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To the reader, from the staff:

The *Spilt Ink* literary magazine staff's mission is to provide our school community with a means to share and celebrate the transformative power of creative expression.

In this year's publication, you will see a variety of writing including stories, poetry, 6-word memoirs, songs, artwork, and photography created by our Merrimack High School students. This year we wanted our magazine to walk you through each of the seasons through creative writing. The team worked hard to think of creative prompts to host monthly contests based around the seasons!

We hope that you enjoy the 2023 publication!

If you are inspired to write or have creative writing or artwork of your own that you would like to submit for publication for the 2023/2024 school year, please email your unique work to: [merrimackwrites@gmail.com](mailto:merrimackwrites@gmail.com)

Enjoy!

## **Table of contents:**

### **Fall Submissions** (writing):

1. Winter is on its Way by Kaylee Ayers (**winner**)
2. Eager Leaf by Paige Ordway
3. Worm on a String by Alana Lord
4. Creature of the Night by Aiden Ham
5. FALL'in For You by Kiara Lynn
6. Halloween is Tonight by Kaylee Ayers
7. FALL'in 4 U by Eden Montoya
8. Pumpkin Spice and Everything Nice by Eden Montoya
9. Untitled by Lily Labore
10. The Contest by Rainier Murray

### **Winter Submissions:**

1. Six Feet of Snow by Anonymous (**winner**)
2. Fleeting by Paige Ordway
3. Bad Mental Health Day by Bethany Fisher (**winner**)
4. him <3 by Alex Therrien
5. Someone Like U by Bethany Fisher

### **Writing Contest Party Submissions:**

1. Spaghetti and Flowers by Vivian Halvorson (**winner**)
2. Untitled by Kaylee Ayers
3. Untitled by Rainier Murray
4. Untitled by Eden Montoya 1
5. Untitled by Eden Montoya 2
6. A Restaurant's Grave by Alana Lord
7. warmth by Paige Ordway

### **Six Word Memoirs:**

1. Rae Gordon
2. Bria Blake
3. Isabelle Newell
4. Alex Barrios
5. Mckayla Mendez
6. Torin Vitone
7. Emily Perigny
8. Dom Luhrs
9. Nathan Watson
10. Vanessa Carlson
11. Julia Hodsdon

12. *And anonymous submissions*

**Name Poems:**

1. Emily by Emily Flowers
2. Ava by Ava Muise
3. My name by Kaden Finn
4. The Meanings of my Name by Alesha Seck
5. My Name by Danyil Kovryhenko
6. I Am by Amelia Siik

**Dear Diary, (personal writing):**

1. Alexis Flewelling
2. *And anonymous submissions*

**Poetry:**

1. Chloe Gangemi
2. Josie Redding
3. *And anonymous submissions*

**Art Submissions:**

1. Fall Fox by Aerin Shaughnessy (**winner**)
2. Not so Spooky by Mia Giuliano
3. Let it Snow by Ava Cruz (**winner**)
4. Kaylee Palmer
5. Rebecca Robinson
6. Maggie Ashland
7. Mason Malone
8. Vanessa Carlson

**Photography Submissions:**

1. Rainier Murray
2. Vanessa Carlson
3. Bethany Fisher
4. Isabelle Newell
5. *And anonymous submissions*



## Fall Contest Themes:

Pumpkin Spice and  
Everything  
Fallin' For You  
Giving Thanks  
Just Fall



**Winter Is On Its Way**  
**By Kaylee Ayers**

Leaves litter the ground  
Summer heat replaced by cold  
Soon, winter will come

**eager leaf**  
**By Paige Ordway**

brown leaves begin to drift  
from their trees, their homes,  
my gaze remains on the singular leaf  
that lingers,  
hanging onto its tree

i am just like that leaf,  
i ponder,  
it, the same as i, has a destiny,  
it has a future,  
and it will change.  
yet,  
it doesn't want to let go of its home.

it is ready to let go,  
but also the farthest thing from it.

it grows  
it changes  
it thrives  
until  
the day it has drifted away from its home.

one true difference between this leaf and i, is this:  
this leaf cannot control  
it's future,  
it has no ability to make decisions,  
as the wind and nature makes all the decisions for it.

i, on the other hand,  
can control my future partially.

so when i have grown and deem myself ready,  
i will go off and start my life,  
knowing that i am everything

and nothing  
like a leaf.

eager to grow,

but don't know how i'll turn out yet.

able to control some things,

but excited to find out the rest.



**Worm on a String**  
**By Alana Lord**

The line that ties  
Us to them is unseen,  
Invisible to your eye.  
We are compelled to follow  
Their every move.  
Where they go,  
We go.  
Worm on a String.  
That is the title,  
They gave our kind.  
It is unofficial,  
But we are compelled to follow.  
That is my title,  
Because you lead me around  
By the nose for your pleasure.  
We cannot break the invisible ties,  
As we do not hold the knives.  
Your kind keep them in their hands,  
Telling empty promises  
And lush lies.  
But I suppose that's what I get,  
For giving you googly eyes.

## **Creature of the Night**

### **By Aiden Ham**

The trees are full of fire, like how the Greeks burned the pyres  
So many colors, so many sounds, lots of joy floating all around  
The people are happy and the people are full of chatter, eating their food  
getting further fatter  
All exhausted after a day of fun, we all go home knowing it's all done  
Walking down along the street, full of fatigue of food that us people  
But when the chills begin to creep, staring tired at your feet  
You do not hear a single sound, only the silhouette of leaves hitting the  
ground  
For when the nights come as early as it does, and everyone sees the  
shadows of the claws  
The creature of the night emerges from its den, with nothing else in mind  
except there are lives to end  
So keep everyone close whom you care,  
friends and family everywhere  
Because the night has come all too soon, and out comes the fear brought by  
this night's full moon.

**FALLin For You**  
**By Kira Lynn**

The day was long, leaves falling slow.  
Sometimes I wonder where did you do?  
I soon found you near a tree.  
And then at least love began to be.

## **Halloween is Tonight**

**Kaylee Ayers**

The leaves crunch beneath my feet. The air is crisp, the sun is warm. Today is the night of Halloween, but I'm not worried. The time for pumpkins and candy will come. But tonight is also the night when ghouls and souls will rise. That's where I come in, you see.

I am a protector, called upon once a year to defend humanity in it's weakest moment.

Don't worry, we've done this before. Hundreds of times, over hundreds of years. And by we, I mean me and the committee. Five members in total, we've been around for centuries, taking the forms of humans to blend in.

Overall, you're in great hands. Go get your costumes, go get your candy, go get your pumpkin spiced lattes or... whatever!

Leave the protecting the world to the professionals, and you'll be fine!

...At least, I hope so.

## **FALL'in 4 U**

**By Eden Montoya**

The yellow leaves spiraled from the trees. Christina sat silently watching wishing she herself could fall into the embrace of the wonderful season. Dan wrapped his arm around her, pulling her close, wondering to himself if *miracles were born in fall, then why was she born in spring?* But saying nothing they sat there peacefully basking in the essence of fall with just each other to hold.

