



PVHS Literary Magazine

illiterature

Spring Edition

2014

# illiterature

The Putnam Valley High School Literary Magazine meets weekly to encourage creativity in writing and to organize events that inspire students to pursue writing and the arts.

## **Members of the PV Lit Mag 2013-14:**

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Congrats to our Writing Contest Winner Racine Smith for "If I ruled the World..."

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Center

**Cover art by Emi Suzuki**

**Check out our website: [pvcsd.org/litmag](http://pvcsd.org/litmag)**

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# College

Amelia Spittal

I've always anticipated the change  
As the light at the end of the tunnel.  
Was always thinking about its arrival,  
Was always waiting for it, impatient  
And waiting for this other road to end.  
Now the light is coming in to focus,  
It's almost here,  
And now I wish it would wait.  
I wish I had stopped to see  
That this journey was not through a tunnel at all,  
But rather down a path lined with roses  
Many of which I never got a proper whiff of.  
But useless is a wish to change the past.  
The present and the future are all that matter.  
It's time to embrace the end of this chapter,  
To create more memories that will last,  
And to look back and remember all the good times already had.  
Each piece of life is important.  
I've been ready for this change for a while now,  
But I'm not ready to leave this tunnel behind me just yet.



Silence's Shadow  
Jadyn Marshall

Photo by Jadyn Marshall

*Silence can heal time's wounds... But in truth, silence loves to let its desolation rule you.*

*Moments go by when you hear nothing but the ocean of blood in your ears. Your house settles around you in a restless bid for attention and your own breath whispers desperate words in your ear with the same conviction as a lover. These moments break you down until all that is left are the sounds and the fear that smokes in your head until ash blurs your vision. Your body develops into a separate entity, a demon whose flesh drips from bone like candle wax. Your senses betray you and trade secrets with your imagination.*

*It is in these moments that you go insane.*

*Your imagination steals you away to a world where people are made of silence. These are people who are lonely, people who are desperate, people who are not people at all. They, like silence, cannot survive without the absence of something else. These are writhing, seeping, drenching, wraithlike shadows whose footsteps leave ink stains on your soul. Maybe they have been there before. Maybe they've been watching you. Maybe they've been waiting.*

*And waiting.*

*Waiting for the right moment in the silence to steal you. They hurry you away with a piercing urgency, a need that emboldens you to the point of delusion.*

*You unravel like a rug at the feet of God.*

*You disappear.*

*Your own heartbeat murders you. Your own breath suffocates you. The creaks of your own home bury you.*

*You go insane.*

*The silence destroys you.*

*You are a shadow.*

*silence's shadow  
Jadyn Marshall*

**Breakfast Musings**  
**By Holly Jones**

**It's been six years  
Since I've eaten Cinnamon Toast Crunch,  
And I've learned a lot about myself,  
Since my last bowl of Life  
I've discovered that destruction is beautiful,  
The way that milk floods the grains  
And the way a bowl disrupts the satisfaction  
Of an empty sink**

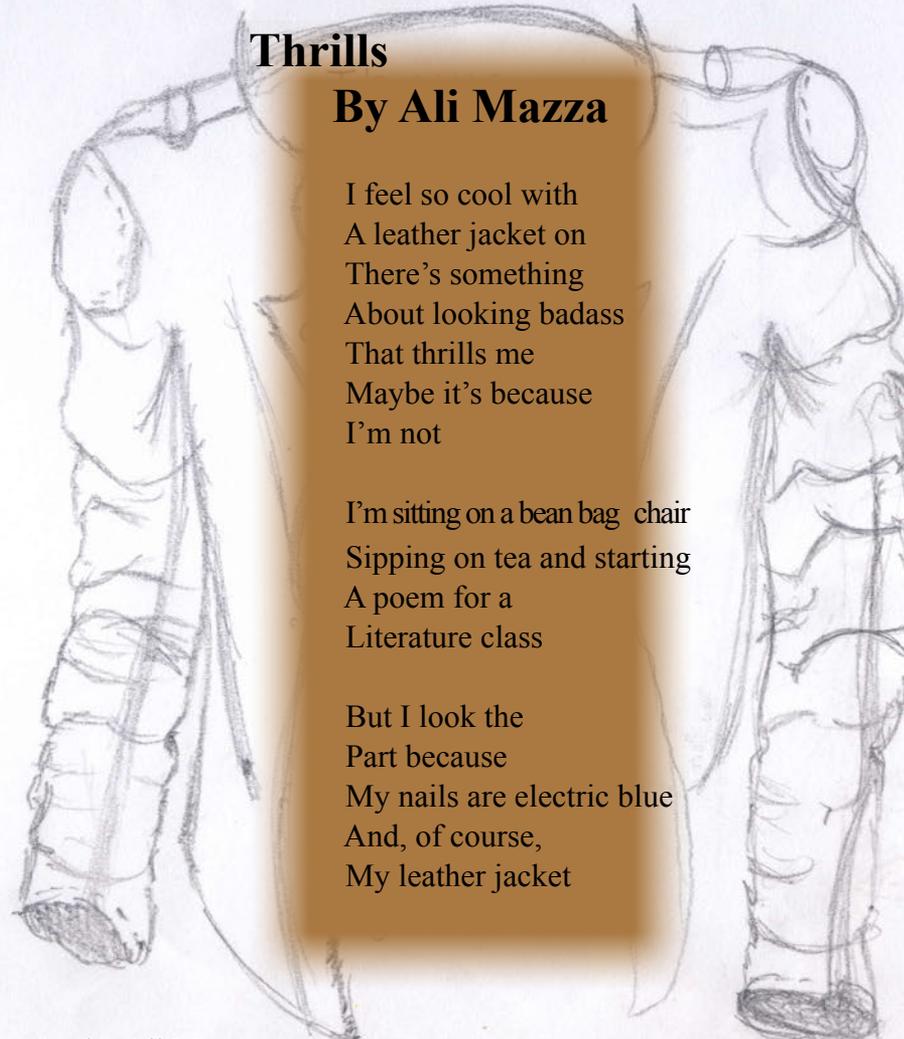


Artwork by Audrey Malek

**When I was nine, I loved Frosted Flakes  
But I hadn't yet learned in life that sometimes to move  
I would have to tiptoe  
And I wouldn't always be more than "good,"  
No matter how badly I wanted to be**

**Coco Puffs have long been gone  
From my taste bud's repertoire  
But chocolate has not  
And I've come to know that  
Most girls my age wish they could rid both  
From their tongues  
To fit into the mold  
The same way their candies are made**

**Now I eat Honey Bunches of Oats  
Because I need the thought of something sweet  
To get me out of bed in the morning  
I know sometimes anticipation is sweeter than manifestation  
So I take my time pouring the bowl  
And deny the spoon more than a few seconds a kiss**



## Thrills

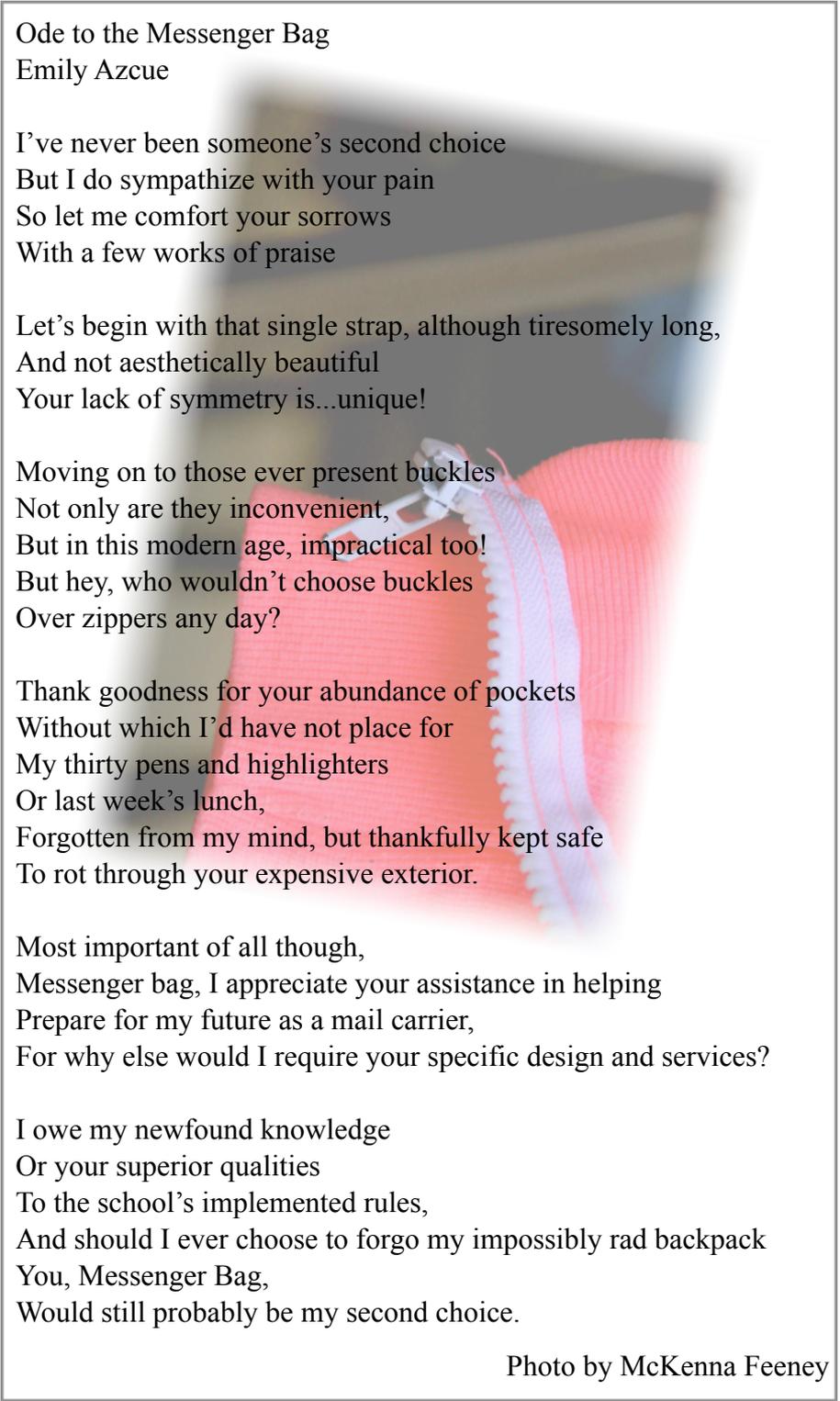
By Ali Mazza

I feel so cool with  
A leather jacket on  
There's something  
About looking badass  
That thrills me  
Maybe it's because  
I'm not

I'm sitting on a bean bag chair  
Sipping on tea and starting  
A poem for a  
Literature class

But I look the  
Part because  
My nails are electric blue  
And, of course,  
My leather jacket

Art by Ali Mazza



Ode to the Messenger Bag  
Emily Azcue

I've never been someone's second choice  
But I do sympathize with your pain  
So let me comfort your sorrows  
With a few works of praise

Let's begin with that single strap, although tiresomely long,  
And not aesthetically beautiful  
Your lack of symmetry is...unique!

