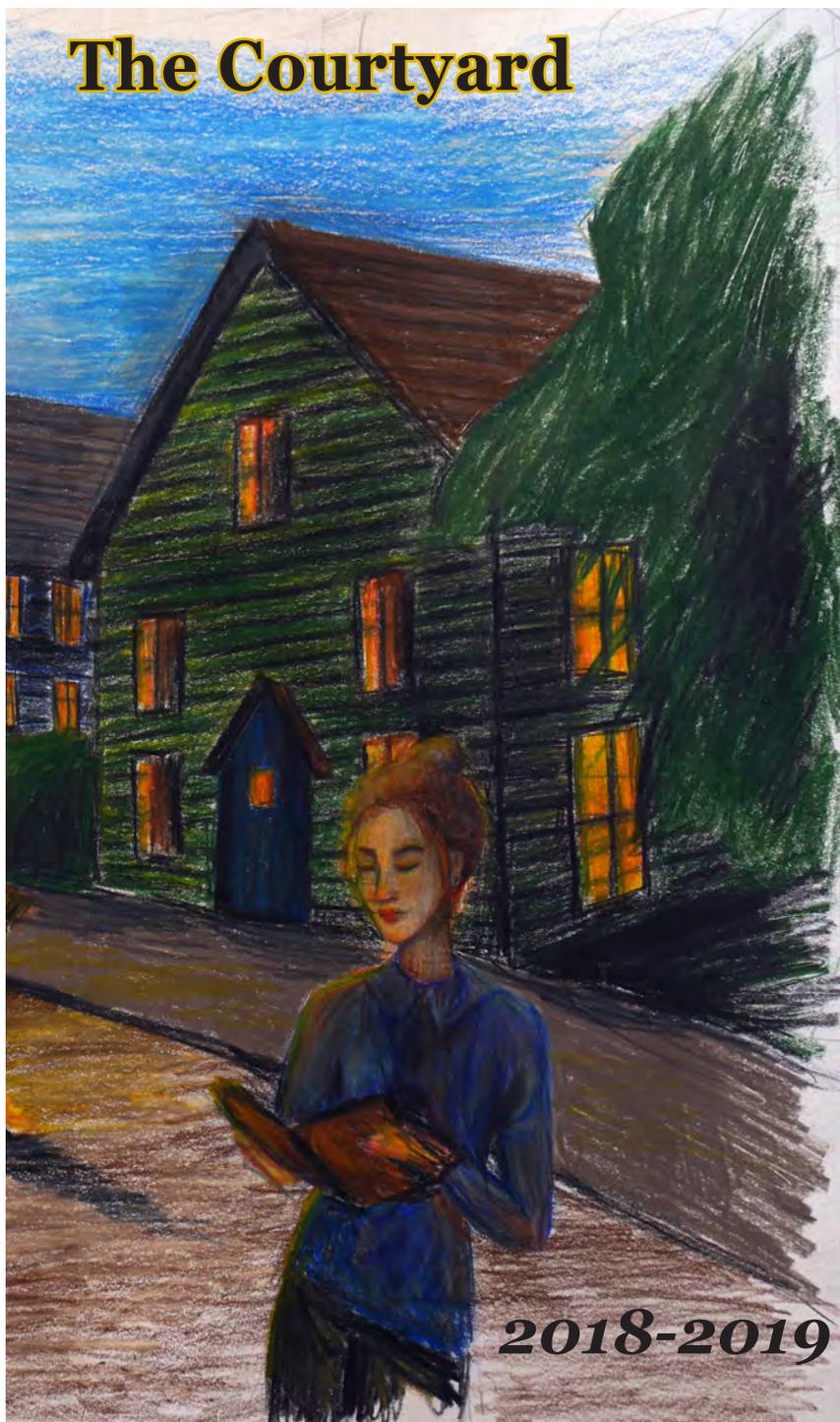


The Courtyard



2018-2019



Colors of the Breeze
by Miriam Sheehan
See this art on page 60.



Courtyard. noun. an area open to the sky, framed by walls, often nestled between buildings, “can provide a break from the frantic pace of every day life” (from Wikipedia)

The Courtyard

Western Wayne High School
2018-2019

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In Memory

We dedicate this edition of *The Courtyard* to teachers Dana Reed and James Rebar who joyfully and proudly advised previous publications of the Western Wayne High School literary magazine.



English Teacher
1976-2009
Dana Reed



English Teacher
1987-2018
James Rebar

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Wildcat Gold

from the staff

Winds of Purpose

by Sydney Peet

When a flower emerges from its loving mother's bosom,
I wonder if it dwells on the future –

 Will it survive the cold reality of spring
or be devoured by the desperate?

 Will its seeds endure to sprout new stems and propagate
petals for itself?

When a flower succumbs to the pangs of its unassuming demise,
I wonder if it dwells on the past –

 Did it blossom at the proper time
Or depreciate its own value through malapropos maturation?
 Did it fulfill its undefined and predestined earthly purpose?

When a flower floats on the breath of a summer breeze
I wonder if it focuses solely on the present –

 How the air feels drifting lazily through its petals;
 How the loving warmth of the sun feels on its exposed face.

When a flower brings spectacularly new hues to the universe,
I wonder if it knows its own worth.

When a flower closes its innards off to an oncoming storm,
I wonder if it deems its movements as preemptive
or as a sign of adaptability.

When a flower stands tall in a field of weeds,
I wonder if it considers the importance of its identity.

 Does it perceive the universe's encouragement of its
 existence?

 Does it know Earth's brook of its beauty?
 Does it know it is loved for just living?

Time

by Emma Dwyer

Why do I cry about the
Days that passed away,
The laughter I had felt and
My smiles that have strayed?

I look back and think of
Our happiness we shared,
Given now a short few months
Passed, and now I simply stare.

I never have enough of time.
I blink, and now we're here.
From your eyes I see a new
Day has suddenly appeared.

Even though I look back and
Think of passing time,
I wish we could sit longer and
Appreciate what was mine.



Seven O'Five by Melody Gershey

Summer Nights

by Alex Featherman

I miss those cool summer nights,
Those nights where I'd stop
And enjoy the vacancy of sound around me.
Sometimes even falling into a golden utopia,
One where everything
surrounding me becomes void.
This golden utopia a distraction from reality.
I run fast through the many fields of blossoming flowers
Unable to decide which one to pick to pluck to enjoy.

Imaginary Things

by Madison Kapschull

**I live in an imaginary town, filled with
imaginary people, who do imaginary things. Every
person in this town is perfect, with perfect flaws,
making
everyone perfectly
flawless.**

**Time in this town is
timeless.**

**Everyone here loves me. No one ever lets me down.
But there is just one thing wrong.
I am a little scared to leave my imaginary town.**

**But it's time to go. I pack my things.
I'm ready for the real world now.**



Seasick Dream by Melanie Roberts

The Ocean is Full of Memories of You

by Miranda Kublius

Waves lap up on the ocean shore
One wave, two waves, three waves, four
Birds above me spread their wings and soar
All the while I stand there and wait for my heart to feel more
More complete than it was before
But really it just feels less full
And my emotions remain lifeless and dull

The waves crashing up break the water's edge,
And in these blurred edges I can see memories
Memories of you and of me

The water used to help calm my senses
But now the waves and I seem to come to a consensus
That coming to the beach only makes me remember what your
scent is

I suppose remembering you forever will be my life sentence

Sweatshirt

by Andie Solimine

I asked, and I received.
I curled my fingers over the pulled down sleeves.
The smell of him was all I needed to breathe
And I had it.

For a while it made me smile just to see it.
I wore it as a reminder to the whole world
That I was loved,
Or at least that I thought I was.

The night I crashed my car
It kept me warm.
And even on the night he broke my heart
It caught the pieces and dried my eyes.

But now, it's a chain.
It still keeps my wrists warm,
But makes me feel cold inside.

It finds me only where I can't be seen
And then locks me away.
A slave to burgundy and white.
A reminder to myself that I was never loved.

I only thought I was.

Haiku I

by Sydney Peet

Bending with the weight,
Two feet upon your branches -
Warmth will relieve you.

Ezra Moses: What's in a Name?

by Ezra Tetreault

It's my name. We all have one. But mine is different. Mine has meaning beyond the surface. Names speak volume, and people remember you first from not what you look like, or what you did, but that familiar name that they hear called out. Names are individual and powerful; they define us. Whenever I tell people my name for the first time, they look at me and smile. They ask me, "How did you get such a cool name?" I tell them from my cool parents. The fact is my name is mine, and it expresses who I am. When I was born, the name "Ezra" was unheard of, and extremely rare. My dad tells me he was inspired by a famous dirt bike racer who had my name.

People also tell me I have a very Biblical name. They are right. "Ezra Moses" is as Biblical as it gets. When I would go to church in my younger days, I would flip through The Bible as fast as possible to find the Book of Ezra. Unfortunately, I don't go to church as much as I'd like to anymore. The coolest thing about being Ezra is that I don't know another Ezra. At school there are eight Zach's, six Dylan's, four John's, two Derek's. There is one Ezra. With this name, I feel like a man on Mars. I'm the only one out there, at least in my reserved point of view.

