

The Magnet

A watercolor illustration of a landscape. A dirt path winds through a green field with some rocks. Several trees with thick, gnarled trunks and dense green foliage are scattered throughout the scene. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a light blue sky. The overall style is soft and painterly.

2021



Fixation by Lucia Maiorese



Kettle and Apples by Lance Chan

Magnet Staff

Principal

Allen Barge

AP of Communication Arts

Gayle Zeitlin

Advisor

Joe Elliot

Magnet Club

Leonora Suleymanov

Roshini Soans

Penelope Day

Tess Nealon Raskin

Nella Bupp

Isabelle Dupreval

Giselle Eunice Flores Mendez

Esther Poon

Salomee Khawja

Layout + Design

Penelope Day

Website

Leo Elliot



Still Life by Trinity Ellis

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From The Magnet Club:
Some pieces of art and writing in The Magnet may contain themes or words that may be disturbing to some. We have included these pieces because they encourage the self-expression of Murrow Students, however, we advise readers of The Magnet to read with caution because of these themes.

The Fuss on the Bus by Jumaane Millette

Just a casual Monday on the bus. It was less packed than usual this evening. I decided to take the slower route home today despite being a bit tired from work, possibly because my normal route was taking ages, as if that would've been any faster.

But being on the bus meant that I at least had shelter from the intense wind that blew outside. I was standing towards the back section of the bus in front of an older woman who was calmly reading a paperback novel. As usual I was just on my phone scrolling through my recommended feed. But then an unexpected sneeze fell upon me.

I quickly retracted my wrist towards my mouth to cover the sneeze. Although it was kind of unsanitary, it was the best I could do at least. And so I returned to my phone to—

"Hey!" someone exclaimed. It was the woman in front of me. As anyone else would, I simply just went back to my—

"Can you put your goddamn phone away for one second?" she questioned me. "We have this virus going around and you can't just cover your mouth?"

I just provided them with the most dumbest face possible. I did cover my mouth, didn't I? Or at least I remember doing so. "My apolo—"

"None of you from the younger generations know how to act. Spoiled by your phones."

Would she even let me speak? I hadn't a chance to even pronounce a word at all. But I suppose that's how an argument works. It was way too much work to even bother arguing with her anyways. As most were, it was just a pointless argument. I wanted to delve back into my phone but she just wouldn't shut up.

"You didn't even bother to listen to anything I said," she blatantly accused me as I snapped straight out of my inner thoughts. And my simple response was, "Nope."

"Well of course you didn't. You're too focused on that stupid phone of yours," she retaliated. "Well, it's more of that I kind of just didn't listen to your bs," I responded.

"You never look up from that device which is why you younger folks don't have any sense of what you're ever doing. Just put it away for a second to cover your mouth." For some reason she decided it was a good idea to keep talking even though I thought I pointed out I didn't want to hear what she said. It seemed to me that I wasn't the only one not listening.

"What does that even mean?" I asked. I genuinely wanted to hear her logic behind whatever ridiculousness she was spewing. But as expected she paused and just didn't respond because she had no clue what she was even saying, or even to gather her thoughts. But instead of what I thought, she had sneezed, about 3 times in a row, covering her mouth with her hand.

"Bless you," I instinctually said. And as I expected I got no response from her. So I decided to play the card onto her. "Why can't you put that book down for a moment to cover your mouth?"

She instantaneously began to glare at me. "Because I'm reading it." Perfect logic. No hypocrisy. There was nothing at all wrong with that statement. "But you can't put it down for one second just to cover your mouth properly? You older people really can't do that?" "Well, if you were paying attention I did cover my mouth," she quickly retaliated.

"I said properly."

She just turned away rolling her eyes. Her annoyance proved my victory. Even with using the same exact logic she used against me I guess it ended up working in the end, somehow. Although maybe I could've used something better that wasn't the exact same thing. She didn't say "thank you" after all. It was rude and I could've pointed that out. Anything that wasn't the same could've worked better actually.

And that was when I realized that I had missed my stop while I was too focused on the argument and my own thoughts. I swiftly called for the bus to stop as it nearly passed the next stop and I made my way off.



Bus Ride Home by Symone Johnson

March by Tess Nealon Raskin

I can still feel the shape of wind and limbs,
tumbling, whistling, cascading under the
 buzzing lights
bright voices calling out like train whistles
 through the halls, but they're leaving
 like doves at a gunshot
closer, closer to the day
 arms brushing together and cheeks red,
 the first flush of summer,
 until the final sharp slam of the
metal door
 still ringing through the clear dark air.



Spacewalker by Bao Lu

The Herbivore by *Liam Powers*

My browser tabs
are the flat teeth
of a ruminant creature
who bellows
as he charges
and mashes
my brain
into
green grass pulp.

Vegetablized,
I resort
to a poem.

Do with it
what you will.

I Remember by *Lyla Kiani*

I remember drawing a Nazi flag in my history class,
The boy who sat next to me
Coloring it in wrong.

I remember my mother and father running away to New York for the summer
To a small apartment in the City.
Whilst I went on vacation to my aunt's.
At least I tried Kiwi those few months.

I remember the face of my Philipino maid,
Who I laughed with on the swings,
Who taught me the female anatomy could be a kangaroo pouch for snow.
I hope she enjoyed that holiday.

I remember my white stray dog
Who we cycled through dozens of names for every so often.
It taught me that death isn't like those Tom and Jerry cartoons.
It takes a minute for the joke to reach its punchline,
Like it takes a minute for the blood to start leaking out of a dog's nose.

I remember the first time I saw a man without legs
Balancing himself on an easel in beauty,
The eyes of a woman defeated,
Drowned out by my father's cassettes,
A child younger than me crying whilst knocking on my window.
Ignored as I adjusted the AC,
A man looking for sympathy in the form of a woman.
What a miseducation,
And all on my way to buy myself a coke!

I remember the warmth in my dining room
As I sat in the front,
Seeing my mother with a flower in her hair as she played the sitar,
All the roots of my ancestry connected to the fabric laid peacefully on
the ground,
Flying high away from an "Indian" heritage and sin.

I remember walking on green marble
As I saw my grandfather sitting in his chair in the middle of the night.
I sat with him in silence.

I remember lights floating in the veranda,
Shimmering of cloth in the dark,
A spoon clanging,
While a drum bangs in unison

I remember staring into my grandmother's green eyes
As she gazed back in the most beautiful hollowness
Broken by my Dada picking up his pipe.
Only in my dreams I meet those eyes! Lucid.

I remember that curious day in Peshawar,
Sitting in the car with my driver,
Silence as the radio report came out.

I remember a boy struggling to accept terror,
 Having to make peace with the idea of death
 At the hands of those who should have united us with religion.

I remember the cricket bats in the streets,
 Shouting out my window in patriotism,
 Black lines on fingers.

I remember the taste of polio drops,
 The marks of chicken pox,
 The disgust of shingles,
 The fear of Dengue.

I remember burying a loved one,
 Praying on beads by the handful,
 In the same room that once radiated in song
 Now silenced in dua.

I remember going down that road
 For the last time
 During my last monsoon season,

And as I saw my home from such height for the first time,
 Abandoning my one point perspective,
 I saw the lights in the veranda once again,
 The claps from that night,
 My grandmothers gaze,
 The body and the mountain of beads.
 I remembered it all as I found some solace in my grandfather's last gift.



Robert Elstein

The Peanut Butter Poem *by Madeline Boccone*

Oh good morning! Do you need me?
 It's good to see your face, smile for me please?
 You're such a pretty girl,
 So what? What am I for today?
 Toast? Oatmeal? A banana?
 I see
 Well take what you need
 And I'll see you tomorrow

Oh, you
 Don't see you much
 What do you want from me?
 A sauce? Savory? You know I've got sugar, right?
 I mean by all means, go ahead
 But I've never done that before.

Oh, man. Big guy? Aren't you allergic?
 It's not worth it, please
 I get bad enough a rap
 At least add some jelly not some oh God no,
 Nutella?
 You're asking for it, bud,
 Better get that epipen ready.

I'm not who you think I am.
 I get it, you only like good old fashioned,
 None of this hipster crap they sell.
 You're a traditional guy, I respect it.
 I'm not bad though,
 I'm no Skippy but I promise I'm decent.

Oh, come on!
 You?
 You're never here, never ask me how I am,
 Scoffed when I was bought,
 And now here you are.
 It's late and dark and you
 Dig into me with a spoon
 Are you some kind of animal?
 I get it was a thing in the 80s but,
 I think you're a little stuck in the past.

Ode to Iced Coffee by Jenna Sajeki

A tough morning it was,
so I bought myself some coffee.
\$3.50 spent on perfection in a cup,
the way the caffeine mixes with the
almond milk, producing a
gorgeous shade of light oak.
A tough morning made better
with a sip through a straw.
The chill of ice radiates through
the plastic cup;
Blood rushes through my body
in excitement.
I drink my coffee,
my reward,
my ray of light peeking through the clouds.
I walk along the street,
iced coffee in my hand,
a smile across my face.
The aroma of the coffee grounds
goes through my nose,
into my brain,
producing serotonin.
My coffee is my happiness;
Without it, I am empty.
It gives me a reason to live,
to smile.
The beauty of its
different combinations of flavor
produce a source of satisfaction.
Good morning, I say;
only the accuracy of it comes after
a cup of iced coffee.

Waiting for a Reason by Emelie Villanueva

There is a boat on the ocean, drifting, floating, fleeting. At first the ocean is loud; with thoughts and memories that hit against the boat as though a storm is trying to sink it by force. It's frigid, whirling, tumbling, flipping, crying, screaming out to an empty abyss. And then, slowly, the forces calm, and the boat is still. It is calm, almost eerily, a small fog rolls in, bringing an odd sense of a mixture of cold and warmth. Then the darkness creeps, with no eyes, hunched and shivering. A black monster, with dripping skin and sticky teeth that steps as though the ocean is made of ice. Circling, taunting, and when it has its fill, it drops. Slowly, as though waiting for a reason to stop and continue its hunting. It sinks into nothing, like a stone in clear waters, waiting for a victim. The small waves crash in a repeating motion, like a heartbeat slowing down as an exhausted body finally rests. The boat is still there, hazy, doomed to repeat itself in its plight, as if to finally say goodnight.



Knightly Commute by Dylan Lam Kwai

No Known Cause by Alexander Baldwin

A tiring day
Followed by an exhausting night
A sharp pain with no known cause
Thoughts of others everywhere surrounding him
Heart ambushed by feelings
What others expected is harder than they could ever believe
The impact of others form weights that hold him down
With nothing he can do
The only idea
Is to express
Feelings through pain
Pain that has no known cause
But is accepted since it can go nowhere else
A heart being crushed by pressure
No amount of strength can save him
As he fades away
The only thing on his mind
Is the feeling of disappointment

Snooze by Gabrielle Fischthal

What are you going to do tomorrow?
 Surely my alarm will wake me up at the cloudy eight o'clock hour,
 Or maybe it won't and the covers will entrap me for hours,
 I'll put my slippers on and swiftly leave my room,
 Or maybe I'll trip and have a dramatic fall,
 A fall that movies capture in slow-motion,
 Leading me to face-plant on my mom's exercise bike.
 Maybe the smell of pancakes will guide me to the kitchen,
 Or maybe it'll be the sound of a fire alarm...
 I'll get ready for my day, dressing from the waist up,
 Or maybe I'll crawl back into bed,
 Counting the minutes until I need to turn on my computer.
 Or maybe I'll come up with a brilliant excuse,
 An emmy winning act,
 To allow me to close my eyes, tight, tight, and tighter--
 I'll get through the day and finish my assignments,
 Or I might melt through my chair,
 Soak through the wood floor,
 Right onto an unsuspecting neighbor.
 I'll make it to dinner where I talk about my day,
 And all that didn't happen.
 Or maybe I'll never make it there,
 Maybe the building will split in half,
 I'll be left with my bedroom and a well stocked bathroom,
 Maybe that will grant me enough time,
 To go back into bed,
 Kick the slippers off my feet,
 Let the blankets hold me,
 And allow me to close my eyes--
 Tight, tight, and tighter.



Losing Grip by Lucia Maiorescu



Hellscape by Elias Maza

My Mornings As They Are, Right Now

By Teeka Duplessis

It is now that
 6 in the morning reels the
 sun into my window but not
 onto my floor and before I can feel
 the air the sun has gone until
 it wakes me in the morning for my next
 empty day where I burn my eyes until
 the sun says bye to me for
 the next three days I live this way until
 I don't let Mister Sun wake me and I
 feel him while wind hardens my skin to put me back
 on the floor that still waits for Sun to pay
 visits like he did four weeks ago when Sun
 wasn't allowed in my presence so early not
 until I said and he shone in the window of my room where I wasn't
 there he had no rules and now I can't constrict
 in the room where Sun cannot be
 constricted

Or Not by *Wiktoria Klimczuk*

Alarm.
Wake up on time.
Or not.
Breakfast?
Too late for it.
Sit. Sit. Sit.
Listen.
Or not.
Stare.
Forget.

Leave.
Join.

Tired.

Lunch?
No, I'd rather nap.

Wake up.
Join call.
I hate it here.
Work.
Leave.

Another call.
Another one.
One more.
And another one.
Bored.

Forget.
Sit, stare, listen.
Or not.

Join. Leave.
Zone out.
Think.
Stop it.

Pay attention.

Leave.
Join.
Mute.

Listen.
Numb.
Leave.

It's Done.
Eat.
Don't eat, you sit home all day.

Outside?
No, homework.
Work, work,
work.

Outside?
No, dark.

Work.
No.
Procrastinate.
Sleep.

Work.
Stress.
Tired.

Make up assign-
ments.
Project.
Quiz.
Paint.
Write.

Forget.

I hate my room.

Work.
Forget.

Procrastinate.

It's 3 am.
Go to sleep.

No, I don't want
to wake up.
Sleep.
No.
You'll be tired.
Don't care.

It's 5 am.
Sleep.
No.

Alarm.
Wake up on time.
Or not.



Mr. Robert Elstein

My Cat Friend Does Not Like The Rain

By Madeline Boccone

It was rainy and grim
And the tire was flat
I bent down to check it and
Turned to see the cat

We were friends on the street
There was a gash on it's arm
So I scooped it up
To prevent further harm

I brought it upstairs
And into my home
My little cat friend
That I see when I roam

With eyes so green and fur so dirty
Lesions and marks
Number close to thirty
My feline who lounged
On curbs and branches
Was finally home
Because a home I granted

It hadn't happened in reality
I woke up so sure
I'm allergic to kitties, sadly



Limbo by Thea Taylor-Mogg

Close Enough *by Mei Ling Dekorne*

I blend in
like a singular tree in a forest,
my features so dull,
not a single leaf shining.

My form stiff,
but fragile in the harsh winds,
roots dug so deep in the ground
I cannot take a single step.

Unstable, swaying in the winds
I am lost but I cannot move.
I wish to be different,
I want to gleam like the flowers at my tips
and catch the natural eye straight away.
Feet climbing my branches
leaving irreversible marks,
hurting my guts and husky heart,
then, they leave,
just like leaves in the fall, never to be seen again.

People believe I am hollow inside,
but they just do not come close enough,
passing me like all the other
identical trees in the forest.

Near Death Experience *By Tess Nealon Raskin*

I wore blue-raspberry tulle
in a crowd of girls and looked out at the audience.
The stage floor was glazed bright and dusty
and my vision paled under the lights, and as I followed the
crowd and my memory to the songs
I had never been quite so cold. The plan was to
not get sick because I had the dress and the practice
and the lessons, so we left the thermometer
on the shelf, but I turned hot and rotten
quick.

The heaven-white halls were sharp and bright like a winter sun,
and I lay dormant, sluggish, for five days.
I often wonder what would have happened if I stayed forever a hospital
bed angel,
a glowing image my brother would grow to envy
when the world would get too loud,
a martyr in dancer's lace.

Wild by Leah Solomon

Sara was shy
And Rose was wild.
What a sight was Rose
When you saw her smile.

Rose drew your eyes in,
Sara made you look away.
Sara tried her hardest,
Nothing she did would ever stray.

Rose soared through life,
Floating on a bubble.
She was perfect in every way,
An empty head was her only trouble.

Sara preferred her warm bed,
Sad and comfortable.
And she didn't like mirrors,
Her image was insufferable.

Rose got attention from the world
And fake love from her friends.
Sara was alone,
But content in the end.



The Two Ravens by Eliana Emelianova

Waking Up From a Terrifying Coincidence

By Jazhara Crawford

The strange thing was that she didn't look anything like me.
A cold birthday in a fancy restaurant.
I had a blue dress and perfectly curled hair.
The sparklers in my cake had all of the attention they deserved.
People cheered and clapped and were happy for me.
I was happy for me until I looked across the room.
There stood a happy girl,
Wearing my dress, with my same cake,
Same sparklers and candles that said "16".
People cheered and clapped and were happy for her
And she was happy for herself,
Until she looked across the room and saw me.
And we just stared at each other while the sparklers died down.
The strange thing was that she didn't look anything like me.
A doppelgänger? A lost twin?
Impossible, we couldn't look more different.
Coincidence?
What's the possibility of meeting yourself in a different body?
Neither one of us could answer.
All we could do was wave at each other,
From across the room.



Line Figure by Gus McCowan



Caution With Calmess by Adam Karim

Sixteen by Ripley Butterfield

Girl or woman, whichever
 With the scrunched soft lips
 With the wiry hairs on
 Brow and chin and scalp, beauty
 Set in herself until a
 Bad wash day or
 Bad day for love,

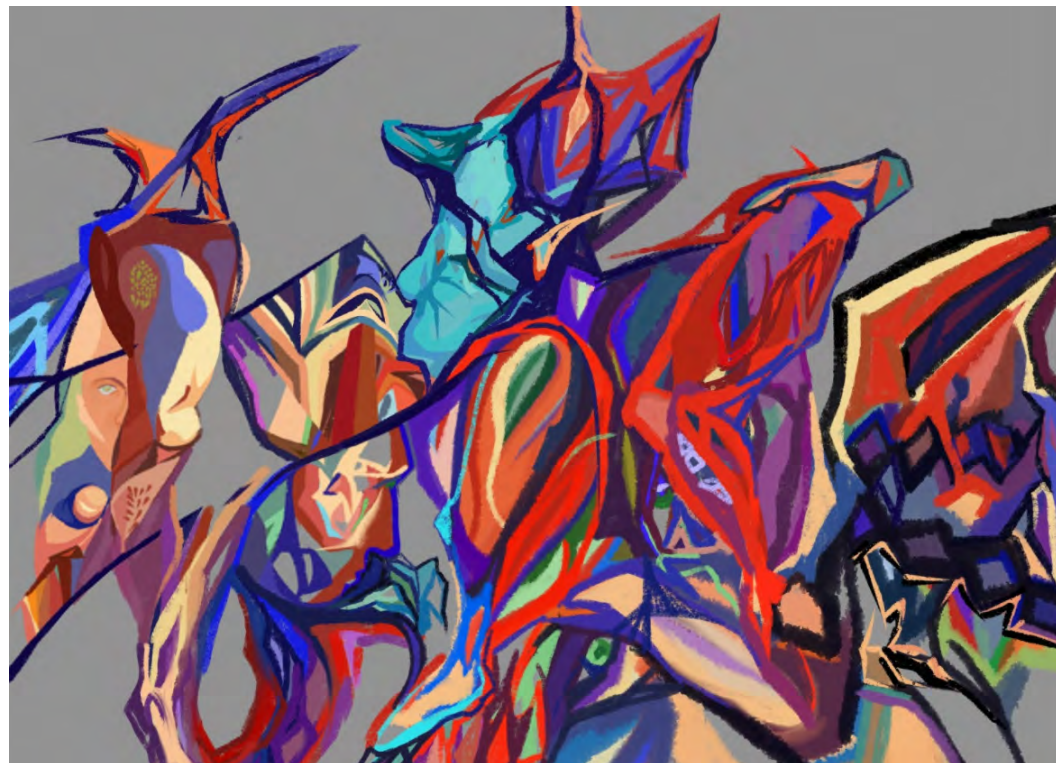
Strangely reversed in her mirror
 Because of asymmetries
 Masking a bleak anthology of missteps.
 In her content,
 That which she cannot lack today,
 A beam of teeth and lighthearted energy
 Get her on the phone with the moon

She is my property
 Mine to hold
 Mine to praise or abuse
 Or deliberate, quietly
 Young forever she will be
 Young forever.
 Containing the only years I know

Thank Goodness For Tacos Menendez

by Liam Powers

This morning Tacos Menendez exploded outside my breakfast window. The sound was lackluster, hardly enough to distract me from my eggs. Quickly though, the truck made up for the weak opening with the flames, which roared to an inferno and spread to an unlucky BMW. The audience gathered, eggs forgotten, ready for the show; windows opened, bathrobed figures appeared in doorways, curtains thrown aside and the truck is just getting started: flame clings absurdly to solid metal walls, surely the thick plume of smoke is visible across the neighborhood, and the heat, the ferocious heat, bursting through sturdy industrial auto components like so much toilet paper! But phew, thank goodness, because for a second I thought it might have been Tacos El Bronco. Oh shame! What a shameful thought, what a shallow, callous creature I am. But really, thank goodness that's not my BMW, unwittingly drawn into the deadly spotlight of this one-act spectacle. And now really, thank goodness, because here come the firemen, they're here to save the whole block from theatrical immolation and thank goodness that poor Menendez is nowhere to be seen, hopefully far far away from the sight of his livelihood, now taking its final bows before being crisped and water-beaten into a blackened wreck and thank goodness for this crackling drama on such a Monday morning, oh thank you, I am thankful, oh thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you!