Moving on to those ever present buckles  
Not only are they inconvenient,  
But in this modern age, impractical too!  
But hey, who wouldn't choose buckles  
Over zippers any day?

Thank goodness for your abundance of pockets  
Without which I'd have not place for  
My thirty pens and highlighters  
Or last week's lunch,  
Forgotten from my mind, but thankfully kept safe  
To rot through your expensive exterior.

Most important of all though,  
Messenger bag, I appreciate your assistance in helping  
Prepare for my future as a mail carrier,  
For why else would I require your specific design and services?

I owe my newfound knowledge  
Or your superior qualities  
To the school's implemented rules,  
And should I ever choose to forgo my impossibly rad backpack  
You, Messenger Bag,  
Would still probably be my second choice.

Photo by McKenna Feeney

# **Education for the Young**

## **by Steven Dick**

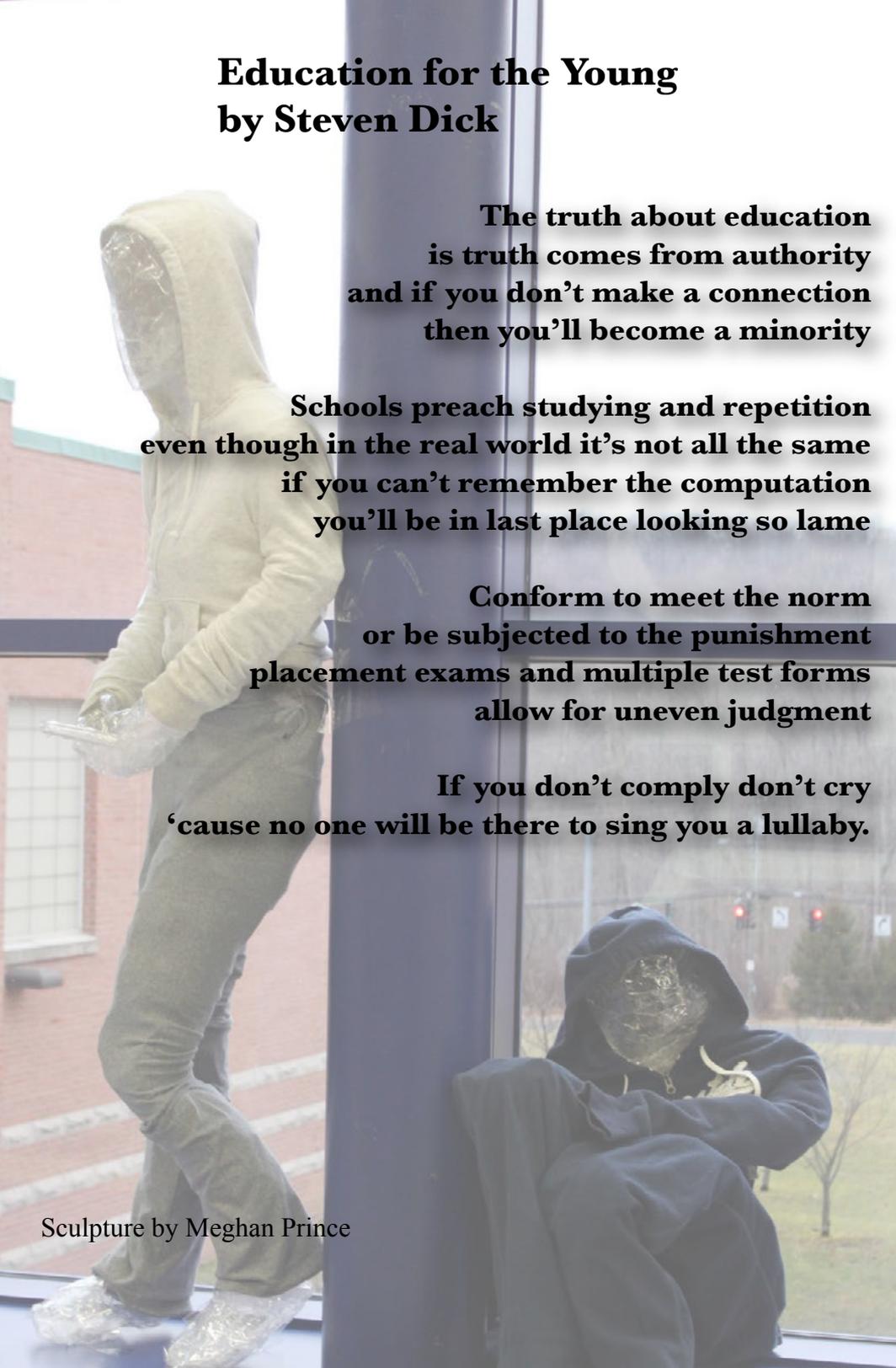
**The truth about education  
is truth comes from authority  
and if you don't make a connection  
then you'll become a minority**

**Schools preach studying and repetition  
even though in the real world it's not all the same  
if you can't remember the computation  
you'll be in last place looking so lame**

**Conform to meet the norm  
or be subjected to the punishment  
placement exams and multiple test forms  
allow for uneven judgment**

**If you don't comply don't cry  
'cause no one will be there to sing you a lullaby.**

Sculpture by Meghan Prince



A Divine Poison  
By Katie O'Leary

Spiders of hallucination  
Spin their webs across my mind  
They wrap me up tight  
In a cocoon of fantasy  
I am addicted to their venom  
I breathe in their miasma  
And drink their toxins  
Until I begin to float  
These spiders begin to feast  
Feeding on my thoughts  
My hopes  
My fears  
They savor the flavor  
Little by little  
They snack on decaying memories  
Ravenous creatures  
Constantly devouring what they acquire  
Until the luminescent nectar of day  
Bleeds into my room  
Placing a sobering kiss on my forehead  
Ripping the baneful envelope from my mind  
The antidotal sun brings me back to reality  
As I squint in the light of a new day  
But a melancholy sense of withdrawal comes over me  
As I realize I have to wait until the next night  
To get my fix of this divine poison.



# Immobile

By Samantha Cunnigham

## Sunset

Cold hands  
Drippy nose  
Nothing to wipe it  
Or cover my toes.  
Holes in my pocket  
But nothing to fall through,  
The sky is black  
But they said it'd be blue.

## Darkness

My pockets are mended  
My feet are now warm  
Hundreds of boxes of tissues  
There's no reason to mourn  
A sky of light blue  
Pockets full of green,  
This unusual day is the best one I have seen

## Sunrise

The sun is back up now  
Bury my dreams in the ground.  
Back to my reality  
Back to my frown.

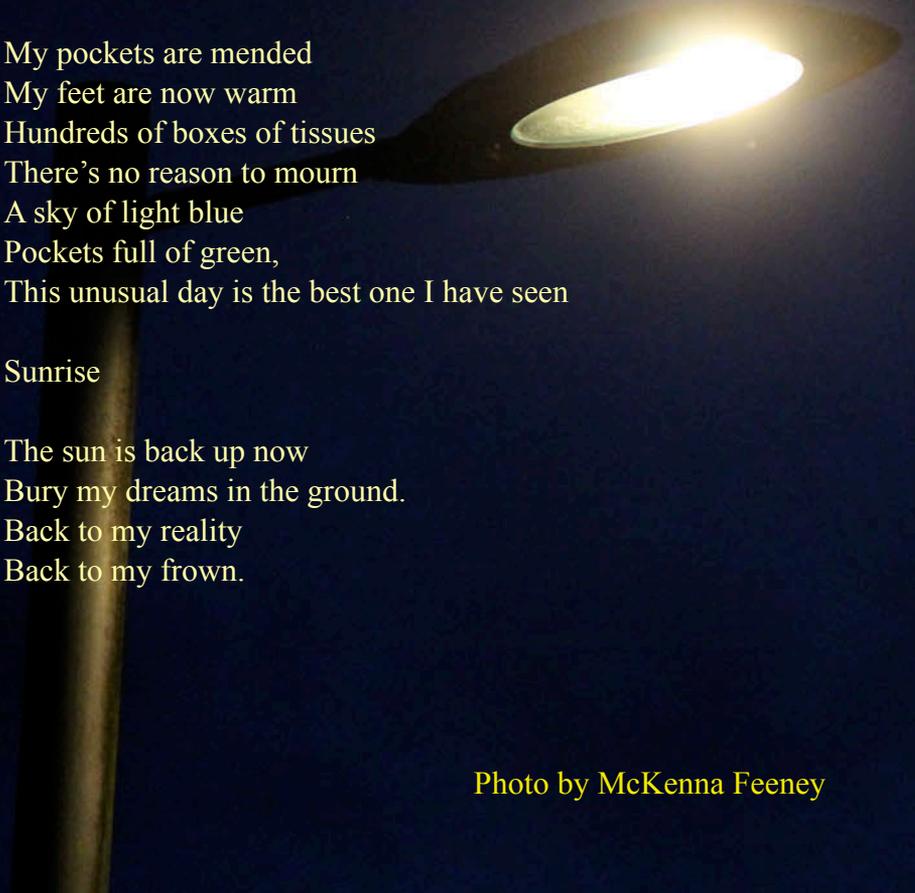


Photo by McKenna Feeney

## Young Girl

By Jackie Budano

She has stood in this spot so many times before,  
With her full brown eyes that have seen much more  
And a voice that has made her each choice.

She is composed with knowledge from obstacles  
She has faced  
Although she has grown, the feeling of that young girl  
has never escaped,  
She remembers Dad's singing wake up call  
And the nickname he used to say.

She remembers ringing the doorbell to  
the neighbor's house  
Unaware of friendships that would grow 'till the end.  
They all ran with bare feet through every backyard.

At a time with no limits,  
When she did not have one care in the world,  
But when did this happen,  
When did her legs become longer and thoughts  
Became deeper?

It seems that she was forced to grow up  
She is forced to create plans, analyze paths, and make  
Decisions  
And although this part is bitter,  
she still holds onto her sweet,  
She will take all those memories of the girl with  
Bare feet.  
And here she stands like she has  
So many times before,  
Telling herself it is just the next step.

So she closes her eyes, knowing she has to be ready to  
Leap  
Dress in white, hand in hand  
She goes and takes a chance



## If I Ruled the World

By Racine J. Smith

A few days ago, in the near future, I shall become supreme leader of this planet. On that day, the earth will be lead to salvation. First thing on my agenda is to stop the destruction of forests and animal preserves, an example of this would be the Amazon Rain Forest. No one would be able to cut down the trees for lumber or fuel unless the situation depended on it. The only other reason you would be allowed to go into the Rain forest would be to take a tour to observe Gaia in her most natural state of beauty. However, if you did try cutting down the forest for some stupid reason such as making another farm because your current one isn't producing as much as it used to, or your developing for the sake of development, you would be sent to jail for the rest of your life without any bail.

