

STARRED ★

Wayland-Cohocton High School's Literary Magazine



SPRING 2022



STARRED

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Spring Writing Contest Winner

Happy Ending
By Victoria Bevis

I have a vision for myself, a vision of how I would like my journey to end...
because in the end it is what I deserve

What all people deserve...

Knowing death would soon be upon me from some incurable disease,
I'd slip away from the "safety" of my home and into the dead of night,

Flowing towards my destination like water in a stream,
the undeniable pull of gravity guiding me.

Straying further and further from the parasitic plague of this world,
the parasites that infect my existence

Drifting upon a vast field of lavender in which I would let my body
finally rest.

Allowing the intoxicating aroma to cleanse my body
of the corruption brought upon me by this purgatory

I'd wear a bright yellow sundress to freeze me from my core
and make my cheeks flush with red velvet blood from the chilled summer night,

I imagine when I'm found I'll bear the resemblance of an antique
porcelain doll,

Innocent, stiff, pale.



I like to envision my body eventually being reclaimed by mother nature,
tainting it in a morbid, yet beautiful way
as I let my physical body seep back into the cracks of its origins.

Of all our origins.

In my dying hours enriched indigo and violet fill my vision,

The soft petals of the lavender brushing against my cold rigid skin,
sweeping me away into a comatose state

The moon emerges from hiding and the stars begin to play amongst one
another,
untethered by the suffocating darkness that surrounds them all.

I'd let my eyes close and the cold air sting my lungs,

And though I could feel my body sink into the ground below,
it felt as if my very being was entangled within theirs,
gliding from star to star in the endless sky

Soon, understanding the apathy as I was engraved within it,

Leaving my body behind as I follow the steps of many before me
fulfilling my happy ending.



Spring Writing Contest Honorable Mention

Breathe

Charina Gray

Mila carved the nineteenth day into the wall with her knife. This time ago she'd lost her entire crew, searched the ship from nose to engine, tried calling the mothership. The comms were dead. The ship refused to start. Mila wasn't a pilot—she couldn't do more than count her days in oxygen.

Inhale. Do the math. Exhale.

Mila floated to a window and looked out. From earth, she'd thought of the stars as celestial and hopeful. Here, on an empty, broken ship, the stars seemed distant and cold, silent and unmoving. The galaxy had lost its allure when it betrayed her. "Am I going crazy?" She asked aloud. The stars didn't answer. Neither did the ship, nor the missing crew, nor whatever had taken them. Maybe they'd fled. "That can't be right," she said, glancing at the wall. Her voice fell to a whisper. "They wouldn't leave me."

Mila blinked, feeling her head float away. *Inhale. I'm dying. Exhale. The stars could care less.*



Happy Endings Are Fake

Roz Rhianson

I don't believe in love or happy endings. I told you this, we had a conversation about it. Do you remember? It was New Year's Eve and you were at a party. Thanks for taking the time to respond to me. You made me feel special. Because in a time you were preoccupied with whatever substances and girls were at that party, you still responded.

I don't believe in love or happy endings. This I blame on my parents. How can two people that used to be in love hate each other? Now they can't stay civil on the phone when speaking on important matters. No, that's not love. I might not know what love is, but I do know what it is not.

I don't believe in love or happy endings. What my parents had was an illusion. Over them a curtain providing happiness. The curtain was of course removed. You were my curtain. You took away my fears and made me feel safe, I felt comfortable. But what have we learned about curtains? They don't last.

I don't believe in love or happy endings. The first time you said "I love you" was within 3 days of us knowing each other. I thought you were crazy, and I said it back because I thought it was a joke. It wasn't. You loved me since the first time speaking to me. What happened? It took 8 months for me to say it and mean it. Now



you're gone?

I don't believe in love or happy endings. I don't know what you wanted. You left. You got nothing out of this. What was the point? "Roz, I want you to know I love you, and I don't want you to wait for me. I want you to live a happy life." What the f*** does that mean? Was it a warning? Was it you telling me you would be leaving? I'm still confused.

I don't believe in love or happy endings. I think I know what love is. Your presence provided me with comfort. Hearing your voice calmed me. And your laugh, I love your laugh. You gave me butterflies constantly, you made me feel happy. When I told you "I love you" did you feel the same way I felt? When you said it to me, I felt giddy. I felt warm all throughout. Commitment scares me, but not with you.

Talking to you I began thinking love does exist. We would be each other's happy endings. Right now I am thanking you. Thank you for reminding me love isn't real. Thank you for reminding me that happy endings are fake.



Kaitlyn Doty



Leah Lock



I wonder, You wander
Charina Gray

Do you remember when you were
With me? There were good times when

We ate salad with raspberry vinaigrette and sweet
Ate gelato out of the pint because it was so

We birdwatched with little booklets and someone
People-watched in the park where you met

Who spoke Spanish to enough
Your English but the laughter said

Remember when we snuck into that café and read but you
Nina LaCour's *Yerba Buena* while waiting for mochas

Finished before me, drink and book and all. were
We laughed at cream mustaches and

Full when we went to the cove to collect buckets of sand full
And by sunset we left them on the beach

Remember when we planted cherry tomatoes and mint of
In your garden and ate them from the ground so they tasted

Earth? Then we painted the night sky on plastic easels sorrow
And told love stories and horror stories and stories of



Like the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice
So I wonder: do you remember? It was long ago

when

We strolled the art gallery and I was so inspired
Sketched you with fine pencils and oil pastels from Japan.

