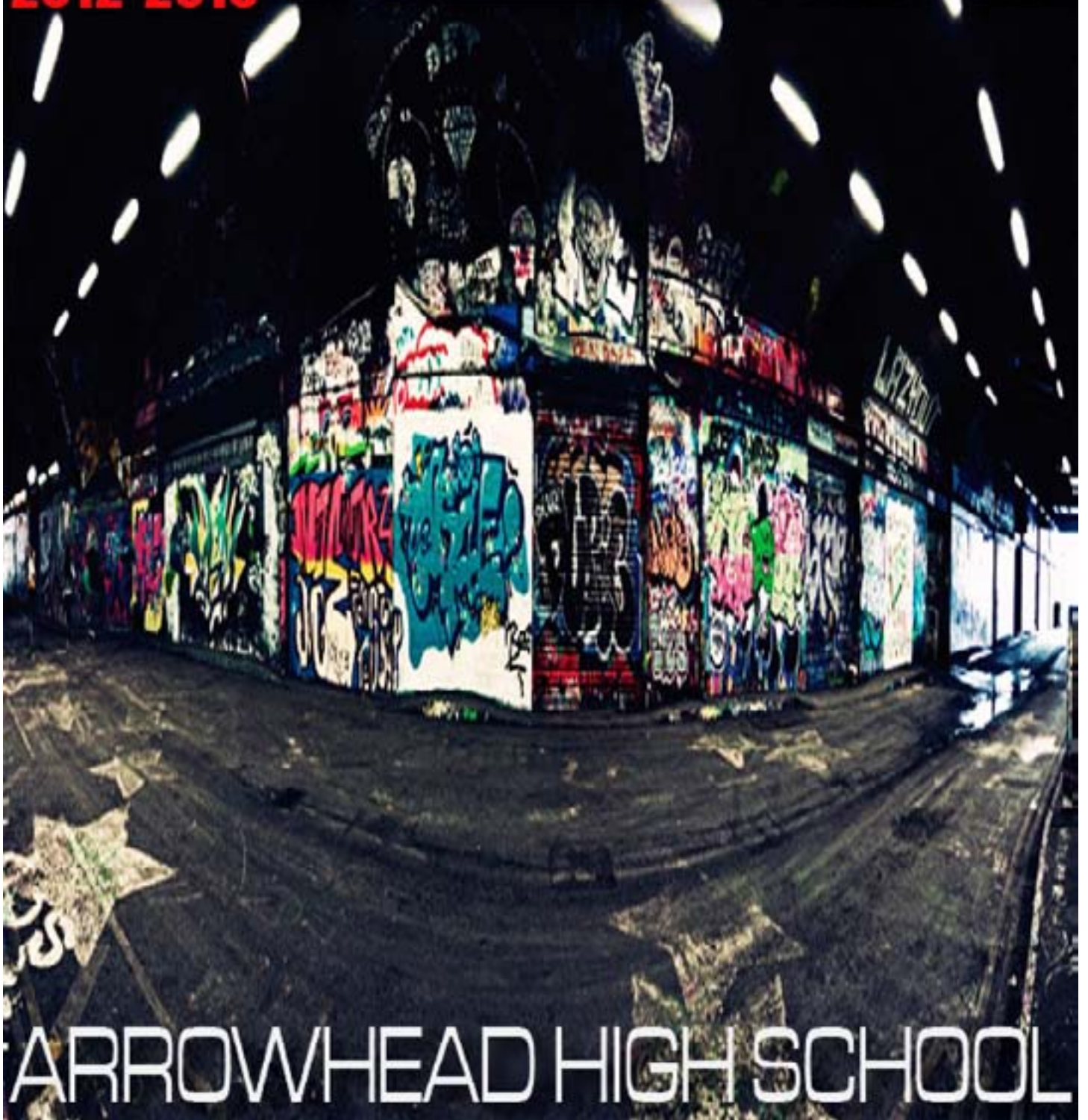


UNDERGROUND

2012-2013 COLLECTIONS



ARROWHEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Mt. Zion
By Jessi Brzeznski

Ahead of me is a makeshift cross held upright by rocks. Is this it? Answered by the sound of bulky packs thumping into the snow. I am here.

Ascending treacherous Mt. Zion brought rough terrain, ten-hour climbs, and insufficient rest. Unaccustomed to fifty pounds on my back, my body ached. Each step I took pain scorched my lower body.

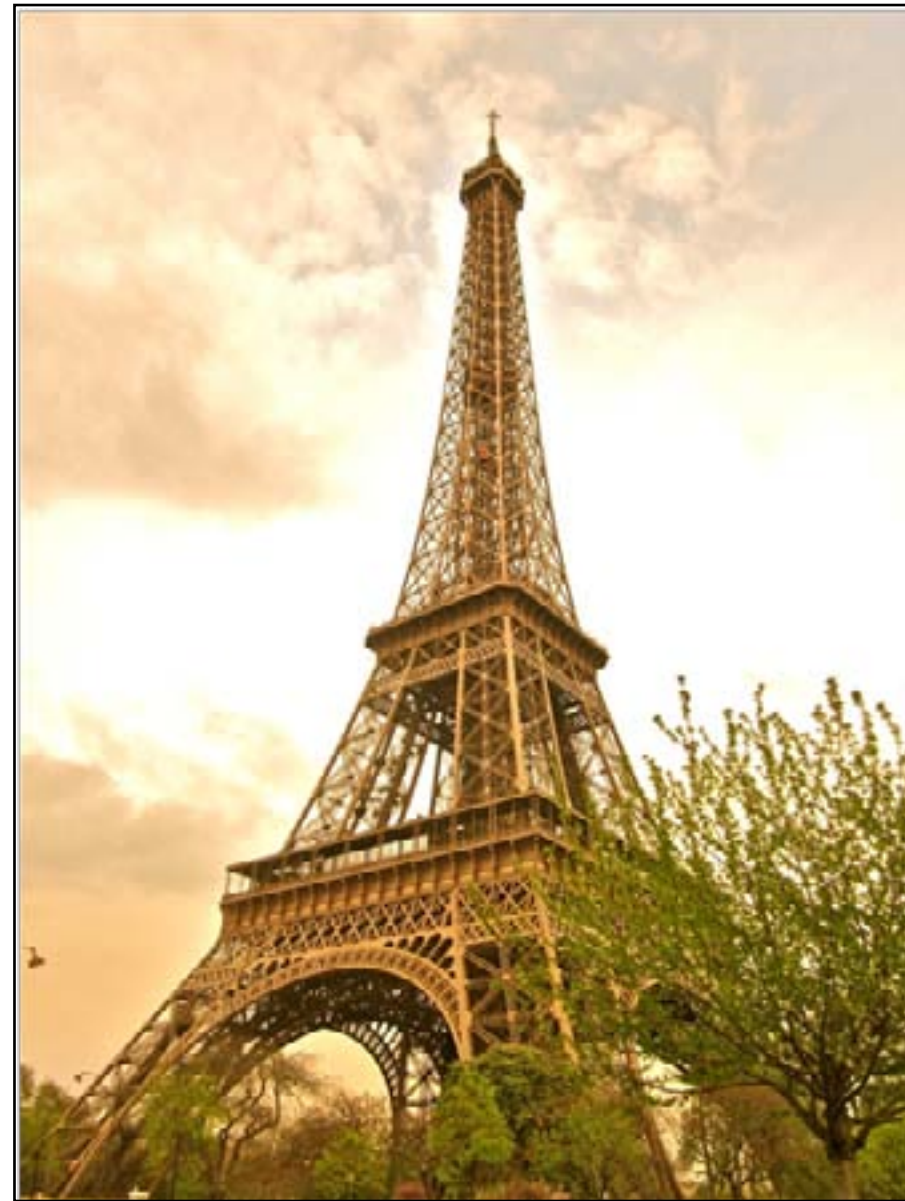
Concluding the first day, my hips were bruised, legs torn, and ego destroyed.

Day two: the Yasher Forest. Monstrous trees collapsed at my feet, I search for the sky but all I discover are countless treetops. A wall of dirt is before me- it seems to go on for eternity. Using my stamina I grab onto the vicious mountain and hoist myself up. My palms, pierced with pricks, my body pleads with me to quit. Hours later, I squint my eyes and peer ahead: white, sparkling, glowing, snow. Filled with unfamiliar hope, I will summit.

Don't you dare look down. I do. Below me is a sea of white, if I fall there is nothing to catch me. I stumble. My vision blurs, hands trembling, I forget to breathe. Knowing without my ice axe, right now I would be cascading down Zion. Repeating my mantra several times, I am focused, I climb on.

Summit day. The white in front of my eyes startles me. Clouds and fog creates a strenuous journey. Impatience grows inside me; the sun will be setting soon. Before long, I see the cross. The simple wooden cross barley held together by a bandana on top of Zion is a memory that will never be erased. The instant I saw it a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment raced through me. I'm here.

Standing under the vast red-orange sun, I am insignificant. On top of tremendous Mt. Zion, I am minuscule. My surroundings overwhelm me, what's more astounding—I got myself there. Ascending Mt. Zion made me want to scream, "I give up!" But the gratification I experienced on the summit is my reminder to persist and be focused.



"Spring Greens and French Scenes" Paris France 2012
Madison Rowe



"Spring Greens and French Scenes" Paris France 2012
Madison Rowe

The Wall
By Lucy Brandenburg

No matter what I did, I never impressed anyone. The grades were never good enough, the clothes I wore weren't expensive enough, and I wasn't pretty enough. But a smile still remained on my face. My friends weren't my real friends anymore, and my relationships were a disaster. He never said I love you, not once. He got his way with all my friends, and he broke my heart. The foundation of the wall began to deteriorate, and so did my hopes of being perfect. Every day, brick by brick, I crumbled. There was no trust. I had no one. He ruined me. Including every relationship I would have from then on. I was never able to open up to anyone. I was barely the strong wall everyone once knew. I was broken and falling apart.

I built up tough, high walls to shelter me from all the pain. That way, no one could hurt me anymore. Then I started not being able to say I love you. I couldn't open my heart up to anyone. But then, one day I met him. He was different. He was nice. I fell for him, and he tore all my walls down. My heart was raw and exposed. But this time, my heart wasn't crushed. Somehow, he manages to tell me I'm beautiful every day. I can be good enough. He tore down my protective walls and built me back up. I know he won't break my heart.

Untitled
By Kaitlin Stoner

Rubber slapping pavement,
Rhythmic, echoing solitude,
Limbs straining, fighting,
Heavy against each stride.
Lungs grasping,
Frantic for brief relief,
Vibrant heart deep,
Tireless in task.

Blood rushing,
Breath steaming,
Muscles rippling,
Life so fully alive.
Whole shrieking in silent agony,
Pleading the expiration,
Yet, so alive, so alive.

Then a fall,
So soon, too soon,
For a life so fully alive,
Blood rushing,
Breath catching,
An agony redefined,
Pleading the salvation,
Yet, declined, declined.

Gray in all seen,
And cold in all touched,
Silence echoes silence,
With never a word to peace.

The heart lies forever,
In its vibrant congeal,
Tireless it remains,
Though its motion is still.

A body there is left,
Lying of its former self,
Missing the impossible truth,
Of a life so fully alive.

Autumn
By Jesse Lee

The opening credits finish rolling as the camera zooms in on a boy. His confidence swells. His happiness blooms. He approaches a girl named Autumn. It's ironic that fall happens to be Jesse's favorite season, which describes his lust for this girl. It's difficult to see, but he's broken: his heart is shattered from a lost love.

She whispers, "I love you." Time stops. All that's heard is his heart beating nervously.

"I love her, but I can't go through this again," Jesse screams to his friend through the bathroom glass hovering over the sink. All of his life, Jesse has had a deep seeded hatred for this friend through the glass, so he ignores his warnings. Furious, he yells again, "no one will get hurt!"

Autumn leaves fall and things turn cold. Autumn's eyes are filled with contradiction and confusion. She steps toward him. He steps away. Jesse doesn't feel right, it is winter—it's cloudy and makes him sick.

"Hello... She, she what?" The phone drops. Time stops. All that's heard is his heart beating miserably. Standing in front of his worst enemy, through the bathroom glass, he cries. She tried to end winter early. Under his tears he mumbles, "I find I miss fall more than ever before." the screen goes black.

"Spring Greens and French Scenes" Paris France 2012
Madison Rowe



Alone

Annie Lindenburg

He looked around at the space, studying the cracked tree and the sound of water slapping rocks. It smelled fresh, like grass and rain and life.

"I used to come here when I was little," she smiled, her face raised up towards the sun and her eyes closed as she soaked it in.

"When?"

"When I wanted to get away from them all," she looked at him.

"When they forgot I even existed."

"Why did you stop?" he asked her.

She smiled sadly, only half of her grin reaching up towards the sky.

"Because I realized no one ever came after me."

A Paradox

Grant Smits

The darkened leaves of Autumn crunched beneath the walking feet. Overhead, the tall trees swayed from side to side in a constant rhythm. All was silent save for the short, shallow breaths coming from the man who walked upon the leaves.

The man stopped short. He had been walking along the path in the woods, as he always did, but suddenly felt dizzy. A strong sense of Déjà vu hit him. Something like this had happened before, he was sure of it. But when? It was like trying to remember a long forgotten dream. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, remembering what he had been doing.

He had been walking home from work. Right? Or was it from the store? Or was he walking to work? His eyes flew open. Where was he? The woods around him seemed suddenly unfamiliar. He turned in a circle. Where was he? What was his name? How old was he, what did he look like, where was he from, what was he doing!? Details that he had known moments ago fluttered from his grasp, leaving only emptiness in their wake. He let out a frustrated yell that rang through the empty woods, and sank to the ground.

Who knows how long he sat there, but eventually he stood. Not knowing from where he came, he picked a direction and started walking.

As he was coming over a small hill in the path, he stopped once again. The path before him lay flat for what seemed to be several miles. Ahead of him, far enough away to seem like but a small speck, a figure stood, facing the opposite direction. The man was about to call out, but decided against it. As he watched, the figure turned to its left and sprinted into the woods. At the same time, the man heard a yell from behind him. He whirled around excitedly, listening the mysterious voice echo into nothingness. Perhaps somebody was searching for him, he thought with hope.

The man was torn with indecision. He had only heard the shout that came behind him, and his mind already seemed to be playing tricks on him. But he had actually seen the figure ahead. Why had it run off into the forest? Perhaps it knew a way out, or perhaps it was in the same predicament as he. He made his decision and turned, running in the direction of the figure.

He ran in silence, hearing only the crunch of leaves and the beating of his own heart. The small wind had died and the trees were now still, like the calm before a thunderstorm. The little bit of sky that peeked between the branches was dark gray.

