

PLOT TWIST



I'M A BIRD

Plot Twist! I'm a bird!

Advance Creative Writing 2019 Anthology

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Nick Bennett

I was born on April 5, 2005, in Yokosuka, Japan. I am heading into the 9th Grade at Brother Martin High School. This is my first year at Advance and I am very much enjoying it. Things I like doing include watching Netflix and Youtube, playing games, reading and writing, and stealing memes. I hope you enjoy the writings I have submitted for the anthology.

Bring May Showers

- I. The raindrops fall slowly, streaming down my face.
- II. My cries are loud, but you hear them as whispers.
- III. Lying here, I can't stay calm. It hurts.
- IV. The animals can't stop my pain. But their songs soothe me.
- V. I am invisible, surrounded by the trees of the wild.
- VI. The sun sets on the horizon. The moon is above.
- VII. The summer ends. The fall begins. The winter ends. The spring begins
- VIII. The wounds are gone, so I lie here only as bones.
- IX. The roots dig deep. I can feel them in my skull.
- X. I cannot taste the water. It fills my head to the brim.
- XI. The metal is rusted. It cuts gardens no more.
- XII. The moss is so warm. The moss is so cold.
- XIII. The ants stopped marching. The others stopped searching.
- XIV. I hope the evening sun can show you my despair.
- XV. Please just light the candle that shows the way home.

“Mike With a T”

As Karmen and I walked out of the theater, she was practically screaming at me how good the ending of “Crossover Event” was.

“Man! I can’t wait for the sequel!” I could see the passion in her eyes. “We should DEFINITELY write a fanfic about it!” I looked at her with disgust.

“Fanfic is garbage!” I spat. “And you should know that with all the shipfics out there of your mom and Logan Paul!”

“I know” she said, her tone lowering, “but I just want there to be more to the story. As soon as I get home, I’m gonna start writing. Nothing you say can change my mind,” she said, giving me a smug look. “I’mma call it...uhhh...” She scanned the parking lot in search of inspiration. That’s when we saw a man throw an entire pizza at his son, who then proceeded to unhinge his jaw and eat the pizza whole. I shuddered.

“I got it! It’s gonna be called ‘The Legend of Waluigi and Pizza Steve’!”

With my mouth still open after having witnessed the jaw unhinging, her spit had no trouble finding itself in my mouth. I gagged. Seeing her look so proud about her “story”, I couldn’t help but laugh and sigh, knowing that she was probably her family’s *oldest* disappointment. But I can’t help but love her. She’s been my closest friend since we were four. We are pretty much inseparable.

We finally made it to my car. I was just about to open my door when I stopped for a moment. Our reflections. The looked oddly...realistic. I told Karmen to stop. As I reached my hand through the window, I noticed that not only had the window been rolled down, but our reflections were not looking at us. In that same moment, my reflection’s hand was coming towards me. We both screamed.

“YAAHH!” I yelled while falling back. The car shook from what I assume was my doppelganger doing the same. I looked to Karmen for help, but she had that weird look on her face that she gets when she’s really excited. Her smile sent chills down my back. I jumped again when I heard the car door open and close. In an instant, Karmen was running to greet our doppelgangers. I got up and dusted myself off.

My doppelganger introduced himself as Kliff and Karmen’s introduced herself as Shy. In return, we introduced ourselves.

“Hi. I’m Mike.” I turned to introduce Karmen and I noticed that she was bouncing in anticipation, “And this is Ka--”

“I’m Karmen!” she interrupted. She didn’t give them a chance to react before she started bombarding them with questions. “WHY DO YOU GUYS LOOK LIKE US? WHY DO HAVE STRANGE NAMES? ARE YOU GUYS DATING? ARE YOU GUYS ALIENS? WHAT ARE YOUR BLOOD TYPES? YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUM--” I put my hand over her mouth.

“I’m sorry about that. She’s a bit” I twirled my finger in a circle around my temple. “But anyway,” I relented my grip on her mouth, “who are you exactly and why are you here?” They told us that they were from a different universe and that we had a lot to discuss.

“Alright before we do that,” I looked up, noticing that a slight drizzle had begun, “let’s go to my house.” They agreed. We hopped in and I started the engine. I banged my head on the steering wheel. “We are gonna be in for a long night,” I mumbled. I then drove away.

The Wings of the Scouts

My backpack whose letters shine bright like the sun
Whose symbols remind me of where I'm from and what I represent
Whose color reflects that of my jacket
My backpack who contains my most basic needs and my darkest secrets
Whose emblem shows that of freedom
My backpack whose stitches show wear and tear
But still, hold together
Whose contents help me through the day
Whose soft cloths comfort me when I need it the most
My backpack, a backpack indeed, contains life like none other
My backpack that I gleefully flaunt
The Queen of packs
The Princess of carriers
The Prince of holders
The King of sacks
A Jack of all trades:
My backpack

Ungodly

One thing that gets me really piped up.
People who pour their milk **BEFORE** their cereal.
It's very sickening.
I feel that they are really messed up.
Beyond repair, even.
But, if it's possible, I'd like to show them that
Their sins can still be forgiven.
That there's a path other than the one
Upon which they chose to tread.

RIP

To the bird flying
Watch out for the guitar ahead...
And there you go. Dead.

Basic

Two words
And now three
Now two

UwU

That is a big boi.
And that there is a small boi.
Not boi. She's a grill.

Remake

Autumn leaves falling fast
Many squirrels struggle to find food
Everything, dead

A.Poc

The Autumn leaves are falling last
All around, the animals crash
Everything is dying fast

CP

The Hole in the sky
Caused Club Penguin
To say goodbye

Tomorrow's Promise

Sunrise. It is the start of a good day.
The rays help to show all of my elegance.
I'm actually quite confident that today is okay.
It is time. Time to show-off. They watch. I marvel.
When the llama is no longer hyper, it all ends.
So, I begin. I dance to the glorious music.
I dance as if tomorrow will never come.
It won't. I know it won't it's sort of...charming.
The llama stops. It's over. Never again.
Sunset. But there will never be another Sunrise.

You

I didn't know that one could fall in love so easily.
I didn't know that a simple look could make one feel queasy.
I didn't know that spending time with one person could be so fun.
That we could do things until the start of the moon and the end of the sun.
I didn't know that we could be as different as a quarter and a dime,
But still, have so much in common that we're the same person at the same time.
I didn't know someone could look their best even at their worst.
I only wish to you your true worth.
I didn't know your words could be so kind.
I guess that's why you're always on my mind.
A person of many faces.
A person that is very gracious.
Your touch sweeps away the darkness.
Your smile has a heavenly shine.
I only wish to call you mine.
This last line I'll say with all my might:
I didn't believe in love at first sight until that one fateful night.

Crossover Event

Since the start of time, there have been two main tribes. The YEEs were the tribe to the West. The HAWs were the tribe to the East. They have been at war for a long time. Both have since split many times. Some of these split tribes are the YEETs, the YOs, the HAWTs, and the THOTs. The boss of the YEEs is Doge. She thinks that it is time to end the wars. She has lost much of her fam to it. The top dog of the YAWs is Lil Nas. He too wants to end the two wars. He lost his horse in the back. It did not come back from war. They chose to meet at the Shrine of WAH. They thought they should wed each other. Lil Nas changed his name so they could be Lil Nas X Doge

Ada Chen

Hi! So, my name is Ada Chen and I live in Deland, Florida. I absolutely love writing stories and I love to draw. I'm aspired to become a medic in the Air Force when I grow up, so I can protect this country of ours. I'm going into 11th grade at Deland High School, which means that I'm finally an upperclassman. That also means that I have one more year here at ADVANCE. I hope that whoever reads this will love the stories that I wrote and if you know who I am, don't be afraid to say hi!

DOPPLEGANGER STORY

Ada and her friend Chloe were walking to Ada's car when they see two people standing next to it. They looked at each other in question, but they walked closer. As they walked closer, the more familiar the two people got until it hit her. Those two people are carbon copies of themselves! Ada shook Chloe's arm and told her about what she saw. The two ran to the car. The people at the car looked up in surprise and tried to open it with a device, but the car didn't budge. Ada and Chloe tackled their doppelganger and made sure they didn't escape.

"Let us go!" the doppelganger of Ada screamed out. The real Ada scoffed.

"As if. Who are you and what are you doing trying to boot gang my car?"

"We aren't trying to boot gang your car, and it's not my fault that your car is the same as mine!" doppelganger Ada said. The real Ada was confused.

"We have the same car?" she asked as she helped doppelganger Ada up, while Chloe did the same. Doppelganger Ada dusted off dirt off her clothes and looked at the real Ada.

"We come from a different world where cars can turn into sofas. That's why I was aiming my device at your car because if it was my car, it would have turned into a sofa" doppelganger Ada explained. "oh, you can call me Capa and call my Chloe Lighthouse, so it doesn't confuse you" Capa said while laughing before doppelganger Choe smacked her head.

"Ow!" Capa whined while doppelganger Chloe looked at Ada and Chloe with an apologetic expression.

"I'm sorry but Capa here is a doofus," she said facepalming. Chloe agreed.

"my Ada is also a doofus" as they hear a "HEY!" from both Ada's.

"You can call me Snow since I like Snow." Snow said.

"Me too! No wonder we are doppelgangers" Chloe agreed. They all talked for a bit before Ada noticed a car exactly like hers right behind her car.

