

PVHS

Literary Magazine

illiterature



**First Semester
2013- 2014**

PVHS Literary Magazine

illiterature

First Semester
2013

A

Bountiful

Creation

During

Every

Fall

illiterature

The Putnam Valley High School Literary Magazine meets weekly to encourage creativity in writing and to organize events that inspire students to pursue writing and the arts.

Members of the PV Lit Mag 2013-14:

Sofia France, Sara Zadrina, Jadyn Marshall, Meagen Rivera, Vicki Ponarski, Katie O'Leary, Emi Suzuki, Dimitri Tomais, Bryce Hamilton, McKenna Feeney, Yoshi Abe, Sam Alper, Tyrique Scantlebury, Veronica Liszewski, Alisa Canaj

Advisor: Mr. Lathrop

Congrats to our Writing Contest Winners for their submissions about "Change" and "A Funny Thing Happenend":

Divya Adukuzhiyil, Alisa Canaj, Samantha DiMarco
Amanda Gazzola, Mariah McDonald, Justine Ortiz
Alexei Smith, Racine Smith

A Special Thanks to
Mrs. Armbruster and
Mrs. Furlong for artwork
and to Lori Boffi at BOCES Copy
Center

Cover art by Emi Suzuki

Check out our website: pvcsd.org/litmag

illiterature

Fall Edition 2013

Table of Contents:

Title	Writer
Cotton Candy Clouds	Veronica Toone
For the Insomniacs and Night Owls	Sara Zadrina
Disodrer	Jadyn Marshall
The Sway of the Daffodils in the Whirl of the Wind	Christina George
Be Free	Bryce Hamilton
The Masterpiece	Sofia France
My Mind, Myself, and Everyone Else	Jadyn Marshall
Beguiling Autumn	Alisa Canaj
Change	Divya Adukuzhiyil
The Dream Killer	Yoshi Abe
My Burden	Curtis Brown
It's All an Act	Bryce Hamilton
Force Down the Doors	Samantha DiMarco
Satire of a Cracked Mirror	Jadyn Marshall
My Other Side	Curtis Brown
Life Changes	Amanda Gazzola
Luck	Sara Zadrina
Heavy or Light	Mariah McDonald
Chairs	Sara Zadrina
Sleep	Meagen Rivera
Psychosomatic	Katie O'Leary
24 Hours	Owen Gifford-Smith
Change	Justine Ortiz
The Body in the Shadows	Meagen Rivera
Intergalactic Exchange	Alexei Smith
A Funny Thing Happened	Racine Smith
The Other Day	
The Climb	Meagen Rivera

Cotton Candy Clouds

Veronica Toone

When I was six years old,
I imagined starting my first day of second grade.
I couldn't wait to learn all sorts of new numbers, new colors, new experiences.
New names.

And when I was six years old, the world was a place crafted by the hands of wizards.
The sky was a big blue swimming pool with pretty white cotton candy clouds and each
blade of grass was put on the ground to be walked on. The trees were skyscrapers and
the bedsheets were sails. Where hands were sticky and faces were aglow with the
happiness of simply being *six years old*.
Where every day was forever.

When I was ten years old,
I imagined myself being a teenager.
I couldn't wait to walk down the halls with all of my friends, go to parties, fall in love.
Just like in the movies.
And when I was ten years old, the world got smaller. School got harder and life seemed
to be going by quicker. Where life revolved around Mad Minute Math and whether or
not they would be serving chicken nuggets in the cafeteria.
Where every school week was forever.

When I was thirteen years old,
I knew everything.
There was nothing that I hadn't already learned, nothing that I hadn't done. There was
no person alive that could possibly know more than I did. I was already a teenager. I
could be out on my own.
I knew nothing.
Eighth grade was a blur of rumors and worries about things that really don't matter but
we thought they did and to us they meant the world. Where "I like you" meant so
much more when it was Halloween then Christmas then New Year's.
Where every month seemed like forever.

I am now sixteen.
And as I sit awake at night and torment myself as I wonder how I'm going to
juggle it all,
Between trigonometry and physics and *I don't understand*,
As I grip my hair in my hands and clench my teeth and constantly worry for the future
that they tell me will be so bright,
I take a moment to remember my skyscraper trees and my bed sheet sails.
And I realize that the cotton candy clouds have not really gone away,
That life can still be bright and beautiful.

So even now, as you read my words
Stop whatever you're doing.
Take a second and close your eyes.
Remember the magic that life used to have.
Remember the feeling of catching your first lightning bug in your hands on a warm
summer's evening
Remember the smell of Mom's fresh baked cookies and being tucked into bed at night.
Remember.

And remember that the little kid inside you that loved to paint and the little kid that
thought that tearing a dollar in half meant each person would have fifty cents, that
wondered, that laughed and played and dreamt

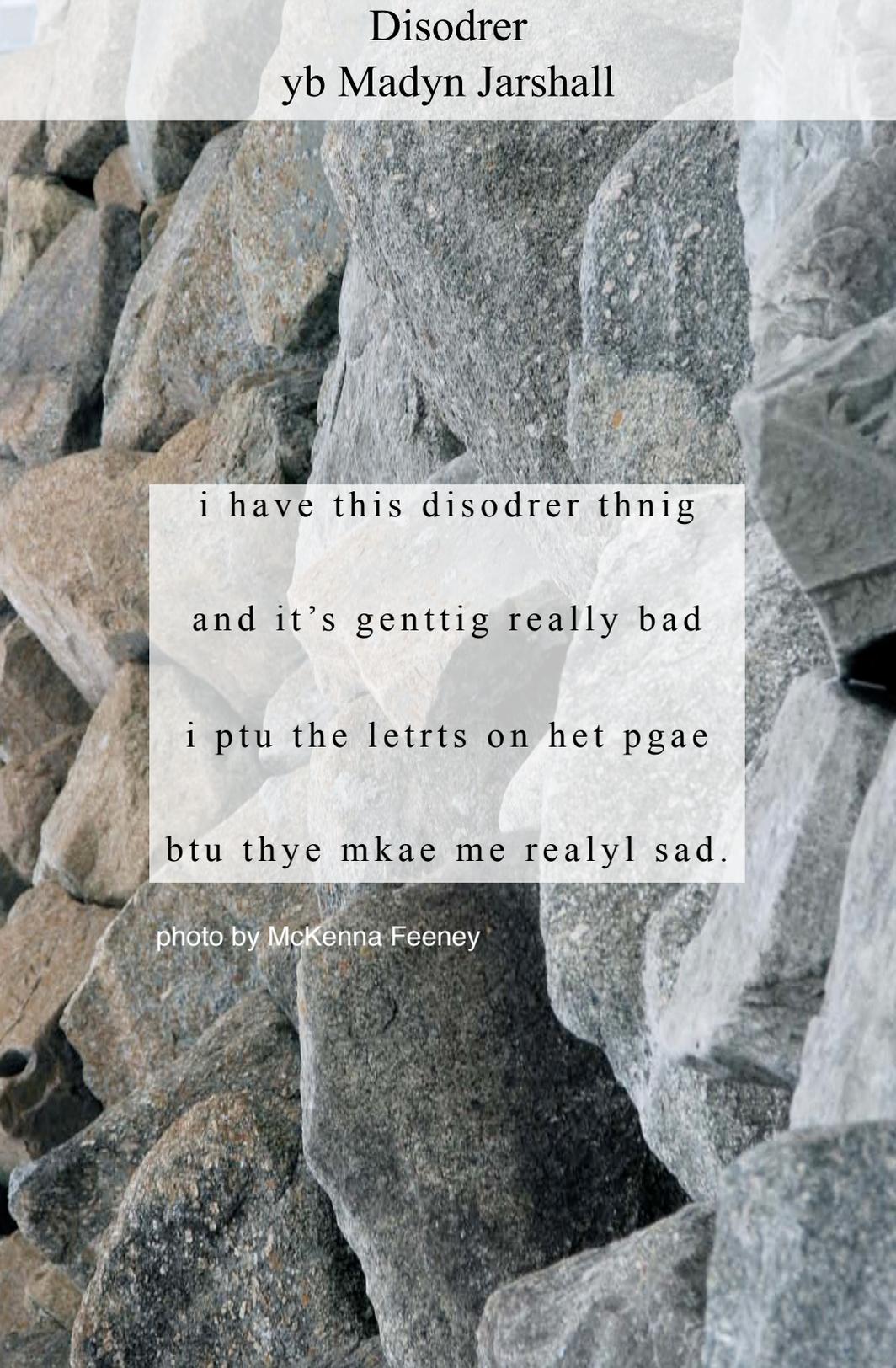
Remember he's still there.

He's just
Changed.

For the Insomniacs and Night Owls

By Sara Zadrina

In the late hours of the night
Or the wee hours of the morning
(Whichever you'd prefer to say)
I like to think
That it's not so late
And I'm just in sync with the wrong city
And the wrong country
The wrong part of the world
I am living as if I weren't here
And somewhere on this planet
I'd go to bed at a decent hour
And wake up with the masses
On their way to work
I'm all wrong in this town
And this state
And this corner of the globe
I go to sleep a few minutes before you wake up
And wake up as you're on your way home
They call me a night owl
Maybe I'm just an owl
What's in a time zone
What's in the date
I'll sleep when I'm tired
And wake when I'm not
I'm not going to sync
With someone else's clock
So when I can't fall asleep
When my rhythm is messed up
(Always)
When the day's plans ruin
The mind's
And I'm wide awake all night
I like to think
that someday I'll find
The place whose daylight
Syncs with mine
And I'll set and rise
With the sun.



Disodrer
yb Madyn Jarshall

i have this disodrer thnig
and it's genttig really bad
i ptu the letrts on het pgae
btu thye mkae me realyl sad.

photo by McKenna Feeney

The Sway of the Daffodils in the Whirl of the Wind

by Christina George

There is a girl
On top of a hill
Who grows her garden
Of Daffodils

She can never come down
No lower than the sky
Her hill is too high
& she is too shy

She waits for one to visit
& give her a listen
As she sings her beautiful songs
As she dances all day long

The petals tickle her toes
And her dress blows
Free of sin
And free with the wind...

