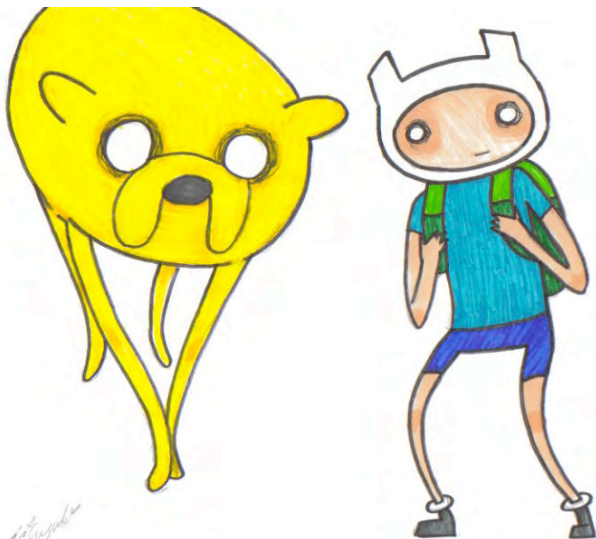


PVHS  
Literary Magazine  
**illiterature**



**A New Year  
Edition for 2013**

# Lit Mag People:



Audrey Malek, Madison Hamilton, Nicole Christmas, Sarah Sperling, Sara Zadrina, Joe Hertlendy, Dimitri Tomais, Yoshi Abe, Katie O'Leary, Jadyn Marshall, Sam Alper, Emi Suzuki, Sofia France, Tristan Merlino, Tyrique Scantlebury

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**illiterature**

The Putnam Valley  
High School

**Literary Magazine**

**January 2013**



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Emily Weise  
Anonymous  
Katie O'Leary

# Where Does A Forgotten Thought Go?

by Audrey Malek

I really, *really* don't want to write. I don't even know what it is, I just...don't want to write. Nothing to write *about*, I suppose, but maybe that's life. A series of things that should be written about, but aren't, and things that shouldn't be written about ever, but are. It's distinguishing between those two things that I find difficult because, to be completely honest with you, whoever *you* are, most of the things in my day-to-day life are even too mundane to remember. Brushing my teeth, I remember that, that's mundane, and why do I remember that? Routine? But everything else that I guess I've forgotten is routine as well, but that's gone...*somewhere*.

As Freud wondered, where does a thought go once it's forgotten? Or something to that effect. I've wondered that from time to time. There's no thin air to vanish into, no vacuum cleaner to get sucked into, no bed to get shoved under. It's just...a forgotten thing. Is there a box tucked away in your brain for all of your thoughts to go, and in your afterlife does it all come rushing back? Dumped into your arms without a second thought, all for you to sort through, and say, "Damn it, how did I forget where I left my keys that day? They were right there all along, and I was *late* because of it!" or "Well, how the hell did I forget that the word for second-to-last is *penultimate*?" Is it in a box, or a trunk, or something much different. A kind of vortex, like a black hole. Tinier than the head of a pin outside, but an entire universe of forgotten thoughts on the inside?



photo by Audrey Malek

# Knitted Soul Cozy

By Madison Hamilton

I do not wear  
My heart on my sleeve  
Deep into my sweaters  
The strings are carefully woven  
Wrapped tightly and closely  
Cocooned around me  
Brilliant blending colors  
Worn for all to see



Photo by  
Audrey Malek

# SAM'S HAIKUS

## (25 of them)

### Sam Alper

#### **Refrigerator**

This is a haiku  
Next line has five syllables  
Refrigerator

#### **Smart Board**

A broken smart board  
The teacher is going mad  
This is always fun

#### **Out the Window**

When you are learning  
Everything out the window  
Is interesting

#### **Haikouception**

Five, seven, then five  
Make up the words in haiku  
Haikou of haikus

#### **A Public Service Haiku**

I once had a phone  
It had all that I wanted  
It went off in class

#### **Poor Scheduling**

I had gym today  
But now I am late to class  
It was an A day

#### **Headphones**

My headphones are stuck  
Tangled inside my pocket  
It's like a nightmare

#### **Sadistic**

Scissors are pointy  
Try hard not to run with them  
Don't you like your eyes?

#### **Laziness**

I dropped my pencil  
It rolled under my friend's desk  
Let's get another

#### **Shoelaces**

My shoe is untied  
But I triple knotted it  
I'll fix it later

#### **Flying Cats**

Several small kittens  
On top of a flying pig  
I hope they don't fall

#### **Essay**

Blank piece of paper  
Covered with blue and white lines  
Time for an essay

#### **Sad Ponies**

Nineteen pink ponies  
Inside of a big barnyard  
No one to ride them

#### **Goodbye Lunch**

Egg falls to the floor  
Shards of white fly everywhere  
Well, there goes my lunch

#### **Algebra**

X plus two minus  
Three to the power of six  
Divided by what?

