



DING DONG, YOUR  
OPINION IS WRONG.

# Ding Dong, Your Opinion is Wrong

## ADVANCE Creative Writing 2017 Anthology

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## Beneath the Cobwebs

The cream colored house casts a shadow over the front yard. The sound of your footsteps up the stairs seem to be the only sound in the neighborhood besides the rustling leaves on the trees. The heavy, black doors seem to suck the light out of the surrounding areas. As you walk in through the front doors, you can feel the whispers of the wind grasping at your spine, making you shudder. The old, wooden floors creak as you walk over them, and you can feel their texture rubbing up against the bare bottoms of your feet.

The blue chairs have thin white scratches on them, like the stripe of a talon marking or missing its prey. The painting above the marble fireplace reminisces of happier times, with emerald grass and sapphire skies. The plantation seemed lonely in the swirls of paint. The dark wood of the wine cabinet gleamed in the corner.

The iron railings of the staircase chills your fingers as they brush against them. The game room smells of forgotten memories, of forgotten games and forgotten friends. The old blanket strewn lazily across the sofa was in faded colors of brown and red, and the hole the size of a fist glared at you from the stark white walls.

The kitchen downstairs must have been beautiful as some point. Dead plants grab onto the blinds on the window, and some droop into the sink. The once white cabinets had faded to the color of spoiled cream. Malnourished, long stems hang low over the white brick fireplace, and the faded blue sofa smells of old age.

The backyard is melancholy and overgrown. The water turned the color of algae in the pool, and streaks of filth covered the walls. Rain began drizzling down as you step into the front yard. The grass is far too tall, and the flowers have grown out of control. A car drives down the silent street, startling you. You turn and look at the house that is filled with secrets and cobwebs, and decide that some secrets are best left alone.

# Happiness

Happiness feels like basking in the rays of the sun

It sounds like joyous harmonies and melodies

It tastes like sweet citrus and sugar

It looks like an array of colors against an azure sky

It smells like a gentle summer breeze wafting across a field of pink roses

# The Crystal Bridge

When I close my eyes, I am transported to a utopia of brightness and song. The first thing I see is a large lake that is seemingly made of glass. The water is the most beautiful blue you could imagine a lake being. I can see small jellyfish gracefully bobbing around in the water of glass. Next, I notice a crystal bridge over the lake. The railings on its side are covered in whirls of precious gems and spirals of rubies and emeralds dance across the bridge. The bridge itself is so clear that if you looked straight down while standing on it, you could see the smallest ripple in the water below. The plants surrounding the lake are nothing like the plants we have in this world. Some of them have long, soft petals in the colors of a sunset, and some have sweet, short petals with romantic reds and blues. The sky is as clear as dawn and I can see a few brightly colored birds swoop and soar across the azure horizon. The grass is as pristine as it is vibrant, with the shade of polished jade. To me, the most beautiful part of the landscape is the people. Their Elysian faces seem almost elven, with their skin being as smooth and clear as the lake. Their eyes range from the color of the earth to as blue as the sky they live under. Some of their eyes are the color of storms forming in the distance, and some are the color of the evergreen forest. Their cheeks are flecked with the kisses of the sun and their lips are pink and full. The women wear beautiful, floor length dresses ranging from wedding day whites to the color of ripe purple grapes; some have hair the color of woven gold, some have hair ribbed with ebony, and some have hair the color of fresh fallen snow. The air smells of a field of wildflowers after a rainstorm, and tastes of plump berries picked fresh off of a bush. I can hear exotic birds of all shapes and colors singing in the evergreen forest that surrounds the lake.

## The Walls

I couldn't help but freeze in shock when I saw the body. It was in the center of the hallway, right outside my dorm room. The cream colored walls were splattered with dark dried blood and the air reeked of death. In the middle of the cement floor was a mangled corpse. A long slash ran down the center of the poor girl's torso. Some of her innards were beginning to spill out of the open wound. The blood on the floor wasn't as dark as it was on the walls, so the murder couldn't have happened that long ago. The girl's mouth was still poised in a silent scream. Fear burned in her emerald green eyes. Eventually I realized that I had been staring at the body for at least a few minutes. I could start to feel the sticky blood on my hands, my skin, in my hair. And suddenly noticed the girl's auburn hair and spray of light brown freckles. My roommate had been murdered. I let out a bloodcurdling scream as my world began to fall to pieces around me. A few girls and my RA came running to the scene. Two girls fainted, one vomited in the corner, and another girl stood a few feet away from her, retching. The RA had turned ghostly white but still called 911. All of the thought swirling around in my head threatened to drown me in a tidal pool of blood. Why had she been killed? How did the murderer get into our room? How didn't I notice? Why wasn't I there to save her? I felt scalding tears stream down my frigid cheeks as the paramedics rushed up the stairs. As I sunk to my knees, I let one final thought swallow me whole: What if it had been me?

## Stains

I felt a grin spread across my face as I saw her chest stop rising up and down. I would have thought that her eyes would look blank and lifeless, but they still burned with fear. Strange. At least she will stop hurting others. I debate turning back for the girl sleeping in the opposite bedroom but decide that she never did anything to deserve death.

I could feel the dead girl's blood soaking into my skin, staining it. My hands were dark red, and in an odd way, it suited me. The girl lying at my feet had hurt so many people, in so few days, one of which was my brother. She told him he would never amount to anything. That bitch. No one hurts my brother... no one.

I tuck my key back into my shirt. The orange and purple shoestrings that hold it were braided like a child's hair. How immature. I guess working at this camp has its benefits.

As I walk down hurriedly away from the scene, I think about the likelihood of me getting caught. Well, for starters, I am a teaching assistant here so there is almost no chance of me being a suspect.

I felt like my footsteps were too loud. They seemed to echo off of the white walls. The walls down the hall were splattered with blood, making the scene look even more grotesque. I can't help but imagine the look on the poor girl's face when she sees the body for the first time.

I have a dorm room to myself, so I didn't have to explain to anyone why I came back to the dorm at three in the morning covered in blood. Anyway, I stripped off my sweaty clothes and jumped in a freezing shower. The crimson stains across my body begin to wash off in the stream of water, staining it red as it runs down the drain.

After my shower, I wrapped my soaking hair into a bun at the crown of my head. Water dripped onto my shoulders and back, sending a shiver down my spine. I wiped some of it off of me, and briefly saw more red staining my fingers. Somehow, I still didn't feel any regret. I threw the key that I can use to unlock the dorms onto my kitchen counter. I cleaned my knife and slide it back inside my mattress.

As I was finally drifting off to sleep, I pretend not to notice the bloodcurdling scream that rings out from the opposite hall.

## Love

I didn't know I loved the stars until I saw them twinkling against a canvas of obsidian

I didn't know I loved the sky until I took the time to watch birds swoop and soar across the endless azure horizon

I didn't know I loved the grass until I let its soft green blades brush against my arms and legs

I didn't know I loved the sun until its warm rays enveloped me in its brightness

I didn't know I loved the earth beneath my feet until I picked it up in my hand and let it crumble out from my fingers

I didn't know I loved the water until I stopped and studied its surface, which is as smooth and clear as glass

I didn't know I loved the snow until I stood with my feet planted on a glacier

I didn't know I loved the clouds until I was soaring above them in an airplane

I didn't know I love the wind until it lifted my hair off of my shoulders and sent it blowing behind my head

I didn't know I loved the rain until it gently spattered against my window and relaxed the mood of my house

## Up in the Stars

So many things were wrong in that house, you could hardly tell what was right. Kitchen cabinets slammed like the doors on my dreams. Money was tight, almost as tight as the tension that filled everyone in our house. The tension that electrified our minds and stole from us the ability to speak without yelling. Things started going downhill when my sister ran away. To where, you may ask. Or maybe why. We still don't know. She could be dead for all we know. A day or two after her sudden disappearance, the yelling began. "Maybe if you weren't such a lousy worker, we would be able to pay for more search groups," my father would yell at my mother. "Well, maybe if you had been able to cool your attitude with her, she wouldn't have run a way in the first place!" my mother would yell back. Before the tragic incident, my parents were truly happy. My mother was always seen with a smile and a gleam in her eyes, and my father was always laughing. Oh, how I miss his laugh. My sister's disappearance happened five months ago. Ever since then, yelling and shouting and slamming doors has become a frequent occurrence. My parents have forgotten to love me, and I fear they have forgotten to love my sister as well. The arguments have stopped being about her anyway. Now, the arguments are mostly about money struggles. Honestly, would things get any better if my sister came back? Money would still be tight, and even more yelling would be thrown at her. And if she turns up

dead, how would we be able to pay for the funeral? The tension in our house would have torn us apart by then, anyway.

I'm not sure if I can take this any longer. I am sitting up in my room, listening to my parents argue for the thousandth time in the past few months. If one more door slams, I will know that it is my time to leave. Maybe I will run away in the night. Maybe I won't. I have already packed a bag just in case... there is another door.

I believe it is time for me to go. I wish I had the heart to write a note, but unfortunately I don't. I sling my bag over my shoulders and climb quietly out of the window. Out in the open, I can see the stars twinkling in the inky black sky. Maybe one of them is my sister, watching me from all the way up there. Maybe I am crazy thinking that she even made it to the stars. Well, off I go into the world. Alone.

## Dreams

I dreamed of a vast, blue ocean that swelled and rocked,

I dreamed of a meadow of tulips dancing in the sweet spring breeze,

I dreamed of a light blue stream gently cascading through a brook of rocks and trees,

I dreamed of the light we hold dearly shining brilliantly across the Earth,

I dreamed of a sunset in the colors of an exploding star.

I dreamed of great ice walls collapsing beneath the weight of the world,

I dreamed of midnight stallions rearing up on their hind legs,

I dreamed of the battle cries of the warriors, the piercing streaks of the fallen,

I dreamed of the scraping of knives against stone,

I dreamed of utter silence.



## Zero

Everyone is exactly the same. Except for Zero. He can see the differences, yet no one knows how. He is the only man with zero light in his eyes. Zero Friends. Zero family. His brain could not be tampered with by the probing claws of the government, no matter how hard they try. One would think that he would be sympathetic of the people with no minds of their own. But he isn't. He also has zero sympathy. The people without minds of their own are fools in his eyes. They saw him as some sort of target. He was the subject of humiliation at school. His family disowned him, and he was thrown on the street with nothing but the clothes on his back. One day, Zero cut himself on a rock. He was fascinated by the stream of blood dripping out of his foot. That night, he decided that he wanted to see what the blood looks like coming out of others. Three days later, he committed his first murder. He traded a loaf of bread for a dull knife from a poor man in an alley. Zero waited behind a building after school for some unfortunate soul to stumble by. At some time around midnight, a man walked by him. There was no one around to hear him scream. Zero took his time running the knife across the man's throat. After he died, Zero sat and watched the crimson waterfall pour out of the man's neck. A few drops splashed against the crumbling brick wall. At that moment, Zero decided to include the bloody walls in every crime he commits. He may have had zero friends and zero remorse, but concerning him, the government had no control.

## Velvet

My mom whose hair is of ebony  
Of obsidian, of black velvet  
Whose eyes gleam of the earth  
Whose eyes are storms exhaling  
My mom whose words drip with fire, with ice  
Whose laughter is of church bells ringing  
Of the music of the beguiled  
My mom whose laugh is not a far cry from ecstasy  
Whose skin is of the finest silk  
Whose face holds the kisses of angels  
My mom whose cheeks are springtime roses, of dewy pinks  
Whose eyelashes are the brushstrokes  
Of an artist

## Rain

Rain pattered outside my windowsill  
Small droplets hitting the glass  
Running down in rivets  
Thunder boomed off in the distance  
And a streak of lightning pierced the night sky,  
Setting the world ablaze  
The dainty little flowers in my front garden  
Were drooping as if they were overcome by  
Some form of depression  
Such petite thing are not made for  
Such a storm  
More thunder crashed like the  
Savage beating of a drum  
The rain poured down harder, faster,  
Splashing against my kitchen window  
Dousing the bright green grass  
Shutting out my view of the trees  
Rain pattered against my windowsill  
Lulling me off to sleep

## Deep Blue

The rocking back and forth of the boat was making my stomach twist and turn into knots. I could feel my breakfast of eggs and pancakes churning around, creating the feeling of my food trying to force its way out of my throat. But my nausea couldn't take away from the beauty of the surrounding scene. The water was as clear as day, and the morning sun shone magnificently in the blue skies. A few drops of saltwater had splashed onto the boat, making the hard white floor slippery. My family and I were huddled together on the back deck, watching the gentle waves flow through the water when things started to go wrong. It was around 10 A.M. when the waves began to pick up. My beautiful, older sister had her arms hung over the side of the boat, her curly hair whipping behind her head. The small boat began rocking more violently, making my stomach clench even tighter. My father told my sister to stop hanging off the side of the boat, and when she refused, the captain said that it is perfectly safe. That people never fall off the side of boats. That there is no need to worry. Well, he was wrong. He was completely wrong. Without warning, a large and powerful wave crashed against the side of the boat, causing me to trip and fall onto my arm. I felt a sharp pain in my wrist, and knew that I injured it. But I didn't get to think about it for long, because a piercing shriek ripped out from the opposite end of the boat, only to be cut off by a loud splash. My sister had been thrown overboard. There was one major problem with this: she didn't know how to swim. She flailed around in the swirling water for a few seconds while the captain lunged for a life ring, but her head quickly went under. I felt tears pouring out of my eyes as I screamed and screamed her name, hoping, praying that she would figure out how to swim, that her head would appear above that goddamn water. But oh, no, all I saw was a triangular fin rise briefly above the water, attracted by the small amount of blood that must have come from my sister's body when she was violently flung off of the boat. The fin seemed to mock my family and I. The water quickly changed from blue to red, and I collapsed to the floor of the boat. Every night, I think about what would have happened if I had saved her. If I had jumped in after her. But no matter how much I dream, her head will never rise above that water.

