



ELEKTRA PHROG

SPRING 2025
ISSUE 17.2

Cover Image:
Detail from "Yosemite" by Emma Campbell

Cover Design by Myli-Ann Goodine

Back Cover Image: "Are You Out There?" by Celeste Greene

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| The Houses Here Breathe by Lorel Allen | 1 |
| Whispers of the Oak Trail by Alina Oberglock | 3 |
| It Is Up To Me by Abby Montidoro | 4 |
| Casey Bats Again: The Epilogue by Mike “Mig” Gallagher | 5 |
| Bitter & Sweet by Livi Antico | 8 |
| The Girl Who Cried Wolf by Tara Marsh | 16 |
| NOLA’s Crown Jewel by Alina Oberglock | 18 |
| My Breath by Kaitlyn Schoenthal | 19 |
| The Fracture I Wear by Mia Olimpiyuk | 22 |
| Sky Island by Abby Montidoro | 23 |
| Yosemite by Emma Campbell | 27 |
| The Edges of His Mouth by Kaitlyn Schoenthal | 28 |
| Snowy Warmth by Elyse McGowan | 34 |
| Puzzle by Micaela Ramirez | 35 |
| Sustaining Strength by Alici Ouellette | 36 |
| Chances by Alina Oberglock | 37 |
| Dreaming of the Beyond by Julissa Hernandez | 39 |
| Are You Out There by Celeste Greene | 41 |
| NYC by Emerance Den Uijl | 42 |
| Florida Christmas by Emma Campbell | 44 |
| My Girls by Lex Emery | 45 |
| Charred Hallow but Standing by Jonathan Joiner | 48 |
| Ashes Always Fall by Taylor Riesbeck | 49 |
| 11:59 by Alexandra Vangor | 51 |
| Apocalypse Incoming by Alina Oberglock | 59 |
| Beautiful, Molded Plates by Gabriel Vives | 60 |
| A Beautiful Struggle by Ben Adkins | 62 |
| Contributor Bios | 63 |
| Elektraphrog Staff | 66 |

The Houses Here Breathe

By Lorel Allen

The houses here breathe.

Their walls are thin, and they take in the cold easily.

There are no longer fires to warm these walls. Instead, pipes
and wires run along them.

If you are quiet enough, when you lay your skin against the
floor,

You can feel the house breathe in sync with yourself.

They are deep aching breaths, like a body that hasn't
stretched in years.

Deep groans and whines as it takes care of the creatures
within.

After a while, it becomes difficult to differentiate which
sounds are the house and which are yours.

The thin walls don't only let in the cold,
voices and bells echo from outside.

A drunk girl on the streets laughing with her friends.

Neighbors catching up.

Fog horns from distant boats and ferries.

The house lets all the sounds from the outside become one
within.

The house's body expands beyond just itself, inviting the life
of the town in.

Its breaths and groans echo the laughing from beyond.

It isn't bad, just different.

There is more of an intimate nature and vulnerability with
these homes.

It is easy to become enchanted with it but after a while,

I can only crave the houses of the Soth.

The houses down south are strong and dense.
Their walls are thick, as one must to resist the pull of nature.
You don't hear the houses breathe down there.
If you are quiet enough in the dead of the night,
You might hear a groan or squeeze escape.
That is all you will hear though, nothing like the houses here.
The houses down south don't have the luxury of being open,
vulnerable, and gentle.
They can't let the voices outside in, nor does it want to.
The houses can't breathe because they were created to be
strong.
But in their own way, they are just as intimate as the houses
in the North.
The houses here take in every little thing.
The houses down south keep their desires and secrets hidden
within their walls.
Selfish little actions to keep its people to themselves,
Holding onto every action, whisper, and secret its residents
dare to have.
I understand the Southern houses.
You don't have the luxury of being weak down there
If you aren't able to stand for yourself, you will easily be cut
down.
It's the way of life there.
But for my time here, in the North, I like this vulnerability.
And right now, I like laying on the floor breathing in time
with the house.

Whispers of the Oak Trail

By Alina Oberglock



It Is Up To Me

By Abby Montidoro

I will hold their hand
They will know what that means
By the lines that are unique to my palm
They will read the squeeze
As a sign to pay attention
They will look at me
See in my eyes my desperate need
They will stay forever
It is up to me

Casey Bats Again: The Epilogue

By Mike “Mig” Gallagher

A fortnight had passed since the loss to Mudville’s cross-town foe.

Casey mostly gathered splinters despite his all-star dough.

All joy sucked from the boys, the team was in a slump.

The skipper looked down the bench, looking for a jump.

But the outcome was not lost for the Mudville nine that day;

The score stood three to three, with one half inning yet to play.

Mudville fans could see some hope through the melancholy haze.

But those boys of summer were lost in a musty malaise.

Perched upon the mound was cross-town’s darling fast-ball ace.

He slung the ball so hard that Cooney could not keep pace.

After Cooney’s K, Barrows smirked and stepped up to the plate.

“Strike one, two, three,” growled the ump; Barrows was swinging late.

Flynn kissed a shamrock on a chain then ambled to the box.

He hacked at a heater that zoomed by down near his socks.

The ace reeled and heaved a meatball right down the pipe.

Stee-rike, yelled the ump and Flynn gave his brow a wipe.

Seein’ the frazzled Flynn the crowd knew extra innings loomed.

Flynn closed his eyes, stuck out the bat, and the ball was boomed.

The blooper found its way to the corner of right field.

“Huzzah!” cried that crowd for a three-bagger did Flynn yield.

The skipper scratched his head, then waved Blake back from the deck.

He pointed at Casey and said, "time to earn your check."

Casey arose twirling the lumber on his finger.

"Don't you worry skip, I'm gonna hit you a dinger."

Ace checked the third base runner then hurled a real gasser.

Casey smacked the ball so hard it hit a streetside passer.

Four thousand eyes were on the ump gazing at the pole.

Moments passed before the ump raised his arms shouting, "foul ball."

Ace glanced at the hot corner then sneered toward the plate.

He tossed the sphere, Casey swinging early, the ball arriving late.

"Stee-ri-ke two" yelled the ump, "time-out" bawled the skipper.

Casey stepped out of the box and slowly trotted over.

The skipper stood on tiptoes and whispered in Casey's ear.

Casey stared at his coach with a slight bewilder.

Then he nodded at his boss and marched back to the platter.

Cross-town infielders backed a step in awe of this batter.

Now, the infielders punch their gloves while ebbing on the grass.

The dauntless ace simply smirks at the Mudville sassafras.

The sphere approaches high and tight, Casey reels in the box.

The barrel meets the leather and lets loose a prancing fox.

Now, Casey tosses the lumber and gallops down the line.
The bunt is fair and true - and stuns the cross-town nine.
First to stir, Ace snatches the ball and stretches to make the tag.
And when the dust lifts, Casey stands safely on the bag.

Now, Flynn slides safely into the plate, Mudville wins, we win!
Players lift the runner, fans screaming, “Flynn, the mighty
Flynn!”

Casey just smiles, brushes the dirt, and heads for the dugout
front.

Ohhhh, there is joy in Mudville today—humble Casey hit a bunt.

Bitter & Sweet

By Livi Antico

SPLASH!

In the blink of an eye, Desideria's day had gone from bad to worse. Her dark colored apron did little to protect her cream-colored shirt, as fresh coffee splattered across her clothes. Thank goodness, it was ice coffee, but that didn't make the assault any less startling. Desideria's face flared red.

This was exactly why she didn't talk to the customers. One minute, they were talking about their order, and the next, they were spitting in her face, cursing out profanities she'd never even heard before.

Why was she surprised at this point? It felt like every social interaction she'd ever had, even outside of work, had gone like this to some extent... minus the cold beverage still dripping from her clothes.

The customer was yelling something at Des – she wasn't paying attention to whatever it was that was being said. Surely, it was the same old thing.

"You messed up my order! Are you dense!? No wonder you work here, you can't get a job anywhere else!

"Don't you know how to do anything right? I asked for a black coffee; you gave me someone else's drink!"

"You might be pretty, but none of that matters if you're stupid! But of course, broads like you—"

She'd heard it all before.

Right now, the barista was far too focused on her internal battle to care, fighting between rationale and emotion.

This time around, emotion won.

Huffing out the breath she had been holding, Desideria left the scene, paying no mind to the patron still screeching in her direction. She stormed into the back, promptly untying the now stained apron from around her waist, before throwing it on the ground and taking the nearest "EXIT" door without a second thought.

There was a chance she'd be fired from her job for this. People aren't allowed to just stomp off in the middle of their shifts. But at this point, Desideria didn't think she cared. Who needed a dead-end job like this? She could find another one, even if it meant moving back in with her parents for a while. She just couldn't handle working in customer service anymore. At least her family could talk to her without spitting in her face. Becoming a recluse would've been better than this.

She was practically a recluse already.

Desideria's feet carried her through the city, their pace slowly down as her thoughts began to calm and reflect on the interaction she had just had. It wouldn't be so bad if she just had friends she could vent to about days like these. The problem was, despite how desperately Des longed for connection, it seemed that her attempts at casual socialization went about as well as today had went. That was to say, quite poorly.

The only time people seemed interested in her was in they thought they could get something out of her. Some people thought being buddy-buddy with a barista meant you got free drinks. Others (especially older men) were under the assumption that women in retail are kind because they're flirting, and not because they'd lose their jobs if they weren't nice. Desideria didn't want dates, and she definitely didn't want anyone mooching off of her, so work didn't seem to be the best place to make friends.

She'd tried other methods. Des had gone to local bookstores, where she hoped to find fellow readers that she could mingle with; turns out, not many enjoyed the genres she did. She went to overcrowded clubs and parties, since that was supposedly where people her age went to find friends. Of course, that usually just ended up in more unwanted advancements, and conversations that were far too friendly for a first meeting.

What other options did she have? Work was a disaster, she couldn't find people with her hobbies, and she wasn't

going to find a best friend or soulmate if they were drunk and creepy.

Desideria's thoughts continued as she made it to her destination: the subway. Stepping onto the train, she found herself a seat; she was in no mood to stand, considering she usually wasn't allowed to sit down at work. She could see a few people glance in her direction, then grimace when they saw the large stain on her shirt. Those were probably meant to be looks of pity, but the young woman felt nothing but judgement.

She felt her phone vibrate in her pocket. Fishing it out, she saw it was her manager calling her. Shit. After some internal debate, Desideria turned off her phone, currently uninterested in thinking about her work life.

Right before the doors of the subway train closed, a young woman around Desideria's age entered the train as well, and, to her horror, she sat right beside her. Oh, god. There were so many other available seats, too. Why did she have to sit here?