Next, as emperor of the planet, I would decree that everyone would have to change his or her dirty polluting ways. People across the world will be changing their energy source from oil and coal to wind, solar and geothermal power. If you're asking yourself how the "heck are we going to afford this," or "how are we going to get everyone to change over to green energy?" "What about all those people who will lose their jobs because everything is changing to green energy?" Well, I have a solution for you. We're going to tax major corporations and billionaires and we are going to use this money to finance this plan. So don't worry about the project. If we are running low on funds, we'll just take some more money from them, so it's no big deal. I will be changing every last house into an environmentally sound house by asking the owners one by one if they wouldn't mind us altering their home so they would be more economical. Last but not least those people who have lost their jobs need not worry. They will all get new jobs building and maintaining the new power sources and new systems. So it would basically be a win, win scenario for pretty much everyone.

Now I'll explain the really exciting stuff. I will first donate trillions of dollars into the research of genetic manipulation and cloning since I personally would love to have both an army of super beings and dinosaurs to follow all of my commands. Just imagine it right now while you are mesmerized by every last syllable that I'm writing down. A battle between an army of super beings fighting an army of intellectually enhanced dinosaur clones. In the midst of the battle an alien invasion forces comes to earth to annihilate the entire human race. The two parties notice this new adversary and decide to join forces to stop the alien menace from destroying the world that they love. Once they have successfully defeated this threat they realize that they aren't so different after all and an unbreakable kinship is formed between these two groups of saviors. Just picture it, wouldn't it be a marvelous day in earth's history for all life on the planet.

Then, I would make a decree that once every month everyone will wear whatever they want as long as it's plaid. If plaid gets too boring then I will change it to some other amusing set of cloths such as cowboy outfits or possibly Star Wars attire for a while. Some people might be wondering, "What if I don't have these costumes or I can't afford one?" Don't worry you have come to the right place; you will be given the outfit by me. By me, I mean that one of my many subordinates will give you an outfit to keep. Then the entire earth would have such an awesome sense of style that the rest of the species in the galaxy will be jealous of how trendy we are.

Under my supreme rule peace and prosperity will spread across the entire world! **No**, the entire galaxy! **NO**, the entire universe! **NO**, my "Era of Glory" will spread across the entire space-time continuum, reaching every corner of the multi-verse until everyone everywhere experiences his or her own form of nirvana. This will lead to an internal paradise across the entire Plane of Existence!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Butterfly  
By Sofia France

Keep moving  
Beat  
Against the wind  
Flit here float there  
Greet every flower with fresh twinkles  
Revive with each bloom  
Don't linger, don't saturate  
Skim the surface with sweet kisses  
And gentle good mornings  
Breathe soft, shallow  
Giggle, flutter, fly  
Don't stop, only pause  
Weave between the raindrops  
Away from the cold chill  
Don't let it pierce or pang  
Don't dip  
Keep shiny and clean  
Always up  
up  
up  
If you droop, if you dive  
The frost will freeze your flight  
Share too much  
Stay too long  
Your wings will petrify  
Stay gentle  
Keep free



Photo by McKenna Feeney

A Room  
By Sofia France

The doorway rings with murmured goodnights,  
The floors sigh with the slap of slippers  
And groan with the tumble of my father's briefcase after an endless  
Monday  
Their voices condense in the silence  
The spongecake sofa saturated  
with rambling lectures, whispered secrets, thrumming laughs  
A lifetime mists over the lonely room

Nook and crannied in the wilted floral chair  
My daughter and I are cocooned in the fog  
She doesn't know my antique childhood  
But she feels the breath of this room  
The steady heartbeat of my family,  
pulsing through the potato chip paint walls

I am back  
I am back with my mother peeling potatoes  
I am back with my father discussing the stars, as the radio crackles  
I want to melt back into the shadows of those evenings,  
sitting altogether talking about how the Sox might actually win this year  
But how we hope they don't, because the Yankees are by far the better,  
classier team  
I want to melt into yesterday,  
to stay there and bathe in it  
Soak myself in a boundless future,  
Lather my self in the luxury of endless possibility

Photo by McKenna Feeney

Until I am swallowed  
how much I missed  
how much I never understood  
All of the promises I never kept  
All of the stories I never got around to sharing  
I sink  
I drown  
Everything I should have apologized for  
Everything I could have said  
Every moment that was unfulfilled  
fills me.

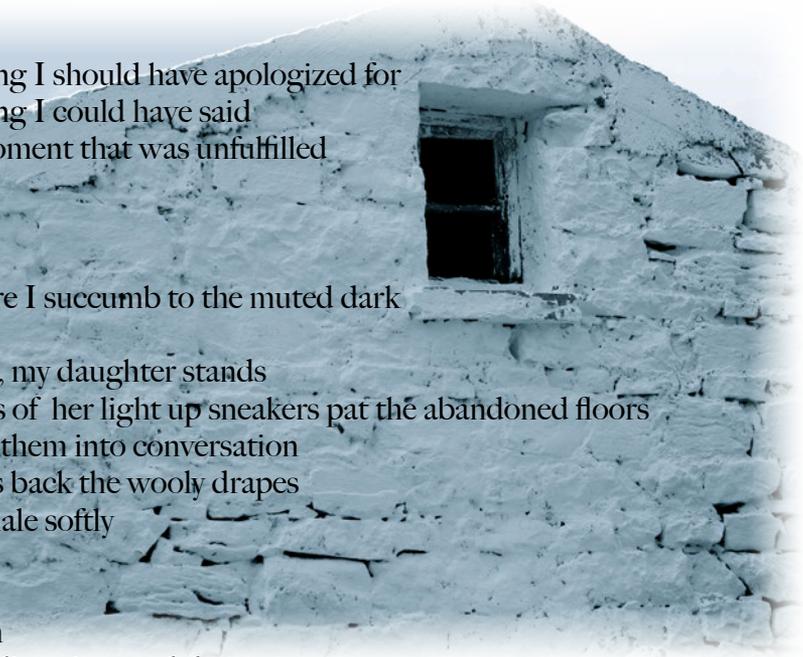
Then  
just before I succumb to the muted dark

She rises, my daughter stands  
The soles of her light up sneakers pat the abandoned floors  
Coaxing them into conversation  
She peels back the woolly drapes  
They exhale softly  
Relief

And then  
I feel it, glistening, and dewy  
So much better than the flimsy memory I was clinging to  
Kissing my face  
Returning my glow  
Reviving the room

Pure, even through the hazy windowpane  
Pure, through my fractured promises  
Pure, through my pad-locked apologies

Pure, because I decide it will be  
For my daughter and for me.



# **String Beans and Asparagus**

**By Lindsey Goncalves**

**String beans and asparagus lay in the trash,**

**End of the nightly struggle.**

**A plate pushed back and forth on the dinner table,**

**A tug of war.**

**“You will eat it all!”**

**“I will not.”**

**“There are children dying for this food.”**

**“So send it to them.”**

**A sigh,**

**A shriek of a chair sliding against the floor**

**A shuffling of feet,**

**A fork scraping off the contents of a now empty white plate**

**A surrender,**

**String beans and asparagus lay in the trash.**

# Bottle

By Katie O'Leary

I'm trapped in a  
bottle.  
I want to scream,  
But I can't.  
When I try,  
The sound  
ricochets off the  
glass  
Cutting deep into  
my heart.  
And if I could  
bleed emotion  
I'd drown in my  
little bottle,  
But eventually it'll  
overflow  
And that bottle  
Along with myself  
Will break.



Painting by Emi Suzuki

What is Education?  
Blendi Muriqi

What year did the Spanish Civil war end?  
Why does man live to hate?  
What nationality was Marco Polo?  
What is love?  
How much does a liter weigh?  
Is it possible to know the truth  
Without challenging it first?  
At what temperature does water boil?  
What is the difference between being alive  
And truly living?  
Which river passes through Madrid?

What is education?

Is it a culmination of facts we regurgitate?  
Is it what we experience during the course of our lives?  
Is it a curriculum we are forced to learn?  
Is it the morality we adopt from our elders?

Do we learn more in the real world?  
Do we learn more from the classroom?

What is education?

What can a book teach us that experience can't?  
Why can't we create our own stories?  
Does a book really teach us what identity is?  
Doesn't the experience of traveling enlighten us more?

What is education?

My knowledge will not lie in the trivial that we learn in school.

My knowledge lies in the experiences I have and the people I meet  
**I don't need a textbook to tell me what history shows.  
Because I will be the one to write it.**

That is enlightenment.  
That is knowledge.  
That is real education.



