

COVER ART BY SENIOR LORELEI PRYOR

VOLUME IIII | JUNE 2020

THE BEST ART & WRITING OF MORSE



A COLLECTION OF WORKS BY MORSE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The fourth volume of *The Best Art and Writing of Morse* is proudly dedicated to the Morse class of 2020. To the graduating seniors, I'm sorry that your final moments were taken away, the ones that were supposed to give you closure and celebrate your achievements. I hope this dedication will honor all that you have done, for yourselves and for the Morse community.



To honor our seniors, please consider checking out their beautiful art and writing:

Grayson Burpee, Macy Cole, Miles Cray, Sydney Johnson, Juliette LaPointe, Emma Roth-Wells, Kimberly St. Pierre, Madelyn Jones-Cressey, Lorelei Pryor, Casey Balke, Kayleigh Duggan

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

As I am sure you may have guessed, this wasn't how we wanted to present you with the fourth volume of *The Best Art and Writing of Morse*. As with years past, we were hoping to celebrate the art and writing of Morse's creators with a full launch party and a printed book.

This clearly didn't happen. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Morse's move to distance learning, we were not able to get a print version out to you this year. There were times when I didn't think we would be able to get the book together in time as I tried to unite a group of people over groupchats and zoom. This wasn't easy to do, especially when people were trying to navigate the world of quarantine and online learning. However, despite the hurdles we had to overcome in putting the book together, we finished it in time for the end of the school year. On behalf of Morse High School's Creative Writing Club, I am proud to present the fourth edition of *The Best Art and Writing of Morse*.

While this edition was not published in print as we hoped it would be, we were able to take liberties with this edition that we would not have otherwise been able to take. This edition will be completely free and available to a wider range of students and faculty. In past versions we have had to worry about space and cost of production but because we are not printing this version, we were able to give every artist their own page to celebrate their work, which we haven't been able to do before.

The production of this publication has not been easy, and there are a couple of people I would like to thank. To Mr. Stanton; thank you for letting us use your room for our admittedly chaotic meetings and for being our wonderful faculty advisor. When there was a chance that the club wouldn't be able to go on you gave us the chance we needed, and we couldn't be more grateful for your help and support.

To Mrs. Madden, for your continuous support and enthusiasm, both for the publication and for the continuation of the club. You have been instrumental in helping with submissions and helping the publication gain traction, and we couldn't have done it without you.

To the rest of my amazing team, thank you both for sticking with this publication even when it was difficult, and for keeping me motivated in a difficult time. I could not ask for a better team, and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to publish this with you.

And to each and every artist and writer featured in this publication, thank you for your contributions to this project. I am so excited for your beautiful work to be shared with the world.

Happy reading,

Nina Powers
Editor-In-Chief

Best Art and Writing of Morse: Volume 4

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NIGHT POEM

Nylaina Wilson

Grade 10

The sound of the wind

The way the branches sway

The smell of the cool salty breeze

The sound of fire crackling in the night

The way the flames blaze with beautiful warm
colors

The smell of burning fire wood

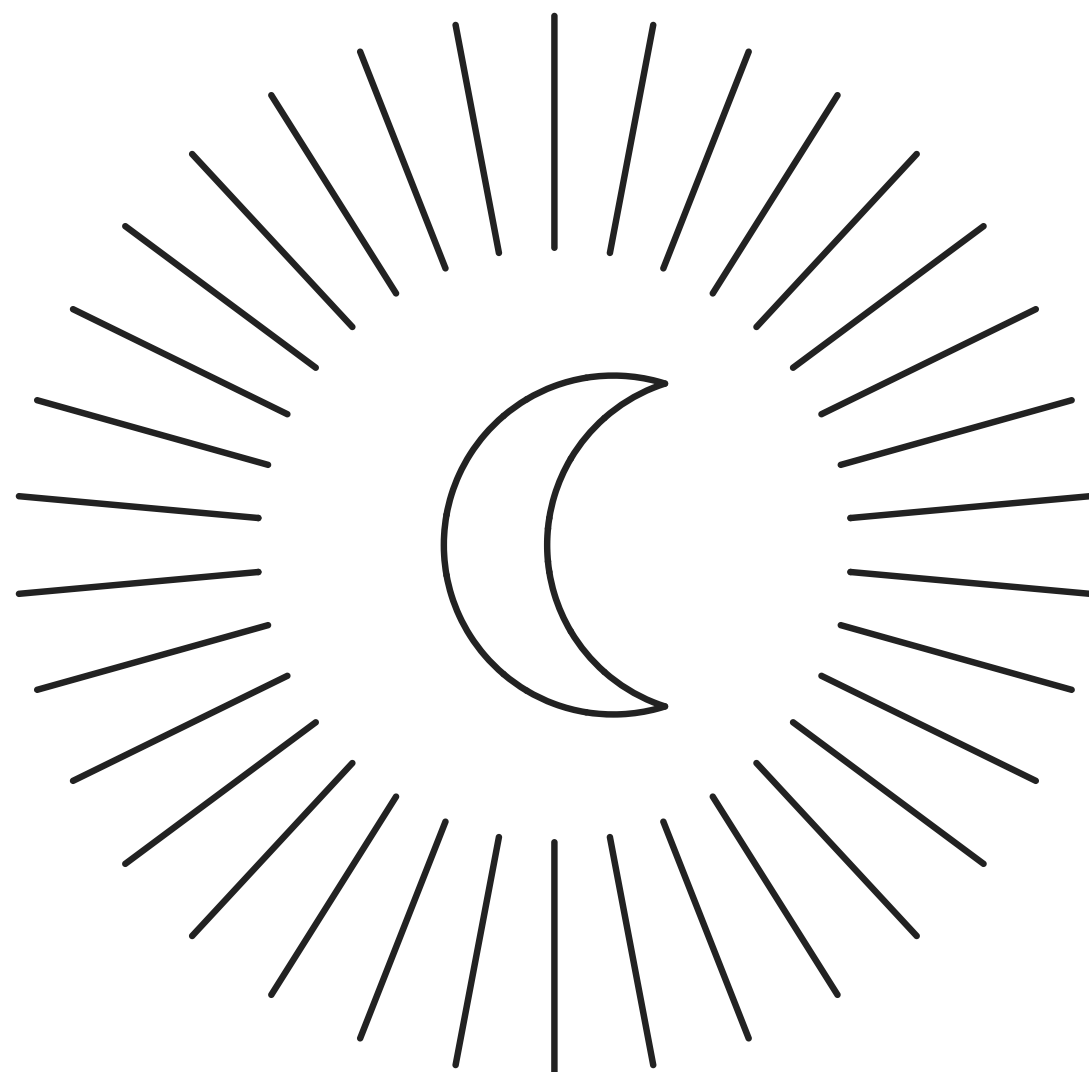
The sound of animals hidden in the darkness that
surrounds me

The way the stars sparkle in the night sky

The smell of burning marshmallows

The sound of rustling leaves

This is how every night should be



5 AM

Grayson Burpee

Grade 12

5 AM

by Grayson Burpee



STARS

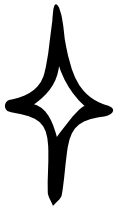
Macy Cole

Grade 12

Every night I'd ride up from the island

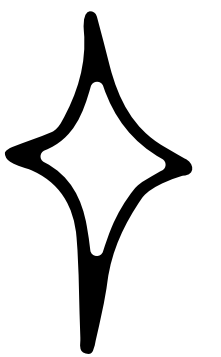
Looking through the window,

gazing at the stars



I'd always look for the big dipper,

as it's always been the easiest to find.



I've always bragged about seeing Orion,

Though I never recall seeing him once.

As we get closer to town, smothered with light,

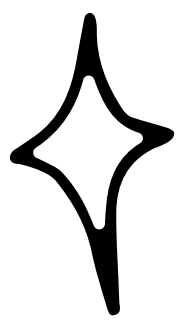
I still try to find the stars,

The brightest star,



The one that will bring me home.

Because on summer nights,



With the sunroof open,

Head laid back on your lap,

I gaze up trying to find the big dipper,

And maybe Orion, too.

Hoping one day I'll find myself amongst the stars,

Leading someone home.

CHILDHOOD

Madelyn Jones-Cressey

Grade 12

White shades on the brick building
covering the once open windows
and the sounds of whispering voices.

Imagination carried us everywhere we went
Up into trees that had low reaching branches
And tumbling into the houses to play hide-and-seek.

The outside facing door is darkened crimson
by the inhabitants that stained it
with their new blood.

At age 10 I left this home
to move on to the middle school.
Secondary childhood to separate the rest.

Years before that door had mixed blue
with the lavender that decorated my room
in which my mother painted.

If my father had kept his promise
We would have stayed
Yet he didn't and didn't look back.

The grass is freshly cut,
without the growing stalks of dandelions
that my rabbits would have grazed.

He left in order to be 30 minutes away
then passing time gave him a new family
30 minutes became 60.

Potholes in the driveway I tripped on
that made our car squeal
have been filled in.

