



STUCK IN THE LIBRARY

FALL 2018
POETRY
EDITION

STAFF LIST

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Mary Halabani | President |
| Aaron Guyette | Vice President |
| Kali Norris | Editor in Chief |
| Mariyah Rajshahiwala | Chief of Publication |
| Raisa Santos | Senior Format Editor |
| Sophie Shnaidman | Senior Editor |
| Zainab Iqbal | Senior Editor |
| Ruby Gold | Editor |
| Marielle Maxwell | Editor |
| Maryam Ahmad | Editor |
| Hira Tahir | Editor |
| Carlos Torres | Editor |
| Roksana Jasiewicz | Editor |
| Jelly Thompson | Editor |
| Saelly Alvarez | Editor |
| Mic Braun | Editor |
| Sabrina Mammen | Editor |
| Toni Coleman | Editor |
| Hinda Dinowitz | Editor |
| Vivian Khaskin | Head of Events Committee |
| Gabriella Calderone | Head of Events Committee |
| Alissa Marino | Events Committee |
| Sharmelys Villaverde | Events Committee |
| Maya Garcia | Events Committee |
| Frances Shnaidman | Graphic Designer |
| Galit Mamrout | Photographer |

Cover Art by Frances Shnaidman

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| a.a | Maya Garcia | Emely Pascual |
| Oriya Abed | Ruby Gold | Lamont Paulin |
| Maryam Ahmad | Akash Gosh | Annabelle Paulino |
| Mukta Ahmad | Jessica Goncharov | Katelyn Podias |
| Sara R. Ahisar | Jada Gordon | Mariyah Rajshahiwala |
| Michael Alford III | Mary Halabani | Ramsey |
| Saelly Alvarez | Shajuana Henry | Kiara Marie Reyes |
| Julia Andresakis | Zainab Iqbal | Isaiah Rivera |
| Nya Archie | Ilana Iskhakova | Kristina Rodriguez |
| Anosha Arshad | Gabrielle Kaplun | Liza Rodriguez |
| Rachel Augustin | Brittany Katelynn | Sofiya Romendik |
| Joshua Avin | Vivian Khaskin | Brie Rosa |
| Zhrah Aziz | Calvin Kipperman | M Jane Ross |
| Daliah Ben-Ari | Sarah Knoll | Jason Sajan |
| Daniel Bennaton | le Cielle | Raisa Alexis Santos |
| Narline Borno | Kalliniki Lambrinoudis | Anum Sattar |
| Mic Braun | Vicky Lee | Monica Saw-Aung |
| Charlene Catalano | Avery Lieberman | Moshe Shalom |
| Zoe Christie | Melissa Louis | Sophie Shnaidman |
| Kathleen Conlon | Miss Malik | Alyssa Siriano |
| Izaura Danilova | Alissa Marino | Shalhevet Soed |
| Bryan Davis | Romel Martinez | Ashaunte Solomon |
| Pomie Delva | Marielle Maxwell | Jennifer Spencer |
| Jessica Drigun-Lara | Miles Mercer | Anya Supernova |
| Daniel Edelstein | Samantha Merzel | Madison-Christopher |
| Sarah Einav | Anastasia Mourzakha- | Sykes |
| Mariam Esa | nova | Alyna Valderrama |
| Quentin Felton | Pen Name | Bloom Yuki |
| Jen Fireflies | Sana Naveed | Zachary Troyano |
| Bethany Friedmann | Hannah Nelson | Edmund Z |
| Nolan Frontera | Kali Norris | Zana |
| Beaton Galafa | Nova | Ahnaf Zitou |
| | Karen Ramirez Nuñez | |

WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Readers,

I thank you all for so readily accepting me to lead *Stuck in the Library* for Fall 2018, as well as the semesters to come. The artistic sphere at Brooklyn College is what keeps me motivated to keep writing and pursue my passion of creating, collaborating, and consistently coming up with innovative and fresh approaches to narrative proposals. It is without a doubt that my inspiration derives from the driven staff and students on campus determined to bring awareness to the creative movement we've all worked so hard to establish.

This magazine is especially exceptional because the *Stuck in the Library* staff was given the pleasure of reviewing all the daily submissions that rolled in, with a total of 100 accepted and published, the highest record we have had thus far. I am in awe with the desire so many students hold to get their voices heard and am proud to take part in seeing their desires blossom.

Thank you for taking part in this monumental achievement. There would be no way for this magazine to exist without the wonderful readers, writers, and fans of *Stuck in the Library*.

Enjoy,

Mary Halabani

President of Stuck in the Library

SOME CONTENT MAY BE SENSITIVE FOR SOME READERS.

"Some things are scary. Writing about them is scarier.
Keep staying strong and write on."

-Stuck in the Library Staff

STOVETOP RECITAL

Ruby Gold

imagine this kitchen tango;
feet, clapping across the tile, anxious to zest the truest lemon,
fingers snap formally,
and peel the carrots of dirty skin, coaxing out a softer, baby orange.
there is dancing in the air, when mezze platters are stacked high,
graciously devoted to brined olives, hummus filled with wells of oil,
and down pillow
pita bread,
fried for comfort in butter,
salt, all the salt the tongue aches for.
pasta in the pot becomes tender and lets loose, fluid as the bodies in rhythm,
driven to kick ball chain from the starch rolling off the boil.
give and take,
ingredients lasso into electric dance,
dill zapping the basil, who in turn zaps cilantro to
stay
on beat.

CONCRETE SHOES

Kali Norris

We all become what we don't understand,
and I leach the warmth from rooms.

I burn out like a dying star
and I've never felt so at home.

We go home
and our gods are kind to us.

We go home.
We do not name our children for our dead.
We put out the candles and live in the dark.
We leave them lit. If the bed hangings want to catch fire, we welcome them to try.
We admire anything that still has the will to burn.

I go down to the river,
unhinge my jaw,
take to the water like I was born to it.

KEYS

Monica Saw-Aung

I lost my keys last weekend.
They must have slipped out of my pocket.
Somewhere between subway commutes and car rides,
Queens and Brooklyn overlapping
like transparencies in the projector of my mind -
sometime between Mother's Day dinner and bubble tea runs,
family friends and temple nuns.

It's hard to describe feeling like you don't
belong at your own doorstep. Missing the security of those
jagged edges imprinted into your palm in the dark
night, the metal warm to the touch. Jolted out of autopilot
familiarity, hands fumbling around nondescript
spares, undecorated and impersonal under
shitty fluorescent lighting. Strangers.
Doors as brick walls instead of open gates.

They're just keys. But they were my keys, and that means something.

I'll get new keychains soon enough, and this loss will fade into a history rife with
things lost and never found. I'll forget that I ever worried about them or missed
their shape against my fingers, just like the pair of glasses in fifth grade or the \$20
Metrocard last month. But my keys will be out there, lost somewhere in a vast,
expansive landscape. Cracked sidewalk, or cold asphalt, or dirty tile. Waiting to fit
into the right slot in the universe again, to be more than a lump of metal without
place and purpose.

RELEVANT

Lamont Paulin

“Pray I get relevant, hope I get relevant, hope I stay relevant, hope I am relevant,
want to be relevant, pray I get relevant, hope I get relevant, hope I stay relevant,
hope I am relevant, want to be relevant, pray I get relevant, hope I get relevant...”

Don't want my doubt,
To be procured by less clout.
Don't wanna feel without,
But I fall into attentionless bouts,
Because I feel like I'm not getting the deserving recognition,
So inside, I pout.

Am I doing something wrong?
Am I complaining too much about what I don't have?
I don't mean to be THAT attention whore,
Because with an attitude like that, nothing good will be in store.
Maybe I'm dormant or stuck in progression limbo,
Residing in perpetual lethargia and fear,
Over the possibility of me not making it.
I see and get followers, who themselves amass more views and likes and reposts
and comments.
They're the ones whose fans honor them in the form of quoted tattoos.
They're the ones who don't get rejected easily when collabs are established.
But who am I to judge,
I don't know their full story.
I can't be a hater,

Especially with all this potential and creativity bubbling inside me,
Like that brown salt in that spoon being bubbled for that syringe.

I'm looking deep within myself for that flame or spark to ignite me up,
So that I can get high off of my own success,
Not what everyone else gives me.
Mama always told me not to compare myself to others,
To focus and do me,
To fuck with myself heavy (not verbatim).
And to always believe in myself.
I've got a number of benefactors on my side.
I just have to listen to them.

Maybe I can do more open mics,
Get people to hear me out more.
That's one of the reasons why I resorted to all this.
But maybe I'm talking, writing, too much for you to bear.
I guess I gotta get with the wave.
Maybe I should step out of my comfort zone,
Speak my language a little differently.
Music could be my calling but that's a slim as fuck chance.
Maybe I should simplify myself.
I don't know...
All I know is I have to keep going on...
And I gotta win.

3AM HIGHLIGHTS

Mary Halabani

It's like rocky waters
Silky sheets
And menthols.
It's like breathing without a
Breath to call yours.
It's like hazy days; taking foggy skies with hail and sleet
presumed to bring moisture to your eyes
reveling in the abrupt storm
looking anew.
We have these clandestine feelings because of
Trepidation
Discomfort
Incertitude
And the fad remains until there's a single patch of light.
A glimmer from the waning moon
A sparkle from His eyes.
I see hope, right now.
I see a future, right now.

WRISTS

Anastasia Mourzakhanova

It's always the wrists.
Something about the wrists
that gets me every time.
Wrists taken at six
Into hands much bigger than my own.
Forced to sit in place
and my little six year old trust
broken.
Wrists that were let go
when someone heard my begging.
Wrists that ran to my mama,
who didn't believe me,
and instead chose to cut off contact
rather than tell her friends
so that they too could protect their young
from the one that grabbed me.
Wrists, that at fifteen
were led to a bedroom by someone
who promised love and joy
but only offered pain and abuse and distrust.
Wrists, that were held down
while whispers of love and reassurance
were fed to my naive ears,
ears that feared for my safety
if I dared to refuse.

