

# SPRINGFIELD SONDER

VOLUME 2, EDITION 2

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L I T E R A R Y   M A G A Z I N E



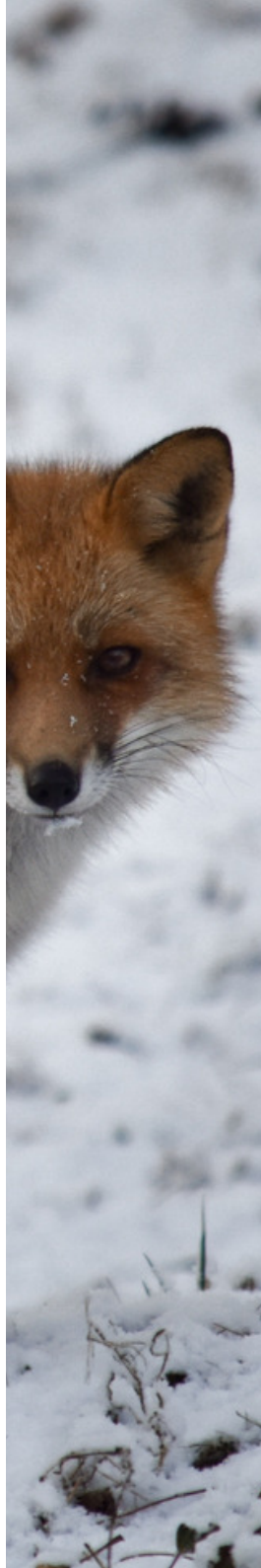
# Meet the Editors

## Co-Editor in Chief Ahlam Houssein

Hello, all! I have been a part of the Sonder for three years and a passionate writer since I first learned English. As a current junior, I look back at the notable progression I've seen in our writers, help from our advisors, and support from our readers with admiration; they have all played substantial roles that make the Lit Mag as successful as it is. I truly hope that you enjoy reading my work and viewing my perspective on the many matters I discuss!

## Creative Director Christy Nguyen

Hello, I'm Christy Nguyen, and my path in the arts has been relatively short but well-loved nonetheless. I didn't know that in such a short time I would find myself so invested in the arts and end up becoming the Creative Director! As Creative Director I get to accumulate many of the art pieces you find here, and I hope that I get to enhance your reading experience!



## Co-Editor in Chief Grace Dougherty

This is my third year writing for the Sonder. Since my freshman year, the magazine has undergone a lot of change, and thanks to Ms. Monte, Alexandra Schneider, and all the members since then, we have been able to make the Sonder what it is today. I'm so excited to be working this year to keep growing and improving the magazine. I've written all my life and I hope to go wherever writing takes me in the future. Thanks for reading!

## Advisor Ms. Deidre Monte

Hello, Everyone! My name is Ms. Monte and this is my second year acting as the adviser of the Sonder Literary Magazine. This year, expect a new, updated look to our magazine as well as art and photography from our very own SHS students! I hope you enjoy the combination of writing and visuals that your peers have thoughtfully compiled.

# Meet the Writers

## Staff Writer Kayla Hayes

I'm a sophomore and this is my first year at SHS. I write short stories for fun, but the ones I enjoy writing the most are stories that revolve around mental health. I think I enjoy these types of stories just because it's interesting to try and get into the minds of others with strong emotions. I hope you can find my writing interesting. Have fun reading!

## Staff Writer M

Hello readers! My name is M (formerly known as Cloudy). I am a 10th grader that loves to write. I enjoy writing poems and short stories about any topics imaginable. I have an interest in writing, but, other than that, I also like drawing. I hope you enjoy reading what I write for you!



## Staff Writer Carlyne McGurk

Hi I'm a sophomore. Some things I am passionate about are volunteering, writing, photography, reading, swimming, singing, and theatre. I love writing because it allows me to open my mind and heart up in ways words can't. Although it may leave me at feeling vulnerable at times, it also is quite freeing to be able to open completely up. I hope you stick around to grow and develop alongside me.

## Staff Writer Olivia Litten

My name is Olivia Litten I'm in 10th grade. I like photography, anything to do with music, and, of course, writing. I like photography because it's something simple to help pass time. Writing is a fun activity to do, it also helps me vent and get things off my chest.

# Meet the Writers

## Staff Writer

### Alexa Mihaita

I am a junior at SHS. After discovering a passion for writing fiction in the 5th grade, I have spent ample time each year free-writing about a myriad of topics, including nature, love, and even my childhood. As I share my pieces with you, I hope that my words may convey my mindset and my unique voice!