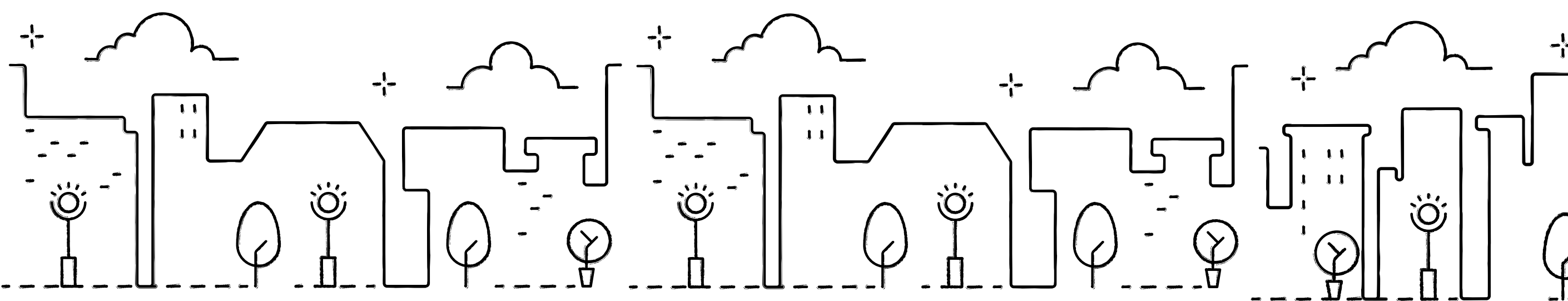
For all the good and bad in that house
I had a room for myself
to keep all my imaginary friends.

Cars rush past in a hurry
down the hill my bike skidded on
and pass the street I played in.

They're still trapped in that room
with the little marks under the new paint
from my prodding fingers of childhood.

The street is clean from the chalk
The chalk marks of my friend and I
As we had drawn our imagination out.

Never a good-bye was uttered
But I still pass and glance
At the brick house with white shades.



Trapped

Sydney Johnson

Grade 12



FAT PREGNANT CHIPMUNK

Macy Cole

Grade 12

You once called me,
A Fat Pregnant Chipmunk.

A name I'll never forget.

You meant it to hurt,
You meant it to sting.

I was only 11,
The start of sixth grade.
And already you had given me,
A sense of hatred towards myself,

That wouldn't go away.

You were the leader of crawling under your
skin,

Planting the hurt in the most tender of spots.

Knowing the face of hurt,
And longing to see her expression.

I believe it carried you on.

I escaped you for around a year,
Transferring schools early.

But on September first,
You bit me with venom I was no longer
immune to.

Several years have passed,
Yet you're still the face of hurt.

The person who brought me down,
So far that the deep end looked up to
me.

Yet knows you as that,
Besides my past,
And your conscience.

Maybe at eighteen, you know your
mistakes,
Because our eyes dart away in the
hall.

Maybe because we haven't spoken a
word,
Since that September first day.

Maybe because you know I'll
remember,

My childhood nickname.

The one that hurt,
The one that stung.

The one that made you the face of my
despair.

And the one that made me,

The Fat Pregnant Chipmunk.

TRUST

Anonymous

TRIGGER WARNING: MENTIONS OF FOOD RESTRICTION AND EATING DISORDERS

We were visiting New Jersey to see my great aunt and some family that we hadn't seen in a while. The car trip down was antagonizing with the movies Megamind and Monster vs Aliens playing over again to keep my little sister at ease and if we were lucky, maybe even asleep.

That was the first time my older sister and I were able to stay alone together in our hotel room while my parents and little sister were getting continental breakfast. Even though it's not that weird, and they would be back in a matter of minutes to make sure nobody died, it was still exhilarating albeit a little scary. It was so nice to have this freedom at a young age, however, at the time I just thought it was cool to tell my friends I got to stay home alone when they don't get to what I didn't realize at that age is that I would appreciate my parent's trust when I got a little bit older.

By the age of thirteen, I was regularly staying home while my parents would go out grocery shopping. This took a lot of trust between my parents and me that I wouldn't start a fire and that I wouldn't let any strangers in my house. I really enjoyed being alone sometimes; it was nice being able to do homework and not have to constantly getting interrupted for silly little things by my younger sister or my parents.

When I was fourteen it was easy for my parents to let me stay home alone for hours at a time, I took a babysitting course so I was able to stay at home with my little sister too. Being fourteen and having that much freedom and trust made me and my parents have a good relationship.

Freshman year was hard, stressful and I wasn't taking care of myself the way I should've been. Instead of eating lunch or dinner I would be working on homework and going to sleep so late that I would wake up with barely enough time to get ready for school. My brain was so stressed I thought that I wasn't good enough for food unless I had all my homework done and I felt confident that I would get a good grade on it. So if I wasn't happy with my school work or my performance at school I just wouldn't feed. It was a bad habit that I got into and couldn't stop.

After midterms in sophomore year, I had an ultimatum. Either tell my parents I had a problem or else my friend would tell my parents without any of my say in it because they were scared for me. It was terrifying to think that I would have to actually face this problem I had of worrying about the calories and how I didn't deserve to have the food made for me, Having what I looked like to others always on my mind and when the next time I was going to faint was going to be. I had no idea what was going to happen after I told them I had a problem. I didn't think they took it seriously, the look on their faces was surprised, my mom said "Because you don't eat?" it was so simple and yet I was almost crying after I told them. They did make me a Doctors appointment, and soon enough I was admitted to Partial Hospitalization Therapy. I still remember what the head doctor said to me "You're the poster child for someone who needs PHP." I didn't want to believe that this was actually happening to me but I looked over at my mother and saw her crying and I knew I wanted to do it for her. The doctor wanted me to start immediately so I joined the other patients in a little house next to the hospital for lunch, Which was chop suey, Salad with Italian dressing, Breadsticks with cheese, and a brownie for dessert.

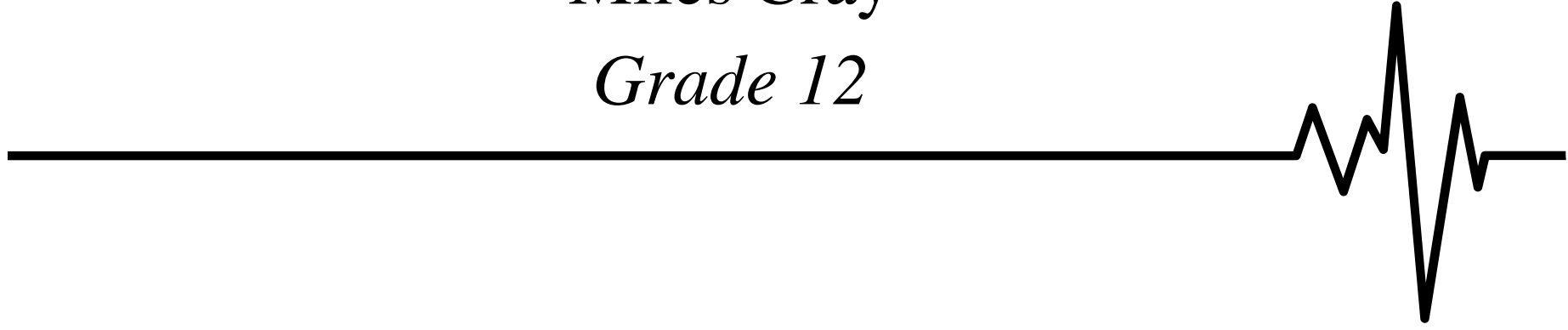
My mother would drive me to Saco every weekday morning and pick me up every afternoon, We would get there at 7 a.m and she would go back to work and then pick me up at 4 p.m. Upon walking in I would be greeted by one of the nurses and then get my vitals taken. Followed by breakfast at 7:30, a group where we talk about what we had for dinner, Snack another group, Lunch which was probably the hardest part of the day for me, Another group where I usually ended up sleeping and then snack and wrap up where we talked about our days. It was a lot of stress on the whole family. I remember one day I came home and heard my little sister on the phone with her friend talking about how she didn't know if I was going to get better I didn't want a seven-year-old to have to worry about her older sister, but I can see where she was coming from, I didn't know if I was getting better and I didn't know if I wanted to get better, that little part in me never wanted to but the bigger more rational part of me wanted to recover so bad. My mom is too scared to let me stay at home alone during meal times. I lost all my parent's trust by keeping this secret.

WAR

A STORY OF A MAN'S LIFE THROUGH HILL 504

Miles Cray

Grade 12



21st of April 1951. Just arrived on Hill 504, they say it's a very good strategic point in the war and we should hold it to the very last man and if we die we have failed our country, so we dug in and we build sandbag walls the size of an eight-foot man, we made dugouts all a ridge and we made them real good and no one was getting in or out. Why am I here? I'm here to fight for freedom and kill all those commie bastards every last one of them till this world is safe once more from communism.

22nd of April 1951. It was a cold night, nothing but a wisp was in the wind. The air was full of friends. It was getting even later at night but we did not care one bit because we knew that if we fell asleep our throats would be slit by the Koreans so we chose to stay up all dang night. We rarely got any sleep at all but this night was colder then normal its as if we were being watched. I could feel the cold blank stare we all could but we just kept on going with our daily things. I was getting water when the alarm rang out with a loud cry. I saw many men run for cover or the AA guns soon the world around me would burn out loud for help but it never came. It came from all directions. It was like a black shadow. It just kept picking us off one by one till we finally saw them all charge up the edge of we pointed our guns right down that hillside and we just kept shooting till nothing moved again. By dawn it was just snow nothing more than snow-covered bodies, I still remember their faces.

23rd of April 1951. It was a decent day out. Morning came quick with all the fighting from last night, I watched my best friend die in my arms but in the end, I got the girl, as I went about my day preparing to bury some of the dead that had nowhere to go after the war. The alarm rang again, none of us believed it until we heard the general on the radio trying to get support for us but they did not believe we were alive so no one came to help us. No one. We had to fight hand to hand just to survive the 2nd wave. We are still tired from the 1st wave from last night, as we ran to the edge we saw those commie bastards running up the dang hill, so we shot them dead once again. We just kept shooting those commies as they ran up the bloody hill, we ravaged their bodies with our bare hands we ripped those commies in half and we killed every last one of them too.

