

STARRED★

Wayland-Cohocton High School's Literary Magazine



FALL 2021



STARRED

EDITORIAL STAFF

Akira Coats	Editor
Lauren Ruch	Editor
Leah Lock	Editor
Amaris Carrier	Editor
Charina Gray	Editor
Charlotte Coats	Editor
Mr. Folts	Advisor

Special Thanks:

Thanks to Mrs. Bauman and Mrs. Kurtz for assistance with artwork submissions.

Thank you to Mr. Lynah and Mrs. Snyder for serving as distinguished judges for the Fall Writing Contest.

Cover Art: "Splat" by Charlotte Coats

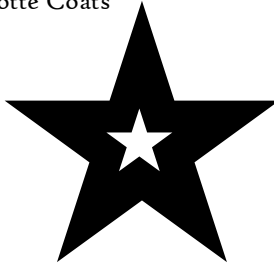




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Work or Title	Name	Page
Spawn	Charina Gray	5
Book Exorcist	Akira Coats	14
Heavenside Animal Resort	Emma Huber	22
Translator	Trevor Donlon	26
Artwork	Trevor Donlon	27
Artwork	Rachel Gray	28
Artwork	Victoria Bevis	29
Photograph	Courtney Merrill	30
Part 1	Kloey Bush	31
The Powerful Cold	Maya Gielen	32
Flaky	Trevor Donlon	33
Artwork	Harlee Grodis	34
Part 2	Kloey Bush	35
Questions	Leo Schledorn	36
A maximis ad minima	Akira Coats	37
Artwork	MaryLi Nielsen	38
My Mind's Home	Amber Lazarus	39
Artwork	Leah Lock	40
Part 3	Kloey Bush	41
Artwork	Akira Coats	42
Grey	Raven Parkison	43
The Ground	Victoria Bevis	44
Grief	Kaitlyn Doty	45
Wall of Masks	Lauren Ruch	46



Work or Title	Name	Page
Part 4	Kloey Bush	47
The Dove	Ron Gray	48
Paralyzed	Haley Hoyt	49
Feather Cat	Akira Coats	53
Non Sum Qualis Eram	Raven Parkison	54



Fall Writing Contest Winner

Spawn
Charina Gray

I didn't know where the flower came from.

As I entered the greenhouse, I felt it. I'd found it earlier that morning, but the mystery of it still hung in the air, choking and restless. Even with all of the exotic greenery here, its strangeness was unmatched. I looked around. That was even stranger. I shivered as I stared at the vines unfurling from the flower, traced their lines up the side of a beam. Those vines were on the window this morning. The flower was moving.

Fidgeting with the watering can in my hands, I circled the beam. This thing had to go. I looked around at the rubber figs and the orchids shrinking under the flower's crushing presence, then at a pair of shears hanging from the wall. Those would do it. I trailed the vines until I found the flower again. It was impossible to miss—it pulsed a muted orange glow against the tree leaves around it, thump, thump, thumping away a frantic heartbeat that sent ripples of suffocating reek into the air. I inhaled sharply and moved. Every step dragged as I drew the blades around the stem connecting the flower to its limbs.

Snip.



The flower head fluttered to the floor, its glow fading and stem shriveling into a stiff, blackened stub. Relief never came. Instead, there was a new flower blossoming in my chest, snaking through my lungs and carving uncertainty into every shaky breath. This didn't feel right.

The phone rang from the house. I froze. Something twinged in my chest. Leaning down, I whispered back to the colorless petals, just as it'd been whispering to me all morning.

“Good riddance.”

Those words didn't sit right. The petals didn't move this time, just rustled with a breeze from an open window.

My nerves prickled as I made my way back inside, trailing dirt through the carpet to reach the phone. I picked it up. “Hello?”

“Hello, Juno? This is Caleb. Beth and I were hoping for your help—there's something weird growing out here, and we don't know what. You're an expert, right? Do you think you can come by the East coast of Mounts Creek Water?”

“I-”

“Sounds great, thanks.” The line cut off. I slammed the phone down with a huff and threw the shears into the sink. Those townspeople couldn't care less about me or my plants unless they needed something, but they talked among themselves, and rumors



spread faster than the vines I'd murdered. Murdered? Never mind. The last thing I wanted was for them to label me a hermit again. Or a witch, but that was a different story.

* * *

Pulling up to the lakeshore, I knew something was wrong. A crowd was gathered around something I

“Thick, black vines had erupted from the stub, and there were two heads in the place of one, both unfurling in angry flashes of red, glowing petals.”

couldn't see, and as I cut the truck engine, Caleb ran to the window.

“You won't believe this, Juno.

There's this flower-thing

growing from the rocks, come see.” A flower?

I entered the crowd, shoving past with a few glares and curses thrown my way. What was this all about?

Oh.

My stomach churned at the sight. Over the rocks sprouted scraggly arms of vines and a familiar creature. I retched. Before me was the same flower I'd found in the greenhouse, only twice as wide and putrid. These vines were thicker, the petals brighter,



sharper. The stench was unbearable. Unintelligible words flitted through my mind, and I knew it was speaking to me, whispering, whispering, as it always did. Or maybe the whispers were from the people who'd all backed into a cautious circle around me.

"What is it?" Someone cried. "The thing's been crawling across the shore!"

A chill crawled down my spine. "I don't know. I've never seen anything like it." Liar. Murmurs arose behind me, low and panicked.

A man approached, his hands wringing restlessly. "Can you get rid of it?" He asked. His wrinkled eyes were wide, full of fear, flicking between my face and the flower next to me as it swayed in the wind. It looked like it was dancing.

I strode past him, back to the truck to grab tools. "Of course. I'm a botanist," I said without turning back.

A few minutes later, the flower was dead, its petals shuddering into grey chips. The crowd around me exhaled a collective sigh and slowly dissipated. Dropping the shears, I walked to the lake's edge and plopped down on the rocks.

Caleb's boots crunched the gravel behind me.

"Y'know, Beth and I really appreciate you coming down here," He said.

I scoffed without looking away from the lake. "Yeah, yeah. You all do. Bunch o' liars." The water



bobbed in the sunlight, forming shallow crests that broke before they reached the sky. I closed my eyes, taking in the breeze and the quiet. This was nice.

Caleb gasped. “Juno, look!” I sighed, glancing over my shoulder. What now?

The flower was back. Thick, black vines had erupted from the stub, and there were two heads in the place of one, both unfurling in angry flashes of red, glowing petals. Someone swore—Caleb? Beth? Reality came crashing over my head. Everything around me was spinning, and my heart skipped, tightened, twinged. I groaned. That flower was doing something strange to me. I stumbled back to the truck, stars swimming in my vision, then slammed the door as everything melted into darkness.

