



Corinthian

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Editors
Kayla Finn
Riya Kumar

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Front and back cover by Kayla Finn. Inside cover and editor's page by Riya Kumar.

A Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

Thank you for making the decision to pick up this magazine and check out the pages; it truly means a lot.

As one of the oldest clubs at Harriton, (being founded in 1962,) Corinthian has had a long history of writers and artists. This year, we continue this tradition, carrying out the honor of shaping a new generation of writers. Every week, students came together to in this brave endeavor of creativity. Yes, writing is brave. It is perhaps one of the most personal ways to express oneself. In the literary world, it is said that in every character, in every story, and every piece of writing, is expressed a little piece of the author themselves. And brave it is when you lay yourself bare in your writing, plain for everyone to see.

This magazine is a culmination of a year's hard work. Every single story, poem, or picture in this issue has been lovingly created by a member of this club. Ranging from silly to serious, funny to heartbreaking, this magazine has it all.

Thank you for supporting our creative endeavors, and enjoy the magazine!

Your editors,
Kayla and Riya

12-Pack Crayola

By Chloe Lee

On a hot summer day, I spent the afternoon hours
With my 12-pack Crayola chalk box,
Etching onto the driveway pavement,
Doodles filling every space and
Colors sticking to my tiny palms.

Reds and yellows clung to my clothes,
Greens and blues to my hair.
My mother laughed, scoffed at my mess.
She soaked my shirt, scrubbed my face clean.
As she sat behind me and dried my hair,
She whispered in my ear--
I was something special, I should never lose my color
While the imprints of my drawings
Bled into the soapy water

When the rain thundered down from the skies above,
I cried, cried to my mother,
Tears streaming down my cheeks and off my chin.
Stop the rain, save my art--
Yet she could only look at me and utter softly,
“Nothing can stop the rain from falling”.

I watched in vain as time
Washed my canvas clean, watched as the river
Carried my colors away, streaming down the road
Until it disappeared down the gutter.

But by the next day, I paid no mind
To the bare cement
Lacking its usual, colorful flair,
Or the forgotten box of

Chalk and its potential.
I paid no mind
As I trudged out the door,
Resigned to the school bus

To carry me away, driving down the road
Until I disappeared.



Riya Kumar

Starry Symphony

By Sophie Boulware

The last sunset hues vanish as the world is cloaked in night
Basking in the stillness my face lifts to the soft light

A symphony of shining stars stretches across the sky
Their twinkling iridescence is like music to my eyes

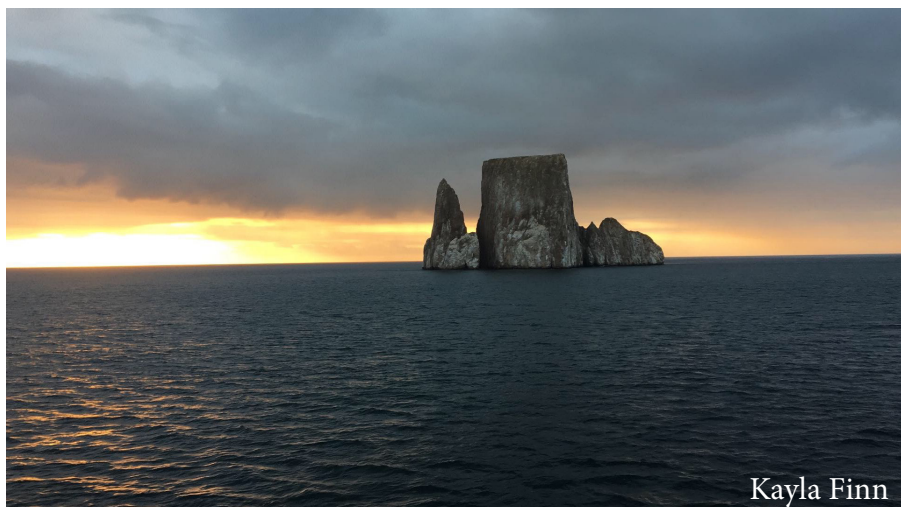
I gaze a little longer, so magnificent and grand
While gentle waves tug at my hair, curling every strand

I look down at my fingers, and the slender stem they hold
Topped with wilted petals, once a vibrant sunny gold

Beautiful yet distant, lying so far out of reach
At least that's how it seemed when I first saw it by the beach

And now I hold it in my grasp, an unexpected gift
But the stars still lie above me, past an impassable rift

But they reflect in water, and they bathe me in their shine
And only for a moment, I can pretend that they are mine



Kayla Finn

Accidents Happen

By Kaelyn Klatte

Sadie crept out of the kitchen, a liquid substance dripping down the sides of her arms. She shivered violently, her back exposed to the frigid air breezing in from the open window and the stone floor beneath her that nipped at her feet. She could feel it already. The guilt, a looming monster of shadows and of darkness who bore a smile of razor knives and a heart of pure, black coal. It would haunt her, follow her, ensure she paid the price for her wrongdoing, wake up at night in cold sweat, until she diminishes into nothing else but dust.

Her feet dragged her across the hallway, hands digging into the wall for support. *The evidence*, Sadie thought, panic-stricken. *I must hide the evidence*. Her fingers trembling, she grabbed the red closet broom and a pale, blue towel. *They could be here any minute!* She knew better than to play dumb; no one would ever believe her if she denied her sins. Her body quaking, the girl approached the scene of the crime, where, with dismay, she could already see the thousands of glittery shards scattered into the pool of red. It was beyond salvation.

"I'm so sorry Momma. I'm so sorry," she sighed, sweeping up the pieces of glass. "I didn't mean to do it." Sadie threw away the debris, and proceeded to clean the liquid mixture from the ground. It was no use. Blood dripped down from the open wounds on her arms from the struggle, dripping onto the floor as it added to what was already there.

Then, she could hear the sounds. At first, they were a little quiet; a small rumbling in the distance that grew louder as each second passed. Sadie was running out of time. They could be here any second, they could catch her red-handed. Just as the pair of heavy footsteps approached the front door, Sadie threw a red checkered rug over the wet floor, shouting, "I'll be there in a second." She grabbed her black hoodie from the kitchen chair, drying her cheeks with its sleeve. The girl plastered a smile on her pained face, and greeted the visitors with an embrace. Although her cuts stung, the young girl refused to let the pain reach her face. *I have to pretend for just a little longer.*

“Mom! Dad! You’re finally back! I’ve cleaned the house while you two were gone,” she beamed, gesturing at the seemingly spotless foyer.

The mother laughed, stepping around Sadie as she walked into the kitchen. “I’m sure you have, honey. Did my vase ever come in the mail yet? Your aunt just sent it to me.”

She never caught the little girl’s nervous shifting as she replied, “No, Momma. I haven’t seen it. I know how special it was to you.”



Riya Kumar

Nope, I Shouldn't Have Done It

By Guillaume Placidet

Every now and then I ask myself what I should have done in a situation. I might be in the shower and suddenly think about the fact that I should've stood up for myself when this random guy, Jim, purposely or not purposely (does it even matter?) pushed me and spilled milk all over my clothes. I should have said, "Hey, you punk, say sorry, you dirty sack of unripe bananas, and get me some towels!" But instead I just said, "Oh! I'm so sorry."

This happens quite often to me because I prefer staying neutral and being stepped on rather than starting an argument with someone. That's just me. It's how I am. I have tried changing that, but no progress has been made.

Anyways, I am currently enrolled in a high school and take a variety of different classes. I love school (except Jimmy), I love my friends, I love my teachers, I love the building itself, I love learning, I love listening, I love playing sports, I love learning a new language, I love learning how to code on my computer, I love writing, I love reading, I love a lot of things and could probably go on like this for a long time but then I would bore you. But I have another, far more important list to present to you and it is drastically shorter. It's the list of the things I don't like. One name. Mrs. Samuel. Of all the things I love in school, I love English the most. Literature, writing, there are many reasons why I love English. I have loved English my entire life. But this year, my English teacher is terrible. That is an understatement. She is the most vicious, cruel, hateful, and mean person I have ever met. I hate hating someone, especially the lady who is supposed to teach my favorite subject in school. How is that even possible? How can a lady who teaches English be even slightly evil? My best guess is that she wasn't supposed to be an English teacher, and was most definitely supposed to be a mathematician. All she does all day is play with numbers. And when I say numbers, I am talking about zeros. And when I am talking about zeros, I am talking about my English grades. See, the first day of school when we participated in "ice breakers" (where you say something about yourself to try to interrupt the awkward climate of your classroom on the first day of school) I said that I wanted to become an English

teacher. Since then, Mrs. Samuel has done everything within her power to make that dream impossible for me. By giving me zeros in English, no college is going to accept me into their literature program, and I understand them. The cherry on top of this unripe banana sundae was that everyone loves Mrs. Samuel. Everyone. Every single person in that room. And once again, that's something Mrs. Samuel is doing on purpose, because if nobody hates her apart from me, then I cannot complain about her since no one will agree. As you can see, I am facing a very tough situation.

