

# SPRINGFIELD SONDER

VOLUME 2, EDITION 1

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L I T E R A R Y   M A G A Z I N E



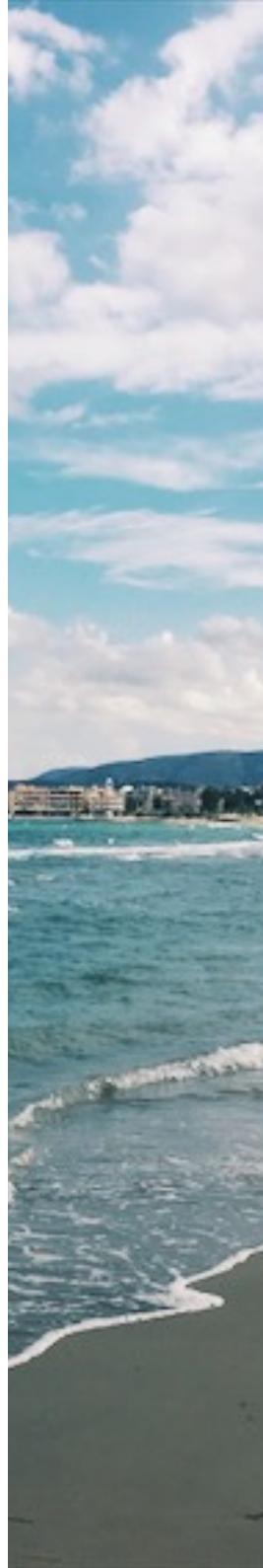
# Meet the Editors

## 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 wrote 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 favorite 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

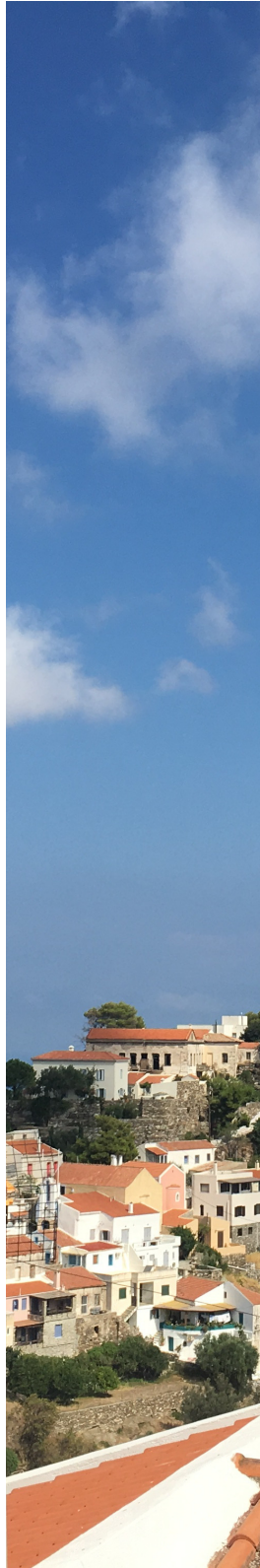
### Andrew Lim

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 an 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!



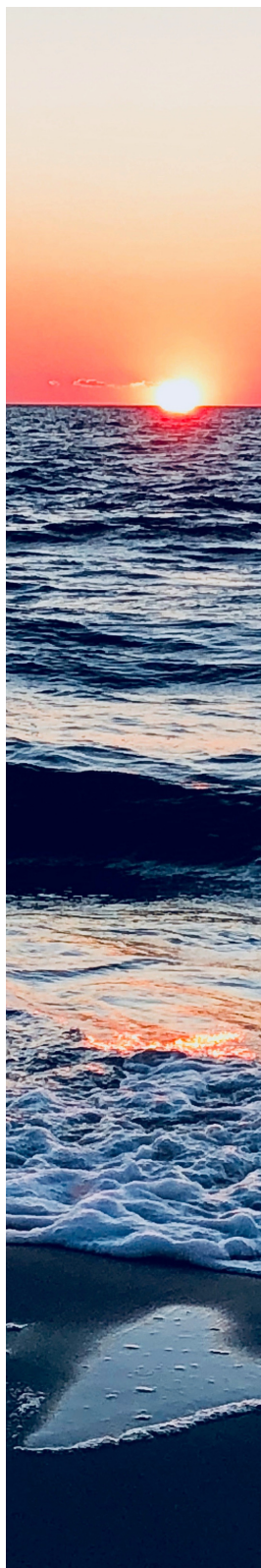
# Meet the Writers

## 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!



# Autumn Wind

By Andrew Lim

I took a deep breath in, tasting the Autumn air as it became colder the further I went up the mountain. It had been years since I took the trek. The last time I came here was during my final year of high school. I was alone then, and here I was alone again. It wasn't always like this; I used to walk up with friends. It was always the same group of friends; we would always laugh and smile together, and we never thought that all of us would end up fading away.