There were no dreams, only restlessness, then something crashing against my window. I blinked my eyes open to a red glow across the windshield—flashing petals covered it, each the size of a palm tree leaf. To my left, cracks webbed across the glass, and outside the door was Caleb, bloodied and frenzied, his eyes wide and teeth grit as he slammed my shears against the window. “Open the door!” He screamed. I’d locked it. Without thinking, I clicked it open, and not a beat later, hands snaked in and yanked me from my seat, slamming me against the side of the truck, Caleb leaned in, his face twisted into an ugly expression of rage.



“What did you do, you witch?” He spat. “With all of your things growing in that cursed house, I know you caused this.”

I scowled at him. “What are you talking about?”

Caleb shook his head. “Not good enough.” He raised the blades, breathing hard. “Say hello to Beth for me.”

Just before he brought it down, something dark whipped through the air, slicing my face and plunging into his neck. His eyes grew wide. Blood gurgled from the hole in his throat as he lurched back and landed on the rocks, stiff and lifeless. On the ground was a vine, its end sharpened to a dagger point. My legs buckled beneath me as I gasped for air. Caleb tried to kill me. He was fine before—before...what was happening?

The shock seeped into dread as I looked around. Town wasn’t too far from the lake, but from here, I saw what had happened: flowers the size of trees had sprouted over the roads, on sides of houses, and out of windows, their red and orange glows casting uneasy beams in the evening darkness. Ropes of vines formed tangled brambles that lined the sides of roads and formed tall, winding blockades. Screams erupted in the distance. The flowers were killing the town, strangling it.

I couldn’t see straight anymore—something slick trickled down my nose, and my head throbbed. It



was the cut across my forehead. I crawled back into the truck, digging out the keys from the mess on the floor, and turned them in the ignition.

It didn't start. There was no doubt the vines had slithered under the hood and destroyed the parts. They were stretched over the truck in intricate, geometric patterns, shifting this way and that. There was no other way of getting home, no other choice. I slid out and walked.

Minutes passed, then an hour as I trudged down the dusty road. I couldn't hear the screams anymore, couldn't see the town, couldn't feel anything. How far was the greenhouse? "What are you?" I said aloud. Silence answered. "Why do you grow? What makes you blossom? The air, something I said?" Now I tasted iron—God, this cut wouldn't stop bleeding.

I paused. There was my house and the greenhouse next to it. A wall of meat-stench hit my nose, and I grinned. An idea came to me. Turning to a flower twisted out of the ditch, I cleared my throat. "I hate you," I said. The flower shivered, then sprouted another from its center. So it was insults. That made sense. The townspeople—their words had to have multiplied the flowers.

First I entered my house. It was dark, its windows blocked by vines outside. Everything was in place, untouched. The greenhouse was another story. Inside, the plants had completely taken over. The



windows were crushed, the beams splintered, and all of the plant pots scattered across the floor in shards.

My own plants were gone. Eaten, most likely.

The air dropped. I shuddered, my heart slamming in my chest. There. In the center of the greenhouse was another flower, violet and pulsing, thumping a steady heartbeat in rhythm with mine—white tendrils probed the air above it, whispering strange, intoxicating things. The vines woven throughout the room recoiled from my steps as I approached her. No, it. The flower widened under my gaze, stretching to reveal the black pit in its center.

“You remembered,” A voice crooned.

Ah, so I was wrong.

Seconds passed as I rolled this feeling around, digested it, before the realization wrapped around my mind and squeezed. I gasped as the memories came rushing back, from the scandals to the seed to the corpse and to everything else from before this clueless morning. I was such a fool. I should never have brought it in.

My hands trembled. I was paralyzed as the vines began creeping back, their wispy tendrils curling around my ankles and drawing close. The rest of them swayed, swollen and trunk-like, their sentience seeping like mist throughout the room. “I hate you,” I blurted. The violet petals shook and bulged with disdain.



“This is boring,” The pit said. “You say the same truthless things. Now you’re the weak one.”

“So help me,” I gasped. Breathing hurt. Standing hurt. My head was swimming, the flashes of purple in front of me swaying from one side of my vision to the other.

The flower stilled. “Tell me a truth,” It rasped.

This was it. Shaking, I smiled through the blood and grief, through the pain, terror, and through the stench choking my lungs. “You are my greatest mistake.”

The flower screeched, shriveling into a yellow pulp, and in the darkness creeping across my vision, I saw its weakness—for the first time, through all of my ignorance, I finally saw.

But it was too late. My body sagged to the floor as thick trunks of vines constricted my limbs, then my chest. In those final moments, I couldn’t help but laugh.

All along, it blossomed from lies.



Fall Writing Contest Honorable Mention

Book Exorcist
Akira Coats

Pacing as I ran, my hands crossed those dust covered books. I look for one in particular.

“Come on, where are you?” I huff and sneeze as the dusk kicked up in my face. “THERE!” I mumble and pull the book from its hiding spot. “Light gods and how to summon them...”

I read the summary placing the book on my stand hoping it isn't a dud. Before gathering my equipment. My mixture of herbs and salt almost spilling everywhere and bump into the chair at the nearby desk.

“Excuse you!” I huff, “How rude.” I mumble at the chair returning the grimoire.

As a book exorcist my job is to purify books in the name of the church. My craft is very dangerous since these are old gods I'm banishing out of grimoires. I start with the salt— some would argue it was a waste of spices, but I digress. My fingers flip through the delicate and crumbling pages.

“Boring...” I huff turning another page, “Wrong...” I sigh, the old archaic ways of magic were very dangerous. Old gods would trick humans into selling themselves, at least that's what the church said.

“Ugh it's a fake.” I close the book, tossing it in the blazing fire.



I roll my eyes. They keep making me go after duds that aren't even infused with magic. I start looking for another.

“No, nope, and no again.”

There wasn't any sign of there being cursed books anymore in this library. I get up and pack my things. I hoped that I could find another library. I push open the old oak doors that I had grown so familiar with. Wishing

“As a book exorcist my job is to purify books in the name of the church.”

goodbye to my temporary home. Stepping on the busy side-

walk I squinted my eyes at the bright sun beamed down at me. I had to find more work quickly but, first I should go home to Allister. Allister was where I expected him to be, the pub down stairs serving drunkards.

“Good midday!” I open the door grinning.

“You're off early?” He raised an eyebrow; he was already suspicious.

“Relax, I just finished quickly.”

“Asta, your job is the only thing that keeps the church from killing you.”

Rolling my eyes, I smirk.

“Not true. Stop exaggerating. Anyways how's the day been?”

“Long.” He sighs walking over resting his head on my shoulder.



“Aww poor Allister” I hum tauntingly as he huffs and rolls his eyes.

“Shut up,” he grumbles. I could tell he had a cheeky grin as he lifted his head.

“I missed you.”

“You have only been gone for three hours.” Allister ran a hand through his hair. I loved his hair, fiery and red sticking up in every which way.

“I should get you a hair brush.” I smirk playfully as I helped him clean the used mugs.

“Oh? Is it that bad? I quite like it.”

“Of course you would.” I rolled my eyes.

Allister sighs and walks over, “Asta, you make me worry.” He starts drying the mugs.

