

windscript

The Magazine of High School Writing Vol. 38, 2022



Windscript has been publishing the best of Saskatchewan high school students' literature since 1983. Created by Victor Jerrett Enns, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild (SWG) from 1982 to 1988, *Windscript* is produced by the SWG with support from SaskLotteries and SaskCulture.



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Managing and Poetry Editor
Elena Bentley

Associate Prose Editor
P.J. Worrell

Design and Illustrations
Shirley Fehr

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild
100-1150 8th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4R 1C9
info@skwriter.com
www.skwriter.com

The SWG is a not-for-profit membership driven organization that strives to sustain and enhance an environment in Saskatchewan where writers and all forms of writing flourish; to promote the well-being of all writers; and to advocate on their behalf.

The SWG serves a membership spanning the entire province of Saskatchewan in Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10, which encompasses the unceded territories of the nêhiyawak (Cree), Anihšīnāpēk (Saulteaux), Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, and Dené Nations, and the Homeland of the Métis Nation.

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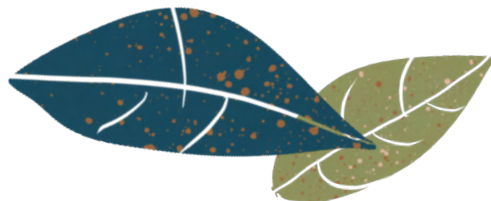
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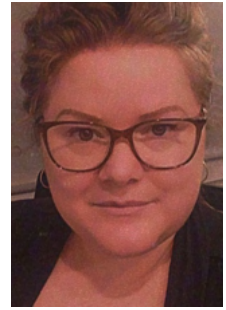
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MANAGING/POETRY EDITOR

Elena Bentley



Do I have a horseshoe in my back pocket? I think I must. Because I feel so lucky to have been a part of *Windscript Magazine* again! This time around, what stood out for me as different from my experience with Vol. 37 was the tone: where the previous issue embraced loss as its theme, Vol. 38 is a literary *objet d'art* realized by courage. The poems and stories in this issue speak to strength, survival, acceptance, equality, identity, legacy, individuality, determination, and love. With the world undergoing massive cultural and political shifts, these young writers, with their astute and powerful insights, have courageously chosen to explore, create art with, and document through writing, the ideological changes we're all experiencing.

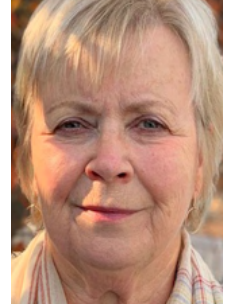
It takes a whole crew to bring *Windscript* to life, and so I must thank everyone involved. For the second year in a row, two editors were at the helm of *Windscript*; thank you, Peggy Worrell, for all the care and effort you put into your interactions with the students. As always, a blue whale-sized thank you to Cat Abenstein for your kind words and continuous support; thank you to Shirley Fehr for another stunning design; and thank you to the rest of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild staff and board for continuing to provide space for Saskatchewan youth writers to shine.

The greatest gesture of thanks I can make, I send out to the contributors—thank you for trusting us with your words, for opening yourselves up to new approaches and ideas, and for being vulnerable and brave enough to share your poems and stories. You should all be proud of your accomplishments.

With that, dear readers, I invite you to dive in and hold onto every word of *Windscript* Vol. 38!

ASSOCIATE PROSE EDITOR

P.J. Worrell



What a ride this has been!

From the cockpit of a fighter plane over Vimy Ridge to the children's storytime corner in an underwater pirate library.

From the grass crunching underfoot at the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia to the grandma with Kleenex and peppermints tucked in her sleeve.

From the couple with their baby awakened by armed men pounding on the door to the girl scribbling her untamed thoughts with a broken pencil.

From the old man writing love letters to his deceased wife to the young man wishing his wife new love after his death from cancer.

From the stalker hidden in the bedroom closet to the ballet dancer pancaking her shoes so they will look like her.

These stories written by emerging high school writers touched me, each in its individual way. They are stories of courage in the face of danger and love in the face of loss.

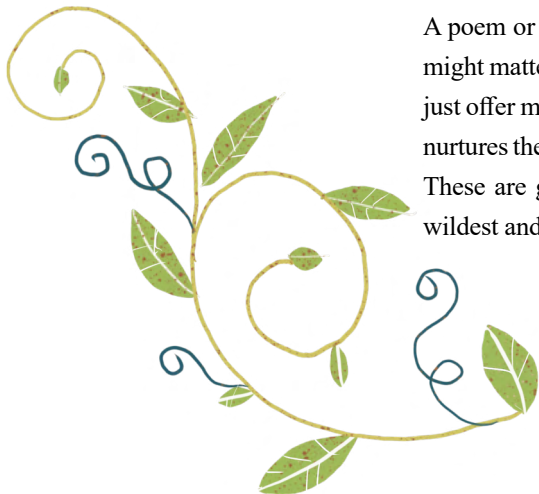
The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild is proud to support the fresh, original work of student writers and thankful to teachers, librarians, and parents who have encouraged them to submit their creations. I am proud to have been the editor for the prose in *Windscript* Vol. 38, the 2022 edition, and grateful to the SWG for this opportunity and to Elena Bentley and Cat Abenstein for their collaboration.

2022 YOUTH POET LAUREATE

Warsha Mushtaq



Dear writers, your works were outstanding submissions among many impressive entries from towns and cities across the province. Behind these poems and stories are questioning minds. All of these pieces have a refreshing clarity: they probe and seek answers with eyes wide open. I've loved to write since childhood because I'm fascinated by how writers conjure entire universes and capture the inexplicable beauty of life. Like scientists, writers make observations of "quantitative" and "qualitative" kind to investigate the complexity and beauty of the world. Like explorers, writers search deep into the unknown eternity, conducting creative investigations. Like activists, writers approach issues with deep empathy, using their minds and pen to advance their cause. At the end of each day, life, in all its everlasting glory, is stilled in a twilight sunset and we are left unable to truly apprehend the world in all of its minute detail, the spritely dance of millions of molecules beyond our blurred vision and understanding. I urge you to continue journaling your observations of the natural world, to continue writing, and to continue exploring yourself. And, please always remember, your own voice matters. Ask yourself what your contribution could be. No matter how small it may seem to you it might make a difference. A poem or a short story might be only a few words, but it might matter a great deal to someone else. I never know—I just offer my words as a gift and I hope you can as well. Art nurtures the seeds of curiosity and wonder within everyone. These are gifts akin to the sunlight on the sycamore, the wildest and most beautiful occurrences in the world.



Jerrett Enns Awards

This award recognizes a high school student for excellence in poetry and prose writing. It is named in honour of Victor Jerrett Enns who was Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild from 1982 to 1988.

POETRY WINNER

Abigail Friesen (Dinsmore) - "The Butterfly"

HONOURABLE MENTION

Farheen Karim (Saskatoon) - "The Vandalism of My Fruitful Childhood"

PROSE WINNER

Silvana Gebremeskel (Regina) - "It All Comes Down to Courage"

HONOURABLE MENTION

Sanjana Brijlall (Prince Albert) - "Mirrors"

Currie-Hyland Poetry Award

The Currie-Hyland Award for Poetry is awarded for excellence in poetry to a high school student 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.

WINNER

Megan Mineau (Waldheim) - "The Final Interlude"

HONOURABLE MENTION

Lilah Flieg-Bacheschi (Rosthern) - "In the Meadow"

Silvana Gebremeskel

It All Comes Down to Courage

The obnoxious sound of hyenas and the cold seeping into my bones forced me awake. When I opened my eyes, all I could see were charred trees. I was eleven years old when I left my home with the hope of seeing my dad again after five years of being apart. To do that, I'd have to cross the border into Ethiopia the same as my dad. But in Eritrea, it's illegal to go anywhere near the border. If your ID says you don't belong in that region, you will be asked where you are going, why, and who you are going to see.

There were four of us—two men my Dad had hired who knew the way, and me and Hawariat. I hadn't known Hawariat before, but when we met on the bus, we clicked, even though she was older than me. We got halfway to the border in a bus full of chickens, farm foods, and village people, but after we got off the bus, we had to walk for forty-eight hours.

One of the men, Mensure, insisted on taking a break before we started the long walk. "We'll stop here for an hour and then go." He was the only one who spoke Tigrinya, whereas the other man could speak only Arabic.

The glistening moon and freezing wind made me yearn for a bonfire. The rock we slept on was chilly. I couldn't sleep under that beautiful moon. I missed my grandma and the smell of coffee at our house. I kept wondering what my grandma was up to, and I wished I was home. I lay there looking at the moon, listening to the sounds of crickets, owls, and the wind.

Before I finished my daydream, we started walking. We walked as fast as we could to avoid the people in the village. Although it was dark, we kept walking toward the border patrol, a restricted place. Only a few are able to cross, but something happened before we could try. Men with flashlights started coming toward us. Mensure whispered, "Hide."

Panicking, I jumped over a big cactus bush. We had to hide. If the villagers noticed our unfamiliar faces, they might tell the soldiers on us. At least that's what Mensure said.

