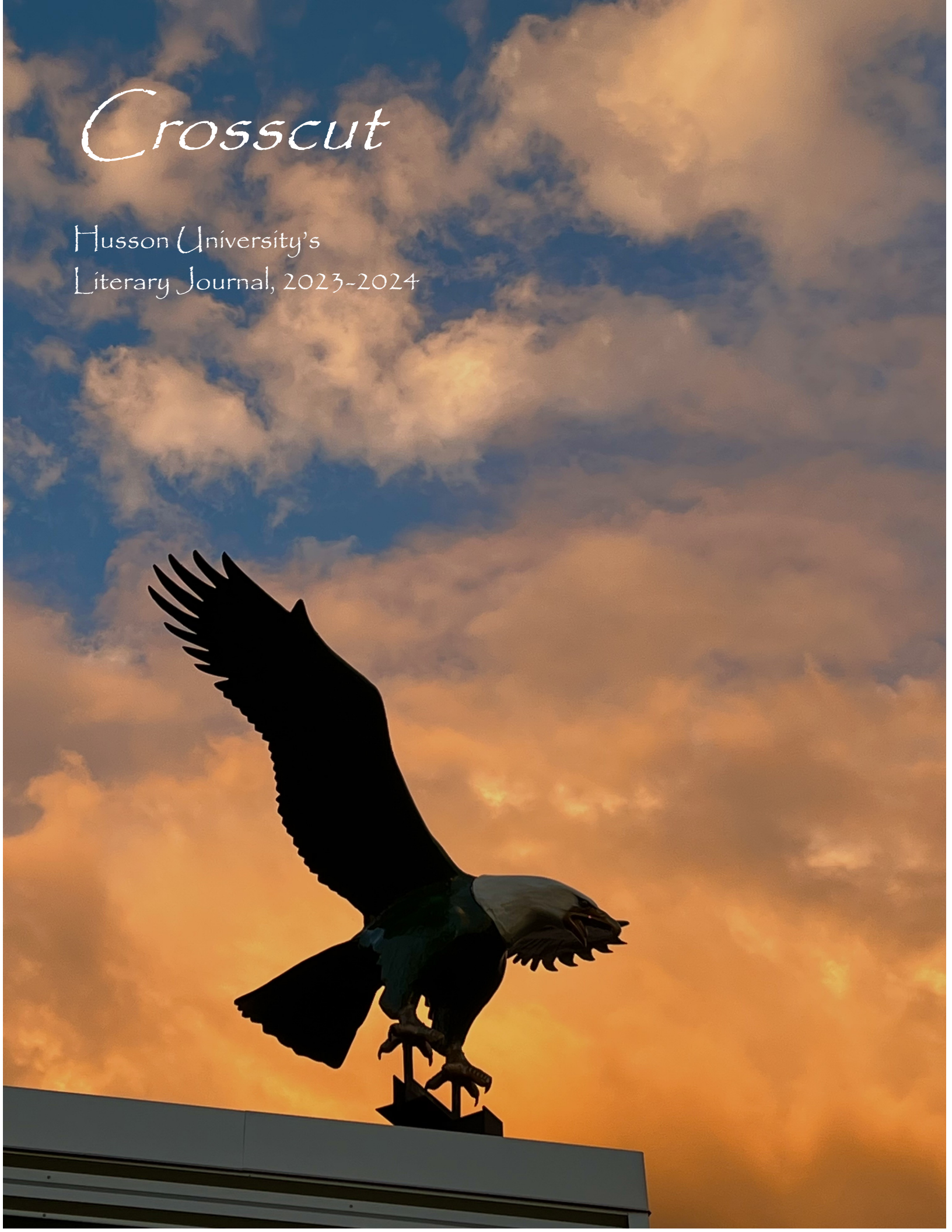
Crosscut

Husson University's
Literary Journal, 2023-2024



Crosscut Welcome

We live in a time of unprecedented change.

The creative entries that you will find between the pages of this journal are original. None were created or inspired by AI in any way. Not only was AI not ready and available for public consumption at the time these works were written, it was also not needed. Humans have had the ability to create for as long as time, and there is something particularly unique in the way creation happens within ourselves. Our students – and in fact all of us – were born with brains that are not fully explored or understood. And even still, as a species, we have accomplished so much unaided by technology. So, perhaps we might explore, not how an AI Chatbot works and can create writing that is "better" or "quicker" or "easier" than that of a human, but what additional powers we can manifest from our own individual brains.

We might also explore what creativity truly is, as a concept at its core, and how it exists the way it does. How can this ability or gift that we know has the power to be cultivated and understood be explored even further for our greater enjoyment and the greater common good? Our students are exploring their creative gifts, regardless of the technological advancements we make as a society. Writing is a person's fingerprint, unique and indelible. We have the power to delve into our unique individual experiences, to live the human experience, and to communicate the experiences creatively, which is something no program can ever truly replicate.

Words

By Emily Austin

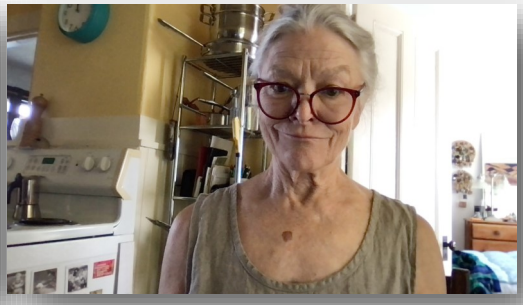
The creative juices begin to flow. I can feel the waves of my soul crashing against my skin, crashing against my brain. Sending electricity throughout my body. Making my hand write these words floating around in my brain. Begging to be released onto the page. They love the page. The page validates them. The page gives them life, but it also is their death, which is why I must cherish and respect them for the little time they are with me. They give my soul meaning, which has always been my only wish.

The editors extend a special thanks to our contributors and to Husson University administration for their continued support and offer a special thanks to Dr. Phillip Taylor, III, Dean of the College of Science and Humanities.

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Kaitlyn Hill, Managing Editor
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Anna Coleman and Faith Reece, Assistant Editors



Maria Cahill and Kaitlyn Hill



Sandip Wilson



Anna Coleman, Faith Reece, and Maria Cahill

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Many contributors appear more than once. This list is in order of the original presentation of their work.
This year's journal includes creative works from present and past Husson University students.

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Photograph by Jenna Brassbridge

Future Crosscut 2024-2025 Contributors needed: Full or part-time students who attend Husson University are eligible to submit their fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, photography/art for the next edition of Crosscut. The first consideration deadline is December 15, 2023. However, submissions will be accepted through April 15, 2024. E-mail your submissions (no pdfs) to Dr. Maria J. Cahill, cahillm@husson.edu.

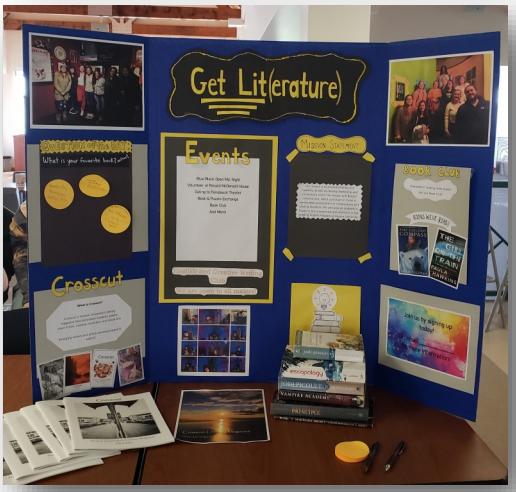
The work in this journal does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Husson University faculty or staff.

Get Lit

English and Creative Writing Club: 2017 through 2023

Get Lit was founded in Spring 2017 by Maria Cahill, Faculty Advisor and students Kaitlyn Hill (Junior) and Jon Smith (Junior). Although the membership included English majors, active participants and the executive team have often included majors in disciplines such as psychology, business, video/film, education, physical therapy, journalism, and healthcare administration. The club's keynote activities and events have been BlueBlack Evenings Open Mic, Urban Poetry and Art, National Day on Writing and Black History Month, and the Ronald McDonald House.

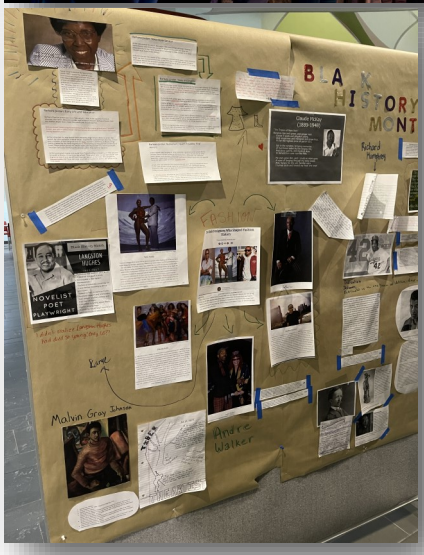
















My Grandfather Died on a Friday Morning

By Kaitlyn Hill

The world still turns even when someone is dying.
The traffic lights are slow, and lazy.
The road work still continues.
The check in counter at the hospital still gains a line,
people waiting patiently to be patients, to see patients,
I tell the woman who greets me that I am doing good,
even though that is the last thing that I am.
My tragedy does not belong to her.
My world has stopped turning for a moment,
but hers does not have to.
Bold of me to assume hers would.
She faces people in my situation every day.
I am not special.
She has been here before.
We have been here before.
And while I mutter the words that will
hopefully get me to the ICU faster,
part of me wants to demand attention at this moment.
Pound on the desk, climb over it, put myself in her seat,
make her hold me in the palm of her hand.
Make her feel my grief the way I do:
in the center of my belly, hands stuttering,
hand to chest, to heart, to any part of me that I can
feasibly hold together, but I can't hold myself together,
because we're losing you, right before our eyes.
without his steady hand and bold presence
guiding her through her days.
Now, I don't feel like I have blinked enough
to pay for the cost of writing another obituary.
I sit by her bedside, watch her sleep through the night,
keeping time with her ragged breaths,
holding her hand like I can keep her here on earth,
but I feel her slipping through my fingertips.
So I make the choice to kiss her soft forehead, to whisper,
"You can go back to papa. We've got it from here."



Photographs by David Bubar

My Grandmother Died on a Monday Evening

By Kaitlyn Hill



Less than a year later, and the traffic stays the same.
This time, I am thankful for the solid red arrow,
for the pause in time,
for the municipality functions that make me wait;
I am scared of having to make a decision.
For a split second, I debate if it is better
to turn before or after the oncoming car passes by,
but then I remember that the choice
is not mine to make.
Just like it is not my choice whether or not
my grandmother keeps fighting.
It has only been nine months,
but they have been the heaviest without her husband,
and I am envious of her strength.
If you asked me nine months ago,
I would have told you that I
was scared she'd be gone in the blink of an eye,
unable to face the world without my papa,





Photographs by Jenna Brassbridge



Your Embrace

By Emily Austin

Your arms wrap around me,
like the ocean swallowing me.
Floating in serenity.
I want to stay here forever,
never leaving.

