Harrison Writing Award Winners

Declan Rous	Change
Caitlin Robinson	Little Moonlight Girl
Clara McRae	Peaked
Hannah Dreesbach	At the End of the Road

Honorable Mentions

Alyssa Thompkins	Crown
Cas Seamons	The Forgotten Generation
Haley Wright	The Hachi Kachi Man

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Change by Declan Rous

I watch the man walk into the store. He walks gingerly and with a light step. He came to this gas station every day during my morning shift. He wore the same plain suit and combed his hair over in the same way. He always roamed to the coffee in the back where he would fill up a disposable cup with straight black coffee. He would always buy a package of donuts and the day's newspaper. He would always have the same total: $6.57. He would always pay with a ten dollar bill, and he would always tell me to keep the change.

I remember talking to him about it around the sixth day he did this. I told him to take it. That he doesn't have to give me almost four dollars everyday. He told me that he didn't like change. That he didn't want to carry it around in his pocket. He told me to keep it. I didn't put up much of a fight with him after that. I mean, I don't mind receiving $3.43 everyday. I still think it's weird though. I usually go out and spend it each day on something new. Once I bought some cheap shades, another time I bought myself some fast food. I always try to keep it fresh and see what I can do with my tips from the day, and I always know that I'll have at least three dollars and forty three cents.

The man walks from the coffee pot to the end of the aisle, where he picks up the same package of glazed donuts from the days prior. He continues to walk until he reaches the end of the counter and picked up today's paper. He pulls out a ten dollar bill and hands it me.

"Can I get my change in quarters if it's no trouble?"

I am stunned and shocked. It takes me a second to respond.

"Yeah, no problem."

The man begins to smile and to collect his thirteen quarters, three nickels and three pennies. He looks up and says his usual, have a great day. He walks out the door. I am stuck staring out the door, watching him drive away with my change ringing in his pockets.

I hate change.



Small Town by Clara McRae

Untitled by Kyle Hicks



I Wanna Go There by Tanlee Pipinich

I wanna go there.

I wanna stand where no one has stood
before.

I wanna feel the rigid cold bite at my nose on
the highest peak.

I wanna see the most compelling views that
take my breath away.

I wanna feel the overwhelming amount of gratitude
just by looking out into
the unknown.

My heart belongs to wandering, and
I'm longing for the day
I get to leave my comfort zone.

Crown by Alyssa Thompkins

She wore her nation upon on her head like a crown of thorns,

Willing to take the pain.

She was not proud of the way her nation forced her to feel the sting,

But she took it anyway.

She was looking up when it happened,

When the bomb dropped.

She ran on her bare, scarred feet,

Not daring to look anywhere but to the future.

She found herself in America,

All those months later.

She was scared for her crown was not atop her skull anymore,

The pain gave way to something new.

She was now wearing a new type of crown,

An American Dream dripping with venom.

She wondered why she ached for a crown that was so painful to wear,

One that dug almost comfortably into her skin.

She realized that the pain was all she had left,

For the people here thought of her as dirt dressed in another language.

She needed another crown,

Anything to keep her own dream alive and not the American perspective.

She decided that this country of hate will not be her pain,

It could be someone else's, but never hers.

She changed her mind set,

Not her surroundings.

She again wore her nation upon her head like a crown of thorns.

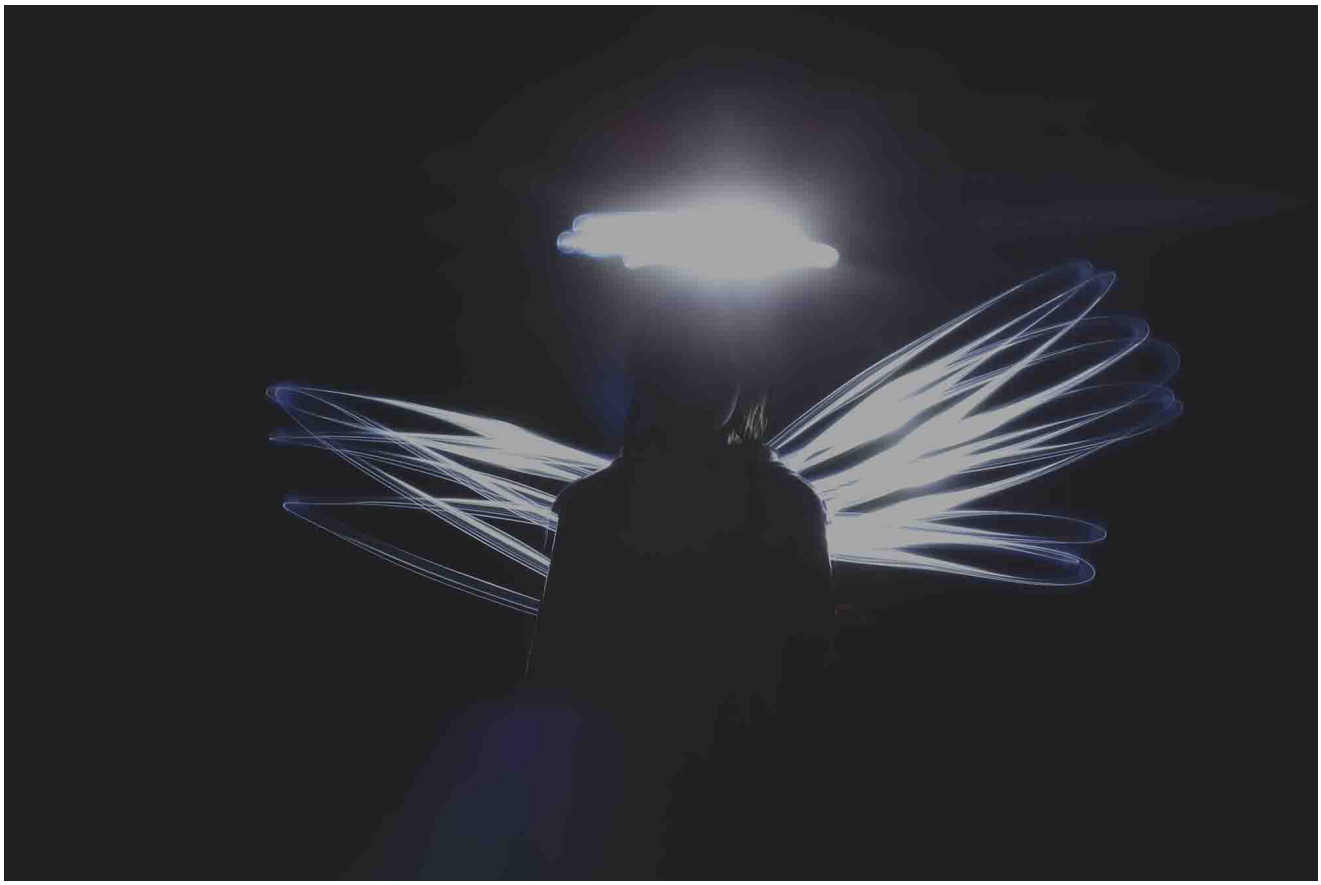


Bird by Tracy Ackert



Lodge by Resse Blossom

Wings by Elise Wolf



I Believe by Declan Rous

I believe in God.
I believe in true love, although it can be as hard to prove as God.
I believe in a good steak, although it can be overdone like true love.
I believe that there isn't a part of a woman that isn't sexy, except maybe the toes.
But I don't believe that everyone is sexy, and I will admit I do have an odd taste.
I don't date blondes, although there are three exceptions to this rule.
I'm not one to share my feelings with my friends or family.
I will never ride a horse, and I will never not tell a stupid joke if it comes to me.
I have a hard time knowing where the line is, and often cross it.
I love the smell of rain in the morning and the taste of oreos dipped in milk.
I hate the smell of kitty litter and the taste of french toast.
I hate cinnamon and mint everyday of the year except for the month of December.
I believe that storytelling is one of the my best skills, but at the same time
I don't believe in myself.



Playground in the End by Kendall Smith

The Things I'd Give by Cas Seamons

I love you.

It's sudden and it's blunt and it's true.

But oh! the things I'd give to have you know.

Dear god, I'd give anything.

Anything to take away the pain.

Anything to help you feel whole.

Anything to make you better.

Anything to have you be mine.

Don't you know the things I'd give you?

I'd give you a shoulder to cry on, and a gentle hand to wipe the tears away.

I'd give you a kiss, or two, or maybe a thousand and then some.

Or perhaps a hand to hold through the dark and the rain, and through the sun and shine too.

I'd give you anything if you asked.

I'd give you the sun, the moon, the stars.

I'd give you the universe to explore.

I'd level mountains and tame seas and extinguish the deadliest of fires.

I'd bring peace to the world in hopes of bringing peace to you.

I'd give you a family, a home, a place to call yours.

I'd give you my life if that's what you wanted.

Don't you know the things I'd give you?

Dear god, I'd give anything.

Yet, here I stand, giving you everything I can.

It's never enough, is it?

You go elsewhere in search of what you desire, leaving me behind holding the pieces of a broken heart.

Of my broken heart.

And still, as soon as you come back, I hide the pieces away and give you everything again.

Because I love you.

Because you don't know the things I'd give.

Oh god, I'd give you everything.



Newport by Haley Wright

Alight by Elsie Harrington

I met the girl with the sun on what began as a lovely Saturday morning, outside of the library. It was one of those mornings when you don't want to do anything but just sit and reflect. A few leaves were scattered here and there along the ground, a sure indication of fall coming. The crisp air was refreshing and cool, and my navy sweater was more than enough to keep me comfortable.

She was sitting in the park, leaning against a tree, absorbed in a sketchbook. She had a charcoal streak on her nose, the silver stark against her dark skin. Her thick hair was separated into two bunches atop her head, and I noticed a tattoo of a sun on her outer wrist. I had chosen a tree near hers and was trying to finish a book assigned for class.

