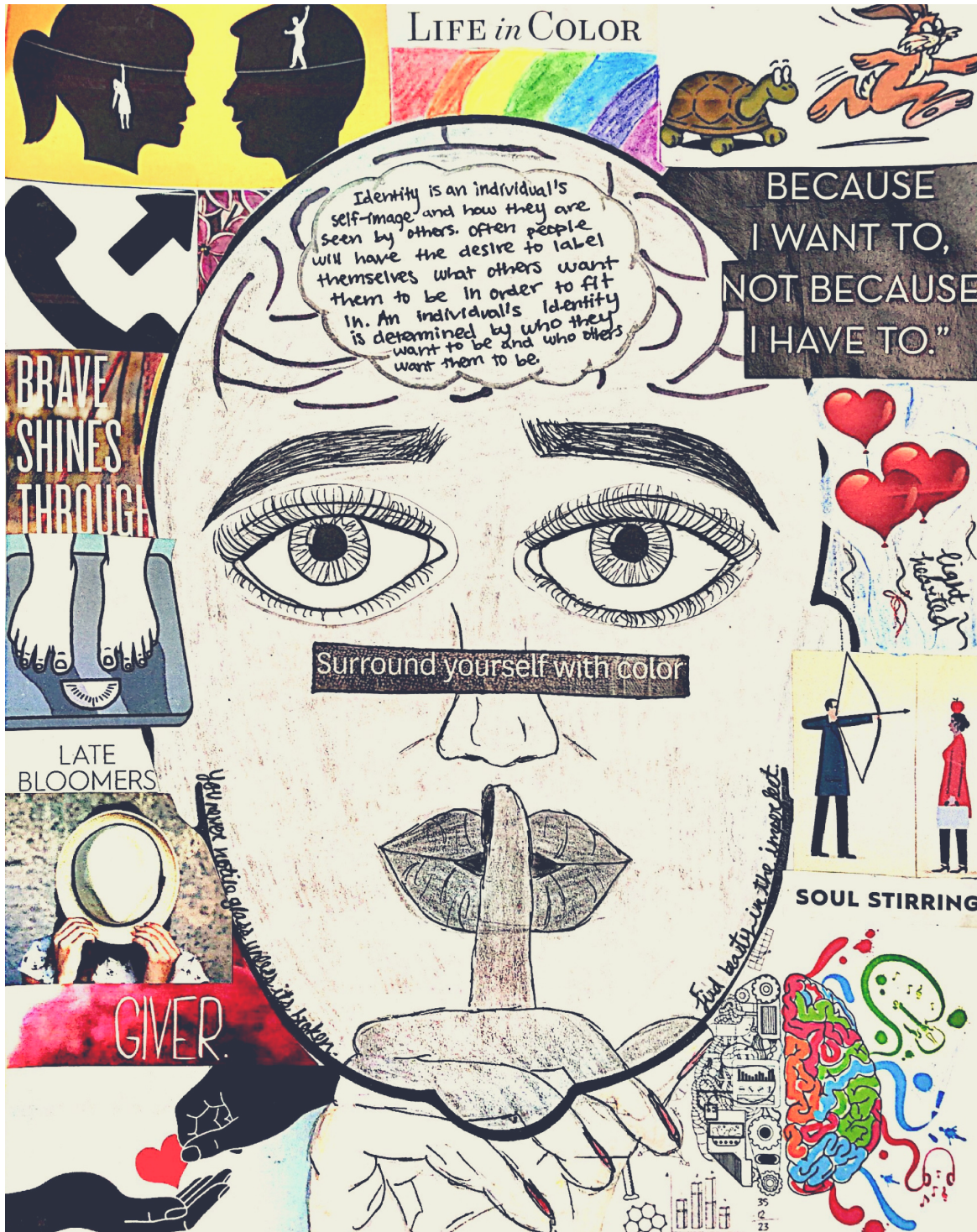


THE ROSETTE GAZETTE

ISSUE 2 | LOS CERRITOS MIDDLE SCHOOL | MAY 2018



Our perspectives, our world

THE ROSETTE GAZETTE

LOS CERRITOS MIDDLE SCHOOL'S LITERARY MAGAZINE
ISSUE 2, MAY 2018

We often hear the cliché “children are our future” when we bear witness to the fantastic work and potential of students, but this axiom sells short the power and creativity of the writers, artists, and thinkers who are represented in this year’s edition of *The Rosette Gazette* already possess. Instead of waiting for the future, our sixth, seventh, and eighth graders at Los Cerritos Middle School are encouraged and empowered to share their experiences, perspectives, dreams, and passions with the world today.

Their words and art have the power to influence and inspire not just their peers and future Leopards, but their teachers, families, and members of the community who are offered a glimpse into the complex perspective of the modern middle school student. As a teacher here at LC, I am reminded every day that, yes, these are the movers and shakers that will brighten our future world, but, in truth, these visionaries and creators have already arrived.



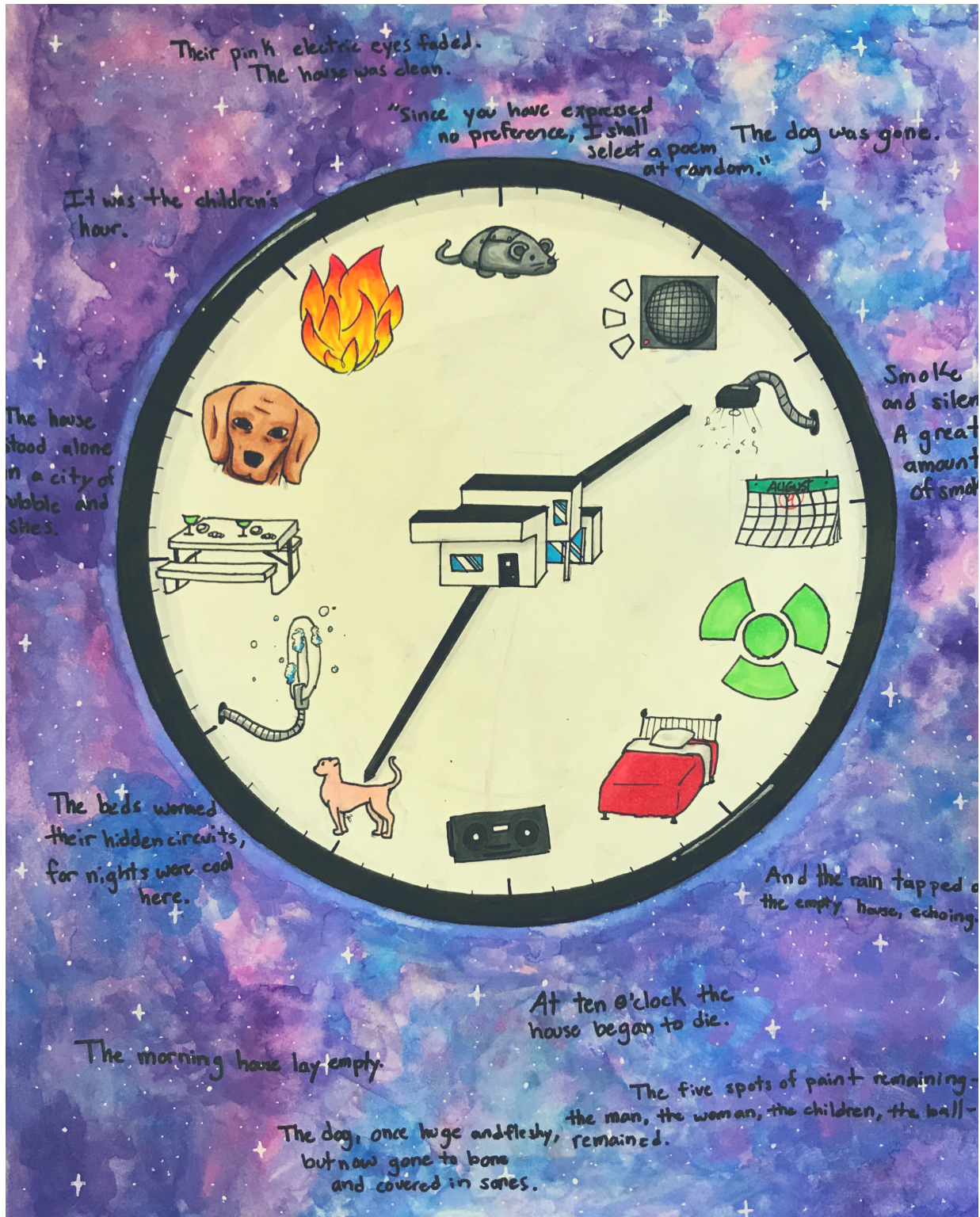
Ms. Jessica Garcia

2018 Literary Magazine Advisor

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"Soft Rains" Visual Analysis

Created by Mara Denis, Sam Hronek,
Angela Maiorca, and Jacob Poley

A NEW WORLD

BY MARA DENIS | INSPIRED BY RAY BRADBURY'S "THE SETTLERS"

A whole new world.

That was what thought crossed the student's mind, who ran her hand through her short green fringe, slightly messing up the gelled curls. Her life was about to change, and she knew not for better or for worse.

Many of her friends had come here and gave her mixed feedback. Some loved it, some hated it, but mostly it was just in the middle. It was required of her to do this, so there was no question whether she could back out of it, but that didn't mean that she wasn't both excited and scared for her life.

The blue-and-white moon was a pace that all Earthlings had to go, for it was almost a rite of passage in a way. They were sent there to learn and work for three years, then taken back home or continued their courses on the green-and-black planet that it orbited around.

The creatures native to the moon, *soshal preshurs*, were the only threat. Though many had been trained against them, some still fell prey to the prowling beasts that sometimes broke into the facilities that the students lived and learned at. But this student, she wasn't sure if she even knew if she was able to fend them off by herself.

She may have to rely on friends, but she heard that people in these places were judgemental and would shove you aside if you were anything outside of the norm. She decided she would just find friends who were in that category because she definitely fit it like a glove.

She bucked up her courage, took a big breath and stepped out of the white room of the spaceport and into the blinding light of the alien red sun, her hands sweaty and her nerves on the fritz.

"Let's do this," she whispered to herself.

THE FOUNDATION OF AUTHENTIC IDENTITY

BY BROOKE NIND

Identity resembles a novel, with every individual acting as the author of their own unique persona. Everyone presents a portion of their story to others, but each person who studies it may interpret it differently. Sometimes people underestimate the identity of a person by solely focusing on her outer appearance, also known as judging a book by its cover, but people's looks do not always reveal their genuine identity, and they often contradict it. Identity includes all the traits that distinguish someone from anyone else in the population, similar to how every novel contains different characters, storylines, writing styles and settings; therefore, a person's identity consists of their background, passions, beliefs, and their actions towards other people. Interestingly, many individuals pressure themselves into transforming their identity. Moreover, the concept of psychology develops identity and influences self-image because people's inner thoughts strongly impact their actions and determine the type of person they ultimately become.

From a psychological viewpoint, people sometimes self-sabotage themselves by believing their identity requires reshaping in order to uphold standards, affecting their self-perception in a negative context. In other words, since our minds target insecurities, we easily discourage ourselves and we desperately pursue change. In fact, according to the article "Basics of Identity" by Shahram Heshmat Ph.D. published by the experts of Psychology Today magazine, these common behaviors inflict a lot of stress on the population, causing people to exhaust themselves for the purpose of maintaining a certain facade: "To deny the true self is to deny the best within us. To find more happiness in life means to live in harmony with one's true self...When people misrepresent themselves or present themselves in out-of-character ways to impress an audience, the behavior is unnatural and exhausting. The behavior requires greater cognitive resources, because the mind is filled with self-doubt, self-conscious, and negative thought" (Heshmat). Essentially, when we pressure ourselves to modify our identities for the purpose of fitting into a mold, it only produces more problems, but positive adaptations that allow a person's unique characteristics to sparkle benefit everyone.

For example, in the short story “Don’t You Blame Anyone” by Julio Cortazar, the main character imprisons himself as he attempts squeezing into a suffocating sweater, symbolizing his struggle to overcome his vulnerabilities: “...the only thing he can do is to keep making his way, taking deep breaths and letting the air escape little by little, even if it were absurd because nothing is impeding him from breathing perfectly apart from the fact that the air he swallows is mixed with wool particles from the collar or the sleeve of the sweater” (Cortazar 1-2). Simply stated, he refuses to surrender the battle of fitting into the sweater until it finally becomes attached to him, smothering his true self so he cannot even recognize his own identity; therefore, he loses his personality while trapped inside a false representation of himself. Many people establish impossibly high self-standards while also burdening themselves with the expectations of their peers, causing them to undergo an identity crisis as a result. Ultimately, in order to unearth our accurate identity, we must accept our original nature and enable it to naturally develop over time, rather than subjecting it to judgement from both our conscience and society.

In spite of self-doubt, psychology assists people throughout the journey of discovering their identity within themselves, propelling them to realize their strengths and weaknesses if they persevere through adversity and concentrate on their desires. Basically, both a deeper sense of purpose and the aspirations that guide our true identity exist in everyone; however, depending on an individual’s mentality, each person will reveal these to herself/himself differently, and if s/he abandons her/his mindset altogether, s/he may never understand the connection between them. In fact, according to the article “Self and Identity” by Dan P. McAdams Ph.D., a professor at Northwestern University, people construct their identities throughout all circumstances, constantly shifting towards a personal vision and requiring them to become extremely self-aware of their life and choices: “...developing an identity involves more than the exploration of and commitment to life goals and values...and more than committing to new roles and re-evaluating old traits... It also involves achieving a sense of temporal continuity in life—a reflexive understanding of how I have come to be the person I am becoming, or put differently, how my past self has developed into my present self, and how my present self will, in turn, develop into an envisioned future self” (McAdams). Simply stated, the process of re-evaluating priorities and reflecting on oneself discloses a lot about a person’s progress on the quest of unclocking and showcasing his/her legitimate identity. Furthermore, in the novel *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, the protagonist Santiago details his expedition of following his supposed destiny and learning more about himself and his identity, also known in the story as chasing his Personal Legend, and realizes that many other people do not possess the same level of dedication: “‘People learn, early in their lives, what is their reason for being,’ said the old man, with a certain bitterness. ‘Maybe that’s why they give up on it so early, too. But that’s the way it is’” (Coelho 26).

Essentially, some people relinquish their dreams and cease pursuing their goals and sincere identity, whereas if they believed in themselves and kept searching they could achieve whatever they wanted, as well as uncover their identity. Clearly, people’s unique approaches to interpreting identity and recognizing their own individuality partly demonstrate their knowledge of the psychology behind their personal growth.