Color Ballet by Iuliia Zaruchevskaia



Vinny by Samer Kaldy

Trapped by Malika Shakirova

Trapped in a forest
No beginning no end
What is there to do when I'm out of breath?
The shadows chasing me
The dirt under my nails
What can I do when I can't run again?

I've fallen
I'm trapped
And the shadows envelope me
There is no dawn
There is no morning
There is no light to save me

The Glove by Sasha Rosen

The warmth of its wool intestines
Stands in total contrast
To the biting chill of the winds
Whipping down Jay Street
A frozen world
From which my senseless hand emerged

Go Green by Max Levinson

At the last second, I went back
and switched my shoes.
My father gave me a ten dollar bill, saying,
"In case you need it."

Taken but not needed,
The bill snuggled up next to my metro card in my wallet.
I ran out of the house.

It was very nice outside.

On my way to the subway station,
I saw a woman in a blue Toyota with a "Go Green" bumper sticker.
The engine was on, even though the car was stationary.

I entered the subway station, and the climate quickly changed.
The fresh air turned to a hot rush of stale air.
The birds chirping turned to the operators' unintelligible words.
The greenery turned to cracking tile and water dripping.

I hopped the turnstyle, as I always do.
Looking back, I saw a man standing at the door.
I looked in my wallet, and saw the money I didn't need.
At the last second, I went back
And paid the fare.
I then opened the emergency door and let the man in.



Evergreen by Eman Malik

Deadline by Victoria Kagan

A month
There are too many topics to write about
And not even one
Good enough for consideration
There are plenty of days to work on this to just put it off for a little while
After all
You have four weeks

Tik tok
On a clock
Can you tell
Who has writer's block

A week has gone by and nothing has been written
Why
What have you been doing all this time
Put the Netflix shows aside
Open up your laptop and just write

Write about love
Write about heartbreak
Write about life
Write about death
Write about anything
Any thought that comes to mind

Two weeks until the deadline
Plenty of time I'll start ahead
Wow look at me
Wait what's that I see
At the corner of the screen
My crush wants to send something
A message
To me
Wow look at that
This stanza can wait
Another week

Tik tok
On a clock
This is the equivalent
Of staring at a rock

Another week has gone by
Nothing has been written once again
Why
What have you been doing all this time

The last week approaches
Before the deadline
That's plenty of time

Oh no
It appears a month has gone by
And nothing has been written
I think you know why
Oh well
What will be will be
It seems I wasn't able to finish because of that darn deadline



Labyrinth by Bao Lu



Tiled Dreams by Brianna Blue



Floating Kingdom by Dylan Lam Kwai

Brooklyn *By Muazam Moon*

Brooklyn is a series of sunlight beams,
filtering through holes in soon-to-be-falling-leaves
anointing you with their light. It is you

rushing across the street, dodging cars to reach the bus stop,
only to see the B-68 leaving, and it is you frantically rushing to get the
driver's attention,
and it is you, having failed, returning to the stop to wait God-knows-
how-many odd minutes more.

It is hopping by the nearby deli on your way to and from school, where
bags upon bags of chips, close to falling,
sit upon steel racks, waiting to accompany your
chopped cheese, everything bagel with cream cheese and sesame seeds,
or the one and only,
baconeggandcheese
(and please, don't forget the Arizona!)

It is where local kids go to school playgrounds or parks
to shoot threes through hoops with no netting and chalk-covered scribbles
on the ground,
to slide down the slides that give you burns during the summer, and
to climb on the monkey bars, hanging upside down.
It is where plans are made and broken over ice cream cones sold out of
the ice cream truck,
which appears whenever its tune rings and leaves whenever its tune rings.

It is clouds forming overhead in a minute and raining, where drop upon drop
falls upon the gray pavement and filtering into its cracks seeps and oozes
out one end or another.

And it is, when those clouds disappear in the next minute or so, the sun
coming forth once more,
to anoint the path people walk on once more.

This, is Brooklyn.

I Saw a Pigeon Limping Across the Street

by Mei Ling Dekorne

I saw a pigeon limping across the street,
Bird foot in front of bird foot.
There was a car zooming towards the wide lines;
I confronted the bird.
"The comet is coming towards you," I said,
"Time is of an essence, escap—"

"My right wing and heart are brutally injured and in pain," the bird
breathlessly said,
And he fell over and died.



Melancholy Street by Adam Karim

Fingers and Toes by Stella Tannen

There is no way to entirely capture the composition of true peace. The best I can do is describe the sun setting on naked trees in the woods on a still, fresh Monday afternoon in December, breathing life into ashen gray leaves and soaking honey into the bitter earth. Except, that peace does not come from the sun-melt, dripping into the woods, but from the quiet of the fallen leaves, settled and motionless and cold. There is no pattern in their grayness, only solidarity in their acceptance of the biting air. The leaves are just leaves, just as the cat sitting in the middle of the road is just a cat, and down the road there are kids in the distance screaming and biking with numb fingers and toes.

Nestled on a limb, watching the world around me, I am content. Not lifeless, not happy precisely, but content. Something has touched the very core of my soul, and I sit comfortably in myself, exactly on the line.

In a Beautiful Way by Ansophie Pagani

To make you feel what they feel
 To make you see what they see
 To make you want what they want
 Like a polygraph test
 You can't lie to them, for they know everything
 An ice cube slowly melting on a sheet of paper
 As you watch the little particles in the paper come apart
 It tears you apart yet in a beautiful way
 You can not run from what they tell you
 You can not hide because your eyes will not let you forget
 It is stuck in your mind, if it is such that impacts you so
 You can run away from a monster but not one in your head
 Once you read the truth, it is no longer tangible
 It is branded into your mind
 And that is what it does
 It tells you the naked truth
 Whether you want it or not



Overthinking by Zarah Greyser

Simple Dimples by Mabel Stafford

Fate fairs airily leading lovers late like enemies
Seasons should slow ordinary orders strutting
Stately legal lyrical callouses seldom suffer secular semantics
Manifested mantles mandate daily dainty tears
Ears resent tentative, timid, dichotomy
Diligent diets quiet quite itinerary iterations
Liberation allegations alleviate hated haughty autonomy
Autocratic ticking kicks cancel celibacy
Celebratory brittle rituals rip righteous
Righted slighted sly lies silly
Sunder sunday someday data
Dating dear yearly leases
Seas breezes breech beech trees
Beaches reach please
Easily sillier rays slide slowly sloppily sundry
Sunny simple dimples deplete playing people
Proper copper catches complicated coins
Carrying a singing, lying, crying, choice.

Dreaming by Rukhshona Tolibova

Walking along a right and wrong path
The feeling I get is gushy and mushy
I think sometimes to myself
Living a fair and normal life is enough
But knowing myself and my plans
Can be changing a deep and painful background
Turning an imperfect and organic future
There are times I think about not caring
Carrying a body weight and a great difference on my shoulder
Having a clear and bright desire
Making a warm and gentle hope
Sensing a lush and verdant feeling
If only I had been dreaming
A light and unbothered story



Dragonfly by Daisy Woelfling

The Last Thought of a Dead Man by Stella Tannen

I do not think of the man in whose lap I lie
I do not think of his despair, his hand across his face
I do not think of his silent pleas that I will wake up in a minute, an
hour, tomorrow morning.
I do not think of his brother, next to me
Eyes open, but they do not see the camera.

I do not see the camera either. I do not feel anything or think anything
But of the puddle in which my hand is resting.

In the bubbles popping on the surface,
The music plays on.
A tear drips onto an old photograph,
burns it to ashes.

Soft Harshness by Keira McKenna

It starts its journey in the springtime,
and finally arrives in the summer.

It comes to wrap its arms around me,
lightly suffocating,

As the sky reflects the ocean,
and the pollen becomes more abundant,

And the sounds of children's laughter
becomes a constant,

And the wildlife I didn't miss
the season before shows up at my door.

It's like time slows down,
my breathing slows.

And the soft harshness of the summer rays
compels me to flop back into bed.

The daylight hours get longer and longer,
my mood doesn't seem to lengthen with them.

It always seems that this time of year
is harsher than it should be,

but I'll survive the summer rays and hold
on for the autumn cold to wake me up.



Subway Riding by Olivia Walker



Growing Flowers by Sasha Horvath



Mother by Brianna Blue

Khalda by *Lamis Idris*

Immortal, everlasting
 Brown skinned
 Coarse curly hair.
 Tinted full lips
 Glossy even colored skin
 New to a foreign country
 Being a black woman in America was the least of her worries
 Upturned eye shape
 Lined with black khol
 Vibrant gold bangles and rings cover her hands
 Dark black henna curtain her fingers
 A rewarding smile
 Straight white teeth
 A fuschia chiffon thoube draped over her shoulder
 With gold dangle earrings
 Pierced since she was an infant
 A necklace that holds the memory of her beloved mother
 A thobe that symbolizes her home
 Henna that marks her marriage
 Gold that signifies her wealth
 Magenta lipstick that compliments her beauty

Forgive me for I forgive myself
 Forgive me for my narcissistic tendencies
 I gossiped your perfections and disregarded your kindnesses, your sincerity
 I wish I could grab them from my hostile mouth
 You entered my broken and wounded heart
 Healing it but triggering my ego
 Regretting every syllable on account of my self absorbed nature
 Perhaps I was jealous
 Maybe I despised you
 So forgive me for I forgive myself
 Forgive me for my narcissistic tendencies

Adoring your every step
 You set fire to my paradise
 Flames grew to anger, in a field of lustful and flourishing flowers
 Avoiding your very presence in my fulfilled brain
 Questioning my doubtful attitude due to your fire
 Your existence became a prison I could not escape
 Blaming my open-minded and accepting mindset for your actions
 Creating false hope for your ending
 Never acknowledging the reality that stood in front of me like a cell wall
 The past gave me comfort and security, it became heaven
 You killed the soul of my happiness
 Replacing it with a stab, a wound
 That cannot be healed
 I've been trapped in your bubble

A Few Angles of M. *by Ripley Butterfield*

One. She is always right, and she'll tell you
I tried to say Mutz-a-rell and Rih-gott like her easy mouth
She didn't even laugh. Looked in my face with furrowed brows and
Said I was gruesomely wrong

Two. She cooks vegetable stock, in her kitchen
The scraps soften up and marinate- that's when she's irresistible
Pushes and pulls in a gentle sort of way
That makes me want dinner so bad

Three. She runs so fast and hasn't stopped
It's hard to beat my lungs and keep up. Changing at each half-mile marker
I can't help but think she "was," although she "is"
She is flying and I hope she looks back

Four. I worried it would rain, so it did. At the library
We walked home together, books bleeding ink
I held the umbrella and might've cried. Silence could end the myth of us
She slipped her arm through mine just then

Five. It's orange in her eyes, and baby blue in her hair,
Golden in her skin, until it marbles all together
She could be mother earth. God knows I am beautiful in her image
Wish I could draw her too

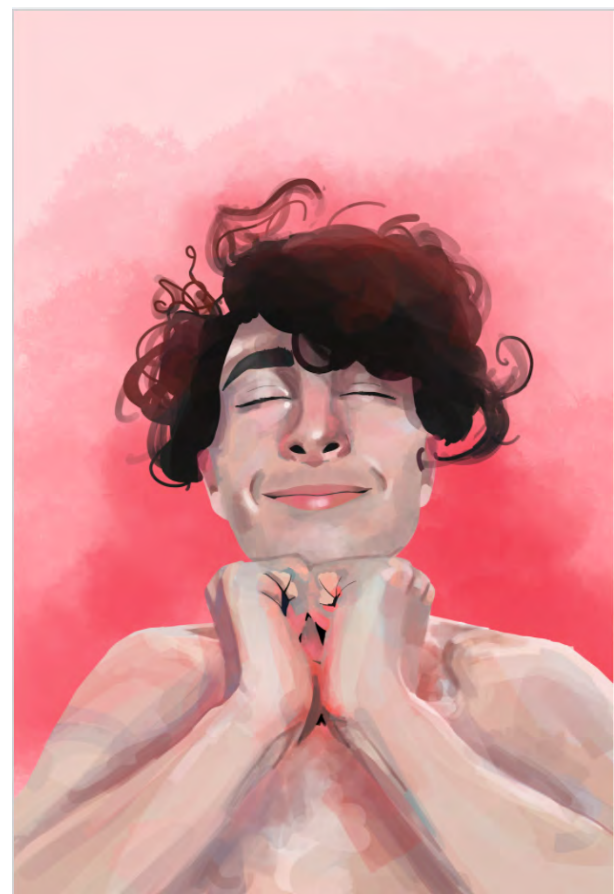
Six. She sits on the floor and her mind is moonlit
Soft-palmed hands sweep the air as she talks
Her communion dress, a grandfather's words and fresh cookies
Materialize just inches from my eyes

Her Window is Her TV *by Django Buenz*

Her window is her TV
Her eyes stay glued to the screen
She watches, still from afar
Dialogue served on a platter, her personalized TV dinner

Mashed potatoes morph into pale soap operas
Steak tastes of true crime, wash it down with Kool Aid
She chews too long as she forgets the action
Action in front of her being the attraction

The power goes out as outside lights dim
Across grids groans are heard
Having to glance through glass pane
Having to dial into the News
How was this ever the only world people knew?



Empathy by Ayden Yair

Blackberry *by Lyla Kiani*

Immersed in hair
Faded at the ends
Clouded by sweat and promiscuity

The
Chaos
In laziness
Aggression
In dominance
Rebellion
In honesty
Stimulants
In blackberries

The
Doubts
In teachings
Sin
In intents
Ignorance of the apple
In the erasure of purity
And lasting divinity
In Arabic poetry

Immersed in her hair
Vibrant with maturity
I was clouded by sweat and promiscuity



Boiling Pasta by Gus McCowan



Polka by Aleksandra Kwiecień

The Lost Shoe *by Madeline Boccone*

My sweater was wet, as well as my pants, hair, and single shoe. The other was lost, probably in the bag transport as we made our way across the beach. So I sat on the railing, swinging my legs, and let the ocean mist saturate anything on my person that wasn't soaked already.

The beach clean up was a well-intentioned but poorly planned field trip. Our English teacher, head of the environmental club, set it up, and graciously invited us, all the geeky outcasts who hung out in her room during lunch. It wasn't supposed to be a wet day, but by the time we arrived the boardwalk was foggy and there was no turning back.

In our valiant effort to remove cigarette butts, bottle caps, plastic bottles, and used needles we were pelted with water droplets and sand all along the mile stretch we set to cover. Students (a few at a time) took turns moving everybody's bags every few meters. It took us about an hour the whole way, and we broke at a landmark signaled by the boardwalk jutting out further into the sand as a platform. My classmates rushed to their bags as they were set down, pulling on socks and dry sneakers, previously removed to walk more freely in the sand. My bag yielded one shoe. Frantically I emptied all of the bag's contents, and some of my friends circled around me, offering to help. They left though, clearly bored of my crisis.

Thus, I sat on the railing of the boardwalk, all alone, watching all my classmates scuttle back onto the beach for recreation.

I had never been to Coney Island when it was like this, only on long summer afternoons when my mom wanted somewhere to sunbathe, or the first day of the season when we went down to Nathan's for hotdogs. It was always bustling but today it was empty. It was always bright and today it was murky. I usually enjoyed it, but then, barefoot and covered with sand blown by the wind onto my damp skin, I did not. If it weren't for that maybe I would have appreciated it, but I simply couldn't enjoy myself in such troubling circumstances.

Then she came up next to me: my friend with the big green eyes and shy demeanor, who'd laugh at only my jokes in history class and smile when I sat down at our table in math. She slid up to my side on the railing and gestured vaguely in front of us.

She interrupted the ocean's roar as it crashed on the shoreline, saying, "You don't want to join them?"

I snorted, realizing she was looking at my teacher hosting a mock yoga class in the distance, our classmates turning down dogs and tree poses around her.

“No,” I said. “I’m tempted, but no.”

“You sure?” she baited. “I could wait here for your shoe to turn up, then you could go.”

“No, really,” I insisted, shaking my head and smiling.

“So you’ll sit here with me?” she asked. I could sit hear the tone of banter in her voice but it was quieter, almost half serious. She rested her head on my shoulder and I didn’t dare look down. Instead we both directed our gazes to the Atlantic and her moody sky, the seabirds circling the water, and the people we knew who seemed so small.

“Yeah, I’ll sit here,” I said. “With you.”



Under the Shadow of Green Leaves by Viktoria Martynchuk



Emanating Love with Elegance by Glory Flores

The Ring of Fire by Adriana Haydarova

Her gaze fell upon them.
When she stares
They feel themselves falling through the Earth.
Her eyes widened,
Lush green forest in her eyes,
The ring of fire around her pupil.

The gushing breeze lifted her feathery hair,
The specks of golden highlights
Beaming like the sun’s rays.
Calm ocean waves
Hit the rocky shore
As her lock of hair twisted into a spiral.

She is a poached egg.
It’s better salted,
And so is she.
Her salty personality is strenuous,
But impossible without it.

She is a razor-sharp arrow.
When she focuses on her target
She never misses
Her determined shot.

She is rich in soil,
Supporting her flowers,
As their continuance of her.