Triggers
By Emily Austin

They are everywhere.
Hiding amongst the shadows.
Lurking behind every corner, waiting for me.
Their devilish grins send chills down my spine.
Their eyes meet mine, making me frozen in place.
My heart rate accelerates.
I can feel my body pulsating…shaking from fear.
"QUIET DOWN!" I scream to myself,
knowing my heart won't listen because it's too late.
The damage has already begun.
The triggers gather around me,
encircling me in their darkness.
Closer, closer, closer they become.
My vision slowly goes dark.
My brain, fuzzy.
Everything is shrinking,
becoming so small and dim
that I am no longer able to make out what it is.
All that's left are the happy triggers.

Bag
By Emily Austin

I'm suffocating.
The bag encases my head.
It blocks my airflow,
keeping out the air
I took for granted.
I wish I could take it off,
but I am trapped.
Trapped with my memories,
regrets, despairs, and loneliness.
A concept I am too familiar with.
The darkness is coming,
and it won't be kind.
How I wish I got to say goodbye…

Beginning
By Emily Austin

In the beginning,
they all validate you.
Your feelings and experiences.
But, once the infatuation fades,
reality sets in.

Who Are You?
By Emily Austin

I look in the mirror.
I trace my fingers along my jaw,
inspect my skin for markings, damage.
I stare into my eyes - my mother's eyes.
They look back at me.
Medium brown with speckles of gold in certain lighting.
Dark brown pupils.
They are everything I recognize in myself, mother, and sister.
They follow me everywhere - take in everything.
They take in every part of me.
I avoid staring too long at my body -
something I hold mixed emotions towards.
I raise my head to look back into these familiar eyes.
I stare.
Waiting for something to happen,
as the ghost of my mother might appear behind me.
She never shows.
Only the ghost of me appears.
She hides in my eyes.
She hides somewhere deep inside me.
I don't know where she resides, but it is somewhere so deep inside
that I hope if I stare into the window long enough,
she'll show herself.
I want to break her out.
Abuse, fear, sadness, and loneliness hasn't worked.
Maybe she needs nurture?
Maybe she needs compassion?
Maybe she needs love?
How I wish she would appear in this mirror I stare into.
How I wish she would appear into these familiar eyes of mine.
How I wish I were her.

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Photograph by Jenna Brassbridge

Getting the Gold

By Anna Coleman

As I walked into the Monday morning assembly on an Autumn day in 2012, it felt different. It wasn't just any assembly where the teachers would tell us about activities for the week. This was the assembly where I would receive my 100 point reading trophy. I worked diligently for 2 years on getting to 100 points, not for the trophy, but to motivate and prove to myself that I was a capable reader.

At my elementary school, all of the books in the library had points attached to them. Longer books with more difficult content had more points while short, less complex books had less points. After completing a book, we had to take a content quiz; how well we did on the quiz determined how many points we received. Some people read longer books to get more points, not because they actually wanted to read. I never paid attention to the points attached to the books I read; I chose books that I wanted to read.

In my opinion, my elementary school valued reading for the way it looked. In my head at the time, the school didn't care about whether or not students were proficient readers, just how much they read. We had a literacy program with a teacher, Ms. Kivel, who proctored reading exams near the end of the year. She was also the "Reading Wizard" and would go around during our assemblies and hand out free books and prizes to those that exhibited some interest in reading. Unfortunately, Ms. Kivel was the scariest person at the school.

When I started the first grade, I struggled with reading. I read more in order to get better at it. I continued this into second grade where we had our first reading test. I remember being very nervous to take my test because of Ms. Kivel. She wore a mean, unapproachable look on her face. She was also very blunt; this is acceptable and effective for adults, but when talking to 9 year olds, it comes across as harsh. While reading out loud to Ms. Kivel, I stumbled on familiar words. I wasn't able to focus due to fear and anxiety, and my reading suffered. I received a low score on my test which did not reflect the progress I made. I felt defeated; if I couldn't read in front of her, maybe I just couldn't read well at all. I remember being very upset when I returned to my classroom, and my second grade teacher Mrs. Wood told me, "Don't be discouraged, if I had to read for her, I wouldn't have done well either." Mrs. Woods' words helped me feel better because I wasn't alone in my fear of Ms. Kivel. It took me a long time to be confident in my reading skills, but after Mrs. Wood reassured me of my feelings, I started anew.

After my reading test with Ms. Kivel, I worked really hard on my reading. I would read constantly during my free time. I still remember when I finished my first "real" chapter book *A Bear Called Paddington* in the second grade. I was so proud of myself for reading a book that wasn't some Dr. Seuss style rhyme or full of pictures. After this milestone, my love for reading only continued growing.

In the third grade, I, like many other children my age, fell in love with *Harry Potter.* When I read these books, I became immersed in the world of Harry, Ron, and Hermione. I would sit for hours at a time with a book in my hands reading as fast as my 9 year old brain could comprehend, trying to see what adventure they would go on next. The *Harry Potter* series contained the longest books in our library, meaning they had the most points attached to them. Fantasy has always been my favorite genre of literature, and *Harry* Potter is a staple of all things magical and fantastical; I chose them for that reason, not how many points they had. That can not be said for everybody.

At the time that I read *Harry Potter*, a large population of other kids were reading them as well. However, many of these kids didn't read out of curiosity about what trouble Harry and the gang would get into next, but instead just wanted to get closer to the 100 point prize. Library time was chaotic; it was a madhouse in there as people tried to get to the *Harry Potter* books before anyone else. Some kids even made the criminal, abhorrent decision to read them OUT OF ORDER just so that they could get the points. I had never seen such disarray in my life.

As third grade ended, I completed *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, the sixth out of seven books in the series. Not only was I close to finishing the series, but also achieving 100 points. After taking my last reading test of the year on *Half-Blood Prince*, I had 93 points, only 7 away from getting the trophy. It didn't bother me, but instead gave me something to look forward to for the beginning of the next school year.

I wasted no time when fourth grade began when we started our reading logs. On our first trip to the library, I checked out *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. I was excited to read it; it would be the last book in the series and once I took the test I'd score over 100 points. I was about halfway through the book when someone else reached 100 points. It was a fifth grade boy who, when asked how he got to 100 points, explained that he read the *Harry Potter* series and *Artemis Fowl*, the longest books in the library. At the time it felt discouraging as I, like my peers and teachers, knew his motives in reading were not the same as my own. I felt as though he did not deserve that trophy because he

didn't even care about reading. When I finished my book and took my test, I got my trophy for getting to 100 points, but it wasn't the same. I felt proud, but upset that someone who didn't even care about reading got a trophy first.

My 100 point trophy was not my first, or last, reading-related recognition of elementary school. The year prior I received an "Outstanding Reader" trophy from our wonderful Reading Wizard, Ms. Kivel. My fourth grade teacher, Mr. Hills, did a reading challenge; the first person to read twenty-five books would pick a book for free. I read twenty-five books before anyone else in my class. Mr. Hills took me to our local bookstore and bought me a book. I chose *A Series of Unfortunate Events: The Vile Village* because I was reading that series. Inside the book he wrote, "Anna, To recognize the incredible achievement in reading in the fourth grade, I present you with this 'unfortunate' book. I am very proud of your reading this year. You are the Klause of our class. I hope you continue to love reading as much as you do now. Mr. Hills." This competition also reflected the importance of quantity of books over quality of reading. To me, it didn't matter, I read for the sake of reading. Reading twenty-five books meant more practice and another book for the shelf.

As time went on, I realized that even though these awards and recognitions were based on quantity, they did help motivate people to read. I know it gave me something to strive for to prove to Ms. Kivel, but most importantly to myself, that I could read. The trophy reminds me of the effort I put into becoming the well versed reader I am today. It has also taught me that reading was valued at my elementary school more than I gave it credit for. Even though the delivery of how the school motivated children to read seemed careless on the surface, the message is sound: the only way to be a better reader is to read. In the end, it helped me get the gold (painted) trophy, and a cherished hobby.



Photograph by Anna Coleman



Lost in Space
By Emily Austin

I feel like I'm floating.
Outside of my body,
out in space,
just outside.
I don't know where I am
or where I'm going.
Am I floating away?
Am I floating towards something?
Is there a destination or just empty space?
I'll stay floating here until someone retrieves me.

Photographs by David Cahill



Heavy
By Emily Austin

The word love holds infamous weight.
Weight that will sink you,
or anchor you.

Life Through an Aged Lens

By Anna Coleman

During the summer, I work at the Waldo County YMCA as a camp counselor. While I work with the kids, I also see and talk to other members of the building. It's natural for me to say “good morning” to people when I see them, regardless of their age. At my Y, there is a group of people that sit at the end of the hallway known as “The End of the Hall Gang.” They’re members of our Y’s Active Older Adult (AOA) group.

Every morning when I walked down the hall at 7 a.m. to start my day and wait for the kids to arrive, I said good morning to Virgil, Jim, and Barbara who were sitting there. Sometimes I even stopped to talk to them for a little bit, and I could tell it made a difference in their day. One morning when I was outside with the childcare director and CEO waiting for kids to arrive, Ms. Barbara walked up to us and said, “Good morning *Anna*"; the day before she looked at my name tag so she could know my name because I knew hers (and spoke to her). She told Faith, my boss, and Russell, the CEO, how every morning when I saw her I would say good morning and none of the other summer camp staff – who were all around my age or younger – ever spoke to her and the impact it made on her. I’ve always felt like talking to adults was my gift, and this is just one example of how my experiences growing up with parents of an older generation have influenced who I am as a person.

Family has always been a very important aspect of who I am. I attribute most of my character, values, and personality to the people in my family. I was born in State College, Pennsylvania and lived there with my mom, dad, and brother until I was six years old. The cognitive memories I have consist of watching my brother do schoolwork and then eventually sitting alongside him as we were both home-schooled by my mother, and my father being away during the day as he worked the night shift at Walmart. This was a job he got after he retired; he was a professor and coach at Penn State in his younger days, along with being a disc jockey and radio host in State College. His love of music rubbed off on me. Not many six-year-olds choose to listen to “Early in the Morning” by the Gap Band on their own.

To me, my life was normal. I didn't think that my family was any different from other people's, but I also didn't have much to base it on. There weren't a lot of other families in our apartment building, so my exposure to other kids and their family dynamics was limited. The most interaction I had with kids was with my cousins, who were all in their teenage years as my brother and I were the youngest grandchildren. I lived those first six years in blissful ignorance, unaware of how different my family was from the people I would meet, and in turn, how different that made me.

It wasn't until I moved to Maine with my mom and brother that I realized I was different from other kids my age. When I started going to public school and saw kids with their parents at school functions, all of my friends’ parents were much younger than my mom. And the kids made it very apparent to me. One time, I was waiting for my mom to pick me up from Girl Scouts. While standing at the door, one of the other girls asked me what I was doing, and I said I was waiting for my mom. She replied, "Oh, that's your mom that picks you up? I always thought that was your grandmother.” I went through all of elementary school being embarrassed by my parents. They were considered old by all of my friends, and I always felt like I was weird because of it. Not only was I that one brown girl in the school full of white kids, but I was also that one brown girl who had an old, white mom. It was a triple negative. However, unbeknownst to me, I already shared some of my parents' traits. In elementary school, I was a friend to everyone in my class regardless of who they were, what they looked like, or where they came from. I was respectful to classmates and teachers alike and often saw on my report card comments on my level of maturity.

Besides the very apparent difference between my parents versus the parents of my friends, I didn't think much about how that affected me until I went to middle school.