**Ferris Wheel**

Flying above all  
Soaring on top of the world  
Ferris wheels are fun

**YouTube**

Go to do research  
Trapped in an endless abyss  
How I love YouTube

**Tick**

"Tick, Tock" says the clock  
Making every second longer  
Can't wait for the bell

**XC**

Run, Run, Run, Run, Run  
Fast, Fast, Faster, Fast, Faster  
Finish, breathe, repeat

**Bathroom Pass**

Go to the bathroom  
Not as easy as it sounds  
Someone has the pass

**School Lunch**

The school lunch is brown  
Everyone says it's yummy  
I'll have a sandwich

**Word**

Use Microsoft Word  
Move the sentence a little  
Delete the whole thing

**Middle School Bus**

Middle School busses  
So small, loud and annoying  
Was I like that once?

**Dead Laptop**

My laptop is dead  
I have gym next period  
My problem is solved

**Benchmark #1**

Twenty-fifth haiku  
Five pages of seventeen  
Will write more later.

**Two Benches**

(this one is by Jadyne Marshall)  
Two cold gray benches  
Carved with the quotes of masters  
Chilled in the fall draft.

My dear friends  
They come and go  
Like fireflies  
Or winter's snow

Speak With Me Old Friend  
By Madison  
Hamilton

I love them dearly  
But they melt away  
As time goes on  
There is much to say

So many years are gone  
The stories could never end  
Yet I am speechless  
When I see an old friend

I have no words  
Or maybe they do not exist  
There is no making up  
For all the time we missed



A photograph of two people sitting on a grassy hill overlooking a town. The person on the left is wearing a blue t-shirt and the person on the right is wearing a blue tank top. They are both looking out over a valley filled with houses and trees. The sky is bright and hazy.

Photo by  
Audrey Malek



Little House On The Hill  
by Joe Hertelendy

Little House On The Hill, I wish to own you one day.  
Raise a family in you, and have a place to stay.  
Little House On The Hill, in my vision you're not far.  
Maybe I'll buy you soon, maybe I'll become a star.

Little House On The Hill, you I have yet to own.  
Time is running out, you stay young while I become grown.  
Little House On The Hill, now you just taunt me.  
I'm broke, loveless, in debt, and now you'll always haunt me.

Little House On The Hill, my vision was just a lie.  
While I get old and without a home, I'm stuck to ask why.  
Little House On The Hill, I know you'll be sticking by.  
Move on to a younger buyer, while I sit down and die.

# Flight 505

## Sofia France

Wednesday, 7:19 PM, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974

“Would you put that out?” Rachel snapped, yanking the cigarette out of her husband’s lips. Behind his square glasses, James’ eyes burned hotter than the cigarette. With nimble fingers he pulled another out of his sock and lit it. She bristled, and stormed out of the house. Throwing her nubby maroon coat over the Rolling Stones shirt she had adopted from James’ closet. Nearly choking herself with her striped scarf as she hurried down the frozen front steps.

How could he? Her mind fumed. He knows full well how much she hates it. Since high school she’s been telling him. Going to burn a hole in the new couch. He’s going to light their first apartment on fire. That would be a great story to tell. Make her nice clean surfaces sticky with tar. How dare he? After she asked him over and over again. Bought him candy and gum to help him stop.

Rachel groaned and plopped down on the slick, cracked concrete curb. She was being too controlling. She knew she was. Was she? She didn’t know. She leaned back on her hands, her exposed palms burned as they touched the icy pavement. She looked out at the desolate New York City Street. She needed to go home. Wiping her hands on her tattered jeans, Rachel rose and started the two-block trek back to her small brick apartment.

James put out his cigarette and made tea to give Rachel when she returned.

Friday 3:45 PM, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1966

“Yeah, no problem, anytime really,” James’ voice cracked. Rachel handed him his Rolling Stones record. “It was really amazing.”

Amazing didn’t even begin to sum it up. She had listened to it on loop for the entire weekend. The music, woke her up. It was like Mick Jagger wanted her to escape into his world of recklessness, and freedom and love and life and awake-ness. She couldn’t even begin to explain what it had done to her. But all of a sudden, she didn’t need to be anything. She could just be.

“Yeah, they’re really great, I love “Flight 505” answered James slipping the record into his doodle-covered bag.

“Me too.”

They stared at each other for a minute, each wanting to say more but not knowing what to say. The silence fogged up around them, the lack of conversation condensing.

“Thank you,” she said finally shining a light into the fog. “For showing them to me. I feel like music like this is a very personal, almost private thing. And I appreciate you trusting me with it.”

“Of course.” He said clearing his throat “I have some other stuff kind of similar to them if you want. I mean the records belong to my older sister so. I’m not sure if she would let me lend them out. But if you ever want to come over and listen. I mean, I don’t know. Sometimes my friends come over and we just play records. I mean whatever, completely up to you”

He needed to show her the Animals. He had to. She would love them. He was sure of it. How could she not? They were the best. Say yes. Please say yes. Say yes please. For the sake of rock n’ roll, say yes.

“That would be great, call me when you can,” she rummaged through her huge purple half-her-size bag. “I would give you my number, but I don’t have a pen,” Rachel laughed, “I never have a pen.”

“I’m always prepared,” said James as he pulled a pencil out from behind his ear, cocking an eyebrow like a melodramatic soap star.