As Montana weather tends to do as the seasons change, what I was sure would turn into a fair day was soon interrupted by rain. I became acutely aware of this fact when large, fat raindrops, the kind that burst on the ground, landed on the pages of my open book.

I hurriedly closed it and stood, glancing up at the sky. Blue only a few minutes before, it was now roofed by clouds. My gaze fell on the girl, who was struggling to pack up her art. I pulled down my beanie, grabbed my bag, and jogged over to help. A pencil case lay on the ground a few feet away.

"Is this yours?"

She peered up at me. Her eyes were deep brown, a color that reminded me of the soil when kissed by the same rain we were standing in.

"Thanks," she confirmed, taking it. She was shivering in her dress, her cardigan thin and unable to withstand the rain. Her sketchbook was clutched to her chest, and she was hugging it, trying to protect it from the sudden shower.

"Do you want to go inside?" I asked suddenly, unsure where this burst of confidence was coming from. "There's a nice coffee shop about a block away. We could warm up there?"

She hesitated, then nodded.

"Of course."

As we walked together, I learned her name. *Theo*. It was a simple name that rolled off my tongue and reminded me of childhood. She was an art major, and she lionized her life drawing professor as if the very ground he walked was sacred.

In return, I told her of my studies in literature and astronomy, which opened the door for me to ask about her tattoo. She glanced down at the sun's fiery tendrils wrapping their way around her wrist, smiled, and told me of her sister.

She was her twin but, unlike Theo, the moment she'd turned eighteen she moved across the globe. The two sisters had always been close, so when they had become antipodes they wanted something to bond them, hence the tattoo. Theo told of her sister's moon, in direct contrast to her own star.

Over time, we became friends. It started out simply enough, meeting each other every Saturday outside the library, yet it soon grew. When we discovered we both needed a roommate, the solution presented itself immediately and we moved in together.

I found something in Theo I'd never known before. Conversations with her opened me and left me thinking for hours after we had spoken. It was unlike talking to anyone else. Exchanges I'd had with others had always seemed superfluous and false, but everything she said was real.

During my time with her, Theo taught me to see the world in a different way. I saw a woman's body in the waving grass. I heard the careless laugh of a child escape a flowing brook. The wind whispered softly to me, hinting of secrets.

And in Theo I saw the world. Her eyes held the flecks of gold that miners had once crossed the country to find. The curve of her neck was the concave surface of a valley; her nimble fingers, fluttering wings. Her fruity laugh spilled out, her shoulders shaking like a mountain in an earthquake.

I thought I'd be learning from her forever.

She was diagnosed on a Tuesday.



Untitled by Megan McCauley

The Sun and the Warmth by Caitlin Robinson

You touched my heart and it soared.
It flew like the birds we saw in the sky.
So free and beautiful.

And when you touched my face,
it felt like the sun touched me.
You were so bright and so wonderful.

And then it was the little things.
The disapproval.
The push to make me like you and your family.
The nudge away from my friends.

And then you left.
And it felt like the clouds would never go away.
And I spent so much time repairing the mistakes you urged me to make with my friends.

But now you want me back.
But now I don't want you.
I don't need you.
And I am better off without you.

I still have your shirt somewhere.
I don't know where it is, but I know I never gave it back.
And I know you know I still have it.
But I don't care.

If I ever find it,
it'll go into a box of memories.
Where you'll be drowned out with the memories of all the time spent with friends instead of you.

But I've found the sun now.
I've felt the warmth without you.
And it's the best feeling in the world.

A Crack in the Window by Ally Hamm

Sitting. Waiting. Sulking. Suffering. The days, unforgiving, continued to seep the life out of the lonesome man. For what reason? To anyone who had once known him, you could ask them, and instantly they would tell you that he had it all. He was joyful—a walking beam of light, and, as the others had noticed, next to his wife it was all they could do to not blind the world together. Though that was then; now, time—merciless as always, painfully and slowly drug him through life, unwilling as he was.

A single step out of his apartment door would birth a chorus of murmerings that simply sent him deeper into a state of melancholy, and giving in, he would slowly recede back into his room in attempt to find comfort in solitude.

There was a moment in time, not long ago, where the irascibility was benevolence. Rather than piercing stares, the man delivered kind eyes. Curt shrugs were warm embraces. Sour frowns were bright smiles.

Eventually, rumors to the cause of this drastic change had surfaced, each one more dark than the last. Though, nothing ever came close to reality. *Perhaps there was a family tragedy.* The words replayed in the man's head, hissing as if he were hearing them for the first time. *Maybe him and that girl aren't together anymore*, his stomach dropped as the words reran through his thoughts, *I haven't seen her around much lately. We haven't seen much of him either, to be fair. I suppose, they pondered, but the other day I saw the ambulance stop at his room. Maybe something had happened to her?*

Of course something had occurred, however, the man was very secretive and would not give in to any rumors. He did not want to talk. For no one could truly fathom a possible explanation for how one of the happiest men in the world could now create a storm with his fingertips. The way he is now.

Eventually his previous acquaintances had run out of patience. *The cowardice! The audacity!* they would say, forcing the man to repeat their comments in his head, over, and over, and over. They did not look for explanations, rather, they took it personally and soon began to resent the man for acting the way in which he did, as if it were a personal attack upon themselves.

And so he isolated himself, and spent his days wasting away in front of a window—a cracked window nonetheless. The weather was slowly turning more frigid as the days progressed, though he did not seem to notice—and if he did, he would not have cared. The only thing that had seemed to occupy him these days was the thoughts of returning to his sacred position of staring through the glass.

There has been talk of sending him away, for his own safety of course. What is the man to do with his life if he continuously locks himself in his apartment? Who goes from the most happy and outgoing person to one who wastes their life away, staring through a wretched window?

Empty as though he seemed on the outside, inside he ticked. And ticked. And ticked. Deep within the man, emotions were churning. As if a bomb had been placed directly on his heart, even the most miniscule of happenings sent him into an indescribably fit of rage. The irritability. The anger. The sadness. There was no escape, though there was for her—so it seemed.

He was not oblivious. He heard the whispers, he knew the rumors, felt the gawking. The man was present, simply not in the sense that others were yearning for. So instead he sat, basking in the window that even he resents, though for different reasons than the others, ones unbeknown to those around him.

A glimmer of movement through the glass suddenly brought him back to a different time. a single flake He watched a single flake of snow slowly drift to the pavement outside his window, vanishing instantly, as though it had never existed. But soon there was another, and another, until a flurry came cascading down.

His heart ached as he solemnly watched the flakes fall; winter was the woman's favorite season, and every motif of it had reminded him of her. A lone snowflake managed to find its way through the ill repaired cracks in the window, and swiftly landed on the back of his hand. But the cool touch was nothing compared to the burning agony he felt inside of him, and as such it could do nothing to soothe him. Regardless of this, the flake managed to bring him back to a comforting memory, a time of happiness.

He looked to the right of him and was mesmerized by the woman standing there. She was skating, portraying long and eloquent strokes, which made his short and sloppy stumblings laughable, though endearing in her eyes. After hours and hours spending time at the happiest moment of his life. He sat, sipping his drink, a rush of warmth spread from his fingertips to his toes. *This is pure happiness*. The biting cold of the weather was nothing compared to the engulfing warmth of the happiness he was feeling at the time.

A sudden whistling wind brought him back to his senses. The tingling warmth he was reminded of quickly vanished. Once again, the biting cold engulfed him. And then nothing at all. He heard the whispers.

He would let them say as they pleased. Whether this was because of his sudden newfound apathy towards life, or a coping mechanism in which to protect himself from the pain of no longer having her.

Sitting. Waiting. Now standing and walking. For the first time, he attempted to sever himself from the window. He thought of the whispers he would hear. In his head, he heard the voices of the people surrounding him, humiliating him. *How could they understand?* He grimaced. *What was people's fascination with pain? They feed off of others and they starve when its their own.* The break from reality happened constantly, so much so that it was his own.

The snow, the lights, jingling bells and joyful faces, it was all too much. Everywhere he went during this season he was reminded of her. Everywhere he looked he was immersed by the thought of her; the thought of her smell, her touch, her voice—everything.

There was no escape. He tried desperately to live his life as he once had, but without her, it was phony.

The first two steps out of his apartment door and they started again. The stares. The murmurs. Crumbling, breaking, hurting, the man promptly gave in, and practically ran back into his room, to his window, to his fate.

With a familiar cold touch, the shattered glass welcomed him. And there he was, absorbed yet again. For the first time since it happened he truly forced himself to examine the window. The severity was sinking in. It has now been one month, two weeks—he looked down at his watch—and 5 hours. It was all he could do to not count the minutes and the seconds. Though time doesn't matter, none of it did without her. Suddenly the comfort of the window turned to horror as it reminded him of the pain it brought him. The pain it brought her. He couldn't continue to be absorbed by the horror, he couldn't stand to spend his days looking through it anymore. Why is it that he felt the need to go back to the thing that hurt him the most? *Why did she do it?* His eyes traced the cracks. *We had everything together. We were happy.*

Why did you do it?

Why did you do it?

"Why did you do it?"

There was no more comfort, and there was no more cold. Simply nothingness. An ill repaired window shattered once more. To him though, there was no window, no light, no hope.

She had said to him that she cannot take him with her where she was going, but just as he had sat and cursed the window, he would be damned if he didn't try.

Expect Resistance by Rachel Jakovac

Her hair is fire.
Her eyes are urgency, her ears a funnel, her lips a transport…
Her words—a revolution.

She is an invisible siren, whispering words of revolt, creating neophytes with open eyes. Women gather around her with restored vision and a fighting spirit—a tantrum of breath, a Starry Night of the rebellious spirit.

Spirit. She is, but she isn't a spirit of someone who has passed. She is alive and determined. She is a bit, a sprinkle, and a dash fallen into the ears of the awakened.

