The Midway Muse

Spring 2020



"It is spring again. The earth is a child that knows poems by heart." --Rainer Maria Rilke

The Midway Muse

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This issue of the Midway Muse is dedicated to the Midway University Graduates of 2020.

During unprecedented times you have strived and struggled to finish your degrees and classwork, to enter a world even more foreign than expected.

Congratulations Midway seniors!

Special dedication to Senior HALA AYYASH

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Hala Ayyash:

A graduating criminal justice major, Hala Ayyash came to Midway University on scholarship to play soccer, which she did enthusiastically her four years here. But Hala proved to be more than just an athlete, but also an artist. Hala's talents in nearly every art form—from writing to music to painting—have been discovered and enjoyed by all who know and love her in the Midway community. The founder of the Midway Art Club, Hala encouraged students from every corner to develop and share their talents by hosting art shows in conjunction with the *Muse* unveiling events. Born in Bethlehem, Palestine, Hala's family now lives in Somerset, Kentucky. Hala plans to become a criminal justice professor, while continuing to pursue her many artistic interests.

Her professor writes of Hala:

Hala is the epitome of LIFE: laughing, creating, running, embracing, shining! Always passionate, always energetic, always grateful—her favorite expression: *"it's a blessing!"*—Hala engenders life wherever she goes. To know her is to love her. She is the blessing.

From her journal, Hala writes:

We don't understand why we go through the things that we go through in the moment but after, we become a whole new person. I spent a whole year crying because of circumstances I couldn't change but over time we slowly grow and one day become grateful for the things we went through. During my journey of falling apart I discovered things about myself that I previously did not know. It is like I unlocked characteristics of my personality after each time I fell apart. Kind of like a level up in life. I learned lessons the hard way, but it made me wiser, smarter and more resilient. I found a whole new work ethic and a whole new way to cope. Like a pocket full of sunshine that I pull out on rainy days. Even on the rainy days, I learned to embrace the grey clouds searching for a meaning. A new thing to learn. A lot of self-reflections come after you fall apart. You think you know yourself, but the truth is, we are never stagnant. Our interests and inspirations will change, only if we fall apart first though. I let all the china in the cabinet shatter for the faith of knowing that better is coming.



Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash

Hold On To Each Moment

They said, "Time will come:

Before you know it, you will be done."

We complain of pain

As we work too hard

To sprint each yard.

Little did we know

That this show

Was coming to an end.

From teammates to friends

Our rivals showed their frowns,

As we screamed "This is our town!"

We played each game,

People remembered our name.

We chanted our way to victory;

We put other teams in misery.

We wiped our tears

As they said "It's been years!"

Our past teammates ranted,

Saying, "Don't take it for granted."

As we played our last game,

The commentator screamed “3,2,1!”

We looked at each other:

We knew we would never be the same.

Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash

The Way You Carry Yourself

The way you carry yourself

So sweet and fine

Eyes so blue with perfect shine

Smile so bright

Blinding anyone in sight

But they don't know

What you don't show

You laugh

To hide away pain

With only yourself to blame

But they don't know

What you don't show

You try so hard

Not to let down your guard

Trapped in your mind

With nothing to find

Feeling like you are in a drought

So you continue to doubt.

Hala Ayyash

Fares, I

Although the heat never left no matter what month it was, the fig tree in the backyard always bore fruit. It was a particularly hot summer day. I heard mama yelling from our first-floor balcony, ""Fares! Stop fighting with the other boys!"

"Mama I don't do anything! They keep throwing the rocks at me!!" Fares ran behind our building. His size often got him in trouble. Being smaller than the other boys, an easy target, I should say. On that day the sun did not show any mercy, and neither did Fares. He had a tan that was a golden brown, with hair always so messy, dark brown covered in white rubble like an old vase that hasn't been dusted in years. He ran toward the fig tree, jumping on it as fast as he could. I watched him wrestle through the leaves, keeping a close eye on him because I underestimated his courage.

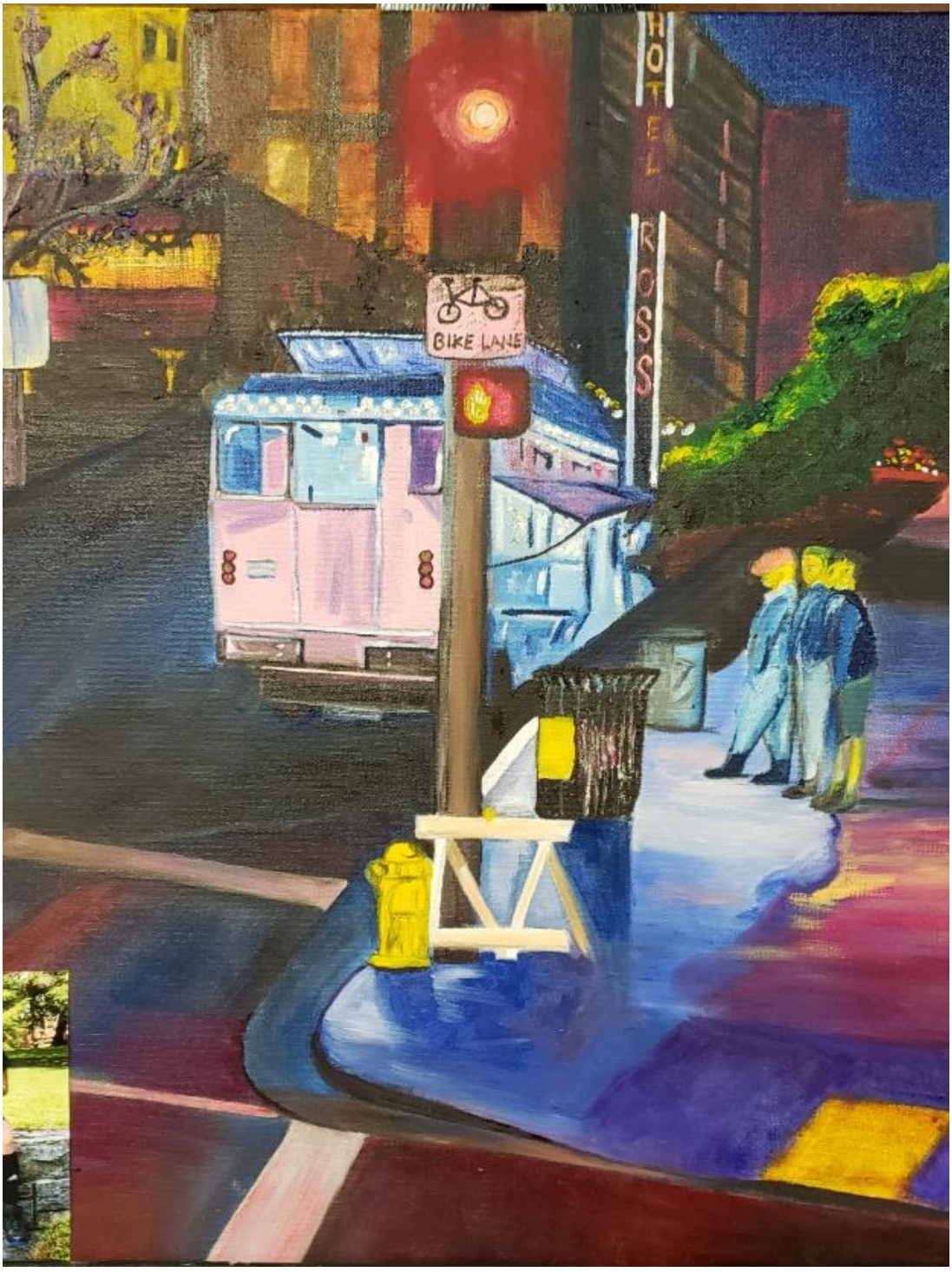
I turned away for a second only to hear him jump off the tree. It was surprisingly loud given his small size, but he was on a mission. He jumped with confidence, holding at least 30 unripe figs with his shirt. Unripe figs, just as hard as rocks that leaked this white milky substance that made your skin itch. He ran toward the boys, stopping only for a second to look at me. The sun reflected in his honey-colored eyes as he read the concern in my face. He smiled so wide, a move-star smile, teeth too big for his mouth. Then, he ran toward those boys. I was scared but Fares was fearless, and his courage brought fear to the other boys. I watch him launch those figs at the boys, moving closer with each hit. The boys began to cry and itch, yelling at him to stop, but Fares wanted them to hurt until all those figs were gone.

