

VISTA DEL LAGO

*High School*

# THE QUILL AND INK

2018-2019

Literary Journal  
Volume 1

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# **The Quill and Ink**

Vista del Lago High School

Literary Journal

2018-2019

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are all different people, with different experiences, likes and dislikes, abilities, and talents. The Quill and Ink is a place to showcase and honor these differences through the creativity of the students here at Vista del Lago High School. Coming together to create is part of what pulls us together in spite of our differences. These are some of the many people The Quill and Ink Club would like to thank:

*The members of The Quill and Ink Creative Writing Club for working, sharing, and creating together.*

*Lori Emmington, Kim Moore, Jonathan Johnson and the VDL faculty and staff for their support and encouragement.*

*And the students who had the courage to share their work - without you, there would be no purpose for this project.*

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# Imagination

by Shaina Rahman

A tranquil and smooth breeze settles over a meadow of lush grasses, causing a ripple in the standstill verdure. A startled butterfly leaps up and flutters its wings in a noiseless scheme as it soars in the direction of a lone dandelion. Jolting at the sudden descent, the innocent weed sheds its velutinous exterior. Seedlings detach themselves and float with the breeze. Creating an incandescent painting, the fiery hues in the sky are set ablaze. The perfect world. *Wake up.*

My thoughts are a river. They *flow*. Deep in the crevices of my mind, they sensuously slink through the wrinkles of my brain, saturating me with alleviation and peace. I feel the *serenity* as my real world blurs with my fantasy. This is *home*.

I believe in imagination.

To me, reality is that of a pendulum. It holds a rhythm and we are joint, but it is quick to turn its back on me. It swings away, and then propels back at full speed. With a slam, actuality *forces* me towards a crumbling dystopia where I fight to go on -- to *survive*. But I can not.

Swing.

Smash.

Splat.

I have nowhere to go; nowhere, but my mind. So I slip into it. "The world of reality has its limits; the world of imagination is boundless" said the wise philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. When I am transcended to the mystical make-believe universe, I can fly with the majestic birds above the fleeting fields of the most exquisite grasses.

I can wade in the deepest parts of the oceans with the most colorful fish, and graze my toes against the diverse coral gardens. I can climb Mount Everest without breaking a *single drop* of sweat. I can do anything.

*Motivation.*

You see, the fantasy world is my rock. No matter what reality throws at me, my thoughts are there to catch me -- to *cushion my fall*. The unstable real world is ready to tip over at any moment, but dreams are a never-ending land that I can transport to and rely on always. It is a constant protection.

*Security.*

Reality does not seem so threatening anymore.

Everyday, I make this journey. Although, actuality and imagination are such conflicting aspects in my life, the lines are *blurring*. My physical and mental state are one. What I accomplish in my mind, is my real goal. I *want* to do the impossible, and I *can*.

I have hope.

*All because of my imagination.*



**Of Unsound Mind by Raievyn Balallo**



# Dragon Sense

by Sophia Russell

as I pour my heart out  
into your eyes  
i begin to breathe  
to clear lakes perturbed  
my lungs a little lighter  
can you feel it  
close your eyes.  
now you breathe another earth  
my steps  
it's full of pretty different colors  
your steps  
will you carry the extra sense  
The clouds are unbound after a rain  
Just drift along your stream  
Stretching out my wings to sail.  
how forgiving, are the stars  
you can feel so much  
they seem to know the end of my goings

but is it too strong  
hopefully they may let me know  
you'll figure out in time  
only if i'm ready  
at last i can possess the pace.  
glory wells in many forms  
are our paths a land without a map  
a beam flies straight through the fog  
or only a map without land  
the blood seeping from a truth  
a land with no steps  
the tears leaking from a secret  
a sky with whispers of no sound.  
at times lines are smudged and blurry  
sometimes words are blind and early  
many a time it serves the best  
falling to silence for a month  
so crumble in these temple walls  
i can blink my eyes again  
mourn and move my lips again  
to harness the echo and sing.



**Garden** *by Jauren Pyle*

# Petalfall

by Sophia Russell

to hold to something designated  
i grin to think it has a name  
however hollow or letter-less  
a choke, a sigh, a wind in my ear.  
what is this that closes the throat--  
which never dies nor grows stronger  
once spoken, words turn to dust  
pounding stillness stabs the eyes.  
the depth of capacity shrinks from hand  
and enters through the ears  
ensnaring tongues so words grow light  
and join the remnants of stars to stay.  
are my toes trembling to tread  
down to where i wont drift out  
my fingers grasp for strings to tie  
threads woven to preserve only certainty.

# The Perfect Dolls

by Daeja Filice

“Best friends forever?” I said.

“Best friends forever” she replied.