"Hey Capa, is that your car right there?" she said, pointing to the car. Capa shrugged and went to try out the car. She pressed a button on her device and the car turned into a sofa.

"Well, what do you know? That is my car!" Capa exclaimed, only to be hit upside the head by Snow.

"Didn't I tell you to try the car behind you?"

"I didn't know, and I swore that this was our car!" Capa whined, pointing at Ada's car. Snow facepalmed while Ada goes to comfort Capa.

"Don't worry, if it was me, I would've done that too," she said. This made Chloe facepalm. Capa looked up with hopeful eyes.

"Really?"

"Yep!" Ada responded. Capa hugged Ada and got onto the sofa with Snow.

"I have to go now but it was great meeting you, Ada! I hope we see each other again!" Capa screamed. Ada nodded enthusiastically while Snow muttered.

"With your lack of direction, we will!" but everyone heard it. Chloe giggled as both Ada and Capa said "HEY!" as the sofa vanished. Ada pouted as Chloe got into the car with her.

"You know it's true" she teased.

"Hmph" was all Chloe heard from Ada as they drove home.

MEMORIES

“Are you sure you didn’t steal my phone and airdrop the pictures to my phone?” I asked confusedly. The person, Kyle as he called himself, shook his head.

“No, we are best friends and have been best friends since like the beginning of this year.” he said, clearly distressed. I felt bad, so I offered that I jump off a building, only to get hit upside the head by my other friend Alastair.

“I heard that! Don’t do it!” he warned. I shook my hands in front of me in denial.

“No, you didn’t hear me. I was going to say that I was going to jump off the building onto a trampoline so that it would hit my head hard and I would get all my memories back. Gosh” I said with an eye-roll, only to get hit again.

“Stop hitting me!” I shouted and clutched my head running to Mike with a T. Mike with a T was with Alston, Tre, and Ryder, so when I arrived, they all looked at me with a confused expression. I somehow knew what they were going to ask so I told them.

“Alastair hit my head” I sulked, only to find out that they were laughing at me so I hit them all on the head and went to Emily, Kimberley, Leighanna, Lindsey, Cat, and Shirya with the boys groaning their heads in pain behind me. After I told them what happened, they all comforted me and went to ask Alastair why he would hit me. I listened as Alastair explained to them and the looks that they gave me were so terrifying that I swore I almost peed myself. As I see them headed towards me, I started to run around the classroom with them chasing me until I ran straight into a blackboard and collapsed. I started to blackout, so I mustered all my strength and said one sentence.

“At my funeral, should someone dress like the grim reaper and just stand there.” I whispered out. The last thing I heard before I blacked out was Kyle talking.

“Why does she never change. This same exact thing happened when she told me the idea to see if she could lose her memories.”

20 YEARS

20 years from now, I would live in a mansion and be drinking my wine sitting on my very expensive car thinking back to all the memories I had, mainly to the one that happened when I was 16 at a Harry Potter trivia game, talking about how “thicc” Voldemort is. Then I would daydream about how fun life was back then, when I didn’t have to worry about anything in the world, and life was good. Not that I have a bad life now, it just gets boring when you’re a single 36-year-old living alone in a mansion drinking wine. A splash woke me up from my daydream and I got off my car. I ran to my backyard and see Cat and Ryder arguing as the rest of the guys jump in the pool and the girls are tanning in the sun. I facepalm.

“Why are you people having a pool party at my place again?” Tre popped his head out from the water.

“Because you have the biggest pool out of all of us.” everyone nodded, and I die a bit mentally.

“Well since you guys are here, who invited Alastair because I don’t see-” Alastair jumped over the fence and landed in the pool, making a huge splash.

“There he is” Kimberley pointed out. I once again facepalm. I guess this is how my life is.

Intruder

I was panicking. The program was shutting down and no one knows why.

“Maybe an alien is attacking,” Ryder said excitedly. Alastair, being the oldest and most responsible one in the room, did the most responsible thing, by smacking Ryder.

“OW!” Ryder screamed. I facepalmed. How can my child be this dense?

“Maybe there’s a thief, I know Kung Fu,” Alston said, showing some moves.

“I can help! I have some mad karate chops” Tre chimed in. I made a face like I usually do when someone says something stupid.

“What if I get blindfolded and strapped to a trolley?” Ryder said, putting his hands to his face.

“That would be a dream come true for Ryder” Alastair muttered.

“What if it’s a unicorn?” Cat whispered. I looked at Cat with aghast expression. That's when Emily decided to whisper plot twist, I’m a bird. I facepalmed. This campus is shut down for unknown reasons and my dysfunctional classmates are making a joke out of it.

“Hey!” the whole class yelled.

“Oh, did I say that out loud?” I said innocently. Lindsey started coming up with a plan with Alastair while Claire is starting a game of mafia with the rest of the kids. I decided to shrug and join the game. In the middle of the game, Mike with a T decided to speak up.

“What if it’s the YEEs tribe and the HAWs tribe attacking the campus?” I facepalmed again. Shriya nodded in understanding.

“What Mike with a T says actually makes sense.” I looked at Shriya with a shocked expression. That's when Leighanna decided to input her opinion.

“What if it’s a murderer coming to kill us?” she said, scared. Kimberley grabbed a metal pole out of nowhere.

“How in the world did you get that?” I whisper shouted.

“what do you mean? I’ve had it the whole time.” Kimberley said like it’s the most normal thing in the world. Instead of facepalming, I decided that banging my head on the blackboard was the next best thing.

“Don’t worry, we staffers have this under control,” Alastair said, trying to comfort us.

I banged my head once again on the blackboard as everyone cheered. Cat started building a house with cards and hit Ryder on the head when he messed her up. Claire started doing the squats and everyone started doing it sooner or later, including me. But a knocking silenced us, and we all stopped. Kimberley grabbed a baseball bat and gave it to Leighanna, who took it and started to practice her swings, only to accidentally break a window. I ushered them all to a corner since we alerted the person knocking the door that we were here. Many of them complained, but my glare stopped them, and they all went, including Alastair. When they were situated, the person busted in with a gun. The guy started shooting at me, but time slowed, and I dodged all the bullets with my awesome dance moves. The guy looked shocked and, in his shock, I suddenly produced a 57-pound bowling ball and threw it, hitting the guy in the privates. The guy screamed in pain and collapsed. The guys looked at me scared while the girls cheered.

“Oops. I was aiming for his head.” I said with no emotion, which scared the guys even more. Ryder tied the man up and placed the man in a way that his rear end was in the air. We broke into another classroom and stole baseball bats that were just randomly lying on the floor. When we got back, the man was awake and screaming at us to let him go. Claire looked at me with a hopeful expression and I nodded my head. Claire walked up to the man and swung the bat to the man’s butt, making him scream in pain.

RUMORS

It started off as a normal morning, I got ready and headed to my maze of a school. My school is a bunch of buildings that are connected by ramps and stairs, which makes it hard for me to get to class on time, so I always have to run. I walked into the school and wave at everyone, to which they waved back. One of them came up to me.

“Hey, um, Ada?”

“Yes, Caitlin?”

“Are you dating a guy because of his looks and his” she pointed downwards. I gasped.

“NO! I only care about personality, not all of that junk.” Caitlin sighed in relief.

“Thank god. So, it was just rumored.”

“Rumors? Who would do something like that to me?” Caitlin’s face turned to disgust.

“Elizabeth.” I facepalm internally. Of course, she would. The girl hates me.

“Thanks for telling me about this Caitlin.” she nodded her head and walked away. I head to ROTC and see my instructor there, looking at me with disappointment. I felt a sinking feeling.

“Chen” Colonel started “So I’ve heard that you’ve been lying and cheating?” I shook my head.

“I would never do that Colonel. I would never break the honor code.” before Colonel said anything, my best friends, Chloe and Alexis, ran up.

“She didn’t do it, Colonel. It was just rumored.” Chloe said. The colonel looked at her.

“And how do you know that Dubreuil?” Alexis cut in.

“We heard Pena,” she said the name with disgust “Talking to her friends about how Chen’s life will be ruined and that she’ll be the queen of the school again.” Colonel nodded in understanding.

“I’ll have to deal with that.” He looked at me. “I knew you wouldn’t do something like this, you’ve dedicated your time to the core and wouldn’t want to mess that up.” I nodded my head as he left.

“What does Pena want with me. I never did anything to her!” I nearly screamed. Chloe hugged me.

“It’s because you’re prettier, much more popular, and have a great reputation for talking and becoming friends with everyone,” Alexis said. I smiled in gratitude and waved them goodbye as the bell rang. As I walked to class, I hear more rumors and I put my head down. A lot of them came up and asked me if it was true and I always deny it. They all nodded and told their friends that it wasn’t true and that it was just rumors. I went through the day and there were fewer people talking about me. As lunch rolled around, Elizabeth went out with her friends to get lunch, so she isn’t at school. I got a microphone and went into the cafeteria.

“Hey guys, so you have all heard rumors about me and it’s not true. Elizabeth is spreading that about me, so whatever thing you heard from her isn’t true.” I explained to the students. Everyone nodded and I was about to put the mic down when I had an idea. I picked up the mic again and spoke into it.

“Pretend you still believe in the rumors. I want to stop her bullying once and for all.” everyone cheered as I got down. My boyfriend, Dalen, came up to me and hugged me.

