

# *Rambunctious*

*An annual publication of literary works from the  
students of Jamesville-Dewitt High School*

**2012 Edition**

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## **A Letter From The Editors:**

Dear Students and Staff of Jamesville-Dewitt High School,

The *Rambunctious* Staff is honored to present this year's issue of *Rambunctious*, a collection of poems and short fiction by students and staff members. This year, we received many high-quality submissions from the community of writers at the high school. It was an absolute pleasure to work with the wonderful writing of the students and staff of Jamesville-Dewitt High School; the talent in this school is amazing and we are thrilled to be able to share some of it with the entire Jamesville-Dewitt community.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the speaker or narrator of a poem or story is not necessarily the same as the person who wrote the piece. In this respect, we have showcased many different voices, perspectives, and styles in *Rambunctious*. In addition, the order in which these pieces appear is solely for formatting and layout reasons. This is also the reason that some submissions are unable to appear in this issue. Space limitations prevented us from printing submissions that far exceeded 1,500 words. However, these longer works will be published on our website, which is listed below.

We would also like to thank our faculty advisor, Mr. Phillips, for his dedication and leadership as he guided us on this journey. We also thank our staff members for the time and effort that they've put into this publication. And finally, we thank our biggest financial supporter, the Jamesville-Dewitt High School Parent Teacher Group, which donated funds to our startup budget.

Please take a moment to visit our website, where student artwork and additional submissions will be posted in the near future:

<http://jdrambunctious.wordpress.com/>

Without further ado, we invite you to explore both versions of *Rambunctious* for yourself. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

The 2012 *Rambunctious* Staff

Extra-Ordinary  
Katie Cieplicki

I dream of oak tables and  
half-read newspapers stained with coffee rings

*Revolution*

I lust after white picket fences and  
green, square yards littered with children's toys

*is*

I long to inhale the newness of clean laundry and  
feel the labor of a man who sleeps but does not dream

*stirring.*

Alarm Clock  
Maria Skandalis

There when I need you  
Like a hot cup of coffee  
To wake me up.  
Every day.

A loud beacon,  
A hero.  
There to save me from a good night's sleep.  
And happiness.

Woken up, unaware  
Of my place and location.  
There you are next to me,  
And I smack you down.

Later on, the routine continues,  
You don't learn.  
Now you're broken, and I'm awake.  
Not sure who really won this battle.

# A Pink Watch, Portal, and Perpetual Sea

## Kyrin Pollock

A pessimist would call it fate  
a believer would fight it  
but no twist on philosophy undermines reality

it hurts,  
it really hurts.

I caught his eye's glimmer  
for the last time  
before he disappeared through the portal,  
the portal that takes real life people away  
and converts their existence in entirety  
into a barrage of texts and memories.

He makes his way through,  
as he continues to walk  
I see myself unraveling from the inside out  
I had forgotten to let go.

My eyes set sail on a long journey  
through a sea of burning waters.

Tonic tears try to tear their way out,  
I fight them.  
They won't escape,  
no please, don't let them escape...

Tears are unrelenting creatures,  
if they can't find a way out  
they will consume you.

After the waves settled,  
they pool at heart of vulnerability,  
where the pressure of the ocean is a constant reminder  
of what is gone.

He left me with but memories,

and a pink watch  
which haunts my dreams,  
its diabolical laughter silently ticks away  
the seconds remaining of eternity  
in which my heart will  
forever float in a sea.  
A sea of un-shed tears.

## The Uggosnatcher

Shelby Weinstein

Beware the uggosnatcher,  
For whom compassion is a chore.  
The evil vile vilinor that  
Swipes riches from the poor

Beware the uggosnatcher,  
Which thinks only of itself.  
It's glopitors punge forward,  
So it may steal ugg boots in stealth.

Beware the uggosnatcher,  
That everyone supports.  
Listen to your conscience  
As it garbles and galorphs

Yes, the Uggs look tacky  
Upon its unworthy slorbbering armths  
But furthermore, it's wrong  
to deny a poor urlandine some warmth

Beware the uggosnather.  
For the Ugg boots it so grossiciously took  
From the colder and less fortunate,  
Were, quite simply, for the "look"

Pity the uggosnatcher,  
with its prize upon its feet,  
You scoff in its direction  
Hoping karma will have it beat.

## Poem about Poems

Ash Masrani

the words dance to an unknown tale  
they gasp at the mellifluous melodies that gently prevail;  
they bow down at the light radiating in the shadows of our eyes  
they see creation being born  
and bid adieu to emptiness at its demise.

Just lift the veil of the words betrothed  
Look; don't see  
Create; don't write  
Exhale life onto paper; set the words free  
Dismiss dreary darkness and summon the light.

## A Word from the Wise

Megan Whitbeck

I've climbed mountains and stumbled on rocks,  
Felt the hard times of pressure; minute hands of a clock.  
I've known the path to success and that of checkmate,  
No time to slow down; must constantly accelerate.  
No visions of play; must constantly think,  
Don't stop for a second; don't even blink.  
A word from the wise, work hard and push on,  
The work will pay off long after you're gone.  
Yes, time is so meek; you think that it's failed you  
And come to find out it's completely derailed you.  
Diminished and doubtful by the day's end  
The time that elapsed felt nearly pretend.  
A word from the wise, be cautious you must  
For the time in life is a game— hold 'em or bust.



## Juggling

Lydia Nevin

A trivial skill, but a skill nonetheless  
uncoordinated people should just give up

Speaks more of a person with magical hands  
Than changes the world in a single small way  
this is pointless i'm naturally terrible

Assigned in Phys. Ed. class, a meaningless grade  
all it does is prove you're coordinated which I'm not

I hope Mr. Archer is watching me now  
never mind

I've realized displays of dexterity just  
aren't my thing that time i almost had it

I'll never have magical, wonderful hands  
That can juggle and make it seem easy to throw  
And catch three balls with two hands and one  
brain uh-oh darn whoa

I'm not good. I've proven that, now can I stop?  
But I'll learn it, to realize the fact that I can,  
As final and incontrovertible proof  
That my inborn talents are not who I am.

## The Perfect Day

Jessica Salbert

The bottom of her yellow dress rippled in the wind. The flow of air perfectly counter-acted the direct sunlight. It was hot, but a comfortable hot. It was typical weather for Springfield, Massachusetts at this time of the year; the transition between spring and summer, but closer to summer. The sky was baby-blue, with a few big clouds scattered throughout. It seemed like the perfect day. But nothing is ever perfect.

It was the day before her mother's birthday. She had no money to buy a gift, so she decided to pick flowers. There was a garden at the park just down the street, which she thought was the perfect flower shop. She wobbled her way to the park on stick-thin legs. The tips of her strawberry-blond hair trailed behind her, just like her shadow. She was so care-free; her only worry was whether or not there would be any marigolds, her mother's favorite flower, planted in the garden. Along the way, she received a few strange looks. Little girls like her shouldn't be out by themselves. But this was a special occasion; she *had* to get her mom a gift.

For the beautiful weather, there was a surprisingly small amount of people in the park. It was sort of an awkward time; in between breakfast and lunch. There was a dog-walker, a couple having a picnic, and a family on a walk. And then there was the little girl. She had tunnel-vision as she walked toward the garden, only focusing on the flowers in the distance. The garden was like a kaleidoscope of blues, pinks, reds and purples. The yellows shined as bright as her dress. It was overwhelming; she had been here a countless number of times, but this time she felt so much pressure. These flowers had to be perfect.

She picked a few purple flowers, and then added some white ones. There was a pretty orange rose, but she decided it didn't go well with the other colors. Her mom didn't even like the color orange. The sun beat down on her bare shoulders, but it didn't bother her. Nothing at all seemed to bother her. She didn't even bat an eyelash at the honeybees that were buzzing in and around the

garden, even though she had been deathly afraid of bees after getting stung by one when she was four. The only thing on her mind was the bouquet of flowers that she gripped in her small, clammy hand.

The more flowers she added to the collection, the more tired her hand got. She was up to seventeen flowers, and the stems were getting too wide for her to hold onto. She eyed one last pink rose and yanked it out of the ground, roots and all. She held her hands together to get a better grip on the flowers. It was just as perfect as she had hoped. The flowers were beautiful and the colors went together nicely. *Mom is going to love these*, she thought to herself.