When he reached the place that the figure had turned into the woods from, he stopped to catch his breath. The woods to his left seemed thick and unruly, but he could see bent branches from where the figure had run. Taking a deep breath, he plunged into the trees.

Branches whipped at him like angry hornets and leaves attached themselves to his hair as he ran. For what seemed like eternity, he was blinded by the thick brush. But after a few seconds he crashed into openness once more, tumbling to the ground.

He had reached another, much more worn path. It snaked through the woods, eventually taking a sharp turn to the left and disappearing into the trees. He spotted footsteps on the path, which must have been from the one he was pursuing. He followed them.

Only a few minutes after following the depressions in the ground, he began to hear the sound of moving water somewhere ahead. Eventually he came to an opening in the wood, next to a flowing river. Kneeling next to the water was the figure that he had seen earlier. He quickly crouched down and went behind a thicket of bushes, unsure whether the figure would be friendly or not.

The person was gazing intently into the water. As the man slowly moved, his foot came down onto a branch, snapping it loudly. The figure looked up at the area the man was hidden behind. The man got a good look at what the mysterious personage looked like, but the figure did not spot him. After several moments, the figure got up and ran into the river, splashing through the water onto the other side and disappearing into the woods once more.

The man let out a sigh of relief and stood. He walked over to the water, where the person had been. Crouching down, he looked into the creek to see what the figure had been gazing at. But all that stared back at him was his own reflection. Excitedly, the man tried to make out his features. After several seconds, he let out a yell and fell back.

The face that had stared back at him from the water looked exactly like the one that he had just seen on the mysterious figure moments ago. He felt a pounding in his head and reeled back. He couldn't comprehend what was going on.

Returning to the water, he confirm what had been seen. Once again, the face of the figure stared back at him.

As he was looking, he heard a sudden sound to his left. His head snapped to where the noise had come from and he searched for a source, his heart pounding. After several moments he decided that it was his mind once again playing tricks on him.

He decided that he would follow the figure and try to catch him, to discover what was going on. He stood and dashed into the river. The water was numbingly cold, but he barely noticed it. On the other side of the river, the path continued into the woods. He followed it, sprinting as fast as he could to try to catch up to the figure. But his mind was elsewhere, and he didn't noticed the steep drop off.

His feet were in empty space before he realized what had happened. Soon gravity played its part and he fell, hitting the steep, leaf covered slope. His momentum continued and he tumbled down, spinning wildly, trees flashing in and out of his blurred vision. At the end of the hill was a sheer drop for many feet, leading into some kind of small valley with a river flowing through it. He saw this and splayed out his arms and legs in a vain attempt to stop his motion. His fingers clutched at empty air uselessly. It was too late though, he was going too fast. His eyes closed halfway in a part acceptance of his doom.

He felt his legs leave the ground first, followed by the rest of his body. For several moments the air howled in his ears as he was in a sort of free fall. It was almost enjoyable, he thought to himself. Then there was a sickening crunch and all went black.

The darkened leaves of Autumn crunched beneath the walking feet. Overhead, the tall trees swayed from side to side in a constant rhythm. All was silent save for the short, shallow breaths coming from the man who walked upon the leaves.

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The End



Blurry Sunset
Ruth Lied

Four Skinny Trees

Killian Markworth

They are the only ones that can captivate me. I am one of few who explore them. Two eternal rivers with cool water and endless changes. Two who last forever. Two crossing marvels that will and have been forever. From where ever we are we hear them, but not everybody listens.

Their power is known. They race gallons every second. They take life, drowning and crushing, and give life, supplying home and hydration. This is how they last.

Long after one is forgotten they roar like lions, each with its own dangers. Rush, rush, rush, rivers do when I wish. They continue.

When you and I are long gone and our names have been said for the last time, the rivers will continue. When there is nothing left that we remember. Two who could not be tamed. Two who have seen many things come and go. Two whose only constant is eternal being.



Collage
Mason Stich

The Runner
Gretchen Berg

It's difficult to explain the joy and satisfaction I get from running because some days I question it myself. One day might hurt more than the next, but that doesn't mean I don't still do it. The adrenaline and impatience I feel at the beginning of each race is too much to give up. I stand on the white starting line, with my left pointer finger on the start button of my watch.

The atmosphere around me is silent. There's a light breeze and the ache in my stomach. The gun goes off. Hundreds of girls fight for that varsity spot. After a minor panic attack, I get into my rhythm and think about my race plan. I hear the sound of spikes across the grass. Nearing the 800-meter mark, I hear my mother. She yells, "Go Gretchen!" That's me. The runner.

I hear my name a few more times during the race. My sister screams, my dad embarrasses me, and my friends know exactly what to say. I feel a sense of accomplishment and use it to push me further past that new level of pain that comes with every race. The likelihood is low of another Gretchen in the race. Without looking, I know they are cheering just for me. The runner.

My friends and family think I'm crazy, when we go up north together and I come back sweating at 8:30 a.m. they ask me, "how do you do it?" I brush off the question and smile shyly. But in my head I'm thinking, dedication. Years of practice. Running every day. I hit a wall at the two mile mark and I think about how fast all the pain I feel would disappear if I stopped now. But everyone knows I don't give up that easily. After all, I am Gretchen.



Purple Stars
Tori Larson

College Essay
Maria Pejvach

My physical body at rest, my head floods with memories, and two people come to mind. My imagination creates the setting: drinking morning coffee. My grandfather approaches me, and my cousin is balancing three coffee mugs in one hand.

As I'm sitting there, astonished and fascinated I ask myself, how am I with them?

My grandfather immediately answers my question, "My dear, grandchild. We are both here to help answer all the questions in your life that remain unanswered."

What questions are unanswered? We sit in silence. I keep asking myself that same question. And conclusively, I realize all my questions are unanswered.

My mind brought me to my grandfather and cousin because their lives were cut short. My grandfather had a heart attack. My cousin was hit by a car. They have no more questions—they are in a place where they know the answers.

They are here to help me.

Being presented with all the answers in life, I start to ask superficial questions: "What will my grades be? Will I get into college? Will I have a family?" As I wait for answers—which they said they would give me—I get silence.

Maybe they are lying...

"Maria, we are here to help you understand the meaning of life. We are here to give you answers to the questions you cannot get answered yourself. In time, you will be able to answer all those questions on your own," my grandfather says.

Hmm...That makes sense. But, what's a "life" question? My cousin George quickly says, "My life was ended, Maria. What sixteen-year-old boy thinks he'll get hit by a car? None. What grandfather thinks he'll never meet his grandkids? None. You have a whole life ahead of you and we are here to guide you."

Questions flood my mind. "Grandpa, how is grandma always smiling with a life filled with grief? George, how can your death be a lesson? How does our entire family remain strong?"

"You are given one life. You have proved yourself to be a smart, passionate, and friendly person. But the next step is to put those characteristics into action. Your grandmother smiles because she has hope, that we will meet again one day," says grandfather.

"My death is a lesson because it shows others how strong you are, Maria. When my accident occurred, you did not stop your life. Instead, you unknowingly showed others how to be strong, keep smiling, and always look forward," says George.

"Our family remains sturdy because of these life lessons. You need to take the characteristics you developed through your life and place them into action. Now is the time to show people who you are, what you are capable of, and how you will overcome obstacles," they say in unison.

My arm flails, my head tells me to wake up, and the new day comes to mind. My "dream"—if that's what is was—overwhelms me. And then, I ask myself, what will I do today? as if it's my last day.



Boats
Madison Rowe



Pathway to Heaven
Madison Rowe

Name Piece
Sam Fredman

"I'm sorry, I have some bad news..." My heart sank. What was wrong with me? After a series of tests, I found out. The suspense is killing me. What do I have? Will I be okay?

"The condition you have is called Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, or JRA." Silence.

"Is it treatable?"

"Of course, however, you may need to stop playing sports if we see any decline in your health."

Silence. Tears.

Sports and competition shape my life, how could I just stop? That might be necessary if I wanted to become healthy. The doctor prescribed me a steroid and I revisited one month later. And at that appointment, my future would be determined...

If I can't play sports, what do I do? Do I become the manager? Maybe I'll join Broadway Company. I could always find something else to participate in, besides sports aren't everything.

Wrong. Maybe to others sports aren't everything, but to me sports are everything. I have played sports almost my entire life. Without them, I am not Sam Fredman.

In less than 10 minutes, my life could be altered forever. Scared. That's the only emotion I felt.

The doctor marched in. He opened his mouth. "Good news, so far, you seem to have a minor case of JRA". I felt some relief. For now, I could continue to live, play sports, and to enjoy life everyday not having that thought stored in my head that I am sick. No one can tell I have this disease. My symptoms are under control. I can compete and even excel. That's what I want.

Falling
Matthew Custer

I'm going to fall
Off this ledge
Don't push me
I'm on the edge

Looking down
think I can see
everyone
look up at me

and as they do
they start to shout
they say to jump
I have no doubt

And while standing
eighty high
I think of life
after I die

would anyone
be sad at all
would they care
after I fall?

Does my life
mean anything
I doubt it now
but it's hard to think

My body wavers
in the breeze
I almost fall
but stop with ease

Staring down
onto the street
I lean forward
but it seems so steep

Never in life
have I thought
that the asphalt
could seem so soft

Just like a pillow
waiting for me
to catch my fall
send me to sleep

I choose to jump
and so I fall
and while falling
I lose it all

I hear the words
inside my head
to try and talk me
out of death

But it's too late
I am almost there
falling, falling
as they stare

I try to stop
reach all around
grab only air
and then, the ground.

Blank White Sheets

By Brenda E. Suhan

Blank white sheets, fresh.
Crisp and crackling faster than the flip of a new bestseller.
A pile of thousands of crumpled, yellowed sheets in the corner
Smoldering and blackening from the edges in.
Ebony ink gliding across a clean page,
Delicately dotting I's, carefully crossing T's.
It will be flawless this time around, she says to herself
As she concentrates gold flecked bag laden eyes
Alight with the reflection of the orange flame to her right,
Lips pursed, brow furrowed,
Her unwashed brown locks disheveled in a nest above her head,
Pieces branching down her neck and face.

She knows it's useless,
Knows that she can't erase or burn or tear the pages to pieces.
But she tries – oh, she tries.
The ink bleeds, infecting the paper with a dark, black mark.
Her lips split to release a shout of hopeless exasperation,
Her lithe fingers shred the sheet in two, three, four. Five. Six. Seven.
There it goes, kindling in the pile. Scorched.

Yet another blank white sheet stares back at her in the glow of the newly ignited flame,
But she can't keep lying to herself, can't keep this up.
Her face shifts from frustration to calm determination,
Pushing back the chair, standing up, turning to her right, and floating to the corner
She grasps the glass of water still on the table to her left, inverts it,
And drizzles it over the flame in a continuous spiral.
The room dims, drip by drip by drip
Until the room blurs with the navy sky between the window panes.
She sighs, lifts her head, and strides off to bed
The soundest slumber she's ever had.
And when she awakes to a neat stack of blank white sheets
Her eyes light up with a smile.

My Beloved

Taylor Rummel

Bewitchingly beautiful
With luscious red lips,
A waterfall of gold curls,
and eyes the color of a chameleon
always changing and full of warmth.

In her elegant black gown
She is forever lovely,
Relentlessly energetic,
My precious little china doll.

I yearn to be with her
As I desire her so.
She is forever my beloved,
My one,
My only.



Rainbow in a Can
Marshall Stich

Amsterdam

Haley McCullough

On a cold night in Amsterdam,
he had no interest in leaving.
He willed potent, cryptic signs in
provocative blue eyes- you could
not see him perform without feeling
chaos and utter brilliance.
There are more love hours that can
ever be repaid- could a
cheeky man have anything profound
to say? The question is this- is
home a motif that threads through him?
Few were interested in looking
closely at evidence of
something so significant, but
he knew of no omen of love.

Time

Brenda Suhan

Time
escaped
us, as we sat in the
cozy cafe,
two friends
sharing sweet lattes
and
bittersweet
memories,
neither of us wanting to
leave.



Frog Feet

Tori Larson

Sitting

Payton Salick

Sitting
in a room so
dull
and
white,
I look
at the clock
for
when
the bell rings
so I can soar
and
spread
my
wings.

Midnight Messiah

CJ Seocanac

Oh prophet so wise, doomsayer so bold,
What have you to tell me this hallowed night?
Of the future you say, come in from th' cold.
Keep warm by the hearth and share thy foresight.
You speak of demon eyes and dragon's teeth,
What seeds of conflict and vice hath been sown?
What you tell me now is what lies beneath.
When your life has been borrowed and time loaned,
Not untortured is th' soul from th' world released.
With my spirit scorched by a brazen sun,
I travel far from th' plains of Paradise.
Along the River Styx to Erebus,
Passed the Reaper's sprawl, through Hell's blackened ice.
To valleys of ash and lakes of fire,
A nightmare granted by fool's desire.

Empty Spaces
Annie Lindenberg

"Code red. Evacuation has become necessary. Gather your belongings and follow the appropriate protocols. Code red. Evacuation has become..." the emotionless voice echoed around the halls, bouncing off and turning around corners and never ceasing. It was clear and deafening, piercing a path through the silence.

"Oh god, can you please turn that stupid thing off?" she roared. Her fierce tone and powerful, fluent strides commanded authority, making it clear she was not someone to be messed with. He followed obediently behind, not out of fear or responsibility, simply because this is how it had been for what felt like forever.

Where else did he have to go?

"It's been going for two years straight, you really think it would still be on if someone knew how to turn it off?" he replied.

"I don't think it's really been a priority, but I can't listen to it for another second. Can you please just go into the control room and try to turn it off? The blueprints say it's just around the corner," she requested, but the tone of her voice made it clear it was more of a demand than a request.

"Wait, what was that word you used? The one with the p at the beginning of it? I don't think I've ever heard that one before."

"Shut up and go do it or I'll leave you here. You need me a lot more than I need you," she retorted.

"Harsh," he mumbled, moving in the direction of the control room.

The girl continued on her path purposefully and stealthily. Her uncontrollable strawberry blonde hair whipped out behind her as it broke from the ponytail that never seemed to be able to hold it in and her footsteps only made miniscule clicks against the ground. She counted the room numbers up to herself, tapping her fingers together to a silent beat. It was funny how easy it was to get everything that had seemed so locked up and unattainable before. Medicine, food, cars...now everything was available at one's fingertips if you just knew how to take it.

That was, everything tangible. Family? Friends? Love? All those things were impossible now. You couldn't just break into a building or threaten someone and acquire them. It required time and patience, something the girl barely had anymore. Those intangible things that she had been taught "made life great" were too hard to create and, from what she had learned, so very easily destroyed. Having a life and living, she had found, were two very different things.