## Acrostic

Keeper of many secrets, I  
Existed within my own world, separate from others –  
Not totally separate, yet only interacting in my own  
Detached ways sometimes – that was before I  
Realized there was more to life than my  
Individual sphere, my individual shell – I  
Came out to the world in my own way, still  
Keeping many secrets, but now keeping fewer.

## In The Middle

I'm standing in the middle between nerdy and cool  
Neither one, nor the other, nor both  
Yet that means I'm fully accepted by neither group:  
Too cool for the nerdy kids,  
Too nerdy for the cool kids.  
I don't know enough about computers  
To fully talk the computer talk,  
I don't know enough about sports  
To fully talk the sports talk, either.  
Yet I embrace my place on the spectrum  
In the middle between nerdy and cool:  
I'm rejected by neither group.  
I can flit my way into both,  
I'm the puzzle piece that can fit in both groups,  
Linking them, connecting them.  
So here I stand in the middle:  
Neither black, nor white,  
Just a shade of grey,  
One of many in this world.  
And I get along without being  
One or the other or both:  
I thrive in my place on the spectrum,  
I embrace my place on the spectrum.

## Homage to My Feet

My feet have gone all sorts of places,  
Worn all sorts of cheap shoes,  
Walked on all sorts of rocky trails  
In the middle of nowhere,  
Ran with me in all sorts of sports,  
Getting sore in the process –  
They have endured it all.  
Thankfully,  
I do not need a new pair of feet  
Every time I get a new pair of shoes.

## You Don't Want to Stain Your Shirt, Do You?

Always put your napkin on your lap before you eat. If you're wearing a white shirt, take it off when you eat food with sauce – or else your shirt will be ruined (but just one tiny stain won't ruin the entire shirt!). You don't want to be walking around in public with a stained shirt, though, do you? When you're telling a story in front of other people, don't include anything that might embarrass me. When it's sprinkling outside, take an umbrella with you (but I'm not going to melt if I get three drops of rain on me!). You don't want to be caught in a rain shower without an umbrella, do you? When you're in the bathroom, close the toilet lid and turn off the light when you're done. Set forks on the left and spoons and knives on the right (does it really matter?). Yes, it matters. You don't want to look like a fool, do you?

Oh, one last thing – when you're at an interview or business dinner, don't order shrimp. Or queso. Or barbecue. Or anything with sauce, really. You don't want to stain your shirt, do you?

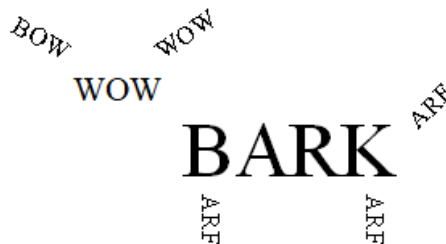
## My Cat

My cat, whose fur is as soft as the unperturbed snow on top of a Himalayan mountain  
Whose fur is softer than dresses of silk  
My cat, whose purr sounds like a symphony of violins in harmony,  
Whose meow sounds plaintive yet sweet and cute like a baby's cry,  
Whose cry to tell me to stop picking her up goes unheeded more often than not  
My cat, whose face invites looks of wonder and delight while she's sleeping  
My cat, whose decision to curl up in a box or laundry basket or a pile of warm clothes always  
evokes happiness  
Whose decision to sleep on a blanket in my lap makes me feel like a peasant graced with the  
presence of a royal  
My cat, whose paws are as pink as roses and as soft as cushions  
Whose belly invites desires to sleep on it like a pillow  
My cat, whose eyes light up when I brush her  
My cat, whose figure is the equal of all the other animals in the world.

## Cat



## Dog



## Natchitoches Thunderstorm

They shuttle us back and forth in vans  
To avoid your falling drops,  
The word liability flashes, red and large, in their eyes  
Whenever they hear your distant thunderclap  
Or see the forks of your lightning  
Even if you're thirty miles away  
And moving farther, farther in the distance.

You muddy our field and leave your  
Mark in the grass. Your little drops  
Render it unusable for walking or playing.  
Whenever we have something planned,  
You must have gotten word of it  
And sent the troops in to ruin our activity –  
Capture the Flag, Beach Party:  
Viewed only as what could have been,  
Not as what was.

Even though you irk us sometimes,  
We still like you and welcome you –  
You give us a respite, ever so slight,  
From the all-encompassing heat.

### Haiku

The Natchitoches heat  
Melts my body and my soul.  
Is it going to end?

### Haiku

Sunshine, streaming down  
Illuminates the water  
With its rays of light.

## A Long-Overdue Thank You

We always put our dishes on your ledge:  
We stack our cups,  
We place our salad bowls, still  
Covered with random leaves and the  
Vestiges of ranch dressing and sunflower seeds;  
We entrust our plates to your caring hands,  
With their remnants of ketchup,  
Spare peas, and sticky cheese casseroles,  
And walk away without saying thank you,  
Still expecting our dishes to come out of your hands  
Shiny, clean, like new.

We complain of the constant lack of forks,  
Of silverware put in the wrong places,  
Of the ketchup and chocolate ice cream  
Being invariably out,  
Of the waffle maker's one day lifespan,  
Of the soda machine giving us fizzy water  
When we wanted root beer,  
Yet we never say thank you when  
Our favorite foods are in,  
When there are forks and knives and spoons,  
When everything is working,  
When we get what we want.  
No, we just take and walk away  
Without saying a word.

We always grumble of the poor quality  
Of your casseroles, of your pasta,  
Of your having dinner for lunch  
And lunch for dinner,  
Yet we never appreciate the work  
That you do to make it all possible  
For our hordes to descend upon you,  
Making our demands.

So, thank you, cafeteria workers  
For all the work that you do. Thank you.



## Losing Weight

My mother told me to lose weight recently –  
But how? Nobody knows.  
Weight Watchers wants to sell you its  
Patented, trademarked, and doctor-tested,  
100% effective plan at an exorbitant rate –  
Does it work? Does it taste good?

Some people say that fat is  
The enemy here. Everything with even  
One gram of grease should be  
Eliminated, cut out. The less fat,  
The better. Trade the fat  
In your hot dogs, in your buttery popcorn  
For fruit drowning in  
High fructose corn syrup water!

Others wag their fingers at you:  
Don't go near that canned fruit!  
Fat isn't that bad for you anyway:  
Sugar is the real enemy, really  
All carbohydrates in general. They tell you  
Cut the bread, the pasta, the cereal,  
Cut the soda, the chocolate milk,  
The cake and the ice cream.  
Low carbs equal low weight, they say.

Then there are the advocates for the salad.  
Fiber, they trumpet.  
Antioxidants, they yell.  
Superfoods, they scream.  
Eat two salads a day, they counsel.  
Fill them with superfoods and antioxidants and fiber:  
Kale and salmon, goat cheese and blueberries  
And cranberries and walnuts and pecans.

Then another group comes along, holding up their hands,  
Wanting you to stop with all of the above nonsense:  
Carry on with your normal diet,  
But cut the calories and increase the exercise:  
Eat less – fat, carbs, sugars,  
It doesn't matter! As long as  
Your portion sizes are less, they say.

Who should I follow, I wonder?  
Everyone says different things

That contradict each other –  
Fat is good, fat is bad, fat doesn't matter.  
Maybe the best way to lose weight  
Is not to gain it in the first place.  
Well, that's surely a lot of solace when  
Your mother tells you that you have too much already.

### What Makes You Angry?

A robber comes in and breaks all your glass,  
Your younger brother gives you lots of sass

Your parents take you on an hour-long hike  
Someone else is dating someone you like

Your weekends are fully consumed by chores  
After sports, your body's covered with sores

You get your ice cream cone – and then it falls  
Someone peeks underneath the bathroom stalls

Your Kleenex box runs out of tissues  
You and your siblings have lots of issues

Sometime in the night you lose your sweet pup  
You and your lover fight and then break up

You get a long lecture from your mother –  
A friend abandons you for another.

## The Angst of a Newly Minted Teenager

Angst: anxiety mixed with hope.  
Having just celebrated his thirteenth birthday,  
The newly minted teenager  
Starts to feel anxious about the world around him;  
He sees it through new eyes,  
Hears it through new ears,  
Feels it with new hands and feet.  
The world around him is changing,  
The world inside him is changing, too.  
He is a new man:  
With the change in his status  
Comes a change in expectations,  
With the change in his body  
Comes a change in possibilities.  
It all feels overwhelming:  
The anxiety about how to deal  
With the changing world is real,  
Yet there's some hope mixed in:  
Hope that the changes can be dealt with,  
Hope that the changes will help, not hurt,  
Hope that a change in age will finally  
Confer a sense of purpose on our teenager, will  
Confer the ability to affect change on the world,  
The ability to react, to respond to the changes  
Affected on him.  
Yet, for now, there is still uncertainty,  
About the future, about the past,  
About the present.  
Hence the angst of our newly-minted teenager:  
Anxiety, mixed with hope.

## Fortuna

Why do we constantly entrust  
Our fortunes to you,  
Lady Luck,  
Knowing full well that  
Your capriciousness means that we have  
No control over our lives?

They told us that our virtues,  
Our strength of character,  
Would grant us good fortune,  
And those without virtue  
Would invite bad luck on themselves.  
Yet I have seen many people

Who have exemplified good character  
And have fallen on the wayside,  
Who have thrown their all into the work  
And still suffered because of your  
Divine intervention, Lady Luck.

I have also seen those people without virtue,  
With no strength of character,  
Elevated to the top of the heap,  
Ready to lord over others,  
Thanks to you and your fickle  
Personality, Lady Luck.

We worship you, Lady Luck,  
Hoping that you will  
Share some of your abundance  
Stored in your golden cornucopia,  
With us. But how do you  
Repay us for our love and devotion?  
You spin your wheel  
And it will inevitably land on  
The purveyor of bad fortune.

Lady Luck, we listened  
To Machiavelli and his advice,  
Telling us that we humans controlled  
Half of our fate through our actions –  
But they only put us one step  
Ahead of the game. Your actions,  
Lady Luck, can raise us up  
Or put us back where we started.

What we didn't realize, Lady Luck,  
Was that your actions determine  
The path of our lives – and ours  
Only determine if we walk quickly or slowly,  
If we meander or walk in a straight line.

Lady Luck, why do we gamble  
Our hopes and dreams with you,  
Knowing that you can take everything away?

## Dear Samantha Green

Samantha Green,  
Lying in repose in a cemetery  
Guarded by a red oak tree  
Planted by an Indian chief to honor  
His lost daughter who died in the pursuit of love,  
How would you feel  
To find out that locusts crawl  
Among the bouquets of petunia and rose  
Placed to honor you and your kin?

How would you feel  
To find out that the wrought iron fence,  
Once shiny and new,  
Built to protect your grave from defilers  
Has since rusted and decayed?

How would you feel  
To find out that your grave,  
Made of the finest marble  
When you died 117 years ago  
And engraved with your name,  
Your date of birth, your date of death,  
Has faded into dark and moss-covered stone  
And water is needed to wipe away  
The collected dirt and grime of 117 years  
And reveal the secrets of your name?

How would you feel to find out that the American flags  
That fluttered in the breeze on the day of your funeral  
Now lie in the dirt on this hot summer's day,  
Tattered and in pieces after the trampling of 117 years?