After admiring the bouquet for a moment or two, she began heading toward the entrance of the park. She was quite a ways away, though, as the park was big and she was in the back of it. She looked up in the sky and realized that the weather wasn't so perfect anymore. The sky was still light blue, but had a grey undertone and was notably cloudier. The sun seemed to have vanished, but she knew that it had been there just a few minutes before. The air was colder and windier. Nevertheless, she continued on her way to exit the park.

She noticed that there were even fewer people in the park than there were before. The couple had left, as had the family. The dog-walker was nowhere in sight. As far as she could tell, she was alone. This realization sent a chill down her spine. She looked at the flowers in her hand, and they gave her confidence; just a few minutes of walking and she would be back home.

A few yards ahead of her, a man entered the park and was heading towards her. He looked like a perfect gentleman; he was freshly shaven with nice, tidy hair. He wore black dress pants and a blazer. The girl guessed that he was a businessman. She was relieved that she was not the only person in the park anymore, and continued on her way home without worry.

But as the girl got closer to the man, her heartbeat sped up a bit. He seemed to be staring directly at her. She knew that it was all in her head, but it scared her nonetheless. The two were now just feet apart, and the man started smiling at the girl. He had a nice smile – it looked sincere and welcoming. That

helped put her nerves to rest.

“Hi, honey,” the man spoke in a soft tone. The girl was slightly startled and uneasy. Her mother always told her not to talk to strangers, but this looked like a nice man.

“Hello,” she responded. Her pitch went up at the end of the word, as if she was asking a question. It sounded like she was giving him attitude, but she was really just confused at why he was talking to her.

“What’s your name?” he responded. With this, the girl grew more alarmed. She decided that the best thing would be to just walk away. She pressed forward with tunnel-vision; her only focus was on the park’s exit ahead.

Suddenly, she felt something touch her shoulder. She figured she was just being paranoid, so she ignored it. But she felt it again. It was if someone was poking her. She turned, and the man was directly behind her. The girl had been so focused on leaving the park that she didn’t even sense him behind her.

The man smirked. It sent a shiver down the girl’s entire body.

“Can I show you something?” he asked. The girl got a very bad vibe from the man, but his clean-cut appearance lessened her concern. *He’s probably just being friendly*, she thought to herself.

“What is it?” she cautiously replied. He pointed toward the garden, where she had been five minutes before. Her mom’s flowers were still in her hand, and she noticed that she had been tightly squeezing on the stems, to the point that they were limp.

“There’s a beautiful yellow flower in that garden. It would go perfectly with the others that you have,” the man said with a smile. It seemed genuine, so the girl fell for it. She followed him back to the garden. She was excited – she thought she was getting a new flower for bouquet.

But she could not have been more wrong.

The man forcefully grabbed her arm and tugged her close to him. She tried to resist. She stiffened her body and tried to push him away, but there’s no way she could stand up to a man who was twice her size. Her arms gave in and

her body was suddenly pressed against his. She tried to scream, but stopped when she felt the man's cold hands around her throat. He put a little bit of pressure on her neck, but let go after a few moments. The girl became numb with fear. She couldn't comprehend what was happening, but she had a horrible feeling that it wasn't going to end well.

"Scream and I'll kill you," the man whispered in her ear, matter-of-factly. The girl was now panicking. She was very scared, but more than anything, confused. Who was this man and what did he have against her?

The girl began to silently cry. Throughout this, she did not let go of the flowers. She grasped them with all the strength she had in her little hand.

And then something strange happened. The man himself began to cry.

"I'm so sorry," he began. "I had a little daughter about your age. She meant the world to me; she was my absolute everything. God took her from me four years ago. She was so young, way too young to encounter something as terrible as cancer. But it happened, and she's gone now. I can't live without her and it drives me crazy. When I saw you, I immediately thought of her. You resemble her in so many ways. And like I told you, it drives me absolutely crazy and talking to you makes me feel like I'm talking to her, which is all I want to do."

The man stopped talking and completely broke down in tears. The girl was speechless. She felt bad for him, but it was really awkward. And it was so unexpected. Five minutes ago, her neck had been in that man's hands and she was afraid for her life; now she was standing next to him, watching him cry. She couldn't tell if he was being sincere or not, but his puffy red eyes convinced her that he was. She looked at him with her bright blue eyes. He looked down into his clasped hands, as if he were embarrassed about what he had just admitted to her.

The little girl looked at the flowers in her hand. Without another word, she placed them in the man's hands. She gave him a smile, which he returned, and she walked away. She didn't leave with what she had come for, but that was okay with her.

## Old Man Autumn

Vickie VanBenSchoten

Along a winding trail,  
Golden autumn leaves swirl along.  
They do not know where they belong,  
but Old Man Autumn knows.  
He walks among the silver flowers, and  
talks to the rustling trees,  
whispering his secrets to the little bumble bees.  
He wears a reddish cloak,  
just like the cherry trees of Lady Spring.  
And when a child meets him,  
he is given golden wings,  
just like the yellowing leaves.  
But there comes a time when the trees turn bare  
And the fallen leaves are brown.  
He leaves that winding trail to Lady Winter,  
coming again when the golden leaves swirl along the trail.

## The Time Keeper Amanda Lee

Soft ticking filled the empty darkness  
Keeping track; second after second  
Time after time; schedules kept

tick Tick TICK; the noise grew louder  
Thoughts pressing on her throbbing head  
Keeping her from an intoxicating slumber

QUIET! She spoke aloud  
Startling the ceaseless clatter  
Interrupting the train of endless thought

Silencing the annoyance  
Reaching over to end the life  
Of a punctual companion

## Undead Like Me

Julen Bascaran

When I opened my eyes I awoke with a grumble,  
And I pushed through the dirt, though I tripped and I fumbled.  
When I reached the surface I was surprised when I found  
That my neighbors as well, had crawled through the ground.

So we stumbled and grumbled and tumbled and fell  
As we limped to what humans were now calling hell.  
And I groaned as they screamed cause we looked rather grim.  
Until I had noticed that I'd lost a limb.

And the people they ran, boarding cars, boats and planes.  
I don't understand why... All I want is their brains.  
But regardless we chased them and murdered and maimed.  
As if we were playing an undead kind of game.

And we danced in the streets as the sewers ran red.  
Oh what fun life can be, when it turns out you're dead.

## The Falsehood of Trees

Koy Adams

Too long have I  
Depended on your shielding  
Which protected me from  
Revealing light.

I must now rely on  
Skin alone  
Since even you were  
Swayed by the slightest breeze.

## The Ones That Got Away

Kara Lopez

“This can’t be how I’m supposed to die.”

“It’s not; please...come away from the edge!”

“I’m already on the edge- no going back...”

Does she mean it? Does she really care? Maybe; but her glazed-over look is telling me something different.

We sit on the freshly painted, forest-green metal bench with the sun glaring down on us as though we are in an interrogation room— which is where we might as well be.

Shelley and I were best friends; we were the two girls that you see in the movies who grow up together— they start off as middle school besties, hang out together, becoming inseparable. Then you always see them getting married together and having kids at the same time. Yeah... that was us. But now, staring at her sun-burned face, I am realizing that this is not the case anymore. Sure, we are adults now, but we aren’t anywhere as close as we used to be.

So here we sit; Yellowstone Park. Over by the swings there is a large group of girls who look like they are trading dolls. On the other end, by the massive sand pit, three boys fight with their mini Superman figurines. The slide has been constipated with at least ten children, all trying to get down it at once. But all the screaming and crying and laughing is drowned out by my thoughts.

I continue to confide in Shelley, though I am aware at the lack of focus she is portraying by staring at no child in particular. Tears are filling my eyes, barricading my lashes, seemingly threatening to stampede down my cheeks at any moment.

‘Shelley, I need your help!’ I beg, desperate for some tender-loving advice or warmth. But I continue on.

“I can’t believe this is happening! I vowed to myself and my kids that I would never end



up like every other couple in our family— divorced and alone. But now look where I am!”  
And look where he is.

Gone.

No reply. Not. One. Single. Flinch.

