



*Flight: Unmasked:  
The Pandemic Edition*

A Literary Magazine for 7th and 8th grade  
Central Columbia Middle School  
June 2021

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*for 7th and 8th grade*  
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*FLIGHT 2021: A Literary Magazine*  
*A Note from the Editorial Staff*

Dear Reader,

The pandemic has been hard, but art and literature can brighten up our lives. Everyone participating in the magazine found light in the dark of quarantine.

We hope you enjoy our Literary Magazine,

The Editors

*FLIGHT 2021 : A Literary Magazine*  
*A Note from the Advisor*

It is an understatement to say that 2020-21 was a tough year.

Yet, Art not only reflects but also nurtures the resiliency of the human spirit. For those of you who managed to create and submit to make this publication possible---I'm cheering for you!! And--to Sarah, Kayleigh, and Liam--without you, I may have given up this year.

Thank you to all of you who persevered and created in the midst of a pandemic. Despite all of our mask-wearing, your voices managed to be heard-- speaking about the things that are on your mind. You inspire me.

Ms. Cronrath

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## *Write to Flight*

When I write  
My mind takes flight  
I let my thoughts talk  
Just don't walk  
All over these words  
Just think not talk  
Don't mock these words  
That I speak  
Just think not talk  
Then I hear  
"Drop writing  
It won't work"  
Words like these  
Start to way  
Into my mind  
I believe in myself  
I believe I have a future  
I don't understand why  
I listen to these people  
That don't believe  
In this dream  
That I have  
But  
These people don't understand  
These thoughts  
Are my vision  
So  
Just think not talk  
Listen,  
As I fight with words  
This is what occurs  
In my mind  
So  
Take my hand  
And  
We can take a flight  
Into my mind.

--Tyler Shaffer



--Stasia Bobal

## *Waffles vs Pancakes*

Since the beginning of time  
the question has always been --  
Waffle or Pancakes?  
Let's us begin,

We're the waffle team and we dream to spit facts,  
because nothing compares to the vertical and horizontal tracks.  
On lines of crunch, and squares of soft,  
with syrup dripping down and butter on top.  
We came to play, don't be mistaken,  
ain't nothin better with waffles then a side of crispy bacon.

You talk about crunch but light, fluffy, and golden,  
is better than the soggy syrup your squares be holding.  
Batter flowing like waves, coming in like the tide  
, unlike waffles, my toppings fit well inside.  
Blueberries, chocolate chips, strawberries and more,  
stuffing my pancakes with treats galore.  
Swimming in syrup and raspberry drizzle,  
hang on to the pancake school bus, we ride like ms.frizzle. **-capitalization**

We hear you a little and see what your dissing but waffles are better.  
We'll show you, just listen.  
With so many options on toppings and flavor, waffles can be eaten at breakfast lunch and  
dinner.  
Syrup and butter is not all waffles offer,  
fruits and whip cream make you feel dainty, softer.  
Slap on some chicken n' gravy no need for bistcuits, waffles have the soothing crunch that  
you need.  
That you've been missing.

Pancakes are flat great for spreading peanut butter,  
Nutella spread so flat it'll make you stutter.  
Make it into a pancake taco baby just fold it,  
slap on some bacon burrito roll it.  
Hot and steamy coming off the griddle,  
rhyme scheme so fly baby it's a riddle.

Waffles or Pancakes is the ultimate question,  
what was your take on this breakfast lesson?

--Avery Geffken, Natalia Taylor, Julia Samayoa, Maura Swab

## *Autism Says*

Autism says "The lights are too bright."

Autism says "It's too noisy in here."

Autism says "Leave me alone."

Autism says "Don't look at my iPad."

Autism says "Don't look at me."

Autism gets overwhelmed.

Autism gets overstimulated.

Autism gets annoyed.

Autism gets angered.

Autism gets raged.

Autism thinks "I'm a failure." but my brain says otherwise.

Autism thinks "No one loves me." but everyone loves me.

Autism thinks "I can't do this." but I actually can.

Autism thinks "I don't know what I can do anymore." but  
I actually know what I can do.

Autism thinks "I want to die." but I live on with my life anyways.

Autism knows "I'm a success."

Autism knows "Everyone loves me."

Autism knows "I can do this."

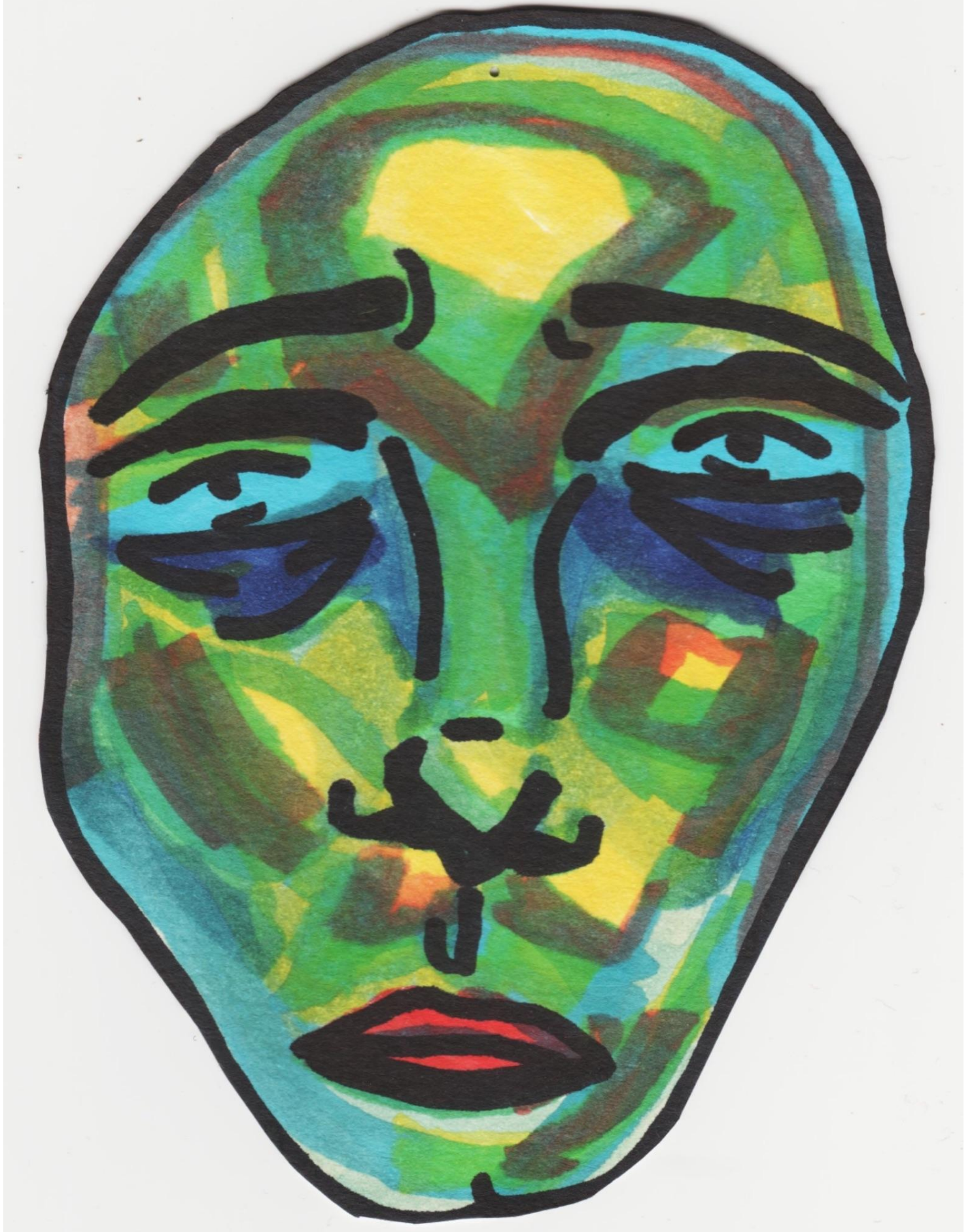
Autism knows "I'm smart."

Autism knows "I want to live."

**Autism is me.**

**--Aurora Eichner**





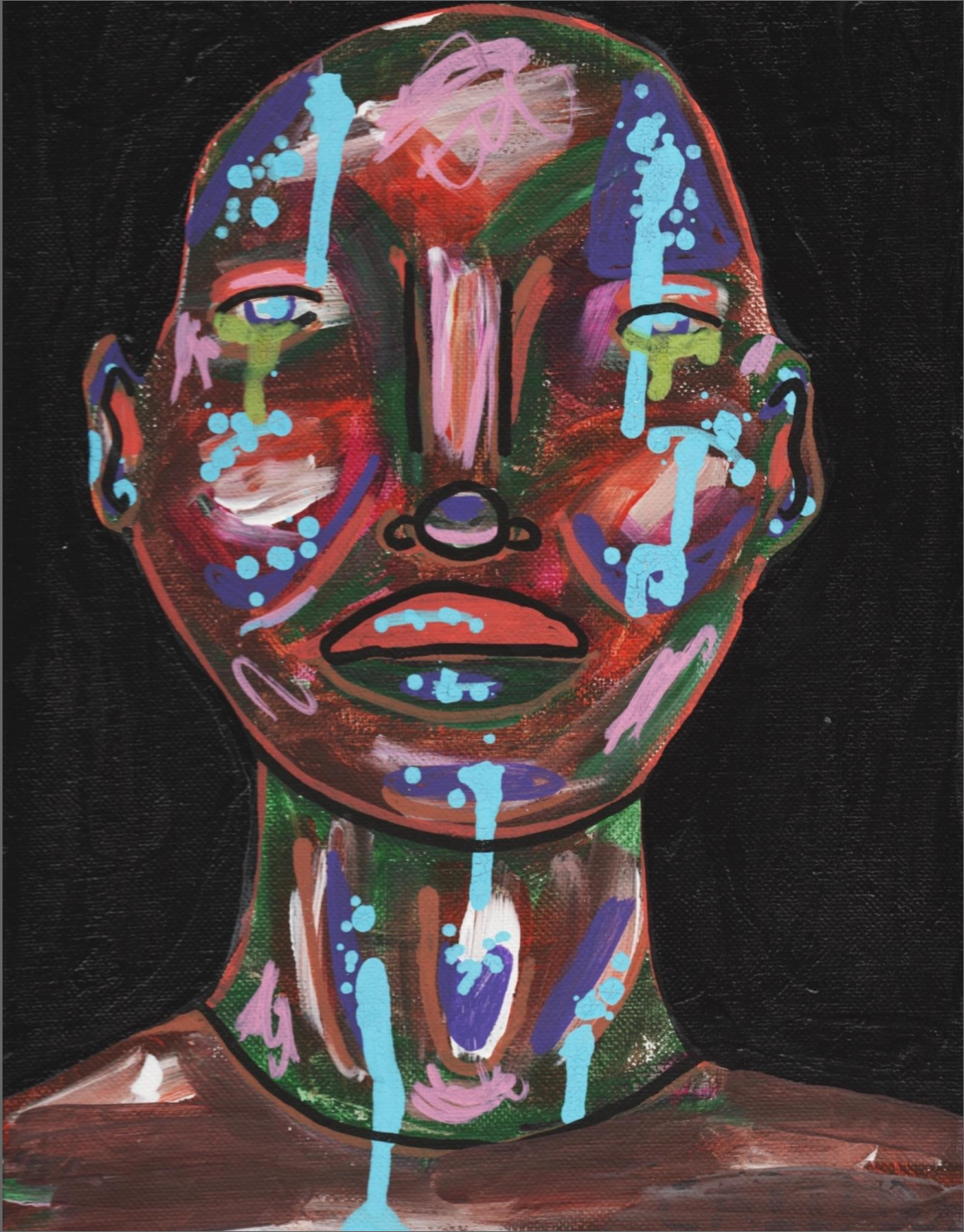
--Sarah Lang

## Wondering

People at every age are getting killed  
Why you may ask?  
and a task,  
I want to bring to your mind,  
Is to stop it,  
stop bullying  
stop harrassing  
stop discrimination  
and inequality.