The summer after sixth grade, my dad died. For most kids my age, if they were saying this, the cause would be cancer, some sort of freak accident, or something else. For me, it was a combination of complications due to diabetes and old age. This was a very traumatic and depressing time for me as I was only twelve years old. I felt very angry and hurt at the fact that I would have to live the rest of my life without one of my parents. He wouldn't get to see me graduate high school and college, get married, or do any of the other things that one hopes their parents get to see. I was, and still am, jealous of my friends who have both of their parents and get to spend time with them because I feel like I've been cheated of that. During this time, the age of not only my parents, but the rest of my family members became a more prominent thought in my mind. I started to ask more questions to better understand why my life was the way that it was.

My father died at a time during my life when I would spend the summers with my uncles in Pennsylvania. Both of them worked in independent/care nursing home facilities. This was the second summer I had visited them and vol-

unteered at the nursing home where my Uncle Albert worked. I spent most of my days with the activities director planning and participating in games and conversations with the residents, and I loved every second of it. Unlike other 12 and 13-year-olds, I didn't look forward to summer for the free time spent with my friends, sleepovers, and camping. I looked forward to summer because I knew I would go to my uncle's and see my friends at the nursing home. I just naturally bonded with the residents; I was able to talk to them and spend time with them and it wasn't weird to me, it felt familiar and comfortable. Volunteering at the nursing home was especially helpful after my father died because I was spending time with people that reminded me of him simply due to their age. Many of them enjoyed my visiting them because they didn't have grandkids or family that came to visit often and that made them less lonely. I willingly would spend 40-hour weeks of my summer in that nursing home. Many of the people there, staff and residents alike, would comment on how I seemed so much older than I was because of how well I could speak to them. I didn't think anything of it; it was just who I was.

I started to see how my parents and family influenced me. When I returned to school and told my friends about how much fun I had over the summer in a nursing home, they responded in either a quizzical or somewhat disgusted manner. I knew it made me different, but I didn't care. Not only was I volunteering, which I loved and still do love, but I was spending my time with people who appreciated it as much as I did. There was a mutual benefit from my time spent in that nursing home; it was fulfilling for the residents and myself. I provided them with entertainment and an extra grandkid while also learning a lot about leadership and how certain businesses run. I cultivated social and time management skills that I still use today.

While in middle school I spent a lot of my vacations with my uncles. In high school I was spending a lot more time with my grandmother as she moved into my house. When this happened we became inseparable. My grandmother and I went everywhere together. I went with her to her hair appointments, we traveled to Southern Maine to spend weekends at my uncle's, and I took her to plays and musicals at my school. During a couple of summers before COVID, I went on road trips with my grandmother to visit family. My grandmother has been a big influence in my life, especially these last few years since she lived with me and has been in Maine. We spend a lot of time together, and I'm able to go to her for advice and when I'm having some trouble. There are times when I think I resemble my grandmother. I feel as though a lot of the traits my mother got from her were also passed down to me. I'm very independent, and I can at times be seen as a tomboy much like my mother and grandmother. I know how to get my point across and make it very clear, and I have strong opinions that don't budge easily, sometimes due to being stubborn. When we are all together, people remark on how similar my mannerisms are to theirs.

It's common for kids to think that adults are cool or dream about growing up; however, as they get older the adults in their life seem less cool and just old. That was not the case for me. When I moved to Maine, I met Dan and Nellie who were friends with my uncle. Every Sunday they came to his house for breakfast, and I was usually there, too, and talked to them. I always thought they were fun people to be around. I remember at some point in time Dan and I started playing ninjas and would karate chop each other. I'm now 20 years old, and to this day, whenever I see Dan and Nellie, Dan and I do our ninja game just like when I was 6. Whenever they come to Bangor, Nellie messages me to see if I'm at school and if I want to see them. The last time they were here and they dropped me back off at Husson, they said, "Thanks for hanging out with us old people." I thought about this a lot because to me, I just see them as my friends. Many of the adults in my life are just extra family to me, and I never see it as a weird thing to spend time with them.

My life is different from many of my friends' lives. When I was younger, I always saw this as a bad thing. I thought that I was weird because my parents were older. It made me uncomfortable to talk about them at school because I was embarrassed and didn't want to be made fun of. As time passed and I've grown older, I've come to understand that there is no "right" type of family. Families come in all different shapes and sizes, and we do not get to pick that. Instead of continuing to hold anger because of it, I celebrate and show how I am proud of the person it has made me be. I'm happy that I can talk to and build relationships with people younger than me, the same age as me, or 30-plus years older. To me, it is a gift that my parents gave me just by being them. If my parents weren't older and didn't have the experiences and values that they did, I know I would be a significantly different person. I'm happy and proud of who I am and will continue to grow into because of the family I have.

My Pretty Self
By Jenna Brassbridge

Well, thank God I am pretty
When I am sad, distraught, or over the everyday habits of living
I am reminded that I am pretty. I am beautiful
But beauty has become the knife I drag across my thighs
My blood is the perfume you so desperately long to smell on me
Mom says, “You look skinny.”
She asks again if I’ve been eating enough
But her question is interrupted by another boy from another app
Who says,
“You look so sexy”
I hate the word
The way it sounds
The way it feels
It’s sharp and rude
But I can translate it
I can translate it into gorgeous, beautiful, captivating
Or any other version of the word that makes me feel like I shouldn’t
Consider myself anything other than pretty
We women turn page after page of a magazine wishing to look like
The models who only eat an almond a day
We’re gushing over another celebrity couple who is showing their
Hot-rated love with two brain cells and a Camaro in their driveway
And all my friends tell me not to feel lonely
Because all I can talk about is loving the idea of being loved
So then they say again that
I am pretty, that I have nothing to worry about
The general curiosity of their kindness makes me think
That their reassurance is code for:
You're not as attractive as you could be
But if boys from apps are showing their modern love
Through a 4-second appreciation of my naked body
Who am I to want to be anybody but my pretty self?



Photograph by David Bubar

Speaking on Modern Love
By Jenna Brassbridge

Sex is equal to drinking coffee on a Sunday morning
Not in the way of holding your cup carefully
Or appreciating the warmth that
It gives your hands
But in the way of its forgetfulness
It happened too many times
Too many places
With too many people
For it to be appreciated anymore
It turned into a force of habit
An expectation for the start of something
Modern love states,
“You cannot start your Sunday morning without a cup of coffee, and you cannot form a connection without being naked first.”

Dinner

By Anthony Colucci

(An excerpt from his book, *Wreathed in Shadows*)

Rose glared at the prisoner as she ate, contempt filling her russet eyes.

Another week had passed by, way faster than time had ever passed back home. It was like the waves carried them through each day with a newfound haste, as if life on the ocean was busier. There was more to do, more to see, more to think about.

The air had gotten much colder in the past few days. She supposed that was a good thing, since it meant they were nearing Amarok, but *gods.* Winter was cold and snowy back in Corewick, but she could hide in the warmth and safety of her own home, buried under mountains of blankets. Winter had just ended, spring was supposed to be in full bloom, so why the hell was it this cold? The freezing wind whipping across the open ocean certainly didn't help. She'd even spotted a few chunks of ice floating in the water, chunks that had only gotten bigger and more frequent the closer they'd gotten to Amarok.

The entire crew seemed to be affected by the sudden drop in temperature: work flow had slowed down significantly. It had gotten progressively harder to open and close her fingers. Liam, through chattering teeth, had promised to bring them all shopping for winter gear once they arrived in North Port, the main city in Amarok.

The only person who seemed completely unfazed by the cold was the prisoner.

They had decided to let the girl roam around the ship as she wished as long as she had a "chaperone." Who, of course, they had nominated to be Rose, since she was the one dead set against torturing the girl. So the prisoner followed her everywhere: to breakfast, to training with Axel, to lunch, and she was locked in her room at any time Rose couldn't watch over her. During all their time together, Rose made sure the prisoner knew which one of them was in chains.

Rose had gone extra hard during training with Axel to show her what she'd be up against if she tried to hurt Rose again— or *anyone* in her crew. She'd made sure to pick the harder tasks around the ship to show off her skills and physical strength, and had taken to glaring at the girl during mealtimes.

The prisoner now casually dug into her lunch, occasionally glancing up at Rose with similar concern to a cat, like she was completely unruffled by the warrior's smoldering gaze.

Between bites, Rose gruffly said, "Where are you from?"

Silence, then the clang of woodenware on teeth, followed by the sound of polite chewing.

Rose had been asking for days. She'd even grabbed ahold of one of the previous crew members they'd indoctrinated and shaken him by the collar, demanding to know where the prisoner was from and how they'd even managed to capture her.

Liam had helped her interrogate every recruit from the battle. And every single one of them had given the same useless response: *I don't know. Rever transferred her to this ship a while ago, told us to feed her occasionally. We don't question his orders.*

Ash had asked her one night for his "meal question" as he called it, and even then she'd answered with cold silence. Staying true to his word, he'd left and kept the meal for himself, letting her stay hungry that night. He'd tried again a couple times with the same result.

She had avoided a lot of questions. Avoided them, or given roundabout answers to them. It had gotten to the point where they'd given up on the questions, instead opting to let her into their lives. Ash had figured that if she saw their good nature, she'd be more inclined to open up about herself and ultimately share the valuable information she held.

Ash knew her opinion on the matter. Knew everyone's opinion.

But he was supposed to be the smart one of the group, so why not give it a try?

Rose had been the one who initially wanted the prisoner to be safe, but Ash's determination and thirst for knowledge seemed to dwarf her kindness. His ideals were a bit too friendly for Rose's liking. It seemed like she had to constantly remind him that while the girl was human and deserved to be treated with respect, she was still a weapon

to be feared. Letting her roam around the ship, even if still shackled, was a risk.

Gods, she was starting to think like Liam.

The bench shifted and Seth plopped down beside her, scooting right up to her with his tray of food, his shaggy chestnut-colored hair bobbing with the motion. He gave her a charming smile and winked at the prisoner.

"You know," he started, his voice already the loudest in the dining hall, "you won't get through to her by talking like that, or by glaring. You're so *scary,* Rosie, have you tried being sweet and pragmatic?"

Rose started at the name. The only people that had ever called her *Rosie* had been close family members.

Recovering quickly, she retorted, "I hope you aren't implying that *you're* sweet and pragmatic*."*

"Of course I am. Just watch."

She fought the urge to roll her eyes, instead leaning back to watch the disaster that was about to unfold.

Any casual disinterest aimed at Rose in the prisoner's amethyst eyes had morphed into a cold, dead stare aimed at Seth. Like she was already ready to shut him down.

Seth smirked and met her dangerous focus. "If you won't give us your name, then I'll make up my own name for you."

Snow Angels

By Jillian Reissfelder

We stood halfway down the hill
The snow silently watching us
Falling gently
And we laughed.

The paths were barely packed down
But then again, we're small and light.
Small in so many contexts.
Light in just as many.

I remember watching them go down
Listening to their shrieks
And I thought, "This is okay."
"I'll be okay."
"I *am okay right now."*

The whole time we were out there
It felt like a movie.
It was just us.

The thick layer of snow made everything feel
plush and comfortable.
We stopped and stood on the hill for a moment
And enjoyed the silence, enjoyed being alone together.