My middle name is just as neat, or neater. Middle names are weird, but the name "Moses" is extra special. Moses, my great uncle seven times removed, was a prisoner of war for the Union in the Civil War. He died a hero at a prison down south before the fighting came to a close. Moses. A baby on a river or an American war hero? You decide. To me, he is a hero. One day I will carry on his name with military service. Even though we never met, I'd like to make him proud. With his name, I have to.

One day when I am married, and my wife and I are ready to start a family, my first choice for our boy will be "Ezra Moses." It's the coolest name ever; there's no doubt. I want to build a legacy - a legacy that starts with a name. I hope I can make my future son proud to have my name, and I hope that I have set him up for a success at that. Most of all, I hope he likes it as much as I do. At the end of the day, names define us. I am thankful mine will be remembered.



The Outside of a Horse by Dayla Jones

The Artist in Me

by **Brittney Reinert**

*E*veryone has a little artist in them, some more so than others do, but it's there. Just about every ten-year-old boy or girl wakes up on Christmas day and rips open that big case of art supplies complete with liquid acrylic paints, chalky crayons, and dull pencils. For me, this is where it all started. Ten years old, on a not-so-white Christmas in my small beige house. Nothing was more exciting to me than the ideas running through my mind of what I could create. From that morning, I started my research. I started looking into art classes and the types of mediums I enjoyed. I thought about what type of art I wanted to make. I bounced around a lot, and I had so many ideas, it was hard to contain them all. I continued my research, and read about different artists. Legends like Van Gogh, and Michelangelo caught my eye right away. However, there was another artist, Georgia O'Keeffe. She sparked how I wanted to express myself. I instantly fell in love with the way she displayed her talent. The acrylic medium intrigued me, and I wanted to know what I could do. I wanted to know the impact art could warrant.

...

Electricity shoots through my veins when I take hold of the bronze handle and twist. The door pushes open, then slams behind me all while my school bags and things drop from my shoulders to the dark hardwood. I step down the seven-carpeted stairs to the organized chaos I started weeks ago. I have updated my cheap case of childish supplies and have invested in large single bottles of high quality paints and top end soft pencils. Brush strokes look like raked leaves on soft grass in the midst of autumn. Worries, and troubles and stress wash away with the paint as I rinse the brush into the already pigmented water. Acrylic paint is by far my favorite instrument of art, but to this day, I still have mixed feelings about it. Every now and then, teething troubles, like slight discolorations in morning sunsets or difficulty in blending the right amount of tint in a pale faced figure, discourage me from using the medium. The ignorance of the paint makes me feel ignorant. None of my paintings emanate my carefully thought-out originals. I could create so

much more, so many other things with the more tranquil and the more gratifying methods that I have learned and practiced with. “I could create so much more.”

Yet, it always pulls me back though, the paint. From all the frustration, art is a stress reliever. Mixing, but not quite fusing them together, leaving stripes of different colors brings a strange and confusing happiness to me with every bright and bold choice of colors, I pour and stir on my wooden pallet. With this action, a quote from my inspiration, O’Keeffe, shoots through my mind like an arrow out of nowhere: “I’ve found that I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way . . . things I had no words for.”

To be an artist is to be passionate. Art gives the artist the ability to express uncertainties, fear, and secrets without the probability of warped communication. Art can open even those minds thought to be padlocked and prompt what the artist cannot explain in any other way.

Art will show you what you love and what you hate in the best way. Art has shown me what I want to promote to the world and my means to influence the world in ways that will take people’s breath away, astounding them into silence. So with every shape I paint, let it shape me.

I’ll Be Okay

by Rayiana Cook

I let myself believe you would be there.
When times got hard, you forgot about me.
I fell for you, and that was rare.
But I’ll be okay. Soon you will see
You were my everything. Last time I knew
The memories were still stuck in my head.
You said you loved me. I wish this
Were true.
“I’ll be okay.” Yes, that’s what I said.
Some years have passed, and with time
Things change.



Witch's Vengeance by Melody Gershey

Night Poem

by Chris Ramos

A warning from a wise man has been delivered,
But not one man will attend to listen.
That warning became reality as everyone mumbles, gibberish, as
The people of Transylvania stand still as the moon glistens.

They are taken by a group of evil men
As they reminisce about their pasts and futures.
With one young boy and his father now sent,
Sent away in a truck to a camp as the Jewish numbers grow fewer.

They work and they work all day, all night long.
Father cannot last with his bruises and wounds.
Father weakens, grows less strong.
The soldier comes to beat him, viciously doomed.

Ellie can't take any more of this battered life.
His mind wanders to a darker place, but he comes to understand his
father's strife,
Decides to keep moving along to his fate.

It's been a while now. Father's not in good health.
Lying on his bed, he begs for water.
Afterwards, he gives his final breath,
Leaving his son behind deep into the
Slaughter.

Independent Me

by Mia Giordano

“Don’t worry. She’ll come back,” I say to my father and brother as they are crying in the living room. On this morning, I woke up to heartbreaking news that would change my life forever. On December 27, 2004, my mother passed away. As a toddler, I was incapable of understanding what all the tears of my family actually meant. Little did I know, life as I knew it would shift rapidly within the next few months, changing my family and me forever.

I do not remember much of the time leading up to this moment, but certain aspects stick to my brain to this day. I can recall how “perfect” my family seemed to be. I had my loving mother and father, nurturing me from the time I was born. My fun and exciting older brother, Vincent, accompanied me. We had our beautiful home in Beverly Hills with an in-ground pool, which is where we would spend our precious family time out in the warm sun. Everything was set up for me to have a great life, without a sign that it would all be taken away from me in a second.

After my mother’s death, my entire family was torn apart. My brother was sent away to live with the other side of his family, and I have not seen him since. I moved away with my father from our beautiful home. He was forced to live with the responsibility of being a single father to his one baby girl. I cannot imagine my life without my father, for he is all I have had since I can remember.

After a couple years, money was tight, so we were in a very tough position. Shortly after, I was taken away from him for being an unfit father. In that moment, sitting in the passenger seat of a police car, being carted away to live with a family of strangers, I thought for the first time, I wish I had a mom. Since then, I have returned to living with my father, and he has done everything in his power to provide me with the life he feels I deserve.

As my teenage years quickly approached, not having a mother figure in my life negatively affected my outlook of the world. In that stage of life, it was extremely difficult to understand everything and find myself without being able to ask my mom for advice. I remember lying in bed every single night talking to her. Although it looked



***Denim* by Maya Black**

like I was talking to the wall, I could feel her presence like a warm blanket wrapped around me. I often imagine how different my life would be with her. I know I would not be nearly the same person as I am today. As my father always tells me, “God gives the hardest battle to his strongest soldiers.” Throughout my life, I have fought many battles, but sometimes I feel as though I do not even want to fight anymore. However, I know my mom would not want me to give up. I strive and persevere for her.

As heartbreaking and terrible it is to grow up without a mother, I know this experience has shaped me into the person I am today. I am strong, independent, and hardworking, just like my father. He and I have always considered ourselves a team; together we still fight through this battle of our loss. There is, and will always be, an empty void within me, but I work hard every single day to fill the void with goals and achievements that would make my mother proud.



Past, Present, and Future
by Melody Gershey

Haiku II

by Sydney Peet

Solitude above -
Visiting my friends
below -
Days stretch into years.

Eyes

by Lydia Hawley

These are the eyes
With which I see the world,
No glasses. No plastic,
Just me and the world.
Trees become sticks,
Buildings become bricks,
The sky a hazy sheet of blue.

Wither Away

By Alex Featherman

We wither like dead roses
And let petals drift away in the wind.
Ripples gently circle into the pond
Where the past can simply float away.

What Matters Most

by Brianna Metschulat

“Someone give me three, how about two fifty, two and a quarter...” The auctioneer says, trying to sell the kids’ animals, at the 4-H Junior Livestock Auction. The auction is over, there are people crying everywhere. I am sitting with my goats and pigs for the last few hours, before I depart with them. I have spent six months with them; I helped the mothers through the birth, I played with them, and I took care of them. I took them on long walks in the summer mornings and nights to get them fit. I cannot believe all this time has gone by, just to sell them in one day. We are all a family. Tonight there will be nobody to welcome me when I go into the barn. These animals taught me how to be patient and responsible. They called for me in the mornings when the sun came up. They were my vacation, my listeners, my reprieve, and, most importantly, my family.

There are young kids here who still do not understand what just happened today. How are the little kids going to cope? Who is going to help them? Will they even understand? A little girl, there for her first year, comes up to me to ask what is going to happen to her animals. “How I can explain it to her?” Her mom looks at me and sees the concentration in my eyes as I try to think of an explanation. As the mother comes to distract the girl and tells her not to bother me, I tell her that it is okay, that I can handle it. I think back to my first year and remember how my mentors explained it to me. I answer the girl’s question. “The people who bought your animal will benefit from it. They will choose what they want to do with the animal. They may want to eat it, donate it to someone who needs help, or they can keep it as a pet. The whole point of this project, as it is a livestock market project, is to raise a high quality market animal.”