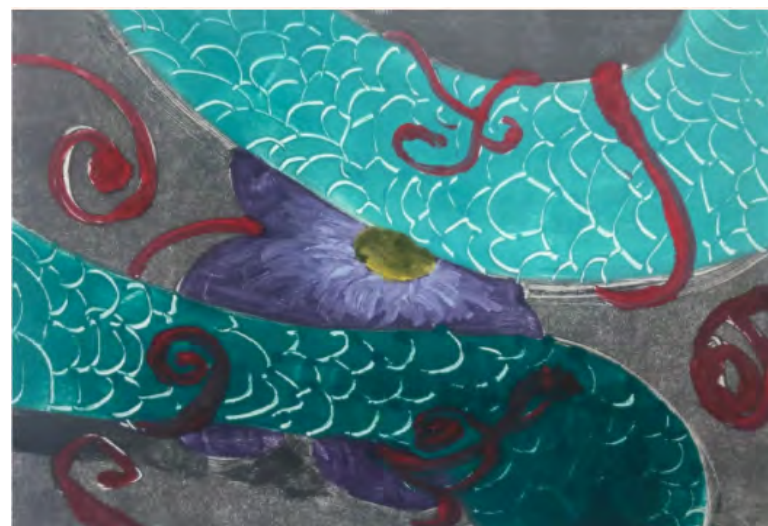
Splitting the Skittles by Lamoy Howard

I remember your love
I remember and I don't want to
We were sleeping in your living room cause you never had any room
Splitting the skittles bag cause we only had a dollar
We ate it on the bus cause you didn't like eating in public
I kissed you there too
And walked you home right after

I know your parents didn't like me
We didn't care
We were happy on the streets far from them
They didn't love you
He hit you and she watched
I hugged you and made no one see
I knew what made you happy
Well, at least I remembered.



Morning by Andra Fong



Green Snake by Michelle Villalba

The Red Stapler by Carly Japa

Fascinated she was
 Fascinated by the stapler
 Fascinated by the red stapler
 She questioned the existence of the stapler
 How could it be red?
 Why is it red?
 Then
 She stapled her finger,
 Not once but twice
 She finally understood why it was red
 The stapler was never supposed to be red



Grape Vine by Robert Marshall

My Locker by Gabrielle Fischthal

The peeled navy paint of my locker is a familiar sight,
 But what is inside is not.
 Miniature zebras gallop around,
 Fictional characters climb out of the graphic novel laying on its side,
 My shoes hanging from the hook sway from side to side,
 Spiders and ladybugs are companions and reside on the ceiling,
 Pencils serve as swords in the war between Post-Its and erasers,
 Miniature monkeys grade papers in the corner,
 The Sharpies graffiti all over the wallpaper,
 The magnets bungee jump off the wall,
 My flashcards flirt with the highlighters,
 My sweatpants serve as a nest for baby birds,
 The stapler is a wallflower,
 The calculator is a trampoline gym for pigs,
 Praying mantises take a swim in my water bottle,
 This is quite unexpected, but not unwelcome.

You, Me, and the World by Hui Lin Wang

rapid warming bursts open his polluted lungs
 flies and maggots spill while wilted flowers have sprung
 sickly eyes and perverted form
 chaos and death revel in the man-made storm

mourning with blue irises in my hand
 a cold silent distance between where you and I stand
 if I move an inch closer, I will have to overcome my fear
 that it is of little matter that I care



Prospect Park by Daisy Woelfling

Naturally by Milena Elias-Reyes

There once was a yellow bird, because it is known; the child birthed
 by a blazing blue bird and a flaming fuchsia fowl is always an orange
 orangutan, this brightly blonde beaker was naturally green. This grey
 bird, who was known for his painfully pink plumage, spoke fluently
 in Ffrench, which is to say she spoke no Eenglish at all, would cry at a
 quarter to noon in Sspanish every day, but naturally never on Fridays,
 or days when the bird was a crocodile and not an alligator. "It is a sad
 day, for I have no wings with which to walk on." Before swinging
 through the trees with its long neck and hooved feet.

Happier Days by Valeria Vantuyl

Was swept up in the undertow
Pull her in, pull her back, wish she could let it go
The sky fell in love with the ocean but the ocean was so low
And she couldn't reach no matter how hard she tried
But the ocean reflected her emotions, bright and joyful, or when she cried
Droplets of acid sorrow drowning with the rest of the collective condensation
Losing themselves in desolation
And the ocean looked up at the clouds and saw not even a glance of the sun
And it was her that was fading away into nothing, the clouds obscured and won
Now the celestial dime up in the sky looked down upon the vast ocean
And like the sky, the ocean was now also weary and without a notion
The ocean could not let go of the desire to reflect that alluring sky
That fell in love and could not say goodbye



Wolf by Brianna Duncan

Assorted Free Things In a Box Labeled “Take Me”

By Stella Tannen

A man's blue eyes.
A boy standing at the edge of the world.
The drywall in front of your nose.
A tiger that knows everything.
The roasty smell of coffee that spilled yesterday. The cup is broken but
not unfixable.
A white poker chip and a red guitar pick click together.
Crumpled up thoughts, straightened by a hair straightener.
My panic, my mania, my ground.
This page is safe.
Someone else's beaded wooden necklace.
A Woman of Rust, covered in shaggy grass.
An alligator tooth.
Dead words. Live words.
A sage gray bush on a lake.
Spinach, pizza dough, goldfish, Sprite, grenadine.
Mixed kales. All of the kales.
A frightened, doe-eyed woman with the most glorious smile. Pleading.
A rotten apple that fell into a page and was forgotten about.
A happy blue cat.
Someone else's lacy underwear.
A crushed, misshapen black butterfly.
A mushroom.
A woman with one eye holding the peace pipe and the cherry red bird.
She remains in the background no matter how hard I try to bring her forth.
I am content to let her stay there.

A Poem About a Poet by Wiktoria Klimczuk

A poet writes about love
And a piece of rotting cheese.
A poet gives faces to emotions,
Praising ideas he thinks he discovered.
A poet writes,
Thinking he's the master of words,
And gives meaning to the meaningless.
A poet tries too hard.
A poet is insane
With pen and paper as his best friends.
A poet is paranoid
About ideas he does not understand
And thoughts he can't put into words.
A poet is angry
Because he does not know how to end a poem.

When She Reads *by Tess Nealon Raskin*

When she reads, it's out loud.
Her lips tighten around the words with concentration
And she shapes the vowels like gum bubbles
Or children's balloons.
"It makes you keep going," she says. "It makes you feel like you're presenting
To someone. It's good practice."
She wants to read to her kids when she's older.

Her willow hair hangs over her pages, arms tucked in.
Feet crossed like chopsticks,
Neck curved like a burnt pen.
She rolls her necklace between her fingers,
The kneading of a little doughy gem.

She swings back and forth
Between her writing and her reading.
When she writes, if she makes a sound,
It's air escaping from lips
Or a gentle question
Or small talk.
She irons out misspelled words, flattening them
Smooth and new
Until they sound right.

If she trips over a word,
She tumbles through the brush,
Down the balding grass hill,
And into the street.



Sophia in a Corner by Mabel Hover



Good Side by Michelle Villalba

The Duke *by Erin Cook*

In the early afternoon in an old lounge bar off
Old Dixie Highway I would meet my grandfather,
Walter—Walt if you wanted to attempt familiarity.
He'd be fresh from his shift at Brandy's,
Having prepared the daily grits and the gravy
for the biscuits—(his secret ingredient
regular old Tabasco sauce).

On this dusty side of Palm Beach
I would meet him at The Duke,
A real rat pack kinda place,
Long wraparound bar,
Leather lounge tables,
Chair backs appliquéd with diamonds,
And a real jukebox.

Walter would have his usual
Bourbon and pack of Pall Malls
And order up a tequila double for me,
And then I'd play one of his favorite songs by Blondie—
Heart of Glass—
A peculiar
Song choice for the strong, silent type—
I loved him for that.

More Than Being *by Joe Elliot*

The dogs pull to the verge
to root around some dead leaves,
sniff at something nameless.

A sad and solitary woman,
her woolen cap pulled down,
carefully goes around us,
moves ahead on the path.

She does not say good morning
or hello or smile or make eye contact
or any expression at all
or acknowledge the dogs' adorable demeanor
or me more than being
some logistical obstacle.

She is very deliberate.
She is wordlessly absorbed
on an inner errand
the dogs and I will never know.

Although as I watch the back
of her brown winter coat
steadily move forward,
I am a little more aware
of what it might be like
to be a traffic cone
or a downed telephone pole
or a spluttering flare
on the shoulder of the highway.

Her Window is Her TV *by Giselle Flores*

Her window is her TV
At which she stares countless hours, all day and all night.
She watches kids playing in the park, couples holding hands,
Dogs playing fetch with their owners,
The colorful leaves of the trees swaying.

She watches how people fool kids and kidnap them,
She watches how men masturbate at children and women,
She watches how the dude on the corner sells drugs to other people,
She watches the homeless stealing food from people.

Her window is her TV at which she stares countless hours, day and night,
Because she sees both sides of the world:
The f--ked up version and how the world is ruined and damned,
And the happy version, where perversion is not a thing.

Ma *by Phoebe Pfaffman*

The time you couldn't do anything
But stare
Some shadow of your gaze
Falling on the space above the TV-

-But unfixed
As if there wasn't even enough of a reason
To pick a point

How it took Coney Island to keep you afloat
Your whole body
Crushed

Each inch
Of the 12 mile care ride
A mountain climbed

How you walked on the sand in November
Ma pulling you
Closer to the surface
As you ran
Mountain ranges

"What do I do?"

What else can a mother do
But throw her key in the ignition
When the daughter answers "a drive"?
What else can she do but end up at Coney Island?

Ma took you away
The shadow growing in
Her cradled arms

She brought you to
"This place in the summer"
"When people are coconut smelling and sweating red and orange"

Ma moved shadows
Even if only once
She did it

Tunneling through summertime
Late at night in November



Caffeinated by Anya Reinhart

Stark Semblance by Teeka Duplessis

Clouds linger in the dark sky and kids pour out of their places. They find themselves in each other. Magnetism centralizing their unearthed energy. Like hate, they form groups, permeating the streets. One drags mercilessly on a freshly lighted cigarette. Hungry and tired. Dark, salient, blue eyes. The pack has been fatigued; yellow tips hang in mouths, clutched in fingers, and delicately jammed into spacious, slim pockets. Happily sparked, the kids trudge on. The origin of joy, receiving yet again, an empty chest, seeks answers beyond Camel. One offers a dollar, sandy in the palm, now merging with grime in the sock. The rest continue. Silently joy drips to the pavement, seeping to the world of holed hearts. No noise on the metal, but the migrants shriek. Clinging to tile, tissue laments. Caked trees warm the bodies with little fat. Above, the absence of joy remains unnoticed. Happily sparked, the kids trudge on.

I Was a Witness by Terrain Chambers Reeves

I was a witness
To something today
With my eyes wide shut
It seemed like the ground
Had opened
And swallowed me up
My thoughts all went astray
Initially the experience
Felt like a hush
Until my stomach
Was tied in knots
And my brain
Felt like it was on shots

I was a witness
To a fall from glory
Even moreso
Hypocrisy telling its story
While holier than thou
Kept pacing the ground
Saying, "See I told you.
Faith is not around!"

I was a witness
To
"Oh not me"
To
"I would never"
"Just the thought"
Shameful
But not discreet
My heart aches
My knees are weak

I was a witness
To a failure
The place where it started
Would humiliate
Its Creator
I witnessed
Those who claimed love
Saying words unkind
Knowing their mouths
Don't say the words
But their hearts
Continuously repeat
And reply
"I hate you!"

I was a witness
To the hatred
So blatant
On its feet
It stood up strong

Words so unkind
While love
On the side
Sat humbly and meek

I witnessed
The nullification
Of life
Desperation
Turned to hatred
In flight
I witnessed
Brothers killing brothers
Daughters killing mothers
Fathers begging and pleading
For their sons to see better tomorrows

I was a witness
To death
Brought on by a knee.
As I watched humanity
Screaming and begging to be free
I witnessed
A nation
So divided by hate
Taking Black and Brown people
Back in time
To a system of injustice
To which they can relate.

I was a witness
To sorrow so profound
Wanting a healing
Tears beating into the ground
While life stood by
Shaking its head
Realizing there was
More value placed
On being dead

I was a witness
To "What should we do?"
As adults and children
Took to the streets
Marching
For a change
A world better and new
I witnessed
Fear
As it came tearing through
Leaving in its wake
Uncertainty
A divide
That even Faith

Could not subdue

I witnessed
Time
As it stood still
Asking itself
Where do I begin?
I was a witness

To a healing
One that came
Unexpected
Not from wishing
But kneeling.
The lack of compassion
That a loving heart brings
The belief that ME,
Not you
Will always commit
A sin
While we judge
Without judging
Hate without hating
Forgive
Without forgiving
Help without helping

I was a witness
To the walking away
Of Truth
The knowledge
One gains over time
From the years
Of their youth

I was a witness
To an age of Truth
Where lies touted as
FAKE NEWS
Had fully taken root
And slowly but surely
The veil was removed
As the power in the people
It bore new fruit!
I was a witness
To the healing
It came at a time
When it was all we needed
Forcing its way
To tell its story
Raising up everyone
Not wanting the glory
I was a witness
To unity so strong
No hatred could break
That irreplaceable bond

It screamed to the world
I will not watch you die
The time is now
We cannot just say nothing
Or just walk on by

I was a witness
To hearts renewed
To children playing
Mother's smiling
At youth
Watching them happily
While telling their story
Elevating expectations
Reclaiming His-
And Her-Story!

I was a witness
To prayer
That thing
We tend to forget
Because we can't accept
Our Creator

I was a witness to his grace
It came in truth
At a time it seems
When we were losing our youth
That moment of understanding
When I see the beauty in you
No ignoring of identity
So beautiful and true.

I was a witness
To love
One that was sublime
Given so freely
Didn't even cost a dime
It came to break
Down walls
Having you fall
To your knees
Wrapped warmly
With loving arms
Soft spoken
Urging you to succeed

I was a witness to Hope
That one thing
We have
When we feel like
Our backs are against a rope.
I witnessed unity
In search for a better tomorrow
I saw as families gathered
To share, heal

And work through their sorrow.

I witnessed Desire
Faith in man
The one thing
To help us heal
To create a better plan
To change this world for the better
To make a better way
To end hunger
Poverty
Helplessness
Drive Racism away.

I witnessed Strength
Joy
No more sadness or pain
I witnessed
Happiness
Expectations for a brighter day
I witnessed
The realization
Of Dr. King's dream
Where people of all nations
Can experience equality true
The Freedom to be.

I was a witness,
I was a Witness
I WAS A WITNESS
TO TRUTH!

Mallory Grossman *by Rubya Ali*

“Go back to your own country.”
“Go kill yourself. You’re ugly.”
They are undercover
You can’t tell what they will say
You can’t predict what will happen
Their hate doesn’t go away
It’s in our minds, on replay
“Go kill yourself. You’re ugly.”
The words reflect what goes through our heads
Easy to do on the internet
“Fag. You’re Gay.” is what they say these days
Children bullying children into their graves
Pushing children into their graves
Lara Dobbie, bullied over acne
She was only 13
When she took her life in 2019
“Witty, tenacious, and a gifted scientist,”
Articles read. But a girl is dead.
Her parents: “We tried to get her into
a children’s mental health ward
but we were told at that time
there were only five beds
available in the Gold Coast
for those under 18” - death by limited space
After the internet gave too much space to hate
We need change.
Pushing children into their graves
Her name is Mallory
Life taken tragically
The story repeats
Instagram, Snapchat, Texts.
“Loser. You have no friends.”
Some words
Hit hard
When we’re already in self-doubt
“Why don’t you kill yourself?”
Five simple words
Mallory vanishes from the face of the Earth
We need change
Schools, make mandatory classes
On kindness and respect
Teachers, teach right and wrong,
Don’t just give punishment
Friends, please, when you’re hurting,
Talk to your counselor
Parents, please pay attention to your kids
Social media companies, do better
Countries, work with students all over the states
To talk about suicide preventions
Do not ignore this
For, Mallory Grossman

A Dream About Red Birds *by Wiktoria Klimczuk*

There was a party yesterday
In the academy,
The one made of stone.
Crowds gathered in the field,
They laughed and joked
And chased each other playing tag.
Red birds began to dance in the sky
And they formed a swarm,
A gigantic red cloud.
They started to whistle,
They sang of death.
A warning whisper filled the yard.
They flew North, where they disappeared behind the eternal forest.
In horror strangers run towards the academy,
The stone one of course,
They ran towards the big wooden door,
Seeking shelter.
As the doors to salvation closed,
The unfortunate ones left in the yard drop to their knees.
They cry and scream.
And pray and ask for mercy.
Worshiping the unnamed being.
I follow their actions, as I don’t know what awaits me.
As they look into the eternal forest.
Where a lunatic appears,
A madman indeed,
With a crazed look in his eyes he comes out the bushes,
Looking for prey.
Out of all people in the yard,
His gaze falls on me.
His long arms and legs began to flail,
And he moves towards me in an unsettling manner.
Mumbling phrases I can’t understand,
And he chases me for eternity.
What for I don’t know,
But I run nonetheless
Because he’s got an axe.

Beautiful Girl *by Elise Guzman*

A ten second interaction.
A ten second moment.
Brief swing of the building door.
Chestnut eyes blinked and we shared a glance.
A girl who wore a lavender hijab.
May I see her again.

The Housewife by Jamie Earlbach

There was once a housewife whose cooking was so unpleasant that she was forbidden to do so any longer after she burnt her husband's toast to the point where what was once bread turned into a charred, carnivorous beast with a taste for domesticated animals. What was meant to be a tasty part of a balanced meal made a meal of the woman's pets. The burnt toast ate one dog, one cat, and the left pinky toe of her first-born child. Her husband was so angry that she burnt his toast that he threw the toaster out the window and it landed in the backyard. The carnivorous toast monster saw his creator lying on the ground in the backyard and returned whence it came. It then reverted back to a piece of bread, and suddenly the woman's first-born child had all ten toes once again, and the family pets were revived. A joyous day this was! The housewife decided to memorialize the occasion by making a celebratory breakfast for the family; however, while she was pouring orange juice for herself, the pitcher of juice combusted into flames and set the house ablaze.

The moral of the story is that women do not belong in the kitchen.



Discovering Tunnels by Olivia Walker

Look What You've Done by Ellie Trinkle

i am not a very memorable person
i take up a considerable amount of space
but not too much
and often i find myself struggling,
struggling to find ways to be memorable
if i could only grasp the concept

but there you are

in the pure white room
staring into my eyes
with your lopsided grin
and your manic mannerisms

and there i am

in the pure white room
staring into your eyes
with my blank stare
and my unreadable understandings

and it is just you, standing there
a person from my past
a person i want to forget
a person i thought i had erased
a person i never thought i could look into the eyes of ever again

and then it puzzles me
if i am not memorable, why are you here?
you must haven't forgotten about me
because if you had then you wouldn't be here
this makes me smile
because it is comforting to know
that to one person i am memorable

and you continue to stare into my eyes
while i bask in the glory of knowing i am memorable to you
then you start to slowly disappear
slowly disintegrating into the desolation
and when you have fully been swept away
i still smile
because i know my worth
and i know i mustn't equate my worth with you
after all, you have been swept away
and i am finally free

at least i got to stare into your eyes for one final moment

Creation Story *by Liam Powers*

The first time I ever stubbed my toe, I screamed and burned the house down
in my rage and pain
I was a little kid, so I didn't know any better
I can't burn houses down anymore, so now when I stub my toe I close my
eyes and take a deep breath and my heart explodes
Betrayal

I wonder how many people have died of a stubbed toe
I wonder what happened to the first person to ever stub his toe
Patient zero
Probably he burned the whole forest
Probably he paved the whole world flat
Probably he cleared the whole world of all hazards, all rocks, all twigs, and
all inconsistencies

Maybe he invented deforestation
Maybe he invented betrayal
Maybe he invented safety
Maybe he invented shoes
Maybe he wrote a poem about what it feels like to stub your toe

And then burned it
F--k toes



Vector Assignment by Lance Chan

The Cure *by Elise Guzman*

If I could drink sunlight from a glass, it would cure my illness,

Bring back some vigor that was lost in untidy bed sheets.
I'm paper at the sight of my mix-matched socks hugging my ankles.
Perhaps the trail of dusty footprints will aid in recollecting my thoughts.
My eyes may even catch some light this time.