## Staff Writer

### Adrienne Keener

I am a writer in 11th grade. I write both short stories and poems, and my favorites pieces pose a question for the reader to ponder. I always have a book with me (and usually two or three on reserve). My other activities include Girl Scouts, dancing, and enjoying educational YouTube videos.

## Staff Writer

### Andrew Lim

My name is Andrew Lim and I am a writer for the Sonder. Some things that you should know about me are, that I am in 10th grade and I write short stories. The reason I enjoy writing is because I like to explore my thoughts and how I think people might react to different situations.

## Staff Writer

### Abigail Hess

To me, writing is a art form used to voice your thoughts which I thoroughly enjoy. Outside of writing, I usually read, paint or take photos. I also am the yearbook editor and have loved every second I spend working on it! Lastly, I am a strong Christian, and have grown in my faith a great deal in the past couple of years. I hope you enjoy my writing!



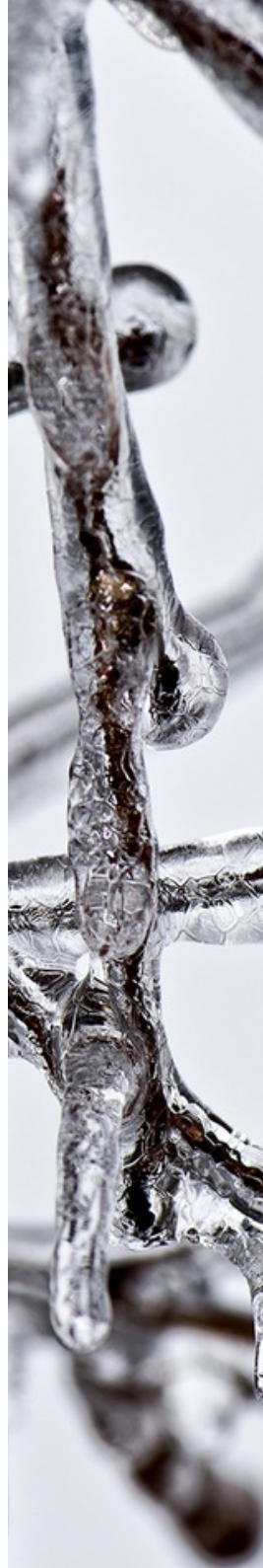
# Meet the Writers

## Staff Writer Amelia Houser

I'm a junior in high school. I've enjoyed writing since I was a child for a few reasons. Writing has let me see my hundreds of thoughts on paper and make sense of them. I really enjoy creating such a vivid image that it feels as if the reader is in the story themselves. I also enjoy Journalism. Some of my hobbies include fashion, style, and sports.

## Staff Writer Max Hay

I'm a writer for the Sonder and Spri-Hian. I really like reading fiction books, mostly satire and fantasy, which most likely led to my interest in writing. I would like to start writing short stories, but I mainly write poems. I hope you stick around and see what other things I write.



## Staff Writer Ashley Ellis

As a sophomore and returning member of the Literary Magazine, I plan to ensure quality and intriguing pieces. I often write poems, but I want to challenge myself to branch out this year. My hobbies include writing, traveling, and reading. Thank you for reading, and I hope everyone enjoys my work!

## Staff Writer Laura Hopf

I'm a junior, and I've been in Lit Mag since 9th grade. The best part of writing for me has always been poetry. Poetry has always been about emotion for me, so I often use it as an outlet to express myself. I absolutely love the flow, structure and emotion of it. I hope you can find my work relatable and comforting, but most of all I hope you enjoy it!

# Gladiolus Flower

By Andrew Lim



I stared out longingly through the window of the almost empty classroom, my head resting on my open palm. The sky held bright clouds moving at a fast pace covering the sun then opening its rays on the world again. I heard the batting of the baseball team from the classroom, every swing and collision of the bat felt like a wake up call for reality to sink in. Down in the courtyard the photography club are snapping photos again, I could see their smiles so wide it almost made me grin too. I hadn't smiled like they did for what felt like ages; for a couple weeks now it had felt like something I had forgotten was slowly coming back to me.

"Hey, Brandon," my head turned cautiously to see two of my friends ready to leave, bags on their shoulders. "We're leaving and-" Trent's eyes squinted, examining my face. "What's that look for- something serious happen?" I tried to feel more of my face to answer his question; my eyes felt like they were making the same expression they always gave. My mouth and lips had felt dry and my skin felt smooth, and everything seemed in check.

