



SPRINGFIELD SONDER

LITERARY MAGAZINE
VOLUME 6, EDITION 1

Meet the Editors

Co-Editor in Chief

Ann Elizabeth

Greetings! My name is Ann Elizabeth. I am a senior, and this is my third year of Literary Magazine! I am an editor of the magazine. I write stories in my free time and publish on AO3, Tumblr, and Wattpad! I am an old soul who loves Queen & The Beatles and styles from the other decades. My writer's name has meaning to me.

Graphic Designer

Asna Akram

Hello! My name is Asna Akram. I am a junior at Springfield High School. I am interested in furthering my creative writing capabilities. I joined Lit Mag because I enjoy writing poems and short stories. I believe that writing is a beautiful form of self-expression, internal thoughts, and ideas. I also love to bake, read, and watch new TV shows.



Co-Editor in Chief

Li

Hello, my nickname is Li and I am a writer. I am in 12th grade and I love to write a lot of fantasy-based plots. If you know the real me, I am pretty shy to people who I do not know. I'm very imaginative and I like playing video games on the side. I'm currently playing a lot of Valorant. The more shameless part of me would be that I used to be a Wattpad writer. I hope you like the upcoming Lit Mag publications :)

Advisor

Mrs. Zubler

Hello, Everyone! My name is Mrs. Zubler and this is my sixth year working with students to create our school's Sonder Literary Magazine. Students at SHS take great pride in their creative work and enjoy sharing it with you. We know you will appreciate the variety of genres and topics within each edition, and hope that you also consider publishing with us!

Meet the Writers

Haniya Raheel

Hello! My name is Haniya Raheel and I am a junior here at Springfield High School. I love to create writing pieces and edit videos in my free time. I can't wait to get to know everyone here in Lit Mag and create writing pieces in an environment where everyone shares the same passion. Thank you for taking time to read our writing pieces.

Julia Mobley

Hello! My name is Julia Mobley! I'm a freshman who's way too excited for high school. I love writing poems about my biggest story that is currently in the creation stage. Poems are one of my favorite genres to write in due to the fact that they can be mysterious and vague. I hope you enjoy our writings!



Rosmy Joseph

My name is Rosmy Joseph. I'm a junior who's interested in the sciences, but have always had a little passion for writing, especially poetry and short stories. I also really value the arts, being an avid artist in my free time and also having an appreciation for music. I'm excited to work with other people as passionate as myself and express ideas using different perspectives and forms. Let's have a blast this year as a team and as a writing community!

Ashley Choe

Hello! My name is Ashley, and I am a junior at the high school this year. My two preferred genres are science fiction and fantasy, but I aspire to be flexible with my writing. The intricacies of human sentiments intrigue me, and I hope to become a writer that can appeal to complex circumstances and emotions this year.

Meet the Writers

Nom

Hello! I have joined *Sonder* as a junior this year and I'm very excited to be able to bring these wonderful pieces of writing to you. Writing is an outstanding art form and having the chance to share it with others is the best use of it. I will not continue to overstate the significance of this collection but on one final point, just know that all of these writings have a piece of a person within them and that there is beauty. Please enjoy.

Khushi Patel

Hello! I've been writing for a long time and this year, as a junior, I am elated to be part of the *Springfield Sonder* creative writing community. I've always loved a variety of art forms, but never truly gravitated towards painting and drawing. I get the pleasure of writing and designing clothes and taking inspiration from my peers. I will mostly spend my time practicing on how to write mind-twisting short stories and poems. I can't wait for an amazing year with all the new writers!



Azreen Haque

Hello! My name is Azreen Haque, and I am currently a junior at Springfield High School. As an avid admirer of people who spend their time giving back to the community, I take inspiration from and dedicate my time to volunteering for our community. My parents are also a constant source of inspiration to find determination and achieve my highest self-actualization. I very much take interest in writing in my free time as a way to clear my head of thoughts and use it to enrich my academic assignments as well.

Gina Norman

Hello! My name is Gina Norman. I am a junior and recently joined the Lit Mag club this year. I have a passion for writing and watching movies. I have other interests, such as drawing and playing the piano that I do in my free time. I have already been to three places outside the country before I turned 13. I am a very open and bold person who loves meeting new people and making friends, and I hope to make new friends within this club too.

Meet the Writers

Evelyn Lombrana

Hello! Since I could remember, writing has always been a part of me, and I doubt that it's something I could live without! My name is Evelyn Lombrana and I am a junior at SHS, as well as a writer for the Lit Mag. In my free time, I enjoy swimming, hanging out with my friends, reading, and of course writing! I hope that you learned a little about me, and I hope you enjoy all of our writing!

Tiana

Hello! I'm in my sophomore year at SHS. I love photography, reading, writing, music, and getting involved. Writing brings freedom and control to things out of my hands, and it's a comfortable way to share parts of myself without saying so. Eliciting the emotions of others is my favorite part of writing, though. Sharing work helps connect people all over, no matter the background. I hope I can connect with you this year!



Liam McCabe

Hi! My name is Liam McCabe and I am a freshman. Writing is something I have always loved; however, I recently haven't had as much time for it. I love being able to create almost anything, and writing is extremely accessible and easy to do. So far, I have only put a few ideas into words, but I've also had plenty of other ideas I will hopefully be able to share with you this year!

London Carnival

ANN ELIZABETH

Roger's POV

The cold is making my van make all these sorts of cranking noises; I don't know if I should finish my drive or return to the flat to switch cars. The destination is closer than the start, plus if we return to the flat, we would never leave due to our bundle of joy making it hard to depart from home. My love, with her unwashed yet still smelling like daisies, brunette hair in a messy bun, and hazel angelic eyes, face out the window to see the orange and yellow leaves fall from the trees.