Anyways, today I spoke with this beloved teacher to figure out a solution. What exactly does she want from me? So I went up to her and simply asked. She answered with exactly what I thought she would say: "Nothing darling, you know I treat all my students the same way. I love teaching, and that means you, too." Something was wrong... why would she say that? Question answered; the principal was in the classroom right next to us and could hear our conversation. As soon as he left, I finally got what I wanted: "I will make your life miserable. You will not get into college to become an English teacher if your grade average in English is 0% your senior year."

That was it for me, I needed nothing else. She had pushed me past my breaking point. Yes, my very, very solid breaking point (even Jimmy hadn't gone that far). I came home that day and knew what to do. No! ...Not murder, are you crazy? I just needed revenge and to get rid of her for a week. With that idea in mind, I went down to the pantry and started my scavenger hunt. I needed to find something bad, I needed something very bad. Should I give her some sort of poison? Yes. But I'm not a chemist and I don't know how to make poison. Instead I found a box of cookies. But not just any box of cookies. These cookies had gone bad, very bad. Expiration date: the 7th of September 2005. I emptied the box and put it on a plate. Over that I put a plastic film to make it seem as if I baked the cookies. The cookies were green. From now on they would be vegan, vegetable cookies.

I delivered the cookies one afternoon with a note: "You are right Mrs. Samuel, I will never be good enough to be an English teacher and thank you for making me realize that. You are really

an honorable person that has changed my life forever. I have baked Vegan Vegetable Cookies to help you accept my apologies for being the disgrace that I am.”

Well I hope she was going to be stupid enough to believe all that. I gave them to her in person. She gave me a dark, gloomy look, then read the note and smiled. She then told me I was “dismissed”. I left the room. I left school and headed home. On the way back, I started regretting it. What if she died? I don’t want to go to prison. What if they caught me? What if she never came back to school? Oh no, I should have never done this. Screw you shower thoughts. No, no, no. What have I done? I went to bed and did not sleep. I stared at the wall the entire night. She has kids. I don’t want them to be motherless because of vegan cookies. Then, they’ll totally never be vegan. And the world needs vegans. Less meat equals less climate change. Man, am I contributing to the destruction of the world? I am sorry Mother Nature. I am sorry Mrs. Samuel. She had children! What did I do?!?!? I considered turning myself in to the police. And even if she wasn’t dead, she would be sick and she would know it was my fault. That was only going to worsen my situation.

I woke up from not sleeping and went to school. She was absent. I was a murderer. I entered the classroom and there was a substitute. I sat down and he announced: “Mrs. Samuel is no longer your teacher this year.” I should turn myself in. “After getting milk spilled on her dress, she left the school after announcing she was moving to Hawaii to become a surfer.” YES, YES JIMMY THANK YOU. I was saved. No sign of the cookies, but I was saved. I could become an English teacher afterall. My dreams could come true. I was walking to the cafeteria and the principal’s office door was open. I could see his desk. And I could see the plate of cookies. Specifically, I could see a half munched vegan cookie. I am sorry Mother Nature.

Bishop

By Sammy Biglin

For once I stand next to normal
And normal stands next to me
He is standard conforming and perfect
And all I wish to be

A titanium moral compass
Quick as the butterfly's wings
And he refuses to believe
He walks among kings on strings

Home is where the heart is
And mine is underground
So he decided to drag me upwards
In a whirlwind of chaos and sound

But because we only have Paris
And he wishes for the stars
He's so blinded by the stars he can't see
We're surrounded by life on Mars
For once I stand next to normal
And normal stands next to me
He is standard conforming and perfect
And all I wish to be

Home is where the heart is
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So he decided to drag me upwards
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Who Am I?

By Anna Lipina

Can you see me?

I will ask, because you hear me.

Do you know who I am?

What I am?

Give me an answer.

Will you say that you know me?

Because I will say that I know you better than you know me.

You hear me when I'm hiding behind your shoulder, but you
turn and don't see me.

You may ask, "Why?"

I will answer.

You are not able to see me.

If you ask someone, they will say the same thing I told you.

Then, you will ask me again, "Why are you hiding?"

But will you believe my answer?

I'm not hiding from you, I am *just* invisible to you.

I'm like air that you use to breathe, but don't see.

I am invisible, but so important.

You stopped listening to me...

But, please, don't ignore me!

I will help you make the right choice.

You still aren't listening?

Please, listen to me as often as you listen to your head!

You're asking me, "Why?"

We are fighting most of the time.

I will speak truth, but your head will ask for lies at the same
time.

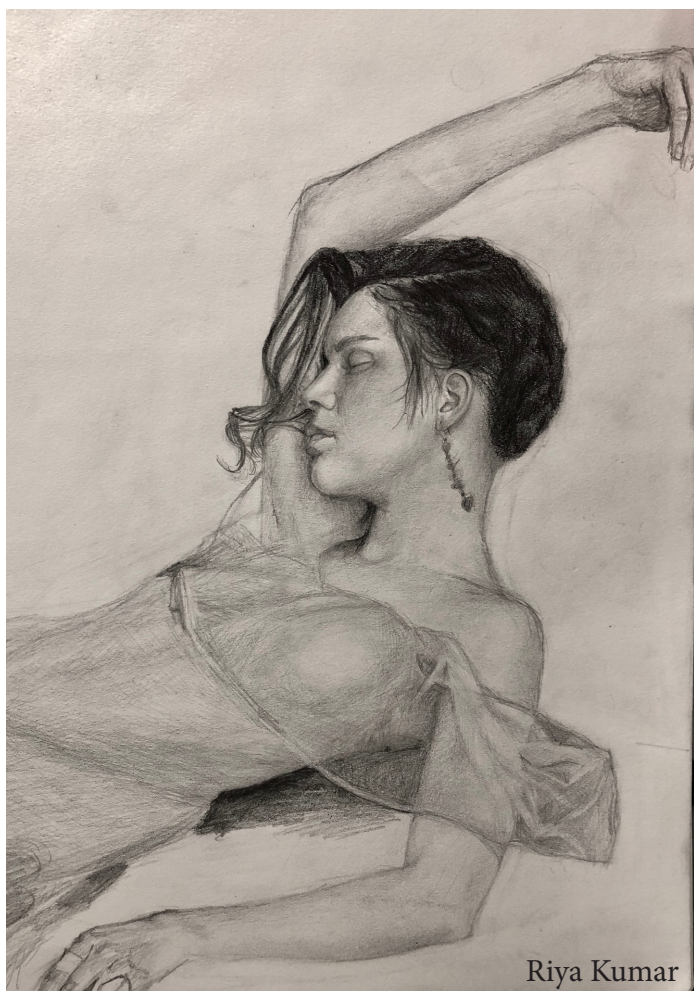
It's normal for both of us.

If you ignore me all the time, you will destroy me!

You will not be able to find me!

I am NOT something you can buy.

I am closer than you can imagine
I am You and your Head is my Mask, that I wish to take off my
face.
That's why I know you better than anyone else, even yourself.
Please, just do what I ask you!
Keep me and don't ignore me, please.
You will not regret it!
I don't want to be destroyed!
Because
I am your soul.



Untitled Poem

By Maria Wang

An unremarkable night sky,
twinkled with specks of light,
they wandered as the planet turned.

From up above fell a fiery blur,
her copper feathers beat in fervent struggle,
to save an astral bird.

The planet welcomed her,
with crickets, nettles, knapweed,
and ignorant, innocent serenity.