I looked up at the trees as I was walking. Their colors were changing, giving it the beautiful shades of red, yellow, and orange, leaving me mesmerized. There was an old log where I decided to sit and take a break to take in the atmosphere. The breeze felt nostalgic like it had been when I first led the group up this mountain.

We were all only about 10 and it was going to be my friends first time up the mountain. I was overjoyed at showing my new friends the place where we could all meet and play. I could hear their voices coming out from the memory like a movie.

"Come on, you guys are so slow!" I was running up the hill with the four others trying to keep up behind me.

"We all aren't as fast as you, Jacob!" Ellie called from behind me.

"Guys wait up," Liam panted from the far back as he tried to keep up with all of us. It was late fall and the leaves had already fell from the trees. The crunching of the leaves echoed out beneath our feet.

"Come on Liam, can't you run faster then that?" Rylie teased Liam, even though she wasn't far in front of him.

"You know I am the slowest in the class."


Warren was keeping a steady pace between all of us. When he heard Rylie he slowed down a little and turned to her, "Rylie stop making fun of Liam, you need to catch up too."

"You all need to catch up!" I interrupted them, still in the front full of energy, "The place I want to show you guys is just a little bit away!" I remember my smile was wide, overjoyed I found these new friends to play with on the mountain.

My eyes opened from the memory and I stood up ready to continue up the mountain. I stretched and looked up the mountain. It looked the same as it did 4 years ago. I restarted my trek up, and as I got closer to the top of the mountain I could feel a weight come over me. I wanted to be here with all of them again, Ellie, Liam, Riley, and Warren. Four years ago, during the last few days of school, we all knew the group would be seperated for a long time. I asked everyone if they wanted to walk up to the mountain before the school year ended one last time together. First I asked Warren, "Sorry I can't. I'm planning to study overseas. I will be going in a few days."

I still kept my hopes up and asked Riley next, "I'm really sorry. I just found out my family and I have to move out of town."





“I cannot. I am planning to go to a top school pretty far from here and my parents told me I couldn’t go unless I got an A on the admissions test. I need to study,” said Liam.

At this point, I wasn’t in the best mood when I asked Ellie, “We could go together. I think I am free if we go next week.”

“No it’s fine,” I said to her, “I know you are always busy with your family since you have to take care of all your siblings. Plus, I think I could use a year when it was just me up the mountain, you know, some alone time.”

I didn’t give her a chance to answer, and I was already walking away from the school. That year I knew the group was not going to see each other for a long time. I wanted to do one last thing with all of us together before we all had to separate. It was my first year alone on the mountain top in a long time; I couldn’t help but cry knowing I made it like this.

The same feeling started to arise as I got closer to the top. I could feel myself holding back the water from my eyes. I had already promised myself I would visit this place one last time with a smile instead of tears. The trees started to open up and from this distance I was almost able to see the top. I forced a smile to stay on my face. I soon got up to the summit where I saw four other discernible heads. They turned to look at me all with beaming grins, and I was so surprised I took a step back and let all the tears flow. The sun shown behind them creating an outer glow around each of their bodies making them look almost like a trick of the light. “We knew you would come here,” Ellie said. They walked over to me as I tried to wipe the tears of happiness away. It didn’t matter though because my eyes stayed watered, blurring my vision.

As I stood they all opened their arms and put me in the middle of a heart warming group hug that almost had me balling out tears again, “But how- how did you guys know I would be here?”

“We’re sorry we couldn’t come here during our last year,” began Warren, “We all know you wanted to come as a whole group last time and,” they all stepped back standing in front of me and spoke in unison. “Happy birthday Jacob!”

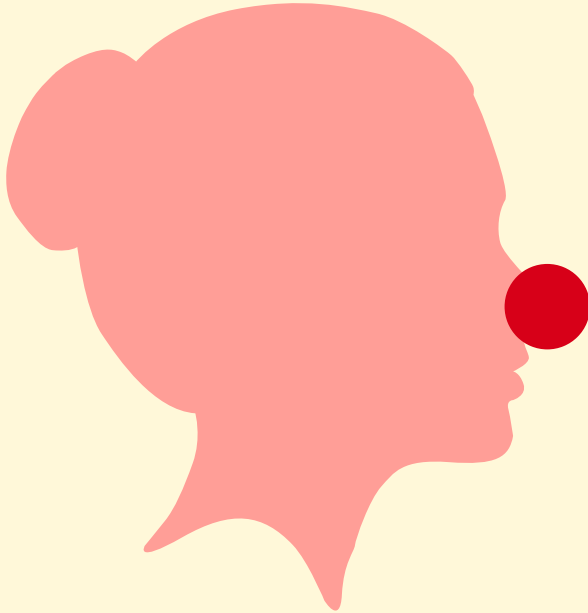
A large smile unconsciously spread across my face. I couldn’t say anything through my surprise, astonished that they would even remember. I went up to them and cut myself a spot between Ellie and Liam. We all turned around to look at the sunset together holding each others hands. I glanced at Ellie getting her attention, “Sorry for ignoring you when you said you could come during high school.”