"I have a feeling we're late," Scarlett's stare from the window ended.

"We have a five-month-old. Of course, we're late," I sighed, "But I believe Elaina's bug was still outside."

"Right... yeah, we'll probably be waiting on Elaina," Scarlett chuckled before finally getting off the road to the dirt surface driveway. The van luckily made it to the parking spot, and I got out. I walked around, trying to help Scarlett out, but the stubbornness that made me fall in love with her was also my greatest downfall when I tried to be a gentleman. She hopped out of the van, but her shoes got stuck in the mud, making her almost lose her balance, but I caught her.

"Got you," I kissed the vein popping out of her temple, "No need to be snobby about it. Would you rather get all muddy?"

"I wouldn't care," Scarlett snickered.

"Until you get cold," I helped her out of her mud imprint. My arm is stretched on Scarlett's sternum while Scarlett's hand is holding mine, rubbing her thumb on my hand. Her arm is hooked around my waist with her hand in my jacket pocket to keep her hands warm. Brian, Chrissie, Fred, Mary, Thomas, Maddie, her boyfriend Theo, Milo, Kelly, and Simon are all in front of the clown decor, staring at their watches.

"There's two," Simon pointed at us; my shoulders tightened as Scarlett dug her face into my neck.

"It's okay. He's not going to kill you," Scarlett whispered before kissing my jawline, looking ahead, and walking to the group.


"Where's my favorite nephew?" Simon looked at us.

"With my mum. We had to wait for her," I chuckled.

"How come Star didn't watch him?" Simon asked.

"Her, Geo, and Des went to New York. George has some album stuff, and the Dylans invited them for Halloween, so they're staying in the states," Scarlett explained.

"We're here!" Elaina ran over, knocking my girlfriend down. I quickly let go of Scarlett as she fell to the ground, smothered in soft mud and grass.



“Eek!” Scarlett groaned.

“Sorry,” Elaina yucked the mud off as Alex looked at the two girls. Scarlett wasn’t mad about the soil, but Elaina knocked her off her feet.

“Can we please go in?” Fred’s impatience whined. I helped Scarlett up and tried to take some of the mud off.

The two girls got enough mud off them, and we walked into the clown’s mouth to see this dusted-looking carnival. Clowns filled the place with the rest of London. Scarlett stayed close due to her slight unannounced fear of clowns, and her now damp-muddy clothes chilled her as the wind blew.

“What about the Ferris wheel?” Thomas pointed.

“Y’know how dangerous they are?” Milo asked.

“No need for you to be Dr. Buzzkill, darling,” Freddie snubbed as Mary chuckled.

“Come on, live a little, mate,” I chuckled.

“Would you go on it?” Milo asked.

“No, heights and I aren’t the best of mates.” I shook my head.

We walked around arguing about what rides we go on. We settled in the mirror maze; this looked fine. No jump scares or anything.

“Do you think it’s right or left?” Scarlett asked.

“Well, I mean, if you walk the wrong way, you’ll hit a mirror,” I explained.

“Left,” Scarlett started to walk left before I grabbed her by the waist and stuck my hand out to see if it was a mirror. I leaned forward before eventually losing my balance and falling. I thudded to the floor, groaning with every ache of my body.


“You didn’t need to do that,” Scarlett failed at hiding her laugh.


“This is not funny,” I mumbled as Scarlett helped me.

“Maybe a little,” Scarlett kissed my cheek, “But it’s okay. You made sure I didn’t walk through glass.”

“I can’t have my little wolf hurt this pretty face of hers,” I kissed her nose.

“Yeah, but don’t do it every time, or you’ll hurt yourself, Lion,” Scarlett grabbed onto me while we walked through the maze. We turned a corner, and a bunch of fake spiders jumped on top of us. I jumped close to Scarlett as she giggled at my fear of spiders. She grabbed onto me to guide us away from the spider hall. Scarlett lightly teased me, but my payback came once a thing of snakes jumped out on us.





“Who’s the scaredy cat now?” I asked Scarlett as she jumped into my arms.

“Shut up,” Scarlett mumbled.

“Want to come down?” I looked at her as she shook her head and kissed me.

“I’m perfectly safe in my Lion’s arms,” Scarlett smiled as I felt a flutter as she looked at me.

Scarlett helped us complete the maze. She extended her feet or arms to touch the glass. Once we finished the maze, we waited for our friends. Scarlett dragged us over to the cotton candy machine. Certain things made her inner child come out, making me want to smile. We bought our sugary snacks. Scarlett bit the pink cloud like an apple and got the candy all over her face. I turned to see the sweets and couldn’t help but laugh.

“What?” She innocently asked.

“Baby, you got melted cotton candy all over your face,” I sighed. Scarlett tried to wipe it off but made it worse. I grabbed a few napkins and helped her get the candy off her face.

“Thanks,” Scarlett’s face turned rosy. I smirked before bringing her face up to kiss her.

“If I keep buying you cotton candy, you need to know how to eat it right,” I showed her as Scarlett shrugged and returned to her childish way.

The group finally caught up with us. Luckily, we finished our snack before they came. The sky started to look gloomy, and the carnival looked dusty. Scarlett stayed close as our friends chattered.

“Rog, when’s the next gig?” Theo asked while embracing Maddie.

“Halloween. It’s in Liverpool,” I smiled.

“Where in Liverpool?” Maddie asked.

“The Cavern, darling, nothing but the best for the best,” Freddie intruded.