Essence of Myself
By Jillian Reissfelder

A long time ago
or at least what feels like a long time ago
my Vans were clean
and unscathed.
I had barely walked in them;
they were new
they were fresh
and they were finally mine.

I wore them to the museum
on a family outing.
The four of us and the three of them.
We had fun.
I loved that museum.
I loved this one exhibit
that gave people a sense of what it was like "back then."
I loved that exhibit.
I rushed to a mockup of a '70s living room
and I asked my brother to take a picture of me
relaxing on an olive green leather couch
with a rotary phone in my hand
pretending to talk into it.
I thought it was funny.
I felt like a kid in a candy store.
I was sixteen.
My Vans were in the picture
clean and unscathed
and the expression on my face reflected laughter
and you could tell that I was happy.
Everything in that moment was okay.
Everything before that had been a little chaotic
but I managed.

Less than five years later
my Vans sit in a crowded shoe closet
under a high heel
and someone's boots;
they are dirty
and worn
and the laces have seemingly stretched
and have been dragged on the ground.
The laces are gross.
The shoes have mud splattered on them.
The white is a cream color now.

Less than five years later
and I haven't thought about my Vans
since what feels like a long time
ago.

Quote
By Emily Austin

I love quotes.
I love how few words can leave a lasting impression
and that has always been something I wanted to leave behind…
I want people to be touched by my words,
even if it is just a few.
I want my few words to change someone:
their mindset, feelings, and perspective.
I want to touch people,
even if it is a few words.
I want to capture emotions, experiences, and people,
even if it is in a few words.
I want only words to remain.
I don't have to be famous.
I just want to be "someone" to someone else,
even if it is done through a few words.
A few words can cause so much change.

Bittersweet
By Emily Austin

This bittersweet feeling is inevitable.
It appears whenever you are near,
whenever you are mentioned,
and whenever I think about you.
But, sometimes it turns into a bitter feeling,
one that becomes a stone on my chest.
It sinks into me, pushing me below the surface.
I can see everything under the water…
The flashbacks, friends, family, everything I am missing under this stone.
I am numb.
Frozen…under the surface.
I wait there.
Hoping someone will come along and find me under this heavy stone.
When they do, they will say, "I've been looking for you,"
with the warmest smile on their face.
Allowing that once-bitter feeling to turn bittersweet,
and then one day it might become a sweet feeling,
making me completely forget about the once bitter one.

Rent Free
By Emily Austin

Poetry lives in my head.
Everyday, all day I am writing poems in my head.
About the sky, the sun, nature, and
all the colors that evoke some kind of emotion in me.
I write poems in my head.
Everything and nothing is poetry.
I find comfort in poetry.
We find comfort in one another.
Both being structure, elegant, and graceful -
to being chaos, abstract, and intense.
How we are these things, yet none of these things.
Poetry is the only vice that gives me fulfillment,
yet gives me nothing.
Poetry is everything and nothing.
Poetry is a contradiction.

Poets are intense, chaotic, dramatic, depressed, elegant, intense souls who seek soul connection through words - through connection.
Poetry,
poets,
and I
are all contradictions.
Why do I find comfort in a contradiction when I am trying to not be one?
Why do I use a vice that makes me more of one?
These are questions I ask poetry as if it will hold all my answers,
yet I continue to ask.
Even though I am only talking with myself.

Lump
By Emily Austin

My head is buzzing.
The back of my eyes are burning.
My throat is closing up.
And the lump is getting
bigger, bigger, and bigger.
It can't keep everything down
forever.



Photograph by David Cahill

Who Is God?
By Autumn Holzworth

God is all-loving.

Many have pondered how this could be so,
because of the issues all around us
in the world.

The murders, the crimes, the atrocities unbearable.
How could an all-loving God
allow things so terrible?

One side would say this shows that He's not,
but the other would say,
"Let's give this some thought."

He's all-loving because He creates all the good.
In regards to the bad, He's misunderstood.
The bad things, Christians say, are humanly caused.
Bad has nothing to do with God.

Humans cause all their aggravation and woe;
their free will allows them to treat each other so.
The next question would be: why then give free will?
The answer would be: so we can make our own choices.
God respects us and loves us and gives us our own voices.

We reap what we sow;
we have our own voices;
the decisions we make could have consequences.
God gives us these consequences
to keep us in check.
Just like any parent who loves us to death.

Startled
By Autumn Holzworth

Lights flickering,
I hold my breath.
The room becomes
pitch-black and cold.

Where's my flashlight?
I wonder to myself,
trying not to let
the fear take hold.

Suddenly, beyond my bedroom door,
I hear an odd sort of sound.
Is that scratching? A light knock?
The house creaking because it's getting old?

Finally, I find my flashlight
and ponder whether to stay in bed.
"Nah, it's probably nothing!"
Curiosity then makes me bold.

Cold metal flashlight in hand,
I walk to my door and open it slowly
so it doesn't squeak.
I then make my way
down the stairs
and feel as though
someone's behind me.

At the bottom of the stairs
I point my flashlight
in every direction.

My heart seems to stop when,
through the sliding glass door
in the living room,
I see something… someone…
looking in.



Photograph by David Bubar

Ignominy

By Jordan Brooks

The loose concrete crunched under his feet as he trudged through the worn-down city. Not another being was in sight; the only sign of life was his own shaky breath reaching its way into the cool wind. The universe admitted its faults and hesitantly handed its weaknesses to its creation. He was the only model left in the wide world of destruction.

All that was once living seemed to be completely detached from the planet that provided its salvation. His mind was void of what was originally thriving. Instead of growth, his thoughts shriveled into fragile petals, dehydrated veins, and a lack of vibrant colors. The garden of preservation was coming to a gradual end. The final stretch was near but not quite yet.

In the distance, the man laid his eyes on a singular object that was, first, seemingly beyond his comprehension. Yet so simple, it possessed shades that were deep in his memory. Perhaps days ago, he had seen it last, perhaps years. Perhaps in another life. The man was utterly fixated on the minuscule item. His trudge turned into a walk, then a jog, then a run, until his inconsistent breathing became unbearable. He coughed, saliva filling his mouth and bits spurting out with each heave. And the man's eyes watered as the coughing grew more and more severe. His sight began to falter, but the bright color of the small facet of the world insisted on its presence. As the coughing subsided, his chest stung with the reality of the scenery in his field of vision.

Accustomed to always being numb, this was new. Similar to excitement, but not quite that; perhaps a diluted version of the emotion. Due to a constant deficiency of feeling, the man was more surprised than anything. Between the sudden physical failure and the enthusiasm of his newfound interest, he felt an odd collapse, an irrational apprehension. The world had already ended, but not for him. He was real, a living being on the earth, even if he was the only one. The man felt the weight of the world slump and die in his hands. It crumbled to pieces. He tried to pick it up, but to no avail. Before his eyes was the disintegration of all that was.

His eyes finally traced back to all that was left: the small object.

A flower.

A living, thriving, prosperous plant. With the flower, a daisy to be exact, came hope. A glimpse into the future. Something to hold, something to believe in, something to. . .

He ripped the flower from the ground, bringing it close to his face in order to bask in all of its beauty. The white petals and bright yellow center showed the innocence of the world and the utter emotions of the man. His fingers traced along the delicate petals all the way to the slim, green stem. The bottom of this delicacy was now damaged from being torn from the ground, but the man did not seem to care. He saw the flower just as precious, nonetheless, and tucked it away into the raggedy pocket of his jacket. The man was no longer alone in the world of ruin.

As he continued to walk along the path to nowhere, he felt a twinge behind his eyes. Both at once, starting abruptly but lasting for what seemed like hours. Before the man could fully comprehend the feeling, the slight discomfort turned into a burning sensation. He felt years of built-up extremity in his head – yearning, begging, and longing to be released. However, momentarily, the man composed himself, placing his hand firmly into the pocket that held his companion. The daisy, instead of providing comfort, demanded the man to let go and surrender the confusion tied to the unfamiliar feeling and release what pined to be heard.

The profound urgency within the man escaped in his tears. The importance seemed vastly misplaced, and the few tears that streamed down his unwashed cheek were chased by more and more of their kind. The small cry turned into a wail, and the only common theme between this overload of passion and himself was the daisy.

The man snatched the daisy from his pocket, and in the process of doing so, two helpless petals fell from the flower. His sobs only continued, louder, stronger, and never-ending. He blamed the flower for every bit of feeling and threw it to the ground. The man stomped on the daisy, dragging the feeble flower under his shoes and screamed for only himself to hear.

His tantrum concluded shortly after. The man was not satisfied, no. He wiped his pathetic tears from his face, leaving no trace of the display. The man was ashamed, but why? What was the point of embarrassment when there were no others to please and make comfortable? And even so, what was the harm of feeling, even if there was no clear explanation? The man had forgotten how to feel but had held the flower accountable, exclusively out of shame. He glared down at the flower, sorrowful of his rash decision. The concrete he walked on was the lying ground of the only honest piece of himself. Among the weight of the world, he now held the regret of destroying the man he used to

be. He lifted the pieces of the daisy from the ground, scraping up certain parts with his uncut fingernails in order to retrieve all that was. He could no longer look at it without feeling a strong sense of guilt. Even so, he pushed the dead flower deep into his pocket, silently begging for forgiveness. He could not possibly be the symbol of all that was left; he was a poor representation of the world's creations. He was plainly worthless, even in this empty, dilapidated city.

