Waking up from the twelve year sleep

Eddas
Eddas presents

Waking up from the 12 year sleep

The time we spend sleeping our life away weakens our soul. Only being truly awake when everything around us feels alive are we reborn into the world. Each word written is one step further away from the deadening boredom that consumes us.

-Eddas staff

Deeds not words

But in our case it is a lot of words.

“I write fiction, or about my crippling depression”

-Eddas author

These stories are not about you, and they may not even be true. But they do deal with real topics that may invoke real reactions in you the reader. If you need help: text, call, find help.

Crisis Text line: Text “Home” to 741 741
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See us on line at  lansdownehs.bcps.org
Lick of a finger to turn the next page. That’s all he ever needed. Pages, and text. The real world was just all too much. The rejection, the hate, the ones who don’t bother to help. He didn’t need it. Books never rejected, they only indulged. Books never left, they could always be bought or borrowed. Books gave someone experiences to read about, and about the literary world. A world, where anybody can be accepted. All he ever wanted, to be honest.

Adam’s head lifted off the ground, cold hardwood floor was all he saw. He picked up his glasses from next to his body. He slid them on with a click.

“I did it again. Woops.” He gently whispered as he started getting up. He had fallen asleep on his room’s floor reading again. He turned to look to the left side of his room. Filled to the brim with nothing but bookshelves. Books on everything were to be seen. A collection which he had been growing since he was young. Adam went to them, and grabbed a couple books before walking out of the room with his belongings. School called, and sadly, Adam had to answer it.

School was nothing but idiots, bigots, morons, etc. Adam viewed them this way at least. He couldn’t care for anyone there, in his vicinity, or for any teacher and staff member. They never cared, who was he to act? However, books spoke to Adam, unlike anybody else. They invited him, to indulge, to incase himself. He accepted the invite. During school, after school, he would read every page offered. Everyone around him could drop dead, books were all Adam needed. People who were avid readers would approach him sometimes, asking questions.

“What book you got there? You read these books before? Let’s talk about them!” They all would shout, excited to find another book lover. Adam would pay no head, sometimes not even respond nor look at them. They didn’t care, they just wanted something to occupy them while being bored and craving entertainment from something new. These people after getting no response, would eventually walk away. Never returning to question or discuss anything with Adam. A life he wished for himself.

Her hips swayed as she walked up to him. Her features defined, one of the more stunning and gorgeous beauties of the next coming generation. Adam, sitting in the classroom, approached by an unidentified girl. He actually glanced upwards to see who it was for once. His book had him in a good mood.

“Yes?” Adam questioned, no trace of emotion. His eyes glanced towards her face, blushing. A spark went off.

“What book is that…?” She asked as she crossed her arms. Her face suddenly turned into some kind of show as she waited for a response. Adam gulped.

“Can You Fathom” He replied. Adam hadn’t ever really answered anybody, he found it quite awkward. The girl’s face lit up with a joyful expression as her body started to almost seem to jump around.

“I love that book! I have read it over three times!” She exclaimed.

“Try twenty-three.” Adam sighed as he turned the next page.

“You really are the school’s literary weirdo.” She said, looking up towards the ceiling with her hand now pushing onto her cheek. Adam looked up to see more. He could tell she was beautiful, and her body type was ideal for girls her age. “Hello??” She exclaimed, now with cheeks flared, tiny little frown could be seen.

“Yes?” He asked again.

“You ok? You can speak English right?” She questioned rudely.

“I read about talking to high school girls once in a book. I quite frankly find it not as good as this book.” He softly said, turning the next
“Really?” She questioned. “Let me change that for you.” She said as she walked away. Adam turned his head to see the slightest grin on her face before her feet took her out the door. He laughed for once.

From now on, day in and day out, the girl pestered Adam. He eventually figured out her name was Cynthia. He also saw an immense height difference. Comparably, she was short and figured as a women should. Adam however, was tall, slender, and lanky. Not very muscular. One last important thing he noticed, was guys flaunted over her left and right. He couldn’t understand why she was so mesmerized by him.

Her blond hair flowing backward as she walked towards him in the hallway. Adam pushed his glasses back up before she approached fully.

“Common Nerd follow me.” She said as she grabbed his backpack, essentially dragging him to the back of the school. A door which couldn’t be locked was near the gym, and a few kids knew about it. They liked to hang outside where it was breezy and cool. After they got to the back, she would let go, with Adam usually panting from causing commotion from it.

“What was that for?!” He questioned, readjusting himself from what just happened.

His glasses seemed to start slipping again.

“Here.” Cynthia said as she got on her tip toes to push his glasses up with one finger. Adam’s eyes widened a bit. She sat down shortly after. “Read to me.” She demanded, almost like a little kid.

“Huh?” Adam questioned once again. He finally thought this girl was a complete crazy. Then again, he had nothing else to do. “What do you like?” He asked, sitting down across from here on the wall.

“Can You Fathom.” She said, as she closed her eyes with a smile, hands in lap waiting.

Adam pulled it from his book bag, opened from page one. It was another experience all over again. He read aloud, but soon got softer. The pages tended to consume him, put him in his own world. They gave him the space he felt most comfortable in. He soon got so soft, Cynthia opened her eyes to see what happened. She could see Adam, eyes stiff, and narrow visioned. No emotion on his face, as if he was a robot. It looked gloomier than happy to her. After she heard a few more mumbles, she got up.

“I can’t hear you nerd.” She said, as she walked over and sat down next to him. She leaned her head onto his shoulder. Adam’s eyes widened, and he became conscious of the situation. She already closed her eyes, holding her smile. His eyes averted to her, next to him. He started to mentally freak out.

“I read this in a book once! I don’t get it! What is she doing?!?” He kept asking as he tried adjusting himself. He had read about almost every experience possible within books. But he had never actually experienced it himself. He tended to act like book experience was exactly life experience. But in reality, he knew it wasn’t. It was another thing to comfort himself.

“Read to me!” She cried out as she bopped her hand on his head a few times.

“Like a child.” He said as he went back to the book. It was the only option.

A few chapters in, the bell rang. She opened her eyes to eventually see Adam almost asleep, head going downwards. Class would start soon.

“Idiot boy.” She said as she got up, patting her pants with her hands. She leaned her knees down into a squat position and looked...
Eddas

at his face. Cynthia’s hand reached up, fingers about to push his glasses back up. Adam’s eyes opened at that exact moment. He screamed as he slammed his head on the back wall. Cynthia was thrown back from her own freight of the event, but trailed with laughter as he wallowed on the ground at his own pain. “Now that’s funny.” She said as her chuckles continued. Adam looked as if he was going to curse.

Adam’s legs carried him towards his home. School was over, and Adam wanted to go home. He hadn’t really talked to Cynthia in the past few days since reading to Cynthia. He had not seen her around, nor did she approach. He put his hand to the back part of his head. It still hurt, and he winced at it. The thought of books overwhelmed Adam, making him forget about the slight pain. His bookshelves awaited him, and he couldn’t wait to walk through his door.

Adam suddenly felt weight on his back, as he went down like gravity increased.

“What the...?” Adam questioned as his face turned. His eyes were directly at Cynthia’s as she rode on his back. His eyes widened, as he panicked.

“Whatcha doin?” She questioned, eyes in a questioning position, arms around his neck. Adam, now holding her thighs to keep her up, looked downwards.

“Going home...” He said as he kept moving. His feet stumbled as he finally put her down.

“No fair.” Cynthia said as she adjusted herself from the drop. She began to walk beside him. Adam looked over to see her thighs swaying, her lips beginning to whistle, and the stride in her step.

Adam thought to himself. “You read this in that romance book Adam! Calm down! It’s ok! Relax, take a deep breath!” Adam’s ridiculous panic finally calmed down as he picked his face back up. Her’s was once again in front of his, smile and sparkling eyes. She leaned into his. He returning the favor. It was sweet to him, like candy. She eventually pulled her head away, keeping her same smile.

“You get it now, right?” She questioned as she stopped. Cynthia’s hands went behind her head, as she waited a response. Adam smiled, his eyes wide open. Almost excitement, could be seen.

“I do!” He exclaimed, his emotions finally returning. She returned the favor, and they walked. Walked to where they wanted. Their feet could take them anywhere! Step by step, they came closer to Adam’s house. Finally understanding each other, Cynthia reached out her hand. Her face was turned the other way, Adam could tell she was embarrassed. His fingers reached for hers. They intersect. She turned her head, keeping the same gorgeous smile she always had.

White paint, and a sign. They approached a crosswalk. Adam was entranced by Cynthia’s expressions, truly enticed with her. They started walking across, intent of looking only at each other. An engines revving could be heard close by. Instincts of both of them saw head-lights, coming ever so close.

“I read about this too! You have to do it Adam!” He thought as both he and Cynthia had a horrified face. Within the fastest and most sudden movement, he shoved her out of the way. The car didn’t stop, and rammed him head on. It drove off as he slid off the side at such high speeds. He lay lifeless in the street, as Cynthia ran to him. The realization of Adam’s body not breathing or moving, couldn’t stop the waterfall which came. Her eyes didn’t stop, and she pulled out her phone. Her hands trembled, calling an ambulance. It was over.

They eventually came with Adam’s parents and all. They declared him dead as soon as they got there. Cynthia’s eyes were red, and tears still flowed out. She couldn’t believe what happened. Adam’s parents cried too. As they loaded the body into the ambulance, Cynthia’s parents asked her to get into the car. She couldn’t move, and her Dad was forced to pick her up and put her in. Devastation was all that oc-
curried that day.

The funeral was a long process, and the final day, Cynthia showed up to pay respect. Adam’s parents even let her put something into his casket.

“We loved our boy oh so much. Books were his world, and we loved his hobbies. He was so intelligent, yet had almost no one but his family. Please, we can tell you two were close.” His mother said, as a tear slid down with a smile.

Cynthia reached from her small baggy, and pulled out “Can You Fathom.” It was Adam’s copy. Tears flowed to her eyes as she opened the cover of it to see the other side. She hadn’t touched it since the incident. Her hands shook, and the tears started to cover the side with writing. Wrote in pen on the side with seemingly glowing tears, was Adam’s handwriting in pen.

“Eyes that sparkle like a star, a smile which penetrates an emotionless body, and a personality which makes the world light up. She listened when no one else would. The true question is, “Can I Fathom what is going on?” The answer is truly no, I don’t. But I’m enjoying every second of it.”

Calm

photo by Brittany Hasenei
Eddas
Anonymous Class of ’19

My mom was never really there for me like a mom is supposed to be. Moms are supposed to make sure kids are okay when they are upset, but my mom didn’t, my two older sisters always did. Moms are supposed to help with homework and teach you how to cook and do laundry, my mom never did any of that. My two older sisters did everything a mom should. It seems like she was never supposed to be a mom in the first place. She was never there for my older sisters either. Now one of my sister’s lives in Maryland and the other one has her own family to take care of. Now I just have my mom and my twin.

We had been living in our apartment for a little over a year now. I had a lot of friends. I finally felt like I belonged with this group of kids. But then he came into our lives. We were all eating dinner at my mom’s best friend Kasy’s apartment up the hill, we eat here all the time so it was no surprise that we were here again tonight. The only thing that was different was that there were 5 or 6 guys, that looked like they were in their 30’s, here tonight and I had never seen them before. I sat down beside my sister Carly a just started eating. All of a sudden my mom ran out of the apartment with Kasy and one of the guys and they said they’d be back within the next ten minutes.

Well 10 minutes turned into 20 minutes and that turned into 30 minutes when she finally got back to Kasy’s apartment. As soon as she walked into the door I knew she was drunk. You could tell just by looking at her. She didn’t even have to talk or walk to see it. I was honestly really disappointed in her. She told me and Carly that she was going to stop drinking because it would mess with her medication. Yet here she comes stumbling into the house as drunk as she can be. This was the first time that I was disappointed in my mom. The mom that showed up in front of us just a minute ago was not my mom that I knew. She was stumbling around so drunk, she was cursing at people and hanging all over the guy she just came back with. I looked away for a second and when I looked back he was kissing her neck and sucking on her neck. It was absolutely disgusting. I felt like I was going to be sick. That is something a kid never wants to see one of their parents doing.