Falling Along the Seasons

Li

Red, Orange, and Green
All these colors make me full of glee
I look at the trees, tangled, strangled, and oh mangled arms
Makes me so alarmed!
Time flies by so fast,
Makes me wonder how long this season will last.
Frocklicking in the crispy, crunchy, crinkly leaves,
Up until Fall leaves.

Once it carries itself away,
Slowly, the sky turns grey
As the day
Starts to hibernate and sleep,
Oh! Will us and the sun to weep.
Blankets of white
Will start to cover us in the night
And seasonal thrills come with winter chills.

Time

Haniya Raheel

When will school end?

The question spun around my head many more times than it should have.

Hitting the snooze button at 6 am every morning,
Having to walk to that one class that we all quite frankly found boring,
To watching kids as they spoke with aggressive tones,
As teachers threatened to confiscate their phones.

Now as time passed, I began to realize that time doesn't wait.

Remember that two-week break?

Two weeks turned into a month, a month into a year, and a year into two.

Every time I heard someone cough, I felt the anxiety build up,
"What if it's Covid, or no, maybe it's just the flu?"

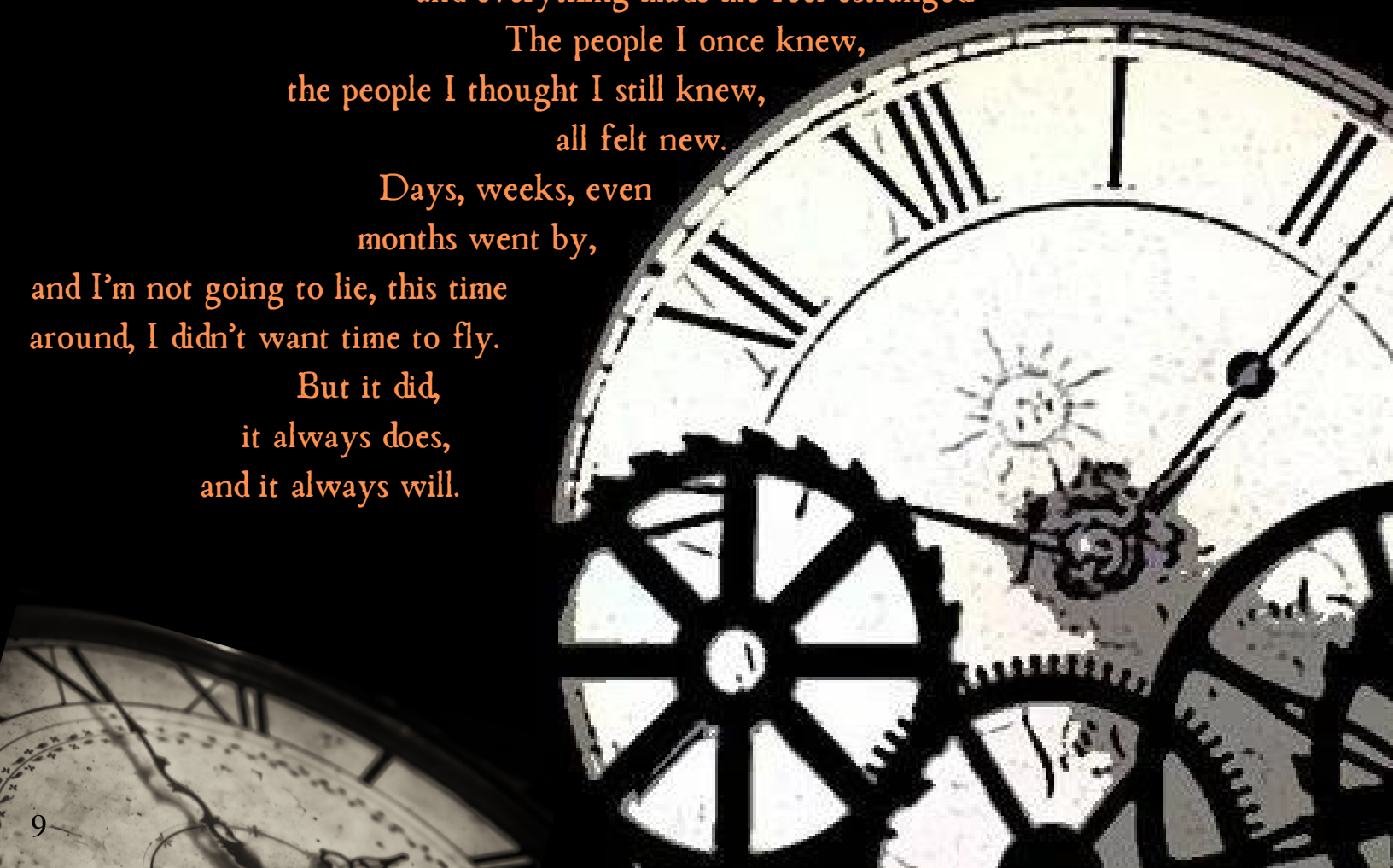
It was too late, I was too late, everything had changed
I wasn't a shy girl in middle school anymore; I was now a junior in high school
and everything made me feel estranged

The people I once knew,
the people I thought I still knew,
all felt new.

Days, weeks, even
months went by,

and I'm not going to lie, this time
around, I didn't want time to fly.

But it did,
it always does,
and it always will.