I

In summer we collected wildflowers and braided them into
Each other's hair and took pictures of our sun-kissed smiles.

Then your mother took you to Europe. That year I was
Behind. That year I sipped coffee instead of mochas

left

And never finished *Yerba Buena* and birdwatched alone
And drew with charcoal instead of paint and found your

Garden dead and knew you were gone. I wonder where
You are now. I bet you're still in Europe,

Speaking French and learning to play the piano and
Drawing Big Ben and eating real Italian gelato and

Walking down the streets of Edinburgh
With your mother because I don't exist anymore

But I still recall when our youth was kind and the
summers were warm and the mochas delicious

And the art beautiful and tomatoes fresh and I wonder
If you remember me after all this time.



Thanks
Trevor Donlon

The driveway is packed with cars so I end up just driving down the dead-end street a ways, pulling a quick U-turn, and parking on the side of the road. If I'm being honest, when I was younger I looked forward to our Thanksgiving dinner. But that was a long time ago. And I can't be the only one who dreads this day either. Everyone is always miserable and at each others throats. The only reason we all still show up has got to be because of my grandma. No other time of year is more important to her, not even Christmas. I guess she sees it as the one time where the whole family can sit down and have a meal together, but that's what she wants it to be. Blind by choice to the fact that our family isn't the cookie cutter representation of a family. I mean there's a point where optimism begins to lean towards denial. To be fair, when I was younger, I saw it the same way because it's what I wanted to believe, not grounded in the reality that our family is and always has been dysfunctional.

After throwing the car in park, I sit there for a bit, contemplating just driving back home and skipping out on the whole thing altogether. But I can't bring myself to do it, especially not to gram. My nerves get the better of me and I reach for my half-pack of cigarettes tucked away in the glovebox. As I light one up, I feel the years worth of sobriety slip away. A couple summers back I kicked the habit after I started seeing this girl who worked at a cafe on my campus. She ended up giving me an ultimatum; it was either her or Marlboro. However, on this "joyous" occasion, I feel it fitting to give in to the urge.

I crank the radio and take a few long drags from the red, running through the scenario of the night ahead; how to avoid the inevitable arguments, excuses to leave, all that type of stuff. Before I know it, the cigarette has dwindled to the size of a pencil eraser, I flick the what's left of it out into the street. I'm dumbfounded at the



fact that I went through one as fast as I did. I reluctantly exit and lock my car, making my way down the sidewalk to the driveway. My Uncle Ron's and Aunt Laurie's brand new, stark white Outback is parked in the front of the driveway, thus prohibiting me, or anyone else from parking in front of it. Frankly, I'm not surprised in the slightest, Ron and Laurie are always doing pretentious things like that. To the right of the Outback sits a lifted, cherry red F-150 which has definitely seen better days. That money pit belongs to my Uncle Matt and his third wife Michelle. They are more or less the Yin to Ron and Laurie's Yang. It's a never ending battle of one upping and bragging. If Ron brings up a promotion he got, then Matt will go on a tirade about the number of deer he shot that season. It's mostly petty and harmless banter but it can easily get out of hand to the point where it's a full on screaming match. Last year had to be the worst one I've ever seen.

RJ, Ron's son, who was 8 at the time, was continually whining about how he didn't want to eat the food that was on the table and instead that he wanted a brownie or something along those lines.

"You can have dessert after you finish your dinner." Laurie said, faking a smile while she did.

"This food is gross. I don't want to eat it. I want dessert." RJ snapped back at his mother.

"RJ c'mon, you know the rules. Don't be difficult buddy." Laurie's voice became more shaky with each word, as if she were fearful of her child.

"No!" RJ screamed as he began to flail his arms around. Laurie tried to hold him down in his seat but it only made the situation worse. He started pounding the table with his fists which hit his plate, causing a whole mound of mash potatoes and gravy to go flying through the air and land right smack-dab on Matt's shirt.



“HEY!” Matt belted while gripping onto RJ’s arm, “You are going to sit here and eat your dinner like the rest of us, you spoiled little brat!”

The room fell silent. Matt’s a mountain of a man. He’s a 6’3, 300 lb. guy, and built like a refrigerator. He’s not the type of guy you would wanna piss off.

That said, you could see the pants-crapping fear on RJ’s face.

“Matt, I can discipline my own kid okay” Ron chimed in, realizing that his parental control was being threatened.

“Like hell you can! He’s a maniac!”

“How dare you say that. You know RJ has a hard time expressing his feelings.”

“He’s 8! The kid hardly has any feelings! You just spoil him too much. He’s so damn pampered, he’s probably never heard the word no in his life!”

“You can’t do much better, all you care about is that piece-of-crap truck. No wonder you can’t hold down a wife for longer than a year!”

If the room had been silent before, it surely was now. Neither of the two had ever brought each other’s family turmoil into the conversation before. Sure, they would “gossip” about it on their own time with their own families, but never like this.

Laurie quickly took RJ into the kitchen where the rest of us followed. Even Gram, who usually tries to mediate these arguments, was booking it out of there. My parents took it as their cue to leave and I soon followed suit. Ever since last Thanksgiving, Ron and Matt haven’t been on speaking terms.

I pass in between their vehicles and get a good glance at both. The inside of the Outback is in pristine condition, like it could have been straight off the assembly line. It’s fair to say that Ron and Laurie have to be in some serious debt because every two or three years they get a new car. On the other hand, the wheel wells on



Matt's trucks are so decayed and rusted, that if you were to touch it, huge flakes of paint would peel right off. A mural of stickers coat the back window and bumper. They consist of all shapes and sizes with subjects ranging from beer to fishing and everything under the sun. They really complement the look that the truck is going for.