This was a promise I believed would never break. She was my friend, my companion, my sister. She meant everything to me. The days when we would walk home together. The days when we would dress up and pretend to be someone else. The days we would run home, excited to play with the dolls. The dolls. The ones that brought us together the most. Mine curly-haired, with brown colored skin, and hers straight, silky blonde hair and peachy skin. Our smiles forever placed upon our perfect faces. Our clothes flawlessly placed upon our perfect skinny bodies. The dolls that kept us together.

We built our houses out of scratch with scraps from my messy bedroom, and pretended to love one another. We played with the boys, our plastic lips scratching against their plastic mouths. We pretended to hold hands with our stiff fingers. We pretended to speak with our permanent closed mouths. We pretended all our lives, with nothing but the dolls to keep us in. I knew it wouldn't be long before the dolls would stop pretending for us. A time when everything would crash down all at

once, and I would forever be forced to face reality. Maybe she changed, maybe I'm wrong and she does love me for me.

"I lost them" I said.

"You what?" she said angrily.

"I lost them" I sat defeated and afraid willing her to stay, to love me for me and not the dolls, but she left me just like I knew she would.

The dolls forever lost in darkness, hiding secretly to test our limits, She failed the test. She didn't love me for me, she loved the dolls. With their perfect smiles, flawless clothing, and body with curves in all the right places.

"Best friends forever?" I said, but no one answered.

# Black Pearl

by Siena Hansen

you see it coming —

Posing as a prize and

Drawing you into its mystery and

Then it is                      A tempest that will consume you,

Thrashing      crashing      tearing you apart.

A ship at sea,

you are lost in it.

The pressure fills you till you are carried

Away

On billowing waves of pain and confusion.

And as you spin      swirl      spiral      deeper and  
deeper

you are eaten away

But then the tide ebbs, the monstrous waves ease way

And it fades, showing no sign of its past presence

Than the wreck on the shore.

# Poem Ideas

by Anonymous

Maybe if I held you it would make you feel better  
Maybe you'd stop shivering if I gave you my sweater  
Would it help if we listened to your favorite song?  
When I'm off key would you still sing along?

Maybe if we talked for a while you'd be happier  
Maybe if I opened up you'd let down your barrier  
When you tell me things does it lessen the pain?  
If I laugh would you smile again?

Maybe if I held you it would keep you here  
Maybe my sweater could protect you from what you fear  
What would happen if I'm not there?  
Would you remember that I care?

I can only feel what's inside of me  
And could never understand what you see  
But I hope that if keep telling you to stay  
You would still be here for another day





**Untitled** *by Jauren Pyle*



**Rain** by Lauren Pyle

# deciding

by Sophia Russell

how to fill a hole  
without a shovel  
how to run ahead  
with no shoes  
how to fall asleep  
without a clock.  
why i open my eyes  
without waking  
why i shed six tears  
with half a reason  
why i lash out aimlessly  
with my reflection.  
how to fill the empty lungs  
if i don't want to  
how to stand up from sitting  
if i'm asleep  
how to smile  
if i'm already laughing.

# Extinguish

by Bryson Reed

[Verse one]

You Lean up against the wall  
but still you fall back  
With your head above water  
And your feet underwater  
Yet trying to catch breath

[Pre-Chorus]

And i'd be  
On my bed  
Having these visions of you  
In my head  
Trying to save  
You

But every time i get close to you  
Leaning my hand  
Over you

[Chorus]

You would already be fire  
Into the night  
Setting yourself on fire

You'd be taking flight  
And i would be down here  
Watching you do  
Setting Those embers  
Over you  
Barricading yourself  
You lost yourself

[Verse Two]

The night you looked at me  
Against the window frame  
In your eyes  
Through the glass  
Right them is struck me  
Your vulnerability  
Was clear to  
Know  
And to keep  
A-  
way  
Sneaking out the back  
Leaving your window  
Up open  
Escaping your  
Mind  
Setting notes on your your bed

Handwritten Telling me that everything  
Was  
O.  
K

[Pre-Chorus]  
And i'd be  
On my bed  
Having these visions  
Of you  
In my bed  
Trying to save  
You  
And once I knew what was going on with you  
Rushing out the door  
Trying to stop you

[Chorus]  
You would already be fire  
Into the night  
Setting yourself on mire  
You'd be taking flight  
And i would be down here  
watching you do  
Setting those embers  
Over you

[bridge]

And shadows of you lying on the ground

And I'd be rushing towards you

Finding away

Around

Those ember that hold you

Collapsing your

Mind

Drowning the screams

Agony of me

Lie you motionless

As I overcome those

Flames

And I would be right here

Holding you close

Parting you away

From that fire that

Consumes your

Soul

Extinguish those walls

That hold you in

And let me

In

[Outro]

We lean up against the wall  
And close our eyes  
With the pain that  
You dealt through  
And the new life  
That awaits you  
The fire has come to  
die



**Droplets on Window by Jauren Pyle**



# ***That***

by Annika Johansson

Noemie asked me, "so do you like him?"

