

EPIPHANY

A detailed painting of a goldfish, likely a Koi, with its mouth wide open in a gasping or surprised expression. The fish is primarily orange and red with some yellow and white markings. Its eyes are large and dark. The background is a deep blue with soft, out-of-focus light spots in white, yellow, and green, suggesting an underwater environment with light filtering through. The overall style is painterly and expressive.

VOLUME VI

North Augusta High School
2023 Poetry & Art Magazine

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North Augusta High School
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North Augusta, SC 29841

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Ann Adcock, Media Specialist

(Best In Show, Cover: “Don’t Tap the Glass,” By Udorji Oji)

First Place, Poetry—Fredy Estrada Lazaro

Si Lejos Me He De Ir...

Si lejos de mis tierras me he de ir, los recuerdos de mi patria cerca me he de llevar
No veré durante mucho tiempo la puesta del sol en los cerros de su poniente
Ni los amaneceres desde su oriente.
Estoy ahora pues, en aquellas lejanías del gigante vecino
Atrás quedó mi pasado, allá donde dejé mi infancia
Donde crece el maíz y los gallos pelean en los palenques.
Cruzaré pues aquel rio y llegaré a su otro extremo,
Cumpliré entonces lo que en mi destino esta escrito que hare.
Si lejos de mis tierras he de ir,
En mi mente todo lo que una vez me hizo feliz me llevaré.

If Far I Have To Go...

If far from my lands I have to go, the memories of my close homeland I have to take
I will not see the sunset on the hills of its west for a long time
nor the sunrises from its east.
I am now, then, in those distances of the neighboring giant.
Gone is my past, there where I left my childhood
Where the corn grows and the roosters fight in the palenques
So I will cross that river and reach its other end,
I will then fulfill what is written in my destiny that I will do
If far from my lands I have to go,
In my mind everything that once made me happy I will take with me.



**First Place, Artwork—
“The Nuclear Family”
Series
by Udorji Oji**



Second Place, Poetry—Ash Manning

The Poet Unfinished

While looking for inspiration one warm Sunday
I had found this phrase
“The poet is always running from the poem”
This meant nothing at first,
How does one run from the poem?
The poet and the poem are one
And yet

I have run from my poems
My poems exist as part of me
An unfinished
Abandoned

Illiad
They are my stories
I am their character
My poems write me more
Each stanza a piece of my soul
I may forever be the character

The marionette
For the poem
Which could choose to dangle me
From the

Rafters
I am
Wooden
And
Sun-washed
Strings worn
Thin
And still chosen for another play



**Second Place, Artwork—
“Untitled” by Morgan Thomas**

Third Place, Poetry - David Brito

Aftermath

As I walk through the desolate ruins
Ash and debris filling the air with every step
The remains of those who fought
Mixed with the remains of those who ran

How could a dispute
End with this gruesome outcome
My mind wandered as I saw what was left

The toys of young children
The kitchen knives of the housewife
The tires of the husband's car
And the ammunition of the enemy

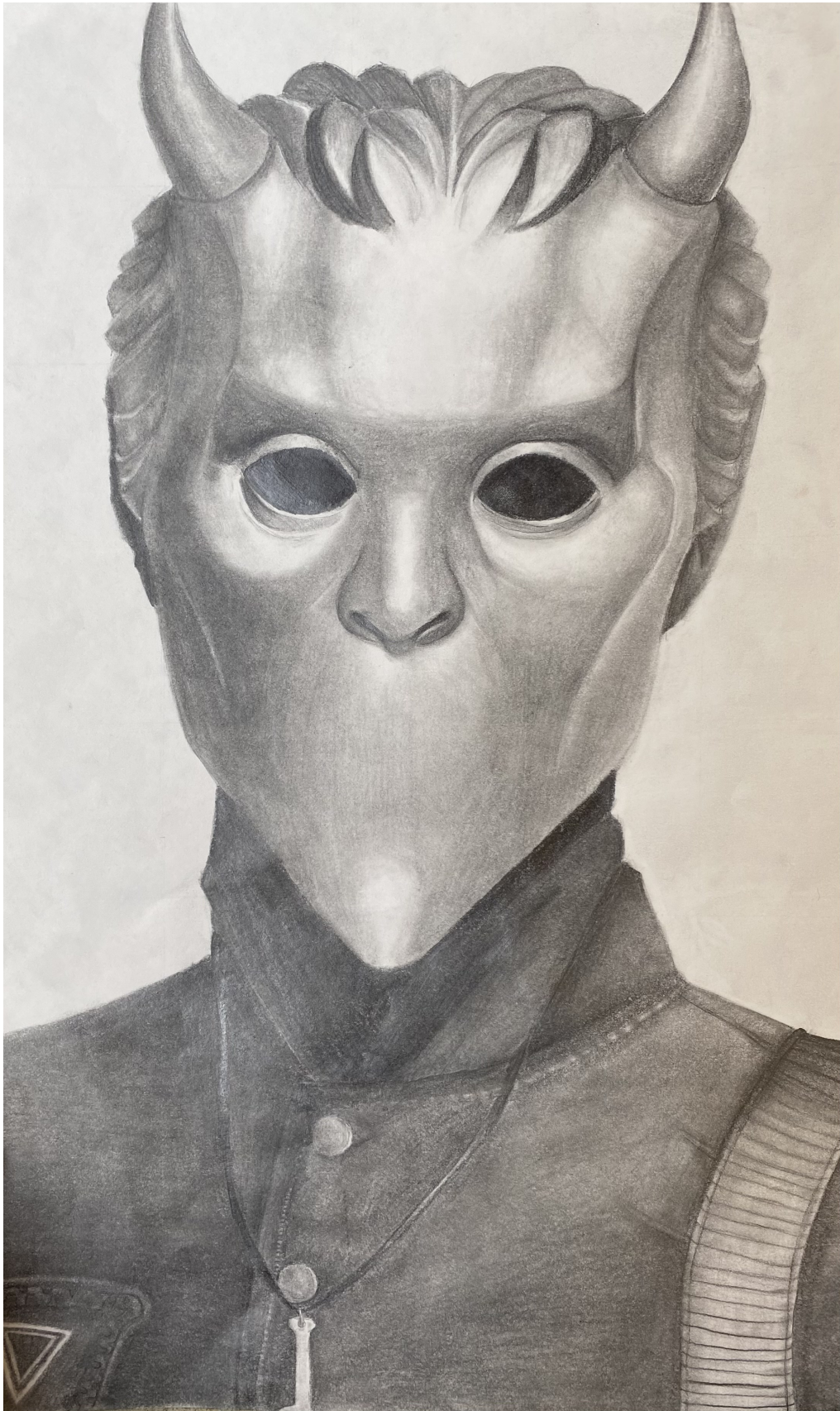
My boot crunches as it steps
On the little remains of a house
The tarnished furniture still burning
As its owner now is nothing but a corpse