Making it to the front steps of the raised ranch house, I hesitate for a moment, thinking about just turning around and heading home. I could avoid the headache, and be in bed by 9, if I were to just leave. But my conscience forces me forward, up the concrete steps, and I ring the doorbell.



Finally Free
Jenny Delafield

I felt the breeze sweep my hair
in back of me.
I was finally free.

I could hear the loving voice of my
mother saying let it be.
Then I knew I was free, possibly.

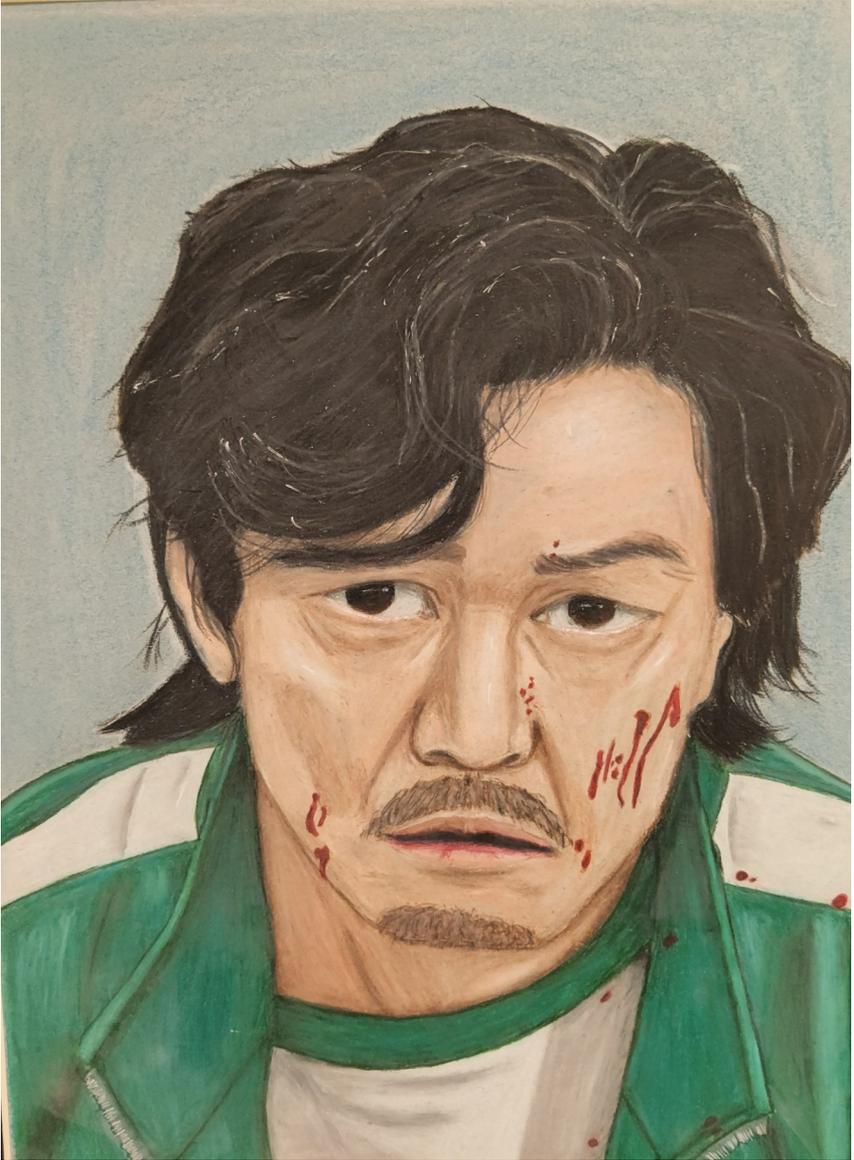
I heard my father with his gruff
voice saying come to me.
I was almost sure I was free.

Was I the one holding myself
back from being free? Maybe.
I needed to be free.