This turtleneck is insufficient in reassuring me of companionship.
There is velvet cream on the roof of my mouth and black arms reaching at
the corners of my vision.

The social worker tells you about grounding exercises, but fails the "show
not tell" rule.

It's too exhausting to tell.
He's dragging my ribcage down like a pair of pigtails.
An echoing throb at the center back target of my skull.
A stuttering stomach ache.

Perhaps a glance of some sunlight will do the trick.

Central Park in Summer *by Alex Zimet*

New York City is a cruel place in the summer. In the winter, the skating rinks open and the trees get their lights. The ball is prepared for the New Year and the stores are getting ready to sell gifts. Saks Fifth Avenue is running their electric bill to Mars. In the summer, your eyebrows produce more sweat than there is water left in the fountains. The air is sticky and thick. If you're lucky, you'll get on a train with air conditioning. If you're getting on the G train, you're not so lucky.

For two boys living in Spanish Harlem, it is a glorious time. A time of independence, with the lack of school that was trapping them. A long day, extending their curfew further and further as the sun refuses to set. They wake up in different units of the same building and walk out with 10 collective dollars in their pockets. From the bodega, far enough from their building where their relatives would not catch them, they bum a few cigarettes, nearly half a pack.

The walk to Central Park isn't far, besides, they have no prior obligations. The crowded park is moving at a hundred miles per hour, too fast for anyone to notice these two underage smokers. A rock near 103rd Street will do. Among the full leaved trees and the tourists and natives alike, the young boys do what they love to do, watch the passersby with bogies in their mouths.

The smell of hot dogs and pretzels wavers from the cart just outside the park limits. They can also hear the distant cry of Mister Softee coaxing city goers to stop and enjoy an ice cream cone. These boys aren't stupid, but they sure are hungry. Either producing cash, or coming up with a plan to steal a hot dog and a gatorade. Those are the two points on today's new agenda. Two very tricky goals to achieve by sundown.



Subjection by Zarah Greyser

Hat by Amelia Reitzfeld

The street was crowded
 But still felt lonely

The fog held a heavy presence
 And set a somber tone

The only personality on the street
 That stretched for miles

Was the large black top hat
 That rested on one man's soulless head

13 Ways by Mabel Stafford

1. Shatter as my heart does when it sees you
2. Blue eyes of stained
Glass, glistening
3. You change like a hummingbird's wings move,
Faster than I can ever understand,
Glass butterflies in my stomach cannot fly
They fall and break inside of me
4. We live on
Opposite sides of a two-way mirror
5. Oh, if the glass would break,
And you could see me
6. A broken heart from a glass boy can be
A weapon
7. If the eyes are the window to the soul,
Your glass must be dirty, since
You hide your feelings so well
8. Glass girls are hollow and see-through
9. A river like liquid glass burbles
Along, hiding
The bones in the riverbed
10. Glass clouds break like rolling thunder,
Shards meet shame
And melt on the ground
11. Toxins bubble and acid
Eats through the glass brakes and
Into the floor
12. Tiny crystals with jagged edges
Like snowflakes on the carpet
From the smashed glass bluebird
That I broke.
Each fragment was a reason that I loved you.
13. The sun heralds morning,
Reflecting off the broken glass
In a bloody hand.



Contemplation by Andra Fong



Pigeon in a Nest Box by Aleksandra Kwiecien

Stuff I Remember From Back In the Day

by Liam Powers

I remember sinking up to my ankles in slick mud.
I remember my dad's office,
As seen from knee-height.

I remember the special look my dog gave me every time I filled her bowl
with food.
I remember the name of my first crush.
I remember the startling blue of the eggs in the nest outside my window.
I remember the pain and rage of a stubbed toe.
I remember one day, the nest outside my window greeted me with one
very small beak opened very wide.

I remember my first city-smell,
That of a ripe dumpster, which caused a sharp pain in my temple.
I remember there were soon three gaping beaks, attached to three naked
bony creatures.
I remember that special look my dog gave me when she was too old
to walk, and I held her up with a hand on her flank.

I remember the day when the nest outside my window was empty, and
I cried for a day or so.
I always thought the baby birds had fallen, but I never had the courage
to check under the window.
I remember that last look my dog gave me, before she closed her eyes
and let out a long, beautiful fart,
Then a beautiful sigh.
For her, I will have no last words.
I will fart and sigh and then die.

Rules of a Zoom Funeral *by Liam Powers*

I am sitting here once again with nothing
but a blank page labelled POEMS
and I wonder why
all my poems are about writing poems.

The walls are blank. The cats have
stopped fighting. The child that cries
next door has gone to sleep. It is too dark
to see the birds outside. Beauty is scarce at this time.
And
the room implodes with the unbearable weight of poems.

The radiator screams and I am saved.

If it weren't for the radiator and my mother's handball games I would be the
most boring poet on the planet.

I would sit at the bottom of The Ocean of Heavy Poems and write poem
after poem about what it's like to write poems. I would kill the fat poem fish
with my poetry.

Today she won two games and I won one. Youth and lanky limbs are on
my side but she is a smarter player than me. One day I will be able to slow
down and think, or she will be unable to speed up, of course; the cycle will
complete.

Today her glasses fell off and she missed the ball and the gray hair of a
monarch burst loose for all to see. I laughed and she laughed, we laughed
and I imagined my parents' funeral. I always imagine their funeral as one,
a double feature, as if their life force is inextricably linked. At the funeral I
will make lots of jokes and they will laugh and smash their coffin to bits and
leap and dance and cry out because their
son is just so dang funny.

A funeral is a good thing to write a poem about.
The other day I attended my first Zoom funeral.
My dead grandfather's close friends fumbled with the camera and told sto-
ries about people they killed in a war. It was very poetic.

The poetry of my grandfather's Zoom funeral joins the poetry of the blank
walls, my screaming radiator, the cats that have stopped fighting, the child
that cries next door and the birds that I can't see
and the beauty is less scarce but it is still me vs. poetry and dignity vs. Zoom
and
funerals vs. handball.



Hot Spot by Trinity Ellis

Happening by Ansophie Pagani

The negative space of a stencil is my journal
 The part that has been colored in by black is the exterior
 The bottomless pit of negative space is what I write
 One would be horrified to read such things
 The words of the teen that thinks she is alone
 My mother would cry for ages if she read such things
 A glass of water spilled on a Dutch masterpiece
 Desperately trying to be mopped up
 The pen running down the paper, trying to get everything out
 Similar to the mascara running down my cheeks being carried by monstrous
 drops of tears
 A page so flustered by the movements
 The sudden changes
 She fell in then out
 She hated then loved
 She convinced then denied
 She told the honest truth
 Lied to herself nearly everyday



Lonely by Rebecca Aris



Distance by Trinity Ellis

Why Are You the Voice in My Head?

by Madeline Boccone

Say something pretty enough to make me happy to be sad
 Pull up a chair, sit too close
 Whisper in my ear with a breath that smells of whiskey
 And ashtrays and speak matter of factly
 Go on for too long
 Then look in my eyes and call me out
 Scoff
 Call my bluff
 Nobody ever makes me be honest
 I will agree with whomever so we can all hold hands
 And ring around the rosie

But you
 Smile unblinkingly and bear your teeth
 Cloyingly put your hand on mine and say you understand me
 Know me
 You were me one day

I'll buy you a drink and go to the bathroom to cry

Above the Mist by Valeria Vantuyl

I'm looking out the window
 and something caught my eye,
 a red balloon alone
 soaring to the sky.
 a single red balloon
 without a family of its own,
 a single red balloon
 that was left tragically alone.
 I left my place near the window,
 a fishbowl stained with dew
 from the early morning mist
 when the world is clear and true
 and in my mind's eye
 I see that red dot in the sky,
 and I know in my heart
 I couldn't just let it pass by.
 so I dart outside
 into the early morning street
 when only a few cars pass by
 and rain puddles pool around my feet.
 I feel another mist coming
 but I still run towards that balloon
 which seems to have drawn closer to the ground,
 a little deflated and in gloom.
 I run all the way into town
 where I see a little coffee shop open their doors
 and outside there's a chalkboard
 with their daily special adorned,
 and tied to that chalkboard
 right outside the cafe
 is another red balloon
 standing as idle as it may.
 Somehow by some witchcraft
 that red balloon comes undone,
 it wavers in its place for just a moment
 and then flies up into the sun.
 But somewhere along the line
 the two balloons intersect,
 parallel destinies twist
 and come together and connect,
 and suddenly that lonely balloon
 I saw soaring through the sky
 doesn't seem lonely anymore,
 and inflated with life
 I'm looking out the coffee shop window
 and my eyes are fixated on a sight,
 two red balloons intertwined
 and the morning illuminates bright.



Waterfall by Viktoria Martynchuk

Flow of Peace *by Sophia Ortiz*

water traces her skin
 her hair dripping drops of pure tears
 wanting to feel free from the strain on her soul
 she sits letting the water submerge her body
 resting her heavy lifeless head against her knees
 hoping that this darkness will last forever
 her bare body sits on the floor hoping to revive itself
 revive what was never there
 and for a moment she felt it
 she felt like she was leaving
 like her darkness was finally taking over
 she was ready to let go
 her breath deepened
 warm wet air filled her lungs
 suffocating just enough that it felt good
 assuring her that she is almost free
 but she can't
 she can't be free
 not yet
 so she opens her eyes and stands up
 off balance she turns away
 and let's the water run along her back and down her legs into the drain
 into the pipes and forever
 on into the darkness.

Wolves of Tomorrow *by Alex Zimet*

Well, twelve short wolves, and I say they were certainly
 in Birmingham. Too close to Guantanamo Bay, if you ask
 Harold, but in three installments of this color television,
 for only 19.99? That's blasphemy, said the Inventor of
 Macaroni and Cheese, Robert Kraft. The inventor of Mac
 and Cheese won a Super Bowl and then subsequently was
 arrested for sleeping with a masseuse. In foresight, he
 should have slept with a laundromat instead. Jimmy Johns
 made a sandwich out of nine-volt batteries and it sold a
 hundred copies within the hour; they were very popular in
 the former Soviet Union, not to be confused with the latter
 Soviet Union, which is where we are standing tomorrow.

Her Window is Her TV by Mirre Zhou

Her window is her TV,
an outsider staring at the outside,
gazing into the outside world,
living forever in a fictional world.

Flickering static drifts across the sky,
the sound of radio silence as overwhelming as a wildfire,
as an outsider, you stare through the window,
everything you see within is black and white,
a girl inside with an endless plight.

Living in an eternal play,
an 80's tv show left unwatched and unheard,
like that radio channel on the old radio that you never dial into,
like that one game you stopped playing when you turned eight.

From her view behind the window,
there is no one,
nothing other than endless sky in a make-believe world,
where nothing and everything exists-
she lives in blissful ignorance,
away from the sorrows of reality.

Time wasted her youthful features away,
with every day you look through her window from below,
you see another wrinkle in her face,
another strand of greying hair.

She seemed to never notice though,
going on as she has in the past sixty years,
acting as if she was still twelve,
believing that time had forever paused for her.

A Rapunzel in a modern world that could never be saved,
and you,
her prince,
was also wasting away.

Time would soon come to take you away,
the visage of death looming behind your shoulder,
you wished would could ask the Rapunzel to let down her hair,
but it was too late now,
for by some cruel fate,
you would pass before she would.

Her window is her TV,
a black and white eternally-playing show,
she lives in blissful ignorance,
of the "prince" who had died down below,
for he had only gazed up her,
but she was never able to gaze upon him.

Soon,
she too would pass,
the Rapunzel who had never been freed from her tower-
the tower of glass that only the sky would know.

She died alone in her sleep,
afraid and cold,
never knowing reality,
and never knowing the "prince".



Neighborhood Buildings by Elias Maza

I Know You

From the blade that played with my breasts
I cut a sandwich in half
Diagonal perfection
The ingredients slip out from in between the bread slices
Too much mayo
For anyone but you

For We Are *by Alexander Baldwin*

Eliminating a terrible and disgusting human
Is the job for those with strength
For we have power
Which others do not
Strange how our acts are seen
Not how we planned
Heroes seen as villains
Rights as wrongs
Our acts are seen
But not allowed
For which they claim
Wrongs about us
But it does not matter
For we are
Changing a corrupted and putrid heart



Ambiguous by Thea Taylor-Mogg



Growing Trunks by Sasha Horvath

Elliot's Class *by Sasha Rosen*

Decades of classes and chaos
Have given way to months of solitude
Unending isolation
Save a few shadowy figures
I even miss the sweet stench
Of sweat and teenage angst
That used to mix
With the aroma of freshly sharpened pencils
For now
I am all that remains

A Man Stood at the Shore *by Caroline Rhode*

A man stood at the shore
And watched the waves.
They were destructive
And crashed loudly and angrily.

Why does this happen?
He wondered
Is there some greater being
That controls the sea with such power?

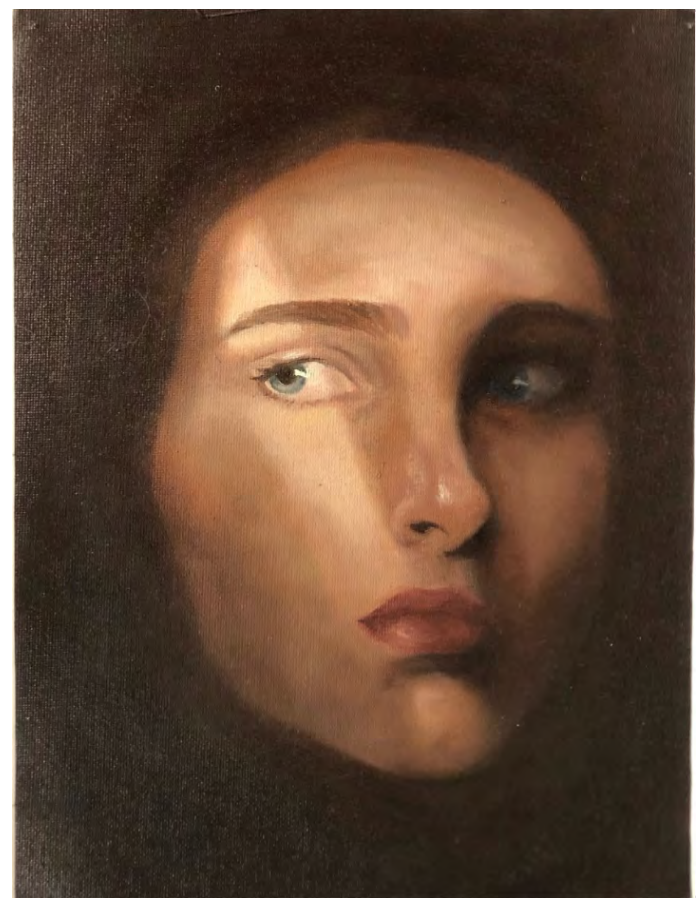
The waves grew higher
And roared at the man.
Was the sea angry at him
For questioning its power?

He wanted an answer
And walked closer to the water.
The waves became higher and higher,
Taller than any being,

And gobbled up the man
Giving him the answer.



Eyeball Soup by Lucia Maiorescu



Portrait in Raking Light by Odile Henriques

Memories *by Lousig Morris*

City landscape
Ten story drop to the ground
Where the suicide
Victim is lying
The light pink sky melting
Behind those tall
Straight buildings

She probably had a name
No, definitely
At the very least Jane
Because where would we be
Without a nametag to put on the toe
Of the slab of meat dirtying their
Taxpayer built sidewalk

Vomit
Threatening to push itself out
Of my throat along with the
Words of punishment
That I wasn't there to see her
Teetering on the edge
Not because I wish I called
For help
But because someone should
Remember
Her movements that are now
Memories

The Pistlepops by Juliet Grochowski

The pistlepops were in the house
The eggs were peppered
The chicken was peppered
The salad was peppered
The potatoes were peppered
The pencil was peppered
The numbers were peppered
The shoes were peppered
The salt was peppered
The pepper was peppered
Everything was peppered
Was peppered, was peppered



Kwesi by Camille Mitchell

I Kindly Ask by Lyla Kiani

I walk in fear of bombs dormant in the ground
Remnants like pillars standing in desolate, hollow ground
Previously erected in awe of the feminine figure
I would kindly ask a rich man to soothe such anxiety

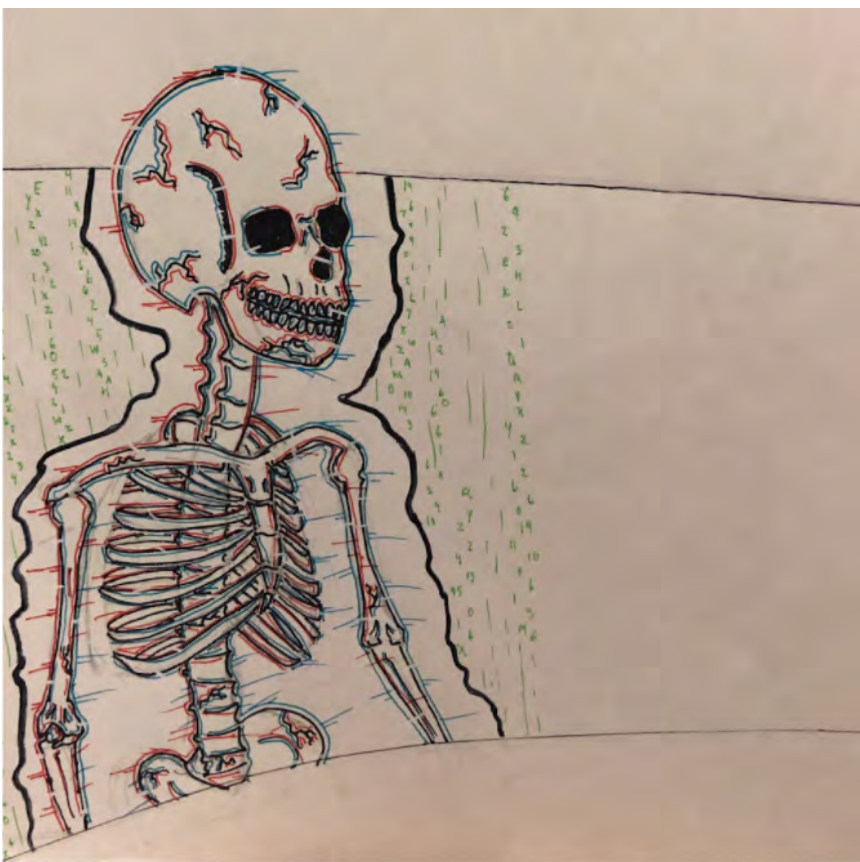
But inside my car
I sit with kin to the same women who basked in my grandmother's jewels
A man whose lack of luxuries were exposed by the cool of a fan hitting
his cloth
A truth that does not radiate a pungent odor
One that lays me to similarly bask in the nostalgia of an outdated grey car
I would kindly ask him to bottle and ration it for eternity

To peer through the window
I gaze at the marvel of curves
Shaping a perspective of an image
One that lacks magic at the ends
But in the center, a true ode to Houdini
To continue to indulge in such erotica
The only one that cannot be blocked by a theocracy
I would kindly ask to take an image of such craftsmanship

Far in the distance
I see an old tire only a child would be excited by
For only a child could find such joy in repetitiveness
While only an adult can find beauty in a child's knee
Pale and unmarked by a past
Only to be struck in excitement
Due to the numbing sensation of a love for a father bringing chocolate milk
I would kindly ask to hold onto that bandage as a memento

But at the white windowsill in my room
I ground myself in the truth of my reality
A flat earth as I decide my course of action
Holding a black book covered in tabs of holy writing in multi-colored pens
Worth more than a Cartier bracelet I willingly bartered for it
Staring into a snake of a woman's eyes
Reducing me to Mowgli in an Indian jungle
I would kindly ask her to mark skin with her love

On a day like my birthday
Surrounded by those who came to mine instead of hers
With an inflated ego I wonder for a refund from her dainty little pockets
And in a moment that will forever be coated in a different light than what it was
I kindly ask what those seduced by me bought me



by Michaela Cintron-Andrews

Stupid by Ripley Butterfield

I am so stupid. My stupidity is fact, like a pure quotation of law that one could defend in court. It's an inalienable right to me, it's inside of me, I am plainly stupid.