After a while the boys ran away, and Fares turned around to make his way back home. He walked towards me, dripping in sweat, dirt, and fig juice. Only his smile was still bright.

"Mama is going to be mad you are so dirty; you know we don't have enough water to constantly take showers like this," I scolded.

Fares looked up and said, “If you do not fight back, you will always be a victim of your circumstances.” In that moment I realized that my perception of my brother was skewed. I used to think that he was a fragile boy with nothing but imagination. He was much bigger than that. He was not my little brother anymore.

Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash

Fares, II

Mama was upstairs with khalto (auntie) Rania. They spent a lot of time with each other, smoking cigarettes, drinking their coffee in their small expresso cups. I never understood why they drank their coffee in those little cups until I grew older and realized that caffeine is the 'normal' drug that adults consume for stimulation. The majority of adults drink coffee, no matter where you live in this world. We lived in a skyscraper sort of. It had 11 floors. Khalto Rania lived on the 11th floor; I lived on the first floor. Each unit was built the same: one big room divided into two living rooms—one for family, one for guests—with no wall separating them, just an opening. The only way to individualize them was with regular couches or fancy couches. The fancy couches were shiny navy blue, like silk almost but the texture was soft and if you moved your hand in a certain way, the color would change into a darker blue. That was my favorite part.

We rarely spent time in the guest room, even when guests were there. The guest room led to the main balcony, and we spent a lot of time on the balcony. It was big, big enough for a kid to dream. I used to be jealous of the other kids who lived in a higher unit that I did. I wanted to be up high, and I wanted to see the other buildings and the land. We did not have houses in our neighborhood; we just had old tall buildings made of brick. Our neighborhood was called "Al Bayader," the oldest neighborhood around. My family and I lived in the oldest building, with the water wells in the back yard along with the giant fig tree, our version of our treehouse. The building we lived in was separated into two halves, like a duplex that has 11 floors.

We lived on the left side so as you walk through the door, you can see the living room(s) and to the right, there was the kitchen. Our kitchen was small, and that had a smaller balcony, way smaller than the other one. The small balcony overlooked the side of our building to the area where the neighborhood boys and I played street soccer when there was not a car parked there. We did not have a car; we had a van that my dad used for work. He parked it under the building, never on the side. He was smart

for that. The balcony in the kitchen was where Mama stored the cleaning supplies--the bleach, brooms, and the mop. It was often dirty, and we did not spend time on that balcony like we did on the big balcony. Mama even said it was off-limits, which was fine with us. We complied most of the time.

Next to the kitchen we had a long hallway, the longest corridor I have ever seen in a house to this day. If you walked straight back that lead to my room, overlooking the backyard. On the left you had Mama and Baba's room, then my brothers Fares and Ahmed's room. I always had my own room, perks of being the only daughter. All the windows and balconies on this building were barred, so kids play safely. Our balconies were the only balconies in the building that were not barred.

I was sitting on the couch on a Saturday afternoon. Saturdays are the middle-eastern days of rest. A peaceful day. We did not have the fancy cable so watching TV was rare. Everything was in Arabic, but it made for good background noise. I could hear Fares stepping out of his room, walking towards me. He had seen a cartoon character playing with an hourglass, so he had taken it upon himself to make one. He used two glass sprite bottles, filled one with water and duck taped them together. The stores never sold soda in plastic bottles; they were always sold in glass bottles and you had to return the glass bottle back to the store once you are done drinking from it. I wondered how Fares still had two but I just let him be. He was showing me his new toy, proud because this is something he had made by himself, as he always copied me and whatever creative things I was doing.

Once he finished showing me, he went to the kitchen and placed his creation on the balcony. Then, he and I decided to play "The Floor is Lava," jumping from couch to couch, trying not to hit the floor. I lost quickly, and Fares was still going, so to make the game harder, I went to the small balcony in the kitchen to grab the broom. I put the broom in his way every time he jumped to make him jump higher. I wanted to see what his limit was, but he just kept jumping and jumping. Aggravated because I could not scare him, I went back to the kitchen to put the broom back on the balcony. As I was

setting the broom back, it hit the hourglass that Fares made and at that moment my heart dropped. The hourglass fell from the balcony with an earth-shattering noise. It was so loud all the neighbors started to look outside their windows.

That day our neighbors had parked their small white Mitsubishi right below us. I looked down and saw the back windshield of the white Mitsubishi shattered where Fares' bottles had landed. Completely shattered, glass all over the ground, and the car alarm sounding so loud. Mama came running downstairs as fast as she could. To this day, I have no idea how she made it down in two minutes from 11 floors. The elevator was broken in our building, it always was. She came bursting through the door screaming, "Who did this?!" looking at me.

I was standing outside the kitchen shaking so hard. Fares was sitting on the couch watching the whole thing. I looked at him, then looked at Mama, and said "Fares did it, his hourglass was the one that fell from the balcony." Instantly, Mama's rage went towards Fares. Fares started yelling, saying it wasn't him, but Mama didn't care, and I was relieved. The wrath was not coming towards me. Baba walked through the house and told Mama that he was going to get it fixed right now. He talked to the neighbors, and the next thing I see is Baba pulling out of the driveway in the car, glass falling everywhere. I could hear the tires breaking the remainder of the glass that was on the ground.

Mama beat Fares that day, so hard, and I did feel bad. I did, but at that moment Fares being mad at me was better than Mama being mad. Fares never did yell at me, nor was he mad. He just let it go and never scolded me. He took a hard beating that day but never told me that what I did was terrible. At that moment, I learned that he forgave me before I even did anything bad to him. He always forgives me.

Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash

Spotlight on Hannah Waroway

Who is the eye behind the camera in so many of the *Muse*'s breath-taking photography spreads? Award-winning Hannah Waroway, junior Equine major from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Coming to Kentucky, without knowing anyone, to pursue an equine education was a "huge risk" for Hannah. Terrified, but determined, she came to rely on her camera—and discovered a new-found passion. "That camera became my outlet," Hannah says, "a medium through which I could express myself and be most vulnerable. No matter what kind of day I had, I could always take my camera and escape." Rarely setting out for any picture in particular, she has come to realize that her best shots are unplanned, the serendipitous. Primarily self-taught, Hannah claims she has developed skills inaccessible in the classroom. "Photography is not about the perfect lighting, ISO, aperture," she says. "It is about *how* you capture your perspective. It is how you *make* a picture and make it come to life so that other people can share that moment with you."

As she finishes her junior year, she admits not knowing what lies ahead can be "utterly terrifying for a person who lives to make plans and makes plans in order to live." These plans include graduate degrees that could lead to teaching and coaching positions in the equine industry. "Teaching the younger generation and helping them work towards their goals has always been a passion of mine," she confides. "So long as I end up on that career path, I will be content."

Just this year, Hannah has received the Outstanding Individual Performance Award, the Margaret Ware Parrish Award, the Midway University Eagle Leadership Award, and the Jack Fritz Memorial Scholarship given through the Intercollegiate Riding Association. What will the next year bring? Whatever it is, Hannah will be sure to capture it through the eye of her camera, sharing her vision unselfishly with the world.