“Don’t worry about me Ally, I can take care of myself.” I grin and ruffle his hair. His amber eyes are pleading, and I know what he was asking for. He wanted me to renounce my position of Arcane but I couldn’t renounce my people or my religion.

“Asta.” He grabs my hand “You ran out didn’t you?” My eyes widened and I sigh looking down at his pale hand intertwined with mine.

“Ally relax, I still got a few more books before we have to move.” He relaxed and held my hand against the side of his face cupping his cheek.

“Ok I trust you.”

After the midnight rush I went upstairs to my room and started packing my things. I couldn’t face Ally. He would be pissed if he knew. After picking up my bag I tip-toed down the steps avoiding the creaky ones.



“So you did lie to me.” I froze, looking to see Ally sitting in the dark bar holding a glass.

“I didn’t want you to worry.” I sigh as he makes his way over resting his hands on my shoulder.

“I want to come with you this time.” Ally looked down at me.

“I can’t bring you, I’m going to Arcadia.”

Ally looked disappointed, “Asta, Arcadia doesn’t exist. It’s a fairy tale, made up by Arcane witches such as yourself!”

“I AM NOT A WITCH!” I shove Ally away.

Ally sighs and shakes his head, “Right, well I’m going with you. Asta I have to protect you.” I weakly push him away again.

“I’m not a witch. I’m an Arcane, a person bound to the spirits of nature.” I start to leave and he grabs my arm pulling me back.

“Ally let me go!”

I didn’t mean it. I didn’t even know I could hurt someone like that.

“Ally...” I shake him gently, “Ally get up this isn’t funny!”

The world around me started to blur. My chest had a newly found aching pain.

“Allister...” I whisper cupping his cheek as he crumbles away like sand slipping between my fingers. I had turned my only friend to sand beneath my feet. After grabbing my jacket, I fled into the cold night.

As dawn came the sky lit up mockingly as if this would end this misery. This always happens when I make



a friend and they leave.

* * *

Competition makes my job hard, the only thing that keeps an Arcane such as myself alive are the finite amount of ancient books. Sighing, I entered an inn that was on the outskirts of the city. Pulling the hood over my face, I walk up to the reception desk. She could tell they always could, by the markings on my hands. Usually they are protection pentagrams, used to keep away dangerous spirits. The lady at the desk was older; she looked like her face was trying to escape her skull wrinkled and trapped in a permanent frown.

“What you need ya just gonna keep staring?” The lady lit up a cigarette and let out a puff of smoke through her mouth.

“A room and some salt.” I state not breaking eye contact with her. She tossed a bag of salt at me and I squeaked, barely catching it.

“Go ahead Witch,” she scoffs, returning to her cigarette.

I bite the inside of my cheek and make my way up the old stairs. The Inn has unkept dust caking the window sills.

“Hey.”

I jumped, having to catch my salt for the second time.

“Who are you?!” looking in the direction of the voice.

“Well I was here first so tell me your name, idiot.” His voice is playful and boyish, I can see his wolf-like eyes reflecting the moonlight in the darkness.

“Elizabeth,” I state clearly.

“That's a plain name for an Arcane.” He steps forward. I inch back and find the window sill uncomfortably digging into my back. He is tall and he looms over me.



“What’s your name?” holding the salt close to my chest he seemed to perk up like a puppy at the question.

“You can call me Luci,” he hums and leans back, sighing, shoving his hands in his pockets.

“Luci? Isn’t that a girl-” I start before he cuts me off.

“Oi! I’m not a girl!”

I smirk. “Oh? You sure? Lucy~”

He gives a frustrated huff. I could still only make out his eyes.

“Luci is short for my real name, idiot!”

Now it was my turn to be offended, “I’m not an idiot! Stop calling me that!”

“Would you two shut up! People are trying to sleep! If ya don’t stop I’m callin’ the holy guards!” The old hag yelled from down stairs. We froze.

“Come with me,” he whispered and grabbed my arm.

“Hey!” I yell and protest.

“Shhh you don’t want to get caught right Lizzy?” I could tell he was grinning.

I ended up following the jerk, not really sure where I was going. He pulled me into the room and I was hit with the smell of incense.

“Welcome to-”

“Hell” I cut him off, smirking and pulling my arm away.

“Oi! It ain’t hell!” he crosses his arms defensively. I look around ignoring him. The room is dim, only a few candles lighting up the place.

“What are you doing here?” I mumble setting the salt down.

“Trying to contact lightbringer for advice.” he sighs.



I turn to look at him.

“Let me see your hands.”

Luci blinks, “Excuse me?” He shifts and takes a step back, “No.”

Rolling my eyes I walk over to the desk, “why lightbringer?”

“I need clarity.”

I was aware of the different god princes, Lightbringer, the Feast, and the Mirror. Different sects of the Arcane. I follow the Mirror known as Astaroth. I have never met another Arcane.

“What is Lightbringer like?”

Luci seems taken back by the question.

“Wise and very grumpy, so you aren’t part of the first sect?”

I flip through the pages of his journal curiously.

“I’m part of the third.”

He walks over taking the books from my hands and rolls his eyes, “That explains a lot.”

I give him a playful glare “What’s that mean?!” I reach for the book and he lifts it so I can’t reach.

“The mirror only cares for himself and you seem really stubborn. It makes perfect sense.”

Stomping on his foot I crush his toes with my heel grabbing the book.

“I’m not stubborn I’m persistent.” I grin tauntingly as he hisses in pain.

“You’re a Bi-”

“Wait, is this a grimoire?”

“NO.”



“Well now I can tell you're lying.”

“Oi! It ain't!”

“Did you write this?”

He sighs and nods hesitantly, “Yes I've been writing down everything I've exorcized.”

I looked down at the book and raised an eyebrow.

“Why? Isn't that a waste of time?” I toss the book to him.

“Oi! It's not. We don't deserve to be forgotten. You really are a third sect.”

He holds the book protectively.

“Oh I'm sorry, wise old man. It's more important that we live! As long as we live we can't be forgotten so what if some old books get burnt.”

“It's our legacy.”

“And?”

“And it's important to know where we've come from,” he sighs, setting down the book.



Heavenside Animal Resort
Emma Huber

Jen fastens her seatbelt and rests her head back on the headrest letting out a sigh of relief. It is quite the challenge packing for the zoo and simultaneously helping her children through their morning routines. She closes her eyes and thinks of anything they could be leaving behind. Pfft. The kids start giggling. Jen makes a mental note that the kids are definitely not forgotten about as they are currently laughing about farts. She opens her eyes and checks the GPS to make sure it is set on the correct place. Only one hour until a day full of fun at the zoo! Jen had stayed up late last night looking for zoos on Groupon. Joseph helped Jen for a little while but he got annoyed by how into grouponing Jen is and went to bed leaving Jen to find the zoo by herself. #BallinOnABudget

* * *

Jen and Joseph Adams have both lived in Salem for their entire lives. They grew up in this small town and know it like the back of their hand. Oddly enough neither of them have heard of the zoo they are going to. Heavenside Animal Resort has phenomenal reviews on Groupon and is held to quite the high standard. Later it would come to the attention of others that these reviews were not left by zoo goers but instead by the employees of Heavenside. Anyone that enters this zoo is never seen again.