“Shelley, please! What are you staring at?” All of a sudden I am feeling her shiver as if a sudden yet intense cold-front has taken over her body. The mention of Jay seems to be bringing an even more anguished expression to her pale face. She is beginning to hyperventilate and is reaching into her purse for her inhaler.

This is when I know something isn't right.

“WHAT IS WRONG?!”

Her breathing becomes even more shallow- I can see her chest rising high and falling as though into an endless pit. Her face is losing deep brown color and her hands are becoming clammy.

“Toby, Toby,” she is calling out to her son in the most nervous tone I have ever heard her use.” Come on honey, we have to go now.” She is clambering forward on to the woodchips, and I am still just sitting here in complete and utter confusion. Toby isn't too happy about that one— his screaming is evident to the strain Shelley's fingers are placing on his arm.

She is hurriedly pushing him toward the car, my hustling behind them with Toby, unsuccessfully, making an attempt at escape.

But her grip is too tight.

“Mommy, please! Please let me go, Mommy! You are scaring me— STOP IT!”

By now she has picked him up and swung him under her arm; her tears must be blurring her vision because she is stumbling from side to side; she resembles more of a drug addict than a once compassionate and warm middle-aged mother.

Shelley is throwing Toby in his car seat, fumbling with the buckle as though she were a blind woman trying to find a needle in a haystack. When she finally gets him buckled, she slams the door shut and hurries past me while nearly running into the car. I try to stop her but she dodges my hands. By now, Sam is standing next to me, his face locked into my leg where it is suddenly becoming evident that he was crying.

Shelley slams the driver's side door shut and nearly squishes Sam's fingers in the process. She is desperately trying to get the keys in the ignition. I bang on the window.

"What's going on? Please, Shelley talk to me; I can help! Just tell me what..." She stops short, glaring at the front window as if trying to break right through it with her eyes.

"It's Jay. I'm so sorry, Jen." She cries through tearful eyes. "I just... we were... and you had..." Shelley can't figure out an entire sentence. She whispers something that sounds like "I didn't mean to push him."

But there's no way. Push him? What did she mean? Does she know where he went? Does she know... how he died?

"Shelley, what the hell did you do?" I am almost too scared to ask. But it's too late.

They're gone.

And even from the other end of the street, I can hear Toby's frantic screams as his mother ignores him. When she turns the corner, the screech of tires desperately trying to stop is impossible to ignore.

And they can't stop.

A horn, the shatter of glass, and one final deafening scream. And then I realize. It's over.

We will never know what she did to Jay.

# Sacrifice

Mikayla Fendt

I see you at the intersection  
and like glass I know you are fragile,  
but at this moment you are like brick  
no emotion and standing there unbreakable.

But I am more like concrete.  
It takes a strong force to break me.  
You can break off pieces,  
But I remain strong.

In this moment we are both vulnerable,  
no matter brick or concrete  
because there are no cars at this intersection  
just you, and I

It is the most vivid of moments  
because your eyes are widened as are mine.  
I can see your pupils move as you look at me side to side.  
I start to open my mouth but I can see you are cautious.

A car approaches the intersection,  
A man gets out  
He walks over and I can see him whisper in your ear.  
I read his lips for I am deaf.  
He says "She is your love, don't let her slip away."

I stand there in disbelief,  
As the man gets back in his car  
Starts counting back from 20  
My love on the other side stands there  
8,7  
6...  
He runs across the street,  
Grabs me in his arms,  
Tells me he loves me,  
I've seen him before but he is still a complete stranger to me.  
He runs back out to the street,  
The light turns green  
He shouts but I cannot hear him.  
The blood streaks left behind  
They read:  
" I had to do this in order to ensure your happiness."  
And now my concrete is split in two,  
slowly breaking down  
to nothing.

I'm done  
Abbey Yonta

And you can't make it not hurt  
Your little kisses don't work  
The pain can't just go away  
I won't feel free, not today  
The chains that bind me  
To get out all I need is the key  
You told me a lie  
That you'd never say goodbye  
But here we are  
And you're so far  
You're drifting farther  
And this is getting harder  
Our friendship is a wire  
And your lies are a fire  
They burn bright  
They are the light  
That lets me see  
All you pretend to be  
I don't like being hurt  
Not when I'm treated like dirt  
This friendship isn't fun  
So this is my way of saying I'm done  
So I'm saying I'm done  
I'm done.

Accidental Lies  
Samantha Jaffe

Lies are not told on purpose  
They lay like a blanket over the truth  
Too cold and frightened to be exposed  
Truths are smothered  
Like a fire fighting for survival  
But often burn a silent death.

## Defining Love

*An excerpt from the novel Axela: written by the character Ellie*

Erin Jorgensen

Love is ...

the feeling of happiness and security when you're around a person  
when they drive you crazy but you kinda like it  
a constant rollercoaster of emotions  
giddy highs and depressing dips  
going insane with passion  
unspoken conversations

Love is

when you can't think of anything but the slight smile they have  
your mouth talking  
your brain dreaming  
your body reacting  
your head spinning  
meanwhile you rattle on about some trivial topic

Love is ...

as permanent as diamond  
as lovely as an orchid  
as deep as the sea  
as vast as the universe  
as delicate as a bubble  
as untouchable as light  
as invisible as air  
as careless as wind  
as perfect as a moment

## Alone

Emily Bazydlo

She slipped between the alleys as her shadow slid down walls and over homeless men with dreams of the rich's garbage cans. Most were kept under lock and key in these days, these days of pain and suffering in the streets, more than forty percent of the country was jobless, homeless, lifeless. They would lay for days, praying for scraps, and dying whether their prayers were answered or not. She was their God, a holy figure in the night.

She waltzed down the streets of the dirty slum villages as if they were her home. They were indeed that, a place of shelter and warmth on those dreary nights. She spent little time here, only borrowed time, but every risky second was worth it. She carried a gold satchel, the woven wool of the string clutched in her hand so no one could reach their hand in as she passed. She always had exactly enough pellets for those who were on the brink of death, the most needy, on the steps of heaven's gate. Some were grateful, the ones with families and loved ones. But every once in awhile she'd stumble upon someone who would refuse the tiny sphere that so many craved. They had someone they wanted to meet in the sweet darkness of death. With them, she'd hold their hand, whisper prayers, sing songs. As their head fell back with its last exhale, she'd run the paths only a beggar would know. Her cloak rustling, the wind rushing through the worn holes as she held the thick fabric over her eyes. On to the next.

Tonight the snow was falling softly as her feet on the old avenues. She came to an abrupt stop in the middle of the street. This was her street. No one for blocks, just her, the snow, and the pavement. She knelt to feel the still shaking ground. Yes, in her mind the asphalt shook with the memories of the brave souls who had stood there. A golden bull standing erect nearby, laughing. The faded yellow lines ran in each direction and were gobbled by the dark. She stared into the night, caught a snow flake on her tongue, and ran.

Her next stop was the village of tents in the park. She loosened the clasp on the pouch so just her hand could jab in up to the wrist and quickly dart out. They called it her magic pouch. Too small to hold enough for even one to live, yet

somehow there were always enough. Her gallop fell to a trot scouting for her patients. For that's what she was, a doctor, she healed their stomachs with little pink pills and their hearts with hope. They called as she passed, "CC! There she goes!" It was always a relief when she kept going, for it meant you would survive at least the night, and if you were to die the next, she would be there to save you.

"Please! Give it to the children!" whispered a withering grandmother as she knelt beside her.

"No, mother, they're safe. You are not."

"Look at them! Look!" At this, CC turned her head and took a second look at the children. It was a small boy and girl, picking up the freshly fallen snow and throwing it into the air again. Their giggling brought a smile to her face.

"Take it. Please."

And with that she was off. She made her rounds as usual, but there was a gnawing feeling in her stomach. She wanted to see the children again. Her heartbeat racing and cheeks pinked against the cold, she rushed back to where they had been earlier.

The pill was gone from the woman's hand. Maybe she had eaten it. The children were still playing, making snow angels on the muddy ground. She walked over so she was near to them but apart from the group. Her dark shadow shifted to the ground. She sat and watched and wished she were so innocent.

"They're beautiful, aren't they?" said a man sitting next to her. She did not know when he had gotten there, the still air hadn't betrayed his presence. His eyes were dark and full of admiration for the young creatures. She imagined her eyes must be similarly dressed, except the bright cobalt would hopefully hold in some of the yearning. She didn't look over, just felt his proximity for a few minutes until he spoke.