After the village men passed, Hawariat checked if I had gotten hurt, but I told her I was okay. We trudged on for a long distance, leaving the smell of farms and animals. Suddenly, Mensure stopped. He said to walk carefully across the dry forage grass between the borders. He insisted that we make no noise. The soldiers will hear dry grass crunching underfoot, and if any movement is heard or seen, they will shoot. He made sure we understood him.

We walked on through that dangerous place, where one small noise could get us all killed. With wet hands and a dry mouth, I paid attention to every step I took. I convinced myself to be brave.

At last, we made it. It smelled like heavy rain was on its way. The cold sand found its way into my shoes as we came upon a large river. Mensure and the other man didn't rush us. It was peaceful crossing the river. We talked and walked slowly. It felt like I was just taking a normal walk. It felt safe. Safer than what I left behind. The feeling didn't last long.

After we had safely crossed the river, we entered the forest, Ethiopia's border. Mensure told us he and the other man had to return to Eritrea. Hawariat told them we couldn't do this alone, that they should stay with us, but Mensure said they had to be back at the village before sunrise.

How were we supposed to go alone, even though, technically, we were on Ethiopian soil? Two young girls in the middle of forest with no one to guide us seemed dangerous. I asked them to show us the direction, so they did, and they left.

We were relieved that we hadn't been caught by Eritrean soldiers, or been shot at, but we were lost in the middle of nowhere. It was getting cold. We hadn't eaten anything in several hours. Some of the trees were cut down and burned. It

looked like the setting for a horror movie. It didn't feel safe.

I told Hawariat we should sleep somewhere because we didn't know where we were going. We found a big tree and slept under it. She held me to make me warmer and told me to sleep. I was scared, and she reminded me that God was looking out for us. I tried to sleep, but my mind brought me back home, and I dreamed of my grandma taking me home. Then we heard a disturbing noise so close to us. It startled me.

"What was that?" I asked Hawariat.

"Hyenas," she said. "They're just laughing." She said the hyenas were far away from us. I trusted her because she grew up on a farm. She knew better than me. But after that, I couldn't sleep. The night was long and cold. I regretted coming here and wished it was just a dream.

Sunrise came, but it was even colder. We washed our faces with the water we had brought from home and looked for the Ethiopian soldiers. We couldn't find anyone for hours, so we decided to climb a big rock to see farther. We saw people working in a farm. We jumped down from the rock, walking quickly toward the people who were singing and working, to ask them questions. The farmers told us we were in the right place. They were kind. They carried our bags and took us to the soldiers, who would transport us to the pre-refugee camp called Endabaguna.

The soldiers took care of us. They gave us clothes to change into, food and water, even tea. We were grateful. They asked questions and we told them how we walked all night and day to get there, and they said we were brave. A car took us to a big house full of mattresses. We stayed there for two days, waiting to see if other people like us would come. On the first day, thirty people came together. They were exhausted. They had been out there in the forest for a week.

We went by a bus to the pre-camp, Endabaguna. After a few days there, a bus came to take the others to the Hitsats refugee camp, but they didn't take me because I was too young. They asked about my dad. I told them that he lived in Addis Ababa. Then I waited for him. He left immediately from the capital city, but it took two weeks for him to arrive.

After five years, I saw my dad again. Until I saw his face, I couldn't believe it was real. The moment I saw him, I sobbed. I felt anger mixed with joy. He had been at this place five years earlier, so his information was already in the system. I hated this pre-camp place, but when I saw him, I knew things would get better. My fear disappeared, and I knew I wasn't alone.

After my dad showed up, we went to the Hitsats camp and met Hawariat and the others. I heard so many heartbreaking stories about how people had crossed the border. My dad and I stayed there for a month, and I saw Hawariat every week in church. We are now a big family for life. We exchanged phone numbers and I still keep in touch with them.

After a month in the camp, my dad and I went to Addis Ababa, where he had been living with our relatives. Three weeks later, he left for Canada.

I stayed in Ethiopia for another two years, then came to Canada to live with my dad.

It was a long journey full of surprises, hard choices, and obstacles. I made so many friends and I'm grateful for that. I realize that all it takes to change your life is to be brave enough to try. It all comes down to courage.

Abigail Friesen

The Butterfly

I slowly reached my arm out, shying my body away from the glass.
“Don’t worry,” the old man chuckled. “It won’t hurt ya.”
The butterfly flitted up and sat on my hand, its little furry limbs
grasped my shaking finger. Dark veins upon velvet wings, a careful
iridescent mosaic, blending and swirling into a body transformed
by a pillar of light bursting blue.



I leaned close, saw intricate patterns: the miracle of a single lifetime
among a trillion others. I felt a profound stirring as if I had witnessed
universes collide. For in such diminutive size, its inexplicable immensity
left me breathless, trembling with silent reverence. In an instant,
the butterfly danced down to a quiet perch.

*

The butterfly’s lifeless form presses against the glass wall, pale wings
rigid, limbs curled in resignation. With wide eyes, I reach out and
feel those paper-thin wings crumble beneath my touch.
The ground sinks under my feet and I cannot speak; my voice breaks
down into little pieces and catches in my throat.
“It happens,” the old man shrugs. “They only live for a couple days.”

I wait for the butterfly to flutter, to twitch. But everything is still.
I feel its absence as the tears rip down my face and my heart shudders in my chest.
For the first time, I understand how delicate and fragile the butterfly was.
Frozen, I stand there, lamenting this creature in my cupped palms. As I consider
its ephemeral life, I am left with one, final thought:

*Why would we ever keep them trapped in a
glass cage?*

Megan Mineau

The Final Interlude

Paint peels
behind the drapes
where I hide, here
tracing shapes
through violet fissures.
Tears fall while I
gather each piece of my
shattered reality and cry.

I thought you'd be my princess—
I'd be yours, too.
But soon you'll be gone,
leaving me with the glue.

You're in the garden, I know
under the night sky picking petals off a thistle.
Its thorns pierce your fingers,
drips on your suede skirt, a red drizzle.
The poem I penned for you
lays abandoned on your mauve armchair.
Why play "she loves me," when
your leaving is my worst nightmare?

You've come to say goodbye—
me, in my pink polyester pants,
you, in your stained suede skirt:
a mournful dance.



Sanjana Brijlall

Mirrors

When I was a kid, my mother would always tell me, “The only time you remember you’re brown is when you look in the mirror.” I thought her made-up proverb was just a bad attempt at a joke. Of course I remember I’m brown! How could I forget? I don’t spend every waking moment thinking about it. It’s not the first thing I think about in the morning and it’s not the last thing I think about before I go to bed.

It was a joke, just not one that I understood. The mirror was the setup and my willful ignorance was the punchline.

I was the dedicated dancer learning the choreography to the tune of their comfort. I thought that if I changed my name, or if I spoke like them, or if I was friends with them, they would forget. But the only one who forgot was me.

Until now.

What is a dance studio if not a room full of mirrors? What is dance if not visual art, where appearance rules supreme? They leave me out because I “break the line,” but they won’t even let me fix it.

Now I don’t need a mirror to remind me. Now I swap the pale pink tights for tan ones. Now I buy cheap brown foundation to pancake my pink shoes so they will look like me. Now I don’t try to appease them.

When I was a kid, my mother would always tell me, “The only time you remember you’re brown is when you look in the mirror.” She was right. It was the first thing they saw and the last thing they remembered. Now I see the wisdom that lies beyond my mother’s joke.

Of course I remember I’m brown. They’ll never let me forget.



Farheen Karim

The Vandalism of My Fruitful Childhood

ঝড় এলো, এলো ঝড়	Jhor elo, elo jhor
আম পড়, আম পড়	Aam por, aam por
কাঁচা আম, ডাঁসা আম	Kacha aam, dasa aam
টক টক, মিষ্টি	Tok tok, mishti
এই যা, এলো বুঝি বৃষ্টি!	Ei ja, elo bujhi brishti!

— Yousef Shimul

New life emerges, growing in my front yard;
craving my attention, I'm caught off guard.
The beautiful, sunbaked আম (mangoes)
glisten in the warmth of a sunny morning
succumbed by encasing leaves,
the আম sprout from aged branches (mangoes)
seducing me with lustrous charms,
withstanding every effort from mellow কাঁঠাল and poised নারকেল . (jackfruits) (coconuts)

I breathe and feel nothing but euphoria.
I climb the tree and reach—
the আম slips, slides, sways, sags, and finally shrivels. (mango)

From far away I spot a street vendor
cart full of jaw dropping আম (mangoes)
I feel the sides of my mouth pull out.
The আম smile back at me. (mangoes)

Translation

*Rainstorm is coming, rainstorm is coming
Mangoes are falling, mangoes are falling
Sour mangoes, ripe mangoes
Sour sour, sweet
Here comes the rain!*



Stripped from its identity, these আম, (mangoes)
natural tricksters fool my naked eyes.
Still, who am I to blame?
The unfair injustices of life
have preyed on me, though I am guilty.
Greed lays its eye on the treacherous sea of exuberant delicacy.
Moistened lips lubricated with saliva trickling down a trail of residue.
Uncontrollable resistance aggravates me to grab it.
As if they were perfect or lifeless,
they looked like the আম I have dreamt of (mangoes)
but could never taste in my childhood.
The robust আম I grew up with, (mangoes)
organically produced and formulated
should evoke *100% formalin free*.
Yet we are deceived.
Consumer labels proclaim them *clean*,
in reality, our right to assess fresh local foods
is a systematic conflict in effect way beyond my imagination.