The flow of traffic inside the zoo was quite bizarre. Everyone moved in groups of 10 or less. Typically 2-3 families were in a group, it depended on how big a family was. Each group would have 15 minutes at each exhibit. When the time is up a bell would ring and the groups would be escorted to the next exhibit by one of the two workers standing by the exhibit keeping watch. Everything



was timed precisely and executed orderly.

Heavenside Animal Resort is a zoo full of multiple secrets. Every single animal in Heavenside was a zoo goer turned into an animal. Zoo employees are given a sheet each morning that tells them what families to look for. These sheets describe ‘ideal families’, depending on what was in demand. The age of a person corresponds to what animal they can be turned into. Children are what Heavenside focuses on the most because younger ages create animals that adults aren’t able to. Adults make up the larger animals in the zoo: elephants, giraffes, rhinos, and big cats. Children are the penguins, butterflies, fish, tortoises, peacocks, and small cats.

* * *

“Momma I've got to use the bathroom” Ashley whines while doing the potty dance.

“Yeah me too” Asher joins his sisters urgency by tugging on his fathers hand.

The Adams separate, Jen takes Ashley and Joseph takes Asher. They agree to meet back up at the next exhibit. Just like the rest of Heavenside the bathrooms are also full of workers. Taking the children while they go to the bathroom proves to be extremely effective. Parents would obviously get concerned after their child doesn't come back. Parents always report their missing child to the front desk. This is when workers take parents to a waiting room and seat them, offering water and snacks to console them. Multiple children are taken at once. This starts a chain of events, multiple parents show up at the same time to report their kids. Employees have to work fast once there are parents in the waiting

room because if they start talking to each other it would become clear something weird is happening at the zoo. The food and drinks handed out are laced. It doesn't take long, maybe 5 minutes, and they are all in a deep sleep. A secret door opens and workers flood the waiting room bringing with them stretchers. Parents are placed on the stretchers and wheeled out into the laboratory where transitioning will take place.

Joseph falls right into the trap. He can't find Asher in the bathroom and makes his way to the front desk. Jen went into the

“Later it would come to the attention of others that these reviews were not left by zoo goers but instead by the employees of Heavenside. Anyone that enters this zoo is never seen again. ”

bathroom stall with Ashley. Instead of taking both mother and child from the bathroom workers let them both leave. The chance of a scene being created was too high, and the goal is to keep everything as behind the scenes as possible. Jen and Ashley wait at the exhibit for the rest of their family to show up, when they don't appear Jen begins observing more of what is going on around her. She notices all of the employees stare a little to long at the zoo goers. She also sees the communication between them via walkie talkie. They talk over the walkies too frequently and for too long.

“Something isn't right, let's go back to the car” Jen picks up



Ashley and plans how to leave. She takes out her phone and calls Joseph. There is no answer. The bell rings and Jen pushes herself into the crowd of people moving. She is able to leave this new group and sneak off in the direction she believes the parking lot to be in. Heavenside Animal Resort is set up like a maze and unless you are an employee of this zoo it is nearly impossible to find your way back out. Jen makes a few wrong turns and despite her best efforts she is not close to the exit. In fact she made her way towards the laboratory. Because she has no idea where she is she looks into the window of the building closest to her to figure out her whereabouts.

“Oh my god!” She sees all of the parents on stretchers being hooked up to brain machines. Workers shave the heads of parents before placing on sticky pads for the machine to be attached to. These machines erase all information from the brain and program the brain for whatever animal someone is going to become. Her eyes frantically scan the room and she sees Joseph being wheeled in. She places her hand onto the window and cries. Jen is so distracted by what is happening in front of her and doesn't hear the approaching foot steps from behind. Ashley gets freaked out when she see the worker approaching them with a club.

“Mommy. Mommy Look!” Ashley tries to get Jens attention, but it just doesn't work. Jen watches in horror as Joseph gets his head shaved. The worker is right behind them at this point and whacks Ashley across the head with the club. Ashley is knocked out of Jens arms. Jen rips her eyes away from the window in front of her and sees her child on the ground. She opens her mouth to scream but doesn't get the chance to. Whack. Jen feels a very hard sharp pain to the side of her head and then nothing. Everything goes black.

Anyone that enters this zoo is never seen again.



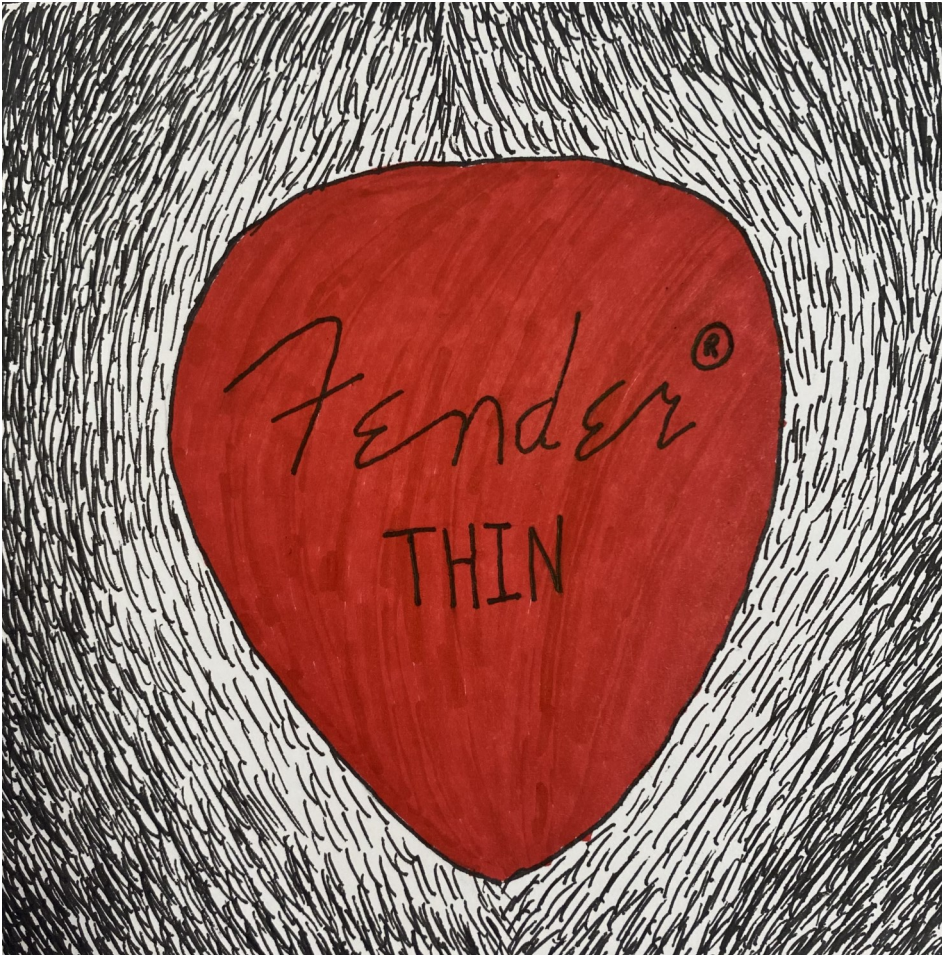
Translator
Trevor Donlon

A timid man,
Foreign to the native tongue,
Yet with the gift of a translator,
Is given a mouth to speak,

With fluttering strings wrapped in steel,
Speaking vowels through a maple face,
And with each motion of his hand,
It kills the vices of his speech,

A vast chamber wails heavy calls,
Accents and dialects vary greatly,
Uttering words within notes,
Power in every single whisper,

With this strength acquired through error,
A voice widened from a silent timbre,
A timid man no more,
Declares his freedom prideful and loud.