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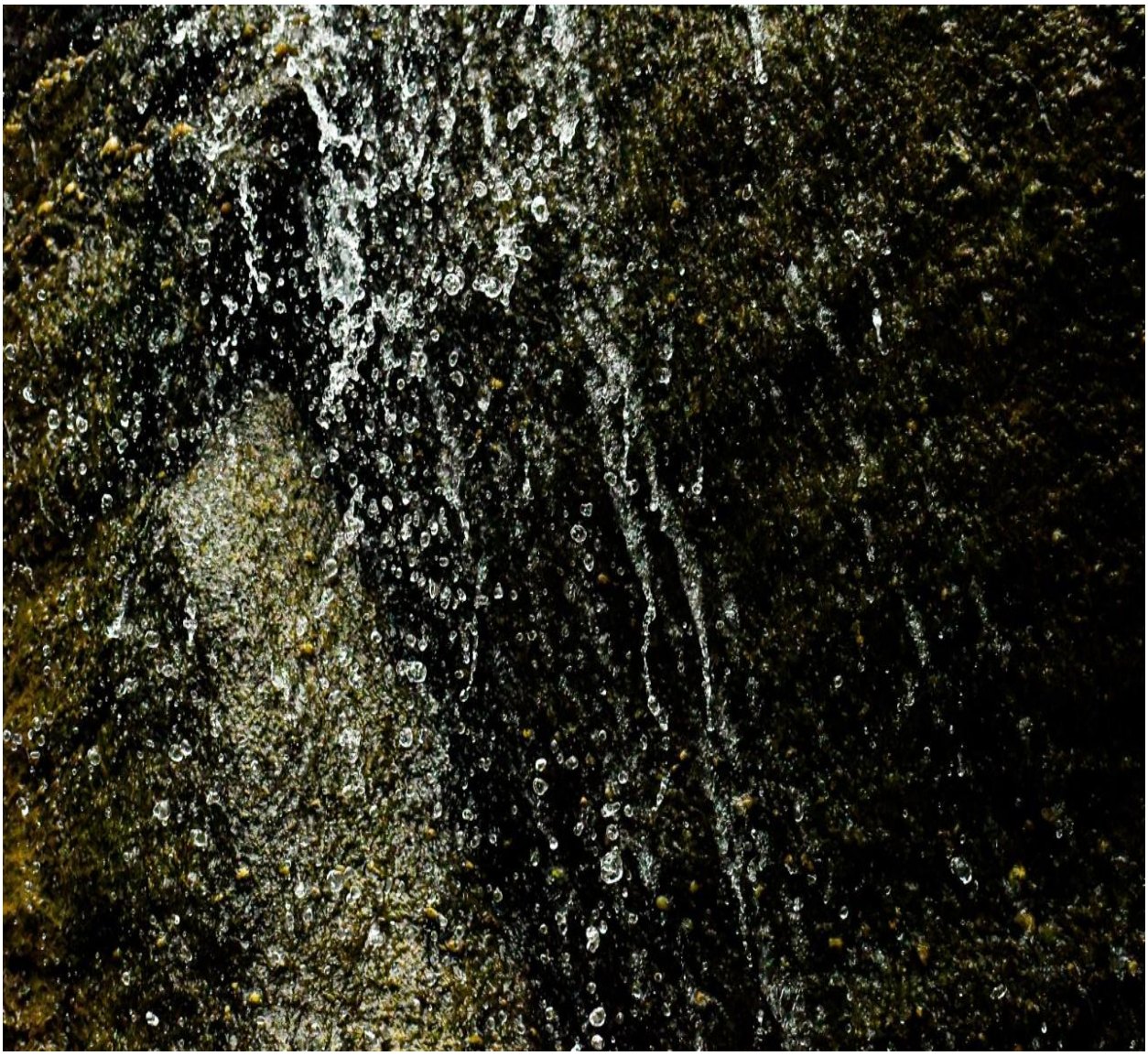
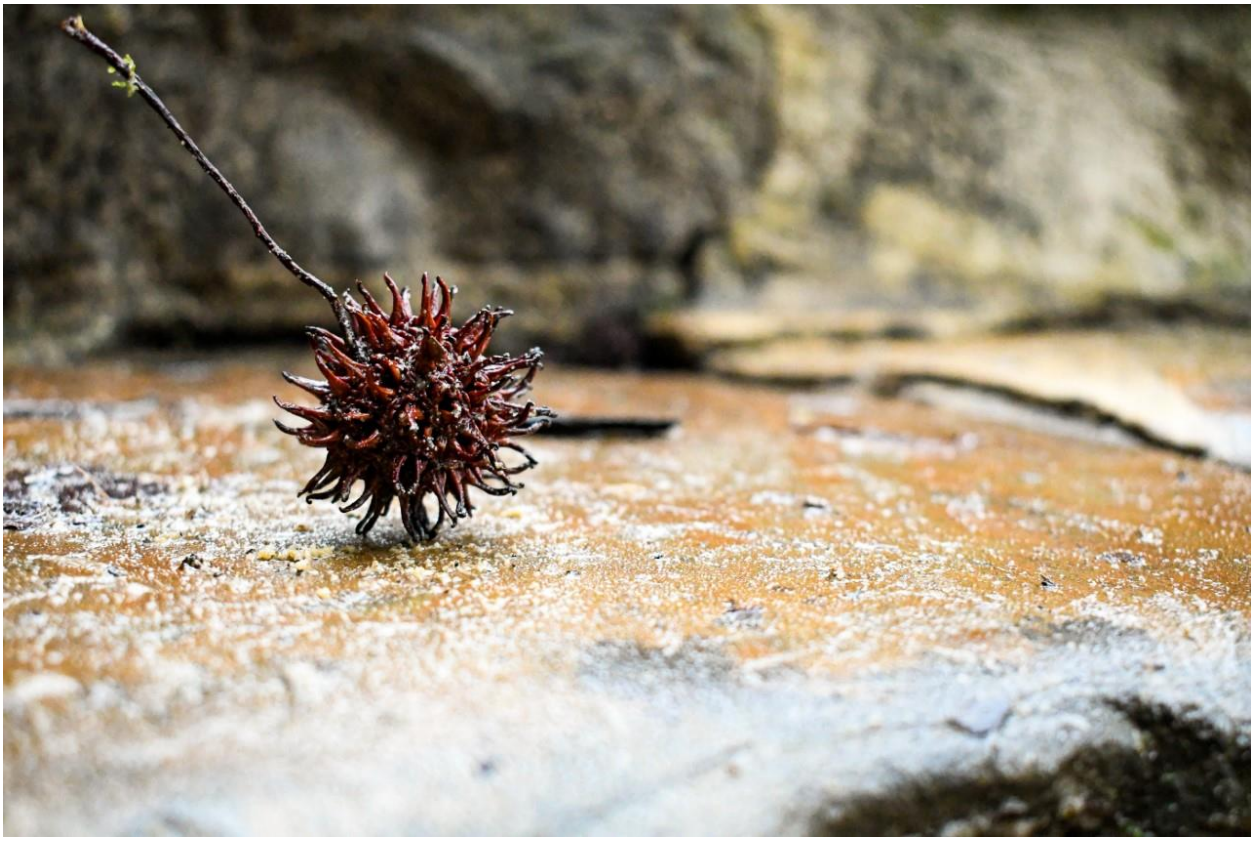


Hannah Waroway



Hannah Waroway



Hannah Waroway



Hannah Waroway

Penned for My Love

My Dearest Love—

To sit in your presence is my joy. A rush of fresh and vibrant springs sprouting life in me that no one can ever replicate. A purity of love and goodness that none could surpass. You, alone, have captured my gaze. Thank you, my dove.

--Your Love

My Beautiful Love—

Your words wash over me like calm waters, bringing comfort to the very depths of my soul. You inhabit every part of me, and I lose myself in your exquisite strength. I see Perfection and only wish to forever hold your gaze, in both respect and honor.

--Your Love

Lovers embraced.

