

PRP PULSE

Issue 8 / Spring 2016



THE LITERARY MAGAZINE OF PLEASURE RIDGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL



Artwork by

Cover artwork by Katherine Barnett

PRP PULSE

Issue 8 / Spring 2016

CREATIVE WRITING, POETRY &
ARTWORK BY STUDENTS OF
PLEASURE RIDGE PARK HS

Project direction by
Jason Linden &
Denise Webb

Editorial assistance provided by
PRP's Creative Writing Class

Design provided
PRP Creative / Design Studio
Class



Artwork by Mary Peckham



PANTHER
P R E S S

PRP PULSE

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PANTHER
P R E S S

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The PRP Pulse has been recognized by
NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English)
for Excellence in Student Literary Magazines.

introduction

The PRP Pulse Literary Magazine is a result of continued collaboration between Graphic Design, Creative Writing, and Visual Art classes at Pleasure Ridge Park High School. Our purpose is to showcase student work, and to increase the rigor and relevance of our students' education by uniting our Communications, Media and the Arts School of Study with our English core content curriculum.

Students continue to be the major players in the Pulse, participating in multiple roles throughout the project: as writers, editors, photographers, painters, sculptors, designers, and more. Our mission is for this literary magazine to provide a cross-curricular, authentic learning experience for the students at PRP.



Artwork by Rayfel Gonzalez

Our Communications, Media, and the Arts Career theme has opened the door for all students to submit their work. These students are charged with the layout and design of the magazine, while the PRP English Department has joined forces to solicit written pieces and encourage students who have shown interest and/or potential throughout the year. Creative Writing students have taken on the editing and selection process for the submitted written pieces. The hard work and collaboration between departments and students has made this project possible at PRP.



Artwork by Rosie Sullivan

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Photo by Abby Hall

Gentle Folks

By Abby Hall

"I want you to stay away from that man," said my dad. He had worry all over his face, maybe a touch of anger too.

"She has only been hanging out with him for a couple of weeks, but they seem serious."

"Hm." He stared at the end table like there was a ball sitting at the edge, ready to fall and wreak havoc on his already messy living room.

"He is taking her out of town this weekend. They are going to the great lakes."

I watched as his eyes went from the end table, to his feet. I couldn't tell what he was feeling.

"Does he have a rental car?"

"Not that I know of. He seems to have everything planned out, he is a very organized man."

"Of course he doesn't have a rental car, that would just put his name on something. It would be too much-" He cut himself off and met my glare.

"Just forget it. For all I know, he has a rental car. He seems like an okay guy. I shouldn't have even brought up the trip."

"No, I won't forget it. Trust me okay, he is not a good guy. I told you I didn't want you around him, I am not going to tell you again. You know better than to not bring that trip up, as much as I know he could have asked you to go with them."

"And why would that have been so bad?"

"I told you, he is not good. Okay? Don't bring it up again."

"No dad. Why? What makes him so bad? I have the right to know, he

has practically been living with us," at that he stood up, "if I shouldn't be around him, mom shouldn't either."

"Have you ever had a conversation with him?"

"Well, no. He has been at the house, but I have never been introduced."

"Please don't tell me you've been at the house alone with him." My face burned with embarrassment. My room is in the basement, I felt safe down there until now.

"If Charlene-I'm sorry, your mother doesn't get her shit together soon you are moving in with me."

"I don't understand why you always see the bad in people before you ever meet them."

"Yeah and I don't understand why you always see the good in people before you ever meet them. He has been at your house and you have never even spoke to him, that doesn't strike you as odd? He is avoiding you. He is the type that never wants to be known. Does that make sense to you at all?"

"No, not really. How do you know so much about this guy? Or, at least you seem like you know so much about him."

"I've obviously never told you much about my past. I've done that for a reason, I wanted to hide as much as my past as possible. But, obviously it is inevitable for the truth to come out." He was getting serious and started pacing around the room. I have only seen my dad get real serious after he drinks and there wasn't a beer in sight.

"I went to jail when you were three and got out when you were five. I never had a good chance to tell you so I decided to keep it in."

"I'm seventeen, you've obviously had a chance." I felt anger boiling up. I shouldn't be mad at him, he's trying to keep me safe and I am mad over some past.

"Well, you know now. But the point of this, is not to tell you about my history. He-"

I cut him off, "He is a bad guy, I got it dad."

"He used to hang around this woman, I think her name was Lisa, she looked very similar to his ex wife. Lisa had some very oddly beautiful



Photo by Abby Hall

features. Her nose hooked a little at the end and the curls in her hair weren't consistent. Your mother actually resembles Lisa, I always loved Charlene's hair..." His voice traveled off realizing although he had the proper audience, now wasn't the time. Not when he was sober at least.

The phone rang and he went to answer it. "Hello...Yeah?...No, I'm not supposed to go in today, why do you ask?...I'll be there in twenty minutes." He put the phone down, obviously aggravated. "I have to go to the shop. You can ride with me if you want."

I had nothing else to do and I wanted to see how much longer he would beat the dead horse about this guy. "Why not."

He went out to warm up the car. I put on my shoes and grabbed my purse. My dad's car and house were both my grandma's before she died. They were never anything to brag about, but at least he had something.



Before we got to the mechanic shop my dad worked at, he stopped at this bar.

“Dad, you still have to drive.”

“I know, I really just don’t have time for this guys shit right now. He knew I didn’t have to work today.”

I let him go because if I didn’t, he could’ve just as easily stopped at a store and got a pack of beer. “I’ll stay in the car.” He nodded as he close the door as a sign of approval. It was chilly outside so I knew I wouldn’t get hot.

He came back to the car half an hour later.

“You told that guy you’d be there in twenty minutes.”

“He’ll be fine.” I could smell the alcohol on his breath so I did my daughterly duty and slid a piece of gum in his hand. It was fifteen minutes later that we got to the shop. This time I went inside with him. There was a woman at the desk who let my dad go on and pointed me to the waiting area.

I fiddled with my fingers before I found a magazine. I could hear my dad arguing with this guy, there was a lot of mumbling. My dad definitely had more than just a drink or two. Bless that man.

I was going over scenarios in my head as to why my dad would ever be in jail. I didn’t get very far with that and I ended up thinking about my childhood. I really didn’t remember much besides being with my mom a lot. She would take me to a movie every week, sometimes she would let me see the same one twice.

“You ready to go?” I didn’t get the chance to put my coat back on, let alone answer because he was so quick for the door. When he got in the car he slammed the door. It may have just been because of the silence, but that was one of the quickest times I had ever gotten home.

I slipped off to my room to find some pajamas. “I’ll go take a shower,” I said from the hallway. He didn’t answer. I peeked around the corner into the kitchen, he was getting out a bottle and a glass. I



Photo by Abby Hall

wasn't sure if I should take a long shower to give him time to cool off, or hurry through so he wouldn't drink the whole bottle.

When I finished in the bathroom I went to start some laundry, but I could hear my dad talking in the kitchen. I stopped and went to the living room on the couch. He must've lost what he wanted to say because he heard the floor creak and noticed me. He kept the bottle in hand.

"The guy, he was put in solitary confinement towards the end of his time in jail. He was in the section near me. I'm not like him though. Don't get a wrong idea about me just because I was around people like that. God knows all of the mistakes I have made in the past, but I didn't hurt a woman." He reached for a non-existent glass on his end table and sipped with drinking straight out of the bottle.

"This guy ran over his ex-wife, well they were married at the time. He hit her a lot, beat her. He told her to get out of the car, she did it

too. I heard that later that day he was hanging around Lisa. Man, she must've had him under a spell. He did anything for her just as his wife had done for him." He touched where his wedding band had once been.

"His wife, she would come to the shop all of the time. His car broke down a lot. She would have a black eye or a busted lip like it was a new fashion trend. He ran over her when, well he was on the way to get Lisa."

"Dad, maybe you should go to bed." His eyes were glazed and I could tell he didn't care what I had to say.

"I didn't just hear all of this in jail either. In and out, I know the people that own the bar him and Lisa went too that night. Rumor has it she put something in his drink, that's why he went to jail." He couldn't handle the story himself and drank most of the bottle right then. "He raped his wife. Lisa was so messed up she led him to it."

"Did he kill her dad?"

He got up and locked the door. He stumbled back to the couch and fell to sit next to me. He looked me in the eyes, "Worse. He didn't even have the decency to kill her. He raped her, in their house. They had a little girl. Oh man. That little one, she was at home with her mom. She was probably getting tucked in or something. I can only picture... picture her looking up, "Oh, hey daddy" and he picks her mom up. He beat her bad. Their daughter, she was your age."

There was a strange sense of familiarity in his voice. He knew the story pretty well. He drank and he got serious. "Why did you go to jail dad?"

"Another time."