The wind carries her voice
To the gentlemen below
Who wish to go up
And see her flowers grow

So one day he climbed
He just tiptoed
The wind pushed him further
& on it blew

He picked her a flower
& gave it a sniff
Then in the next moment
His thoughts went adrift

Then on she came singing
Singing her song
Then he began humming
Just humming along

Then their eyes met
He is holding her flower
They stared at each other
For over an hour

Just one word was spoken
It was only a whisper
And in the next moment
He finally kissed her

photo by McKenna Feeney

Be Free
by Bryce Hamilton

Upon the battlefield of the sky
You fight the battle of day and night
Twice a day, they are raged
Yet neither can win, and neither can die

Reds and yellows and pinks
And all colors upon the rainbow's hue
Mark the fuel of your greatest battles
Your glorious endless battles

Look down upon the world for once
See the the land that watches you
Watch your battle on the water's surface
And observe the beauty of your fighting
Edges

Fight not now for the winning cause
Quarrel forever without pause
Show the world the wonders that you
Made
Show them the middle line between day
And night

Help them to see the middle ground
That it's not all black and white, good
And evil
There's more than two polar opposites
The best place has the right amount of
Both

The Masterpiece

by Sofia France

A wax figure stares out of the apartment's highest window.
Her vermilion lips painted into a delicate bow, glistening.
Her glass eyes, the surface of a pool in the morning,
Before anyone has splashed in and made the first ripple, clear and glossy.
Her ivory skin is smooth satin, like the ground after the first snow
Her rosy cheeks shimmer in the dim light
Her gold curls twirled around rollers
To make her beautiful.

As she watches the sun curve under the horizon
The air chills, slipping through the cracks in the walls
But she is safe, locked away upstairs
An observer of the night.

As she sits, watching the evening envelop the city
The rollers in her hair begin to burn.
Slowly building their heat moistens her scalp,
Her snowy forehead melts,
Her sculpted eyebrows slacken.

She wants to scream until the pain stops
To shred her lungs until someone comes to save her
To scream until her throat is raw and blistered,
Until the night echoes only with her wails
But her voice does not boil up to free her
Her lips stay closed, a delicate bow now dripping down her chin
The glistening red paint, like blood.
Every part of her wants to rip the smoldering curlers from her smoking stitches of hair.
She wants to quiver,
To convulse violently enough to snap her own neck but to end the pain
To claw at her scalp, to mutilate her scalding face, anything to tear them out
To hurl herself through the window
To land on the unforgiving concrete, to medicate the burns
To kill herself free

Her hands stiff, folded neatly in her satin lap
Her melting flesh smears her glossy eyes
Blinding her
But she cannot escape,
She cannot leave her decided pose
And her sculptor has moved onto a new masterpiece



photo by McKenna Feeney

My Mind, Myself, and Everyone Else

Jaden Marshall

As a young child, before school taught me how to share and say the days of the week in order (a skill which I then forgot in the lapse between preschool and kindergarten), my contact with the rest of the world was limited to my immediate family, strangers, my imagination, and the little girl I saw when I looked in the mirror. The time I spent with that little girl was limited; she existed primarily in the moments when I managed to balance on the rim of the bathtub at a position fairly in line with my bathroom mirror. She was mostly hidden by the edge of the bathroom counter, but I tended to remember her more recognizable features: blue eyes, blondish-brown bangs, and a pointed chin. I had trouble associating my name with these glimpses, until I was able to view the mirror without the use of the bathtub, toilet seat, or any other form of elevation. She talked when I did, moved when I did, and made funny faces when I did, but for all I knew she was a separate being entirely. I dreamt that she wasn't really me. Instead, she was a girl who existed in the glass and whose job was to imitate me whenever I stood in front of it and then go about her daily business the same way I did as soon as I turned away. That was where my imagination came in, the part of my world that made it so hard to believe that the girl I saw was me.

My imagination never showed me that girl in the mirror. Aided by grown-up dresses, furniture that was easily manipulated, and the reliable fuel of Disney cartoons, I became a different person every day. Sometimes I was a princess who had to jump from stepping stone to stepping stone (little pillows) across a racing stream (the living room carpet) to get away from the evil dungeon (located behind the couch). Other times I was late to the ball and had to fight away the evil monster (insert vacuum cleaner) to reach my prince (also known as Buddy the cat) before midnight (lunchtime). These fantasies changed how I perceived myself, changing me into everything that the little girl in the mirror was not (she never grew wings, as I'd once hoped) and expanding the limits of my world.

My Mind, Myself, and Everyone Else

The real world, which I was sometimes forced into by a glimpse of the girl in the mirror or a trip to the grocery store, was far less exciting. While the people in the real world were far greater in numbers than the ones that my imagination conjured, they were all rather boorish. They led lives in the real world, had real jobs (I discovered that being a part-time princess was not one of them), real families, and were real people (none of them grew wings, either). These people, while a part of a world I had constant contact with, were not entirely real to me. As I began to see the girl in the mirror more and more (and finally accepted that she would never grow any supernatural appendages), I began the long process of associating her with myself. She became annexed into my identity and was what I believed others saw when they looked at me. I eventually used her when I wanted to view myself, instead of pretending she was my twin trapped in a mirror world.

As the fact that she was definitely me sunk in, I began to spend more time in the real world, attempting to figure out where she (and I), fit in. We began living within each other, until we became one being entirely and she was no longer someone else. I saw her as Me, and Me was somehow more significant than anyone else in the world. Otherwise, why would I be living in Me's head? I started to categorize the rest of the real world into different groups of people. There were my parents, the people closest to my world apart from myself. Then there were my other relatives and family friends, who made less frequent cameos but were significant none the less. And beyond that there were the Others.

My Mind, Myself, and Everyone Else

These were the people who had no connections to me, and were therefore unimportant, or should have been. They were the people who earned my lingering stare while out shopping and at church and other sorts of places, because after a while I had to wonder if I was the only person who categorized my world this way. Were they the center of their own worlds? Was their face the rubric they used to measure everyone else? Did they also have different worlds that they entered the moment they were alone? Was there a slew of goblins and princes and dragons and heroines that followed them around too?

This identity crisis kept me motivated to discover myself, to find out what made the Me I saw in the mirror, the Me who was once that separate little girl. *Me eventually became just*

me, an avid reader, writer, learner, philosopher, dreamer, thespian, and overall content person. Sometimes I look in the mirror and I still see that little girl as a separate person with no place in the world except the one she's made for herself. I still wonder who I am, and what makes me different. Do I think the same way as all people, or does my real world consist only of my mind, myself, and everyone else?

Where do I fit in? And while we're on the subject, where do you?

Jadyn Marshall



photo by Sara Zadrima

Beguiling Autumn

Alisa Canaj

What a beautiful time of the year,
Blushing trees far and near,
Crisp, blowing winds and impatient rustling leaves,
Breathtaking, gladsome sights,
Summer on a leaving flight,
A natural work of art,
Giving us a clean, fresh new start

photo by McKenna Feeney

Change
by Divya Adukuzhiyil



Change:



New becomes worn-out
Young becomes old
In becomes out
Simple becomes complicated
Or the other way around
People are born and
Some unfortunately die
But that is the way our world is
It thrives of change,
It makes mistakes
But everyone should know,
Change opens the door to many opportunities.
There really is no way to stop what is around
us.
All we can do is make the most of it.
And hope for the best.



photo by McKenna Feeney

The Dream Killer

By: Yoshi Abe

Deep down the dark, ominous hallway, hidden to the naked eye, a sinister voice echoed endlessly into the dark skies, "The children of this world have grown arrogant, their lives are too peaceful. Now as long as the bright sphere shines high above your minuscule, weak heads, your arrogance and peaceful lives will enter an endless nightmare, and you'll enter endless sleep."

July 2nd, in a small county of South Carolina, a young girl the age of fourteen woke up from her deep sleep, screaming uncontrollably in pain, clutching her head. Her family barged into her room, comforting her from the pains, attempting to ease the pains of her screams. After approximately five minutes of endless screaming and trashing, she finally calmed down enough to speak "I couldn't escape... The Dream Killer..." before she'd lost consciousness, and revealing upon her arms, neck, and stomach a deep dark bruise.

July 29th, an epidemic far greater and more dreadful than anything the world has ever faced surfaced. Millions of children between the ages of one and seventeen, located across every country and nation, were placed inside multiple hospitals due to life-threatening wounds, fractures, painful bruises, and burns. Thousands were placed into psychiatric facilities, each one mentally unstable, and questioned about the mysterious Dream Killer. In addition, hundreds were frozen in a state of unconsciousness, for which recovery rates were unsure.

August 2nd, the remaining children unaffected by the Dream Killer's puzzling abilities, were scouted and gathered from across the globe, and centered in the United States in hopes of discovering the hidden truth to this epidemic. Gathered and assisting in the research and development of the cure and prevention of the newly named epidemic, *Sommium Mortem*, were the multitude of countries affected by this threat to humanity.

The leading scientist of the project, Dr. Valkov, a sixty year old, with gray spiked up hair, who constantly wore nothing but pajamas with a lab coat, is a world-renowned specialist in oneirology and children behavior. "Hello Earth's remaining non-wounded children, your vast group of children varying from ages three to seventeen is humanity's only chance of survival." Mixed in with the crowds, a deep voice spoke out, "How are we supposed to stop this Dream Killer? I mean how do we even know he exists? What if this is all some other random disease?"

Other children and several figures of the scientific and political world began questioning the identity of the Dream Killer, or what's happening to all the kids in the world. Unfazed by any of the children's questions, Dr. Valkov stepped up to the young defiant boy, his face only few inches away, "So you're not scared about the Dream Killer?" The boy gulped, backing away from the doctor, "Yeah! Bring this stupid disease on!" The doctor teeth aligned into a sinister smile, "Well children, for the next few weeks we'll experiment on you're brains and your sleep and we'll discover the truth and how to defeat the Dream Killer," his face growing solemn. "However I can't guarantee each and every one of you will survive, so good luck."

Time passed before our eyes, and our minds had a chance to understand what's happening before us. On August 2nd, over a hundred children stepped forward to support the fight against Dream Killer. On September 2nd, ninety-eight children from ages 1 to 17, had been painfully wounded or deep in a coma, leaving only a brave group of nine children. Over the duration of the month the Dream Killer grew relentless because of adult intervention and their meddling, however there'd existed one night where none of the children had lost their lives.

Controlled by the fear of reeling into the Dream Killer's threatening and cool hands, the children grew restless and used whatever methods to avoid any direct sleeping. Their minds and bodies grew tremendously tired after a week of continuing avoiding sleep longer than an hour. Finally on the 8th of September, Dr. Valkov announced the results of his studies and decided to take the final initiative.

Gathered deep in the center of a cylindrical steel room, filled with nine glass cubicles and several highly advanced machines of the future, Dr. Valkov gathered the entire community of scientists, medical practitioners, politicians and the brave nine children. The groups of kids consisted of four girls and five guys, with a large diversity of culture and nationalities present. Each child had acquired the capability to speak English earlier on, or during the past month, and each was tested on his or her physical capabilities.

