



You Are Here:

***FP Student Art & Writing from the 2023-2024
school year***

Dear readers,

This year's issue of "You Are Here" was the result of many hours of hard work and dedication. We have considered and compiled all of the writing sent our way and woven it together with art pieces selected by the art department. We would like to thank Mr. Hyatt and Ms. Ashman, who collected terrific art submissions to make our lives easier. We hope you find something to enjoy in these pages!

SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

We are open for submissions for next year as of right now! If you are submitting text (poetry, fiction, or nonfiction), please make sure you have it saved on a Google Doc somewhere and email it to Mr. Neumire at bneumire@fabiuspompey.org. You can also share your submission with your English teacher. Please include your name, and let us know if you want to remain anonymous when the magazine is printed.

If you are submitting artwork, please give it to Mr. Hyatt and Ms. Ashman. They will give you more instructions if they are needed.

Please make sure your piece is school-appropriate, proof-read, and creative! We sometimes have to decline submissions that are not appropriate.

If you would like to join the literary magazine staff, we highly encourage it! We meet during activity period 1-2 times per month. You should be ready to edit, type, and review submissions for publication.

You Are Here 2023-2024 staff members:

Ava Lee
Allison Marlow
Tim Barnum
Addie Curtis
Aunahka Valdez
Clare Rosa
Jordan Janicki
Alex Neider
Alexandria Berhow

Table of contents

Cover image....	Helena Piorowska
Head Construction...	Kloey Fairbanks p. 4
Speak Blackout Poem...	Alex Neider p. 5
Selfie...	Aunahka Valdez p. 6
Speak Blackout Poem...	Bryce Drexler p. 7
Speak Blackout Poem...	Jordan Janicki p. 8
Mirror Triplicate...	Leah Kirkeby p. 9
Speak Blackout Poem...	Aurora McDermott p. 10
Passing Stages...	Jared Janicki p. 11
Field Landscape...	Jenna Loomis p. 12
Hill Landscape...	Siriah Walser p. 13
Mountain Landscape...	McKenna Johnson p. 14
Speak Blackout Poem...	Tim Barnum p. 15
Flowers...	Jenna Loomis p. 16
Speak Blackout Poem...	Addie Curtis p. 17
Coke Vase...	Eliza Taubman p. 18
Flowers...	Emily McKee p. 19
Skull and Candles...	Anthony Dimon p. 20
Skull and Glasses...	Aunahka Valdez p. 21
Speak Blackout Poem...	Clare Rosa p. 22
Portrait...	Jordan Janicki p. 23
Giggles: A Tragedy...	Marisa Trommel p. 24
Dog...	McKenna Johnson p. 29
Dog...	Felicity Rosa p. 30
Dog...	Keira Trommel p. 31
Dog...	Stephen Bodley p. 32
Speak Blackout Poem...	Will Skeval p. 33
Charcuterie Board...	Aleah Fuller p. 34
Castle...	Jack Long p. 35
Lesson Learned...	Julia Loomis p. 36
Breadless...	Jack Long p. 37
Art...	Myers p. 38
Apple...	Adelaide Curtis p. 39
Photograph...	Jared Janicki p. 41
Winter Lights and Storming Nights...	Kait Reid p. 41
Waterfall...	Sage Badman p. 42
Snow Branches...	Sage Badman p. 43
Field...	Melissa Moore p. 44
Brain...	Kloey Fairbanks p. 45
Will It Be Enough?...	Grayson Wallace p. 46
Aging in Plastic Pointers...	Kait Reid p. 48
Learning from the Soul...	Kait Reid p. 49
Face...	Rebekah Frazee p. 50
Light Squiggles...	Jared Janicki p. 51

Wings Light Squiggles...Jared Janicki p. 52
Secret Animosity...Kait Reid p. 53
Spinder...Alayna Sandberg p. 54
Wooden Fish...Shawn VanErden p. 55
Antlers...Kloey Fairbanks p. 56
Antlers and Flag...Stephen Bodley p. 57
The Day I Saved the Cows... Jenna Loomis p. 58
Boot and Hat...Gavin Myers p. 61
Going to a Small School...Kait Reid p. 62
Rat... Gavin Myers p. 63
Bunny...SaoirseLeigh Cosgrove p. 64
Mouse...Riley DeLosh p. 65
Hamsters...Gia Myers p. 66
Hamster Mirror...Gia Myers p. 67
The Ugly Yellow House...Kait Reid p. 68
Feathers...Sage Badman p. 69
Duck with Flower...Gia Myers p. 70
Peacock...Carter Warren p. 71
Mounted Duck...Shawn VanErden p. 72
The City of Pompey...Kait Reid p. 73
Shells and Boat...Marisa Trommel p. 74
Turtle...Laurel Yard p. 75
Fish...Allison Marlow p. 76
Octopus...Gavin Myers p. 77
There Exists a Place...Alex Widdekind p. 78
Pattern...Alayna Sandberg p. 79
Broken Mirror...Ace Stevens p. 80
It is Easier...Aleah Fuller p. 81
Car Window...Ava Lee p. 82
Rearview...Jordan Janicki p. 83
Bus Rearview...Kloey Fairbanks p. 84
A Current Too Strong...Kait Reid p. 85
Bottle and Driftwood...Leah Kirkeby p. 86
Sculpture...Ace Stevens p. 87
Aquarium...Sage Badman p. 88
Cat...Gracie Frost p. 89
Flower...Sage Badman p. 90
The Neighbor...Lincoln Skeelee p. 91
The Matches...Madison Putnam p. 94
The Betraying Fire...Myah Keenan p. 96
Nostalgia...Dana Ingersoll p. 100
Back Cover...Marisa Trommel p. 103



Kloey Fairbanks

High Home of the Trojans didn't send a message, so they have transformed us into the Blue Devils. Better the Devil you know than the Trojan you don't, I guess. School colors will stay purple and gray. The board didn't want to spring for new uniforms.

Older students are allowed to roam until the bell, but ninth-graders are herded into the auditorium. We fall into lines: Jocks, Country Clubbers, Editor Savants, Cheerleaders, Human Wasps, Juro-ish, Future Fascists of America, Big Hair Chix, the Gothas, Suffering Artists, Thespians, Goths, Shredders. I am classless. I wasted the two weeks of August watching cartoons. I didn't go to the mall, the lake, or the pool, or answer the phone. I have high school with the wrong hair, the wrong clothes, and the wrong attitude. I don't have anyone to sit with.

I am Outcast.

ALONE

There's no point looking for my ex-friends. Our clan, the Plain Janes, has splintered and the pieces are being absorbed by rival factions. Nicole hangs with the Jocks, comparing scars from summer league sports. Ivy floats between the Suffering Artists on one side of the field and the Thespians on the other. She has enough personality to travel with two packs. Jessica has moved to Nevada. No real loss. She was mostly Ivy's friend, anyway.

The kids behind me laugh so loud I know they're laughing about me. I can't help myself. I turn around. It's Rachel, surrounded by a bunch of kids wearing clothes that most definitely did not come from the EastSide Mall. Rachel Bruin, my

best friend. She stares at something in my left ear. Words climb up my throat. This was the girl who suffered through Brownies with me, who taught me how to swim, who understood about my parents, who didn't make fun of my bedroom. If there is anyone in the entire school who is dying to tell what really happened, it's Rachel. My throat burns.

Her eyes meet mine for a second. I hate you, she mouths silently. She turns her back to me and laughs with her friends. I bite my lip. I'm not going to think about it. It was ugly, but it's over, and I'm not going to think about it. My lip bleeds a little. It tastes like metal. I need to sit down.

I stand in the center aisle of the auditorium, a wounded zebra in a *National Geographic* special, looking for someone, anyone, to sit next to. A predator approaches, a gray jock buzz cut, whistle around a neck thicker than a tree trunk, probably a social studies teacher, hired to coach a school sport.

Mr. Neck: "Sit."

I grab a seat. Another wounded zebra turns and smiles at me. She's packing at least five grand worth of orthodontia, but has great shoes. "I'm Heather from Ohio," she says. "I'm new here. Are you?" I don't have time to answer. The lights dim and the indoctrination begins.

- A Friend**
- THE FIRST TEN LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL:
1. We are here to help you.
 2. You will have enough time to get to your class before the bell rings.
 3. The dress code will be enforced.

Alex Neider



Aunahka Valdez

ex-best friend She stares ~~something above my left ear~~
 Words climb ~~up my throat~~. This was the girl who suffered
 through Brownies with me, who taught me how to swim, who
 understood about my parents, who didn't make fun of my
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THE FIRST THING LIES THEY TELL YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL

1. We are here to help you
2. You will have enough time to get to your class before
 the bell rings
3. The dress code will be enforced.

Ms. "We are nobody."

Heather: "However you say that, why does everyone have that attitude? I don't understand any of this. If we want to be in the middle, then that should let us. We could just stand on the edge of something if they don't like our name. It's not fair. I hate high school."

She pushes her books to the floor and knocks the green nail polish on the sand-colored carpet. "Why is it so hard to make friends here? Is there something in the water? In my old school I could have gone out for the musical *and* worked on the newspaper *and* chaired the car wash. Here people don't even know I exist. I get squished in the hall and I don't belong and nobody cares. And you're all just being so negative and you never try anything, you just mope around and you don't care that people talk about you behind your backs."

She sits on the floor and buries her sobs in the tissues, with little squeals of frustration when she punches the teddy bear. I don't know what to do, so I try to soak up the nail polish, but I make the stain bigger and looks like algae. Heather wipes her nose on the bear's head and I help out to the bathroom and come back with another box of tissues and a bottle of nail-polish remover.