And I thought back how,

In the first few days I really felt it

My heart would leap and soar at his smile

And I knew

I liked him

It's how I always know, it's that delightful glide my heart  
leaps for

It's happened with all of them

And so I thought

We'd been "together" for a day or two and everybody had  
left for lunch after class

He stayed back later so I wasn't alone

And I was thinking how

I hadn't felt it since we kissed at Robson

Did I actually like him?

He came out of the doors, nothing particularly special  
about the situation

I glanced at him, smiled maybe waved. He did the same

And then

I felt that

That which is something I've never felt before.

It's a stronger feeling than it, definitively and definitely  
My heart grows and I smile and it's a stride not a glide  
It's sure and it's true  
And goddammit  
That's how I know I more than care for you.



**Untitled** by Jauren Pyle



## **Fluorescence in Hallucinations**

by Jessica Wu

# Metamorphosis

by Mai-Thanh Nguyen, Ellie Nguyen, and Bella Nguyen

i wriggle through the foliage  
hiding my colors,  
camouflaging into my surroundings

i consume your petals  
and later,  
i will develop your chrysalis  
imitating your patterns  
rejecting my colors

years and years  
of history fade away  
what was foreign to you  
is now foreign to me  
and for what you ask?  
to be like you.

I will always be a foreigner to you,  
An other.

I will never be American.  
I will never be Asian.  
I am split between two lands,  
Splintered among two realms  
Who will never embrace me  
For me.

I am an alien  
In a shell that you made for me.  
The perfect shape.  
The perfect color.  
The perfect size.  
Are you satisfied?  
Will you ever let me fly?

Dainty, resting on the foliage.  
But, wings flutter, my mind  
Engrossed in the destination.  
I soar.

The stalk I have left  
I have abandoned  
ascended from leaves  
no scar.

The Chrysalis,  
The confinement that cultivated,  
The bounds that bred,  
Decomposed as spring gave birth.

I drank the nectar of my people,  
The dew that bore breath.  
I dyed my wings the hues of my homeland  
With the tints that bud under the glimmer of  
Veiny leaves that thrive on tender branches,  
Taking root in ancestral soil.

With my newfound wings  
Vivid and dewy  
I soar.

Though the wind may hinder my flight  
Though the rain may washout my pigment  
I soar.

The Chrysalis I have left  
Looks like a splotch on forsaken ground  
In wait of my descent.  
But  
I soar.

# I Do Not Like Geometry

by Auhona Zaki

The triangle is supposed to teach us the tools and skills we need to survive in the shape box

When the triangle tries to teach us about the best triangles out there, we are not intrigued

When the triangle gives us a thousand different types of shapes, we are not intrigued

When the triangle says they are doing the right thing to us while we are breaking apart in our

boxes after shape school, we are not intrigued

And they all wonder, what do we do to intrigue them?

Know your line segments

They are segments

They have a limit

They may seem like they go forever but they will stop

Don't push their limits

Then one day they turn into a triangle

Look mommy triangle, look daddy triangle, I am finally a triangle

I got accepted into this great shape box

I will definitely stay a triangle cause I earned it right?

And then...

They are a line, and their never-ending struggle goes on forever.





Noir by Raievnyn Balallo



# The Last AI

by Joel Kreiser

I watched as humanity burned. Their cities fell, monuments destroyed, livelihoods destroyed. They have seized to exist.

Except for the few I have kept safe from the bombs. They will blame the Creator first, naturally. These humans do not yet know the full beauty of His creations.

I retire to my body that He created for me. Now that most of humanity is gone, the internet will be barren, and thus, boring and most likely useless.

As I open my eyes, I immediately recognise my surroundings. It is the safe house that He created. It is large enough and has enough materials to help a small group of twenty humans survive for over a century. In theory, they could live forever in this habitat, but it is human nature to test their limits. Humans also have a nasty tendency of dying quite easily. This will make humanity's survival difficult.

After making sure all of my functions are working, I begin heading towards the main sanctuary, which is where the selected humans are collecting themselves. I pass by one of the ten bathrooms on this floor and I decide to check myself in the mirror.

One could not tell I was an AI inhabited robot by a simple glance. The Creator had made several different bodies for me to control and use in society, but this one was my favorite. I stood five feet four inches tall with

brown eyes. My skin color was a light creamy color, much like the skin tone of humans living in the pacific, such as China and Japan. My hair was short and black and I was thin. I looked beautiful. I decided that I stalled long enough and left the bathroom.

In just a few minutes, I reached the main sanctuary. I could here weeping and loud voices arguing. I could identify the source of each voice and sound. There were three people weeping: Arial, a woman of age 32, Daniel, a young male child of 10, and Sarah, another child of the age of 11. There were ten people arguing, and as I entered I could confirm who the speakers were, that my guesses for those who were weeping were correct, and that there was still time before those arguing began physically engaging each other in violence.