It was so late and I was so tired that I finally told my mom, I wanted to go home. There was no point in me or my sister being there anymore. She wasn’t going to pay attention to us, it’s like we were invisible. It seemed like she forgot she even had two teenagers at the time. It made me think that she didn’t even care about us in the first place. She just told me to go ahead and that she’d be home in a little bit, I just walked away because I needed to get ready for school. So I and Carly walked down the hill to our apartment without my mom. As soon as we got home Carly went to bed because all of her homework was already done. I on the other hand still had two pages of writing to get done and three pages of math homework to do! It was going to be a long night.

By the time I was completely done with my homework it was almost 1:30 in the morning and my mom still wasn’t home. It was making me nervous. I decided I was going to wait up for her, no matter how late she got home. My mom finally came stumbling into the house at almost three in the morning, but she wasn’t alone. She had that same guy with her. Something was off about him, I dint know what it was but whatever it was it wasn’t right.

My mom didn’t know I was in the room when they got home so when she saw me she was completely stunned that I was still awake, usually I’m the first one asleep, espe-
cially on a school night. She barley even looked at me before she told me to mind my own business and get ready for school tomorrow and go to bed. I didn’t think twice now that the man was in our house and knew where I slept. I went into the room I shared with Carly and locked the door before I went to bed. I knew it would take me forever to fall asleep. I just had this uneasy feeling in my stomach, I don’t know how to explain it other than being scared I felt like I couldn’t make a sound. The thing that freaked me out the most was the fact that when we were at Kasy’s house the man kept trying to sit close to me and kept touching my arm and talking to me like he knew me or like I was one of his friends.

That next morning when I was getting ready for school the same man walked out of my mom’s room in the same clothes as last night, and he just sat in the kitchen. It was awkward because I was just walking around the apartment like I was lost because I didn’t know how to act with him there. I told my mom how I felt about the situation and she just brushed it off and said he was completely harmless and I was just making things up.

The next thing I knew it was five days later and the man was still at my house and it was extremely awkward and uncomfortable. The only other people I could think of to tell was my older sister Bailey or my dad. The only problem was that my dad couldn’t just come get me. He was on probation and I’m not allowed to see him until I turn 18, and that was still three years away. So Carly and I decided to call Bailey. We knew she would know what to do. So we took my mom phone and went into our room and locked the door to call Bailey.

She said we were doing the right thing by calling her. It felt like the whole time we were on the phone we were playing 20 questions. She kept asking us questions like, “did he ever touch you?” or “did he ever try and get out to leave and go somewhere with him, just you two?” I just needed her to come and get this guy out of my house. It took her forever to finally decide that we could not stay there. She told us to pack a few bags and to bring our school stuff because we were going to stay with her until this man was out of our house and out of our mom’s life. When we told my mom it was time to choose between us and that guy we weren’t very surprised to see that she picked the guy. She was choosing a few days of sex and happiness over me and Carly.

Moms are supposed to keep their kids safe. Whenever something or someone threatens their kids safety hey are supposed to get protective. My mom didn’t do that when these guys showed up. She chose this man over her daughters. My worst nightmare was coming true. I wasn’t good enough for my mom, with my bags packed, I knew I had lost all respect for the woman I used to adore. She was no longer my mom. Moms don’t do that to their kids. She was strictly a surrogate mother for 15 ½ years. My “mom” has now lost every ounce of my adoration and respect.
Tell me.
Explain the reasoning behind this horrible world.
There is talk of being this…
Equal…
But equality does not exist.
Bombings and murder.
Some groups are rarely blamed.
Other groups are looked down upon because of what
One person
Two people
Chose to do.
Everyone is a representative of their group.
And not all of them
Make good enough choices
To deserve the responsibility.
It doesn’t stop at race.
Gender stereotypes.
Girls always wear makeup
Can’t play sports
Should have a skinny waist and wide hips
And need to wear dresses and skirts.
Different girls
Are labeled
And hated for being different.
Tomboys and skanks.
They don’t want to be absorbed
They want to stand out
Instead of blend in.
Blending.
Makeup.
One thing leads to another.
It all comes back together
In the endless loop.
Boys, too.
They must play sports
And be good at them.
Put on a jersey and no one gets hurt.
But they do.
Boys can’t wear makeup
But look at the ones that do.
They are beautiful
Inside and out.
Some do better than girls
And that’s okay.
But not to the others.
Boys shouldn’t cry.
Boys shouldn’t wear makeup
Boys shouldn’t…
Stand out.
Be different.
It’s all okay.
Choosing individual people to pick on
For something that wasn’t their fault.
That 16 year old girl you saw
Holding her three year old son’s hand.
She was raped at 13.
That boy you saw crying
And you laughed at him.
His best friend committed suicide yesterday.
That seemingly overweight woman you saw.
She went to the gym and you laughed at her.
She’s already starving herself.
But she’s trying to get better.
That man with burn marks covering his face.
You made fun of him.
He ran into his burning house to save his young daughter.
And she still didn’t make it.
They’ve been through enough
And you’re making it worse. Stop it.
And you.
You’ve gone through it, too.
Even if you haven’t heard it for yourself.
People always talk bad about you.
Right behind your back.
Sometimes your closest friends turn on you.
And you don’t know until it’s too late.
This world is cruel.
But that’s okay
Because we are so obsessed
With fitting the standards
That we tend to ignore some of the people
That apparently
Don’t matter.

Because they’re different.
Thanks society
You’ve ruined the individuality
Of the entire human race.
Well done.
Reflections

photo by Kassidy Lehr
Be Wary of the Bird
Aaron Martin

It was a rainy Autumn day in Lansdowne, 1969. The kids were rolling in through the big blue doors at Lansdowne Senior High while, among the controlled chaos of stampeding students, a little black bird wandered into the school. Everyone had settled into their homerooms when principal spotted the bird and decided to notify the staff and students over the intercom:

“Good morning everyone. Real quick, I just wanted to inform you that a bird has made its way into the building. There is no need to panic. If you see the bird, let a teacher know and it will be taken care of. Have a great day.”

No one thought anything of it and the day continued on as usual. No one, except Senior Karen Andrews. Karen was sitting in French class when the bird quietly trotted into the room. The bird went unnoticed as it walked across the floor and under Karen’s desk where Karen lied slouched over with her cheek in her elbow. The bird began to peck at Karen’s Converses and she woke to investigate. She peeked under her desk and, while at first startled, quietly cracked a smile at the little bird taking a liking to her shoe laces.

The bird then cocked its head to the side and stared blankly into Karen’s eyes and with a whisper it said to her, “Psycho killer. Better run.”

Karen shot back from her desk and started pointing and screaming, “IT TALKED. IT JUST TALKED TO ME!”

The bird then began flying frantically all over the room, flapping past the faces of dodging students and screaming girls, papers flew and desks fell over, the teacher yelled for everyone to calm down and in the chaos he managed to get the bird out the window.

The teacher walked over to Karen who was now on her knees in a state of shock and angrily sent her to the principal’s office. The students whispered among themselves, proposing that she was either on drugs or just plain crazy. She never made it to the principal’s office and Karen never showed up to school again. The students figured she had probably transferred to avoid torment.

However, this was not the case as Karen’s body was found several weeks later with 26 stab wounds and multiple bone fractures. Her killer was never found.

Eight years later, The Talking Heads released an album called “The Talking Heads 77”, which included the song “Psycho Killer”. The lead singer of the band, David Byrne, was a Lansdowne High School alumnus and a classmate of Karen’s. Some students reported that Karen had allegedly called David that night and told him about the incident. Interestingly enough, the most iconic part of the song is the chorus, which goes:

Psycho killer
Qu’est-ce que c’est
fa fa fa fa fa fa fa far
Better run run run run run run away
Track #4

photo by Kara Geisbert
Friday the 13th

Kiersten Snyder

“You know they say…” Meg paused and then put a flashlight under her head illuminating her face, “a murderer still lurks on these camp grounds.”

“Shut up rat,” Cam said back.

With a pouting face, Meg turned off the flashlight. The whole group sat in front of the fireplace with the lights off. It was probably 10 pm at this point but no one cared to look at their phones. Their heating system had been acting weird all day so the fireplace was their last option to keep them warm.

“But you guys do know it’s Friday the 13th,” Meg said while Cam groaned in annoyance.

“You can’t actually believe in that,” Claudia responded.

Meg shrugged, “Not really but apparently back in the 80s, on this very day, a masked murderer slaughtered an entire group of college kids who were staying at these cabins.”

“Did they ever catch him?” Scott asked.

“Nope. The cops were called but when they got there, the kids were already dead, and no murderer to be found.”

“So how did they know he had a mask?”

“The person who called the cops said so.”

Dylan, Cam, and Claudia were all rolling their eyes as Meg was telling the story.

“It’s true!” Meg yelled out of desperation, “you can google it.”

Cam wanted to prove her wrong, so he pulled out his phone and went to google.

“See all these articles talk about Jason, the fictional character.”

“Ugh Cam,” Meg moaned crossing her arms, “can’t you just let me have fun.”

Everyone was starting to get tired. After all the yawning, they all decided to get sleeping bags and sleep in front of the fireplace since their rooms were freezing. Meg laid the farthest from the fire while everyone else huddled together. She didn’t really mind, she was just happy to be included. She sat up and looked down at all her friends: Cam, Scott, Claudia, Dylan, Eden, and Hamish.

“Wait… where is Hamish?” Meg asked aloud.

Everyone sat up and looked around, but he was nowhere in the room.

“I’m sure he is getting food or something,” Claudia said.

Meg decided she was going to look for him. First, she checked in the kitchen, not there. Then in his bedroom, not there either. As she circled the cabin she reached the back door. Meg almost walked right by it but something caught her eye. Opening the door, she called out Hamish’s name. She could hear yelling, it was coming from Hamish. She got closer and saw a huge man holding him up by his throat. Meg let out a shriek which caught the big man’s attention. He turned his head and on his face, was a mask. It was white and had a bunch of holes in it. Just like Jason from Friday the 13th. Meg was only joking when she told the story.

Meg was snapped back into reality when

Continued on next page...
Goofy Jake  photo by Ryan Propst
the masked man took a knife and disemboweled Hamish. His guts poured all on the grass changing it from green to red. This image would never leave Meg’s mind. Meg did not know what to do. She couldn’t believe what was happening. She was not shaking, she was just perfectly still. Hamish’s body fell to the ground as blood came out of his mouth. The worst part was, he was still going to be alive for 30 more seconds after that. Meg let out another scream and ran towards the back door. As she got there, everyone was standing in front of the door.

“Guys we need to run,” Meg said with tears coming down her face, “a masked man just killed Hamish.”

Before anyone could reply, the masked man banged against the door. Everyone let out a screech with eyes wide.

“Oh my god what are we going to do,” Scott whispered.

Cam took out his phone and started to dial 911. The phone started ringing and then an answer.

“911, what is your emergency,” the operator said into the phone.

“Yes there is a masked man who just killed our friend and is going to kill us!” Cam yelled into the phone.

“Oh sir can you tell us where you are.”

“We are at-” Cam started to say but then the phone went dead, “Crap, the signal went out.”

“Oh my god we are going to die,” Claudia said with her hands on her head.

“It will take time for them to trace the call but they should get here eventually,” Dylan noted.

Just then, there was a bang and a big crack in the door. Then another bang, and an axe was visible through the door. The murderer was trying to break down the door.

“Everyone hide,” Scott said putting himself under the couch.

Everyone except Claudia went in different directions to find hiding spots. She just stood there staring at the door shaking.

“Claudia what are you doing? Go hide!” Scott said with a hushed voice.

