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Muse

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2021

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Acknowledgments

Muse is the literary magazine of Lamar Middle School and Fine Arts Academy in Austin, Texas. Student editors reviewed submissions using a blind submission process in which the authors' names were hidden.

In addition to a print edition, we published this volume online to make it more accessible during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Authors' last names were omitted to protect their privacy.

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Rachel Dietz
Austin, Texas
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Possibilities

By Jillian D.

Is it possible
that each morning
when the sun takes a peek
over the mountain tops,
thousands of fairies
whisk away
into their safe caverns
leaving nothing
but a trail of dew
on the sweet smelling grass?

Is it possible
that behind the mirror
lies a whole 'nother world
where dragons
some purple
some woolly
some even slimy
fly freely
spewing pink bubbles from their noses
across an orange-stained sky?

Is it possible
that long ago
there were dolphins
who could jump
sixty-two thousand
feet in the air
take a lick of the wispy clouds
and come back down
landing on the other side

of the ocean?

The Days of the Week Ditty

By Holden E.

Oh Monday, you are full of surprises
And most of them lead to dire demises
You analyze one's life and then choose
What could possibly be the most appalling ruse?

Oh Tuesday, you tell Monday to shut it
But you're one to talk; such a hypocrite
At least you have standards, you're not as bad
But boy, sometimes do you drive me mad

Oh Wednesday, thank you, thank you so much
You're the jolly fellow of the whole bunch
The one shaking hands and giving out candy
A day worth celebrating, you're very dandy

Oh Thursday, you just sit and brood
For everyone's waiting for Friday, not you
You don't really care about having anything special
In your eyes, you'd still be unsuccessful

Oh Friday, the golden boy of the pack
You're always up front, never in back
You're so narcissistic; everything's about you
But all people enjoy it, through and through

Oh Saturday, you're way better than Friday
But you still don't care if he gets his way
Subtly being the greatest one of all
Yet even though you're subtle, you definitely enthrall

Oh Sunday, you're a day of tranquility
A day of peace and true nobility
But you make sure everyone heeds your warning
That Monday's coming in the morning!

The Water Spirit

By Gus H.

In the flowing river
Running to the sea
There lives the water spirit
She sings for you and me
She swims inside her kingdom
In its cold, deep embrace
And some have thrown their lives away
For a glimpse at her face
Beware the water spirit
Though prettily she sings
For there lay in her kingdom
Some dark and dismal things
The waves they have come howling
They strike the fragile shore
The wind it has come growling
The waves they rush and roar
And deep within the water
Lie the bones years old
Could not breath beneath the waves
Could not stand the cold
Don't go near the water
If you wish to live
The water spirit's heart is cold
She has no love to give
Swirling in the water
In their freezing grave
Spin the bones of people past
Cowards and the brave
In the flowing river
Running to the sea
There lives the water spirit

Who will accept no plea

The Poet

By Luca B.

Life is a poem
My mother is a poem
My father is a poem
My sister
Is a poem waiting to be written

I

Am The Poet
And I write the world
A Poem

I write what I see
I write it in its mistakes
In all its glory
And wonder

I am the storyteller
I tell the stories of
The past
The present
The future

Every day
I look into the world
A new way

I write poems
Because there are no rules
No capitalization
No punctuation
No do this

Or do that
Nope
None of that

And like a poem
My mind is free
That is why
I am
The poet

Snow in the Desert

By Ahmory H.

The sky blurs, a mosaic of the small town weathered by the sun
and the dull gray of the clouds
The pink and gray mountains embrace the little town,
watching as the flurries fall before them
Snow slides down the dusty windows,
turning from a soft white to brown
A patchwork of dried grasses raise their heads to greet the snow,
like old friends that meet again after many years.
The flurries blow through the air,
pushed by the wind across the metal roofs of the faded homes
I reach out to catch them, but they
flit through my fingertips
and twist to the snowy ground

Green Hills in Boxes

By Lily W.

I had a box of my own
It was blue and purple
Mismatched
A map on the wall
I played board games inside its walls
I read Jane Austen on the floor
I painted
I got taller
I grew up
Didn't have an excuse
for staying in my room
Work for beauty
Work for approval
Growing up is hard
Leaving your box is hard
I paint flower fields
Purples and yellows
Fields of rolling green
But those are paintings
You can burn paintings
You can burn novels
The words forever no more
Your childhood can't burn
Your brain cannot forget
But my box burns along with everything inside
A match lights and my palace falls
My sanctuary
My room
Paintings can char
My flower fields wilt
The ash builds up in my lungs

Perfect is not enough
Never
Forever
Always
Pick your poison
to ignore the inevitable
Growing up

When We Die

By Teddy M.

When we die, where do we go?
Do we haunt the living, much like a ghost?
Do we not leave till we let go?
Is death quick, or is it slow?
Do we go to heaven, or do we go to hell?
Or do we spend eternity in our universe, but parallel?
Do we live again, and get another turn?
Do we finish undone business once we are reborn?
Does God have mercy?
Or is he vengeful?
Yes, the act of death is truly eventful
Or maybe it's not and we spend eternity at peace
And maybe then we are finally free
The burden off of our shoulders and our shackles released
And that the beauty of death is in its simplicity
Yes, the subject of death is truly a mystery

The Neverending Sea

By Nettie R.

The air, the breeze, the smell of sea
The marvelous, majestic, magical beach.

Waves so blue, splishing and splashing, crashing and pushing against the sand
Splash! Splash! Up with the water, in the gap.

The water cold, it stretches long, past the skyline where you can see
That goes on indefinitely.

The deepest dark depths, the lightest blue
The sea green deep washing up anew.

The ocean is throwing away what's no use
Sucking in the treasures it holds.

The sand crunching underneath the feet of many, many
Animals and things.

The seagulls laughing, the crabs pinching, the ocean still swishing
Everlasting night and day, the waves of water here to stay.

The moon, the sun, the light of day
The waves crushing everything like an avalanche moving what's in its way.

When it comes, the fish hide, the crabs collide under the sand
Night and day, no matter the way, the ocean is here to stay.

When the Sky Turns Red

By Una K.

When the sky turns red
You know it's time for bed
But even the thought of it
Makes you feel abandoned.
How you forced your eyes open
Because your dreams told you lies
When they said they were yours
And you can control them.
Yet though you have your dog as company
Your heart feels achy
Like you might not sleep
Because of the thought
That your dream will turn
Until it scares you awake
In the middle of the night
And you cannot sleep.
But if you just closed your eyes
And forgot your dream's lies
And suddenly realized
That it is morning.
And all of your silly fears,
Are more of your mind
Than reality.

Playground Memories

By Caroline B.

