

elementia

volume ii, issue i

a

Teen Services

literary

Johnson County Library

teen

9875 W 87th St

Overland Park, KS 66212

zine

913-495-2490

published

to

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elementia

uplift

creative

sublime

young

adults

volume 2, issue 1
fall 2006

elementia

creative sublime young adults

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elementia

creative sublime young adults

scott sime
cover design

angel jewel dew
eriko akaiki toste
editors & design

ralph nardell
philip arthur
summer anne
photographers

theo goodloe
magazine title

katie manning
proof editor
&
young adult submission
committee facilitator

kelly sime
young adult submission
committee facilitator

jennifer taylor
cindy frazer
printing



young
adult
submission
committee

farah firman
selena feng
luke feng
rabi hemayoun
leah holy
nickey jafari
rebecca mosely
angela clem
laura wellington
delaney herman
zoë christianson

interested in serving on this
committee for future issues?
please email simeka@jocolibrary.org

As the submissions began to drift in this fall, I had a magical feeling that this issue was going to be something to reckon with...

Yet, I never could have imagined how magical.

We received such a vast number of submissions -- nearly triple what we've received in the past...and the content...was so honest and fresh; thoughtful and thorough; and genuine and sublime, that it seemed almost impossible to decide what actually would be published.

Luckily, we established a young adult submission committee, whose ultimate task was to read through, consider and discuss each submission. The content in this issue was hand-picked by this committee. It is my hope that because of this very fact, elementia is seen in a new light, for it is now a magazine composed not only of young adult creative work, but also it is created on behalf of the thoughts and perspectives of young adults.

It is also important for me to mention a special section of elementia-- on pages 42-47 you will find the poems and thoughts of young people currently living in Johnson County's juvenile detention center. These poems were submitted by Kathy McLellan, who visits the "jdc" monthly.

I'd like to extend a special thank you to my colleagues, Eriko Akaiki Toste -- her work and devotion to this project will astound me always, for all her efforts are on a volunteer basis, and without her, elementia would not exist, Kelly Sime & Jennifer Taylor -- for being a voice of reason and support, Katie Manning -- for adding her expertise and focus, Scott Sime -- for sharing his gift of design, and Kasey Riley -- for considering elementia's future.

And lastly, I want to bring attention to a literary magazine based in Somerville, MA. Happeningnoweverywhere!, is a magazine written and edited by teens. The magazine is currently working on their 3rd issue and has decided to write and feature a review on elementia, as well as reprint several of the poems from our 2nd issue. Thus, I want to extend a thank you to Alan Ball, the sponser of the magazine, for his interest in elementia and in his devotion to young adult writers. Enjoy.

angel jewel dew

learn explore enjoy create connect

staff

mona carmack
jcl county librarian

carolyn mccown
weeks
associate director for
central services

patricia suellentrop
johnson county library
youth services manager

dennis ross
central youth services
manager

eriko akaiki toste
central youth specialist
volunteer

kelly sime
central youth specialist

linda kautzi
central youth specialist

angel dew
central youth specialist

susan woodruff
central youth specialist

katie manning
central youth specialist

jan mcconnell
central youth specialist

www.happeningnoweverywhere.com



photo provided by the parents of jaden gragg

featured young adult writer
jaden gragg

Jaden Gragg is 14 years old. Her writing submissions received the highest marks from our team of young adults. The poise and focus displayed in her writing is simply superb. Jaden has three poems and one prose poem published in this issue. Jaden was kind enough to let us have a glimpse into her world:

what inspires you?

I am inspired by all things around me. Sad events or ideas fuel my writing, as do people that I see. Songs, movies and things people say give me ideas on what to write about. Other times, poems just come to me.

what are your favorite books? favorite movie?

She's Come Undone by Wally Lamb, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, *Animal Liberation* by Peters Singer, *1984* & *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. My favorite movie is the musical "Rent."

what are your hobbies? what do you do for fun?

Reading, writing (obviously), painting and drawing. I love animals and helping the earth. I like to cook, especially foods from India and the Middle East. I enjoy dancing, singing and having a good time with friends.

Submissions for the 4th issue
of *elementia* will be considered
January 1-February 16, 2007.

The theme for the 4th issue will dwell upon the notion of *not fitting in, feeling on the outside and/or being on the outs with peers, parents, teachers, etc.* We are also seeking writing, photography and artwork that is *Asian themed or inspired.*

No more than 3-5 submissions per person.

Any writing, photography or artwork received outside that scope, will be set aside for the fall (5th) issue. All submissions **must** be typed, and in 12pt Garamond font. Any submissions that are not submitted within these restrictions may run the risk of **not** being considered for publication.

Any questions in regards to the 4th issue of *elementia* should be directed to central youth services at 913-495-2490 or dewa@jocolibrary.org.



Words

like amorphous chunks of metal
they rest on a shelf in my brain
and beg to be molded

I long to hold them in the
fire of my skull
till they are soft and malleable

I yearn to bring them to the
forges of my soul
and beat them
and pound them
and hammer them
into lively, intricate shapes

all day long
I sense their weight
in the back of my mind

golden and silver
they beckon,
brass and copper they sigh
forlorn and impatient

I reach out to grasp them
but they acquire lives of their own
squirming out of my hands
and hopping, toadlike, back to their residences
taunting me

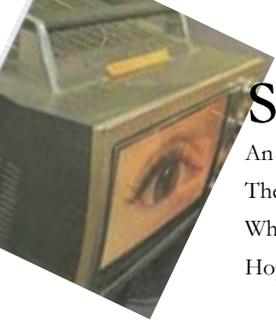
there they remain
languishing upon my cerebral shelf
collecting a thin layer of brain cells

and there they will remain
until the time comes
when I catch them
melt them
mix them
mold them
into a gleaming
new
poem



photograph by ralph nardell





Standing stiffly in an elevator,
An automatic mouth swallowing,
The girl who so surely stepped inside,
When she was little,
Hoping for a ride.

The hot breath of the box,
Padded mouth clamped so tightly,
Suddenly opened with hushed awe,
To the second top floor,
Revealing cold mannerism made of marble,
A tiled suite of swirling colors.

The second floor,
Gave her shudders of indecision.
Seconds after the iron gates swung so,
the marbled floor, the perfect still life,
She clutched her heart and closed her eyes.

And colors never swirled before her,
The anonymous girl, her eyes stayed shut,
As the elevator doors swung forth,
Revealing another silent still life.
She was scared of the sight,
The long tiled hall.

cold mannerism in marble
jaden gragg

After several heavy moments,
Of hearing doors close all around her,
Did eyes slowly come open again,
To the ever slight comfort of the room,
Hearing her heart beat through the thin wall.

The automatic mouth took breaths of darkness,
Its shallow breathing the same as her heart's even beat.
For several swollen moments,
The bated hums of the elevator matched the fluttering of her eyes
But she could feel the quick change; in seconds she was on the ground.
She lay there hearing the elevator humming the tune of her death.

She could see her breath stain on the window as she struggled back up,
Panting in pain, she beat on the door.
Her breathing became ragged; her heartbeat came fast and cruel.
But the elevator noticed no change, it sang the same.
Came slowly, slowly to the feared second floor.

The girl shrieked in despair and sank to the floor,
Teeth bit into her veins and elevator music pounded in her poisoned blood.

Closed her eyes one last time as the metal teeth of the doors,
The mouth and the tongue,
Spit her out onto the cold marble tile, already pale with death.
The elevator sardonically closed its doors,
and started humming its way up to the third floor,
Where a similar young girl was hoping for a ride.



I wish that I could speak my mind more easily.
I wish I didn't fall in love so easily
and that it weren't so obvious.

Sometimes,
when I blush or faintly smile
I forget that I am not entitled to my feelings.
I forget that my every thought of being close to someone
is a slap in the face to someone who cares about me.

Lately, my dreams have been filled with someone
whose every word,
every movement,
every touch
would fill me with revulsion
were I to allow her into my life.

It's easier on my conscience
to let my perversity run its course
on someone who could never make me happy

than to harbor my offensive feelings
for someone who might tempt me
to break the most important, least spoken
rule
that I never follow my heart.