I shrugged and turned back to my window as another crack of the baseball could be heard, "You guys can go on without me." Their stares burned through me for a few seconds before I heard their feet pace themselves out the room.

The crack of the the bat kept flying into my body like it was the ball itself. It wasn't until I heard the sound of a chord from the piano below my feet when my head rose again. My eyes widened and mouth lay open, agape; the notes fit the tone so well. The chords created waves around the school none could see with a naked eye. My eyes averted around the room, it had seemed no one else could notice the sounds of the piano below. I took no time grabbing my heavy bag full of scrap paper, notes, and other useless items out of the room walking swiftly and quietly. Downstairs I had found myself met with the door to the room with the piano still hearing the melody clear as day. My hand reached for the door knob but I found it to be shaking, my eyes scanned the door but nothing seemed wrong. The feeling of uncertainty and foreshadowing loomed over my shaking body as I reached for the door knob again. It was cold but welcoming, like a warm cup of tea in the morning. I slowly pulled the door open without haste so I wouldn't second guess myself. Sure enough there was a person on the piano, or at least what I thought.

She had fine brown hair streaming down to her waist complementing her fingers running like water on the ocean shore. Her smooth round face made her all the more alluring with a nice even figure, and feet using the pedal with precision. Before my mind was able to go farther I brushed it off quickly and tried to enter the room to get a clearer sound of the music.

One step, all it took was one step into that room to make her disappear with the sound of the piano. I was nothing less than astruck. At the sound of the bat my head whipped itself around, giving me a glance of the girl now running towards the front of the building. I hastened my pace not wanting to bring to much attention but fast enough to keep watch of the girl. When passing the courtyard I quickly went out to ask some of my friends in the photography club to make sure I wasn't crazy. "Did any of you hear a piano just now?"

Their heads turned, most in confusion. Only one stood out with a sigh, Helen spoke with a worried look, "This again Brandon?"

"Again?"

"You do this almost every month, no one plays that piano. The last person to play that piano was-"

Helen was pulled to the side by another person. Delina whispered into her ear, whatever she said to Helen it seemed to make her annoyed. Helen crossed her arms and allowed Delina to respond to me with an uncertain smile, “No we didn’t hear a piano.”

Another crack of the baseball bat was heard. This time it seemed louder than before, I managed to get another glance at the piano girl still heading towards the front of the school. I waved goodbye to the photography club and this time ran back into the school following the girl. She didn’t stop at the entrance but continued to run down the hill the school was built on towards the town. I continued to follow her like my life depending on it, It felt like I had met her before. Without paying much attention I almost tripped as my speed increased going down the mountain. Trent and Henry noticed me racing down the steep slope and tried waving to me but my mind didn’t have enough energy to focus on anything else but my pace. “Brandon, whatcha running for?” My voice wasn’t able to hear their question. I had almost lost sight of the girl so I increased my pace.

We ran through the town weaving my way through people so I could keep watch. She turned a corner leading to the outskirts of town and I followed without thought. My fatigue and the heat of summer was starting to catch up with me as more forceful breath started to escape my body. Each step became heavier, harder, my feet digging into the ground, so I pushed on. I wouldn’t let go until this was over; the pressure, my pride, this strive. All that was inert before rose to levels I have never felt.

The forest outskirts were next in the run to end my life. I put all my strength into what seemed like the last push. So much so, I wasn’t able to realize I was in the same forest I had been in for days on end playing with an old friend only two years ago. I finally saw the mystery piano player stop running in front of two sets of gladiolus flowers not usually found in the area. The girl then disappeared again but this time it seemed she sunk into the roots of the flowers. Before she sank into the ground fully I tried to reach out for her but missed with no surprise only millimeters away.

I dropped to my knees finally soaked in the fatigue breathing deeply and staring down at the two sets of flowers. In a flash of memory someones face brightened my eyes with a smile I could never back away from. I looked at the flowers and held my hand out to grab something but missed the air, “We promised to come back here together.”

“Brandon?” In my dread of memory and silence I heard my name come from a familiar female voice. The voice seemed more dignified since the last time I had heard it, but I was certain it was at least recognizable. My head turned wondering who was calling my name only to have my breath stop and heart skip a beat. She had fine brown hair now only reaching her upper arm, the smooth round face still alluring and beautiful and about that same enticing figure. I forced myself to stop thinking shaking my head violently then using my two hands slapped the sides of my face getting me back on track, and checking if this wasn’t a dream. She stuttered at my self inflicted pain but I ignored it staring into her indigo colored eyes. “Elizabeth.” We stared at each other without any motion or movement for us to respond to. Elizabeth walked up to me and kneeled down so we looked at each other at even height.