I couldn't save them
We arrived too late to help
As I walk through the disheveled town
An arm reaches out through the rubble

I wince, thinking the poor soul is dead
But then the hand moves
The small fingers curling into a fist and
releasing
I ran over and dug through the debris
Tears flowing down my face

As I heaved the last stone
The little girl lay there
Her once pristine dress
Now tattered and dirty from the ash

I pick her up and run to the camp
Praying that she still lives
Hoping that I could at least save one
Just one from this horrendous
Aftermath



**Third Place, Artwork—
“Ghoul” by Wren Charles**

Untitled

By Ash Manning

Here you are
My violet sky,
My bright beyond,
You are incredible.

My dearest cloud
You float and fly,
Amongst the sky,
Beautifully, you stand out.

An incredible connection
You are the universe



Beautiful Illusion

By Lillian Smith

glittering amethyst crystals
in the pale moonlight
the silk touch of those
flowers colored with fiery shades
a soft ocean breeze whispering through
the cold night
a thousand stars in the sky above
all of them are reflected in your soul
your heartbeat beats in time with
the gentle melody of the rain
silver wings flutter,
lifting your feet up off the ground
feels almost as if
you can touch the wispy clouds,
insubstantial like smoke
tendrils of shimmering light
weave around the scene
casting out the shadows within
even if it all turns out to be an illusion,
it's a beautiful one

“Alexa Demie” by Yazmyn Ramirez-Saldana



“82.99 F.M” by Hugo Garcia-Colin

Untitled

By Jaycee Lewis

As a quiet person
I see a lot of things
Others don't notice
How that girl goes to the bathroom
After lunch every day to puke
How that boy only smokes to feel less
How they suck in their stomachs
How she never wears short sleeves
-stop ignoring the problems

The Flight of the Fallen

By Ash Manning

As I fell from the Heights
Of which I had been raised,
I laughed. The Ghosts of
Boiling wax scorching my skin.
I had become Icarus.
Flying on wings that were never Mine.
And as the raging sea grew closer
I felt a freedom I had never known before.
The freedom of falling when you should be flying.

Live Again

By Lillian Smith

Soft golden light
Fighting against the harsh shadows
One thousand heartbeats
Synchronize
Almost as if they were one
As the storm rages on
The clouds spill their tears
While the world watches from below
Weaving dreams together
With smoke from distant fires
Gentle flower blossoms
Drift down a tilting river
The stars watch on
Gifting their sight to the next generation
All the words that were never said aloud
Fill the hourglass
As time catches up with every one of us
Trapping us like a bug in a spider's web
We try to break free
Fill up the holes left
From the past you don't remember to miss
But still long for, deep down
You don't know it,
But your destiny is wide
Carve it into something wide,
Something beautiful,
If you dare
Every whisper of wind,
Every leaf that falls to the ground
Won't last forever
The strands of time can bend us
Break us, sometimes
Maybe
But I think it's time
We reached for our own purpose
Break down the invisible walls
We hadn't even realized were caging us
And truly live again