Wrists that felt the sting of soap
after feeling the sting of a blade.
Wrists that a year later
were grabbed as a joke,
but still panicked and slammed a door
while running away crying.
Wrists that felt the weight
of a bottle of pills,
and still drank them all,
despite the shaking.
Wrists that gripped the toilet bowl
while the host heaved
and rejected all of the pills.
Wrists that have come so far
and have seen it all.
Wrists are always the central point
where I experience all of life
and where I dump out
all the shit I'm forced take,
and where I rebuild myself
and see true progress.

A GIRL

Bethany Friedmann

I am not **“girl”**
Pretty face
Nameless

Nor am I **“your”** girl
Property
Senseless

But I am a girl
Tender
Fearless

YET SPACE CAN NOT CONTAIN

Sara R. Ahisar

Anger rages, coursing through.
Veins too thin, too young,
Unequipped to deal with what is meant for souls much older.
Turmoil, pain.
A swirling mix of colors, feelings, ideas.
So much going on in a place so small.
Weeks, months, years pass by,
Yet it's only been hours in time.
A lifetime of lessons learned before they were due.
Wear and tear, lines of age.
So new, yet so old.
The past and the future merge.
Confusion. Noise. Fog.
A thickness hanging on a wisp of air.
Relentless; it will not rest.
It rushes, it roars, it spreads.
Fills the space that was never there.
Darkness takes over in the absence of light.

LATE NIGHT CAB RIDES

Hannah Nelson

I'm stuck on a track that feels bound to crash
It's loud and noisy and I feel I've lost myself
Drowned out in all the responsibilities
And people and things relying on me
To play my part successfully
Why is there no reset button
I'd go back so far if I could bring what I know
I carry a lot of pain and
It can make me feel insane
Some days I can't separate myself from fact and fiction
I just want you to love me more
Cause your love drowns out the pain
It slows down the racing thoughts that scare me
It helps me feel like there's a me again
It paints a picture to happier ends
But I don't know how to explain any of this to you
Without it sounding like too much
They say love conquers all
But it's nowhere near that easy
So I write my feelings off
That I'm just too damn needy
But I really hate it
I wish I were better
I wish I didn't worry so much
I wish I didn't feel like I'm collapsing in on myself

Every time you're mad at me
cause I've done some type of wrong
or you *think* I've done some type of wrong
But either way I'm hurt and confused
I wish you cared how much I beat myself up over you
I have felt before you were looking for reasons to leave me
Expecting me to fail
But kind of hoping I won't
Sometimes I feel like a book
You're not sure you want to read until the end
But I wish you saw forever in my eyes
I wish every moment could be as blissful as late night cab rides
Cradled in your lap, with your eyes on me
And the words falling softly
But hitting me strongly of
"You mean the world to me"
I'd give anything to hear you say that again
Because I'd give anything x2 to feel that again
Now I'm just scared of how I stand
In your future plans while I agonize
Over my future plans not going according to plan
Please love me better
Because I love you so much it hurts

EUROPE AFTER THE RAIN

Ramsey

A daydream floated through her head as the rain played beatbox against her window sill. A sound that she had grown accustomed to, rain was no stranger to her town. These days were the best. They were the moments where she could simply allow her mind to roam.

She lay on her bed with her head against the window and just listened. Her heart tremored to the pulse the rain created. Her eyes closed as she at last became one with the earth. When the sky cried, she cried. She could feel her chest give way to the air that had suffocated it. With each bellow came a long-awaited exhale. And as her chest rose to the sky with every inhale, she leapt to her feet and danced.

All of a sudden, her feet were splashing water. Her hair, sodden with regret, tapered against her delicate skin. Her bruises were fading and her pores opened. Everything released itself in that moment.

The soil emerged from the ground and tapped her skin in admonition. It held the very emotion that she allowed to flow from her being and into the air. Her existence became a vacuum, below absolute zero, for her entire world had become a vast amount of nothingness, just matter in an enormous quantity.

But her heart felt something was wrong. Her fingers rhythmically stroked the atmosphere, like the bow on the violin, moving in slow succession, trying to find its place, trying to find where it belonged. Pitches of uncertainty caressed the world around her as the rain became its harmonizer.

And suddenly, the music found its stillness. It found its calm in the everlasting storm. Then all became still, all became quiet, as the only music left to assault the eardrums were that of the rain creating its palate on her soul.

03-07-2018

Jessica Goncharov

Chocolate Biscuits
And a cup of tea
Are so much more
Than nutritional value
Or substance alone.
I'm sorry, out of 4
I ate 3.

Chocolate biscuits
And a robust earl grey
Silken milk chocolate
Veneering
A coordinate plane.
What kind of graph can I plot
In a house that's not my own
On chocolate biscuits
We've had to unknow.

These chocolate biscuits
And tangy earl grey tea leaves
Two cups
Steaming,
Cooling,
Drinking,
Gone.

Earl grey tea
Would you like some more?
Perhaps I would
But I'm not quite sure
That I want the tea maker to get up
For another second,
Not even for more.

A LIE. A CONVERSATION.

Nova

I wonder if I've really cared about anyone.
That's a troubling thought.
You know it isn't true.
But what if it is.
You've just convinced yourself you're a normal person who cares,
But you aren't.
You're just a good actor, a method actor even.
I would die for the ones I love.
But is that caring or something you convinced yourself of again.
Why does it matter, it's who I am.
Ya, but you're a liar.
You toy with people.
Play on their wants.
You love the look of desire.
And you crave trust.
You let them believe you're authentic,
But you can change with a coin flip.
You will never really be sure of who you really are.

FICKLE

Pen Name

Satisfied
By the sound of my
Beating heart,
By the pee hitting the
Water
With a twinkle in its
Step,
I am the sum
Of my trips
The product of my
Math degree
The quotient of
Any number
Over zero.
A survivor of my mind --
That fickle old fart,
I count the minutes
Until the next minute.
The smile on my face
Hiding nothing
But my tongue
And what's beneath.

MY BLACKNESS IS FAR FROM SKIN DEEP

Nya Archie

I am a woman who wears her gelled edges and brown gloss like a uniform
Red nails and hoop earrings
Box braids and brown eyes
My Blackness is far from skin deep
It is an essence
It is a walk, a talk
A smile, a look
It's my fist held high
It's my elbows Vaseline'd
It's the bass in my voice when I ask
"Who are you talking to?"
And the softness of my sigh when I lean on you
It's the part I make in my hair when I grease my scalp
And the knot I tie behind my satin scarf afterward
It's the universe I seem to create in my warm embrace
As I shield you from the Black death that plasters the screens of day
It's the power in my eyes when I say nothing
It's the way that each step I take isn't graceful but groundbreaking
And the fact that I know it
My Blackness is loud and forthright
My beauty, unfair and lovely
My Blackness is far from skin deep
It is my everything.

HOW TO FEEL BEAUTIFUL 101

Gabrielle Kaplun

Tip #1 Be happy for others. Remind your friends and the people you love how beautiful they are, inside and out.

Tip #2 Stop comparing yourself. Different is good.

Tip #3 Don't guilt yourself over temporary things. Your mental health is more important.

Tip #4 Plan for the future. You deserve the best there is. Think about where you'll be Tomorrow. Think about how you're gonna get there. Start doing that Today.

Tip #5 Keep the people who support you and love you, unconditionally.

JE TE VEUX

Narline Borno

Let's hum to this
As we dance in the rain
And get lost
In each other's eyes again
And as we laugh and giggle
At our awkward movements
May our fumbling fingers
Intertwine
And our hips sway
And wine
Let us cuddle up
Nestle in each other's ears
Whispering sweet nothings
Into the wind
Let this energy be forever
And a constant
And let it be known
That if we are ever apart
No matter how far
Or near
That I will always
And forever
Love you

“READ THIS IN A QUIET ROOM”

Quentin Felton

where the body breathes
for one. for once, i can't be
held by everything everywhere,

for there's a magic in the way
i hold reality by the hind leg,
pulling reason to a straddle.

now, let me be the first to say
that the metaphor is dead, & that
i don't wanna be anywhere else

but here, where skin is skin,
not sky, where veins stream the
bone, not the river. the metaphor

is dead, i've bludgeoned it to sleep,
to sleep a night without wonder.
the metaphor is dead, pin drops

fill the room. the metaphor is
dead, my eyes aren't stars. the
metaphor is dead, my limbs

aren't the world's, for once,
Heaven is just another word
sliding off my sword -

less tongue without impact,
for once, i just want to feel
what's actually here, to savor

the silence slurped from my
lips, to wash my hands of
the ecstatic. the metaphor

is dead, for now, the body
is canon, my body is tradition,
& my tradition is enough.

SAY MY NAME

Zainab Iqbal

say my name.
zainab.
you're not saying it right
pretend the eye isn't there
there's no aye
take a can
and replace the sea with a z
uh
bbb
say it quick
say it quicker
zainab
zainab
zainab
say it again
say it until it rolls off your tongue
Like jane
and stacy
and louisa
except it's zainab
i'm zainab

zainab
z a i n a b

z a i n a b

VAMPIRES AT DAWN

Kathleen Conlon

The only truth I know anymore is
Death riding on that pale horse.
Cold paper-mâché hands,
Ashen and unafraid.
I look to the sunrise
Only to find myself
Wrapped in a cocoon of worry.
How many more of these
Until my breath leaves?
Before I can no longer look at daylight.
His wan complexion turns people aghast.
Something walks among them
Undead and unchanging -
An inevitable force that
Shatters hearts.
I know nothing anymore.
I know no one anymore,
Not even myself.
Nothing is real.
This is all an illusion;
A sweet, chaotic lie
That we tell ourselves
Before we die.
I have a graveyard inside of me -
A rickety boneyard
Filled with plots
That hardly thicken.
Macabre mannerisms
Disturb the living.
What if I told you that I'm already dead?
Supernatural creature
That walks besides the rest.
My body is here
But my mind is not
Till death do us part,
Till my flesh starts to rot.