“Did you run here?” she asked with a quizzical look. I had completely forgotten about my loss of breath and fatigue. In one wave I felt my whole body lost strength again and I fell onto Elizabeth.

She jumped in alarm but managed to catch me anyway, “Maybe a little more than run.” We both laughed drowning any awkwardness that lay before then. She brought her arms up now holding me in embrace, I tried to do the same with the little energy I had to little success. “So what are you doing here?” I finally asked.

“My family was passing by on the train and I ran off coming here instead,” she said almost like it was just a normal thing to do.

“What made you come here all of a sudden?”

I heard her smile widen with a small laugh, “Just a hunch. What about you?”

My mind wandered for an answer when it was already clear how I had come to this moment, “A hunch, I guess.”

We stopped hugging each other and looked at the gladiolus flowers while holding the others hand. I felt hers clench harder, like if she didn’t I would end up disappearing and never seen again. “We planted these two years ago. Do you remember?” she asked.

“It was your last week in town before you moved. We promised we would meet each other again at this very spot.”

She turned to me. Her eyes were full of relief but hints of worry seemed to be erupting inside of herself, “Did you... ever forget about me?”

I released my hand from her grasp and pulled her head so it was laying on my shoulder, “I think, even if I tried I could never fully forget you. And if I did, somehow we would meet again.”

Elizabeth started tearing up and crying on my shoulder as I had to fight back tears of my own so our space wouldn’t become flooded with water, “But I did forget! I forgot about this town, the people, the streets, these flowers,” she grabbed my arm holding like her life depended on just this arm, “and you.”

“And that’s ok-” I said looking at my side to her weakened state. My hand resting on top of her head for comfort.

“Not it isn’t!” she cut me off with her scream causing me to recoil back slightly, “How could I forget about you after all the time we spent together! After our promise we made! After-”

“No, listen to me,” I spoke more sternly than before, “If you forgot who I was I will find you again and make you remember, if we both forget. I already said we would still meet again, I promise it.”

“You always promise on things unbelievable.”

My whole body turned to look at her swiftly and held her shoulders tightly locking my eyes on hers, “I swear on it, with everything I have to offer.”

She started to laugh through her tears causing an uneven sound in her voice, “Is this supposed to be some love confession or something?”

Looking at her smile I couldn’t help but smile back. It was this smile that would always find a way to make me happy. I stood up and held my hand out to her. Elizabeth grabbed my hand and I pulled her up, “Maybe it was.” We were locked in each other’s sights and it took another crack with the baseball bat bringing back the wood surroundings. “Let’s head back, I’m sure your family is worried.”

We turned our backs from the flowers and proceeded to walk back to town. Before we were out of sight I glanced back and saw the silhouette of a young boy and girl tending to the gladiolus flowers, joined hand in hand.



# The Hillside

By Natalie Pierce

In the beginning,  
Wild green grass grew tall like the trees above,  
Small streams trickled down the colorful hillside,  
Sparkling flowers of all the colors in the rainbow brighten the  
ground,  
Reds, oranges, yellows, blues, and purples everywhere along the  
hillside,  
Calm wind whistles through the tall trees, comfortable silence fills  
the air,

It starts slow,  
A dusty dirt road here, a wooden cabin there,  
They weren't hurting anything,  
But than more and more appear,  
Soon it's not just cabins,  
but colossal towers sprout from the ground like weeds,  
It was as if a planet of stone and concrete exploded up in space,  
And all of those pieces rained down on the beautiful earth,

Soon the colors started to fade,  
The flowers once plentiful, now a rare sight,  
The green grass gone, replaced with a stone cold grey,  
Small streams once clear, turned murky brown,  
All that is left of the once colorful hillside is now a dark, dead,  
slate color of  
a city.

# Protected Journey

By Amelia Houser

She was only a teen figuring out  
what to do next,  
as life threw curve after curve,  
only confusing her more.

As the path grew more narrow  
and the turns became wider,  
she wondered,  
is it worth the journey?

She paused in her footsteps,  
looked up at the sun,  
and remembered that she  
was not alone.

She remembered that she had  
guardian angels watching down.  
And she continued.

