

The Creation Aerie 2016-2017



Lanier Middle School
Literary Magazine

The Creation Aerie 2016-2017



The Creation Aerie



Lanier Middle School

Literary Magazine

2016-2017

The Creation Aerie

A cross-curricular collection of artistic expression

LMS Literary Magazine

2016-2017

Sidney Lanier Middle School

3801 Jermantown Road

Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Administration

Ms. Erin Lenart – Principal

Ms. Michele Johnson – Assistant Principal

Mr. Kevin Greata — Assistant Principal

Ms. Kathryn Teague — Director of Student Services

Faculty Sponsor

Mrs. Theresa Sincere-Eastman

Artistic Support

Mr. Robert D’Souza, Ms. Leah Dubray, Ms. Janel Justice,
Ms. Kirby Kennedy, Ms. Sylvia Kojcsich, Ms. Greer Mancuso,
and Mr. Sam Tennison

Table of Contents

NaNoWriMo

In February, Lanier Middle School participated in a modified version of National Novel Writing Month. Here are our top completed stories and a special personal narrative:

Empty Rooms — <i>Jillian Bjork</i>	7
Twisted — <i>Niya Shorts</i>	18
Faculty NaNoWriMo submission – <i>Mr. Sam Tennison</i>	25
Bonus Text: Personal Narrative by <i>Fatima Hadeed</i>	45

Odes

Inspired by ode poets Keats and Neruda, students crafted odes to tag around Lanier—in hallways, bathrooms, and on doors leading out to the bus circle.

Ode to the Star — <i>Danish Parvez</i>	4
Ode to Band — <i>Aiden Baker and Michael Rath</i>	5
Ode to New York — <i>Albert Kosseh</i>	16
Body Image — <i>Leah Rapallo</i>	16
Ode to the Cafeteria — <i>Harneet Singh</i>	17
Ode to Nature — <i>Andrew Oner and Zachary Tunick</i>	17
Beauty — <i>Alexandra Branez Ayala and Estefani Diaz</i>	23
Ode to Our Beauty — <i>Andy Yoo and Arveen Nazemian</i>	24
Ode to the Auditorium — <i>Darius Patterson and Matthew Samimi</i> ...	24
Ode to Inner Beauty — <i>Payton Morrison and Lindsey Strowger</i>	31

Poems

Nothing is Wrong — <i>Alessandra Woods</i>	32
Keep Going — <i>Caelan Kim</i>	33
People — <i>Emma Le</i>	34
Go For It — <i>Faith Presson</i>	36
Goodbye Climate Change — <i>Grace Walters</i>	37
Life — <i>Joel Tyson</i>	38
Be Yourself — <i>Katerin Marroquin Ruano</i>	39
Colorism — <i>Abbie Ekwujuru</i>	40
It Doesn't Matter — <i>Anthony Riviere</i>	41
Dark Days — <i>Colin Keogh</i>	42
Clockwork — <i>Daniel Briosio</i>	44
Soldier Boy — <i>Justin Nguyen</i>	50
Take the High Road — <i>Sierra Vance</i>	50
Because I'm a Girl — <i>Paola Riviere</i>	51
Beautiful — <i>Mikhail Edwards</i>	55
Our Hearts All Beat Together — <i>Haneen Yousif</i>	56

Artistic Talent

Many thanks to the talented illustrators, doodlers, and graphic designers!

Mr. Robert d'Souza.....Cover	Kimberly Medrana ... 21
Sreenaina KoujalaTitle Page	Sabrina Fernandez ... 22
Abby Garcia 4	Callie Longs 23
Andrei Dascalu 4	Reagan Young..... 26
Amani Kurtz..... 5	Shafayet Fahim..... 28
Athena Guerts..... 7	Zainab Khan 31
Austin Eilbert 8	Natalie Dominguez.. 33
Catherine Resta 9	Morgan Shake 38
Celine Doan Ha 10	Shane Gardner 39
Elli Kirkland..... 11	Melquin Majano
Joseph Hurley 13	Sorto 42
Lena Asha 15	Chris Quintanilla 43
Maysona McDuffy 16	Mikhail Edwards 55
Jessica Reeves 17	Sara Chen 58
Ishika Jerath..... 18	Morgan Shake 59
Joel Tyson 19	Ariana Ishairzay 60
Kaylani Gibbs..... 20	

Art in Civics: Good Citizen Stories and Art

Ariana Setayeshpour and Christina Yi..... 6
Sarah Bird and Lauren Bolter 35

Bonus Digital Content QR Code58

Ode to the Star

by Danish Parvez

There's someone

Who wants to be a star.

A superstar.

But time,

And time again,

He is laughed at.

Others think he is obsolete.

But, he thinks the opposite.

*People think he is a **pest**.*

*But he says he is the **best**.*

*And one day, he will be the **star**!*



Ode to Band – Aiden Baker and Michael Rath

The shiny **gold** instruments shine like the sun

The blazes of **silver** making roars of the ages

The instruments, the **heart and soul**

The melody is like a **midnight** dream

The sound makes everyone **enthusiastic**

The low voices are the **gut** of the band

But everybody has part of the band life

No matter big or small everyone plays a part





Jennifer is a 24-year-old woman. She is engaged to be married in one month and couldn't be happier. She's honest, respectful to everyone and is a very understanding/caring person. Jennifer always pays her taxes on time and never broke a single law in her life. She just finished college and is now working as a dental hygienist. In her free time, she enjoys volunteering in her neighborhood.

"Good Citizens" Part 1

Art in Civics

Oliver is a great citizen. He attended Fairfax High School and the University of Virginia. He pays his taxes and always obeys the law. When not saving lives, he reads the newspaper to stay informed on what's happening. Every year he votes and participates in election campaigns. He often volunteers in community events. He shows courtesy in public and is honest and trustworthy. He also shows a lot of respect for the law.



Empty Rooms |:| By Jillian Bjork

Prologue:

Amaryllis was walking home from the corner cafe, it was a breezy and pleasant October afternoon, and each step she took became more bouncy from excitement on the



crunchy leaves. Amy was humming a song she heard on the radio, some infectious pop tune, implanting its beat into her steps. Finally 13. Young, but almost an adult to her. She could look at a person as a mature teenager. Amy did something every time she saw a person. She analyzed them, broke them down to paper thin layers, like a novel, for her to read. She looked at every detail. She would talk to them, make friends, smile. Often she would let herself float away to the tune and beat to the song she was listening to. Her heart was palpitating and she skipped onto her street. Then, she stopped, her feet stuck in invisible cement.

Everything seemed to slow down. Every chronological incident peeled apart for Amy to suffer through. The police car. The stretchers. Two of them, both pieces of rough canvas. One with her mom. One with her dad. She didn't feel the tears but she knew they were there. She was in a dark limbo. Someone was screaming far, far away. She was mindless, emotionless. She didn't feel the police officer step in front of her to stop her from running to her parents. She sank to her knees, worthless, helpless. The world spun. All Amy saw was her charred home. She felt as if she was falling slowly, and the world was pushing back. She was stuck to the ground. People were asking questions, but her mouth was glued shut. Then, like the click of something, as easy as a light switch, everything released.

Time snapped back to her as everything became audible. Each beat in time was its own song, no longer silent, but excruciatingly loud. She jumped up, startling the crowd of people circling her. She spun on her heel and ran. She ran and ran, she didn't dare to look back. Tears streaming down her face, she collapsed. She was in a field. Somewhere far away. She had no idea where she was, when it was, or why she was even alive. She was stationary, crying until she couldn't see, then fell asleep.

Part I:

Amy's hands were blistered from making fires when the stove broke. On the days she bled she would fall asleep cold. Only one year, and so much had changed. She was eighteen-year-old Mary Watson here. Amy only ever stepped out of the abandoned church to breathe, and to take the truck out to buy food. Today she had bread, eggs, and a glass of orange juice. As she bit into the toast, she reminisced on the days when she would have the privilege to eat

pieces of toast, soaked in warm, smooth butter, sprinkled with unlimited cinnamon and sugar. She remembered warm, robust, coffee, and butter.

The memories shifted, and then she saw the red flashing lights, the rolling stretchers on wheels. The loud ambulance doors, the running, the screaming- Amy forced herself out of her dream state. Her vision was as if someone had swirled the landscape with a wooden spoon. She lie against the wooden planks, and she could feel each nail being hammered in right through her, as if she wasn't there. She saw the dark oak tree, and the red axe that split it, from the bottom. Amy felt the tree fall, and she wondered if that tree was her, and she had fallen, and someday, someone will make her just another place for people to step on.

Amy jerked up, and it was almost as if she had been asleep for years. She rubbed her eyes, and stood up, wondering where she went in her daze. She unlocked the door, and stepped out into the air, to view the landscape. It was release. She took gulping breaths of fresh, cool air. She saw nothing but rolling hills of short grass, and a dirt road down the middle. She saw her truck, and the distant line of tall trees. This was her oasis, her sanctuary. The sun was already falling, her days were short. She turned on her heel, and walked into her little home. She locked the sliding guard, the padlock, the password lock, and the in-door lock. She threw sheets over the rods above the windows. She climbed up to the shelf, her makeshift loft, and fell asleep on the roughest canvas she had ever felt.



Part II:

Today was grocery day. Amy was up early, to ensure less people at the corner mart. She pulled herself into her red truck, her prized possession. Amy stole it a month after running away. She needed it more. She left the owner all the money she had, she needed to leave. Someday she will return in. It will be in her will. It will make its way back. She slid the key into the keyhole and heard the engine rumble. She stomped on the gas and felt the truck lurch as she turned onto the dirt road and accelerated.

As she turned into the parking lot for the corner store, Amy stepped out of the truck and pulled her bag over her shoulder. She had inherited a few thousand dollars from her parents, so the first thing she bought was a purse; Amy noticed people don't worry about her if she carries an expensive purse, but that was about all she bought. She didn't deserve a house, or fancy clothing, or anything. Karma is no one's friend, but it can be nice to you if you're nice

to everyone, and you do no wrong. She must have messed up somewhere, she did something to her parents that caused them to be forced to slowly burn, torturing her with every second.

Amy stepped into the store, wincing at the ding of the overly jolly bell. She walked from aisle to aisle, picking up bread, eggs, milk, and a bag of salt and vinegar chips. She bought a shirt, one of her other three had been torn apart by a bar when she was doing pull ups. Lastly, she got some cheese, some crackers, and a jug of orange juice. Amy knew that the stores would be crowded, it was mid December, so she bought enough food for the holidays, and the chips were her Christmas gift to herself. She checked out, spending nearly a hundred dollars, and sat



in her truck, thinking. Her family wasn't poor, but they certainly weren't close to rich. Amy sighed at the memory of her parents, yelling at her for spending more than a hundred dollars in a few months. Their meals together were simple, and snacking was only for holidays, or sick days. Amy hadn't gone to school since the day of the fire, because they were looking for her. An amber alert pinged everyone's phones, but Amy didn't want to live with anyone else. Her only family was dead. So she didn't return. Amy was Mary Watson, and Mary had already graduated anyway.