Sculpture by Shannon Rose Rogers



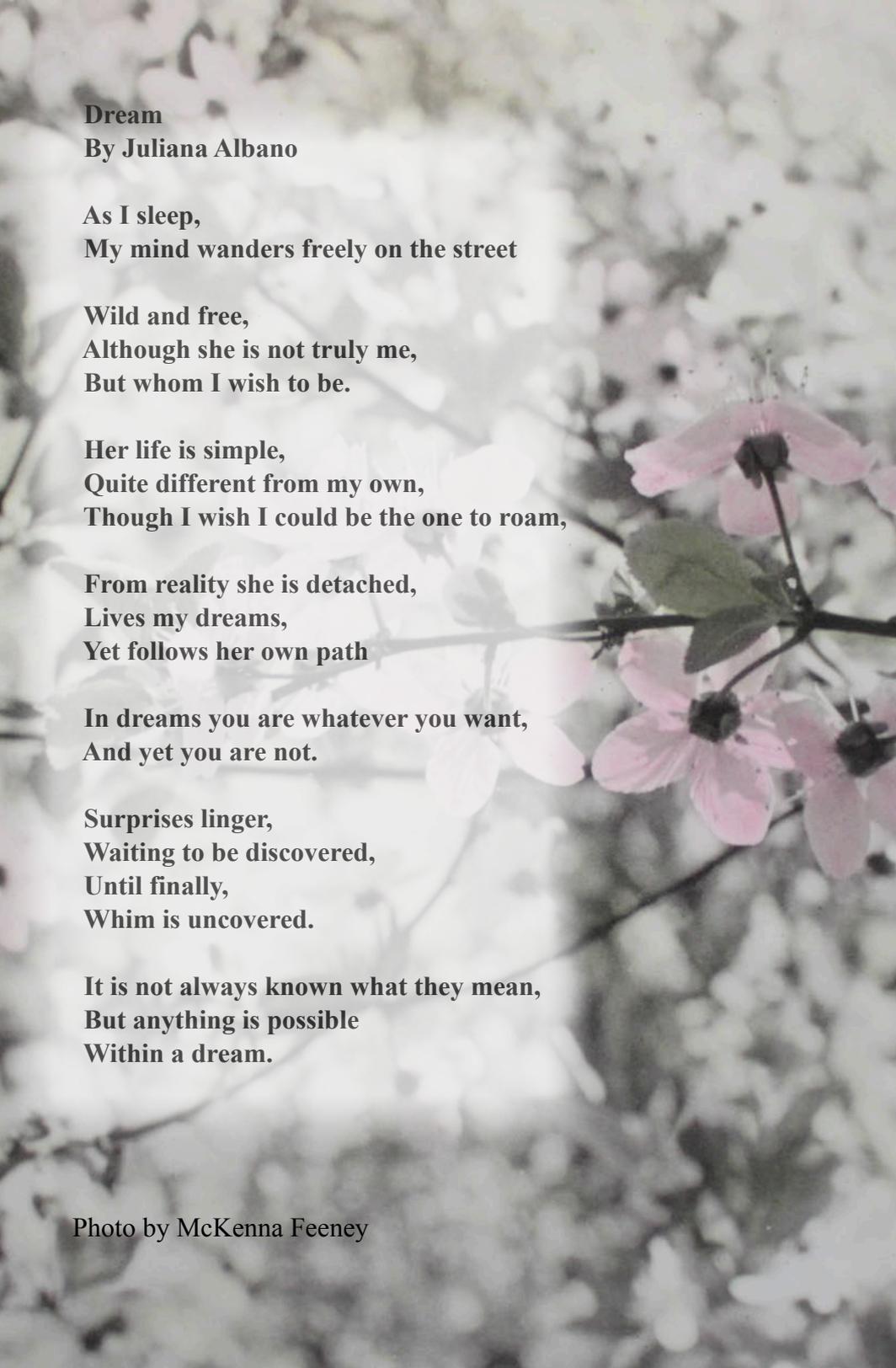
## **and then there were no commas**

What would happen if all of the commas in the world just disappeared? Poof and no work of print would ever be the same again. Think of how boring life would be without any commas. People would run out of breath at the end of really long sentences when they were reading aloud because there wouldn't be a comma to hinder suffocation which would be bad because anyone in the audio book industry would promptly pass out periodically. This would be problematic.

First of all commas are needed to make sections of writing sound important like one should have done at the beginning of this sentence. Secondly you can't just completely eradicate a critical portion of the language. That would be even worse than pretending that the letter " " never existed. Not only would selling uncuation and grammar be illegible arenthetical statements would be distorted as well. And Who needs quotations? scoffs the New Uncuation Times. It's like we're retending that we care!

So the next time that some oor English teacher hands back your comosition with a lethora of red marks you'll understand why this lesson is so imortant. Failure to do so is something u with which we will not ut.

**-jadynd marshall**



**Dream**

**By Juliana Albano**

**As I sleep,  
My mind wanders freely on the street**

**Wild and free,  
Although she is not truly me,  
But whom I wish to be.**

**Her life is simple,  
Quite different from my own,  
Though I wish I could be the one to roam,**

**From reality she is detached,  
Lives my dreams,  
Yet follows her own path**

**In dreams you are whatever you want,  
And yet you are not.**

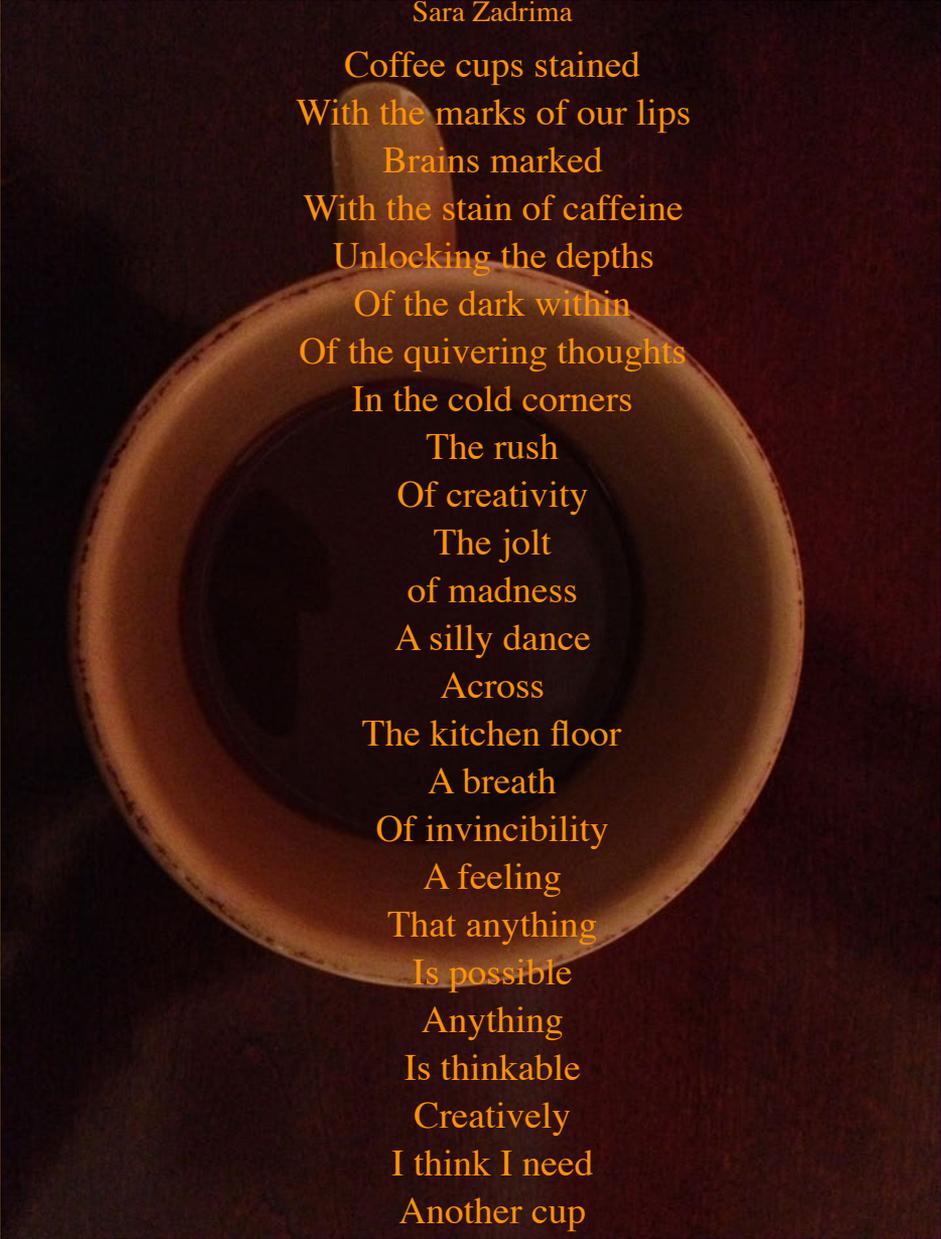
**Surprises linger,  
Waiting to be discovered,  
Until finally,  
Whim is uncovered.**

**It is not always known what they mean,  
But anything is possible  
Within a dream.**

Photo by McKenna Feeney

## Stains

Sara Zadrina



Coffee cups stained  
With the marks of our lips  
Brains marked  
With the stain of caffeine  
Unlocking the depths  
Of the dark within  
Of the quivering thoughts  
In the cold corners  
The rush  
Of creativity  
The jolt  
of madness  
A silly dance  
Across  
The kitchen floor  
A breath  
Of invincibility  
A feeling  
That anything  
Is possible  
Anything  
Is thinkable  
Creatively  
I think I need  
Another cup  
Of coffee

Art by Sara Zadrina

**From Fire**  
**by Emi Suzuki**  
(*Inspired by Night by Elie Wiesel*)

I see death.  
I see it everywhere.  
I see it in the faces of the people.

I see corpses fall all around,  
Like ashes from a fire.

I see these ashes.  
I feel these ashes.  
I breathe them in.

This, which has faded me,  
No longer changes me.  
Which, once made fearful,  
No longer startles me.  
Which, once was revolting,  
Has become my life.

I question nothing now,  
But my will to live.  
All the questions I would ask,  
Would go unanswered.

He who I looked to,  
To find answers,  
He has died,  
Along with the people.

They have become ashes.  
He has become ashes.  
And I will join them.

# An Eternity Of Scars

(Inspired by **Night** by Elie Wiesel)  
BY LUCY ISRAËL

They drank,  
They ate,  
They sang.

**IT** came  
A wave of death  
We began to run  
And **never** stop

Satan fears this shadow  
He runs too  
As he should

**Where** is god?  
**Why** do we pray?  
**When** will it end?  
**Where** is the light?  
**Why** won't it end?

Please  
I beg god to end this existence,  
This so-called "life"

I march forward as my soul whispers its  
goodbye  
It drains from me and damns the rest of this  
body  
And still my heart pumps blood through my  
raw veins  
Air seeps between my lips  
I trudge forward.

Then  
**They die**  
**They all die**  
I think I may die too  
I welcome it  
But,  
I don't

I give up.  
I am gone.  
**Me is no more...**

I still run.  
I am...  
**Not.**  
God is gone.  
Never shall I forget.  
**Never.**

Photo by McKenna Feeney

# Light to Dark

(Inspired by Night)

by Katherine Quast

The sudden darkness  
Is of great contrast  
To the light

The beauty, the bi**R**ds  
Hav**E** left  
The butterflies, replaced,  
with **M**onsters

Things hav**E** changed forever  
Never again shall I walk  
I a**M** forced to crawl  
Carrying my **B**urden forever

wh**E**n I crawl,  
it is not towa**R**d the light  
that brightens the world

I crawl toward  
The glow of hell  
To return to the ashes  
I was born from

# **Stripped to Stripes (Inspired by Night)**

**by Katie O'Leary**

**Stripped to stripes**

**I represent what my people have  
become**

**Black for the smoke**

**From those hells on Earth**

**White for the snow**

**Which ate the victims**

**Like a ravenous spider in a web**

**Black for the death**

**That lived deep inside us**

**White for the pale twisted bodies**

**That matched the pale twisted faces**

**Black for the identities**

**Lost in an eternal night**

**White for the God who abandoned us**

**When we needed him most**

**Black for my mind  
The darkness that rests**

**White for the memory  
I will not forget**

# The Greatest Loss of All

(Inspired by [Night](#))

by Maija Knapp

“Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever.”

Throughout life there are moments and glitches of loss.

Loss in all contexts, and all meanings.

Loss of all that had once interested you,

Loss of the deep love that once consumed the entirety of your soul and being,

Loss of the sparkle in which your eyes had perpetually emitted.

But- the deepest cut and the deepest pain one could endure

Is that of a loss in faith.

Loss of faith in a time when it was needed the most is the greatest loss of all.

This loss removes what your soul desperately yearned, reached and grabbed to attain.