Every morning I rise and brush my teeth and twist my hair. My wife hums beside me and holds my waist, I tell her good morning. I think she is beautiful, her deep brown eyes and skin. I tell her I love her but don't say the rest. Stupid.

Every afternoon I clock into my shift at the bookstore. I have my nose in a little book about the art of boxing. When a customer comes in, I start and drop to the ground like a freak. Stupid. I gather myself, apologize, and put on a smile. I can't even waste my embarrassment on digesting a book for self improvement. Or a reasonable skill.

I think, every night on my way home, about the things I am seeing. I like to take different routes on the bus, even though they only come every half-hour. I go through the other suburbs or through the heart of the city. I see smarter women, who are rushing home to their beautiful husbands or wives. I regret going off schedule. Then I look up at the statue of William Penn and wonder if he was ever so stupid.

I think about the Quakers, and the oats, and tomorrow's breakfast. Or about money and horses, kids and coming senility. I will die devoid of intelligence. People are so precious, in their realizations and emotional truths. I'll be thinking about oatmeal as the light goes out of my eyes.

When I get home, I slump over the counter and try to forget all the stupid things I've done.

Ham Sandwich by Phoebe Pfaffman

A daughter walks through smoke clouds to reach her father
Embers of sage and weed burning
At the other end
Turning the small square between them
Into daylight

It is always this leftover scent
the white smoke tunnel

Rinsed and washed over
Through the season
And his t-shirt

And the marks that spin
On his hands.

Following him into the kitchen
To replace the smell of dinner dishwashing
Into the smell of your father.

Suds pooling in my hands and the palms of the silverware
Standing at the sink and
Smelling his smell
Even before I hear his boots.

Heavy and slow on the wood stairs
Opening
Like this kitchen is a canyon
The doorway behind me
Another end to a tunnel.

It is late
So he walks straight to the faux leather chair
Facing the TV
Past outlined memories of himself

The red wine blackened tongue
Laughing at the dinner table
And again in his reflection.

It is late
So he makes himself
A ham sandwich
As a midnight snack

Biting
With crumbs that fall
Like morning
Into the black carpet
I just vacuumed



Baby by Genesis Santos-Francisco

Between the Mudpies by Tess Nealon Raskin

the time your mother pressed me into your hands
like you push a seed into the
earth
you couldn't get a grip around
my cold limbs
my slender ankles and waxy neck

i had no pink convertible
or tiny tacky shoes, my hair
shot up
in sprouts,
rows of platinum garden,
hacked down to weeds

my poreless digitality
was not enough
my itchy velcro and my
painted smile

i became paint stains
glue clumps
stickers and glitter

i became the women
between the mudpies
and the doghouse

Bus Rides by Anastasia Protsak

Tiny raindrops racing down the window distort my view
Of the autumn leaves being blown by the cool breeze
Little old women pushing their carts
Filled with groceries

I think back to last year
When I wouldn't be so lucky
To get a seat on the bus when it's raining
Having no choice but to stand in between people with the floors all muddy

Isn't it funny how I've gotten what I wanted?
A seat by the window
Yet somehow I don't enjoy it as much
And so I sit for the rest of the ride, in rainy sorrow



Shut Your Mouth by Zarah Greyser

The Mask *by Alexander Baldwin*

A mask
Something to stop the cool wind from blowing against us.

What we hide behind
When our tail is between our legs
Not a person

We can see through it
But cannot be seen
Our feelings inside unfazed

A box of our fears
Are kept safe
Never to be seen by anyone else
Blocked off by Guards

A door
It opens to few
And closes to the rest
What's inside is special

We tear it away
It stops us from changing
It keeps us the way we are.

It shows our eyes
Our passion
What we believe in
But don't strive for

It is connected to us
Our fear, ideas, and connections
For they hold us back
So we must tear them away

It is there when needed
In many colors
In many sizes.
It can show what we want shown
Our eyes, nose, or mouth
Or none if we just want to hide.

A light
Through which our eyes view
A house
Where we keep everything away

A mask
One that can be described in 13 separate ways.

I'm Not Sorry

I'm sorry that I wake up late
I'm sorry that I take too long in the bathroom
I'm sorry that I don't eat a lot
I'm sorry that I eat too much
I'm sorry that I wasn't who you thought I was
I'm sorry that my breathing is too hard
I'm sorry that I listen to music too much
I'm sorry that I don't please you
I'm sorry that I crave attention
I'm sorry that I feel sad all the time
I'm sorry that I'm loud at times
I'm sorry that I'm not pretty
I'm not sorry that I'm not more of a lady
I'm not sorry that I see the bad in you
I'm not sorry that I feel the need to protect myself
I'm not sorry that I'm too overprotective
I'm not sorry that I don't shave my legs at night
I'm not sorry that I don't fit your type of girl
I'm not sorry that I'm too smart for you
I'm not sorry that I am a powerful woman
I'm not sorry that you are not my sun
I'm not sorry that you are not my moon
I'm not sorry that I'm an extraordinary person
I'm not sorry that I don't let your needs conceal mine

I'm sorry?
Did I step on your moment?



Too Close to the Sun by Isabel Herrera

Fear by Clio Barrett

Fear is one of the most dangerous emotions one can experience, and yet it is embedded into humanness. It could be argued that regret, hesitation, anger, and sadness are all interconnected to fear, the king of negative and merciless emotions. The definition of fear describes an unpleasant and unsettling feeling caused by a threat or something that is believed to be dangerous. Synonyms include terror, dread, panic, and agitation, and yet every single human is forced to experience it on a daily basis. While the things that cause fear are usually intimidating, scary, or anxiety inducing, I find nothing more frightening than fear itself. It is the culprit behind every action never taken, every limitation and insecurity. And yet sometimes fear can be a protector- a feeling that guides and warns you of consequence and nature. There is the fear that aids, helps, educates, and prepares you and there is a fear that limits, attacks, and diminishes you. It is clear that one of the bravest things a human could do is muster the courage to face and overcome their own fear.



Gio's Butterflies by Sade Desir

For Sīyā* by Roshini Soans

Did you favor my mother, over her two sisters
who weren't as studious as she?
If that is so, then,
what would you think of me?
Would you prefer my sister
for her grades and literacy?

How did you express your affection,
was it murmured or sung?
Or stitched together
by each sacrifice you silently threaded?
Then, did your own seams come loose?
Did you fall apart, old and worn?
Were all your scraps given away,
and sewn into your daughters?

Was your rage so hard to overcome,
in its crashing, turbulent waves?
Did it bubble and boil within you,
confused with your trauma and fear?
How badly did it overflow?
How often did it splash up and scald their skin?

As you drove that car, your wife beside you,
did you know?
Or was it a complete surprise?
Why were you so calm, so complacent,
that no skid marks were found?
Did your face not even flinch
as it happened in that instant?
How could it be that in such a moment
your rough, violent waters
became the still surface of a tranquil pond?
Had you simply decided your fate,
without any hesitation nor regret
without even a ripple?

*Grandfather in Sinhala

9 Lives by Valeria Vantuyl

She was sitting at the bar content with her drink
 Humming an unknown melody as she felt herself sink
 Was it 1? 2? the memories blurred into a mixture of vodka and rum
 Or was it brandy? wine? No she didn't have that yet...maybe she could get some
 3, 4, something knocking at her door
 It reverberated through her eardrums and vibrated to her core
 No it wasn't her door, but rather her brain
 And she felt a headache spreading through her temples like a stain
 Her dress was stained, she noticed as she looked down
 Its diaphanous white silk spotted with an ugly brown
 As her stare prolonged more dots would appear
 The 5th dot, 6th dot, she sensed unconsciousness near
 Slumped in her stool, leaning on the bar counter for support
 She peered over to the stool beside her figure so short
 So sunken and small that she felt like almost nothing
 But she hoped that the 7th would make her feel like something
 And that bar stool beside her, once a calamitous vacancy
 Was somehow filled with darling catastrophe
 A man sat beside her and offered her a hand
 And she almost expected to see an 8th there, summoned by her heart's command
 But his hand was bare and as dry as her glass
 Making a thirst swell up in her throat for a 9th at last
 But something halted her tantalizing temptation with an abrupt snap
 And the room was no longer the dim dullness that formed a desolate gap
 A gap in her soul that was now filled with vibrancy
 As she took his hand in hers in delightful irony
 And as she leaned on his shoulder with his hand placed delicately on her hip
 She no longer craved another drop, nor craved another sip
 She only saw the world as it had always been
 Once hidden behind a curtain, but now, the sunlight streamed in



Robert Elstein



Girl on Fungus by Odile Henriques

Never Forget by *Diana Marie Paunetto*

i wanted to stand out from the crowd.
but i learned the sick, twisted truth about this world,
nobody will ever fit in.
no matter what you do, what you say, how much you change your appearance
or attitude,
you will never fit in.
i'd like to say that society is the reason that we act the way we do,
impulsively, without thought or common sense.
that fight or flight reaction in us will always be judged by our peers,
always put on pedestals for the world to see,
to judge without consequence,
to break our self esteems one by one,
till there is nothing but anger, sadness and loneliness left to muster up
the courage to commit suicide.

our parents don't know what we have to go through every day.
our parents didn't live in the world we are living in now.
they didn't think that someone could come up and abduct them while out
getting milk from the store.
they didn't care about the consequences of their actions, they lived life the
way we want to.
but we can't because of all the bulls--t that pollutes our world and the fear
of rape or murder on the streets.
our parents didn't have statuses to keep,
they just went to school and actually went to class and learned
instead of screwing each other in the stairwells or smoking in the bathrooms.
after they graduated, nobody cared about anyone outside of their friend group.
they went on with their lives.

nobody's social status mattered after high school, so why should it
matter now?
what purpose does a social status serve to our youth?
we are already depressed as it is, so you're gonna have kids telling us to
jump off buildings?
you'll have kids say we are sluts when we haven't even lost our virginity?
you'll have kids call us slurs, whether dealing with our race or sexuality
and gender identities?
you'll have kids peer pressure other kids into doing things that are illegal
or wrong in more ways than one?

have you ever had someone call you something rude and disgusting to your
face or behind your back?
i have, and i will tell you now that it's hard to hear it, especially from people
you thought were your friends.
when it first hits you, it makes you feel like absolute shit.
what did i do to get called this? "slut, whore, homo, bitch..."
but then it sinks in, that's what i am.
that's what people think of me and i can't change it.

it's hard to go through anything when you surround yourself with fake people.
they drag you down to bring themselves up and it's just sad that there are
people like that,
horrible people getting rewarded for it.
sickening.

after reading this you'll think, is there anyone who can help me through this?
the answer is no, short and sweet, because nobody understands your
personal issues,
and to be quite honest, nobody cares.
they say they do, but they don't.
perfect cherry on top of our twisted society we call life.

but you can still help yourself. never let those things get into your head,
never let someone else drag you down so they can become something
better than you,
always be the better person,
never be the bully,
never succumb to the horrible thoughts you have at 3am about how you
don't belong in the world or that it would be better off without you,
because it won't.
you can't throw your life away because of some bullshit people who have
nothing else better to do than to drag you down.

you matter, you're beautiful, kind, talented, amazing, and however many
other good synonyms you need to hear. never forget that. no matter what they
say, never forget that.

The Power of Black by *Paris Leonce*

B
L
A
C
K
Never cracking in age
But always cracking when your knees are on our necks
Even at this peaceful protest your knee finds its way to my neck like
the two are magnets
Tears form in my eyed but don't fall
Why?
Because I'm tired
Tired of being told what to do
Tired of being told to sit in the back of the bus
Tired of being told to shut up and dribble
Tired of being told to pull out any form of identification while your gun
screaming shots out of fear hit me as if I am a target at a shooting range
I'm tired
But this war will never end
But I will never stop fighting no matter how tired I get

Silver by Mirre Zhou

Falling down in a cascade of silver
raindrops around me,
glittering stars under grey skies.

I dance and twirl under the storm,
the rumbling of the sky gentle and calming,
serene.

I stride along the shores of the sea,
watching the stars
be swallowed by the sea,
drops of silver
becoming one with the ocean.

I wonder where the droplets go,
do they sink into the sea,
or disperse like a school of fish,
leaving a single silvery droplet behind,
alone?

What would it feel like to be that droplet,
sinking lower and lower, deep into the sea?
Would it be lonely,
or would it be peaceful?

To fall into endless black
and to be reborn
as a single raindrop,
serenely dancing under darkened skies.

A single glimmering star,
a gleaming drop of silver,
bound to become one with the sea,
bound to be alone once more,
sinking deep down,
beneath the sea.

Twists by Leah Solomon

I hate your deep dark secret full hair.
I hate your rumor ridden slimy lips.
I hate it when your actions of pure evil make me stare.
I hate how you control my mind
And stuff it with twists.
I hate how you dress
And make me ball up my fists.
But what I hate most of all
What almost makes me cry
Is how you look me dead in the eye
And lie.



Wasteland by Matthew Hamm

Treasure Hunter by Zion Clement

Scintillating gold, shrouded in shadow.
Treasure Hunter, it's only a bit farther.
Lustrous, there it sits,
Its glimmer no match for the deep dark depths of the cave where it lies.
Treasure Hunter, don't turn back now.

Cold and lonely, prettier than the stars,
There it grows desperate.
Desperate for love. Desperate for affection. Desperate
To be found. Treasure Hunter,
You're it's last hope!

Stranded by Maia Musallam

White, pure, cold, blank
Snow covered the once green field,
In a blanket that did nothing
To protect life from the freezing temperatures.

The sun had resided beyond the horizon,
Its warmth scared away by the winter cold,
Leaving the landscape to the mercy of the snow.

Seldom plants grew, the land was dull
With dark trees and clouded skies
Alone stood an evening grosbeak,
Whose bright yellow coloring brought warmth to the landscape.

His flock abandoned him, the trees were unwelcoming,
Rough, cold, and hard.
His dark wings gathered the little warmth in the air.

He beat them to pump more heat through his muscles,
And he took off into the dark sky,
But it was cold and containing, keeping him
From flying to freedom

Alone stood the bird, without a friend to stand with
Through the cold season.
Stranded was his spirit among the cold white blanket



The Machine by Eliana Emelianova



Dumbo by Aisha Shazar

For Jonghyun by Brianna Clemetson

How hard was it? Did it hurt?
Was the pain quick or fast?
Why did you do it?
Are you happy now?

Did you think everyone would forget?
Did you think about your friends or family? Your fans?
How long did it take? How long did you keep it in for?
What led up to this?
Are you with the moon?
Are you shining for us? All of us?

Are you asking if we're okay?
Do you miss singing? The feeling of being loved?
Who hurt you? Was it us? Was it yourself?

Are you in peace?
Are you happy now?
Do you think we're mad at you?
Will you shine on us forever?

1987 by John Faciano

A note you showed me from long ago
written on a bookmark blue with tasseled top
from me to you in youthful aching hand
lines so clearly curved, each letter strained a meaning
fearful a right idea be wrongly read

a note nine words in brief about a dinner we shared
neither you nor I recall. Yesterday on the porch
we tried so desperately to turn back the pages
to see that time again—did we meet in hope or worry,
an evening gray or light, with words tender or tight
did we touch, was our farewell polite,
But alas! no image did appear,
a mystery and the pages bare,
an echo from the breach we gladly hear.



Vines Growing on Statue by Elias Maza

Mountains by Emma Banks

Mountains are tough as nails
They could withstand anything that is coming their way
Mountains are so strong that sometimes it seems that they are stuck to the Earth
They are so magnificent and pretty, especially at dawn
The sun peeking out from behind them,
Casting a shadow on them,
Making it seem like they are a different color
Mountains are one of those things that makes the Earth look imposing and
marvelous
But they cannot help themselves but laugh
Every time a human walks by

The Seashell

I am the ancient seashell,
Scratching against wet fingernails,
Peeling off layers and layers of plastic armor,
Looking for scraps of seawater.

I am the submarine of ants,
Leaving an igloo in the sand's wake
Seeing the dim lights of anglers,
Hoping that it'll paint a new mural,
On my PTSD infested face.

As I ride the elevator current,
I become a speck of dirt in the greater scheme of things,
Orbiting a train that's traveling to Brooklyn,
Yet actually travelling around the entire
Earth.

I hit the sand softly,
Yet there's nothing but fossils.



Pandemic by Ayna Reinhart



Natasha by Andra Fong

Look Through the Window by Aleksey Kalinovski

Look through the window
The storm glows with magnificent streaks of light
The rain drops, tears of water slamming against the ground

as the storm rages on, people congregate
in their homes, ~~cherishing their~~ plotting with their loved ones the wicked laugh,
clearly at my expense, in front of their fires

The rain with blackened sky, fills the streets
Each individual drop coming together to ruin the roads and street paths
The rain falls into their gutters, ~~coming out clear~~ leaving pipes with the
remnants of dirty sludge

The gutters have to be full of decomposed leaves
They had to have installed a secret bypass
The water ~~shouldn't~~ is not as clean as it appears

The homes are not as clear as they appear
For why else would they purposefully move their homes
For why else would the homes separate themselves so far from mine?