She snapped out of her memories with the ping of the phone. Amy kept a flip phone in her glove box, which alerted her of news, just in case the search continued. Amy sold her smartphone the day of the fire, which added another seven hundred to her

measly savings. She only used it to check the news in parking lots, where there was wifi, she couldn't afford data. She flipped the small device open with a click. False alarm. Amy read about political statuses.

Frustrated, Amy shut the phone back into the glove box, and locked it with one of her keys. Suddenly, Amy realized something. Anyone could recognize her, even after she brutally shaved off the entire right side of her dark hair. She opened the door to her car, and nearly ran back into the general store. She found the hair care aisle, and walked back and forth, looking, and she listened to the too-bouncy synthesizer over the speakers, with the unrealistic cartoon voices and the dramatic banging on the drums, creating a medley of noise, blended with dramatized lyrics about love and hate and survival and loss. Amy audibly laughed, muttering to herself. "They don't know crap about loss."

She finally found the box, proudly displaying a woman, wearing rather revealing clothing, which was common and unavoidable these days, facing something in the distance, with a laughably serious expression and heavy dark makeup. She was twirling a strand of her bright pink hair. The box advertised in big, bold words: "Decorus! Permanent hair dye that doesn't fade!" She turned the box to read the color description: "Roseus: A beautiful pink shade with near grape highlight and color shifting magic!" Amy snorted and tossed two boxes into her cart. After checking out, Amy drove back to the church quickly, she wasn't usually out for long.

Amy arrived home around eleven in the morning. She quickly rushed in, not wanting anyone to see her enter the door. She emptied her groceries into her mini fridge, plugged into the only working power outlet. Amy lit a kerosene lamp, and pulled the sheets off the windows to let light in. As soon as the pale sunlight flooded the single room, Amy noticed something, square in the middle of her floor. A vase. Small and white and simple and elegant it was, sitting there in the middle of her floor. Amy lifted up the vase to find it was full of water.



Heart rate rising, she jerked up, and ransacked her home. Pulling books off the shelf, emptying her cabin of anything, turning things over for any sign of a thief. Amy rushed to the door, feeling along the edge for scratches, or anything. Nothing. After hours of putting everything back in its place, Amy sighed in frustration, and placed the flower on her counter, analyzing it. It was pink, and warm, and the petals seemed to be in a beautiful constant state of movement. It was flecked with scarlet and slight hues of lilac. It was beautiful, like love, or hope. It was late at night, so she locked her doors and covered her dusty windows, sending particles into the atmosphere. Coughing, Amy pulled the hair dye out of the shopping bag and opened the box. She found in there latex gloves and dye. Amy pulled the peroxide out from under her cabinet, she found some when she was looking. Not bothering to read the box, she filled a wooden bowl with the strong liquid, and used a common cleaning brush to run the stuff through streaks of her hair, and waited, while reading a newspaper she stole.

Part III:

Amy was eating a grilled cheese sandwich, a luxury she allowed herself every few weeks. She was eating in her car, careful not to spill anything onto the truck seats. It did belong to someone, after all. The toast and the melted cheese were not something Amy grew up with. She felt queenly. She normally only leaves her home when she needs to, but she left, just to leave. It seems the place just sucks the hope out of everything. Amaryllis hoped that with the pink in her hair it would be safer to leave. She didn't even feel safe at her home anymore, after that flower appeared in her home. She had no idea what it meant, but she needed air. She passed by a hunting store, and realized she had to hit her brakes. She swerved into the parking

lot, hitting the curb. Amy cursed under her breath. She continued forward, and her neck whipped. Amy cursed again, rubbing her neck. She flipped the door open, livid, making sure to take her papers out of the glove box. She flew passed the aisles, ignoring beartraps, mace, knives, and numerous other weapons and hunting gadgets and things. She stops at the aisle carrying rifles, handguns, and old fashioned muskets. She eyes a small .22 handgun. The man at the checkout counter looked as if someone had killed him, and left his cold, blue corpse to work.

“Will that be all Miss-” his eyes slowly drew to the ID on her permit.. “--Watson?”



“Yes, that’s all.” Amy responded. She hated the syrupy kind tone that became her Mary voice wherever she went. She felt unreal. Like there was a cloudy layer of someone else laid over her. She needed the weapon. She needed protection. She wasn’t going to die. Even if she deserved it.

Amy was in bed, or whatever you would call her sleeping situation. Her gun under her pillow, she tossed and turned. The outline of the weapon burned through, and each bullet felt like more than a life. One for her mother, lovely and kind, and beautiful, even to the people who never deserved it. One for her father, strong and emotional, always cooking dinner before he left for work, so he could eat with her when he returned. One for Amy, who seems to have died with her parents. She was a hollow shell, a lie. Her new life was no life at all. Mary Watson, 18, with a gun permit and a job, didn’t exist. Just Amaryllis, 14, with no parents or home, or life left. No matter who had broken into her home, they were someone’s family. They have a family, and Amy would not be the one to take it from them, like someone from her. She pulled the horrible machine from under her pillow and got up from her bed, and her state of half-slumber.

Amy rushed in the forbidden attic. She had brief memories of going up there once, and seeing a wooden platform held up by four wooden dowels, and holding bars of brass. For what, she'll never know. She laid underneath the platform. Amy aimed her weapon at the first dowel. The safety clicked off. As she pulled the trigger, she felt a current of adrenaline rush from her heart to hand, to her finger through the flying bullet. The dowel snapped, and pieces flew in all directions. Amy winced as she knew weight was being shifted to the remaining three dowels. She turned and aimed the weapon at the dowel diagonal from it. She saw the platform teeter as she shot. She reached inside of her shirt, to find the small, dirty bottle, and grimy cloth she had been hiding for months. She found it in some alley, dirty and sealed. Chloroform. She soaked her cloth in the foul substance. She had to be fast, simultaneous. She must inhale, shoot, join her parents. No. Amy wouldn't join her parents. Amy will burn in hell. She hopes they're happy. She will become a flying ember, in the fire of pain. Shifting light, and beautiful heat. Death. Amy wishes it is peaceful, though she knows she doesn't deserve it. She readies the drug, moves it to her mouth, and inhales deeply. Clouds, like creatures, beautiful, everywhere. Shoot. She must shoot. The dowel. The dowels. Amy was in a room of dowels. Shoot. One bullet, one chance. She pulls the trigger, just as the image of the wooden planks fades away.

Click, click, click click. A dark room. An empty room, black. Was Amy alive? Amy had no idea. Was this death? No. Yes? Amy's head was palpating, pounding. Pain, something was in her head, her brain expanding, hitting her skull rapidly. Amy tried to lift her finger, gravity pushed back, pain pushed back. Amy cried out. One finger. Wincing, Amy lifted a second finger. A hand. An arm. Tears ripped through her cheeks, leaving burning trenches. Amy brought herself to her knees. The pain was sweet, gratifying. This was Amy fulfilling her destiny, feeling her deserved pain. Her ears were ringing, radiating, the world was deafening. Something cold and hard hit the back of her skull, and the world spun away.

Amy awoke, no longer feeling the immediate sense of excruciating pain. She guided herself to her feet, to find nothing. Black, dark empty. Click click click CLICK. A lighter explodes to life. Amy jumped, turning on her heel, which she didn't notice before. Amy was not wearing her t-shirt, hoodie, and jeans., Amy was wearing a white silk dress, adorned in gold. Her dark hair, the pink, in loose ringlets. Golden strands, falling from her ponytail, also wrapped in golden silk. Numerous thick bangles, stacked on her wrists, weighed her arms. The entirety of her sparkling ensemble paled when Amy looked at her shoes. Made out of what looked to be glass and gold, bright four inch high-heeled shoes were there, on her feet. Though solid, they didn't hurt. The platform was crystal clear, and the gold surrounding her foot was shimmering. Amy was swimming in shock from the wardrobe change, but forgot to look at the source of the fire.

A boy, appearing to be in his teen years, but much older than Amy, stood before her. Amy looked at him. Young, but his face scarred, and saddened. Amy pondered how he grew up. Did he have a loving family? Why did he look so sad, yet so angry, and all at the same time, eerily calm. But even through all of that, Amy didn't think he would hurt her. He *saved* her. CLICK. The boy raised the flame to a paper cigarette. Amy reached inside of her to find words, trembling. "You know, smoking isn't good for your health." The boy looked up, almost surprised.

"Neither is chloroform." Amy was taken aback, he was right, but that was different.

"That was different. I wanted to die. I *still* want to die." After the dark words left her mouth, she remembered the gun, and the bronze, and the pain, and the reason. She *deserved* to die. Why did she tell this boy? She didn't know this boy. Her thoughts were cut off again.

"I'm not sure dying sounds so bad anymore." Amy felt a pang of sympathy for this boy. What could be so horrible that dying is a better option?

"What is this? What is this place, why did you stop me?" A question Amy didn't expect to have answered, but the boy was already speaking.

"This big, fancy place, this is The Meet. I saved you because you need hope. I left you those flowers every day, Amaryllis." The side of the boy that she didn't see appeared, kind and hopeful.

"Why? Why do you have a meet? With who? Why did you save ME? WHY-"

"Stop! I saved you because we are the same! I saw your parents in the news, I saw the amber alert, I saw you, our story is the same except-" Amy was collapsed on the floor, sobbing in frustration, sadness and fear. She looked up.

"Except what?" He looked down, kicking stones on the floor. "Wait. How do you know my real name?" Amy rounded on him, circling him, suspicious instinct clear as day. He froze. "'Answer me!' saddened tears fell down her cheeks. "I thought maybe, maybe I found a friend in this cold, world. I thought I had an ally."

"You do! I want to help, I want to-"

"Then tell me why you know! I told no one! I erased myself, and now it is crawling back up to choke me. You should have let me die."

"No." His tone was angry now, gentle and betrayed. "I let my whole life go to save you. There was more people here, we all lived here, the people who didn't fit in. All of them left the minute I told them I wanted to bring you back here. They abandoned me. I have been following you for the entire time you have been living in that church. I didn't do anything until I found *this*." He thrust a receipt in her face. Amy took it. One handgun, a small box of ammo. Three bullets. "If you ran away from your life, a gun is not good news. I came just in time. Ever since I saw that you lost your parents in a fire, ran away, lied, and lived on. We are the same, don't you see Amaryllis?"

"Except?" Amy looked up, tears halting. The boy looked at Amy, eyes locking. He hesitated, as if his tongue was iron, guilt, regret, and, fear flooding his eyes, tears clouding his irises.



"My sister killed your parents." He looked away, guilty.