BIRDS

Madison-Christopher Sykes

Constantine first told me about the birds.
He brought it up while waiting for a train back to
Manhattan.
We were leaving a party.
He crushed a can of Ol English that was hidden inside a
brown paper bag
and threw it on the track.
He looked to his right and so did I.
Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect were walking
towards us.
You could tell by their walk, slow, gallant, deliberate.
New York's finest headed our way.

Luckily I heard the train coming, I stood up and stepped
close to the edge.
An express train blew right past me. I turned around.
Constantine was still sitting, eyes closed, head tilted
back. I was embarrassed.
I sat back down just as a bird swooped down next to me.
A sparrow.
You know, he said, eyes still closed, if a bird finds its
way down here,
it can almost never get back out.

The cops passed us as if we were statues.
I continued to watch them walk, heavy with their oath.
I thought deeply about what he had said.
Before I could grasp what was going on
Constantine was boarding an Eighth avenue bound L
train.
I followed.

HEALING

Kiara Marie Reyes

Moving on is never an easy process. See, what they don't tell you is that it'll come at you in waves. They don't tell you that your heart will break and ache at the most random times. Instead, they fill your head with thoughts of heartbreak happening only once. But heartbreak has a pattern that was specifically designed by your ex-lover and as they broke you apart over and over again, parts of you **died**... but when you finally left, better parts came *alive*. Now, you're sitting here and two months have gone by, and you're wondering how you even got this far in the blink of an eye.

IN THIS MOMENT

Sophie Shnaidman

you draw me an infinity

he drew me an infinity

and live with me within it

and let me live within it

hold me all my days and nights

watched me slink along its curves

along it's rose hued walls

and scale its silent walls

whisper softly and discretely

whispered secrets through the slivers

pretty nothings

watched them slip between my fingers

candied secrets

told me, told me how to love him

tell me, tell me how you love me

told me how to crawl

tell me how to fall

let me climb

in the seconds

and scratch and suffer

in the spaces

let me chip away the plaster

not a breath or moment wasted

of these walls

in the quiet, quiet morning

that he had built me

of our curving, endless

by his serpentine design

shrine

THORNS

Miss Malik

I used to love roses.
I'd admire their beauty.
Then I met you.
I opened my heart.

Slowly falling for your smile.
For your eyes.
For our late night conversations.
For your promises.

Until one day...
That smile disappeared.
Your eyes wouldn't meet mine anymore.
Our conversation turned into arguments.
Promises turned to excuses.

Now I give all my love to thorns.
They aren't unfaithful like the flower.
They won't slowly rot and change colors.
They will always be there. As they were.
I used to love roses.

VICARIOUS REINCARNATION

Kristina Rodriguez

My mother wasn't the best at giving advice
But regardless I've learned a lot from my mother
#1 being always hide under the cover.

You see like no other

My mother was a scammer
She was the ultimate deceiver
From the minute she knew someone would leave her
She'd become hopeless and frail
Tricking her loved ones to come to her ail.

She's become quite good at it you see

It's what she expects us to be

Us, her children.

Amanda is her favorite

Kristina is her burden

Luis, her fragmented toy.

My brother is just a boy

A boy who loves his momma

And it's not his fault, he's often gullible.

My sister is a girl

Who will dance when asked to give a twirl

She likes Mommy's attention.

And well, Kristina is betwixt the two

Never really knowing what to do

Never really knowing she was Mommy's rue

Until she grew up and started connecting the two.

All of a sudden there was a hatred growing inside

Most of the time it wasn't easy to hide
But it wasn't all hate...
Something inside her thought it was fate
Fate to restore something that's always been broken
And for that feeling she held open
She held her heart on her sleeves like the armor for war
She is me, and I had accepted my place in the shadows of my mother
And every time she gave me the least bit of love my heart fluttered
Because I was a child who just wanted to be loved by her mother.
The second thing I learned from my mother was how to keep a man.
When you make a man feel bad for you, it makes them stay,
It's how she's kept her prey
My father has been her prey for many many years
And it's ultimately brought me to everlasting tears
Tears because I don't even know who he is anymore
Thrown out of my home and slammed the door
The old dad would have fought for me
Instead he sort of took my key...
My mother is a liar
I've preached this many times to the choir
And she's passed this tradition along
Like an old song that wants to live forever.
It's easy to see my mother
Wants to live through another
That person being my sister
Originally, it should have been both of us.
I untangled myself from being consumed
Leaving my sister in the fumes
Because, after all, she wanted it.
She wanted the easy life.
Instead of putting up a fight
She threw herself into the knife
And all because my mother wanted another life.

THE LUNG FLOWERS

Maya Garcia

Monday morning, and I wake to the thought of the flowers that grow in your chest, the vines that found a home in your lungs.

There was once a time that I thought you loved me, but those plants have grown for another, and this is something I learned to make peace with.

Monday morning, and I'm trying to convince myself that I never wanted those flowers in the first place, but I've never been good at lying and I won't start now.

Monday morning, and I'm thinking about the flowers that grow on my windowsills, how somebody told me that my basil plant would not grow but now it has, all because I loved it—

That the basil plant now grows on my windowsill, as well as in my heart.

Monday morning, and I'm thinking about how wonderful it is to not love you anymore, and it's so strange because I had spent so much time wondering what love would be like in the first place,

Part of me wants to think about the gardenias and red roses that could have been left by my door, but the truth is more wonderful, and that truth is the fact that I do not love you anymore.

Monday morning and I'm reminded of the plants from my youth—

The devil's ivy named Mary, my father for as long as I can remember, the memories of my mother

planting the white bleeding hearts in front of our house, the garden
my Tia keeps in her backyard.

Monday morning, and I'm thinking of myself; myself and the garden that has yet to grow.

The flowers in my own lungs that still have to blossom, and I can breathe just fine.

WITHERED

Edmund Z

I should have never believed I was a gardener.

Lilies were beautiful, but I replaced them with
violets when winter came.

Violets were unforgettable, until the petals that fell
the following winter were not the same.

Cactus was my favorite as I touched it, until the
spines were soaked with my own blood.

But no flowers seem to last and with time each
spine fell quickly with a soft thud.

Instead of growing a garden,

I left a trail of dead and damaged flowers. I'm
sorry I planted seeds in all of you, I'm sorry for not
saving them when it was still within my power.

From the start, I should've never planted seeds in
the spots I fell for. Instead, I should've used the
shovel and spade to dig deeper into my roots and
find out what I found today: an amateur.

I pray to not touch another flower, not when I am
still sane. Because looking behind at the dead and
broken flowers, I know I am the one to blame.

I should have never believed I was a gardener.

The universe is my god,
And she is uncaring.

Her creation
Is and was.
Her being
Is everything and nothing.
And all in her influence
Is accidental and intentional.

Though I am of her creation,
I am not her design.
She has no interest
In the lives of the specks of stardust,
When she is eternity.

But I am not afraid.
And I do not feel abandoned.

Because in the same way as you or I,
She created the sun,
And the colors that transform the setting sky.

She created hugs from my mother,
And the smell of my favorite book's pages.
She built the sound birds chirp in the morning,
And she built my best friend's smile.

She wove the love she does not feel
Into the fabric
Of all that there will ever be.

Katelyn Podias

And it,
Like she,
Is alpha and omega.

And whether she cares or not,
We are cared for.
Whether she acts or not,
We can act for each other.

The universe is my god,
And though she may be uncaring,
She built her creatures capable
Of finding their own meaning
In her meaningless expanse.

And my meaning
Is everywhere
And nowhere.
In all that she has made.

And to me,
That is worthy
Of worship.

PULL ME IN

Annabelle Paulino

He carried the bones for me.
My mal du pays, my mellifluous taunt, my agony to the core.
Why do you hide beneath the coconut trees in the middle of a storm?
I wait for your treble to awake me from this dream.
Your hands so vivid. Etched into my hips.
Eyes that can stop a traffic light. My Houdini.
Curvaceous tongue, soft touches, deep into my subconscious.
Deep blue waves coming to surface as you prey on me. Reaching into
the velvets of my soul.
Breaking me in like no one else before.
I asked you not to love me the way you do, but I continue to get more
and more and more.
You take me into a trance where there is no escape. You find me while
I'm hiding behind your skin. Pull me in, pull me into your deepest
wounds.
I am your biggest fool. You see me deeper than I see me. My pupils
dilated from east to west. You beg for more, but I retreat. You try to
grab me like a star in the universe. Far to reach, insurmountable.
L.O.V.E.
That's what you taught me.
Turbulence is what I am. Heaven is what you try to be. Oh, how
flattered I am by your admiration, infatuation, no hesitation love.
Pulled me in frontwards, backwards, sideways, all different type of
ways. You are waiting and I am yours. Take me into the further.
Pull me in.

ROBOT

Julia Andresakis

Blue: Sad. Or, the ocean.

Green: Trees, American dollars. Envy.

Yellow: The sun.

Orange: Fruit and color.

Red: His teapot.

Gray: My wires spilling out as he configures them.

Gray: My arms and legs, cold, not warm; metal, not flesh.

Grey: British custom of spelling “gray.”

Purple: Kings in castles; magicians near bouncy castles.

Black: Space. Some bears.

#fffff: The bulb, the ceiling, the button behind my left ear. The adapter affixed to the plug that connects to my back. The coat he wears. The bones inside of him.

Man walks in and sees his creation on the floor overheating. He is deeply troubled and props him back up, adjusting a loose cord. He exits. ROBOT remains.

Black: Some bears. Space.

Red: Fast cars, fire, blood.

White:

Gray: Elephants.

OUR CREATOR:

Miles Mercer

This is how I see my father's god.
Merciless, like the tide that cools us down in the summer heat before we're pulled
in to drown.
A book with blank pages, all knowing yet keeps its knowledge to itself.
The judge, jury, and executioner of those who live in another world created to
endure labor, then die.
Negligent and abusive to those who are loved by God.
Nowhere to be found,
leaving me on hold,
now I'm stuck listening to shitty elevator music.
Dead in my eyes, like a parent that went to buy milk at 3 am but decided to just
keep driving.
A poisonous river near your thirst for meaning.
God is playing with helium; all fun and games until you suffocate and die.
The light at the end of the tunnel.
No, wait,
that's a train-

This is how he sees his god.
The janitor cleaning up the vomit of a third grader.
The friend who makes sure to watch him close the front door to his house before he
drives away.
The mentor who shows him how to live a prosperous and fulfilling life.
The part of the brain that controls morality.