Heather: "I can't believe I said those things to you. PMS, down, down, down to me. You have been so sweet to me and I can't believe I can't trust." She blows her nose loudly and wipes her eyes on her

Jordan Janicki



Leah Kirkeby



Aurora McDermott

Passing Stages
By Jared Janicki

water has flown down the land
supplies the trees
and dampens the sand
under the breeze

warm rays of sun fly through the air
for no end
through the sunny glare
as the seasons blend

speckled rocks on the hard ground
acquainted with leaves painted on the soil
the organic matter lessens the sound
of a summer that doesn't spoil

healthy moss covered brown bark
in a forest penetrated by a cold breeze
when the sky turns to dark
all life begins to freeze



Jenna Loomis



Siriah Walser



McKenna Johnson

for birds to eat, so they get pooped out on passing cars. Plants make way more seeds than they need, because they know that life is not perfect and all the seeds won't make it. Kind of smart, when you think about it. People used to do that, too—have twelve or fifteen kids because they figured some would die, some would turn out rotten, and a couple would be hard-working, honest farmers. Who knew how to plant seeds.

What seeds need to germinate are inefficient. If the seed is planted too deep, it doesn't warm up at the right time. Plant it too close to the surface and a crow eats it. Too much rain and the seed molds. Not enough rain and it never gets started. Even if it does manage to sprout, it can be choked by weeds, rooted up by a dog, washed by a soccer ball, or asphyxiated by car exhaust.

It's amazing anything survives.

How plants grow: Quickly. Most plants grow fast and die young. People get seventy years, a bean plant gets four months, maybe five. Once the itty-bitty baby plant peeks out of the ground, it sprouts leaves, so it can absorb more sun. Then it sleeps, eats, and sunbathes until it's ready to flower—a teenage plant. This is a bad time to be a rose, or a zinnia or a marigold, because people attack with scissors and cut off what's pretty. But plants are cool. If the rose is picked, the plant grows another one. It needs to bloom to produce more seeds.

I am going to ace this test.



Jenna Loomis

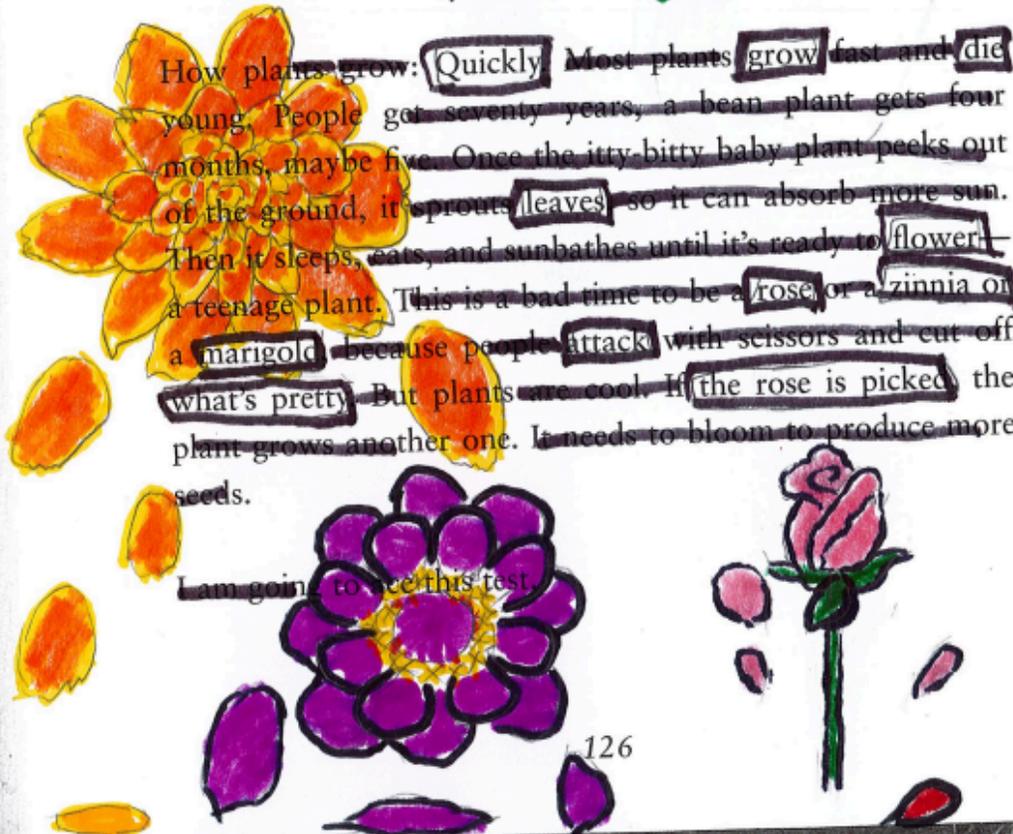
for birds to eat, so they get pooped out on paths. ~~make way more seeds than they need, because they know that~~ **life** is not perfect and all the seeds **won't make it**. Kind of **smart**, when you think about it. **People used to do that, too**, have twelve or fifteen kids because ~~they figured some would die, some would turn out rotten, and a couple would be hard-working, honest farmers. Who knew how to plant seeds.~~

What seeds need to germinate? **Seeds are inefficient**. If the seed is **planted too deep** it doesn't warm up at the right time. Plant it **too close to the surface** and a crow eats it. **Too much rain** and the seed molds. **Not enough rain** and it never gets started. Even if it does manage to sprout, it can be **choked** by weeds, **rooted up** by a dog, **mashed** by a soccer ball, or **asphyxiated** by car exhaust.

It's amazing anything **survive**.

How plants grow: **Quickly**. Most plants **grow fast** and **die** young. People get seventy years, a bean plant gets four months, maybe five. Once the itty-bitty baby plant peeks out of the ground, it **sprouts leaves** so it can absorb more sun. Then it sleeps, eats, and sunbathes until it's ready to **flower**—a teenage plant. This is a bad time to be a **rose** or a **zinnia** or a **marigold** because people **attack** with scissors and cut off **what's pretty**. But plants are cool. If the rose is picked, the plant grows another one. It **needs to bloom to produce more seeds**.

I am going to see this rest.



Addie Curtis



Eliza Taubman



Emily McKee



Anthony Dimon



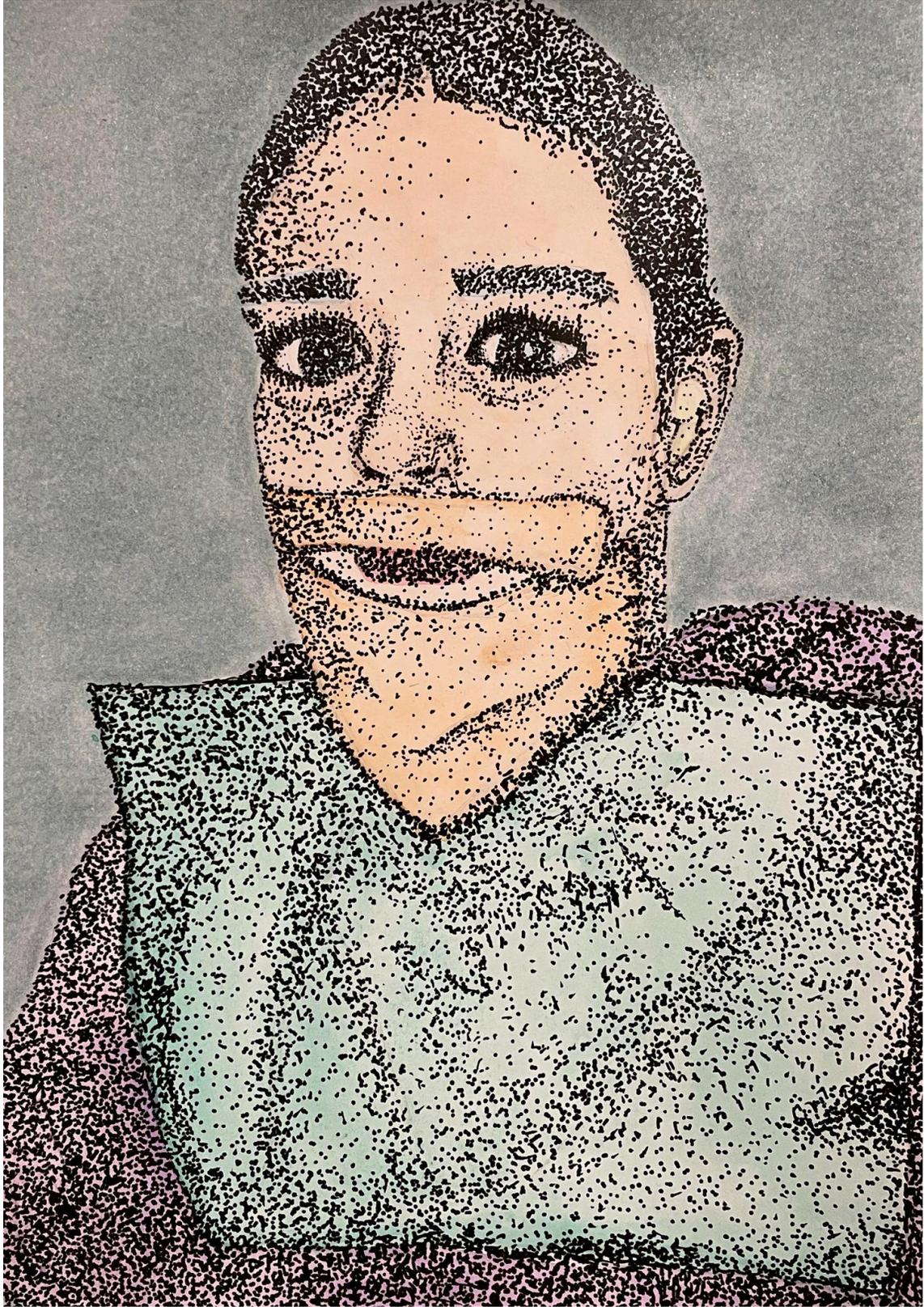
Aunahka Valdez

the baby due, is it my mother, a sister? If I wanted people to ask me questions, I would have gone to school. I say I have to call my father and flee.