A person’s identity summarizes his/her life, expressively defining him/her based on all his/her traits while constantly changing as it develops throughout his/her lifetime. These identities originate from within ourselves and from our first dreams and accomplishments. Even though humanity easily adapts based on surrounding influences, the inner workings of our minds comprise the raw foundation of our identities. When we understand how certain factors alter our identity and from where the original form of such identification emerges, our confidence raises and we discover our authentic potential. In the end, when people become comfortable with their own identity and acknowledge their evolution so far, it allows them to resist influence from both internal and external forces and personally flourish, rising above those who continue to confine themselves with crippling expectations and societal norms.

CHARACTER

"Cold weather always complicates things a bit. In summer you're so close to the world, skin against skin, but now at six-thirty his wife is waiting for him at a store to choose a wedding present, it's late and he realizes it's cold, you've got to put on the blue sweater, just anything that goes well with the grey suit, fall is nothing but putting on and pulling off sweater, closing oneself in, keeping distances." (Cortázar, 45).

TONE

"Luckily at the very moment his right hand comes out into the open, into the cold outside, at least there is an outside even if the other hand is still trapped inside the sleeve, maybe it's true that his right hand was inside the sweater's collar, that's why what he thought was the collar is pressing so tight on his face, stifling him more and more, and the hand instead has been able to emerge easily." (Cortázar, 46-47).

CONFLICT

"It's not easy, maybe because of the shirt that sticks to the wool of the sweater, and he has trouble forcing his arm through the hole: little by little his hand advances until at last a finger appears from the cuff of blue wool, but in the evening light the finger looks wrinkled and bent inwards, like a black nail with a sharp tip. With one quick movement he pulls his arm out of the sleeve and stares at his hand as if it were not his own, but now that it's outside the sweater he sees it's just the same hand as always and he lets it fall at the end of his limp arm, but it occurs to him, that maybe it would be better to put the other arm into the other sleeve, just to see whether this way it isn't easier." (Cortázar, 45-46).

THEME

"It doesn't seem so, because as soon as the wool of the sweater gets stuck to the material of the shirt, the lack of habit in beginning by the other sleeve makes the operation twice as difficult, and even though he's begun whistling once again to end that without some complementary maneuver he will never succeed in getting it to reach the exit." (Cortázar, 46).

"Don't You Blame Anyone" Visual Analysis

Created by Samantha Bynder



"Mirror"

Created by Aliyah Bouziane

BABY DAISY

BY DAISY COOL

I look at the massive pile of papers in front of me. All of this work to adopt a baby, but understandable work. I started digging into the skyscraper of papers on my desk signing my name, Gina Cool, where ever it says "signature here." As I'm working through the papers, my baby boy waddles into the room. He is only two years old, and I am unsure if he was happy about getting a baby sister, but I think he will be happy since he can finally have someone to play with.

After a month of getting prepared, I am ready to get my daughter. We would be taking a business class flight to China and stay for a few nights sightseeing. I grab TJ's monkey leash, knowing that without it, he will run off into the busy streets of China. We are off in our SUV driving to the LAX airport. It will be a thirteen-hour flight, so we better get comfortable, but luckily since it's business class, it won't be as uncomfortable compared to the standard seats.

After a long thirteen-hour flight, TJ has found some friends to play with to entertain himself. Getting off the plane, we take a bus through the crowded streets of China. People litter the sidewalks with barely an inch of room spared. It looked like a runway of a busy ant colony; cars were honking, bumper to bumper, with barely any room between them. Our taxi driver drove us to the hotel. Getting out of the car, AJ starts unloading the taxi while TJ tries to help, but most of it is too heavy for him to carry, so we give him all of the light bags to bring up to our room.

"Hey, dad, when are we going to meet my sister?" TJ asks AJ.

"Tomorrow afternoon. We have to get settled before we meet her," he replies. We were all jet lagged so we fell asleep immediately.

Picking up the babies and feeding them spoonfuls of baby food, I look in disgust. "That food is so nasty," I think to myself, but that was the protocol for the orphanage, and that's what we feed them. As a worker at the orphanage, you spend a lot of time with the babies you're assigned to take care of. Getting a little attached to the babies is not unusual, but you become a little emotional when they leave to their new families.

I had been taking care of this baby that was going to be adopted today, and her new parents were coming. I was a little sad, knowing that she was leaving, but I knew that the people were kind. We do a background checks on all of the parents to make sure they are suitable for parenthood. This family already had a son for her to play with and had steady jobs, so I knew we were leaving her in capable hands.

It was now only a couple of minutes until I would bring out the baby that the family had adopted. Fixing her little green jacket that had a flower, a daisy, patch on the left side of it right above her heart, my coworker walks into the room, signaling that it was time to give the family their new baby girl. Stepping out of the door and seeing a man, a woman, and a boy probably about three years old wearing a monkey leash, I think to myself, "That must be them." Walking towards the family, I give the woman the baby. Taking her from my hands, the woman looks at her, bending down to show the boy, the family looking delighted.

Finally, after so long, after all the hard work, we finally have her. I kneel down to show TJ his new sister. He seems excited, holding a rattle close to her face shaking it, making a hissing noise as if it speaks. That was so cute, and I knew that he would love her. Getting back up, I gave her to AJ who starts rocking her back and forth. I am so happy that my eyes twinkled, scrunching up as I smile. It is all I could have wanted for my family: happiness.

Days go by, and we have finally arrived back from China, being greeted by my mom, siblings and AJ's family. I hand my baby around, showing everyone the new addition to our family.

"She's so cute," my mom says. "What are you going to name her?"

Already knowing the answer, I reply "Daisy Jane." AJ and I had already discussed it before we even went on the plane to China.

"Coincidentally, the jacket she was wearing when we got her also had a daisy on it. I think the name was meant to be."

Chuckling my sister-in-law says, "so we have an AJ, TJ, and a DJ."

"Yep," I reply. "I had to carry on the tradition."

Out of the corner of my eye, I see my mom's eyes tearing up. Knowing that she won't want to draw attention to herself, I don't say anything, but I know she's crying with joy. Ironic that she's so happy that she is crying. Laughing to myself, I see everyone else head inside. After a long night of conversations, I finally fall to sleep. "What a day," I say, my mouth twisted up happily. I black out of consciousness as sleep overtakes me.

"So that's how the story went," Daisy says.

Eight years have passed since I adopted Daisy and I couldn't be any more proud of her.

"That's so cool! I've been to China! Even though I don't remember any of it, that's still awesome" she says.

Even though I have told her that story more than once, she still likes hearing how we got her. Interrupting my thoughts, Daisy says, "So if I were still in China right now I would probably be playing the piano and studying twenty-four seven."

Laughing, I say, "Probably, but I don't know what your life would have been like if we hadn't adopted you. Family is very important. It depends on the parents that raise you, makes up who you are and the decisions you choose, but you'll make smart, good decisions right?" I ask wiggling my eyebrows at her.

"Pshhhh, of course," she says brushing it off. Suddenly interested in dinner, she walks to the kitchen saying she's hungry. I get up, smiling as I poke my head into TJ's room saying, "Dinner will be ready in thirty!"

Nodding his head, I walk downstairs. "Are you going to be my helper?" I ask, tying my apron around my waist.

"Yes!" Daisy replies, laughing and shaking my head, perfectly content with my family. I prepare dinner with my mini chef.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

SLAM POEM CREATED BY JOEY MILLS, AVANTHIKA RAMASAMY, ADDISON STOLLE, AND SARAH ZIFF

Diversity—
Being composed of different elements.
Diversity—
Representing more than one nation, color,
religion.
Diversity—
Look around you; it's everywhere.

From here and there, near and far,
Now is the time in
This ticking clock to
Embrace diversity.
The message of spreading love and
understanding
Comes at no cost
And is important now more than ever.

We are like the stripes on a tiger;
Not one is the same,
Each is different, and yet somehow still the
same.
Our similarities bring us together,
All with a similar human brain
But different thoughts and perspectives,
Dancing around on one big canvas.

A different perspective
Makes us different
And allows us to be
Diverse.

Sometimes conflicting like oil and water,
But we still come together and thrive
On this world of a stage
So that we can rise
Through the countless whirlwinds of life,
So that we can survive
By embracing diversity.

We can climb higher than Jack's beanstalk
And go into the clouds,
Farther and farther and farther.
By doing just as simple as this:

The world will change
For the better,
Allowing us to go farther than the moon
And touch beyond the stars,
For if we all just reach for the sky
And don't grab what we jumped for,
We will keep trying to make a difference,
Improving who we are and who we will soon
become.

It all comes back to now, the present.
What you and I do every day,
Whether we ignore or embrace.
So now we need to take it in and embrace
diversity
To make this world a better place for
You and me and the rest of time.



OBLIVIA AND IDENTITY

REVIEW OF KATY PERRY'S "CHAINED TO THE RHYTHM"
BY MAE SIMONEAU

Katy Perry's "Chained to the Rhythm" communicates the message that society can shape a person's identity and blind them from reality. At first, the video's vibrant colors and catchy music gives off a playful and positive vibe, but it quickly becomes clear that Oblivia is a dystopia that lacks any real human emotion. For example, there is a scene in which the people are lining up for the "Validation Station," almost like programmed robots. The song enforces this mindlessness, singing, "We're all chained the rhythm." In other words, the video demonstrates how people can follow what society wants them to do, rather than something they themselves would enjoy. Another moment involves others being, quite literally, thrown out of the amusement park, and bombs being sent out beyond their "white picket fence." The lyrics inform the audience that the civilians are unaware of these horrors, stating, "Are we tone deaf? Keep sweepin' it under the mat." Basically, this verse and visuals imply that being ignorant of facts can change one's perspective on situations, and their identity in that sense. Ultimately, the purpose of Katy Perry's "Chained to the Rhythm" is to bring to light the power that society has on shaping a person's sense of identity, and hopes that something or someone can set things right.

THINGS CHANGE

BY JAMES MALE

“Things change. And friends leave. Life doesn't stop for anybody” (Stephen Chbosky). Everything will always change, and people change and grow up and leave home to start their own lives to develop a family and just live their lives and be happy. In *The Color of My Words* by Lynn Joseph, a girl named Ana Rosa experiences a change of heart. She enjoys writing, but in the Dominican Republic, the people are not allowed to write because the government does not allow freedom of speech. The meaning of the title of *The Color Of My Words* is about the inspiring words people use to help others to do more in life. Words can change people because words change people’s responsibility to understand more as they grow up.

Ana Rosa’s love of writing changes her when her brother Guario dies. His death helps her to understand more in the Dominican Republic about the power of words. In other words, when Guario dies, her secret love of writing changes forever. In the story, Ana Rosa must discover the power of words, her words, to allow her brother’s life to have meaning. In the text, Ana Rosa states, “But I was a writer, wasn’t I? I Love words” (Joseph 79). She understands that she should teach people to change the world and to help people to have responsibility for the future, so she chooses to write her brother’s story. In addition, words have also changed me when I am at my weakest point, and I need to read to understand. We should all do what matters to help other people to have more knowledge of books. The knowledge helps Ana Rosa to write some amazing stories even if she is not allowed in the Dominican Republic, and it helps me to have a greater understanding of the world.

Words also affect Guario’s life because when he is the community’s spokesperson trying to keep peace and protect the land in Cabarete, he is killed by the government. In other words, Guario dies because he wants the people of Cabarete to be happy and safe, but his words and death have the power to change people. In the text, Ana Rosa states, “We had it all along and had never given it up not one inch because of Guario”(111). Ana Rosa knows her brother’s words protected their land. Like Guario, we should all try to keep going and to work hard for the better of all people. We should try new things and accept change. Guario stands up to the government, and he uses the power of words to fight back against them and to protect his family.

In the introduction of the book, Ana Rosa states, “Sometimes you have no control over what will happen next” (Joseph 3). In other words, Ana Rosa means that we can not control what will happen next in the future of our lives. Later, she finishes, “And sometimes you do. And when you do that’s when it is time to take charge because you sure don’t know when the chance will come again” (Joseph 3). Ana Rosa takes control when Guario dies by taking some time to herself to think about what she will do next without Guario’s help, but she decides that she will write a story about Guario’s life. Although not free in The Dominican Republic, freedom of speech should be protected because we should all have it to speak out to help more people. If Guario’s rights would had been protected, he would still be alive.

ANA ROSA

BY ETHAN ZHANG

INSPIRED BY LYNN JOSEPH'S *THE COLOR OF MY WORDS*

Cause
Angel, Angela
Had become one
Resting themselves like butterflies
Filled with moonlight and stars
Put my broken heart in place
Couldn't breathe whole lot worse
Tried hard to smile
Soul-sad rhythm
Fearful cement
Effect

GRANDMA CHERIE

BY JOSH GOULD

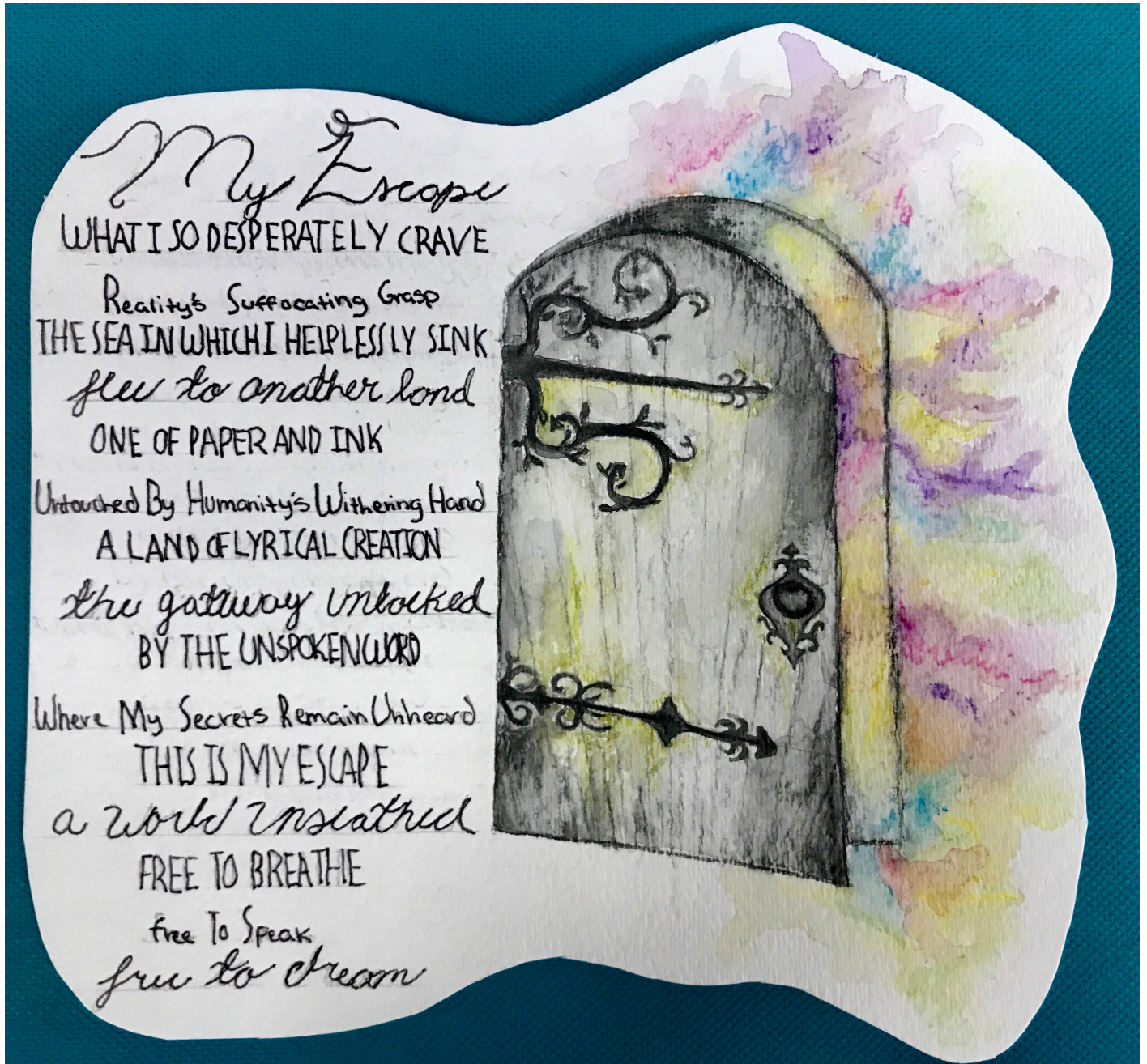
Dear Grandma Cherie,

I am fourteen years old now, and it has been three years since you passed away. I am writing this letter to tell you how much I miss you and how much you influenced me when you were alive. We are studying about identity in school. Identity is the qualities, characteristics, and beliefs that make a person who they are and make them unique and different from other people. For me, I think my identity is being a kind, smart, and funny student. I play volleyball and football. I am a son, a brother, and a friend. I play video games. I love my dog. I am also interested in becoming an actor. Most of all, however, I am proud to be a good friend and considerate of others, and I have these qualities mainly due to your impact on my identity.

