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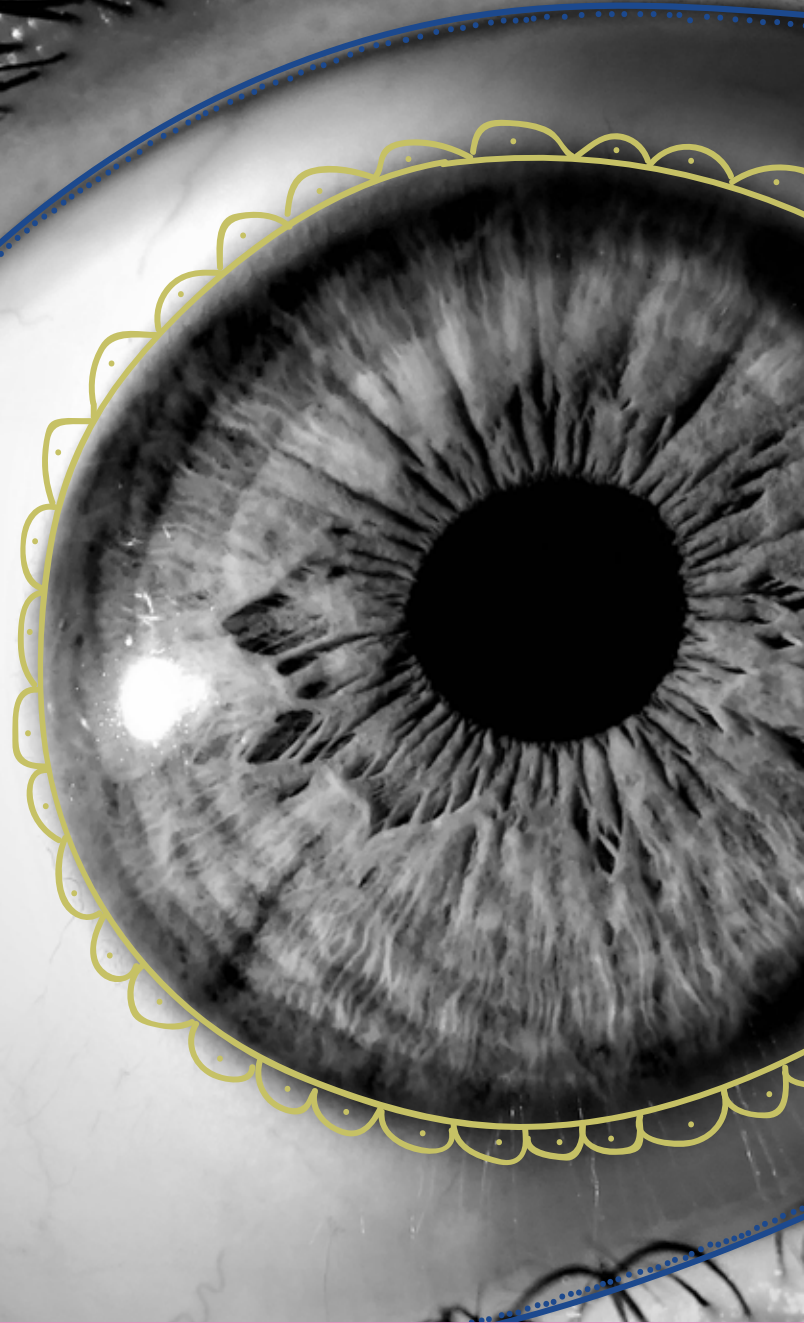
windscript

Volume 34 2018

The Magazine of High School Writing

SWG
Saskatchewan
Writers' Guild

FEATURING:
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OZMANDIAS REIN
MEGHAN REYDA-MOLNAR
CHASE ROSS
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The Best in Poetry and Prose from High School Students in Saskatchewan Visit us online: skwriter.com

Volume 34, 2018
ISSN: 0822-2363
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PUBLISHER
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Cover image courtesy of Pixabay

PRINT
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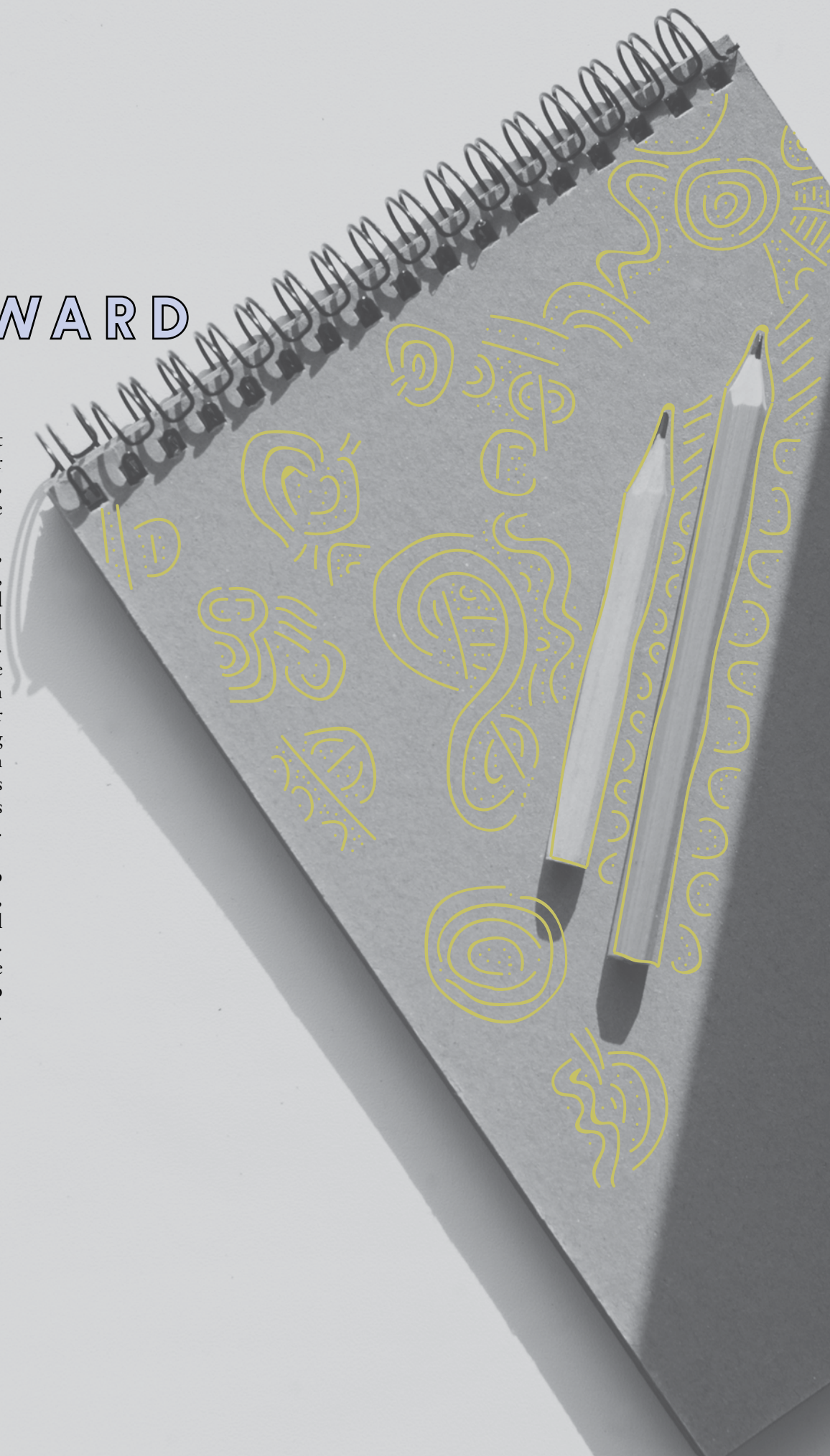
EDITOR'S FOREWARD

Welcome to *Windscript* Volume 34. It's never been more important to have a venue for young voices, as the response to our call for submissions proves. We had more than 100 entries this year, setting a record for the magazine, and making my job as editor even more of a challenge—and a reward.

Themes that quickly surfaced included significant personal and social issues, whether in the complicated facets of our relationships with self and others, or in expressing the unusual or unexplained in our world—and beyond it. Most of these young writers are experimenting with poetic forms and techniques, or with narrative styles in both fiction and creative nonfiction. I found myself inspired by the openness and sheer creative energy of the work. Choosing which to include in this issue was very difficult, and often based on examples of the type of work or theme: how many of that type or genre, or how the various pieces would fit into the mix by theme or writing style. During the editing, I was impressed again by the care and concern these writers showed in discussing and considering their original intentions while revising. If there is a theme in this issue, it might be described as “dare to be different”—different characters, different styles, different ideas. We've tried to reflect that in the layout and design choices we made.

Thanks to the SWG for giving me this opportunity a second time, to Stephanie Campbell for her valuable advice and marvelous design skills, and to Oin Nicholson for his tireless leadership. As well, I have to thank all the writers and their writing coaches for their dedication and hard work. It's been my honour to edit *Windscript*, and my privilege to work with these young writers. Congratulations to all for your courage and dedication to the process, which bodes well for the future of writing in Saskatchewan. Enjoy the journey!

Marie Powell
Editor



AWARDS

JERRETT ENNS AWARDS

The Jerrett Enns Awards are two awards of excellence for high school student writing in poetry and prose named in honour of Victor Jerrett Enns, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild from 1982 to 1988. A third award for art was discontinued in 1996. Today, the poetry and prose awards continue to be presented, as well as an Honourable Mention in each category.

CURRIE-HYLAND PRIZE

The Currie-Hyland Prize is awarded for excellence in poetry to a high school writer living outside Regina or Saskatoon. This award was established in 1992 by the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild and the literary community of Moose Jaw as a tribute to Robert Currie and Gary Hyland in recognition of the literary excellence they achieved in their many published works and to acknowledge their commitment and generosity to their students and fellow writers.

AND THE 2018 WINNERS ARE . . .