They are being killed,  
and harassed,  
or thought differently of  
all because of their  
race, sexuality, or even because of their gender.  
People getting killed off, and bad mouthed  
all because of those reasons.  
and a task  
i want to bring to your mind  
is to stop it.

Funny how all you have to do,  
is say a few words that hurt  
they don't affect you  
but they affect the person you said them to  
and all you have to do  
is laugh  
while they sit,  
wondering what they did wrong



Bleeding Out-- Sarah Lang

## *A Note with Love to Everyone—*

Everyone has fears  
Some cause tears  
The loneliness  
Aches..  
5 Pain..  
Is it scary?  
Is it terrifying?  
The sleepless nights  
Helpless fight  
10 All you do is hope  
Tell me what's your fear  
Tell me what's got you thinking  
The look of drear..  
Upon your face  
15 You hope for peace  
So that you no longer overthink  
Just blink..  
The little voices  
In your head  
20 Sitting on the edge of my bed  
Wishing for the fears to end  
A fear of losing everything..  
And anything  
What are your fears?  
25 Do they cause tears?  
Some fears are good  
Others are bad  
Taunting me at all hours  
With their powers..  
30 Say you think with fear in everything  
Everyone does.

—Morgan McCracken



Falling Apart Heart-- Sarah Lang

## *Rose*

Tinted rose,  
the glasses you wear on your nose.  
Sugar-coating what I'm saying to you,  
as though it tastes foul on your tongue,  
5 going about your day without a clue.  
The sweet syrup you pour  
on the things you choose to ignore  
is now dripping off onto the floor.  
Picking and choosing what to hear,  
10 as though you could not bear to taste something so sour,  
sorting through the candies you don't want to devour.

Listening to me,  
with your cotton padded headphones,  
as your way to silently disagree.  
15 Taking my thoughts,  
with your grains of salts,  
not batting an eye.  
Let it be time  
to have you open your eyes,  
20 no longer protected by those rose-tinted glasses,  
cleaning up the spilled bottle of molasses.

--Julia Evans



Thinking-- Sarah Lang

# *Stereo Strangers*

--Evvy Hackley, Lexie Shellenberger, Alia Williams

Alone

Alone

Alone

Alone until I hear the words come from a microphone  
The unknown voice emerges from the telephone  
Until I hear the stranger singing their song  
Through the stereo I feel understood  
Not just pretending to be all good  
Someone finally gets me.

I just wish it wasn't a stranger on the stereo  
who helped me get through my body issues  
the unrelenting realities representing the struggles of today's youth  
unable to soothe  
the anger in truth  
I don't know what I would do without the strangers on the stereo.

Red

red from all the thoughts that scramble in my head  
it's like I'm hanging from a thread  
but instead I can't get out of my head  
Tyler Joseph once said "the world has left you lying on the ground"  
without a sound and with a frown  
but no one knows teens feel like they drowned  
From head to toes  
I'm skin and bones  
thin as a wire  
it's like an eternal fire  
looking into the mirror it gets clearer  
that I'm not perfect and I'm not getting nearer  
"Wish I was like you blue-eyed blondie, perfect body"  
I'm not flaunty  
I just want a different body.

4. I wish I could go back to 4  
when I could look in the mirror  
without worrying that I'm a bore  
every day feels like a chore  
just walking out my front door  
"I find it hard to trust not only me, but everyone around me"  
can't you see we just want to be free

the strangers on the stereo are the only ones who know how we feel  
when we are low listening in a world full of dangers  
to the songs made by these stereo strangers.



# *Memoir*

by Morgan McCracken

On the week of September 4th 2011, there had been a significant amount of rainfall across Pennsylvania. The small town of Nescopeck, Pennsylvania had gotten drenched with this rain storm. Very shortly after the rain had started falling, the river was drastically hit with tons of water. Commonly, this caused a flood. The raging flood waters were escalating much more rapidly than anyone presumed. At the time, I was staying at my house in the rural town of Berwick, Pennsylvania. I was safe from this flood but my grandfather lives on a farm in this small town so instantly all we could think was "Will the flood get to him?" For the first day of the flooding, we checked up on him regularly because we were worried. As long as family was okay, we would be okay until we could be able to help other families effected. It felt so sad to just see photographs on the internet of these homes drowned by the dirty water. The flooding had looked monstrous!

On that Saturday, my stepmom and I had gotten anxious and wanted to see what the flood waters were like. We were on our way to go grocery shopping and she didn't make the right turn to go to the local Aldi's. "We forgot to turn!" I said with an anxious tone but quickly figured out what was happening. We had made it to the bridge that takes you from Berwick to Nescopeck and you could see the flashy orange signs that alerted you there was flooding in that direction. The signs stopped us three quarters of the way across the bridge which was when she parked the car and we both got out. I stood there and acknowledged the rusty brown water. There were many people walking around in the water, most were doing the same thing that I was doing. The small town was bare, residents had fled when the water started rising so they didn't risk their lives.

We decided to take a walk to see a bit more of the town which meant we had to walk in the water. As I slowly walked around, I felt all the debris even though I had my sneakers on. The brown-colored waters had made the town look so dreary. Some people around me had a shocked look on their faces, others were horrified.

After a while of just watching over the town, we had taken a few pictures of the water and one of me standing in the water. The town looked as if a tornado had gone through-- it destroyed everything!

Then, we decided it would be best to head back home. I was soaked by the dirty water, so we weren't able to make it to the grocery store. I remember on our way back to my house, all I thought about was how many people wouldn't be able to return back to their homes. Most were so blemished that new homes would have to be built. Residents lost all of the items they'd worked so hard to buy themselves. I realized that anything could be taken from us at anytime.

The next day, my stepmom, siblings, and I made our way down to the grocery store to do our shopping that was supposed to be done the day before. We got all our grocery essentials and left Aldi's.

On our local news station, we heard that the water had risen, so as usual we got anxious. My stepmom was stopped at about the same spot as the previous day. My siblings hadn't seen the flooding yet and were speechless when they saw the damage. The rain had come to an end that night, so everyone was hoping that the waters would soon go down and the town could start fixing all their hard work. In my head, I was thinking anxiously, "How will residents pay for this" and "I wonder what my siblings are thinking".

My brother and sister didn't show much emotion, which is why I wondered what had been going through their minds. The whole town was just so silent like at night when everyone's sleeping and you hear everything; except this time, you couldn't hear anything besides the swishing of water, and it set a depressive mood.

It was September 7th, 2011 and the flood water had started to evacuate the town. Many people were hoping that this would be the news we have been waiting for. The townspeople were so overjoyed to be able to put their lives back together again. When the flood waters had washed away, residents went around and cleaned up all the debris. Their homes were then either cleaned up and repaired or rebuilt.

After months to a year of this progress, Nescopeck was back and better than ever! Some home owners made their homes look nicer than before the flood, which gave a more positive effect of the town to travelers.

Everyone was exhilarated for the town's reopening. The only problem from now on is to watch the river because if we get a monstrous rain storm we could be back to square one at any time. Hopefully, nothing as significant as this flood happens again in my history!

It's been 9 years since this natural disaster happened, and I still think about experiencing this sometimes. When I think of this memory I think of it as a negative event but I think of the outcome as a positive event. It cost people lots of money but nothing as tragic has happened since then, which is great.

This memory makes me realize that we take our lives for granted when we shouldn't as much as we do. Anything can be taken away from us at any second --like your home, pets, and even your own family. We should also appreciate what we have because others aren't as fortunate. Through all the tragic experiences in my lifetime, it only teaches me to be grateful and appreciative towards everyone as well as myself.



Drooping Face-- Sarah Lang

## The Elevator by Clara Badger

The elevator dropped, down, down, down, seemingly forever. When the number finally hit one, I went to walk out, but it kept going down... When the doors opened, I shrieked in fear as I looked out and jabbed a finger at the button but the doors were jammed. I gave up the struggle and walked out of the tiny metal room. Looking around I felt desperate to climb back into the elevator. A large basement was before my eyes. The lights glowed reddish and I winced as I saw the rot on the walls and floor.

“Where... in the world...” I said confused and nervous.

“Hello child. I think you are lost... or maybe delusional. This is not *in* the world,” chuckled a voice that made a shiver run down my spine.

I jumped back and raced for the elevator, but I crashed into a rotten wall instead. I shrieked in fear and looked around for the malfunctioning machinery, but it was nowhere to be seen.

“Yeah, I figured they needed to hire a new mechanic.” I looked around the room for the mysterious voice, but like the elevator, it seemed to never exist.

I shook my head, telling myself it was just a vivid dream. Replaying every horror movie in my brain, I checked my phone... but of course, no bars means no service.

I pursed my lips to restrain a cry of fear. ““If this isn’t *in* the world, then where am I? This is obviously a prank.”

The voice sighed and seemed to shake it’s head, even though it wasn’t visible.

“Seems you’re new to this area. Let me show you around.”

As if by magic, the elevator appeared in front of me, in the middle of the room. I raced to it and the door opened automatically. As the door closed I hammered the up button.

( Clara Badger cont'd)

*“This elevator looks different...”* said the voice in my head, but even as I pushed it away, I knew it was right. The original one was old, but kept its color. It was made of Palladium, but this one looked like it was made of 18ct White gold. I know this for a fact because it’s what my mom’s wedding ring was made of. And of course as a tiny child, I didn’t know what any of this was, but I remembered it. You don’t have to know the details to remember.

But that’s the thing, I did remember. Every day for sixteen years I have ridden the same elevator to the first floor. As a child, you get bored easily, so I used to look around the elevator for ‘landmarks.’ I knew the button panel was the same metal as the walls. I knew the buttons were black, with worn out, white numbers labeled on top unevenly. I knew the ‘emergency stop’ and ‘call’ buttons were not red, but blue. This elevator was impossibly similar to the original... but there was one main difference... the key hole. I know it sounds gross, but nobody used it anyway, and besides, it saved me the trouble of telling the cute guy at the desk that my seven year old self had decided it was a good idea to shove some gum into the keyhole.

I took out my emergency paper clip (Ok stop judging. In today’s society you can never be too careful.) and unfolded it. I gently shoved it into the keyhole. It slid out easily and the tip was clean. Not even close to being sticky. Last test. I dipped my nose to the keyhole and sniffed it. I didn’t smell watermelon, or... anything. Not cleaner, or fresh cut metal. Nothing. After what felt like an eternity, the elevator came to a stop... there were only two choices. Go out, or stay in. If I went out, well... I didn’t actually know. Anything could be out there, anyone. I could die out there, or I could end up on the first floor just like I was supposed to. Next choice is I could sit here and fiddle with it until I die of dehydration, starvation, or lack of oxygen.

( Clara Badger cont'd)

I took a deep breath and pressed open. My eyes and nose stung even before I dared use them. I opened my eyes, and before I could take a breath, I was aghast at what I saw. The same exact room. I had heard the elevator move, and could definitely feel it too... so what was happening? The mysterious voice rang in my ears again. "You look like you're about to fall off the edge there girly." I looked down to see that what had originally looked like a wall from the room was indeed nothing but air. I leaped back from the edge and slowly tiptoed back from it.

As I turned around slowly, a shadow entwined itself around my feet making me trip. I tried to free myself, but all was lost. The shadow dragged me into a hole in the floor and from there I fell. I don't know how long I fell but suddenly the creature picked me up again with its sharp claws. I now noticed the shadow had become a creature. It looked similar to a griffin from some sort of mythology, but it was black as night, and it's tail was like that of a giraffe but much longer. It had long ears and sharp eyes. It was extremely large. Just in an estimate, it was probably twenty times my size. I whimpered beneath it's sharp claws and it dug them in even harder. Silent tears flooded my face and I bit my lip to help but cry out again. My shoulders were going numb from the pain and the rush of the winds. I could do nothing but sit there in the cold wind. Eventually the creature slowed, then dived. Large gashes that decorated my shoulders grew from the winds. I felt like I was going to fall away, then the creature dropped me.

I fell for about two seconds and slammed into a concrete barrier. When I finally had the strength to sit up, I found myself in a cage as if a dangerous animal. I was in such confusion and pain that all I could do was frown and tilt my head sideways like a puppy. The creature landed in front of my prison and laid down. I was even more confused until something climbed off of it's back. There standing in front of me was a new creature. It had the body of a human but it drooled at me, and it's teeth grew long and pointed. I cried out in fear but there was nowhere to go.