The comfort,

The stability,

The repose,

The consolation,

The last thing one needs is a disconnection from these things at a time of great desperation.

Faith bestows a gift on to all whom request its enticing qualities,

A loss of faith is a loss of extraordinary magnitude.

When the great tragedy referred to as your life leads you to devour all reminisces of hope

And at one point in your life, you will experience this.

There is no avoidable route you can take.

Faith will play the role of sanity to rescue your soul from all worry

Throughout life there are moments and glitches of loss.

But the greatest loss of all,

Is one of faith.

# *Unfulfilling Change*

*by Joseph Saez*

Once, laughter, hope, and faith guided me  
like a lantern through a dark cave

Now, crushed under boulders, my life is  
shattered, destroyed with ease.

Once, friends, family, and history, painted  
me, it was my identity

Now, washed away, like rain through  
leaves, I cannot remember, I cannot  
believe...



*The Shaping of a Man*  
(Inspired by *Night*)  
by Bryce Hamilton

Here upon a hill I stand  
Looking upon the nightmares,  
of another man

He dreams not of the horrors  
done to him  
But of the people, and the  
demons  
Inside of them

I see the people  
Who think they are, so much  
better than the rest  
Simply because of their  
ethnicity and race  
I see the human beings  
Lost in their upbringing

They were taught to hate man,  
Who dreams about them now?  
They were told that they were  
best  
And this man was just a  
blemish,  
On their Earth

They beat upon this man and all  
his fellow kin  
They broke them down

And let them drown  
Some in ignorance  
And others in despair

When his God was lost to him  
He knew then what they were  
And they were gods, in their  
own right  
For who was to challenge  
Their power and their might

Here upon this mountain  
I see the cause of suffering,  
I see a man without regret,  
because they are not human  
Not to him at least  
But now we see the cause of  
this  
And it's the way he was brought  
up

So when brought up right  
Without racism or bias  
A true man is born  
A man with knowledge of right  
and wrong  
A man who won't let himself  
Do any sort of wrong.

# Where Has The Sun Gone?

(Inspired by Night)

by Michael Toone



*I remember days when the sun would shine bright,  
and I had held no fear in my heart,  
but the sun must always set sometime.  
With the setting the sun comes night,  
and the everlasting night brings death.*

*I do not know when night will cease.  
I do not know if it ever will.  
But I know that I must see it through,  
for the coming of day will put me at peace.  
Until then, the night goes on.*

*How I long to again see light,  
as I wait in the darkness.  
The starving of my body and my soul.  
A terrible force I cannot fight.  
Perhaps death is a better option.*

*I fear the night will be over soon,  
but just for me.  
I don't care if I die here,  
underneath the glowing full moon.  
I have but just one question...*

*Where has the sun gone?*

# Within the Night

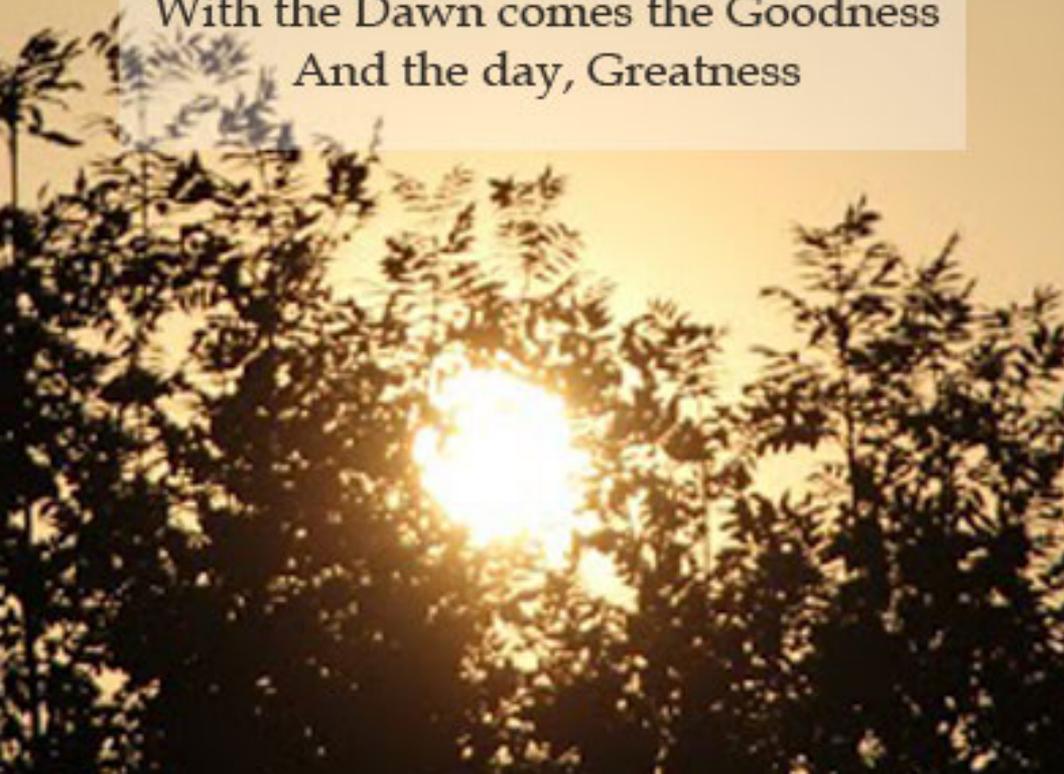
by Tommy Carroll

(Inspired by Night)

The Night can be long  
But no matter, the Dawn comes  
And a new Day starts

The Terror scares us  
But there is Good in the world  
And it sparks Greatness

The Night brings Terror  
With the Dawn comes the Goodness  
And the day, Greatness



# The *Salsa Dancing Apocalypse*

By Alyssa Carrow

It all started one cool, crisp, summer morning when my two friends

Kim, Emma and I went for a cruise around Lake Peekskill.

It was like any other morning, we all met at the deli and got coffee before starting our day. The three of us, equipped with our skateboards started our trip around the lake just like any other day.

Kim's neighbor drove by us and stopped to say hi, little did any of us know that this would be the last time any of us spoke to him.

We went to Singer's beach to hang out for a bit when we saw a woman flailing around in the road.

"Hey what's that lady doing?" I asked my friends

"I dunno" Kim says as we watch a woman dance to salsa music down the road.

"Is she dancing?" Emma asked as we watched her get closer to a man walking down the street.

"Yeah it looks like salsa dancing" I responded.

She danced closer and closer towards the man, she was about 3 feet from him before he said

"Hey lady can you-" and that was it.

We watched in horrified silence as this woman changed him, she grabbed him and he screamed in horror. We took cover under the table so we wouldn't be seen. Nobody was around to witness what we witnessed; his screams were terrible it; the salsa music got louder.

We watched as the woman held the man, the salsa music was deafening now.

The music suddenly went back to a normal volume and the man fell to the ground he lay there not moving. The woman continued to dance and went up the street.

"What just happened?" I asked my friends as we hid under the table stunned from what we just witnessed.

"I don't-" Kim began, and then the man got up and began doing the dance the woman had been doing. **This,**

**IS THE START OF THE APOCALYPSE.**

Artwork by Aurora Sopow-Alleyne

**Forget**  
**By Bryce Hamilton**

**Distrustful**  
**Emptiness**  
**Always**  
**Terrible**  
**Horrible**

**Laughter**  
**Intense**  
**Fabulous**  
**Enjoyment**

**Upon these words are stereotypes**  
**Let go of all previous thought before**  
**And the stereotypes shall be no more**

**Although thought as opposites**  
**They cannot last without each other**  
**And then the flame would smother**

**The flame that burns through everything**  
**Thought, creation, will be nevermore**  
**Forget the stereotypes and never think as you did before**

**Photo by Bryce Hamilton**

Photo by McKenna Feeney

## Hidden or Unseen Things

By Christina George

There are days so purposeful  
Yet there is something missing  
So focused, so determined  
What else  
And I take a breath  
And I realize that behind everything  
There is a purpose  
A perfection  
It goes hidden to all of those too  
Introverted to take a look  
It goes unseen to everything that  
lacks an understanding  
And I realize that everything has its  
Own sublimity  
And beneath it lies a unique  
Composition  
And I am humbled  
And I want to understand  
And I am at peace  
As I continue



Photo by McKenna Feeney

**Bucketz**

**By Erjon Brucaj**

**Get on the line, take a lap  
After this circuit, give me 20 more  
Keep going, you're halfway there  
Let's go, don't stop now**

**These words are inscribed in our heads  
We constantly battle ourselves to become better  
Our blood, sweat, tears, fend off seducing fears  
But this pain I suffer is not suffered alone.**

**Alone I am great, but together we are unbreakable  
Our battles stretch our physical and mental limits  
Second-guessing our decision, I didn't sign up for this  
I want to puke; I'm taking a nap right after this.**

**We lost much more than we gained. Gaining even more than we lost  
The time that passed, the hours in the gym, all gone.  
But this time taught me heart and discipline  
My next challenge stands no match for me.**

**\***

**\***

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**As I yawn, stopping my alarm with the Saturday sun in my eyes  
I wake up my sons yelling at them to get up before I tell their mom  
About their English grade  
We eat breakfast and prepare for drills at 7 in the morning**

**Damn it, I love this.**

**You are the beholder  
Elise Alexander**

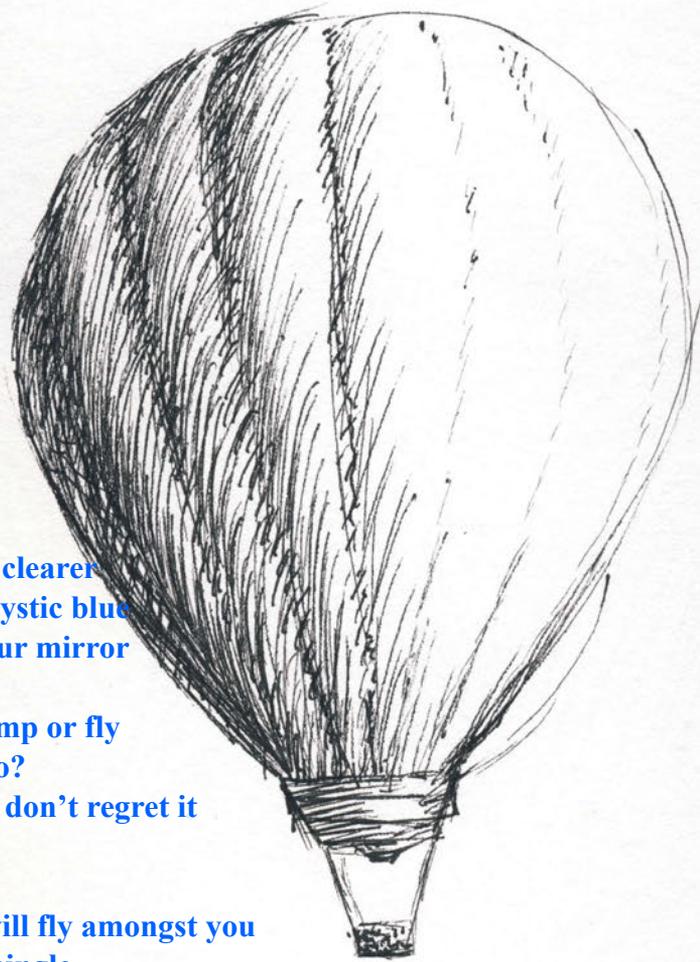
**once you get your head  
out of the clouds  
the view becomes much clearer  
you find the sky to be mystic blue  
and that the world is your mirror**