The cafeteria is cool. Huge. Full of people wearing doctor-nurse clothes with college-degree posture and beepers. I always thought hospital people would be real health nuts, but these guys eat junk food like it's going out of style. Big piles of nachos, cheeseburgers as wide as plates, cherry pie, potato chips, all the good stuff. One lone cafeteria worker named Lola stands by the steamed-fish and onion tray. I feel bad for her, so I buy the fish platter. I also buy a plate of mashed potatoes and gravy and a yogurt. I find a seat next to a table of serious, frowning, silver-haired men who use words so long I'm surprised they don't choke. Very official. Nice to hang around people who sound like they know what they're doing.

After lunch I wander up to the fifth floor, to an adult surgery wing where waiting family members concentrate on the television. I sit where I can watch the nurses' station and, beyond that, a couple of hospital rooms. It looks like a good place to get sick. The doctors and nurses seem smart, but they smile every once in a while.

A laundry-room worker pushes an enormous basket of green hospital gowns (the kind that shows your butt if you don't hold it closed) to a storage area. I follow him. If anyone asks, I'm looking for a water fountain. No one asks. I pick up a gown. I want to put it on and crawl under the white knobby blanket and white sheets in one of those high-off-the-ground



Jordan Janicki

Giggles: A Tragedy

Written by:

Marisa Trommel

Dramatis Personae:

MR. ERIMUEN, *school teacher struggling with the loss of pet weasel*

SON, *oldest child of Mr. Erimuen*

LITTLE BROTHER, *youngest child of Mr. Erimuen*

MRS. ERIMUEN, *wife of Mr. Erimuen*

MR. NITRAM, *principal of school*

GIGGLES, *Erimuen's pet weasel*

Scene 1

Scene begins in the Erimuen household with Mr. Erimuen in his son's bedroom. A tragedy has occurred. Giggles, their beloved weasel, seems to be dead.

SON: *(In tears looking through the cage)* He's dead! Giggles is dead!

MR. ERIMUEN: No, he's breathing. Look. *(Puts finger on Giggles)*

Giggles does not move.

MR. ERIMUEN: I'm sorry, son. I think you're right. Let's go tell your brother.

Mr. Erimuen and his son walk down the hall to tell the little brother.

MR. ERIMUEN: Hey, bud, Giggles has died.

LITTLE BROTHER: *(Shocked and crying)* I want to say goodbye! I'm really going to miss him. His duck-shaped birthmark was my favorite thing in the world.

The three of them walk back to the cage, only to find it empty.

LITTLE BROTHER: *(Confused)* Where is he?

MR. ERIMUEN: Mom must have brought him to the kitchen. Let's go check.

The three of them walk to the kitchen.

SON: *(In tears)* Mom! Giggles died! Dad said you brought him here. Is he in that box?

MRS. ERIMUEN: I'm sorry, sweetie. Yes, he's in that box, but it'll be better not to look. Let's bury him under the willow tree.

LITTLE BROTHER: Alright, mom. I'll carry it.

MRS. ERIMUEN: *(aside, to the audience)* I never put Giggles in that box...

Scene 2

Six months later, Mr. Erimuen is stuck inside his classroom grading papers at his desk. Mr. Nitram, the principal, barges in, very concerned.

MR. NITRAM: *(Forcefully barges through the door and hovers over Mr. Erimuen's desk)* I fear that there may be a wild animal in the school. We have seen small muddy paw prints in the boys' locker room, and the strawberries in the cafeteria have been

partially eaten. Keep a look out for this animal and report it to me immediately! We'll have to exterminate it. It's a disgusting vermin looking to terrorize our students and disrupt our academic learning environment. If you see this creature, do not let it out of your sight.

(Mr. Nitram exits)

MR. ERIMUEN: *(Alone)* Does he have no empathy? It's an animal! A harmless, loving animal scared for his life in this school! If he can't find a little kindness in his heart for an animal, then he can't find a little kindness for anyone! Oh, I miss you, Giggles! It's felt like an eternity without you. You were my sons' first pet, but also mine. I was never allowed to have a pet of my own as a child. My parents always said that I'd have to move out first. But with you in our family, a piece of my childhood felt whole again. Even if my sons have forgotten about you, I never will! You've made me a better man, Giggles. I wish you were still here to be our beloved pet.

There is a rusting noise from inside the desk drawer.

MR. ERIMUEN: *(Jumps)* Hello? *(Opens the drawer)* A weasel?

He lifts the weasel out of the drawer and places it on his desk. The weasel looks at Mr. Erimuen with curiosity.

MR. ERIMUEN: *(Noticing a duck-shaped birthmark)* Giggles?! Is that you? I haven't seen many other weasels with a birthmark like that before! You're supposed to be dead, Giggles! My wife buried you!

Giggles tilts his head, almost as if he were shaking it.

MR. ERIMUEN: *(Picking Giggles up)* I can't wait to take you back home to the kids!

Mr. Nitram enters the classroom.

MR. NITRAM: Nice job finding this little bugger, Erimuen. I want him in my office by the end of the day.

MR. ERIMUEN: (Aside, to the audience) Over my dead body. (To Mr. Nitram) Yes, sir.

Mr. Nitram exits. Mr. Erimuen places Giggles in a shoe box, only to realize that Giggles seems incredibly sad.

MR. ERIMUEN: (Confused) Giggles? Why are you sad? You're going home! (Comes to a realization) You never liked being in a cage, did you? Oh, Giggles, I'm sorry. You seem so much happier living free. I can't possibly take you back with me after seeing you like this. But what will I tell the kids? How will I live with myself if I let you go?

Scene 3

Mr. Erimuen takes Giggles outside, far behind the school, and sets him in the grass. Giggles looks up at him with loving eyes.

MR. ERIMUEN: (In tears) I know this is for the best. I love you, Giggles.

Giggles turns away and runs off into the woods.

Scene 4

Back at the Erimuen household, Mr. Erimuen enters the garage and sees the cage.

MR. ERIMUEN: (Angry and alone) Why did we have to get a pet in the first place?!

Mr. Erimuen enters the kitchen. Son and little brother greet him.

SON: Dad! A kid in my class brought his pet hamster in for show-and-tell today!

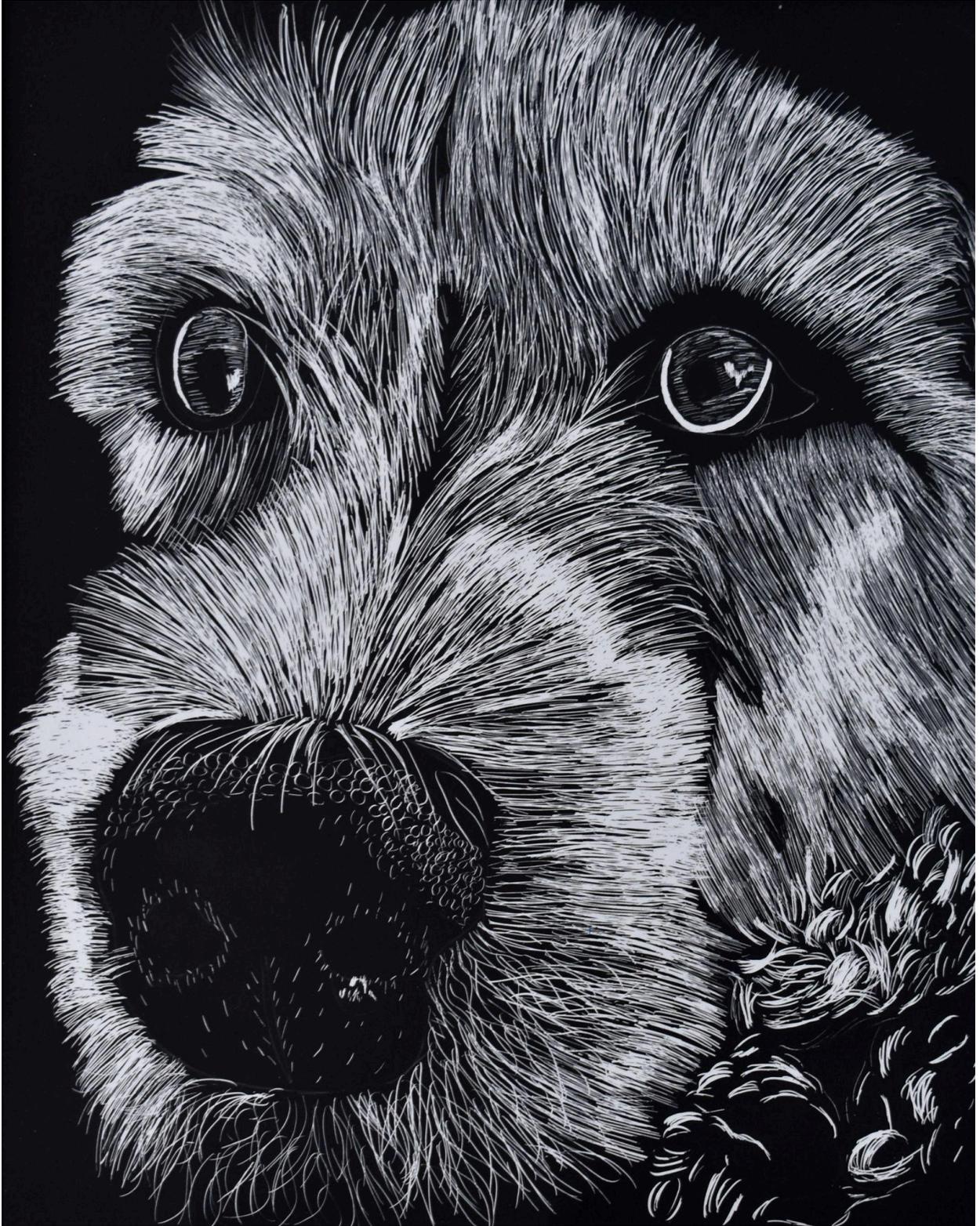
LITTLE BROTHER: I want to bring in a pet for show-and-tell, too! Can we get another weasel? Or a hamster? Or a bunny rabbit?!

MR. ERIMUEN: *(In a burst of hostility, on the verge of tears)*
Having a pet is too painful, Son. Neither of you will have any
more until you've moved out of this house!

MRS. ERIMUEN: I'm sorry, my love! I was trying to protect you! I
should've told you!