"You're CC." A simple statement. She gave one quick nod of her head. "Well," he continued, "That was my mother that you saved." An unspoken thank you was shared. That word, mother, it stirred an unquenched thirst of jealousy inside her. Her own mother was long gone. She just stared down at her small pouch, clutched in her hands. She wanted him to reach for it, try to steal it, so that she could run away

and not feel guilty. But he was so alone here. Her limbs were frozen by his exhaled breath.

Only God knows how much time was spent from that moment to the next time he spoke. Seconds or days wouldn't have mattered.

"We used to live in a house." A small crack in his voice shattered the rest of his mask. "Little Joey there, he was two when we foreclosed." She had seen this happen before, he'd soon unravel into a mess on the ground. "God, how in the world did we get here? How could this happen? My daughter, my princess, is growing up without a mother. Why? So that Mr. Buxby on The Hill can have a bottle of wine with his meal?" He resigned to his tears. She sat uncomfortably listening to his constant inner monologue, guessing he didn't have anyone to complain about The Hill to. Always had to be cheery for the little darlings.

The Hill was where the rich lived. Huge mansions piled with all the amenities hidden behind golden gates and crystal moats. Anything to keep the riffraff out. Mr. Buxby was the richest of them all. He owned most of this city, and he wanted all the poor out, now. CC hated him. At the mention of his name, a slight chill fell down her back. She held him personally responsible for the death of her mother. The parallel between herself and these children scared her, bonds hurt when they were broken. She watched them.

"I can take them." Her words mumbled into her cloak, and she didn't even know if the man had heard her. He twitched, thought, and slowly turned with eyes hazed with tears.

"Yes. Please."

"Get what is theirs and bring it to me."

After a slight pause he spoke, "They have nothing."

At that, she slowly rose and tiptoed over to the children.

"It's time to go." She knelt beside them and welcomed their puzzled expression.

"Why is Daddy crying?" spoke the man's princess.

"He's staying here with your grandma. Don't worry." She held out her gloved hands, her pouch hanging on her right arm swayed back and forth and back and-



CRACK!

The ground was covered with blood. She knew what was happening before she turned. It was hunting season for Mr. Buxby. The target: herself.

She scooped up the children and ran as the old woman howled in the background for her newly lost son, a man whose blood was spilt for no decent reason but to save his children. The troop with Buxby were trotting after the young ones. They were all so heavy and stuffed after their long dinner that they were normally no match for CC, but tonight she had stowaways.

“I’ll catch ya! Get back here! Stop him!” screamed the man with bloodshot eyes and a handlebar mustache.

She could not be caught.

When they seemed far enough away, she stopped and dropped the children. “Hide here,” she said, exasperated and breathless, “I’ll be back, I promise, stay here and don’t make a sound!” The desperation was thick in her voice.

She trotted off as they cowered between an old dumpster and a shadow. As the figures came around the corner, she waited and then ran up a fire escape, knowing they would never be able to catch her going upstairs. As she neared the top of the building, they began their poorly aimed shooting. She stood triumphantly, stories above them, a hero on her pedestal. As the shots became fewer and farther apart, she heard the voice. Every time it made her shiver.

“Oh lookey here! You thinks you can out smart us! I’m terribly sorry, but you’re wrong,” spoke Buxby as he held out his gun pointing in the shadows and emptied the barrel. Only one shriek could leave the girl’s tiny body before she and her brother met the same fate as their father. “You can’t save them! You’re no hero! You’d need an army!” His laughter faded as he walked into the distance.

She looked down, said a prayer, and ran--leaping and lunging from building top to building top. The winds whipping past wicked the tears away. She finally arrived at the golden gate, scaled it and jumped into the lush garden of the Buxby household. She climbed up the brick work to the dungeon waiting behind the window sill at the top. She hopped into the room.

It was a wonderland. A large four poster bed with the softest of sheets, a

plush tan carpet under foot, and a vanity with a mirror. She walked up to the vanity, sat on the white satin stool, and unclasped the cloak letting it fall from her shoulders. This was but a house and for this fact she cried. Deep tears of anguish and pain. When she was done, she put the cloak and the pouch, both with crimson stains, in the hidden drawer under the vanity. She threw on her silk night gown and began to brush her hair waiting for the clock to chime six in the morning.

Right on cue. There was a knock and her father came in the room. "Good Morning Clarissa! How's my sunshine?" His reflection fell in her mirror, his voice hit her eardrums, and she shivered.

"Good Morning, Daddy!" She ran and jumped into his arms.

She would find an army.

## Knowledge Sara Griffiths

The smartest person I knew  
Knew nothing at all  
They didn't know how to speak  
How to multiply  
Historical dates I've spent hours memorizing  
What molecules made up water  
What the primary colors were  
But they knew how to breathe  
They knew how to feel  
To feel loss  
To feel sorrow  
To rejoice  
To smile  
They knew how to live

## 5<sup>th</sup> Metatarsal

Nicole Crisalli

A burning sensation;  
A needle through my foot;  
The feeling of devastation.

The feeling of letting down my friends,  
my teachers,  
myself.

I want this feeling to flee from my mind,  
my body.  
I can't take this pain anymore.  
I just want to dance full out for once.

Why did this happen to me?  
Am I supposed to fix it?  
But how?

Everything I try doesn't work,  
nothing helps the feeling go away.

Whenever I dance,  
There's always a little pain.  
The constant reminder in my mind  
to not overdo a  
jump,  
or a turn,  
or even a plié.

I won't let it stop me.  
I'll dance through the pain.  
It won't stop me from doing what I love.

The intensity of pain  
is nothing compared to  
my passion for dancing.

I'll dance for my life if I have too.  
Nothing will stop me,  
Not even my 5<sup>th</sup> metatarsal.

## My Big Friend

Megan Gillson

the sweet, sour lemonade,  
the warm summer breeze,  
bomb-pop drops sizzled on the black tar  
the tar that burned and blackened our bare feet.

Two good friends, one big and one small  
seventeen and seven  
playing and jumping and splashing  
our laughter bouncing off the waves  
the chlorine water on our sun-baked skin  
our eye lashes hold water droplets and stick together like glue.

the sun lowers and the barbeque air fills my nose  
the leaves turn yellow and orange and then brown  
the breeze becomes chilly,  
shivers and red noses.

a mother gets sad, she sniffles and cries  
as do I, but I don't understand  
why my big friend lies still and quiet, and naps for days and days  
as all the family comes together to watch.  
Their tears fall on him and splash his cold, white statue face  
but he doesn't notice.

he doesn't feel me touch his hand  
he doesn't hear me talk to his ear  
Wake up, silly.

the leaves give up and they fall down with the rain  
like tears.  
the wind turns cold and mean  
the sun plays hide and seek behind big gray clouds

before the snowflakes come, we send special balloons  
to my friend's new home  
I watch them float up into the big blue sky  
and for now I say goodbye.

## Track Spikes

Katy Pieri

I sit unused for most of the year in a drawstring bag  
Under the bed in the dark, coming out  
Only when needed for certain days of the season.  
In the dark I wait, until I'm dragged out into the cool outside air  
When that moment arrives, full of anxiety and adrenaline.  
I'm laced up tight and flex into position  
All is quiet for a just a second,  
Until the sudden bang sets the race in motion.  
The weight of the load I must carry  
Pushes on my sole as I slap along  
All the way around the track as fast as legs can carry me  
Down that final stretch, crowd cheering  
As I pass that magic line.  
The running slows,  
The race is over, I'm unlaced and  
The pressure is off  
I'm shoved back into the  
Bag and under the bed.

## Smiles

Emily Frank

Red  
Orange  
Yellow  
The taste of sour lemonade—the sting to your taste-buds  
Orange slices against your teeth  
Baby's laughter, rays of sunshine  
Bursting through the atmosphere  
Breath in, breathe out-fresh...clean...takes you back  
To memories  
Memories  
Your grandmother's laugh-lines, the dimples, the future  
To your features, and history in the same  
Yellow  
Green  
Blue  
Changing tone, disappearing  
The colors draining from the afternoon sky...black  
Feelings of butterflies-they fall asleep  
Sleep.  
Dream.  
Smile.

