

THE
SHEET

ART

PHOTOGRAPHY

PRINTING

AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL

2023-2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Photography Competition

- A Letter to Santa* by Bella Grace Kimbrell..... 1
- He Never Quit On His 8-Bit*
by Dracen Pedersen.....2
- The Best Day Ever!* by Hanbi Youn.....2

Short Story Competition

- “What You Think Is Dead Isn’t Really”
by Evelyn Dorsett.....3
- “Camp of Cryptids and Cats”
by Janae Merrill.....4
- Specs, Livi, and Snow* by Janae Merrill.....4
- “Sitting on the Dock of the Bay”
by Riley Yates.....5

Art Competition

- Just One Wish* by Madonno Keyes.....6
- Mermaid at Midnight* by Cindy Niu.....7
- Extremely Old Wizard* by Micael Barefield.....7

Poetry Competition

- “Waste of a Good Girl” by Evelyn Dorsett.....8
- “Velveteen Rabbit” by Luci Johnson.....9
- “Just Keep Hopping” by Analie Pesce.....10

Poetry Outloud

- “I Do Care, and I’m Never Going to Admit It to You” by Lily Tao.....11
- “He Loved Me” by Bella Collins.....12
- “When Rain Meets the Summer June”
by Doyeon Kim.....12

General Submissions

- “You Told Me” by Anna Lillebo.....13
- Little Red Riding Hood*
by Mary Grace Helm.....14
- Camp Fire Chaos* by Nathaly Mackiewics.....15
- “The Clearing in the Weeing Woods”
by Grayson West.....15
- “The Snow Meadow” by Isabella Stevens.....16
- “Descend” by Jasmin Roman.....17
- “The Rabbit Hole” by Grace Xiang.....17
- “What is a Rabbit?” by Ella Kate Nolen.....17
- “Patience in the Unknown”
by Stirling Wilson.....17
- “The Bullies” by Bella Thompson.....18
- “Taxi Cab” by Evan Clarkts
on.....19
- Scattered Azure* by Sydnee Seaborn.....20

- “The Animal” by Jai Roberson.....21
- The Frog Prince* by Catherine Song.....22
- “Food for Love” by Mollye McBride.....23
- “Garden” by Ella Moore.....24
- The Beach Rabbit* by Karson Hester.....24
- “Twists and Turns” by AG Pennisi.....24
- “The Chaotic House” by Sierra Minor.....24
- The Old Man and The Dog* by Jun Ahn.....25
- Laughing Gull* by Jun Ahn.....25
- Destin Harbor* by Jun Ahn.....25
- Twilight* by Jun Ahn.....25
- “Burrowed” by Kaylee Tisdale.....26
- “Rabbit in the Wild” by Cooper Nimmo.....26
- “The Hunt” by Howard Homburger.....26
- “The Rabbit Attack” by Reagan Robbins.....26
- “Chasing Cotton” by Anna Sims.....26
- “A Rabbit Trail” by Russel Johnson.....26
- “Alphabetical Realizations”
by Bella Thompson.....27
- Western Magic* by Catherine Song.....27
- The Dance of Life* by Eileen Merrill.....28
- The Spider* by Kat Vogel.....28
- “Whiteboard” by Mason Lehmkuhl.....28
- “The Ghosts of Childhood” by Eileen Merrill.....28
- “Stars Enclosed” by Grayson West.....29
- “Fluttering Hearts” by Eileen Merrill.....29
- “Rebirth” by Eileen Merrill.....29
- “The Lost Rabbit” by Haley Rowell.....29
- “Reflection” by Peyton Leard.....29
- “Halloween Night” by Emmanuelle Bachrach.....30
- “Night in a Cemetery” by Isabella Stevens.....30

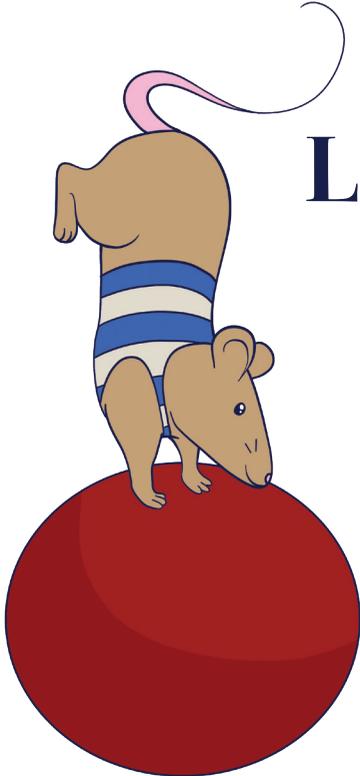
Telephone Project

1. by Isabella Trentacosti.....31
2. by Beck Hall.....31
3. by Landon Hughes.....31
4. “Mockingbird” by Emily Biaz.....32
5. by Avery Scifres.....32
6. by Echo Youngblood.....32
7. by Si Ni.....32
8. “Violena, Violena” by Bella Collins.....33
9. by Minnie Jackson.....33
10. “The Enchantment of Beauty”
by Kael McReynolds.....33
11. by Addie Strickland.....33
12. “In the Moonlight” by Jasmin Roman.....34
13. by Elena Kim.....35
14. “Moonlight Contemplation”
by Gwilym Lloyd.....35
15. by Caterina Chahine.....35
16. “Whatever it Takes!”
by Kounte Threadgill.....36
17. by Catherine Song.....36

STAFF

Arts Team

Caterina Chahine
 Jesse Goldsmith
 Landon Hughes
 Minnie Jackson
 Elena Kim
 Si Ni
 Jinhyo Park
 Avery Scifres
 Catherine Song
 Addison Strickland
 Isabella Trentacosti



Literary Team

Will Bao
 Emily Biaz
 Bella Collins
 Beck Hall
 Lilia Hall
 Gwilym Lloyd
 Kael McReynolds
 Jasmin Roman
 Kounte Threadgill
 Echo Youngblood

Officers

Teacher Sponsor
 Editor & President
 Vice President
 Head Writer
 Head Artist

Mrs. Muschara
 Avery Scifres
 Emily Biaz
 Gwilym Lloyd
 Catherine Song

thesheetauburn@gmail.com
cemuschara@auburnschools.org

Cover art and assets
 made by...