“No, he will find me. I have to get out of here,” Claudia said and then went to a window.

Very quietly she undid the latch and opened the window up. Putting a leg over the window, she jumped down on the other side. Only seconds after she jumped out, the banging stopped.

“Oh god,” Scott whispered to himself.

Claudia sprinted towards the woods next to the road. She wanted to run in the woods following the road so she would not be seen or get lost. She looked behind her and saw the masked man following her. Claudia tripped and fell since she was not looking in front of her.

“Oh no,” she cried out.

She tried to get back up but the man lifted her up in the air by her throat. His fist was tight around her throat to the point where she could not breathe. Out of desperation, she kicked her feet out, kicking him in the chest. Claudia dropped

Continued on next page...
to the ground as the man stumbled back. She tried once again to get back up and run but a hand was on her hair. The man pulled her back and put a knife to her throat.

“Please don’t,” Claudia pleaded while crying.

The man did not listen to her, he just slit her throat. Claudia held her hands to her bleeding throat and coughed up blood. She slumped to the ground struggling to breathe and then went still.

***

The masked man walked slowly back to the cabin. Just as he was about to continue axing down the door he stopped. In fact, he saw his reflection in the mirror. He could see his eyes through the tattered mask. Slipping off his mask he thought, maybe he was beautiful. Maybe it wasn’t Maybelline, maybe he was really born with it. A tear slid down his face, he never had this much self-esteem in his entire life.

A thought came to him. Killing those 2 kids was tiring enough. He went and opened the teen’s car trunk and pulled out a gas canister. He emptied their gas tank while whistling to the tune of Firework by Katy Perry. Then he started singing.

“Cause baby you’re a firework,” the man sung aloud. Once the canister was full he took the tube out from the hole in the car and just the latch.

Still whistling, the murderer poured the gas all over every inch of the walls outside the house. He even put gas all over the porch. When he covered it all, he pulled out a lighter and threw it on the gas.

“Darn it,” the masked man said as the lighter went out once he let go. He picked it back up and tried again.

When the lit lighter hit the gas, it all went up in flames. Fire spread to every part the gas covered.

“Boom boom boom. Even brighter than the moon moon moon,” the man sung as he walked away, drowning out the screams from inside the cabin.

***

It took a minute before Scott realized the cabin was on fire. He could smell smoke but he was still expecting the masked man to come inside. Quietly, he peeked his head out from under the couch and through the window, he could see the whole porch was engulfed in flames. Scott pulled himself out from under the couch and ran upstairs.

“Guys we have to get out of here!” He yelled into all the rooms, “The cabin is on fire!”

Meg, Dylan, and Cam came out into the hallway to meet Scott. Someone was missing though.

“Where’s Eden?” Scott asked.

Everyone checked the rooms but he was nowhere to be found. Scott ran down the stairs and the living room had started to catch on fire. The door and the couch were up in flames.

“Eden!” Scott yelled out. No answer.

“I don’t know man we might have to leave him,” Dylan muttered.

“What? No!” Scott and Cam yelled in unison.

Dylan was scared, too scared to think rationally. So, he, in teenager talk, bounced out of there. He was out of the room before anyone could stop him.
grabbed the back-door knob but flinched back. There was a sharp burn on his hand. He looked up and saw fire through the window. Dylan walked back into the living room with one of those “Oh buddy” faces.

“Uh, there is no way out,” Dylan muttered.

Everyone started freaking out. Cam ran to the window but everyone had fire covering the opening. They were surrounded.

***

The once masked man felt a pain in his chest. Could this be… remorse? Even though he was far away, he could see the smoke rise from the cabin. On a whim, the man ran back to the cabin. Was it too late? Were the remaining kids dead?

He walked around the cabin and surprisingly enough, the only spot that was in flames was the hose. He turned on the hose and started spraying the fire through a window. The fire became smaller and smaller in the one spot. A face appeared in the window, it was one of the teenagers. The man gestured Cam to climb out the window, but Cam knew what he had done to his friends. Dylan pushed past Cam and jumped from the window. So, the rest of them did too. The four of them stood there staring at the man. He no longer had a mask on so his scarred face was out in the open. The man started to walk over to the kids, making them all tense up. They were too afraid to run, there was no doubt that he could catch them. The scarred man reached a hand out to them, but they couldn’t reach back because there was a bang. A bullet pierced through his back and his chest. He fell to the ground and dropped the mask beside him. All four of them looked up and saw police officers with their guns drawn.
Breakfast in Bed
Aaron Martin

John tucks his daughter in and turns out the light, leaving only the soft pink glow of the nightlight. He grabs his book and slides a chair up to the side of her bed to read to himself as she falls asleep.

His daughter stares at him curiously, his face barely illuminated by the small reading lamp. His complexion is rough and his expression stoic. The wrinkles between his eyebrows are indicative of a whelming lifestyle. His stern and clever manner make him a convincing hitman. But, when his daughter rises from the bed to ask him a question, a sincere smile stretches across his face.

“Breakfast in bed, huh?” He asks with a chuckle.

“M-hm.” His daughter replies promptly. He chuckles again, “Alright sure, what would you like?”

“Same as last time.”

“With the bacon?”

“With the bacon.”

“You got it. Now get yourself some sleep, I’ll see ya in the mornin’.”

His daughter closes her eyes with an excited smile and within a few minutes she’s asleep, but John waits a good while just to make sure. Then, he closes his book and massages his eyeballs. Leaning back into the chair he sighs deeply, relaxing his arms on the high armrests. He closes his eyes and focuses on the sound of his daughter breathing. One final peace before he sets out to complete the hit he had been hired to do.

Hitting, especially to a single father like John, is good money. John typically only has to complete merely three to six hits a year to provide for himself and his daughter, making between $10,000 and $50,000 for each hit.

This time he’s been hired by a man, who owns a large company, to murder his ex-wife. The reason wasn’t specified, but it doesn’t concern John, he just needs the money and the man is offering $100,000.

John opens his eyes and checks his watch. Then he stands up, kisses his daughter on the forehead, and leaves the house, closing the door softly behind him.

He’s dressed totally in black. Long sleeves, long pants, black boots. John opens the trunk of his car and unlocks the suit case inside.

With the equipment in the case he gears up — gloves, a black baseball cap, and a silenced pistol which he conceals in his belt. He looks over his notes about the hit -- no guns, no dogs, and no cameras, silver SUV, standard locks, target sleeps alone in back right bedroom — and drives to the target’s house.

Arriving out front of the house, John analyzes the scene – lights out, no other cars in the driveway. He proceeds calmly to the back of the house where the target’s bedroom window is found open with an ash tray resting on the window sill. John scans the back yard for something to boost him into the window, finding a small kitty pool with a ladder just big enough. He props the ladder up under the window and pulls himself in quietly, trying desperately to avoid disturbing the sleeping woman.

John pulls a chair up next to the woman’s bed. The woman lies facing him with brown hair covering her face, which John gently moves out of the way. Then he reaches in his belt and draws his gun.

“I’m sorry,” he whispers as he kisses the barrel gently to her forehead.

Suddenly, a voice disrupts John’s focus, “Mommy?”

John glances at the doorway where a little girl, maybe five or six, walks sleepily into the room, rubbing her eyes.
“Mommy, are you awake?”

The mother wakes and props her head up, keeping her eyes closed. John’s gun becomes heavy and his eyes widen as the little girl’s eyes meet his.

“Yeah I’m awake sweetie, what’s wrong?” The woman asks.

“Mommy, who’s that man sitting next to you?”

Frightened, the mother turns at John, seeing only a dark silhouette holding a pistol between her eyebrows. She jumps back and tries to scream but nothing comes out as she can hardly catch a breath. The little girl jumps onto the bed behind her mother and begins to whimper, clenching onto her mother’s shirt. The mother looks at her daughter and turns back to John. The moonlight protruding through the window reveals that the mother’s face has changed, no longer fearful of her own life. She throws her arm over her daughter, protecting her.

“Who are you?” She asks sternly, “Why are you doing this?”

John peers over at the little girl, whose glistening, fearful eyes pierce his, then at his gun, now shaking and still fixed on the girl’s mother. He relaxes his finger on the trigger and lowers the gun slowly, watching the little girl’s eyes follow it as it falls to his side, then to the floor. He lifts his hands and stares at them, falling into deep contemplation.

Fire rips through John’s chest, snapping him out of his thoughts. He looks up at the girl’s mother who points a smoking gun. He looks down at the wound.

“No…”

Two more shots plunge into his abdomen, splattering blood across the little girl and her mother’s face. John holds his arm to his torso and struggles out of the room. The girl’s mother follows him out with a gun to his back and closes the front door behind him.

John, knowing he’s already lost too much blood, he gets in his car and calls his sister. The phone rings for a while before she finally picks up.

“Hello?” She answers tiredly.

“Alice… I need you to do me a favor.”

“John? What is it? Why do you sound like that? Are you sick?”

“No, just… listen. Kylie’s at home alone. She’s sleeping… I won’t be able to make it home tonight.”

“What are you talking about? Why not?”

“I’ve been shot, Alice… I’ll bleed out soon.”

“What do you mean you’ve been shot? How could that happen?”

“Just… listen.”

“…”

“Kylie is expecting breakfast in bed tomorrow, I need you to make it for her. Two eggs, over easy, with two pancakes. Then… take two pieces of bacon… and arrange them into the shape of a seven… and tell her that daddy loves her… and that he wishes her a happy, happy birthday…”

He hangs up and pulls a picture of his wife out of the glove box. He runs his finger over her face, carelessly smearing it with his blood.

“See you soon, honey…”
Melanie Felony
Marissa Harris

Did she commit a Felony?
Well she’s Melanie…
A Psychotic female
With a positively pessimistic
View of life itself.

A low-key genius in fact,
With a twisted mind…
A lifetime movie lover and fan from out of this world.
Her intelligence is overridden by humor.

A specific fan of “Kept Woman.”
Yet a kidnapping killer she may be?

A dog lover yet humanity hater
An adventurous wild one
With still the girlish complaints
Of a girly girl than tomboy.
This perverted but intriguing young mind.
A nightmare come true some might say…

Her undeniable desires for sexual traps of lust or love?
But like I said it’s as much of a mystery as to what her soul holds…
If she actually has one?
Still currently debatable.

However her friendship is not…
A life changing woman she can be…
Negative or Positive effect you might ask?

Well, that’s up to your own perspective as to where you think a friendship with her will lead you.

If you’re ever so lucky as to have the ability to put up with her you’ll learn to;
Accept it…
Love it…
Freely laugh it off…!
…and never be the same again.

Due to having no shame or regret for breaking hearts… of ones that really loved her.
A mutual attraction so it seemed but I was nothing more,
Than a body to her.

Deceived and secretly unwanted…
Those secrets wouldn’t have…
Lethally shatter my previously broken heart…
If only she told me;
Her love for me was lost,
That I wasn’t enough anymore…
Or that I made her uncomfortable.

She made me think that…
She loved more & more with time,
But no… She was faking…
And waiting for the right time to,
Pull the trigger.

I’m done
Were done
No more excuses…No more lies!??
No love or maybe just fake love… that I
thought was real!
I’m done… were done!
But we can be friends if you want!?!?
It’ll never be the same…
However she’ll be fine.
Melanie is still;

A Psychotic female
With a positively pessimistic
View of life itself.

A low-key genius in fact,
With a twisted mind…
A lifetime movie lover and fan from out
of this world.
Her intelligence is overridden by humor.

A specific fan of “Kept Woman.”
Yet a kidnapping killer she may be?

A dog lover yet humanity hater
An adventurous wild one
With still the girlish complaints
Of a girly girl than tomboy.
This perverted but intriguing young
mind.

Yet I’m not… I lost myself.
Becoming another person,
From the parts of me that can’t be re-
stored… Reformed as guess who?
Jazel… she is coming and soon enough
she’ll bring revenge from the void left in
her heart from this deceivingly pathetic
bloody anus… Melanie Felony.

