

## Lighthouse Mission

The mission of Lighthouse Writers Workshop is to provide the highest caliber of artistic education, support, and community for writers and readers of all ages in the Rocky Mountain Region and beyond. We strive to ensure that literature maintains its proper prominence in the culture, and that individuals achieve their fullest potential as artists and human beings.

We conduct workshops for young writers in-house and at local schools with the goal of fostering creativity, confident self-expression, and interest in the power of language and story.

Selected students ages 8-18 convene for a creative writing camp at Lighthouse each summer. This is the program's eighth published anthology.

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[lighthousewriters.org](http://lighthousewriters.org)

AND WE CREATED WORLDS

Lighthouse Young Writers Anthology 8.0

# AND WE CREATED WORLDS

LIGHTHOUSE YOUNG WRITERS ANTHOLOGY 8.0

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# **And We Created Worlds**

**Edited by Sherrye Henry Jr.**

**LIGHTHOUSE  
YOUNG WRITERS  
ANTHOLOGY 8.0**



The boy laughed. “How can it  
be so scary,” he thought. “How can my  
experience be so much different than hers?”

— Madeline Barbeau



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## Introduction

ALISON PRESTON

LIGHTHOUSE YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM INSTRUCTOR

Camp is only one week; a workshop lasts only a couple of hours. I know this acutely. Every teacher knows there's a river of sadness that runs beneath this happy-and-sweet-seeming profession: a teacher only gets her students for a little while, and then they have to go. Always. If they don't have to go, it means you didn't do your job right. I guess I'd argue that without the river, the rest of it couldn't stay afloat.

With writing students, this feeling is magnified by about ten million because we're not talking about anything less than sharing our souls. Monday morning of summer camp, for example, they arrive nervous, unsure, starting to regret it, feet pounding across the creaky Lighthouse floors down to the grotto. We always gather there first, and everyone's always quiet, too quiet. We're all wondering how this is going to go. The best moments in life are categorized as best because you remember thinking at the start of them that it could all end in disaster.

So then we split into groups and we disperse to our respective Lighthouse rooms and we do the only thing writers can do. We sit down. We write our hearts out. We show don't tell each other stuff we've never hazarded anywhere else. Dark things are said, really funny things are said, oftentimes in the same breath. We don't flinch. Our secrets don't stay kept here, our daydreams grow spines and bust out to walk the notebook pages. About fifteen minutes in, without fail, someone shares a one-liner so gorgeous the instructor has to copy it down in her own notebook, because she never wants to forget it.

Whether it's a week of camp or a whirlwind workshop, it's never child's play. Someone's writing historical fiction and needs accurate dates of Thursdays in December of 1611. Someone needs the down-stairs window seat to think in because she's trying to get inside a character who's struggling with a secret. Someone is out on the porch

singing. Someone hit his head. Someone wrote an epic poem about zombie cats. Someone can't get an idea, can't write a word at writing camp, it's a nightmare. But then I see her in the back corner of the parlor early Wednesday morning, cross-legged, notebook wide open, pen moving. Someone just rewrote his ending and now he looks like he's seen a ghost.

All week of camp, each afternoon, I walk out of Lighthouse and lift my head to look around at the neighborhood. I look up and down Race Street, out at Colfax, where it's business as usual, and I think, how weird, that no one knows what just happened in there all day. And it's that way with every Saturday workshop, every afterschool workshop. All around Denver, all year long, we meet in the forgotten room inside the tiny school, in the unventilated almost-closet in the rec center, at the deserted end of the day, with someone talking too loud in the hall. A lot of the time no one knows we're there, and frankly that works for us: we're writers.

The inside of Lighthouse during camp week has a drumbeat, a racing heartbeat. In a cartoon, they'd animate Lighthouse during camp week like it was bursting at the seams, about to pop. But then it wouldn't pop. Without the house, or all the other classrooms and spaces where we've held our workshops this year, there'd be no song for a beat, no body for a heart. The rooms hold the writers like the paper holds the words, and the words hold all the beauty in the world. These pages are what happened.

LIGHTHOUSE YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM  
2016-2017 SCHOOL OUTREACH

Arapahoe High School  
Broomfield High School  
Denver Online High School  
Denver School of the Arts (Middle)  
Denver School of the Arts (High)  
Fox Creek Elementary  
George Washington High School  
Hulstrom (K-8)  
I-Team Manor  
Jefferson County Open School  
Kepner Middle School  
Marvin W. Foote Youth Services Center  
McLain Community School  
MindSpark Learning Community  
Most Precious Blood (K-8)  
Mountain Vista High School  
Newton Middle School  
North Arvada Middle School  
Parmalee Elementary  
Pennington Elementary  
Southmoor Elementary  
Stober Elementary  
Tennyson Center for Children  
Thornton High School  
Urban Peak



## Mr. Mahogany's Science Class

MELANIE BATTEN

**T**he tables smell lemony after the cleaning spray. I wipe down the table with a dishrag in large circles. It was a pleasant smell that lingers on the desks until the afternoon, and definitely smells better than the formaldehyde from the dissections earlier in the week.

I look up as a shadow crosses along the window. It is a black-haired cat who sits down on the windowsill, warming itself in the sun. I watch it for a time between tables, calmed by its presence.

There's a knock on the door as I sling the towel into a hamper and place the cleaner into a cabinet.

"Come in," I call out.

It's Ms. Sanchez holding a Starbucks cup. I walk over to her with a smile and take the cup from her hand.

"Thank you, Rita." I shoot her a wink. She blushes and backs out of the room to deliver the rest from a small tray she's brought along.

I take a sip of the drink, savoring the hot chocolate and cinnamon. A hint of vanilla brightens the flavor, and euphoria washes over me.

In five minutes the classes will start, but for now I relish the alone time. I glance at the window. The cat is licking its fur, the smooth pink tongue peeking through the lush coat. A small smile creeps onto my face.

The bell rings breaking the silence with a long piercing tone. The cat jumps and streaks away, its fur on end. I scald my tongue, also surprised by the sudden clamor. I set the cup down with a curse, my smile deadening.

The first student shambles in, his hair not combed from his bedhead, and wearing a large red hoodie. I can hear the music blasting from his earphones and I spy the top of his underwear as he lumbers to his seat.

Kids these days, I think, repulsed by his derriere.

Other kids join him in the back of the room, greeting each other with cheerful insults and fist bumps. I drum my fingers on the desk



in front of me. As the final bell tolls a few stragglers rush in, and I give them a sharp look. They know I still count them tardy. They plop down at their desks and I begin my lesson.

“Today we’ll be watching a video about human anatomy. I expect you to take notes on this sheet,” I hold up a stack of papers, “and hand them in to me at the end of class.”

I hear low grumbles, but they know they’re fortunate to get a video in *my* class. I walk around sliding papers across the desks with practiced ease. I go back to my desk and start the video, taking a sip of my chocolate. As the video drones on in the background, I focus on entering grades into the grade book in the meantime.

“Ew, gross!” I hear a girl’s voice break the silence. I take a quick glance at the video and see that it is showing an unappetizing view of the colon. I pause the video for a second.

“My apologies, I didn’t say that the video was graphic. However, it’s nice to think about how this is going on inside your own body, isn’t it?” I smile and continue the video. Although the girl’s face is barely visible I can see it pale at my rhetorical question.

I continue my work until near the end of the period, finishing my drink as I watch a patient undergo neurosurgery. The bell rings, so I pause it and collect papers. Some shoot their friends disgusted looks, and others imitate the girl’s reaction or parts of the video. I rewind the video for the next class and hand out the same worksheet. My later classes will fortunately not be so similar.

As the class settles into the video, I settle into grading. The notes are fairly good, some writing paragraphs, others meager bullet points. Then I come across a picture sketched across the entirety of the page. It depicts me putting a brain into a blender and later drinking it. My heart stops and my knuckles clench.

*Do they know? Or did they just observe what was happening today?*

Regardless, I enter a zero into the grade book and slide the paper into my desk drawer to speak to the perpetrator later. My anger fades and I resume my relaxed posture for grading.

As my classes draw towards lunch, they get more restless in their seats, glancing at the clock more and more often. I don’t blame them. When lunch finally starts, my class hands in their papers quickly and rushes out the door. I collect the papers in a less haphazard way, and

stow them into my bag. I gather my stuff and head out, but not before I hear a muffled *meow* from outside. I turn to look at the black cat on the sill, it sits there lashing its tail, with a small mouse dangling from its mouth. I grin and walk to the science office.

The teachers in the office greet me as I enter; I nod to them and sit down at my desk there. They've been like family to me ever since my wife died. . .

## Ice Brinicles: A Supernatural Wonder of the Antarctic Sea

JAMES BLACKFOR

One of the most amazing natural wonders come from the frigid waters of the Antarctic Sea. Ice Brinicles. A pipe-like structure that grows from the thick and almost unbreakable sea ice. “The finger of death,” as BBC Nature calls it.

As the salt is excluded, this frozen underwater wonder spirals towards the ocean floor, looking for sea life to find a kill. Growing and sinking, two things that force against each other. But gravity and the super-dense salt sinks towards the floor, winning the battle. Even as some of the slow, rare ocean life gets trapped and killed there, it is in the wonder and amazement that opens our mouths for use.

At first, when the early salt is exposed to the frigid Antarctic seawater, the pipe-like structure is thin and delicate. Almost like a newborn bear. Cute and non-harmful, but then growing up to leave anyone that gets in its way anything but unscathed. Getting bigger and stronger as it goes, it becomes more of a wonder

The excluded salt is so much more dense than the surrounding, unbearably cold Antarctic Sea. It traps the unworried sea life, growing and sinking very fast. It is like running on a moving carpet for the last plane of the month to Key West. Although it grows, it does more sinking than growing, forcing it to grow downwards. When touching the ocean floor, the sinking stops and the growing takes over, making it one of the few sea-floor icy patches.

Although a lot has been discovered during the BBC Nature recording, a lot has yet to be discovered. Just like the brinicle, the discoveries keep growing and changing, making it more interesting and fun to discover. Some of these things keep the mind going and running, making new discoveries every day. Making new discoveries every week. These amazing wonders take a heavy toll on sea life, but not often. Ice brinicles are found every couple of months, while people think that they happen more often.

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Davies, Ella. “‘Brinicle’ Ice Finger of Death Filmed in Antarctic.” *BBC News*. BBC, 23 Nov. 2011. Web. 07 Mar. 2017.

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## Untitled

LEXXIE CLARK

I was sleeping on the living room floor, cuddled up to my younger brother for extra warmth. It was peaceful enough, surrounded by the warm sound of children's snores and the security of dreams. I didn't hear her when she came in, but I did hear when she screamed. I jolted awake and tightened my arms around my brother, unsure of the severity of the threat. She continued to scream, and another outline abruptly joined the havoc in the living room. She yelled and screamed about her young sons not having pillows or blankets to sleep with. *At least they have a comfortable-enough couch to sleep on rather than the hard floor*, I thought bitterly. By now, everyone was wide awake. Children were crying and whimpering but the screams did not stop. The second outline shouted over the chilling screams a string of profanities along with the message to shut the hell up before the cops were called. But the screams did not stop. Petrified, yet somehow still coherently thinking, I whispered to my brother to be quiet, everything will be all right. When the screaming still did not stop, a bigger figure stepped into the room, and with one fluid motion of his strong, bearlike arms, the screaming stopped. For only a second. But then the screaming morphed into loud cries for help and I knew we had to get out of there. Somehow in the commotion the cops were called. I quickly snatched my phone and charger out of the outlet, yanked my brother up to his feet. We made a beeline for the door, and somehow managed to escape.

Barefoot and shivering, we ran to the camper, banged on the small door until it was unlocked and opened. Somehow in my rapid succession of rambling words, my dad was able to understand the message: the cops were coming. He quickly pulled on his boots and pushed his enraged girlfriend out the door. By now, I could pick up on the faint sound of sirens, growing louder and louder with each passing second. We ran down the street and to the nearby elementary school. My dad carried my brother, and I hushed my whimpers with each painful, cold, barefoot step that hit the unforgiving gravel. I

couldn't help but reminisce on all the stories I had read in school of Jews running away from the Gestapo. I too was running away from authority, hoping not to get taken away. It was not until we reached the school and found a discreet spot to rest that my dad noticed the lack of shoes on my feet. He insisted I put on the way-too-big cowboy boots he had pulled on moments before.

We stayed in the shadows of the school, stopping for seconds at a time in between pillars of brick in order to catch our breath—or in my case, catch up with the others. Finally, we reached a destination on the far side of the school that my dad deemed fit for us to rest in. I attempted to block out the memories from only minutes before—but they pushed and shoved their way into my mind until I couldn't run from them anymore. The mother of children she barely knew screaming and lashing out at anyone in her sight, the grandmother who didn't want to deal with any bullshit, and the grandfather who physically pushed his authority when it was not automatically given to him. Despite the so-called reason for the screaming, the five young children in the living room did not seem to be a priority in the midst of the chaos.

My dad shifts and just like that the spell of the past is broken and it is time to move on.

Since it's not safe to go back yet, we roam the streets of the neighborhood, straying far away from the flashing lights. When we reach a house familiar to my dad's girlfriend, she goes up to knock on the door while my brother, dad, and I wait in the darkness of the shadows. Refusing to let my true feelings of pathetic-ness show, I hesitantly smile up at my dad. He does not smile back. Girlfriend returns to the shadows, quite frankly looking pissed. *But how could you expect someone to answer the door at three in the morning?* I do not voice my opinion, only pull arms inside my shirt in an attempt to collect more warmth. After a few more minutes and many more barely concealed yawns later, we approach another house. But it is to no avail. Nobody answers. By the time we reach the third door, girlfriend is no longer pissed. Rather, she is weary, with arms that drag along at her sides and a mouth that yawns wider than a crocodile's when it is about to snap at its next meal. I only focus on not blinking because with each blink my eyes stay closed a little longer and a little longer.

The rest of the night blurs as we venture around with our sleepy eyes and groaning feet. We eventually return to where we started. The sun has already risen and birds are cheerfully chirping. The house is finally quiet. There are no screams. We crawl into the camper and try to get an hour's rest before continuing on with the day that has rolled in. Although I do not sleep, a resolution sets deep inside me. *It is time to get on with the day. Pretend like nothing happened. This was just another event.*

## Meeting

LIAM CORSUN

Cancel the meeting; I can't come. My baby is sick and so am I. Together we are impregnated with influenza. Fevers soar as sleepiness rubs us away. A chink in the armor, a crack in the vase. We sleep together, cough together, die a little together. A sickness breaks one, but molds two together. A shame. A real shame. Cancel today, meet me tomorrow.



## The Hero's Journey, a Play in One Act

THE AZTEC GROUP (FROM BECKY FORD'S  
FOX CREEK ELEMENTARY SIXTH-GRADE CLASS)

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

CIPACTLI	YAOTL
YAYAHQUI	EZTLI
J.W.	IRANDIYU
NACDE	MATLAL
TENKOCH	TEPANEC WARRIOR
MONTEZUMA	PRIEST
MESSENGER	

### SCENE I

SETTING: YAOTL'S HUT

YAOTL: Mom! Dad was a warrior, and if he can do it, I can do it!

CIPACTLI: Yaotl, your father had the strength and intelligence to become a warrior and you definitely do not fit that description! You're too clumsy, you drool in your sleep, you're short, you smell like a rat died in (pause) peanut butter. What did I do wrong to deserve a son like you!?

(CIPACTLI walks off stage and YAYAHQUI walks on stage)

YAOTL: What does your mom think about you being a warrior?

YAYAHQUI: Oh, she is proud to the highest extent.

YAOTL: My mom is disappointed to the highest extent.

YAYAHQUI: Probably because I'm a much better warrior than the likes of you.

YAOTL: Oh, ya? I bet I could capture Tenoch himself.

YAYAHQUI: Ok, calm down, hotshot. Let's see if your words hold any truth.

(YAOTL and YAYAHQUI run to the Tepanec camp to find TENOCH.

YAOTL trips two times and then face plants)

YAOTL: Why is Tenoch the only Tepanec here?

YAYAHQUI: He must be on guard duty tonight.

YAOTL: Hee-hee. Duty.

(YAYAHQUI rolls his eyes)

YAYAHQUI: All right, on three. One, two, two and three-eighths, two and three quarters, three!!!!

(YAOTL and YAYAHQUI charge TENOCH. YAYAHQUI attacks TENOCH first and fatally fails like a pro. YAOTL gets hit in the leg and falls, then TENOCH ties him up. TENOCH then checks YAYAHQUI's pulse and shakes his head.)

(Drag J.W. by da foot)

YAOTL: NOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!! YAYAHQUI!!!!!!

TENOCH: You're so heavy! You need to lay off the coco beans!

(later in TENOCH's prisoner hut)

TENOCH: Nacde, take this new slave to the prison block.

NACDE: Yes, sir. Come with me. (NACDE takes YAOTL back to the slave shed. Irandiyu is in the hut with the food)

NACDE: Right on time. Irandiyu brought dinner. This is Matlal.

MATLAL: Nice to meet you.

YAOTL: Sure.

(YAOTL sits down and starts scarfing down food.)

NACDE: Be up at dawn tomorrow to start working. I will show you how to whittle wood for the prisoners hut.

MATLAL: I'll show you how to prepare your sleeping ground.

(MATLAL and YAOTL walk of stage. YAOTL comes back on stage, grabs more food, and walks back off again.)

## SCENE 2

**SETTING: PRISONERS' HUT**

IRANDIYU: (yelling) Yaotl, wake up now it's late!

YAOTL: (moaning tiredly) What? Are, are you sure?

IRANDIYU: (yelling) I said you must be up at dawn!

(NACDE walks in)

NACDE: (yelling too) Why is he still on the floor?

IRANDIYU: (calmly) I came in to clean up breakfast and found him still sleeping.

(YAOTL snores)

IRANDIYU: (yelling) Get up you lazy fool!

NACDE: (shaking YAOTL) WAKE UP NOW!!!!

(NACDE shakes YAOTL)

YAOTL: (moaning) All right I'm up, I'm up!

(NACDE grabs YAOTL by the arm)

NACDE: You're coming with me, you sleepy scum!

(NACDE pulls YAOTL offstage. Everyone else leaves.)

### SCENE 3

**SETTING: TENOCH'S WOODPILE AND NACDE'S KITCHEN**

(NACDE is outside TENOCH's hut and YAOTL goes on the stage)

NACDE: Grab that stick and start whittling.

(YAOTL picks up the stick)

YAOTL: Where's the knife?

NACDE: En garde!

YAOTL: Why? (NACDE pokes him) That HURT! (NACDE pokes him again) You're being mean!

NACDE: You must get stronger if you want to escape! Tenoch is a big fat ugly jerk and my only hope of escaping lies on your smelly shoulders! Now move!

(NACDE picks up her stick and points it at YAOTL. YAOTL and NACDE have a stick battle)

NACDE: Parry! Parry! Strike!

(NACDE flies backwards off stage then YAOTL follows. Then we show a training montage.)

#### SCENE 4

SETTING: PRISONERS' HUT

NACDE: (in a whisper voice to YAOTL and MATLAL but still firm and commanding) Now, you two, this does not get repeated. Me and Irandiyu can help us all escape. Be quick, we must be silent in order to make it out alive. Go! Go!

