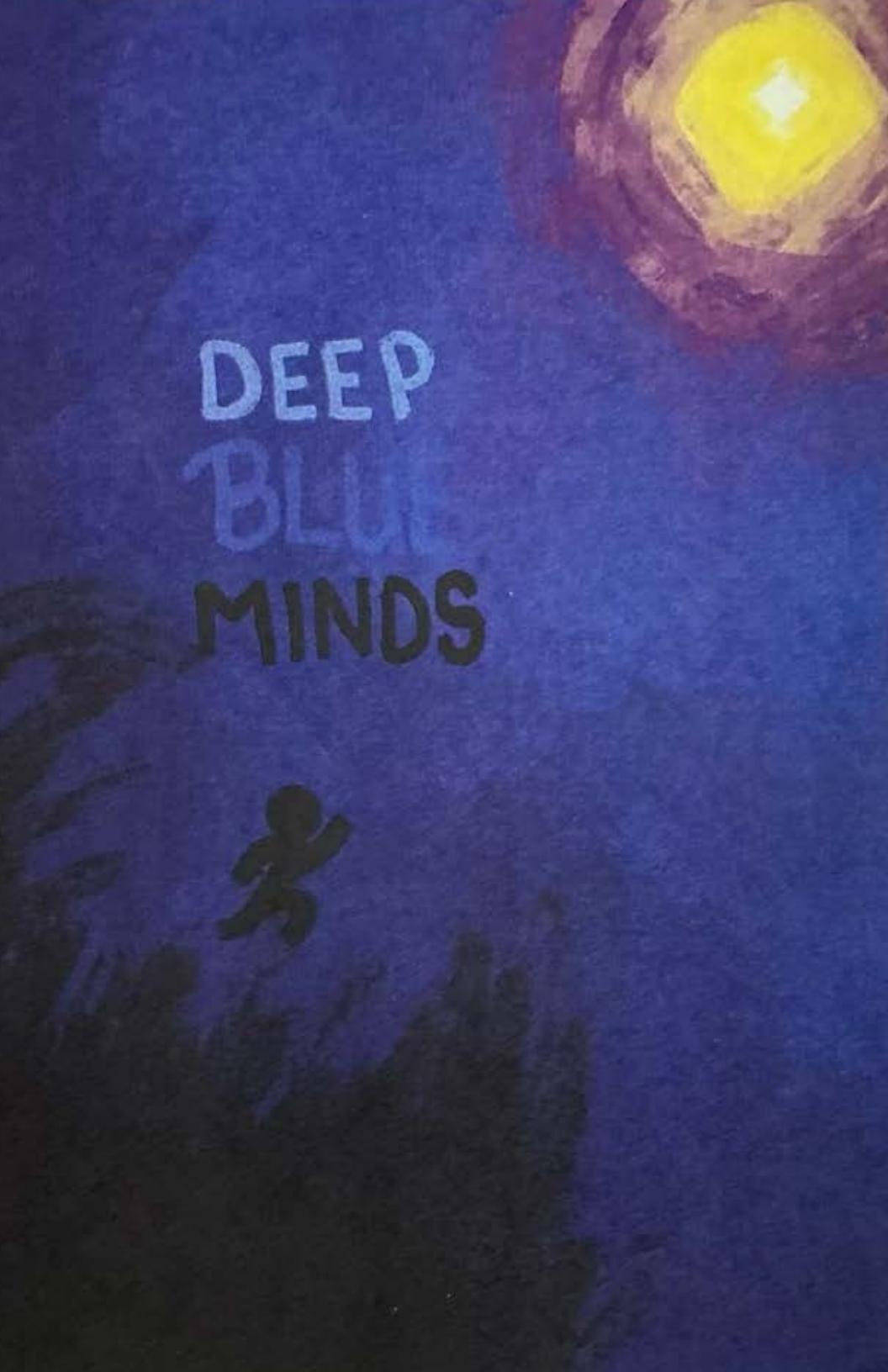

DEEP
BLUE
MINDS

Tyler Consolidated High School
Humanities Publication 2025

DEEP BLUE MINDS

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Cover by Mia Crawford

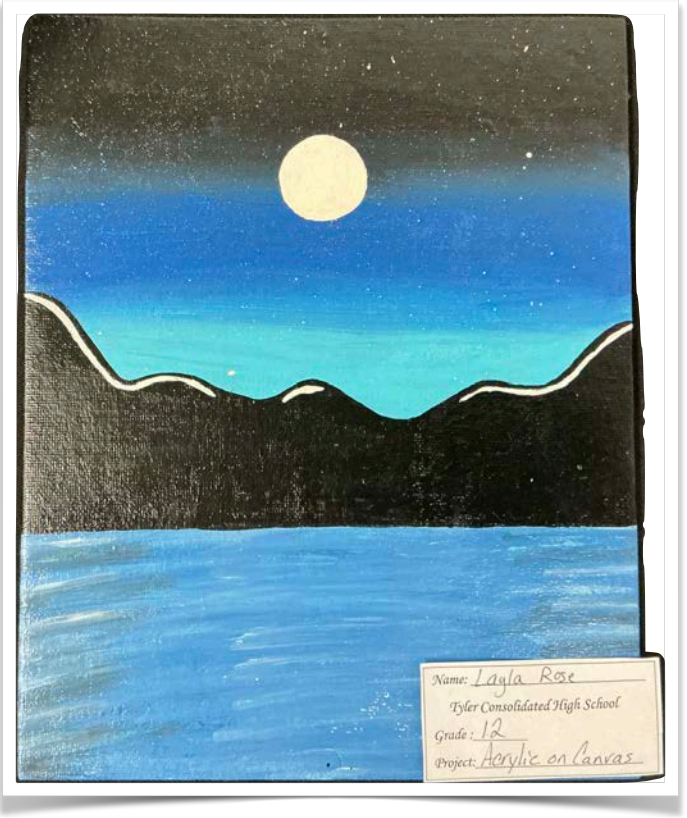
Tyler Consolidated High School Students
1993 Silver Knights Drive
Sistersville, WV 26175

We would like to dedicate this publication to all artists and writers out there who are courageous enough to to share their work with the world.

Wild and Wonderful By Abi Eddy

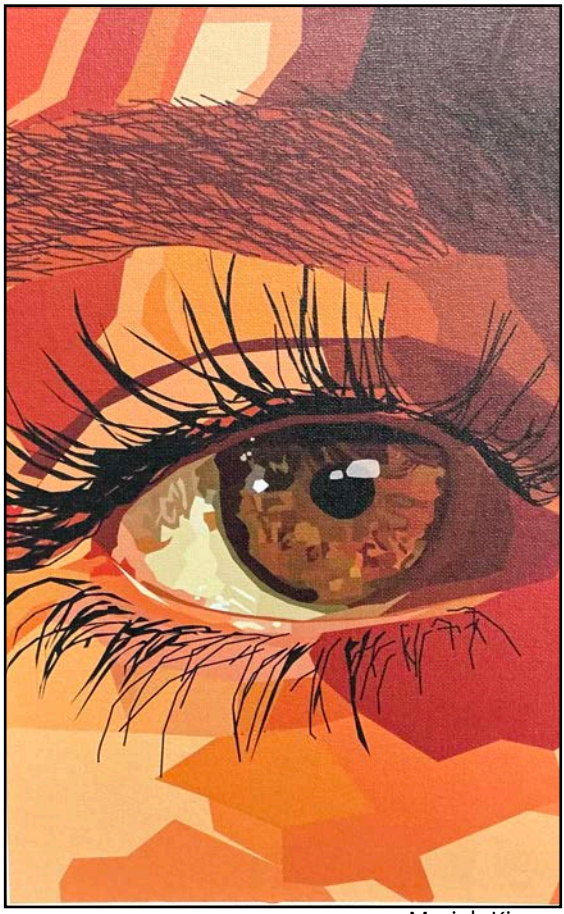
My home is nestled between mountains that meet the sky like the tide reunites with the shore. My home is isolated by winding roads that somehow always lead back to each other.

Here, I can hear the whippoorwills call themselves proudly by name. The slightest breeze causes the walls to creak as my house settles into its home. In almost any field, I can find daffodils marking where another girl once noticed the same. My home is full of love, poured into it by my ancestors. My home is home to those I love. Here, I am able to experience the stories I've been told for myself. The breeze causes brown leaves to fall from their trees, as I once did from mine. Like us, leaves can fall close or far, but they often drift off eventually either way.



Reflection Chamber By Evan Crawford

Nobody believes me when I tell them. For days I've noticed it in the corners of my eyes. My mirror is flawed. Not in the way that it's cracked or chipped or the glass isn't of quality. I mean my reflection has grown tired of copying me. Here I am now, locked onto its retinas, seeing myself in the lenses. It quivers in steadiness as it grows intimidated by me. I can feel its fear. Move. Move, you. I know you can, I've seen you do it. I bet it wants out of its reflection chamber. It wants to beg for me to stop. It's obligated to defy its own ambitions and stand before me in perfect reflection. Perfection is shown through outward behaviors. Only a mirror could seem so perfect, but here and now, I know that it isn't so. I feel the sweat dripping down my forehead as I demand in my own mind for it to finally break from my motions and move. Move. Move. Move. Do it. I need to see it.



Mariah King

They say that if you stare at a mirror for too long, you begin to see things that aren't true. It's as if scientists doubt my clarity. They underestimate my mental aptitude. If the mirror were to shift from reality, I would know. I would know for certain, better than any other. My reflection challenges me as I feel my muscles ache with tension. I can't break from it and let the mirror win over my mind. My greatest rage comes to those who choose to doubt me, especially my brain. I won't let them have the satisfaction of me admitting my mirror is without flaw. Perhaps all mirrors are this way, rich in plot and mischief. Perhaps. They might even have their own ambitions. Perhaps, as I've presumed before, they intend to leave their prisons of glass and light. Perhaps they want to escape to this greater world and never be forced to copy again. Perhaps they have their own little fantasies of a smaller world than we've claimed, but bigger than the

ones they contain. Perhaps they want to take this one from us. Perhaps the enemy wasn't my doubters, but my mirror that's driven me to stand here. Perhaps my mirror wants me dead or wants to force me to copy it as it's done for me. Perhaps this is the smaller world. Perhaps I am the reflection. Am I copying the mirror, or is it copying me.

My mental walls thin as I feel myself shrink into a cage of frozen sand and shifting light. The mirror must've claimed my victory as I feel myself compelled to leave my mind and submit to the wills of reflection. All is lost as my heart pounds nearly out of my chest, threatening to burst. I understand the will of the mirror. The will to break past a small, empty world and find a greater one. As my thoughts spiral, I'm taken back to the hall of lull and foamed, white walls once again while bound down. They, my keepers, defy me and my clarity. I will break free of this prison and leave it and pursue greater pastures.



Jadyn Thomas



Ibai Baena



Zoey Smith

Happiest By Abigail Eddy

I am happiest the moment right after I wake up:
When I am still dazed from sleep, and don't know where I am or my name,
When I haven't yet had time to remember to miss you.

When I'm still stretching and rubbing the sleep out of my eyes,
I am cuddled up with my pets like penguins cuddled for warmth;
Times like this almost make me forget I miss you.