A gentle dance

That never ends

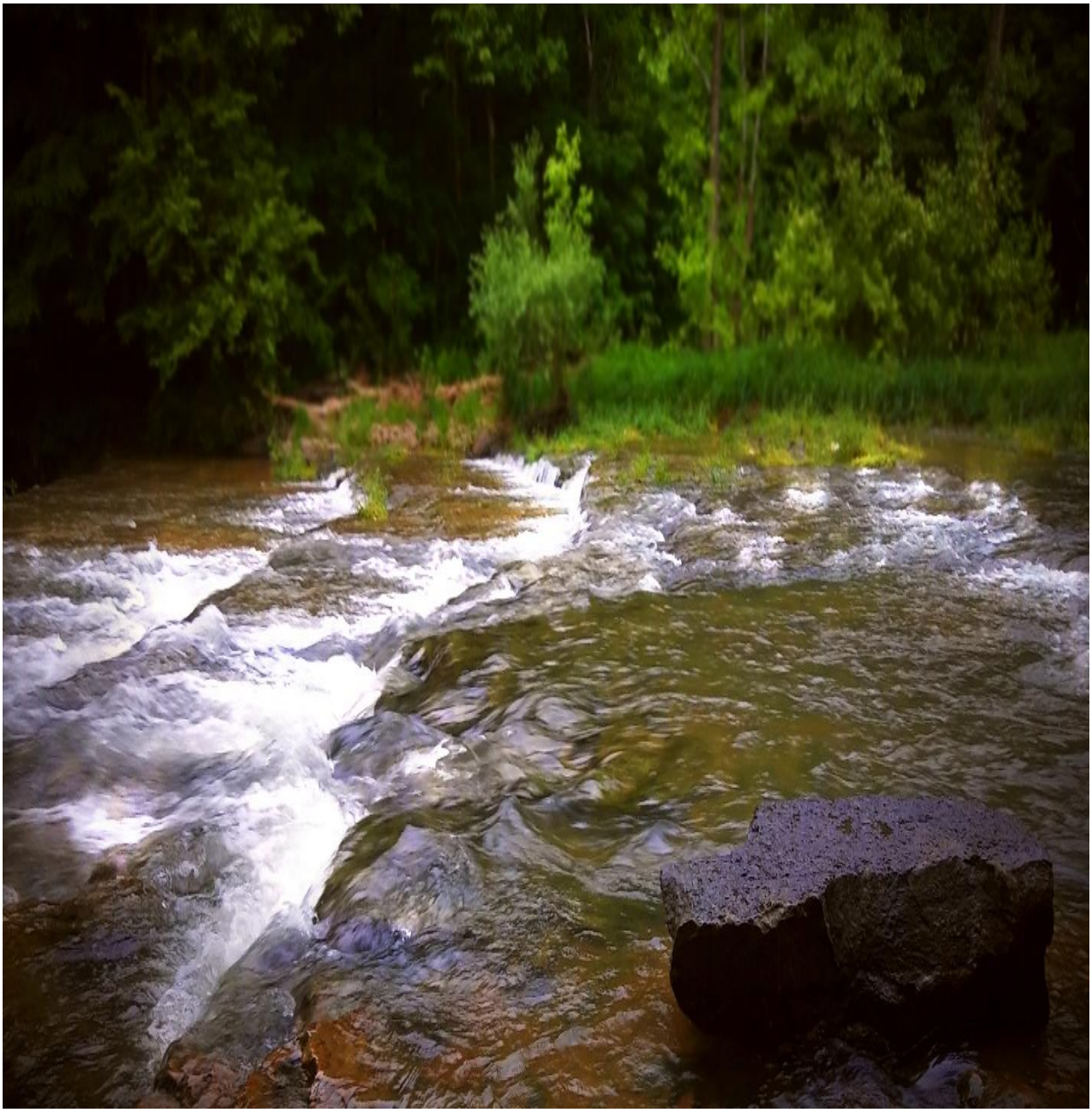
With each step,

new life begins.

Legacy Lovers.

Brady Delgado

Waterfall Top



Brady Delgado

Werewolf Sighting

for Basil

I had my doubts--
It'd been so long
I had forgotten.
But recent glimpses
seen for myself is
believing, knowing as I
myself am only known.
I sniff electric air
for that inimitable scent:
faint but unforgettable,
depending on the transport
of the wind,
then cock an ear for
that singular, solitary howl
that calls me back, and I
am converted,
translated,
yet again.

Rebecca Luttrell Briley



Hannah Waroway

The Note

Looking out the window of my family's winter cabin, I am met with an ominously gray sky. There's something about winter that brings out the coldest side of people. No matter how warm the sunset is, the bitter cold always manages to find its way into their bones. My cabin is in Fraser, Colorado, about 8,574 feet high up in the Rocky Mountains, making us the coldest place in the state. The annual temperature here is a measly 18 degrees Fahrenheit and in the "summer," it hits a low of –6 degrees. Not much of a summer at all if you ask me. My summer consists of wearing every long sleeve shirt I own, two pairs of pants, gloves, a hat, a scarf, earmuffs, oh and don't forget five pairs of socks, just to walk out to my mailbox.

The winters here are lonely to say the least. I roam the cabin alone each night hoping to calm my restlessness. I chose a life of solitude, so that I could excel in my career as a writer. I mean there's nothing more inspirational than the black bears, right? All I have to keep me company here is my Siberian husky, Shadow. I've had him for five years and he is the world's greatest guard dog but he's also the laziest dog I have ever met. He can spend hours on end just sleeping in front of the fireplace and will only get up to eat or use the bathroom. Other than that he's like a ghost. I don't blame him though. The fireplace is tranquilizing. Once you sit down in front of it, there is no getting up until after you've had a three-hour long nap. I, too, feel myself falling victim to the tranquility of the fireplace and I am slowly succumbing to fatigue.

It's Friday night. I'm sitting on the couch watching for any new updates about the blizzard that has been ravaging our town for a week now. As I watch the news, I a headline pops up that reads: "ALL SURROUNDING ROADS HAVE BEEN CLOSED DUE TO IMPEDING BLIZZARD CONDITIONS." Panic starts to creep up my body. Blizzards are not uncommon for us locals, it's never bad enough to prevent people from going about their daily lives. This sounds serious. Questions start imposing on my peace of mind. How long will the blizzard last? Do I have enough food? What about Shadow? The nearest neighbor is two miles away, if not farther. What am I going to do? Questions of survival whirl through my head like the harsh winds that currently occupy the outdoors.

Suddenly, a knock coming from the front door echoes throughout the house. Why would anyone be knocking on my door during a blizzard? Hesitantly, I walk to the front door to see who it could be. Reaching for the handle, the cool metal sends a shiver down my spine. At once, I crack the door open, careful not to let in the cold, and all I can see are snowflakes falling full speed into the ground, making it hard to see anything past my driveway. No one is there. But someone has to be here! I heard them knock! Have I been in solitude for too long? Then a piece of red construction paper lying at my feet catches my eye.

"YOU'RE NEXT!" This isn't some sentimental handwritten note someone gives to their school crush. This is the kind of note a serial killer gives their next victim. The letters are all different shapes and sizes, as if someone has meticulously cut out each

and every one for the sole purpose of scaring the living daylights out of someone, and by someone, I mean me. I look around for anyone who might be watching me from afar, but I see no one. Peering into the darkness, I make out faint footprints leading into the forest of pine trees next to my house. The forest looks like a black hole. Someone is watching me. I can feel it. I quickly shut the door, then go around closing all the blinds and curtains, double-checking that every window and door in the house is locked.

I've never been concerned with extra security since it's just me by myself out here, but now I'm totally regretting that decision. The letter left on my porch is lying in the center of the kitchen table, the words, "YOU'RE NEXT" staring up at me. Who is this from? What does it mean, I'm "next"? None of this makes any sense; there's no one around for miles and the weather is so severe no one could last out there for very long. Inching to the window, I carefully crack the blinds just enough to peer out onto my front lawn, a white blanket disappearing into the black trees.