In the center of the room was located a raised black platform with Dr. Valkov present center of the circle, "Hello everyone whose participated this past month, thank you for your participation. I'm pleased to present the initiative against our opponent, the Dream Killer." He'd pointed towards the ceiling of the room, "I've discovered a significant weakness to the Dream Killer." The entire room filled with shock and silence, everyone couldn't believe his words, and "What do you mean by weakness? This is a disease, not some video game! I thought you were researching how to cure the millions of children near death right now?"

Everyone slowly agreed to that man's words, believing that everything they'd done till now was a waste. "What are you talking about? This isn't a disease, but an epidemic!" Unlike Earth's dark history in the Medieval Times with the Black Plague, which was spread by mice, the Dream Killer can manifest itself in any dream! This is unlike anything we're used to as scientists! Something that can't be proven using facts, not even a hypothesis! It's a mystical being that is hurting the younger generation! So we must ultimately discover how to destroy it before humanity dies!"

Before the community of scientists, medical practitioners, and politicians, a tall brute man stepped forward dressed in a suit, "Dr! We've lost over thousands of children, and another billion could be following their deaths. The human race is reaching extinction!" With a solemn look upon his face, kneeling down before everyone, "please just listen to my words! Raising his head, "I understand we've lost a large percentage of children, but their pains aren't for vain!" Standing high, "I've observed and researched this past month to discover a three hour time span, where the Dream Killer's strength decreases drastically. It's during the short moment where the moon isn't shining, the New Moon.

Dr. Valkov pointed towards a large screen computer, "Over the past month I've observed the daily amount of sleep each children acquired throughout the research along with the number of children affected by the Dream Killer." Pulling up a calendar with stages of the moon and alternating numbers, "I've observed on the stages closest to and including the full moon the number of victims increased, on the stages closest to and including the new moon the number of victims decreased, almost to none." He'd jumped onto a nearby desk, "Folks! Tonight is the night we've all been waiting for, the night of the New Moon! This is our chance!"

There were murmurs and arguing going amongst the crowds, the balance unstable between sending the children and waiting for a higher possibility to rise out from the roots. Amongst those against the theory of the New Moon, a strong confident voice spoke out, "Are you aware you're sending Earth's last children! Every other child is dead, bedridden, or about to die, we don't have enough equipment to support those kids much longer." Slamming his hands on a desk violently enough to crack his knuckle, "You're sending those kids into the dream world against an enemy we hardly know anything about, and on such as small possibility!" There were many agreements on this statement, however he'd pulled everyone's attention with his next words, "Do you want to be responsible for humanity's extinction?"

The chatters fell to silence, the tension grew in the room, the sound of a falling pencil echoed across the silent walls. He'd put his hands in his pockets; his head drooped down, his face hidden by the shadows of his hair, "Everyone I'm aware that we're risking humanity's existence here people but," raising his head, "We're already fighting a nightmare against the Dream Killer! So what else can we believe except to dream about a new dream? A world where children can sleep without fear of dying before the horrendous nightmare!" He'd finished his long memorial speech, leaving nothing but a grown man on his knees and panting viciously worried no one would understand.

Rummaging through the legs and shoulders of the adults, the nine children stepped forward hand and hand, "We're with you Dr. Valkov!" The eldest of the boys stepped forward and offered his hand, "Come on! Let's go wipe the floor with that Dream Killer once and for all!" Before the Doctor could recover his strength and rise, the number of people stepped forward and offered their hands, "Come on Doctor! Let's do it!"

Wiping the tears away, standing up he began laughing, "Thank you!" Collecting himself he'd rushed to the computers, "We've got twenty minutes before the New Moon rises into the air." He'd motioned his hands, "Kids please stand atop the large platform, and "Okay now I'd like each and everyone of you to shout out your name, and age nice and loud for everyone here to hear."

The eldest of the children stepped forward immediately, "My name is Nathaniel, age seventeen." Their tensions relived, following his example, the kids spoke in descending order, "I'm Vanessa, age fifteen", "Name's Richard, age thirteen", "Katherine, age twelve", "Ankur sir, age eleven", "My name is Christopher, age ten", "Julia, age eight", "I'm Franklin, age seven", and the youngest of the children stepped forward still shaking, "Um, my name is Ashley, I'm only five years old." Everyone was both surprised to witness such a young child involved and also amazed to see her determination despite her age.

Dr. Valkov smiled, "I'm glad everyone here is acquainted with one another" gesturing towards the glass capsules, "Would each and everyone one you kindly step up?" The children filled with complete excitement, the thrill of entering a situation completely new to the world, immediately jump straight into the glass capsules. He'd gestured a smile towards the children, "I'll make sure to send you into a wonderful dream where your lives are at an advantage before the Dream Killer." Those kind words escaped from the doctor's mouth and released the tension from the children.

A room filled with high tensions, fear and war, anger toward one another, instantly morphed into a room riled with positive emotions with hundreds of machined growling with life, and the voices of encouragement now supporting one another fueling everyone's spirits.

The children were completely encased in the glass capsules, the destined time of humanity now approached only moments away, Ashley gestured for the doctor to approach, "Yes what's wrong Ashley?" "Are we really gonna win? I'm scared," tears began to run down her face, "It's going to be okay," patting the face of her capsule, "I promise, so be strong for your older brothers and sisters okay!" Ashley gathered her strength and wiped her tears, "Okay!" The boys and girls around her who'd heard her voice all comforted her, "Thank you everyone, I'll do my best!"

Men and women waited patiently for the moment of humanity's counterattack, as the seconds passed by, their throats silent and the tension grew steadily. Suddenly a voice boomed across the room, "The time of night is upon us! The New Moon stands high above the skies!" Dr. Valkov jumped up in excitement, "All machines start up engines immediately!" His eyes fired with determination, "Let's save humanity once and for all!" The only sounds audible to the people were the men and women pushing the start button and the machines in full drive, "Good Luck children!" A tear sliding along his cheeks and dropped to the floor.

"What is the meaning of this Dr. Valkov? I thought you were going to send us into a world filled with light? This is just a scene out of some post-apocalyptic world!" Tapping him on the shoulder, "Ankur this isn't any post-apocalyptic world", shocked and turned around, "What do you mean Vanessa?" Nathaniel pointed towards a few rubble trashed with machine scraps and skeletons, "This is an apocalyptic future of our world, right there being the World Research center, the place where our physical bodies are right now." Everyone both physically and in their dream-state were completely stunned by this overwhelming scene, in the real world Dr. Valkov clenched his knuckles tightly, "Dream Killer!" his fists bleeding as he shouted violently, "How are you doing this?"

Franklin stuttering, his breath becoming ragged, "What's wrong Franklin?" His shaking finger rising ever so slightly, everyone's eyes guided by its point, revealing at the end of his trail their worst nightmare, the Dream Killer standing atop the piles of rubble, laughing a tone filled with evil and fear, "So that's the Dream Killer, what a monster!"

The Dream Killer, an existence that remained a shrouded mystery behind the eyes of those fallen against his darkness, stood before the community of scientists and Earth's final standing children. Standing above their heads at approximately eight and a half feet tall; two identical four foot jet-black legs, a right arm built up from elastic cords, a spinning edged wheel at his elbow, and a claw covered in an ominous miasma; a left arm built shoulder to elbow from similar elastic cords, an identical spinning edged wheel at his elbow, a bronzed colored arm from elbow to fingertips built up of sections encased in menacing black flames; a blood-dyed gem glowing center of the torso, with six claws closed around the body, tips against the gem; dark-purple coated horns located at both shoulders; and a blank metallic helmet covering its true face; the monster resembled the true meaning of darkness.

The Dream Killer stood atop the rubble of the world's apocalypse, his still dark mask staring down upon everyone, sending chills running down their spines. Nathaniel stepped forward, holding out his arms to shield the younger children, "You won't hurt any of these children! I'll defend them with my life!" Vanessa stepped forward, winking towards Nathaniel, "Don't worry, I'll defend them too!" Relieved, "Thank you Vanessa, turning his attention to the Dream Killer, "You won't hurt them!" Both children stood firm with strong resolve, their minds determined.

A deep, menacing laugh filled with nothing but terror voiced out of the Dream Killer's existence, "Silly humans, even without the moon's brightness, my strengths are enough to send nine children to their deaths." He'd summoned a black, thick blade four feet long with the engraving on top a red dragon, throwing it viciously at the children, missing only by a hairs width, cutting Nathaniel's cheek. The area filled with shrieks and screams, Nathaniel clutching his cut, "Dream Killer," angrily staring deep against the Dream Killer's mask.

A deep scarlet scar appeared on Nathaniel's physical cheek, an ominous pus bubbling on scar, the doctor rushed towards the other scientists, "Get the children out of there immediately! Wake them up before it's too late!" The men and women fumbled around with the machines before an electric shock prevented their efforts, "Sir the machines are malfunctioning! The machines have been hacked, they're not responding anymore!" The doctor twirled his body towards the large screen, screaming into a dream vocal mike, capable of speaking into the dream world, "Dream Killer! What have you done to the children and the machines?"

The Dream Killer remained silent before the community of men and women, "Dream Killer this nonsense..." his words were interrupted by the unexpected shouting of a young voice, "Shut up!" Everyone stunned, turned their attention towards one of their younger members, Franklin, "Please everyone stop screaming," his voiced muffled by the tears he desperately tried to hide, "You're all... you're... you," taking the role of the adult figure, Nathaniel patted him on the head, "Don't worry Frankie," turning towards the skies, "Doctor we were sent here to fight the Dream Killer, and we're determined so a little obstacle shouldn't stop us should it." Vanessa playing a motherly role, holding Franklin in her arms, "Everything will be alright, so calm down okay."

Nathaniel before their very eyes fell down onto his knees, the children ran towards his aide, "Nathaniel! What's wrong?" Breathing heavily while facing the skies on his back, "I'm sorry everyone, this is as far as I'm getting." Everyone's eyes opened wide, rushing to his side, "What are you talking about? We'd all promised to defeat the Dream Killer altogether right?" Although shaking violently, his face contorted with pain he'd continued to speak, "This wasn't my fight, it's all of yours" Katherine muttered, "What do you mean, we're the nine children right?" Nathaniel lifted his fingers, "Eight children since midnight," imitating blowing candles, "I'm officially eighteen, already an adult." Ashley jumped, "Oh it's your birthday! Happy..." Vanessa stopped her, shaking her head, compiled with nothing but tears and sorrow.