Lilah Flieg-Bacheschi In The Meadow

The sky is a bright, pure blue.
Trees sway in the light summer breeze,
and the sun shines overhead. Wild
flowers sprout from soft earth, sprinkling
the meadow with a sweet aroma. Lilted
birdsong drifts through the air, blending
with the soft rustling branches. A girl,
tall and graceful, posture straight, leaps
through the picturesque stretch of grassland.
Hair pulled into a neat bun, clothes clean
and pressed, she has a confidence that radiates
around her. In the meadow, it is peaceful.

But as she moves, knee deep
in lush grass, her mind is a tornado.
She runs, lungs burning, her chest heaves.
Gasping for breath, the girl stops and screams.
The harsh sound reverberates around the valley,
and even the birds quiet for a moment.

To the girl, demons hide in every corner,
in every shadow at the edge of the meadow.
She sees them. They watch her as she runs.
The demons' eyes are milky white, teeth
sharp, fingers long and clawed, their snakelike
bodies tall wisps of smoke. Their smiles are cruel
and leering, blood drips from their lips.
They whisper in her ears: *You can't hide.*
You know the truth. Soon they will all know.
You're not strong enough. Not brave enough.
You will never be good enough. You can't change.
You'll never change the world.
They cackle and screech. All the darkness, all
her fears reflected in the eyes of these creatures.
They reach out to her. *Come to us.*
The girl's heart races and her throat bleeds.
In the meadow, she tries to escape her mind.



Myles West

affirm me

i am stagnant
a puddle of water along an empty street
muddy and dilute
molded to fit a form
but i am a boy.

i hear words spoken
of someone i am not:
she's over there
you can't miss *her*
she isn't me
i am a boy.

forget what you have heard
say *my* name
see me
hear me
affirm me
i am a boy.

i wait patient
to emerge from my chrysalis
to be seen as i am
because i know
i am a boy.



Keira Miller

Apples

/

/

No two apples are ever the same
Each one has a different colour, texture, name
Some are sweet inside and some are way too sour
Some apples are green with envy, some are angry red
Most are bruised from clumsy fingers that let go too early
A few have perfect flesh, but are rotten to the core
Those with gouges, scratches, and scars embedded in their skin
tell the stories of their past, but not their quality within
Some have dirt spots and wormholes, others wear shiny wax
to attempt to impress the other apples sitting in their basket
They can't see the price tag, they don't know their own worth
They assume when they're not picked first, they must be last
You might notice soft spots, so use a gentle touch
Apples can degrade if they've been handled too much
If you see one fallen on the floor, pick it up
Don't judge their blemishes, because you have more
in common than you think. And they're worth it
Although no apple has it all,
every one is perfect

Madeline Clincke

Pirate Library

Through the windows, all I can watch is waves crashing through the water onto the grassy shore. No land in sight for this lonely island. The pink wallpaper surrounds me in a wide circle. The small space is suffocating even with the high ceilings. I work a well-known library for pirates across the seven seas, yet I don't have many customers. A library that moves after every visit is hard to return to. Most days I dust the shelves and wait for someone to come and borrow a book or two. Today is like every other, wide waters waiting for eager customers.

Ring, ring

The bell on the door chimes with delight. Someone has come. I watch a burly man enter, eyepatch over one eye and a wooden peg leg. His beard is long and mangled with the ocean winds and salty sprays. A pirate as clear as one could be.

"Good day, sir," I beam with excitement.

"Can I get some kids' books?" he whispers, sparing no time for pleasantries as he hobbles into the store.

"Why is it you're getting kids' books? If I remember correctly, your whole crew is up to teen level reading now," I reply, leading him to the far edge of the building.

"It's not for the crew," he responds gruffly.

"Then who is it for?" I ask as we rush straight to the back of the store.

"We have a bunch of kids on the ship," he whispers with embarrassment.

"Captain, pirates should not steal children," I gawk, stopping in my path.

"We didn't steal them, we saved them, they were orphans," he defends himself. "We were robbing another ship, as pirates do, and when we went looking for their treasure, we found these kids!"

"I'm sorry I was too quick to assume the worst. May I see them?" I calm myself. Pirates can forget their manners, and they are the only people I ever talk to, so I fall into their habits. "Let me read to them. They could enjoy the warmth of the library."

"Alright, can my crew listen, too?"

"Of course, it's charming to be read to from time to time." I pile a stack of books in my arms for the kids and lead him back to the front desk. "I'll set up the reading area while you get the kids."

"But won't the library move to a different spot on the ocean once I leave? We were lucky enough to find your island on our course to the south. Where will it go next?" he asks.

"It will only move once the ship leaves the port. I assume I'll move north," I reply.

He wanders back through the door while I roll out the carpet for the kids to sit on. He walks in with the repetitive sounds of the door chime. A line of fifteen young children follow him like ducklings trailing their mother. They range from five to ten years of age, but one boy looks much older than the rest, in his teens.

"Welcome, come have a seat and I'll read you a story," I say as all the children waddle to the carpet, and sure enough, behind the children is a line of grown men towering over me, with curious eyes as sweet as the children's.

With everyone settled, I bring over a chair and open the book to the first page.

“On a lovely summer day, Mama duck swam around in a small pond with all of her little ducklings. One duckling, however, was not like the others.” I start to read the classic tale of the ugly duckling, all the children with excited eyes listening intently. Even the strong men are enticed. Behind the children is the older boy with short hair, dull eyes and clothes, all in the same shades of brown as the planks on the pirate ship. He is the only one who looks bored, with eyes darting everywhere except toward me or the book, and his arms crossed. As I read, the lull of my voice is the only reason he’s staying. His arms relax and a smile breaks across his lips.

“And finally, the ugly duckling had found his true home,” I finish, closing the book dramatically. All the children and men erupt into claps. The teenage boy follows suit, but not enthusiastically.

“Now children, go pick out a book from the shelf or from the books on the table. You may borrow one to read later.”

When everyone stands up to leave, the children go to the colourful shelves and pull out large picture books, the men going to the teen section to pick a book from a series they’re reading or simply a book with an interesting title and cover.

The boy doesn’t follow either group. He goes over to the adult section. It has the dustiest shelves in the library. The pages are eaten by the few mice living here, and the books are older than me.

When all your costumers are pirates you might see only once a year, and you’re the one who taught them to read, you know none are higher level than young adult. I’m the only one who reads adult books and I’ve read all the books in this library twice at least.

“Hey,” I whisper to him. We are alone in the dark aisle.

“What?” he replies with a slight voice crack.

“What’s your name?”

“Eland. Why?”

“I’m Liberty. It’s just that I’ve never had anyone read the adult books before.”

“So, all your costumers can’t read then?”

“No, they all started reading very late in their life. Do you like it on the ship?” I begin picking out a book from each genre I think he might like. I grab one from the fantasy, sci-fi, comedy, romance, and nonfiction sections.

“Not really. All the kids run around, but I’m too old to play with them. All the adults are working, but I’m too young to work for them. They found me with the kids on the ship they were robbing. I’m expected to play with them, but they’re so hyper they never take a minute to understand me.”

“Well, I am often very lonely in this library,” I hint.

“I’ve heard about this place. It’s not easy to visit very often.”

“That’s not what I mean. I have a spare bedroom.”

“Oh, you’re offering me a job?”

“Not so much a job, more of an apprentice, and the job is voluntary,” I smirk.

I watch his eyes light up with possibilities.

“I would love that, Liberty. I just have to ask the captain.” He runs off. Before he leaves, I see excitement in his eyes, something I haven’t seen the whole time he’s been here.

Soon enough, he comes running back as I’m putting the books away.

“He said I could!”

“That’s great. Do you have any stuff you need to grab from the ship before they leave?”

“Yeah, I have a small trunk.”

Eland gets his trunk. I help him get settled in, and I now have an apprentice. We watch through the window as his ship pulls out of port.

Not only does the ship move, but the library moves too. The island starts to sink, the magic of the library taking charge, and once we’re fully submerged under the dark water, we wait. Since we’ve had our visit, the library changes locations for our safety.

After a few short minutes, we start to rise once more, and the light returns in the windows.

The landscape is slightly different this time. A small island is in the distance, a new landmark for Eland and me to gaze at as the waves continue to crash through the water onto the grassy shore.



Momin Bilal

Wild Words

In the garden of life
every planted seed
will grow one way or another.

Our lies are roses:
Blood-red, a stem of thorns.
Just one prick leaves an everlasting scar.

We blow out gossip like dandelions:
A flurry of seeds whispered in the air,
it spreads, uncontrolled.

Greed suffocates like weeds:
gripping the soil, rooted, it takes hold.
And jealousy, common as grass,
waits to be mowed.

Ungrateful thistles,
sharp and bitter,
strangle and trample,
the delicate baby's breath.

Where do we lie
in this tangled mess?
Are we the gardeners,
harvesting life?
Or the insects,
occupying a world,
towered over, controlled?

After a long search,
one wonders—where is truth?
Not in the soil,
or in the bushes,
nor in the crannies of roads.
Truth lives in the trees:
its roots dig deep,
tall and proud.
It blossoms with flowers
and sways, leaves green.

Seasons change and weather
shifts, but truth remains
when all else shrivels, wilts,
and wastes away.