Jerrett Enns Award for Poetry:
MEGHAN REYDA-MOLNAR, “Naïve”

Jerrett Enns Award for Poetry, Honourable Mention:
BUSHRA BURKI, “A Child's Hands”

Jerrett Enns Award for Prose:
TIA PECHAWIS, “The Divorce”

Jerrett Enns Award for Prose, Honourable Mention:
JOSEPH ALDRED, “Bumfuzzle”

Currie-Hyland Prize for Poetry:
CHAD KITCHEN, “Shower Thoughts”

Currie-Hyland Prize for Poetry, Honourable Mention:
OZMANDIAS REIN, “Pieces”

caught

BY CAITLYN WATERHOUSE

The need to be wanted
eclipsed my care for you.
As you sat there, all alone,
my heart grew hard.
It wavered; caught
between the roiling sea of guilt,
and the mountain that is my pride.

I can see it in your face:
smile feigns indifference,
eyes beg to differ.
I know that facade well, and yet,
I do not extend to you
the branch I now possess.

My strangled voice grows thin,
with the words now left unsaid.
The power of a gesture, of a single word

But I don't move or speak, and all that lingers
is the whisper of "if only,"
and the emptiness of sorry.

a world of wounds

BY KARLEY STANGEL

The scars never went away. Not after I ripped the pictures and burned them, watching as the orange flame rolled over our faces, one inch at a time. Not after I threw out all of your clothes instead of donating them, knowing that on a good day you might have, and I didn't want anything to remind me of you. The scars stayed through every storm that rolled in over the purple skies, watching the raindrops slide down the car window. Drip. Drip. Drip. The sound of my tears hitting the pillow. When the sun poked through the clouds, all I could see was the fact that there were still more clouds than sun. When the rainbow appeared, shining through the window sill covering a corner of my bed, I couldn't shake the fact that it was only an illusion. Not even when I had every light on in my room did I feel the least bit illuminated, darkness surrounding my heart because I couldn't tell whether the glass was half empty or half full, because to me it didn't matter anymore if there was anything in the cup at all. I drove past the swing set we used to sit on during the deepening hours of the night, laughing, talking. Only now did I notice the frayed ropes and the cracked wood benches, waiting for the chance to fall apart. The water from the beach we once stood on is faded and greenish, almost as if someone had come to suck up the heart of the sea. Now only movies teach me the difference between dreaming and reality. Books have become only words on a page, reminding me that happy endings don't exist. I began to see the world differently. Almost as if you were the only thing I really ever looked at and once you were gone, I was unable to see anything good that wasn't you. The scars never went away. But only when I accepted that they were here to stay did I begin to finally notice the brightness of the sun.

it's
complicated

“SHE RESTS HER HEAD ON MY NECK, THE WAY EYELASHES FEEL AGAINST SKIN, AND HUMMINGBIRDS CAN’T STAY IN ONE PLACE FOR LONG”

naïve
BY MEGHAN REYDA-MOLNAR

hi,
she said
my throat is a little raspy
and my hands are small, worn
but could you take them
like oceans take ships
pavement takes skin
catastrophe
apostrophe after ‘t’
it’s not its when she’s talking about us

her sweaters full of holes
i stop them with the tips of my fingers
like bath plugs to keep her from draining out of my arms
like keeping snowflakes cold on your coat
i keep her warm with my breath
that she steals because she can’t help it, a candle kept from the wind and

why am i writing this down
why do i try when there are no eyes worthy of reading about her
since i am sixteen, hyperventilating, and they will tell me that my sentences are full of holes
gaps in my mind
they think time will fill
but as of right now
i have reached as far as i’ve ever
the miracle of your shoulders
dip of your neck
endless marigolds

damselflies that hover lazily on the crevice of your collarbones
a valley that goes on and on until the waterfall drops off the cliff of your back
and the raindrops down your cheeks
gather into the blue dress
i only see her wear in dreams

why do i write something that will never be physical
why do i write something they will say rings out in no echo chambers
but those of my own soul
when with every dip, press of ink,
i’m getting to a place
only clouds have seen in visions
where the blonde of her hair, makes me want to buy sunglasses,
even when we both know they won’t fit my face

we blast the radio too loud
but not loud enough to wake houses
since we’re rebels in soft blue jeans instead of leather
who tie our hair back with ribbons, not razor wire
won’t you stay a while
you can sit on my desk while my pen moves in maps, a cartographer of the moles on your chest



why do i always do as i’m told
i say as i disobey
you tell me not to write my heart out
because my writing is new wine that supposedly gets better with age
but i’d rather get drunk on it now than wait up until my back breaks and i can’t see the light in
your eyes like i used to
i’m so used to you
to people telling me that my feelings mean nothing
because my commas are valued less than a twenty-year-old man’s song about sex
thoughts spilling from my broken mirror hunched hair falling on the notebooks at four in the morning
when my hair smells like her shampoo
meaning less to the world than pocket change
spare keys to a broken lock
told they’re worthless
but there aren’t enough pens running dry on the planet to capture
the you in us

still, you market cheap sweat as exotic, reusing the same dimensions, proportions, when there is
clearly a mark on her that indicates—
“this is not to be recycled, handle with care”
she rests her head
on my neck, the way eyelashes feel against skin, and hummingbirds can’t stay in one place for long
you were humming my favourite song in the car yesterday
and i heard her since that song was our secret

i’m sorry i can’t stay angry for long
i would pound you with my paragraphs, if my weapons didn’t seem like such smooth pebbles
against a towering giant
because where you loom over me
she’s four foot eleven and three
quarters, and we both need to work together to reach the kitchen cabinets.

i don’t know what else to say, but since you’re not listening, i’ll leave a message at the tone, and
you can discard it, as if i’ve never been here
i was told a long, long time ago
not to write poems to the loves that will leave me
because last night’s semicolons will tangle in the wire rims of my grandmother glasses
we’ll label it “bad poetry”
but i held her hands,
and words meant nothing.

"EVERYTHING GOES RED AS THE BLOOD STREAMS DOWN LIKE A RIVER, TRYING TO WASH AWAY MY EMOTIONS."

Sunlight streams through trees and the wind rustles pages in my book. The park is always quiet in these early hours of the morning, so when I hear the pounding of feet on concrete I glance up, and that's when I see him. It is obvious he's a runner; the powerful strides, the confident way he navigates the park. He looks so focused, which allows me to appreciate the small details of his face, like his one dimple and his startling green eyes, framed by long straight lashes that reach his cheekbones. My heart speeds up and I have the sudden revelation that I could see myself with this man for the rest of my life. He stops short when he sees me, and everything feels like the soft orange of a sunset. Beautiful and timeless.

###

He twirls me around the dance floor. We are Prince Charming and Cinderella as we glide around his apartment's living room. Smiling and laughing, we are untouchable, unstoppable in this moment. We are pink, our love fresh and new.

###

It's been two years, and today we stand at the altar to profess our love. He slips the diamond ring on my finger as we pronounce I do. Today we are dressed in white, pure and whole.

###

We have just moved into our new house with it's two bedrooms, one for us and one for the baby, which is on the way. Just a couple of young adults foolishly happy. This is a purple day, for this is our castle, our story. This is what happens after the happily ever after. Our love is grand and majestic.

###

Today he comes home drunk, angry. I am doing the financials and notice that a lot of money is missing. I ask him. He yells, daring me to question him again. I tell him to stop and don't

expect the sharp whistle as his hand strikes my cheek. The warm sting sends waves of shock through my body. We are both silent. He starts to cry and apologize. What happened to us? Later he tells me he had a few too many drinks. That some guy got in his face. His boss got mad at him for no reason. But I know the truth; neither of us have been the same since the miscarriage. Today was the first grey day, the line blurring between safety and love.

###

Every day is filled with horror. He yells, breaks things, I try to calm him. He still hits me. I hide the bruises; I will bring him back. A little pain can be endured in the short term if he becomes the good man he once was. I tell myself this as I ice my new black eye. The darkness of each day is overwhelming, it feels like every day is now the colour black. Fear and stubbornness guide me through this harsh new reality.

###

I am holed up in the bathroom, skinny lines run across my arms, I breathe a raggedy sigh in as the knife skims my skin. He pushes me too hard, wants me to be perfect. I can't do this anymore; the pain of the knife cuts the skin the way his words slice my heart. The emotional pain is gone as the physical pain takes over. Anything to get away. Everything goes red as the blood streams down like a river, trying to wash away my emotions. It's overwhelming, until all I see is red; despair and anguish are a current dragging me under.

###

I'm reading my book in the same park when I see them. A family. Mother, father, and a little baby boy. They are having a picnic when a butterfly lands on the boy, who let's loose a giggle of delight. Salty tears stream down my cheeks and drip onto my bandaged arms, as I remember how that was all I wanted. The time has finally come to leave, for me to find something new.

picture perfect

BY JADE ECKL



The sun starts to set, a soft orange. As beautiful and timeless as the first, and in that moment I realize, the odd thing out in this beautiful scene is me. I am not the same person I was when I first sat in this park and met the man I thought was my world. I have survived so much, and I will be able to survive what comes next.

###

Today everything is brown. The brown boxes all stacked up in my car. The brown bandages wrapped tightly around my wrists. The brown envelope that contains my letter, addressed to him, telling of my departure. I look at the apartment one more time filled with so many memories. I get into my car and drive away. As I pull out of the street, I pass his truck pulling in, and when I see his face there are no colours, just feelings of hope, joy and freedom.

shades and shadows

BY OZMANDIAS REIN

Shades of perfect flowers
Daisies, roses, tulips
Breath painting pictures
Poems written in your hair
Shades of black and blue
Purple, pink
Sunset colors in spilled ink
Crocheted lines in rainbows
My forever teardrop girl
Shades of I love you
All the things I've never spoken aloud
All the girls I've dated after us
Trying to find you in them

“A CIGARETTE
FULL OF SPARK
TILL YOU PICK IT UP”

cigarette heart

BY DAN SILVESTER

People love tossing my heart
Toss this shit like the butt of a cigarette
Stomp on it
And leave it behind
A cigarette
Full of spark
Till you pick it up
Set it on fire
Take a puff
Keep on puffing and puffing
Till I'm nothing left
Stomped on
Passed by
Useless

shower thoughts

BY CHAD KITCHEN

He enters the bathroom.
He starts the shower, he sets the temperature, he removes his clothing
and with them her shackles.