After that day, she understands what the project means and is able to enjoy it a little more. The girl’s mom thanks me for being so good at explaining it to her. I smile when younger 4-H members ask me questions. This matters to me. I could never live without knowing younger kids are interested in 4-H. Soon it will be time to feed; then the whole day of commotion will be over, as the buyers take out the animals they have purchased. In the next month, we will all write our thank you letters to our buyers and the auctioneers.

A Blissful Silence

by Madison Godfrey

A thoughtless, calm fall breeze in the air led me to believe my night was going to be like any other. However, I soon came to find out my life was about to change forever in the matter of a few hours. Cheer was my passion as a little girl. I had practice every week, so this would make for long conversations on the ride home. However, this ride home was very different, a little tense and quiet. “I’m taking you to your grandparents tonight, just for a little,” my mom informed me. It was about nine at night, and I knew in my heart that something was wrong. She glanced over at me and says, “I don’t think we are going to build that new house. Is that okay with you?” The curiosity that comes with childhood led me to question her. However, she never answered my questions in that moment.

I arrived to my grandparents’ house, not thinking anything much about what had just happened. I mindlessly watched television. My grandparents and I are neighbors, so when I peered outside to see where my mother was going, I noticed she had pulled into our driveway. I was overwhelmed with confusion. As my mom picked me up that night, there was an uneasy feeling in the air as we drove home. When we were approaching our driveway, my dad was packing his clothes and other things in his car. Of course, I asked where he was going. However, he left me in silence as he got into the car and drove off.

The only thing my mom said was, “Dad is leaving for a while, and it’s for the better. Believe me you won’t understand now, but you will.” I went to sleep that night still oblivious as to what my future would hold and if I were ever going to see my dad again.

The next day I found myself thinking at the edge of the bed. I came to realize the house was peaceful. Peace in my house was a very strange thing. Bickering, yelling, and tears had often intruded into our home. However, that day was blissful. From that, point on, I realized how silence could be beautiful. The things I took for granted soon disappeared into thin air. Soon after my dad left that night, my parents got a divorce.

Continued on page 19.

Friends

by Miranda Kubilus

I have been so empty
For so long,
Just waiting for real friends to come along.
I have been used,
My kindness abused,
Just to have the blame pointed on me and to be accused.
Everyone I trusted to stay with me has left,
And even though they left long ago, my heart they have kept.
People will come, and people will go,
But to think that this friendship was only for show
Hits me with a harsh blow.
But, alas, some real friends finally come around,
Creeping up on me without a sound.
It feels warm to finally have found
Some true friends who always keep me grounded.

A Blissful Silence **Continued from page 18.**

Times were hard after my dad left; many tears were exchanged, and some arguments occurred. I did not understand what a divorce meant at that time, but I do now. Sometimes people grow apart for the better. I still see my dad, and we have a much stronger connection than we have ever had before.

My mother is getting married next month to a person she loves unconditionally, and I could not be happier. This event has made me the strong individual that I am today.

I continue to work effortlessly to make my parents proud of me, knowing in my heart that they will always be by my side despite their differences.

Brooke

by Dayla Jones

If I knew walking into the barn, with my 4-H leader Sharon, that I would be assisting in bringing my new friend into the world, I think I would've been more prepared. You are not always prepared for someone new to enter your life, and I definitely was not. What we came upon was one cold lamb on the floor and the ewe struggling to push the other out. "Grandma! Get some towels!" I yelled out of the barn. By the time my grandma arrived, Sharon had gotten the other lamb out, and I had the cold lamb breathing. I wrapped up the cold lamb and brought her inside to warm her up. A half an hour later, I brought the little one back into the barn to try to introduce her to her mom and sister. It did not take long before I knew this lamb would be going home with me. Her mom had rejected her, and Sharon had no time for a bottle baby.

Raising Brooke was a lot of trial and error. I didn't really know how to hand raise a lamb. I was always consulting with Sharon and the internet. It took a while for Brooke and I to figure out a system. It was a lot of work. I set up a feeding schedule, crate trained her in my bedroom, and changed a lot of diapers. Brooke did have some health problems in the beginning. I battled scours for weeks. I cared for her when she had a very bad reaction to her tetanus booster shot. I had to watch her 24/7 making sure Brooke wasn't trying to eat something she was not supposed to. She went everywhere with me - in the bathroom, the bunny barn to do chores, and even stores. Basically the only place Brooke didn't go was to school.

I had lots of fun with Brooke. She taught me patience, and, trust me, I needed lots of it. She wanted to taste and chew on everything. Brooke liked pushing my buttons. Yelling does not faze her. I would have to follow her around telling her no and tidying up every thing she would pull out. I became more responsible, too. Instead of going out with my friends, I would stay with her. I spent much time hopping in the snow, playing tag with the tiny coated lamb. I also learned the art of multitasking. Imagine doing homework while a lamb is stealing papers or wanting a bottle. I spent many nights typing work with a lamb sleeping in my lap or nibbling on my hair.



Goat to Split by Dayla Jones

Not only did I have to learn how to raise a lamb, but also I kept up with my schoolwork all through the end of my sophomore year. Brooke molded me into a better person and became my buddy. She continues to do so even to this day.

In fact, Brooke did much more than teach me patience, responsibility, and multitasking. She amplified my love for caring for animals and helped me figure out what career path I want to follow in life. I am excited to see what the future has to offer. I will keep bettering myself to get where I need to be.

The Hill Speaks to Me

by Ezra Tetreault

A house in a field, on a hill. It's a pretty classic scenario. But when it is your house in your field on your hill, you learn to love everything that comes along with it. Some people at school hate that they live in Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania. Well, I can admit that when I meet someone new, I have trouble explaining to them where I am from. Let's be honest. The only people that have any idea on what this place has to offer are the ones that call it home. Even then, some people still can't find the beauty, but there is something unique about my property beyond it being mine. It has a language. A language that I can't find anywhere else on this planet. In the cold blustery winter, the wind screeches as beautifully as a French singer. My mom's favorite is when the "peepers" in the spring and the "rat rats" in the fall yell out from the pond across the road. In the summertime, you might hear the coyotes get riled up when they have found food down by the creek. The faint purr of the eighteen wheelers on the interstate serve as relief. Quite frankly, those are not nearly my favorite part about this dialect.

Whenever I get to thinking and it gets dark, I love to walk around on my 13 acres. I look out at deep space wondering if I'll ever make it to another planet. As I continue to enjoy the beautiful PA night, I try my best to hear something, anything. But I can't. I hear nothing. There is pure silence, pure silence that doesn't exist everywhere. I am not in the city, or at the Homecoming football game playing in some crazy atmosphere. I am home, and the silence here serves as the most substantial words to this language.

I don't think I'll ever be able to fully speak another language. I don't mean Spanish or French or German. I mean MY language, my home. When I was just starting to understand the world I told myself that when I grew up, I was going to leave and never come back. Each day I get older, that feeling gets duller. Why should I go anyway? I have my own language here, one that I'll never forget or stutter over. Even if I do leave, I will return. I will crave to hear that language again. From my house in my field on my hill.

The Pond

by Hannah Fryzel

Inspired by William Henley

Out of the water that soaks me,
Free as birds from day to day,
I enjoy whatever fun may be
For my childish play.

In the bright sun of day
I have not sat nor calmly lay.
Under the sky so blue
My skin is warm and new.

Beyond this home of bugs and fish
Lingers but the hope and the wish,
Yet, the smell of this place
Brings and shall bring me space.

It matters not the flowers beyond,
How filled with weeds the pond.
I am the master of my dreams.
I am the captain as it seems.



Southward Bound by Melody Gershey

Challenger

by Tyler Keill

“Here I am, in a dark, motionless room, waiting for the arrival of my challenger. The door opens up, and a tall dark figure slowly walks through and flicks on the light. “There you are; it’s time to do this once and for all!” He picks me up and starts to move me in all different directions. Side to side, up and down, left to right. “Where do I begin?” he says to me, as if expecting an answer. The room falls silent for a while; until he starts turning my sides, bottom, top, front, back, every way he can. He tells me with a smile on his face, “I can do this. I know it.” You can see the passion and determination in his eyes as he tries to make me whole. He has been working with me for over 2 months and has gotten very little progress. He has a notebook to his right. Every time he sees progression he writes it down. “Right-up, Up-right, Up-right...” he says to himself as he writes it down. “I’m so close. It’s been almost three months since we’ve started.” His determination is unbelievable. At this point, most people would give up on me, but not him. He looks at the clock, ‘Oh, man, it’s time for work. Let’s go, buddy.”

He tosses me into his bag and starts the journey. I lie there, bouncing to the rhythm of his walk. Time passes, and I still have not seen him. Then after a long wait, I hear something. The sound gets closer and closer. I feel myself start to swing, and I hit against the wall of the bag with great force. Then I feel the rocking motion again, but this time it is a lot more intense. I hear his feet slapping on the ground with the relentless rhythm of his strut.

Everything stops. The movement, the sounds, everything. I wait and listen for something, but there is not a sound. Suddenly, he rips open his bag where inside he sees me lying there, half-solved. Smiling, he picks me up. “It’s time to get this done.” He starts turning me in every way. He stops, sets me down, pulls out his phone and takes a picture. “I did it! Mom! I solved my Rubik’s Cube! Mom!” he runs out of the room screaming. He has done it! He has finally made me whole again.