"Pansies. Snowflakes." The opposition calls out, "What are they trying to prove?"

And so she laughs at them. She laughs with pity at the blinded citizens attempting to hold their power by covering the eyes of their children. Generation after generation they ignored The Spirit of Revolution, telling their kin of the 'selfish', the 'bitter', and the 'dramatic'.

Possibly dramatization is exactly what The Spirit wants. Possibly she is fed by loud voices and clear intentions. Possibly this would bear the day where she was no longer vital, no longer an I.V. producing a flow of desire for equality.

One day her hair will extinguish, her eyes will slow, her ears will have silence, her lips will close, and her words will stop. Her death will prompt the end of necessary revolution.
Her death will mark true life.



Untitled by Hayley Fife



Friends? by Sydney Wilke

Thanks for the friendship
The smiles
The laughter
It hurts me to say
That I think we need a break
Maybe forever
Maybe just a few days
You said you were sorry
But that's not enough
The things you said,
They hurt me too much
I'm trying to get over it
I'm trying to return
But if I do
I am so much afraid
That things will never change
And those things you said
Will never fade



Untitled
Photos by
Morgyn
Hutchinson

The Butterflies by Tanlee Pipinich

The butterflies.
The twisted feeling in your stomach,
Because something longs
To be with you.
The heart beat.
The fast pace that begins to race,
As the moments arise and fall.
These feelings are rare.
Not like the others,
Different.
Something is different with you.



Untitled by Madison Blixt

The Hachi Kachi Man by Haley Wright

When I swing the door open she is there to greet me,
A wiggling bundle of fur
Spotted and small
In her mouth she holds her favorite chew toy
A teddy bear we like to call the "Hachi Kachi Man"
Because of the karate-esque cries it makes when squeezed

That's probably offensive
But it's too late to change the truth now

Everyday
Anytime
Anyone
Is at the door
She excitedly runs to greet them
Bearing the Hachi Kachi Man in between her teeth like a gift

I guess 'chew toy' is not quite the right word for it
She never chewed her toy
Gnawed at it yes,

Only when she got nervous
But never tore at, threw, shredded, ripped into
The Hachi Kachi Man

Whenever someone squeezes it,
Evoking the comical series of "ha-yah's" and "hai!'s,"
She comes running
And gently removes the bear from your hands

Now I am holding it in my hands
Feeling the crust of saliva from years past
It occurs to me that we never washed it
Save for the times it may have gone through the sprinkler

I give it a light squeeze
"Haiii—"
It splutters and the recorded voice fizzles out into garbled static
The moment is ruined

I don't know what happened to the Hachi Kachi Man
It's not in the house anymore
Maybe my parents threw it out

Maybe it was too hard to see it get destroyed by the other dog
Maybe it already had been, and it was too hard to tell us
That it had been tossed away
Mixed in with the waste

Or maybe it's still here
Buried somewhere
A strange addition to the fine china and other dusty keepsakes
In the backs of our closets

I'd like to think that it made it to wherever she was going
Passed on and out of this world
Just a little late
Enough time to say goodbye
Since we weren't able to then



Hagrid by Levi Long

Icicles by Beatrice Pujol

When the wind blows from the east in the middle of a winter storm, it can feel as if you are surrounded by beasts—all out for your blood. And who knows? Maybe there are wild white wolves dancing between the snowflakes, growling into one ear, then, as you turn your head to search for the source of the sound, jumping around you to snap in the other. Their howls fill the night and carry the cold air that hits with such a force to steal the breath from your lungs.

You shiver, knowing these images in your head are nothing more than fantasy. But there's still that small part of you that wants to run through the storm, away from these beasts that chase you. But you have to conserve your energy; if you exhaust your energy now, you won't survive the night. You can't afford to make any mistakes.

Another gust of wind blows the cold, sharp shards of glass into your eyes. Your cheeks are covered in a thin film of frozen tears. You expect that if you tried to smile, your face would break, like the vase you pushed off the table at age twelve. You push on, blinking madly to force the bubbles sitting along your bottom lid to break. Not that it helps much. The night is dark, and the snow is thick. You don't know where you are, or how long you've been walking for.

You walk for hours on end. You can feel the blisters on your feet breaking, and the skin on your hands being chaffed away by the too big, too rough gloves they wear. Your nose has gone numb. Your every limb aches. With every step you can feel your legs threatening to give up – to let you fall. To let you die.

And maybe that would be easier. To just lay in the snow like you used to when you were young. To let the wolves catch up to you and consume you. It's a tempting thought. There would be no more pain, you could simply fall asleep and never wake up. You wouldn't feel your skin cracking, bleeding, aching. You wouldn't feel anything. This numbness had already made its way from your nose to your ears, and you could feel it trying to reach your heart. Your soul. You know if you let it win, it'll be over. You'll die.

But you don't want to die.

It may be hard to fight off this storm and the wild, white wolves that chase you, but that's the beauty of life. It's raw. It hurts. It's cracking, bleeding, aching. There is never peace. You just have to keep moving. One step after the other.

So, you will your legs to keep moving. You push on through the endless drifts and the raging storm. Fighting back the wolves with growls of your own. These growls eventually become grunts. And before you know it, you're shouting and howling back at these wolves that once terrified you.

As you scream, your face splits and cracks, then breaks. It isn't the kind of break you were expecting. There's no pain. There is freedom. You suddenly understand how close you had actually come to giving up.

A shadow looms ahead of you. You resist the urge to run again, forcing yourself to stay calm, to not get your hopes up.

It's a cave.

You cry, openly and loud. The tears that fall from your eyes no longer freeze onto your face in a mask. They drip down your chin, making icicles like the ones you can see hanging from the mouth of the cave. You've never been happier to see icicles in your life.

• • •

Dawn breaks, and you're alive. You made it through that impossible storm. And as you step outside of the cave, you see the dazzling sun, reflecting off the snow. You can see the wolves dancing and playing together in the distance. They'll not be bothering you for a long time yet. Their happy yips and barks travel across the landscape to you. A sharp gust of wind leaves a cool kiss on your cheek.

You inhale deeply, and you exhale through a small, determined smile.

The icicles wink mischievously at you from the cave.



Untitled Photos by Melina Scott





Untitled Photos by Becky diMontigny





When Sky Meets Earth by Cas Seamons

Blue as the grand cerulean Sky
As the Cosmos that shimmer through the night
As the Mountains that stand tall and strong
As the Ocean dancing in the sun
As the Sapphires hiding in the dust
As the Moon on a summer's twilight

Brown as the sturdy Earth below
As the Dirt after heavy rain
As the Forest that sways in the breeze
As the Bark of the oldest tree
As the Coffee scent that wafts through warm air
As the Honey that sweetens all good things

As the Sky met the Earth
They fell
Through time and space
Across galaxies and oceans
And in Love

The Sky is everywhere
And it begins at our feet
Touching the Earth
Keeping it close
While holding its breaking pieces together

The stars in the Sky
Are as countless
As the sands of the Earth
But not all stars belong up Above
And the Universe gives way
To dust and storms

The endless Empyrean
Dances and swirls
Stretching through time
Past and Future
All the while remaining in the Present

But the Earth
Oh the broken Earth cannot last
And it fades
Into the darkest night
Brown leaving Blue as slowly as it came

And slowly the Sky falls
Blue fading as Brown
For the Sky without her Earth
Is as Dark without Light
And Rain without Shine
And Dance without Music

Brown is no longer sturdy Earth
Blue not cerulean Sky
The galaxies fall
And the oceans fade
Along with our Blue and Brown eyes

Emulation of Virginia Woolf by Kaytlin Newlun

Mulberry, said the backward view of the sign that Miss Pym saw as she stood in the shop; seeing only the bottom of the shop's name through the window that cut off the top of the word, to the extent of one not knowing what it may say unless one is familiar with it; such as Miss Pym was.

She peered through the window which cut off the word, as a woman approached, a woman of high class and a high respectability; a woman known to all as Clarissa Dalloway. Unusual to see a woman of her monetary position to be found footslogging into the shop rather than sending someone, but Miss Pym wasn't one to wonder much, just to tend to her pedaled and colourful children. Clarissa was swathed in clothing expensive to the means of which that Miss Pym could not have afforded one piece of the outfit. Not to say that Miss Pym doesn't have money, but simply not to the amount of that of Clarissa. The gloves were what Miss Pym fawned over most fashionable, yet warm, yet thin, yet beautiful; she always had cold hands—not that she could have worn them, what with the need for delicacy when trimming, and snipping, and fluffing, and perfecting the flowers—her flowers, her children.

Each flower to Miss Pym was a smile, event, laugh, cry, gathering, memory, that she pleasured herself in creating. She spent nine rings of Big Ben in the shop per day; and she did so six of the seven days of the week, adoring every minute. That's not to say that boredom was never an issue; but she found ways of passing her time. Counting the pedals of every flower in the shop, which was often interrupted; counting the pedals on one flower, which was tiringly repetitive; imaging where the flowers she sold were going, but she found that over the years she had started to run out of places to imagine them at; but her favorite thing to do, which she had not yet found a foible in, was to watch the people outside of the window. She imagined the people, same as she does the flowers, but the flowers all go to the same events and the same parties and places, but the people on the streets—always changing. One day she may see a small man in a long trench coat, or a tall man is a small sweater, or a lad on a bike, or an old woman hunched and hidden in a hood. What do they do? What are their lives? Miss Pym wondered, she wondered. Her experience today was that of a backfiring car, and the interesting people inside of it, around it, and that saw it. Each person always so different and each person bringing her a new experience, thought, wonder ... epiphany .. epiphany, epiphany.

