

*Beyond even the darkest
clouds, the wide, open, blue
sky goes on forever. Trust,
let go, and allow yourself
to take flight.*



So fly! Only then can you soar.
- Marta Karol



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Pug

Kaylee Strehler



Things I Could Do Instead

Anna Dahlstrom

I could go for a walk
instead of curling myself into wasted space.
I could remember every person who ever loved me,
I can thank them for stopping by.

I can make something beautiful from despair
I can water my reborn seed with everything I love about myself.
Instead of letting my flower shrivel and forget.
I will teach it to grow
I will let it become whatever creation of nature it wants to be.

Instead of self destructing,
I can remember how good it feels to fall apart
For the last time I saw a dandelion in the wind, it scattered a thousand seeds.
Grow. Renew. Find the good.

Instead of thinking about breaking,
Instead of fearing it,
I can give my chest the option to cave in on itself
For this breath of despair is no match for my war hero lungs
No match for my unwavering heartbeat.

I can puddle on the floor,
Heaving on my own sorrow.
But there is nothing more beautiful than the breath I still breathe.
The more battle wounds, the more scars
The more scars, the better stories.

Instead of hurting myself,
I can paint pictures on my thighs,
Create a Goddamn masterpiece of my wrists.
I can bathe in warm water,
Submerge and frolick in the snow.
I can bring myself from edge to edge,
from extreme to extreme,
To remind myself how to live.

This is the beauty,
Of crumbling and uncrumbling.

Tattered Archangel

Breanna Macedonia



Used

Skylar Nitzel

The words that simply made us
Look up in confusion,
Now we've come to realize
Are just a silly illusion

The threats that we believed
Were just childish games,
Now we've come to realize
Are used for sickening fame

The smiles that we trusted
To be a sign of fair play,
Now we've come to realize
Are molded from sadistic clay

The nothings that we thought
Were soothing and reassuring,
Now we've come to realize
Were lies used for luring

The whispers that we assumed
Were gentle, soft, and sweet,
Now we've come to realize
Were as dead as concrete

The promises that we desired
For an escape from reality,
Now we've come to realize
Killed us with brutality

The people that we loved
To keep us safe and warm and sane,
Now we've come to realize
Were all just part of the game

A Family's Flame

Kristen Saucedo



Dawn of the Balancer

Kieran Phillips

O' Eternal Flame. O' flickering darkness of constant light. Let this story be told throughout the realms so that you might be known. For first, there was Phoenix: of all realms, of all power, of chaos and tranquility. Phoenix once gave existence to twin daughters; Leilah of the Chaos, darkness, emotion, and change; Zora of the Peace, light, calm, and sameness. The daughters were the perfect opposites, and for many centuries they worked together with Phoenix to govern the realms, a perfect balance, but it could not last.

Leilah one day wandered the realms alone, and happened upon Earth, which had previously been governed by the sisters together. Leilah looked upon the Earth and that Zora had corrupted it, allowing no change. Leilah was able to see that the planet would die if there were no motivation for change, for adaptation, for the only constant in life was change, as Leilah thought. For sameness could never think to be wrong, not as change could. Now though, Chaos had been betrayed, and she sent storms below to Earth, throwing it into utter turmoil.

Phoenix sensed Leilah's anger, and the chaos she wrought. Zora would give just as little forgiveness to her sister for the disturbance of her peace as Leilah did for her own chaos. Chaos and Peace would rip unceremoniously at Earth, at entire realms. Phoenix had feared this day - the day when the daughters turned away from each other. Phoenix's power was waning, however. After creating the daughters, the Flame had begun to require a new form, from creating such beings from it. Phoenix then created one last child, the one which would bring balance, and called her Shara, leaving her mortal for now, as to hide her from her sisters - she must not be corrupted by either. The Flame's power was also conserved for a time by this action.

Shara was found upon Earth, the battleground for which Leilah and Zora's battleground first began. A man called Thom Davar raised her as his own child, traveling the globe for his marketing business. Shara had her shares of chaos in the trade, but she found peace in herself in it as well - it was really most of the same in different places.

Eventually, though, Phoenix came to Shara, once she was grown. Phoenix told Shara of her nature as the Balancer, telling her that she must train before she is to unlock her power.

"You must face Leilah and Zora," Phoenix insisted. "You must bring balance."

Shara was most taken aback, "I-- no, I'm afraid you must be mistaken."

"I assure you, I am not. I am the one who created you. You are the one who will unlock the Flame for yourself and take my place by creating balance."

Eventually, Shara accepted this truth as Phoenix stood before her. She began to train, and Phoenix gifted the Balancer with a sword of radiating blackness and a sword of equally brilliant light. Shara dueled with Phoenix to test her power, with her Earthly father -who in his own right was quite skilled with a sword- to help with combat with multiple opponents. Shara was extraordinary - she defended with ease and attacked swiftly with the same motion, as gifted in battle as she was in all endeavours she'd explored.

Phoenix warned Shara that the twins would not be easily defeated, though, and that she could only unlock her full power once she had defeated them. As gifted as Shara was, in this moment, she could not help but worry that she would be tempted by one of her sisters, overthrowing balance - how could she be sure that she wouldn't be?

Alas, as the twins continued to assault each other, and entire realms wavered in the face of

one taking complete control over it. The time had come for Shara to face her sisters and bring them to balance once and for all. Phoenix began the process to allow Shara to take the power of the Flame, becoming a mortal in the process.

Shara crossed into the middle realms, where Leilah and Zora instantly sensed her, as they had been scanning the areas for each other. Curious of the new being, Leilah appeared instantaneously, raven hair twisting around her.

“Who are you?” the Dark One asked.

“I am the Balancer, of the Eternal Flame. I have come to take the place of Phoenix as ruler of realms.”

Then, Zora appeared, sensing changes in the realm.