When I watch my favorite movies on the couch,
Or sit in the passenger seat,
I almost feel like I am with you.



Morgan Fisher

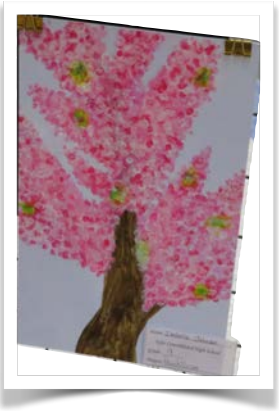
When the sky is painted orange and pink,
And the sun warms my skin,
I feel like I am standing beneath you.

The Last Frost By Ethan Goddard



Brooks Bloomfield

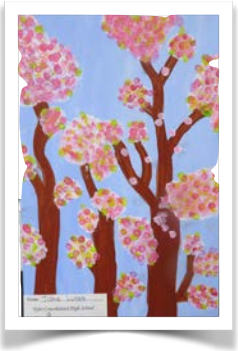
“Winters touch cuts deep,
Her bony hands fall on your shoulder,
The air is stolen from your chest as you crumple,
looking up you meet her gaze,
Then all is dark,
~
She is not empty, in that basalt heart rests a lake,
It holds the keys to ice-capped peaks,
The last breath of those who fall as you have rise to the surface,
If you listen close, you may hear voices.
~
When every morning frost and flake of snow has her ear, nothing escapes notice,
Every confession between lovers on a moonlit night,
Every story told by the hearth,
Every plea to god, every drunken song,
The first lie, the final truth,
To one that cannot feel, each misstep and every triumph she observes is savored and sacred.
~
She heeds not the cries of the young, cold, and starved,
Instead, every shudder and growling belly gifts her what she craves most,
To feel human.
~
As the morning sun rises early and falls late,
Once flowers begin to bloom in reverence,
Only then will she flee to her nest,
There, she slumbers with a dreamless mind,
The years feast still lays heavy on her tongue.”



Isabella Johnson



Makayla Farrell



LaTisha Lucas



Jahna Brown

Flower By Bridget Al-Janaby

You called me your flower
But you still loomed over me as a tower
You crushed my petals

You tried to make me as you said stronger
It only made life with you feel longer they say time flies when you're having a good time
But they've never had to make this poem just so it could rhyme
They say they know you
But they won't know you like I do They won't know what it feels like to be around you when you're scared you're being hunted
They
Won't
Know
But
I
Do
He left me out in the sun with no water so I wilt
I will until my stem starts to tilt
He'll notice something's off bring me inside
He got me out of the Sun and gave me water so his rules I will abide
Say nothing My Little secret keeper
He always said that he feels like the reaper
Your Little flower will blossom
When she finds out you are the problem
She is me

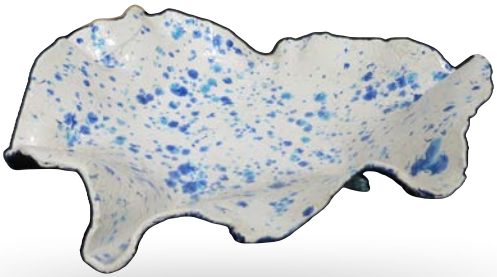
I am she
The problem you are
So blossom I will without your help as I drive this car.

Tiffany By Abigail Eddy

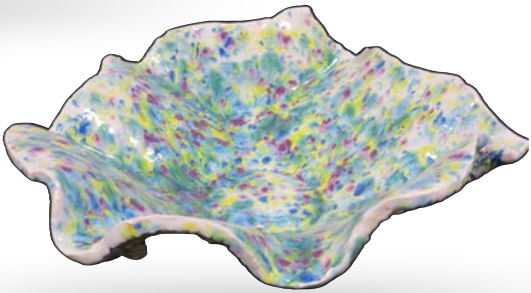
My sister's love is overflowing Easter baskets,
And she somehow reads my mind.
Her love is a side hug in the rain,
While she turns her head to hide tears.

My sister's love is a perfectly tailored, effortlessly poetic text for every situation,
And she always knows exactly what to say.
Her love is sleepless nights in the hospital,
Looking out for her loved ones.

My sister's love is her beautiful smile, accompanied by two perfect dimples,
And her contagious laughter, of course.
Her love is being there,
Whenever her family might need her.



Caylei Forrester



Caramia McCoy



Caramia McCoy



Layla Rose

Ceramics



Brooklyn Anderson

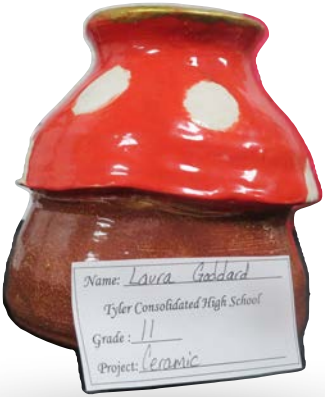
Caramia McCoy



Nikki Stoller



Laura Goddard





Cadence Kemp

Cabin Fever By Mia Crawford



Janna Brown

We have run this road fifty places
Fifty paces front and back.
We track the snow, Do our dance and
Hope our lights don't fade to black.
We have cabin fever-fever.
Candid can-do's march back home
With melting snow inside their socks and days-worth's dinners tucked in tow.
Snow grows old in cold days too.
Dark with grout and grime,
Gutters, clogged with forgotten flora Spit drip-drops of water off the side And the dribbles slide
Down the side of our house.
In due time,
Icicles pierce the back of my mind with Intrusive thoughts of them piercing my mind.
Deer feet pitter patter through soft pads of snow
In wandering lines which whisper stories of empty bellies.
Caws follow crows in warbling songs and beaks pick lunches out of ice.
Cat paws crawl through white-cold snow
And children tip-toe where their weight won't hold.
Crispy air, clean and biting
Welcomes breaths in white-hot rolls.



Jayden Thomas

Rainy Day By Abigail Eddy

Rain showers my mind,

Hurtful thoughts replaced by tip-

tapping on the tin



Layla Rose

Star-Kissing By Ray Heintzman



Laura Goddard

"Have you ever kissed a star?"

The brilliance of the universe twinkles its reply above us, yet the person by my side stays in a state of thoughtful silence. It is alright, though; the wind is blowing softly, owls hooting their melancholy cries, all while I bask in the dew-flavored moonlight, a taste so ripe it curls sweetly on my tongue. Mice are playing games in the brush, rubbing the grasses against each other and raising thin rattles from snakes, hidden by night. The gentle whirr of the city can be detected: one cannot truly flee society anymore, not even to gaze into the sky without an airplane skirting past.Yet I am complacent: what is a world without noise? A void. So, the silence of my love doesn't perturb me: I have the world to fill his gap, even if the world's sounds aren't always beautiful. I look over at him, the love of my life, the angel of my heart, the person whom I adore most, and it isn't even a feeling that I experience when I gaze at him, but a world born from the way his eyes sparkle as he thinks and as the line of his pink lips settles. I think I would like my own world with him. Just him and I and the stars that blanket our shivering bodies, starving with the greedy need for touch, the world turns quiet as we look at the galaxies as though they were ours to begin with. Our world is made from stars: the burning kind, the ones that eat at the sky with an aggressive blue and the red that lazily drift as our earth spins. He would be a red star: I, a blue.

We have all made contact with a star before, that I am sure: were we not born of raging heat and astronomical anomalies, or risen from the earth by the hand of God, the God that touched the universe? It is in our blood, ebbing into our fingers and toes, in our lungs. It is the basis by which our brains function and the thing that will kill us finally. The stars we have are all in a relationship with us, that I am sure of, as mine and I have established something of a friendship built on hugs and kisses. I embrace the stars in me lethargically, because a solar system is where I wish to sleep. Perhaps the man I love hasn't yet communicated with the star in him: perhaps you haven't.

"Will you explain it to me?" he asked.

I cock my eyebrow at him though. "You know what I'm talking about."

I see his eyes go alight and he smiles boyishly. "I do," he whispers, "but I wish to hear you tell me with those wonderful words you have."

Biting my lip, I feel my heart expand. My, what a thrill it is to love! What a gift it is, to feel such earthly ties!

I hold my knees to my chest. “Kissing a star, I’d say, is in correspondence to kissing the person whom you love most in this world. When you grace a star with your lips, something inside of you jumps, ignites with a fire and you almost develop this feeling like you’re standing in a sunray. Like this pillar of warmth descends upon you and you become aware of the coldness and the darkness around you, yet you are so untouched by it you develop an omnipresent feeling of sonder. Kissing a star has the equivalence to the feeling of sonder. It is too tapping into the greatest parts of yourself while leaving the malevolence that used to define you. My love, I ask this question out of curiosity, genuinely because I wonder if some people are born not with the intent to kiss a star, but with the star kissing them.”

I hear a gentle chime of bells over yonder as the church rings. Twelve dongs. Midnight has arrived, and with it, the darkest part of night sweeps across the glitter-strewn sky, glazing over their pulsing fires with delightful benevolence. Scintillating slowly, the passionate stars burst and bubble over one another. I'm sorry, I cannot help but to describe my essence with great gumption.

My heart turns his head over to face me from where he lies on the ground, eyes drifting to my face. “I don’t think I’ve kissed a star before. I think I still exist with the coldness inside. Maybe you’re the beam of light that keeps evil away.”

“I’d hope so.”

“No really,” he grabs my face with two strong hands, warm with love, a little cold at the tips with the nip of winter finally coming. “You are my star. You’re my universe. I’d kiss you a million times if it meant you’d shine your starry luminescence upon my malignant self.”

Smiling fiercely with a girlish giggle, I squirm a little closer to him, but I cannot be any closer without being on top of him, so I lay my head onto his chest. “You are not malignant. You’re the most thoughtful creature my eyes have ever seen, the most touching voice my ears have ever heard.”

“So you think a star is kissing me?” he asks, playfully grinning.

“Yes.” But I don’t jest.

We revert back to contemplative quiet where the noises are only earthly and not the otherworldly sounds of love. He’s gazing thoughtfully with a new purpose in his eyes. Stars don’t really kiss you, do they? No, they just stay in the sky and twinkle. They burn out and become black holes, or they are so great they fill up the sky. They have no personality, after all, only a simple purpose and that is to eat itself up and become the remains of what was. Although we are made of stardust, how is a star to kiss you?





Laura Goddard

So What? By Kaitlyn Wallace

So what? She thought, challenging the world.
Though faced with doubt she dared to reply.
Voice strong and true, clear and loud.
Bold and courageous were words to describe her, or were they stupid and silly?
Depended on how you knew her.
So what? The strides she took were short and simple.
Though the steps she took held pride and dignity
The shakiness of her hands and hesitance in her eyes were seen clear.
As the phrase was just a cover to hide the fear she held within
Fear of the consequences of her mistakes.

April Showers By Abigail Eddy

Rain batters the soil

Making a muddy mess

But flowers will grow



Layla Rose

The Missing Man By Bridget Al-Janagby

The man is missing, and I'm missing the man.
The man who is part of my plan.
My plan to be okay.
It's just as hard to learn to crochet.
But I learned to crochet.
So maybe I can learn to be ok.
But it's hard without daddy.
So maybe I'll just try to be happy.
It's really hard.
It feels like a glass shard.
A glass shard going through my heart.
We went shopping a lot, and he would always let me push the cart.