“Thanks,” she giggled, scribbling her number on a scrap of homework she had forgotten to do.

“They’re amazingly, mind-blowingly awesome, they really are,” she said, giving a slight wave before trudging down the hallway.

From where he was standing, her lopsided, back-pack-weighs-too-much look looked like the most beautiful, graceful ballet.

Monday 6:32 PM, November 18th 1974

“Shit shit shit!” The smoke alarm’s insistent beeping harmonized with her shouted profanities. As Rachel bludgeoned the fiery stove top with a checkered dishrag, the thrashing towel caught fire too.

“Shit!”


She dropped the towel on the white linoleum floors and stomped on it, burning her mismatched socked feet.

James entered his apartment to hear the high-pitched screaming of the smoke alarm, mingled with the even more high-pitched swearing of his wife. Dropping his doodle-covered bag, he rushed into the chaos. The entire oven was aflame.

James grabbed the shower-head sprayer out of the sink and began dousing the flames with high-pressure city water. Rachel followed his lead, choking the flames under the warm afghan they used to cover the coffee stains and cigarette burns on the couch. Still cursing at full volume.

Finally after minutes of battle, the fire surrendered.

Coughing, James opened the windows.



Rachel slumped down on the kitchen floor. Her hands covering her ruddy face she began to cry. Sliding down next to her James wrapped his arm around her small shoulders. “I was trying to make a nice dinner... I can’t cook. I’m terrible at it... Just terrible” She whimpered into his shoulder.

“Sure you can...” he responded stroking her hair. “You can make beans,” he tried.

Rachel’s sob turned into a desperate laugh, then a cackle, then a full-out guffaw. “I *can* make beans!” she laughed doubling over with giggles

“You make the best beans in city!” He declared lifting her to a standing position

“The best beans in the country!” She spluttered, her eyes welling with laughter.

“The world!” He chimed, in stitches.

“The universe!” She shouted pulling the Chinese take out menu from the junk drawer.

“The universe,” he echoed, kissing her cheek, as she began dialing the restaurant’s phone number.

Photo by Audrey Malek

# FLESH AND PAGES

I want to read you like a book.

You will open up slowly, leaving me gasping for breath and the promise of another word. You will be quiet at first, slowly easing me into your exposition; you will take my hand and lead me, intriguing me and enticing me to continue turning your pages. I won't be able to put my finger on it, but there will be something there. It will be like an itch at the back of my mind, and talking to you will be the only way to scratch it.

But no matter how much I scratch, I will need to scratch more, digging my fingers into my head, into the far corners of my mind where you've managed to embed yourself.

As we talk, I will become invested in your story – in your life. Your sentences with their excellent vocabulary will pull me in and make me eager to reach the next. I will need to think when I am around you, but when I ask questions, you will not immediately answer them. In your soft smile, you will promise me everything if I only stick around to reach the end. Your subtle foreshadowing will leave me satisfied and strangely frustrated, as I flounder and guess at yours thoughts, lost somehow in your eloquent words and your

complexities. I will only have pieces of the whole, and the pieces cannot account for all of you. You will not be a simple thought; it will have taken ages to create you, long nights of the Creator bent over his desk and pondering your lines and nuances with his poised pen and flesh-colored ink.

I want to hang onto your periods and linger on your words, attach myself to your commas and follow your stream of consciousness. I want my thoughts to revolve around why your sentences were cut off, or why your voice was soft instead of loud. I want to wonder about your word choice. Each word will turn over and over in my head until I have them memorized, all of them carefully crafted with purpose and forethought. I will wonder on your riddles and long to find the meaning behind your symbolism. The sweatshirt that you always wear will tell me even more than your words could, becoming worn from long days and tireless nights as I watched your story unweave like the fraying fabric.

I will stay up long nights talking to you, eager to learn more and terrified that it will end. Every word that you speak will fill me with elation, because you will make me think and feel again, taking me away from the superficial and the meaningless day to day sludge. I will become breathless at your semicolons and weak at the knees from your similes. Nothing will make me happier than your twists and turns, the places where our fingers

touch and I can feel us becoming connected. I will mix your life with mine and blend your words into my own.

And when I have learned everything that I can, when the new book smell has faded into a musty smell and your pages have become worn and yellowed, I will hold you close on cold nights and attempt to linger in your comforting fantasy again. Each time I look into your eyes and see your last secret, my heart will clench with heartbreaking, bittersweet melancholy that leaves me wanting to cry and needing to smile.

But you have already been read, and I will need to place you back on my shelf, because you are made of flesh and bone and skin, and there is no comfort in that. I can read you like a book, but I cannot keep you like one.

I want a dress that speaks aloud.  
It needs a voice, shrill and proud.

The color will be white as a dove  
As soft and satin as a glove.

Gossamer sleeves to shoulders cling,  
With a pearl on a silver string.

A wave of silk to brush the air,  
And touch the skin, smooth and fair.

A laughing bell will be the skirt,  
Sweeter than whipped cream atop of desert.

But nothing in life is truly that pure,  
For innocence soon can become too demure.