# Beautiful Garden

By Adrienne Keener

What a beautiful garden!  
Trees of emeralds, flowers of jewels,  
A river of sapphire  
That reflects a sky of blue.  
It is not hard to picture  
A lovely gardener  
Tending her garden  
As the sun shines brightly above.  
But there is no gardener here.  
Nor a shining sun,  
Nor emerald, nor sapphire, nor jewel.  
You can see it--  
If you look closely--  
A seam on a leaf,  
A scratch on a flower.  
All carefully designed mimicries  
Arranged to fool  
Everyone outside.



# Perfectly Fine

By Abigail Hess

I'm fine.  
I knew he couldn't stay forever.  
I just didn't think our parting time would come so soon.  
I'm perfectly fine.

I felt it deep within my bones.  
I knew he was gone.  
I didn't even have to see him leave.  
It nearly tore my heart apart.

He was supposed to be my one and only.  
Whisked away right from under my snout.  
I cannot comprehend exactly why.  
But now, who will be mine?

They say dogs do not have souls.  
I did not shed tears for no reason.  
I did not beg to bring him back for no reason.  
I do too have a soul.

I am cold.  
There is no one left for me to hold,  
And not a single soul to hold me.  
I am stone cold.

They replaced him.  
Two new faces for me to hold.  
I have no interest in doing so.  
Pongo was supposed to be mine.

I'm fine.  
I knew he could not stay forever.  
I just didn't think our parting time would come so soon.  
I'm perfectly fine.



# A World Where

By Max Hay



I would like to live in a world full of cool skate tricks

I would like to live in a world where everyone felt safe and free

I would like to live in a world where The Last Airbender movie  
never got made

I would like to live in a world where everyone could say  
“Neato” and be genuine

I would like to live in a world with no unnecessary pain, drama,  
or hate

I would like to live in a world where I could write good poems  
and stories

I would like to live in a world where I wouldn't have to list the  
things I want in a world

I would like to live in a world where every water bottle we  
flipped would land and everyone would go ballistic

I would like to live in a world where people had that same  
intensity of emotion that came with the first

I would like to live in a world where Jim was already dating  
Pam

I would like to live in a world where George didn't need to kill  
Lenny

I would like to live in a world where

# Enough For Everyone

*By Grace Dougherty*



From her college dorm, sometime in the 60s, my grandmother calls her mother.

“Bo is moving back home, his company went bankrupt,” her mother tells her, a sadness weighing on her words. She is, of course, sad for her son and his situation, but she also knows her time without children in the house is over until he can get back on his feet. Since her youngest, Diane, had moved out, she no longer had to cook for ten children and her husband every day. With no one to cook for, she and her husband went every Wednesday to the local diner and had a meal that, for once, she didn’t make. Her son coming to stay with them changed that, as she told her daughter, her voice tinny over the line,

“I’ll have to cook for him every day now.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, Ma! He lived on his own for years and he can make himself a sandwich.”

Maria Grazia replies, “No, no, I have to cook.”

Cooking, and doing so in the largest portions possible, was how my great-grandmother impacted others the most. To dole out portions was to give her love, and she did so in abundance. Having a large family in Italy and making her own upon coming to America, Maria Grazia only knew how to cook in huge quantities. My grandmother fondly recalls her traditional Italian cookies, which she made annually. Maria Grazia baked batches in the hundreds for days at a time. She did so in a coal stove, constantly keeping the fire hot enough to bake.

Love wasn’t just for family. She baked cakes and made sandwiches when the women in the neighborhood, who couldn’t read or write in either Italian or English, would come to have letters translated or transcribed by Maria Grazia. She taught herself to read and write in both at some point, though I can’t imagine when she had the time. My grandmother, seeming to hold the grudge still, remembers that none of these women ever brought food of their own to share, but that her mother didn’t seem to mind, happy to help and feed her friends.

Even in such large portions, Maria Grazia never used a recipe. However, my grandmother, not wanting her mother's dishes to fade from her memory and possessing a tendency towards organization and procedure that I would one day inherit, insisted that she record her processes. Her daughter's insistence that she record her methods baffled her. For her, cooking was second nature and ingredients were felt, not measured. When she said "mix by hand" she meant for the chef to use their hands to stir or to knead and to feel the quality of the food, not a spoon in sight. Regardless, my grandmother helped her to write down her recipes by watching her cook and insisting upon stopping and measuring out each ingredient as they went along.