I vividly remember the time that we went a local homeless shelter to serve dinner and entertain the people that lived there. We served roast beef, corn, green beans, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and bread rolls, with chocolate cake and vanilla ice cream for dessert. We were there as part of an activity through Temple, and you were in town from Las Vegas, so you came with us. When we got there, I was not sure what to do, but I knew that we were there to help. I saw that you pitched right in, introducing yourself to the other volunteers, asking what needed to be done, and getting right to work even though you were just visiting. I followed your example and got right to work as well; we helped carry the food from the kitchen and set it up on the serving table. I helped put out the paper plates and silverware. You were so kind and polite. I was a little nervous because I didn't know what to expect, and I was worried that the people at the shelter would be scary or different. I then realized that once we started serving people, they were very kind and friendly. I saw that you were smiling and joking with them and helping them to feel at home. Your bubbling laughter when we opened the soda cans and bottles was contagious, and everyone joined in the fun. You helped me not be afraid to put myself out there, and that I can find common ground with the people in the shelter that we had dinner with that night. When it came time for the activities, we played board games and bingo, and I was still a little nervous. I watched how you helped a little girl find the right spots on her bingo board, and she was so excited to yell, "Bingo!" The little girl's smile was like a shining star on a dark night.

Watching you work at the homeless shelter had a big impact on how I later viewed the experience. I started out being unsure and scared; I was so nervous that the room was spinning. I wasn't sure that I wanted to join in and help, but I saw how confident and friendly you were. You helped me see that the people in the shelter were regular people who were just living a different way. Watching your example helped me to be more kind and compassionate. It also helped me learn how to help people, and that it is important to give back to the community. As I think back on that afternoon now, I realize how watching you work at the homeless shelter has influenced me and many parts of my life. For example, watching you be kind and considerate to strangers has helped me in my current life to make friends and be a good team member. I also think it will help me in the future when I start my future career and endeavors. From your example, I can learn how to have more patience, work with other people, and be kind. Thank you for sharing that special day with me. I miss you and love you!

Love,
Josh



"My Escape"

Created by Colette Westwood

PHOSTINISOS AND THE CLAP OF THUNDER

BY ETHAN ROME

Long ago, in a quaint little village in ancient Athens, there lived a happy family consisting of a mother named Pavaea and her brave, kind-hearted son named Phostinisos. Phostinisos was a tall, black-haired boy who would protect his mother at all costs. He enjoyed walking and talking to her when they went on their daily trip to the local agora to pick up fresh fruit. Phostinisos also loved throwing spears and he became quite skilled at it. His mother often watched her young son compete and win many spear throwing competitions.

One day, Phostinisos took a trip on his own and went to visit and admire the majestic Parthenon. While he was enjoying the beautiful architecture and art of the Parthenon, Phostinisos tripped over the entry steps and knocked over a small statue of the sky god Eontius. Phostinisos quickly righted the statue and ran home to tell his mother what happened.

Of course though, the watchful god of the sky, Eontius, saw his small bronze statue fall over and stormed off from Mt. Olympus to his home in the clouds. "I can't believe that clumsy kid knocked over my marvelous statue!" Eontius yelled at his wife who was right beside him. "I know you're upset, but let him go unpunished. He's just a young boy who made an innocent mistake," his kind wife Cea, said in a soft, loving voice. But Eontius paid no attention to Cea and sent his evil henchmen to take the one thing Phostinisos loved most, his mother.

"I almost broke a statue at the Parthenon!" Phostinisos yelled as he came bursting into his home.

"What do you mean, dear son?" his mother asked puzzled.

"I was at the Parthenon admiring all the art and decorations and I tripped over the entry steps and knocked over the statue of Eontius," he blurted.

“Alright, tomorrow we can go down to the Parthenon again and pray to the gods to forgive you,” his mother replied calmly.

The next day, Phostinisos woke up and went into the very cramped kitchen. He took a small piece of fruit, sat on the dusty floor, and ate his fruit in peace like he did everyday. But when he went to wake up his mother to go to the agora, she wasn't there. He checked inside, outside, in the village, and even, with permission from the elders, inside the acropolis. But Phostinisos's mother was nowhere to be found.

He walked home sad, tired, and very worried that he might not see his mother again. “Where could she be? Oh where could she be?” he cried. He sat in the small sitting area and curled up in a depressed ball. As he moped, a dark messenger from Eontius appeared. “Phostinisos! You were disrespectful to the great Eontius! You knocked over his statue. Eontius has captured your mother and you will never see her again!” the messenger shouted in an ominous voice.

“Where is she?” Phostinisos asked sternly as he launched to his feet.

“In a cloud prison by the home of Eontius!” the messenger cackled loudly.

As soon as Phostinisos heard this, he ran out the door and went to see Hiopys, the local priest at the Parthenon.

Phostinisos quickly found Hiopys drinking some water by the majestic columns of the Parthenon. Hiopys noticed the young man standing quietly and asked him to join him on the entry steps. “What is it, young Phostinisos?” he asked with a gentle, kind voice. “An evil messenger told me Eontius captured my mother because I knocked over this statue,” Phostinisos cried, pointing to the small, bronze statue. Phostinisos then told Hiopys how his mother was locked in a cloud prison. The priest said to the sad boy, “Let us pray to the goddess Athena, and she can help you figure this out.” Feeling the smallest hint of hope, Phostinisos replied, “I will try anything to get my mother back.”

The next morning, Phostinisos woke up and hurried back to the Parthenon. This time, he went to pray to the goddess Athena to help him reunite with his mother. Phostinisos bent down on the steps of the Parthenon, looked directly at the statue of Athena, and whispered a faint prayer, “Oh mighty Athena, please bring my mother back to me. Or please, great Athena, bring me to my mother.” After praying, he waited patiently at the Parthenon. Then, feeling dejected, he left.

He woke up the next morning tired and without any enthusiasm, but that changed when he saw the bright goddess Athena standing in his tiny kitchen.

“Oh great Athena!” he said in shock. “It is you, but why have you come to my house?” he asked in disbelief.

Athena responded, “I have come to help you find and bring back your mother.”

“How are you going to do that?” Phostinisos asked, still in shock that a goddess was standing in his humble home.

“With these,” said Athena. She then revealed a set of feathered wings that could carry him to the home of Eontius in the clouds.

Phostinisos put on the magnificent wings to soar up to the clouds. “Farewell, Phostinisos, for tonight you battle the great god of the sky, Eontius,” Athena called out, her voice trailing off into the blue sky. Athena flew back to Mt. Olympus. As she left, Phostinisos began his ascent to the clouds to find the dark lair of Eontius.

Phostinisos flew a great distance up into the sky to get to the dark realm that Eontius called “home”. After a long while, he landed on dark, squishy clouds and started his hunt to find the evil sky god.

Eventually, Phostinisos found the ominous, deformed home of Eontius and pounded on the door furiously. There was a reply from Cea. “Who is there?” she asked. “Me, the brave son of Pavaea, Phostinisos,” he declared with as much confidence as he could muster. “Come in,” Cea said in a voice more welcoming than Phostinisos expected. Phostinisos entered cautiously expecting some sort of trap, but there were no traps. He felt comfortable with Cea and sat down on the cumulus couch where they started hatching a plan to get his mother back.

“Cea, do you think there’s a way to free my mother?” Phostinisos asked.

“Well, I think I can help free your mother, but only if you send Eontius far away beyond the Sun for a while. He needs time to think about his terrible actions toward mortals,” Cea responded.

“I’ll do it,” exclaimed Phostinisos.

While Cea and Phostinisos plotted against Eontius, the sky god was making a potion to make Pavaea fall into a deep sleep. Luckily for Phostinisos, this particular potion needed three days to make, so Phostinisos had a little time.

Cea and Phostinisos had come up with an almost unbeatable plan. Cea would trick Eontius into thinking the gods were mad at him for taking a mortal's mother and would demand that he send Pavaea and Phostinisos back down to Earth. Then, Phostinisos would sneak up behind him and make sure he was sent away from Earth as punishment for treating mortals so badly. Lastly, Cea would take Eontius back after he improved his attitude toward mortals, and Phostinisos would get back his dear mother.

They put their plan to work on the second day of the potion making. Cea came up to Eontius and told him to move away from the silver cauldron where the potion was brewing. She told him to go to the balcony as she wanted to talk to him. As soon as Cea left with Eontius, Phostinisos made his move to dump the potion and free his beloved mother.

"Eontius, I know you love capturing and hurting mortals, but you have to stop because the gods are getting upset with you," Cea told Eontius. "I cannot. I do not know what the gods will do to me, and I don't care because I will not stop!" Eontius screamed furiously. As this was happening, Phostinisos and his mother appeared behind Eontius. Phostinisos bravely tried to banish Eontius to a place far away, beyond the sun. But after he finished talking, Eontius screeched with laughter at the thought of a human banishing him and started to fight the boy for his mother.

Cea quickly stepped in and convinced Eontius to take the battle to Mt. Olympus where they could battle in a best-of-five match right in front of the superior god Zeus. Athena was there too, looking on as the young boy stood bravely facing Eontius. With the blast of an electric shock from Zeus, they started to fight. Phostinisos only had his quick reflexes and spear to fight with, while Eontius had supernatural powers that no mortal could ever have.

But Phostinisos tried to fight the evil god anyway and threw his spear at his large, blue head. He missed and had to run to get it. When he was running to get the spear, Eontius clapped his hands. The immense sonic boom knocked out poor Phostinisos. Eontius won round one. After losing round one, Phostinisos focused more and threw the spear angrily, but accurately, at Eontius's head. The spear hit and knocked out Eontius. Phostinisos had won the second round making the score one to one.

Zeus struck his lightning bolt and the next round started. Eontius ran towards Phostinisos and tried to slap him unconscious. Fortunately for Phostinisos, his quick reflexes helped him avoid it. Then, he was able to hit Eontius with the spear again and win the third round making the score two rounds to one in favor of Phostinisos.

The fourth round started and Eontius faked going forward. Phostinisos met him in the middle. Eontius clapped his hands again, but this time, Phostinisos covered his ears until the thunderous noise was over. He then threw his sharpest and hardest spear. The spear went soaring and hit Eontius's body. He collapsed and said, "I give, you have bested me."

Phostinisos had won, even though he never thought he could. Zeus proclaimed that Eontius must go beyond the Sun for a time to think about his actions toward mortals. Phostinisos was so thrilled to hear this that he became arrogant. "I have won! You should be ashamed that you lost to a mortal. I bet I could beat you at any activity!" Phostinisos boasted.

"Stop bragging, mortal," Zeus said very sternly. "As a punishment for your boastfulness, you must battle Eontius from time to time to keep your mother with you. I will let you know when this battle is happening by sending a lightning bolt down to earth, and you will hear Eontius's thunderous clap directly following my lightning strike," Zeus said in a serious, deep voice. "You will not know when these battles will happen, so you must prepare everyday," Zeus further explained.

After Zeus explained the way the battle would work, Phostinisos went back down to Earth with his mother and went back to his daily routine in Athens. "I am very proud of you for not only taking on a challenge with a god but actually winning and saving me. Thank you, son," Pavaea said to Phostinisos lovingly. "Thank you, mother, for being there for me when I was battling Eontius," Phostinisos replied to his mother. "And I'm sorry I became so boastful and bragged to the gods. But I promise to be more humble from now on."

Athena had taken a liking to this young boy. To help him train for the upcoming battles with Eontius, she allowed him to keep his wings and also gave Phostinisos the powers of a demigod in spear throwing. For the most part, Phostinisos and his mother lived their days peacefully. But on occasion, a lightning bolt would strike followed by a thunderous boom. Phostinisos knew it was time to battle his old nemesis, Eontius. Phostinisos trained hard and thanks to his demigod powers, he never lost his mother in battle with Eontius. He also never boasted of his wins ever again.

THE MYTH OF PROTAGOLIS

BY MIRIAM TONG

Small colony of Ethenes, thirteen years ago...

Like silvery buoyant bubbles rushing to the surface, Poseisea arose from the depths of his watery palaces to the shore of one of his colonies. In his arms he lifted a newborn baby boy. He was called Protagolis, meaning “troubled waters”. As Poseisea reverted to his favored mortal form and strode determinedly through the small town, whispers snagged on the wind and fluttered on the swiftly-flowing current of gossip all throughout their midst. Many girls would halt their activity to goggle at the newcomer before turning with haste to gossip in tones of hushed awe. Who was this tall, handsome young stranger with a sleeping child swaddled in damp wispy blankets in his muscular arms? It was obviously his son—both had the same salt-crusted short tangled brown hair, the same clouded dark brown eyes, the same pale skin and the same thin-cut face. But the main cause of the poor townspeople’s interest was the man’s clothing. Clothed in a loose short tunic of finest linen, silver-trimmed and belted with purple mussel seed pearls and black coral, he sported a rich cloak woven from unidentifiable deep-sea aquatic plant fibres that rippled with a wavering watery blue-green light. Strapped across his back and one shoulder was a simple but awesome javelin, that could be more aptly called a slender sharpened rod than a true spear. It was carved of some semi-translucent glowing substance that shimmered a milky white. All over, if one were to look carefully, were faintly inscribed mysterious symbols of ancient script, strategically studded here and there with the tiniest snowy pearls. The keenly fine tip, plated about half a finger’s length in pure burnished bronze, gleamed in the morning sun, sending beams tumbling bright and sudden through the air the way small quick waves danced over the surface of the sea. His feet were shod in rough grey-blue sharkskin sandals chased with beaten gold leaf and obsidian.