Desideria stole a glance. Her new, unwanted companion had blonde hair, tied up in a messy ponytail. She was wearing a gray hoodie with some sort of text on the front, although Desideria didn't want to stare long enough to find out what it said. She also had a backpack instead of a purse – was she a college kid or something? That was a future Des was never able to afford.

She scowled and averted her eyes, not wanting it to seem like her glances were invitations for conversation. Unfortunately, the other woman would start talking anyway.

"Had a bad day, huh?" the woman asked, her eyes on the large ugly stain. Her voice wasn't a whisper, but it wasn't too loud either, not wanting to disturb others on the train. No, it was just disturbing Des.

"It just got worse," she answered with a groan.

The blonde raised her eyebrow. "Wh—how come?"

The meaning was lost on her. Desideria bit her tongue; she really shouldn't be lashing out at a stranger like this. It

wasn't the poor girl's fault Desideria was upset at the moment.

"Nothing, just—not a fan of the subway," Des lied. "Sorry. Long day at work."

"Oh! Where do you work at?"

"Just some coffee place downtown. It pays the bills, at least."

Desideria could see the cogs turning in the young woman's head as her gaze momentarily returned to the stain on her clothes. "Oh." Her face looked so remorseful.

"Eh, it's not a big deal. It's not the first time it's happened." Desideria gave out an awkward chuckle, but she didn't receive any laughs back.

"Does that happen a lot? I can't imagine having to put up with that sort of thing all the time!"

"Not *too* often, although I have had to toss out a few shirts..." Desideria admitted. "I take it you don't work in retail then?"

"Oh no," the girl shook her head, "I just go to my school, currently. I would work, but my class schedule doesn't really leave me time for a job."

"How are you paying for college then?"

"Government grants, mostly! Me and my family are pretty low-income, so most of my tuition gets covered for me! The rest, my parents help me with."

Boy, was she lucky. Well, not the low-income part, but Desideria had never gotten a chance at higher education. She chose not to bring that up right now.

Instead, she asked, "What classes are you taking?"

The blonde girl smiled, before listing a few off. "Right now, I'm taking Intro to Humanities, Earth Science, English, and College Math. My workload has been intense..."

"God, I can't imagine the amount of homework you must have," Desideria remarked. "I get to just come home and pass out after a long day of work. You have to come home and *then* do most of your work there!"

“Yeah, it’s a bit exhausting sometimes,” the girl said. “But ultimately, I know it’ll be worth it. At least if I have a degree, I’m less likely to get stuck at a dead-end job.”

She then paused, before covering her mouth, although the blush on her face marked her obvious embarrassment; “No offense! I didn’t mean it like that, I just meant—”

“It’s okay, don’t worry,” Desideria chuckled. “I get it. I *do* work a dead-end job. It sucks. It’s good that you have the option to go for something better, ya know?”

“Yeah,” the lady nodded her head, “But still. That was rude of me. I mean, someone needs to make people’s coffee in the mornings! You should just be paid better to do it, especially with how everyone describes retail jobs...”

“People have it in their minds that folks who work at coffee shops are lazy, or stuck up, or whatever. I’m not sure where they get that idea from, because at least at an office job, you’re allowed to sit down!” Desideria complained, before sighing. “Some who came in are nice though. Usually it’s just the usual small talk, but some tell me about their day, and that makes things interesting at least. Plus, some of them just tip well. That always helps.”

“That’s great! What’s the name of the place—I could come by and grab some coffee some time!”

Desideria gave a little laugh. “Well, I might not be working there anymore, but if you ever want to check it out for yourself...”

#

The two talked to each other for several minutes. They talked about whatever came up; school experiences, work life, and how it was living in the city were just a few things they spoke about. During the middle of all the talking, Desideria had completely forgotten what had even taken place at work, and the frustration that accompanied it. It was so refreshing to have someone who would just listen to her, and someone who had interesting things to say of her own. Right now, it felt like her problems were miles away.

Unfortunately, the pleasant conversation couldn’t last forever.

“Ah, this is my stop coming up,” said Desideria. After some thought, she followed up with, “Well, it was nice talking to you.”

“Before you go—” the blonde lady paused in the middle of her sentence, pulling out her phone from her pocket, “—Let me give you my number!” She tapped the screen and scrolled for a moment, before presenting her smartphone to Desideria, revealing her phone number written out in her notes app. Desideria was so surprised by this, but quickly pulled out her own phone, waited for it to turn on, and typed the number down. For now, she ignored the missed call and text notifications she had.

“Gosh, I really should’ve asked this earlier I guess—” Desideria felt embarrassed but pushed on, “What’s your name?” Her finger hovered over the contact name textbox, awaiting an answer.

“The name’s Dawn!” the young woman answered, smiling warmly. “And yours?”

She spent a moment adding Dawn’s contact into her phone, an embarrassingly wide smile growing on her face. She felt a warmth she hadn’t felt in a long time. “My name’s Desideria.”

The train was slowing down, having made it to one of its destinations, and Desideria would be getting off here. She stood up and readied herself to leave before addressing Dawn one last time.

“It was nice meeting you,” Desideria said. “I’ll make sure to remember to text you when I get home.”

“Have a good rest of your day,” Dawn waved. “And good luck with your job!”

Desideria beamed. When she got off the train, there was a skip in her step, and the sun seemed to shine a little brighter, even with the misfortune of the day’s events. The walk home to her apartment took less than five minutes, and that time was spent mulling over the conversation she had just left; when she arrived, she wasted no time changing her clothes and quickly slipped into something far more comfortable and far less coffee stained. With the change in

wardrobe and a heavy huff, Desideria finally decided to bite the bullet, and pulled out her phone, her hand trembling.

As expected, one of the texts she had missed was from her manager. Being fired over text wasn't a great way to go out, but at least it would be in writing.

However, Des was surprised to see the text was, in fact, not informing her she had been fired for her behavior at work. Yes, the text was definitely a frustrated one, but this time, she was being let off with a warning. Desideria would have to count her blessings today, because she had felt so sure she was going to be out of a job. She let out a huge sigh of relief, thankful that she still had a way to pay the bills. Next time, if a customer assaulted her, she'd just call the police and let them handle it.

Having her phone out, Desideria considered texting Dawn. Is it too soon? They had just talked, maybe fifteen minutes ago? What if she came across as desperate? But what if Dawn was waiting for confirmation that Desideria typed in the correct phone number?

There were so many things that could go wrong, and so many unspoken rules when it came to socializing with others that she just couldn't understand. Desideria felt clueless, but she couldn't just give this up. Someone had gone out of their way to talk to her, so she should do the same, shouldn't she?

Fighting against herself, Desideria carefully typed and deleted and subsequently retyped a text message:

"Hello Dawn, this is Desideria, the girl you met on the bus today! Just confirming I got your number typed in right!"

Is this good? Is this too formal? Desideria worried. She was an adult. She didn't have time to worry over a silly text message like this. She eventually sent the text, and immediately afterwards, she shoved her phone in her pocket, not wanting to acknowledge its shameful existence. Just a few minutes later, she would feel it vibrate, and she anxiously looked at the new notification.

“hi!!! yes this is dawn! thank goodness you typed your name out, because i have no idea how to spell it lol!”

Desideria smiled. What was she so worried about? Dawn seemed like a sweet person. If Desideria was finally going to break out of her reclusive, hermit nature, she was glad she might have someone like Dawn to help her along with that process. She quickly typed out a reply, her smile growing by the second.

The Girl Who Cried Wolf

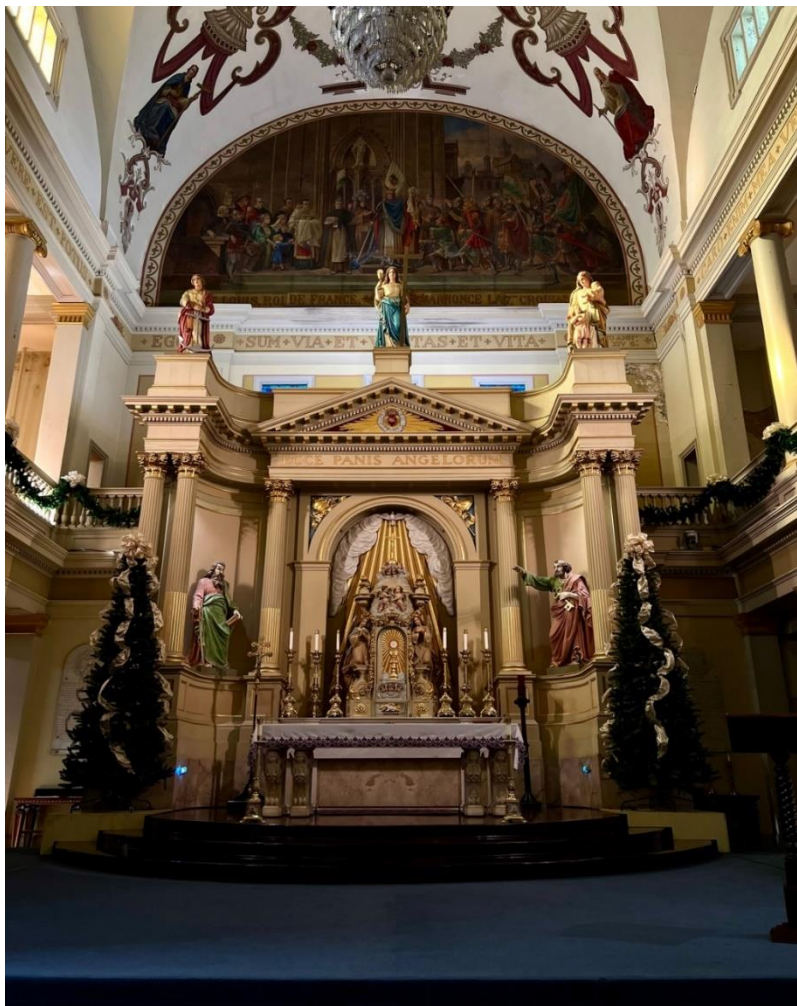
By Tara Marsh

Crying wolf is what you would tell me
When your son would poke and hit me
Sibling bickering, growing pains
Pain in the ass is what my brother was
Maybe you thought they were alligator tears
Not to be confused with the alligator roll at that sushi
place
Smooth and silky
Unlike that basketball from
That one time in gym class
The ball felt like a hide of a gator
As it hit the tip of my middle finger
Were those wolf tears, alligator tears, human tears?
It wasn't bleeding so must be wolf tears
Even though my finger was as purple as ube fudge
Just as soft as that alligator roll
It is a little hard to cry wolf
When my foot is facing backwards
And my face is planted in the snow
Maybe the snow melting on my face
just looked like tears
My leg looked like my finger
Broken and bruised
My skin as white as snow

Now discolored
Fifty shades of Ube
The scar down my leg is a reminder
Another reminder I like to give you
Is my middle finger gesture
From that one time you said it's not bleeding
Maybe that's why I don't tell you my secrets
You wouldn't believe me anyways
You may think I'm just crying wolf

NOLA's Crown Jewel

By Alina Oberglock



My Breath

By Kaitlyn Schoenthal

You seldom realize how fast life can act until despair cascades upon you, with no idea how to respond.