Miss Pym let her eyes fall fixed on a small purple-white lilac; the smell almost still extant although it was far from her reach, as if the sight of the beauty radiated the smell to her nose so that she could enjoy the scent of spring from the indoors. “Maybe..” she asked “if people out there, and you and I, and I and someone else; do you think that we are not so different? I am not meaning it to sound that I believe myself to be of your stature, but … flowers, each pedal different, all still beautiful. Might I be as beautiful as you in someone’s eyes? Some believe roses to be the most lovely, some say carnations, lilac, delphiniums. May I be a lilac when all I have met have been in search of a rose?”

She looked up from the lilac hoping for an answer from Clarissa; although not expectant, seeing as she felt nervous that her bravery of her words, her question, may need have been refrained. Her worry soon dissipated, however, when she looked up to see an empty shop, and Clarissa’s dress flowing in the wind, far from the shop, down the street, walking away.

Miss Pym walked to the delphiniums

1..2..3..4...



Untitled by Isabella Brooke

Counting, A New Coping Method by Jordan Straub

A hospital is surprisingly silent. I think that is why I latched onto the mechanical sound of the equipment alerts. I spent hours lying on my back with my eyes closed simply counting all the beeps that filled the room. The beeps comforted me. I'd imagine that they were the PCA's way of telling me "don't worry, this wave will pass" or the ventilator whispering "just sleep, we'll take care of the rest" into my ear.

By six, my family realized that immobilizing stomach pain was a fact of life. Throughout elementary school I would be sick for days with severe discomfort. The pain always meant visits to doctor's offices to be interrogated and prodded. This would continue until just as suddenly and inexplicably as it came, the pain would disappear. For years doctors explained my pain as constipation, anxiety, the flu, or a conversion disorder. I was told my pain wasn't real so many times I began to question my sanity. But my mom never gave up on me. At nine she practically forced our pediatrician to run four specific blood tests. He was convinced they would be negative, but a week later, the results returned with a small green check mark next to the "impossible" diagnosis. Acute Pancreatitis. I didn't know what a pancreas did or what pancreatitis meant, but it didn't matter. A diagnosis meant I wasn't crazy, that my suffering was indeed real. The next few years I was in and out of the hospital every few months or so, otherwise leading a relatively normal life.

Normal, at least, until sixth grade when I was hospitalized in July. Like Usual, we waited for the pain to go away, but this time it didn't. I was discharged 14 days later without medication and told my pain had become chronic.

I couldn't eat, go to school, or leave my bed. A tube in my stomach fed me a disgusting concoction of liquid nutrition. The pain was unrelenting in my sleep and a stark reality when I awoke. I became incredibly depressed, we knew that we had to do something.

Four days after Christmas, I laid in a sterile room, 1,037 miles away from home. The room was full of people dressed head-to-toe in blue medical gear. They attached a mask to my face and told me to breathe deeply. I inhaled the Nitrous Oxide, the chemical made me laugh, I didn't want to laugh but I couldn't help it. I remember looking up into my mom's eyes ... and then nothing.

Twelve hours on the table. The surgical team removed my pancreas, spleen, gallbladder, duodenum, and appendix before transferring my islet cells into my liver. A foot-long scar from the bottom of my sternum to the top of my pelvic bone revealed itself. Two months were spent in recovery, still 1,000 miles away from friends and family. During this time, I experienced the most painful and mentally challenging days of my life. I had to learn how to walk, breathe, and eat all over again while being in excruciating pain. These moments are the lowest points of my life, but I wouldn't trade them for the world.

When I look in the mirror every morning and see my scar, I'm reminded not of a dark time, but of my bravery and triumphs. After what I've been through, I've learned

first-hand that I can accomplish anything with a sense of determination and a system of support. My surgery gave me a perspective that I would otherwise have never developed. It's one of gratitude and strength. This outlook is who I am, and it translates into everything I do, making me an overall more confident and empathetic individual.

I still count every day, but instead of beeps, I now count the number of hugs I give in a day or the number of people I make smile.



Sunset by Sloane Chapman

Historical Fiction by Zoey Wall

"I said no, Grace. Move on from your silly fixation, you are no longer old enough to go on childish adventures. You are sixteen years old, by God, and you are to be married in a month, this is the last time we will speak of it," His voice grew with every sentence, and his eyebrows furrowed even deeper into his forehead. When he was finished, he crossed his arms, and looked down at her through his hooded eyelids. Grace knew her father was surely expecting some kind of argument. She had a million of them rushing through her mind, but the tears pulling at her eyes kept her from putting them into words. She would not let her emotions betray her in front of her father. Instead, she held her breath to fight the sob of desperation that threatened to come spilling out. Shaking off her hurt, she assembled the greatest glower she could. She put all of her anger and enmity into her face, hoping that he would see the emotions in her mind, see her passion, along with her misery of her captivity, just enough to change his mind on his decision. Not breaking eye contact, she knelt down to a bow, before stalking away. As a tear slipped from her eye, she could only urge him in her head to call her back in his gentle resonance. To tell her that if her one love is the sea, then she shall be with it, at least one last time before her freedom is traded away and her sea adventures surely gone forever. But he never did.

Once she'd past far enough through the halls to hear him say anything, her shoulders dropped and all the hope fled her body. His decision is final. With the loss of that hope, anger took its place. Grace stormed through the castle, servants and maids parted out of her way. Her indignation radiated through the old stone walls. With each step, more thoughts of betrayal raced through her mind. Each of them raged in her mind, how could he call my devotion a silly fixation when he was the one who taught me the beauty of the ocean, the strength in manning a ship, and the power in fighting the waves that are God's will themselves?

By the time she threw open the great oak door of her rooms, tears of frustration had already begun to flow down her cheeks. Not even thinking, she resorted to a violent urge and yanked her clan tapestry off the wall. She watched the symbol of her clan—a great hog under a crown—twist to the floor.

She didn't bother to pick it up again.

Her breathing was deepening as she began to think of never being on the sea again, she felt prisoner to the castle walls, and she hated that she may feel like this for the rest of her life. Trying to control her breathing, she began to stalk around her room. During her pacing, she stopped in front of her mirror and gazed at her reflection. With disgust, she realized, this has all happened because she was a woman. Had she been a man, she would never have to mourn the loss of her freedom because of marriage. Had she been a man, her father never would have betrayed the bond they formed from the rolling waves of the Irish sea. Had she been a man, it would have been her duty to do the one thing she loves more than anything.

As more thoughts came through her mind, she began to gaze at her long red hair in hatred. She always left it knotted, and kept strands of it braided chaotically. It was uncharacteristic to how women are expected to wear their hair, yet it was still long and bright, branding her to a life of serving and nursing. The more she stared, the more she began to despise her mop of hair. She hated the status it represented, she hated the looks of disapproval it got from the older women when they saw it on a ship. Anger boiling up her body, she unhooked the blade from her hip. Clutching it tight in her fingers, she brought it up to her temple, and cut away at a large section of hair. Grace watched the curled red lock fall to the ground before she continued to slash tirelessly at the one barrier to her passion.

When all of her thick hair lay in spots around her feet, she studied her new reflection in the mirror. She still looked like a woman, her long eyelashes curled up past two, doe-eyed, bright jade orbs. Her lips were still full and red, but the hair that normal curled around her face, and down her back, now stood up just an inch past her forehead. With a plan forming it her head, she realized on that alone, she could pass as a young boy, whose voice had not yet dropped. She decided in some ways, she did admire her long hair. She'd managed to make it look perfect for her part in life, but knew it was worth it to see it gone, even for only one more adventure at sea.

By the time she'd gathered her belongings for seafaring, she could already hear the horns signifying a soon departing ship. Grace checked her reflection in the mirror one last time and smirked at herself as she pulled a crimson hood over her cropped hair. Excitement bubbling up inside of her, she made a skipping sprint toward the castle doors, sliding through corridors and even throwing in a childish heel click as she grabbed an apple from the kitchen. The maids gazed at each other in confusion at the indistinct person running wildly through the halls, but continued work with an eye roll as Grace announced herself with a grin,

kitchen. The maids gazed at each other in confusion at the indistinct person running wildly through the halls, but continued work with an eye roll as Grace announced herself with a grin,

"Don't cause too much trouble while I'm gone ladies."

Grace opened the doors and a sliver of bright colors entered her vision. Even in a rush, she couldn't pass up the opportunity to stop and admire the beautiful Irish sunrise as she opened the towering castle doors. The stars in the highest part of the sky shone just barely against the deep blue of the morning sky, contrasting perfectly with the purples, pinks and electric blues that shone just over the horizon, hinting at a new sun rising above the surface of the sea. Grace's lips twitched into a small smile. The familiar sound of a ship breaking from the docks broke her out of her bliss. Glancing toward the docks, she takes off to catch the ship moving away from land. She isn't worried about missing the ship, but instead, embraces the energy that began to flow through her body. As she pushes past women and children waving at the ship, she let out a sigh of relief when she saw her father kept his promise from many years before. He assured her that he would always leave a rope on the bowsprit of the ship cast off, in case she ever got stuck off the boat. Sure enough, there it was, waving at her in the wind. She guessed the boat was nearly ten feet from the dock, but not wanting to risk any time, Grace makes a blind jump and barely grabs onto the rope in time. She laughed slightly at her dumb luck and began to climb.

On the beak of the ship, she hoisted herself up onto the edge and then again up onto the main deck. On top of the ship, she paused and just enjoyed the salty smell of the air and the light wind blow across her body. Men bustled about around her, paying no attention to her presence, but rather lifting settled into her favorite spot. Leaning against the boat, she sat back and just watched the horizon with a satisfied smile on her lips. As she closed her eyes to doze off, something caught in her vision. What was the point of her cutting her hair if no one sees it—have her sneak onto the boat and do something—maybe she gets yelled at so she just goes back to the bowsprit. Taking a moment to react, she ripped her eyes open again and stared at the ship they were approaching in the distance. Something in the pit of her gut, told her it wasn't there to exchange hellos. As they got closer, the flag flying from the ship, identified as belonging to the O'Connor Clan. Grace sucked in her breath. She found she couldn't take her eyes off the ship. After a couple seconds, she realized that she was holding her breath, worry began to course through her mind. Her father had told stories of the O'Connors since she was little. They were ruthless and cruel, but no one had heard from them in years.