Addison Strickland, Si Ni,
 Catherine Song, & Echo Youngblood



NOV-DEC

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

2023

Theme: Nostalgia

First Place

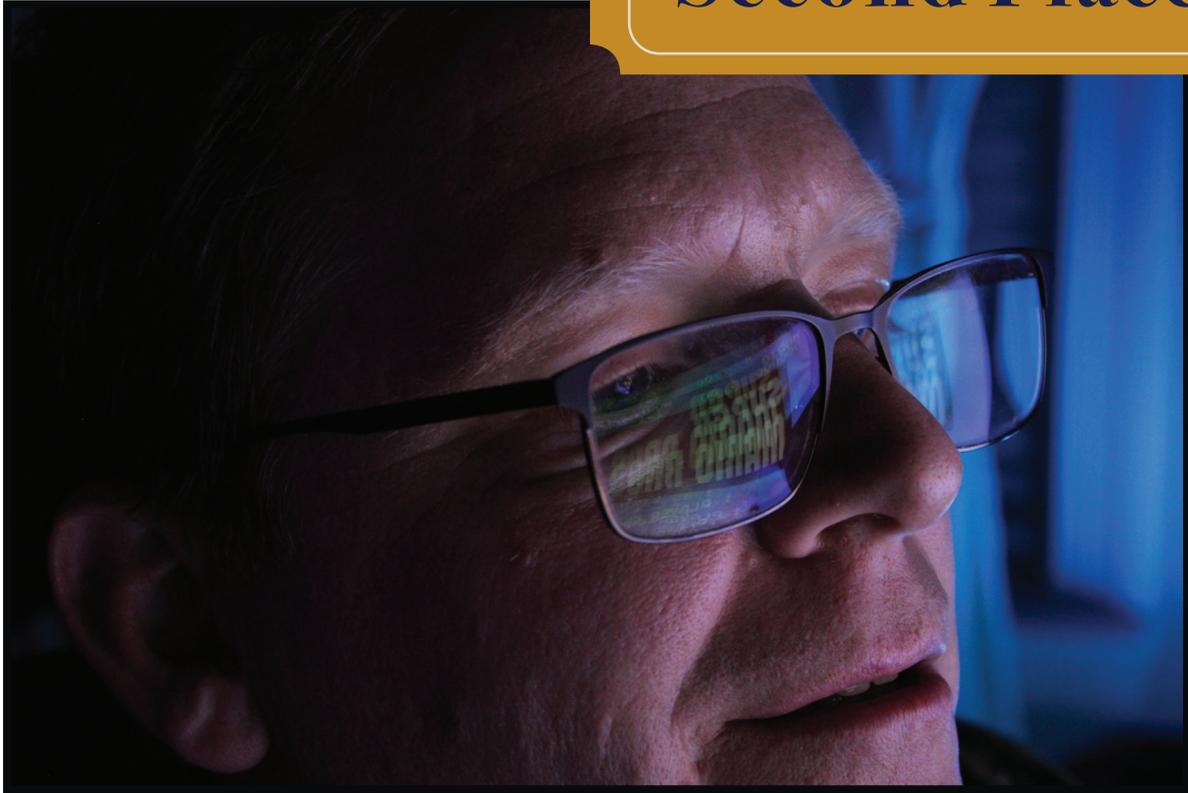
A Letter to Santa

Bella Grace Kimbrell



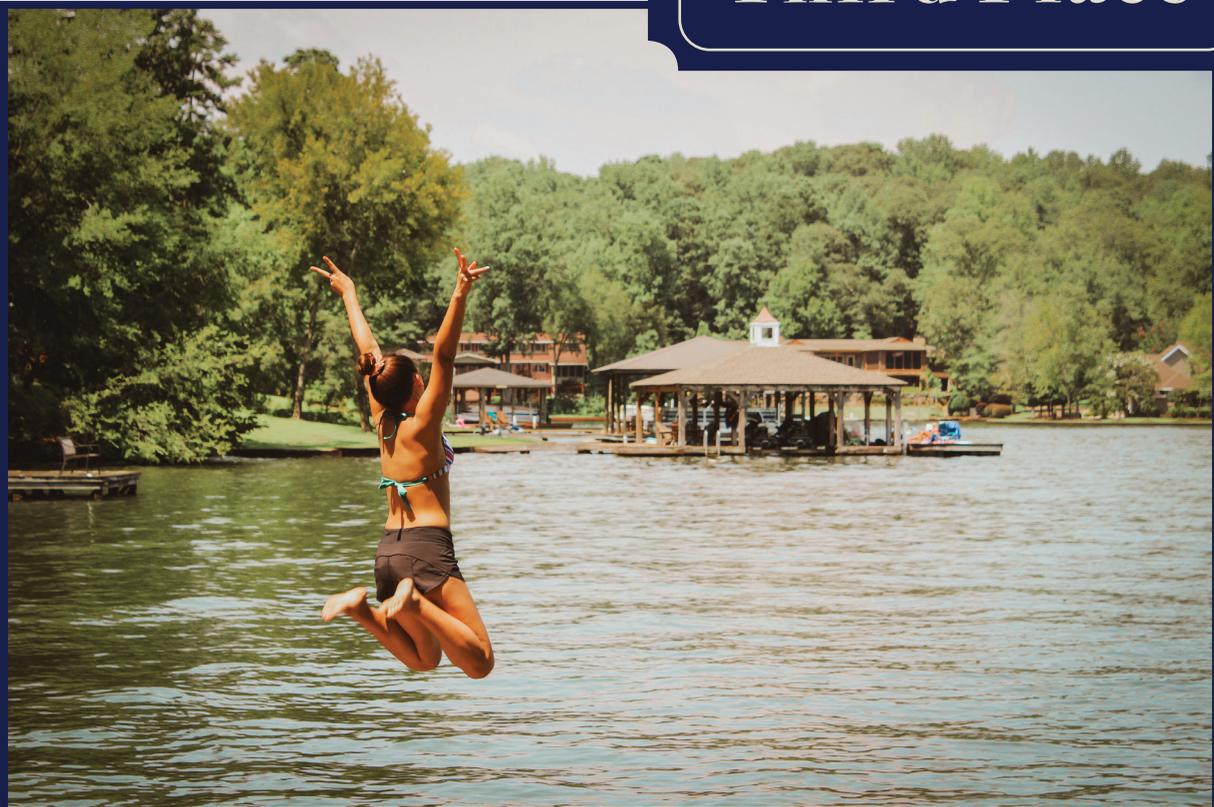
He Never Quit On His 8-Bit
Dracen Pedersen

Second Place



The Best Day Ever!
Hanbi Youn

Third Place



OCT-NOV

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

2023

Theme: Campfire Stories

First Place

“What You Think Is Dead Isn’t Really”

Evelyn Dorsett

I’ve been thinking about how we view roadkill. I was walking down a desolate road, sipping my frozen coffee, when a foul odor hit my nose and put a sour taste in my mouth. There on the side of the road below me was a raccoon that had been disemboweled and flattened by a tire. It was a pitiful thing, maybe already a week into decomposition, but still much gorier than your average roadkill. It’s hard to imagine being in such a situation. To be crushed repeatedly in the middle of nowhere, even after you’re dead, and to have absolutely no one care. Everyone passes by just the same, maybe grimacing at you in disgust, but no sympathy and no pity. Your body is just a small sidestep in a large winding road. You will rot there until eventually sinking back into the earth.

How careless to ignore such a thing. How odd and detached. But I suppose no one understands until it happens to them.

Four months ago, my father died. Two months ago, I saw him again.

I want to clarify that I’ve never coped with things well. There’s always been a stuffed suitcase of neurosis sitting inside me waiting to burst at the slightest inconvenience. I’m easily driven insane by little things which is something I’ve never been able to suppress. I spent every hour of my miserable, dull life not crying over my dad, not even grieving him, but obsessively thinking of him.

My basement door was a pristine off-white with an old steel knob covered in stickers. Like a lot of little girls, I used to collect them. Most were from friends or my dad, now worn from sentiment and poor hand eye coordination when peeling off the sticky film. Being in front of it was like being in front of an estranged family member. The basement was a place where my father would spend the free time he rarely had carving out small wooden figures and molding clay while I would make botched crayon drawings on far too expensive art paper. Me and my mother hadn’t touched it. I’m not sure it was even out of grief, there was just something intrinsically off about it now. Staring at it, my vision blurred and darkened around the edges of my peripheral. I opened the door with haste and was welcomed by the stairs’ pitch dark. I looked down at it. They sat there lonely and desolate like they’d always been that way. The blackness was creeping closer, it inched along towards me like a snake. It blanketed my eyes and dulled my senses, but I remained compelled by some unnatural force to go forward into the pit.



Read the rest of
the story here:



Second Place

“Camp of Cryptids and Cats”

Janae Merrill

Tonight was not a great night to be haunted.

Despite the thick parka wrapped tightly around him, Specs shivered. Stars glittered in the blue sky above, twinkling madly, and the full moon bulged, sending silver slats streaming into the forest below. A log shifted in the flames, sending up a cloud of sparks that illuminated the tall pines standing vigil in the forest. Specs grew closer to his campfire, rubbing his hands together, and breathed out a puff of air, the breath misting.

“You know you have a sleeping bag,” Livi quipped from somewhere close by. She materialized, the floating, slightly translucent form of his best friend hovering over the needle-strewn dirt. “You could just use it.”

Specs grumbled, “I’m not that cold.”

Livi cocked an eyebrow but didn’t argue any further. Her eyes slid to the fire, and she experimentally waved her hand through the sparks. “Funny. I don’t think I’ve dealt with fire yet.”

“Let’s plan on not dealing with it.”

Livi frowned. “Buzzkill. You’ve been in such a grouchy mood all day. I would’ve thought a vacation would make you nicer.”

“You know I’m not the kind of person that can just not do anything!” Specs threw up his hands, quickly shoving them into the parka’s pockets. “I should be doing stuff, not sitting out in the middle of nowhere, freezing.”

“So, you are cold!”

That earned Livi a glare. She shrugged it off, still experimenting with how dangerous fire was to a ghost. Without looking up, she continued, “But you did need this vacation. Ever since the stupid House of Horrors, you’ve been way overworking yourself.”

Specs sighed, not denying that she probably was right. It’s just the idea that there were supernaturals out there, all the time and nobody did anything about them and didn’t sit right with him. Experience taught him out dangerous anything supernatural could be. The more he dealt with, the less were out there and the safer everyone could be.

Specs, Livi, and Snow

Janae Merrill



Read the rest of
the story here:



Third Place

“Sitting on the Dock of the Bay”

Riley Yates

It was a small, quaint town in the outskirts of Louisiana. The swampy, crocodile lurking parts of the state. The locals weren't familiar with the term “skyscraper” and most of their jobs consisted of farming or fishing. They sold their goods to the closest trading post where they would bring in, at most, a couple hundred dollars a week. Bearing children was very common. Most families consisted of 5-7 members, if not more.

Each family in the area lived on the bay. The homes weren't well built and were often very unprotected from potential crime. It wasn't common to lock a door or close a window; if this was observed it was thought to be peculiar. One home in particular was often closed, but inside lived a beautiful, sweet family.

Laura and Jim were the parents. Laura was a stay-at-home mother who devoted her life to their three children, plus the one on the way. Jim had a passion for fishing and spent a lot of his time on the river. Lilly, John, Rivers, and May were the names of their children. They were just as precious as can be. Mrs. Laura kept them clean and well dressed. Their manners were also very much on point, and they attended church every Sunday. The littles were constantly playing in the water behind their house and kept busy by building sandcastles and hopping over rocks. It was common for all of the local children to come together in the afternoons to fish for tadpoles and baby frogs. Needless to say, the water was their home and learning how to swim was required at a young age. Of course, for the younger babies, Rivers and soon to be May, it was more of a threat.

Keeping an eye on three children is a chore. Especially when they are just learning to run and want to keep up with their older siblings at all times. All this being said, there were rarely any incidents in the peaceful little town.

Nightfall on the bay was remarkable. The darkness could overcome your soul in a split

second. Without caution or familiarity, you could be easily swept away.

One evening in particular, the family was enjoying a late dinner. Mr. Jim was late getting back from work and Laura was exhausted from chasing kids all day. After getting the children situated to at least sit down for the next 10 minutes, they dropped into the wooden dining room chairs. Both letting out a sigh, they prayed and then began their discussions as usual. It wasn't long before Rivers let out a cry to get out of his chair and John complained that he was tired of the whining. The dinner came to quick close and as usual the kids ran out to catch lighting bugs. Laura and Jim left the kitchen window open to keep an eye out for the older children while Rivers got his bath.