∎

Through a View
photo by Brittany Hasenei

Through a View
Mocking Shakespeare

Kara Geisbert

For me to stomach the scent of you in my bed, and my clothing is sickening. Feeling breathless from you not around, reminds me I was only suffocating when you were around. I cannot fathom how you came into my life to manipulate my mind to make me feel whole, to just leave me even more shattered than before you “saved” me.

Still trying to comprehend what moments we had together was real, while piling on the memories that were forged. My brain and life was hijacked from me with your lies, to only have me abandoned. You brought me to my knees on the brink of insanity, and yet you stood there mocking me. Laughing at my pleas to have you back. For you to love me again so we can be how we were before.

“Why did you leave?”

“What did I do wrong?”

“Was I not good enough?”

I start to scream at the man I once loved lifeless, limp body on the floor. By now there is nothing left of our love that can undo what you have done to me to us. The only thing remaining is a pool of your blood that is now surrounding your body.

“Was she better than me?”

“What did she have that I didn’t?”

“I loved you”

“I carried you when you were too drunk to walk”

“I was the one who supported you through getting sober and then seeing you fall to your knees to drugs”

“I then still stayed as you got clean”

“I was there for you…. And then you go throwing everything we had to sleep with some wench”

“You deserved this….”

The tears start to pour from my eyes like a waterfall. Still holding the knife I stabbed him with I came to my senses. You turned me into a monster and yet I still love you. I can’t find it in myself to hate you, but I can hate your actions and what you have become as well. You were the fuel that created more than a fire in me.

“What have I done?”

My eyes widen I run to the mirror seeing myself covered in fresh, warm blood. You are worst thing that has ever happened to me. While you are also the best part of me bringing out what I had lost inside. My heart and my mind but again it was just a joke to you.

“I killed him”

“No I couldn’t have that wasn’t me”

I then drop the knife seeing I still had it. You can’t take this back, just like what I can’t back was happened. Your life was precious compatible to mine yet easy to take away everything in an instant.

“I… I have to fix this”

“I can make this right”

Walking to my locked drawer, and grabbing the key that was around my neck to unlock it. I now hold in my hand a gun with one bullet in the barrel, ready to play a game of Russian roulette.

“We will now be together forever”

Kneeling to kiss his lips so faded and blue one last time. Hoping he would wake up or
I would wake up to his smile.
Looking in his deep blue eyes, hearing his soft voice telling me it was all a dream.

“love you”

Pulling the trigger the barrel rotates the first shot was empty, crying I whisper. You are the Romeo to my Juliet, we sadly had the same fate. Only how it came to this was far from their love. Which was the biggest difference their love was true and your love was never there to begin with. I then softly say with a heavy heart.

“I forgive you”

Knowing the next shot will be it. I pull the trigger falling dead next to his body.

―

Shadow and Light
photo by Brittany Hasenei
The Night

Nicole Campbell

I heard him coming. His footsteps were heavy. Like someone beating on a drum, hard. They were getting closer and closer, making my heart drop to my stomach. I wanted to run, but I couldn’t bring myself to move, no matter how hard I tried. It was like I was stuck. I knew there was no escaping at this point.

***

A week prior to this, I lived a pretty normal life. I was an honors student, a two season athlete, I even went to church on Sundays. I was a good person. I never understood why bad things happened to good people.

I remember it was a Monday morning like any other. I woke up a little earlier than normal, so I decided to go for a run before school. Now that I look back on it, I probably should have told my mom where I was going. I put on my pink and black Nikes, put on my favorite pink and grey hoodie, and out the door I went. I had only intended on being gone for twenty minutes.

I went on my normal route, around the mini mart, through the small forest, and then around the high school. I saw a strange vehicle in my neighborhood that morning, and thought nothing of it. It was a big blue pickup truck, I didn’t recognize. I figured it was just a newer work truck.

I noticed as I ran that it followed me, even when I ran through the forest, it followed me again when I came back to the main road. I wasn’t scared, just a little confused. I knew everyone in my small town, but never before had I seen this truck. I now know that they were not from my neighborhood.

I was about to turn back onto my street when the truck stopped and two hooded figures jumped out. One grabbed my arms while the other covered my mouth with duct tape. “If you scream, I will kill you” he said. I was terrified.

I think they put some type of sleeping medicine on the duct tape because I don’t remember the ride at all. I woke up in a dark room. No doors, no windows, only a small TV and a slit in the wall which is what they fed me through. I took the tape off of my mouth slowly. It was painful.

The TV came on, and a man started talking to me. He said they had been watching me for weeks and that they had some ‘fun’ planned for me. Let’s just say their definition of fun, isn’t what normal people would think.

Three days went by, I was trapped in this room. Only eating once a day. The one man, Ed was scruffy. He was the leader, or so I thought. He was the one who hurt me the most. The second, JP. He was sweet. He talked to me when Ed wasn’t around. He told me that Ed was sick and that he was scared of what he would do if he didn’t listen. But the man ‘in charge’ I had never seen. His name was Bill. I was now his “Doll” Ed would always say. Ed did awful things to me. If I didn’t do exactly what he said, I was beaten.

I missed my mom. All I wanted was to hear her voice on last time. I came to the conclusion that I was going to die.

It was Saturday. I was cold, scared, and alone. I was desperate. So hungry and afraid. All I could think of was my mom and my brother, my team, and my dad. Even though I haven’t talked to him in three months, all I wanted to do was hug him.
Did my mom realize I was gone? Did she call him? Are they looking for me? These questions flooded my mind. Somehow, they put me in this room. Even though there isn’t a visible door, maybe there is. There has to be a way out.

I started searching, trying to be as quiet as possible. I felt the floor and walls with my hands. Suddenly, I felt a knob. It was on the ceiling. I was in the crawlspace. I found my way out. I was going to escape tonight.

Ed was out of town on some type of business, and JP wouldn’t hurt me. Bill is the only one I had to worry about. I waited until it was night. The clock on the TV read 10:45 pm. I was ready to go.

I very carefully turned the knob on the door and climbed out. I made sure to be extremely quiet. If Bill was in the house, he would find me and kill me. I saw JP, I pleaded that he help me escape. He agreed.

He told me that Bill was supposed to arrive tomorrow morning, but he could turn up any time tonight so we had to be quick and careful. I was up for the challenge. My motivation was to get home.

JP told me to hide in the hallway closet and await his signal. I silently nodded. He got all of his stuff together and knocked on the closet three times, I knew it was safe to leave. He guided me to the main floor, all I had to do was sneak out the back door and take his car. He handed me the keys and apologized for what had happened to me. It felt like we were almost friends. He left and sat in the living room like nothing happened and waited for Bill.

I ran out the back door and felt free. Until Ed pulled up. He started screaming at me and hitting me. He grabbed my waist and took me back inside while I wailed for help. He lost his grip on me and I ran, as fast as I could. I had no energy but I had to do it. I ran up the steps into a spare bedroom and locked the door. I always wondered why Ed wore a mask, now I know why.

I heard him coming. His footsteps were heavy. Like someone beating on a drum, hard. They were getting closer and closer, making my heart drop to my stomach. I wanted to run, but I couldn’t bring myself to move, no matter how hard I tried. It was like I was stuck. I knew there was no escaping at this point.

I tried to hold back the tears, but they came anyways. I silently sobbed knowing that I was going to die. The door opened and I heard a voice. It wasn’t Ed or JP. It was Bill. His voice was deep and scary. I knew he was going to kill me. I cringed with every move he made.

I saw the knife. Bill saw me, and our eyes met. His eyes were familiar. They almost felt like home. That’s when I realized Bill was my father.

“Dad?” I said, barely getting the words out. “Why did you do this to me?”

“You are mine.” His words cut like a knife.

He raised the knife, and I was ready to die. The door flung opened and someone darted across the room, plunging a...
knife into my father’s leg. It was JP, he came to save me. “Thank you…” I said barely getting the words out. He grabbed me and hugged me tight. “I’m so sorry I let this happen to you.” He said, now crying too.

He let go, wiped my tears and helped me up. He grabbed my hand and walked to me to his truck. He wrapped me in a blanket, and drove me home.

On the ride home, JP told me that he topo was one of Bills prisoner’s. He made him help kidnap me. “It’s the only way he told me I’d be free. So I did what I had to do. I didn’t realize it was going to hurt you like this.”

“JP, it’s okay. If I were in the same position, I would have done the same thing. But you had the courage to save me. So thank you.”

When we pulled up to my house, the police were there. My mom was bawling her eyes out. JP got out of the car, and opened my door. My mom’s eyes met mine, and she ran to me. All I could do was cry. I was so happy to finally be home.

The police came up to us and asked me some questions. I told them everything. “Mom, dad did this to me, and I don’t understand why.” I sobbed.

“Sometimes the people we love the most, have twisted minds and do bad things.” My mom said, trying to comfort me the best she could.

They took me and JP to the hospital to get checked out. I had a broken wrist, slight concussion, and bruised ribs. JP had gotten the cut on his arm stitched up. We were alive.

Sometimes, bad things do happen to good people, but sometimes it can turn out to be a good thing. I now know who my father really is, and I’ve found a lifelong friend. Maybe things will be better now.
I should’ve known it was a ghost. I should’ve known this house was too nice. I should’ve known once I got my own room. I should’ve known after my books fell off my desk and my backpack got from my bedroom to the living room. I should’ve figured that one day I’d be standing in this room looking at something that shouldn’t be there. I should’ve known, but I didn’t. Which is why I walked in my bedroom and screamed at the sight of a ghost.

“How can you see me?” The ghost asked, she was short and thin with long brown curls, and unlike in horror movies she wasn’t distorted or in grayscale. She looked like a real person. This can’t be real. I’m losing it, I am officially losing it.

“I don’t know.” I replied still in shock. “Why are you here?”

“I lived here, with my family in the 90’s. Then I was murdered by my boyfriend because he thought I was cheating on him. The police never suspected him. No one would ever believed he killed me anyway. He was a straight A student. An athlete. He was so perfect and he swept me off my feet and then he killed me.” She looked ready to cry by the end. I wonder if ghosts can cry. This can’t be real.

“Well I’m sorry.” What else was I supposed to say. She looked unamused. “So, ghosts they can only stay on the side of the living if they have unfinished business right?”

“Yes, that’s why I’m here. You’re gonna help me catch my killer.” I’m going to what?

“And how am I going to do that? Do you want me to call the cops and tell them they have an eyewitness to an unsolved murder, the only drawback is she’s dead? This can’t be happening.”

“Oh, it’s happening. Now, what we need to do is find him, get evidence, and see to it that he’s arrested.”

“Fine.” I said moving towards my laptop. “Give me a name.”

“Adam Malcom.” I googled him. I clicked on a link to an old newspaper article.

Community in mourning after tragic death of 17-year old Bella Smith. She leaves behind a loving family and Hillcrest High’s football captain Adam Malcom…

It included a picture of the girl Bella that looked like the ghost. The article included some basic details of the case, an overview of Bella’s life, and a plea from the sheriff’s department and her family for any information about the case. “So this is you, and this is what happened.” I went back to the search results and clicked the next link.

Adam Malcom, the son in Malcom and Son Realtors, a local hero after saving a litter of puppies from a barn fire.

“Some hero.” Bella scoffed.

“This article was written a week ago. He still lives here, we found him now we just need evidence.”

Continued on next page...
“My class ring was never found even though I was wearing it. I bet he kept it.”

“Huh, look in these photos of him on Facebook. He has a chain around his neck. You think your class ring is on it.”

“It’s not unlikely.”

“Great now we need to find a way to get the Sheriff to believe that he has the ring around his neck and then get a judge to believe that so we can get a warrant. That’s not difficult at all.”

“The sarcasm is unhelpful.” I rolled my eyes at that.