Spring sighed his last breath,
to catch her gentle wings,
and lay her petals to rest.

Entombed by crumbs of grieving dust,
a burst of vibrancy stained sepia,
they preserved and eroded her.

Autumn caressed her with a quilt of decay,
as the world shuddered in gloom,
he knows their ephemerality.

Her name is lost in time,
scattered in shifting summer sands,
forgotten by winter's splintering grasp.

Amo

By Anna Lipina

*"Hello, my diary.
Doesn't it seem strange to you, to spill thoughts and dreams on a piece of paper?
For me, yes....*

*Maybe, it is just a matter of a habit, and every beginner feels the same?
But no less strange for me is the meaning of 'friend'.*
It's very strange to have a friend, whom you yourself are forbidden to touch."
The man in the black mantle looked to the window, his face covered with
the gloom of his hood.

Outside there spread an evening sky.
Wonderful sunset.

The sun wasn't visible, and the sky was divided into two halves.
It was dark and gloomy at the top, but below, the beautiful colors
spilled from a palette.

The man in the black mantle continued to write.

*"Amo, Amo...
My little friend.. .
Whose name sounds like love.
Why do I keep remembering you?
That is all my fault.
My slip.
A mistake.
My pity.
But it started out so well."*

A few years earlier.
The man in the black mantle, Death, walked along a clean, reflective
lake.

It seemed, like there was no wind at all.
It was silent, warm and pretty.
But Death did not care.
He was looking for souls,
Sacrifices.

And at that moment he heard a
Plaintive
"Meow".

Such a plaintive and quiet meow came from the side of the lake.
The man in the black mantle smiled wickedly.

*"AND HERE IS THE SACRIFICE,"
Were his thoughts.*

The steps made their way to the side of the water.
Close by, there was a basket floating in the water.
With a white ball of shivering fur.

Death looked into the basket itself,
Chuckling, saying,

“SO SMALL AND WEAK,

YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO GROW.

BUT DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T HAVE TO SUFFER... ANYMORE,”

The man in the black mantle spoke.

A silver switchblade whistled toward the basket,

But this “meow!” sounded again.

The blade stopped,

Right in front of the basket.

“STOP MEOWING! THAT WON'T HELP YOU...”

Death said.

The man in the black mantle had left the lake.

But there was no basket in the lake...

The man in the black mantle returned home,

Carefully carrying the basket.

The basket was put on the floor,

Silence...

Death goes away,

Comes with a blanket.

Small

And

Warm.

Blanket

Gently

Covers the kitten...

...Purring...

Some years later...

The man in the black mantle raised, from a kitten,

A real cat.

White,

Like a clear cloud.

Kind,

But with a lack of affection,

Death raised her in love

But never touched her.

Never...

Any touch

Equaled
Death.
*"But she was lonely ...
And one day,
By pure mistake
I called her..."*

"AMD..."

In response, the man in the black mantle
Heard
Purring...

The cat responded to this word,
As this was her name.

"Meow!"

"Meow."

*"She told me something,
But I didn't know the cat's language..
It melted the ice in me.*

*And I pet her...
Her fur was so fluffy, but I didn't hear her...
Breath...
She didn't move,
Anymore..."*



Riya Kumar

Not Ideal

By Riya Kumar

but of course not ideal that you feel that way
like
at all
but
can't just not feel bad I suppose
cause it doesn't work that way
can't just push a button and make it go away
but hey
it's okay
Not everything is gray
The bad times don't stay
And there's always the fresh start of a new day
I promise
I promise
I promise we'll be okay
And we'll always find a way
You'll make the bad memories pay
Just focus on right now, today
Don't let your resolve fray
I'll be with you
All the way

Hope

By Kaelyn Klatte

When the winds are the strongest,
The days are the dullest,
And storms cripple your soul,
Hope seems to have strayed.
But when you believe, you find hope.
Hope, your brightest light in the darkness,
The only thing that keeps you from despair.
And while I lost everything, hope is still there.
Hope, my unwavering friend,
Hope, my undefeatable ally.
I can get through the toughest of times,
With naught but hope by my side.



Riya Kumar



Girl

By Riya Kumar

Aloof and distant
She holds her head up
Seeing something farther, higher, more
She is intelligent, and wise, knowing more than her years
Hard line of a mouth and creased brows
A seeming, confused disapproval of the world around

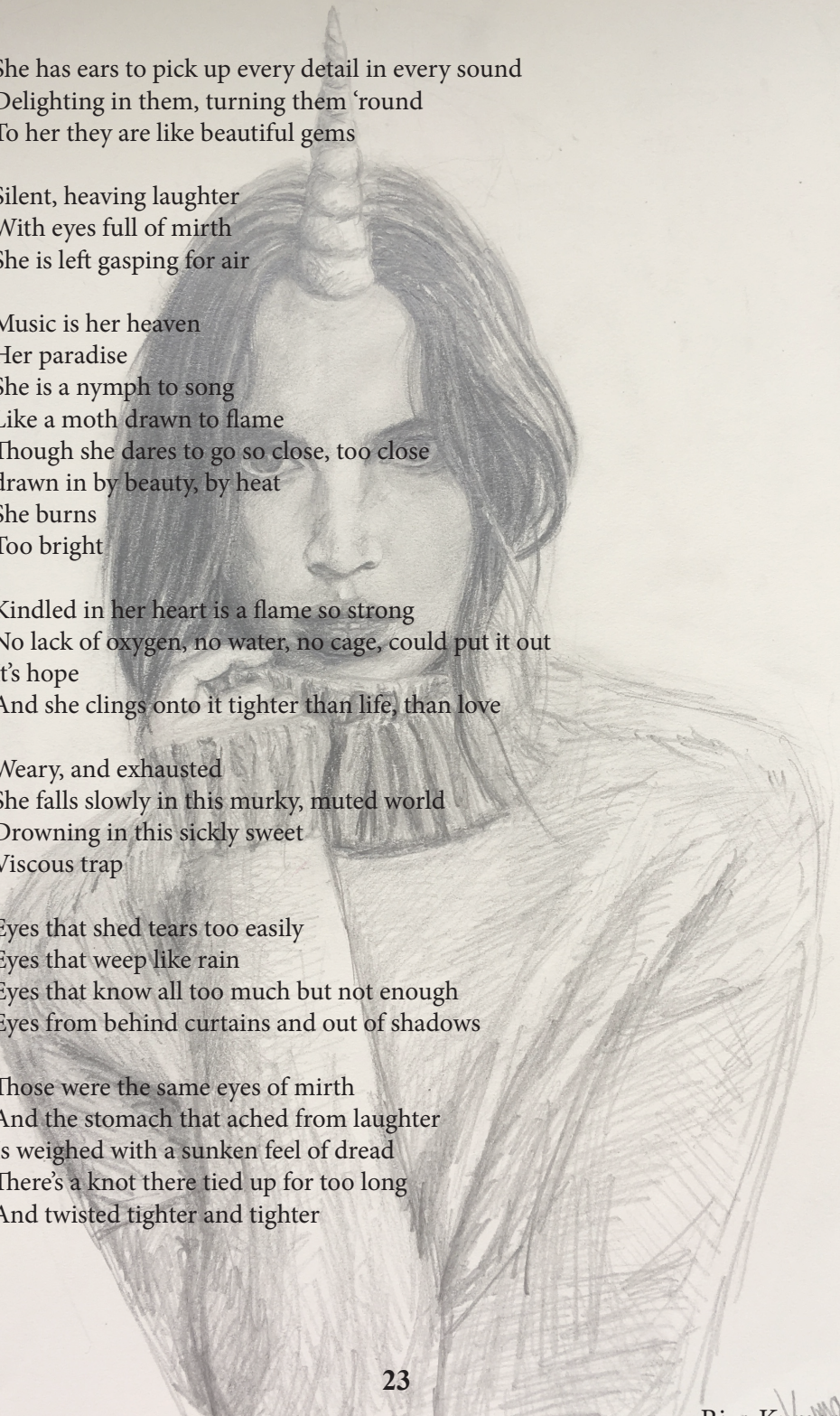
Wild, loud and silly
Happily clumsy
Bubbling laughter a tad on the side of awkward
Bright and sparkling with so many colours
Teasing and bantering; her joy
And smiling, grinning; her light