## **Pumpkin Spice and Everything Nice**

### **By Eden Montoya**

The frigid air softly brushed against Chrissy's already pale face, the steam rising from her cup past the lip made its way up, fogging her red tinted glasses, she lifted it up to her chapped lips and took a moment to take in the scent of cinnamon-spiced cider, and the red and orange fall leaves falling atop the pumpkins in the pumpkin patch wanting to live in this moment forever, she stood there silently enjoying the essence of fall.

## **Untitled**

### **Lily Labore**

My branches, speckled in warm colors, weep their leaves as the colder season approaches.

My foliage brought me sunlight and safety; it filled me with a confidence I can't bear to have extinguished.

As the winds turn bitter with the weather, and the dew turns to frost, I lay bare and vulnerable in the harsh climate.

My weaker twigs are fragile and open to breaking from the weight of incoming snow. Despite the cheer winter is rumored to bring, I find myself dreading its approach.

I find myself enveloped in the frigid air, surrounded and claustrophobic to its strength. I am consumed by it, breathless and rapidly losing hope.

My limbs rattle in the blizzard, and I shake back and forth and strain to remain rooted to earth. As I lean, my arms brush another's.

I find, squinting through the snowflakes, that I'm not alone. Trees of all kinds- pine, oak, maple, birch- shake and lean with the wind as I do.

We all struggle against the harsh, unpredictable winds. Each of us with our own struggles. Grub-infested, bare of branches, split through the middle. Regardless of our differences, of our personal hardships, we withstand the madness of the weather together. We creak and groan from the pressure of the snowy gales and lean into each other for support.

We face the cruelty of the world together, keeping each other rooted to earth. A much needed companionship reliant on each other's existence; to inspire ourselves to fight the odds.

With the knowledge of a sympathetic presence beside me, my branches ease and I relax into a dormant state, assured of my survival now that I know I'm no longer alone. The winter becomes a lot more bearable.

## **The Contest**

**By Rainier Murray**

Helena grinned and pulled out two leaves from her jacket pockets, spreading them out on the table. "Five."

She seemed so confident, Pepper was almost sad they had to ruin that. Almost. They smiled back and pulled their three leaves from their pocket. "Seven."

Helena slammed her fist on the table and laughed. "Damn. So close, but yet so far."

Pepper nodded and shrugged. "Park later?"

Helena grinned. "You're on."

After school, Pepper drove Helena and her siblings, Alexis, Collin, and Ryan, to Wasserman park, offering plenty of space and trees for their competition. There was a breeze as they parked, and Helena had both her arms out the window. She grabbed a bright yellow leaf just as Pepper pulled in. "Six!"

"Does—" Alexis started, "Does that count?"

Both Pepper and Helena paused to think, then shrugged. "Sure," they both decided at once.

The second that debate was over, both of them were out of the car, trying to grab any of the other leaves that were knocked down in the breeze. It was only after the leaves were on the ground that they went back to the kids. Their rules for roaming the park were pretty simple, stick together and don't go into the water or on the docks. And if anything happened, yell for one of them and they'd come help. They also gave the kids their phones, in case they found anything fun enough to photograph.

The kids waved and ran off, leaving Pepper and Helena alone. They looked at one another, grinned, and ran down the hill.

The breeze started up again as they ran, scattering leaves above the path. They veered off, trying to catch everything they could see.

"Seven!"

"Eight!"

"Eight too! Wait— Nine!"

Another leaf touched Pepper's fingertips, but slipped through their hand. Helena caught it under their arm. She looked up and smirked at them. "Ten."



Pepper feigned irritation as best they could while trying not to laugh. They broke into a helpless grin, then resumed their race down the hill, Helena in hot pursuit.

They both reached their destination at the same time: an ancient oak tree with brown leaves twice the size of Pepper's hand that only needed someone to imagine a breeze in order to fall. Pepper caught one just standing there, waiting for the wind to blow. "Nine."

They stood in comfortable silence, waiting for the wind to blow. Eventually Helena threw an acorn at Pepper, grinning like a kid. Pepper couldn't help but smile back.

They picked up the acorn to return it right as the breeze began to blow. Leaves rained down around them as they grabbed at all they could reach.

"Ten!"

"Eleven and twelve!"

"Eleven!"

"Thirteen!"

"Twelve— thirteen!"

"Fourteen!"

Pepper caught the last leaf above Helena's head. "Fourteen."

Helena rolled her eyes and lightly jabbed Pepper in the ribs. "How dare you."

The rest of the afternoon went like that, both of them keeping it a close race. Sometimes Helena was up, sometimes Pepper, sometimes neither. Once the sun started to go down, Helena finally suggested they head home. "We do still have school, after all."

"Last round?" Pepper offered.

Helena nodded. "Last round."

She'd barely finished saying that when the wind picked up around them. Leaves fell in droves, the light turning them gold as they floated towards the ground.

"Twenty six!" Helena called. "Twenty seven!"

"Twenty eight... twenty nine..." Pepper grasped at another, but it slipped out of their hand.

"Twenty eight— nine— thirty!"

"Thirty!"

They both called thirty-one at once, and had to calm down their laughter enough to see straight to break the tie.

"Thirty two!" Pepper called, the last of the leaves finally falling too far to reach.

Helena grabbed one inches from the ground. "Thirty two here too."

They looked at one another and grinned. "Sudden death?"

That in agreement, they both started looking around for any stray leaves still in the air. There was only one, floating lazily down near the beach, still far enough above them to warrant their running. They kept below it, waiting for it to be within their reach. Pepper's fingers grazed it, and they reached to grab it before Helena could.

Then the ground disappeared below them and they fell into freezing water. Helena fell on top of them. They swam to the surface and nearly hit the side of the dock. Helena popped up next to them and grabbed the dock with one hand.

They both burst out laughing, no other words needed.

"Draw?" Pepper asked as soon as they had a chance to breathe.

Helena started laughing again and looked away, then held up her other hand, holding the leaf. She opened her mouth as if to say something, but she couldn't stop laughing enough to say it.

"You got it?"

"Yeah—" she managed between bursts of laughter. "Yeah I did."

She turned to swim back to shore, then started laughing again. "YOU SAW NOTHING!" she yelled at the shore.

"This camera says otherwise!" Collin yelled back.

"YOU GOT THAT ON VIDEO?"

"Yeah!"

She immediately pushed off the dock and started swimming. "I've gotta see that."

Pepper followed, and they both got out of the water just in time for a gust of wind to strip them of any of their remaining warmth. They shivered, but huddled behind the phone all the same.

The video perfectly captured both of them running straight off the dock after the leaf. Collin could barely hold it still for all he was laughing. The rest of the family wasn't any farther behind.

"That's amazing," Helena said finally. She tapped Pepper's shoulder and grinned. "You have to send me that later."

Another breeze flew by and Pepper and Helena both shivered. "Alright," Helena decided. "Let's go back to the car. I need to go home and change."

"But what about ice cream?" Ryan asked. "Helena won, right?"

"Change first, ice cream after." She shivered again. "At this rate I might as well *be* ice cream."

The kids, satisfied with that, ran up towards the car. Pepper and Helena followed after them, exchanging unspoken words and laughter the whole way up.