ROADKILL

By Ethan Hayse

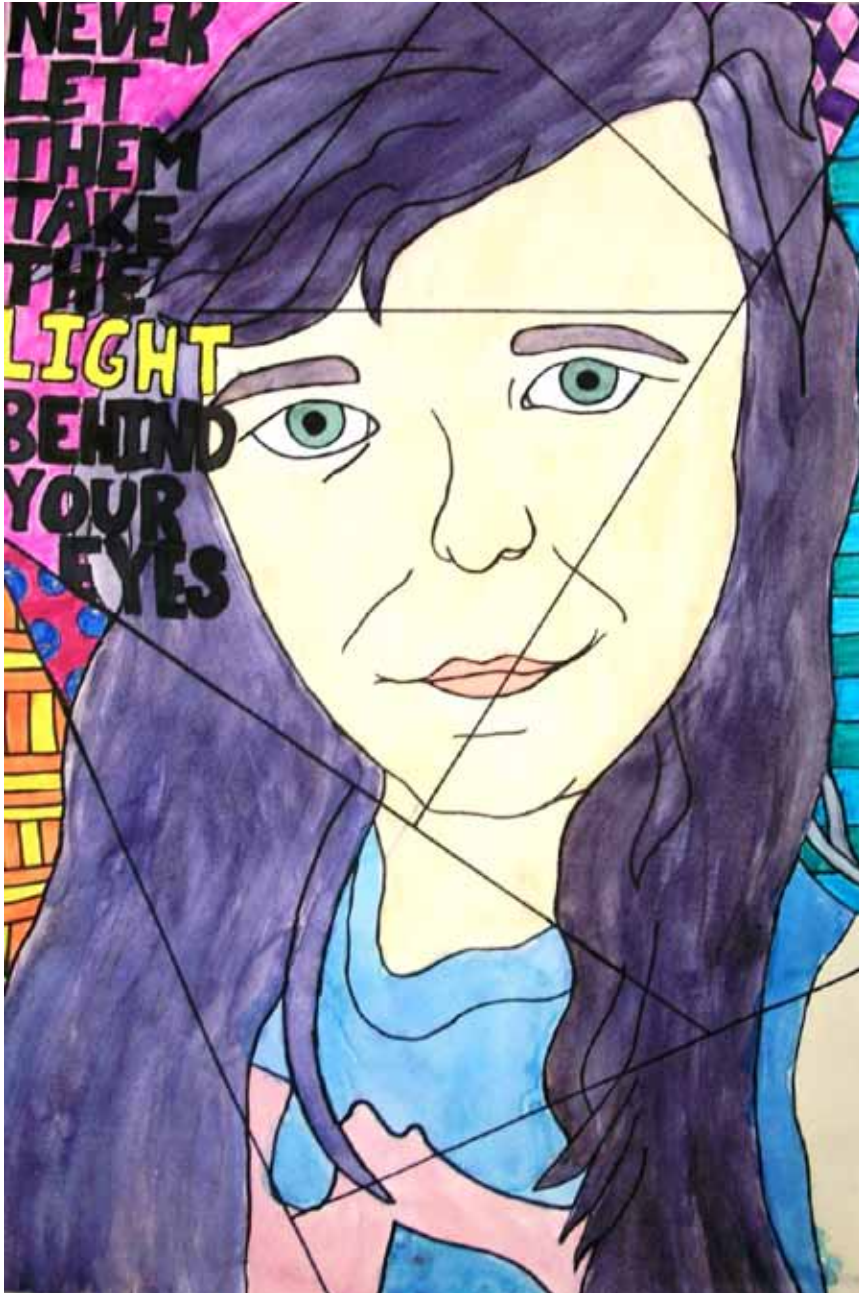
From life to death in a storm
Of screeching brakes and squealing tires.
The storm has settled
And the maroon blend of guts and fur
Becomes so easily ignorable.

Hours later, it is road carpet.
Appendages, kidneys, eyes,
All have been reduced down to
Paper, maybe the second dimension,
Left only to make passerby's noses turn.

We've got to get where were going,
We need to go. Now.
People turn sociopathic out of
Sheer impatience and laziness.
Cruising down i-64
Plowing through their own filth.



Artwork by Mariah Cabknor [top] and Olivia Trusty [bottom]



Artwork by Amber Lewis

Mother's Daughter

By Hannah Rose Edrington

Long white hallways, leading to two big doors at the end; with a dismembered tub in an empty room.

Orbs fly around of white light, and she stands there in white. Mimicking strange voices, and having faces appear around her. Out of nowhere flies the old instruments, and the bell tower chimes. Rusty old beds start to scratch the floor, and you hear a baby cry.

The doctor he's ripping the baby out of the woman, and she's screaming; hanging her up on a rope, Making it look like a suicide. While his dead son lays on the cold table. Nurses all stand around, to see her hanging there. Eyes bulging, purple skin, and bleeding from her stomach. Meanwhile children scream from the nursery section of the asylum, and throw balls back, and forth. Old woman in rocking chairs, and look outside the big white windows.

While watching the nurse carry in a child around two, putting her in a baby bed. She cries, and cries for her mother, and father but he is dead. That's what the nurses are saying, and the mother decided to give her up; all the orphanages are filled up.

That baby is you, and you grew up here; amongst cruelty, and sadness. Hearing screams in the night, and no one wants to play with you.

Nights were lonely, birthdays forgotten, and most importantly here there was no love. Getting used to this, until you see mother. Entering the building screaming, crying, and in a white jacket.

There now disappearing like mom did, and the nursery nearly empty. Only ones left is you, Billy the crier, and Ansel. Ansel was frigidity, tiny, and alone. He never played with anyone, looked outside the window on his tiptoes, and slept all day. Billy was different, he played with me all the time, and cried in his sleep.

That was the past, you're beginning, and end at the same time. In came the same doctor who killed the baby you saw dead, and you were on the way to a bare room. On a table, with rusty instruments in blood, and he stands above you. When mother comes in, running past the men in whitecoats. "Don't touch my child! Jared don't you dare" screaming as she takes the knife, and stabs him to death.

Were down the halls now, past all the staff, and patients; with Billy, and Ansel. Running out of the doors, and into a stolen vehicle. Mother drops us off at some old building, driving away. Holding me for only a little before she left, and that was the only hug I've gotten from mom.

Hiding me, Ansel, and Billy watching as the cars start to chase her. Eventually they catch up to her, and come the cars again. Back to Jared her brother, and men in whitecoats. They say she died there, in a dark room with no light. After that day, all three of us, were stealthy.

After a year of our escape, the asylum stopped looking for us. Stealing food from vendors, going from town to town, and living in old places. Cleaning it up, and making it a temporary home; libraries were school, and we made our own birthday cakes.

By our age of fifteen, we had enrolled in school, and had new names. The names we were given at birth had no meaning, deciding that they weren't even real names at all. Names were given to you by, someone who wanted you, and loved you. My new name was Eva, Ansel changed his name to Matthew, and Billy became Ben.

Finding a home within an apartment complex, rent was 25 dollars a month, and necessities under 45 dollars. I worked Wednesdays, Billy Tuesdays, and Thursday, and Matthew Fridays. Learning to cook new meals, and Matthew became pretty good at cooking; While I sewed, knitted our clothes, and repaired ripped clothes.

There was a dog or two we adopted named Oscar, and flux. Oscar was a Pitbull, and flux a boxer. That's when mother's letters arrived taped to our door; there was more than 52 written letters. Some were newspaper clippings, old pictures, and news that the asylum shut down. We were never crazy, we were just unwanted. My mother was crazy, and I wasn't; still she saved my life for new opportunities.



Artwork by Elizabeth Shirley

All the memories I have told, and remerged in my mind; have made me thankful for my new life. Jared the doctor and mother's brother killed all those children, in his experiments. The staff mistreated us all there, and in the last letter came the best news. The asylum was never to operate again, and I never wanted to see that hellhole again.

Much more of the letter shows that my mother did love me, but not in the normal way; more deranged, and dispatched. Wanting a Barbie doll, instead of a daughter, mother abandoned me. Losing her mind slowly after, and becoming a prostitute on the streets. Truth is I truly didn't need a mother, and when I am one I'll never be her. Mother surprised me one last time with this poem.

My greatest love is my daughter
Though all she does is holler.
She hates the pageants her mommy puts her in.
Adaline my daughter never wants to be mommy's Barbie.

Cheeks like roses.
Hair like her fathers, which is why I never want her.
Who wants to see the man they hate.
My greatest love is my daughter.
To be a Barbie it takes a lot of money.
For a child you never wanted.
Though all she does is holler.
Adaline my daughter never wants to be mommy's Barbie.

After this poem, I burn the letters, watching the flames grow higher. Filling the room with heat, and light, more than mother will ever do for me.

All she wanted was a Barbie, not a daughter, and all I ever wanted was to be loved by her. I never wanted to be my mother's daughter.

Cheeks like roses.
Hair like her fathers, which is why I never wanted her.
Who wants to see the man they hate.
For a child you never wanted.
Adaline my daughter never wants to be mommy's Barbie.

Ben says that Mother isn't worth it, and Matthew watches the letters burn. One thing though I will not forget is what was said. "She may have been horrible, but least she saved our lives."



Photo by Taylor Mingus

Smiling a little, we all sit around, and watch the fire through the night. With Flux, and Oscar at our side, we witness mother disappear from our lives. Paper by paper, word by word, mother's existence burns. I will never be my mother's daughter.

After that night we move to Paris, and never return; Living the rest of our lives in a nice little old house, and starting all over again.

Piff

By Lyric Hicks

The moon, if one were to overlook the street lamps, was the lone factor in keeping the street from being hidden under a dark blanket. Not a real blanket, though. The one thing Peter Marshall begged for: now that was a blanket. The sign propped up next to his tall frame stayed there throughout the night, and read, 'Warm blanket, please.' It was past midnight, and the November air whistled around him. He sat up against the damp wall of the liquor store. A tattered paper bag sat to the side, and was the extent of his inanimate belongings. His cat, Piff, stretched as it snuggled closer to his leg as they both drifted off to sleep.

Three in the morning brought a pair or so of drunken teenagers, who woke them both by intentionally spilling beer on both him and Piff. The oddly marked cat let out a low growl, and Peter consoled him until both eventually closed their eyes once again.

It turned out that morning was just setting the scene for a shitty day for the pair. Peter awoke around an hour before noon. The street in front of where he sat was filled with a crowd that gradually grew as the minutes passed. These people were protesting the idea of the homeless being allowed to keep pets. The small community was heavily populated with people without homes. Signs were held up in the air, like backup singers to their chant: 'If you can't take care of yourself; you can't take care of them.'

It was nearly half an hour before one of the supporters approached Peter, with a megaphone in their hand. "You have a cat. Do you know



Artwork by Darius Henderson

how sick that is? By keeping this poor, capable animal with you, you force him to starve." Her voice boomed throughout the street as she stood right in front of his face. The crowd of supporters cheered and clapped to support her speech.

"Yes, his name is Piff. I love him, and I feed him with a priority that exceeds feeding myself."

"If you love him, you shouldn't keep him, should you? Should he?" She directed her last pair of words to the crowd behind her, who all agreed, "He shouldn't."

A small drop rolled down his cheek, falling into his unkempt beard. "My cat is all I have, ma'am."

The woman returned to chanting with the rest of the group. Peter cried a long time after she left. Piff offered a small, 'meow' as he rubbed his face on his owner's arm. This seemed to make Peter cry more. Peter opened up the paper bag sitting next to him. Piff nudged the bag as he lifted it off of the ground. Inside he found two pieces of bread, a cheese slice and a small portion of a leftover banana. His stomach made an audible growl, yet he started breaking the bread into bite sized pieces, feeding them to a very happy Piff.