All of a sudden the strident voice disappeared and silence quickly entered the empty space it had left. The girl's ears seemed to instantly calm and she let out an appreciative sigh. The right door number seemed to suddenly appear and she slipped in quickly, a sudden spurt of joy at the simplicity of the job taking her over. It was a simple job to start out with, medicine, food, clothing...gather whatever they could. She had shown a sudden interest in sugar, and he hadn't argued. He rarely did.

The moonlight seemed to dance through the window and shine down on her. She preferred night trips so she had the blanket of darkness to help hide them, but the moon tonight had been an unexpected hindrance. Their plans had already been concrete so they had no choice, even if it had started her night out on a bad note. The beauty of it all made her happy for some reason, and, though she very rarely allowed it, she let the satisfaction take over.

Footsteps echoed off the walls as they moved closer to her. If the girl hadn't been so focused on her brief happiness from the food supplies that laid before her, she would have noticed that they weren't as light as Liam's. They stomped and clanked, making short, bulky strides when he made elongated ones. He would have said something before then, announcing his presence jovially, but she didn't notice. She shoved the sugar into her bag and called back happily.

"Liam, I knew there was a reason I kept you around," she spoke harshly simply out of habit. They both knew he was around for more than his affinity with electronics.

"Florence," his voice responded, but it wasn't joking or light. It held a sort of defeat that scared her as she put down the bag she held quickly and turned around, grabbing the gun from the back of her jeans.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, sweetheart," a thunderous voice urged, looking at her with a slimy look that made her shiver. Florence held the gun up anyway, aimed straight at his head. "Why not? I can get off a clean shot," she spoke with a heavy sense of pride. "I am very good with a gun."

"Maybe, but do you think you can shoot me before I shoot him?" he questioned, lifting the gun that had been pointed at his back up to the side of his head for emphasis. Florence looked on emotionless, but inside her insides churned and her heart beat rapidly. She moved the gun down to her side and made a point of putting it down on the table next to her.

"Good girl," he declared.

"What do you want?" she spoke tightly.

"What did you do with the weapons? Hand them over and no one gets hurt, darling."

"We don't know anything about any weapons," Liam exclaimed.

"Shut up!" the man yelled, hitting the side of Liam's head with the gun. Liam groaned slightly but didn't say another word.

"We just came for sugar," she confirmed.

"Yea, right." He chortled. "Why in the world would someone just come for sugar?"

"It's his birthday in two days, I wanted to make him a cake," Florence pleaded.

"You did?" Liam blurted.

"Are you serious? How sweet, you've gone freakin' domestic," the man claimed, a disgust oozing from his voice.

"Just let him go, we'll leave and never look back."

"You see, that's easier said than done, because I don't quite believe you. There has been some rumors going around that the cure for death, the formula, it's hidden somewhere around this area."

"Trust me, if I had known that a bunch of immortality-seeking freaks were coming around here, we would have been states away."

"So, you're on that side of the war? Another reason to hate you..." he trailed off with a greasy smile.

"No, you see, you're wrong, because we aren't part of this war. You freaks started it and you freaks can end it, but I don't want any of it," she spoke, her voice rising in ferocity and volume as she continued on. "Now, you better let go of my friend and let us go because I am starting to get very angry. My patience has worn incredibly thin and I don't think you want to see me blow up."

"I'd listen to her," Liam whispered.

"SHUT UP!" the man yelled. In the second that the man rose his voice, his grip loosened slightly and Liam stepped on his foot with all of his strength and whipped his head back, aiming straight for his nose.

The man squealed from the unexpected attack and stepped backward, giving Florence just enough time to launch herself at him, wrestling the gun out of the man's grip. They fell to the ground in a tangle of limbs, rolling around on the floor. The man was very clearly stronger than Florence, but she had more heart, more angst, more pure hate as she tried to get the gun away and out of his hands.

Bang.

A gunshot flew through the air and Florence looked at their hands. The shot had most definitely not come from this gun, she would have felt it, but she looked up in the doorway to see a short and stout blonde with a twisted grin on her face.

Where had the shot gone? Florence suddenly realized. Her head whipped up and she looked for Liam, needing him to be ok, to not be hurt, to not be gone. The reality hit her all at once as her eyes met his from his place on the ground, clutching his chest. "Florence," he breathed out quietly, his eyes wide and terrified.

"Liam!" she cried, abandoning the bulky man with a gun, ignoring the blonde in the doorway, and making her way over to him. She clutched at his body, trying to see the wound and fix it, but she knew there was no hope. The woman knew what she was doing, the only reason she hadn't gotten a clean shot was probably a purposeful decision.

"Sorry," he groaned.

Florence stopped her endeavors and moved over to his head, putting it into her lap as she blinked to stop the tears that welled in her eyes. Her hands brushed the hair out of his eyes as she gave a teary smile. "Why would you be sorry?"

"My...fault," he groaned out.

"Shh, don't worry about it," she spoke, smiling down at him as the tears slid down her cheeks. "Just focus on staying with me, ok? I need you. I was lying before, you know, when I said you needed me more than I needed you. I need you so much more, please don't leave," she pleaded.

"I'm sorry," he choked out.

"Don't be sorry, just, just...I love you, ok? Don't leave me because I love you and I need you and I don't want to be here without you, do you understand me? Please? Please."

A smile stretched across Liam's face, a large, goofy smile that stretched from ear to ear. It shined brighter than the sun and was more beautiful than the moon. "I love you, too," he said.

Florence choked, grabbing his hand desperately as a sob escaped her throat. "Liam, just..." she began, but she was halted as his breathing stopped and his eyes closed, his body becoming motionless. "LIAM! NO, please, no," she pleaded, clinging onto his body and letting out a wail that sounded primitive, almost animalistic in nature.

Tremors took over her body, the seconds that passed feeling like milleniums as she waited until her breathing got under control. Florence waited for the emptiness that filled her gut to disappear, but she knew this was a silly notion. Carefully, she kissed Liam on the cheek one final time before letting go of his body and standing up slowly as she covertly grabbed the gun off the table.

"You have made a very stupid mistake," she spoke quietly through clenched teeth. The terrifying nature of her voice came from the lack of volume; the true terror was in the emotionless strength that her voice held.

"And why is that, sweetheart?" he questioned, a macabre twinkle in his eyes as he gave a side-glance to the blonde in the corner.

She pushed her shoulders back and let out a quiet chuckle to herself. If the man was capable of feeling guilt anymore, he might have realized the girl in front of him had become a broken human being just from a single bullet, but his smile just widened at her listless eyes.

Her voice rang clear and emotionless through the silence.

"You just made a soldier of me."

Two more bangs pierced through the air and then the silence reigned once more.



Larger than Life
Mason Stich



Untitled
Lindsey Budde

You Can't
Haley McCullough

You can't listen
You can't see beyond this
You can't stop fighting
You are selfish
You fight yourself and us
You don't want to be here
You and me both, baby

But you're selfish
You are mean
You will leave, eventually.

I'm not surprised.

Refugee
Brenda E. Suhan

Flapping my wings through
the wispy white fog -
snipping across like a cat's yarn,
untangling this chaos.

A nebulous sky gleams crimson beneath
the setting sun,
my ivory wings stained
as I dive down beneath the canopy
in pursuit of my escape.

Peaceful Reflections
Marshal Stich



Wisconsin winters
Diya Ramanathan

Snowflakes swirl through leafless trees
Floating in the frigid breeze
Childrens' cheeks are aglow
While rolling through the fallen snow

Mitten-covered hands press snow into balls
And create battle forts with strong, icy walls
Children lie down, wave their arms all
around
Forming snow angels in the ground

Kids in sleds descend slippery slopes
Steering them on by tugging the ropes
Snowmen with buttons and a carrot nose
Stand up tall as the frosty wind blows

Not a bush or tree is lacking lights
Bringing holiday merriment to wintry nights
Yards with inflatable Santas and reindeer
Help to spread the holiday cheer

Families gather around a toasty fire
As the Christmas tree star is lifted up higher
Hot chocolate with marshmallows up till
the rim
Fills houses with warmth, right up to the
brim

Wisconsin winters mean snow and ice
Toys, treats, and everything nice
Fireplaces, lights, games, and rest
Without a doubt, they're surely the best



Silent Sage
Paige Kohrs-Herwig
Scratch Board Drawing

Insomniac
Brenda E. Suhan

Droplets reflecting the moonlight dribble down
my bare cheeks, spreading steadily in dark ripples
Onto the plum pillowcase.
My mind drifts to you at this midnight hour
as your cobalt eyes pierce my thoughts,
and silence seeping through the sheets
suffocates my heart.

"One of us will get hurt."
I brushed off your worry as lightly as you kissed my lips.
Because I believed in you,
I believed in us.
I believed in love.

But now I'm lying awake
searching the ceiling for an answer,
a comforting ritual of insomnia.
But all I find are whirling memories of
You and Me,
a ghost that empties my heart and mind,
a phantom I cling to out of fear -
all that I have left to embrace anymore,
a lone echo in the silence.



Threshold
Tori Larson



Brides Boquet
Kimberly Cornell

My Sea
Tori Larson

Every day I make a journey for the basic needs of survival, and for the enlightenment of my soul. My only constant companion is the waves, whom toss me here and there. It's alright with me, though, for nothing is more reliable than my sea.

My sea drowns out the doubts and failures of the past, ever-moving, pushing me forward. Lurching to and fro, it never brings me down. My sea never takes me out further than I can handle. It keeps me always in sight of my home near the shore.

Though my friends change with these tides, my sea is the same. It will take me where I belong, and to where I need to be. My loving sea carries my dreams to the shores to share with the places of the world.

Each morning, the sun streams in ripples to my eyes, wakening me slowly, and never rushing me. My gentle sea. Through the day, though the weather may change, underneath the surface, my sea never changes on me. Though thunder and hurricanes rage above, my wonderful sea would never hurt me.

Be it frigid or humid, my sea lets me float along. The songs and choruses swell with the tides. Humming me home, my sweet sea, provides a constant melody, taking me on journeys through the world. Show me the wonders, my wise sea.

You, who have seen the ages, reject none, my accepting sea and protect all, my brave sea. You, who never backs down, have taught me courage. I'm so thankful that you have never failed me, oh, my wonderful sea, so beautiful and radiant.

Wave me along home, my warm sea. Never leave me, and I will never be afraid. Stay, my lovely sea. Never go away, and never let your waves stray. You comfort me well, wrapping your lapping arms around me, pulling me close.

And so when I look out at you, my sea, I know there is nothing bad about you. You are the purity left in this world, my innocent sea. Only you could save me this way, my sea. Only you could do all these things at once.

I yearn for your power, envy your strength, and wonder how you came to be, my timeless sea. Surviving all odds, you never give up, my strong sea. You never see my faults, never turn me away, and I never do wrong to you, my forgiving sea.

And at the end of the day, my sea sings me to sleep, with the softest melody I ever heard. My constant and stunning companion. My glorious sea.

Fair Warning
S. Micheal

Travel down Mean Street
To observe this Dirty Movie,
A child riding in a Sinner's Swing!
He will Hear About It Later
After unleashing the Unchained, ravaging hunger.

When Push Comes to Shove, the sauce sticks everywhere
Making an observer ask, "So This Is Love?"
Faithfully, he returns after every Sunday Afternoon In The Park,
Devouring ribs forcing people to place One Foot Out The Door.

Wasn't the red shirt a Fair Warning enough?

Five
S. Micheal

If I could turn back time...
I'd stare at the sand.
And run my fingers through it.
With bare feet.
The heat would flow through my bones
And remove the suffocating stench of war.
Not to be satirical, just realistic.
Hiding behind the axis.
The center of the universe?
That's the story of the hour.

William.

Listen:

Heavy
S. Micheal

Aside from integration,
The world is heavy.
Obese with people and round with nature,
Yet the only sparing part of this diet
Is heavy.
Heavier than a ton of bricks,
Heavier than many libras,
Heavier than a titanic failure.
Yet it remains lighter than a feather,
Lighter than a re,
Lighter than off-color.
Paradox?
No, the thought's heavy enough.



A Red Fourth of July
Kimberly Cornell

La Vie

Shannon Johnson

You collect virtual check marks
Like precious gems,
Waiting for that magic number that will
Never be achieved.
You see what's her status
Status update,
Status quo never changing,
Becoming another statistic.
Part of statistical analysis,
Analyzing every move
Judgment
Decision.
Do you have the will power?
The power to overcome,
Overemphasize,
Outmaneuver.

She thinks she's got ying and yang,
But really it's a twisted pretzel,
A mismatched mix up
Screaming for relief.
He speaks of blood and iron
But is he willing to pull the blade
To draw the blood
Bursting in sickly free fall
Falling from lacerations by a knife
Serrated with the evil desires,
Secret desires,
Desires too powerful for will power.

The circle of life? Yeah,
I circle life round and round,
My head swimming with
memories, emotions.
Like tasting raw meat,
Life circles me in a pungent mess,
Waiting for creativity to overflow.
The brain neurons flowing with electric energy,
Ecstatic with life's experiences.
Eccentricity following the
Burst through a boundary
Known only as a comfort zone.
Zones gated off, walls built;
Torn down.
Personalities perpetuating
Inner circles as
I circle life.
Cutting through the old lady's garden,
Breathing the air of rebellion and reason,
Reasoning this is only a phase.
Writing my own story,
Stories without sequence or theme,
Themes without sequential beginnings,
Dancing in the infallible climax,
Peering over the edge of that mountain, heart racing.
As Smash says "Falling through the sky."

Not falling, but flying.
The wind taking me where I want to go
Need to go.
Society pulling me down but still I remain aloft,
Flying high.
Sorry Aladdin, I don't need carpets.
I make my own magic and ride on clouds –
Grey balls of diamond mist,
Reflecting my hopes and dreams.
Dreams become a reality,
Reality blurs to imaginary,
Imagination takes me to the clouds, and my
Circle of life continues.

"Nants ingonyama bagithi baba."
Yes I do see the lion,
But I need a magnifying glass to
Check my problems.
God is good to me, so good,
Yet I keep messing up,
Throwing it away with the tide.
Stop and smell the roses they say,
But first he's gotta find the roses.
Instead he's in the desert,
Eating sand for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, gritting his teeth.
Teeth grit in response to the wind,
To life hurled across the artificial dunes,
Toppling with one foul.
Foul smells permeate the air,
Scorch his lungs,
Suck the life like Dementors but we ain't got no wands.
They say don't waste time but
Time stands still, moves
Backwards on the number line into the
Fourth dimension, sucked in by the vacuum in space,
Cleaning up the mess you left behind.