The children's faces were filled with tears and their hearts wounded, "You're already here with us! Why do you have to quit now?" Lifting his finger to point towards his cheek, "You know whatever he does becomes reality?" "No you can't mean?" Pointing towards the large blade dug deep into the ground, "The poison is affecting me both dream and reality, so even if I somehow survived to defeat the Dream Killer, I'd never live to see your beautiful smiles filled with joy." Those last words escaped through Nathaniel's mouths before he'd slipped into the next world. The children's painful screams filled with nothing but tears, "Nathaniel, Nathaniel, NATHANIEL!!"

Wiping away their tears, Vanessa angrily while filled with sadness, "Why didn't you say anything," screaming at the top of her lungs, "YOU IDIOT!" Suddenly without anyone having to gesture to anyone else, the eight of the children, and the entire community of men and women at the laboratory all broke into song filled with the pain in their hearts, "Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday, today your life was born onto this Earth, you were a dear friend, you have lived for a strong seventeen years, so let us say this last word to you," their mouths curling in the sadness that pained their hearts, "Congratulations," people after people fell down to their knees and started sobbing, "Happy Birthday Nathaniel."

After an hour had passed since Nathaniel's death, Vanessa reached out towards the children, "Everyone please calm down, I promise everything will be alright!" Her words and actions slowly soothed the minds and hearts of the children, "So how do we defeat the Dream Killer?" The ideas and thoughts shot around the group, none of which seemed plausible, then Ankur muttered the words, "...sword..." Vanessa tilted her head backwards, "What did you say?" Jumping up to his feet, "Nathaniel mentioned it before he died," running to grip the handle of the red dragon sword, "That's the sword that the Dream Killer threw at Nathaniel!" His muscles tensed, his breathing grew heavy, as he'd lifted the blade, and "The poison on this blade might possibly kill that monster!" They joined together in cheers and celebration, "Yeah, we can do this!" Suddenly before their very eyes, an ominously sharp force came as swiftly as the wind and sent Ankur flying along with the blade.

The bodies pivoted around, "Ankur!" others stared horrorstruck at Ankur's assailant, as the stretched out right arm returned to it's original position. Ashley cowered in fear; Ankur fell into a fetal position from the immense pain; Vanessa, Richard, Franklin, and Julia at Ankur's side to assist him. Katherine and Julia stood to the side remaining close to remain safe from the Dream Killer.

Without another minute passing, with his monstrous legs he leaped high and fast, the first of the group, "It's all of your turn to die!" Richard mustered his strength and swung the large blade, "This is for Nathaniel!" Lifting his left arm, the blade's overwhelming presence swung and fell null against the flaming arm, "My left arm is indestructible, and wields the deadliest flames of the underworld." Vanessa and Katherine with Ankur against their shoulder used the moment of Richard's attack to run within Dream Killer's blind spot, when suddenly the devil's claws scratched their backs, rendering them in a weakened state, "They were over a hundred meters away, plus they were behind him, how had he seen them?" His body pivoted, "My right arm can stretch infinitely beyond any reach and render anyone defenseless with the Devil's claw, also there is no such thing as a blind..." he'd turned and slashed without hesitation, the blood that soared through the air rendered everyone stunned, the youngest of the children Ashley now lay motionless on the ground, "ASHLEY!"

With anger driving him forward, ignoring the circumstances of the Dream Killer's invincible left or right arms, Richard dashed towards the Dream Killer and pushed the blade into the Dream Killer's head, "The strength of my head is twice the strength of my left arm, your blade will never pierce my head." Smirking, "That attitude you have of speaking about your superiority is what I was aiming for!" He shifted the coarse of the blade toward his opened mouth, however, he'd instantly attacked against Richard, "Silly Human, you can never win."

Just then his short-lived life flashed before his eyes as the meteor of Earth's extinction came crushing down onto him. Seconds passed without his life disappearing, "Did I die?" opening his eyes after witnessing a scene from a Hollywood famous action movie, despite their wounds, pains, weaknesses, Ankur was clamped onto his right leg; Vanessa clamped tightly onto his right arm above the claws; Julia jumped onto his back; Katherine clamped onto his left leg; Christopher clamped onto his left shoulder; Franklin clamped onto his head from behind, "Richard! Do it now, we don't know how long we can hold on! Everything's on you!"

Back amongst the reality of the physical world, encased inside the glass capsules, the severity and number of wounds continued to escalate on the eight children's bodies. Men and women were rushing back and forth between re-gaining controls of the machinery, prying open the capsules and waking the children before morning, and determining how to supply aid to the children.

The most agitated and overworked amongst the men and women was the lead scientist, Dr. Valkov, "Doctor, please get some rest, you're going to kill yourself at this rate!" Pushing him aside, "No look at those children! They're fighting until the end, so I must do so as well." As the children hung on desperately onto the Dream Killer, followed by Richard's standing, the broadcast of the dream world vanished from their views. The world of dreams became an unknown mystery, "What happened? Get the video broadcast back up and running! Hurry!" Rushing and rambling through wires and mechanics, "Sir, nothing is working." Their worst nightmare had occurred, humanity was doomed for extinction. Ultimately, the only path they had left was to wait the last hour before morning rise, the final moment for humanity's judgment.

Tick, tock, tick, tock, the seconds passed silently as they awaited humanity's judgment, the doctor tormented with the thought that he'd failed humanity and killed the poor children, "I'm so sorry." Then before their very eyes on a large scale television, originally broadcasting the vision of the dream world, the image of the rising sun appeared, "What the? Whose fault is this?" Everyone asked around but to his or her worst nightmare, no one was at fault, "Could this be the work of the Dream Killer?" "Wait ignore the scenery! It's morning, are the children waking up yet?" None of the children were moving a muscle, their bodies were in a state of unconsciousness.

No one could believe what he or she was witnessing, the greatest effort to save humanity had ended in a failure. Everyone slowly walked down towards the door, "Wait everyone there's been a phone call from a nearby mental hospital!" Halting in their positions awaiting the news, "They said that all the children affected by the Dream Killer had returned to a normal mental state!" Another individual entered the room, "The hospitals from around the world are reporting returning regular symptoms from all children affected by the Dream Killer, children are awaking from their comas!" The news continued to increase; "Hospitals also reported the birth of children across the globe. HUMANITY IS DOOMED FOR EXTINCTION!"

The men and women about the room filled with depressed thoughts and believing they'd accomplished nothing all suddenly threw their papers and jumped in the air in utmost joy, celebrating the defeat of Dream Killer and saving humanity from extinction.

Within a month from the final incident with Dream Killer, all the children had completely recovered from their wounds; few remained with broken, fractured, or bruised bones but those would shortly recover. Families, friends, guardians, everyone raised a toast and celebrated day and night for the final recovery of the children hurt by the Dream Killer.

However despite the recovery of the millions of kids wounded by this worldwide incident, the mysteries behind the actions of the nine children in that last remaining hour had remained shrouded forever, their bodies placed into intensive care, they'd remained unconscious, which no one believed they'd ever awaken. At the end of this large-scale event Dr. Valkov submitted his resignation as a doctor, which surprised everyone who believed he'd saved humanity. Months later a fellow scientist walked up to Mr. Valkov, "Why did you quit being a scientist?" Grim faced, drinking some coffee in a neighborhood park, "I believe the children's unable to return is judged onto myself, thus as long as they're asleep I cannot bear to be a scientist." "So if they wake up, you'll return right?" rising to his feet, "Who knows, however I'll tell you one thing, there's someone working with the Dream Killer." What are you talking about? Who would...?" "Think logically, there's no way DK could do anything to physical computers, plus when the screen of the sunrise came up, he'd been engrossed in combat with the kids, he couldn't have." Walking away, "Just be aware okay," his hands raised as he waved goodbye to the world he'd just saved.

My Burden

Curtis Brown

My burden is heavy, so I can't travel light
Maybe he can teach me to travel right
My burden is mean; he says I'm too nice
He says a lot of crap, but I don't mind
My burden is the person I learn from
I talk to him in my head during lunch
So he can show me the things I've done.
He shows me my past that's filled with regret
And he shows me my future in which I won't make a mess
My burden is my favorite teacher
Because he knows all my flaws and good features
But he's also the worst
Because every time I mess up he gets meaner
My burden says he will be gone as soon as
I'm done with school
Even though he was a pain in the back he was kind of cool
Because he knew that I could be better than I am
And the funny thing is that he can do everything I can
My burden, you the man.

It's All an Act

Bryce Hamilton

It's all an act
At least for some
They know it not
But it can be seen

Should the world be a play
In which you don't know the lines
Are you a rock star
In Shakespearean times?

I say let the set come down
And let me be open
Judge not who I am
And don't keep me down

Let the puzzle be broken
Be that one wrong piece
Then the rest will be wrong
And bend back to fit you