MR. ERIMUEN: You lying bastard! Get out of my house!

The End



McKenna Johnson



Felicity Rosa



K Trommel



Stephen Bodley

The hot lunch is turkey with reconstituted dried mashed potatoes and gravy, a damp green vegetable, and a cookie. I'm not sure how to order anything else, so I just slide my tray along and let the lunch drones fill it. This eight-foot senior in front of me somehow gets three cheeseburgers, French fries, and two Ho-Hos without saying a word. Some sort of Morse code with his eyes, maybe. Must study this further. I follow the Basketball Pole into the cafeteria.

I see a few friends—people I used to think were my friends—but they look away. Think fast, think fast. There's that new girl, Heather, reading by the window. I could sit across from her. Or I could crawl behind a trash can. Or maybe I could dump my lunch straight into the trash and keep moving right on out the door.

The Basketball Pole waves to a table of friends. Of course. The basketball team. They all swear at him—a bizarre greeting practiced by athletic boys with zits. He smiles and throws a Ho-Ho. I try to scoot around him.

Thwap! A lump of potatoes and gravy hits me square in the center of my chest. All conversation stops as the entire lunchroom gawks, my face burning into their retinas. I will be forever known as "that girl who got nailed by potatoes the first day." The Basketball Pole apologizes and says something else, but four hundred people explode in laughter and I can't read lips. I ditch my tray and bolt for the door.

I motor so fast out of the lunchroom the track coach would draft me for varsity if he were around. But no, Mr. Neck has cafeteria duty. And Mr. Neck has no use for girls who can run



Aleah Fuller



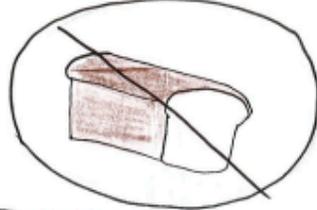
Jack Long



Julia Loomis

Breadless

The story of one of the most traumatic events in history



Jack Long



Gavin Myers



Adelaide Curtis



Jared Janicki

Kait Reid:

Winter Lights and Storming Nights

It's the most wonderful time of the year

When the trees start to die and the leaves begin to fall

The joyous gatherings with family, shedding nothing but a happy tear

Though last year I sat in bed all day waiting for a call.

Oh how the beauty of the snow coats the green global grass

Oh how I love the lake and warm walks when the sun begins to rise

The snow that melts on my hand, sleeps on my hair, and cancels my class

Though this is the hardest time of the year.

I love the silent snow and imprinting angels in the powder

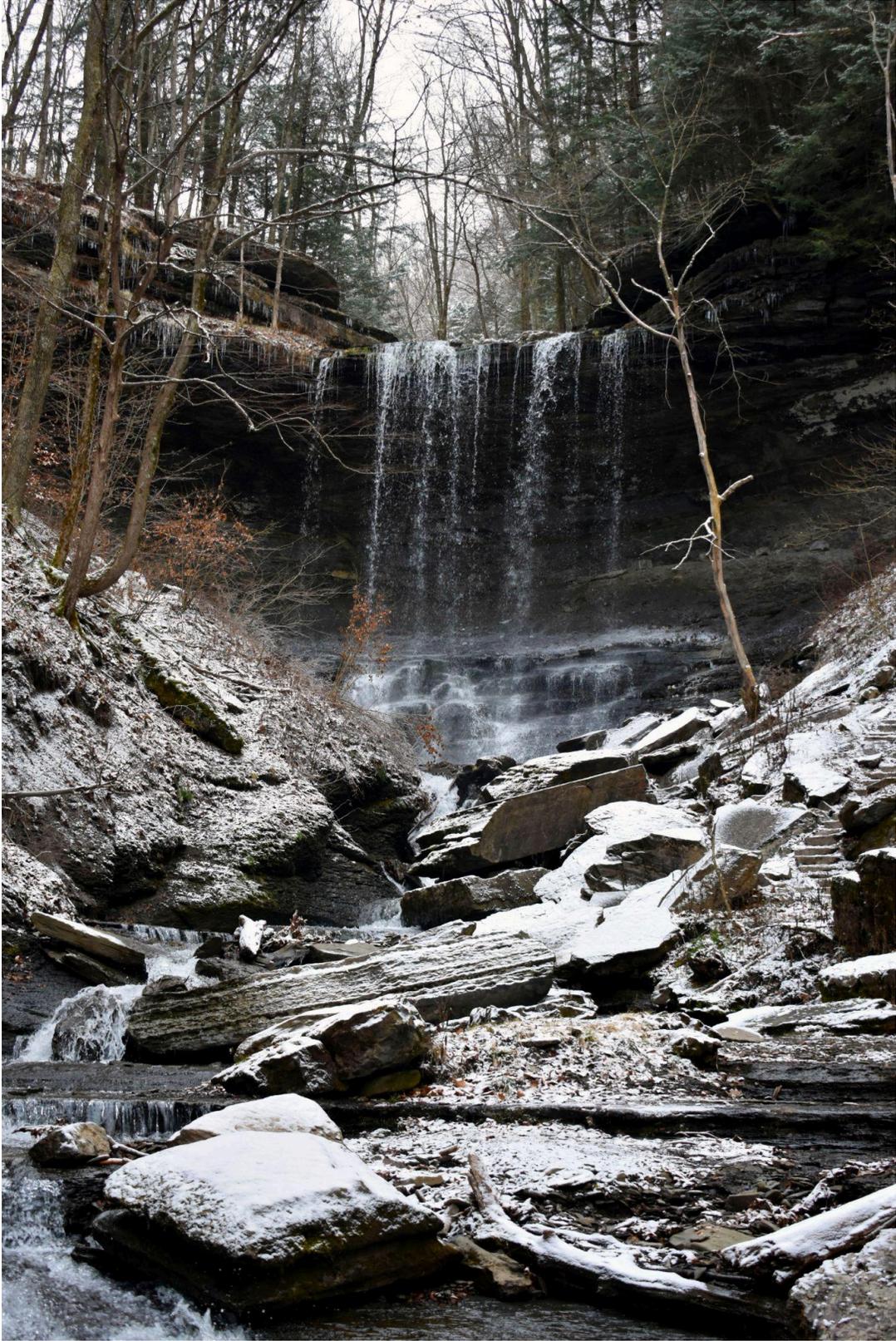
Frosty and bitter weather, the roads sealed with ice, accident one, accident two

The search for a transcendent experience, always found dancing in white, euphoria gets louder

For all the nights I can't leave bed and all the thoughts that run through my head,
now I just wait for morning dew.

The gorgeous glimpse of the winter lights

Conflict my opinions of traumatic stormy nights.



Sage Badman



Sage Badman



Melissa Moore



Kloey Fairbanks

Will It Be Enough?

Setting: A dimly lit corridor, nestled in a highschool where recently a electrical box has malfunctioned and is now trying to be located and fixed by some staff.

Dana Enters

Dana Where is that dang electrical room located! If this highschool wasn't so big, it would be a lot easier finding it. This is a serious issue and not resolved can be catastrophic. Luckily, it's the weekend and no one is here.

Marisa Enters

Marisa (Appearing out of the library) Do you need any help?

Dana Holy Toledo you scared me! Why are you even here?

Marisa I was one of the first notified to check out the situation as I live very close (Aside: I was catching up on my book marathon)

Dana Well try to make some noise at least. Anyways, you got a clue where this electrical problem can be?

Marisa HAHAHA of course I know where it is, follow me. I know this school like the back of my hand. I bet I'll beat you there.

Marisa Exits

Dana I know this is a serious situation and what not but you're telling me I got paired with the weird librarian. I mean out of everyone they could have sent, they sent the librarian. She is so corny. And she just randomly appeared. Is she a spy? She definitely isn't normal, that's for sure. Typical librarians. Let's just get this over with.

Dana Exits

Setting: A small electrical room located at the end of the hallway. Dust rests on all surfaces and a wire whips around loosely flinging sparks and loaded with electricity. The door creeps open slowly.

Marisa Opens The Door Slowly

Marisa Hello?

Dana Enters

Dana Why would anyone be in here? There has got to be a light switch somewhere in here. Watch out for the wire. We don't want to find out what it does if it hits you. Here is the light switch

Lights Come On

Grayson Appears In The Corner

Grayson What are you guys doing here? You're not supposed to be here. I have this situation under control. It's dangerous for you two to be here. One wrong move or step can lead to your death so I advise you two to leave and not speak of this. This has happened before and everytime it gets fixed. (Aside: The problem can only be fixed if they obey the voice in their head)

Dana What in the actual flickity flack is going on here. A librarian and now you! You know what, I'm not even going to question it this time.

Marisa I think he is a ghost

Dana Ghost or not I don't care, I want to fix this and go home. I just need to cut the cord that runs to this crazy wire.

Grayson I've warned you.

Grayson Disappears

Marisa AAAAAHHHHHHHHHH

Marisa Exits

Dana Can this day get any more normal? Anyways, here's that box. Now which wire do I cut? Blue or Green

Grayson Whispers Blue

Dana Am I going crazy now? That was definitely not my voice in my head. Why would I trust it! I'll cut the green one.

The door slams shut. The room goes dark. The curtains close.

Aging in Plastic Pointers

By Kait Reid

I am from a glass tub
From a rainbow bear and plastic princess pointers
I am from a grey shoebox
And replicated houses on a picture perfect block
I am from tall green vines
That coat my old grey house
I am from cheap nail polish and blonde barbie dolls
From arrogance and deception
And from nosy careless care
From genetics for our love for booze
I am from a Catholic kneel
I am from Henora and Albert
From Irish stew and Ulster fry

I am from those forgettable moments that hold sulking memories, the things we remember but slowly forget as we age.