We each serve the same different god.
If there even is one.

STEPS

Calvin Kipperman

It's just
One more.
They tell me
To take small
steps
Because if I
were to take
larger ones
I might trip

BLUE

Mariyah Rajshahiwal

The color
Blue,
I feel
I hold
I breathe.

Blue
Passes through
Happy moments
Like soundwaves.

Blue
Floods memories,
Blue sky
Blueberry muffins
Blue blanket
Blue eyes.

Blue
Wreaks havoc
In dark moments.
Drown gasp drown
In chaotic blue
Tried to swim
In thundercloud.

ALL I KNOW HAS BEEN REWRITTEN

Jada Gordon

All I know has been rewritten
Speaking in tongues
Bygone languages I no longer recognize
But the face that I remember
Like when I tasted hope for the first time
It came in the form of sunshine
Then a superstorm
It's my fault for thinking time is longer than it actually is
Memories are just a supercut
The mayhem that flows in and out of my framed life
Didactic Bible tales turn into truth
Standing in front of me
Everything I prided myself on
Comes apart in brittle
Baptism can be my therapy
Love is not love
Just the world is a messy canvas
Wipe it with the tears of the innocent
Soak it in the blood of the guilty
Shameless scenes of freedom
Thank you for being my friend
While I relearn watch me fall
Hit the ceiling
Unveil vulnerability
And do it all again

ANTI-AGING

Ilana Iskhakova

Would you suppose it to be ideal
If the cycle of life worked in reverse?
I'm simply itching to know.

Would our "happy birthdays" be happier?
As we transcend from old to young,
Our silver hairs transforming in color
Our saggy skin tightening up,
We add increased energy and vitality to our pile of gifts from time.
Being able to kick a soccer ball with increased force as the years go by!
How unthinkable!

Yet, in dreaming of this utopic process,
We forget that youth is a fragile state.
Wouldn't we lose memory over time,
Simplifying our once complicated thoughts?
As feeble children experiencing the bliss of childhood...
Emotional sensitivity, naivety, and vulnerability befall us.

Tick tock, tick tock.
Our earned awards and feats fall into a limited sphere:
The mind of an infant, youth's supreme form.
We become the epitome of innocence, unknowing of our origins or purpose.
Reaching this point, won't our memories fade?
Fad
Fa
F
?
Nature is wise, I see.
Now I really see.

#THISISAMERICA

Alyna Valderrama

Rest In Peace I find myself saying again
After another school shooting.
It physically hurts to see the crying of children on TV
Like they were the story the news just had to have.
It's tormenting to see that nothing has changed
After all these protests from Parkland's shooting,
After all these protests from Sandy Hook,
After all these protests from so many kids with no reward to come from it.
That's because this is America,
Where Mother's Day and Father's Day are spent
Picking up the calls of your child who could've died,
Mourning the loss of the children who did die,
Panicked forever because school is just another word for a possible shooting range
Because, again, this is America.
Here is where the guns get better privilege than white privilege,
Where our generations and future generations are being picked off one by one
Where the stories of royal weddings and viral trends are more talked about
Than the real news of the death of everyone else.
It's funny to see how everyone deals with grief
Especially after doing little to nothing with gun laws
He says
"My administration is determined to do everything in our power
To protect our students
And to keep weapons out of the hands of those
Who pose a threat to themselves and to others."
Because the funny thing is you didn't do anything to fix this before,
Nor has any government administration before,
So how can we trust anyone to mean what they say?
Actions speak louder than words
But I never knew something like the three-fifths compromise
Could be the protesting and ever losing Americans vs
The inaudible, lifeless and yet life taking, cookie-plattered guns.
Our generations shouldn't be
Dodgeball where we instead dodge the bullets
In schools
From the police

Who only seem to shoot the innocents
The colored innocents, like Trayvon Martin and Stephon Clark
Who are now not only black or brown
But are stained in red
Uno where we have to count our blessings if we are left standing
Chess where we are the easily reap-able pawns
The skip-it's that just got jumped over
The hot potato that got too hot to touch
Like the slight burns left from bullet wounds -
Do you think this is a game America?!

Because I'm tired of it.
America isn't what it used to be back in 1791
We are ever changing and so should the mind set.
It's not the America that many think can help better your future anymore.
To those who still come to America for a better life I can only say:
Quédese en casa
o usted y sus niños serán el próximo objetivo.
Stay home or you and your children will be the next target.
The American dream is dead citizens.
The land of the free and home of the brave
Only stand for the citizens who have stayed long enough
To continually bear the pain America has brought to the survivors
Or the prisoners left behind,
Because this is America.
Where things won't seem to ever change
Even after the constant begging
The constant prayers
The constant protests
What will be the last straw for America?
Because honestly I'm tired of it already.

Rest In Peace Americans
Because you may be next.
And although officials may say it through plastered lips
I'm saying it
As my last human to human connection
To all.

MAIDEN OF ZION

Daniel Edelstein

Maiden of Zion, skin olive and fair
Standing on the hillside, awaiting my touch
Beauty engulfs you, though you betray no care
I stare into your solemn eyes and enfold you in my clutch

Princess of Zion, a colossal history resurrected
Betrayed and neglected, I've awaited your return
Now your novelty before me, I was ever the skeptic
We sway in the wind, my heart darts and churns

O maiden of Zion, your aroma like henna
Two thousand years I've pined for your love
Your return is soothing to my soul, the sound of quena
Renew our days as old, my faithful dove

Return to me o love, my soul which you've kept
For without you I'm broken, my heart plagued and bereft

AUTUMN

Beaton Galafa

Whenever I walk out of my room
Every eye pierces my skin
Leaving cuts that show the many fragments
Making the piece I call home.
Every step I take leads me to a crowd.
Kids hugging walls bemused at what oven
Could have possibly baked such bricks
Darkening their orange pavements built from
Coughing skeletons and the sharp
Tongues of patriotic capitalists.
I try to hold together the tiny bits of my heart
But the winds sway me to the lake.
Passing by blossoming flowers and calm waters
I return every night to walk around in peace
When no eye can see a mile away and laugh
At the darkness of my skin that takes refuge in
The beauty of stars shining on the waters.
Each passing second I feel like a tree in autumn
All leaves running away only to be trampled by feet
and to be blown away by the winds
and to be swept away by the floods.
To distant places beyond heavens and the sun.

A WARM WINTER

Melissa Louis

I walk a warm winter's path
Down towards the softness of spring
I take a breath, now two,
And let the air come in

I've discovered a place there,
Where the fragrant breeze wafts in,
Lavender, Honey, Lilacs
The warmest of springs

I walk a warm winter's path
How delicate it is
The slightest of skin
Causes flurries within

I notice how the ice lessens
How the snow dances beneath my feet
The gentle glow, a misting blow
So to sleep, so to sleep.

I walk a warm winter's path
That greets me all the same
That never holds me bare,
And knows me by name.

MS. HONEY LEMON

Vicky Lee

I watch as she drips at every curve
coating her sweetness around me,
like the plaque of my morning teeth.

I'm reminded of her shy smiles
her echoing laughter and
her piercing eyes.

I'm finally soft and safe
rolling in her palms like
a mellow putty of gentleness.
Warmed with her every drop.

She was all I savored
and so I sipped
until she had gone cold
until she had gone sour.

She chases the sound of my voice
burning a reminder into my taste buds
of who she is
of what she can do

And so I lay
throat dry
lips cracked
tongue heavy.
Craving
for her to come again.

STATE OF MIND

Ashaunte Solomon

Everything is dark until I open my eyes.

The walls,

The color of purity and innocence.

Nothing moves.

Nothing changes.

This matches my outside.

Still.

Quiet.

And very dark.

At night it gets loud,

too loud to hear the quiet.

The voices won't stop.

The man in black won't go away.

I'm stuck here.

There is no window.

There is no door.

Just me and this darkness around me.

Claiming me as its own.

I am pure with dark thoughts.

I am innocent with a dark mind.

He is coming to take me away.

The man in black screams in my ears.

But it's so quiet.

Too quiet.

BEHIND THE SILENT WALLS

Rachel Augustin

Resonates within the silent halls

The distinguished voices of our...

Authors creating works of contemporary masterpiece

Proctors directing our steps behind sound united minds

Philosophers reasoning intellectually as one, every season

Pillars paving the road to the future

Thinkers enlightening, contributing to our evolving world

Readers, commemorating new beginnings

Building new bridges through unity, forming branches of one tree, our collegiate
community.

B.C.

TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE.

Anya Supernova

I know you think it's the wrong way,
but I'm taking the long way.
I call it the lone way,
the 'made it on my own' way.
And it's perfectly okay.

Okay so... patience is a virtue
but is that really true?
It's all about the 'what'
not the 'how' do you do?
No one cares
what's really inside of you.

So, here I go
down the long road
of keeping my distance,
every mile I push through
just to try and justify my existence.
Pardon me
if your small talk
is met with big resistance,
I've got bigger things to deal with.

For instance,
I don't have much to say
about things I have to show.
You know...
like when it comes to material
possession. Everyone seems
to want to quantify your blessings.
Eternal greed and chronic oppression.
What's really the lesson
if every chance we have
to build each other up
we instead choose to lessen?
Can I be worth my weight in gold
if I choose to invest in my soul?
Will I be judged for taking the higher
road if it's nothing like the path
that they chose?

My dreams are too big
to fit onto the main road.
I'm paving my own zone,
unfold my destiny slow and steady.
But staying steady with the flow.
Every step I take, I come full circle.
They hear me,
they don't feel me though.