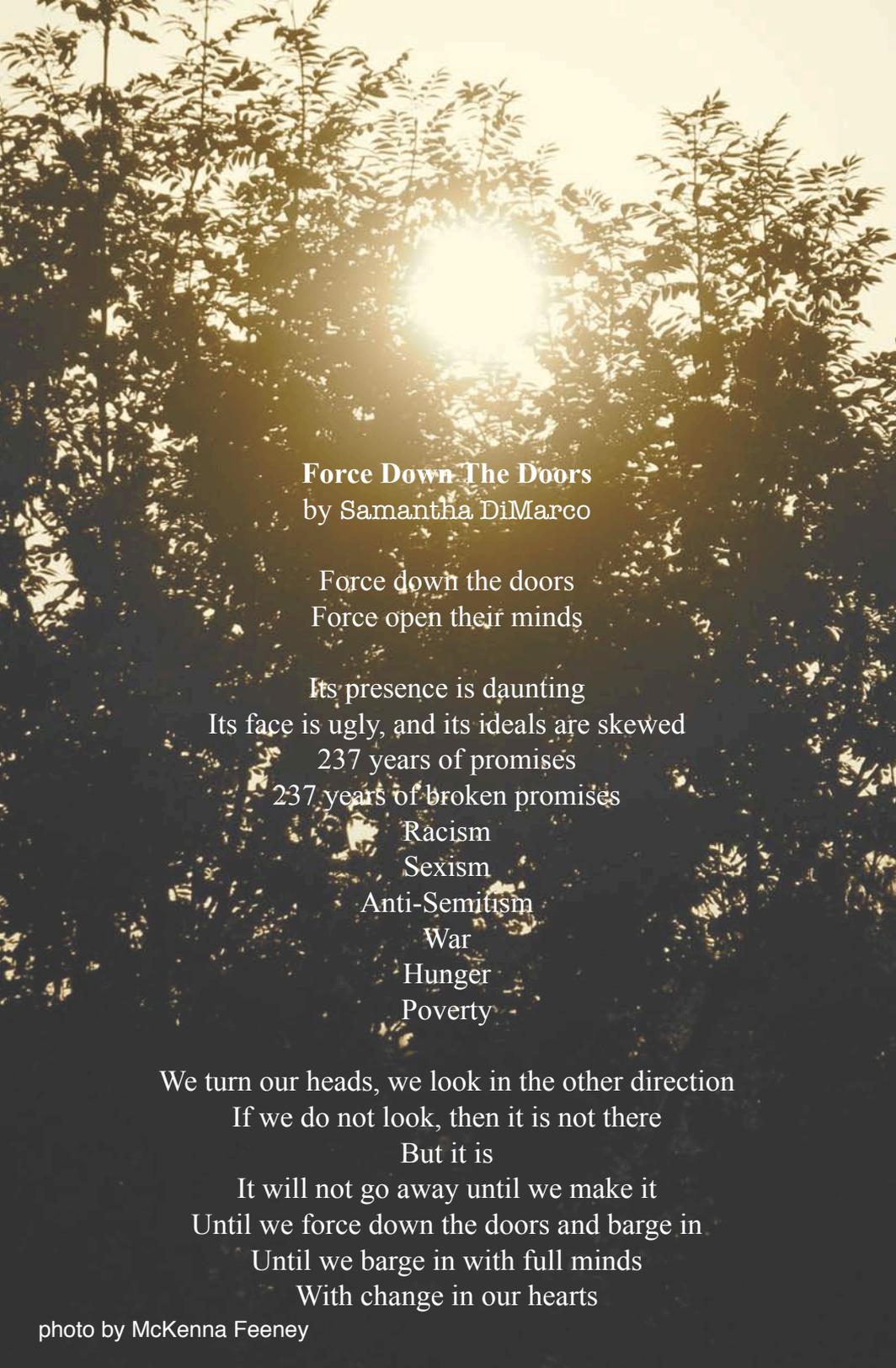
And when this happens
Then they'll all fit together
And make a fine picture
Better than before

Drop the mask
Hide not your face
Show it off to the world
And hide it no more

And yes you'll be different
At least for a while
But then people will see
It's good to stay true

They will change
And come back to you
So stop the act
And remain true to you

photo by McKenna Feeney



Force Down The Doors
by Samantha DiMarco

Force down the doors
Force open their minds

Its presence is daunting
Its face is ugly, and its ideals are skewed
237 years of promises
237 years of broken promises

Racism
Sexism
Anti-Semitism
War
Hunger
Poverty

We turn our heads, we look in the other direction
If we do not look, then it is not there
But it is
It will not go away until we make it
Until we force down the doors and barge in
Until we barge in with full minds
With change in our hearts

The Satire of the **Cracked Mirror** *Mirror*

by Jadyyn Marshall

I am a mirror, cracked. I show you how I see you in my shattered surface, with all your imperfections and superficial qualities strewn across my perspective as I grow dull in an attic.

Once I was neatly polished and attended, my surface kept clear of smudges and often warmed with the mist human breath. I was kept in a foyer, treated often to glimpses of oriental fabric, dancing shoes, effeminate orchids, soft curls, and best of all sunlight, gloriously vibrant afternoon sunlight,

radiating across me and matching the burnished gold of my frame. I reflected the best in people and showed them what they wanted to see, because that was all I saw. I was like them, pleased by the sight of pretty things and ever flattered to contain them. But my sheltered fantasy ended when I was broken



Photo by McKenna Feeney

in an accidental spurt of motion. A latticework of spindly cracks crunched my surface, destroying my perfection permanently. Still in a dazed stupor I was swiftly hurried up to the shadows of an attic, to dust motes and sepia curtains. They hid me away while a pure, un-marred cousin replaced me, one guaranteed to show what they desired.

My once polished thoughts began to seep out of my cracks, replaced with a sickening epiphany. I began to realize how empty my owners were, how foolish I was to believe the lies they set before me. Every surface I had been presented with was gilded and painted rose. I had never before considered the murky, insidious sludge fermenting beneath their two dimensional exteriors.

Now you find me, human, and you are exactly like them. You draw back the stiff sheet that has kept me contained and dark for years to ward against my bad luck, a curse devised by humans who could not bear to see themselves distorted. Now, as you stare intently into my fragmented depths, I am bitter.

My cracks are the defects you do not see in yourself. They are the ones you did not know you possessed until you saw yourself reflected in me. They take you by surprise, and you try to skim to a less imperfect part of me, but I have already marred your entire image. As if I were one of your own kind your eyes drift continuously toward my scars, my merit judged solely by my exterior.

Even worse, I display you as you are before me, nothing more or less. I do not see your life beyond my tarnished frame, and as a result I represent only a fragment of your life. You think that I am broken and

useless, because in your eyes I destroy your image and turn it into something misleading and grotesque.

I am only showing you the truth, but you despise me for it.

A thought clouds your eyes, tries to distance you from me. In your mind you are discrediting me. You tell yourself that mirrors are idle, useless things. More lies. We are not impractical, and our efforts are not futile. You are. We tell the truth, something that you refuse to acknowledge. Holding a staring contest with me will not change that. It will not assert your authority over actuality.

In your days of ignorance, you humans used to say that ghouls and incubi faced with a mirror would not appear in the glassy depths because these creatures lacked a soul. If this were true, there would be no need for mirrors. You are all vain, empty creatures. We mirrors have no choice but to echo your empty, physical shells back to your lusting eyes.

You know that I will never change my ways. Broken mirrors do not seal up their cracks. We stay the same, reflecting what we can and showing you what you are, what you are not. I am one of the few who do not alter you with my own impressions. I can only parrot what I see, and quietly absolve myself for lacking a voice to reprimand you.

We mirrors are eternal, and we will remember the entirety of your imperfections forever. We have no end, which is why we never die, however shattered we may become. Hold two of us together, and we will bounce light and color back and forth to infinitesimal proportions until all scraps of life disappear into the imperceptible. I only cease to function when there is no one left to see me.

Why do you close your eyes, human, look away? When your eyes find me again, nothing has changed. Your body remains the same as it was, blemished and imperfect from years of contact with far too impressionable humans. But who am I to talk? Here I sit, deserted, and it is not a mirror's place to lecture.

Of course, I know something you do not, so perhaps for once I will play the teacher. See human, your kind will all someday dissolve into darkness, and your flesh-wrapped bodies will break to dust. In this time of darkness, we mirrors will live on even without you present to lend us your colors and donate the shapes of your world. We will no longer function, but we will exist in perfect form, unchanged. Our shards will always be a part of our whole; our pieces will always contain the essence of our function. When torn apart, you animals are little more than carrion.

Does this disturb you, human? Your discomfort is evident in my expanse, your fear-soaked breath steaming my cold cheeks with cowardice. Your hands tremble, your fingers clumsily jerking past each other as you reach again for my shroud. Human, do you really believe that by covering this guise of yourself that your imperfections, insecurities, and inevitable demise will cease to

photo by Chelsea Connell

My Other Side Curtis Brown



Him: what's up dog?

Me: shut up man I'm not in the mood

Him: here we go again

Me: what!!!

Him: you always quiet when you think about
your life and how something in it just don't
seem right

Me: because nothing ever is

It's almost every day I come up with a list.

People always have problems and they
come to me for their issues

I don't have a clue how

It's like trying to teach me how to catch a
mouse

Him: listen man you got to start worrying about
problems that got to do with you

Because whoever else you're worrying about has
their own life to choose

And their future might not involve you

Me: you know what? why is it that you always
end up right in a conversation?

Him: because I'm you and who knows you
better than you do.

Me: true, I guess it's time for me to get a clue



Artwork by Emi Suzuki

Life Changes

By: Amanda Gazzola

Back when I was two
there was nothing that I knew
but my crib, my mom, and my binkey.

And when I was four
there was nothing I wanted more
than to roll down the stairs with my slinky.

When I was six
my favorite candy was Twix,
life was good, nothing bad could occur.

Then when I was eight
I liked to irritate
my mom, my dad, and my sister.

At the age of ten
I got angry when
I was treated like a baby.

When twelve came along
I said "So long!"
to all my Barbies! Isn't that crazy!?

Then came fourteen,
I was such a drama queen!
Life was all girlfriends and boys.

Sixteen was a blast,
I could drive at last!
Sorry for the yards I destroyed!

Now I'm eighteen,
graduating in 2014,
I don't want to say farewell.

Soon I'll be twenty
and I'll be really grumpy
'cause my life flew right by, what the hell!?!?



Photo by McKenna Feeney

Luck

by Sara Zadrima

I am always so, so, SO late. I have the worst luck on the planet. I don't know why he keeps giving me extra chances, but he does. I mean, I most definitely am not complaining. I am all for second chances! But I feel guilty. I feel like he's wasting away precious moments of his life just waiting around for me. I guess it's not entirely my fault, though. Every time I try to leave the house, something absolutely insane happens. I don't know why he hasn't left me yet. I can't think of one reason he has to stay.

Just about half an hour ago, I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth. It was all running smoothly until I reached for the toothpaste. Those little pests were back again! They are like mini people, about three inches tall, with purple skin and red clothes. I don't know what they are or how they got here, but they really enjoy messing with me. They usually snag my toothbrush, but I guess they wanted to catch me off guard today. Just as I was reaching for the toothpaste, it slipped away. I saw tiny little purple arms wrapped around the tube, and tiny little red shoes sprinting across the counter. Every time I tried to grab it from them, they would dodge me at the last second. Eventually I was able to trap them in the corner between the hair dryer and the mirror, pluck the toothpaste away from them and brush my teeth. I still would've been on time despite this little setback, but the trouble did not end there.

25 minutes ago, I went to my room so I could change my shirt. I opened the closet, and it all went downhill from there. This big guy usually does not give me a hard time. When I pick out my clothes for the next day before I go to bed at night, he is usually fast asleep. When I go to change in the morning, it is still too early for him to be awake. However, it was only 3:05pm, so I guess I caught him off guard when I opened the closet in broad daylight. His big, blue jell-o like arm reached out and swatted at my face. I wiped the goop out of my eyes and reached for my shirt, but he let out a cry and snatched it up, tucking it away into his middle section. I guess that is the downside to having a monster in your closet. He will protect your clothes from everyone including you.