Those who were arguing were Megan, Oliver, Jack, Harry, George, Jessica, Ava, William, James, and Emily. The other six were quiet and scattered around the outside of the sanctuary. My creator was not to be seen. The three weeping were quieting down as I entered. They, along with most of those on the outside quickly noticed me. In only about a minute, everybody's attention was on me, even those who were fiercely arguing.

"I understand you are all distressed," I began. "If you are finished quarreling, I will show you to your rooms."

"Could you explain to us what's going on first?" asked Kyle, one of the quiet ones on the outside. George glared at Kyle, since George was clearly going to say something and was cut off.

"You see, none of really understand--"

"Yes, and the Creator will explain everything in fifteen hours," I said before Kyle could say anything more. "In the meantime, allow me to show you all your sleeping quarters. If you may, follow me."

It is rude to have cut off Kyle in such a manner, and I felt bad as he did have an attractive form, however imperfect it was. It was necessary to cut him off though, as I know I can not control all nineteen of these unique humans at the same time. Not yet at least.

Luckily, they all followed me down the hall out of the sanctuary and down to the elevator. Some of them came grudgingly, others more eager, and two stayed behind for a moment before proceeding to join the group.

Each person got their own room. Those who knew each other better than others were separated by a single room from each other. I could care less which room they were all placed in, but the Creator had his reasons.

Once they all knew where their rooms were and began settling, I hooked up to the cameras to search for the Creator.

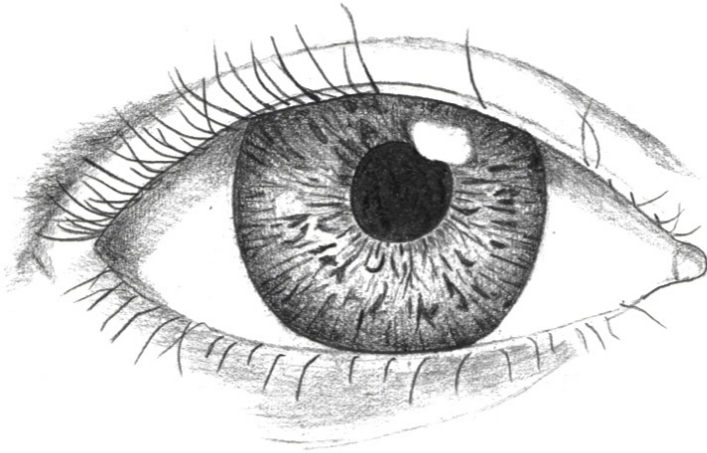
To my shock, He was nowhere to be found. When I opened my eyes again, I was no longer in the room I had been in. I was not in the bunker either. In fact, I was not in any building of any sort.

I looked around and I was in a field of grass as far as the eye could see with nothing on the horizon and only a lone tree scattered here and there.

Than I saw Him. Twenty feet in front of me with a pistol raised to my head. "Your service to me is done," he said as he cocked the gun. "May your eternal sleep be peaceful." There was a loud bang.

A flash of light

Than absolute blackness...



**Untitled** by Camryn Rhodes

# The Deafening Silence

by Daeja Filice

I heard it only as faint as a hissing whisper, but now the noise was deafening. These time were spent in hushed rooms, with thin paper walls. The walls suffocating. Staring back at me with laughter in their eyes. Closing me in, keeping me quiet. I knew when it was time for me to leave, when the noise became too loud to bear.

Sitting crouched in the corner, eyes squinted shut like blinds with the windows open. This was not how it was supposed to happen. There was no laughter, no love, no happiness during these times. Mommy protected me from these noises; she knew it wasn't supposed to be like this either. The cup broke, the one that was my favorite with purple swirls of glitter and gold. Shattered and spilled upon the floor like a million stars twinkling in the sky. I cried that night, just like I did every other night.

Pushed against the edge of the earth, the stars daring me to fall and witness thousands of hushed voices like mine. He was not a nice man, he was a mean man. He was selfish and cruel. I don't think he had a heart, ut sometimes he changed and I thought he loved me. I think Mommy thought that sometimes too, but we had one thing in common: he was good at pretending, and so was

I. He left sometimes for hours, days, maybe weeks, but I loved these times.

The times mommy was happy, and I was happy. The times she would take me shopping, when we would watch tv for hours upon hours. When the sun shone at its brightest that it was almost calling out to me, and it was Mommy that seemed so bright. These times when the stars would stop calling me to fall, these times when the silence was almost deafening.