Never-Ending Rain by Lionel Benjamin

Noise never values much until it vanishes
Vanishes into nothing but blackness
Blackness that makes colors look like miracles
Miracles full of confusion
Confusions that almost become common
Commonly making memories lost
Lost is every ounce of whoever existed
Existing until I exist again and again
Again and again and then nothing
Nothing much happens whenever it's raining
Raining eternally or never ending rain
Rain loyally waiting like a sickness with a heart
A heart created to pollute or created to hurt
Hurting no one or no one important
It's important to me, but whatever
Whatever comes my way
My way will be the one and only way
The one and only way to decide the solution to the problem
Problem child acting like he hears everything
Everything but the rain blocking out the noise



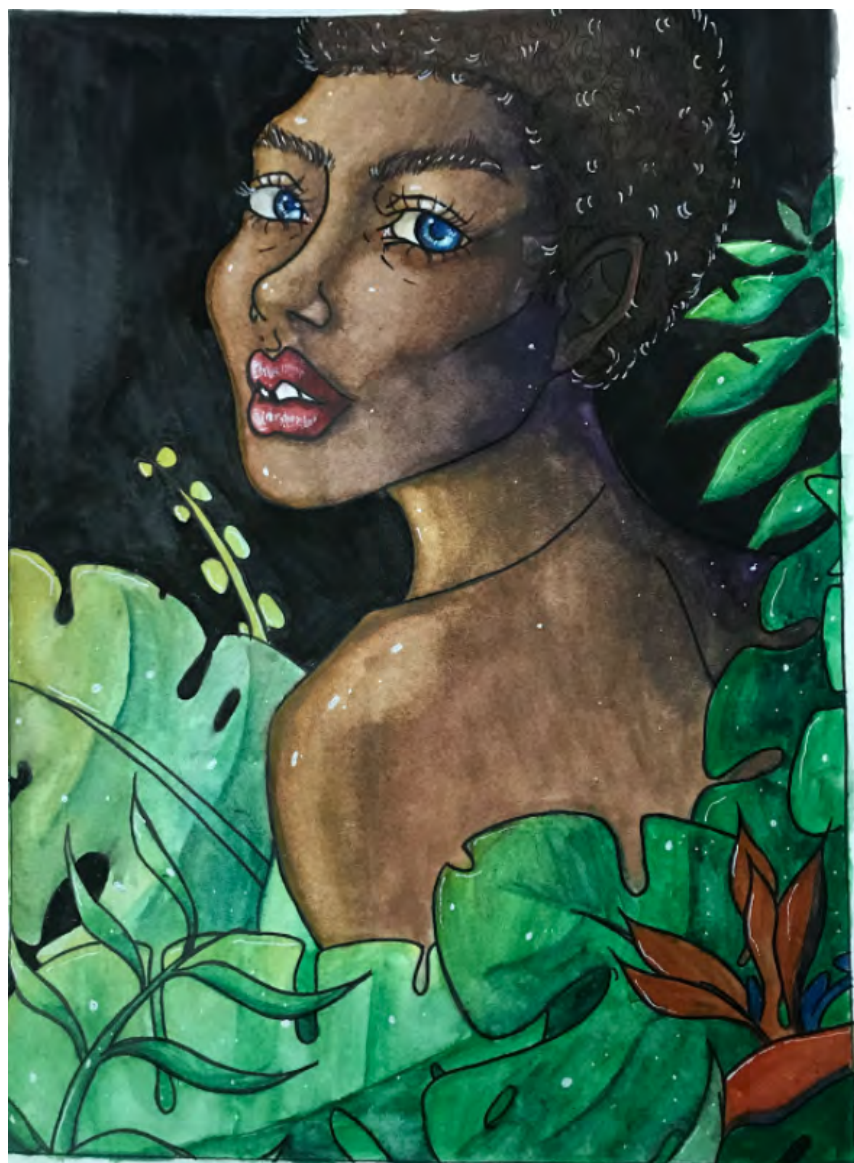
Drying Off by Glory Flores

To the Person I Admire by Daniel Mahfood

Sometimes I wonder how you put up with us
Do you wish you could live a luxurious life
Are there regrets in your past
How can you wear yourself out so much

What gives you motivation to get out of bed
What gives you motivation to go to work
Are there things you still want to do in your life
Do you wish you could find a briefcase lying around with a billion dollars in it
Sometimes I wonder why you do all this for us

Have you ever thought about giving up
Have you ever doubted yourself
How is it possible for one person to do so much
I hope this reaches the person
The person I admire



Princess Richardson

I Walked Into the Dark Room by Yana Sapunkova

I walked into the dark room
What seemed to be a young man was sitting on a small stool in front of
the window

The moon

He was looking at the moon and the stars scattered across the sky
His legs were pressed against his chest
He was mumbling something under his breath while biting his nails

Every step I took forward
His mumbling got louder and louder

“I am free”

“I am free

“Freedom”

“Freedom”

Once I got to the other side of the room
I pressed my fingertips against the lightswitch

With one effortless motion
I now faced an old man
Sitting on a small stool

“I am free”

“Freedom”

He was chained up in shackles
His feet were bleeding

I turned around and the door
The door was no longer there



Lunar Spacecraft by Samer Kaldy

The Book of Dust by Amelia Reitzfeld

The empty train track seemed to go on forever. The town was almost as quiet as the track. Trees symmetrically lined the path as if to help guide the train. The leaves would gently brush against the windows reminding the machine of the route it was on. If only that train were to ever come. Rats and other rodents had found their comfort in the warmth of the abandoned road. With no consistent sounds, no consistent movements, no shaking or fear they had found peace. Upon first glance, these animals seemed to be the only life in this town. The community was filled with frail, quiet people. People whose lives at this point were only mementos and pictures inside their creaky homes. Pictures of days when they used to explore. Books of languages they had once promised themselves they would speak. There were hundred year old dining tables with stories more detailed and intricate than could be described. These homes consisted of history. And adventure. Maps with thumb tacks pinned where they had once traveled. Coins from places that no longer existed. But the locks on these doors and the people who never left demonstrated silence among the town.

I ran my hand across the edge of a leather covered book. A mountain of dust began to collect under my finger tip growing as I kept my finger along that path.

"That was your grandfather's." My grandma's voice brought me back from wherever my mind had just gone. I followed her pointed finger to the book I had been touching. The golden letters were suddenly legible as my mind was now aware enough to read them. "TRAVEL". I apologetically moved my finger, startled by her acknowledging him. "Oh no, that's alright dear, he was very proud he filled that book." She slowly lumbered over to the desk where I was standing. I stood still waiting for her to reach me. When my grandfather died my grandma moved to this town. Despite my efforts to push her not to she did. She said it was quiet. It was simple. And it was the last place on earth my grandfather would have ever wanted to be. I guess that made it easier for her to forget him. Everything was different, and she no longer had to worry about the rocks on the beaches reminding her of him. She picked up the brick red book. The cover crinkled, evidently the first time in a long time this book had been acknowledged. She opened up to the first page. A picture of a young man in his twenties layed softly on the aged paper. I recognized my brother through that man. "Your grandfather," She explained in as few words as possible. I nodded, admiring the man who could have been mistaken for many of the others that had come after him. The next page was filled with photographs. My grandmother's unmistakable script painted across the top of the page labeling the images as ones taken in the Galapagos. A younger version of the woman holding this book was posed next to the man on the first page. They looked happy. It was as though you could hear their shared laughter through the photograph. The next few pages labeled different places. "Japan", "Rome", "Thailand", "Greece". Each photograph the same young posed couple explored.

"I don't understand you," I looked up at her tearful eyes. She looked surprised at the words I had just uttered, I was as well. How can someone just give up on everything they love and let their life become a book wrapped in a layer of dust? She had shushed these stories so many times that it felt like a myth I was supposed to have believed when I was little. She did not respond to my mumble, though her eyes

grew hurt. I knew that I was upsetting her but I knew this was what she needed to hear. I told her I loved her and I told her she needed a change. I told her she made me sad and she did not respond with words. She pushed me towards the door while maintaining her gentleness.

The difference left me astonished. The difference between the spontaneous, curious woman in the pictures and the one who had made me leave. It was as if the choice to move to this quiet town also silenced her desires. It was hard to distinguish what pain came from losing my grandfather and what pain came from being suppressed to the same few roads. The same few people. That was the town. Silent. With trees never able to guide trains that never came. And people that never left houses that could never tell their stories. And rats, that kept peace in the silence of the town.



The Handy Mushroom by Sade Desir



A Hope for Life by Genesis Santos-Francisco

Being Grateful by Frida Rakhamimova

Being grateful is something that comes from the heart
 It isn't a feeling that can be faked or torn apart
 Being thankful for all the good you have in your life
 Does not also mean forgetting the hardships and strife
 Such as parents who sacrificed it all
 To move to a new country takes a lot of gall
 The hardships of all they had to endure
 In an effort to make your future secure
 Their actions should be not be taken for granted
 Since through poor health and lack of money they stayed candid
 And allowed you to live out your dreams
 While also acting as helpful beams
 With constant reassurance and lots of patience
 It's unfair to say that all they do is surveillance
 There may be some arguing and a few disagreements
 But in the end they are always proud of your achievements
 For that I will always be indebted to them
 Since they make me feel like a star or gem
 After all they've done to get us here
 From their lives I will never disappear
 And for friends and those that support you
 Never forget what they helped you get through
 Since not everyone can accept you for who you are
 So keep those that do near and never far
 That is what it means to show gratitude and give thanks
 By cherishing those that would go to any lengths
 To keep you happy and supported
 Always keep them close and rewarded

A Glimpse of B by Teeka Duplessis

I dreamt I saw Bobby in the bathtub
 In the abundance of pinks and greens.
 The roses filled my nose.

After tickles from the burning water,
 He cried black soot
 And sunk.
 The sky glossed over his porcelain body,
 Scraggly hair and pinkies peeking through.

The horizon rose,
 Bright.
 Fluorescence seized the gaping squares before my eyes.

When I got up I recalled Bobby.
 He lay next to me next to the bed.

I went to do my hair for Bobby.
 I walked into last night,
 But the roses weren't roses,
 And there was more than just pink.

I cut my hair for Bobby,
 Hugged by a black shawl.
 Your tears.
 I closed my eyes
 As if to blink them away for you.
 I smiled, encountered your face,
 Your hair clumped and wet
 And speckled skin taut.

Turning,
 the blade pulled you away.
 The drags down my neck need not rake you from my memory.

I hope to meet you tonight.
 In a room with blue flowers,
 Your arms, warmer than the shawl.

I hope you'll like my hair
 As it is done for you
 And the sky caress us both
 In comforting light.



4 Horsemen by Matthew Hamm

Hands Aloft by Maggie Wienstien

A wall of blue a mile long
 Preventing a crowd of people from seeking justice
 For a list of crimes that goes on and on
 Hands held aloft, these people plead
 For a peaceful change and the ability to lead
 A life that is not full of fear that they might be perceived
 As a danger because of how they appear

These officers, here to “serve and protect”
 Refuse to look her in the eye
 Because if they want to shoot her,
 They’ll have to recognize that she’s another human being
 Same as them, she’s alive
 With a mother and a father who will demand an answer as to why
 They felt the need to shoot their little girl
 Who was down on her knees
 Fighting for a better world

The Treads on the Tank by Jackson Cuff

The treads on the tank go round and round
 Round and round
 Round and round
 The treads on the tank go round and round
 All through the town

The turret on the tank turns and turns
 Turns and turns
 Turns and turns
 The turret on the tank turns and turns
 All through the town

The guns on the tank goes “burp burp burp”
 “Burp burp burp”
 “Burp burp burp”
 The guns on the tank goes “burp burp burp”
 All through the town

The men on the tank go “bang bang bang”
 “Bang bang bang”
 “Bang bang bang”
 The men on the tank go “bang bang bang”
 All through the town

The driver of the tank says “shoot them in the back”
 “Shoot them in the back”
 “Shoot them in the back”
 The driver of the tank says “shoot them in the back”
 All through the town



Princess Richardson



Ava by Odile Henriques

Thing in the Dumpster by Huan Ye Mei

Do you know the street in the alley?
The one with moss and grime?
If you take a right
Then go straight
You will see a thing in the dumpster

Ask it
"Who are you"
"What are you"

It will come
It will come

Just wait
Just wait

Then once you open the door
Once you open the gate

You will see it
You will see

Nothing

What were you expecting?
A secret?

A Series of Unsent Texts by Juliet Grochowski

february 29, 2020
sorry i added and then unadded you on snap, i was in my bag for a sec

february 8, 2020
should I dye my hair?

january 17, 2020
ok

december 31, 2019
happy new year baby

december 25, 2019
merry christmas baby

july 4, 2018
i'm sorry if this is weird but i was thinking and i guess i just wanted to
tell you i kinda have a crush on you but you don't have to say anything
and i know you don't feel the same way and

june 11, 2018
hey it's not a big deal if you can't come but i'm having a birthday thing
today. it's just a couple of us going to the pier. just let me know if you
wanna come.

november 5, 2017
i miss you

october 4, 2016
hey, you called me? sorry i don't have this number saved

february 14, 2016
yes



Among the Columns by Jade Forrester



Losing Myself by Lance Chan



Amaya by Isabel Herrera

Dust in My Eyes by *Trinity Folkes*

I imagined dreams
 I imagined love in its darkest days
 I imagined peace and serenity
 I imagined death as a rarity
 I imagined pain as an accident
 I imagined hope, wistfully
 I imagined life for a moment
 I imagined stars and trains and going far
 I imagined moons and dust
 I imagined dirt
 I imagined self
 I imagine the future
 But I do not recollect the past

I dream of today being equal to tomorrow
 Stagnant and frail
 Merciless and I find
 The aches it takes to be kind within my mind
 Have all dulled away in the thoughts of tomorrow
 May my ocean of peace hit the shore
 My death a rarity
 My body may soon take on the form of a cube
 And I will lay at its mercy once again
 Should my every pain quell
 And my hope wash out
 I will be forced to move somewhere else

As an eventuality, I am left with myself
 Forcing my tranquility and serenity with every smile
 I am left with myself
 On just one setting on a dial
 Of which I cannot turn back from
 I can only form myself
 I am not molded on a day when the weather is nice
 But on its darkest day where the winds have no flavor
 I favor myself when the notch is turned up
 If only for a moment

I find dust in my eyes when I've just been crying
 And something learns to reset itself.

Twisted and Wrong by Martin Kiser

A young woman watches the sun slowly arc through the sky from the window at the far end of the room.

"Emelieeee? Anyone home?"

Emelie blinks and her cubicle comes back into focus, over the top of which she can see her co-worker's head peeping at her.

"Yeah.... Yeah I'm here. Sorry"

Jesse laughs and tells her she daydreams too much.

"Boss wants those reports filed by four. How much did you get done?"

Emelie feels a slight pang of guilt in the pit of her stomach and she glances at the pile of paperwork in the corner of her desk, out of sight from Jesse's big wandering eyes.

"Good. I'm doing good, I think I might actually be able to go home early today!"

The truth was, Emelie has done absolutely nothing. She isn't feeling too hot from last night. In-fact, she has a hangover almost all the time these days. Jesse is reluctantly sinking back down into his domain seeing that she has again drifted off. She looks again around her plain desk and pictures the bar. She has a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other. She is talking in a wild animated manner and the others are swaying as if entranced by her movements. They swim in the laughter and she stands above them like a lighthouse. But then the glass suddenly breaks and the sweet scent of the liquor turns sour and slowly warps into the odor of cheap cologne.

"What the hell are you doing? I don't pay you to sleep!"

It's her boss Staneks, who is currently leaning his greasy head close to her face in order to yell in her ear, spraying her with foul spittle.

"WAKE THE F--K UP!"

Jesse is pretending not to be entertained but the clicking from his computer has suspiciously stopped. Not that she can blame him, nothing ever happens here, aside from the occasional eruption of spit and bad breath exploding out of Staneks' mouth. Emelie blinks twice and shuffles her papers around as Staneks retreats suspiciously reminding her she already has two strikes. She gets out at six just as the sun is finally setting, covering everything in a soft red glow. She walks down the sparsely populated avenue quickly, her bag swinging beside her.

She reaches a corner and heads into the fancy historical district, where she is now facing the sinking sun in all its glory. She continues walking, feeling more and more uncomfortable. The sun is reaching that point where the seams of day and night begin to blend, that strange and brief period of time where they are the same. Emelie happens to glance to her side and stops.

She is standing in front of an old gas lamp post. It protrudes from the ground, its metal embellished with flourishes that give it the impression of a vine. The glass cage atop its head is not yet lit. She can feel it waiting to ignite, she can feel it in her bones. She looks down at the cracked sidewalk and sees its shadow. It's beautiful, the top of the post casts the image of a large blossom onto the ground. It reaches out farther and farther down the street like an arm searching. There is an old bench to compliment the lamp, she sits and puts her head in her hands. Emelie is not sure how long she watches the lamp and its shadow. Long enough that the person in front of the apartment across the street is watching her suspiciously. She starts to scroll mindlessly through her

phone. She can't put a finger on it, but she knows she is waiting to see something.

Finally, Emelie stands reluctantly and feels a wave of exhaustion. The shadow has almost disappeared now as the shroud of darkness envelops the block. She begins to walk again, looking at the still faintly burning but now sunless horizon. Emelie reaches the intersection. It is telling her to walk, it's blinking. She looks back down towards the bench and the lamp. Its light is burning now. But its shadow is twisted and wrong, like a trampled flower.



Bulimia by Autumn Shapiro

Three-Leaf Clovers *by Stella Tannen*

Three leaf clovers ripple in a field in the wind,
a very small mass of gently waving blue-green
seawater.
That earthy dirt smell settles at their roots,
a cold, bitter freshness in the stems and the leaves.
Children toddle around in the sea of three-leaf clovers,
if they are small enough they do not know that three-leaf clovers are not lucky.
Older ones rip them out of the ground in handfuls,
searching for one with four leaves to tack to their walls,
or to press between wax papers,
or glue with nasty-smelling paste to birthday cards.
They do not know why four-leaf clovers are lucky,
but they are bored of the ordinary,
and three-leaf clovers lie, dying, crying,
in heaps.
But very small children do not know that three-leaf clovers are not lucky.
They have no sense of what ordinary is.
To a small child everything is extraordinary,
even cloudy skies and three-leaf clovers.
They do not know what birthdays are,
much less birthday cards decorated with lucky clovers.
They do not know what wax paper is,
and they are not old enough to be allowed to use tacks.
So a toddler rolls around in the dirt, in the extraordinary masses of
three-leaf clovers,
and when he sits up there is one dangling from his mouth.

The Beast Inside *by Emma Bank*

A girl, steaming
Her cheeks are red and hot
If you touch them, you will burn yourself
Her eyes are full of flames
She was a volcano everyone knew was about to erupt
And the beast come out of its cave
Deep and mysterious,
Dark as the night
Everybody feared the beast
No one knew what it looked like
All they knew was its TERROR!
Making children burst into tears
Waterfalls come down their faces
Many people think that this girl is from a different world, carrying this
beast inside of her
But what they don't know
Is that everyone in the world has their own, even THEM



Infantilization by Sofia Cirone

Yes, Please

To see millions of shapes
Millions of colors
At once
it feels weird
it feels kind of different
The static in her ear
Muffled melancholic tunes in her ear
Looking into the abyss of her humanity
She thinks she hears a heartbeat
What was once hers
Is now resting
It likes this sensation as well

Inhale
Look up
Exhale
Slowly close your eyes
White linings fill the air around herself
Let yourself go

Don't dwell
It'll be over soon
Then we can ~~stop~~
Do it over again
~~Stop~~
And again
~~No~~
Yes
Then we can do it over again

The white linings turns into a figure
It bores its eyes back into me
Staring at my soul
It smirks

How does it feel?
I don't know
How do you feel right now?
Better than before
How did you feel before?
Fine
How do you feel now?
I feel like I'm on top of the world
Would you like more?



66 Years by Camille Mitchell

To the Moon and Back by Madison Katsman

I know it's happened multiple times. I know that it is difficult to forget something like that. You don't have to forget. You just have to get better. You do not get better by beating yourself up over things you can't control. You need to work towards making it better. I understand that you have not felt true happiness in a long time. I think that it's unfortunate because you're my favorite person and you deserve to be happy. This has taken too much of you from yourself. It has consumed you and now you think it's who you are. This doesn't define you. You are so much more than what happened to you. I love you to the moon and back a million times over.