WALLS

Helen Bertlesman

Grade 11

age six

pale pink walls
and care bears
and a room shared
with my sister

age ten

lime green walls
and straightened hair
and being friends
with the cool kids

age thirteen

powder white walls
and purple-dyed hair
and hating the world
just because

age sixteen

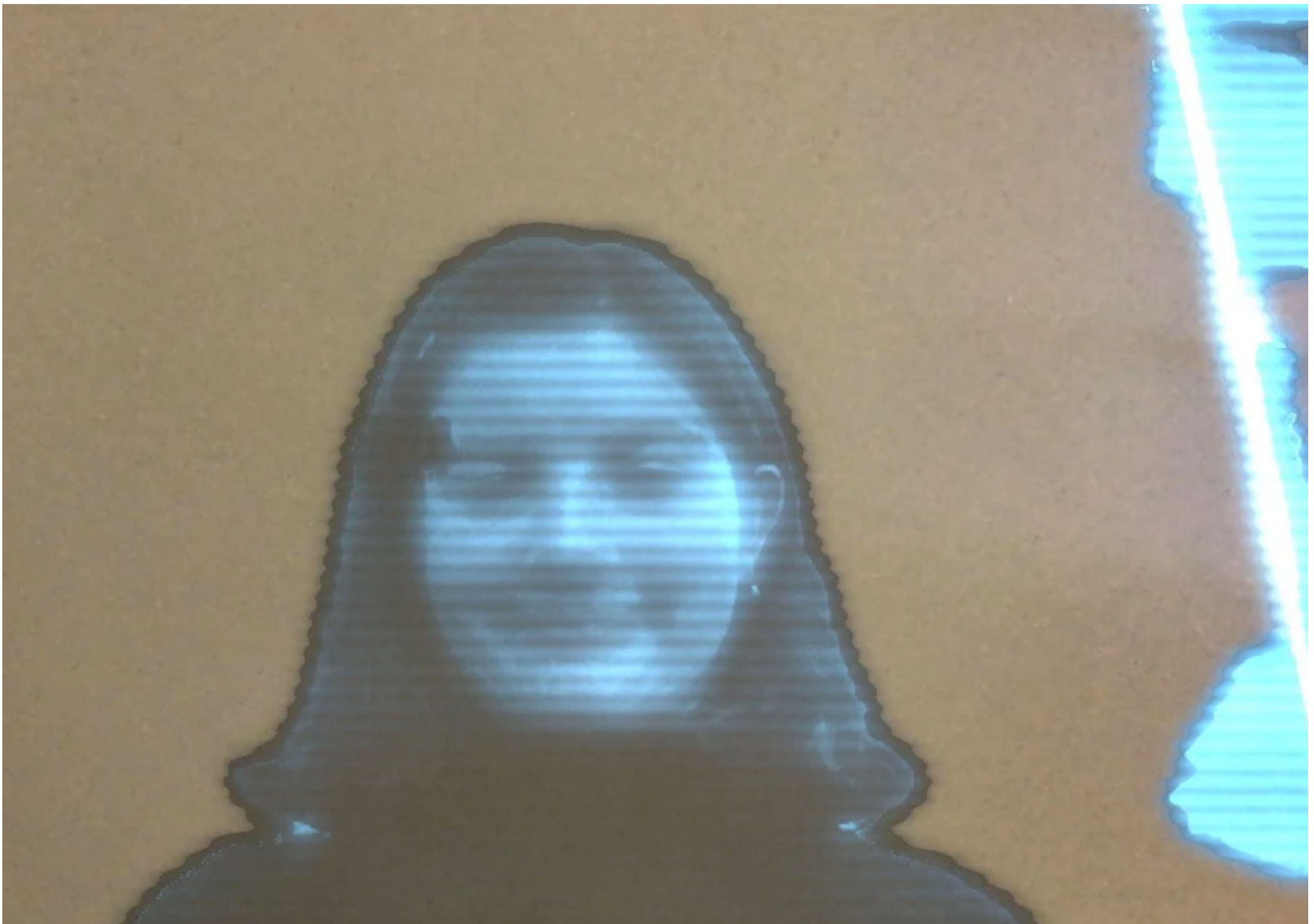
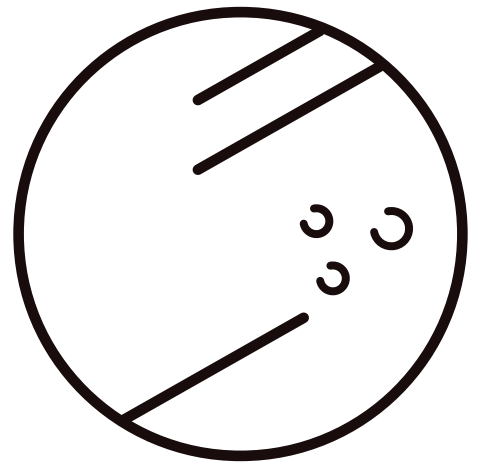
white walls again
and better grades
and a rekindled love
for the little things



HOLOGRAM

Sarah Staeben

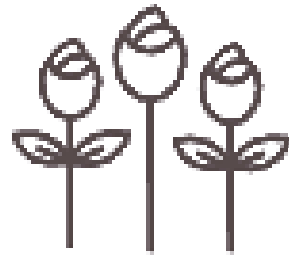
Grade 11



HERE IS WHAT YOU DON'T SEE

Macy Cole

Grade 12



You don't see that I'm a flourishing flower,
Becoming my own.

You don't see my grades,
Or my achievements.

And you don't see that I miss you.

Because if you did,
See that I miss you,
I wouldn't be in the dark.

Here lies our relationship.
Gone,

But for you,

Forgotten

For I will keep growing,
And striving,
Becoming my own.

You'll be seated in the dark.
Just to realize how cold and lonely it is,
Without someone who has been your everything.

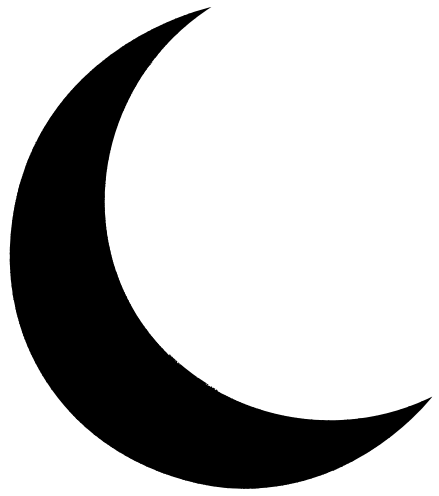
Maybe then you'd see that I miss you,

And maybe then, you'd miss me too.

NIGHT SKIES

Emma Smith

Grade 10



I tried to focus on being able to picture
how the night looks on the beach
and how it reflects on the water
and how it takes one thing
and makes it so much better.

I bury my feet in the cold sand
and listen to the sounds of waves.
How they crash into each other,
and roll up onto the beach's surface.

I look up and watch the stars twinkle
and see falling stars shoot by,
making the ones they pass over,
flicker with excitement.

I look back down at the water
and the reflection of the moon,
just settled upon the water.
It makes me stare with amazement.

I'm shocked by the water
and how it takes one thing,
makes it even better
and even prettier than before.

A WORD ON THE WOOD

Alexa Cressey

Grade 9

I could remember it as if it had happened yesterday.

When I think of them my breathing gets heavy, my heart starts racing, and my mind goes into hyperdrive. Even now, typing on my old-fashioned laptop, my body is trembling. My hair has turned gray and my eyes have lost their light; two of my friends have passed on in their old age, and yet I'm still here. Surely I'm here for a reason, and I've decided that reason is to pass on my story to those less fortunate than me. For those who don't make it out alive like my friends and I did all those years ago, during that summer of 1994.

It was during the summertime. I was 25 years old and I was a cashier at Angel's in Jordan, Maine. Angel's was a quick stop if someone traveling needed a snack or some gas for their truck. The entire courtyard-like perimeter of the store smelled strongly of gas, beer, and cigarette smoke.

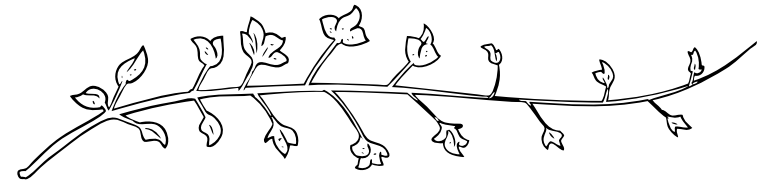
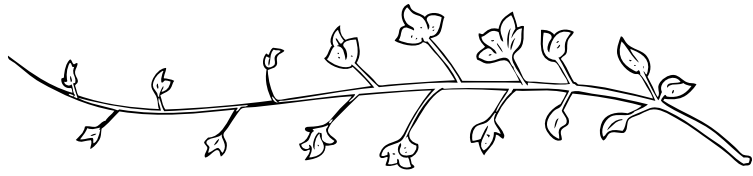
Two football fields away from the eternal damnation of all those who were poor, was a pond. It was two miles wide, twelve feet deep, and was filled with orange-green algae and the screaming of children being pulled away by disgusted parents.

I preferred not to look out the window not facing the pond, because on the other side of the window, was Throwwood Forest. The shortest way back to the main road. The shortest way back to my house. The shortest way back to life. The winding road leading through the trees, for miles and miles and miles. The tops of the trees secluded the road enough that no helicopter could see through them. The forest was dark even during the summer.