She is in control.
She steps into the shower, she freezes, and she cries.
Depression pelts her from every angle, crawling across his body.

She wants to be free.
Her only haven, the cage he provides,
Her home since birth.

She wants out.
She needs out. He is slowly killing her. He, her protector.
Her tears flooding the tub.

She curls up under the rain.
In silent conversations she introduces herself.
Everything goes wrong.

His parents tell him to hurry up.
She crawls out of the shower. She looks for her reflection.
He stares back puzzled.

She returns to her cage.
Revived, he dries off.
He exits the room, draining her hopes.

You know, I never realized how unhappy my parents were until that day. I remembered all the times I could hear muffled yelling as my brother covered my ears and mouthed, “Everything

**THEY JUST CAN'T
ACCEPT THE FACT
THAT MAYBE ONE DAY
I'LL PICK ONE OVER
THE OTHER, BUT IT'S
OKAY, I'VE GOTTEN
USED TO BEING
A PIECE OF MEAT
BETWEEN TWO LIONS.
I'M USED TO IT.**

is ok,” with a big smile on his face. I knew deep down that his smile hid a thousand tears. All the hours I spent outside with my brothers as my parents yelled at each other in the kitchen window, we sat there in the yard like stray dogs wanting to come into the warmth. The reality is there was no warmth in that house. It was bitter cold, with no love, no happiness, and no true family—only people pretending to love each other so their kids could think everything was ok.

When I think back to my younger days, my parents were never happy. All the days I spent in between them I questioned myself: who did I love more? My mom, who showed me how to take care of myself, how to be a lady, and how to love unconditionally? Or do I love my dad more? The one who showed me how to be tough and how to make sure no one hurt his little girl?

To this day I don't really think I fully understand the divorce. At the start of this paper, I began by saying, “Until that day.” Well, that day is a day that is stuck in my head like a scratched, skipping CD. That day was the first day I didn't wake up for school to my parents arguing, because they were both doing their own things. My mom was upstairs cooking for me, my brother, and herself, and my dad was downstairs getting ready for work. My mom kicked my dad downstairs about a year before they officially split. I was a daddy's girl, so I stayed downstairs with my dad and even slept down there with him every night.

When my dad and I walked to school

that morning, something felt different. My dad looked like a kid who was about to watch the door jam and his tooth go flying. That day at school was an okay day. I spent a lot of time doing work in his office because I wanted him to cheer up and have a better day. On the way home that day, it seemed that with every step he took, his strides got slower, and his head was looking straight at the ground. When we turned the corner around the fence my dad stopped as if he saw a ghost. Right before the gate sat three full garbage bags. All I could see were clothes pouring out the sides. My dad looked at me like he was ashamed because there sat all his clothes.

“That's all she gave me?” he whispered on the verge of tears. That was the day that never-ending sadness and confusion would begin.

You never really realize how much a divorce can affect you until you try to love;

**DIVORCE,
A FAMILY THAT ONCE
LOVED
BUT NOW ONLY
HATES
TWO LOVE BIRDS
WITH TORN WINGS
UNABLE TO LOVE THE
SAME**

you don't know how and you have this constant fear that if you get too close to a person they will break your heart, just like your parents did. You have this constant weight on your shoulders. If you have ever heard someone explain depression, that's how a divorce feels. Never ending, unhappy, dark, and lonely.

I've heard many peoples' stories about divorce and no two stories are the same. Like snowflakes, they are all different. A lot of the time I hear, “It will all be over soon, everything will turn out okay.” In reality, it's a never-ending roller-coaster. For the rest of your life you have to realize that, if you need your parents' help or advice, you are going to get two completely opposite answers. They work against each other constantly, like two of the same magnets; they think the same but never work together. And my brother and I are caught in the middle between their

BY TIA PECHAWIS

the
divorce

polarized forces. You also need to realize that, deep down, they probably do still love each other, but they will never admit it, like two fussy, stubborn kids.

**DOES IT EVER KILL
YOU DEEP DOWN
THAT IN A DIVORCE,
YOUR PARENTS LIED
THE WHOLE TIME
ABOUT LOVING EACH
OTHER? BECAUSE IT
KILLS ME.**

red

BY KAYLEE CLOUTIER

Red
I grew up with
Red
on my nails
lips
cheeks
Red
because he talked to me
because she hit me
Fresh dewy eyes
sharp thin metal gliding
across
where skin is less noticeable
drawing pain relieved
Red

the
dark
path

BY JACKSON LESTER

I feel greatness surge through my body
But I also feel like I'm dying
I feel like I'm the king of the world
But I also feel like a single kid could overtake me
Take a puff, hold, blow and all my problems are gone
I feel like I'm suffocating
But I can't stop it
I feel like society wants me to change
So I change
Take a puff, hold, blow and all my problems are gone
I feel like I'm drowning
But society just holds me down
I feel like instead of being loved
I'm hated
Take a puff, hold, blow and all my problems are gone
I feel normal
But everyone is staring
I feel like I'm chasing society
But they keep getting farther away
Load it, cock it, and shoot
And all my problems are gone

**“I FEEL NORMAL
BUT EVERYONE
IS STARING”**

the final three

BY QUINN HODGES

We turned onto the final mile. The colossal crimson barn towered over the veil of deciduous woods which sheltered the yard. This was the last time I would be able to experience its glory. The next time I drove down this road, the iconic barn would be absent from the view. Lacking any practical use to our family, who were now solely grain farmers, the barn was to be torn down in the coming summer. It was going to be replaced by newer, fancier grain bins equipped with in-bin dryers that would keep the harvest fresher.

As we continued down the poorly graded approach, my mouth began to salivate. Though it was not yet present, the illusionary smell of my grandma's cinnamon buns filled my nostrils. Memories of the gooey buns sticking to the roof of my mouth were suddenly fresh in my mind. My heart rate slowly began to increase as my body became aware that I would soon be able to sate my craving for this long awaited delicacy.

We were now at the end of the approach. With the thick veil of trees behind us, the full beauty of the yard could now be experienced. The grass was luscious; the skyscraping windmill remained dormant on the calm summer day; the quonset shone like a disco ball on the dance floor. It was the perfect day to take some photos.

The car rolled up beside the farmhouse, where some of my cousins were already waiting for us with my grandparents. With the click of my seat belt and the thud of a door, I was on my way to the porch. With each step, my stride increased until I was almost in a full sprint to the door. As I entered the house, I was welcomed with a chorus of greetings followed by the hugs of my aunts and Grandma. The true smell of Grandma's cinnamon buns was now assaulting my nostrils. I had to peel myself away from the pleasantries and small talk of family gatherings in order to follow my nose to the wondrous smell of the cinnamon buns. This was to be another last, although I didn't know it at the time. In the coming months, my grandma would suffer damage to the tendons in her hand, preventing her from ever baking again.

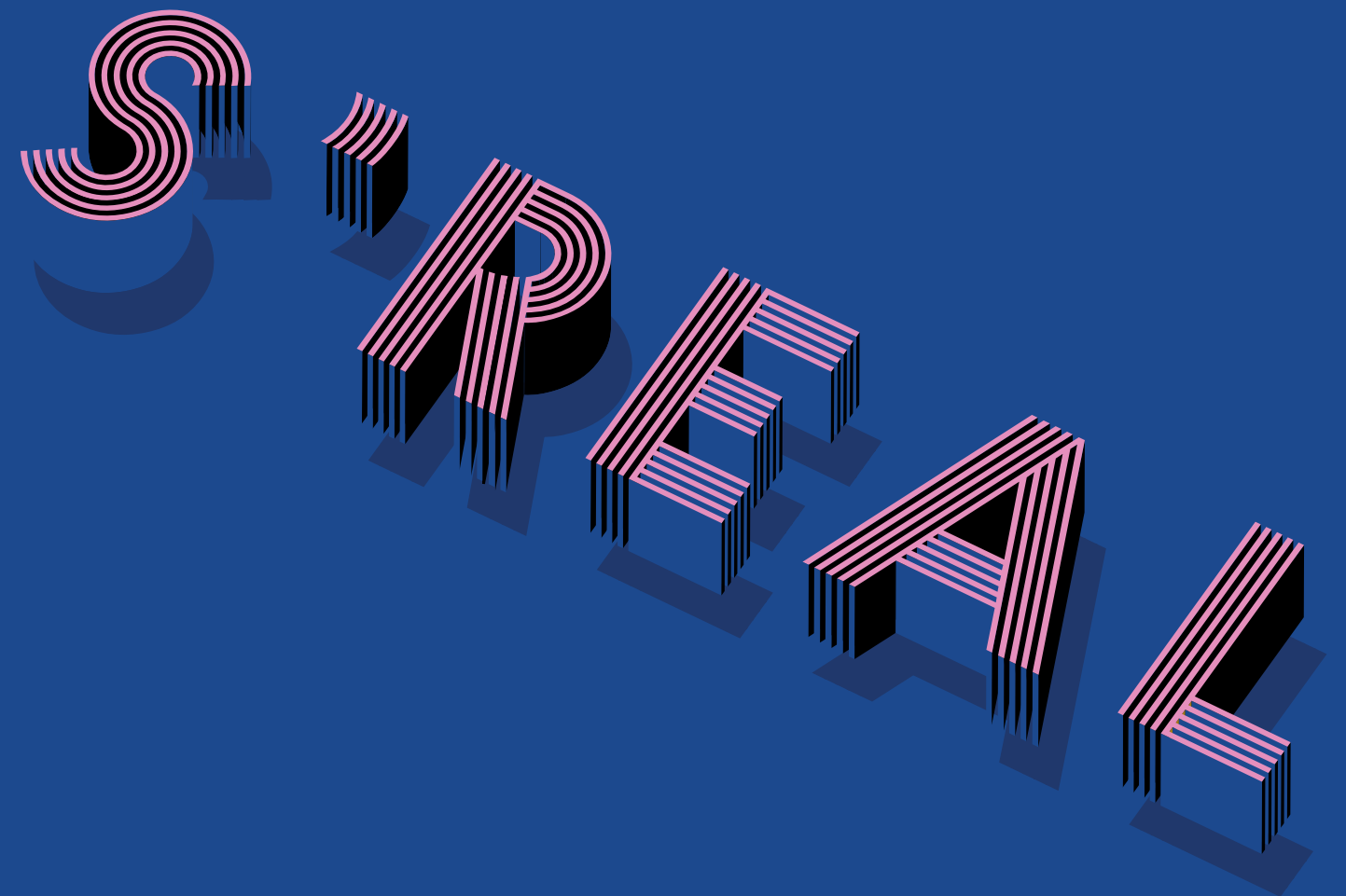
My parents and my brother were now filing through the small porchway entrance and up the stairs