“Hold up this is the company mom and dad bought the house from. They’re com-ing over later as some sort of weird congrats you bought a house from us dinner. Think you can work some ghost magic?” I ask turning back to look at her.

“What do you mean ghost magic?”

“Like when you knocked my books down and moved my backpack. You think you can get the necklace in a bag with a note and then I’ll get it to the Sheriff’s depart-ment.” She nods.

“What are we putting on the note?”

“Something explaining where it came from.” I pulled out paper and a pen.

To Sheriff Wallace, this is the missing class ring from the unsolved murder of Bella Smith. We got it from Adam Mal-com. Remember protect and serve. ~A friend of Bella’s

“How’s that?”

“Cora, Selena, dinner!” Mom called up.

“We get it to the sheriff’s office.” We sneaked out the house and walked to five blocks it took to get there. Bella got in and dropped it on the Wallace’s desk and we left. Once I woke up and saw the news the next day I saw them arresting Adam. I should’ve known the ending was too good to be true though because that night when I went to bed, I saw a new ghost. A boy named Matt who needed justice.

My own room was so not worth it.

∎

walked with me and my sister downstairs. We all sat around the dinner table, Mom, Dad, Adam, Adam’s dad Franklin, Selena, and me. I saw just the faintest gleam of a chain and then it disappeared. Dinner went along smoothly, dad had made his infamous lasagna. After dinner Selena did the dishes and I went up to my room. Bella was wait-ing there.

“Now what?”

“We get it to the sheriff’s office.” We sneaked out the house and walked to five blocks it took to get there. Bella got in and dropped it on the Wallace’s desk and we left. Once I woke up and saw the news the next day I saw them arresting Adam. I should’ve known the ending was too good to be true though because that night when I went to bed, I saw a new ghost. A boy named Matt who needed justice.
Run

photo by Corrie Bittings
Please, Farrah

Emily McCown

I grew more and more used to my precious wings. I started to learn what they could do after that incident in the alley. They'd glow and wrap around my arm in a henna design to my fingertips where I use my power for good. A simple touch on a wilted flower could make it blossom to the brightest flower you could see in the dark from a mile away. I softly touched a vine and the color danced. It climbed up the vine and decorated the wall it was covering with bright colors and light sparks. I turned the dark and lonely alley into my dance floor. Touching every bit of decay or darkness to change it to a beautiful array of life.

“That’s quite nice.” A low growl voice said behind me. As I turned to face who spoke, I saw the colors light up in flames. My alley was inching closer to me in flames. All my flowers burning till they’re no more than ash on the floor and a black spot on the walls. The one who spoke was a demon by the name of Lucius. I’ve known him far too well. He was one of us before he was banished to the forgotten world of demons.

“This is not the world you belong in.” I growled as my vision grew brighter and my feet were lifted off the ground. My wings on either side of me waiting for me to charge at him with everything I have.

“Farrah... listen to me.” He said as he walked over to the first flower I lit that was now burned. I blasted light from my fingers to him.

“Don’t touch what’s not yours.” I banged my hand on the wall and saw the sparks in the ashes, but the flowers were too far gone to be saved.

“Farrah, please.” He got on his knees and held his hands above his head. I charged at him, laughing when I heard him scream.

As I stood over him, waiting for him to look up to me, I smiled, holding my hand towards his heart. Both of us knew this would kill him slowly. He will feel a never ending pain till it eats him alive, leaving him in a pile of dust like my flowers he destroyed.

“I like you begging.” I giggled. “Do it again.”

“Please... Farrah...” He put his hands and head on the ground, bowing to me.

“Why are you here, Lucius? Just because you were one of us doesn’t mean you belong back here in this world.”

“Yes, I know. I came to see you.”

“Well, I’m here.”

“Farrah... I know I’ve done wrong to you.”

“Tell me something I don’t know.”

“Please, let me finish.” He said getting up in a snappy tone. I put my finger under his chin to lift his eyes to meet mine.

“You’re the one only seconds away from death, so you better watch yourself.” I growled. He pushed away my finger and pressed his lips firmly against mine. I pushed him and turned away.

My powers draining, my body turned cold. He came and wrapped his arms around me. His warmth and comfort is something I deeply missed.

“Please, Farrah.”

To be continued...
Flag
photo by Corrie Bittinges
Born on the 23rd of June in year 1986, was a beautiful redheaded baby girl to be named Valentina. Her parents, Margaretia Julian and Constantine Emerson, were facing hardships when she was born, leaving the poor young girl without clothing or adequate amounts of food. She’d wear a blanket tied around her everywhere she went. She grew up a happy girl, however. She resides in a small town of south London. No one really knows her besides her clients, but if you mentioned the name Valentina, it wouldn’t ring a bell. They know her as Valor. When she was 3 her parents received financial help, which helped them provide clothing for her and eventually a new baby who was born on April 19th of year 1990. Valentina and her family welcomed a handsome baby boy named Cassius Elton. He had sparkly blue eyes and he became his big sisters best friend. They did everything together and grew up very close. When Cassius turned 7, their mother left the family for another man, leaving their father, Constantine, depressed. Aggression toward Valentina grew strong and eventually led to daily beatings given by this cold man. He had completely changed their family- bringing in women every night for one night stands and beating Valentina when Cassius wasn’t around, became a daily routine. The constant abuse led the two siblings to drift, as Valentina would always lock herself away trying to find a way to get out of that situation. But at 11 years old, what was she to do?

As years went by, the abuse got worse. Cassius started beating on Valentina too, which her father praised him for. They had both grown a strong hatred for women and used this poor, now 17 year old girl, as their punching bag.

As an outlet, Valentina gained an interest in makeup artistry. She would steal cosmetics from the local drugstore and go home to practice while the men in her house were not home. If the men caught her in makeup, she got beaten harder as they considered it to be slutty. She grew extremely talented in this, and started using her skill to make money. She provided makeup services for girls at her school, which helped her feed herself, as her father and Cassius never let her eat their food.

One night, she came home a bit too late, which set off both Constantine and Cassius. She was dressed in clothes that her father deemed slutty and her makeup resembled one of his old hookers whom he’d used to bring home. The father and son duo grabbed her as she walked into the house and threw her down. Before she knew it, her clothes were being ripped off and she was being forced to commit sexual acts with two men who she thought would never hurt her when she was younger. The two men used her as their toy for what seemed to be never ending. Once they released her, she ran upstairs naked. The men were laughing at her and high fiving each other as if they had just won a game of football.

That was it. She had hit her breaking point. She looked down at her body and noticed the bruises and cuts that had been inflicted. A girl who once felt like she had the world ahead of her, was falling apart. She had been a mere 98 pounds- as her food intake depended on how much money she brought in from doing makeup jobs.

After years of abuse she had enough and needed her revenge. She slipped on a blue silky nightgown and crept down the steps to the living area where she saw her father and her brother. Millions of things ran through her
head. Some voices telling her no, some telling her yes. The two men were sitting on the couch unsuspecting as she gathered her supplies- a knife, rope, pepper spray and 2 large trash bags. She walked in front of the men holding the supplies and just as they were about to attack her, she pepper sprayed them. The two men scurried around, screaming about their eyes. She then went behind her father and stabbed him repeatedly in the back. Cassius put up more of a fight so she pepper sprayed him again and tied a rope around his neck to suffocate him. She cut up the bodies into pieces, shoved them in a bag and threw them in the lake which was near her house.

For once she finally felt peace and had absolutely no regrets with what she had done. She hid the bodies, excellently and was never even asked about the deaths, as she never reported them. No one even noticed the two men just disappearing, but Valentina had a knack for hiding bodies- creepy right?

She lived on her own and worked as a makeup artist full time. She finished out high school and then moved on to get her cosmetology license. As she grew into her early 20’s, she met female friends who had been through similar things as she had, but in relationships as well as family. Valentina knew she wanted these terrible people to pay for what they did, and she also knew that she was insane enough to do it without feeling any sense of guilt.

One day she had enough of hearing of her friends get hurt, or raped. She suited up in a skin tight jumpsuit with skulls on it, masked herself and tied up her long red hair. Her first client was just a friend so she didn’t charge. The job was done quietly and gracefully. The man was hidden and Valentina made the woman promise not to tell anyone, as she didn’t think she’d ever do it again. Not too long after, she received a call from the same woman, saying another rapist was on the loose but not her rapist, a friend. Panicking, Valentina hoped the woman hadn’t used her name, which she didn’t. She used the name Valor- meaning bravery. It had a nice ring to it so she kept it as her undercover name.

After the job was done, the woman insisted on paying Valor. A check for $100,000 was written in her name and this was when she realized, that this was her calling. Saving rape and abuse victims from retaliation was her passion. Killing men was just a fun advantage to helping the women. She brought in over $500,000 in one week.

Knives, guns, ropes and poisons were her tools of choice to get her work done. Her aim was impeccable and she was a pro at hiding bodies. One kill went anywhere from $100,000 to $500,000 depending on the complexity. She worked when she wanted to, only when it was convenient for her. If you dared to disrespect her, you’d be charged more. She was commonly known as Valor- she kept her real name secretive for security. She was widely known throughout the rape awareness and abuse advocacy programs.

She’s the person to go to if someone hurts you, if you’re willing to shell out hundreds of thousands of dollars to get the job done. She’s yet to be caught even though the cops are on the lookout for her and as far as I know, she still lives in the same house in which she was raised in. If you ever hear that Valor is coming for you- be scared.

It won’t end well.
Power of My Screen
Alex Leake

My screen shines with nothing
but words that say “victory!”
The only victory in my life
that my eyes can see.

I was always told by my parents
that games were a waste of time.
Wasting my life away,
playing games was viewed as “out of line.”
But why would I waste a life on others,
if it was rightfully mine?

Sitting here, playing, winning, talking
with others with something I rightfully enjoy.
Is it too much to just leave alone your son,
stop trying to destroy,
The thing that keeps him together,
not in pieces or in pain.
Was his games he loved to play,
and the family that loved him all the same.

But now all you bombard him with is
about things with jobs and college.
I try to deal with it all in my own ways
without the stress, but you never acknowledge,
That it really tires and stresses me when
I’m screamed and yelled at over these things.
I just wish to play my games, to get better
at what I love, let me spread my wings.

“Play Again?” It asks as I click,
and ready in another queue.
“You’re doing NOTHING with your life
Alex!” They Scream, it simply isn’t true.

Playing my game, watching live streams,
it’s not nothing.
It’s what I truly love to do every day,
something you’re crushing…

I can’t promise a future
dicted by others.
Ideals that aren’t mind
just won’t randomly strike wonders.

I love the little bit of myself
I still feel by playing games.
Everything else of myself
has been burned in YOUR flames.

It will always be a major part in my life,
don’t try to change me.
Whether I be here, or somewhere else,
I will always be connected to my PC.

I look in the trash can next to my
computer desk, all shiny and black.
It looks like you threw all my game
papers away, thanks for the feedback.

You both stomp upstairs
in your parental anger.
Mouth closed, no talking,
left with a silent cliffhanger.

Queue pops up, the screen fills
with color as we begin the banning phase.
Left alone in the basement I hang out in,
my self-created happy place.

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Purple Days

photo by Will Hernandez
The Locket’s Shield
Dyamond Hilseberg

A boy stepped back from a tree, looking up into it. His amber eyes narrowed into a glare, peaking from behind messy chocolate brown hair, peppered with small brown and feathers that formed two tufts almost shaped like horns on each side. His gaze could be followed to a locket, swinging softly in the breeze. It was held aloft by an arrow lodged higher up in the tree, its silver chain glinting from the shining sun.

The boy growls, one mottled white-brown wing ruffling in his agitation. “Stranos… Why must you be so infuriating?” He looks at his back, huffing. One wing was completely wrapped, thin wooden slabs underneath keeping the wing folded. The other wing in working condition, simply missing few upper layer feathers. His gaze turns back to the tree, his thoughts turning back to Stranos. “That insufferable magpie… First he breaks my wing, then he shoots my locket into a tree.” The boy walks closer to the tree, his hands reaching up to grab a branch. He goes to pull himself up, swinging his leg up when a voice rings out.