Artwork by Trevor Donlon

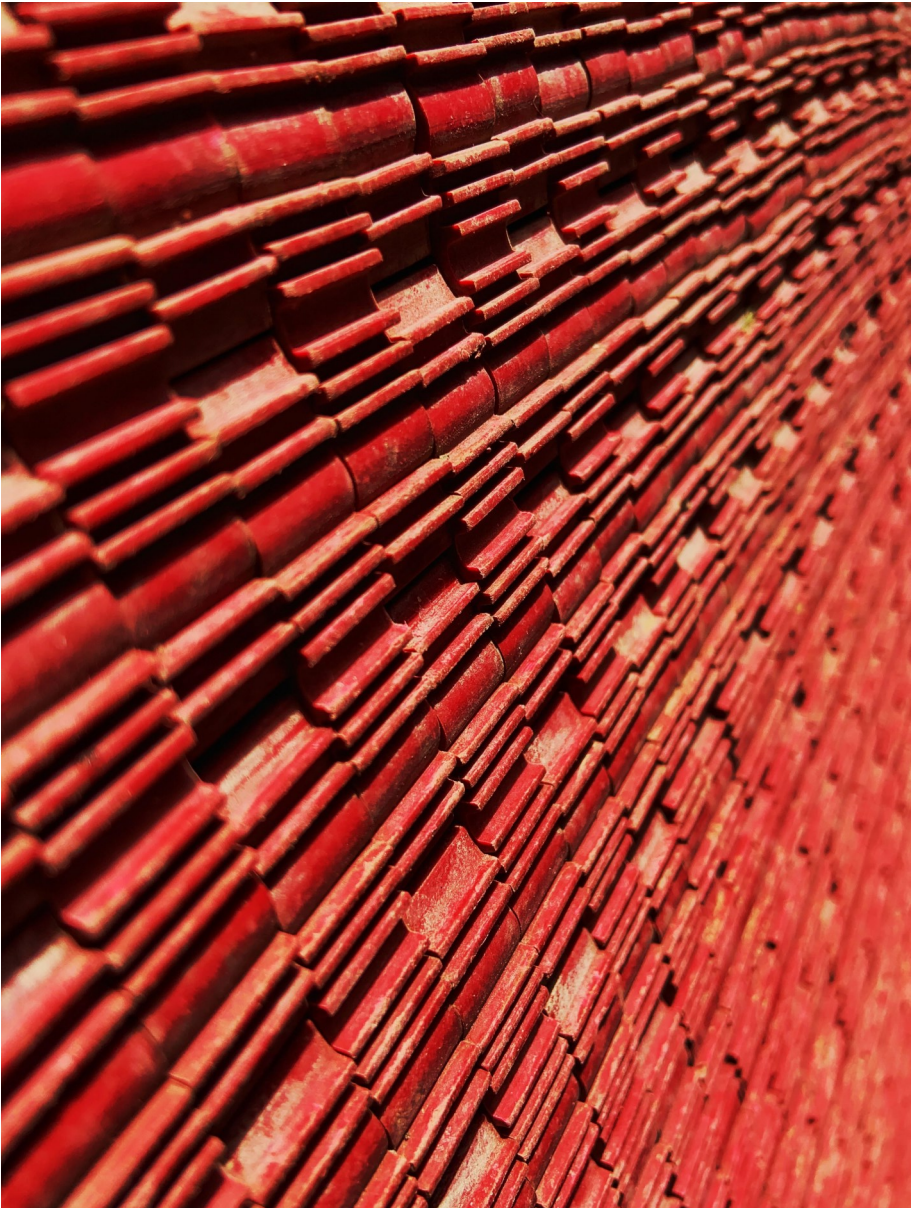


All along, it blossomed
from lies.

Artwork by Rachael Gray



Artwork by Victoria Bevis



Photograph by Courtney Merrill



Part 1

Kloey Bush

"I must admit Dr. Chrisworth is quite an audacious person. I don't mean this as a compliment. I find his fearless nature and boldness make him a far easier target than the rest of us doctors. This is most likely the final write up I will write for the man. However, I best get on with it. Just a mere hour ago a loud sound similar to that of someone crashing through a pane of glass echoed through the facility. I tried convincing him to come with me to the panic room however he refused the offer with an eye roll, as if I had made a stupid comment. He claimed that the facility was full of raucous patients and it was nothing to worry about. That is when I left him on his own; I knew then I should hide myself away for my safety. For the first thirty minutes of silence I began to worry I had been irrational and I'm almost positive Chrisworth thought the same as me; however, while I sit here writing this report waiting for backup listening to distant calls of Chrisworths voice calling out my name I know I wasn't. The man had let out too loud of a scream when he was killed. I believe patient 10-056 has escaped again."



The Powerful Cold
Maya Gielen

The cold feeling
The shivers on my neck
The icy feeling of isolation
Head feeling like a brain freeze

It's a powerful feeling
Takes over my entire body

I'm ice to the touch
Radiating a depressing feeling
Throughout my entire body
Feeling as if the black abyss
Has completely overtaken me