Slowly, the Light One circled Shara, bright blue eyes critical. She saw only chaos within the Balancer, and far more power than her own calmness, or even Leilah’s emotion, could provide. “Leilah, I trust you have already detected threat to the reign of your realms beyond your toils with me.”

Leilah knew her sister well enough to know what she suggested with that. Subtly, she summoned a shining black sword, identical to the one in Shara’s own hand. Zora, however, rushed forward first, hair unnaturally still as she assaulted the Balancer. Shara deftly spun, meeting the shield with its twin of her own, pushing Zora back roughly. Ducking as Leilah swung a sword above her head, she made a stabbing motion behind her. Leilah cursed and leapt back, now soaring overhead to land beside Zora.

Shara then became a blur, swiping her leg below Zora and bashing her shield into her the Light’s stomach. She dropped her shield as Shara’s blade entered her spine. She would not -could not- recover without Shara allowing it now, and only once the Flame was hers. Yes, she could feel the power of it beginning to flicker within her now.

Leilah flipped up and over Shara, but only managed to meet a gleaming shield with her blade. Shara calmly, but swiftly, dodged to Leilah’s side as she swung again. The Balancer mirrored her previous actions in perfect balance as she struck the Darkness in the back with her shield, sword clattering to the ground as her own entered Leilah’s stomach.

As both of the Heavenly Twins lay upon the ground, the Eternal Flame then merged with the Balancer as she stood, victorious. Shara healed Zora and Leilah, as they would not defy the Flame after this. Shara returned chaos, emotion, order, and calm to each realm respectively. Shara was fully merged with the flame now, and her reign would not end as Phoenix’s had, for she had recovered the balance. Thusly, Shara taught mortals of balancing emotion and calm, and knowing which to follow at a given time. For those who fulfilled her teachings, she granted rebirth, or even immortality. Thom and Phoenix were among the few beheld that gift, though none were granted such power of Leilah or Zora had been, so long ago.

The Flame’s reign had at last been restored, and the realms mixed their own Chaos and Peace under Shara’s rule.

Karina

Kaylee Strehler



A Father

He's my superhero
Makes sure I'm safe all the time
But something made me question him
Of course reality hits
I don't live in a perfect world
Pictures are the only thing that help me remember his face
Innocent kid loses a trust bond between father
My first heartbreak
Nothing is worse than the pain you feel when he left
I hate him with my whole heart
Sometimes I imagined not even having a father
A stupid arrogant father
He left because of a stupid mistake he did
Left an innocent child with her mother alone
How I wish I can turn back time
Tell me why did you leave without saying goodbye
Why would you make a child wonder what did she do to make you leave
Mother said all these lies to me
Family said these lies to me.
9 years passed
Have you received those letters I sent you
The letters that I poured my broken heart into
Of course you haven't
Why would you
You have another daughter that's more important
You just stopped caring
Not even a single phone call
Nothing, it's just like you vanished from my life...

Cakey Coy

Tess Landin



My Monster

Anonymous Author

Screaming and crying I run into my room as fast as I can. He has come to visit me again. I was only four years old when the man first stood in my doorway, creeping in to lay beside me and haunt me for years to come. Even though I'm older now he still visits, hiding in the shadows of my room. Lurking in the darkness, that is my mind, he waits for me to fall asleep. As my eyes are starting to get heavy, I repeat to myself, "Think of happy thoughts, happy thoughts. Happy thoughts scare the monster away. They make him go far away from here."

I close my eyes and, suddenly, I feel him sit down on my bed. The reek of week old cemetery flower water fills my nose. The rotted smell of flowers had a vague floral smell. I shut my eyes harder trying to force sleep upon myself. Since I was young I always wondered why this man followed me. Everywhere I go I know that he is there, somewhere. Watching me, controlling me.

I never truly see my monster, but when I do it's horrifying. From what I have seen, he's always the same. His face is as black as night, only showing his glowing white eyes. His appearance was nebulous to me, and it has always been that way. Still sitting at the foot of my bed, he stands up. Standing to his full height at just over eight feet tall, he creeps over to me. I know that he is coming when the smell of rotting flowers slips into my senses. He places his thin bony hand on my forehead. Squeezing my eyes even tighter I wait for him to leave my side. His cold and moist hand still rests on my head, filling my mind with appalling thoughts and feelings.

I never truly know how to get rid of him, I try and try but to no avail. He is always there, always watching, always listening. They put me on medication to try and hide him from me, but he still comes back at night, tempting me with the bitter-sweet side of darkness. Everyone tells me not to conform to what he tells me.. Sure, I'm terrified of him, he is one of the scariest things in my life. What am I supposed to do without him? All I have ever known was fear for this being, that's what I'm used to. He got me locked up in the hospital for a week. "My name is Monica Kreppo. I'm here for self harm, depression, and suicidal thoughts." I still remember why he put me there. He sits on the edge of my bed every night, when the medication wears off.

My Monster, cont.

Instead of trying to sleep when he is around, I stay up restlessly. The smell of rotting flowers still lingers, it seems to be a permanent smell now. He stands next to me sometimes, trying to fill my head with his own thoughts. Little does he know, they are already there. Some people say I should be terrified of my own monster, and in a way, I am. What would you be without your monster? You wouldn't be you... you wouldn't be anything.

After time I have learned how to function properly while he is around. I now understand all of him. He shows me more of his features now that I accept him more. He was scared of showing himself to me, because I was scared of him. I now see, sitting at the foot of my bed, his glowing white eyes staring into my soul. He wears a black suit and black shoes, that squeak with every step he takes. He is deathly skinny and completely black. Only his eyes, and the outline of his bones, are features that can truly be seen. Still slightly petrified of this man I close my eyes every night when he towers over me. He continues places his cold and clammy hand on my forehead, forcing even worse thoughts into my mind.

My own monster... is my depression.