*Grandmother's
House* by Melody
Gershey

Stole my Heart

by Ashly Chapman

It is a cool show Sunday, and I find myself admiring the large show ring. We enter the ring shy and slow until the whistle blows show time. I gently ask for canter, and he gives it with no hesitation. We continue quickly through the difficult course taking each fence with great ease, dirt flying around every sharp turn revealing the great power in his long legs. Ten fences later, and it is over. I softly brush his sweet face for he has just gotten a good time, but the class is full. Competition is tough at the benefit show as always.

I find myself lost in the crowd waiting for the final results, I zone out. This brings me the thought of the year earlier when I, the bright-eyed child that I am, fell in love with this massive brown horse. However, it was not as easy as that... most people thought that I was never going to be able to ever jump or show him, they thought that his ginormous body was inferior to my tiny one. In fact, everyone was kind of scared and told me to choose something safer and that I was never going to win. Still, I couldn't get over the big brown horse, so no part of me was taking no for an answer. After all, who cares about the prize, as long as you give it your all?

Suddenly, I zone back in to the sound of the announcer saying, "First place, and congratulations to Rider 276 on "Stole My Heart."



Luna by Maya Black

The Trees, The Leaves, The Earth

by Miranda Kubilus

*B*efore me, the house I grew up in lies in ruins. I'm not sure what else I expected when I got the call that there had been a fire, but it certainly wasn't this. The whole way here I had daydreamed about coming home. I'd leap out of the car and bound up the misplaced sidewalk towards the misshapen front porch. To my left would be my swing set, bars still chipping yellow paint and orange plastic seats worn and faded. Out of the corner of my eye to my right would be the big barn where my brother and I used to catch mice. Before that, fields of colored leaves would rest peacefully, fallen but still just as beautiful as they'd been on the summer trees. The wooden porch stairs would creak under my weight, threatening to break with every step but somehow managing to hold their weight even after decades of use.

The wraparound porch that my father had spent so many summers building would still be standing despite the rusty nails slowly ripping from the boards and random holes lurking where the rotted wood has fallen through. My brother and I used to huddle around these holes, watching and waiting for a strange bug or maybe even a rat to scurry by so we could name them. My mom would be standing by the door, waiting for my arrival as she had most nights when I rode my bike to the neighbors earlier that day or even when I came home to visit after my first year of college. It feels like ages despite being only three years ago. She always knew when I would be home.

"Oh, darling, a mother always knows when her babies will return," she would say, laughing, crinkles appearing around her eyes more prominently with each passing year, graying brown hair always tossed up in a perfectly constructed messy bun. I can still remember the way she smelled like old books, most likely because she was always holed up in her library when she wasn't spending time with my brother or me. A small octagonal room built specially for my mother with bookshelves for walls with all but one of those shelves filled from top to bottom with books. Once as a child I crept in late at night to find her curled up in a chair reading.

"Mommy?" I tugged the blanket off her lap, and she glanced down

at me. “Why don’t you spend time with Daddy?” Her deep brown eyes filled with sorrow as she pulled me up into her lap and placed her book to the side.

“Your father and I had our time a long while ago sweetheart. We get along better if we’re not around each other so much.” I hadn’t understood what she meant as a child and never really cared either. Mom made sure not to stay around Dad for too long, and they never fought because of that.

Knowing all I do about the world now, I shudder thinking about what might have occurred had Mom not known Dad’s limits. We weren’t perfect by any means, but growing up Mom never let me see that. I envy the strength she must’ve had to carry the weight of our family without sharing the burden with anyone but her books.

As I approach the now ruins of my home, I notice that the temperature around the area has dropped a few degrees. Apparently even the sun knows of the horrors that went down last week and is shying away because of it. *I* don’t blame it, I wish I could shy away, too. However, this is one demon I must face, and my mother is no longer around to shield me from the truth. Climbing the few rickety stairs that remain, I find myself on the porch. A heavy fog settles in my stomach, welding my feet to the boards. So, I sit down on the top step, staring down the driveway and out into the road. The air is fresh and cool, exactly how you hope for fall to be, and the leaves on the trees are turning colors. The grass remains the same as it always was, except maybe a little taller from not having been cut for a while. I close my eyes and imagine bugs scuttling across the dirt, hurrying to their homes for the coming night. I wonder if they have any idea of the terror that took place.

Do they know of the family that grew here just to die here? Probably not, after all, they’re just bugs. They go day by day trying to survive, dodging predators and striving for life, until one day it’s not enough. I humor myself however, and let my mind slip into a haze of thinking about bugs. Comfort wraps around me to think that somebody, anybody, even the bugs, understand and share my sorrow. They understand.

I sit and stare into the trees and the sky until it’s begun to get dark, and finally decide that to find closure I need to enter the dismantled structure. Rising from my seat, I wipe dirt and ash off my jeans,

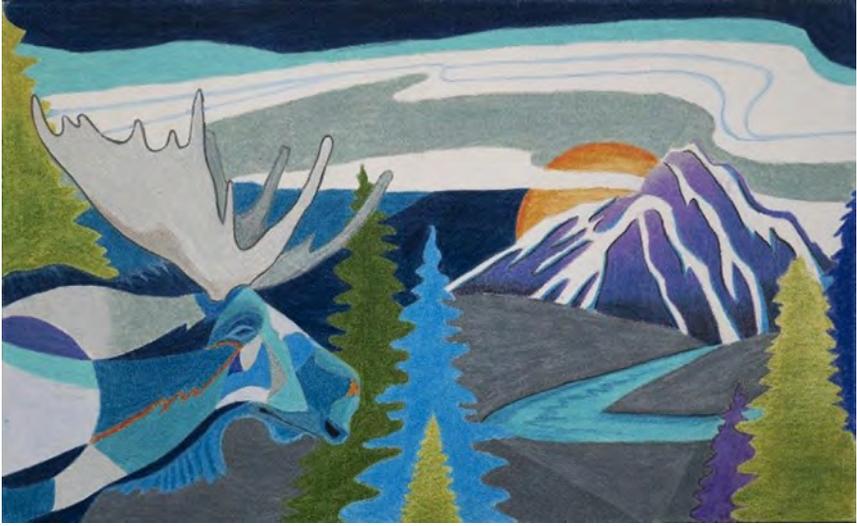
then turn to face the front entrance. The big blue front door is no more, and neither are the walls of the front hall. Even though it's been a week since the fire, smoke and ash fill my lungs when I step inside. I cautiously navigate my way through the rummage, avoiding holes and shards of glass. Slowly I make my way to my mother's library, craving the feeling of being wrapped in her warmth.

My heart leaps into my throat because of the subconscious knowledge that I am currently traveling to the place where my mother, now passed on, had spent the majority of her life. It's not difficult to find the room despite most of it being burnt away. Shriveled up papers and leather book covers litter the floor. Sturdy frames remain standing in protest against the flames. I know that most likely, this is where my mom spent her final moments. Tears brim in my eyes, and I rush out of the house, incapable of remaining inside any longer. A hearty cough breaks through my throat as my lungs way of telling me that they've had enough of the smoke. When outside, I take a deep breath, trying my hardest to calm myself.

Two lives were lost that night, though to me it only feels like one. My mother, the glue that held our family together, and my father, the hands that threatened to tear us apart. Everything I thought I knew about my family is now twisted into the horrific reality, and nothing is the same about it.

The story of my mother and father that I thought I knew is now dismantled, as well as my childhood home. There's nothing anchoring the memories I built here anymore. Gasping for air to settle myself, I stare intently at my surroundings and notice that my initial thought is not entirely true.

The trees are still the same, some sprouting anew each year and others remaining from years prior, providing homes for the mice and bugs, many of which hold names bestowed by two naïve children all those years ago. The leaves are still the same, growing and falling and growing again, producing food for the trees, both new and those still standing tall and strong from before I was born. The Earth will continue spinning and providing homes for billions of creatures despite this fire (because just one tragedy does not make the world stop spinning). These are the things holding me here, the things keeping my memories alive. Things the fire did not take away from me. The things my father did not take away from me.



Winter's Thaw by Kaitlyn McDonald

The Bluebird

by Bryce Urian

Inspired by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a bluebird's flight?
Thou art more smooth and more soft.
Rough skies do throw the simple feathers of light,
And bluebird's wing hath all too slow a loft.
Sometimes too cold the wind of heaven shift,
And often is its golden shine block'd.
And every feather from feather sometime lifts,
By cool or nature's changing nest, flock;
But thy eternal bluebird shall not slow
Nor lose possession of that feather thou fold.
When in eternal beats to Time thou hold.

So long as winds can blow, or clouds can be.
So long lives flight, and flight gives life to thee.