Learning From The Soul

By Kait Reid

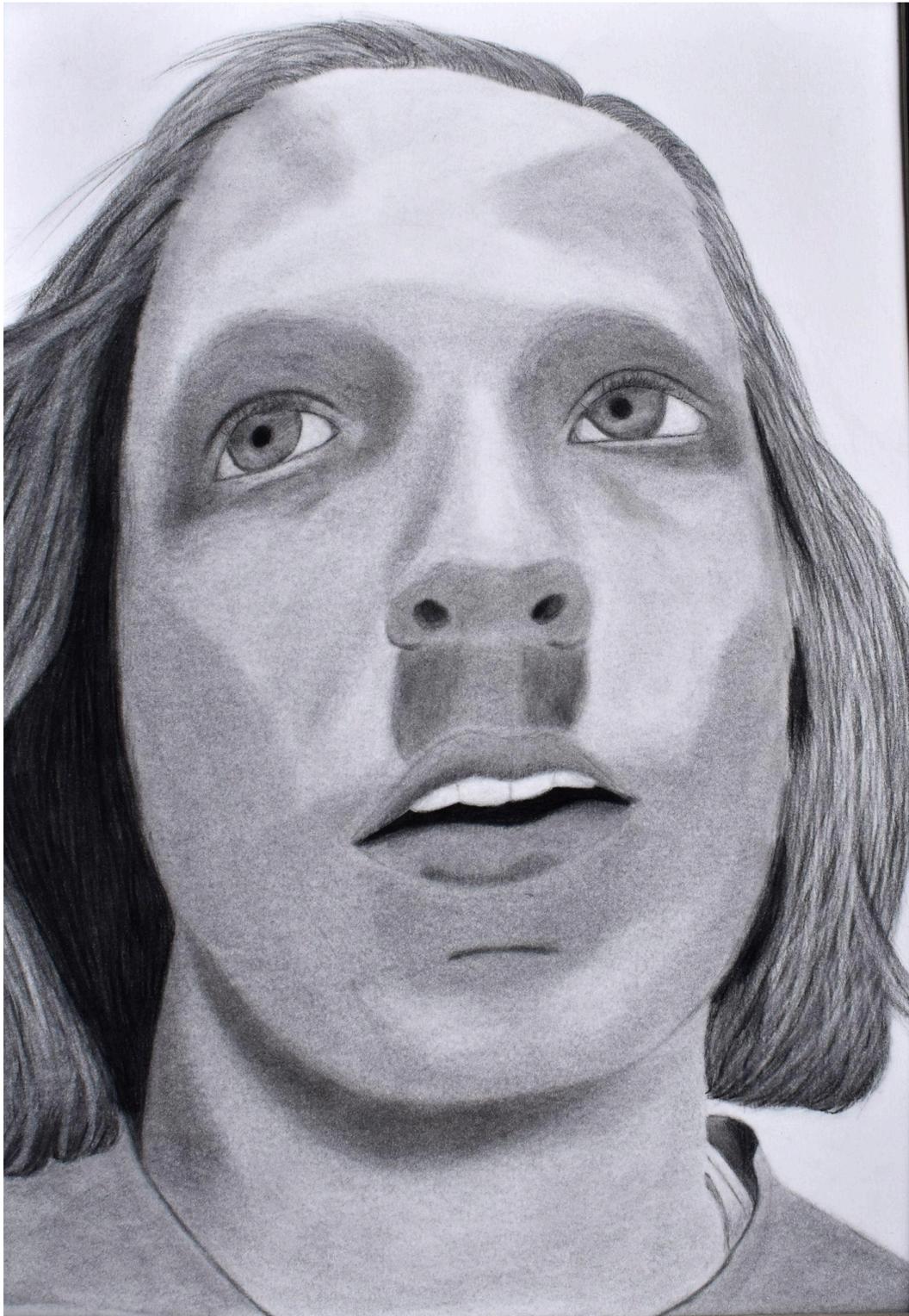
A beauty that is heavily sought, introduces a dimension of deadly rope.
Though myself only fears the terror with intense weary pain,

On weekends you may weep frozen,
on weekdays you continue,
with agony that is stuck still in time, for a mask we hover against our faces.

Changes may be glorious, welcoming, and new, but how is your adaptability to change?

Is it you that feels misguided,
or is it change that leaves you believing this is too contradicting?

Beauty is forever learning by the soul's voice and forever being grateful for its courageous investments.



Rebekah Frazee



Jared Janicki



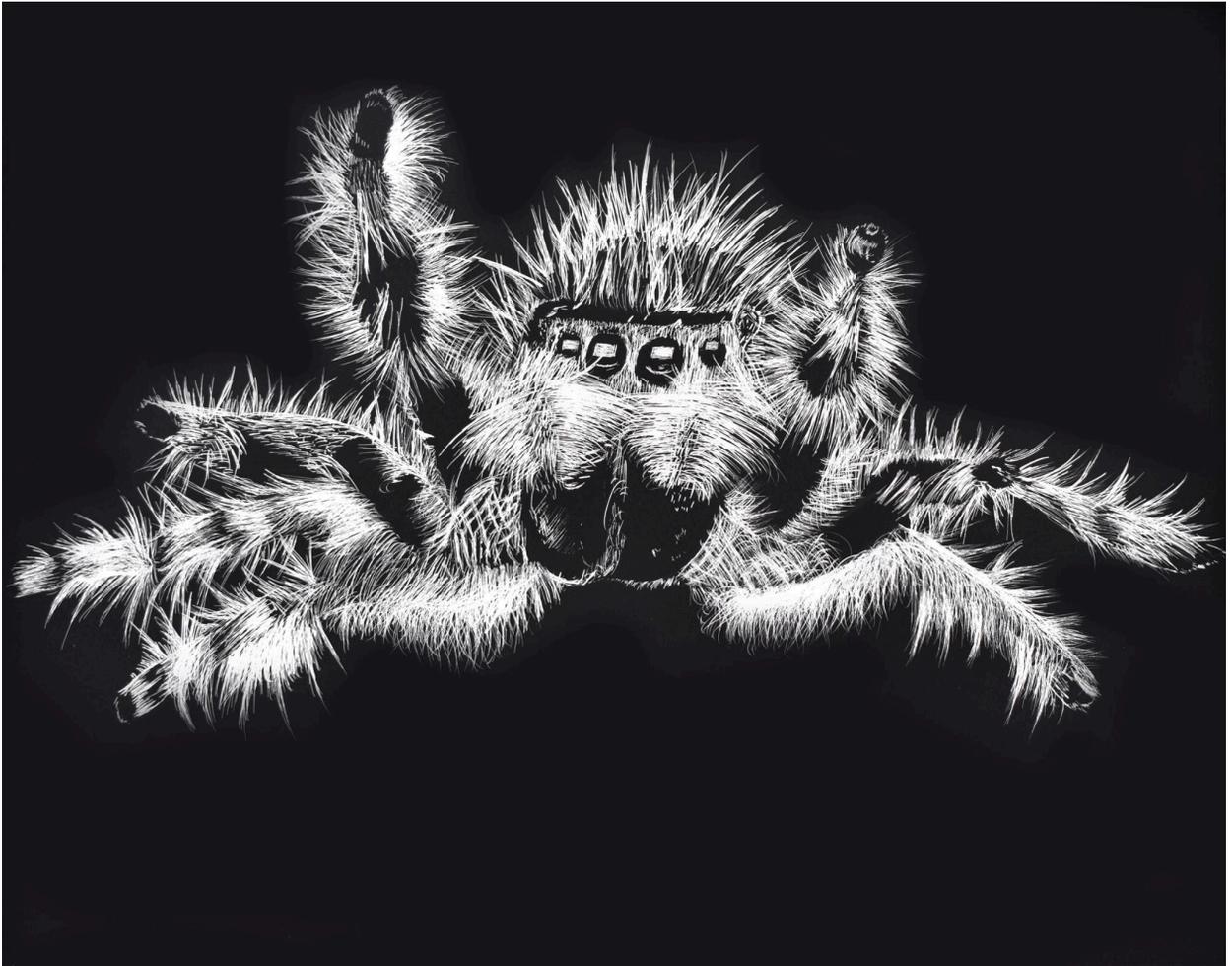
Jared Janicki

Secret Animosity

By Kait Reid

Seemingly, every normal human-being forms at least one secret animosity in their life.
Everyone forms these animosities because we fail to be truthful to the ones we can't offend.
Contradicting, we all are when we don't want to gossip about our personal feelings,
Reality might spark a different interest when we worry for a scandal.
Every day, you see the ones you do not like, privately, and at points publicly.
Together, we all make up this one big lie to survive and avoid the drama.

Animosity I feel when forced to have a conversation with one that reciprocates poor intentions.
Never should anyone have to feel stuck and unsafe around the ones who others love most.
Instead, we should be able to do our own things without performing judgment
Moreover, to never show that you have a temperament.
Only you have the ability to control your own limits,
Sharing your anger and granting the bitterness will only leave others feeling timid.
If one is upset in a social setting, never dare show those feelings, for you will fall for the
Trickery of a downfall,
Yet, I am so happy that my life remains obscure to all.



Alayna Sandberg



Shawn VanErden



Kloey Fairbanks



Stephen Bodley



The Day I Saved the Cows

Julia Loomis

I was there. Watching it happen. It was the dry season, and somebody's bonfire had lost control. At first, the fire wasn't big. My Father talked about it like it was no big deal, but it was-...it really was. The fire got bigger, crazier, and wilder. It gracefully danced through the fields, but that perspective died very quickly when I realized the fire was rapidly growing towards us. I was sent to get water from the well to soak our land when suddenly smoke filled my lungs. I hacked and coughed, my eyes watering. I heard yelling from the front of the house and stumbled towards it to see what was happening. Just miles away, I could see it. The biggest

fire I had ever seen, glowing red and orange. Every second it slowly was creeping closer. It was almost mesmerizing. Then I snapped out of it as my father yelled my name.

“Jane! Hurry up and get over here!” He yelled in a panic as he loaded a wagon full of food and water.

“What's happening? How did the fire become so huge?!” I asked, still looking at the fire in a trance.

“There’s no time for that! We’re getting out of here!” He yelled as if I wasn’t next to him. I glanced at the wagon, then to the fire, that's when I noticed them. The cattle. The fire was closer to the cattle than it was to us. If we left, what would happen to the cattle?