Forgetful and careless
Fumbling, bumbling, through life
What is she thinking?
Where is she going?
There's a lopsided head on those small shoulders
And it seems she's getting colder

Uptight, uncomfortable
Prickly as a cactus pear
She's too green
Immature, arrogant, and ahead of herself

Mysterious, elegant
Soft eyes
Hard features
And sometimes switched around
Graceful gait, lithe, and soft raiment

Creative, delightful
Pure and innocent
Her moral compass unrivaled
With a kind touch and a generous heart



She has ears to pick up every detail in every sound
Delighting in them, turning them 'round
To her they are like beautiful gems

Silent, heaving laughter
With eyes full of mirth
She is left gasping for air

Music is her heaven
Her paradise
She is a nymph to song
Like a moth drawn to flame
Though she dares to go so close, too close
drawn in by beauty, by heat
She burns
Too bright

Kindled in her heart is a flame so strong
No lack of oxygen, no water, no cage, could put it out
It's hope
And she clings onto it tighter than life, than love

Weary, and exhausted
She falls slowly in this murky, muted world
Drowning in this sickly sweet
Viscous trap

Eyes that shed tears too easily
Eyes that weep like rain
Eyes that know all too much but not enough
Eyes from behind curtains and out of shadows

Those were the same eyes of mirth
And the stomach that ached from laughter
Is weighed with a sunken feel of dread
There's a knot there tied up for too long
And twisted tighter and tighter

A New Friend

By Anna Lipina

The night came into a village. A silent peaceful night. Everyone was sleeping in their warm beds. The lights were turned off and only a moon, the night's sun, was lighting up the streets, playing across the soft green grass. The only place that stayed open was the library. A girl stood in front of the building, looking into its large, colorful windows. It was dark inside. The library was bigger than any houses in the village. Its walls were built from a very different kind of stone and each were covered with green moss. The girl tried to open the door, but it was closed. "Again?" she whispered, not surprised, but slightly annoyed, and walked behind it. "Last night I found the fake wall here..." She placed her hand on the wall, feeling some of stones, "found it." The girl pressed one, and the wall disappeared, moving down into the ground. She walked into the building, but suddenly, as the wall returned to its original position, it activated a second mechanism, making the floor disappear from under the girl. She dropped down, but surprisingly, didn't scream. It seemed like she had expected it. "Ouch," she grumbled as she stood up.

"Noka, are you alright?"

"Yes...maybe. You closed the door—hmm...let me count—" she began, "...you closed the door for the 67th time, Snowf!"

"I closed it?" the guy asked, and went to check the door. It was closed. "Sorry, next time I won't forget."

"Okay..." Noka sighed deeply, before turning to a bookshelf and picking a book at random. "A Living Star'..." she whispered, opening the book.

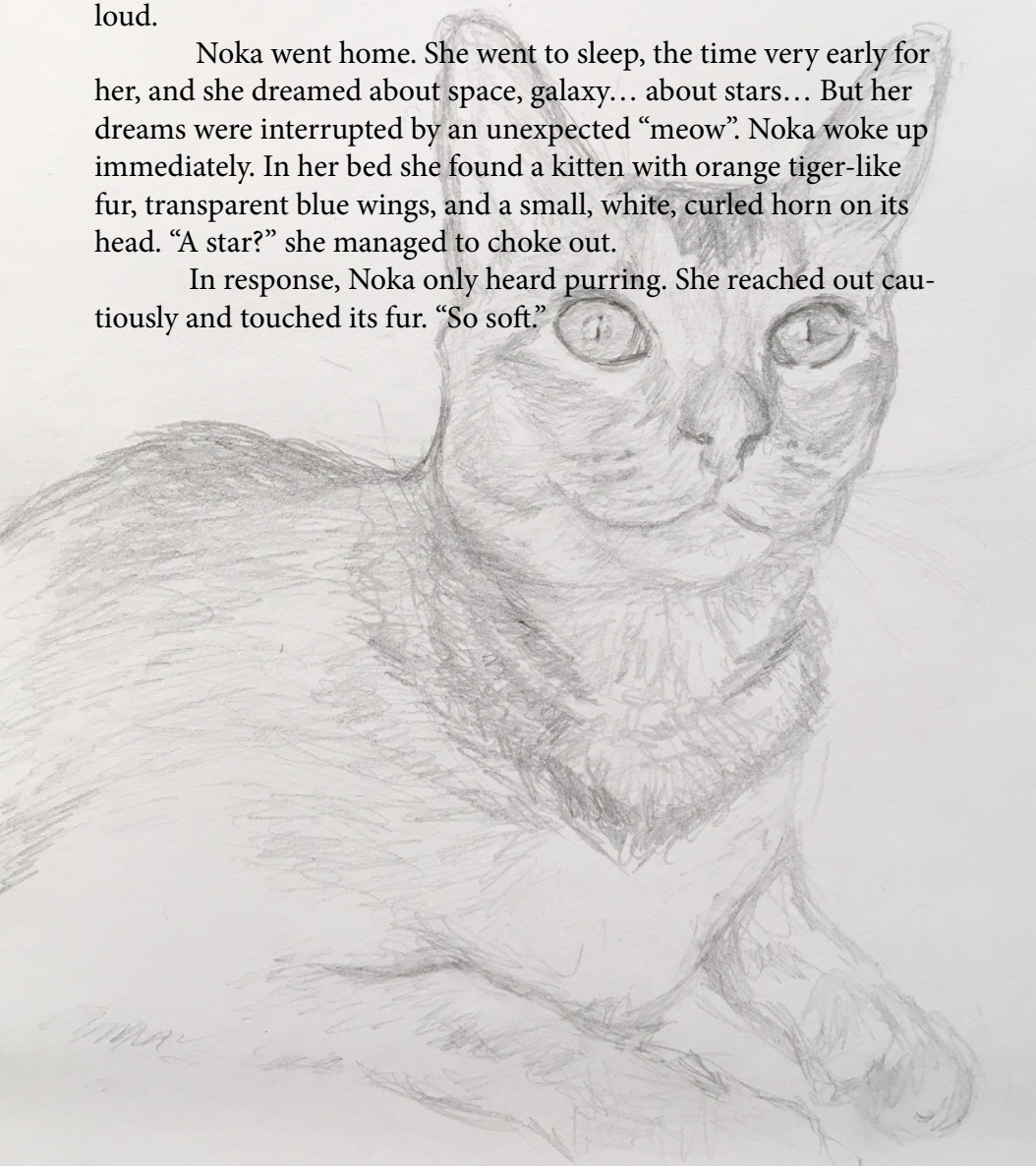
The first five pages appeared quite boring. She flipped through much of the book, but stopped at the very last paragraph. "A Soul in Space'..." Noka started to read, "Each star is the soul of a living thing. They're born when we die, but in the reverse, we are born. But not "we". The star, after falling, turns into different creatures. We call them "anomalies". But, without knowing, we use stars for wishes, which may become real, and which may not. Respect them, as you might respect your soul." Noka closed the book and put it back. She turned back to Snowf. "I will go outside. You don't

need to wait,” she said, walking out of the library.

“What if I see a falling star? The only person, with whom I am friends with, is that forgetful librarian...” she whispered quietly, only moments before spotting a falling star. “My chance! ...Please, Star... I don’t want to be alone when it’s daytime... I want to have someone to talk to at night and at day... please,” she wished out loud.

Noka went home. She went to sleep, the time very early for her, and she dreamed about space, galaxy... about stars... But her dreams were interrupted by an unexpected “meow”. Noka woke up immediately. In her bed she found a kitten with orange tiger-like fur, transparent blue wings, and a small, white, curled horn on its head. “A star?” she managed to choke out.

In response, Noka only heard purring. She reached out cautiously and touched its fur. “So soft.”



Glass Marbles

By Chloe Lee

I was walking along the sidewalk, sneakers dragging
against the concrete,
Along a street I seldom used.
On the side of the road, there was a
Bird, wings bent and sprawled out against the asphalt.
I saw its eyes: its beady, dead,
Eyes.

They reminded me of the glass marbles that I kept in a
wooden box
Under my bed:
Old, fogged over with the dust of forgotten years past.
In those eyes, I saw my own reflected back to me—
Those same, beady, dead eyes reflected back to me.