As a mother, most of the cries you hear are just a figure of your imagination, especially when you have a child screaming that they don't want to take a bath, but this scream was a little off.

“Jim!” Laura called.

“Will you please check on the kids outside?”

“Sure.”

Jim walked to the patio and called for Lilly and John.

“We are OK daddy! I'm coming in a minute!!”

He shrugged and walked back to the bathroom to reassure Laura that everything was OK.

About thirty minutes passed and the children weren't inside. They knew the consequence for staying out, no frog hunting for a week. Laura began to worry.



Read the rest of
the story here:





First Place

Just One Wish
Madonno Keyes



Second Place

Mermaid at Midnight
Cindy Niu



Third Place

Extremely Old Wizard
Michael Barefield



APRIL

POETRY COMPETITION

2024

Theme: Rabbits

First Place

“Waste of a Good Girl”

Evelyn Dorsett

How abysmal to see such a nice girl go so soon.
Hidden beneath your daddy’s shirt, but I can
see those legs bruise. Linger here for awhile and
try to stay awake, but your happy ending will not
come without mistake. Left to clean up after
prom. When does caution go all wrong? Magic
eight ball high or tall, the spiral deepens as you
fall.

Down, Down, Down, Rabbit, Down
Down where they cant see you, Rabbit
Down Down Down Rabbit

You were lavender when the sky was yellow.
Bury your face inside your elbow. Rose Red
Maidens say you’re neurotic and no fun. Look
into my eyes, hypnotic and cathartic when I
smize. And you think I’m lying— at least you
think I’m lying when you go down.

Down, Down, Down, Rabbit, Down.
Down where they cant see you, Rabbit.
Down Down Down Rabbit.

I do concur, I’m what that girl died fur.

Tree house blue will wash the poppies from
your system. You see in smokey hues and
violent premonitions. Under the tree
washed and sobered. Your body’s free, but
the dreams not over.

Down, Down, Down, Rabbit, Down.
Down where they cant see you, Rabbit.
Down Down Down Rabbit.
White Rabbit.

Second Place

“Velveteen Rabbit” Luci Johnson

When I was little
My grandmother gifted me a Velveteen Rabbit.
She had a yellow dress, and a perfect pink nose
With little yarn whiskers.

I remember reading the story for the first time
And learning how they became real
And so, I would hold her as close as I could,
Squeezing her into my chest
Every night, until I fell into sleep's embrace.

Now I lay at night wide awake at two,
With nothing to hold close
And wondering where that girl went.
Did she get lost in the whirlwind of my life?
Or maybe she was buried underneath heavy tears
And maybe she drowned under mascara and lipgloss,
When I tried to hide her away.

I'm sure she wonders why my rabbit never became real,
I will never tell her
That my rabbit sits in a bag, collecting dust underneath my bed.
Maybe she would tell me that if I just love myself,
Maybe I'll be real one day too,
The story says so.
And when I'm real I won't mind being hurt anymore,
I won't be ugly, "except to those who don't understand."
Said the Skin Horse.
Maybe when I'm real,
I won't hide away anymore.

Maybe one day,
I can take my Velveteen Rabbit out of the bag
And brush the dust off of her, and hold her close
As I fall asleep.

Third Place

“Just Keep Hopping”

Analie Pesce

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit whispered aloud
To nothing but a small gust of wind, and the screaming song
Of a thousand mourning doves, invisible, yet profound
In the infernal forest, entangled in its own esse

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit murmured
As she convinced herself to scurry through the—
Wicked brambles and sludge, coating the forest floor
In her essence, embedding fragments of dwindling resolve in the mud

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit breathed sharp
As the familiar pain of dread and agony carved itself into her soul
The careful footsteps of a carnivore in the dark
Alerting her, to the definite danger of death and destruction

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit screamed and cried
As she saw them, the piercing eyes of a predator
In the broken, black brush; against the darkened dirt, confined
And glowing a threatening crimson, unraveling her from the inside

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit wailed (to herself)
As she found herself fused, constrained to the grimy ground—
Beneath her, imprisoned, as she heard it: a growl
That roused the sleeping woodlands, their tranquility shattered

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit whimpered
As she defied the instinct to dart and disguise
In the brambles nearby, for all she could do now was swallow her—
(Fear), and face the foe with all her might

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit (stopped)
Seemingly, in the dead of night, all went quiet as he conveyed—
A question; she resisted the urge to answer, for if she spoke,
She knew he would win, as predator outwits prey

Just keep hopping, the little rabbit (tensed)
He laughed at her meekness, her quietness, her (fright)
And stalked towards her, swallowing her whole, engulfing her—
In his shadow, contrasting the sky of twilight



“I Do Care, and I’m Never Going to Admit It to You”

Lily Tao

We’re sitting in your car, driving home,
when you ask me what I want for dinner,
and you tell me you’re worried,
and I say I don’t care,
and you say nothing at all.

We’re sitting at the dining table, making dumplings,
when you ask me how I plan to spend the rest of my life,
and I say I haven’t figured it out yet,
and you tell me that’s not an answer,
and I say I don’t care,
and you say nothing at all.

We’re sitting on the floor of your new room, drinking juice,
when you ask me if I’m happy,
and I say I’m okay,
and you tell me those aren’t the same,
and I say I don’t care,
and you say nothing at all.

We’re standing in line, getting groceries,
when you ask me if I hate you,
and I say not yet,
and you tell me you’re trying your best,
but I say I don’t care,
and you say nothing at all.

We’re walking through your neighborhood, holding hands,
when you ask me if I’m ever going to write about you,
and I lie,
and you know I lie,
but you say nothing at all.

What is Poetry Outloud?

Poetry Out Loud is a dramatic recitation contest, where contestants choose 3 poems each year to connect to and recite on stage.

I’ve had the wonderful opportunity of going to DC last year and I’m excited to go again as one last hoorah!

Poetry Out Loud has taught me much more than I thought it would. Not only have I fallen in love with poems, ranging from themes of loss, humor, and a simple appreciation of the world, but also styles and poets, like Pablo Neruda. With him, I actually got to combine my love for poetry and Spanish by checking out some of his odes in Spanish!

And to top it all off, I just wanna say I think poetry is criminally underrated. It brings our emotions to life in the most wonderful way of words, it just might take some time to understand them!

- Emily Biaz

Second Place

“He Loved Me”
Bella Collins

He loved me,
He loves me not.

He wanted me,
He wants me not.

He adored me,
He adores me not.

He lied to me,
He cares for me not.

He used me,
He’s a good man

NOT.

He left me,
He’s not around anymore,
Ever.

Then he killed me

...

And now I live not.

Third Place

“When Rain Meets the Summer June”
Doyeon Kim

When Rain meets Summer June
After waiting a year
How are you? Where have you been?
They quickly enter a conversation.

They talk of memories
Of past summers and rainy days
They talk of how things have changed
But for some reason, never them.

While Rain meets Summer June
Rain gently washes summer heat away
From a hot afternoon
Into a wonderful June

Summer June too responds to Rain
Mellowing into evening
Shifting color
Warm

When Rain has met Summer June
And can stay no longer
They promise to come again tomorrow.
This is when Rain meets the Summer June, for a
month, in a year.

I decided to participate in Social Justice Poetry Out Loud because I thought it was a cool new medium to talk about injustices, and I wanted to explore it more. I’d never written and/or performed political poetry before, so this was a fun first to be part of. What I loved most was hearing the passion with which others talked about issues they cared about. I thought it was really refreshing to see the wide range of current events and social justice issues that others wrote and performed.

- Lily Tao



“You Told Me”
Anna Lillebo

You told me, when I was young that I can be anything I want in this world,
Though I will have to work twice as hard.

You told me, the world is mine to conquer.
The men of the world already have that covered.

You told me, “That means you’re a woman now”
Yet I was still only eleven.

You told me, “That’s just boys being boys.”
What a pathetic excuse.

You told me at school, “You can’t wear that here.”
I had no idea my shoulders were such an issue.

You told me, to share my location with you,
“Just in case.”

You told me, “Carry this with you.”
I pray that I will never have to use it.

You told me all this as if it’s a normal thing,
It’s only normal for us.

Why should I be the one to blame?
Why am I forced to grow up while they continue to be boys?
Why when I act a certain way, I am this, but act another way, I am that?