These feet carried the young man at a rapid pace toward the edge of the town to a poor old fisherman’s home. Rattling thunderously on the ill-fitting front door, he slipped on a slick patch of muddied grass. In a flash of golden light, he flew upwards, hovering casually above the ground, ignoring the sudden loud chatterings that rose up abruptly from the startled watchers. All at once it made sense to the villagers. This could only be the great god Poseisea, guardian of the city-state Ethenes that had founded their small colony.

The fishing shack door swung wildly on its loose hinges, thrown open by an aged fisherman breathless with awe and trepidation. He fell upon his knees and gabbled meaninglessly in his terror. He choked, "Oh great god! We beg of you—don't harm us—our daughter may—the ocean —" Abruptly his mouth snapped shut. Unable to speak another word, he stared up wide-eyed and trembling at the majestic and powerful luminous figure before him. Poseisea's eyes were flat and bored, commanding silence with the force of his will. At last he spoke in a voice like the low rumbling waves slowly rising to roar over the high seas, devoid of all light. "Your daughter has died giving birth to my son. You may take and rear him as your own. His name is Protagolis. Let him always remember the sea from which he was born." The fisher stammered for words, scrambling upright to take the small bundle of blanketed babe. Poseisea turned on heel and strode proudly away. The grey-haired old fisherman cradled the child, studying the sharp face shrewdly and muttering under his breath, "We cannot afford to raise a child...". At the edge of the path, Poseisea halted hesitantly and slowly turned around to face him. "Your daughter was very beautiful," he said softly. Then the father of Protagolis, birthed of saltwater, vanished. Silently standing with his subdued gaze fixed on the soil on which Poseisea had stood, a whisper, a gentle breath of air, stirred the still air.

"Each full moon... fish at night... for the fish you might catch... one will have a golden coin in its mouth. Use this to provide... for my son... for my son... my son..."

And then it was gone, and the wind died.

Small colony of Ethenes, thirteen years later...

The wind rippled softly through the tall, fluttering grasses. It flowed, fresh and cool, down steep rocky mountainsides and at the base swirled into a narrow valley's creek bottom, causing feathery little leaves to sway and slender flexible branches to swing to gentle unheard music, shadowy depths dappled with ever-changing patterns of warm sunshine and cool sparkling darkness. The wind rose out of the valley and high up among the luminous clouds illuminated from behind with white fire from the sun, and seemed to pause and hold its breath as one undecided. Then with grace it swept easily down and skimmed, almost playful, across the shining deep-blue molten sapphire sheets of the ocean, where little waves lapped hungrily at the sand, swallowing up the small beach and port greedily.

The sea, blue and silky as a cornflower petal, glittering like a thousand shards of shattered crystal, clear as light, was home to the great god Poseisea and the welfare of a small crumbling shack situated at the edge of the brilliantly white sandy little beach, where a tall young man stood.

Flinging out his oddly untanned arm, dramatically, he gestured to the sea proudly, proclaiming proudly to the wind and the high screams of soaring gulls, "I am Protagolis, son of the god Poseisea! Though you may fly above my head, I am forever more powerful than you!" Chuckling softly to himself, Protagolis sifted the coarse sand between his toes as he walked down the beach. Slowly bending over the swishing water, he stared at his reflection in the glassy surface, thoughtfully. Proud and arrogant with the knowledge of his father's identity, he considered himself far above the townspeople. After all, he would say, he was half god, half immortal and therefore above all mortals. Abruptly he flung back his wind-tousled head and laughed aloud in the springtime air. If he was part god, why could he not act as one? Why, his own father, Poseisea, had had many mortal wives and one immortal. Why could he not have a beautiful, never-changing goddess for himself.

Protagolis strode to the edge of the water and looked through the clear waves. "Father," he laughed. "Father. I am going to Mount Olympus to live with the gods. Are you not proud of me?" With those confident words, he left his hometown, never once looking back. Without a farewell. Without returning to his home to inform his worried grandparents of his departure. Without any provisions, coins, or even a pair of sandals to protect his bare feet.

He left, only with the clothing he carried on his own back.

Base of Mount Olympus, several days later...

A soft grey coloured little bird fluttered on the gentle currents of a breeze. Its voice, sweet and thin and high, wove a song of indecision, fear, and weak will. Of this it sang for it saw such weakness, and it composed into notes whatever it could see, being the joyous copying young thing it was. And it saw a young man, trembling and shy with indecision. His weak heart quavered at the sight of his aim. His fearful gaze, shadowed with doubt, was positioned at the summit of a great snowcapped mountain. His breath fluttered and his heart shuddered within him at the thought of scaling to such terrible heights. But his mind, corroding under the pressure of his prideful thoughts, reminded him of a beautiful goddess he had not yet seen. Slowly, a tremulous finger extended and gingerly stroked the smooth surface of a red-and-silver banded stone embedded in the side of the mountain, cautious feet scrunching through the short vegetation underfoot. His hair, tousled and unkempt from travel, flattened under the rising wind. He lifted his head to squint at the high peak, shrouded in ghostly clouds that drifted in out of his sight like wraiths in some other mythical dimension. Lowering his head against the powerful song the world began to strum on the wild strings of the winds, he reached above his head and began to climb... in the midst of a supernatural storm.

The formerly light breeze became a beastly being that tore and snatched at limbs, plants, whole boulders. Enormous protruding roots were released from the confining earth as crumbles of dry earth began trickling down the mountainside, converging and flowing into little streams, and then massive rivers. The soily flood grew, drowning the vegetation with dryness and washing over it in the terrible haste to obey the will of the gods. A streak of white fire split the great vaults of above, breaking into the stores of dark writhing water and releasing them into the terrified silence with a booming crash of thunder. In the space of a heartbeat, ominous dark clouds had rushed across the once-clear sky, oceans lashed up into massive frothing mountains of roiling water that sped across the tumultuous surface. The darkness had fell abruptly as though some supernatural being had dropped a pure-black smoking veil of entwined glowing embers over the sky, shaking the ground with impact. Squat mountain shrubbery rustled, hefty limbs splintering and damp broken foilage spraying out into the increasing gloom. Earsplitting screams were lost in the howling and shrieking of the wind as livestock, driven mad and half-drowned by the pounding rain, broke fences, tore into the already storm-ravaged fields. Yet somehow, Protagolis climbed onward, defying the will of the gods. And the storm worsened.

Swiping sweaty hair from his forehead, the ambitious young man slackened his pace and peered upward. An easing of downpour, a softening of darkness spelled out peace and calm ahead. He had reached the Palace of the Gods, the famed peak of Mount Olympus.

Out of the darkness and into the light swooped a small songbird. It landed and perched upon a golden twig, causing gleaming jeweled leaves to glimmer in the bright sunlight in the eye of the storm, and preened its downy gray little breast. Fluffing its short wings, it sat contentedly, looking none the worse for wear having just flown through a magical storm. Slowly walking around in a stunned state of mute delight and wonder, Protagolis for a while did not notice the young woman tending a small patch of ground within a much larger garden, crowded with jeweled opening buds and gold-veined leaf, watered with natural fountains of glittering crystalline waters of the deep reservoirs beneath the earth, purified a thousand times by the underworldly ghost rivers Styxa and Lethea. The woman, completely oblivious to any intruders upon her beloved home, was strikingly, breathtakingly beautiful. With loose golden hair that tumbled over slender shoulders that displayed her smooth light skin, she was draped in a simple yet elegant chitin with her slender feet buried in the soft, rich, dark soil, warm underfoot and fertile. A small sprig of young coltsfoot was tucked into her gleaming hair that seemed to glisten with a thousand points of light over a single strand. In awe, Protagolis immediately decided to take her as his wife.

As he approached quickly, the alternating marble, limestone, granite and open ground path obligingly gave forth many noises, alerting the young goddess. As Phonepurse [fon-EH-purr-SEE] whipped around in alarm, her startled cry, soft and delicate as doves, rang across the empty and peaceful courtyards in the temple of Metered [me-DURD], an older goddess of summer and autumn, and her mother. As Metered rushed to her daughter on fleet wings of horror, she made it just in time to watch the goddess of springtime and flowers drop her bouquet of black roses mixed with white lily-of-the-valleys. A gift to her husband, Hadies, god of the Underworld and the dead, it lay amongst the damp garden, forgotten, as Phonepurse scrambled to face this cocky young intruder. Instantly sensing Protagolis' intentions, Metered let out an unearthly roar of rage. It echoed across the heavens, stilled the storming clouds and frenzied winds to listen, and flashed over the oceanic deeps where Poseisea dwelt. Flinging a bolt of gray energy towards Protagolis, Metered thundered, "For this crime, may you sprout hair until no man should ever recognize you, and you shall be hunted as a wild beast!"

But as she spoke, Protagolis has skipped sideways from the spell, the quickness and flowing ease of the sea natural with his thin frame. Drawing his only weapon, a slim and undecorated dirk, he turned barely in time to see several small white butterflies morph into a strange new animal: four skinny legs with cattle-like hooves, but much smaller; a scrawny little body; a queer flapping tail; a knobby, startled head with the beginnings of horns poking out the fine grey hair covering its entire body. The animals let out indignant blaaaas and goddesses and demigod alike jumped at the new and unaccustomed sound. Then Protagolis remembered his quest and lunged at the elderly goddess, his arm rising to take a quick stab. As she raised her staff, entwined with pomegranates, grapes, and vines, to deflect the blow, Phonepurse gathered herself together, arose, and extended her arm and wrist to the demigod, crying, "Depart from me, you crass and disgusting mortal; bear up the weight of my palace on your shoulders forever!" A twisting beam of pure light shot from her fingertips with terrifying speed. But again, his reflexes saved his life. Contorting his body wildly, he released his grip on his dagger and he narrowly avoided the curse.

Two things happened at once. Metered's staff, entangled with Protagolis' blade, plowed over the edge of the mountain, taking with it many of the sparkling blossoms from the gardens, and Phonepurse's spell ricocheted wildly into the body of one newly created animal. A mangled burst—baaaa!—came from the still-changing animal as it formed into a plumper, shorter, much hairier soft white thing with a rather thistledown-stuffed expression on its blank face. A strange tinkling music rang out clearly as crystalline blooms fluttered, bright exotic birds of the ground. Cast out high above the world, it drifted amongst the clouds to form an arc-like depiction before melting into the misty rain.

And then the stilled storm returned... but not quite. The sun darkened, the wind rose... yet silence reigned. Over the horizon of the palace grounds a great dark figure swooped, riding in a chariot of black leather and cold steel, a skeleton horse with the ghostly remains of its original body giving an illusion-like mist over itself. Behind him a great disc-like wall of darkness flew with him, shadowing the sun and darkening the earth. In one smooth majestic sweep, Hadies, god of the Underworld and married to Phonepurse, towered above Protagolis, who dropped and groveled in terror. The moist warm earth glowed white-hot beneath him, it flooded through his body, shoving the guilt, the lies, the pride out of his mouth and into the open, exiting a garbled mess.

But Hadies was unforgiving. With a mighty sweep of his hand, he knocked the young man into the skies. The stillness of the darkened evening was all witness to his fall. He plunged through the drifting flowers, through the misty clouds, and into open air.

Time seemed to pass in slow motion. In his descent toward the endless sea, unforgiving black glass, his memories of his pride, his deceit, his unworthiness slowly washed over him, drowning him in guilt before he even touched the water. A clap of thunder pounded the sky and faded. The ocean boiled, waves rising silently in sync to the lightning flickering over the water in a deathly dance.

And then Protagolis hit the ocean.

The force of his impact was far greater than enough to cause a tsunami, and his body promptly dissolved into a new white foam that crested the waves and floated high into the sky on the watery mountains of Poseisea's wrath and disappointment.

Ethenes, centuries later...

The legend of Protagolis spread, increasing in fame and reach like dandelion fluff blown on the wind. In many places, the the foolish young man was scorned; in others, he was even regarded as a fallen hero.

But each time it's told to a young child, the same hidden message is repeated, again and again... and again... and it is up to the listener to figure it out.



"Jedediah Smith"

Created by Nick Celozzi

IDENTITY

BY STOCKIE SIPES

Identity is the amalgamation of one's unique thoughts, experiences, and choices. Identity is what the individual truly is, unbiased by physical appearance or stereotypes of those like them. Identity is not what others assume the individual is or is like, but rather what their choices and thoughts make them to be. Society's stereotypes and how others may assume the individual to be like is not their identity, but a false pretense of what their identity is in actuality. One's identity can be changed by others' opinions: both positive and negative comments of peers can be visible in how an individual expresses them self. Identity is not just what the individual acts like around others, but also how they act without influence of those closest to them. Each person's identity is different. One may attempt to copy off another's identity to become more like them, but this copied identity is false. Identity is not always ideal, but is the result of a lifetime's worth of mistakes, hardships, and misfortune, but is also comprised of the individual's successes, attitude, and choices.

Who I Am Now?

Like the plant, I am still growing and have not yet found what I will end up being like. When fully grown, both the plant and I may look or behave drastically different from when we were younger and still growing. As the plant requires soil, sunlight, and water to survive, I need feedback from those around me, company, and to learn about the world around me to live happily. In the image, the plant's pot is broken, but it is still growing. Figuratively, my life's "pot" may be broken creating trouble and hardship, but I will still continue to grow and thrive in life. For example, in the short story, "The Gingham Dress," Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford had been told off of erecting a building in Harvard University in honor of their dead son, and instead went off to Palo Alto, California to make another University in their son's name: "Do you have any earthly idea how much a building costs?'...'over seven and a half million dollars'... the lady turned to her husband and said quietly, 'Is that all it costs to start a University? Why don't we just start our own?'"(Malcolm Forbes 1). Due to the Stanford's physical appearance, they were judged by Harvard's president solely based on preconceived notions and the societal connotations that apparent lower class bring. Their homemade, threadbare clothing is stereotypical of the uncultured, and Harvard, being a school for the upper class, based how they treated the Stanfords on the stereotypes alone, rather than the content of their character or identity.