Ellie looked out towards the sunset again and shook her head, “It’s fine, we are all here together now aren’t we?”

I looked out at the sunset again, “Yeah, I guess you are right,” the sunset shined a bright orange that reflected off of our hometown below the mountain. I took a deep breath in tasting the Autumn air with all my friends. I stood smiling knowing I completed my wish, to be with my wonderful friends a top the mountain for a last time.

# RED NOSES AND SIZE 22 SHOES

By Max Hay



Every court must have their clown  
And I can play the fool

To throw oneself on the stage of life  
Is a bravery most cannot find

But us jokes in ill fitting shoes  
Topple and trip onto it

We throw our pie  
We slip on our peels

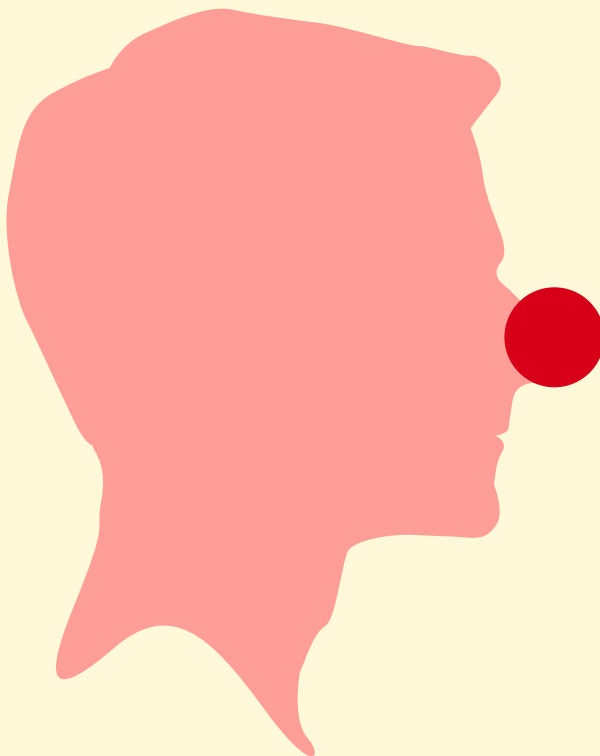
And drive off cramped and confined  
All to cheers and jeers

We may laugh and we may joke  
But we all know it's just a mask

A mask made of makeup,  
A mask made of parody

To hide the pain,  
To hide the truth

To entertain the maskless  
To dull the ghastly horror.