Recipe for Disaster: Columbus Cookies

**by Sam Collins
and Journey Sosa**

Ingredients

1 cup of Christopher Columbus
didn't find America first
3 1/2 cups of Leif Erikson
found
America first
1/2 cup of innocent Natives
3 tsps. of war
A pinch of Pocahontas
1 cup of John Rolfe
4 tbsps. of Bubonic plague
1 cup of Small Pox
2 tsps. of Malaria
1/4 cup of Measles
1/4 cup of Scarlet Fever
3/4 tbsp. of the Earth is flat

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 1492.
2. Steal the Natives' food and set aside.
3. Forget Step 3 and mix Pocahontas and John Rolfe.
5. Mix deadly diseases and set aside for later.
6. Sprinkle "The Earth is flat" all over Columbus.
7. Add deadly disease to innocent Natives.
8. Roll out Leif Erikson and Christopher Columbus.
9. Cover Erikson with Columbus until he is no longer visible.
10. Add all ingredients together. (Be sure not to forget war.)
11. Roll into balls and place on baking tray.
12. Bake until year 2019 (making sure to let America run its lovely course). Enjoy!

Haiku III

by Sydney Peet

**Balancing on you,
Carry me across the depths.
Trusting in your strength.**

Defying All Odds

by Chris Ramos

I walked out of my room when it all started. My brother and my parents were at it again, arguing and bickering. My brother, Alex, always wanted to be his own person. Independent, but stubborn. He liked to make his own decisions, like any young teenager would like to do. But he never really liked or understood any of my parents input on what he did. The fight continued for some time until my brother had had enough and said the fateful words. “I’m moving out!”

Growing up, I have always seen my older brother as strong and humble. He is exactly that. His dream to be a professional wrestler wasn’t always planted in his mind, however. When he was around 14, he started to write raps and upload them to YouTube, he started to sell his own personal CD’s to his friends and family, and after a while, he even got recognized for his music and was asked to perform on the radio station, KRZ.

Even though Alex and I have many things in common, we are definitely polar opposites when it comes to school. For example, while in school, Alex was very athletic and played multiple sports. He was sociable with everyone and was able to hit on girls very easily. He has always had a knack for making new friends and talking to other people he didn’t know. But during his senior year, he only went to school once in a while.

Yet, Alex did many things as a young teenager that he should definitely be proud of. But now 21 years old, a two-year-old son, a fiancé, and a professional wrestling career, there are plenty more experiences with my brother I could share. As I look forward to new times, some stand out in memory. For example, one time, when we were in Long Island at the company Alex wrestles for, Alex looked at me and asked, “You ready?” He was about to wrestle for the World Championship later in the night.

“Yes I am; I want you to win so badly,” I responded. Just as we were talking, RJ, who books matches for the company, walked up to me and asked if I wanted to be a referee that night.

“Sure, why not?” I humbly accepted. He looked at his notebook

and read off the matches I would be refereeing.

“Oh, and you’ll be refereeing your brother’s match.” My heart started to pound rapidly.

“Are you serious?!” I yelled. *Alex* and I met eyes and smiled. That night, I got to be part of one of the most important nights of my brother’s life and got to raise his hand in victory.

Another time that I will always remember is when *Alex* and I got to meet Bob Orton, a legendary wrestler and Hall of Famer of the WWE. Our old trainer, Koz, paid to have Bob fly down to Long Island so he could give us some pointers and advice on our future in the business. At one point, *Alex* and I even got 20 minutes to ourselves just to speak with him. But that wasn’t even the coolest thing. We both got to show him some of our wrestling moves, and the best moment was when he said to us, “Yeah, that was great.”

In my perspective, *Alex* is like Batman. Even when wounded and exhausted, he still pushes to do what he was made to do. He is a genuine person outside the ring, but when he’s inside, he puts his game face on and impresses everybody. Just like Batman, *Alex* helps friends and family who are loyal to him. Through times when he faces struggle and sadness, he is still able to make it through his life whilst walking on eggshells. My brother proves time after time, that no matter how hard the obstacle, the hard work pays for the best outcome.

Differently than *Alex*, I am like Eminem, a very mellow person but very outspoken and headstrong. No matter what success I earn in the future, I will never forget where I came from. My ambition is through the roof when it comes to something I’m passionate about. Not saying *Alex* isn’t like that, but in comparison to me, he doesn’t need to show passion; everyone sees his wisdom and passion inside of him. I’m not an athletic person in sports or school, but I make myself out to be athletic in my own world: the wrestling world.

With that said, my brother is a hero to me. You see, we’ve shared so many great memories throughout our lives, that sometimes I wish I could rewind to the good old days. However, needless to say, I hope we make better memories to leave behind in the future. He’s the best person I know, and he is my blood. We don’t have many differences truthfully, which makes our relationship ten times better. When it comes brotherhood, nothing can break our bond.

Changing of the Seasons

by Emma Dwyer

I am so in love with
Warm autumn days,
A fresh breath of summer
When it is getting cold.

With you, there is no winter
Just the setting sun.
What is left of
August and
The Opening of
our arms.

To the comfort of
the weather
And all the
colored trees,
The embrace of
its sweaters
The sadness when
you leave.

As it turns dark,
the sky
I know one thing
still.
Seasons will al-
ways change
But I am here to
stay.



Bi-Polar Leopard by Dayla Jones

Waters of Atlantis

by Brittney Reinert and Cameron
Johnson

Inspired by William Henley

Out of the waves that moves me
Blue as the sky from coast to coast
I consume whatever worries may be
For my cold ghost.

In the dead waters of Atlantis
I do not bleed nor kill nervously.
Under the sand of my campus
My army is small but does not fight
aimlessly.

Beyond this ocean of creatures and sand
Shows the importance of the sea,
And yet the heft of the land
Follows and shall follow me undersea.

It matters not how bad the journey,
How mastered with fraud the enemy.
I am the master of who is worthy.
I am the captain of my memory.

Sonnet I: Past Demons

by Lydia Hawley

Shall I tell you the rules of the darkness,
The many emotions swirling around,
The lingering feelings of sadness?
For now, you are stuck with a silent sound
Of nothing, of absolutely nothing.
There is no light. There is no sound at all.
There is no warmth, no comfort, no blushing.
There are only demons, trying to crawl.
Those demons who will feast on your mind,
Demons only hunger for despair.
The demons will not stop until they find
Your sadness that snatches you like a snare
And attacks you like a bear.
Those are the morose rules of the darkness.



Home Sweet Comb by Shailyn Pugh

Passion Discovered

by Stephen Orchard

*I*t was a normal school day. Third period came around - Metal Shop. I walked in and sat down next to my friend in the talk room, waiting for the instructor to take attendance. As my teacher rounded the end of the class roster, he shouted, "LET'S GET TO WORK!" Everyone shuffled over to the cabinet with the safety goggles, desperate to grab a clear pair that wasn't plagued with scratches. As we walked out into the shop, I went for the oxygen and acetylene cart, I could hear my teacher yell, "ORCHARD, CAREY, GET OVER HERE!" I urgently returned to my teacher, scared, thinking I had done something wrong. My mind raced, thinking of what I could have possibly messed up. My teacher looked up from his computer, "How are you two doing with the oxy and acetylene welding?"

I nodded and told him, "I'm doing well, not perfect, but I have the concept down." My welding partner agreed.

With this answer, my teacher said, "Well, alright. Let's see how you guys do with Gas Tungsten Arc." We both looked confused. We both knew this was a big opportunity, only the upperclassmen could use the Gas Tungsten Arc, for they were the only students with enough experience and skill.

Nonetheless, our teacher led us to the big red machine, cracked the bottle of shielding gas, and flipped the switch to ON. He informed us about the machines functions, demonstrating how to properly hold the torch and filler metal, as well as how to use the foot pedal which was no more than the pedals in a vehicle.

He handed the torch to me first and said "Here, let's see if you were paying attention." I instantly got nervous, as I slipped on the big leather welding gloves and put the helmet on my head. I grabbed the torch and sat down, placing my foot on the foot pedal. I jolted my head downward to drop the hood over my face, put the torch next to the metal and put the pedal to the floor. Striking the arc was quite alarming at first. It was my first time arc welding of any sort. I waited for the puddle of molten metal to form and dabbed the rod in and inched the torch onward.

After laying down a bead of weld, a step that felt like forever, I lifted my foot off the pedal and lifted my hood. It was amazing at

first; the bead I welded was distorted in color from the heat, which left a nice bluish color to it. It was very inconsistent and shaky, but it was still a good enough bead for my teacher to say, “Well, well, well, do we have a natural? That’s one of the nicest I’ve seen from a first time welder.” I grinned and shook my head, handing the torch and gloves to my friend as he sat down and started his turn. I stood up and watched, in my head thinking of the rhythm of the weave.

That night, I went home and looked up videos on theory and skill building. I was mentally absorbed in welding all within an hour of welding at school. Since that day, I’ve always taken it seriously, trying to better myself day by day, hoping that in the future I will get paid to do what I love. Whether it’s a new type of task or the same old routine of “making sure this sticks to that and never comes back apart,” I remain committed to solving the problem to the best of my ability. Who knew I would find my passion in a class I took on chance?



***Strung Out* by Katherine Moore**

Unheard

by Adam DeGroot

If you do good,
They call it bad.
They mess it up,
Then we all get mad.

I have been good,
But they make me a fool.
They have consequence
Not used like a tool.