## **Winter Contest Themes:**

**New Year's Resolutions**

**Santa's Cookies**

**Holiday Cheer**

**Time Flies**

**Let it Snow**

**St. Valentine**

**Self Love**

**Valentine's Pride**



## **Six Feet of Snow**

**By Anonymous**

*Originally read as song lyrics*

### **Verse 1:**

Sheets of ice cover every road  
I'll wrap myself up in my coat  
I think about you more than you'd ever know  
For you I'd stand in six feet of snow

### **Verse 2:**

It's dark and it's only 4 o'clock  
I'm just coming home from school  
I'm starting to feel lonely out here  
With you I'd thought I'd never feel alone

### **Chorus:**

It's hard to watch you fall apart  
Like snowflakes on a tarp  
It's hard to watch you slip away  
But for you know I'll always stay  
It's hard to watch you fall apart  
It's hard to feel okay  
But for you I'll always stay  
Even in six feet of snow

### **Verse 3:**

I remember you were crying on the phone  
How Family doesn't feel like home  
I wish you knew that you weren't alone  
But there's no sense in telling you so

### **Chorus:**

It's hard to watch you fall apart  
Like an icicle stuck in your heart  
It's hard to watch you slip away  
But for you, you know I'll always stay  
It's hard to watch it fall apart  
I miss it from the way it was  
But for you, you know I'll always stay  
In six feet of snow, every day

**Bridge:**

Nothing will help  
I can't do this myself  
I'm stuck at the back of the shelf  
I wish you would listen  
I wish you would know  
That you are killing yourself  
But so am I, in six feet of snow

**Coda (repeated chorus):**

Waiting for you to show  
To the girl you were once ago  
Back when we made gingerbread homes  
I wish you would know  
If I haven't said it before  
For you, I'd stand in six feet of snow

*\*\*This literature is about a friendship that begins to die as time flies by and the loneliness, isolation and pain that comes with it.*

**fleeting**  
**By Paige Ordway**

it speeds by  
so quick  
i barely notice it.

another minute  
another two

seconds, minutes  
race each other  
through time  
they make it so  
on them, i cannot rely

hours, days  
true, they do pass.  
the time flies  
how swift,  
i cannot deny

weeks, months  
they tiptoe,  
and slowly creep by,  
and then i blink,  
to where does the time shy?

all within the years:  
    the hours,  
    days,  
    months

they all swirl around me  
countless numbers,  
they count for so much

they swirl

they dance  
they frolick away

i reach out  
try to cup  
    this minute,  
    this moment,  
    this *memory*,  
in my hands

how do i make it count?

it slips from my grasp seeping through my fingers and when it's  
time is up...

i will never get it back.



## **The Story of a Bad Mental Health Day**

### **By Bethany Fisher**

**2/17/23**

**A story of hate, not love:**  
**Thoughts 2/17/23 3:53pm**

Self-love is an intriguing concept  
I think  
I seem to love a lot things  
Beside myself  
Like the fake succulents on my nightstand  
Or the quotes on my walls that say  
"You have survived a 100% of your worst days"  
Which is very true

But I've been told it doesn't help  
It makes them angry  
Nothing seems to help as far as I know  
Nothing but anger fills them  
Which is the status quo

Their mind filled with nothing, but fury is taken out on me  
They tell me not to feel  
They tell me not be angry  
But I'm only angry because it seems to have rubbed off on me

I'm angry because I'm not allowed to feel  
I'm angry because I have let myself down

But why should I be bothered?  
I'm used to it by now  
It's only been the past 2 years  
That I've seemed to let them down

All of this makes me hate myself  
Instead of love  
But maybe I will another day

Self-love is yet to come

Unlike any other day

**Thoughts 2/17/23 4:08pm:**

It's okay not to love yourself at the moment, right?

Yes, it's okay.

If you think about it

If you loved yourself all the time

They would be no room to grow

"If there is no rain, there is no flowers"

Another quote on my wall

We have already established that it is stupid

But it brings me great comfort knowing no matter how hard life gets, there's another way to look at it

Another set of eyes

I chose that quote because ever since I was a kid, I loved flowers

I've never received flowers, not even from St Valentine.

I guess someone like me doesn't get flowers

Daisies are my favorite

Another one of my favorites are sunflowers or poppyseeds

But today it rained

The snow is now mush

And the grass is now pushed

As my converse walk down on it

I wear the same shoes almost everyday

I like to stay familiar

I hate change

But today I didn't wear those same shoes

And today was unlike any other day

The office is my favorite TV show

**Thoughts 2/17/23 4:25pm :**

I recognize I am superstitious

Some may say

"I'm not superstitious I'm only a little bit stitious"

Which is more relatable to me  
Michael Scott  
In a weird way  
He has taught me a lot  
Although it's quite ludicrous to watch  
In a way  
I get him  
He has very strong opinions  
Like myself  
Unlike myself  
He is not afraid to do so  
But to be fair  
I also don't declare bankruptcy in the middle class  
But he also is like St Valentine, like Cupid  
His heart was always in the right place  
He had so much love  
His heart began to melt for you  
He's the kind of guy to tell Jim to go for the girl of his dreams on the boat  
Or to show up to Pam's art show when nobody did  
(That picture was hanged up in the office for the entire show)  
In way I relate to him  
Yeah, he's kind of weird  
But he has a big heart and he tries to love the people around him (except  
Toby)  
But Even if he ends up doing the wrong thing  
At least he still tried  
He tried to care  
And he tried to love, even when he didn't love himself

Just ignore the problems or turn down the heat

### **Thoughts 4:39pm**

You know thinking back  
It's hard to love yourself when some people don't even love you  
It's always  
"It's not you, it's me"  
Yes, I know  
"It's you, not me"

I didn't even do anything  
But then again  
I'm not sure what I did today  
But apparently feeling isn't okay  
Aren't you supposed to feel?  
It's not good if you don't feel  
What should I do  
Feel numb?  
I saw a quote on the wall it read  
"Just ignore the problems"  
I wish I could ignore reading that  
But it made so angry  
I'm sorry  
It didn't make me feel anything  
But seriously  
I was mad  
Mad someone would be so ignorant and oblivious to write that  
We are supposed to learn how to respect the people you love  
And even the people you don't  
But okay  
"Ignore the problems"  
And it will all be better  
Ignore the fact that you are not happy with yourself  
Don't try to make it better  
Just ignore the problems  
If I were them  
I wouldn't take pride in that  
That was yesterday  
And today is today  
But I still feel mad  
But I shouldn't because today is a new day  
But really, I just shouldn't feel at all  
But it's okay  
It's okay to feel  
Whether it's happy, sad, angry, or scared  
It's okay to feel  
We are supposed to feel  
"There are six universal emotions," said Ekman