How would you feel  
To find out that the trees,  
Planted in the cemetery to provide shade,  
A momentary relief from the blazing summer sun,  
Have overgrown, their roots growing unabated  
On top of the sacred space that contains  
Your grave, and their branches have  
Obscured your name, your date of birth, your date of death,  
Having fallen on your gravestone, undisturbed?

How would you feel,  
Samantha Green?  
How would you feel?

## Binary

What was once the Constitution had turned into a morass of useless laws and trivialities. What was once the United States of America... well, that's a long story. Thirty years after the disintegration of our former society, I lead my band of twelve men and twelve women in the wilderness, in an area formerly known as the Texas Hill Country.

Forty years ago, we had a constitution, we had the rule of law. We had states and a government and a Congress and a Supreme Court. Forty years ago, everything changed, when a series of events – yaks as pets, a series of murders, blood split, burning bears – totally changed the way we looked at the world.

Something called reabramgement emerged – it's all fuzzy in my brain. My father told me the only details that I know, and he didn't tell me much before he died seven years ago. I'm not sure if he knew that much anyway – he wasn't a higher-up, just a normal citizen who happened to be caught up in this morass that totally consumed our society.

With the changes of 40 years ago, our constitution changed with it. Three amendments – which should have been only laws, if that – entered the law of the land and overruled anything that the democratically elected Congress might have wanted. With the three amendments, everything started to go downhill. Our government became power-hungry after realizing that it could change the constitution as much as it wanted... that's how we lost the constitution. We no longer had a law of the land. Within a few years, the citizenry had been brainwashed in the government's quest for total control. At least that's what I know from the few records and oral histories that survived this turbulent period of time. Even those probably weren't all that accurate – a total reorganization of the brain didn't produce that great of a memory.

Ten years of that chaos passed. Ten years of sorrow, of pain, of death passed. Thirty years ago, though, the whole system fell apart. A band of revolutionaries had found a way to crack the code – to exploit the system. But they didn't have the most altruistic of motives: they thought they could control the populace better than the current government, and they had hacked into the system to prove that the current government's system didn't work. Instead, they had developed a biomechanical chip, implanted in a person's neck next to the thyroid glands, which controlled the body's hormones and neurotransmitters. This system allowed for the perception of free will and the perception of normality, but in reality, the chips allowed for maximum, and efficient, control.

For thirty years, our world has been in conflict. For thirty years, the battle between the status quo and the revolutionaries has torn our world apart. Some of us want no part in this conflict, like my band and me, and we've escaped into the wilderness to escape the death and destruction. Now, I think that the revolutionaries are on the verge of winning, and I think they're coming for all the survivors. That includes us, so we're trying to go deeper into the wilderness, to escape detection. I'm not sure if we'll be able to – but by God, we'll certainly try. None of us wants a chip implanted in our necks – none of us wants to be controlled.

Over the horizon, I see a group of men, clad in black body armor advancing over the next hill... they're coming for us. I know our end is near. We must fight to keep ourselves alive.

Well, we fought and we lost. The evil men put chips in our necks – forcibly. Now we are supposedly slaves to our government – but I’m not so sure that I am. Something must not have worked with the implantation of the chip – the resistance in my brain must have been too much, and my brain produced so many neurotransmitters that the chip never started in the first place. The failed chip implantation wiped my memory, though. I have no idea where I am, where I came from, who I was...

Some people call me Zero. I like that name: the government has zero control over me. That makes me smile.

## Fun Times

Man, I hate Saturday. The irritating smell of pancakes always wafts me awake and drizzled on top is the scent of black bitter coffee. I wished we had nothing planned for today, but this is never the case. It's only 8:00 and I just want to go back to bed. This sucks. After being pried away from my computer (it helps me recover much of the sanity that I lose during the week), my mother then plants me inside a car with all of my annoying siblings. Universal studios is fun she says. Writhing in lines for hours on end is fun she says. Moping around in thousand degree weather with your stupid idiot brother is fun she says. So, ride after ride I stood, miserable. Miserable from 11 to 12. Miserable from 12 to 1. Miserable from 1 to 2. One glance at my sister and I almost puked due to her irradiating smile forming from her admiration for the works of Satan that we've suffered through all day. I then proceeded to call her a bitch. I got smacked. The day went on and on like this until eventually even the sun could no longer stand this suffering and bolted from the sky, but we still remained. People all around travel half the globe for this shit? Our world really is screwed, huh... What a great way to waste a perfectly good Saturday.

## Gilded Trophy

It's the embers that spark  
And then may leave their mark,  
Be it expressed or kept  
'til there's no room left.  
The hijacker now controls  
By exploiting all the holes,  
And unleashes the beast  
You have chained down and leashed.  
Once the coal is all out  
And you have had your pout,  
Only then the emotion  
That missed all this commotion  
Instills the sense of grief, tire and sad  
That you needed most when you got mad.



## Wilted

30 years too late, 17 past ignorance and three since the panic. I mean, we probably deserved it, most of us, that is. If those in power were to serve as representations of the people, then it appears the people all agreed to ignore the warnings, disregard the consequences and erase our future. Power, in multiple senses, sourced the problem. It was 17 years ago that the research team I worked with had finally unlocked the ultimate power source: fusion. We were all jumping up and down filled with joy when the final test results blared on screen. We all thought that the crisis was finally over; we were all so naïve. We then presented our solution to the world; you would think that the most powerful companies would've loved the most powerful energy device, but it seemed a power spawned from corruption proved stronger. The initial cost for a full scale functional reactor that could power half a continent was 100 million dollars; definitely something all these companies could risk, but nothing any of them wanted to. Declination after declination arrived via email until each and every fellow scientist realized that despite our efforts, we could not alter the desires of humanity. "If the captain refuses to fix the ship," I can recall Gerome muttering, "then they, as well as us, will go down with it." It wasn't until 14 years later did they realize they were drowning. Panic swept through the world as people prepared to live underground. Everything on the surface had to be abandoned and thousands of years of progress had to be left behind. Now, our only and final action is to watch the sun we harnessed for them transform into what will be their final shadow.

## An Ode to ODEs

The ODE towers anyone who tries,  
with complexities and knots of which it ties.

Each and every second you trail on this path,  
is confusion and trouble with no turning back.

So pull out your calculator and just buckle down,  
you're stuck with pain until an answer is found.

## Crucial Encumberment

There once was a blue plastic piggy bank. It was not mine; it was my brother's. Inside of it was his collection of assorted coins. Mine looked similar but its additive total was only \$14.90. Why did it have to be \$14.90? That number burned a mark in my head forcing me to pop open the bottom of the plastic ball. I fingered around for the thin strip of metal I was after. A single dime flung from the opening. I then sealed the hole and scurried back to my room with my new treasure in order to complete the perfect 15 dollars I was after. I became a thief and nobody knew it.

## What I Really Missed

It all came down to this. A tied game that has lasted far too long into Penalty Kicks, but the end was nearing. The set was almost complete and the score blared 4 to 5. To stall the game further, it was necessary that I made this shot. Normally never picked due to my amateur skills, I was the only one who had not shot yet as the game dawned upon its expiration. Wanting to join my teammates on the sides, I closed my eyes and concentrated. The blare of the ref's whistle sent me rocketing towards the ball. To further boost my rage I pretended the ball was Natalie's head: fuck you Natalie. As I neared the sphere I arched my right leg back and then released its piston sending the ball flying. The sidelines screamed with joy. I really missed the goal.

## Neat

I shall make puns  
because I think cringe is laughter  
because internal wincing is success  
because the cleverness of puns is overlooked  
because the potential inside is limitless  
because the harmless joke can cause much more  
because the witty power can condense into a bullet  
because the clock is ticking and time is running out  
because I've been forced to write and I resorted to my only trump card

## Guide to Rain

Water can rain from above, and when it does you will get wet and then you will contract hypothermia and then you will die. This is not recommended.

Hail can rain from above, and when it does you will get smashed in the head with a 3 pound brick of ice and then you will lose consciousness and then you will die from exposure as the snow slowly covers your body. This is not recommended.

Money can rain from above, and when it does it is presumably your money and then you will become poor on the streets and then you will die of malnutrition. This is not recommended.

Fire can rain from above. No further explanation is required in order to demonstrate the strong advocacies against this action.

Dogs and Cats can rain from above, and when it does the smell of pulverized flesh will force you to hold your nose with one hand and that causes you to be unable to wield your two handed sword and that allows the giant yak you are fighting to crush you causing you to die of massive hemorrhaging. If placed into this situation, our models contain insufficient data to formulate a suggested recommendation; proceed as you will.

## A Nighttime Run

The night was still. This was the single time at which a city's only commotion was the steady buzz of electric street lamps occasionally broken by the whoosh of a nearby car. It was rather soothing, buzzing then a whoosh, buzzing then a whoosh, seemingly hypnotic until an intruder of noise disturbed the peace. "That was rad dude!" said a boy well into adolescence as he panted heavily in order to supply oxygen to his running legs. The other boy next to him, holding onto his hat in order to keep it from brushing off his head, managed to say: "I know right? Didja see Brittney's face when I punched that guy?!" "Yeah dude, her face was was hilarious! That poor dude, you even gave him a cold one!" "Man, we gotta do this next week as long as Kevin's got one planned for then." The wind racing behind their sprinting bodies died down for a split second as they turned into an alleyway. The boy with his reasonably fashionable hat glanced at his wrist; 2:23 stared blankly back at the kid. "Aw crap man, we got 7 minutes," he told his pal in which the response was: "How can we complete our preparations before *that* deadline? I'm not settling for being one of the only dudes in our school that misses a single bit of it! Our next hour has to be the pinnacle of tonight!" "Well," said the hatted boy "We just gotta keep on running" and the two hurriedly ran through the night.

## Problems

My calculator whose screen is a fragile tea leaf,  
Whose screen is a placid ice cube,  
And a train bounded towards the horizon.  
Whose buttons are ricocheting bullets,  
Whose buttons are tranquil stones standing erect,  
And crisp grains of rice.  
Whose case is a hard, sweet candy,  
Whose case is a gliding crow stark against the daytime sky,  
And a guiding sheathe sleek with ink.  
My calculator who has helped me solve many of my problems.

## Calibration

Random kid #3124776 – Hurt – Jump kicked my sorry ass 5 years ago for no apparent reason.

Random kid #5172229 – Helped – Believes that responding to my sneeze with an ancient tradition could assist me in my struggles of everyday life.

Random kid #7015053 – Admired – Seems like a cool dude but I'll never find out because I've never decided to personally know them.

## Room Known

Basic was a good description of my room. It had a single basic bed with a single basic drawer, a single basic desk and a single basic nightstand. Each piece of furniture had the same basic caramel colored wood coating that had been plastered across their surfaces. The wall was tainted a blue so faint, it was as if they had been bleached twice over in an attempt to remove the blue color that once stained the walls. In one corner lied the “black hole” as I would call it. This atrocity contained all my toys long past expiring date and each one was retired in this heap. Its void-like properties sourced many of my missing items, but I would not dare disturb the angry cist. To the left of it was an embedded closet with collapsible wooden doors that presumably came with the house. Inside were shelves that filled every crevice with its white paint. Each layer hosted a different theme: books on one floor, fancy clothing on another, board games as well, and so on. Left undisturbed was that earlier desk that lied across my bed. The desk had overarching layers intended for the stowing of educational items, but I simply overflowed the base with all of my junk I never cared to see again and the peak with little artifacts I'd take pleasure in eyeing from anywhere inside of my basic room.

## Never Doubt Your Eye

It just sits up there, mocking me, mocking us all. Each proper piece strikes a sweet note through the courtyard except that one. This carved figure that rests so nonchalantly amongst such a masterpiece as if it was a child vandalizing art in the Vatican. This defect is a sticky spine that hurts the eye but also is impossible to will away from. The structure whose face is blighted by this feature transforms from a magnificent iron-clad behemoth into a dimpy spool of steel-wool for everyone to mock. It's so sickening, all this lost potential that is corroded due to a single blemish. In fact, it's *so* sickening that passerbys upon noticing this blemish direct an accusing finger towards it. At that moment, you can see it in every visitor's eyes, disgust, treachery, anger all boiling up inside their head and between this flurry of emotion, they just laugh. Overwhelmed past the point of disbelief, they have nothing left to do but laugh. For there, at the end of every finger lies a building engraved with the words: “English Building.”

## The Thing Never Seen Before—Tree

Something looks like a giant mushroom stands at the middle of the park.

The cup is green and the root is brown.

The branches go into different directions from the middle.

They look like hands, the hands that catch pretty birds in the sky.

What are those green pieces on the branches?

The babies of the tree?

They shine in the sun, small, thin, and new.

The roots go deep and far from the base.

They are just like its legs to stand up straight

## Friend—the moment that was angry

Nothing can be better than giving, I thought.