( Clara Badger cont'd)

Suddenly, a drop of luck formed as the wind grew and my prison and I were carried away. Then I stopped moving, then started moving back. “No, no, no!” I cried. It was all over. But then something happened. As we landed, a smaller version of the flying creature picked us back up, and carried us off into the wind. We flew for probably a few hours, and I could hear the constant beat of wings behind us, and the creature with the glowing red eyes, sharp fangs, and a diet that consists of sixteen year olds. I gulped and tried to set my mind in a different place, but when your life is at stake, it is slightly hard.

The wind was in our favor and helped the little beast fly me back to the safety of the rotting room. I heard loud footsteps behind me and a roar of anger from the mother as she clambered onto the rotting room. I looked around solemnly knowing that this was it- but wait... the elevator was back! I grinned and jumped into the beautiful, speedy, shiny, life saving machine. As the doors shut I looked back to see something that horrified me. The mother grabbed onto the child's wing and threw it off the building. I screamed in horror and tears pierced my eyes like needles. How could she do this... Then she looked at me. I didn't know that a creature could have such a vivid expression, but it did. It's face was a mixture of mocking pity and cruelty. It showed that face even after I pressed the up button. “Until next time my dear friend,” it taunted. It's expression made me wince and sent a flow of ice down my spine.

When the doors closed, I sighed in a mixture of relief and heartache. The creature had saved me only for it's mother to kill it. Desperate to ignore my grief, I winced when I fingered at my shoulder wounds. As the elevator went up, I sniffed the keyhole and sighed in relief of that familiar smell of decaying watermelon bubblegum.



( Clara Badger cont'd)

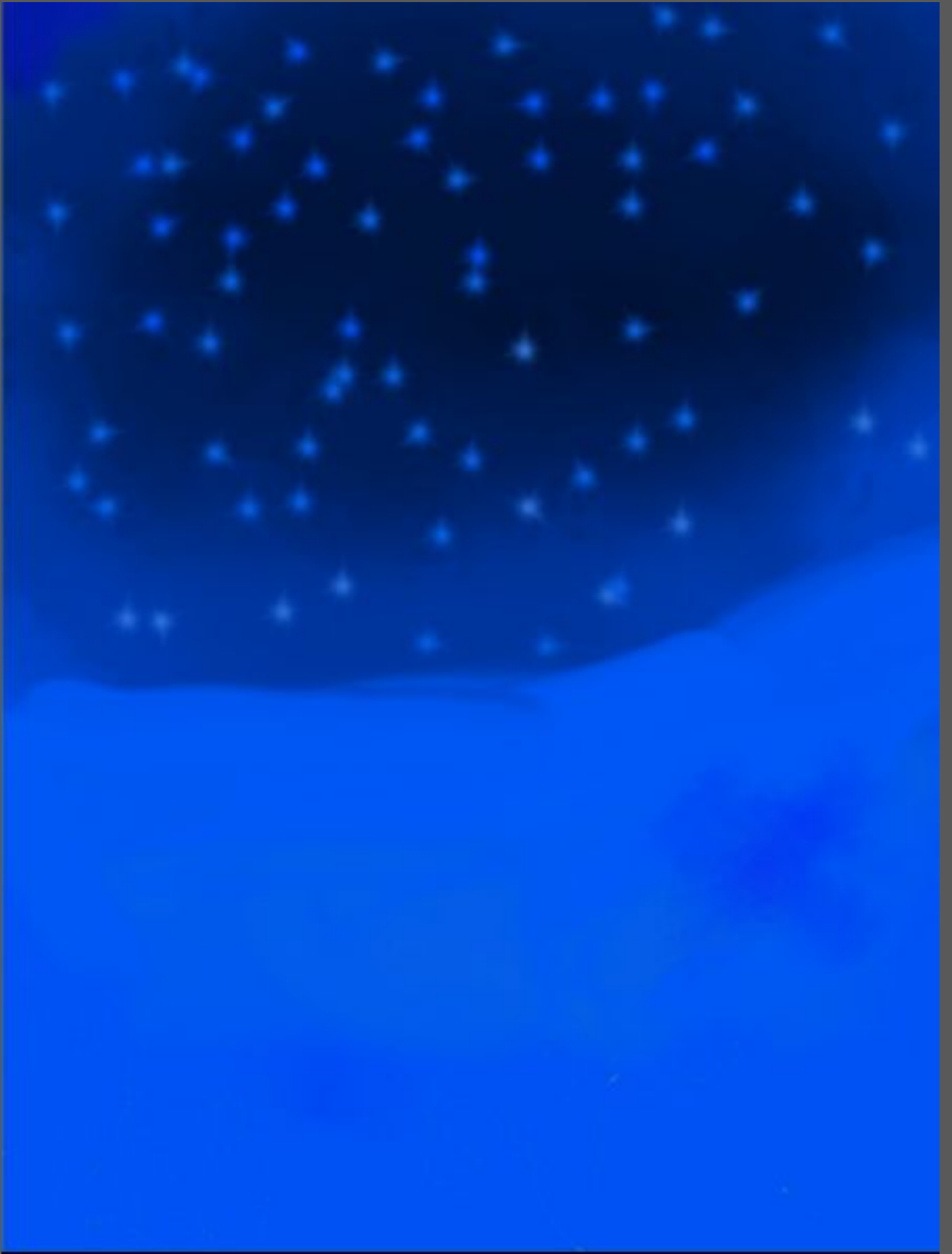
A few hours later ~I was so glad to be back. I took a taxi back to the hotel after the hospital had me cleared. When we got there I opened the double doors and shuddered at what I saw. Getting out of the elevator was a man. He didn't seem to be wearing contacts, but his eyes were red... And trodding next to him, was a black cat... *You had lived in this hotel for sixteen years with your mom. No need to be afraid of the elevator just because of some weird incident... who am I kidding.* I ducked my head in the crowd and slipped through the double doors. *One, two, three, four, five... twelve, thirteen!*

When I went into our room, my mom was crying in her bed. I slowly walked over and poked her arm. She jumped and wiped her eyes before turning her face to look at me.

“Oh my god...” she cried. She leaped up and embraced me with a ‘I luv you so much imma crush your ribs’ kinda hug. “What happened to you?” She said in fright.

“Long story mom, just gonna say this now. Don't EVER take the elevator. Even if you think you're going to pass out. You wouldn't believe me if I told you what really happened, so just know, if you use it... it's similar to being abducted and driven through the sky at puking speed, then dropped about thirteen feet, only to come back, right after watching a mother, (“let's just say a cat”) drop her child off a building... then having her and her buddy stalking you...”

Mom looked at me like I had just asked if I could bail on movie night. The rest of the night was pretty quiet, with only a few sounds a stalker might make. I woke up randomly after hearing a noise, and opened my curtains slowly... nothing. I sighed and shook my head at myself, and went to close the curtains, but this time, something smiled back.



Starscape--Beau Rohm



--Clara Badger

## *Environmental Distress*

Plastic bags, greenhouse gases  
litter stacking in the masses  
car emissions, factory smoke  
holding our planet at a choke--

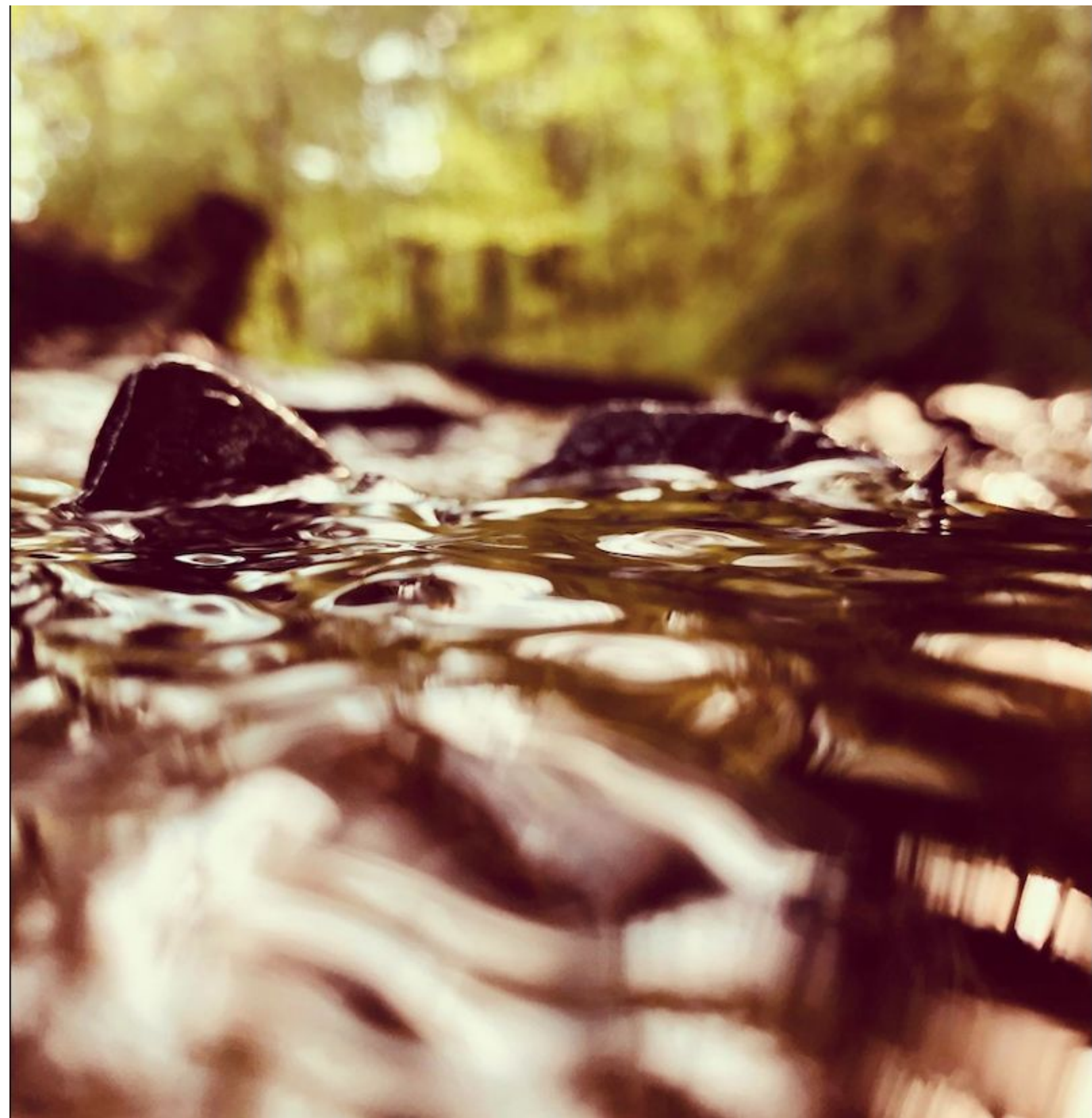
polar bears without a home  
cows and sheep, no where to roam  
koala bears, no place to climb  
the environment is running out of time.

what could we possibly do?  
to stop this destruction and decimation  
Of our oh so dearest planet  
A small sacrifice can't be enough, can it?

We all must chip in  
because it is time to begin.  
we are the ones that earth has sustained  
and now it is our turn to make a change

For our animals and our plants  
That rely on us for aid  
We still have time and one last chance  
to save us from dismay.

---Gavin Berger



“Creekside” by Madison Young

## *Summertime*

Summer, the time to play  
smile all day  
the chalk on concrete  
but when we repeat  
it cannot beat  
Smiles on faces  
while everyone races  
Our feet hit the green grass  
as the days will pass  
just like the elder people do with such a passion  
shown with a great reaction  
the children playing,  
you hear everyone saying  
"see you all tomorrow"  
as if it had no sorrow

It's getting dark so everyone planned  
to meet at the park  
8:25am no later  
or you won't be any better  
it's getting a little colder  
while the days are getting older  
the sun is dimming and  
nobody wants to go swimming  
temperatures are getting lower  
the children's fun is getting slower  
kids are getting bigger jackets  
nobody wants to admit  
that it's getting colder  
snow is gonna start falling  
but everyone wants to be calling  
the sun to stay and watch the kids play  
the two are battling,  
Which one will win?