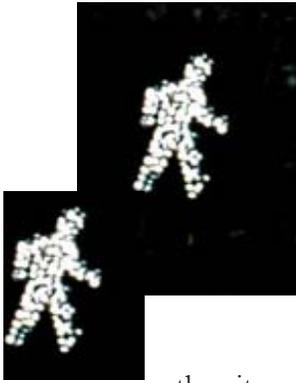
I dread the day when someone
wonderful by my standards
sees me for the human being that I am,
and makes me fall too far into that vile
thing called love
to remember that my love is not about me,
but the people it hurts,
and that every time I submit to my own
happiness,
I'm making someone cry,
I'm making someone ashamed.

If I am anything but selfish
I will never let this happen.



nausea way beyond maalox
becky peda

Your hopeless little tragedies
Spill so hopelessly on the floor.
The ones that take over all the attention,
The ones so goddamn impossible to ignore.
The not so gentle news
Is burning away, all this trust once built
Built for no reason at all,
For why should I trust someone who knows no guilt?
*
The not so brilliant light
Didn't exactly hide your figures,
On the ground as you lay not so motionless,
With the immoral girl you've known for years.
All I really long for
Is to make this paranoia subside,
And know that everything is exemplary
And that the girl's answering your phone
Means you have nothing to hide.
The stories I hear after years of romantics,
The rumors that spread so lightning fast,
This nausea is something way beyond Maalox.
It's permanently built in to last.



the city
hana spangler

*B*efore time was invented, there was a city. Half of the city was as light as day, and the other half was as dark as night.

A woman of the night slipped into the day, wishing to see the light that was absent from her life. The brightness of light blinded her as she stepped onto the unfamiliar ground, and she darted back into the darkness, unconscious of the shadows she left behind, or the specks of light that fluttered in behind her

“A woman of the night slipped into the day, wishing to see the light that was absent from her life.”

Beyond the limits of the city was what the citizens called The Void. The Void was neither dark, nor light, but a complete emptiness. Nothing ever went in The Void, and nothing ever came out of it.

The boy stepped up to the border, only three paces away, and glanced over his shoulder. The other children were waiting with baited breaths. He gritted his teeth and extended his hand, slowly creeping toward The Void, stopping only a pace away. The boy dropped his hand and let out a sigh of resignation. He ran off between the glistening buildings in pursuit of his friends.

Shadows from the night seeped into the day, arousing the suspicions of the people of the light. An invasion couldn't be tolerated; war seemed inevitable.

The man smiled. His band of Day-men were ready with their magics prepared. The Night-dwellers wouldn't have a chance.

Or so they thought.

The girl's mother had told her that it was long expected that the Day-people would attack, even before the glimmers of light had appeared. Still, it surprised her when she saw the first slashes of light crossing the border. Though she knew the drill, her hand trembled as she reached out to take the Emblem, the only thing holding back The Void from the city's innards. She closed her eyes and took it.

shades of darkness
drew wilson

Horrific scenery fills my mind
Some from the future, some from behind
Nightmare images that fill others with Dread
The world would be better if My Kind were dead
In spite of the sacrifices of those we're above
We see a future without Hope, Faith, or Love
Hate hails from all races, both genders, all creeds
It has no Goals, no Hopes, no Needs
We destroy the world, like iron by rust
We wait and watch the Earth fall to Dust...



photograph by ralph nardell

light up the night
anonymous

Immovably unquiet and forever
Is the moon's perch in the sky.
Sitting in a blanket of mismatched stars
Is the place children go for a sweet midnight dream.

They look up at her majesty,
Queen of all the night.
For without her presence,
Summer dreams would not be alive tonight.

The dream that she gives us
Is a present wrapped in all its glory.
One that only happens once,
So hold onto it while it lasts.

She is something to be cherished
For she gives us insight
Into what life could possibly be like.

One that is peaceful
Without any harm.
Breathing in air that inspires us to light up the night.
Even if we are a dull grey color.

When all is quiet,
She tells her secret
Of what makes her wonderful.

But only those who truly see her
Will know themselves.



the eye
sara fisher

The wind is intermitting, dry and light
It rustles the trees and leaves
with silent gracefulness
The eye catches a
glance of the honey auburn leaves
The night world is listening
to every sound echoing
The moon light illuminates
on the lake
while fish disrupt
the reflection
The eye sees two moons
one on the lake and one in the sky
The sounds are slowly dying
The creatures sense something
a disturbance in the air of night
Here it comes, the wind, intermitting, dry and light



photograph by ralph nardell

nature
drake myers

As the wind blows a harsh breeze,
And the trees start to sway on their knees,
Within the surface of the fleeting river,
I see myself sitting in the harsh weather,
As a boy, slouched down in the freeze.

My hair being blown around my head,
My hands in their own cozy beds,
O'er the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream,
Admiring Nature, a crown on its head.

As Winter comes, quickly on its sleigh,
It, the predator, Summer, the prey,
Other animals take food into stock,
As snow falls down, white as chalk,
I sit there, not unlike a rock,
Like Summer, broken by winter's ram,
This boy quickly turns to a man.

line from "evening"
emanuel medina

The dust and straws are driven up and down
as the sky darkens from the clouds up high.
It starts to get cooler as the first drop hits the
ground. Then it brings more drops in till it starts
pouring from the clouds above. Some of the drops
start to freeze in the clouds and they come down
hitting the surface. Then the wind picks up all of the
dust and straw from the ground. Then you see the whirl of
wind coming from the ground to the middle of the sky as the
dark clouds throw a whirl of wind down to the middle and the two
connecting and make something deadly.





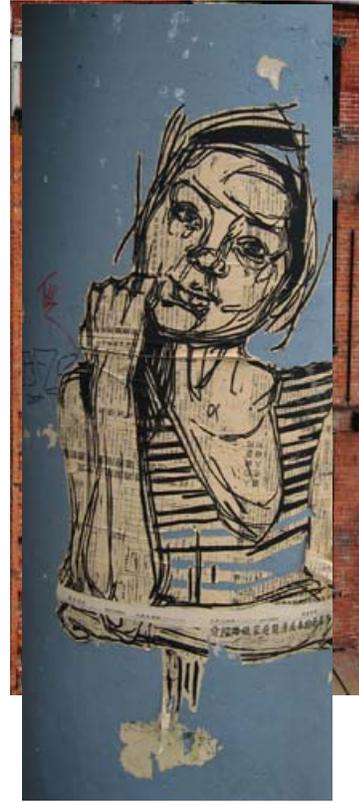
untitled
ayah abud-rauf

I want to scramble away
I want to scream
I want to shout
I want to fight back
No...
No...
I need to scramble away
I need to scream
I need to shout
I need to fight back.
Or do I?
The voices tell me not to,
Not the voices in my head,
The voices around me.

The ones that are yelling-,
And screaming-,
They are begging for help, just like me.
Some of them, even, are cannibals!
I would rather die,
Than be someone like that.
But they have no other choice...
And it's because...

Of the people inspired by misdemeanor.
The ones that yell,
At us,
And pull on chains,
And fill the place
The "place"
With blood, sweat, and tears.

They turn us into things as weak as butterflies,
And then pull off our wings.
Butterflies without wings.
That's what we are.
But I am the enemy,
For while they are inspired by misdemeanor,
I am,
Inspired by the torture they are giving me.



my own thoughts
morgan shaffer

Sometimes I think you're doing this on purpose,
Locking me up inside.
With no light seeping through.
My skin turning pale,
My hope being lost.
Leaving me by myself,
A world so alone.
I feel trapped in a prison,
Or lost in a crowd.
There is something about this that makes me grow ill.
I don't see my surroundings,
Therefore I don't know what's going on.
You leave me with very little food to eat all alone.
I'm sheltered under your presence.
I was lost, but now I am found.
Being locked in your prison
Changed my insane thoughts.
Something I doubted I had,
I'm a key in a lock.
I'm turning and breaking free.
I'm only locked in my own thoughts
Because you are still a part of me.