"What?"

"I'm so sorry, Amaryllis. She hunted the people living cushy lives. She wanted to show them survival. She was going to recruit you. After you ran away, not returning at all, she was impressed you never turned soft, she wanted you more. Then she was killed. She fell off of a ledge, hit a rock, and died. It was all too much for her. After she no longer lead us, we voted that it wasn't safe to take you, you were... unstable. After watching you, you seemed more and more like us, and I... I almost fell in love with the idea of someone like you, someone like me. I wanted to know you. I watched you. When I found you, one day I collected myself to leave you a small sign of hope. The pink flower. When you bought the gun, I got scared. And, I guess I came in time. Listen, I am so sorry for bringing you here, I should have let you be, no, I should have told the police I knew where you were, let you live a normal life, but-"

"No. My life will never be normal. Thank you. I'm sorry if I-" The boy stepped toward her, persistent, but not harsh, at her in a step, letting the tension between them fall.

"You have no reason to be sorry."

"What now?" Amy had no idea what to do with the ruins of her life.

"Go to sleep, Amaryllis. It's late, we can talk tomorrow."

"It's Amy now." He looked at her, and she could see the battle behind his eyes.

"Amy. I'm Colson. Go to sleep." He stepped out of the grand room, tall golden door shut slowly behind him. Amy spun, the silk spinning around her. The large room was dark, every step clicking on the floors in her shoes. Amy took small steps, feeling for a candle or lamp. Finding an oil lamp, Amy sighed victoriously, and clicked it on. Warm light spilled across the floor, crawling up the walls and lighting up the entire space. Amy looked around in awe. The room was built in arches, golden and true, spanning the entire space. The floor was made of elegant marble tile. Tall windows spanned floor to ceiling, covered by thick golden curtains. An extravagant king bed sat against the wall, with posts reaching high.

Amy stepped towards it, to notice the curtains hanging from the post were soft, and translucent. A wooden bowl of ripe grapes sat on her nightstand. Amy looked up, to find the most beautiful detail. A dome on her ceiling, a blackened sky. Sparkling stars were little points, millions of pieces of light across the astronomical landscape. There was a flaming, beautiful sun, lighting up the sky. The golden arches surrounded the piece, complimenting the sky. Two smaller doors led to a large closet. Most of the clothes were of the sort she woke up in, with white silk and gold accents. There was pieces of bronze shoulder armor, and numerous styles of silken dresses. Amy saw dresses that fell off the shoulder whimsically, and dresses that left cuts, revealing skin on the legs and arms. Walking around more in the circular room, Amy saw leather sandals, with straps up to the thighs, and golden heels, and simple cream slippers. Reaching the near end, there was simple bedclothes, and extravagant accessories. Chains that fell over the entire body, and heavy earrings.

For the first time since she had arrived, Amy saw herself in a mirror. All of the dirt and grime had been gently scrubbed from her face, and she was clear of makeup, though she saw there was a supply neatly laid on the vanity. Amy was shocked. How much had she aged, in such short time without any family, or friends? There were lines on her face, ones that hadn't carved her skin before. She traced her fingers along the lines. Amy ducked away, not bearing looking into the eyes of a ghost of herself. She walked out of the enormous room, and the door fell quietly behind her.

Amy noticed one last door. Curiosity taking over, she peered inside. A full, luxurious bathroom lay waiting for her to walk inside. The sparkling marble floors reflected the strong lights. She looked at the large footed bathtub, and the multi-headed shower. She looked at the countertops, and the knobs, ready to activate the beautifully intricate faucets. Amy ran her fingers along the large bowls above the countertops that were the sinks. The entire bathroom rung with a wafting smell of lavender and rose.

The room seemed to ring with a sense of monarchy, as if Amy, herself couldn't possibly deserve to stand in a luxurious washroom such as this one. However, in the clothes she wore, she felt as if maybe she did deserve this. Amy turned off the small chandelier, made from wood branches to cast beautiful forest shadows onto the bathroom walls. She spun on her gilded heel, and let the door click behind her. There she was in this regal room, which was all for Amy, who was just Amy. She changed into a simple chiffon nightgown, and pulled her hair into a simple side ponytail. Amy toned down the lights in the room, allowing possible sleep potential, but Amy felt as if she was filled with a moving sense of powerful and childish energy and glory. She flung open the curtains, allowing beautiful and peaceful moonlight to spill into the room. She lie on her bed thinking about her past, about her present, and about her future. Why couldn't Amy be born into a simple life, on a farm, or in the city? Waking up to warm sunrise in the morning, running through fields, and talking to birds, cows, pigs and chickens, or waking up to bustling life and purpose, and sitting on the terrace, overlooking the cars and trucks? Her thoughts were interrupted when Colson burst through the door.

"Let's go."

"What?"

"No more thinking. Let's go somewhere we don't have to worry. About anything. Just you and me, friends, living a peaceful life!"

Amy thought for a second. What was keeping her from running with him now? Nothing. There was a silver thread holding her back. So she cut it.

"Let's go."



Ode to New York

by Albert Kossel

When I think of New York, it's not just rude taxi drivers,
Different kinds of gangs, abandoned warehouses
I see many lights, many trees, many museums and MAAANY PARKS
I see many different famous celebrities, who lived in New York
JLo, Jay Z, even Madonna, sad thing is, Trump owned a building there
But, who doesn't enjoy those dollar slices of pizza, the crazy litt cookouts,
All the blinding lights, that explains why it never sleeps,
Because who could fall asleep when they know they're in New York



Body Image

by Leah Rapallo

YOU look down on yourself don't you?

YOU see yourself as being

UGLY

NOT GOOD ENOUGH

HATED

DIFFERENT,

But YOU Are

Good Enough

YOU Are Loved

YOU Are unique

Just LOVE yourself

Ode to Cafeteria
By Harneet Singh

As you walk in you hear the noise of students chatting it sounds like birds chirping.
While you wait for your food you hear students eating CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP!!
The food in the cafeteria tastes like food from heaven
It makes me happy when I see people socializing
I get full by trying different foods at lunch
The good meal and a good talk get me ready to work



Ode to Nature
By Andrew Oner and Zachary Tunick

Nature, Nature. How beautiful are you
How I love to watch your flowers bloom
Though sometimes you turn on us and attack
Besides that, there is nothing you lack
One day you're calm one day you're mad
One day you're weird, but you're mostly glad
Whether harsh or rough. No matter what
You are always nice to me
When i see that beautiful glowing sun
It always fills me with glee

Twisted | By Niya Shorts

I looked out the window, I looked back at my life that I have left behind, then I look to my new parents named Linda and Frances and I was their adopted daughter. I grew up in a foster home in Alabama, They have three children Rosemary, Zoelle and Nova. They all didn't look the same I just figured it was their variations in traits. I liked them they had a nice house, a nice family, Rosemary, Nova and Zoelle were just lucky girls. Rosemary carried a strong mindset while Zoelle had a childish figure then there was Nova, I liked her more than Rosemary and Zoelle. Nova and me shared so much in common, we had a sense for classical music, had light brown hair and blue eyes, we just clicked. I lived with that family for seven months until their dad and their mom got a divorce and she took the three girls to Europe, she had already preplanned the plane trip, the house they would be living in and she had a job there and enrolled them in school before the school year started, which meant I was sent back and that is when they put me in a new foster home and as of this day I wonder what Nova is doing? I wondered as my train of thought left its station.

Today I saw the look on Linda and France's face when they saw me, it glowed like when you see a puppy find its owner. Linda has brown curly hair with her green eyes shining through her thick rimmed glasses I looked to my right and there was Frances he had orange hair that shined like a copper penny, then as I looked I saw his brown eyes they just looked like chocolate chips. They got me in and out of the house as fast as a cheetah could run down a two-mile track. As I sit and think about the lovely things in Europe, mostly France the "city of love" I just love it when people say "I love you." I probably haven't heard that since birth.

"Hello my name is Catherine." I said.

"Finally you talked. Nice to meet you Catherine my name is Linda and this is my Husband France." Linda said as she turned to look me in the eyes.

"Linda and I have another daughter at home her name is Nova she is around your age." Frances said.

"Okay, but what does Nova look like?" I asked it is the same Nova I know.



"Okay, well Nova looks a little like you, and she plays the piano because she loves classical music." Linda responded.

With me getting closer to find Nova. I just start crying. I don't cry usually because crying shows weakness and weakness can break you down. I was born in jail, so thanks mom. Then I haven't been in contact with them since. Linda looked like a party planner because of her bright clothes and happy spirit then Frances looked like a social security agent because every time he said something it meant business. As I looked out the window, I passed out; I was so excited to finally go home.

When I woke up, we were home and there was Nova; I ran toward her as I hugged her.

"Catherine it's you. Long time no see." Nova said.

"Same, but Nova what happened? Where is Rosemary and Zoelle?" I then asked.

"Yeah... my dad didn't know I was adopted so that is why my mom and dad got a divorce, so after that my mom didn't want me to remind her of what ruined her marriage. Then Linda and Frances adopted me." Nova said. I looked as shocked as I did when I ended up here.

"Did Rosemary and Zoelle know? I asked.

"Nope they were depressed after she told me. That is why I don't eavesdrop,

everything comes in through one ear and out the other like if I was to throw a paper airplane, it takes about 5.5 seconds to hit the ground, so same with telling people about..." Nova said as she laid back.

I wouldn't understand what Rosemary and Zoelle were going through, I didn't get to know my parents or any future siblings. But, I can feel the pain like it is a language because, we all have a certain pain but they are different.

"So, I can see that you two have talked before." Linda said

"Yes, we lived in the same house when we were younger, but she moved to Europe." I said.

"Well aren't you happy to see each other again?" Frances butted in.



When I walked in the house Nova showed me the room that we shared. It was bigger than the kitchen. It had two beds one was pastel green the other was pastel blue with three different colored pillows, two white dressers, and a bay window. Our names were hung above the bed. Nova had the pastel bed, with her name covered in floral print wallpaper it looked like a fairy's bedroom meanwhile my side had a rustic look to the room, my name was made from metal and had chicken stickers on it. It looked like the countryside part of my life that lives deep within me.

I started to add some of my stuff onto my dresser. I put a picture of my old pet chicken Anna she died four months ago. Anna was a gift from my parents, then sent Anna to me. Anna was to family as Fish is to bowl. I then pulled out my three favorite books; "Grounded" by Kate Klise, "Outsiders" by S.E Hinton and "Stargirl" by Jerry Spinelli. I then pulled out my glasses case onto the dresser. I then walked over to Nova's dresser and saw that there is a dozen letters that were unopened, which was very strange. Nova also had a framed picture of her, Rosemary and Zoelle, but there was a baby.

I called Nova and asked her she replied with, "This is our late sister Mary Ann, she died when she was only three years old. She wasn't my sister, she was Rosemary and Zoelle's sister." Nova said as she looked away.