Endless Search

Sonja Sower

Secret is a person's identity
Mysterious to all, even oneself
Incapable, can't know this entity
Cruelly hidden from you, put on the highest shelf

How can the truth be found, where does one look?
Even though it could be learned, it can change
Lost it can be, down a babbling brook
Loathe or love it, but the truth may be strange

Evanescent, it depends on your time
Slyly it avoids capture, who are you?
Outraged, to discover it you must climb
What is it, do you even have a clue?

Elusive it is, but it will be found
Royalty deep within, you will be crowned

Doing What Hands Do Best

Tess Landin



Fall's Last Gem

Kristen Saucedo



A sanctuary.

A ray of sunshine casts directly through the middle shining as brightly as
the girl who inhabited it.

Enduring the tears when pain paid a visit.

Sharing the happiness when it flowed within the constructed walls.

A home within a home.

Covered in bright posters that were splattered with dark blacks, blues,
greys; displaying musicians that mesmerized her ear drums

Smiling faces covered corners

Innocent memories that made her smile appear...

A frown surfacing as the memory crumbles

Books craving to be read lounged on drawers overcast by dreadful
papers that cried for completion.

A perfectly imperfect territory.

Filled with far fetched dreams.

Oozing with privacy.

Seeping with comfort.

This was her room

R & J

Brandon Gonzalez



Poema Yucatán

Kimberly Azueta

Yucatán, es un estado muy alegre
And it reflects in its folklorico dance
Con canciones movidas y trajes coloridos
The ladies use a clothing called 'huipil'
Its white with rosas bordadas de colores
Y un rebozo
The guys use a guayabera and white pants
Un sombrero de palma
sandals de madera known as
"Chillonas"
El Chinito Koy- Koy is one of the songs us as Yucatecos dance
It's so fast that they call it el 6x8

Dicen, que somos cabezones
También que somos panzones
La verdad, los Yucatecos
Tenemos grandes corazones
Bomba!
Es un orgullo ser, Yucateco

Horologium of Forest Campus

Abigale Field



New Beginnings

Tiffany Cox



Promise to Love

Brandon Nguyen

I Promise, a strong statement

Promise to change

Promise to get better

Promise to forget

I Promise I would take care of you
From the moon and back

No one sees you like I do, remembering the first time I saw you. Luscious
Red lips, soft hands, cute smile, gorgeous laughter

To fall in love, never wanting to let go
My heart skips a beat when you smile

I know our time is running out, soon I may not be able to see that sparkle
in your eye again

To find love in a hopeless place makes me know that you are my hope
when the world is downhearted

You are the Ocean to my Sand
The Moon to Earth
Light to my Day
The Star that glimmer in the night sky

my everything and as soon as I have you in my arms, I will hold on, never let go
if I do, I will never see beauty again

I Promise to Love you with every chance I get

Promise ,you will find someone better than me

promise that I love you

Promise i'll cherish every second we had together

promise to move on

This is what it feels like to have your heart racing and not knowing when or if it would slow down.

Your ever so tired body can't keep up with it's rapid beating against your chest,
You're exhausted after only climbing a flight of stairs.

Just the thought of tomorrow leaves you gasping for air,

Only it's not refreshing like the first breath you take when you come out the womb,

No, this breath is tight and sharp as if you've got asthma and just ran a mile without your inhaler.

As if your lungs are collapsing in their cage.

Like two popped balloons hanging in your chest.

This is feeling like your socks are filled with stones

And the world is zipping past you on roller skates.

This is being a week ahead on your calendar,

Never learning how to live in the moment

And letting life pass you by, while you're still shaking worried about what tomorrow will bring

This is storing your past in the corner of your closet,

Hoping the clutter won't take up the space for your self-confidence, and all your hopes and

dreams,

But every now and then it likes to creep out of nowhere. To creep out to remind you it's still there.

This is remembering the time you fell off your bike in 4th grade, or when you were first hit by the first man who was supposed to love you

You can put events from your life together through flashbacks

The worst ones will come unexpectedly.

A flood of past memories - Ones you choose not to remember, A flood of old emotions,

Still so vivid and alive, as if the past was running to catch you again.

Anxiety, cont.

Rushing over you like a monstrous Tsunami in the Honshu Ocean, One that sends you off your feet and spits you back out, Salty and heaving for air. This is living in a dream state, one you wish you'd waked up from so you can finally feel the ground beneath your feet .

This, Is instability of the body heart, and mind. This is learning to walk again, reminding yourself of every single step so you don't send yourself falling.

This is questioning yourself constantly, wondering if everything is and will be okay

Wondering if everything you've worked so hard for and put your heart into is worth it because,

after all, your mind has been impaired, not just by the many many sleepless nights in fear of dying, or losing yourself, or waking up with everything gone.

This is operating on fumes, Chocolate and junk food is the only thing keeping you going, Drugs are the only way you can truly release your pain without sounding depressed or insane because, everyone else is doing it

too. They don't notice you disintegrating into flesh and bone, that you're merely hanging on for everyone else's sake. Losing your focus and strength to your clouded head and burning heart.

This is worrying so much about what hasn't even happened yet, that you don't even have the

consciousness to take a look at what's going on around you, to see the nothingness you're slowly turning into.

This is trembling hands

This is stuttered words

This is feeling that dark pit in your chest no matter what you do

This is the inability to unclench your tense fists

This is independance

This is holding yourself at gunpoint

And not knowing which side to surrender

This is being the enemy
And the survivor

This is telling yourself “it’s gonna be okay” trying to calm your rigid body
While sitting in a ball sobbing not believing it ever will be
You don’t know if it’s ever gonna be okay.
You’ve lost control of yourself

Before you even had the chance to try and grab the wheel.
You’ve become so attached to what is to come, the thought of what captured
you
May never cross your mind. Maybe one day you’ll learn that there is no use in
trying to run from the beast.
For it will shadow your every move and maybe you’ll learn that stabbing it would
do you no good. It would be a mistake, A big huge mistake.
‘Cause in the end, you’ll find yourself with bloody hands and a dying heart.