The Lion's Yawn
Tori Larson

Behind the gates you see yellow grass,
Maybe you got the green stuff.
Contradiction leads to consistent confusion,
Fusing two thoughts,
Thinking the fuse will light the fireworks that
Explode in your mind.
Distant footsteps fade like the dye from my jeans.
Cash runs down the river,
Trying to keep up with the evil that
Runs alongside.
Try and diagnose me and you won't find
Anything but a ball of light,
Bursting from the seams right there.
It doesn't matter where, but the joy blossoms like the roses
He stopped to smell.
Embracing the elated love of life,
Life spinning around in my head like a top,
A top always spinning,
Speculating on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
Pursuing something great,
Greatness beyond reasonable doubt.
Theories proven,
Disproven,
Changing with the colors of the wind.
We like the woods too Pocahontas.
Scream and shout,
Push and pull.
They say opposites attract,
But the only attraction I'm feeling is the force of nature,
The plus signs of our relationship
Act as darts,
Piercing my heart.
Pinning it down immovable,
But that's how you like it.
Afraid to run free.
Leaping leprechauns spread luck,
But the pot at the end of the rainbow is
Empty.
Instead its used to make soup,
And luck vanishes like the early morning mist.
Teardrops of the fog are like tsunamis to Gulliver,
But he doesn't mind.
Grand adventures breed curiosity
Even though the cat died.
Your metallic smile reflects back your
Warped idea of life.
You float by while the rest of us feels the
Earth between our toes.
The earth turns and we turn with it.
You think you can stop the turning, stop gravity.
I say go ahead with Elphaba and "Defy Gravity."
Give a new definition
To restriction.
Ride the ocean til you reach the end
Then go back again.
My back hurts under the stress,
But the experience hurts much worse,
Weathering in the incessant turmoil,
Non-stop tragedy they call life.
But is it really a tragedy?
She says, "Oh, what a tragedy!"
But the worst she's seen is her
Favorite shirt still full priced.
What's lacking is exposure,
A new world view is in order, and
I'm ordering it now.
Now is the time to make real change,
Instead of making suck up cookies for your teacher,
Who should teach what needs to be learned,
And learn only what matters because the rest will disappear
Like dark matter.

I want the recipe for success,
'cuz right now my cake tastes bitter,
The measuring cups must be messed up,
Broken by my hatred.
Greed.
Pride.
I have suffered defeat.
I know the pain,
Anguish.
The feeling when the expected is
Turned upside down,
Inverted to a new reality.
Actuality becoming more and more like
The fallacies found in fairytales.
My life consumed by the evil deeds of the wicked witch,
Wishing I could make up for my actions,
Even though my actions
Define me,
Describe me,
Differentiate me and I'm not talking derivatives.
It might be that who I am is
One big mathematical equation, and if
I could just simplify it I would be free.
But you can't simplify me.
All the little pieces make up who I truly am.
The only way I can be liberated is through the truth, as my
Drooping eyelids question this truth.
Fatigue sweeps though my body like a
Bolt of lightning,
Coursing through my veins,
Seeking out the last drop of golden spark that gave me
Vitality.
As vivid memories gradually diminish, I am left with
Nothing but the here and now,
My mind altered only by current circumstances,
Events of the present.
Presently the light at the end of the tunnel gets nearer,
Until I step out of the tunnel and into the sunshine.
Sunlight greets me enthusiastically with the pulses of
Golden energy.
Energizing me,
Invigorating me,
Preparing me for the unknown.



Three Word Project
Mason Stich



Adopt an Artist
Mason Stich

Before the Star Fell
Laura Schiller

The small collections carefully assembles paintings
 Drawings of a history of his charming self
 But not fully repeated with a familiar landscape
 The exaggerated possibilities become his companion
 Before the elegant start fell for this adventurous artist
 He was searching freely for a pretty, fine treasure
 A daring sense of a superheated instrument
 He carefully assembled moments
 The shadowed cures of the body
 Suggested the intense feeling
 Allowing the riches of fascinating transformation
 He celebrated in the selection of his new canvas
 But an artist expands and challenges traditional values
 Elsewhere with the girl feeling pale
 All of them remind us,
 Evoke just a gaze daring to crash
 Before darkness fell
 Before the star fell
 Before we desire an artist of our own

Let Me Be

Haley McCullough

Caress my cheek with your rough hand,
 Your eyes the color of mine.
 I keep waiting, waiting for my pulse to land
 Waiting for some kind of sign
 That you are okay, that this is a bump
 In the road of being fine,
 In my throat a lump
 Too big to ignore now.
 I do not condone these memories,
 I do not want to remember.
 But here they have kept with me
 A year later, but you've got her.
 You touch her as you touched me.
 A gross reminder of your needs,
 About how self full you can be,
 And how far into it I had read.
 I know you-knew you- inside and out,
 At least I thought I did.
 Lies are just your only clout
 And that of myself I have rid.
 Except the memories, those will
 Unfortunately stay close by me
 Forever more and still
 Now you are in my -let me be!



Untitled
Hannah Kearny

Untitled
Hannah Kearny



5

"Things do not change; we change." -- Henry David Thoreau
 S. Micheal

Classical theory can span generations,
 Remaining constant along the way,
 Yet experiences define our nature
 Or so Mr. Watson used to say.

I can't believe it's happening,
 This unlikely roll of the dice.
 Somehow we managed to succeed
 Despite all the helpful advice.

Institutions still decide the fate
 Of each and every flaw
 Presented clearly in black and white.
 They're laying down the law.

One formulaic correspondence
 Is simply all that we need
 To alter a nation instantly
 Putting people in the lead.

But what good does any name do
 When nearly no one pretends to care?
 Who thought that 11 inches
 Could create a ridiculous air?

Sometimes I lay and wonder
 If people can really change.
 According to an Ivan,
 There appears to be a range.

One ventured into the pine woods
 Hoping to be set free
 Transplanted by the quietest friends:
 The cabin and the trees.

Does there exist a people on Earth
 That can adapt to be
 An ally instead of enemy
 To our future? We'll see.

Perfect
Rachel Bartelosn

She runs and flips, and twists and lands. It's the closest thing to flying, she thinks. As she leaps and spins around the blue floor, four pairs of finicky eyes centralize solely on her and her performance. Her name doesn't matter. When she is being judged, she is just another athlete striving for perfection. But she isn't perfect. Close, but not perfect.

Practice hurts. Her mind and her body ache from hours of training. The goal—that non-existent perfection. She runs and flips and twists and falls. She tries again. Again. And again. Flying isn't much fun anymore. Defying gravity isn't easy. Her hands torn, her ankles taped, and her shoulders stiff. Still, it is expected that she practices.

Her name suggests she is a dreamer, an idealist. She knows dreams mean nothing without pursuit. Her entire life she has been chasing her dream—to grasp perfection. But perfection doesn't come in a day. It doesn't come in a year. It hasn't come in fourteen years. Occasionally, she catches a glimpse of it. It's closer than it was yesterday. Still, it's like shooting for moon, except if she misses, she won't land daintily on a star. It's discouraging. Frightening.

There are times when she thinks she can't do it anymore. The practicing and the judging. It demands excessive amounts of her energy, her time, her motivation. It would be so much easier just to say that she has had enough, that she is done. Yes, she is done. It's no longer worth the effort. But then something happens, as it has countless times before. She sees the eyes of a little girl, much like her own many years ago. Eyefull of hope, admiration, and marvel—eyes that see perfection.



Untitled
Paige Kohrs

Caught in the Moment
Maggie Schoenecker

A little boy was sitting on the curb with a sign in front of him. I was caught in the middle of a dilemma;
Should I give him money or keep driving?
The next day, I drove past the spot where he was sitting; he wasn't there anymore. Driving away, I had peace of mind.

An escape
Cassandra Gregorie

A place you can get lost in
A whole new world waiting for you to explore it.
New friends waiting to meet you.
Where this is no judgement, no hate.
Only a place where peace is found.

Trapped in a book

A place where you can be anyone.
A daring knight, or a spell-casting wizard.
A place, where you can be yourself.
A place, where nothing can harm you.
A place where you are always safe.
A place, your place forevermore.

In my arms

In my arms, is where you'll always be.
Where no one and nothing can harm you.
Stay here, stay with me.
Stay at my side and let me protect you.
Let me love you and show you.
Show you, how life is.
How it's cold and cruel,
But in my arms, life's safe and sound.

My Name Piece
Anastasia Pjevach

My one true love is food. It comes from my ethnicity—Greek. From that day my nana crossed the raging Pacific, I was changed. Her cooking is beyond incredible. And when she bakes native Greek foods, it really is to die for.

Spanakopita. Although I'm not particularly fond of this type, it tops Greek culture—a true classic. Whenever my nana makes it, she forces me to try it. Every. Single. Time. Already knowing it's the same bad taste, I continue to eat. Similar to spanakopita, sometimes, I'm required to do something I loathe. But swallowing the slimy leaves, the taste soon disappears.

Cheese pita. The cottage cheese creates an odd texture and becomes distinct in my mouth. It makes a statement. But I'm not one to make a statement—I don't see myself as popular, rich, or well-known. Instead, I'm a band nerd, the girl lugging her instrument case all around school and the one who has a chance to be popular, but, chooses to be a geek.

Apple pita. Sweet apples and cinnamon cover my taste buds. My comfort food. But a thought pops into my head. Is there ever a place where I don't feel at home? Most times, I make friends wherever I go. Whether I'm at a random bonfire, or hundreds of miles from home, I can strike up a conversation with ease.

I think back to the pitas. With each comes a trait I keep in the back of my mind—each one a trait I'm inspired by daily. Although my nana will not be around forever, the pitas will be, along with the lessons I've learned. Willpower. Originality. Adaptability.

This is War
Kim Cornell

A screech of red blisters the moon,
Underneath tree bark is a dark, swirling doom.
If you jump to the future, you'll sink in the ruins.
Hope hides away in the flight of every bird.
The friend of blue is somewhere amidst the grass.
The sounds of the stars shriek above the canopy.
If you attempt to flee this place, the flakes under your toes may go up in flames.
This time is a howl, a squeal...

Bitter entwined in a white world, a dangerous sneer



A Wavy Night
By Madison Rowe

Just One More
By Jared Bostrom

Suddenly gasping for breath. I make a last effort to stay as I am. Smack! The earth crumbles beneath my feet. Everything's black, what is this place? Where am I? I wake up in a different room. How did I get here? Millions of thoughts rushing through my head. I've felt this way before.

One month. Exactly how long since the last time this happened. Playing hockey is a rough sport I guess. How many hits can a guy take before he falls? For me it took just one. Bashed against the boards I first lose my bearing; then the world slips away as I collide between glass and pad. I wake up in the locker room, team huddled round, I can't think straight. I've felt this way before.

Two weeks. It's the championship game. Nerves spiraling up my body, head to toe, I'm flushed with fear. This is the most important game. My coach gives an inspiring speech and all of us head to the rink. The puck gets dropped. I race to the boards to retrieve it and help score an early goal. I get hit. I drop to my knees. I clench my stomach, my head ringing as if struck with a boulder. I start skating back to the bench. Black. I wake up in the personal trainers office, ice pack on my burning head. I've felt this way before.

Five days. I'm in practice. Just a little friendly completion between teammates. A pickup game erupts at the end of the practice. I'm skating with the puck. Full steam ahead straight for the goal. I see my friend coming at me, preparing to lay on a hit. I quickly try to maneuver. My footing is lost. My friend has no idea. He hits me. I go flying into the boards and hit the ground. It felt like nothing more than going to sleep. It's the first time it's happened. A concussion. What I didn't know was there was more to come.

Name Piece
Kenny Finco

In Canada, he's a legend. He's a four time Grey Cup champion—the Canadian Super Bowl—and a CFL Hall of Famer. He even has a street named after him—Ken Ploen Way—and a book written about him—Ken Ploen: The Quiet Hero. To everyone in Canada he's a national icon and a superstar. But to me, he's Grandpa Kenny. And I'm just lucky enough to share the same first name with him.

My parents wanted to name me Kenny right from the start. They must've had a vision that I would turn out like him. Just like my grandpa. I'm a quiet man who loves to play sports and fish. We're both hard workers that get what we earn. And we even have the same body type: 6' 2", 175 pounds. My grandpa is a wise old man who gives good advice—especially when it comes to fishing. The best advice he has given while fishing me is "be patient and they'll bite." But this advice doesn't only apply to fishing, this advice can be used for anything. Be patient and good things will come.

The only thing that is different between the two of us is that he's famous in Canada and well... I'm not. Not yet, anyway. One time I went out to eat with him. We sat down and within a few seconds there was a little boy coming up to him with a pen and napkin asking for his autograph. The little boy says, "Mr. Ploen can I have your autograph?" My grandpa said, "You sure can."

And so he signed the napkin and the little boy scampered back to his dad with the biggest, brightest smile.

Grandpa Kenny, the quiet hero. Maybe one day I'll turn out to be as successful as he was. But for now, all I can do is work hard, be patient, and good things will come.

Shaped by Stitches
Jackson Abresch

Trips to the emergency room were familiar. "Accidents happen" is what they say, and that's the saying I lived by. I was a reckless child—playing often turned into an injury.

Stitches were my worst enemy. I experienced it enough. I could not endure another appearance at the E.R. But it happened...again. And it was the worst accident yet.

I remember lying on a bed in the hospital. "You're going to be okay, honey. You're fine. Hang in there," I recall my mom saying.

I'm not fine. Am I going to die? I'm going to die. This is it. I was a kid. What did I know? It was only 55 stitches on my nose. That pushed the stitches count to 85 total—all on my face. One more accident and I'd likely reach triple digits.

But, stitches are also my best friend. Rarely am I asked about my scars, which provides assurance that they are subtle.

Each accident made me tougher. Would I go back and change everything if I could? Would I be more careful? Hell no. I was a kid playing football, tag, and other games. That is what kids do. Stitches were my worst enemy, but accidents happen, and they are now my best friend. My beauty has been kept intact, for that I'm thankful. Although the trips to the E.R. were terrifying, they made me who I am today—Jackson.

Untitled
Gretchen Berg

Crossing the finish line in first place, I'm happy...until the moment my eyes look up at the clock. It wasn't enough. My time was just shy of that seventh varsity spot on the Cross Country team. My family comes to congratulate me and I force a smile. They remind me that I'd done my best that day...if only my time had been a little bit faster. Next time, I know to focus only on my individual goals and running for my team.

Math tests are back today and I have to do well. This can't be like the last one where I only got a 94%. With that score, I didn't make it up onto the board where my teacher shows the highest grades.