On Roe vs. Wade Being Overturned

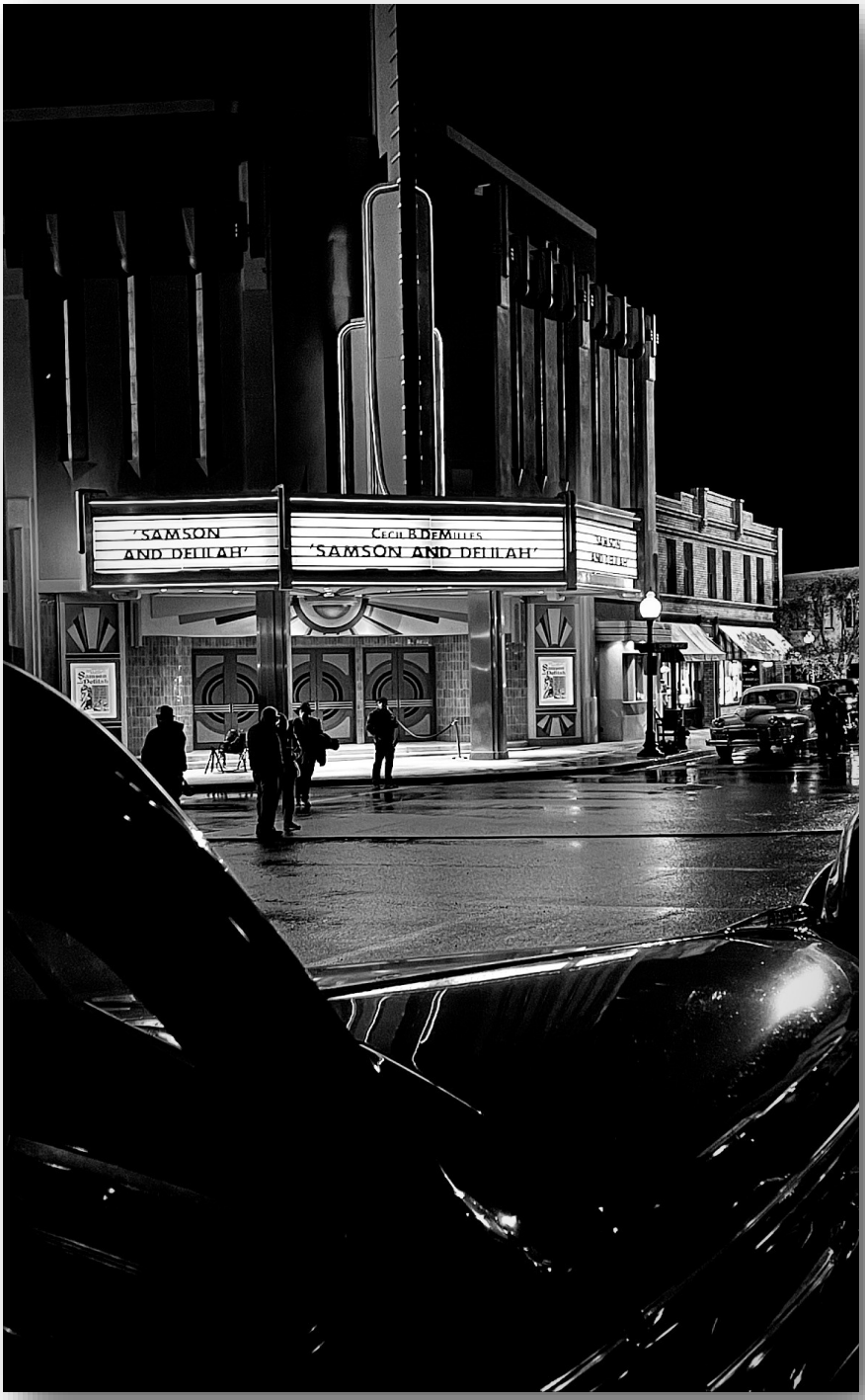
By Kaitlyn Hill

Today, my friend asked me,
"What would you do
if you got pregnant right now?"
and without missing a beat,
I flippantly replied,
"I'd get an abortion."

It took half a second
before my mouth snapped shut
with a record-scratch stop.

The state I live in
determines the state I live in,
gives me the power to lay claim
to my own body, a right treated
as a privilege by some, and by some,
an abhorrent, selfish act made carelessly,
something they have control over,
something to sit in on the decision of,
something to have a say in.

They refuse to get vaccinated
in the middle of a worldwide pandemic.
They scream from the rooftops,
"My body, my choice."
They say we do not have the *right*
to tell them what to put in their bodies,
but to us, they say they have the *right*
to decide what stays in ours.



Photograph by David Cahill

Tangerine
By Katherine Aubin Hoyle



Photograph by David Cahill

I've never eaten a tangerine.
I never had the desire to.

I've indulged in watermelons;
I've eaten spoonfuls of pomegranates,
bitter tasting on my tongue
and perfectly sapphic.
I've even tried grapefruits,
ruby red and sour to the touch

Yet, I've never eaten a tangerine.

But I did taste your lips
that one cold night in March
when we walked out of the theatre
and saw it had snowed.

Up in my room,
full of ivy sheets and euphoric touches,
I rested my head on your body
and closed my eyes.

But then the witching hour came,
and every goddess was begging,
hoping, and praying that you
would stay with me.
But it was time for you to go home.

Sickly and weak on my feet,
I led you to the door.
There was a weight on my chest,
but I felt like I could fly.

We paused in the kitchen,
motionless, breathless on my tiptoes,
wintergreen air and pneumonia-ridden lungs.

And like two strangers exchanging glances,
our lips met.
And in that moment,
I realized no fruit,
cultivated and crafted by Persephone herself,
no citrus too sweet or too sour,
could surpass the taste you left in my mouth.

I've never eaten a tangerine.
But now, I will never have to.

Immortal
By Katherine Aubin Hoyle

you said you found beauty in me,
enough that you wanted to touch me,
enough that you would ruin something already so pretty.

i'm tainted.
be sure to boil me
before you use me.
put me in water,
dilute me.
i wouldn't want to poison your blood.

too fast, too hard.
too little and too much.
you couldn't stand the touch.
i didn't want it hard enough.

one touch.
one touch and my skin is shed.
you promised you'd make me immortal.

now,
i'm so repulsive, you sanitize
and disinfect the spot in which i lay.
your touch travels to a new body,
one that gives you more
than i ever could.
i told you, i'm tainted.

i can't seem to age like fine wine,
so i'll just become vintage,
leaving rims on the glass
and vinegar tasting.

you leave me to collect dust
on the windowsill.
i lay waste here
with the other artifacts, fossils, and bones.
we've become forgotten to time.
but there is beauty in old things.

i lay waste here
with the insects, the other carcasses,
and the roaches and rats.
a feast for the vultures,
their claws sharp, their beaks bloody.

i lay waste here.
even if it takes years and years,
i'll become one with the earth,
who will take me as her own.
she will lay me to rest as i rot.
she will kiss me as i decompose.
she will love me in spite of my filth,
for she truly finds beauty in me.
she wants me to be inside her.
she will make me immortal.

Letters to Ghosts
By Katherine Aubin Hoyle

and so, to all of my ghosts
who have made up every part of me,
from the melancholy,
to the syrupy sweet,
the bitter, the sour,
the overwhelming glee,

know that every part of me thrives on
the muck and the weeds,
the sun, sea, and sand at my feet.

to all of the ghosts who have died,
whether in pain or mercy,
by showing me what being alive means,
i hope you continue to haunt me.



Photograph by David Cahill

Keep On Movin'

By Vivianne Holguin

The Family's To-Do List:

- Update personal records
- Pack up each room
- Label the boxes
- Make donation bins
- Clean and take out trash
- Everyone prepare their carry-on bag
- Grab snacks and drinks for the road
- Say goodbye to the house
- Pack items into the car and mover's van
- Last minute bathroom trips
- Put gas in the car
- RUIN ETHAN'S LIFE

Ethan

Five times. That is the number of times we have moved houses. I guess you could say my family doesn't like to stay in one place for long. If you really knew us, you'd know it's because we are poor and can't afford to stay in one place for long. Perhaps you're thinking, "Wow, Ethan! You must have seen so many cool places, though, right?" Wrong. My parents, sister, and I have moved five times around the same city: Santa Maria, California. They say it's for our benefit, but honestly, I can't believe I still have my head screwed onto my body. Now, here we are again, about to move for the sixth time. This time, we are leaving the city. Actually, this time, we are leaving the state… and moving across the country. Don't ask me why because I don't really pay much attention to this stuff anymore. All I know is that we are leaving everything behind to start over, but I have a feeling this won't be the last time.

Because I Said So

Why could we not stay at our house? Because I said so.

Why do I have to leave my friends behind again? Because I said so.

Why are we going across the country? Because I said so.

Mom, Dad, why do we have to keep moving? Because we said so.

The Car Ride- Jesse's POV

I looked over at Ethan, but he had his head resting against the car window and his eyes staring mindlessly at the traffic. He'd been like this for the last hour.

"Ethan, why are you so quiet?" I asked him nervously. I love my big brother, but when he gets quiet, it can be a bit scary.

"Because," he replied coldly.

"Knock it off," Mom snapped. "The time for hating us all has passed, so move on."

"Wow," Ethan scoffed. "Nice choice of words there, Mom. All I *ever do* is move. We just move and move and move some more. I'm tired of moving on."

Ethan turned his body more toward the car window as if he were trying to escape us all. I put my hand on his back, and he looked back at me. He placed his hand on mine, giving me half a smile, then turned his face back toward the traffic.

Shared Memory-Flashback

A Few Summers Ago…

Ethan walked out the patio door and slid it shut behind him. Jesse noticed and followed quietly behind him, carefully maneuvering around the boxes labeled “Kitchen” and “Dishes” that had been written a week prior by their mother. As Jesse made her way outside, she noticed Ethan crying with his face buried in his lap, arms wrapped around his legs as he softly rocked his body back and forth.

“E-Ethan?” Jesse let out nervously. “Are y-you okay?”

Ethan let out a deep breath but kept his face buried. He took one last big sniffle as he continued to compose himself before speaking. “Yeah. I’m fine, Jes. Go back inside,” Ethan replied coldly.

Jesse walked closer and took a deep breath. She closed her eyes, and when she opened them, her eyes revealed an unfamiliar sense of determination. She walked closer to Ethan, standing right in front of him with her back straight and shoulders pushed back. “Stop. Stop treating me like I’m a little kid, Ethan. I understand, okay? I get it. You’re angry because we never stop moving, and you feel like Mom and Dad are doing this to hurt you. Well, they’re not!” Jesse exclaimed passionately as she stomped her foot on the ground. Ethan looked up at her, surprised at her pain. “I am tired of you always complaining about us moving and making it all about you! News flash, Ethan, I am moving too! Each time you move, I move. Each time you’re sad because you go to a new school, I’m sad too! So stop acting like you are the only one in pa-,” Jesse burst out in tears.

Ethan cut her off as he let her into his embrace, her face soaking in the tears from his sweatshirt. “I’m sorry,” Ethan choked out. “You’re right. I’m sorry you’re in pain too. I’ll be better.”

Jesse released herself from his embrace and looked at a group of fireflies by the fence. “Look,” Jesse said softly.

“Fireflies,” Ethan said, finishing her statement.

Jesse grabbed Ethan’s hand, signaling to him that she wanted to catch a firefly. Ethan ran inside to grab a jar and began rummaging through the boxes that flooded the kitchen. He pulled a jar out from a box and made his way back outside. As he slowly approached Jesse and the fireflies, he moved the jar underneath a couple and closed the jar. Jesse turned to him excitedly.

“You caught some!” Jesse said excitedly. Ethan handed the jar to Jesse and put his arm around her shoulder, looking down at the fireflies he just caught.

“They shine a nice light, don’t they?” Ethan asked Jesse with half a smile on his face.

“Yeah, they do,” Jesse replied. “I wish I could help you find your light again.”

Ethan looked down at Jesse and squeezed her shoulder. He sat on the patio steps and observed his sister staring at her fireflies. He took in a deep breath and let it out. *Peace.*

Flight Plans

5:52 AM - Arrive at LAX airport
Let’s just turn back.
8:00 AM - Get on the plane
I wish we could turn back.
1:33 PM - Arrive at Philadelphia airport
There’s no turning back.

New House
Ethan

As we walked into the new house, I scanned my eyes every which way to scope out the exits. I needed an escape. Fast. I just could not do this again. I looked over at Jesse and she gave me the sweetest smile. *How are we so different?* I remember that night we had a few summers ago, the one with the fireflies. I think that was the last time we had a nice moment together. I remember her expressing her pain to me, and I being me, caught her some fireflies and probably made her feel worse. I looked over at Jesse standing by the new stairwell, and she motioned for me to take a deep breath. I did what she said, and while I did feel better, I also felt terrible that she felt like she needed to look after

me. I was the older brother. That was my job. I walked over to her and grabbed some boxes by her feet.