Two bread slices and the majority of a piece of cheese later, a cat who finally had some food in its stomach snuggled up to nap next to his companion. Peter then started to eat, only having only saved the small portions of banana and cheese for himself.

"Hey... Hey! I'm talking to you." Peter suddenly was woken up, a loud voice coming from in front of him.

"Sorry," Peter apologized, opening his eyes. "Yes?" He wasn't met with a face that he recognized. In fact, he wasn't met with a face at all. He was met with a hand that smacked him in the face.

"Why don't you get off your ass, get a job, huh? Stop taking up space on the street, making...it look like shit." The man was clearly intoxicated, as he stumbled a great deal as he kicked Peter's paper bag down the street (which by now contained nothing more than a banana peel.)

"I don't have any way to get to a job or anything—"

"I don't care about your excuses. What the hell is this, your cat? It looks like a diseased pig. Do you actually feed this thing?" Peter reached for Piff protectively. "Who am I kidding; it probably starves as much as you do. You're both better off dead. Nothing but wastes of space." He reaches for Piff, and Peter instinctively wraps the cat in his arms and brings his knees to his chest, trying to protect him the best he can.

The man brings his foot to the side of Peter's chest. His leg swings back as the front of his shoe kicks him with enough force to scoot him over a good few inches. And he kicks him again. He winces. He's

frozen, he doesn't know how to protest or help himself. Peter tries to make sure his pet is as safe as he can be, and the man's foot meets his shoulder. Then it happens once more.

It's a quiet time of day, and the street is hardly busy at all. A handful of pedestrians appear to take notice, but go around them, giving their friends scared glances. They would be afraid to help, even if they wanted to. If they wanted to.

Peter looks up enough to see that his foot is lined up for where Piff is being protected to the best of his ability. He moves his knees up to cover up where he is keeping the cat, only there was nothing that time.

The foot stumbles back and Peter looks up to see two hands on the man's shoulders.

"He never did a thing to you." The second man says.

Peter's eyes never go towards the fight between the two. They're only directed toward Piff, who seems to be mostly unharmed. The cat's ears twitch, and his tail moves back and forth.

"You can tell something is wrong, can't you... It's all okay," Peter whispered to him. He was right. The fight in front of him was over in a matter of minutes. The man who saved him clearly had an advantage due to his sobriety.

The nicer of the two men looked at Peter, and that was the moment when Peter was snapped whatever shock he was in from what had happened. He hugged the man, he cried, he thanked him more times than either of them could count (all while not letting Piff leave his arms.)

Once Peter's tears had come to an end, the nice man spoke. "My name's Brian, sir. I'd like to get you some lunch if you don't mind. I can get you something for your cat too."

A small tear had ran down Peter's face once again as he nodded.

Peter stood outside of the small restaurant with Piff in his arms, as there was a sign indicated that they didn't allow pets. When the man returned, he told Peter that he would like to buy him and Piff something to eat here twice every week.

Peter cried as he hugged the man for what must have been ten minutes. Piff licked his owner's face.



Artwork by Celeste Stokes

Headache

by Brie Taylor

I'm not exactly sure
What happened yesterday
I know you smiled
And it was because of me

I know it was a great day
I laughed
That was because of you

I'm still confused
I can't wrap my head around it
It's almost as if you actually made me happy
I was actually going to give you a chance

But sweetheart
It's the concussion talking
You'll never be good for anything
But a headache

ONCE ON A HILL

by Abby Hall

once on a hill flowered with sweet woodruffs
he hummed a tune
and it was called "humility"
because that was how he felt with her
and it was all about how
his girl would giggle
and give him a smirk
and a rub on the back
and she never understood it.
that was the day they tried
ecstasy and things were good
and everything moved fast
and his mind was happy
with the euphoria and all
and his girl asked to go home
and she came down first but
he still had to drive her
and he had asked why she couldn't do it
and she slapped him across the face
and he had to take it



Artwork by Amy Cook

once on a hill flowered with violets
he hummed a tune
and it was called "loyalty"
because that was what he felt for her
and it was all about the girl
his girl would look away
and give him a sigh
and a touch on the cheek
and she started to realize.
that was the day they tried
talking and things weren't good
and everything moved slow
and his mind was diluted

with the girls ideas and all
and his girl asked to leave
and she said this wasn't for her
he still was loyal
and he asked her why she was done
and she went to slap him
but he stopped her
once on a hill flowered with hyssops
he hummed a tune
and it was called "cleanliness"
because that's what he felt without her
and it was all about himself
and his girl had moved away
and he had looked at the flowers
and he saw them for what they were
because they didn't need to be looked into
that was the day he had ease
and he felt his mind stop analyzing
all of the maddening thoughts
and he caught himself smiling
down at the flowers
and the sun beat down on him
or maybe the flowers
and he lay in the cleanliness
knowing that they were him
but he couldn't analyze anymore
because it was good again
and he could walk home with ease
his girl snuggled with a new man



Artwork by Chelsey Duff

Escape

By Kasey Hottinger

I've always been fascinated by
the whim of the make believe
and the brightness of
a world I do not know
and I loved the movement
of it all
how the forest would
bustle and grow
and mystical things would fly
and trot along
and I would escape
into another dimension
where time did not exist
and my worries didn't either
where the forest was my home
and like a beating heart
it contracted and bled
with the glow of nature
and being
and I would follow the trail
into the life
I could only dream of