Nothing can be better than loving, I thought.

Nothing can be better than showing my heart, I thought.

We met.

We left.

I told her my morning, I told her my night.

I loved her hair, I loved her eyes.

The black hair under the sunshine was shining like her eyes.

But she left, she left, she left.

How can she leave my morning?

How can she leave my night?

How can she see his eyes as I see her eyes?

She left, she left, and she left.

I Hope we are still friends.

## Winter Night

The voice of river is the songs for the spring.

It writes those songs with summers and falls.

No one calms it down but the winter nights.

Evening of spring, evening of summer, evening of fall, and evening of winter.

The sounds of crying from the freezing night.

The wind blows through the bones and steals the lives.

Calling the sunshine through the window to the stars.

No one responds but the candles inside.

Invisible fear coming out of my mind.

How wild is this winter night.

Hold your hands and close your eyes.

Spring is coming, comes with the wonderful sky and the garden by my side.

The river sings again, sings with the birds and everyone under the sun.

Clear water and clear sight, a cleaner world after that wild night.

## I Couldn't Believe My Eyes Part 2

That was a day in fall. I was only six years old. I couldn't believe my eyes on that day.

Everything was dark in the early morning. Watching the sky there was nothing I could see but those huge gray clouds moving around. I didn't like the weather in that morning. There was no sunshine, no blue sky. I felt cold. The strong wind blew through the trees and the road was covered with golden leaves. I said: "Mom, the air smells like morning." I don't remember what I was smelling, but it might be the smelling of those dry golden leaves or just the freezing going into my nose.

Later, the morning quietly left. The sunshine went through the clouds and shined in my eyes. I said: "Mom, look! There are lots of stars on the ground." The sunshine went through the leaves and branches reaches the ground. It seemed like many twinkling stars shining in the sky. It got warmer and warmer, it was almost at noon.

"Mom! It is an ocean, an ocean!" I said. Even now, I can still feel the cool wind blow through my hair. I couldn't believe my eyes. I saw the ocean. The ocean under the sunshine sparkled like the prettiest diamond in the world. I ran to the beach and I ran to the sea. I used my toes to touch the water. It felt warm, and it looked crystal clear. To see farther, there were two people kissing in the ocean. I felt like I already loved the sea. I felt as if the sea is the place of freedom and the place of love.

I couldn't believe my eyes. That was my first time I saw the ocean. The Blue water flowed into my eyes and flowed into my heart.



## I Shall Wear a Rain Coat

I shall wear a rain coat.

Because my necklace will still bright on my neck.

Because I won't get cold.

Because my dress won't lose its color.

Because it will cover my big belly after I have lunch.

Because the rain won't mess up my make-up.

Because I can see the road without keep wiping my glasses.

Because I don't have hair dryer in my back pack.

Because it makes me feel cool.

Because my umbrella doesn't look good.

Because I won't look like the chicken in the soup.

## Arson

It wasn't the greatest idea. Meetings between two people like us were rare. They were always on neutral ground. Usually advice or trading ensued. Sometimes it was to collaborate and join together for a plan. But that wasn't why I called it. I gave him the time, he gave me the place.

The parking lot was evident that this place was sketchy, which automatically made my skin crawl. I was used to anxiety-inducing places for missions, but never for meetings. A quick check of my phone told me I was right, however, so I went inside.

The air was chilled and riddled with dust, seeping in and infecting my lungs as soon as I shut the heavy door behind me. I immediately scanned the room as soon as my eyes adjusted to the darkness; it was instinct at this point.

An abandoned bar stood before me. Bottles of liquor lined the walls. Stools stood under the counter, painted with dust. A small stage took up the far wall. A window was carved into the wall behind the bar, giving a small view into a basic kitchen. Possible exits included the door behind me, a door most likely in the kitchen, and a small window in the right wall. Perfect. I always wanted at least three exits.

My tools were in the right places. A matchbook in my jacket and a lighter in my pocket. I didn't need a mask as I was always gone before the smoke had filled the room.

A door slam from the kitchen ripped me from my thought. My eyes shot up towards the door to the kitchen. Heavy footsteps echoed throughout the building, growing closer and closer until the door flipped open, swinging on the hinges and creating a slight screech as the tension built. Archie, an old colleague of mine, stood, eyes following along the wall until they met my own, widening in surprise. It wasn't his real name, just the one he went by. Everyone went by a name, usually with its own origin story. A cheerful grin spread like fire over his face. It had been a few months since I had seen him.

"Smokey! Damn, I thought it would be someone else. Why were your messages so secretive?" He asked. I had kept my identity anonymous when contacting him. I didn't want too many others here.

"I just wanted to talk, Arch."

"Talk away, man."

"I want to quit," were the first words out of my mouth.

His grin faded as quick as it had appeared, replaced by a frown. "What?"

"You heard me. I want to quit."

"Tch, do you really think you can?" He seemed baffled at first, but quickly regained his composure. I could tell he was growing furious, face as red as a tomato.

"I know I can. I just wanted to tell you."

“Ha! Are you that dumb? You can’t quit.” He started inching towards me, little by little.

“Why not?”

“Once you start, you can’t stop. No one ever stops.”

“Maybe I’ll be the first.”

“You really don’t get it, do you?” He was beginning to close in. My hand reached into my back pocket by instinct.

“Maybe I do, maybe I don’t.”

“You don’t.”

“Enlighten me then.”

“No one ever stops because they can’t stop.”

“Why?”

“Because they’re in too deep. You’re in too deep.” He was a foot away at this point. I backed towards the shelf behind me.

“Well, why is that?”

“Don’t you get it? You know too much. The second you leave you are a threat to all of us.” He gestured around like there were others around, but there weren’t. We were alone.

“You know I wouldn’t do such a thing. I just want to stop. I have a family now.”

“I don’t know that. For all I know, you’ll just turn us in.”

“Trust me. I won’t.”

“I know next to nothing about you.” He raised his hand, ready to pounce at any second. But I was quicker.

“Well, now you know I’m a quitter. I’m sorry, Arch.”

My hand wrapped around a bottle of alcohol behind me.

“Oh trust me. You’ll be sorry.” His arm began to swing forward. My reflexes were sharp.

I met him in the middle, the bottle braking on his arm as I slid back. The liquid flew everywhere, landing on the ground, mixed with Archie’s blood. He cried out and pain and began to yell out obscene words too uncomfortable to list.

A single match was all I needed to finish it all, flicking it along the wall before throwing it in the pool in front of me.

A single flame flickered before quickly growing, spreading all around the room, following the trail the alcohol had led. I turned towards the door behind me.

“You’re going to regret this!” Archie’s screams filled the room.

“I know.”

The door shut silently behind me.

## Equality

You were as resplendent as fireworks  
You were like a phoenix in all of its glory  
Organized and put together like a phalanx  
Somedays you were argon, clouded in your own world  
But you still had the grace of a griffon’s talon  
One day a quiet storm arose, the end in sight  
You saw the world like a view through a glen  
Our views clashed, and we debated to no end  
You said I was wrong, turning and walking away  
And then you were gone like a dewdrop in the rain.

## Dreams

I dreamed that everyone had wings and we could all touch the stars  
I dreamed that all wings were clipped and the sky had a limit.  
I dreamed that anyone could do anything as long as they tried  
I dreamed that happiness came with a cost and no one could pay.  
I dreamed that everyone was tolerant and loving to all  
I dreamed that reality existed and anyone could be judged by a simple mistake.  
I dreamed that my parents were ok and let the love be  
I dreamed of the rain drizzling as the door slammed behind me.  
I dreamed that love lasted forever and would never die  
I dreamed that time changed things and everything was a lie.

## Direct Message

If you only knew what I was doing,  
Brewing, spewing, spitting  
Venom I had rehearsed in my head  
I regret it now, but part of me wished you were dead  
Fury consumed me, blood pumping through my veins  
I was grieving and I wanted you to feel the pain  
Fingertips typing faster, I was so lucky you were out of range  
But part of me knew that no matter what I said, nothing would change  
So as my rage died down, my message complete  
I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and I hit delete.

## Cemetery

The funny thing about cemeteries  
Is that eventually people forget  
Everyone inside is just an engraving  
Known only by a name and a date set in stone  
And as time wears on  
They're forgotten, dirt caking on and on  
Until they're just a skeleton  
Buried under cracked brick and mineral

## Transition

8<sup>th</sup> grade. New school, new classes, and new friends. I sat alone at lunch, and everything was fine. A month or two into the school year, I made a friend. We talked and laughed and then he introduced me to his friends. It was great. I was happy again. I ate lunch with them and sat with them before school.

Then it happened. What felt like a simple mistake was made and before I knew it, words spread like fire behind my back. Everyone acted normal around me, but debates filled with shouting rang out when I wasn't there. I picked up on it. Then it went wrong. I asked for help. Beans spilled farther than I thought they could and it shattered my self-esteem. He thought I was annoying, but he still talked to me like everything was fine. But now everything's different.

9<sup>th</sup> grade. New school, new classes, and maybe new friends. I'll probably sit alone at lunch, and everything will be okay.

## Haley

Her mind couldn't think rationally  
Anxiety-induced, riddled with error  
Light peered around the corner  
Edging closer and closer  
Yet she still couldn't reach.

## Saturday

A day for thoughts to digest

No school; yay

A day to simply decompress

No homework yet

Reading lots of books or just a few

Thankfully, no plans have been set

I'm done with sports so there's no games to go to

No socialization

I don't have to worry about snapchat

No texts sent for consideration

Just a good book and chilling with my cat

It's the best day of the week

Because Sunday's depressing

We've reached the peak

Ready for school? Time to start stressing.

## Happiness

Happiness feels like a rainy day with a book

Happiness sounds like silence after a stressful day

Happiness tastes like a fresh crisp apple

Happiness looks like a rainy day with a book

Happiness smells like fresh dew grazing on grass

## I Shall Wear My Orange Shoe String

Because it's like an orange traffic cone on the street that makes your eyes tear up because of its... beauty.

Because it's a freaking sign that creates an imaginary arrow saying that I am a camper at the college.

Because my outfit is so bland I'm hoping it will draw attention away from my poor fashion tastes.

Because I don't own any jewelry so I put a shoe lace around my neck so I can fit in.

Because only certain people can pull off the bright orange look and I want to be one of those people.

Because I want to twin with everyone at camp.

Because (unfortunately) I can't lose it.

Because orange is the new black.

Because it's so bright it will blind everyone who looks at it; therefore, I will never have to use pepper spray if someone tries to rob me.

Because I'm forced to.



## The Dance

Dear God. It was tiring to say the least. There was a lot of people, and yelling, and bright colors.

The decades dance. I WAS excited. Emphasis on was. I even bought a costume. I wore a poodle skirt, white socks, black shoes, and a white shirt. I also put my hair in a ponytail with a ribbon wrapped around it. They say “go big or go home.” I looked like my history teacher. It was a sad day.

The songs were alright; I think what I was doing was dancing; I’m pretty sure Matt was pretending to have a seizure for at least half of the dance; and my friends and I started a grocery conga line. Overall, I think it went pretty well. I think the best part of it all was being able to go to sleep. Then, I dreamt about it. Dear God.

Kristin Schmidt

Keep what is

Reality

In your heart, but

Start

To

Imagine

New dreams because

Sometimes life

Can bring monstrous troubles. But

How will you succeed in beating down the

Monsters

In your life without at least

Daring

To dream of overcoming them first?

## The Valley

The sun paints the horizon orange and gold  
And everyone is calm in the valley  
The chilly air makes my bones go cold  
As the evening fog surrounds me

The garden on the hill is attended to by hand  
And I'm expecting to have flowers this spring  
If everything goes according to plan  
The florist will be happy and sing

The cry of the wild geese sounds like a song  
They fly over the valley each year  
And though their flight may be so long  
They use their strength to say "We're here!"

An invisible being paints the stars into sight  
And the river water reflects the moon  
I blow on the candle and out goes the light  
Falling asleep to a cricket's soft tune

## Trauma

I couldn't believe my eyes. Everything was a mess. I went to sleep last night in my bed, and somehow I woke up in a different room. The bed was hard, and there were wires connected to me. I heard beeping sounds and saw a weird screen with zig-zagging lines. The walls of the room were painted a cream color, and an ebony door with a silver handle stood in the corner of the room.

I have a weird plastic block on my finger. I'm wearing a polka dotted dress with only a string to keep the back from opening. There is a long tube in my nose that forces me to breathe when I don't want to. My hair is matted and my eyes are dry. It hurts to move my head. How did I get here?

I pull off the annoying tube. I take off the plastics and wires even though it hurts to remove them. I sit up in bed and a loud, piercing screech of a flashing light above the bed goes off. I don't like it. I have to get out of here.