“I knew you wouldn’t cheat and that it’s Elizabeth’s scheme to break us up.” I hugged him back.

“Is it because she liked you and we started dating?” I said quietly, feeling guilt. The hug tightened.

“I knew she liked me; I just didn’t like her back. She’s a snake and you are an angel.” I nodded my head and hung out with him until the bell rang. I went to science and had a normal class, but when class ended and I was walking on the ramp to the medical building, Elizabeth came up to me and pushed me into the ramp, giving me bruises. She purposely fell and started to create a scene.

“Why would you do that to me Ada?” she started “I was so nice to you! How could you push me and hurt me like this? You are a monster!” she started to fake cry as her friends cornered me and started to punch me. I felt so betrayed by her. I was nothing but nice to her and this is how she treats me? What did I do to her? I felt tears about to come out, but I held them back. I won’t give her the satisfaction of winning. Some of the students that were there started to fight Elizabeth’s friends but that wasn’t enough. Thankfully Dalen arrived and pried them all off me with his friends. He held me close to him as teachers came.

“What happened?” a teacher asked.

“Elizabeth made a big scene about how mean Ada was then made her friends punch her.” a student said. Elizabeth shook her head.

“That’s not true!” the teacher rolled her eyes.

“You are coming with me, Miss Pena.”

“You won’t get away with this Ada! I’ll make your life living hell and become the most popular girl on the campus if that’s the last thing I do!” she shrieked.

Tre

Tre is a thirteen-year-old boy and he lives in Many, Louisiana. He was born on November 2, 2005. He has 10 siblings and 2 dogs. He attends MJHS in many and is going to 8th grade. This year he took creative writing in search of new ways to write songs. This is Tre's first year at Advance and he plans to come back next year.

Tre

My name is Tre, but my real name is Charles Glen French III. I pretty much know everything about my name. People call me Tre because I'm a third generation. See Tres is three in Spanish so that is why my name is Tre. Tres-three. Tre-third generation. I don't, however, know where Charles comes from. I would ask my grandpa but now I can't and that is one of my biggest regrets.

I didn't know I <3'd

I didn't know I loved the simplicity of a hug.

So, gentle but so significant.

I didn't know I loved the piano.

The tenderness of its resonance.

I didn't know I loved the sympathy of a ballad

And the meaning it sits upon.

I didn't know I loved books

And the journey they take you on.

I didn't know I loved my grandpa

Until I lost him.

I didn't know I could be the son

Of such an amazing person.

But I knew I loved my mom.

Dad

I try my best
To let you love me,
but I guess that's
another story.

I go to your house
on the weekends.
Every occasion.
Every season.

I wish you would care.
I wish you would try.
But now I'm alone
and all I do is cry.

You were my idol;
my sun, my moon, my stars,
but I won the war
look at my scars.

They say I don't know much
because I'm just a kid.
But when you say that you love me
I wish it was actually meant.

But all my hurt, all my pain
all my bruises, gone!
I am kicking you out
and I'm turning mine back on.

It's Not Over for Me

"We should go watch a scary movie. In theaters." Hunter said to his brother, Leo (you know the one that d... oh wait that's for later).

Unlike Hunter, Leo did not enjoy anything scary. So, you can guess what Leo said.

"No." It was the simplest answer Leo had ever given in his life. He started to walk away but Hunter was not taking "no" for an answer. "Why not? Do you know how fun it would be to go out on the town and finish it with the scariest movie you've ever seen?"

"That is literally the opposite of fun in my book. Besides I have plans."

"Plans? What plans? You don't have a job. You don't have a girlfriend, heck, you don't have friend friends."

Leo headed off to his room but not before clocking Hunter in the stomach full fist.

Now just so you know Hunter is the youngest out of 3 children. Riley, 23, the oldest but she's off at college. Leo, 18, the middle child, and Hunter, 12. Hunter enjoyed being the youngest. He got attention the older kids never got. So, he was thankful. But there were some downsides to being the youngest as well. Leo never wants to do anything with him so he has to sit in his room and do nothing. Anyways.

"Well, you know what," Hunter screamed towards Leo's room from the bottom of the stairs, "I don't need to see a stupid movie with you! To be honest I don't ever want to see you again!"

He turned to go to his room. But what he found was not his room.

"Hunter! Hunter!" Leo screamed in search of his brother. He tried calling Hunter's phone, but it was just sitting in the chair beside him. He knew it was his fault. He heard what his brother screamed at him and he knew he ran away. (or so Leo thought)

So, Leo went to the police station and asks them to file a missing child report. But when he goes to sit in one of the chairs beside him is Hunter. Just sitting there not even acknowledging that his brother was with him.

"Hunter," Leo said as he threw himself onto his brother. "I thought you ran away." Tears started to trickle down Leo's cheeks as he pulled Hunter in.

"Let go of me." Hunter said just as plain as day.

"What?"

"I said, "LET GO OF ME!" Hunter's scream was enough to burst a man's eardrums. Leo flew back and hit the wall at full force. The police who were in the station pulled their weapons on who Leo thought was Hunter.

"No! That's my brother!" Leo was now screaming as well with the sound of ringing in his ears. He started to sob, "Please."

The police lowered their weapon and Hunter ran at Leo at light speed and before the police could get shots off, Leo and Hunter were gone.

Leo woke up on Friday in a dark room on the cold floor. He struggled to move but soon found out he was tied to the ground.

“Well, well if it isn’t the infamous Leo.” There was no one there and there was no one talking he just heard and so did it.

“Who are you and where is my brother?”

“Oh, your brother. He’s safe. But only if you cooperate with me.”

“What do you want with me.” The man and Leo were now in a straight conversation.

“I want your appearance.”

“Excuse me.”

“Your appearance. Was I not being clear? I am not from here. I am from a place that has no name. It just is. And we do not have faces or appearances. We just have. So, we come to planets that have people with appearances and we take there’s. And we go back home and our people throw a big party.”

A thousand words flooded his brain. But what he said was. “Uh-huh. And when do you plan on doing that.”

This question angered the thing and he attacked Leo. Leo could not see if, but he felt every blow thrown at him. And then he started feeling sick like his body was leaving his body and then the thing started appearing but as Leo. But he started to see a different person as well. It was Hunter. He was standing there with a shovel waiting for the thing to appear as Leo. As he became more visible something grabbed Hunter and lifted him in the air. Then Leo could see what was happening. The thing was absorbing Hunter. Leo didn’t know how they were going to get out of this and neither did I.

It's Not Over for Me Pt. 2

“Fight it,” Leo screamed, “Don’t let them in!” He screamed this but he had no idea how. He just shook and shook, but when he tried to move his hands they did. The whole time he thought he was tied down. But that was the last thing he thought about. He jumped on the creature and tackled it to the ground even though he could not see it. He just started feeling it until he found what felt like a person’s foot. He mustered up all his strength and spun. The creature became weightless as Leo spun and then he let go. The creature flew into the wall so hard there was no way he was alive. The blood splatter proved that theory.

He fell to the ground, panting, but he couldn’t stay there. He had to save Hunter. He ran at the kid in the air and pulled him to the ground. The impact of the two kids hitting the ground made the dust in the room rise and create an opaque fog in the room. The brothers were separated in the process of the attempted saving. Fighting trauma, Leo jumped up and started to feel around for his brother. “Hunter, say something.”

“Something.”

He ran over to the voice and felt around, dust filling his eyes.

“Here.” A voice said. A few seconds of silence passed. Hunter started to get mad at the fact he could not find his brother because of some stupid dust. He grabbed the nearest thing, that felt like a giant book and slammed it to the ground. As the dust exited the room, he covered his eyes and heard Leo scream. He turned prepared to fight but found his brother standing there. “Spider.” Hunter ran to his brother and tackled him to the ground.

“How do I know it's you. Say something only my real brother would know.”

“Horror movie, you want to see a horror movie with me.”

He got up and pulled Leo to his feet. The hug took Leo by surprise, but he accepted it.

Tears in his eyes Hunter said, “I thought you were dead.” There was irony in that line because you see Leo was dead but that was oblivious to Hunter. If only Hunter would’ve turned around and seen his brothers’ body on that cold floor, he would be alive today. Maybe he would’ve fought. Maybe I wouldn’t be telling this story.

Shriya Gogineni

My name is Shriya Gogineni and I am 13 years old. I moved two years ago from New Orleans, Louisiana to Dallas, Texas. I am going into 9th grade and I love my school. I am going to Carroll High School. My hobbies are playing sports, reading, and watching movies. I love to sing and dance. I do Taekwondo and I love playing basketball. I have terrible writing skills, and over the past three weeks at ADVANCE, I think I have improved so much more. I hope to get better than I am right now.