They all wanna know
What do you have to show
for all of this 'personal growth'?
Can you prove your worth?
Show me the status symbols.

We live in a world
driven by eternal greed.
and clever marketing.
They wanna divide us
and conquer by any means.
Some cling to God in hopes
that He will take the reins.
But most cling to their screens
and other distracting things.
Your life is crashing
while you try to keep up
with the Kardashians.

But we are all connected
by a common link.
You'll find a little bit of you
in everyone you meet.
But they don't want you to see.
Or to be.
Or every letter in between
that strings together every word
of truths unseen and unwritten
in newspapers and magazines.

We are draining each other
and mistreating our silent Mother.
And she is hurting.
Take a moment to find
where true beauty is lurking.
Deep down beneath the surface.
Treasures hidden in our precious planet.
And we are taking it all
for granted.

Sometimes it feels like I care too much.
Like I walk around with the Midas
touch. Gift and a curse.
Turning everything into something
precious and malleable.
Create a ripple effect
to show them what's valuable.
But you can't force the blind to see.
Call me crazy

but I believe in humanity.
I think we are all just afraid
of our own tales
and our own dreams.

And so it seems
you can choose to be anything
except for free.

You can choose to follow
but you better not lead.

Fill you with fear till you retreat.
Misdirection is their projection
of truth.

Poison the water
and distract the youth.
Destroy our future.

There is a way out.
Meditate to make the earth quake.
We can change the stream
of unconsciousness
and part the sea of confusion
by raising our frequencies
to shatter their illusion.

Yeah I'm naughty
but I was made by nature.
A natural born trouble maker.
Magic creator.
A real rebel, not a faker.
Lover of truth and imagination.
No imitation.

Pure inspiration.
Goddess by creation.
True Liberation.
Divine operation.
SUPERnova,
I'm my own constellation.
Sent here to crush expectations
with my healing vibrations.

THE MONSTER OF EAST 14TH STREET

Mic Braun

I walk a long way from home.

Turn the corner of Walk and Don't Walk, and it will all be over.

Seven years later, and it's still not over.

He appears in every window and mirror, hunting me down.

A mocking smile that says he can hurt me.

A thin piece of cardboard smacks me in the face, dancing by in the jeering wind.

The last wall of my shelter is gone.

I hate looking at the childish drawings hung on the door of the fridge.

My sister's dreams, carelessly ripping a hole through my heart.

We won't ever be that family.

We won't be anything but the shells we occupy.

I stub my toe so that I can mask my cry.

I drop shards of glass in my water so that the lumps in my throat have an excuse.

I turn the corner, pick up the pace and run, a long way from the home that never was.

FINANCIAL BIND

Anum Sattar

My parents could not afford to make a payment
of \$2,760 on the 10th of July

so I could register for a poetry tutorial this summer,
because they were asked to pay an extra \$3,000

before the deadline of the 25th of May —
as a compromise for an unpaid balance of \$18,000

that they planned to cover in August
without any Pell Grants or Stafford Loans

and rather than encourage me to write for the time being,
my professor told me not to leave any poems at his door.

I WAIT

Bloom Yuki

I wait and I wait
For a text from an ex-mate
One check, two checks
No message was sent
An idle mind with one thing
In store, I wait for the day you say, “Hi.”

I wait and I wait
But still no response
The anxiety I have begins to grow
Will you forget me?
I pray you don’t.

I wait and I wait
But no response.
I wanted to say “I love and miss you”
One more time.

SOMETHING

Vivian Khaskin

Say anything
just fucking anything
please just something
to show you think of me
as much as I think of you.
Maybe this is better
they all tell me it is
but then why.
Why do I need to feel this way.
Why do I need to say something.
Why can't you just try once.
I hate this
I hate feeling this way
I hate thinking that you're doing better without me
and I hate knowing that I'm doing better without you.

THE CHOSEN SELDOM COME

Shalhevet Soed

It's hard to let go.

It's harder to let go of something that works, something you love, something that strikes you as one of the few things amongst your vast, fleeting collection of things that are worth grasping onto.

Something. Someone.

When someone tells you they don't love you, you have to let go. It is very, very, hard to let go of love.

A year after I decided to let go, I ran away to the arts and crafts room.

Running away is something I did when I was a kid
and also yesterday.

Away from the rising whispers and giggles of eleven-year-old peers
And from the teacher that wouldn't hear my protest to read out loud for the class please

And from the numbers on my math test that scrunched up and became tiny, taunting caterpillars that laughed at my squinting, watering eyes.

It's unfair to say that I wanted to disappear.

No, this is what I wanted:

To be noticed.

To be followed.

And not by just anyone.

When you set a search party after yourself, it's difficult to determine who will find you.

No, this is who often finds you:

The one who made you run in the first place.

The one who doesn't care.

The school psychologist.

When I ran, I always had my finder in mind. I hid where I knew they would find me.

I hid at the edge of their peripheral, I waited for them to turn around.

The chosen seldom came.

Yesterday I hid in the arts and crafts room.

I hid like a prisoner who breaks out of jail for the eighteenth time, I did it because that's what I do. That's all I know.

And as I traced small, purple, crooked hearts onto construction paper and laced them together with cheap plastic ribbons, I thought bitterly of what brought me here.

I thought about the year I let go, how I left love like breadcrumbs to burn, slowly trudging along, the gaps in the trail growing farther, the crumbs on the ground becoming smaller as they curled into ash.

I thought about what started it in that laundromat with its tumbling heaps of color and the soothing endless night. The gumball machine that only he and I thought was funny. The cops we had to call when the dryer exploded. That stupid song he sang from stupid sesame street when the firemen came, and that warm pile of laundry in the back of the truck that we slept in once the sun rose. I should have known that being there again would set the clock back.

Shards of leftover love raised and aimed at my throat.

In the arts and crafts room, I wished he would find me.

I picked him.

And because I knew how this went I wished for him to come like I would on a star that I knew is really an airplane.

When he came into the arts and crafts room, looked at me, sat across from me, brought out a notebook and began the draw gently in front of me, I knew he was waiting.

I wanted to say

I'm sorry for being so weird and telling you I'm over it then suddenly not be over it and I'm sorry for talking to you so much last night even though I knew you didn't really want to and I didn't mean to treat you like you were my boyfriend because I know that you're not and I'm sorry I suddenly I forgot that and I promise I'll remember again and it was just that laundromat that's making me crazy and I'm sorry, I'm sorry

Instead I couldn't breathe

And it wasn't just him. It wasn't just that as he sat silently beside me, I looked at him and saw nothing else, understood nothing else but how heavy my heart was and how trapped I was in this thing that would never, ever go away.

It wasn't just that.

It was that... the chosen seldom came. And I chose him and he came. And at that moment I felt so smart for loving him, because even though he could never love me back, he was the only one who knew to come and find me. To wait for me and talk to me. And I knew that even though I chose wrong, I chose so, so, right.

Which made it so much harder to let go.

STRING

Daniel Bennaton

A flash... a memory!
The shame remains with me
I showed you bad poetry
You kept a straight face constantly
(I thank you for that)
I prayed for this -
I plucked the string that connects us all
And funny...
A sound did reverberate back to me
In a phone call.

AEROPLANE

Anum Sattar

Do you not think of the suffering of the balsam
as you shred the evergreen tree into smaller strips

simmering all the natural fibers in soda ash
to separate them from the other broken heartwood bits

then blasting everything in a shiny new blender
before drying and peeling off the paper

and weighting down the wing with a metal clip
to send it off somewhere out of your reach?

THE LOVERS

Raisa Alexis Santos

I'm not envious of the woman
being proposed to in the middle
of the subway car while a mariachi band
plays La Bamba,
se necesita una poca de gracia.

Nor do I care about the man
who sits across from me,
as he places his left hand
over the knee of his lover,
his ring finger bearing the mark of infinity.

I do not even mind the couple
in the corner fast asleep;
their heads like polarized magnets
drawn so close together,
despite their potential to clash.

What I do mind is the gap
between the 5 train and the platform,
the Candy Crush commuters wouldn't catch me
if I were to fall
in between.

A tarot card reader on the floor
of the piss-laden Atlantic-Barclays station
tells me that my mind projects
its innermost desires onto others.

The card I draw from her hand
reaffirms that the \$2.75 fare
isn't worth
all this crap.

GLUTTONY

Michael Alford III

Food, food, all there is
is food.
Food brings great happiness to the soul.
It slowly becomes an unstoppable craving.
Like an endless river it flows
Down to my stomach without thought,
Filling the void that seems to grow
Bigger and bigger than space.
Like a black hole, it consumes,
Ever growing, ever expanding.
Food becomes love, food becomes life.
I'm really tired but I can't stop eating -
It's the last thing that brings me any joy.
Through all my trials
Without any limitations
Food has become my true best friend - no hesitations.

KEY LIME PIE

M Jane Ross

This is an unconventional poem dedicated to an unconventional man who makes me feel small No not the feminine small but the type of small that makes me fit into a snake hole He will probably never see this because he believes poets are not artists He makes me feel too conventional too average But no I am anything but JUST LOOK AT THIS UNCONVENTIONAL POEM i am totally different but he cannot see it because he never looks He closes his eyes and dreams in a world where she exists OPEN YOUR EYES why cant you see me standing on this mountain before you question mark is it because the mountain isnt high enough for you or because this mountain is too average question mark

CONTRADICTIONS

Shajuana Henry

An amalgam of holy and hypocrisy.
A homophobic hymn.
Hell on Earth looks like conversion therapy.
Husbands and wives hide their infidelities
and call it Christianity.
You still search for a God,
A church where love doesn't lose.

They call this cognitive deviance.
They call you deviant
You call this prayer,
Or some semblance of it.
Maybe you are just another lost cause.
Maybe your family was right
Maybe there is a special place for you,
although you wouldn't count on it.