Flaky
Trevor Donlon

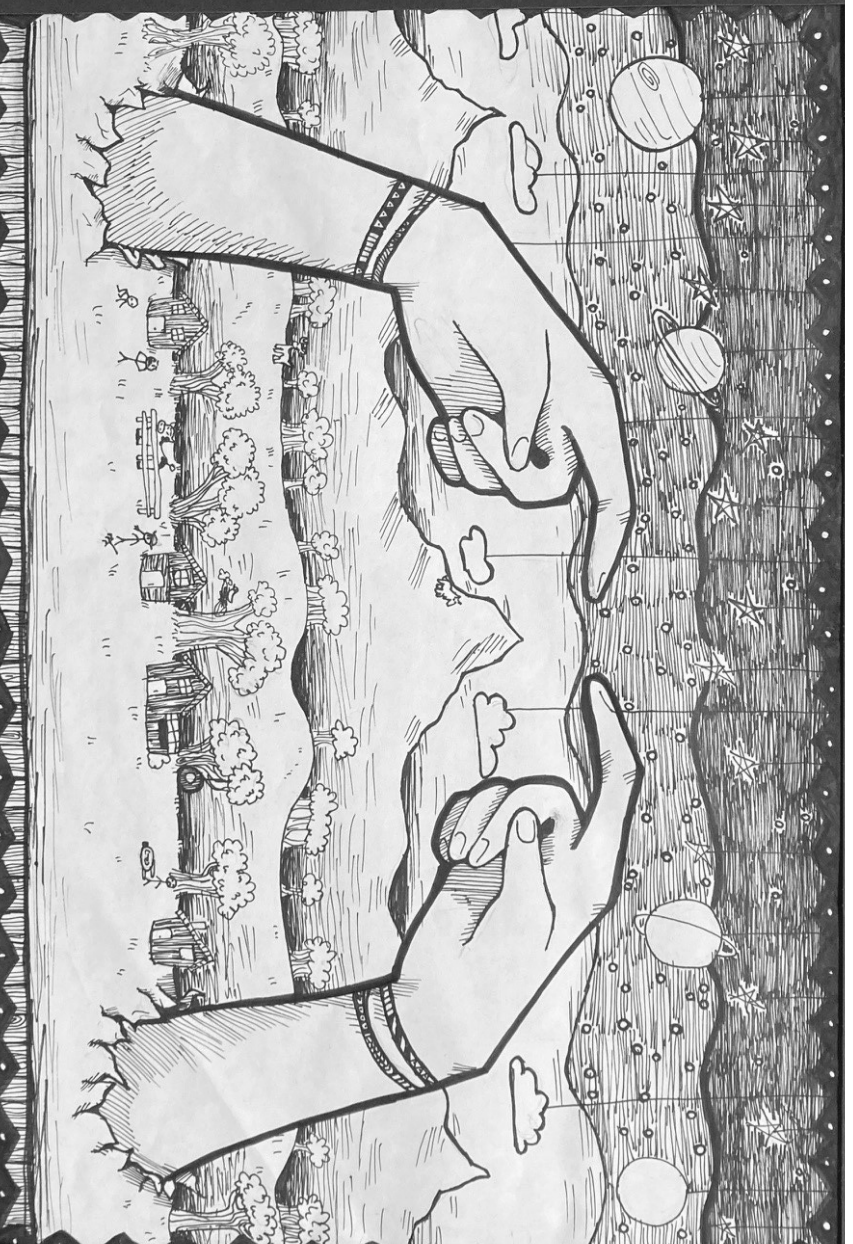
Ground of salt,
Water once touched,
Shattered fields,
Ripe to rust,

Past was lush,
Those lost times,
Cattle roamed,
Livestock grazed,

Now skeleton rests,
In open rays,
Foregone city,
A fleeting memory,

Weather worn,
And sunburned,
A ghost town,
Aged and sore,

Vast and stoic,
The desert stays,
Recollection,
Of the glory days.



Artwork by Harlee Grodis



Part 2

Kloey Bush

“One can deal with only so much before they start questioning how you got through screening. This of course applies to many who work in facilities such as mine, but this time it is directed to one person in particular, Dr. Worths. A fairly new hire compared to the others, very young as well. No matter his age, however, it is expected of all those who are hired to follow the expectations set. The expectations are fairly easy in my honest opinion. Honestly, all you have to do is follow the rules and respect the higher ups. Worths, however, had such careless flippancy with this single rule that I found it appalling to even work the same shift hours as him. He acted in ignorance of all basic safety measures and even filed grievances on, what he believed, to be the unfairness of keeping 10-056 locked up. I wish I could say I was surprised when I came into work one morning and was sorrowfully told of his disappearance the night before. Maybe I would have been surprised in his case that it was a natural disappearance. But after pressing the issue and observing cameras it was found he brought it on by himself. I mean who lets out a patient who’s cell is marked as highly dangerous no matter their appearance?”



Questions.

By Leo Schledorn

Who is one to deter one's sense of being?

Who is one to spite another's interpretation of the world?

Who is one to cement meaning into the world as a general term?

What is anything? be it physical categorization or a personal junction

All that is color, whether it be that of the sky or that of the trees,

All that may be beautiful, but what is beauty to the beholder?

Are we, as inhabitants of something greater, led to interpret as one may?

Trapped by a social stigma of what is and what isn't?

What is inevitable and what is absolute?

What follows from the written meaning?

Be it accusations of illness or a sense of lonesome ideology?

Are we doomed to follow that which is already stated ?

Or will expressive freedom and human will rock that which is deemed obvious?