My life is trapped inside glass walls
 I try hard to make them fall
 But nothing can penetrate them
 The only escape is around the rim
 I'm stuck to the earth around me
 Hoping one day to be free
 I try to grow over the rim when it's low
 But it seems to rise each time I grow
 If the walls see weakness in me
 They'll try to find a way to break me
 I hide my true feelings from them
 Praying they won't detect my feelings within
 Who could ever be loved behind glass walls?
 Not being able to go anywhere at all
 One day a bird flew over me
 Said that he could love me
 He said he could make my life complete
 Instead of every day feeling so obsolete
 I was glad he flew my way
 Now I feel happier day by day
 As the walls watch the bird fly above
 They couldn't stop him from sending me his love
 The greatest thing in life is love
 And I got mine from above

above
michele ortiz

Im torn between two worlds
 One where I'm accepted from what I've become
 And another where I'm hated for who I've been.
 Each day I walk the line between the worlds
 Trying to keep each other apart
 But I know one day I will fail
 And the two worlds will collide.

torn
delaney herman

I try hard to escape
 And find a place where I can be free from me:
 The fake me I've created out of many lies
 That has made me a friend to everyone
 And the me that is misunderstood
 By the friends that have been blinded
 By the lies that I have told.

One day I will slip up.
 One day I will get the me's mixed up and then
 Once the fatal error's made I won't be the same.
 The black abyss will consume what is left
 And when I am gone who will notice
 That freak in the back of the room
 Was actually the real me.

father problems
cory mclaughlin

Fighting never ends...
 Words back and forth...
 What will come next?
 Why do I put up with it at all?
 What to do?
 Why try anymore?
 What is the point of things?
 What should I do to fix things?
 I need help...
 Want it to be better...
 Trying so hard...
 Nothing is working...
 Not giving up...
 Trying...
 Trying...
 Trying...

photograph by ralph nardell



Can you believe that? Absolutely impossible. The world ended three months ago. But if you think that's why I'm in denial, you're wrong.

I simply can't believe that a guy like that can even exist...

Okay, let me explain. After the world ended and all, (something to do with nuclear bombs, I don't really care)... there were a bunch of survivors, and a lot of them were hurt (of course). So now it's time for the REAL smart ones to actually take a stand and they've rounded up a horde o' people and told them to go around curing everybody. Luckily, I'm not hurt. I forgot what country we're on now, I just saw someone die, but aside from coming very close to going psychotic, I'm not hurt.

Or maybe it's not so lucky. See, there's this guy, he's one of the people helping everyone and acting like a doctor, and you can tell that he's quickly adapted to his environment. He's already found his own sword to strap to his back-, and I have no idea how an oversized blade could manage to pull through a nuclear war thingy-, but that's not the point. Maybe he wears it for protection; maybe he wears it to emphasize his striking good looks. I dunno.

Anyway, he's also got these big black boots that probably weigh a ton each, and they've got those little belts on 'em like you only see hot guys wear in movies when they're about to jump on a big black horse or rescue somebody or other. He's not short on strength, either. I know this may seem a little rude, but I couldn't help notice that he's worked up quite a few layers of muscle that make him look like everything he does takes a lot of energy.

If you're thinking he's just some big oaf, you're wrong on that, too. He's got intelligent dark eyes and these eyebrows that always have one hard expression, which just goes to show you that he's always busy, working, trying to stay on top of things just to help out other people. I've never seen him sit down, really! He's always running, or standing, or talking-, did I mention his voice? It's no squeak tube. He sounds like one of those guys from an action movie, and I'd give you an example, only I don't like playing with copyright law, even if the world did in fact end.

I always get nervous about recopying any logo...

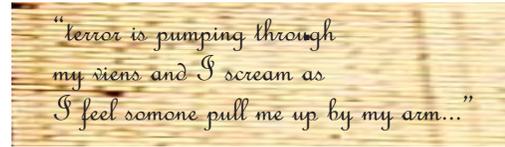
He's got a pretty sweet tan, too, but not one of those fakey fake tans where some guy pays a thousand bucks or something just to get a few lame girls on him. This is one of those natural tans you get from working out in the sun all day, which I know he does, because the sun is getting real close to the earth-, (not that I even pretend to worry about all that global warming junk. It's too late now).

Statistically speaking, he is probably one of the last males in existence. But if someone were to ask me what the last several males in existence would look like, I would never have guessed that this hunk would be one of them. I mean, he's the manliest manly masculine young man I've ever seen in my whole life!!! He is the definition of the word: MALE.

Okay, well here's the catch. (Yes, there always has to be a catch.) He doesn't even know I exist. And if you think that's bad, wait till you hear this:

I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME.

Yes, yup, yuppers, indeed, yap, that's right. I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME.



by. ayah abdul-rauf

I've made several guesses, though I'd rather not write them down cuz I'd sound ridiculous, and I can't spell most of the names anyway.

So now I'm thinking, if it's possible for the world to end, is it possible that he actually came from an unknown land where they breed beautiful guys so girls like me can analyze his every lovely feature???

Okay, now I AM ridiculous...So if you think this short little story writing piece type thing is about the end of the world, it's not. It's about me trying to survive by restraining myself every time that beauty walks past. I just wish he'd give me a break!

So here's a better description of what's happening: (I think it's important to write all this down, right? It is, after all, the end of the world...)

The land here is coarse, not fresh, and every once in a while you see a big hill of dirt that I suppose was just kinda swept upward by the force of whatever and it makes it real hard to get around. It's really wet here, too, cuz all the water from the oceans, I suppose, just went SWISH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

And now the earth is really wet...

In case you haven't noticed, my writing is getting all choppy cuz that GUY is now walking past me to get his PACKAGES which are probably so BIG and HEAVY that only HE can carry them coz he's got all that MUSCLE...

You know what I'm thinking? I'm thinking that maybe he'd notice me if I hurt myself... his job is to cure people, right? No way, I'm not that pathetic! Not trying to be arrogant or anything, but I'm not that bad looking myself. And I'm smart, unlike them other cheap girls with too much make-up. They're a dime a dozen.

Most of those girls are dead, now...

If he doesn't notice me of his own accord, then that's his loss. Still, as he walks past me to get some more packages, I can't help but think that he really is better looking than I am. But I'm not pathetic. Hurting yourself is stupid. Besides, I can't busy myself with being in love!!!! I'm busy with other things, like how I'm going to survive, or why my best friend died in the war, or how I can possibly write like everything's fine and dandy when really the world has ended???

There must be a God out there somewhere.

It's the next day. I can never pretend that what just happened didn't happen.

Last night I was scouting around carrying nothing but my canvas bag, (which is all I have, anyway.) I was really hungry, and hadn't found anything to eat. I was thinking solely about food. Did I mention that there were cannibals out here? It wasn't safe, especially not at night. I'd rather die than eat another human, but on a certain note, I couldn't blame them.

There are robbers out here, too. People had nothing, I had left the reservation area where I could do my writing, so it was dangerous. I shouldn't have brought my bag. Any robber could tell I was one of the lucky ones. It was late evening, but they could still see me. I had been worried about getting mugged for hours, and I would have gone back, but I couldn't find my way.

I was doing my best not to panic, cuz I knew that wouldn't help. I was walking a little faster with my head held high, my way of telling all them robbers to back off. It was really hard to keep walking that way on an empty stomach, and I was trying not to think about the darkness and the hunger and the fear and the fact that all my relatives and friends were dead, which I must admit I had been doing a pretty good job of until that point.

Now this is the most scary and beautiful thing that ever happened to me. As I'm walking, I start to hear heavy footsteps behind me. I don't turn around because I didn't want to attract any attention, and you couldn't see much in that dark, anyway. But the footsteps are getting louder and louder and next thing I know I'm pumping my legs as fast as I can to get away from whoever's behind me, which still isn't very fast because I'm starving so bad that I'm thinking of food even as I run, and I'm thinking that the person behind me is gonna eat me cuz they must be hungry, too, and then physics takes its toll...

I trip. I fall.

Terror is pumping through my veins and I scream as I feel some guy pull me up by my arm and I try to pull away but he's strong. He grabs my other arm and turns me around. I opened my eyes and stopped screaming.

It was the GUY.

"I didn't mean to scare you," he said, "but you're not supposed to be out this late. Don't you know it's dangerous?"

I try to stop concentrating on how close I am to his face and the fact that he hasn't let go of me yet so I can answer.

"I was hungry..." I tell him in a small voice, feeling really embarrassed cuz now there are tears leaking out of my eyes.

"It's okay," he says, and lets go of one of my arms to pick up my bag (which I had dropped, of course), and swings it up onto his shoulder.