(The four run off da stage.)

#### SCENE 5

SETTING: TENOCH'S DOORWAY

(NACDE, YAOTL, MATLAL, and IRANDIYU come on stage and pretend to run. TENOCH and EZTLI come around the corner.)

TENOCH: Ha! You thought you could escape! Me and Eztli here beg to differ.

MATLAL: Chaaaaarrrrrrrrgggggggggeeeeeeee!

(Only MATLAL attacks. YAOTL and the maids stay back. EZTLI kills MATLAL. YAOTL and the maids look shocked, and then charge. IRANDIYU fights EZTLI and YAOTL fights TENOCH. TENOCH floors YAOTL but NACDE hits him over the head with a pot. She then hits EZTLI with a pot.)

NACDE: Yaotl! Irandiyu! Go! I'll handle them!

(YAOTL and IRANDIYU run offstage. NACDE, EZTLI, and TENOCH run offstage the other way.)

#### SCENE 6

SETTING: Tenochtitlan

IRANDIYU: I overheard a conversation between Eztli and Tenoch. They plan to attack the northern aqueduct at dawn tomorrow.

YAOTL: We must get back to Tenochtitlan and report this to Montezuma immediately

YAOTL: (bowing) My lord. We have information on when the Tepanecs will strike at us.

MONTEZUMA: When!?

YAOTL: Tomorrow, at dawn.

MONTEZUMA: Messenger, go get my club and shield. Alert the army, they must be ready tonight.

MESSENGER: Yes, sir.

MONTEZUMA: You two. Head to the armory and prepare for battle. We leave for the Northern Aqueduct at dark.

(Both IRANDIYU and YAOTL bow.)

YAOTL and IRANDIYU: (together) Yes, sir.

(Everyone leaves the stage.)

## SCENE 7

**SETTING: AQUEDUCTS**

MONTEZUMA: We need to be silent. They will attack soon. Be ready.

(TENoch tip-toes around the corner.)

EZTLI: (whispering) I think we are supposed to charge

TENoch: I decide when we charge. Raaaaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrrr!!

(TENoch and EZTLI come around the corner and charge. TENoch and YAOTL fight, with YAOTL capturing TENoch. IRANDIYU and EZTLI fight, with IRANDIYU winning. MONTEZUMA and Tepanec warrior fight with MONTEZUMA winning.)

YAOTL: We, we won. We won!

(Everyone celebrates.)

## SCENE 8

**SETTING: YAOTL'S HUT**

YAOTL: (bowing) Mother, I have news. I have traveled far. I have captured Tenoch himself, and became worthy of a Jaguar Warrior. Will you come to my ceremony?

CIPACTLI: (smiling) Of course. I'm very proud of you. You have grown into an intelligent and strong young man, like your father was. And you smell like peaches!

(Actors walk off stage.)

## SCENE 9

**SETTING: THE TEMPLE**

(The PRIEST cuts YAOTL hand.)

PRIEST: Today, the gods have blessed us with another Jaguar Warrior.

(Everyone cheers and then walks off stage as a group; the PRIEST exits on the other side.)

**THE END**

## Ice vs. Ships

KAILEY FRITZ

**Y**ou aren't that safe. Imagine riding on a massive ship with your family. You are as happy as can be, having no worries at all. But, as you enter the Arctic, the ice danger zone, you still don't have any worries, there is no way this massive ship will sink because of ice. The ship bounces up and down on the waves, and finally ice comes into view. You just continue talking with your family, when the person in the seat behind you starts to scream, but before you could ask what's wrong, you are knocked off your feet and a loud CLSSHH sound erupted in the whole ship.

Before you know it, water is splashing in from every direction, and you can feel your heart beating harder in your chest. The crew is hurrying to get the lifeboats out, and grab the life vests. The water is now up to your neck, and you get one last breath before you are plunged into the icy cold water. You thankfully have a life vest on and you rise back up. But others weren't so lucky. Ice has caused many deaths, and it happens when people think they are just fine.

### *Terra Nova*

September 13, 1943, seemed just like any other day on the sea, but it really wasn't.

The *Terra Nova* was on a journey, delivering supplies to base stations in the Arctic, when it came across some ice. The crew continued with their journey, basically ignoring the ice. But, none of them knew this of course, so they just continued with their normal schedule. They heard a weird noise, like grinding metal, and thought little of it, and kept on with their tasks. Soon after, they realized they had hit ice, and their boat was slowly sinking. They tried everything to stay alive but they were no match for the cruel, relentless ice, and all five of their lives were taken that night. Their bodies and journals were later discovered eight months later, but the supplies were never delivered. But they are not the only ones that have lost their lives in shipwrecks.

### *Hannah*

April 3, 1849, many Irish immigrants made a huge mistake.

The boat left the dock on April 3, 1849, from Newry heading to Quebec City. The *Hannah* set off into the dark night, the sound of the waves rushing up against the boat relaxed many of the immigrants, but others were frightened that it was a sea monster lurking beneath the boat. It splashed through the water, and for twenty-four days it went on like this. April 27, 1849, scared many of the passengers, as they encountered high winds and ice. But they easily moved on, expecting to encounter some winds and ice. When April 28, 1849, came, it seemed like any other day, although it wasn't. They were in the Gulf of St. Lawrence; they had made it quite far. They got up, ate, and sat and chatted for a while. But that morning, at 4:00 a.m., they heard a loud, horrible sound, like nails on a chalkboard, but ten times louder. They all hurried to see the problem, and by the time they got up to see the problem, water was up to their ankles. Apparently, the boat had scraped against "a reef of ice", which had made a huge hole in the hull. Worry flooded them just like the water was flooding their boat. Within forty minutes, the boat sank, and 49 bodies sank with it. Many more bodies will be discovered at the bottom of the ocean for expeditions to come.

### *HMS Investigator*

1853, the *HMS Investigator* was abandoned.

The *HMS Investigator* is a British Navy ship (HMS stands for Her Majesty's Ship). It was purchased in 1848 to find Sir John Franklin's lost expedition. The *HMS Investigator's* first trip was unsuccessful, but they were still determined to find Sir John Franklin's ship, so they went out again. In 1853, they sailed off for a second time, leaving the dock waving to family and friends, hoping they would see them again. But what really was on their minds was finding Sir John Franklin's lost expedition: they would become rich, and famous! Waves rose and then fell, some men got a little sea sick, some got frostbite, and some got scurvy, but their most concern was the ice. It was starting to surround the ship, many men frantically tried to get the boat away from the ice, but was it too late? "Like an almond in a piece of toffee," the storekeeper wrote, and now they were stuck



with nothing else to do but abandon the ship. They watched it fall to its side, the ice basically attacking it. Now, getting back home was much more important than finding Sir John Franklin's lost expedition. As a result, many boats were sent out to find the HMS *Investigator* that never made it home.

### *Endurance*

The *Endurance* was their only way home.

October 26, 1914, a huge wooden ship, also known as the *Endurance*, left London, under Sir Ernest Shackleton's command. Twenty-eight men, all prepared on the journey, knowing that they may never make it home. They played card games, and did many other things to keep each other entertained. On November 5, 1914, they arrived at South Georgia Island and waited for the ice to recede. January 18, 1915, they started to have constant ice problems, and were just making narrow escapes every time. They were trying to keep their hopes up, but just like the waves, they rose, just to fall again. July 21 1915, the *Endurance* began experiencing colossal pressure, and the ice packs seems to be stacking on top of each other.

"The ice was rafting up to a height of 10 or 15 ft. in places, the opposing floes are moving against one another at the rate of about 200 yds. per hour. The noise resembles the roar of heavy, distant surf. Standing on the stirring ice one can imagine it is disturbed by the breathing and tossing of a mighty giant below," Shackleton said.

Now the men were really panicking, and some were regretting getting on the ship: is mutiny their next option? September 1915, almost a whole year has sailed by, and the *Endurance* is struggling. Groaning as if it were in pain, sometimes the men can hear a screech, as if the boat were screaming for help, and all these noises just added more worry to these men who were already freezing and quite hungry. By the time October came, the *Endurance* wasn't doing well at all, and when ice rubbed against the side of the *Endurance*, it was over. On October 27, 1915, the *Endurance* couldn't take it anymore and basically folded in half, and—with the ice clinging on to the ship—the *Endurance* plunged down 3,406 feet.

*What is being done*

More than two dozen ships sink a year, and about half of them are caused by ice. Many people underestimate ice, which is why many of the ships end up hitting ice and then sinking. They think they will pass the ice with ease and continue to their destination, but when they hit the ice, they know they were wrong. Most shipwrecks end up with many people dead or injured. But, due to the fact that captains are becoming much more aware of the ice, there are less shipwrecks happening because of ice. Captains are avoiding the ice, taking different routes, and also we have advanced technology, so if the ship does start sinking, they will get help sooner. Captains are also being smarter about ice, and not being cocky and trying to get through the ice. But, that does not mean that they aren't still happening.

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## All Aboard!

ANNIE GLEASON

**H**ow did the *Titanic's* sinking affect survivors' lives? We begin on a chilly night, and all is well on the RMS *Titanic*, sailing toward New York City. It's around 2:00 am in the morning, April 15, 1912, and most all of the passengers are asleep in their beds, dreaming dreams about New York, or counting sheep, or rainbows... The possibilities are endless. Now, imagine you are one of these passengers, fast asleep and you hear a loud noise, and as you try to make sense of the noise it is only getting louder. You lie there, trying to get back to sleep, but it's hopeless. You decide to get up and check what's going on.

When you open the door, you are horrified to see people running up and down the halls, whilst water is flooding the scene. Is it a broken pipe? A sinking ship? You scramble out of the room only to find things are much worse than you could have imagined. You run on, and soon, you have jumped into a boat, floating along with the other fortunate passengers lucky enough to have made it off the sinking ship, in the cold North Atlantic Ocean. Terrified for your life, what do you do now?

### *Royalty in the freezing sea*

For Laura Mabel Francatelli, age thirty whilst on the ship, this terrifying nightmare became a reality. And, well, her story even more of a nightmare. She describes it as a night she won't forget, even though she wants to. She still remembers the event, saying, "A man came to me and put a life preserver on me assuring me it was only taking precautions and not to be alarmed . . . When we got on the top deck, the lifeboats were being lowered on the starboard side . . . I then noticed that the sea was nearer to us than during the day, and I said to Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon, 'We are sinking,' and he said, 'Nonsense, come away.'" Although she passed away June 2, 1967, which was quite a long time ago, her notebooks and entries are important pieces of history, and clues to help us figure out more than we already know about the *Titanic* sinking.

*“A baby put on a lifeboat”*

Laura was one of the 705 survivors of the *Titanic*, as was Millvina Dean, the last living survivor of the *Titanic*, who passed away, sadly of pneumonia, in 2009. She was the youngest passenger on the ship, “A baby put in a lifeboat,” as *The Guardian* states in an article about her tragic death. The Deans did not choose to be on the *Titanic*, as the article says, but, rather, “Her parents had decided to leave England for America, where her father had family in Kansas and hoped to open a tobacco shop. According to *The Guardian*, “The Deans had not chosen to be aboard the *Titanic*, but because of a coal strike they were transferred to the ship and boarded it as third-class passengers at Southampton.” She is not alive today, but her memories have been much help to the ongoing investigation of the *Titanic*.

*A mother of two*

The final survivor story we have is of Rhoda Abbott, who was a young mother on the ship, who sadly, like many other passengers, lost two family members, sons Rossmore and Eugene, ages thirteen and sixteen, respectively. Her story, by *Biography.com*, is rather tear-jerking:

Rhoda Abbott was returning to America with her two teenage sons, Rossmore and Eugene. The family managed to reach the boat deck by climbing a steel ladder onto the stern and walking on the slanting deck over ropes left from lifeboats which had already been launched. Collapsible C, one of the lifeboats with canvas sides, was being loaded—but only with women and children. At 16 and 13, the Abbot boys would be considered too old. Their mother stepped back to stay with her children. As the boat was being lowered, J. Bruce Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line, jumped in. In the final moments, Rhoda and her boys jumped from the deck. She managed to get into Collapsible A, the only woman in that boat. Her beloved sons were lost. It took a long time for Rhoda to recover from the effects of injuries and exposure she suffered that night. She never recovered from the loss of her sons and died, alone and poor, in 1946.

As you can see, this article from *Biography.com* is so sad, and this is one example of what an impact the sinking put on survivors' lives.

Could you imagine losing important family members such as two sons? Imagine, getting off that boat, the RMS *Carpathia*, stranded and cold, with nowhere to go. Do you live your life like normal, ignoring the event, or do you seek fame because you are a survivor, or do you struggle to get back on your feet, never recovering from the loss of your loved ones? People still research just how much the tragic event affected survivors, and we still don't quite understand the pain it puts them in. Will we ever?

[HTTPS://WWW.BIOGRAPHY.COM/NEWS/TITANIC-PASSENGER-LISTS-FACTS-CLASSES](https://www.biography.com/news/titanic-passenger-lists-facts-classes)

## best friends

ANELA GOMEZ

I was in disbelief. Feeling like I was a character in a mean girls or high school musical, where the girls yell out, “OMG!” really loud with their high-pitched voices. I wonder if this is why there are sister codes, bro codes, and just playing dibs.

I had done nothing but talk about him, fawn over him, and fangirl him in front of all my friends. I had desperately wanted my friends to meet him, and maybe that was my mistake. I was so desperate I had invited my now “best friend” to play an online game of *League of Legends* and a video chat, again, my mistake. I thought I lived in a rational world where it was clearly common sense and etiquette to not do what she did, my mistake.

We had played a full game and moved onto pure video chat, all three of us. During the course of the conversation, it had steered to a two-way communication channel with my “best friend” and crush living in their own world. To make it worse my connection was suddenly cut and the video chat continued as if I was never there. I waited. I waited for my “best friend” to redeem herself. So, I waited. And I waited.

Finally feeling myself about to hurl my computer to the opposite end of the room, I called them back and was surprisingly added back into the conversation for it to be just how I was left it. When we ended the chat and I was going to continue my seething, my phone alerted me of a text message. It was from “her.”

*i think i like him*

I thought we were best friends. My mistake.

## Not Your Fault

ANELA GOMEZ

I've learned several things about how you break bad news to people. First, say a bunch of stuff that won't mean anything to what you're about to say to that person. Two, make yourself the victim. And three, tell them it's not their fault.

My aunt had a gift: she was able to make your hope soar high above the ground only to shoot it down with a swift shot of her bow. I often imagine it like a reverse Cupid, instead of feeling love you can only feel despair and hate. Not to say that my aunt isn't a gracious, loving and caring person; she was all of that.

"I said I would give your mother one year," my aunt said. We put our forks down and put our eyes to the table. "And it has now been almost four years. You know I love you guys but it's time for her to move on."

I tried to act normal and moved my fork around my plate praying no one near was listening. She had shot my brothers and I down and took our bodies as trophies to show the world. In one second of happily eating and enjoying our food the atmosphere had changed. We knew exactly what she meant. My aunt continued on but I blanked out, only catching bits and pieces of the excuses she was making.

"... I've never lived alone, I've always lived with someone . . . I want you to know I'm not kicking you out, it has nothing to do with you guys . . . It's not your fault with what's happened with your mom and dad . . . I want you to know it is not your fault."

I zoned out, the only thought running through my thoughts: if it's not my fault, why am I being punished?

## Untitled Essay

ANELA GOMEZ

It's another early morning at the University of Denver's Pioneer Prep summer program and I felt my eyes begin to droop and my head begin to sway in exhaustion from being awakened so early. Today is the final day of the long mini-summer camp that the University has provided for us. It would be another day of guest speakers, activities, and more guest speakers.

I zone out thinking about lunch, and then after lunch I wait for the day to end so I can go home and sleep in my own bed. Although the dorms are nice, the mattresses are killers and I chide myself for not bringing my own pillows and blankets.

Not that I don't care for these people's stories and appreciate them taking time out of their day and life to help us, but I had already done several summer programs on top of this one and worked hours upon hours and heard speech upon speech on almost every subject related to school. I simply want to lie down in my own bed.

But the last speaker of the day caught my attention. He didn't give the inspirational spiel about college or minorities, scholarships, finding the right career. Instead of a speech he prepared a poetry slam. Instead of giving us a speech that had no personal connection, he told us his story. About how he grew up in a poor family with little motivation to pursue education. He talked about his son and being a teenage father. And how his life changed with poetry.

His speech, as inspiring as it was, was not all he gave to us. The next activity involved us creating our own poem about ourselves and something important to us. As if our stories were locked behind a door and he was the key, we let our stories fly free. Although everyone didn't share, I learned more about so many people in an hour than I did in the previous three days. I connected with so many whom I learned had experienced what I had experienced.

I wrote about my mother's disabilities. I had written many things over the year about my financial state, my worries, my alcoholic father, but I had never written about my mother. I wrote about the



spine problems, the nerve problems, the arthritis. I wrote about being her cane. I wrote about how scared I was that in the future I wouldn't have my mother.

As if writing about this for the first time wasn't enough I also read my poem. Out loud. I was amazed. This man who didn't know my name released my worries to a room full of people I didn't even know. I was able to admit something to a room full of people that I hadn't been able to admit to myself.

## The Diabetic Doll

MOLLY HOOVER

*Everyone*

*Can*

*Do*

*Anything*

Once there was a girl named Molly. She lived in a house with her dad. All she ever wanted was an American Girl doll. One Christmas she got an American Girl doll. “Thank you, Santa!” she screamed. The doll had blonde hair and a slightly slanted smile. Molly decided to name the doll America. A week later her dad gave America a diabetes doll kit because Molly has diabetes. Molly yelled “A diabetic doll!”

(America’s perspective)

“The diabetes makes me able to talk,” thought America.

“America,” called Molly one day, “Dad says we’re going skiing.”

“No,” America yells. “Because I can’t do it!”

Molly couldn’t hear a peep. But she said, “We can do this!”

When Molly and her dad got to the ski hill, they put America in her bag. They went down a double black run!! Dad got stuck behind a group of toddlers, Molly and America went on. It was a sunny day and as Molly looks around her, Molly noticed her dad is not right next to her. She suddenly stopped and crashed. When she crashed, America said, “Ow that hurt!”

“AHAHAHAHAH!” Molly yells.

“Shush it!” America says. “Someone might hear you.”

“Uh, uh, uh—what the heck just happened?” Molly says.

Molly decides to not tell her dad America can talk because America says, “You keep the secret Molly girl.”

After that they all left from the ski hill to go home. When they get back home, Molly explained diabetes to America. She said, “When you have diabetes your body can’t make insulin. Insulin is the key to open up your muscle cells. Without it you would get really pumped and unhealthy. To put insulin in your body you need to take a shot. But even if you have diabetes you can still do anything!!!”

## **Fireside Recollection**

ABIGAIL HORTON

The seat was leather.  
Cracked, old, and worn.  
The seat was massive.  
Large enough for me to curl up  
in it on a rainy afternoon.  
The seat had mahogany legs.  
With carvings dancing up the sides  
almost moving in the fire's light.  
The seat was cozy. Like a huge hug  
from your mom.  
The seat was green.  
Green like the grass  
in Ms. Plinkard's lawn.  
The seat was always warm.  
Because it was right next to a massive fireplace.  
The seat was my favorite.  
And it might get sold.