“Arkus! Where are you!” A little voice rings out from the trees around the clearing. A younger boy comes out from the tree line, soft footsteps signaling his arrival. “Hey Navin. Sorry for making you and Stau-nas worry. I’m just,” He grunts, swinging his leg up and over the branch, getting into a sitting position. “I just… slowly standing up on the branch he was on. He slips a bit, taking a sharp breath. Navin’s soft blue wings unfurl in one quick moment, the smaller boy ready to help his friend at a moment’s notice.

“Then just let me fly up and get it.” Navin looked up at the other boy in worry, not wanting the boy to slip and fall. “I can get it for you.”

“Sorry bud, but I gotta do this myself. It’s my locket. I feel I should get it myself.” Arkus steadies himself, reaching up for the branch again. He gets a good grip, pulling himself up to the next branch. He stands up on the branch, tentatively stepping onto the main tree. Arkus twists his body, reaching up for the locket. He slips the chain off the arrow, with the locket in hand. The owl winged boy smiles in victory. He gets into a more comfortable position, looking down at Navin. He holds out the locket, grinning. “I got it! Now to get down. Hey Navin, you think you can get up here? I have an idea!”

The smaller boy sighed, his wings unfurling. He gave them a strong flap, launching himself in the air. Navin stopped his ascent next to Arkus, who in turn grinned sheepishly at him. “What’s this plan of yours?”

“Well…,” Arkus stood up, standing at the opening of branches. “Would it be possible for you to act as my other wing?”

Navin thinks it through for a moment then sighs. “Yes it will work, but I don’t know how well.”

“Okay. I need you to wrap your arm around my shoulder.” Arkus did the same as Navin floated close to the boy. He unfurled his own wing. “I think I’m ready. Are you?”

“I ready as I can be.” Navin replied, looking at Arkus.

Arkus started flapping his wing in sync with Navin’s, the two slowly and steadily making their way towards the ground. There were a few fumbles, a feather flying into the others face or a missed beat but they eventually made it. They gave each other a smile.
“Looks like we can finally make it back to town.” Navin sighed happily. The search for Arkus has taken a few hours, at least two.

“Yeah! Now I can show Mom and Dad my locket!” Arkus looked down at the locket now around his neck. The strange symbol it was shaped to be gave off a gleam in the sun.

“I wonder what ability it will give you. Elder Eranous said every locket holds a different ability, never repeating.” Navin looked at it as well, examining it. “Since only a few Avians a year are presented with one they’re almost a mystery as to how many different abilities there are. And some don’t even activate, going back to the Elder.”

“Well, I hope mine activates. I don’t care what kind of abilities mine gives me, I just want to see what it will do.” Arkus looks into the forest as the two are walking, hearing louder footsteps. “Wait a minute... Do you hear that Nav?”

The smaller boy stops for a moment, listening. “Yeah, now that you mention it I d-” “DUCK!”

Arkus pushes Navin to the ground, falling with the younger boy. He looks up, fallen leaves falling from his hair. A large figure stands a few feet ahead of where the boys where, his wings out stretched. His arms were out at his sides, talons at his finger tips. “A-A h-hawk...” He whispered to himself. This man shouldn't be here. This was his clan's territory!

“Well looky here... What have I found? A Great Horned Owlet and a little blue Love Bird fledgling. Looks like I do have something to take back to the clan.” The man smirks maliciously, causing Navin to shrink into Arkus' side. The man took a few steps towards the two, his talon-ed fingertips ready to slash at the two. He suddenly lunges, yelling. His hands move to his front, aimed directly at the two fledglings. Arkus sees the man lunge, his first thought is to protect

Navin. He quickly spins around, wrapping his arms and single wing around the smaller boy, hoping that this would at least protect the younger boy. His second thought was that he wished someone, or something could save them both. And that's when the locket around his neck glowed brightly.

The small locket cracked open, the light erupting from the crack. Golden energy swirled around the two, creating a dome from the ground up. It finished quickly, just in time for the hawk winged man to smash into it, crumbling onto the ground. Arkus, after not feeling the anticipated pain, looked up. His eyes widened, seeing the swirling golden dome “A-A dome...? N-Navin!” He looked down at the younger boy, finding him alright. He looked outside of the swirling dome, the hawk laying on the ground dazed. The next thing the boy saw was a flurry of feathers and the hawk was pinned to the ground by two clan Guardians, the clan's peace keepers. As soon as he knew Navin was safe, a wave of exhaustion came over him. He fell to his knees, but his grip on the small love bird fledgling didn't falter. A voice caught his attention, the feminine voice familiar.

“Arkus? Navin? Are you two alright?” The women kneeled down beside the two, Arkus tiredly looking up and Navin peeking over the owlet's shoulder.

“S-Staunas...?” Arkus managed. The women nodded, and the two boys quickly launched themselves at the emerald green winged Guardian. She soon found her arms filled with two fledglings, one extremely tired and the other a bit shaken. Navin looks up from where he buried his face in Staunas' shirt, eyes teary. “H-How did you f-find us?”

Staunas smiles softly and looks down at a nodding off Arkus, who was trying to fight off the exhaustion. “It was his locket activating. The light was bright enough for us to

Continued on next page...
see.” She places a hand on Arkus' head, the boy looking up tiredly. His look of confusion in his amber eyes asked his question. Why was he so exhausted all of the sudden? Staunas picked up on that and moved her hand to point at the locket. “When it activates, it takes some of your energy to power it and to connect to you.”

He nods tiredly, taking her word for it. Staunas was one of the few Avians to have their locket activate, so she was the one that usually trained the ones that do activate theirs. He found himself fighting sleep even more. Staunas just chuckled and looked back down at him. “Go ahead, I'll watch over him. I promise.”

Arkus, as soon as he hears her promise, falls asleep. Navin watches the older boy in concern, as Arkus was never one to quickly fall asleep. Staunas turns to the two Guardians tying the hawk winged man up. His hands and wings restrained, stopping him from attempting an attack or flying away. “Take him to the village, clip his wings, and throw him into the pit. Have someone send for these two's parents. I don't think they'll make it back themselves.” The two nod, and unfurl two pairs of blue macaw wings. They take off, the man in tow. They quickly disappear into the distance, the man’s unintelligible yelling following.

Staunas looks back down at the two in her lap; The youngest son of the clan leaders and the only son of the town medics. Young fledglings that had nothing to do with the hawks, no reason for them to be attacked. And yet, she had a strong feeling this attack was only an omen of many to come. There had been increased territory trespassing, the hawks slowly taking small bits of land. She had a feeling there was a clan war brewing. Arkus mumbled in his sleep, Navin grabbing at his sleeve gently. Staunas smiled and brought her wings around the two. But she also had a feeling these two would guide that war. Defensive abilities like Arkus’ shield like dome was rare, even more so when most lockets don’t even activate. Navin was the one he wanted to protect, the one he unknowingly activated the locket for. The two were close friends, brothers even. If Arkus' abilities were to be developed, and possibly needed in this possible clan war, Navin was going to be needed by his side.

She just hoped that the two’s parents would see that their boys were ready, as they may be needed when the time has come.

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The Lockets Shield, Continued...
Tranquil

photo by Briona Vennie
Tides of Power
Armando Gonzalez ‘16

New year, New times
Now, lots of tears and many fears
We leer at the new face of our states
Good to bad, in a snap
Breaking the constitution to ban out brothers?
Bringing contusions to our beloved States
Who is this monster whom we empowered?
America, we love one an other, no matter what
King had a dream, Founding fathers had an image
That we'd stand together, not separate
People are desperate for a new leader
Let's come together like God intended us to
To stop this dreary present, for a better future.

Submit to next edition’s “Staff & Alumni Page” by emailing the Eddas Editors at bstano@bcps.org with the subject “Lit Mag Submission”. Include your name, year, and a title of the work.
Min hannah
photo by Pamela Martinez
There is a bunch of hearsay about the ice cream truck in the bottom of Lansdowne’s High School Lake, but has anyone ever seen it? Where’s the proof that it’s true? Is there any proof that it’s true? Well, lucky for you wondering reader, there is proof.

My name is Dustin, I was only 16 years old and wanted to be a reporter for as long as I lived. Nobody believed in me, besides my two friends Adam and James. The three of us snuck into Mr. Nick’s room and took as much camera equipment as we could manage to sneak out without getting caught. Together, the three of us took a trip to the Glenn Dale Hospital where we met with Frank “Musty” Martin, the history behind the lost ice cream truck.

He had many wrinkles and barely any frosty white hair left. Compared to the rest of the facility, he seemed the sanest besides the workers. Didn’t need a strait jacket, but was brought in handcuffed to a wheelchair. His voice was gravelly and almost childlike, the voice of an innocent man, but the story he told was unbelievable.

“The lake…” he sighed. “It all started in the year 1943. I was a happy clown delivering ice cream to kids while their fathers were gone saving our lives in the war. They’d hear the honk of my nose and the jingle of the truck and they’d all come running. They loved me… and I loved them. Boy, I loved those kids. They meant everything to me.

One not so special day, a new ice cream shop opened up. The kids… they didn’t love me anymore. One by one, they stopped coming to visit me when I drove down their street, until nobody else came to see me ever again.” His hands balled up into fists and his face turned bright red. He was fidgeting in his chair, like a balloon getting bigger and bigger almost about to pop. The security guards had to calm him down before he could continue.

“One little girl, her name was Emma. Sweet little blonde baby girl. “Musty! Musty! Musty!” She’d cheer when I roll around the corner. Every time she’d see me, she’d ask for a chocolate and vanilla cone with candy in the shape of a kitty. Cherry for the nose, little Hershey kisses for the ears, and sprinkles for the whiskers. She was my favorite stop. Every time I’d hand her that cone, I’d see her little smile light up her face. One day, it was her birthday. I made her this huge cone with little kittens and delivered it to her door before she could make it outside. When she saw me, she smiled the biggest smile I’ve ever seen and kissed my cheek. Behind her back, she gave me a little plousy she made for me in art class. “I wuv you, Musty.” She giggled. A gingerbread man with my white hat, red nose, and spotted outfit. “I love you too, Emma.” I would have done anything for this girl.

She was the last person to see me. She promised she’d never leave me, but she did. She, along with all the other kids, abandoned me for this new shop. As I watched her with her ice cream and that sweet little smile, I ripped the plousy in half and threw it on the ground. The tears that left my eyes in that moment smeared the white face paint off in streaks down my cheeks. My heart was shattered into a million pieces seeing just Emma alone leaving me for someone else. In that moment, I knew darn well, that I would never be the same.

That night, when the shop was closing and with the workers still inside, I snuck inside and dumped gasoline all over the walls and the floors, bringing a trail of gasoline with me away from the shop. I lit a match and laughed as the flame trailed towards the shop. In an instant, BOOM! THE WHOLE THING WAS IN FLAMES! Hahaha… All the kids would DEFINITELY come back to me now, right?! That’s what I thought. I was never caught, but they still never came back. By that time, I’ve had enough. I wanted the kids to love me like they did once before. But I… I found a way to make
them remember who I was.

Their parents were so mean to those poor kids. Making them go to school and do work they didn’t want to do. The kids, they just wanted ice cream. So, I made their parents go to sleep. No more kids to worry about, just endless dreaming as the beautiful color of red oozed from their necks, painting their white marble floors. It reminded me of the cherry red nose of Emma’s kitty cat ice cream.

I drove by and offered them a ride when I saw them walking home from school all alone. I gave them a rope to grab on the back of my truck. Somehow, they couldn’t make it to their feet. Their skin scraped on the ground but I couldn’t hear their screams over the loud music of my jingle.