On my dress I'll spread a bottle of ink,  
A raven black hue with a dove's breast of pink.

Loops and swirls that touch the dress,  
Soon will spread up and fibers caress.

Soon a sweet song they'll start to chime,  
Filled with beauty, creation, and rhyme.

Loops and whorls connect themselves,  
Each detail crafted by the likes of elves.

The shapes become words,  
Flying high like birds.

And with wind in between them and song in their heart,  
They spread up together and form works of art.

And so I laugh and touch the ink,  
As my words drain down a sink.

Wore the dress in a blackened box,  
And protect it with nothing but a hard metal lock.

There it sits while the years unfold,  
Changing with my story, one of gold.

Finally someone sets it free,  
And the words become a perfect me.

## **Wearing my Words** **by Jadyn Marshall**



Artwork by Jadyn Marshall

## Season Changers

by Sara Zadrima

In November

When the trees are bare  
And there's frost everywhere  
But there's no snow  
And things feel rather dull  
Ask her what her favorite season is.  
She'll surely tell you it's winter.

For the peaceful snowfalls  
And the skiing and the sledding  
And the hot cocoa by the fireplace  
And bundling up  
And rosy cheeks  
And the holidays

But ask again in February,  
When it's been cold for so long  
And your cheeks are too red  
And the rest of you is white as what's left of the snow  
And the chill has permanently seeped into your bones  
And the trees are still bare

Ask again.  
And it'll be spring.

When the trees grow their buds  
And your bones start to thaw  
And your cheeks aren't so red and frozen anymore  
And maybe a hint of color comes back to your skin  
And the wildlife comes out of hiding

But if you ask again in May  
That spring fever will have evolved  
Into a passion for summer

When the warmth of the sun will seep to your bones  
And melt away any cold that remains  
And your cheeks are burnt red  
When there are sleepless nights  
And adventures

And you don't have to worry  
And you can taste the salty air  
And the sun sets on the lake

Ask her now  
Her answer will definitely be summer.

And this answer will last  
Even through September,  
When routines return  
And freedom is exchanged for classes  
And summertime insomniacs must learn to sleep  
And you still long for the beach  
And the lake  
And the adventures  
And the fun

It will last until October,  
When you've settled into a routine  
And think maybe it's not so bad anymore  
But you stop in the madness for just a brief second  
And you look outside  
And you see the first leaves change from green to yellow  
And soon enough the reds and oranges and browns chime in  
And everything is beautiful  
And you'd almost forgotten  
How much you loved the fall  
And the earth  
And how wonderful the world really is.

And her answer to your question will certainly be fall.

That is until November comes again.

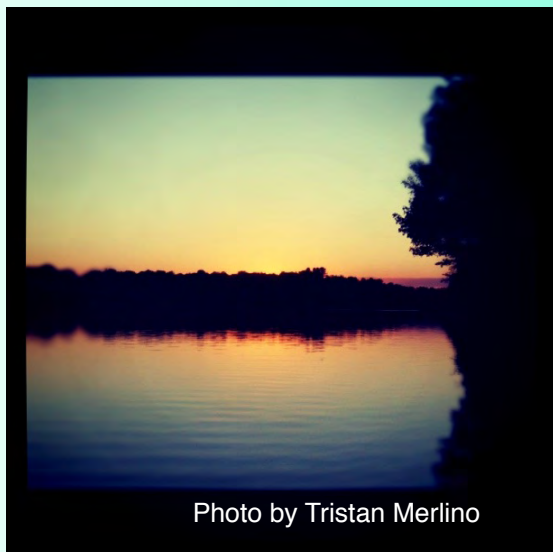


Photo by Tristan Merlino

# The Reader

## by Jadyn Marshall

As a child I was fascinated with words. Words were everywhere and on everything, written on signs, toys, and other worldly possessions. They came in different forms, different lengths, and different languages, but wherever you went you could find them. Since they were always near me they became my greatest security blanket, things that I didn't need to carry with me because I could always find them. They were as delicate as spun glass yet more permanent than a mountain, perpetual treasures woven into a world that flaunted them to everyone who would adopt them. My favorite place to look for words was hidden inside of the pages of books. That was the most constant place to look for words that didn't change according to my present surroundings. These books were full of beautiful words that could easily be toted around to be released at will, and perhaps the idea of always knowing where to find those words was what had me hooked. They were more constant than the moon or the sun or even the face I saw in the mirror. They were a reflection of my inner feeling and ideas, and those never changed, no matter what happened to the rest of the universe. I'd always had Athazagoraphobia in my blood, and that was cured by the idea that these words, words that I could someday use for my own purposes, could live on for an eternity so that I would never be forgotten.