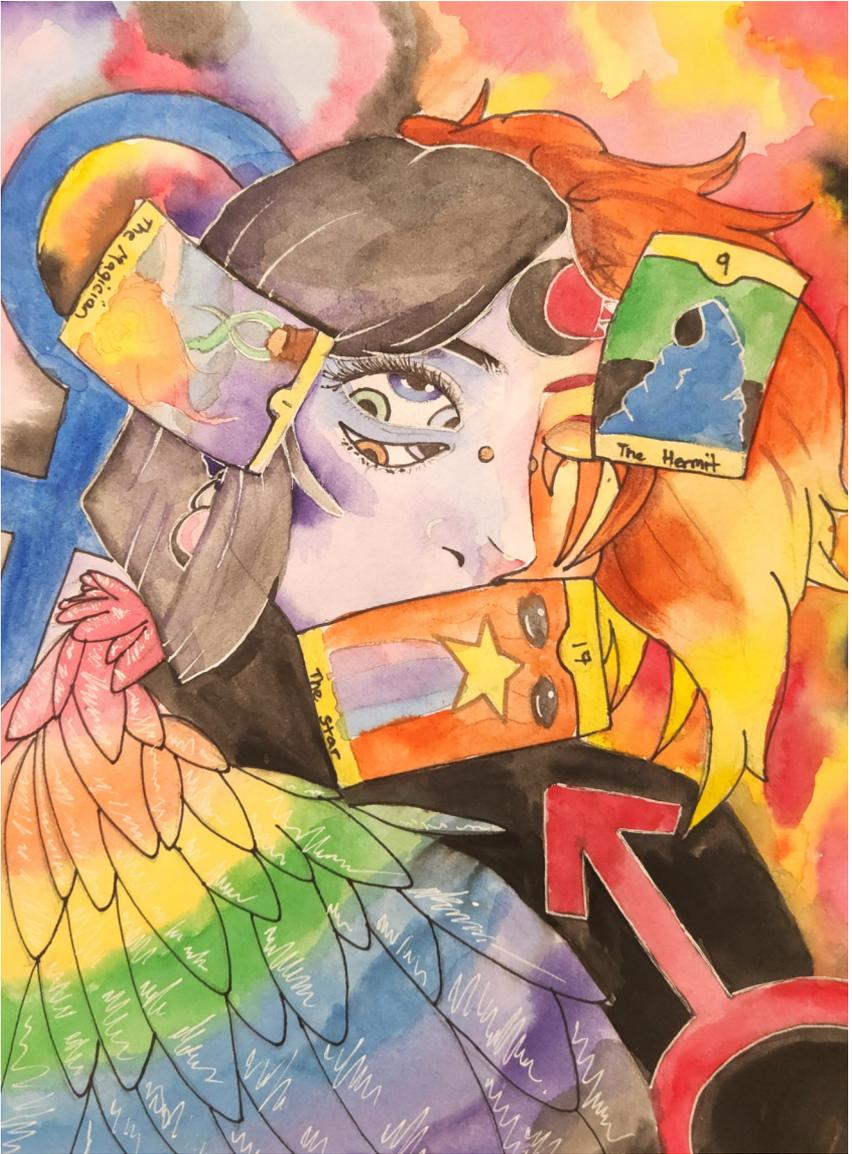
As the day ended and night came
I heard the stars say to me
“You are free,” then I knew I was
finally free to be me.



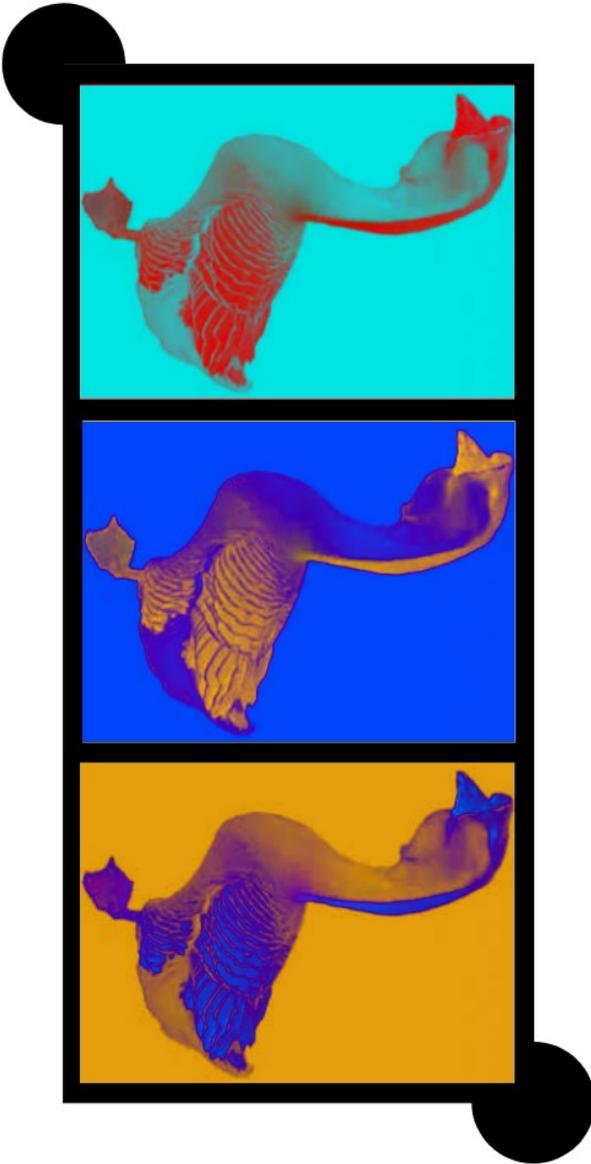
Jaiden Coombs



Jayden Richardson



Akira Coats



Virginia Carr



The Old Guitarist
Charina Gray

You pentimento:
You are a ghost, a
Sightless thing sitting
On the crooked neck of Picasso—
You see double, upside down,
Curling over the edge of canvas
Knowing-all and invisible.
You hide in the vibrant and colorful,
Tuck away in each line,
Curve, and swirl of paint
Because you are abstract yet elegant,
Bold yet subtle,
You deceive the eye and
Reveal yourself in the lamplight.



syn-on-y-mize (si-non'a-miz'), *v.t.* [SYNONYMIZED (-miz'd)], **SYNONYMIZING**, to furnish a synonym or synonyms for (a word).

syn-on-ous (si-non'a-mas), *adj.* [ML. **SYNONYMUS**; *syn-*, together + *onyma*, a name], of the same meaning; abbreviated **syn-**.

syn-onym (si-nō-m), *n.* [pl. **SYNONYMS** (-miz)], **SYNONYMAL**, 1. the study of synonyms. 2. a listing of synonyms. 3. a) the same meaning; abbreviated **syn-**. b) a list of words that have the same meaning; a list of words that are synonymous; a list of words that are of the same meaning. Abbreviated **syn-**.

syn-opsis (si-nō-pis), *n.* [Gr. *syn-*, together + *opsis*, a view], a summary, a brief, a general view.

syn-optic (si-nō-pi-tik), *adj.* [Gr. *syn-*, together + *optikos*, of vision], of or relating to a general view.

syn-ovial (si-nō-vi-al), *adj.* [Gr. *syn-*, together + *ovion*, a joint], of or relating to a joint cavity, tendon sheath, or synovial membrane.