## Killer Whale Adaptations

RIVERS HYLTON

**K**iller whales have been around for quite some time in Antarctica, but how is it that they can live there? Orcas have adapted to be able to live in such cold temperatures. But what are those adaptations? Have you ever wondered what you would need to live in such frigid temperatures? There are many types of body adaptations you would need to live in the freezing waters of Antarctica like a killer whale.

### *Swimming and diving*

A killer whale needs many different things to be able to swim through the water smoothly. This includes a layer of blubber underneath their thick skin to contour their body so they can swim faster without having a blocky build that would slow them down. Killer whales have also learned to ride waves out in open water to help save energy. When a whale dives, it will lower its heart rate so that it can dive deeper, because a lowered heart rate decreases oxygen need. Orcas will often dive small depths three to four times before doing a large dive that may take several minutes. This is called “purposing.” Orcas lungs do not tolerate water, much like ours.

Killer whales can hold their breath for long periods of time. Whales have the ability to store more oxygen in their veins before they go dive for long periods of time. This is why whales can hold their breath for so long.

### *Sleeping*

Killer whales don't truly sleep, but only half sleep. They shut down half of their brain while still maintaining some of their awareness. They usually maintain sight and sound while half of their brain is sleeping. The orca will usually only have one eye open. They will often float near the surface or on the surface so that they don't drown while sleeping. Newborn whales do not sleep for the first few months of their life and swim the entire time. Whales can even swim while in this sleep state.

### *Mating season*

Killer whales are very peculiar when it comes to mating. The orcas will never mate with the same partner and are only able to have one baby at a time. The orcas will travel in packs during the year when it is not mating season (which happens several times a year.) Whales can have young at the young age of eight but can only go until they are thirty-eight, after which they have a 50% fail rate but are known to completely stop when they are forty-six. (Whales are only known to live until they are between the ages of forty and fifty-five.) Whales can only have one baby per year and often don't have another the next year because they are still taking care of the first one.

### *Conclusion*

Killer whales are very special animals when it comes to how they survive. Orcas have many special adaptations to be able to live in such cold temperatures. These include swimming adaptations and even some for mating. Hopefully this article satisfied your thirst to know what adaptations killer whales need to survive in the starfish-ridden water.

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## Baking and Cleaning? More like Hammers and Nails: Women in WWI

MEG ORR

**M**en were away and there was work to be done. So, the women put down their aprons and grabbed some tools. Between the years 1914–18, women left the comfort of their homes and entered the huge and bustling world of the modern workplace. Some even became the world’s most influential suffragettes a few years later. New jobs were even created due to this, including munitions factories. Some doubted that women should be able to work in what was before known as the men’s domain. There were many objections to hiring women for men’s work until 1916, when the conscription was introduced, making hiring women completely necessary.

### *What Were They Doing?*

The most common work that people think of, when they think of early women working, is in factories and auto mechanics. And yes, they did do that, but they also were nurses on the battlefield. They also worked in the navy SEALs—which is surprising, because for centuries women were prohibited from fighting in the armed forces.

### *Elizabeth Knocker and Mairi Chisholm*

There were many women who made monumental strides for women in the workplace, Take, for example, Elizabeth Knocker and Mairi Chisholm. These two heroes save tens or maybe hundreds of wounded soldiers at the Belgian war front Pervyse. Elizabeth (Elsie) was a trained nurse who believed that it would be better to treat the wounded men at the front instead of bringing them back to the tent where they could sustain more injuries or obtain an infection. They sacrificed their safety to help other people. They obtained no injuries except for being badly gassed in 1918, forcing them to leave Pervyse. The two were awarded the Order of Leopold in 1915 and the British Military Medal in 1917 for their bravery and selflessness.

### *Evgeniya Shakhovskaya*

This Russian princess was the first woman ever to serve as a military pilot in the 1st Field Air Squadron. She was unfortunately convicted of treason, because she fled to enemy lines, and sentenced to death by firing squad, but was granted life in prison. However, she was freed during the Russian revolution. Sadly, she became a drug addict later in life, due to the stress of her time in prison. But she was able to open military positions to women that previously would have been exclusive to men.

### *The UK's "Land Army"*

The United Kingdom was at the forefront of the war from 1914-18. Most of the men were away fighting in Germany, so there were many jobs left undone. So, women took to the machines and started working. With the money they earned they were able to support their families and to support their country and the men fighting. It was the largest volunteer organization Britain had seen for a long time.

### *The Big Idea*

So, whether they were on the battlefield in the hospitals or working with machines, women stepped into the workplace with full force. Elizabeth Knocker and Mairi Chisholm with the Red Cross, Evgeniya Shakhovskaya with the Russian air force, and the UK's Land Army. These women were monumental in helping women to have equal rights and the same job opportunities as men.

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## A New Life

MIA PAOLICELLI

I'm cuddled in Abuela's shawl; it smells of tortillas and soap. I drift asleep in the moving truck. I dream of my last few minutes at home. I could hear Abuela crying while the whole family stared at Mama. I think of Papi; he and Brother are playing this funny game where they yell at each other and clench their fists. My last memory is hearing my best friend crying after her sister was taken.

Someone kicks the side of the truck. An owl hoots into the darkness. Mama jumps awake and holds us tightly. There's a man. He has a trimmed beard and smells like Papi when he came home at midnight. I stare at him. He looks like he wants to hurt us.

"Get out," he says in a hoarse, rough way. Brother gets out first and helps Mama and I. Mama and Brother play the game. Except this time, it is sad. Mama has tears streaming down her cheeks and Brother is hugging her tightly. When she whispers, "Mesita, green park" in his ear, he nods.

"Say goodbye to Mama," Brother tells me. I was going to ask why but I already knew. We are trying get into America, somewhere safe, away from the guns and gangs. We are going to stay with our uncle, some place in America. Then I remember what I am supposed to do. I run into Mama's loving arms one last time.

"I'll find you," she whispers in my ear. I cry. I cannot speak or breathe. I don't want to leave Mama. Brother pulls me away and puts me into another car. I'm tired and sad. I wish I could just lie down. The nighttime sky around me welcomes me into sleep. The last thing I see is a large sign saying, "Now Leaving Nogales."

I wake up. There is nothing but the hum of a tired car. I am hungry but decide not to tell Brother. I fall asleep again.

When I wake up this time I see a sign saying Albuquerque. I think we are in America now. The car reels to a stop in front of a gas-station. A man like the first gets out and yells, "This is your spot." He smells like cigarettes and alcohol. I don't like him. Brother says thanks and walks into a place called 7-Eleven. I follow behind.



He grabs food and goes to the counter. A pretty lady helps him. Brother pays her and we leave. He has a map in his hands.

“All right sis, ready for our next adventure?” he asks. I see pain in his eyes. We begin to walk.

We run out of food after two days. Abuela would not approve of how skinny I am. My brother and I smell. My teeth hurt. My feet feel like they cannot walk anymore. We walk along this road with fast cars driving next to us. A car pulls up behind us.

“Excuse me, are you children lost?” a man asks.

“No,” Brother grunts at the white man. I know what to do.

“Yes, actually we are, sir,” I say. I could feel my brother’s eyes glaring at my back.

“Where do you need to go?”

“Colorado.”

The man thought about it then nodded for us to get in. I grabbed my brother’s arm and drag him into the stranger’s car.

“How old are you all?”

I nod at Brother.

“I’m fifteen and she’s five.”

“That’s awful young to be wandering around on the highway.” Neither of us answer. The man drove us for hours in silence, every couple of miles looking back. Though he had the same skin color, this man wasn’t like the others. He didn’t smell of alcohol or cigarettes. He was a kind man who seemed to have a troubled past. I feel like this man. I have a troubled past too.

I read a sign saying, “Welcome to Colorful Colorado.” Grasslands reach out in front of me. The sun shines into the truck.

“Sir, can you take us to Mesita?” Brother asks.

“Mesita, sure.”

My brother and I stare at each other.

“Can we give you anything for your kind actions?” My brother wonders if they do this here, give each other presents.

“No,” he mumbles. Then he is gone.

The grasslands seem like they go on forever. My eyes feel tired and I think I should rest. The shawl around my neck smells of home and even the thought of never seeing Mama again makes me cry. I wish I could just have a sense of home.

Brother takes us to a park, green grass, not many people and the stars shining.

“Go to bed now,” I yell at Brother, and push him onto the ground. He doesn’t resist. He’s asleep before his head hits the grass. A piece of paper falls out of his pocket. It’s from his girlfriend.

“I’ll be okay, I promise. I’m going to miss you. Please take care of Mari. She’s your life now. Make sure what happened to me doesn’t happen to her. She deserves better.”

I stare at the note as a flash of memory comes back. I see Brother’s girlfriend; she has a small bump on her tummy. She was gone for months. Brother was so happy when she came back. She had a scar across her forehead and had changed. Someone had attacked her. A man.

But before I could continue remembering a man walks towards us. He has leathery skin that is old. He looks weak. I smile.

“You have her eyes.”

My mouth opens. He has my eyes. I shake Brother. He stares at the old man and gives him a hug.

“Jaco, my boy!” my uncle yells.

This is my new life.

## The Orb

IZIHK QUINTANA

### *Chapter 1: The Orb*

Through the whistling cold, across the big mountains, the orb of power will be taken. “Look, Kitty, it’s the orb.”

“Meow!”

“No! You will have some warm tuna instead!”

So, under the tunnels we go and through the sewers we walk, and, at last, the city.

“Look, Kitty! A little kid stole a candy bar.”

“Meow!”

“Ok. So, Kitty, the ender is back!”

“Meow!”

“Would you like to live on an island?”

“Meow.”

“Ok, let’s make some boats.”

*Blop blop blop blop BLOP BLOP.*

“Let’s go! Yeah!” Me and Kitty sailed across the ocean to the island. We made a big house with a mat and a chest, also a crafting table by a bed, and a table under a potion-maker. “Kitty, let’s get some diamonds.”

“Meow.”

“Good reminder. Let’s go.”

Down the sewers we went, through the tunnels we’ve gone. Across the mountains we ran. Asleep we went.

### *Chapter 2: The Dead Hand*

“Two more mountains to go.”

“Meow.”

“One more day.”

“Meow.”

“Let’s just go.”

“Meow.”

Through the rivers we sailed, across the mountains we walked, in the breeze we travelled, asleep we went, up the mountain we climbed.

“Oh, Kitty, we’ve made it.”

“MEOW! MEOW!”

“Travelers! Kitty, distract them!”

“I’ve got it! Scar’s got the cat! WAR...let’s get that orb!”

“Not on my watch!”

*POW.*

“Get that w—no no no no NO!”

Me and PUH jumped in fast speed to grab the orb! Then a big shockwave hit the world! Mountains broken, the world cracked.

“What happened?”

“Who knows! Look at those mountains! The tips are cracked?”

“So what what—”

*BOOM!*

*KABOOM!*

“What the—aaaaahhhhhh!”

*Chapter 3: As I Rise*

“Run! Run!” I said. I grabbed my cellphone and called 9-1-1. “Bring us a helicopter, NOW!” I yelled. “Stay here or die!”

“What? Why sh—”

*THUD.*

A jockey was riding PUH around! Quickly I went inside my backpack and grabbed my crowbar, then I stretched my arm to my back and I swung the crowbar to the jockey and cracked its head.

*CRACK.*

“I think I cracked its head!” I yelled.

A helicopter floated by. “City H, please,” I said to the flyer.

“Ok,” responded the flyer.

“Coming in,” said the flyer, as we landed on the city.

“Ok, bye,” I said.

The helicopter left. After that, we didn’t know what to do. But then the world shook in terror. Zombies’ hands appeared from the ground. We were on a building with an H and a circle on the top. There was also a door to the building.

“Ok, what’s happening now?”

“The zombies are rising. They will take over the world,” I answered. “Get inside. The building has portal guns.”

I went inside and saw a lab. I went inside the lab.

“I found the portal guns,” I called.

“Meow!”

“Yes, Kitty! Let’s go!” I said.

So, we went back up to the roof, I shot a portal down and the other roof too.

“How do you know how to use the portal gun?” PUH questioned.

“I play PORTAL!” I answered.

## Questions

RILEY DYLAN SULLIVAN

**L**ooking into nothing and imagining it as your own. What could you make of it? When something you know shouldn't pull deep down, calls you, do you answer? Feel like you are floating but can't tell which way until you are ripped back into reality not knowing how to get back and talk to yourself. Finding the clearing that captures you and your family. Knowing you will never be alone; feeling as though no one understands, even when they do. In nothingness you see what you want, but do you understand what you see? You receive more knowledge than makes sense. You look at them, thinking, how do they not have questions? Wondering if you really are what some say. And you remember you can always follow what you think may happen and how you want it to happen. You have a voice. We're all what we make ourselves, and we all can have a great future. Hopefully. . .



# YOUNG WRITERS AT LIGHTHOUSE

*Workshops and Summer Camps 2017*





## Know Your Worth

CHARLOTTE ANDERSON

It was election season 2016, but don't worry, I have a point. My best friend was an uncompromising Hillary Clinton advocate surrounded by Donald Trump fanatics in her suburban middle school. She was immensely distraught when Trump was elected, which is something the boy, whose name I don't even remember, used to his advantage. They were on a Facetime call when, explicitly expressing his support for Hillary and disdain for Trump, he decided to ask her out. She said yes and when she told me about it the next day, I grew skeptical. "Sometimes being solo is wiser than being in a false relationship."

"He's pretty nice, kind of cute, and best of all, his parents voted for Hillary!" she told me. I remember telling my other friend that she may not like him as a boyfriend, but more as a relief from people around her who disagreed with her politics. She certainly didn't have her eye on him before. They broke up within a month or less, mutually deciding they were better as friends, since she was too nice to break up with him when she wanted to (weeks before). After they broke up, she actually told me the same thing I had told my other friend a few weeks earlier. "I think I just went out with him because he was a Hillary supporter."

"True love is like a ghost, which everyone talks about, but few have seen." I thought a lot about what had happened to her and it makes me wonder. Why do women always feel the need for someone they are better than just because the person happens to like *them*? Women tend to believe they can't do better than the less-than-average-looking guy who happens to share their political views, but ends up being a jerk. They think, *Wow, he likes me, so I should automatically like him, regardless of whether I have romantic feelings for him or not!* "Settling for crumbs doesn't keep you fed, it keeps you starving." The truth is, while we may not all find a perfect person to love, we can all find the perfect person for us, whose company we actually enjoy. "Love doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to be true."

The boy and she did not end up being friends. She did go on to date many other guys who asked her out, most of whom she had no romantic feelings for. Maybe I'm a horrible friend for not stopping her, but it finally became worth it when she found a guy she actually liked. It's a lesson that is important to learn, and I was lucky enough to learn it through her. Once you find someone you have crazy-strong feelings for, everyone else seems like a pointless endeavor. She and he may or may not be together forever, but it is rewarding to see her stop wasting her time. "Never settle for less because you're too impatient to wait for the best."

## Morphs: Chapter 1

CHLOE AREND

**M**orphs have been hunted forever, so we have to hide. I'm Sydney Harshington, and I'm a morph. Morphs are people who can change into their animal, but they have features of their animal in their human form. My animal is a cat, and I have cat ears and a cat tail in my human form. I go to Hybrid Middle School. Hybrid is another word for morph.

Being a morph is hard. I have to wear a hat and pants to hide my ears and tail, even in the summer. Once I make it to the school hidden by dense green bushes, I can take off my hat and change into shorts. Another secret I have is my tendency to go off and fight crime. Yup, you could call me a superhero.

This week, a villain of no other is rising. She-3P0. Half mechanical, half human. But I can't think about that now. I see Mr. Foring walk past, his fox ears twitching.

"Hey, Sydney." A little black Chihuahua comes up to me.

"Hey, Virginia!" The Chihuahua changes into a girl, my friend, Virginia.

"Gotta go to class!" I say, then head off to P.E.

"All right class," our P.E. teacher, Mr. Lorm, says. He changes into a giant ape, his muscles bulging. Mr. Lorm split us into teams to play animal ball. When he yells *Go*, we all morph.

I feel a tail grow and my legs shrink. I am now a silver-grey black tortoiseshell cat. My glossy fur shimmers in the bright light of the gym.

Animals race to the ball, skidding on the slick wood and jumping over each other. An eagle on my team grabs the rough ball in his sharp talons and flies towards the roped net.

I rush under him to catch the ball just as a monkey on the other team jumps down from climbing on the pearl-white rafters in front of me. Soon animals from the opposing team surround me. Thinking quickly, I hiss and claw the air, but they hold their ground. Looking up, I see an enemy owl fly towards our eagle with the ball.

Seeming to finally understand what's going on, a toad jumps over the heads of the animals surrounding me. The animals look around at the sleek, flat walls to see what caused the sudden burst of wind on their heads.

Seeing an opening, I dart through it and *meow* loudly to the eagle, "Open! Over here!"

Seeing the owl approaching him, he drops the ball and I catch it in my front paws, using my tail for balance as I stand on my hind legs. Most of my teammates are being pressured by animals on the opposite team, but a raccoon on my side is open near the goal. I thrust my paws through the air, tossing the ball to the raccoon.

"Thanks," he chitters. He drives the ball full speed towards the goal. The pig goalie squeals at the hurtling ball and flattens his face against the gym floor. The ball flies into the net and my team cheers. We play for a while longer until P.E. is over.

After P.E., I go to the restroom to prepare to leave. The room is tiled with stalls for all animals. I go into the one labeled *Cat*, and go in. It has two stalls with litter boxes and a bathing station. I go into one of the stalls and relieve myself. I can't get She-3P0 out of my mind. I decide to leave now. I mentally prepare myself for the challenge ahead.

Taking a deep, long, breath, I change into a cat and climb into the vent. The smell is what hits me first. It smells of dead mice and murky water. To me, dead mice smells good, but not murky water. Even so, I continue going through the vent.

I know this vent will lead me out of the school. I step on something squishy and wince, moving along faster. It's dark and I use my whiskers to guide me through the tight passageway that presses in on my head and sides.

After about ten minutes, I see a light. The end of the vent! I think. Bright light hits my face and I move my head away, taking a step back. Once my eyes adjust to the light, I push through the rusty vent door and leap out. Ahhhh, fresh air! I am in a small grassy clearing just off the side of the school. Straightening up, I bound through a bush, branches poking at my sides. Once in the city, I must remain a cat.

All the information I have about She-3P0 is that she is located

somewhere hidden in this area. Picking a direction, I walk, looking for a place to stay, maybe an alleyway...

After about six hours of traveling without a destination, I decide to settle in an old alleyway. Finding a comfortable space in a mound of boxes, I look around. The sun is going down in front of me, it's bright red orange colors glimmering on the horizon. My paws ache from the rough concrete, and my fur is messy and unkempt.

I lick my paws to make the aching cease a small bit, then begin the long process of grooming the dirt, grime, and dust out of my medium-length fur. My rough tongue catches the dirt and I spit it out after a few licks. After about an hour, my fur is clean and the sun has completely set. Darkness fills the alleyway and shadows creep on the ground, chilling my bones.

I am exhausted. Turning around a few times, I lay down and sigh. I know the journey ahead will be hard, but no one else is going to defeat She-3P0.