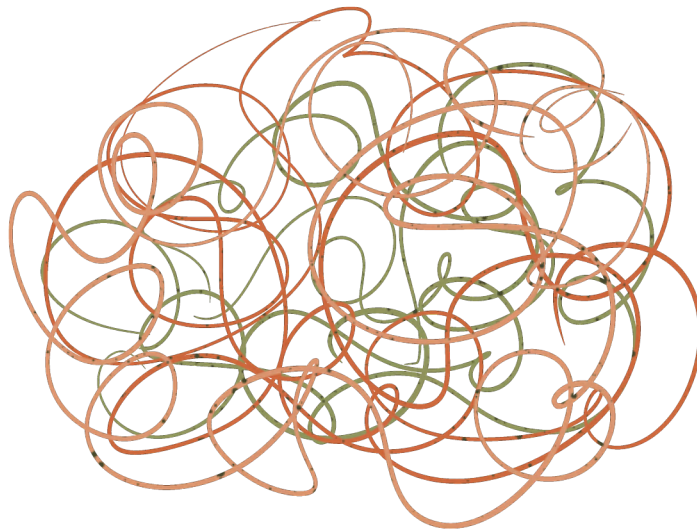
Abigail Friesen

Scribbles

That's all they were, and all she ever called them. Scribbles. Words hastily written down on a crumpled piece of paper. Words in the margins, the notebooks, the schoolwork, the extra spaces. Words written out before they could be lost, accompanied by a broken pencil, a tired mind, a late night. Words puked out in a meaningless heap of lines barely legible. They were just scribbles.

But they were more. They were words unfiltered and untamed, an attempt to capture her experiences, her emotions, her passions. They were drawn from the depths of her sadness, the heights of her joy, the fire of her anger. They were worlds uncharted, stories intricately woven and carefully crafted, poured out into the universe. They were her lifeline, for without them, she would have drowned in a raging sea of thoughts. They were the flowing parts of her soul, glimpses of her inexplicable identity.

They were everything.



Harlee Brinkman

Eccedentesiast

(from Latin, meaning someone who fakes a smile)



She struggled, but no one knew
She hid behind a smile
Protecting her from
rejection, failure, hatred
She was an eccedentesiast

She became good at hiding;
laughing through her pain

"I'm fine. I'm okay," she would say
She wasn't
She was an eccedentesiast

Everyone moved on
She didn't need attention
"Help me," she wanted to ask
But couldn't say

She found calmness in her room
on her bed, by her dresser
Her dresser hid silver
The silver mocked her
"You are weak," it sneered,
yet she still found comfort in it—
especially when it drew red
She was an eccedentesiast

They gave her Band-Aids,
as if swallowing the pain would fix her
She stopped taking her Band-Aids
And saved them up

She wrote a note
to her mother, father, and a few close friends
then she swallowed all her Band-Aids
She was no longer an eccedentesiast

Nesochi Okezie-Enyioma

Forever and Always, Jeff

“Wow. The first Black American president, Barack Obama, has won the election and is set to move into the White House on Monday,” I whisper, reading aloud the headline for the day. I drop the newspaper on my nightstand and proceed to stand up, when her picture catches my eye.

“I miss you. Come back soon,” I say, kissing the framed photograph of my wife. “Oops! I almost forgot to write to her today.”

Her name is Helena and we have been married for the past fifty years. She is so beautiful. Her skin is white and soft as fresh snowfall. She is tall, with blonde hair and bright emerald green eyes, and a heart made of pure gold.

By profession, Helena is the chief medical personnel for the Royal British Air Force, the RCAF. She has been in this job for the past forty years and absolutely loves it; however, it has been very hard for me. Her job requires her to constantly be travelling with the troops and this means she is often away from home and me.

I’m very attached to Helena. Every week I write her a short letter to update her on current events in my life. She cannot write back much, but she tries. For every five letters I send, she sends one in return. But I am okay with this cycle, because when she does write, she sprays it with her signature woody and vanilla perfume. When I open the letter, the scent escapes the envelope and fills the room and it feels like she is standing right there in front of me.

“Alright. Let’s begin,” I say with a smile, sitting down on the couch. Writing letters to Helena is my favourite part of the whole week.

My sweet, sweet Helena,

I have missed you terribly. I feel like we haven’t seen each other in years! Every day I wake up and turn to your side of the bed and expect to see you there. Then I lie in bed and reminisce about the days when we slept in together and woke up at noon. Oh! How I miss the simpler days! The weather over here has been excruciatingly cold, and you know how much I hate the cold. I have not gone out in a while, and am in desperate need of groceries, but I’d rather starve than slip on some ice and break my hip bone. It’s cheaper that way.

I can’t seem to remember a lot of what happened this past week. That’s what aging does to the old noggin’. However I do remember a funny incident. I accidentally set the table for you and me, and then remembered you were not here. Ha! I also made a new friend last week, and his name is Jeff, like mine. It’s awesome. Apparently we like a lot of the same things. I can’t wait for the two of you to meet.

Enough about me, how are you sweetie? I forget, where are you stationed? I hope you’re getting eight hours of sleep. Please take care of yourself.

Well darling, I will drop off your letter in the mailbox and patiently await your reply and sweet scent. It’s been amazing catching up with you, although it’s not the same. But alas, we make do with what we have. I love you, and come home to me soon.

Forever and Always,

Jeff

While I'm sealing the envelope, I hear knocks on the door.

"Hello?" I say in a questioning manner to the blonde, olive-skinned stranger with sparkling, glass-like blue irises at my door. "Can I help you with anything?"

"Hey, Dad? How are you? Why do you sound confused?" the man asks, but I genuinely do not know who this person is and why he is claiming to be my son. He looks just like Helena, so I guess we must be related.

"Ahh! Of course boy! How are you? Please come in. Set your bag down there," I say, gesturing towards the couch. "Did you read about how President Obama was elected into the White House? It is incredible that America has come so far from their racist history. What do you think?" I ask, making small talk.

"What are you talking about? Obama has been president for the past three years already," he chuckles. "Have you forgotten? It was years ago in 2008. Dad, what year do you think it is?"

"2008," I say.

"Good joke. It is 2011."

"If you say so." I laugh along with him

"How rude of me! Allow me to introduce you to my friend Jeff," I say, walking towards this person with the same features as mine, a hunched-over man with a smooth caramel-coloured complexion. He has warm, earthy hazel eyes and thick grey hair and he smiles back with a sweet grin. "We have the same name and look really similar. It's amazing. I just wrote to Helena about it."

The man's countenance shifts. "What are you talking about?" he asks in bewilderment. "Your friend Jeff is you looking at your reflection in the mirror. Are you okay?" he says. "Enough about that, you said you wrote a weekly letter to Mom in Iran? Do you still write to her?"

He trembles as he opens his brown leather bag and pulls out what looks like hundreds of letters.

"Why, yes. I've always done that." I try not to look at the countless sheets of white paper. "What's wrong, boy?" I ask, my voice full of worry and confusion.

"Dad, have you ever gone to the post office to check for packages or letters?" he questions, his eyes refusing to look up.

"Not really. It's too cold to walk all the way down there; plus, I always forget to."

"But how do you send the letters to Mom?"

"I had a mailbox installed just down the street," I explain. "The nearest one was three blocks away. Why all these questions and what's wrong with your face?"

"Dad, Mom died three years ago. She hasn't been in Iran since 2008, and it's now 2011."

"Wait. What are you talking about?!" I fume. I spring up from the couch. "Is this your idea of a joke?"

"Dad, please listen. I stopped at the post office on my way here and picked up your mail. I thought you may not have gone there in a while, and they gave me this huge stack of letters, saying the RCAF office sent them back because Mom is no longer working with them. What I don't understand is how you forgot that she died. This is not something you forget."

I can feel the colour drain from my bronzed face into a sickly, pale white. My eyes dart back and forth between the pile and the visitor. "No one ever told me this," I murmur under my breath while slowly backing away from the strange pile of letters. My breath hitches and comes out in small gasps of air. I think my heart is about to give way and I will collapse right there. I must look terrifying to this stranger.

“There is no way. Helena is in Iran and will come back soon. You’re lying to me. I refuse to believe this. Leave right this moment before I bash your skull in!” I scream, lunging at the stranger. He quickly retreats to the door and looks at my now green face.

“I really think I should take you to the doctor and get examined. This amount of memory loss is not usual.”

I quickly cut him off. “I will not pay anybody a single nickel and I’m not going anywhere!” I shout as I slam the door.

I shuffle towards the hundreds of letters and drop to my knees in front of them, like a prisoner in front of a guard. All of the letters have my address as the return address. All dated December 2, 2008. “My wife never received any of them,” I say, tears streaming down my eyes in hot paths.

I feel so physically and emotionally drained. I hobble into my bedroom, not bothering to eat or brush my teeth. I am too hurt.

“How dare she!” I shriek, pounding my fists at the wall. Hot, acidic tears swell in my red, bloodshot eyes. Too many questions to count, swirl around in my head like a whirlpool as I lie in my bed.

Will I ever smell her sweet scent again?

Maybe he was lying.

Is she really gone?

A single tear falls from my eye and lands delicately onto the pillowcase.

I am awakened in the morning by the sweet tune of a small blue bird. I look to Helena’s side of the bed and realize she hasn’t come back from her recruitment yet.