Artwork by Te'Mea Shelton



Artwork by Elizabeth Shirley



Artwork by Amanda Mudd



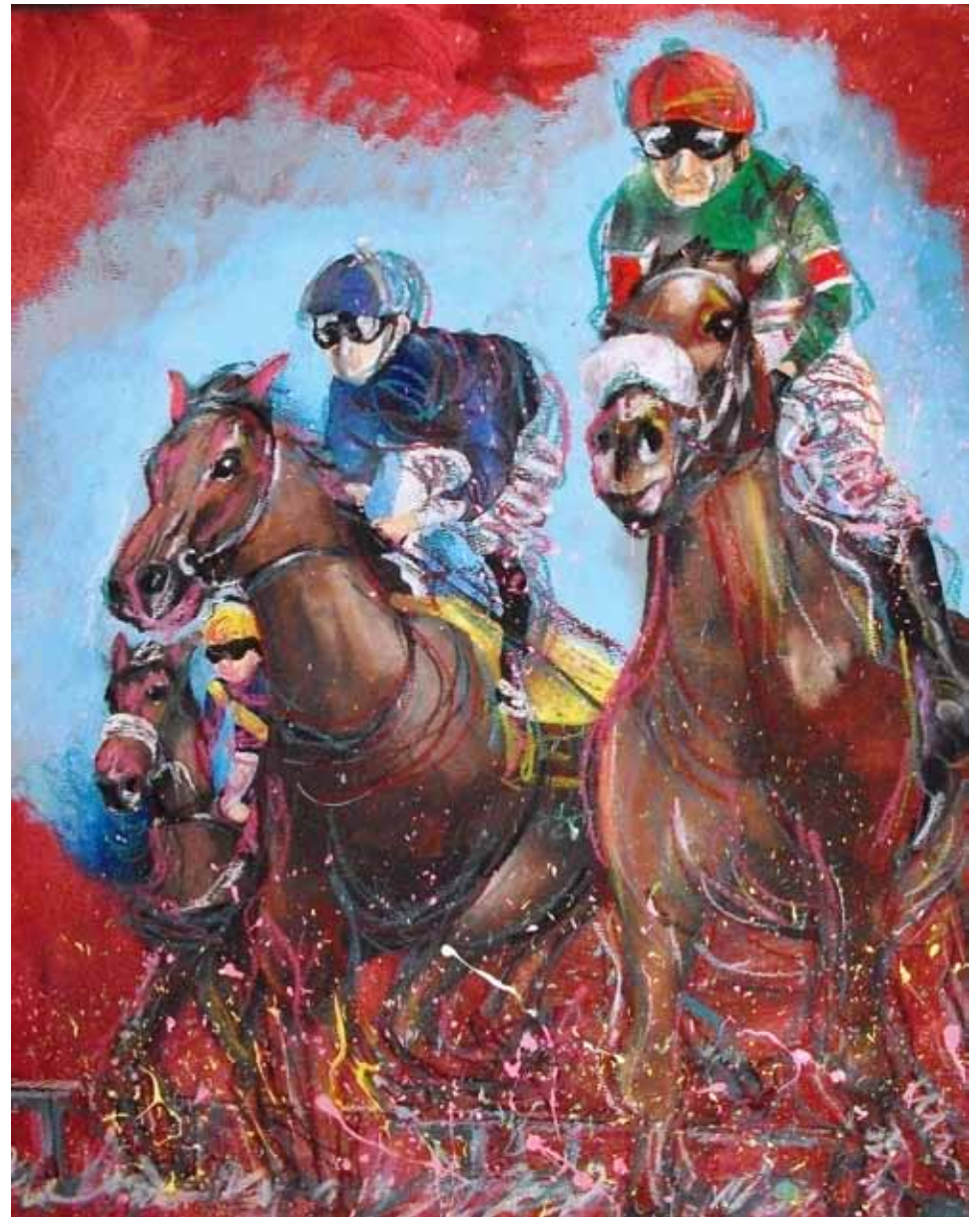
Artwork by Cashaye Whaley



Artwork by Jake Thomas



Artwork by Te'Mea Shelton



Artwork by Jackson Penna



Artwork by Nicholas Wooden





Artwork by Savannah Wilder



Artwork by William Davis



Artwork by
Maddie
Campbell



Photo by Taylor Mingus



Photos by Taylor Mingus

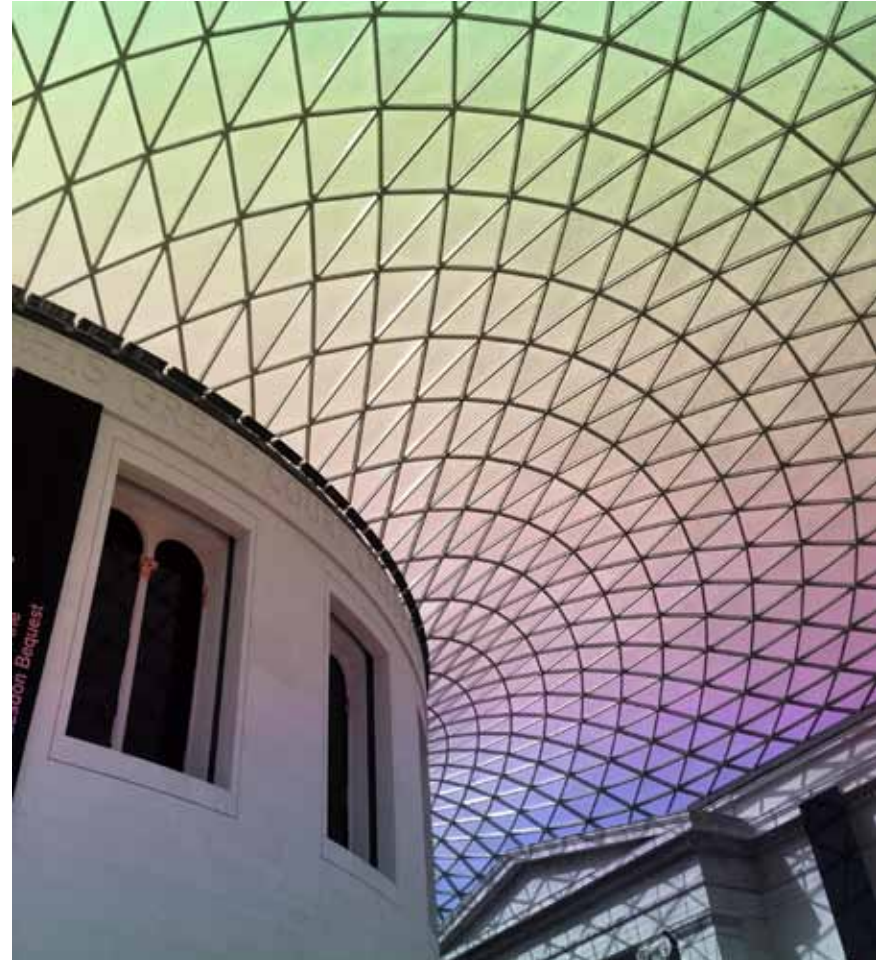


Photo by Taylor Mingus



Artwork by Madison Loney



Artwork by Chelsey Duff



Artwork by Maddie Campbell



Artwork by Mary Peckham



Artwork by Olivia Trusty



Artwork by Kayla Cyrus



Artwork by Fallyn Evans



Artwork by Abigail Stewart



Artwork by Fallyn Evans



Artwork by Maddie Campbell



Photo by Abigail Stewart

From Linda Adele Goodine's Beeline Highway series (2013) - Perigee Moon

By Miranda E. Smith

From Linda Adele Goodine's Beeline Highway series (2013) – Perigee Moon

The note on the nightstand read, "Don't doubt my conviction, my darling." He blinked at it, eyes still bleary from sleep, skimming over the words. He felt across the bed, waiting for his hand to brush her hip, back, hand, anything. The sheets were cold where she should have been.

"Cass?" He croaked, pushing himself up onto one elbow. When no response came, he pushed himself all the way up, peering around the room. "Cassandra?"

The air was warm and humid as ever, hanging in the house like a blanket. He listened, but there was no clanking in the kitchen, no hum from the living room television; instead the house was filled with the chopping roar of the ocean, waves slapping against rocks - there was no beach on their stretch of shoreline. The double doors facing the water stood open, letting the wind blow in the salt and stench of fish. He walked to the doors, and stood bewildered on the splintering wooden steps.

She stood amongst the dark, blunt faces of the rocky shoreline, her back to the purpling sky, draped only in the patched quilt they pulled down when the air got too cool for just sheets. The wind blew her hair forward, into her eyes, half hiding the smile blooming on her mouth.

"Cass?"



Artwork by Leah Wright

First Steps

By Caitlynn Banks

Nicky didn't like the look of it. They had told her that it looked authentic and real. That some people couldn't even notice the difference between it and a real leg. It laid in Dr.Karev's arms, she presented it to Nicky.

"You hate it, don't you?"

"...No, it's great."

Karev was hesitant. "We have an appointment for the physical therapy room at four. I will be there for the first one, but then after that it will be you and your PT." She touched Nicky's real leg, "Are you excited?"

Nicky nodded. She said goodbye to Dr.Karev then turned on the tv. Over the past three weeks she had become a professional player on family feud. Barnes told her to stop watching tv and do a crossword. But Nicky didn't let up.

When four came around a nurse helped her into a wheel chair and took her downstairs. The PT was there waiting for Nicky. He sat at a tiny desk in the corner of the room. The nurse rolled her in the room up to the desk then left. The PT reached around and grabbed what Nicky assumed to be the same prosthetic from earlier.

"Have you put this on by yourself yet?"

Nicky once again shook her head back and forth.

"I need you to move your gown up to where your leg ends."

Nicky did as he said. She watched for his reaction to her leg, but there was none.

"Alright listen and watch." He moved the prosthetic up to her nub.

"We put in this" He rub the cloth padding in the inside of the leg. "This will help with the rubbing." He grabbed Nicky's nub and lifted it, "You place the prosthetic around the end of your leg, is the fit tight?"

"Uhm, it's okay..."

The PT shook his head, "This is not how it works. You need to be honest and tell me everything, if not I cannot help you. Is that clear?"

Nicky gritted her teeth, she didn't like it when people spoke to her as if she didn't know anything, "Yeah, the fit is tight."

"Is it a comfortable pressure though?"

"As far as I can tell."

The PT grabbed a clipboard and a pen and pushed Nicky over to what looked like mini gymnastics parallel bars. Nicky rubbed her palms on her thighs in attempt to wipe the sweat off.

"Okay first thing we are going to do is try to stand. Place both your hands on the bars and try to pull yourself up. I want you to place most of your weight on your left leg."

The PT stood beside Nicky. His clip board rested on foam blocks next to the parallel bars. His arms were stretched out so that his hands held Nicky's hips straight forward. She gripped the bars tighter and pulled herself up to standing.

"Alright, now go back to sitting using only your left leg."

Nicky lowered herself back down into the wheelchair. Her left quad ached a little bit.

"That wasn't bad. This time I want you to try and balance your weight. I want you to use your left leg and also prosthetic leg. The weight has to be equal."

Nicky placed her hands back on the bars. She bent her left knee using the force to stand upright.

"Stand evenly, the weight has to be even."

He stood behind Nicky nudging her to lean far to the right.

"Okay hold that position."

The PT climbed underneath the parallel bars so that they were face to face. He held the bars beside him and demonstrated, by shifting his hips side to side.

"You need to know how much pressure you can put on this so I want you to shift back and forth. Little shifts at first then move to bigger shifts."

He then put his hands on her waist and guided Nicky side to side.

"Good, I'm going to let go and I want you to try doing it on your own."

He then moved his hands away and watched Nicky move side. Nicky looked up from watching her feet and stopped moving.

"What's wrong?"

Nicky's eyes filled with tears. She couldn't remember the last time she had stood up. The PT nodded and touched Nicky's arm.

"If you're comfortable, I'd like you to take a step."

Nicky replied with a shaky okay. She gripped the bars next to her tighter. She leaned on to the prosthetic leg attempting to step with her left. Her right leg pinged from the prosthetic. Her nub had slid deeper into the socket and was now rubbing on her skin. She winced and kicked her right leg out. When she went to put weight on that leg, her hips thrust forward. The leg buckled and Nicky's grip loosened from the bars. The PT barely catching her fall. He helped Nicky hop back to her wheelchair. When he had her seated he went back to pick the prosthetic up off the floor.

"Was the leg too loose?"

He waited for an answer from her. Nicky's head was bowed, she refused to look up at him.

"For me to help you, for you to get any better, to move farther along. We need honesty. I need to know if this leg worked for you or not?" He waited once again for her to answer. "We are done today. I'll call the nurse to come get you. If you decide that you want to talk about the leg, then here is my card." He took one out of his scrub pocket and set it on her lap.

He then walked over to his desk and dialed up to Nicky's floor and asked for a nurse. He sat at his desk for the rest of time. He watched Nicky out of the corner of his eye, hoping that she would see today as an accomplishment.



Artwork by Peyton Hawks

Untitled

By Chloe Bailey McDaniel

The cool air felt nice on my scabby knees as I followed behind my mom in my nice dress into the church. The air in the car was broken so I was sweating already but the breeze was good.

“Lexington Scott I’m not going to tell you again, let go of your dress.” She smacked the hands holding the bottom of my dress so I could fan my legs. I let go and flattened my palms to my side and followed her in, walking like a robot.

“Good morning Jane, Lexington.” Father John stood in a big dress with big sleeves in front of us, handing out song pamphlets and shaking peoples hands in that weird way of holding one of theirs in both of his and not letting go. He was the only person I had ever seen do it. He took moms hand for a whole eleven seconds before he let go. After three seconds I wiggled my hand out and scooted behind mom. She led me into the double doors and strait to the bathroom.

“I’m starving.” I said.

“We’ll eat at your party. Are you excited for your party?” she asked me while she smoothed over my dress.

“Yeah I guess. Is Kyle coming over?” Kyle was my best friend. Mom started checking my hair and pushing on bobby pins that stabbed my head. Then she pulled the thing ladies have on their head when they get married out of her purse.

“Yes, he and his parents.” I knew the name of the thing but I had forgotten it. It had a big circle of flowers she placed on my head like a hat and then pushed the curtain behind my head so I couldn’t see it. Then she wiped my shoes with a paper towel and took my hand again.

“Remember your manners.” She said and made me follow her to the church. Inside there were lots of girls in dresses like me, and they

all had hat things like me.

"Lex!" That was Kiana from school. Her curtain thing was over her face like she was a bride. Mom let me wave but then made me go sit in a spot between one girl who was kicking the seat in front of her, and the other who was playing on a DS until her mom snatched it out of her hands.

"I told you to leave this at the house. You told me you didn't bring it." She said. my mom kissed my head and went to find her seat, leaving me with the woman and the girls.