"Here," I asserted as I picked up her boxes. "Take me to your new room." I reminded myself to smile as I followed her to her new room. I tried to pretend like this wasn't the sixth time we were entering our new rooms. As I walked into Jesse's room, I noticed she was standing over by a window that I could only assume she would place her bed next to. She was looking at the group of girls a few houses down that were set up at their own lemonade stand. She immediately ran out of the room, and I heard her beg our parents to let her go meet them. They definitely said yes, because I then saw her out of her window, running up to the girls to introduce herself. How is she so willing? She is always so willing to try new things, meet new people, and move to new places. Maybe I should be a little more like her, then maybe I would actually be happy.

I walked out the front door. It was not as nice as the old one, but it would do. I made my way over to Jesse and the new neighborhood girls. Jesse waved and started telling the girls my name and how I am her amazing, wonderful, super cool older brother. I chuckled and personally introduced myself to the new girls. They smiled at me, then at each other, and then back at me. Creepy.

"Your name's Ethan?" one of the girls asked me, smiling heavily.

"Yes?" I replied. *I am so confused right now.*

"LAUREN!" the girls screamed. *I think my eardrums are broken now.*

"Who's Lauren?" I asked. *Man, why do I keep engaging in this conversation?*

All of a sudden, a tall brunette walked out of the girls' house and made her way over. She was gorgeous. Like, insanely gorgeous. Like, the kind of gorgeous that makes other gorgeous people question if they themselves are really gorgeous. I must have been awkwardly staring, because when I refocused my eyes, she was standing right in front of me.

"Hey, I'm Lauren," she said cheerfully. Her eyes met mine, and it felt like I was going to pass out. She reached out her hand to shake mine, but I completely shut down. As I reached out my hand to shake hers, my parents called us back to the house. *Of course. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for ruining this moment that I was probably going to ruin myself.*

"I'm Ethan," I responded quickly, smiling nervously. "I gotta go, but maybe we could chat later?" *Did I seriously just ask this new girl to chat later? I have got to get out of here.*

I grabbed Jesse's hand and walked us back to our new home, regretting how that entire moment just went. Then from behind me, I heard, "Yeah, maybe you can swing by tomorrow. I'll be here helping my sisters with their lemonade stand." *No way.*

I turned my head around and nodded excitedly. I turned forward again and continued walking Jesse and me home. Home? *Home.* I could get used to this. Maybe it takes moving a sixth time for things to get good.

To the woman in my mirror

Jenna Brassbridge

I avoid hard annunciation
It's like I'm sitting here, watching you fall apart
Everything you could've been,
everything you could've accomplished
It never happens
And you weren't good enough
When I look at you I see the lines under your eyes,
The tired slouch your back seems to hold
The way you move your lips too fast.
Whenever I look at you I see everything I want
But know that I can't be.



Photograph by David Bubar





Photographs by David Cahill





Baseball: Clocking Years

By Isaac Bushway

Coach: First Practice

It was the beginning of the fourth quarter for the middle school, which meant baseball season was here. The field finally dried out enough for the team to get out of the gym for practice, and it happened to be a warm spring day. When the school bell rang, Coach gathered his players, and they made their way up to the field. On the walk up, the boys were excited. Chatty. Energetic. Coach was stoic. Quiet. Cold. The warm feeling of the sun filled the air but did not touch everyone. When they got to the field and settled in, Coach gathered everyone around and shuffled through his clipboard, pulling out the sheet he gave to all the players at the start of the season.

"We only have a couple of days until our first game, and I know it's our first time outside. Let's try to stay focused and get a lot done. Here, let's review our expectations, goals, and routine before we start."

2023 Middle School Baseball

Expectations:

1. Be on time & come prepared
2. **ALWAYS** hustle
3. Strive for academic excellence
4. Communication & Commitment
5. Next man-up mentality
6. Respect each other, opponents, & umpires

Goals:

1. Have FUN
2. Develop & improve fundamentals
3. Possess a greater understanding of the game
4. Win or lose, leave it all on the field
5. Prepare for the next level

Practice routine:

1. Touch base/communicate goals, needs, & ideas (5 min)
2. Team stretch & base running (10 min)
3. Throwing progression (10-15 min)
4. Long toss M,W,&F; Short toss/pull-down T&TH
5. Defensive work (20-30 min)
6. Individual/Position-specific (knee drills)
7. Team drills/Defensive scenarios
8. Offensive work (20-30 min)
9. Tee D.O.T.D.
10. Soft toss
11. Batting practice/Live at-bats

Coach: Childhood Memories

My dad wasn't around much when I was a kid. He worked for the Army out of Vermont and typically did two or three-month stints away before he would return for a week or two and leave again. When he was home, one thing was for sure. We were going to play ball, whether that was just a toss or a full-on game in the backyard. Toss was usually the go-to but games were the best; the only problem was the lack of space to hit the ball. One particular memory comes to mind of a day when all the time he spent away didn't matter and we really bonded. We bonded that day when we both knew my mother was going to be…

Coach: Practice

"Coach. Coach. Matt finished his bullpen. What should we do next? Coach, are you alright?" Josh hollered, standing up from his catcher's crouch, quickly snapping him out of his memory. Interesting how he can get lost in thinking about his Dad and those days.

These guys need me, and I am off someplace remembering playing ball when I was a kid. Come on now, man, focus, he thought, beating himself up inside.

"Yeah, Josh. Sorry, sorry. I was just thinking about... Well, right, what's next?" Looking up, he scanned the field, seeing players hustling around from station to station.

"Matt, you go hop in over there and send Austin this way."

"Yes, Coach," he replied as he scurried out of the bullpen and back to the infield. Austin began making his way over as Coach made his way down the bullpen to the plate where Josh stood. He, too, had stood in that spot a thousand times.

"So, have Austin throw the same number as Matt, and when you guys are done, come take some swings."

"Sounds good, Coach."

This was the second season that Josh was on Coach's team for middle school, and, undoubtedly, he had a soft spot for Josh. Josh reminded him of himself. Both were catchers, great teammates, never complained about not playing, and, most importantly, always wanted to get better. He had a certain kind of trust with Josh where he could leave him to run a bullpen session and expect to get it done the right way. But this connection wasn't evident amongst the team. Everyone got runs, everyone got hits. Everyone got his attention and care. That was the kind of coach he was because he loved the game. Loved the kids playing. Loved to see them succeed in any part of the game: hitting, running, pitching, and celebrating with teammates. Josh, being a natural leader, set the example for everything the rest of the kids did.

"Okay, guys. Group 1 is in for BP, everyone else find a spot and spread out."

The Rules of Batting Practice

1. Set up the L-Screen
2. Everyone Find a Spot
3. Someone on Bucket
4. Have an Approach
5. Two Bunts
6. Swing at Good Pitches
7. Reset and Repeat

As the boys set up, Coach made his way to his spot right behind the L-screen. It sits at the end of the tail that extends off the pitcher's mound. He waited for his players to fill the holes in the outfield. Looking down, he shuffled around the dirt with his foot. Digging in like he would when they played in the backyard. Oh, how the rules of BP were different.

The Rules of Backyard Batting Practice

1. Pick Up Dog Poop
2. Dig Out PLASTIC Bat
3. Find an Old WIFFLE Ball
4. Never Bunt
5. Swing at Everything
6. NEVER FACE THE WINDOWS

The afternoon wore on, but the spring air was still warm. Coach laughed to himself and said, "We don't have chinook, but boy, this breeze feels like the chinook." He figured they were set for warming air, but it was strange that he had felt cold all day. He remembered his Dad playing ball. Once upon a time. When he was a kid. Gone now. Coach had tried to throw with both hands, like his Dad encouraged him to do, but settled on one, finally.

Practice: Final Moments

Down at the other end of the field, Josh and Austin were wrapping up their bullpen session. Austin, the ace, and Josh, the starting catcher, took no time getting through the twenty-pitch sequence. One loud SNAP after another, and the two boys were done. After the final pitch, they tossed the ball back and forth until they met in the middle, bumping gloves. A tradition after a good pen and precursor to a good outing. A superstition of sorts.

Unwritten Rules of Baseball: Superstition Edition

1. Never Step on the Foul Line
2. If You Win, Don't Wash Your Socks
3. Always Buy the Same Flavor Seeds and Color Gatorade
4. Never Cheat on Your Throwing Partner
5. Don't Let the Bats Cross
6. If the Score Board Says 2-Balls, 2-Strikes, and 2 outs
7. Then Everyone MUST "Shark-it"

The sound of barrels slowly faded, the pace of a jog slowed one step at a time, and Coach's arm was hanging and heavy like a power-line coated in ice. Satisfied with the productive practice, he gave the signal to clean it up and meet at the dugout. As everyone huddled around, Coach began telling them a story about when he was their age.

Coach: The Hand of a Ballplayer

My left hand, my non-dominant hand at that, tells stories of my many years playing baseball. The time that I was in the backyard playing with my dad. He lobbed me the pitch and I barreled it up, sending the ball through the air and… CRASH… through the garage window. At first, I was amazed, amazed that I could even hit the ball that far. I had never squared a ball up like that, hit it on the sweet spot. The hands just flow as an extension of the bat through the baseball; they do not ring or vibrate from the contact, they remain strong and firm, punching the baseball back to where it came. Then came the realization that I broke the window. *Uh oh.* I looked at my dad, expecting him to be mad, but he looked just as proud as I had felt moments ago. Then I saw the same realization wash over him…*MOM! She was going to be mad. How were we gonna fix it? Did she hear the glass shatter?*

Broken Window

Young Coach

SMASH
I can't believe it flew that far I
I didn't think I could hit like that
WAIT! What was that crash?
Oh nooo, Mom's going to MAD
I'm never hitting again
I'll have to use all my chore money
Let's not tell Mom

Coach's Dad

SMASH
I've been waiting for him to crush one
Atta Boy! Great piece!
WAIT! What was that crash?
That's not good, she's gonna be mad
Oh, I can fix that easily
I'm so proud of him
Let's not tell Mom

How I Got Here in Baseball

Walking back from practice, Coach thought about how he got where he was, with his players, with his life of baseball…

Then

- He was the player
- Going through the warm-ups
- Superstitions before the game
- Getting geared up as a catcher
- Taking BP with the team
- Bus rides in the back of the bus listening to music
- Wore a baseball cap
- Got really dirty and sweaty
- Hitting off the tee, front toss, coaches bp

Now

- He is now the coach
- He runs the warm-ups
- Note that he still holds superstitions
- He blows the whistle
- He wears the "Coach B" batting jacket
- He sits at the front of the bus, no music, filling out the lineup cards and writing the game plan
- He gets the catcher ready to go
- He stays clean in the dugout/coaching from 3rd base
- He now hits the fungos, gives the front toss, and throws the bp

Alec
By Kaitlyn Hill

The daffodils start to sprout in the field.
I see so much of your face in your mom's.
I walk across the creaking floorboards of
your childhood home, and it is pure bliss.

Your mom points out your grave
on the hill across from what's left of the pond,
but I know where you rest before she says a word.
I can feel you, here, everywhere, at every moment.

It is surreal to have this pause in time,
another way to know you better than I did.
Your dad comes over because he wants to meet me,
and there is no higher honor than the title of your friend.

Our time together may have been fleeting, yet I
always imagined, one day, we would come full circle.
I have found the path our story was meant to take.

It is not the shape I thought we'd build,
but at least it exists.