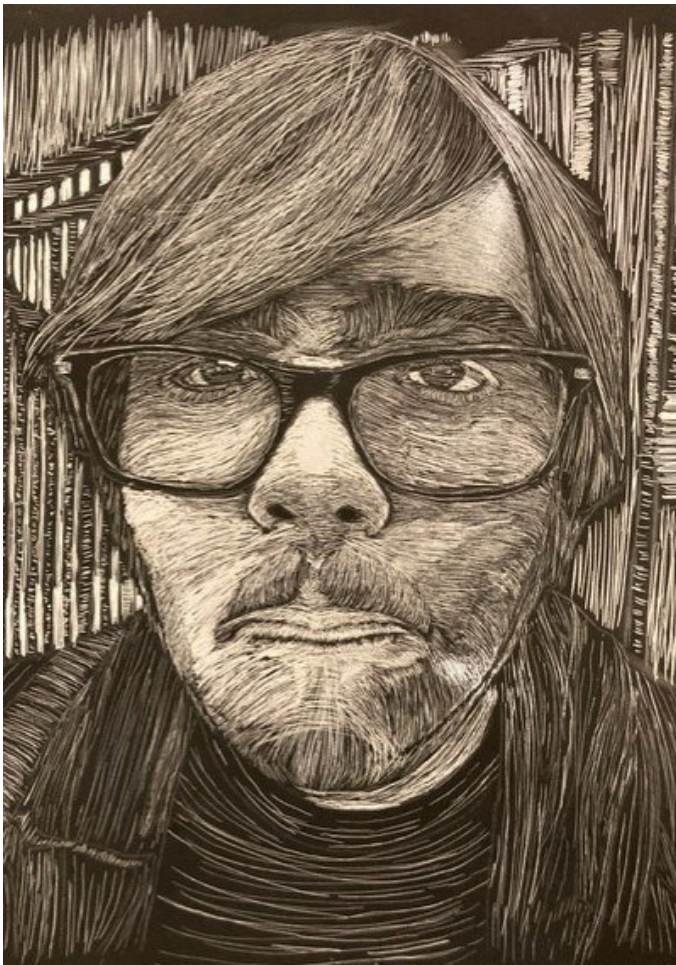


“Untitled” by Izabella Brower

Cinquain

By Cody Morgan

Fortune
Found within all
Yet discovered by few
Perpetual poverty
In Many



“A Friend” by Jozwan Jorlessalgado

The Price of Time

By David Brito

As I stood in the meadow
The soft grass bringing little comfort
As I watched the city before me
Crumble under the thumb of time

I knelt down picking one of the flowers
Ending the poor souls' life
How is something so beautiful so limited

The cool breeze soothing the pain
That I have felt for millennia
But as the wind blew the city collapsed
Its decaying skeleton
unable to hold its weight any longer

I got what I wanted
Immortality is the promise of infinite life
But also, are chains
Bound to the clock
As it ticks away

I am alone in this journey
Never aging and never changing
I watched as empires grow and fall
Watched as life began and ended

Even when the world ends
I'll still be here
No one to help
No one to hold

As I stand in this meadow green
I say to the wind
For only it hears me
This is the price of time

To Give All You Can to the Giver

By Sylver Hase

They give from the heart, so pure
My hands reach for more, for more
To give someone life, to give someone flight
To give all you can to the giver

I'm selfish to want, I'm greedy to need
My insecure thoughts, they suffocate me
I'm calling, I'm screaming, I'm begging for help
To give all you can to the giver

Their joyful laughs, so freeing
Their delightful smiles, so calming
I feel safe in their presence, but what do I deserve
When I haven't given to the giver

They do what I can't, they give what I need
But what have I done, to be smothered with love
I want to make myself worthy, I haven't given enough
I must give more to the giver

They praise me, they say I've done well
I've helped them plenty, but is it enough pray tell
When I give and I give and I give and I cry
I've given it all plus more to the giver

I've given it all plus more to the giver
Yet still I give more and more to the giver
They saved me, so it will never be enough for the giver
I will sacrifice my life for the giver

Someone, anyone, please grab me please shake me
Please, I beg you, tell me that I've given enough

I won't believe you at first, but maybe with time
I can accept what the giver has given me

They love me, they hold me, they give me important things

They give me the life I never once thought I'd see
But who gives me the most, who is it other than me?
Who is it that's kept me alive and free?

I don't... I try... now I do give to myself
A special balance of giving and health

You can't give to others something that you too don't have

So I will give to myself and feel peace at last



“Things About Me” by Jamie Walczak

Before the Bombs Dropped (Part 1 of 3)

By Nathaniel Hale

What were you before the bombs dropped?

Were you a doctor?

A soldier?

Were you a Mother?

A father?

A sister?

A brother?

I was a brother once,

But that was Before the Bombs Dropped

But that was Before the Bombs Dropped

Before the Bombs Dropped life was great!

A normal family, with normal problems

Everything was as perfect as could be

But that was Before the Bombs Dropped

I had a life once...

But guess what?

Where did you live Before the Bombs Dropped?

A House?

An Apartment?

Did you live on the base?

I had a house once,

...

That was Before the Bombs Dropped



“City of Cats” by Morgan Thomas

When Mourning Comes

By Ash Manning

Kissing you

but in the way someone presses their lips to your forehead right where the hair starts,
in the way someone kisses a close friend or a family member that they haven't seen in too long.

Hugging you

in the way a starved dog protects its food,
in the way a stranded person rushes towards the first person they see,
the way an abandoned person clutches to the first signs of being cared for.