## Autumn

Megan Whitbeck

He stood in the front yard amidst the falling leaves from the oak trees, their branches reaching out as if asking for shelter from the cold winter season that was approaching. He gazed at the wonderful sight of autumn leaves of all different colors; gold, fire red, and his favorite, ominous orange. The leaves brushed by him in a timely manner, awaiting their destination that was the frozen earth's crust. Taking in his surroundings, he breathed in the scent of pumpkin spice wafting from the house and felt the chill of the fresh crisp air that pinched his tiny nose. He noticed that all the dandelions had packed up for winter and demolished themselves along with the warm summer air. Fall was his favorite time of year, and he would never forget the sights, smells, and feelings it brought him. They would stick with him for years to come.

Peering through the lens, he put on his glasses to view the scenes in better focus and adjusted the pieces hoping to help his terrible vision. His hands trembled, trying to efficiently work with such miniscule equipment. Once all the settings were perfect, he began to look out from his front porch into the unknown. He saw the birds sitting on the electric cables, a mother and daughter yelling at each other from inside the house across the street, and a baby throwing his plate of broccoli to the ground in a rebellious fashion. He had been through all of the hardships before, but only realizing now what they really meant.

Mr. Osmand lived by himself in a small townhouse in a fairly new neighborhood on the suburbs of Chicago. All his life, Mr. Osmand had been a curious man. Even as a young boy, he would be caught staring at things blankly until his mother called him in for dinner. He didn't think he was strange, just observant. He remembered anything anyone told him- times tables, stock prices, or even the salaries of famous baseball players. Certain ideas just stuck in his mind like superglue to a broken trinket. He didn't know why, it just happened to be that way.

Mr. Osmand rocked back and forth in a repeated motion silently on his porch step. He observed the arbitrary runner up and down the block or the child playing with chalk across the street. He observed all kinds of things, but felt nearly nothing. Peering through the binoculars in his bony hands, he made all sorts of judgments about most situations on Park Ave. The mother obviously didn't care enough to take note of the fact that her son had hated broccoli months earlier than today.

'Every time he is given broccoli it ends up on the floor or in his mother's lap. That mother and daughter have been yelling about the same topic for months. Who cares if she drives after 9? You only live once,' he thinks.

Mr. Osmand knew everything about everyone in their quiet, cozy neighborhood. Mrs. Jenson across the street had just been diagnosed with liver cancer, Mr. Goodman won his first chess tournament at the Grand Valley All Star Chess Championships and Janie from apartment 206 was pregnant with her first child. Through his binoculars, Mr. Osmand viewed the world through a lens that was polished and shiny, but not perfectly clear. The details to the puzzles he watched were unknown, filling them in as he went along. As he peered through the lens, he remembered everything he saw. He took note of everyone's agenda, when they would leave the house and return after work, or when Mary and Cindy snuck out on Thursday nights when their moms went to sewing class. Mr. Osmand knew more about the people in his neighborhood than he knew about himself and the people that lived there. He kept journals of his findings and recorded them daily. What else did he have to live for? Writing kept him in check but it still made him feel like his life wasn't completely useless.

'Maybe someone will notice my hard work once I die. Maybe they'll think I'm strange. Who knows. Only time will tell,' thought Mr. Osmand.

As Mr. Osmand sat on the porch, neighbors would pass him without the slightest hello. No one cared to talk to Mr. Osmand because of his silent nature. He didn't converse with anyone or enjoy nights out on the town with his friends. Mr. Osmand's prime was over, and his retirement was in full swing. Sitting in the

rocker on the front porch was all Mr. Osmand's destiny had held for him, and quite frankly, he wasn't terribly miserable about it.

He watched the way a bird's wings flapped against the movement of the wind, or the way a woman's hair flowed in the breeze as she ran swinging back and forth like a cowboy with a lasso. He watched the planes fly overhead taking passengers to new and exciting destinations or the couple with locked hands taking a casual walk down the road basking in new love's joy. Mr. Osmand rocked back and forth, stationary for a moment's time drifting into a deep sleep.

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The sirens wailed and the wheels screeched against the blacktop parking lot of the hospital. The vehicle darted through the streets winding and twisting fast enough to reach its destination in record time. The truck came to a screaming halt in front of the house. Medical personnel and police ran to the scene, only to find a man sleeping in a chair. They threw him to the floor breaking out the defibrillator from its spot in the ambulance. Three...two...one...ZZZ! No response.

Mr. Osmand was carried into the vehicle as the neighbors began to hear the commotion outside of their homes. One by one they cautiously walked into their front yards staring and chatting about what had just happened. Neighbors crowded together in circles, hands covering their mouths as lumps began to form deep in their throats.

What killed Mr. Osmand they did not know, but what they found inside the house was remarkable. The cop carried out all the boxes they had found and searched through them as the neighbors watched in suspense.

Flipping through the pages of at least 300 notebooks stacked in boxes on the front yard, the officers were puzzled as to what filled their old and wrinkly pages. There was a notebook dedicated to the birds- the detail in their fluorescent wings as they contrasted against the pale robin's egg blue sky. How the graceful flaps of their wings pushed the air out of the way as if to dominate the uncontrolled movement and chaos of the wind. Detailed descriptions and



markings filled the lines with amazing poetic phrases. The neighbors read in shock as they discovered Mr. Osmand's talent. He was a writer. No one would have ever known if it wasn't for these documents that were so carefully crafted out of his gentle, tender heart.

Word spread throughout town as newspapers wrote articles about Mr. Osmand and his writings. Notebooks full of fabulous poems and observations were sold to the press by the police department giving them permission to release them to the public. He became an instant hit with the people in Chicago, everyone reading the weekly published segments of his works.

Neighbors had conversed about what Mr. Osmand was all about before his death, but no one really wished to talk to him during his time on earth. Mr. Osmand was viewed as the beautiful dandelion in the crack of the pavement—unnoticed and unappreciated until they die. Although Mr. Osmand observed so much of the life around him, his neighbors passed without a single glance or friendly wave of a hand. Sitting on his porch, watching through the lens that was his creative mind.

The bird stared up at the glowing tree, its leaves falling into empty nothingness. They rocked back and forth until they fell into a view that was no longer recognizable to him. Sitting upon the telephone cord, his fragile wings began to flap against the stifling wind, rising up from the thick, black twine twenty feet above the ground. It flew to the nearest tree and landed without hesitation into its comforting branches. The colorful leaves surrounded him as if a blanket in the warm sun, wrapping around him, protecting his life. Peering onto the ground, he noticed a boy, staring back into his eyes. The boy's intention was one he had known, in a previous life, the observant kind of mindset. The boy smiled and waved as his mother called him in for dinner.

## Cuddles

Veronica Wheelock

I was there the first time that she watched me  
precariously peeking  
and boo-hooing whenever she could find reason  
she liked clinging as much as crying  
while most babbled "mum-ma"  
she called for me

I helped her tie her sneakers  
two bunny-eared loops  
that guided her  
and then we would dance  
and stomp around  
just to see those things light up

She told me about the boy who  
on Valentine's Day  
slipped her the biggest heart shaped letter  
out of all the other girls in the class  
and then I sat on her lap while she cried  
because that boy was not good enough

I watched her smile with her newly straightened teeth  
and beam after she passed her driver's test  
I saw her get her first kiss  
far away  
down the endless hallway

I still lay under the bed  
I try and forget the hand that pushed me  
I watched her grow

I still watch the heels walk in  
and out of the room  
and the darkness that will not stop coming  
and enveloping me

## Mr. Skunk

Tessa Devereaux

The despicable smell that follows Mr. Skunk  
gradually pollutes the air.

A stink so distinct and intolerably foul,  
even the strongest man cannot bear.

He slowly meanders wherever he may  
as others clear his path.

For those who know, the little foe  
has an utterly wicked wrath.

His black and white coloring is not very special,  
except the stripe that he wears,  
cannot be mistaken, for there is no faking  
the odor that brings about tears.

But there is a way to stop his spray  
and end the fear once and for all.  
It will just take one swipe, and despite all his hype  
Mr. Skunk will face its fall.

As he takes his sweet time crossing the road  
Mr. Skunk forgets one rule;  
to look both ways, or else he just may  
be flattened on the road like a fool.

