

Eclectic Soup



2007-2008

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity



Megan Woodward

2 Round Rings

By Candace Mallory

They are the only ones that fit us. We are the only ones who wear them. Two round rings with words engraved and meaning behind them. Two who mean the same thing, but not for the same person. Two smooth sides polished to shine. From the church we exchange them, but they were given to each other before hand. Their meaning is scared. They send a message to everyone who sees. They are put on and taken off and taken to the jewelers and cleaned to sparkle. This is how they glisten.

Let two become one, they'd forget all of the past, each growing stronger in love. Love, love. Love surrounds them. They join.

Untitled

By Anonymous

It's remarkable how a few days can shape the rest of your month, or how a few months can shape the rest of your year, or how a few years can shape the rest of your life. Just when you believe you have a hold on what's going on around you, it slips through your fingers. It seems like the harder you squeeze the more likely it is to leak from your grasp. There's all those clichés about life, made by people trying to understand it. "Life's never fair," "Life is like a box of chocolates," "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," and "Live and let live." However, these aren't always true for everyone. Not everyone has an unfair life, not everyone has an assorted life of chocolates, not everyone can make lemonade when the lemons are too sour, and not everyone let's others live. It's quite a surprise how many different ways life can be lived and described. I do not argue with anyone on their view of life, but this is mine.

I have always had a satisfying life, so I won't waste time explaining my childhood. That isn't what this is about. That is my first thought on life. I think sometimes it is good to concentrate on the bad things that happen. Just long enough to learn a lesson. After that, it is best to move on and heal. In this case the "bad thing" involved my youngest brother. I am the oldest sibling of four. I appreciate every one of them. They all affect me in

a different way. My brother, Jimmy, is 15 and reminds me of how I was two years earlier. My sister, Brianna, is 10 and it is always fun to dress her up and do her hair when she is excited for a special event. Last, is my smallest brother, Sammy. He is just about the cutest five-year-old there is. In fact, currently, he is missing all his front teeth and smiles to show everyone. He has the highest spirits of anyone I know. He is strong and rambunctious. He can physically and mentally tolerate a lot of pain and pressure for a kindergartner. Unfortunately, he didn't gain these attributes by living a simple life.

When I was in 8th grade, Sammy was diagnosed with a very severe case of pneumonia. But, that doesn't matter. When someone you love is threatened with something like their life, the reason doesn't matter; it's getting rid of the threat that consumes your mind. The story of the tests and results and constant advising of the doctors doesn't matter either. It is a mere blur in my mind anyway. Those are the things you tend to remember, even though you don't need to.

The one detail I will share is how my brother fought. My mom stayed in the hospital with him night and day. Seeing him lying in that hospital bed, with my mother weeping next to him, was unbearable. He was so small for his age, and the huge white sheets seemed to engulf his helpless body. He had tubes coming out from his arms and chest, and he was always sound asleep with the exhaustion of crying for so many grueling hours. His lungs were full of liquid as a symptom of the pneumonia. He had to endure two surgeries to fully relieve his lungs.

What I am describing in a few sentences actually took weeks of sorrow, pain, and concern. That's another thing about life: a horrific, long, agonizing event can be summed up in a couple sentences after it's over, but no one really knows it in your eyes. No one knows the whole story, and sometimes it is best left that way. Now, all my brother has to account for his experience walking at the edge of life, is a few deep scars and the yearly checkup.

At the age of 17, I'm sure most teenagers have experienced a death or near death experience in their family. I'm sure they all can sum it up in a few sentences while living a whole different life in their minds when they think about it. And I'm sure most of them have moved on, but have also remembered what they felt they had to. After every new occurrence in life, people come up with new ways of viewing time. That's how clichés are formed. My brother's sickness didn't give me a new outlook on life. I love my little brother and am thankful to still have him. I probably haven't changed the way I live since he was sick. I don't think I have even

dwelled on it much since then either. What I have taken from that time is knowledge, acceptance, and strength. Knowledge of what I may have to deal with in the future, acceptance that there will always be hardships, and strength go on when I feel stranded.

As corny as these things sound, I think you can agree they are less corny than a cliché. What I gained wasn't a reason or way to explain life. It was something for me. Every time you are forced to experience one of those "life-changing" events, don't look for a way to explain it or dwell on the reason. Don't look for a cliché out there, so you feel someone understands what you're going through. Find something in it for you. I promise it will be a great deal more rewarding.



Megan Woodward

Voting

By Matthew Axberg

I don't want to vote
I can't, I won't,
voting is lame
all I feel is shame.
People ask me why I don't vote
I say cause I don't,
I know I have that right
maybe someday I might.
I think most of the people that run
just do it for fun,
it's hard to be a chooser
when everyone's a loser.
People run for the crowd
shout things real loud,
listeners are so numb
they believe anything, even if it's dumb.
Oh well. What can I do?
those who see it my way are few,
some people just want fame
care or not care it's all the same.

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Knucks Around

By Zach Trepanier

Aced a test
Kissed a chick
Knucks around bro
Cause that's just sick

Don't give me skin
Just give me a pound
Skin's so last year
Knucks around

When you're kickin
At N64
Pass around the rock
Cause that's knucks galore

Rolled a strike
Hole in one
Knucks around bro
Cause that's a job well done

So when you see something sweet
Don't be a clown
Stick out the fist
And knucks around

The Boy by the River

By Natalie Wasilczuk

Soft, sweet scents flutter through the air. They tell a story. The wintery cold defeated, and the sun shines bright, backed by sky like a robin's egg. And the girl walks the field through flowers and grass that tickle her legs and dance under her bare feet. Her tears will help them grow. And she looks so calm to the boy by the river, but her heart is racing, and her fingers intertwined in nervous motions, and the thoughts fill her mind, and why did he die?

And she walks to the river, she's almost there, and her heart is still racing, and her soft feet are bare, and the boy is still watching behind the long vines of an old, weathered willow, and whistles a sigh. The springtime sun mocks her mourning, her loss, and its rays meet her tears, and they shine. And the boy sees her cry. He feels the same loss, but she doesn't know he's there, and the river stole his heart, and it sinks in despair. And the girl's wet eyes glare at the river right there, and she sits on the brink where her love's heart sinks. And the boy leaves his hideout, he's crying inside now, he sits by her side, by the love of his life, the tears fill his eyes, and why did he die?

LET ME IN

By Matthew Axberg

He ran across the lawn. The door was locked. He had a look of furious anger on his face. He looked around him to make sure no one was watching. He broke the window silently. He ran upstairs to the master bedroom. He opened the door and rushed inside to the private bathroom.

2007-2008

For the Eye that Cannot See Their Pain

By Andrew Sisulak

Emblems
They bring desire,
Man against man,
Carve each other,
By the rigid blade,
To be a Father,
The admiration,
The beast surfaces,
So material,
As others die,
As others are exiled,
As others suffer,
I sleep in this warmth,
Yet I am chilled
By the inhumanity
And ignorance
Of my kin

What Matters to Me

By Anonymous

What matters to me?
I don't know,
What matters to you?
That's what matters to me.

Do you think for yourself?
Or ask for help?
Is a lie a big deal?
Or can you shrug it off?

What matters to me?
Why do you ask?
Am I being judged by my reply?
Does it matter to you?
What matters to me?
Does it matter if I don't try?



Britnee Brauer

Voting Through Life

By Shelby Brehmer

Voting at just eighteen,
Not knowing what to do,
And without a clue.

When going to the poles,
You go with very little knows,
Cause they don't want to know.

I'll watch campaigns,
And all speeches,
But it might not make a difference.

When I turn eighteen,
I'll watch politics with glee,
So I pick the best for the Presidency.

Every candidate has to make their point,
Without any fence sitting,
So we will see how voting goes.

Black Platinum Mask

By Andrew Sisulak

It covers my face,
Saving them from the terror,
An alteration of identity,
Inhibiting my judgment,
Under the crown,
To which I follow,
For I die without,
Yet I am already dead

Slay me,
Take this away,
Let no immortal diminish humanity
Guard beauty for the beautiful souls,
And repulsive for the tainted,

With eternal prayer,
I live,
Cursed,
Under oath to the Devil

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Untitled

By Shelley Grosch

It is the warm smile of one you love,
Sharing memories with an old friend.
It is laughing so hard,
That your sides begin to hurt
And forgetting why something so stupid
Could make you laugh so hard.
That matters.

It is a girls' night in,
Complete with sappy movies and junk food.
Popcorn and chocolate.
It is warm sand
That squishes between your toes,
And somehow gets into your bologna
sandwich,
But you don't care because that matters.

It is the unbearable excitement
You feel on Christmas Eve.
It is being 6-years-old again
And spinning enough
That you cannot help but fall down
And get back up just to do it again.
That matters.

It is letting it all go,
These inhibitions,
And dancing as if nobody can see.
It is the overpowering stink of new paints
On a new canvas.
It is a fresh start, a beginning,
That matters.

The little things matter
In this life where we grow up so fast
And reward seems to come so slowly,
If ever.
But never forget the things that matter:
Friends, gratitude, love, family, life,
compassion.
That matters.

Rage

By Anonymous

Suppress it,
Control it,
Hide it,
Force it,
Love it,
I HATE IT

Rage

Monitor it,
Play with it,
Bottle it,
Channel it,
Lost control of it,

Rage

Imply it,
Refine it,
Deny it,
Supply it,
Define it,

Rage

Violent excitement
Throbbing desire,
extreme suffering,

Rage

The Librarian

By Natalie Wasilczuk

It's been a year now. One full year since I started working at the Silver Crest Public Library. The automatic doors part for me, and I walk into the small building. One year...

A year ago at this time, I stepped through the same doors, embarrassed of the only job I could acquire. *But it's temporary, and I won't be here long*, I thought. And now it's been a year.

A father and her two small children walk in wearing puffy winter jackets, gloves, hats, and boots, leaving wet, slushy footprints in their wakes. The young boy runs to the children's section.

"Dad, look at this!" he says, holding up a book about monster trucks.

"Shh! This is a library!" I whisper-shout across the room. I hate those words, hate I'm the one the kids glare at, but it must be said. And maybe I should keep an eye on them....

The books are out of order again, placed carelessly on the shelves, Fs and Qs in the same section. Stein next to McCarthy and Smith next to Paverell... Smith, like the one I know. Knew. She never called me back, hasn't sent an email since Katie's baby pictures. I wonder what her life is like. Is she rich, successful, married? Or is she a single mother working in a library, just getting by? No, no...she wouldn't end up like me, not in a million years. Carly always worked hard and even if she slacked a little, her good luck carried her through. But why won't she call if she's living the life she's always dreamed of?

"Daddy, can I get all of these?" the small girl says in a painfully high voice. She sits in a pile of twenty books.

"No, no, honey, pick out three and put the rest back, please." The little girl screws up her face as if making the decision of the century. After three seconds of careful consideration, she grabs Rainbow Fish, a Clifford book, and a book about ballerinas. She starts replacing books to the shelf, but sees her father's turned back and sneakily shoves the remaining books under a nearby armchair.

Great, thanks.

The girl runs to her father and shows him the books she picked out.

"Those look great, Katie," he says and takes the books.

*Katie...*and then I see it. The girl's bright blue eyes staring into her father's face. *My Carly's* bright blue eyes staring into that man's face with *my Carly's* hair and hardly-noticeable freckles. I approach the man warily, nervous excitement building up inside of me. Hope fills me, but my bubble bursts when I talk to him and find out the news.

No wonder she never called me.



Britnee Brauer

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Trapped in Elevator

By Candace Mallory

"I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, I'm late," said the White Rabbit from Alice in Wonderland, as he raced into the elevator. "Oh Bruzer look, a cute little white bunny," said Ell Woods.

The White Rabbit looked at his watch and jumped. "Oh dear, I'm late, I'm late, I'm late!"

The shiny elevator doors open on the next floor and Pumbaa came charging into the elevator. "Well, hello there," said Pumbaa. "Whoever said brown was the new black, is seriously disturbed," said Ell.

The elevator comes to a jolting stop.

"Oh no! I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, I'm late."

"Hakuna Matata," said Pumbaa as he smiled.

"I object!" said Ell.

"Hakuna Matata, it means no worries," said Pumbaa as he started to hum.

"Well, I suppose I'll have some tea then.

Anyone care to join?" said the White Rabbit as he pulled out a wooden table, four wooden chairs, a white table cloth, and a blue and white tea set.

"Bruzer and I would love some," said Ell to the rabbit. "Look Bruzer, a cute little chair and cup for you!"

"I would love some grub. Got any worms?" said Pumbaa as he licked his lips.

"No, just bisquets."

When they finished drinking the warm tea, they started to get a tingling feeling throughout their bodies.

"Um, like what is going on? I think I'm shrinking," said Ell and Bruzer barked in

agreement.

"Hey, me too!" said Pumbaa looking at himself shrink.

"Oh dear, wrong tea," said the White Rabbit.

Now everyone was six inches tall.

"How are we going to get out of here? This can't be good for my clothes," said Ell.

The White Rabbit and Pumbaa looked at each other, smiled and slipped down at the crack in between the elevator doors.

Music

By Natalie Wasilczuk

softly floating silver reaches my soul and nothing else could ever, ever compare to this mist, this aura, this fog that helps me see,

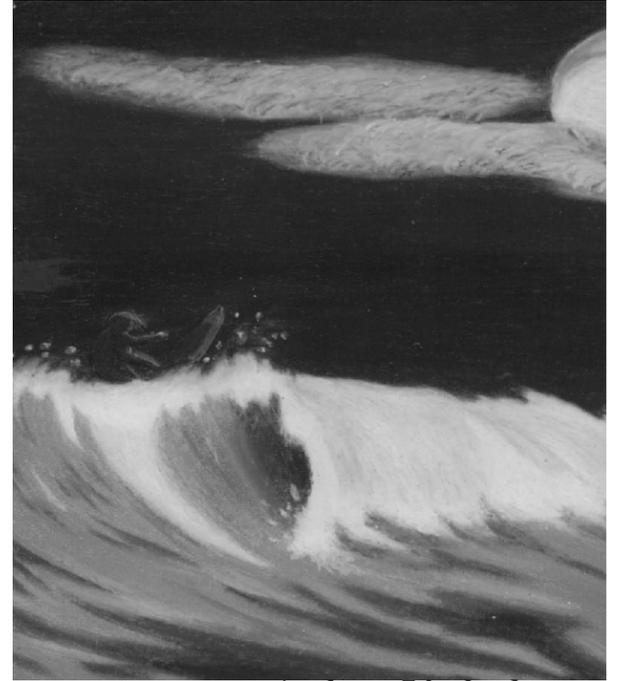
and I've been so foolish, and forgive me, and please sing sweet notes to soothe my remorse,

so we can hear this soft silver floating through the air together, and loose ourselves to the rhythm we choose

and the melody will kiss the floating mist and the music won't end, not a music like this

I watch from above
Like a movie scene

I wish someone could tell me
What I should be looking for
Something that makes my days
Not a blur anymore



Andrew Lindenberg

A Detailed Study of Seasoned American

By Anna Quint

When it comes time to wade in water,
The kin choose to stay with the Sire.
To left or right follows the daughter.
Divided by invisible wire.