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syn-ovitis (si-nō-vi-tis), *n.* [see -**ITIS**], inflammation of a synovial membrane.

syn-sepalous (sin-sep'ul-as), *adj.* [**syn-** + **sepal** + -ous], having the sepals united; gamosepalous.

syn-tac-tic (sin-tak'tik), *adj.* [Gr. *syn-*, together + *taktikos*, of arrangement], of or in accordance with the rules of syntax.

syn-tac-ti-cal (sin-tak'ti-k'l), *adj.* [see **SYNTACTIC**], of or in accordance with the rules of syntax.

syn-tac-ti-cal-ly (sin-tak'ti-k'l-i), *adv.* [see **SYNTACTIC**], according to the rules of syntax.

syn-tax (sin'taks), *n.* [Fr. *syntaxe*; LL. *syntaxis*; Gr. *syn-*, together + *taxis*, to arrange], 1. [Obs.], a systematic arrangement. 2. a) in *grammar*, the arrangement of words as elements in a sentence and their relationship; sentence structure. b) the branch of grammar dealing with the arrangement of words as elements in a sentence and their relationship; sentence structure.

syn-the-sis (sin'the-sis), *n.* [Gr. *syn-*, together + *thesis*, to put], a process of putting together; a process of putting together; a process of putting together.

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acterized by a hard chancre on the genitals or other point of inoculation, the second (*secondary syphilis*) by variable lesions of the skin and mucous membranes, and the third (*tertiary syphilis*) by the infection and dis-

able of bones, muscles, nerve tissue, etc. **syph-ic** (sif'a-lit'ik), *adj.* [Mod. L. *syphiliticus*], of or having syphilis. **n.** a syphilitic person.

syph-oid (sif'a-loid'), *adj.* resembling syphilis. **syph-ology** (sif'a-lo-lō-jī), *n.* the study and treatment of syphilis.

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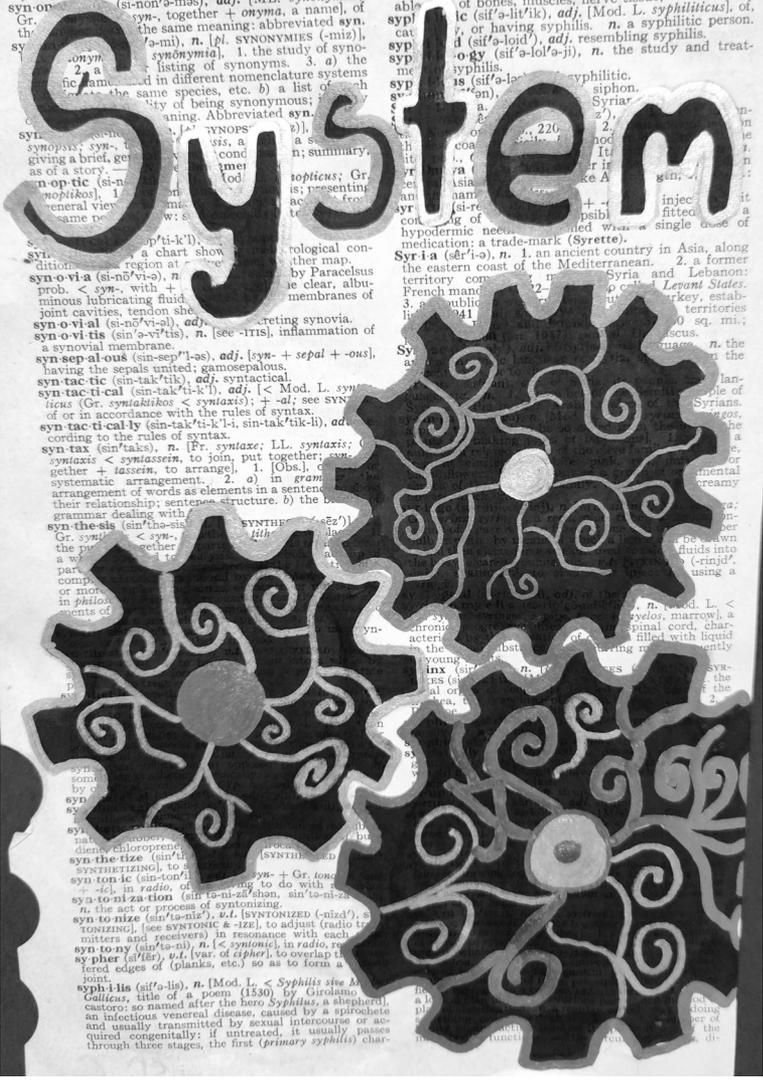
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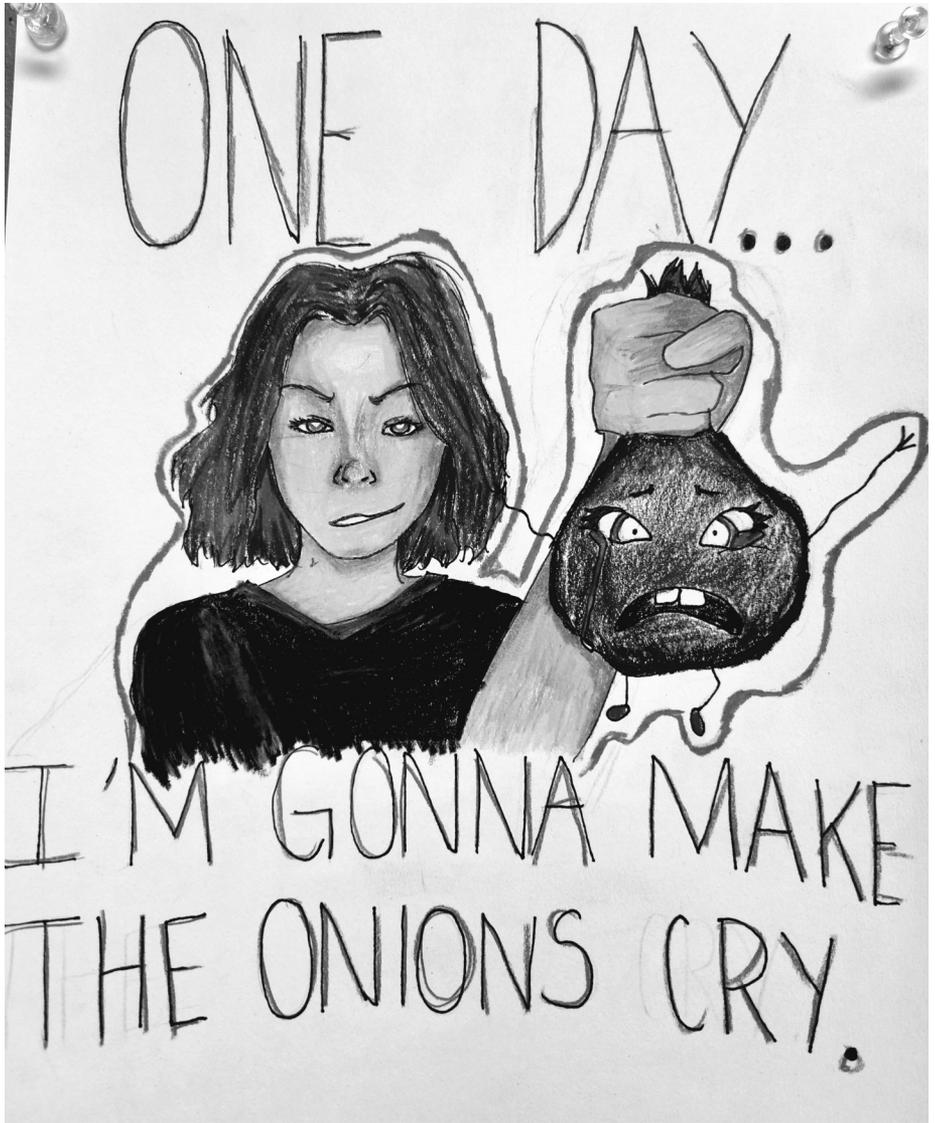
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Kyler Collins