BOY IN BLOOM

Excerpt from the soon to be published novel

Nina Powers
Grade 11



An hour passes and Ollie has almost begun to believe that he isn't really getting a roommate when the door swings open and a boy is standing in the frame, luggage strapped to his chest as he clutches a grease-stained bag. It's almost a superhero pose, his body lit up from the glow of the hallway, his suitcases as shields and the McDonald's bag the sword. Something you might see on the cover of a comic book where the hero goes on an epic journey to kill the monster. Ollie sits up from the position he has slid into, taking out an earbud as he watches the boy step further inside, dropping the food two feet to the floor and shrugging off his bags. Something heavy crashes against the wood but the boy doesn't seem to care. He picks up the food before sitting down on the edge of his bed, letting his long legs stretch to their full capacity. Ollie is pretty sure he heard a crack. Neither of them has said a word, and Ollie isn't sure either of them is going to until the boy holds out the bag of food, showing Ollie a nugget box and a carton of fries that have been tipped over in his disregard. "Hey, I'm Ryan. Want some fries?" For a second Ollie is frozen in place and Ryan raises his eyebrows, shaking the bag lightly. "Come on. I can't have gotten stuck with the only guy in the world who doesn't like McDonald's."

"Thanks," Ollie says slowly, taking out the carton of fries and popping one into his mouth. It's cold and mushy but he eats another anyway, salt caking onto the tips of his fingers. "I'm Ollie. Cunningham. Ollie Cunningham." He clears his throat, scratching the back of his head with greasy fingers. He feels his hands starting to get clammy.

"Cunningham?" Ryan asks, licking salt from the tips of his fingers. He's lounging on the side of his bed, one long leg swinging off of the edge. He's lanky and yet his movements are fluid as if he does everything effortlessly.

"Yeah," Ollie says, poking at the carton of fries. "Why?"

"Like the principal dude?" Ryan has a fry hanging out of his mouth and he sucks it back in without a sound.

"Yeah," Ollie says. "He's my dad." He's heard people refer to his dad as Mr. Cunningham, the principal, and the most terrifying man on the planet. But principal dude was a new one.

Ryan laughs dryly, wiping the corners of his mouth with the sleeve of his shirt. "That must suck," he says.

"Yeah, kinda," Ollie says, awkwardly playing with the end of his sweatshirt sleeve. The carton of fries is sitting on his lap, spilling out excess salt. "He's kind of an asshole sometimes." He feels his face burn. "But don't tell him I said that." This time he doesn't get a half-laugh but a full one, and Ryan's eyes glitter even from across the room. Ollie feels warmer.

“Don’t worry about that. I plan to stay as far out of his way as possible,” Ryan says as he dangles a fry into his mouth. “So, what are the people like here?” He finishes off the fry and for the first time since they’ve met, Ollie feels as if he’s getting Ryan’s full attention. He can’t tell whether or not he likes it. Part of him wishes that Ryan would go back to making love to his fries but if they’re going to be spending the next nine months in a dorm room together, Ollie supposes they should get comfortable.

“Rich and mean, mostly,” Ollie says. His hands are tucked between his legs as if making himself smaller will slow the beat of his heart that grows faster and faster with every second. “And also snobby, but only sometimes.” Ryan smiles again.

“Sounds like I should fit right in.”

Ollie eats a fry just to avoid talking. People don’t talk about this part of meeting new people, the uncomfortable gaps in conversation and feeling the need to compensate for something that never existed in the first place.

“So,” Ryan says. “You wanna help me unpack?”

“Uh-”

“Please? I kinda brought a bunch of junk I need to unload.”

“I wasn’t going to say no,” Ollie says.

“Oh,” Ryan says. “Sorry. I just kinda assumed you wouldn’t want to. If I’m being honest, I probably would have said no.”

“No, it’s fine,” Ollie says. He isn’t sure if he would have been able to stand sitting on his bed, watching Ryan unpack in uncomfortable silence. “So, do you, like, have some sort of system?”

“Not really,” Ryan says, scratching the back of his head. “If you wanna make one that’s cool.”

“I’ll just group stuff together,” Ollie says. He shoves crewneck after crewneck into the dresser as he watches Ryan cram a tube of pringles underneath his bed.

“You look like the type of person who would organize his clothes,” Ryan says.

“Is that, like, some sort of thinly veiled insult? Because if it was, it wasn’t a very good one.” Ryan laughs and Ollie feels the same warmth from before blossom in his chest.



Look for the novel, coming in August!

THE TRAP

Sadie Kaply

Grade 9

James first saw her from across the parking lot, tucked away in the evening shadows, sitting on the pavement with her feet sprawled out in front of her. At first glance James thought her plain, a boring figure in a world that valued only what matched its definition of extraordinary.

Freckles dotted her cheekbones like faint stars. Her hair was an uncontrolled nest of midnight black curls. Her eyes, frosty blue orbs tinged with a calculating nature, stood out against her cold appearance.

But when he gave her another glance he began to sense something unusual about her. Something intangible, just beyond comprehension. The more James watched, the more enraptured he became.

She did not look dangerous or bloodthirsty, but when James watched her intently, enclosed in a dark aura with pale lips pulled into a small unnerving smirk, dread began to trickle down his spine. James was swept up in her eyes, every inch of him shaking but yearning to be by her. He was caught in her trap, torn between shrinking away like prey under the glaring eye of his predator or being coaxed to join her.

James chose the latter. With trembling feet he walked closer until he could smell her smokey scent. Her wild, animal-like eyes bore into him, pulling him further into her trap, daring him to take another step.

Her blood stained claws where the guns she kept tucked in her holsters, her venomous fangs the daggers she hid up the sleeves of her blouse. Settled behind her eyes James could see hunger playing with her mind; the thirst for blood of those who had wronged her overflowing from want to need and quickly progression into an obsession.

James could say she was evil, malevolent, and always had been. But he knew those words were detached and came from a place of misjudgment and lack of understanding. Behind her shattered eyes and drowning heart James could see that she had once been loving, sweet, and kind.

“What happened to you?” James breathed.

The girl laughed, “God decided to cut out my heart, this planet replaced my sweet with something bitter, and my loved ones taught me kindness is a manipulation.” James could see the monster lurking within her now. Dark, cynical, hungry and restless. She was a monster crafted by society's hand.

And she enjoyed it.

The girl reached out, cold fingers meeting warm flesh. Her nails dug within James's skin, but he could barely feel it. He couldn't breathe, he couldn't move. He was frozen, trapped in her isolated world. All he could do was watch as she inched closer, her eyes narrowing like a lion spotting her next meal. He could almost see her teeth stretching into razors.

“I'll tell you something,” The girl whispered. “I'm happy they did. I'm no longer weak, I'm no longer living in delusion. I'm the predator, no longer prey.”

The girl yanked James closer, their heads resting against one another. James felt his heart shrivel away at the sight of an unnaturally wide, beautifully insane smile stretching across her face.

“Tell me,” She purred. “Which one are you?”

E N D

A RITE OF PASSAGE

Mackenzie Wilson

Grade 10

The day started off normal, typical, as expected. A smile was on Rosemary's face as she raced down the stairs to see balloons scattered around the walls and floor, "Happy Birthday" written on each one announcing what she already knew. Taking in a breath she was met with a mixture of balloons and pancakes.

Without thought she rounded the corner through the archway and into the magical room that held those fluffy pieces of goodness. "Rosemary dear! Happy birthday!" squawked the woman in front of her, delighted to see her young niece awake.

The girl was surprised to find her Aunt Honey had been the one preparing breakfast, but quickly brushed the thought away. "Hey aunty, thank you, the pancakes smell delicious."

The young girl sat in front of an empty plate as Aunt Honey set down three pancakes. "Well I would hope so, I spent all morning fixing these up for you and your cousins." Pouring a gallon of syrup over the cakes the girl began eating, "Make sure to save room for lunch, your father and his family will be joining us."

At this the girl froze, the pancake on her fork forgotten as she mulled over her Aunt's words. "You mean Dad is coming with... is that why Mom's not here?" The girl looked expectantly at the older woman.

"Rosemary, I'm sure Lavender- your mother, has her reasons for stepping out, but no, she did not leave because your father is coming over, I can promise you that!" Putting the situation to rest, Aunt Honey began filling up the rest of the plates with pancakes, making sure to look busy so the girl would stop asking her questions.

Before Rosemary could fully understand the reason for her mother's absence, three sets of feet were heard running down the stairs. Soon followed the bodies of the young girl's cousins as they ran to their seats already finding their food waiting for them.

Unhappy without her mother to wish her a happy birthday Rosemary kept quiet and silently ate her pancakes. "Happy birthday Rosey, I'm so glad we got pancakes today!" Squealed the smallest boy Aegis who already had finished his first pancake.

"Thanks Aegy," Rosemary sighed quietly trying to smile for the young boy.

"And the rest of you boys? Forrest? Crane? What do you have to say to your cousin?" asked Aunt Honey.

"Happy Birthday Rose," the two said in unison before going back to their food.

"Mom!" Whined Aegis, "Can I have more pancakes?"

All four of the once full plates now lie empty, only a pool of syrup hinted at what once resided there. "It's already 10:00, we have guests coming for lunch in an hour! You three go get dressed into something nice, Rosemary, your mother hung up a dress for you on the nightstand, go put that on will you?"

"Yes Aunty," Sighed Rosemary sliding out from her chair.

"Who's coming over today?" Asked Forrest.