## Unreal

EMELIA BARBEAU

A wide-eyed little girl  
sits on the carpet playing with her Barbie  
fantasizing about what she would  
look like as her,  
skinny, beautiful, noticed.

Now at the age of 13  
she is hanging out with her friend  
who is taller  
and weighs 10 pounds less.  
The crappiness and ache she feels  
as she calls herself fat  
looking at her perfectly  
flat stomach in the mirror  
wishing it to be smaller.

Now she sits at the dinner table  
playing with her half-eaten food  
dreading how much she would weigh  
if she took another bite.

She weighs herself again  
that night for the fourth night  
this week, she weighs  
three pounds less.

She turns toward the toilet and  
pukes up her dinner, not  
on purpose though, never on purpose  
always induced by stress or  
hatred for herself  
“I’m fat”

She tells herself  
Banging her head with  
her hands.

At age 18 she sits on the  
same tiled floor

weighing the same thing  
too skinny to touch,  
a twig that could snap at any  
minute.

She's crying, her insides  
ache  
her unrealistic body  
size is being carried out of  
the house and rushed to the hospital  
her insides bleed as she  
mutters "fat" to herself over and over

Her image of the blonde perfect  
Barbie doll is still plastered  
in her head. She  
sobs as she calls herself  
"Fat," her tears rolling down  
her cheeks and tap-tapping  
on the floor.

She's mad with herself, her  
hatred radiates off her in waves.

All this pain for  
something that's unreal.



## A Baby Was Born

MADELINE BARBEAU

A baby was born July 12, 2017  
She was beautiful with long blonde hair  
and a smile that incased the room with  
joy when she showed her new baby gums.  
She grew up like all kids do, into  
the world without a care in the world.

A baby was born on July 13, 2017.  
He was handsome with small dimples  
that complemented his smile and eyes  
that looked like the ocean was in them.  
He grew up strong and ready  
to take over the world without a  
care in the world.

One day they meet. Tears lined  
her beautiful face as she walked to  
the bus. He walked too, waving and  
laughing at an inside joke he had  
heard. They meet when he asked  
“What’s wrong?”

“I don’t like this world, so big, so scary, so unfair!”

The boy laughed, “How can it  
be so scary,” he thought. “How can my  
experience be so much different than hers?”

They kept walking...

A baby was born...

## Tick, Tock

KATE BESTALL

I wandered over to the timeline exhibit. I had been in this museum many times before, but I had never been to this part of the museum. A grandfather clock stood in the corner of the room, ticking softly. I glanced at the objects and photos. A photo of 19th century London. *Tick, tick, tick.* A lace fan. *Tick, tick, tick.* An old vase. *Tick, tick, tick.* As I walked rows of old, forgotten items, the clock ticked steadily. A cool breeze ruffled my hair. The window was open. Windows were not supposed to be open. It was one of the most important rules of the museum. Outside, a car honked, and I made my way to the window. I breathed in the thick New York air and gazed out at the cityscape. Then, I shut the window with a satisfying click. I plodded back to the exhibit, my footsteps the only noise in the room, apart from the clock. This part of the museum was empty. Too empty. Strange, for a Saturday afternoon. I glanced at the objects again. A picture of a piano. *Tick, tick, tick.* A photo of an old library. *Tick, tick, tick.* How different the world had been then. Soon, I reached the last object, the one closest to the clock. Another vase. *Tick, tick, tick.* I let out a slow breath. The room was too quiet. I turned, planning to leave, but my foot caught on the clock. My vision blurred. I flailed my arms, desperately trying to latch onto something that would steady me. I must have looked ridiculous, and for once I was glad the room was so empty. At least no one would see my embarrassment. Finally, my hands touched something. The clock. I clung on, my head still spinning. The hands on the clock spun quickly, far quicker than they had before. In my addled state, I couldn't be sure, but I could have sworn they were spinning backwards. I took a deep breath, then let go. I tumbled to the floor. I spat out a mouthful of the intricate rug. I hadn't noticed it before. It seemed old-fashioned, yet in surprisingly good condition. But still, really? My balance was that bad?

As my head cleared, I stood up gingerly to realize I was no longer in the museum. I was in a house, one that seemed old—not

old, exactly, but old-fashioned. It was in pristine condition, and I thought it might be Victorian era. I was standing in a corner, just before a grandfather clock—the same one I had been clinging onto at the museum, except perhaps less worn. Strange.

The room was bright, with a small chandelier and two open windows with velvet curtains. In the opposite corner, a piano like the one in the picture sat. There were many old chairs and a large couch, with what seemed to be velvet cushions. A huge fireplace was beside me, with mantle decorated with figurines. There was a mirror above it, with a golden frame. This certainly was fancy. I walked over to the window. The clock must have somehow taken me here, wherever here was. I hoped I wasn't too far from home. As I gazed out, the curtains brushing my shoulder, I knew for certain I was *not* in New York anymore. In the distance, I saw a large bridge—one that I had studied in fifth grade. Blackfriars Bridge. I had been there once, but this was different. *Very* different. I remembered doing a timeline on it, and had included pictures of how it was in the olden days. This looked very much like one of those pictures. My heart raced. So I knew for sure I was in London, and even saw a couple signs. The clock must have taken me here somehow. And unless London had changed a lot in two years, this was not the London I had visited.

The house wasn't too strange. It could have simply been a mock-up of how it used to be. But unless the whole city was a mock-up, I was not getting home anytime soon.

I searched for a rational explanation. Maybe I was dreaming. But I knew for sure that I had been in that museum in real life, and unless I had fallen asleep or gone unconscious when I fell...

My thoughts were interrupted as a young boy in strange clothes walked in. "Hello," I greeted him politely, wondering how to ask where I was.

He didn't say anything, then walked to the piano. I blocked his path. "Excuse—"

He walked right through me, as if I were nothing more than mist. He didn't seem to even *see* me. I tried getting his attention, but unless he was a very accomplished actor, I was invisible. And if he were just ignoring me, that still didn't explain how he had walked

through me. I punched the wall. My hand went right through.

“Hello,” a voice interrupted quietly. “Follow me.” I turned to see a girl in a dress with puffed sleeves. It seemed to be like a ball gown, except in a dull brown.

I didn’t usually follow strangers around, but I didn’t know what else to do, so I followed.

She led me to what I thought was her bedroom, which was also old-fashioned. “Are you a ghost?” she asked bluntly.

“What—no!” I exclaimed, then hastily added, “or at least I don’t think so. I don’t remember dying.”

“That’s how it usually is,” she responded cheerfully. “I can see ghosts, but I’m the only one I know who can. I tried to tell William, but he doesn’t listen to me. He never does, and I haven’t told anyone else, since they’ll think I’m insane. People think I’m strange enough as it is. I’m Lucinda Grey, but call me Lucie. Who are you?”

“Holly Clare. How can you see me?”

“I see and hear ghosts. I don’t know why, or how. You’re definitely not the first, and you all have strange clothes. Now, what’s your last memory?”

“I was in a museum, and when I turned to leave the exhibit, I tripped over a clock—the same one that was in the other room and ended up here.”

She studied me closely. “One other ghost said that. And I don’t know how you could die from that.”

“Is that other ghost still here? Are all the ones you saw still here?” I wondered.

“No. My theory is that if a ghost stays here too long, they fade away or settle their unfinished business. And all the ghosts claim they tripped over an object that is in this house. And you must be ghosts, since no one else can see them, they pass through things, and one day, they disappear.”

Lucie did have a point. Maybe I *was* dead. “What’s the date?” I hoped that only a few minutes had passed.

“May 17th, 1878,” she replied. “Why?”

My heart skipped a beat. “You’ve got to be joking. When I tripped over the clock, it was June 4th, 2017.”

Lucie’s eyes widened. “So, you’re not a ghost after all, but a time

traveler! The others asked the date, but I never told them the year. And don't worry, I've read plenty of books about this. We'll get you home. Come on, the first step is to look at the time-traveling device, in this case, the clock."

As we raced back to the parlor, as she called it, I questioned, "What was the ghost's name—the clock one?"

"Her name was Theresa Meyer. Now, put your hand on the clock."

That boy—William—was gone. I did as she said. Nothing happened.

Lucie sighed. She banged the side of the clock. "Stupid, stubborn—"

My vision blurred, and the clock's hands started spinning faster. I tumbled to the floor yet again. When I stood up, I was back in the museum.

"Hello," a voice said kindly. A girl stood before me. "What's your name?"

I hoped she hadn't seen everything. Whatever "everything" was, anyway. "I—I'm Holly. Holly Clare."

She smiled. "Nice to meet you. I'm Theresa Meyer."

## Shadow's Revenge

CHRISTIANE BOREE

**T**he hardest part about killing someone was finding them first. At least, that's what Shadow thought. Even after his twenty-eighth murder, it wasn't any easier. Most people were easy to get to, but if you wanted a certain person. . . Shadow knew from experience that even the weakest child could cause a huge problem.

Right now, Shadow was sneaking through the alleyways of Portland, trying not to slip on the seven million puddles that ran down the street like a dirty river. He had just nearly died after he had tripped over a pile of Pepsi and Coke bottles filled with something that was definitely not soda. He noticed with a sigh that his coat was beginning to drip water. Shadow reminded himself to go back and personally kick whoever made it in the shins. The fabric soaked up water like a cheap sponge. Shadow wasn't sure, but he suspected the coats weren't really made with "pine-infused rubber" like the tag claimed.

He shoved his hand in his pants pocket and pulled out a green card. *Samantha Doyle*. In his opinion, it was the stupidest name he'd ever heard of. Even though Shadow didn't know much about last names, he did know a dumb one when he heard it. He flipped the card over. *1235 South Crestmoor Avenue*. He grinned as he saw a sign with "Crestmoor" engraved on it in silky letters. He approached the yard with caution.

Shadow swore he caught sight of the plastic gnome with the address on it. *1235 North Crestmoor*. He was going in the complete opposite direction of his destination.

Shadow grabbed a stick from the soggy yard, anger rising in his chest. With a clean smack, the gnome's head went flying into a nearby trashcan.

He turned on his heel and left. *Onwards*, he thought, but even as he said this, he could feel his legs begin to buckle. He hadn't had much sleep, and the effects were already beginning to show. Shadow wrapped the wet fabric around himself and was

about to sit down in the alley when he heard a voice. He turned, blade at the ready. Anyone could pop out of these alleys, and he knew a weapon was the difference between life or sudden death. “Hey, man!”

Shadow rolled his eyes and put away his knife, careful to make sure none of it was showing. *Stupid mortals*. He continued on, ignoring the calls of, “Wait up, man!” He didn’t have time to talk. As he went down further into the street, he caught sight of another walkway. It was cobbled and polished. A car squatted in a driveway, with the name *Lamborghini* spelled out on the hood in gold. Shadow instantly liked it, and promised himself that he would come back for it later.

Shadow checked the address, and sighed with relief. Finally, he had arrived at his target.

As he came up the walkway, he couldn’t help but knock over a few more of the gnomes that all the yards seemed to keep religiously.

An idea came to him. Grabbing the gnome, he hurled it towards the window. It shattered into a million pieces, glass spraying Shadow’s toes. He smiled and slipped in, careful not to cut himself on the sharp edges. Muffled scuffling came from down the hall. Samantha had probably heard the glass shatter and was on full alert, just as he had suspected she would be. He could hear her jump up and grab a pan from the kitchen, possibly to whack her attacker with. Shadow felt a little bad for her: Whatever came next would need more than an egg fryer to do the job.

As she turned into the room, Shadow slipped out of the darkness. “*Hello, dear child.*”

Samantha swung out with the pan, but it was too late. Shadow reached up and pressed his finger to her temple, watching the look of anger turn into a look of surprise.

“*Adios, Samantha.*”

The girl wilted like a flower in the heat and sank to her knees, eyes glassy and dilated. She was dead before he reached the window.

Slipping back out, Shadow made sure not to leave any mark of himself. Last time, he’d left a glove on the windowsill, and even though no one knew about where he came from, it was still too close a call.

Shadow ran down the alley and back to the car he had liked. With some careful finger work, he popped the lock and opened the door. The leather seats sank down as he sat in the vehicle. Smiling, he touched the dashboard. The motor rumbled, and Shadow backed out the driveway, pulling down his hood for the first time in hours. Brown curls tumbled down his face, and he brushed them away. In a world of trouble, hair was the least of his worries.

He sped down the alleys, passing the same man who had shouted at him. This time, Shadow waved at him, and the man waved back. “Nice car, dude!”

Shadow declined to tell him it wasn’t actually his. He couldn’t show off for long. The police were going to be searching the house soon, and he couldn’t risk getting locked up again. Shadow turned into an old lot and parked the car. He hopped out, leaving the car still running. There were some large trees off to the left, and he ducked behind one. Pulling off his cape, he yanked another coat out of its pocket. It was dripping water, but it was the only disguise he had. Running a hand through his hair, he stepped out, smiling to himself.

One down, three more to go.



## Fireflies

ELLA BYGRAVE

I saw her, and then she was gone. She whispered for me to follow, and so I went. Her warm hands reached for mine. I let her find them. She grabbed one and we raced for the back door, careful not to step on the creaky wood planks that might wake up Mom. The back door was never locked, so it was easy to slip out into the night. We both knew exactly where we were going without having to say a word. I remembered what happiness felt like, and how great a smile was. Our bare feet pitter-pattered on the street. The dim streetlights were enough to see the smile on Hailey's face, too. Our shadows danced behind us as we ran into the grass and fell on our backs together, laughing. The full moon shone through the tips of the branches of the great birch tree. The night had a clear sky, but the storm earlier that night had left traces of dark clouds. The grass was wet to step on, and when Hailey and I climbed the great birch, raindrops fell from the tree, creating a drizzling rain. At the top of the great birch, on the fragile-est of limbs, I sat in my usual spot to watch as the fireflies came out dancing with the stars. Tonight, there was no competing with the city lights, because the storm left another thing behind. Darkness throughout the city. Some fireflies hovered by the fountain that no longer had moving water. There were small lights in the water, from the larvae...

One by one, it seems, the fireflies fly up and swirl around the fountain and long grass. Some even come up into the birch tree. I grab Hailey's hand as we watch. One firefly lands next to me, on a leaf. Then, as if the firefly invited them, two more come up. One lands on my lap, its legs grabbing at my silky nightgown. I reach for the other and hold it in my hand. I make a wish with this special fallen star, and let it fly away. The fireflies zoom, each light different. Blurs of light are cast around me. I don't want to go back. I want to stay here forever, in my special place no one can take away.

## Forgotten Jewel

EVA Q. CHANDLER PRADO

Gnarled  
clumps of rock  
a spiteful formation  
of jagged lines  
scarring  
only when needed  
If not  
a reign of rare flesh  
But all kings fall  
penetrated  
by madness  
a hammer of unknown  
only to spill what's inside  
a forgotten waterfall  
frozen in time  
each drop  
a petal of life

## Trapped

CATE DAVIS

I am trapped inside a large castle dungeon. I don't know how I got here. All I remember is walking into the library and being told I had to go. But now I'm here, and I can't remember another thing. The dungeon is smelly, and skeletons are hanging from the walls by the various torture devices. Two dead (and very stinky) bodies are in the prisons beside me, and a teenage boy (still alive, not so stinky) is standing two cells away from me.

My name is Lilac, and I joined the Californian Wizarding School on January 15, 2016. Ever since I've been pursuing my education as a wizard. But now I'm here, and I can't become a wizard because no one's here to teach me. What am I going to do here? I can't do magic, so maybe I should try getting myself out of the prison. I could try to get that other boy out of here, too! I fish through my pockets and find a rubber band and a pack of gum. I chew a piece of gum, take my rubber band, and slingshot the piece of gum. But just then...

(definitely not) THE END . . .

## Three Minutes and Nine Seconds: A Memoir

EMMA DAVIS

I have always had a very odd relationship with time. When I was younger I hated timed tests and digital timers that never made a peep until they screamed in your face, a loud beeping sound I grew to hate with a passion. I didn't like looking at clocks, and even the purple, glow-in-the-dark watch my mom bought for me was rarely worn. To this day I refuse to watch the time while reading. I merely stuff my nose in my book for as long as possible until, inevitably, my sister begins yelling at me and I nudge her in the ribs, only to realize that she's been trying to tell me for the last five minutes that it was already time for dinner. I still hate timers, but I have forced myself to wear a watch or look at the clock every so often. Sometimes fifteen minutes will feel like an hour, and sometimes it will feel like fifteen seconds. When focusing on something, it feels like time is whipping past at light speed, ripping seconds and minutes and hours of my day. But when I have nothing better to do, I could stare at the grapes in the crown molding on the ceiling for five minutes and it would feel like a whole hour had already gone by.

*Tic-toc,*

*tic-toc,*

*tic-toc...*

*Clock face staring down maliciously, moving slowly,*

*slowly,*

*very slowly,*

*oh-so slowly*

*as it tic-toc*

*tic-toc*

*tic-tocs*

*away.*

Time zones used to confuse me unfathomably. I didn't understand any of it until I was almost eleven, when I finally realized what my parents meant by "Greenwich Mean Time." I hated that.

I hated that everywhere, all the time, everyone was constantly being chased by time, like it was a little dog trying to bite their ankles. I hated that everything was always on a schedule, being timed, like my whole life, like everybody's lives, were ticking away on that silent timer that screeches in your ear when it think it might possibly be done. It wasn't that I was afraid of Death, although in a way I suppose I was; it was that I was afraid of living for the clock, within the bonds made by myself, tailored to wrap around me and never let me go. I was afraid of Time tying me up in an empty basement and locking the door so I could never escape. *\*Side effects of time travel may include the following: wish to change the past; hope to alter the future; hatred for the present; uncontrollable itch to travel; erasure of all time, history, memory; potential death. Make sure to be tested for inflated ego before time traveling.* I used to be obsessed with time travel, the idea that I could go back a few hours and fix that one mistake that got me grounded, fix the problems in my everyday life. I loved that it was something through which I could break the laws of time, break the chains that bound me to the big, black clock of my mind.

*Ticking,  
tocking,  
ticking,  
tocking,  
hands  
moving,  
still  
moving,  
always  
moving,  
never  
stopping,  
ticking,  
tocking,  
ticking,  
tocking...*

I used to be obsessed with time travel, but I only ever thought of the past. The future never crossed my mind, never even touched

the little gray cells between my ears, inside of my skull. It merely sat at my feet like a puppy, waiting patiently for a thought, trying to break through the wall I had made with my obsession, my obsession with past mistakes, past punishments, past times. I was afraid of change, even though I never admitted it. I was afraid of what the future had in store for me, of growing up, of making mistakes that I did not have the power to fix.

## Au Revoir

ADAM DORSHEIMER

**A**lec anxiously glanced at his watch. It seemed that the trains only ran on time when he was not around. He shuffled his feet and ran a hand through his hair, suddenly feeling annoyed with the bustling crowd at the platform. “Excuse me, sir,” said a small voice in an unfamiliar accent.

Alec looked in the direction of the voice to find three boys, all bone-thin and sickly in appearance. They seemed to be of varying ages, though this could hardly be determined by their minuscule size differences. Even the tallest one was quite small, likely due to malnourishment.

“Do you know if the train is coming soon,” said the eldest boy.

“I don’t know,” Alec said, perturbed. “Probably.”