That is their weapon,
Their knife, their gun
They use on me.
I am so done.

They push to the ground,
My soul, my heart.
They do not know
It tears me apart.

She says her words,
Unholstering her verbal gun.
There is consequence.
She fires her words.
I am done.

Some hurt with words,
But they will deny.
Words can lie
And justify
And make me cry.

The actions they take
Are theirs to make, but
Their feelings are fake
Like a Styrofoam cake.

And in my heart, a stake.

If I had a dollar
For every jab in my heart,
I could fill millions
Of shopping carts.

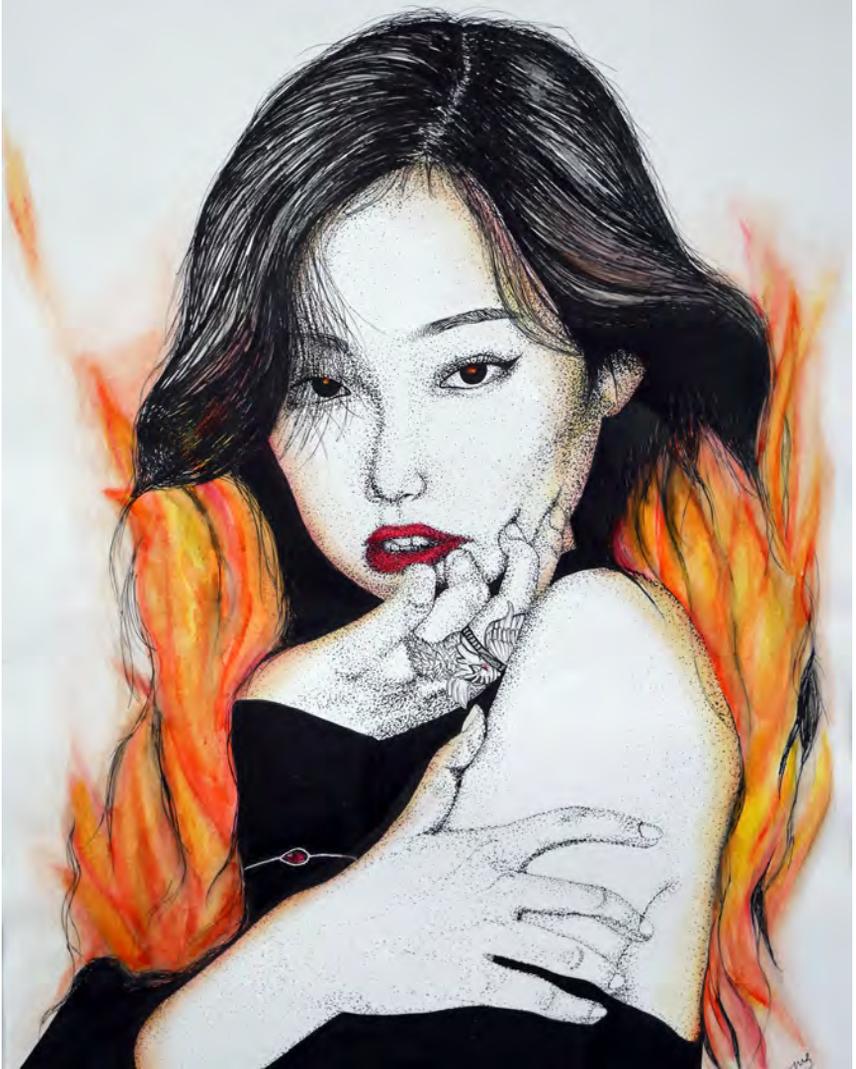
I speak my mind.
They make me talk loud,
Like the roar
Of a crowd.

The tape on my mouth,
Silenced sounds,
While they spread their ideas
Up and around.

They cannot hear
Their words in my heart.
They tell me to talk
But won't let me start.

I wasn't listening in the first
place.

Can you hear me now?



Playing with Fire by Maya Black



Made of Dust by Melanie Roberts

If You Asked

by Madison Kapschull

If you asked I'd sit up straight.
I might even do my hair.
I would never be late
And could pretend to care.
If you wanted I would smile
Even if it were fake.
The power to change my style -
An advantage you never take
Because you haven't asked.
This is how I know
That you love me for me
And not for my mask.

The Windows Were Glass - So Was my Heart

by Miranda Kublius

**Your body pressed to hers had shone
Through the windows of what we once called our
home
I don't think you knew that windows were made of
glass
And if you did then kissing her in front of them didn't
show much class
It wasn't the first time you had done this
And I'm sure that this with her was not your first kiss
I watched as you pulled apart to laugh
All the while my heart was slowly being torn in half
I opened the door
And you knew that I had caught you once more
But this time would not be like it was before
I punched the window
And the glass shattered under my fist
Just as m heart did when I thought of all the girls you
had kissed
Your lips were not something I could call my own
And that house was no longer a place I could call my
home
I wish you had watched as I walked out the front door
Instead of sinking to my knees on the wooden floor
As I did each time before
Because this time I realized I deserved more**



Hipster by Maya Black

I Am Her

by Emma Dwyer

She is beautiful.
Does she not know so?
She looks into a mirror
But the glass is a fog.

I notice her grey blue eyes.
What is hiding is her mind.
Her heart radiates a golden truth.
She does not realize she is blind.

The way she laughs sends
Butterflies through my soul.
I cannot help but notice
The little things she does.

To grab my attention, she
Does not need to be outspoken.
A subtle conversation with her
Will send my thoughts after.

Her beauty is in the little things
Like how she thinks or speaks.
Listening to what she has to say
Gives me everything to believe.

What sends her into disbelief,
A confrontation with herself.
The mirror may be but a fog
But I know she is beautiful to me.

Failure is *Not* an Option

by Dylan Walck

*I*t was third down with only seven yards to go, and at that moment I knew that I needed to endure a challenge in order to succeed and benefit the team. The score froze at 21 to 14, and my team was in the lead. Thirty-eight seconds stood between an important win or a severe loss. My brother Scott, the safety at the time, reminded me, “Dylan, this is a pass. Look alive; you know they’re going to try to pick on the freshman,” referring to me. Understanding what he said, I nodded my head yes and became even more determined to defeat the opposing team. I glanced at the quarterback to see if he was revealing any hints as to where the ball was going, and as his eyes met mine I knew the ball was coming to me.

As the ball snapped, the quarterback faked the handoff up the middle and rolled out right. The ball was travelling straight to me, and I knew that this was the time to show everyone that I was not just a freshman, but a threat. I collided with the opponent, and when I caught the ball, I immediately collapsed on the ground. The adrenaline raced through my body, and my only thought was saving the game for my team. My teammates rushed over to me and helped me up to celebrate the game-winning catch. Suddenly, I knew that something was wrong: I could not breathe. Walking to the sideline, I began to cough and instantly tasted blood in the back of my throat. The athletic trainer asked, “Where is it coming from?” but at that point I could not speak, so I pointed to my throat and he urgently called the ambulance. After I was rushed to the hospital, I discovered that I had broken my ribs and punctured my lung on impact.

Although I have been pushed to my limits and faced various challenges, I have always been taught that failure is not an option and that I need to push myself in order to succeed. Many individuals define failure as lack of success; however, I view failure as an opportunity for improvement.

This experience allowed me to become more determined and strive for recovery in order to continue my athletic career. Once I set my mind to something, I always do my best to achieve that goal

and if not, I do not consider it as failing, but rather as a stepping stone to learn and persevere from the experience. Even the most serious injuries or most challenging setbacks can be overcome with a combination of hard work and motivation, along with a positive outlook and constant determination.

During the recovery, I asked myself, “Is it worth going back? Is it worth all the pain I’ve been through?” However, in the end, I realized that every second was worth it. My dedication to the sport I love raised my team’s spirits and motivated them to work even harder to accomplish our goals for the season.

I have always been told, “It is not how many times you get knocked down, but it is how many times you can get back up.” I believe the word failure can only affect you if you allow it to, and that it is just somebody’s opinion whether you’ve succeeded or not.

I know if I put my mind to something and work at it each and every day, there is nothing holding me back from excellence. Therefore, none of us truly ever fails if we strive to be better in whatever we set our minds on throughout life.



Surf's Up by Rachel Butler

What the Eye Can See
by Maya Black



Insanity

by Evan Thomas

Insanity is characterized by the deep hollow in her eyes

**The soothing sound of her voice touching your ears
Each word a bullet gliding through the canal of you
destroying all**

All that's positive falls ill

Weak to a sickly calming poison

Smiles of a dagger

Its edge as dull as a cold stone washed in from the sea

The dullest of blades are the most treacherous

One would not suspect an old razor to cut

Yet a grin is as sharp as Excalibur

Still hiding in the corner

Reminiscing on the pain that's been dealt

The guilt is painful but no more than the attention that

fuels her

One may love

Another can slash it as mindfulness is the only true draw

Once completed she will return what's been taken

Even the most generous of killers keep trophies

Insanity kept my heart

Reality's Fate

By Jesus Lopez

They could tell you this.
They could tell you that.
They see you doing good,
But wishing that you do bad.
Soon as you start to smile,
They'll just want to make you sad.