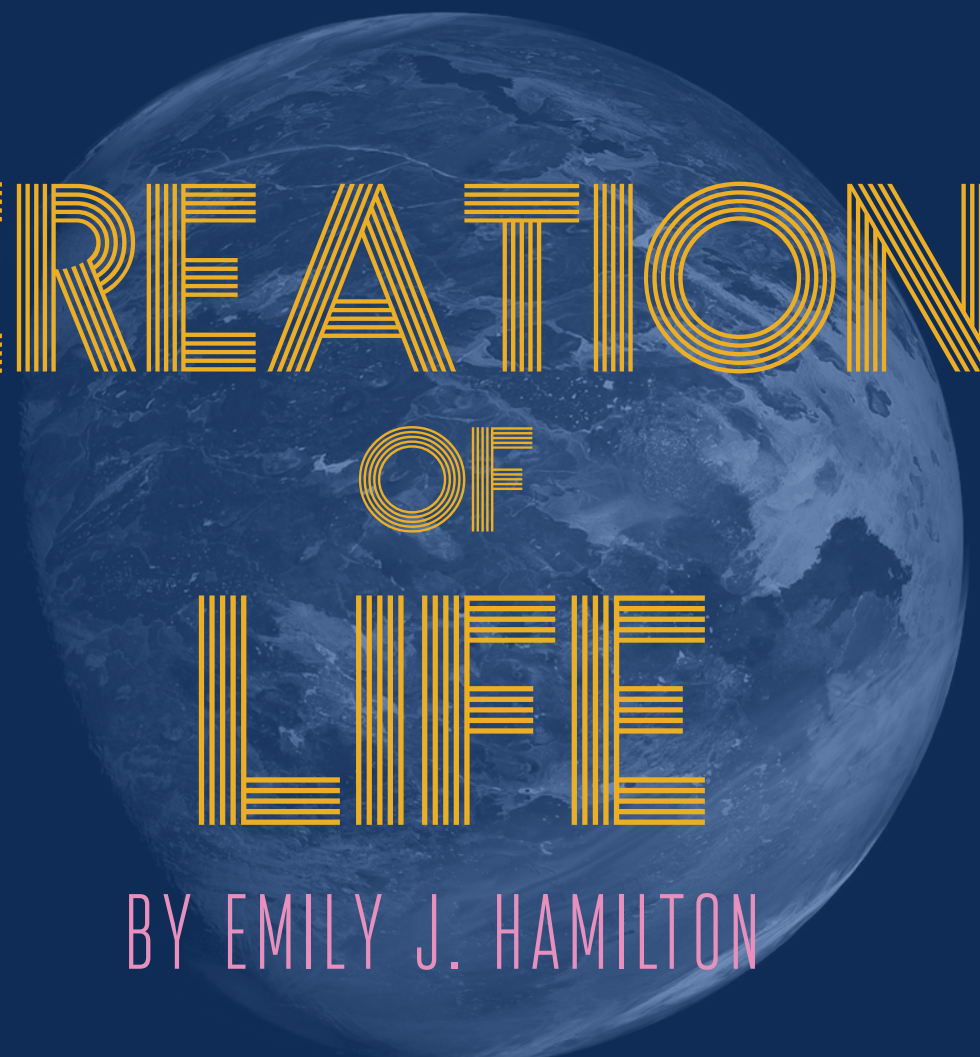
to the main level of the house. As they distracted the rest of my family, I made my way to the kitchen where the cinnamon buns were resting on a cooling rack just above the counter. I reached out and delicately removed one of the buns from the savoury array. I looked up to see my grandpa giving a little snicker from his couch. Though he had quit smoking several years ago, the damage had already been done. His body was beginning to wrinkle and every breath was taxing for his lungs. None of us knew it at the time, but this was yet another last. In the coming months, my grandpa's condition would continue to deteriorate to the point that we were forced to place him in the hospital for his final days. Thankfully he was still able to see his barn one last time with his family.

Once the rest of the cousins arrived, we ventured back outside to that barn. It was family photo day. We spent most of the day taking candid. For a lot of the younger cousins, this was the first time we were allowed to venture inside of the old barn. The internal supports were ancient. The second reason to knock down the barn was now clear to me. If we didn't knock it down, it was going to knock itself down. It was essentially a house of cards: waiting for the perfect puff of wind to blow it to the ground.

After all of the photos were finished, we went back to the house. It was only natural that we finish off the day as all other Schneider/Wegner family gatherings end: with a game of cards. No matter how many things come and go, the rummy table will always be a constant at the farm house. People will fit into their roles like a puzzle that solves itself. There is the angry screamer, the giraffe neck, the card shark, and of course, the superstitious "ritualist"—the last of which is always the easiest to pick out. Never will they touch their cards before someone else, nor will they dare to take a card other than the one on the top of the deck.

When the games came to an end, it was time to pack up. As we headed out to the car, we took one last look at the barn. With the sun setting in the background just over the flat prairie horizon, it was the perfect moment to say a final goodbye.





CREATION OF LIFE

BY EMILY J. HAMILTON

At the beginning of time, a lone barn owl flew through space. He looked on towards the barren planets he had created, none of which he was proud of. Odyss had created all of the planets in the void he called space, but none of them were the beautiful masterpiece he dreamed of creating. He wanted a world where other beings could thrive. A world with landscapes so beautiful, he may never be able to make anything like it again.

Odyss soon came to the conclusion that, to be able to create this world, he'd need help from others. Using his beak, Odyss plucked three white feathers from his back. He tossed them a little ways away from himself, and then let out a screeching cry that would render any mortal deaf. As his cry hit the three feathers a strange pale yellow glow surrounded them. The lights started changing shape until they faded, leaving three new animals in their place. Slowly, a dire wolf, a hippocampus, and a nine-tailed fox came to life. Odyss decided to name the wolf Wagen, the hippocampus Haert, and the fox Faex. For the rest of time, these three would be the gods

that would accompany Odyss.

Even though Odyss had created the three new gods from pieces of himself, each one of them had unique abilities that neither Odyss nor the others had. With Odyss' new-found helpers, he started taking charge of his plan to create an inhabitable world. At first, the three newborns were uncertain about whether to go along with Odyss' plan, so he decided to try and persuade them.

"Help me, and you'll be granted the satisfaction of knowing you aided in the creation of a masterpiece!" he told them.

Wagen, Haert, and Faex agreed. Odyss first gave them simple instructions. Separately, all four gods created an element based around themselves. Wagen created earth, Haert created water, Faex created fire, and Odyss created air. Then they combined these elements together, which took the form of a sphere with elements mishmashed together. This of course wasn't exactly what Odyss had dreamed of, so he ordered the three gods to help him shape everything like he wanted it to be.

Odyss had finished first, seeing as air was the easiest to construct. He set out after the rest of the gods to help them shape their elements like he wanted. When he finally came across them, they were having an argument over where and what to create. With a single trill from his beak, Odyss sent a calming aura through them, ending the conflict. He helped answer all of their questions by taking matters into his own talons and instructing them on what to do. Odyss helped Wagen create the shape of the continents, along with forests, mountains, and plains. He helped Haert with the depths, sizes, shapes, and placements of bodies of water. Haert created all the lakes, rivers, waterfalls, ponds, streams, seas, and oceans seen today. She also created the barren, icy wastelands in the north and south regions.

While Odyss was helping the other

two, Faex snuck off to find areas they'd done nothing with. Faex started creating new landscapes in hopes of Odyss' praise. She created tropical islands, beaches and shores, and deserts. Once Odyss found Faex, he scolded her, "Faex! You should not make terrains without my supervision! What if you were to do something you'd regret?"

Though she was confused and a little annoyed by the sudden scolding, Faex still pleaded for Odyss to look at what she'd made. He finally gave in to her pleading.

At first, Odyss was impressed by everything Faex had made, but he grew mortified as soon as he came across the deserts she'd created. He tried fixing them or even outright erasing them, but in the end he seemed to be unable to do much about them. Odyss ordered Wagen and Haert to do whatever they could to fix the land, so they added a few forests, streams, and lakes. Infuriated, Odyss deemed Faex's land ugly, and stripped Faex of the ability to create anything with her element. This hurt Faex, but she soon turned that hurt into a ball of seething hatred for Odyss and everything he'd made.

Faex went on to manipulate Wagen into using both his and her element to create magma and molten rock within the earth, which soon created volcanoes. Faex was also able to manipulate Haert into using her element to create swamps and marshes in the land as a "joke" to play on Wagen. Wagen however was not pleased by this and it caused tension between him and Haert. Everything Faex had done went unknown to Odyss until much later.

While this was all going on, Odyss had been observing and thinking about Faex's creations. A seed of guilt had started to grow in Odyss because of what he had done to Faex. He went back to the desert and realized that it too was beautiful in its own way, ultimately deciding to find Faex

and apologize. Once he did, he offered to give Faex her abilities back. This caused Faex to breakdown and start telling him everything she had manipulated Wagen and Haert into doing. She begged for forgiveness and although what she'd done had upset Odyss, he could only blame himself for setting off this chain reaction. Odyss forgave Faex again, but gave her a warning, "I may not be so forgiving next time, Faex." Faex understood, thus earning her powers back.