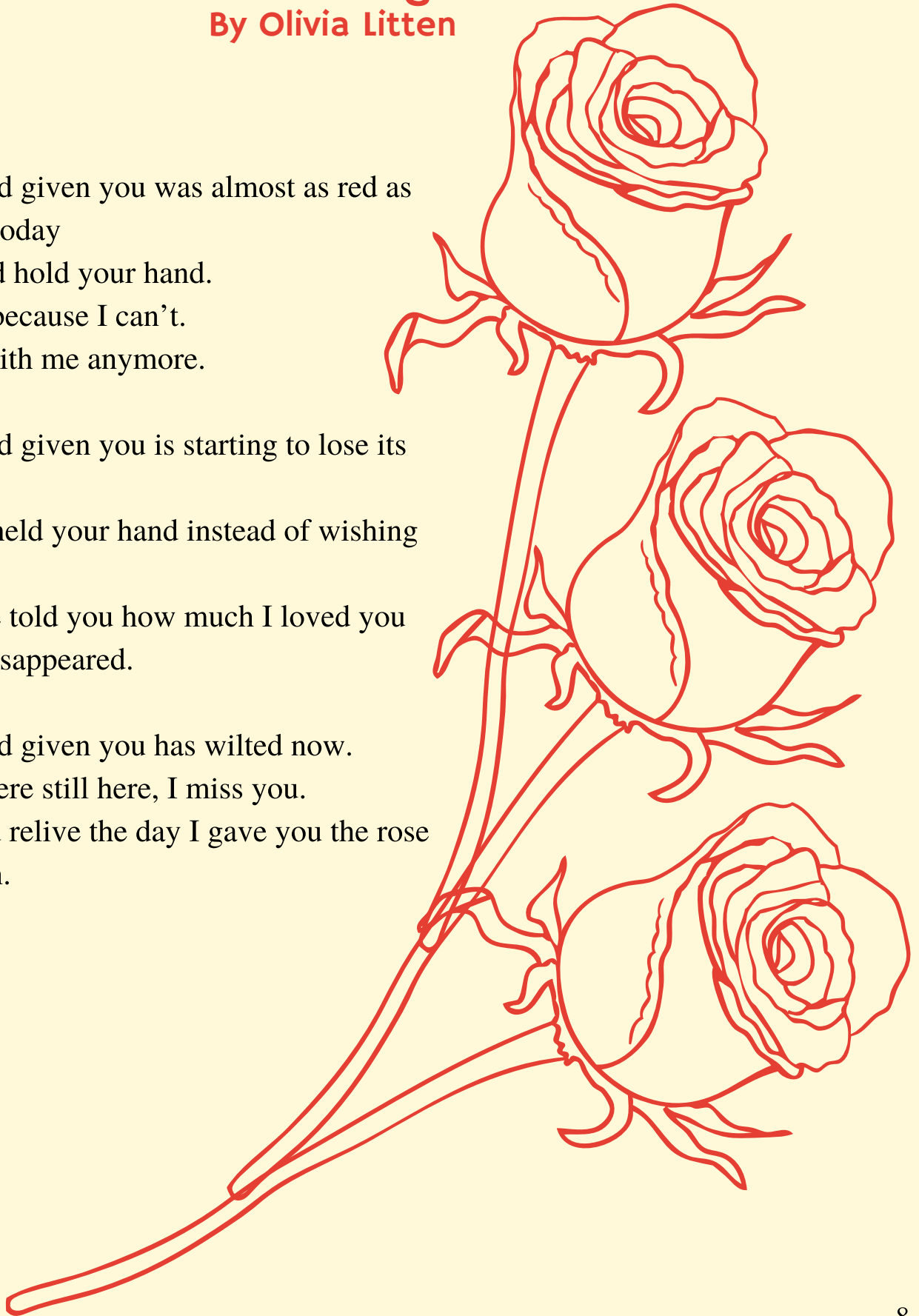
# She's a Rose and She's Wilting, Darling

By Olivia Litten

The rose I had given you was almost as red as  
your cheeks today  
I wish I could hold your hand.  
But it hurts, because I can't.  
You're not with me anymore.

The rose I had given you is starting to lose its  
color.  
I wish I had held your hand instead of wishing  
to.  
I should have told you how much I loved you  
before you disappeared.

The rose I had given you has wilted now.  
I wish you were still here, I miss you.  
If I could, I'd relive the day I gave you the rose  
all over again.



# BLUE JEANS

A MEMOIR BY GRACE DOUGHERTY

I'm five and shorter than all my classmates in the graduating pre-school class of 2006. I'm wearing a dress (white with pink polka-dots and pink ribbons) and I hate it. I hate how my knees are brushing the edges of the stiff fabric; I hate that the ribbons are tangled into knots and that they hang off of me like chains; I hate that the shoes on my feet are shiny Mary Jane's that make my steps heavy. Most of all, I detest how my mother told me I looked pretty after she finally wrestled me into the loathsome garment.

I stand idly with the other girls, all as dolled up as I am. They seem to love it, their rosy cheeks split by blinding grins, and I don't understand why. Don't they know being girly is bad? Don't they know they shouldn't be so confident? Didn't anyone tell them how they should act?

They told me. They told me all the time:

"You can't play this game, you're a girl!"

"Isn't that dress a little much?"

"She's so vain and loud. Don't grow up like that."


I would much rather wear pants like the boys, who are wrestling and swatting at each other across the room.

Of course, at five years old, I lacked the vocabulary to express how I felt about my dress. I was grasping for words to describe the deeply rooted feeling of discomfort I felt. Confidence in myself and my attire was a far-off dream, and the insecurity that festered in its place was pounding through my veins.

Despite my wardrobe crisis, I successfully graduated from preschool. At such time, my parents decided I could choose my own clothes. My first instinct upon receiving this new power over myself was to never wear a dress again. From then on, I woke up each morning and chose a pair of jeans (blue, with so many grass stains they were mostly green and rips over the knee from seam to seam) to wear to school or wherever I happened to be going.

At this time in my life, a good pair of jeans were the jeans that horrified my mother the most. The more ripped and worn by failed leaps from the swingset, the better. In these jeans, which became a layer of myself that protected against the world, I could do anything. I played with whoever I wanted to. No one wasted their time cooing and telling me I looked "cute." I bossed my little brother around and marshaled the boys of Thatcher Road into neat order for games of tag without a second thought. I spit the unsophisticated adjective "girly" at other young women like it was the mother of all insults, like it would split their bones like it had mine, like it was deadly force. They didn't seem to notice.