I pick up the newspaper from my nightstand and read the headline aloud. “Holy moly. The first Black American president, Barack Obama, has won the election and is set to move into the White House on Monday. That is amazing, America has matured.” I plp the newspaper onto my nightstand and stand up.

“I miss you terribly. Come back soon,” I breathe, kissing the framed photograph of my wife.

“Oh boy! I almost forgot to write to her. Let me get my pen and paper.”

“Alright. Let’s begin,” I say with a grin, as I settle onto the blue couch.

My sweet, sweet Helena,

I have missed you terribly. I feel like we haven’t seen each other in years...

Forever and Always,

Jeff



Penny Lounsbury

This Tiny Screen

This tiny screen is a necessity
It allows people to text and talk endlessly
communicating beyond countries

With digital relationships
we can socialize instantly:
when we miss someone we can Facetime
and their faces appear on a screen

Thirty years ago
this was an impossible dream
technology evolved quickly
from television to computers
computers to iPhones
screens shrunk in a growing industry

Unable to unplug completely
we have more dependency
as our phones' mobility improves
Without these capabilities
where would we be?

People move and friends grow apart
this tiny screen
is an opportunity
to stay connected
convenient connection,
conversation one click away
Goodbye letters and hello DMs
No waiting, no longing
for company among a community

So if it seems
like we're wasting time,
we're connecting,
connecting digitally
Digitally, we're connecting
with our tiny screens



Poppy Brown

Fugitive

My feet hit the ground hard as I sprint through the thicket, branches lashing at my face, leaving it raw and stinging. I push forward, my eyes watering from the pain, clutching a bundle of wailing cloth against my chest. “You’re okay, I’m right here,” I assure my baby daughter. Running a thumb against her rosy cheek, I wipe away her tears. I turn my attention away from her and back to the path I was racing down. Heavy footsteps and the barking of dogs follow me. The silvery wire of a chain-link fence catches my attention. There’s a small opening in the fence, just wide enough for a person to fit through. I come to a stop, relief flooding my body. *I might have a fighting chance if I don’t let them corner me.*

Slipping through the hole, the cold metal wires tear at my body, leaving a deep gash in my arm. I let out a pained cry and fall to the ground, hot blood steadily seeping from my fresh wound. I shoot back up, ignore the searing pain, and clutch Eli even tighter than before. Behind me, I can hear heavy footsteps and hounds catching up. Immediate panic sets in, my heartbeat pounds in my ears, and my eyes feel wild with terror. I push off hard once more towards the giant gleaming gate that towers over the trees. “Almost there,” I gasp, my lungs burning in my chest and a bitter taste in my mouth.

I trudge through the thick brush that lines the golden gate, the leaves slightly damp from the ongoing drizzle. The bleeding from my arm has slowed, blood clotting instead of the stream that flowed earlier. Eli has grown silent by now, almost like she understands what’s going on, that we need to hide and be quiet. Just the thought saddens me. *She will never get to lead a normal life.* I push my feelings aside as I finally reach the gate. It must be fifty metres tall. I feel minuscule next to it. Making my way down the length of the gate, I slip in between the thick bars and head down a shadowy path, the rain echoing around me.

My boots are damp by the time I reach the other side. The sun has just dipped below the horizon, the sky already a deep blue, stars laying unseen behind the thick grey clouds. A tall man, just a few paces ahead, holds a watch.

“Devin!” I yell.

“Amanda?” he asks, jogging up, wrapping me in his arms. He looks down in between us at the bundle I’m carrying. “Is this?” he starts, eyes wide.

I smile. “It is.”

Devin scoops Eli into his arms and hugs her tight, a bright smile on his face. He looks back to me, his eyes sparkling. “She’s beautiful. Wait ... what happened?” he says, noticing my bloodied arm.

“It’s a long story, but we have to leave quickly. They found out about us.”

He understands the situation immediately and passes Eli back to me. “Let’s go somewhere safe.”

With that, we set off into the woods quickly, hoping to find refuge among the trees.

A small cabin comes into view as we enter a glade. It’s pretty run-down, but somehow has managed to stay standing.

“This will have to do for the night,” Devin decides.

My legs feel like lead and my arms burn. “Let’s get inside then.” I push open the weathered door that hangs from a single hinge. Inside it’s dusty, dirty, and full of cobwebs. An empty fireplace with sagging cupboards on either side takes up most of the far wall.

We make our way in the dimness, dust floating up from our footsteps and lingering in the air.

I hand a sleeping Eli, who has finally given in to the exhaustion of the day, to Devin. I walk over to the first cupboard. "We should check for supplies."

He nods back.

Inside, I discover a long-abandoned pantry. Sifting through the forgotten food, a rotting smell hits my nose. My stomach heaves and I cover my mouth. I pick up a dusty can. *Lentil soup, not bad.*

"Food?" Devin asks.

"I sure hope so." It's my half-hearted attempt at a joke.

We settle in the middle of the cabin, after having pushed the limited furniture in front of the only window and door. The small table and chairs won't do much, but they're better than nothing.

I set two cans on the floor in front of us and bring out my pocket knife, piercing the first can and successfully opening it. "Here," I hold out the can to Devin. "Cold soup will have to do." I grab hold of the second can and push the point of the knife against the cool metal, but instead of piercing the can, the blade slips and catches my thumb. "Shit." I wince, bringing my thumb up to my lips.

"Here, let me," Devin offers, reaching for the can and knife.

We sit in silence and drink down the cold soup. I gag as it slides down my throat.

"We should get some sleep. Let's leave before dawn," Devin suggests.

We curl up on the floor, cold air seeping in through the floorboards; I shiver.

"Cold?" Devin shifts, pulling me and Eli into his body.

My head rests on his arm. "You think we'll be okay?" Tears threaten to fall.

"I'm sure of it," he assures me, tucking a strand of hair behind my ear.

I lean up, giving him a kiss. "Thank you," I murmur, leaning into his warmth.

He relaxes, curling an arm around me, Eli nestled peacefully between us, her face relaxed with sleep after the stress of the day.

* * *

My eyes snap open as heavy pounding rattles the door. *No, no, no, no, this can't be happening, we were safe, we are safe.* I scramble to my feet, picking up a startled and crying Eli.

"Devin!" I sob, clutching his shirt.

"Get behind me," he instructs sternly.

The pounding stops, heavy air filling the silence before the door suddenly flies open with a sickening crack, a chair skidding across the floor. Five men file in and encircle us.

One of them points a gun at me, at the red laser dot on my torso. Before I can think about moving, excruciating pain explodes in my chest. I crumple to the floor, my vision spotty. Eli screams from somewhere next to me.

Devin falls. His eyes are glossy and already empty.

My breath catches in my throat and I let out a strangled, "No."

His beautiful face is splattered with blood. I painfully reach out, wiping some of it from his cheek with my thumb.

"Grab the child," is the last thing I hear as my life slowly ebbs out of me.

Emma Benoit

The Monsters You Made

I do not belong to you
Why do you judge me when I give you everything you need?
You overlooked all my good intentions
And chose her over me
I won't be waiting when you leave, leave, leave
She'll take the last breath you'll breathe, breathe, breathe

You lie about your experiences
You try to make our relationship a game
But you're doing it all wrong
I think you knew it all along
Picking fights and pinning blame, blame, blame
Can you finally see the monsters you made, made, made?

I don't want you to know my flaws
So I cover my insecurities with pride
Behind my career and success is where I hide
I want to do what makes me feel alive, alive, alive

But who are you to judge me?
All you did was overlook everything I offered
All I did was imagine what we could be
I won't be waiting when you leave, leave, leave
She'll take the last breath you'll breathe, breathe, breathe



Allison Wawryk

My Grandparents' House

My grandparents' house built me.

Waking up each morning, my short, stocky legs run across the street up the small hill to meet Grandma on the green, paint-chipped deck that stands out against the nine other houses surrounding it in this small town. The white house glows with the sun beaming on it. As I approach, I turn back to wave at Mom in the living room window.

Grandma's warm arms wrap around me saying, "Good morning, my girl." Her smile runs ear to ear and her soft eyes sparkle when she looks down at me. Grandpa is sitting on his couch, his nose three inches away from the newspaper he picked up this morning. I breathe in the aroma of fresh bread and cinnamon buns we baked the night before. My grandma is wool knit sweaters, soft and warm, tucked into pants pulled up past her hips, Kleenex and peppermints tucked in her right sleeve. She smells of love and happiness and dish soap. My grandpa is plaid shirts, pants held up by suspenders, and grey wool socks. He is never far from sugary treats, and the scent of coffee is always on his tongue.

My visits consist of half-finished puzzles, colouring with pencil crayons, and endless giggles. Even when we sit in silence, just existing, I know how loved I am. Before I leave, Grandma and Grandpa make sure my heart is warm and my tummy is full.

I'm eight years old. I'm always laughing and beaming with a large toothy smile that runs ear to ear across my face. I climb trees to see baby birds. I learn to ride my bike, daring the gravel roads to scrape my knees. I always run back to Grandma; she knows how to make the worst pain fade away.



* * *

I am seventeen, and I wish I knew then what I know now.

It came as a shock when my family told me they had to move away. “They need more help than we can give them here. They need to move to a home where they can be taken care of.”