**the choice is yours to jump or fly  
so which way will you go?  
make your decision and don't regret it  
just go with the flow**

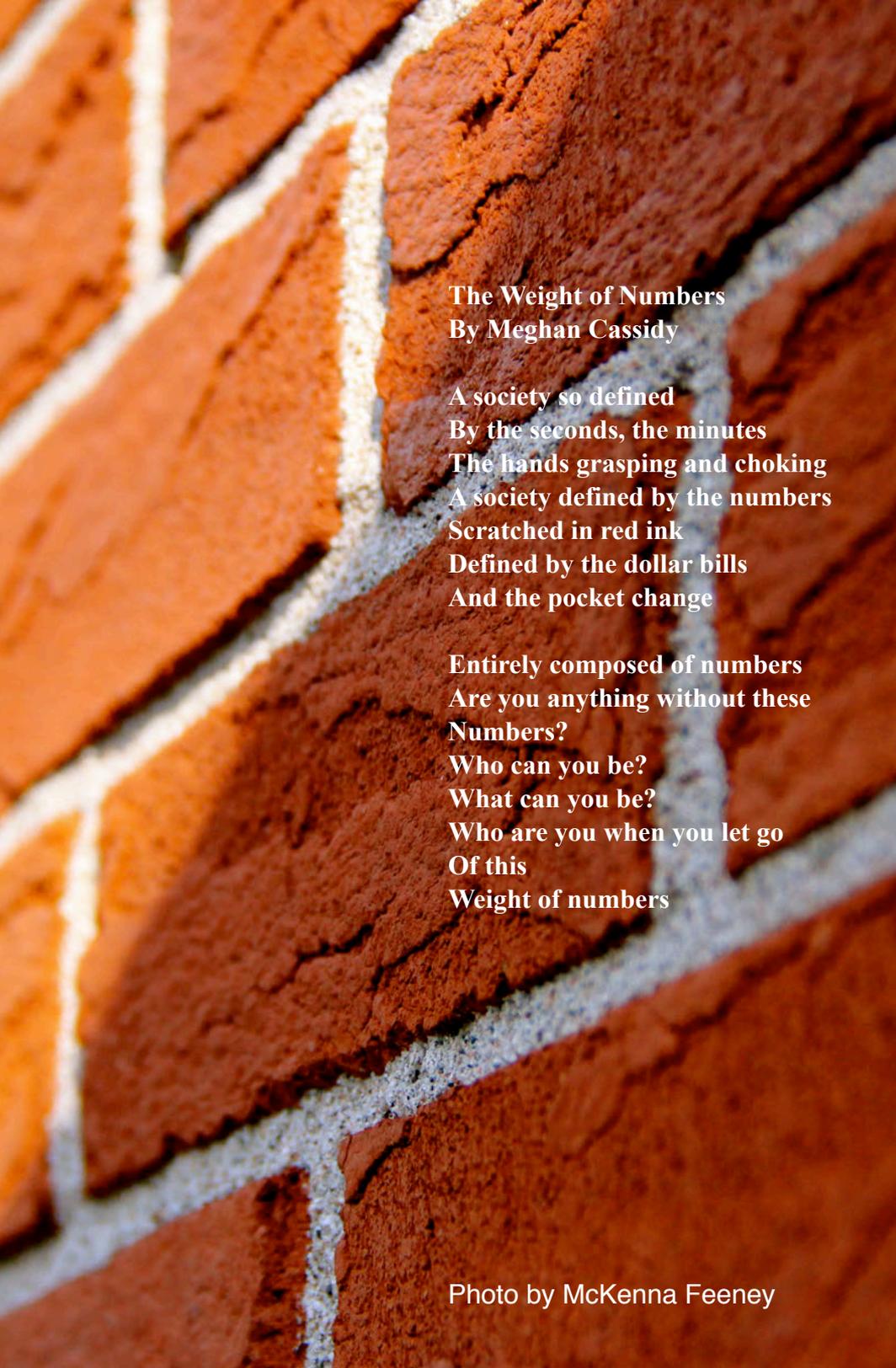
**the birds in your path will fly amongst you  
but you must not intermingle  
go on in your own direction  
be true, be you, be single**

**do not look back into what you've escaped  
it's behind you for a reason  
but propel ahead into the change  
it's coming just like a season**

**but just remember not to fall  
the world is on your shoulders  
balance it correctly and you will see  
that you are the beholder.**



Artwork by Emi Suzuki



**The Weight of Numbers  
By Meghan Cassidy**

**A society so defined  
By the seconds, the minutes  
The hands grasping and choking  
A society defined by the numbers  
Scratched in red ink  
Defined by the dollar bills  
And the pocket change**

**Entirely composed of numbers  
Are you anything without these  
Numbers?  
Who can you be?  
What can you be?  
Who are you when you let go  
Of this  
Weight of numbers**

Photo by McKenna Feeney

**Tree Branch**  
**By Rachel Liscia**

**Wanderers traveling throughout the night  
Gather and collect me as if I were gold  
Ignited with a spark I give off great light  
I keep these travelers from getting too cold.**

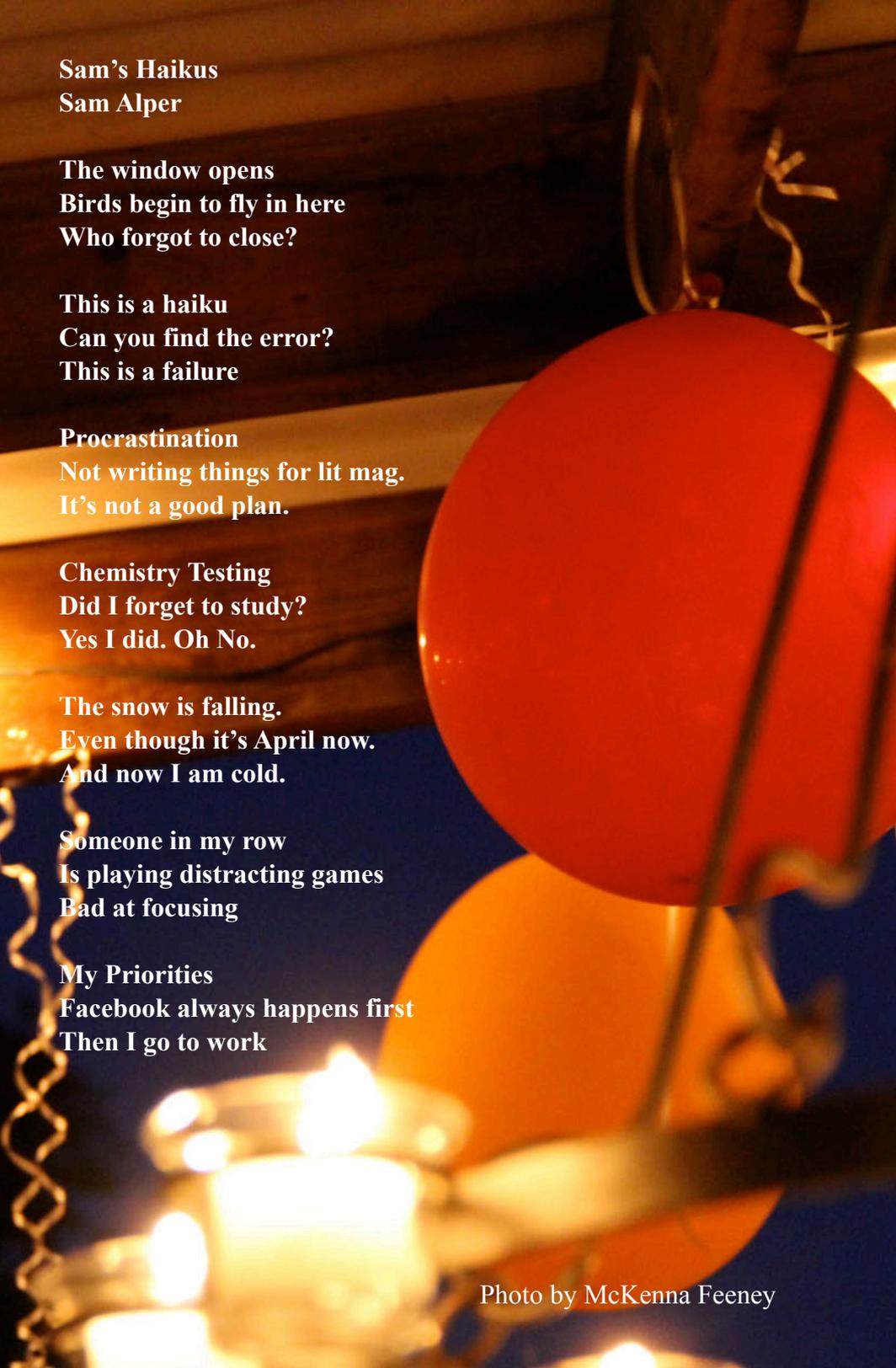
**Hollow boned creatures take refuge in my height  
Their offspring in eggs I hold with great care  
I provide shelter for these animals in flight  
A shelter that is high up in the air**



Artwork by Divya Adukuzhiyil

**My structure presents the perfect play site  
For squirrels to jump and somersault  
Whether it's a game of tag or play fight  
I'm the perfect playground above the asphalt**

**To children gathered around a campsite  
I am essential to making that savory treat  
The one that no one can resist to bite  
With its gooey marshmallow and chocolate so sweet.**



**Sam's Haikus**

**Sam Alper**

**The window opens  
Birds begin to fly in here  
Who forgot to close?**

**This is a haiku  
Can you find the error?  
This is a failure**

**Procrastination  
Not writing things for lit mag.  
It's not a good plan.**

**Chemistry Testing  
Did I forget to study?  
Yes I did. Oh No.**

**The snow is falling.  
Even though it's April now.  
And now I am cold.**

**Someone in my row  
Is playing distracting games  
Bad at focusing**

**My Priorities  
Facebook always happens first  
Then I go to work**

Photo by McKenna Feeney

## The Sea

Veronica Toone

I could sit here all day and explain to you why I think the shore is beautiful. I could try my best to explain the feeling of sand between your toes, the feeling of salt in the air, entangling your hair and filling up your lungs like it has nowhere else to go. And I could try to take a picture of the story in all its glory, try to put it down in a story, write all the words I could but there's so many more than ten thousand, that's for sure. Because the truth is one picture cannot capture the sea. It cannot capture the depth that we cannot perceive, it goes out and on forever, forever outward and downward and in every direction, beyond our perception. It's something new that is eons old, it's dark and deep and strange and cold, and the deeper you go, you lose the sand between your toes, but you know, down there, is a strange new world that lives and grows. The sea is unending, unbending, just goes about its unity with a silent power that sailors fear. It's vast and yet, can fit in the palm of your hand, cannot be conquered like land, in the name of man, one giant leap for mankind, it's a new moon, a new place, yes, it is ours, it is Earth's, but we don't know the ocean from the depths of space.