"I forgot." The girl said. Her mom popped her mouth and the girl sucked her lips together.

"You will not lie in the Lord's house." Her mom whispered and walked away with the DS. Father John went up to the front and said a lot of stuff, and I started kicking the back of the seat in front of me like the girl next to me, and then like five other people did it all together until the Sunday school teacher Mrs. Applebottom came and smacked our shins. Then we sat in silence until she told us to stand, walk up, eat a salty cracker, drink nasty juice, and sit back down, then all the grown ups did it. He talked some more and then my mom let me go home.

"Did you forget how to act in a church?" she demanded in the car. She made me sit in the back because she was mad at me. Sometimes if I was real good she would let me sit up front.

"No." I said.

"Were you one of the girls kicking the Pews?" she asked, looking at me from the little mirror on the front window.

"No." her hand caught my leg in a smack.

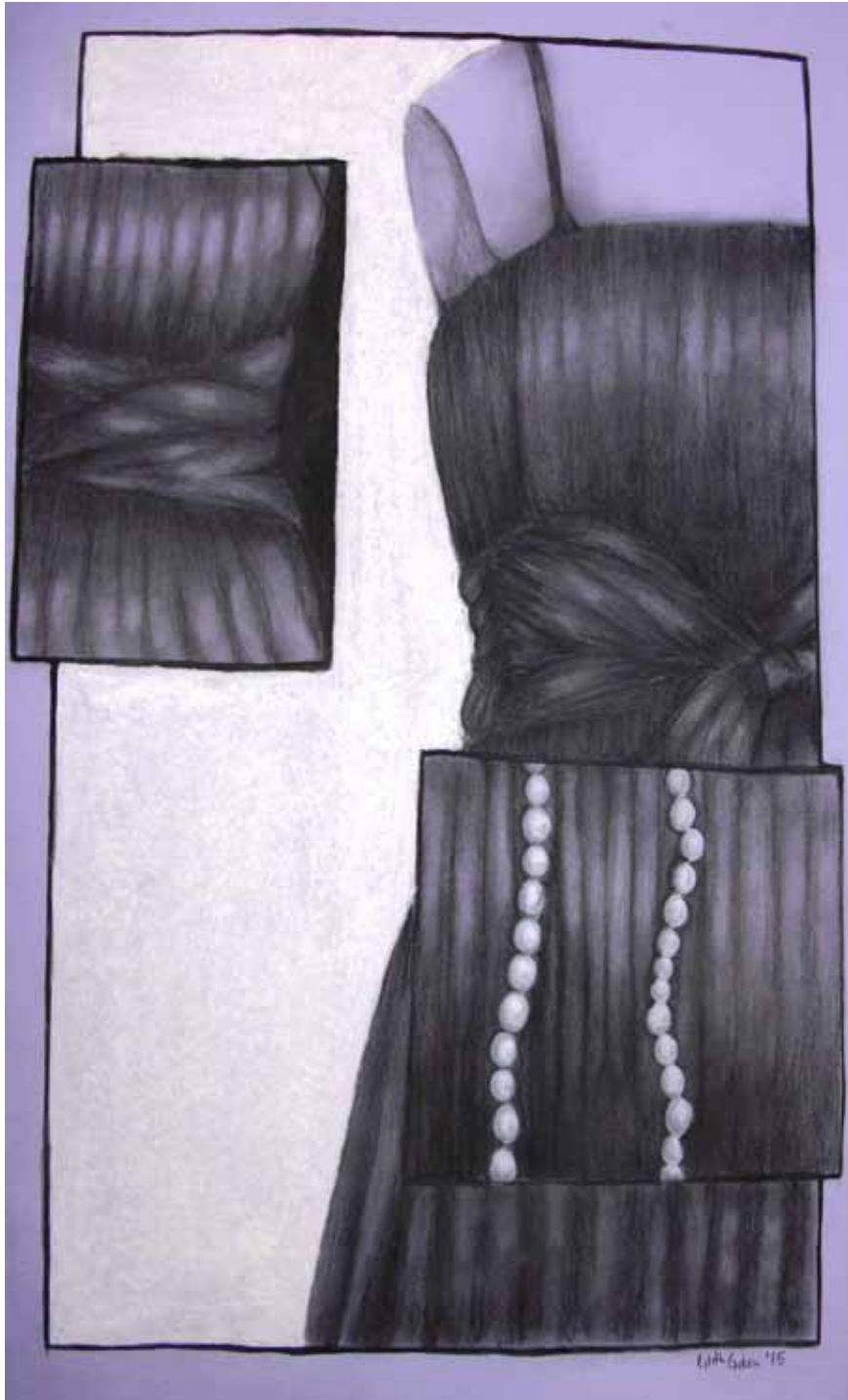
"OW!" I hollered at her and she reached back to do it again. Her biggest rule was not to holler at her, and then not to lie to her. "Okay I was." I pulled my legs up into her seat.

"Don't lie to me, and get your shoes off the leather." I complied, fearing for my shins if I didn't.

We went straight to Grammas where I finally got to eat and everybody was supposed to give me presents but all I got was stupid cards with money in them. My aunt Debbie got me a pack of water



Artwork by Sarah Reynolds



guns but only when my mom wasn't around.

"You didn't get these from me." She winked and walked back into the kitchen. I immediately went on the search for Kyle. It was time for a water fight. He was under the Kitchen table so I crawled down next to him. He had a whole tray of sweets.

"I got water guns." I said, grabbing a little cupcake. He nodded and I followed him outside. In the back was a lot of muddy yard and then a few trees and then train tracks and then a creek. She never let me go past the trees.

"I'll race you to the Creek." Kyle said but he was already running. I ran as fast as I could in the stupid white shiny shoes that hurt my feet and we went past the trees and the tracks and all the way down to the water and Kyle didn't stop, he toppled right on in because he was going too fast.

"Dang it, my Momma's gonna kill me," he said when he stood up and the water was at his knees.

"Well, get out." I said. I opened the water gun thing and gave him two and me two. Then we filled them up with the water. Kyle started shooting before mine were filled and I started splashing water at him and running up the bank back onto grass. He kept making laser noises when he shot his and I made explosion noises.

"Kyle James Jeffries!" I heard the whisper and knew that someone was yelling for him.

"Someone yelled for you." I said. he looked back at the house and squinted.

"I didn't hear it, and no ones outside." And that was it, we went back to shooting each other, and then trying to jump the creek.



Sun

by Sahra Hussein

This sun
That shines bright every morning
The strict schedule it follows
In the evening it sets
Creating beautiful colors
As it says goodbye
The sky is dark for a moment
Nothing lighting the world
But the street lights
Than the beautiful moon rises
Adding a dash of light to the sky
Not not too much.
I lay under the oak tree
Counting every star that pops out
In the city we don't get this view

Photo by Abigail Stewart



Something Gentle

By Andi Petrella

At home, in the stables, is his wife. Today, she has killed and de-feathered a chicken for dinner, and brined it. She has repaired the wooden fence on the far west side the farm. She has milked the cows, and fed the calves. She has stacked the hay bales in the barn, and shot the rat that has been chewing holes into the barley sacks. Now, she is in the stables, grooming their horse.

She runs her hand down the side of the mare, and hums a sweet tune her mother used to sing to her. She holds the horse brush in her hand, and turns to toss it in the bucket sitting on the bench. She gives the mare a final pat on her hip and heads inside to start cooking.

It's nearly sunset, and her husband turns off the reaper and heads inside. He has been outside harvesting wheat since cock-crow, and the years of sitting out and harvesting show on his skin. His hands are hard and calloused, his face is leathery and the skin beneath his eyes is folded over and over. His left cheek bares a moon shaped scar, from his childhood. He was helping his father set up their donkey to plow the field, and the donkey kicked. He takes off his hat and sets it on the kitchen table, as his wife begins to cook the dinner.

"Did ya fix the fence yet?" he asks as he leans himself back into his chair, and lets out a huff of air.

"And stacked them hay bales you put outside yesterday evenin'." She says as she hacks down onto the chicken, and tosses a leg into a dish of flour.

Artwork by Tori Embry

He grunts in approval and sits up to grab for his newspaper he didn't get to read this morning. Princess Grace has died, and her daughter injured after their car drove off of a cliff. He makes a sound deep in his throat, and flicks the paper.

"Did ya see about this here princess dyin'?" He asks his wife as he reads an article on Princess Grace, and how sad the world is to lose her.

"A darn shame if you ask me, I really liked her in *To Catch A Thief*." She says with her back to him, she drops pieces of chicken into the skillet to fry. She peels potatoes and adds them to a pot of boiling water, with ears of corn.

"She acted?" He asks and furrows his brow, he reads further into the article.

"A few of 'em, we seen some of 'em in the theatre, 'member?" She turns her head to eye her husband as he turns the page of his newspaper.

"No, she ain't worth my attention." He folds his paper up and gets up from the table. His boots are heavy against the floor, from the other room she listens and hears his body drop into his chair, and the TV buzz into life.

This is how their days go.

Every morning, he goes out and works the fields and grows darker, while she stays in and works about the old farm house. She tends animals and repairs old rotten wood panels. Their property is a patchwork quilt, placing and replacing things once they've gone past being functional. Their old cat Tom will need replacing soon, too. He's nearly eighteen, and has stopped catching mice and keeping them from coming inside. He spends his days laid out on their porch in the swing, chirping at birds and feeling warm.

After he works the field, he comes inside and asks her if she did the chores he gave her, and then watches the news until dinner is finished. They eat in silence, and ask one another if anything exciting had happened while the other was away. He goes and showers, and she does the dishes and cleans the kitchen. They sit in the living room together and he smokes his pipe and they tell each other stories they've both



Artwork by Tram To Nguyen

heard before, stories about how he used to fight with his brothers and how she sat and learned needlepoint next to her mother.

He lists the things he wants her to start on tomorrow morning, and they tell each other goodnight. He goes to his room, and she falls asleep on the couch.

Before her husband rises, she goes outside to the chicken coop. She walks along and reaches under each of the hens and puts each egg softly into her basket, she pets each one of the hens and sweetly apologizes to each of them for taking their eggs. She stands in the doorway, and turns back around to look at all of the hens. She reaches into her basket and takes out one of the eggs and puts it under the nearest hen. She pets it once or twice along its back and heads inside.