Avoiding you

in the way a hurt person distances themselves from others
in the way an abandoned person avoids others, for fear of being abandoned again
in the way someone who isn't sure they've moved on reacts to those they cared for

Missing you

In the way an abandoned dog misses their owner
in the way an ignored friend clings to the last of their hope
in the way a lost person misses the things they knew
We Both Know Better Than To Make Promises We Can't Keep



“Guiding Light” by Thanakorn Chanatungcharoen

The Hidden Struggle

By David Brito

I stood in the snow
Gasping for air with each breath
My arm felt numb
My feet ached with every move

But still I lifted my blade
To the oppressor, ever clear
His dark cloak kissing the white snow
His eyes hidden within the shadows of the night

Against my body's wishes
I raised my blade
As my blade swung through the darkness
It pierced through the elegant cloak

My foe let out a scream
Then disappeared into the night
I stood in that snowy arena
Contemplating my own choices

I awoke in my quarters
Sweat pouring from my face
I turned and saw my nightstand
Three objects lay upon the wooden pallet

A pen that would write my final letter
A sheet of paper that held the letter close
And a blade, one that I would use to leave the world

I let out a chuckle as the letter crumbled under my hand
My tears flowed out as I let it fall
I stowed the blade into its corner
Knowing my bout will come again.

Elegy

By Paige Spires

As I sit here on this hospital bed with you
I hold your hand so tight.
I want you to stay awhile
Please don't give up the fight.

You kept me when I was just a baby
You fed me bananas and we had picnics in the yard.
You always said, "No running in the house –
and close the door!"
You are my Papa who I so adore!

You loved to walk and took me with you
You watched Fox News
You put a black check on your white cup
So we all knew it was yours.

You loved us so much and always told us so
You would grab us when we walked by and hold our hand
Now I'm sitting here holding your hand not wanting to say goodbye
I know you will be in Heaven though, with the angels up high.

Haiku

By Wendy Salgado-Martinez

The broken window
The rain splattering down now
Mimic my slow tears



“Forever” by Amber Norris



“Treelenae” by Caleigh Holmes

Imperfections

By Evan Drake

As the days passed the boy kept scrolling
Seeing the guys who always went to the gym
The ones with 6 packs
The ones who always kept a steady weight range
The ones with perfect skin and bodies
While his body was barely holding on
He had acne, weight problems, and ate too many
snacks
He was just the opposite of what those guys were
The boy looked at himself and started to tear up
“Why am I so weird looking?”
The boy hated himself, he hated his life
The boy desperately wanted to make a change

So, he went to the gym and started to train his body
Months later he saw a chubby kid walking to class, a
girl’s hand was in his
The boy’s eyes drifted towards their hands as they
walked
The boy cried to himself and realized something
He didn’t have to change how he looked
But how he acted
He could go about changing everything and never
being happy
But he knew that if he just changed his attitude
Maybe someone would reach for his hand as well

L'Accueil A North Augusta High School

By Ange Kotou

HIGH SCHOOL N'EST PAS SITUÉE SUR LES MONTAGE COLORÉE DE YELLOWSTONE,
N,Y SUR UNE PLAGE AVEC DES BASSIN FLEURIE OU VIENNE CHANTER LES OISEAUX
AUX MATIN.

JE SUIS VENUE SANS CONNAÎTRE LES CULTURE ,
JE SUIS VENUE SANS PARLER LA LANGUE OFFICIEL;
JE SUIS VENUE COMME UN HOMME PERDU AU DÉSERT,
QUI MARCHE SANS SAVOIR OÙ IL VAS.

DEHORS J'AI VUE DES GENS QUI PARLAIT MA LANGUE M,EVITER
COMME UN ÊTRE DÉGRADÉ PAR LE SABLE , LE SOLEIL ET LA TEMPÊTE DU DÉSERT;
CERTAIN PERSONNE AU MAUVAIS SUJETS PARLER DE OU J'ALLAIS COMME ,
UN ENDROIT OU VIVRE DES MONSTRE DES HISTOIRE PARANORMAL.

MAIN À MON ARRIVÉE C'ÉTAIT JUSTE LE CONTRAIRE ET UN ACCUEIL D'ANGE ,
LEVEZ ET LES YEUX SUR MOI AVEC DES SOURIRE CARICATURAL AU LEVRE ;
ET COMMENCAIT TOUS A ME SOUHAITER L A BIEN VENU DE PARTOUT.

AINSI,JAMAIS J'ARRÊTERAIS DE DIRE JE SUIS FIERE DE FRÉQUENTER CE ENDROIT
ET QUE JE L,AIMERAIS AUJOURD'HUI ET TOUJOUR NORTH AUGUSTA HIGH SCHOOL .

Reception at North Augusta High School

HIGH SCHOOL IS NOT LOCATED ON THE COLORFUL MOUNTAINS OF YELLOWSTONE,
NOR ON A BEACH WITH FLOWERED POOLS OR COME AND SING THE BIRDS IN THE
MORNING.

I CAME WITHOUT KNOWING THE CULTURE,
I CAME WITHOUT SPEAKING THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE;
I CAME AS A LOST MAN TO THE DESERT,
WHO WALKS WITHOUT KNOWING WHERE HE IS GOING.