This image has long been a funny one to me. I picture Maria Grazia, by then an old woman, and my grandmother, at that time young, side by side over the stove. Maria Grazia grabs ingredients from muscle memory, never touching a measuring cup or spoon. Her daughter frantically asks her to slow down, taking ingredients from her mother's hands just before they can be added to a simmering pot and urgently calculating their volume while her mother taps her foot impatiently.

Even though no one in my family cooks in such abundance and my grandmother has preferred to use her own recipes more often than the ones she goaded out of her mother, Maria Grazia's memory lives on through rich foods. Long before I became curious about who she was, I knew her favorite word: "*Mangia!*"

This word, the imperative form of the Italian verb *mangiare* (to eat), was used to encourage her skinny grandson, my father, to eat as much as he could at family dinners. Of these dinners, my father recalls the childish memory of a gargantuan stove upon which a mammoth pot full to the brim with red sauce, meatballs, and sausages sat, the delicious smell thick like a warm blanket. An uncle would grab a fork, plunge it into the pot, retrieve a meatball the size of a fist, and give it to my father. Somewhere in the background, my great-grandmother's voice could be heard over the hum of the boiling pot and the roar of every uncle, aunt, and cousin crowding the house, calling out in a concerned tone to my father,

"*Mangia!* You are too skinny!"

In turn, my father, though he speaks no Italian, encouraged his skinny children with the same simple phrase decades later.

"*Mangia!*" Maria Grazia says to me, decades after her death, "*Mangia!* And be loved!"



# *Stone Cold*

*By Ablam Houssein*

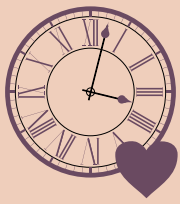
Cold hands cosset cold hearts  
And stone attracts the like.  
Hearts quiver at steady fingertips--  
Fissions of waning quartzite.  
Stoic eyes stroke stoic minds  
And extend their lifeless arms  
To reel the feckless and dispel  
The presence of any qualms.  
Delusive words captivate verdant  
Souls who follow and surmise  
That their fate will be advantageous,  
Blind to the latency of lies.  
Nervous networks shudder and hide,  
Ridden with utter guilt  
For finding too much credence in  
The utopia they have built.  
Stiffened skin lacks porousness  
As sagacity begs to be evinced  
The mind is rendered resolute  
Until otherwise convinced.  
Bare faces manifest the truths  
Repressing the sinuosity  
Of twisted fates and malign motives  
That accelerate callosity.



# A WORLD OF MY OWN

BY AHLAM HOUSSEIN

Like a drop of water bedews a parched throat,  
And like wax lies upon a sclerotic ground,  
Traction is dissolved in a frenetic effort  
To reach the summit of an unknown.  
At whose peak we find nothing but  
The illusionary assurance that climbing  
Higher will bring us to a desired destination.  
But as I trust not a grain of salt in freshwater,  
Nor the beauty of fusion of irradiated atoms,  
I stand astray and refuse to pursue  
That which the others do.  
I wish to wade in the console of solitude,  
To bask in the idiosyncrasies and  
Rays of my roaming mind;  
To mute the clutter of social tides,  
And to drift far into a world  
Of my own.



# Think of Your Mom

By Laura Hopf

When she came into my room at 3:22 AM, I was worried. My mother never comes into my room. My mom doesn't wake me up in the middle of the night for no reason. I sat up, dazed with sleep.

"Why are you here?" I asked. She seemed surprised. She made her way to my bed, and sat on the side. She never did this.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to wake you up. I'm sorry," she apologized quickly. My mother is not the type of person to be so unsure of herself, and it disturbed me how much she apologized.

"What's up?" I mumbled, still trying to determine her reasoning behind waking me so early. My words slurred with lethargy but I still was curious.

"Well, I had a bad dream, where I woke up in a world, and you weren't in it," my mother finally replied. "And it was... awful. It was awful, Laura, being in a world where you'd never existed."

She stood up.

"Promise me you won't leave?" my mother begged. "Promise me you'll stay?"

"I promise, mom," I said, and she wrapped me in a hug. In the darkness of my room at 3:22 AM, I hugged my mom with all my might.

She held on for a while, whispering "I love you"s and soothing words. When she finally let go, she seemed almost embarrassed.

"Okay, I'm gonna go now, get some sleep," she made her way to the door through the dark, "I love you."

"I love you, too, mom."