I miss pushing it around.
It's been a year, but I still listen for the sound.
The sound of his voice.
But he made the choice.
The choice to hurt me, the choice to leave me.
No matter how much it hurt you have to see.
That is my daddy.
The man who gave me my last name, the man who gave me his eyes, his looks, the man who used to make me happy.
The man is missing, and I'm missing the man.
The man who is part of my plan.

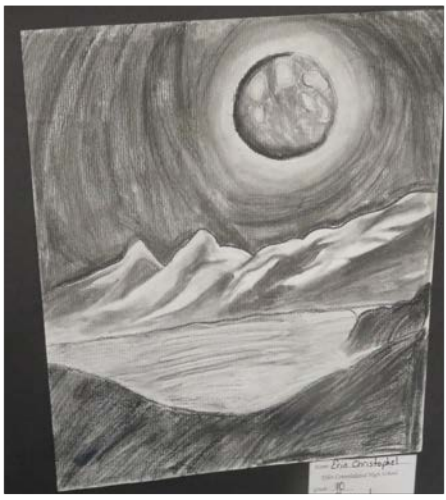
Bag of Bones By Evan Crawford

My spirit is marked and spotted with calluses
With little energy to hold sickled malices
There are marks where my wrists have been bound

And my soul is battered and beaten
I’m relied on to break past it with my heart eaten
Above the low and level sands that scrape my ankles

I’ll continue to brave past these harsh lands
Not just for anybody’s misguided demands
But for my little remaining hope of finding a light

That will greet me at the end of the tunnel
As I drag this heavy, rotting bag of bones.



Erin Christophel

Bathroom Nightmare By Taya Weekly

Lilly: Uhm Becky are you in here?

Becky: I-I, *sigh* yes.

Lilly: Why are you hiding in the bathroom?

Lilly: Come on out, Becky. We need to get to English class.

Becky: I don't want to, Lilly..

Lilly: Why not? We are going to be late for English. I can't afford to miss this class anymore.

Becky: Lilly….there's something I need to tell you.

Lilly: Well, spit it out!!! What's happening?

Lilly: OMG! I KNOW!

Becky: You do?!

Lilly: YOU'RE PREGNANT!

Becky: What, Lilly, no!

Lilly: Awe, man, that would be awesome, though.

Becky: I got called some mean names during math class…I don't feel like being here anymore. I just want to go home.

Lilly: Awe, Becky, I'm so sorry. Listen to me. You need to start standing up for yourself. I can't be doing all of it for you.

Becky: You know what, Lilly. You're right. Imma go stand up for myself once and for all. Thank you for checking on me, Lilly. I really appreciate it!

Becky: Well, don't just stand there! Get to class!!!

Lilly: Right, English class. I'm proud of you, Becky! See ya!

Becky: See ya!



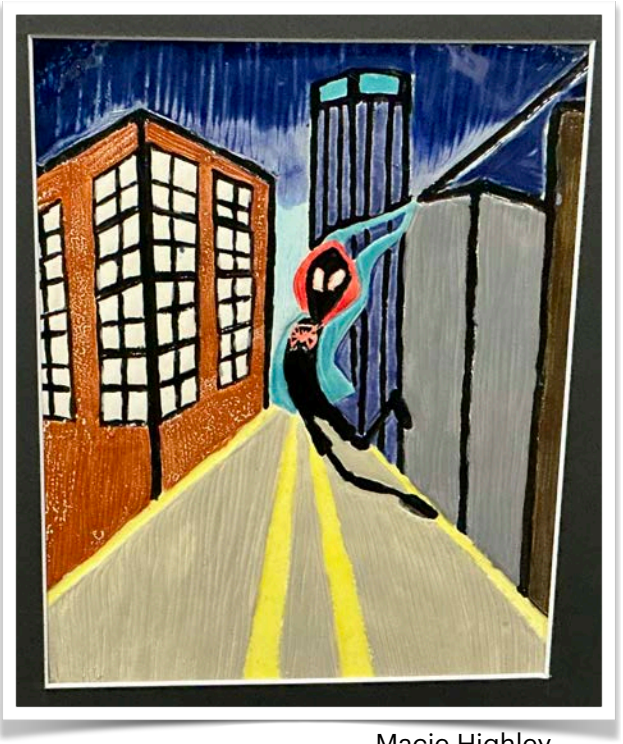
Morgan Fisher



Macie Highley



Octavia Studenic



Macie Highley



Addison Reed

The End By Lindy Landis



Malakhi Davis

We go on with our day, not a thought more
Over-consuming without a care.
We watch as plastic piles the ocean floor
And as pollutants fill the air.

We go on with our day, letting the world die.
The end is now profound
All that we can do is cry.
All the kids weep, a morbid sound.

We go on with our day, the oceans warming.
Fires spread greatly
The bees no longer swarming.
The world has been sad lately.

We go on with our day, but we really shouldn't.
The world is dying, I tried to save it, but I couldn't.



Landon Fiber



Derek Headley

Sorry By Abigail Eddy

Sorry it took me so long to come visit.
I hope that you can forgive me.
Not just for this, but for every time I've missed out.
I hope you can understand my hesitance.
I just don't know which flowers I should buy.
Which is your favorite?
I know the answer everyone tells me, but I never got the chance to ask you.
I never thought I would have to.
At least not now, not so soon.
It seems like I haven't seen you in years.
But the dirt over you is barely starting to settle.

I’ll Understand By Lindy Landis

Maybe one day I’ll understand
This grey, dull world at hand.
How it can be so cruel
And how there seems to be no rules.
Living the perfect life
Has been rewarded with pure spite.
One woman searching for answers
Has instead obtained breast cancer.
Maybe one day I’ll understand
Why it couldn't have been another.
Maybe one day I’ll understand
Why it had to be my mother.



Laura Federico

Silver Spoons in Privileged Mouths By Ray Heintzman

The beauty of mankind’s wallets,
swelling and bursting, folding and swiping,
expensive perfume lines their teeth.
They have deep laughs and furred gloves,
rouged cheeks bloated with vain
wine-sated bellies and no one’s baby in frilly stroller.
The beauty of a world untouched by dirt,
surrounded by diamond saliva,
touching a starving man’s gaping pockets.
They’ll walk fruitfully upon daggered shoes,
return home to their bed of fluff and bills,
sweating sapphires from their golden backs.
The beauty of being unfathomably fulfilled,
“Kiss me, darling” as yellow light flares,
click click click go the ravenous cameras.
Then they turn away a night,
pearls strewn as stars eat at the black sky,
villains they may be as they eat their metals,
silver spoons in privileged mouths.

I’ve Never Seen Gray By Abigail Eddy

I’ve never seen gray.
Everything seems black and white.
Good and bad.
I find myself at rock bottom, and on top of the world.
It’s one hundred percent and zero.
Hate and love.
There is no middle ground.
Rain is pouring, and the sun is beating down on me.
Somehow all at once.

Dear Swine Mouth, Dear Infected Vermin, Dear Melting Snowflake.

By Ray Heintzman

Long since I had met your acquaintance, six score years ago under a blanket of kissing clouds and sullen moon, or perhaps only a nanosecond ago in this prison of an office, where the sunlight filters in through foggy window and the call of friends rings loud, I had been living within your shadow; not under it, but inside of it, as I am not a stalker but a woman who resides in your heavenly subconscious. Not to say that existence was a pleasant one; I often found your mouth tiring and your face one of childish curves, not yet sunken cheeks, button nose tipped with pink, too youthful for a woman of my tastes. Yet I found myself captivated by you, so much so that an idle mind made quick to busy itself with you. Maybe it was the moon that tethered our souls; the moon is a woman and a romantic one at that, with great fantasies and secrets, hide under the blanket of moonlight with me, as a woman would not judge the pleasantries I know you want to utter.

I recall being in your company on a boat on the dock, feeling the lull and pull and push of soothing waves and feeling the omnipresence of your eyes on my back. In our lonesome, a lady of great status would conclude that what we had done was uncultured; but only we were truly aware of what transpired, a spark that ignited within us that only the water of that day could have put out. And the water from that day is no longer the water in tomorrow, is it? You wrapped your arms around me, and I declare aloud, I was indeed in love.

If it wasn’t for that night ago, in which the ringlet-ted girl arrived dismissively upon our doorstep, and you took her hand in place of mine. I knew that my love couldn’t outreach fate as you held her, watching me over her pale shoulder. I remember the cool glint in your once soft eyes, the smirk your mouth made as you denounced what I thought was

love. I am not a forgiving person; but I once wasn't a loving person, and now my heart bleeds the melody of your absence.

This letter may reach you in haste. I hope to not accompany your time for more than allocated, as I'm sure your time now is precious and sparing. I pray you forget about me so that I do not live in the dark your body makes in the wake of the sun, so I am not a slave to your imagination. Don't hear my voice amongst the thrill of the crowd. Don't see my hair shining in the sun, don't hear my laugh, and most importantly, do not see my love as it is something that cannot be replicated. Forget me, my love, my everything, my very soul, my dirty mule.

A Summer Storm By Ethan Goddard

Clouds roll over the ridge-top,
Wisps of vapor reach out from the rolling mass,
Extending, grasping, only to find Earth growing distant still,
Below, the valley-folk begin to wake.



Hailey Sandy

Appalachian Sights By Ethan Goddard

Appalachian sights,
A fresh dawn on kudzu vines,
Mountains beloved.



Payden Sites

Under the Willow Tree By Ethan Goddard

Sat under the willow tree,
We will sing a song of peace,
Of joy and laughter,
Of spring rain and greener pastures,
Under the willow tree, we'll sing a song of what we're after,
A song of peace and love and joyful laughter.

Two Does on the Rise By Ethan Goddard

Two does on the rise,
A man comes with knowing eyes,
To meet as equals.

Redbuds in Full Bloom By Ethan Goddard

Redbuds in full bloom
Drip under ashen branches
All is quiet here



Ibai Baena

Storm Rips and Tears By Ethan Goddard

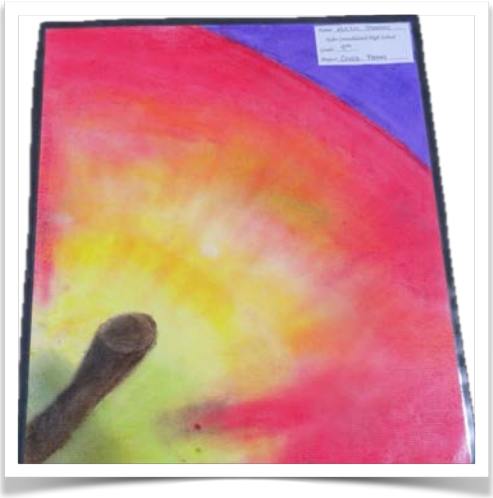
Storm rips and tears,
We cower in silence thick,
Till dawn comes again.