It's okay feel  
And it's okay to love  
Even if love varies from person to person  
I didn't wear the shoes I always wear  
They have rainbow-colored beads within the laces  
They are my favorite shoes  
They're my pride shoes  
They're my lucky shoes in-fact  
And I didn't wear them today  
And I had the worst day today  
Maybe the universe is telling me something  
But tomorrow is a new day  
It's Saturday so that's good  
And soon a new week  
This week in general has been bad  
People think I'm so angry  
Because I think out loud  
But that's how I deal with whatever I'm struggling with  
Instead of feeling too much  
Or feeling nothing at all  
But I feel with words  
Whether it is on paper  
Or out loud  
It starts to pour over if not  
Like a boiling pot of water  
Which only creates a bigger flame  
But all you gotta do is turn down the heat and it won't boil over  
I turn my heat down by letting it out  
Even if it means ranting about only being served two Bosco sticks at lunch  
Yeah, it's dumb but if the water is already full then the slightest bit of heat  
will make it overflow  
And not to mention I've spent an hour writing and creating instead of doing  
something dangerous  
People seriously don't give me enough credit for that  
But who really cares  
It's a Friday night I could spend wasting my life way or reminiscing over all  
the things I can't control

Instead, I am creating something I hope will be positive for the people  
reading this  
My goal in life is to help people  
I know I say I don't like people a lot  
But if I can help make a difference  
And help at least one person become the best version of themselves  
Then that is what I want  
That is all I need  
It is all worth it  
The people around me telling me I shouldn't feel  
The sticky note on the wall  
The lack of Bosco sticks at lunch  
(It's seriously frustrating because they are good)  
But on a more serious note,  
it's all worth it  
The pain and the hardship  
Is all worth it  
If one person  
That person being me  
Can make a difference in the unfair world we live in  
That's why today is only a bad mental health day and not the day where I  
want to give up

~

**5:15pm**

*Message from the author:*

*Hi, I'm Bethany,*

*This writing is very different from my normal witty memoirs or sad poetry  
But I had a hard day, so I wanted to write about it, but I also knew I wanted  
to submit something for the February contest. So, I did both because I am  
indecisive. Moral of the story, your feelings are valid and it's okay to feel  
them too! If you ever struggle with mental health of any kind, talk to  
someone you trust. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. But  
it's one of the hardest things I had to do. But what I've learned is that it's  
okay to feel. But today I felt like it was not, which was why today in practice  
got to me. But with that said, I created this for you and me to read, look  
back on, and reflect. I hope you enjoyed it!*

...him

middle of sophomore year, i was looking for new mascara. all the other mascaras i had tried using damaged my lashes.

one day, i found this new mascara. as soon as i saw this mascara, i knew i had to start using it. it was special. the kind they don't sell in any other stores.

the first time i put it on, i immediately fell in love with it. i had finally found the perfect mascara that made my eyes pop. it made my lashes curl the way they used to when i was younger. it made me happier the more i used it. i found this mascara at just the right time. i really needed good mascara in my life. it was just the kind i was looking for.

i've been using this mascara for over a year now. i can't believe it's been this long. i use it every day. it's basically a part of my daily routine. the first thing i think about when i wake up in the morning is putting on my mascara. the last thing i do before going to sleep is take it off. in fact, i'm so attached to this mascara, that i have a hard time taking it off at night. i hate every minute it's not with me. this mascara is my whole life. i love it so much.

on my good days, putting on my mascara only makes me prettier. although, i can even use it on my bad days to cheer me up. my mascara is always here for me.

one thing i love about my mascara is that i don't need to use any other makeup to make myself feel beautiful. all i need is my mascara, and my makeup routine is done. i'm satisfied with just my mascara.

i am so insanely in love with my mascara. it's completely changed my life for the better. sometimes i don't even know how i would live without it. but in the end, this isn't about mascara... it's about him.

**Someone like u:**  
**By Bethany Fisher**

I once thought  
That I'd be happy with u  
Now it's gone  
For a while  
But how little I knew  
Now the thought  
Of u  
Makes me sick  
Makes me blue  
Oh, it's true  
I wish I never met u

I'm just a girl  
Trying to feel the void  
But it doesn't have to be  
A girl or boy  
Does it matter  
(Does it matter)  
If I look alone  
I'd rather be home  
Then meet someone like u  
Like u

Hates a strong word  
That's what my mother says  
But for you  
I use  
The word despise instead  
Oh, I wish  
I didn't let you in my phone  
But now your numbers gone  
And I'm better off alone  
Then with u



I get no flowers  
No, Not a girl like me  
But It doesn't matter  
Because I'm free  
From Someone like yourself  
You hate yourself  
Almost as much as I hate u  
(You do \*3  
(Someone like u)  
And It's true

*This song follows moving on and becoming yourself once again. I thought it fit well with the theme of valentines and self-love.*

# **SPILT INK CONTEST PARTY**

**Each contest participant was required to write based on two random words they received, provided by the Spilt ink staff.**



## **Spaghetti and Flowers:**

**By Vivian Halvorson**

The best moments are the ones where all you have to do is breathe in and admire the world around you. Although the land can seem barren with its stagnant hues of green and blue, there are splotches of color all around... if you know where to find them.

When wildflowers bloom, the world gains beautiful hues. Breathtaking moments are shared and the world seems a bit more bearable. Away from the pressing cities, filled with unchanging grays, whites, and browns. Forests, fields, rainforests, even deserts and mountains, all hold beautiful blooms. Sharing all of these with a lover makes the world seem less monochrome. Enjoying dates out in fields of flowers, swaying in the breeze. Picking flowers to put in each other's hair. Holding them close in a world now shows its true colors. Shared picnic dates with fancy spaghetti dinners connecting the humanity of the world to its natural beauty. There's a comfort that comes with eating a hot meal together while watching the steam float off into the sky.

No matter how rich, how joyful, how broken, how poor, how fortunate, everyone can enjoy nature's beautiful hues. So while the world can be dreary, take a moment to spend it with someone close. Enjoy the nature around you. Always remember that whenever the world's colors seem to warp and bend, step back and take a moment to see what is really there, hidden among the colorful flower fields of nature.

## **Weeds and Fever**

### **By Kaylee Ayers**

Sasha lays on the couch, her breath short, and her long, dark hair hanging off and brushing up against the floor. She is covered in sweat, and her eyes are glazed over, staring at something far, far away in the depths of her mind.

Eve scrambles to get the keys to the medicine cabinet. They jingle tauntingly as she rushes over, hands shaking as the cabinet unlocks. The small shelves are lined with herbs and miscellaneous pills; some of the labels she can't even read.

"Sasha?" she calls out behind her, leaning back to peek around the corner. Sasha, set up in the living room, doesn't reply. "Sasha!"

"Yeah?" she answers weakly, whatever haze she was just in temporarily broken.

"What was the medicine called?"

Sasha mumbled under her breath, the only words caught by Eve were pieces of nonsense. "The Wexterdarin." She giggled, singing a jingle. "Wexterdarin, Wexterdarin, cure your curse with Wexterdarin..."

"Okay okay," Eve whispers, scanning the cabinet once more. "Wexterdarin..."

She turns a pill bottle around, exclaiming a small 'There!' before yanking it out. She quickly scans over the warning labels, glancing here and there at Sasha. Sasha is still breathing heavily, but now it was interrupted by tired giggles.

"Okay. Okay! I got this, I got this. I can do this." Eve says, trying to take calming breaths. "Take the Newt eyes, take the Wexterdarin, mix them together, pour it into her mouth."