And all of a sudden, I couldn't tell
If I was me, myself,
Or if I was sprawled out against the asphalt,
A mere inconvenience to my assailant's wheels,
My blood and guts stuck in the crevices of tires.

A Little Nudge

By Kayla Finn

Everyone says *addiction* like it's a bad thing. "That *poor* girl is addicted to fame," "He's become addicted to the playboy lifestyle," "Blah, blah, blah, addiction, blah blah blah, something pitying but condescending at the same time."

But who says addiction is bad? I mean, duh, some addictions aren't good, especially if they get you killed (I'm looking at you drugs, alcohol, and smoking). But other addictions are actually quite nice.

You're confused, I understand. Let me start with the definition of addiction:

The state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma.

Well, that sounds bad. But wait! Aren't we all addicted to breathing? Having our lungs compress and expand is a habit, and if it stopped, it would most definitely cause severe trauma (ie. death). Same with drinking water, right? It's become a habit for me to drink water at every meal, and if I stopped drinking water, I would get headaches, and be tired, and then I would die.

As you can see, not all addictions are bad. I have a friend who's addicted to reading. She reads a book every few days, and she can't go more than a week without reading a book. One time, it had been 6 days since she'd last read, and she looked awful. Her hair hadn't been brushed in days, she was wrapped in a blanket burrito-style, and her eyes were glassy and bloodshot. All she did was lay on

the couch and feebly pick up the remote control to change the channel on the TV. But when I brought her a book to read, she perked right up. She started smiling and reading, and the next day she was positively glowing.

So to answer your question, Officer, I *am* addicted—Addicted to love. And if that's a crime, I say to hell with it! To hell with the whole justice system, if love is a crime.

...

...

...

Yes, ok. I understand that *technically*, from a *certain* point of view, my actions could be *considered* “illegal”. But really, you don't have the whole story.

In 2016, a new study came out showing that shared fear and adrenaline can, in the right circumstances, help people fall in love. You look skeptical. It seems crazy, I know. But you hear stories about survivors of plane crashes who were lost in the woods for a month falling in love and getting married. Or two people whose boat nearly sank starting to date and then *falling in love and getting married*. It happens all the time.

All I was doing was simply giving those two lovebirds a push. I was never really going to hurt either one, I just needed them to *think* that there was danger, so they could fall in love and live happily ever after!

...

...

...

That's not enough explanation? Fine, I guess I'll walk you through the whole story: Elizabeth was born in 1998 to two loving parents, on a wintry day in mid-February. She was born to Mr. and Mrs---

That's too much information? Good golly, Officer, make up your mind!

...

...

...

Ok, so I met Elizabeth a little over a year ago. She's a lovely girl, you know. Very sweet, very smart, beautiful brown hair, eyes like a doe. Anyway, we became friends and she started to confide in me. When she told me that she'd never fallen in love, but that she had a crush on Alex, I just had to help!

Alex was a classmate of ours. Handsome, well-built, funny, popular. Everyone loved Alex. And, well...I love Elizabeth, but she was much too shy to attract him on her own. So I started to push the two together. Nudge, really.

It was laughably easy. I paid a guy to "accidentally" bump into Elizabeth hard enough that she fell down at the same time that Alex was coming from the opposite direction. Like the gentleman he is, Alex helped Elizabeth up and asked her if she was alright. They went out to dinner later that night.

I thought my work was done, but they were lingering in the platonic stage for too long. They needed a nudge. This time, it was Alex's turn. I made sure Elizabeth was at the bottom of the staircase, poured some slippery stuff at the top, and made sure Alex tumbled down the whole thing to land at Elizabeth's feet. She helped clean and bandage his scrapes, and by the time his skin had healed completely, they were dating!

Oh, the joy I felt knowing I had brought love into the world!

But then. Then the relationship stagnated. They

were happy, they were in love, but they weren't engaged. I couldn't abide by it. I had to make sure they were together forever.

No! I didn't kidnap them!

...

...

Ok, maybe I kidnapped them a *little bit*. But they were never in any danger, I swear. I hired a guy to abduct them and bring them to a scary warehouse, it's true. But they were only roughed up a *teeny* bit, just enough to make it believable. And I made sure they had the means to escape. Which they did, after two days and some subtle hints from the guys I hired.

I mean, really, Elizabeth and Alex are clueless. They'd never survive a real kidnapping.

Anyway, everything went according to plan. The couple was so distraught over the whole ordeal that they got engaged on the spot.

Truly, they should be thanking me.

...

...

...

Say, Officer, I couldn't help but notice how you were staring at Susan when you brought me in. I don't suppose you're...looking for a little nudge?

Another Untitled Colour Piece

By Riya Kumar

It is the color of late autumnal afternoons. Surprisingly warm compared to the cold bite of the same morning's air. Deep as the swirling leaves, and the dappled sunlight warming bare-tipped branches poking out through the fiery raiment. It is the color of afternoon tea with soothing chamomile and a touch of honey. It is the color you feel, while caught in the embrace of an old friend. It is the warmth, when you think back to childhood summer nights spent with siblings and family. Nibbling on candied ginger, it is the color you taste, the warmth spreading through your body and the sweetness lingering on your tongue. It is the last rays from the setting sun, trickling in through the window to caress your cheek. The color your favorite memories are stained with, and your laughter sings of it. It is the warm glow of the lamp on your bedside table, fending off the midnight darkness, illuminating the pages of the book in your hands. It is the wallpaper in a nursery. It's the smiles from postcards saved. The color you see when looking into your best friend's eyes. The color you feel when just one look at each other sets off another bout of laughter. It's the kind of laughter that makes your stomach hurt and your cheeks ache from smiling.

Sunbeam

By Kayla Finn

She was a sunbeam
Strands of gold caught in her hair
Her very skin shimmered with light
As if the sun had distilled part of himself
And poured it into her

She danced to the song of life
Hair bouncing,
feet tapping,
skirt twirling

Her embrace held all the comfort
Of warm sunlight on a cold day
Gentle, yet still seeping through
All the layers of cloth and skin and bone
Until even our hearts felt her touch

She was radiance given form
Light gifted with life
Gorgeous, in a way only
Love freely given can be

And we, too, were beautiful
Like motes of dust dancing
Entrancing
Invisible but for the light

Untitled

By Riya Kumar

*How can one song
break my heart
so simply...so
painfully, beautifully....breathtaking.
'Tis like all the beauty in joy,
and most of all sorrow,
come crashing down,
rushing through...filling
my soul, searing
my soul and striking my heart
so softly. It blew me over
and seeing, feeling such
beauty has broke my heart.*

Plot-Twist They Say

By Guillaume Placidet

So everyone lives a normal life, right? But what exactly is normal? If everything was weird, then wouldn't weird just be normal? Confusing right? Anyways, I have a weird life. And

I truly mean it. I will not live a day that is normal. But what is "normal"? Maybe my days are normal since they are all weird. Good, now you're lost. That's perfect; it's what I want. I mean, wouldn't it be boring if I just told you about my normal life? But then again, how do you know what normal is? Is it just your own perception of normal? Or should we just all sit around a table with a good cup of joe to settle down to determine a meaning for normal? And how do we know that cup of joe is good--isn't that just my opinion? What if I like a certain type of coffee, and you don't? What do we do?

I got it--you are bored of me repeating the same things over and over, but you know what? If you don't want to hear my story. Then don't. Just go. Do that right now. Last reminder, this is going to be a weird story. However, what is weird? You know what, I have an idea. I am going to define what weird is. Here we go. Weird is something that is not normal, and normal is something that is not weird, which itself is something not normal. Ok, I believe all the people who want to hear the story are still here and the others by now are all gone.

Welcome, Individuals!