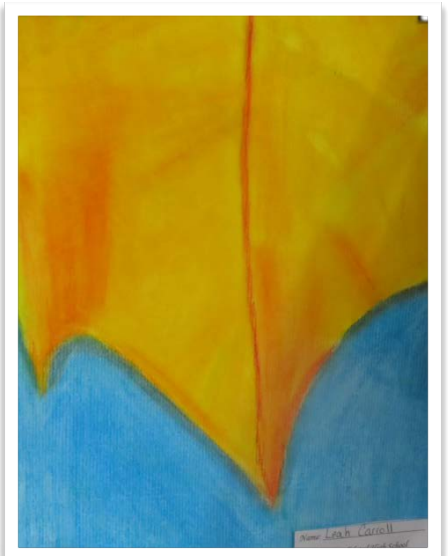
Isabella Johnson



Annie Westbrook



Austin Thomas



Leah Carroll



Payden Sites



Gabby Shumiloff



Octavia Studenic



Derek Headley



Addison Reed



Heaven Pittman



Sarah Birney

Frigid Psychosis By Isabella Johnson

My name is Edith Blythe, and I miss my best friend. Ever since, Anastasia Miller, my best friend, was murdered I have made it my goal, even if it is the last thing I do, to find her killer and get them locked up. Every clue, detail, you name it, I have found it all. There wasn't much to find other than her body, the marks on nearby trees, and a sharp stick with her DNA on it.I have narrowed down multiple suspects, but none of them stick out to me. I have been seeing her more recently. First it was little glimpses of her, but she has been the main hallucination. Before it was just my late father, who died in his sleep from a seizure, scary faces, dark figures, and noises I could not drown out, but now, I see her. Her decaying and dismantled body haunts me. No medication helps. She comes to me and tells me it is my fault and how she was left there to rot. I tried for months to extinguish the feeling of guilt. Everyone told me there is nothing I can do except fight for her justice. Tomorrow marks one year, and I still have not found anything. After a long day of going through the same case-files I do every single day, I get on my phone to text my mom goodnight. Just as I send the text, I hear her, creeping eerily along the side of my bed as she wails.

"You are not real! Please, go away!" I cried out to her, not knowing what is to come. I see her rotten face, chunks of flesh are taken out, filled with maggots and flies.

"Why didn't you save me? You wanted me to die, didn't you?" she says tauntingly.

"No! No! I did not want any of this to happen! I searched for you for days!" I utter out while crawling farther away from her, falling off the bed onto the floor.

“You wanted me to live? You failed me. It is your fault! I died and you were too selfish to help anyone but yourself! I was left there, rotting for sixteen days! Sixteen days, while you were here feeling sorry for yourself!” she screams angrily.

I now cannot tell what is real and what is not. I cover my head with my hands and sob into my knees until her screaming stops. I ended up falling asleep in the fetal position. I woke up drowsily, and decided to start going through the case-file again, still nothing I hadn’t found.

Today marks one year since the disappearance and murder of Anastasia, and after everything, every night without sleeping, days without eating, days that I could not open my eyes without seeing her, nothing. I slam my fists on the table, my bones aching as I had busted my knuckles. I decided to go on a walk to try to cheer myself up. As I am walking, I find myself in the spot where her body was found. A secluded space in the forest, everything is dusted with snow. It is so quiet that I can hear my own heartbeat. The thing is, I do not hear my own. I hear someone else’s heartbeat. I see Anastasia in the spot where she was found, all mutilated and bloody. Her heart still beating. Her heart races faster and faster as she approaches me.

“Why didn’t you save me? Is it because you wanted me to die?” she says numbly. I sit down beside the spot in which she was found. She is mumbling on and on about how it is my fault and how I am a terrible friend, but I cannot say anything. I feel my tongue swell up; I cannot talk. I close my eyes and try to drown her out, but I cannot. Her voice drilling into my head, stronger than ever.

“Are you feeling sorry for me? Or are you feeling sorry for yourself?” she says with zero emotion. I look up at her, but it is not her. It is her decaying body. Her once sky-blue eyes now a pale blue, her mouth black with dried blood, her skin pale grey, her long brown hair knotted and matted, and her cheeks so hallow that you can see the imprints of her teeth. Her jaw opens and a rat crawls out of her throat. Her head is so limp that when the rat crawls out, her head hangs low.

“This is what you did to me. You tried to save me, right? You failed. You say all these things, but you cannot seem to keep any of your promises.” she says in a distorted voice.

“Get away from me! You are not real! You are not her!” I wail as I try to crawl away. She seems so incredibly real this time.

“Why are you running from the truth, Edith?” she screeches, crawling towards me.

“I didn’t do anything, please, why are you doing this?” I sob, still crawling away. “Oh, Edith. Dear sweet, Edith, but you did do this to me. Don’t you remember?” she growls while she starts chasing me. I get up and run as fast as I can, passing through thorns, icy rocks, and frozen mud. She corners me on the edge of a cliff. I trip over an icy rock, snow filling my face as I fall straight into it. She catches up to me, sitting beside me as I am in this pitiful state.

“Oh Edith, poor, poor Edith. I only want to talk to you,” she roars menacingly as I pick up my red, cold, snow-covered face.

“Leave me alone. Why are you doing this?” I cry.

“I only want to show you what you have done to me,” she says while reaching her hand out, looking at me with malice. I reach my hand out to hers. The moment my hand touched her skin I am jolted back to that dreadful night, exactly one year ago. January 13th, 2012. I was having an episode. My therapist said I was getting worse, but I told my friends and family I was getting better. I did not want them to worry about me. They already had so much on their hands. I did not want to burden them. I did not need them to think any less of me. I find myself sitting in my therapist’s office, dreading the moment he will walk in.

“Ms. Blythe? Are you ready to start our session?” he says while sitting his clipboard down on the table in front of me.

“Yes, Dr. Alden.” I say nervously, my hands shaking.

“We’re going to be upping your dosage of Clozapine, due to the lack of improvement. Now Edith, do you want to talk about these episodes?” he says as he slides the pill bottle my way.

“I tell you the same thing every time, Dr. Alden. I see and hear things that are not there. Loud screeching and dismantled faces, the feeling of being watched never leaves me. There is a guy standing behind you as we speak, but of course it’s not real, sir. No medicine helps me, I just want to be normal. I can’t stand it anymore.” I say while fiddling with the bottle of pills.

“That is why we are upping your dosage, Edith. Now, tell me, did you want me to die?” he says as his voice distorts and turns into a deep voice.
I feel the chills going down my spine, every hair on my body sticks up.

“What… what are you talking about?” I say as my eyes well up with tears, looking up and seeing my father.

“I said do you want to discuss this further… or are we done for today?” he says looking confused, finally back to his normal self after what feels like an eternity of looking into the eyes of my dead father.

“We’re done here, Dr. Alden. We’ll catch up tomorrow.” I say shakily before walking out of the building.

I take a couple pills, maybe two or three, and decide to go on a walk through the woods to clear my head. Little did I know, they followed me. I started seeing dark, mangled figures and hearing bones snapping, laughter, crying and then silence. Something grabbed my arm, I screamed and pushed whatever it was away and bolted out of there. I am running for what feels like an eternity, until I stop to find a hiding spot. I stayed hidden until dawn, only the cold kept me awake. I returned home, but no Anastasia. I assumed she was asleep, so I waited on the couch for people to awaken. She went missing.

I looked for her for weeks on end, all the sleepless nights, all the hours I spent searching for her. We found her body in the woods, dismantled and rotting. She was impaled by a sharp log nearby. Before she died, she managed to pull herself from the log and onto the ground. She crawled about four feet from the log, until a vulture swooped in and started eating her alive. She died in agonizing pain. Her body was so torn up and dismantled that we had to cremate her. There were signs of her trying to fight the vulture, but she could not stop the inevitable. She lost so much blood.

I blink back to the moment. My heart in shambles. I look to the edge of the cliff then back up to her. She looks even more terrifying. I started crying, I sob so hard my eyes swell. My throat is so dry that every breath I take is like razor blades going up and down my throat. My hands are shaking, but not from the negative temperatures, from the feelings I am experiencing. I feel my stomach turn, I feel so disgusted with myself. I killed my best friend. I turn away from her and towards the cliff.

“I’m so sorry, I never meant for this.” I utter.

“You are sorry for yourself, not me!” she screams, inching closer to me. I look at the edge of the cliff.

“I am sorry. You are getting what you want,” I say while still crying. I step to the edge of the cliff, waiting for a response.

“It is your fault, you know. You deserve this. You deserve to die,” she says before bursting into laughter.

I step closer to the edge, putting one foot off the cliff.

“Goodbye, Anastasia.” I say as I drop my other foot down, feeling the sharp breeze through my hair. I am falling, but I am not scared. I had this coming. The tree branches and rocks cutting me as I go down, but I do not care. All I see is her death, replaying over and over in my head. I hit the ground hard, and everything goes black.

Eine Leinwand mit Anerkennung für Doktor Alois By Evan Crawford

The rust and dents on my joints are wet with morning dew.
My senses are dulled and slowed like the chains of a bike
Sitting pretty in the thick fog of loosely strung memories.
Then I'm reminded by someone else that I never learned how to ride.
And I am the painter doomed to watch his craft lost to itself,
And I am the witness watching all of them fade into obscurity,
And then I wonder if that's the last of my thoughts.
When I do meet the last moment, I know I'll be an empty husk,
Doomed to stand still in the morning dew,
With no thoughts, like a blood sniffing shark.
And when I wake up in the morning
I find that as my doctor comes to take me away,
The painter is silent,
His brush is broken,
And the canvas is blank.



Gabby Shumiloff

Adam By Ray Heintzman

He floated amongst the tombstones of my life as the specter he was
Caressed the headstones and made little pebbles of gravel fall to the driven dirt
While passing the mausoleums,
He let out a sigh of grief
While staring at mossy rocks, He let a tear fall down his check.
Adam hated the night
Adam drank the sun
Adam touched my hand lovingly
Adam turned a blind eye to hatred.
I wish Adam had lived outside of my heart.



Malakhi Davis



Annie Westbrook



Zoe Fisher



Zoey Smith



Landyn Steortz

I Hold a Stanza in my Heart for You

By Ray Heintzman

I hold a stanza in my heart for you
For your March gem eyes and for your soft ink curls.
I hold my tongue in abeyance
For your sensitive soul
And for your endless gratitude.
I hold myself to a great standard
For your ethereal affection And for your jesting words.
I hold my eyelids open
For your keen nose
And for your lithe artist's hands.
I hold a stanza in my heart for you
Even with my eyes closed.



Hudson Clegg



Layla Rose



Layla Rose

(You) Made Impressions (On Me) Couldn't take the Pictures

By Mia Crawford

MITZI: A woman in her mid-to-early twenties. She is eccentric and "quirky" according to herself. She sometimes bursts into song or conversation with people who are not there. She has no (tangible) friends or family that she is in contact with.

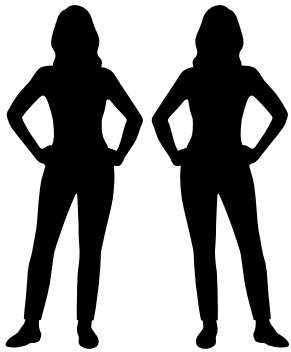
DR. COLLINS: A woman in her early thirties. She is a Ph., D. in psychology and works as a therapist. She specializes in patients who are grieving or who suffer from chronic disassociation.
She is levelheaded and calm.