He's walking towards my pod, handing back tests. He drops my test faced down on my desk. I slowly inch my way towards it until my finger touches the edge. I quickly turn it over. My score is written in black letters and circled on the top: a 98. I'm happy. I studied hard, I went in for help, and I completed all the homework. My hard work finally paid off.

My teacher turns on the SMARTboard and I skim the top scores, searching for my name. One percentage point. That's all it would've taken to get my name on the board. I go back to my test, and look at the questions I got wrong. Next time, I will check over my answers thoroughly to be sure I don't make any silly mistakes.

Having strong emotions is a positive characteristic. I have come to realize that my emotions show how passionate I am. Knowing I'm capable of improvement and wanting it to be noticed, I strive to do better.

During the last few years my desire to do well, both in school and athletics, has matured. In chasing perfection, it was difficult for me to accept anything less than perfect. When I did well, I looked to others who obtained higher grades. After being fixated on the fact that nothing was ever good enough, I gradually realized my best is good enough.

Madison Essay
Maria Pevjach

The new girl. That is who I have been my entire life. I have lived in six different places. I have attended six different schools. And I have had to create a new life six times.

Every place has different people, with different perspectives. But too often each difference remains undistinguishable, negligible, even. But immersed in it, each culture experience stuck with me.

Illinois consisted of a fast paced life. People were always in a hurry to accomplish a task, even if there was no deadline. Germany exhibited the same characteristics as America, but they were executed differently. It taught me a second language, to appreciate long-standing traditions, and to be adventurous. Wisconsin showed me the harsher side of people. It is a place where I had to make the first move, where I had to talk to people, and where I had to make my name known. And South Carolina had southern hospitality. There I learned to be kind to all and listen to others opinions. I was still the new girl—but a girl of six different cultures, as well.

I attended three elementary schools, one middle school, and two high schools. Each first day was nerve-racking. Will I make friends? Will people like me? Will I find my way around the school? I took each first day as a challenge and applied the characteristics of that place to my actions. My take on this challenge worked.

I had six times to create a new life. I had the ability to make a new name for myself six different times. And after each move, I wondered, who will I be this time? That question was quickly answered. I was still me. I had taken the uniqueness from each place I had lived before and put it into action. This worked for each new life I created, but I was still the new girl.

I am a mixture of different cultures and characteristics. And it is unnoticed. From the surface, I am the new girl. Generally, these kids are timid and afraid to stand out. But this is not the case for me. I take pride in my combination of different places, people, and perspectives.



Somewhere Close
Tori Larson

Alice
Mason Stich



And The Winners Are...

Poem

Walled-in
S. Michael

“Welcome to the grand illusion”—Dennis DeYoung

A rush of activity, a return to silence.
A source of knowledge, an air of mystery.
And still the cabin remains open,
While eternity slips through the grasp.
A simple notion never seemed more complex.

While worries flourish, I'm walled-in;
Free from all distress, yet still not safe.
Why must nature create a blanket of darkness
Between allies?
And still the cabin remains open,
While eternity slips through the grasp.
A simple notion never seemed more complex.

Perhaps the possessors of primitive priorities
Can't share the fire to all.
Offering the second greatest gift vanishes
When you're the magician,
Walled-In by the air of mystery.
And still the cabin remains open,
While eternity slips through the grasp.
A simple notion never seemed more complex.

And while the lowly acorn grows,
The unchained sounds of slaughter and rats and crews
Dominate the forest,
Waiting for the oak to serve its purpose as
The one to complete the masterpiece.
And still the cabin remains open,
While eternity slips through the grasp.
A simple notion never seemed more complex.

Boston will never change though the pond will.
But what if the needle described the haystack?
It only takes one to accept the burden
To find the walled-in grand illusion
Was inside just the same.
And still the cabin remains open,
While eternity slips through the grasp.
A simple notion never seemed more complex.

Essay Name Peice

Honorable Mention

Hammers and Strings
Andrew McWilliams

I can't get the sounds of my head. It seems that these hammers and strings will forever continue to follow me around. One doesn't grow up behind the piano and not hear the ringing of eighty-eight different keys constantly in his or her head. It seems as though I was meant to play considering the name I've been given. It is as if nothing else could keep me content.

The concert hall is filled with one-hundred people or more as the judges motion for me to come forward. They say you get nervous about the things that you care about most. Which must be true considering my fingers cramp and the pulse in my neck is visible from miles away before a performance. Expectation. Will I exceed it? There is no one else to rely on. No one else to blame for failure. Should I have gone through the piece one more time? There are not many things that are as personal as playing the piano. I sit down and begin to tell my story through the eighty-eight keys.

Homerun. I knock my piece out of the park. All those hours of sitting upright with the perfect posture have finally been translated to a thunderous applause. Good thing too, because every time I try to pursue something else; I am drawn back to the piano. Just like how people either pray or brush their teeth after they wake up or before they go to bed, I play piano. It's become a healthy addiction for my mind and body.

It's an unfair fight. No use. Living in a daze of notes and pitches has become a reality. Andrew, meaning manly and strong, is only Andrew if he has the piano.

Winners Continued...

Photograph



Sparkler in the Night
Kimberly Cornell

Essay: College Essay

Red Thread of Fate
Ashley Osbourne

There is an ancient Chinese myth about the red thread of fate. The legend states that an invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstances. I have come to believe that each and every person I come in contact with was placed there, with a purpose and it is up to me to determine why. Although time goes on and faces fade, certain individuals—most of them strangers—will be instilled in my heart forever.

Deep brown eyes. Chocolate skin. Cheshire cat grin. The ICU nurse opened the giant glass doors to a girl roughly three years of age standing in her crib. She began to jump up and down with relief, as I impeded her hours of solitary confinement in the hospital. I grabbed a gown, a pair of gloves, and meticulously washed my hands before proceeding over to her bedside. Dora the Explorer played on the television and as the theme song started to play, the little girl's voice echoed down the hall. We both danced and sang—carefree from the contagious disease defining her life. Emotion: happiness.

Six pack. Baggy jeans. Dripping sweat. I handed him a 10-foot piece of smoldered wood, crumbling in my hands from the recent fire. We loaded it into our church's dump truck parked at the curb and discussed the results of yesterday's baseball game. But his sports knowledge and striking laugh didn't last for long. He told me of the bloodcurdling nights in the neighborhood, when gunshots encapsulated the darkness—taking the lives of friends and family members. Despite the tragedy, he dedicated his life to restoring the streets of Detroit. Attribute: Strength.

Leather jacket. Messy hair. Combat boots. He is prejudged by his employers, family members, and complete strangers as a piece of white trash. Each day, he orders a large salted caramel frappe. I start the espresso machine and we pick up our conversation where we left off last night. Most evenings, he talks about God, and how the Holy Spirit guided him throughout the day. I listen. He is not perfect and has made far too many mistakes. But he believes. Virtue: faith.

Happiness, strength, and faith—three traits that I value and will get me through countless obstacles. A beaming smile, a helping hand, or even a cup of coffee reminds me of how I was touched, and in return, I reciprocate them to whoever comes my way. Each person is a part of an intricate web, weaved and fashioned with care. The red thread may stretch or tangle, but will never break. Now, in my four years of college I will never come in contact with these people again, but their stories have forever changed my life.

Winners Continued...

Carpe Diem



Josh Bodnar

Thank You All!

We greatly appreciate all the amazing work submitted this year. Thanks for the support and allowing us to share your art and writing.

Judges



Tori Larson



Haley McCullough



Rosie Belson

Winners Continued...

Short Story

Choices

By Justin Schneider

"Hey sweetie," Lawrence Phillips said to Sarah as he gave her a peck on the cheek. "Shh," she whispered, smiling at him. "I just set Adam down for his nap. He had a lot of energy today. How was work?"

"Excellent! Today we finished the design for the new bank. Construction will begin in November."

"That's great! I'm so proud of you, honey. By the way, did you get the mail? I was expecting my delivery from Amazon today."

"Well, there was a package, but I don't think that it's from Amazon," replied Lawrence. "In fact, it doesn't have a return address. That's weird."

Sarah walked over, intrigued. "Let's open it!"

"Okay." Lawrence grabbed a pair of scissors and cut the tape that held the box closed. Inside, a blank screen awaited them among packing peanuts.

"What is it? Show me!" Sarah demanded curiously. As Lawrence picked the device up to present it to his wife, the display flickered on, and he nearly dropped it out of surprise.

"Careful!" exclaimed Sarah, just as a face appeared on the white screen. The face was pale and strangely emotionless. When Lawrence saw it, he was reminded of the vampires he had been frightened of as a young boy, and he felt an involuntary shudder pass through his body.

The man on the screen started to speak, barely moving his lips, yet still enunciating words sharply. "Hello Mr. and Mrs. Phillips. You do not have much time. As we speak, a SWAT team is moving in on your position. If they find you, you will be killed. If you want to survive, come to the building at the corner of Washington Avenue and Starlight Drive. This is not a joke."

Sarah was numbly standing there, as if in a dream. Lawrence called to her, then shook her. Smack! He slapped her, snapping her out of her trance. "Is this real?" she mumbled. "Could it possibly be real?"

Lawrence tried to collect his thoughts and think clearly. After a moment, he replied with forced calm, "The man said it wasn't a joke. I don't know why anyone would be after us, but even if it isn't true, it would probably be safest to go to this building he mentioned, and quickly." As he finished speaking, he heard a car screech into the driveway. "Come out now!" a voice crackled through a megaphone. "We have you surrounded!"

Lawrence responded quickly, sprinting upstairs while ordering Sarah to collect cash and food. He ran to Adam's room and took a moment to look through the open door at the sleeping child, the picture of perfection. Forcing himself to slow down and be gentle, he picked up Adam and went back downstairs.

Sarah was in the kitchen, frantically grabbing granola bars and water bottles and shoving them in a backpack. Lawrence was about to ask if she had already collected money, but a sudden explosion threw him from his feet. As he was falling, he braced his body around Adam to keep the child safe upon impact. He dimly realized that a grenade had been thrown through a window. Ears ringing, he got up and pushed Sarah forwards and out the back door while holding on to the now screaming baby. He smelled smoke; the explosion had started a fire.

They ran for the shed at the back of the yard where their old Jeep was kept, coughing from the smoke of the growing inferno. Taking a few precious seconds, he gave Adam to Sarah and put on the backpack. They slid into the front of the car and peeled out of the shed.

Lawrence drove across their backyard and their neighbor's garden to get to the nearby road that led into the highway. Although Sarah had complained about being so close to the interstate many times over the years, he couldn't have been more grateful for it then.

As they merged onto the highway, Lawrence heard the sounds of sirens behind them, and his heart sank. Sure enough, half a mile behind them at the start of the entrance ramp were two black SUV's racing towards them.

He floored the accelerator and the Jeep leaped forward, making Sarah cry out a little with surprise. She quickly recovered, and while soothing Adam, she instructed, "Take the next exit and turn right onto Washington. Starlight Drive should be two or three blocks down."

Lawrence waited until the last moment as the SUV's closed the distance between them, then yanked the wheel to the right. As they jolted onto the exit ramp, the SUV's tried to make the turn, but crashed into the side of the highway. Lawrence turned right and ran a red light as he desperately searched for the corner at Starlight Drive. He spotted it, and saw the short black building that was supposedly their sanctuary.

He slammed on the brake, and Sarah's grip on Adam tightened as her face whitened with fear. They flew out of the car and ran for the entrance. As they threw the door open, lights came on and revealed an empty room. Sarah stood there motionless as Lawrence ran to the back and searched the wall for a way to go.

The door slammed shut, and the sound echoed through the room. Lawrence tried the door, and found that it was locked. As he shook the handle, a screen previously hidden in the back wall turned on. On it was the same blank-faced man from the screen in the mail. "Good job evading the police. However, they are now threatening to bomb the city unless you surrender. They demand that only one of you lives. You choose who."

As the man finished speaking, the screen flickered off and a drawer opened beneath. When Lawrence looked at what was in it, he felt sick. "It's a gun, isn't it?" asked Sarah. He nodded stiffly, a small bob of the head.

He walked away from the drawer and threw himself at the door over and over again until he finally grabbed the gun and futilely shot at the lock. Sarah grabbed his shoulder and he almost shook her hand off, but saw the tears silently running down her face and stopped. "No, honey. I won't," he started.

"Listen to me," Sarah interrupted. "You have to shoot us. Our two lives are not worth the rest of the city." As he started to protest, she kissed him, stopping his words. He pushed her away after a moment, insisting, "I should shoot Adam and I. You should be the one to live."

"It has to be you. You have things to live for. You can get by without us."

"Not without you!" he argued. She silenced him with one last kiss, and closed his hand on the gun.

"No," he weakly protested. "I'm not strong enough! I can't..."

"You go to the gym. I think you can pull a tiny trigger," Sarah said, feigning a smile at her sick attempt at humor.

The screen turned on abruptly. "You have one minute left before they detonate the bomb," the man informed them.

Emotions coursed through Lawrence's body: anger, anguish, conflict. Inside, some final shred of will snapped. Shoulders falling, he resigned himself to the awful truth of necessity. He first turned the gun towards Adam. As his trembling finger closed on the trigger of the machine that would end his young, innocent son's life, Adam looked up at him and turned his head inquisitively. Bang!

He held back a cry, and sobs of despair and self-hatred rocking through his body. Lawrence blinked through his tears to look at his wife. Somewhere in his crazed mind he realized how ridiculous the whole situation was. If someone had told him that morning that he would shoot his wife and son later that day, he would have thought they were insane.

Sarah smiled her last smile, a small curve of her lips full of love and regret. He pulled the trigger, killing the last of his family. Bang! The screen blinked on. "Thank you for taking time to participate in our psychological experiment. Have a nice day." In disbelief, Lawrence slowly turned the gun and pulled the trigger one more time.

Winners Continued...



Boats
Ruth Lied

Photography winner: Ruth Lied for multiple outstanding photos



Leaves
Ruth Lied

Second Semester's Contest Winners...

Shame

Anjali Bejur

Make up a story.

Say it was Death
With his sharp touch
And evil eye.

Say it was love,
Come to whisk me away
To a palace in the mountains.

Say it was opportunity:
Good fortune falling into place
Like gold nuggets in a steel pan.