There's Only You

Azreen Haque

For most of the world, there's religion
For me, there's only you
My heart is complete when I'm with you
Your presence is my strength
I find courage in your smile

Life is so incredibly merciless
It always will be
It separates heart before they even met properly
All this talk about fate
All this talk about destiny
How does it know best for me
When it still keeps me from you

Hope is only present when I am with you
I therefore thank you
Everything you have done
Every sacrifice you have made
It is heard
It is recorded in my heart

Our eyes used to dream together
Now they are separated
The wind of questions in my heart is twirling
My heart has fallen frail
It is fragile
Oh, dear,
Help me win against despair and defeat

This world that we have created
It feels lonely
Even the birds have begun to weep
I can't stand this anymore
These moments are filled with torment and desolation
My perfect life shattered in a split of a second
But still life must go on...

TO BRAINSTORM

Ashley Choe

Once the walls come tumbling, crumbling, crashing down, people tend to turn towards themselves. One should not reckon with the clockwork of the brain; effortlessly, one can toss once-defining constraints aside. In some cases, one's mind can act as a place for repose; in others, the mind acts as an inhibitory force, making the simplest of tasks impossible.

Much to his discontent, Sterling was part of the latter group.

Instead of maintaining typical gears and hands, his mind resembled a tumbling, destructive hurricane. Once the winds began to howl, any sense of tranquility ceased. And while Sterling learned to control the reins on the nightly tempest creatures, they kicked, snorted, and growled defiantly against their restraints.

His head was beginning to ache. Despite it all, he continued forward. He pressed the tip of his pen against the clinically white page until a seemingly insignificant pool of black ink threatened to swallow the rest of his sanity.

In his mind, he snatched a paper out of the air, desperate for an inkling of normalcy; instead, the troubled agent found another neat sheet of formulas and equations. With a scoff, he tossed it over his shoulder and back into the whipping winds. Locating a single creative thought in such conditions, he thought, was akin to finding a lone star in the sky of a city with no concerns for the environment whatsoever. As each second passed, the maelstrom grew stronger, tearing up the tiles beneath him.

And yet, the pen remained motionless, unbearably still. In a moment of uncharacteristic defeat, Sterling prepared to give up. The writing tool quivered in his hand, and he considered putting it down for good.

Before the pen could hit the table, Catherine flung the door open.

The hurricane paused in its tracks, blatantly demonstrating its unreasonable properties.

She balanced three absurdly lengthy books in her arms as she stumbled to Sterling's desk. Without a word, Catherine glanced at the blank page and pen. And when she met his gaze, Sterling could see the tornado in her eyes, the papers fluttering, and the unwritten words she would never speak.

But most of all, he could see flashes of an ever-changing ocean blue and hints of vibrant carmine. Butterflies with iridescent wings flew through black skies, abnormally calm in a world of struggle.

Gripping the pen with renewed tenacity, Sterling blinked at the puddle of ink, the fruition of his efforts, and noted its faint hint of galactic indigo with the slightest smile.

Halloween Blues

Asna Akram

“Did you know Halloween is the deadliest night of the year,” asked Paul.

The school day was almost over and kids were eager about their Halloween plans. Paul was going to go to the Halloween party at Miguel's house, but I had to stay home this year. It was our annual tradition for Halloween, but I was grounded. My parents even had Halloween plans, so I had to stay home alone.

“Yeah, you say that every year, Paul. I'll see you tomorrow,” I replied as I exited the school.

I knew Halloween was going to be bittersweet this year without Paul and Miguel, but to cheer myself up, I bought a scary book from the library I was excited to read.

When I arrived home, I greeted my mother (to not get in more trouble) and quickly ran to my room to read my new book. I walked into the familiar room and sat on the chair next to the long mirror. I cracked open the book and began reading.

The story took place on Halloween (ironically) and introduced the main character, Michael. Michael was a little younger than me, about 12 years old. He was getting ready in his Halloween costume and was thrilled to go trick-or-treating with his friends. He was going as the devil this year and had an intricate mask that came with the costume. Although the mask was hard to see in, it helped bring the costume to life. As Michael left his house and met up with his friends, he realized someone across the street looked like they had the same costume as him. He didn't think much of it though. As the night went on, Michael noticed the kid again. The kid seemed to be closer now, and it was odd that his costume looked creepily similar. What made the whole occurrence weirder was that Michael's costume was homemade. He had stayed up all night making it.

“Guys, that kid has the same costume as me. Isn't that weird?” Michael stated.

His friends didn't think much of it and thought that his “twin” was cool. Michael, on the other hand, was starting to get concerned. Further into the night, he noticed the kid had a similar pattern on his mask. He had added a specific engraving onto the mask to make it look frightening and distinctive. Now, Michael started to get worried. He informed his friends that he was going to go home early and started walking home. While he was on his way back home, he felt a pair of eyes watching him. He quickened his pace and started almost running home. When he entered his house, he sighed in relief. He went to his room and stood in front of the long mirror that was positioned next to his chair. As he took his mask off, he realized that the reflection that stared back at him looked odd. The reflection had an odd smile on its face. It looked exactly like him, but the expression was horrifying. As he reached out to inspect the mirror, the reflection grabbed a hold of him.

I started to get an uneasy feeling, so I closed the book and decided to get a snack. As I began to leave the room, I stared at the mirror in my room. I was horrified to find the same smile described in the book staring back at me.

CHAMELEON

Chase Todd

My mind is an ocean. Swathes of vast emptiness only modified by the forces that guide it. I am without form. A box would be preferable to my life. Life without shape is a hopeless mangle of mass, not long for this world. Personal ambition creates a shape. But I am clay to be sculpted by others.

I wander the vastness of my planet's surface, each crevice and curve telling a story, forming a beaten, worn face. A face weathered through millennia of dust storms, rain, hail, warfare, and hate. A once beautiful face, scarred and deformed.

No. Altered. A face of beauty has merely taken a new form. New faces still hold luster. That's what I hope.