When we were young, you told me I intrigued you.
I was infatuated from day one: hook, line, and sinker.
I don't think I ever told you how in awe I was of you.
But if I could, now, I wouldn't leave a single word unsaid.

In place of words I give to you,
I drink in stories from your parents.
Our laughter is a spoonful of sugar with a squirt of lemon;
we hold it on our tongues, a moment past enjoyable,
let the tartness soak in,
let ourselves feel the sharp edge
of what grieving for you feels like.

The world around me feels more beautiful than ever,
but only because I can see it through your eyes,
those eyes none of ours could ever compare to,
those eyes that bring us nothing but light,
even in the darkest of days.

Out With the Old, In With the New

By Lydia Gatcomb

Welcome. This is the story of a young girl, Rowan, who believes the grass is greener with a newer car. She fights the wisdom of her father, Oliver, who knows better. We begin our story with our main character: Rowan.

Meeting Our Main Character

Rowan. Red hair falling down her back in loose curls. Piercing green eyes. More freckles scattered across the bridge of her nose than stars in a midnight sky. You'd think this combination would make for a gorgeous young lady. And maybe it could if it weren't for the sour look she'd worn on her face for the past three months.

Finding the Problem

Rowan and her father, Oliver, stood over the red SUV, staring into the engine bay in search of answers. It'd been five months of solving one mechanical failure after another, only to have two more pop up in its place. The two had installed three new batteries, two new starters, and one new radiator just to find that the transmission fluid had sprung a leak. Without transmission fluid to lubricate it, the entire transmission had failed. At this point, the only options were to keep pouring money into this car to install a new transmission or spend an entire life's savings on a new car. Unfortunately, the two couldn't agree on which solution would be better.

Two Sides to Every Problem

Rowan:	**Father:**
Sometimes	Sometimes
An old car	A new car
Isn't worth	Isn't worth
The stress	The money
A new car won't have as many problems	You already know the problems with an old car.
It's cheaper	It's cheaper
To buy a new car.	To fix an old car.

A New Car

January 8th

Dear Diary,

Oh my gosh!!!! I just bought a new car! It's so much better than my old Ford was. It's a 2009 GMC Acadia, and it's so perfect! I found it on Craigslist, and it was only like $8000. It has 12 cup holders and 2 sunroofs, and it's a pearl-white color with pitch-black wheels! GORGEOUS!!! I've NEVER ever owned a car this fancy before! I'm so glad I bought a new car instead of dealing with that stupid Ford anymore. Until next time, Rowan

One Thing After Another

January 8th: Bought car
January 9th: Car wouldn't start
January 10th: Registered car
January 12th: Car is fixed!
January 13th: Car has new tires!
January 14th: Drove the car for the first time!
January 15th: Check Engine light turns on

Daddy's Little Girl

"Kid's screwed, Jackie."

"Aw, don't say that, Oliver. She's just tryin' to make her way in this world the best way she knows how."

"Kid's screwed, Jackie."

Jackie knew better than to argue. Oliver loved his daughter, but he was stubborn as the day was long.

Jackie set down the skillet and crossed the kitchen to meet Oliver at the table. Gently, she rested her arms on top of Oliver's shoulders and planted a kiss firmly on his head.

"She's your daughter, Oliver."

The wooden chair scraped against the floor as Jackie moved to sit by her husband.

"If you think she's making a bad decision, you're the one who's gotta help her see it."

"Fool girl won't listen to me. She thinks I'm old." Oliver rested his hand on his cheek sadly. Oliver bowed his head as if he were praying. All he'd ever wanted was to give his daughter the best life he could. But, here he was. Broke. Struggling. Watching his baby girl lose money hand over foot.

"You are old, Oliver."

"I just don't understand how anyone could take advantage of my little girl. She was honest with him. She told him that was all her life savings. And he still lied to her. Lied straight to her face." Oliver took a shaky breath as he looked up at his wife. "She deserves better than this, Jack."

"I know, sweetie. But, remember. We gave her a strong name. She was born to ward off evil. She'll overcome this, and in the end, she'll have learned a lesson." Jackie patted Oliver's hand before moving back to the stove to finish cooking. She had always been a superstitious person - the kind of person who tosses salt over her shoulder, opens umbrellas well away from the house, and never walks near an open ladder. She'd spent hours pouring over baby name books and thumbing through meanings before she finally settled on the name Rowan, which she believed would protect her baby from evil.

"If she was born to ward off evil, how'd she get stuck buyin' a car from a weasel like that in the first place?" Oliver muttered under his breath. He knew better than to muse loudly in front of his superstitious wife. You know the old saying - opposites attract.

"I heard that."

A Strong Name

Rowan

Origin: Scottish or Irish
Meaning: "rowan tree" or "little redhead"
Mythology: Rowan is the name of a tree common in Scotland that bears red berries. A rowan tree is often seen as a tree of protection. People would sometimes carry a piece of rowan to protect themselves from witchcraft. They even grew rowan trees near their dwellings to ward off witches and other bad magic.

The True Cost of a New Car

Down Payment: $20
Initial Payment: $8000
New Tires: $200
Taxes/Registration: $350
Gas: $100/week
Mechanic to find problems: $150
New coils: $150
Completely rewire the engine: $1700
New Engine Head: $3300

Déjà Vu

"He hates me, Mama."

"Now, sweetie, you know that's not true," Jackie said reassuringly as she dragged the soft bristle brush through Rowan's long hair. This happened a lot to Jackie. Caught in the middle. Oliver and Rowan were one and the same: stubborn, set in their ways, and socially inept. In their 21 years together, the father and daughter still hadn't found a way to communicate clearly. Jackie was the glue that held the family together. She was the mediator for every disagreement. But she loved her family and was happy to play the devil's advocate as needed.

"He hates me, Mama." Rowan winced as her mother pulled her hair. Every time she spoke to her father, he seemed annoyed and disappointed. She understood he had wanted her to keep fixing the Ford, but they'd already dumped $11,000 into repairs for that before it even needed a transmission. In the five years, she'd had the Ford, it was stuck in the shop more often than Rowan could actually drive it. It wasn't a trustworthy vehicle, in her opinion.

"He's your father, Rowan. He'll never hate you."

"I didn't realize a new car would cost just as much as my old one. I just wanted something trustworthy and reliable, and now I'm stuck with nothing."

"It's not nothing, sweetie. You have a car, and it still runs; it just needs a new engine head. That's okay. It's still drivable." Jackie put on her most reassuring voice as she set the brush down and kissed the top of Rowan's head. "I gave you a strong name for a reason. You will overcome this. You were born to ward off evil."

"If I was born to ward off evil, how did I manage to find the one liar in the whole state to buy a car from?" Rowan rolled her eyes, but deep down, she was grateful to hear this optimism, even if it was based on superstition.

Expert Advice

"So, once the engine head's replaced," Rowan questioned, "you think it'll last a while?"

"What, the car?" the mechanic asked.

"Yeah."

"Now, Rowan, you know he can't answer that. Nobody really knows how long it'll last." Oliver set his hand on Rowan's shoulder. He said this more for his own benefit than anybody else's. In all honesty, Oliver had been waiting for an opportunity to ask this question himself, but he'd restrained himself, knowing that the mechanic wasn't allowed to give an opinion like that.

"Couple years, maybe." The mechanic's voice brought Oliver back to reality.

"Oh," Rowan and Oliver chorused. Rowan looked at her father with shock. He sounded just as disappointed as she did, but for the first time in months, her father's disappointment didn't seem to be directed at her.

"You're gonna haveta replace all the parts that last guy put in. Ya know he's psychotic, don't ya? Talk to him one day and he's completely different the next. Guy's insane. He used 'bout the cheapest parts he could get his hands on. I'm s'prised the car even starts, to be honest with ya." The mechanic didn't quite know what to say. He had a daughter too, and he could see parts of her in Rowan. They had the same freckles, the same fire, and the same stubbornness. He knew how angry he'd be if somebody took advantage of her, so he was trying to provide reassurance while still being honest.

"Do you think it's worth putting the money into?" Rowan stood frozen, waiting for an answer. She was curious but scared at the same time. At this point, she didn't even know what answer she was hoping for.

"I think you'd be better off buying a new car instead," the mechanic answered honestly. Rowan slumped back in the front seat of the GMC, disappointed in the verdict. Oliver let out a deep breath that he hadn't realized he'd been holding in. A sigh of relief.

"If you buy another car, bring it to me first. I'll check it all over and let you know if it's worth the cost or not. I'll be honest with you, no charge. " The words fell out of the mechanic's mouth. Rowan was so much like his own daughter. He hated to see her disappointed.

"Yeah," Rowan started taking a deep breath to slow her racing heart. "I thought a new car was the answer once."

Two Sides to Every Story

Rowan:

Sometimes

A new car

Isn't worth

The money

A new car might have just as many problems.

It's cheaper

To fix an old car.

I wish I'd listened to him.

Father:

Sometimes

An old car

Isn't worth

The stress

You can't afford the problems of an old car.

It's cheaper

To buy a new car.

I wish she'd listened to me.

Essence of Myself

By Jillian Reissfelder

A long time ago
or at least what feels like a long time ago
my Vans were clean
and unscathed.
I had barely walked in them;
they were new
they were fresh
and they were finally mine.

I wore them to the museum
on a family outing.
The four of us and the three of them.
We had fun.
I loved that museum.
I loved this one exhibit
that gave people a sense of what it was like "back then."
I loved that exhibit.
I rushed to a mockup of a '70s living room
and I asked my brother to take a picture of me
relaxing on an olive green leather couch
with a rotary phone in my hand
pretending to talk into it.
I thought it was funny.
I felt like a kid in a candy store.
I was sixteen.
My Vans were in the picture
clean and unscathed
and the expression on my face reflected laughter
and you could tell that I was happy.
Everything in that moment was okay.
Everything before that had been a little chaotic
but I managed.

Less than five years later
my Vans sit in a crowded shoe closet
under a high heel
and someone's boots;
they are dirty
and worn
and the laces have seemingly stretched
and have been dragged on the ground.
The laces are gross.
The shoes have mud splattered on them.
The white is a cream color now.

Less than five years later
and I haven't thought about my Vans
since what feels like a long time
ago.

W.O.M.E.N.
By Anna Coleman

Women

Wonderful, whimsical beings wandering around this big world. Always wondering what's going to happen to them next, always watching and waiting…

Women

Optimistically trying to view the world and overcome the problems they face, overcome the obstacles placed before them, overcome the opinions of those who think they can't.

Women

Maneuvering through life and its messy curveballs. Managing, motivating, and moving, both themselves and others.

Women

Enduring the hate, the love, the anger, the praise all the same. Enjoying the ever-lasting energy to uplift their ethereal souls and spirits by those who love them.

Women

Never giving up. Nonchalantly navigating the labyrinth of life. Negotiating who they are – who they should be, knowing when to nurture themselves before others. Remembering it is okay to say,
"No."