The car rolls on without even stopping,  
just a slight bump with no remorse.  
Mr. Skunk the crook, as flat as a book,  
isn't so mighty anymore.

## Feet

Andrew Lee

One feat. Two feet.  
Wooden feet. Leather feet.  
As silent and nimble as a rabbit in the black of night  
Flashing  
They fall like starry meteors  
On the dirt-strewn field.  
As Paul Bunyan dug a gorge, so the feet scarred the earth.

Feet that can shuffle the night away  
Transport a common man  
Nudge a dead man  
Spin a dancer up and away  
Yet always kissing the earth

Accomplishing feats that other parts of the body can only  
Dream about  
Not measured by size in meters,  
Feet become the prized possession  
With the rest of the body along for the ride

A golfer's club  
A scythe that swishes through the grass  
Lurking in leather and wrapped in fame  
Twelve inches of an athlete's trophy  
Feet  
Are what juggles a world and then punts it

## Spider

Liz Pieri

He methodically moves to set up his trap.  
It seems he could do no wrong.  
He never fails to draw up his map  
As he labors and hustles along.

He's a soldier in the midst of war.  
Plotting and planning to kill.  
He never fails to finish his chore.  
For he traps all trespassers at will.

In silence he will wait for days  
With his ambush perfectly set.  
Until a victim enters his maze  
A move it will come to regret.

## Open Window

Mikayla Mizruchi

Mimi pushed open the freshly painted white door. She kicked aside the pile of boots, canes decorated with flowers and animals, and plastic bags filled with junk that probably hadn't been looked at since 1974. She cleared away the purses and tote bags, which covered the old sofa, so she would have a place to sit down. Mashed in the corner of the sofa, pressed between two, thick, hard cover books that Granny and Gramps most likely did not read before going to Florida, was Granny's hat. Mimi snickered as she held Granny's blue hat with the red feather. She stroked the feather between her fingers and wondered what ever possessed Granny to buy that thing. Mimi thought back to the misadventures of Granny. She remembered one of Granny's classic disasters that happened last year in Florida, while she was talking to Aunt Joanie on the phone.

"Joanie! Thanks for the wonderful Hanukkah gifts!"

"Glad you like them, Ruth. So, how's Florida?"

"Oh, it's just so beautiful! I feel like I'm in Shangri-La! Everyone here is so nice and sweet!"

"It's great to hear that you're having fun!"

"We are. As you know, I can't take a trip to Florida without getting into one of my messes. You won't believe the adventure I had on Tuesday, or was it Wednesday? Yes, it was Wednesday. Tuesdays are good luck days. Anyway, you know that beautiful ring I have? The one that replaced my wedding band that I lost."

"The platinum ring covered with diamonds?"

"Yes."

"Please don't tell me you lost that ring, too."

"No, don't worry. I am ok, and the ring is ok. Wednesday morning I was rushing around to get to my 11:30 appointment at the beauty parlor, and it was already 11:54. I took my ring off as I was washing my hands, and I left it on the bathroom sink. I don't know how it happened, or what I exactly did, but somehow, stupid me did something which caused my ring to fall in the toilet."

"You really need to be more careful."

"Don't tell Harold! Whenever I have my daily disasters, I don't want him to find

out, because he will be mad at me.”

“I won’t tell him.”

“Thanks! You’re a doll. Thank goodness there is this sweet woman who lives in the condo next door to us. She always helps me through my adventures.”

“It’s very nice of that woman to help you, but you should really be more...”

“Oh no! Some bills just flew out the window! Got to go! Bye!”

Granny stumbled her way outside. She tripped along the beach, stepping on her floor-length denim skirt. Her silk, floral print scarf blew off from around her neck, and floated in the direction of a group of kids building a sand castle. A boy charged over to where the scarf had landed, and picked it up. He waved the scarf in the air, proudly showing his friends. The castle being built began to be decorated with Granny’s scarf. Granny walked over to the castle while the woman who lived in the condo next door to Granny, pulled her sopping wet bills out of the ocean. Once again, Granny’s neighbor came to the rescue to help her through another mess. Granny gave the kids a warm smile, and she complimented them on how beautiful their castle looked. She explained to the kids that she would love for them to keep her \$118 scarf, however, her husband, who bought her the scarf would be mad at her, after once again, being irresponsible with another expensive gift that he bought for her. The kids did not have a problem with giving the scarf back to Granny.

Granny held her scarf and soaked bills while holding up her long skirt, so she wouldn’t fall and spend even more time in the emergency room, as she walked back to the condo. She tried to be discreet as she slowly opened the door. She entered, only to be “warmly” welcomed by her husband. He looked disgusted as he stared her up and down. Granny’s stomach turned when she saw the look on his face. Granny nervously said to her husband, “Do you know what just happened?” Her husband smirked as he said, “I can only imagine.”

Mimi laughed after thinking about Granny’s misadventure with the open window. She stood up and left the blue hat with the red feather on top of the pile of hard cover books. As Mimi began to walk out of the living room, she turned around and looked back at the hat. She quietly chuckled as she walked out the front door.

You and I  
Sara Griffiths

You and I

You see vandalism

I see art

You hear noise

I hear music

You smell the smoke and think

Negative

Death

I smell the smoke and think

Positive

Life

You think how could I?

I think why didn't you see it coming?

You feel disappointed

I feel confident, finally alive

You and I

Our paths diverge from here

You'll never see through my eyes again

Though I don't think you ever did

You shake your head and look down

I shake my head and look down

At least there's one place we find a connection

You and I

## Hidden Fruit

Kyrin Pollock and Jackie Knapp

Like an apple  
She's strong from her core  
But the first drop's bruises give her away

Like a grape  
She's always sweet  
But the smallest bite releases her tears

Like an orange  
She's protected by her layers  
But they peel away to expose her center

Like a fruit  
She's seen unbreakable on her surface  
But nobody sees through to her fragile inside.

## Poetry #4

Mopati Kuswani

To listen or not to listen  
To all of these mumbles  
To stay or to leave- I don't know my decision  
because,  
To them, we are just numbers

If I go I might miss a lot  
If that happens, I have chosen to stay  
If it was back then, when I thought I would have been a cop  
If it ever ends, one can only pray

Should we trust or not to trust  
No one could have expected all of this  
But the way it's told, to believe is a must  
On the other hand, it might just be one of your many myths



## Megabus

Ash Masrani

The dim light, escaping the grasp of the light bulbs, gently sinks into the arches of their faces, giving each one of them their own spotlight, for once; at least once. Each of the billions of cells of their faces resonates a story waiting—yearning— to be heard, but is bolted down by the rigid cork named society. I can see their eyes succumb to the overshadowing sense of fatigue that is clawing itself into every strand of vulnerability in their bodies. I can see their eyes losing themselves into the uncharted chasm of pure creation: their dreams. It's marvelous how similar they look when asleep; how human they look when asleep. Darkness is claiming the reigns of the sky around me and seems to be harnessing even more power with every fleeting minute. But the darker it gets outside, the brighter the light dances on the faces of these passengers; on the passengers aboard the Megabus en route to New York City.

Besieged with unmatched boredom while sitting on this bus and inspired by the life around me to rendezvous with words, my counselor's response to my college essay echoes in my mind. "There's a book in you", he says. Well, there's a book in everyone, isn't there? Every breath, every encounter, every ephemeral day is a story; isn't it? Yet, in the midst of the pressures suffocating the final whispers of emotions from these very individuals—pressures to attain perfection, to continuously prove one's self worth in order to receive self validation and societal approval and to demonstrate uniqueness after being assessed in a standardized method of evaluation— tend to deem the stories that echo the tales of their lives to be trivial. Societal pressures that have elevated and redefined success to be veiled in materialistic robes, dawning the jewels of fiscal status, have robbed the bourgeois of the simple joys hidden in every cursory moment.

Outside the window, the ground from below the tires is escaping the grasps of the tires and fading into the pervasive darkness of the night sky. The faces of the passengers aboard this Megabus continue to revel in their sheltered dreams, away from the molds carved out by our society. The light on the screen of my laptop begins to dim as the battery begins to dwindle away, encouraging me to yield to my own exhaustion and join my fellow passengers in the field of dreams.