My face has never taken into its own form. Instead of a nose, clear eyes, lips, emotion, it is clay, able to mold itself a new shape. Each new personality is perfectly crafted down to the most minute detail, down to how their legs cross when they sit. All so that company has the ideal companion. But it is not me that they enjoy. They enjoy my great creations of life that I have given life to. They live so that I survive. There's no use risking exile.

A boy crosses my path, dressed in black slacks, a white formal shirt underneath a classical type suit, accompanied by a grim scowl and no one else. He is in mourning, requiring the mother. My face begins to soften, shifting features to appear personable, eyes turn a soothing shade of amber, hair lengthens to shoulder length, followed by a shorter demeanor. I am no more, only the mother remains.

She carries herself towards the child, crouching down to his height. He lifts his head to meet hers, crystal tears fall from his eyes as he wraps his arms around her, pulling her into his weak embrace. The mother recognizes his condition. No parents. No other kin. He has no one else. But he will no longer be alone.

His tears dry, salt-covered residue remains where rivers once flowed.

"Let us go, young one," sounds the mother, "The storm will subside in time. Your grief that slices through your being will no longer be more than a pinprick. You are not alone. You will never be alone again."

"B-b-but my mother...father," stammered the child, "they're dead. W-we were just sleeping. I was s-s-sleeping. I-I-I..."

"Hush now," the mother interrupted "You may tell me in due time. For now, we must leave here. Come. I have a dwelling not far from here."

The mother lifted the child into her arms, cradling him like a baby. She admired the intricacies of his face. The button nose, eyes too large for his head, so many miniature features. He must have become comfortable within his own face. Life had yet to weather him like the planet. As long as the mother exists, no weather shall change the child's face.

As a pair, the two traversed through the dense woods. A well-worn path, crossed by countless vagabond travelers, lay before them. The child begins to stir, turning his face towards the mother, dried river beds begin to fade from his face. He spoke.

“W—who are you,” he asked the mother.

“That is not important now, little one,” replied the mother. “All you need to worry about is surviving through this journey. Only then will we deepen our understanding of one another.”

He didn’t like this answer, but she had saved his life, so he should be grateful.

Further and further they hiked. So deep into the woods that the skyline faded to armies of trees. Deeper than the child had ever been before. But not the mother.

A short, dilapidated cabin stood before them. The cabin was not alone. It was accompanied by hundreds of companions in the form of tree stumps. Smoke still billowed from the chimney. Quilts of moss and cobwebs were draped over the cracking foundation and roof of this weathered cabin.

They strode up to the door. The child began to squirm away from the mother, terrified. His own reality set into place. He had just lost his mother and father and now he was following a stranger for the promise of food and shelter. There was nowhere to go, but he could die if he went any closer.

The mother noticed this and slowly shifted her face to a more comforting form. Her voice changed its timbre and construction of phrasing.

“Please, don’t struggle, my child,” pleaded the mother. “You’re safe now. Nobody will harm you while my own heart beats. Not even a single scratch will ever befall your beautiful face.”

With the final words, the child began to calm. The voice and face gave him a familiar comfort that he had not felt in hours.

“Okay,” he replied. “I’m sorry moth- ma’am. I’m just so scared”

“It’s okay to have fear, just don’t let that fear hinder you.”

The mother pressed her hand upon the door, and, with great resistance, it swung open with a deep groan. Inside, the smell of crackling wood from the hearth filled their nostrils. Like a blanket, the child felt like he had known this cabin all his short life. That’s when a familiar smell graced his nose. His own mother’s stew that she would make for him whenever he was scared. Something was wrong here. All signs pointed to the woman, but none to what she wanted.

The child was sat down at a tiny splintering wooden table only meant for two to sit. The mother glided over to the boiling pot, pouring its delicious contents into a small ceramic bowl engraved with old carvings of creatures dancing around the center of the bowl, like its contents were a worshiped bonfire of health. The familiar smells gave the child a sense of comfort that he had lacked, but he couldn’t relax, not now. Not when this strange woman had brought him through the woods at the exact time he realized that his parents had died, then cooked up his mother’s stew also. Everything lined up so perfectly even to a young child like himself.

She turned her body to gather her own stew when the child realized that this was his shot. Like a gunshot, he launched out of his seat at the door, feet pounding on the ground, pounding in his head. The crack of daylight from the door showed through to his eyes. His savior is just within his grasp. But his savior was a false messiah. The mother swept around him with snake-like fluidity, blocking his only exit. Her form began to change, twisting into a forest's worth of creatures and faces. The antlers of a deer, snout of a bear, teeth of a bear, and hundreds of faces forming an amorphous clump of life. Screams and shouts all in a twisted harmonic chorus.

"NO LEAVE," growled the beast. "YOU WILL NOT BE ALONE. YOU MUST JOIN THE CHAMELEON. JOIN US IN HARMONY."

The child looked around his surroundings, any way that he could escape his fate. Nothing. There was nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. Just the Chameleon and him at a standstill.

In a fit of desperation he called out, "I just want my mother and father back. Please!"

The Chameleon appeared confused. The screams of pain turned inward on themselves, as if it wanted to give but had nothing to give. Then a unified expression of exclamation fell upon its face. Its main face began to morph and shift into two, one of the mother, the other of the father, the child's parents.

In a dissonant harmony the two spoke with one voice, "Come, child. You needn't be afraid. We are here. We all are here. We feel no pain. No cold. No hunger. Only each other's comfort. Please, child. Join us in harmony so we may be whole again."

The child's eyes began to well with tears. This was his mother and father he was talking to. Had this monster consumed them, or were they actually happy and just missing him? If he left then he would be abandoning them like them to him. A burden he no longer wished to have shackled onto him.