I don't remember the day we met
I was told it was in summer
At some long forgotten day camp
Full of pipe cleaner crafts and five-year-olds with sticky hands
I don't remember the day we met
But I remember the playground slide

Back then
My world didn't seem much bigger than the end of the street
The only mountain in sight was a tall metal slide on the kindergarten
playground
And we saw it as our duty
Our purpose in life
To run
Run up
Slide,
Rushing,
Down
the metal slide
Over
And over
Again
It would be a long time before we understood tragedies
Bigger than skinned knees
And dropped ice cream cones slowly melting on asphalt

Four years later
Pain still wasn't in the picture
You were celebrating the freedom of our age
The summer days were hot
But you came knocking on the door anyways

Without warning, you were there, asking to play
Only nine,
But you were ready to grow up
I was never as sure
That the perks of independence
Outweighed the responsibility

That was okay.

You were reckless enough for the two of us
And so four years later
I was there
Hopping the fence to the kindergarten playground
Racing towards the metal slide
On a hot summer day

Footsteps pounding unforgiving sidewalks
As four-year-old memories awoke in my mind
Crying
Like four-year-olds do
And history rewound itself
Crying
“Let’s do this again
Let’s learn
And laugh
And fall hard
And grow down
So we can learn to grow up
And paint ourselves small
So we can see the little things
As vast
Once again.”

All on a hot summer day

Age

By Milane B.

People think growing old is a pathetic, slow, painful process,
That should be feared.
They think aging is like
a used piece of gum, which has lost its flavor
Or a feather once part of something bigger,
Once a whole living organism,
Now alone
 Floating
 in
 the air
Pointless.
Obsolete.

I see something more.
I see your face,
Pruned or not, still beautiful.
You're speaking to me
Telling me things I can't forget.
Giving us wisdom to lead the next generation.

You aren't afraid of growing old,
You are afraid of death.
Yet the solution is simple.
I ask you to give your fear a deadly stare,
Not afraid of when it will happen
Not afraid of the after, if there is one,
But happy you had a chance.

This might seem like useless advice coming from a thirteen-year-old,
Since it seems I know nothing about the subject,

But being younger makes me know everything.
I know what it's like to not fear death.
Not afraid of when it will happen
Not afraid of the after,
But happy I'm having my chance.

Remote Learning Glossary

By Charlie S.

Remote Learning: A worse version of normal school that you complain about and also causes you to be less happy and active.

Zoom: Where you go to access your classes, even though you would pretty much always rather be doing work asynchronously.

Asynchronous work: An alternate way of doing classes instead of being on Zoom that is way easier and you wish that you could do it every day but your parents won't let you.

Music: Something that you try to listen to but you can't because every three seconds a kid says "I have a question" or, "My sound glitched, could you repeat what you were saying?"

"My sound glitched, could you repeat what you were saying?": Something you say because there was an important part of the lesson you missed or the teacher was asking you a question, and you weren't listening to it at all because you either were daydreaming, watching random YouTube videos, or spamming memes on Discord.

YouTube: Something you probably watch every time you have free-time and during transitions.

"What did you learn at school today?": A question that's already been asked multiple times after normal school by your parents but is even harder to answer after online school.

Breakout Rooms: A place where you socialize more with your classmates, which you either really enjoy doing or you turn your video off and don't speak at all.

Lunch: When you eat during school, it's also what you complain about not being long enough.

Friends: People you hang out with that share similar interests and experiences. They are close to impossible to make during online classes because you can't talk or chat with anyone unless you're talking to a whole group or the teacher, so you don't even bother to try.

Discord: A social networking app that your friends constantly spam random words and songs on because they're bored.

Chatbox: A way for introverts to communicate.

Virtual Backgrounds: A way for people to express random memes and pictures they found on the internet.

Functional Fitness or P.E.: Probably something you enjoyed until online school started and instead of doing the workouts you either make up an excuse as to why your camera isn't working or you tilt your camera up so the teacher can't see you doing push-ups and other workouts.

TikTok: A social platform that you are obsessed with if you don't watch YouTube. You watch it whenever you get the chance, including 5-minute transition breaks.

Parents: A type of human being that doesn't give you any empathy and instead blames you for not doing chores and calls you lazy just because you're forced to do online school.

People: A rare species you scarcely see.

Social Skills: A skill that you forget was even possible to have, or a skill you haven't acquired in over a year.

“Zoom Bombers”: A person that one of your classmates gives the Zoom password to so they can delay the Zoom call to either pull a prank or delay a class because they didn’t study.

Pencil Sharpener: A tool you used to cherish that you don’t care about or need anymore.

Daydreaming: Something that happens three times more often because you’re always bored or have nothing to do.

Hamilton: A musical you are obsessed with and watch and listen to “Non-stop”. (Get it?)

School Ending: Something you deeply despise because you absolutely love sitting in a dark room filling out vocabulary slides, submitting useless quizzes, and completing discussions that no one will ever read!

Attention Deficit- What? (ADHD)

By Soren M.

School.

The teacher is talking
And I need to listen
But how do I focus?

I tip my chair back,
I twist my hands,
I click a pen,
I tap my foot.

What was the teacher saying again?

They're explaining something
But I forget in a second.
It slips my mind,
Disappearing in a flash.

Focus focus focus

I do the work
Then doodle on the corner of the paper
Then fold it till it's crumpled and ripped.

Was I supposed to turn this in?

There's so many other things to focus on
Besides work.

People talking,

Posters on the wall,
The thoughts in my head.

What was the teacher saying again?

Majestic, Mysterious, and Misunderstood: The Ocean

By Olivia C.

The ocean:

Dark, choppy, waves.

Fearsome, hungry, creatures.

What you see and what you don't.

It doesn't take a genius to realize,

The ocean is deadly.

The ocean:

Playful, swirling, waves.

Curious, careful, creatures.

What you think and what you don't.

It takes imagination.

The ocean is beautiful.

You see the waves.

You feel the creatures.

Fear.

You see the waves.

You feel the creatures.

Peace.

Same title,

different authors.

Same paints,

different artists.

Viewed in many ways.

The terrific, terrible, and tangible,

Ocean.

Like an iceberg,
Barely seeable.
Like humans,
Truly complex.
The ocean,
Calm, creepy and contradicting.

Seen and unseeable,
Loved and unloved,
The ocean is,
Natural, nice, and necessary

Perspective is peculiar,
Judgment is justice,
The way of the world.

Unexplored, undiscovered, and unrelenting,
The ocean.
Exciting, interesting and inspiring,
The ocean.
Majestic, mysterious, and misunderstood,
The ocean.
Is and has always been,
Majestic, mysterious, and misunderstood.