“What about the cattle? We can’t leave them. They’ll die!” I cried, really hoping that my father had some sort of back up plan to save them.

“No time. We have to leave them,” he said with despair in his voice. “Now let's hurry up, or we’ll never get out of here”.

I looked towards the wagon, then the cattle. They looked so helpless and scared; we couldn’t just leave them. Surely there was a way to save them. I started running towards the cattle. My father was yelling my name, but I ignored him. The closer to the cattle I ran, the more my eyes stung. My lungs felt like they were closing up, but I kept running. I ran to the gate and opened it, hoping the cattle would come running out, but no, they didn’t. I yelled for them and tried signaling that the gate was open but they just stood there. I wasn’t sure what to do, when I noticed the fire was almost touching the back of the pasture. If I was going to do this, it had to be quick. I ran in and herded all the cows until they were one big running clump. I chased them until they ran out of the pen. I was relieved until my back felt like it was burning. The fire was

only feet away from me. Surely I should have noticed from the black smoke that danced in the sky or the way I was coughing like crazy, but no. I was too focused on saving the cattle. I started running, and it felt like the fire was chasing me. Every step I took, it took three. The cattle were all scattered around like marbles that had been dropped on the floor. My father looked at me like I was crazy, but he was proud.

“What now? The cows are out, but how are we gonna move them?” My father asked, wiping his brow as he looked at the cows.

“Rope- we just need rope. Where's the rope?” I said as I started looking for some sort of rope.

“Jane! Here.” My father said, handing me a bundle of rope. I ran to the cows, and tied a knot around each one of the harnesses they were wearing. In a flash I had made a lead and was leading 20 cows with it. With the excess rope I had I tied it to the back of the wagon.

“You sure it'll work?” My father said, looking skeptically at my strange invention.

“I hope.” I said, tightening knots. I wasn't sure if this was going to work. I even thought about giving up for a second or two, but I knew I needed to save those cows. My father and I got into the wagon. He whipped the horse and we started to move. I looked back to see if the cows were still following and connected, and they were. It worked and just in time. The fire had burned half of their pasture. I sat looking forward as I took a sigh of relief. No longer was the fire bothering me. As long as the cows were safe, I didn't have a worry in the world. We kept moving onto safer ground, all 20 cows confused but prancing along with us. Not once did I look back to the fire, for I knew we were all safe.



Gavin Myers

Going To A Small School

By Kait Reid

Though this old rustic school embodies the scent of dirty clear,
The deep red squares on the patio sat right near.

The cold tinted glass was the only thing that stood between the empty shy concrete and I,
As well as the sticky matted black goo that may lay on the tile that made sitting not worth while.

And to be repelled by the never ending odor of dead old souls that flooded this school,
Made walking into the disgusting small bathroom feel like a tool.

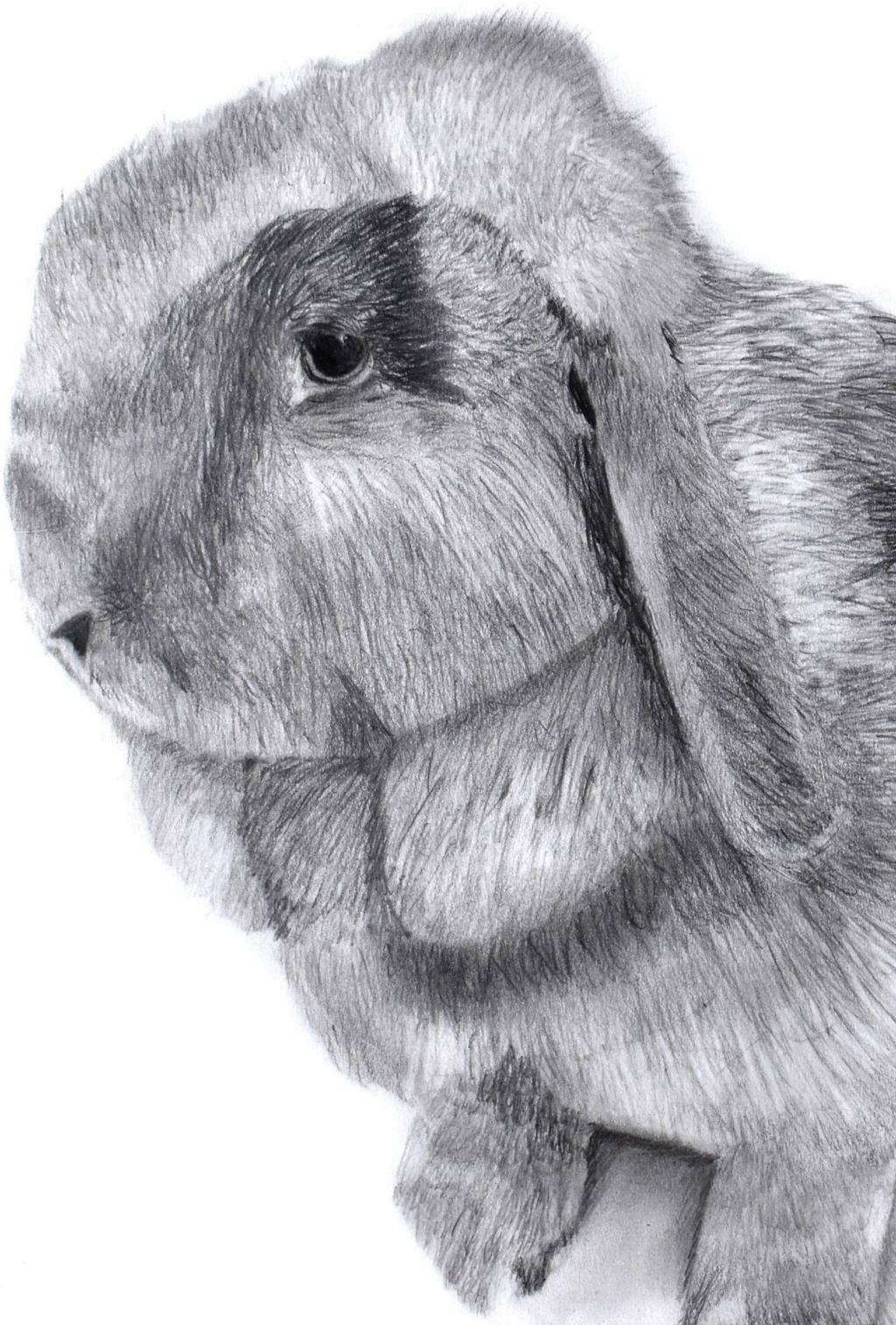
The whispers in the hall appear louder than a tidal wave,
The stepping of shoes,
The 2 second eye contact with people who know you based off reputation,
A social hierarchy,
If you're kind, funny, or sporty,
You may sit on the throne as a king, queen, or friend of one.
The hypocrisy filled in the halls by students that felt like a suffocating gas,
Almost makes me excited to just get to my next class.

Secrets don't make friends, but you lose more the more you speak,
A friend is not someone you always get to keep.
Losing friends, keeping friends, and making friends, is part of a daily routine,
A routine dependant on your mood and your attitude towards others.

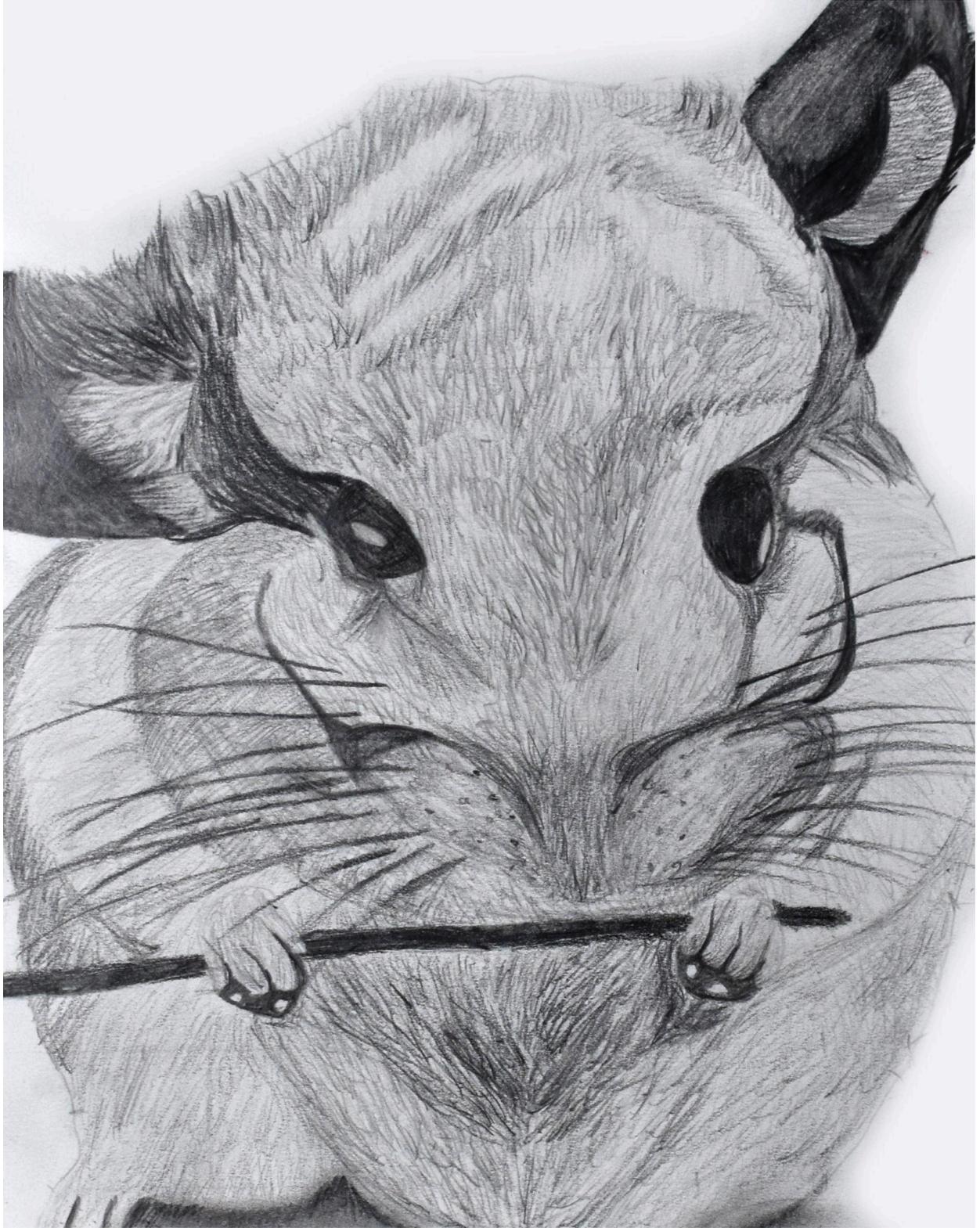
There is no such thing as a bad day,
You will be judged for all of it.