"I'm sorry." Who can ever wish to hear these dreadful words, swearing rejection?

I know the feeling, to peer around and ponder at sullen faces, clad solely in black, dismissing it, thinking nothing of importance to the matter despite how blatantly obvious it may be. One could call this naivety, another denial.

"You shouldn't have to hear this." You respite from that erroneous absence, as nothing but cherubic play. We don't question when they don't come home that night, nor tomorrow, nor the night after that... Your mind shouts that there nothing to worry about as it falls prey to the dreamless slumber.

"There's no need to be sad." Why would you be sad? Yes, you have yet to receive sweet goodnights for quite some time, and haven't seen a mere strand of familiarity for even longer than you remember but...

The calendar continues to pester as days fall away along with no hint of that longing presence. "I'm sorry," I can wait, this may be the longest I have been alone, but you will come home. *Just stop*. It claws at the fabric of my mind, grasping, shredding, a feline gleaming its curved canines in danger, why aren't you here yet?

What is happening? They saunter around as if nothing is wrong. Something is missing. *You* are missing. It isn't right!

Am I solus in this feeling of deep silence? It accompanies me every moment of my wake, yet there they go, on and on as if you never existed, *we* never existed! You believed they cared, cared too much to ignore the missing. Though of course they didn't; if so, how would they possibly refuse to tear their throats, if only to appease this cutthroat ache in their chest as I do! True altruism. It drives a hotness in you to well up and fall in your stomach: anger.

Their hearts were not shattered; they did not cry till tears bled dry, so cease these pointless pleasantries and ersatz desires. Our once kaleidoscopic galaxy is diminutive in shape, color, and texture. Our whole world has been doused in Louboutin red. While we spoiled in our vexation, they slept quiet as a babe, carefree as one could be. Even as they shirk in nonchalance, you could still bear down. Now they expect acquiescence? To force this smothering rage, rebelling against every action of yours, into compliance?

Their demands were just asking me of such animosity, fooling with the devil himself. How could you remain calm when this vindication spits and spews, burning me alive? Like a festering wound, it simmers underneath flesh, it harms, it tires, it curses. You're tired—tired of the uncertainty—tired of the criticism—tired of the lies.

You can never stop reminiscing; your heart can never forget, even as theirs do. You are tattered inside, past an alluding frontage. Willing to bargain your life away, if just for one ounce silence to ooze the voices away. I wish to God for it to be our helpless daydream. I am begging for this all to go away.

You...don't want to be alone anymore, not again. Your little Kindle of Hope is dying, suffocating, and deprived of breath. The weight grows heavier as the clock ticks on, day after day. Endless time is running towards an ultimate completion. You know you were wrong. You know that they hate when you plead your love; they cannot stand it, but you are on the verge.

So please, "don't speak such hurtful words."

I look around, and all I see is blur, a monotone dullness. I mourn my lament and lament my mourning. The sorrow swallows my silenced soul. I drown myself in the depression of the world and all the distractions it provides, which I worship. My joy riven, leaving my mind disfigured and maimed.

Their ushers drive me down concrete streets, viscerally knowing of the monsters that lurk and prowl underneath the night. My mind cloudy, going somewhere man could not,

deep within fantasies and delusions. Broken desperation scraping onto whatever it can to retain my sanity.

Only in thin spreads of fiber can you hear my voice crack. Emotions carve lines, that chase words, sculpt sentences, and weave entire poems of my woes. Once blank canvases, brimming with unfiltered fervor, it screamed, it cried, and finally, it grieved.

Does time heal? Does acceptance? I do not know; none can cull the brine emotions that sting and eat away at your flesh like no flame dare. Rusting pure precious metal until all that is left is your corroded tarnished self. But I can say, that when she lit that kerosene wick, ultimately slicing open that petite envelope in ginger hands, she knew the bitter truth: you weren't coming home,

She couldn't breathe.

The Fracture I Wear

By Mia Olimpiyuk

He broke me until all that was left was fragments.

I used him until his past echoed.

I run until dusk.

The night does not wither.

The pain, it lingers.

I love to look at the fracture.

Beautiful, it is, the fracture.

I need it to linger.

He knew it wouldn't wither.

Last I saw him, it was dusk.

Hurt and pain, they echo.

Its hard to visualize when all you see is fragments.

The sun goes down at dusk.

He forced me to endure the fracture.

Petals fall, they bend and wither.

I hope I showed him how to linger.

My voice, to him, is just an echo.

I forced him to look at the fragments.

Knowing is not so much understanding fractures.

You know what else goes down at dusk?

My soul, it echoes.

Sky Island

By Abby Montidoro

My pencil taps rapidly against the desk. I look around the room; there's cameras on each corner of the ceiling. They have a 360-degree view of me.

The weight of my family looms over me. This test will decide whether we stay on this big chunk of floating rock. I think of my name: Aaron. My parents named me based off its meaning: the light bringer. I am the reason they're closer to the sun instead of down below.

"Aaron, you brought us to the light," my parents always say. I didn't do much. I was born into the right place at the right time. I gained my natural right to citizenship, and now it was time to get my parents'.

My parents always reminded me of our beginnings. The sky island was built 50 years ago. The depletion of resources on our planet caused chaos. Researchers found that our star was the source of life. The governments around the planet started building upwards. They never stopped to think about who would stay and who would go. The wealthy went up, abandoning everything. The poor were left to fend for themselves. Soon, though, they started letting the poor they left into their cities. They called it "A Promise Land".

"5 more minutes," the test proctor said. The test proctor wasn't even human, just a chunky robot announcing a script.

I scramble to finish. I walk out of the testing center feeling uneasy to my stomach. I will know our fate in 5 hours after everything is reviewed. I can't go home to my parents' unending questions, so, instead I take a shuttle to the edge of the island. The edge is my favorite place. It's the only spot where the illusion cracks, where I can see the truth of what lies beneath us. Luscious green mountains. Compared to the bare city of the sky island, down below looks wonderful. My parents say they miss it sometimes.

I sit on the railing, my legs dangling over the edge. I wonder what it must have been like for them, leaving everyone and everything behind, struggling to find work in the city, hiding for years until I was born—until I became their light. But I don't feel like a light now. I feel like a fire suffocating.

The five hours pass in a blur of wandering. When I finally return home, my parents are already waiting. Their faces are tight with anticipation, hope flickering in their tired eyes. The notification pings on my wristband.

I hold my breath and open it.

Test Results: FAIL

The word is stamped in bold, unfeeling letters, sealing their fate. My mother covers her mouth with her hands. My father closes his eyes. For a long moment, none of us spoke. The silence is deafening.

Then, my father straightens his back. "We knew this was a possibility," he says, his voice steady but hollow. "We've moved once before. We'll do it again if we have to."

I shake my head. "I'll come with you. I'll help you build a future down there."

My mother grips my hand. "Aaron, you have to stay. You have a future here."

I look at her, really look at her, and I realize how fragile she seems. I've never seen my parents as weak, but now, I see the exhaustion in their faces, the years of struggle carved into their skin. They sacrificed everything for me. And now, I have to decide.

I could stay, safe in my citizenship, surrounded by wealth and opportunity. Or I could go down with them, to a world I've never known, where everything is uncertain.

I stare at the word on my wristband until the letters blur. Fail. It echoes in my mind, rattling against my ribs, suffocating me like the fire I've always feared.

My parents' hands are still in mine, anchoring me, but I feel like I'm floating. I am adrift in a sky I no longer

want to belong to. I think of the world below, of the mountains that stretch endlessly, of the green that beckons with its raw, untamed beauty. My whole life, I have been told that this city above is the future, that we were the lucky ones to be here. But as I look at my parents, I wonder, “What if the real promise isn’t up here at all?”

The thought terrifies me. It also excites me.

The knock at the door is loud, final. The relocation officers stand in the doorway, their faces blank, their uniforms stiff. My mother’s hand trembles in mine. My father lets out a heavy breath and nods.

“It’s time,” one of the officers says. There’s no sympathy in his voice.

My parents exchange one last glance before stepping forward. I watch them go, feeling my heart pound in my chest. The officers don’t even look at me. To them, I am still part of the system, still a citizen who belongs. They expect me to stay.

But I don’t.

Before the doors shut, I step forward. “I’m going with them.”

The officers pause, eyes narrowing. “You understand what that means?” one asks. “If you leave, you can’t come back. You’ll be erased from the system.”

I swallow hard, but I don’t hesitate. “I understand.”

One of the officers sighs but gestures for me to follow. My parents stare at me, disbelief and love warring in their eyes. My mother shakes her head, tears spilling over her cheeks. “Aaron, you don’t have to do this.”

“I do,” I say firmly. “We’re a family. We stay together.”

The shuttle ride down is silent. My parents hold my hands tightly, as if afraid I’ll vanish. The descent is long, the artificial light of the sky island fading until all that’s left is the deep greens and browns of the world below.

When we land, the air is different—thicker, filled with the scent of earth and growing things. People wait at the edge of the landing platform, their faces familiar yet unknown. My father steps forward first, embracing a man

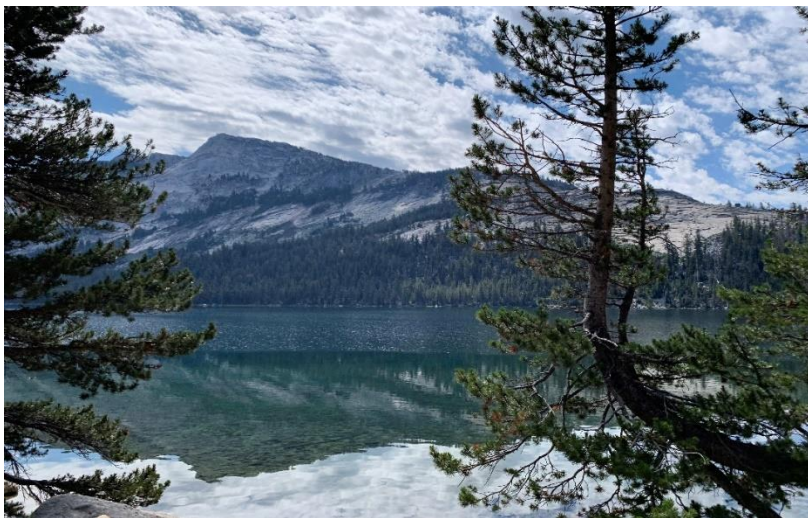
who looks just like him. My mother is pulled into a tight hug by a woman with the same warm eyes.