I went to reach my hand out to quickly snatch the shirt back before he would have had any time to react, but I thought better of it. I didn't want him to start crying. Once he starts crying, there is no stopping, and it is quite a commotion. I was not in the mood for a huge mound of dirty laundry and a huge mound of sad jell-o, so I let him be and shut the door. Giving up on the shirt I had my mind set on, I changed into a shirt I happened to have left out on the chair a few weeks ago. It was a little bit wrinkly, but that is always better than blue jell-o stains.

15 minutes ago, I walked over to my bedside to get a nice pair of shoes. The second I looked down, I knew there would be trouble. I saw Lyle's claws sticking out from under the bed. He's the orange monster that lives under there. Today, he decided to be extra large and cause extra problems. I much prefer the days when he prefers to be nice and small, but that was obviously not going to happen today. I peeked my head under the bed, and saw a few of his big, green eyes staring back at me. He was laying flat on his stomach with all limbs extended outward. It was impossible for me to get to my shoes. Either he was lying on top of them, or they were somewhere along his digestive tract.

"Lyle, please give me my shoes. I don't have time for games today!" I begged.

He grumbled and breathed a little puff of flames, shaking his head "no". I clearly was not getting what I wanted today. I'm just hoping that he shrinks down tomorrow so I can get all of my shoes back.

Art by Shannon Rose Rogers

5 minutes ago, I stood up, left my room, and headed for the mudroom. My sneakers were the only shoes currently free from the clutches of Lyle's internal organs, so I put them back on.

It is now 3:30, and I should be waiting under the tree outside of the old theatre, but instead I am at the front door of my house, trying not to wake the cat while untangling the rather ticklish knotted string that likes to protect my doorknob. It giggles uncontrollably and my fingers fumble. I am losing my grip with each outburst of laughter.

"SHHHH! I am almost done!" I whisper-cry.

It tries to cover its mouth, but its hand is tangled too far away, and it can't reach. Here comes another laughter outburst, and *here* comes the cat.

I back away slowly. I must not get any cat hair on this outfit. I just ran out of sticky sheets on the lint roller yesterday, and I can't get into my closet until the guard jell-o falls asleep. The cat is watching my every move. The knotted string giggles again, jumping down from the door and tying itself up around the potted tree in the corner. Now, the cat pounces. I am done for.

It is now 3:45, and I am wearing a wrinkly shirt, running sneakers, and a ton of cat hair. I make it out the door, lock it, and sprint to the old theatre. At least I get to put the sneakers to practical use. It takes me five minutes before I round the corner and see him waiting under the tree.

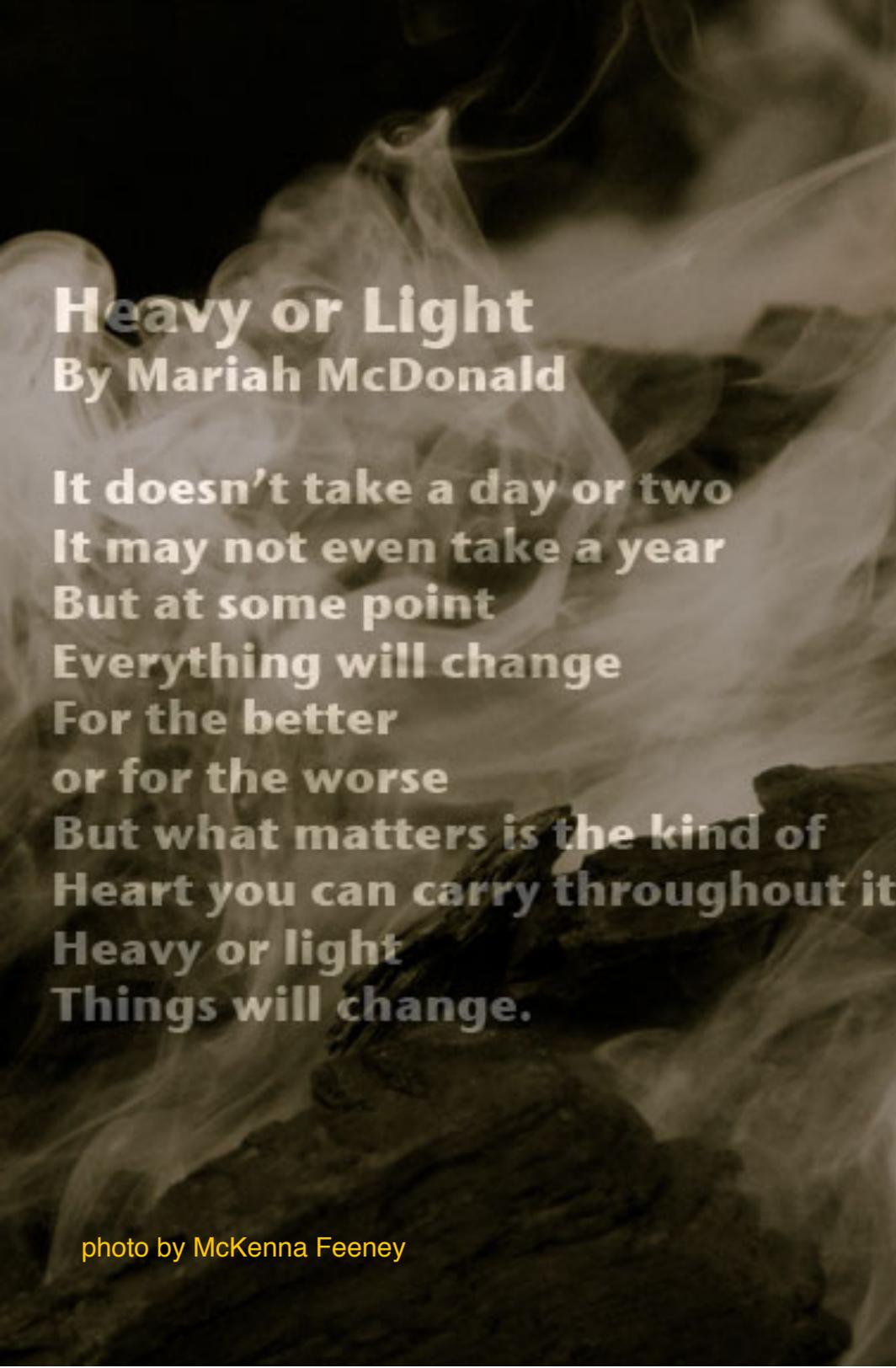
I come to a halt about two feet in front of him, but of course, with my bad luck and terrible relationship with gravity, I trip on my shoelaces and take us both down in the process. Hello, sidewalk. I am the worst person on this planet. Why does he even bother keeping me around? I look up and catch his eye. He is laughing, and I flash a smile. We help each other up, and he wraps his arms around me.

"Careful, I'm covered in cat hair." I warn.

"No worries. We can have matching outfits." He laughs.

I laugh too, and then get real quiet again. I am debating whether or not to explain the course of events that made me extra late today. Maybe I should just take him back to the house and show him. I think he deserves more than just stories. He lets me out of his embrace so we can head towards the box office, but our hands find one another. I am the luckiest person on this planet.





Heavy or Light

By Mariah McDonald

**It doesn't take a day or two
It may not even take a year
But at some point
Everything will change
For the better
or for the worse
But what matters is the kind of
Heart you can carry throughout it
Heavy or light
Things will change.**

photo by McKenna Feeney

Chairs

By: Sara Zadrina

**They sat me down in a chair
In a room full of people
And told us
Welcome to life
Where we teach you everything
Except what you need
And you figure the rest out on your own
They strapped me down to a chair
And glued an hourglass to the table in front of me
And said
This is your life
Don't waste it
But they never told me what waste was
And they forgot to unstrap me
They strapped me down in a chair
And drove away
And showed me how fragile
Life can really be
They sat me down in a chair
And told me she was practically gone
And I realized a part of me
was going with her
They strapped me down to a chair
And lied to my face
Tried to paint ideas in my head
But told me I was free
They strapped me down to a chair
And told me exactly
how to live my life
But they forgot to unstrap me**

Photo by Sara Zadrina
Edited by Juliana Albano



Sleep

By: Meagen Rivera

My eyes are growing heavy.

I'm finally getting tired.

Sleep calls my name.

She calls me to bed.

As I come into the bedroom,

She welcomes me with open arms.

She lies down with me,

And rests my head on her chest.

The lovely sound that her chest makes.

The thump, thump, thump.

The lovely sound of her lovely beating heart.

As I lay there and listen,

I feel my eyes start to close.

I start to drift away.

Away into another world.

Only she can take me into this other world.

I am not scared of this other world,

Because I know I'm under her wing,

And she will keep me safe.

She has taught me the ways of this world.

Together we fly.

Our imaginations sore!

Until she tells me it's time to return.

My eyes suddenly don't feel heavy.

I open them,

And she is gone.

But I do not fret or cry,

Because I know she will be back.

She'll always come back.

Until the day comes,

Where she has to take me for good.

But for now,

I enjoy my adventures with her.

Until tonight,

My beautiful lady!



Psychosomatic
By Katie O'Leary

You can feel it.
The stares.
They burn holes into your skin.
It tells you that they're all laughing,
That they stare when you stumble by.
You're just a waste of space.
Space that could be taken up by someone
important.
Someone prestigious.
Distinguished.
Influential.
All the things you're not.
Someone who deserves to breathe this air
And walk this ground.
You don't deserve anything.
It says the only thing you deserve
Are the demons living in your head
Mocking you,
Taunting you,
Making you feel like you don't fit in,
You don't belong.
It cages your conscience.
You can hear it screaming,
The screeches getting increasingly louder,
Filling up the void in your vacant mind,
Until your entire body goes numb,
Splintering your brain.
You snap.
Blanketed by psychosis,
You no longer feel the cold grasp of sanity.

24 Hours

Owen Gifford-Smith, from PVMS

BEEP *BEEP* *BEEP*

The sound of evil. I reach over and push the alarm clock off the edge of my nightstand. Ahh, blissful silence. I glance at my watch. 24 o' clock because of my stupid military watch. Frickin' alarm clock! I roll over and shove my face into my pillow.

Time passes. My mind wanders.

I glance at my watch again. 00:01. With a sigh I swing my feet out of bed thinking to get a midnight snack when I stand on the broken remains of my alarm clock. “*Insert profane statement here*”.

I jump around cradling my hurt foot. I slip on a shirt lying on the floor and fall back in bed, hurt foot and all. My entire existence at that point could be summarized with one sound.

Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. Some mornings. Or is it morning? I close my eyes.

Some days just need a reset button.

Something bonks off my head. I sit up and feel around for it in the mess of blankets and sheets.. It's a small die. But strangely, it has twenty sides. Each side is marked with a small number written in black ink. The die itself is clear. I sit up and turn on my bedside lamp. Climbing out of bed, I gingerly make my way to my desk.

The die intrigues me as it stares at me from my desk. I glance at my watch. 00:09. I pick up the die and give it a roll. The world starts to spin around me, the lights flicker off and suddenly I am sitting in my chair staring at the glistening black inked 9. I glance at my watch. 24:00.

What had just happened?

I glance at my nightstand. My alarm clock, now back where it had been started beeping. As I watched, the me from before pushes the alarm clock onto the floor and rolls over. Realizing what is about to happen, I start to clean up the alarm clock pieces. I freeze as a thought hits me. If I had never stepped on these pieces I wouldn't have wished to start my day over and I wouldn't have gotten the die. Glancing at my watch I realize it's 00:01. I shove the pieces back on the floor and run to the other side of the room. The me of the past stands up and stepped on the pieces. Gosh, where had I learned to swear like that?

He falls back in bed and I realize what I have to do. I throw the die at my own face. An arc of course, for the die had *fallen* on my head before. The other me sits up and turns on the light. He walks over to the table and looks at the die. He picks it up. “NOO!” I yell and run at him. So that's what people mean when they say “you should have seen the look on your face.”

I slam into myself and knock the die out of his/my hand. It hits the ground and lands on 1. The world spins. The lights flicker off -

- and we are left staring at me throwing the die at another me in the bed. I stand, releasing myself from my pinning hold, and yell, “EVERYBODY STOP!”

The me in bed sits up. The standing me stares, eyes wide. The me on the floor gapes. “What's going on?” They all say at once.

“I'll explain.” I say, picking up the die from where it had landed. “This die seems to be able to change the time around the person who rolls it. Which happens to be us. Follow?”

The three other me's nodded in unison. Wow, I explain things to myself really well. “I am from 00:09 going by our watches.” We all looked at our wrists simultaneously. 00:08. You're from 00:08 I said pointing to the me on the floor. He glanced at his watch and ceased to exist. We all tensed. “What just happened?” asked the me by the wall.

I knew how he (I?) felt. If we all ceased to exist when we reached the time when we rolled the die, I was gonna cease to exist right about n-.

I sat in my bed and stared at the spot where an exact copy of me had just disappeared with a small pop. Then suddenly, the me holding the die, popped out of existence too. Then the one by the wall and the room suddenly had only one me. I jumped out of bed nimbly avoiding the broken alarm clock. The die glared at me from the floor as if daring me to roll it. I ignored it and gently set it on my desk. I would need to test this die, but not now. Now it was time to sleep for six more hours. I cleaned up my alarm clock before jumping back in bed.

This time, I was woken up by a pair of familiar hands shaking me. My eyes snapped open and were met by the same pair. “Hurry!” said the Me who had just woken me up. “You're gonna be late for school just like I was a few minutes ago!”

He handed me the die and a set of clothes. “Mom and Dad won’t be up ‘til later. Breakfast on the table!” then he ceased to exist.

Okaaaaaaay... it’s quite the experience being woken by yourself. Not sure if I’ll get over it. Might as well take my own advice. I got dressed and hurried downstairs where some pancakes sat on the table. Nice touch. I glanced at my watch. 06:30 on the dot. I grabbed the pancake, glad for the lack of syrup, and ran out the door. As I ran down the street another me bolted out of an alley and handed me my backpack before popping out of existence. Helpful.

I arrive at school on time for the first time since kindergarten. First period social studies. I slide into a seat in the back of the classroom. The teacher, Mr. G. walks in and smiles at all of us. “Class, get out a pencil please,” he says.

We groan at knowing what this means. Pop quiz. He hands out a sheet with some questions on it. I glance over them and realize how very little of them I can answer. Stealthily, I copy the questions onto a sheet of loose leaf. I tuck the paper into my pocket and ask to go to the bathroom.

In the bathroom I dart into the nearest stall and roll the die. 10. The world spins. I check my watch. 06:55 on the dot. I should be arriving at school just about now. I sprint out of the stall and run to the front of the building. Another me comes around the corner munching on the pancake I’d eaten a little while ago. I sprinted to him and gave him the sheet. He looked at me, mouth full of pancake said something. “No time.” I said “Mr. G. is giving a pop quiz these are the questions we don’t know the answers to. You need to get these answers out of the textbook. I’m going to hide ‘til I cease to exist. Best of luck”.

I stare, my mouth still full of pancake as the me from the future runs down a nearby alley. My watch reads 07:00. Just enough time to get these answers, get to class on time, and finish this pancake.

At lunch I sit alone as usual. Other than the test I aced, nothing else had happened. Yet. As I got up and threw my tray away Boris, the school bully, came up to me and pushed me into the hallway. Uh-oh. He was mad. “I noticed you cheatin’ on that test this morning punk.” He said pushing me again. “How’d you know it was coming? And how come you don’t tell your old friend Boris?”

This was bad. I backed up and he drew his arm back to punch. Suddenly, he was tackled by someone. Me. This me was badly beaten up and seemed to be willing to kill Boris. As I watched, two more me’s came from the hallway and started kicking Boris. Wow, I have my own army. One by one, the me’s popped out of existence. Boris lay on the ground crying. What was one supposed to do in this situation? I put my hands in my pockets and walked back to the cafeteria whistling.

I walk home from school, an extra spring in my step. Today had been truly a wonderful Monday. Yep. I said it. A wonderful Monday. I round the bend and come upon a version of myself leaning against the fence. He tosses the die up in the air and catches it. “You’re right” he says, “Or, I was, several minutes ago. This was a wonderful day. However, its nothing compared to tonight.”

“What?” I say, confused.

“Oh yes, you haven’t lived it yet. Shame you won’t get the chance.”

He advances slowly towards me. I advance slowly backwards. He leaps at me at the same time I leap at him. Our heads collide in mid air. We both lurch back holding our heads in the exact same way. Then we both, seeing an advantage, throw a punch at the other.

Something that happened to him this night and had yet to happen to me saved me. The impact of my fist on his face knocked him out.

This was bad. I suppose I can kiss whatever good night he was talking about goodbye. I pick up the die from the sidewalk and inspect it. Something so small yet so dangerous. Dangerously fun too. “Nope” I say out loud. “It’s not worth it.”

I run the rest of the way to my house and sprint up to my room. There’s only one way to get rid of this die. I slip under my bed and roll over.

BEEP *BEEP* *BEEP*

The sound of evil. I reach over and push the alarm clock off the edge of my nightstand. Ahh, blissful silence. I glance at my watch. 24 o’ clock because of my stupid military watch. Frickin’ alarm clock! I roll over and shove my face into my pillow.

Time passes. My mind wanders.

I glance at my watch again. 00:01. I slip out of bed and walk downstairs for a midnight snack. As I munch on my cookie I realize something. My broken alarm clock is still on the floor! I pick up the broom and walk back upstairs. The alarm clock however, was gone. Every last scrap. What? I wander around my room looking for it. Oh well, I guess some things you never find out...

Change

By Justine Ortiz

Change is found even when one's eyes are shut.
Change happens in life when one's in a rut.
Change will happen when the wind blows.
Change is like a stream, and a stream must flow.
Change can be good and good could be bad.
Change can be happy and happy could be sad.
Change happens in a blink of an eye.
Change could be one's choice, to live or die.
Change happens as sun rises each day.
Change will never end although some may delay.
Change wont ever stop but it can switch direction.
Change is found in one's love and affection.
Change is like time, and time never ends.
Changes is what life does it's the message it sends.
Change could hit you like a slap in the face.
Change could happen as fast as a hare in a race.
Change may appear in places small
Change may not be spotted you may not see it at all
Change is sneaky but don't be deceived
Change will happen no matter what god you believe.
Change is what makes the world go round.
Change is a part of life and change will always be
Found.

The Body In The Shadows

By: Meagen Rivera

I stand alone in the shadows.
I hid from the evil face of the world.
A mask is what I wear.
So you can't see me.
You can't see who I am,
Or how I feel.
All you can see is the body.
The body of which I seek shelter in.
You can't see passed my hard shell,
To the soft, squishy inside.
All you see is the body.
As I write this I can see the body.
I'm no longer inside.
I'm back in the shadows where I
belong.
I can no longer look out the eyes of
this body.
I look at this body from shadows,
And it looks back at me.
It does not know me,
Nor do I know it.
But somehow we are connected.
As the body opens its mouth to
speak to me,
I retreat farther into the shadows.
To a place where it cannot find me.
To a place where it dares not go.
I stand there and stare out.
Before me are students sitting in
desks.
They are laughing at me.
But why?
They cannot see me.
I am in the shadows.
How can they see me.
They aren't laughing at me,

They are laughing at the body.
I can see through the eyes of the
body once more.
I finally understand how we are
connected.
We both don't fit in.
Once again I retreat in to the
shadows,
Only this time I invite the body to
join me.
Join me.
Into this wonderful world of
invisibility.
Where no on can see you.
Where you always fit in.
The body says no.
I ask it why?
Why would it want to be in this
place,
A place where it was visible.
Where it didn't fit in,
Where it didn't belong.
The body says it rather live in a
place where it didn't belong,
And be visible,
Than to be invisible and never live
life.
I look at the body one last time,
Before I go back into the shadows.
The body doesn't see me any more.
It doesn't look into the shadows.
I feel it has forgotten about me in
the shadows,
But I shall never forget the body.
I will always be watching the body.
Watching that strange body,
From the deep, dark shadows of
invisibility.

Artwork by Jessica Baisley



The Intergalactic Exchange by Alexei Smith

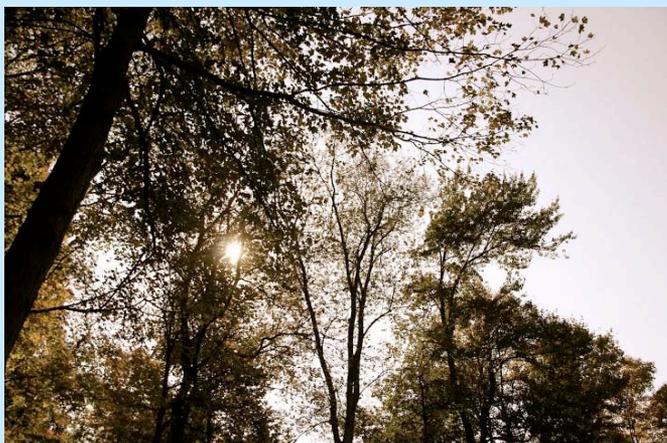
The funniest thing happened the other day. This new kid came to our school, and boy was she strange. She was Izek's "exchange student" from this weird planet in the Milky Way. I've met some other folks from around there and they seemed pretty chill, but she was just really nervous of everything. She was probably still a little shaken up from the journey I guess- if you're not used to traveling in a Space Cruiser 9000® at 37,589 times the speed of light then you tend to get a little ship-sick.