The boy looked like he was going to say something else, so Alec grabbed his bag and walked to the other end of the platform. The 6:40 train arrived soon after, at 6:53 (this only worsened his mood), and he found his way to his seat. The first couple hours of his journey were rather uneventful, as he had his nose buried in a book for that long, but upon concluding the final chapter he immediately felt a deep boredom wash over him.

Alec checked his watch again, noting with disappointment that it was only 9:14. He smirked as he recalled the day when he received the watch, less than a week prior. It was a gift from his former boss. He told him that the watch was to honor his time at the company and wish him luck in his new job overseas. It was a gorgeous piece, a gold watch with a silvery face; but most importantly, it was a symbol of how far he had come. This watch represented his struggles, his life’s work.

He attempted to sleep, but finding this to be difficult (he cursed himself for not booking sleeping accommodations), he decided to take a walk. He kept his eyes forward, trying not to allow himself to be bothered by the other passengers, until he heard a familiar voice. “Please, sir, do you have anything you could spare? Just enough for some food?”

He bristled at the sound, and looked to confirm his suspicions. Behind him, two boys stood silently while a slightly larger one spoke to an elderly man. Alec cringed and started slinking away, praying that he would avoid being seen. “Hello,” called the boy. “Hello, sir? Can you spare any money or food?”

Alec felt the rage boiling inside of him. *How dare these urchins, these worthless street rats, harass hardworking adults? If he had made a life for himself, surely these children could do the same?*

“No,” he said, forcing himself to keep calm.

“Please, we don’t have a family. We’re very hungry. We just need a little bit of money—”

“I already said no. Please leave me alone.”

The boys looked upset, and the smallest one had tears in his eyes. Alec shook his head. *This must be one of their tricks to shake people down,* he thought to himself. It was then, however, when he came across the most beautiful woman that he had ever seen.

She did not notice him, as she was completely focused on her drawing, a pencil sketch in a leather-bound book, and he noticed that her wrist and hand were stained with graphite. Her hair was a chestnut brown, the perfect complement to a pale complexion that reminded him of a doll. She also gave off the faint aroma of a flowery perfume, which came as a welcome change to the stale air of the train. Alec always saw himself as a reasonably attractive man, and as such he felt that he was above the childish sensation of “butterflies in his stomach,” but even he felt nervous to approach her. “May I see what you’re drawing?”

She looked up and set her icy blue eyes on his face. “Yes,” she said in a thick French accent.

The picture was a landscape, a scene of mountains and trees in the nighttime. Were it not drawn in pencil, Alec might have been convinced that he was looking at a photograph. “You drew this? This is incredible,” he said.

She smiled and blushed. “You like?”

“I love it,” he said with his much-practiced, award-winning smile. “What’s your name?”

“Margot,” she said. “And you?”

“I’m Alec. I’d love to talk more about your artwork, and the seat



next to me is open and a little bit less crowded than it is up here. What do you say?"

She nodded and packed her book into a small handbag, her only piece of luggage. The two walked back to his seat, and Alec felt her eyes resting upon him. Incidentally, when reflecting on this experience years later, he could hardly recall the details of that night. He remembers the beginning of the evening, as depicted above, and he remembers the following morning, which is transcribed below. The events in the middle are a blur of champagne, flirtation, and struggling to understand Margot's broken English.

When Alec awoke, he found that the train had reached its destination. His head pounded and every sound rattled him to his core. He went to check the time only to discover that he was not wearing his watch. Panicked, he checked his pocket for his wallet, which was also gone. In the place where it was, he found only a folded piece of paper. He realized with a start that he was holding Margot's sketch from the previous night, with one noticeable change: the words "au revoir" were written on the moon in graceful, deliberate cursive. He held the paper to his nose and was greeted by her flowery scent. After going through his bag (which was also missing several valuable items), he hurried to Margot's seat, but she was already gone.

A short while later, Alec stood outside the train station. People swarmed the street, making it impossible to see more than a few feet in front of him. He knew he had to find his way to his hotel, a difficult mission to accomplish without money or a cell phone. The sun seared his brain, and he regretted every sip of alcohol. He let out a long sigh and closed his eyes, wondering how he got himself into this situation. When he reopened them, a path in the crowd had cleared, and he happened to see a peculiar sight. On the terrace of a restaurant across the street, three boys sat around a table.

Alec shoved his way through the crowd, scrambling through the mess of people until he stood before them. The two younger boys looked up, wide-eyed, clearly surprised, but the eldest continued eating from their shared platter of breads, meats, and cheeses. "How dare you," said Alec, his voice shaking with anger. "How dare you steal from me, you filthy—"

"We didn't steal from you," said the eldest boy, not breaking from his meal.

“Why should I believe you? You’re nothing but a beggar.” He paused and took a deep breath. “If you didn’t steal from me, who did?”

The eldest boy looked up for the first time. “I don’t know.”

“Well, then, where did you get the money to afford this?”

“A French lady gave it to us.”

All the anger left Alec’s body, replaced by a more intense headache. He winced in pain and stumbled away from the restaurant. Within seconds, he had disappeared into the crowd, hoping to forget Margot, the orphaned boys, and his night on the train. Unfortunately for him, the curse of these memories would not let up so easily.

*fin*

## I am an Atom-sized Black Hole with the Mass of a Mountain Inside Me

EMERSON DUPREE-HENRY

**M**aybe it was inevitable after that cloudy afternoon, raindrops rippling against the pavement, and after he walked me home that night. Or maybe the point of no return was the day I met him, a tall, green-eyed smile on a hot summer day.

A year ago today I had my first ever hickey, a galaxy of red and purple on the back of my neck that I hadn't asked for. I told him not to, but he did it anyway.

"Why can't you just trust me?" he would say, as if trust was a light switch and I should just flip it back on for him.

I'm not stupid, but he made me look stupid. Every word a lie, every lie an invisible mark on the back of my neck I could hide behind my hair, but I would still feel it burn with all the shame I carried. Popped blood vessels, guilt spilling out and roaming around beneath my skin.

"He had depression long before he had you, but you made him a better person," someone told me. I don't think I ever did. Maybe if I had shown him he couldn't have something like me without earning it, I would have. But it wouldn't have stopped him from slipping through everyone's fingers.

Now, he's a watered-down version of himself and doesn't try as hard to hide the person he is. He asks for what he wants and he wants to see me, to get tipsy off the unglorified yesterdays of what happened a year ago, but I'm tired of being defaced and hiding things under my hair. I'm tired of his sharp, radioactive words making me forget everything, erasing the marks he left, a clean slate for him to destroy one more time. And the worst of it is that I still miss him sometimes, but someday I'll meet someone whom I don't have to keep secrets for. Some things aren't inevitable, but some are.

## The Boy Who Captured Thunder

JOANNA DUPREE-HENRY

**T**hunder, he thinks, is loud. It rumbles down through his toes and strikes his chest, filling the room with ceaseless crackles.

Curled in his closet, he still feels it reverberate through his bones, and imagines the thunder's thick power filling his arms, and for a moment he is invincible. The boy who captured the thunder.

"Theodore? Where are you?"

His mother's silk voice reminds him he is simply the boy who hid.

"Here," he responds.

Light spills in as she opens the door and grabs him, lifting him onto her hips.

"Are you scared?" she asks.

"Not anymore."

Theodore's first grade teacher calls him White Lightning.

He doesn't connect the name to his appearance until it's explained to him.

His hair is such a radiant white it seems to swallow brightness from the sun. His eyes shine grey and sharp and observant. Only in complete darkness can he not be seen.

Theo's teacher says he is able, swift, and intelligent. He inherits his mother's thorough way of speaking. Words slip sleek off Theodore's tongue; articulation is his forte.

Neighbors he's never met are familiar with him. His mother tangles her fingers into his hair and tells him he was sculpted from marble and clouds.

Once, during recess, he trips and skins both knees and all the children do is gawk at him. (They seem surprised his blood spills red instead of blue.)

It's the first time no one bothers to help him up. It's the first time he shuffles to the nurse alone. The electric glare he gives them when he walks by ensures it's the last.

That night, it pours.

The next day, a boy in his grade walks up to him and asks, concerned, "Are you an alien?"

“I don’t think so.”

“Ralph thinks you’re from Mars.”

“Do you believe him?”

“No. I think you’re just like everybody else.”

Theo pauses. “What’s your name?”

“Cameron,” the boy replies.

Theodore makes his first best friend.

When his mom walks into his room, his cheek is pressed against the window as it rains, warm breath fogging up the glass. She smiles, warm and happy, and walks over to throw her arms around his torso, her chin rests on his hair as she watches with him.

“Mom?” he asks, tentative and soft.

“Yes?”

“Why do you say I’m like lightning? Is it my hair?”

His mother curls a thick lock behind his ear and says, “It’s that look in your eyes, dear. And what happens behind them.”

He thinks for a minute, then looks back out the window as a bolt of lightning strikes across his vision and reflects in his wide eyes.

## Lamp

LUCY EARL

Lamp:

/lamp/

*noun*

Any various devices for producing light or sometimes heat.

Lamp:

/lamp/

*noun*

An object of little to no importance to most people.

If I had known yesterday that the lamp would be moved, I wouldn't have bothered to show up. I mean, it's not just about the lamp. It's the uneasy feeling that everything has changed. I left this room two months ago and I wanted it to stay exactly the same. I wanted to come back, have to slightly reposition my chair, and put my notebook on the table to my right. I wanted to watch the same crowd of people parade in, one after the other. But now the lamp is moved and everything else has changed with it.

Lamp:

/lamp/

*noun*

A physical representation of the impact of change on one particular individual.

The thing about communities is that they need constant maintenance and a level of consistency in order to survive. But, if those communities are left unattended for too long, then new people come in and start messing with it. Suddenly, the table is on the wrong side, there is a clock counting out our fleeting time together, the arms of my chair are covered with a different fabric, and the lamp is in the wrong place. But still, I am here.

Our time here is forever frozen in a collection of words

The cold echoes of past moments

Still reverberating around the room

They have left their ghosts here for me to discover  
My other anchors across the room  
Slipping away from my hands  
Taking the living, breathing moments down with them  
Symphonies of laughter still seem to bounce around the walls  
Fading away with every second ticked off by the clock  
Tables look empty without the collection of juice boxes  
And gummy wrappers slowly building up as the hours go by  
The room looks empty and cold without the overflow of chairs  
and lives

I moved the lamp back  
Placed the clock out of sight  
Hid the fabric covers  
Put the table on the right side  
And waited.

Lamp:

/lamp/

*noun*

A word, like most, that begins to sound incorrect the more often  
you say it.

## Places

ANNALISE FRENCH

This house reminds me of everything.  
These hallowed halls remind me that we must leave  
Sometime  
In our short lives.  
These pictures on the walls remind me of inevitability  
One day, I will be forgotten.  
And my great-grandchildren will no longer wonder who I was,  
because I was not famous,  
Or special.  
The only modern things in this house  
Are the phones, computers, and the fact that it very much is, the  
21st century,  
Although none of its inhabitants would wish it be.  
This house reminds me of everything.  
The forgotten corners and now meaningless paint,  
Remind me that someone is always left behind.  
And the ones with a future may never remember their home  
Or where they grew up.  
Or the fact that there is always someone waiting,  
Wishing that they hadn't thought that this was their dream,  
Or a happy life.  
When their children visit their home, when they are dead and  
gone,  
They are reminded of everything  
Because this house reminds everyone of their woes  
And this house reminds me of everything.



## Nights

GABRIELLE FRENCH

*“Why are you here, talking to me?”*

A girl in a corner where the glaring fluorescent lights can't reach  
and dollar bills crumpled in her hand.

Hot temper mixes with my numbness

the teardrop of heat slowly charring my mind.

Angry lips shut for the city, the lights, the people  
dull world beyond.

*“Why are you here?”*

through his skin and into his emotions.

The words were not tangible on my tongue.

This boy with his fire feels like my last breath.

## The Boots in My Closet

ESTHER GOLDBERG

### *Before*

It's January 18, 1939. Two weeks into the war. My father's been called to serve. He hasn't left yet. He's being picked up in three days. Mama's eyes are constantly filled with tears. Her cries and whimpers fill our small house and keep us all from sleep. She won't stop even to feed baby Heidi, who now has to drink from the cow. She talks in a voice like cracked glass, about fleeing Poland and going to America. She talks as if the war wouldn't follow the refugees everywhere.

It's January 21. Father is saying his goodbyes. He kisses my eleven-year-old sister Ilsa on the cheek and hugs her tight. He takes baby Heidi from Mama and kisses her forehead. He looks at fourteen-year-old me and hugs me—too long to be curt, and yet too short to be affectionate. He hands me a large bag. Inside are a pair of boots, brand new. I look him in the eye and smile. As he goes to the door, Mama clings to him and refuses to let go. Father peels her from him, kisses her cheek, and runs to the truck where his comrades are waiting. Mama remains crumpled on the cold wet ground. Ilsa and I drag her inside.

It's February 6. My mother has limited herself to fitful sleeping, crying, and eating. Well, when I make her anyway. Ilsa is now in charge of Heidi, but I still worry about Mama. She whispers to herself in between periods of painful sleep. Today I heard her say that she wishes she would just die already, that this was all over. I said nothing, just fed her stale bread and studied her eyes. I keep the boots in my closet, afraid to wear them.

February 27. Father wrote us a letter:

*Dear Family,*

*I have been assigned to fight in Germany. I will be serving on the front lines. Henrietta, my darling, I love you forever. Jacob, Ilsa, and Heidi, may you never have to go to war. But if you do, go with pride, as this is a country worth fighting for.*

*Oliver*

March 9. We received a letter from one of Father's comrades. He'd been taken hostage. We know this to mean he's as good as dead. Mama said nothing, but her eyes said everything.

It's now March 19. Mama won't let us in her room. When I try to bring her food, I can only hear her say, "Not now, Jacob..." Her voice is no longer cracked glass. It's a glass bottle thrown out of an open window; shattered. I can't even hear her cry anymore. The boots in my closet remain untouched.

April 2. Heidi is sick. She is coughing uncontrollably. Ilsa and I are up at ungodly hours of the night soothing her stricken lungs. Exhaustion creeps into my body.

It's April 29. Heidi is coughing up blood. I haven't slept in four days. Ilsa is staying strong through all of this. How can she take it?

May 7. Heidi is better. She's now eating and her coughing has almost ceased entirely. Hearing her faint giggle feels like music. I smiled at Ilsa today, and it hurt my lips. It's funny how faces can grow used to worried frowns.

It is May 11. Conditions are worsening. We have barely any food or water, and our neighbors are dropping like flies. I visited old Mrs. Heinrich next door yesterday. She seems tired but okay. Her cats are strangely content. Mama stays in bed all day. This morning she beckoned me to her, held me close, and asked aloud, "Why can't he take me with him?"

May 14. I don't feel like living anymore.

May 17. I wore my boots today. They were a bit too tight, so I took out the laces and took a walk. I tripped over a tree root.

May 26. I found a rope in the backyard.

June 1. My mind is a storm. My thoughts are clouded with snow and hail. I don't know what to do anymore. I'm deteriorating. I'm ruined. Helpless. Hopeless.

June 4. Do it, Jacob. Don't be scared.

June 6. I walk to the closet. I step up. I glance at the slightly used, slightly dusty pair of boots my dead Father gave me just a few eternities ago.

I'm on my way, Father.

I jump.

*After*

I've lost track of time. I drift weightlessly across a dark grey sky murky with clouds. I need to find them. I need to explain why. I need to tell them that I'm sorry.

I see a mudslide of terrified people and animals, fleeing their homes. A scalding storm is raging below me. Ashes fall like snow. Fiery hailstones fired from guns strike people. They bleed. They fall. They scream. My head hurts.

I see four dilapidated, impossibly small houses. They look familiar, somehow.

I enter one of the houses. It's empty. The second house has an elderly woman and two cats in it. The woman looks exhausted. The cats look ironically happy. The next house is empty as well. I peer into the last house. I don't go in.

I stay near the four houses for a while, trying to remember. Finally, I slip into the last house.

A girl, eleven or twelve, is sitting on a small bed. A small baby rests in her lap. They are both frightfully thin. The girl is holding a small photo of a smiling boy who looks about fourteen. I've seen that grin before. The girl puts the picture down, her bright blue eyes downcast.

Ilsa. Heidi. I say their names out loud. I move away.

This room feels especially familiar. It smells like coming home.

A woman is crumpled on the floor. Tears cascade down her face, leaving trails of clean skin on her dirty cheek. She's curled up, staring at a pair of dusty boots. I wonder whose they were.

And then I see it.

The rope.

It's my fault. It's my fault that my sister is there, looking at the picture of me, knowing that I won't be up in the kitchen stealing a cookie or two at odd hours in the morning. And she won't be there to scold me, even though she's three years younger.

It's my fault Heidi is sitting on Ilsa's bed, wondering where I am to bounce her on my knee at night, and to feed her when Mama's too tired.

It's my fault my mother is lying next to my next-to-new boots, knowing I won't be trying to sleep with a pillow over my head when

she comes to wake me up, and I won't be there to kiss her cheek before walking to school.

And it's my fault she's standing on our roof, looking down.

## Nothing but Noise

HUNTER GROGAN

**B**lood oozed onto the shag carpet, staining it crimson and seeping into the roots. The blood dried tacky, flaking off and speckling the floor. Demei realized faintly that the buzzing in the background was the frantic hum of flies, flickering back and forth over the woman's prone body like a pendulum. Demei stepped back, noting that the soles of her shoes were coated with a thick layer of the woman's blood.

Demei retreated once more.

She felt she could scream but she didn't—she just continued to withdraw, staring blankly into the sunrise, which was flooding the room with a cacophony of yellows, reds, and marvelous oranges reminiscent of the leaves of aspen trees in the midst of autumn. Viola's blood glistened in the wake of the sunrise.

Demei's descent out of the room was halted by a pang, forced forward abruptly by a pulsing in her throat, stomach slamming into the windowsill. "Help!"

A soldier's eyes collided with her own, twisting and snarling into an ugly beast. Fear. Fear in those vast blue eyes. Gun on her sights. "*Get back in the room!*"

"My friend—"

This beastly man, soulless monster would not deign to hear her pleas.

"*Get back!*" he screamed once more, gun surging through the air. Demei, disturbed by a sudden flare of self-preservation, reeled back. The soldier glanced to her once more, face flushed with panic, fumbled with his weapon and continued to patrol the perimeter.

Demei stepped back onto the blood and back onto the body, her shoes scraping over the blue-tinged skin.

The sun cast over her, digging into her flesh. *Burning. Burning.*

The blood sunk through her skin. *Burning. Burning.*

Her feet dragged over beige carpet, bringing along a trail of blood in her wake. Demei fell back out of the room, her hand scoring the wall.

There was nothing but noise.

Footsteps.

Clanging.

Coughing.

Dripping.

Swishing.

Coughing.

Barking.

Coughing.

Coughing. Someone was coughing.

No, Jason. Jason was coughing.

Her brain thudded into the thrum.

The blood! *The blood*, she realized. She was covered in blood and there lay Viola in the next room in a pool of blood sparkling in the sun. The blood on her person was not sparkling but they would make the connection.

The coughing was getting closer.

*Run!* Her body chorused, propelling herself into action. Her feet sounded the shabby steps. But, she didn't hear a noise. She didn't feel a noise.