And then they turn to me.

“You must be Aaron,” the woman says, her voice kind and knowing. “We’ve been waiting for you.” A lump forms in my throat.

Yosemite

By Emma Campbell



The Edges of His Mouth

By Kaitlyn Schoenthal

By a sparkling cool stream, a snake reflected on the past thousand years. It sunbathed on the rock, hot like glowing coal with dark orange lightning underneath, as a pink ribboned tongue flicked across its white slender maw. Inside the serpent's slitted eye was avian, tall, strong, black as the midnight sky. The raven peered intellectually when a naïve figure approached and watched as the world swam along day after day. Deep inside the soul was the moon, pale and beautiful like a washed-out painting, as a scaled fish, pelted as silver as a silverfish, dazzling like a child's glitter, flicked its crescent-shaped arrow, colorless and invisible, up the chilled run of wet. The current sputtered and gasped in its cascade downwards in an elusive dance with gravity, graphing the permanence of its frolic with liquid twirls and whirls.

The moon gazed at the Grassland, the Savannah, the Forest. What a sight to behold. In the day's bright reflection, the moon fluttered at the beautiful sight. It is beautiful, isn't it?

The trees thought of the world. Thought of their desire, a desire unfamiliar after centuries of stagnant repetition. Day. Night. Day. Night. Hunger. Desire. The trees lived their familiar life, damned to never act upon their desire, one thing that they knew to name. They knew the name of a few things, even after all the time vines spent observing.

In the distance, a far-stretched horizon as long as the Old One was tall, had shifted and swayed. The leaves and branches had not seen the mirage that stumbled flat, a dark speck in the sun's retched burn that had raised again on, had not seen the figure of spectral skin, limbs bruised in fresh mud and old abuse, a mere 20 feet from the tall flesh of foliage.

The huckleberry was first to have known of the presence as it staggered ever closer to the furthest brush of muddled nightshade. The raven was next as it took in the figure; a

glare of murky light revealed his neck adorned with thick poised leather. Perfectly silver chains of cobalt hung limp, dragging along his clavicle. Grating oblong hoops, linked together to braid all the way down, rattled and chinked. The forest buzzed in acceptance at the spectacular sight of human.

Ten feet far the shrubs heard the faint murmur and hollowed eyes, distant and glazed alone. "Upon shortchange, as both trusts decay—" a whispered to nothing and no one, barely a voice.

A human. A very real human. How long has it been since the surface had last caught eye of the native species, so divine and wary? The wood prised the brambles, ushering the human to enter its maw, cautious, to not amate the human, careful and slow as if the forest was to soothe a frightened feline.

He trembled and shook in the open gaze, underneath the towering overtop him, overcast in shadow as they engulfed their prey. His feet partially lacerated from a harsh trek on the surface earth and leaked ichor with every stomp. The vibrations resounded through the roots, up the trunk, over the branches, and the leaves shuddered like a finger's nerves as he trudged into the predator with impassive acquiescence.

Shadows overcast at once, caution aside to harrow. The opening clamped shut.

Snap-crack!

All at once. Inky blackness doused the forest. Soft dark green and light neon filtered and weaved between leaves. Shadows empowered grew in a blink watched wryly wringing in the undergrowth, incandescent delight at their duly wrought catch.

The forests savored the taste of human and prided the hunt, a feeling not felt since The Fall. The simple title gave an unpleasant texture of bile. The Fall was the beginning of life and loss. The forest had not known of the first fallout, sparking the first of many gorge and panic. The trees too late to revel in the out-of-control flames. The ash left behind

was only of importance in memory, the dying moment the humans had hidden in secrecy, slinking away deep undersea of great waves inside large translucent domes, so far from the surface's grasp.

"He shall lay, birthing madness and sin." The human, ever too distracted to fret adventured into the depths, guided by the elusive branches and weeds.

"Tainted flesh and black within."

Sound started up again, the tense anticipation melted away to a symphony of voices that resounded throughout the holt. Wolfsbane indigo bells ring, rocking fast side to side mesmerized. Hemlock huffed and puffed petrichor that swam under the twirling roots of birch.

A touch against hairs of grass, inches from brushing against delicate leaves jolted the bobbing florets. The tempestuous prancing had not gone unnoticed even far utop the horizon, long dead and silent.

Two feet stood purposefully at the corner of the forest, not yet daring to enter. The personage seemingly judged whether it should enter the area or not. It should not if it wishes to live. To hands of sand sway by its sides, poised to act. It was one of the ancient creations even older than the forests or any of their relatives. The human look-alikes could not remain stagnant like the forest for all of the time that had passed and would appear rarely on their endless journey.

Some could fix shredded and rust. Some could not. This creature was something in between. A stark of nature. A chimera, dead yet alive. A new sight to behold. It had not degraded into a mass of steel and mechanics like so many before. Nothing humanlike. They screeched loudly, for their anguish could be heard 12 miles away mid-gale.

The jagged tears of lacking flesh had not gone unnoticed. Strips of golden tan missing on one favored side: along its ribs, shoulder, neck, and ankle nearly splitting at the median plane. A showcase of red rubber and black mist swirled underneath mimicking flexing muscle. Its robotic organs hidden from view. It had a near-perfect human visage with

small cracks along its cheekbone and opulent soft locks to drain the top of its skull of which reflected rich golden in the sun's rays. A patina sheen in its uncanny gaze, scrutinizing.

They are not unlike human with their human looks and bipedal stance. They were tricksters, fakes. They looked human, they sounded human, walked human, and acted human, but they were not human.

Most would call out, banefully hoping to attract their fathers and mothers attention. They would produce soft sounds, perfect replications of their creators. Gentle tongues of warmth and safety instantly used as line and lure for unfortunate does.

This alive-dead dyad was silent, remaining taciturn and unpredictable. It would not fool the forest, they never had. It was just as starved as any other surface dweller spawn. They were traitorous creatures wishing to engorge upon their creators. The forest knew of their hunger, knew that the filial mechanics of screws and energy would gorge their stomachs till it stretches and bursts, brimming with the pain and tissue of those they mimic, on an endless strive to assuage their filial desires.

"In exchange, where emptiness lies," the human murmured to the bush deep.

This chimeric being would not take the forest's human catch, caught after centuries of practiced patience.

Deep within, the thicket circles the personage, ivy and shrub sidled, knitted a scarf tall as the trees, a possessive wall formed to battle peering gaze, despite the obtrusive human spawn standing impassively at the leafy shore 50 feet, at 20 degrees northeast away from the clingy barrier like a child pestering for a guardians approvement.

"She shall rise. Fulfilling the unfulfilled."

The human reached the dark middle where a tall tree of no name stood awaiting, magical photons of wry yellow rain down upon, capturing the cool bark of deep maroon, twisting and turning in a maze-like painting of twirls. Dark and light concentric circles rush downward and upwards into the sky in nature's phenomenon of spiral. Light pink petals, royal

pinks of a conch inner ear of calcium, soft and delicate as a fluffy pillow cloud, iridescent as an oyster's sweetly baked pearl of love.

The mystical branches sing sweet words to usher the human closer. The autumnal colours hypnotized, calling *closer, closer, come to me*. The human approaches, fatigue within each step but with purpose kindled and ablaze as the daisies giggle in excitement, sweet tunes to the ear, a blessing to a tired soul. "Her destiny surmised." They listened intensely to his whispers, for what else would he grace them?

The human stops, centimeters from the entangled roots of the centered tree, halfway to touching yet half an inch away as he gazes at the awing fairy dust. The living muscles and nerves hear his farewell smothered in bliss and contentment, freed inside the tight confines. "The world's love estrange." His dull grey eyes blanked and unseeing closed, pleased in rest and at peace.

The forest devoured it all, the chains, the mud, the scares, the bleeding flesh, it clicked together, a missing piece to a puzzle, a chronic void of emptiness the forest had not known euphorically drank to fullness. The forest changed, shifted, and morphed into a superior evolutionized version of itself.

The trees and shrubs and vines and blooms walked out of the foliage feeling things it never felt before. It felt hot, an unbearable heat comforted its chest, and the sun heated its nape and limbs, rejuvenating its body, instinctively shuttering and the hotness, hairs rising in poise. The knowledge came. Warmth, the hotness of red crimson heat was called. The forest knew more names, more labels, many, many more. A feeling rose from its chest, warmth budded within its navel, new, it was all new. The edges of its mouth creaked upward in reaction to this feeling, a leftover social reflex of being human. Joy, another feeling that it could put novel words to.

It breathed in deep and long, lunged puffed out to maximize intake, its nose tickled at the potent pheromone of fresh lavender and sweet rosemary. It could scent the warmth in the air, the sun's welcome caresses and sharing

of its energy. The world, a kaleidoscope of colour that it could name at glance, blues, roses, violets, and red overwhelmed and filled its sight of the awaiting horizon of hilly grassy scapes.

The sunset sighed lovely over the valley. Isn't it beautiful?

A breeze kissed gently at its skin, singing a sweet melody of allure, voice so slight, as if to peek around a bush at every attempt to transcribe. Just behind the ear, a soft feminine voice wisps among the valley.

It tasted the air, mandible ajar, testing its tongue, flicking the roof of its mouth, behind the smoothness of its teeth, rolling over two sharp k-9s and rough molars. It gurgled, vetting the novice feeling in its throat and rumbled till grumbled and completed, testing, and testing again till perfection.

"Upon shortchange, as both trusts decay..." Alas, it spoke, so natural it seems tattooed beneath the layer of its flesh, etched into its very soul.

It walked on, to where it knew humans could be found and in the plenty, where it would verily be hauled under black oceans, where some vindictive lay chained for the sacred purpose of furthering generations. It knew, knowledge flooding and whirling like a whirlpool yet calm as a serene pond behind its eyes. It had a rare and revered body, cursory groomed at birth, so scarce yet a necessity for the doomed species of human, though it did not know how it knew. Its knees tremble as if a diminutive babe, threatening to collapse under the herculean effort, to shirk movement of any along the familiar path. *Fear*. It hesitated and fingers shook at the palpitations of its racing heart and saunters off.