Her husband is already sat at the table, his coffee mug set steaming before him and his newspaper in his hands. As she walks around to put the eggs away into the fridge, she glances around the door and asks her husband what the headlines are this morning.

"Jus' everyone an' their mother cryin' over the princess' car crash, is all." his voice is flat, and monotone.

She keeps some eggs out and keeps them on the counter, she takes out a half pound of bacon wrapped in brown paper, a few tomatoes. They sit in silence for a while, she eyes the biscuits in the oven and decides now would be a good time to start the eggs. She takes one in her hand and cracks it onto the side of the skillet, and drops a clump of veins, blood and yolk into the skillet.

He notices her tense up suddenly, and looks back to his paper and begins to speak, "My brother called while you were outside. Tol' me that he saw ya a few nights ago, at the bar in town. Tol' me to keep a closer eye on my woman." He lifts his eyes back up to see her frozen with the skillet lifted off the flame on the stove, unmoving. "Are ya tryin' to make me look like a fool to my family? My blood?"

She hears him set his paper down on the table and his chair scoot back, she lets the skillet fall out of her hand back onto the stove and turns to leave through the back door. He grabs a hold of her arm before she reaches the door and spins her around so she's face to face with him.

"Where ya think you're going?" He asks her as he presses her to the wall behind her.

"I heard the chickens squakin', I'm wantin' to see what's buggin' them." She pulls her head back to the wall.

"Why you tryin' to back away for? Shouldn't be scared of nothin' unless ya know ya did somethin' wrong." He leans closer into her, and she turns her head to avoid his face. "What'd ya do, woman?"

"I ain't did nothin', I was in town buyin' chicken feed and I seen him, grew up with him. He asked me to if I wanted to go talk, an' I did. That's all." Her eyes fell to the floor long ago, when she finishes speaking she swallows hard and stares unblinking at the ground.



Artwork by Ira Porter

"Jus' an old friend, huh. Is 'at why you was kissin' on em?" He lets go of her arms and steps back a few paces and watches her, she can't answer him. She fingers the edge of her apron and purses her lips. "An old friend." He steps back a few more paces and leans against the counter.

He watches her stand and fiddle with her clothes a few moments longer and begins, "Go on." She looks up at him with a confused look on her face. "Go on, go on and see what was buggin' them chickens."

She turns to the back door and makes it halfway out before he starts again, "I know you been givin' them chicken eggs back to them hens." She pauses in the doorway and turns to look back at him and swallows hard, and continues out the door to the chickens.

Where Did the Time Go?

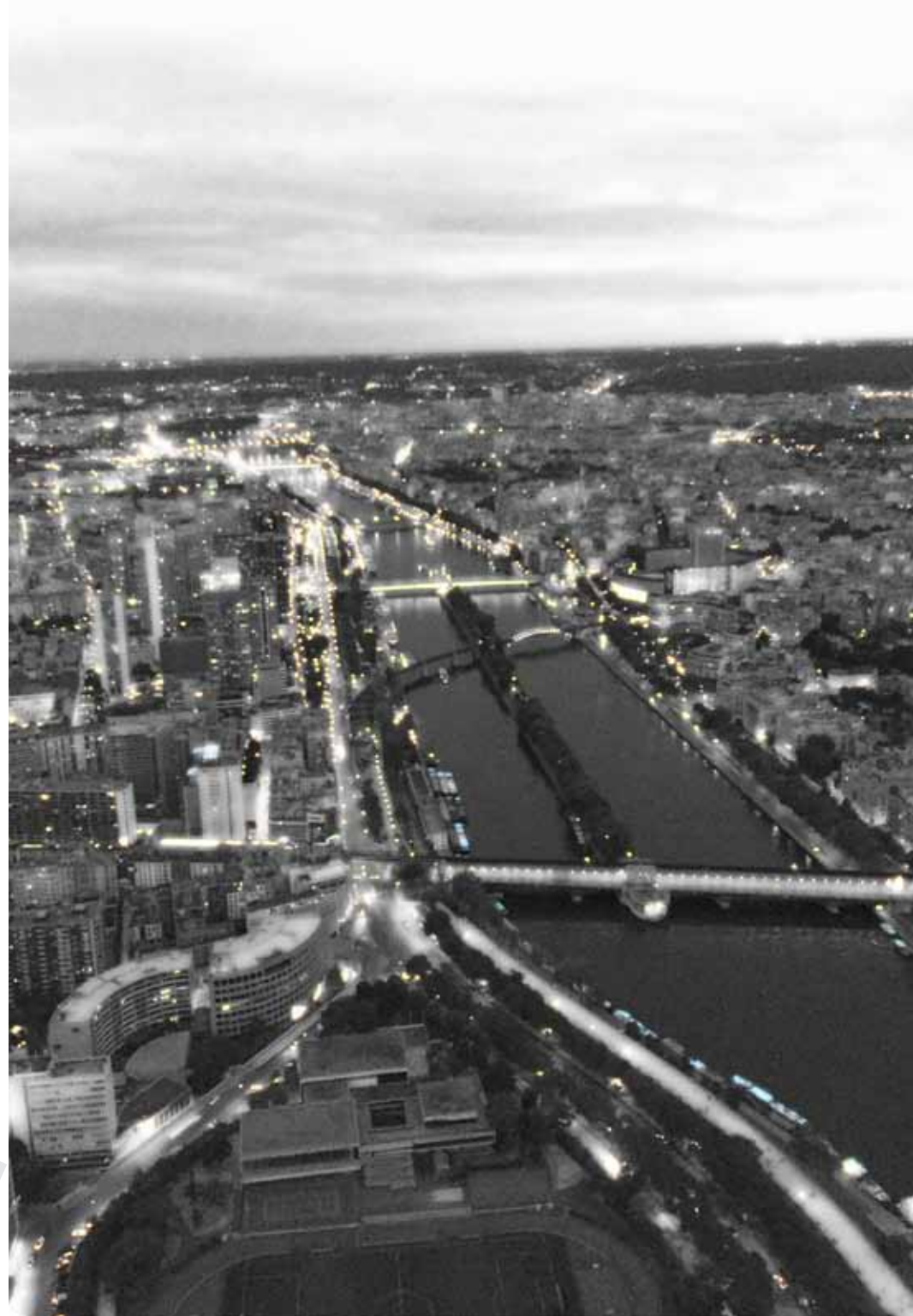
By Victoria Baker

Numbers fall off the clock into my hands
as I hit snooze.

They slide through my fingers
mixing in with the mess on the floor.

I can't find them, they're hiding in
with the week old clothes.

I can't keep track of anything anymore.



A MARCH AGAINST DEMOCRACY

Maggie Colston

Cast of Characters:

Noel, a headstrong 19 year-old, member of Students for Democratic Society, anti-war

Anna, 24 years old, older sister to Noel, not very outspoken, goes along with the grain

Police Officer, average police officer, works in D.C

Setting:

Play takes place in D.C during the 60's. The Vietnam War has already started, causing controversy throughout the country.

Scene 1

Scene opens up. The year is 1967, three days after an anti-war demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial. The living room has been removed, replaced only with an uncomfortable looking bench. Sitting upon that bench is ANNA.

ANNA: (She checks her watch, then starts tapping her foot.)

An officer enters, carrying a clipboard full of names.

COP: The family for Noel Hickerton?

ANNA: Oh, yes. That would be me, Officer.

COP: You were made aware of the charges brought against Ms. Hickerton, were you not?

ANNA: Yes sir.

Artwork by Madelynn Campbell



COP: Disturbing the peace, vandalism, resisting arrest-

ANNA: Yes, yes. I know.

COP: Alright, I need you to sign here.

(He hands her the clipboard. As she reads through and signs, he begins talking again.)

You know, in all my years on the force, this was one of the worst resistances I've ever seen. It's insane how these children think they know better than the government. I mean, we're in Vietnam for a reason. It's all to stop the commies, am I right?

ANNA: Oh yes, of course, Officer.

COP: Anyways, looks like everything is in order. I'll bring her out momentarily.

Anna takes a seat on the bench, looking around as if lost. A voice calls from offstage "Anna?"

ANNA: Oh, I'm here Noel!

NOEL enters. She is dirty and torn. There are bruises covering her face and what's visible of her arms. Her dress is ripped.

ANNA: Oh my God, Noel! Who did this to you? Are you alright? What the hell happened?

NOEL: I'm fine, I just want to leave.

ANNA: What were you thinking? (Smacks NOEL on the head.)

NOEL: Geez! Dammit Anna, I'm already bruised up.

ANNA: I can see that! What were you doing? You're lucky I was the one that answered the phone and not dad.

NOEL: (Shrugging) I was just fooling around with some friends and it got out of hand. Don't worry.

ANNA: How can I not worry? You're my baby sister, Noel. I just had to bust you out of jail. (Stepping closer)

Please tell me you weren't with those anarchists masquerading as college students.

NOEL: No one's "masquerading" as anything, Anna. We're just meeting up and discussing the actual morality of this war.

ANNA: "We're"? When did this turn into a "we" situation? Noel these people are violent and unpredictable and-

NOEL: (Cutting her off) We aren't violent. We just meet up and sometimes set up peaceful protests against it. Don't have a cow, okay?

ANNA: I've read the papers. This group you're in is going against our country, Noel. They're calling it "A March against Democracy." How did you think this demonstration would help anything? Look, we're just trying to help you.

NOEL: No, what you're doing is trying to force the U.S into affairs that have nothing to do with us.

ANNA: They attacked us first!

NOEL: So that gives us the right to bomb their villages and towns full of civilians?

ANNA: Do you not understand the situation you're putting all of us in? This is war, Noel. This is about patriotism. It's not our place to decide whether we should be there or not! Why can't you understand?

NOEL: And what exactly is our place? Just sitting quietly, looking pretty? Maybe getting a job as a temp before we get married? Anna, we can do so much more.

ANNA: But this isn't just about us, Noel! It's about our country!

NOEL: That is exactly what I'm saying! I'm doing this for our country!

ANNA: All you and your group are accomplishing is creating a rift between everyone. Noel, why can't you see that?