My greatest temple soon became the place where the words lived before they became mine: the bookstore. When I was little and words were nothing but worm-like squiggles on paper, the local Barnes and Noble seemed too old for me. The shelves were made for tall grownups who read books without pictures, and I felt as if I were chained to my parents, unable to go to the smaller section with the bright colors on paper and buttons alongside the pages to make obnoxious sounds. It was there, as I waited for someone to translate the lines into vivid stories full of imagination, that I got my first peek into the literary world. The squiggles slowly became pictures in my mind, taking on an entirely new form. Previously alien symbols like "DRAGON" became a crimson lizard with leathery wings snorting cloudy billowing steam at a handsome and gallant "PRINCE," dressed in the finest clothes with a shimmering "CROWN" emblazoned with jewels upon his head. The words progressively became more familiar, and I used them often as the archetypes they created in my mind morphed themselves into stories of beautiful damsels and dastardly villains. I even went so far as to narrate parts of my own life, ending every sentence with a simple "she said" whispered in my mind. The visits to the bookstore continued, and I began to see it as a different place, no longer a singular stop in a long line of errands filled with boredom, but as an anticipated trip, every visit unique. I never would walk down the aisles of books to find the same things waiting. I changed, and the books I searched for changed shelves trading popular titles for the next bestsellers and flashing their covers with hopeful smiles, waiting to be cracked open and documented eternally in the minds of their readers. I learned to take my journey on my own, and though I was always chauffeured by a guardian, my visits became more personal, and I tried never to come with a purpose. I simply browsed the shelves and allowed the books to pull me in as they willed, like a raft floating down a

lazy river. Some visits stood out from others when I found particularly enjoyable works, and others faded into the familiar pattern of playing hide and seek with the pages of the books, searching for true gems.

Tonight the parking lot is riddled with puddles as rain seeps into the evening's atmosphere. The drizzle is illuminated by spotlights that sprout up from the medians. The first few parking spaces have already been filled with cars of various makes and models, and I am damp by the time we reach the store's overhang. Strung up across the front windows is a laminated parade of posters in the signature jade and beige of Barnes and Noble, comforting bookish colors that announce the latest literary successes of the authors whose names are on everyone's lips: Rowling, Patterson, James, Meyers, and countless others. Someone holds the door open for me and my mother, a stranger with the same face as everyone else around me. The entrance is narrow, with tables on either side displaying books from every walk of life that have yet to find a home and are slowly depreciating. I hold open the second door for another visitor, sliding my hand along the smooth brass, dulled by the hands of hundreds of readers before me. I smile as I am faced with the rows of shelves full of books, standing at attention for inspection. The divisions are headed by small round tables, the commanding officers setting an example for their battalions with displays of the best the store has to offer. I feel like a uniformed general inspecting my troops as I separate from my mother, my shoes squeaking with water retained from the parking lot on the pale tiled squares of the floor. Although there are snatches of conversation hovering in the air I hear none of it as I survey what my army has to offer.

Although this is only one of countless trips, I am always amazed by the concentration of masterpieces that this single building can hold. There are thousands of old and new friends held within, friends who never forget, and wait for their futures, being found by new readers and recollected by past audiences. It feels like a reunion with every book I recognize, even if I only know it by its cover and not its text. I stroll past the adult novels with sultry colors, shelves full of pastel stationary with flowers printed in corners, the bold bumble bee hue of the "For Dummies" books, and the wall of flashy magazines screaming headlines at readers. There are a few plush chairs set in quiet corners for peaceful solitude, and a few wooden benches set up as pillars of worship to the current events. Hung up on posts are large, blown up images of some of the most famous books known to man. The orange hills from "Of Mice and Men" dominate one, while the blue face of "The Great Gatsby" peers out from another. The customer service desk is capped with an enlarged version of the latest digital toy for reading, with all new features and a high definition screen for the stunning price of one hundred and ninety-nine dollars, plus tax. It overshadows the books around it, like a science fiction robot invading a city and knocking away bookshelves like building blocks. It would seem that the books should be terrified of such a massive creature, but I know that no gizmos of soulless technology can ever beat holding a real book in your hands, crafted with paper and ink the way it was intended to be read instead of as a file in cyberspace.

I make my way to the teen section and deliberately walk up and down the shelves, my head tilted sideways to read each title. Every few steps a book will materialize in my hand, and I'll analyze the back cover or inside flap before carefully positioning it back on the shelf in its proper spot. Behind the attention-grabbing new titles set out in little cardboard stands are my

old favorites, books that have made it past inspection on previous visits and were packaged with care to be shelved at home for ceaseless enjoyment. I greet each of them with a fond smile as snatches of their words surface in my memory. I finally select a new book, slipping it out of a line of duplicates and turn it over in my hands. Its jacket is silky under my fingers, the title, Silence, forming a bumped ridge under my fingers. There are the tiniest of indents on the first page from each of the little inked letters, and I take a deep breath full of freshly cut pages that brings me to the trees whose branches were sacrificed for the paper in my hands. I am dragged away from the bookstore as conversations around me dissolve and the classical music projected throughout the store melts away. The opening phrase has me hooked, and the pages fly past my fingers as drama unfolds, before I am precipitously released from the novel and thrown back into my own world. My mother is calling for me down a row of books. It is still too soon to discharge my new friend, but I close its binding once more with a distinct reluctance.