Cow

By Lily W.

Cracked clay on the warm concrete
Sweat drips from the hammer
The clay moves to a bucket
The bucket holds water and clay
Until it holds watery clay
Slowly it becomes just clay

Walk on stones back to your house
Your clay swung around your arm
Roll it into a cylinder
Make the legs
Then the body, the ears
Mouth
Eyes

Score his body and put him together
Bring him to the fire
Wait.

.
. .
Now he's done
Only grazing at your desk
He lives in your room
Watching you grow
Ever-changing
a piece of pottery
He's always there
Right up until he's knocked off
Ears break
Tails snap

Tears fall

And our cow goes back to the warm concrete
To be broken again

You Are Beautiful

By Cleo H.

Slam! Noah ran into her room and collapsed on her bed. Her face was bright pink and her cheeks were wet with tears. It was her last day of school, and her friends were teasing her about how she looked.

Noah had shape shifting abilities. She never used them besides pranks, pranks, and pranks. But she was considering using them to hide her identity. Her true self. She and her mom were moving to a different town soon. Maybe she could start fresh. A new face, new personality, new Noah.

While she was packing up to go to her new house, she thought about hiding her identity. She never considered it before, and she wasn't so sure about it. But she had to. Years of being ridiculed for her looks had burned a fire in her heart. That was when she decided.

“Mom, how do you feel about me shape shifting more often?”

* * *

Three Years Later

Three years. It was three years since Noah showed her face to anyone other than her mom and her younger brother Will, whom they adopted two years ago.

She replaced her blond, short hair with wavy brown hair. Her green eyes were now brown, and freckles covered her nose.

Noah's friends never asked. They knew she was a shapeshifter, but they didn't know what Noah actually looked like. Her new friends, Bethany and Leo, were nicer, and didn't care much about appearances.

Leo was a fairy, so she was just like everyone but with wings. Not tiny bug-like wings, but huge bird wings. She was stubborn, and had a great sense of humor. (She also was pan, and her girlfriend was a shapeshifter, just like Noah.)

Noah's other friend, Bethany, was a witch like Noah's mom. That meant she could cast spells. But Bethany didn't like school. At all. So she didn't really know any spells. They all (including Bethany) kinda teased her about it.

But their group was inseparable. They did everything together, and rarely got into fights. But one day something crazy happened. Something that never happened before, and almost messed up their friendship. Almost.

It was a normal Tuesday morning. At least, it seemed like it. Noah got up, got dressed, and went to brush her teeth. But when she looked in the mirror, she dropped the toothpaste in surprise.

She saw herself. Not what her friends knew her as but old Noah. Normal Noah from three years ago. She was frantic. She and her mom went to the doctor to get it checked out.

She was diagnosed with a virus. The virus meant that she could not use her powers for the time being. It was very rare, and it usually only came from witches. "The effects are temporary," the doctor said, "but there is no way to know when it will come back. It can last from one week to two months."

Noah came home and screamed into her pillow. Her face was pink and her eyes were wet. *Why me why me why me why me* kept echoing in her mind. "I knew hiding my face would be bad," she told herself. "I should have just told them, and showed them my face!!! Why did I lie..."

* * * The Next Day at School * * *

Noah shoved her messy, short hair into her hood praying that her friends would be sick today. That the teachers didn't call her out. And most of all, no one made fun of her. She could only think of the old memory when her friends made fun of her, merely a few years earlier.

"Noah, we need to tell you something." She remembered the conversation like it was yesterday. "We're good friends, so we would like to be upfront and honest. We don't really like how you look. The way you

dress is so yesterday, and you never brush your hair!” “We are going to take some photos, but how about you take it for us?”

Idiots, Noah thought. *They thought they were so cool. I don't know why I ever liked them.* “Ugh,” she said.

“Noah? Is that you? Where are you??” Leo said. *Oh no oh no oh no oh no oh noooooo.*

Noah spotted her friends. *There's no avoiding it.* She took a deep breath. “Hey.”

* * *

It took a while for Noah's friends to understand. Noah was practically in tears by the time she finished. “I am so sorry.”

Leo and Bethany were shocked. They looked at Noah, then to each other, then back to Noah. As if it was planned, they both ran to Noah and hugged her.

“No! You're our friend. We care about what's underneath, not what's on the surface.”

“You are beautiful.”

Planet

By Kalliope H.

I'm in love with your winter
in love with your summer
you jump, I can't catch you
you live for the wonder
your spring and your autumn
sky high, rock bottom
you crest like waves
I'm a cove, long forgotten
but I love your mountains tall
take my air, breathe it all
I'll live on your planet
sleep as your sky falls

The Days That Are Her Last

By Kaela M.

She is not fully gone but is not fully there
Like a dream that breezes
Across your mind in your sleep
But disappears when you awake

I wish she would go now
But that is selfish, is it not?
Although she does not
remember enough to care
So it is just the same

I feel so bad saying so
I loved her when she was here
As I still do, but with
sadness and despair
Of what is soon to come
Or already has

But for her to go?
It is a greater woe
Sometimes living is much worse
Than being dead
Well that also all depends
They say I will see her once again
But will I?

How can we be sure
Was she that good
Of course, they tell me she was
I don't remember her so
There was no time for good

After we had that barren day of news

For I did not know
Where we would be today
Peering through a sheet of glass
Into the place
Where she will lay last

With your memory
as my only companion
And my tears streaming fast
We made few memories
I hope they will last

And then someone holds you so tight
You know they will have to let go
Of the person that gave them their life

At least while she lives without a care
Now when I see her it's hard to tell
Is she laughing, is she crying?
No, she's slowly dying

The pain is in not knowing
When she will pass
Just hoping they will be good days
The days that are her last

You Are Electric

By Josie B.

And your thoughts follow red
Strings of fate
And your applause
Is love, because that's how you work
And I haven't felt this way in
A long time
And you are my feelings
Warm, a hug
On a Christmas day
With presents to come
But cold, rain
On a shell-shocked boy
In the road
But charged, a jolt
To a heart
To wake it
And I am asleep
And you are electric
And you follow the yellow brick road
And your shoes are shiny to distract
And your love is as electric
As the sodden boy in the road
Wishes it weren't
And yet rain comes with risk
And you sang in it
And you sang and were struck by its glow.

Home

By Ruby A.

Home
might be
a small
cozy
hole in the ground

Home
might be
a far off destination
to which you
are always bound

Home
might be
the place you
lay your head at night

Home
might be out in the open air
under
stars
and the moon
shining so bright

Home
might be
the place where
you've played
and laughed
and learned
and grown

But

Home
is a word
that many
can't truly
call
their
own.

Olivia Miranda Backsman

By Luca B.