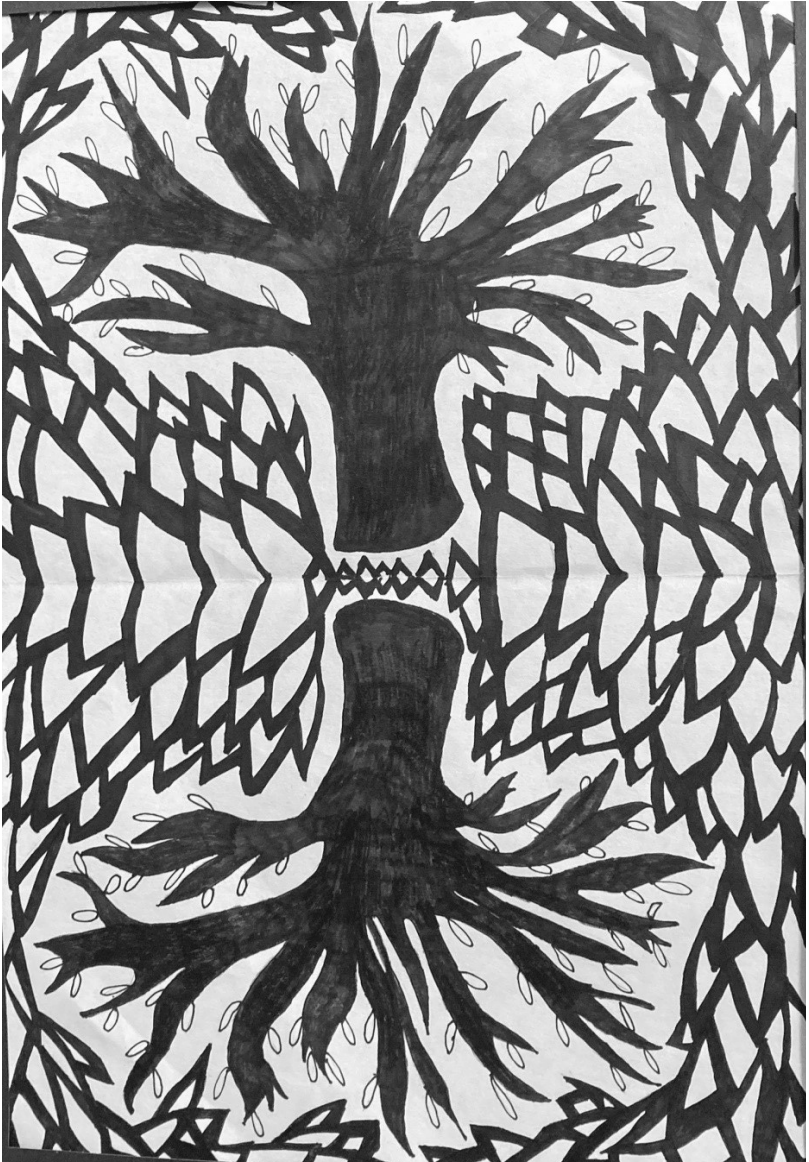
A maximis ad minima*

Akira Coats

Oh foolish child why do you betray me
falling into the flowing depths.
For your wings were never made of molten wax
perhaps it was your hubris
Not only did you fly to the sun.
You believed that
you were the sun.
The favorite son born of light dies
of his own will.
Falling into the cold depths
and losing himself in his own sin.
Oh brother why must you wallow in your own failure?
Was being the light that guides us all not enough?
Did the sword give you the same feeling
of fathers praise?
Hubris is little in comparison
to your ignorance.
For why
couldn't you see your own perfection.

I wasn't proud.
I was scared
Because
I felt my wings melting and scorching
my back with its weight.
For all I want is to melt them off.

*from greatest to least



Artwork by MaryLi Nielsen



My Mind's Home
Amber Lazarus

The towering branches
are the door to my home
These trails are halls
that I walk alone
This is the place,
where I am at peace
I can climb my tree,
where I may fall asleep
So rugged and rough
So simply sweet
My feet plant into dirt
As I hear the little birds tweet
Casually calm
The chaos subsides
I pick up my pace,
I challenge my stride
inhaling the fresh air,
I once struggled to find
My lungs fill with freedom,
my heart finds pride
I plunge into the bliss
I so longed to find.

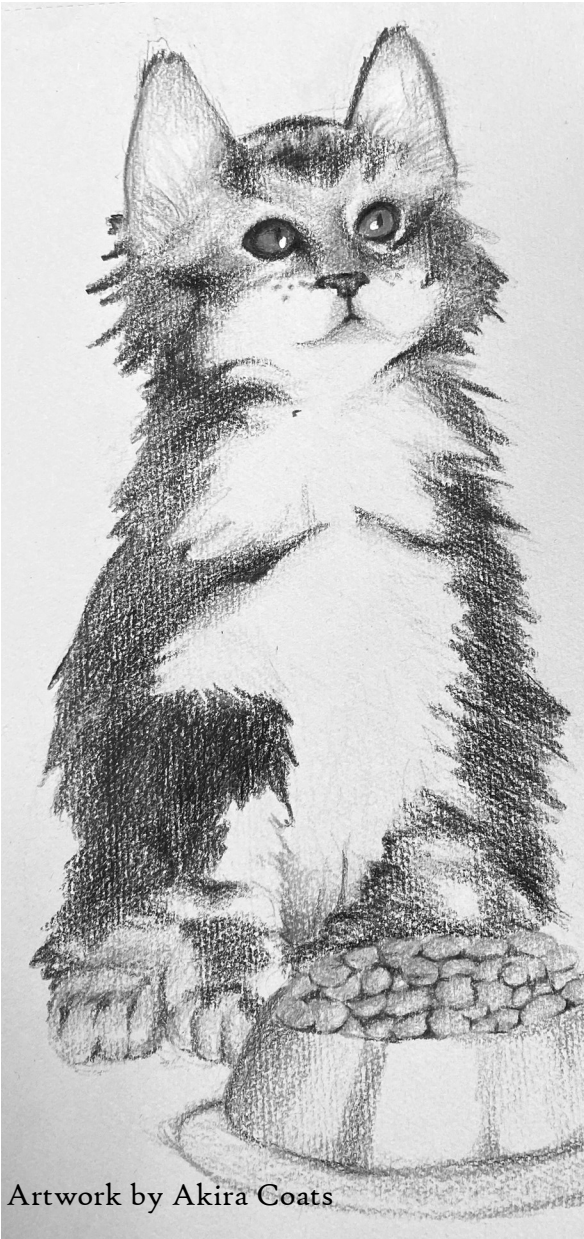


Artwork by Leah Lock



Part 3
Kloey Bush

“Dr. Crast was someone that could easily gain the respect of others, everyone in the facility including myself had at one point or another been enamored by both his personality and responsibility. He had always seemed so devoted to his work, so it was no surprise when he was promoted to being one of the seven supervisors within Ward 10. There are steps to become a supervisor, the final one being an oath you must swear to, one which makes you swear on your life that you will never reveal the secrets from within the facility to anyone who does not have clearance. Supervisors are the ones who observe all the other employees, they have to be vigilant and keep an eye out for any type of misconduct, sometimes this even evolves to the wards below the one they are primarily assigned to. If they believe someone is at risk of exposing the secrets they are to be reported by the supervisors to the main doctor. This had been done before by Dr. Crast which is why it was so shocking that he himself had been a whistleblower. When the truth came to light that he had been sharing the information with his wife who then shared with her book club whenever they drank a little too much, the head doctor decided on a punishment fit for such a betrayal. They decided it would be the best course to see if he would ever do such a thing again after a few days stuck in a cell with patient 10-056.”



Artwork by Akira Coats



Grey
Raven Parkison

Many hide away in the shadows.
Never wanting to be seen.
They always seem to be wherever you go,
Not many try to be mean.
It's just a good place to be.

Some stand in the spotlight,
Asking for all the attention.
They tend to be in the edge of your sight,
They might as well be an extension.
Yet they never seem to be right.

Those in between the light and the dark,
Are the most hidden of all,
Their contrast is never that stark.
The group is never small,
But that is where you find your spark.



The Ground
Victoria Bevis

Looking below to the ground from the rooftop,
Back up again into the cold formidable sky.

Wind blowing, seemingly right through me,
No shivering, no reaction, numb.

Future, past, all things inconceivable;
Facing adulthood, terrified.

I am the night sky,
Unpredictable, untamed, dangerous.

Only the ground below is sane;
I can see it.

Not prepared for the future
Never wanting to grow old and frail,
To be vulnerable in that way.

The inevitable dread that we all have to face,
Returning to the safety of the ground.



Grief

Kaitlyn Doty

Wings outstretched the delicate little sparrow
beats against the breeze,
Desperate to leave all behind.
The sparrow pushes harder and harder
forcing herself further and further,
She struggles and loses momentum,
Only making her push harder against the battle.
She grows tired,
And the sparrow falls.
She thrashes around and struggles to regain flight,
Which only makes her fall faster with the ground in sight.
Eyes closed, she waits for the end,
She decides to outstretch her beautifully silky feathers
one last time when,
The wind catches.