## Untitled

SOPHIA HANSEN

The rage of courage  
ushers chaos  
down and through  
the narrowing time.

Earth  
deconstructed  
flake in shards  
of land and sea.  
Building burnt bridges  
creates a false  
charade  
with lace and ribbons.

Our men,  
our armies,  
forward marching;  
for the pen is  
not  
mightier than the sword  
today.

And as  
the sun  
re-enters  
our sky,  
we bow to the one  
who settles our cries.

For the light  
is no longer  
at bay,  
and the night is far gone,  
but it is hard to remember what that means.



## Wanted

CROSBIE LACASSE

It was a cold night and the wind was howling. Poppy shivered as she walked to the bank the second time this week. Earlier this week she had become wanted for robbing the bank, so now she was hiding out in the woods. Everything that had happened was a blur: green leaves rustling, money flying, alarms sounding, and then nothing but the wind in Poppy's ears as she fled the crime scene. As Poppy remembered this, she started to feel less certain she should be paying a visit to the bank. All she was planning on doing was to walk around the bank and come right back. She wished that her mom or dad were here but she was afraid they wouldn't want her so she didn't go to them. Poppy snapped out of her trance, her wanted posters were everywhere!

"Oh, no," she muttered. She saw a masked figure appear in the darkness. The figure began to turn its unseen face to her... She bolted! Her cheeks heated and her heart hammered. She ran deep into the forest when she heard a curious pounding noise from behind her. Poppy turned. The masked figure was pressed against... nothing!! It looked like a mime in an invisible box! Poppy followed the masked figure's gaze to the crystal necklace hung around her neck: It was glowing. Poppy's mother had said it would protect her from harm. She spotted a dagger in the masked figure's pocket, it was coated in dry blood. Suddenly, the figure started to take off their mask, revealing a layer of cherry-red locks of hair just past shoulder-length. A face with emerald eyes and strawberry freckles was what Poppy saw under the mask. Light-skinned hands tore off a black cloak and a blue gown was what now showed. Rose-petal lips moved on the girl's face, and she said, "My name is Lilac."

Poppy thought she must be a princess. But then again, Lilac shared a secret with Poppy that only the truly brave could find. A dark secret. One that could change both of their futures forever, one that only they knew about. "My sister also wears a mask and cloak," Lilac whispered gently, as if reading the curious part of Poppy's mind.

“Oh,” said Poppy.

“Ask your necklace to turn off the forcefield,” Lilac blurted.

“What?” asked Poppy, confused.

“Just tell your necklace to take down the forcefield!” exclaimed Lilac.

Poppy wondered why Lilac thought she would take down a forcefield, even if her necklace actually produced one. Poppy thought Lilac must be odd to have a used dagger. Again, as if reading Poppy’s mind, Lilac said, “I only use this dagger to kill animals for dinner.”

“Fine,” Poppy said angrily. She whispered the words to her necklace and Lilac was finally able to walk into the woods. Her luscious lips curved into a grin. She simply stood next to Poppy and looked even more outstanding. Lilac whispered, “I know a place to sleep, follow me.”

The two girls trudged through the trees to find two cottages standing in front of them. One looked old and abandoned while the other was bustling with life. “Fetch food,” commanded Lilac to Poppy, pointing at the lively cottage containing animals. She handed the blood-stained dagger to Poppy and sent her off. Poppy walked over to the cottage. She unlatched the wooden gate and held out the dagger towards a pig and its baby, ready to kill.

“Murderer!” screamed an old hag, coming out the front door.

“No! No!” Poppy said, her voice shaking. “This is animal blood.” She held out the dagger.

The hag sniffed it. “Nope. Definitely human blood,” the hag replied. “Now, who gave that dagger to you?” the hag asked Poppy.

“I’ll take care of it,” she told the woman.

“Yes, you will. And don’t ever go near my animals again!” the hag screamed, comforting the pigs.

Poppy ran back to Lilac. “Liar!” she yelled.

“What?” Lilac asked.

“Oh, don’t pretend to be innocent you—you murderer!” Poppy screamed again and again.

Finally, Lilac said, “Okay.”

Poppy stopped screaming. “What?” she asked.

“This dagger has human blood on it. You got me,” Lilac replied calmly.

“Ah-ha!” exclaimed Poppy.

“Or rather, you got my sister, this is her dagger that she let me borrow.” said Lilac.

Somehow, Poppy believed her. Until... “Stop!” said an angry policeman. Poppy didn’t know whether to run or cry.

“A man who has been digging for diamonds found this.” The policeman held up a dirty glass bottle containing a single slip of paper. It was a journal entry, an IMPORTANT journal entry, POPPY’S important journal entry.

An exasperated voice spoke up. “This paper claims Poppy is innocent and Lilac is guilty.” A dirty explorer had spoken this and denied when Poppy said that Lilac’s sister had committed the crime and many others.

“Lilac doesn’t have a sister,” said a good-looking man in a suit. “I should know. I’m her father!” he said.

“Lilac, you’re going to jail,” said a frustrated banker.

Lilac ran.

A day later Poppy’s wanted posters were replaced with Lilac’s new wanted posters. Poppy saw this when she was on her journey back to her parents, and Poppy smiled. When she reached home, her parents and her new puppy and she lived happily ever after.

## Biggest and Baddest

S. JASONLEE

*He's the biggest, he's the baddest, he's the one you never knew  
And no one can ever stop him, from doing what he love to do  
So either sitting there or standing here, he stays right where he is  
You can try to get some information, but he knows it's not your biz  
He will sit there in his sunglasses, reflecting how you die  
He will stand there in the night, as he stares into the sky  
You should feel nice and cozy, when he's in your area  
His style with his persona, will spread like bacteria  
He can rhyme it on the toilet, he can rhyme it to your face  
If you mess around too much, he will put you in your place  
He is he, he is her, he is it, he is they  
Everyone will try to be him, in a single of his many ways*

## An Obituary That Doesn't Count as Legal Testimony

LEKHA MASOUDI

**A**melia Harris was found dead in the play structure of a local school this Friday. Her last words were allegedly, “No offense, but you’re ruining my image,” as heard by Ella Morgan, who wrote this obituary. Amelia was universally described as “a VERY honest person, maybe too honest,” and, as someone said of her, “She was, um, nice, I guess?” The time of death was 4:30 p.m., and foul play is suspected (and no, it wasn’t by Ella Morgan. Definitely not). Amelia is survived by her parents, her new, rather more popular friends, and her brother, as well as miscellaneous relatives this writer doesn’t really know or care about, as it is very difficult for one to meet the cousins of the deceased when one is sitting in the county jail because her parents refused to pay bail, which we can all agree is TOTALLY ridiculous. Amelia will have a service in honor of her life this Friday, and this writer sends her condolences to Pastor Markham for the difficult job of saying nice things about the deceased with a straight face. Amelia’s parents, John and Ilsa Harris, have decided to start the Amelia Harris Foundation to assist young people in their dreams of becoming career politicians and recurring characters on *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*. Amelia Harris will be mourned by all, and when I say all, I mean a few. My thoughts are with Mr. and Mrs. Harris during this difficult time . . . Oh, who am I kidding?

## **The Invisible Prison of the Moon**

HARRIS MAY

The moon, as a prison, is not a prison for physical things, but for ideas  
It is a trap for those who don't dare to go higher, to the stars above.  
Those who dream are permitted beyond, but those who don't must stay.  
—Go for the stars

## **Why She Was Here**

HARRIS MAY

As she sat there, she contemplated the void. Not a dark, desolate land but light, purity, and fulfillment.

The void is not a bad place. It is a place for those suffering.

Step in and you shall at last, truly, find peace.

~Mu, a Japanese letter/proverb

## The Shadow

GRACE MCCLUNG

A master of disguise, sneaking stealthily along the pavement,  
only seen under a street light.

The black image wavers, then is gone,  
obscured by the night.

Day reveals secrets and wispy details,  
fragments of information as the sun illuminates everything its golden  
rays bestow their light upon. That's why it prefers to travel at night,  
hidden,  
a friend of the dark.



## A True Story

THALIA MEDRANO

**N**ow, what's honesty without a little absurdity? All that polished, pretty writing that acts like everything is meaningful and nothing weird ever happens is lying to you. That's not real, and I'll tell you what's real: a true, real story. Way back in preschool I thought someday I was going to marry this girl in my class, until I realized she had "ugly thumbs," which, in my tiny little brain, was a total deal-breaker. Yup, ya read that right, folks. Ugly thumbs. What makes a thumb ugly? you might ask. Honestly, I couldn't tell you if I wanted to; all I can tell you is that hers *were*, and no way was I going to get hitched to someone whose thumbs were anything short of godlike. Ridiculous, isn't it? Well, that's real life, and real life is ridiculous. Real life is the fact that at five-years-old I forfeited a potentially happy marriage on account of "ugly thumbs."

What if this girl had turned out to be my soulmate? Man, that would suck. Imagine botching it with you love of your life over something so insignificant that most people don't even consider it a finger. Someday I'm going to die and God's just going to look at me like, "Wow, you're an idiot. I really gave you a chance there, and you went and screwed it up before you even learned addition." What am I supposed to say to that? "Oh, I'm sorry God, but aesthetically speaking I really value attractive thumbs"? He'd probably blast me straight to Hell just for being a dumbass.

While I've definitely gained some perspective on the whole thumb situation over the years, it's too little too late, can't save our marriage now. A decade of hindsight can't erase that fateful ten-second conversation I had with myself in which I decided to marry someone and then went, "Ew, never mind." Yes, that's right, in ten seconds I built up and then destroyed the entire foundation for my future domestic bliss. Who knew this would mark the humble beginnings of my decent into premature relationship bitterness. Honestly, I might as well just get a cat. At least they don't have thumbs.

## Projected

DEVON MILLS

I stared up at the cold grey sky glaring at me for what I had done. The bag of cash from the store got heavier in my hand. Massive raindrops fell from the sky, soaking my tattered sweatshirt. I shivered and stood there doing nothing. City smoke filled my lungs and slowed my thinking as I try to comprehend what I should do next. My plan did not go this far and I didn't expect to do it so easily. The store employees' fearful eyes flashed in my head again. Suddenly the guilt kicked in, weighing heavy on my heart, making it hard to breathe. It strained my throat into what felt like a tight coil. My mother always told me to never cry, for it shows weakness to my enemies, but I couldn't hold it back with the guilt squeezing the tears out of me. I risk my life, my everything, for my mother who doesn't even bother to stop using her children like slaves. Even if I tried to escape, what would be the point when I always ended up back in this situation, crying away my sins. As mother always taught me, I rolled my guilt into a tight ball and stored it away. I looked down at the pavement, my shoes were squishy and soaking, making my ripped jeans look professional. Through the rain I started to hear the all-too familiar police sirens cutting through the soft white noise. The sound blared through my head and I knew it was time to go. I broke into a sprint, running into the crowded streets of New York.

The wind pinched my skin as the sirens got louder, coming closer and closer. I dodged through various swanky people and went down as many alleyways as I could. My mother taught me that. Adrenaline pumped through my blood and my chest heaved with fatigue. I was about to turn around the corner of a rather dingy alleyway when a grey flicker caught my eye. I stopped and stared at the spot for a long time, only to realize I probably looked like a lunatic staring intently at a brick wall. Well, even if I did, no one would care. After a moment of confusion, I continued down the alley, except slower as the sirens started to fade. I wandered through

the alleyway, taking various turns trying to find my way back to the street. Suddenly I saw the grey flicker again. This time it stayed for longer. The flicker resembled a girl with long wavy hair wearing a cute summer dress and hat. Despite the cheerful attire she looked rushed and frightened. She looked as though someone cut her right out of a black-and-white film. She was making a “come here” motion with her hand, as though she wanted me to follow. Then once again she disappeared. Frantically I looked around the alleyway, trying to spot the young girl again. What was she? What was she trying to tell me? Where did she go?

The questions were overflowing in my mind and I started to get a headache. More confused than before, I trekked through the alley every so often to check for the girl. Ahead of me, a bright light signified the end of the alley. Beyond I saw various people wandering about and yellow taxis blaring their horns. The streets were so colorful and alive while the alley was the same monotonous color. I was about to reach the street when I saw the girl again. She was standing right in front of me doing the same “come here” motion. This time she did not disappear but stood there staring deeply into my eyes. All I could do was stand there and stare, amazed. Tired of waiting for an answer, she turned around and walked out into the street, flickering along the way. She took a left down the sidewalk and walked right through the people moseying about, almost like a ghost. Breaking out of my trance, I sprinted after her, trying to catch up. She calmly walked through the crowd and into another alley. I almost tripped over myself trying to catch up, and my heart pounded harder than before. I skidded into the alleyway and almost ran right into a wall. The girl was nowhere to be found. As I panted, the only thought that floated into my head was, “What in the world am I doing?” To think that I was chasing after some girl that was probably just some hallucination. I sighed. I should be home right now. My mother is not going to be happy when she notices she didn’t get the money she wanted.

I was about to turn around when I saw something glint on the ground. A silver necklace lay in the dirt next to a pile of trash. The necklace had very intricate designs and looked quite old. What would a rusty necklace be doing in a trash covered alley like this? I leaned

over and touched the delicate necklace. The cold chain felt smooth in my hand. The locket held a small picture of the girl I saw before, smiling in a sun-filled meadow of red and yellow poppies. I had never seen anything so beautiful. I was about to slip the necklace in my pocket when suddenly everything went dark. I felt cold all over, as though I was drowning. I tried to breathe but nothing came into my lungs. Darkness was all I saw as I thrashed in what felt like icy-cold water. It got darker and darker until there was nothing at all, everything went silent.

*Click, click, click.* A faint clicking filled my ears. Slowly I open my eyes. My body ached all over and I could still feel the cold icy feeling in my veins. My muscles strained at I stood up. *Click, click, click.* It took a few seconds for my eyes to clear up, to see what was in front of me. Grey hills covered in grey grass and trees expanded across the white sky. A field of poppies spread out along the horizon. In the distance, a black-and-white city could be seen. The air around me looked fuzzy and similar to a TV screen. It was all so realistic, but I knew something was wrong. In the background I could hear the faint clicking that sounded almost like... an old movie projector? Suddenly I realized where I was. "How could this be possible?" I whispered to myself. "Follow me and you will find out," said a quiet voice suddenly. There the girl stood in front of me, grinning at me in the field of poppies.

## This is How It Ends

MAYA FLORENCE MONKS

**T**hree endings for one story, what it is, is up to you. In your mind you will see its glory, an unknown beginning just for you.

The clouds are breathtaking. They are fluffy and light, like the cotton candy of my childhood. Making me fill with the joy of the circus, bringing the bright-eyed child back to me. They are smooth and thick, blanketing the world like a fresh snow. Taking me back to my youth, playing for hours, till my cheeks turned rosy and my fingers stung. Then coming in for hot chocolate with clouds. I stare up at the clouds, transfixed with them, watching their movement, for the last time. Silently my mind whispers memories, the sky brings back my past, taking me back to the child I once was. I have always loved to go back to my past, forget my age, remember the child I once was. Now, in my death, I do this once again. So again I am young. I come home from a day at the circus, watching the show, eating clouds. I come home to clouds blanketing the ground and everything I see. I get cold, and come in for hot chocolate, with extra clouds. It is a cold night, so my parents long gone, tuck me in, using a big soft cloud. Even now, the clouds are soft and comforting, wrapping the sky, covering the earth like a sleeping child, tucked into a large white blanket.

I looked out across the grassy field, covered with early morning dew, shining in the light. Slowly the sun surfaced over the green hill, staining the sky pink, yellow, orange, and red. The scene took my breath away. I scanned this beautiful picture, viewing its perfection, until I spotted the flaw. It is strange how a tragedy can occur, even in the most beautiful scenery. How you wish that your surroundings would somehow match your emotions, but they always seem to do the opposite, causing you to despise the beauty. The fact that I hated the place she loved so dearly, was almost worse than her death.

I float silently, watching the woman, the woman who is watching me. No one ever seems to notice me. Everyone just going about

their lives, unaware of me floating over them, watching every move. Sometimes they do notice, but even then, they don't just see me, they say I look like a dragon, or a duck, they never just say, "Look at the beautiful clouds." It is always, "It's too cold," "Stop covering the sun." When I am there, they all go inside. Some say that I drift here, totally unaware of the tragedies below, but what they don't know, is that I am here for it all. Now as I float here, I know that I will soon witness another tragedy. This woman is not like the rest. When it is sunny, she beckons me in, thanking me for my service as a shield from the heat. When I am sad, she doesn't go inside, she comes out spreads her arms and tells me to just let it out, let my tears flow down on her, she doesn't mind. Now she looks up at me, choosing to spend her last moments watching me at her favorite time, dawn. As the sun rises I shield her, allowing the light to tint me colors of yellow, orange, and red. She smiles up at me, closes her eyes and whispers, "So this is how it ends." On a breath of wind, I whisper back, "You are lucky, for me it never ends, now slip away peacefully, goodbye my dearest friend." I wait knowing what comes next, wishing it would not. This happens every time, one ends as they wish, and another comes trying to bring them back, if only to say goodbye. This time she comes on foot, she runs, ignoring the small lives crushed beneath her feet. She drops to her knees and sobs, unaware of the beauty that surrounds her. I watch from above, not seen as always, I wish to comfort her, the only way I can. So, I let slip one tear, then another, until they flow softly, changing the scene if only one small bit. I wish to comfort her; why do you think it always rains at funerals.

## Delilah's Lament

EMMA MORROW

**I**t irritates me how painfully oblivious people are to the art of shell finding. I watch them rummage through the sand, miles from the waves, and coo at the coral chunks they find; bleached of color and life. But from the distant memories that never failed to linger, I alone can recite her words.

★ ★ ★

The waves had been hushed in order to give the sun peace of mind. My eyes were transfixed on the gradual melt from rosé to lilac and the tentative stars slowly rising from their sleep to sing of silence. It had always been a captivating experience for me and I'd wished for it to never stray from view. A splash and gasps of breath greeted me like it always did. I didn't need to sit up to know who it was. Each gentle shuffle of sand I counted, I loved to count. 1, 2, 3... 7, 8... 10, 11. Then her voice, "Babe, guess what I found!" The elation in her words suggested that she was holding buried treasure, but I knew.

"Hmm, hinge or no hinge?"

"No hinge."

"Are the whorls connected?"

"Nope."

"Narrow cavity?"

"Uh-huh."

"Olive shell."

"Ding, ding! We have a winner folks." She mimicked the voice of the infamous Steven Carlsburger, the host of the community radio. It was our private joke that could always draw a smile to my lips. I extended my hand and she hauled me to my feet. Her hands held mine and I felt the shell pressed into my left palm. The dark prevented me from seeing her quirky smile, but I could easily visualize it in my head. Her single dimple, the cute gap between her front teeth, that freckle only revealed when she moved her mouth.

While we walked alongside the peaceful shoreline, I asked, because I never get tired of hearing the answer, “How do you find these?”

★ ★ ★

To find the perfect shell you must wait till the sun has dipped a fourth of the way into the horizon. The waves will be small, subtle and smell more sweet than salty. It’s vital that you duck yourself into the ocean’s embrace, let it toy with the way your body moves. When the shore is blurry and a seed of panic sprouts you’ll know you’re close. Immerse yourself one last time into the water’s touch and you’ll find the perfect shell. This is as familiar and rhythmic to me as your favorite song is to you.