The wind blows in my face, it's chilly outside today, I wish I could huddle up on my bench in the park, but I have to make money. I have to make money, because food costs money. I haven't eaten for days, I can hear my stomach.

I start to play my guitar. People walk by, some look at me and throw a few coins, some don't even glance at me. It is so easy to ignore a person, especially if they are my age. I close my eyes, becoming one with my music. When I open my eyes again, a little girl is grinning at me. She appears to be about seven years old. Then, she sits down, and looks at me expectantly.

“What's your name?” she asks me.

“My name, no one has asked me that in a long, long time. My name,” I take a breath, “my name is Opal Parks.” The girl thinks.

“My name is Olivia Miranda Backsman. Your name is very pretty,” she says. I laugh a little and she smiles so hard it looks like she is gonna explode.

“Olivia!” a woman yells, rushing over.

“I am so sorry, Miss.” Her voice lowers. “Get away from that woman,” she hisses, “I told you not to talk to strangers.”

I look up, and apologize, “I am so sorry ma'am. I don't want to cause any trouble.” That woman stares me down, I can see her icy, cold eyes judging me. She nods at me, takes Olivia's hand, and walks away. I smile to myself and laugh a little as I play my guitar. Music is my crutch, the thing that keeps me going, I've loved it since I was a girl, I can still remember the first time I picked up a guitar. I get lost in my thoughts, in my music, in my sorrows.

The next morning I am at the corner of the street and am about to play when that little girl from yesterday comes running around the block, her mother behind her. She is screaming and laughing as her mom chases her. She sees me, and runs over “Will you play me a song? And sing?” she asks me. I look over at her mother, who is out of breath, she

nods. And so I sing for them, and that little girl listens. She listens with such seriousness, like I'm the only person in the world who matters. Her mother is smiling, I can tell, even if she is trying to hide it.

Day after day, month after month, even years pass. Me and Olivia become close friends, she comes nearly every day, no matter her schedule, she finds the time for me. She gets older, and smarter, and as she grows she gets more and more beautiful. I get to see her growing up. If I don't have a meal she gives me hers, if I'm cold she lends me her jacket; even if it is too small for me, it's the gesture that counts. As we get older, she becomes more and more kind.

Then, after 11 years of friendship, I lose her. She goes off to college, to get a job, to live her life. Some days her mom will come and see me. We have become acquaintances, and when she does come, we talk. "Olivia sure did love you," her mother had told me. "You know, she always had trouble making friends, a very shy person, but you two clicked, and I owe you for that. You were her friend, her partner, her personality, her kindness, most of it is because of you." Her mom smiles a tired old smile. I smile too, thinking about all the good times I had with her.

I am 80 years old, I feel chest pains almost daily and I know I am dying, but I need to stay strong, and I will until the day I die, until the day I cannot get up. At night I lay peacefully, but I don't sleep, I cherish every day and night I am alive. I cherish every moment I am playing my guitar, and every person who gives just a little bit.

One day, I am playing my guitar, when I see a familiar face, smiling down at me. "Olivia!" I laugh. "What are you doing here?"

She looks at me smiling, "I'm on break and thought I'd visit an old friend." She has no idea how happy I am right now. She sits down next to me and we talk about what has happened in the months apart. She's a woman now, and I'm an old lady, but we talk like we were children.

"Child!" I say in a shaky voice, "Come over here." I flinch, my chest hurting more and more by the minute, my time is running out.

“Come, follow me, ”I tell her. We walk to my bench in the park, my home. I hand her my guitar, and she looks at me.

“What's this for? You need it to make money.” She says, her voice getting higher, and I know she won't let herself come to this conclusion. “Opal Parks! You NEED it to make money!” She is yelling now.

“Olivia, I bequeath this to you,” I say, my voice getting shaky. I know she understands, and I look at her, my breath shakes.

“No!” she yells. Her voice softens. “You can't leave me, not now.” Her eyes are watery.

“It's not my choice,” I say softly. I can feel her hand holding mine. I lay down, and look up at her, thankful she is here. I look at her face trying to memorize everything on it. I smile a little and pain shoots through me. I tell her the last words I will ever say: “I love you, Olivia Miranda Backsman.” I close my eyes, my breath comes short, my heart stops, and I let go. I set myself free.

Why the Masters Is Special to Me

By Stephen E.

There is a certain feeling that comes to my mind when it is wintertime. Limited golf, trees are dead, the ground is bare. These things cause me to feel a sense of loss. So when, in April (sometimes November), there are blooms everywhere, and a certain aura in the air, there is almost a grounding feeling. The feeling that you can see all of these majestic azalea blooms lining golf holes, patrons enjoying the illustrious buzz of what is the Masters. Pimento cheese sandwiches, for a dollar apiece. All of these things make me feel like the world has come alive again, reborn from the dead that is winter. Bob Jones and Alister Mackenzie designed a beautiful canvas for the world's best golfers to paint on and THAT is what makes the world feel reborn. THAT is what makes you want to go play eighteen, and then sit around on the couch, stuffing your face with pimento cheese sandwiches, watching skilled artists paint. From every time I hear Jim Nantz say, "Welcome to the Masters", to the now-famous theme song that plays when CBS comes back from commercial break on Sunday, I, and everyone who knows anything about golf, feel this buzz.

Thank you, PGA Tour, for letting us all feel alive after the death of winter.

I'm Tired

By Lallitha G.

I'm tired
I'm tired of people telling me how to act
To talk
To walk
To laugh
To smile
I'm tired of being told
Get off your phone
Are you eating, again?
Don't curse
Come inside
Go outside
Clean your room
Do the dishes
But don't slack on school
Or I'll take your phone
Talk more
I DO
Just not to you
I would talk a lot more if you would
Stop criticizing me
And listen
So I'm going to my room
Because
I'm tired

Cheeseburgers

By Lucca L.

Drive up to the place millions have been before.

Gas flowing from the rusted pipes.

Sunken eyes quickly scanning the cheap, high-calorie menu.

When will I stop?

Tomorrow, they say

As the said handcrafted sauce drips down their reddened face

Clutter

By Milana B.

The various papers were lifted to the floor by the leisurely paced ceiling fan. The panels of wood stood still and quiet, as I stumbled over a few moving boxes. My colored socks became warm when I walked into the warm lamp light. Cool air from the cracks of the window breezed through. The silence surrounded the closet door when I noiselessly opened it. Papers, highlighters, and pens filled the bookshelves.

Covid

By Felix K.

Covid has taken many things away from everyone.

Family, work, happiness and the ability to play with friends.

I hate Covid. I know that hate is a strong word but it's the only word that
comes to mind when I

hear someone talk about Covid.