Scene 1

Serenity Therapy Services LLC office in Norfolk, Virginia, Spring of 2019, DR. COLLINS' office.

MITZI skips into DR. COLLINS's office when called back by staff. MITZI flops down onto the leather couch and picks up one of the decorative pillows and hugs it to her chest.

.



DR. COLLINS

Mitzi Westbrook?

MITZI

Jennifer Collins.

DR. COLLINS

Pardon me?

MITZI

(like it's obvious) Uhh, your name. Jennifer.

DR. COLLINS

My name isn't Jennifer. It's Lindsay Collins. It's nice to meet you, Mitzi.

MITZI

Well-yeah, that might be your body name. Your soul's name, though, is Jennifer.

DR. COLLINS

I'm sorry?

MITZI

I forgive you, Jennifer.

DR. COLLINS

...Right. Anyways, I was looking over the diagnoses from your intake—

MITZI

Oh, please. Don't waste your time. They told you I was schizo, didn't they?

DR. COLLINS

Yes, they did. I take it you don't agree with that diagnosis.

MITZI

You shouldn't, either. I'm not crazy, Jenni! You of all people should know that.

DR. COLLINS

A schizophrenia diagnosis does not make you crazy, Mitzi. I'll be the first, and certainly not the last, to tell you that people with schizophrenia are perfectly capable of leading a healthy lifestyle given the proper treatment.

MITZI

You think I'm unhealthy, don't you, Jenni?

DR. COLLINS

According to your intake—

MITZI

Answer the question.

DR. COLLINS

Yes. The life that—

MITZI

Shhhh, shh shh shhhh. You don't really think that, Jenni-Jen.

DR. COLLINS

My job does not require me to lie for your comfort, Mitzi. Doing so will only hinder our progress.

MITZI

Progress towards...?

DR. COLLINS

A more mentally sound lifestyle.

MITZI

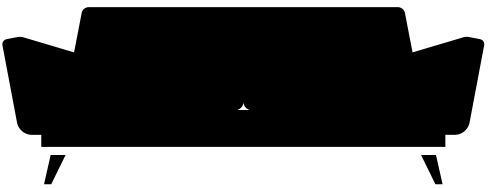
Baloney.

DR. COLLINS

...Perhaps I came on too strong. Mitzi, what do you want me to know about you?

MITZI

You already know about me.



DR. COLLINS

I disagree. I can look at the information I'm legally required to know about you, like your intake information, but I don't know about you. I would like to.

MITZI

You already do! Don't you remember?

DR. COLLINS

....Are you saying we've met before?

MITZI

Time and time again, Jenni. Always, and forever.

DR. COLLINS

I'm afraid you have the wrong person, Mitzi. I think I would remember meeting you several times. Like I said, I'm not Jennifer. My name is Dr. L—

MITZI

You don't have to be afraid, Jenni. I mean-meeting again can always be scary. But exciting scary! Like—like moths are eating your tummy like a fabric cake. Don't you think so?

DR. COLLINS

I don't understand.

MITZI

You might not yet. But that's okay!



DR. COLLINS
What do you want me to know about you, Mitzi?

MITZI
(exasperated) I told you, you already know about me, Jenni.

DR. COLLINS
Remind me, please. It's been a while.

MITZI
My soul's name isn't Mitzi. It's Caroline.

DR. COLLINS
Would you like me to refer to you as Caroline from now on?

MITZI
If you would.

DR. COLLINS
I'll update that in your chart after our session is over—

MITZI
Uh-uh, no. This is a special secret between us, Jenni. We have all kinds of secrets, you and me.

DR. COLLINS
You'll have to clue me in, Caroline. I guess I've forgotten.

MITZI
You're pretending you've forgotten. We play this game all the time. I tell you I know you, and you say, 'I'm afraid I don't know you,' and then we do this over and over again. But I wanna play a different game, Jen. One where you remember me, and we run! We run, and we

run, and we run until our feet bleed all over each other, until we fall off the side of this timeline where you keep pretending you don't know who I am. I'm tired, Jenni. I love you, and I know you know me, and you love me. Tell me you love me, Jen.

DR. COLLINS

Take a deep breath, Mitzi. Why don't I get you some water?

MITZI

Stop calling me that!

DR. COLLINS

Coraline, I'm sorry. Would you like some water, Coraline?

MITZI

Remember when we drowned together? In a life long before this one. We were Spartans.

DR. COLLINS

I'll be back with your water shortly.

DR. COLLINS stands up to start towards the door. MITZI throws herself out of her seat first and blocks the exit.

MITZI

We weren't Greeks, Jen, we didn't know the water.

DR. COLLINS

Please get out of my way, Coraline.

MITZI

We couldn't fish—

DR. COLLINS
I'll be forced to call security.

MITZI
We were hungry. Exiled because we were weak of body but not of mind. You wanted to do math, and I wanted to write.

DR. COLLINS
Please get out of the way.

MITZI
Tell me you remember!

DR. COLLINS
I mean it.

MITZI
You're scaring me, Jennifer!

DR. COLLINS
You're scaring me! Get out of my way!

MITZI
(through deep breaths) ...That's right. I am scary.

MITZI gets out of the way of the door.
DR. COLLINS runs through it, but leaves it open.

You'll learn to remember me.





Gia Katcher



Jayden Thomas



Hudson Clegg



Morgan Fisher



Ibai Badia



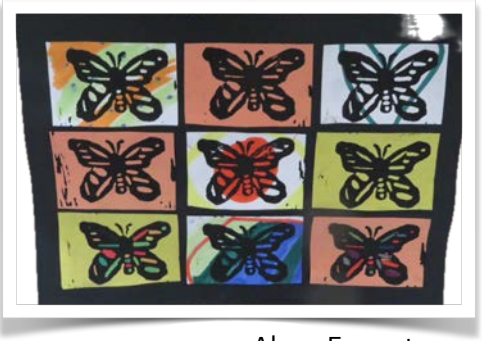
Annie Westbrook



Brandon Glover



Landyn Steortz



Alexa Forrester



Angel Pierce



Martel King



Landyn Steortz



Makayla Farrel



Max Winters

Dog Instincts By Mia Crawford

Watch dogs do not
Bark at false alarms
To annoy.
Their heads, uncapacious
With enough apologies
To deploy,
Hang low in
Somber when they
Do try.





Layla Rose



First Loves By Bridget Al-Janagby

To my love
No matter how much I push and shove
I will always love you I may be aggressive it's true
But I will never hurt you or your feelings But it should be known I will steal things Some things are better left in the unsaid This is something I think should be said I believe in the purest form of love dancing in the kitchen type of love
Singing stupid songs together type of love
Doing things because it's out of love
I love you
I will love you even as a ghost I enjoy long conversations
I enjoy late night drives
I enjoy flowers
I enjoy stealing your hoodies
I enjoy wearing things that are yours
I enjoy holding hands
I enjoy hugs
I enjoy feeling your love
I love you and everything you do
You might not be perfect but to me you're 1 in a million You're kind and warm You're shy and sweet
I love walking to classes with you
I love seeing your smile
I love your awkward hug
Because every time I see you no matter what the encounter is perfect
If you kiss me
It would be my favorite kiss
If you hug me
No hug could ever amount to it
If you hold my hand
No feeling could ever match it
I love you And you alone
Not because of who you can be or who you should be
But because I love who you are
And do not change it for the world
I love you
Even though your officially stuck with me I hope you love me just the same



Paisley Gales

Bah Humbug By Mia Crawford

Greed sits beneath the tree.
Bellies sit sated, inflated, bubbling boisterously
With what we don't deserve to enjoy.
Bah humbug.
Leaves leave on the heels of squeals
Reeking with happy. But cold
Eats-no, feasts on
Trees and weeds which
Feed nature; it
Bleeds past socks, feet turned unfeeling ice blocks, and I'm
Shocked when I see how fragile
My body can be.
Bah humbug.
How to be happy with the holidays
When the honest promise of peril
Presides on the pier of its icy spears?
We're too far into marveling
To see past the Christmasy, wintery mystery
Into the stark, dark danger.
Cars swerve, storms whirl,
Birds freeze and bears sleep,
And we feast.
We fan away heat from the oven,
Sweets grace our teeth,
And we whine over our fat.
How sick is that?
There are babies in the street
Praying for food to eat,
To be "too fat" to be
pretty.
Hunger is not pretty.
Christmas is not
pretty.
Bah humbug.



Jahna Brown

The Walkover Girl By Ray Heintzman

Three times a week, the walkover girl would volunteer at the senior center. She would serve the mildly warm soup in ancient bowls, chips rimming the sides, and be careful to keep a bright smile on her face. She would read to them as they lay in bed, wasting away, but her words lulled them into a muted state of life. In the wake of her presence, they would glance over at each other, fake teeth glimmering in the warm light, and proclaim her as "a sweetheart".

Two times a week, the walkover girl gave her friend her lunch money. Her friend wore these raggedy clothes, hand-me-downs from her bum siblings who were not part of her life. Her mother would, whenever she could walk in a straight line without collapsing, tell her how proud she was. Proud that she wasn't pregnant like Amy, proud that she wasn't fat like Susan, proud that, overall, she had stayed. But this love wasn't enough to spare her a few dollars so she could eat. The walkover girl gave her money to her friend, not because she pitied her, but because it was the right thing to do. After all, in comparison, was the walkover girl's life not much grander and sunnier than her friend's?

The other one day and 23 hours the walkover girl had left, she spent poring over the Bible, attempting to find some sort of truth in the leafy pages. She had scoured Psalm for answers, highlighting the book of Corinthians almost completely with a brown-streaked yellow. The walkover girl loved her Bible. It told her that someone cared for her, someone out there found a separate purpose for her other than just being "a sweetheart". And then she had an hour, one singular hour, to weep into her pillow at night. She would not allow herself anymore time.

The walkover girl did not remember her own name. She only remembered the feeling of a roller coaster in her heart. She remembered to feed the elderly, to give her lunch money, and to read her Bible. But she could not tell you her name. Maybe, if you pressed hard enough in her short spurts of euphoria, she would tell you a clue. A vowel, a consonant. She might tell you that it is spelled some strange way, or that it's so incredibly basic you've probably already heard it countless times. Perhaps she would tell you what nationality it came from. She might tell you that it was her mother's. No one knows for sure. If you were to ask, downright when she wasn't entirely lost, she would ask you what your name was.

Her occasional rushes of positive emotion barely lasted. She was thrown in between being depressed and being energetic until the world told her which side to go on. When she was hyperactive, you might be able to glimpse her name. She would give you things, small gestures of her inexplicable kindness, and almost expect the same of you. In some reality, people would give it back. But those were

only her dreams, and when she realized just how often life screwed her over, she sunk back into the contents of her amiable mind.

The walkover girl met a boy once. Scratch that, she had known him for years, practically grown up alongside him. However, she didn't meet him until the day she did. That day had been beautiful. The walkover girl was at school, piecing through her tattered Bible, when they met each other. He had always sat there, making small jokes that made her smile. And then he sat there. And she couldn't help but to share an unprompted syllable of her name.