The Struggle is Real
By Anna Coleman

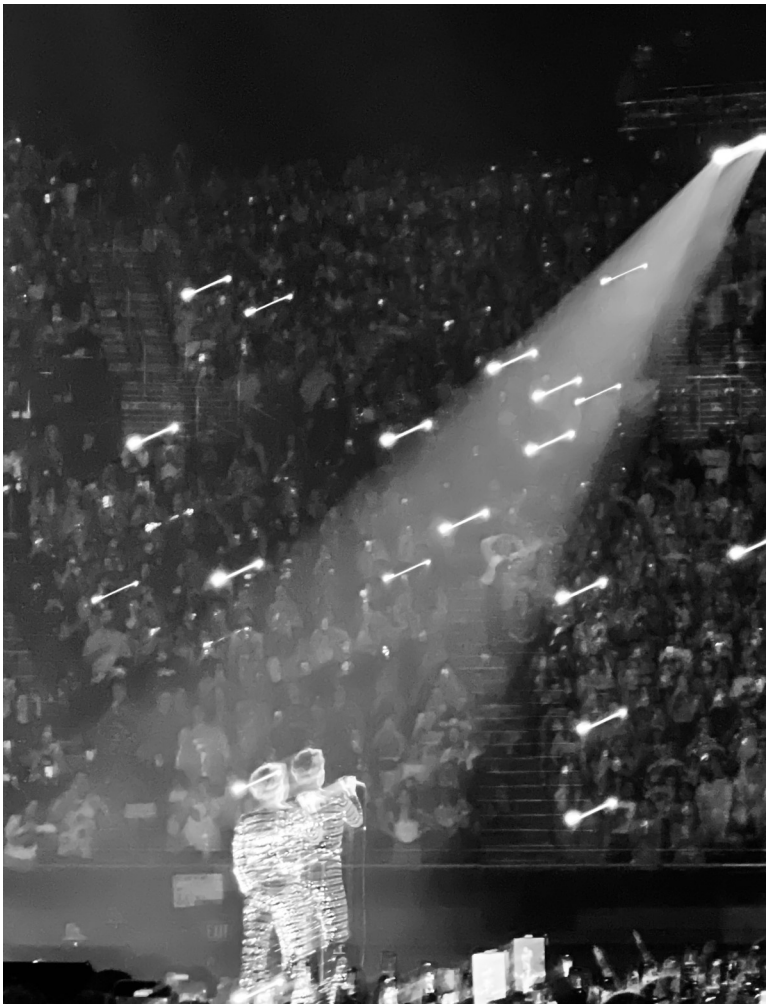
In the depths of my mind, a battle rages on.
My thoughts are twisted, my emotions raw
as I struggle to find the will to carry on.

The weight of the world seems to crush my soul
as anxiety and fear take their toll.
I often smother my problems by helping others
or tuning them out with music that could
rupture your eardrums. But I'll take deafness over destruction because
inside I'm screaming and the demons in
my head are trying their best to drag me down.

The darkness creeps in, like a thick fog
and I feel trapped in my head.



Photographs by David Cahill



10112015

By Kaitlyn Hill

Danika's mom, Loretta, commits suicide,
and Danika finds her,
and I am chain-smoking menthol cigarettes,
and I end up in Nick's kitchen.
We were different people the last time we did this
I am sworn to secrecy, and the first thing I do
is break the vow, pull someone down under with me.
I cannot exist alone in the knowledge of loss
that person is Nick, because it always has been,
because his arms are open, without fail,
because it does not feel forced,
and as the night goes on,
we are smoking a joint
on the couch in the garage, with Alex,
and that also feels easy.
These cushions and I have never met,
but the worn blue fabric feels like the closest thing
I've had to a slice of normalcy
in a very long time.
In another lifetime, Alex and I were close friends, too.
That is not our reality anymore. But in this moment,
there is no space between us on the couch.
Our knees are bumping into each other
as I lean forward to pass the joint to Nick.
I never feel like things will turn out okay;
when people tell me it'll all work out,
I'm predisposed to distrust, to believe they are lying,
and this moment is no different,
even though I feel more comfortable
than I have in months.
And I'm not sure if it's because these people are familiar
or because, for so long, I've been
sleepwalking through a sea of strangers
as we all graduated from high school
and tried to merge into adulthood.
But I am crying in Nick's lap
and he is rubbing my back,
and I have never felt younger
but I am aged beyond my years
and I can relate to Loretta
more than I am willing to admit.



Photograph by David Cahill

there are so many ways to be violated without actually being touched

By Kaitlyn Hill

i like to think of myself as someone
who has never been sexually assaulted.
i ask myself to forget the witching hours of my life
the moments untamed that leave someone else in control.
my memories are clock-hands,
rotating around a center point;
they never stop moving; they orbit around me
until i become them
their long arms stretching from the inside of my body
they keep time, count the occurrences
that tell me i'm a liar, if only to myself.

one.
my grandmother's boyfriend says,
"let me see your pussy"
and i am six years old.

two.
he grabs for me as i walk past him
he only makes contact with my left hip
but my skin still burns where he touches me.

three.
the first thing people notice about me
is the way my chest has blossomed
before any of my friends'
i become just the only girl with boobs in our grade
i start to think this is why the boys are friends with me
when all i want to do is play kickball with them.

four.
in front of the entire middle school
the principal calls me and three other girls
down from the bleachers
to meet her on the gymnasium floor.
she says we need to better consider our clothing choices
because we have bodies that make us vulnerable
as if i asked to wear a C cup in the seventh grade.

five.
an anonymous man in my Stikam video chat room
tells me to send him nudes or he'll come to my house
he says he has my address
i am fourteen and don't know not to believe him.

six.
whispers in the hall echo against the metal lockers
people i have never spoken to call me a slut
assume that because i have big boobs in high school
i have given everyone unfiltered access to them.

seven.
i have gotten used to being defined this way
i use it to my advantage
i lean over slightly and ask people to see
if they can notice the difference in their sizes.

eight.
i start to tell people i have no nipples.
i think part of me is hoping if i freak them out enough
they will find someone else to talk about.

nine.
at first, i think the boy
who follows me and Emily home on the 4th of July
is actually interested in me
until he fingers me and sucks on my chest
and then says, "you better put your clothes on, kiddo."
i don't understand why he calls me that
when he just had my nipples inside of his mouth
if i'm a kid, what does that make him?

ten.
i start to think i will never grow into my chest
but they seem to be all i'm good for
so i let them dictate my relationships
at least, then, people seem to pay attention to me.

eleven.
a boy i went to school with's coworker
gropes me in the parking lot at their work
nobody objects, not even me
the boy i know gets a look in his eye
and i know that when we are alone
he will ask to be next.

twelve.
i consider myself lucky in the grand scheme of things
i know other people have been through so much worse
their bodies violated in ways my body has not been
but i still don't feel like i belong only to myself.

Childhood Haunts
By Kaitlyn Hill

I can't sleep at night.
My bed has turned into a graveyard
and not the kind we used to roam in.
It is every nightmare I have ever thought of having
and every other one I didn't think into existence.
It is the slam of your finger in the door
of your father's beat-up pickup truck.
It is the sharp edge of your mother's voice
when she finds you and your sister
doing somersaults down the stairs.
It is the way we have always tumbled —
Down stairs, into each other's arms,
into the hands of undeserving boys.
It is the bitter taste in my mouth
after I bite back hurtful words
words I shape to leave marks on your skin
and in your heart —
the way you always did to me.
I try to rest within this broken, craggy land,
keeping time with my irregular heartbeat
annoyed for wanting you here,
a place you no longer want to be.

King of the Hills
By Kaitlyn Hill

My dad loves to watch the birds,
and we laugh in a good-natured way.
But I am mesmerized by his concentration,
his focused contentedness as he watches
them eat from the feeders, as they dance
around the many places he has given them
to perch as they flutter between places
naturally made for them.
And he stands at the kitchen sink,
a cup of coffee in hand,
looking out the window in the place
naturally made for him.
He watches the birds, and I watch him.

How I Came to Be
By Kaitlyn Hill

I am made
of messy buns and long sleeve shirts
of cleaning the snow off the car in shorts
of puddles under the streetlights in June
of driving down Broadway with the windows down
of smoking joints in Autumn's barn
in Autumn's bedroom
in Autumn's car
of Autumn
and autumn.
I am made
of cigarettes smoked on the freeway
of sneaking boys in through the window
of nights spent sleeping on the trampoline
of teenage rebellion and fierce love untamed
of heartbreak and exhaustion
long before I ever knew how to feel them.
I am made
of being one of the boys
of wondering why I couldn't be just a girl,
a girl who hangs out with the boys,
of Connor teaching me and Danika how to drive stick
of hookah at Connor's worn kitchen table
of milkshakes at midnight
of bruised knuckles from punching trees
of cleaning bloodied hands in the bathroom
of bloodstains on the carpet
of the messiness of my friends
of my friends.
I am everything I have ever loved.
I am everything I have ever lost.
I am everything. I am of everything.
I am
and what a joy it is to be.

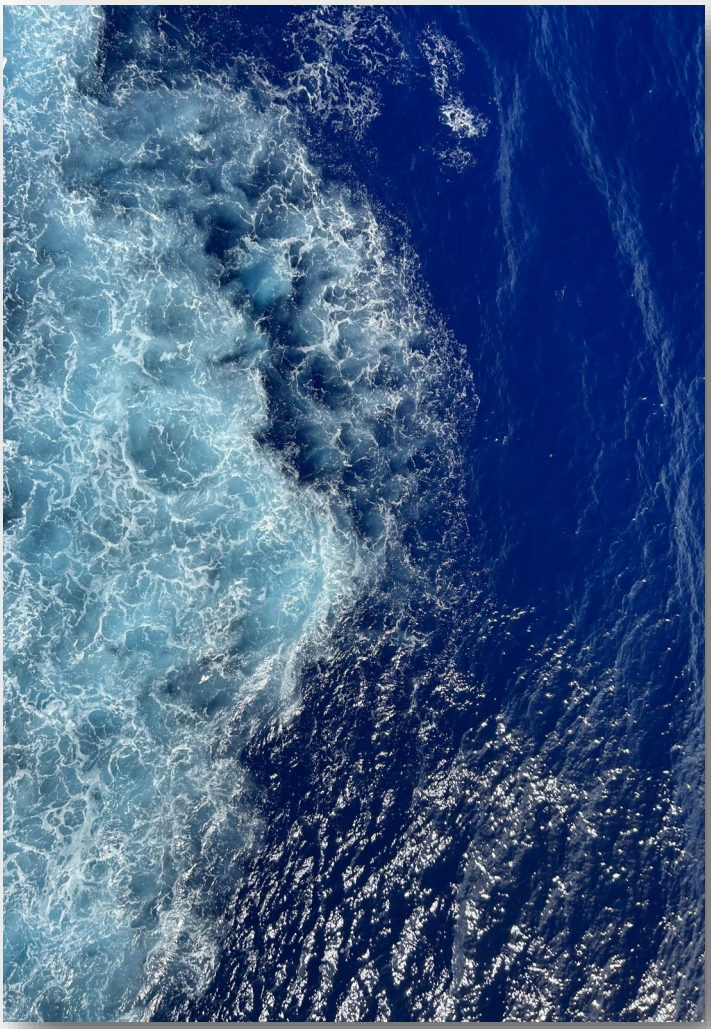


Photograph by David Cahill





Photographs by Janessa Corrigan



Poetry

By Emily Austin

Poetry is not my favorite.
It is not my first choice,
but it is the only outlet I can use.
It conveys feelings without details.
As long as your soul is shared that
is all that matters to poetry.
The truth serum of the writer's soul.
Can you see my soul?