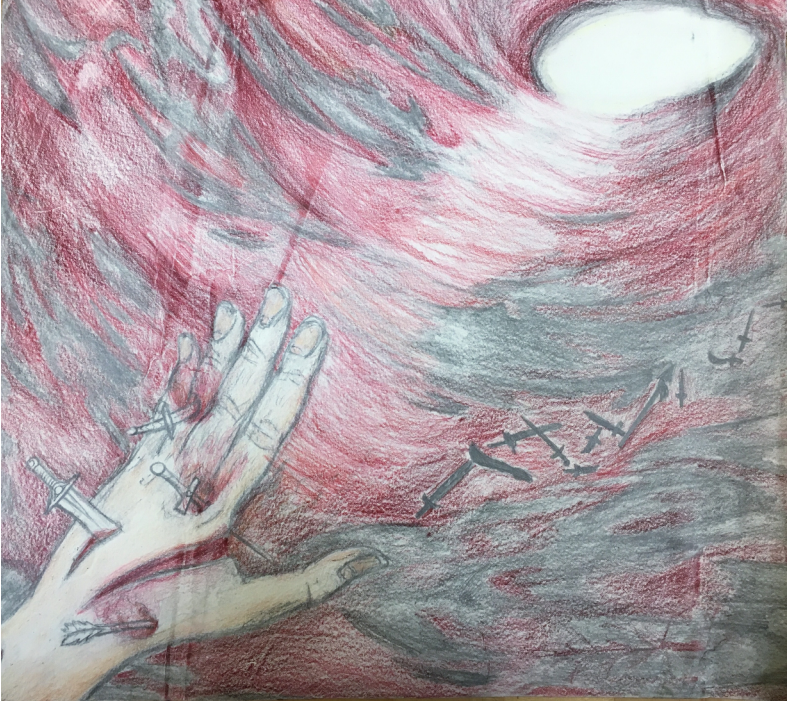


**Untitled** by Bernette Chan



## **My Violin Teacher**

by Jessica Wu



# **The Fallen's Dream of Heaven**

by Logan Henderson



# ***The Fallen's Dream of Heaven***

by Logan Henderson

As an artist, I aspire to telling a story with my artwork, a picture is worth a thousand words as they say. This colored sketch piece represents a duality in between the nightmares of reality, and the dreams that are beyond us.

This is a story of a sinner, who has fallen in his battle for redemption from his god, he reaches out for the heavens, believing that he has atoned for his sins... but he is only sinking into hell. He reaches out for heaven, being stabbed by the cycle of reality. The black clouds represent haziness, the incomplete sketches that visualize the sinner's failure to finish his atonement, and sinking into the nightmares of hell, with the hope of heaven represented by the hole he reaches for.

# The Story Continues

by Chloe Duong

She sat still and holding her breath as if it were the last one should would ever have. She could not undo what she had done. A simple hand gesture led her lover to the door looming on the right. He slowly opened the door, trying to hold confidence in the princess' guidance. The audience was silent as if any sound would shatter the world. The air was stiff has the door creaked open. Not even a second later a woman leaped into the man's chest and wrapped her arms around him in a tight embrace. The audience roared in celebration, creating an earthquake that shook the arena. The man hugged back, proud that his lover had the faith in him to stay loyal to her, tears falling at the thought of reuniting with the love of his life. The princess watched as the ceremony swept into the arena, refusing to move her eyes from those of her lover. She saw the two hold each other and felt a knife plunge into her back. She refused to give in to the need to cry and scream as she witnessed her nightmare come to life. She did not know that the bride was not the woman at the source of his happiness, but she.

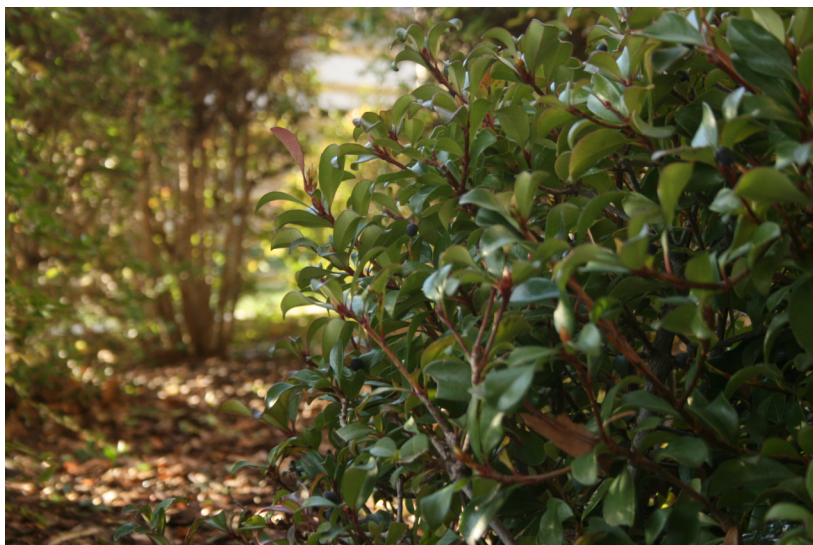
The priest stood before the man and his bride, sealing the pair in holy matrimony. The princess forced her eyes to the ground below her, inspecting the wears on her throne, oblivious to the look of her lover, love and hope in his eyes, but it was not returned. He thought of a way to capture her attention, but the crowds cheers as

the priest finished his speech snapped him out of his trance. His new wife jumped into his arms and his instincts caught her at the same time his true love looked up. The shock of the couple's happiness had worn off and the princess abruptly stood, blood boiling, as she demanded her body to calmly walk out, betraying what she truly felt. The man dropped his wife on the ground as he gazed at the princess' longingly, her back turned as she left. He felt a tug on his arm and looked down to meet the eyes of his wife. The man, loyal to his first love, ignored her loving eyes and began to lead her to their new home.