"I'll get you some food..."

But then he pauses, staring at the ground. I look down, too, and see what he sees. There was a small green plant where my bag had fallen. Small, green, but alive. Alive in this wasteland. This little green plant was hope.

He smiles, and it's the first time I've ever seen him smile. It's a beautiful smile, because I can tell he only saves it for special occasions. Then he looks at me, and he's still smiling. He takes my hand and leads me back to a safer place and I can tell things are going to get better. He's had losses just like me.

Now if you think this is just some sissy little tale about an overemotional girl who thinks that the only way for her to be safe from herself is for some perfect guy to come along and turn her world upside down, (which is impossible, of course, because a perfect guy would never like a dangerous girl), then you are dead wrong.

It's just a story to tell that eventually, those weird fairy tale dreams can come true, even if the world has to end first.



untitled
jaden gragg

Notorious Victoria,
Malicious Victoria,
Sweet kind and loving Victoria.

Multiple personalities,
An ongoing personification,
Can create,
In itself a problem,
Don't you think,
Vic-tor-ia

One persona so straightforward, so for sure,
Keeps you on track,
Another moving at such a fast pace,
Never looking back,
And the last so kind and nurturing,
Sings you a sweet song.
I know this much is true,
Because I hear you sing along.

These three distinct voices,
All have quite a grip on your sanity,

As I look at your swollen face,
I notice your red eyes.
You haven't slept for days it seems,
Try and rest while I keep watch.
By watch, I mean sit quietly and think,
What goes on while you sleep...
Do your voices ever rest,
Victoria?

So lay down,
No I mean it,
On the cold wood floor,
And I'll protect you from things we can both see,
Although for your inside's arguing I can't do much more
Than softly rub your tensed muscles.

And I can't fully understand this much
But I'll readily explain it.
Your twitching and your mumbling,
Tossing over away from my view,
Proves to me
That inside your mind,
Isn't quite as peaceful,
As where I am in this breezy room.



photographs by ralph nardell

Are they all shouting,
inside your blank mind?
At least that's what I assume,
Because I hear you yelling back at them.
However softly.

Pulling at your knotted hair,
And chewing on your lips,
I suppose I can take a hint.
And gently rouse you awake,
and give you my hand.

Opening your eyes,
Seems like quite the task,
But I've something to tell you,
Little Victoria

Creative Victoria,
Depressed Victoria,
Or is it fun and crazy Victoria?
There's two sides to every story,
But perhaps in this one,
There's three.

As I say this,
You, Victoria,
Look directly in my eyes,
And say
"There's four."

One for who I really am,
Underneath all the crazy whispering.

Though you'd never admit me to be justified
in saying "no,"
I think you know why I'm doing this.

Too often
I catch you staring at me, wanting me,
but never know how to say
what I have to say.

After everything I'm hardly tongue-tied anymore,
but it's become too easy to doubt your reality-
making you, in my mind, only what I want you to be,
A hypocritical motion, I suppose,
recreating your principle crime against me.

You'd wonder why exactly
I'd ponder something so long dead.

I cannot precisely say,
though I figure it has something to do with how much better
it feels
to miss someone
who might have, in her own twisted way, wanted me
than to shudder at the mention of her name,
remembering the nausea that followed
each and every time she made a pass at me.
I would have played along
as your naive redhead,
would you have pretended to love my spirit
for more than a cheap screw.

It's never a fair trade,
but it's apparent that
given and despite everything that happened
only I was truly wrong.

I should have known better
than to search for compassion from a girl who will spend her life
scrounging for approval in the beds of foul boys who close their eyes
and make believe they're with someone, anyone but her,
who love her because they're too lazy,
too worthless
for any girl
who insists on being valued as more
than something cheaply bought
and thrown away
the next day





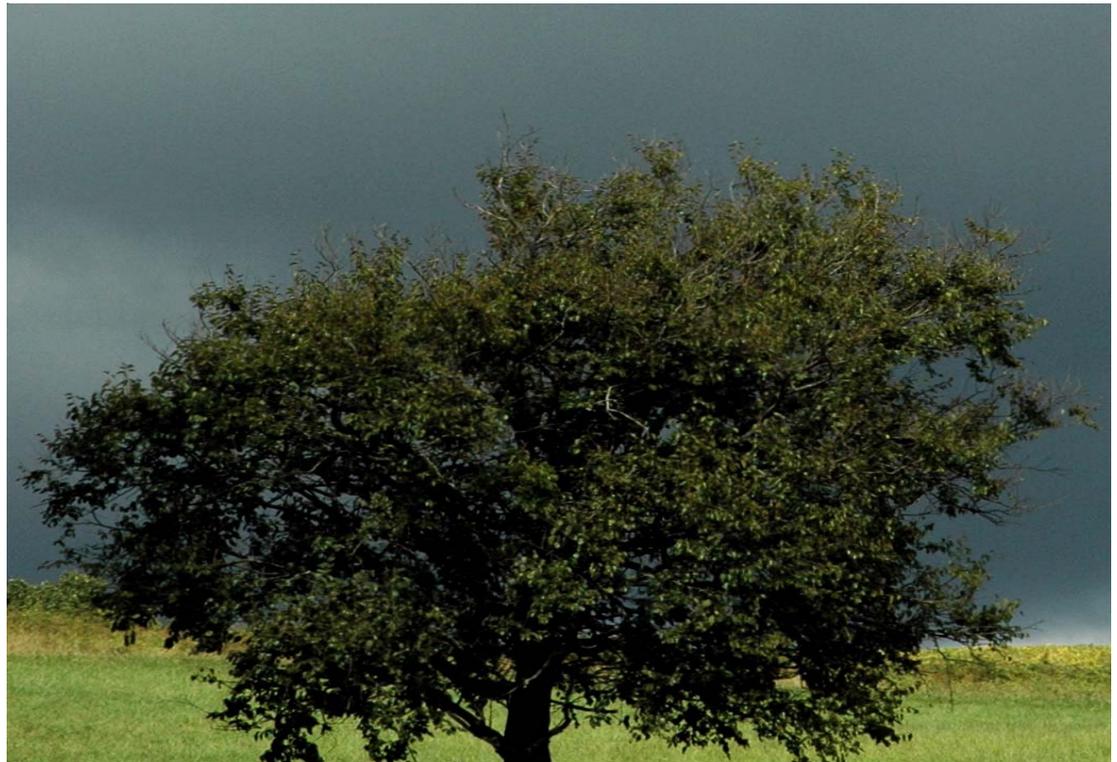
ode to bunny
angi elem



O, furry friend with aerial ears
Short in memory, but long in years
You hop, you stretch, you yawn, you drink
But as I can guess, you do not think
What passes through your fuzzy head?
You eat, you run, you go to bed
What lessons do you possibly affect
To save your sliding intellect?
The scales to measure your IQ are speculative
Running from zero into the negative
For although thou art no mental brute
You make it up by being cute
Not much different than some people, I fear
Like 50 Cent, or Britney Spears
For though they do more than eat and drink
It's still unproven that they think

wish
jessica outler

I walk outside
Everything seems so dark
Have only the stars
To give me light
Wind blows the grass
Makes the leaves dance
Swirls in my hair
Carries away my every care
And the stars
Twinkle down on me
Like diamonds on velvet
They seem to be winking
Are they smiling at me?
They seem to be thinking
They seem to be asking me
To wish
A crystal clear sky
Not a cloud in sight
Moon shines down
With light so bright
And the stars
Whisper to me
They're telling me
To wish
As the stars fade
And the sun awakes
And the dawn is mirrored on the shimmering lake
As the crickets end their midnight requiem,
As crazy as it may seem,
I wish



photograph by ralph nardell

don't try to understand

bethanie powell

The words that I say may confuse you
corrupt your mind
drive you crazy
but the one thing
it is for sure to do
is kill you
make you cry
try to run
but the words
will find you
in your dreams of lies
you shall tell me
to die with them
but I shall hold the lies
with me

in my heart of sorrows

loves death

kim nash

I look at your face,
the flowers in the vase,
I never wanted to be in this place,
As I pace the floor,
Searching for the door,
I realize I miss you more,
So I kneel at the cross,
And pray for my loss,
Wondering why you paid the cost . . .

silence

kelly o'neill

Over the quivering surface of the stream,
The moon issued a silent scream.
The fog of war flowed silently adrift,
The pain of the night was silent and swift.
A moth fluttered in the silent breeze,
Surrounded by the scent of death and disease.
And yet it seemed it hadn't a care,
About the senseless slaughter of others
who did not quite as well fare.
But as dawn began to appear,
Away went the pain, the despair, the fear.
The silence of a new day,
Seemed to deafen what had come to stay.
Even when there is the darkness of the cloud,
There is still light all around.

untitled

anonymous

It comes in all shapes and sizes
some cute couples,
some odd pairs...
we know who we are.
But despite the fact that commonly,
this world leads us to believe
that clash will always lead to
-conflict-
and conflict just its own,
I've found that with each
difference that comes between us,
we grow that much more alike,
and with each little quirk I find in you,
you're simply that much more intriguing...
Because from where I'm standing
every little thing you do
makes you that much more.