Eve turns from the cabinet and speed-walks to the living room. She looks at Sasha and swears loudly.

Sasha, breathing shallow and shaky now, gazes at her arms. Weeds of all kinds had begun to grow from them, little flowers peeking out here and there. Other various places, like her neck, have also started to be taken over. Sasha laughs joyfully, her usual cautious self completely unaware of the danger she's in.

"Eve, look! My favorite color's popping up!" She says, still gazing at them. She grins up at Eve.

Eve books it to the kitchen, clumsily taking out a brewing pot from underneath the stove. She flips the switch on, the small blue flames lighting underneath, and their warmth already radiating.

Eve bites her lip in concentration, her heart beating up into her throat.

There's not much time left.

## Untitled

By Rainier Murray

She could only remember at dawn. When the light spread its golden fingers over the field. Only then could she remember. The blood-like water over the grass. The bodies emptied out by bullet-holes. The suits of armor that became gravestones for their wearers.

She raced through the field, around corpses long-gone, over weapons melted down before she'd been of-age, through makeshift ramparts that had washed away with the snowmelts of old. She needed to find it.

It had been lost here. She remembered that.

A phantom pushed her away as a cannon burst through her ears. She regained her bearings and kept running. Dawn only lasted so long.

She jumped the enemies' barriers, something she never could have done before. The ghost of an officer shouted an order to his men, who shivered with the breeze. They aimed, but several fell before they could even put their fingers on the trigger.

Not her. She was past the medical tents, where the doctor bandaged the stump of an arm as a soldier gazed at a picture of his wife in the golden rays of morning. She was nearly there.

She reached the high officer's tent, the bent flagpole at the entrance a monument to the battlefield that haunted her mornings. There, the general brandished it, catching the sunlight and turning the tent's inside to gold. She reached to grab it, but a young girl snatched it before she could reach and raced out of the tent.

She chased after the girl, who weaved between the battle like she was born there. She might have been. She was nearly in the woods, nearly free, nearly morning, as the shot rang out.

The girl collapsed, dropping it. She ran to grab it as the girl laid there. She wouldn't get up.

She retrieved it and handed it back to the girl, a sad smile on her face. The girl lifted her head, looked at it, looked at her, and smiled as the light faded from her eyes. As the dawn light faded away around her. As it all disappeared.

She stood up. Looked at the field. Something was missing. Gone in a whisper of the wind. She went home, humming a song she couldn't remember, with a slight smile.

## **Untitled**

**By Eden Montoya**

The sight before him was something Tom could only explain as grotesque. The flesh was clinging by a thread. The flesh was clinging by a thread. The rotting teeth nailed in his skull and his jaw was dislocated making a clattering sound with every step. This can't be right. That thing was wearing the same purple satin top hat as his pops. "Stay back!"

Upon maneuvering backwards weaving between the tables and chairs he studied its movements along with trying to block out the smell. Why was he here? Why now? Was this what happens when you make a deal with the devil?

**Untitled**  
**By Eden Montoya**

I tilted my top hat to the ladies making them swoon. The fiances of those ladies threw me a look and protectively wrapped their arms around the beautiful ladies.

Continuing on my way I passed an unordinary building. Its stench was grotesque. Looking up at the sign it read, "Cannibal Cafe." What kind of town is this! Quickly jerking my head around I now recognized the unfamiliar and odd behavior and norms of this place. How did I get here you ask? Let me explain from the beginning...



## **A Restaurant's Grave**

### **By Alana Lord**

I remember the smells,  
the sounds, the lack of humidity in the air  
despite the place being packed with  
people shoulder to shoulder.

The feeling of kneaded dough under my palms,  
the flour trapped under my fingernails.  
The way she messed with my hair  
before every opening and after every closing.

The feeling of our stability being swept away,  
the rug pulled from beneath our feet.

We knew it wouldn't last,

the newest technology and the rich men and women

coming into our humble town  
and stealing away the profits with  
shoddily made treats and baked "goods".

It was time to welcome  
a new era, they said.

I remember the crestfallen look  
upon my mother's face  
as she read through the new landlords  
terms and conditions.

We couldn't stay there any longer,  
much to our dismay.  
We bid our goodbyes and left.

And that's why I stand here now, years after,  
the small, quaint little bakers' shop

erased and replaced by some big-name brand.

A restaurant's grave,  
the cold bite to the air,  
the scent of gasoline tainting the breeze,  
and the light pollution staining the  
star speckled sky.

## **warmth**

**By Paige Ordway**

arms wrap  
around each  
others waists,  
radiating warmth.

they hold  
one another to  
resist the tumble  
back into the  
despair  
that they've  
both succumb  
to before.

together,  
they form their  
own community,  
away from the  
rest of humanity.

as if they  
are a warm  
microwaveable  
meal,  
after a long  
day,  
providing a sense of  
belonging  
to each other.

"welcome:  
when they  
collapse  
into each  
other,

for,  
they have  
found home  
in each other's  
arms.

- welcome home



# Spring Six Word Memoirs

School  
Lucky  
Nature  
3 AM Thoughts



# School

## Six word memoirs

Wake up early, focus on grades. ~ Bria Blake.

Hard class. Low grade. More stress. ~ Isabelle Newell

Four years. 21 credits. One test. ~ Isabelle Newell.

More to life than an assignment. ~ Anonymous

There is no time for anything ~ Alex Barrios

Slow hall walkers are so annoying. ~ Anonymous.

School wants to help. How ironic. ~ Anonymous

Lunch is great, leaving is better. ~ Anonymous

took test, failed test, parents mad ~ Anonymous

so much work, so little time ~ Mckayla Mendez

Keep your brain with you, always. ~ Torin Vitone

Editing my inner circle. Deleting negativity.

~ Anonymous

burnout. an excess of homework, stress.

Rae Gordon

# Lucky / Four Leaf Clover

four leaves, some wishes, let's hope. ~ Rae  
Gordon

green leaves, two wishes, really one. ~ Rae  
Gordon

green is good, full of luck. ~ Bria Blake

Little kids, pick clovers, they hope. ~ Emily  
Perigny.

The metal rod fell beside him. ~ Alex Barrios

March 17th, glowing green, shining gold. ~  
Dom Luhrs

Bought a ticket. Won the lottery. ~  
Anonymous

look a ducky, I'm so lucky ~ Mckayla Mendez

It's possible to find, but difficult. ~ Torin  
Vitone



# Nature

Mother Nature's Wrath Knows No Bounds ~ Nathan Watson

Her Raging Storms Tear The Grounds. ~ Nathan Watson

Mother Nature, She Tall And Proud. ~ Nathan Watson

tree gives life, helps us grow. ~ Bria Blake

Growing from roots, I am alive. ~ Vanessa Carlson.

Tall trees to be well admired. ~ Anonymous

The squirrel saw smoke straight ahead. ~ Alex Barrios

Vibrant leaves, limitless trees, chirping wilderness. ~ Dom  
Luhrs

Luck wisped through the spring air. ~ Anonymous

wind blew, trees fell, power outage ~ Anonymous

the grass the trees, fluffy bee ~ Mckayla Mendez

Beautiful; but mistreated often, cruel world. ~ Torin Vitone

Quiet sizzle, delicious aroma, morning sun. ~ Anonymous

The beach, soft sand, sunny day. ~ Emily Perigny.