Covid is a fire and we must be the water that puts out the raging fire.

It's time to take back what's ours

Freedom

Covid is a puzzle and we must solve it

We must work together to stop this.

We'll stop Covid by working together.

Hang. In. There.

Art

By Soren M.

a sketch,
with charcoal and cardboard
dusty figures
smudged edges
and chalk outlines.

browns and blacks,
silvers and whites.

a landscape,
with watercolor and paper
elegant streaks
soft scores and
bright colors.

reds and yellows,
blues and greens.

a portrait,
with acrylic paint and canvas
twisted shapes
sharp lines and
splattered colors.

orange and pinks,
purples and golds.

Instructions to the Artist (after Billy Collins)

By Milana B.

I wish for my head to be placed exactly 20 inches away
From the upper right corner
Shaped like a slightly skinnier avocado
The specific avocado I eat every morning for breakfast
I should expect to see it exactly

My face a foliage of fresh flowers
each petal a different shade from the petal beside it
Be sure not to drop my bouquet
For I don't want any petals crumpled or lost
I should expect to see it exactly

The result shall be the most incredible piece
For I am that
No mistakes shall be made
Yet it is me, nevertheless
I should expect to see it exactly

The body must be angelic limbs
Shaped into an intricate root system sucking in water for my flowers
For my body is a gift
I use it every way I can through my dancing
Draw it that
I expect to see it exactly

The background shall be nothing much
The hue a standard green
A plain Joe
A white or black perhaps
Call me when you have chosen your color and I will ask you to choose
again

I should expect to see and hear it exactly

Also, disregard every instruction I gave you
And do the exact opposite
I should expect to see this exactly

Some recommendations for the art piece,
Art isn't about others' thoughts, feelings, or ideas
It's about your thoughts, feelings and ideas
Artists should be rebels
Their heart is louder and shall be heard
I should expect to see and hear this exactly
But what should I be expecting from you?

Photographs Are Memories

By Delphia V.

Each moment in life is a snapshot, some we can remember, and some we cannot. Some are from the distant past, and some, closer to us in time. As a photography major at Lamar, I've learned to see the world through photographs. Certain photographs stick with me. They are like portals into the past. If I could, I would choose to go into the past to hold on to the photos I have lost.

I line up my camera close to the toy basket, focusing on a simple doll. I squint my eyes, peer through the camera and snap my shot. I had moved my basket of toys, and I saw a hole covered with tape in the floor. It was big enough to fit maybe a spider. I had thought back to Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* and how she shrunk. I thought, 'What if a person shrunk and came into my room?' I tried to go to sleep, not telling my parents how I felt, eventually falling asleep. I find myself wide awake in the middle of the night. I call my mom into my room, asking her to sleep with me because I am scared. She climbs into my bed and holds me, but I still could not stop thinking about someone coming through the hole. I think it is fake, that can't happen. Slowly drifting off to sleep. Since I was 6, I have learned to get over my fears and not to be afraid. This skill helps me find solutions to my problems and fix them.

I start the timer, running back to my spot on the couch, right next to my grandpa, and smiling for the camera. Click! I remember the day my grandpa, with whom I was very close, had to go to a nursing home. I didn't think much of it. I thought he would go back home in a couple of days or weeks. Months had passed, he still wasn't home. We get a call from my grandma, she tells us he has died peacefully in his sleep. I didn't understand what had happened. A couple of weeks went by and we went to the funeral. It finally hits me, he is gone forever. Everyday, I wish that I could have said goodbye. I have learned to appreciate people

in my life because you never know when they will leave. This has taught me to take my time with people seriously and value others.

I put the camera on sports mode, I am getting ready for the perfect time to snap a picture of my sister doing a pirouette, waiting and then a click of the camera. My sister was trying out to be in a higher level of dance at our dance company. I wasn't trying out but my parents were making me go to support her. My head was pounding like it had a heartbeat of its own. I begged them to not make me go, they thought I was just faking it. I pushed through, the best I could, with my headache. When we got home I ran up to my room because I could not take the constant pounding anymore. When I got in my bed my heart was pounding so loud you could hear it from a mile away. The only cure was sleep. The headaches happen for many different reasons, but especially stress. I have learned how to deal with them and power my way through. They have made me stronger. I have learned that even though it's hard at times, if you just keep pushing through, you will succeed.

I would like to revisit the memories captured in my photographs. Certain photographs resonate with me today because of the lessons I have learned. They show how I have come to be the person I am today. I wouldn't want to be anybody else. I choose to go back to the past only to revisit those moments in time and not change a thing.

Who Makes Sure the Trees Will Grow?

By Josie B.

Who makes sure the trees will grow?
And waters when the rain is slow?
Who swings the earth
Around the sun?
And tells the crops when growing's done?
Who breaks the land
And shakes the sea
And blows their breath
To toss the trees?
Who fills the dirt
With priceless things
And tills the earth
To plant the seeds?
Who cries the rain?
Who made your brain?
Who gave the coal
To fuel the train?
Who let us eat?
Who got us meat?
Who did all this?
(An epic feat)
Who built the sky
To give us blue?
Who gave us warmth
When we were new?
The answer is
Not you or I
Nor someone else
Up in the sky
In fact it was
No one at all

Yet only we
Will take the fall
When all is lost
And food is sparse-
Who'll take the reins
And drive our hearse?
Who'll tuck us in
And let us sleep?
Our slumber will be filled with peace
We doomed ourselves
With every breath
And fated life
With endless death.

The Rabbit

By Rebecca H.

I watch the warm glow of the sunset as the precious guardian of the Earth leaves the job to the moon, not knowing of the terrors that engulf our world at night. I hear my mother call my name softly, just realizing I am not by her side. She doesn't yet know that I am left behind and I still have time to gaze upon the world.

The trees are rustled by the wind, of which you can all but see, their leaves rub together creating a melody to the sounds of the dark. I shift my gaze downward and see a small rabbit within arms length. It nibbles at the grass thinking I am nothing, that I could cause it no harm. It does not realize that I too am a living thing. I crouch down, getting closer to this glorious miracle. The rabbit tenses up and looks at me. Its nose twitching, its ears perked, eyes are staring into mine. It's surprised that I have moved, that this once meaningless object that could cause it no more harm than a bush has suddenly turned into a threat. As I make no more movements toward it, its body relaxes but its eyes never shift away from mine. Rabbits do not have the luxury to trust, no. No one tells the rabbit anything. It knows only that others will harm it; it knows only to run from all. It knows only fear.