--Trinity Toledo

# *Reasons to Blame You*

By Evvy Hackley

It was March 1692, in Salem when I first got the news that the trials were being held. It would take the townspeople two days to get to Salem where they would search for reasons to blame you for witchcraft.

My eyes fluttered open with the sound of my mother talking to a strange man.

“We are just going to visit my sister,” said my mother .

“I’m sorry for the delay. These days are very confusing with all of the witches,” the strange man with a frizzy uncombed beard said.

“Mother what happened who was that?” I said after I could only see a small black dot where the strange man once was.

”A townspeople. He had just been in Boston,” she said.

“Boston? How are they so close”? I whispered in fright.

“That’s why we need to pick up our pace. Now get some more rest,” my mother said and leaned over to give me a hug of concern.

I would’ve found something to pout about but It wasn’t worth my time. Instead I would rather drift to sleep.

I awoke again just around midnight to see the tiny golden specks of light flickering. I looked into my mom’s eyes seeing them turn into a glare. I already knew what she was going to say but I asked anyway.

“ What are we going to do?”

“Run” she said. “Get your belongings we need to leave!” I heard my mom scream from her chamber,

“I don’t understand why we have to leave-- we aren’t witches,” I said in response.

“Katherine get down here NOW.”

I hurried down hoping no one from outside could hear my mother's screeching.

"We will be riding toward north Connecticut," my mother said as she slipped on her snappy old brown boots.

"Mother, why are we leaving? We have nothing to hide," I said sharply.

"We are leaving for the same reason we don't go to church. People will find a small reason to judge us and then next thing you know we will be on the platform with all of the other dead witches."

So we got out and scurried up the rough edge of a hill hiding behind a tree line. As we got closer the thunderous shouts of the townspeople began to get clearer.

"You're a witch" they all screamed . As we got closer we could make out a face .

"Mary?" No, Mary couldn't have been a witch something has to be wrong

"Mother we have to help her --she's no witch."

" Katherine stay down--they will hear you!"

I was in a panic; she's our family. I listened to my mom as we watched the fire make a capsule around her body. It seemed as if she were looking at me --did she know I was there? This was nonsense, how could she? We aren't witches. I couldn't move. I was in shock.

"Katherine, you need to walk. Do you want the same thing to happen to you?" I snapped out of my trance and began walking toward the clearing out of the woods.



Around four in the morning we finally made it to a very small run down town with around six houses, a rusted church, and a few ragged fruit stands.

“Mother why are we here? We could get killed,” I said quietly.

“This place is safe... so we will stay ‘til morning. Now, go get some rest. We have a long journey ahead of us,” she replied.

In the morning I walked out to the broken-down fruit stand to see if I could salvage anything. That’s when I saw a glimmer from the church window. Mother was still gathering up supplies for our journey, so I walked slowly toward the church.

As I inched closer practically touching the door knob, I started to feel a tingling sensation, but I proceeded. As I pushed the door open, my hand started to feel like fire burning-- it wouldn’t stop. I shrieked in pain and mother came running with worry in her eyes. She pulled me away from the church.

“Are you mad, absolutely mad?” She asked with rage.

“Mother, I thought I saw something in the church. I didn’t know I would be burned,” I said with sorrow.

”That’s what happens when you're a witch, Katherine!” She yelled furiously.

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Yes, I had seen signs like never going to church, and I get why we were running because people would blame you for witchcraft for anything; but this...this was unbelievable. My eyes grew large and my legs gave out; everything went black,

I woke up a few hours later riding with my mother on a horse she somehow had acquired. I remembered where we were... back when I was around five my mother had brought me to a cliff’s edge. She told me that the cliff was her favorite spot . As a kid I always loved when she brought me there.

“Good, you’re up” she said.

“Mother why are we going to the cliff?” I asked

“I thought it would be a good place for you to think about everything that I told you,” she said while nudging me with her arm.

I didn’t feel like saying anything; I just wanted everything to be over. We soon passed the tree line to the cliff and saw the opening where the cliff was. It was just as beautiful as I remembered, but something seemed off, spots in the grass were burnt, and the smell of smoke took over. Once the horse settled, I ran to the cliff’s edge to see the beauty of the bay. I was consumed with the beauty when I turned to see that my mother was gone.

Mother! Can you hear me? Where are you?” No reply.

Suddenly, I saw the flicker of a torch and then another and then another. It looked as if they were heading my direction. I looked closer. I could see my mother bound with twine at the wrist and ankles. I couldn’t move as they got into view of me.

One old man started talking.

“You’re a witch aren’t you?” he screamed, and the others started mocking me and mother, screaming insults.

They didn’t come close to me though as if they knew I was frozen with fear. They took their time to light the flame that killed my mom. As she resisted, they laughed.

I couldn’t move.

The cold wet tears fell down my face. I couldn’t stay here. I needed to run. I couldn’t deal with what just had happened. I felt like breaking down. I knew my mother would’ve wanted me to run, but in the moment it felt right.

I jumped.

I felt the air between my fingertips.

I knew I wouldn’t die --because everyone knows witches only die with fire.

# *Inequality*

Let me tell you what equality isn't  
Equality isn't  
Treating others with disrespect  
Is disrespectful what you expect?  
To walk into school  
And be called a fool  
To be afraid  
To be the one that stayed  
To be given death threats  
Like a knife to the soul  
Like a bee sting to a heart  
That trauma will never do us part  
People make us feel out of place  
Make us want to hide our face  
People make us feel alone  
Why is this still condoned  
Persecuting others  
For things not chosen  
To make them seem  
Like they are broken  
When all is said  
And all is done  
We still shall stand together  
To stand and fight  
From all that gives us a fright  
From all that we have shown  
Why is it this still condoned ?

-Katlynn Church, Kayleigh Lennon, Liam Huntington



Digital Art: "Crown" --Stasia Bobal

## *Over and Over*

By Gavin Berger

I was running, as fast as my legs could take me, it seemed like this thing chasing me would never stop. It was huge, bigger than bear. It was around 20-30 feet tall, towering as tall as some of the trees. It had two arms, human-like arms, but with claws. It was extremely fast, using its four horse-like legs to propel itself forward, while it used its arms to push the trees out of the way. It had the torso of a human as well, except it was abnormally hairy, and i had the body of a horse, almost like the mythical creatures called “centaur.” And the thing that scared me the most about it were its beady, glowing red eyes behind the mask it wore. They shone like the sun, and could light up the whole area at nighttime.

I had just realized I dropped my phone while I was running, so i couldn't call for help so I had to keep running. I tried to lose it, weaving back and forth through the trees. I didn't think I could run anymore, so I tried to throw the creature off by hiding behind a tree and hoping it would pass. I waited for the right time and quickly dove right and crouched behind a tree, which was perfectly in between me and the monster. All I had to do was hope that it wouldn't slash at the tree I was hiding behind and hit me as well.

As it neared closer and closer I could feel the sweat beads all across my forehead, waiting for whatever this thing was to slice me in half along with the tree. I counted down from 10, and I held my breath as tight as I could. 10. 9. 8. 7. I felt the hooves pounding the ground closer and closer. Louder and louder. 6. 5. 4. 3. I could hear it slashing down the trees left and right. I became more and more scared as the monster drew near, and I was getting light-headed from holding my breath. 2. 1. The monster zoomed past me at a terrifying speed without looking back. I was safe for now. I waited for the huge creature to get at a safe distance, and when it did, a feeling of great relief swept over me. After that, I decided to start my journey to look for a way out of this giant forest.

## *Over and Over (cont'd)*

I must have walked for a few hours at least but I was getting nowhere. Trees, after trees, after trees. I didn't know if I was getting anywhere at all, so I started making tally marks every 10-20 trees or so, just so I would know if I was somehow going in a circle. Earlier during the chase I had tripped on a tree root that was hidden under some leaves and crashed to the ground, leaving a huge gash in my left leg. I tore up my flannel jacket and wrapped it around the wound to stop it from bleeding. I just hoped I could get to a hospital before the bleeding became too severe. The limp was causing me a bit of trouble, but I kept walking, trying to find an exit. After a few minutes, I started to notice that the tally marks were reappearing. I was dreaming. I had to be. I saw the same numbers over and over. I slapped myself, hoping I'd wake up from this terrible nightmare. No luck. I had no idea what was going on, but I didn't like it one bit.

I must've been walking for around six hours when I decided to sit down to rest. I knew I had to make some sort of shelter, in order to protect myself in the event of rain, or even that hideous creature finding me again. I had seen some TV shows recently about people surviving in the wilderness, and I remembered how they made a sort of teepee out of sticks and leaves. I found some nearby branches and strung them together with some strong vines I found. There were leaves all over the forest floor, so that was no trouble. I found a good supply of tree sap as well, in order to stick the leaves on my makeshift hut. It was very light to lift, so I found a low hanging tree and decided to move my shelter under some of the branches—enough to hide me until morning.

## *Over and Over (cont'd)*

I woke up, very disheveled and sore, but I was relieved that my cover had worked. I was hungry, very hungry, so I decided to scavenge for berries around the forest. I tried to remember the tell-tale signs of a poisonous berry, but I couldn't recall any that were 100% safe to eat. I did remember, however, that there was a berry bush that had oval-shaped leaves and red berries, that were almost completely safe to eat, as long as they didn't have any signs of infection. I looked around my surroundings and just as I was about to move on, I saw out of the corner of my eye, a red berry bush.

I was very pleased to find that the berry bush perfectly fit the description that I had recalled from my old boy scout manual. I picked a few dozen of the best berries I could find and looked around for a nearby stream, but I had no luck. I didn't want to waste the measly amount of water I had in my backpack, so I decided to eat the berries unwashed. They were perfectly ripe and sweet, and they even quenched some of my thirst as well as my ever-worsening hunger issue. Right as I was finishing my berries, the flashback replayed in my head. Seeing the creature zoom towards me. Falling and cutting my leg open. The thing felling trees left and right. It terrified me. Where had it come from? What was this thing?

I tried to gather myself again, carefully standing up, as to not injure myself even more. Today's trek was going to do nothing but worsen my injuries, and I was not looking forward to it. Before I left my home area, I decided to fabricate some sort of distraction, in case I ran into that disgusting thing again. I decided on a slingshot. I remembered when I was in the boy scout troop when I was a little boy, and how me and my friends had practiced shooting our slingshots at the plastic cups we set up on the logs outside. I found a decent sized stick that was perfect for a slingshot, and I cut it down to a good length, found some durable rubber bands in my jacket pocket, and tied them up to form the slingshot. I also gathered some small rocks as ammunition and set off on my journey.

## *Over and Over (cont'd)*

I had been walking for about an hour, and I tried my best to stay on a straight path, but I had no luck. I kept seeing the same tally marks on the same trees over and over. What kind of mind trick was this? I was confused, extremely. How could this be happening?

I had so many questions. I'm not sure why, but I kept walking, hoping to find answers. The forest was very quiet, no sign of the creature that had chased me. I stopped to rest on a tree to take a break, when I heard a rustle in the distance. I immediately jumped up, slingshot at the ready. I pinpointed where the noise came from—a tree in the distance. It looked to me like it was shaking, and then another tree started swaying and another.

The creature was back! How did it find me? I grabbed a rock from my pocket and loaded the slingshot. Right when it came into the clearing I released, sending the rock perfectly at the monster's eye socket. It hit! The monster recoiled back, almost falling backwards, and I knew I had to start running. I heard it catching up behind me, so while I was running I loaded up another stone, looked over my shoulder, and fired. Another perfect hit! I was ecstatic that I was actually stunning the monster. I got another good lead ahead of it, but I was getting exhausted.

I decided to try the old jump-behind-a-tree trick again, so I could stop this chase and lose the monster. I fired my third rock, but this hit was not as successful, hitting the monster near its mouth area. I knew it would try to shake off the embedded rock in its mask, so right when it shook its head, I quickly dove behind a tree. It stopped, realizing that it had lost me.