Anyhow, in Inter-Planetary Relations the teacher had her stand up and tell us about her home planet. I figured she was from Jupiter or something, 'cause she looked a bit like one of Mom's cousins, but apparently she's from this one I've never heard of. *Earth*, she called it. The teacher pulled up a picture on her HoloGraf® so we could see what it looked like. It sure seemed pretty, let me tell you. Mostly blue and green with some white stuff at the top and bottom. The girl told us that those were called the North and South poles- don't ask me why, I haven't a clue. She told us the blue stuff was water, and I couldn't believe how much of it there was. Most of the planet was covered! If we had that much water here, we'd be set for life. None of this "we must conserve water for our children!" rubbish that they're shoving down our throats. The girl said the green places were land, and she even showed us where she lived. I don't know if I remember the name of the place correctly, but I think it was a town called Logan. It was near the center of this big piece of green called North America. She told us that she was one of the first Earthlings to travel to another galaxy without being an "astronaut" (your guess is as good as mine). Her planet is trying to get friendly with the rest of the universe now, so they started this exchange program.

The rest of that class was devoted to using our own mini-HoloGrafts® to explore Earth and find some interesting facts about it. Let me tell you, it seemed like the place to be. These Earthlings are pretty neat. I read that they had some energy crisis in the past, but ever since some genius figured out the secret to nuclear fusion they're doing better than ever. It took them years to figure that out- I mean really, it's not that hard a concept. We learn that in third year, for crying out loud. At least they got it figured out eventually, though.

The more I read about this planet, the more I liked it. It just seemed like it was created for me, ya know? I read about some typical Earth customs and it was just *so fascinating*. I knew that this was quickly going to become my new favorite topic. I actually started to get a little upset, because I felt like I belonged there and knew that wasn't a possible thing. All I could think about was the amount of times I've felt out of place here, and how sick I was of it. I was long overdue for some fitting in, and I knew the place for that was Earth.

Then lo and behold, a miracle! Towards the end of class, the teacher told us about how the school was starting up an exchange with Earth within the next few weeks and if we were interested, to talk to our parents and sign up with her. The second I heard the bell I ran up and put my name down at the top of the sheet. No way was I turning away this chance. All these years feeling out of place here- who would have guessed that the whole time, there was this planet just waiting for me to discover it?



photos by McKenna Feeney

The Funny Thing That Happen The Other Day
By Racine Smith

The funniest thing happened the other day when I was walking through the park, some kids were playing soccer on the field. One of them kicked the ball too hard and it was flying straight for my face at a rapid speed, but a second before it hit me, my instincts kicked in and I grabbed the ball spun around, in the dirt, then chucked the ball right back at the kid. Breaking his nose, while at the same time knocking him in a big pile of poop. After that event I kept walking and didn't stop for that kid, which I don't really regret since, I had more important things on my mind. I was trying to comprehend the vastness of the universe and reality itself, though all it was doing was giving me a major headache. It was hurting like the Dickens.

Though I got bored with this train of thought so I went into a nearby comic book store. It had a slight musky smell, which would tell you this place was a very good place to look for Pogagan volume four, which went out of publish in 1995, it only had four volumes not very widely known but the price for one of these comics in good condition could range from a hundred dollars to one thousand dollars. The best part of this was that I had three volumes already and since most people aren't very knowledgeable on this subject, you could usually find them at extremely low prices, if you could find one at all.

But back to the main subject, while I was searching in the store for a couple of minutes, I stumbled upon the back corner. Everything in the back corner was in a thick layer of dust as if no one has cleaned in forty-five years. I blew away the dust from one comic, which caused a huge cloud of dust to form. That dust got everywhere it got in my hair and my lungs and I keep finding the stuff in my socks even. After the dust cleared, I saw in my hand what I have been looking for, for the last five months. I now held the ultimate power in my hand. I went up to this hippie looking sales clerk and asked how much for the book. He said, "It cost only five bucks." I couldn't believe what I just heard this super rare comic only cost five dollar, I could hardly hold in my emotions, I almost jumped for joy. After I paid the man, I went outside into a beautifully cheery disposition. I didn't see the world as one huge mess that we have to fix if we want to survive to the future, but now as a great new world.

Until this thief, who was riding a plaid bicycle model xl500 made in 2011 came by and ripped the bag which held the comic, right out of my hand. In the split moment right after the event, I realized what my true purpose in life was. My purpose was to go and get back my comic, and in the process destroy that thief and everything he loves in life, his job, his house, his friends and family, but most importantly destroy him completely. Revenge was the answer and I knew what must be done. Instantly after these thoughts came into my head I started to sprint at full speed right after him, adrenaline and endorphins pumping through me, such as molten lava bubbling and coursing through a volcano, waiting to erupt and destroy everything around it.

After sprinting for a couple of miles after him I realized that I wasn't making good enough progress, so I went to the closest dirigible store and came out **riding a dirigible, like a boss**. While in the air I watched and waited for signs of him, while I was over a couple hundred feet up in the air. When I thought I saw signs of him or of any form of biker I dropped pies from my dirigible, not those weakling pies you

buy at the store or make but industrial grade pies strong enough to knock out a saber tooth tiger that's in your pajamas and raiding the fridge. It's the type of pie that if you get hit, you stayed hit.

Well after a couple of minutes a new problem arose, the scent of pie attracted a nearby sky whale, which in itself is a major problem. They're always going after my pie, I'm not kidding. Every time I ride in a dirigible and have some sort of food/ pastry they're always trying to steal them. Well, after an epic fight between me and the sky whale which lead us to becoming friends and also hooking it up with a friend of mine, a giant space bear. I left the sky and began to search on the ground again. After about five minutes, I felt that I couldn't go on any more since I'd been searching for this guy for about twenty to thirty minutes in general. It made me feel terribly low, just like the way I felt when I took an arrow to the knee and was unable to become an adventurer just like you. I didn't know it then but my luck instantly changed for I saw that biker thief heading into a dead end ally. I confronted him, he instantly took off his helmet showing his hair which was pure fire, which had a lovely blue and purple tint which made it pop. I have only seen hair like that once before when I was taking a foreign exchange trip to Northern Alinjuia in Europe. Ah, I remember it like it was yesterday, climbing the Horfinale Mountains in the freezing cold winters, running though the beautiful untouched fields as if they were saying get off my lawn you dangnabit kids and picking the strange and delicious WaHaWaHaWaHaWaHaWaHaWaHaWaHaWaHaWaHa berries which were the size of your fists and were the most beautiful shade of *Bleep* that I ever saw.

This man though was from somewhere that only the most dangerous criminals go he comes from the seventh and nine fifths dimensions in the Noo4ki'd / g3tyf section of time and space. It's one of the most crime-infested areas in all of existence right after Teddy Bear Junction and the Lollipop Guild. This man was probably a hired mercenary sent to destroy me, and I just walked into his trap. He got right off his bike and his muscles started to bulge, they bulged so much that they actually ripped his shirt off, which was a sign that his power levels were over nine thousand, but he realized that it was a very brisk day at that moment and put on another shirt.

I knew what must be done to stop this monster so I gave him a Quick upper cut and then a flaming falcon punch to the gut and used my secret combo technique. Hold A, B, R, R, A, R, → ←, →, →, L, L, A, A, ←, B, B, B, Enter. I thought it destroyed him until the smoke settled and it was revealed that the technique was too weak so I took out the only weapon at the time which could have defeated him. I took out the fish blade which was basically a medium size fish used to slap people around but it had less than little effect on this behemoth and he then punched me almost knocking me out to the void of eternal nothingness, but I was still able to stand strong. I then knew I had to use one of the forbidden techniques that my cosmic martial arts master taught me before he went to wage war against the cosmic owl, flying spaghetti Monster, unicorn and the anti-monitor. He taught me these techniques, which were so powerful that they could destroy the fabric of reality, as we know it.

Before using any technique that could destroy the universe if done wrong you should stretch first. Afterwards, I gathered all the energy around me and focused it in one point and released, causing a giant yell that shattered glass and called out to the people telling them that the guy that I was fighting was a witch. This caused an angry mob of angry peasants carrying pitchforks and torches to chase the dimensional being away resulting in me grabbing my comic and heading back home with out a care in the world.

And that was the funny thing that happened to me yesterday.

The Climb

Meagen Rivera

photo by Sara Zadrina

I look into your eyes and all I see is failure

I look at myself and I see someone who is trying to make you happy
What is wrong with me?

Am I stupid?

Am I ugly?

Is there anything wrong with me?

I don't think there is

But still in your eyes I'm a failure

I'm just an average person trying to be successful in life

I'm a person just trying to get through life.

Trying to be positive in life,

But you're no help with your negative attitude

But who are you to judge me?

I don't care what you think.

It doesn't matter what you think.

It's what I think that matters

I think I'm ok

I think there is nothing wrong with me

No!

I know there is nothing wrong with me!

I may not be perfect but I make myself happy-

I don't need you

Or anyone else to make me happy!

I don't need you telling me who I am

Or what I can and can't do!

I climbed this mountain on my own!

And I will continue to climb!

Yes I will fall,

But I will always get back up in the end!

I will never give up!

I will fight for my happiness!

You can hurt me

And make me cry

But in the end I will always come out on top!

It doesn't matter how long it takes me

I will succeed!

I will be the best that I can be!

I will get back up!

I will live my life to the fullest!

I will live it with no Regrets!

I will live it the way I want to live it!

Why?

Because I will be happy!

Why?

Because my happiness is worth fighting for!

I may have ups and downs in the fight,

But that's part of life!

Part of the climb!

I am happy!

I am successful!

I am living the life I want to live!

And I am living life with no regrets!

I know I will die happily,

Knowing that I climbed that climb!

And I made it!

I reached the top of that mountain!

I am perfect for me!

If you don't like it, too bad!

Because I do!

I love myself exactly the way I am!

And I will never change for anyone or anything!

PVHS

Literary Magazine

illiterature



First Semester

2013-2014