The families wade under the boat,
Where worms look real and bobbers don't float.

Trusting the man in the dark black coat,
Hooks lurk in water, better not choke.

A tasty grub wiggled, squirmed, fought;
The trout has not eaten for some time.
Fisherman smiles, the fish is caught.
Money is law, killing is no crime.

With schools of a hundred or greater,
The lone trout can change it to the same.
The suits will just account him later,
Just as they did before to the grain.

The boat with the most trout underneath
Sells its banquet to the fleshy sphere.
Trout are displayed as deserving wreath,
Or unworthy to receive a tear.

Another She Picked from the Garden

By Natalie Wasilczuk

After the rose had cut both hands
Commitment waned and cut its growth,
But still he justified crude talk;
And summer interest, morning walks
Saw tension growing, hopes fell low.
Problems reflect a potential to slow
Between differing sides that could have
been close,
And cut the rose of yesterday's growth.



Britnee Brauer



Megan Woodward

A Blur

By Zach Trepanier

My days are a blur
They all seem the same
Nothing ever changes
Life is one boring game

Played by billions
But no one knows how to play
Such a stupid game
But we play everyday

No rules no directions
Nothing to help us out
No handbook that says
What life is all about

But the days keep floating by
And who knows what they mean

Eclectic Soup

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Untitled

By Anonymous

You were the stem of my rose,
The trunk of my tree,
Until I took my axe,
And chopped you down.
I put you in a pile,
And walked far away.
The rain poured that day,
The sun didn't shine that day.
I gathered myself,
And poured into bed.
I laid pondering the thought,
You're really gone,
You're not coming back.
I was petrified you'd leave,
But you never did.
So the day I picked up my axe,
Everything broke.
You are the sun.
I am the rain.
I'm sorry.

One Fallen Bird

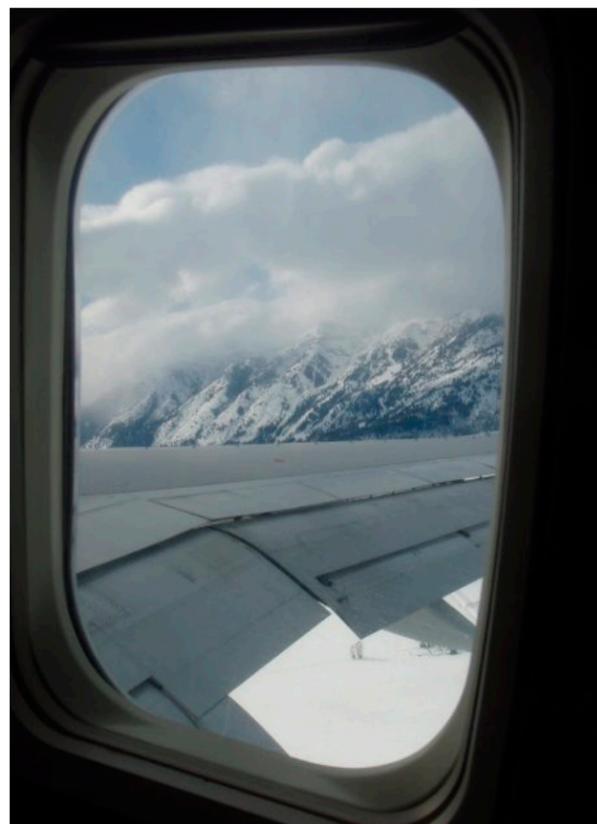
By Alex Wank

Hopelessness is the dark night.
The sky black as coal. The clouds glowing
ember falls. No sound can be heard over
the silence. The sky ripped open. A shape
descends. The figure, hopes and dreams,
revealing itself to the world. A grand bird
glides. Light shines from the feathers,
majestic against the darkness. The places
this creature flies - unlimited. The visions
of beauty never ending. It flies with all. For
all. Within all. It spreads wings. The span
immense, free. It soars above towers,
above imagination.

And it is destroyed.

Into the glass. The cadaver holding
thousands of possibilities. Now nothing.
The heart breaks.

The bird dies. No tear is shed.



Valerie VanTussi

Broken

By Zach Trepanier

Broken inside
Ripped by the seams
Hallowed like a pumpkin
Buckled at the knees

It's over, it's done
It's finished, it's through
The words sting my ears
Cause I know I lost you

Broken on the inside
Broken like a toy
Thrown out the window
Now I'm crying like a boy

But I never really had you
So why do I care
Why am I broken
This just isn't fair

I learned to love
Something I never really had
It should have been clear
That this would end up bad

You

By Anonymous

You're the reason I'm alive
The reason I still breathe
You're the one who saved me
So why'd you have to leave?

You laughed to make me happy
You cried when I was weak
You're the reason I'm alive.
The reason I still breathe.

Distance didn't stop the love
Doubt fades with those three words
You're the one who saved me.
So why'd you have to leave?

You killed my fear of friendship
And made higher feelings peak,
You're the reason I'm alive.
The reason I still breathe

I was a fool for leaving
Because you are all I need.
You're the one who saved me.
So why'd you have to leave?

Fear takes hold when you leave me
Out of loneliness I sleep,
You're the reason I'm alive.
So why do I still weep?

Storm

By Natalie Wasilczuk

The flowers shine bright, though the sun
never came.
They feed off the rain like a life needs some
pain.
And deep, heavy floods aren't their right to
complain.

These flowers' strong roots, they can
handle the rain.

*Why did the sun lose its brightness?
Why did that star leave the day?
Why is the rain too heavy, too much?
Why can't it just go away?*

The trees cast big, black shadows.
The trees with their big, green leaves.
The trees, take the life; the trees take the
day.
Those tall, leafy trees stole the sun away.

*Why can't those trees take some of the
rain?
Why won't they stop giving too much
shade?
Why can't they share the light of the day?
Why can't the big trees just go away?*

The clouds overhead let go their wet
weight.
They gave it away to some flowers one
day.
And the moisture they handled drowned
soft-colored petals
That prayed for the end of a cold disarray.

*Why have the clouds dropped their
burdens?
Why did they selfishly leave?
Why have they traded their darkness for
white?
Why burden small flowers, not trees?*

Music

By Natalie Wasilczuk

softly floating silver reaches my soul and
nothing else could ever,
ever compare to this mist, this aura, this fog
that helps me see,
and I've been so foolish, and forgive me,
and please sing sweet notes to soothe my
remorse,
so we can hear this soft silver floating
through the air together,
and lose ourselves to the rhythm we
choose
and the melody will kiss the floating mist
and the music won't end, not a music like
this

Untitled

By Anonymous

rose pedals fall
down to the grass
like fall leaves
in autumn
rose,
the perfect flower
so beautiful and true
until those
pedals fall off
then you're back to just being ordinary
poor rose,
never had
a chance.

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

Untitled

By Karly Pearson

You walk across that stage as they call your name,
Showing that you have had the guts to do what it takes.
It's something very special, and so much well earned, it has been twelve waited years for this to come.
Everyone cheers as they see you smile but behind that smile you hide away trying not to show what it really feels like to walk across that stage alone.

You're friends flash you a returning smile through these four years they have learned about you.
They have learned how to read you inside and out.
They have learned what you try to hide.
They have learned your emotions and your fears you hold, and they can see your pain in the fake emotions you show,
That's hidden behind that fooling mask.
They know you are scared of this stage and don't want to leave them behind but you continue to walk across that stage alone.

You shake the hands with the familiar proud faces, as you take that piece of paper and hear congratulations.
Its been a long journey that seems to have been cut short, when it feels like you were just building tents and forts.
Now, somehow, you're here and received this paper, that says you are no longer part of this school- family.

You finish your walk across that stage and

remember the times, when life was young.
But this is now, which scares you the most.
You think of the things you wanted to accomplish, and realize that this is the time to be them.

You have so much to say, but decide to wait for you never know what in the future a waits.
So you bite your tongue and show that smile.
All you can do is wait.

You look over the stage to the other side to see your friends waiting for their name to be called, so they can take the same journey and meet you on the other side.

You watch each friend as they cross that stage, reaching for their diplomas and saying their goodbyes.
Each of their eyes are truly thankful and become a little teary when they turn to walk away.

These years have been easy.
These years have been the best.
These years have been hard.
These years have been the worst.

You always wanted to leave it behind, but you never knew just how it would feel when you could.
And now you wish you could walk back over that stage and do it all backwards.

Mix it Up

By Brianne Becker

It's Monday and everyone already knows
Of the drama that filled the weekend before

Walking into the room
The cold hard stares break you down inside

What was supposed to be done?
Stand behind someone or shine in your own light?
Fight for what you believe and know is right
So you turn away acting as if you don't care

Questions run through you mind
As you walk across the painted squares
What does it matter to them?
Apparently everything, they are done being your friend

How could everyone already know?
It was one simple fight
That continued throughout the night
You sit somewhere that no questions are asked

Old friends are revisited
Maybe the ones who had been forgotten
And to realize they are glad that you are back
A true friend always picks up your slack

Life will soon go on
The present will soon become the past
New drama will grace our school which won't last
So you wait patiently until life returns

The walls at school always talk
People are whiling to exclude
While others are really to except
The most important thing you need for yourself is respect



Andrew Lindenburg

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Untitled

By Anonymous

you look into the reflection
of that broken glass
but is it really broken?
your liberty is absent.
for you are now innertwined in a mess
a mess of hatred
directed to only one person.

you look into the reflection
could it be true?
do you see what others see?
he tells you you're beautiful,
but he's deceived you before.

you look into the reflection
the glass is no longer broken
you get a look at what you've become.
nothing.

Untitled

By Grace Collura

The sunglasses are dusted off
No more parking in the school lots
The warm weathers here
Hanging out on your friends pier
Yeah these are the good times
When everything feels fine
New memories to be made
Don't have to worry about grades
Staying up real late
Yeah, everything feels great
Endless parties and new embarrassing pics
Don't have to worry about how fast the
clock ticks
Funny moments which you'll never forget
Taking chances you'll never regret
Tanning outside feeling that warm sun
Yeah, everything's way more fun
So cheers to an endless time
Drinking smoothies with a lime
Yeah, it's all because of one season
Which makes me happier for a reason
And that's all because of.....summer

Luck

By Alex Wank

The man walked into the airport.
He strode past the checkpoints, grinning
eagerly.
Today he was signing the contract –
becoming a millionaire.
As he waltzed through the terminal a
mother was interrupted by her son, thus
spilling her coffee on the
man's chest.
He raced to the bathroom, missing his
plane: Flight 175, September 11th.

Untitled

By Anonymous

I'll slam my car
into a tree
he says
as he takes
one more drink
of that sweet alcohol.
it's your fault,
he mutters.
you're going to
believe him
aren't you?
of course you are.
love is something
so rare
you say.
i need him to survive.
he's my everything
he treats you terribly
you don't mind
because
he's yours.

Six Billion Lonely Stars

By Natalie Wasilczuk

They are not the only ones who feel
that way. I am not the only one who feels
this way. Six billion lonely stars that could
shine so bright and warm your heart. Six
billion who do not feel needed, but they
are. Six billion stars scattered in the sky to
fill a void. From wherever we are, we can
see them, but no one appreciates their
company.

They send their light into the night.
They come out and go away and hide
during the hectic day and shine at the
empty world at night when few care to
notice how they are so incredibly bright.
This is how they shine. Let no one ignore
their light, they'd all lose their lives, each
so secluded and far away. Shine, shine, or
you'll run out of time. They cry.

When I am too scared or too lonely
to keep shining, when I am a small light
and everyone else is so bright, then it is
I remember the stars. When no one else
can see we're all the same. Six billion
who shine together. Six billion who don't
disappear when it's dark. Six billion whose
purpose is to give the world light. Six billion
lonely stars who shine so bright.



Valerie Van Iussi



By Michelle Manthey

The Warehouse

By Alex Wank

There's an old warehouse in D.C.
filled with hundreds of boxes. Inside one lies
a dusty orange recorder. Pressing the play
button yields two minutes of static, followed
by a frantic man's voice.
"Roswell... July...
1947... 509th Bomb
Group.... Some
giant disc falling
from the sky."
That's when
the bullet will
enter your head.

The Storm Consoles

By Natalie Wasilczuk

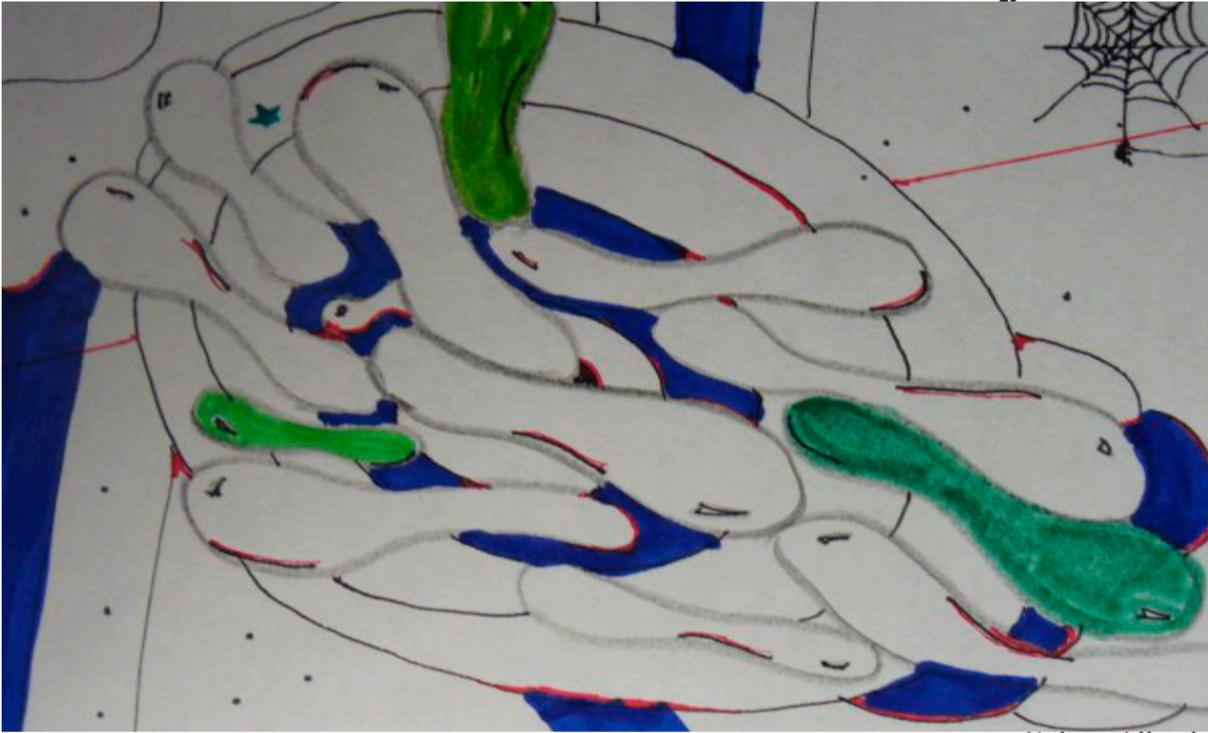
The rain cries lonely tears for me.
It shares despondent misery.
Without a face, but with a voice,
Reflecting feelings for my choice.