Boredom

Boredom looks like a cup with no water in it

Boredom tastes like a mango with no sweetness

Boredom feels like and an empty theater with no movie playing

Boredom smells like dried up flowers with no scent

Boredom sounds like a noise that will never reach you

Lost Eyes

These eyes are little eyes

They need some time to see

They definitely need glasses

To see a little bee

These eyes are tiny microscopes

With not a lot of zoom

Although they seem a little broken

They are good enough to see this room

My Mother

My mother whose face is that of a beautiful sun

Whose voice is the voice of a calm breeze

Whose eyes are fierce but gentle

Whose hands are those of a worker

Whose wrists are lean and rough

My mother whose heart is as big as this world

Whose bones are weak but strong

Whose feet are tired but tough

Whose mouth is the mouth of an outspoken bird

Whose body is full of gold

I Didn't know I loved

I didn't know I loved the night, so calm and peaceful

I didn't know I loved the rain, which gently pours making the flowers bloom

I didn't know I loved the trees, that give a soft breeze and shade from the heat

I didn't know I loved the grass so smoothly dug into the soil, so green, so alive

I didn't know I loved the snow, so soft, so cold, but so shiny and bright

The Experience

They started to drive past the large hills and valleys somewhere in the middle of Ohio. Suddenly they stopped. A boy and a woman got out of the car. The boy's heart started beating faster and faster. All they could see were small buildings, hills, and a bunch of people.

"What do we do now," the boy said.

"It's cold and it's raining almost ice on us."

"Well," said the woman. "We go in and get all the stuff we need."

"Ok," said the boy fearfully.

"Don't be scared," said the woman.

"Everything will be fine."

"It will be fun"

The boy and the woman got all their stuff on and went to the top of the hill

"Look." said the woman

"If you're scared, you'll never have fun."

"Just go for it. If you fall, I'll be there to pick you up."

"If you don't want to you can sit out but I prefer you try, and everyone in the family has done in no one has come back with a single scratch."

"Well," said the boy his heart beating faster and faster by the minute.

"We'll have to give it a try

"Alright," said the woman

"3,2,1" "Go!!!!!"

I Will

20 years from now I will live in a beautiful home which gives me the luxury

20 years from now I will get a job which provides me with food and money to live

20 years from now I will have a car which takes me from place to place with ease

20 years from now I will live up north where I can experience the beautiful snowfalls

20 years from now I will be 33, for me very old, but for others still young

Home

Home is a place my heart yearns to go

It protects me from the rain and snow

Home is a place I don't have to resist

It gives me the right to go steady and slow

Home is a place I always love

It gives me every comfort I seek

Home is a place I cannot explain

It makes me strong although I'm weak

Lost

That was it. I couldn't get out. No fresh air nothing. Just a limited amount of food and water to share. It was the last day at ADVANCE. Thankfully there was electricity, it went on and off due to the rain.

...one day ago

This is the news channel on live today with the no-name hurricane hitting hard in Natchitoches, Louisiana at a 5. There will definitely be a lot of flooding so stay inside your houses, be safe, and don't come out. Looks like the rain will be staying for the next five days, so stay inside for the next week.

Everyone's watching with fear. So, the manager of ADVANCE decides to shut it down for the next week.

...back to the present

I'm sitting in my room thinking the more I want to go home, the more it pulls that thought away from me. I'm bored. I don't know what to do. I'm really hungry so I decide to go and get some food to eat. It's only the 2nd day and I'm already almost out of food. All I hear is the rustle of the wind and thunder loud and enormous enough for someone to scream. I'm tired, so I get to bed early.

After 5 days...

On the 6th day, all I'm left with is one pack of noodles, a few pringles, some peanut butter, one bag of trail mix, and a few packs of peanut butter crackers.

"Well," I say to myself. "At least it's enough to survive one more day."

That night I go to bed thinking about going home. The next morning, I wake up and see a face staring at me in my room. It's my mom!!! I'm so happy to see her, I can't even resist. I give her a big hug and we head home for the rest of the summer.

Impatience

Why can't you ever come home
Even the birds are calling out to you
Every time you leave us
I run after you, as fast as a jaguar
The clock is ticking faster and faster
I am growing older with it
The time will be gone for me
When you are free to spend it

Saturday

Saturday is the time to go out and have fun
Enjoy playing out in the sun
Saturday is the day to slowly ride your bike
And do all the fun things you like
Saturday is the time to go and watch new movies and shows
It's also the time to make friends with your foe's

Leighanna Kain is a fourteen-year-old born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana. She is entering the ninth grade at Caddo Magnet High School. She lives with her mom, sister, and her two dogs Khloe and Lily. She loves books, dogs, and musicals. Her hobbies include singing, reading, writing, pin collecting, and competitive archery. Leighanna's writing has been previously featured in an anthology for Shreveport's writing competition Seedlings and she often writes in her free time for her own enjoyment. She hopes to have a career in writing someday. Featured in this anthology are some of Leighanna's favorite pieces that she has composed during her time at the Advance program and she hopes you enjoy them, or at least that they make you feel something.

My Box

In my box, there are memories. Each memory is a fluffy ball, all of them hibernating until they are called upon. Some of them are bigger than others, some are softer.

On top, there is a newer memory. It is medium-sized, blue and purple. When it unrolls it blares music, dances, offers me little paper cups of water. It is the intergalactic dance.

I dig through my box.

There is a small one, barely prominent, but there. It's very soft. It's soft brown and greens with white patches. When it unrolls it spouts words and laughter, smells like Starbucks, grins and sticks its tongue out. It is me, Alexa, and Jojo playing Scrabble in a Barnes and Noble Cafe while we wait for our car to be repaired.

I sift through recent ones.

There is a newer one, bright orange. It unrolls and trembles with excitement, gives hugs, braids a shoestring. It is the first day of my second year at Advance.

The more I dig, I find larger ones, less soft ones.

In a corner, large but rolled tight, there is a black and dark blue one. It unrolls and it is cold, smells like cologne, holds a suitcase, and says mean words behind a Cheshire smile. It is a few memories in a bundle of dad leaving, and the conversations that followed.

There are so many memories in the box that I can't open them all. I know I don't want to. I put them back to sleep and close the box. But I keep my box with me. I know they will prove useful soon.

Eurydice's song

I left my faith in a lover
who used it for a song
who used my voice for harmonies
and my sinew to string his guitar

I left my faith in a lover
who carried it with him to hell's door
who used our rings to bribe the king
and laid our vows out on the floor

I left my faith in a lover
who in trust must have lacked
who made a deal with Hades
and had the audacity to turn back

I Shall Live as Myself

because it is how I am happiest
because I do not choose who I am
because there are people who think I shouldn't
because you think I shouldn't
because it is my choice
because there are others who have
because those others did more than survive
because those others lived
because some didn't have such a choice
because some died for it
because I would rather live as myself
than die as yours

In His Image

find me on my knees before the altar
searching for an exodus of my sins
searching for forgiveness, mythical as fairy tales
saying hallelujah, a promise to be broken
and I'll fall like lucifer from god's starlight grace
scandalous acts blacken shining white wings
deja vu as it happens a thousand times again
men born in sin as morning dew on grass
though it can burn away, it will always come back
so, in the mirror, I see no god's epitome

Invisible

The water whispers words to me and
I wish I knew what it was saying.
It's hard to hear the spring over the sounds
of shouting that isn't mine in my mind,
of angry songs that vibrate to my bones.
But the spring is a candle in the window,
the gardens are the calm that follows a storm.
Here, I am invisible to a world
that wants to watch my face as I cry.
But I watch the horizon as evening comes
and know that I can live after I survive.

When I Die

When I die, bury me low

So, I have less of a way to go.

Leave flowers by my grave

and carve benign words beneath my name.

Leave coins and cards and your best wishes.

Share stories, jokes, and recipes of my favorite dishes.

Say that I was kind,

that I lived as I died;

that in all I did I tired

to live my best life.

Remember me as you want

with fond memories or ones that haunt.

But when I die do not weep for me

as I go to join the Lady Persephone.

Lindsay Miller

My name is Lindsay Miller and I live in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am a rising senior at Woodlawn High School and am currently in the Great Scholars program. Because I am a rising senior, this year was my first and last at Advance; however, I hope to one day come back to be a staffer. I am artistically focused, my interests mainly including singing, piano, ukulele, and guitar. I also enjoy writing and plan to major in English or Journalism at Southeastern Louisiana University or the University of New Orleans.

Mother

My mother whose touch is velvet

Whose hair is a field of grain

Whose shoulders are a tissue

My mother whose eyes cut diamonds

Whose hands are filled with fire

Whose fingertips are blades of grass

My mother whose back is a load of bricks

Whose embrace is infinite

Whose laugh is a chorus of children

My mother whose mind is an unnoticed cave

Whose love is a waterfall

Whose words are a novel

Storm

As grey clouds form overhead in the morning sky
The sunrise begins to slowly disappear
In the distance, a corvid's cry is heard
He is loquacious, but simply as a warning
To be a pluviophile would be out of place
For the coming horror is grunted to destroy
Mayhaps the clouds will quickly fleet away
And the luna will come out tonight again
a complete Elysium blanketed with peace
But this peace seems to only be found in fiction books

Little Things

I didn't know I loved the subtle movement of grass in the wind, how it brushes my leg as I gaze towards the sky.

I didn't know I loved the way an owl so silently flies to stalk its prey. The ominous mood, how it grows as the wings extend.

I didn't know I loved silent car rides with those close until I almost lost the privilege to.

I didn't know I loved the gentle touch of fingers on ivory until I pressed the keys.

I didn't know I loved the feeling of tears streaming down my cheek until I felt I couldn't cry.

I didn't know I loved a comforting hand to wipe those tears away until I was able to cry on the shoulder of one I love.

Home

Eyes that are the window to your mind,

You are home.

A smile not only seen but also felt,

You are home.

An embrace gives the protection of walls and roof,

You are home.