I tuck the novel under my arm as I follow her to the platform of the café, sliding my hand along the dense knobbed rail before I join those already on line. As I shift to the front of the line with my mother I order my drink: a sugary, coffee-free concoction of vanilla and milk with a puffy cloud of cream on top. I request a *venti*, mostly for the crooked, dissimilar flavor of the word in my mouth. The café is noisier than the rest of the store, with machines whirring as they blend and heat, and people laughing as they chatter with their companions more freely than in the rest of the store, where an unspoken rule of quiet settles like a blanket of the first snowfall. Looking down on the buzz of activity is a painted mural of a different, darker coffee shop, not from one past era but many. Sitting at those tables are faces that no one alive can recall, smoking for fashion and holding worn notebooks. They grip steaming beverages with ink stained fingers and exchange intelligent words with their companions. Captioning the faces are their names, which credit them with the greatest thoughts known to man. Twain, Orwell, Steinbeck, and Woolf are among those who watch over me as I wait at the opposite end of the counter with my mother for my drink and her coffee. Once the order has arrived I take a straw and a wad of napkins from the condiment station and cross the café to an open table with two chairs. We set our drinks down on the autumn-colored table top, and I run a finger along the metal ridged edge that gives it a homey, retro feel. I take a small sip of my drink through the green striped straw and let the sweet vanilla flavor settle in my mouth while I pick up the book again. I lean back in my chair and with a sweep of pages I let the story envelope me again, burying me with words.

I am a part of the story. I'm walking through a bright white pathway with spiked black lines of words rising on either side of me to a height more than several stories tall like a wrought iron gate, swaying and unfolding themselves into a story. I watch with anxiety as a desperate man meets his greatest enemy in the quiet of a graveyard. I'm no longer sitting in a warm café with comfort and bubbling sounds. Instead I stand on long grass damp with fresh rain and evening mist as the temperature slowly lowers. The light dies around me as cruel words are exchanged, the poor man begging for his freedom. Soon all that is left of the story is the rough texture of raw words and the lingering images that my mind has provided to accompany the text. The story is now mine. **I am the reader.**

# Colors of My Future

by Emily Weise

People are exposed to color from the first moment they open their eyes to the world. Coloring is the means by which one can express these colors. I have been coloring since I was about a year old; granted I was no Monet, but the scribbles I made represented what I saw, what the world looked like through my eyes.

My first memory of coloring (inside the lines) was coloring a picture of Clifford in Kindergarten; I was so excited because Clifford was one of my favorite PBS channel characters, and still is to date. I remember picking up that red crayon and not giving a second thought as to what color it was. Then, red was red; there was no such thing as scarlet red or violet red, or wine red in my mind. But as I grew older, I realized there were many more shades of red, this realization added new colors and new perceptions to my life.

For me coloring has always been more than just a hobby, coloring connects me to my memories: sitting with my Nana at the kitchen table coloring pictures of farm animals and Disney princesses. Visiting my Nana and Poppi is always associated with an innumerable number of crayon color choices and endless amounts of coloring books. On cold winter days at our Nana and Poppi's house, my siblings and I would sit near the fire with our coloring pages, decorating the walls of the house, or at least the bottom third of the walls, since we were no more than three feet tall at the time.

Coloring connects me to my past, every time I color I still think of those winter days at the house with endless crayons. Coloring brings me joy, holds my attention, and relieves my stress. When I need to think, I color; when I have had a stressful day at school, I color; when I need to think of a topic for my college essay, I color!

In a recent trip to Germany with my extended family I had the opportunity to explore my German Heritage. The experience changed my perspective on color. The experience broadened my view of the world by showing me new colors and combinations, as well as finding the colors associated with different cultures and peoples, and about how color is truly about one's perception. I was able to educate myself about me, about my ancestral background, through color. The color of education will direct my future.

If education were a color, what color would it be? Would it be the yellow tint of aged paper, or a bookshelf brown? Maybe it is the color of a dark green textbook or a small blue essay booklet. What will be the colors of my education?

My future is a blank coloring page. I want to color my life and future with the education I learn, I want to color my community with this education, I want to color the world with my education.

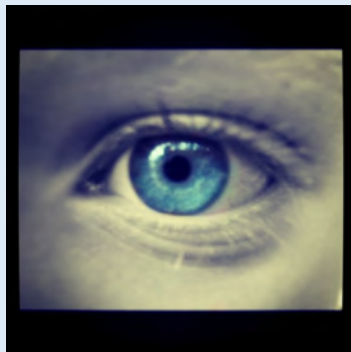


Photo by Tristan Merlino

Dear Bully,

You were not my first bully. I wish I could say that you were. There is no reason anyone should have to deal with more than one of a person like you in their lifetime. I have dealt with many, many bullies, people who lived to put me down and couldn't stand it when I did anything better than they did. During my middle school years I became an expert at hiding in the bathroom. I would put my back against a cold tile wall and sob with my nose plugged and hot tears streaming down my face so no one would hear my pain. When the first wave of hurt was over and I was empty, I would come out and wash my face with cold water to freeze the tears and pretend that everything was normal until the end of the day, when I could come home and drench my pillow. When I got to high school, I had promised myself that I was going to have a fresh start, and I was convinced that the bullying was over. I just wasn't going to lie down and take it anymore. I was through with being everybody's doormat, and I thought that with that simple decision life was going to get better.