From now on, question everything you think is true, because trust me—it is not. But then again, what is truth? Do you think that truth is just you projecting what you think is right, or is it something else? I don't really know, and maybe no one knows. Or maybe they do know but they just don't want to say. The story I am about to tell you is so mind-blowing that you won't even understand what anything means. But wait—you may say, "What is *mind-blowing*?" I agree! Maybe I find something really interesting and maybe I call it mind-blowing

and maybe you might find it really boring. However, now that you're a pro at this, you will say: "Boring? But what is *boring*?" See, I think boring is something that just isn't very interesting. You know, like that class you take everyday where your mind travels to a different place because obviously anywhere else is better than being in that class. It's what people call "daydreaming". You see, I love to dream. But I can't really control it. Like, you know, I can't control my emotions or my heartbeat. Well, dreaming is the same. You just hope for it to happen because it gives you the chance to punch someone in the face without having any consequences for your actions. See, the story I am about to tell you is kind of like that. You wish something happens, but then it probably doesn't. But when I tell you that story, you will want to read it over and over again, because it's an awesome story that will change your perception on life. Um, come on, go ahead, what are you waiting for? Fine, I am disappointed. You were supposed to ask: "But Narrator Dude (or Girl, or is "dude" gender neutral? I do not know), what is 'awesome'?" Do not worry, I will explain: awesome is something that is really cool and that you appreciate a lot. Ok. I think you are ready. Just keep this story to yourself--I do not want people mad at me for spilling tea. Why do we even say that, "spilling tea"? Like why don't we say "spilling the beans"? Wait, we do say that. Ok, why don't we say, "spilling the pineapple juice?" Oh my, I am sorry I got side-tracked. Here, after a very long introduction, I present to you all the story

I have called:

The Meaning of Life.

Here we go.

Buzz, buzz, it is 6:00 AM and I have to get up. I find my dog laying on my bed. He is right there, just blatantly staring at me like he usually does. I head downstairs to Oh what? You thought it was going to be that kind of story? Nope! Plot-twist! There is no story.

Letters for my Life

By Kaelyn Klatte

November 15, 2017

Before you came into my life, I wasn't that different. I came from a town in North Dakota, small yet vociferant. I had friends whom I held dear, but not one sibling in this biosphere.

In my school's gym, two years prior to my moving, I waited for my mother to arrive, for all my hard work she would be approving. I sat alone, feeling like a princess perched upon a throne, listening to the monotone of the principal's voice, unmoving. Minutes felt like days, but my heart burned with a blaze, a fire so bright, I never believed it would faze. After eight years of academic rigor, my excitement to start high school grew even bigger.

I could hear the director call the names, followed by clapping and the certificate the student claims. It was my turn soon; I felt butterflies, but in my eyes, I would claim that prize; I would spread my wings and take for the skies, to hypnotize my audience with splendor and speed. I was a fish, swimming in greed, thirsty for my parents' pride.

"... Iris Moore"

Suddenly, I heard my denomination and the applauding of the crowd as I strode with elation to the podium, claiming my prize. I saw my father's teary eyes, but to my demise, my mother was nowhere to be found. All night, she never returned, instead, disappearing without a sound. It was only later that I learned of her fate; to this day, those very words castigate my father and I. Upon my mother's grave, I vowed that I would honor her name, to bring our family happiness and fame. Such was my wish. And then, you came.

November 18, 2017

We are all complex structures woven from insecurities and fright, given life and hope, love and light. What would that make you, putting others down with your profanity and stripping them of their humanity? I know things about you, too. That you cheated yourself out of Christianity, that your parents are legally through. You're struggling – your every move is a clue. The pain you hide,

you feel as though there's no one you can confide; I cannot blame you for acting so horrified, the loneliness infesting, magnified in your soul. And once you met me, your hate continued to acclimate. You knew of my weakness, you knew to break my pride; you knew to whisper those terrible thoughts, increasing my desire of committing suicide.

You would stare at me with contempt, watching me tumble to the floor, making no attempt to fight back. I'm sorry if I ever offended you—at the time, the thought of new friendships seemed splendid. But now, that dream ended, for the old me never comprehended the evil this world possessed. If only I could help you, to end your suffering, to mend whatever has been broken inside your heart. I only want for others to transcend pain, to extend towards the sky and reach for peace. But you've told me ever so many times that it was I who committed countless crimes against my own brethren. That my mere existence bothered all those who laid eyes upon me, that despite all persistence, everyone would do naught but give me distance. And your words I shall heed, for you've rendered those commands impossible to impede.

November 21, 2017

Long ago, I dreamed of a bright, sparkling ocean, a series of words that rang of emotion, pure devotion to the happiness of those I cared for. And then you arrived, giving me nothing but demotion, stripping me of my ambition, depriving me of my erudition, throwing me into this world filled with tradition; you called it *reality*.

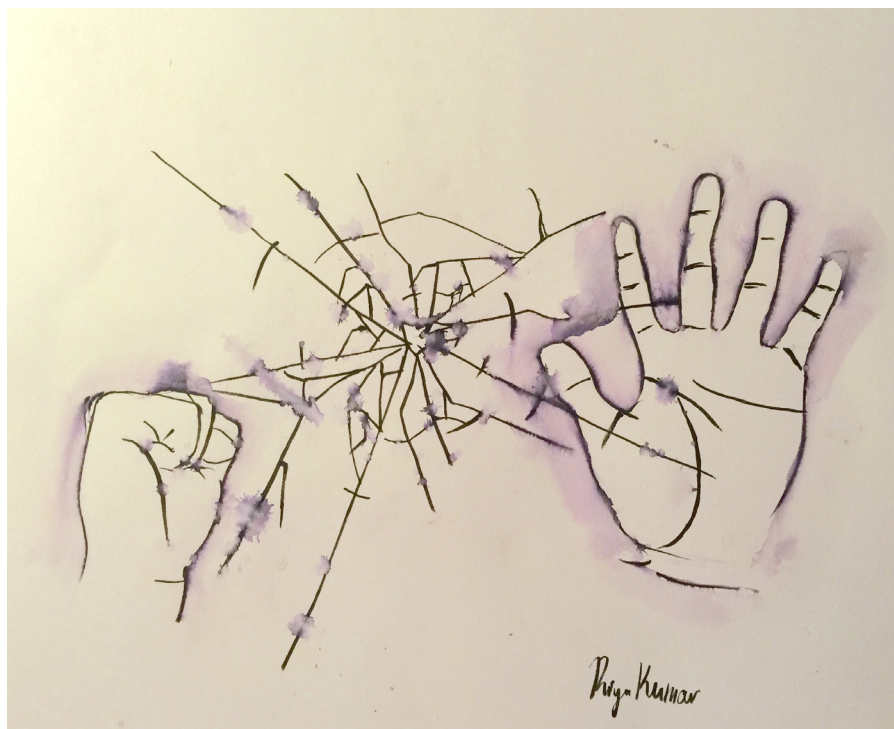
All these years, I've tried to forget the past, and I wish I could claim that all my efforts were unsurpassed. But into the wounds you rubbed salt, stinging the cuts, claiming it was all my fault? Maybe you were right; that my mother, watching from above, would be disgusted to think that the kicked puppy is very same girl she once loved.

I've walked these halls, seen these faces, treaded behind these walls. My life has become monotone, as empty and useless as that of a princess tossed from her throne. I've been here before; this is the part where you step up the front door, luring me in with your friendly faces, then putting down in deep, dark places, leaving

behind nothing that traces back to you.

There was a time when I felt alive, where I'd strive to have friends, when I'd contrive my future; I was a try-hard. Yet ever since I transferred to this school, I lost hope; you used me as a toy to ridicule, looking at me with disgust as if I were nothing but a bothersome papule, a filthy rat invading a society of high-ranking aristocrats.

Because of you, I've turned into a clock tower, the heart-beat pulsing inside of me counting every hour until finally, the girl you've forced to cower, whose life you now turned sour will overpower my will to thrive. With each bell that did toll, you dragged me lower, deeper, pushing me into a black hole, suffocating my lungs, my heart, my head, until nothing was left but a dying scream, a single dream; *peace*. And without so much of a second thought, you set my mind whirling, a tropic storm unfurling, emotions swirling into a deep, black ocean. There was no reason, just treason, for a fault that was not my own, but yours.