A chest being my comforting pillow,

You are home.

A voice so melodious every word is a lyric,

You are home.

A feeling so serene,

You are home.

The Path to You

Together we died long ago,
But apart we were still living.
Now a cold, dark path still leads to you,
Away from a world unforgiving.

With demons and dragons,
You fought every day.
Sometimes with a shield,
Often nothing to display.

But it was the final battle,
They won.
Now, this path that leads to you is haunted,
And can never be undone.

Would You Believe?

Would you believe your eyes,
If the leaves in the trees waved back?
Would you believe your eyes,
If a branch swayed as if to say, "Attack!"?

Would you believe your ears,
If the gentle breeze seemed to whisper, "Hello."?
Would you believe your ears,
If a bug in a trap were to say, "Oh, no!"?

Would you believe your nose,
If the fragrance of flowers sent hate, not love?
Would you believe your nose,
If you smelled a smell only known from above?

Would you believe your tongue,
If what you tasted was always sweet?
Would you believe your tongue,
If there was never something bad to eat?

Would you believe your hands,
If a feather felt like a knife?
Would you believe your hands,
If all they felt was strife?

Rebirth

She quietly whispers, "Wake up, now."

I tell her, "My candle is being blown out."

That my roots, the bones in my body have decayed,

But instead of a reply, I am met with a song.

A calm song, almost invisible to the ear,

"My evening wind blows," she sings to me.

"Over the horizon, the sun will surely go."

"The water will flow, your spring will arrive."

She faces me, a wild look in her eyes,

"Your garden will grow, just allow it some time."

"To be reborn, you surely have to die."

Escape

She sings a song of sorrow

That leads me to believe

She doesn't speak with truth

Only lies spill from cheek

A girl with unknown power

She hides behind facades

The walls she built with flowers

They crumble when she talks

Her lies they are so simple

Yes, they are plain to see

But they are more for her, an escape

A forest with no trees

Cat Picht

Hello, my name is Cat Picht. I am currently living in the small town of Natchitoches. I am originally from St. Petersburg Russia but then was adopted when I was one and moved here. I love to play soccer, read books, hang with friends, play the violin, write, listen to music, and travel. I hope one day I can move to England or Colorado. I would love to either be a police detective, police I.T., or something that requires a lot of traveling or action.

Bonjour mon nom est Cat Picht. Je vis actuellement dans la petite ville où ce programme est organisé. Je suis originaire de Saint-Petersbourg, en Russie, mais j'ai été adopté quand j'étais un et j'ai déménagé ici. J'aime jouer au soccer, lire des livres, traîner avec des amis, jouer du violon, écrire, écouter de la musique et voyager. J'espère qu'un jour je pourrai déménager en Angleterre ou au Colorado. Je voudrais être un détective, la police informatique, ou quelque chose qui nécessite beaucoup de voyage ou d'action.

What I didn't do

What I should have done is say I love you

What I should have done hug you one last time

What I should have done is laugh with you more

What I should have done is danced with you under the stars

What I should have done is taken more pictures with you

What I should have done is stared up at the stars with you

What I should have done is say goodbye one last time

Hatred

Dress made of crystal butterflies

Hair made of gold

lips made of sugar

eyes made of roses

heart made of ice and fire

hands that can burn and explode.

Wish for what you would like

Be careful what you wish for or you won't like what you get

Be careful what you wish for because you can only have so much

Be careful what you wish for or you might get a cat instead of a dog

Be careful what you wish for and always speak clearly

Be careful what you wish for and be specific with what you would like

Do not demand but ask, and be careful what you wish for

So, if your careful with what you wish for you might indeed get what you asked for

Inside out

I like my box, it's a little see-through, but you can't see its contents. Ok, so there is a ring made out of golden flowers That I wear all the time. My necklace that I got from my cousin is in the box. Oh, look that's interesting, I won't use it but there seems to be a water gun with Alistair's name on it. There are two books stacked, Maid of Secrets and Beauty and the Beast, two of my favorites. A picture is folded up and put in the cover of one of the books, it's of me and my best friend on her porch during Christmas. I recognize my cats' collar hiding under the books. I see my father's watch that he always wears, and I fasten it to my wrist. My favorite jumper is folded nicely, I put it on since I'm always cold. My brother's ULL shirt that I stole is in there too. My mother's earrings I made for her are tucked in the corner. Last, I spot something that's also special. My acceptance letter for advanced, without it I would have never met some of the amazing people in this room.

Starbright

Something's glowing

A star so high

Too far to reach

Open book

Easy to rip

Lots to read

A whole new world

Pen

So bold and bright

Easy to write

A felt tip pen

My Books

My books who are just as open as they are closed
My books whose pages are like silk and sandpaper
My books who opens windows when doors shut to a new world
My books who has more secrets than me
My books are thin like plaster
My books are thick as the fog on a dark night
My books who keep me occupied when my friends cannot
My books who are strong on the inside but weak on the outside
My books who are the key to the questions

Things I Didn't Know I Loved

I didn't know I loved the clear blue sky
I didn't know I loved the trickle of rain on my tin roof.
I didn't know I loved thunder pounding the sky
I didn't know I loved laying on the carpet looking up and daydreaming
I didn't know I loved sitting in the bed of a truck letting the wind blow through my hair
I didn't know I loved just sitting with my best friend just laughing
I didn't know I loved blowing dandelion fuzz
I didn't know I loved sitting by a pool with my feet in the water
I didn't know I loved the small things in life

20 Years from Now

Beep, beep. My alarm goes off. It's 4:30 in the morning. I slowly allow myself to wake up and go to my job. I'm a detective for the London Police Department. I work basically 24 hours because I never know when I'm going to get a call. I have to answer them above all else. I could be getting dinner; I have to go. I could be arresting someone, I get a call, I'd hand the criminal over to my partner, detective Allen, and I'd have to go. My jobs take me all over London. I've been in an alley with the victim then get a call and be in a fancy hotel all the way across the city. I'm 36, married, and have two beautiful children. The world has changed a lot in the last 20 years. Some good some bad. A scientist found the cure to cancer which made him rich and famous. His work has saved millions of people. People are now able to get shipped off to the moon and mars to live there. I wonder what it is like. Hover cars have been put on the market and are already flying in the air. The newest iPhone XNP5 has been on the market also for a mere \$3,500. Way too expensive for a phone. And there aren't any more kings or queens. It's a certain type of family, not royalty but something else. It's a little confusing to understand and explain. I have the house I've always dreamed of. I have the family I've dreamed about and the job that always keeps me on my toes. Life is looking up for me and my family.

This is How You Should Act

Don't throw food on the floor. Don't throw your toys. Always pick up after yourself, don't leave a mess. Go have fun with your brother, don't argue over anything. Use your fork and knife properly, don't stab your food. Keep your feet off the chairs, don't make them dirty. This is how you hold a pencil, write slowly. Make your handwriting neat and legible. Go to bed at your bedtime or you will be tired. put on your Sunday dress- make sure to sit like a lady, don talk too much. Always brush your teeth, morning and night or no one will want to be near you. Raise your hand in class, wait to be called on. *But what if I know the answer and they don't call on me?* This is how to braid your hair make it nice and neat. go to school with a smile on your face. Don't waste water and don't leave the light on. Make your bed, keep in smooth and presentable. Sit with your legs crossed. this is how you set the table. This is how you clean the house for guests or a holiday party. This is how to drive a car, stay in the lines. Always be nice to your brother even when he isn't. say please and thank you when talking to someone. Don't do the same thing if your brother doesn't get in trouble.

Claire Reed

Claire Reed was born and currently lives in Eunice, Louisiana. They attend the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts as a sophomore. Creative writing is Claire's second class at ADVANCE. Her hobbies are drawing, walking, and learning. She aims to be an animator someday.

PETALS

Crepe Myrtle petals
Falling through the air
Caught in my hair

BIRDSONG

Little songbird sings
His tune of happy springtime
It is three A.M.

SWAMP

My foot caught in the
Boggy mud of my swamp yard
The rain can stop

DOPPELGANGER

I walked down to my mom's truck, my friend Hailey beside me, her bright orange dyed hair glittering in the sunlight. I was recounting to her a story from my old school as she laughed along.

But as we grew closer and looked up to unlock the truck, I saw something strange. Two kids running toward us. And one of them looked mad.

As they grew closer, the mad one yelled out "Stop trying to steal my mom's car!" This confused me, but what really got me was that I could soon see that they looked exactly like me.

Down to the last detail, we were just alike. The grey baseball cap, faded green hair, worn blue jacket, and black cargo pants. I slowly reached for the pocketknife on my belt loop as my heart rate picked up, anxiety surging, and I asked. "What is this?"

"I could ask you the same thing," growled my clone. Now that they were only feet away, I noticed an identical Hailey accompanying my look-alike, looking thoroughly disturbed. My Hailey spoke up, to shakily state "This is weird."

"Is this some kind of prank?" I asked.

"Is it?" my clone retorted, glaring.

"I...I think we should calm down and try to figure this out, okay?" clone Hailey suggested. My Hailey nodded in agreement.

"...okay," my clone and I responded in unison.

I stepped forward and began to examine my clone, ignoring their grunt of protest.

"It's absolutely uncanny..." I mumbled, mostly just to myself, "you've got all my scars...acne...it's identical."