Welcome to the Lost and Found

Truc-Ly Ngo

What are you doing here?
You're no good in my life
And you should know I'm doing much better.

She sits in front of the mirror talking to her reflection
But that wasn't her,
It was her old self
Trying to control her again

Recollecting her memories
Good and bad
What it's like now
And what it used to be
She doesn't quite remember when
But as her uncertainty of growing up progressed
She had lost herself

Perhaps she left it those middle school hallways
Halls that were filled with whispers
Occupied with the ideal image of how everyone should dress and act
Pretending to be someone she wasn't
Absorbing in all the toxic standards of society
Just to gain acceptance from her peers
But deep down she knew that girl wasn't her

Maybe it was through all those late nights studying
Frantically scribbling down words
Just to get it done
Just so she could get some sleep
Trying so hard to make her parents proud
Maybe she was trying too hard

Did she lose herself while spending all that time alone?
Anxiously watching the clock tick away
Waiting for better times to come
Yet they never did



My Role Model

Marco Delgado

I remember as a kid
how much I wanted to be like you
(brave, big, and strong)
I copied your every move
and every thing that you would do

From the beautiful sounds of your guitar
I would play with you
To the bizarre person who you still are
I wanted to be like you

But everyone makes mistakes
That can crush others lives
Like you did to me
With your many lies

Even after everything that you've done
You still don't regret anything
Can't you see what you've become?
Because I, for sure have been noticing

The many nights and days
Of screaming and fighting
Im sure we can figure out a way
To end all of this soulful crying

But at the end of the day
I can see how much I grew
And even if you turned my life grey
I will always love you

A Paper Cutie

Tess Landin



How long has he been awake?
He can't believe a single word you say
This had always felt so fake
Per usual "same head, new day"
An embodiment of unconscious misery
Past month, no real sleep
"What the hell has gotten into me?"
This whole stunt has left him a maroon, nothing to eat
To feed his will, feed mind, feed just one more rhyme
Fresh off the kill, buzzards not too far behind, but it's fine
"Not news to me"
One more weight on the chain
Far from free
An eroded membrane
Because his motor and thoughts have gone bad
Spit, mutter, and cough as he wonders how he's gotten so mad
Both mentally and emotionally like a dog at the end of his leash
Starved for days, willing to break your collarbone for a feast
Desperation for interaction does that to you
As he dies day by day
He just watches himself fade
Withering in the light in shining rays
Waits for night to be uncaged
He puts on his best suit
Brushes off the stress and scars
For once he feels at use
As he's enchanted under the stars
With the unseen he sways
With the uncertain he steps slow
Remembering better days
He waltzes with something he never knows
Perhaps it's his love
Perhaps it's a past life

Awake, cont.

He's doesn't worry or snuff
Out his only candle, the last light
But as his sight grows heavy
Sleep beckons again
She visits him, easily setting
The mood for paradise to begin
Second reality
A life set apart from the actual
He finally breathes and smiles
Not worrying about being factual
Day comes soon
So they start a final embrace
He looks up from the gloom
As revelation may show her face
A blare shatters the daze
He sits under his covers fazed
Jeans and shirt from the last day
Memory returns cruel and dismayed
His mood starts to shake
As he wonders again
"How long have I been awake?"

Simple Adventure

Gaby Tolosa-Ramirez



The Creation of the Sun

Richard Vo

I sing for Dad, the keeper of the stars, so he guide my words with his celestials. Upon the constellation, Horologium, lived a guardian. This humble guardian was thought to have created time, space, and the twelve dimensions. His figure was omnipotent to a degree and his presence could be felt across the twelve dimensions. This protector of the celestial objects existed with his wife whom was pregnant with the god's child. Curious to see what the child would become, Dad set out to meet his long time friend, Orion, the future-seer. The belly-sliders from the star Horologium accompanied Dad, and together they traveled to Orion's home planet, the oar-steed. It took them half a light year to get there. Dad was about to ask his wise friend what kind of man his son will turn out to be but, he decided against it since it would be a surprise to know in the future. When Dad finally saw Orion, he did not greet him but instead told Dad's fortune instead. It was about the guardian of the stars and it told that a ragnarok was impending. Dad questioned his friend but, that was all he said. He traveled back to his home on Horologium and waited for the coming with his wife. A light year passed and the protector of the celestial objects noticed that one of his many constellations are missing. Dad called on his power and found the perpetrator. The prediction from a year ago finally came true, a being born from a supernova and swallowed stars. The keeper of the stars' duty was to eliminate the threat however, because of his child's birth that was coming. He did not want to go for, he did not know when he would return but at the same time if he did not go then his wife and child would perish. Dad was about to blink to the center of the universe where Ragnarok was began when suddenly a mist became the form of Dad's wife.

Dad: How cruel, the person I wanted to see the most is not themselves.

The mist said nothing to this but, revealed herself as the penguin goddess and presented the Dad equipment to fight the Ragnarok, including a companion, a combat penguin. They continued with their intended journey until an entity came before them. It was Soar, a guardian of the skies, he mistook Dad to be the star eater and attacked. Dad easily overpowered him but, he suddenly surged in strength. The keeper of stars cleared up the misunderstanding while they fought. The breath of the wind finally understood after needless fighting. Soar decided to travel with Dad and for a while they could not find the Ragnarok, though soon they noticed more stars

The Creation of the Sun, cont.

disappearing. The duo and penguin friend traveled to the vanishing stars although an enemy named Stardust encountered them on the voyage. It was an easy task to defeat him however, just before he died, Stardust shoved all of his remaining power into an attack that created a dark sea of abyss bigger than a planet; which sucked everything in it. The heroes tried to outrun the gravitational force output but, it was too great. As a last resort, Soar used his stone and fired an attack that pushed Dad and the penguin away saving them but not himself. While he did this, Soar gave Dad the stone that had boosted his abilities. The guardian of the stars grieved for his fallen comrade but was now more determined to defeat his enemy. Overrode with the will to win he found the Ragnarok inside the Andromeda Galaxy. It had a cosmic radiance from devouring the stars; it was like a silent nocturne. The size of it was almost as vast as the Milky Way. Dad enlarged himself and engaged in battle and Dad's ability had also transferred to the penguin and made the penguin much stronger and enormous. The two were evenly matched but, as the match drew out longer it seemed that the enemy had grown stronger with every swing. Even with the penguin, the duo could not hold out. Suddenly the burst of energy that had come to Soar, the fallen warrior, overflowed into Dad and the penguin's strength, the stone had increased strength based on their will to win, and together they delivered the final blow.