I heard the monster sniffing around, trying to catch my scent. It must have caught on to some smell, because I heard its head jerk and its footsteps got closer. It started pushing trees over, one by one, getting closer to me every second. I calculated that I had around 15 seconds to get out of there, so I loaded the slingshot once again. I took a deep breath, and pulled the slingshot back with all my might. I locked on to the monster, right at its forehead, hoping to crack the deer skull mask and reveal the devilish face behind it. I released my grip on the slingshot and sent the rock flying, it was on perfect trajectory. The monster caught sight of me and before it could gather momentum, the rock struck perfectly on the creature's forehead.



## *Over and Over (cont'd)*

The mask shattered into thousands of tiny bone fragments. It staggered backwards trying to regain its balance and wipe the shards from its face. I saw its bright glowing red eyes stare right through me. I had angered it and it wanted revenge for the destruction of its prized possession. It charged at me and I immediately turned around and bolted.

There was no time to fire another stone off, as the monster was speeding faster than ever. I had to trick it into running into something, something big. I got a good lead on it and turned around to watch it speeding towards me. I stood in front of the biggest tree I have ever seen, waiting for it to notice that I was standing still. It lowered its head—perfect—and started coming at me even faster, ready to ram me into the tree, surely killing me. My heart was racing. I had to time this right.

I waited for the perfect moment, and right as it was about to hit me, I dove to the side, and just like I planned, the creature rammed head first into the tree, knocking itself out cold. I saw it crash to the forest floor, and I jumped with joy. I had defeated the monster, for now at least. I prayed that it would not get back up. Now I just had to find my way out of the forest.

As I was walking away from the unconscious body of the monster, I heard a sort of buzzing noise and my head immediately whipped around. The monster was vibrating and it was starting to stand up again. It was violently shaking as it was arising, and I didn't know how, but it had survived that blow to the head. I knew I should've started running then and there, but I couldn't. My legs were stuck in place. As it was readjusting itself and finally standing upright, its eyes locked straight onto mine.

## *Over and Over (cont'd)*

It was then that my brain finally told me to start running. It followed and started gaining momentum. I could hear the intense huffing of the monsters breath right behind me, as I raced for my life. I was turning and weaving nonstop, hoping that I could through the creature off and it would stop chasing me. I was getting extremely tired, and I could feel the jacket I had wrapped around my leg getting looser. I thought I had been losing it amongst the trees, but every time I turned around the monster was right there. Just when I thought I would collapse from pain and exhaustion, I saw an opening ahead of me, and what looked like a road. I got an insane boost of adrenaline, realizing that this could mean freedom from this prison.

My feet started pounding into the ground as I raced for the freeway. It was a straight path there, no trees that I could weave around to confuse the creature. I had to outrun it.

I lowered my head and pushed myself as hard as I could. The breathing behind me was getting louder and louder—it knew it was going to catch me. I could hear the thing cackling, waiting to swipe at me and knock me out cold, and most likely kill me. There was about 20 yards between me and the road, and the monster was about 10 yards behind me. I had to go faster it. I had to.

I heard car tires in the distance and I knew if i could catch the car in time, I would be safe, and away from this insane forest at last. I counted down in my head, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4. I was so close to the road. The car was coming at a perfect time. 3, 2, 1. The monster slashed at me, but I was too fast. I leaped out into the road with my arms out, trying to catch anything on the car. I saw the windows were down, perfect!

I caught onto the frame of the window and just as I did, I felt a searing pain in my right foot. I looked over my shoulder at my foot. My shoe was completely ripped and my foot was half taken off. My mind was not focused on the pain, just the creature. I looked back to see that it had slowed down. It knew it couldn't catch the car. I still had to explain to the driver of the car, and get to a hospital ASAP, but I was safe. I had done it. I escaped.



Splatter-- Sarah Lang  
Original art: Cocktails and Color Erie Pa

## *Heading Towards the Future*

I know this is a poem,  
but I'm turning it into a rap,  
when she sayin' stop,  
I'm saying cut the crap,  
never lookin back,  
I'm heading towards the future.  
seein my name up in lights,  
I'm putting up a fight,  
I'm going down in fame,  
not going down in pain,  
when I'm spitting bars,  
automatically to the brain,  
bars are so insane,  
I'm out here spitting fire.  
these words are real  
cuz I'm not a liar.

I know this is confusing  
don't jump to conclusions  
making mistakes but I'm never losing  
but these bars so hot  
it got people grooving  
let's have fun, make music,  
rap or pop --just choose it  
let me get back up on the stage  
for a second let me spit  
a few more bars for a second  
this is a poem  
it ain't google Chrome  
can't look this up because  
this ain't a phone  
so leave me alone  
and don't call my phone  
I think you're just better off going back home  
so if I don't answer  
just leave a message at the tone.

--Jamal Swank



--Aurora Stine

# *A Winter Memory for a Winter Dog*

by Tyler Shaffer

A year ago back in 2019, the snow was falling like it was as furious as an animal that has rabies. My dog and I were flopping in the snow. In my backyard, there were about three to five inches of snow on the ground. Mia was rolling around looking like she was trying to have white fur instead of black with how much snow was on her. I could hear the snowplows and those trucks people hire to plow their driveway. The snow had almost stopped. It was only flurrying then. Nothing more than just a light breeze and snowfall. Mia wanted to play in the snow so much. All I thought was why not.

As I opened the door Mia bolted out the door faster than an Olympic sprinter and into the backyard. I am pretty sure she was rolling in the snow within seconds. Mia was such a well trained dog to the point where she didn't need a leash to go outside. This made it easier for her to play and for us to play with her. I started throwing snowballs up in the air in her direction for her to catch and squash them with her jaw. That was her favorite thing to do. That and also playing catch with snowballs. She never brought any of the snowballs back. All she brought back to me was some snowflakes but no snowball. I wonder why that was. Yet our fun in the sun and snow was not even close to being over.

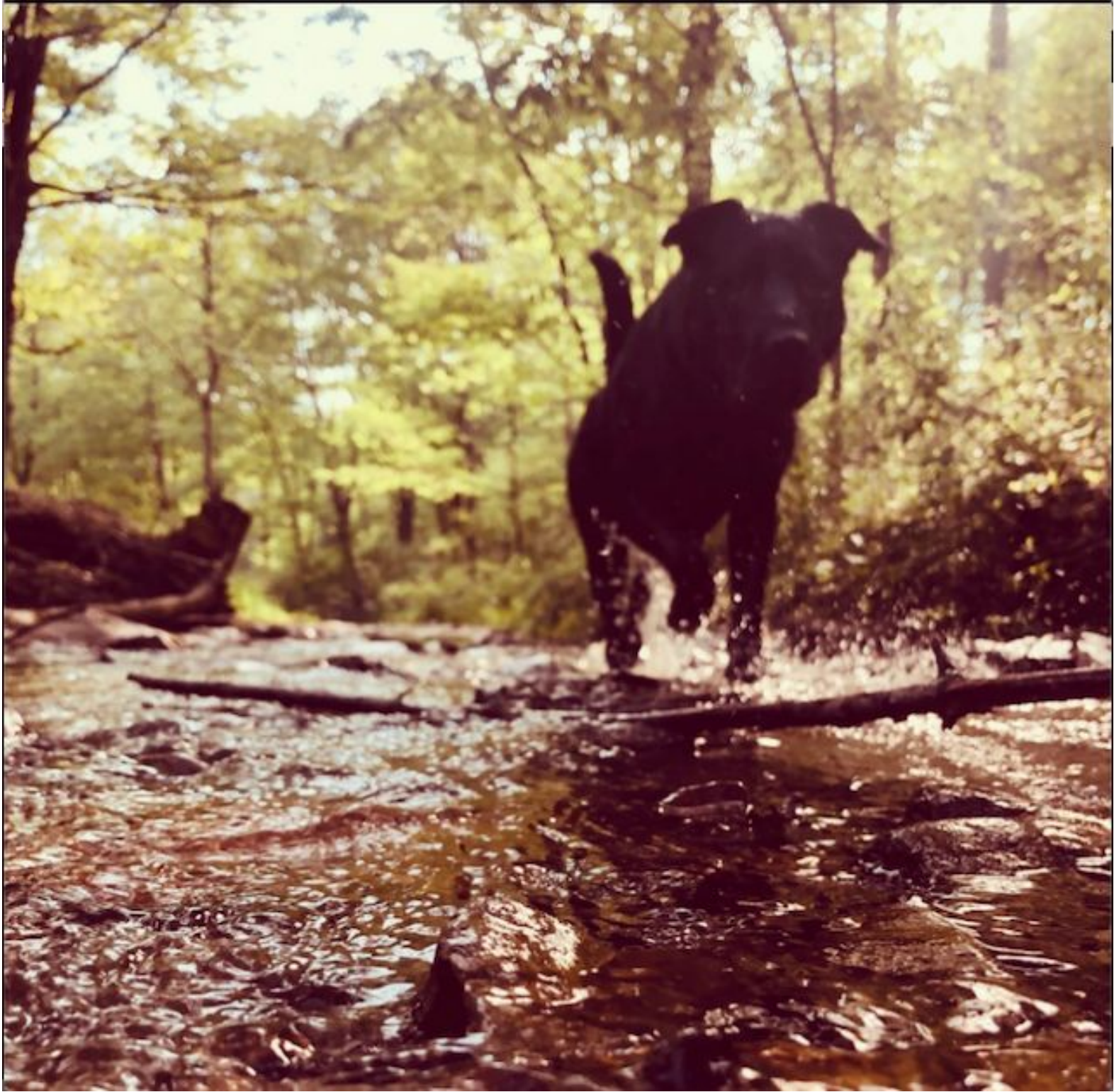
As much energy as a dog had, Mia did get tired almost as easily as someone who ate way too much food. everywhere in the yard. She ran off out front and kept looping the house. I thought I lost her until I realized that there were snow tracks in the yard. After only seconds I found her and she was laying down eating the snow. My sister came out and brought me hot chocolate. Mia kept following me everywhere like "give me that chocolate Tyler! GIVE ME THE HOT CHOCOLATE!" I swear Mia went insane that day. Mia scared me. After a while of her following me she gave up and I slurped down that nice and warm hot chocolate. Yet the day would still not end anytime soon.

It was so cold out but yet Mia didn't want to go in. So, neither of us went inside yet. I wanted to go sledding with me to a nearby hill. My brother said no to taking me on a walk there. So, I had the bright idea that since Mia was so strong for her age to put the leash on her and sit on a sled while I threw a chew toy away from her so she would run to the toy and drag me on a sled behind her. At first, I thought it was a great idea. After I at a lot of snow I realized that it was not the smartest idea. It was fun before I was face-first into the snow. At this point, I wanted to go inside.

## *A Winter Memory for a Winter Dog*

What is so special about this. Well, this was the last time Mia and I were able to play in the snow. She hurt herself by slipping on ice and hurt her paw. Luckily she made a full recovery after a while. We were all worried that it was going to be permanent. Luckily it wasn't or so we thought. In July Mia had a hurt arm. Then we noticed a lump. Later we found out it was cancerous and then we had to put her down in September of this year. I had to think of the good memories like when my sister and I played with her a lot throughout the winters. We would always laugh and say "Mia you can't do that". I always heard Mia's anxious and excited bark for the snowballs.

Looking back on that day in the snow now that Mia has passed away hurts but it also shows that I had the best moments with her. I always tried and did make every moment count because as much as I would want to doubt that she will pass I had to realize that she will someday pass so I made everything count. As sad as it is that Mia passed I still think back to those memories I kept and saved from that day. I will always remember her and cherish these memories. This event in the snow and then never having that chance again to play with Mia in the snow makes me realize that everything must come to an end no matter how much you don't want it to. I still think about her a lot. However, I feel today that I should write this about her as a final tribute to her. There are many more stories to tell of her, but those stories must come later.



“Water Dog” by Madison Young



## *So Hot They Shivered* by Alaina Stine

The mind is sinuous. It resembles a river. It juts out into many different directions. Into many paths that create new paths that create new paths. It does this simply because there are far too many thoughts that consume the mind to flow in just one straight direction. If that were the case then everyone would act like robots. With automatic responses and lack of the ability to pick up on change and opportunities. Everybody's mind is also very antithetical. Meaning that some may only have a few streams and paths that their mind wanders into, while others have multiple connected tributaries that temporarily attach themselves to the mind. And of course, there's always the ones in between. The mind usually has one either tiny pool or gigantic ocean that it floated in when the mind was a bit blank. But then when ideas started to grow and thoughts started to expand the mind would swim out of that circle and into many pathways and streams and explore wherever they led it.