"My Dad and his family," Rosemary answered. "He's bringing Naomi and her kids."

"Yes they're bringing Gyna, Imis, and their new babies Arton and Aphy. Crane, make sure you're on your best behavior, Imis and Arton are their sons and Gyna and Aphy are their daughters. I don't want another incident like last time."

"But Mom!" whined Crane, "why is it my fault that they named their kids like that?"

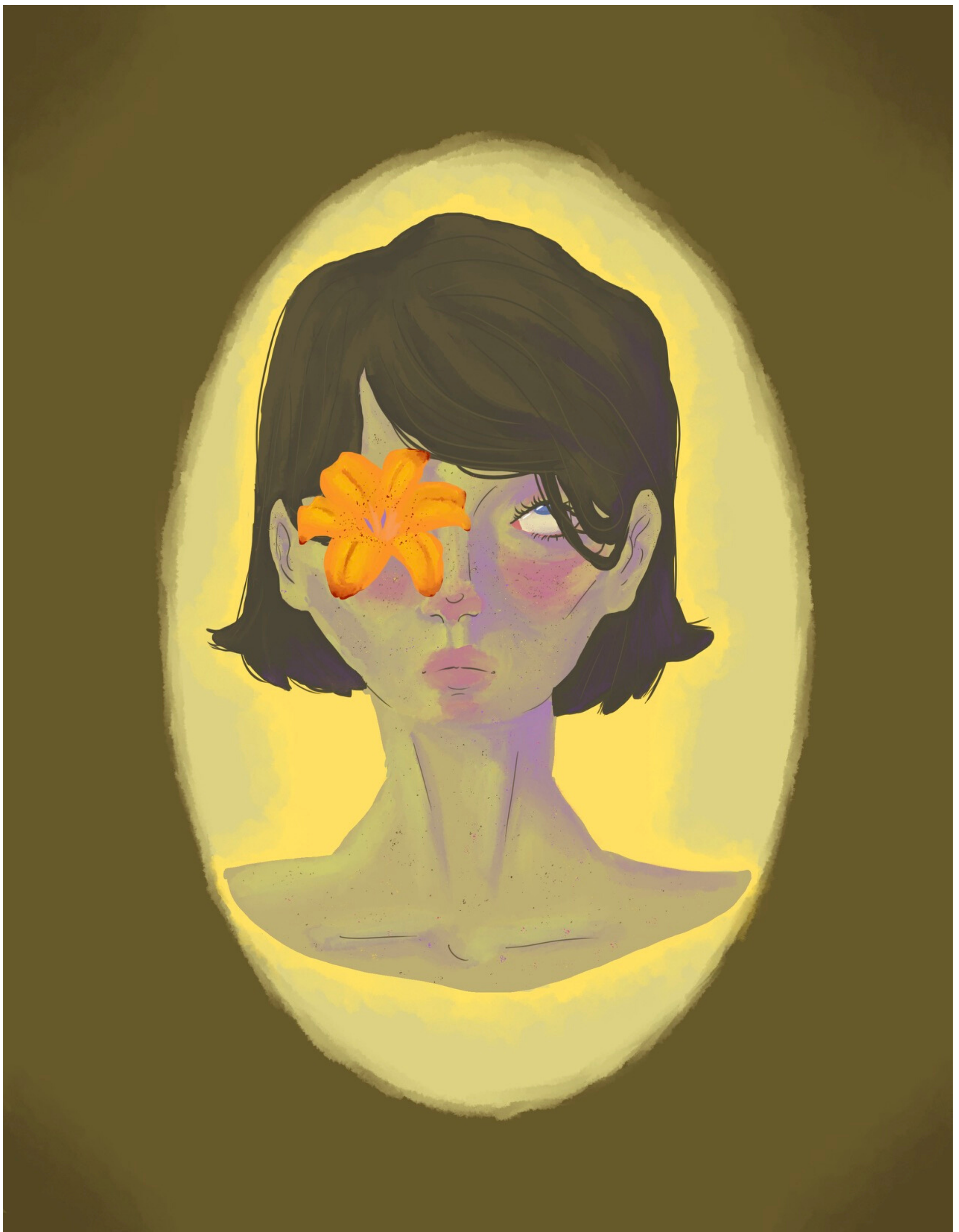
Aunt Honey glared at her son, "Crane, you stop that nonsense this moment. Your father and I taught you better than to talk bad about family. What are you four still doing here? Get upstairs and get dressed!"

"Okay Aunt Honey," and with that Rosemary left the room followed soon after by the three boys.

ORANGE LILY

Grayson Burpee

Grade 12



THE GIRL WITH THE HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Sydney Johnson

Grade 12

Quote from the author: "This essay explains my life with hearing aids, and what it was like before I could hear fully."

It was 2:49 pm and Dr.Z_____ walked over to me and put the first one in. Then she walked to the other side and put the second one in. I immediately felt like the world had changed. My eyes started tearing up and I felt like a whole new person. I started laughing because honestly, I did not know how to feel, my emotions were all over the place. It felt weird, but awesome at the same time. I could finally be like everyone else

It was October 29th, 2018 and my mother and I were headed to Hearing Healthcare Associates in Topsham. I didn't know what to expect, because I was worried that people would notice them when they look at me, or kids at my school would make fun of me for them. Today, I was getting hearing aids for the first time.

My hearing has always been an issue. In school I had to sit in front of the class and ask the teacher to repeat what she said, my hearing was so bad. When watching a movie or a video in class the teacher always had to put subtitles on or else I wouldn't understand anything from the video. If someone was facing the opposite way from me, I wouldn't be able to understand them, I always had to read people's lips. It was a nightmare that never went away.

When my mother and I got to the office we checked in and sat down. I've been without good hearing my whole life, so I didn't know what it was like to actually hear the world around me, I was so nervous.

There was one problem that set me back. The price of the hearing aids was through the roof, and neither my mother nor I had the money to purchase them. Since I was under the age of 18 the insurance company would have to cover 85% of my hearing aid payment. My mom and I were psyched to hear that this was finally going to happen. But we still had to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket, and we did not know if we could do it.

When we were called into the office and sat down, my heart started beating really fast. Dr.Z_____ asked me how I was feeling, and I told her I was nervous. After we got the right earpiece on, she showed me how to take the batteries in and out, and how to clean them. Once we got that all taken care of, It was time to finally turn them on.

When she turned them on, I immediately felt like the world had changed, my eyes started tearing up and I felt like a whole new person. I could even hear the AC in the room, and at first, I didn't even know what that sound was. My Mom was crying, Mrs.Z_____ was crying, we all were crying. It was the best day ever because my whole world changed for the better.

I can finally hear the world around me. These hearing aids have truly changed my life for the better. I feel like a completely different person; Unfortunately, I can now hear the heater running at home, the A.C., the fridge, etc. but when I am outside I can finally hear all the wonderful sounds, like birds, the wind, the water and so much more, it makes me feel more like a human now.

THE MALL PARTY

Juliette LaPointe

Grade 12



I was walking along the long wide hallways of the mall. There was so much noise, of people laughing, talking, and all the smells from all the different foods from the court. While just wandering around I noticed the giant banquet room. Inside, tons of purple and blue balloons, kids screaming, parents huddled off to the side chatting and taking pictures.

It was an obvious birthday party. The kids were maybe around eight. I thought it was a little strange. The big banquet room that used to be a JC Penny was all glass walls, so you could see everything. There was a long table covered in snacks and drinks, and a center table with a giant cake.

Off to the far left, I noticed a little girl sitting on a bench, her feet were kicking because her feet barely touched the ground. She wore a bright pink tutu and a white and pink shirt. She had her head down and I could tell she was sad. All the other kids didn't seem to notice her in the corner all alone.

If I could guess, she was maybe in a time out, or maybe feeling left out from other kids excluding her. All the commotion in the mall didn't phase her. A little boy approached her and sat with her. I could see the hurt in her face. She didn't look at him, just stared at the floor while he spoke.

The reason why she was sad? Nobody walking past would know, maybe her friends would never know. Maybe she didn't like playing games, or maybe one girl made fun of her. Little kids can be mean to each other and none of these adults would know. The boy stood up and reached out for her hand, and together they walked back to the crowd of kids.

I saw the party for maybe 45 seconds, I saw this moment. Birthday parties aren't always fun for everyone. That little girl would smile and pretend as if one minute ago she wasn't hurt. Then I took one last look and couldn't even see her anymore in the crowd of children playing. I just simply proceeded with my day, but never forgot this moment.

ADDICTION

Casey Balke

Grade 12

Quote from the author: How addiction can drastically affect the way somebody functions.

When I was younger I used to think that weed was revolutionary and had no side effects of the negative side. I had heard that it killed cancer cells and also was no longer a gateway drug. That was until recently that it all changed in such a tremendous way overtime.

My brother started to smoke it little bits at a time. The first negative effect I witnessed was the addiction. He slowly went from smoking it little by little to needing to be high all the time just to function. At first, I was the only one to notice this change so I bought up multiple times but he would just write it off as me being worried. My saving grace was mom noticed and tried to help him as much as she could but it hit him hard and he always would go back to it.

It couldn't seem to get any worse until I started to notice how it altered his attitude and energy. He used to listen to us and actually involve himself in the family plans that we all had made. He slowly started to become more sluggish and lonely. Mom found this out first but my brother hid it behind excuses of being tired and just said it was boring. It seemed like an escape to him which brings me to the most negative attribute: my brother used weed to escape the feeling of living in dread and fear. It was his way to take control and maintain some control but he couldn't seem to handle it well due to not getting a job while under the influence. It wrecked his train of thought and made him do dumb decisions.