Once conquered, the penguin and star guardian begun the trip back home. Ragnarok, despite taking a heavy blow, concentrated the last reserve of his energy into his final attack, Ouroboros, and fired it straight at Dad. The penguin noticed at the last second too late and could not warn the star guardian in time and so, he shielded Dad and took the blow. Dad heard the shockwave behind him and lamented for the penguin when he slowly faded away in Dad's arms. He desperately tried to save the dying penguin, but nothing could rescue him from such a devastating impact. The penguins back home from Horologium felt sorrow as one of their brethren passed away. When Dad came home from his journey, he created a massive star called the Sun in memory of the penguin and Soar. This was where the home of many anthropomorphic creatures would be. They would relied on the Sun's powers to help them live. Every day once the sun sets or rises, the mortals are reminded of both the warrior's sacrifices.

Salvador

Lizbeth Sanchez

A place as small as my hands
In a place filled with poverty
You only see violence and rape
Poor little girls doing adult things
She was 16 when she moved
Misery is her best friend
No one was there for her
Always wearing a facade
She had many of those
One for home
One for the day
And one for the night
Didn't know any better but always tried to show her best
She's full of lies, sins and regrets
But there's another girl
People say she's got her eyes
But she doesn't want to look like her
She's been hurt and neglected
She's fragile like glass
Poor little thing blames herself for the others actions
She was the anchor
Drowning her without even noticing
Because she doesn't know any better
They're both empty
They can't love
But they both want a savior
For them to find happiness.

Something Lost

Judith Zavala

Steadily Fracturing her to the core.
Crushing her soul
Her spirit
Every ounce of water shedding from her body
Through her innocent eyes
Held captive in her mind... silently shrieking for relief.
Her “loving” mother foreseen as malicious
The “aiding” social worker futile
powerless.....defenseless
A child’s lies challenging the torment endured
desolate.....
And as hope came into view.....
Access denied.
A prisoner in her form
Walls built befriended humanity
Befriended Hope
Her once sparkling brown eyes faded grey
Hope.
Preached by her best friend
Chanted by the “family” that enclosed her
Sermonizing the song of optimism
Disregarded
Given.. nonetheless not received - loving - beautiful -
innocent - caring - Hope.

Boy

Kaylee Strehler



My Best Friend

Jacqueline Jurado

My best friend is an immigrant
My best friend is an immigrant, but he is also much more
My best friend is smart, hardworking, and honest to his core
High school junior with college credits,
Architecture internship and he's earned all the merits

My mother was an immigrant...
Sent against her will, to have the "better life"
You see, not everyone wanted this - some people just wanted to survive.
Be it here, be it there, she did fight
Fought for her dreams to take flight.
Unbound by others' limitations
She grew beyond anyone's expectations
From 6th grade-educated to GED graduated
Entrepreneur, job creator, tax payer
She's an essential economy player
She's my Mother, She's my Best Friend,
My best friend was an Immigrant

Our country is in turmoil
Our priorities all wrong
Outraged cries, resentful glances,
The accusations are so strong!
But how have we forgotten?
Immigration is the only way this nation was begotten

You see, my best friend is no rapist; he is no criminal
Yet so many people remain so cynical
My best friend holds my heart and I live in constant fear
that one day he may no longer be here
My best friend is an immigrant
My mother was an immigrant
11.4 million people in the U.S. are immigrants
Let's celebrate our differences
Let's throw away our scorn
and forget the borders that separate us
To become something more

Just a Guess

Katherine Taylor

Reform is, at best, imperfect. At its worst, reform is the foundation, or after-thought, of revolutions, weaving destruction and manifestations of misguidance, loopholes, and corruption in a “progressing” society. So, should such detrimental paths be taken? Change, while natural and unstoppable, seems unnatural and forsaken of humanity (though one cannot abandon what one never first possessed), but without, we are left hindered, torn between survival (which will not continue should change not occur) and tradition.

Tradition seems jolly enough. One may imagine holidays where the family sits around a fire, avoiding eye contact after the mention of Trump v. Hillary, or grandpa-pa sitting in an armchair, recalling stories of Nazi Germany while his grandchildren shift uncomfortably, awaiting the time they can finally put him in a home. There must be some remembrance though, that tradition surpasses family dinners and often sits at the head of the manic and maniacal. Worse are the traditions not considered such by the general public- cultural inadequacies and social inequalities left unbound for decades, even centuries. Had the idea of American women, though the depth of this inequality reaches much farther than two hundred years of confederates and donkeys, as the inferior sex, incompetent or overwhelmed by activities and livelihoods considered unfeminine, been uncared for by the rich white men who conquered rather than discovered, would there be a more efficient and adequate use of human capital today? How far from logic and comprehension would the vast majority of Europe stay, and would the complacent, the compliant, still shoulder (however heavy the load) years of indoctrination and falsities had ignorance and fear not run rampant during the glory days of the infamous Catholic church?