OUTSIDE I SAW PEOPLE WHO SPOKE MY LANGUAGE FLEEING ME
AS A BEING DEGRADED BY SAND, SUN AND DESERT STORM;
SOME PERSON WITH THE WRONG SUBJECTS TALKS ABOUT WHERE I WAS GOING
LIKE,
A PLACE TO LIVE MONSTERS OF PARANORMAL HISTORY.

AND WHEN I ARRIVED IT WAS JUST THE OPPOSITE AND AN ANGEL WELCOME,
LOOK UP AND LOOK AT ME WITH CARICATURAL SMILES;
AND BEGAN TO WISH ME WELL FROM EVERYWHERE.

SO, I WOULD NEVER STOP SAYING I AM PROUD TO FREQUENT THIS PLACE
AND THAT I WOULD LOVE IT TODAY AND STILL NORTH AUGUSTA HIGH SCHOOL.



“Untitled” by Zsa-Kiana Williams

What Happened When the Bombs Dropped (Part 2 of 3)

By Nathaniel Hale

What happened When the Bombs Dropped?
It happened in a matter of seconds

A loud boom!
A bright flash!
Brighter than the surface of the sun
I'm Blind! Only for a moment though

That's What happened When the Bombs Dropped

What happened When the Bombs Dropped?
There was fire
There was destruction
Complete and utter destruction
It was Hell on Earth
Like the Wrath of God

That's What happened When the Bombs Dropped

What happened When the Bombs Dropped?

There was chaos
There was anarchy
It was every man for himself
There was death
So, *so much death*
That's What happened When the Bombs Dropped

I thought my life was over

My new life had just begun

...
That's what happened When the Bombs Dropped

Distractions

By Evan Drake

Look mom, over there, a bird is looking at me!
Focus, son, focus on your homework

Look mom, outside, the dog is running around!
Focus, son, focus on your exams

Look mom, the art around me is glorious!
Focus, son, focus on getting your degree

Look mom, look at all technology we can create!
Focus, son, focus on getting the office job

Look mom, my childhood was wasted
Focus, son, focus on enjoying your life

Lost

By Ash Manning

When one loses themselves
They find that a mirror is
Their enemy

You find yourself only in
The lead stains
The ink stains
The teary skies

You spend your days
Drowning yourself
In what little remains

You drown yourself in meaningless words
In the constant flow
Of poetry
Of stories
Of unfinished symphonies



Leviathan

By David Brito

It came from the ocean depths

Its needle-like teeth

Snapping into the air

It grabbed my crewmate

Its long tongue wrapping around him

He struggled to break free

I tried to help

But with every attempt it tightened its grip

Then I heard a snap

My crewmate went limp

And his lifeless body sunk under the waves

But it still wasn't full

It rose out of the water

Its scaly body wrapping around our fishing boat

When it towered above us it started to rain

The sky now angered by our actions

I couldn't fight back

No one could

I closed my eyes praying

For this nightmare to end

Then I heard a song bird

Its light chirping

Bouncing around my head

I open my eyes

I am on a beach now

I look out to the ocean blue

And see a large serpent headed for me

I was on its beach

It rose again its mighty body

Over fifty feet tall

Stared down on my frail form

It was then I realized

We humans aren't at the top of the food chain

We weren't even close

We are nothing but food

For the Leviathan



"Banana Or Something" by Audrey Hammond

Acceptance: Tonight & Tomorrow

By Ash Manning

Tonight is one of those nights
The nights where I sneak to this kitchen
Make myself some cocoa
And think
I think a lot these nights
About the Present
The Past
The Future
It's not always all that great
But it's what I do
I don't rest
I can't rest
Too much energy
Too many thoughts
There are days I enjoy it
There are days I dislike it
There are days I don't particularly care.
Tonight is one of those nights
Where I drink my cup of cocoa
And ponder what could have been
If one thing changed
I'd never met the people I love so dearly
If one thing changed
I wouldn't be writing this today
If one thing changed
I'd be living instead of surviving
If I could change one thing
I don't think I'd change anything
That is what Acceptance is for me
It's not pretty
It's not fun
It's not terrible
It's a day by day,
Night by night,
Thing.
Today I choose to think about the future.
Today I choose to make plans;
Even if they are in vain.
Today I choose to love as I wish to be loved
Tonight will be when I accept

Tomorrow is a new day
The same sun will be in the sky
The same moon will be hanging above
But tomorrow will be a new day
Tomorrow is the day I will tell people I love them
Tomorrow will be the day I walk from my burnt
bridges
Tomorrow might be worse
but
Tomorrow has all the possibilities tonight does not
have
But until tomorrow,
I will think about my future
And I will love
And I will cry
And I will laugh
And I will be me



“A Short Summer” by KJ Simpkins

Something New

By Charlotte Syring

Something new,
Replaces the old,
Like shoes,
Or homes.

Someone new,
Makes you feel wanted,
But before,
You felt unwanted.

Somewhere new,
Is a place you go,
To get away,
From where you are.

Sometime new,
We can meet again,
And try to be friends,
But not now.