And then you came. You had been there before. I had dealt with so many different types of bullies, the Mean Girls, the Jealous Ones, the Unfriendly Teasers, and the Frenemies, and maybe that's why I didn't see what you were at first. You didn't fit into any of those categories, as far as I could see. You weren't popular. You didn't seem to be jealous, and you were never all that close to me. I didn't see you as a bully. Instead, I saw you as you. You were just the person who went out of their way to be vulgar and crass to everyone, and I didn't notice that you were going out of your way to focus on me for a while. It was subtle. An extra mean look here, a rude comment artfully placed when I was having trouble keeping my balance. I got used to it, just like everyone else around you. I started to accept it. I told myself that I could just deal with you, like everyone else did. I told my parents of course, like they always tell you to do, and they agreed it was best to ignore you. I kept trying to shut you out. And you kept trying to break down my walls.

And then came the day. There was nothing special about it, it was just one more day when I had to get up again and face you. That day it wasn't just a nasty look or a few words that bruised my skin. That day it became all of the horribleness that you'd been dealing me for years, and it hit hard. The dots connected, and became one big ugly picture. I came home crying that day, not waiting to give the story to my pillow. I was ready to give up school, friends, and everything else I love so that I'd never have to see you again. You had hurt me. You had hurt me Bad. And yet I still didn't think of you as a bully until my mother watched me crying and said it out to the world. Bully. Giving something a name has a power you don't quite expect until you hear it. Bully. I had been bullied again, and it happened right under my nose. I was a Victim again.

Some people think bullying is a virus. You get vaccinated for it when they tell you how to handle it via PowerPoint and some social worker at a school assemble. And then it actually happens, and it's no fault of yours. The reason is more foreign to you at first than an alien language. You tell someone, they tell someone more important, and

you think that it's all over. Like the chicken pox, it isn't a one-time thing, and when it's gone you don't feel normal again. It stays with you. You get scars from scratching too hard. It becomes a part of you, like when in first grade the teacher draws a heart and crinkles it up to show you that mean words do leave impressions. And once it happens again, and again, and again, it doesn't hurt any less. It stays like a big purple welt on your soul and grows, filling up with ugliness. It doesn't look any better on the inside, believe me, and just like crumpled paper it leaves a scar. I can remember every mean word and thing you and the others did to me.

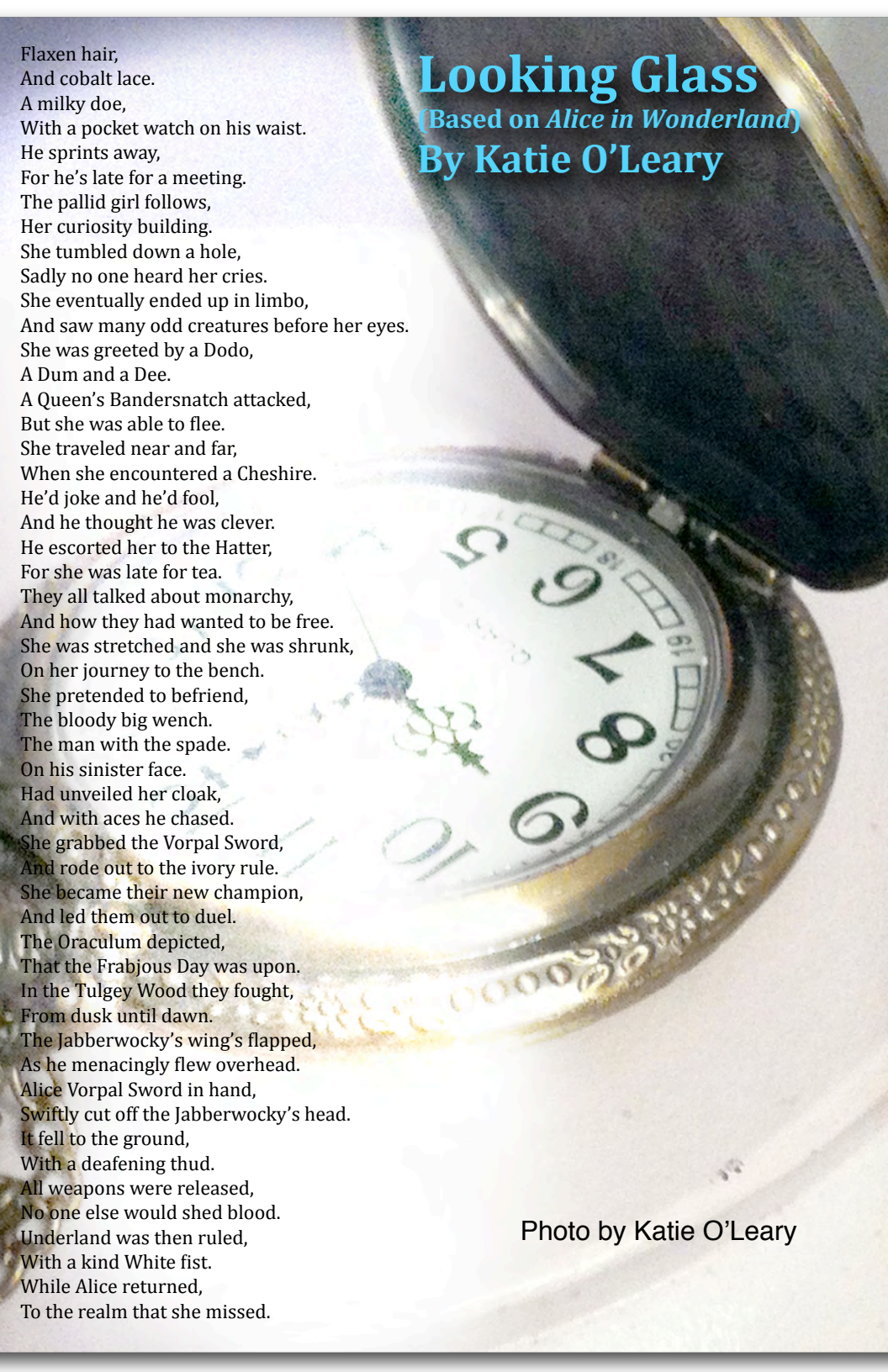
When I found out what you were, I tried repeating all the crap I've heard since I was little. "You're special," "You're going places," "They're just jealous." It didn't work this time. All I could think of was that it just wasn't fair. Isn't the good guy supposed to have a great ending in the story after all the strife and trials? Unfortunately, whoever was writing my life story kept on adding post post post post scripts, because I kept on coming full circle. I had fooled myself into believing that I had forced myself to grow stronger. If anything, now I was weaker. I had let my guard down just a little bit, since I was so sure that this was going to be different. That was how you slipped inside. And the funny thing is, I don't wish that it didn't happen. If my fairy godmother ever offers me a magic "redo" button that can reverse anything I want, maybe I'd use it to get a better grade on a test. I wouldn't waste it on the misery you put me through, because I grew from it. I always do. I just wish that you had seen me.