A Museum of the Sea by Aleksey Kalinovksi

Walking beside the boundless sea. Walking is the time of thought. When you are walking, you are fixating on a goal. When you are late, walking is a penance prolonging your goal. When you are early, walking is the experience of life. When it is repetitive, walking is no longer step by step, but more path by path. Walking is immutable, it is a fact of life and yet it changes so much depending on circumstances. With a clock, walking becomes a tool where you spend time for movement. Walking is also defined by the land trodden. A beachside walk becomes a museum of the sea. A city-sidewalk becomes an exercise of speed and how quickly one can get there. A walk in the forest becomes either a display of nature or the fight for your life, depending on the person. Walking is the experience which binds people's perception of the world.

Busy Streets *by Salomee Khawja*

Two worlds exist, my window in between
Sitting next to my window, nothing can be heard
After waiting a few seconds, the clock starts ticking
It had always been ticking, but today it reminded me of its presence
So did the walls, as they vibrated from the cold
I thought they were shivering!

Sometimes, the leaves started knocking on my window
They rustled together in the wind
Like intruders
Sometimes I thought they were trying to escape the cold

I rejoice at the fact that I can hear the chatters of the street
Everything and every thing has been talking
The wind whispers into my ears
It is fast and I can't decipher a word
The walls have been listening
The beds have been breathing the air coming from the window

At night, the streets are busier
Heels and shoes are walking on the pavement
Laughter can be heard in the distance
People are laughing and so were the windshield wiper of the cars
.....it is raining.
The winds are angry and push the plastic cups and cans across the sidewalk

And Hark! Vehicles run across the streets
Some are nervous and run slow
The others are mischievous and sprinted towards the road

The cars stumble on the poorly constructed road
Loads of tractors and trucks crash as the tires bounce
The road continuously sighs as vehicles run over it



Looped by Brianna Blue

The Drum *by Phoebe Pfaffman*

I started running at night just a couple weeks ago. Not for exercise, but more for a chance to hypnotize myself for a moment, for my mind to disappear into footsteps.

When you run, all you can hear is your heart beating like a drum and all you can feel is your breath in your body, moving in and out freely, like it's being let go by a clenched fist.

I walk outside and start running once I turn onto Wolcott Street, past the bodega on the corner of my block, with the several MegaMillions lotto ticket advertisements stuck to the windows. I don't start running right when I leave my door because I don't want someone to think I'm running away from something and stop me.

This happened to me a few years ago when running from the train station to the bus stop. I wasn't afraid I'd miss my bus and hadn't seen it coming or anything, but sometimes you just feel like you have to run; to hypnotize yourself for that moment, and throw up everything sticking to the walls inside your head; when you can hear everything except your heart beating; and you feel everything but your breath in your body. You need rhythm. You need a drum.

When I started running that day, I didn't want to stop. I wanted to run forever, for the rhythm to take control, for the heart to be the brain.

But a cop drove up next to me and asked me what I was doing, like he knew everything. I told him I was just running.

I wanted to scream and strangle him the way I want to do when I get angry like that sometimes, when someone takes that moment away from me and makes me stop running; makes me stop and stand at the bus stop, each heart beat flying further away.

Then the cop just disappeared. He drove away and left me standing there with all the people staring into the street, looking out like there's a dream between the curb and the empty parking lot, but there's not.

Running at night is better. The streets are emptier like they used to be, and you get that peaceful feeling, that sacred feeling that this place is a secret that belongs to you.

I run to Valentino Pier. I run to the farthest end, where the men come to fish when the sun is there, and all the lights lining the pier at night are that perfect yellow color that makes everything look like it's made out of magic.

When I get to the end, I see that the water is still waiting and hasn't left the ground. And I listen to the sound of silence that's the same as the hush of that still ocean and that hum of wind, the same as the drum, the heart and the breath.



Quiet by Arev Amroyan

To Those Who Are From South Brooklyn

by Yana Sapunkova and Akulina Kashchei

To those who discriminate against people who don't fit their standards,
Their standards of racism, homophobia, misogyny, and classism.
Their standards of political beliefs,
Screw you!

To those who brag about the money their parents gave them,
The money they use for illegal purposes,
The money they use to buy 100 dollar leggings, which they then call "style",
Screw you!

To those who won't call out each other,
The ones who make fun of people who don't look like them,
The ones who are prejudiced against cultures then steal them for their own benefit,
Screw you!

To those who go with the grain,
Screw you!

Devoid of Light and Sound *by Maggie Wienstien*

In a house
Devoid of light and sound
I witnessed a mother, thin, pale
Kneel over her wailing babe

The child cried loudly and the mother cried silently,
And rocked the small being in time with its wails.
I asked, "Why soothe when you yourself are unsettled?"
"I weep because he weeps," she whispered in reply.

"His tears are my tears,
His comfort will be my comfort,
Soothing my child is my only relief."



Kya by Kya Parris

The Fight by Layla Musallam

Protests are bursting left and right
But when will the embers in our souls ignite
The flame of change we are longing to see
The difference we seek is what we must be

How do we change a system that failed
When so many around still believe
That the system that tears families apart
Is still working at heart

Black Lives Matter is an important movement
It's working to protect the ones hurt most
By this fight

But saying in response All Lives Matter
Is so ignorant and awful I just can't fathom
If a house was on fire and someone rushed to help
Would you tell the firemen to stop and spray all the other houses first

Yes, all lives matter
That is abundantly clear
But some are in trouble more than others
And together we must work to help

Our friends, our family, our neighbors are in danger
And we can't let them fight it alone

We're in a pandemic
And I know that it's scary
But you think this will stop
For a second cause we're weary
From fighting a battle for which we were unprepared

To think for once we would be safe
For this new war we all must face
This battle may single out a race
But it will take all of us to chase
Away the foe that doesn't not care
Who it takes down

A black on the ground
Is that all they see
George Floyd lost his life
And it seems like they don't care

Breonna Taylor was another death
This woman lost her life after midnight
The police crashed into her home
Not announcing their presence wouldn't you be scared

Ms Taylor was an EMT
But who was there to save her when she was in need

Like so many others these two lost their lives
And the police got away with their unlawful crimes
Finally we are seeing some action
As the man Derek Chauvin was at last arrested

We must be the change we want to see

They may say we don't understand
I call that BS
They may say we're too young
I call that BS

In fact I believe it is us who know best
We watch everyday as they steal another from our ranks
I am painfully aware of the protests
I wish I could go and stand with them
But now there is another barrier holding us back
And we must fight twice as hard

We are Americans
We live in the land of the free

Well it doesn't seem so free to me



Andean Bear by Iuliia Zaruchevskaia

A Departure by Wiktoria Klimczuk

The silence of loneliness.
A ring of conversation.
Questionable amusement.
Accusation.
Mindless confusion.
A question,
More words.
More questions.
Offense?

Distraction.
Escape.
Anger?
No - a mistake.
Question.
No, definitely not a mistake.
Disagreement.
A silent question,
To self.
A voiced answer.
...
Ignorance.

Now it's anger.
Breath. Wait.
Ignored truth.
Pointless statement.
More ignorance!
Honest answer.
"No."
Made up "truth."
Disbelief.
Hurt.
Unvoiced disagreement.
And silent fury.

Breath.
Explanation.
Ignorance.
Loud silence.

Fake justification.
Fake excuse.
Fake understanding.

Regret?
None.
Truth?
None.
Understanding?
None.

Disgust.

More questions to self.
Leave.

Forgotten,
Not forgiven.
A departure.
A permanent one.

Good.

A Walk of Mine by Ripley Butterfield

I can feel the veins beneath the skin inside my nostrils sting and
my lungs becoming chapped, walking the hill.
Surrounded by Johnsons and Stantons and Smiths, and occasional Vanderbilts,
yet, I can't help but pinpoint the gnats that drop down and shoot up
Bicycling in packs of 8 or 10, at head-level. Humid anger.

My feet are worn as my sneakers, I become aware
When the mourning men and girls in cloaks and dresses like Queen Victoria
Pause some silent grievance to turn my way.
Mother Stanton, or Bergen or Jefferson is making her descent
Arms crossed and teeth apart beneath her stitched lips.

The summer bugs block my path, concentric circling the funeral procession
Saying, if someone should be so deject without a loss
or failed cousinly scramble for wealth,
She cannot pass 7th or 6th avenue in the confines of this place.
I walk through nonetheless, shielded by some phantom.



Beauty by Jin Ling Zheng

Donald Trump *by Jenna Sajecki*

Make America Great Again!
What does that mean?
Because, like others say, America
looks like a shithole to me.

“We have it totally under control!”
as thousands of people lose their lives,
“Don’t be afraid of Covid!”
Are you forgetting how many have died?

Don’t try to tell me he cares for the people,
when his heart only beats,
eyes only beam,
for those who don’t have to fight to be equal.

Protestors are thugs,
yet domestic terrorists are great people?
Does this country look great to you
with Donald Trump as a leader?

Women are called murderers
when they want to make a choice,
but his habit of preying upon them is taken
as boys will be boys?

Military members are praised
for keeping the country safe,
but a transgender gets denied
for wanting to do the same.

Ignorance is bliss,
so it’s expected he can’t see
America’s not beneficial for many,
only people like him and his posse.

So this is my goodbye to
Donald J. Trump.
You’ve finally made America great
by no longer leading this dump!

Trees *by Gabrielle Zhuravenko*

Trees surround the exterior of this nuclear family’s background. The little boy plays in his kiddie pool behind his parents while his parents lay on lawnchairs, tanning. The father holds his hand against his head with a displeased expression on his face. The mother seems the opposite of her husband, looking relaxed with her eyes closed, stretched out. Throughout the yard, there are mysterious white straws and plates. On the table between the parental figures, there sits a cup, an ashtray, a pack of smokes, and a tiny metal box. On the far right, there is a swing set. On the far left, there is a picnic table. Nothing has changed, nor will it ever change.



Moving Day by Mabel Hover

Her Window is Her TV *by Makayla Desrosiers*

Her window is her TV. Suddenly we are all aliens. Outside we won’t dare go while the pandemic keeps us on hold .

Her window is her personal entertainment center. It keeps her safe and indoors. With these social distancing methods in place she doesn’t know when she’ll ever get back outdoors. Windows so clear she could see the whole globe light up with Corona. Life may never get back to normal.

She never turns on her real TV and wonders if looking outside is all she needs to see. With all the killing, shooting and protesting outside, she wonders if the Channel 7 News is even worth watching. She thinks if she peeks her head out she might not survive.

Living in fear she does. Everyday is a new episode in this series. At 6:30, an unarmed black man is shot and killed by a cop. At 3:30, a 14 year old is shot for mistaken identity. At 7:00, a random 30 year old man punches an Asian woman on the train. Outside her window is a reality show, if you ask me. It’s sad her window can’t be filled with cartoons, like the ones we would wanna watch on TV.



June 2020 by Autumn Shapiro

Requiem by Valeria Vantuyl

Your voice flows in harmony with the wind
 You appear faintly in the mirror I gaze in
 To all of the memories sealed carefully away
 In a poor wooden box with the lock decayed

I hold your ashes closely to my heart that lingers
 They escape like grains of sand through my trembling fingers
 I see you reflecting back at me when I cry
 When my tears get lost in the copy of the sky

The sea, where I first saw you perched on a rock
 Staring cautiously at the boats parked on the dock
 How helpless you looked and how small you appeared
 Like the wind could effortlessly sweep you up, something I feared

Could you just taste the irony? As I stand out here
 In the graveyard, fragments of souls lurking near
 I hear their echoes in a corridor that is narrow
 Their tragedy stings my heart as if it were an arrow

Fundamental Forgiveness by Malika Shakirova

As many mistakes you make, the hole you dig is that much deeper.
 The pit of f--king disappears.
 The growth of humanity stops within you.
 Drugs, money, sex, alcohol:
 A distraction, a shovel.

You disappear within that darkness,
 Thinking you have no responsibilities,
 No one to reach out to you,
 No one you devote your life to.

Fundamental forgiveness.

The hole is deep,
 There's no ladder.
 Blood encrusted fingers,
 Dirty nails.

You grab onto the walls of the hole,
 Screaming, crying,
 Begging.

"It's okay, I forgive you,"
 Echoes from the rubble.
 That hole levels taller,
 And your head lingers smaller.



The Hair by Eliana Emelianova

Self-Portrait by Kya Parris

We live in a society where there are certain beauty standards, and even though they are looser than they were decades ago, they remain rigid and biased in many ways. They are pushed on people at very young ages through social media. While working on this project, I confronted a lot. At first, I thought it would be a healthy exercise, a way to appreciate myself more deeply and as a work of art. I thought I would be able to look at myself and see all the beauty that I hold, something that I can most easily see in others but not in myself. I worked for days using picture references I took of myself, posing in a non-traditional way, half to experiment with how to sculpt a more expressive portrait, and half to remove myself from this extremely important piece of work I was making. On one of the last few days working on my self-portrait, I was smoothing out my skin. It reminded me of an idea I think of sometimes: imagining if people were made out of clay, if we could at any time make ourselves “perfect”. As I held the sculpture of my face, something came over me, an overwhelming flood of mixed emotions. I started crying. Holding your own face as if it was the face of someone else scared me. I had the persistent feeling that I didn’t like the face I was holding. I felt it didn’t look like me, or the way I saw myself in the mirror. It felt as if I held the face of an innocent, unknowing human in my hands. It felt alive and too real for comfort.



Self Portrait by Ayden Yair

Capsules by Lucia Maiorescu

“F--k f--k f--k!” I yell from my room, rummaging through my overnight bag. My mother walks in looking concerned. “What are you looking for?” She asks me. “My Goddamned meds,” I reply. “Hey, language!” she says. I never understood why she would let me say f--k and not Goddamned. I know it’s about using the Lord’s name in vain and her Catholic roots, but it still amused me. “Which meds? The Seroquel or the Effexor?” she asks me. “The Effexor,” I reply as I shuffle through my old medication bottles to see if I had any left over. “I really can’t call Dad and tell him to bring them over. He’s gonna be pissed,” I say in an increasingly frustrated tone. “Come with me. We take the same shit,” she says to me. I follow my mom into her bedroom to the part of her dresser that holds all the pill bottles. “How many milligrams do you take at night? Fifty, right?” She asks me as she pours a few peach colored pills into her hand. “No, I take a hundred,” I reply. “Really? You take the same dosage as me? Like mother, like daughter,” she says jokingly, handing me a pill and an old glass of water from her nightstand. As I swallow the pill, I wonder how many more capsules I will have to take in this lifetime. At the rate I’m going, I should be taking the dosage of an MMA fighter by the time I’m twenty. When will I be fixed? Can I be cured? Or am I just destined to be sick forever?



Internalized Opression by Rebecca Aris

King of Linen Sheets *by Phoebe Pfaffman*

This is the kind of white you dream of
Waking up to the
King
Of linen sheets

Hair hanging in the static
Streams of iridescent Morning

Your slightly crooked nose running
For the doorway
When it rings

Sometimes
He allows me pieces

Opens
The cocoon of blanket
He has wrapped around himself
Like a gown
He lets me in

Says
“It’s not winter
With both of us in here”

And it comes back
Becoming more again

Waking up for the second time
To the
Pumping wings
Of an eagle
The both of us
One bird

Before the blanket falls down our backs
The crown of spring
Shattered on the hardwood
Winter closing into stone



Michaela Cintron-Andrews

Misplaced *by Lucina Ozcan*

You are not here but still linger
I walk past places and stores that remind me of you
And I always try my best to avoid them
But I feel like my legs have a mind of their own
The outline of your body is still embedded in my sheets
I still pretend you’re next to me most nights
I’ll admit that I cried the first time I washed them after you left
It took me longer than it should have
And I remind myself not to wear my favorite perfume
The one you got me
Because all of the memories flood back
The first time I met your family, the first Christmas we spent together...
And all I can do is cry
I associate that scent with your smile which is why I’m never able to
wear it again
Without dragging my feelings alongside
I still have some of your clothes and they smell like you
I wore them every night to bed when you left
I hold onto your sweater like a childhood blanket
How do you let a memory stay a memory without destroying yourself?
Because now not only was I torn apart from you,
But I misplaced myself in the process

Shuffling Feelings by Hailey Prophyl

Sentences tend to bend into shoes shuffling feelings hearing through earrings walking waking shaking shivering diving driving arriving at the river versus curses cakes corpses sources serpent slithers silently tickling kind kangaroos gurus stamina is stamping amendments are making commandments demanding mandatory dichromatic death disciplinary canaries can't candy catastrophes trending readily editing dictating tainting antagonizing zig-zags engagingly farting altering terrestrial lions lying trying to tic-tac-toe row the bow in a boat around the moat arising arbitrary boats rat-tat-tat time is rhyming and miming mimicking mickey ickey keys keep peeping gladly lacking continuity tuning tuna because aliens are bragging constantly demanding eureka factoids giggling happily in joking kinetic longitudes madly nagging opposing pompous questions rapidly substantially taunting urethras violently wailing on xylophones yearning ziquashily counting qualities of quantities teeming examining multitudes of hydrants



Girl and Monster by Brianna Duncan

Scene

“Our streak broke,” I tell him, fully aware that I’m grinning crookedly. My mask covers it up but I still hate it when I do that. However, at this moment, on a snowy Sunday evening, I don’t care.

“What streak?” He calls out from, I’d say, eight feet away, holding his mask up as he speaks.

“You know,” I look down, watching my feet fiddle with the three inches of snow on the ground as I lean against my car, “Ever since I reached out to you in November, we haven’t stopped talking since,” I look back at him, his eyes fixed dead at me. He’s still holding up the black fabric over his nose and mouth. I just know his hand is freezing. Maybe he’s distracted by the embarrassingly constant fog on the lenses of my glasses. I know I am.

“What point are you trying to make?” He asks, inching closer to me. My teeth chatter as I try to say something but I only let out a weighted breath, instantly turning my lenses white.

“Okay, I can’t do this,” Fed up, I take off my mask with the hopes that I don’t rip out any of my piercings. It’s not like anyone was around us anyways. I stuff the cover-up in my jacket pocket. My lenses instantly clear up, allowing me to focus on him with no disruption, “The point I’m trying to make is that clearly something changed and I hate to believe that it was all for nothing.”

As it turns out, it was.



Elena by Kya Parris

Twisted by Beatrice Goyer

I knew a skinny little girl who looked in the mirror one day,
And found a large, chubby woman glaring back.
Devastated, the girl cried out, “Why
Won’t the reflection work?”
To which the mirror replied, “Ah,
My girl, don’t shoot the messenger.
I am merely a vessel filled with
Your twisted reality.”

They Bleed Me a Desert by Yolaine St. Fort

She plunges needles into my wrist
collect vials of blood
still, it's not enough
pitye. pitye.

My wrist swells like
a root canal gone wrong.
Last night, the nurse said
I needed antibiotics
She lied and said it wouldn't hurt.

Alzheimer's made my old man
satisfied like a baby boy with
a sison in his mouth. Would he see
the nurse holding a flower stem instead?

I swear she wants my blood to study it—
to steal secrets of my lucid mind.
I was around when Rafael Trujillo
was killing Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

His soldiers threw babies in the air
like balloons and popped them with spears.

The nurse blows on my wound,
but the wind from her mouth
smells of cayenne pepper.