# Food

Joe Lawrence

Bacon. Bacon.  
Toast. Toast.  
Ice cream, you scream  
for a bowl of pot roast.

Milk. Butter.  
Eggs. Tea.  
Cake and doughnuts  
go well with coffee.

Rice. Bread.  
Shrimp. Fish.  
Caviar is an  
expensive dish.

Chicken. Potatoes.  
Fries. Cheese.  
McEverything  
from Mickey D's.

Food. Food.  
All sorts of food.  
Food is good.  
I like food.

Food. Food.  
These are all food.  
We'd all be dead  
if it weren't for food.

Brownies. Cake.  
Cookies. Candy.  
A spoon and a fork  
really come in handy.

Apples. Bananas.  
Pears. Oranges.

Clementine and tangerines  
are... uh... like oranges.

Carrots. Beans.  
Lettuce. Corn.  
Corn can be cooked  
to make popcorn.

Pie. Honey.  
Grapes. Chips.  
Drinking hot chocolate  
might burn your lips.

Food. Food.  
All sorts of food.  
Food is good.  
I like food.

Food food.  
Those were all food.  
You really can't survive  
without eating food.

Nuts. Nuts.  
Nuts. Nuts.  
Pistachios and almonds  
are sorta like nuts.

Berries. Berries.  
Berries. Berries.  
Blueberry and raspberry both  
end with berry.

Food. Food.  
Those were all food.  
You seriously won't live  
unless you eat food.

## The Stares

Emily Bazydlo

The twinkling lights and smiles above blind me  
The spinning mobile hypnotizes and tries to distract me,  
Haunting my thoughts as if to mock my immobility

Your stares and cooing noises hurt rather than soothe  
For I am aware of each distinct word uttered  
The twinkling lights and smiles above blind me

You don't seem to understand what's going on in my mind  
As you carry me from room to room  
Haunting my thoughts as if to mock my immobility

If only I could tell you, make known to you that I am here  
In both mind and spirit, I'm no pet that you can tote like a prize  
The twinkling lights and smiles above blind me

I want to scream out as the Whos have, "I am Here!"  
We are here, yet you're ignoring us by seeing us  
Haunting my thoughts as if to mock my immobility

Just because I don't speak doesn't mean I can't hear  
I am here, I am a person, I am just not old enough  
The twinkling lights and smiles above blind me  
Haunting my thoughts as if to mock my immobility

## A word to the wise

Katie Cieplicki

Careful, I may look like an average word:  
simply synthesized sounds and symbols. You  
may think you have a handle on what I  
mean; what I stand for. Well, I may think *you*  
are wrong, wrong, wrong. I've been blowing on this  
breeze far longer than you. Since I first formed  
on the tongue of some ancient man; whether  
accidentally or actually (I guess it didn't matter in the end).

Careful, before you use me, so you don't  
lose me; look beneath the symbols and sounds  
What do I mean to you? What will I mean  
to the world you are keen on writing for?

I've been misused before but maybe this  
time we'll be partners in rhyme (and get things  
write).

## Language

Jessica Salbert

It's the way we share ideas,  
A connection between nations.  
Words, pictures and thoughts,  
A link between generations.

Commonly found among people,  
But it really has no limit.  
Animals, rocks, plants-  
They all lie within it.

Traditions, customs and culture itself  
Cannot live without  
And if it did not exist,  
Life would be a drought.

We use it every single day,  
And it's known to cause some damage.  
But without it there are no thoughts, no life.  
It's everything. It's language.

# I Have The Ability

Dylan Muller

I have the ability to

To never give up in times of struggle  
To say don't stop  
To not let myself down

To let time fly before me  
To watch the second hand  
The minute hand, the hour hand

To live life everyday like the last  
To forget death; cherish birth  
To watch nature unravel

To run and hide when struggle comes near  
To face them with chest held high  
To overcome obstacles

To sleep all day without awakening  
To wake up  
To greet the day with warm welcome

To never give up, no never give up  
To avoid the possible  
To conquer the impossible

I have the ability to

## The Circle Window

Katie Maroney

“I came in first, she came in second, I was the winner, and she was the loser. I play sports at a division I college, she couldn’t make a modified team. I am the super star, older sister to an under-appreciated, disrespected younger sister. Before I left for college I looked after her, my parents were never there for her. I brought her to school and made dinner for her, what would she do without me? I guess she gave up.”

I looked in the mirror, unsatisfied with what was reflected. Bad thoughts emanated through my mind. “Why am I here? What is my life worth? Nothing, I am useless. Why did she have to leave me here alone with these animals?”

The dark blue painted bathroom acted as cave, a place where all of her thoughts were trapped and echoed in her head as she stood there, in front of the mirror. The sun that poured in at a slant through the small circle window disrupted her self- destructive feelings. Her focus was on another noise, one that to her was like nails to a chalkboard, her parents fighting. The sound of their bickering emanated through the house. Loud music and plugged ears could not tune them out. They were like lions fighting over a territory. Mom was always right and not to his surprise, Dad was at fault. She would try to get them to stop by slamming her door, yelling at the both of them or turning up her music too loud, but they were strong and neither one was going to back down from this fight.

“I wonder if they would miss me? Probably not, they are always too busy fighting. I’ll call Grace and she if she’ll let me stay at her house for the night.”

“Hey Grace, my parents are at it again, I can’t get my homework done, and I just need to get out of here.”

“I think that would be fine Shannon, just let me ask my parents, I’ll call you back in a minute.”

“Thanks, bye.”

She walked into her bedroom saying, “They don’t care. What am I to them, another mouth to feed, something that they have to waste their money on?”

A couple minutes later, Grace called back and said that Shannon was free to stay. Shannon packed her sleepover bag; regardless of whether her parents said yes, she was getting out of the hell that was her “home”. She walked past them without saying a word, went out the door, and into her car. She cranked her music in defiance of her parents; they hated her kind of music. Her choice of music was country. Why did they hate it? They didn’t want her to become a “redneck”. Recently Grace had exposed her to this type of music and she fell in love with it. Her parents, however, decided that she had become obsessed and was trying to act like something she was not, but what did they know? They never knew who she was to begin with. She was the unappreciated, disrespected younger sister.

She arrived at Grace’s house, but before she left her car, she looked in her rear view mirror and wiped the tears from her eyes. Once again she began thinking negative thoughts. This time her car was a cave, and the silence was a net that captured bad thoughts and held them against her mind. She gathered herself and walked into Grace’s house.

The walls adorned with family photos, children’s artwork hanging and the smell of sweet cookies filled the air. Grace’s house was a breath of fresh air. “What a place... this is like heaven compared to my house.”

Though the house was bustling with activity, there was no shouting, no yelling, and a hot, home-cooked meal sitting on the table waiting to be eaten. Shannon sure was hungry. Her mother never made them food unless her sister was coming home. Most nights it was Chinese take out, pizza delivery or a bowl of cereal. Not in this house— this place was like a five star hotel, complete with loving family.

Shannon, Grace and her family sat down to eat. Though starving, Shannon did not start eating right away. She was content with listening to normal dinner table conversation, the kind that used to occur between her sister and her

parents. After about five minutes of soaking up the humble, family atmosphere, Shannon began to feast.

After dinner they had planned to start their homework, but were interrupted by Shannon's worst nightmare, her parents. They had come to take her back to their hell-hole and out of the paradise she had sought out.

"Oh Shannon, we were worried sick about you!" her mother exclaimed.

"Why would you just walk out on us, without even saying goodbye?" her father questioned.

"I did, you must not have heard me."

What a lie that was. She avoided all contact with them when she left and knew that her parents could care less where she was... they just didn't want Grace's parents to think that Shannon hated them.

Reluctantly, Shannon climbed into her car and drove herself home. Her parents drove behind her to make sure she didn't take a detour before going back home. She had no one to lean on, no one to talk to, no one who understood what was happening. She called me. She cried to me and blamed me for all her misfortunes. I could not control my parents, I could not make them see that she was just as talented as I. There was nothing I could do but be a good listener. That would calm her down, at least for tonight.

Shannon hung up the phone. She was exhausted, and she knew in the morning she was going to hear it from her parents about her little "escape". Could you blame her?