Unfortunately, it is not until the many find themselves in a myriad of unfavorable and dire straits that the impression of wrongdoing sets. For the American woman, though whether or not the time of enlightenment has truly been struck is debatable, ties could first be drawn to entrance within the workforce during World War II, and then, of course, the revealed secrets of the modern housewife during the 1960s wherein, at least half felt empty; half were ready to jump off a cliff, and enough of the general public wondered if the schooling provided at the time was much too much- overcrowding a woman’s small mind with things other than washing clothes and making her husband happy. Europe was a bit more problematic, over seventy percent of the population dying from religion, the Crusades and “Hundred Years War”, and being unhygienic, just one reason the actu-

al Bubonic plague spread like a figurative plague, well, that and burning the bodies ridden with an airborne pathogen. The repetition of such cultural identities may stem from a desired sense of reliving what made one happy, or from a place of acceptance, years of immersion and upbringing, or even from human nature itself (should such a thing exist); all of which would be fine if not problematic (i.e. over seventy percent of a population dying), causing cycles of fear, oppression, marginalization, and school shootings (though more symptomatic of the causes, and, as always, the topic of which will be saved for another time). These problems, and that's what they are, have morphed into our very being, only worsening as solutions lessen.

The lack of solutions come- perhaps not from that of the creative and bureaucratic mind, but from the standstill they often find themselves. There's no movement, what is in motion comes from years of the public saying nay (many by association rather than information), then some of the public saying yay, and then years of the rest saying "eh, well, maybe", the first two then battle it out every four years; playground rules apply: that's right, no rules, name-calling is obvious, and a circle will form around them shouting "no more taxes" and debating so-called "inalienable human rights". What little is able to seep through the cracks, ushering in a new "milestone", does not then grow as a seed laid to dewed floor, but rather, germinates and shrivels as though caressed by clear stream and left to desert extremes.

It is troublesome that, despite years of the same malicious cycle, one might look to a reform, seasons past, and describe the outdated, the shriveled, as salvation. Reform is meant to carry on as a war: strategize, embark, die, conquer; those remaining carrying a sense of loss for the remainder of their lives, and those retracted, or protected, from the hardships of war may break away from their lesser, older habits. There comes a time during reform where a society may build anew, strive for progress, yet there is a consistent fall, a reversion, to the docile and obsequious.



She

Anna Dahlstrom

I am a woman.
A female. A fe-male,
A “He” with an “S” added to the front.
I am the sidekick, the side chick,
Wrapped around the finger of MANmade criteria.

I am a phoenix,
wings clipped by man-made scissors.
Trapped in a MANmade cage.
I am evolving into a MANmade construct.
A MAN-nequin of myself,
I cannot recognize.

I run in a race of MANKind,
I have no chance at winning.
Here, I play a rigged game.

This country, this society, this street corner;
All held to the ground,
Tied down to the belief that a woman is just a woMAN.
Just an add on to the founding fathers,
Placed on the back burner of the American Dream.

I am a woman.
My sexuality is begged for and exploited.
They want everything I am made of,
But think the taste is repulsive.
They want my woman hood,
But are disgusted by how it melts,
Slips through the binding fingers of the man.

I am told to walk, talk
To look, to cook
Taste and smell,
Like a woman.

Society taught me to be “ladylike”
Society taught me not to “throw like a girl”
They tell us to make something of ourselves
but really only want us to make them a damn sandwich.

My bones are not woman bones.
His bones are not man bones.
They are human bones,
Made from from the same stardust.
My blood is red and so is his.
Our ribcages imprison the same wild beast.
Humanity courses through the veins of sons and daughters alike.

I am a woman.
I am on the underside of the upper hand
My place is here, but I will not get comfortable.
I will not settle into the folds of injustice.
I will raise my fist to catcalls and lower paychecks.
I stand on my own feet.
I need no man to hold me upright.
I will raise my fist to slut shaming and double standards
My fists are tight
Ready to fight,
Like a girl.

Misinformed Intelligence

Anonymous Author

Our desire for an advanced, progressive future burgeons as we aim to raise the most successful, intelligent generation possible. In *The Dumbest Generation*, social critic and professor Mark Bauerlein claims that individuals under the age of thirty – millennials and teenagers – embody the “Dumbest Generation.” The great decline in reading in recent history, Bauerlein postulates, reduces our knowledge, thus rendering this particular age group the “dumbest.” Bauerlein further argues that the younger generation is not “less intelligent” or “less ambitious,” but it simply “[doesn’t] know anything.” Memorizing a multitude of facts and figures from occasionally reading, however, does not equate to intelligence. Those under the age of thirty do not, in fact, restrict their intelligence because the greater access to and use of technology, rather than dumbing us down, instead enhances our intelligence because it demands that we encounter situations where technology’s complexity steadily increases, ultimately forcing us to continuously boost our intellectual dexterity.

We want the young generation to read voraciously, of course, but even more importantly, we want to promote access to the plethora of opportunities for critical thinking enrichment. A cartoon by Roz Chast which appeared on the cover of the *New Yorker* in October 2010 mocks young people’s disinterest in reading and excessive use of technology through the personification of desperate, nervous books begging to be read, while a young man, headphones plugged in, idly slouches in front of his laptop, completely unaware of the books’ desperate cry for help. We do, in fact, allow reading to slip to the bottom of our priority list, but doing so does not hinder our capacity for intelligence. For instance, video games, movies, and television – perceived enemies of intellectual engagement and growth – “challenge mental dexterity” by “steadily build[ing] in complexity” (Johnson). Mizuko Ito’s report *Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project* expands the argument through the assertion that “young people acquire various forms of technical and media literacy by exploring new interests, tinkering, and ‘messing around’ with new forms of media.” Young people, truthfully, challenge themselves through new, increasingly complex technological mediums. Technology does not diminish our critical thinking skills, but rather enhances them. Perhaps, contrary to popular belief, young people are becoming the “Smartest Generation.” Although ultimately, like many things in life, moderation is paramount to ensuring that we can thrive with balance – we cannot plunge into the future and leave books out in the cold, but we must also recognize that technology is central to progressing in a world where we must feel connected, informed, human, and – most importantly – smart.