To this very day, he is still addicted to it but I've lost hope about getting him to stop and getting my brother to stop smoking at all. He still relies on it and shows all the effects that I first witnessed many years ago. But on the other hand, it can still kill cancer cells and treat depression to some degree.

This woke me up and saw weed in a whole lot darker light with some light patches here and there. It has the potential to be good but it also can ultimately cause some awful consequences to people who get addicted to it. Addiction is a power struggle that can really take hold of people and you want to make sure that your friends and family are okay because it can really open up your eyes about battling personal addiction and not losing your loved ones.

I am not against using it in a medicinal way if you have some horrible disease and it would help you recover but I have seen what it can do to somebody who uses it recreationally and daily which then gets them addicted.

FAILING TO FORGET A PLACE YOU ONCE LOVED

Helen Bertlesman

Grade 11

You've memorized the details.
Your young hands picking dandelions and
plucking raspberries off the bush mid-july,
the sweet and tart staining your fingertips. Remember

capture the flag at 11 in the dark which
was later than you were ever allowed to stay up
but your parents were inside
drinking, laughing with the others. Remember

racing through the pond to the diving board,
out of breath but you had to prove yourself
to the older kids, the ones who could jump in
without plugging their noses. Remember

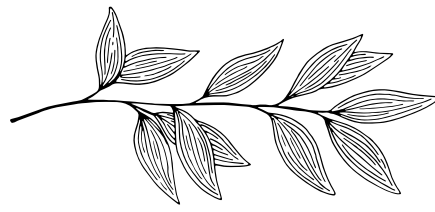
having no idea that in the long run,
it wouldn't matter. You would leave your
red fingertips, horse chestnut, catching salamander days
on the cottage porch with your last goodbye.



SEEING GREEN IN OUR COMMUNITY

Emma Roth-Wells

Grade 12



I would not call myself a filmmaker by any means. I do not own a fancy camera, or even really know how to edit footage, but when I heard of an opportunity to make a documentary highlighting the individuals in my community who make efforts every day to be more eco-friendly, I was the first person to sign up for the task.

The idea for the documentary came from my local library where a climate justice panel was going to be held for Earth Day. As a member of the Teen Library Council, I was one of the first to hear of the budding idea to have a few local high school students make a small video of their own to show at the event. I immediately brought the idea to Morse High School's Green Club, a new environmental club that has blossomed into an active, passionate group. Between Teen Library Council and Green Club, we assembled our filmmaking team of six.

After the initial brainstorming process, the next step was to contact the adults we wanted to interview. We scrambled around to find phone numbers and emails and then crossed our fingers while we attempted to make contact. I filmed three of about ten of the interviews we did. The first person I filmed was a woman responsible for creating an annual electronic recycling event. While she was camera shy at first, her kindness and passion for her project shone through in her interview. The second time I tried to get some footage was at the local farmers' market. I marched about asking vendors and shoppers questions about why they grew, sold, and shopped there. A beloved coffee shop located in downtown Bath called Cafe Creme was the location for the third interview. There I spoke to the owner of the cafe which is known for its compostable to-go cups and straws, elaborate waste sorting system, and delicious vegan options. Discovering the ways such a central and popular business did its part to limit environmental impact made me proud of my community's values.

The outcome of the documentary, with our very limited editing knowledge and software, was not of the highest quality. The transitions were abrupt, the audio was sketchy, and the image was fuzzy. However, the response was immense. The video first premiered at a climate event at our local library. The audience was mostly adults who were thrilled to see youth in their community showing passion for something so important. After the viewing, we were met with praise and new opportunities. One man came to our next Green Club meeting looking for students to come with him to City Hall and show their support for a new environmental bill. We were invited to attend a roadside cleanup sponsored by a recycling committee in a neighboring town. Adults in our community were just learning about Morse's Green Club and beginning to use it as a youth perspective on all things environmental. The six filmmakers were asked to be in a much more professional documentary meant to inspire others to make pieces of art like ours. Knowing that our film could be the first of many others made me ecstatic.

When I first accepted the challenge to create this documentary I thought it would be a fun and creative way to make a difference. Preserving the environment is one of my largest concerns and I will take any opportunity to benefit the cause. What I didn't know was the significance my endeavors would have. I never could have imagined the connections I would make and opportunities for even further change I would have that came out of this experience. I will remember the creation of "Seeing Green in our Community" for years to come, not because it was the greatest film ever created, but because it made me feel like my work could impact a community.

Mouse

Lorelei Pryor

Grade 12



COEN

Aidan "SPook ME TIMBERS" SHIELDS"

Grade 10

"BOO!" Went the vampire. I woke up. It was just a dream. I was in Spanish class and Señorita Coen was speaking. Conjugations. There's only two minutes left in class. After that, the day will be over and I can go home. I fumbled the pencil around the paper until everyone else stopped writing. The bell rang. I got up, but wait, there's more:

"Campbell, could you stay after class?" Señorita Coen was heard to say.

"Yes," I was heard to retort.

"I've noticed that your attention seems to be drifting in class." She offered a sombrero to me. I took the sombrero, studied it, embraced it. I'm too old for this.

"Campbell, did you hear what I said? You aren't paying attention in class." Señorita Coen kind of looked like a parrot. She also looked tired, worn-out in a way, despite only holding twenty-five years. She held them well, damn well. Underneath her Day of the Dead tattoos, Señorita Coen's skin looked glossy, too glossy. It was flu season, I thought comfortingly. Suddenly, a thought occurred to me. Then, I forget. Then, I thought, I remembered.

"Señorita, did you get the flu vaccine this fall?" Suddenly, it was too quiet, too, too quiet.

"No, as a matter of fact, I've never been vaccinated," She spat, chidingly. "My parents were anti-vaccine. But this is beside the point. In fact, it's proving my point: You get off-task too easy. I have something in my monster truck that I think might help you."

"Okay," I spat back, less chidingly. Señorita bade me outside of the classroom with her long, dangerous fingernails. I followed behind her, like an old man sending back soup at a deli. I could hear a John Denver song playing faintly in the distance.

Things felt wrong. I couldn't disobey Señorita Coen, because of my profound respect for her and the entire Morse Community, but I needed to buy myself time. I asked to go to the bathroom. As I walked to the bathroom, the John Denver music got louder. Even though school had only ended a few minutes ago, there were only a couple of kids in the halls. I saw one kid I recognized, a boy we liked to call "Cappy."

"Hey, Cappy," I gurgled. "What's up with the country music?"

"I dunno. I think one of the grades is decorating their hallway like 'Old West' or something."

"Oh... thanks, Cappy." I went to the bathroom. As I was zipping up, I realized the hallway decoration contest ended weeks ago. It didn't matter anymore; I was keeping Señorita Coen waiting. I practically ran back to where I had left her, mostly out of fear, but when I saw her waiting there for me, I started to drag my feet.

"You certainly took your time," she quivered. "Did you get lost?" Jajaja, Coen. Jajaja. She led me again. She led me to an exit and took me outside to the parking lot. I would need to go back and get my bags. If I got back. "Do you like my truck?" She queried, like a sparrow into the night.

I don't know what it was, the moonlight, the truck's new windshield or the chill running down my chest, but that truck looked beautiful. She invited me up to the back of the truck. I accepted. I waited for her to tell me what she wanted to, the reason she had brought me out here. She started talking, but she took her time. I was comfortable in the truck, but I needed to get home. I just asked her why she had taken me here.

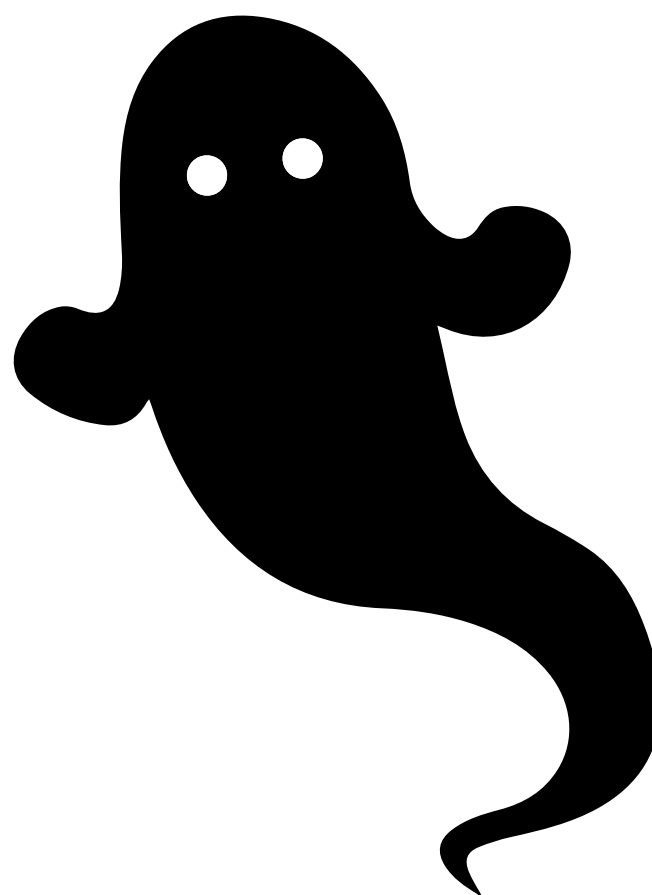
"Campbell, have you ever wanted to turn into a bat, enter the night, and really fly?"

That's when it hit me: Tonight was Friday the 13th and Halloween!