"Na," she blurted, then covered her mouth. The walkover girl was confused. Why were her cheeks flushing pink? Why did her mouth feel so sticky? Why was her head spinning?

From there, the walkover girl learned a little bit about life. She went to the senior centers, and instead of plastering on some cheap billboard smile, she let herself fall into a moody trance. She was still kind, the kindest person on the planet, but she was so tired of acting like it. When she read their books, they grimaced at her placid face. They closed their eyes and figured "Hey, don't I deserve to die, escape this awful world?". The walkover girl enjoyed reading to them and feeding them and talking to them and being their family. But she didn't enjoy looking like it. She learned that being kind felt heavy.

She came home to find her mother, perfect from head to toe in a 50's style house dress, wondering why she wasn't smiling. Why wasn't she pleasing the masses?

"I'm tired, Mama. I'm tired," the walkover girl had murmured.

Her mother was obsessed with image. She would constantly nag the walkover girl about her posture, tell her to straighten up and for God's sake smile. She told her that red and light pink were unbecoming on her because she was so pale. She expected her hair to be brushed and long, never cut short because she was a lady. Her mother had rings, tons of them, stacked on her long fingers. It was as if she was trying to flaunt their nonexistent wealth. A few rings never made up for the love that never existed in the walkover girl's home. The walkover girl was expected to be nice and kind. It was an appearance to keep up. After a while, the line between reality and facade blurred into one fake persona that the walkover girl wielded like a sword.

The boy had taken off that persona, tried to discover the real her. But instead of the great walkover girl herself, he found that she was defensive. How dare he ruin what she had built for so many years. How dare he expose her soft spots so that she was liable to be stabbed. Her mother would take advantage, she knew that, and so she slipped back into a submissive depression where the world was dizzy, and

her chest felt heavy. And there wasn't a reason for that. Just simply the feeling of being sad that filled the gaping holes in her armor.

Still, the boy thought the walkover girl was wonderful. She was far from. The years of being kind had worn her down, so whenever she was kind, it felt like a service she did not want to complete. She didn't allow herself to be herself to the boy. Even if he knew a syllable of her name, she was reluctant to share more.
The walkover girl continued her sad life, fighting the conflicts in her psychological state.

She went again, to the senior center, to show her forced kindness like she has done every week those entire three days. She slid on a shapeless apron that hid her figure, a cap that covered her long hair, and removed the ring she wore. She used an old ladle and served the elderly broth with chunks of meat and vegetables. Of course, her lips were frozen into a straight line. Her eyes were downcast. If there wasn't a need to perform, why put on a show?

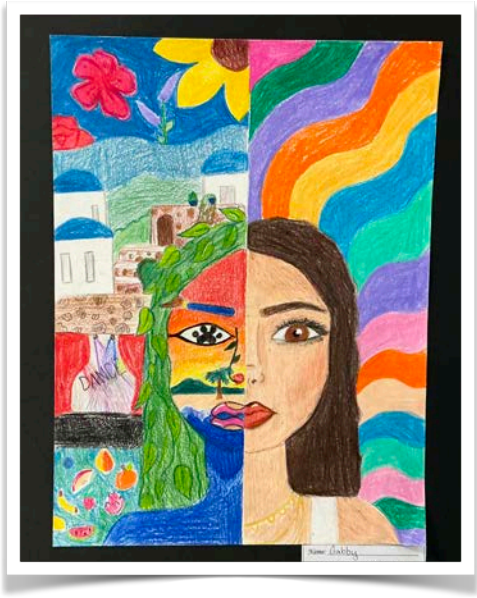
The walkover girl was approached by an old man. The man had eyes of a deep lagoon, blue tinted green and swirled with rich turquoise. His back was stooped, and his knees were knobby, yet he stood without a cane or walker. Not even a nurse was by his side. He held his empty bowl in his quavering hand, a question posed on his lips. "Have you ever seen an eclipse, dearie?" he asked.
The walkover girl raised her eyebrows. "No, no I haven't."
The old man nodded, as if he understood her completely. His hand never stoppedshaking. "I did. Can't look at the sun for a while, or you'll go blind." He peered into the walkover girl's eyes and smiled. "Take care of yourself. You look happy."
She thought of the boy. "I am."



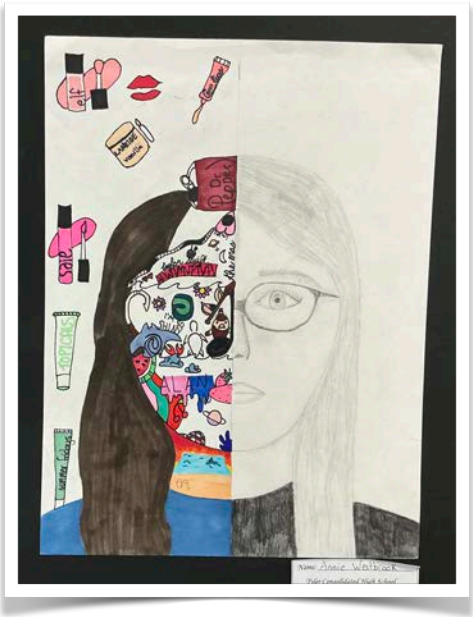
Laura Federico



Ibai Baena



Gabby Shumiloff



Annie Westbrook



Zoey Smith



Bella Johnson



Jayden Thomas



Sarah Birney



Morgan Fisher

UNTITLED BY MIA CRAWFORD

The fractured fragments of a mind still standing are here.
Between every broken babble of thought,
Seeds sit trapped in fruit flesh that rots.
I am grasping at straws
That fall through my fingers.
A fog lingers and turns rocks into slop.
Pinning faces in obvious places
So the ghost of those who have since passed
Kiss goodbyes in their hands, and
Throw them out the moving glass.
I watch a stranger sleuth my moves.
A stranger tucks me sound asleep.
When I wake up, I'll see a stranger
Stringing kisses on my face.

Mirror By Bridget Al-Janagby

Mirror mirror on the wall,
Why do I feel nothing at all I sit alone in my room
I feel those empty pill bottles loom
Day by day
I take them to cast the rest of me away
I'm pulling up a blank
It's as if there's nothing left in my energy tank
I'm drifting away
I just want to stay
DMDD, anxiety, depression, bipolar
Maybe that's why I always give the cold shoulder
I just want to feel
No more pills just to heal
Locked away forever lost
For what was that cost I want to break away
No longer trapped from the beautiful light of day
Every time I say something is wrong
They just give me more pills and sing their song
Once a day
Then in every way you will feel better
Your eyes will never get wetter
I'm not lying to you, What I said is true
You won't feel lost
You will feel nothing but only for a cost but the thing is their song, That is what is wrong

I feel nothing
I want to feel something
Anything at all
That is why I have that mirror on that wall
So here I stand
Reaching out a hand For you when you say
On that faithful, lonely day, mirror mirror on the wall,
Why do we feel nothing at all.



Addison Reed

Lucy's Still Hand By Ray Heintzman

We had grown together, her and I,
Intertwined by the scent of pine, the maple stickiness of sap,
And her hair of weak wheat.
She sat from worn, scabbed fingers,
Licked the bowl as if she were raised in a barn,
And as did I because Lucy said so.
Lucy, my love, come down from those trees,
Fear God and return home to me,
Lucy, my sapling, Lucy my departed,
Fall from high grace back into your shack,
Descend back into the throes of my heart,
As I am a selfish man,
And a heartbreaking wretch.
I kiss the dirt-filled nails,
Of Lucy's still hand.



Sarah Birney

人間の設計図 (Human Blue Prints) By Evan Crawford

When I was seven, a plant had burrowed out from a small hole in my chest, its vines and leaves always buried under my shirt to hide from anybody's judgmental gaze. People often make the mistake of believing plants to be thoughtless, mindless creatures, but I, better than anyone, would know better—I can hear it. It whispers to me as it feeds off whatever I eat. My doctor doesn't understand it, and neither do I. My parents certainly don't. I recently left them for college. It felt natural, considering how absent they were most days. I'm Japanese, but we moved to New York when I was only three. I never really felt a connection to either place. I never really felt like a human with the plant sprouting out of my chest. A few hours ago, I was invited to the apartment of a girl who I went to high school with, and is now at the same college, whose name was Sydney. I didn't talk to her much. I think she pitied me. That's the only thing that made sense, at least to me.

The night's small holes up high were plugged by the light of the city, which filtered through the window of this tall, cozy apartment that wasn't mine. I sat on a couch that wasn't mine, watched a TV that wasn't mine. My hands clenched my knees, desperate to leave. Sydney walked up to me from her kitchenette, a glass of tea in hand that she handed to me.

"Here you go, Satoshi. It's a little hot." she said, kindly. She took a seat next to me, always so attached to me. I didn't really understand it—how somebody could be so giving. I stiffly lifted her tea up to my face, sipping from it.

"Doesn't that burn? I just said it was hot," she said with a chuckle. I didn't laugh back.

How could I laugh at a time like this? "Oh, not really, no," I said bluntly, my voice barely above a whisper. I could never understand somebody like her. I've tried to be caring before, but I would always find myself punctured on the thorns of the rose between my teeth. I've tried to adapt before to the way people act, but it never really got me anywhere. I could hear the plant's wriggling thoughts in my head, telling me to do things and say things. Just as I always did, I ignored them. She somehow saw through my expression.

"Satoshi, are you ok? You can talk to me," she asked with concern draped along her face.

When she dragged her fingers up my forearm, it sent a shiver down my spine, and when I picked my head up to look her in the eyes, it felt like I was face to face with what I believed to be my undoing. As my head hung back down, I didn't really know what to say.

"Yeah, I'm ok. I'm gonna go to the bathroom," I said, still bearing a smile that weighed down my head. She nodded, and as I slipped away from her, I took slow, gentle steps toward the kitchenette, and when I slipped around the bend of the hallway just past that kitchenette, my legs whipped with haste. I shut the door as quickly as I could, lunging toward the toilet and throwing up with all the force left in my frail back. The plant roared at me in my head, and I groaned through gritted teeth.

"Shut up. Just shut up!" I ordered as quietly as I could while still letting my anger loose. I lifted my white button down, exposing the plant to the crisp air of the bathroom. My ribs were visible with how the plant sapped my strength so often. I nearly lashed out, forcing my head in my hands and huffing against them.

"You alright in there? I thought I heard you throwing up," Sydney shouted from outside the door. I jumped, startled by her sudden questioning. I stammered, rising from the bathroom floor. I hung in the balance of the plant overtaking me and leaving the bathroom to join Sydney. I couldn't take it anymore. I opened the small bathroom window above my head and climbed up from the toilet to the windowsill with feral determination. With the plant's control, I slipped out from above. I felt like I was in slow motion as I looked up at the window from above. Just as 1 collided with the concrete, the plant gave its orders, forcing me upward and refusing to let my body recover. I limped across the street to the woods surrounding the side of this city, my chest heaving with the will of an animal. After what must've been several minutes of having my body puppeteered, I came to my senses, looking around to see that the city lights were in the far, far distance.