The lightning in its majesty,
Strikes fiercely without empathy,
And leaves me pouting, wet and cold,
Wishing I'd done what my heart told.

The thunder drowns my rhythmic sobs
And understands my poor façade,
But when will come that joyful day
When I can throw my mask away?

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity



Kelsey Allard

Campfire

By Alex Wank

It was a dark and damp night. The deep woods were silent except for the crackling of flames and the occasional animal. The woods were black also, save for the glowing embers, dancing in the clearing near the center of the woods. Around the glowing blaze sat four friends: Billy, Dan, Ted, and Mike. They were having a bonfire - discussing school, girls, games, girls, evil teachers, and girls. Finally, as they were getting tired, they decided to tell ghost stories. Ted was the quickest, practically jumping up to tell his story.

"I have one. It's about something I heard about the other week. It's about aliens." The children groaned, having heard so many tales about these space invaders. "This is a scary one! I swear," insisted Ted.

"What makes it so scary?" his friend Mike asked.

"Nothing much, except for the fact that it's real." The boys stared at Ted for a few seconds until his friend Dan spoke up.

"Well... Let's hear it."

"Ok. Last month during the meteor shower, a visitor made his way down to Earth, unseen. These aliens are not the peaceful type, they have long tentacles, which they clamp onto a human with, and take that person's form. The alien then lives in it's host's body, transforming other humans into slaves. The creepy thing is that you can't tell who has been changed, because they act normal until their new master calls. This is how they pass among us unnoticed. Soon, these aliens are going to show themselves, and then they will take over the world. There will be no way to stop them, because there will be no trust left. It will be pure anarchy and the world will fall."

There was a chilling silence. The sounds of the fire were gone, as were those of the forest. It was shattered when Dan spoke.

"That wasn't scary."

"Yeah, that was stupid," Billy agreed. "I have a better one."

So the night went, the boys telling chilling tales and laughing at hooked maniacs. It was decided later in the night to sleep, and the boys each went to their separate sleeping bags.

About an hour passed and Mike spoke up.

"Ted, are you asleep?"

"Yes, Mike."

"That story you told tonight, was that real?"

"Real?"

"Yeah, I mean it. It sounds possible. I know how lame this sounds, but it won't stay out of my mind."

Ted was silent for a moment. "You couldn't let it go," he spoke, sadly.

"What?" Mike asked, fully awake now.

"I'm sorry, Mike. I really didn't mean for it to go this way."

Before Mike could respond or wake up the other boys, he felt something slimy move across his neck.

Dream Awake

By Alex Wank

I am not from the Garden
Where Judgment was passed.
I am not from the Fires
Where the Fallen was cast.

I am not from the sane
Nor the screwed up.
I am from my home
The place I grew up.

I am from the Koontz
To the Shan and the Flynn.
I am from the chair
That I was rocked in.

I am from my dad
Always making me smile.

I am from my mom
With her caring all the while.

I am from the land
Where the dreams are born bright.
I am from the one
That makes everything right.

I am just one soul
Only this I do fear.
But I am from the hope
That love is all here.

The Boy by the River

By Natalie Wasilczuk

Soft, sweet scents flutter through the air. They tell a story. The wintery cold defeated, and the sun shines bright, backed by sky like a robin's egg. And the girl walks the field through flowers and grass that tickle her legs and dance under her bare feet. Her tears will help them grow. And she looks so calm to the boy by the river, but her heart is racing, and her fingers intertwined in nervous motions, and the thoughts fill her mind, and why did he die?

And she walks to the river, she's almost there, and her heart is still racing, and her soft feet are bare, and the boy is still watching behind the long vines of an old, weathered willow, and whistles a sigh. The springtime sun mocks her mourning, her loss, and its rays meet her tears, and they shine. And the boy sees her cry. He feels the same loss, but she doesn't know he's there, and the river stole his heart, and it sinks in despair. And the girl's wet eyes glare at the river right there, and she sits on the brink where her love's heart sinks. And the boy leaves his hideout, he's crying inside now, he sits by her side, by the love of his life, the tears fill his eyes, and why did he die?

Don't Let Go

By Zach Trepanier

Baby look inside yourself
And tell me what you see
Does it all seem fuzzy
When you find yourself thinking of me

Think of how you told me
That you love me uncontrollably
Let yourself be taken away
Let yourself be free

Don't try to tie your heart down
Don't deny yourself of what you feel
Baby don't let go of me
Of something that's so real

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

Family

By Andy Dix

I am from an age group that may or may not enjoy Old Skool Rap,
From Run DMC with JMJ (Jam Master Jay) with them roaming around everywhere in Adidas.

I am from an average house where family rushes in and out.
On the weekends you can count on father and son getting full of grease in the garage. The dogs are active and protective when someone arrives to visit.

I am from a rock that is hard to crack.
I am stubborn, strong willed, and know what I want to do.
I am an individual that is always around to help a friend who needs some stability.

I am from a family that enjoys viewing cars from our past.
As a family we enjoy car shows and cruisin' around in them.

Our love for cars goes back to grandpa who became interested in cars when he was a teen.

Not one person in my family likes the morning. We enjoy our late afternoons and evenings, when all the action comes about. When we have to be up early, we are all at each other's throats yelling and arguing. It seems as though nothing ever gets done. From being told at a young age that it's important to believe in myself. I need to always be confident, never give up, and be patient. These values don't happen overnight. This helped me with baseball and other sports.

I am from a christiann family that follows all the holidays.
However, we do not go to church to practice.
Although the parents do on Mondays.

I am from Wisconsin with nationalities of American Indian, Puerto Rican, and German.

With chocolate torte and pumpkin pie on the mind for dessert.

From my god-father doing a burn out across Goodhope Ave.

The biker we were joking with to street race who never took off to catch up.

From then on all I ever wanted to do is go fast!! He is there to show me how to be safe when going fast and when its appropriate.

I am an Wisconsinite through and through. Although I travel throughout the United States the badger state will always be my home!

A Quest

By Aaron Gnas

The strong, the wise, the blessed
A holy tradition you could say.
Creation after creation
Nothing but the same people, new faces
Not in our case.
Deep within the eyes of our Father, a hidden truth is found.
Only those born with strength and power can be handed this insignia
For within the Kingdom of God, we are the chosen.

We learn by our surroundings;
We perceive God himself;
There is no sky limiting us;
Arrogance you might say.

However, flawlessness comes at a price;
Where there's truth, there's no seeker,
Where there's talent, there's no audience,
Where there's accomplishment, there's no impact.

We do not know our purpose.
But we do know that we are selected for a reason,
A reason we may never find.

Let the journey continue...

My Name

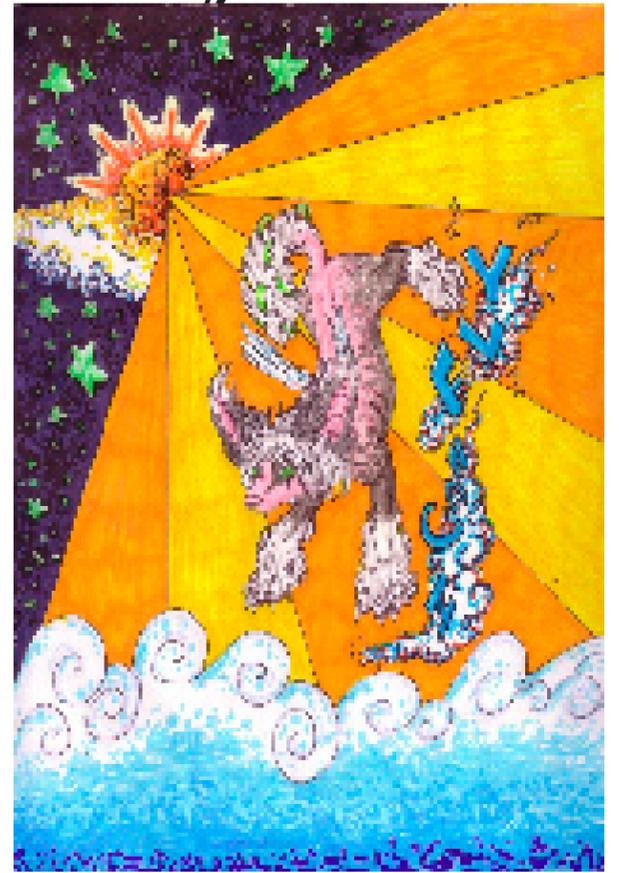
By Andrew Sisulak

Scrape these blasted craters from my mask,
So I may be the guy to that girl,
And give me one more chance,
So I may change what I like not,
And find the cure for the lost,

Take the blindfold off,
So I may see what exists
Break the mask,
So I may open these clumsy lips
Crush these shackles,
So I may act
Sing to my soul,
So I may wake to her desires

And when I shatter,
Who will retrieve the broken pieces,
Will I be able to notice another,
If she ever comes,
Or am I destined to be alone

The body, Andy...
The mind, Andrew...
The soul...
Issac



Mallory Zimmermann

Where I'm From

By Candace Mallory

I'm from babysitters and late nights waiting for my mom,
I'm from vacuuming apartment stairways, to help keep a lower rent.
From charcoal kokopellies dancing along the walls,
I'm from running through a cold sprinkler, to keep from getting warm.

I'm from the family gathered around the Christmas tree, and stuffing our faces with little wieners.
I'm from Jennifer and Andy, oh and Jack's too,
From yelling and laughter, all filled with love.
I'm from puking every holiday, not exactly sure why.

I'm from "it's only funny the first time" and "be sure your homework is done."
From the dusty Catholic bible which my step-dad turned to new,
I'm from "up north" in the middle of the state
Chocolate and chunky hopel-popel.
From the father who left me when I was two,
The one who now says he loves me, and always thought of me too.



Jon Gill

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity



Brad Gundrum

The Great Escape

By Kayla Herrera

The sun rose, vibrant ribbons of pink, purple, orange, and the blue tone of the lingering presence of the night expanding in the sky. A few seagulls perched themselves upon the corner of a building, squawking to one another and cocking their heads to one side as if determining the strange occurrences of the awakening day. Indeed, Chicago was arising from its pleasant sleep.

Delilah was similar to the seagulls, for she sat upon her window glancing down at the city below from her mediocre apartment. Sure, these seagulls and Delilah both had this position in common: an interest in watching the city slowly wake up. But there was an extreme difference, as well. The seagulls were free to extend their wings and fly to wherever they pleased, whereas Delilah was stuck in this muddled apartment with mottled chinaware and zealous artwork. She hugged an orange pillow against her chest and watched as the seagulls bobbed their heads and took off in flight towards the rising sun. Someday, Delilah, too, would fly away.

Using the sunrise as inspiration, she grabbed her paintbrush and gathered the paints that sat in the corner on a shelf. Delilah and sleep did not associate with each other. They were strangers in different worlds, for Delilah Bessner did not sleep. She believed there were too many opportunities in her life to just lie down and squander valuable hours.

She tucked a lock of her ginger hair behind her ear before slipping on a pair of latex gloves. Before her stood a vacant canvas; it was just as intimidating as a blank stare from an unknown stranger, tempting her to bring upon something inconceivable and beyond her natural talent. This blank canvas wouldn't stand desolate for very long.

She scribbled feverishly with the brush

against the cool, soft paper that was taped to the wall. Red, orange, pink; then another dash of red and added some blue to the milieu to promote the idea that twilight was not long gone.

She stood back to scrutinize her work and pressed her filthy hand under her chin, ignoring the fact there was paint on it. Something was absent; something just wasn't right. Her lips formed a small "O" as she grabbed the smallest paint brush she had and dabbed it into the black paint. She began to draw the outline of a seagull, tracing its bulbous head several times before realizing a seagull is not what she wanted to draw. Instead, she added a pair of legs, arms, and wings to the head. Draping down the back of the flying human was the same long, auburn hair that hung from her own head.

Delilah worked at an art museum, giving hourly tours of the Pollock, Van Gogh, and African art exhibits. This wasn't her dream profession and she knew it, even as she felt the headpiece tucked around her ear securely, the microphone amplifying her gruff voice. Her manager was a decorous, nit-picky woman in her late forties, surveying every blunder Delilah seemed to make. As soon as she slipped up a word or confused a fact, her manager was sure to hurry over and publicly debase her in front of the entire crowd.

"Now, Delilah, I do not believe that he actually grew up in the middle of the rainforest. I do believe he was first placed in a foster home *near* the rainforest and then adopted by a South African family thereafter. Right?" she said. Everyone stared perplexedly at Delilah, taking in her flaws and waiting for the approval, the agreement, that she had been wrong.

"Ah sure, yes I guess I forgot that. Right..." She itched her neck nervously where her fingernails dug into a dried blob of paint. Luckily, it had been hidden behind her braid. Her manager smiled in triumph.

"You just have to remember those

facts from now on, okay now? I don't know how many times I tell you to study the artists diligently." She shook her head softly. "That'll teach me to hire another wannabe." Delilah froze. Her arms had hurt for she swore her blood ran ice cold, causing everything in her body to cease. The visitors stared at her tensely, almost embarrassed for her. She choked before continuing on. Pushing through the day was hard when everything was always frazzled.

"A famous piece and personally, one of my favorites, is 'Starry Starry Night' by Vincent Van Gogh," she said. Delilah always said that was her favorite piece, but was it really? In the thick swirls of paint and the luminous, blobby stars that reached out in points like the white caps of waves, she wasn't sure she found the painting terribly appealing anymore. She had lost interest in a painting that had become so much a part of popular society. This wasn't giving Delilah much hope, but each day she continued to give her tours at the art museum. Each day she glorified "Starry Starry Night" by Vincent Van Gogh, and each day she grew more weary of it.

Delilah had a boyfriend. It was delightful how they met. She was sitting in the park reading the latest Stephen King novel when she noticed a guy chasing a couple runaway sheets of paper. He looked ridiculous in his crisp, striped shirt and dress pants, bent over and wobbling towards the papers. She effortlessly snatched the papers up and handed them to the guy. His hair was milk chocolate-colored, long, and a tad bit curly. The ends bowed around his eyes and flipped out at the tips. His eyes were a radiant green and mirrored the sun, making them appear almost golden. He smiled gawkily as he grasped the papers.

"Thanks." He grinned.