# 3AM Thoughts

Dreams are a double-edged sword. ~ Anonymous

The shell of my mind disintegrates. ~ Julia Hodsdon

Healing is about accepting, not forgetting. ~ Anonymous.

Can global peace ever occur, naturally? ~ Torin Vitone

I am turning into something beautiful. ~ Vanessa Carlson

I'm not ready for these changes. ~ Anonymous

I'm tired of not feeling normal. ~ Anonymous

Surrendering your consciousness, a scary thing. ~ Anonymous.

Depression's taking over, but I'm fine. ~ Anonymous.

Whatever comes up, always comes down. ~ Bria Blake

Cling to the last of her. ~ Isabelle Newell.

I'm not giving up just yet. ~ Anonymous

I'm too tired to sleep today. ~ Alex Barrios

No matter the amount, keep traveling. ~ Torin Vitone

# Name Poems



Students in English 9 were given an opportunity to write poetry about their name based on the novel in verse *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds.

## **My Name Is**

from *Long Way Day* by Jason Reynolds

Will.  
William.  
William Holloman.

But to my friends  
and people  
who know me  
know me,

just Will.

So call me Will,  
because after I tell you  
what I'm about to tell you

you'll either  
want to be my friend  
or not  
want to be my friend  
at all.

either way,  
you'll know me  
know me.

## **My Name:**

Kaden Finn

Was not picked for a specific reason

More than the fact that my parents loved it.

I enjoy my name and see no reason to want another,

My parents gave me this name

And I am happy with it no matter what.

My name of course still has a meaning,

Defined as a companion for those around.

A willing fighter and gentle

While not all fit me perfectly they can describe me.

Of course I am called different things

My parents calling me K most often

And friends call me Kaden.

While it is not set in stone this is how it goes

Am I upset about it? Not at all

Matter a fact I think its nice

No one really says my full name.

Unless I did something wrong

When I hear my full name my spine will shake.

I know for a fact at that moment I am in trouble

And left to hope that it was a mistake.

**My Name**  
**By Ava Muise**

Ava.

It means birdlike

Birdlike?

If I am a bird, then shouldn't I be free

Not be forced in the cage which I cannot escape

The cage where I am forced to live a life.

I want to be a bird

I want to be free

Be able to fly away from all my problems and never look back

And most importantly live the life I want to live

But I do not leave

I am fed and given water and am told I am loved

I am loved.

To me it is only words

Maybe that's why I do not leave

Because although it may be words to me it seems like a lot more to others

Perhaps that is why I do not leave this cage

Perhaps that's why when the doors are left open, I do not fly out

Soar away in the sky where I want to be.

I do not though

I stay in my cage

Not because I fear starving or dehydrating

Or having nobody to comfort or "love me"

Not because I am scared to die but because of others

Because I do not want them to put themselves in cages

Hurt their own wings or hurt and trap others.

That is why I am still in this cage

In this false happiness

Maybe I'm still a bird

Just not a happy one who wants to call my cage a home.

## **The Meanings Of My Names**

### **By Alesha Seck**

Esha.

Alesha.

Alesha Kadiatou.

Online, I am Esha

A short nickname I chose for myself.

I love making nicknames a lot.

But to my classmates, friends, and family,

I am Alesha. My first name, Alesha, is

A Muslim/Arabic girl name

Meaning "Protected by God"

and "noble and kind"

And my middle name, Kadiatou,

Is a West African/Arabic name,

Which makes sense because I am

Half Senegalese.

I know this because I searched them up on Google.

These meanings and origins of

My first and middle name are connected

to my identity and ethnicity,

Because I am kind hearted,

I have morals and a good heart

And I will never change that

About myself.

## **Emily**

### **By Emily Flowers**

Emily.  
My name is Emily.  
A very basic name  
One that everyone can pronounce.

To most people there's no meaning behind my name.  
Nothing special, nothing interesting.  
It was chosen just because my mom liked it.

But to me my name is special  
Special because my mom chose it.  
She could of choose Madeline, Cecelia, Virginia  
But she didn't.  
She chose Emily.

Even though my name isn't interesting, people still find a way to make it.  
so many nicknames for such a basic name  
Louie, Memmy, Ems, Emmy, Flowers, Emily bo Bemmily.  
I don't think I know anyone who is named Emily bo Bemmily.

I love my name no matter how basic it is.



## **My Name**

### **By Haileigh Harris**

It's confusing.  
Annoying.  
It's too basic.

My parents told me  
it wasn't popular at first.  
It's not from relatives  
except for the spelling.

Haleigh.  
Haleigh Morgan Harris.  
It's too basic.  
People don't know  
how to spell it.

It means hay meadow.  
My parents named be after  
what a horse eats and consumes.

When people call my name  
six other girls look over.

They pronounce it wrong,  
and tell me it's cool or pretty  
when I correct them.

I wish my parents  
picked their first choice,  
Sierra.  
At least people would know  
how to spell and pronounce it.

They also wouldn't have the same name.  
I get no nicknames.  
The only nicknames I get  
aren't from my name  
or they're to make fun of me.

I wish my parents  
Weren't so basic.

**My name**  
**By Jake Roehm**

is cool.

It has four letters  
it is very short  
I am very short.

It means  
acceptable  
adequate  
satisfactory.

Jake  
Jake Roehm  
Only Jake

People think it is a nickname  
but it's not.  
It is my legal name  
Because that's all my parents got.

**My Name:**  
**By Danyil Kovryzhenko**

My name has a lot of various meanings. At the age of eight, I decided to figure out what does it mean and found out that in every language in the world my name means: "God is my judge." This is a biblical name, therefore, this meaning is very biblical. Also, the name Danyil in the Bible is associated with such adjectives as: decent, smart, calm.

Ukraine is a part of East Europe and people who live there are orthodox. Also, people in Ukraine are strong believers in religion and it is important for them to be clear in front of God and adhere to a large number of commandments. So, my family is not an exception and we usually went to church for every day which was associated with Christianity. Based on all this, I can tell that my family chose a name for me that was very closely connected with Christianity.

Eke, Danyil is a popular and famous name in Ukraine but in my family nobody had the same name or even close to mine. When my parents decided how to call me they noticed it and were sure that I would be successful with this name.

In all my life, my first name very rarely pronounced incorrectly and I understand why because this name is known in many countries. However, my second name was a big problem for people and usually people pronounce it with mistakes, which never angered me or upset me because people are not required to know it, usually it is just funny. As well, I have never been ashamed of my name and I have always been proud because I like it.

**I Am:**  
**By Amelia siik**

Amelia.  
Amelia Melissa Siik  
That is my full name.

Amelia means hard working.  
What is true in some cases but sometimes not.  
My mom had a lot of ideas for a name for me.  
She had a full list with baby girl names  
Like Eilsabeth, Sophie, Isabella  
All the English names.

But my name is German.  
Which makes no sense to me.  
Now, Amelia is more of an English name, but it was first German.  
I am not German, I am Italian and Finnish.