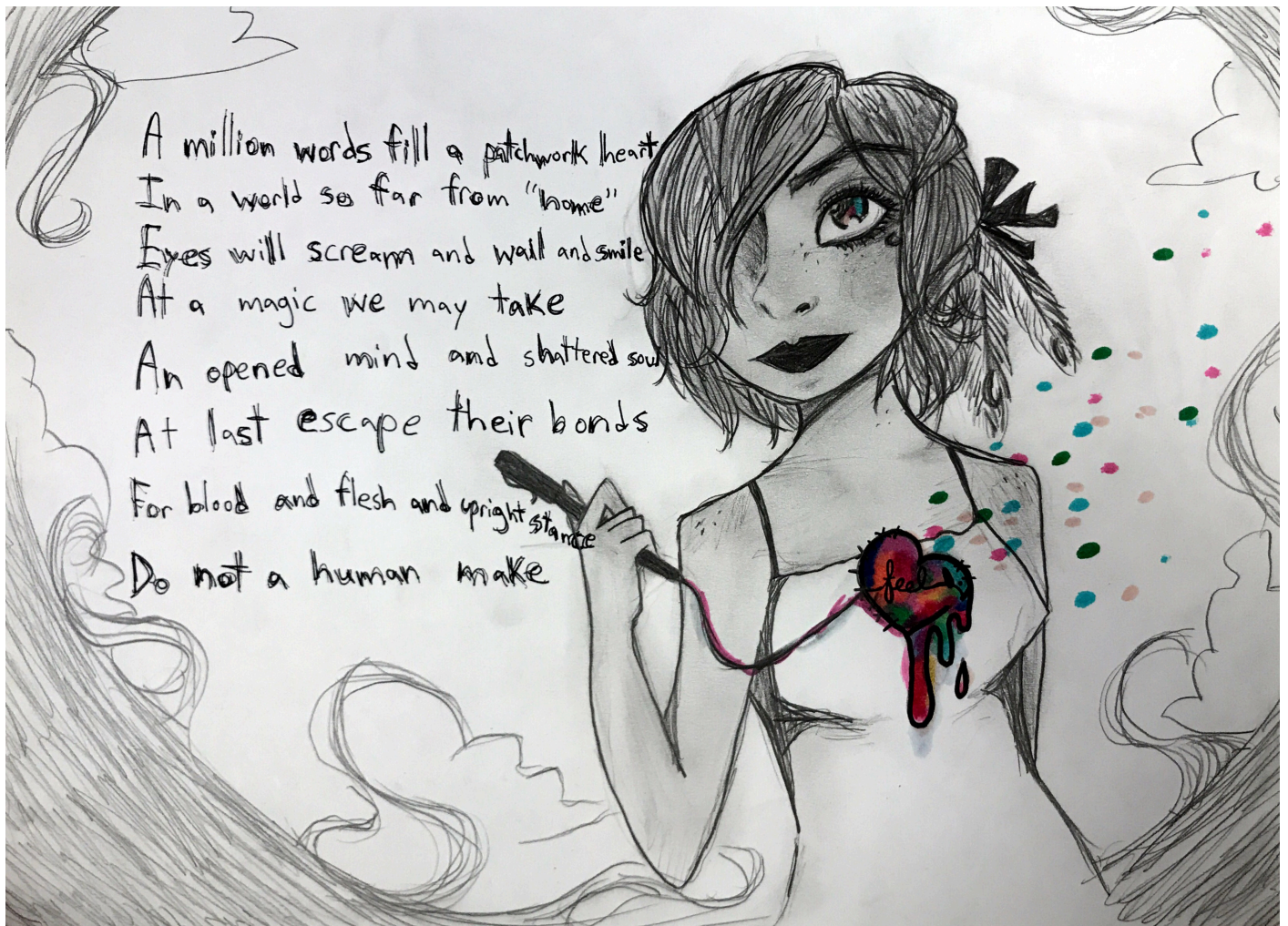
Just by viewing upon how society treats those “lower” than ourselves, Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford had not been granted the desirable method of erecting a memorial building; instead, they were equally satisfied with an alternative. The same is true for who I am now: even though a situation may not be ideal, there is always an alternative.

Who I Want To Be

To symbolize who I want to be later in life, I chose the roots growing from the brain. Sierpinski’s Triangle (a fractal and attractive fixed set with the overall shape of an equilateral triangle, subdivided recursively into smaller equilateral triangles) signifies what I do not want to be. The roots are now large and finished growing, and firmly implanted into the world, symbolizing how as my life progresses, I begin to get used to the world around me, and may pass my sage advice to others. The fire represents warmth as I wish to be to others, but is also symbolizes spontaneity and how I am fueled by those around me. The melting ice represents how I wish to be cool and collected in the face of adversity, and can be rigid or stubborn, but when heat is applied, can transform into a free moving liquid, and can mold to the shape of my environment. Sierpinski’s Triangle is a fractal, and is constantly repeating. This symbolizes the homogeneity of society, and how “individuals” are copying off one another and following trends, rather than self-expression. As people keep copying off of one another to try to fit in, others stray from the rest and express their identity. The others’ identity slowly amalgamates into one hive-minded being that lacks any sense of self-expression, and individualism is lost. Later in life, I want to stand out from the crowd not to be different, but to show myself for who I am. A similar situation occurs in the short story “The Black Eye of the Month Club,” as Junior, the main character, describes how he expresses himself through drawings and images, as to not be judged on his physical appearance and express his identity from an unbiased perspective: “I draw because words are too unpredictable...too limited... when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it... I draw because I want to talk to the world, and I want the world to pay attention to me” (Sherman Alexie 5). Just as Junior used his drawings to communicate to the world and express himself. Junior, in the story, was assumed to be something contrary to what his identity truly was by those who saw him physically. This was due to the societal connotation and seclusion that has sprung from the difference from others. The modern version of the perfect person is one who fits in with others, instead of someone who can show their identity to the world. In the future, I want to be the person who is able to show themselves to the world, and not be afraid of what others think.

The Identity an Outside Influence Has Imposed On Me

As a child I had often heard the phrase “teamwork makes the dream work” as a child from family members, and took it to heart. I often find myself working more efficiently with others, especially those who I know closely or are similar to me. I represented this trait by the symbols of the gears. Each cog on their own will not accomplish much, but together, with the right others, can accomplish complex tasks and functions. The golden cog in the middle is a representation of myself, as the other cogs are symbols for those around me. Each cog fits in with the one next to it, and when one is spun, the others will spin with it, showing how those similar to each other will work in similar ways. Due to how I was influenced when I was raised, the trait of cooperation with those around me is part of my identity, just as how the main character in the short story “Girl” is taught life lessons from her mother to help her later in life: “This is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man, and if this doesn’t work there are other ways, and if they don’t work, don’t feel too bad about giving up” (Jamaica Kincaid 2). In “Girl,” the main character is being taught how women are supposed to act in their society, rather than be taught to show herself to the world how she truly is. In their culture, and in society in general at the present, people are treated by their stereotypes based on their gender and physical appearance, rather than the content of their own character. The main character’s identity has been influenced by her mother’s words to fit into society’s stereotypes, in an identical manner to how family members had taught me and influenced my identity to treat others by their character, and to enjoy and thrive in others’ company.



"A Million Words"

Created by Alexa Brent

HE BELIEVED HIM

BY FRIDA MORENO

The artificially blue colored door had been locked tight ever since Ramon was a little boy. No one was allowed to open it, and no one could anyways; there was a large lock preventing the door from being opened. The strangely pigmented door was the only part of the house that Ramon had never entered.

As a child, of course, Ramon had been curious of what was beyond the mysterious door and had always questioned his mother about it. He could not ask his father because he was oddly never home. His mother had always answered his persisting question the same, “There is nothing down there.” This response was the same one used over and over again by his mother, followed by a troubled glance and fidgeting. Soon Ramon became sick of the repetitive reply and decided to stop asking altogether.

Ramon became older and, to his mother’s relief, he stopped investigating completely...until his 12th birthday.

Now, Ramon was turning 12 years old. He had invited his friends over to his house for his birthday party. He was sitting on the couch when the doorbell rang. Ramon rushed to the door to invite the first bundle of people in: Max, Alex, and Sean. Only David and Jaime were left. He decided to show them his room first.

Ramon led them upstairs. Once they reached the top of the stairs Ramon told them, “Oh, I forgot to tell you guys, I’m going to take you guys to see my room.”

As they crossed the hall towards his room, Max asked him, “Hey, Ramon, what’s up with the flaking door?”

Ramon stared at him for a second, his curiosity, which had been dormant for so long sparked up again, “Well, um, I actually don’t- Well I mean, I’ve asked, but...” His voice trailed off.

“Waitwaitwaitwait wait,” started Sean, “So you’ve been living here for what? 13 years? And you still don’t know what’s behind that door? That you’ve lived with for your entire life?!”

Embarrassed, Ramon shook his head.

It was Alex’s turn to join in, “That is so... COOL!! Now you have a mystery that you can solve!! Can I help?!” The others joined in asking if they could help. Ramon too, now wanted to know what was hidden behind the door.

“Wait, why don’t you just try to open the door?” Sean asked. Ramon decided a little pull on the door would be okay.

“Okay, then you guys can help me if it doesn’t open.” Ramon stated flatly hoping the door would open to reveal objects of low interest.

Ramon pulled on the door but it did not budge. Confused, he glanced up and noticed a heavy duty lock near the top of the door.

“Well then I guess that’s the end of our quest...” Ramon said pretending to act disappointed. “No way!! It’s not over yet. All we need is a key!!” Alex exclaimed, “It has to be here somewhere right?”

Ramon sighed and replied, “Fine, I’ll search for the key when no one’s home and then call you guys if I do find it.”

They all bobbed their heads in agreement as Ramon continued, “Oh, and you know David and Jamie? Yeah, do NOT tell them because they will for sure tell on us.” Again, his gang bobbed their heads like bobble heads in agreement. The doorbell rang again and the boys, startled, raced to get there first.

The next day, Ramon helped his mother clean up the mess and afterwards waited silently reading a book until she left. As soon as the door closed, Ramon sprang to his feet placing the novel on the coffee table. He decided to check his parent’s bedroom first.

Once inside the master room, Ramon checked his mother's drawers and all the pockets of her clothing. Afterwards, he inspected his father's side of the room which was the neatest since he was never around. He examined the drawers and pockets on this side too. Ramon then explored under their bed.

Three large boxes were under the king-sized bed. In the first one was his mother's wedding dress, the second one had pictures, and the third one had his father's wedding suit. He was about to close the third box when something caught his eye. Gingerly, he lifted the suit up a little bit and found what he was looking for in the inner pocket of the vest.

Ramon removed the dusty suit from its cramped box and, checking all the other pockets placed it back into its box. He had found a key, a small pocket knife, and a giant flashlight. He decided to keep the pocket knife with him because of the beautiful carvings carefully embedded into the fine wood. He traced the engravings with his fingertip before shoving the weapon into his pants pocket.

The flashlight was so humongous it would be impossible to carry around discreetly, so he decided to ditch it. Ramon glanced at the grandfather clock in the corner, 4:50. His mother said she would be home at around 5:00.

Ramon sprinted downstairs and grabbed the phone to call his friends and tell them the news.

Near the end of encountering his tale about how long it took him to find it, he heard the keys click into the lock. Ramon quickly slammed the receiver on an overexcited Alex and dashed to the couch to pick up his book.

Later that day, Ramon was sitting on the couch watching television when there was a sharp knock on the door. He ran to answer it. Ramon threw open the door to see his father. He remembered the knife and the keys and shoved them deeper into his pockets. His father surveyed him then, silently, handed him a red box. Ramon stared at him in wonder as his father smiled at him and said, "Your birthday is next week, right?" Ramon felt a sharp pang in his chest but decided not to correct him; it would hurt him more than his father.

His parents talked for hours and hours. Ramon was becoming more and more bored by the second so he went into the kitchen.

Ramon waited until his parents stopped speaking for a second, “Hey-erm- guys, could I go outside for a little bit?” As he asked his mother that, he snatched her phone from the counter and shoved it in his other pocket. His father had witnessed what he had done but only eyed him suspiciously.

Smiling tightly, his mother replied, “Sure honey, but you certainly can NOT go into the woods.” She shifted a little, “Oh, and make sure you come to me as soon as I call your name, okay?”

When Ramon nodded, his mother’s blue eyes softened and she allowed him to leave. Ramon retreated from the kitchen and, once out of eyesight of his parents, charged out the door and into the surrounding woods.

Ramon called his friends and they arrived in less than five minutes. They all stared in awe at the keys and the pocket knife. Ramon said he had called them with his mother’s phone and then asked them if they wanted to play in the woods. They all eagerly nodded and commenced into the wood.

As they were walking, Max was telling them a funny story when Sean almost tripped. “Ouch!! What was that?!” He whimpered and then continued, “Look!! Whatever it was scraped my leg!!” He bent down and clutched his leg, overreacting.

Alex looked around and then picked up an oddly colored woodchip. “Maybe it was this... sticky thing.” Ramon looked up and then snatched the woodchip from Alex’s grasp. “Hey!! What was that for? You could’ve given me a splinter!!” Exclaimed Alex.

“Guys look!!” Ramon said excitedly, ignoring Alex’s comment. The others stared at Ramon as if he had sprouted another head.

“What? It’s just a woodchip” Sean replied, momentarily forgetting about his injury.

“No!!” Ramon exclaimed, “Look at the color of it!!” The others stared silently; waiting for an explanation. “It’s blue, ARTIFICIAL blue!!”

Ramon grinned at them expecting them all to be excited.

Max stared at him, “So? Do you have a problem with that color or somthin’?”

Ramon was confused why they did not understand yet, “It’s the same color as the door!! And look here! There are more pieces!!”

Alex’s face broke into a grin as he understood what Ramon was hinting at, “I get it now!! We should follow the chips to see if we can find something else that matches with your door!!” Ramon smiled back gratefully at Alex.

Together, Ramon and Alex began following the wooden fragments. Max and Sean resentfully trailing behind them.

They followed the blue chips until they ended up in a patchy clearing with an old little shack off to the side. Bewildered, they all stared at the mysterious house with a door... an artificial blue colored door.

Alex looked as though his excitement was about to burst out at any second. “Try the key!!” Alex practically screamed at Ramon.

Ramon stepped towards the house and was about to put the key in when he heard his mother screech his name in the distance, sounding panicked; Ramon knew he was not allowed in the woods.

“I guess I’ll just have to try the key some other time... First, I’ll try the key in the door at my house and then I’ll call-” Ramon was interrupted by the frantic screaming of his name.

They ran towards the house and Ramon’s mother yelled at him for going into the woods without an adult. However, her voice was more anxious than angry and her usually neat, blonde hair hung in a messy bun on the top of her head. Her clear baby blue eyes were now cloudy with stress.

Ramon wondered why and was about to ask but then remembered that her responses were always vague. He sighed and went in to see if his dad was still there, but he had mysteriously disappeared yet again. Since his father was no longer in sight, Ramon decided to go up into his room and wait until his mother left for work.