Gryphon's mind had a boundless and capricious amount of vein-like streams that his mind swam in during a day. If there happened to be a ship sailing down the paths that his brain travels to, the sailor would be extremely inundated with the amount of options they would have. Gryphon was not a very accustomed troll. Mentally or Physically. Typically, trolls don't have wandering minds. Their minds are kind of like ponds or lakes, and their brain just floats around and circles the perimeter. They think the same thoughts everyday because they participate in the same things day after day; because they don't have to think any differently. Distinctive trolls are beautiful. They have big, round bellies; smooth, silky skin in the areas that aren't occupied by a variety of lumps; short and stout bodies that can be rolled like a bowling ball; and gorgeous navy green skin that blanketed over their round bodies. Gryphon was an unprecedented troll.

He was very skinny and scrawny and sometimes thought he looked related to a deflated balloon. The bones of trolls were always concealed. They were always swallowed by mountains of skin and blood. But, Gryphon's bones were manifest. It often seemed as if there wasn't even a single layer of skin hiding them from the outside of his body. But the skin that he did have had a yellowish tint to it. Unlike any other troll. Creatures often teased and poked fun at Gryphon. They all meant it lightly and with no harm, but still, their comments affected Gryphon. He liked the way he looked, but he didn't like that people noticed he was different from the other trolls. Gryphon was hurt. He was cut open through his thin, yellow skin and bled out. So he decided to create himself a bandage. And that bandage was one of the paths his mind went down very often. The path led to a fictitious world. A world where everyone was puny and left tinted yellow—even those who weren't trolls. Gryphon's world contained some peculiar aspects. Unlike the quintessential trolls Gryphon's mind was not trapped. It didn't float around in the same little pool everyday. It liked to travel and discover new paths and streams it could wander down. The main non-physical trait that set Gryphon off from the majority of trolls was the power of imagination.

Gryphon's mind had the ability to imagine and create. Gryphon didn't enjoy doing the same boring things every day. He wanted to be somewhere else. Somewhere exciting and just plain different from his life with the larger and dumber trolls. He liked the extreme. He loved it. So what Gryphon did was append the idea of extreme into his get-away world. In his world everything was to the extreme. So extreme, that it was the opposite. Gryphon got this idea while stepping into the community bathing pool one evening. This was the place for trolls to relax and to smell and look decent. Though both the look and the smell often wear off in a matter of minutes. The pool was usually hot, bubbly, and steaming. It was hot but bearable and soothing. But as Gryphon stepped into the bathing pool on that particular evening, he felt his skin burn. It felt as if his hue of yellow should have altered to a flaming red color. As more of his puny body emerged into the pool, he felt the burn trickle up his skin. Almost as if the hot water had flowed through his thin skin and directly into his veins. Gryphon decided to swiftly race over to the thermostat that controlled the temperature of the water. He conjectured that some fool has felt the need to burn off their skin while relaxing.

As Gryphon waded his way through the boiling water, he noticed a change. A change in his feeling. The water began getting more sizzling until finally it burned Gryphon's skin so arduously that it almost felt cold. The water was so amazingly scorching that it felt like the opposite to Gryphon. Gryphon's mind was so distracted by this change in feeling that he completely forgot to continue rushing to lower the thermostat. He soon did snap out of it and realized that his skin still pained and spun the dial way down to soothe it. Gryphon decided to base his world off of that evening in the community bathing pool. He was just so astonished by the thought that a feeling could become so intense that it transforms into the complete opposing feeling. So, what Gryphon did everyday while he followed the tedious routine of a troll, was lead his mind down the path that lead to his crazy world, and just let his mind swim around in the sea of weirdness that the path led it to. Gryphon did that for a while. He adored it. He would just live in a world with friends that didn't view him as an idiosyncratic. For the most part, Gryphon kept his getaway world to himself. He liked having something that belonged to only him, that only he knew about. But Gryphon did have a younger brother who he couldn't resist to share all his ideas of his weird and opposite world with. His name was Typhus. Despite being years younger than Gryphon, Typhus was a profusion of height and mass greater than his elder brother. Typhus was quite a common troll. He followed the everyday life and tasks of being one. He acted and looked like the standard cave troll people visualize. Typhus did, though, have some unique traits. He was a tremendous listener. He listens to everything and he remembers everything. But the fact was that Typhus had an average troll mind. So he took in all the information he learned, but then it mostly just floated around in that little pool that trolls' minds are stuck in. Simply because it had nowhere else to go. Typhus was incapable of expanding that tiny pool in his brain consisting of his mind. So Typhus couldn't really deeply analyze the information that his older (but still tinier) brother provided him with. But even though, Gryphon told Typhus all about the world. About how things and feelings are so extreme that they feel opposite. And about the semblance of everyone who lived in his world. And Typhus took it all in and kept it in his tiny pool.

After that evening in the community pool, Gryphon enjoyed raising the temperature of the pool. Whenever he would hop in to take a bath he would go straight to the thermostat and turn it to the highest possible degrees until the burning sensation eventually felt cold. He tried multiple times to do the opposite, too. Gryphon would turn down the thermostat to the coldest temperature and try to feel a burning sensation, but it never came. He loved to imagine that though. He decided to add that in his crazy world. One evening, a few months after he had originally stepped into the steaming community pool, he hopped in again for his regular weekly bath. He practiced his normal routine of spinning forward the dial on the thermostat. And relaxed as he felt the crazy, opposing feeling he had grown to be familiar with. He was floating on his back and drifting farther and farther away from the temperature dial. Gryphon would never really leave the water boiling hot for too long. He would usually wait until the cold sensation came to him, weirdly enjoy it for a couple seconds, and then spin the dial to a comfortable temperature. But that night he felt different. He didn't want the so-hot-it-felt-cold feeling to go away so fast. After a few minutes of floating in the crazy hot water, Gryphon started to get dizzy and a tad nauseous. It was also really starting to burn badly even though the feeling of coldness was underlying it.

He decided to get off of his back and swim back to the thermostat. But it was when he did get off his back, Gryphon realized how far he had really drifted. Now, the community bathing pool was large. It was probably the size of a small lake. It wasn't just an average backyard pool. And Gryphon was a long way from any side of the pool, especially the side where the thermostat was located. He realized he was getting more dizzy and nauseous by the second, and his pain was starting to be unbearable. The burning feeling was now almost completely overpowering the cold feeling. Gryphon tried his best to swim towards the thermostat but his tiny arms and legs were so exhausted and he was feeling so sick from being overheated. Gryphon started getting extremely overwhelmed and nervous. He was hyperventilating and sobbing knowing that it was so difficult to swim just one foot and he had many more than one to swim if he wanted to make it to the temperature dial. That's when Gryphon felt like his stomach was being ripped from his body. It felt as if there had been two ropes tightly tied on either side of his stomach and they were both being yanked away from each other simultaneously. Then Gryphon threw up all that his body could hold. He tried his best to call for help when he could take a break from either weeping or vomiting. But he didn't hear any sound escape from his mouth as much as he tried to free it. At this point Gryphon didn't know which direction was up, down, left, or right. He was beyond dizzy and was having trouble keeping his eyelids closer to his eyebrows than his cheeks. Then everything went yellow. His funeral service was just three days after that night.

About three and a half months after Gryphon's death, Typhus gained the feeling of being aggrieved. He didn't quite know why. He felt angry, but he didn't know what or who to be angry at. But he desperately wanted to find out. So he thought. And thought. And thought. His thoughts started to consume him. Which was a very rare circumstance for a troll to be in. Because of this it was hard on Typhus. It was hard to, well, think. He thought about the life that his older brother once owned. He thought about how different Gryphon was. He thought about how Gryphon was never afraid to discuss his thoughts and feelings with him. He thought about how Gryphon would yearn to make discoveries and how curious he was. How sometimes it felt as if his whole entire body consisted of curiosity. How it would kill Gryphon to not know. To not know everything there is to know and to learn and to discover. How no one ever understood how his mind worked. Because they didn't have the mind power to. Typhus thought about all of it. Every sole second he spent with his brother. All this thinking caused the tiny pool in his mind to stretch and expand and augment.

Little by little and day by day, Typhus's brain allowed him to think more thoughts and think more of them. He thought of it as building muscle. If you work out consistently for an extended period of time, you'll notice that you can start to lift heavier things. Things that before seemed impossible to even nudge. Now Typhus has more power. He had worked out his brain. There was more room for his mind to swim. There were more paths and longer ones for his mind to wander down. When months of thinking had passed, the feeling that Typhus had of anger slowly transmuted into the feeling of emptiness. Of dissatisfaction. He felt that something was due that he wasn't aware of. Something had to be done. So what Typhus did with this new feeling was think. He swirled this feeling around in his enlarged pool that his mind lived within. His mind followed wherever that feeling swam to. Typhus thought about everything Gryphon told him about his abstract world he enjoyed being in. He thought about what it would be like to live there. To look like Gryphon and to be surrounded by extreme feelings. A few more months flew along until Typhus's mind pool stretched out long enough for him to figure out what the purpose of the feeling his mind was sticking to actually meant. But, eventually, Typhus was able to devise a conclusion. He wanted to make his brother's abstract world concrete. He wanted to do it for Gryphon. So he consulted with a few magical forest fairies and asked them for help with his mission. Because his mind wasn't that larger than before.

The fairies were kind and happy to help Typhus. They knew Gryphon and always were fond of his individuality. So, they held a fairy meeting, including Typhus as a viewer, to come up with an answer. After numerous vetoed ideas, one of the fairies Maybell, provided the group with a suggestion. She informed everyone that Gryphon enjoyed citrine crystals. They were yellowish little stones that were mostly found at the forest fairies' lake. This was an adequate little lake in the middle of their forest containing many beautiful rocks and crystals in the gorgeous clear water. The water was so pellucid that sometimes it looked nonexistent. It looked as if there was just a large divot in the ground that water should've filled. As Maybell brought this subject upon the group, Typhus recalled that Gryphon did spend a multitude of hours at the fairies' lake. He then wondered which direction Maybell was leading the group to with this topic.

Maybell announced that she thought it would be splendid if one of those crystals Gryphon idolized could somehow be the key to his world. The group discussed this idea thoroughly for a bit of time, and then the fairies descended behind the trees to debate privately. Once they returned they told Typhus to return to his cave, as they needed to think of a reasonable plan to bring Maybell's idea to life. Typhus returned to his now lonely cave desperately hoping that the fairies could make this happen for him and for Gryphon. Typhus didn't sleep that night. He arrived at the meeting spot in the forest the next morning waiting for the fairies to show. When Typhus decided that the position of the sun differed too much from the position it layed in when he first showed up, he wandered off to the lake. He was surprised to see the fairies huddled around the edges of the translucent water. As the fairies spotted him they waved their hands in the air to call him over. Typhus noticed the fairies observing a scattered pile of little yellow crystals. He started to tear up a bit seeing something that his brother loved so much. After Typhus turned his head a little to the left to hide his face, and gathered his emotions, he looked back at the fairies and gave them a questioning look. Maybell spoke up and said that they decided to meet at the lake today instead of the circle of trees in the forest. Typhus thought a little heads up would've been handy. He did wait in the forest for a number of hours hoping that they didn't bail on him. Typhus moved his eyes toward the crystals lying by the lake and then glanced at Maybell. "Which one would you assume Gryphon would've liked best?" she asked. Typhus knelt over and peered left to right down the line of crystals, looking closely at each one.

After a few minutes had passed and the fairies looked as if they were about to select one randomly, Typhus picked up the fourth one and held it out to Maybell. "This", he stated plainly. He then asked what was taking place here because the fairies still had failed to inform him. Maybell squealed excitedly and flew into the air to be eye level with Typhus. She explained to him that they had worked restlessly to create a spell that would be cast on one of the crystals. She said that the spell was almost completed. All they needed to grant Typhus his wish was a piece of Gryphon's mind. They made sure to add that it wasn't his actual brain. They just needed a bit of his mind to make the spell really come alive. The bit that contained all the secrets to his world.