Odyss looked down on the world he created. He only had to create one more thing before he was completely satisfied: life. Together, the four gods created animals adapted to certain areas and climates. They also created human beings, whom they deemed the strongest and most intelligent life form they'd created. Wagen, Haert, and Faex did however voice a concern they had about these humans: "What if they grow to be too powerful?" Odyss thought for a moment. Then he spread out his giant wings and the four gods joined together to create diseases and natural disasters. Then each one created weather patterns in their separate areas. Wagen created the least amount of disasters, only making earthquakes. Odyss made tornadoes, sand storms, and hurricanes. Faex made lightning, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, and droughts. Haert made the most, with rain storms, blizzards, tsunamis, floods, and hail. Of course after every occurrence the Earth would be able to repair itself, though it'd be a slow process.

With Odyss finally content with his work, the four gods disappeared without a trace. People say these four went on to create more galaxies and planets as to fill up the empty voids within space, just as Odyss had promised in the beginning. It is said that every thousand years the gods come back to check on how the Earth has progressed, but no human has been able to even catch a glimpse of them.

ALONE

BY JASMINE DAVIDSON

Long ago, before there was anything in the world, there lived a man. This man was alone and had no clue why. Most nights he would cry himself to sleep. He thought he was different and thought no one wanted to be with him. He dreamed of a different, better life.

One night he felt strange. He did not feel right at all. His body felt tingly all over and he felt like his head was spinning. He fumbled and crashed down on the ground; he couldn't move; he was paralyzed. He struggled and yelled for help, but there was no one; he was alone. He tried to speak, but nothing came out; he began to feel pain.

Tears fell from the man's face and dripped to the ground. Then he couldn't control his tears and they rushed out onto the ground with his pain and feelings. The tears kept on flowing and turned into rivers and streams. His tears stopped when he couldn't cry anymore. He felt his head bang against the ground. He tried to pull away, but he couldn't. The man felt agony as his hair was being ripped from his head. Grass started growing where his hair had been. He tried to clench his mouth shut to keep from screaming, but his teeth had fallen out. As the man spit them out, they turned into sharp, bumpy rocks. He clenched his eyes shut, but seconds later his eyes shot up to the sky. One eye turned into a glowing, bright, yellow sun and the other a rough, white moon. His eyelashes were ripped out and flew away and turned into flapping birds. The man lay in agony and confusion.

For a moment, the man felt no pain. Then suddenly he felt excruciating pain in his legs. It felt like they were being stretched and torn from him. He felt his legs rip off. They stretched on and on until they formed a road. His toes then detached from his legs and formed huge rocky mountains. His arms started to grow and turned into thick, brown branches. Then, in front of him were ginormous trees. His cheeks floated up to the sky and turned into fluffy, white clouds. His ears grew until they fell off onto the ground and turned into dark, huge, caves. His nose then started to grow into a beautiful waterfall. Last, his lips turned into huge, bumpy, grassy hills. The man called this beautiful place "the world."

There was no longer a man. He was gone, but his consciousness remained. He thought to himself, I have created this beautiful world, but no one will see it. The man felt alone again. Suddenly two people appeared. The man felt happy for once. The people were in awe as they looked around the world. The people then grew bored of each other. So the man thought of unusual creatures and filled his beautiful world with them. He called them animals. Thanks to this man, we are now able to live in this beautiful world today.

STAY AWAY FROM MIDNIGHT

“SHE
STUMBLES
UPON THE
OCEAN,
WEARING
NOTHING
BUT DEWY
MOONLIGHT.”

BY AALTICE MANN

Warm sand between her toes, salty breeze weaves in her midnight hair. She stumbles upon the ocean, wearing nothing but dewy moonlight. Finding shells in the dark. We are two a pair like we have been salvaged for Noah's ark. I grab her wrist and dream catcher soul. We tangle and dance to the drum of her heart. She is frameless. A voice for freedom. Yet she is stolen art. I would steal kisses off the stars seeping from her whiskey glossed lips and return them to her incandescent eyes.

"MY SMILE GREW WIDER. I PATTED THE BOY'S HEAD, RUSTLING AROUND HIS CURLY HAIR. 'FOR A HUMAN, YOU'RE PRETTY CUTE TOO—'"

As I sat there on the bench, the wind rustled through my fur. The hundreds of humans walking in front of me only glared when they saw me, and I forced a smile back. Each one made sure to leave plenty of room between them and me so they would not even have to breathe the same air. Their loss. The sky looks quite nice from over here.

But from the crowd, one boy stopped walking. He faced me with a tilted head, forcing the other humans to walk around him. *What is he doing?* The boy looked around before making his way towards me, entering the vacant space between me and the others. Soon enough, he stood right beside me. The boy placed his hands atop the seat of the bench, boosting himself up beside me. Keeping my legs crossed, I continued watching the sky. He will go away soon en—

"What are you?"

I turned my head to the side, looking down at the boy. He just stared at me with his large brown eyes. Right away, I smiled, showing my razor-sharp teeth. But oddly enough, the boy did not flinch. *What is with him?*

"What do you mean?" I asked, still smiling.

"Like ... " The boy looked farther up. "Just ... what are you?"

With my legs still crossed, I tapped the air with my foot. "Well, I am many things. For example: I am happy."

The boy chuckled. "That's not what I mean. Like, you have a head, two arms, and two legs, but you don't look human. So ... what are you?"

I tilted my head. "What do you think I am?"

The boy moved his lips to one side of his face. "Um ... a cat? No ... you're furry, but your ears are too long. And your

eyes are pure white. And you're too bony. And you have horns."

I raised my eyebrows. "An ugly cat?"

"No ... " The boy thought again. "A horse? No ... you have the mane and the neck, but your face isn't that long. And no hooves. And there are still those horns."

"What about an ugly horse?"

"No ... " The boy thought yet again. He lifted his hand to stroke my arm. My muscles tensed, but I tried to relax.

"You're as fluffy as my dog, but there're still those horns. Can dogs have horns?"

I looked up. "Maybe an ugly dog can."

The boy chuckled. "You're not ugly. You're cute."

My smile grew wider. I patted the boy's head, rustling around his curly hair. "For a human, you're pretty cute too—"

"Calcifer!" a woman cried from somewhere in the crowd. "Calcifer!"

I turned my head forwards. Many humans had stopped to watch me, and one woman pushed her way to the front. Her dark hair was draped over her suit jacket, matching the deep creases in her face. She ran towards the boy, grabbing his wrist. I lifted my hand as the woman ripped the boy away from me.

The woman shook the boy. "Calcifer! What are you doing?"

The boy pointed towards me. "What is he?"

Without even looking at me, the woman scoffed. "It's ... different." Tightening her grip on the boy's wrist, the woman made her way towards the surrounding humans.

My smile faded as the two disappeared into the crowd. *Poor boy.* Everyone else started to walk again, still keeping their distance. I placed my hand on my knee, sharing the same frown each passing human gave me.

BUMFUZZLE

BY JOSEPH ALDRED

IN MY HEAD

BY ANGELIE CORTES

Eyes pool with tears,
body colder than a winter's day,
heart shatters like broken glass.
Every piece scatters on the floor,
no way to put it back.

Crumbling to the ground,
silently screaming
to myself,
to everyone,
to the world.

Pain in my chest throbbing,
my demons whispering in my ears.
"It's all your fault," they laugh.
The more they speak,
the more I begin to listen.

Repeatedly, I hurt myself.
My hands ball into fists,
one punch after another
aiming for my absent-minded head.
My demons take control.

I cry and cry,
drenching my face with cold tears.
My face in the mirror
filled with pain and agony,
eyes blank with no emotion.

When my demons leave,
the room is silent as snowfall.
Once more I am okay,
until the next time
my demons want to play.

"YOU'RE AS PRETTY AS PRINTED INK TABLE BREAD, VIOLENT THOUGHTS ALL THE AESTHETIC THINGS YOU LIKE"

PIECES

BY OZMANDIAS REIN

Years to count down the days
An hour to count the seconds
Bullet-proof rings and tattooed swaths of skin
You're as pretty as printed ink
Table bread, violent thoughts
All the aesthetic things you like
With the cracked dirt roads and tilted trees
Empty Wi-Fi links and cold blankets
Down by that field where we had our first kiss
And all those wasted fights and balloon dresses
The bleachers you'd cheer on
The swings you'd sit on
This life you destroyed and the skin you scraped
I'm the boy you left behind, holding the marks
from your crushed cigarettes and beer caps

NIGHTMARE BY KAMRYN HEAVIN

I try to scream but no sound comes out. My throat is closing up, like an invisible hand is clenching down on it. I dodge trees, their trunks looming before me like huge soldiers. My legs are going to fall off. My breathing is heavy and loud. I can't get enough air. I don't know when this thing started chasing me or how long I've been running for my life. I only know one thing.

Keep running.

Tree roots threaten to trip me with every step and branches rake at my face and arms. The sickle moon cuts a path through the whispering leaves.

The creature screeches, a bloodcurdling sound. I make the mistake of looking back and a fresh wave of fear shoots through my body. It's still there. Part man, part monster with sinister cat-like eyes in an unusually large head. Large, skeletal hands reaching for me. It's vile breath hot on my neck. I stifle a scream, even though it strangles me more.

I don't feel myself slow down.

But it catches me.

It seizes my ankle, my hands slap on the ground and so does my chin. My teeth slam together and for a moment I see stars. Lasering pain spreads fast through my head. This time I let out a sob.

The creature keeps a firm hold on my ankle and drags me over a log, the bark scratching my neck and my cheeks. Drawing blood. I choke down my tears. Skin peels off of my elbows and palms. I've never known pain like this.

"Abby."

I turn my head and come face to face with the creature. I scream. Its grin only grows. Revealing jagged bloody fangs.

"Abby!"

It's going to kill me. I'm going to die.

"Abby!"

I jolt awake.

I'm lying in bed.

My bed.

I'm in my room.

I'm not in the woods anymore.

I'm not being chased.

I'm not being dragged.

I'm safe.

I'm safe.

"Abby," says the voice. "I could hear you screaming from the kitchen."

I struggle to sit up, wobbling a bit and I realize my sheets are slick with sweat. My pillow is thrown across the room and my lamp is on its side. Nothing new, but just as terrifying as all the other mornings. I know that's not normal to wake up like this. I know you're supposed to wake up refreshed, not panting like you've just run a marathon. But when you've been through what I have, it's almost acceptable.