A noise is heard off stage. Both girls jump.

ANNA: What was that?

NOEL: Calm down. It's probably just the man teaching us "radicals" another lesson. Don't have a hissy-fit.

ANNA: Noel! This is getting out of control. If you don't stop, I'll- I'll-

NOEL: You'll what?

ANNA: I'll tell dad.

NOEL: Fine! I don't need your support! I don't need you, and I definitely don't need dad!

ANNA: I'm just trying to protect you! Look, I had a dream where they hurt you. Hurt you worse than how you are now.

NOEL: Who? Who hurt me?

ANNA: The enemy, Noel. I had a dream that we'd lose the war and they'd come over and invade and you were tied up and these monsters were attacking you and-

NOEL: Anna, please just calm down. We're fine. No one has invaded. The war's still being fought over in Vietnam.

ANNA: I know, but still. It freaked me out, Noel. I've never been that scared in my entire life.

You don't have to be involved in this. There's no reason for it.

NOEL: Actually, there is. It's personal for me. Look, Anna, we need to talk.

ANNA: About what?

NOEL: About the war.

ANNA: Are you finally going to give up this idiotic idea?

NOEL: What? No, it's not that. It's, um-

ANNA: I'm sorry? I didn't hear that.

NOEL: I've met someone, Anna. A man.

ANNA: A man? Really? Well, I did have a few boyfriends coming around when I was your age so it's no surprise and hopefully he can convince you to stop all of this nonsense-

NOEL: Anna, he's Vietnamese.

Shocked silence. ANNA seems to be frozen to the spot. NOEL is fidgeting, pulling at her dress.

NOEL: I met him at one of my meetings. Look, he was born here in America so he's a citizen-

ANNA: He's what?

NOEL: Come on, you heard me. I know this is going to be hard to get used to but I think we can do it.

ANNA: Noel, you can't even legally marry him. He's not white. This whole thing would just fall apart. Did he put you up to this? I bet he did. Look, break it off with him and we can fix all of this.

NOEL: Not going to last? Are you kidding me? I love him, Anna. He's never doubted me or thought that this is all I could be. You know what? This is the last straw. Anna, I'm- I'm leaving. I've decided to go live with some girls from the group.

ANNA: You're leaving? But why? Is it because of that boy?

NOEL: Of course it's about him, but it's also about this family and the toxicity everyone expels!

ANNA: Just because we don't share the same views doesn't mean we're toxic-

NOEL: But you are! God, I can't breathe in that house without someone getting on my case. If I even mention something that's different from what you or dad think, then suddenly I'm losing my marbles! Don't you see it? Anna, you don't even have views! You just take fathers and spout them out as your own!

ANNA: We are your family, Noel! We matter more than any war or boy or cause that you can think of!

NOEL: I wish that's how it was, but that's not the case. My opinion will always be less than yours. That's just how it is. And no, you don't get to choose what matters. I have the right to choose to be with people who

believe in me and trust me! I'm done, Anna. You can't make me stay.

ANNA: Noel, please. Stay and we can talk about this. I'm sorry if you thought we didn't love you. I just bailed you out of jail. Doesn't that count for something?

NOEL: All it says is that you care about what people think of our family. Can't have the cops bringing me home in a cruiser, can we?

ANNA: That's not true! I love you, Noel. If you stay, we can talk this through. I admit, the taxes have raised much higher ever since the war.

NOEL: That's what you care about? Taxes? Do you even know what they're doing over there?

ANNA: Well, what else am I supposed to know about, Noel? The news won't say anything and you won't talk to me! How the hell am I supposed to know about it?

Silence.

NOEL: I'm sorry. I guess I could have opened up more. But don't you see? This is what they can do to people they want quiet. They did this to me.

ANNA: Who? Who're they?

NOEL: The police! We were protesting, peacefully, when someone shoved us. We looked over and it was a state trooper, saying we were all under arrest for vandalism or something. Everyone panicked and ran, so the police started to grab people and beat them into submission. Really, I'm one of the lucky ones.

ANNA: Oh my God, Noel. We need to tell someone, we need to do something!

NOEL: Who are we supposed to tell? The ones that are supposed to fix this, are the ones that started all of it. It doesn't matter. Please, just take me home.

ANNA: I-, alright. (They walk in silence.) Look, I'm sorry. I never knew-

NOEL: No, you didn't.



Artwork by Kayla Cyrus

Silence.

ANNA: So, what happened to that boy of yours? Did he also get arrested?

NOEL: No, he got out. His name is Vinh, by the way.

ANNA: Oh, Vinh. Okay, that's not too bad.

NOEL: It's not bad at all.

ANNA: No, no. I didn't mean that I meant- Nevermind. So, could I meet him someday?

NOEL: She looks incredulous. Sure, I'd like that.

ANNA: Okay, okay, good.

The sisters clasp hands, looking at each other before walking off,,,,,,,,,,,,,

THE END

POWER OF HER VOICE

By Dinah Smith

Cast of Characters

Amanata, a teenage girl, 17 years old, she is opening her eyes for the first time.

Brianna, 17 years old, Amanata's best friend, loves Amanata's poetry.

Marquise, 17 years old, has known Amanata since kindergarten, supports Amanata 100% of the way.

Setting

The play takes place in a poetry slam in a course of five days the same time every night 8:30, the year is now.

8:30 pm Amanata is sitting at the front table with her two friends, Brianna and Marquise, a man in his mid-thirties is on stage reciting his work, just finishing up. Her friends encourage her to go up on the stage while she has the chance.

Brianna: Go on Amanata, your poetry is amazing! This is your chance to get your voice out there.

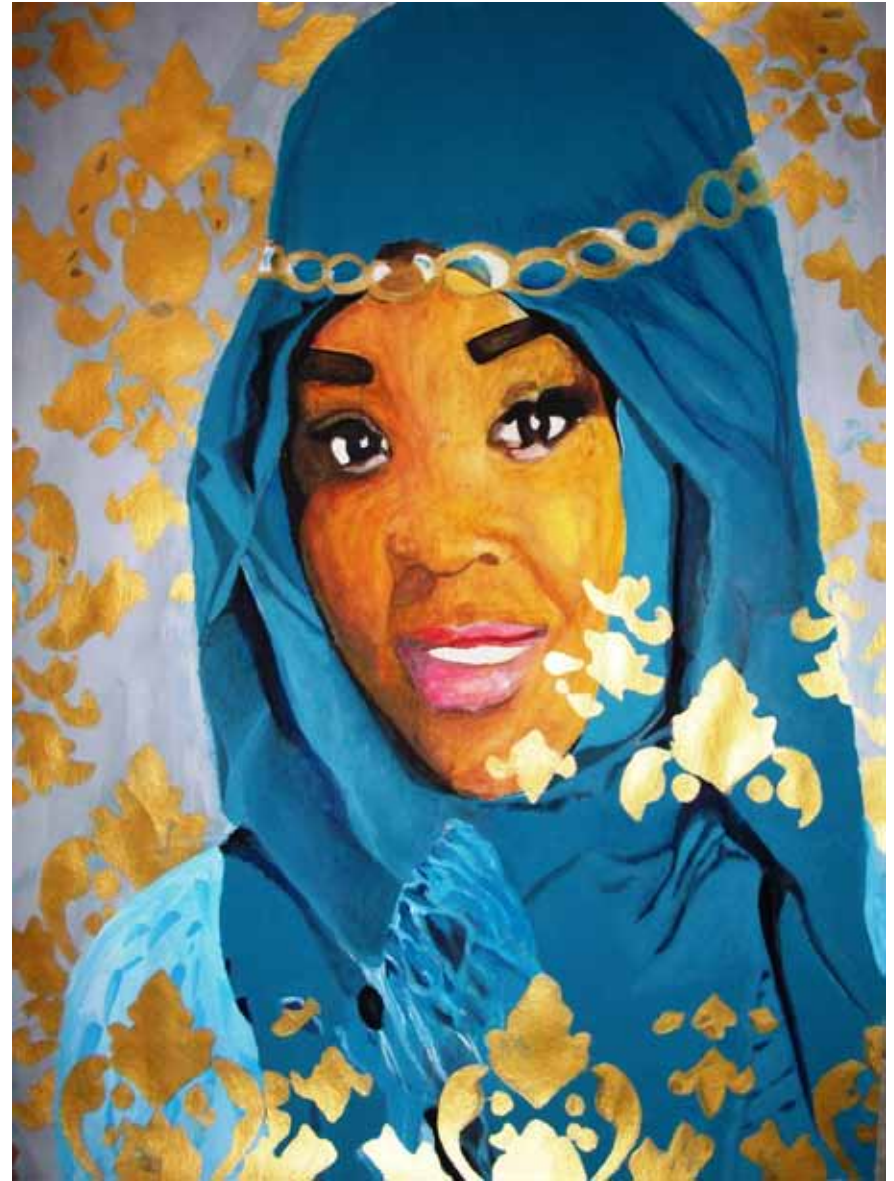
Amanata: (Nervously) I don't know.... Maybe I'll go tomorrow?

Marquise: You said that yesterday, now go up there and speak your mind.

Announcer: (Looks around the room) Alright who's up next?

(Starts pointing into the audience) How about you? You? Hmmm I kno-

Amanata: (Stand up nervously) I would like to go.



Artwork by Abdullahi Hussein

Announcer: Perfect! Everyone give her a hand!

(Applause)

Amanata: Uh hi, my name is Amanata and my poem is called 'star'

Star: Not many seem to notice
When the stars disappear
They burn bright producing light
But we don't seem to care about them being there
You see it's the same with people
We pass them every day
Not thinking about the way
The way they seem to have a gleam
Or the way they let their pants hang
And use the modern slang
We don't notice the way the birds fly high
Above our heads, we don't see
Anything but a screen.

(Applause)

(Amanata stands, looking around in the audience, smiling involuntarily)

Announcer: Wow! Amanata that was wonderful let's give her another hand

(Applause as lights fade)

(Lights come back up, Amanata, Brianna, and Marquise are sitting in the same spots as the day before)

(Amanata and her friends are talking amongst themselves as a woman, early twenties, is reciting a poem)

Amanata: Her poem is beautiful.