When I hit middle school (like a VW Beetle smashing into a cliffside) my peers had discovered the ease of wearing leggings and sweatpants on the daily. I, however, remained true to my denim commitment. While friends sought comfort, I discovered, much to my mother's boundless delight, that cleanliness was a bigger priority than the total rejection of femininity that I was previously so committed to. My new jeans were boot cut, with the widest flares I could find.

On days that I did attempt to don the style of my peers, I found myself feeling much like I had in dresses as a younger child.

"Ooh, cute new leggings!"

"I could never wear jeans all the time, they're so uncomfy."

"Aren't those so much better?"

Even though dressing to appease the new fad helped me to fit in, the loose fabric made me feel like I was standing on unsteady ground. The chatter about the trajectory of my life that everyone but me was partaking in was bad enough alone. When I wore the costume of my peers, I was growing up, and I was changing. I was becoming a woman, but I couldn't be girly; because if I was, everything I worked for would slip away and become a blink on the distant horizon. My childhood would become a far-off memory as time swept me from its shores and into the vastly confusing sea of maturity. The boys in my class didn't seem to worry about this. Shrouded by the all-forgiving colloquialism, "boys will be boys," they enjoyed freedom for longer than I.

As such, I fell back on the familiar textures of old. At the press of thick seams and the stiffness of denim, the confidence with which I once ran amok returned and with it, my resentment toward my ticket in the gender lottery resurged.

Resentment, as it turns out, is an excellent motivator, and in the subsequent years, I endeavored to learn about myself and about why I felt the way I did. I was able, eventually, to subvert the expectations set upon me in a society where those expectations were glaring at me from every aspect of life. Still, though, when I feel the full weight of the presumptions of the world on my small frame, I reach for a pair of blue jeans.



# My First Word was "Da"


By Alexa Mihaita

“You don’t realize how language actually interferes with communication until you don’t have it, how it gets in the way like an overdominant sense.” - Lily King, *Euphoria*

When asked to pinpoint the moment life begins, the instance when each element making up a human being aligns to change from prospect to reality, most reflect upon the moment they were born. They imagine lights of the hospital as blinding as they took in the vast world surrounding them. Indeed, two mornings after Christmas day, my mother first laid eyes upon my pink lips, my dainty nose, the unique combination of traits that shaped my family’s perception of me for the first few hours of my life. However, if one were to ask me when my life began, I would tell them of a time years before my existence was even considered. I would picture two lovebirds in the heart of Romania, sitting on a swaying boat as they began to visualize their future. I would see the pair boarding a plane bound for the United States, their eyes brimming with excitement for the opportunities laying ahead. I would see my parents finally settled into the country, envisioning the experience of raising a child. My name is Alexa Mihaita, and I am the first of my Romanian family to be born an ocean away, on the east coast of America.

While I can effortlessly recall my family’s first house in the suburbs of Pennsylvania, the early memories of my growth have been supplied by my parents, whose unique experiences defined my own. Setting foot into America knowing English and with a career path laying ahead, my father jumped straight into his office in a towering building in Philadelphia. For my mother, setting foot on American soil meant a reinvention of her education, and she who once spent hours in Romanian science labs now attended college to excel in the fine art of dental hygiene. With the toil of work and school occupying my mother’s and father’s time, I found myself with four extra caregivers—my grandparents on both sides—throughout the earliest phase of my life, the time in which I would learn to smile, to wave, to talk. As my grandparents spoke solely Romanian in my presence, acquiring the language was inevitable for me; I soon became the toddler who shouted “fiindca nu” instead of “because no,” and by the time I turned three, I could not speak one word of English.

Considering the Romanian atmosphere in my house at the time, not knowing English seemed insignificant in comparison to the importance of my health, my development, my ability to wake up each morning with a smile marking my features. However, once I entered preschool, the doors of my first education beckoning me, I began to feel that smile dwindle. The day before preschool began, I trembled with anticipation, recalling the new friendships that my parents told me I would soon experience. The next night, I dreamt of the clamor and trembled with fear.



I recall clearly how my mother and I ambled to the entrance on my first day, the building towering menacingly above. The chattering of children, a piercing shrill in comparison to the tranquil quiet of the outdoors, rang in my ears as we entered the classroom, sending a swift chill down my spine. The advisor of the pre-school soon approached, and her words only added to the cacophony infiltrating the room. “Good morning,” she greeted with a grin far too large for her face, “you must be Alexa. Welcome to Montessori! How do you pronounce your last name, dear?”