Under a snuffle he said, "Okay. I trust you."

"You will never be alone," replied his parents.

The Chameleon morphed into the workings of a jaw, with teeth belonging to any forest creature that could be thought of, then swallowed the child whole. And as promised, he would never be alone ever again.

Weeks later, a couple stood over the tombstone of their child. The husband bracing his wife from collapsing onto the ground. In the distance, I take notice. They have a need for the child. I changed and warped my body into the small form of a creature long ago, from a distant memory.

No matter how long I wished, I will never have my own face. But I can mold mine into any, until one fits. But until then, a new face couldn't hurt.



The want for tangerines is something I can't focus on.

Forget iambic, I want to explore
Orange dress glistening, guessing burgundy
Within a question, something quite purdy
Ready to pluck now, now what could be more

This poem hurts, who even gave me a typewriter
Treat the one with aplomb, help the guards
Night without moon, sing with and around bards
Who even says bards, a sweet bite makes the day get brighter

Green leaves warm with the shine
Pick one with outstretched arm
Close enough to smell

Looking around for my eyes are only mine
Just a bite could have no harm
Why not take one more and rip off that orange shell



Child in Haling Cove

"You can't leave, now. My birthday is just next week. And going by yourself to a cabin in the middle of nowhere, is not going to help you with your miscarriage," Clandestine cried. This was a sudden and unpredictable plan that suffered mid-week on a random Tuesday. The pain of leaving my sister for her to lonesomely prepare for her 16th birthday party. Like a boat drifting off to sea, after you swore to tie it to a dock.

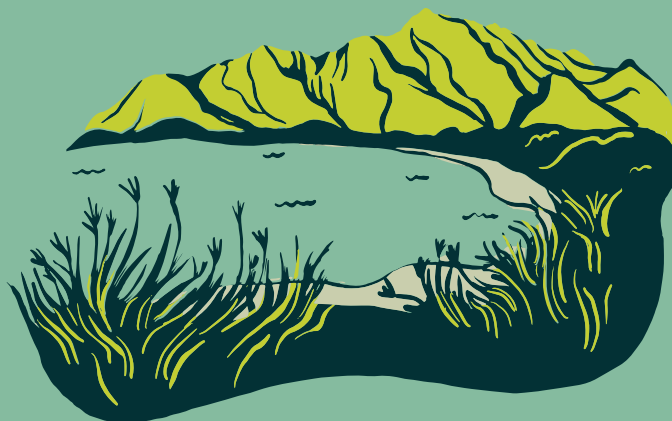
"Exactly! Some time to recover in a cabin in Haling Cove is exactly what I need. Also, I'll be back next Wednesday, just in time for the event."

On the way to Haling Cove, the flowers navigated their luscious petals to the rhythm of the wind and the wind to my music. I could hardly remember the fact that my baby sister cried when she saw my packed car. My Thunderbird swore if even one luggage was added, it would explode like pinatas.

This two-hour long drive in Nevada made me realize that this state would be useful if only it wasn't a quarter glued on a sidewalk. Nevada's most popular trait was Las Vegas, quite the opposite of where I was heading off. Not only in length, but Haling Cove was a relieving spot, it was on the top list of my family's favorite vacation spots. We once ventured off there summer and returned back home in a week, after being soaked in Lake Sundance and sweaty from our bike rides to Mariena. It felt satisfying going back there 7 years later.

After 3 stops at a local gas station to pick up Dr. Pepper and other necessities, I arrived at the cabin "Safeplace" was listing. The place was listed for \$300 a week. After scooping out the village, I realized I would have easily paid \$300 just to visit all the markets. To have these cherished memories with my family that I had back in the summer of 1992. Fragrances of sweet potatoes and berries filled the March air. Most of these women decorated their necks with a red ribbon and wore cotton sundresses.

Down the road from Mariena, quietly stood a brown tinted cabin. At first glance, I rightfully figured this would be my accommodation for the week. It was not the same as my previous stay, for that was destroyed and made into a nursery school. As I drove my car to the back parking lot of the cabin, the owner surprised me with a warm. The cabin was big enough for two families. So naturally, I was quite fond of the company that Ms. Loraes provided. She was a kind lady, whose fate got pulled and twisted.



“How was the trip here? Are you tired? Does your stomach hurt? How about you get freshed upstairs and see your room? I will be downstairs preparing tea,” Ms. Loraes questioned

Without a word, multiple expressions surfaced on my face. I did as she asked and carried my luggage to my nursery-like bedroom. The room had a baby carriage, instantly I thought of how a child was once in there. Or perhaps it never made it in there.

I joined Ms. Loraes down for the rest of the evening and she talked about the convenience of finding whatever we need in the village down the road. The tea smelled like fresh cut lawns. I loathed that scent and it recently made my stomach feel kicking and made gurgling noises. I asked to be excused for the night and found myself asleep on the soft mattress.

The next morning I didn't feel any better, and Ms. Loraes provided me with herbal juice and a plate filled with meat and eggs to replenish my “energy” from the long drive I had

I was quite speculating about this feeling and environment because I didn't feel as nauseous as I do now, when I had to drive to California for University.

I could feel my lower abdomen and mind revolve at the same speed. My visions flickered like a child playing with the switch light. My body felt unreasonably heavy. I heard a thunderous noise thump against the wooden living room floor. The floor was slippery as I was trying to grasp. Before I knew it, I was on the floor pushing something vigorously moving from my sudden watermelon-sized belly. In one blink I was in that familiar cabin, and the next I was surrounded by figures wearing blue masks and matching sets.