Brianna: Are you going up again today?

Amanata: I think I might actually go up after her.

Brianna: Great! Can you do your poem 'brutal'? I love that one, it's amazing.

Marquise: It should open a lot of closed eyes.

Amanata: Yea, that would be a great idea, it'll open eyes of a lot of people.

Announcer: Alright, that was powerful! Who's up next?

(Amanata stands and begins to walk to the stage)

Looks like Amanata is up for another night, let's give her a round of applause!

(Applause) This poem is called brutal

Brutal-savagely violent
Police brutality-doing their job?
When a civilian attacks another, it's assault
When a police officer kills an innocent civilian it's the law
We are blinded
Blinded by the corruption of the law
They would rather send a black man to the grave
Than to send one of their own to a jail cell
But we will not forget
We will stand for those who were wronged
We will fight
For the people like
Michael Brown Jr.
Violently taken for innocent crimes
We will fight for the truth
For what happened
To people like
Sandra Bland
Children are being left without parents
Because of the careless acts of our
Quote, unquote "heroes"
But not all are bad - No
Some smile and laugh their days away
They don't abuse their power
They are the real heroes



Artwork by Te'Mea Shelton

(Amanata looks around the room waiting for an applause like the one she received the night before, it doesn't come)

Thank you

(Only Brianna and Marquise start clapping as Amanata walks back to their table, everyone but them are silent)

Marquise: You did great Amanata, it was amazing!

Amanata: I don't know, I don't think they liked it...

Brianna: Of course they did, your poem was beautiful.

Amanata: They didn't clap, they clapped for everyone else...

(Overhearing their conversation the announcer walks up to their table)

Announcer: It's because they've never had to think about the truth before, no one has ever spoken about the truth like you, Amanata, and you have a gift.

Marquise: See I told you!

Amanata: You think so?

Announcer: Absolutely, I have worked here for 25 years and I've never heard anything like your poems.

Amanata: thank you!

(She smiles as wide as she can)

(The lights fade)

(The lights come back up Amanata, Brianna, and Marquise are in the same positions as the previous nights)

(A man, mid-thirties, is on the stage reciting his poem, everyone is captivated by his words as Amanata and her friends are talking amongst themselves)

Amanata: What if they don't like my poem today? I don't know if I should go up...

Brianna: Don't be stupid Amanata, everyone loves your work.

Marquise: You're an artist, Amanata, embrace your thoughts.

Amanata: What if they boo me off of the stage?

Marquise: They wouldn't do that.

Amanata: How do you know? People can be unpredictable!

Brianna: Exactly! They're unpredictable, so you can't just assume that they'll boo at you.

(The announcer walks up to their table)

Announcer: So what's the move for today is Amanata going up?

Marquise: Not sure, she thinks they'll boo her off stage.

Announcer: That's insane!

Amanata: They hated my poem yesterday...

Announcer: Nonsense! They were just awestruck. After you left everyone was talking about how eye opening your poem was.

Amanata: They liked it? (Amanata looks around in silence) Alright...I'll go.

(The man on stage finishes up his poem and everyone applauds him)

(Amanata goes on stage to replace him)

This poem is called 'not ashamed'

It's about accepting myself when society doesn't

I am me
From my American heritage
To my African roots
I'm not going to hide it
I'm not going to hide me
I will embrace my dark skin
As my thick hair
Coils in the rain
I'm not ashamed of me
Or the way I speak
As if color
Had a way of speech
I will be me
Until I cant
Because I am beautiful
And society can't tell me otherwise

(The audience loves it, they applaud her and some even stand. She looks around the room with the widest smile on her face. She had achieved her dream of having her voice heard; she used the power of her voice)

(Lights fade out and you can still hear clapping)

(Proudly) I did it



Artwork by Fallyn Evans

SOCIAL MEDIA

by William Robinson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Coby- A college student at Alabama University. He is an average student that is very involved in activities and socializing with friends

Instagram- A social media site that brings people a lot of enjoyment but in some cases can cause problems and distractions

ACT ONE

Coby: (Walks into his dorm) Flops down on the couch and takes out laptop.

Instagram: (In a faint voice) Bump bump baba bump bump baba bump.... Bump

Coby: (Ignores it)

Instagram: (Louder) Bump bump baba bump bump baba bump Bump

Coby: (Acknowledges it for a second, and then looks back down)

Instagram: (Even louder and noticeably off key). .Bump bump baba bump bump baba bump Bump

Coby: (Picks up his phone and looks at it, then quickly puts it down)

Instagram: (Sneaks up behind Coby) So you're just gonna act like you don't see Kaylee dming you

Coby: (Exhales) Don't you think I would rather be on my phone right now, but I got a paper due tomorrow and I'm only finished with half of it

Instagram: Half of it? It's only 4 o'clock you have plenty of time to get done with that paper I guarantee it



Artwork by Maria Alvarez

Coby: I don't know about that I have never really been a big fan of procrastination

Instagram: I don't like to call it procrastination. Think of it as more of a reward for a hard day's work you college students are always stressed out, you need to take some time out to relax

Coby: I don't know

Instagram: You mean to tell me you'd rather sit here and write this humdrum paper

Coby: Of course not

Instagram: Then what's the problem chill out now and write the paper later

Coby: But why? I won't be missing out on much

Instagram: Are you kidding me? There are thousands of videos and funny pics posted every day, I know you don't want to fall out of the loop?

Coby: Well no

Instagram: I know for a fact you don't want to miss Daniel back at it with the white vans

Coby: (Chuckles) That was hilarious

Instagram: Exactly, so?

Coby: Um... I don't know this is an important paper and if I fail this class my mom will kill me

Instagram: Dude, you have plenty of time to get your paper done, you're the one wasting time thinking about it

Coby: Okay

Instagram: Okay?

Coby: On one condition

Instagram: And what is that

Coby: Geeked up challenge

Instagram: What's up? (Beat plays) They call me IG, check my I.D. free app you ain't gotta buy me, couple people try not to mind me, check the app store if you ever wanna find me

Coby: My names Coby, I stay low key, gonna get my paper done that's guaranteed, a couple hours to relax that's all I need, so now it's time to chill if we're all agreed

(Coby falls back onto the couch and gets on his phone. Instagram is standing behind him like he is getting ready to work his magic. Blackout.)

ACT TWO

(Coby's last alarm goes off and he wakes up on the couch with his phone sitting next to him. He is panicking because he woke up late without finishing his paper)

Coby: You got to be kidding me I slept through my first two alarms?! (Looking at his laptop) And my essay! (Rushing out of his dorm) I never got my essay never oh my goodness. (Exits. Blackout)

ACT THREE

(Coby walks back into his dorm looking disappointed. He has a paper in his hand that represents the grade he got with his unfinished paper. Coby plops down on the couch, while Instagram approaches him.)

Instagram: What's up playa?

Coby: (In a faint voice) I'm failing

Instagram: (Checking his nails for dirt) Hm?

Coby: (Much louder) I thought you said I would get done with my essay huh? What happened to that? "You'll get it done guaranteed" you said. "You need some time to relax" you said. What happened to that?

Instagram: Relax there will be other papers

Coby: (Firmly) I'm failing

Instagram: That sounds like a personal problem

Coby: I got another paper due pretty soon and I'm going to start on it right away

Instagram: I hope it's cool that I invited a couple of friends over (Twitter and Snapchat enter, face the audience, and then sits on the floor with Instagram)

Coby: Huh. I guess it's okay as long as you all don't detract me

Instagram: Yeah yeah of course

Coby: (Sits down on the couch looks at his laptop and starts on his paper)

Instagram: (Instagram and his friends Twitter and Snapchat creep up behind the couch, they all peek up at Coby's laptop. They all descend as Coby looks back. An Iphone notification tone goes off)

Coby: (Ignores it)

Instagram: (Notification tone) @kingpinderrick12 liked your photo

Coby: (Ignores it)

Instagram: (Notification tone) @plannetracie retweeted your video, what are those, crying emoji

Coby: (Moves on to the floor with his laptop)

Instagram: (Notification tone) @coolinwithkaylee17 like and commented heart eyes on your last picture (Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram say in a flirty voice) oooooooooohhh!

Coby: Do you mind?

Instagram: No problem at all

Coby: Thank you (continues his work)

Instagram: (Ironically waits about 15 seconds and then another notification tone) @udaman44 tagged you in a video, worldstar two girls fight in the middle of dairy queen MUST WATCH!!

Coby: Dude!! (Standing up)

Instagram: (As soon as Coby stands up the notification tone plays rapidly as Coby starts for his phone on the couch Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat follow him) @tangytony21 just liked your new photo

Twitter and Snapchat: (Chanting any notifications that come to mind)

Coby: That's it I'm turning off my phone!!

Instagram: No anything but that

Coby: You guys have been bugging me for too long I can't get anything done so adios (pressing the power button)

Instagram: Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat all fall out on the floor into a deep sleep

Coby: (Sits back down on the couch and continues his paper. Instagram and his friends toss and turn on the ground a little and then finally give in. Blackout.)

ACT FOUR

Coby: (Coby walks into the dorm Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat are still sleep. Coby is looking accomplished and turns his phone back on)

Instagram: (They all pop up) Don't touch that button

Coby: Without you I got done with the paper and got some extra credit to make up for the last on

Instagram: Well I guess you want me to pack my bags then (crying) I'll hit the road you don't worry about little ole me

Coby:: Wait you don't have to go

Instagram: I don't?

Coby: No we can still hang out you just have to understand that work comes first

Instagram: I guess that's okay. How would you go without me in the first place?

Coby: So no whining when I turn my phone off, deal?

Instagram: Deal. (They shake hands)

Coby: (Walks out to the end of the stage) Social media is fine for when you have free time, but first you have to take care of your responsibilities. To be successful in anything you do you have to prioritize what's important before you indulge in things that aren't getting you closer to your goals. When you put your all in working towards your goal you will always end up with something, but if you stray away from the path you set for yourself you will be left with nothing but regret. Left with no one to blame but yourself. Distant yourself from regret, because there isn't a burden worse than regret. Regret doesn't wash away; it stains the host with thoughts of what could have been. Always do your best, live without regret, that's the key.

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Artwork by Darius Henderson