I guess that's why we call it
Love.

rainbow is

lois wetzel

resounding majesty
abundant light
interceding with the heavens
nymphs like beauty
bestowing radiance
overpowering reign
wondrous creation





photograph by ralph nardell

love
anna jones

Built into the foundation
Of this very earth
Is a virtue,
More mysterious,
More powerful
Than life itself.

Etched in the building blocks of heaven,
Inscribed on the clouds up high,
Written below the ground I walk,
Engraved on the sidewalks in the sky.

Before the sun was created,
On the day the lord made light,
It escaped from his heart onto the land,
That gives us all our might.

Might to believe,
Might to care,
Might to cherish,
It's everywhere.

My heart is overflowing,
With that virtue cast into our core,
Who would have thought love was so meaningful?
But without it we're nothing at all,

Just empty shells,
Going through motions,
Day after day,
Without any emotion.

It's the light in the dark,
The big in the small,
The warmth in the cold,
And yet nothing at all.

It remains the biggest mystery,
We have yet to solve,
But I'm not worried,
I always know,
It's there inside us all.

A class clown attempted murder today.
A mother's little boy,
a child's best friend,
a teacher's beloved terror,
stood over the monster who raised his freckly faced son
like the animal he'd become,
clutching a knife.

The only story told
was of a victim,
motionless and bleeding on the ground,
glaring up at his son.

But no one's ever bothered themselves with the story
of the boy
who was as much as killed by circumstance.

Killer used to sit by me in art class.
He used to joke about the way his mother left him home on friday
nights with a cheap video game to keep him company.

Next time he saw her, she was rarely alone.

He took in stride the way his villain of a father
whistled at
girls six years his senior.

He saved his best friend's life once,
one day on the playground.
Only killer knew the telltale signs of the poor boy's asthma.
Only killer knew where to find his inhaler.

No one looks at mug shots of a brute
who almost killed his own father
and wonders

if he was someone's best friend,
someone's love,
someone's baby.

But he never had a friend to share the disturbing facts of his
life with.
No friend was ever burdened with the reality of his home
life,
with his father's belt and rage.

No one ever wondered
why he didn't know how to love.

No one ever cared
that he had no one in the world to tell him
that the way he treated all of us was wrong.

Killer was not born
He was made
by the very "victim" pitied through every source.

It doesn't matter, they argue.
Why should it matter?
He's someone else's responsibility.

I was taking a test
for AP class
while the boy who came from the very
same place that I did
got arrested for fighting his abuser.

By next week, the boy who could make
anything exciting, could make a
statue smile
will be in jail.

And the rest of us will continue living
our lives with nothing but cold pity
for the boy we insist was never
one of us.



artwork by maddie miguel



No One Ev

Regretful murder suicides
Or better yet, just suicides.

Acting as if you knew all about it,
You're helping a lot,
Really, you're not.

It's all her fault,
She forced it upon her.
Bullshit.
She loved her to death,
The good kind of death,
The one you would die for.

They say opposites attract.
Let me just say,
Your opposite reactions
Are far beyond attractive.

And your whispers in the hall
Echo on forever,
She can hear you,

You say you cared about her,
Well she's listening,
And she says stopping
Would be 100% correct.

your opposite reactions are far beyond attractive
becky peda



untitled
dustin robinson

What is this nonsense that a school represents?
It teaches the ways of a trained money controlling society
I dwell in the essence of my mind knowing they don't have me convinced
I'm an individual and I will not be another part of the variety

I dwell in the essence of my heart to divide me
I need to learn a lesson in love, compassion, and generosity
That school won't teach so I pray to god to guide me
This is what I feel and I'm not hiding behind a philosophy

What is an education?
It's not about a job or living a lavish life or having a career
But that's what they call it in the freedomless nation
Because when I die it will only be you in the mirror

I was once upon a time controlled by fear
Fear is what powers evil
I love and pray to my god
But I won't bow my head to an occult's steeple

That is made up of nonsense religious people
But yet I'm very spiritual
There are those ones in the church that divine evil
That's why I don't fall underneath the steeple

I only ask god to give me wisdom and understanding
All things happen for a reason even the reprimanding
I ask him to answer my prayers
He holds me up that's why I'm still standing



er Cared

the beast
dylan spencer

On the way to the hospital I could feel no pain, but I knew what he had done to me earlier that day. I had just flown in from Kansas City, and it was my first day in Vegas. My dad had already gone to work, and grandma was out back mowing the lawn, unable to hear the sounds around her.

After watching a couple movies inside, I moved outside to the hot desert air and went for a swim. After swimming I was tired, so I started walking around the pool. Then I heard the dog on the other side. When I looked over I could see nothing, but I could hear him. Still, I could tell it was a big dog by the sound of its foot steps, one after another I listened. Soon I was on top of the wall looking for the dog

The dog was big and black, with a mane of muscle around its shoulders. The dog seemed nice when it started licking my Taz slippers, so I jumped down to pet it. The dog licked my hands and let me scratch its ears. Then something strange happened to the dog; it stopped breathing and stared into my gut like it was looking right inside of me.

I started to back away but it just followed, still staring at the same spot. My fingers touched the wall. He had me cornered. Then he did it. He slammed me up against the wall! I had nowhere to go, slashing, cutting, biting. It wouldn't stop!

I had to do something or else I was going to die. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the rock, the rock that was going to save me. I kneed him in the gut. He kept going. Again and again I fought the dog, punching it in the face, finding any place where my body could connect to his. Finally it hit the ground. I picked up the rock and stood over him like a new person, like the beast he was. Then he was dead.

I'll never forget that day, not just because of the scars I have or the memories that are jammed in my mind, but because of the thought that my life could have ended right there, just like his.

*"out of the corner of my eye,
I saw the rock, the rock
that was going to save me"*

one
lauren engelken



*"alone and where
I want to be,
happy and content"*

All I've ever wanted is independence from everyone and to live my own life. I don't know if it's because I've never had that before living with a large family and controlling parents but it's something I always long for. My dream is to get out of Kansas City and move to New York, go to Art College, live on my own, live by my own rules, live for only me. I don't get independence anywhere besides in my art. There I'm in my element I am one. Alone and where I want to be, happy and content. I have never found someone who keeps me happy and really, really understands me. Whenever I think I've found it, someone that I want to be with and like they betray or let me down. I don't want the average All-American Dream: kids, early happy marriage, nice house in a nice neighborhood. That's not me at all; I would rather love myself than someone else. I would rather understand and trust myself than someone else. Other people don't complete ourselves, and not objects, but how we feel about ourselves. Doing what makes you happy and living a long healthy life is what completes a person, not other people and objects. People and objects can make you laugh and be happy but not content you. They are only temporary. People die, objects crack, and memories fade. We must live our own lives and complete ourselves through ourselves. We are not jigsaw pieces that walk around trying to find a mate. We are beautiful and interesting creatures who live their lives through themselves, try to understand themselves, and do *what* makes them happy, not *who*. I'm not bashing people, but one's soul lives on, so take hold of your life and complete yourself.

the journey
mike helton

"an old man in the middle of the road..."