My mother calls my name again, realizing I am not within her sight. Her voice is frantic and I know I must trouble her no more. The rabbit's body tenses again. Its ears swivel towards the sound and in a split-second it disappears along the grass. I wobble in her direction, my small feet stumbling along the rough road. I wish I could show my mother the world, bring her away from our perfect little house, with its perfect cut grass, and the perfectly clean windows. Show her that you do not have to hide from the wonder of nature, that the good is there along with the bad. But she will not understand me. No one will understand me. And when I'm older I'll soon forget the time I had to think. The time I had to figure out what was wrong with us. I shall be sucked into our small world of bedazzled perfection in which we hide from the truth.

I walk across the road, then I freeze. The lights, the noise. It's as if the beast is screaming for me to run, but I can't. Sirens blast, a dog barks, wheels screech against the road, trying to stop in time, I try to jerk myself forward, I try to run, but I can't. I hear the helpless screams of my mother as she runs toward me, I hear the impact of metal against bone. I wish I could leave; they tell me to run. But I can't.

I'm as powerless as a rabbit. I'm as fearful as the rabbit. I am the rabbit.

Here in My Happy Place

By Nik A.

Here in my happy place

Here in the sun

Here in the grass I lie down

Here in the filthy dirt small puddles of mud don't bother me

Here I can finally feel the clouds below me moving under MY feet

(Here people are powerless compared to me)

Here I FEEL everything I want to feel, I SEE everything I want to see, I TASTE my favorite taste, I SMELL my favorite smell, I LISTEN to what I want to listen to.

HERE I AM

H A P P Y

I Dream a World (after Langston Hughes)

By Ruby A.

I dream a world where all people are equal
Where differences are embraced, where people of all skin colors are
treated equally, and where love is love
I dream a world where people don't judge a book by its cover,
but instead, open it up and read the whole story
I dream a world where people are friendly and kind
I dream a world where love will bind
I dream a world where everyone will come together and compromise
I dream a world where people can find their passions and rise
I dream a world where we will help other people and animals around the
globe
Because we all live in the same home:
The Earth

Green Eyes

By Cleo H.

“Plunk!” The cat jumps onto my porch. He shyly walks over to me with a meow. They say not to go near black cats, but my mother never believed in superstitions and neither do I. I hand him his dinner and he eats it slowly. Finally, he jumps back onto the fence, his neon green eyes glow in the night like a glow stick, as he walks away to the abandoned house across the street.

The cat always goes into that house. I never cared, the cat isn't even mine, but a stray. I feed him so he doesn't starve, and I leave a bowl of water on my porch. I've done this for two years, since my mom died. But today I slip on my sandals, and follow the cat across the street to the old house with boarded up windows and a jungle backyard. The front is a sea of dead leaves but I see the cat staring at me with his green eyes. I see him walk into the house, and I follow.

The floorboards creak, and it's dark and dusty. It's so dusty that I can see my footprints. I hear rustling behind me. A shiver runs down my spine, but I keep walking. I feel a slight breeze through my purple polka dotted pajamas. The cat looks at me. It seems that he is trying to show me something. He walks into a room that doesn't have creepy cobwebs and eerie shadows. The room is big and open. There is only a piano in the middle, accompanied by a small bench. I walk in front of it, and the cat leaps onto the piano and sits down. I wipe the piano with my hands, making a little cloud of dust go into the air. The cat stands there watching me with his emerald eyes in curiosity, his head slightly tilted.

I sit down, opening the fallboard covering the keys, and place my hands in that familiar spot. I wonder what to play. Then I have an idea. My mom's favorite song. She taught it to me before she died. I close my eyes and play the song. The sweet notes are so familiar I feel like I can reach out and touch it. I turn to the cat. “Why did you bring me here?”

Then suddenly I hear what sounds like a whisper. The cat looks like he is turning into smoke. The foggy figure grows, until it's filling half the room. Suddenly, he blows away in a gust of wind, making the

windows rattle. I somehow smell the faint scent of my mother's perfume.
I sit in the now empty room.

The Power We Hold

By Natasa K.

We can emerge from victory with power
We may also choose to cower
If we stand tall then so be it
But what of those of us, small, who can't see it

We were raised to be what is
Yet we have tested the boundaries again and again

Full of what we could be
that we don't see it

We are incapable of seeing the rain
But as long as our sunshine will dawn a new age
We will see
The
Sun's
Rays

The Perfect Air B&B

By Olive G.

When my house starts to get a little dreary
I know every dust bunny and I'm tired of talking to Siri

I hop on the Mac with my fingers flying
And click and scroll until I'm tired of trying

To find the perfect AirB&B

“Over one-fifty? Just for one night.”
My mom nods, doesn't put up a fight.

So I insert “dog friendly”
Into the search frenzy.

Find the one, the one that's not fake
By a river, pool, or lake

So I pack my bags, stuff in treats
And in the car I kick back my feet.

I stroke my puppy in utter delight
I'm staying somewhere else, this is alright!

I'm heading to the perfect AirB&B

I look around, and make sure it's fenced,
Then I clip off my puppy's leash and she sprints

All around the perfect AirB&B

I Can Hear the Future

By Ruby G.

Round and luscious
Blue and green
The cradle of humanity

Yeah, everyone's just kinda selfish
Living in their own little world
Completely ignoring the other species

Crick-
Craack
CRUSH!
Crumckl..

That's right, I can hear the future
And it doesn't sound that great

Corals dying
Sea turtles are lessening
Glaciers are melting
And rivers are crusting

If the humans went extinct
Then the rest of the creatures wouldn't be on the brink
They could lay back and relax
Take a breather, eat a snack
Rebuild their habitats, rebuild their homes
And never hear the terrorizing future I hear today

Ballad of Time

By Holden E.

Time, oh how they say you fly,
As if you were a passer gliding through the sky
Time, oh how annoying you can be,
Sprinting past when I want to stay asleep

Time, why must you choose to stay
I'm tired and bored, make this day go away!
Time, if I could stop you I would,
You endlessly tick and you're just no good

Time, oh you just live to disrupt,
You're always so sudden, always abrupt
Time, I really wish you'd find a better time
I have an essay due tomorrow, and it's 11:49

I Live in a Castle Made of Endless Dreams and Reality

By Mahlia D.

I live in a castle made of hope
I live in a castle with desires
Dream of peace
Dream of love
Dream of beauty in society
The environment is serene so you can dream

But then reality sets in,
by crashing down on your castle
Dreams become hopes that will never come true
Until you lose hope

Don't lose hope,
rebuild your castle when it crashes to the ground
Hold your head up high
Remember endless dreams
can become reality

Underwater

By Milane B.

My hearing muffled, my vision blurred,
I shut out the world,
as if I'm in a new universe.
I let the water carry my weightless body,
and I could care less where I go.
I've escaped,
I feel like a different person.