The lake you know now was once a silver mine. It was long abandoned, so I thought it would be the perfect place for these kids! It was spacious and nobody would ever think to look down there, hehe, until... The sound of police sirens echoed around the neighborhood. “Oh no... they’re after me!” I thought. I did my best to turn the truck around and get out of the mine as quick as I could. They followed the song and the blood trails of the kids to where I was. They were going to take the kids away from me! I couldn’t let them be taken away from me again! I COULDN’T!

I stopped in the mine to throw the kid’s bodies in the back of the truck. I spun around, but slammed into a pillar holding the mine up. All the water surrounding it came pouring in quickly! I didn’t have time to get out before the water pushed me back down deeper into the mine. My truck was never found. I stood behind trees and gazed upon them pulling the bodies of the children out of the water. Emma being one of them.

“What have you done?” a voice growled in my head to see my darling girl’s lifeless body being pulled from the lake by my doing. The rest is history. I now live here with only the memories of those kids visiting me every night.”

***

The three boys shakily said thank you to the old man as he was wheeled away. All three of them had faces as white as the whites in their eyes. They went home that night in silence. The sun had set and their parents were sure mad at them when they got home far past midnight.

The next day, they all sat down to try and edit the footage, but there was a problem. There was no footage.

“What?” Dustin flipped out, looking through the camera and microphone’s files. They know they hit record on all of them, but what did happen?

We took an adventure to Glenn Dale Hospital again, only to find it was much different than it was. It had been broken into, plants climbing all over it, spray paint all inside. It was abandoned, but it didn’t make sense. It was active and clean the day before. The three boys went back up to the room where the interview took place, but even getting there was a challenge in itself. The stairs had collapsed so they had to climb over some old desks which were very difficult to stack together. The room they saw Musty in was barely there. Windows broken and floor ripped up. Adam stood at the gaping hole in the wall in shock as it looked straight at the lake where police officers pulled out a body of a child their age.

The jingle of an ice cream truck echoed in all of their ears. The officers, even the body of the kid, their heads had jerked our direction and stared right at us.

“D-Dustin...?” Adam said grabbing at

Continued on next page...
Eddas

James’ jacket, seeing the lifeless body looking at them with the face of the friend they had just been with not too long before. His skin as pale as paper and his eyes blacked out, darker than the night sky.

“Yeah… That’s Dustin…” James whispered.

The two boys turned and saw a white hat and a red ball sitting on the old desk in the middle of the room. The jingle of the truck got louder and the honk of a clown’s nose honked in a beat.

Honk…honk…honk…honk… progressively getting louder until… silence.

We All Scream for Ice-Cream Continued…

Oil Capitalism

photo by Katie Amoss
Fallen: Chapter One
Patricia Smith

Basil woke with a sharp gasp, eyes flying open as the breath he’d just inhaled immediately being coughed out harshly as his lungs were violated with the dust particles and dirt around him. The first thing he processed was that he was very disoriented. He didn’t know where he was, but it was cramped and he felt like death. His stomach was empty, evident by the cramping pain he felt there, and his mouth was about as dry as the dirt he’d just about everywhere on his dehydrated body.

After a moment of struggle, he was squinting blearily into the darkness around him. He couldn’t see a thing—it was pitch black. His breath hitched in his throat, another cough leaving him as he extended his hands cautiously in front of him. They only reached a few inches before coming into contact with something soft. Was that…cushion? His eyebrows furrowed in confusion. Why was there a cushion above him? He pushed gently at it without any movement, then pushed harder and even harder. No budge. Now he was beginning to freak out a bit. A soft whine of a sound left his throat, but it was raspy, like his vocal chords had just been dropped through a paper shredder.

“He-hey--!” He called out, coughing harshly afterwards. No answer came, not that he really expected one. Wherever he was, it was very, very quiet.

As he continued to try to push at whatever was above him, his back muscles were suddenly stretching and he felt something strange. Almost like…limbs, but out of his back. It didn’t make any sense, but Basil honestly believed in that moment that he was just having some sort of delirious day dream from the lack of oxygen that was quickly making itself known through the pained burning of his empty lungs. As he struggled, he began to shout in his panic, short, oxygen-less breaths coming in short gasps.

As his squirming continued, there was suddenly a loud crack of wood breaking and the rush of dirt falling. It was soon pouring in, making him close his eyes tightly to avoid getting any in his eyes. He found he could now squirm past the cushion above him, shoving it aside with all his strength. His eyes stayed closed, but he could still feel the dirt all around him. Was he buried!? It suddenly clicked. He was in a casket. But…why?

Tons of questions pressed on his brain, but now was not the time for it. Instead, he began to push his way up slowly, his back muscles working more than usual as he did so. Finally, the boy broke surface backwards, panting heavily and closing his eyes. It was night, but even the soft glow of moonlight that illuminated the small cemetery hurt his eyes after being in the pitch black darkness for so long.

After he’d caught his breath, Basil took a moment to rub the dirt from around his eyes, lashes fluttering like mad in an attempt to clear them of it. He sat up slowly, feeling dizzy from dehydration as he

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looked around, only to stop and do a double take to the left. His eyes widened at the sight of a huge wing, white with brown dirt caked between feathers. He yelped and scrambled back in fright, but it moved with him and flapped. He felt it. He felt it flap. He had wings!

A hoarse scream forced its way out of his lungs and he pushed to weak, shaky legs, his wings swishing out a bit clumsily. He stood in shock for a long moment before he slowly, experimentally, flexed a back muscle, making his left wing curl around in front of him. He stared in awe and reached a trembling hand out to brush just the tips of his fingertips against it and found that the touch tickled. . He actually had wings.

“I’m going insane.” He whispered, voice raspy, to himself as he slowly turned to look around. His wings folded back and, without his knowledge, slowly disappeared into two clean slits in his back, leaving just his shirt torn in the back. He was exhausted and his brain felt a little fried from the crazy events, but he needed sustenance. He began to make his way towards the empty road he noticed was nearby. He could figure out the whole waking-up-in-a-grave-with-wings thing later. He was in desperate need of a drink.

His steps were slow and shaky in his weakness, but eventually he found himself outside an isolated gas station on the side of that highway. It was one of those 24-hour ones, so he was pleased to find someone slumped over at the counter, looking bored as they swiped their thumb slowly over their cell phone screen. He pushed the door open and the person’s head raised, looking rightfully shocked at the sight of a filthy, corpse-looking teenage boy standing at the door of his store at whatever horribly late hour this was.

“Uh, hey, man… Are you okay? You’re not looking so good…” The guy murmured hesitantly, a frown on his lips as his muddy brown eyes scrutinized the stranger.

Basil’s own wide blue eyes locked onto the man’s as he nibbled his dry lip gently. “I…I was lost in the woods.” He lied quickly, thinking fast on his feet. It’d explain the dirtiness and dehydration, he reasoned. “I…I’m really thirsty, but I have no money--.”

“Oh, no, man! Ah, I’ll cover it. Dehydration is really serious. My little brother was hospitalized for it once.” The man, Michael his name tag read, was fast to reassure, moving to the nearest fridge and pulling a water bottle out to pass to Basil. “How long were you out there? You really do look bad, dude.” His eyebrows were furrowed with concern.

Basil blinked slowly and took the water bottle a bit belatedly, unscrewing the cap. “Thank you--. Um, I don’t really know, it’s been a while…” He murmured softly, tilting the bottle back to gulp down the water greedily. It felt amazing and energizing going down his dry throat. He drank almost half of it before sighing and lowering it, wiping the back of his mouth with his dirty hand.

His gaze happened to trail around the store until it caught on a small stack of newspapers. He thought nothing of it until he noticed the date printed over the top. He did a double take, eyes suddenly bugging out of his head as he processed what it said.
“You’re really not looking too good. Should I… call someone?”

His words sounded distant to Basil, his brain still trying to work through what he’d just read. 2 years. It’d been a whole 2 and a half years! It felt like all the air had just been punched out of him. How could 2 years pass and he not remember any of it?

“…okay? Uh, I’m gonna call an ambulance.” Basil suddenly tuned back into the world around him, shocked gaze refocusing on the cashier.

“No! Uh, I mean…I’m fine, really…I know how to get home from here, I just-. I didn’t think I’d make it without water. Ah, thanks a lot. Have a great day--!” With that, he was quickly making his leave, stumbling out with the water in hand. He didn’t want an ambulance called when he still had those..things on his back. Who knows what they’d do to him.

Obviously he’d been lying when he said he knew the way home, he couldn’t even tell you what state he was in. Waking up to find you’d been buried alive sort of had a way of disorienting a person like that. But he was determined to get somewhere safe and warm to figure this all out. …A nap wouldn’t hurt either. The highway had to lead back into civilization eventually, though, he figured. Highways didn’t just lead to nowhere, right? So, with his jaw set and the bottle clutched firmly in one dirt-coated hand, Basil turned on his heel to face the opposite way he’d come from. It was still dark

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out, but the scattered lamps along the road lit the way for him, almost beckoning him forward. Somehow...this felt like the right way to go. He took a deep breath and began the long trek ahead of him.

_hours of walking found Basil in some small town. Honestly, he was pretty sure he passed a sign but just missed it out of exhaustion. It was still dark, but it was probably closer to morning than night now. It had to be after all his time spent walking. He collapsed the first place he deemed good enough for napping; a small bridge.

No water was underneath, just solid ground, but it was still high enough to make the angel boy feel weary for some reason. He curled up to the small barrier separating the road part of the bridge from the sidewalk, grateful for the barrier from the wind. He was all ready to just drift off right then and there, but suddenly, a searing pain in his head had him jerking in surprise and clutching his hair, groaning out as pictures began to race through his brain, memories.

A man and a woman smiled at Basil as he shuffled across the graduation stage, beaming and waving at his parents excitedly. Basil was stood outside a small room on a college campus, watching as his the same man from before lifted a large box and carried it inside for him, the woman bringing a small bag in just behind him.

The man is angry, his face screwed up in an ugly grimace. He’s yelling about something, but Basil can’t make out the words, too stunned by the stinging pain lingering on his cheek and the sight of the woman standing just in front of him, eyes teary and hand raised.

Flash!

It’s dark out and the cold air is drawing goose bumps out on Basil’s skin. The man and woman are nowhere to be seen as he steps close to the edge of the building he was on. He’s scared, his heart is racing, and his face is stained with tears, but something feels right about this, peaceful. He takes a deep breath and another step forward, but there’s nothing under his feet to catch him this time. He’s falling, falling, so close to hitting the ground and—

Flash!

Basil jerked a bit and gasped as the final flashback ended, leaving him panting, his heart racing with panic and his head still throbbing dully. He blinked slowly at the edge of the bridge before him, hands beginning to tremble. He remembered those things...They definitely happened to him. But that was all he remembered.

He shook his head slowly and closed his eyes tightly, frustrated and stressed by all the crazy things that were going on around him. He really really needed sleep. He couldn’t deal with all this when he felt so sleep deprived. So he began to make a plan in his head. He was going to sleep now, then when he woke up, he was going to find a gym or something to shower in. Maybe he’d go to a library as well and do some research, see if he could find anything about this sort of thing happening in the...
Eduardo Physical

photo by Briona Vennie
Nodding to himself as he was satisfied to actually have a plan of action for the following day, he pressed his small body closer to the barrier and curled up, bringing his shirt collar up to cover the lower half of his face in an attempt to find more warmth. His head of messy curls rested against the hard ground and, although, it was freezing and his headache was still very present behind his eyes, Basil drifted off into a deep sleep.

Sleep found the already confused boy in an even stranger state than he already was. He dreamed of whiteness—pure, white light that was so bright it was almost blinding. This white had a voice as well, whispered words muffled to his ears.

"Who’s there…?" Basil managed to ask, though his voice was slow and sounded like he was under water as the light before him wavered. And just like that, the light’s voice became clearer.

"Who I am does not matter, but rather why I am here." It answered, glowing somehow brighter as it spoke.

"Wh-what are you here for then…?" Came Basil’s smaller, much more hesitant voice.