How can this be? For as long as I can remember, whenever I need someone to comfort me or make my problems seem less extensive, the warm hug of my grandparents is what I long for. I feel remorse build inside my body, a feeling that never leaves no matter how many years go by; if only I could aid them the way they did for me.

Walking into the care home, I am overwhelmed with all the emotions coursing through my body. No matter how many times I have been told they aren’t doing well, I still refuse to believe they are any different than before. I can’t decide if I am going to laugh, cry, or hurl.

Grandma and Grandpa are sitting at their designated table, staring lifelessly at the wall. Our eyes meet and my emotions finally seem more clear. My trembling legs approach their table and a lump forms in my stomach. Normally I would run to hug them, but it only seems fitting to walk. They are sitting side by side facing me. Wool knit sweaters and suspenders, but something is missing. We exchange glances and they smile back at me, but I do not see the glow in their eyes. I stand in front of them with the same love in my heart I have always felt when I see my grandparents, but the difference is that they no longer see their granddaughter.

When I wake up in the morning and look across the street, I don’t see the bright white house glowing in the sunlight with the green paint-chipped deck attached to the front. I don’t see Grandma waiting for me with open arms, or sense the love I used to feel from her. When I look out my window, I long for the sense of happiness and belonging my grandparents gave to me. My heart breaks when I realize that house will never belong to them again.

Now all I see in its place is a blue house with a freshly painted brown deck. Anger overwhelms my emotions, replacing the love I once felt for that house.

I realize, without Grandma and Grandpa, it is no longer the same house, the house that built me.

Dedicated to:

Merilyn Wawryk, 1932-2017 Mike Wawryk, 1921-2017

Hayden Webb

Under My Bed

Two pairs of clean cleats, too small
Clumpy volleyball knee pads stained with spots of blood
Scraps of doodled-on, coloured-on paper
Old assignments with no empty margins
My second pencil box, vandalized with Sharpie
A plastic recorder and keyboard with missing pieces
Yarn and whits of thread and notebooks and binder clips
Rubber bands and half-finished friendship bracelets
Board and party games collecting dust and extra dice
Empty boxes from Christmases past
Crushed receipts and an envelope full of sparkling gift cards
Olympic quarters from 2010 and reading socks
An unfinished romance book with yellowed pages and a broken spine
Dusty canvases, bottles of paint, cheap and frayed brushes
Scolded and hidden art, pencils without erasers because I can't just cross it out:

Gifts for someone I don't want to be anymore



Kiran Butter
My Brother's Keeper

I rushed into the cold hospital room
and saw my brother. Strength beaten from his body,
left on the white bed. Goosebumps pricked my skin.
I prayed and dropped to my knees next to him.

I intertwined his lifeless fingers with mine
and I felt sorrowness I had not known since
the day I said goodbye and walked the stone path,
leaving my brother to fend for himself
in the house that entrapped and drained us.

He turned towards me, revealing
my abandonment as his ruin.
“I’m going to be okay.”
“I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you,” I whispered.
As the words came out, I realized it’s too late
for apologies now. Because the shouts, fights, and broken
bottles were too much to handle.

Guilt tethered itself to my feet—
with each heaving step I hauled my conscience into bed.
Then I lay lifeless and limp, just like him.



Daylon Lloyd LaFreniere

The Front Seat of the Plane

Vimy Ridge: I think of it as a remarkable accomplishment in my early life, but in 1917 it was just another battle. The sound of the plane motor becomes vexatious when it is all you hear for many days straight. The smell of gas fumes and gunpowder lingers inside of the cockpit of my Nieuport 17 fighter plane, driving me dizzy. As I approach the battle, the sound of the plane motor tunes out, and a rush of adrenaline races through my veins. At this point, I can hear only my thoughts: Is this going to be another victory or a catastrophe? My mind goes blank as I squeeze the trigger on the Lewis machine gun mounted on the front of the plane. Bang! Bang! Bang! A burst of bullets leaves my gun. When I release the trigger and my brain starts to work again, I see a German fighter plane spiral down like a bullet. I have shot down many fighter planes. Yet every time I see one go down, it feels just like the first.

It's been exactly 1095 days since I saw my fiancée. It is bothering me that I have no idea how she's doing and she has no idea how I'm doing. Missions are repetitive, and every time I go out, my chances of being shot down increase. The Germans now know who I am and have set a bounty on my head, so I've been told by many of my fellow Aces.

If the war doesn't end soon, I might not survive. I've been thinking about crashing my plane on purpose so I'll be sent home for recovery, but when the moment comes, I just can't do it. I have done many incredible things in the air, and if I crash-landed my plane, people wouldn't remember me for the guy who shot down many enemy fighter planes; instead, they would remember me as the weak guy that couldn't handle the conditions of war.

It's been four days since this battle began, 1099 days since I have last seen home. This battle is over and many of our soldiers have died (3598 to be exact), but there is still a whole war to finish.

When I get back to the Western Front, my lieutenant brings me a letter that arrived two days ago. It's from my fiancée. She said, "The indent in our queen size bed from our last three years together is starting to fade, and the more it disappears, the more I miss you." She basically just rambled on about her afternoon coffees with her friends downtown and closed with, "Write back as soon as possible and keep on fighting for our country." I have trusted my fiancée for as long as I have known her. I'm pushing to go with her words and keep fighting no matter how long this war lasts.

* * *

It's been ten years since the war ended. Seventy million soldiers have put their lives at risk to save what we call home today and I'm proud to say that I was one of them. I have many medals for my actions in the air (Military Cross and the Victoria Cross). My fiancée kept me going through the war, so I didn't take the coward's way out.

Amongst all the great things I have in life like my wife, two children, and a piece of land, I will always have that one memory of the horrors I faced in my three years at war. I can still hear the sound of my plane motor roaring and bullets being fired at the speed of light. I can smell the gunpowder and exhaust like it's trapped inside of my nose. Many nights I wake up screaming and scare my wife half to death, but when she asks what I'm dreaming of, I can't say. I don't want anyone in my family to imagine what I went through. When my children are old enough to understand, I'll show them my medals, but I'll never tell them about the horrors of war.

Megan Mineau
Apotelesma

I wonder—do you hear
the stars as they sing? See
their twinkling faces in the sky? Feel
their tendrils caress your cheek?

I wish I didn't hear
their wailing voices, see
their ghastly expressions, feel
their cold fingers rip across my skin.



Shanzay Nawaz

Enough is Enough

A cry from the hospital room
a girl is born
The mother holds the baby to her chest
she looks on lost in wonder and bewilderment
and fear
because of a single gene
Fear her daughter will spend her whole life facing
barriers:
pink taxes
judged by size
objectified by magazines
that make her believe pretty is peak
told she is lesser, meeker, quieter, weaker
Stuck between paradise and Earth
the mother whispers to her daughter
with pride and hope
enough is enough
She won't let her daughter live in a world
where of the people who die in car accidents, 47% are women
because seatbelts are constructed for men
where for every female movie character, three are male
where there is a strong division between women and men
She won't wait one hundred and eight years
to bridge this gap
She will teach her daughter
her appearance won't be the rent she pays
to exist in the world as a woman
her emotions, knowledge, and strength matter
She will ensure her daughter is free
to choose, to make her mark
to blaze new footpaths
She will taste the heat of the world
and breathe the cold air in
refreshed, free
She will no longer have to say to the world
enough is enough



Taqdees Thajudeen

She

She's studying in her room, something with numbers, but not math. It's too simple to be math. There are too many paragraphs in her embezzled little notebook. Her pencil is green, rubbery, and smooth. It's an average pencil. But it has so many little imperfections and bite marks. I adore it. I adore her dark green room and the roses that dangle from the ceiling. I adore the creativity that surrounds her being.

But what's that? Why did she stop writing? Why is she staring out of her window? She looks concerned. She looks as though a spider has crawled up her arm. She swats the spider out of her brain and closes the ivory drapes. Ivory. The colour of an elephant's tusk. The colour that makes up the keys to her grandmother's piano next to the grandfather clock on the fuzzy green carpet in her wooden cabin. But enough. Enough side tracking. Focus on her. Only her.

She closes the notebook and does something on her phone, maybe texts a friend. Who is she talking to? Maybe Bella, who lives on the corner of 83rd Street and Park Avenue, next to the kiosk with the hot dogs she likes so much. Enough. Focus. Focus on her shirt. The one with the cartoon daisy on the front. Focus on her crinkled white skirt that she loves and wears every Friday. Focus on the scuffed white Converse sneakers she wears with the star-patterned laces. Focus on the—she stops. Her ears perk up. She can do that cute thing where her ears move up, down, and to the side. I can tell she's stressed. She's worried. She stares at the bottom of her bed. The bed is full of darkness, old socks, debris, and that stash of Twisted Teas she hides from her mom. Why does she stare under the bed? What could possibly be there? Nothing. She hesitates, but stops looking. She eventually shrugs it off. She doesn't look under the bed. Good. There's nothing worth checking there. I would know.

She grabs a book from her tall oak bookshelf filled with books and random trinkets. She pulls out *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh, the book she bought at the little bookstore next to the skate park no one uses on Juno Street. She's been putting it off since last Valentine's Day. It's been at the top of her list since—

"Lights out!" her mother yells and cuts off my train of thought. "It's five past bedtime," she remarks as she opens the door.