His mother left and Ramon was left with the door. He rushed to the blue door in the hall and inserted the key into the keyhole. Perfect fit. Grinning his face off, Ramon turned the key and he heard the satisfying click as the door unlocked to grant him entrance. Carefully, Ramon opened the door slightly and peeked in. Since it seemed safe, he opened it all the way only to discover that it was pitch black. He ran to the kitchen and came back with a flashlight, but no matter which flashlight he used, it only ever showed more darkness. Just then it hit him, the bulky flashlight he had seen in his father's suit!!

He raced upstairs and came back with the monster flashlight. And, sure enough, the light beam illuminated the entire room.

“One look at this beam directly could blind anyone,” Ramon muttered to himself. He crept down the stairs and saw only bland, cement colored walls and... a black, cardboard box sitting in a far corner of the room, with a regular flashlight, Ramon would definitely not have been able to see it, but with this white beamed giant light, anything was possible.

Ramon crept towards the black box and cautiously opened it then peered over its edge to find it completely empty except for another key. This key was colored a type of blue that matched the color of this door and the one in the woods. Ramon stood up to leave when something glinted in the beam of the flashlight. He walked towards it to see that it was a wooden chair: the object that had glinted in the light was a nail. Dismissing the chair with a wave of his hand, he ran back up the steps and closed the door softly. He was about to call his companions when he decided that perhaps this would turn out better if it was just him; there was less of a chance of him getting caught if there was less people who knew.

That night, Ramon heard crying followed by sinister laughing coming from a distance. He told himself that it was simply the neighbors making noise because the only other person home was his mother. The sounds seemed to be coming from beyond the blue door. He imagined his mother sitting in the tiny, wooden chair sobbing and maniacally laughing. Then, covering his ears with his pillow, he dismissed the horrid thought.

When the next day arrived, Ramon heard a strange noise coming from downstairs. He went down to investigate and found his mother trying to open the door with the top locked. Ramon observed her for a second before realizing that there was definitely something wrong with her.

“Mom...” Ramon began, “I don’t think you should go to work today...” She continued struggling with the door. Ramon took note that her hair looked thinner and dirtier as if she had not bothered to deal with it for a while.

“Mom...?” Ramon asked tentatively. No response. “MOM!!” Ramon yelled at her. A pause. She stayed still for a second before collapsing to the floor.

“Oh, my...” She started, “What was I doing?” Ramon rushed to her.

“Are you alright? It’s Saturday... You don’t work today...” Ramon stared at her, waiting for a response.

Crying, his mother replied, “I don’t even know what I’m doing half the time!! I can’t even sleep correctly!”

Ramon sat with her until she stopped crying.

By the next day, Ramon had decided that it was his quest in life to find what was inside the other door in the woods. So that day, he decided to go back into the woods and investigate further.

Ramon followed the footprints he and his friends had left not too long ago, and, sure enough, they lead him right to the clearing with the door.

Ramon approached the blue door with the crumbling brick and tried the first key he had found. It almost fit, but not all the way. So, relieved his mother had stopped him before he could attempt to open it with the incorrect key, he tried the second key which he had found in the black box. A perfect fit. The door clicked as it unlocked. Hesitantly, Ramon creaked open the door.

Once he opened the door, a darkness similar to the one at his house invited him in. This time, Ramon had remembered to bring the oversized flashlight. As soon as Ramon turned on the big flashlight it illuminated the room. He stepped down the wooden steps, flashing the light beam everywhere. This room was very different than the one at his house; the room was not empty but rather full of items. He glanced around and saw rows and rows of jars full of what looked like colored water.

Ramon decided not to touch any of them. Curiously enough, all of the liquids smelled bad and none of them had labels.

Ramon examined many of them but they seemed to be there for no reason. He was about to leave when a small scrap of paper on the floor caught his eye. He bent down to pick it up when he saw another. He inspected the first one and noticed that it was a note and that the writing looked almost as if... his mother had written it. Ramon then turned his attention to the other piece, and, sure enough, there was the signature: Raquelle Bianchi.

Ramon read in horror the parts he could read when he put the two pieces together: “-don’t think I can do this any longer. I’m so sorry. Please- I will probably have to go to the Healthridge Hospital because- I don’t know what to do anymore- Can’t sleep because- Suffering on a daily-.”

To Ramon, it sounded as though someone was making her pay for her life and she could not do it anymore and she was suffering about it. He then scanned the floors to see if there were any more fragments of the note. No luck.

Remembering that she was sick and weak at home...alone, Ramon ran as fast as he could. When Ramon finally arrived to his house, his heart stopped for a second; the front door was on the floor and looked as though it had been kicked down. He ran inside to locate his mother. She was no longer in her bed. In these few seconds of terror, only one thing came to Ramon’s mind: Healthridge Hospital. It was the closest one, perhaps a few blocks away. He hoped she was there. Once again, Ramon began sprinting.

Once Ramon arrived at the hospital, he asked for his mother. She was in. Leaving the nurse mid-talk, Ramon bolted to the room the lady said she would be in. In the room, to his relief, he saw his mother. She had various tubes connected to her inner arms and coming out of her nose. After seeing his mother, he saw his father sitting next to her holding her right hand. Glad she was not lonely, Ramon sunk to the floor.

Ramon tried the door, but it was locked tight. He knocked but neither the doctor nor his father batted an eye. He guessed the rooms were sound proof.

Ramon watched as the doctor disappeared behind a curtain and his father stood up.

Ramon felt a surge of hope, thinking that maybe he had heard his knocks and was going to open the door for him. Instead, however, he reached into his pocket and took out a little jar that looked just like the ones he had found behind the door in the woods. Ramon's father uncorked the container, glanced nervously around, and poured its contents into one of the pouches that were connected to his mother.

The pouch, which was originally a clear-like in color, immediately turned the same crimson color as the liquid in the glass vile. His mother glanced weakly at her husband, and then closed her eyes.

Ramon watched in absolute panic as the dark red liquid traveled into her bloodstream. His mother's eyes opened wide with fear and terror as she felt the effect of the poison. Ramon began banging on the door as hard as he could. He felt his fingernails dig into his hands, cutting his soft skin in his desperate effort to open the door. His mother writhed on the bed helplessly as his father ran to where the doctor was. Ramon watched in terror as the doctor ran out with his father and called for backup. Still hitting the door with everything he had left in him, more doctors arrived and, brushing him aside, opened the door and closed it, not letting him in.

In the few seconds that the door was open, Ramon was able to hear the machine voicing his mother's heartbeat go off in a long beeeeeeeep.

It was then when Ramon thought about what had just happened: his father had poisoned his mother, he had gone to the doctor and said that she was dying, and then he had pretended that he had no clue what was happening and that he was completely innocent. The worst part of it all was that the doctors had believed all of it.

Over the next few days, Ramon had to move in with his murderer of a father. Paranoid that he was going to try to poison him next, Ramon made sure he did not eat any of his cooking and that he locked the door and placed a chair to keep it from being opened.

His mother's side of the room was kept exactly the way it was when she left, the only difference was that there was white cloth placed over everything she owned.

After a week of living with his father, Ramon stopped seeing him as often; he began waking up later and later. This was fine with Ramon, except for the day he did not come out of bed at all.

Ramon went into the room to see if he was still there or if he had just abandoned him. He walked carefully into the room and saw his father in a bundle of blankets. He was wheezing loudly.

“Father? Are you okay?” Ramon asked gently.

His father rolled over to look at him, his bleary eyes unfocused.

“No, I’m not okay son. I think my time has drawn near.” His father’s brown eyes looked just like Ramon’s. He continued, “If you saw what had happened at the hospital and you hate me because of that... I understand.

“But, please, don’t hate me too much. I know you loved you mother. I loved her too.” He placed his hand on top of Ramon’s and traced the bruises that were left from him banging on the door.

Ramon snatched his hand away from his father’s in disgust; he still did not believe that he had loved his wife.

“I understand that you may not believe that I loved her because I killed her... but... She asked me to. She wrote me a letter telling me how she couldn’t do it any longer and she was tired and suffering. She was taking a lot of painkillers that had no effect on her. So she asked me to help her and she even told me to take her to die in the same hospital she was born in. That was what she wanted.” He finished.

Ramon stared in awe at his father. It made sense. The hand-written note connected perfectly to what his father was saying now. Ramon went to the other side of the bed and lifted up one of the white cloths to reveal several empty containers of pills littering her nightstand.

“I believe you father, I trust you,” Ramon said quietly to his father, no response, not even a stir. Dread clutched at Ramon’s chest.

“Dad!! I believe you!! I trust you!!!” Still, no response. Ramon yanked off his father’s blankets, tears forming in his eyes.

“I SAID THAT I BELIEVE YOU!! I’M NOT TOO LATE!!! YOU HEARD ME, RIGHT??!!” Ramon shook his father some more, the tears already streaming his face. He felt for a heartbeat, a pulse, anything. Nothing.

The truth sunk in that he was gone. He had to have heard him though, he believed him he trusted him now. Ramon had treated him so terribly his last few days. He hoped he had heard what he said. However, something inside him told him that he had not heard him say that he believed him.

Ramon sunk down to the floor crying. He did believe him, he believed him, he believed him, he believed him, he believed him, he believed him, he believed him, he believed him.

SPECIAL SAXOPHONE SONGS

BY LOGAN ASHAMALLAH

It was my first day playing alto saxophone in the school band. I had just switched from clarinet because I was not enjoying it very much. I couldn't wait to get a fresh start in my musical life. I arrived at my house that night and played my heart out. I was on top of the world. I searched the internet for fun, popular pieces for saxophone outside of what we were playing in class. I played a plethora of songs, ranging from the Star Wars theme song to Careless Whisper. Although I was relatively new to my instrument, the saxophone sang beautifully.

I returned to band class the next day, ready to show off all of the songs I had learned the previous night. When showing my friends, they acted unexpectedly. Instead of being impressed by my skills, they assumed that I was terrible at my instrument because I had practiced unimportant songs, rather than the songs we were playing in class that "actually mattered" for future performances. I was as shocked as a smart kid who received an F on a test. Although they might have had a good argument, I did not take their advice. I continued to play the pieces I enjoyed playing. I knew that I could play the songs in class relatively well for my level, so I would not be letting my band down, and I could continue to love my instrument.

This situation has taught me that I am the one who chooses my identity and how to live my life, rather than having others decide for me. In this case, I have learned that I should have fun in life, because that is what makes me carry on with music, and everything else. This decision I made has majorly shaped my life by making me very involved with music, unlike my friends, who are quitting band in high school. This scenario can relate to "The Danger of a Single Story" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie because, in her story, people base their opinions on Africa based on the narrow-minded stories about what takes place in Africa. My friends based their opinions about my saxophone skills on which songs I practiced. In both situations, people created false stereotypes because they only took the time to look at one side of the story.

I could have acted in this scenario by following what my friends said, and only practicing the uninteresting pieces, but then I would not have any encouragement to stay in band. This alternative action would have pleased my peers, but it would not please myself. I want to go far in life and have a lot of success, but this is not possible if I don't have at least a little bit of pleasure in what I am doing. My friends had become pessimists at the moment; only focussing on the negative side of the story. Before making stereotypes about my musical skill, my friends should have acknowledged the other, more positive side to the story. In other words, my peers should acknowledge both sides of the situation before making assumptions.

DON'T BLINK

BY MADISON LOUIE

Screams, walls closing in, air thickening.... Yet, I'm getting way ahead of the story; here's the untold backstory of the enchanted camera.

Hi, my name is Mila Donner. I go to a school called Lakeside High School, and my main focus in life is photography. One day, I encountered a new camera store that looked very antique. Since I love photography, I decided to check it out, and as I entered the store, one camera instantly caught my attention. I walked in that direction to examine the quality and price. The value of the camera was uniquely vintage like no other camera, and was surprisingly cheap for such advanced technology.

"That one's nice," he said.

I jumped at the sudden deep, unfamiliar voice, revealing a tall guy who appeared to be a year older than me. He had light brown hair, muscular arms, and deep crystal blue eyes that you could stare at for hours.

"You like the view?" he chuckled.

"What?"

He smiled, and like that, a hundred butterflies flew in my stomach. This was a feeling I had never experienced before, a new type of excitement. It was like this stranger was crafted by the Gods, his teeth whiter than a diamond's gleam, and his jawline with the ability to cut through stone.

"My name's Darren Collins. What's your name?"

"I'm Mila."

"What school do you attend, Mila?"

“Little too early for that, stranger.”

“Fine, I’ll tell you where I go if you tell me where you go after. I just moved from Australia, so I’ve been transferred to Lakeside High School.”

“Well, I go to Lakeside High School as well.”

I was so caught up with Darren that I completely forgot about buying the camera, but I convinced myself I would get it another day.

“See you tomorrow Mila!”

“Bye Darren!”

That next morning, I was actually looking forward to school, unlike the majority of school days I’ve experienced. As I was walking to my locker, I noticed a familiar figure waiting for me, leaning against the wall with the largest grin ever.

“Hey Darren! How has your first day here been?” I asked.

“It’s been good, but is it normal for everyone to stare when a new kid transfers to this school?”

“Well, you are good-looking” I confessed, instantly realizing what I said as I tried not to show my embarrassment.

He then looked at me, and just smiled. He totally recognized that I was blushing, but seemed to be totally satisfied with my feelings.

Eventually months passed, and our relationship was like a Rubix cube, almost impossible to solve, but with the right mind, our lives made it anywhere together. We knew that there was something between us that could possibly become more, but we agreed to progress our romance slowly.

On the day of prom when school was dismissed, we sat on a bench under the most breathtaking cherry blossom tree. Then, he ran his hand through his hair as he took a rose out of his jean pocket, and knelt on one knee.

“Mila Donner, would you do me the honor of becoming my prom date tonight?”

“Of course! Yes, I thought you’d never ask!”

He stood up and I wrapped my arms around his neck and smiled, giving him the biggest hug ever.

“I’ll pick you up at 5:00pm then?”

“See you then!”

“Bye beautiful.”

The time was 4:30pm and I was just about prepared for the night’s events. My hair perfectly curled and braided to the side to represent a flower crown with cherry blossoms tucked within it. My makeup was light with a rose lipstick, black eyeliner, and the slightest amount of blush on my cheeks.

That wasn’t even the best part of dressing up. My dress portrayed of a cherry blossom tree with light pink lace tightly wrapped around my waist. There were golden sparkles to lighten up the glaze of the tree, and my high heels matched as well.

I looked at myself in the mirror, slowly examining myself to make sure there was nothing out of place. I was anxious, I wasn’t going to lie, but I was just hoping that this was all real and not a dream.

When I headed down my stairs, I saw Darren in the house already, his suit crisp and his hair styled to the side as if each strand was designated in a certain spot. His crystal blue eyes pierced mine with the most irresistible gaze ever, my mind slowly melting.