Muse

By Riya Kumar

Everything slowly shattered
Turning the world to gray

And she spun
Crashing to the floor
Dress billowing
Books flying from hands
As arms hit floor
Jarring
Thud resonating

Cracking and splintering
Wood smashed to the ground

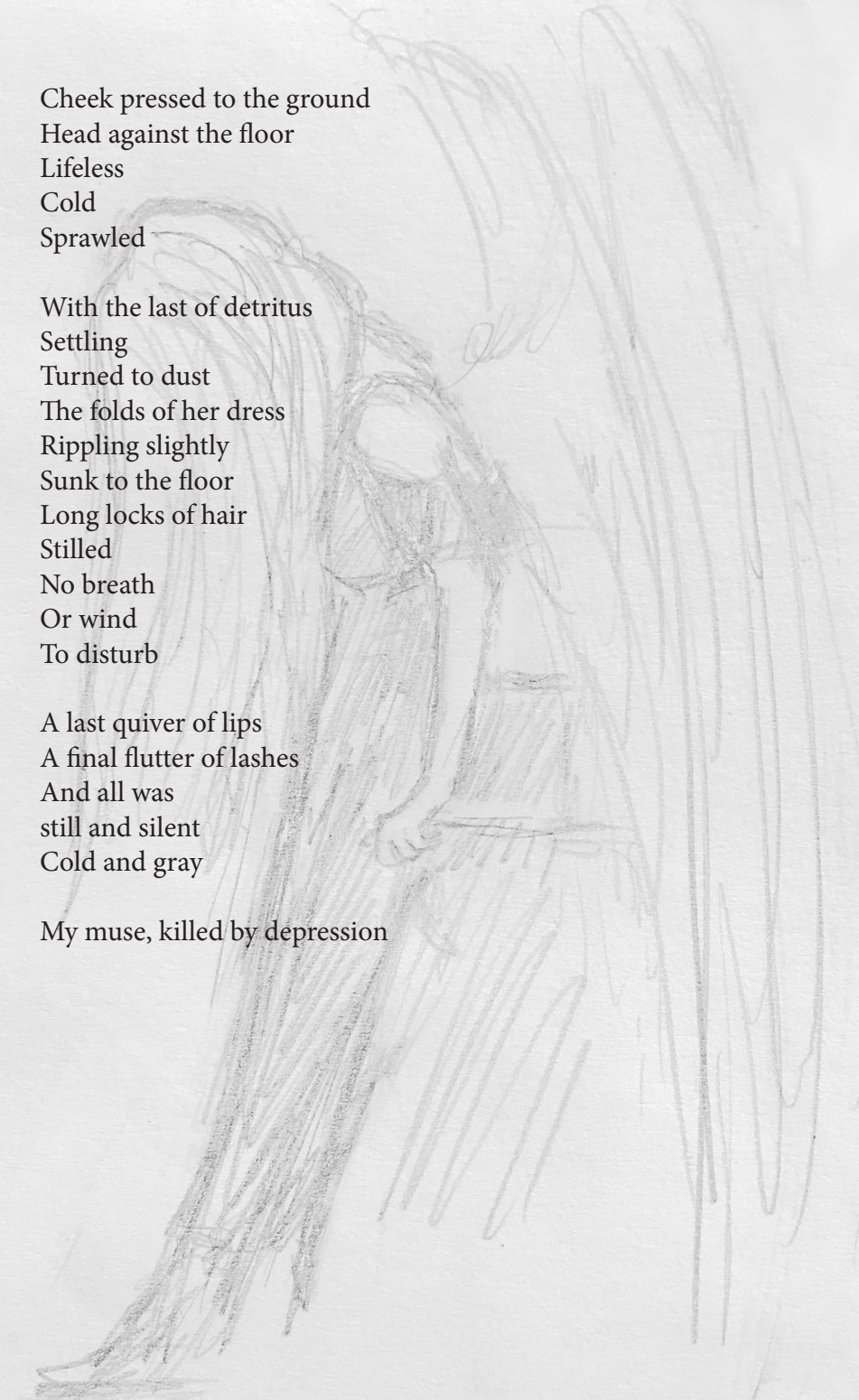
Pages fluttering
Across the floor, skittering
To lay
Open and unmoving

Strings snapping
Keys exploding forth
So fell, the piano forte

Just as paint erupted
Splattering
A torn up canvas
And broken easel, dusted
With each drop burning
Like acid

So debris fell
Raining all around

Her body lay resting



Cheek pressed to the ground
Head against the floor
Lifeless
Cold
Sprawled

With the last of detritus
Settling
Turned to dust
The folds of her dress
Rippling slightly
Sunk to the floor
Long locks of hair
Stilled
No breath
Or wind
To disturb

A last quiver of lips
A final flutter of lashes
And all was
still and silent
Cold and gray

My muse, killed by depression

Two-Faced

By Sammy Biglin

White House,
brown coat
I have happy,
She has a moat

Crumbling Castles
Thrift store finds
China White
For porcelain minds

Year after year
Time after time
She cries graffiti tears
And I put them into rhyme

She lives in 20/20
So sharp it hurts
With no silver lining
To shorten her skirts

Goodnight moon
You tear-streaked Descartes
Brew unbroken darkness
To contrast her heart

Is Dublin a painting?
Or a neon tale?
Either way it's mine now
Make those dolls frail

Glassy eyes
Nylon hearts
They steal my fishnets
And falsify my arts
But cigarettes permeate
And music soars
True humans pirouette
And I close the faceless drawer

Goodbye Barbie
Hello fractured minds



Riya Kumar

Game

By Anna Lipina

“N-no... P-please...” A silent voice in the errant darkness. It filled with an evil, inhuman laughter. The laughter was shrill, but the earlier voice was silent. Everything had become silent. “Hel-...” the voice started and broke off. Again, it was quiet. But the quiet was interrupted by stranger sounds, like piercing laughter and tinkling metal. And after a moment, silence returned.

There was a girl in this dark and silent place. Her hair was blonde and her eyes, hazel. Scared, she searched the darkness, unable to see anything. “Is there anybody here?!” she shouted into the black. No one answered. After a few minutes, she gathered the courage to take a walk, to see what exactly this place was about. She walked carefully, step by step, without stopping. Suddenly, a sharp light cut through the darkness, and the girl stopped, shielding her eyes. A moment passed and she removed her hand. The girl could make out a strange, shadowy figure. Fearful, she tried to run away, but immediately discovered that she wasn’t able to move. Something dark covered her eyes, whispering chilling words...
“Azumy... you... are... next...”

Azumy woke up breathless in her room. It glowed warm with torange sunlight. “...A nightmare? But it felt so real...” She shook her head and stood up. Everything was normal. Azumy turned to her bedroom mirror, hanging on the wall and framed in silver. She took a step back, with an expression of fear and surprise passing over her face. When she looked in the mirror, Azumy saw a girl that looked just like her, but the girl in the mirror had blond hair and a black-streaked quiff, like white tiger’s wool. Blue-speckled gray eyes stared back at her. “Am I still dreaming? This can’t be real!” Azumy whispered in shock. She pinched herself. “Ouch! That hurts!”

A few days passed and Azumy had begun getting used her new look, but her classmates started to mock her, abusing her verbally rather than physically. The students called her “Scary Alien”

among many other things.

As these mockeries continued, her parents decided they would move to another town. Azumy was happy as she didn't have anything important left for her here. She began packing.

One morning the following week, she got in the car with her parents. It took quite a while with all the traffic, but they finally reached their new house. Azumy was exhausted by the time they arrived and went straight to sleep, not even bothering to change her clothes. That night, she was visited by another nightmare, where she met the same figure from before. In the dream, it was laughing, "Now...you...will...not...escape..." The figure disappeared. Azumy woke up in the middle of the night for the second time. It wasn't the first time she saw that shadowy figure after the first nightmare. She wasn't scared anymore, but she was confused, the expression shifting across her face as she looked out the window. The moon, stars, and sky were covered under heavy gray clouds. the summer was a rainy one.

When school started, Azumy got there early. She entered the building. Azumy was in luck. No one laughed at her appearance, even when she asked for help to find her class. When she got to class, the teacher handed her a paper with a locker number and password. Once all the students had arrived, the teacher let them find their lockers. After searching for a short time, Azumy found her locker and opened it. She stumbled back, clapping a hand over her mouth. In the locker there sat a student's severed head. But before she could utter a single sound, a sharp pain pierced through her back and everything was covered with darkness. Azumy woke up on her bed in her new bedroom gasping for air, just like she had before. She didn't mention this to her parents and headed to school. It had seemed like yesterday was repeating itself.