The fairies would cast this completed spell on the crystal that Typhus decided Gryphon would've chosen. Then, when anyone or anything touched the crystal, they would actually be in Gryphon's mind. Well not in his mind, but in his extreme world that he loved so much to wander through, and to create. They would live in it and face the reality that Gryphon dreamed of. The crystal would be the key to Gryphon's world. As soon as Maybell finished explaining this to him, Typhus couldn't help but jump with excitement. He really didn't presume that it would be this easy. But it was happening. It was actually happening. Typhus raised his arms in the air, keeping his elbows bent, and then swung them down by his side, propelling himself a few feet forward. This was wondrous. When Typhus was finished with his little celebration, Maybell asked him if he was going to actually use the crystal for himself and live in Gryphon's world. Typhus quickly explained to her that he wanted to do this to honor Gryphon. To make his dream a reality. Typhus didn't want to use the crystal to enter the world. He didn't want anyone to for that matter. But just the fact that his brother's world really existed and was tangible, provided Typhus with a little speck of happiness that he hadn't felt for almost a year now. It had filled that empty and oh so very confusing hole that had been consuming Typhus. He felt like this was finally the answer. He felt as if his suffering had driven down such a long road and it had finally reached a cul de sac. He could finally go around that loop and then be headed back down that road but in the other direction.

As soon as Typhus returned to his cave he searched. He searched for something that he could put into the spell to make it complete. He needed to find something that resembled Gryphon's mind, his world. He pulled out every drawer and looked under every cushion for something. Anything that he could use as the final step of this mission. Finally, something sparked in Typhus's memory. He remembered that Gryphon enjoyed writing. And that he would write his thoughts down about his world so he wouldn't forget them. Typhus started looking everywhere for papers. He found many pages written by Gryphon, but none that were about his world. When Typhus was just about to capitulate, he spotted a tiny crevice in the wall of Gryphon's room. Typhus jumped up onto Gryphon's bed and peered into the crack. There they were! More pages. He figured that Gryphon must've hid them there to protect them because they were so sacred to him. Typhus tried to reach in the little crack in the wall to snatch them out, but then realized his hands were far too large to fit. So he went into the fairies' forest and descended from there with Maybell. She could surely fit her tiny hands through the wall. And she did just that. Typhus and Maybell then sat down at the dining room table and read through the pages. They were perfect. They described in perfect detail Gryphon's world. Maybell took the papers back to her forest so that she and her friends and family could extract what the spell needed from the pages. When Typhus returned to the forest the next day, Maybell flew up to him, holding a box with a shiny, bright yellow little crystal stored in it. She of course couldn't touch the magical crystal because of what it was capable of doing now.

When Typhus saw the crystal, he reached for Maybell and tugged her in for a hug. He thanked all the fairies profusely for making his wish come true. The fairies replied that it was an amazing experience and that they were glad they could be of such great help with honoring the life of Gryphon. Typhus brought the little box home with him. While walking, he had time to observe it. The background was a beautiful dark blue black color and had scattered yellow and white dots spreading around it. The box was tiny and circular. It had a round lid that fit it perfectly. The box also had painted stars and suns on it. The paint work was beautiful. Typhus could see the light from the suns flowing downward. It almost looked as if it actually illuminated the box. When Typhus arrived at his cave, he wasn't too sure what to do with the box. Should he just leave it inside the cave somewhere? Should he bury it somewhere outside? Should he place the box in the lake? He pondered all these ideas for awhile and then decided on one. Typhus knew of a ravishing waterfall on a mountainside that hid a narrow cave beneath it. Not many others knew of it. Typhus only knew it existed from Gryphon describing it to him. He thought this would be the perfect hiding place for the box. No one would ever find it. So Typhus wandered through the mountains for a while searching for waterfalls, trying to find the one Gryphon had told him about. As soon as he came across one he would stick his hand through it hoping to feel air and emptiness. But most of the waterfalls only had more mountainside underneath them. Typhus spent hours climbing the mountains and plunging his hand through any waterfalls he happened to come across. Finally, though, on about the eleventh waterfall he stuck his hand through, he felt air on the other side and not just jagged rocks. Typhus was so relieved. He sprung through the water and found himself lying on the floor of a cave. This place was perfect. Surely no one would find the crystal here. He traveled all the way to the end of the cave and placed the tiny box. Typhus finally felt joy and completion. He hiked back through the mountains and right back into his cave. The box remained there untouched for many years.

Every now and again, Typhus would find himself in that cave to check up on the box and crystal and to mourn his brother. So one day about seven years after the crystal was created, as he lifted up the lid and peered into the box, he found the crystal gone.

Esmeralda and Maeve were beyond confused. Where were they? What had happened? Why couldn't they see anything? All they remember was touching that yellow shiny item. What was it again? What had been so intriguing to them? Maeve suddenly felt a pair of hands on her wings. She assumed that if she could hear she would be listening to someone bombarding her with the regular questions you ask someone when they are unconscious and lying on the ground. Maeve slowly squinted open her eyes, still unable to hear anything. She repeatedly blinked trying to see clearly. She glanced up at the figure that kept shaking her. It looked to be a yellow baby elf. She saw the elf's mouth moving as if asking if she was alright. Slowly she could hear grumbles coming from the elf's mouth. She was still utterly puzzled as to where in the world she was and why.

Then all of a sudden she heard, as clear as day, the little elf ask what her name was. She was taken aback by their voice though. She had expected a tiny and squeaky voice based on the elf's look. But the little yellow elf had a deep, scruffy voice, sounding to Maeve like a giant. Maeve was so bewildered and demented as to what was happening, that she couldn't even force herself to ask the deceiving little elf anything. That's when she remembered Esmeralda. She jolted her head around, searching for her friend. She ignored the elf that was still pelting her with questions. As Maeve shifted her head a bit to the right she caught a glimpse at herself. She felt her mind start jump roping. She had realized that she felt lighter than usual, but she just assumed it was an effect of whatever happened to her. But it wasn't. She was so very small. She felt like an ant. For a few moments she thought she had been switched to a different body. She spun her head around to steal a look at her wings. They were still beautiful angel wings, but looked like they belonged to an angel much smaller than Maeve. Or at least much smaller than she was previously. And they were....yellow. Why were they yellow. Was she sick? Finally, she allowed her ears to listen to the tiny little elf.

"Hello, I'm Dewinn," the strangely deep voice said.

Maeve glanced up at him and managed a 'hello'.

"Ah, she has a voice," said Dewinn. "Now how about a name?"

Maeve continued to look at her surroundings, ignoring Dewinn's question. Despite being in shock, she noticed how beautiful everything seemed. It was almost like a dream. Big, fluffy clouds floated through the sky, tiny creatures played in the greenest of grass, gorgeous crystal lakes stood in some areas of the ground. It was stunning. Then she spotted a petite little yellow fairy wandering around having what Maeve assumed was a concerned look upon her face. Though, she couldn't very well tell as the fairy's face was so miniature. When the little fairy called out for someone Maeve's eyes widened. She knew that voice. "Esmeralda?"

Many hours later Esmeralda and Maeve were sitting on two stumps trying desperately to understand everything that these yellow little strangers were trying their best to explain. The stumps formed a circle around a big bonfire. Which seemed oddly very hot for some reason. But it also felt different. There were about ten absurdly small and all yellow creatures each on their own stump. They all took turns telling Esmeralda and Maeve this crazy story that both of them were too tired to understand.

The creatures ranged from trolls to leprechauns to fairies to angels to elves. Dewinn had led them there after he had a long chat with the two. He had tried his best to explain, but Esmeralda and Maeve kept calling him mental and asked him how to get out of this strange place. If only he knew the answer to that. So Dewinn, after many minutes of convincing, took Esmeralda and Maeve to circle stumps. Where he gathered Hermes, Attila, Artemis, Eros, Cronus, Cyfrin, Agatha, Dorris, and Kub. All tiny yellow creatures who once were in the exact same situation as Esmeralda and Maeve.

After an abundance of hours sitting on stumps, wondering how they got there and why they looked like tiny stars, and listening to the other tiny stars that were trying so hard to explain this to Esmeralda and Maeve. At the end of those hours, when everyone descended off to wooden cabins that they made together, the two kind of understood this: they had simultaneously touched a crystal that brought them to this world and were now trapped in it while having the appearance of mini daffodils. The world also had some unique attributes that they would have to learn for themselves. Esmeralda and Maeve were told that they would be bunking with Attila, a very kind little leprechaun. She and Maeve got along extremely well.

Angels and leprechauns were known to naturally prosper. Esmeralda however was acting a tad shy. She had never really witnessed a leprechaun. Fairies usually stayed in their forests', isolated from most other creatures. The next few days Esmeralda and Maeve started to feel like they fit in this new, mystifying world that they'd been brought to. They got to know the ten other creatures that they were sharing the world with pretty well. Hermes was very kind. Almost to the point where it was annoying. For example one time at the circle stumps, Esmeralda accidentally bumped into Hermes and apologized. Hermes made a huge deal about how he should be the one to apologize and how he was so truly, truly sorry. He went on like that for the whole day. And it somehow made Esmeralda feel worse about bumping into him.

The more Hermes apologized, the more she felt bad about herself. She concluded that kindness can greatly contradict. Each night it was mandatory to arrive at the circle stumps when the sun was equally horizontal with the tree everyone called, Fangs. Fangs had only two branches shooting in opposite directions directly from the center, which made it look like the letter T. On both of the branches hung an upsidedown triangle of bark, hence the name of Fangs. Everyone would sit on their assigned stump and tell stories about themselves when they actually lived in a normal world. They would ponder together about why they came to this world and what that crystal had to do with it.

Everybody told Esmeralda and Maeve about their own experience coming to the world. Cyfrin was the first one to arrive so that kind of made him the leader. But he had the disadvantage of arriving in an empty world with no one to fill him in on where he was and why. He had to figure everything out for himself. Everyone respected him for that. Cyfrin was the only angel aside from Maeve. It definitely gave them a topic to discuss. How much they missed their big, majestic, white wings. They kind of turned into the average size fairy in this new world. One of the facts that sparked curiosity in everyone was how they all found the crystal in a different place. Cyfrin found it well hidden in a mountainside cave, while everyone else found it pretty much in plain sight. Esmeralda and Maeve found it while walking through Esmeralda's forest trail. It was peeking out of a hole inside of a fallen log.



Typhus was beyond befuddled. How was it gone? He had hid it so well. Who took it? All he could do was stare at the empty box on the cave floor. His first thought was to run to the fairies. So that's what he did. He sprinted as fast as his stubby legs would allow him all the way from the mountains to the fairies' forest. "It's gone!" In a matter of minutes Typhus, Maybell, and a few other fairies who had helped make the crystal were trekking (and flying) through the mountains scanning their eyes left to right. They needed to find it as soon as possible to prevent anyone else from finding it and touching it. Because it would happen fast. One of the faults of the crystal was that once it was touched and used to teleport someone to Gryphon's world, it randomly transferred somewhere else. Somewhere that wasn't a hidden cave behind a waterfall on the side of a mountain. Which means it would be much, much easier to find, touch, and be trapped in Gryphon's unique, but insane world.

Esmeralda and Maeve were confused by what everyone meant by the unique attributes of the world at first. The world seemed fairly normal beside the fact that everybody was shrunk and turned yellow. But slowly the two started noticing things. Bizarre things. Especially the bonfire. Most nights it was lit for the circle stumps conversations among everyone. Now usually a fire radiates heat and it warms you up real nice. Well the bonfire somehow warmed everyone too much. It gets absurdly hot. Like very extremely hot to the point where everyone has mini rivers flowing down their face. But then something crazier happens. The heat slowly turns into cool air. And then into cold air. And then slowly transforms into freezing and piercing air that makes your teeth chatter and your entire body shake. It starts to sound like out of sync tap dancing with all the teeth chattering around the circle. Everyone has to bring out blankets and scarves to keep a little bit of warmth by the freezing fire. But the fire is not the thing that's absurd. When it rains it doesn't just rain. It downpours. It feels like a deluge emerging from the sky.