I could go on to explain how small you feel with nothing but ocean on the horizon and beyond, but I won't, because humans have all gazed up at the stars, and in the stars they are nothing, but it is no cause for alarm. Because the ocean, yea, may swallow you whole, but it is not an enemy. Nor a friend. It is the peaceful beginning and the violent end.

I could tell you all the wonders of the deep blue sea, that is so strange and new and beautiful. But I won't. Because while it cannot be captured in one single frame, it is a picture we know, we know the feeling of sand between the toes, because the sea is in us, we move with its waves and we hear it in shells; for fish it is heaven and for some sailors it's hell. It's scary and lovely all at the same time, throughout all of time, from 5 Billion BC, 'till one million eons or two or 'till three. Because the sea doesn't care what time and space have in store; it will still be the sea. For now, for tomorrow.  
For forever more.

Artwork by Vicki Ponarski

## We Are

Sara Zadrina

Heavy eyelids  
Leaky faucets  
Lazy smiles  
Tangled sheets

We run

Like foxes

We dance

In the moonlight

We breathe

In salty air

We keep time

With broken clocks

We watch

The sand

Slip out

Between intertwined fingers

We are

# Nostalgia

Sara Zadrima

Do you ever have nostalgia  
For places you haven't been?  
Like that cozy house  
Tucked away in the mountains  
With their blankets of snow  
And the fire  
And the laughter  
And everyone in  
their coziest sweaters?

Or the roadside diner  
With the really good coffee  
Where you might have stopped  
On your road trip  
Through the scene  
Of a masterpiece by Mother  
Nature?

Does it ever get so bad  
That your hands tremble  
And your heart aches  
Like it's shattered  
To a million pieces?

No  
it's not wanderlust  
Because my heart sinks

Photo by McKenna Feeney

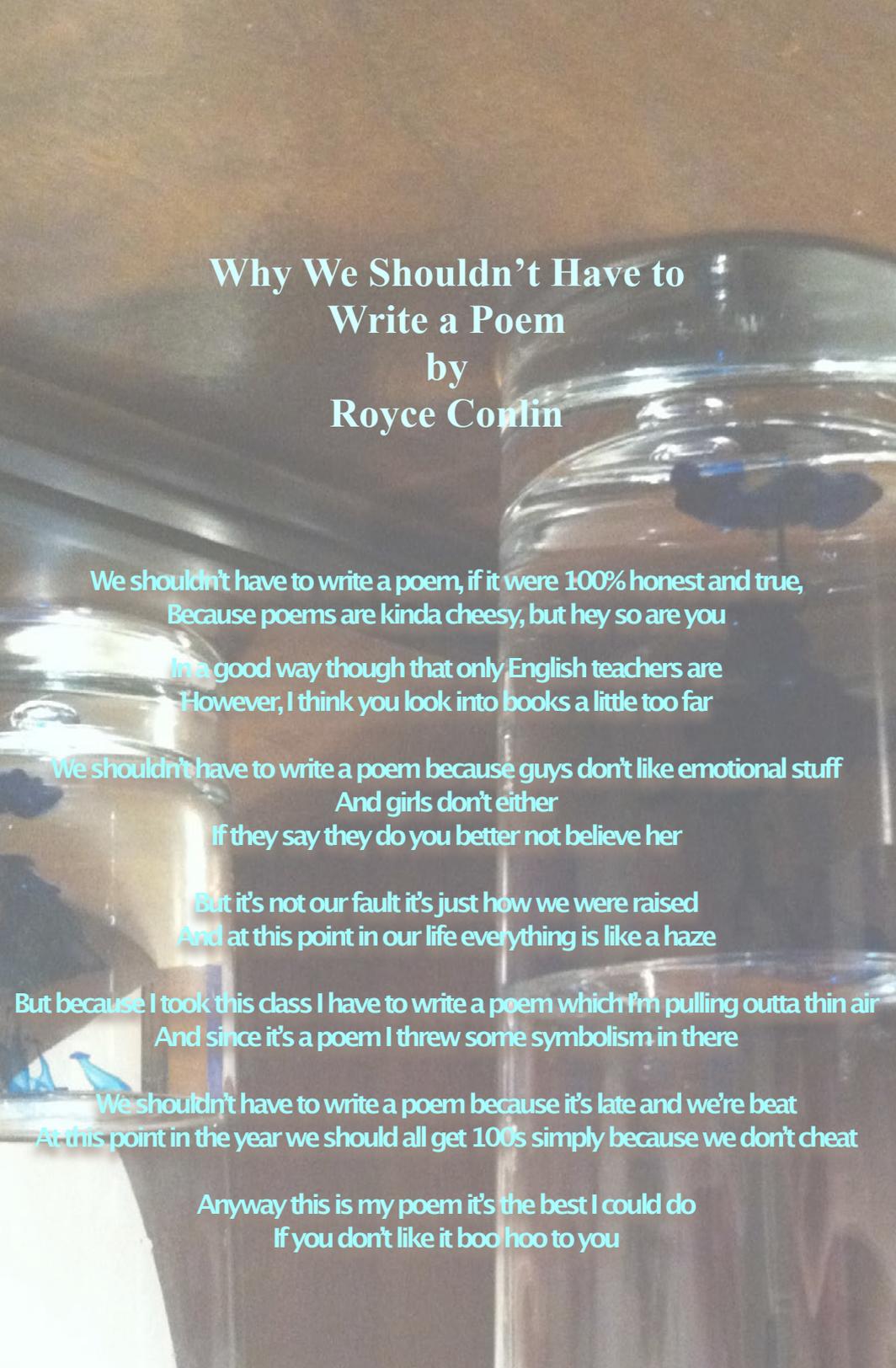
When I look at photos  
That aren't even mine

I see a place  
And nonexistent memories  
Swimming through my head  
Drowning my thoughts  
In wishes to relive them

Longing for a time  
That hasn't happened to me  
Maybe I'm nostalgic  
For someone else's memories



Photo by McKenna Feeney



Why We Shouldn't Have to  
Write a Poem  
by  
Royce Conlin

We shouldn't have to write a poem, if it were 100% honest and true,  
Because poems are kinda cheesy, but hey so are you .

In a good way though that only English teachers are  
However, I think you look into books a little too far

We shouldn't have to write a poem because guys don't like emotional stuff  
And girls don't either  
If they say they do you better not believe her

But it's not our fault it's just how we were raised  
And at this point in our life everything is like a haze

But because I took this class I have to write a poem which I'm pulling outta thin air  
And since it's a poem I threw some symbolism in there

We shouldn't have to write a poem because it's late and we're beat  
At this point in the year we should all get 100s simply because we don't cheat

Anyway this is my poem it's the best I could do  
If you don't like it boo hoo to you

# The Decision

## John Byrne

Two boxers in the corners, one in a red robe, one in blue  
“Clean fight, Come out of your corners” the fight of the old and the new  
A jab to the left, upper cut, right hook, bob and weave  
The opponents are evenly matched, more so than can be believed.  
As the match continues and they begin to tire  
The fight feels like it is coming down to the wire  
Are they fighting each other or is there to be more than that?  
There is a scary moment as the boxer in red is on the mat.  
“Three, two...open your eyes, get up, don’t let him win.”  
Up he pops and it is then I notice his face with a grin

The boxer in red and the one in blue are none other than me  
Fighting myself about where to go and where I should be  
Which one will win? The end of the round  
North, south, east, west, in which direction am I bound?  
The fight continues, they both fought hard, but only one can last  
The ref holds up the winner’s arm and hands him the belt fast  
Part of me is bruised and battered, the other is filled with pride  
It is at this moment that I finally decide.

**Ode to Sweet Sleep** by Sara Zadrina

This is an ode  
To the sweet sleep  
That escapes my grasp  
As I write these very letters  
Which form these here words  
And these here lines  
Of this here poem  
That you have come across  
At this very moment

This is an ode  
To the seconds turned minutes  
Turned hours  
Upon hours  
In which I *could* spend  
In my warm, cozy bed  
In which I *do* spend  
Unscrambling thoughts in my head  
Instead  
Squeezing out words  
Onto pages  
Into paragraphs  
Into papers to turn in  
In the morning

This is an ode  
To the pillows and blankets  
That will be waiting extra long  
To start their shift  
Tonight  
And to the alarm and the mother  
That will likely be receiving  
Extra morning grumbles  
When the sun decides to rise

Photo by Sara Zadrina

This is an ode  
To the wise time I might've spent  
In the week past  
Writing something  
Such as this  
But then you wouldn't  
Have a poem  
Quite like this  
Or see a person as weary  
With eyes as bleary  
On a face as droopy  
As this one here  
Come morning

So I write this here  
Ode to sleep,  
Unfortunately  
Fortunately  
Made of late night words  
Tied with wishes of sleep in each letter  
Written in ink that runs with dreams  
As jealous eyes  
Stare cold into the late hours of the night  
As they trade places  
With the young hours of the morning

Photo by Sara Zadrima

# **Lionheart** by Veronica Toone

**Today I saw an artist.  
Today I saw a silent lion heart creating works of art,  
Splattering his blood and his dreams and his paint onto pavement with  
Nothing  
But hands and heart.  
And he created masterpiece after masterpiece  
He was sneered at, his art labeled as an outcry for attention  
The only time his name was mentioned was if someone said,  
“You’re not gonna make it, lion heart  
Give up and go home.”**

**Today I saw a man on the sidewalk, his head held down and his arm  
held out, a hat clutched in a dirty fist as people dismissed him, but hey,  
They had places to go.**

**Today I saw a poet, shouting with everything he had to give, screaming  
that you need to live with passion, with fury, tears starting to fall onto  
the stage as he spoke with the wisdom of a sage and with a lionheart.**

**Today made me think that there is good in this world.  
Before today I thought that there was nothing but suffering and fear,  
Nothing but hatred and tears, and before today I thought  
That there was nothing to live for.  
But today I saw hope and passion that burned with every second that  
the world turned, and I saw people that loved and felt and breathed in,  
breathed out, letting it all out, and they didn’t stop to let the pain catch  
them  
Not stopping to give out  
Because they were lionhearts.**

**And they’d be damned if they were going down today.**

Artwork by Yoshi Abe

But she's ugly, you think to yourself, the thought curled behind your lips. What do they all see in her? She's by far the most exquisitely unlovely female pictured in the hall. The others at least have a few redeeming attributes. There's a swan's neck under the sharp shoulder of a scarlet dress... the finely crafted muscles in his dancer's



Edward Hopper

back... twigs of fingers laid to rest on worn ivory. But this woman seeps the beauty out of the female form.