A combination of incomprehensible noises rushed into my ears, bringing tears into my eyes. At four years old, the concept that any language other than Romanian existed had never occurred to me; the English-speaking world was a vast island of unfamiliarity, upon which I felt stranded, helpless. After all, language is the key to communication, and no bright mind can convey the necessary ideas without a means of expression.

To this day, I remember how my inability to speak English once frustrated a teacher to the point where she locked me in a bathroom stall. At the sound of the lock clicking, my lips quivered, and with each passing minute, the walls of the stall seemed to cave in further. However, my trembling soon transformed into an act of wit. Within the next minute, I found myself crawling through the space between the door and the bathroom floor, emerging on the other side with a smug grin plastered on my face.

Although the “bathroom situation” proved that intelligence does not depend on language, learning English was a necessity for my education. Within the following months, my parents only spoke to me in the unfamiliar language. As months passed, my confusion dissipated; the syllables that once grated my ears began to acquire substance and meaning. The mind-boggling string of letters lining the walls of the classroom became the alphabet, and I knew the appropriate response to a “hello.” As my kindergarten teacher would later claim, my rapid learning of a new language unlocked a door in my mind, allowing me to become the first student in her class to open a book.

Despite the positive outcome, my success came at a cost. Thirteen years ago, I understood each word my grandparents spoke with clarity. After my first day in preschool, I cried to my parents, asking “de ce nu pot înțelege niciuna dintre ele?” (“Why can’t I understand any of them?”).

Today, I am sixteen years old, and I cannot hold a conversation with any of my grandparents, who so heavily influenced my development. Today, my head spins as I try to decipher the conversations of my parents at the dinner table. Another language was gained at the expense of my first, which would remain forgotten for the rest of my life.

My name is Alexa Mihaita, and I am the first of my family who can no longer speak Romanian, the defining language of my heritage.



# Fog

*By Ablam Houssein*

The morning fog settles in my chest;  
I feel an amorphous weight on me.  
I sense a heaviness in my breath and  
I see a light with an evasive mien.  
It seems that I approach it but it  
Strays away fleetly; like a blinking  
Muddle of comfort and pain,  
A reminder of my heart sinking.  
I walk beside my clinging shadow  
As I pursue sunrays radiating  
In every direction but my own  
But upon dawn I feel their sting.  
Droplets of dew settle on the grass,  
Their masses wincing in sympathy.  
Their eyes are miry and their strength  
Succumbing to debility.  
The woolly air smothers my lungs--  
I live the narrative as it drafts my epilogue.  
It glances at me so sorrowfully;  
Alas, it is the mourning fog.





# *Disconnected*

*By Ashley Ellis*

Trapped within solitary,  
You pace back and forth.

You are confined by four walls,  
Desperate for answers.

Surveillance cameras tremble,  
Watching every move.

Casting your shadow below,  
Light beams through the bars.

Reaching for inhabitants,  
But palms are ghost towns.

Stripped to numerical code,  
The chamber glitches.

Even though ones make amends,  
Zeros never end.

# Walk for a Rose

By Kayla Hayes

She stumbles down the city street in her white heels and violet dress that raises slightly above her ankles. Her hair lays long and straight, covering her full face caked in contour. Her head hangs low enough to not meet the eyes of any other pedestrians that cross her path. Her heels click against the sidewalk at a quickened pace, and her arms are tightly crossed over her stomach. She walks down these few blocks blinded by the hair in her face, as if she's made this journey a thousand times. Finally, she enters a store. In this store sits an old man surrounded by many different types of flowers.

"Welcome back Jane. The same order as always I'm assuming? What exactly are these roses for?" inquired the man.

"My bedside table." Jane replied. "I keep them because of a saying my mom had said to me before she passed. I have to replace it each time it dies."

"Ah yes, young Isabel. She was a wonderful woman." said the man with a look of remembrance. "Haven't found a single chocolate cake that can beat hers in these past 10 years."

"Yes, well I must be heading back soon so..."

"Oh, of course, dear. We've just got a new stock of roses that I'm sure you'll love." The man scurries to the back of his shop and returns with a single rose in his hand.

"Thank you Mr. Henry," she replies. She attempts to hand him three dollars.

"Oh, no don't worry about it, sweetheart. It's on me this time. I hope this one lasts a while," he says with an almost unctuous grin.

"I hope so too. Enjoy the rest of your evening."

She exits the store and again lowers her head and crosses her arms with the rose tightly held in one hand. Usually the roses would slightly prick her fingers as she held them but this one's thorns seemed to have been removed. She's walking so frantically that she doesn't even notice the man in front of her that she rams into.