I look around and find the dark outline of a person sitting next to me. Holding my arm tightly. I catch a glimpse of three green dots on my clock, but my eyes are too glassy to read the numbers. Maybe a five? A three?

No, that would be too early.

"Abby," says my mother once again, her face morphing into shape as I blink a few times and clear my blurry vision, "you're safe. It was just another nightmare."

I exhale lightly, my head throbs and my stomach is uneasy. I almost want to say "Thank you for that Captain Obvious." But I think I'll throw up if I open my mouth. So I keep it zipped closed, just nod and try not to cry. My body is still aching like it was in my dream. I remember being dragged over the log, being slashed on the face. My cheeks are hot and I raise a hand to touch my palm to them. It's like I can still feel the way the bark felt on my skin.

"Come on," says my mother, drawing me out of the flashback. "Breakfast is ready."

I follow her downstairs, still in my pajamas. I stop when we pass the full length mirror in the hall and I just stare. I look awful. My elbow length auburn hair is so messy it looks like someone tied a bunch of knots in it and failed to undo them. My once-bright green eyes are dull with exhaustion from battling an imaginary force. My arms hang at my sides like useless pool noodles and I'm slouching like an old lady who needs a cane.

A thirteen year old shouldn't look like this.

Mom appears by my side once again, "Abby?"

I look at her too in the mirror, she looks almost worse than me. Tired, weak. Her brown hair is going grey despite her attempts to color it and her face is drooping. I didn't realize how these restless nights have taken a toll on her.

"Come," she says with a light sigh, taking my shoulders and steering me down the stairs, "there's someone to see you."

Someone to see me? Did I hear her right?

We round the corner and I jump. A man is sitting at the table. His back is to me and he appears to just be staring out the window. But he turns when we enter the room. Mom sits me down across from him and I sit as still as I possibly can. He nods at me. His eyes are green and cold. My mother smiles and hands me a glass of orange juice from the counter.

"Abby," she says, gesturing to the lanky man, "this is Doctor Rooney. The therapist I was telling you about."

She takes a seat next to me, the chair creaking. I'm suddenly very aware of all my senses. The soft fabric around my body, the way my mother is breathing so softly she may not be at all. The smell of Dr. Rooney's cologne, so strong it makes my nose itch. The way my mother is looking at me, wanting this to go well so that everything can go back to the way it was before the nightmares began. The dryness of my mouth, waiting for a drink that I'm not taking. The tension in the room as they wait for me to say something. But I don't want to. I don't want to be here. I don't want to be sitting at my breakfast table with this strange man.

I stare at him. He's wearing a dark trench coat and black-rimmed glasses. He talks when it is clear I'm not going to. He grins at me, a great monstrous smile, as he extends a large, bony hand. I make no move to shake it.

"Hello Abby," he greets me, his voice deep and sinister. "I don't believe we've met."

But he is wrong. So very wrong. We have met before.

COLOURS

BY CHASE ROSS

They just won't come anymore
I furiously whip my brush on the canvas
Paint colors flying in every direction
But all I see is black and white

The sounds won't stop

I can't even hear my own screams
Violent grating, waveforms invading
Squeaking, piercing, screeching
Cacophony
Of endless
Noise

The noises never end
But the colours
They will never come

CURSES

BY ASHTON WEBER

The still frigid air burns the insides of his lungs, keeping his senses on high alert. He will not die, not here, not now. He continues to climb the cliffs and jagged rocks, determined to reach the opponent he has been seeking for so long. The ledges of rock he stands upon are high above any sign of life; no plants grow in this cold; no birds fly at this height. Why would a man in armour so heavy, scabbard slung across his back, climb a mountain alone and without gear? For honour? For money? Or maybe he has the goal to win the heart of a lady?

This man, whom some would call a hero, is a being of curses, for the slaying of this mighty beast is not an act of hate or revenge. This demanding task is a favour, for his own satisfaction, for the life of a beast that lives just to suffer; he will set it free.

Over the mountainside, a chasm lies. Its bottom cannot be seen from above, and the creatures within its bowels cannot be heard. In the deepest cavern of this dungeon pit, lies the beast. A monstrosity, some call it. He sits by an underground spring, pondering his own existence, staring and examining the reflection

in the water, although he believes that ownership of such ugliness is not his. The image plastered to the water's surface is one of evil and fear: eyes of citrine yellow, teeth harder than diamond and sharper than any mortal blade. The scales embedded within his hide are shimmering black, seemingly made of onyx gemstone. His wings, four of them, are tattered and shredded like ancient tapestry; not the warrior he was remembered to be but an abysmal dragon, the one who protected the princess of an age so long ago. With her loss, he lost all faith and fell into the abyss. Now he lies, waiting for a champion to free him from his heap of rotting flesh, bone, and scales. He squeezes the air from his rotten lungs with a low hum.

Ears twitching, he hears metal boots on the cold abyss floor, an uncommon sound at this depth. Turning, the beast realizes he has met this champion before: a knight in pointed black armour, cursed with the mark of fire and a steady blade. A flash of bright flames from both knight and dragon. Which one will leave, and which one will be freed?

RASPBERRIES

BY MARLEE HAUBER

Like pumpkin pie, a thanksgiving necessity,
but smaller, sour, and grown in the summer.

Towering turrets that start from nothing but
are built into the sky.

Rabbits that reproduce copies. One day, there's two,
the next, several.

Fortified castles with spiked defenses and secret
places, treasures hidden underneath.

A paint palette with variants of red and pink
splattered abundantly.

Large apartment complexes in which each tenant
has their own room.

Magic that transforms mice into coachmen,
berries into muffins, tarts, and jams.

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**“A PAINT PALETTE WITH
VARIANTS OF RED AND PINK
SPLATTERED ABUNDANTLY.”**



© T. / Adobe Stock

Great Lakes: Erie Origin

BY DAVIS G. IRELAND

Long ago, in what is now Ontario, a great, tall maple tree stood isolated in a field of wild grasses and shrubs. A god stumbled upon this tree and decided to use it as a home to sleep under, because the leaves would protect him from the frightening noises of the night. This god was named Poe, and he was the god of weather. Every day, he watered the tree using the rain. Eventually, the field flooded, causing all of the shrubs and grasses to die.

All of the water surrounded a tiny island, which was all that was left of the field. Poe stopped watering the tree in an attempt to save the small island, but the soil was too soft and kept creating mudslides. Every day, Poe's island shrank, and shrank, and shrank. Poe was afraid that his island was approaching its final days, but he had no way to escape. Poe needed to make a plan, and fast!

Poe's only way to get off the island was to sail across the giant lake he had just created. The only things left on the island now were Poe and the tree. Poe had an idea. He gathered all of his might and summoned a giant bolt of lightning, which struck the tree mightily. The tree snapped and cracked and fell over onto the edge of the water. Poe hopped onto the tree and brought a great gust of wind across the leaves to begin his journey.

Poe took a final look back at his small island as the last of it crumbled into the lake. Poe watched the water for a while; it was quite eerie. He floated across the surface of the dark water. Poe began controlling the waves to push himself to safety. If there was a mainland; he couldn't see any. Poe sailed for days and days. Still, no land was in sight. One fateful night as Poe was sleeping, his tree raft touched the shore.

Poe awoke gratified that his long and monotonous journey was over. He used some of the maple tree's seeds to plant more trees to live under. However, this time he wouldn't water them as often. Poe looked down the shores; they seemed to never end. He looked at the horizon, but couldn't see the other side of the lake. Poe was confused; he was clueless to the fact that he had just created North America's Great Lakes.

The blazing hot sun casts rays of heat and light down onto the uncovered ground all around the sappy pine tree that offers me shade. I hear my name called and force myself out of my shadowed hiding spot. Sudden brightness blinds my eyes. I cautiously walk down the steep hill, trying to avoid most of the pinecones littered everywhere, but some still bore into my feet.

I look up from the ground and see everyone in my uncle's boat, except for two of my cousins, who are joking around while they wait for me beside the tube. McKenna jumps onto the tube with no hesitation and urges Jorja and I to do the same. Jorja eyes a suspicious puddle on the tube and blurts out, "Did Jasper (a younger cousin) use the washroom on there?!" Jasper laughs hysterically and McKenna giggles. While everyone assures her he didn't, I step out onto the mushy, wet sand. A slosh of water splashes over my feet and sends a chill up my spine.

Jorja and I climb warily onto the tube and take our seats. My uncle makes sure the rope connecting the tube to the boat isn't tangled and the knot is secure before turning the key. Chook, chook, rrrrrrr. The boat starts growling and sharply spits water in our faces. The smell of gasoline feels like a fire lit inside my nostrils. Just as I think of jumping out of the tube, the engine's rough churning turns into a soft sputter.

I feel a tug as we start moving, the waves send ripples through the tube as we glide through the water. I feel a pit form in my stomach and my teeth are chattering so hard that my jaw is sore. Suddenly, we speed up and a sudsy, white wake forms. The bubbles underwater from the motor look like a huge, greenish-white fish. I keep thinking about that and eventually, I end up believing it. I am about to make the signal saying I want to go in, but then I see the boat bounce harshly. Thump, thump, swoosh.

Soon enough, it is our turn to hit the violent rolling waves. The boat slows ever so slightly and I realize I am clenching the handles so hard, my fingernails have started ripping into my palms, but I don't stop, despite the pain. I squeeze my eyes shut as a blast of cutting lake water hits my face like one thousand tiny icicles. Here it comes, it's going to crash into us right now ... What? I loosen my grip on the handles and open my eyes. ShwaBAM!!

I fling my arms and legs around wildly until SPLOOSH! I feel I am surrounded by something so cold it bites at my skin. I open my eyes and see tiny white orbs dissolving while I float to the sun. Wait, WHAT! I'm DEAD?!! My head pops out of the water and I gasp. Where is everyone? I spin around, blindly trying to find my two cousins, the tube, and the people-filled boat. Finally, I spot the tube flipped upside down, but it mysteriously starts levitating. Vroom! The boat circles around, towing the tube.