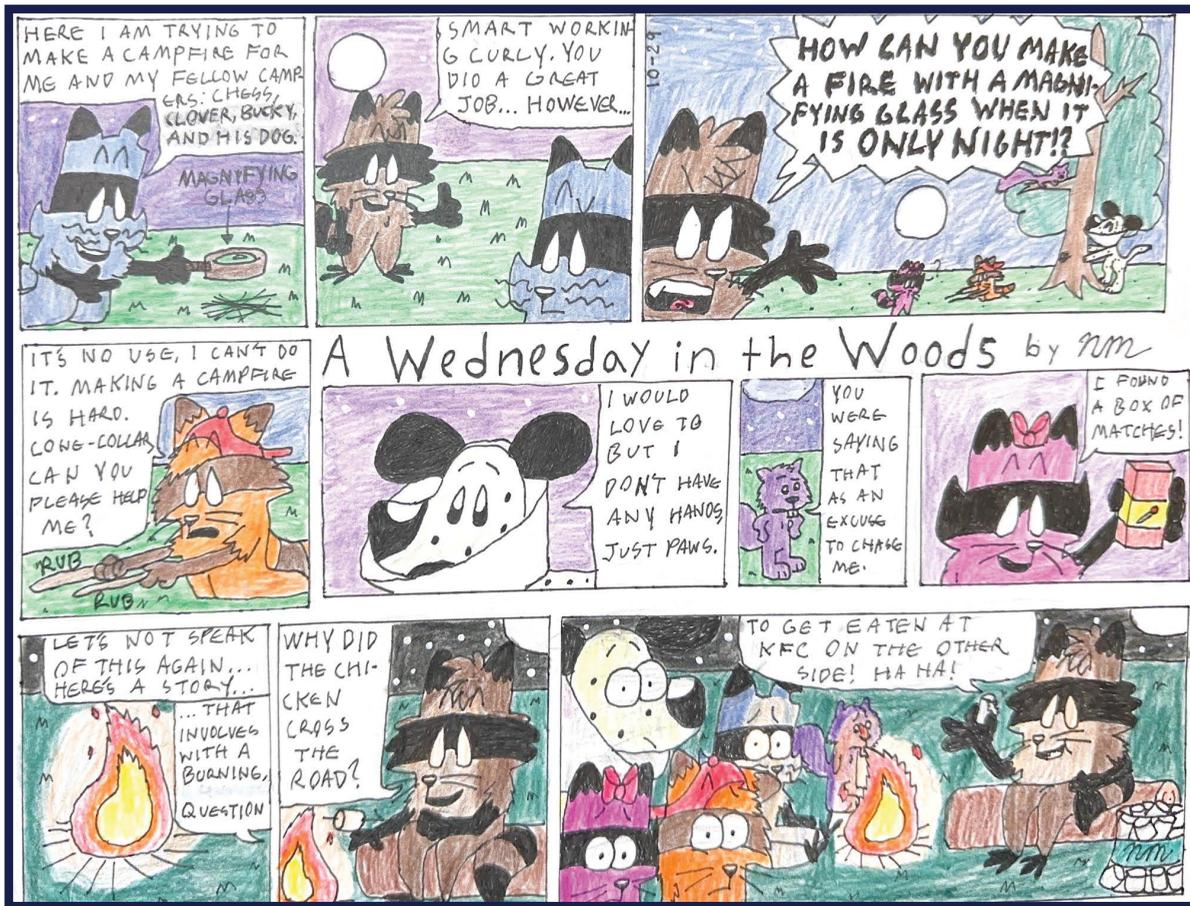
How come when there needs to be heavy lifting, they call for “big strong boys?”
How do you expect me to “smile more” if the only thing on my mind is fear and paranoia?
How dare you tell me, “not all of them” and “there’s no need to get angry?”

But of course, “That’s part of being a woman my dear.”

Little Red Riding Hood
Mary Grace Helm



Camp Fire Chaos
Nathaly Mackiewics



“The Clearing in the Weeping Woods”
Grayson West

A man wandered aimlessly through the weeping woods. Beehives hung from the branches of eleven trees which rimmed a clearing the man then stepped into. Clear was the clearing of anything but clear air and the eleven, beehive harboring trees. Down low did the beehives hang from the eleven branches of the eleven trees of the clearing. Eleven beehives began buzzing in the clear clearing of the weeping woods. Fifteen-thousand bees poured out of the eleven beehives into the clear clearing of the weeping woods. Graham was the man in the clear clearing, and Graham did run from the fifteen-thousand bees which poured from the eleven beehives which hung from the eleven branches of the eleven trees which lined the clearest of clearings in the weeping woods. How long Graham ran, he did not know, for the bees were behind him, buzzing loudly so. In the end, Graham did run for as long as he could. Just not long enough to outrun the fifteen-thousand bees of the eleven beehives of the eleven trees of the weeping woods.

“The Snow Meadow”

Isabella Stevens

Searching, the rabbit searches to find something.
It looks out to see the bleak meadow, where it once lived.
Cold, frozen, stuck in time the rabbit looks.
Can't see beyond the icy landscape, frosty the paws of the rabbit.
Numbness, it goes into the rabbit hole.

Down deep in the rabbit hole, it sees visions of its future.
Lower in the warmth of the hole, it wears through the numb.
The bleakness of the meadow is warmer, warmer.

The rabbit peaks through the icy meadow, watching carefully.
For what? Only the rabbit knows, it is searching.
The sounds of music came from a far distance, filling with hope.
Cautious, the rabbit heads to the music.
The paws are getting damp from the ice, but runs to hope.

Down deep in the rabbit hole, it sees visions of its future.
Lower in the warmth of the hole, it wears through the numb.
The bleakness of the meadow is warmer, warmer.

The rabbit heads out of the hole, waken from its dream.
The dream of warmth, the rabbit looks out to see the tundra snow.
The meadow is only of icy isolation, hope still lives on.
The rabbit believes in the music and hope, forever of that spring.
The paws are wet, icy, and numb.

Down deep in the rabbit hole, it sees visions of its future.
Lower in the warmth of the hole, it wears through the numb.
The bleakness of the meadow is warmer, warmer.

The rabbit has its head popping up, a sound is heard.
The rabbit ever so hopeful, follows it.
Blinded by optimism, the sounds of nature fills its head.
Now farther and further away from the rabbit hole, cold.
The rabbit is hopeful, but now numbing.

Down deep in the rabbit hole, it sees visions of its future.
Lower in the warmth of the hole, it wears through the numb.
The bleakness of the meadow is warmer, warmer.

The rabbit closes its eyes.
Warmth swallows it, the rabbit is at rest.
It no longer needs to search for the warmth.
The rabbit lays, frozen like the future and past.
Like something out of Watership Down.

“Descend”

Jasmin Roman

I'm late. I'm late.
I'm late, I'm late, I'm late.
I run and chase and hide and wait but all the same
I'm Late
The clock ticks, the bird sings
Run and chase invisible things
My thoughts are red, the cards are drawn.
Who am I, I'm late, I'm late.
Who am I?
Forever feels like a second, a second feels like a day
Left is right, up is down, bad is good, silence is sound
Am I late or early? Am I there at all?
Fell down a hole, bumped my head and bruised my soul
Deeper down the rabbit hole, destination no one knows
Can't turn back time, no use going back to yesterday
I was a different person then
I'm late, please time, slow down and rewind
I'm late, I'm late.
Late for what?
Late for what.
L
A
T
E

“What is a Rabbit?”

Ella Kate Nolen

What is a rabbit?
An animal?
A white ball of fur?
A silent stalker?
Or do they mean more?
Are they beauty?
Grace?
Compassion?
Do rabbits bring joy?
Are they a light for someone in a dark place?
Do they make people smile?
Or are they useless?
What is a rabbit?

“Patience in the Unknown”

Stirling Wilson

The sun was bright and grass was green
I ran over when I heard a scream
Many strangers stood around
Amazed at what came out of the ground

Timid and with fear
It fled when people were near
Round with a tail and slow like a snail
The creature hid in a bush and wailed

It stalled still unsure of what to do
Knowing it would have to make a move

Eventually the sun would set
And the creature would have to rest
I waited silently outside until sunset

Suddenly I heard a bark
A dog was near at a park
I looked up ahead right as I was about to flee
White as snow it was a rabbit I see

It scurried along as fast as a bee
Dodging and hoping no one would see
Which made me feel like I could duck and roll
And see the rabbit scurry in the hole

“The Rabbit Hole”

Grace Xiang

The Rabbit Hole
Not a place nor thing
Lives in our mind
Reality's dream.

The Rabbit
Never leaving the hole
Only sees in gray
Never gold

The
Wind, the seasons, change
Never reaches the hole
The rabbit will either stay
Or the rabbit will go

“The Bullying’s”

Bella Thompson

Mallory was walking down the hall with her two friends, Christie and Freyah. Those three are like peas in a pod, they’re always seen together. They stop at Christie’s locker in between periods, chatting about subjects that seem random and unimportant.

“So, how come there’s wind? Is it because of everyone’s breathing or because of the ocean waves?” Christie blabbers on with question after question, each question seeming obvious or just plain old stupid.

“Girl. Hush,” Freyah grumbles, sounding annoyed with her constant talking as she leans against the locker next to Christie’s. Christie shrugs and ignores the sharp glare sent her way as she exchanges her history binder for her English folder.

“Guys, can we not argue today? I’m trying to keep it together so that I retain my sanity by the time the dismissal bell rings,” Mallory says as she texts her mom on her phone. Christie just shrugs and Freyah rolls her eyes a bit, muttering something under her breath. Christie persists with her questions, knowing that if Freyah truly didn’t like her talking, she would have walked away by now. She closes her locker, turning to her friends with her usual bright smile as she hugs her folder to her chest. Freyah gets off the locker and the three begin their casual stroll towards their next class, English.

They eventually reach the classroom just before the tardy bell rings, Freyah giving their teacher an innocent smile as an excuse for their lateness as they go to their assigned seats near the back of the room. The teacher just sighs quietly to herself before beginning their lecture. The trio goes through their usual classroom routine: Freyah leans back in her chair and stares up at the ceiling, Christie actually pays attention, and Mallory looks around the room with a bored expression.

One of the students on the other side of the room raises their hand to ask a question, and a group of girls sitting in front of them sco(s) quietly and sigh in annoyance. For context: this student is the type of student that usually asks a bunch of questions about anything and everything that they’re confused about. Mallory raises an eyebrow at their obvious behavior, but stays silent. The student ask the teacher a question about commas, which the teacher happily answers. The teacher looked a bit nervous when the group of girls displayed annoyance, but chose to not to call them out on their behavior.