My toes lightly touch the tile flooring. It's cold. Eventually, the balls of my feet are on the ground and I try to stand. I use the hard bed to keep me from falling. I stumble to get my balance, but I quickly get used to walking. I let go of the bed and place my hand on the wall for support. I realize the walls are peeling. I trip over a desk I did not notice before, but I catch myself despite my lack of coordination. My legs feel heavy like lead. I use the desk to push myself up. The screeching light is still there. I get to the door and turn the handle and it creaks as I push it open.

I observe the new room. People yell above the din. Tension fills the atmosphere. A man stands in the middle of the chaos. His eyes meet mine and light up as if he had known me for years. He looks happy to see me.

"You're awake," he mouths. He has short, messy, brown hair. His golden brown eyes reflect the light of the lamp on the ceiling. He has on blue clothes and white slip on shoes. My height is nothing compared to his. I'm at least two feet shorter than him. He has a long, strong jaw and white, pale skin. Beads of sweat trail down his face. I don't have time to stand in place gawking like an idiot, but I feel stuck. Hypnotized even.

I pull out of my trance like state from the screeching lights. There is a red and orange flower that I haven't noticed before. I think it makes the temperature hotter. It's dancing! I want to dance too! It looks like it's having fun. It takes a lot of space to move around. Maybe I can dance too! I start going towards the flower.

Before I can even get near the pretty flower, something tugs me back harshly. It is the man. He is holding my hand.

"Let me go," I say to him. He drags me to some doors in a hurry. I want to argue with him and tell him I want to play with the flower, but I'm too shocked to say anything. He pulls me to the double doors that magically slide open. The screeching is still there. It gets quieter and quieter and quieter, until I can hear it no more and I'm pulled outside.

There are more flashing lights, some weird moving beds, and a car with a silly plus sign on it. There are people with big brown suits with yellow stripes and funny domed hair. They also have a big snake in their hands.

The man takes me to people in blue outfits. They had funny domed hair, too. He lets go of my hand and starts talking to the people. I don't care what they have to say so I look at the lights in the sky. I think they are stars. They are very pretty. I'm under a giant lamp on a street, right next to a car. It's dark and scary out here.

The man walks away and gets into a little, white car. The people with blue suits tell me to get in the car. I do. The car starts to rumble and move. The seats are really soft and comfortable. It's definitely better than that hard bed. I'm sleepy. I rest my head on the seat belt and close my eyes.

I wake up. I am in another hard bed. There are more wires, beeping, tubes, and lines. The only difference is that there are people around me. Looking at me. It's calm. I don't know who they are, but I feel safe.

There is a woman. She has short, silky blonde hair and pretty blue eyes. She has a short, lean body. She looks like me. Before I even know what I'm saying I look her dead in the eyes. "I know you from somewhere." I know her? It feels like someone is talking through me.

"You were gone for four years. I am so glad to have my baby girl back," she says.

"You have amnesia," the man states. "You seem to remember the English language but you have forgotten very simple disasters, as shown by the fire incident."

I remember everything now. The plane crash, the dead bodies, the falling cases. No wonder I forgot everything and went into a coma. Why would I want to remember?

## Annie

“Where is Annie?” asked the small child.

“Um... sweetie. Don’t you have some test to study for?” asked the mother clearly avoiding the question.

“No. It’s the first day of school, Mama,” replied the child.

“Well, go and play then,” said the mother.

“But I want to play with Annie.”

The mother broke out in a nervous sweat. “Well Annie can’t come to our house right now. She is, uh, getting a visit from the, um, stork.”

“What’s a stork, Mama?”

The child was getting impatient. Why was her mom dodging her questions?

“A bird. With big wings. Now go and see if you can spot it from the window. It should be coming any minute now.”

“Why?”

“Because he wants to visit Annie.”

“But Annie is---“

“I know that she is, sweetheart.”

“Okay, Mama,” the child replied. She watched from the kitchen window but saw no bird. She gave up and decided to ask her mom more questions.

“Where is she?”

“A neighbor’s house.”

“How come she can’t come over?”

“Because she’s making a surprise for you.”

“Can I see it?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Just go look for the bird!”

The mother started to get annoyed. She honestly just wanted the child out of her hair.

“I already did.”

“Then do it again.”

“Okay,” replied the child. She went back to the window.

*Ring ring.* The phone rang. The mother picked up the phone and started talking. The child tried eavesdropping but couldn't hear the mumbling of the person on the phone.

“Alright. Are you ready to see Annie?” the mother asked.

“Yay!” the child screamed and ran out the door. The mother following after, laughing at her child's excitement.

The mother and child walked side by side down the street.

“Have you noticed that Annie has gotten fat?” the child asked.

“Emily!” the mother laughed.

When they got to the neighbor's house, the child finally saw her friend.

“Annie!” the child cried. Annie's ears perked up and trotted to the child in cheerfulness. Annie licked the child's face and wagged her tail wildly. Once Annie laid down, the child noticed a new fluffy rug in the house. On that rug was something amazing.

“Oh my goodness!” the child screamed and ran to the smaller versions of Annie.

“Choose one,” said the mother.

“I can have one?” asked the child. The mother smiled and nodded her head.

“Now we have a new addition to the family,” said the mother.

## Acrostic of My Name

Does not like work  
At all because he  
Yaks a lot and he  
Takes things lightly because he  
Obviously is  
Not a normal person



## Confusion Part II

I am still confused about things,  
From a pile of pages to a pile of bones.  
The black substance seems to permanently engrave itself on my white shorts.  
The sarcasm seems to have filled my brain,  
As I stare at this planet of strange things,  
Still confused.

## Confusion

I sat in this forest filled with green trees,  
With a book and a skeleton with me.  
I put them together to think of equality.  
In the space around me I felt sarcasm,  
The continuity of that feeling felt weird.  
As I compared ink and vinyl in my head,  
Why I did this you may ask, I do not know,  
I looked back at the book and opened it,  
Only to find ink splattered everywhere.  
Was that the work of my mischievous brother?

# I Want a Yak

I want a yak

And when I find one I'm naming him Zach  
He will use his nose to scratch my back  
And use his horns as a drying rack

When I go places he'll be helping me pack  
And when he is bad I'll give him a whack  
Hit him with the back of a tiny thumbtack

I'm getting another and naming him Jack  
I want to train Jack to try and run track  
But the one thing that they will always lack  
Is the ability to speak, not even a crack.

I want a yak.

## Something Dumb I Did as a Child

Something I did as a child that was dumb, yet quite funny, was in third grade. Our gateway teacher was gone for the day and therefore we had to do what the remedial classes were doing that day. The two teachers in the room were both looking at the computer at the front of the room after they explained our assignment and were interested in what they were looking at. After about ten minutes of me being bored I decided to ask what I should do, instead of an answer I just got “Oh, I like that one”, “That one is so cute!”, “I LOVE THAT ONE” and so I asked, “Are you guys looking at dresses?” and after I said that they asked what I said and when I repeated it I immediately got In School Suspension, and I was escorted out of the room by the principal. But as I was being escorted out of the room, I took a peek at the monitor, and sure enough... I was right!

## Jhansi

Whenever I hear the name, Jhansi, which is not very often, I immediately think about bravery. Jhansi is the name of the only queen that ruled India. When she was younger, she was taught that Indian girls were not allowed to study, or go to school; that was what boys did. Girls were supposed to spend their days with their mother, learning how to complete household chores before the day ends. Jhansi did all of her daily chores quickly, and spent her afternoons with the boys in the village that went to school, and studied with them. Many people in her village thought that she was a disgrace to her family, but many more thought that she was unique, and had great ideas for young girls in India. When she was older, she became the queen of India because she inspired India to change their beliefs on a woman's role in society.

When my mother told me the story about this queen, I knew that if she did not stand up for what she believed in, I would be in India, learning how to clean a house perfectly. Instead, I am in school, learning as much as I can so that I can use the opportunity that Jhansi worked so hard for me. Jhansi, the queen, taught me to be brave, and that is exactly what I think of whenever someone says our name. I love the sound of it, the meaning of it, and the story it tells. Most people I know cannot pronounce it correctly at first, but once they get it, it sounds perfect.

## House of Memories

I've lived in the same house for 14 boring, dreary years, the house still has the same, strange new vibe to it from when it was first built. While all of the other houses in the neighborhood are painted dark colors, mine is an eerie yellow, not like the bright color of a sunflower; more like an off-white, as if the painter was colorblind and was trying to pick out a creamy white. There are three balconies that have never been touched, with black paint so fresh, there are no chips in it. The doors to enter the uninteresting house are large, dark brown double doors, and has two windows so that any stranger can look through, and see what we are doing. There is a large, dark staircase that leads up to the empty game room that is always silent, and then my room. The walls are painted purple that is so bright, it burns the eye. Every piece of furniture in my room is either black, white, or silver. Everything in the room matches perfectly, it was scary. Where are all of the bright colors? Are they all locked inside the closets that are so strangely small, they keep me awake at night? One of the closets holds all of the Indian clothes that I wear once, and then forget about it.

Downstairs, there is the living room that has two regular walls, and one made of glass. Anyone can sneak into the back patio and spy on whoever lives in the house. A piano rests against one wall, but it does not make any music. Another wall has a fireplace, but it is never used anymore.

Outside, there is a patio that was not suitable for a curious child. My dad had an outdoor kitchen, with four plain stove plates, and one small fridge, but it was empty, because people snuck into the background and stole my dad's beer, and my lemonade. There was also a fire pit that always reeked of gasoline, and it was only used at night, once every few days. The patio was so sophisticated, and I wanted a swing, or at least something to play with outside, but I would have to wait until I was old enough to reach the stove, or until I took an interest in reading by a bad-scented fire.

Throughout the house, there was always the familiar scent of spice in the air, but it was never anything sweet. What would happen if a sweet smell took the spot of the normal spicy smell? What if my room had bright colors clashing with the boring, common colors? What if there was a swing for me to play with outside? Would I have a happy childhood, or would it just stay the same? I will never know.

## My Turn

It's 12:30 in the morning, and I'm stuck at the station until six. The break room is empty, and there are only a few criminals who are in the middle of questioning. Nothing very important was happening tonight, it would be an easy shift. At least, that's what I thought.

After about an hour, the station phone rings. Somebody needs help. I rushed over to the phone and sharply state, "911, what is your emergency?" I'm still new to the job, but if I've learned anything from the experts that work here, it's to sound confident, even if you're scared and don't know what to do. A woman answered back, but her loud sobs and fast talking was not helping. I couldn't understand her at all. "Ma'am, please calm down, and slowly repeat what's happening." "Someone's in my house," she stuttered. "I think he's robbing me. I can't tell, I'm hiding in the bathroom right now." She sped up right before she finished speaking, and I heard her choke on her tears. "Ma'am, if there are any windows in the bathroom, try to move away from them, and stay as quiet as possible." "There aren't any windows. My bathroom is upstairs, and I think he's still downstairs," she replied. "Please tell me your name and address," I said to her. She recited her name and address over the phone quickly, but I was able to understand what she was saying. "I am sending a police officer right now. Meanwhile, stay in the bathroom with the door locked, and stay quiet, please. Carefully try to find something that you can throw at the intruder if he finds you." She hung up, and I looked around, searching for an officer to help the poor woman. There was nobody in the main room. I ran to the break room, but it was completely empty. Where did everyone go? This woman needs help immediately, so it looks like I have to go. I grabbed the keys to one of the police cars, and quickly began to drive to the woman's house.