A sudden spark of bright light opened my squinted eyes further. Within a second everything, everywhere was moving. A man, not wearing the same outfit as others, was holding a tiny creature created in white and red.

The man exclaimed, “Katherine!”

Slowly, I got up and tried to remember all the unrecalled events that previously happened. As the supposed father for my supposed baby pushed the wheelchair with Katherine in my arms, I noticed how the board below the reception desk stated “Haling Cove Hospital,” my room number “1999,” and one more thing that confused me.

Before my family left the Haling Cove Hospital, Jack thanked the nurse for the helpful delivery. And I noticed the name on the tag of the purple scrub. It stated “Kathlyn Loraes.”



The New Order

Julia Mobley

Everything has changed. Everything that HE has made, has been destroyed. Good riddance. But happy things make people... unhappy. A war has been won, but at what cost? Villages were destroyed, hundreds were killed, and mistrust lurked in the air. These are the effects of war that are felt by all. Even the ancient species of The Mists were thrown off guard.



“-And there has to be change!” One of the counselors shouted, “Time is changing, so we must change. We have to change the symbol that represents us all!”

“Really? And leave our heritage behind?” Another one rebuttals.

“Oh? So you want to be associated with HIM?” The table went quiet, and all of the side conversions disappeared in an instant.

“Gentlemen, Gentlemen, please all calm yourselves.” The new voice who said that stood in the doorway. Every Mist turned their hooded face to see the God of Death; The Reaper. He stood there and belonged there; his eyes were lines made of white light but a hint of maroon and went unopposed. His dark gray cloak wrapped around the black mist that was his body. He didn’t have human shape, like all of The Mists, but instead was like a small fog moving throughout the world. He made his way to the seat at the head of the table and sat down. “Now, may we actually begin?” He said, looking around the table. All of The Mists around the table agreed together in a murmur. “Great, well. I called this meeting in the first place to discuss the war’s end. Yet, when I walked in, I saw The Explainer arguing about our symbol. Can you elaborate?” Reaper said, turning to Explainer.

“Well you see, during the war, we had a lot of people talk about how HIS attacks were similar to our symbol, the Spiked Ball. Some people thought that this meant our people were supporting HIM. So, some of The Mists have been, um, wanting to change the symbol. And I agree with that. Times are changing, and we must change too,” The Explainer says, looking at all of the other Mists. The Reaper clasps his gloved hands together and then signals for the other Mist to start talking.

“Well, what I was saying is that we can’t just leave something that has been a part of our order well before I was born. It has a different meaning than what HE used it for... Why do we change it now?” The Explainer was about to form a rebuttal when Reaper called them all to attention.

“I understood that this was going to be an issue, and I, myself, have encountered some of this hate that our order is experiencing. I know the people outside our order are confused and hurt by this war that has disturbed their day-to-day lives. I can understand why some of you feel angry about HIM using our symbol as a magic attack that has killed and wounded many. I feel... rather conflicted about our symbol, and whether it is safe for our people to be wearing it anymore. But that is why I created this counsel, yes? To seek guidance from people of my own,” Reaper explained. “For now, we shall discuss what to do about our ancient symbol. For starters, how many of you agree with The Explainer?” In the room of nine- Excluding Reaper- six raised their hand. “Interesting... So all of you wish to change our symbol?” They all agreed, some more confident than others. To say that Reaper was startled was an understatement. Are they really willing to change something that has been in their order for hundreds of years? The Reaper looked at the six until someone said something.

“Well, we all know that many things have changed about our world due to this war. And as long as I have lived, we have changed our rules before. And, well, Why can't we have something new? Why can't we just change with the world? Our species is one of the oldest, and yet we haven't evolved that much. So, why can't we change?”

“You are correct. We can change. But we choose not to. Barely any of us are even involved with stuff outside of our order. I agree that we can change, change our ways, but I won't... I can't... I will not tell you why. But... It's kinda obvious why. I hope you all understand” And those were his final words. He simply stood up from his seat, and exited from the room. The rest of The Mists simply started at the door that their God had just walked out on.



“It's nice to see you up here again, my friend,” says a familiar deep voice from behind The Reaper. Reaper quickly turns around, only to see that it's one of his friends, The God of the Earth; Ridge Rock. He stood at his menacing 6'10 feet, and a giant crown on top of his rock head. He has a boulderous appearance, with him being made of chunky rocks. His eyes were carved out of green gems, the color looked faded. Then again, this was caused by a single deep gash, going straight through his eyes. His hair is made of moss, mainly staying within the walls of his golden crown, but falling to the sides every now and then. His golden crown stood out from the rest of his body. It shined in the light, and its green, blue and red gems engraved within the gold, stood out the most.

“I mean...your kingdom is one of the most stunning in the land I would say, good job on the landscaping, if I didn't make the joke already in the past 600 years we have been friends.” Ridge Rock chuckles and asks, “So, what brings you up here?”

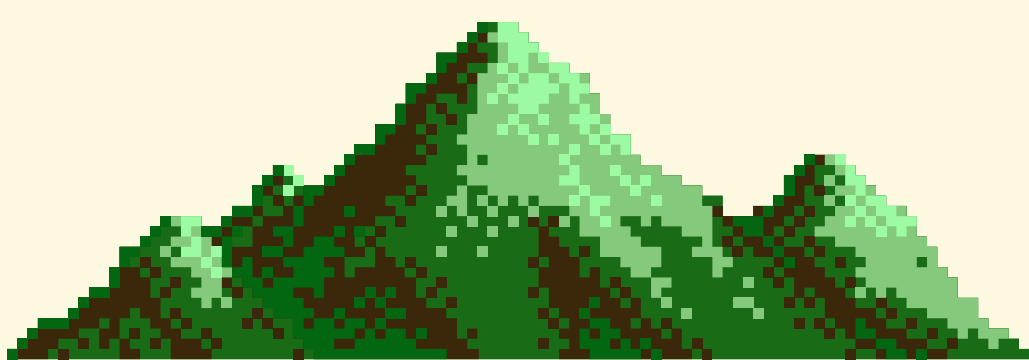
“Well... I have just received word that the council of The Mists are creating a New Order,” Ridge Rocks mossy eyebrows furrowed.