Snowy Warmth

By Elyse McGowan



Puzzle

By Micaela Ramirez

You once described me as a one thousand piece puzzle

Of a deer grazing in an enchanted forest

That you couldn't see without your glasses

You imagined me so vividly, so confident in your fantasy

But what if you find your glasses and see the picture
clearly?

What if you piece me together

Bit by bit

Until I become whole again?

Would you move on to a puzzle with one million pieces

Leave me exposed for the wolves to find?

Once I am complete, would you reluctantly frame me and
display me on the wall with a collection of solved puzzles that I am unaware of?

I would imagine that you hated the shading, or the color of
the deer or the story behind why she is eating alone

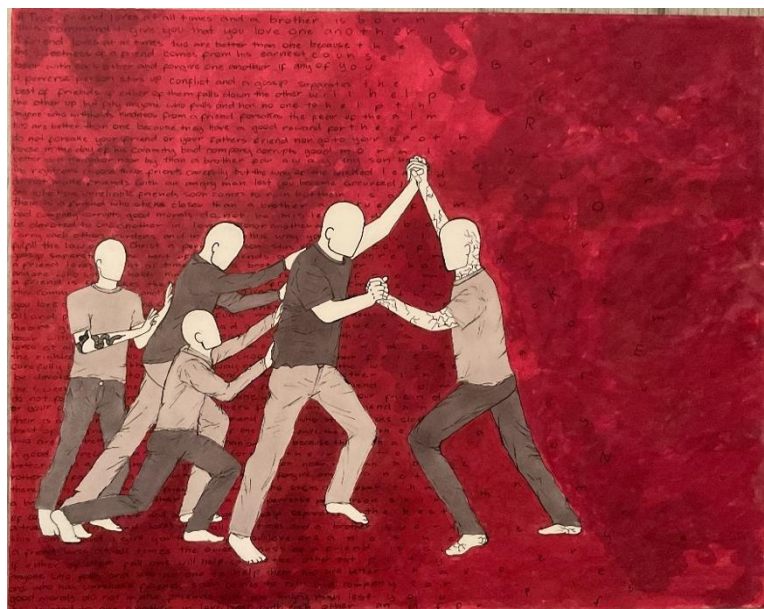
I live in paralyzing fear that you will tear me apart and
scatter me

Staring at the headlights as if they were spotlights on my
soul

Still, what if you come solve me?

Sustaining Strength

By Alici Ouellette



Chances

By Alina Oberglock

“One ticket to Elizabeth station, please.” I couldn’t wait to go back home and snuggle up with my new book. When I got on the train, I looked around for a seat. That was when I spotted a free seat across from someone. I asked if the seat was taken, and I caught the most beautiful brown eyes looking up at me. “No, please sit.”, was his response. He was the most handsome man I have ever laid my eyes upon. He had brown hair and was wearing a navy-blue sweatshirt. Once I sat down, he started looking back at his phone. To this day, I am not entirely sure what he was doing, considering that I was sitting in front of him and could not see anything on his phone. For the entire duration of the ride, I was hoping for him to talk to me. Maybe I should talk to him...What if he was too shy to talk to me? Suddenly, my stop came, and I had to get off. I was mentally beating myself up. I didn’t speak to him, and he hadn’t said another word to me. What could’ve been the worst to happen? For him to say no, so what? It would be better to just take a chance instead of now wondering what could’ve been. Maybe I will see him again, somewhere, someday? I doubted I would, what are the chances of running into a guy like that twice.

Him

I was on the train. I had many stops to go, so I got comfortable in my sweatshirt, reading on my phone. A few stops later, I looked up at the most beautiful woman that I have ever seen. She wanted to know if the seat across from me was taken, and I told her no. So, she sat down. She was so pretty, but I did not want to stare at her, so I pretended to keep reading. I was just staring at a black screen, trying to build up my courage to ask her what her name was in order to start a conversation. However, once I could finally find the words, she got up and left. That must have been her stop. I had missed my chance. I missed it. How could I be so stupid

and let such a once in a lifetime chance go? But then I saw it, on the table. She forgot her phone. I was thrilled, I still have a chance at finding her again.

Her

My home was very close to the station. Once I got home, I took out my book, that I had just bought “The Love Hypothesis” and started reading it. But I found myself not being able to retain any of the information that I was reading. I kept thinking about my own missed chance at potential romance. All of the sudden, my train of thought was interrupted by my sudden realization. I had lost my phone. How could this happen to me? I never forget my phone anywhere. Where could I have left it? I started mentally retracing my steps, but I could not make up my mind about where I must have left it. I desperately needed to find my phone and I had no idea how to do so. I tried calling my number with the landline, but the call didn’t go through. Unfortunately, it was already really late, so I could only wait for now. I have decided to go to the Apple Store first thing in the morning.

Just as I was getting ready to leave to go to the Apple Store, I got a message on my computer. Someone had found my phone and brought it in. I have never been this relieved in my whole life. I got my keys and rushed out my door. Once I entered the store I saw him, with my phone. “Were you looking for this?”, he asked. I thanked him a million times. And then he said “No, thank you for leaving it. If you wouldn’t have left it, I would not have had my second chance at asking you for your name.” I told him my name and asked him for his. Christian Warren. This man had completely taken over my mind. I have never left my phone and I have never had problems focusing on my books. Yet here he was, someone I didn’t even know. Who knows, maybe I had subconsciously left my phone on purpose. Perhaps it was meant to be. I ended up inviting him to get coffee that day and the rest is history.

Dreaming of the Beyond

By Julissa Hernandez

My mind is wandering further,
beyond textbooks, beyond the now,
where life stretches vast and unknown.

I think about life after,
when degrees are framed,
when caps have been tossed,
when my feet keep moving forward.

I can't wait to be a mom,
to give them the stories I've gathered,
from every corner of a world I've yet to touch.

I want to travel,
feel the wind of unfamiliar lands,
taste new foods, hear new voices,
meet souls with stories of their own.

I want to live for my work,
find passion, find purpose,
build a life, not just get by.

I hold onto the vision I've had since eight
a home filled with love,

laughter echoing through the halls,
a life chosen with intention.

So while the world lingers in the now,
I keep dreaming of the after,
where everything falls into place.

Are You Out There

By Celeste Greene



NYC

By Emerance Den Uijl

Noise upon noise, it never fades,
A city alive in endless maze.
There is no silence, no quiet retreat,
Just echoes of life in every street.

Subways rumble, packed like sardines,
Footsteps shuffle in endless streams.
Yellow cabs honk, voices collide,
Arguments lost in the city's tide.

Music thunders from a passing car,
Bass so deep, it shakes my heart.
Sirens wail—ambulance, fire, police,
Yet no one flinches, no signs of peace.

Noise belongs to this restless place,
]Day and night, a tireless race.
Honking horns, bikers' calls,
Children laughing, a streetball brawl.

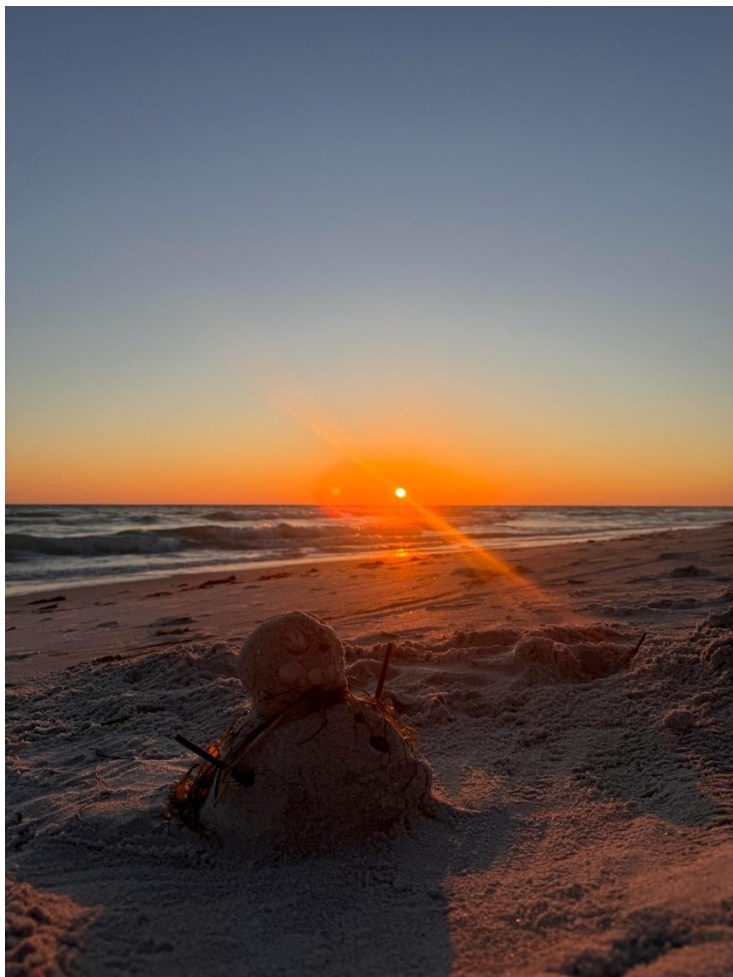
Horses clatter through Central Park,
A bird still dares to sing its part.
A lone guitarist strums his tune,
Drowned beneath the city's boom.

Can someone turn the volume down?
Just a moment—one quiet sound.
Yet, if the noise were gone one day,
New York just wouldn't feel the same.

I'd love some silence now and then,
But without the noise, it wouldn't be *NYC* again.

Florida Christmas

By Emma Campbell



My Girls

By Lex Emery

“What did you want to be when you were a child?” You said to me, as if the question was plain and simple.

I looked at you, your hair fanned out in the grass around you. You had recently cut it to your shoulders after growing it out for cancer patient wigs. I always loved that about you, how giving you were. Nothing was ever for you. Or, at least, it was never only for yourself.

I laughed and then spoke softly so that only you could hear, “I wanted to be in love with the most remarkable girl on Earth.”

You didn’t laugh, just grimaced. I could never read your mind, and maybe that’s another reason why I loved you. You were mysterious and sometimes distant, and it made me want you. I still want you, even now, after everything.

You looked at me, “you couldn’t be talking about me,” you had said.

“I could,” I responded, smiling, but you didn’t return the smile. I wondered, as I often do, what you were thinking about. I wondered if there was another person who had already stolen your heart who you neglected to tell me about. I wondered if he was better looking than me, or stronger, or smarter, or or or.

But I knew there was no one else. And there never will be again.

“Anita, I love you,” I said to you. You sat up, honey skin glowing in the moonlight. How beautiful you were. Are. How beautiful you are.