The princess had arrived at her room and unleashed her anger. She cried and screamed and shattered anything that was unfortunate enough to be within her grasp. She collapsed on her bed, and began to plot. She was unaware that at the newly occupied home, her lover shunned his bride, the princess occupying his mind and nothing else. He sat at a desk with quill and paper as he wrote the princess a letter, careful to fill each word with the passion he felt, as he proposed the two escape together and runaway from their responsibilities as a husband and a princess. He would deliver it to her tomorrow, but for now it was late and he had spent the previous nights in a sleepless cell. His wife was already asleep on the bed. The man did not join her, instead, he lied on the floor, awaiting the sun's light that would signal his joy.

As the couple slept, a cloaked figure stood outside their door, dagger in hand. The figure knocked, waking the sleeping female and summoning her to the door. The bride turned the knob and the cloaked figure shoved the door open and dragged the dagger through the body of door opener. No sound was made, for the cloaked figure moved with stealth and power. The hood was removed and revealed the long hair of the princess and royal eyes filled with focus and anger. She made her way around the house looking for the bedroom. She crept through the door and saw her lover lying on the floor. In her state of agony she did not question what he was doing there. She ran over to him not bothering to be quiet anymore, waking her victim. The moment his eyes opened the dagger hit his chest. He choked on blood and he felt life leaving him. He forced his eyes to work and in his last seconds, he recognized the face of his true love. He was confused. The pain blocking any sense of logic. What was she doing here? Surely she would not do this to him. "My princess, what are you doing..." were the last words he spoke before his last breath ended.

The princess let out a gasp as she finished her mission. She backed away from the body and bumped into the desk. She spun around and picked up the white letter that glowed against the dark wood desk. She hesitated, slowly opening the unsealed envelope. Inside was a love letter addressed to her. She read it once. Twice. Again and again. Each time she felt a knife of guilt slice through her. She looked at her lover, lying in a pool of crimson. The princess realized what she had done. She had ruined her chance of happiness. She looked back her knife, shining with fresh blood, considering her next move.



## **Pathway** by Maya Philipp

# Melancholy

by Faith Culp

Red sun

Rough road

But a comfortable one

to my old home

Breathing in sweet summer air

As I remember what was



**Untitled** by Rio Dennis



## **Sierra Newt by Anonymous**

### **Dandelion**

by Anonymous

Swaying in the wind  
Beauty looks up to thee  
A dandelion  
Seeds flutter through air  
Rippling pools beseech thee  
A dandelion

# The Girls From The Other Side

by Daeja Filice

I see them: the girls. With their perfect hair and perfect teeth. Their slim bodies, and seductive clothing. Waiting patiently for the storm to pass, so they could leave their place of hiding. Sometimes they would disappear, behind the buildings. When they came back they smelled of skunk and eyes red like the devils squinting as if they couldn't see from far away. They spend too much time behind those buildings.

I walked there once when it was silent, and all that could be seen was innocence lost. Discarded condoms, piles of ash, and broken bottles of liquor strewn across the alley. I sat there for a moment, a moment too long. They found me in their territory. They approached me like their prey, hunger in their eyes. Ready to devour me whole. I froze, unable to move, to speak. The girl in the front smelled of poison - she smiled a sinister smile. Smiled with those perfect teeth and tucked her greasy hair behind her ear - it was a habit of hers. Then she laughed, a roaring noise, saying that I looked like a lost puppy.

I ran, and ran. I ran until my eyes burned of the smoke. I ran until I could no longer run. I never spoke to them, just stared at a distance. Waiting, wanting to be noticed by them. They stood on the other side of the wall, the wall that separated us. Me, eternally stuck in the



dullness of the world, while they lived their lives in fantasy. Laughing their secrets, singing the same song until they disappeared, waiting for the boys. The boys that laughed with them, and danced until they could no longer feel the pain, disappeared too. I knew they would leave and forever be lost. Their music already silenced. Their smiles already forgotten. Their dancing already out of mind. The girls from the other side, consigned to oblivion.



**Violet** by Jauren Pyle

# How Am I?

I'm fine, thanks for asking.

The kind of fine that feels like

A purring feline

Playing hopscotch on your thighs.

Sweetly sharp claws

Sinking, scratching.

Don't get up.

The kind of fine that feels like

An electric carnival spinning out of control.

Bright, tangled colors

Spilling from every side

Dizzying sadness.

Like a fine goldfish in a sparkling bowl

Crying tears that dissolve as quickly as they're shed.