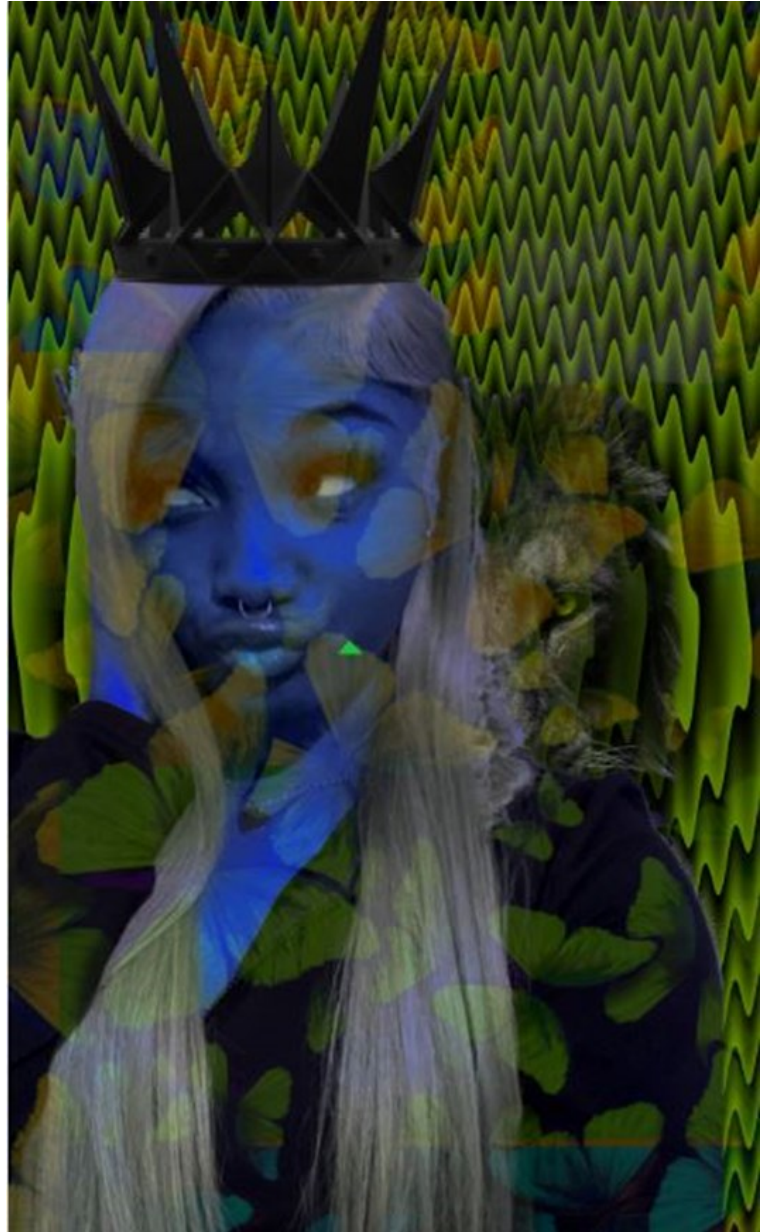
Somewhat new,
Is this place,
New to me,
But not to you.

In some way new,
I belong,
Like I never thought
before,
I have hopefully found
my place,
For me to be me.

Untitled

By Jaycee Lewis

How were we supposed to know?
Maybe because your daughter
Was wearing a sweater
In 100 degree weather



“Behind Her Shadow” by Naja Kelly

Erased

By David Brito

As I stand there
I watch myself fade
My arms growing transparent

Soon I'll be forgotten
Soon I'll be nothing more than a sore topic
My life wasn't grand
It wasn't extravagant

So, I couldn't be remembered
By the great things I did
I start to cry as my legs fade away

My life was nothing more than a place holder
For those greater than myself
As my torso Faded
I heard the sounds of footsteps coming closer

I see a young woman approaching my fading body
She knelt down and touched my face
Her soft hand gently comforting me
Then she speaks
"You won't be forgotten
I will always carry your spirit with me

For you were the one who gave me life
Father"

As those words left her
My heart beat again
My torso began to reappear
My legs got their shape back
And my arms formed around her small body

I still sobbed as she held me
And I still do when I remember what almost
happened
That day is one I don't speak of often
For it still pains me to retell this story

But thankfully she was there to save me
She saved me from disappearing
She saved me from being forgotten
Thanks to her I wasn't
ERASED



"Love Galore" by Makayla Murray

Dancing and the Devil

By Ash Manning

I have this tantalizing urge
to put my lips to yours
and to trail down to your throat.
I could stay there all day
feeling the blood rush just under your skin,
scrape my teeth along the pulse point
and imagine,
for a second,
biting down
in a cruel imitation of a lover
to feel the blood flow into my mouth
with metal and flesh stuck in my canines.
Darling
no one ever invites the Devil to dance.
So when you offered your hand
and my prey was willingly placed in my lap,
it only makes sense I wouldn't realize your
intentions
As you led the first waltz
and then the second
with blood staining your dress
pouring from your throat.
Does it surprise you that the beauty of it all
left me blind,
to the dagger you had been
guiding into my spine,
ever since I accepted your hand.
What greater grace is there
to die,
while killing an angel.
The blood of someone so holy
staining my smile,
as I fade into some deeper
darker
place of torture.
A dream to never be repeated
A dream to be cherished