LEO

zachary troyano

go on, shake yourself clean. that steel chicken
coop they've donned your dog cage will only stain
those paw pads pink, callous-free sea sponges.
outside, grass calls for growth past suessian

rhymes and time, to air metered grievances.
quit all that clawing at rhythm-less cats
jurassic nails chip from friction. concrete
cracked from wrecking balls with lost receipts.

ancient dynastic breeding shaped your face.
anxious asthma fits become part of you
leaving wheezing snarls to barely escape
between teeth busy teething on blank verse.

upright hind legs peak past tired fences.
sniff new leaves, sprawl among the written green.

WOMAN

Pomie Delva

I am a woman
Who seeks validation from no one
Who lifts her head high to feel the sun
Who seeks experiences that make her soul feel free
Healing every day from all the hurt inside that no one else can see

I am a woman
Who has a lot of determination
Who lives up to her own expectations
Who can't be defined
With God's plans I am aligned

I am a woman
Who lifts other women up
Who sees her inner and outer beauty
Who appreciates herself for all that she is
And all that she will be

I am woman
Who doesn't compare herself to anyone else
Who looks in the mirror and sees beauty
As I am God's daughter so that is my duty

I am a woman
Who shares her light so that others can gain insight
Who's energy shines so bright even in the dark of night

SHE

Akash Gosh

I do not know her.
Yet she is a beautiful soul that
I conceive.

A soul like a house
Where everyone wants to stay.
A soul like a deep ocean
Which does not end.

She is stardust, like flowers
That cannot survive without sunshine.
She is beautiful when
She is happy.
She is thunder when
She is angry.
She is messy like
My bedroom.

Soon she will be gone.
A traveler will come by
Silently, invisibly.
He will grab her with a big smile
Look alike devil.
Sigh.

KING

Liza Rodriguez

My hands wouldn't stop shaking
I sat on the edge of King's bed
Clothes left by my side to change into
I sat trying to get my thoughts together in my head.

It was late into the night
While everyone slept
I slipped into the clothes quickly
As I listened to my heart skip some beats.

I admired King from afar
Never did I believe
That King would return that admiration
The admiration I never thought could be achieved.

I felt King's fingertips touch the indent of my spine
Sending electricity through my veins
I closed my eyes as King got closer
Trying to keep my composure - trying to stay sane.

I turned to meet King
Both bodies touching, now sharing one space
I nervously brought my fingertips to outline her body
Feeling her petiteness as it made its way up to her face.

Our eyes fixated onto one another's lips
I no longer felt my heart
The electrical circuit in my veins
Somehow wouldn't allow me to start --

King's face in my palm
I went in for the kiss
Those feminine lips so soft
I never thought it would be like this.

King's hands gripped me at the waist
I whispered softly, 'Don't let go -
Hold me tightly, hold me always
There's so much that I want you to know.'

MY PRAYER TO YOU

Nolan Frontera

Purchase my soul as the fleet flies away
with the prevailing wind cutting through my wings.

My soul benevolently shines with all powerful dynamics
while the rays of wrath pierce though me
onto the many blades of the emerald grass.

And the sky,
Oh, the sky!

For which it is the sapphire dimension of the almighty universe,
and the partition between us and nirvana.

Empower the doves,
Oh, the doves!

Have them disperse and enlighten the disciples to soar for the emancipation of
mankind,
and to have us endeavor to become charitable descendants of the Great Architect.

For the roses,
Oh, the roses!

As we gaze in euphoria at the ruby essence of your glorious beauty,
let the thorns admonish us for the horrors of deceptive evil.

We must stand,
Yes, stand!

Side by Side,
 Brother by Brother,
 Sister by Sister,
 Neighbor by Neighbor,

To protect our ethical truth and morality.

To my creator,

This is my prayer to you.

THE CROW AND THE MOON

Jason Sajan

There sits a lone Crow on a branch
Bathed in the winter Moon's light
Though the Orb herself be so far away
It may one day reach it through flight
But alas, the Moon is so distant
And near the Stars that are so bright
The Crow knows its place is in its lonely nest
Yet keeps on dreaming throughout the night

THE DAY AFTER YOU FALL OUT OF LOVE

Zhrah Aziz

the day after you fall out of love,
you wake up and the sun has not eaten itself

you rise from your bed and smell the same
air as you did yesterday.
it is not heavy.
it does not suffocate your lungs,
like it had done before.

before him. before her. before them. before
anything and everything had been felt.

the water was enough to drink and the
oceans had not been drained dry,
as all writers so poetically put it.

the day after you fell out of love, you were
still greeted with same reflection you slept
with.

the pillars of your home had not been torn
down,
and the flowers that kiss your feet every
morning on your way to life had not wilted.
they were them; going about life.

you tried to remember what love felt like
but your bones had built their cities upon
natural disasters
and there is nothing left to be.

now, the nights are softer, not lonely.

so you stay up late.
laugh too hard.
and talk too much.

the day after you fell out of love,
you kiss your mother's cheek and
washed the tangles out of your hair.

you talk about how you've healed
and now he/she/they have drifted
oceans apart from you

you race against the sunrise just to
see who would bow their eyes first
and forgive yourself at sunset
until it turns to nothing.

maybe that's how you fall out of
love.
you chase what you can't have until
it slowly fades away

you talk about how you will never
find love again.
the day after you fell out of love,
you did it anyway.

THE WALTZ

Jennifer Spencer

Falling through the whirlwind
Of waltzing and rightful speech
Dressing in lace and given pearls
“How do you do?” and swinging round

Vertigo hitting and champagne sizzles
Plenty of people to play my scene to
Your eyes bloodshot with shoulders swaying
Eyes softening upon potential victims

A beautiful mannequin is in favor
No serious thoughts or laugh too high
Answering whispered malicious inquiries
While you watch and join in on the charade

Your convenience of love, dowry too great
A cell with ribbons and high ceilings
Parties fall into the witching hours
Must get up and impress them all

Tear stained silk and crumpled skirts
Gripping my nails into the delicacies
All pride being washed slowly away
His isolation too strong to step away from

Pushed into arms so cold every night
My mother declares his love is strong
I lie and comply with my choice
Waiting for the last huff and collapse

A LESSON IN RESILIENCE

Sarah Einav

they say a chrysalis is simply
a mess of muck,
the collapse of a life in
the pause before a butterfly.

there's magic in the sound
of your foot finding its way
in front of the other.

there is glory in this
season of waiting and trying
and messes and do overs,
in the i'm sorry and
thank you.
remember,
time and grace and grit will carry you through.

UNAPOLOGETIC

Jessica Drigun-Lara

My name is not 'hey sexy'
My name is not 'bitch'
My name is not 'his girl'
I have a name
I am not a baby incubator
I am not a human dishwasher
I am not a punching bag
I am a person
I have purpose, I have meaning
I am a person, I have a name
I am capable
I am strong
I am not a fragile little girl
My hair color does not make me 'dumb'
I am intelligent
My wardrobe does not define me
I am women
My sexual reproductive organs do not make me crazy
No, there is not a pill or something that I can take
I am not sick, I just don't have makeup on
No, I do not need your unsolicited gym bro advice on form for my lifts
I have a name
I am a person
I have purpose and meaning
I am not fragile
I am intelligent
I am women
I am me
& I am not apologetic

**SORRY IF MY FOREVER
ISN'T WHAT YOU THOUGHT
IT WOULD BE.**

Izaura Danilova

Did you know, most butterflies can only live for two weeks?

When I found this out, it all began to make sense
because I often found myself throwing up dead ones.

Maybe when they say love is forever, they are right.

After all, the butterfly did flutter around
and dizzied me in the best way possible for its whole life span.

Sorry if my forever isn't what you thought it would be.

TRAINS

Ahnaf Zitou

You are a passenger
Riding a train
You don't know where this train is going
But you continue riding it
Sometimes you switch trains
Sometimes other people board your train
You meet different people who are all going
somewhere
But this train is where you meet
After multiple transfers
After interactions with many passengers
You board a different train
You might be alone
You might have a family
But one day your train reaches its final stop
Your train might go on or stop with you
But you step on to an empty platform
In an empty station
Your ride is over
And now you linger
Alone

I'LL BE ALRIGHT

Saelly Alvarez

Everywhere I go
People tell me
“Saelly, I’ll never leave your side”
But they do. See,

Friends and Family
Most of them were the same,
I straight put a smile on
Just to ease up my pain.

Laughed at, dragged on
With a smile on their face.
It just now hit me
I am not meant for their space.

But I’m not going to lie
the pain is still within,
Friends now are enemies
Enemies once were friends.

I know I ain’t perfect
But I’m trying to fit in
Gaining all your trust,
Your friendship to win.

What I realize now
Every heart isn’t the same,
Some have greater intentions
Others only personal gain.

What I finally see now
Isn’t always going to be a pretty sight,
But that’s fine though
I’ll be alright.

WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES

Emely Pascual

All of a sudden darkness consumes.

Then there is light.

But soon darkness returns.

Then it's gone, then it's back, again and again.

The voices in the back fade into nothingness.

I'm sick of where I am.

I must go.

The closer I am to my destination the darker it gets,

The quieter it gets, and the more peaceful it gets.

I'm finally at my destination and darkness consumes everything,

For what seems to be forever.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Samantha Merzel

Cover me
with the broken pieces of your soul.
Introduce me
to all the demons you battle.
Show me
the darkest parts of your mind.

Bring me
a storm,
Bring me
sunshine.
Bring me
your withered petals,
Bring me
your blooming daisies.

In your broken pieces
I will always see the sunlight illuminating within each crack.
When you are fighting your demons
I will be right there battling them too.
In the dark parts of your mind
I will always find the light that is dimmed.

I love your storms
Just as much as I love your sunshine.
I love you when you're withered
just as much as I love you when you're blooming.
So come to me in any condition
because the love I have for you has none.

Part 3

I wish I could run
Forward
To a time where I will
Be.
A world that will make me become
My best possible self
The beautiful aroma
Of freedom has brought me great
Joy
Joy of life, of course
Joy of friendship, of course
Joy of family, of course

Because all of that is real

I will praise all that is around me
And will make myself a light
That will shine from this joyful
Heart.