My mom said she only picked Amelia  
Because she liked the name.  
She loved how powerful it was and how much meaning it had.

She loved how uncommon it was.  
Now it is more common.  
What can be very annoying, but it gives me a lot of nicknames.  
Like Millie or Mini  
My mom hates the original nickname they gave Amelia  
What is Amy she hates that nickname would not let anyone  
Call me that



**Dear Diary,**  
**(Personal writing entries)**



## **I am a kid who...**

**By Anonymous**

I am a kid who is stressed with school work being available for friends and family. I am a kid who is trying to make it on the daily for everyone else around me. I am a kid who is being brought up in an awful world we all are required to live in. I am a kid who is trying to have fun while our "young" years are here. I am a kid who is trying to make everything better for everyone else yet a kid who smiles every day because every day is a good day.

## **Happiness**

### **By Anonymous**

Happiness is the warm gooey chocolate chip cookie my grandma made. After a long hard day at work, I walked into the kitchen and saw the most delicious-looking cookies on the counter. The sweet chocolatey aroma hit my nose and carried me to the kitchen. It was late so I didn't want to wake her up. Slowly, I tip-toed to the table, careful to make no noise besides the grandfather clock ticking against the wall. Biting into the soft cookie; it was the best thing I'd tasted in my life. While licking the leftover chocolate off my fingers, I heard my Grandma Gigi gradually descending the stairs. "Did you try one of the cookies, Honey?" she asked me. I looked at her and jokingly said "Um no." We both giggled and she said, "Are you sure? Your nose is growing." I admitted that I tried one and told her they were delicious. I hugged her and kissed her on the forehead, and we started heading upstairs to our rooms. "I forgot something," I said as I turned back around "I'll be right up." She continued to her room while I returned for one more cookie.

## **By Anonymous**

It's a warm mid-spring afternoon. The sun hits the backyard perfectly at this time of day. The brisk breeze blew the warm air across my face while the butterflies danced around the gardens. I sit down on the outdoor furniture and watch the dogs run energetically out into the yard like wild animals in an open field. I turn on the music that plays from the speaker and listen to the birds sing from the woods in the background. I let my mind wander and soon I find myself standing up and wanting to explore the gardens within my yard. The floral scent takes over the fresh cut grass smell that lurks in the air. I make my way over to the fruit and vegetable garden and I look for new ready-to-be-picked fruits and vegetables. I am quick to find a few tomatoes, cucumbers, and strawberries. I blow off anything that may be on the strawberry, and I take a bite. Mmmm, I love strawberries. It was a perfect bite, sweet, flavorful and not tart. I bring in all my new findings to the kitchen and let them dry off after a good wash. Taking a step back outside I go to the hammock this time. I lay and let the wind rock me gently back and forth and for a short while I close my eyes and drift off.



## **Most Powerful Word**

### **By Alexis Flewelling**

The most powerful word is dedication. I think dedication is the most powerful word. It means one thing but under all the layers it means so much more. The word, like many people, has a story like no one knows about, like a success story. They may say they were dedicated to succeeding their dream, but what does that really entail? To be dedicated means to pursue through any obstacles that are in the way of what you are dedicated to achieve. When someone says they were successful because they were dedicated, what truly did they overcome to be dedicated? To then also know why they are so dedicated to achieve their goal.



**Untitled**  
**By Anonymous**

I was 14 and my depression tried to get the best of me.  
I was sitting on the floor crying.  
I told my dad I was gonna leave this life.  
He just hugged me.  
He told me it was all going to be alright.  
I could feel the fear we both had,  
But he said it was going to be okay  
He told me he loved me,  
And he just hugged me.  
I cried in his arms.  
But in those tears,  
I realized I wasn't alone.  
I knew logically I wasn't,  
But him holding me in his arms-  
Until I felt okay again.  
That's where I got motivation,  
I kept going.  
The war in my head ragged on.  
But I never thought about leaving this life,  
Ever again.  
And one day,  
I hope I find the strength  
To help him like he helped me.

## **Untitled**

**By Chloe Gangemi**

when you showed me how to love,  
you showed me the world i was missing.  
the mountain tops, the hills,  
the moon and the stars.  
you showed me that love isn't just a word.  
it's a galaxy i never thought i'd explore.  
that is,  
until i met you.

## **Spring**

### **By Anonymous**

Spring, a time between  
dark and light,  
gloomy and sunny,  
cold and warm,  
winter and summer.

A mix of bright sunny afternoons  
and rainy humid damp days.

Spring, flowers bloom,  
covering the ground  
in a rainbow of colors.  
Trees are filled with blossoming buds,

making them look as if  
they are coming to life.

Spring, a gust of cool  
breeze ruffles the  
leaves and blows through  
your hair. You can  
smell the freshness of

the air as it brushes  
against your face.

Spring, the rain falls  
outside, watering and  
giving life to the world,  
creating a humid feel to  
the air when it's over.

The smell of the damp air  
seems to refresh your mind.

Spring, the birds come  
out all at once. The  
soothing sound of their  
chirping brings a peace  
of mind. You can hear the

flutter of their wings against  
the leaves up in the trees.

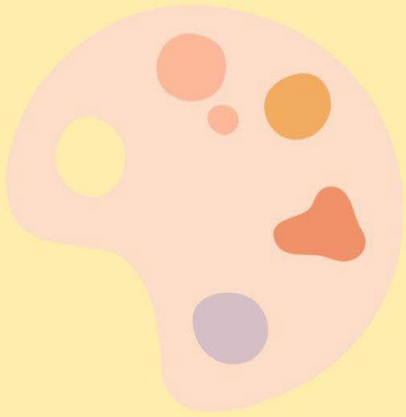
**Over**

**By Josie Redding**

bright horizon Reaches across.  
taking it all in.  
Enjoying the time left.  
mesmerized eyes.  
loving life.

Doing all the activities.  
wishing for more time.  
Dancing my way through time.  
hoping it lasts forever.  
forgetting all responsibilities.

I can't leave.  
sun waves goodbye.  
Nighttime arrives  
It's time to say goodnight.  
Good luck at the start of school.