Then, Linda and Frances called us down stairs. I looked at Nova and she looked back, Nova and I held a long stair, like a lion stalking it's prey. I then noticed that Rosemary and Zoelle were Nova's family, and this one is like a replacement. I think they just told her she was adopted. I looked down at the floor and right back up and asked,

"Nova did you know you were adopted?" She waited three whole minutes. I sat down on the stairs Nova was alongside me.

Nova laid her head on my shoulders, I could feel Nova slowly crying then she said, “No, I had a sense when I didn’t carry any of the genes that Zoelle and Rosemary’s parents did, I have blue eyes and brown hair, meanwhile everyone in their family had the green or brown eyes and the intense blond curly hair. I thought “it must be a leap in genetics”, but I am the odd one out. We sat on the stair steps, I hugged Nova. Linda and Frances wanted us to come to the living room.

Linda said, “Hello, Nova and Catherine. Sorry to ask but what is your middle names?” I looked at Linda because middle names don’t matter.

“My name is Nova Faith and I don’t know anymore.” Nova replied. I looked at Nova then at Linda and said “My name is Catherine Louise also, I don’t know.” Linda looked at me with a smile that could light up a room. She said to Frances “They both still have the names we choose for them.” I looked like a lost cat, but she also asked when is our birthdays.

“My birthday is July 9th 2002. I was born at 4:04pm.” I said

“My birthday is April 4th 2002. I was born at 7:09am.” Nova said with a big smile. Just seeing Nova happy makes me happy.



“Okay... Nova and Catherine we are your biological parents! And you guys are sisters, twin sisters!” Frances said. I looked at Nova and she was crying, I didn’t know why. Everyone was happy except Nova.

“Nova don’t be sad, we all... love you.” I said as I walked over to hug her.

“I am fine Catherine, I just can’t lose my sister.” Nova said, I hugged her as if we were never going to let go.

“But, when is our birthday?” Nova and I asked.

“Your birthday is August 3rd 2002” Frances said.

“Wait... who is older?” I asked. Me and Nova almost screamed. We were sisters.

“Well, Catherine is older by two hours.” Linda said. We all had a good laugh.

Nova and I went rushing upstairs into our room preparing for school we would need to attend by this Friday. Nova and I sat on our beds talking about our first day of middle school (since we were both homeschooled), we talked about friends, electives and honors classes. I looked into Nova’s blue eyes then told her: “This is the best day of my life. Yet, I wonder why Linda(Mom) or Frances(Dad) waited so long, and how did they find us?” But, then Nova was my focus, she is my only best friend.



Beauty

By Alexandra Branez Ayala and Estefani Diaz

You look into the mirror and you see someone you wish weren't

You grab your makeup and drop it

You stare at yourself 'cause this is the longest time you ever seen bare face

You tell yourself bad things even though you aren't

Even though You should be telling yourself

You're beautiful without make up like a cake is without frosting

You're charming, cheerful, and charitable

You don't need makeup it's just I waste of your time

But no,...you still put it on you still want to cover who you really are

But I'm ready to see the beautiful you-- not the fake you.



Ode to Our Beauty

By Andy Yoo and Arveen Nazemian

Don't listen to the voices behind you back

Everyone is different

This what you look like there's nothing that could be said

If you have to be pretty, beauty is what you should seek

They can talk as much as they want

Just on a smile that shines up the whole room

Don't listen to the words that hurt you

You are the way you are any there's nothing wrong with that

Pretty or not handsome

If the haters say you are ugly

You are a star and no one can change that

NO ONE CAN CHANGE YOU!

Ode to the Auditorium

By Darius Patterson and Matthew Samimi

When I walk into the auditorium I am filled with excitement

I choose a seat in the center of attention and wait for the enthusiasm to start

Friends and family surrounding me waiting for the show to start

Soon the curtains open the excitement starts Whether

Orchestra

Band

Choir

Or Drama

Eventually the show ends and the tension builds up threw out everyone's skeleton

At the everyone is leaving and the happiness fills up like a water bottle.

Faculty NaNoWriMo Submission | By Mr. Sam Tennison

When looking at a map, Farfetch does not strike one as an obvious destination. In fact, it is the least likely spot to receive any attention - a lowly town filled with half-backward folk content with their own theories of the world. Every Saturday evening, the Promenade - a brick edifice constructed intentionally to recall the historical trends of two centuries' past - becomes littered with individuals purporting "high-class" philosophy. The air fills with oddly flavoured hookah smoke, rampant with crazed ideas as bad as the odor. Those who disagree with the atmosphere choose to ignore either the place or the ideas. On occasion, the Promenade hosts something spectacular, and the people who witness it are blessed with the remarkable experience - only to forget it the very next day

Jon was one of those fortunate to remember, not only the day, but the day after as well. He rose from his bed, composed of aged shirts and pants atop a smashed futon pad that was two sizes too small for his frame. A simple yawn preceded his morning routine, walking to the bathroom, which was encrusted with a thin layer of dust and human grime. As he brushed his teeth with year-old bristles that masked the flavor of the minty toothpaste, he gazed at himself in the mirror, admiring the whiskers that had grown on his face overnight. He was surprised - these were literal whiskers, the sort one might expect on a dog or cat. And then he remembered the night before - "a whisk of dog ale and you'll be yapping for joy."

Such concoctions exist in Farfetch, but Jon had never seen one before - let alone did he believe any such hype. How could a transformative elixir exist in the first place? Physics could not allow it (if not biology), yet in the mirror, he saw the effects of that drink before his eyes. In fact, his eyes were strange. He couldn't see the sheen of his auburn hair, which seemed shaggier than usual. He opened his mouth, looking for the dentition of his human mouth - the teeth had somehow shifted in their position, not quite human, but not quite canine either. He touched his nose - still fleshy and dry. Then, he reached behind him and felt the unmistakable wag of a tail.

Jon shrieked. To his ears, it sounded like a yelp. Next door, Faruq rushed over, bewildered at the noises. He stood at the door to the bathroom, looking at Jon in perplexed horror. "Man, what happened to you?" he shouted.

"It's the dog ale!"

"Did you actually drink that stuff?"

"I thought it was just a name!"

"Dude, you should know better than to consume strange things at the Promenade. There are people who sell the weirdest things, and the worst part is that they generally end up doing weird stuff to you. Like... you... *turning into a dog.*"

"I know!"

"When did this happen?"

"I don't know! Maybe last night? I don't remember what happened when we came back last night, it was really dark." Jon tried hard to recall the events of the last night. Some details emerged from the foggy memories, distilled through the morning stupor. "Marie! What about her?"

"What about her?" Faruq asked still, uncertain what Jon meant.

"We shared the same drink together! She could be turning into a dog too!" By then, the transformation was making it hard for Jon to stand on his own feet, so he leaned over on the sink counter with his arms, which were more like legs, complete with paw-like hands. It was also getting harder to speak, as Jon's neck shifted and twisted to conform to the dog-like shape. After a while, Jon wasn't certain if he was actually speaking clearly - but Faruq clearly understood enough to call Marie immediately. The pause was tense, as Faruq listened through the dialtones to hear Marie. The first time proved fruitless, as he went straight to the voice mailbox, so he redialed. The redial was also fruitless, but he tried again, and the third call was finally successful.

"Hello?" Marie answered in a dazed, sleepy tone. She seemed very annoyed.

"This is Faruq, Jon's roommate. Listen, I have to ask - do you... feel like... a *dog*?"

A pause filled the next ten seconds. Faruq was uncertain what Marie was thinking, other than that the question must have been so stupid that it passed over her head. "What sort of question is that? Are you trying to insult me? Are you trying to insinuate..."

"It's Jon," Faruq said plainly. "He's turning into a dog, and he says that you and he shared a drink that might be causing it."



"He's what?" Marie said, still unaware of the significance of the original question. "Did we share a drink? Not that I recall. Actually, I can't recall much of anything about last night. The Promenade? Maybe I was there. Whom was I with? Jon? No... it wasn't Jon. I went with my friends - Sasha and Trisha. We went to see the ventriloquist's show. He worked magic with some dummies - hah."

"Seriously, you didn't drink *anything* with Jon - right?"

"Not that I recall."

"Okay, just had to check." Faruq hung up, a second later regretting that he never really said 'good-bye'. But he looked back into the bathroom, where Jon's transformation into a dog was nearly complete. The only thing that seemed to have any human resemblance was the crown of the head. All over, his auburn hair had sprouted into fur, and his appearance was that of a labrador - complete with drooping ears, tapering snout, and a slightly curled tail. The sight horrified Faruq, who didn't know what to say exactly. "Um... *are you okay?*"

"Wroof."

"Ohhhh, there'd better be an antidote..."

"Wroff."

"Dude, for the record, *I can't understand you anymore, but I hope that you can understand me still.*"

Jon nodded, with a big wag of his tail. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Faruq started to the panic. How would he explain this to Jon's friends and family? How *could* he explain it? There was the matter of Jon's work too - his boss was expecting Jon to come to work the next day, and there was no way Jon was going to work as a lab dog. This meant - realistically - that Faruq had a day to figure out a way to reverse the transformation.

Fortunately, he had some good ideas about how and where to start. He pulled up the Promenade schedule to look up the places open last night, to see which one Jon had visited and drank the special drink. Unfortunately, they were *all* open - which meant a slow, painstaking process of looking through each one. But Faruq figured that Jon had remember somehow, which meant taking Jon - as a dog - back to the Promenade.

Of course, there was the draconian leash law in effect in Farfetch; he fetched an old belt from his dresser and fashioned a makeshift collar and leash. This was a hard sell to convince Jon to wear, especially after he had to derobe Jon, who was still waddling around with pants on after the transformation had been complete. "Listen, Jon, this is the *only* way we're going to fix this. I need you to take me to where you were last night, so we figure out if there's some way to reverse the dog ale thing. And... you know, I can't just take you like a dog. You're not a human anymore. You've got to wear stuff like a dog. I promise... this will be... *just* for today." About that last part, Faruq was least certain. He wasn't even certain if taking Jon back to the Promenade would jog his memory.

It was a good half-hour walk from the apartment to the Promenade, and all along the way, Jon received so many compliments from passing gents and ladies. He seemed to relish the attention from the people they passed, even to the extent of lapping for affection from every woman they met. The half-hour walk turned into a two-hour journey through crowds, which totally frustrated Faruq - it was not the way he wanted to spend his Sunday morning/afternoon. But after a few good tugs on the makeshift leash, he convinced Jon that there were other, more important things to settle.