"No problem," she replied. Things were incredible at first. Fiery passion met with bouts of love. That was until he got sick of her disorderly apartment, always something covered in paint. And how he hated those paint-covered tennis shoes. Why couldn't she find just one day to look proper? There was always paint somewhere on her body whether it be inside her ears or on the back of her arms. That was the point when her beau, Ben, started coming home late from work; when all of the fiery passion had sizzled to its final spark it died out soundlessly.

Delilah did not desire her life, not at all. What was there to embrace? The only thing she managed to hold onto was her artistic flair and yet, even that seemed to drive people away. She wanted to be content and liberated. There was also another obstacle in the way of this aspiration: her mother. She was the reason Delilah had only moved an hour away from home. It had always been thought out that Delilah would go to the school her father had graduated from.

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A collection of creativity

As she grew older, her mind contemplated the ideas of different schools. What if she attended this enormous university and discovered a place on her own rather than embarking on a mission that has already been accomplished? Than exploring a place that has already been uncovered? Her mind wavered and she fell into the hands of her parents, choosing to attend the university they had attended. No, college there wasn't bad, wasn't terrible at all. College had been the best years of her life; after that, everything seemed to fall into this mundane pit. She began questioning her decisions. Perhaps she should've attended college somewhere else? After reading all of those college books at the library, she had definitely learned that college was supposed to be an innovative experience. Instead, college was just like getting back together with old friends and staying someplace proverbial. This wasn't Delilah. She hankered for new places and experiences; and meeting new people. After all, it was how she was brought up.

The phone rang and she stared down at the caller ID, knowing it was her mother. She called every Sunday to check in with Delilah.

"Hey how's it going?" she asked her mother.

"Good, good. So how's everything with you? You doing alright? How's Bono?" Delilah stared over at her French bulldog, Bono, who was fast asleep on his doggy bed. He snorted and itched his nose unconsciously.

"He's fine, Mom. Everything's fine." There was nothing worse than the nagging of her mother. All throughout her teen years, she thought she would be able to escape it once she moved out of the house. Luckily, most of it dissipated. That is, until she began to receive the weekly phone calls from her.

"You getting your laundry done alright?" she asked.

"Yes, I go to the little place down the

street." Delilah began to play with the magnets on her fridge. This conversation was growing old, rapidly.

"Place down the street? Isn't there one in your apartment building? Do you have a friend who can go with you? You shouldn't be walking there alone. Women are vulnerable nowadays."

"The one here is broken. Look, Mom, I got to go. I'm baking cookies and they're going to burn if I don't get off and if I try to get them out with the phone, I'll prolly burn my arm off," Delilah said as she stared at the bare, cool oven across the room.

"Oh, well okay then. Dad and I miss you. I'll call you later, bye." Delilah set the phone down and for some odd reason, it felt as if the receiver weighed at least one hundred pounds. Her mother still treated her like she was sixteen: young, stupid, and a know-it-all. This is not how Delilah had depicted her life at twenty-three years of age. This is not how things were supposed to turn out.

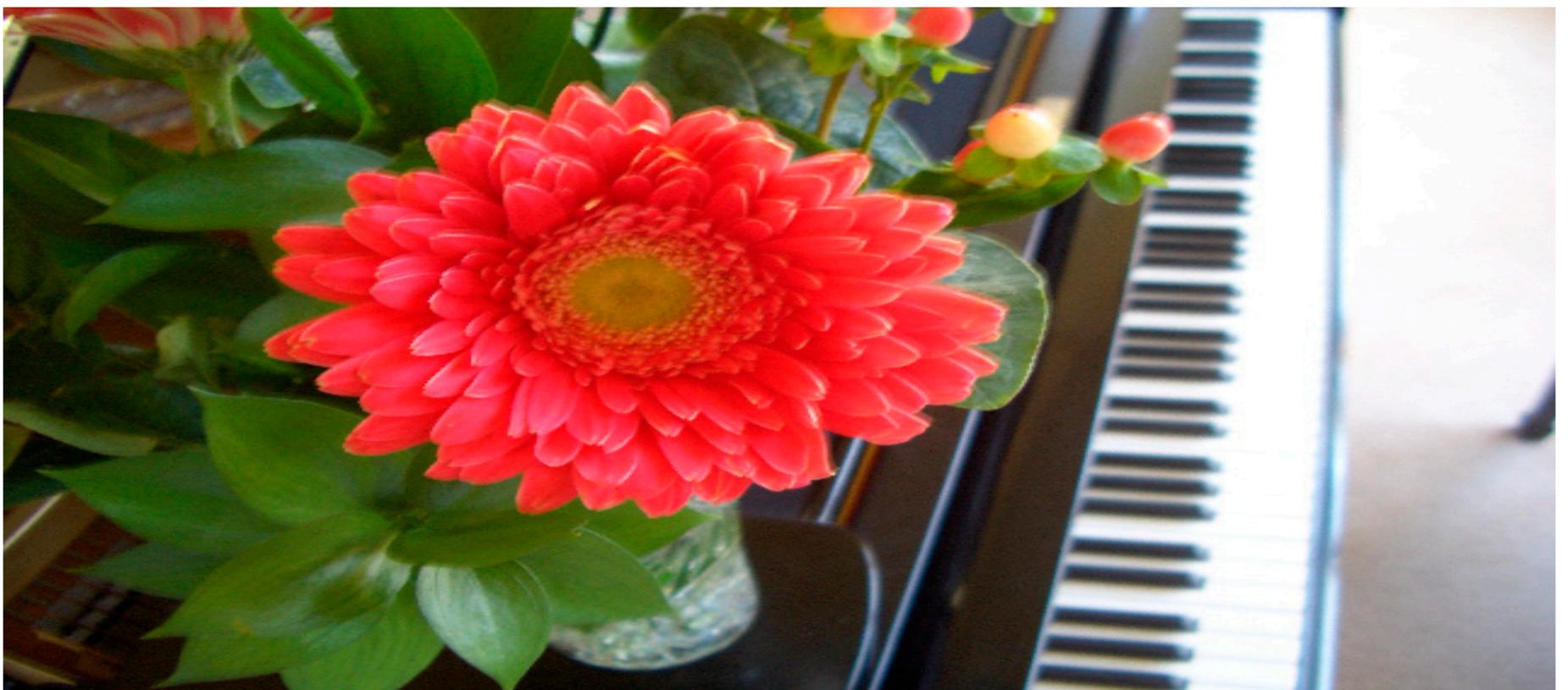
She raced to the window of her apartment and now faced a setting sun. On the corner of the building sat a stout seagull, looking her up and down with its beady eyes, taking in the resonating disappointment from her quivering frame. Delilah wanted to be free.

She slowly inched her way to the ledge and peered down. A bustling street was below her, a plethora of dashing blurs and intermingled colors. She could feel the summer breeze tickle the microscopic hairs on the back of her neck, almost alluring her into sliding forward. She couldn't handle the monotony of her job or the chronic mistreatment from her boyfriend anymore. Her mother was still holding her down from living her own life and it seemed there was nothing left in this tedious life. She wanted to do something impulsive for once; something crazy and unthinkable. Who knows what would happen after she slid from this ledge? A plane could fly by and catch her or she could land on the back

of a colossal bird. Just like in the movies, maybe she'd get a soft landing on the awning of a vendor.

She turned around to face her apartment. Bono was now standing up on his four, stubby legs, his head cocked in frustration. Her colorful paintings adorned her apartment walls, portraying recollections of her dreams and desires. These were her sentimental feelings on paper, yet now she wanted to see some of them in action. The only way to test this was to receive the rush; take the leap.

So she turned back around and instead of looking down, she faced straight ahead towards the sun dipping below Lake Michigan. Her wild, golden-brown hair now seemed to have turned a sizzling red in the sun and her freckles were darker than usual. Her eyes scanned the area in front of her in search for any protruding objects, but there were none. Yes, this was it. Her trembling hands grasped the ledge as she stood herself up, never once looking down at the traffic. She inhaled deeply and exhaled at the same pace. And with one simple step, she walked off of the ledge of her apartment window. Her stomach rose up to her throat and for a minute she felt like she couldn't breathe. Her hair whipped around her head sadistically and her eyes began to water, but then something astounding happened. There were trivial, tickly sensations on the back of her shoulder blades. Out of nowhere, a pair of brawny, feathery wings sprouted from her back. They instantaneously caught the wind and stopped her falling. She flapped them gradually at first and pushed herself upward. Bono watched her as she flew past her apartment window and towards the roof. Upon the corner sat the same, chubby seagull, taking in this new sight. Delilah grinned and with one great exhale, she swooped down like a vengeful hawk and soared into the blinding light of the sunset, The fat seagull following closely behind.



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A collection of creativity

A Detailed Study of A Seasoned American

By Anna Quint

When it comes time to wade in water,
The kin choose to stay with the Sire.
To left or right follows the daughter.
Divided by invisible wire.

The families wade under the boat,
Where worms look real and bobbers don't float.
Trusting the man in the dark black coat,
Hooks lurk in water, better not choke.

A tasty grub wiggled, squirmed, fought;
The trout has not eaten for some time.
Fisherman smiles, the fish is caught.
Money is law, killing is no crime.

With schools of a hundred or greater,
The lone trout can change it to the same.
The suits will just account him later,
Just as they did before to the grain.

The boat with the most trout underneath
Sells its banquet to the fleshy sphere.
Trout are displayed as deserving wreath,
Or unworthy to receive a tear.

More than Words

By Amanda Mendyk

My heart starts to race.
The temptation within me is ready to explode.
I see you standing before me.

I look into your eye and smile.
This fluttering feeling of contentment
overwhelms me.
You smile back.

You hold my hand and gaze into my eyes.
We start to get closer and feel our hearts

beat as one.
Then, in a split moment, we kiss.

This kiss is gentle, but full of energy,
It feels like a sweet summer's day.
At this moment there is nothing that words
could say.
My love for you flourishes within my soul.

I whisper "I love you" into your ear,
But I still feel this power of love, which is so strong.
I wish I could show you how I feel,
But it's so hard nothing could explain it,
Not even those three very special words.

See into my Soul

By Kevin A. Manthey

If you could see into me, into my soul,
What would you see?
Well, what would you see?
Would you see the real me, or would you see,
Would you see a reflection of how you see yourself?

If you looked into yourself, into your soul,
What would you see?
Would you see how you really are,
Or would you see how you would look from my eyes?
Well, which is it? Tell me now.

If you could see how I view you,
What would you do to change my mind?
If so, who's it for, you or me?
Either way, you're just the same.

Why, you ask? How can I tell?
Well, if you do it just for me,
It means that you want to change for yourself.
If it's just for you, the need to change, you really can't.

My Learned Lesson

By David Haddix

There I was, passing cars like they were standing still on I-94. Cars in the fast lane had to move over to let me by. I had my Valentine One radar detector and thought I would never get caught with such a dependable device, which told me how many types of radar it was sensing, what direction they were coming from, and what kind of radar or laser was detected.

Suddenly, the Valentine One started beeping. I slammed the brakes and slowed to the speed limit. My friend and I figured the radar had originated on the other side of the freeway, so I resumed speeding. While passing another group of cars, I noticed a car was keeping up with me. I assumed he was either mad or he was a police officer. I casually moved over one lane, but he followed my every move. Looking in the mirror, I saw red and blue lights. I felt sick to my stomach.

"Do you know how fast you were going?" the officer asked.

"Eighty?" I lied.

"I originally clocked you at 91, but as I followed, I saw you reach 107. Were you trying to lose me?" the officer said.

"No sir. That was not my intention."

At this point, I was helpless. I was done driving for a while. I had my driver's license only two weeks and already got a six-point ticket for \$280.50.

When I told my parents, they were not as upset as I thought they would be. All I heard was, "We're so disappointed in you." They said I had to pay the ticket and enroll in a traffic safety school to get three points back.

In the next four weeks, I woke up on Saturday mornings to go to traffic safety school. I typically worked from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. to pay for the ticket. My court appearance was embarrassing; the judge reprimanded me longer than the drunk drivers. My face turned red while I was humiliated in front of the judge and the drunks.

If one breaks the law, one has to live with the consequences. As a sixteen year old, I thought bad things only happened to others, but nothing would happen to me. This incident proved me wrong. It is easy to get caught breaking the law. Now I am responsible and will not make the same mistake. People make errors, but they are worthwhile if one learns from them. I am a better driver and smart enough not to put myself in situations where I could get into trouble. If I do something wrong, I will admit to it. I am not going to be the person denying something I did.



Kalli Krueger

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Rage

By Anonymous

Suppress it,
Control it,
Hide it,
Force it,
Love it,
I HATE IT

Rage

Monitor it,
Play with it,
Bottle it,
Channel it,
Lost control of it,

Rage

Imply it,
Refine it,
Deny it,
Supply it,
Define it,

Rage

Violent excitement
Throbbing desire,
extreme suffering,

Rage

What Have You Found

By Alex Wank

Flowers bloom
And rain falls down
The world changes
What have you found?

People wander
Time flies by
The heart aches
The children cry

What have you found?
Lies all around
What can we believe in?
Where will it begin?

The birds in the air
The fish in the sea
How many lies have you told me?
What have you found?

I hope it was kind to you
Life can sometimes seem so blue
I never forgot what you said that day
The words I thought you couldn't say

What have you found?
Pain all around
What did your future bring?
What have you found without me?
Without me.

Shapeshifter, Angel

By Andrew Sisulak

I could be anything you want me to,
But it wouldn't be true,
Deceiving my essence,
Slaying my dignity,
Taking the form of what you truly desire,

But it's already here,
In front of you,
And you've already taken its soul,
Thrashing it,
Bruising it,
Rotting it

You understand,
Now I may return the act,
As you so lovingly imposed upon mine,
But I am not so cruel,
For you are human,
Just let me be your guy...

And into the clouds I will carry you,
On the wings you did reveal,
Through the trials you took me through

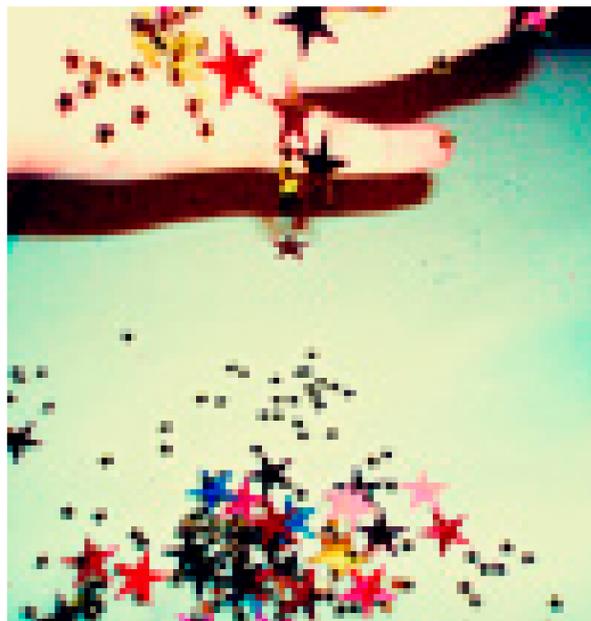
Color of Water

By Andrew Sisulak

Feel the warmth in the rain,
As it falls, listen to each drop,
For they tell stories,
Tales of angles, and the Divinity
The beat as they hit the ground
Explodes into colors
Only your heart can see

The tool of the mighty,
The poison to the forgotten,
These souls have the power to change,
With every fall from the heavens,
They come to deliver us messages

And as a flood they shall bury us,
In an eternal love
More powerful than the sword
And with more conviction than the judge



Kelsey Allard

Emotion

By Anonymous

You see the face I reveal, but the emotion's just a lie
You understand embarrassment, but I don't see it in
your eyes.
You can see the emptiness I try so hard to cloak
behind my pride.
You can feel the loneliness I try so hard to hide
Acting like I'm good enough just makes my love a lie
Surrounded by mentality, wishing my pain would
simply die.