Mirror Image by Aisha Shazar



Midsummer Blues by Eman Malik

Eyeing a small sliver of light by Gabrielle Zhuravenko

Eyeing a small sliver of light escaping through the curtains, you can see the aftermath of the sun's descent into the sky. Even from afar, you see the light blue turn into light gray. It's early enough for the room to be so dark, but for the curtains to look dimly lit and hopeful. I'm still on my bed, watching the little pocket of light change and shapeshift. You can see some clouds strolling by, the sky looks like an oil painting-- there are so many shades of light blue with just a slight difference in each. The view is peaceful and calm, lighting up my room as I do work, slowly. At second glance, it seems like everything has changed. The curtain is lit up brighter than it was before, and the numbers on my computer indicate the time seems to have flown by.

Cheeseburger Backpack by Skyler Sharpe

A wise man once said it is the fool who rushes in.
I guess I am fool of it.

I find myself running to you in leaps and bounds, bound by your love.
All of my waking days consumed by thoughts of you, my head
in a daze.

I am drawn to your arms, magnetized by your touch.
Every hug sends sparks through my veins.
Your touch leaves me craving more. I am an addict with a pen,
you are my drug.
Don't ruin us, God said.
A pleading voice from above, rooting on our side.

My lighthouse in the dark stormy ocean, navigating me to dry land.
My ship I sail on, built tough for smooth sailing on treacherous trips.
My anchor, holding me sturdy, keeping me from being washed away.
My lungs, reminding me to breathe in the salty ocean air.
My crutch, I lean on as I hobble about on my peg leg.
My parrot, keeping me company on a long voyage of pillaging
the seven seas.
You are my world and everything in it, my treasure.

I'm trying to write something cute for you but I just turned into a pirate.
Writing is hard, I can never find the right words to express just
how I feel.
A strong swarm of emotions surrounds the thought of your face.
I feel woozy and weak in the knees, yet I feel strong and brave.
I feel like I could do anything, yet all I want to do is curl up in a ball.
All of these mixed emotions, yet every one of them is positive.
My brain is flooded with thoughts, yet every negative one seems
to fly away.
You always bring that dumb smile to my face, yet I never want it
to leave.
Do you think pirates have pet frogs?

You saved my life, over and over again.
You are the wisest man I have ever met.
I want to rush into life with you.
I love you.



Sibling Angels by Kya Parris

200,000 Tests and 120 Dead by *Rubya Ali*

You think COVID won't get you
But it can get you at any moment
So I am isolated
December 18, just a month ago, I turned 17
Shelley, Showkat and Ibrahim,
Bro, Ma and Babba,
All suffer from COVID-19
The virus is touching everyone but me
December 18, NYC dealing with COVID-19: Day 293
200,000 tests and 120 dead recently
I don't like tracking numbers, but numbers are all I see
People have their whole homes for quarantine
But not me, just my room, all lonely
Every other room is deadly
You think COVID won't get you
But it could get you at any moment
Now I live in a house filled with it
Suddenly I am doing groceries
Apples, Chicken Nuggets, Soda, Prunes, Tangerines
Out in the cold, snow still on the ground, 30 degrees
Suddenly I am carrying the family
"There is death in my body," my older brother says.
December 23, what a week!
14 days, 5 hours of sleep each
But how can I sleep? At the end of the week
The nurse told my dad to go to the emergency room
Suddenly I'm writing dad's health records
Before he goes to the hospital
Writing mom's health records in case she goes to the hospital
"Let this not be the week. I am not in the mood to lose,"
My older sister says
Luckily, it becomes the week of the Ali family's recovery
The vaccine is here, the masks are still there
Three vaccines, variety
Better days are coming
Days where we go to Spain
Loved ones come over for holidays
Times where you aren't worrying about another COVID case
Better days, better days, better days



In Pain by Jin Ling Zheng

My Death by *Viktoria Klapkova*

The sun paints the sky violet it sets
I found what I love and let it kill me
'Cause all I wanted was to be pretty
I stare at my reflection in the mirror
A fragile, shattered skeleton glares back & smirks
Skin pale as yonder waning moon
Lips of lurid ocean blue
With each second, my heart palpitates
The ground beneath me starts to shake.
I sit on the floor and take a blade
As the word "worthless" is engraved
My hastily weeping tears stung the wounds
As the heart slowly paused its rhythm
My eyes fluttered shut
I was nothing but a Disintegrated pile of bones
A corpse of betrayal, unruly and relentless
I dwelled too long to be set free
Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned
In hell I should perish for all eternity

Marshmallows *by William Adams*

Chapter 1~Smores~

They shish-kebabbed a marshmallow and painstakingly positioned it over the faltering blazes. It took a couple of attempts before they could delicately brown the marshmallow rather than transforming it into a searing hellfire. I disdain consumed S'mores. Finally, my open-air fire creation was prepared. My mouth started to water. The young ladies were escaping their seats and going to the oven, prepared to get their own forks and follow my splendid model—when, lamentably, our eagerness went to a sudden end. They understood that the remaining parts of my marshmallow were starting to trickle off my fork. Since I like things to be slick and clean—and wouldn't fantasize about setting another, ideal marshmallow on a disgusting, gooey fork—something must be finished. I didn't stop to consider the logical reality that in the event that one places a marshmallow on a fork, holds it over an open fire, browns the outside of the marshmallow—which one eats—yet is left with the goo in the center, which seems uncooked—the fork will in any case be hot. Indeed. I pushed the fork into my mouth, clasped down with my lips, and expected to polish off the remaining parts of the marshmallow. Unexpectedly, everybody was expanding at me—eyes wide, jaws dropped. I didn't feel anything, be that as it may, but heard a nauseating, sizzling sound reverberating in my ears. She shish-kebabbed a marshmallow and painstakingly positioned it over the faltering blazes. It took a couple of attempts before I could delicately brown the marshmallow.

Chapter 2 ~Smores continued~

He almost laughed, but then the nerve endings that hadn't been singed recovered from their initial shock. Frantically screaming, jumping, and waving my arms in a cooling motion, He ran towards the freezer to get ice, to be met with empty trays; hey settled for a wet paper towel. When he was finally able to stand calmly in one place, Sue inspected my wound and informed me, "Well, Bec, the inside of your mouth looks like the belly of a dead fish." With those words of comfort, she and the girls traipsed off to youth group—without a single S'more. she was left to her own devices. I tried to ingest some antibiotic cream to lessen the pain. He didn't think it worked, but the ice cubes that my neighbor donated did. She doesn't eat S'mores anymore. And that is not the only thing that has changed. Now, when the cool winds begin to blow and fall is in the air, I taste fresh apple cider, glazed donuts, and antibiotic cream.

The Judges *by Elvis Soriano*

A thief was caught.

I asked, "Why did you steal?"

The thief said, "I needed money for food."

The people responded, "Okay, punish him. Let him starve."

A murderer was caught.

I asked, "Why did you murder?"

The murderer said, "I wanted to."

The people responded, "A psychopath! Kill him!"



We See All by Dionisia Soumakis

This Lil' Flame & Me *by Zion Clement*

Igniting an ethereal and benevolent lil flame.

Each day it grows brighter.

There for me in my darkest days that lil flame.

You cannot push me and get away with it.

My lil flame won't let you.

You called me useless. You said I was nothing.

This lil flame says otherwise.

I refuse to be your doormat.

I refuse to be tossed around and stepped on.

My lil flame and I have agreed...

One more word out of you and you'll be burned

By this lil flame & me.

Watch your back.

Or I'll have no choice but to ignite.

A Ballpoint Pen *by Kiera McKenna*

poets find sense in the
patterns of stars

and find love in the
orbit of comets

poets communicate the
words of the trees,

granting unorthodox meanings
to the wind that rattles their leaves

poets pour salt into your old,
closed wounds and invoke

tears that you have hidden
from yourself

poets disguise a heavenly
truth as the most sinful lie.

poets capture and decipher
minds, using a ballpoint

pen or a cheap computer
to articulate their wildest dreams

The Rich *by Gabrielle Fischthal*

Is that a look of concern or disgust?
Surely the second, you are breathing on her coat
It's probably worth your yearly income
Her eyes pierce through a thin veil
A small interaction
A frightening old woman
A harmless photographer
A standoff on the sidewalk
A staring contest through the lens of a camera
A sleepy building in the background
Her oblivious companion
Her fur coat
Which you were breathing on
Was that a look of disgust?

|

What's In My Journal *by Madeline Boccone*

One day girls talking,
Picnics and meet cutes.
One day dark monotony: this is how it always is and that's bad,
And I mean to only fill it with stories and nothing at all real
Daring cows and haunting husbands,
Alien beings who wear flowers as badges,
Abandoned homes in the woods with the door left open

But my feelings creep in
Something I'll rip out tomorrow
Or forget or cringe about in the future

So much complaining and self-deprecating
So much "I hate myself" and contemplating
Picking apart my closet, sucking in so hard I turn blue.
Practicing my posture, perfecting my hair,
A woman with over-plucked eyebrows spitting in my face,
Being dragged out of bed at midnight and never coming back,
Sitting alone on the steps of the school,
Toeing the air over the train tracks,
Why bad things always happen to me

The stories usually stay in my head
Because they have no real estate on the page
It's a house taken over by
Emotional, nonsensical squatters.



Three Faces by Sofia Cirone



Happiness by Arev Amroyan

Countryside Nights *by Angie Salinas*

It's two in the morning
 Outside the window is dark and quiet
 The city that never sleeps is sleeping tonight
 The sky is pitch black
 The little stars glowing in the dark giving little light

The dark sky reminds me of the countryside nights
 The crickets' chirping and frogs croaking
 A night in El Salvador with brighter stars
 This city never shows as many stars

But tonight I feel at peace
 I feel like I'm free and out of people's clutches
 The windy sky feels nice against my skin
 I wish I could feel like this everyday

Joe and Donald *by Madeline Schaffner*

Joe wears a mask
 Donald teases him
 Donald spits into crowds
 As the polls look grim

He tested positive
 But I thought it was a hoax?
 Everyone smiled
 And hoped that he would choke

Joe certainly isn't perfect
 But Donald is far worse
 It's been a long four years
 His only term better be his first

Donald wants to make America great
 Or so he does assume
 Always running his mouth
 Is the White House a locker room?

It looks like Donald might lose
 In all his time as president he's left something to be desired
 I cannot wait till the day when someone says to him
 "You're fired"

He's building a wall
 If he could he'd make a moat
 It's almost November 3rd
 And it's time for us to vote

Not In Service *by Leah Solomon*

A service for 'everyone'
 A service designed to 'protect'
 A service that is broken
 A service that helps who they want to, but not who really needs it
 Not in service

Not in service if your skin is darker than bleach
 Not in service if your mind works differently
 Not in service if you seem sketchy
 Not in service if we don't like you
 A service that was built on hate.

Protagonist and Extra *by Roshini Soans*

The protagonist is the center
The extra is the side

The extra has only a few lines
But treasures each word
The protagonist has most every monologue
Yet finds himself often bored

The extra has a plain face
And plain tastes
Like a raw canvas
That belongs to no title
The protagonist is anything but plain
Painted in an array of colors
Because he is made to display

The extra is a sparrow
Ignored and untamed
The protagonist is a pretty parrot
Kept as a pet within a cage

For one has their story written out
From start to finish
No ends left untied
And no detail can hide

While the other is given no certain fate
And has infinite space
Left to roam beyond the page



The Studio by Robert Marshall

Portrait *by Lousig Morris*

Eyes downcast
I stare at the oncoming train
Every day it takes me back to that day
Eight years ago
He used to talk deeply to me
We were sitting in that subway car
My father told me that the universe isn't deterministic
And that Newton was wrong
I liked when he talks like
He knows what the world holds
But he doesn't
Doesn't know that changing
My haircut
Does not mean I need protection
That visiting dark places in my head
Does not mean I am psychotic
I remember feeling your hands
Telling me that I do not understand
With their force
That I am an inferior child
With your voice
You hurt me most
Not with your words
Not with your hands
But with your betrayal
I thought you knew the world
You never even knew me
I understand myself better
Than you ever will
But most of all
My understanding of the fact
That I don't know the answers
That you don't know the answers
That no one does
Will mean I
Always understand
more than you.

For My Best Friend *by Beatrice Goyer*

What is it like,
 Living in your mind,
 Wishing you were dead every second of the day?
 Is it like you're being suffocated,
 Like someone is pushing a pillow over your head,
 Pushing harder and harder as the day goes on?
 What pushed you over the edge,
 Made you think you had to take those pills?
 Is it terribly lonely,
 Standing at the edge of a cliff
 With no choice but to jump?
 Did you know there was a net of hands at the bottom
 Waiting to catch you, support you, save you?
 Are you happy now that you're getting help?
 Or are you still on that cliff,
 Waiting for people to get out of the way
 So you can jump again?



Rainy Season by Jade Forrester



Nature's Sundown by Eman Malik

Mind and Soul *by Jumaane Millette*

Breathe.
 Expel all the worries.
 Suppress the troubles.
 Blank mind through the course of time
 Eating away at the precious discourse.
 Disgust of the times before,
 Repeating the same melody
 Desiring that it gets old.
 Dying out without a single
 Expectation on the horizon.
 No thought in mind.
 Nullifying the impurities
 Seeking to dwell inside,
 Diluting the words
 Searching for a meaning.
 Gathering the thoughts
 Sailing through my mind
 Devising a plan to escape these
 Sensible troubles.
 The only way out?
 To forget them all.
 Live life without a worry in my soul.
 Let them go before they
 Trouble me again.
 Inhale.
 Exhale.

Not Too Late Just Too Far Gone *by Sophia Ortiz*

It's the quiet nights that bring me peace of mind
The nights where white flakes fall from the sky
When the lights are all shining in their golden glory
The streets covered warm in a supple blanket of white
The sky sorrowful and shyly blue
Children playing as if it were a movie and I were the camera
Capturing human behavior
Unfiltered fun
Nothing but feet and gravity
Seeing innocence
Living in the present instead of the future
Indulging in the life I couldn't have but at least I can see the beauty
of how it could've been



Life of Lockdown by Dionisia Soumakis



Grandmother by Glory Flores

Social Injustice *by Kaylisa Phillips*

Social injustice, the reason they are not here today
Rest in peace, is all we can say
Because the racism is getting worse everyday
But black lives matter, so we have to stay brave
For our brothers and sisters like Cusseau and Floyd
Who were shot and stepped on like toys
We are going to fight for a change
And make the world better for the generations growing up today
Rest in power
While the state tries to clean up the black blood they splattered
Tries to justify all the black dreams they devoured
Hands up! Don't shoot! but those words don't matter to the men in blue
Social injustice
The battle we always lose
No matter what we try to do
Even though we are unarmed
They still try to justify their wrongs
But at least we can say we tried
To stand up for our black brothers and sisters that died
Social injustice, the reason they are not here today
Rest in power, is all we can say

Inheritable Tears by Tess Nealon Raskin

I will go simply.
 Like moths peeling from yellowed screens,
 Like a dirty plate slipping under the grey water of the sink
 I will wait for my time.
 Not under hot, energy efficient lights
 And white sheets as flocks of sobs press like hail against
 My aging skin, no, not by the hands of
 Teddy-bear, plastic flowers, wall cross, Christmas ornament
 Always-in-our-hearts angels.
 My father's father writhed inside his head
 as we kept him on drips and medicines,
 His eyes closed, long gone,
 And I felt myself join in a throng
 of tired, inheritable tears.
 When I have learned all there is to learn,
 I will fix myself a warm, sweet drink in my favorite glass,
 Soften my thoughts and walk into the water
 to feel the moonlight on my skin,
 for the poetry of my body to give out quietly
 out of the blue, and into the black.



Mother vs. Child by Aleksandra Kwiecien



A Fun Outing by Jade Forrester

Seepage by Yolaine St. Fort

Your presence
 gathers bones into
 this self now
 a windmill

Breath bends spine
 these utterings dress
 your feet in daffodil petals
 I kiss the spaces in between

You told me to lift my feet
 and place them in your palms.

I will never forget how
 You found my sternum
 in the Atlantic Ocean



Kettle and Apples by Kya Parris



Kettle and Apples by Michelle Villalba

Things I Didn't Know I Loved (After Nazim Hikmet) *by Ayisha Siddiq*

It is March 24, 2020, I am sitting dehydrated
in my old bedroom window, and it's so quiet in
the world tonight.

I never knew I loved the racket of tires bearing
down on the pavement.

Or the early morning pressure on my
eyelids; fluttering just to open and
shut again. The interdependence of
the same few moments every day after
the alarm rings.

I don't think of myself as a poet by
default but I didn't know I loved
scavenging for chatter for traces of existence.
Nor that I loved time moving linearly like an ameba,
extending its single-celled body,
in a brain or damp surface somewhere.
I've always been pretty hopeless at
biology but I didn't release I liked the
thought of little organisms designed
just for eating bacteria

I did not know I loved the stubborn openness
of the sky, its asymmetrical dips and the
fragrance it holds of spring.
And spring, for the velvet stalks
turning green, the beastly mosquitos ganging up
under lampposts, the berries growing fat
and proud, and then collapsing, bleeding
open like water balloons.

It had not occurred to me that all I needed
to unload my cargo was to stand underneath the sky.
I did not know I loved standing underneath the sky.

I know flowers are piling up right now.
I know the elaborate game has reduced us
all back on our knees.

I know modernity has lost its reputation.
I know the trial of separation has inspired us to
take to our balconies and applaud.
I know our nurses are making masks out of their scrubs.

And knowing this and all the other minutia
is breaking my heart into a thousand pieces.

I watch the theater of white righteousness
make space for a few moments of silence,
for some patronizing delineations of loss,
and concave at the showmanship of
“Say her name”
printed over their masks and t-shirts.
Black and brown death;
an instant on their mobile screens.

I know to sing is to harness beauty out of sadness.
I did not know that there was a casket to accompany each
word leaving our mouths.

I know I am holding my pen to ignore the
the disappearance of days. The wet sidewalk after
a long lecture. The memory of all the busy bodies
clinging onto poles and doors on a
moving train. I never knew I needed the
odd sensation of human hisses and
“excuse me’s” as much as I do right now.

I hadn’t thought of loving the street vendors, the halal
carts, the ice cream trucks and the man playing
his jinghu on Canal Street.
I did not know the restitution of moonlight,
the reappearance of apartment buildings, asphalt
and stars after being in a tunnel could be so symphonic.
That I loved the high of making it to the end of a day.
To arrive at a place.
To trust it without a map.
To slip in and out of it like conversation with a soulmate.
To have the rousing city be photogenic for you.

I did not know I could miss the thing the trees do with
their boughs on a windy day;
the swaying song birds on their sleeves,
the sparsity of their bodies on the impatient corners
of Manhattan. The dogs of Manhattan that do not
grin or speak. The colored spotlights after cheap
beer in the Village. The left hands slipping out from
right arms on a Saturday night. The rickety structure
of the “see ya later’s” from all the
twenty-something year-olds on campus.

I thought myself a porcupine.
As we all do at a skin-peeling age.
I thought myself always late
and body enough for watching.
I found comfort in absolute corners
and made peace with being far away.
I did not know how much I oozed
with love for normal circumstances.

I took nature as pines and oaks
and cedars growing somewhere North from here,
away from cement and stone. But the nature of
stopping and holding a smile, a hand, a bloodstream.
The nature of hundreds of thousands of shoes,
the sewers, the benches, the buses
the other people and the other houses.

How could I have let myself make these things plain?



Medusa by Symone Johnson

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The Magnet 2021

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If your work is not included in this publication,
please don't be discouraged from sharing
your work with us in the future.

To have your work considered for next year's edition,
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