As my eyes adjust to the darkness, something stands out from the trees. There, along the forest line, is a person, staring directly back at me. I freeze. Fear takes over every inch of my body. Who is it? Why is he doing this? I rarely leave my house, and I keep to myself. Why would anyone have anything against me?

Without taking my eyes off the figure, I reach into my back pocket for my cell phone to dial 911 when I realize I left it on the couch where I was watching the news. I run back to the couch, grab my phone, and race back to the window to keep an eye on my secret admirer. He's gone. He's completely vanished into thin air. Unlocking my

phone, my hands shake so badly I keep pressing the wrong keys. After a couple of failed attempts, I manage to dial 911. Pressing the green call button at the bottom of the screen, I wait for the outgoing ring to rattle in my ear. It never comes. No service. Great. The weather must have blocked the service lines in our town. I'm stranded out here alone with a psychopath.

My brain kicks into action. I need a weapon. A knife! Tiptoeing into the kitchen, I grab a massive butcher knife from the wooden block. I then make my way back into the living room to check on Shadow, who is now fully awake from his nap and on high alert. Suddenly, the power goes out and all that is left to illuminate the room is the glow of the fireplace. Quickly, I switch the flashlight from my phone on and back myself into the corner of my living room away from the windows. Shadow is by my side, but when the doorbell rings again, he just edges against my feet and whimpers. It must be him.

Holding my breath, I peek out of the sidelight window before pulling the door open with a sudden jerk. Once again, there's no one there. At my feet, there is another note. This time it's blue with the same letter pattern as the first one. But the message is different. A message I definitely do not want to receive. It reads: "*If you want to survive you must come outside. I will give you 10 minutes or else I'm coming in there with you*." I take another look around the perimeter to try to see where this guy is, but I still see nothing. Well, I'm not going to wait around for this psycho to come and find me. I set a timer on

my phone for 10 minutes and race upstairs to prepare for the cold conditions that wait for me outside. Ten layers of clothes later, I head back downstairs with Shadow.

Shadow and I start off on our journey of survival with 5 minutes left to spare, following the driveway, not sure where to go. There is a lodge about a mile down the road. Perfect. We'll go and get help from there. About halfway down the driveway, Shadow starts barking wildly at something up ahead. Afraid, but compelled to look up, I see the man standing there. Shadow takes off towards the attacker, while I take off running through the woods. I can hear the man struggle against Shadow behind me, but I can't stop to look back. That is what every dumb girl in all the horror movies does and they end up getting themselves killed. That will not be me.

My lungs are screaming at me to stop and take a break, to just take a second and wait for Shadow. I catch my breath and listen. Except for my jagged breathing, all is silence. The struggle I had once heard behind me is no longer there. I hold my breath and listen again. Nothing. I'm not sure if it's the blood rushing in my ears or just all the snow acting as insulation. I pray Shadow is ok, but the silence is interrupted by a noise horrifying enough to knock me back into my senses. "*You can run but you can't hide! Even if you do get away, I will always find you.*" The man's footsteps follow his voice, becoming faster and louder in my direction. I take off running again.

I can't tell how long I've been running, but these woods must go on for miles. I force myself to turn to look where I've been, and suddenly, I am struck in the back head with such force that I land face first in the snow. Groaning in pain, I try to see who my

assailant is, but all I can see is a blur of a black shadow. Then I fall into a state of unconsciousness.

I wake up with a throbbing pain in my head that keeps me from opening my eyes. "That's interesting. The last thing I remember was being knocked out by that psycho. How am I still alive?' Finally managing to open my eyes, I realize I am lying on an old rickety bed, covered in blankets, in a dimly lit room. To the unknowing eye, this scene looks like I just woke up from a great night's sleep in a cute log cabin, when, in fact, I just ran miles through the freezing cold forest being chased by a serial killer! Wondering if there is anyone here who may be able to help me, I gingerly pull myself up out of the bed and creep to the door. Placing my hand on the knob, I slowly turn it.

It's locked. I look around for a window for escape, but there is nothing but wooden walls. Footsteps approach the door, and I immediately jump back into the bed to pretend to be asleep. Keys jingle as they open the lock; someone enters the room. I know it's the man who has been chasing me, though I keep my eyes tightly shut. I try to still my breathing, but as I hear him approaching the bed, it gets harder and harder to control my beating heart. He stops at the foot of the bed. I can feel his eyes staring at me. *"Open your eyes. Wake up! You need to get up Hurry! If you don't wake up now, you're going to die."*

I want to open them so badly, but I can't. It's like my eyelids have been glued shut and no matter how hard I try; they just won't budge. I attempt to move my arms and legs, but they feel heavy as lead. The room is getting warmer and warmer; I'm

sweating. I desperately want to remove the blankets from my body. The heat is now sweltering and becoming unbearable. I give it one last try with every ounce of my strength just to open my eyes...

Fire! Flames are surrounding me on all sides. The man leaning over me is dressed in a heavy uniform of some kind. The man… but no! This is a firefighter! My eyes widen as I struggle to get up. "What's happening?"

"A burning log must have fallen from the grate onto the floor! No time to talk! We need to get out of here now." He pulls me up from my couch, still wrapped in blankets, and hurries me through my own front door. Once we've evacuated far enough from the cabin, he leaves me to rush back to fight the fire.

I stare in disbelief as my house blazes against the black sky. How'd I get back here? Where is the man who was chasing me? Had I just dreamt everything? The night is dark, but stars shine brightly from the clear sky. Even the blizzard must have been part of my dream. Before I can puzzle it all out, another man, in a different uniform, insists on putting me in the back of an ambulance to check for injuries. As he examines me for burns, I can't hold my tongue any longer. "Where's that man?" Surely they would have seen anyone else around.

"What man?" The EMT continues fiddling with equipment in the ambulance.

"The one who was chasing me!"

"Chasing you? We found you passed out on your couch in front of your fireplace."

"But—" At his quizzical look, I decide not to ask any more questions. I don't want him thinking I'm crazy. I force a laugh and he chuckles. Neither of us notice the shadow lurking at the edge of the forest. Watching. Waiting...

Sydney Houp



Hannah Waroway

School Blues

Learning, yearning for a grade
I dig through books with sharpened spade.
Studying hard to get straight A's,
Waiting, impatient for summer days.
Stress is high, exams are near.
These online class raise my fear.
Watching the clock tick slowly by,
Wishing the rest of this day would fly.
I work to finish class after class,
If only to be outside fishing for bass.
And when the day turns into night,
I wish that I could take a flight.
When morning comes, class starts again.
I'm never ready to begin.

Hannah Welte



Hannah Waroway

Pantoum

Two different people you are

Of night and day

Both seemingly close, yet oh so far

You ask for my hand to show me the way

Of night and day

Once a sun that pierced my eyes, as my heart

You ask for my hand to show me the way

I admired you with a flaming passion, my own colorful piece of art

Once a sun that pierced my eyes, as my heart

Both seemingly close, yet oh so far

I admired you with a flaming passion, my own colorful piece of art

Two different people you are.