Wall of Masks
Lauren Ruch

Wall of masks are everywhere inside of us.
One for various occasions.
Either it's to hide their pain while talking to people
or being seen in public.
They all hide who we are
and make us do the dance of lies.
But what happens when we take them off?
Some are afraid of that possibility
and the aftermath they'll have to endure.
The possibility of losing everything or everyone.
But some aren't, they take theirs off with pride.
They tear down their wall, bask in the sunlight.
Brimming with delight of those who love them
for just being them.



Part 4
Kloey Bush

“Chaos filled the facility, screams of terror filling the crowded halls, suffocating those who managed to find a hiding place. It suffocates them more so that the haunting silence on night shifts no one ever wished for ever could. The head doctor of Ward 10, Dr. Adair had finally taken a vacation at the suggestion of her higher ups and was away from work out of state. No one could have ever guessed that this would have been the consequence of her absence, all of the workers had gotten so used to patient 10-056’s obedience with the doctor that they had forgotten of how dangerous he was when out of control. Manic distorted laughter echoed through the halls somehow managing to overpower the terrified screams of workers which seemed to have only grown in volume. Hands tightened around ears from those who could manage, desperately wishing to rid themselves of the threatening laugh and horrified screams. That day only a handful of people managed to get out of the ward alive. The ones who continue to work within Ward 10 tried to not notice how Dr. Adair never took another day off.”



The Dove
Ron Gray

The white feather
trickled to the ground
Like a waterfall.

A dove soared
through the balmy breeze
above me.

The way
it caressed the current
reminded me of my youth.

It looked free
like the flow of a river
that was recently unthawed
from the drowsy winter months.

Oh what I would do to be that dove
As I hold the feather in my palm.

The memories of my childhood
Flood my brain
as if I was looking through
my old school yearbooks.



Paralyzed
By Haley Hoyt

“Brynn,” I heard whisper into the night.

I sat up slowly, squinting until I made out the shadow of my grandmother.

I already knew what she was going to say by the worried look on her face. She was trying to tell me the news I wasn’t going to like. News that would later devastate me.

All that came out of her mouth was, “Pack a bag for school tomorrow.”

I knew what pack a bag for school tomorrow meant. It meant I wasn’t going to be here when the sun came up. I would not wake up tomorrow in my bed but somewhere else.

I quickly grabbed the necessities for school tomorrow and got into the car.

“Brynn,” I heard again whispering into the stars as I looked up on them.

I turned my head toward my grandma to hear the words, “You are so brave darling,”.

Brave wasn’t the correct word to use to describe what I was. I was the emotional support person. Anytime something like this happened I was relied on to support my family.

But this support system they all had was breaking.

The support system they all used was on fire, about to burn out, about to shut off when the car stopped.

We had arrived.

These halls I walked through many times in my life.

This time it felt really different.

Almost lifeless.

The faded pink paint they freshly painted a year ago was starting to peel and the aging wooden railings were starting to split.

I walked by each of the rooms remembering all the people



who once lived there and now were gone.

I followed my grandma through the hallway until we stopped at a closed door.

As it opened I immediately felt the night sky fall as the rain poured out and hit the roof.

There was my family surrounding the bed with tears running down their cheeks.

I dropped my bag and ran to the bed pushing my aunts and uncles out of the way.

There she was, lying there struggling to take in the oxygen with every breath.

“Brynn,” I heard, whispering one last time.

As my vision began to blur a little and the emotions I had held in rolled down my face and smacked the ground. I looked up at my grandma.

My grandma’s beautiful green eyes were filled with the same as mine as she looked at me and did her best to smile.

She then whispered, “It will all be okay, she is in a better place now, no more pain,”

Be okay, right, I thought to myself.

My mind began to catch on fire.

The fire was getting bigger and bigger and running down my body.

My fists started to grip tighter and I thought to myself, why did this happen? How does a person one day be so full of life and joy and the next be stuck?

For the first time in my life I knew what it felt like to be another person.

I knew what it felt like to not move at all but crave to run.

My feet were stuck to the ground beside the bed and my head would not turn another direction.

The nurses started to come and began to unplug the machines.

I wanted to scream, tell them to stop but no words came



out of my mouth.

One of the nurses looked at me and said,
“I’m so sorry for your loss honey,”

I stared at her for a long time, what on earth was I supposed to say to that?

I looked at the people surrounding me in this room. All of them were in tears, crying to each other, some arguing about who was closest to her to decide where to spread her ashes.

I was not even a part of this decision.

“My fists started to grip tighter and I thought to myself, why did this happen? How does a person one day be so full of life and joy and the next be stuck?”

I was her
flesh and
blood. I
was a part
of her and
I don’t
even get a
say on
where she
rests. My
fists started
to
clench

tighter and tighter the more they argued. I was standing right in front of everyone yet it was almost like I wasn’t even there until they needed a shoulder to lean on.

I felt this cold, chilling feeling in my stomach. Almost like I was going to be taken by the wind as it blew through the crack of the window.

Another nurse looked at me and jokingly said, “At least you won’t have to go to school today,”

My eyes glared at her and her voice cut out as she began to make more jokes. The family was laughing. My stomach began to turn every time a laugh was let loose over my mother’s body.

I couldn’t take it anymore, all of a sudden the glue let loose



from underneath my feet and I picked them up and ran. I ran to the car and got in.

My breath got heavier and heavier and it felt like someone was sitting on my chest. I tried to close the car door but my arms wouldn't move and my eyes began to close almost as if they were never going to open again.

Until they did.

I opened my eyes to be in my room with my grandma next to me.

She was rocking back and forth in an old wooden, white rocking chair.

She stood up and said, "Oh good you're okay!"

I tried to speak but felt as if I couldn't move again.

I wish I had woken up from an awful nightmare but I knew this was real.

My grandma walked out to the kitchen and returned with a tray of breakfast.

She then faked a smile and handed me the tray.

"I made you some breakfast," she said, placing the tray on my lap.

My grandma was an extremely strong woman, the strongest I had ever met. She took care of everyone before herself.

Maybe she's the actual emotional support human I thought as she turned around and headed out of my bedroom door before she started to cry.

I couldn't move though.

My body craved to yell at her to come back but instead I sat in my thoughts.

Too much anger, too much heartbreak.

The tray sat there taunting me and I finally understood what it was like to be paralyzed.



Feather Cat by Akira Coats



The Final Word

Non Sum Qualis Eram*
Raven Parkison

The castle's filled with despair.
The king's rule is naught,
But here I still remain.

Too gone to repair,
I never once thought,
I'd be free of my parents' reign.

I have learned to not care,
Though I felt I was shot,
When I finally got rid of their chains.

I may hit some snares,
with all that I've fought,
But I will never forget the pain.

* I am not as I was



Special Thanks

to the

WCTA

Wayland-Cohocton Teachers' Association
For Encouraging Student
Creativity and Enrichment
Through Semi-Annual
\$50 Sponsorship
of Annual Student Writing Contests

And to the

Lowell Club of Wayland

For honoring student writers with
an annual

Literary Award