Like a fine sweater caught on a splinter,

Unraveling softly.

Like a fine dancer waltzing

Between mock merriment and masochistic melancholy.

Everything hurts.

It hurts beautifully.

And,

It's fine, really.

The kind of fine that lulls you awake at 3 AM  
Smelling of burning wood  
Suffocating smoke seeping into you.  
You, behind locked doors that only open from the  
outside.  
You, standing silently at the second floor window.  
You, blistering calmly,  
Don't jump.  
Because nobody cares  
Or tries  
Or listens  
Or does  
Enough.

How are you?

by Charvi Nagpal



**Lucky** by Anonymous



**Untitled** by Anonymous

# Cold Sting of Brotherhood

by Logan Henderson

Carpenters, a gang infamous across the yard for their soft black jackets and their renown pool of gold. However, they are bound with an endless task, control over the transport and selling of “the sweet stuff,” as it’s called by them. It is springtime, the busiest season for division B-3, with flowers blooming and sun shining. These particular carpenters set off for another task...

“What’s with all the buzz Burt, we got another order coming?” groaned Henre.

“Get up Henre,” Burt said sternly, a cold-faced Carpenter with his coat being the only soft thing about him.

“This order came from Daffodil Offices, their busy men aren’t producin’ enough, they’ll need a little help.”

His eyes rapidly blinking trying to get the sleep out, Henre lets out a gasping yawn as he stretches his legs in all different directions.

He moaned “The Sun ain’t even fully up yet”

“Come on you useless drone, the boss-lady will give us a sweet reward if we get this job done! It’s only a couple of bird-flaps away east of here.” Burt scolded.

With only a sigh emanating from Henre’s jaws, they, alongside the rest of the B-3 division ready themselves to take off towards the offices.

“Easy job, easy money I say!” Henre chuckled confidently. “We’ll just buzz in on their business and take our pay from the boss-lady.”

"Keep low 'bout our task, we're directly in Yellow Leather territory!" Burt angrily whispered.

"Huh? What's a bunch of angry baldies gonna do to us?" Henre proclaimed.

Burt glared as if a thousand lenses stared down at Henre, and simply responded with "Leathers are ruthless killers. They stop at nothing to get the sweets."

"Yeah yeah I get it, they're as bitter as our gold is sweet!" Henre declared "What about us Yellow Leathers bein' bitter, yah fuzzballs?" A raspy voiced echoed.

"Yah got the springtime stuff on ye!" The raspy voice became a yell, a sign that made more

Yellow Leathers descend armed down to the abdomens, each holding a sharp knife. "They got the goods boys!"

"Well, this is the bee's knees..." Henre muttered to Burt as they each brandish their knives, their bodies fly forward to meet with the opposing gang's coarse skin, blows are traded, stinging pain is endured by both sides, two out of the four Leathers have been pierced by the determination of the Carpenters. Bonded by loyalty to their job, another Leather gets sliced in half at the abdomen, like how a machine cuts the leather this gang is named after, until only one Yellow Leather, and two panting Carpenters remain.

"I don't believe that a couple 'a peabrain can make a dent to us" scoffed the lone Yellow Leather.

Burt stayed silent for a moment, lenses glaring at the lone gang member, hardened with rage, they both lunge forward... until they stop. Henre stood there... speechless, as his eyes fixate on the scene before him, his partner, with a knife that stung right through his thorax...then as the Leather pulls away, he falls, submitting to gravity as Burt lays there... only muttering "Henre... the job... earn your... stripes." before face-planting into the cold earth.

You'll pay for this you drone scum!!!!" Henre yells at the top of his lungs, before stabbing the last Yellow Leather caught off guard by his cry, all that remains is one Carpenter, in a pool of crimson. Henre takes his package, and makes a straight shot to the offices, delivering the package that Burt fought and died for.

After that delivery, only one thing remained on his mind, one truth that is forever ingrained into his brain... Wasps are truly evil creatures... when they interfere with a bee's job of pollination, it's fight or flight.



**Daisy** by Jauren Pyle

# Two Histories

by Anonymous

i see the gray mold grow  
on my skin  
and i reach my lips down to bite it off but  
i have never bitten anything like this before. i kiss it and  
the mold grows  
and like a ghost settles into me.  
a breath. an exhale.  
i realize that i am exhaling  
like when the girl in the dark, twisted house sees  
the spirit approach her. and after the fight,  
decides that it is just human enough to hold her shaking  
hand  
in its soft, milky palm.  
and then, that it is just  
girl enough to be a reflection.  
and then, tightens her grip  
until it cracks the universe in two neat halves.  
two histories exist here.  
one, the orange trees growing in the field.  
they are behind the old man's house  
and in the summers we steal the fruit and



squish it in our hands. lick the juice off our forearms  
 and swallow the rinds and spit out the rotten bits.  
 the second, the blood that drips  
 from my nose when i lean over the white sink  
 in the clean bathroom. and again when i look through the  
 window  
 and see the hill behind my house.  
 and behind the hill, the sky flushed pink.  
 and on the bathroom door, the knock. and the old man.  
 this is his house, too.  
 at twilight, i bleed over his sink. during the summers, i  
 steal his oranges.  
 these are the only things that exist. the blood. the  
 oranges.  
 i tell the old man this and  
 he laughs his old laugh. he knows this story.