Is this why he wouldn't let me come along?

Suddenly it all came together in her head.

He planned this since the beginning, he wanted to go after the O'Connors. Dammit, how could he be so stupid?

He had this planned since the beginning, he was going after the O'Connors, that's why he wouldn't allow her to come. With each new thought, she became more and more concerned. Her eyes still on the ship, she waited for one of the ships to turn around—neither of them did. Grace's eyes widened as she watched from her spot, she could hear her men yelling commands from the top of the ship as they threw hooks onto the other ship, causing both to come to a halting stop. She didn't even notice herself lurch forward from the stop, too caught up watching men spill from the boat onto her own. Knowing she couldn't just sit there in her sheltered spot on the bow, she urged her shaking fingers to steady as she hoisted herself up onto the main deck, and she grabs onto a rope hanging down from the bowsprit and lifts herself onto the beak. She stays there for a while, notices they are approaching another ship—enemy by the looks of it (Enemies of the Irish? Clans? If yes look up symbols they identify themselves with they could decorate ship with).

During the fight, hoists herself up onto the main deck, hides behind a barrel. Everyone is fighting the last men standing, sees father being attacked on the bottom part of the boat, waits for someone to notice but it seems everyone has a person so she squints her eyes, bares her teeth and jumps straight onto the man approaching her father from behind, screaming as loud as she can. *Have her think about it before she does it*

Once she leaves the deck, everything passes so quickly she can't understand what is happening. But then she looks up to see her father's stunned face, and the rest of the crew who ultimately defeated the other ship members. Her father looked at her with surprised respect as he gave her hand up, the rest of the crew had so much respect for her.

fav spot is on the beak



Untitled
by Ryan
Canty

Okay by Sydney Wilke

I hate the way
You say
"Everything will be okay"
I daresay
It's a cliche

I feel I need a getaway
But you beg me to stay
And everytime, I obey

How do I convey
Just how much I want to go away

Everyday
I'm handed a new problem bouquet
That I just wish could be thrown away

Someday
Someway
I will escape this constantly surrounding grey

"Everything will be okay"
Or so you say

The Forgotten Generation by Cas Seamons

We are the Forgotten Generation

Left to fend for Ourselves

In the Mountains of Isolation

And find our own Paths

Through the Forest

Which no man has walked before

We are the Neglected Generation

Scorned and "Entitled"

To those

Insurmountable Rights

Which we have not yet

Been given

We are the Broken Generation

Expected to act

As though everything in our life

Is alright

When we can no longer

Push on through the Storm

We are the Fallen Generation

Watching the World around us

Excel and Progress

While we struggle

With Ideas and Substances

We cannot understand

We are the Forgotten Generation

Alone in the Darkness

Fighting to Remember who we are

And crying out

In hopes that one day

Someone will see Us

O'Malley by Katie Culver



Wink by John Duffy



Untitled by Sarah Mull



Life is Good at the Barn By Melody Perry

Hello weary traveler! Lay your troubles at the barn.

Brick, stone, wood. Any shape will do. It's what's inside that counts.

The magnificent beasts that keep us sane, take our troubles away,

They are the reason we go to the barn.

A long nose and muscular neck peering over the stall door.

Nostrils quiver slightly in greeting, ears lifted to attention.

Whether you saddle up and gallop away,

Or lay in sweet smelling straw with your one-ton companion,

All your troubles will be gone.

Seething?

Go riding.

Depressed?

Go riding.

Ecstatic?

Good for you! Go riding.

Whatever the ailment, whatever the weather

Leave your worries at the barn.

No stress can touch you, no rain cloud hangs over your head

For each hoofbeat is an escape, each stride a chance to start anew.

The Texture of Hope by Kenny Keller

The ache of depression.

It's the feeling when you wake up in the morning and feel nothing at all
The want to use sharp blades and dry pills to numb the pain
To feel so alone
That it's hard to breathe
The walls close in and you can think of nothing else but the possibility of ending
Ceasing to exist
Knowing that you need help, but there is no one to ask
The notion of the pointlessness of life and love and hope and happiness
Death becomes your closest friend,
Pain your only ally,

The beauty of life.

The sight of a couple in a deep kiss, a hard embrace
The view of a baby girl, giggling as her father tickles her tummy
And the look on the fourth grader's face when she comes home with a 100% on her spelling test
Somewhere, a parent will hear
'Your child will make a full recovery'
'He's the top of his class, in the run for valedictorian'
'I love you too, Mom'

The texture of hope.

It's feeling the touch of a human being that you love.
It's seeing that post on Facebook that tells you how important you are.
It's the warm feeling you get when a stranger smiles at you for no reason.
It's the rush of happiness when you're dancing to your favorite song in your bedroom.
When you see someone propose to another, and they break down and cry because they are so ecstatic at what's happened to them.
When they kiss you for the first time, and you think to yourself
    So this is happy
When you hear those three little words and think
    So this is home
It's dancing with your lover in the dark, not a care in the world
And when they bring you back to their house to mess up your makeup
And you leave glitter stained to their sheets
It's the very first time you laugh all day, and the air feels light again
And when you look in the mirror and realize that you don't hate your reflection today
It's repeating your favorite song over and over

The feeling of happiness.

When you play a board game with your sisters, and your pain is invisible for a while
When you feel pride in something you've done
When you take your brother out for a drive and hear his laugh
Eating fries and listening to music in the car with him
Listening to the music your dad used to jam to when he was a kid

To hear your sister talk about her day with you like you're her best friend
And your favorite teacher is buying you a coffee because she sees that you are tired
Seeing your brother playing basketball and cheering him on from the stands
Experiencing the happiness someone else is sharing with you
And their eyes light up and they get so excited

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And their eyes light up and they get so excited

The heartbeat of love.

To lean over and throw my arms around his neck
And to feel his hands and hear his laugh
His eyes looking at me with a gaze that I cannot perceive
The experience of his lips on mine.
To have my chest open to expose the fire in my heart and to learn that there was such a thing as
    Heaven on Earth
When you realize that maybe he does mean what he says
And your heart starts to flutter and your stomach does a gymnastics routine
When he says that
    This is your second home
Or
    When are you going to come home?
And he isn't talking about my home
He's talking about his
And his roommate asks me
    Are you coming over tonight? Are you hungry? I'm making dinner
And I feel it
The love and strength and security

The healing

After, people call you brave
For dealing with the pain so long
They call you strong
For doing it on your own for as long as you could handle
You'll know deep down that it was just something you had to do
Nothing about it was brave or strong
It was hellish and cruel
You will keep this horror a secret
Wearing it like a scarlet letter
Rather than a badge of honor

But then there is the rush of pride

When you see that he is keeping your poems in the folds of his wallet
To feel that yes,
I've made it another day
Still alive!
You want to scream
To feel alive
The rush of adrenaline
That even though there will always be hard times
You can look yourself in the mirror and say
I've made it this far
How glorious does it feel
To wake up in the morning and feel relieved
That you are pulling air into your lungs
That your heart thumps like a basketball bumping against the gym floor
Go ahead
Fall into the meaning of life
And understand that it's okay
To not be okay



Early Fall by Evan Hinds



Waterfall by Haley Wright

Untitled by Devon Banks



Tears by Abby Stiffler

I
shed
tears for:
the home that I
lost. The country
that I left. The lang-
uage that I can't speak.
The chopsticks that I can't
properly hold. The orphanage
that I lived in. The school that I
didn't attend. The people that I did
not meet. The traditions that I did not
learn. The food that I did not eat. The
music that I did not hear. The dances
that I did not perform. The family
that I did not know. I shed
tears for who I am.



Bear by Tracy Ackeret





Untitled Photos by Malaysia Lee

Little Moonlight Girl by Caitlin Robinson

I lost my poems.
Somewhere in the hallway.
Somewhere in this place.

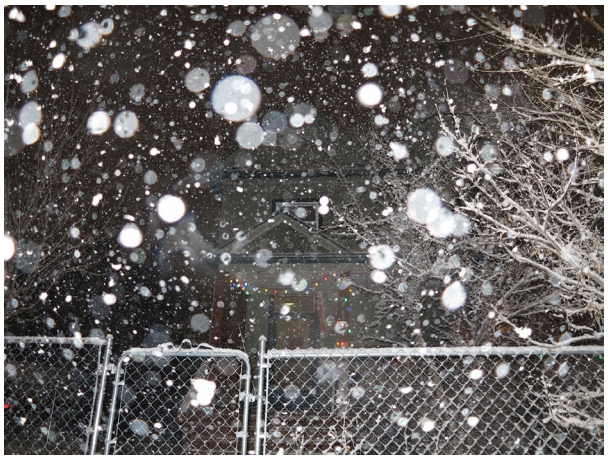
Maybe someone will find them.
Maybe they'll bring joy to whoever does.
Maybe they'll make someone sad.

But maybe…
Just maybe
the words of moonlight and stars
will inspire someone.

Inspire them to think of a
boy by their side.
Inspire them to think of a
moonlight girl.

A little, lonely
moonlight girl
with eyes full of stars.

Eyes full of stars
and a heart full of



Untitled by Conor Hawks



Linked Pinky by Jordyn Everett

Time by Kaytlin Newlun

The boy in the black trench coat looked at the light as it rounded another time. He looked back down and continued walking towards the bar. His grey scarf blew behind his shoulder in the wind, he grabbed it from his back and brought it to his front as he approached the door. The door opened with the ringing of a small bell being hit by the top of the door. He walked to one of the new red-topped stools and sat down facing the counter while he checked the time and date on his watch.
9:24pm 11/02/05

When he looked to his watch he caught a glimpse of the scars on the inside of his wrist. He quickly looked away and started reading the names of the different alcoholic drinks on the shelves across from him. The bartender walked up to the boy, "What'll it be today?" she asked as she wiped down the counter with a white dirty rag. The boy looked a couple tables over to two men, with what looked like beer, seeming to be having a very funny conversation based on their loud laughing.