"Why did this day just start over?" Azumy stood at her locker. *Good luck.* Azumy carefully opened her locker. But she saw that head again and same sharp thing had pierced her back. Everything begun dark until Azumy woke up on her bed "s-stop it! Please!"

she cried. Salty tears slid off her face. At this time, Azumy's dad heard her crying and came into her bedroom.

He sat on a floor, near her bed. "A nightmare?"

Azumy nodded. But she lied to him. Azumy didn't want her parents to be worried. Dad gave her a comforting smile and left her bedroom. Azumy got ready for the day and went to school. The same things had happened, but, in front of her locker, she came up with an idea. The "alien" girl pretended she couldn't open her locker's door and asked for help.

Azumy had asked her locker neighbor for help. She was about Azumy's age. The girl didn't wear a school uniform, but donned a black coat with a white hood, sleeves, and spiraling patterns. The hood had covered her face. The neighbor opened Azumy's locker and looked at the head without any surprise, but said,

"You only have eight lives left. If you have questions, meet me beside the park." Then, the student had left Azumy. Azumy watched the girl leave until she disappeared behind a corner.

Who is she? What did she mean by those words...? Azumy closed her locker. Eight lives...left?

School was over. Azumy didn't see anything to provoke caution, so she opened her locker to reveal a regular student's possessions. She took a deep breath, "This is finally over..." Azumy took her books left the school. She assumed that the girl who she had met was waiting somewhere there. But, when she entered the parkside, no one was there, but a voice behind her.

"Tell me, what you saw or heard."

Azumy looked over her shoulder, but no one was behind her.

"I was..." she began, "somewhere in the dark. I couldn't see anything, even near my face... I heard a voice, that asked for help... but then I heard an inhuman laugh..." She took a pause. Azumy pulled from her backpack a drawing. "After few minutes, the place

filled with light, and then I saw a strange figure..." she held up her drawing.

The girl from earlier revealed herself, "That's sad, that I didn't make a mistake."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Lots of problems. But I am here just to answer your questions. I'm guessing you have some."

Azumy nodded and became silent. She wanted to ask all her questions at once. "First, what happened to my appearance?"

"You became a player."

"A player...?"

"One who will die if he or she is not careful."

"O-okay... Third, who is that figure? Who or what killed me?"

Azumy was surprised when the girl took out a small puppet. "That makes a third and a fourth question. The figure is a puppeteer. The one who killed you is the puppet. And you are the player. You have eight lives before you die, for you can die."

"Why eight?"

"You already lost and died those other two times." She removed off her hood and smiled darkly, "Welcome to my game."



The Yellow Bus

By Guillaume Placidet

Tuesday was the day I discovered the night. Previously, I would come home from school through a method of transportation known as the automobile. However, Tuesday, I decided to change that. Or shall I say, circumstances out of my power decided to change that. The Method of Transportation or MOT, I utilized on that day is known as the School District Bus Transportation Service for High Schools or SDBTSFHS, for short.

However, this was no regular bus. This was a late SDBTSFHS. There are five late SDBTSFHS at my education facility. They run through five different paths and do their best to deliver the adolescents to their designated living habitats. First, I needed to figure out which SDBTSFHS I needed to board. The first one, the second, the third, the fourth, or the quinary. Thankfully, I was able to wirelessly connect to the online web through the my multi-function cellular mobile telephone. I surfed my way to the education facility's webpage and furthermore surfed through the tabs to find which bus I needed to use. I had done a lot of surfing and I finally found the information necessary to help me resolve my problem.

I boarded SDBTSFHS number 1. The conductor of the four-wheeled transportation machine asked me what stop I needed to exit the vehicle at. I realized I did not know. I delivered my very best guess and he acknowledged the information. The voyage was long, very long. I imagined the days passing by. My family unit growing old without me and the time running by as a well prepared athlete on a treadmill. Finally, 20 minutes in, I descended from the bus and realized I had no idea what my location currently was. The not too bright, not too dark, transportation with four wheels utilized its onboard fuel reserve to create a chemical reaction that would make it advance along the street. It did. And I was left there on: in the middle of nowhere road.

I utilized my cellular multifunction device to access a program called maps by google, "R" in circle. Finally, thanks to

the fact that we live on a planet revolving around the sun which gives us the possibility to live and thus create such things as cellular service, I was able to determine where I was. I walked and walked. I crossed the road, like a poultry would, and almost ended my life. Indeed, the other living-beings did not consider that another being crossing the road was a reason for them to slow down. My whitley conditioned shoes, darkened due to the earth matter that deposited on them. In addition, there were no sidewalks.

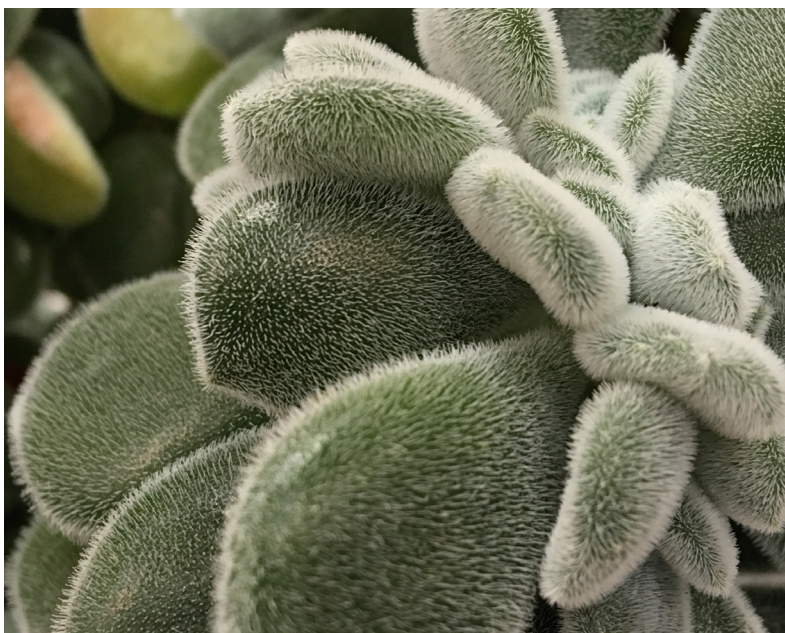
This event was such an encumbrance. Why would this happen to my person. I was obliged to execute the action of walking and to speak the truth, I did not consent for this event to affect me. I walked and walked and walked and walked. The living poles with wood and leaves that us beings call trees where very disruptive to accessing my only source of light, being the reflection of light the moon. There was also the white LED flashy flashes that were projected by the MOTs. These beams traversed through my soul and I felt discouraged, 13 multiplied by 60 units of time left. My inner body fluids were low on glucose. I needed $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$. I was famished. If only I had consumed particles during the middle day eating session. No! My portable communication device was lacking protons and electrons. 1% left. I was obliged at this point to execute the ultra power saving mode, because all non essential functions on my portable machine needed to be shut down in order to ensure my possibility of contacting my parental units in case of a drastic emergency. No more yellow boos or blue birds. In fact no more color at all, it was dark outside.

I further marched into the forest. I could see monsters. I could see danger. And most of all, I was lost. What direction should I take? Where should I direct myself to go? Maybe I should question someone in a MOT? I walked towards a MOT that was arriving. And then it happened. The climacteric of this entire ordeal. The MOT passed by and its circular suspension rolling utensils rolled in the gathering of liquid on the ground. The liquid sprayed all over me. My hair. My body covering mat-

ter. My education facility packing device. They were all impacted by the liquid. These events have been forging my terrible after middle of day. Suddenly, an XL-sized MOT approached my person. The conductor then started producing words with his mouth that I could not comprehend .

“Hey lil’dog! Ya wanna catch a ride? I gotcha dude! Ur completely soaked!” he exclaimed.

What were my options at this point in time? I talked to the older being and expressed my acceptance to his offer. I climbed on the large MOT. The being had been consuming liquid sugar know as “Coke”. He had a lot of useless plastic material coverings on the floor. He conducted the vehicle and I assigned him road tasks that consisted of directing the MOT towards the left or directing the MOT towards the right. 60 x 6 units of time later, we had arrived at my living facility. I directed my body out of the MOT. Then, as he was readying himself to further utilize his MOT, I called to him using my vocal cords and said, “Yo thanks bro.”



Riya Kumar