I noticed the Halies had taken to talking. I watched absently a moment before my clone removed my hands from where they had been resting on their shoulders.

"Stop," they stated simply.

"Geez, sorry," I replied, taking an exaggerated step back.

"Play nice!" my Hailey snapped, looking at us, "We need to get to the bottom of this."

"Guess so," my clone agreed before I could speak, so I punched them in the arm for stealing my response, receiving a punch and two exasperated "Jack!" s in return.

We cut it out, but I stuck out my tongue, which started a slap fight. The Haleys had to physically split us up this time. "Geez!" mine exclaimed.

"All right, all right!" I yelled, struggling from her grasp, "I get it."

She sighed. Then lit up with an idea. She pulled my hat off my head and threw it to the clone Hailey, who barely caught it.

"Hey, what was that for?"

"So we can tell each other apart," The clone nodded in agreement and put my hat on.

I grunted in reluctant agreement to the idea, and my clone smirked. I glared back. "Guys..." my Hailey warned, seeking to prevent another fight.

"Yea, yea..." I muttered.

"Let's go back to my-our? -house," Clone Hailey offered. "It should be empty, and we can try to figure this out."

"...ok," I nodded. "Sounds good."

We got in the truck and drove off. There were many things we had to figure out...

Words Left Unspoken

Two people sat in a room, one short, cropped hair, wrapped in an oversized hoodie and curled up on a bed, the other one taller, with hair caught in a ponytail and wearing a tank top, and sat on a beanbag. The room was sparsely decorated, with a dresser, bed, a desk, and a full-body mirror.

“How’s your heart...?” asked the taller one.

“It’s *fine*,” snapped the shorter one, “It just...went fast.”

“...if you say so,” replied the taller one.

There was a pause.

“Are you sure you don’t want to talk about it?”

The shorter one slammed their phone down. “I *said* I’m *fine*. It happens all the time, I’m used to it.”

“That...doesn’t really make it any better.”

The shorter one shrugged.

“Is there anything I could- “

“*No.*”

“...are you sure you’re fine?”

“It’s just how I live,” the shorter one shrugged again.

Another pause.

“You know I’m here for you, yeah? You can tell me anything.”

“Okay.”

“...”

“You sound like you don’t believe me.”

“I don’t.”

“Oh.”

“I’ve heard those exact words thousands of times and never been able to believe them. Don’t take it personally.”

HMM?

Who decided we should
Have the power to scream all day long?

What god pulls my arms
Like the strings of a puppet?

When do the cells of all things know
When its time to say goodbye?

Where did the stars come from
If not the tears of some god of sadness?

A DEATH

My first experience with death was March 10th, 2012, when my pet fish died. Being a child, I cried very much for the first few hours and they mostly forgot about it.

My next most important was on April 30th, 2016, when my father died. He worked in transportation. He had gotten into a crash with another 18-wheeler and broken his neck. I spent a few days in tears and the next few years numb.

I suppose next in line would be December 13th, 2018, when I fell off a building. It wasn't entirely intentional. Sort of a spur of the moment thing. I broke every bone in my body and punctured a lung. Expected injuries, though it did hurt a lot.

Today is June 18th, 2019. I found my fish and my dad. I think they were disappointed in me. I am too, I think. Doesn't matter. Nothing really bothers me, except that I miss my mom. I know she still has many years to live. I get to visit her now and then, but it's one-sided. Whatever. I'll wait. My dad and my fish keep me company for now. We play cards and we wait. I'm trying to be patient for my next experience with death.

Good Job

What I *should* have done was kept my head down, stayed quiet and moved on. But I guess all the anger I had built up was ready to come out, whether I liked it or not.

Let's go back about an hour, to 6:45 AM on Monday, at Green High School. I'm walking down the hall, kinda distracted because I hadn't had the best of mornings, gotten up late and had to skip breakfast. So I'm walking and I bump into somebody. No big deal, irritating but it's my own fault, so I say sorry and prepare to keep walking, because what are you gonna do?

But I hear a familiar click of the tongue and I look up and cringe.

"Ughhhh," says Kelly, the usual cause for my terrible time at school. "Don't you look where you're goddamn going?"

"Sorry," I repeated, "I didn't see you."

"I bet. It's like you don't have a damn brain."

Now, I'll tell you. I'm a bit of a crybaby. So, my lip is starting to wobble and my face starts to go red and I can see by the look on her face she can tell.

"Aww, now he's gonna cry and go tell his little friends he's getting *bullied*." She says to her friends.

This may not have seemed to warrant what I do next, but please bear in mind that this girl had tormented me for a third of a year now. Understand why when I tell you that after she says this, I clench my teeth and dig my nails into my palms and tackle her to the ground. I'm not very strong at all, but the rage behind my blows and the surprise gives me a bit of an edge.

So I ram her against the cold tile floor and repeatedly slam my fist into her face. It was satisfying, in a sadistic way. I'd thought of this moment many times, sort of as a way to cope with her. Kind of sick I guess, but it worked.

Sadly, the feeling didn't last long. I felt the sting as she started using her fake nails to scratch my face, and moments later a teacher was pulling me off.

The rage overtook my senses and I start thrashing, and I can't really remember what happened next but I assume I got pulled into the office.

So that catches us up to me, sitting outside the principal's office and shaking like a leaf with scratches on my cheeks and blood on my fists. In true me fashion, I am on the verge of tears.

The door opens and I decide to examine the ground. There are hair and food crumbs, and an empty Dorito bag under the bench. The principal glares at me a moment before speaking.

"Tom, please come in."

Ryder Robbins

Ryder Robbins. This Arkansas native comes from North Little Rock Middle School with an ACT score high enough to get him into ADVANCE Program for Young Scholars. He has always had a passion for writing songs and stories. He has done a lot of work over his weeks at advance. He hopes to continue to write in the future and come up with less cringe-inducing autobiographies such as this one.

Alstin Took a Tumble

Can you argue with the best nah not really

Peace be with you go ahead hold up your rosary

Oh lord what are these words it ain't right wish I could take

Flight plot twist I'm a bird what an iconic line

These words are not pandas not black and white

I don't mean to be a bully, but this sounds like an eminem track

Gone bad it needs swag it's not good it's pretty sad

Ye I would roast it more, but mom said I can't burn trash so

I wish dumbo would fly in and take me out if you

Think this is el stupedo you might be el stupido bro

House of Cards

Home is an interesting word. A house is not the same as a home

A house is a building stacked brick by brick

A home is what is inside

A home is where you are supposed to be safe

But it's hard to feel safe when you feel like you live in a house of cards in a quake zone.

Or should I say a house of cards.

Our house is not what will come down at any second.

A home you'd think is a place where you can breathe but can you.

If you live in a home of cards every wrong word is a gust of wind

Say something bad and our home will cave in.

I Don't Need to be Nice

I hope people don't say I'm heartless

I really need to use my heartless

Because when I really cared

You couldn't even careless

How could you be so careless

You come back in my dreams

just to leave me haunted

But I hope all the decisions you made

Will come back and haunt you

Inside Jokes

Emily flies in at the advance after-party and walks up to the group. "Plot twist I'm a bird!" She says. We all admire her new wings. We want to write one bigger story together. Mister Ralph reminds us there are no bad words in literature. Clare and Tre high-five. Shriya has a good idea about a story and we all are like "what a good idea Shriya." she sighs. I have a great idea to include someone strapped to a trolley but then I remember. Is it Advanced appropriate? We write it nappy-headed biscuit and all. Then we go to play volleyball. Rory pulls a wild move and I wonder is that a ball as it proceeds to hit me in the face. I serve and it lands in the bushes. Be careful of the snacks I say. Oof, what a mistake. There was born the snack squad. Haraash is better known as a stuttery snack. Cody or also a stumbly snack. Rishona or even better spicy snack. McKenzie. Sister snack. Rory. Sir snacks a lot. And me. Snackzilla. Speaking of Rory. That time where my poor phone was locked in his room and I could not save it. I had a brilliant move. Use a toothpick. Once the toothpick broke and got stuck in his lock it was no longer a brilliant move. But none of this would've happened if grandmaster with a C Hadn't have been my R.A. We had so many funny conversations. Caleb is the best. We are not even going to talk about the order of the nut.

Oceans

Don't make me feel like water invisible.
Accept when I cry cause people seem to notice but don't care.
Don't calm me like a stream cause I am a wild ocean
Listen to the songs of waves hitting the shore.
Listen to the gulls and maybe
Just maybe your bones will understand
When you lose your footing the waves will take you away
The evening sun like a candle in a dark room.
I will call out from the sea I hope you see my face
The day you lose your footing the tides will wash you away

Kimberley Sorsby

My name is Kimberley Sorsby. I am 13 years old and live in Little Rock, Arkansas. I attend Our Lady of Holy Souls Catholic School. The Duke Talent Identification Program allowed me to take the ACT. My ACT scores led me to Advance. My hobbies include reading, singing, and listening to musicals. I enjoy live theatre and have recently taken part in my school's play. This class has become a second family (in a somewhat literal way). I hope you enjoy, not only my writing but my classmates' writing as well.