“Color” by Aros Thomas

Fallen Grace

By David Brito

I stand atop the hill
The bodies of those against me
Strewn out like gory art

The gun in my hand
Felt heavy as I reloaded
My fingers fumbling the clip out

As the clip snapped in
I see a new foe
Her face familiar
Yet unknown with her features

Her white dress flowing
Like water in a gentle breeze
I unloaded the fresh clip at her
But none of the bullets ever touched
Her fragile skin

Even though I shot at her
She kept smiling
Walking towards me
Her hair tied beautifully into a bun

I unsheathe my dagger and I charge at her

I've been mocked for far too long
Yet as I reached her she stopped me
Using the tip of her finger
What I remember next is still something strange

She spoke in a voice
One long forgotten by me

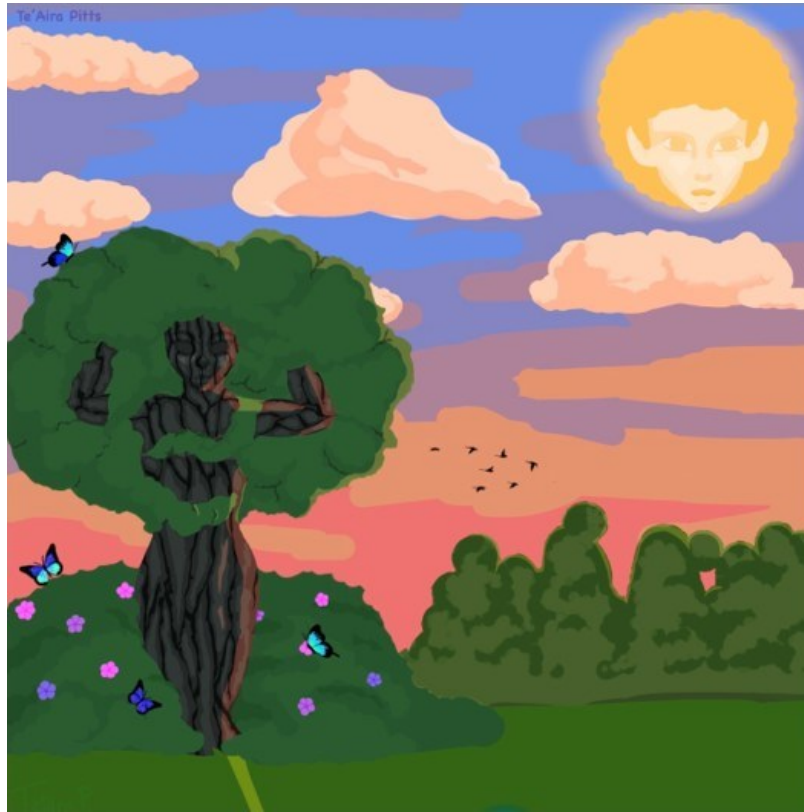
"Why do you do this
Why do you make others hurt?"
She spoke to me as tears flowed down my face

"They took you from me
How could I not return the pain?"
I said as she placed her hand on my face
Her perfect skin
Now tainted with the blood that covered me

I collapsed on the ground
Tears flowing
Soldiers approaching from all sides
But I didn't care
I saw her one last time
My Beautiful wife



"Butterfly Glow" by Helen Laube



“People in Nature” by Te’Aira Pitts

After the Bombs Dropped (Part 3 of 3)

By Nathaniel Hale

What happened After the Bombs Dropped?
Did life go back to normal?
No...
Nothing *is* normal anymore

I walk around in a daze
It's like I'm walking in a dream
No, not a dream
A nightmare
And I kept telling myself that I would wake up
soon...
But this is real life. I'm not dreaming

Nuclear Holocaust...

Nuclear Armageddon...

Nuclear War...

This is my life. My new life
That's What happened After the Bombs Dropped

The outside is not safe anymore

Fallout particles are through the air
The Water is undrinkable
Radiation is everywhere
Death is everywhere

That's What happened After the Bombs Dropped

And the worst of them all:
Human Beings
The worst side of mankind comes out to play

That's What happened After the Bombs Dropped

I look off into the distance and see something on the
horizon
What do I see?
A rescue team? The Military?
Another explosion?
No...