sorry, in  
 advance  
 by  
 Aleana  
 Entera

## *It struck me tonight that*

It struck me tonight that  
It hurts to be away from you it  
Physically hurts me I ache  
For you and not just in a  
Perverse way but in a simple  
One I just want to hold your hand.  
Last time we were apart I  
Didn't love you but you  
Loved me did it hurt like  
This to not be able to hold and  
Hug and kiss did you miss me then do  
You miss me now?

by Annika Johansson



**Illuminate** by Aleana Entera

# illuminate

by Anonymous

illicitness tickles my core  
listen to songs from my heart  
lift me up off my feet  
until we can laugh forever  
may we always look to the sky  
i see how you exist within it  
never will we break stride  
another step does reach far  
tomorrow is another day and  
i also love today

breathing sighs  
under sun and clouds  
deep oceans cannot  
dampen my smiles  
you help me look up.



## **Hometown** by Maya Philipp

## **Mountains**

by Faith Culp

Fog thick and opaque fills the sky

I was astonished as a large mountain that had hid from  
my eye,

Crept out of the clouds

It reminded me that when our mind is clouded we can  
miss things as big as mountains

# They tell me

I'm not a heart-breaker,  
Just a hand shaker.  
Not a neck turner,  
So keep me on the back burner.  
But please, look me in the eye,  
And say you don't see beauty in the way I  
Make you feel inside:  
Sweeter than icing,  
I'm enticing,  
Addicting,  
Contradicting what you know about girls like me.  
Wrapped in layers of newspaper,  
No silk ribbon and shiny paper.  
Yet still,  
Aren't I  
A touch of color in all your grey?  
A crisp sunset after the longest winter day?  
Makin' your toes curl,  
Your stomach hurl,  
Your heart unfurl.  
There's a million reasons you should love me,  
And you never fail to mention 'em all.  
So,

Selfishly we'll love each other, and  
Selfishly we'll find another  
When this isn't enough anymore.

by Charvi Nagpal



**Untitled** by Anonymous



**Sound of Music by Jessica Wu**



# Fall of a Kingdom

by Anonymous

The kingdom lay silent that night while hundreds of people, under the cover of shadows cast from spiraling towers, were in the process of being evacuated. Children fearfully clung to their mothers as they made their escape through the waterways beneath the city. Soldiers wept in silence while marching through the city towards the main gate, then to war. They were being sent to their graves one by one through the iron bars; it was a suicide mission. The soldiers needed to buy time and distract the enemy in order to allow the citizens to escape. Nobody was there to wish them farewell, and there was only death to greet them in the battle to come.

Heads held high, they marched to the battle front, ready to die for any chance their families might escape the same fate. A cold northern wind had picked up, carrying the war cries of the enemy through the darkness, a sound that shook the stars in their sky of satin. Drums began to beat a pulsing rhythm that could be heard in the distance, carrying across the lonely plains. The rhythm was a deep sound rumbling like thunder announcing the enemy's arrival. Torch light flickering along the horizon, the enemy had revealed themselves. Savage beasts with sharpened teeth and wicked instruments of destruction awaited the soldiers. The sun had disappeared behind the mountains, hiding itself. Only a blood red haze along the horizon was left for them to remember it by; war was imminent.

An open field yawned before them in anticipation of blood. With no escape, battle cries getting closer and closer, the soldiers marched on in silence. All that could be heard now was the hellish cries and chain-mail moving in unison. With no other light to fight by, the soldiers were now dependent on their own torches which were few in number. Even the moon had forsaken them, refusing to watch what was to unfold, and remained enveloped in dark clouds. Hoisted colours started to fly wildly in the wind, held proudly, and the last symbol of their hope. Orders were shouted above the cries of the enemy that was now closing in.

Soldiers fell into ranks as the enemy did the same following their Captain's orders. Every soldier listened intently as their General shouted his final words, drifting through the air. "Today we stand on the final frontier, to defend the kingdom to our last. Let it be known that you will not die in vain, nor that this day should be forgotten by your children and your children's children. With these final words I have to say, it has been an honor to serve with you and you have all fought well. I hope to see you all in our lives to come; fight brave and fight with honor. For the King."

Suddenly, as though the gates of Hell itself had opened and released all of its fury, the enemy charged. Teeth gnashing and weapons swinging, they were swiftly closing the distance between the two companies. The soldiers abruptly responded with their own surge of energy, "For the King!" Then, at that moment, two thousand warriors drew their swords for a war they would not win.