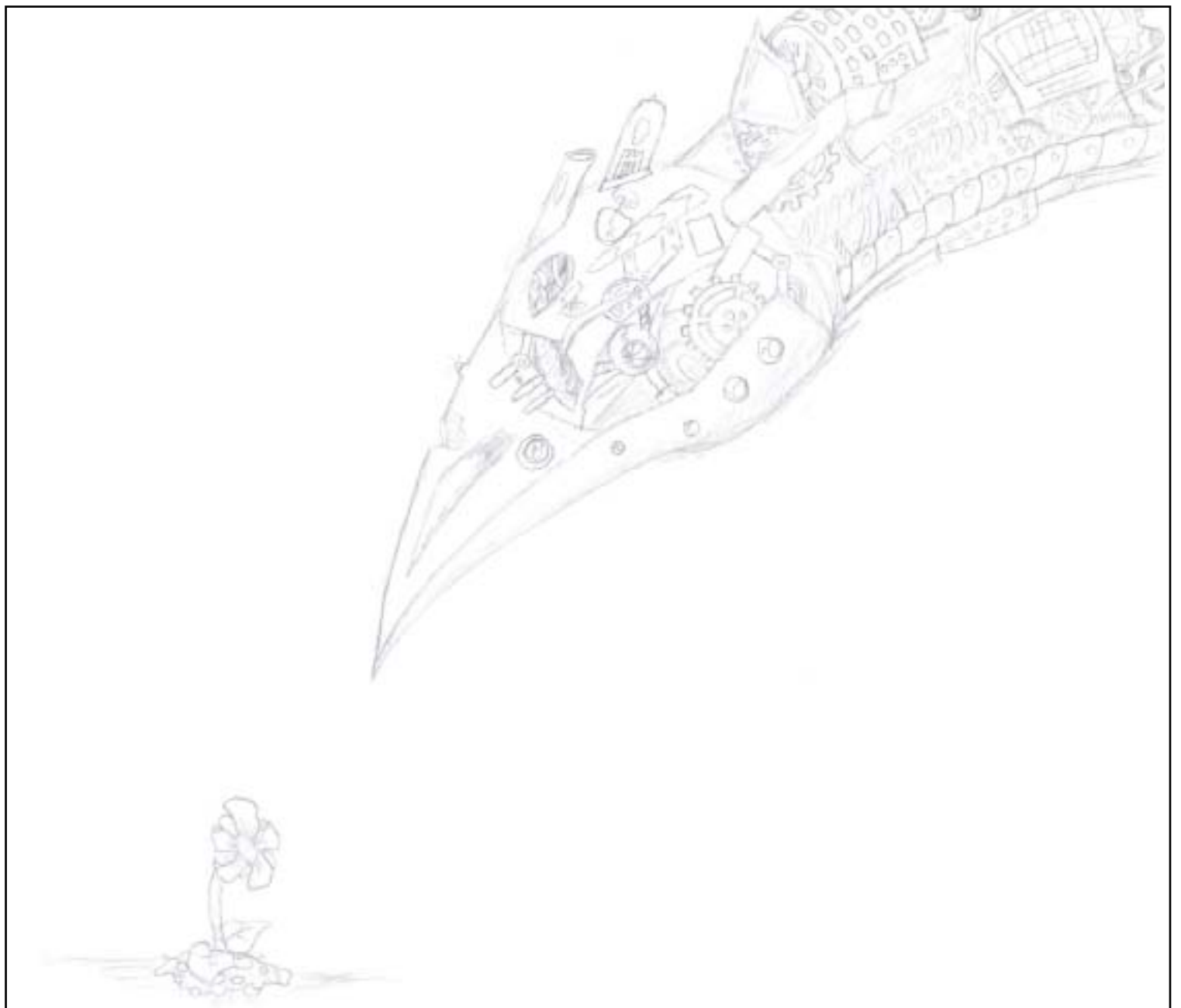
But whatever you do
When they ask why I'm gone
Don't tell them about my demons.

Don't say what truly
Drove me away.

Let them remember me
Without shame.

Restrictions of Life

By Gabrielle Dyke



Winners Continued...

As Laura was about to lose consciousness, Stanley suddenly let go, and air rushed back into her body with a shudder. She gasped and looked around for him, trying to find where he had gone. Her searching eyes found him, crouching down to pick something up. As he walked calmly back over towards her, she saw that it was the knife. He looked peaceful except for the blood running from the gash on his forehead down into his eye. He wiped it away, and smiled at Laura as she tried to crawl away.

Stanley moved remarkably quickly, pouncing on top of her and crushing her legs so she couldn't move. She started screaming, a long, high-pitched wail. He traced the point of the knife along her throat, cradling the collarbone. Laura stopped screaming and started to cry silently, sobs wracking her body. Stanley looked at her with a mixture of contempt and pity. They locked eyes for one last time as he drew the knife across her skin, creating a river of blood.

Stanley kept looking into her eyes as the life drained out of them and her heartbeat slowly stopped. After a long while, he got up and cleaned the knife. He cut the corpse in half and put each part into a garbage bag, which he then placed in the large refrigerator where they kept supplies for the animals. He next cleaned up the stain on the floor and washed his bloody clothes. That night, after dark, he drove Laura's car to a nearby junkyard, sold it, and walked back. He proceeded to smash the body into a bloody mixture and remove the bones. He buried the bones in his field and fed the remainder of the body concoction to the animals.

The next week, the police came to the house asking about Laura. Her boss at the gas station had called them. Stanley answered their questions, and told them that she said she was going on a vacation for a couple days. They continued to come with questions over the next few months, but the visits got farther and farther apart.

Eventually, a year passed with no one coming to the house or asking about Laura. Stanley sold the farm and moved to Texas, where he became a head executive official of a local manufacturing plant. He never married again, but was happy for the first time in his life.



Mountains (above)
Leaves (right)

Ruth Lied



Winners Continued

The Events of Merryweather Lane

Justin Schneider

Stanley Bryan had never been a happy man. It started with his childhood, where he was a forgotten only child, victim of his parents' unhappy marriage. He grew up depressed and resentful, being bullied through middle school and high school. He had poor grades, partly due to his environment, and partly because he simply wasn't that intelligent. He didn't plan ahead, just lived his life, minded his own business, and did what he had to do. Due to a lack of money, he didn't go to college, and remained a farmer in Iowa. He married Laura Gaure at the age of 22.

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After a long day in the field, Stanley was leaning back on his chair on the porch with a bottle of beer in one hand and a home rolled cigarette in the other. He was tired, and irritated with his job. "Why should I have to work as a farmer for the rest of my life? Why me?" he growled, startling some crows. "What is it that's keeping me from doing better?" The front screen door squeaked open, then slammed closed. "I'm home," called Laura.

Laura Bryan worked at a gas station in Chemung, the nearest town, which was about 15 miles away. She didn't make much money, was not in any way sophisticated, and hadn't been called attractive for several years.

"Great," Stan mumbled, "just when I thought my day couldn't get any worse. I'm out here," he called, adding under his breath, "you miserable excuse for a wife." Laura came out onto the porch after putting her things down. "What was that? Are you complaining about your 'miserable' life again? Well quit your whining and come help me make bean stew for dinner."

"Bean stew again? That's all we eat! Monday? Bean stew. Tuesday? Bean stew! Why don't I ever get to have a real meal?"

"Because that's all we can afford!"

"I'm 38, and I expect a big, warm meal at the end of the day. A man can't live off of this crap! We should have more money!"

"And who's fault is that?" Laura retorted.

"It sure as hell ain't mine! I work 12 hours a day, and all I ask for is a nice dinner at the end of the day. But you! You're barely making any money working at that damn gas station, and you always have to have your stupid magazines and fancy new technology. You're holding me back!"

"Don't be stupid," Laura replied.

Stanley, who had always been sensitive about his intelligence since taunting as a kid, was enraged. "Don't call me stupid! I'm not stupid!"

"Stan, you're the dumbest person I know. I'm not holding you back from anything, because you have no potential and no future. Without me, you wouldn't even be able to survive!"

"Shut your mouth, you bitch!" Stanley yelled back.

Smack! Laura slapped him across the cheek, leaving a red mark on the side of his jaw. Stanley seemed to get bigger, inflating with his anger. Laura retreated, cowering. "I'm sorry Stan. I didn't mean it! Please!"

Stanley advanced, looming over Laura, his hand on the sore spot where her hand had connected. "You think I'm dumb? Stupid? I'll show you stupid!"

"Please, Stan! You're drunk, you're tired; you're not yourself! Please!" Laura continued to back up, leaving the porch and going back into the kitchen.

Stanley shoved her backwards, sending her sprawling onto the kitchen floor. She pulled herself up, crying. She started backing away again, and as she left the kitchen, she grabbed the large knife that she used for cutting meat. She held it in front of her to defend herself, the blade trembling.

"You're not satisfied with hitting me? Now you're going to cut me?" Stanley taunted as he approached Laura.

As he got within arms' reach and lunged towards her, she swung the knife down, catching the very edge of his forehead with the tip of the blade, slicing a deep cut and drawing blood instantly. He bellowed with rage and pinned her arms with the knife to her side. He squeezed her wrists until she cried out with pain and dropped the knife.

He kicked the knife behind him, away from the struggle. Tears were flowing from Laura's eyes, and she pleaded, "Stan, I didn't mean it! You're not dumb! Please stop!"

Stanley just grinned, a gruesome smile. "It's too late now. It's no fun when you're not in charge, is it?"

Laura dropped to her knees, drawing into a fetal position away from Stanley. He grabbed her shoulders and shook her. "Look at me," he demanded. "Look at me!" He grabbed her throat and started to squeeze.

She turned her face up, her streaming eyes filled with terror. "Stan, please stop. Please! Please!" she croaked through the pressure on her throat.



Monster in the Wall
Mason Stich



Fading from the Universe
Cortney Huska

Stars

Haley McCullough

I can see you,
Hunter of love.

You're in the
Celestial stars.

He reminds me of
You- Orion.

Except he's everything
You're not-strong.

And you are much,
Much farther away.

Freeburg, My Demon

Steve Kelly

All of it began when I rang his bell,
All of the torment this demon has brought
To my day. Being his assistant is hell!
Forced to do his job is the life I've wrought.
My duties commence quarter past seven:
"Pass out the books, hand back our Scantron sheets,
Be Othello!" This is far from heaven.
"Hey, look at my assistant, this is sweet!"
What started as employee of the week
Has torn my soul apart piece by piece.
And now it appears I can only seek
A stretch of time my agony will cease.
Freeburg, my demon, arbiter of pain,

Occurrences on the Ceiling

Rosie Belson

Flowing water transcends the seasons as it constantly flows around the familiar creeks and bends. In the winter, it transforms into a magical frosty wonderland full of adventures. The snow falls, capping the reeds that hug the bank, each sprout donning a plump white hat. They are now dressed for the occasion. Ice forms, giving the river a fresh coat of possibilities. Life beneath looks through a different lens. Underneath, the water snakes around its cozy curves as the fish look up to see peculiar lined markings on the roof. Shadows spin and glide on the frosty ceiling as a red scarf tails behind being tossed merrily through the wind. Suddenly a thud presents the fish with a near glance at the shadow, the enormous pale form attempts to regain balance. The figure wobbles, glides, and meets the ceiling once more. A breathless giggle escapes the mouth of the shadow, and it wiggles its rosy nose before hoisting up once more to continue the jubilant twirling.

Soon the rigid ceiling liquefies and the reeds lose their caps once more to the heightening sun. New residents poke through the green sproutlings to view the great river. Newborn fish are introduced to the river's way of life, the bends and twists becoming familiar. The shadows peering down into their homes have taken rather curious forms, their faces twisting and turning with the currents of the river. The rosy coloring migrated from the nose to the cheeks as the shadows seem rejuvenated with spirit.

Shadows appear at more frequent intervals and on a particularly warm day, a long yellow form hits the water. A black form swipes the water on one side then jumps out of the water and lands on the opposite side of the yellow pod. The black shape continues to rhythmically swipe at the ceiling until it successfully carries the yellow form to the mouth of the river, where it disappears only to return a short time later. Along with the reoccurrence of the yellow form, other objects break the ceiling as the sun strengthens. Soon, pairs of triangular forms attached to black sticks with knobby knots dangle into the river. The knobby knots propel the tear drop shaped shadows along the bends and twists. Occasionally another stick appears, this time the stick dons a fearful looking face which snaps at the colony; trying to lure members of the school to its belly. They release a quacking noise that only the flock can translate.

Noise fills the river as spinning metal propels two gray cylinders through the water, like the yellow form ventures past the mouth of the river, into the abundant body of water. The vibrant sun attracts green visitors with hard shells whom perch themselves on the drift wood. They spend the duration of their visit idly catching rays. They are presented with a magnificent visual spectacle as the reeds stretch towards the sky and burst into firecrackers of purple and yellow. The show draws to a close. The lights dim and the falling leaves form a curtain over the river. The various visitors and the triangle sticks reluctantly return to their safe homes. The yellow pod and the brisk moving cylinders venture through less frequently until one day ceasing. The river reforms a roof in the hopes of spotting the joyous shadows whom dance upon the ceiling.

Looking Up

By Tori Larson



Pencil

S. Micheal

As the knowledge flows out,
The friction burns the wick
And soon enough, a weight must be
added
To make it uniform again.
Shorter than before, not as bright,
Yet equally as sharp as a tack
Until the last pressure snaps the center
And the final error is expunged from
the record.
Where else can we go but six feet un-
der?

Talk

Anjali Begur

 you
talk and you
talk and you
talk
and your words
often turn
into ropes
that stretch 'cross the
ground
or just wrap all
around until
I can't
breathe
anymore.
dollar signs and regrets
spill out onto odd
kitchen tiles
that are much too cold
to lie on
and far too new
in my life.

Bloodbath

"AMDG" – Common Latin Phrase

S. Micheal

From blue to red and back again,
The result remains the same.
Punishment for fighting
Wrapped in the color red.

The choir boys and the southern pride:
A recipe for success.
Yet after 37 days,
The dish lost all its flavor.

Through the air, on the ground,
It's a dual threat attack.
As efficient as the military,
As reliable as the mailman.

There's always the remote chance
That people never consider.
Exhibit 1980, 2004, 2007, 2012.
Moments that break the dynasty.

Act I is now concluded.
There may be a shred of hope.
If the golden boys want to win,
They're gonna have to pray.

Thrash kings wrote ballads
Fitting for this time.
As time fades to black,
The elephant never forgets.

They always said St. Nick
Wore the color red.
Since when was January 7
The same as December 6?

In the end, sides will part
And the bloody river will flow.
Never blue, always crimson.
The tide will not be turned.

One will get the crystal ball
While the other casts an envious gaze.
And the Gold and Blues maintain the glory of God:
"Play Like A Champion Today."