Once I reach my home, I write a number on the shell. Today is number 2,708. Then I place it in my garden, shuffling the sand around till it’s finely coated. I can’t afford to lose a single one.

Number 2,105 was the day the numbers turned from red to black. On that day, they told me she had fought valiantly. They didn’t need to tell me that. I know she wouldn’t fight any other way.

I hang her dress on the balcony to sway in rhythm with the palm trees. Her dress, the one I swim in every night. The ocean had always favored Quinn and her strong, balancing touch. As I gaze up at the sky, colored from pollution residue, kissing the sea gently with toxic breath. I like to think they miss her too.



## By Chance

ALMA ORTIZ SAWAYA

**T**here was a prince named Chance. He had amazingly powerful sword skills. He practiced every day for countless hours, never stopping to rest. But his mother, the queen, wouldn't allow him to leave the kingdom, which angered the prince greatly.

One night, Chance disobeyed his mother by sneaking out of his room. He made his way to the entrance, successfully avoiding the castle guards in the process. There was a rumor that a horrifying monster was roaming the forest right outside the walls of the kingdom.

Chance roamed the forest until he felt strong vibrations in the ground. He stopped walking and turned around, soon facing the truly horrifying monster. He drew his sword and then proceeded to attack the monster. At first, the monster flung Chance away, but Chance wouldn't give up. He threw his sword like a javelin, piercing the monster's chest. The monster let out a loud groan, then quickly fell to the ground.

Chance sighed in relief as the sun began to rise. He retained his sword and began walking back to the castle. Everyone in the kingdom was overjoyed that the monster was defeated. As he was about to walk into the castle, his mother burst out of the doors, tears running down her cheeks. "Thank the lords you're all right," she said, as she wrapped her arms around Chance, smiling.

One day however, Chance and the castle's warriors were fighting an enemy kingdom. The soldiers had heard of Chance's heroics and they desperately wanted to stop him. The castle warriors were successful until one of the rogue soldiers managed to sneak away and hide. Unfortunately, he was an archer. He drew his bow and shot the arrow, the arrow pierced Chance's chest, and it killed him instantly.

News of his death spread like wildfire. The incident shocked everyone. Soon the queen held a grand memorial service for her son. Everyone from the surrounding area attended, mourning his loss.

Ever since that day, multiple stories were told about the great

prince who saved his kingdom numerous times. He became a legend throughout the land. His story will never fade.

## The Blockos

ELLA PETERSEN

### *Chapter One: SQUARE 1*

I'm Alexandra CEO but no one knows it. I'll tell you why.

It all started one afternoon when I had just come home from middle school. "Ahhh," I sighed, and then I saw a gift on the table. "Mom..." I said, but then the gift's words shined: *From, Grandpa.*

"Mommy, can I open this?" I asked. "Yes, honey," my mom, Cona, responded. I lifted the gift's silky top and inside there was a beautiful necklace and on it was, emerald!

I went to my room and put it on, I heard my grandpa whisper, "Say SQUARE 1." I was scared at first but when I calmed down. "Square 1."

Suddenly, the necklace began to glow!

Then it stopped, but when I looked in the mirror, I WAS A ROBOT DOG THING! "AHHH!!" I screamed.

"You all right, honey?" Cona asked.

"I'm fine." *OMG what happened? I should probably keep this a secret,* I thought.

"Ummm, Alexandra CEO," I said without thinking. I transformed back but I was, well, a superhero! I didn't know what to do next, but this floating town needs a hero!

And that leads us to now.

## My Mexico Trip

SHREYAS RAO

Once I went boogie boarding at a Mexico beach. I was very excited once I learned how to! I buckled the strap around my ankle and waded in the Pacific Ocean. I went over sixteen small waves and caught three big ones. One wave, however, when I was not looking at it, went over me. I was in the water, gasping for breath. I stayed in the water for at least ten seconds. I was very scared. Finally, I managed to get to the surface. I quickly grabbed my boogie board and got on it. The next thing I knew, a ginormous wave back flipped me. I was laying in the middle of the ocean on my back with a boogie board on me. Soon, my feet found the soft sand at the bottom of the ocean. I kept on boogie boarding and for some reason didn't give up. I caught five more waves and returned to the shore and made a sandcastle.

## The Soul Poet

SHANTA RECHKEMMER

I watched him. Closely. As he sat on the bare park bench, its once jade-green coating peeled off, the result of too many nervous fingers fiddling with it, to leave it without its once shimmering dress. With his grey felt hat, his dune-yellow overcoat, perfectly complemented by the plum-blue tie, which in a neat fashion, sat, perfectly straight, on his chest. In his left hand, he held a steam-spewing white coffee cup, the finely swung black letters indefinable from the position where I was ducking, hiding.

No one ever needed to ask another if they were to search for him. His schedule and regular doings weren't an immense privacy fore say. At six-thirty, he was on his usual stroll next to the glinting, dazzling pond, the morning still playing with the colors. At seven, he would wander, walk into Aunt Grin's bookshop, and find himself a coffee. And, at noon, you saw him here. On the bare bench with his coffee, sitting and listening. His strange, crooked smile never amiss.

Even now as I observe safely behind a row of dense bushes, my nose tickled by the nimble branches, I can see that smile surface as he stares at us children playing, tumbling clumsily in the green.

No other adult ever spoke to him, at least as I know of it. They just left him in his world of calamity and fantasy. Only us children did, for we were the only to understand. The only ones to feel the many strings of color that were woven to make the tapestry of his life. Or did we?

"Boy!" I remember him say even years, yes, centuries after, "why do you spend your precious time watching me." He never turned his head, and I was still sitting in what I thought to be a marvelous hiding spot. I crawled out and stood in front of him. He softly grinned. Where as I, still in shock, just blankly stared. He then leaned out and took the time to flick a glinting emerald-green beetle off my shoulder; it was only then that I noticed the mud and filth I had been smothered in.

He leaned back and squinted into the sky, then turned his gaze

back at me, “Do you do it often?” he questioned suddenly. “Do what?” I hastily replied. The man before me chuckled. “Do you often spend your precious time staring at unimportant old men like me? Old men that no one talks to, old men that love the cobalt-blue sky, that love lonely rippling water and the beautiful sounds of the world?” My eyes grew wide in confusion and fear. “Don’t you have studies to do? Don’t you have parents who love you to end of the world and back and therefore make you work, make you reach the dreams floating above?” I just stared. For never had anybody spoken to me in such a way as to belittle themselves.

Yet again, I was just eight. And because of that age I still cannot define why the words that where to roll off my tongue did so in the first place. With a single shrug I said, “I don’t know. What about you?”

Now, later, I would have considered it purely nonsensical to ask and answer in such an indirect manor, but he understood. He answered without another question. “I am a strange sort. The sort that is sweet and pleasurable yet hard to find.” I rudely interrupted, “What sort. The sort that begs for food, or the sort that bathes in riches.”

“Neither. I am a poet. Yet I never have brought a single word on paper. I am a poet. Yet the world never thought so. I am a poet. Yet I do not know of couplets, of sonnets, or of haikus. My poems are different. The world are my letters and life my pen, and the ever-lasting soul my paper.”

Oh, and ever more I shall cling to these sublime words.

But then my parents came, as dusk neared. They picked me up and brought me home. And soon we moved. “For the business, son. For the business,” is all my father ever said.

Strange enough, I had been told, plenty of times, that we were going to leave, but as my eight-year-old self I never wanted to know.

And so, the day after I met that man, that wonderfully strange man, the boxes were packed and apparently. “Business was calling,” and we left.

Since that day I never saw him again. But I remember him; remember him, oh, so clearly. Every speck, and every loose thread on his plum-blue tie. You might be surprised, but now, age twenty-one, I am a poet too. I would have never thought so, and surely

my parents, especially my materialistic father, were disappointed in my choice as well. But that day changed my life. The day I met the Soul Poet.

## Firework Fingers

CONNOR RODENBECK

You only feel alive when you're numb,  
Dancing in your tube socks,  
Nothing but lace covering your skin.  
Don't you know?  
You can parade the sky with sparks,  
Shoot bursts of emerald and garnet from your fingertips,  
Create magic from your amethyst arteries.  
I can't help holding your hand in mine...  
I want you to let the blue in your eyes sparkled through the smoke,  
Let rubies replace red blood cells,  
Let halos hijack dilated pupils,  
Let the world grow brighter in your kaleidoscope.  
I trace my finger along your palm and  
Paper cranes fluttered in your chest,  
Saturating your lungs and ribs with love notes.  
Unfold your origami heart,  
Serenade me with your sonnets.  
Go ahead,  
Fingerpaint poetry onto brick walls and dumpsters,  
Onto dubious whispers and afraid glances,  
Onto the moon and all of your second chances.  
Let me feel them,  
Let me feel the drops of rum,  
Press your drunken tongue on mine until I can't tell our bodies apart.  
Burn the past from my breath and color me into a work of art.  
Take my hand, darling.  
We can walk on stardust towards the sky,  
End up in the clouds,  
Sit on those fluffy bar stools and sip spirits until we twirl.  
We'll only fall back to the earth when your tears drop into the ocean  
below,  
Every part of you descending in a rainstorm of regret.  
Only then will your firework fingers fizzle out.  
While our star-spangled hands may no longer intertwine,  
My body will still be stained where yours touched mine.



## When is Tomorrow?

JONAS ROSENTHAL

*"I think we agree, the past is over."* —George W. Bush

**T**he classic question asked by very small people is, when is tomorrow? I mean nothing against them; I asked the same question when I was very small, and I still want an answer. But, after all, it's hard to ask that question without getting that song from Annie stuck in your head.

*Tomorrow* (noun): On or for the day after today, occasionally used to indicate perpetual postponement. —Webster

At 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday night, tomorrow is Thursday. One minute later, at 12 a.m. on Thursday, tomorrow becomes Friday and today is Thursday. Tomorrow is, in *Webster's* words, perpetually postponed, like elections in some third world country, or Tupac's world tour. Scheduled at one point, every day pushed another day away and kicked down a road, tin-can style.

Two schools of thought held in the ancient world on time. One proposed time to be like a river, unchanging in speed or direction, with us as canoes on that river, able to look forward and back but not to do anything about it. Tomorrow, then, is the canoe in front of us, which, with both of us going at the same speed, we can never reach.

The second ancient position on time, held by Zeno and Parmenides, posits time as an illusion. The present exists, memories are of events that never happened, the future will never come to be. Change is illogical, announced the Elatic movement in Greece, therefore the world is static, unchanging, and motionless. They reached this position by way of the logical paradoxes that Zeno invented, which found that movement was impossible with flowing time. (The best response to this was that of Diogenes, who upon hearing the paradox got up and walked to prove motion was possible). Tomorrow becomes a non-entity, a state that will never be reached in Zeno's view.

*A Fortune Cookie:* Given the inevitability of time, no scrap of paper from a cookie is going to spark any deep revelations about time. Have a nice day.

A compromise to these positions was first used by the prophet Zoroaster, in the 10th century B.C., who decreed time to be a temporary state, which upon final judgment from God would end in timeless bliss for the saved, and eternal hell for the sinners. Various other religious philosophers adopted his philosophy across the Near East and in Abrahamic religions. Tomorrow is always tomorrow, therefore, until Judgment Day, which then becomes all of the tomorrows.

Jack and Jill went up the hill  
In defiance of Zeno's principle

But Jack moved at  
A speed near light

And when they returned,  
Jill did find that

Jack was twenty years her senior.

You'll note, in this discussion of time, science comes up very little. This changed with Einstein, and to sum up his incredibly complicated theories, and do a great injustice to a Nobel-prize-winning idea: my tomorrow is not necessarily your tomorrow. The canoes on the river can now speed up, and slow down. But even with that, we cannot ever reach a point that can be called tomorrow.

Common sense tells us tomorrow cannot be reached, tells us that tomorrow does not even exist. Zoroaster preached that only faith, *sole fida*, can let us reach tomorrow, and Einstein tells us our tomorrow can be reached by everyone, save ourselves.

Why do we ask ourselves about tomorrow and what's on the other side? I think it's because we always want something more, because we are always striving to the future, and you never know what tomorrow might bring; because we practice Zoroaster's ancient belief that we will find tomorrow through faith.

What do we tell ourselves, as to when tomorrow will be? Do we

lean towards Zeno, or Diogenes, or Einstein? I prefer the answer five-year-old me always wanted, which is that massive black holes exist and that these holes suck time away from us. Tomorrow is one day away from vanishing forever.

## Ender: Part 1

ERSEL SERDAR

**T**he Ghast screeched as it spat another fireball at the fortress. I had enough Blaze rods, so I dashed into the maze-like building. As I ran through the Nether Fortress, I heard the disturbing crack of the support beams beneath me. Suddenly, the building lurched backward and the bridge I was on gave way to the lava sea below. I jumped up and grabbed the edge of a bridge above me. I pulled myself up over the railing, dashed to the other side, and pitched an Ender Pearl at a nearby cliff ledge. Pain shot through my legs once I teleported to the mouth of the cave. As I limped in, I heard the faint hum of the Nether Portal. I turned right, left, left and right again. I walked into the portal, both excited and nervous.

### Chapter 1

“WHAT?!”

“But, dad—”

“No ‘buts,’ Steve. You could have died in there! Besides, rumors are fake, and so is the one about The End!”

“Dad, you and I both know that rumors are fake, but this one...”

“This one’s fake, Steve.”

“Okay, dad. I’m going to the library.”

I ended the conversation by walking out the door.

A few minutes later, I opened the library door. I found the crafting table and laid out what I had. “*Twelve Blaze rods to become Blaze Powder, eleven En-*”

“HOW the Nether could I have FORGOTTEN?!” I screamed as I realized that I had eleven of the twelve Ender Pearls needed for the Eyes of Ender. I went home, discouraged.

### Chapter 2

“*Nighttime!*” I thought as I dashed out the door. I swigged a Potion of Strength and kicked a Zombie into a tree. Then, about one hundred feet away, I saw a pair of glowing purple eyes. I drank a potion of

Leaping and Swiftness.

“Hey Bozo! You’re so useless, I don’t even know why you’re here!” I screamed to the Enderman. I didn’t know why I said that, but it had the intended effect. The Enderman whipped around, shaking uncontrollably. Then it was gone. Knowing what had happened, I whipped around, sword drawn. I stabbed the Enderman right as it teleported away. I grabbed my axe right as I was flipped upside-down. I threw my axe haphazardly. There was an otherworldly scream, and I fell to the ground.

“Well, that was lucky.”

The axe had decapitated the Enderman.

I yanked my sword out of the corpse, sheared the skin off its chest, cut open its heart and snatched up the Ender Pearl. I rinsed the purple slime off my hands in a lake, and went back to the library.

### *Chapter 3*

“Dad, Mom, and Alex. I have something very important to tell you.” I said.

“Go ahead,” said Alex, my sister.

“I am leaving. When I reach my destination, I will send a message in a bottle. You are not to tell anyone I am leaving. When you receive the message, do not tell anyone about it. I already packed my stuff.”

I walked out the door, pitched an Eye of Ender into the air, walked into the direction it floated, and picked it up.

The End...

...for now

## Things That Go Bump in the Night

SELEN SERDAR

“Is this an interesting sentence?” Luna asked her friend Cinnamon. They were decorating invitations for their Halloween party.

“I guess,” replied Cinnamon. She was scanning the bookshelves, searching for a scary story to read aloud. “Ooh! Look at this.”

“Did you find anything interesting?” Luna said, walking over to Cinnamon.

“Yep.” Cinnamon was holding a thick dusty book. It was called *Do Not Read Aloud*.

“Let’s read it at the party.”

“Okay.”

Since it was time to go to school, the girls went to the bus stop. They passed out the invitations when they got to school. There were three hundred girls invited.

Two days later, girls were streaming through the iron gates leading to Luna’s huge glowing house. They were all going to sleep in the basement. Luna picked up a huge megaphone and clicked the switch on.

“GIRLS!” Everybody went quiet. “Who wants to read a scary story?”

The room started to buzz as girls stood up. Shouts of “AAAH!” “No thanks!” and “I hate scary stories!” could be heard around the huge basement. Girls streamed through the doors again. Out, this time. “What? No! Girls, please come back! It’s not THAT scary!” Luna cried, waving her arms in the air. Everyone was gone. There were only three people left. Luna, Cinnamon, and another friend named Sarah.

“I happen to love scary things,” said Sarah. She snuggled up closer to them. “Go ahead.”

“Good.” Luna said. She opened the book. The page now said *Tremendous Hauntings*. “Weird. That wasn’t there before. Oh well.” Luna opened the book. “When night falls, they close the malls so the ghosts, so thin, can’t haunt within.”

“Not a very good rhyme,” said Sarah. The lights turned off. “Hey! Who did that?” She whipped around to face the light switch, which was all the way on the other side of the room. She turned back around. “Maybe the power turned off.” Cinnamon jumped up.

“I’ll go out and check the fuse box,” she said and went up the steps. Luna was rummaging through her bag. She pulled out a small flashlight and clicked it on. “There.”

Meanwhile, Cinnamon was walking outside to go check the fuse box. Abruptly, she stopped. Something took over her mind for a brief second, and then she returned. She shook her head. “I must be sleepy,” she thought. She opened the fuse box and looked around. Everything looked okay. She closed it and went back to the basement. The light was still not working. Sarah and Luna were huddled together, watching a video on Luna’s phone. They looked up when Cinnamon walked in.

“Is the fuse box okay?” Luna asked.

“Yes.” Cinnamon said flatly. Then she flopped backwards on her sleeping bag and shook her head. “Sorry. I’m having these strange freeze-ups. I’m probably just tired.”

“Okay,” Luna said. “Let’s just keep reading the book.” Cinnamon came over and sat down. Luna opened the book. She continued to read for a few pages, but then she stopped. “It’s blank,” she said, flipping through the rest of the pages. Then, out of nowhere, Cinnamon fell backwards. Luna and Sarah dropped the book and ran to her.

“Cinnamon! Are you okay?”

“What happened?”

“Wow. The book is glowing!” Luna said. She picked up the now greenish book. It stopped glowing. “Strange.”

“Read it!” Sarah said. So, Luna opened the book. Now it had different text inside. Luna began to read.

“You have done the wrong thing. I told you not to read me, but you went along with your party. Your friend is safe, but she is lost in her own thoughts. I can help you now, but you will find the key in a dream.” Luna kept flipping pages. “It’s blank,” she said.

“Oh! I remember this happened in one of my dreams. We had to make a memory circle,” Sarah exclaimed. “We sat in a circle around the person and held hands and closed eyes, except one person, who

read a script. But in this case, it will be the book. Then we had to get a piece from the past and a piece from the present and then burn them. Then our friend came back.”

“We could try that,” Luna said. She got the book and held hands with Sarah. Cinnamon was in between them. Luna opened the book and began to read. The text had now changed, so Luna guessed they had done the right thing. Suddenly, they were sent to Cinnamon’s house. Luna jumped. “It worked!” Then she stopped jumping. “Now what?”

Sarah shrugged. “Ring the doorbell.” Luna rang the doorbell and the door opened to reveal Cinnamon.