Yes, the younger generation’s knowledge of history and trivial facts is rather

diminutive, but failing to know the capital of Vermont does not constitute a lack of intelligence. The U.S government's 1962 Foreign Service Journal describes a study in which many participants failed to demonstrate a basic knowledge of American geography and history. We, however, don't necessarily need to know such facts in order to learn multivariable calculus, compose a masterpiece in 40 minutes, or understand the Theory of Relativity, but we do need strong critical thinking skills and creativity. According to Sharon Begley's 2010 article "The Dumbest Generation? Don't Be Dumb," IQ scores, which measure "not knowledge but pure thinking capacity," have greatly increased since the 1930s and continue to rise, even though, according to Steven Johnson's *Everything Bad is Good For You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter*, IQ tests are becoming more critically and logically challenging. Technology is, in fact, sustaining and transforming our minds, allowing us to quickly adjust to complex situations that require strong analytical and critical thinking skills. Instead of determining one's intelligence by assessing their memorization skills or reading habits, perhaps evaluating an individual's ability to analytically solve intricate problems and quickly adapt to new, elaborate technological mediums more accurately reflects said individual's intelligence. Of course, clinging to our phones and excessively wasting away our time on insignificant activities that we deem essential does pervade our daily behavior, but it does not detriment our intelligence, and it does not harm the possibility of a hopeful future full of bright thinkers, innovators, and leaders who will boldly propel us into an advanced, progressive society.

The millennial over-contemplates the possibility of prioritizing a dinner with friends and family, one with actual interaction, over updating his or her blog; the traditionalist cringes at the sight of "brain-washed" high-schoolers sitting at a table, staring down at a screen, and innocently playing Connect 4 online with his or her friend who lives 4,000 miles away. But these technologies, whether we agree that they reduce our morals and weaken the quality of human interactions or not, nevertheless permit a deeper understanding of how the world functions, thereby unleashing ideas that provoke the advancement of society -- and humanity -- which would have otherwise lain dormant, buried underneath the layers of pointless, trivial information. Rather than condemning future generations for straying from traditional values and leaning towards enhanced ways of life, we should encourage them to strive for greatness, because ultimately, they determine our future. Only when we acknowledge that an enhanced understanding of the world -- and ourselves -- is possible through embracing technology can we maximize our potential for greatness in order to truly work towards an improved, progressive civilization.

The Dream State

Nick Gelwick

The dream always starts in a dimly lit room, with bare white walls and a grey carpeting. For some reason my heart is always pounding and I'm sweating heavily. Slowly, painfully slowly, a thick black fog rolls into the room and the walls slide away, revealing more of a dark forest floor below me, and some trees barely in my vision. A heavy huffing noise makes my heart skip a beat as I hear a sort of dragging noise coming from in front of me.

It's the sort of noise to give your nightmares nightmares. A wet slapping noise against the forest floor followed by a horse-hoofed clop. In the fog I can just barely make out two red, evilly glowing eyes moving closer to me. I stand paralyzed as it moves closer, and I can make out its face, a skinless horse, with exposed slick muscle on its elongated form almost falling off from decomposition. It almost seems like the creature moves in slow-motion.

It's mouth is always full of razor sharp teeth, and as it comes around side me I see that it has a rider, but it seems to have almost melted into the horse's body, and it's arm's lengthened till they drag across the ground, leaving behind a bloody trail on the forest floor. The rider is also skinless and had the same evil eyes and teeth, but more humanoid and terrifying. Each time it's arms slowly reach around and grab me by the armpits, lifting me up into the air and staring me down.

The top half of the horse-man opens its mouth and moves towards me at a snail's pace. I don't wake up until its teeth are sinking into my neck and its arms are slowly ripping mine off, and I can feel each bone popping off each other and the muscle tearing.

Then I shoot up on my bed, drenched from head-to-toe in a cold sweat, terrified of sleeping again.

I've been losing sleep because the dream feels so...real. It's made me terrified of horses, and unfortunately I live near to a farm. Me and the farmer are decent friends, being neighbors. I went to him about a week ago and he told me a terrifying story.

"Long ago, when settlers were first setting up towns in America, lots of Native Americans died. Sometimes these Natives died near their horses, and sometimes under them. Rarely a newly dead Native and horse would meld spirits, combining them into one entity. The Native American's beliefs re-animated the horse, with the Native with it. The newly formed creature, aptly named the Nuckelavee after the similar Nordish creature, would wander the Americas until it finds civilization." The farmer started looking shifty, as if he was a little kid saying curses on the playground.

The Dream State, cont.

“As it wanders the body breaks down until only its skin is gone, then develops a sheen of protective translucent fat. It’s arms elongate until they drag along the ground, creating a terrifying noise. The horse’s front feet meld with the humans, forming a sort of webbed foot, like a frog. It terrify’s towns all over, making up for its murdered brethren by slaying the white men and eating them.” The farmer then refused to continue, saying thats all thats known. I tried to get more but he quickly turned and went back inside his house.

I went home, terrified of what the farmer told me. “A creature that kills people and eats them? That can’t be possible in this reality. I must be just having a bad spell.” I thought to myself as I got ready for bed that night.

As I fell asleep, still thinking about his “Nuckelavee”, and hearing a sort of creaking noise.

I woke with a start, I was outside. “I must be dreaming again.” I told myself as I looked around. A dark fog rolled in slowly and I saw those too familiar eyes. It moved like a normal horse now, trodding towards me quickly, the noise of its hands dragging along the ground worse with speed.

“I told you, the Nuckelavee is a creature that punishes the white man for his crimes.” I heard a voice call from behind me. I spun quickly and saw the farmer. He had this...crazy smile that was almost too wide for a normal human.

I realized this wasn’t a dream as a slimy hand grab around my throat and picked me up, cutting off my air supply. I felt the creature move me backwards, crushing my neck tighter as I feel both pairs of its teeth on my right side. The horse bites into my hip as the human part bites into my shoulder. I can’t even scream as my vision goes blurry, then black. The last thing I see before I die is the creature’s face, it had dropped me and peered down at me before continuing to eat.