Extinction

Broken

By David Brito

The hall of the church empty
The sound of the bell
Echoing through the desolate
Halls of the cathedral

The windows are all chipped
Some were gone
And others were barely in their frames
As I take a step
My arm starts to crack

The crack reaches up
Enveloping my arm before it falls
I scream in pain as my limb
Now a writhing mass
Loses its life and crumbles to dust

Maybe as I walk I'll find
A stone mason
One with the skill to repair
My now deceased limb

My thoughts were hopeful
But as I take another step my leg cracks
And it too falls and crumbles

I stumble
Losing my balance and falling
As I impact the ground
My other arm and leg shatter
I lay there unable to move
For I have no limbs
I am nothing but a statue
My hopes of getting help

Turn to sobs of grief

Then I hear a noise outside
A quick tapping followed by mumbling
I watch as an old scraggly man walks into the church
He gasps as he sees me in my dilapidated form

He swears under his breath
And picks me up
He takes me to the town where he is mocked
By carrying my heavy figure
Some said to use me as a chair
Others told him to break me up
But he didn't listen
He kept moving until
We reached a little shack
He put me on the ground
And opened the door
I lay there as I awaited my faith

Then I feel a sharp pain
The pain of metal striking my stone skin
I couldn't scream for my face was in the dirt
The mumbling of the old man continued
As my skin broke away

I thought I was saved but
This man kept breaking pieces off of my body
When the old man finished
And the pain subsided
I looked to see
I wasn't a pile of rubble

I was reformed
Turned anew by his skilled prowess
He was no stone mason
But he had sculpted me
A new body

My arms and legs
They all felt again
I watch as the sculptor looks at me
He smiles before patting my shoulder

You were too good for that church
Why did I give you up?

I listened to the preacher
And look what they did to you
But worry not
For you are back
With your humble creator
Here you will never be
Broken



“Untitled” by Zsa-Kiana Williams

On Anger and Self Isolation

By Ash Manning

Anger lives in my lungs,
Hatred has its thorny roses travelling up my throat,
with a single crimson blossom resting just behind my
tongue.
I will cough up petals,
and blood,
before I allow myself to let the thorns prick you.
The beast I house in my lungs,
in my throat,
would see you torn to pieces
would have me hurt you
until there is nothing left to hurt.
Would see your blood stain my fingertips
and my lips
as I tear out your jugular.
And how I wish to say I hate that urge
to say that I recoil at the mere thought.
Perhaps I am not ashamed to admit
that the idea intrigues me
that some days I yearn for the feeling
of blood and gore

and perhaps I should be ashamed.
There curled within the blossom in my mouth
lies a thorn designed specifically for you.
And as I am wont to do
I would rather bite my tongue
than let the venom I bear
spread this disease to you too.
You love me
and despite my love for you
this venom would kill you,
taint the memories we have
and harm you more than you would ever deserve.
I will sit unhappy in my silence
and touch the morbid
with all the gentle self-loathing it takes
to grow thorns in your lungs.
I will be content
knowing that despite hurting you here
you will not have blood-stained skin
or a bone deep hatred of me
come the morning



“Rainbow Vomit” by Kadi Barfield

Puppeteer

By David Brito

What shall I do
With this show now open
The cast all set

It had conflict
It had glamour
And most of all
It had excellence

But yet I stand here
My hands shaking
The wooden doll quivering
With the movements of my hand

How could I freeze now?
Why, when the whole show
Depended on my fast fingers

I steady myself
The doll calming as well
I am no coward
I didn't flee

Instead I raise my hand
For I am the one pulling the strings
I was in control
I am the hivemind
The Puppeteer

Sonnet

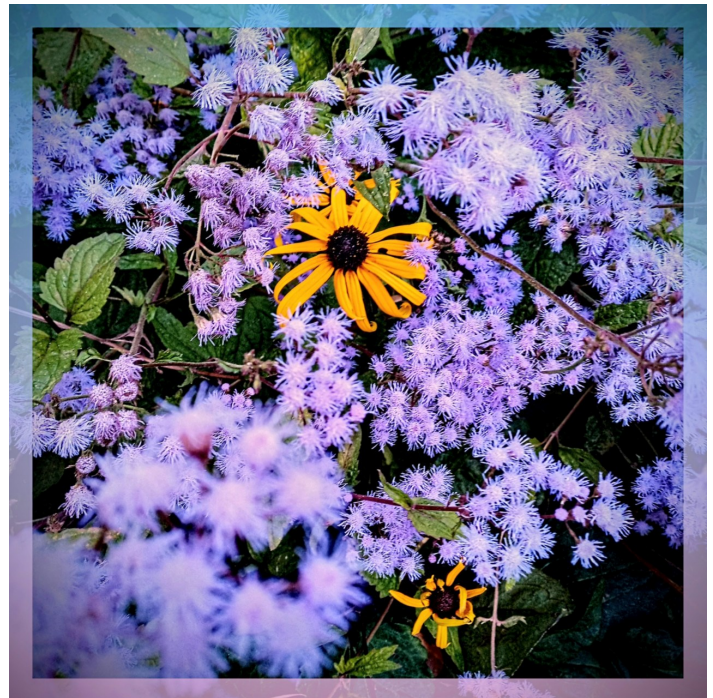
By Gladdie Laube

I wish I could be stronger for myself
Maybe if I could have been taught how to love
My feelings have been put up on a shelf
While many others have been put above

I had to teach myself how to grow up
Then I had to teach my sisters how to protect
In our house we always had a backup
If you aren't us, you don't know the effect

I need my sisters to be strong for me
Because I will not always be around
They need to stop fighting and just agree
For I will not always be in their town

I have raised these girls since I was a child
I will love them even though they are wild



“Flower Breeze” by Emily Harris

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“Scarlet Witch: Harbinger of Chaos” by Udorji Oji