Isabella Robinson



Hannah Waroway

Our Duet

I look at you and you're black and white
I hear you and you're an assortment of wondrous colors
I play you and know that there are gray areas in-between your depths
I listen to your stories and move to your music,
I dream of you and feel your uniquely toned 88 parts,

Our first song was Heart & Soul

I abandon you and try out the spunky 6-stringed guitar
I forget you and dust settles on your stillness
I remember you but not as your former glory

Parts of you are flatter and your voice has gone out of tune
These imperfections ruin the enjoyment for many
But when you go silent, when you should be making ambient noise
I do not fret anymore
For I will always adore your faithful company

You never complained when I pounded chords on you with my ungentle fists
You sang me a melody as my tears fell upon your porcelain skin
You let out just one scream when I knocked the lamp and it chipped your precious teeth
But you always forgave me even when I hid your scar for weeks with a red and dusty cover
At times I resented you even though it was I who couldn't get in touch with the song

I left you but you were patiently waiting

So together we'll continue making music
Until my notes go flat, and my hands grow cold
When the final note is sung
Do not let it be the last

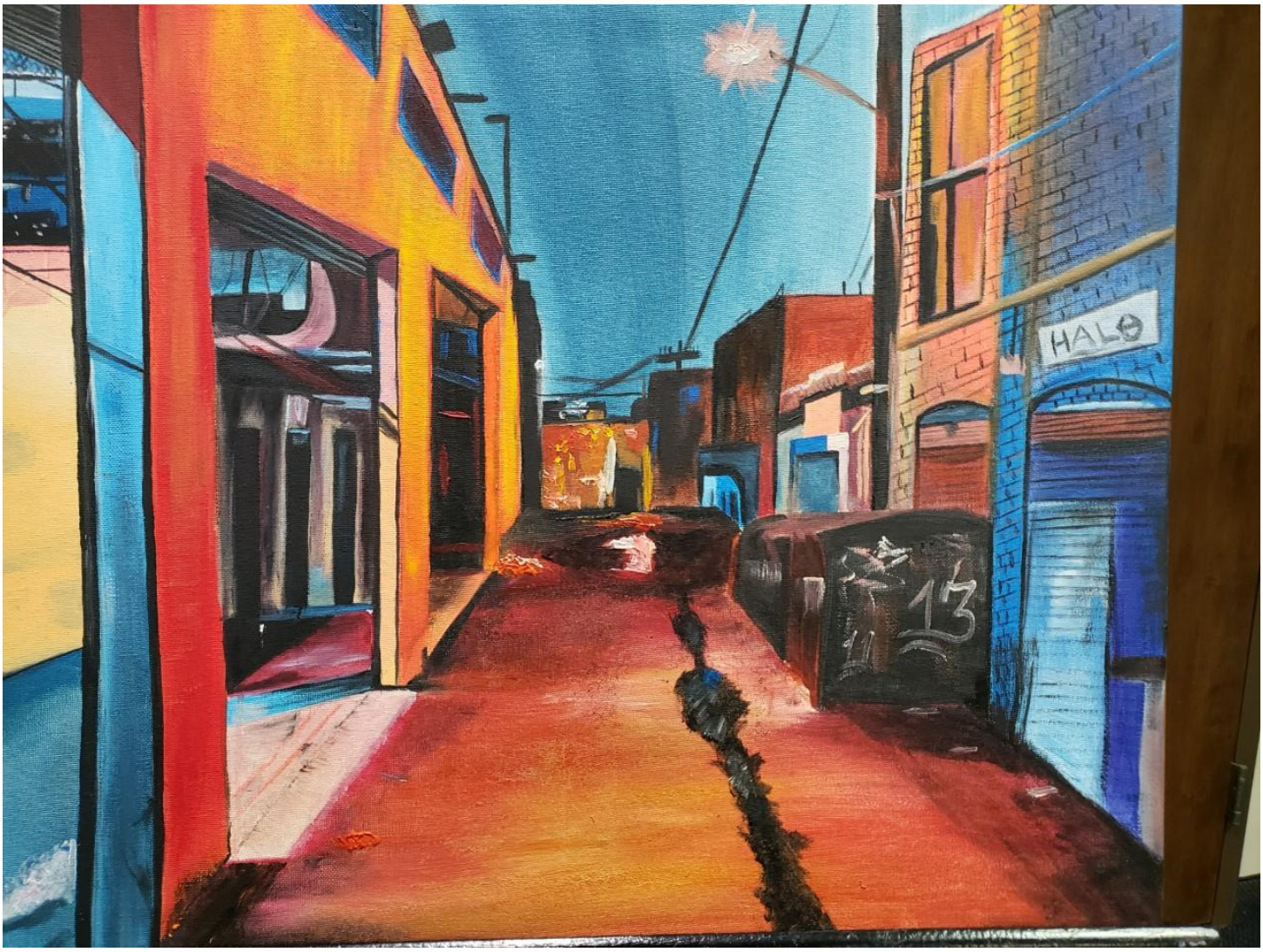
Let me still feel the music
Help me to rest with the rhythm
If I shall never sing again
Please play our song, as I'm six feet down
You can create the unfinished piece

And I will be proud as I lie in my dusty coffin
Hearing strangers sing and dance to our lyric

This music makes the heart hear the beat of the soul

And the rhythm of the heart is the most beautiful sound.

Annie Oakley



Hala Ayyash

For Your Eyes Only

I am so glad your eyes

Are only for me

Through all the chaos, your blue eyes

Are all that I see.

God made your eyes blind

To my every fault.

And when you speak to me so kind

My heart pounds by default.

I am so glad I belong only to you,

It's within your blue sky

That I am made anew.

Mine not to question, I don't need to know why.

And again I am reminded:

For me, thank God, your eyes are blinded.

Bobbi Stephens



Salah Shakir

Address My Mess

This poem is nothing less than an attempt

To address my mess

In the midst of distress

A time of uncertainty

Seems like I lost the person I used to be

Who even am I? The person I call me

I strive to be free

From what though

Who dare let I hinder my glow

And stunt my growth.

Hala Ayyash



Hala Ayyash

Canvas

Paintings.

Vibrant and bright.

Your colors tell your truth.

The red, blue, orange, and yellow.

The brush strokes.

They give you a rough edge.

Or sometimes smooth waves

From a brush dipped in blue and green.

The empty space has nothing.

Yet means something.

Oh the stories that you tell,

Through your many colors and shapes,

You say much.

Yet you are secretive.

Never showing your true face.

Only you know your true meaning.

No one will see you,

Unless you let them in.

You start out as a blank canvas,

Until you are set free.

Hannah Welte



Hannah Waroway

Chasing Cars

Softly purr my sweetest child.
Let me guard you from the others.
Know you are not from the wild.
Let me guide you through the summers.

Can't you see the roads aren't safe?

The cars speed past without a glance.
To stand a chance is not the case.
Come here my love, do not advance.

Stay here within protective arms.
I've seen the horrors of chasing cars:
They do not stop, they cause such harms.
My love, stay here and watch the stars.

You are my only precious baby,
I need you always, I need you daily.

Josette Isaacs



Hannah Waroway

Fly High Bird

Cast your feathered wings

out upon us

Soar high and low

All throughout the sky

Coat the ground with your

Majestic shadow.

Jasmine Jordan



Salah Shakir

Release of the Monarchs

Finally the wonderful day has arrived!

Today we release what we've nursed for months:

Beautiful butterflies we hope will all thrive.

Peacefully flying together at once.

None of us know how far they'll each travel.

All we can hope is that we did our job

So as each of their life's stories unravel,

We'll know it was us—it makes our hearts throb!

Joyfully we observe them fill up the blue sky

Orange, black, and white—such colors to see!

Before we saved them they were once left to die.

We celebrate now they are all flying free.

Jasmine Jordan



Hala Ayyash

Thick as Thieves

Many people talk about their childhood, their friends. They tell stories that are truly wonderful, but I've not heard a story yet that could top any of mine. My childhood was something out of a story book. My memories and stories are the best.

Thick as thieves we were. There were about eleven of us, little thieves masquerading around as a church youth group. We were so close and very protective of one another. We did everything together. We didn't see anything wrong with taking rolls of toilet paper from the gas station or stealing letters from restaurant marquee signs. Scavenger hunts required several odd items, and each of us was a master at obtaining a few of said items under cover of darkness. Do you recall the tin foil ashtrays found on Wendy's tables? Well, I still have about a thousand of those! The best part of the hunt was that it was my mother who would make the weekly list. She even drove a team when we found ourselves short on either drivers or a car. Even with adult supervision, we managed to get into all sorts of shenanigans.