A long time ago, in a place far, far away, it was storming, wind blowing, the sound of thunder cracking like a whip. It was me and my brother, and we were lost in this far away land. We started on a journey to find the spring of eternal life, and we were told by an old man in the middle of the road that this would push every limit we could think of both mentally and physically but we did not believe him. We figured, "What does he know? He must be senile," but little did we know he was right. We ended up in this forest being attacked by the most ferocious beasts we'd ever seen, and all we had to protect us was our minds. We had to outsmart the beasts so that we could find the spring and live forever.

My brother and I decided that we must run from these beasts and make a booby trap for when they came after us. So that's what we did. My brother and I made the trap out of all the materials we could find and it destroyed these beasts. We were proud of what we had accomplished but we knew this wasn't the end of our journey, so we continued in search of the spring through the deepest parts of the forest—things popping out of every corner to try and stop us. Finally we made it, and when we got there, there was a bright light, and in a blink of an eye we were out of the forest, and we found out the true way to live forever—use your head. This journey made life worth living.



the twilight
audra spitzer

Have you ever awakened in the middle of the night? You look around and all your clocks are flashing. Blinking, on and off, on and off. You think to yourself, was it supposed to storm tonight? You decide the best way to find the solution is to check outside. As you struggle with the covers to get up, it seems that somebody has tried to wrap you like a burrito. The darkness takes over and you begin to wonder where he's hiding. Could he be under the bed? In the closet? A swimming noodle then falls onto your bed. You think, hmm, where did this come from?

While you're wondering, you come up with the perfect plan! You can use this noodle to swing open the closet door all the way! In the process of doing this, the darkness takes over again. What if that's exactly what he wants you to do? Obviously there is no fooling this guy. You then decide to get a running start to jump as far away from the bed as you can in the direction of the door. One, Two, Three, SMACK into the door. You open the door and feel a gust of wind flow past you. Pondering for a second, you decide to step out. Wow, it's cold out here, you think. You go a little farther down the hall with great caution. Ewh, something wet! Finally you wake up and realize you're lying on your cold wooden floor and you have messed yourself.

Don't worry. It happens to the best of us. But only in the twilight . . .

"Darkness takes over and you begin to wonder..."



reflections on water
jessica suller

The water spraying around me
The waves like endlessness enveloping me,
Surrounding me, smothering me
The hugeness of the ocean
Obscures my vision
Numbs my senses
Yet I feel the waves
Pounding, beating.
I feel the water
Splashing, swirling.
I feel the creatures dance and sing,
I join them
and I am gone.

Blue swirls,
Colorful stripes and spots of color moving,
Swimming around me
Bubbles
salt on my tongue
Whorls of light
Distorted by the surface above me
Sleek grey bodies brush my hand
Playful liquid black eyes
Orange towers of spongy coral
Water flowing through my hair
It's like it's flowing through my mind
Erasing all but this moment.



photograph by ralph nardell

the sun is set
hannah gerwick

the water is still.
sitting on the dock, watching the horizon
I see
the bright orange, pink, yellow sky
with a mix of purple and blue
slowly fading away into darkness.

forgotten: the holocaust

alexa schnieders

The horror, the brutality
eats away at my heart until I no longer
see the need to go on.

I bite my lip,
holding in the
rage,
the remorse
the screams
I want the world to hear.
but they won't.

I watch my people, my family, suffer
then perish.
I haul them
with the beady guard's eyes
watching...waiting for me to stumble,
to gasp,
but I won't.

The tears
fall,
though I try to blink them back,
my feet carry me
numbly,
as I carry my
beloved ones.

I'd be forgotten
a number
a mere
statistic.
I want the people to remember,
but they won't.
I fade away,
until I'm a
walking corpse.
No more than skin
and bones
no joy left,
no feeling left,
no anger left.
I am no longer human,
I'm a statistic...
Forgotten.



white death

rachel karner

Daring to yearn for freedom as
the doors of your prison open
the view of white death before you
all of your small hopes broken
standing in a door between hell's
cold fingers brush your skin
beautiful death covers the hills
wait for a new torment to begin
a terrible fate and broken will
not wanting to endure the pain
will the white death soon melt?
Will warmth and life come again?

lonely man
alison stephens



photograph by ralph nardell

A lonely man sits on the side of the road
He sings a song,
La, la, la.
He stops, silence.
Red, green, yellow, red, green, yellow
The light keeps turning
Over and over
But no one is in sight, besides the lonely man
Abandoned buildings, collapsed houses
No one is there, but the lonely man.
The light keeps going, going, going
The lonely man sits, waits
Waiting for something, anything
A person, a sign, just waiting
Can he do something?
Yes? No? Who's to decide?
Him, you, me?
Him, only he can decide
And while he's waiting
The lights keep turning
Time keeps turning
And he's just sitting,
Waiting, wasting his life, wasting his time

A lonely man sits on the side of the road
He sings a song,
La, la, la.
He stops, silence.
The lights are still turning
But this time as he watches
He's not waiting
He's not waiting for a person, or a sign
He's looking
He's not wasting his life, his time
He's living.

A lonely man sat by the side of the road.
That lonely man has moved on.



photo by sarah spencer

scarlet hall

jaden gray

Hearing the phantom calls of the organ,
And the soft murmur of the church choir,
Awakened from sleep with a feeling she couldn't describe,
She got out of bed and followed it outside.
A careful mist lay over her small town, a light shield of protection.
On the rusted train tracks she walked,
Each new step brought no new thoughts to her head.
Under the glow of the moon and through the trickle of morning, she journeyed slowly,
In a trance, past the rubble of bricks, past her old home.
The trance held her carefully, a thin web withholding thoughts.
She knew not consciously of where she was headed, but memories tumbled
uncomfortably in her mind and she stopped walking when the abandoned church
sprawled ahead of her.

Hearing the old double doors creak open slowly, as if revealing a crematorium,
was a comforting sound. Her trance held all worries and thoughts away, and she floated
from outside into the church, breathing the moldy air with satisfaction.
She wandered in through the hall, cradling pictures of past ministers and married couples,
all smiling wide under their film of dust, as if they knew she was here,
with them in their scarlet hall. More doors opened, and she found herself treading the
worn carpet leading into the great sanctuary. Though dusted with filth, it still held her
breath with awe. The windows depicted tortured demons and glowing angels in stained
glass, and morning light, faint and delicate, came through the eyes of the martyrs, as if
afraid to enter the room of the church.

Up the steps, leading up to the altar she floated,
Soft notes, a piano, a harp, filled the air around her.
Daintily fluttering, the intricate strains of music lasted only seconds,
but brought up more memories. Silence seemed heavy, but lasted only
seconds as the notes came again, this time slightly louder,
as if another instrument had joined in but no voices, only the melodious laugh of playing.
Silence again, then music, deftly gaining speed and sound. Closing her eyes and swaying along
with the sweet music, it played in her ears and whispered for her to crawl into the altar,
the warm scarlet red altar. The music curled around her head and squeezed her eyes
shut and she obeyed it and the music took control as she climbed into the large
box. The next time she heard the music that had mysteriously come, it was
no longer fine and sensitive, but was played overwhelmingly loud and accompanied
with screeches. Metallic screams took control of her head, banging the knowledge
of who she was. She winced as she heard the magnificent stained glass murals
breaking into a million pieces and doors slamming open and closed. As the
altar slammed shut and thus locked her in, her muffled screaming matched the
fast, cruel pace of the music that had taken her sanity, and she knew nothing was impossible.

holes in the heavens

drew wilson

The sky is bright
But the Stars are cold
Like eyes, they twinkle
Ancient and old
Looking down on the Earth far below
They watch and wait,
And what's more, they know
They look down, older than time
Staring at me
Like I've committed a crime
One must wonder,
If I were to poke a god in the eye
The Stars, would they blink, or fall from the sky?
Though it seems, at times, a great deal odd
They're just balls of gas,
Not the eyes of a god
Stars hold a magic all of their own
It grips the world, like a dog grips a bone
The Sun, bright and golden
With its skin scorching rays
Can't hold a candle to their cold, searching, gaze
The Sun sears your flesh
But the Stars steal souls
I look at the sky
And in the Heavens, see Holes.



photograph by ralph nardell

“W”ithin the surface of the fleeting river the wrinkled image of the city lay.” I stopped and observed this for some time deep in thought about how much I wanted a gas-powered sweater. Sadly, being a stand up comedian, I had little or no money. I then thought to myself, why did I become a comedian? The answer was obviously not clear to me. I became a comedian after an unfortunate bad luck streak as a lumberjack. When I was a lumberjack I had this awful habit of showing up at the wrong location and chopping down a couple trees on someone’s property. Needless to say that ended my career in the lumber business.