"I'll have whatever they are having," he replied finally.

The bartender smirked and said "Alright, can I see your ID first?"

The boy smiled, breaking eye contact and looking down at the counter "I'll just take a water."

"You aren't technically supposed to even be in the bar if you're underage… but I guess I can let it slide."

The boy sat there and drank the water slowly until he eventually ran out of water and left to sleep in the alley next to the bar.

The man sat against the damp brick wall and watched the soothing blue light turn in circles. He slowly got up and walked around the corner to the door of the bar. The door hit a bell at the top with a thud, the knocker in the middle had been broken years ago and never replaced. He clunked his heavy wet boots up to the counter and sat on an old, well-used, red-topped stool.

"Hey Sands, beer as usual?" the bartender said as he stood at the sink and dried glasses.

"No, today I'll just have water."

"You sure? You always just have beer."

"I know, but today is different" he said

He looked down and checked his watch, dirt covering his once very visible scars.
5:06am 03/10/69

He drank his water slowly, then went outside to his mattress against the bricks. He watched the light circle and shine on the slow-falling snow around him. He layed down and continued staring at the light until it faded to black.

Fallen Misfits by Bailey Huffsmith

Chapter One

Death Day

"Keep my Avi safe, Adam!" My father screamed at the top of his lungs as the SS soldiers took him away. He was kicking and screaming as his face began to turn purple. I saw the veins in his neck bulge out as they tracked up to his forehead. His striped blue and white hat fell to the ground as the other men and women walked along side of the soldiers carrying away my father, they had accepted their fate. They knew if they did what my father was doing all at once they'd be shot on-site.

Do you know what it is like to be starved down to the bone, to sleep on a cold wood plank with some straw thrown into it with three other men, with nothing but pajamas that were a thin layer and two sizes too big, but worst of all to sleep at night not knowing if you'd die tomorrow or the next day? Well I wanted to be the next person to die because maybe in heaven they would treat Jews like people rather than cattle waiting to be slaughtered. But you know what is worst of all? To watch your father being dragged away to his slow death, screaming your name, kicking and yelling, and not be able to say a thing.

You see, my life was like having a gun next to my head with someone ready to pull the trigger at any time. If I were to defend myself, give out my own opinion, say to my father that I loved him, the man behind the trigger would kill everyone that I love in front of me slowly and in the most brutal way. He then would only leave me to grieve the next few days. Then one night show up while I was asleep and pull the trigger during a nightmare so I would then have to live in that nightmare forever and never be able to wake up. I live in constant fear of living, but I also live in constant fear of death.

Adam had his arms wrapped around me as I stood in front of him. I saw my father being taken away, it was almost as if a piece of me was being taken away with him. My eyes began to let go of the tears I had been holding in, but I feared If I began to cry I would not stop.

"Papa" I softly whispered to myself.

Adam turned me around and looked at me in the eyes. He couldn't speak at first, I know he wanted to comfort me but honestly, I don't think he knew how. We both knew the day would come but we just didn't know who it would be.

"Avi, I will be here for you, I will be your second father because I know I cannot fill the shoes of your first father. He will be in heaven before you know it. He will be your guardian angel, he will keep us safe, fight off any harm, and soon enough we both might join him and finally get to be at peace."

I couldn't honestly tell what Adam was saying, my heart was slowly shattering as he tried to make me feel better. There was nothing that could make me feel better at this point accept for death itself. I wanted to be with my papa and mama. I wanted to be playing outside on my swing again, getting ready for school, and... and... I couldn't hold back the tears anymore, I shoved my face into Adam's chest and began to sob. I have never cried like this before, this was a serious feeling of loss and I have never felt this way before since my papa told me mama had left.

"Shut that kid up."

Adam nodded his head towards the Nazi soldier and picked me up and took me to his bunk. I felt lifeless, Adam was probably carrying dead weight and annoyed with my crying.

"I wish I could tell you everything was going to be okay, but I honestly can't tell you that kid."

Chapter Two

Anger

I sank in Adam's arms, I felt my heart rate drop as I didn't care to breathe anymore. At this very moment my father was being stripped from his clothing, thrown into a square room, and then suffocated with mustard gas. The moment I was safe in Adam's arms, my father was thinking of me, wondering if I'd be okay, as he struggles to breathe, dying a slow and ferocious death. His body would then be thrown onto a pile of other bodies naked and revealed to the world. No proper burial, no goodbyes, just gone and taken away all because he was Jewish.

My heart began to beat faster and faster as I thought of my father being taken away and thrown out like garbage. My breaths became more rapid as Adam pulled my face from his chest.

"Are you alright, Avi?"

I shook my head and stood up faster than the blood could rush to my head. I saw sparkles and felt faint but kept my speed up as I made my way to a Nazi soldier.

"Avi!! Come back here, you're going to get yourself killed!"

"Shut me up? Huh?" I said with anger.

"Hey kid, you better watch what you say to me!" The soldier snapped back at me.

I grabbed his M1 Carbine and turned it so the butt of the gun was upwards.

"I need backup, now!!" The soldier yelled for his colleagues.

I took the gun and pulled it back behind me and used all my force to begin to push it in the man's face. Everything seemed like it was happening in slow motion. The butt of the carbine hit the soldier dead in the middle of his face. Blood squirted out of his nose as he did a half a spin and hit the ground. I sat on him as I dropped the gun and took my hands and began to bash his face in, even though he was already knocked out. My knuckles went numb, I couldn't tell whose blood was whose anymore. Adam came running towards me and screaming.

"Avi! Stop this! I promised your father nothing would ever happen to you!!"

I helped myself up quickly and began screaming at Adam.

"What does it matter, Adam? We're all going to die in this shit-hole anyway! Nobody cares about us, nobody out there gives a damn that we're being picked out of existence! No, everyone thinks we're at some nice camp where they feed us, give us warm clothes, and a bed to sleep in!"

At this point I was crying as I spoke. I was surprised no one had come towards to check on what all the screaming was about. Adam began to cry as he shook his head and fell to his knees.

"This wasn't how it was supposed to be, Adam." I fell to my knees in front of him.

I heard men scream in German as I heard running footsteps come towards me.

"Hands up where I can see them, now!" A soldier screamed.

Adam put his hands up slowly as spit fell from his mouth and snot fell from his nose. He couldn't control his crying. I kept my hands down as Adam signaled with his eyes towards my arms. He whispered,

"Please."

"Hands up now kid, or I'll shoot you right here!" The soldier screamed louder.

At this point we were all making a scene as people and other soldiers began to gather around us. I looked at Adam in the eyes,

"I love you." I whispered.



Summer in Winter by Shanon Murray



From the Ground Up by Abrianna Burrows



Organized Clutter by Shannon Murray



Untitled by Jake Pipinich

Memories Never Fade by Alexis Tielking

The darkness had been in my favor while I had heard the sirens chasing me as I jumped fence after fence and nearly tripped over multiple children's toys lying carelessly in yards. I threw myself between a large doghouse and a shed to get a glimpse of the sleek police cars as they sped by. Breathing heavily and feeling fatigued, I began to hear a rustling from inside the doghouse that steadily grew in volume. As every hair on my body seemed to rise in slow motion, I found myself slowly crawling backwards at the thought of the creature that was lurking inside. Despite my attempt at being cautious, I managed to accidentally bump a muddied shovel that had been balanced against the wooden siding of the shed. I foresaw the loud clang the metal would make as it struck the ground, making me hold my breath and feel my eyes dilate as fear took over my body. Yet, if there was one thing that went right all day, I felt lucky as the fall of the thick wood was broken by my already aching back.

"Great," I murmured.

At that moment, I looked up to see a medium-sized german shepherd glaring down at me with a pair of golden brown eyes. Those eyes seemed to be the only light on this eerie night. It appeared as if the dog's long, shaggy coat was glowing under the distant streetlight that poorly illuminated the surrounding darkness. With even less speed than before, I stood up and placed my dirt and blood covered hands before me in an attempt to prove to the dog that I meant no harm.

Unfortunately, that is not what happened to run through his head. The shepherd automatically smelled the human blood that had speckled my body just hours previously, and went into a rage. It started barking up a storm and I ran. I ran and ran, for what felt like faster than I had ever before. My legs forgot to ache, and instead, felt as if they were gliding over the dew-covered grass.

But the dog was faster.

Pearly white teeth grabbed my leg and wouldn't let go for the death of me. I screamed, no longer considering how my actions could lead the police back to me. All of the outside lights flickered on, and my heart dropped further down my stomach at what was to come.

My legs, once unstoppable, were now characterized by a shooting pain. The agony sent my body flailing to the ground beneath me.

"Maverick!" a booming voice from a tall, lean man standing just outside a sliding glass door proclaimed. "Who's out there, boy?"

I froze in place, and the dog just barely loosened his grip on my leg at the sound of the familiar voice. The built man shone a flashlight upon my body and started walking towards my shivering body—or soon to be corpse, I suppose. Then he reached for something in a side pocket of his cargo pants.

A gun.

I slowly raised my hands up at the sight of the potentially dangerous weapon.

"S—, Sir..." my words trailed off. How do I respond to someone that I don't know while I am suspiciously trespassing on their lawn? And when they are holding a firearm that could easily end my life?

"You know who I am, son?" the booming voice loud once again. Close neighbors began turning on porch lights and stepping outside of their houses, curious as to what all of the commotion was about.