For a typical Sunday afternoon, there were few people walking the Promenade. Evidently, the previous night's shenanigans had kept the crowds away, which was good from Faruq' perspective (*as the fewer crowds meant less distractions for Jon*). But Jon had turned hyper-focused on the place where he had spent the previous night. His keen nose picked out the scents, and suddenly he remembered it all. He began to tug Faruq in the general direction from the Kafejo Bohema. At first, Faruq thought that Jon was just trying to feel for the crowd, but eventually, he realized that Jon was directing to the place.

They went inside, a relatively quiet spot for that time of day. The barista was hardly working, passing her time idling on her phone while smacking a loud piece of bubble gum. The smacking sound echoed through the cafe, which must have contributed to the emptiness inside (*it was also a very nice day outside - who would want to spend any time indoors when the cool breeze was a welcome distraction from the slightly balmy weather?*). Faruq looked around for some clues, hoping to avoid asking the barista, who probably had no clue what had happened last night. The chalk boards were cleaned - perhaps as recently as that very morning. All evidence of last night's indulgences had passed.

"Excuse me, ma'am," Faruq asked the barista. It took him a few tries to catch her attention. "Would you happen to know what happened here last night?"

The barista looked at him with a weird glare. "Uh, life?"



Faruq shook his head. He didn't know what to expect, but surprisingly, that answer wasn't far off from the possible outcomes. Nonetheless, it wasn't enough to give him any more clues. And Jon was no closer to being human again. He decided to ask some of the clientele outside for clues.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he asked the first person sitting outside. "Do you know what happened here last night?"

"No."

Faruq nodded, moving on to the next person. Each person denying any knowledge sunk him further and further into a doldrum, until finally he had asked everyone and knew nothing more about what had happened to Jon or how to reverse it. All the while, Jon was happily soaking the extra attention, gleefully ignorant of the situation's gravity for his own sake. Faruq finally took a seat, head bowed in his hands. Jon took the seat opposite him, with a dog's smile greeting every passerby.

It was luck that brought Murray over to the same spot. He waved at Faruq and took a seat next to him. Faruq was so disoriented that he didn't even notice Murray sitting there until Jon was lapping at him, getting his ears scratched. "I didn't know you were a dog-person," Murray said.

"I'm not," Faruq answered. "That's Jon."

"Jon?" Murray said with some surprise. "Oh. That's... surprising."

"He drank some dog ale last night, and now he's a dog ale."

"Hm, well, I was there... and I did the same thing."

"Really?" It finally clicked in Faruq's head - when Jon mentioned 'Marie', he meant 'Murray' instead! Well, maybe he said it all the same, but Faruq misinterpreted it. Nonetheless, the person who *was* there was *here* now! Perhaps Murray had the answers to the questions that had boggled them for the day so far? "How are you a human?"

"I've never had to worry about turning into a dog. I'd guess that Jon did something else."

"Like what?"

Murray shrugged his shoulders. "Farfetch is a strange place, with strange people. Maybe he fell foul of some witch?"

"Which witch?"

"I wouldn't know. I'm not even sure if there are witches in Farfetch, I'm just making it up as I think of it. It wouldn't make any sense that there are witches in Farfetch anyway."

Faruq sighed. "I just want Jon to be human again."

"Why?"

"Dude, he's a dog. My roommate is a dog."

"You've always complained about him being so messy - sorry, Jon. Anyway, he lived like a pig, littered in his own mess. He never cleans the bathroom - his toilet is basically a cesspool, and the tub crusted with the lime scales. His laundry is constantly recycled between wearing it on his back and sleeping on it at night, with a spritz of Febreze to mask the age of his threads. The kitchen is a minefield of spoiled leftovers, and your cleaned dishes end up stacked in a half-rotten pile in the sink. With all of that... *are you sure that you prefer Jon as a human than as a dog?*"

Faruq took a moment to consider everything that Murray had just said. While all of those facts were major annoyances, he still leapt to the thoughts of liability - *someone* would have to take care of Jon's stuff anyway. Notwithstanding the rent, the junk, everything - *it was better* to have Jon back. "Well, someone needs to take care of that stuff."

"Why does it have to be Jon?" Murray asked. "I could take care of that stuff."

That seemed odd to Faruq, who peeled a suspicious eye towards Murray. "What are you implying here?"

"I like Jon as a dog," he replied. "He's nice, affectionate, doesn't spew half-witted nonsense every half-second. It's like... *he's a better dog than a human.*"

"Did you make him a dog?" Faruq asked.

Murray laughed. "Hah. That's funny. You think I'm a witch - or whatever is the male-appropriate term for that sort of thing? You think I can turn people into dogs? I wish. I'd turn everyone into dogs! I like dogs. I like *this* dog. Jon's so happy!"

"Seriously," Faruq said with intensity. "I need to know how to get Jon back into a human. I am not going to explain to his parents how Jon needs to lap his water from a bowl now. I am *not* going to tell his friends that Jon needs to go outside to go. I am *not* going to justify Jon's absences from work. He needs to be a human again."

"Faruq - why are you so intent on taking care of him? Who appointed you as caretaker?"

At that, Faruq became completely frustrated with Murray's inquisition and thrust the leash at him. "Well, if that be the case, *you* take care of Jon. I'm done with him."

Murray smiled. "Sure! I've always wanted to have a pet dog. I'm not sure if Regina will like it, but I'm sure that I can convince her. Plus, it's Jon. Who couldn't love Jon? He's such an adorable labrador too!"

"Pff, I'm done with him," Faruq said, trying to explain his frustration. "I don't know how or why Jon is a dog. At this point, I don't care if he stays a dog or comes back a human. You take care of him."

Murray nodded. "It seems that there may be some deep-seated resentment here."

"Deep-seated? You've already explained it so clearly. He's a filthy person, and a horrible roommate. I keep telling him to take care of himself, to clean up his mess, to come home at a reasonable time, but he doesn't listen. He just does what he wants. And now he's a dog - he can *literally* do what he wants when and where he wants to do it! And I'm not even sure if he can *comprehend* my frustration. I don't even know why I'm stressed out about this, because it's not my life - it's his. And at this point, I'm just going back home to relax before I have to go back to work tomorrow."

Murray nodded once more. He finally stopped scratching Jon's ears, who snook his head onto Murray's lap, begging for more scratches (*or more attention in general*). Faruq still had a flustered appearance as he looked to leave. He even got to his feet, ready to depart for home. Murray caught him quickly with a tug on his shirt sleeve. "Faruq - you shouldn't give up on Jon. You were once good friends, no? Living together hasn't changed that, even though you've discovered some of his more disgusting habits - things that he's learned from being immature, on his own - so to speak. But, you shouldn't give up on him. Remember how you came to be friends. Remember the happy character, the merry, contented fellow you met at college."

Faruq shook his head. "Why are you speaking like this?" he asked, perplexed more than ever. "I've never heard you speak like this. It's bizarre."

"Why do you say that?" Murray asked him in return. "Are you implying something?"

"Yes," Faruq asserted finally. "Something isn't right here. And I'm thinking now that it's you."

"Well, I don't know what to say, other than I'm hurt. But if you must know, the reason why this feels weird is because *this is weird*." Murray then stood up and reached to flick his fingers at Faruq's forehead. The snapping felt strange, tingling his head with a shocking sensation. Faruq recoiled, grabbing at the spot on his head with his palms. "I think you need to wake up."

With that, Faruq woke up, dazed and sweating profusely. Somehow, he was back in his room, neatly dressed as it was that morning. He checked the clock on his phone, to see the date and time. It was in fact that very morning, again. He rushed to his feet, not even thinking about his dress as he crashed into Jon's room. Jon looked up with a dazed glare in his eyes.

"Dude, are you okay?" he moaned.

Faruq shook his head. "I just had the weirdest dream..."

Ode to Inner Beauty

By Payton Morrison and Lindsey Strowger

You sparkle brighter than the stars in the sky.

Everyone wants to say hello and never say good bye.

You are perfect just the way you are.

I can see you glistening even from afar.

And whenever you see yourself feeling down and blue.

Remember what's inside shines through, to make a beautiful you.



Nothing Is Wrong

By Alessandra Woods

Does it take you long to wonder if
Something's *wrong*?
And I cannot deny that I
Can be... *shy*.
Something we might try to hide

I like to,
think think think
Then I...

S-I-N-G!

Even though the notes are not perfect
Wait...

You say
I am always **HAPPY** and *bright*?
Shining like a full moon on a summers night?
You wish
You were someone *else*?
It's as if you're the
ONLY ONE
Who thinks they are **weird**.

Have you ever done something new
And your heart is
Boom-boom-booming
Asking you to turn back?

So maybe now you'll think
A -- h -- h,
I am fine as a feather
Yet shy as a sheep.
And nothing is wrong with that girl you see.

Keep Going
By Caelan Kim

Thinking about your goal seems easy, right?
Achieving it is a challenge.
Hard work that you put in,
Will later pay off.

Others will say you can't make it,
Or you're not even good enough.
People's opinions affect how you act.
Don't let opinions eat up your dreams.

Your anger, temptation to reveal your bad emotions.
Will only break you even more.
The world's a stage,
Many things will occur in your life,
Good or bad, there's a lesson.
Learn from it and improve.

There are a million things to do.
Tons of goals and dreams.
Procrastination will make your
goals
and
dreams,
Harder to achieve.
Shine bright like a diamond,
And give back.

As your alarm goes off, ding ding!
It represents a new day,
Make everyday a memorable one.
Rise above the hatred,
Exceed all expectations.

Yourself is the only one that can control your doings.
Don't let anyone else change your decisions.
There will be hard times,
It's just a part of life.
You just have to be patient and flush it.
Always chase your dreams and goals.



People

By Emma Le

People can be mean
It can mess with emotions
And cause a lot of commotion
Just don't be that person

Bullies can be as small as mice
Or

As BIG as an ELEPHANT

But

Be careful of who you choose to be friends
Because you never know the unexpected twist
That life gives you

When you're down in the dump
Don't worry
Because true friends are the ones who pick you back up
Don't worry about the fake people
They just want to be the best
But just remember that
You are you, and nobody can be exactly like you

Never judge a book by its cover
If you never get to know them what good does that do to you?
People can blow your mind
Looks can be deceiving
But you never judge a book by its cover

From my experience friends are great
But people that you may not know now may have a big impact in your life
later on
So just remember that
People are people
It doesn't mean we're perfect
We have our flaws but
That just means we're unique

Alena is a 27-year-old veterinarian who lives in Fairfax. She has a dog that she takes care of and also helps take care of her neighbor's car, since her neighbor is old and can't do it herself. She often volunteers in her niece's girl scout troop. The commute to her work is a little far, but she always obeys traffic laws. She is respectful to others and always shows honesty. Alena always pays her taxes on time and never misses an election. She sometimes helps out with campaigns. Alena went to George Mason University and has once served as a jury member. She always checks the news to stay informed about important events and overall leads the life of a model citizen.