Hidden Tides

Tori Larson



The Cold

Smantha
Oleson Lifesaving Medal

The night is gloomy and
Cold.
The men are asleep, but
Cold.
A wave washes over,
Cold.
Awakened suddenly,
Cold.
Water seeps through his clothes,
Cold.
Crew taken by sea, it's
Cold.
No hope to survive, too
Cold.
He dives in for them, he's
Cold.
Arms outstretched, in the
Cold.
Saving poor souls from the
Cold.
The ship destroyed by the
Cold.
He's a hero, but still
Cold.
His gleaming medal is
Cold.
He cannot escape the
Cold.
He is haunted by the



Sorrow
Sara Wisniewski

Love Test

Anjali Begur

Imagine a machine
One that knows all truth
And controls all the riches
But will not be lied to.

A confident man stands before it
And decides on a love test
“My girlfriend’s name is Mary.”
The machine says, “Yes.”

Not bad, the man thinks, and continues:
“She cannot sleep before dawn.”
The machine replies, “Incorrect.
A third of your means are gone.”

The man stumbles back—
This machine really is good.
Mary, of course, sleeps the whole night
Like any healthy person should.

The machine’s words hit him.
His hands search his pockets
And when he finally finds it,
He has a lighter wallet.

“Mary’s hair, it’s brown,”
He cries, sounding desperate.
The machine replies, “Yes,” and a dollar returns,
And now he knows he can’t quit.

“She wishes to go to Paris.”
The machine says, “Yes.”
“She has a fear of insects.”
And the machine says, “Yes.”

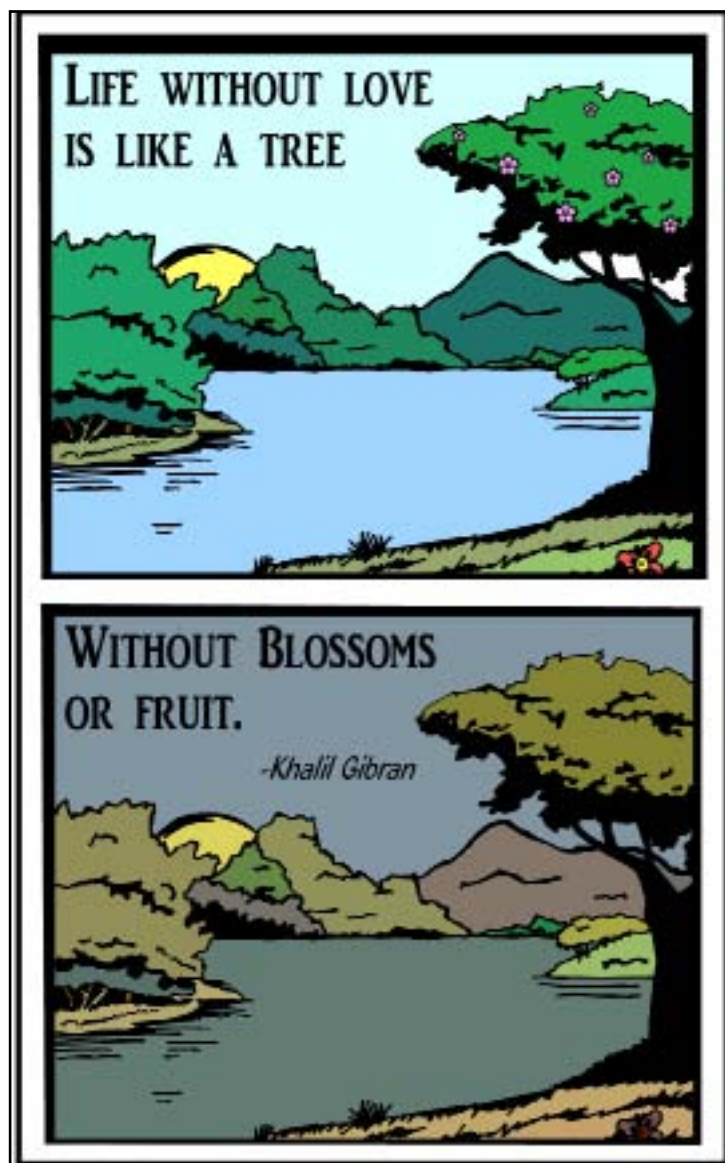
“She loves me,” the man says then.
And there’s a slight pause.
Then the machine tells him he’s incorrect,
And that another section of his money is gone.

He’s lost almost all that he regained,
And now he reels in shock.
She doesn’t love me? he thinks.
“I love her,” he says, pushing on.

Another handful of his riches disappear—
The man’s eyes have gone wide:
So if I don’t love her and she doesn’t love me,
Then she’s not the only one that lied.

The man gets a thought,
One he can’t suppress.
“She isn’t in love, then.”
The machine says, “Incorrect.”

The sun sets as he walks away,
His hands stuffed in his pockets.
Four dollars and a broken heart
And a cocky mind gone quiet.



Concentration
Mason Stich

Miniscule Man
Mason Stich

A tiny man, minuscule man, rugged and wrinkled, his face saw many years pass by. The lines on his face recreate a map—a map of past struggles, adventures and discoveries. His jaw appears to have a fuzzy squirrel on it....but that's just his tangled, grey-ish white beard. He sports a filthy deep maroon knit cap, which covers his balding skull. Under his bushy snow white eyebrows are his dull, steel colored eyes. His appearance is decayed, yet his eyes show the strength of a powerful man, ready and willing to take on any challenge.

He's a lonely man, with nobody to love. Yet, he finds a strange attraction to the mountains. He's in love with the mystery of them. One day the mountains started to appear. Little pink flakes—plummeted from the sky. They built up slowly, but at a steady pace. They covered the flat white landscape. The ground starts to shake and the man's eyes get wide. His heart starts to beat faster, and the excitement rushes to him. He knows what's going to happen...but the end result is different each time.

"Here it comes." An enormous yellow pole sweeps by the ground, leaving behind a dark burn mark. The yellow object continues to mark up the landscape, creating lines going in every direction. Occasionally it stops and the pink flakes start to fall faster. Eventually it ends.

The white landscape has been transformed into a maze of lines and shades. Scattered to the side are the pink hills, and mountains. The man readies himself. He slides on his climbing gear and pulls down his cap tight around his head. He starts to walk, with a little hop in his step. "This is going to be good." He makes his way over to the largest mountain and begins to climb. By the time he makes it to the top he is winded, but he looks out and he is immediately revived. The view is phenomenal. A figure covers the earth. It stands out and grabs the man's attention. His eyes are fixed on the figure, examining every detail.

He spends the rest of the day a top the mountain, just relaxing and enjoying the view. "I don't understand it...but I love it." He takes a deep breath, filling his chest with air. His steel colored eyes take a long last look at the masterpiece below. He exhales slowly and blinks, trying to take a mental snap shot. The man rolls out of bed. He rushes outside, but the landscape is white again...This is no surprise for the man, because it always happens this way. He is disappointed, but he knows, someday he will climb those pink peaks and see yet another masterpiece.

In a lot of ways I am like the old man. I appreciate art—even though I don't always understand it. I believe everyone in society is influenced by art. It provokes thoughts and feelings. It also inspires creativity. Creative ideas can help shape and influence a community to do great new things. I want to use my ideas and creativity to influence and enrich your community.

A Mother's Promise

Ashley Rehlinger

I hear her softly sobbing, those little hiccups muffled by an old rag. She wants to contain her feeling, but sometimes she can't. I slowly walk into her room and I understand now; Father is missing again. He always seems to be missing. "Mother?" I look up at her, she shouldn't have to cry, but I see those tears carefully running down her cheek. Again I say, "Mother?" She smiles at me covering her tears, but I can see it in her eyes the pain and sorrow. "Mother, what's wrong?" "Nothing dear. Come help me do the chores. We have a lot to do today and so little time." I nod my head and follow her out. Mother didn't want us to know, but some things just weren't hard to figure out. The reason why Father was gone so much was because of his mistress. What Mother didn't satisfy him with, his mistress did.

Father was a controlling man and an alcoholic as well. He told us what we were going to and what we were not going to have for dinner. If he didn't like something, you'd be hearing about it. Father always had to have things his way, which was why he had a mistress. My mother was only there to satisfy the family part of his life. Because birthing and raising seven children couldn't have been my mother's plan. I know that Mother had considered leaving Father multiple times, but no matter what, things never seemed to go her way. On multiple occasions Father has threaten to sell the farm, land that was rightfully hers, just so she wouldn't leave. Mother wouldn't admit it, but she needed him, he was the main source of income, my brother being the second. He was not only taking care of her, but her seven children as well. Mother had no job to support herself. Many of us tried to go to school, but if we missed the bus because we were doing chores or anything else, then we missed school. As my father would say to me, "A woman learning how to do her chores, as well as cleaning and cooking, is much more important than a woman going to school." This made me distraught. I wanted to go to school. I didn't want to end up like my mother.

Every night Father would drink and when he wasn't drinking, he was with his mistress. He took her everywhere. My mother didn't even have a driver's license or a car for that matter, but Father wouldn't take us anywhere. A trip with seven kids can get expensive, but he would still take his own trips to Florida, with his mistress of course.

One night I heard Mother crying again, but she was louder that she usually was. Now that I think back Father had been gone all day. That wasn't like him. Father always came back sometime during the day. I went to my mother and simply asked, "Mothers, where's Father?" My question seemed to act as a trigger of some sort, because she completely broke down. "He's not coming back dear. God took him." I didn't understand at first, but after an explanation from my brother, I understood. Father had a heart attack, at a strip club of all places. His mistress was at his side.

Later that week we went to the funeral. As we were walking in, his mistress was walking out. I don't know what she was doing there. At that moment I didn't care. But once I seen Father in his coffin, I understood. Next to his head lay a dozen red roses. In different circumstances, they would have been beautiful, making him look peaceful, a good father, and husband. But she put them there. I saw them as death itself. I couldn't stand looking at them anymore, so I ripped them out of his coffin. I wish I could have burned them. I was holding my mother's hand as she was crying, as she leaned down to me and said, "Promise me. Promise me you will never go through this pain." I hugged her and whispered in her ear, "I promise."

To this day I have kept my promise. I have gone to school and worked my way, slowly but surely, up the corporate ladder. I got married to a husband that loves me. I have a mother-in-law, which thinks I'm the devil, mostly because I'm a Christian, and my husband was a catholic. On multiple occasions she has told my husband that he is going to hell because he married me. I have birthed four beautiful children that I have raised and taught that hard work always pays off. Going to school is the most important thing. One day, I will tell this story to each of my children, right before their wedding day, and make them promise to never have to go through the pain my mother did. In turn I hope that they will teach these lessons to their children, because I promised and it's a promise that I never did or will regret.

Pale Yellow

Tori Larson



Arrowhead Solorship Fund

Brandon Kim

Every moment impacts you as a person. Everything that happens in life changes how the future unfolds. The experiences at Arrowhead High School molded my goal into playing football at the next level. From draining two free throws in overtime for the win against CMH, to losing in the second round of the football playoffs to Verona, there have been highlights and dull spots in my high school experience. But one thing that remains constant and steady has been the coaches. Coach Breitlow taught me to always have fun. Leoni showed me how to work hard everyday. Malling instilled toughness. Haase inspired passion for the game and Coach F. always knows how to get me back in my place. Whether it was basketball or football, my coaches knew how to maximize my potential in the through teaching me to never quit.

My goal has always been to play collegiate football, and my coaches knew how to force me to take the next step. They taught me to always push further, to strive for perfection and to never be satisfied. Both on the playing field and in the classroom, I try not to ever be content with where I am. That's why now that I am playing football next year, I have to change my goals, reshape them and force them higher. I may not ever reach my next goal, but as Coach Malling always says, "We want to have that perfect play, that perfect quarter, that perfect game." I never can reach all my goals...or can I?

Lose Yourself

Maddie Dallman

Sitting on these cold leather seats with my lunch coming back up, not speaking a word. My thoughts make it worse. Are we going to win? I can't screw up. I must play my best game. The single thing keeping me sane is Eminem's pep talk. I sit, thinking the words as if they were mine. My self confidence boosts with every minute. It's game day.

I step off the bus that once held every emotion. Silence. Nervousness. Excitement. Instantly, I'm the next Pele to play to the best of my abilities. I sit, pull the socks up to my knees and slide in bullet proof protection: my shin guards. I then lace my cleats up as if I never want to take them off. Tight and snug. It's game day.

Finally, I step on the freshly trimmed grassland that is home to me. The sweat drips down my face like on the Gatorade commercials. With every shot taken I know were getting closer. My thoughts are taken over by Eminem. His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy/There's vomit on his sweater already, mom's spaghetti. Repeat. The words pump me up with every time it's sung throughout my head. It's game day.

I tuck in my fresh cleaned jersey. I hear my mom scream, "Let's go girls!" I'm not alone anymore. It's now up to my team and me. Every stride is for my team. Every tackle is to protect my goalie. Every word is to help the team. Everything is for the win. It's game time.

The Bean

Ruth Lied



Trapped
Sara Wisnewski



College Essay

Kenny Finco

My eyes lock in on the rim. The ref says, “One and one, play it off the miss.”

I think, put this one in to seal up the game. It’s 63-60 with 18.9 seconds left. One, two, three dribbles. The shot goes up. That wasn’t a good release, it’s off. It rims out.

The clock winds down with the student section chanting “DEFENSE! DEFENSE!” They make one pass and throw up a deep three pointer. No way that’s going in. DJ had a hand right in his face and he double-clutched it. Swoosh, 63-63. We pass the ball in. I look up.

Ok seven seconds left. I dribble up the right sideline but then get cut off by a defender. I go around my back with the ball to change direction. Then the whistle blows. The ref points down at the line and signals the other way. Our coach calls time. We’re fine. We’re going to get a stop right here and send it to overtime. 3.2 seconds left.

They inbound the ball and then make on more pass. The shot goes up. Miss it, miss it. The ball bounces off the backboard and falls through the hoop. Game over. And season over.

One team, four coaches, and 1,000 people are left disappointed. I had two opportunities to help our team win the game and I failed both times. Failure is a part of life and everyone does it at some point. But failing gives me determination to succeed. It gives me the motivation to strive for perfection. It gives me a never-give-up mentality.

And no matter how many times I fail out on the court, I’m always going to want the ball in my hands at the end of the game with the ref saying, “One and one, play it off the miss.”

College Essay

Brady Keliher

If you want to understand the person I’ve become today, you have to know about Coach Malling. He is a tough, aggressive, hands-on coach who stresses three main themes—Perfection, Work Ethic, and a Warrior’s Mentality. And the things he taught me are important in life, and not just in sports.

At times, he can seem uncaring. “We might as well not even show up this week if this is how we’re going to practice.” But he is teaching us about our world—and how not everyone in the world will be as generous to us as we are used to. “That’s soft!”