"Five more minutes."

"Five more," she reluctantly allows and closes the door.

"Five minutes won't even be enough for half a chapter," she says. She talks to herself. One of many quirks I admire and will never stop admiring. She begins to read, clutching the open book in one hand and twirling her hair with the other. She reads and reads, eyes jotting left and right down the pages as fast as she can consume until she stops. She peers over the book.

Something fell. Something hard and blunt in her closet. She seems frozen, uncertain whether she should pursue the sound. Wearily, she approaches the doors of her closet.

"Who's there?" she asks. Why would there be anyone in the closet? She rips open the doors to see nothing but a broken white piggy bank, its guts made of coins spilled out on the floor.

"Oh," she says softly. "I should get to bed." She leaves the broken piggy bank in the closet. She'll clean it up tomorrow. Or maybe she won't. She doesn't have a piggy bank. She hasn't had one since she was eleven years old. Who put it there?

As she turns off the lights and tucks into bed, facing the wall as she always does, I scurry out from behind the bookshelf and leap through the window into the bushes.

I silently leave the yard, and I wonder—*who else was there?*

Maggie Beth Bieber

Pain

We have no answers yet. The results aren't back yet.

Yet

Yet

Yet

We use the word like a crutch, something to lean on; as though one day soon yet will become a tomorrow, a today. Yet stirs thoughts like the stew my brain has become, more questions than answers, more what ifs than solutions, more worries than hopes, but everything leans on the shaky brittle crutch of

Yet

And our frail hopes depend on it. Because pain is relentless. It consumes our life, our thoughts, everything we are. It demands to be heard, to be seen, to be felt until it's over. But when will it be over?

Not yet.

It has the power to slow down time, slow down dreams. Pain lacks the courtesy to ever let you know when it will arrive.

Pain is challenging. It starts as a shriek in a silent room: sudden, short, shocking. It becomes a booming baritone over time. It

Builds

and builds

and builds

when no one is looking. Seconds, minutes, hours pass. Pain crescendos, drowns out the orchestra. Like the baritone, it steals centre stage, impossible to quiet; it will never give it up. Only pills, lots of them, can silence the pain. Medication steals consciousness and leaves a heavy cloud in its wake.

Takes life

Takes love

Takes ease

They all exist among a baritone that echoes through the mountains like wind, morphing these activities from plains to Mount Everest overnight. You move in a thick fog, never knowing if the next handhold is just a loose stone that will send you falling back to Earth.

You feel like a burden. A far cry from the person
you were born to be. Friends and family tell you it's
not true, but every time you ask for help your dignity
crumbles until there is nearly nothing left. You try to
laugh as chunks are drilled away, so you make a joke.
You tell everyone you're

Fine

Fine

Fine

But it's just a mask. And masked people aren't real.

Worry is the worst sentence you could convict unto
others. Worry in the mind is like termites in a wooden
castle. It

Chews

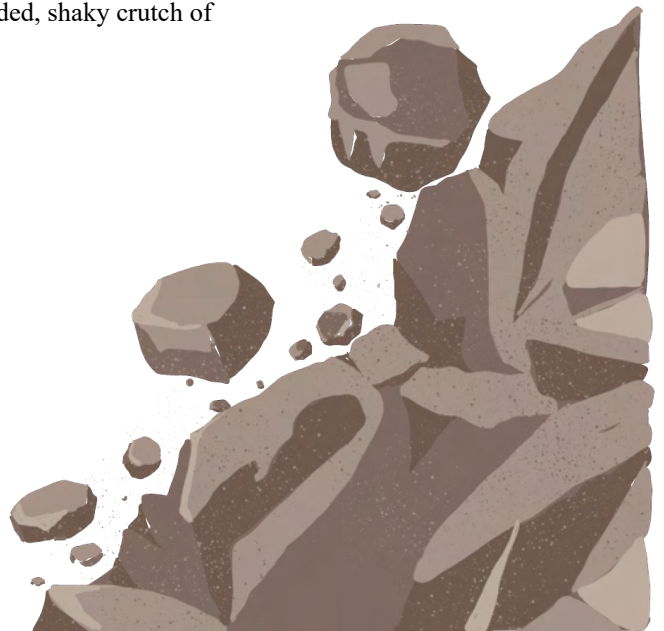
and chews

and chews

until all that's left of you is sawdust. Pain continues
to mine for the remains of your dignity as termites
demolish your mind, but your support reminds you
of those less fortunate. Reminds you of those who
don't have support. So many of us are tormented, day
and night, by pain. Pain is a silent killer. It can't be
recognized with the human eye.

A balloon can only hold so much air before it pops,
and we can never know how much more someone can
take before they pop.

We must be strong. Help each other. Otherwise all
we can really count on is the dreaded, shaky crutch of
Yet.



Maia Battersby

Disordered

At first it's just stacking pots, largest to smallest from bottom to top

and the way the crevices in your elbows feel
and the need to blink in multiples of three
and if you miss a step in your ritual, you believe your cousin will die
and if you walk over a storm drain, you fear you will throw your phone down it
and if you say the wrong words before they leave, they will get in an accident
and it's scars on your body from compulsive skin picking
and you're late to class because of your ritual on the stairs
and you can't leave the house because you fear you might pitch yourself off a bridge

Then

someone notices the blinking, the hand washing, the tardiness
and you start exposures with your therapist
and find the strength and bravery to fight
those thoughts, those fears

and though the fire in your mind rages on, you hold the extinguisher to douse the flames
and feel courage and resilience
and you challenge those who think OCD is just a quirk, an adjective, a joke
and teach them it's not.



Seija Liimatainen

Dandelion

Hello. Good morning, little thing.
Little green and yellow thing.
Little spark, little nuisance, our steadfast annoyance.
I'm happy to see you, small and soft signifier of spring.
You're a little speck of sun, flaring in our eyes, unrestrained.
Everywhere, little green and yellow things.
We mow you down with roaring machines, dig up and poison you.
Yet you return every year.
Loved by dirty-kneed children, hated by critical-eyed gardeners.
We should all be more like you: beautiful, strong, resilient.
With deep roots and proud heads that spring back regardless of anything.
Hello. Good morning, little thing.
Little spark, little nuisance, our steadfast annoyance.
Little green and yellow thing,
just like me.



Addisen Laird

Letting Go

To Nanny and Papa, who even in death showed me what true love is.

I sit on the fence watching her. The earthy scent of the field fills my lungs, and the sound of crickets engulfs my hearing. A soft wind blows, stirring her auburn hair from her shoulders. I watch as her smile brightens when she looks at him, the way her beautiful blue eyes light up like the night sky. A single tear runs down my cheek, knowing she'll never look at me that way again. Reality washes over me; I will never feel her delicate lips on mine, her body pressed against me, her soft hands touching me everywhere. It is his to enjoy now.

I remember when I took her on dates, wandering through the fields of lavender just north of our house. Watching sunsets in the bed of our truck, her hand grasped tightly in mine. Or when I took her ice skating. She clung on to my arm like she'd fall at any minute. She told me that she would love me forever, but I suppose she was only meant to be my forever. I wasn't meant to be hers.

My eyes glaze over as I stare at the millions of stars that fill the sky. I reminisce about our wedding; she forgot to pick up her shoes before the ceremony, so she walked down the aisle barefoot. We had the biggest argument over the colours; she wanted emerald whereas I wanted navy. The argument seems so childish now. I think the worst part of planning was choosing the venue; she was terrible at making decisions. First it was her parents' backyard, then the field of lavender where I proposed. In the end, it was the local church, which was perfect for us. All of our efforts weren't in vain because it was the best day of my life.

I'll never forget the way she looked walking down the aisle. It may be cliché, but she looked like an angel in our midst. In the moment, we were the only two people in the world. I never took our vows seriously, but I've learned that "until death do us part" is more real than it sounds.

The day I got the scan was the most terrifying moment of my life. She was so strong; she never cried after the tests, or after I lost my hair. God, she even quit her job for me. She dedicated every moment of every day to my wellbeing. It was true love.

I remember the last day of my life very clearly. We both knew it was coming. The doctors warned that I only had a few days left with her. We spent every minute of those last few days together; I don't think she ate at all.

I knew it was my last day from the second I woke up. I felt lighter, like nothing bad had ever happened to me. She knew it too. She spent all day holding my hand and feeding me those little ice chips. It still hurts my heart to think about it. That night she lay in the hospital bed with me. It was the first time she ever did that. The scent of her vanilla perfume filled my lungs while I played with her luscious hair. These were the best last moments anyone could ask for.

I felt my eyes begin to close as a tingling started in my feet. The feeling slowly crawled up my legs and into my torso. I thought that I would be more fearful; instead, I felt an overwhelming cloud of calmness engulf me. It started to move faster, consuming my body. I allowed it to happen. My time was up.

I fought so hard against this illness, and she was the last thing I let it take from me. As I was falling asleep for the last time, I heard her whisper softly, "It's okay my love."

I let out a short gasp as I'm drawn back into reality. They're dancing under the stars, just like we used to. Tears are running down my face. The way they hold each other is the same way we used to. I know that they're in love. She's falling, but this time I'm not going to be the one who catches her. I watch him as he pulls the ring out of his pocket. My true love deserves to be happy again. While he gets down on one knee, she looks over to where I'm sitting. It's almost as though she sees me. I know that one day we'll be together again, and I'll be able to tell her that I never left her side.