Art in Civics



"Good Citizens"

Part 2



Doctor Marx is a doctor and scientist trying to cure cancer. Marx has never missed an election day and votes every time. He pays his taxes on time every year. He also serves on his local jury whenever needed. He shows his patriotism by hanging a flag in his office. Marx also volunteers to hold blood drives in his local community. He is very courteous and greets his patients with respect. He also participates in his community by volunteering to collect donations. He is trustworthy with your information. He is honest and will diagnose you with the right illness.

Go For It
By Faith Presson

Sometimes days are tedious, boring as a bad book
But so many fun things are out there you might just have to look
You have goals you want to accomplish
Go for it don't leave it a wish
Show all your talents, don't be shy
Go ahead and walk into that spotlight
You could just sit around being bored
Dreaming of things you can't afford
But your goals don't get accomplished sitting around
Don't stop till you hear that victory sound
Some goals are harder to achieve than others
But stay calm and keep on going don't be discouraged by one another
You might just be afraid of trying something new
Find someone you know that can help encourage you
It is okay if somethings may fail
You can always find another ship to sail
Don't
Give
Up
It is hard to achieve your most ridiculous dream
But it is worth it, And could be even better than it possibly seems
Whatever it is give it a go
Sometimes you have to get out of the flow
What do you have to lose
A penny, a dime, a story in the news
So much awaits you on the other side of your goal
What are you waiting for
Try looking at your dreams like an open door
Go beyond what you think is possible
Don't
Give
Up
Go after your goals
It is worth it in the end
So don't wait, just go.

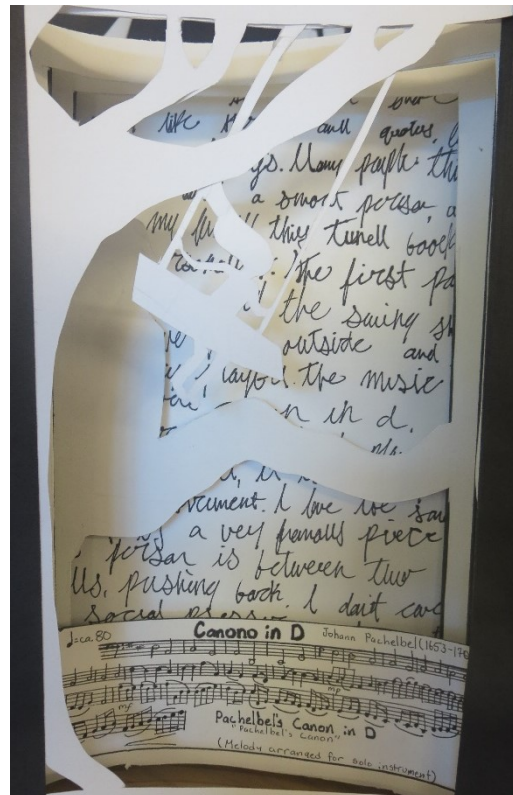
Goodbye Climate Change
By Grace Walters

Climate change.
Let me start with this.
Many people don't believe that the earth is heating
up like an oven.
But it is.
Whether you like it or not (you shouldn't like it).
The Earth is our only home, and you can make a
Difference.
We are destroying our only protection from the sun!
How about that?
If that is gone forever,
our Earth will become as hot as the sun,
and we will all die!
I know, that a pretty sad ending, but we can change this.
The Earth is telling us to stop air pollution.
We just need to stop using
Such harsh chemicals like CFCs
Climate change.
It is a new problem upon our Earth
It only started in the 1900's.
The ozone layer is thinning
And Antarctica is melting
Because of too much heat and sun
But...
Within the past 3 years,
It has started to heal!
We just need to keep on doing what we've been doing
And more, in hope of a complete heal
In the ozone layer.
Climate change.
A scary idea that if we don't change fast enough
We will all die in an instant
Everyone, everyone can make a difference
In each home and each vehicle.
This is an important event right now
because it involves every single person in the world.

Life

By Joel Tyson

I stepped outside seeing the day ahead of
Me,
I was afraid
that
The ghosts and spirits
Would haunt me,
That the demons
Would come out and snatch me,
I walked into the light knowing the day ahead of me,
Of the slimy sticky slithering snake,
And the demons that
Wanted me
I had no weapons
I was going alone
Even though I knew what was ahead of me
I heard screech, scratch, bang,
Coming from the shed
I took a step closer and
Out came a head
A big, black, slimy, sticky head,
It hissed and scratched me
And reached out and grabbed me
I jumped away but somehow I came closer
To the big, black, slimy, sticky head,
It bit
Me,
Scratched me,
Devoured me,
Yet
I was
Still
Alive,
I was on the
Ground, but I got up
Not scared of the big, black, slimy, sticky head,
That devoured me, slimed me, stabbed me,
Because I was unstoppable.



Be Yourself

By Katerin Marroquin Ruano

When a man cries, he is weak like a woman,
Why is that an insult?
If we are all human,
and we all have feelings,
They say respect those who are older,
For they are wiser than we,
I say respect those people,
Who respect me.
I am different then you,
And you are different then me,
But that doesn't give you a right,
To judge me,
From the other stories,
You have heard from Someone else,
Before you have met and got to know,
The real story,
We're all are just one,
With our own qualities and personal traits,
The real question is, *Why do you judge me?*
For being,
Myself
I am just different like everyone else, but
You know what ,
Life is as hard as a challenge,
People will always try to laugh just because you're different,
They'll kick you away like you're a rock in their way
Or an anchor holding them down,
But don't let that stop you,
From being yourself.
You're more than what people think you are,
You are more than what you are labeled,
More than the opinions people have of you.
You are more than that,
And that's okay, don't let anyone change you,
Just be yourself.



Colorism

By Abbie Ekwujuru

My skin
Is
Black.
These days
I'm reminded
that my skin has gotten
me the most attention
It can be
A
Distraction
Was constantly picked on
By kids
Often jokes like
When
They turn
Off
The lights
Where did Abbie go?
Summer was supposed
To
Be fun
Right

I dodge the
Sun
While White people
Bathe
In it
Like I can't afford
anymore blackness
My
Dark can do
Damage
My
Dark can rip
Your race apart
I am
A
Celebration
This
Black
Is magic
And
Beautiful.

It Doesn't Matter

By Anthony Riviere

Look at yourself, tell me what you see, and don't be negative
Try to look at yourself in a positive way
It doesn't matter if you're smart, strong or tall
It doesn't matter if you can jump, sing or run really fast
It's all about how you feel, feel, feel
About yourself, self, self
Don't cry or don't be shy always know that it's your time to shine

If you do, don't worry.

You can read this poem and let it lift your spirit
It doesn't matter how big, popular or good looking you are
Always know that people will look at you from a different angle
But it is your job to ignore that and keep all thoughts about yourself, positive
Don't let bullies get in your head
Don't let them put you down
And even if you lose a fight against them, it will come back and bite them
This is not real life yet, it is just school
Things that happen go away after a little while
And when kids get older they'll realize how stupid they were to bully you
Take this message in and carry it with you
For it will remind you that you are just as good as other people
Don't make stupid decisions because of fame or popularity
Make them based on what you feel and know, is the right thing to do
Don't copy other "cool" people
Make your own style
And if people don't like it, you keep it, and don't look back
Because they cannot determine what style you have or what decisions you make

That is your job.

Look at yourself and tell me what you see right now
Don't you feel better about yourself now that you have read my words
Aren't you more positive than you were from the start
If you are, then you will have confidence and you won't let other people determine the path to your life
You will make your own path without taking in the slurs and the negativity
Be your own person and don't look back.

Dark Days
By Colin Keogh

There will be times when you feel things

ALONE

Feeling alone is like when you were a little kid and you dropped your ice cream

Ha

There WILL be dark days

But that is what makes the best days even better

There will always times when you will feel like you were

Abandoned

But you should always remember

We will always be there for you

Maybe not all of us,

And we may not always actually be THERE with you,

But we have found a way into your heart

This has been the best year of my life

You all shaped us into who we are meant to be

But destiny is not written in stone

We might see things in our own way

But there will always be people who are going to try to make you see things their way

But, always be true to who are are

To whom you believe you are meant to be and what you are meant to do

There will always be dark days,

But when there are, those are the days that you are meant to dig deep down

I always hoped that you were meant to be something more

To give something

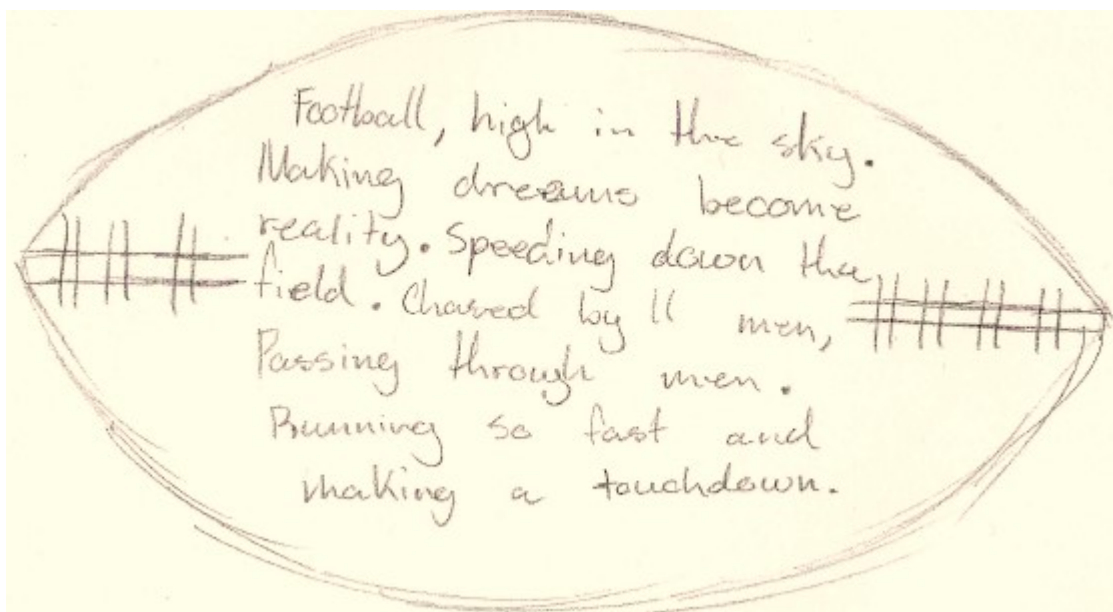
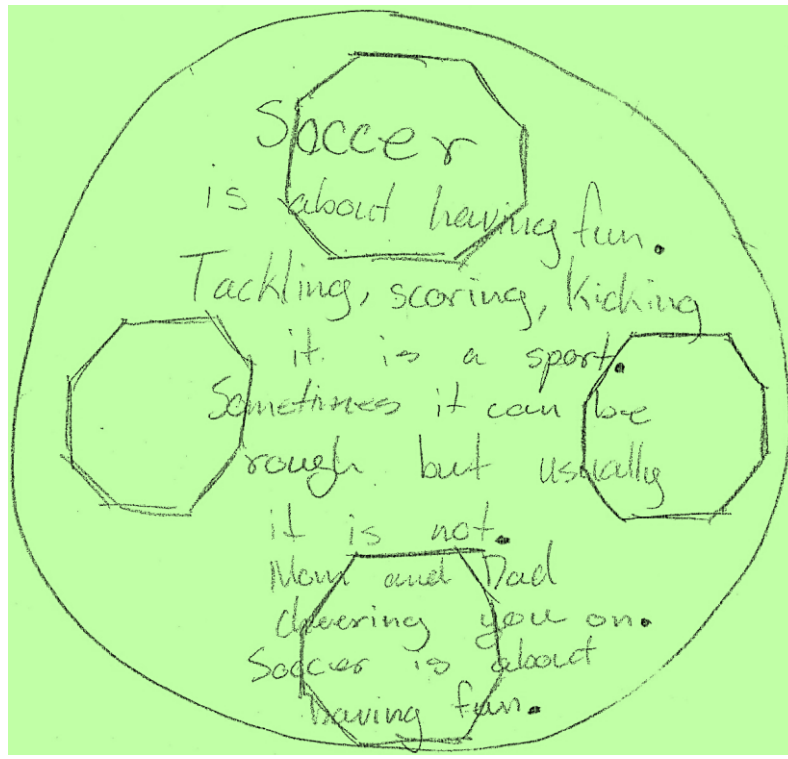
My hope for you is to become hope