“Wow Mila, you are just stunning.”

I brushed a hair out of my face, and just like that, I felt like I was in an unrealistic movie, but yet, it was happening, and I savored every second of it.

As we stepped out of my house, a large limo was placed right in front of my house.

“Oh Darren, you didn’t have to do this for me...”

“Why not? A beautiful girl deserves a beautiful life.”

Soon enough, we had reached Lakeside High School, and it was extremely crowded. There were lines of couples waiting to enter the gym, and cars honking constantly. We eventually made it inside, linking our hands together so we wouldn't lose each other through the crowd.

“Do you want to take the photos now to get it over with, and then dance the night away?” Darren offered.

“Sure, whatever works out for you,” I replied.

Before we reached the photo booth, Darren had run into a friend from his hometown who apparently was the photographer.

“Do you and your lovely lady want to take a photo first?”

“Yes please, I'm starving!” I declared.

Darren's friend said he would take three pictures of us and print out two copies of each photo for each of us to take home. Darren and I made sure that our last photo was special while our second would be hilarious, and our first one would be classic arms around the waist photo. As his friend took the first photo, I could see haziness in Darren's eyes, and a sudden wave of concern approached my mind.

“Are you okay, Darren? You seem a little out of it. Do you want to just do the photos later?”

“No, this is our night, and it's only a little headache. Don't worry about me.”

Subsequently, the second photo was taken with us winking with our tongues out, and Darren started turning green, bruises randomly showing up.

“Darren, you need a break, something is happening to you, and I don't want you getting any more hurt than you already are.”

“No no no. We are finishing this last photo for our memories.”

“Darren, you NEED to rest.”

“It’s just one more photo, okay? After that, you can take me home to my parents, and they’ll tend to my sickness.”

“Fine, but it’s only because I...”

“What, is it because you pity me right now?”

“No it’s just...never mind, it’s nothing. Let’s just get this last photo over with.”

As we positioned ourselves for the last photo, Darren looked at me with his sore-looking eyes, and said the words I thought would never come out.

“I love you, Mila” He weakly confessed, trying to smile.

“I love you too...”

Darren’s body suddenly went limp as our third photo was taken, instantly collapsing. My eyes were wide with shock, my brain calculating what had happened in the last few seconds, and my heart beating like crazy. Tears started swelling up in my eyes as I kneeled down next to Darren’s body.

“SOMEONE CALL 911 NOW!” I yelled, while holding Darren close to my body, trying to transfer my warmth.

All I could hear were people running out of the gym, terrified expressions plastered on their faces.

“I’m so stupid. I should’ve stopped, I should’ve forced you to stop, but I was ignorant. I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.” I whispered, tears streaming down my face while holding his hand in mine.

My vision was blurry, everything out of focus. I just remembered his friend by my side, trying to comfort me, but my mind was too all over the place to acknowledge his effort. Soon enough, the ambulance had arrived, and took his body away.

When we arrived at the hospital, I rushed towards the waiting room and sat down, trying to resist my anticipation to burst into tears again. My hands were shaking with fear, my eyes swollen and red from all my crying.

“My name’s Clay, by the way. Sorry for not introducing my name sooner.”

“Do you have his parent’s phone numbers?” I ignorantly asked.

“That won’t be necessary,” a female voice quivered while entering the room.

I turned my head to see an old couple holding each other, with tears in their eyes.

“My name’s Charlotte, and this is Will” Darren’s mom said.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“Oh Darren’s talked so much about you the past few months. He said you have a really special place in his heart.”

“Are you guys here for Darren Collins?” the doctor questioned, standing in front of the entrance way.

“Yes, we’re here for Darren Collins. Is he alright? Will he be able to survive?” Will explained.

“I have some troubling news for you all. It looks as if Darren has this rare condition that just stopped his heart. We are trying to revive his body with CPR, but we haven’t gotten a sign, or anything. I think, I think it might be time for you lot to say your goodbyes. I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Are you sure there isn’t anything else you can do?” Charlotte pleaded.

“I’m sorry, but that’s all we can do, Mrs. Collins. I’ll give you guys some time alone.”

“Excuse me, I need to refresh.” I said, every part of my body shaking.

I rushed into the nearest guest bathroom, locked the stall, and cried like I’ve never cried before, my mascara dripping down my face. Screams, walls closing in, air thickening, it was a nightmare that played over and over again.

“NO! NO! NO!” I screamed.

I banged my head against the bathroom stalls, my head hurting like crazy, but I didn't care. My heart felt like it was a broken mirror, hopelessly impossible to repair without a deep scar leaving its trace. I lifted my head from the stall, blood dripping down my forehead, forcing me to get up and tend to my injury. Once I had finished cleaning myself up, I took a taxi because I couldn't bear seeing Darren's body, knowing that he would never wake up ever again. Although I wanted to go home, I requested the driver to take me to school to see if Darren had dropped any personal items.

Finally, I arrived at the school, the streets more bare than the Sahara Desert. I entered the room, the decorations all ripped from people trampling over them, the disco ball still spinning. I made my way towards the photo booth and searched the ground, yet I found nothing. I looked up to see if there were any other possible places we were when I saw something strange. The same camera I saw in the camera shop was there, lying on the camera stand. I decided to look through the photos to see if they turned out any good, but what I found was horrifying. Darren's face scratched out in the photos we took, each photo more scratched out than the rest. My mind was racing, and then I remembered what had happened that day at the camera shop. That camera had chosen me to be its owner, and when I met Darren, he had distracted my mind from buying that camera, so the camera had wiped out Darren.

I looked at the camera, took it into my hands, and threw it on the ground, smashing it with the end of my high heels, anger fuming through my veins. By the time it was destroyed, I had left the school with a feeling of courage and relief knowing that camera would never touch another living soul again.

Time passed, and the day that I never wanted to encounter had finally come, Darren's funeral. I dressed in a nice black dress, my hair placed in a clean bun, and a large brimmed black sun hat placed on my head. I looked at myself in the mirror, my mind instantly being brought back to prom night. A tear streamed down my cheek, but I wiped it away, and headed out with my parents to the funeral.

It was an intimate funeral with his parents, my family, and a couple friends. We all said our eulogies, scooped a shovel-full of dirt to cover Darren's coffin, and talked about all the great memories we each had with Darren. The minutes felt like hours, but eventually people started heading back to their homes, leaving my family as the last ones there.

“I just want some time alone with him,” I confessed.

“Take your time, we’ll be waiting in the car,” my mom assured.

Once my parents were out of hearing distance, I kneeled on the ground and said my own personal eulogy.

“Hey Darren. You probably can’t hear me, but if you are, I miss you so much. My life feels incomplete without your presence making me laugh, comforting me, or just being you. I just wonder what the future held for us if you were still here with me. I know you want me to live my life to the fullest, but there will never be a day where I will not think of you. You have brightened my life since day one, and I am truly grateful for those times. Although you should know that when I leave here today, I won’t ever be coming back because I know that if I visit you one more time, I may never leave, so I am doing this for the sake of us. I love you Darren Collins.”

I kissed his gravestone and started heading back to the car, but I took one last look before I drove off into the distance, never looking back again.

WINTER TO SUMMER

BY KALIA MYLES | INSPIRED BY RAY BRADBURY'S "ROCKET SUMMER"

One Minute
A Winter
Doors closed
Windows Locked
Icicles Fringing
Children Skiing

Then *Snap*
Icicles drop
Doors open
Windows up

Rocket Summer
Words passed
Skis, Sleds
Suddenly Useless
Snow falling
To a
Hot Rain

Rocket Summer
Launching Field
Blowing Fire
Oven Heat
Rocket Summer...

"ROCKET SUMMER" HAIKU COLLECTION

BY ALEX CHI | INSPIRED BY RAY BRADBURY'S "ROCKET SUMMER"



Ohio winter.
Doors closed, Housewives in warm furs.
Then, a wave of warmth.



A sea of hot air
The snow showed ancient green lawns
The doors flew open.



People watched the sky.
The rocket, blowing fire.
The rocket summer.

PLANTING A LEGACY

BY JACOB POLEY

Throughout life, people encounter many difficult and stressful situations, but one can use resilience to overcome these challenges and become a better person for doing so. Resilience means that a person is capable of adapting to and recovering from adversity by never giving up and being patient. Resilience is demonstrated in American society on a daily basis as people rebound from divorce, losing their job, or the loss of a loved one. Perseverance is a crucial element that cultivates resilience and influences the future as it teaches the importance of persisting despite all odds.

In the selection “The Green Morning,” from Ray Bradbury’s *Martian Chronicles*, the protagonist Benjamin Driscoll demonstrates great resilience as he sets out on a campaign to plant thousands of green trees in order to produce more air and make Mars a healthy and safe environment. In other words, he is a very selfless and hardworking individual who awoke each day in the early morning to test, dig, plant, and water while facing weather obstacles. For example, Benjamin was on a mission to create higher oxygen levels by planting more trees in order to improve their lungs, as the air is quite thin on Mars. Basically, by planting thousands of trees air was produced, towns were cooled, winter winds were held back, color was added, shade was provided, and lungs were revived. In fact, this is evidenced in “The Green Morning” when Benjamin Driscoll says “Well, I’m doing more. I’m planting oaks, elms, and maples, every kind of tree, aspens and deodars and chestnuts” (Bradbury 183). Essentially, he planted all types of trees in order to have the best possible oxygen for their lungs. Ultimately, Benjamin exhibited great tenacity through his determination, perseverance, and positive thoughts which cultivated resilience to successfully turn Mars into a forest of great trees, new air for the Martians, and a safer environment on Mars.

Ray Bradbury does an excellent job describing how Benjamin’s resilience impacts the future in “The Green Morning” as the new miracle of oxygen has saved lives on Mars and created a healthy environment, resulting in the population not becoming extinct. Simply stated, Benjamin’s persistence and positive outlook greatly impacted the future of the Mars because without those qualities, Mars would continue as a dry, depressed, and undesirable town to live in.

Interestingly, according to The American Psychological Association many people who have surmounted tragedies and hardships have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength, increased sense of self-worth, and heightened appreciation for life. Basically, people that have overcome calamity have been found to have a more optimistic outlook towards life. To validate this idea, Benjamin said “The stars came out freshly washed and clearer than ever” (Bradbury 105). In other words, his resilience resulted in him feeling better than he had ever felt before as he officially had fresh air and an increased oxygen level to breath. In the end, Benjamin’s resilience greatly impacted the town’s future by producing oxygen, making Mars more suitable for humans.

Benjamin’s character is admirable as he did not get discouraged or quit when he encountered setbacks; instead, he maintained positive thoughts and persevered to reach his goal of producing oxygen to create a healthy environment on Mars. No matter where a person comes from or what they do for a living, resilience is a key component in life as it gives strength and building blocks to lead a healthier and happier life. Resilience can be found in many other novels such as *A Mango-Shaped Space* where the main character suffers from synesthesia yet she focuses on the positive aspects of her life and has the support of family and friends to lift her up in times of sadness. All in all, resilience is a quality that every person should strive for as they navigate their way through life.

LOS CERRITOS: WELCOME, SETTLERS

BY MADELYN LYNCH

The children stand at the large metal gate towering their scrawny pubescent bodies, staring at the openings through the graffiti bars exemplifying prison walls enclosing misfits who believe too highly of themselves. The fear of never leaving hell with mood swings until acceptance with the popular kids has commenced. Children shiver as the gates open, turning toward their mothers for reassurance but Madelyn has no one for she was forced to walk to school. Her parents leave for work very early in the morning not allowing comfort for Madelyn during an important period in her life. The gates are opened by Rudy the custodian who intimidated the students, for he is the first adult seen on campus. The children scurried through the opening refusing to make eye contact with one another. Madelyn froze, imagining nerve-wracking situations with what seemed to be opposing species. She would just have to find out her future by entering the obis known as school. Heaven or hell, she has yet to find out.

Adames' use of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" illustrates and shapes perspective by portraying a left out character building up courage and straying away from the group to open up a door towards an alternative world despite the uncertainty, causing others to experience a change in judgment on both the unique individual and the viewpoint on the world. In other words, an individual following one's own path rather than following a trend introduces newly found discovery and change which creates multiple perspectives and interpretations from which to view. In fact, in the short film "Identity", a teacher explains Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" to a class who all appear uninterested except for a girl whose attention is captured: "In Plato's allegory, he talks about human beings living in a cave. All their lives, from their childhood, they have been chained up in such a way that they cannot move their bodies and all they can see in front of them is a dark wall. Because they have never been outside of this cave, all they know about life is this dark wall" (Adames). Essentially, in both the allegory and the short film, most people believe and comprehend the same because their knowledge is limited due to an obstruction of view which develops ignorance and restricts their perspectives.

Moreover, the video continues to show the teacher describing the positive and courageous turn taken in Plato's allegory: "However, one day, a slave is released and he discovers a whole new world outside of the cave, and because he is now the enlightened one, his job is to come and free those that are still trapped in the cave" (Adames). The allegory reminds the girl of herself and her surroundings, as the slave represents her, and the trapped people symbolize her peers. She encounters the truth and believes her job guides others to discover their true identity and remove the mask limiting perspective. On the other hand, many may believe Plato's analogy of the cave does not demonstrate the idea of perspective due to its inability to display a connection towards obtaining a different standpoint in the face of a new discovery. However, anyone to gain access to a much broader array of choices and point of views when leaving the crowd and finding their own path. All in all, learning to lead and not follow opens up a whole new world full of endless opportunities and possibilities where an abundance of different perspectives allow each and every individual to become diverse from one another.

When in the face of Adames' chess allegory, where the pawns are portrayed as weak and insignificant compared to those in charge, people must not plunge into the trap of social pressures and disguise themselves behind a mask, but obtain confidence and originality to maintain a unique perspective. Simply stated, social status should not limit one's ability to remain distinct from others but act as a motivation to discover talent and strength.

For example, the short film “Identity” displays the girl intrigued by a pawn as she listens to her teacher explain the importance of the chess pieces located in only the first row: “The front row consists of kings, bishops, queens, pretty much the people in charge of the country” (Adames). The importance of the front figures is often magnified, causing others to feel non-existent and irrelevant. However, the impact the lower pieces impose on the game is not affected by the surface value. Evidently, in the video, the chess teacher portrays the role of the pawns as meaningless: “The second row is made up of pawns. The pawns are the least important and are pretty much what the leaders use to protect and benefit themselves. They are meant to be used for your own advantage” (Adames). The girl thinks of herself as a pawn, small and unnoticed, but she later proves the importance of even the smallest pieces who can create the greatest impacts. On the other hand, many believe that the pawns cannot obtain originality and maintain perspective because they are often found in extensive groups. They believe the miniscule pawns follow a crowd in overwhelming situations. Nonetheless, each pawn is different in its own way, and they all possess distinctive methods to stand out from the crowd by holding different choices and actions which separates them from one another. Ultimately, a leader is not someone with popularity or power, but a leader can be anyone with the ability to be different and unique.