For the rest of the class, whenever the student

would raise their hand, the girls would scoff not so quietly and whisper and giggle amongst themselves. Mallory began to grow annoyed with their rude behavior. She glances over at her friends to see their reaction, and finds that they also don’t like it. Christie just looks disappointed in them and Freyah outright glares at them whenever they go through their mean routine. A few minutes before the bell rang, everyone began packing up their things and Mallory took this as a chance to whisper to Freyah and Christie.

“Hey, what’s their deal? Do you know why they’re so...” Mallory trails off, thinking to herself to find the right words.

“Stuck up? Irritating? Bratty? Annoying? Pompous?” Freyah whispers back, trying to help Mallory find the proper words to describe the group of girls. Mallory shoots her a quick playful glare.

“You know that’s not what I meant, Freyah. The word I was looking for is disrespectful,” Mallory whispers before turning back to Christie. “Do you know why?”

“And don’t try and play devil’s advocate like you always do,” Freyah whispers to Christie as she rests her cheek against the desk. Christie looks a bit guilty before shrugging her comment.

“I don’t know, maybe they have some problems at home or something,” Christie whispers to them, looking a bit guilty at Freyah’s comment.

“Maybe they’re little sociopaths and narcissists in training,” Freyah chimes in quietly. Christie nudges her in the ribs with her elbow, Freyah making a small grumbling noise and glaring at her in response.

“Don’t be mean, Freyah, they’re people too,” Christie whispers to her.

“Yeah, not very good people,” Freyah grumbles under her breath, to which Christie nudges her again.



Read the rest of
the story here:

“Taxi Cab”
Evan Clarkson

EXT. BUS STOP - TWILIGHT

A young man, CLANCY, stands dressed in a baggy, grey suit. He carries with him a medium sized briefcase, the top of it is littered with scratches. The bus stop is completely empty, and no one is visible for miles around Clancy. The only light is a single dim streetlight.

Clancy checks his watch then sits on the curb. He pulls out a postcard from his suit pocket. Written on the back is: “I am half a soul divided without you. Love, Wilma. 512 Keons AVE, Scarver District.” Clancy sighs and puts it back.

After a beat, a plain taxicab pulls up in front of Clancy and rolls its windows down. Inside is a man, DRIVER, whose face and body are obscured.

DRIVER
Hey. You need a ride?

Clancy looks up at him and shrugs.

CLANCY
Sure. I didn't know cabs were still running.

Clancy stands up and walks to the other side of the car. He gets in and shuts the door.

INT. TAXI CAB - CONTINUOUS

Clancy gingerly sets his briefcase on the floor and buckles his seatbelt. We can only see the back of Driver's head. The cab begins to move.

DRIVER
You thought the cabs stopped running but the buses didn't?

Clancy says nothing and looks out the window.

CLANCY
I thought buses ran all night.

DRIVER (LAUGHING)
Nope. They shut off before we do, at least around here. Lucky for you I've still got an hour on the clock.



Read the rest of
the story here:



Scattered Azure
Sydnee Seaborn



“The Animal”

Jai Roberson

The autumn season has been spoiled by the experiences of October. There was something following me, stalking me. It was a creature, not a human and definitely not similar to any species in the woods. But for now, I just call it ‘The Animal’. The first time I ever came across The Animal was when I was taking a stroll at around 11 at night. I was walking and heard a sound, a gasp for air, or maybe even clicking, wheezy kind of breathing. The thing was these clicks would only happen in threes. Not one, not two, just three. Of course, being a good citizen, I walk towards the noise.

Then I saw it. The Animal. It was like a human skeleton, but it had stringy hairs on its head. It had no eyes, only black craters where its eyes should be. It had no flesh covering its teeth, they were exposed. Its arms were thin and bony, and its hands, dear god, its fingers were like sharp, thin daggers. It had these six spider-like legs that cut into the ground whenever it walked or crawled (to be completely honest). The Animal had wings or something that appeared to be wings, it couldn’t fly with it because it was like its legs but longer, it cut straight like there the wings were one big piece of bone. Strings of flesh hung and connected for all eight of them. It was staring at me. You could hear it huff in and then, “Click, Click, Click,” Over and over and over again. I was frozen, holding a flashlight that illuminated the craters where at holes where the eyes should be. It was so dark, so empty. It started to crawl, it started to click faster and faster as it got closer. I ran away as fast as I could to get away from The Animal. That would be my worst mistake.

The next two nights, there was a strange occurrence at around the time I found The Animal. I would be lying in bed and turn the lights off and try to sleep, but exactly at 10:57 pm I would hear taps in threes. Not one, not two, but three. “Tap-“it would happen again at 11 pm “Tap-“and one last time at 11:03 “Tap-“then the tapping would stop but the clicks would begin. “Huuuuuu Click-“it inhaled and exhaled slowly as if it knew it was there. “Click-“I almost shook in fear as I knew it was The Animal, “Click-“. Then 12 am would strike and the clicks and huffs would stop. The worst happened the next night. The Animal wouldn’t do it slowly anymore. It would do it faster in threes. “Tap, Tap, Tap-“ it wouldn’t stop clicking, it would just tap until 12 am. It sounded so urgent, like it was excited.

The last night The Animal bothered me, it was quiet, so quiet. It must’ve been 11:03 pm when it started. Awfully late for its usual schedule. It would start, “Tap-“ you would think it was a leaf brushing the window. It would happen again but even quieter, “Tap-“ then The Animal’s plot would be revealed when it did it again, “Crash-“ it used its bony, flesh connected wings to break the window. I wanted to scream, it seemed natural to jump but I didn’t somehow. I was frozen like ice.

I heard the wood break as it legs dug into the windowsill. I could hear it click and huff again but it wasn’t in threes anymore it was in fives. The inhale was longer, wheezier, “Whuuuuuuuu-“ it crawled closer, “Click-“ I could feel it exhale on the back of my neck, but now the clicks sounded like words, like my name, “J...a...m.e.s...” How did The Animal know my name? How did it know, “I...kn-ow... yor... awaaake.” It growled, it was so close. The Animal moved its bony arms with a snap and moved its sharp fingers to touch my hair on my forehead. Its sharp finger dug into my skin of my forehead, but I had to keep my eyes closed. “W-ake u-uuup.” It demanded briskly, I had to open my eyes. What would it do if I didn’t. I opened my eyes and stared at it in its craters. It was strange, it seemed like it smiled at me. “B-e ca-reful, be-ware o-f what’s u-nder yor be-d.” It snapped at me. What was under my bed? “Tap-“ I heard it again but it was from under my bed. I could feel it this time. I looked and saw the animal was gone but I could still feel the tapping. I moved towards the end of the bed. I slowly moved to look underneath the bed. “Oh my...” it was horrific, there were claw marks on the bottom of my bed. They were so deep, so animalistic. I get off my bed and look at the marks. I slap my hand to my mouth in shock. It was so deep in the bed you could almost see the mattress, carved in the bottom of the bed was ‘You look so peaceful when you sleep :)’.

The Frog Prince
Catherine Song

The Frog Prince



“Food for Love”
Mollye McBride

I've been told that my love life is like an ocean
Unexplored
I've never really had a love life
I've never even had a love
So for them to say that is fair
But I have another analogy
A rabbit
A white cotton tail good old rabbit
I know it's silly to compare but if you think about it
It sort of makes sense
A bunny searching for food
But in my case love
He can't find any so he doesn't get any that day
But winter is coming, that means no more food soon
What will he do
Sure he had some scraps here and there but that was because
his friends were willing to give him some food
And he was fine just eating with his friends sharing their food
But then his friends found partners
Other people to share food with
Now the rabbit was alone
He had friends but he rarely saw them
So he kept searching and searching
Then suddenly he found this tree full of yummy snacks
All harvested by a squirrel
The squirrel invited him in and let him stay awhile
The squirrel then gave him some food
And they became friends
But one day
The day before winter ended
The squirrel kicked him out
After relying on friends food and not searching for his own he
realized how much he needed to find his own food for himself
She realized maybe it's not a bad thing that she dosent have a
love life with another person
Because as long as she has her love for herself she'll make it
through the winter and maybe through life

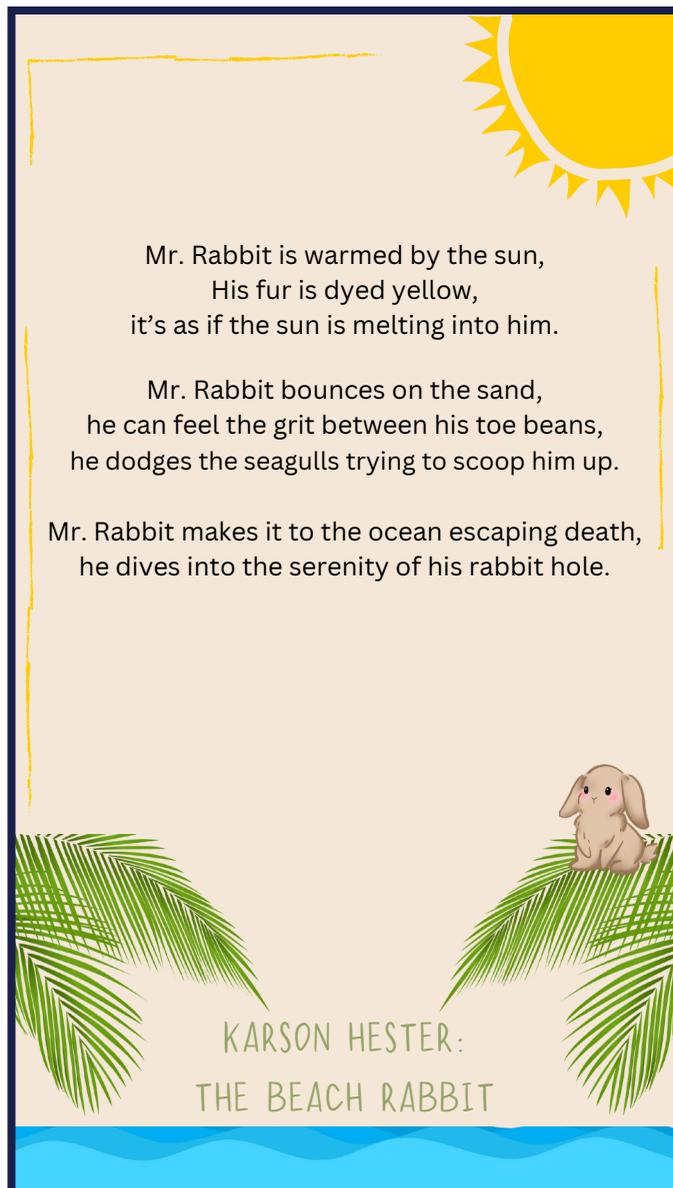
“Garden”