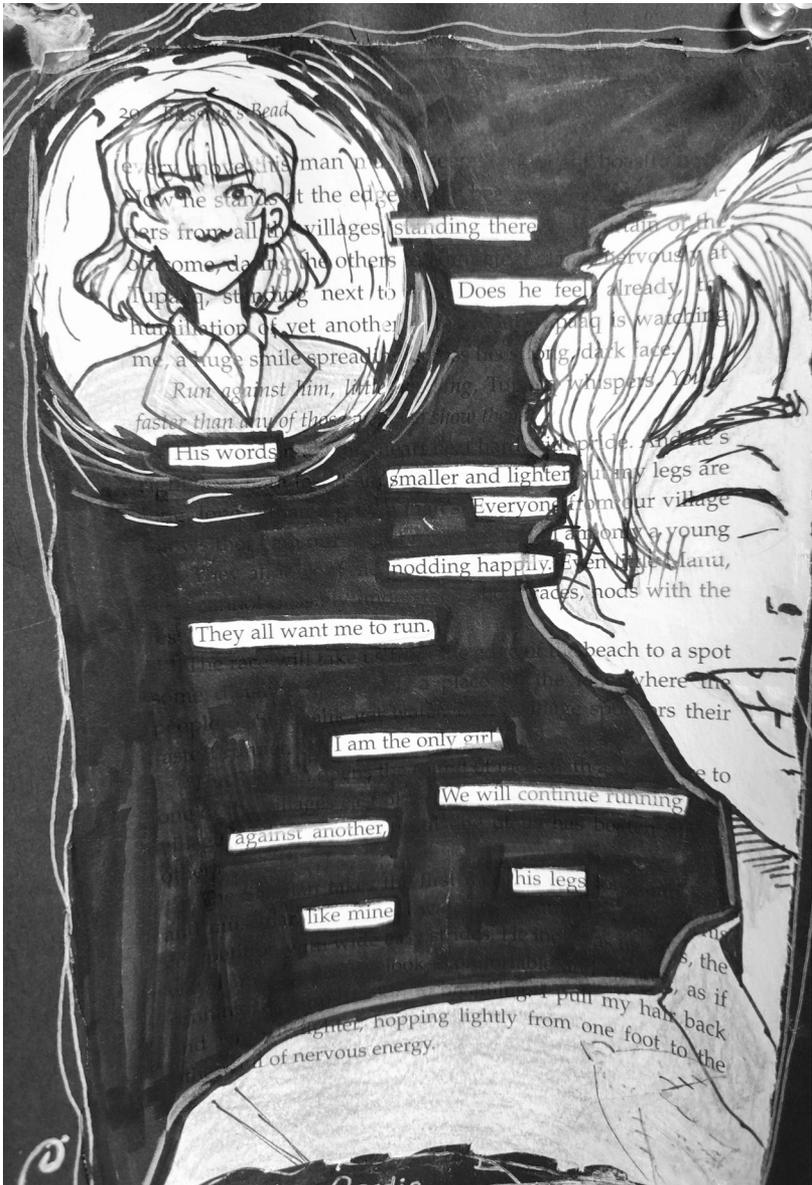


Rachel Gray



New Beginning
Emily Feely

As the sun goes down ,
Everything is calm ,
Everything is asleep,
Everything is quiet,
Everything is peaceful,
Knowing ,
Tomorrow will be better,
Will be different,
Will be,
New
This keeps us going,
Keeps us moving
It propels us
Towards a new beginning



Harlee Grodis



Escape

Kloey Bush

"Before you enter its cell you need to remember this, it may take the form of a child but it lost every ounce of humanity the moment they began the experiments. This patient is severely dangerous to everyone but itself and has spilled more blood than any other patient we've ever confined in any of the ten wards." The man had been stressing these points for the past hour, while the doctor had been getting all her protective equipment on. She could have sworn she'd be able to tell him back every word of warning that had been printed onto the file case.

"I am aware, Supervisor Kiln, I know of every possible danger that comes with stepping foot into its cell. You won't let me forget." She sassed back, a teasing grin on her face but it fell when she noticed the higher up wasn't showing even a hint of amusement. The man just shook his head and ran a hand through his ever silver turning hair, every day he felt as though he gained several new strands of gray, his hair turning from stress.

"I don't think you understand how dangerous this patient is, Nema. They have single handedly slaughtered an entire division of Ward 10's agents. They don't have any guilt, or humanity. There have been reports of it mimicking a passing agent's daughter's voice, several days after she died of a heart condition, because she failed to acknowledge who was in the cell when they said hello. They've spilled more blood then the Orion Division has when trying to bring in escapees. It is a true monster of the highest caliber, not a joking matter in any way." His voice was harsh and cold and the doctor couldn't help but to swallow down harshly. She knew of the atrocities committed by 10-056. They were used as the worst case scenario of a break out in screening, and they had been shown pictures taken directly from the carnage following the last time it broke through its restraints. Over half of her entering class had quit that day, they had left the building crying and gagging, several having thrown up over the classroom.

"It'll be fine. It's tied down by eight tons of chains and is basically nailed to the wall with the mental age of a teenager. What could he possibly do?" Kiln glared harshly at her but she ignored that in favor of opening the capsule and stepping in, listening to the glass door tighten so



tight no human could open the doors. Between how heavy the doors themselves were and how much pressure was applied the moment they closed they were basically impossible to open unless it was using the levers on the outside.

She steadied her breathing before forcefully opening the cell door, nearly losing her nerve when two toxic green eyes locked onto her figure. She breathed out slowly and walked further into the room grabbing the chair from the corner and pulling it in front of the door and sitting down, all without taking her eyes off of the humanoid creature as it tilted its head slowly, observing her through the dark shadows of the cement floored and padded walls room. The only light being supplied from the small window on the door shining a small light onto its face which looked horribly humanoid and childlike.

"Patient number 10-056, I am Dr. Neoma, your new leading doctor while screenings are administered-" She couldn't finish her introduction as a low voice cut her off, it was too raspy to be healthy but managed to hold a high pitched undertone.

"You're new to this facility." it cooed out, Neoma could hear the grin in its voice as she suppressed a shiver. How did it know that?

"How do you figure?" She kept her voice steady and refused to show even a bit of her unease. The creature laughed again, its head tilting inhumanly far to the right as it stared her down. Unnerving eyes never blinking.

"You left the light off. Older experienced doctors never listen to protocol. Call it a stupid practice that only puts them at risk. You haven't gotten your introduction down, you stuttered with your title. They don't like assigning older doctors to me. And..." They trailed off looking at the doctor as a large fanged grin grew across their face as the light from the hall shut off leaving the only light to be its eyes which glowed in the dark space. The low sounds of chains scraping on the ground filled the small room.

"Experienced doctors would have known my chains weren't on anymore the moment I moved my head." Neoma choked in shock when the creature launched forward in a dangerous lunge grabbing at her armored shoulders and digging its claws into her skin. She wasn't even able to scream before it ripped her jaw clean off and dropped her on the



ground, a low gurgle filled the room as blood began flooding down her throat and she began choking on her own tongue. It stepped heavily onto her, dragging a loud gurgly cough to erupt from her throat. It purposefully stepped onto her a second time in order for it to get to the door before pulling it open. Neoma watched helplessly as the movement tracing lights flickered on, it itself was so horribly thin with long nails obviously filed to a point, most likely against the chains that were so useless in keeping it under control. Its patient uniform was the same as all the others, the only difference was the white cloth painted red and brown by new and old blood.

"You're also too trusting. Older doctors know to trust no one, not even themselves." it cooed out, barreling through the doors at an impossible speed the sounds of the metal doors breaking out of the walls and hitting the floor with a bang.

Neoma could do nothing but cry silently, choking and gurgling on her own blood and tongue as it sat limply against her neck no longer kept in place by her jaw as the screams of her newly appointed co workers sounded out, as the alarm began screaming through every room and finally as the robotic announcement came on over every room within each ward.