You tucked your hair behind your ear and placed a hand on your stomach. You looked at me, then at the stars. You whispered something only God could hear. You looked at me, sorrow in your expression. You had paled, the circles under your eyes had darkened, and you seemed smaller.

“I’m pregnant.”

If the world could stop spinning, it would've. If my heart had stopped, I wouldn't have blamed it. I felt a smile erupt from my face.

"That's fantastic!" I said, giddy. I moved closer to you, putting an arm around you. "You're going to be a great mom."

You looked at me with that same unreadable look that drove me insane. Then you smiled, if only a little.

"You're not mad?"

"Why would I be?" I asked, still giddy, still smiling.

You went silent again. "We didn't plan it," you said in a small voice.

"The best things in life aren't planned," I said, taking your hands. I met your eye and pulled you close.

Whenever I get sad about what happened to you and Rosie, I think about that night. I think about how you relaxed onto me, how we cried together, how we planned our move from our parents' houses.

I think about what came afterwards, those beautiful, perfect months. You worked until you couldn't, and I worked when I could. We moved into that shitty apartment upstate. Your mother was excited for us, my father was reluctant, but I could tell he was happy it was you and not someone else.

We planned the nursery, we planned the wedding, we planned our future. We planned Rosie's future. You were my girls. I'll never love anyone as much as I loved my girls.

Now I walk this shitty apartment that has only become shittier with your absence. I walk into what would have been Rosie's nursery. I walk into what was our bedroom. I walk through the space that once was *ours*.

Sometimes I feel you. I feel your eyes, sometimes, I think, I feel your hands gently on my back, but when I turn, you aren't there. I'm looking for a ghost. A ghost that walks through this shitty apartment beside me, a ghost that haunts me.

Sometimes, I wish I could join you.

I long for your laughter, your embrace, for your curls to fan out around you in the grass. I long for that night. I regret not holding you tighter. I regret every fight, every sour mood, every cruel word. I regret not telling you I love you more often. I regret all the extra shifts, the second job. I regret not rubbing your feet longer, not helping you bathe more, not telling you how beautiful you were. Are.

How beautiful you are.

I spray your perfume on your side of the bed, your side of the couch. I grow anxious when I realize it'll eventually run out and I'll have to buy a bottle you've never touched.

I wondered, as I often do when it comes to you, if I had driven quicker if I could've saved you. We both know you shouldn't have gotten behind that wheel, Anita. But neither should the man who killed the both of you.

The man who killed my girls.

Charred Hollow but Standing

By Jonathan Joiner



Ashes Always Fall

By Taylor Riesbeck

There is a shatter
echoing through the dark.
The thread that starts to unravel
People in stillness
Looking at nothing but ash
It is now only a hollow container.

Their hearts feel nothing but hollow
With all of their hope shattered,
and only ash particles left.
The echo of memories passes them by
Stillness brains thinking nothing but everything
Unraveling one by one, the tears well.

No one wants to unravel, it's a requirement.
They started feeling hollow before this
Their hearts still beating; slowly, but there
Hoping they could shatter as well.
Thoughts echo coldly,
only a pile of ash.

Ashes, Ashes, they didn't fall down too.
They are left to unravel
The silence echoing just as before

Hallow bodies being operated, not by them.
Not able to take another shatter
Life nothing but stillness taking over.

As the stillness takes over,
the ashes drizzle.
Shattering bones, hearing cracks
Bodies unraveling
turning into hollow figures,
while the echo of bones roar.

Echoing throughout the darkness,
The stillness has not changed.
The people are now hollow,
and their ashes are piles
They do not have to take another unravel
as they shatter for the last time.

Ashes don't hear echoes,
nor listen to the unravels as they shatter,
but stillness will always be in their hollow bodies.

11:59

By Alexandra Vangor

Then it was dark. He rolled over to face the clock. It was a small, black, digital clock that he had had since college. It was old now, about fifty years but it still worked just fine, aside from its horrid ticking. It had no hands to move, no gears to turn, no reason to tick but so it did. He could've replaced it. He should've replaced it. But he adored it and a second one could do no better. So there it was, bright red numbers staring unwavering back at him as he troubled over whether or not to get up.

It was 11:59. With one minute until tomorrow, he could get an early start on things, or he could let his eyes close and reopen in the unsettling world he visited nightly. He opted to surrender to the day, the darkness and the familiar "tick... tick... tick... tick... tick...". He used to hate the sound, you know, the ticking, but around the eleventh year he began to enjoy it.

With the clock's steady chatter pricking into his thoughts, he began to dress, reminding himself why he could never replace it, *'nother would do no good, and would do no better than this one, 'would probly' make those terrble' sounds too, it would. Probly' would 'click..click..click' it would. 'Click..click..click' is much worse, much much worse'* he thought. *"Tick... tick... tick..." is much better.* It was re-decided, he would keep the clock.

Now clothed, he let the ticking fade, carrying himself down the long staircase, around the banister, back behind the stairs, and into the kitchen. He started a pot of coffee and plopped into the only chair to wait. As the machine began to dribble, he glanced over to the stove, *the clock is off, damn faulty thing, can't trust 'em for nothing, 11:47 my ass!* He thought angrily, *it ain't 11:47, for I woke up more than ten past that, damned thing.* He hobbled over to the stove to adjust the time, but as he tampered with it, it stared back

unchanged. He pressed, then jabbed, then mashed, the buttons but the clock only let out a screech before turning off completely.

With a huff he turned, snatched the coffee pot off the plate and filled a chipped teacup to the brim. *This's why I keep my clock, the old and irritatin' little thing it is, hasn't 'ever failed to tell my time right, it hasn't that's why I been keepin' it*, he thought as he took a bitter sip. He soon finished his first cup, then a second, then poured a third, bringing it out into the parlor to sit and stew with him over yesterday's paper.

He sat slouched in the single recliner that stood guard over the living room. He read for a long while, only breaking when he heard the chime of the grandfather clock. Out of habit, he glanced up to see the hour striking, marking 1 o'clock, but when he made eye contact with the clock's face, its hands pointed to 11 o'clock, *bloody stupid clocks, all failin' me together. They do know I can't be replacin' them all at once, they do!* Angrily, he approached the large grandfather clock and pulled it forward. Stepping behind it he inspected its mechanics, listening to its slow and smooth "Cluck.. cluck.. cluck..". He turned the knob that turned the gear that turned the hand that told the hour, then he did the same to the minute hand, but as the latter slid onto the one o'clock positions, the clucking stopped. He tried jiggling the knob, then patting its back, whacking it, then rocking it, until it tipped over. It landed on its side with a startling smack. That probably would've hurt his ears if they worked a bit better, and it probably should've hurt his feelings, for their decades-long relationship was likely over. But what need did he have for an old grandfather clock when his dearest little digital did just fine.

After that he began to notice, it wasn't just the clock on the stove or the old grandfather that had turned back, it was all of them. He had found his old pocket watch next. This one's mind was elsewhere too, for it said it was 9:23 and he knew for sure that it must've been only 2:30, *stupid, stupid thing, oh yes very stupid indeed*. He tried taking it apart.

But alas, when he began to turn the hands to half past, it abruptly stopped ticking, and no fixing would start it again. He chose not to abuse it as he had the others and instead left it on the table.

He continued the same pattern, at first by accident, coming across the coo coo clock which lived in one of the sunroom windows. Similarly to the others, he found it to be telling him wrong for it said it was 7:36, and he knew it could only be half past five as the sun was still tucked neatly away.

Then it wasn't an accident, he was hunting them, every clock in the house. At what must've been a quarter till six, he plucked the clock from the dining room wall, for it said 7:13. He tried to adjust it, then to fix it, then gave up, leaving it to rest. He repeated this with every clock in the house, the one in the vacant guest room, the ones in the first and second bathrooms, the one that sat on the fridge, and the one on the porch, all of which were lying. The first of these pointed to 7:04, the next 6:57, then 6:46, 6:39, and 6:22. *Stupid, he thought, countin backward's they are, all t'gether they counting down. Countin down to what? No! Fallin fer a bloody clock? Am not, am not!*

A few hours passed, he never bothered checking the digital, it wasn't a young one like the others, it was older, wiser, like him. *The little thing wouldn't never make those mistakes, not like those new ones, those's just kids, don't know anything, not like the older ones, the wiser ones.*

He eventually ended his hunt after running out of clocks, only to begin again sometime in the early afternoon when he remembered his wrist watches. Stomping up to the master bed, he charged the closet. There he produced a small wooden box lined neatly with six antique watches, all of which now said it was a quarter after 10. Defeated again, he slammed the box closed, shoving it back into the closet. He then turned towards the sweet and familiar ticking that he so adored, though when he saw it, disgust washed over him. His beloved now told him that it was 10:17, *but that is't, it cannot, is not, for the sun is way high! But you never would lie, not to me,* he thought, *it cannot, but it must be.*

The clock continued ticking, unfazed by his distress. *You would never lie, not to me you would not, so it must've been true and so I've killed the others! I'll fix 'em all don't worry, dear thing.* He moved quickly back down the stairs, to reset each of the clocks, starting in the parlor first, then the sun-room, the porch, the kitchen stove, the one on the fridge, and in the dining room, then headed back up to the ones in the guest room, and two baths.

As he made his way around the house, he started to hear a quiet noise, a delightful noise, a soft "tick... tick... tick...". The clock was calling for him, or at least that's what he believed. He also began to believe it was speaking, whispering to him. But what would it be saying after all of these years of ticking? Only once he had helped the others, did he return to the master bedroom where his lovely clock sat, waiting for him. Now it told him it was 9:31, *9:31? Can't be, but t'is, it must. They weren't lyin', none of 'em, because this one not ought to lie to me, it mustn't. They were countin down, down to what? What need they count for? Why do they warn me now, why not b'fore? An' why is the littl' thing only speakin' now, tellin' now? For what will happ'n when they cease to count?*

As his thoughts began to jump, they leaped back to the pocket watch, the one he had forgotten to revive. With a start he hurried feverishly down the staircase back to the kitchen, to collect the thing. It, like the rest, wouldn't start but still he placed it carefully back in the pocket of his hanging coat. Now standing in the center of the kitchen the ticking seemed louder than before. At first he thought it was his lovely little digital but as he began to turn the sound moved. It wasn't coming from upstairs, no, now he was sure it came from his right. He hastily moved to the counter to his right, but as he did, it changed again. He heard the soft "tick... tick... tick..." elsewhere, *'course I couldn't find it, bloody stupid man, 'course it ain't in a cab'net, stupid place for a clock to live. Mus' be somewhere else, somewhere better. Mus' be coming from the parl'r.* He continued like this, searching, the sound always just ahead of him. *Mus' be watchin' me it*

mus', ought to know not to hide, very undignified of a fine thing like a clock. Ought to know better, it does. The ticking continued to elude him.