Guilt

Today they killed
An innocent man
I shouldn't have let them
Go through with the slaughter
I should have, however,
Confessed to the crimes
Admit to the bodies
They found in the garden
But now my son has
Paid for my misdeeds
I shouldn't have let him
Go through with the plan
I should have stopped him
But now it's too late
I'm guilty! I'm guilty!
Not him

Love

Wedding bells ringing
Flowers blossom on the arch
'Till death do we part

Escape

The smell of the Sea
Beach towel beneath me
Lost in my thoughts

True

The monitor beeps
She takes her final breath
Goodbye, my love

Sweetness

My dog who is a dwarf fighting giants
 Whose bark is that of a lion's
 My dog with a tail of a human
 With a fire still burning inside
 My dog whose fur is silk
 Whose tongue is ice and fleece
 My dog whose bite is a baby's coo
 My dog with the brain of Einstein
 With the common sense of Patrick Star
 My dog whose love is a galaxy
 Whose affection is a warm blanket
 On a cold winter's night

Unplanned

A man and a woman had just entered their home. She slammed the door and turned toward him, tapping her foot. "Look," he said, "before you get upset, let me explain."

"No!" she responded, "Charles, I am more than upset. I want to know, what made you do that?" The man went to sit down, he placed his hand on his head.

"I don't know...I had a few drinks, and he was egging me on..."

"That's what drove you to attempt that?!" the woman questioned.

"No, h- he threatened me!"

"Threatened you how?"

"He...he just did." the man threw himself up, almost losing balance.

"That still doesn't explain why you just left him there!" she exclaimed.

"I panicked!" The man started to tear up, show his vulnerability. The woman sat down with him, being his comfort.

"Look, yes I'm upset. Just know, we're both in this together." Sirens were blaring in the distance.

Possibilities

“Alright,” Mr. Ralph says, “Let’s hear your poems so we can move on.” Everyone stops writing and waits for Mr. Ralph to pick someone to read. *BUZZ!* An alarm starts blaring in the halls, and Alastair gets notified to take us to the auditorium.

“What’s going on?” Ada asks.

“Are we on lockdown?” I question

“I’m not sure,” Alistair responds, barely fazed by the news. Everyone starts walking, confused by the current events. When all the students are accounted for, Mrs. Harriet gets on stage.

“Calm down everyone. I know the events of this afternoon are strange, but I want you to know that you are in good hands.” I start to wonder why this is happening, and of course, I am answered by Mrs. Harriet. “I want you all to be aware of what is causing this. A group of young people living in America have gathered together.”

“Nazis?” Ryder questions.

“No,” Mrs. Harriet replies, “They call themselves ‘The victims’. This group has made it known to the world that they are targeting organizations that encourage youth to learn and apply themselves.” Advance is part of that, I think. “From this point forward your morning classes will stay the same, but the afternoon will be spent learning safety and how to act if we are targeted. Room assignments will change, and all classes/activities will be held in the dorm. RA groups will be changed to TA groups. Later today the RAs and I will stock up on non-perishable foods.”

I lean to Emily, “Do you think we will be able to call our parents?”

She answered, “I’m not sure, but I hope we can.

Mrs. Harriet continued, “You will be given disposable phones, since our cell phones are easier to track. I want to inform you that our systems were hacked, and information was leaked.” Everyone around me starts to panic. I’m not even sure what I feel, I think.

Leighanna starts to say, “Well guys you see, we only have two more weeks until we can go home right.” We all nodded.

“Lindsay adds, “If we stick together, we can make it through anything.”

I zoned out thinking about not being able to see my family. Mrs. Harriet catches my attention when she says, “We have evidence to believe this is an inside job.” This makes Everyone gasp.

Shriya comments, “Why would anyone that works here want to destroy it?”

“I don’t know,” Clare responds, “maybe they feel they were wronged in some way.

Then Tre thinks it’s a good idea to say, “Maybe it’s Alastair.”

Ada hits him on the head, “Don’t say that!”

Nick replies, “You never know,” as he pulls his hoodie over his head. Everyone is quiet for the rest of Mrs. Harriet’s talk. Afterwards, Alastair walks us back to the dorm, and we all gather in the lobby.

Alston brings up the Alastair conspiracy, “You know, his reaction to the news wasn’t really a reaction.”

Cat says, “What if he actually is in on this?” We part ways. Our class has three rooms on the 2nd floor short hall. Two girls’ rooms: Ada, Cat, Clare, Lindsay then Me, Emily, Shriya, and Leighanna. And the boys share the third room. As we head to bed that night, I can tell that we are all pondering on the thought. Alastair wanting to end Advance.

Reverse

Rachel was always bullied for her clothes. In 4th grade Rachel found an outfit that made her happy, and Klaus Kazoo, the school bully, decided to tease her.

One thing that stuck with Rachel is when he said, “Rachel dresses like a toddler.” For the rest of 4th grade through 5th grade, everyone called her ‘toddler’. The teachers included. People would pour their drinks on her, throw mud at her, and tease her constantly. The bullying got so bad that Rachel shut down. In 6th grade she wore black, baggy clothes, and just floated under the radar all year.

Then, in the middle of 9th grade, she moved, because her dad got a job offer out of state. Rachel knew it was her chance to be herself. “New school, new me,” she said as she walked into her new high school. Rachel was wearing an outfit that she thought was pretty. She hoped everyone else did as well. Her first class was smooth, no one teased her, no one stared at her. Rachel was enjoying herself...until lunch.

Rachel was headed to lunch when a group of girls called out, “Hey, Rachel!” Rachel turned around and let them reach her. The group was dubbed: the popular girls. Immediately Rachel feared the worst, they were going to tease her.

The leader of the group introduced them, “Hi, I’m Jewel and these two are Teresa and Rose.”

Rose spoke up, “We were wondering if you wanted to sit with us at lunch.”

“Really?” Rachel asked

“Of course,” Jewel said, and began their walk to lunch.

“I like your outfit,” Teresa commented.

And just like that, Rachel became part of their clique. They did everything together, Rachel even became a cheerleader. At the same time, Rachel changed. She became the bully, and 9th grade was a breeze. Everyone liked her, for the most part. In 10th grade it got to the point that most people feared her. This continued until 12th grade.

The first day of her senior year, a very familiar face crossed the hall. “Klaus Kazoo?” Rachel asked. The familiar face turned at his name.

“Toddler?” Klaus teased. He looked no different than he did in 6th grade, just taller.

“Not funny,” Rachel responded.

“What happened to you?” Klaus asked.

“What do you mean?” Rachel questioned.

“I mean, you look different, in a good way.”

“Whatever.” Rachel knocked his papers out of his hands and walked away. Rachel met up with Teresa, Jewel, Rose. They ate lunch together and Rachel told them about Klaus.

They all agreed to treat him as though he had been here since the beginning. So, they did.

For the first two months, then something happened. Rachel found herself constantly thinking about Klaus. She tried to deny the fact that she was having feelings for him. Whenever she saw him she would shove him trying to prove to herself she didn't care about him. Then one day Rachel turned the corner to see Teresa doing the exact thing. Without thinking about it Rachel shoved Teresa against the wall.

“Shove him again, and this we be nothing,” Rachel threatened.

“What the heck, Rachel! Whatever just stay away from me.” Teresa exclaimed. Rachel let her go and went to apologize to Klaus. At this point everyone was staring at Rachel, too scared to say anything.

“I'm sorry, Klaus. Not just for this, but for the way I've treated you the past few months.” Rachel told him.

“It's no big deal,” Klaus responded, “I deserve it, because of what I did to you.” Klaus grasped Rachel's hand and led her away.

The rest can be filled in. Rachel and Klaus began to date soon after. They were both brought to their senses. They had a good rest of the year, except for being teased by Teresa, Rose, and Jewel. In a way, they both knew they deserved it. Rachel didn't want it to be any other way.

Emily Xu

Emily likes food, candy, potatoes, and cats, though not necessarily in that order. One of her greatest dreams is to own a candy shop and then rob it (the candy, not the money. Why would she need the money?). Her hobbies are reading, puzzles, and eating. Her favorite movie is either *Lucy* or *A Letter to Momo*. She is also the ‘founder’ of the saying “plot twist, I’m a bird” (yes, she takes credit for that; she has to make money somehow). She also hopes that you, whoever you are, enjoy her works but mostly her poems.

WINTER HAIKU

In the cold nighttime
No green is showing
White snow piled high

SPRING HAIKU

Flowers are growing
Pollen is everywhere
The bees are dizzy

SUMMER HAIKU

Hot sweltering day
Mother nature hates us
Everyone's burning

NOT MINE

Doofus, with an extra emphasis on the ‘o’s
Wacky, something everyone knows about
Despacito, my Alexa plays on full volume
Yeet, the word that stands out on its own.

Dummy, something I hope I am not
Americanese, I pretend to know what this word means
KACHOW! I think Lightning McQueen said
Okurrrr, which strangely sounds like ‘okra’
Ha, a simple word yet I have nothing to say
Jah, French-sounding and looks like a typo

HOME

Home meant more to Ashley than it would to a normal person. Walking down the path, she recounted all the times her family had shared; the hugs, the laughter, the talking; just enjoying each other’s company.

Ashley stepped on the front porch, looking in the black darkness of the house. The floorboards creaked underneath her boots as she walked throughout the rooms, breathing in the familiar smells.

Next, she goes to the backyard and in the far left, she can make out three rocks, side by side. Dad, mom, and sis. A sad ending.

The graves gave Ashley a wave of nostalgia, and she hurried out of the place. Stopping in front of the building, she snaps her feet together and salutes. Goodbye.