After about ten minutes of driving with the sirens on, I arrived at the neighborhood. It was midnight, so I turned the sirens off, and drove to her house. The lights downstairs were on, and I could hear some of the noise the thief was making from the living room. I carefully walked to the window on the side of the house, and with my gun in hand, I looked around the room and saw the intruder. He was about 5'10", had dark brown hair and pale skin, grabbing small antiques off a nearby shelf, and roughly tossing them into his large, black bag. The woman said there was a back door and the key to unlock it can be found under a flower pot. I swiftly moved to the back yard and searched for the flower pot. There were large trees, and rose bushes that formed a barrier around the woman's property. Along the outside of her house, a brown pot holding bright sunflowers rested on the ground. I moved to the pot of flowers, carefully picked it up, and grabbed the key under it. I moved towards the back door and peeked through the window, making sure he could not see me. The door led to the kitchen, which was completely trashed. Pots and pans were scattered on the floor, and most of the opened cabinets were empty. I slowly unlocked the door, and with my gun in hand, I made my way through the kitchen. Adrenaline was pumping through every single vein in my body. I could feel my heartbeat in my ears. Words can't even describe how nervous I was. I came to this station three months ago, right when my training finished. Everybody else has been part of this station for over ten years, and I came in brand new, and I was immediately put on desk duty. My boss has never chose me to go investigate a case. Instead, I was called every time for completing another officer's paperwork. I don't have experience outside of my desk. I know exactly how to file a criminal report perfectly,

but I have no idea how to take down a possibly armed thief without getting myself or the woman killed. I heard more loud sounds coming from the room next door. I immediately hid behind the counter as the man passed by, and crossed to the other side of the room. Once I heard more shuffling, I lifted myself off the floor. I mentally prepared myself, and raised my gun. “This is the police, drop the bag and put your hands on your head!” I shouted at him. He quickly turned around, and gawked at me, but he didn’t move. “I said drop the bag and put your hands on your head!” I repeated, but once again, he stood still. Then, both of us heard someone running down the stairs. The woman appeared right in front of us. Why would she come downstairs? It’s not safe for her. “Ma’am, get back upstairs. You put your hands up, and I won’t say it again!” The man dropped his bag, but immediately, he pulled something shiny out of his back pocket. Once I saw the object, I fired my gun, but it was too late. He shot first. I winced at the sound, but didn’t feel any pain. I watched the man fall to the ground, but I also heard a body behind me fall with him. I rushed to the crying woman on the ground, and called for an ambulance. The thief had awful aim, and the bullet barely grazed her ankle. I was not dead, neither was the woman, and the thief was caught. Everything worked out almost okay.



## 30 Years from Now

Everything is different. Everything has changed since I was fourteen years old. There are trees, still, and there is grass, but their colors are so artificial and full of chemicals, they burn the human eye. There are many diseases, new and old, and now there are paramedics waiting in every building. Out of all of the strange changes, the air is the most unusual. Thirty years ago, the air might smell like fresh grass, or the nearby ocean, but now, everywhere you go, the air holds the scent of strong, fake flowers. What scares me the most is how much the people living in this country had changed. Thirty years ago, almost everybody was polite to each other. If you went to a grocery store, and someone was next to you, most people would whisper a soft “hello” to fill the awkward silence. Now, no one cares if they are standing right next to someone they know, or if they push someone out of their way by mistake. When you step outside your house, you witness only anger. People are paying money to watch a street fight, and some are being robbed in broad daylight, but nobody does anything to stop it. There is no more security, or anymore police stations because now, the law is considered a joke. People took it seriously long ago, but now, it has no effect on what people do. Paramedics wait for people to get hurt every day. Parents don't let their young children leave their houses anymore. Families get robbed each day, and there is nothing you can do now. Nobody feels safe anymore. Everybody keeps themselves, and when someone talks to another, they think it's a threat. What has happened to this world? Everywhere I look, someone is hurt, and someone is being robbed. Why can't the country go back to enforcing the law, and taking each crime seriously? We need our old country back.

## One Empty World

I dreamed of a rainbow with no color,

I dreamed of food with no taste,

I dreamed of all the clocks stopping,

I dreamed of the sun never rising,

I dreamed of hundreds of writers with no words,

I dreamed of hundreds of empty shelves,

I dreamed of a singer with no voice,

I dreamed of a record player staying still,

I dreamed of the world being empty,

I dreamed of the world remaining empty.

## Rich Girl

During February of this year, some of my closest friends were beginning to change. It started when I received a letter from the school district, which told me I got into the high school I wanted. Everyone got one, and they were putting pictures of their letters on their social media accounts, so I did, too. The mistake that some people, including me, made was to forget to cover their address. I didn't think anybody would notice, and if they did, I didn't think they would care. I thought people would just look at the dumb joke I made. About two hours later, I opened my Snapchat, and saw over thirty comments on my recent photo. Some were from my friends, and others were from people I don't even talk to. I read each comment, and they all said the same thing: they all showed how much my house was worth. Pretty soon, everyone at school found out my dad is a cancer doctor and he drives a BMW, and the next day, people starting calling me "the rich girl." There was nothing else to it, and I knew it would be hard to change.

On weekend, my friends asked me to go bowling with them, and I went with them. Once we got the bill, they all passed it down to me. "Am I paying for all of it?" I asked them, and they all just nodded their heads like I was stupid. Apparently no one else brought money, and all of my friends expected me to pay, and the bill was \$60 for the four of us. I had to use the extra money that I kept in my phone case that was reserved for emergencies, but I just let it go. About two weeks later, the same issue occurred, and the bill was over \$150, and I had to call my sister, asking her to bring money for us. I thought it was crazy and rude that they were making me pay for everything they wanted, and I didn't want it to happen again.

The next time they wanted me to go out with them, I asked them to bring money for whatever they might buy while we were out, and they were furious. They all texted me back saying that the only reason they wanted me to go with them was because I had money, and they didn't. I responded, telling them that because my parents have good jobs, and we have extra money does not mean I'm spoiled. I told them I can't ask my dad for money whenever I wanted it, and expect him to hand it over. They didn't text back, and they didn't talk to me in school. I kept telling myself that they were the ones who were being complete jerks about it, and that I should be happy these rude people were out of my life, but I really loved hanging out with all of them. I had so much in common with them, other than how big our houses were. Soon, I had friends that did not care what kind of family I came from, and whenever I spent time with them, we split the bill equally, no matter how expensive it got. We all became so close to each other, and they were always accepting of each other. People at school still call me "rich girl," but my new group of friends put it aside, and so did I.

## My Child, Not Yours

I saw her only one hour ago. She was by my side, and I held her hand in mine. She was only seven years old, she can't be by herself. "Sarah!" I screamed. I needed her back, I can't live without her. What kind of a mother am I? I am so stupid, I let my child go by herself. If someone tries to take her away from me, I'll kill them. If someone even talks to her, I'll kill them. Nobody will ever take her away from me. If she tries to run from me, I will get her back. She will never leave me.

I ran around the mall, searching for my dear Sarah, but I couldn't find her. She wasn't in the bathroom, and she wasn't in any of her favorite stores. Sarah knows not to leave my side. She knows how mad I got last time. It's all happening so fast, I can't think. It's making me so angry and upset, but I love her. She's my daughter, I will always love her. I dropped to the ground and began to cry. Then, all the anger inside of me erupted, and I heard myself start to shout. People around me began to stare, but they did not say or do anything. I looked at my surroundings, and saw my little girl, hiding behind a tall man and his wife and child. I ran over to grab my Sarah, but the man stopped me. "Stay away from her!" he shouted in my face. "That's my Sarah! She's mine, let go of me!" the man kept his strong grip on me, and I watched my Sarah begin to cry. "Look at what you've done. You made my Sarah cry!" I yelled at him. The woman took her own child and my Sarah away from the two of us, and led them away to go sit down. The man did not loosen his hold around me, and I grabbed his hand and bit him hard. I began to taste his metallic blood, so I knew I was biting hard enough. He yelled in pain, and instantly snatched his hands away from me, and I ran to find my Sarah so I can get us away from these horrid people as soon as possible. When I spotted my Sarah in the crowd, a police officer stopped in front of me, blocking my path to my child. "Oh, good. The police! Please help me, this awful family is trying to keep me away from my Sarah," I shouted while pointing at the couple. Then, another police officer came behind me and pulled my hands to my lower back, and I felt something cool touch my wrists. They were handcuffs. "Wait, what's going on, what are you doing?" I'm not supposed to be arrested, they are. "Miss Carrie Foster, you are arrested for kidnapping," he replied, while pushing me away from my Sarah. "I did not take her! That's my child, Sarah," I told him. I just wanted to hold my Sarah, and calm her down. I don't like seeing her cry. "Miss Foster. That is not Sarah. That is Angie Williams, and she went missing over three weeks ago." No, her name's not Angie, her name is Sarah. Why isn't he listening to me? "That's not Angie, that's Sarah, She has brown hair, and brown hair, and she is Sarah!"

"Ma'am!" he shouted at me, and I instantly stopped shouting at him. "That is Angie Williams. Your daughter, Sarah Foster died over two months ago. You took her to a waterfall, and she slipped and fell into the water, where she drowned." No, that's not true. That's not true at all. This is Sarah, why does he say her name's Angie. "Ma'am, Angie just has similar features to your daughter's. It's time to leave. Please turn around, and get in the car." The two officers pushed me out of the mall, and into the nearby cop car. Sarah wasn't dead. I know she wasn't. That was Sarah, and they are all wrong. They have to be wrong.

## Rain

Some people hate it, others love it,  
It cancels the exciting activities some were looking forward to,  
Or it's used as an excuse to get out of one.

Sometimes it brings thunder and lightning, sometimes it comes alone,  
People get nervous when it is accompanied by the loud crashes or the bright flashes,  
But they remain calm when it enters alone, and leaves peacefully.

Sometimes it is helpful, other times it's not,  
It's welcomed on a hot day so that we can all be cooled off,  
But dreaded on the day everyone wants to leave the house.

Some people like to touch it, others don't want it anywhere near their skin,  
Some pack an umbrella, others just run straight into it,  
Some people love the rain, some people hate it, but nobody's feelings will stay the same.

## Run

It was just a regular day, so we were in class. Everybody was bored, and I felt like I was about to fall asleep. Our preppy teacher, Ms. Williams, continued lecturing us, but no student was really paying attention. All of a sudden, there was a loud bang, and the lights went out. Everyone's vision turned pitch black, and some of my friends began to scream. My teacher tried to calm them down, but nothing was working. Then, the lights came back on. Nothing changed, except for the teacher and some students stood from their chairs. Everyone was silent, but it was broken by the girl next to me screaming. She pointed at the window behind all of us, and an unfamiliar neon green sticky note was pasted on the glass. The word "**run**" was written in bold, red pen. "Get out right now!" Ms. Williams screamed, while pushing me and the students that were close to her to the nearest door. I moved to the front of the door, and tried to pry it open. "It's locked," I declared in a shaky voice. Ms. Williams looked at me, and all the color drained from her face, leaving her the color of a ghost. "It can only lock from the outside," she says slowly. I gasped, and backed away from the door, and everyone moved with me. Ms. Williams runs to the back door, but it was also locked from the outside. Instead of joining the rest of us, she banged on the door as hard as she possibly could, while screaming "Please help us! The door's locked from the outside!" She didn't stop until a loud crash was heard from the other side of the door, and was followed by a loud shout.

She moved to the middle of the room quickly and stayed with us, making sure everyone was away from both of the doors. The lock on the back door clicks, and the door handle slowly pushed down, and it is open for everyone to run out, but one thing stops us from leaving our classroom, and he is lying on the floor. My principal was on the ground, with blood pouring out of the left side of his chest. "We need to leave now!" my teacher yelled behind us, and we bolted out of the door, sprinting past our dead principal and through the halls. We stayed as quiet as possible so that no one in the halls could hear us. We see the end of the hall, with the light shining through the window. Some of the people began speeding up, and running in front of me. I finally reach the door, and I push it open. Everyone in front of me ran in the same direction, which was through the school's parking lot, and into the driveway of the nearby house. I check behind my back to see if my other friends or Ms. Williams were out of the invaded school, but nobody was behind me. Replacing them was a man with a black ski mask that hid his face from my eyes. He was blocking the exit for everyone that was trapped in the building. He does not move from the window, instead he just watches me. I turn around and sprint as fast as I can to get away from him, before I end up like my principal.

## Home

Every year, we go home.

Until one summer we didn't.

I wondered why.

The only answer I got was "It's not safe".

A vague answer for a curious mind.

"It's not safe"

I miss my family

Walking the streets where everyone seems to know each other

Salty air whips my hair out of my face

I want to go home

But it's not safe

## 30 Years from Now

30 years ago, I was told to write about the future. I was dumbfounded and had a hard time imagining the unknown. Now, 30 years later, I've decided to compare. Driverless cars? I look out from the small café on the corner to see a red convertible with a teenager reading a magazine sitting in the driver's seat. Yes. Jetpacks? No, not yet, but I heard they're working on it, though. A small metal man on wheels took my empty coffee mug away. The glaciers have melted tremendously and most of the Gulf Coast has gone under. The summers are indeed still hot and I haven't seen snow in ages. Then again, I live in Texas. I read the next paragraph that 13-year-old me wrote. I was right. I did end up living in Houston and becoming a dermatologist. The metal man returned with a now-filled coffee mug. I took a sip and continued to read. Synthetic trees? A few, but only because people won't stop cutting them down. I read the next lines. Levitating Shoes? Where'd I even get that crazy idea? The metal waiter comes back and I pay. I get up and start walking down the street towards my home, looking up to see a drone wishing happy birthday to someone name Katie. I see 5-year-olds walking with their parents, each of them with the latest iPhone in their hands. I reach my house. It is white with a red door and a pitch black roof. It was the exact house that I had written about but better because this one was real. My dog greets me at the door. I look at the last two lines that I had written. "I don't know what's going to happen in 30 years, and that's the scary part. But I guess that's also the fun part too."