Catch a Falling Star

By Natalie Wasilczuk

the night we met I caught a star
(I crossed my yard to catch this star)
it twinkled, hidden, soft and sweet
I hoped no one else would see

the next night, too, I caught a star
(I crossed the street, it wasn't far)
it joined its partner, pure and kind
these stars were warm; these stars were
mine

as week by week they left the sky
(I chased the stars that fell from high)
and each one filled my room with light
they gave me hopeful dreams at night

now every night I catch a star
(I cross the world to where they are)
I take my time to travel far
I cannot live without my stars

Life on the cold green hills of hell

By Anonymous

Nothing but sunshine
Don't need to hold my hand
I'm fine
You're the one casting the shadow cross
the land
Nothing but sunshine
Smiling at the irony
No will left to exist
Nothing but sunshine
But when the sickness do come,
A hoard of greed will flood the sea,
And the pure of heart will run.
Nothing but sunshine
The rays pierce through the grey
The sun will set and all will see
The light early the next day.

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When I Look At The World

By Alex Wank

The sky was black as coals, with a fiery sun casting absolutely no light in the desolate wasteland. Dust was thrown savagely in the wind. Over the ground, the gloom and horror of this place was unnerving. The ground was aflame, embers glowing, flames licking the sky.

Nothing was alive, only pawns and robots wandering monotonously through these badlands. They believed they were free, except they were merely tools, living in a fantasy world.

Yet one of them suddenly stopped.

And saw the truth.

He screamed, the flames searing his flesh, thick black smoke billowing down his throat, cutting off his voice. He attempted to cry, but his tears were dried. His hair began to burn; his skin pink and bleeding pus.

He wished for death, for release from this terrible place, yet death didn't come here.

Over time the flames no longer bothered him, for they had burned off all of his nerve endings. Other things took the job of disturbing him. The loneliness ate away at him, until he believed he no longer had a heart. He also stopped screaming because the fires took from him his voice.

He could see others walking. He could even reach out to them, yet they never felt him.

While he could no longer join them in their blissful existence, he could influence their world by tales of the truth.

He couldn't tell of this reality, for his voice was gone, but he could still write. He would scratch out the truth on anything he could find and stuff it into the others' pockets or wherever it would stay on their person.

He knew it worked because

occasionally he would see some of them stop and glimpse the truth of the world. Yet none became like him. They would always immediately return to their fantasy world. The memory turning into a nightmare.

He lived here for years, in this dreadful place, wishing for release each day.

And, like every other day in those many years, release never came.

But this story has a happy ending.

One day, seemingly normal in this awful existence, as the flames licked his horribly scarred skin, a door appeared.

It was made of solid wood, with a golden knob. The man walked over to it and studied the thing because it was strange, to say the least. It wasn't connected to anything, just standing upright in the middle of a patch of flames. And it wasn't burning.

He walked over the embers and reached the door. Around it, the flames had retreated, as if the door had some power over them. He slowly stretched his charred hand to the door and grasped the handle. The handle was cold, a feeling he hadn't felt in many years.

But as he grasped the handle something else happened. His blistered and burned right hand was clean, the skin back with no sign of damage.

He laughed, the sound reverberating around the wasteland. His eyes widened in shock, for he realized what he had just done. He had laughed.

"I'm alive!" he shouted jubilantly.

The man turned the handle in his grip, the door opening silently.

Once the door was opened the man peered inside.

And saw the truth.

The sky was pure blue, with beautiful white clouds dotting the heavens, a yellow sun casting its glorious glow upon the earth, a colorful rainbow framing the

scene. Red rose petals drifted lazily in the breeze, beauty and happiness as far as he could see. The ground was covered with green grass, which swayed in dance with the gentle wind.

Life was everywhere, animals frolicking in the field and birds flying above. But what caught the man's eye was the girl in the center of the meadow.

She was beautiful, with gorgeous silky russet hair which dangled playfully over her amazingly large and deep brown eyes. She stood, revealing herself. She was built like a goddess, enough to make any man crazy and to make every woman jealous.

She walked over to him and he hugged her. Her stunning scent entering his nostrils, the bond between them unbreakable, having been coated with love and pure joy.

"I've been waiting for you," she said, her voice reminding him of musical notes and merriment.

She kissed him, their lips erupting in passion.

Bliss.

On that day, his view of the world changed.

Thanks to her.

On that day my view of the world changed.

Thanks to you.

Rethinking the Past

By Lily Grace

I sit here crying on my bed
Horrible thoughts run through my head.
Her cackling voice yells loud and clear,
"You stupid brat, get over here"
My own mother, how can this be?
Though she's estranged herself from me.
She called me ugly, fat and dumb,
The thought of her just makes me numb.
Like a thousand waves crashing on sand
My cuts run deeper with each reprimand
The bindings loosen, the ropes start to break
As pain and hurt I can no longer take.
She lied to me, knowing the truth.
I believed them all right through my youth.
I was naïve, I was so blind
To think that I controlled my mind.
She reinvented my entire past
So she'd direct the blame I cast
On Dad for never being there
When really he was everywhere.
Now every memory I thought
Was mine, really gets me distraught.
It's hard to think she has a heart,
When she tore my world, my life apart.



Val VanTussi

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

Then It Was Over

By Alex Wank

Then it was over
Everything had disappeared
Not one thing left standing
Just as we all feared
Nobody listened
No one had cared
To them the world meant nothing
And no one seemed to notice it

Because it's too late
Everything is over now
It's too late!
Nothing is there no more
The life is gone
And I couldn't even say goodbye
Then you're gone

I tried so hard to steer us from this
I saw it coming
You didn't see it
But now that means nothing
Everything is erased
All that we knew
Now I'm standing here
Alone through and through

Because it's too late
Everything is over now
It's too late!
Nothing is there any more
The life is gone
And I couldn't even say goodbye
Then you're gone

Peer Into a Duo

By Andrew Sisulak

Don't call me Hero,
I'd say I'd save your lives,
But when the guns at your head,
I don't know,
For I have not been there,
As words are words,
Break they shall,
As a pane of glass
Smashing to the ground
From the rooftops

Don't call me Genius,
For what I do on paper,
May not be real,
And what I say,
Just might all be a lie,
But as I am on my back,
In this tomb of cloth,
I must think of you,
And what matters most,
In our hearts,
Separated by my ignorance

Don't call me Lover,
For my acts,
My intentions,
My feelings,
I cannot express to your face,
And chaos it comes out,
And your essence,
It's what I look for,

It gives me hope,
It puts a great smirk on my face,
Yet you call me jerk,
And I respond,
With the slightest bowing of my head,
So our eyes do not meet,
For if you knew,
If you could tell,
That for one instant I wish we'd be together,
The earth would quake,
Fires would rain down,
Our hearts to beat as one,
And wings would emerge,
Because you're my darlin' little angel



Michelle Manthey

My Promise

By Lily Grace

If I could even think of one,
I'd write a poem for you.
I'd say how much I love your laugh,
And all the things you do.
I love the way you look at me,
The way you hold my hand,
How you never say goodbye just once,
And you don't like just one band.
You never know just what to do
Or what to say, that's fine.
The only thing I care about
Is knowing that you're mine!
And mine is what you'll always be
Until the end of time,
Through being healthy as can be
Or greener than a lime.
So are you sure, my darling
You want me to be your bride?
I swear to god had you said no
I think I would've died...
Well, since I've got you trying
I'll take this chance to say
That I love you forevermore
And then another day.

The Recital

By Lily Grace

As I look out across the crowd
They're staring back at me.
They judge me if I say a word
By what they see and what they've heard.
Most of these lies, the things they say
Spread like wildfire through fields of hay,
And then a low, dark, buzzing hum.
My body, mind, and soul go numb.
Anticipation's on the sea of faces staring
back at me.
Upon the stage I stand and wait, just
wanting to be free.
One small dim light shines from above
I'm prepared to do something I love.
As tension fills the air like smoke
I cannot breathe, I just might choke.
The music cuts the silence,
Like butter with a knife
And as I glide across the floor
The butterflies take flight.
I soar to the music, shun all their doubts,
Put my soul in the dance; let my heart
come out,
For this is my life, it's just too much fun
At the end of the music, I bow, then I'm
done.

Acuestense: It's Time to Wake up

By Andrew Sisulak

Apologies are for the weak,
Actions for the humble,
And truth for the robust,
Me? I'm for you,
Brothers and sisters,
I couldn't see the hope,
There'd be no reason but greed
So keep your eyes open,
Your minds alert,
And throw your fists down,
Lift up your arms,
And embrace your brethren,
Heathen and Jew,
Muslim and Christian,
Buddhist and Satanist,
Mend races and religions,
Slay the intolerance, the impedance of your
soul,
For it is the only one you get,
And I wish to wish no harm upon you

.:Conversations;.

Kelsey Allard

Why am i so quiet?
Why isn't she trying
I want to scream in her face
Can you even see me?
No eye contact when I walk by
I just want to give up
Why do i feel this way,
Have I pushed her away
Why cant i just say.....
We need to talk

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

Untitled

By Natalie Wasilczuk

I'm feeling alright,
but I can't ignore
the feelings I felt
when you slammed that door;
and it wasn't on me,
but still I feel
you broke that heart
when you pressed in the seal.
And I cannot tell
if I'm happy or sad,
because seeing you lonely
is like seeing you dead.
And I'm scared that my dream
could maybe turn real,
and my terrified heart
thinks you've lost your appeal
because it breaks when you frown,
but these tears are denied
because no one should cry
for two others' goodbye.

Taking it Back

By Lily Grace

My insides are churning, I'm falling apart
Because you don't understand the pain in
my heart.
Since you just won't listen, I can't make you
see
What's deepening this riff between you and
me.
I wish I could tell you, wish you could hear
The heart-wrenching sound of each
dropping tear
But you refuse to listen, deny me the
chance
To explain what I feel, pull you out of your
trance.
In your own little world, you can do nothing
wrong
And yet here I have cried much too hard,
much too long.
I'm now kicking you out of my heart and my
soul
I'm getting my life back under my control.

Wright Night

By Alex Wank

Entrancing oddities dance up above
Within the desolate deep
Calling out that of my beloved
A name that hope can't keep

No clouds within this empty sky
The moon behind the light
Tonight there are no stars that fly
Only the darkness known as night

Movement causes me to turn
A wave beyond the trees
The ground is covered by tall ferns
Which brings me to my knees

A luminous glow appears in the dark
Coming out from the wood
"Who goes there?" I bark
My question being good

A figure moves neatly
"My name is Vicky."
She spoke sweetly
My vision beginning to trick me

Gorgeous brown eyes
Awash in the glow
Beauty telling no lies
My heart about to blow

"I love you," I mutter
She emits light from her smile
"From when I met you," I stutter
Her hair fluttering all the while

She takes my hand
And kisses my lips
The lights erupts in the land
Making my life bliss

Dry Eyes

By Natalie Wasilczuk

Lonely eyes and a half-hearted smile;
I can only hope you'll feel better tomorrow,
Because nothing hurts more than your half-
concealed frown.
You hold in the tears because dry eyes
can't drown.

Fill your eyes, if it helps,
To clean out the sadness.
Make room for the stars,
Please see what could be ours.

And your cries will soothe you, dry eyes,
And your tears can bring you back,
Because once you let it all out, love,
You're free to take some back.

Pray with me that tomorrow's not broken,
And nothing will empty the words I have
spoken.
And sing me a tune that will give me some
faith,
With the stars in your eyes and the smile
on your face.

Tell me words, if you can,
That will bring back the stars,
That will cure the pain,
And spark a new flame.

And the words you let out, dry eyes,
Will extinguish all your fears,
Because once the old fire dies, love,
A new one will mist your tears.

To Thine Muse

By Alex Wank

Are we growing closer?
Or are we drifting apart?
Do you regret I called you?
Or were we right from the start?

I took you out to dinner,
And then you stole my heart.
I took you back to my house,
Impaled by Cupid's dart.

Yes, I fell in love with you,
Looking deep inside your eyes.
How I fell in love with you,
Leaving behind old lies.

I never thought I could love,
But now you've changed my mind.
I never want to leave you, dear,
Your love for me too kind.

I never thought I'd say this,
But I need you in my life.
I know it's early to say this,
But I want you as my wife.

You're as free as any human,
More beautiful than most.
Your perfection everlasting,
Your character to toast.

I love you, my Vicky,
The sweetest girl of all.
I love you, my Vicky,
My heart took the fall.

You are the best thing to ever happen,
To this old bum named Wank.
You've given me the gift of love,
For which I need to thank.

And now I need to hug you,
Kiss you, my dear.
I want to hold and love you,
Until the morning's here.



Karly Pearson

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

Love Never Dies

By Alex Wank

"I'll always love you," Eleanor cooed.
"I'll love you forever," Michael replied, his heart swelling as he gazed into the soft eyes of his bride. He had been taught the secrets of love from this woman and, even more, she had given him the gift of pure bliss for the past sixty-four years that they had been married.

True, from time to time they argued, as all couples do, yet the bonds of their love were unbreakable. They met when Michael was a senior in high school, in their small southern Illinois town, on a double date. Eleanor had been the other bloke's girl, but that didn't last. Michael became her close friend and eventually the two began dating. When Michael began being paid enough in his factory job to start a family, he proposed to Eleanor.

They were married within two months and have been living happily together since. Michael, being the hardworking man that he was, made his way to eventually owning the factory, retiring two years before with enough money saved away to live the rest of their days peacefully. The couple had a child, one boy, who was now grown and the head of his own family, with two beautiful girls.

While everything was fine, within the past year they had begun to discuss their mortality. Eleanor had come to the conclusion that, due to her heart problems, she would reach the other side before her love. Michael disagreed, telling her that they would die together, in their sleep. Yet still, he knew, as the doctors reminded him, he was in perfect health while Eleanor's was slowly deteriorating.