I glanced at my wrist watch, Oh My God! It was 11:00. I Was Late. At that moment I took off running. My side began to cramp up and I thought, that burrito was a bad choice, had I known I would be running I would not have eaten so much. In my thinking I forgot to pay attention to the sidewalk ahead of me. I ran straight into a large blue mailbox and fell over. The pain was terrible! Somehow I managed to get to my feet and started to run again. Finally, I had reached the show! I was five hours early. This didn’t bother me so much as the fact that my watch had been broken for weeks.

While waiting for the show time to near, I sat on the curb deep in thought. I began to ponder. I pondered about what smarter people probably pondered about, why they ponder, and if they ponder do they not ponder about what dumb people ponder about? After pondering for a good hour, I proceeded to think. However, this did not last long as I was hungry. I got up from the curb and began to stroll down the sidewalks of the city in search of someplace to get some food. While walking I bumped into a man who began to strike up a conversation with me. I forced an uncomfortable smile and pretended to be interested in what he had to say. He talked about the weather and I thought, how boring, if I wanted to hear someone talk about the weather I’d watch TV, yes I acted interested while inside my head I heard, “Get something to eat! Stop talking to this guy and get some food now!” I made sure I ended the conversation with the boring man and continued my search for food.

I walked into what from the outside looked like a restaurant. I soon found out it was not a place to eat, but the whole place was one huge empty blank room. I thought I should walk back outside, but when I turned around the door I came in was gone! I turned back around and saw a door at the other end of the building. I walked cautiously towards the door. I opened the door and saw a vast black nothingness. I thought about what I should do. At that point I realized I had two choices: number one, go through the door and take my chances in the vast black nothingness, or number two, turn around and hope the door leading back to the street would appear and forget about the vast black nothingness. I figured, what the heck, what is the worst case scenario of going through the door? I stepped through the door. Immediately I was walking through the door again only I was walking into the building. I saw a door, so I ran to it. When it was opened it went outside. I stepped through it and was glad to be out of the building.

The city changed during the time I was in the building. Everything looked sleek, shiny, and metallic, like something from the future. I looked in a puddle and saw my hair had turned grey and I had a beard, my hair used to be black and I had no beard; I couldn’t believe what I saw, so I found a newspaper and looked at the date. It was thirty years into the future. This didn’t bother me so much as my watch was still broken and I couldn’t tell if I was late to the show.

the milkman

jaden gragg

The milkman used to come up this way,
Bringing us his creamy milk, and stories, back in the day.
A dusty train followed him, rising up into the sky,
His buggy drove low, but his spirits sang high.
In my mind, I still see his horse-drawn car,
And would know he was coming a mile afar,
Winding the turns up the mountain,
The hum of his voice, his songs of life rising up like a fountain.
The knock on our doorstep to announce he had come,
He'd jump from his buggy and from his milk jars pick some,
In exchange for your nickel, a smile gave he.
He waved to the children, bounced the baby on his knee.
The children smiled gaily as they waved back,
Their faces stained white, his milk a fine snack.
And then he'd turn off again and ride down the mountain,
His horses would carry, as light as a feather
You'd hear the thousand milk jugs banging together,
The noise of his laughter getting smaller as he made his descent.
But you knew he'd come back after the day's crescent.

And I knew something was wrong, when I woke the next morn,
The children were crying and the morning paper was torn.
The milkman, read the news, was found dead late last night,
His work clothes all bloodied, his carriage a sight.
The milk jars were broken, and the ground stained red,
As stained, as our hearts were when we found out he was dead.
Despite all the news, I waited two hours for the milkman to come,
But wait as I might, the milkman came none.
I went out to the back porch, where the milk usually waited,
And found my youngest son, curled up crying, he was so devastated.
Our town was dead from a murder, dead from a rage, dead from a stranger,
The masked man who put our town's happiness in danger.
As he put the knife through our milkman's beating chest,
He had robbed us that night of the man we loved best.



untitled
erin ashley

Hawk upon blue sky
Soaring above brook and spring
On the endless high



photograph by ralph nardell



photograph by ralph nardell

I want to touch a tree.
Not just any tree.
A tree with big green leaves.
I miss the shade trees
give on hot summer days.
The way they smelled, not
like a flower, just the
overall smell of nature.
I want to sit on
a tree branch and scream.
I am free.
I want to hug a tree.
It may seem hippiesh
to you
but when you haven't
seen a tree...
in so long..

~jdc resident

If you fall head first
are you falling up?
or to the side?
or in between?
Can you feel heaven
and taste hell?
Can you reach in and pull out,
jump in and jump around?
If you exist but choose to be
nonexistent, are you real?
If you can go into a tragedy
and come out, does it even matter?
What makes life a lie and death a reality?
Stop dreaming
they'll all be nightmares soon.
Intoxicate yourself on
prescribed medication
your doctor says you need
them to function.
Why function in a dysfunctional world?
If you could fly
would you ever land?
would you?

~jdc resident

My mom is like binoculars
She is always looking out for me

My dad is like a unicorn
I've never seen him
I have always wondered
what he looks like

~jdc resident

repercussions
josiah jackson

Condemned by them
Isolation
Controlled by them
Aggravation
Freedom lost
Twice the cost

I am on probation

Repent

As I sit and do this free write
The thoughts going through my head aren't light
As I think back on my old action times of crisis
Thoughts of things past I would rather dismiss
As I realize I betrayed myself
Life's simple rules stare down on me

~jdc resident

dedicated to joetta
I care about u
just 2 let you know
cuz I don't know how
much love I show

A strong black
newbian queen is what
I call you

At graduation with 2 babies on your hip
U stayed focused and never lost a grip
I know it's been hard staying
on the godly tip

I think of U 2 day
especially fond of that
sunday
when we hugged 4 so long
I knew your love was strong
the strength I C in U
brings out the best in me
I care about U
with your bubble eyes

I love you like a fat kid loves pies

~jdc resident



on vacation from myself-
damaging life

~jdc resident

freedom's important
I see very clearly now
the great open space
it's not much to some people
but to me it's...everything.

~jdc resident

I lost my favorite cousin
he was at a gas station getting gas
with his daughter
and his daughter's mother
and someone ran over
and shot him.

~jdc resident

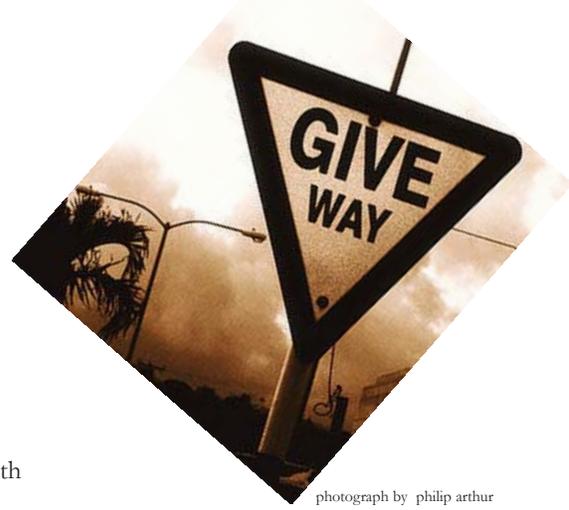


I remember a time when I had freedom. Maybe
not freedom, but choices. I could
choose my friends. I could choose
what I wanted to wear. The freedom
to say no, when I didn't want to do
something.

~jdc resident

I remember about my past.
my childhood.
it wasn't good.
It was actually a nightmare.
dark
scary
sad.

~jdc resident



photograph by philip arthur

Life Bites

My life is full of tragedy
Hurt and pain left and right
I see things a little differently
Looking for sunshine in the night

I think I've met the snake of the earth
And stepped in his rattling tail
Ever since the day of my birth
I've believed I was put here to fail

The snake has had its turn
It has bit me once or twice
I've felt its venom burn
Realized life's not always nice

I feel hurt and the infection
I fight it everyday
When I go the right direction
It takes the pain away

When I fight it, the infectin never lasts
All I have is thoughts of a better tomorrow
It's hard to put the pain in the past
But it's worth it to get rid of the sorrow

~jdc resident

door clang, no privacy.