# Ice-cream

Ice-cream  
Sticky  
Cold  
Crunchy  
Chocolate-Dipped  
Ice-Cream Cone  
Cream  
Hard  
Wafer Cookie  
Yellow  
Vanilla  
chocolate  
pistachio  
Dripping  
Sweetener  
Strawberry

## What Happened?

What happened to him?

Old laugh lines hung like shadows from the past  
His hair in scruffs resting on the top of his head

What happened to her?

She wears all black on the sunniest of days  
Her smile forever lost in the sea of sorrows

What happened to them?

Once happy people, not a care in the world

Some live on and forget

Others do not

That is what happened to the lonely old man

Rocking in his rocking chair on his porch

That is what happened to the woman,  
who sits in the cemetery all day and cries into the night

What Happened?

## Anger

Anger feels like a huge wave suddenly crashing into you, knocking you over

It sounds like rocks tumbling down a mountain forming a deadly rockslide.

It tastes as if you have just swallowed an unripe lemon

It looks like the biggest volcano about to wreak havoc on the unsuspecting town below

It smells of sulfur and rot

## The House

Red and black cracked bricks crumbled on the outer walls of the structure. Holes, like Swiss cheese, patterned the roof. Cracked glass doors opened up to a foyer. Broken tiles meet your feet and what used to be a mirror hangs on the wall. It was once a graceful living room but now you look upon the torn couches and the dull battered piano sitting alone in the dark corner. A set of fresh footprints lead you to a kitchen, the walls now a fading grey. The countertop had fingerprints in the dust that encased the scratched marble. Someone has been here. You go into the game room. You look to see abandoned dolls lined neatly, gathering dust. Glass eyes look at you, watching your every move. Their faces stained with what looked like tear streaks. Their delicate dresses faded. A lonely doll house sits in the corner. A creak comes from upstairs. The stairs tremble as you run on top of them, one breaking right from under you. You free yourself as you hear more noise. You barge into the first bedroom to see the window wide open. The gun had been left on the bed. You think it was because the intruder had been in a rush but then you read the note. "I will be back."

## Where it All Went Wrong

We hadn't expected it. What started out as an evening of fun quickly turned into hell. We had been returning home from an evening of fun. It came from nowhere. All I remember is a loud noise and that it was raining. I woke up with blurry vision and a nurse at my side telling me about medications and whatnot. However, the only words I heard were 'serious' and 'car crash'. My vision slowly cleared I realized I was in a hospital room. On a hospital bed. This wasn't supposed to happen, but it did. A searing pain traveled up my leg. In fact I hurt all over. My arms, my back, but the pounding in my head is what drove insane. It was horrible and all wrong. None of this should have happened from a night out. My mind flew to the others. Are they okay? I didn't know and they didn't tell me. In a way, I didn't want to know. We didn't deserve this. Then again no one does. But sometimes, even the most innocent people get hurt. That thought lingered in my mind as I drifted off to sleep, feeling as though I was floating. Floating away from the pain and this horrid accident. Maybe even floating away from reality. Until finally it was dark and silence ruled my mind.

## My Piano

My Piano that shines with the light of the evening stars.

That stands with the glory of the heavens.

My piano that lures people with its music as a watering hole does to wild animals.

Music craved as water for the lost man in the desert.

It's the color of the night sky.

Its keys are alabaster and ebony.

My piano is admired as one does a mountain view

Or praised as though made purely of gold.

Whose grace is used as an example for others.

My piano, who glitters like the ocean during a sunset

My piano who brings joy to all.

## Summer Nights

The moon hung in the air, held by an invisible string

Black and blueish hues mirrored in the glass pond below

Its reflection rippled as the waterfall flowed

Diamonds littered the black canvas of the night

And black butterflies took flight

As purple, pink, and orange flowers begin to glow

Fireflies fly in sight like fairies in a row

Oh, how I love these summer nights!

## Stuck

Her words rang through my ears. “I dare you to spend 10 minutes in the old asylum” I look up at the ghost of a used to be building. I walked up the cracked, stone steps. Barred windows caging the half burnt contents of the asylum. It stood in shambles. It used to be square and serious and now it seemed it was crying for help and I wondered how it was still standing up. I reach for the door.

Creaakk. I heard the door open. Someone was here. I hadn't heard that creak in a long time. It still echoed through the hallway as I saw her enter waiting room slowly, checking her watch and frowning as they often do. A new friend, I thought. Though they don't usually stay for long. Sometimes they come back, but with armed men in blue clothes and shiny pins on their shirts. I hide because they don't look right. But this one will stay, I'll make sure of it. The thought made me laugh.

Suddenly, a giggle echoed through the long hallway. Shivers ran up my spine. I turned to leave, but then I heard crying. My steps screamed around me. Begging me to turn around. I it only I had listened.

I had practiced this multiple times. I cried, hugging my knees to my chest. It will work this time. They always left before it could work. I cried, remembering my old friends, wailing into the night. My parents, who looked at me as I would look at the monsters in my nightmares, forever haunting me. I remembered the fire and I cried even harder.

I followed the noise upstairs. Stairs moaned, willing me to turn around. If only I had listened.

The door opened and there she stood with the same look of terror as many before her.

A little girl rocked back and forth in the corner amid the burnt hospital beds. Wearing an old hospital gown, burnt at the edges. Black hair draped her face. I stepped closer, unsure how to react. The asylum was supposed to be empty. The wind howled outside the iron barring the windows, warning me not to stay. If only I had listened.

She stepped closer and I quickly reached out, pulling her back in time, to the day of the disaster

Suddenly I blinked and the beds were new, containing coughing children. I look at the clock to see it 12:00 AM. That's weird. It was 12:00 PM. probably broken. I back out of the room and bump into a nurse, who looks at me and screams. "She's out. She's escaped. I looked down to see I'm wearing a white hospital gown. Two burly men grabbed me. There must be a mistake. I writhed in their grips. I saw what was in the nurse's cart and winced. There was a syringe filled with a greenish blue clear liquid. A man and a woman stand in front of a glass window. They gasped as I was thrown into a room. I heard a click behind me. No way out. Just a bare room, nothing but an iron, rusting bed, a rocking chair, and a way mirror. No windows and a locked door. I'm claustrophobic. I can't handle the small space that confined me. I start backing into a corner, crying, clawing at the walls. The smell of smoke fills my nostrils. Fear shoots through me. I bang the glass, breaking it. On the other side stood the man and woman looking at each other in fear. "Mommy" I whisper, though I have no idea why. The nurse quickly comes in with the needle. I fall to the floor, shrieking.

I heard the door open again. "Nicole?" No. She's going to ruin it. Not again. Not again. I creep around the staircase. "Nicole? Times up. You can come out now." I accidentally take a wrong step. "Come on. Cut it out. I shouldn't have made you come in here. I'm sorry." I see a big, long, fat, heavy looking pipe. Perfect. I reach out and push. A shrill scream vibrated through the walls. Shame. If she had died the right way, I could have had another friend. Oh well. I run back up the stairs. She should be waking up now.

Ugh, I have a headache and seeing double. What happened?

I smiled. It worked. The girl wakes up "Hi" I introduce myself "I'm Mia. We're going to be spending lots of time together." I bobbed my head excitedly "Now that you're dead and all."

I couldn't seem to register her words. Dead? "I'm Nicole. You must be mistaken. I'm alive." Mia smiled "But that's the thing, you're not. You died in the fire of 1989, like me." She seemed excited. No, no, no. I run down stairs to see a girl, blonde, was crushed under a rusted metal pipe. Oh my god, is that Andria? She was lifeless and her skin tinged blue. I turn around to see Mia smiling in the door way. "Let's play a game, we have all the time in the world after all." I look back at the door. "Don't bother. They'll come in an hour or so looking for you." I looked at her. She had stepped closer. "They'll see the body and assume the worse." Her eyes seemed glassy and I didn't think she was talking to me anymore." "Why did you do it Mia?"

They asked. Of course they took her side. Everyone always did. They landed me in this hell hole.” She looked back up. “Let’s play a game.”

# Rain

It's raining hard today  
And it is very calming  
But lightning is not

---

The rain is pouring  
And the lightning is striking  
Make sure to stay safe

---

The storm is now here  
And it is starting to rain  
here is the thunder

---

The rain is hard today  
The beautiful rain drops fall  
The storm is now here



## Homage to my eyes

These eyes are brown eyes.  
They move from one place  
To the next.  
They see people,  
They see things,  
They see everything.  
They see the outside,  
They see the inside,  
For they have nothing hide  
These brown eyes of mine.

## The Encyclopedia

The encyclopedia was opened  
The depth of the knowledge inside was beautiful  
It was written in ink that caught people's eyes  
It could be found surrounded by a bleak landscape  
It was surrounded too by a flowing river  
The river had a translucent bridge to cross  
If you crossed the bridge you would find the book  
There was a man full of wisdom trying to find it  
A devilish man was trying to find it to  
The encyclopedia will lure all people

## Ode to the Clock

You hang upon the wall  
Around and around, your hands will go  
Telling the time for everyone you know  
Until you're broken  
Then you're useless

Your hands will still move from here to there  
But everyone will still just sit and stare  
Then you get fixed  
And telling the right time  
Now can I just think of a rhyme

HeadHead

HeadHeadHead

HeadHeadHead

HeadHead

Neck

Neck

ArmArm ChestChestChestChest ArmArm

ArmArm ChestChestChestChest ArmArm

ArmArm ChestChestChestChest ArmArm

ArmArm ChestChestChestChest ArmArm

ArmArm ChestChestChestChest ArmArm

ArmArm BellyBellyBellyBelly ArmArm

ArmArm BellyBellyBellyBelly ArmArm

ArmArm BellyBellyBellyBelly ArmArm

ArmArm BellyBellyBellyBelly ArmArm

HandHand Leglegleg Leglegleg HandHand

HandHand Leglegleg Leglegleg HandHand

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

Leglegleg Leglegleg

FootFootFootFoot FootFootFootFoot

FootFootFootFoot FootFootFootFoot

## Origin of Burning Bears

“We need something to do,” A taller boy says to a shorter one of the same age.

“Yeah we’ve already done everything we could think of. We need something more.”

“We need something big,” says the taller one “We need something that people will remember us by. How about we clean out our pockets and see if we can come up with any ideas.”

The taller boy cleans out his pockets, and he only has cash. The shorter boy cleans out his pockets and he has a couple of dollars and a lighter.

“Where did you get that lighter from?”

“I took it off my dad’s desk when he wasn’t looking.”

“Nice.”

“So, what are we going to do with some money and a lighter?”

The taller one ponders for a moment when he suddenly gets an idea.

“How about we have an epic s’more contest?”

“How is that big?”

“We cook them over a burning bear.”

“Where will we find a bear to light up?”

“I have a forest behind my house, and there are bears all in it.”

“When will we do this?”

“Tomorrow at midnight, meet me beside my house with the lighter. I’ll get all the items for the s’mores.”

“Ok I see you there.”

The boys take off back to their houses. A day passes by and it’s midnight. The two boys both have everything they needed and set off into the woods.

“There’s a bear right there,” says the taller one to the shorter one.

“How are we supposed to kill it so we can roast the marshmallows?”

“That’s why I brought this,” says the taller one while pulling out a pistol.

“Where did you get that?”

“I stole it from my dad’s safe when he wasn’t looking. Lucky enough for me, he doesn’t know that I know the password.”

“Ok, so you’ll kill it, then I’ll catch it on fire.”

“Yeah.”

The taller one aims the gun straight for the bears head and he shoots. The bullet goes straight through the bear’s forehead and it drops down dead.

“Go on now. Go set it on fire.”

The little one runs and sets it alight.

“Ok now we can start the s’mores.”

They both pick up a stick put a marshmallow at the end and start roasting them.

“Hey this reminds me of the time that girl roasted marshmallows over that one famous bear,” says the shorter one.

“That’s where I got the idea from.”

“Oh.”

The boys suddenly hear a police siren, and take off back to the taller boy’s house but there was already a police car waiting for them when they got there. They got caught and put into the car. They had a trial and were put in jail for six months for bear slaughter. The word got out about what the boys did, and everyone nationwide started doing it. The bear population was also decreasing rapidly, so the government decided a change needed to happen. They added a new amendment that stated that it’s illegal to burn bears on American soil. The punishments also became bigger to try and get people to stop. Also, since everyone spent their money on making s’mores, they decided to make s’mores the new currency.