"Warning patient; 10-056 has escaped containment. I repeat, patient; 10-056 has escaped containment."



To confer and neglect
by L.M.

Each inconvenience, I'll listen; What's wrong?
Every complication, I've got it; Carry on.
Although you need five, I'll always give ten.
The tendency to give more than you can spend.
When you display the face, that may never dim.
The chance of being recognized, when you need it most, is thin.
Ponder. Anticipate. Presume
What can I say to liberate their anguish?
Disregard. Shun. Disdain.
All the things that yield my pain.
I've constructed a world where I am number two.
And those around me, their mishaps, I consume.



Leah Lock



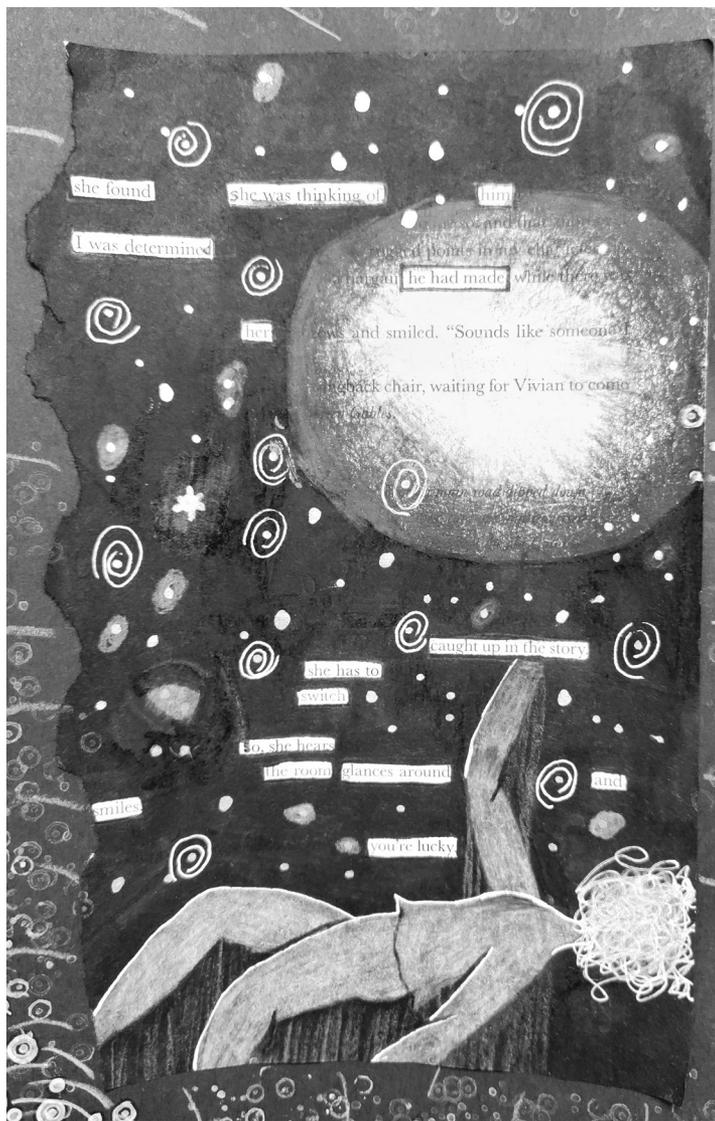
Only say kind things
Emma Huber

As someone with tattoos and piercings, I have experienced first hand people that love expressing their negative opinions towards tattoos and piercings. Someone close to me had told me “Young ladies are much prettier with only earrings and their hair done nice.” I didn't say anything back, I always avoid feeding into certain conversations because a reaction is what they are looking for. To myself I thought “Who do you think I am doing these things for?” And it's only myself, I couldn't care less what others think. Anyone with tattoos and or piercings has definitely had something similar said to them. Everyone is different, everyone has different opinions, different likes and dislikes. I love that, differences are what makes humanity so cool. What I do have an issue with though is when someone doesn't like piercings, and goes onto voicing that directly to someone with piercings. What is the good in that? Essentially you're telling them that they aren't attractive because of the piercings. When I've had that said to me I wanted to say back “You were more attractive when you kept your mouth shut.” or “You would be more attractive if you did have piercings.”



What's also great are the negative assumptions made about tattoos. Inkedritual.com has an article that says "Some negative perceptions are that tattooed people are more rebellious, less intelligent, with lower levels of competence, inhibition and sociability." This makes no sense to me because they're just a form of self expression. Simone Biles actually has a few tattoos. She is an extremely talented and successful individual. I don't think anyone doesn't like her, but let the anti-tattooers find out and hell might break loose. Imagine being a child watching the Olympics and your parents turn off the TV when Simone comes on the screen and when you ask why you can't watch they say it's because of her tattoos. Let's all hope that hasn't happened to anyone *fingers crossed*.

The one thing I hope you have taken away from this is to only say kind things. I mean come on, weren't we all endowed with that ideology in kindergarten...



Gabbee Guido



Harlee Grodis



The Final Word

What Makes Her
Charina Gray

We are the druids.
We carved our hearts out of the Redwood,
Scooped our hair from algae-ponds.
Damp and frigid, we trudged the mountain peaks
To sing to the forest and desert, sea and jungle,
Our voices molded from soil and so
Coarse and crumbling it poured from our lips
And formed crevices in the earth.
Heed the rivers and know—
We are the mothers of land.



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an annual
Literary Award