"N—no sir," I stuttered. I had never been caught before. *Maybe if I can just find a way to run and get out of this...* I thought. But that idea was quickly shattered as I felt the sharp pain of the shepherd's teeth, which could still be found in my dripping calf.

And then one of my worst nightmares came true. The man put both the gun and the flashlight in his right hand, and reached into his back pocket to pull yet another object out.

A badge.

So the yard I ran into happened to be one of a police officer.

How did I manage to lurk for an area of refuge in the yard that belonged to a police officer? In my mind, I decided that only I could manage to put myself into a situation such as this, meanwhile realizing the man could easily throw my pathetic self in jail.

A couple swear words came out of my mouth, muffled under heavy breathing. The man told his dog to let loose of my leg, using a command that I didn't understand due to my thoughts and loud exhaling. A tiny moan could be heard from the back of my throat as the dog obeyed the order and dropped my leg from his strong jaws. Although the shepherd no longer had a grip on me, his big brown eyes held me in place all without blinking. I knew he could sense my fear and had probably already realized that I was the enemy, as his owner was an officer, after all. The dog was ready to chase me down or grab hold of me again, and all he needed was a short command.

The man took a step back to examine my appearance, "You look like a nice kid," he began.

I was assuming he was referring to my clean button up shirt and nice jeans I had just thrown on. It almost sounded like he was expecting me to be wearing tattered cotton covered in blood spatter. But little did he know.

He finally finished his sentence after a long pause, "what are you doing out here in the middle of the night, rustling up the whole street?"

I looked up and realized the police officer was still waiting for a reply.

"I suppose my house just got too hot and I needed to take a walk. Everyone was fighting, you see," I had trained myself to lie on command at a very young age, for times when my parents would wonder what I had been up to.

"Is everyone alright down there? Or maybe you just want to show me where you're coming from?" he asked, cautiously. It seemed almost as if he was a long-time friend of mine, by how he calmly asked each question.

"No, we're okay. I just—just needed to get my mind off things. I'm sorry for any inconvenience," I apologized.

"It's not necessarily an inconvenience, but a suspicion, son. How did you end up on private property if you're merely on a walk?"

I realized that there was little chance of escaping from this situation. I stood there silently for a few moments before simply shaking my head and whispering that I didn't know. The officer cooed in a soft voice to talk me into coming inside his house to manage the dog bites, and to talk further about my situation. It was almost three in the morning, and I barely spoke to the man as he worked with me to clean the wounds. He reminded me that his dog has recently had his rabies shots, but that he would still suggest visiting the nearest hospital. I made it clear that I didn't see a need in being looked after by a doctor. I admitted to him that I didn't have health insurance, and a trip to a doctor would cost me more than I could currently afford.

From there, the night was a blur yet again. The officer had called another cop on duty to take me into the police department and file a report. I suppose the man thought I had been attempting to rob him or one of the neighbors. The consequences may hurt me in the short run, but truly, they could never compare to what I would be facing if he found out what really happened.

I remember looking closely at my hands every chance I could, trying to see if I had left any evidence of blood. Before being chased by a police interceptor, I had run to the nearest gas station and locked myself in the bathroom. People knocked every now and then, but otherwise I was only accompanied by the greasy reflection staring at me in the mirror. My hands became rough with how hard I scrubbed to wash off not only the blood, but the terror that grew from the memory of her eyes. I struggled to look at my own face and wonder what kind of a monster I truly was.

Peaked by Clara McRae

I will never forget the way my lungs burned. It was like somebody had struck a match and placed it in the back of my throat; I could almost taste the phosphate-sulfur blend. We had been climbing for hours, though the sun had only crept above the horizon a short while ago. It had been an "alpine start." The alarm had gone off at 2:30 AM, and we emerged from our tents, groggily gathered materials that would be needed for the day's trip, and hit the trail at 3:15 AM.

The first few hours were quiet, just the sound of our boots crunching over the varied terrain. Eventually we emerged from the dense forest and into the high alpine meadows. It was here that we stopped to watch the sun rise. The sky was a blend of deep pinks and oranges. One boy broke the silence, saying that it reminded him of the Death Star exploding. We all laughed, but even after ten minutes of discussion nobody was able to come up with a better description.

We continued on, and the terrain slowly changed from grassy meadows to loose shale. It then became evident how high up we were. The oxygen was thinner, and we were completely surrounded by opaque clouds. We had once again ceased to converse, only now it was due to labored breathing rather than lingering sleepiness.

Finally, we were within feet of the summit. As we climbed the last few steps, I remember thinking to myself: *It can't be worth it*. But then, I looked over the edge.

Words have always come easy to me. There had never been a moment before this that I had found myself truly speechless, but all I can remember thinking was that I needed to sit down. I was beyond exhausted at that point, but it was more than that. Have you ever been on a chairlift or high ledge, mistakenly looked down, and needed to close your eyes? It was like this, but my eyes were glued open. I knew logically that the vastness before me could not have spanned more than a hundred miles, but in that moment I would have sworn that it was the entire universe. It was like I was on the top floor of the highest building in the world. It was like I was in an airplane, looking down out the tiny window. It was like I was on a far-off satellite, orbiting Earth from miles and miles above. Everything that ever was, and everything that would ever be, was now laid out before me. Trees that looked like little pebbles, bumpy ridges resembling vertebral columns, glassy lakes that looked like delicate sapphire stones, it was all below me. If I squinted, I could almost see the outline of other stars and planets on the edge of the horizon. Distant nebulae and galaxies not yet touched by human eye. I was the tallest person in the world, and yet I was so small.

I have climbed many mountains since then, but none have left me with the same lingering sense of awe. I remember beginning our descent, everybody resumed talking and laughing, but I was silent. I could not comprehend the experience that we had just had; I could not find the words to piece together my thoughts and emotions towards it. I remained quiet for the rest of the way down, wrapped up in my own thoughts. I do not know if I will ever fully understand what happened that day, but sometimes, when I close my eyes and concentrate, I can almost see the Earth curve in the distance, I can almost hear my heart pounding in my ears, and I can almost feel my lungs burn.



Untitled by Zane Roush

Good Night, and Good Luck by Anna Boughton

"I'm standing on a rooftop looking out over London. At the moment, everything is quiet."

Rain fell heavy from grey clouds, drenching the streets and creating miniature floods in rivets of the pavement. An occasional car motored down the street, headlights cutting through the darkness and illuminating nearby shops. Flashes of lighting streaked overhead, immediately followed by claps of thunder.

"Off to my left, far away in the distance, I can see just that faint red, angry snap of anti-aircraft bursts against the steel-blue sky."

Angry, dark waves crashed the coast and harbor, drenching the already soaked wood. Fishermen and sailors scrambled to secure their boats to the docks before they broke free and floated off into the heavy storm.

"I can look across just at the building not far away and see something that looks like a splash of white paint down the side. And I know from daylight observation that about a quarter of that building has disappeared, hit by a bomb the other night."

A lone figure moved swiftly down the street, sending up splashes of water as he stepped through puddles and small streams. His coat hung heavy around his thin frame, weighed down by the falling rain. Waterfalls ran down his brimmed hat, splashing to the ground below. Reaching out, the figure grabbed the handle of a door and slipped inside.

"Streets fan out in all directions from here, and down on one street I can see a single red light, and just faintly the outline of a sign standing in the middle of the street. And again, I know what that sign says, because I saw it this afternoon. It says: 'Danger: Unexploded Bomb.'"

The change in the atmosphere was immediate. A checkered floor spread out underfoot along with numerous tables and chairs spread over the expanse of the room. Spherical lights hung down from the ceiling, standing out against the oppressive darkness of the outside. A single counter extended across the length of the café, where most of the patrons were located. A small radio sat on the center, delivering the news of the bombings in London.

"You may be able to hear the sound of guns off in the distance very faintly, like someone kicking a tub."

The man settled down at one of the tables. A waitress peeled away from the group listening to the radio to go to his table. She silently handed him a menu, black and white with the sharp "Woolworths" logo on top. No one spoke. Only the radio could be heard, a soft voice leaking through the speakers.

"I should say at the moment there are probably three aircraft in the general vicinity of London, because one can tell by the movement of the lights and the flash of the anti-aircraft guns."

A man sitting at the counter blew out a puff of cigarette smoke and scowled. "They won't bugger off, will they?"

"It's not just London," a woman said softly. She sighed, setting a menu aside. "My family and I had to leave Liverpool because of the bombing."

"More searchlights spring up over on my right. I think probably in a minute we shall have the sound of guns in the immediate vicinity."

"Ah, so you went eighty-eight kilometers to get here? There's no telling the Nazis won't bomb Blackpool next," the man snapped back. "They already hit the north railway station, there's nothing stopping them from attacking again."

"Liverpool's the big Atlantic port, not Blackpool," the waitress replied, turning the radio up so it could be heard over the new flurry of voices.

"You'll hear two explosions in just—there they are."

"Oi, well they didn't have to hit Birmingham, did they?" a man in a suit growled. "I haven't heard anything from my family in days, and my boss won't let me back until they're certain the bloody Nazis are done with the place."

"Birmingham's an industrial city," the woman chipped in, "it's not unreasonable for them to bomb it."

"I can hear just the faint whisper of an aircraft high overhead. Again, those guns are a considerable distance away. You'll hear them just vaguely in the background."

"Blackpool has aircraft manufacturing plants! If they're hitting industrial cities, then they should logically hit here as well," the man replied. His grip tightened on the mug he held as he stared at the woman, challenging her to reply.

"It's a resort town, we'll be fine," the waitress huffed. The man shot her a sour look as she left the counter and walked back to the table.

"Straight in front of me now you'll hear two sounds, in just a moment. There they are. That was the explosion overhead, not the guns themselves. I should think in a few minutes there may be a bit of shrapnel around here."

"Hello sir, welcome to Woolworths Café. What would you like to order?"