Gavin Myers



SaoirseLeigh Cosgrove



Riley DeLosh



Gia Myers



Gia Myers

The Ugly Yellow House

By Kait Reid

I remember sitting on a lonely wood porch waiting for your call
With a black sweatshirt on and long green pants,
Trembling hands and a bruised eye,
I was left hoping you weren't out and forgot that you left me at this place.
Left hoping and sitting that you didn't make the mistake.
A mistake of forgetting me and leaving me behind,
Stuck at an ugly yellow house
With ugly people
And ugly memories.



Sage Badman



Gia Myers



Carter Warren



Shawn VanErden

The City To Pompey

By Kait Reid

A quick travel from day to night,
is a feathered pen that flames brown paper, wishing to color the trail of the scene.
From the North to the South, I see Grey to Green.
Buildings that drown the beauty of the hills,
to water that floods the land,
to a quiet chirp that captures the nature
of a lovely blue bird band.



Marisa Trommel



Laurel Yard



Allison Marlow

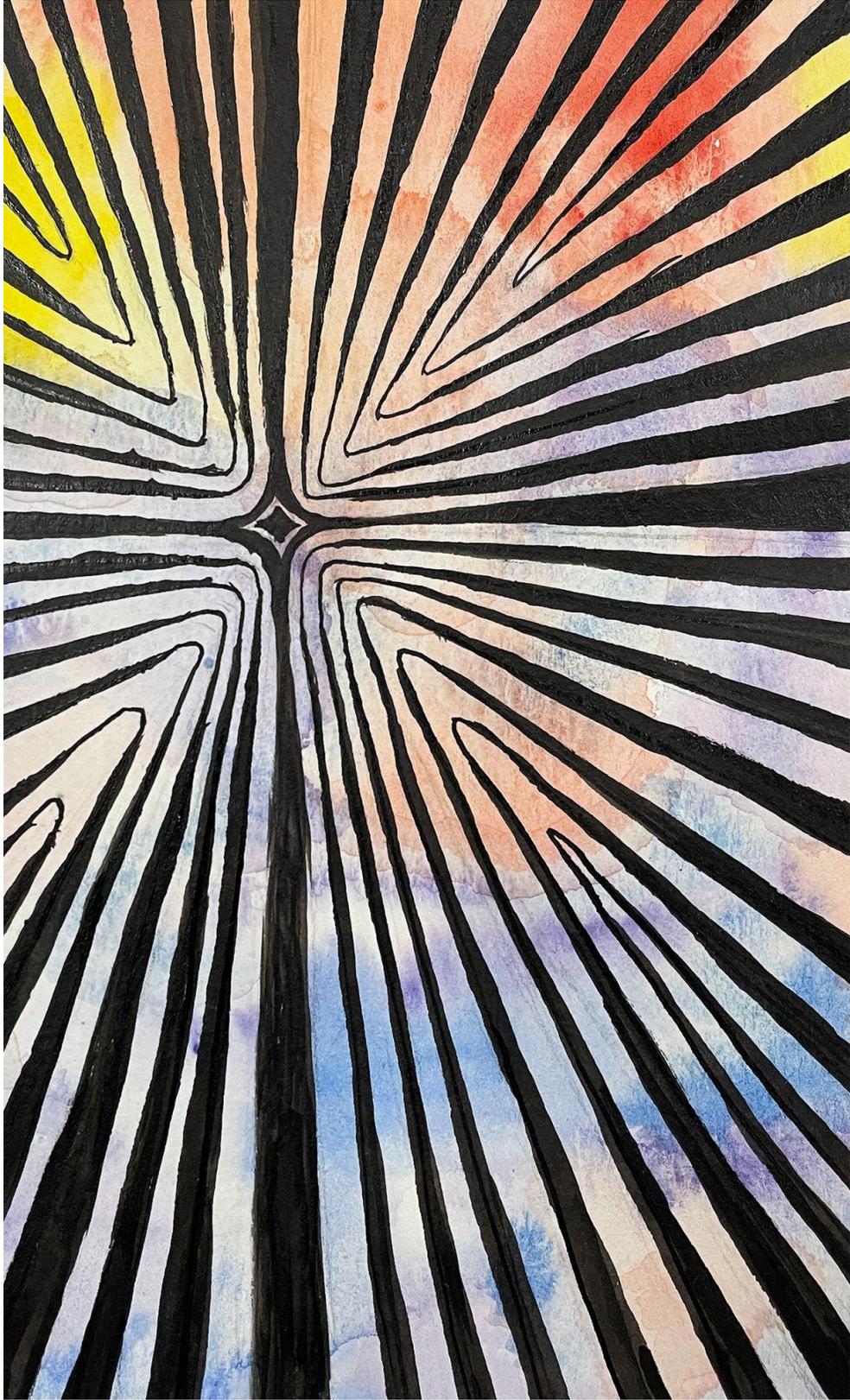


Gavin Myers

There Exists a Place

By Alex Widdekind

There exists a place that is always engulfed in smoke
But only on the perimeter
It surrounds the townsfolk
The taste choking and bitter
The fence is barbed wire sharp, a glass dome
It is smooth as it is clear
The haze as thick as foam
No one leaves because there is no reason
To look at the destruction when
The only thing changing are the seasons
And support is only a trend
The dome has great wonder inside
Children playing
No reason to hide
So why are minds fraying
Like the wires that keep it all out
Someone's always dying
And there isn't any doubt
That when the storm comes each year, it is defying
Every rule every thought and every norm
Kids will become adults
Personalities perished with scorn
Claim your purpose in this town, rather than its faults



Alayna Sandberg



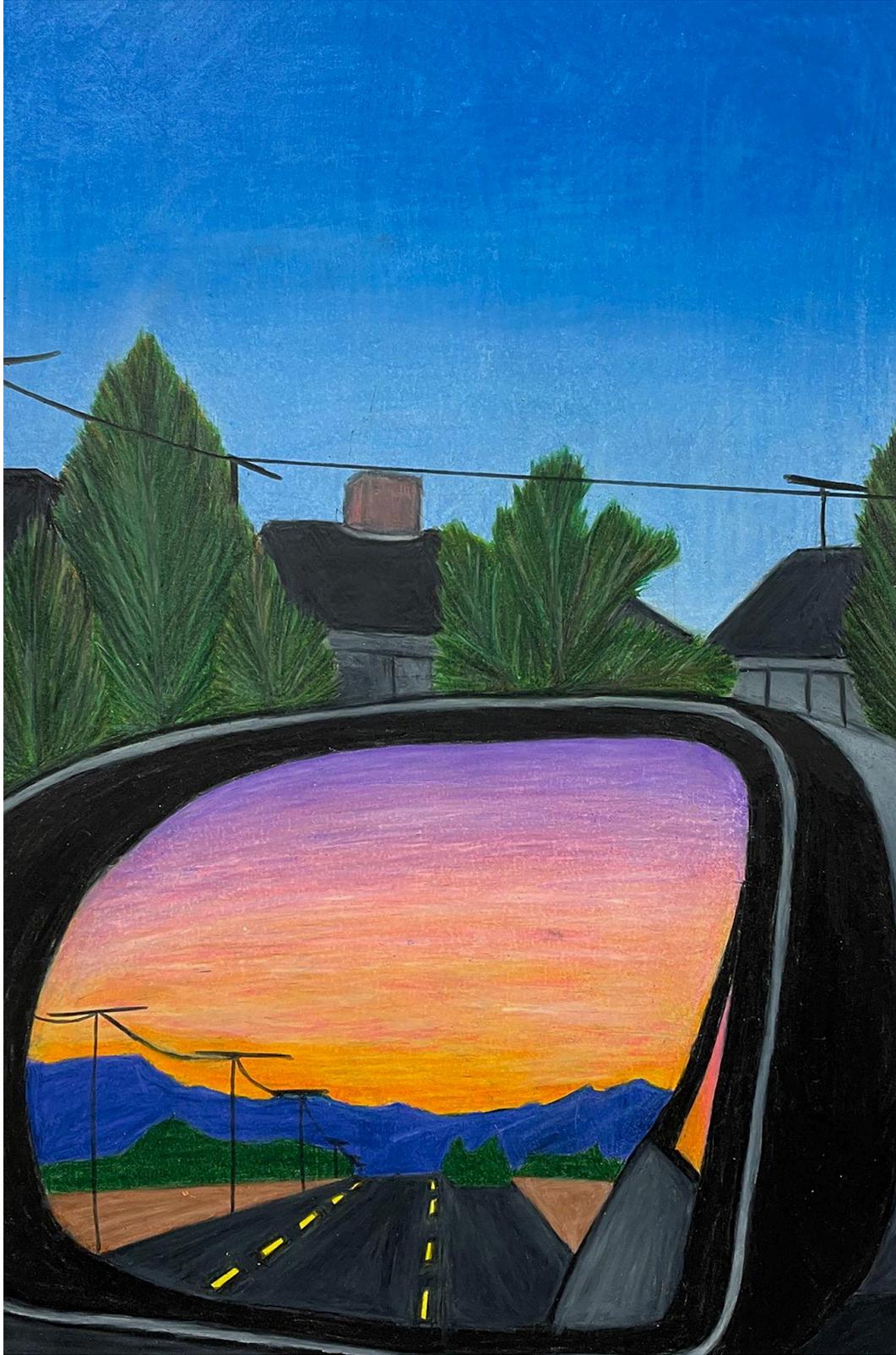
Ace Stevens

It is easier to be held up with pain than happiness or even love. When dealing with pain, people get stuck and can't overcome it. When dealing with love, you really have to love purely to feel it. Love is easy to say, but it's hard to feel. Love gets numbed by other emotions, but mostly by hate. Love can be painful, but you have to know when love is good and when love is bad. You can love someone even if they are destructive to you. Love is all emotions in one, because love is something you make.