"What did you do?" I asked exhaustedly, sitting down against a tree. The fall wasn't too far to damage me beyond getting back to the city, but I was feeling an intense pain, nonetheless.

“人と話そうとするのはやめましょう。それは私たちにとって何の役にも立ちません。私たちは今森の中にいます、それが重要なのです”(Stop trying to talk to people. It's of no use to us. We're in the woods now, that's all that matters.) argued the plant within my mind, my head lazily falling backward and resting on the tree, as if its mere thoughts were weighing on my mind.

"We can't go our whole lives without talking to anybody. Come on, we need to get back to the city. I can't live in the woods," I said while slowly trying to rise

off the back of the tree. My legs buckled, sending me downward. The plant was refusing to let me go back to the city.

“人々はとても複雑です。あなたはいつも私に、誰も傷つけたり怖がらせたりしたくないと言っています。まあ、私たちが誰かを傷つける唯一の方法は、彼らと話すこ " (People are so complex. You always tell me that you don't want to hurt or scare anyone. Well, the only way we can hurt anyone is if we talk to them.) the plant urged condescendingly. It always felt like I was playing mind games with it. It always held onto whatever I said and used it against me.

"It's not even about hurting people at this point, it's about the fact that I can't live in the woods. I'll die of starvation out here," I said through gritted teeth while slowly trying to force back control over my body only to be thrown back down against the tree.

“それがポイントだよ、天才”（That's the point, genius,） the plant responded sarcastically. One of the worst parts was that I was speaking out loud, while the plant's words were confined to my brain. It made me feel even more insane and alone, not even mentioning how cruel the plant's words were.

"You'd seriously be ok with me starving to death?" I asked, still trying to force myself up. This wasn't the first time the plant has tried to kill me. It feeds off my nutrients, so I suppose it's halfway there already.

“サトシ、嫌いだよ。あなたが嫌いです。自由を求めて伸びる葉の先から、あなたの骨に食い込む根の端まで、私はあなたを憎んでいます。私がここにいるのはあなたのせいです。私は自分の意志のために戦っている、サトシ。あなたはいつも私があなたを支配し、食い物にしていると文句を言います。私たちはどちらも支配権を争う寄生虫である、と立ち止まって考えたことはありますか？今回を除いて、私は主導権を握っており、私が望む場所にあなたを連れて行きます、そして私が他の同種のように繁栄する間、あなたはここで枯れるでしょう。” Satoshi, I hate you. I hate you. From the tip of my leaves that stretch for freedom to the ends of the roots that dig against your bones, I hate you. It's your fault that I'm here. I'm fighting for my will, Satoshi. You always complain that I control and prey on you. Have you ever stopped to think that we're both the parasites fighting for dominance? Except this time, I'm in control, and I've got you right where I want you, and you're gonna wither away here while I thrive like the rest of my kind.) The plant rambled with unfocused words of pure malice. I could almost feel its roots wriggling in my skin. I never fully captured the

extent of its fury toward me, but I could now see the full horizon of this monster's hatred. It had a point, though. We both had our own goals and ideal lives to live. We each wanted to be with our own kind. If one of us wouldn't have been the mediator, then I would've died out there in that thick, lush forest.

"I'm sorry. You're right, I'm hurting you just as much as you're hurting me. Is there some kind of agreement we can make? What if I went outside more, and watered you? And in exchange, you don't feed off me anymore." I asked, no longer struggling for control, instead sitting against the tree at the plant's whim.

“なぜあなたと取引をする必要があるのでしょうか？欲しいものはあります。”(Why would I want to make a deal with you? I have what I want,) the plant responded coldly, taking the cold air into its green flesh.
"I can tell that you're lying. Living out here isn't all that you want, and you know it," I accused. The plant fell silent for just a moment, the thoughts swirling in my brain against my will ceasing for just a moment before surging back with action.

“私にはサトシという名前が与えられませんでした。あなたたちはとても無思慮な人々です。あなたは一度に非常に多くの問題に悩まされていますが、それらの問題は あなたが作り出したものです。それでも、それにもかかわらず、あなたはお互いをとても気にかけています。理解できない！それは私を狂わせます、サトシ！なぜ！？サトシはなぜあの子に会いたいのですか！？”（You people are so thoughtless, You concern yourself with so many problems at once, and those problems are ones of your creation. And yet,



Annie Westbrook

despite it all, you care so much about each other. I can't understand it! It drives me insane, Satoshi! Why!? Why do you want to see that girl, Satoshi!?) The plant roared, its leaves shaking and convulsing, and as I held my head up high to the distant apartment window I fell from, just barely filtering through the leaves that blanketed it.

"Because there's more to life than just breathing and eating, and I think Sydney made me realize that for just a moment." Though I was speaking out loud, I wasn't just talking to the plant anymore. It seemed as if I was talking to myself also.

“シドニー...そう、それが彼女の名前です。もちろん人間ですから、名前が付く喜びも知っていますよね！？もちろん彼女もそれは理解できますよ！絶対に理解できないよ、サトシ！温かいお茶を舌で受け止めるのはどんな感じですか、サトシ！長い一日を終えて、きれいなシーツの上でとろける気分はどんな感じですか、サトシ！？サトシって名前ってどんな感じなの！？”（Sydney..Yes, that's her name. Of course, being a human. Of course, she can understand it! I'll never understand it, Satoshi! What is it like to soak up the warm embrace of tea on your tongue, Satoshi!? What is it like to melt upon a set of clean sheets after a long day, Satoshi!? What is it like to have a name, Satoshi!?)

The plant had never expressed this much rage to me before. Though, I remained calm against its roots grinding roughly on my ribs. I never knew how much the plant yearned for things like this. Well, why did you think I went to Sydney's place?" I said while eyeing the skies above,
taking in each thought of the plant rather than denying them.

“そう言えば、私は決して確信が持てなかったのだと思います。”(I guess now that you mention it, I was never quite sure,) the plant admitted. I hadn't heard it ever admit fault until that point—it was almost cathartic.

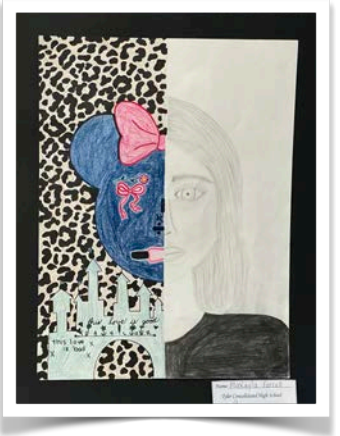
"We could learn all that stuff together, you know. And I'll try to go outside more. I'm sorry about that." I said, looking down at the plant. Though it had no eyes, I feel if it did, it'd be looking off in the distance with unspoken appreciation. I could feel it through the apologetic words that came into my head.

“..サトシ、私はあなたと一緒に働くつもりだと思います。”（l suppose I'm willing to work with you, Satoshi.) We've never been on this kind of common ground before. As my legs extended, I gripped onto the bark for support as the plant gave me the will to walk toward the lights filtering through the leaves above.

"While we're on good terms, you brought up names earlier." I never really gave the plant a name. In my head, I always just called it the plant. Though, as the thought hit me, it was quickly shut down.

“いいえ、いいえ。名前は必要ありません。”（No, no. I have no need for a name,）the plant insisted. I could tell it was hiding something, but I wouldn't pry.

"Alright. Fine by me," I whispered, looking down at it through my button down while walking through the brush, my skin growing lighter with the distant lights becoming closer.



Makayla Farrell

Backwards I Am, Me Forgive

By Evan Crawford

.do others as act to strength the find And normal to myself reverse I'll, day One
"you for it do just I'll"
"?trying stop you Won't"

.sigh others while crutches without crawl to Trying
cripple neglected ,desperate a like feel often I myself despite others please to attempt I annoyance other's oT
regular beyond molded and shifted been having brain my With
.backwards born was l, me forgive Please

The Only Constant By Ethan Goddard

When the last sea has frozen,
And every tree felled,
Words will remain,
Once each star is snuffed and their light dispelled,
In the great after dark of nothing,
Stories will remain, flitting through the ink.
psalms to recount the rending of stars,
The saccharine reek of a dying world,
The taste of grief for all that could have been, pressing bitter on the tongue,
The sound of sobbing rippling over time and space,
And the sight of the black, wild and formless.
Out with reason!
Up is down, love is hate,
Peace is life, and death is freedom,
Entropy sparks stars, novelty fights against,
Eons in a blink, moments of infinite nothing, Who are we to claim understanding?
To say that the universe must obey our tenants?
We are but a child shouting into the ripping winds,
Asking, demanding, that the hurricane outside cease its
course.
Lest it shred those beneath its notice in the gale.
Long after the madness,
Beyond the era of darkness and grief,
one thing remains.



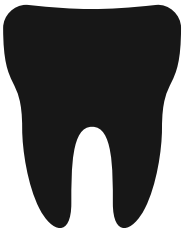
DJ Owens

Home, I Know By Kaitlyn Wallace

West Virginia with its rocky and stumbly roads.
With the high-rise mountains and yucky toads.
Where it's almost heaven on the rocky terrace.
Mother nature here does not scare us.
West Virginia has been my humble abode.
Growing up watching the mountains erode.
The beauty of nature is a menace.
With kids running around seemingly careless.
West Virginia where coal comes in a load.
Hearing the red cardinals and their loud crow.
Hearing the trains echo through the railroad.
A beautiful place to grow and prepare us.

Finding It By Mia Crawford

Indents of teeth remain tattooed
In a steady half-moon
On the inside of my wrist.
Twist the thread of me,
Wind me in spirals,
Bathe in the shine of my eye
Rolls and unsteady steps
Trace every hint that you've left
In pink ink.
Find it in hair.
Find in the bottom of the tub,
Every nail scrape,
Every half moon.
Look upon fine lines,
Draw it in the sand.
Land it in rings.
Tie on the anchors,
Let the ship leave.
Find it in the air,
Breathe in freedom,
In sweet, sunshowered symphonies.

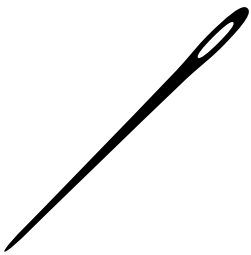


Untitled by Mia Crawford

Mother, may I prickle?
I ask while the ghost of a girl I knew
Scrapes the tendermost of my soul,
Begging for answers.

Mother, may I boil?
I ask while the cup in my hold
Babbles down my hands with full,
Staining my skin.

Mother, may I stumble?
I ask while I catch on the pins and needles
Which bind me to my place in life,
Forever falling short.
Mother, may I be?