Become that light when there is none to be seen

Be that light shining through those dark clouds on dark days.



Poetry n' Sports



Clockwork **By Daniel Brioso**

LIFE

It's the thing that makes everything who they are
It can be as **stressful** as teaching your dog new tricks
Or it can be as **simple** as breathing
Nevertheless, you shouldn't stop when you fail
Or when you failed the first time
"If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again" said William Edward Hickson
You shouldn't give up on life just because of some **meaningless** thing
Focus on the **big things** in life that matter
Not the small useless things in life
Unless those small things soon become **big things**
Then you have to worry about those "small things"
But anyway
Things can happen

SUDDENLY or UNEXPECTEDLY

Whether we like it or not
Like when you get a new baby brother or sister
It can either go really good or really bad and it's mostly bad
But nevertheless

We get through it

If you fall down or lose your step
Get through it and get back up as best as you can
If it seems you can't get through something
Don't just stand around and see if someone will notice you and help you
By the time that happens it'll be too late

So get help from someone

Even if it means sacrificing something you would never do
Like a club, a gang, a society, a title, popularity or just respect in general
You shouldn't have to keep doing this even if you know **it's wrong**

Rise above the crowd and soar like an eagle

Don't let **peer pressure** or whatever change who you are
This is a part of life and it can work in mysterious ways
Sometimes **good** or **evil**

Life works in a way where everything is in its place and nothing should interfere with it
Kinda of like **clockwork**.

Bonus Work: My Story | By: Fatima Hadeed

Welcome to my life. I used to live a happy life where I was thankful for everything. I have done great and then something bad happened. It was like losing someone special in your life. It can be so hard and in your mind. This is just like what just happened to me when I lost my older sister. It was so sad when my sister died. I was not born yet to make my family feel better. My deceased sister was only one night old. My sister was not sick or having any sickness but that time my mom took my deceased sister to the hospital when she was ill. In the hospital there was a terrible doctor that did not know how to take care of people. The doctor that my mom took my sister too was not sure what to do with my sick sister. The doctor decided to give my sister a shot on her forehead.

After a couple days later my mom explained what happened with the doctor and my sister. Losing my sister is a little bit of childhood that can never be regained. The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living. There's nothing worse than losing who you thought would be your best friend. They just wake up one morning and decide they don't like life anymore and just leave you. They ignore you. It hurts you. People break promises. It's truly sad and hurts especially when you did nothing wrong.

Don't worry about my feelings though, because nobody does. Sometimes I just still can't believe you're gone. Sometimes I just need someone in my life that can help me with my feelings but nobody does. I hide my tears when I say your name but pain in my heart is still the same. Although I smile and seem carefree there is no one who misses you more than me. Sometimes allowing yourself to cry is the scariest thing you'll ever do. It can also be the bravest thing because it takes a lot of courage to face the facts, stare loss in the face, bare your heart, and let it bleed. Sometimes it's just hard to sit and think about your past but your heart always remembers the loved ones. Life can be so hard.

Six months later my mom gave birth to me. My family was so happy and we turned back into our normal life again. Every time my family needs help I was there for them. Every time when I needed help they were there for me. I was proud of my family and they're proud of me too. Do you know that a simple phone call can make your parents happy? Your parents did not leave you when you were young, so don't leave your parents when they are old. All these years my family and I did not want to show how sad we were but then one of my favorite teachers helped me to come up with a beautiful story and I love her so much. Every time I read my book and my memories come back to my mind. All I want in this world is a good wish for my deceased sister to have a good life in the other world.

World is too short while you are still alive so keep smiling because you never know what will happen for the next day. Sometimes when you have a lot of bad days but you can't do anything, all you can do is just let it go with a big smile on your face like

anybody sees you they want to be like you. Sisters are like angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have a trouble remembering how to fly. We shared so much happiness in times of yesterday, and to say how much I miss you I could never find a way. I wish with all my heart that you were here with me, and we could share the laughter that there always used to be. I know we'll meet again in another life elsewhere, and those very special times we once again will share. If you have a sibling and he or she dies do you stop saying that you still have one? Or are you always a sister even when the half of the equation is gone? I had a lot of bad days and happy days but when you look back and will understand why all happened.

All these years my family and I had good days and bad day but we never show how sad or how happy we we're all we could do is stay silent and listen what will happen for feature and know ow I have a beautiful sister and she is older than me but I love her so much she means the world to me. I have a beautiful mother and a father I love them so much and a beautiful strong grandmother she is very nice, she helps me with everything. I am very thankful for my family for being so strong to stay positive and polite I love them so much. Do you know a simple phone call makes your parents very happy. Your parents did not leave you when you were young, so don't leave them when that are old. I looked up at the sky and I said "Dear god, bless my family and give them a good health, provision, and protect them." If god brings you it. He will bring you through it. When life gives you hundred reasons to cry, give life thousands of reasons to smile. The day when my sister died we were very poor. After my sister past away I was born and our life got better and better. Each day our life got better until I turned to 9 years old. My family and I moved to United States. I changed my school which was worse than any school I had ever attended because I did not speak any English beside Kurdish and Turkish. I met two of my most favorite teacher in 7th grade. I loved them so much and I loved there class too. I laughed so hard in their class. I did well in their class. I still didn't forget about my past like losing my sister.

Sometimes when I smile it doesn't mean that I am always happy. Sometimes when I am quiet it doesn't mean that I don't like to talk it means that I need to figure myself out. The day that I left my country, my family and I went to a very dangerous place so that we could enter to United States. We stayed in a very dangerous house that was very scary. We feared many bad things would happen like a fight or like a bomb. After a few days later we went to a restaurant to eat our lunch. After my family left the restaurant we came back it was all ruined because one hour before we left the restaurant a bomb happened there and killed all the people in the restaurant which was sad because about 30 people died in the restaurant.

I was only 8 years old all of these fights started happened in my country. If I survive you can survive too. My family and left the restaurant and we went to take the pill and get into the van and then go to the airport. But by that time my mom got a headache and I couldn't swallow the pill so we had to go back to the doctor to get my mom better. My mom got better but I couldn't swallow the pill because I was a little kid. My family did not know any English so my dad had to talk to the security in Arabic and

explain I couldn't swallow the pill. I finally didn't have to swallow the pill but I had to take a shot. I was scared of shots too. The security brought a doctor to give me a shot it took my family and I around 3 minutes to take a shot. My mom helped me a lot by holding me. Unfortunately as she was trying to hold me and I accidentally slapped her on her face.

It was very tough week for us. There was nothing fun to play with so I had to play with my short hair to pass the time. The worst of all was the security situation when they brought dogs to see if we have any guns or anything with us. I was so afraid of dogs. After my family and I left the security check point we went into a van to go to the airport which was scary because we did not speak any English to say "where is the bathroom". We were finally at the airport and we gave our papers to the officers but there was a problem about why my sister was not with us. I have a second older sister who is alive.

My older sister was about to go to another country and she did not know any English. My family and I were so worried about my sister but fortunately the lady at the airport spoke the same language as my family does. My mom explained that my sister was with us. The lady that she spoke the same language she was very nice and kind that she changed the location that the place we were going. Safely we left the airport and we came to the United States. However, I didn't want to come to the American because I didn't want to leave my grandma, my family in my country, my religious practices, and my toys.

We got in to our apartment. A few days later the lady that helped us took my family to get more shots. I was so scared that I almost had a heart attack. We all received ten or fifteen shots. When we left the doctor we all went to my Dad and my Mom's friend's house. She was responsible for keeping us and taking us wherever we want to go. My family and I had so much fun at our friend's house. My family and I went out for a walk but my sister and I did not attend because we had to go to school for four months. I was bored we had a lot of snow. It was so much colder than my country.

My favorite part of living in the United States is because we have more opportunities and have jobs and good doctors. Every time I looked at the sky and I remembered of my deceased sister's beautiful name. Her name is Choestan.

After two months my family and I got a new home to rent. We got into our home and we had nothing in our home. I was very bored and I couldn't go outside because there was a lot of snow and it was very cold. A couple day later my Mom and my Dad's friend came and take us to their house for a week until we got our home a couch, tv, wifi, beds, and some other items that we needed. My family and I went back to our home. We had so much fun. Each day I remembered my beautiful deceased sister because it's very hard to lose someone so special like a sister or like a brother. After a year, my family and I went back to my country to visit my family in my country. I was so excited to see my grandmother again. My family and I got left the airport and we saw half of my family came to the airport to see us. I was excited to see my grandmother but

she was not with my family. I asked my family where my grandmother was and they said that she had her foot pain and she couldn't come to see us. My family and I went to our home in my country and my old house. It was all destroyed because we gave our old home for rent and the person that was in our old house had four little kid and they were very bad and painted my sister and my room. I was sad. My favorite part of all of this was to see my family and to see my beautiful grandmother. I love them but at the same time it that my deceased sister was not with us. My sister and I went to live with my lovely Auntie. I went to the new playground that was outside so my Aunt had to pay for us and we went inside. I went to get the tickets for the roller coaster for three of us. I had so much fun out there. We spend five hours out there. I love it so much.