I look at her with a small smile and whisper, "It's okay my love."

Contributor Bios

A 16 year old attending Bedford Road Collegiate with her service dog, [Maia Battersby](#) has been to over ten countries. She is active with Girl Guides, and she enjoys baking, cooking, crochet, knitting, writing, and any other art form. Maia aspires to become a veterinarian, and her favourite animals are sea otters. She's taking it day by day.

[Emma Benoit](#) has lived in rural Saskatchewan her whole life. She spends her time riding horses, studying music, and reading books. In the winter, she officiates minor hockey. In the summer, she teaches swimming lessons at Loon Lake. She dreams to attend university and study to become a lawyer.

[Maggie Beth Bieber](#) is a senior student at Wolseley High School. She lives with her mother, father, younger brother, three dogs, and a rabbit named Earl Gray. They live on a farm outside of town. Maggie Beth enjoys drawing, acting, dancing, and spending time with her friends.

[Momin Bilal](#), aged 16, is a Grade 11 International Baccalaureate student at Bedford Road Collegiate. He's multi-passionate and hardworking, with interests in the sciences, maths, and humanities. In his free time, he enjoys partaking in digital art and calligraphy, and loves finding new things to learn and good books to read.

[Sanjana Brijlall](#) is a Grade 12 student at Carlton Comprehensive Public High School in Prince Albert. She can often be found belting out her favourite musical theatre song, dancing, or watching the latest Netflix foreign-language drama.

[Harlee Brinkman](#) is a 16 year old who lives in a very small town. She enjoys reading (especially the Harry Potter series) and going for late-night drives with her friends. This poem is very personal to her and she hopes it helps people speak out before it's too late.

[Poppy Brown](#) is a hardworking, Grade 10 student attending Bedford Road Collegiate. They spend their time drawing, going on movie/show binges, gardening, and making random things in the middle of the night with tape.

[Kiran Butter](#) is a Grade 11 high school student. Growing up with what some may call an unfortunate, while others say an amazing, last name, a lot of jokes come her way. She doesn't mind though, because with her last name come its advantages. One of them is writing about it here.

[Madeline Clincke](#), aged 15, is in Grade 10 at Campbell Collegiate. She has a passion for anything creative. From writing to painting, drawing to sculpture, she will explore any

medium she can express herself with. This is her first published work/story, and she hopes to publish novels someday.

[Lilah Flieg-Bacheschi](#) is 14 years old. She was born in Inuvik, NWT. She lives on a farm close to Rosthern with her parents, sister, and a bunch of pets. Lilah enjoys reading, writing, drawing, playing sports, and spending time outside and with animals. Lilah speaks English and Portuguese.

[Abigail Friesen](#) is a Grade 10 student from Dinsmore. She enjoys reading, writing, and everything music. She spends most of her time making art, overthinking, petting her dog, and writing stories at midnight.

[Silvana Gebremeskel](#) was born in Eritrea and is 17 years old. Silvana attends Archbishop M.C. O'Neill Catholic High School with her friends, learning about the inner workings of life as she figures out her journey. Silvana's future career goal is to become a neurosurgeon, hence her favourite TV show is *Grey's Anatomy*.

Farheen Karim is an inquisitive enthusiast who seeks to bring a positive change in society through her involvement in the community. Science Trek was an experiential program that provided mental, physical, and academic challenges for her. She participated in Shad, a STEAM based program to drive and fuel future leaders. She is looking forward to the opportunities she has yet to experience!

Daylon Lloyd LaFreniere is a Grade 11 student at Hafford Central School. When he isn't playing football or working on the farm, he is doing something active outside. He cannot handle being inside and sitting on the couch; he always has to be moving around or helping wherever he can.

Addisen Laird was born in Regina, and she currently resides in Radville. She is in Grade 9. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing, playing volleyball, and hanging out with her dog. Her favourite book is *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein.

Seija Liimatainen is a high school senior who lives in Lanigan with her wonderful mother and weird dog. She enjoys drawing and would like to have a career as an arts writer. Seija has a passion for B Movies and angry folk music, and she uses art to channel emotions.

Penny Lounsbury is a rapid reader and writer. She's been writing poems for about five years, consuming stories in multiple formats. When not

writing, she's probably listening to the *Hamilton* soundtrack or watching a movie. She's graduating this year, so she hopes to continue writing post graduation.

Keira Miller is a 17-year-old Grade 12 student from a farm outside of Wilkie. She has had a passion for writing poetry from a very young age, and it is on her bucket list to be able to share her work with the province, and maybe even the world someday.

Megan Mineau is a 16-year-old girl who has been creating stories for as long as she can remember. She thinks reading is a novel idea and after getting a new story, her day is bound to be fully booked. She also enjoys languages, musicals, the colour red, autumn, and music.

Shanzay Nawaz is a Grade 11 student at Bedford Road Collegiate in Saskatoon. Her hobbies include reading, travelling, and swimming. Writing has been her passion ever since she can remember. She thinks it's really interesting to see how individual perspectives and ideas take some form in her writing!

Nesochi Okezie-Enyioma is currently a Grade 11 student at Holy Cross High School. She is a proud Igbo girl, originally from Nigeria. Nesochi runs a small business of sewing and selling Ankara hair bonnets and face masks. In her free time, she loves to travel and read books. She aspires to become a dentist after high school.

Taqdees Thajudeen is a 15-year-old student living in the small town of Fillmore. They go to 33 Central School where they work hard in the hopes of one day becoming a psychiatrist. Taq enjoys literature, art, and music, and incorporates all aspects of these mediums into their projects.

Allison Marilyn Wawryk is a Grade 11 student who attends Hafford Central School. Allison loves to read and write, and has been very fluent in both from a young age. Allison is a downhill ski racer and a hip hop dancer. Her favorite thing to do is spend time with family.

Hayden Webb is a Grade 11 student from Martensville who can often be found getting inspiration in math class and writing poetry marathons after midnight. She hopes to one day publish a grand series of novels.

Myles West is a Grade 10 SAGE student at Bedford Road Collegiate. They enjoy making paintings and mixed media artworks. Myles has been a Ukrainian dancer for 12 years and they're working hard to perfect the art form. Poetry is something Myles enjoys and they find inspiration from life experiences.

Thank you!

Since 1983 the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild has proudly supported the fresh, original work from students across the province in *Windscrip*t.

Thank you to teachers and librarians from these participating schools who encouraged students to submit their creations for this issue.

33 Central School	Lake Lenore School
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Windscript Submission Guidelines

DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15, 2022

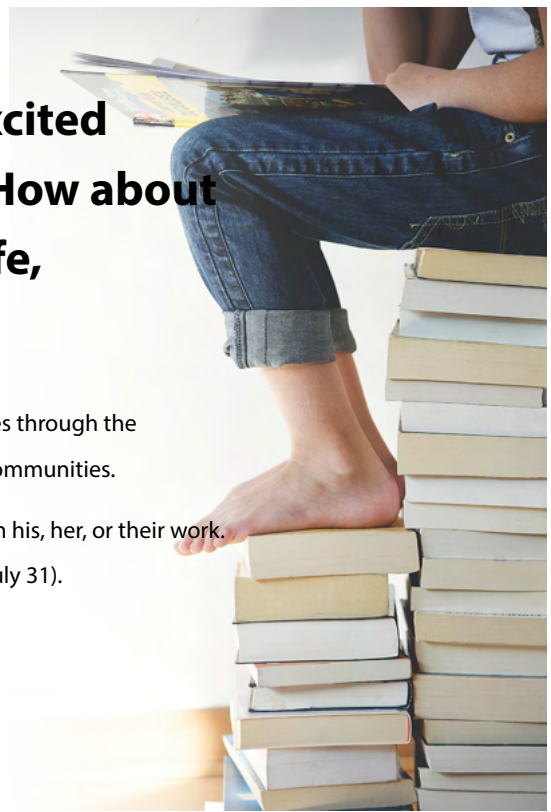
1. Submissions are open to Saskatchewan-based high school students.
2. Always keep a copy of your submitted work. Submissions will not be returned.
3. Writers must submit their own work directly. Submissions cannot be made by a third party (such as parent or teacher).
4. Proofread your manuscript.
5. Submit a maximum of six poems and/or a maximum of two prose works (each piece must not exceed 1500 words).
 - Do not put more than one poem on a page
 - Type each piece in 12 pt., plain text font (such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier), and double space
 - Number each page
 - Put the title on each submission and each page of the manuscript
 - Please format your file names as follows: magazine_title_genre (example: Windscript_PoemOne_Poetry)
 - Submit documents in .doc format only (Please do not submit PDFs or Google Docs)
6. All work must be original from start to finish. Writers submitting plagiarized work will be banned from *Windscript*.
7. In a cover letter, provide the following information:
 - Your name, 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's name and email address
 - If under 18, the name, email, and phone number of your parent or guardian
 - A fifty-word biography written in the third person (If we publish your work, we will use this information, so be creative!)
8. Submit by email to windscrip magazine@gmail.com. Put *Windscript* in the subject line.
9. If your piece(s) are selected, they will go through an editing process with the *Windscript* editors before final publication.

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