Kahill Adames strategically incorporates a message of encouraging the viewers to possess a different, one of a kind perspective rather than blindly following the majority which can reveal their true characters. Perspective allows individuals to step into another’s shoes and understand what they see. Many people achieve more knowledge and awareness when given the possibility to experience more. A slight change in perspective can completely transform an individual’s view on the world, allowing the impossible to become possible.

TRAGIC AMUSEMENT

BY CONNOR LAVEAU

The world was silent. Johnny realized the irony of his location. He had always dreamed of visiting a fantastical amusement park with all of his family to ride the attractions. Now the abandoned park represented something more than a symbol of childhood and youth, it was a gateway to safety for the survivors of the attack. As the group approached the entrance, there was seemingly nothing alive within twenty miles of the park, but they all felt the presence of something watching them. They all knew they were never safe, but the entrance and ticket booths in the park gave them a safe, inviting feeling. Michael and James began searching through the first few ticket booths and attractions in hopes of finding anything useful to their journey.

A vibrant flyer for the last show airing in the park floated by the boys. Johnny picked it up and stared closely at the bolded words, “One Night Show - The Great Cartoon Electrical Parade - July 20, 1948”

After reading the words, Johnny remembered how much the war had controlled his life.

Johnny recalled the day that the first bombs were dropped on Oregon. Johnny was still in school when the alert signal was played. He could only recall the moments after the blast. He remembered exiting his classroom and seeing the sky turn orange with flames. Eight years ago, Johnny didn't believe the attack would affect him for so long.

“It's been eight years,” Johnny told James, standing next to him.

“It's felt like a hundred,” James replied, still rummaging through the ticket booths for supplies.

“When do you think it will end?” asked Johnny.

“We can only hope soon,” James muttered as he pushed through the wreckage of fallen attractions, “It's possible it's already over.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that the war might be over... over years ago, but we’re still stuck in the debris, waiting to make it out.”

“If it were over, they would’ve already come and found us... right?”

“They don’t know that anyone’s here, or at least still alive.”

“But they wouldn’t just walk away from us, and leave us to die, would they?”

“I don’t know Johnny, maybe the rest of the country got hit too... maybe they think that the west coast is a lost cause... maybe they just walked away, started fresh. We won't know until we get across the state line and get to working transmission stations.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Michael uttered angrily, spouting off after remaining silent for most of the conversation. “We can’t trust anybody but ourselves to get us out of this mess!”

In silence, the boys continued to hike through the rest of the destroyed park looking for food and medical supplies as they had done hundreds of times before. The sight of the destroyed amusement park attractions broke their hearts. They kept walking until they reached a spout of water. A fountain, destroyed and failing, leaked the precious fluid that all of the boys craved. One by one they took turns laying under the dripping water, becoming rehydrated for the next leg of their journey.

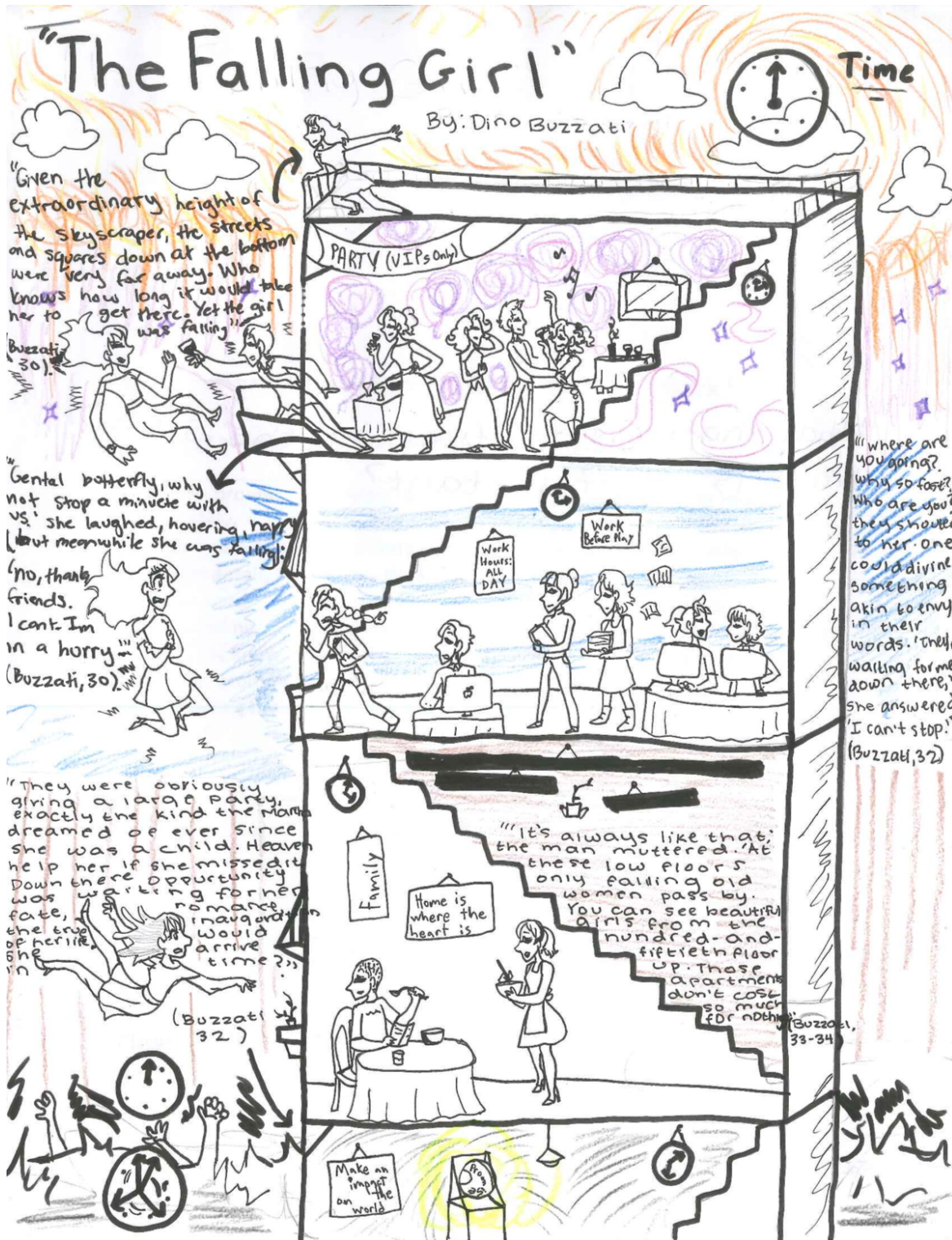
“We’ve got to be close now,” James remarked as he pulled out his map.

For the first time on the journey, Johnny felt relieved. He took a large breath of the fresh, morning air. The scent of mold and bacteria overwhelmed the boys, but for the first time in the past eight years, they didn’t feel alone. In the park, the birds still sang their joyous songs, and the rats still ran freely, ignorant to the lack of people and the destruction that surrounded them. That’s when the boys realized that the park wasn’t abandoned at all. It was inhabited. A whole world made of what their world had discarded.

“Where do we go next?” Michael asked after taking a long gulp of water.

“The same way we’ve been going,” James responded.

The boys exited the park to continue their journey, not knowing if they would ever reach the end.



"The Falling Girl" Visual Analysis

Created by Karina Backes-Jedrzejek, Evah Cline, Elisa Coccioli, & Lili Dritz

MARTA'S IDENTITY

BY RIANA MISTRY

In the narrative “The Falling Girl” by Dino Buzzati, Marta’s identity is characterized as an young adolescent hurrying to the future where affection, opportunities, and perfection awaits her: the social trends and mainstream pop culture develop her identity into a woman that does not embrace and cherish the present but anticipates the future. Pop culture heavily influences Marta’s identity, creating the stereotypical fantasy life that Marta “falls” to instead of taking opportunities and living in the moment. In the narrative, the nineteen-year-old girl jumps off the top of the towering skyscraper hoping to arrive to her fictional reality as she cascades down the building encountering different parties of society: “They were obviously giving a large party, exactly the kind Marta dreamed of ever since she was a child...down there opportunity was waiting for her, fate, romance, the true inauguration of her life” (Buzzati 32). Through the force of pop culture, Marta shapes her expectations from societal trends and entertainment idols: she leaps off the tower and rejects all opportunities and experiences, only waiting her planned realism. The contemplative tone of the story created by the author forces readers to question how pop culture influences their unique identity and how society focuses only on reaching a perfect, yet unattainable, utopia.



THE TRAMPOLINE

BY DANIEL WANG

Failure is a universally dreaded concept that could either end up destroying one or positively revolutionize him. Some people who fail can recover very quickly, just like how grass bounces right back up after you step on it. Though some believe that recovering from failure is a waste, most people that do try again are successful because they are resilient, an essential characteristic needed in American society. People who bounce back from failure often become America's most significant achievers. For example, Steve Jobs' idea of an iPad got rejected several times, but he was resilient and without him, who knows if an iPad would even exist today. What exactly allows people like him to be resilient? The answer is a strong sense of love for an individual's goal, like how Jobs adored his invention, and it allows the individual always to have a fighting spirit to continue for the future. Therefore, an important aspect that develops resilience is the passion for reaching one's goal, and it greatly influences the future by allowing an individual's spirit to live, allowing one to be optimistic.

A crucial element that cultivates resilience is being passionate, shown through "The Green Morning" from Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*. To clarify, passion develops resilience, as demonstrated by Benjamin Driscoll.

For example, he was very passionate about planting trees on Mars, so even though he passed out and had an obstacle, he eventually succeeded. To clarify, even though Benjamin Driscoll did not meet his goals during his first try at planting trees, he was passionate and refused to give up. To add on, passion as a crucial factor that develops resilience is also emphasized when Benjamin Driscoll's doctors told him to move back to Earth, but he still "forced his lungs to drink in deep nothingness"(Bradbury 98). As one can see, this emphasizes that even though he could not live on Mars currently, he obliged to adjust to the climate. Ultimately, Benjamin Driscoll from "The Green Morning" demonstrates that passion cultivates resilience because even though he faced hardships when he tried to make Mars habitable, he still worked again because he was passionate about living on Mars.

Being passionate can lead to the growth of resilience, which impacts the future by making most people eventually reach their goals, shown through "And the Moon Be As Still as Bright" from *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury. In other words, resilience influences the future by allowing one to always be able to fight and feel successful, as demonstrated by Spender from *The Martian Chronicles*. For example, Spender was resilient by finding out what happened to Martians, but then he shot the whole crew out of vengeance for the dead Martian civilization. To elaborate, Spender's resilient mindset towards trying to find out what caused the extinction of Martians led him to shoot the Earthmen and feel successful because he accomplished his goals. This idea is also emphasized by Spender's "first reaction to his killing of the six men," which was "peace"(Bradbury 81). To elaborate, Spender was glad and at peace when he was resilient by getting vengeance for the Martians, which caused him to act hostile and do immoral things. In conclusion, Spender from "And the Moon Be As Still As Bright" shows that resilience allows people to be ecstatic and reach their goals, as after he was resilient and killed the six men to get revenge for the dead Martians, he felt at peace and accomplished.

Overall, passion being a crucial element for the development of resilience is shown by Benjamin Driscoll as he loved living on Mars and tried to make it habitable even though he was unsuccessful at first. However, even though Spender also showed that passion cultivates resilience, it may cause an adverse impact as he shot six men for vengeance. Society should take these concepts about resilience in consideration when making choices, or else a colossal calamity may occur, shown through other texts. In *Everyday*, by David Levithan, the protagonist, A, fails to start a relationship with the girl he loves, but through resilience, he succeeded. However, this caused other problems that almost cost his life. In the end, everything gets started with passion and resilience keeps it alive. However, like bouncing on a trampoline, one wrong use of resilience or one wrong land can cause a huge problem, making resilience always a risky but rewarding choice.

LET'S INITIATE...

SLAM POEM CREATED BY SAM HRONEK, SOPHIA KANE, JACOB POLEY, AND ALYSSA RICE

I look around
 And see a world of hatred and violence
 Yet the sun's rays still dance over the hills
 Despite a world consumed by evil and greed,
 Longing and desire
 Yet the trees still whisper of something
 Hidden, lost behind the voice of evil
 Yet the stars still watch us, guiding us
 No matter where we go, no matter where we look
 I see evil, I see greed, I see hatred in this place we call
 Home

It brings me great sorrow
 That most of us today
 Don't even care about tomorrow

Look right
 Look left
 Look up
 Look down
 Surrounding you are the words of the past, influence of
 the future and the destiny of the present
 We can change those words to bring a better tomorrow

Wars won't arrange
 A peace treaty which will change
 Investing in weapons
 Instead of helping the needy
 You know we're all greedy

The world is hidden by a screen
 And the computers can't explain
 Mean comments on social media
 Causing people to feel pain

Trying to place the blame
 Trying to block out the shame
 Because it is us humans fault
 That our world is in pain

Are we sorry?
 Are we sorry that we put profit above people
 Greed above need
 Gold before the golden rule?

Are we sorry?
 Are we sorry that millions have died in battle
 Fighting for something
 Us selfish humans
 brought upon ourselves?

Are we sorry?
 Are we sorry about our mindset
 Because we had the nerve to cause this destruction
 And never the strength to bring it back to how it was?

Are we sorry?
 If we were truly sorry
 We wouldn't be making excuses
 We would be making a better world

It isn't social media's fault
 It isn't the weapons fault
 It isn't the world's fault
 It's ours

And I'm
 Trying to hide this feeling inside
 Trying to deny
 Asking the world "why?"
 And my brain can't handle the pain
 Suffocating
 Thinking that the world is insane

We think violence can solve anything
 Can it?
 Close your eyes and think
 How many people have suffered
 From this out of whack link

How open your eyes
This is no fairy-tale
We are no Cinderella story
There is no magic mirror
No Fairy Godmother
No Prince Charming
No happily ever after

Unless...
We create
We demonstrate
We educate
Let's initiate

But can we really?
look at us
we are pathetic
Thinking all this hate
Is going to make us great
We are destroying this world

Now imagine a world of peace
Never a lie
Bullies are gone
Friendships are tied
Wars are extinct
And truces stay true
Violence is gone
This can all start with you

What are you going to do?
Make a change
What are you going to do?
Stand up for what you believe in
What are you going to do?
Be kind

All it takes is one kind word
Let's initiate
All it takes is to be a true friend
Let's initiate
All it takes is one kind action
Let's initiate
All it takes...Is US

It brings me great sorrow
That most of us today
Don't even care about tomorrow

You see this world turned upside down
Let's change this into a world that is safe and sound
Instead of our world chip-chipping away
Let's put our actions together
And make a better today

THE ROSETTE GAZETTE

ISSUE 2 | LOS CERRITOS MIDDLE SCHOOL | MAY 2018