The boat slowly drives in beside me and an adult flips down the shiny metal ladder. I hastily climb in and wrap up in a thick, colorful towel. I am almost instantly flooded with relief. "Can we go in?" I plead. As we start driving in, McKenna tells us how she got trapped under the tube and was trying to lift it off. That explains the hovering tube. I thought it was witchcraft.

The rest of the day goes by in a blur. We roast squishy marshmallows over a toasty warm fire. Jasper's marshmallow becomes ablaze after he dips it in the most intense part of the fire. After a few more minutes of visiting, my family and I make our way from the cabin to our cozy camper.

Tubing at Memorial Lake

BY ABIGAIL KYLUK



Differences, Differences, Differences

(SPOKEN WORD POEM)
BY LIAM GARNEAU

Differences, differences, differences
No, I'm not talking about Math
I'm talking about what society has done with their path

Sure, good things have come from differences
Our law, our order, and peace
But differences can be a downfall
It's a big human-made disease

Bigotry
Have you heard that word a lot?
People hate others for one idea, or one blind spot
Here there are people persecuted for doing different things
It is an intolerance for others that are not really the same
Nerds, Geeks, and Ugly they're called
Still doesn't give rights to treat them like they're small

Racism
Now that's a word we all know
Why does this word even make such a big blow
Raging at someone for the color of their skin
What is this nonsense? And why did it begin?
Might as well yell at the sky being blue
Because it will never change color like a chameleon for you

Bullying
Remember this in high school?
It was so long ago that it shouldn't be cool
Yet we still face that problem every day in our life
Please let this stop before it starts strife

Differences can cause issues
Differences can make change
Differences
Differences
Their outcomes never the same

Ode to My Sweater

BY BRIEANNE OSHANEK

Textured fibers
Scents of home twined and twisted in the wool
Soft and cozy like a new-born kitten
Wide-seamed hood provides shelter
From harsh climates and seasons
A sense of security
On those cooler days
On those insecure days
Strings from the collar
To tie up nervous habits
Graphic designs
Make it that much more appealing
Positive emotions
Keeping me warm
Protection from the
Outside world
I escape into the pleasure of my safety net

Super Glue

BY MADISON NEWBERRY

She sat alone, embracing the dying light of dusk, allowing the silence to devour her, fighting the cracks in her heart with patience and super glue.

"Time heals all wounds," someone once told her. She would bide her time, waiting patiently for the cure of time to mend her broken bones and hurting soul. She sat in the growing darkness, allowing the fading light to dance within her eyes.

If she allowed herself to fall apart, she knew no amount of time would fix her. She was a vase, teetering precariously on the edge of a table, poised; ready to fall, to crash to the floor. She'd shatter at the impact, leaving pointed splinters of glass surrounding her, warning onlookers to stay away.

If she allowed it, she would fall. There would be too many pieces to put back together, she would be a puzzle that could not—would not be solved.

If she let that vase fall, no one would help her, too scared to cut themselves on the sharp glass. They would finally see her, shattered and hopeless. They would watch her hands drip with crimson blood as she tried helplessly to glue the pieces back together.

She was a vase balanced on the edge willing herself not to fall.

She would not fall she would not shatter.

She sat alone, embracing the dying light of dusk, allowing the silence to devour her fighting the cracks in her heart with patience and super glue.

"Bastard!" I said, louder than I probably should have.

"What's wrong, mate?" asked a voice from the bed a few bunks down.

"My matches got wet," I answered as a tall, thin man appeared out of the shadows.

"Ah, bollocks," he said as he walked towards me. "Here." The other man handed me a lighter and leaned against the post opposite me.

I took the lighter from him and lit the cigarette hanging from my lips. I offered him one, but he shook his head. "We're going to die anyways," I said.

"You have no faith," he replied softly. He had a thick British accent and what I guessed to be blond hair, but he was so filthy—and it was so dark—that I couldn't be sure.

"What's your name?" I asked as I took a long drag of the cigarette and felt the red of the burning tip reflect on my face.

"Benjamin Perkins," he responded. "And yours?"

"Theodore Arrington."

"Blimey, that's a mouthful." We both laughed quietly.

"So, you're from England?" I asked after a while.

"London. Cobblestone roads and constant cloud cover. Yourself?"

"Saskatchewan, Canada," I said. I told him about the country, and how the sky was almost always blue and the winters always cold. I talked of the vast landscapes in Saskatchewan, and how it looked when the Northern Lights touched the earth.

"Sounds like somethin' out of a dream," Benjamin said.

"It is," I sighed.

"I don't like it here," said Benjamin a few moments later.

"Nobody does," I replied.

"A lot of these men seem like they do. They scale the walls of this trench with enthusiasm. They go on these night raids not only because they have to, but because they want to."

I tossed the butt of the smoke on the ground and looked at Benjamin thoughtfully. He couldn't be much older than I was. Eighteen, maybe nineteen.

"It makes me sick," he said quietly.

"I went on a night raid about a week ago," I said, looking away. "And there was a man down, a close friend of mine

actually, and we left him there; I left him there."

Benjamin looked at me. "That isn't your fault," he said.

"Everyone keeps telling me that. But, I should have carried him to safety and tried to save his life but I just left him there. Once I saw the blood..." I shuddered. "I was frozen. I'll never forgive myself for that."

A few men stirred in their beds and Benjamin and I took that as a sign to get back to our respective bunks before we woke someone up.

I met Benjamin the next morning after stand-to. He was playing solitaire in his bunk. There was the odd gunshot throughout that day, and everyone went silent immediately each time; as if being quite was going to stop the Germans from sending another shell, or worse: a metal canister of gas.

Benjamin and I became fast friends over the next few days, playing cards and talking of our homes. Although, we never did mention what we would do when we got there. I guess we both came to the realization that we weren't going to leave this place alive.

##

One night, after a dreadful day where we lost many men, we were all laying in our makeshift beds trying to keep our eyes closed for more than ten minutes. I tried many times to fall asleep, but every time I would come close, I'd jerk awake as if I was falling from hundreds of miles above. I could hear the faint whispers of Benjamin from a few beds down. I couldn't make out what exactly he was saying, but it sounded as if he was praying. Not that that was a bad thing. I knew that there were many religious men in our little group of soldiers. I just didn't think I'd befriend one.

So much had happened in my life—back home—that I just kind of gave up believing in anything. I had been given so much that I was thankful for, only for it to be ripped from my grasp: like my father. I understood, though. I understood that a man who had been through everything he had—the abusive father, the whore of a mother, two older brothers who didn't understand the line between playing and beating—couldn't possibly get through the rest of this life without some sort of aid. I just wish my father hadn't chosen alcohol.

Knowing that Benjamin was religious, I could only hope he wouldn't be the type of person that tells me "everything happens for a reason." So many people have told me that throughout my life, and if they believe it, good for them; I don't, and doubt that I ever will. I fail to see a good outcome from this hell-hole we've been dumped in. Everyone around me is dying and I don't see how that is supposed to work; I don't see how that plays into the grand scheme of the world.

##

For the first time since the raid, a few weeks ago now, I was on night watch. Nevertheless, I was thankful Benjamin was with me. I hadn't mentioned hearing him pray, and he had never mentioned his beliefs to me, which I respected, in some sort of weird way—I guess I was thankful that he wasn't trying to shove his views down my throat. It seemed like a normal night, as far as nights go around here. Benjamin and I had climbed the ladders so we could see over the edge of the trench. Soldiers were mending the barbed wire and no one was shooting—yet.

I turned my head to ask Benjamin a question, but before the words were out of my mouth, there was a ping sound. I was knocked on my back as a sharp pain ran up my spine and I felt the blood soaking through my uniform. Frantically, I shoved my hand in my pocket to grab the small Canadian flag I carried with me and brought it up to my chest. Benjamin appeared beside me and held my head up. He put a hand over my wound to try and stop the bleeding, but when he looked down at the stain on my jacket we both knew I was going home—in a box nailed shut with a flag draped over it.

"Bloody ... hell ..." I managed to say in between gasps. Benjamin stifled a laugh before tears began rolling down his cheeks and I could taste the blood in my mouth.

He began whispering to me, "You're forgiven, He forgives you, you're okay," over and over again.

The last thing I heard him say, before all hell broke loose and a shell exploded overhead, was, "In the name of the Lord, you are pardoned for all of your sins."

BY KAYLA HUYGHEBAERT - BELSHER

Pardon for the Executed

Your hand is soft, child.
 The palm is pink.
 It has no scars,
 No marks, no pricks,
 No telling of the wars already won,
 No telling of what is preparing to come.

Your hand is hard, child.
 Your hand is rough.
 It's aged and cold,
 It's seen enough.
 It's calloused; it means you have a firm grip
 On your life, your conscience,
 Your bullets and whips.

Your hand is soft, child.
 Your hand is dying.
 It's leathery, and tanned,
 And I'm left remembering
 The ruin you placed on all those lands,
 And the scars you put on other's hands.

A Child's Hands

BY BUSHRA BURKI

Confined

KEATON FOURNIER

I've lived behind these bars for as long as I can remember. Through the chain link metal fence, food is served to me. Never living, already sacrificed. I've grown used to it, but I always hear about what my ancestors used to do. Run wild, hunt their own food. They used to be free. I want to be free. The humans keep me captive, never allowed to leave, and whenever my family left the cage, they never returned, never to be seen again.

I'm tired. My joints ache, and I move slowly. I'm tired but I'm not sad. A man approaches, not like the others; he's tall, covered head to toe in a long black robe with a large hood. I cannot see his face, but I know who he is.

"Is it time?" I simply ask.

"I'm afraid so," he responds in an emotionless tone.

"May I make one final request?"

"I believe I can make an exception."

###

Grass as far as the eye can see. The smell is so sweet. No cages, no people, just the wild. All to myself. So, I run, and I run, and I run. A cool wind blows through the clearing, sending chills down my spine. But I don't mind; it's pleasant. I lie down in the snug sunlight in the middle of the clearing. The refreshing breeze comes again, rustling the leaves on trees nearby. I look up and see the man in robes.