"Earlier this evening, we heard a number of bombs go sliding and slithering across to fall several blocks away. Just overhead now, the burst of the antiaircraft fire."

"Your soup of the day and some tea, please."

"Still the nearby guns are not working, and the searchlights now are feeling almost directly overhead."

"It will be out in a moment."

"Thank you."

"Now you'll hear two bursts a little nearer in a moment. There they are. That hard, stony sound."

Overhead, a roll of thunder echoed across the dark sky.

And overhead, the low drone of airplane engines.

"Good night, and good luck."



Untiled by Kyle Hicks

Winter By Kaytlin Newlun

Silent ethereal snow falls
Heat of summer killed
The cold winter calls

The clouds' frozen bawl
Unique flakes neatly chilled
Silent ethereal snow falls

Pack to form ball
Mug is fully filled
The cold winter calls

Good fun is all
Igloos are to build
Silent ethereal snow falls

Windy air wisps crawl
Mitten's fabric neatly twilled
The cold winter calls

Caught in frosty thrawl
Cold birds softly trilled
Silent ethereal snow falls

The cold winter calls



Falling Into Winter by Ellie Malcomson

Montana Skies by Brieann Carlson



Psychopath by Haley Wright

You said I was a psychopath
I watched you walk away
Don't leave me with the aftermath

I said something I shouldn't have
But what does it matter anyway
You said I was a psychopath

Maybe there's more to ask
But there's nothing more to say
Don't leave me with the aftermath

I travel a different path
Perhaps I led you astray
You said I was a psychopath

Split half and half
Although I won't beg you to stay
Don't leave me with the aftermath

I have but one more task
I'll be sure to make you pay
You said I was a psychopath
Don't leave me with the aftermath



Untitled Photos by Devon Banks



At the End of the Road by Hannah Dreesbach

They put the cemetery right where Fort Hill used to be, but no one would have known the difference if the road hadn't been called Fort Hill Road. There wasn't a fort there anymore. There wasn't even a hill. Not for miles. There was only a faded cemetery at the end of a dirt lane.

Her foot sought out the brake pedal and she flashed her blinker as she came upon the road. The old 4-Runner grumbled as it turned onto the gravel. It was clunky, and its red paint was chipping, but it ran. Old Faithful, they had called it. She didn't call it anything anymore.

The radio was on, blaring Dave Mathew's and static, but mostly just static. She flipped through the other stations. There were none. Just Dave, singing:

"…Oh there's an emptiness inside her and she'd do anything to …"

She dialed back the volume with a flick of her wrist. Glared at the sun slanting through her windshield. Flipped the visor down. It didn't help.

At the cemetery, the road widened into a lopsided circle of sunbaked earth. Some people might call it a parking lot, but truth be told, the cemetery wasn't important enough to have a real parking lot. Hardly anyone ever got buried there these days. Still frowning, she turned the wheel and coaxed the Runner over the deep ruts that had dried in the mud and killed the engine.

Mottled sound still issued from the speakers.

"– and all the colors mix together – to grey, and it breaks her heart –"

Static.

She yanked the key from the ignition, killing the radio. Stuffing the keys in her pocket, she popped the door open and slid from her seat, slamming it closed behind her. The sound seemed to ring in her ears for a short eternity. Then there was silence. Stifling and hot and overwhelming. Even the wind was still, and the wind was never still in those parts.

But the cemetery demanded stillness. And so it was. She walked toward it – the dilapidated gate hanging from one hinge in the dust. She pushed it aside and entered, boots flattening the shriveled yellow grasses growing on the gravel path.

It didn't take long to get there. To the grave marker, that is. It was nothing fancy. Just a grey slab of granite. A name. Some numbers chiseled in. For a long while, she simply stood there and stared at the smooth grey stone. Finally, she buckled. Like a marionette whose master has faltered at the strings. Knees hit the ground. Arms hung loose by her sides. She couldn't stand beneath the weight of all that silence.

Minutes passed.

Somewhere miles away, clocks were striking five o'clock.

She continued staring.

"I helped set up the exhibit on this place, you know. It's still up in the old Abbotville Museum, though I never did find out why it was called Fort Hill. Someone's feeble attempt at humor, I suppose." Both she and the silence jumped at the unexpected voice. Boots crunched softly on the gravel path behind her, but she did not look back. She did not need to. She would never forget that voice.

"Wasn't very large, Fort Hill. About the size of this cemetery, with a few out buildings. But it saw its share of action back in the early 1800's. Chief Little Elk died here after beheading the outlaw Joe Regen not ten steps from the gate. The first mayor of Abbotville was a captain here before it got shut down. Guess he was tired of soldiering. Wanted to try his hand at just living for a while. Course all that doesn't interest you much, does it?";

She made no sign that she was listening, but he carried on nonetheless.

"Anyhow. It's a pretty place now adays, don't you think? Your grandmother and I always knew we'd want to get buried here. We bought two plots at fifteen dollars apiece. That was before they started burying people in the place on Calverton Lane." There was a pause, followed by a throaty chuckle.

"I remember...Your grandmother and I took bets on who'd go first a few years back. It was all a game then. We laughed at ourselves. Never would have thought that…" He trailed off slowly. She could sense the bitter-sweet smile peeking out from his wrinkled visage— picture his frosty white hair waving in the timid breeze that had sprung up between the gravestones. "I… I'm sorry," he began again, "I shouldn't have brought that up, but… Well, you know."

She didn't. But she nodded anyways, still staring straight ahead, knees ground into the dirt. The silence began to settle once more, like the silt that slowly sinks to a pristine lake bottom.

"We had some good times though," he remarked, stirring the air once more with his voice. "You remember when your dad and mum left you with us for Christmas? Your grandmother was so excited. Spent all day in the kitchen, cooked a ham big enough to feed the town. And there was only the three of us –" another chuckle – "We played cards in the sunroom and listened to your grandmother cursing. You gave me a picture that read 'best Grandpa award' for Christmas. That drawing stayed on my bedside table for years."

Clenched fists hung at her sides, nails biting into the soft flesh of her palms. She opened her mouth, words teetering on the tip of her tongue, but none came. Her eyes were wet.

"You're crying," he noted gently. "You shouldn't cry. Not on such a beautiful day. Just look at that sky. You know, I never used to appreciate the sky until I met your grandmother. She would sit on the porch for hours and just stare at the sky. She told me once – she said, 'Life is funny, dear. You think it's about one thing, only to find it's really about the color of an evening sky.' She was wearing a yellow dress that night. Frilly thing with white lace. Her bun was lopsided. Funny the things you remember."

She was shaking now. Just a slight tremor in the hands, the shoulders, a lock of her loose bronze hair. His boots crunched softly and a warm hand settled on her shoulder. The sun flashed on the horizon, brushing the clouds with pastel hues of orange and violet. The golden prairie rippled against a sighing breath of
wind.

And as she stared at the smooth granite of the headstone, a yellow butterfly alighted there for a heartbeat, flashing its fragile wings before fluttering away again.

"I always did love butterflies," he commented softly as the sky swallowed the tiny creature. "They live such short, brilliant lives." She felt a hand squeeze her shoulder lightly, reassuring and warm and strong.

And then the pressure lifted. She choked back a sob. When she finally looked up, he was gone. Wiping the salty tracks from her face, she took one last look at the headstone and the blocky inscription carved into its perfect face. Abernathy Gilmore Wass. She could still feel the ghost of his hand squeezing her shoulder.

"I miss you," she whispered.

And then she stood and walked away. Passed through the decrepit gate. Slid back behind the wheel of her trusty Runner. Shoved the key into place. The radio blared to life – Tom Petty singing: "…can't you see… breakdown, it's all right…"

The static faded in and out. For a moment, she only sat there, fingers idly tapping out the beat against the warm rubber steering wheel. Outside, the clouds stretched across the great bowl of the sky and the sun sank deeper into the arms of the Earth.

The engine roared to life and she urged the Runner down the dirt lane.

And as she turned back out onto the empty highway, she smiled. A somber little smile – touched by heartache and weariness – but that was okay.



Road by Duston Knutson



Tree by Kylie Hanson

Index

Ackeret, Tracy 5, 41
Banks, Devon 40, 56
Blixt, Madison 19
Blossom,Reese 5
Boughton, Anna 52, 53
Brooke, Isabella 27
Burrows, Abrianna 46
Canty, Ryan 32
Carlson, Brieann 55
Chapman, Sloane 29
Culver, Katie 34
diMontigny, Becky 24
Dreesbach, Hannah 57, 58
Duffy, John 34
Everett, Jordyn 42
Fife, Hayley 17
Hamm, Ally 14, 15
Hanson, Kylie 59
Harrington, Elsie 10, 11
Hawks, Conor 42
Hicks, Kyle 3, 53
Hinds, Evan 38
Huffsmith, Bailey 44, 45
Hutchinson, Morgyn 18
Jakovac, Rachel 16
Keller, Kenny 36, 37, 38
Knutson, Dustin 59
Lee, Malaysia 41
Long, Levi 21
Malcomson, Ellie 54
McCauley, Megan 12
McRae, Clara 2, 50, 51
Mull, Sarah 34
Murray, Shanon 46, 47
Newlun, Kaytlin 26, 27, 43, 54
Perry, Melody 35
Pipinich, Jake 47
Pipinich, Tanlee 3, 19
Pujol, Beatrice 22
Robinson, Caitlin 13, 42
Rous, Declan 2, 6
Roush, Zane 51
Scott, Melina 23
Seamons, Cas 8, 25, 33
Smith, Kendall 7
Stiffler, Abby 40
Straub, Jordan 28, 29
Thompkins, Alyssa 4
Tielking, Alexis 48, 49
Wall, Zoey 30, 31
Wilke, Sydney 18, 32
Wolf, Elise 6
Wright, Haley 9, 20, 21, 39, 55