I know life is hard.
It's all about making a choice.
I want to be the main speaker
When people don't have a
voice,
But I know that you're worth
it,
And I know I'm not perfect.
Look me in my eyes and tell
me,
"Do you see purpose?"
People say I'm preaching
Every time they read my
verses.

You say you can do this.
You say you can do that.

I support your decisions.
Remember, I got your back.
I have always been there for you
Through the good times and the
bad.

Enough with the sadness.
It's time to put a smile on your
Face.
Don't pay attention to the hat-
ers -
What they do best is to hate.
They feed off of your energy,
Adding more to your plate.
They going to hate you some
more when you get the chance
to
Escape reality's fate.

Made a lot of enemies and not a
lot of friends.
You can't understand if you
have
Never been where I've been.
How about you try growing up
in a place full of sin?
Money's pointless if you've
never been happy within.

Haiku IV

by Sydney Peet

Brushing my skin now
Whipping wind returns again
Biting my flushed face.

Eight Dollar Pencil Skirt

by Vaeda Pontosky

Snow was falling profusely; the flakes were intricate and dense. The little hairs in my nose froze each time I drew a breath. Filled with optimism, I fastened my seat belt as I texted my mom, “leaving.” *This is the time to prove to my mom I can drive in the snow.* The snow was accumulating rapidly, the highway was desolate, the sky was gray, but I was determined. As I got closer to my home, all the cars in sight had their hazards on, crawling slowly towards their destinations. My mind drifted from the road. I was looking forward to telling my mom I had gotten a pencil skirt for eight dollars!

My house was only one minute away, but it seemed as if time was standing still. As I took a sharp turn, the car wheels slid out from beneath me, violently accelerating in the opposite direction as the steering wheel. My adrenaline was pumping, my mind was spinning—

What if I die? My car spiraled clockwise, and my car’s back end was now across the road. Yet another deadly obstacle hurtled towards me in a matter of seconds - a car coming in the opposite direction. I remained persistent as I kept turning the wheel, even though there was no more wheel to turn. My car screamed in pain as it collided with the other car. Thankfully, because of Newton’s second law of motion, “For every action, there is an equal but opposite reaction.” The collision had forced my car into the opposite direction, causing it to avoid hitting a tree on the other side.

As I was sobbing, I shakily reached for my phone and dialed my mom’s number. She immediately asked me “What’s wrong?”

I had to admit, “I got in a crash.”

My mom exclaimed, “I should have never let you drive in this weather!”

As I was awaiting her arrival, I approached the driver of the other car with tears rolling down my face. The only words that could escape my mouth were “I’m sorry.”

The man replied, “It’s all okay as long as you’re okay.” The man assured me, “This isn’t the worst thing that can happen.”

The most awful feeling was facing my parents after the accident. In this moment my heart sunk. This was the first time I had let my

parents down. My dad would not even look at me in the eyes. The consequences were irreversible, which is what upset me the most.

My car would have been totaled, but with the help of my dad, we went to various junk yards to pull parts. I reassured my parents that I would be paying the entire cost of damage. I started to work doubles every weekend along with juggling my academics, sports, and science clubs. I realized this setback was minor because overcoming obstacles is not new to me. I thrive on a challenge. As a student and athlete, I strive to be the best, and I push myself to my fullest potential. I have paid back the entire cost of my car, and I have learned to weigh my decisions more carefully. Ironically, I ended up wearing my pencil skirt to an interview, and subsequently I won a research fellowship to a local medical college.



Cabin Fever by Melody Gershey

Gone Fishing

by Coral Swoyer

April 19, 2018. I will never forget this day. I knew the day was coming but didn't want to think about it. He wasn't just my papa, but my best friend. The last time I saw him he didn't look like my partner in crime who used to go fishing with me and start sword fights at the kitchen table at Easter dinner. He didn't look like my Santa Claus without his long beard and his big belly. It didn't seem real when I was called into his bitter cold hospital room with my sister - or at least I didn't want it to be real. As soon as I saw him lying his hospital bed with what looked like a million tubes coming from his body and various machines near him, chills went down my back. I could feel the hairs on my arms perk up when I heard the heart monitor. Beep, Beep, Beep. I walked over to him, tears in my eyes, knowing that I was soon going to cry like a baby. It wasn't until I said, "I've missed you" to my best friend that the tears came like a waterfall. I held his hand and told him that I loved him and thank you for going fishing with me and loving me back.

Soon came the phone call that no one wants. We were all sitting in the living room when my mom answered her phone, and my dad just knew. He knew that the man who had gotten him out of foster care, the man who had raised him to be the tough but gentle father just like the one he once was, was gone. The air in the room thickened as the sadness was absorbed into us just like that. Oh, my dad, my grizzly bear of a dad, became a teddy bear as tears ran down his face.

An old pastor gave the funeral speech, talking about how well-respected my grandfather was, not only in the community but in Pennsylvania. Many people stood up after the pastor telling stories of my grandfather.

War stories, childhood stories, work stories. We sat on the edge of our seats listening. It felt good listening to the stories and hearing how respected he was. I wished he were there to hear them. I felt as if I could hear his roar of a laugh in the distance and see his big smile in the back of the room.

A Rose

by Madison Kapschull

Inspired by William Henley

Out of the seeds that made me,
 Red as the fire from stem to petals,
I bless whatever dirt may be
 For my rooted devils.
In the hot rays of sun
 I have not drown nor wilted long.
Under the shadows of none
 My vines are thorny, but strong.
Beyond this summer of heat and breeze
 Lay the winter of the cold.
And yet the survivor of the freeze
 Lives yet and shall live to be old.
It matters not how deep the snow,
 How red with fire the petals.
I am the master of my foe.
 I am the captain of my devils.



A Change Within by Cosette Talarico

The Sisterhood

by Sabrina Swoyer

I am tired but still full of energy and ready for the next play. My eyes focus on one person, #4, the server. Each time before she serves, I gather myself and wipe the sweat off my forehead before it reaches my eyes. Our back row is down and ready. All I hear is smack as she serves the ball. Sydney yells, “Mine,” signaling to us she has it. She follows the serve until she is close enough to reach her arms out and pass a perfect pass to our play maker, the setter. The sport of volleyball is more technical than many think. I didn’t even get all the rules until this year.

Playing with a team is difficult for some people. Growing up, I would say I was pretty independent. I taught myself a lot of things. I went to volleyball practices and worked out with the team until sunset or until the grass was too slippery to play on. During the summer of 2017, I really put in a lot of work on my own time, too. Every morning I would go outside and play with my sister as the sun beat on our faces, turning our skin as red as a lobster. As a sophomore on varsity, you need to work for your spot. So that’s what I did. Coach listed the roster after an exhausting August workout. I had made the team for the third year in a row. I was jumping off the walls!

“Hey, girls, gather around. Is everyone here? Great! Everyone is here! Now let’s start warm-ups. Do them correctly, or we’ll do them again.”

If you looked at me, you would see the excitement in my eyes. I was wearing the same shoes as everyone else, spandex, and a white shirt with Western Wayne Volleyball emblazoned across the front. I really felt like I was part of the team.



Rest in Peace, Patrick Luptak

by Jessica Scaduto

Sweet like honey, pure like water, honest as a god. These are a few words I can use to describe Patrick, but honestly any way to say someone was a good person.

That's how I can best explain Patrick's personality perfectly, I've never met such pure soul before and such a positive person in my life. If I ever had a problem he would always be there for me. Somehow he would always know how to help me, by giving his best advice.

Patrick was my other half. We instantly connected on everything. He would light up the room with his smile which caused everyone else to smile, too. He taught me to always look at the bright side of every negative thing that crossed my path. Showed me to appreciate the little things such as the sky and nature. That was our thing, just to stare at the sky and talk about it. Everything would fade away as the sky captivated us.

Patrick honestly helped me with so much. I can't thank him enough. I wish I had more time to tell him all of this, but unfortunately I can't.

Continued on page 55

Whatever It Takes

by Jaydon Frable

Warning: Spoilers below

As I pull up to the Cinemark, the nervousness in my stomach begins to grow as if someone has told me bad news. My best friend and I exit our car taking a deep breath of the fresh mountain air that surrounds us. “Well, here we are Josh the finale of the Avengers,” I say nervously.

“Thanos may have won the infinity war, but today... He’s getting taken down by the remaining avengers!” replies Josh with confidence. As I open the door to the movies, the aroma of buttered popcorn hits my nostrils like a semi-truck. That smell brings back so many great memories of the previous great movies I have seen here at this very movie theater. We walk up to the kind woman behind the glass and purchase our tickets for *Endgame*. As we walk to our designated theater number, we see people drying tears as they leave from a showing of the film. “This isn’t looking pleasant.” My tone matches my frightened face.

As I enter the dark, cold theater I have a heavy feeling of sadness. Yet, I feel a slight glimmer of happiness and hope for our heroes about to come on screen. Josh and I take our seats as the lights dim. As the Marvel intro starts to roll, I feel as nervous as a little kid going on his first roller coaster ride. The movie begins... about halfway through Captain America gives a great line of motivation to his team that is about to have the fight of their lives: “Five Years Ago. We lost. All of us. We lost friends. We lost family. We lost a part of ourselves. This is the fight of our lives. We will get our friends and family back. Whatever It Takes.”