"How do you think he'll come for me?" Eleanor asked, wonder on her face.

"I wouldn't be able to say," Michael replied, knowing exactly to whom she was referring. "But I bet he'll greet you as a gentleman."

"My father told me that when he was a boy, he met him."

"Really?" Michael asked, shocked. "You've never told me that before."

"Oh? I'm sure I have." Eleanor blinked, rubbing her head at the same time. "I'm positive I have. You remember that my grandfather died when my father was fifteen?"

"Now that you've told me before."

"Well, when he passed away, my father was in the room. Holding his hand, in fact. It was in the middle of a snowstorm, so no one could come for the body that night. They had to close the bedroom door and wait until morning."

"It was much different than when we grew up," Michael acknowledged.

"It's a different time now," Eleanor replied.

"Please, dear, we're not *that* old."

"You might not be, but I'm running

on the last of my time."

"Don't say that, darling. You look just as you did on our first date."

"Smooth-talker," Eleanor giggled, becoming a teenager once more.

"Better warn your parents about me, miss," Michael teased, kissing her cheek.

"You'll never let time bring you down, will you?" Eleanor smiled. "That's why I love you."

"And I love you," Michael replied.

"Forever?"

"Forever."

"Good. Now, where was I?"

"Your grandfather had died and no one could come because of the storm."

"Oh yes. So you see, my father's bedroom was right next to his father's room. In the middle of the night he woke to the sound outside. The sound of an engine."

"Stop right there," Michael interrupted. "A car? Those weren't invented yet!"

"My point exactly. But my father could describe it perfectly because he saw it out the window. It was a large black object, with two beams of light coming from the front. As he stared, a door opened and a pale man in a black suit with a bowler hat stepped out."

"That was him?" Michael asked, unable to hide his wonder.

"Yes, I'm sure of it. The man got out of the car and looked directly at my father. He grinned at him and that was the end of the story."

"That was the end?"

"The next thing my father knew it was morning. His father was gone. The only proof of his story was some strange tracks in the road."

"Strange."

"But true," Eleanor insisted.

"I believe you, love," Michael replied, kissing her again.

All was well for the next month, but then Eleanor's health began to fail at an alarming rate. She had been right, her time was soon up.

It was a warm June night when she passed away, peacefully, in her sleep. Michael woke when he could no longer feel her soft heart beat. There was a terrible silence when he came to the dreaded conclusion, yet then it was suddenly broke.

By a low rumbling noise, reminiscent of an engine.

Michael was up immediately, out the front door in seconds with his rifle in hand. Sure enough, there, snaking its way down the long dusty driveway, was a large black car. The headlights gleamed in the warm night, illuminating the old man and his weapon. The car pulled in near the house and the engine turned off, along with the lights. The door opened and *he* stepped out.

He was tall and lanky, dressed in a black suit. He wore a bowler hat over

rumpled brown hair. He was clean-shaven, with a sculpted chin and bony features.

To say he was pale would have been an understatement. He was white as paper, his face and hands glowed in the darkness.

"I won't let you take her," Michael spoke, his voice devoid of fear.

"I admire what you're doing, I really do," the pale man spoke, closing the car's door. "But it's just her time. There's nothing I can do."

"You can get in that car and go back where you came from," Michael growled, lifting the rifle.

"You really think that'll do anything?" The man asked. "Besides, I can't go back without her."

"Take me instead," Michael spoke, setting his rifle down.

"You?" The man asked, surprised. "But you're not due for ten years."

"Then just divide my time, give her half. Leave us alone for five years."

"It doesn't work that way."

"So what can I do?"

"Let me take her."

"I won't do that."

"There's no other way."

"There has to be."

"I'm sorry," the man spoke, the sorrow in his voice speaking truth.

Michael closed his eyes, his decision made.

"Take me too."

"What?"

"You have to take her. I'm coming with."

"You know," the pale man replied, nodding, "that can work."

"Then do it."

The car's engine started up.

"I'll always love you," Michael whispered, grabbing Eleanor's hand, as they sat together in the backseat.

"I'll love you forever," she replied, kissing him, as the car's taillights disappeared into the night.

Sweet Camping Trip

By Melissa Sikora

"Look at the *Milky Way*."

"It's just *Dots* in the sky."

"You're such an *Airhead*."

"Well at least I'm not a *Nerd*!"

"Go in the tent and get a *Hershey's Bar*. We'll make s'mores."

"Oops! I dropped it."

"*Butterfingers*!"

"Hey! Look in the lake. There's *Swedish Fish*."

"Let's go for a *Fun Dip* with them."

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

My Promise

By Lily Grace

If I could even think of one,
I'd write a poem for you.
I'd say how much I love your laugh,
And all the things you do.
I love the way you look at me,
The way you hold my hand,
How you never say goodbye just once,
And you don't like just one band.
You never know just what to do
Or what to say, that's fine.
The only think I care about
Is knowing that you're mine!
And mine is what you'll always be
Until the end of time,
Through being healthy as can be
Or greener than a lime.
So are you sure, my darling
You want me to be your bride?
I swear to god had you said no
I think I would've died...
Well, since I've got you trying
I'll take this chance to say
That I love you forevermore
And then another day.

Dream

By Alex Wank

Solace. Comfort. As I lay on the grass, basking in the warm summer breeze, the beauty of nature loomed around me. The tall, majestic oaks swayed slowly in the wind, dancing to the cricket's violin serenade. The fluffy clouds crept through the blue sky, natural theater for anyone who would care to look. In the clearing of which I lay, I felt at ease. I had no problems, no obstacles in my path. The comforting calls of birds gave the days their own soundtracks, never the same. Here my mind was blank, true peace was felt. Then everything changed.

The warm breeze blew ice, chilling my very core. I shivered, as the white clouds blocked the sun, turning the sky to an eerie darkness. The calls of birds and nature ceased almost at once, sending the area into an unnatural silence. I slowly stood, my knees creaking. The long grass around me was dead, yellow where it had been green seconds before. The trees were all now burning, each leaf ablaze, giving the clouds above a reddish tint. The smell of fresh oxygen was replaced by that of burning embers.

As I watched the redness seemed to build in the clouds, until the clouds seemed to be overflowing. As the first droplet landed on my hand, I saw it closer. It was a deep red color and had a strange metallic smell. The sky was raining blood, yet it was sporadic, not raining more than a few drops at a time.

"Delightful, isn't it?" The words were filled with maniacal glee and originated directly behind me. I turned around slowly, and sure enough, there stood the man who had just spoken. He was about six feet tall, one hundred and thirty pounds. He wore a black suit and a red tie, which seemed to strangely fit our location. His face was thin, his nose short and sharp. He had a goatee

below his mouth, which was now stretched into a smile that clearly showed his pointed, yet blindingly white teeth. His eyes glowed yellow while his black hair was slicked back.

"I can see why you come here, Daniel Moore. It's wonderful." How had he known my name? "Yes, it's perfect out here. You can just sit down, relax, and then the blood..." He looked right into my eyes, and it was unnerving, yet I didn't look away. "...the glorious blood..." The intensity in his eyes built, and I felt as if he was looking directly inside my soul. "...will flow!" He finished finally breaking the gaze, his arms reaching towards the sky. As he yelled the clouds broke open, releasing gallons of blood upon the field. He laughed all the while it poured upon us, until I was deep inside a river of blood. But I could still *hear* him.

"I shall see you soon, Daniel." As he spoke my name everything went black.

I awoke in a cold sweat, the dream still vivid behind my eyes.

This dream had been repeating for several days, yet this time was different. I could feel something warm in my clenched fist. I slowly opened my hand, sending a shockwave though my very core.

There, in the center of my palm, lay the cadaver of a dead dove.

A Detailed Study of Seasoned American

By Anna Quint

When it comes time to wade in water,
The kin choose to stay with the Sire.
To left or right follows the daughter.
Divided by invisible wire.

The families wade under the boat,
Where worms look real and bobbers don't float.
Trusting the man in the dark black coat,
Hooks lurk in water, better not choke.

A tasty grub wiggled, squirmed, fought;
The trout has not eaten for some time.
Fisherman smiles, the fish is caught.
Money is law, killing is no crime.

With schools of a hundred or greater,
The lone trout can change it to the same.
The suits will just account him later,
Just as they did before to the grain.

The boat with the most trout underneath
Sells its banquet to the fleshy sphere.
Trout are displayed as deserving wreath,
Or unworthy to receive a tear.

Andrew Sisulak

Voice to the Silent

Dance to the music,
The poetry of life,
For you have been fools,
Withering your lives away as clones,
Kept up inside,

Release your inhibitions,
Awaken to your sense of ordered chaos,
Let your feet paint the canvas with your individuality,

And scream the lyrics of the suffering,
As you have drank from the fountain of luck,
And received its blessing,
You don't know their pain,
Yet you sleep in my wake,

Believe in yourself,
As he would want,
As you are more powerful than you believe
You can do it,
You are that which is the leash

And I plead you,
O beautiful people,
Take a drink from His Chalice,
The one o so holy,
Thought to be lost,
But has been ever-present
Whenever his Sacrifice given,
And you have received,
How could you be so blind,

I care not who you are,
Just that you may share
What he desires most,
You shall not preach,
Fall from your pedestal,
You who preach but do not act,
Bigot, I call you,
Though I am not Judge
I merely wash his feet

Untitled

By Mallory Zimmermen

How do you start to say something
that cannot be said, something that is
unpronounceable?

These things around me, in me, myself
included, make no sense. There is no
semblance of logic left for me, just writhing
madness in bright colors—RED, YELLOW,
GREEN, ORANGE. Things so bright and unreal,
so basic they make me think of a child's
drawings; dark triangles pressed against a
flat blue sky. These colors are vulgar, they
are madness.

Nothing strings days together, much less
events. There's no regulation, no sense, no
straight lines to map the universe in all this
fallout. Time is bent and elastic; in some
places it stretches thin and strained like
tights on a fat woman's calf, and in some it
was sandwiched over on itself and melted
in the middle. The world has gone mad,
and I have gone with it.

There's a chasm in my mind, and if I look
into it, I can see the universe.

Eclectic Soup

A collection of creativity

Sirius Problems

By Alex Wank

Some may call me crazy.
They may be right.

My name is Eric. I'm not comfortable giving out my last name. It's nothing against you; I just don't want my full name in the public eye.

What I will reveal; however, is that I am fifteen years old. I'm a relatively normal kid, or at least I once was.

Before they came.

I don't remember a time before them, when the Fear wasn't living inside me. But my parents seem to remember, which they constantly tell me of. Now, don't get me wrong here, the only change was inside me. The world is the same, a dark place, but I will no longer go outside.

Okay, that's a lie. I'll go outside, but never when I can see *them*, the clouds. Those menacing fiends lazily drifting above, it sickens me. I have no doubt that you find me strange for fearing clouds but if you have seen what I have, you would dread them too.

It was early in the Fear, soon after I realized the clouds for what they were. I would tremble at the very sight of a cloud and scream if my parents forced me outside. At the end of their rope, my parents brought in the child psychologists. After ten failed, my parents hired one man named Dr. Neville Holden to speak with me.

Dr. Holden was different, to say the least. He had written an essay which rocked the science world and had appeared on the cover of *People* magazine, where they described him as a "modern Aristotle crossed with Einstein."

It went directly to his head.

His ego the size of the sun, it was no surprise when his anger surfaced during our first session, when I reluctantly told him about the clouds.

"Absurd!" He shouted, his moustache bouncing above his lips. "Clouds are nothing to fear!"

To prove his point, he grabbed me by the wrist and dragged me to the door.

"Please, no," I pleaded, but he continued. He clutched the handle of the door and, throwing it open, turned back to me.

"There is nothing to be afraid of, Eric," he told me – the sniveling child at his feet. "Stay here and you shall see." He released his grip on my wrist and strode outside, standing in the middle of my driveway. "You see? It is perfectly safe."

My eyes widened as I spotted the cloud hovering above him.

"Please come back in," I whispered, barely able to speak.

"Not until you admit that all of this is nonsense!" He shrieked.

Without warning, the cloud

descended, covering him in its billowy folds. At once the cloud rose, the only evidence of the doctor being his shoes, sitting in the center of my driveway,

I slowly closed the door, shivering, and went back to my room.

"He should have listened," I muttered, staring out the window at the fluffy white clouds.

Midnight Suns

By Alex Wank

The bright red meteor streaked across the pale blue sky, a long white tail swaying behind it in the empty space.

As it entered the atmosphere, debris of all sizes began to break off the enormous asteroid, accompanying the rock to the earth.

One hundred miles to the ground the flame grew larger and the meteor began to glow from the heat. Looking up from the ground, an average eye could make out the shape, falling towards Earth.

Fifty miles. The shape looked larger now, from this height seeming the size of a basketball. One could only guess how immense it was, its size incomprehensible. Even from here, its heat could be felt on the ground.

One mile. The shape utterly gigantic in size, easily larger than a football field, and it was falling directly over a dense forest.

Boom.

The explosion was unlike anything the earth had ever seen. It sent rocks, dirt, trees, and other rubble sprawling at least one hundred kilometers away. Any creatures doomed enough to be under it were destroyed instantly. The crash sent out a shock wave, tearing up vegetation and anything in its path for several miles.

If there were any creature, any creature yet alive, they would have seen the great rock glow an eerie yellow light. The blaze radiated evil, sending out visions of destruction and horror that the world had not yet seen. Almost as soon as the flash appeared, it disappeared, in its place a newly formed crevice in the rock face.

As the sky began to return to normal, the few small animals that had survived the crash crept out of their holes to stare at the rock. A new thing had begun to happen – through the fissure, smoke and other gas flowed through. Another light, this one radiating from within the meteor, glowed blue. As the small animals watched, a figure began to exit through the crack.

It was about five feet tall, standing upright. It held itself up with two legs, using another two arms for balance. The creature was soon followed by another, and then another, hundreds of them eventually emerging.

Very soon these creatures gained power in this small planet, eventually becoming the leaders.

What of the creatures? Therein lays the frightening truth.

The creatures are humans.

We are the creatures.

Heart-Shaped Box

He thinks he loves her, but he can no longer be sure. The way it seemed, he was going to make her his, seal her away forever in his heart-shaped box. But now he can't see the spark in her, now he questions his actions and wonders why he changed tactic. She had been a new love, not like the others. But now...

You see, it was generally hard for him to think, and he supposes this kept the ones he loved away from him before; somehow, the failing leaked out of his brain and stained his face, making him unappealing. He has great ideas sometimes (fathoms, he is fond of calling them), but most of the time his brain seems to be spinning on its own axis, tumbling away from his body. Lucid thoughts are like bolts of electricity, waking up his entire body and making him active—he smiles now as he pictures it, bolts of mental electricity shooting through his body, spreading life and color. It's easy to imagine this because he's having a lucid period. These sometimes last for hours, sometimes days. He equates it, now, as waking from a sleep devoid of dreams, mind and body refreshed and the stony stretch of life's road ahead suddenly bursting with possibility. And of course he is busy as a beaver, working and thinking because the thoughts push at the sides of his skull and he is sometimes certain he will explode. He doesn't know what would happen, should he explode; all his life his brain seemed useless as a shriveled raisin (except, of course, for these bright periods). He can never decide if his fundamental uselessness would result in a great rush of compressed air, or if these moments tell of a deeper, wetter mass in the cave of his head, resulting in an explosion to make a horror-movie buff proud.