He had gone back to the master bed to retrieve a wrist-watch, he thought he ought to know what time it *really* was, you know, just in case. It was a quarter past five now, it should've been almost eight, the sun was setting, and the ticking was louder now. Every inch of the house seemed to tick that same slow rhythm, that same sweet, "tick... tick... tick..." and it was everywhere and nowhere all at once. It was in the walls and the floors and the ceilings and behind the shelves, it was in his bones and his blood and his mind. It rang in his ears and pulsed in his veins, and he didn't enjoy it anymore. He had tried to plug his ears and cut it out from his forearms. Afterwards he mopped the blood from the floor and bandaged his wounds, he then filled his ears with cotton, and went back to his lovely clock on the nightstand in the master bedroom.

He started to plead with it, silently at first, his thoughts willed it to speak to him again, comfort him, tell him why it counted down. When it stayed silent, he began to speak out loud, begging it to answer, and when it didn't, he cried. After his vocal cords grew raw from crying, yelling, begging, bargaining, and pleading, he sat quietly on the floor in front of the lovely thing. He stayed there with it, whispering quietly, rocking slowly, begging continuously.

It was 3:04 now, that's what the silly thing showed, he had little more than three hours left, that's what he had decided. The clock wouldn't speak to him anymore, so it must've been for a dreadful reason. He had concluded that it would happen at 11:59 of the previous night, or the new one, he couldn't decide which was coming for him.

He was still rocking, his face now dry and his vocal cords numb, it was 3:02. Then he was still. He stared unblinkingly at the little black clock as it flicked to 3:01. He couldn't bear to look into its face anymore, so he closed his eyes and began to count. Counting backwards he marked the ticks, though they weren't sweet anymore. When he got to one, there was

silence. Relieved, he released his held breath but before he could inhale again, it was loud. Ticking and cooing and clucking filled his ears until there was no more room and the house shuddered with every beat as each of the clocks began to scream at the top of their lungs. His eardrums stung as he ran to the closet. He grabbed the watches, throwing them to the floor, smashing each one. Once they had passed, he moved quickly to the guest and bathrooms, then the ones downstairs. The kitchen, the dining room, the parlor, in his coat pocket, the sunroom, the porch, one by one he slaughtered them all, and only then did the ticking, the cooing, and the clucking die away.

They were all dead now, aside from his wristwatch, and the delightful clock on the nightstand in the master bedroom. He had silenced their counting, but they still counted down, even if they weren't ticking and their arms didn't move, he knew. He could feel their eyes on him, watching. It wasn't just their eyes, their many gazes poured through the walls, the floors, the ceilings, and underneath the furniture, all the same places that ticked. He paced the entire house, not wanting to be seen for too long by any one eye and as he did, he cried, beginning to count again.

He started at sixty, counting tick by tick till he reached zero, then he started over, again and again. It was 2:01 now, but how could he be anxious? *Ther'r only two of 'em live still, I ought to turn them off quickly enough.* That was what he told himself, that no mess could follow for he had prevented it. Then 2 o'clock struck, and they all screamed again. The cotton couldn't keep out the sound and so it flooded his ears again. He, desperate to stop the noise, started to grab the clocks and hurl them out the windows, the upstairs, the kitchen, the dining room. When he had banished the screeching clock from the fridge, another sound replaced it. A loud thumping noise streamed in from the parlor. Peering in, he saw the grandfather clock standing tall in the middle of the room, and with every tick from the house, it moved. He crept forwards until he could see the clock's front where the pendulum was swinging, beating into its wooden ribs

with every cluck. Every hit rocked its body left then right, slamming its base into the floor, again and again, “*thump.... thump.... thump....*”. Grabbing his clock by its waist, he dragged it towards windows, leaving two more lengthy scrapes in the floor. When they reached the window he leaned its body into the glass, balancing it on two legs. Then with all of the strength he could muster he grasped its two outstretched limbs and sent it through the glass and down the steep hill below. Then he moved onto the sunroom and porch.

Once finished, he returned to the master room, watching the clock's bright red numbers tick by. He wanted to cry but his eyes stayed dry, and screaming was no use for he had isolated himself, his cries would never pass the woods. So, with no better option, he sat with his lovely little clock, the walls humming, the ceilings and floors ticking, his bones pounding, and his blood pulsing. He sat with his clock, and he waited. 1:06, 1:05, 1:03, 1:01, 1 o'clock.

Now it wasn't just the clocks screaming and ticking and cooing and clucking, it was everything and everywhere. It filled every space in the house, as he ran desperately trying to get away from it. He ran out the front door but as he did, the sky started to scream and tick too. *No use*, he thought faintly, *it's everywhere, in everythin', and I could never escape everything!* Then he saw the clocks he'd banished outside. There they lay facing him, even the ones he threw from the back side of the house, they were all there on the front lawn, screaming at him, arms spinning backwards. He peered at his wristwatch, it too was spinning backwards, round and round, faster and faster. He raced back inside, *the lovely littl' thing it'll tell me truths, l'say I haven't lost any more time, it will!* He fell to his knees in front of the nightstand and indeed, more time had passed. It was now 12:11. He had less than a quarter hour till 11:59, till he would surely end.

The screaming, the ticking, the cooing, the clucking, the noise, it all surpassed the cotton, stabbing his ears. As his ears began to dribble warm and wet, he felt the blood still in

him humming with the walls and his bones and his brain. They buzzed and rattled with the steady ticking, as he watched the clock.

He kept watching for when he looked away for a second at least four passed. His mind was too far away to count anymore, and with every bruising tick, it went a step farther. He could feel the eyes again and this time he could see them too, though he couldn't look at them directly, not without losing eye contact with his clock.

It was 12:01 now, he didn't even care about what would come for him at 11:59, he only cared for spending his last minutes with his darling little clock. It ticked lovingly at him he thought, counting down for him as he could no longer. 12 o'clock. His eyes stayed fixated on the lovely little clock on the nightstand in the master bedroom. It was 11:59. Then it was dark.

Apocalypse Incoming

By Alina Oberglock



Beautiful, Molded Plates

By Gabriel Vives

They say there was a time when people kept their faces. Or so I saw in the latest documentary I watched. I don't see why anyone would do that, so I wouldn't know for sure. I'm talking about a real face, of course. I've seen plenty of the usual synthetic stuff. Face plates, they're called, but we just call them plates. Beautiful, molded plates.

Years ago, long before I was even a reckless idea between my parents, they say that there were no plates. People were stuck with the same face their whole life. Can you believe that? Being stuck with an ugly face that ages and wrinkles? How did we even survive as a species?

Luckily, we don't need to worry about any of that. A company by the name of Aesthetix had the ingenious idea of giving people new faces, and since then, companies have been improving the technology, constantly adding new ways for people to look however they want. Eventually, they found a way to put plates on babies, and people have worn plates ever since.

Each day of the week, I assign myself a new plate. I can't even remember which plate my parents gave me. I guess it wasn't that important since they sold the plate chip at a garage sale.

Anyways, today is Monday, when I usually wear Jonah. Tomorrow I'll be Ben, Wednesday I always wear Gene, and Thursday is Halloween, so I'll be wearing Lincoln (or at least a more modern look. I could never look like the real thing). Friday I've decided to be Gus, and for the weekend, I always switch it up depending on what my plans look like. Disco night means Travolta, which wasn't easy to get. I had to sit at the plate station for 3 whole minutes while I downloaded the preset. Just think of all the other things I could have been doing!

Later, I'll be watching a one-minute documentary on what happens to the ugly dogs at the pound. Maybe someday they'll get their own plates.

It's not easy to think about... but I know that my real face is in there. Somewhere beneath my genetically molded mask, there's a person I've never met. It scares me. How could I ever have disco night with that face? I usually just tell myself that he's an organ like my heart or lungs, which makes it easier to accept. No one thinks about their hearts or their lungs.

Unfortunately, however, I have a skin condition called "rebuff," which means I have to go to the doctor and think all about what's going on under there. But I've heard rebuff is pretty common these days, so I don't feel too bad.

One kid had it so bad he had to stay in the hospital for a month while the doctors gave him an entirely new plate! But you know, his new face looked so shiny and perfect... I'd be lying if I said I wasn't jealous. Maybe someday I'll get a new one too.

My mom has always had the same plate. She says that eventually, everyone has to accept themselves for who they are. She says that eventually, it'll happen to me, which of course is bull. I know who I am. I do. She'll never understand that.

I hit the little button on my plate. It always feels a bit weird when I do it, but at least I look good. I feel my plate shaking uncontrollably. They say the newer models are more stable. Mom calls me downstairs.

"Breakfast is ready, Simon!" she says.

"I told you, Mom, I'm Jonah!" I say, rubbing my plate between my hands. I'll never get over the feeling of a new face.

"Is it Monday already?" she says. "Hurry up and get ready for school then."

A Beautiful Struggle

By Ben Adkins

Josie kneels by the river, her toes sinking into the mud.
She drops a stick into the water and watches it.
It drifts away, carried by an invisible current.

A road extends unto lengthy footsteps.
Tight shoes, a heavy backpack, yet the air is light.
The path winds forward, and further forward,
leading into the unknown, will it be found?

The chair rocks on a wooden porch.
The wind rushes through the trees, steady but fast.
A perfect rhythm of fingers tapping on the armrest,
the same rhythm that once match footsteps,
once followed the current of a moving river.

The water pulls, the road bends, the chair rocks.
The road moves forward, and it always will.

Contributor Bios

Ben Adkins is a freshman at SCF. He plans to transfer to the University of Florida and study multiple different disciplines: philosophy, political science, and economics. He enjoys these three subjects and plans on going to law school later down the road. He enjoys learning more than anything because he feels it can better shape his future the more he knows.

Lorel Allen is 18 and about to graduate from high school. She loves writing and drawing in her free time. When she writes, she usually focuses on poetry because it is more convenient. She also feels it is easier to portray emotions in poetry than in longer forms of writing. However, she still writes longer works. For those, she likes to dabble in fantasy and occasionally thriller.

Livi Antico is a sophomore of SCF Venice who will graduate this summer; from a young age, she has had interest in both writing and illustration. In her spare time, she enjoys writing her own short stories of various tones and genres, as well as depicting those stories through her artwork. Beyond her creative passions, she hopes to become a librarian in her future, providing to the community not just the benefits of literature, but a safe space for those who need support and resources.