I remember one night in late summer like it was yesterday. Steve lived in a very affluent neighborhood. He came to church against his parent's wishes. They were Catholic and we were Pentecostal. NO! We did not handle snakes. That's crazy talk! We would park around the corner from his house, and Steve would crawl out his second story bedroom window and climb down the trellis. About half mile away was the biggest tree any of us had ever seen. It stood right in the middle of a field and we called this tree, "The Tree of WOA!" Many nights during the summer break, we kids would meet behind that big tree in an old pump house. We'd have to walk a cattle trail, then climb down into this concrete structure. We'd build a fire and hang out, telling horror stories and eating s'mores.

One night, my mom and older sister hatched a plan. They were going to sneak ahead, hide out in the old pump house and scare the crap outta us kids as we climbed down inside. That particular night, it was dark, humid and shadowy. The moon was about half full making it just bright enough to see the trail and the person in front of you. It had rained earlier in the day, so the ground was wet, and some parts of the trail were muddy or had formed puddles. The eleven of us, in single file line, circled that great Tree of Woa. On the other side, partially underground, the pump house beckoned, dark and spooky. Steve and a boy named Jeff, led the

group. Knowing what lay in store for the first few who entered the dwelling, Kelly and I pulled up the rear.

My mom, misjudging her timing, jumped out of that pump house right in front of Jeff and Steve, her arms in the air, fingers like claws, howling at the top of her lungs. In a split second, Steve started swinging fists, all the while trying to get turned around to run. He hit Jeff in the face, knocking his glasses off. In the confusion, those in the middle of our group didn't know which way to run, so some were moving forward and others trying to go backward. Jeff was pushed to the ground, face down in the mud and Steve stepped right on his back, using him like a human bridge.

Kelly and I laughed hysterically. (I guess it's sort of sick for me to get such satisfaction at the expense of others' terror, but it truly was the funniest thing I had ever seen.) My sister came up out of the pump house, and ran after Steve, trying to slow him down. The rest of us kids were slipping and sliding, headed in every direction. The panic was monumental. Finally, my mother started confessing her deed, trying to identify herself to the group of panicked kids. She was apologizing to poor Gail who got so scared, she peed in her pants, and poor Jeff, was still face down with a mouth full of mud, broken glasses lying beside him. We think Steve must have stepped on them in the chaos. All of us were covered with mud and grass. We watched as Steve ran. He ran away so fast, I bet he could have qualified for Olympic track at the pace he was going.

We didn't see Steve for a few days. He had run all the way home, climbed up his trellis, back into his room, and he didn't show up for church that next Sunday. We all called, left messages, we'd just have to wait him out. My mom felt so horrible about her evil, but seriously awesome prank, she vowed never to play with us again, but she could never resist an opportunity to be part of our fun. Steve finally surfaced several days later, pride in check, able to laugh at himself just as we all had laughed at him and with him.

That night went down in our free entertainment book as one of the greatest times and best stories of my youth. From that epic night at the "Tree of Woa," to the scavenger hunt which landed Gail locked inside the women's restroom inside Arby's at closing time, or the not so epic night when we toilet papered our preachers front yard and it rained, our adventures were many. Midnight swimming in any apartment complex pool we could get into, or trips to a

Madison County farm where they had peacocks running loose. Have you ever heard a peacock call? It sounds just like a woman screaming. We'd rile those birds up then take turns telling horror stories. Perhaps stealing marquee letters was not to our better judgement, but we were all good kids deep inside, just a little mischievous.

Through the years, we've all gone our separate ways. Occasionally we speak through face book and reminisce about the good ole days. Our children don't believe we did any of that stuff, which is probably for the best, but we did. I know the impact those people and the crazy things we shared have made on me. The person I became has parts and pieces of those times and those people. I hadn't thought much about what our group might mean to those like Steve, who was so sheltered, he had to sneak out because his parents thought we were a cult, or to Morris, who had a pretty shitty home life, or to Jeff whose parents worked all the time, he was constantly alone. We were family for each other. Thick as thieves.

Bobbi Stephens



Salah Shakir

Papa

Grandpa is what most people call him, but Papa is who he is. Always workin' and hardly ever sitting down, but he didn't mind it. Papa was a propane man down at the Southern States in our little county, which meant that my Papa knew everybody around our parts. Every now and again he would take me to work with him, whether it be standin' in the back helping stack feed on trucks for folks or going to their houses to fix their propane heaters so the cold wouldn't get 'em. I spent every day with my Papa, sometimes even if it was just holdin' the flashlight in just the right spot for him to work on somethin'. Him being a propane man, he always faintly smelled like propane even after a shower and even after his clothes were washed. Papa was always getting' his clothes filthy. On his days off, he would go out and work in our garden, I'd go out and help him, too, of course. Just pullin' the weeds with Papa. The both of us would have to hear it from Nana for trackin' the dirt on her freshly mopped floors, we would just laugh 'cause we both had dirt from our heads plum down to our boots. Papa was strong, definitely stronger than anyone I had ever known his size. He must have loved the sun 'cause when it was out, he never had a shirt on. That's probably why he was so tan and his hands so dry and cracked. Nana would ask "Where is your Papa?" and all we would have to do was point to the doorway and she would know he's outside findin' something to work on. Though papa was always workin', he made sure to be home for supper and most definitely for the UK basketball games on the TV. Papa loved him some Kentucky basketball. Papa liked all sports I guess, he collects cards,

mostly basketball but some baseball. He had hundreds or those cards, he would go through 'em some nights and ask me if I could remember who they were and then read me their stats off the back of the card. Papa had a couple cards he found to be very special to him. "These are my one of one cards," he would say; that meant he had the only one in the world of that card. His laugh would crackle an' sound raspy just like everyone's grandpas would. You know what I'm talkin' about. Papa would tell us funny stories of when he was a boy. Sheeeewww! He put his momma through hell bein' buck wild like he was in his stories. Papa taught me how to play softball in the backyard; he played ball for years all the way up till he was 53 years old. Sometimes they come and watch me play in my college games now, and I always remind him that he is the one to get me hooked on playin' ball. Grandpa is what most people would call him, but MY Papa is what he is.

Kelsey Shepherd



Salah Shakir

Memorial Day

Etched sayings in the rock

Some big some small

Flowers and flags hung proud

To show the love that once was.

Lynsey Doles

The Trunk

Heirloom, family

Holder of memories and secrets.

Rusted, forgotten,

Keyless.

Restore, Revise

Reuse.

New memories and

Secrets.

Inherited by generations.

Rhonda PPool



Salah Shakir

It all changed

Baltimore Drive in Maryland was a dead-end street. This was where I lived when grunge music took hold of an entire generation. Near the Chesapeake Bay, within walking distance in fact, the wind always blew. Even in summer that breeze helped tame some of the sultrier days. I loved that wind. I didn't realize I'd miss it until years later when we moved to Kentucky, far away from the Bay and my childhood. A different wind blows those days back to me now.

My heart nearly jumped from my chest when the alarm blared in the early morning hour. I, absent of grace, fell to my bedroom floor, tangled in hideous pink sheets as I scrambled to turn off the obnoxious buzzing. There was a very clear rule in our house: the night is a time for sleeping. My parents repeatedly told us, "Nothing good ever happens after dark," so nonetheless, that's when we decided it was absolutely the best time to do just about any and everything. Classic psychology: we were told no, so we must. I can't remember a time before that moment when I so blatantly went against my parent's rules.

Both of my older brothers, Josh and Bryan were asleep in their rooms. I hoped they still were after the ridiculous alarm clock fiasco. I was breaking the rule, going out after dark. I was hell-bent to discover if what my parents had said was really the truth. Sweat was trickling down my back just as a faucet with a leak. I had to make my escape unnoticed. First Bryan. He wasn't hard to slip past; I had seen him sleep through fire alarms. This might have had something to do with the multitude of concussions he sustained as a Kent Island High School defensive lineman. Josh, well, he couldn't care less, he was sixteen. All he did care about was his guitar, Eddie Vedder, and our neighbor's sixteen-year-old daughter Melissa.