As I enjoy my few seconds of absolute peace,
a small ache buried underneath my ribs starts to grow.
It's battling inside of me,
Hitting my lungs,
Getting stronger with every punch.
Growing,
It consumes me,
reminding me I can't stay here forever.

I've come to my senses;
This haven can kill me.
Why can't I stay?
I start to move arms and legs quickly,
trying to reach the surface.
As it starts to feel like my body is about to give in,
I break through.
I gasp for air,
the pain is gone.
The noises of the outdoors fill my ears.
I'm back to reality.
I'm back.

Yellow

By Camilla M.

Yellow is the sun smiling down on the earth.

Yellow is as optimistic as a litter of puppies a few days from birth.

Yellow is a joyful spring day.

Yellow is calm, captivating, controlled, yet pliable clay.

Yellow is the color of creativity.

Yellow is a mindset of positivity

Yellow is a good way to think.

Yellow is a gentle orange when mixed with pink.

Yellow is a majestic gleam of light.

Yellow is never flashy but always bright.

Yellow is a visual to happiness.

Yellow is harmonic, joyful bliss.

What Really Is?

By Lilly B.

- What is a doorbell without its ding?
- What is a catchy name without its ring?
- What is a world without mistakes?
- What is a mistake with no opportunity?
- What is a rank without its place?
- What is an animal without cells?
- What is a told secret without any tells?
- What is a chair without its legs?
- What is a person without their friends?
- What is a fight without any words?
- What is a flock without any birds?
- What is a book without any wonder?
- What is a storm without any thunder?
- What is life without any living?
- What is Christmas without any giving?
- What is Earth Day without Earth?
- What is a thing that really is worth?
- What is a goal without any do?
- What would life be without you?

The Key Exchange

By Emmett B.

A secret message
Mutual trust
Left unencrypted

Trade public keys
Encrypt once
A secret message
Hold what is private close

Decrypt once
A secret message
Mutual trust
Left unencrypted

Mutual trust
The only thing not needed
For an exchange of public keys

Mutual trust
The only thing needed
For a secret message
Left unencrypted
Hold what is private close

Queen

By Josie K.

Garbed in lace and velvet
Diamonds and jewels
Delicately stitched and woven
A satin-and-yarn shawl
Gently wrapped around the wearer
Dressed in shimmering silver
Clothed in a reindeer-skin hat
Embroidered with gold thread

The Murderer's Dessert

By Maria S.

It was a cool, breezy fall evening. The perfect evening for a murder. And it just so happens that I, Luna Channing, 11-year-old resident of Westmore Estate, had just witnessed one.

I had wedged myself between two statues in the garden to spy on dinner in the main hall when Mr. Miller dropped dead over his soup. Most people jumped to their feet to see what had happened, while I surveyed the guests: Mrs. Brown, the estate owner, panicking, Ms. Radle looking around the room frantically, and Mr. Baker, adjusting his glasses. People started running around, and I slipped inside unnoticed.

I had no parents, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown had let me come live at the estate. I was thankful for this, but declined invitations to dinner, for I preferred to watch other people.

I crept to the kitchen to get something to eat. I spotted a triple-layered, chocolate frosted day-old cake that had been left untouched. I was about to take it when my hand was slapped away. I yelped and leapt back. Ms. Rankins, the usually sweet cook, glared at me.

“OUT!” she shouted.

“Sorry, Ms. Rankins, I-I was just getting some food,” I responded, holding my breath in terror.

Ms. Rankins hobbled over to the counter, took some cheese and bread, slammed it on a plate, and thrust it at me.

“Now, what did I say? Oh, yes, I said, OUT!” I nodded and ran from the kitchen, balancing the bread and cheese on the plate. I sat in my tucked-out-of-the-way bedroom on the second floor, eating my dinner. The bread was stale, but I did not complain.

I went to bed before finishing my food and hoped breakfast would be better.

The next day the sun shone through the window and created a crisscross pattern on my blanket. I shook my hair out of my eyes, crawled out from under the covers, and ran to breakfast where the adults were talking in hushed voices.

“Yes, it’s true, someone has stolen the diamond,” said Mr. Brown.

“That isn’t good,” said the gardener.

There was more to hear, but I did not hear it. I had turned and was sprinting down the hall to the diamond display.

The glass was shattered, and the diamond was gone. I was on the case. I looked around and spotted a footprint. *A small man’s*, I thought.

I sat down, my head spinning. I had clues, and yet I had no idea how to put them together. Maybe if I read a mystery book, I could pick up some tips.

The library was a large, oval room with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves on every wall. I had already read my way through the fantasy section, bookshelves which occupied most of the right walls.

It took me a while to find the mystery books, and I ran my fingers across the spines, until I found a book I thought could help. I read with my fingers gripping the book, trying to absorb every bit of information.

Most of the story flew by, and when I was through, the only information that had stuck out to me was ‘ask questions’. Maybe asking Mrs. Brown a few questions would help. I was not sure, anyway.

Mrs. Brown was where I thought she would be, knitting a long, green scarf in her favorite chair. I took a deep breath and stepped where Mrs. Brown could see me. “I, um, have some questions for you, Mrs. Brown,” I said, trying to look braver than I felt.

“Sure, ask away,” Mrs. Brown said.

I hesitated, then asked, “Why do you think Mr. Miller was killed?”

Mrs. Brown thought for a moment that looked up at me, “I am sorry you had to see that happen Luna, but why are you asking me?”

“Because I am trying to solve the mystery of the diamond and Mr. Miller’s death,” I said.

“That is very kind of you Luna, but we have detectives for that kind of stuff.”

“I know, but I still want to try.”

“Well, if you really want to help, you could question Mrs. Miller. I’m sure she would be happy to help.”

“Yeah.” I said, “I will ask her some questions, too. Thank you, Mrs Brown.”

“No problem.”

I spotted Mrs. Miller down the hall and asked if she would mind answering some questions.

“Sure, let’s talk in my room, it’s just down the hall,” she responded.

I followed her into a large room and sat down on a stool near the desk.

“So, Mr. Miller, two nights ago, where was he?” I asked.

“Well, he went out for a nightly stroll, past the diamond display. He seemed nervous when he returned. I did not want to upset him, so I let him be.”

I nodded, “Would you say he was short?”

“Well, smaller than most men. Is that all?”

I smiled. “Yes. Thank you,” I replied and left the room.

Mr. Miller is short, I thought. He was near the diamond, alone at night. Could he have done it?