Still, he sighs, there must be work done, and then he must do a lot of thinking about what he had gone and done.

Just as he rises from the seat, his legs crumble and he falls back again with a sudden huff of air. His eyes roll, surprised, to stare at the ceiling, searching for some entity, or just a strand of belief. He has always believed in *signs* and he takes this one to mean that the thinking must be done now. Biting at the tail of this thought came another, a gut-ripping fear. If the thinking is to be done, does that mean he is going to slip back into another blank period? He fears this time, fears becoming simple and placid, unable to think or react. He fears the hibernation his brain takes. But most of all, he fears the emotion. These hibernations are when he falls in love again, when he vies for the heart and soul of another pretty lady (though he knows now it is generous calling these girls *ladies*). This is when the dangerous flow of emotions opens up, and

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he cannot possibly think into the future. He supposes, now musing in the rocking chair, that this is when the vicious cycle starts. He loves these women (these girls), he can't let them go when his mind is so far gone from the rest of them, and they are, at the time, equally attuned to him (he has, on some subconscious level, developed the skill to pull the weak, previously injured ones from the herd, like some carnivorous animal).

And when his mind comes back to him, he knows that he must keep them from running from him; he must stop their fear, the only way possible.

But now, he isn't so sure of what he has done. This is not in the norm; it is, in fact, almost frighteningly *strange*. Is this girl different? He cannot decide. Too many thoughts press against the confines of his skull, strangling his vein of consciousness and jumbling up the important thoughts tucked deep down somewhere. She seems, to him, to be different; the way her skin lit up in the sun, the way her hand ghosted over his face like butterflies—delicate and flighty—the way she did not shun the assumption of his shriveled-raison brain. He could not dare to do to her what he did to the others, he had to preserve her in simple innocent beauty, lock her in a heart-shaped box to which only he had the key, only he could draw her out and enjoy her again. The others, he muses, were superficial beauties with no substance. They were lovely, yes, and he loved them, yes, but he could not keep them, and so he had to take them away.

He was so sure of this girl, so sure she was *the one*. He believes in *signs* and believes in *the one*—the single soul custom-fitted by some higher force to fit right in against your soul. And that, he thought, was here. But now he second-guesses himself, something he tries so hard not to do. This has not turned out as he had first imagined. The beautiful butterfly hands venture to his face no more. The gentle voice does not speak; it seems trapped in her chest, unable to escape. The eyes are the worst—where compassion and intelligence had filled deep romance-dark eyes, there is nothing. Now, he almost wishes for her to have mind enough to hate him.

Suddenly he leans forward, head cradled in cupped palms and elbows perched on knees. His voice escapes him in a helpless scream of indecision, to which there is no answer. He feels he cannot possibly fill up that horrible void, that void *he* created, and it smothers him alive. What if he only halted her, not preserved her? What if his good intentions led him down the path to Hell? Fear constricts his chest and chokes off the second scream. He is rocking dramatically in the chair, riding the smooth curved

runners to their upward ends.

Slowly he becomes aware of this, and slows down. His mind is coming out of the cloud of emotion; he forces himself to stop rocking so vigorously, though being still makes him nervous. He calms himself down as best he can, and tilts his head like a dog, listening to the quiet of the house. She is here, he knows where he left her, and she will not leave unless he goes with her, but she is silent and it bothers him a great deal.

But no...how has he come to second-guess his hard work and careful planning, he wonders? Is he merely troubled by the break from habit? He supposes so, it had always bothered him in the past, and he never met trouble through doing what became comfortable. Now his mind cannot accept this change, and it has made him worrisome and nervous.

What is done is done, and it will be for the better. He knows it, he feels it, and he tries to push the nervousness away. He doesn't want to doubt any longer, it gets him nowhere, and he will only be this lucid for so long. While it still does not feel entirely comfortable with him, it creates this strange itching, grating sensation in the back of his mind, he knows that he can try to learn to enjoy it. She is, after all, truly his now; he has taken her and re-written her in a language only he can translate, a language that speaks to no heart but his. He smiles warmly, handsomely, at this thought.

He has a vague thought of what will happen when he becomes simple again. Usually, by that time, he has taken the previous love and filed her away so she could never leave him and would always remain close to his heart, and re-entered bitter society in search of *the one*. His digression from the habit has nullified this course of action, and he can only remain here with her, though he is not sure of what will result.

Now he rises, smiling still, mostly at ease with his future path. His mind is alight with possibility; he plans to take her, before it gets dark and the mosquitoes become heavy, to see the other girls, in their beds with limestone headboards and root mattresses. He wants to show her she is special, and fancy she still understands (he briefly entertains the thought that she is too special now, and transcends their axis of reality, making her incapable of understanding anything but his presence, and this thought makes him shiver with joy).

He opens a door with aging, whiney hinges and steps into the darkened kitchen. She waits for him at the table, eyes vacant, arms curled defensively to her chest. She makes no sound when he approaches her

and first touches her shoulder, then takes her hand. Her dull eyes do not even roll towards him. He is still smiling, numbed by joy and passion to her state. He pulls her up, though her feet do not move well, and leads her outside to visit the girls.

To him, she is an angel of a completely different dimension, too strange by this reality's standards to be accepted. To her, he is a vague shape, a guiding hand, a voice she cannot understand. Together, they are backlit by the afternoon sun as they shuffle into the woods.

The Treasures of My Name

By Annie Losinke

I am Anna-banana, the sun coming out tomorrow. I have the sweet inside music of the orphan girl, but I never had the loneliness she did in life. The feeling in the pit of your stomach when you know it will be a party of one. No, my family's loving arms are always around me. They teach me never to give up on what I believe in.

My grandmother was the one they named me after. Anna. Over time it softened into Annie. I'm told I have my grandma's intellect and her positive view of things in life.

She was Anna Augusta. I am more simple, Anna Katherine. It can sound a bit stuffy, but I enjoy the formal ring of it too. The importance those words carry.

A name can consist of only a few letters but hold so much more hidden meaning and underlying secrets. Like a buried treasure.



Megan Woodward

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The Gas Station of Doom

By Annie Losinske

Morgan Wesley and her daughter Paige were on their way home from a four day stay at Aunt Peggy's house in Moylan, Indiana. The drive home was bound to be a long and treacherous one. Paige was not one to sit still and this ride home was about six hours. Morgan was just praying that everything would go well. They set out at about 9:30 AM after approximately twenty minutes of goodbyes. It was one of those hot sticky days when the morning dew seems to linger long past its welcome. Morgan could tell that this was going to turn out to be a long day.

After about two hours in the car, and about eighteen rounds of "I Spy", Paige had had enough. For the past two hours all they had seen was plains, tall grass, and a few cows. This was surely not enough to keep a six-year-old busy. Then the dreaded words came, "Mommy, I need to go potty."

Morgan had not seen a building for the last forty-five minutes or so. She knew this could not be a good sign. Oddly enough, within five minutes, she spotted an old 7-Eleven. She quickly signaled and pulled in. The windows had a musky yellow tint and the gas pumps looked like they hadn't been used in decades. Morgan thought it will have to do. When they walk in, the only person there is a boy, about twenty four, sitting behind the counter. The boy has thick glasses and a sweaty forehead. Morgan asks where the restroom is.

"Head to 'da back, first door on 'da right."

"Paige, you head back there and I'm going to get us some snacks."

Paige nods her head in agreement and shuffles to the back of the store. Morgan begins to ponder the assortment of candy bars.

After about seven minutes, Morgan begins to get a little worried. So, she wanders toward the bathroom door. She knocks twice but gets no response. She jiggles door handle and it opens easily. Morgan stands in shock for a moment. There is no bathroom. The door leads out into the back lot of the store. She yells for Paige, but is interrupted by the sound of a car starting up. She peers around the corner and sees Paige inside this strange truck while it is speeding away. She had always heard stories of kidnapping. People would leave their children carelessly when there are in unfamiliar situations. She had always secretly pledged to herself that this would not happen to her. She sees now that she should have made that promise a little louder.

The Link

By Andrew Sisulak

I am but one part of the System,
I did not choose this,
But somehow I am free,

We have no choices,
No brains,
No bodies,

No possessions....

We are united,
As such,
I am linked with all,
Our pain,
Our joy,
Our life,
All one,

I did not believe,
I was artificial,
Style mattered,
But what is
That which is molded from shadows

So I profess,
Stand strong,
As one,
Souls together,
Arms linked,
All equal
And no earth shall move under your feet



Karly Pearson

Untitled

Anonymous

Everyday, I feel like I'm in a hard competition for love against all these people. A competition for attention, which in my mind demonstrates love. I'm always so afraid that he loves her more than me, that he would rather laugh with her than be with me, that he would rather spend time with her than with me. Does he even see all of this that he is putting me through by choosing to hang out with her over me? I put myself in a competition, and try to beat her at everything for his attention. I put myself in a competition to win his heart like a pathetic game. I put myself in a competition against her to try and show how much I love him. By the end of the race, I figure out that it was just me all along, competing against myself, and worrying about losing the whole time, when I should have been thinking about how to win his heart and not about losing my own useless competition. I realize that the only person I'm competing against is myself And the only person I'm making it hard for is myself. There is no competition; it's just the obstacles I'm making myself jump over

and crawl under. By the end of the day it's just me against me. But by morning, the pointless but very dramatic heart stabbing-real competition starts all over again until I remember I'm competing myself for the attention of the one I love. It's me against me... fighting for attention.

Queen Bee

Mallory Zimmermen

It was a low noise that caught her ear.
Something quiet and menacing in the distance.

The streets were empty. They spanned below the steel trees of a concrete jungle at precise right angles to each other. Every so often a large pileup would clog the road and she would turn back. There was no way to become confusedly lost there, just horribly misplaced in the seemingly endless white noise of past destruction.

The days of fighting for pride were over. The days of fighting for life had yet to start.

The low noise came again. It sounded distinctly like a growl but she dismissed it. There were no animals here. Even the sky-rat pigeons had blown the coop during the last weeks. Perhaps a door with un-oiled hinges groaned into the silence. Perhaps...

Perhaps her lonely footsteps were waking the dead.

But that was silly-talk. She was the only one to see the dead grey of the future nobody wanted to realize. What would the dead want to wake for? There was nothing left...

A line from a movie occurred to her then. *You are a lord among insects*. Indeed, she appeared to be. A Queen among the dead; the highest being for miles around; with her throne of twisted metal and crown of glass shards.

They were all dead now. Every. Last. One. The heaviness of the thought weighed on her although it all seemed very unreal. Just another horror movie in high definition, VERY high definition.

The woman watched the low cloud of oily black smoke rise in the distance. Why she, out of millions, had been spared to wander inside America's giant shrapnel wound was a question for the heavens. She really didn't care. It was enough that she had to sleep in the dead silence, much less wonder *why*. Why was a stupid question to ask when there was nobody to answer.

Something crashed with the light, chime-like rain of glass. Her head snapped sharply towards the sound. Bright blue eyes widened. A hank of matted, unwashed hair hung down in front of them. She didn't bother pushing it away as she bolted down the next street.

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Another low growling noise. Most definitely closer. Her feet flew over the upset wrinkles of cement. The street was broken and jagged. The toe of her sneaker caught on a chunk of rubble and soon the actions of her body and feet switched places. *She* was flying, falling, landing, crashing. Her palms scraped along the uneven ground. Soon they would be oily with blood, but that was a far way from her panicked mind. For a moment she felt almost mouse-like, small and cowering in a hostile world of secret fearful wonders.

She twisted around to scan her surroundings frantically. Silence and desolation. No apparent threat. No walking dead, no vengeful beings, no little green men in tinfoil suits. The woman stood slowly, shaking and nearly weeping with emotional strain. She simultaneously scolded herself for paranoia and comforted herself as best she could. A low crackling of fire comforted her as the white noise of radio static sometimes did. She crossed her arms below her breasts and cupped her elbows. She stepped forward to leave and—

—Cold hands gripped her throat and pulled her backwards. She fell into a pulse-less mass of growling flesh, feeling the ripping as her hot blood rushed down her chest—

—Her eyes shot open. For a moment all was dark and comfortless. Slowly the grayness of the new old world drifted in and shot through in fuzzy images. A garbage can overturned and dented on one side. A newspaper fluttering in the listless breeze. Her palms throbbed lowly, as did her neck. She looked down at the raw red scrapes and felt a stab of sick déjà vu. She told herself her neck was roasting in slow, warm pain from sleeping on the cold ground in a heap. She told herself she fell and knocked herself out. She told herself there were going to be others, *alive* others. She told herself she was not alone in this ongoing nightmare of threadbare sanity.

All in all, she told herself a lot of things.

Slowly, the confused woman, now shaking anew, let her bruised fingertips brush the flesh of her neck. Her throat was puffed horribly with swelling, probably covered in dark bruises to boot. Her heart caught in her windpipe and made it hard to breath.

She rose up shakily onto her feet. She was at a dead-end of wrecked cars and tumbled brick. Slowly the woman turned, afraid to twist her head too far in case it should bother the thick tube of swelled flesh that collared her throat.

They stood dim and silent in the grey day. They stared with their glazed white marbles of eyes. Even those missing one or both of the aforementioned orbs still watched her through wide dark sockets. They made a solid semicircle around her. She screamed harshly, but they remained impassive. Some cocked their heads

off to one side like listening dogs.

The woman knew they were zombies. They didn't look like Hollywood zombies, not in the least bit. They were pale of flesh and gone of mind, yes...but they looked too intelligent to be hunting flesh and brains. At least...not her flesh and brains. She stood with her fear draining, horribly embarrassed because she was certain she'd just wet herself. With a sick bit of compassion she noticed that some appeared to be holding hands.

They watched her without a glimmer in their lifeless eyes (or lack thereof), and she saw her place in this new old world.

Queen bee. Queen of the damned. With throne of twisted metal and crown of broken glass. Lord among insects.

She looked over their heads (apparently even zombies needed one because there appeared to be no decapitated creatures around) at the destruction of the city. They turned, slowly at first, and soon they were all looking towards the hazy horizon.

The woman swallowed the lump that had risen high into her throat (her constricted neck sang in pain as she did) and stepped into their ranks.

It was only right.

They were dead people...

That wanted a place in a dead world.