"So soon?" I ask.

Suddenly everything is warm. No pain, no fear, just a beautiful warmth. I smile for the first time in many years.

I am finally free.

CONTRIBUTORS BIOS

Joseph Aldred is a student at Lumsden High School who is absolutely terrible at writing biographies.

Bushra Burki is a Pakistani-Canadian who is enthusiastic about poetry, especially since composing a poem takes less time than writing a short story. She is planning to teach English when she grows up, but hopes to work as a novelist (wishful thinking, but here's to trying).

Kaylee Cloutier is a student at Peacock Collegiate, in her senior year. She loves writing and singing, and making art. She has applied for Pre-Journalism in the hope of starting a career in a field she loves. Kaylee loves reading, and believes family and friends are important.

Angelie Cortes is known to be a small but friendly amateur writer. She was born in Philippines but was shipped to Canada at a young age with high hopes and dreams. Years later, like every other millennial, she enjoys procrastinating and is married to her phone.

Jasmine Davidson is a passionate student who enjoys reading, sports, and arts. She has even won the Junior Athletic award and hopes to win it again. She aspires to be successful and be a lawyer. Jasmine is the leader type and is willing to take on any task.

Jade Eckl is an imaginative teen who loves to read and write fictional short stories and novels. She hopes to inspire other teens to write and publish their work because in her opinion there are not enough stories in the world. Along with writing Jade loves to play soccer and golf.

Keaton Fournier is in Grade 11 at Martensville High School. He enjoys playing games on his computer, spending time with friends and family, and engaging his creative mind with writing. Keaton has been living in Martensville since he was three. He's more of a creative writer so bear with him.

Liam Garneau is a writer who enjoys making others laugh and writing fiction. Poetry is one of his many writing passions.

Emily J. Hamilton is a Grade 8 student who likes to read or write with her friend to pass time. She also watches anime, along with playing video games. Emily has an interest in the Art department as well and has participated in her school's drama club every year so far.

Marlee Hauber is a Grade 12 student from Cudworth. She works as a lifeguard and swimming instructor during the summer and writes poetry as a hobby. Much of her writing and poetry comes from the havoc of having four younger siblings. She hopes to become an Optometrist later in life.

Kamryn Heavin is a 14-year-old who lives on a farm near Melfort. She enjoys photography, reading and skiing. She's not sure what she wants to do after high school, but writing is going to be a part of her future.

Quinn Hodges is a Grade 12 student from Swift Current. Growing up, he has had the opportunity to travel all across western North America with his family. These travels have been the inspiration for many of his stories and non-fiction pieces, including "The Final Three."

Kayla Huyghebaert-Belsher is from a small town in southern Saskatchewan. She enjoys writing, playing piano and reading as well as helping out in her community. Kayla works hard in school, on her music, and writes whenever she gets the chance. J.K Rowling and her story is Kayla's inspiration for writing and she believes, if Joanne can do it, why can't she?

Davis Ireland currently lives in Moosomin. He attends McNaughton High School where he succeeds at every subject. He loves participating in sports. His favourite time of year is the summer, because he can go to Moosomin Lake to boat, hike, and swim. He's excited for winter to be over.

Chad Kitchen is a Grade 12 student living in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Chad is struggling with self-discovery and the stress that follows. Chad uses poetry to deal with stress and to calm down. Chad has been suicidal in the past, but has always found the people worth living for.

Abigail Kyliuk is a Grade 6 student who lives in the small town of Shellbrook. In her spare time, Abi enjoys reading and making stop-motion videos. During the summer, she loves taking road trips with her parents and sister and brother. Abi also loves doughnuts.

Jackson Lester is 13 years old. Some might say he is a bit of an adrenaline junkie; he loves dirt-biking and snowmobiling. His class had an opportunity to write a poem in school and, at the time, he was dealing with a rough patch in his life, so decided to just write down what he was feeling. This poem is the result. He was surprised that people liked it, so decided to submit it to *Windscript*.

Aaltice Mann is 16 years old. She has written since a young age and has joined writing classes in her past few years of school. Aaltice was always seen as the more "free spirit" soul out of her family and friends. She hopes one day to become a well known writer.

Madison Newberry, from Lanigan, is in her senior year at Lanigan Central High School. Outside of school she spends most of her spare time dancing, reading, and sleeping. Upon graduation,

Madison is planning on moving to Saskatoon to pursue a degree in Biochemistry.

Born and raised in Saskatchewan, **Brieanne Oshaneck** is known for her writing at Lumsden High School. She has written many pieces and specializes in her prompt writing. She often has a darker take on writing, and finds those thoughts easier to put down on paper. Brieanne enjoys spending time with her family and is a huge fan of dogs. She spends her summers camping and visiting relatives. Playing sports is what keeps her busy through the year, alternating between volleyball and softball. She has a quiet personality but loves to have fun. Her mind swims with thoughts, begging to be released.

Tia Pechawis is a Grade 11 student from Mistawasis First Nation. She loves playing sports, including lacrosse, volleyball, and basketball. She is passionate about writing prose and poetry; she uses her writing to explore her identity and experiences. Tia is a kind and loyal friend.

Ozmandias Rein spends his days reading fan-fiction and surfing the deep dark web from his spot on the stairs where there's good internet connection. He likes cats.

Meghan Reyda-Molnar is a short girl with a very long name, a 17-year-old in her senior year at Holy Cross High School. She enjoys libraries, listening to music, writing (most of the time), playing her violin, scouring thrift stores, reading too much and sleeping too little.

Chase Ross is a Grade 10 student in Shellbrook. He is mostly just a stereotypical nerd, a fairly ugly guy taking an interest in comics, anime and video games. He one day hopes people will be able to create things for others to enjoy, whatever that may be.

Dan Silvester is a student from Moose Jaw. He mainly writes poetry and has been writing in his free time for about one year. He writes most commonly about all different kinds of heartbreaks he's had, even the most childish ones. Most of his poems talk about one or more mental illnesses.

Karley Stangel is a 16-year-old girl who loves to write, sing, and act. Writing has always been a passion of hers from a young age and she takes pride in her creative mind. She dreams that one day her writing will be known all around the world.

Caitleyn Waterhouse is a Grade 12 student at Naicam school. You might say she is a bit of a procrastinator, from her aversion to deadlines to her favorite number, 11:59, and most of the time, she can be found reading.

Ashton Weber is a Grade 11 student at A.E. Peacock Collegiate. He has done things to leave his mark with others. He set a record in a cadet straight-face drill game, with a record of eight minutes twenty-six seconds. Now he writes short stories to pass his free time. Ashton aspires to be a Blacksmith when he is done school.



HISTORY

Founded in 1969, the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild (SWG) is a provincial cultural organization that represents writers in all disciplines and at all levels of achievement. The SWG operates as a not-for-profit provincial cultural organization, fosters excellence in Saskatchewan writing and promotes public awareness of our literature.

MISSION

The mission of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild is to support writers by raising public awareness of the value of the work of Saskatchewan writers; to advocate on behalf of writers and work to improve their economic status; to foster a sense of community among writers; to promote excellence in writing; and to support and facilitate public access to and participation in writing.

windscript

HISTORY

Windscript has been publishing the best of Saskatchewan high school students' literature since 1983 and was created by Victor Jerrett Enns, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild from 1982 to 1988. His enthusiasm and determination kept the magazine alive in its first two years until permanent funding could be found.

For twenty-one years the magazine was distributed free to all high schools and libraries in the province. By 2004 funding sources were no longer available and the print publishing of the magazine was replaced by electronic versions through the SWG website.

In 2011, due to popular demand from students and teachers, as well as offering it online, the SWG was once again able to publish this magazine for promising young writers in print form.

SPECIAL THANKS

PrintWest for their donation in printing *Windscript*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild gratefully acknowledges the support of SaskCulture, Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for operational and program funding and the publication of *Windscript* magazine.



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At the SWG, we all started out just like you—wondering if we had what it takes to be a writer. Wondering if we were any good. Wondering if there were others who looked at the world as we do. Since 1969, the SWG has been glad to help writers—of all levels and abilities—answer those questions, and more.

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PrintWest is honoured to have donated to the printing of this year's issue of *Windscript*. *Windscript* is a powerful tool in the writing community—it not only aids in the development of capable young writers, but demonstrates the importance of education and literacy. We hope to continue with this meaningful partnership in the years to come.

PrintWest salutes the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild for their ongoing pledge to supporting writers in Saskatchewan.

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Please note that as in all writing competitions these guidelines are very important and must be followed in order for submissions to be accepted. For complete submission guidelines visit: skwriter.com

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Submit by email: submissions@skwriter.com
Put *Windscript* in the subject line.

1. Submissions will not be returned.
2. Submit a maximum of three poems. Prose works maximum 1500 words.
3. All work must be original from start to finish.
4. Type each creative writing piece in 12 pt font, double-spaced.
5. Number each page.
6. Put the title on each submission and each page of the manuscript.
7. Proofread your manuscript.
8. In a cover letter, provide the following information:
 - Your name, your home phone number, mailing address, and email
 - The genre of writing you are submitting (fiction, poetry, nonfiction)
 - The title(s) of your poems or stories
 - The name, address, and phone number of your school and teacher
 - A 50-word biography written in the third person (if we publish your work, we will use this information)

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Author Readings Program For Schools, Libraries and Communities

Information for Teachers and Librarians

Saskatchewan's finest writers of every genre share the distinctiveness of their own stories when they visit schools, libraries, and other public venues. The SWG makes it possible for these writers to reach students, teachers, librarians, parents, and readers around the province. People of all ages are given the opportunity to meet and listen to their favourite authors and storytellers.

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How to Choose an Author

To assist you in selecting a writer for your event, Find Saskatchewan Writers, a searchable, comprehensive online directory of Saskatchewan writers and their works, is available, online. Please visit: skwriter.com

How Much Does It Cost?

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The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild is proud to support the fresh, original work of student writers.

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LIBRARIANS WHO ENCOURAGED THEIR
STUDENTS TO SUBMIT THEIR
CREATIONS FOR THIS ISSUE.

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THE SWG IS FUNDED BY