If you knew the extent of what you'd caused, I bet you'd have regretted it. I still believe that you're human, even though what you did to me was inhumane, and I know that anyone who saw me would have felt sorry for me. The only problem was that you never found out that I cried inconsolably for a full hour after you were out of sight, and suffered the headache that came from it. You didn't even notice that I was crying the entire time I was with you, which wasn't an easy task, mind you. I was good at hiding it. I even took up temporary residence in another bathroom stall. You made me break a promise to myself. That's never happened before. That hurt me on a whole different level. I wish you'd seen me suffering from the pain that settled inside me like a storm front and stayed there for days, like someone had punched me in the gut. That hurt too. I wish you'd heard me crying, I wish you'd seen the way my hands swelled when I bit my knuckles to keep from screaming, and I wish you'd understood what you were doing to me. If you ever read this, I doubt you'll recognize yourself. Maybe one day you'll read something else I wrote and remember me fondly with no memory of what you did to me.

But most of all, I wish that I could thank you. You might have tried to hurt me, and believe me, it worked. But in the end, all you did was help me. You pushed me to be better than I already was, and because of that, every good thing I ever did felt twice as sweet because I did it in spite of the pain you dealt me. So thank you, Bully. Thank you for being my last.

**Sincerely,**

**The One Who *IS* Going Places**



# Looking Glass

(Based on *Alice in Wonderland*)

## By Katie O'Leary

Flaxen hair,  
And cobalt lace.  
A milky doe,  
With a pocket watch on his waist.  
He sprints away,  
For he's late for a meeting.  
The pallid girl follows,  
Her curiosity building.  
She tumbled down a hole,  
Sadly no one heard her cries.  
She eventually ended up in limbo,  
And saw many odd creatures before her eyes.  
She was greeted by a Dodo,  
A Dum and a Dee.  
A Queen's Bandersnatch attacked,  
But she was able to flee.  
She traveled near and far,  
When she encountered a Cheshire.  
He'd joke and he'd fool,  
And he thought he was clever.  
He escorted her to the Hatter,  
For she was late for tea.  
They all talked about monarchy,  
And how they had wanted to be free.  
She was stretched and she was shrunk,  
On her journey to the bench.  
She pretended to befriend,  
The bloody big wench.  
The man with the spade.  
On his sinister face.  
Had unveiled her cloak,  
And with aces he chased.  
She grabbed the Vorpall Sword,  
And rode out to the ivory rule.  
She became their new champion,  
And led them out to duel.  
The Oracle depicted,  
That the Frabjous Day was upon.  
In the Tulgey Wood they fought,  
From dusk until dawn.  
The Jabberwocky's wing's flapped,  
As he menacingly flew overhead.  
Alice Vorpall Sword in hand,  
Swiftly cut off the Jabberwocky's head.  
It fell to the ground,  
With a deafening thud.  
All weapons were released,  
No one else would shed blood.  
Underland was then ruled,  
With a kind White fist.  
While Alice returned,  
To the realm that she missed.

Photo by Katie O'Leary



Photo by Tristan Merlino