“Hello?” Cinnamon yelled.

“Cinnamon! It’s Luna and Sarah!” Luna screamed.

“Is anybody there? Hello?” Cinnamon looked around. “Huh. I bet it was a prank.” She closed the door.

“We need to ring the doorbell again and go in when she opens the door.” Sarah said. She rang the doorbell and slipped in with Luna when Cinnamon opened the door again.

“Stop ringing my doorbell!” Cinnamon yelled and closed the door. Luna and Sarah went into the living room. A giant cat was sitting on the couch. He got up and ran towards Sarah. She screamed and tried to dodge the cat, but he grabbed her in his mouth and tried to push her out of the open window.

“STOP!” Luna yelled. She looked around for a weapon and spotted a bowl of fruit. She took an apple and threw it at the cat as hard as she could. He fell down and Sarah climbed out of the window. Before she came back to Luna, she snatched a piece of a wooden puzzle from the cat’s mouth. She showed it to Luna. “I think this is the piece from the past. Remember Cinnamon always keeps a piece like this in her pocket just in case she finds the other piece? Well, I think it got stuck in the past.” She handed Luna the piece. There was a blinding flash of white light, and the girls were back in Luna’s basement. Sarah smiled.

“Now what?” she asked.

“We have to destroy the puzzle,” Luna said, pulling a wooden piece out of Cinnamon’s bag. She clacked them together. “Too bad Cinnamon will never get to see this.”



“How are we going to destroy them?” Sarah said. Luna pointed at the fireplace.

“The matches are on top of the fridge.”

Sarah went over to the fridge, then, noticing she was too short to reach the top, she dragged over a chair and pulled the matches off of the fridge. She went back to Luna and lit a match. She threw it in the fireplace. Luna threw the puzzle and the book into the fire. The two girls watched the items burn.

Once the fire was out, they went back to Cinnamon. She was still laying on the ground. Luna sat down and slumped over. She was in tears. “What are we going to do?” she whispered.

“What are you sad about?” Cinnamon said, rising up from the ground. She came over and hugged Luna.

“Oh! You’re back!” Luna started to laugh, and then so did Sarah. Then they stopped.

“We found the missing piece of your puzzle,” Luna said. “But we had to burn it.”

Cinnamon’s eyes widened. “Why?” So Luna and Sarah told Cinnamon the whole story of the book, and how they made a memory circle, and the pieces from the past and the present.

“Oh,” Cinnamon said. “Well, that’s okay as long as we’re alive,” she said and smiled. The next morning, everybody awoke to a cold first day of November.

“I had a really weird dream,” Luna said. “There was this book, and Cinnamon fainted, and...”

“I had that dream too!” said Sarah. “We had to get a piece from the past...”

“And a piece from the present,” Cinnamon said. She searched through her bag. “Yep, it’s really gone.”

“Wait. Are we saying we all had the same dream?” Luna whispered. The girls looked at each other and slowly nodded.

Sarah closed her eyes. “Oh no...”

## Come Alive

LILLIAN STONE

Pain,

A being I cannot describe

Cannot justify

This madman enslaved my dreams

In a jungle of hurt

Possessed my mind

With his airborne venom

Told me the antidote was the real poison

Tauntingly urged me to dig my heart from my chest

Ground each piece dust

With a carcass sprouting lies

And bury the remnants deep in the mud

Eyes and ears,

Just barely out of reach

From the groping vines

Sister Sunlight, dancing through dark leaves

Mother in the Wind

Help me see

Teach me to hear truth

Tear open my lips to make way for the magma

Unleash the volcano, destruction brewing for years

Eradicate the forest that grew from a seed of fear

Garden a mosaic from my buried essence of innocence

And Forget the ashes of a deranged wilderness

come alive

## Caravan of the Apocalypse

KATHRYN STULTZ

**T**he drifting hills of sand glow under the heat of the midday sun. Small creatures hide beneath the sand while the blue sky devoid of clouds looks down upon the desert. A line of wagons sits atop one of the desert bluffs, creaking as the wind hits them. The wagons have rusting wheels that squeak as the camels tied to them shift in place, while the tops of the wagons groan as the pieces of metal poorly welded together strain against one another. Small rays of sun push their way through the openings between the sheets of metal and lay themselves upon the people inside of the wagons. The people in the wagons are silent, too tired to talk and too hot to move. The shelter the wagons provide allow the people to rest and stay in the shade, but the metal and heat turns the wagon into a giant furnace during the day. When it gets too hot to be in the wagons, people slowly climb out and slide under the wagons where the air is cooler. One or two people sit and watch for any scorpions or snakes, making sure that no one gets stung or bitten while the others sleep.

Once the sun starts to dip below the dunes the people begin to move. At first, they move slowly, stretching and getting up from under their wagons, greeting each other quietly as they move. The eldest reach into the wagons and pull out food. Most of their food is either canned or dried so that it does not perish in the desert heat. Each wagon has a single can opener to open up their meals as well as one spoon for each person. People pull out their spoons from their pockets, shirts, and take them off of cords around their necks as they get their cans opened. They sit next to the wagon, passing around the cans of food to whoever wants a certain can. If there are any children or elders in the wagon they get first choice of cans. Once they have finished eating their food, they pass their cans to one person who collects them in a bag and carries them to the last wagon in line where all the metal is collected. Then they begin to move; one person from each wagon sits and takes the reins

of the camels while everybody else stands next to the wagon they stay in, waiting for the signal to walk. The person at the reins strikes a match, lighting a torch on the front of the wagon. The wagon behind them lights their torch, as do the others behind them. After the wagons torch is lit it starts to move over the desert bluffs with the people swathed with clothing to protect from the cold. Once all light from the sun is gone the wagons stop, each wagon calling out to the one behind. One person jumps into the wagon and hands out makeshift weapons. The weapons are old cans welded onto metal poles or more cans covered in leather or cloth. Each person has their own weapon, one made special for them. Some of them are long and sword-like while others are like clubs with spikes and others are spikes attached to gloves. The children each have very small weapons and are placed in the wagon. Another message is passed to the back of the group and the wagons start moving again, but faster. The people's eyes dart around, looking narrowly into the dark, raising their weapons every time they hear a sound in the distance. People call out to the wagons behind them when they see a skull sticking out of the sand. The wagons give the skull a wide berth, the people around the wagons eyeing it suspiciously. When the final wagon passes the skull a person inside of the wagon peaks out at the skull, watching it carefully. The person watches as a skeletal hand raises itself up from the ground and pulls up a body, the head raising above the sand with the rest of the body. It turns to face the wagons, its mouth opening. The person inside of the wagon runs to the front of the wagon and then begins to bang cans together while yelling out to the other wagons. Once the message reaches the front of the group, the people outside of the wagons dart inside. As the people start to move more skeletons start popping up from the ground, all turning to watch the line of wagons as they start to pick up speed.

Slowly the first skeleton takes a step, falling into an arched position, still gazing at the wagons. The wagons start picking up more speed, trying to get as far away as possible from the skeletons. The hoard looks towards the first skeleton, looking for direction. The skeleton takes another shaky step, crouching a bit lower as it does, then it runs. Its back is arched inwards, heading directly towards the closest wagon. It seems to glide along the sand compared to

the wagons ahead of it, barely leaving a mark as it runs. Its arms fly out after it as it runs, cracking sounds echoing after it as its arms snap and legs clack together. The rest of the hoard watches before a second skeleton takes a step, then two, then more as it, too, starts to run after the wagons. Then a third and fourth skeleton run after it, the sound of snapping and cracking getting louder as even more skeletons behind to run. The final skeleton looks ahead, cocking its head to the side, then it slowly starts to follow behind, running on one foot and one hand jammed into the place where the foot should be. Several other skeletons are also deformed, some with no jaws and some missing ribs, each mindlessly following the wagons like a dog runs towards a treat. Even from the front of the line the sound of the skeletons is deafening, drowning out everything except for the peoples' beating hearts.

The wagons run until dawn and then sleep during the day, and then travel during the night past the skeletons and dunes of sand. The wagons and people in them are known as the caravan of the apocalypse, and at night they ride.

## Apocalypse

LILLIAN STURHAHN

**T**he meteor shower was beauty beyond compare. It would make landfall on earth in three hours.

It had to be the most brilliant apocalypse I had ever heard of. I suppose there is beauty to be found, even in the destruction of all I have ever known. The sky is streaked with crimson and gold and silver. This is not how a meteor shower is supposed to look, but the world is not supposed to end. Not this soon, anyways. Scientists had given us five more years, give or take.

Still, five years wouldn't have been enough.

And suddenly, I hate the beauty of this apocalypse. I hate that I will come to an end in such a stunning way. People will look back and say, that destruction was a wondrous thing. If the world had to die, couldn't it end in a way that was as horrific as the fact that all it had stood for, all it had learned, would be obliterated in a few short hours?

I longed for the books I used to read, where the characters were killed by aliens or huge atomic bombs. The books had been grisly, but I could have looked past that.

The meteors were too beautiful to be the end of the world.

And then they hit. Explosions shook the earth surrounding me. Plumes of smoke billowed up from craters that had been hollowed out in the ground, engulfing the world in filmy sheets of grey. I could see streaks of crimson, gold, and silver streaking through sky. We were supposed to have three hours. It was not supposed to end this soon.

But, then again, the world was not supposed to end.

## Who Was in the Woods?

CHLOE TOLER

It was the same day as always but one thing was different everybody was fighting about the same thing me. I was getting sick of all the fighting so i left through the window in my bedroom it was dark outside but i still left i started running through the woods i finally found my treehouse i climbed up the wooden stairs when i got there i opened the door and there was a *kreek* as it opened all of the stuff i put in there was still there as i walked passed all the stuff and found my old bean bag chair i sat in it i was not really worried about anybody finding me before today they were all self-involved in their own little life in which to tell you i would have to start from the beginning which began about four hours ago. My mom was in her own little business then my school called goodness don't they ever leave me alone anyway they told my mom that i skipped school and now they are arguing about what my punishment. Now we're back as i was saying i was sitting in the bean bag chair watching the small tv i got for my birthday then there was a snap not from the tv from outside oh no one of them found me i assumed then i looked out the window and nobody was there at all but i still got so scared when that happened then i thought oh maybe that was a animal so i sat back down and started to relax then an even bigger sound happened i knew that was not an animal so i looked out of the window in the treehouse i saw an arm then creaks and way more snaps by even bigger branches breaking then something grabbed my back i gasped them when i woke up i was in my bed with my parents in front of me or above me you could say i got up and said how did i get here they said you were outside on the swing passed out then i thought how did i get here but the main thing i thought was WHO WAS IN THE WOODS.

## Amazon Reviews

ELAINA WEAKLIEM

THE PRODUCT: Unbiased Acceptance of Race, Religion, Gender, and Sexuality.

### *BEST REVIEW:*

ingram207 *wrote:* FIVE STARS

This product was great! As soon as I opened my mind, it was there, and I don't know how I ever lived without it! I've given it to my kids as well, and it's done them a *world* of good.

bluebird&george *wrote:* THREE STARS

A very good product, but takes up a lot of room, and required that I remove a lot of deeply-rooted prejudices and biases. Don't buy if you don't have the mental capacity to store it!

AngstyTeen21 *wrote:* THREE STARS

my mom got me this for christmas. idk it works but it took literally forever to set up since other ppl kept misreading the directions and fighting over who was right

lifesux09 *wrote:* ONE STAR

NO.

;) *wrote:* FOUR STARS

Although I really liked this product, it's not for everyone. My husband hates it, calling it a nuisance, and tells me to "Stop trying to change the world and make me a sandwich." I enjoyed it, though, and was pleased with the price and quality.

shotgunbadboy *wrote:* TWO STARS

It arrived in damaged packaging. The description said it would come in a week, but it took a really long time. When it did arrive, my aunt had just given me a box of her old biases, and I didn't want to offend her by not using them at all. I haven't gotten around to unboxing it yet.



Bluebox91 *wrote*: FIVE STARS

After my daughter came out to me, I decided to try out this product. Its quality and efficiency surprised me, considering the low price. I'm seeing the world with new eyes!

CUSTOMERS WHO BOUGHT THIS PRODUCT ALSO BOUGHT:

Empathy

Open-Mindedness

&

Kindness

## thoughts of prayer

LUKE WOLSKO

Dear God,

She squeezes her lungs in and out, struggling to get in a breath, her diaphragm creaking like an old wooden door as she lies in the hospital bed. Her heart pounds with every breath of her lungs and both sides of her body are working equally as hard to keep her going. She thinks about a prisoner in a clammy prison cell, feeling trapped and knowing that for the rest of his life he'll be pondering what he did to get here. He hopes for a second chance at this beautiful life, but there's no such thing.

Please give him a second chance, God.

The perspiration is covering her forehead, giving the room a similar smell to that of adolescence. She thinks about a construction worker wearing all long sleeves in a neon-green suit, hoping that the beads of sweat dripping from his forehead would turn into water and it would rain from the sky, cooling his body and giving him beautiful water.

Please give him water, God.

And the old woman's heart pounds like a gong. The sound of the gong bangs inside her head over and over. She thinks about a man driving a trash truck, day-in and day-out, listening to the hollow echo of each trash can dumping waste and excess into his truck over and over again.

Please give him peace and prosperity, God.

The pain she feels in her back, hoping it would just stop. She groans, her mind drunk on painkillers that are beginning to wear off. She thinks about a businessman whose life is all about his job. He works at night and at morning, hoping to get a spare moment of time to see his wife and children and support them.

Please let him see them and love them, God.

And she cries. Tears flow down her wrinkled face like a topographic map.

Please help me know that I have lived a meaningful life, God.

And God answers her.

"There are many things alike between you and all the people

you were thinking about. They all are sad about what their life has become. They all want another chance, and this is very similar to you. What I ask of you is to not be sad about your life. You do not need another chance. You can let go and know that the world would not have been the same without you. You just have to let go.”

And the woman weeps and clasps her hands in prayer.

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Your kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.

## Poems

AYNSLEIGH WOOD

### Dream My Son

I can give you dreams my son,  
But only you hold the key to making them happen.

### The Journal to Me

The writing is all that matters.  
The words that tell you what happened.  
The letters that outline the story.

### Candle Code

The light flickers. The shadows dance in a rhythmic pattern.  
The smoke talks, telling us the past and showing us the future.  
The glow speaks to the soul and brings light to the darkest of hearts.

### Marriage of Two

The girl of the past sat in somber silence,  
as the boy of the future paces in anticipation,  
for today to arrive to join the two together.

### Survive or Die

I reach the point of no return.  
The point where the only way is forward  
And back doesn't exist.  
I've reach the point of no return.

### The Storm Inside

The storm is raging,  
The food is low,  
But were too far to not see this through.  
Lighthouse

The light spun round and round.  
The boat swayed back and forth.  
Trying to stay afloat and getting to shore.

The water crashes,  
the boat tips.

Rough Seas

## Barbie Doll

KATHERINE YU

Perfection.

Or so everyone thought.

Thick, flowing blonde hair,

Big, bright blue eyes.

The clearest, tannest skin,

And a beautiful, fair face

Everyone thinks she is perfect

But no one knows her story.

They don't know the pain she goes through every day,

Or her ideas of changing the world,

Or the fact that she is a normal human being.

They don't realize the scars hiding under all the makeup,

Or her kind, innocent heart,

Or that maybe, she's more than just a pretty face.

They don't understand the loneliness,

Or the hunger and starvation,

Or the boredom she suffers through, while trying to seem perfect.

All they see is just another pretty face.

Perfection.

They don't realize that there is so much more.

And they never will.

Because when the fire burns out,

And her faith, dignity and determination withers to dust,

Her confidence breaks into shards of glass.

So she thinks that she is nothing more than a pretty face.

Nothing than a Barbie doll.

So she is put in a box,

A box society calls "a girl,"

And lives her life according to the instructions on the box,  
And remains there for the rest of eternity, barely living as an  
example for others to follow.

Being nothing more than a Barbie Doll.

## Family Recipe

SONYA ZAKARIAN

All I wanted to do was bake cookies, but instead I discovered the four sentences that would forever change my life. Trust me, I didn't expect to find them in my late grandmother's cookbook, but there they were, next to the picture of gluten-free oatmeal and raisin cookies. While the rest of the text in the book had been a small, black print, the recipe on the page was handwritten in purple ink, the only color my grandmother ever wrote in.

That was the first and only time I opened the cookbook. The eerie white infinity symbol emboldened on the front cover, like a sideways eight, had always been enough to steer me away. This was the recipe:

*Stir three times counterclockwise*

*Stir one time clockwise*

*Add one spoon of sugar*

*Proceed with caution—heats up quickly*

Somehow, I knew just what to do. I ran into my grandmother's room for the first time since her death. I was shocked to find that it hadn't changed at all. The pressed laundry on her bed still looked fresh. There were hairspray bottles and makeup products all over the floor. The covers of her bed were folded back, as if she had just gotten up to make her morning coffee.

But that was impossible.

I snatched the special powder from her abandoned desk drawer, pulled on my fleece jacket, and flew out the front door.

Down at the lake, I knelt by the waterfront. The sand was wet and cold, little grains of it seeping into my skin and giving me goose bumps.

*Three stirs counterclockwise.*

The morning sunlight shimmered on the face of the water.

*One stir clockwise.*

The water began to transmogrify into a sickly green.

*Add one spoon of sugar.*



I carefully poured in the contents of my grandma's special powder and watched it submerge into the depths of the lake.

*Proceed with caution—heats up quickly.*

My body burst into flames. The fire rippled through my bones, my heart, my veins. And as quickly as the heat came, it vanished, leaving my body with a sense of drowning cold.

“Hello, Beatrice.” My grandma smiled, holding a gun to my forehead.

The last thing I saw before I hit the ground was the white infinity symbol, flashing before my eyes.

I awoke with a start, relieved to find I was staring up at my bedroom ceiling. But as I slowly rose from the bed, the feeling of panic came rushing back. Something was wrong. Something had changed.

## Breathless

KELLY ZARATE MIGUEL

I want to explore the grassy green lands and lay under the cool gray fog that covers the sky and mountains. Hear the soothing sound of the water falling into a clear river. Look at the cliffs and red canyons, swim in the cool blue ponds. Understand what nature really hides. See what leaves me breathless.

The skyline that changes color, blue, pink, black, the warm sunlight, the cool dark nights filled with the white moonlight glare. See what leaves me breathless.

The ocean waves that reflect the crack of dawn, the sunset reflects on the sea. The smell of the bright white roses, the red rose maze garden. See what leaves me breathless.

The slow fall of snowflakes, the snow-covered forest at night, looking up at the snow-filled sky. The cold nights that make you feel alive. See what leaves me breathless.

The smell of the fields of colorful flowers after a rainy day. The damp yellow fields after the rain has fallen. The look of rain crashing down on a room full of windows looking straight to a luscious green hill. See what makes me breathless.

The coolness of the shade on a hot day, the warm feeling of the sun on your skin in the morning. The smell of the morning, with the sun waking up. The scent of flowers in a garden and the feeling of lying down on the soft cool green grass. See what leaves me breathless.

The color of the afternoon sky, the color of sunset, the color of dawn. The breeze during the day, night. The feeling of the dark shady mountains. See what makes me breathless.

Do you feel breathless?



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