Normally when it heavily rains, your skin hurts from the thick raindrops pinging on it, and of course, you get soaked. Now, in this world it starts off as that, but then as if an invisible umbrella has appeared over your head, you stop feeling the rain. You can still see it showering from the dark clouds, but you don't feel it stinging your skin. In fact it kind of feels pleasant. Like a billion soft feathers brushing over your skin. You also start to feel dry. You will look completely drenched and sopping wet but you'll feel as dry as if it were a nice, sunny day. It's preposterous. It's the same situation for sunny and rainy days. If the day starts out beautifully sunny and warm it will eventually turn into a freezing and cloudy day. Vice versa. These weird changes did sometimes get dangerous. The world didn't just get hot or cold, or wet or dry. It took it to the extreme. Like extremely extreme. Oftentimes it would get so cold everyone would just collapse. It would get so extremely frigid, that it felt so extremely hot. Everyone would get heat strokes and be sweating, but at the same time was shaking frantically and freezing. It was not a pretty scene. They would get dizzy and their heads would feel like tops.

One time Esmeralda had a panic attack because the feeling was just so scary. It was the same thing for the hot. The temperatures in the world could rise so high that people would get frostbite, and hypothermia. Their skin would start to flake off and everything would freeze. They grew icicles near their eyes from crying. It would be so cold, but the sun would be shining so brightly and they still felt a bit of that original warmth at the same time as shaking vigorously because they were just so completely freezing. They were so freezing that their whole bodies would go numb. Luckily, all of this was temporary, but sometimes surviving in that world was a struggle. It was also a struggle mentally as well as physically. Everyone started to assume that they would be trapped there forever. They looked all over and there were no exits. No keys back to the normal world. Everyone missed their families and their friends and their old lives in general. It definitely hit Agatha the hardest. When she came into the world a few months ago she had very recently been made a mother and was enjoying starting to raise her young one. But she was taken from that and trapped in this horrible world. Surviving mentally and physically in that world was the greatest obstacle for everyone.

After days of searching for the crystals, Typhus wanted so bad to just give up. He just wanted to pretend that he never even made the crystal. That he never made the world. That he just walked into a cave and didn't find a shiny yellow crystal with strange magical powers. That was normal, right? But he couldn't. He couldn't pretend that the world didn't exist. He was the one who made it. It was his idea. Seven years ago it seemed like such a great idea. It seemed like such a fantastic way to honor his brother. But now he had to find this crystal, because he was responsible for god knows how many creatures that were trapped in Gryphon's idiosyncratic world. He was responsible for them now. He needed to find some way to free them. Because as much as he loved his brother for his strange ideas, he knew that that world could be dangerous. As Typhus thought about all his brother once told him about the world, he realized that it probably could be very dangerous. He needed to get whoever was in that world out. So he decided to gather all of the fairies in the area for a meeting. It was their magic that made the crystal's power come alive. He asked them questions about their magic powers and how to reverse spells. They all discussed solutions for many days. They had private discussions and sent out people in small groups to look around the area just in case.

. After all that looking, Typhus felt like he knew the town like he knew his own cave. After about two weeks of the same useless answers and conclusions upon the fairies, Typhus decided to seek out the elves. He knew that they were quite experienced with dealing with magic and spells. He set up a meeting over tea with the only elves he knew well enough to send out an invite to a tea-party. Felix and Cosmo arrived extremely confused as to why they were asked to have tea with a troll. Typhus welcomed them and poured three cups of tea to put on the table. He set up a little white, patterned table outside of a forest near the elves' villages. Typhus sat down and motioned for Cosmo and Felix to do the same with his hand. He knew the elves from a convention they had been at simultaneously a few years back. They met up and talked for a bit about all sorts of topics. Typhus noticed they were both very intelligent. They seemed to not have changed a bit. Typhus didn't know how to start this conversation so he took a sip of his tea. He decided that it tasted like grass water. He curled his tongue back and pursed his lips while the taste of the grass water left his mouth. He had always imagined tea to be very sweet, like candy or something. But, no. Just grass. Well, since he couldn't procrastinate with the help of the tea anymore, Typhus just went all in. He dove head first in. He told Cosmo and Felix everything that happened seven years ago and everything that happened these past couple weeks. He told them everything about Gryphon's world and the crystal and the magic and cave and the fairies and the dying. And they listened. They listened very closely and attentively.

Typhus noted that when he told the story of Gryphon's death to the elves they didn't have those fake sympathy, 'Oh what a shame,' looks on their faces. They didn't interrupt him to say how sorry they were. And they didn't let out those little gasps when Typhus said Gryphon was dead. He liked that. When Typhus was done telling Cosmo and Felix all of these insane events, the first thing that Felix said was, "I think I know exactly who you need to talk to right now. And it is not us."

Typhus opened his eyes and looked expectantly at Felix. "Follow me," Felix said. So the three stood up and left the little wobbly, white table alone in the forest with three barely touched teacups. Around an hour later Typhus stood alone at a ginormous, swirly dark oak door, preparing his fist to knock. But before his fist was ready the door swung open from the inside. Typhus' hand wasn't ready for that door to open and his mind was certainly not. He heard a deep, "Hello," from above him. And there stood Barnabas. Barnabas was a giant but he wasn't too giant. Maybe like eleven and half feet tall. Which for a giant was considered achingly puny. Typhus had never heard of Barnabas before, but according to Felix and Cosmo, he was basically a wizard. Barnabas led Typhus into his fancy cave home/lair. They sat down on a very uncomfortable silver sectional and discussed the situation for a while.

Typhus told Barnabas everything that he told Cosmo and Felix. Typhus noted that he nodded an uncomfortable amount of times. Barnabas was very kind though. It wasn't like he was an evil, malicious giant. After Typhus filled him in all the way, Barnabas just sat there for a while, elbows on knees, thinking and sighing. He let out a, "Humph," and then stood up and walked up a spiral staircase made for a giant. Typhus wasn't sure whether to follow Barnabas or wait for him to come back. Well what if he didn't come back? Typhus started walking up the staircase. It led to a humongous library. It looked very German to Typhus. Everything was a dark, warm color and it was very amazingly scary. He found Barnabas in the third aisle around a corner, flipping through a very thick, old book. "You said forest fairies put this spell on the crystal," said Barnabas, still flipping through the book. "Correct." Barnabas let out another sigh, put back the book, and pulled out an even thicker one. After a few minutes of Barnabas squinting his eyes across a number of pages, his eyes widened and his posture straightened. "Where would I find these fairies, Typhus?" said Barnabas, still pointing his gaze at the pages.

When Typhus introduced Barnabas to Maybell hours later, he couldn't help but smirk at the size difference between the two. They disappeared behind some trees for a bit, while they discussed, Typhus assumed, magical powers and spells. He chatted with the other fairies until Maybell and Barnabas came back, Barnabas kind of demanding to be taken to the hidden cave. So Typhus led the way to the same cave he trekked to seven years ago, excited that he could do this for his brother. Barnabas had brought with him a large magnifying glass and a clear, plastic bag. For a while he just stood with his giant hands on his hips, rotating his head to look around the cave.

“Let’s get started.” Barnabas said abruptly.

Typhus still didn’t know what they were getting started with exactly, so he kind of just awkwardly watched Barnabas whip out the magnifying glass and crawl around on his hands and knees. Typhus was weirdly very scared to ask him why. Barnabas continued to crawl around the cave floor holding the magnifying glass to his eye. His nose was scrunched up and his mouth hung open with his front teeth sticking out.

When Barnabas decided he was done with the cave, he crawled through the waterfall and continued to walk the mountainside, hunched over, still staring through the glass. As Typhus followed him, he eventually built up the courage to ask him what he was doing. Barnabas explained that the crystals should have left little tiny, almost microscopic trails of yellow, powdery dust to wherever it was transported to after being touched and used. He was following the tiny trails of dust to figure out where the crystal was. Typhus was shocked that no one had filled him in on this detail. But he was also relieved. At least, now, they had a way of locating the crystal. But how to free the ones who were trapped in Gryphon’s world still remained a mystery.

Maeve was fanning Esmeralda with her wings, trying to get her to cool down and relax. Everyone was still recovering from an episode of extreme fridity and was very flushed and overheated. They all drank lots of water and tried to hide from the sun as much as they could. Hours later, everyone was feeling fine again. They were getting ready to go to the circle stumps. Tonight they were planning to share stories about their families. They all sat on their stumps and talked that night feeling the coolness of the crackling bonfire illuminating everyone’s faces. As Eros was telling a pretty humorous story about his big sister, Maeve heard a grunt coming from behind Fangs. She got up from her stump and motioned for everyone to follow her. Slowly they all peeked behind the tree and found a stubby and short, yellow colored troll lying on his stomach in a patch of wildflowers. Esmeralda flew down and kind of tapped the troll on his shoulder with her feet. The troll, groggily lifted his head up and took a good look up at everyone. “I touched the crystal!?” he said. He jumped up and was taken aback by how effortlessly he did the action. He looked down at himself and his mouth suddenly dropped open. “I’m exactly like Gryphon!” Agatha spoke up, “Um, who might Gryphon be?” The troll looked at Agatha and then spun his head to the other creatures, all tiny and yellow.

Typhus had been in Gryphon’s world already for a numerous amount of hours and he was still completely bewildered by how he could’ve touched the crystal. He remembered that he and Barnabas eventually found it under a pile of leaves in a random forest somewhere after following the yellow dust trail for many hours. Typhus was introduced to everyone in Gryphon’s world. There were way more of them than he thought there would be. But he guessed it made sense. He and Barnabas did have to travel hours to find the crystal. Then Typhus realized that he owed everyone there an explanation. He started from the beginning and explained to everyone how his brother sometimes lived in his own crazy world. He told them all how he and the forest fairies created the crystal. And lastly he told all of them he was so sorry for unintentionally trapping them in this eccentric but also very dangerous place.

It all started to make sense to everyone. They were glad that they finally had an explanation. Typhus was so very angry with himself. He attempted to help these people but instead ended up being one of them. At this point all of his faith was put into the fairies and Barnabas to help them. And if they decided not to, Typhus knew that he and these tiny yellow creatures just like Gryphon, were going to be trapped here endlessly.

But, luckily, Typhus was right to put his faith into Barnabas and the fairies, because after two days of him being in the world, Barnabas and Maybell appeared in the world with smiles upon their faces. Typhus was amused at the sight of the once eleven foot giant, now about two feet and turned yellowish. He had to admit, when Typhus saw Maybell and Barnabas, adrenaline rushed through his veins. He thought that they had accidentally gotten teleported there as well. But luckily enough, they didn't show up empty handed. For the last few days Barnabas, the forest fairies, and Cosmo and Felix had been working on making a crystal with the opposite effect as the first one. A crystal that would finally free all of these trapped creatures. Typhus was so grateful for having so much help. Barnabas then held out a large dark purple gem with a glove on and asked everyone if they were ready to escape Gryphon's crazy world.

Days later Typhus, Barnabas, the fairies, Felix and Cosmo, and everyone who were freed from Gryphon's world sat on stumps that they worked together to create, telling stories about Gryphon's world. They were all glad to be back to their original shapes and colors. They all talked about Gryphon and what a mind he must've had for coming up with that world. They all smiled while Typhus told everyone what an amazing, intelligent, distinctive troll his older brother had been. Typhus didn't want to destroy the first crystal that was made seven years ago. He made it to honor his brother and he didn't want to take that back. So what Typhus did was hide it in a place where he really knew no one would find it; in the little crack in Gryphon's old bedroom wall that only his hands were made for.

-Alaina Stine



--Stasia Bobal

# *A Great Thanks to All of our Contributors:*

*Clara Badger*

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*Madison Young*

Thank you to our 2021 Slam Poetry Contest judges...

Mrs. Lora Stone

Ms. Jona Ritter

Mr. Tom Byrn

Ms. Renee Fawess

Mr. Rhys Kauffman

Mr. Daniel Cronrath

Ms. Heather Almer

## **Winners:**

### **1st place:**

Julia Evans

### **2nd place:**

Alia Williams

Evy Hackley

Lexie Shellenberger

### **3rd place:**

Maura Swab

Avery Geffken

Julia Samayoa

Natalia Taylor

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Let Your  
Imagination  
Take Flight!