I never knew my mom thought about such things. I never knew she cared so much to come into my room at 3:22 AM to tell me she loved me. At 17 years old, I'm almost fully-grown. I can do my own laundry, make my own food, and drive myself anywhere I need to go. Yet still my mother sees me as integral to her life. I feel as though I hardly even see her in the blur of my busy life, but still she manages to be there. She leaves me dinner when I come home late, she buys me Snow Dance shoes just because she's thinking of me. No matter how old I get, my mom will always love me. And maybe I knew that before, but finally seeing it makes me think of every encounter with her. I appreciate my mom more than ever now. Thank you to all the mothers who wake up at 3:22 AM to check on their kids. We love you.



# She Smiles

By Alexa Mihaita

A plethora of responsibilities line her thoughts  
Each weighing more than the last  
Her head feels heavy, her shoulders slump  
But she lifts her chin and she smiles

“You always look happy”  
They tell her with admiration  
“I wish I was positive like you”  
They shower her with praise.  
She looks back at them with bright eyes  
And in response, she smiles

But do they know she falls asleep most nights,  
With an incessant ache between her eyes?  
The result of hours upon hours of thinking,  
Worrying that failure is soon approaching,  
And despite it all, she smiles.

Perhaps she smiles as a way to cope,  
To trick herself into bliss  
To alleviate the worries of friends and parents,  
Or to somehow, some way, disintegrate her own.

But she knows her smiles are genuine  
Deeply rooted in her mind and heart,  
So as long as she has the strength to give them  
She'll lift her chin and she'll smile.





# DANDELION

BY OLIVIA LITTEN

Lively, bright, soft  
Helps the community  
Receives nothing in return  
Adored by few  
Unknown by most  
Hated by many  
Closed up  
Hiding transition  
Coating removed

Opening  
Fluffy, frail  
Transparent  
Sharing the gift of the world  
Left with a corpse  
Soul is gone  
Blown away in the wind  
Could be anywhere  
Could be gone  
No one knows

Feels wasted  
None of us are  
We all play a part  
We all shine  
We all sin  
We all live  
We all end

# *Blurred Polaroids*

By *Ashley Ellis*

A camera and lens  
Concentrating on a subject.  
Shifting in and out of focus.

Foreground and background  
Merge and become one.

Forgotten frames develop into  
jump cuts.  
Everything is trapped in slow-motion.

Motion and fast forward are foreign.  
One can only pause,  
Then rewind.

Shaking the polaroid.  
White frames the film,  
Engulfed by darkness.





# THE LIGHT



BY KAYLA HAYES

The little circles of light shine intensively onto my grimy head as I hide my eyes in my knees. I try to sit as comfortably as possible with my arms strapped across my chest. My legs, with infectious scratches trailing down them, stay folded against me in a fetal position. My feet are bare and cold against the tile floor, still with dirt embedded in my toenails from the night before. I try to distance myself from the voices that speak the most accusatory and ridiculous questions I've ever heard in my life. They call me crazy. I'm not crazy. I've told them what really happened, and they choose not to believe me. They choose to put themselves in danger.

"Julia Morse, why did you kill Tyson Ellwood?" the voices echo throughout my empty box prison.

"I didn't do it...I would never kill him." I spoke audibly yet shakily. They're never going to believe me. I guess I wouldn't either with the story I've been giving them. Nonetheless, it's a true story and I don't plan on altering it for their approval.

"Of course not, sweetie," the voice speaks in a patronizing tone. "Can you tell us what happened last night?"

And I'd reply with calmness and certainty:

I was the freakish girl of the town. That one that no one really wanted to talk to. The one that was bullied for just existing in the world. They called me alien girl because I believe that someday aliens will take over and enslave us all and use our world for their own benefit. Through all of their teasing and abuse, I still refused to let go of my beliefs because I know it makes me more evolved than those who stay ignorant. I thought that I'd forever be an outcast to everyone, and I came to terms with that, until Tyson came along. He was a clever boy, not quick to reject the ideas of life outside of Earth, so I liked him. Our friendship developed quite rapidly, as we were the only ones that understood each other's ideas and theories.

However, we were not completely similar because I, unlike him, had experienced paranormal alien activity in my own life. Sometimes when I sleep, I hear raspy breaths hovering above my face. Occasionally, even a single cold finger will trace my forehead. I'm unsure if they're coming to check on me or if they just want to gather information, but either way I feel comforted by their visits. I know they don't want to hurt me because, for whatever reason, I'm special to them. I never told anyone about my experiences because I had no one I could fully trust.