A shadow gauges out her cheek, leaving her a masculine, thick bone structure covered with under-stretched muslin. Her hairline forms the silhouette of a wave, beached by straw rather than sand. The distance between her shoulder blades and the peak of her bony chest is disproportionate, uninspired. Her figure is comprised of elementary geometry; triangles carve out her ribcage and the silhouette of her heels. The harsh slope of her calves meets her shoes, which are reminiscent of a housewife in mourning...

...And they pinch. Your toes ache, sheathed from nine to nine by a pompous pump. But you had to chose those shoes this morning, because they were the only ones plain enough to make your dress seem blue-chip. And god, do you love that dress. The collar blows back, criminally feminine. Of course it's plain, the plainest you own. And that's good, because simplicity is rich, though daddy's company isn't. The year's been tough, the camaraderie tougher. There's the man at your side, close for comfort though he stands in umber shadows. He's a nice rectangle, at home with the beams on the ceiling. The other is a tent, staked on an uneven desk. He billows in the evening wind and threatens to topple everything down.

You hate being trapped between the tables. It makes you feel like a bit of flour stuck between the cracks of America's kitchen. You point your feet at the nearest gap, hoping to spring out of the shadows. You won't though, and they know it too. You have to remain predisposed, posed. You must live up to the conference you now wear like your favorite, damaged dress.

But that can't stop you from peeking around the corner of your eye. The raindrops that live in the evening's pith are bright, mindful starlings that fold their way through the creases of your palms and cast light across the night-soaked room.

**But She's Ugly**

**Jadyn Marshall**

**Inspired by Edward Hopper's *Conference At Night***



# New York State Testing Program

*I'm trying to fathom, to grasp, to see.*

*How the state test is of value to me.*

*What is the purpose, in wasting our time?*

*And strangely that question is treated like crime?*

*But no one will stop and no one will halt,*

*For then a teacher is under assault.*

*But if nothing happens then nothing will change,*

*It will grow bigger, 'till learning is strange.*

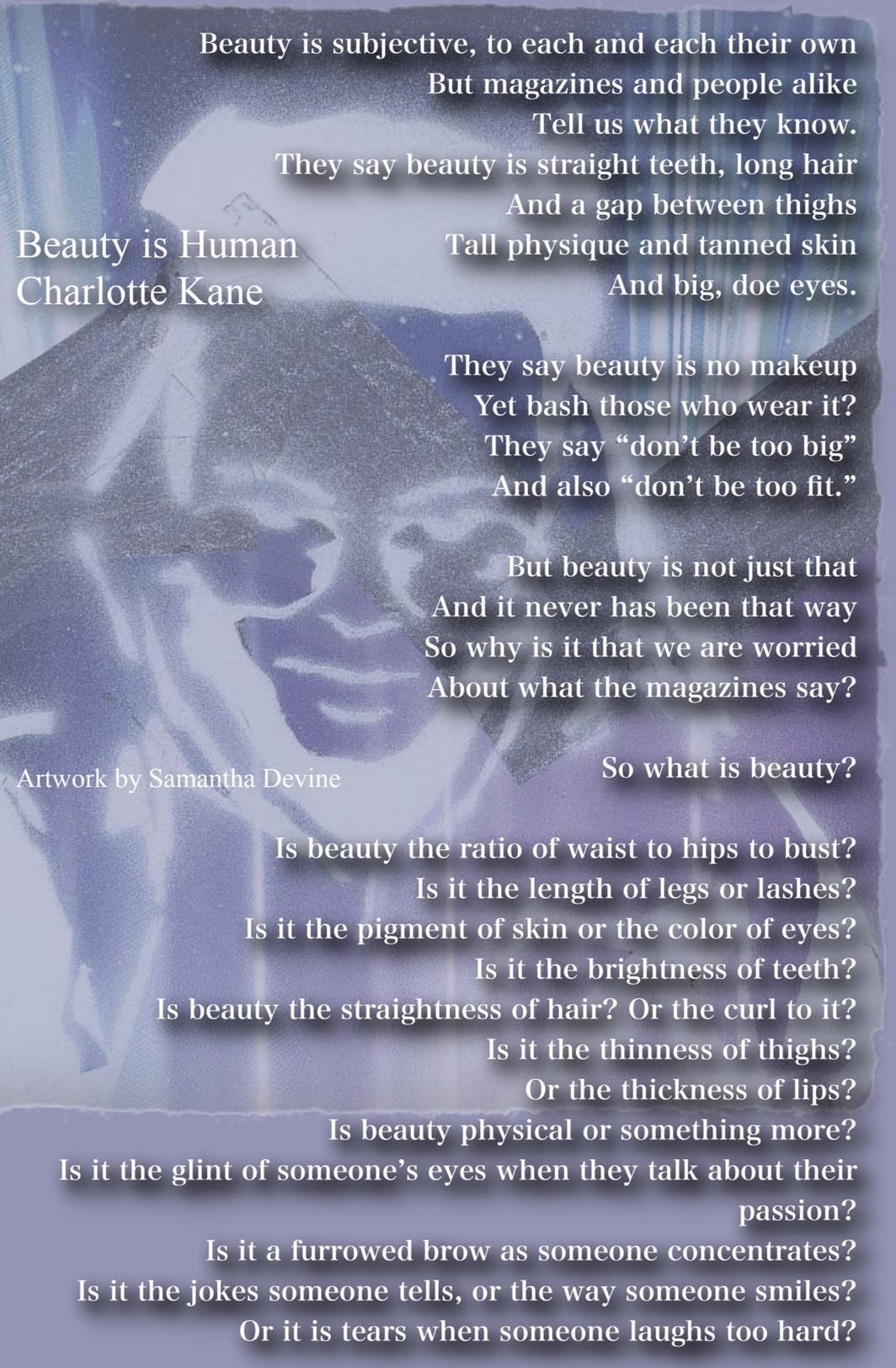
*It sucks up time and energy too.*

*How long 'till it eats up a student like you?*

*They have no effect, no reason, no call,*

*So how are we sure they are something at all?*

Name Owen G. Ford-Smith



Beauty is Human  
Charlotte Kane

Beauty is subjective, to each and each their own  
But magazines and people alike  
Tell us what they know.  
They say beauty is straight teeth, long hair  
And a gap between thighs  
Tall physique and tanned skin  
And big, doe eyes.

They say beauty is no makeup  
Yet bash those who wear it?  
They say "don't be too big"  
And also "don't be too fit."

But beauty is not just that  
And it never has been that way  
So why is it that we are worried  
About what the magazines say?

Artwork by Samantha Devine

So what is beauty?

Is beauty the ratio of waist to hips to bust?  
Is it the length of legs or lashes?  
Is it the pigment of skin or the color of eyes?  
Is it the brightness of teeth?  
Is beauty the straightness of hair? Or the curl to it?  
Is it the thinness of thighs?  
Or the thickness of lips?  
Is beauty physical or something more?  
Is it the glint of someone's eyes when they talk about their  
passion?  
Is it a furrowed brow as someone concentrates?  
Is it the jokes someone tells, or the way someone smiles?  
Or it is tears when someone laughs too hard?

Is it the words we speak that make us beautiful,  
Or is it the words used to describe us?

To me, beauty is simplicity; it is life with all its faults

To me...

beauty is the sunrise, as it casts an orange glow

beauty is being carefree and going with the flow

beauty is crawling in bed after a long day

beauty is laying on a hammock and feeling it sway

beauty is the taste of your favorite meal

beauty is a smile as you receive a text

beauty is a teacher happy with their class

beauty is people, eager to learn

beauty is exploration

beauty is a child's wonder

beauty is the laugh of a toddler at play

beauty is the stars at 2am when you know you should be asleep

and beauty is freckles on a sun-kissed face.

Beauty is chaos, it has no rhyme nor reason

Beauty is all around us and doesn't have a pattern,

Beauty is unique to each person,

What each deems it to be

Beauty is humanity, in all its glory.

# *Beauty is Human*

Artwork by Yoshi Abe

*Charlotte Kane*

Creative Writing Prompt #1: *I didn't go to \_\_\_\_\_ looking for redemption, but somehow I found it.*

I didn't go to Columbia looking for redemption, but somehow I found it.

I arrived in the city of Columbia in 1904, 2 years after its secession from the United States. I had done something horribly wrong, and I knew that the guiding light of Columbia and the Prophet, Father Comstock, would cleanse my sins and make me one with the Lord. I remember that day like yesterday.

It was raining, a heavy downpour, and I took it as a sign that I would escape my black regret and finally reach the salvation I had been chasing. I boarded the zeppelin that would take me away forever. There were no tears in my eyes.

And then I was above the clouds, and my jaw dropped. As every day in Columbia, it was sunny and warm. We began our descent into the docking station of the Welcome Center to be assimilated into this new Eden, and I was greeted by the massive stone face of Father Comstock, who stood proudly in the center of the town. It wasn't even possible to take in all of the sights: shops, cobblestone streets and other large business buildings caught my eye. Everything was beautiful.

Far off in the distance was another statue. This one resembled the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, but instead of a copper lady holding a torch high, it was a bronze angel with arms open, protecting her city like a silent soldier and, like Lady Liberty, welcoming all of her children to the promised land.

I could not have been happier. We were all searching for heaven; criminals, loners, poor and sick alike, seeking redemption for our sins and cures to our ails. I was sitting next to an old man. "Why are you heading to Columbia, young fella?" he said, his walking cane resting in his lap. I sighed. "I'm here to—" I thought for a second before finally blurting, "seek forgiveness."

He smiled, his eyes crinkling at the corners, and he stroked his beard. "Ahh, aren't we all. Maybe the Prophet will give us tha' helpin' hand." He coughed. "I been sick for many years, dyin', and this is my last hope to be redeemed. You, young fella, you have your life ahead o' ya; it's best to repent now, b'fore it's too late and ya end up like me," he said. I gave him a nod, not really paying attention. Once we landed, we were separated; those needing healing went to the church, and the rest of us waited at a large, wrought-iron gate.

Suddenly, the voice of a cheery American man came over an intercom: "Welcome to Columbia! Please place all baggage on the carts provided, and we will escort you to the Registration Area! All Negroes and Irish, keep to the left!" I was grinning like an idiot as I marched forward to the white building. The message repeated behind me, but it quickly faded from hearing: "Welcome to Columbia...all baggage on...and Irish, please keep..." I didn't care.

I had reached the promised land.