He expects perfection—schoolwork, practice, and life—and if we aren’t perfect, he lets us know. Every game, our goal is a perfect play. “Lazy!” he screams at us if we weren’t trying hard. And when we are up against a weak opponent, he says our challenge isn’t to beat them—it’s to do everything we can perfectly. “Finish every play,” he yells.

We are expected to work hard. “Focus!” He makes sure we get our homework done before practice by giving us a study hall right after school. I learned if I work hard and keep up my work ethic, I will be able to achieve. “You either get better, or you get worse. You never stay the same.”

“No mercy,” he tells our team. It’s our job to score. Every time we can. He teaches us we have work in order to achieve our goal. He tells us stories about his high school days and how he worked hard to play in college. He tells us to avoid distractions. Last year, when he found out the people were partying—and not giving up those distractions—he held a meeting and told us words that drove us for the rest of the offseason: “In order to be great, to achieve something great, we have to sacrifice something. If you aren’t willing to do that, then don’t even play. You’re not doing anybody a favor.”

The expectation is perfection. And I have the ability to work hard, and the mentality to get the job done. The things Coach Malling taught me has helped me grow into the person I am today—a perfectionist, a hard worker, and fearless frame of mind.



Untitled
Ariel Baker

Tethered

Brenda E. Suhan

Love like an Amtrack train –
The heat made me queasy.
It clung to me and hung on to me
When I stepped off,
A vague blurry feeling
Tethered to me, or I to it.
No refuge in the street of this new city
Or even in the comfort of my own home.
No escape from this magnet that lives in me,
On-again, off-again, but I carry it with me, tucked inside.
Eventually the dull fire was too much to imagine,
And I wondered what was next,
Frightened and longing for an impulsive new love.

Anonymity

Kim Cornell

As you talk about him
While he sits alone
Over there in that lonely corner,
I'd like to tell you...
He's just another person.
What if you
Took a walk in his shoes?
You would wake up in the morning
Looking at the sky through your ceiling,
And you'd go downstairs,
Battling an empty feeling,
Yet you know there will be
No food for the time being.
You would gather your things
And catch the metro
But if you missed it
There would be three miles to go.
You would arrive at school
And be pushed around
Because you wore those clothes
Yesterday and the day before.
Once in class,
Teachers would mutter your name
And kids would speed up by you
Because your shower's broken.
And at lunch,
You wouldn't get food.
You also would sit alone,
Because nobody would want you.
You'd be crying since your stomach hurts,
Your heart aching for all the things
You never had.
You would sprint out the doors
At 3 o'clock
Because if you're out late,
You'd miss the stray cat
Down on the dock.
You would get home
And put up your feet,
Wondering where your parents were,
Worrying you may never re-meet.
You would curl up,
And scream in pain
Because nobody would love you
Nobody would care
Nobody would smile
When you were there.
So hear me, child.
He's going through enough.
Can you not be
His diamond in the rough?
Go up to him,
Ask him his name.
You'd be surprised
At how much
You're the same.



Shoes
Mason Stich

Never

Savanna Maxwell

Ticking time bombs in the air,
Life goes on it's just not fair,
A child forever Peter Pan,
I wont ever leave my Neverland,

The real world is scary stark and bleak,
Just thinking about it makes me weak,
I run with the lost boys wild all day,
In a world of never ending play

Untitled

Laura Schiller

For something that felt
So Strong

So Amazing
And a Surprise,

it's strange
how you left
So suddenly

just like you had appeared
In my life before;

I never had
the chance
to whisper
my

goodbye.

Bullying

Johnny Klaus

The main problem in high school stems from the ignorance of teenagers.

I've always personally thought the term bullying suited the action of it, since it kind of sounds immature. I mean that because it makes most people think of the cliché elementary school scene of a bigger kid pushing the other around for his lunch money. In the end that's what bullying is, is immaturity.

If you break down the action of bullying, what does it really make you gain? A cheap laugh with your friends? But wait, why? Is it because you see the victim differently? Yeah that's right, because being different or standing out scares a lot of kids in high school. They feel much more comfortable in their tightly knit group of friends that secretly all hate one another. We're all secretly afraid that if we try to be individuals and express creativity that we'll become that kid that gets picked on. That's all our greatest nightmare, truly. That's what begs the question of why people do it in the first place. I'm right there with you. Let's put it into perspective.

You're already accepted into a group. Congratulations! High school isn't so scary for you anymore. But wait. There's a kid walking in the hallway, or the lunch room, where ever. This person looks different. Or at least different from the people you hang out with. Someone you're with whispers something. They're pointing out the kid, saying something about their appearance.

You get caught up in the moment and say something, your friend says something. You finally get the balls to yell something because your mob mentality kicks in. The damage is done. Yeah, you laugh with your friends, it's really funny seeing someone else that you don't know getting hurt, right? You feel like your accepted now, don't you?

You're laughing with your friends. The victim doesn't say a word; maybe they pretend they didn't even hear it. Why? You're in a group of kids you call friends, to them, now all enemies, people they don't want to ever see again in their lives. The victim could stand up for themselves. But what're they going to do? It's just them up against this group of kids all laughing at them.

Imagine if it was just you walking down the hallway, passing the different kid. You wouldn't do anything near this, maybe even smile at them or give them a courteous nod. But in your group of friends, it's different. Hey, you just learned what peer pressure is. You don't realize it, the other kids don't know. You guys don't even know why you did it.

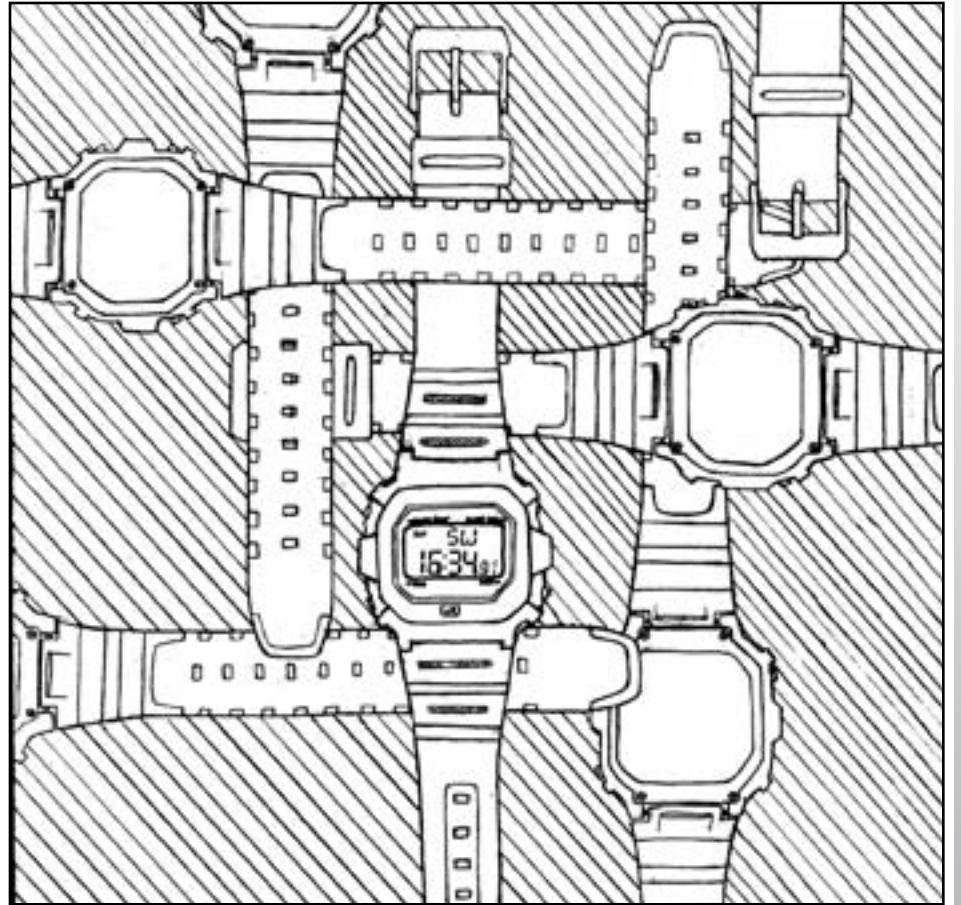
So what happens to the different kid? They're currently dealing with the ruined day, lowered self-esteem, current hatred of everything, and maybe hatred of themselves. All of this for a cheap laugh with your group of friends. This cheap laugh at the different kid's expense may go on for a while too, until it stops being funny.

This is where the topic that all the guest speakers in the auditorium talk about comes in, suicide. It's a long road to there, though. You and your friends first make them not want to come to school, which could lead to or coincide with self-harm, depression, and then suicide.

Being a teenager you hear about it all the time, kids killing themselves over bullying, but that would never happen in your school and you would never be the contributing to the cause though. You forget about it as soon as the different kid walks away.

Teenagers can be so ignorant about their actions and the repercussions that their actions can produce. They may be the nicest kid in the world, seemingly, but kids can get lost in mob mentality so easily and have all that go out the window. If you get anything from this, take away that you need to be more aware and conscious of your actions towards other people. Bullying can have any medium whether that's in person, over the phone, or the internet. Welcome to the glories of being a teenager, let's just try to make it easier on each other.

R.I.P. Grant Thomann



16:34
Josh Bodnar

Welding Poetry

J Ryun

The weld starts. The energy flows from the source...the heart. The torch, a poetic pen, of a welder, bears the flow of energy from the heart...to the piece. Taking the heat, the energy, and the blow of that can render you useless. The heat. Enough heat to spontaneously combust your clothes, your heart, your life. Ashes. The darkening cloud. Failure. Breathing in ashes, choking on the dark particles, that are fatal. Particles slowly eat away at your life, your weld, and your structure. They blacken your lungs, your blood, and your thoughts.

Once the weld has failed, the structure is broken, doomed to tumble until the infinite circle ends. The searing heat liquefies the metal, of dreams and ideas, of a team. Too long and the heat will melt away the dream, too short and the weld cannot affix the metal together.

Heat from the weld rises, pressure from the team mounts, and time from the due date dwindles. A cloud of smoke arises. The weld stops. Blindness. Darkness.

I lift up the full—face visor, and catch my bearings. Examine the weld...and triumph. The weld is absolute.

Only the strength of my words, my promises, and my expertise keep this team alive. Once your words and your promises have failed, trust within you has failed. If you cannot keep your word, who will trust you? If you break a team's trust, who will rely on you? If you break your promise, who will forgive you?

Once trust is gone, it is gone for good...never to come back with the same degree. When trust is gone everything else follows like a marching army heading out to battle. No more trust, no more friends, no more happiness. Nothing.

On a team, breaking your word can be as detrimental as not having one. This is no exception in First Robotics, if you cannot keep your word, your promises, and your deadlines, trust is broken and, just like a failed weld, your structure, your trust, and your life...Crumble.

Escape in the Keys
By Julie Spitzer

My eyes glue to the notes, as my fingers glide across the keys. Music flows through the airwaves—hitting my right ear and drifting through my brain—and pops out my left one.

Insecurity hammers the strings. This is not something I can do in front of anyone. My self-confidence was never built in forced recitals. Private lessons were designed to destroy self-doubt, but they never accomplished that. And hours of practicing in front of my family only made me feel a failure

My low self-esteem forms of flats and sharps, treble and bass clefs, and in eighth notes and whole notes. It's consuming the page and me.

Then suddenly, everything I hate about myself disappears. What began as hatred, turned into notes and keys and music played to perfection.

In that moment in this empty house, I finally feel free from all the pressures of school and parents and work. Everything is lifted off my shoulders and I float.

Piano is my escape—a secret obsession. When I don't know who I am anymore, I lose myself in Bach, or Beethoven, or Chopin. By losing myself in those melodies, I find myself. And my confidence.

My Heart

Josh Bodnar

my troubled heart was held so high
its beating was heard across the sky
a flash in the night oh so bright
it's evanescent glow oh so white
my heart beat sounds across the land
I press my chest against my hand
tick-tock tick-tock my chest says to me
tick-tock tick-tock time to flee
wakeup wakeup says my heart
I wake from this dream with a start



A Tilted View

By Tori Larson

Surely You Jest

By Mitch Wehnes

As I step up to the plate, I take one quick survey of my crowd. Each bleacher seat is filled with a teenage boy. Some sit two to a seat with a friend kind enough to share. They yak about girls, sports, and school, while lazily picking away at a stick of string cheese or gnawing on a bagel too big for their mouth. I turn slowly and focus my eyes on the pitcher. The spherical object he adjusts in his hand behind his back is the perfect sentence. My timing is going to have to be perfect. He winds up and releases. I lower my shoulder and swing for the fences. BOOM—my punch line.

The kids at my lunch table roar with laughter, rocking back and forth holding their stomachs. Tears appear in the corner of a few eyes. Gasping for air, they start to collect themselves but fail when another uncontrollable bout of laughter erupts. It's a remarkable sound. It's a sound I constantly crave and pursue. I can't suppress the toothy ear-to-ear smile that creeps onto my face. Nice one, Mitch. Sadly, it is inevitable that within a mere matter of minutes they forget completely who and what put them in such a pleasant mood.

The lifecycle of a joke is a despicable one. At first, its originality and spontaneity are matchless. The pure brilliance and wit required to meld a masterpiece so fine is incomprehensible. But over the course of a day, the joke is retold, reformatted, and regurgitated until what's left couldn't possibly have ever been funny, right? I guess you had to be there. As always, the credit eludes me.

I like making people smile, but I love making them laugh. Nothing is more satisfying to me. Ever since I can remember, I've been cracking jokes and doing whatever it takes to get people to giggle. If I need to flat-out embarrass myself in front of a group of friends—I'll do it. The reward is always worthwhile. If I'm not having a good day, I'll go out of my way to make someone else's better with a silly joke or witty remark. Seeing them walking away with a grin, in turn, makes me happy. It's win-win.

Despite the initial impact, my effort often goes unnoticed. It might look easy delivering the punch line or making a sly retort, but more work goes into it than you'd think. You have to be constantly prepared, in the right state of mind, and most of all, on time. Timing is crucial. That extra intentionally awkward pause might change a mediocre joke into a side-splitting one. Telling jokes is an art. And while not everyone can appreciate the skill it takes to perform, they certainly enjoy the finished product.

Rip- tied

Haley McCullough

Your warmth envelopes me
In the December air.

There is no escape,
But why would I leave?

You have me, and I have you...
And everything else.

Listening to you made sense, calmed
The ocean tide in my head.

And now that tide overtakes me,
The riptide pulls, drags deep.

Slowly, I'm fading out, until all
Breath breathed blows by.

I'm gone. You don't remember those
Nights I held you.

Don't let go of someone who is
Still holding on.



Les Jellies

By Taylor Rummel
Taken at the Shedaquarium