Well one day, Tyson witnessed my usual bullies spraying green paint onto my face at lunch, and yelling about how I should go back to my own planet. He helped me wipe it off, and was so furious of the way people treated me that he decided we should run away together. We went home, packed our bags, and met in the woods where we decided we should camp out temporarily until we formulated a better plan.

As we sat there talking back and forth of random life stories, I decided that now I could trust this boy. After all, we were already planning our lives together. I told him of my nighttime alien visits and he wasn't frightened, he was impressed, and he believed every word. Instead of telling me I was a freak, he told me I was a miracle because both he, and unworldly creatures, found me special. I had finally found a human that accepted me for who I am, so why would I ever want to hurt him? That night I had my first kiss under the light of the moon and stars, hidden behind the bushes and trees. I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Everything seemed perfect, but I had no idea that my one chance at happiness would be taken away from me that night.

We fell asleep on the dirt floor without a single complaint because we had each other. Not long after we both dozed off, I started hearing the raspy breaths of my alien friends, but this time in a greater number and much more rowdy than usual. I opened my eyes to see dark silhouettes pulling at Ty's arms. I jumped up and yelled at them "stop!" The figures quickly turned their heads to me and suddenly a bright light flashed all around me, blinding me from seeing my surroundings. I start screaming in a panic and shaking my head around, desperately trying to see what was going on. The sounds of their breaths got louder and louder until they finally came to a halt all at once. The light faded slowly and I turned my head around, trying to find Ty and hoping to just hear his voice so I knew he was okay...I found him with his head propped up against the tree, motionless, with mysterious scratches across his torso. I turned away and sobbed for the rest of the night, huddled next to him until you found me lying there, soaked in my own tears.

Once I finish my explanation the voices ask, "So the carvings that you -or the aliens- put into this boy's chest, they read 'don't tell.' What exactly does that mean?"

I look up and stare at the cushioned wall blankly as I say "It means...whoever I tell about my experiences, will face the same fate as my poor innocent Tyson."

The room goes completely silent as I continue to stare at the wall and my lip begins to quiver. After a minute of pure silence I hear those familiar breaths once again, and a bright light shines into my eyes so I see nothing but my filthy legs in front of me. The voices emerge and the sounds of their shrieks of terror thunders through my head. My eyes water and my chapped lips open slightly as the light fades away, and I'm brought back to silence in my padded prison.

"I warned you..."

# *City Sounds*

By *Carlyne McGurk*

Liquid gold leaves a trail  
from the wooden window panes  
to the ivory bedside.  
as the afternoon gives away,  
Tinting the cream room  
a shade of honey happiness,  
the lilac pink sky  
fades into a tangerine  
as the yellow sinking sun  
dips his head beneath the sunken earth.  
Leaving way for his silver sister to  
peak her head over  
the sleeping French Quarter,  
music dances through  
the indigo sky,  
Slipping in through the walls.  
sounds of the city  
slowly fall into a sleep.





# *You Still Deserve the World*

*By Carlyne McGurk*

I'm sorry  
you fell in love with  
an idea of me.  
Maybe that's what hurt you,  
what made you so sad  
and I'm sorry for that.  
I'm sorry,  
I tried to love you  
the best I could.  
But just because it didn't work,  
means I regret it.  
Because I could  
never regret you.  
But even if you  
regret me,  
I think you still deserve the world.  
And I'm sorry I couldn't be  
the world for you.

# When I Told You I Was Busy, I Meant It

By M

The clock ticks vigorously as my heart pounds out of my chest.  
It could never be the same.  
All of my feelings for you went down a  
long  
spirally  
drain  
where the end was a black hole.  
I did not need you anymore,  
And when you asked for my company  
I was always busy.

I was not lying,  
For I knew I was busy figuring out me.  
I was figuring out who I was and  
Who I wanted to be.

Talking to you about this was  
Impossible.  
Telling you how I felt would take  
forever.  
I decided to take life slowly.

When you asked to hang out today,  
I was busy.  
I was busy working on telling you.  
Telling you that I cannot go through with seeing you everyday.  
Telling you that I cannot go through with seeing you at all.

It never occurred to me that we may not see eye to eye.  
I was ready to tell you but I was stopped.  
Stopped by the thought of how you felt,  
And by the thought of letting you go.  
The problem was one thing:  
I had to.

When I told you I was busy,  
It was because I could not drag myself to see you.  
Ever again.



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