“I’m so sorry! I guess I wasn’t paying much attention to my surroundings,” she says with her eyes still on the ground.

“Well it’s okay. It’s not everyday a pretty girl bumps into me on the sidewalk. What’s your name?” he says with a confident smirk.

She looks up and in meeting his eyes she looks angered “Well if I knew you’d be so condescending towards me I would’ve just kept walking.”

The man looks confused “Condescending? I jus-”

“I know exactly what you were doing and I don’t appreciate it. I know I may not be the most beautiful girl in the world but I’m very well aware of my appearance. I don’t need your patronizing comments.”

Jane runs past the man and goes to her apartment building. She rushes to the top floor of the building and heads into a very spacious and well decorated home. She first goes into her bathroom and stands there staring at the wall. She looks down, reaches, and grabs at the rolls of her stomach, and pinches the fat on her arms. She reaches up and touches her cheeks and pulls the underneath of her chin. Finally, Jane turns around and looks in the mirror in silence. Looking back at her she sees a face of a woman with tears trailing mascara down her cheeks.

She places her hands on the edge of one of the two sinks in the room and continues to stare. Jane jerks back, as if she’s been released from a trance, scrunches up her face, and leaves the bathroom, slamming the door behind her. She rushes into the kitchen and grabs a chocolate bar out of a package in her refrigerator. She goes into her bedroom and removes her heels, pushing them off to the side, then glides over to her bedside table and places the rose she has just purchased in the vase sitting next to her bed. Next to this vase sits the only picture frame containing an image of young Jane. This image presented a thin 12 year old girl, in the arms of her loving mother. Jane takes a bite of her chocolate bar and settles down into her soft queen bed and finds comfort in her velvety blanket.



# Soulmate?

By Laura Hopf

What if  
there's no one out there  
for me?

What if  
I move Heaven and Earth  
looking for him-  
or her-  
or they-  
and they aren't there?

What if  
no one out there  
wants me?

What if  
I miss my chance,  
and they're gone forever?

What if  
they already passed me by,  
and I dismissed them?

What if  
they live on the other side  
of the Earth,  
and they miss the plane  
that leads to me?

What if  
we were born for each other,  
and they flatlined  
last year?

What if  
I'm too nervous  
to ever make my move?

What if  
I'm too scared-  
and dull-  
and feeble-  
to ever catch them?  
What if  
I'm not good enough?

If they're out there--  
if *you're* out there--

If you know me  
if you know it's me  
if you want me  
if you want to meet me  
if you're out there,  
Somewhere,

know I'm waiting  
solely for you;  
I know you're coming  
in shining armor,  
My Prince,  
My Queen,  
My Royal Love.

I miss you,  
I need you.  
Know I'll stay here  
for You  
perpetually,  
endlessly,  
Always.



# Maybe

By *Carlyne McGurk*

Messy, independent and flawed,  
but it was love.

Didn't follow the average script,  
but it was there.

Complexly simple.

Maybe the first time  
isn't supposed to last.

Or maybe we were too  
young to know how to make it last.

Perhaps there's no one way to make it.

And maybe it's all  
up to the stars and planets,  
but we'll never know.



# She Looks to Me

By Adrienne Keener

She looks to me  
For help with things she thinks she can't do  
But really she can  
She looks to me  
And sees so many coming for help  
But I don't see  
Why they do not also come to her  
She looks to me  
And thinks that she is not capable of what I can do  
But I have seen her do better things, greater things  
I've seen her understand what I cannot  
I've seen her help those that I cannot  
But still she looks to me  
And sees someone far superior  
She does not see she how she is the superior  
How I must look to her, instead of her to me  
I tell her what she does not yet believe  
And still she looks to me  
She doesn't expect to beat me  
Even at things that I know her to be better at  
I look to her  
For help she does not think she can give  
Maybe one day she'll see what I see  
But until she does  
She looks to me



# Sister's Room

By M

I tapped my foot anxiously as  
The door gradually creaked open;  
I dared to enter the foreign territory.  
Slowly but steadily I walked,  
Grabbing my gas mask on the way in.  
Essential.

Creatures scurried across the floor,  
Slowly inching up my legs.  
I grabbed the laundry basket  
And caged the numerous ghouls  
One by one.

By the end,  
The floor was practically spotless;  
My work here is done.



# Scars

By Amelia Houser

If you ask people to tell you a story about one of their scars, the answers will vary from person to person. One may show you a scar they got while playing a sport, while another tells you a story about an experience that has stayed with them throughout their lifetime. The scar that I tell people about is my scar from POTS and dysautonomia.