I took a pad of paper and started taking notes. I wrote ‘suspects’ on the top of the page and thought. Who was I suspecting for what? I drew a line down the middle of the page and labeled each half ‘stolen diamond’ and ‘Mr. Miller’s death’. I started thinking about who would steal a diamond when an idea popped into my head. Maybe they were connected, maybe the diamond was stolen before Mr. Miller was killed, maybe no one noticed the diamond was gone, because of Mr. Miller’s sudden death. But how were they connected?

Maybe a walk would clear my head. I passed the diamond display again, and I stared at the broken glass. Then I thought about Mr. Miller, and the diamond. Maybe he took the diamond, and someone knew, so they killed him for his crimes. But that just caused more crimes. Then I started thinking about different sides. Maybe Mr. Miller was killed because he *witnessed* the diamond being stolen. That was different. I

could tell the police my suspicions. They were already here, so what did I have to lose?

I walked to the large dining room where the police were looking for the diamond and investigating Mr. Miller's death. Ms. Rankins walked by.

"Hi!" Ms. Rankins said to Mrs. Brown, "I was going to let you know I am retiring, I have made enough money to buy a house and live the rest of my life."

"That is great!" said Mrs. Brown, "But we will miss having you around."

Something confused me. Ms. Rankins was not exactly the youngest person, but she was not old enough for retirement. I closed my eyes and thought. *Yes, that's it!*

I ran to the kitchen.

The two-day-old cake was still there. *Why did she keep it after all this time?* I thought.

The serving boy, John, walked into the room.

"John!" I said, "This is very important. Did Ms. Rankins ever say to give Mr. Miller a specific dish?"

"Well," said John, "she told me to give him a specific bowl of soup because she said he was a vegetarian."

"Okay," I said, "now think really hard. Was there meat in the soup you gave him?"

"Yes. Yes, there was. But I still followed instructions."

I nodded and ran from the kitchen, grabbing the old cake as I went.

"I solved the case!" I called triumphantly to everyone in the great hall.

The police looked up.

"Mr. Miller was poisoned!" I said.

"We know that," said Mrs. Brown, "We never found the bottle though."

"Well, I know where it is!" I said.

"Then tell us the entire story," said one of the police officers.

“Ms. Rankins wanted money, so she stole the diamond, Mr. Miller had walked by just as she was stealing it. Ms. Rankins must have noticed because she killed him later. He knew too much. She poisoned one bowl of soup and told the server to give that bowl to him. But she had a problem. People were going to figure out someone poisoned him and she had to hide the evidence and the diamond.”

“But whoever did it wiped down the glass of fingerprints,” said one officer.

“Yes,” I said, “she’s too smart. But like I said, she had to hide the evidence.” I plunged my hand into the cake and pulled out a plastic bag.

In it was a bottle of poison and a diamond. “I wondered why she never threw away this cake, it was because she hid the evidence in it.”

“But that is not enough evidence, anyone could have put it there,” one officer spoke up.

“Yes, but the fingerprints on the diamond and poison bottle *are* enough,” I finished.

Ms. Rankins turned and ran, but the police were faster.

“Thank you so much, Luna,” Mrs. Brown told me.

But I just smiled and went to my room. After all, reading mysteries is a lot less tiring than solving one.

Red

By Elise G.

Red is the color of springtime flowers

Red is the color of nice hot showers

Red is the cocoon that tucks you in at night

Red is the color of rage and fright

Red can be awake, alive when bright

Red can be a peaceful, lulling sight

Red is the color of a round, shiny apple

Red is the stained-glass windows of a chapel

Red is the color of energy and life

Red is the feeling that comes with strife

Red is warm like the sun on your face

Red is the stars, hiding out in space

Red is a rhythmic beat

Red is a choir, their voices concrete

Red is a color that soothes and moves

Red is a loved one, their kindness and truth

New Birds

By Josie B.

Fluttery
And fluffy
A new bird with small wings
And somehow the strongest thing
There is
Each touch a new stick
In this nest of a love
A baby stretching
Up, up, up
Each kiss a worm
A fresh little chick
Turned to grizzled old fowl
And someday,
The tree will ice over
And each bird departed
And the mother
Snatched up by the neighbor's cat
And the father long gone
To the south
And the little nest of a love
Will be gray and empty
Until summer comes.
Until there are new birds.

Canvas

By Emma S.

Blank,
Same throughout,
Waiting,
Pacing,

Waiting for the courage of an artist,
The artist is the only one who can fix blankness,
Despair without a fixer is just a pile of uselessness,

Waiting for purpose,
Waiting for hope,
A canvas is just a thing if an artist is not present.

All the Little Things

By Lexie P.

All the little things
All the overlooked problems
Like cream colored Band-aids on dark skin
Publicly display “unwanted” differences

All the little things
All the small details of difference
Like the judged accent in a last name
Are all factors in unfairness

All the little things
All the assumed traits
Like people who call people with glasses “nerds”
Make the world a little more divided

All the little things
All the little discriminations
Add up to the biggest problem
We’ve yet to face

I Dream a World (after Langston Hughes)

By Zane L.

I dream a world where people are not seen as Black, White, Asian, or Latinx, but human.

I dream a world where we do not attack our own capitol after a fair election.

I dream a world where no matter whether you are male, female, or non-binary, you are treated equal.

I dream a world where a man can love a man and a woman can love a woman.

I dream a world where we do not destroy our forests and poison our rivers.

I dream a world where we treat all animals with kindness, and do not kill them for sport.

I dream a world of peace, of togetherness, of love and compassion.

I dream a world of hope.

The Galaxy and I

By Claire K.

Swim far down to the deepest place,
Where constellations shine bright
And planets spin in circles on their axes,
Many miles above the earth
Where you float
Peacefully.
You see forever:
With only drops of light to guide you
Where only the sounds of the atmosphere whirl softly.
Where you can be far away
From all of the things below.
With your feet on the clouds
And your head in the stars,
The coolness on your skin
Makes you feel truly warm
The feeling of comfort and contentedness
And the sensation of having nothing to worry about
Is truly beautiful.
While time ticks slowly,
Reality slowly creeps up on you.
As you drift back up to life,
Your head comes heavily out of the water,
Only to take
One
Full
Breath
To immerse yourself
Back into the gentle swaying of the galaxy
To make our world
As peaceful as this one.

Nightfall

By Ruby A.

Nightfall comes with darkness
with quiet
and with gloom
the streets are overcome with silence
the glowing world is engulfed
in a dark, silk cocoon
The cicadas chirp a mellow song
reminding us to
slowly unwind
We rest our heads on pillows
we start to relax our minds
We think with sorrow
about the day
that's quickly come and gone
but also about the hope
of tomorrow's brand new dawn
After sunset
after dark
after a world that shines so bright
we close our eyes
and fall asleep
so softly
in the
night.