Emma Campbell was born in California, spent her early childhood in rural Georgia, and now a Florida local. She is an aspiring early elementary school educator and dog enthusiast. She enjoys traveling and photographing her travels.

Lex Emery is a 12th grader at SCFCS who writes horror short fiction and poetry.

Professor Gallagher teaches American Government. He is a retired Marine. He also retired from the federal government. Now he teaches, entertains, and writes. He enjoys baseball and works for the Atlanta Braves. He wrote this poem to lift Casey from the basement, where the epic poem, "Casey at the Bat," had left him.

Celeste Greene is a student at the State College of Florida, aspiring to lead a fulfilled life. Her extensive experience in a foreign country amplifies her understanding of diversity and acceptance. A profound need for knowledge drives her to be an open

minded individual and an advocate for those who desire a voice. Her love for music and art is expressed to her best ability in her work.

Julissa Hernandez is a 20-year-old nursing student with a love for writing and art. She has always used her notes app to write small poems, expressing her emotions whether she's happy, anxious, or just bored. Writing helps her make sense of her feelings and create something beautiful. She's passionate about exploring and creating, and she believes in living with purpose. She envisions a life full of meaning, collecting memories and stories to share with loved ones. Though she hasn't always had a passion for living, she now embraces it fully and is determined to make the most of every moment. Her journey is one of growth, discovery, and creating a life that reflects her true self.

Tara Marsh is a returning student at SCF to finally finish her A.A. degree. She is originally from Kansas but has lived in the Southwest Florida area since '98. She enjoys the arts, cooking, fishing and gardening in her baby food forest backyard with the company of her dog and chickens.

Elyse McGowan, a Canadian born 18-year-old, enjoys passionately exploring matters such as her faith, history, and politics, the latter of which she hopes to pursue a career in. Occasionally, she also has fun expressing her artistic creativity.

Abby Montidoro is a student at SCF who is graduating at the end of spring semester with her AA degree. She wants to continue her education in the social work field. She loves to read, write, and collage.

Alina Oberglock is a 21-year-old SCF student currently enrolled to earn her associate in arts degree, planning to get into Psychology. In her free time, she finds inspiration in nature for both writing and photography.

Mia Olimpiyuk loves to read and write stories because they won't leave her alone. She lives in southwest Florida and when she's not buried under assignments she escapes to fictional worlds, preferably while sitting on a beach.

Alici Ouellette is a student at SCF with the goal of pursuing a degree in architecture. She has always loved drawing from a very young age and enjoys experimenting with and creating art.

Micaela Ramirez is an aspiring writer and actor! She is very passionate about storytelling and usually spends her time at rehearsals for a musical, or writing fantasy stories that she hopes will one day be published.

Taylor Riesbeck was raised in Florida and is currently getting her associate degree in hopes of setting stepping stones for her dream life. Taylor is not usually a proud writer but is stepping out of her comfort zone as her works are personal, even when they might not seem to be.

Kaitlyn Schonethal is a young student in her second semester of college who enjoys spending her little free time with her nose in a book or jotting down little bits of poetry. She is an aspiring doctor with a deep passion for human creativity and science.

Emerance Den Uijl is a third-year student at State College of Florida, pursuing a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. She works in a Pre-K classroom supporting children with varying exceptionalities, finding joy in fostering inclusive learning experiences. Originally from the Netherlands, she lived in New York with her husband and daughter before moving to Florida, seeking a quieter environment for their family. Emerance cherishes her Dutch roots and enjoys visiting family in the Netherlands, often pairing these trips with visits to iconic cities like London, Paris, and Antwerp. She also loves spending time outdoors, whether working in the yard, going to the beach, or exploring new places on walks. While she never considered herself a writer, she embraced the opportunity to try and discovered a love for writing short poems.

Alexandra Vangor is a 16-year-old sophomore at SCF, an equestrian, and an aspiring English major. She enjoys analyzing other horror works as well as writing her own.

Gabriel Vives, as a writer, is a person who is always trying to find the best way to truly express himself. Whether it be through writing, music, or conversation, he finds it rewarding to be able to organize the hundreds of thoughts and ideas constantly running through his mind.

Elektraphrog Staff



Gabrielle Aleman is a full-time student, vet receptionist, and aspiring advertisement creator based in Miami, Florida. She is a contemporary dancer and will be graduating this summer with an associate degree. In her free time, she enjoys videography, DJing, and watching student-submitted short horror films. She also loves spending time at the dance studio, improvising and creating with her best friends. Whether crafting compelling visuals or moving to the rhythm, she's always finding new ways to express creativity.



Matthew Boock is a dual-enrolled junior at the State College of Florida, graduating in 2026 with an Associate's in Arts. He plans to pursue a Doctoral degree in physical therapy. As an athlete, Matthew plays hockey and practices Brazilian jiu-jitsu while coaching soccer and T-ball to kids ages 2-5. He is the Vice President of the student leadership team and takes part in the National Honor Society. Matthew values visual art such as painting and drawing. He enjoys seeking personal growth and learning new skills such as boxing, cooking, and design.



Moriah Beyer is a State College of Florida student working towards getting her Public Relations degree. Her current specialties include writing, speaking, and making music in her free time, which is her favorite thing to do. She is getting ready to finish up her Associate's degree and move on to her Bachelor's shortly after. She hopes to stay in the Sunshine State after she graduates, and for many more years to come!



Connor Cintron is a student at the State College of Florida and is currently working toward a Bachelor's degree in Public Safety and Administration. He is an avid reader, creative thinker, and problem solver. Aspiring to help others with his common sensical solutions. In the future he would like to become public servant in Sarasota serving his hometown community. Outside of his career aspirations and work, he enjoys watching movies, shows and playing billiards. Connor values time with his friends and is an only child.



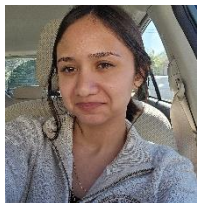
Sophia Colombo is a full-time student at the State College of Florida and works part-time at an Italian restaurant in the service industry. She is a passionate health, fitness, and nutrition enthusiast who enjoys exploring the outdoors, photography, creating artwork, and interior design. Deeply committed to her faith, Sophia actively participates in mass and loves sharing her beliefs with others. She has many aspirations and goals for her future but has yet to make a final choice on her future career decision. She has a dog named Lola, who is more like a sister than a pet since she is an only child.



Ana Florez is currently attending SCF Bradenton, in hopes of getting her AA and then eventually transferring to USF Tampa for marketing. She is a very creative and outgoing person, who hopes to be able to use those characteristics in her future career. She hopes to specialize in entertainment marketing to hopefully work in the music industry.



Roxy Gatchell is a student at the State College of Florida working towards a communications degree. She is currently finishing her poetry collection and aims to become an editor at a publishing house. In the meantime, she enjoys journaling, creating art, and singing for her band, T.D.D.O. Her life revolves around her 7 dogs and 4 cats whom she considers family.



Myli-Ann Goodine is a nineteen-year-old full-time student at State College of Florida and is currently in her second year. She is getting her Associate's degree in English Literature and then will get a Bachelor's degree in English Literature. In the future, she would like to become an author and possibly be an editor. She enjoys reading mystery, fantasy, and horror and likes to learn new things in her free time. She also likes photography and different forms of art. This is her second semester working with Elektraphrog, and she has had work featured in the magazine as well. She is working on two novels at the moment and also enjoys writing poetry.



Emma Hubley will be graduating from the State College of Florida and Braden River High School this year then will be pursuing a dual major at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, in studio art and journalism, she is aiming to become a wedding photographer/videographer and a technical writer. Outside of academics, her commitments include volunteering at a local nursing home every week, running four activities at her high school, and maintaining a part time job. Emma's other interests are embroidery, playing the flute in her orchestra, and caring for Quinn, her pet chinchilla.



Dicee Kearney is an aspiring studio artist and designer with a passion for creativity and innovation. Currently pursuing a degree in Studio Art and Design, they specialize in artistic design and have a keen eye for detail. They have contributed their skills to projects such as designing business cards and picture borders for Genesis Auto Sales. A dedicated artist with a love for all things creative, their favorite thing is coloring in the lines.



Mikayla Kelly is currently attending the State College of Florida in hopes of pursuing a career in sports journalism/photography. I am currently doing photography work with posed photoshoots of couples and families. As an avid reader since childhood writing only came natural to her. Her passion for art is there but not the talent so she chooses to use her camera instead.



Alix Remick is a current student at the State College of Florida and is currently in her Sophomore year, wrapping up her Associate's degree in Communications. She is a writer and a musician with an immense love for any and all types of art, and currently she is working on writing a song. Her career goals are geared toward journalism, with a focus on environmental journalism. Outside of academics and arts, she works part-time as a server, loves spending time at the beach, and is often accompanied by her cat and dog. She values her time with her friends, and meeting new people is a treat for her.



Sofia Zavala will be graduating from State College of Florida this summer, and will be furthering her education to pursue Public Relations. She works part-time at a non profit organization with girls from ages 5-14. She also works part-time at SCF's Communications and Government Relations department as a student intern. She enjoys helping with the schools social media and press releases. She aspires to work for a non-profit to be the director of Public Relations and or Communications. She enjoys taking walks and doing yoga as well as going to the beach. She is not the best artist, but she loves a coloring book!

You (Yes! You!) Can Earn a Certificate in Digital Publishing!

This is 18 Credits of Awesome!

This is an extraordinary new certificate program that is cutting edge and interdisciplinary!

Program Goal

The purpose of this program is to prepare students (yes! Even you!) with hands-on training in new media and digital publications. This program focuses on the skills necessary to work on print and digital publications, work in social media and digital marketing, or work in lay, design, and editing fields. The skills in this program are transferable to both local and national level publications. This program includes editing, programming, and graphic design courses.

Core Requirements:

- CGS 2820C: Web Page Development (3 Credits)
- CRW 2001: Creative Writing I (3 Credits)
- GRA 1100C: Introduction to Computer Graphics (3 Credits)
- JOU 1440L: College Magazine Production I (3 Credits)

Choice of two courses (6 credits total) from

- GRA 1206C: Typography (3 Credits)
- GRA 2121C: Communication Design (3 Credits)
- GRA 2150C: Photoshop (3 Credits)
- ENC 2210: Technical Communication (3 Credits)
- JOU 1441: College Magazine Production II
- MMC 2949: Internship in Mass Communications (3 Credits)
- PGY1800C: Digital Imaging I (3 Credits)

Contact Professor Masucci at masuccm@scf.edu
for more information.



**Are You Interested in
Writing and Publishing?**

Join Elektraphrog!

JOU 1440L (3 Credits)

<https://litmag.scf.edu>



litmag.scf.edu