"Just come a little closer, Campbell." She beckoned, and called. The sounds weren't even human, but a remnant of the Elder Time, the chaotic ancient days of rock'n'roll. I couldn't even think, I started to lean into her. Then, she opened her mouth to fangs. AAH! Señorita Coen was a vampire. Of course, she hadn't taken her vaccinations as a kid, and now she had mutated into a monster. If only more people would get their flu vaccine.

"BOO!" Went the vampire.

I woke up. It was just a dream.



DANCING THROUGH LIFE

Kayleigh Duggan

Grade 12



The lights hit at just the right angle, vivid hues of yellows and pinks paint a picture of emotions through graceful swipes of the arms, quick extensions of the legs, and an unspoken poetry of the body. I'm in a state of control. I am becoming someone whom I have always wanted to be. Telling a story, and depicting life, no longer as myself but as a separate entity.

I do not have to worry about the problems of my home life. My adopted siblings are not creating a cloud of disruption. The three A.M diapers that I will have to change do not appear in my mind. I am completely consumed in my own world. Emerged into the non-verbal speech and ability of my body—the ability to hold a passe en pointe, the number of pirouettes I can fit into an eight-count, and how straight my legs will be in my saut de chat. I am not focused on the bruised feet and broken toenails, but rather on how my body emits a new language as I move. I am becoming someone who can feel the music like it's a shot of liquid adrenaline, pulsing, and causing a reaction of movement through the body.

Dancing would not have been in my future if not for the multiple scholarships I have received. Through these scholarships, I have been able to dance at prestigious studios, get discounts on pointe shoes, and learn to advocate for myself not only as a dancer but as a person. It has opened my view to society and has gifted me with opportunities such as acting and directing, allowing me to throw myself into the arts and the meaning behind it.

But as soon as the curtains close, when the applause comes to an end, and the sweaty costume is peeled off my skin, I will have to face my reality. The reality of waking up to the primal cry of an underweight child, a baby seeking milk at four in the morning. The fear of waking my father, the monstrous bear sleeping in his cave, for whom even the slightest noise breaks him from his trance. Without his trance, he wreaks chaos on everyone and everything that gets in his way. Little to no care for the miscellaneous thrown freely throughout the room, no bullseye insight. In my life off the stage, I am like a switch, rapidly flipping on and off, changing personalities, applying the studious personality in order to be up to par at my own school setting.

But then the bell rings, the activities come to an end and I go home. I watch foster children so my mother can get more than an hour's sleep before she goes to work at night. I find the determination for high achievement in my academics in spite of my family's lack of interest in education. I gain the confidence to stand up to the Department of Health and Human Services and beg them not to let my drug-addicted sister keep the children that she continues to hurt.

Through dancing, I have found a sense of therapeutic discovery, that silent action drawing me into a deeper meaning of myself and others. Dancing has inspired me to delve into a more meaningful level of myself, putting less attention on the physical movement and more attention to the art form. Connecting me not just to dance but the universality of humanity, and allowing me to connect emotionally, inspire, and understand people through the action. I can not imagine a future without the art form. Because when I am dancing all of the weight and stress of life can be pushed aside. I can focus on the present, and enjoy the gasps from the audience as my partner and I nail the Dirty Dancing lift.

LOVER'S QUARREL

Alex James

Grade 9

Quote from the Author: 2 unnamed characters, female and male, are having an argument which is viewed by the female's perspective.

She is scared of him, but tries to be confident. This man she is with is a player of some sorts and she can see it. To end the argument and their relationship the man leaves the female physically and mentally wounded and she is hurt by his sudden absence.



“A visit is not a long stay,” I told him that. We were locked in a battle, a strange, dangerous sense lingering in the air. He wants to study me, make me become his creature, his pet, a means to an end. “We are the best of lovers.”

He told me that. A glowing jewel in a jewelry box outshining the others. He was staring at me with his deep, cold eyes and I stared back. I read through them hungrily, trying to find fear, but all I found was a dissipating sense of hope. His gaze pulls me to him, his grip on me tightening. “You are so beautiful.” He told me that.

Vanity, that’s all he looks for. He prizes girls on how they look. Tightening my face, I could feel my stage fright growing. He attacks me, a headache forming in my skull. He left me bruised and broken, hurt that he will never say goodbye. I thought he understood it was too big a step for me, that I didn’t want to be whisked away from my life of peace and sanity, that I wanted to be who I am, who I want to be, not who I should be. My heart sprang open for him and he just put it in the box with the other conquests.

INSOMNIA

Kaleigh Gingrow

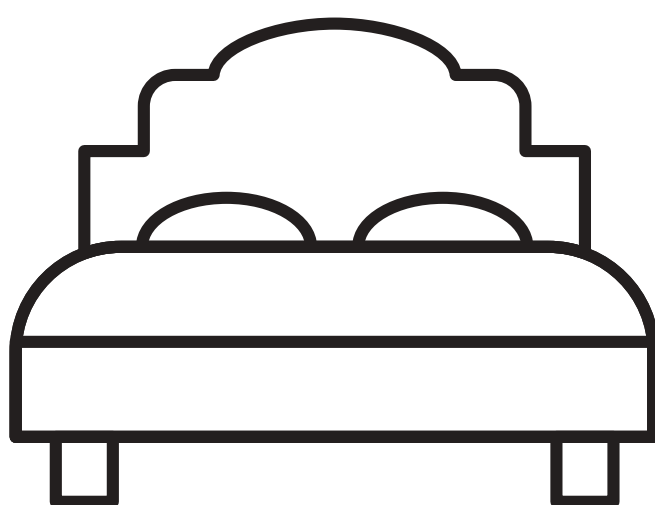
Grade 10

Most nights i have a hard time falling asleep. No matter how exhausted.

My mind keeps turning like the records i play. Round and round and round.

I count the records i have collected over a few short years.

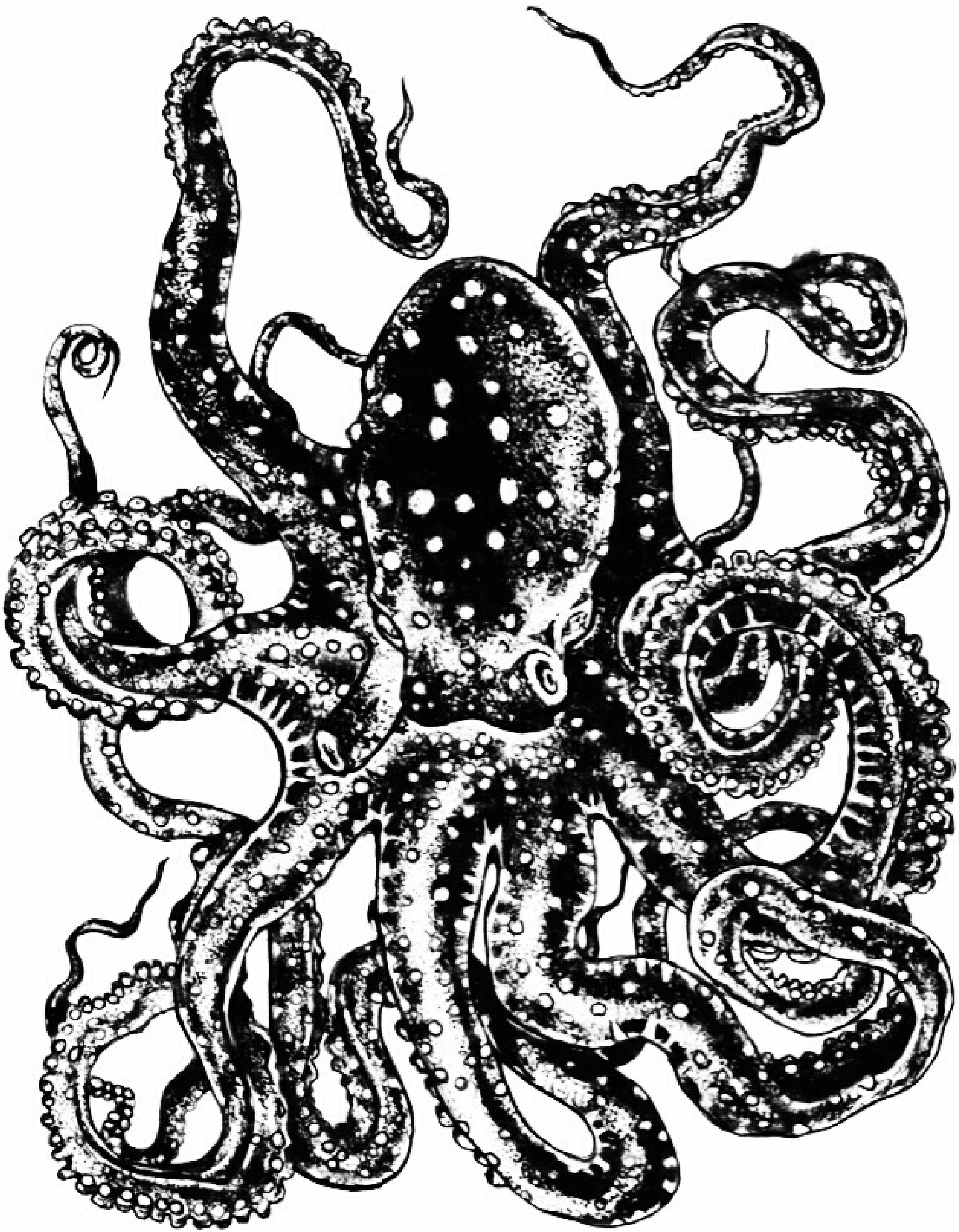
A Lot more than i'd like to admit.
I feel ashamed that i never listen to some.
They just sit in a pile collecting dust.
I wonder what it feels like to be forgotten.
Like a record that is never played.
A story that is never told.
A life that is simply forgotten.