A fire inside of me burns bright with motivation. We watch attentively as the movie nears the end. The end of the infinity saga: 11 Years. 22 Movies. 1 Epic Conclusion. The Final Fight begins. All of our favorite heroes come out from Dr. Strange’s rifts. Everyone in the theater applauds and cheers loudly for the heroes we all love and adore to end the villain Thanos. Iron Man grabs the infinity stones and snaps with his built-in gauntlet. The Titan race begins

to fall into ash. The Avengers have won the war... but with victory comes loss. Time feels as it has stopped, and my heart drops as I see Tony Stark struggling to hold onto life...

Tears fill my eyes as I see my favorite Avenger die in his wife's arms. Now I understand the sadness I felt walking into the cold and dark movie theater.

As Josh and I make our way back to the car, I keep thinking about the last part of Captain America's speech "Whatever It Takes." I recognize how his words have worked to motivate me. Overall, *Avengers Endgame* was an incredible, and emotional ride. I do recommend this film to everybody who loves Marvel and action movies like I do.



Rest in Peace, Patrick Luptak
Continued from page 53

Why does God take away the best people who can change the world, but leave all the negative people to cause problems? This makes me very angry, but then I remember what Patrick told me, "Loss is a part of life. We have to go through it whether we like it or not, but I'll always be by your side."

So I now I take time to remember everything he taught me, and I look at the sky. Suddenly my pain goes away. I am free of everything: stress, people, school, drama, even feelings of loss . . . sadness. . . and hopelessness.

This is why Patrick will always be important me He will never be forgotten. Sweet like honey, pure like water, honest as a god, strong like a warrior, beautiful like a sunset.

After his passing I realized that tomorrow is not promised. Anything can happen at any minute. So living life to the fullest, trying new things, going out of the comfort is my mentality on life. Thank you, Patrick Luptak, for being you and changing my life forever.

My Friend, Mason

by Damon Martzen

“*H*ey, Damon, you should try this,” said my friend Mason. The band was on a one-night trip to NYC, and there we were in Times square visiting the M&M World. Mason was pointing to this game like machine that compares you to a certain color of any M&M. I decided to accept his offer and tried it out. It made a bunch of colors, and the screen showed my color: It was gray, and it was labeled “depressed.” Mason and John (my other friend) were laughing because they thought it was not a correct description of me. I laughed with them, but only because I didn’t want him to know that, sometimes, he doesn’t really notice how I feel. The device was right this whole time because I was saddened by the truth: This would be the last time I would actually spend a huge chunk of time with Mason before he graduated.

Mason and I met each other for the first time when I became a freshman and became friends a little while later. In addition to being my friend, he was also the percussion section leader for two years. He would help all of us become good drummers, with the underclassmen being no exception. Because he is very caring, sometimes, he would let us pick our parts for our concerts.

Unfortunately, because he was two grades above me, I was forced to say goodbye to him as I became a junior. There were several moments with him that I will never forget about, but I will talk about the one that’s more important to me. If it weren’t for him, I wouldn’t have been good at my rudiment test held every quarter.

In my freshmen year, I was only in the percussion section during marching season because I played trumpet during the concert season. When my sophomore year came around, I decided to do percussion at full blast, doing drums for both seasons. However, that meant I had to switch from scale tests to rudiment tests. They would be much more challenging. So during practice for my first test, Mason decided to help me become good at the rudiments. He said we should start with warm-ups that would make the rudiments easier for me. It worked very similarly to a paradiddle (a pattern of four even strokes played in order left-right-left-left or right-left-

right-right). When I tried doing it myself, “Excellent work,” said Mason with satisfaction in his eyes. for the warm-up I had to be able to do two beats with my left hand and do another two beats with my right hand and repeat. I started to get the idea of the rudiments thanks to Mason’s warm up. The next one was very similar, except that I did four beats on one side, and repeated on the other side. I had to do the first warm up two times. Mason was really impressed with me and claimed that I was going to ace the test. And I would soon learn that it was true. When Mrs. Ort wrote my grade on the rubric, surprise, I got a 100% which is why I am happy about my first rudiment test.

That is the greatest moment I had with Mason. In fact, I remember breaking in tears when Mason was in his cap and gown during graduation day, ready to leave for Marywood University. The percussion section will never be as good without Mason- even if I get the part as a section leader for my senior year. Yes, I do enjoy being with Mason that much.



Wanderlust by Nina Nerys

New

by **Andie Solimine**

Yes, I heard.
You've found someone new.
How lovely.
How tragic
For her.

Yes, I know.
She makes you happy.
How false.
How funny
for me.

Life is a game, so it is said.
If not well-played -
Well, I don't worry about that.
I know my way.
Do you?

Oh, love.
Lost, broken love.
What is that you expect me to
say?
That I am sad and distraught,
Jealous, even?

Emotional, I am.
But patient is a better turn.
I could react,
But I'd rather observe.
It's more fun to keep you
waiting.

You reek of bitterness and
uncertainty.
Anyone can see, anyone but you,
that is.
As for me, I wish nothing but the
best for you and
your new flame.
May your "love" for her
outweigh your desire to
see me fall.
And may she realize before you
do, I did,

That it's all a lie.



***You See Me* by Miriam Sheehan**



***Cole* by Miriam Sheehan**

Vignette Series

by Adam DeGroot

Seed

From the distance in the light,
Her smiling face with all its might. Who is that girl?
I ask my friend. I think I know; a hand I'll lend.
Her grade is eighth, in color guard, I see her face. Scarred.
One day I'll speak. One day I'll say that I want Her here to stay.

Stem

Summer comes to us fast, and in it, memories Never come in last.
Now is when I meet her, the girl of my dreams.
The flower starts to grow; Seed has left his roots.
Up, up, up, Stem goes into the air,
His lungs filling with the beautiful summer Breeze.
I see her today - on the bus to a game. I introduce Myself within
minutes.
She says her name.
It means pure, like that gray-blue of her eyes,
In which I get lost.

Bud

Nothing is more pure than the bud of a flower.
She is the face of beauty or the face of pain.
When a baby is born, we don't know if she will be beautiful;
All we see is the Bud of a life to be lived,
Or the Bud of a relationship,
Or the Bud of love.
We talk today;
Her voice as pure as her name
Or eyes.
I see a future with her,
A Bud to a lifetime;
A smile on her face,
A Bud to her laughter.
Life is full of Buds.
I hope mine will grow.



Colors of the Breeze
by Miriam Sheehan

Bloom

Bud has grown; has spread his wings.
He looks around, and smiles.
She made us smile, with the blossom of laughter Upon her lips.
Her smile has nothing to contrast with the sun.
It has the same bright glow,
The same pure aura.
With the coming of the fall, we see us start to Grow.
The seed leaves his roots;
I see her.
The Stem reaches for the sky;
I reach for her. The Bud grows; As does our love.
The Bud chooses to Bloom. And soon, so will we.

Rose

Her eyes can be one of two;
Blue as the water,
Gray as the clouds.
But as things should be,
they go hand in hand.
The cloud sends the water to the
Rose;
She sees the cloud, and starts to cheer;
My time to shine is finally here.
Rose has lived through a lot:
The Seed with his roots
The Stem with his growth,
The Bud with his fear,
The Bloom with his wings.
She emerges from all of them,
Bathing in the light.
I have seen her face with all its might,
Have grown to the sun,
Which has no contrast to her Smile.
She is my Seed of hope,
My Stem of peace, My Bud of laughter
And my Bloom of Happiness.
And now she is my Rose;
My bringer of love.

See You Soon

by Shailyn Pugh

“Don’t just think about it. Make it happen.” My aunt says this to me as I try to plan a trip to visit her. I have not been down in a few years. I miss it. The warm sun on my skin, the soft sand under my feet as I walk towards the salty water. This is important to me. I do need a vacation, but that is not the only reason I want to take another trip. I miss her. My aunt is among the most important people in my life. She helped raise me as a child, so I have grown very close to her. People even say to me, you are just like your aunt. I definitely take this as a compliment. My aunt is strong, free like the wind. As open as a book, something I can’t exactly say I am. I am more reserved. I think it is my point of view that they are talking about. No matter the reason for comparison, I am proud to have my aunt by my side.

• • •

Black and white paper, a huge wrapped box. What is it? I wonder. “Open it,” my mom says. I have just returned home from breakfast, faced with a box as big as I am. I tear away the paper as my mind races with all of its possibilities. I have no idea what lies inside. As I uncover the top of the box, my aunt pops out. “Surprise!” Tears flow down my face as I melt into her arms. She has really flown here for my birthday. I am exhilarated. This is a common occurrence between us, surprising each other when we visit. It makes it all the better when I get to see her.

• • •

So, now I sit trying to find time to visit my aunt. When can I go? Will I have time? I will go. I don’t know when yet, but I will make sure I can share part of my summer with her. I need a break from all of the stress of work projects and plans and my future. If I could, I would hop on a plane right now, faster than a speeding bullet.

I will see you soon.