Ella Moore

The day is bright, the day is warm
The trees sway over fields of green
Each patter of a paw, each tune of a bird,
They all harmonize as one, its nature's song to be heard
But one little creature, in his castle of earth
Is particularly eager, for a new spring, a new birth
His nose twitches, his ears flop
His stomach circles as his heart just might pop
With the smell of fresh dew, he inspected the budding flowers, and this little rabbit knew
That in just a few days his field would be filled, with his very own garden, he could not be more thrilled

The Beach Rabbit

Karson Hester



“Twists and Turns”

AG Pennisi

A rabbit bound in the maze of life,
Riddled with internal strife.

Around the twists and turns,
The hard learns,
About the maze of life

“The Chaotic House”

Sierra Minor

In a loud and playful house
Lives a very old mouse
One day he got a neighbor
The kids all called him Tabor
He was a little rabbit
That liked to make a racket
The mouse never got a break
Until the day he was buried with a rake

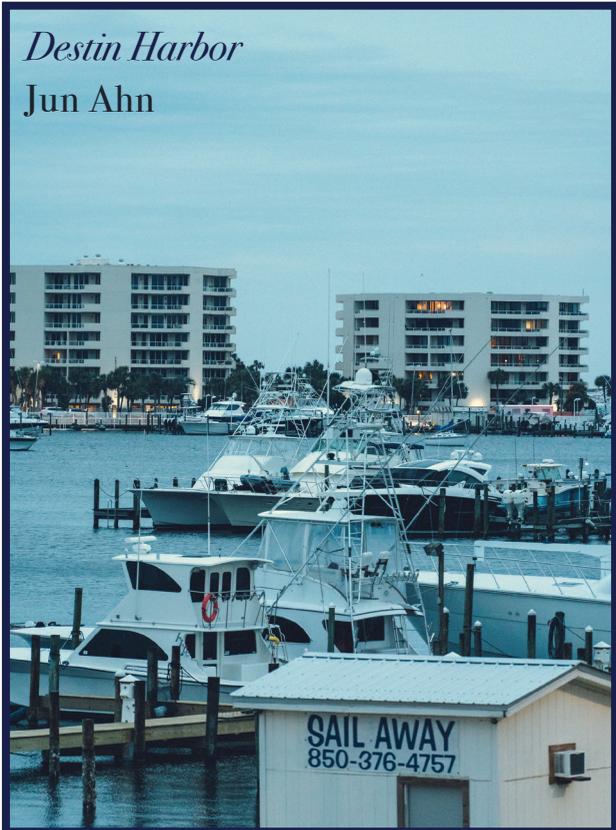
The Old Man and The Dog
Jun Ahn



Laughing Gull
Jun Ahn



Destin Harbor
Jun Ahn



Twilight
Jun Ahn



“Burrowed”

Kaylee Tisdale

Here we go again
Down
Like a rabbit i dig myself a hole
I have to live in it this time
Escape
want to escape
Let me out
There is no way out
Burrowed forever

“Rabbit in the Wild”

Cooper Nimmo

Racing around through the high scratchy grass
Always alert and ready to dessert
Bouncing high and low, up and down
Bushy tail looking extra squishy
Instincts say to run super swift
Twitching and going off amazingly quick

“The Hunt”

Howard Homburger

The rabbit hops along
Silent arrow launched across night
Family fed for tonight

“The Rabbit Attack”

Reagan Robbins

A sight to be seen
Are it's eyes the gleam.
Red or black,
Staying away from an attack.
A leap in the air
Tussles it's white, fluffy hair.
The fox eves the rabbit from afar,
Causing the rabbit to jar.
The fox decides to strike,
But the rabbit disappears into the night.

“Chasing Cotton”

Anna Sims

All hope lost
I stand alone in a meadow
No, not just any meadow
Not one bursting with spring green grass
That smells of sunflowers and conifers
No

My meadow is a muted gray
No flowers dare to grow
The shine doesn't peak through the horizon
Instead, overgrown weeds tangle their vines
With rolling hills and no end in sight
Stuck

Then, the faint rustling of leaves
A glimpse of soft fur
Snow white, unmarred
Pink button nose with a cotton tail
Hopping to an unknown world
Freedom

I break out in a sprint
My heart beating to cadence of my steps
But then, weeds reaching out
Wrap around my feet, dragging me down
The rabbit is long gone
Alone

“A Rabbit Trail”

Russel Johnson

Wandering aimlessly
Until I see light
Almost like The Weeknd
In the Superbowl performance
That became a gif and meme.
How strange
That he performed the Superbowl
Considering he is Canadian.
Canada offers a lot of things
Notably their syrup
Which is very much like honey
Sweet to the tongue.
Honey is a favorite food of bears,
Namely the most famous children's bear
Who wears a top and no bottoms
And has a handful of friends
Including: Rabbit.

“Alphabetical Realizations”

Bella Thompson

10-4

A person is allowed to

Believe whatever they want to.

Can they believe that they will be

Dealt a winning hand in Poker? Absolutely.

Even if some people don't

Feel comfortable with some beliefs,

Good people will know that they are just beliefs.

However people want to be, they will

Inevitably have some kind of belief.

Just because someone's beliefs are different from yours,

Keep in mind that they are human, just

Like you. You are human.

Many people sometimes try to tell you that you're not human, but

No one is allowed to tell you what you are.

Only you can decide what you are and what you're capable of.

People can talk all they want, they always will, but don't ever

Question your own humanity. Have

Respect for yourself and your fellow humans.

Sometimes giving or receiving respect can be hard, but

Take the time to remember that everyone has their flaws.

Understand that sometimes people aren't comfortable with themselves. The

Very thing that makes people human is their

Weird belief that people should be viewed in a different category from all other things.

Xylophones have numerous keys,

Yet people choose to listen to the music it creates rather than examine each little key. Find

Zen in realizing that your uniqueness and you're inability to “fit in” and be like everyone else

is the very reason that you are you.



The Dance of life
Eileen Merrill



The Spider
Kat Vogel



“Whiteboard”
Mason Lehmkuhl

You get looked at in each classroom,
and written on by multiple directed markers.
The markers strum you like a guitar,
and you can't say anything about it.

Do you like being written or drawn on?
If yes, what's your favorite color?
Can you see what's being added to you,
like clothing and accessories?

Does it feel like a tickle on your
non-existent stomach?
Do you feel exposed if you're
clean and empty?

Is being dirty also known as
having no hygiene?
For right now, all I draw on you
are silly affirmations, well, sometimes.

“The Ghosts of Childhood”
Eileen Merrill

Childhood is so carefree,
But now the future is calling me
Growth is a terrible sight,
the difficulties of navigating life.

The responsibility is large,
like a shadow from the sun's charge
Uncertainty fills every breath,
As I wait for the dance of death

Yet, in the darkness, a light shines
Courage whispers, “You'll be fine.”
Though growing up may cause some fear,
With each step, I'll persevere.

“Stars Enclosed”

Grayson West

An old circle of silver
With flowers on a river
Wrapped around its shining waist
I can't let it go to waste
Now recently replaced by
A band of eccentric taste
The night surrounded in gold
Gilded stars swimming in black
Shimmering shards atop tar
I wear stars on my finger

“Fluttering Hearts”

Eileen Merrill

Whispers in moonlight,
Young hearts dance and reunite
Love blooms in the night

“Rebirth”

Eileen Merrill

Cherry blossoms bloom,
Rabbits nibble fresh clover,
Spring whispers softly.

“The Lost Rabbit”

Haley Rowell

Down the rabbit hole he goes
Into the abyss he knows
Uninterrupted he runs
Through the bush
Through suns
Rushing
Fast
Faster
Through time
Through the twigs
Without reason or rhyme
Into the bottomless hole of dirt
Back up again
Slip
Into the swirls
Into the frozen clocks
Into the giant caterpillars
Into the little butterflies
Into the tea cups
Into the light
Girl
A small girl points
She points at me to her mom
“Look mommy a bunny”
With a gummy smile
“You're cute”
“Stay awhile”

“Reflection”

Peyton Leard

Spring time is rolling around
the grass becomes greener, the flowers become colorful, the sun becomes hotter
Animals begin to come out from the cold
Rabbits enter into backyards hopping and nibbling on leaves
Rabbits symbolize kindness, compassion, and elegance
And I begin to think what I have in my heart...
Am I kind, compassionate, or elegant?
Do people think of me in the way I think of a rabbit?
I would hope they do.
I want my intentions to be to fill others hearts and let it grow,
To be graceful and impactful,
To be the person that people come to
I want to be a rabbit.
Everyone should want to be a rabbit.