"You. I understand you’ve woken up in a confusing situation and I’m here to…shed some light on this all." A sound followed the horrible pun, almost a chuckle, before it continued. "You have seen your wings. I assume you’ve realized you’re an angel by this point?"

"I’m—I’m a what?" Basil gawked at the words spoken to him, shaking his head slowly in disbelief. Everything still felt sluggish in this dream, but his mind was the opposite, working in overdrive as he began to piece things together. He hated to admit it, but…yeah, that pretty much explained everything. The memory he’d had of stepping off the roof must have been his death. And he woke up in a casket because…well, that’s what you do to dead people, you bury them. It also explained the wings, but…it didn’t explain why he was stuck on earth like this. He may not have remembered much of his past life, but he was pretty sure there had been very religious people in his life that went on and on about how when you died, you went to heaven. Shouldn’t he, as an angel, be in heaven?

The light seemed to read his mind.

"Usually, one as pure as yourself would have gotten into my heaven without a second thought. But…there was a small issue with the manner of your death. Suicide. No one should ever end their own lives. When people like you do end their lives, I have very strict rules. I wish to put a stop to all these suicides that have become so common. Every person that kills themselves becomes an angel; an angel trapped on earth. And you have a task. In order to get into heaven, you must save someone from suffering the same fate that you did."

Basil frowned to himself, feeling his heart ache at the words. His flashbacks had made it pretty clear that he’d killed himself, but he didn’t know why he’d ever do such a thing. He wasn’t sure he wanted to either. "W-wait…I can’t…go to heaven unless I save someone? But—how? How am I supposed to find someone who’s suicidal? How am I supposed to save them?" He questioned quickly, eyebrows furrowed.

"I cannot tell you how, that’s for you to
figure out, Basil. But I can tell you where to find them.” The voice provided.

“How do you know my name?” He interjected quickly, only to be ignored as the voice continued without hesitation.

“Even as we speak now, a young one prepares to take his own life in the exact same way as you. You will save him this morning, but that will not get you into heaven. You have to ensure that he will be safe even after this morning. I will deem when you’ve done your job well enough.”

“But—. That’s not fair, how long do I have to wait? I have no home, no money! How am I supposed to survive while I look out for him?” He was getting tired of how nonchalant this thing was. It clearly knew more than he did and he hated that he was being left in the dark about things.

“You’ll find a way. Besides, angels can survive much more extreme things than humans. Weeks without food or whatever, severe temperatures…It will be unpleasant, but survivable. Now, those are enough questions. You have a job to do. Wake up now and do as I say, pure one.”

Basil opened his mouth to protest, to demand more answers, to do something that would keep the disembodied voice from leaving as it was the closest to understanding things that he’d gotten, but already, the bright light was beginning to fade.

“No, please, wait—!”

As he lay there thinking, he suddenly processed a soft sound that definitely hadn’t been there when he fell asleep. Sniffles and soft, shaky breaths from somewhere beyond the barrier. He sat up quickly, face scrunched in confusion, only to gasp at the sight before him.

A boy with jet black hair was stood at the very edge of the bridge, his shoulders shaking with what Basil could only assume was small sobs. Obviously, the kid was very distressed and not in the right mindset. Something about it looked very familiar…He was reminded of his flashback earlier.

Just as the thought crossed his mind, he saw the kid lift his foot, moving to step forward. He panicked and let out a shout.

“Hey, no, stop—!”

Basil’s eyes fluttered open quickly as he awoke, blinking sleepily at the starry sky above him. He lay there silently, just staring as his mind pondered over the strange dream he’d just had. He had to…save someone. But he didn’t know how to do that.
Jazel’s hand
photo by Marissa Harris
Interrupted Lifestyle
Lexi Soltesz

Laying in my bed thinking to myself how could I break this news to my family. Me and my boyfriend had only been together for two years off and on and there was no way my parents or anyone in his or my family would be accepting. Things Jack and my relationship is already shaky, yet I texted him and told him anyway. Every morning for the past week I had been throwing up and feeling very sick in the morning. I decided to take a pregnancy test and of course to my luck it was positive.

I ran out of the bathroom back into my room and started crying, I had no idea what to do, the minute I texted Jack it was like he already knew something was up because as soon as my message said delivered it was read. Which was peculiar because I sent this text at four a.m. Jack never wakes up before six a.m. I totally missed the fact he had texted back so soon that I had fallen asleep and he thought something was wrong. So at four o’clock in the morning he headed over to my house and at that point my parents already knew something was up, Jake had already gotten to his parents before he came over.

He was banging on our front door and I was still asleep, well at least I didn’t have it break the news to my family, but he did. As he sat at the table all I could make out of the whole conversation was “I. I need to tell you guys something, I already told my parents but I know that Ally is going through a lot right now so I need to be the man and tell you,” Jake had said. Before Jake could get the rest of it out my dad walked away because he guessed it right off the bat, I mean come on why else would someone show up to my house at four a.m. “She’s pregnant, isn’t she Jake?” said mom. As Jake nodded my mother started to cry, I could hear her sobs as she came back up the stairs.

Dad cracked open a beer and just sat there. As Jake explained how he found out he showed my dad the pictures and text I had sent him so my dad said for Jake to come up and stay with me for the rest of the day. He walked up the stairs and stood there and took a deep breath before he walked into my room. Staring at me as I sat in my bed, pillow in my arms and tears strolling down my face, the house as quiet as a mouse. He ran over to me and asked if I needed anything and hugged me and put his hand on my stomach.

Which during that time he promised everything would be alright. I felt my body tremble as I was trying to fight back the tears but at that point it was just pointless. The tears had over come my body and I knew that I couldn’t change what we had done, but I didn’t want to change it. Things weren’t going to be the same anymore, I was going to be a mom and no one was going to change that not even me. Time went on longer, and longer, and about a month and sixteen days after telling my parents I had a feeling, something was not right, the sickness stopped and I was no longer as heavy as I was before.

I had been on the same diet and hadn’t changed any of the exercising I was doing, Jake took me directly to the hospital because he was afraid that we had just lost our precious little baby girl. Unfortunately, by the time I got to the hospital I was bleeding, when I sat in that room for hours, I was by myself thinking what could I have done differently. Doctors constantly explained time and time again how it wasn’t my fault but if you were in my shoes how would you feel? After hours and hours of long excruciating tests and more tears than anyone could count, we finally got the results.

Jake didn’t get the news until a bit after I did and as soon as he saw me balling my eyes out when he walked in the room he hit his

Continued on next page...
knees crying. Praying and wishing and hoping there was something he could do to bring back his baby girl. He layed on my stomach for hours as I wasn’t allowed to leave for twenty four hours.

Time has still gone on and nothing could ever change the way that I feel about my daughter, here or not she is still my daughter. Jake and I will always love her and will cherish her memory for the rest of our lives. Our other kids in the future will never replace her! I guess the hardest part about this for Jake and I is the fact we have to live in the same house where our baby was conceived without her. Shortly after we found out she was gone, Jake moved in.

Many teen moms think that things will never be okay after they end up pregnant. That is not always the case. About a year later Jake and I decided that we really want to have a baby of our own, we wanted it more than anything in the world. Although our parents despised the idea they had to live with it, it’s been about twelve months now since I had gotten pregnant and I had our new baby boy, his name is Bentley. Bentley was born with what is called Gastroenteritis. He is in a lot of pain, my poor baby, an will need eventually a gastro by pass to allow the pain and swelling to go down.

All we want to do is help and at first I felt that this disease was my fault but of course once again the doctors explained that it is something that could happen to anyone and it was nothing that Jake or I had done. Other than the Gastroenteritis Dakota is a health Babyboy and he does not have any other issues. We of course do miss our baby girl dearly but our Babyboy take the time of mommy and daddy so that way we aren’t upset all the time. We love both of our kids to death. As for me and Jake we are still getting along, and making things work to the best of our abilities.

One thing we have learned from this is that we need to stick together in order to make everything go smoothly. We have gotten engaged and we want to continue to grow our family to prove to our parents that is was not and never will be a regret or a mistake because we love each other more than anything but most of all we love our kids more!
A Message from your Demons
Destini McCombs

Hello, my dear. You do not know who I am, but I know you, I know you very well. I am one of the four demons that were assigned to you at birth. You see, some people in this world were destined for greatness, destined to live happy, fulfilling lives, to do great things in the world. You, my dear, I am afraid, are not one of these lucky chosen people, and it is our job to always make sure of that, to always keep you in line. Who are we? Oh, of course, how terribly rude of me. Allow me to introduce us all, though I’m sure you know us very well already;

Shame is my younger brother, the demon on your left shoulder that sticks and smells awfully foul, dripping down your arm and off your fingers leaving puddles of muck. Shame tells you that you’re a freak, that those thoughts you have are not normal, and that you will never fit in, that you don’t deserve love and success. Shame whispered into your ear when you weren’t allowed to have. Shame is the one who makes you hate yourself, shame is the one that makes you hide away.

Fear sits on your right shoulder, he is my older brother, as old as life itself, and he stabs and pulses, hissing angrily into your ear. Fear fills every dark corner with monsters, turns every stranger you pass on a dark street into a murderer, makes you turn on a light in a room that should be empty. Fear stops you from telling your crush how you feel about them, fear stops you from standing up for yourself. He tells you its better not to try than to let others see you fail. Fear makes you build your own prison, which you welcome with open arms.

Doubt rests in your head, my twin brother, flitting around, wild and nervous, and his bright eyes wide and panicked. Doubt makes you second guess every decision you make, every word you say. Doubt is what rears its ugly head when you cut your hair a certain way, or wear something new. Doubt is what makes you second guess getting that job, or pursuing friendships and emotions. Doubt stops you from doing things that could have, would have changed your life for the better. If fear is the prison, doubt is the lock that keeps you inside it.

Who am I, then? I am the worst of your demons, but you see me as a friend. My arms are warm when they embrace you, and I smell like wild flowers and sunshine. I am soft and sweet, alluring yet fleeting. You turn to me when you have nothing else, because I live in your heart. I am the one who forces you to endure, that prolongs your torment until the day you die.

Sincerely,
Hope.
Waves

photo by Brittany Hasenei
I woke up today,
Fresh air took my breath away,
Along with winter.
— Antonio Forrester

Monday came and wept,
Like rain falling from the roof.
My hands caught each tear.
— Emily Moxley

With test and studies
In the field with my buddies
Lax calms my worries.
— De’Ara Washington

Spring is in the air,
Sunflowers blooming sky high
While we are in school.
— Aryell Cooper

Dancing my heart out,
Working very hard in school—
We shine in springtime!
— Ashante Hall

Playing our hearts out,
Many hours on the field,
The diamond is home.
— Destiny Wortman
will

photo by Alyssa Daly
Renew
Kara Geisbert

Don’t open yourself up for destruction and then shut yourself down for reconstruction. Don’t let the head lead havoc on the body, to just leave the soul confused and alone. Find the strength beyond what you are told, be reborn as a new pure embodiment of your past demons.

Poetry Winner
Sorry

Anonymous Class of 17

You've caught my eye the moment I met you
I could see your potential
You walked with beauty and grace
But a dream truly unachievable

I gave myself no hope, and let you be
Kept you at arms reach
Afraid to bring you close
Fear of falling short

The window of opportunity opened
I wanted you to see
How special you are
How special you are to me

I overly pursued
Drove a wedge between us
As I was mending the damage
I lost sight of the truth

I have great feelings for you
A girl that deserves so much
But can't see why
I wanted to show you why

After merely two nights
I ruined it all
Instead of mending our friendship
I let you push me away

A fight worth fighting
So I begged you to stay
Then I realized
I was the one who let you get away

I can't help but to think
Time can heal all wounds
My heart is shattered
Because I think I lost

I lost your smile, laugh, and friendship
The chance to get to know you
The chance to show you
Show you I will never let you go.....

But I let you go.....
To all the artists and authors,
Thank You for the submissions.
We could not have a
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