After my sister and my Aunt left the playground and we went back to home and we slept at my Grandmother's house because my house was ruined. For the next day we woke up and my Uncle was a police officer and he said that a fight was going near us so it was very dangerous in my country. My family and I stayed in my country for 24 days. My dad bought flight tickets for four of us and we left my country. I hated to leave because I had so much fun in my country and I loved my Grandmother and my family in my country. I just hated to go back to United State. I just didn't want to go back. I wanted to live in my country with my Grandmother. The worst thing is that I forgot to visit my sister's grave at the cemetery. I went back to the airport and I was so tired and so sad. I was upset to leave my beautiful country and my Grandmother, and my family, and my diseased sister.

I went back to my normal life in America. I was very tired. I went outside to play with my friend and have fun. I was smiling but inside I was dying. After for six months my beautiful Grandmother called and she said "that she was coming to visit us" my family and I was so happy to hear something very special from her. I was so happy that I did better work at school at home and every other places. I was so happy so I wanted to make other very happy. I turned ten years old with a bad days and happy days. When I was little I always dreamed of having my own book and share my story with everyone but I didn't know how to make one. I was in 7th grade and there were two teacher that were my favorite and made my day everyday. I decided to tell my English teacher that I wanted to make a story. She was very nice and helped me to make one book.

After seven months later my Grandmother told us that she wanted to go back to Kurdistan to visit her kids and her family and my family said ok. My Mom and my Dad bought a flight ticket for my Grandmother and she flew from America to Kurdistan which is so hard for my Grandmother because she had a foot pain. My family and my Grandmother were at the airport and we were all sad and upset for my Grandmother to leave us. My family and I left the airport and we went back to our house and my sister and I cleaned my Grandmother's room. We saw her clothes and shoes on the floor. My sister and I cried so much because we missed my grandmother so much. My Mom and my Dad's friend came to our house tooked us to her house again. My family and I stayed there for a week to get used to live without my beautiful Grandmother. After a month without my grandmother and without my deceased sister life was very hard but I was

still am thankful that I have a beautiful parents and a beautiful nice sister. I started school and I was in 7th grade and I was 12 years old. I was ok with all I had. I made so many good friends in middle school and they were all very nice to me. They helped me with everything and I helped them with everything. A grandmother thinks about her grandchildren day and night even if they are not with her and will love them in a way they will never understand. I hide my tears when I say my grandmothers name, but the pain is in my heart is still the same. Although I smile and am care free, there is no one who misses you more Grandma than me. Our grandma's hold our hands for a little but they are in our hearts forever.

The rain falls because of the clouds can no longer handle the weight. The tears falls because of the heart can no longer handle the pain. Those special memories about my grandmother brings me a smile. If I only could have you back for just a little while. Than we can sit and talk again just like we used to do. You always meant so much to me and I will always be in my heart. The fact that you are no longer here caused me so much pain but you're forever in my heart until we meet again. Your arms are open when I need a hug. Your heart understand when I need a friend. Your gentle eyes are stern when I need a lesson. You guide me and give me a wing. Thank you Grandma for everything. A warm grandmother brings hugs and sweet memories. She remembers all your accomplishments and forgets all your mistakes. A grandmother always has time for you, even if the world is very busy. All these years I have had bad and good days. I stayed silent and didn't show my pain. One day you can't stay silent and break the moment and share your sadness and happiness. Sometimes you can be very happy and very sad but no one have a perfect live. So be thankful for everything you have and know that you are still alive. You never know what will happen for the next day. The worst sadness is not being able to explain why. Tears are the words that heart can't explain.

Thank You

Thank you for listening to my story. I always wanted to have someone in my life that I can explain my heart to and have them listen. I still miss my lovely awesome Grandmother and my deceased sister. I wish them the best. I am very thankful for all I have. I want to thank my family my Grandmother, my teachers, and my friends. They helped me to stay strong enough to share my story.

Soldier Boy

By Justin Nguyen

It's time to stand up,
Draw your weapon.
Stand up for yourself,
Beat the Monster beating you
down,
Watch how you attack,
Get some help,
Build Friendships.
Don't let those friends go,
Watch your stance,
Hide your fear,
You don't know how strong you
are,
Until being strong is your only
option,
Stand strong,
Don't hide,
Stand up for yourself,
Be like the Rock holding you down
Your Victory will not be unheard,
Destroy the monster
beating
you
down.

Take the High Road

By Sierra Vance

People are like cars.
We all have two roads to take.
High road, and low road.
High road meaning doing the right thing,
even if it may not be easy.
Low road meaning
seeking revenge or wanting to be
better than everyone else.
In middle schools there are about
100 times in a year
you are going to want to take the
low road.
But you can't.
Sadly.
Taking the low road maybe
makes you feel better but,
really it is representing a self-centered
person.
Taking the high road is showing a person
who
knows how to hold their anger
or frustration for later.
Some minds are filters.
They know how to control and hold
frustration
for later.
Some minds are just straight forward.
Sometimes in life you get in a conflict
and
you just want to
SCREAM
But you can't.
Life is hard but
you should take the high road.

Because I'm A Girl

By Paola Riviere

Because I'm a girl

I have to sit

With my legs
crossed

Because I'm a girl

I can't be the doctor or the politician

I *have to be* the

Nurse

or the

Teacher

Because I'm a girl

I'm *NOT supposed to* play video games

Or sports

Because I'm a girl

I *need to* know how to

Cook

And do

housework

Because I'm a girl

My job is to sit and

look pretty

and

wait for

my husband

to get home

Because I'm a girl

I have to hear

these statements

more than once:

“Women are not as strong as men.”

“Women don't do a ton of work, like men.”

Because I'm a girl

I *have to* act

“girly”

(whatever that means)

And wear

dresses

and

skirts

Because I'm a girl

I understand and know

That these **ignorant assumptions**

Are wrong!

People automatically

Put all girls

In one basket

But,

every

girl

is

a

different

girl!

We have our **own style,**

Our **own ways,**

Our **own lives.**

Not every girl is the same.

And this world

we live in

Still does not

understand that!

Because I'm a girl

I can't sit here,
Writing about stereotypes
I should be dealing with.

Us girls need to do something.

We need to fight back

For equality.

Take every opportunity

that comes knocking on the door.

Living in a world
Full of *men*
is hard.

BECAUSE

I'M

A

GIRL!

Beautiful

By Mikhail Edwards

The sky is painted blue alight.
while the people of love dance with might.
the meadows of flowers bloom with life.
as the people of love cherish it like a wife.

The people of love paint a gateway.
to a new hope, a poem that goes all the way.
the crystal-clear water ripples with a touch
as the people of love jump in with a such.

The waving of the leaves that flow with the trees.
the warmth of the ever-present sun to believe.
that the people of love will feel the heat.
of every heart that's true to its beat.

They claim to have hearts as strong as a bull.
while they still remain as beautiful.
the people of love claim to be you.
since your heart is always true.



Our Hearts All Beat Together

By Haneen Yousif

Do you hear that?

Do you hear the pain?

The pain happening 7,108 miles away from here?

I hear it. I hear it loud and clear.

It is the pain of paying the price for crimes people did not commit.

Perhaps you know what I'm talking about. Perhaps you don't.

I am talking about these innocent people in the Middle East getting killed every day for a crime they did not commit!

And here, I am labeled a terrorist for being a part of the Middle East.

I am labeled a terrorist because of what happened in Paris, Brussels, and in New York 16 years ago. Those victims will never be forgotten.

But why blame the entire Middle East?

Do you blame all Germans for Hitler?

Do you blame all Whites for slavery?

Do you blame all Christians for what the KKK did?

No. The answer is you don't.

So, I ask once again: Why blame all of us for the actions of a few?

Let me tell you what's happening because of everyone's false accusations:

Imagine seeing kids and their families struggling to survive when they see bomb after bomb flying down to destroy them.

Aching for food, grieving over their losses, and yearning for some love in this world. Heartache and despair tackling their bodies. Big bombs blasting through the sky making us all cry. We're watching them play, but we are on the sidelines, unnoticed.

How would you feel if the whole world was against you and wanted you to suffer? Just because of your race or religion.

Complete misery.

That is how we're living our lives.

Hold on.

We're? Our? Those things aren't happening to me, so why am I saying these events in first person?

I'll tell you why.

We are all one.

We all bleed blood.

Our hearts all beat together.

We are all human.

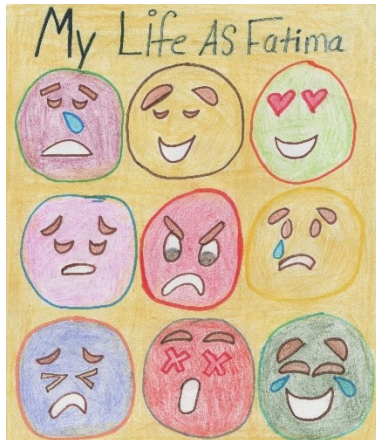
No matter what race or religion.

People constantly say these phrases,

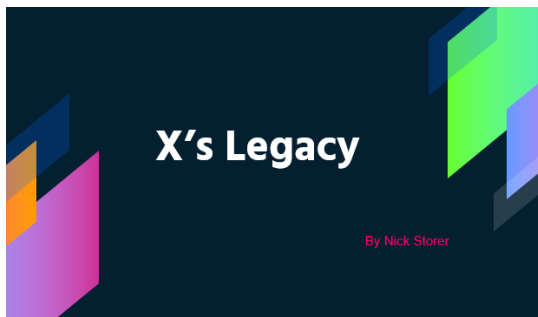
Now it's time to act like it and make a difference.



**BE SURE TO TAKE A
LOOK AT OUR BONUS
CONTENT ONLINE!**



See Fatima Hadeed's original personal narrative, which was published for the Lanier Library and available to read at the circulation desk!



Patriots Team students in Honors English had the opportunity to create Choose-Your-Own Adventure stories. Jillian Bjork and Nick Storer's tales are available to play online!

<http://taecastman.wixsite.com/lanierpublications/digital-works>

WORDS ARE A WAY TO TRAVEL GO BACK IN TIME
 IN ONE GO ON GREAT ADVENTURES, BE HUMBLER TO
 LAUGH JUST A LITTLE BIT. WORDS DO MANY THINGS,
 CRY JUST A LITTLE BIT. THEY MOST TELL S THEY OPEN YOUR EYES AND SHOW YOU
 SMILE JUST A LITTLE BIT. THINGS YOU WOULD NEVER BELIEVE BEAUTIFUL AND
 WONDERFUL AND PRECIOUS AND JOYOUS AND POWERFUL THINGS
 YOU MEET AND MAKE WITH THEM AND YOU THAT LIFE
 THEN AND YOU GROW TOGETHER AS YOU WITH THEM YOU LOOK BACK
 AT THE PEOPLE YOU WERE WHO YOU ARE NOW AND YOU REALIZE YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.



Lanier Middle School
Creation Aerie 2016-2017