Moshe Shalom

Part 4

I am loved
I was always loved
I should have known I was loved
I now understand that I am cared for
I now understand that my life is filled with love
I understand that I am
More
I understand that I am
Loved
I kept thinking that I needed to
Become the right thing
But little did I know I was always
The right thing
But now I know you're
Caring for
Me.
I've found hope that will keep me
Running
To be the right thing.
But now I know that I am the right thing
I'm running for life
I'm running for friendship
I'm running for family
And now that I know, I can finally stop
Running.

THE NIGHT FALLS

Romel Martinez

When the satin night falls
I'll forget your name.
You won the battles well fought
And I endured your pain.
Arduous memories claimed me
Bound me to hell,
All of them a facsimile,
One I can never tell.
You are acidic to the bone
The moon has bathed you.
How can I be on my own
If your passion is all I know?
But when the sun rises I won't remain
You must take the night to forget my name

AFTER THE PARTY

Marielle Maxwell

do you know the song that lives in the basement of your heart?
i remember dancing in the roots of the old house perfumed with mildew
feet muffled against the ash covered green carpet while the walls and the world melted
as the world spun in time with our pirouette.
laughing and trying to catch our breath as we just kept going
and going
and going
until everything was gone
and exhaustion grabbed at our ankles
but still the music played.
do you know the song that lives in the basement of your heart?
was it mine?

AHMED

a.a

*Ahmed means "much praised" but you'd never know.
As a woman, I learned to hide in the shadows of men,
but flowers in the shade never grow.
Do not equate my gender to failure;
It does not make me inferior.
"We need the money,
don't send her to study."
"The place of a woman is in the kitchen," I was told.
Wondering what kind of future will unfold,
How can I be successful with my head down low?
Would it be different if I were a man? Would I be encouraged to lead, not follow?
"We know best," despite the fact that we're stuck in 1946
But modern times and misogyny don't mix;
You can't silence me,
My voice will set me free.
I pray my daughters will not feel the wrath of misogyny.
We continue to walk the road paved by Susan B. Anthony,
But one hundred eleven years later and I still wonder if I am safe to walk streets alone.
I walk with nine-one-one ready to be pressed
In case my father sends me to dial tone.
"Do not be afraid," they say;
Maybe I won't be one day,
But how do I fight suspicion when my footsteps are silent like the voices of women
When they tried to cry no?
When I complain about their stares, I am greeted by laughs because I have no scars to show?
How can you still deny the presence of sexism?
How can you tell me it is all in my head?
When I am still told I am a harlot because my lipstick is red?
You cannot argue with facts, it is foolish to ignore the mistreatment of women.
There is a divide determined by gender that has constrained me like a prison.
It is wider than the gap between the legs of men on the train,
Yet it is women that are told to abstain.*

*Through writing, I hope to serve as a beacon of hope.
Show my sisters there is more than a mechanism to cope.
I will shed light on the truth, because no longer will I be held to higher
standards,
and payed less for working twice as hard.*

*They can underestimate me,
But judgements from others do not dictate what I will be.
I'll take the stones and build myself a pedestal;
It is not only men that can stand tall.*

*When I pushed through the storm and broke barriers, they no longer saw
someone weak.
My future may have looked bleak,
But my strength and resilience will pay off.
I will tell myself, "Do not listen when they tell you that you are not enough.
Do not give up when he says that your ideas are too ambitious.
You know the strength inside of you, you are more than someone meant to
wash dishes."*

*Misogyny seems cemented in minds.
I used to think what's the point, isn't it too late to alter the nature of
humankind?
Treating us as equals to men should not be a bother.*

GUILTY

Isaiah Rivera

A house.

Bent doorframe, distorted.

Crooked welcome mat. Crushed windows.

Decor of decrepitude. Shrinks, cops,

Evangelical priests pass it, their eyes

Follow it as their bodies all walk on by with

God on the mind. They all have their theories,

Ideas about what made the house so

Jetlagged. They know the tale.

Kid, 11, fresh out of the traumas of

Long division and hairless crime

Moves to another place, another precinct, another

Office. Tries to escape the

Pulverizer at home. Tries to exist

Quietly, even as the house is being

Ruined. Kid gets ousted. Folks inhale. So, now the

Shrink, the cop and the Evangelical priest

Take their sweet time down the sidewalk

Unless they hear a creak, the echo of a laugh, or a

Very low moan that sounds like the lost ones:

Wanda; “god where’d you put the broom at?”

Xavier; “god did you put the mop back?”

Yosiah; “god where the hell is you at?”

Zadiyah never spoke. The men don’t look back.

MY DAD AND MODEST MOUSE

Joshua Avin

Dad, this first part's for me:

Last night we saw my favorite band
I told you about them once,
while in the basement we shot pool
Richie Havens sang -
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
And I feel real now
Dad
I do.

I wrote this next part for you:

Everything is flowers in the ICU,
they hang from the rafters, gird the walls
they grow up from the grime on the marble line floor,
they pluck themselves and waft in the recycled air
they fill your lungs
they join your blood,
so your toes grow petals,
and your legs are stalks,
and butterflies and ladybugs
go free
from the earth of your chest
And when we say goodbye
your taste lingers,
on our lips
in our noses
and stains the lines of our hands

SADNESS

Avery Lieberman

The sadness is here again
It seeks to disturb me and my pen
While I sit here and rhyme
Most of my time
Is spent combatting hopelessness

Well, what is sadness?
It is worse than a lack of bliss
It will not go away
Alas it is here to stay
Till these thoughts of mine end for good

Why have you chosen to shackle me?
Is it because I'm fragile as can be?
Or perhaps I have brought this upon myself
As I spend the days feeling empty like my shelf
I've gone numb to the pain

The sadness is here again
It is not a means to an end
Like a love ended too soon
I am destroyed by a buffoon
That buffoon being myself

APOLOGY #3

Sarah Knoll

I feel as if my mistakes are the lines in the palms of my hands
 Caused by an earthquake of the mind.
That they manifest in ways of uncontrollable circumstances
 And flourish into a full bloom.
As if the wind carries them away, concealing the lives and environments
 Of those who are loved around me.
My intentions of purity are actually tainted, soiled, rotten fermented fruits
 Painted to seem like they're fresh.
 A falsely advertised dysfunction gaslit for an autopsy.
Ripped away, my mask shows the heinous crimes of inconsiderate behaviors:
 Selfish loathing and isolation from the world I once thought I knew.
 My apologies are only shaped from the tears and breaks of leaves
 Crunched by an innocent foot.
A crumbled piece of paper with thoughts as courteous as a textbook.
Now if you would accept me as my ankles are chained to my bedside
 screaming for a warm touch.
Let me know that even though I have plagued the village with poison
 That at least one of us can forgive and survive.

DEAD TO ME

Brittany Katelynn

See I'm DONE
letting you make me think
ideas of suicide
are the only way to escape you
I just want you to know
what it feels like
to cry yourself to sleep at night
and not because some boy you like
broke up with you for the millionth time,
but because you finally pushed me to the
edge
that "dear ol' sister of mine"
And while right now
I might not be saying much
I know when it comes to words
I've got that writer's magic touch
And maybe this is too complex
and spelling it out would be better
So dear you,
I hope you get it when it's spelled out
Letter by Letter
You're
DEAD TO ME
You're worse than middle school
and all three of those years
I got bullied
And while I'd never say I hate you
cause that means I want you dead,

I just hope somewhere you're reading
this
and get it through your head
that no matter how fake inspirational
or changed you try to be,
you'll always be the girl
whose life is just unhappy
And I'm done trying to kill myself
cause you can't snad you
and you take your shit out of me
cause you don't know what else to do
And even if "sorry" slapped you in the
face,
you wouldn't know how to say it
And even if you did,
that point has passed,
I wouldn't take it
And even with my hurt,
cause I refuse to call it mad,
there's still not a bone in my body
that will sit and wish you bad
Cause while your shit's left scars so deep
it's worse than ones I've made myself
I still hope you never meet someone
who's so close to yourself
And I pray that no one treats you
the way you treated me,
but only then might you learn
that's a shitty way to be
And in my mind there's no good
that outshines all the bad with glee
cause in my head there's no you
cause the you I know is dead to me

I CANNOT STAY

Anosha Arshad

I think you've made a mistake, calling me "beautiful".
Beautiful doesn't stay,
It doesn't last,
No,
Beautiful things wither away.
And I can tell,
Because the wine-infused roses on my table have withered away,
Their corpses lingering,
Untouched, forgotten, dead, and delicate.
But maybe you're right,
Maybe I am beautiful,
Because I know my soul will fade and my skin will wither away,
And I'll be forgotten, dead, and so delicate that I'd be left untouched.
Beautiful things don't last,
And neither will I.

- 10:19 p.m. [A]

TODAY

Karen Ramirez Nuñez

Today I Feel
Tired
Happy
Confused
Upset
Mad
Hopeless
The Next Day I Felt
Tired
Sad
Depressed
Yesterday I Felt
Tired
Happy
Confused
Upset
Hopeless
And Everyday I Feel
Tired
Sad
Depressed

TO BE CONTINUED

le Cielle

Coffee mug at hand, a novel in the other,
Lost in another world, another time, another era.
Time drifts away before she finally looks up and gazes in the mirror,
Hoping to see her life a bit clearer.

Alas, she couldn't,

A sigh escapes her lips as she reverts her gaze to the novel,
Her only escape from a reality that was her reality.

A sad tale no one else could/would comprehend.

She turns the page over and begins a new chapter
Hoping that in this chapter the main character would finally master
The art of resilience and defeat that heinous creature.
The creature whom she herself has also been trying to defeat.

A monster of her own creation.
That helpless victim of rape and sexual abuse.

Would this be the chapter where she recaptures her life,
From all the misfortune and disaster?

Would she finally say enough is enough? Finally claim her body as her own?
Would she finally discover the power?

HOPE (1995)

zana

As she does the dishes, or cleans the counter
While she shallowly sleeps
She waits for the silence to disappear.

THE SILENCE DISAPPEARS.