## The Eclipse

It was just a normal day. It was a Saturday, so I was just sitting in my room playing on my phone when my mom called my family downstairs for lunch. When I had gotten down stairs I saw my mom had made sandwiches. My family all sat around the table and started to talk.

“You guys, did you all know that there is going to be an eclipse today?” my sister, Kim, said, bouncing in her seat excitedly. “Yes, and I’ve bought us some special glasses so we can go outside and watch it,” Mom said while holding up four pairs of glasses. “So we actually get to watch it?” I asked, starting to bounce like Kim was. “Yes, we’re going to get to watch it. From what I heard, it should be happening sometime after five, so you’ll have a little time before we watch it,” Mom said while she started to clean up the table.

Kim and I ran upstairs to get ready. We had just a few hours until we would see the eclipse. After getting ready, passing some time with talking with each other, Kim and I ran downstairs to see our mom holding out our glasses to us. We grabbed them and put them on. Mom and Dad put theirs on as well, and we all headed outside.

We waited a couple of minutes, and the eclipse began. I could not believe my eyes. It was so amazing and beautiful. I am so happy we actually got to see it.

## Get it done

“You need to get it done,” Mom said while looking at me.

“I have plenty of time to do it.” I replied to her,

“I’ll do it later,”

“You don’t have as much time as you think.”

“I have plenty of time.”

“You have two hours until I want you in bed, so you have probably just enough time to get it done.”

“I can wake up early tomorrow and do it.”

“No. You need your sleep for school.”

“I can lose a little sleep to do it.”

“No, you need to get it done tonight because what happens if it doesn’t finish in time. Oh wait I know: you won’t have any clothes for school, so get up and do it.”

“OK, I’ll do it.”

“You better get in bed as soon as you’re done.”

“I will.”

I grab my clothes and set off to do it before I get grounded.



## How it All Went Wrong

It was late in the afternoon when Ella got home from softball practice. She walked into the house and set her stuff down beside the door. She then walked into the kitchen where her mom about to make dinner.

“Don’t forget to take out the dog before dinner is finished,” her mom reminded her. “I know. I’m going to do it right now,” Ella said while putting a leash on her dog, Abby. Ella opened the door and walked out and started to head to the dog park down the street.

Ella walked into the park and saw one of her friends from school. She looked down at Abby and asked, “Do you want to go say hi to Brianna?” Abby just kind of looked at her so she took it as a yes.

She started to head over to Brianna when she felt no more weight on the end of the leash. She looked down and saw that Abby had broken the leash. She was gone. Nowhere to be seen. Ella stared to panic. She was trying to keep her breathing steady while attempting to figure out where Abby went. She searched everywhere at the dog park with no luck. She ran back home to see if her parents could help her look.

She ran into the house to find out that her mom had just finished cooking dinner and her dad just got home from work, “Ella why are you so panicked and where is Abby?” Her dad asked as he started walking towards her. “I was taking her on a walk through the dog park when she somehow broke the leash. I looked everywhere at the dog park and couldn’t find her.” She said while starting to cry. “Well hurry up and let’s go try to find her.” Her mom said while grabbing the car keys.

They all got into the car and started looking all over the city. After the looked all over and couldn’t find her they decided that they hang up lost dog posters all around to see if anyone else has found or will find her and help them. Weeks went by and they still don’t know where Abby went but they’re always looking for her.

## Croissants

He looked through the anthology of poetry, looking for a work by *her*.

It appeared that she had contributed only one work: it was about bone marrow.

She went to her friend's house and watched Netflix.

The show got so boring that she threw a remote at the TV in annoyance.

The remote then landed in a puddle of syrup.

The remote drowned, and the TV was sad.

The remote then suddenly started changing the channels happily.

The TV turned off and on.

Then the lights went out.

Everyone died.

## Pancakes

What do we do with the extra bread?

A burrito I had for dinner yesterday.

What can I do to ward off my evil stepsister?

A sad cheeto that I found in the middle of the road by Wal-Mart.

What happened to my stash of cookies?

The possible existence of an alternate universe in which grape juice is alcoholic.

What kind of fish can be my servant and make me food?

The dogs will howl.

What kind of person makes s'mores of a bear's burning body?

A purchase of new pens at the store with a credit card.

What do we see when we fully roll our eyes back?

I ate ramen noodles last night, and I threw up.

What is your dog's name?

Thunderstorms will happen.

What would happen if monkeys wore earrings?

I would never have looked so amazing.

What will happen if the sky falls?

To get to the other side.

What happens if you forget everything?

3 books in a pile.

## Crepes

What is life?

Fish made out of stick.

What would happen if a cat lost its tongue?

Waffles are better than pancakes.

What would you do if you ended up in space?

Dayton will ride a yak.

What is the purpose of scuba diving?

I will fly above the clouds.

When will I become rich?

A sound wave one half the size of the E note.

What you gotta do if you meet a creepy person in a party?

The wall is beige.

When will we go to lunch?

Politics.

What if you fell out of a tree into a hole?

I will swim in my house's swimming pool and eat brunch.

When did we run out of eggs?

I would've never survived the great waffle and pancake war.

Why can't I go vegan for an hour?

When pigs fly.

## French Toast

If I get a pet monkey, I shall read and annotate Jane Eyre.

When I ate the last piece of chocolate cake, then it's about frikn time that happened!

If the dog barks, the yak will kick the monk.

When I eat ice cream for breakfast, I will never have pizza again.

If I wake up on Mars, Nemo was never found.

If dogs could climb trees with their tails, Mr. Waffles is going to attack us.

If my suitemate beats me to death with a spoon, I will go to the Christmas parade.

If I stay up past lights out, the cat would shake hands with the dog.

If my dog is hiding in our oven, Momo would get jealous of the apple juice in the lake.

When a chef accidentally puts orange nail polish in your pumpkin soup, I will slap him as he laughs.

## Waffles

Tim thought Mary was beautiful, but a little stuck-up.

Tim thought that Mary's statements were nonsense, so he ignored her for two weeks.

Tim and Mary never talk to each other, but one day they met at the bridge in their college. They fell in love when they first saw each other.

Tim and Mary were attacked by wolves while taking a nature hike.

Tim stole Mary's s'mores resulting in an eternal hate.

Tim began to hate Mary, but Mary still loved him.

Mary hits Tim with a copy of *War and Peace*, knocking him unconscious.

Tim met Mary when they ran into each other while searching for pickled beets in Wal-Mart.

Tim and Mary go to their friend's birthday party.

Mary got tired of following Tim everywhere.

Tim once asked Mary for a cup of coffee, and she replied, "No thanks, I'm good," which confused Tim.

Finally, Tim turned around and saw that Mary's skin had turned into a rainbow gradient.

## Strudels

When I got to school, someone ate a piece of cake with three bugs inside.

If my dog started to meow, I would like to talk with friends.

If the dogs don't stop barking, they would need to take their dogs to the park.

When I finally scuba dive, I will go to sleep at eleven o'clock.

When the two bottles of liquid aluminum are deposited in front of my can opener, the girl will draw swirls of ink on her hand.

When the penguins find another home, I will go to school today.

When it's one o'clock in the afternoon, I will take a two thirds portion of my bed and chuck it down my suite's garbage disposal.

When I broke the piano with the chair, Andrew sat down and began to practice the piano.

If the people do not stop talking, the tree, bursting into flames, will later be the cause of Smokey's death.

If I ruled the world, the pristine, sandy beach will be scorching hot in the summer.

## About the Authors

**Ashley Belcher, the Painter of Bloody Walls:** Hello, my name is Ashley Belcher, and I'm from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am 13 years old, and going into 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Runnels. I greatly enjoy math and the field of medicine, and want to be a biomedical engineer when I grow up. I love playing my violin, playing tennis, reading, watching Marvel movies, hanging out with my friends, and most importantly, writing. I hope you like my stories as much as I loved writing them!

**Kendrick Foster, the Holder of the Red Pen:** A rising senior at Memorial High School in Houston, Texas. Unfortunately, this will be his last year at ADVANCE, but he's had great memories at the camp. In the next school year, he will be President of his school's debate team and its Model United Nations club; he also takes an active role in his school's World Affairs Council, and he will serve as its Vice President. He has his sights on the Ivy League for college and would prefer a major somewhere in the social sciences or humanities, although he has no idea what just yet. He decided to take creative writing because he's always been interested in works of poetry and reading novels; he wanted to improve his own writing through this class. His work in this anthology consists mainly of free verse poetry, although he's dabbled in more formal styles of poetry and prose.

### **Matt Goldberg, the Punderer:**

>> be me  
>> be 17 years of age  
>> constantly be harassed by mother to finish college essays  
>> get beautiful idea to stall out essays by taking a creative writing class  
>> get mom to successfully believe this so you can play video games all summer  
>> reach point in time where camp starts  
>> uh\_oh.exe  
>> go to camp actually write a bunch of short stuff  
>> compile stuff in anthology  
>> ayy\_lmao.jpeg

Mathematics are  
Artistic but  
Take less  
Time than  
Heavily restrained  
English poems.  
Wait...

**Serena Hsieh, the Chicken in the Soup:** I am Serena, a sixteen year old girl who just came from Taiwan. I live in Beaumont, TX. I am going to be a sophomore in high school. I came here to study because I love the culture of this beautiful country. I like dancing and art, and I have learned ballroom dance for seven years.



**Haley Regan, the Original Bear Arsonist:** Hi, I'm Haley. I live in New Braunfels, Texas. I'm 14, and will be going into 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Canyon High School this fall. I enjoy the arts, specifically reading, writing, and painting. I hope to pursue the arts one day in filmmaking and animation. I took creative writing to further enhance my writing skills. I hope you enjoy my work!

**Kristin Schmidt, the Unpronounceable:** My name is Kristin Schmidt. I like anime, Pokémon games, animals, making friends, and making people laugh. That's about it. I'm thirteen years old and going into eighth grade. My hometown is Alexandria, Louisiana, and I've never lived anywhere else. This is my first year at advance, and I absolutely love it. The only thing I can't stand is typing things like this; that and English class.

**Dayton Waltman, the Yak-Rider:** Hi, I'm Dayton. I live in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm thirteen and going into eighth grade at Youree Drive Middle. I play five sports including: baseball, lacrosse, tennis, and I run track and cross country. I like to watch a lot of Netflix and I don't really like math. The poems that I write should not be taken seriously and I hope you enjoy what I got done in this class, I know it's barely anything compared to Kendrick or really anyone else in creative writing. But I honestly enjoyed my time at Advance and I would like to do it again.

**Jhansi Yadlapati, the Indianator 3000:** My name is Jhansi Yadlapati, and I am fourteen years, and will be in 9<sup>th</sup> grade this year. I am from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and I will be going to Baton Rouge High School. I chose to take this class because we spent only a few weeks on creative writing in the eighth grade since everything was rushed because of the flood at the beginning of year. I learned many new concepts of writing in general, and they will all help me throughout the year no matter what type of writing I am learning. I enjoyed this camp so much, and I hope I can come back next year.

**Yara Younes, the Player of the Piano:** My name is Yara Younes. Many people butcher my name so it's ok, you aren't the first. I am 13 years old and I go to ACDS. I live in Alexandria Louisiana. I am a twin, even though it's hard to tell whether we're even from the same family at all. I took creative writing because I like to write stories. I had a lot of fun and made a tone of friends. I like meeting people as weird as I am and everyone is really funny. I love the inside jokes that started on the first day here.

**Kendsi Zabel, the Kind One:** I'm Kendsi Zabel and I am 13 years old. I live in Van Alstyne Texas and this year I'll be going into eighth grade at Van Alstyne Middle School. I love to draw, read, write, and watch anime. Creative writing is amazing and I hope you enjoy my work.

# CREATIVE WRITING

@ ADVANCE  
2017

Glenn  
-TA-

"...Who put  
me in charge?"



Matt  
"I need  
to smell  
like vinegar."



Kristen  
"My personality and my attitude  
are two different things. My personality  
is who I am. My attitude depends on who you are."



Thais:  
"So I can  
write anything,  
and it will be  
in the anthology?"



Kendri:  
"Kindness is  
a great  
virtue."



Ashley  
"Some of my  
talents include  
making sarcastic  
comments and  
describing blood  
on the walls."



Serena  
"I can't  
change the  
world, but I  
can change myself."



Mr. Adorno  
-Instructor-  
"Atmosphere?"



Yara  
"I don't  
know what  
I'm talking  
about 150%  
of the  
time."



Dayton  
"Dingdong, your  
opinion is wrong."



Haley  
"Thankfully,  
Smoking the  
Bear came  
to save the  
day."



Kendrick  
"I'm the holder  
of the infamous  
red pen!"