“Halloween Night” Emmanuelle Bachrach

There once was an old lady in an old white house, where the walls were peeling off and the roof—let’s say it is not the strongest thing ever. The lady had white, curly, short hair, with deep green big eyes. Her house was known in the neighborhood as the “3 Ghost House,” because the family who lived there before her got murdered, but no body knows how they got murdered. Some people say that they see the mom and the dad and their little baby chilling on the couch in the living room. The ghosts never really bothered anyone. It was like they were living as normal people, like a normal family, like they don’t even know they’re dead..?!

Because the old lady was known as a creep for living there, she never really got along with anyone. Nobody ever saw her coming out of her house, not even people coming to visit her. She was a lonely, old lady. On Halloween, no one ever came to knock on her door for candy. Everyone was scared of her. “Creepy, old lady,” the kids yelled. Suddenly, they saw the TB turned on in the old White House. A creepy Halloween movie started to play, and the old lady showed up on the couch out of nowhere. The kids started running for their lives. One of the kids, an 8th grader, Johnny was his name, got home after running for his life. His mom was in the kitchen cooking dinner.

“BOOM!” Their door slammed shut. Johnny’s mom turned around and saw the fear on Johnny’s face. His face was pale. His hands and legs were shaking.

“What’s wrong?” she asked, with a worried voice.

Johnny could barely talk. When Johnny calmed down a bit, he stared describing to his mom what he saw: “The the the old lady in.. in the white old house...” Johnny started, mumbling.

“What about her?” his mom asked, worriedly.



Read the rest of
the story here:



“Night in a Cemetery” Isabella Stevens

Once was there a man traveling along the border of Yukon, Canada. He was visiting his younger brother and wanted to drive past his old family grave plots. He drove to the end of the highway, turning to the left into the old rustic cemetery seeing the headstones of the once living. He parked his car near the willow tree that was on a cliff hanging over the arctic scapes, he walked down the fresh snow towards the cemeteries oddly shaped ritual grounds, that the indigenous tribe nearby had made. The man didn’t particularly care, nor wanted to respect them and walked over the ritual grounds towards his family’s grave plots, all things were fine, the crickets chirping, and the leaves humming from the winter breeze.

After a while he walked deeper into the cemetery the sounds of nature abruptly ending, he looks around only seeing headstones. He stares into the forest hoping to catch a glimpse of the thing or being that silenced the trees around him. He soon saw nothing. The paranoia began settling in, he kept walking, but now, a little more rushed as he heard nothing but his own steps. The sensation of being watched amplified, he closes his eyes counting to ten clearing his mind. He walks deeper into the cemetery towards his family’s section.

His breathing was shaky and shallow as he turns it into paranoia he keeps walking, it was only his footsteps and his hard breaths echoing against the headstones. He kept walking, catching a glimpse of red eyes in the tree line, he tried to brush it off, he walks faster to his family’s headstones, he can still only hear himself, and faint footsteps. He kept walking into the cemetery, now miles away from the willow tree and his car, he tries to calm himself saying it was all in his head. Deep down he knew it wasn’t.



Read the rest of
the story here:

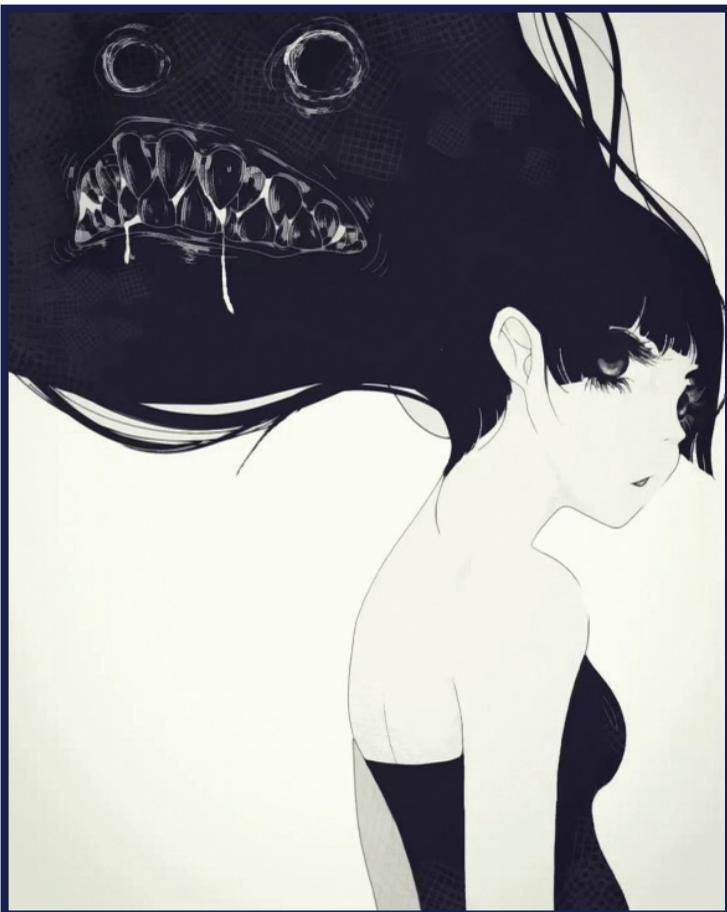


TELEPHONE GAME

How it works

One artist starts off the game with an original piece of artwork. They send their image to one of our writing staff who creates a piece of writing inspired by the artwork. The writer then sends their work to another artist. This cycle continues until all members have participated.

1. Isabella Trentacosti



2. Beck Hall

Copper wire briars
Golden dust dredged
Upon feather fluffed hay
Writhing downy masses
Cry preciously shrill

3. Landon Hughes



“Mockingbird”

4. Emily Biaz

Melted together
welded from one piece,
This cage is virtually unbreakable
inescapable

Except for one hole you left open
One that I can just barely *not* fit through

Your menacing eyes
Cackle at the impossibility of escape
Watch me behind the barbed wire
Your taunting words
And mocking words
clip my wings

So stuck as I am
I act as your trophy
Sing those evil tunes you hum all day
For you

But your mocking words
Aren't enough to defeat a mockingbird
Not enough to drown out my own tunes for
at night I'll sing my own song

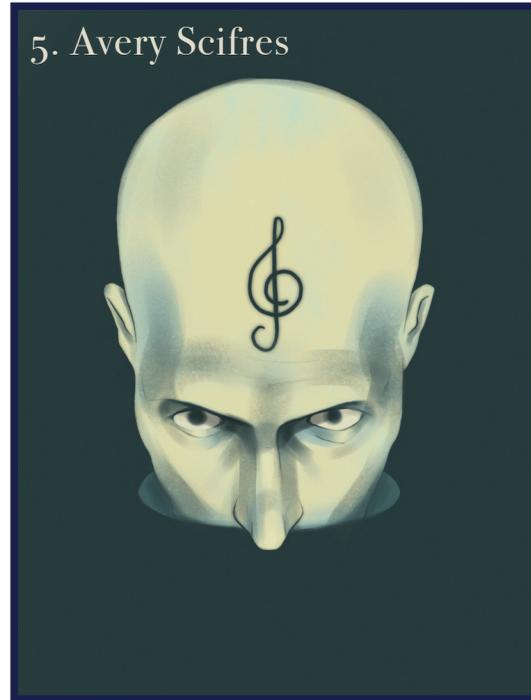
I won't eat
I won't sleep
Til finally
Emaciated
I can squeeze through that wretched hole
Past those piercing knives
and your piercing eyes

Unit I emerge

My beloved feathers, crumbs of my past
self, float below me
Now a skeletal shadow
Chords swollen, almost broken

But free

5. Avery Scifres



6. Echo Youngblood

Notes branded upon my skin
Digging holes just to fill them in
Peering, staring, wondering why
Wishing the songs would linger and lie
Praying for more than just one chord
Waiting in vain for melody to pour
I watch the time just trickle on by
Resenting the day when the music won't fly
Sheet music untouched from its place on the shelf
I'm stuck in this hole that I dug for myself

7. Si Ni



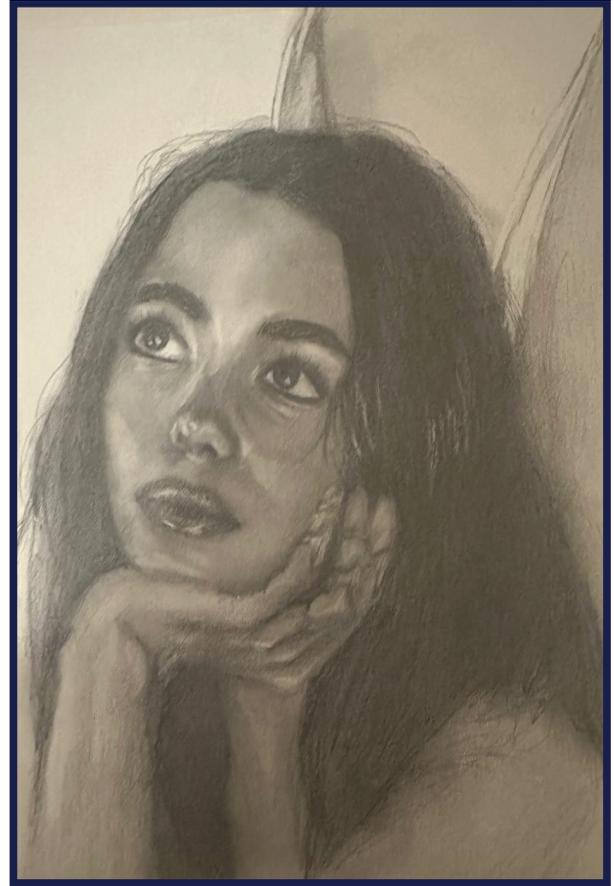
9. Minnie Jackson

“Violena, Violena” 8. Bella Collins

Violena, Violena,
Daughter of the strings,
Violena, Violena,
Player for the kings.