Today would be her last day here. Serving her country was all she could do now. Walking back down the beaten trail, she meets with her fellow soldiers.

“I’m ready,” she says, putting on a brave face. The commander nods and they start moving.
Because home meant more to Ashley, she would give up her life to protect it.

FROM THIS POINT FORWARD

From this point forward you'll be a good child; from this point forward, you'll be too big to suck your thumb but too small to know that I'm gone from Earth; you'll wash by yourself; get ready for school by yourself; you'll have many friends; *mommy I miss you* ; you'll meet new people by yourself and then you'll question the lady at the adoption center, "where's my mommy?" and she'll look at you sad and say "she's gone, and don't ask about your dad"; time passes and then you'll go to middle school; get more friends and take lots of tests; you'll get straight A's and make me proud; you'll start to scream and rage as all teenagers do; you'll turn back to your old self in high school you'll have a car; you'll get a boyfriend; and before you know it, you'll be graduating; you'll cry and say goodbye; you'll realize I've been watching you all this time up above; you'll live life with your soulmate; you'll have children; and from then on, you'll come back home, and my child I'm sorry I left you so early; you'll visit me every month or so, and at my gravestone place the flowers you bought for me; from then on you'll be a true mother; from then on you'll be sad your partner left you and this world behind; you'll feel sad that everyone's leaving; you'll be fine, as you have your grandchildren to comfort you, and your grandchildren; then it's your turn, my darling, and Mommy has been waiting for you all these years.

THE FOREST

In the darkest forest nights by far
The whispers of the trees you hear
The fairies sing their song of color
Evening is finally here
The bones and roots both make the dirt
And the faces upon the tree
The cry of wolf not feared from any
By candlelight spring is here
Atop the horizon sits the moon
Invisible only to those who sin
The elves in the garden sleep in groups
Too scared to fight the wild beast
The reflection in the water ripples
And all is calm before the storm

MY FIRST

My first day without you
Was like a blissful breeze
Cool and refreshing
In the summer heat
All along I thought
I couldn't live without you
But in reality
It was just a simple game

My first day without you
Broke down my barriers
Tore down my doubts
To know I live better life
Than the one you fabricated
The thoughts you made up
Made me give up

But now I'm free
And shackle-less
Now in your presence
I stand victorious
My first day without you
Seemed possible at last

SATURDAY

Saturday comes and goes
Undisturbed by others;
This time is one of fun and play
So why do I have to math all day?

I ask my mom for an answer
“You do not know the way” is all I get
So here I am on this Saturday
Doing math all day
While hours come and go;
I thought this time was one of fun and play
But apparently not so

WHAT YOU ASK FOR

Be careful what you ask for,
As sin and greed can only take you so far;
And the heart says stop when you get too close
But do you ever listen?

Be careful what you ask for,
For everything is different
Every smile hides a tear;
People aren't who you think they are

Be careful what you ask for,
Because many of us lie
Sometimes the truth is too much
So we sweep ourselves away.

Alston Zhang

Hi, my name is Alston Zhang. I'm 13 years old born on March 22, 2006. I live in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm in the eighth grade and currently attending Caddo Middle Magnet School. I have been in the gifted and talented program since first grade. I have 2 siblings. One older and one younger. I also have a little cat. I am also a second-generation advancer for my older cousins came to the Advance when they were my age. This was my first year here and I have had a lot of fun writing and making new friends in the creative writing course. I have learned and experienced many things during the 3 weeks here.

Didn't Know

I didn't know I loved cats till my mom brought one home.

I didn't know I loved nature, till I saw a beautiful valley.

I didn't know I loved food, till I ate after 2 days.

I didn't know I loved the earth, till I realized its where I live

I didn't know I loved animals, till I saw a baby bird.

I didn't know I loved my bed, till school started.

Visuals

The sound of water dripping from a faucet.

The sound of wind blowing like a whisper.

The smell a waterfall in the springtime.

The colors orange and red in a horizon.

The statues in a beautiful garden.

The sound of little monkeys in the wild.

The song that birds sing in the morning.

The low light of a candle in a dark room.

The cry of a rooster early in the morning.

The roots of trees many feet below the ground.

The sound of crickets in the evening.

The face of a clock ticking away at time.

The feeling of a breeze on a calm day.

The feeling of an invisible wall in life.

The sound of cracking twigs like little bones.

Doppelgangers

One day, on a Sunday afternoon, my friend Gavin and I were walking back to my house after going to the gas station to buy snacks. We were walking up to the house when we heard a voice talking to my mother. He said, "Mom me and Gavin are going to go to the movies." We quickly ducked behind a bush both of us full of confusion. I peeked and saw 2 boys walk out of my house and towards my car. One looked like Gavin and one had an odd resemblance to me. Once they got in the car, we quickly ran up to the car to confront them. I knocked on the door and could not believe my eyes. They looked exactly like Gavin and I. They got out of the car and asked if we were the new neighbors. I replied that they were in my car. A look of confusion crossed their faces. He said that he had no idea what we were talking about. I walked into my house to find my mother watching tv. She said, "Hey, I thought you were going to the movies with Gavin." I told her that there were some weirdos in the car that looked like us. I went back outside to make sure that they did not drive away. Shortly, my mother came outside and asked which one was me. We both raised our hands and looked at each other. My mother asked us many questions such as my birthdate and favorite foods. Somehow my doppelganger got all the questions correct. He even had the same phone as me and password too. At this point, my mother was getting really confused. This seemed like it would go on forever. I knew everything he knew, and he knew everything I knew. He even knew what I was thinking! It was as if he was an alien. My mother gave up and just told both of us to come in. It was late anyway. It was awkward having a person that looked like you and knew what you were thinking of. It was also annoying that my mother kept getting us mixed up. I was tired, so I got ready for bed. My doppelganger was sleeping on another mattress. Once I hit the bed, I passed out. I woke up the next day to see that the mattress was gone. A couple of minutes later, I thought I just had a weird dream. I walked downstairs to see my doppelganger eating at the table. I thought to myself, "The worse is yet to come."

Home Sweet Home

Home, the place where I feel safe.
Home, the place where I was raised.
Home, the place where I find sleep.
Home, the place where I can sleep.
Home, the place where I can eat.
Home, the place where I can play.
Home, the place where I can relax.
Home, the place where I don't have to worry about things.
Home, the place that I love.
Home, my favorite place.

I Shall Feed My Cat

Because she will be hungry.
Because she will scratch me.
Because she will be rowdy.
Because she will meow loud.
Because she will knock things over.
Because she will scratch my door.
Because she will ruin the furniture.
Because she will pee on the floor.
Because she will spill her water bowl.
Because I love her.

My Cat Alice

My cat whose face is like the meeting of sun and shadow.

My cat whose ears are like 2 mountains with soft grass in between.

My cat whose whiskers are long like antennas.

My cat whose hair is short like cut grass,

But soft like a blanket.

My cat whose meow is like a quiet yell,

A purr like a machine working.

Legs like a lamppost,

And paws like darkness.

My cat whose claws are sharp like knives.

Whose tail is like a snake.

Whose back is straight as a ruler,

And a tummy as big as a small pillow.

New Student

One day, I was walking to class with my classmates. I looked around and saw a new student. I asked who the new student was, and they said, "What do you mean new student? Alex has been here since the first day. I thought yall were good friends." At this point, I was getting confused. I was thinking that they were playing a trick on me but that was probably not it. I have never seen this kid before and apparently, we are best friends. Even if he was, where was he the whole time and why do I not know him. I have never even seen him walking around. Later in class, we were talking about a previous story and somehow Alex knew everything we did. Even what we did on day 1. After the first 3 hours of class, we went to lunch. During lunch, Alex was nowhere to be seen. I asked Nick where Alex was, and he replied that he didn't know and Alex that went here. That was really confusing because they were talking to each other in class. After lunch, we went back to class. I saw Alex again, sitting in a chair. I went up to him and asked him where he was during lunch. He looked confused and said, "What do you mean? I was sitting right next to you." He then told me that we were best friends. He showed me pictures. He told me to check my phone and sure enough, there were pictures with me and Alex. I went to the bathroom to think about what I had just saw and heard. One I returned to class, I saw that no one was there. Once I turned around, I saw Alex by the door. The words "see you later" came out of his mouth. That's when everything turned black.

Rainy Day

It was a rainy day. It was full of thunder, lightning, and heavy showers. It was humid and damp. Once you went outside your skin would immediately begin to moisten. On rainy days there's really nothing positive to think about. The loud thunder also makes my cat hide behind the washing machine. You can hear the rain on the roof slowing down, speeding up, then slowing back down. It was quite peaceful actually. All you hear is rain hitting the roof then quiet thunder in the background. These sounds were calming. I actually like rainy days. Even though it's a bit moody, you can relax and listen to the rain pittering and pattering all around.

**Northwestern State University's
ADVANCE Program for Young Scholars
2019 Creative Writing Class**



Front row (from left): Ralph Adamo (Instructor), Tré French, Emily Xu, Lindsay Miller, Alston Zhang.
Second row (from left): Cat Picht, Ada Chen, Kimberley Sorsby, Shriya Gogineni. Back row (from left):
Nicholas Bennett, Alastair Dunn (TA), Leighanna Kain, Ryder Robbins. Not pictured: Claire Reed.