Aleah Fuller



Ava Lee



Jordan Janicki



Kloey Fairbanks

A

CURRENT

TOO

STRONG.

By Kait Reid

A guileful lady she was;
A love I obliviously allowed, being blinded by temptation,
A puissance she held dented her flaws,
A sinful life she molds promise's damnation.
She presented a facade that fooled a satanic entity.
She may have appeared as an escaped angel from hell;
But the tranquility of one's mind falsely granted serenity,
It is too late now, for she has already cast the spell.
A warning from a buzzer, loathing in my ear like a fly,
Signs one was to ignore, truth be told, I was forsaken,
A heart loving enough to believe any lie,
For all we had was still mistaken.

And still, a fool I am to seek for a match that sips the cup of shameless wine,
Rather than obscurities I could never solve, and the lingering thought of what *was* to be
mine.



Leah Kirkeby



Ace Stevens



Sage Badman



Gracie Frost



Sage Badman



The Neighbor

By Lincoln Skeele

After waking up at 7:00 AM on the dot, I go downstairs, make a quick cup of coffee and head outside to do my daily chores. My neighbor, Spencer Brown, is making breakfast on his griddle.

He hollers over to me “Hey neighbor, you want a quick bite to eat before you get to work?”

“No,” I replied.

“If you say so,” Spencer says.

I start walking towards my barn to get my tractor to start moving dirt that I dug up to make my well last summer. I was just getting to the barn to start my tractor and all I hear is boom—cracck. I turn around and look up to my neighbors house and I see his

house on fire! I run up and see that the griddle is out of control possibly due to a grease fire.

I yell, "Spencer, you alright!"... No response back.

I run back to my house and pump a bucket of water through my well. His house is inflamed with fire licking every square inch. I run back to Spencer's house and drench the grill with water. I open the door impulsively and scream for Spencer. This time, I hear a faint voice coming from the basement of Spencer's house, which the only access point is through the house. I sprinted back down to my barn and called my buddy, Paul Terrif, who owns a crop duster and has his pilot license.

He picks up, and I say, "We got a bad house fire at Spencer Brown's and we need you ASAP."

He replies, "Don't worry Brian, I will be there T-minus 5 minutes."

Paul flies over the fire and drops the red firefighting dust. I was blinded by the red dust and it took a minute until I could see Spencer's house. The dust finally cleared up and I sprinted up to Brown's house. The house looks like a big chunk of ash. As I walk into the house, I go directly to the basement as that is where I last heard Spencer. I glance over and see that Paul has landed his plane in an adjacent hay field to the right of my house. I slowly make my way to the cellar door when it bursts open quickly and Spencer crawls out.

"You are alive Spencer!", I say in relief.

Spencer emotionally replies, "I thought I was a dead man, I knew you would find a way to save me."

Spencer walks over and gives me the biggest hug.

Paul sprints over to us and says “Is everyone ok and not hurt?”

“Yes,” Spencer and I say at the same time.

“That’s good, glad I could help you guys,” Paul says.

“Thank you so much, Paul, you saved a life today. “Don’t forget that,” I say.

5 years later.....

Beeeeep-beeeeeep-beeeeeep, the sound of my alarm woke me up at 7:01, one minute behind schedule. I look out the window and Spencer is making breakfast like always. I walk downstairs, make a cup of coffee and make my way outside.

Spencer yells to me “Want some grub, it’s getting cold.” “No I replied”.....
“Actually...sure.”

The Matches

Madison Putnam

One day, John's son, Greg was being mischievous and he decided to go through the barns since nobody was home and he found matches. Greg got bored and was feeling like a clock waiting to get batteries, so he decided to go outside and light them. But Greg wasn't careful enough and when a bird swept through... he dropped the matches, and because the wind was blowing like a fan the fire from the matches went everywhere.

Greg didn't know what to do, especially because they don't have water at the barn nor a phone to call somebody. So he decided to go into the house like it was nothing because he thought the fire wouldn't spread. But the wind picked up even more. John came back from the market and as he was trotting up the road he saw.. All.. the.. Black.. Smoke. John started running up the road to the farm and once he saw the barn was covered in flames, it was like the 4th of July in the barn. John heard the bangs like fireworks, the flames were different colors, it was almost a rainbow. John ran inside the house to get Greg. Greg acted like he didn't know the fire started.

John and Greg couldn't take this fire by themselves so they went and got their neighbor Dave to help. They ran to the pond and filled buckets of water. Bucket after bucket after bucket and after some more bucket filling, they got the fire calmed down. The whole barn was gone. All the plows they had inside are gone, the food, the grain, the waggons, everything. At the

end of the day, Greg went to talk to his dad and confess to him how the fire started. But, when Greg saw how upset his dad was about losing all those things that are so important to him, he walked away in shame.



The Betraying Fire

By Myah Keenan

As Helen Sanchez brought the hay around the shed to the cows, she thought about moving back to the city. Helen knew her mom, Ruth Sanchez, wanted her to stay, but she couldn't help wanting to live in the place she loved. Suddenly, she heard yelling and felt a huge wave of heat. She ran around the shed and as soon as she saw the enormous fire, her stomach dropped and she filled with fear. Her mother was trying to get the horses out of the burning barn and Helen ran to help her. Their neighbors, Charles and Margaret Fletcher, were helping Ruth and Helen get the cows

and chickens away from the fire. The fire kept growing and growing like a weed. Helen didn't think there was any way to stop it. As she turned toward the house to see if the fire had spread to it, she saw someone run behind the house. She could see the Fletchers and Ruth still near the barn, so she didn't know who else would be on her farm at this time. She went behind the house to investigate and to her horror, she saw a person lighting a match and setting her house on fire! She screamed and when the person turned toward her, she could see his face and her jaw dropped. He ran into the woods and when Helen turned around to tell her mother who started the fire, a part of the house's roof fell on her head. At that moment, Helen's thoughts vanished as she became unconscious.

While she was unconscious, Helen dreamed about how the lawyer, Keith Reid, was coming to buy their farm after many unsuccessful tries. Fortunately, in the dream, her mother Ruth had her no-one-pushes-me-around look on her face when she rejected Keith's offer again. Helen tried to say something to her mother in the dream, but it was like she couldn't talk. Helen walked outside in the dream, feeling very weird and suddenly woke up. She could then see her mother leaning over her

and a raging fire out of the corner of her eye that seemed to spit out more flames every second. She wanted to tell her mom who she saw light the match, but just then, she heard ambulance sirens and fire trucks that distracted her. Getting her into the ambulance was quick, but the ride to the hospital took a while. Helen tried to keep her eyes open in the ambulance, but eventually she fell into a deep sleep.

Several days later, when Helen felt better, she went home for the first time since the fire. Her mom said that the firemen put the fire out quickly and were able to save the house and most of the farm. Ruth also said that the police were trying to find out who or what started the fire. When Helen heard that, she remembered the face she saw like it was yesterday. Helen told her mom that she wanted to talk to the police, who were already at her house. As soon as Ruth parked in their driveway, Helen got out of the truck and looked at the house. It seemed to hug her and welcome her back. She declared to the police that she knew who started the fire and the police started asking more questions.

The next morning, Helen turned on their radio to hear the news, because they didn't have a TV. She heard that the lawyer, Keith Reid, was arrested for starting a fire to get revenge on a customer who didn't sell their property to him. Helen immediately shut it off and went outside. She felt angry because she was betrayed by Keith Reid. However, she also had a strong sense of happiness because she was able to save her farm. Helen and Ruth were starting to rebuild the barn so their neighbors, the Fletchers, were going to come over and help them. As Helen remembered her thoughts of wanting to move back to the city, she got mad at herself. Now after everything that had happened, she couldn't help but think that the farm was her forever home and she never wanted to leave. Rebuilding the farm would actually be rebuilding the love that Helen and her mother had for their farm.

Nostalgia

By Dana Ingersoll

MR. Neumeier's CLASSROOM - NIGHT

The classroom is dimly lit, and DANA, a troubled soul, sits in the back. MARISA paces nervously.

DANA (looking down): What happened to us, Grayson?

GRAYSON avoids eye contact.

GRAYSON: Life happened, Dana.

DANA (desperate): Can't we fight for what we had in this classroom? Dibs on the Pink chair.

GRAYSON (avoiding): I don't know if it's worth fighting for anymore.

DANA: Are you willing to admit your faults in this room?

GRAYSON freezes, caught off guard.

Everyone exits except DANA.

DANA: In this dimly lit room, where we play with the remnants of our laughter, I find myself lost in the echo of our broken dreams. Grayson, the best person I have ever met is gone. Our fatal flaw was not seeing how fragile happiness is, and now, in the scary quiet, I confront my actions and realize Grayson was definitely better than me at soccer.

MR. NEUMIRE'S CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

DANA and GRAYSON, once happy, laugh together during Mr. Neumire's class during dailies.

DANA: I believe that we will be friends forever, Dana.

GRAYSON: Definitely.

DANA: In this room, where the echoes of our laughter once were, now is just the painful silence of our shattered friendship.

MR. NEUMIRE'S CLASSROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

DANA discovers a note in GRAYSON's Pink chair.

DANA (crying like a baby): I thought this was a fresh start, but you lied to me!

GRAYSON (realization): Dana, I...

DANA (still whining): I can't do this anymore.

Dana and Grayson leave and part ways forever.

MARISA (alone, reading the note): "Dana smells funny."