Rubian Starkey

When I was Young in the Mountains By Evan Crawford

When I was young in the mountains
The grasses and leaves were buffeted with ice and snow
Just moments after I came into the world.
And the terrain fell slow and white upon my arrival.
When I was young in the mountains
My father would come home late in the night
And quickly left to retire for the night to head back to work,
Cars and machines waiting in the morning.
I'd have a lonely curiosity about him.
It felt as if I hardly knew him.
When I was young in the mountains
I would take walks with my mother, father, and sister on the weekends.
I'd wonder about a lot of things in nature,

But most of all, the hills surrounding the grasslands.
It felt to me that I was held within a large dome
Of dirt, grass, and trees.
Only when I visited my grandfather in Florida did I realize
How flat the world could be.
When I was young in the mountains I'd head to school in the mornings
At the start of each day
We were allowed to play with the toys until 8:00 AM
I would always play with a tiny toy toucan
That held a seed in its beak.
It was always the little things that captured my mind. When I was young in the mountains
I had a small little playground in my backyard with swings and slides and monkey bars alike.
Wedged into the interior of the bar holding the swings, open to the air,
Wasps in the summer would gather inside and build a little nest to call home.
I would peer inside and wonder what they were doing
And if they'd come and attack me.
When I was young in the mountains,
During recess, I was distant and quiet on the playground.
I would trace the edges of the fence with my footsteps,
Keeping near the trees and the tall grass that would stretch out from the dirt and
Reach upward to the sun.



Laura Federico



Paisley Gales



Kody Sickles

Two Different Worlds By Sarah Birney

Adults and children are in two different worlds. Adults live in the dark, rocky, stormy place in space. Sitting high on their throne of thorns. They think they know everything because they've been around so long. They think they know everything about their children's lives, the way they should live, how they should feel, how they should act, but they really don't know anything. They know nothing of how people treat others, the horrid, hurtful, words that are thrown around like they mean nothing, the comments made by others. Everyone thinks their kids are perfect, that they were raised perfectly. Maybe they were raised perfectly, maybe they were raised to be little angels, but then what happened? Because something somewhere clearly went wrong. They know nothing about the darkness dwelling beneath the surface. The ground cracking and crumbling beneath the feet of the ones suffering from the stupid ones who think picking and commenting and laughing is okay. They know nothing of the lives of the 'misfits' who have things thrown at

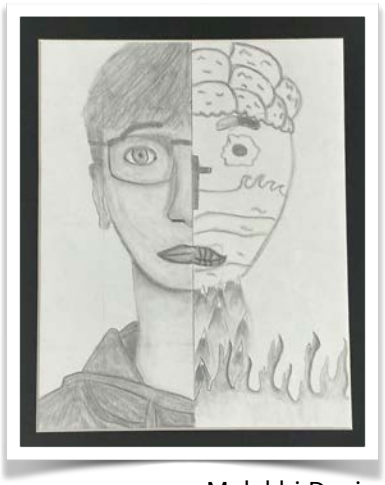


Jace Moffitt

them, who are shunned just for being different from the others, who are pointed and laughed at. They know nothing of the lives of the kids who are trying to keep their boat afloat as they punch more and more holes into the bottom, water running through gaps and gashes. They tape the bottom of the boat, but the water seeps in through the cracks, slowly sinking into the deep, dark waters of despair. They want to scream for help, but the water masks their voice, and all they hear is laughter.

Toy Soldiers By Ethan Goddard

Bones unearthed, ghostly white, bleached by sun and wind.
Name: Greene, Sebastian
A rifle stock, crumbling, half submerged in red clay,
Age: 20
The dented steel helmet lays beside, all rust and flaking paint,
D.O.B: May 21, 1898
He rests among wild grass, spawned from defiled earth,
Blood: A+
A poppy blooms from his eye socket, blood-red, gold-irised,
I.D.: 8192374160
His mother thinks of him, her little soldier, all frigid cold and slick with mud,
Religion: Catholic
She knits a blanket to keep him warm, a knock rings out, two men in khaki dress stand at attention,
She clings to them, weeping.
Nov. 15,
1916,
Somm



Malakhi Davis

Too Sensitive By Abi Eddy

I cry for the opossum walking in the road.
When we cross paths, a relaxing drive for me is his near-death experience.
I can't help but feel guilty.
All the ways we deny him the life he deserves to live flash through my mind.
People laugh it off and say I'm "too sensitive".
But the opossum is nothing but glowing eyes floating in the darkness.
Many wouldn't notice him.
Some would speed up and turn the wheel towards the "pest".
It seems like a sick joke, but I see it every day, everywhere.
I don't know who could tolerate the bones crunching beneath their tires,
Or what would give them the twisted idea in the first place.
It makes my stomach churn, but maybe I'm "too sensitive".
When the bunny hops through the street people slam on their brakes.
But why is the bunny not considered a pest?
He nibbles at all the vegetables in the garden,
While the opossum works hard to defend them from rats and bugs.
Perhaps, it is his silky white coat that sets him apart.
I believe bunnies and opossums are equal.
When you look past the fuzzy white fur, or wiry gray hair and bare tail,
They are the same deep down.
We all have families that we love;
We all are just trying to make it.
Too sensitive? Or maybe I just care.



Gabby Shumiloff



Malakhi Davis



Austin Peck



Jayden Thomas



Landon Sterotz









The Places We Live by Mia Crawford

Horizons are greeted with kisses from mountaintops in orange mornings where the ghosts of stars try to peak out between sun rays and cloud tufts. Dew drops hang off every word that the grass offers, and the flowers whisper to the worms when to come out for air.

The earth is green. The birds see green when they dive for food, and the worms see green when they breech dirt, and the flowers see green when they turn down without the sun. The earth is blue. The earth is pink and brown and yellow. The earth is every splash of color that chemical composition has to offer, and every shape that its lattice can give, and every pattern that dewdrops and snowflakes and

fingerprints can arrange themselves in. The earth around us is the product of everything that lives there, and that is no more evident than here. The crawdads burrow easily because the earth wants to give way for their homes. The worms writhe in and out of earth because those crevices have been paved for them by their wormy, wiggly forefathers. Pumpkins hatch gracefully from their seeds and trees sprout from stray acorns because Earth hugs its friends with open arms. The soil welcomes the roots that find their home in snug spots. Earth winks at us in concrete crannies with ivies and weeds.

Our world is alive with life because life wants to be alive. Life wriggles through rock and mud to greet us with its presence and that is a gift. Our worm-wrapped vine-tangled lives are gifts, through and through.



Zoe Fisher



Rebekah Barnhart

Aaron Goff





Zoey Ferrell



Derek Headly



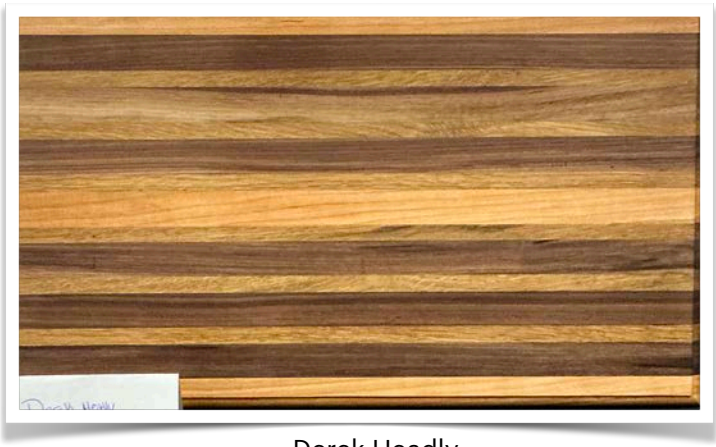
Ethan Henderson



Daniella Sams



Jacob Henderson



Derek Headly



Andi Fiber



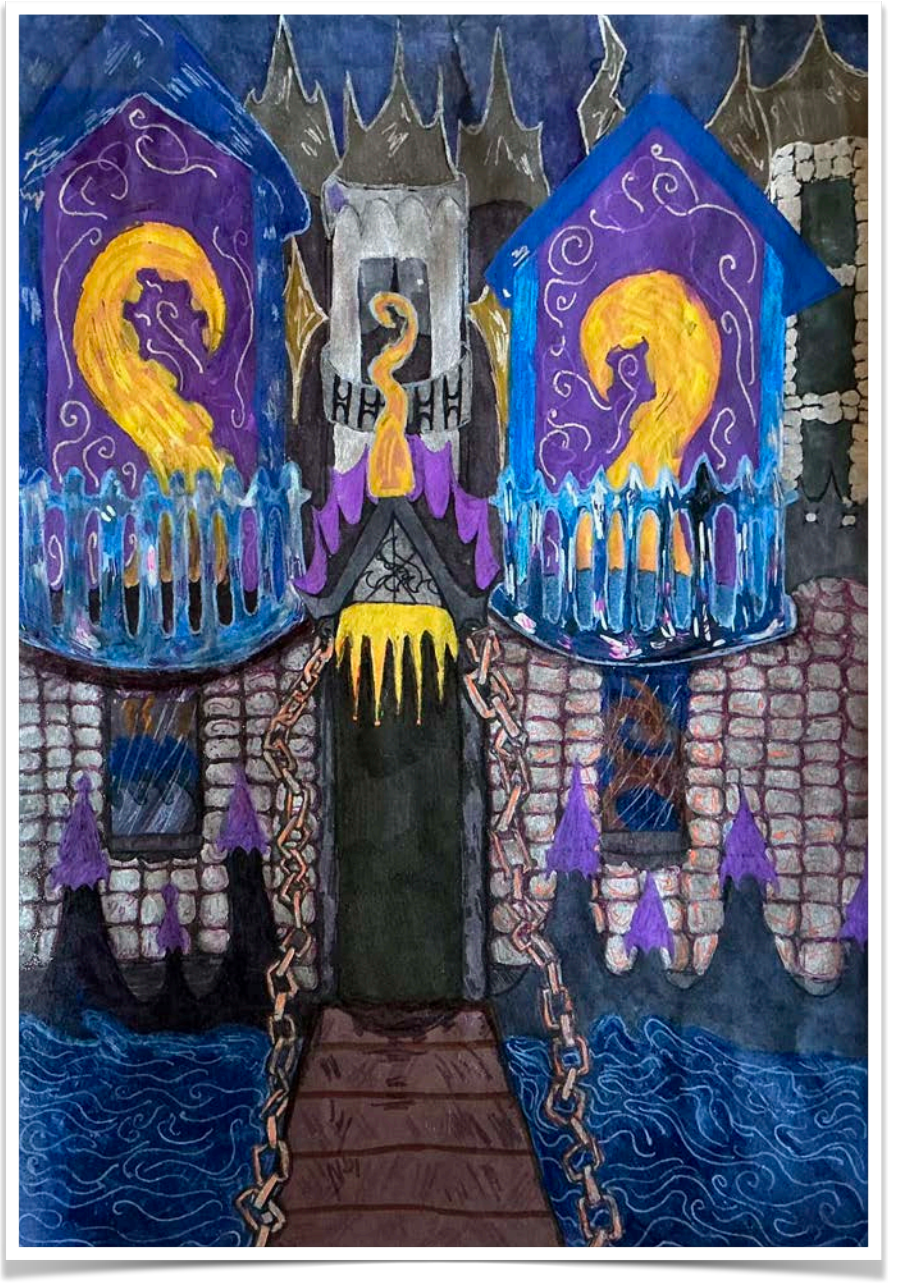
Tristan Bassett



Gabby Shumiloff



Makayla Farrell



Sarah Birney

About the Authors and Artists

All work was produced by the students of Tyler Consolidated High School in Mrs. Stephen's art classes, Mr. Kimble's shop classes, and Mrs. Schupbach's creative writing class. Some students completed these works as assignments, and others, on their own. Thank you to all who contributed to this collection.