“And you weren't a part of this decision?”

“Ah, Well... You see my friend...I've decided to step down from the council and let my people rule themselves. Of course, I'll be popping in every now and then but...they themselves should rule.”

“Really? Are you sure you want to give it up like that?” The Reaper just shrugs and says, “Well, I have been the town's leader for a long time... I think it's time for someone else to take the lead” Ridge Rock let out an uproarious laugh, which caught The Reaper off guard.

“Oh sorry, it's just that you are starting to remind me of Jmobes.” Reaper just rolled his eyes and said, “I'm absolutely flattered.”



The House Next Door

Awaken, is simply not powerful enough to describe Helena's jolt to reality on the brisk, October night. A loud, mysterious bang forced her awake and out of her bed, snug with pillows and numerous fuzzy blankets. Looking out her frosted window, Helena wondered what the sound could be, but the blanket of night masked any view of this object, forcing her to only catch a glimpse of the outline of the big oak tree in her front yard. Sighing, Helena tried to forget about the noise, but as she shuffled groggily back into bed, a loud thump erupted again. Helena, now scared, picked up her phone and big, green puffer jacket lying on her chair before heading downstairs to investigate. After hearing the second thumping noise, Helena was able to identify that it was coming from somewhere below, so she crept down her cricket staircase with her phone beam pointing shakily in front of her. When she got to the bottom of the steps she immediately turned on the lights, and with her finger on the on button scanned the entire room.

After scouring her entire house, Helena was shaken and sat in a small stool in her kitchen, trying to convince herself the noise was all just her imagination. Before she could collect her thoughts the noise ensued again, this time louder. Helena jumped from her seat, her hand hovering over the green dial button, before she realized the noise was not coming from her house, rather the house adjacent to hers. She peered out the window, looking at the old, beaten up mansion, with the overgrown lawn butting next to hers. There never seemed to be anyone home and of course rumors flew around town naming the house haunted and numerous other tales about corpses and ghosts that inevitably occupied within. Helena never believed in such things and tried to forget it was ever there, so if anybody actually lived in the house was unknown to her.

A small light was emitting a soft glow from the third floor window, and shrugging Helena decided to see if anyone was home. Helena took a deep breath before shutting her door and walking through the dense canopy of foliage and chipped stones to reach the next door. This door was much larger than hers with a large crack splitting the door down the middle and a big knobby brass handle.



Although the door was unlocked, she smacked the knocker against the door three times before deciding to venture in. The house, filled with rumors of decay, death, and destruction, only contained marvelous riches that Helena could have never before imagined. The hall leading into the house was made of a rich red carpet, cushioning her every step as she walked into the grand hall filled with a gold chandelier dangling from the ceiling. Helena looked around stunned at the riches in front of her before walking up the winding marble staircase to the third floor where the light was seen. As she glided up the two flights of stairs, she saw paintings she only read about in books from Picasso to Da Vinci and peered into rooms that were filled with such beautiful designs and objects that she could not breathe.

Finally, Helena reached the third floor where she followed the dim ray of light into the largest room yet. This room was much more austere than the rest of the rooms, with a simple wooden bed sitting in the corner, a singular window with the candle burning, and a metal desk below the window. Sitting on the metal desk was a small black cat that cocked its head when Helena walked in, its night-black eyes piercing Helena. Helena smiled slightly, still spooked, and started walking around the empty room, when she suddenly heard a clomping up the stairs. Startled, she jumped up and peered outside the room. She heard a familiar coughing noise and a thin figure appeared, his hand grasping the railing and his face gaunt with old age. A bright smile lit Helena's face as she stumbled into the wall in shock, falling down with a loud thud. Surprisingly for his old age, the man looked up quickly, his hazel eyes piercing Helena's dark ones, before he foolishly grinned and used his minimal energy to run up the stairs and embrace Helena. Between tears, Helena choked out the words, "Father, what are you doing here?"



A Rainy Day

Rosmy Joseph

The rain is tumbling down on me
The drops, they're always falling
The weight of water on my shoulders
Tiny tidbits dropping

It's in the air, it's everywhere
It sneaks me into slumber
The rain keeps falling down on me
As I began to wonder,

"The sun's a wonderful yellow
And the sky's a baby blue
But the rain that's falling down on me,
Does it have color too?"

Some may call it shiny,
Some may call it clear.
But I look at the rain and all I see
Is a friend that just draws near.

The rain is pouring down on me,
The drops, they're always falling.
It gets harder and heavier as I go,
They'll always keep on dropping.

But I don't really ever care
The rain can go anywhere.
The crystals of the Earth
Will fall here or there.

The rain just knows where it wants to go,
Just like I'm walking now.
To find my own way back at home
After the rain has gone.



yearning

Tiana

to the life unreached
i believe
that there is more
than the eye can see

i yearn for a life
more honor pursued
yet what i receive
is the best you can do

i cradle the wishes
kept inside the moon
for the sun is too bright
to withhold the truth

to the life i will dream
till the day that i die
i pray you'll be more
than a glimmering eye

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