No, not “pots” as in pots and pans you use to make dinner. That’s the initial thought most have when I first tell them. POTS stands for “Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome.” When you say it out loud, it makes you sound like a very sophisticated college professor. This “syndrome” is specifically defined by symptoms related to the reduced blood volume that occurs when standing up. Basically, when I stand up I feel like a person just getting off the Gravitron: dizzy and nauseous as can be. I also have dysautonomia, which is a disorder of the autonomic nervous system. It pretty much means that there’s problems in how my blood flows from my head to my toes. These “disorders” affect everyone differently, and there is no definite cure for it. There are remedies that can help, but I’ll get into that more later. Sounds completely awful, right? I mean, it could be better, but a girl can’t complain too much.

How did this possibly happen to an, at the time, fifteen years old? I’m glad you asked because I was going to tell you anyway. I remember it more vividly than what I had for dinner last week. Rewind back to February of 2016, a week and a half after my fifteenth birthday. It was oddly warm for mid-winter weather; you could go outside in a t-shirt and leggings, and I did exactly that. The sun rose early, warming up the ground below to make it feel as if spring came a little too early. It was a Saturday after a long week of school came to an end. It seemed as if everyone decided to leave their house that day to take advantage of the warmth while it lasted. I had plans that day to hangout with all of my close friends. We were gonna do what normal teenagers did, simply hangout around town. What we did from that late afternoon to what we’re here for isn’t that important, so we’re gonna skip over it. My phone died, so my friends and I went to the school’s dugout to charge it. A group of people were there doing who knows what, and they were friends with some of my friends, so we eventually started talking. I was standing, minding my own business when I was suddenly falling backwards. I smacked my head on the concrete wall behind me. Don’t worry, it doesn’t stop there. Hitting my head on that





wall caused me to fall and smack my head against more concrete. Now, it's still up in the air whether or not I passed out after this since I wouldn't remember that happening. My friends quickly lifted me up trying to get me to stay as awake as possible. They pulled a water bottle out of thin air, and became a concussion doctors in seconds. I repeated several times that I was perfectly fine. You and I both know now that this was the furthest from the truth.

I say that these disorders have given me a scar because of how it has yet to be completely healed and how it has definitely left a mark on my body and my life. My life was flipped upside down, left, right, and every other direction imaginable. Adjusting to these symptoms was not easy. It started out as a simple concussion and led to this. I was told I could no longer play contact sports, which really rained on my parade since I was an avid softball player. I also had to change my diet drastically. My water intake had to double as well as how much salt I ate in a day. If I didn't make these changes, things would go down hill very fast. Making a whole new daily routine has kicked me down more times than I can remember. I missed more than a quarter of the school year and stopped being as active as I was. Missing school was what put me under. I had weekly meetings with my counselor and seemed to always be doing school work in my free time. It was like my life wasn't mine anymore.

Apart from all the sadness of the situation, POTS and dysautonomia has not ruined my life. It has not changed how I look on life. It has not made me depressed or miserable. It has not become who I am. I am still a sixteen year old girl who loves to write and loves to help others. I still love to get out of bed to go to school and learn new things. POTS will never make that change.



# *Fox of Wisdom*

*By Abigail Hess*

On the verge of tears, I lift my eyes up to the peak of the Appalachian Mountains and ask, “Where are you?”

I lay my misty eyes on the horizon and close them shut so that the tears roll down the tumbling mountains. I pray for a fox in hopes that its rationale will show me the way. How is it possible that such a serene place can instill such troublesome feelings in my soul?

I hold on so tightly to my anxieties that one would think they would crumble in between my fingers; however, they choose to remain solid and I am forced to carry these burdens alone...or so I think. My heart begins to pound to the beat of a tune that lets my fear run rampant through the streets of my mind. At a fork in a road, I chose left and find that I could not have been more wrong. My stomach swirls with the motion of the falling leaves, and I quake at the rustling sound. The false evidence of sickness begins to sharpen and becomes more and more real. The red eyes of bats glow in the darkness and I freeze under their gaze. My mind writhes at fear’s grip and I cry out, “From where does my help come?”

The appearance of a fox guides me through the darkness of the forest. The fox’s knowledge and judgement amazes me, and I begin to understand the source of my help; I am able to face everything and rise.

Once inside my cabin, I find myself sitting close to the hearth of my fireplace searching for peace. I pull out my leather notebook from my Fjallraven backpack, and begin to sketch a maple tree, scrawling the word “hope” at the foot of its roots. I hold my favorite coffee cup to my lips and allow the warmth of its contents to run through me. Out the window, I see a bright red leaf lulled to sleep by the wind and cascading lightly to the calmness of the earth. I sway with the steam of the coffee as the song of field sparrows floats gently into my mind. The realization that my ahelp comes from the Lord who made Heaven and Earth rushes into my heart on the wings of a graceful falcon.



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