~jdc resident

I wonder...
I sit in my cell and
wonder
where will I be when
this is all over?
will there be something
waiting for me on the
other side of the door?
Will the world have
changed?
Or will it all be the
same?

~jdc resident

Why
Why do I want to do my own thing?
Why do I always want to be in trouble?
Why don't I stay home...in one place?
Why do I always run away?
Why do I lie to AJ?
Why can't I just tell the truth?
Why can't I tell him I love him?
Why did Kyle ever kill himself?
Why couldn't he just live life like
the rest of us?
Why couldn't he just talk to his family
or friends?
Why am I going to start a new life
when I leave JDC?
Why should I be good?

my family
I want to see them more and more

~jdc resident



So maybe I am bound by fate, a problematic scaring induced
by hate, you never seem to open out, is that what all this
teaching has led to scout, it's not my fault, you make me feel,
like my own education wasn't truly real. So you came right
tearing up my soul, how could this small loss be your only
goal. You're all heartless people...

~jdc resident



photographs by ralph nardell

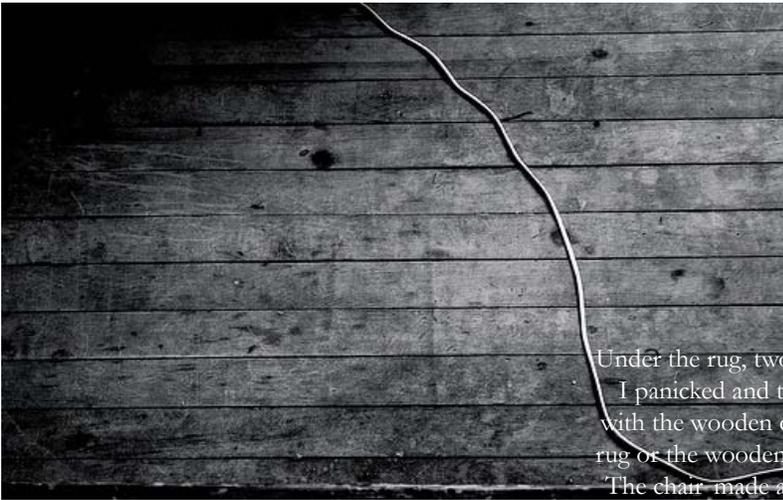
The calm before the storm

In the calm before the storm all is concealed
There is serenity and peace of mind before the storm is revealed
The clandestine activity crude as it laughs in your face
The Gnostic gimmick of peace before the mask breaks
Drawn into the illusion of pleasure, beauty, and delight
Then being tossed and consumed in the heat of the night
The calm before the storm creeps in disguise
Then leaps upon its victim in sudden surprise
Unaware of the cruelty that hides in the shadows
Unsuspecting first to the calm then the dilapidation
and destruction that follows

~jdc resident

I see purple oranges bouncing
Silly rabbits singing
twisted colors, sadistic hallucinations
these purple oranges hanging from a noose
dripin in my cup is purple orange juice

~jdc resident



Under the rug, two weeks later it happened again. The huge bump came back. I panicked and tried to smash it, like last time. It moved clear of my blow, with the wooden chair I had been sitting on. I didn't know if it was under the rug or the wooden floor. I slammed the chair at it again. Once more it moved. The chair made a loud sound as it broke on the carpet of the wooden floor. I stepped on it and it slid out under my foot. It came out of the carpet. It was under the wood. Making little cracks in the floor as it traveled to the stairs. I followed behind slipping on the wood in my wool socks.

~jdc resident

waves slapping against the shore
sun shining through every door

sets my mind free and at ease keeps
my head in the clouds...always dreaming
about me perfect one

~jdc resident

Sometimes I Cry

Sometimes when I sit in my room I think of home
I think of all the things I miss and how I'm alone
In all the loneliness I get consumed in sadness and fear
Then I feel the pain as I shed a tear
Sometimes when I'm in my room and I'm entrapped in silence
I bring back the past, all the hurt and violence
In the way things turned out I wonder why
Then I feel scared and sometimes I cry

~jdc resident



photograph by ralph nardell





an anecdote to be read aloud, with enthusiasm

madeline pinne'

Wait!

Yes, we're open. Despite the fact that someone didn't flip the OPEN sign around. Walter! Yes, you! What did I say about that sign? Oh, no, ma'am, don't leave, please, we're open. We are! Hello? Excuse me? Please turn around! Are you deaf, ma'am? Hard of hearing? Suffering from a buildup of ear fluids? HELLO, YOU CRAZY OLD BAT! Oh, so you can hear. Delightful! Oh, goodness. Oh, now don't look at me that way, sir, you looked rather, erm, feminine from behind. It was that scarf around your head, sir. Yes, I know it's cold, why do you think I've got the door shut? No, I can't imagine, but I can see that you're going to tell me anyway, so...how much did you pay for that scarf? Really? Good gracious! God bless America and all the ships at sea! You could feed an entire third world...no, no, excuse me, sir. I only meant that...no, I understand that it must be worth it. Quite toasty, I'm sure, underneath that scarf. No, I assure you, I'm not being flippant. Your ears are the picture of, erm, warmth. Oh, well, of course I will. But I must insist that you buy something from me, if I'm going to do that. We in the rain slicker industry make a rather modest living. But do you really want me to touch your ear? Are you certain? Well, alright. Hmm. Yes, that is quite warm. And sweaty. No, no, I didn't say sweaty, I said...gingham! Because you, sir, need a gingham rain slicker, I can see it in your eyes! What's that? You don't want the gingham? You want a slicker to match the scarf? Well, I don't know if we carry pink paisley. That's an interesting choice, may I say, especially for someone of the, erm, male gender. Oh! It's for your wife's birthday? You mean to say that you're testing out the scarf for your wife, to make sure that it's warm enough for her delicate ears? Well, now you tell me! So that means the coat would be for her, as well. It would have been most helpful to tell me this before. Oh, no, don't leave. Please! I'll paint the pattern on the coat myself! Oh, do come back, sir! I can send you a catalog! Yes, I'll do that. Our hunter green camouflage print is very fashionably priced this month. What does that odd gesture mean? Oh, can't you hear me? Come back, sir, come back! You haven't even filled out a customer satisfaction survey!





photograph by ralph nardell

Thank You

Young Adult Contributors
Central YA Creative Writing Group
Central YA Submission Committee
Eriko Akaike-Toste
Scott Sime
Ralph Nardell
Jennifer Taylor
Jennifer Mahnken
Kasey Riley
Kelly Sime
Katie Manning
Linda Kautzi
Dennis Ross
Patricia Suellentrop
Erin Howerton
Carolyn Weeks
Monique Sendez
Kevin Chacey
Susan Woodruff
Jan McConnell
Marsha Bennett
Julie Rickman
Sarah Handgraaf
Philip Arthur
Summer Anne
Youth Services Staff

Colophon

This publication was put together using Adobe PageMaker 7.0. All layouts materialized using Adobe PageMaker 7.0. Unless otherwise stated, photographs were acquired through liquidlibrary.com and generously donated by Ralph Nardell, Philip Arthur, and Summer Anne via www.flickr.com. Garamond and French Script were our fonts of choice. Printing was coordinated by Jennifer Taylor and Cindy Frazer in Johnson County Creative Services.

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created by shelby g. wheat

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Blue Valley West High School

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cory mclaughlin

audra spitzer

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john hughes

kim nash

dustin robinson

dylan spencer

Homeschool

hana spangler

Lakewood Middle School

anna jones

Mission Valley Middle School

shelby e. wheat

Olathe East High School

amanda ross

sarah spencer

Shawnee Mission East High School

patrick barry

caitlin benson

lauren engelken

sara fisher

hannah gewick

delaney herman

emanuel medina

drake myers

lois wetzel

madeleine pinne'

sarah sears

Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

rachel karner

maddie miguel

Shawnee Mission South High School

drew wilson

becky peda

Shawnee Mission West High School

zoë christianson

michele a. ortiz

morgan shaffer

Trailridge Middle School

ayah abdul-rauf

jaden graqq

Westridge

angi clem

jessica sutter



drawing by john hughes



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