His eyes widen and bulge
As she watches it return
With one foot out the door.

She stays.
She stays for her baby boy.
She stays for the future.

When she'll be happy
When she'll finally be able to sleep peacefully at night
He'll be too old and weary
He'll have bones that are too brittle to hold the fire of his youth.

She stays for now
for now she rushes
To protect her baby boy from his father.

Interlude/Kismet (1996 1999)

On a **CLOUDY** sunny day
A nurse walks in, **SHE** hands her the baby girl
And leaves.
She presses the daughter to her chest,

a little too tightly.

Had there been **ANYONE**, someone there.
They might have mistaken her sorrowful sobs
for tears of joy.

The Future (2017)

As she slowly,

Does the dishes and

Cleans the counter

As she sips her tea in the company of her graying husband

Sorry he waits for the silence to disappear.

The silence disappears.

She watches as his eyes widen, and she greets a familiar foe.

It stayed.

With tired eyes and brittle bones,

She rushes to protect the world from her baby boy.

the loudest silence (2018)

laying in bed she waits,

she waits but it never disappears.

she runs,

as she starts to slow, red floods her vision

she tilts her head slightly to the right

and watches her baby boy,

for a little too long.

saved from The Future.

FLOWER TRUFFLE

Mariam Esa

a love letter to vw's fingerback

summer wedding flower truffle melted
fondant makes stained sunday oxfords shuffle

tented big sur time share beige sand between
a dry barefoot rabbi busy eyeing
the groom: a self-employed sneaker-head dressed
in a tailored black tux stunting copped grails.

taking his hand this tall orthodox girl
raised under shadows of king messiah

curlers rolled in black hair, chilled mimosas
rest on dowry doilies baring pictures
of eight laced lights and the dome of the rock.

shaking dust off coat tails a falsetto
tenor clenches his rusty diaphragm:
vibrato with bent knees pants lose their crease

lyrics speed read off a smart phone online
bend my finger back snap! wrap it in a
paper towel. the same song played though white
speakers at the falafel shop where this
orthodox girl fell in love, and why not?

chicken gyro dripped on fresh kicks, her hand
soon slipped napkin squares then souls did swoon
turning paper wipes into diamond rings.

at the altar pep-pep wareheim sternly
looks from a custom satin rose colored
stitched seat sucking his tongue through gray
spaced teeth

until his cork cap popped, hurling champagne
at the size nines laced up on the groom's feet

shouts of who is this clown talmuds slammed shut
streetwear goons gasp all the blood came so fast.

bare feet slip beneath super king-sized sheets
ninety-seven air max out the window
champagne rain on midnight taxis below

salvaged flower truffles scooped and scraped
against hotel china porcelain bone plates.

NIGHTHAWK

sana naved

She sits there in her red dress
Knowing well she has many to impress
Not knowing that her life is in distress

The street is empty, like her lonely heart
They all want her, calling her a work of art
Many may call her a streetwalker
But only some know that she's in deep water

“Sweetie, honey, sweetheart, darling”
It's what they call her
While she always walks in a blur
She just wants someone to love her right
Someone to make her life bright

The dark streets give her a fright
but she has to always be ready for a bullfight
It's tiring now to walk alone
She's weary of this brownstone

She sits there in her red dress
Her head in a constant mess
She can't do this anymore
She doesn't want to be called a whore

She stands up spilling her drink
Her patience is at its brink
“I'm done being a harlot,” she roars
As she says this, her heart soars

Those three men look at her with astonished eyes
As they see her walk out into the open skies

JUST A FLOWER

Mukta Ahmad

A flower was just born
It was time for her to blossom
And shine the world with her colors
But she was told to shut herself
Locked in her inner self
And never was to let herself out
Someone picked her before she was full
Tore her down to pieces
Yet told to pull herself together
She can't talk about her pain
Her sorrow
Her ambition
Her dream
The love that lies within her
For she was raised to serve a man.

I wrote this poem because I grew up in a society where women are not treated fairly, in a society where they say it's okay for a man to hit a woman, where they say men can say whatever they want when they're mad. They say a family should never be broken, even if violence is part of everyday life. The husband verbally and physically abuses the wife and the wife is expected to take the abuse and move on with life as it is. I live in a society where even if the men are at fault the women still have to say sorry and put themselves as far down as possible. She cannot speak against her husband or stand up for herself because men are always right. Also, sexual abuse is part of almost every girl's life but they aren't allowed to talk about it. If they do talk about it, people will shame them. They ask them questions like, "What did you wear? Where is the evidence? Aren't you ashamed of it; why would you talk about it?" Sometimes they are forced into marrying the guy that has raped them.

WE ALL WOULD WIN...

Zoe Christie

From my mother's womb I came,
Into a world filled with all the beautiful things that life has to offer.
As I thrive into a young lady today I am galvanized to notice the pain,
Tears flow from my eyes and down my cheeks as if I were standing in the rain.
Blessed, I thought, is my mother's womb to give me life,
Only to realize that society has cursed it, for giving life to a child who has skin of
chocolate, heart of gold and a smile to behold.

All my intentions have always been pure,
Yet still I find that others who are different than me hate me to their core.
I awoke from the illusion of those who've deemed themselves superior have crafted,
The illusion that we are all equal...when in fact their actions have placed them on a
pedestal that one like me could never dare to remove them from,
Implementing unwritten rules and laws that only they would benefit from.
And should I speak of it my life would be done.
They want us to bow down to them as if they are gods, and get on our hands and knees
and crawl
Then profess "We are one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all"
Oh, I wish that were true. Then I would truly be accepted for me as I accept you for you

Why does it matter if we are not the same?
Why do they ridicule me and put me to shame?
Why are some things acceptable for some and others not the same?
How many more centuries should we be coerced to condone and ignore the pain?
Integrity and justice are terms they have yet to comprehend and gain
Many say that to wait for them to change would be truly insane,
Do my ancestors bleed their blood and march their marches in vein?
Often times I cling to hopes of change to hide my tears of sorrow

Yet still to till their lands and fight their wars they look to us,
But when asking for equity and justice in return they turn in disgust.
Why are we only valuable for our resources?
When will the day arrive that we can all come together and join forces?
So that we may one day concur, people are more than their skin and more than their
religion,
We must understand that they are their hearts and souls within.
Knowing that this ignorance might someday subside makes me survive the pain
I believe that this grave inequality an injustice will meet the end off its reign
So remember if the world would love each other regardless of our skin or the gender we
choose to live within
then in the end...WE ALL WOULD WIN!

NOT HER FAULT

Maryam Ahmad

She wore a crop top to school
Oh no! Is that her midriff
This calls for detention
We cannot tolerate such mischief
Our boy will get distracted
Would you look at her bare
He needs to get good grades
But he cannot help but stare
He took off his shirt
It was way too hot in gym
Will the girls not get distracted
Will you not detain him?!
But he walks down the halls
Would you look at him go
He's so strong, we're so proud
But if she does it, she's a hoe

He grabs her at the party
Then drags her into the room
It wasn't his fault
She wore too much perfume!
The boy was young
That's what all teenage boys do
The girl may be in trauma
She'll get over it soon
This is natural behavior
But she has filed a report!
Here comes Kavanaugh
Maybe he'll do justice in court!

FAMILY

Charlene Catalano

Family is a blanket
There for you at the coldest of times.
A hug
Surrounding you with warmth and affection
When spring touches the earth after a cold winter's night.

They are birds
Hoping that one day you will fly,
Gardeners
Making sure that you will blossom.
A tree standing tall, smiling in the wind
Despite what hardships come its way.

FRIENDSHIP

Oriya Abed

Relationships of this sort
that some say only last a few years
can sometimes last a lifetime.
A relationship so pure
what comes to mind? A friendship.
Friendship is care, love, truth, and honesty.
A relationship so real
it becomes intangible.
The other by your side
at all times.
Never forgetting the downs
as such relationship can't be sustained without.
Stay true to such relationships
as they are difficult to find
and more difficult to maintain.

PRAGMATIC

Daliah Ben-Ari

The gravity
of reality
is that we cannot
ascertain or foresee
what comes.

We must
trust, believe, breathe
and we will receive
our utmost calling
and destiny.

WARMEST PLACE

Sofiya Romendik

The next escape is hard on the nails,
But he tries and he tries and he fails
And he falls by the ground at his feet,
But there's no one there to care.
So he comes by our house and knocking on the door,
Calls in a voice full of fear,
"Won't you, oh will you, but spare a fare, dare, for the care of a boy,"
And I open the window and pull the boy in,
And he closes the window and screams.

For the night is dark and the candle is near,
But there's nothing out there for him to fear.
For what but in here could the boy have to fear,
When the night is dark and the flame is near?
For what but the care of a bleeding old bear could he see by the light of the flame?
So he shudders and mutters and mumbles a prayer,
Jumps to his feet and loses a layer.
He closes his eyes and we step away slowly,
Not to frighten a visitor when we're so very lonely.

He waits and he waits and his gait goes unnoticed,
As he paces the room, then calmly proposes:
He can clean, he can cook, he can deliver the roses,
His life was unlivd before he came here, he discloses.
We say that's okay, he can start work tomorrow.
We set up a bed on a plank near the furrow,
"T" is a cold night," we explain, "Warmest place in the burrow."
He gulps and he nods and himself he composes,
"Alright," he agrees, "I'll stay here 'til the morrow."

We leave him be and retreat to the trees,
The ones with the frosting and the bees.
We planned to climb for two days past,
But winds were tough for two weeks last.
The bark is rough, the branches brittle,
But honey's sweet and spoils the spittle,

We hear a sound, a rattle or scratch,
So turn around to dig, or snatch.
Who do we see, but the nightly catch
Scratching at the window latch.

Calling talented people to join our staff!

Content Editing
Format Editing
Photography
Graphic Design
Event Planning

[STUCKINTHELIBRARY.ORG/APPLY-HERE](https://stuckinthelibrary.org/apply-here)



@stuckinthelibrary @stuckinthelibrary @BCStuckInTheLib