About the Authors

Anna Dahlstrom

Hello my name is Anna Dahlstrom, I'm a sophomore here at Bear Creek. In my free time I enjoy making art, writing and hanging out with my family and friends. As a career I want to pursue nursing, but plan on keeping my love for writing close to my heart. For the slam poem I wrote called "She", I pulled inspiration from the media and current events regarding feminism. In the piece I wrote called "Things I Could Do Instead", I focused on putting lessons I learned in my past and making them into a piece about healing and growing but still keeping the honesty intact. Both pieces I wrote and perfected in Ms.Roach's creative writing class. I highly recommend that class to anyone who gets the opportunity.

Marco Delgado

My name is Marco Delgado and I am in tenth grade. My hobbies are mostly playing video games and creating music. I don't really want to pursue art or writing a career, but it seems really interesting so I could give it a try. The source of inspiration is the way I feel about my dad and the things he has done throughout the years. Some positive, some negative. I put a lot of effort into this short writing, opening up and saying everything I wanted to say about my dad. Now I feel a little more relieved.

Abigale Field

Hi, my name is Abigale Field. I'm a ninth grader at Bear Creek High School. My leisure time often is filled with writing, drawing, reading, and more recently- looking up pictures of my favorite yaoi over the Internet. As a career, I want to be a graphic novelist and an astrologer. For now, a short-term like goal I have is to get a DevianArt account to present my art\fan art and fiction\fan fiction.

I kind of decided to draw one way I see Horologium (Horo for short) that day. It took a couple of days to complete. I drew him many times before, but I chose to submit this one, as well as another.

Horo is a Forest magician; a magic combination of Grass and Dream magic. Smart and sympathetic, he likes to write, draw, daydream and listen to music, to name a few. But he's over-emotional and tends to get offended easily. Lonely and somewhat sadistic, a tendency to torture others is not one of Horo's admirable traits.

That will be all for now. I could go on with the monologue of him later.

Sayonara!

About the Authors

Tess Landin

Tess Landin, a junior, enjoys playing videogames, sewing, and drawing. In the future she wants to pursue graphic design. Her piece was inspired by anime, videogames, and her peers.

“My COs, do not steeeeel!”

Breanna Macedonia

My name is Breanna Macedonia, or as most people know me, Bree, and I’m a senior. I don’t really have much of a hobby, but I’m kind of a nerd about choral music. I’m not entirely sure what I want to pursue my career in, but if I had to make a choice between art or writing, I would probably choose writing, although I did submit an art piece. When I’m focused and really into a piece, I put a lot of thought and dedication into my writing. Through my life, probably starting in middle school, I’ve been told I have quite a bit of potential in writing. My source of inspiration for this piece was actually a song I don’t listen to anymore. I don’t even listen to the artist anymore. But the song just gave me the idea to draw an angel. What started this piece was a curvy ‘x’ that created the shape of her crossed legs. From there I kind of thought it looked like crossed legs and went from there. I actually drew this piece when I was in 10th grade during my study hall and it is by far the best piece of art I have ever made. I’m still very proud of this piece because I struggle to draw in general, but realistic pieces aren’t really my style (hence her awkward feet and her hands hidden under her wings as she holds them up). I’m especially proud of this piece because what makes this unique is I usually draw things using a reference photo, but this piece came purely from my imagination. I saw in my mind what I wanted to draw and recreated it onto the paper. One happy little mistake, as the great Bob Ross would say, would be that I left this in a sketchbook and the pencil lead rubbed onto the cover, then back onto the picture, giving it that foggy or grungy, dirty look she has. At first I was upset that it had been ruined, but I cleaned it up a little with an eraser here and there and realized it added to the effect I was going for. Overall, I am very proud of this piece and couldn’t be happier to have the opportunity to be in Bear Ink. It’s a great way of being a part of something a little special in my last year of high school.

About the Authors

Maggie Mills

My name is Maggie Mills and I am a junior. I love to swim and do art of all mediums. My source of inspiration for this piece was the theme of birds that is persistent throughout the year in my AP language and composition class. This piece represents the heart that I have spent in that class.

Truc-Ly Ngo

10th

I have thought a lot about pursuing writing as a career, but at the moment I am still unsure. My source of inspiration I found into piecing together the poem was using one's past memories, and taking those experiences, to compare the past and present. I tried to demonstrate the significance of growth and change someone went through to be able to have a positive outlook for their future, which I personally believe is a substantial part of growing up.

Kieran Phillips

I'm Kieran Phillips, author of my myth, The Dawn of the Balancer. I've always loved creative writing, and have written a number of stories, all the while considering it as one of my options as a career. In addition to writing, I love reading, music---listening and creating, as I play the violin with a few instruments on the side---it is one of my greatest passions, as well as math and science. I'm left in quite a plight, caught between my passions. In all respects, though I have been inspired by teachers all the way through, as well as authors like J.K. Rowling and Brandon Sanderson (read The Stormlight Archive, it is WORTH IT, reader or not), amazing individuals like Lindsey Stirling, and amazing and kind people in my family. That is not to mention the effect Star Wars has had. Overall, my uniqueness is most important to me. Never let go of who you are.

Lizbeth Sanchez

Liz Sanchez in tenth grade. Her main hobby is drawing. She is not has not decided if she she wants to pursue art or writing as a career. Her sources of inspiration is thoughts, music, talking to someone about her problems or theirs. "Savior and Salvador mean the same thing :)"



About the Authors

Sonja Sower

Sonja Sower is in the 10th grade. Her source of inspiration for this specific piece is Momma Lowell and her English class, which has the overarching theme of identity.

Judith Zavala Torres

My name is Judith and I'm a junior here at Bear Creek. When writing poetry I think it's most important to key in on the emotional impact a poem can have, and so when writing these poems I found inspiration in anything in my life. Outside of school, I enjoy reading and going on jogs. I actually had wanted to pursue journalism and become a book editor and hopefully one day become a publisher.



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