Pretty as can be,
Violena, Violena,
Much prettier than me.

Who knew your love,
An angel from above,
Violena, Violena.



“The Enchantment of Beauty” 10. Kael McReynolds

In the wispers of the night,
Her eyes sparkling bright,
Glimmering like the start in the night sky.

Her hair,
For every strand holds a memory,
Swaying gently in the breath of the wind.

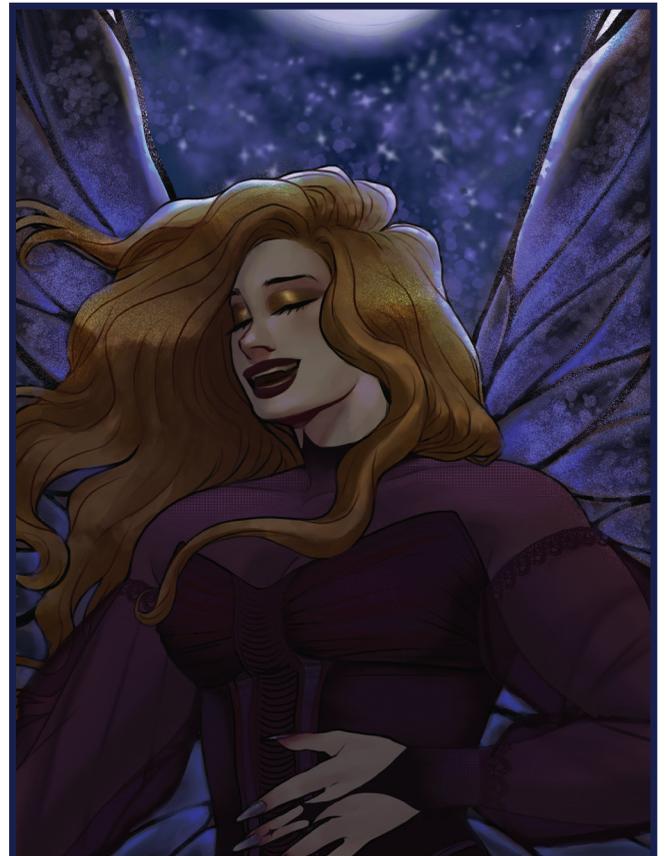
Her features,
Glowing in the pale moonlight,
So enchanting it captivated his heart.

Her voice,
Magical to the ear,
A serenade of love.

Her wings,
Something so delicate as love,
Carrying her to the one she loves dearly.

She is the true embodiment of grace,
A fairy who is beyond compare,
With a love so pure that is simply divine.

11. Addie Strickland



“In the Moonlight”
12. Jasmin Roman

In front of the moon, she stands, with her hand carefree and cast

Out in the open, in the moon she feels free, her eyes closed but laughing at those
who will never understand she

The moon turns blonde hair and eyelids to gold, the moon helping her glow more
than she knows

Her wings close her off from the world but open her heart, butterfly wings the color
of lavender, that of a butterfly migrating to where it's warm

The moon is her space, her warmth and her cold

The moon is her home, her fear and her love

The stars are behind her, jaws dropping in awe at the girl who dances and laughs
without care

The girl whose pale complexion matches the moons light, but whose lips match a
rose, dark lavender on her clothes

Sleeves and neck of lace and dress of cloth, drawn to the light as would be a moth,
sheltered by wings and eyes closed tight

The light of moon overshadowing the darkness of night

Shimmering and radiating the meaning of free, she knows not the way of captivity

Stands in the middle of view, smiling so bright, hand carefree and cast in front of the
moon in the lightness of night



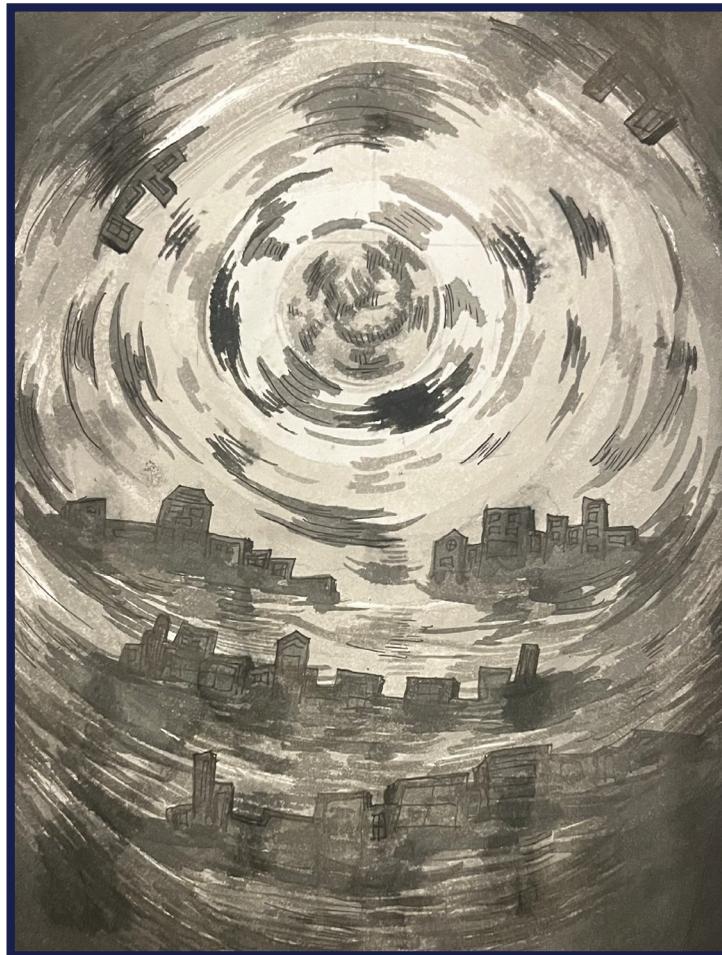
13. Elena Kim

“Moonlight Contemplation”

14. Gwilym Lloyd

The girl looked out on the night,
Moonlit and misty.
She could not help but smile,
At the serene evening, a blank canvas stretching endlessly.
“What could be out there?” She wondered,
As her golden hair swayed in the wind.
“Whatever you want,” the moon said,
“Now what do you see?”
“I guess I see buildings, reaching towards you in mad hope.”
“What do they look like?”
“Some only twist around in weird patterns,” she started.
“Others just go straight for you,” the girl muttered,
“But most are a mixture of both.”
Sadness soaked her voice as she continued,
“Some are but foundations or stop halfway, incomplete.”
“Then let me shine brighter for the rest,” her lunar muse replied.

15. Caterina Chahine



“Whatever it Takes!”

16. Kounte Threadgill

Finally, the day of my anniversary with my husband is here! Two months ago, I didn't think that this marriage would last considering all of the unfaithful actions and less than savory words. I decided to venture back to my hometown, visiting my folks and the oldest amusement park in Wisconsin. As the date transpired, I noticed that my husband, Roman, was different. I could have sworn that his nose was smaller, fingernails were cleaner, and his hair was a beautiful strawberry-blond colour and much longer. Regardless, I will always love him, and I know my man feels the same way.

“A toast, to my favourite lady!” he said in a thoughtful, caring tone. As I drink the liquor that was supposed to taste like cherry. I feel my eye twitching, then hurting, then burning. The pain was blinding and caused me to lose my balance and soon my consciousness. I woke in what I can only describe as bare wasteland with a few buildings in the distance but not too far away from me. Everything was spinning, the building contorting which was most likely caused by the drink I had. I was now alone, cold, and in pain; a sad husk and a broken soul while anxiety rising by the second.

I screamed, at the top of my lungs: “Where are you, Roman? Please, I don't want to be alone out here. I'm so confused, I thought everything was going well!” Suddenly, like a miracle, he came but I can only see a curved silhouette.

“Let's see if you can survive out here for a while in this hellhole. You see, my dear, you were nothing but a pawn in my 'experimental game.' Ever since that distasteful procedure I've had you undergone; you've never truly been the same. Trust me when I say that I tried everything to help you, but to no avail. So, I'm leaving you.”

His voice booms like thunder, but the words burning like a branding iron pushed firmly onto sensitive skin. I don't understand, what procedure could he be referring to? Then, as soon as he appeared, he left me in an instant which left me in a worse state. As I cry, the world swirls faster and faster, like a tornado. It's just me, this dusty rotating town, and my tears to keep me company. I will survive and I will get the answers I need. Whatever it takes.

17. Catherine Song



“Untamed Blaze”

18. Will Bao

In flowery dress with fiery mane,
A gun in hand, she dares disdain.
“I will survive,” she boldly states,
Through fierce trials, she'll stake her claim.



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