Before Shannon went to bed she went into the cave, and looked in the mirror. "What do I do when I don't like what looks back at me? I need to escape, I need to flee this monstrosity." The small circle window mocked her. It showed her the beauty of the outside world, something she will never be able to experience now. Looking out the circle window, she decided it was time to end this disrespect once and for all. Shannon was getting out. She ripped her bed sheets off her mattress and went back into the bathroom. She tied one sheet to the towel rack above the toilet and tugged to make sure it wouldn't break under the stress



of holding her weight. She tied the other end of that sheet around her waist. She tied the second sheet to the end of the sheet she was attached to, so that it hit the ground. Carefully and quietly she propped open the small circle window, as she did paint chips started to fall from the window and float to the bathroom floor like feathers. Once again she yanked on the bed sheet and tested the strength of the towel rack. When she was satisfied, she climbed on top of the toilet and stuck one leg out of the window. When she felt her toes hit the roof, she started to move the second leg. She was halfway out of her window when she heard a noise outside of the bathroom.

She was struggling to move fast; the roof was slippery from rainfall and she couldn't get her feet solidly planted on the shingles. She had to get out. She was not going to go back in that house again, and she was certainly not going to deal with those animals again. She had no time left, so she dug her feet into the roof and shoved her head and shoulders out of the window. Just as she stood up on the roof, her mother flung open the bathroom door and saw the escape in action. Her mother ran towards the sheet tied to the towel rack and grabbed onto it; she was not going to let Shannon get out. Shannon felt the tug and was pulled back. She lost her footing, the sheet tied around her waist slid up around her neck, her mother kept pulling.

"You are not leaving, get back in her now!"

Her mother was using all of her might to pull Shannon back up through the small circle window. The sheet tied tighter around Shannon's neck. She tried to stand up, but the roof was too slippery.

Her mother finally gained the strength to pull Shannon back up to the window, but what she got was not Shannon, it was Shannon's lifeless body. She had escaped. She was free from her parents' wickedness, free to explore the beautiful nature that she once dreamed about, that she saw through the circle window.

## Seasons

Stela Janku

I am the first and  
the beginning of everything.  
With me everything  
Comes back to life.  
I give you a second chance  
To everything.  
I am the lovely SPRING.

Everyone loves  
What I bring with me.  
I bring happiness and time for resting  
With me you shall find peace.  
I am all about beaches and sun.  
I am only for your well-being.  
And I am the happy SUMMER.

Things take a new and  
Different course with me  
My time is just as golden  
As everything around  
And I must be the one  
To get you ready for the end.  
I am the mature AUTUMN.

Even though I'm cold and white  
Still there is meaning to me.  
Things come to an end with me  
But what may seem like the end  
May be just the beginning.  
I am the forever WINTER----A road you  
shall take.

You may take us for granted  
if you wish, but we are here  
As we always have been  
And will be for eternity.  
But you won't.  
So enjoy us while you can  
because we are the seasons of life.

you + me= something special  
Tangela Hightower

You + Me  
equals something special  
it's like we have  
this secret code  
that only the two of us  
can read,  
it's like we see  
into each other's heads  
I know what you're going to say  
And you know what I'm going to say.  
Maybe that makes you + me  
equal mind readers.

You + Me  
equals something special  
and by the way  
you are looking at me  
I think you know what I mean.  
Maybe that makes you + me  
equal love.

You + Me  
equals something special  
it's like we are connected.  
Like a piece  
to a puzzle  
you make me whole.  
Maybe that makes you + me  
equal together forever.

## Autumn

Veronica Wheelock

Our chubby fingers— woven together  
swung,  
cutting through the crisp air  
the Velcro on our shoes latching tightly  
to one another to withstand the friction  
of our fumbling shoes

It was a three part competition  
my brother and I could only spectate  
for so long  
until we were compelled to join the  
rush  
the first event was a race  
we bet our pennies on the leaf that  
could soar the fastest

Then we would judge their journey  
writing their scores in the palm of our  
hands  
with the invisible ink on our fingertips  
contemplating every flip and plummet  
the winner would belly flop  
out from their game of leap-frog  
only in the lead by a slight margin

That sight sounded the gun for us  
we were leaves  
captivated into the race  
the first one to catch the leading diver  
was branded the winner  
we would wriggle around  
less gracefully tumbling over one  
another  
to win bragging rights

Hidden from the Autumn's cool hands  
watching through the glass door

both feet resting on the ottoman  
our mother would simper inside.

## Poem about Poetry

Maria Skandalis

Thoughts flow on the paper  
Like the memories that created them.  
Words combine to create the story,  
A story no one outside your own head can fully know.

The importance of the writing is what it is for you,  
To understand means you can relate.  
Every poem is a story,  
Not yours.  
Theirs.

Poems give the opportunity to visit their thoughts,  
They get to really focus on what they feel.  
Written to explain themselves  
To themselves  
And the people who could be reading it.

The darkness of the human mind,  
Only accessed by poetry,  
Brought to life by the carefully chosen words  
And the experiences that give them life.

Poetry is the access key,  
To your own subconscious  
And the minds of those around you.

Worker Bee  
Alex Lesser

Buzz Buzz Buzz.  
Wig Waggle Waggle.  
The flowers are far.  
I must go  
to please Her.

Fly Fly Fly.  
I go go go.  
Off to the flowers  
to do what I know.

Buzz Buzz Buzz.  
Flip-ity Flap Flap.  
Off I go  
to do  
Her bidding.

Buzz Buzz Buzz.  
Stop. Hover Hover.  
What can't I differ  
from any other?

Haiku for a Girl, Lost  
Brianna Suslovic

It's far too easy  
to believe wholeheartedly  
that which is not true.

## Gum Wrappers and a Withered Carnation Stem

Andrew Lee

Gum wrappers and a withered carnation stem.

The faded, pastel wrappers put the taste of carnival candy corn back on my tongue, the sweet tang of lemonade under a blazing sun when we first held hands. That had been a summer to remember. Never-ending weekends and the feeling of boundless elation, overwhelming me with nostalgia every time I think back. And then there was that night, that one night by the beach, midsummer warmth and shorts, soft grass underneath bare feet...

It all had left as quickly as it had come. I've grown accustomed to being yanked around by Life, but always thought that something so concrete would always be before me. But you'd be surprised how fast a carnation wilts when left in your hands, ungiven. It spoils. The beauty becomes a poison that leeches into the deep river of hurt that flows constantly within you, swelling and receding but never running dry.

"I don't think this will work out."

A moment of registered shock. Stunned, even having seen it three weeks coming. "I got a different job," she had said. "And my manager— he's a great guy."

I got a different job, too. I quit working the trinket shop by the beach and employed myself to sitting at home, staring at the checkered designs of my couch, my only company being the empty soda cans nearby and the half opened bag of chips by my side. Too numb to pick up the phone, too tired to look for the remote. Exhausted after a long day of doing nothing.

I stopped going to *The Oasis* altogether. The chiming of the register— there was nothing I could do to stop myself from thinking of her smiling face, her laughter at the sound of change bouncing on the floor when the register had nearly tipped over. Opening the cooler in the back and seeing only her smooth, red lips on the rim of the bottle. No, I didn't think it would work out.

Drowning in the memories. I trace my finger idly through the white sand on the beach, feeling the contrast of pearly grains against the dirt and pebbles. I close my eyes and feel her chin resting on the cradle of my shoulder, feel her soft cheek brush against mine, feel nothing but her warmth again out on the cold, desolate beach after the sun had departed and the people had left.

The shore is a lonely place, stuck on the edge of two infinite planes, waves roaring in the distance and the surf crashing angrily at your feet. And when the sun recedes, the land is plunged into a barren landscape with no hope, the chill penetrating through everything you thought once was. Nothing is there to comfort you but the stars above in the night sky, emotionless and disjointed on the other side of the vast void. Our ancestors gaped at the infinite black in wonder, naming the myriad of points as constellations to guide them through the sky- I have nothing but a handful of broken dreams to guide me through this same void I feel within me.

“I will always remember you.”

The touch of her hands, the feel of her hair, the lure of her smile... I will always remember the moments we shared back when the days were long and the sun took its time in setting each night.

Gum wrappers and a withered carnation stem. At summer's close I am left holding each in one hand, facing the endless blue expanse in front of me and keeping *The Oasis* to my back. I keep one and toss the other.



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