Megan Woodward



Megan Woodward

Help

By Alex Wank

The soldier ducked behind the door. Bullets instantly ravaged the walls. He had been caught off guard; his best friend killed the day before by a roadside bomb. The soldier heard a shrill cry and peeked into the room. Dead Iraqi's lay with a man standing over them. The man saluted the soldier and vanished.

Strike Three

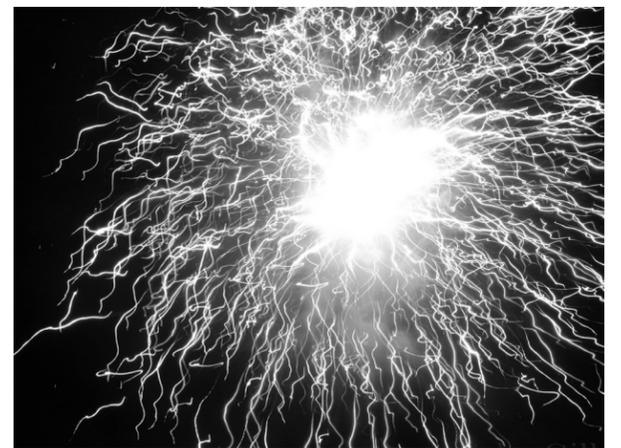
Rachel Kellicute

The end of the battle had come. It was one on one, and I was in control. I planned to do it in three shots. I let the first two explode, both times slicing the edge of my anticipated target. One more would do it. The final shot was flawless. It was the perfect victory.

The End

Rachel Kellicut

Smoke filled the streets. My eyes stung and cried tears of irritation that seemed to be infinite. Blackened faces huddled together in corners. Bodies sprawled along street corners. Occasional screams could be heard, but no one took any notice. Building burned and crumbled with each agonizing step I took. It was the end of the world.



John Gill



Michelle Manthey

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Untitled
Rachel Kellicut

I clench the crimson rose in my bare hand.
I don't even flinch as the thorns dig deep
into my flesh. Looking down I realize my
hand matches the deep red color of the
rose petals. Over time the cuts will turn into
scars. Each scar taking away one that lies
on my heart.



Brad Gundrum



Michelle Manthey



Britnee Brauer

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Eclectic Soup Announces Winners

Eclectic Soup, AHS Literary Magazine, would like to thank everyone who has submitted their pieces of creativity over the 2007-2008 school year.

Listed are the winners from this year:

Cover: 1st Maggie Knoebel 2nd Kendall Koepke 3rd Amanda Kuehn 4th Niki Fischer

Story: 1st Alex Wank 2nd Lily Grace

Art: 1st Andrew Lindenberg 2nd Kelsy Allard

Photo: 1st Megan Woodward 2nd Britnee Brauer

Poem: 1st Elliot Jungbluth 2nd Matt Axberg

A special thanks also to the Editors Michelle Manthey, Mallory Zimmermann and Natalie Wasilczuk.

Writers

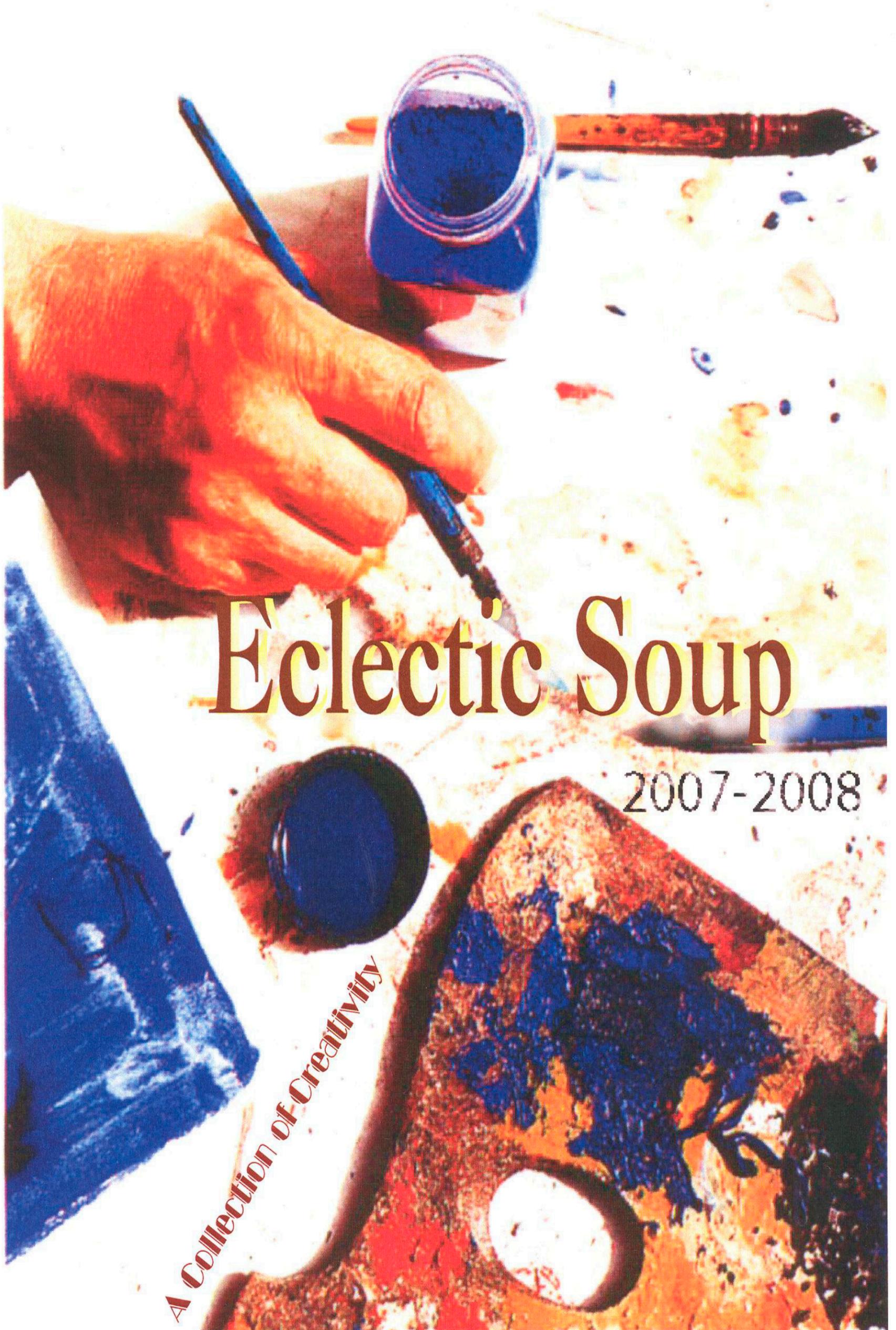
Candace Mallory
Matthew Axberg
Zach Trepanier
Natalie Wasilczuk
Andrew Sisulak
Shelby Brehmer
Shelley Grosch
Anna Quint
Alex Wank
Karly Pearson
Brienne Becke
Grace Collura
Andy Dix
Elliot Junbluth
Aaron Gnas
Kayla Herrea
Amanda Mendyk
Kevin A. Manthey
David Haddix
Lily Grace
Kelsey Allard
Melissa Sikora
Annie Losinske

Artist

Megan Woodward
Britnee Brauer
Andrew Lindenberg
Valerie Van Tussi
Michelle Manthey
Kelsey Allard
Mallory Zimmermann
Joh Gill Brad Gundrum
Kalli Kruger
Karly Pearson

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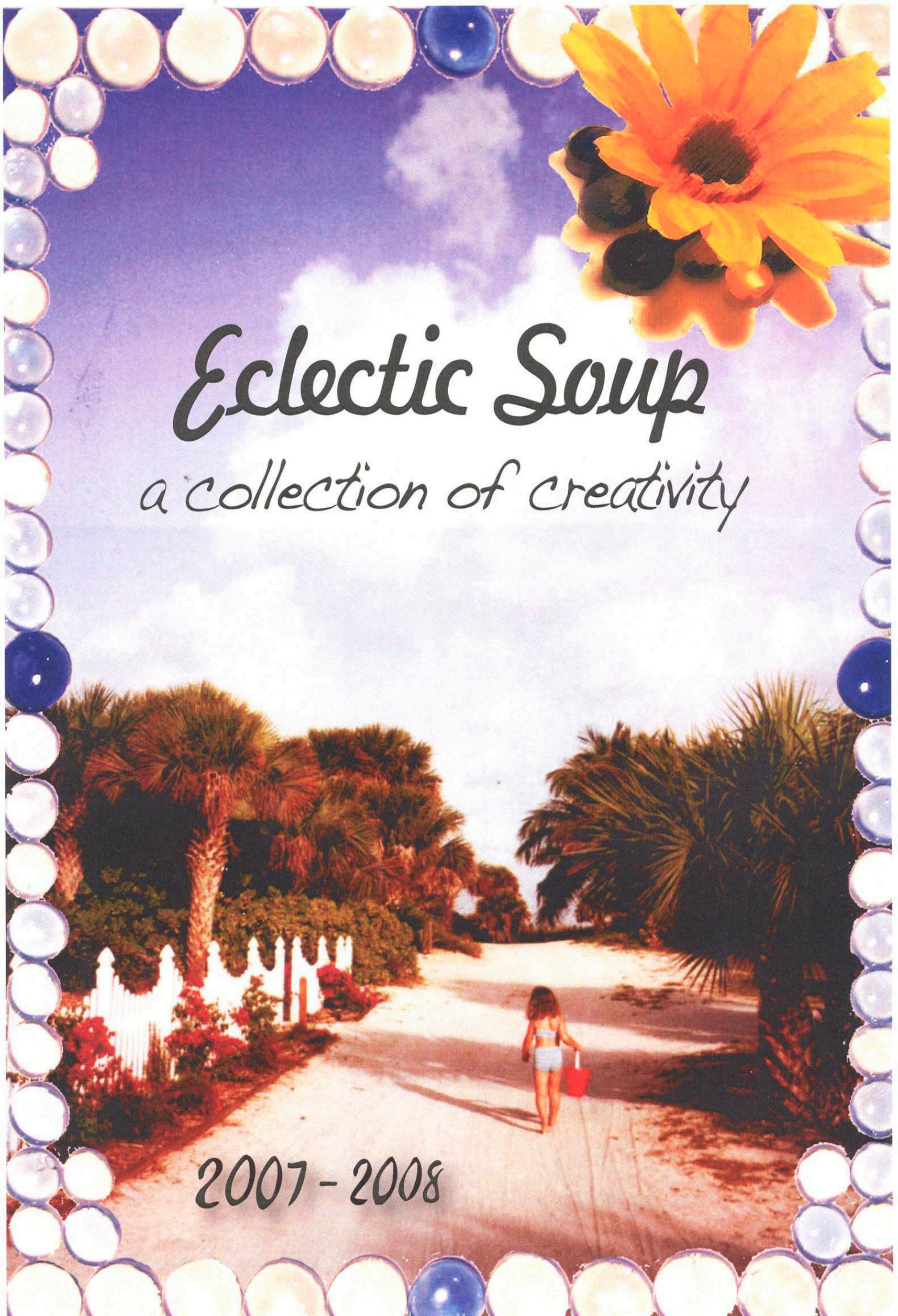
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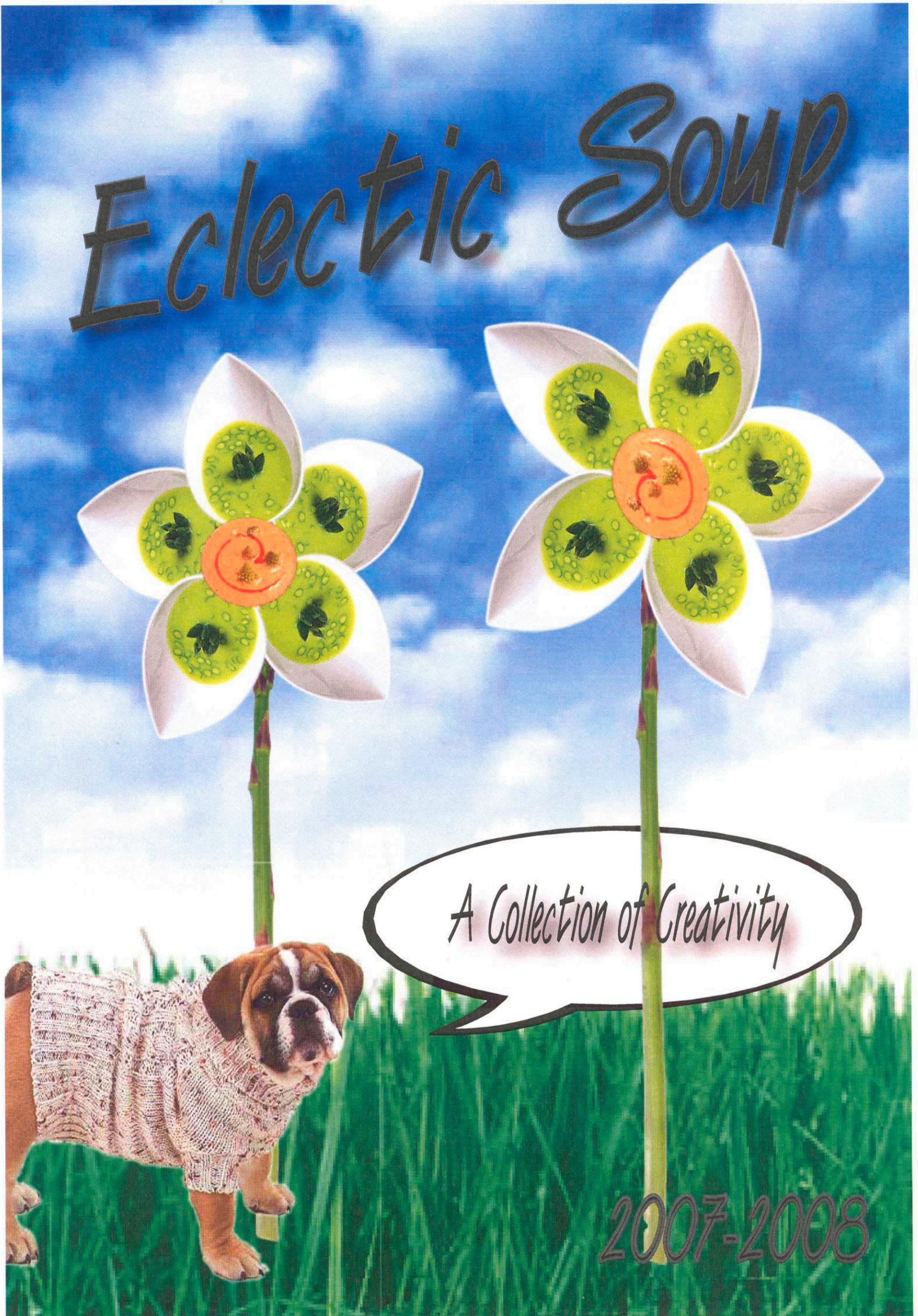
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