Octopus

Lorelei Pryor

Grade 12



BIRTHDAY DISASTER

Kimberly St. Pierre

Grade 12

My twenty-first birthday comes around, and I am ready to party. It's the morning of, and I just got out of bed, took a shower, and met up with my family for breakfast. My parents tell me what a wonderful woman I have turned into while posting on their Facebook and soaking up all the rich comments from family and friends that we don't talk to. After breakfast, I go into work, at a job that I hate. I work for what feels like forever while complaining to my neighbor in the cubicle next to me. When it's time to leave it's about 2 pm. I got a text from my best friend Macy. She tells me to meet her at her apartment in 20 minutes. On my way, I stop to get a couple of coffees. When I arrive, Macy is waiting in the living room. She tells me that our friend Lexie is on her way. While we wait we sip our coffee, and talk about the most recent gossip while scrolling through our twitter feeds. When Lexie arrives we leave for the airport. We fly to New York and catch a taxi ride to our hotel room we rented.

We drink wine while figuring out what to do for the night. Finally, we decided to go shopping and then hit the club. We find dresses to wear, with heels that match. By the time we arrive at the club, it's 8 pm. We drink and dance, filling up on alcohol that is overpriced and bitter. We jump from club to club almost blackout drunk, when a bald man in sunglasses guides Lexie out of the club, and into a taxi. He slides in next to her and whispers the cab driver a location and they zoom off.

It's 9 am. The morning after the party. I wake up and roll out of bed. On the floor next to my bed was Macy. Her arms and legs spread out like a star, and her hair covering her face. I shook her awake. We had to check out at 10 am, and the room was a mess. Macy and I began to clean with the thought that Lexie would join us too. I told Macy she probably got up early and went to the breakfast buffet downstairs in the lobby of the hotel. After cleaning our clothes and makeup off the floor, we sat on the bed waiting for Lexie to return so we could check out. We waited a few minutes longer and decided to call her. When she doesn't answer we decide to ride the elevator downstairs. When she's nowhere to be found, we sit at a table and go over where she could be.

Once the taxi arrived at its chosen destination, the bald man got out of the taxi with Lexie by the arm. She was too intoxicated to understand what was happening, so she didn't struggle or put up a fight. The man opened the metal door to a small abandoned building with holes in the ceiling and dirty stained windows. He brought her down a narrow hallway with broken lights hanging by the wires. The wallpaper torn, peeling, and curling all the way to the ground. He guided her down a set of stairs at the end of the hallway. The stairs were wobbly wooden planks broken and molded from the moist air. They arrive at a large basement-like room. The floor and walls are cement. The cold musty air made it hard to breathe. Lexie began to complain. She was tired and wanted to sleep. She didn't want to walk any longer. The man ignored her whines squeezing his hand around her arm a little tighter and kept walking. They came to a small door in the corner of the room. He unlocked the door with a small gold key.

I told Macy I was starting to get worried. We hadn't heard from Lexie since the night before. She took out her phone with an idea. She went on an app, life 360, and found Lexie's location. We grabbed our belongings, checked out of the hotel, and hurried into a cab. We followed the map all the way out to a small secluded neighborhood. The houses were small and weathered. We drove down the streets toward Lexie's location. Passing people leaning against telephone poles and smoking on their porches. When we finally arrive at the destination, we find Lexie's broken phone on the ground near the door to an abandoned building. Macy picks it up, turns around, and looks at me. "We have to go inside," she says. I agree and we nervously enter the building.

Lexie woke up to darkness all around her. She was lost and confused. She replayed the events of the night in her head, remembering little parts as time went by. She remembered how weird it was to see a man in sunglasses so late into the night. And why did she get into a cab without her friends? Where were they? Are they okay? After what felt like hours she heard a few footsteps followed by a jingling of keys and the turning of a doorknob. A small bright light beamed at her through a doorway. She looked at her surroundings, she was trapped in a small metal cage that was only large enough to crouch. The man at the door walked towards her. Shaking she asked who he was, what he wanted, and where he had brought her. The man tossed an apple through the bars of the cage at her. "Eat," he said. And with a grunted mumble he added "not that it would matter." the tall bald man turned to leave, carrying the light with him. She cried for him to wait, for him to let her go. He replied with "I'm just following orders." as she screamed and cried he walked away into the darkness, the light fading away through the crack of the door as it closed.

Macy leads the way through the dim flickering hallway. The light swaying back and forth from the train that speed by on the track outside. We walk down a set of broken stairs, and into an open basement room. The room was empty and cold, with cobwebs in the corners of the walls. The feeling of being watched quickly spread across my mind.

Lexie heard footsteps coming from across the room. She heard people whispering and the doorknob started to jiggle. She started to panic, screaming for help. For someone to get her out. All of a sudden she heard banging and a light flicked on. she could see everything. The door was locked and we heard lexie screaming. How were we going to get to her the room was empty so we couldn't use anything to pry it open. The bottom of the door was bent inward which made the lock looser. Macy told me we could try to kick it in. I backed up to the wall and ran toward the door. I stuck my foot out and kicked. The door didn't budge. I tried again and again. Nothing happened.

Macy was growing impatient so she asked to give it a try. She ran at the door as I watched out of breath on the side. On the second try, the door swung open. It slammed against the wall with a loud bang. Macy flicked on a light. We saw lexie sitting in a cage on the floor tears streaming out of her eyes. I ran over fiddling with the large metal lock on the door to the cage. Trying desperately to get her out. I finally break it using my shoe kicking it so hard against the metal bars that it snaps. Lexie crawls out of the cage and embraces me with loud tears. We look to Macy who is suddenly at the door, with a large smile plastered across her face. "I didn't think I would ever get this chance." She then flicks the light switch off next to the door. The room went black.

Macy grabs a hidden crowbar and runs in the direction of the cage. Lexie and I scream when we hear the clang of the metals together. She swings downward and I hear a crack and a thump. I hear footsteps toward the door and the light flicks on again Lexie's body is on the ground motionless. A pool of blood surrounded her head. I grab her and scream Macy apologizes and says she didn't mean for this to happen this way. Tears stream down my cheeks as I ask why she is doing this. She tells me my time has come. She runs towards me with the crowbar in the air. And then everything went black.

The next week the Times Record came out with a news-breaking story. The title read Three women found dead in the cellar of an abandoned building. The story of two females with major trauma to the head and another hanging by a rope above, carried throughout the media for the next month. An area of which no one cared to look up on google, or to search for the identities of those found. The large bald man had been arrested for crimes of abduction and conspiring to murder. He was later found dead in his cell. Hung by a rope to a window above his toilet.

THE INKEEPER'S DAUGHTER

Lorelei Pryor

Grade 12

We always leave the front door of my house unlocked. No, we aren't unconcerned with personal safety. We own a bed & breakfast. Guests come in at all hours of the day, from across the world. I have always loved interacting with those staying with us. At an early age, I would check the guests into their rooms. Even before that, at the young age of five or six, I would sneak into the guests' dining room and plop myself down onto one of the old ladder back chairs. With my feet dangling from the chair I would happily chatter to different people each day for as long as they would talk to me. As I got older and lost my childhood extrovertism, I stopped talking to guests. Instead, I would attempt to quickly sneak a peek at the guests chatting and laughing with my hostess mother.

As the years passed, I again became more outgoing. Popping my head into the dining room to say hello to the various people from God knows where. I asked questions such as: "What made you come to Maine?" or "Where are you guys from?" Often they were visiting to see the beautiful Maine coast or on a business trip. If they were French-speaking guests I would say "Parlez vous français?" and attempt to speak to them with my three, going on four, years of broken high school French. It's always a surprise who is sitting at the breakfast table in the morning. A big family from Luxembourg, a Scottish woman and her Cuban husband, or maybe even a group of five Japanese businessmen who were shocked I had been a short term exchange student in Aomori, Japan. I love that everyone at the table always has their own unique life and experiences to share.

I started to feel like a story collector, as I grew up and collected the different experiences from the guest lives. There was an older couple who owned an Alpaca farm and came back every year to visit us, who taught me how to spin wool. A shoe designer who often saw his shoes on people's feet in public places. A German mother and her 5 children. I realized almost everyone who has passed through my family's small three-room bed & breakfast has impacted me and shared a piece of their story. And in a way, I had shared parts of my story with them.

Guests would ask me questions about myself, as much as I asked them questions. If they found out how much I loved art I would show them my sketchbook full of animal and plant drawings, and talk about my experience with hand screen printing those drawings on t-shirts. Occasionally, guests would see me in my cross country jersey as I peeked my head in to say hello before I left for an early Saturday morning race, and ask where the best place to run in Bath was. Sometimes, they would ask me what I wanted to do with my life, and when I say "I want to be a veterinarian" occasionally there is a big-animal vet at the table ready to share her James Herriot-like stories with me. Every guest is a fleeting moment into different lives, briefly connected by the breakfast table.

I will always like sitting at the breakfast table, maybe sipping steamy tea while guests chatter and fawn over my mother's delicious breakfast food. My family's charismatic greyhound occasionally poking his pointy snout into the dining room to see if guests would give him leftovers. I found it amazing how people from across the United States, even the world, can share their lives and connect to people who are from different backgrounds and lifestyles. After all, we are all just people living our lives, and we all have a story to tell. I too, am embarking on my story.

Life Imitates Art

Mary LaRoche

Grade 12



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