**Artwork**



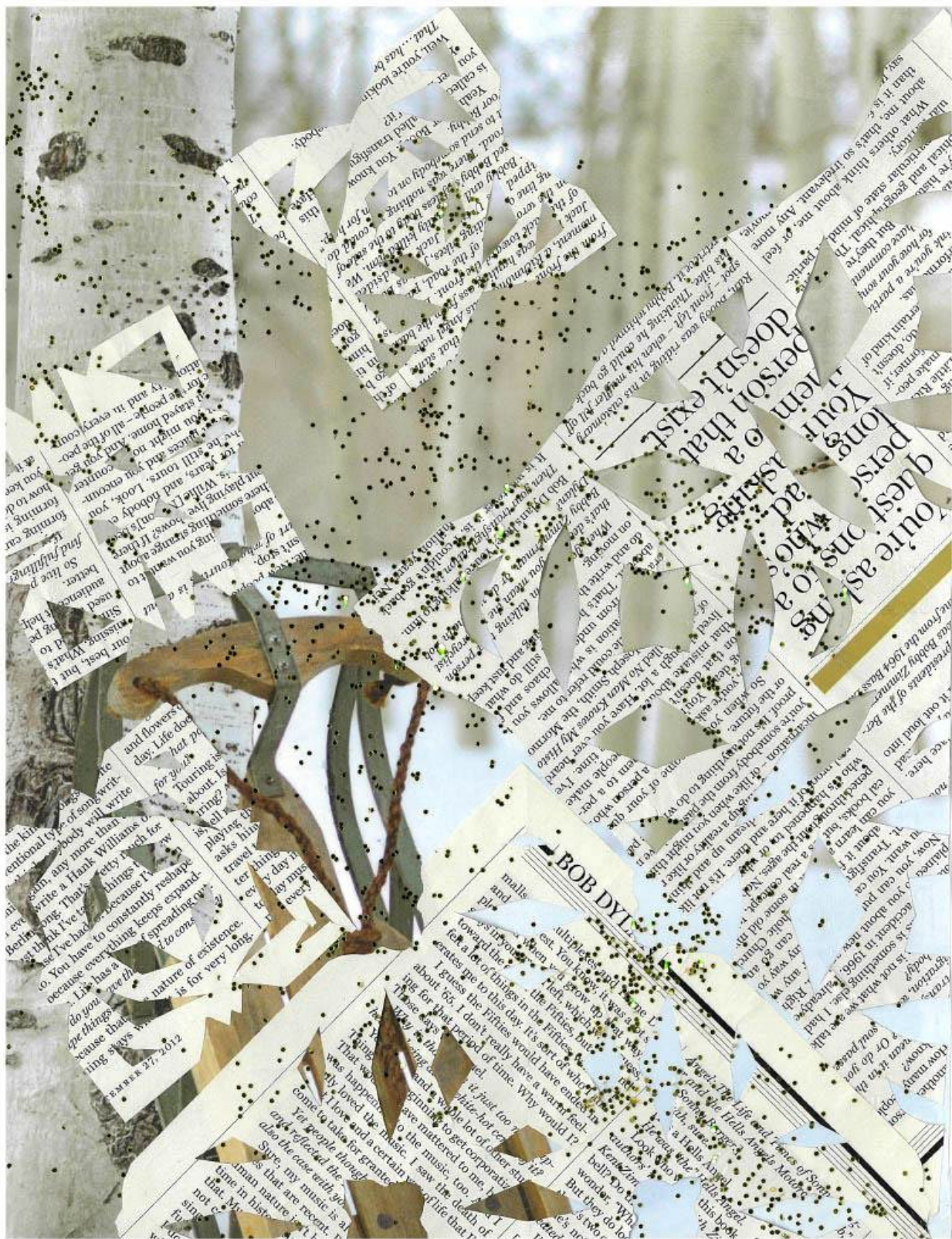
**Aerin Shaugnessy**





**Not So Spooky**  
**Mia Giuliano**





**Avary Cruz**





**Maggie Ashland**



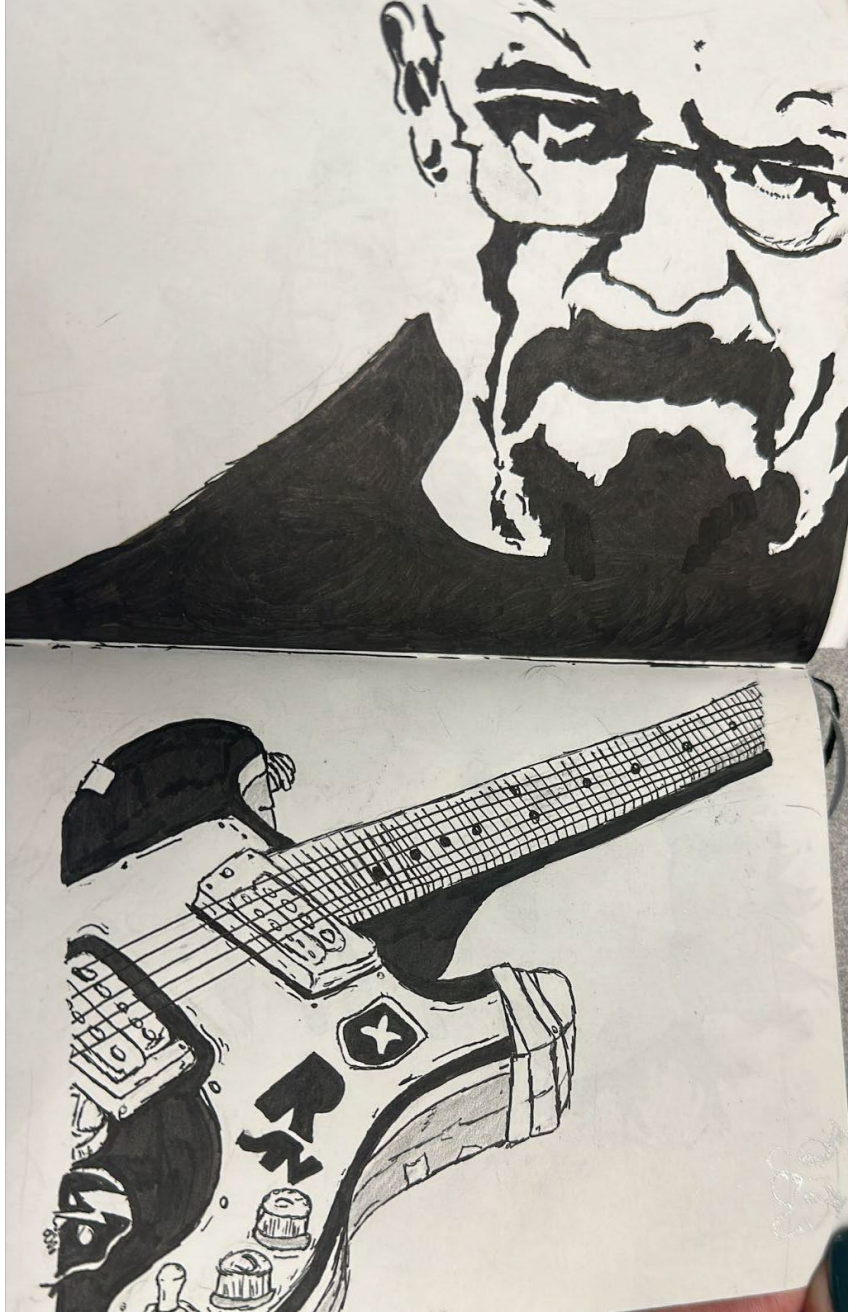


**Molly Manyard**





**Rebecca Robinson**



**Molly Manyard**







**Little Flower**  
**Rainier Murray**



**Squish**  
**Rainier Murray**





**Orchid**  
**Rainier Murray**



**Vanessa Carlson**



**Vanessa Carlson**





**Vanessa Carlson**



**Vanessa Carlson**



**Anonymous**





**Anonymous**



**Anonymous**





**Bethany Fisher**



**Bethany Fisher**





**Bethany Fisher**



**Bethany Fisher**



**Isabelle Newell**



**Isabelle Newell**



**Isabelle Newell**





**Isabelle Newell**