Dad was another story. Usually by this time of night he was dead to the world, the hazards of being a hard-working father. Sometimes though his acid reflux and sleep apnea would keep him awake, undoubtedly causing me to meet him at the bottom of the stairs. He worked a minimum of two jobs my entire life. He was made of "tougher stuff" accompanied by a work ethic to put younger men to shame. But the real trick to the next thirty minutes was to get dressed and out of the house without waking my mother. After having three kids it seemed she was embedded with a kind of superhero sensory machine in her ear. I swear this woman could hear a pen drop to the floor during a thunderstorm.

Once my highlighted hair was up in an acceptable messy bun, and my platform black and white Skechers were tied up tight, I checked the mirror. My limited makeup left me with the choice of Dr. Pepper or Coca-Cola flavored lip gloss. I slathered the stuff on my lips like I was at the equator, in the midst of summer, about to meet my maker. I was thirteen and didn't know any better at the time. The phrase many young teens lack during that "awkward" stage of life is "less is more"; my blue eyeshadow would attest to that. I was ready. In my mind I was the hottest thing since that actress from Dawson's Creek. I, however, was adamant about wearing a bra, even if it was a halfway pointless measure.

The meeting time we had all agreed to the night before was quickly approaching. The numbers on my watch glowed, the time grew closer, and my tryst into the world unsupervised was about to begin.

We didn't have cell phones then, though they were slowly coming onto the market. We had house phones: ours was a giant off-white hideous plastic thing hung to the wall with a twenty-foot curled cord. There were phones being made, though, from translucent plastic that allowed you to see the inside wiring, furry phones, and even some shaped like hamburgers. I remember the hamburger phones were coveted, but soon you would find the insides easily came loose; when talking on the burger phone after about a week you would be resigned to shaking the thing like a maraca, hoping in vain the wires would reconnect so the person on the other line would hear you again.

I painstakingly headed for the back door. My bike already lay haphazardly against the back of our brick two-story house. I couldn't use the front door since it was under mom and dad's bedroom. If they were suspicious of any noise and looked out their window, they would have seen their youngest child, "up to no good."

Finally, I made it out the backdoor. For a moment everything was still; then the screen door proved it was not my friend tonight and the screeching it was emitting was powerful enough to wake the neighbor's dog. Holding my breath, I listened to see if there was any noise inside my own house. I couldn't hear even an inkling of footsteps, "Yes!" I whispered as I pumped my arms up and down close to my sides. I quickly jumped on my shiny green overpriced mountain bike and high-tailed it out of the backyard. Once I was an acceptable distance away, I slowed. Something was gnawing at my insides, I kept turning to look back at my home. The adrenaline was coursing through me like a river and I half expected to see a small woman clad in a bathrobe burst through the front door. Expecting any minute to be caught, I kept focusing to see

if I heard my dad, if mom was able to rouse him from his deep sleep. I could imagine my father bellowing my name from our front porch steps. He would have been loud enough for the cadets at the Naval Academy to be awakened from their graduation party stupors. The farther away from the house the deeper I felt this teenage victory.

I was flying high; the reality of what had just happened igniting every nerve in my body. I always believed my parents rules were absolute, unbreakable. Never in my life had I been this sneaky or such a rule breaker. I was learning a lesson that night: parents are not all-powerful beings. They can be disobeyed, sometimes they won't even have a clue of the wrongdoing. There are no eyes in the back of their heads. I can choose to not listen, and not follow directions. I was emboldened by the power of God at this point, my head could not have gotten any bigger.

I wove down the asphalt street, in and out of the streetlights, taking my time since there was no one tostop me. I felt like Leonardo DiCaprio in that movie mom dragged us to see. "I'M KING OF THE WORLD!" I bellowed as I stretched my arms out straight on either side of me just as he did on the front end of that fated ship. It truly was a moment when perspective really changed. "I can choose, I don't always have to follow the rules, and there is no one who can stop me." This was the mantra repeating over and over in my head.

Pulling up in front of my best friend's house, the night began to take shape. She didn't have to be quiet or sneak around like I did. Her mother was an ER nurse who usually worked nights. The system in their house was The Honor Code. A code which Beth broke at every turn she could. Elated because of my rush of freedom, I threw down my bike in the grass and ran towards her. Tall, blonde, and well-endowed in the chest, she was every middle school boys' object of desire. "I did it!" spewed from my mouth as I climbed her front porch stairs. We both started our little giggle dance routine, our go- to move any time things went better than expected. Laughing and falling onto the white wooden porch a little winded, we took a minute to catch our breath. A short moment later Beth leaped up on her tan well- shaped legs and grabbed her large sequin hobo bag. Always the life of the party, the popular girl, the center of attention. I was always a little jealous of my best friend. She was naturally what every teenage girl wished they looked like. The outfits she wore always made me feel dumpy and naïve. She wasted no time taking delight and giving resounding encouragement to my descent into teenage trouble.

Walking, we headed for our next destination, Daniel's house. We made it to his front yard, where he and Kyle emerged looking like poster children for an alternative rock group. I could see Daniel give Kyle one of those "Our lucky night, hot damn!" nudges to the ribs. Boys will always be boys. Beth and I were nothing new to their eyes, they saw us all the time. Beth and I have lived down the street from these two clowns for most of our lives. We went to each other's houses, met at the beach, rode the bus together, and were obligated attendants for each other's younger sibling's birthday parties. But tonight. Well, maybe this was the meaning behind my parents' "Nothing good happens at night."

Beth and I couldn't quiet are girly squeals as the boys pushed their bikes in our direction. Both guys rode BMX bikes equipped with pegs on the spokes of the back tires. These were now our chariots of the night. I watched as Beth gracefully jumped on the back of Daniel's bike. Not so subtly she pushed out her chest to ensure her "assets" rested on his slender back. I watched while she smirked, she knew exactly what she was doing. Daniel was displaying the absolute grossest "hell yeah man" smile. Pulling my attention from the teenage hormone fest back to my own "chariot of the night," I was a side show. I couldn't balance to save my life on these little metal pegs.

Awareness dawned on me this wasn't our typical hang out session. All of a sudden these two guys who we'd known most of our lives were an object of wanted attention. I could only imagine the redness on my cheeks as I felt flushed. The atmosphere had changed, and just that fast my thoughts turned to "I hope Kyle doesn't notice." He didn't smirk or make a single remark as he grabbed my hand to place it on his shoulder, helping me gain my footing and some of my dignity back.

The night air had come alive with pending mischief as we rode down the streets. Our neighborhood was quiet, except for Beth's shrill laugh and a random dog's bark. How did a night of hanging with friends turn into a double date? Inside I panicked, realization hitting me that I was in very uncharted waters. I have no idea how we got this far. I was suddenly sweating and nervous. Kyle, who, until fifteen minutes ago, I could easily have kept conversation with, was suddenly a cute dateable guy. I tried to calm myself and regain a bit of intelligence, I thought, "What do I do? What do I say? … Okay, it's just Kyle, the same boy who brought your food tray to the lunch table today!"

As I inwardly fought with myself, Beth and Daniel had already dismounted from his bike. Kyle was standing next to me with a shy grin smeared on his beautiful face

(BEAUTIFUL!? I squeak inwardly). I took his outstretched hand to help me to standing position from those awful metal death pegs.

The neighborhood park was empty at this time of night, no little kids running and screaming in circles. None of the swings were making their metal on metal noise from overuse. There was a slight breeze on the air coming from the bay and still I stood with my hand in Kyle's. My brain was like a computer with a virus, one just bad enough to make it painfully slow, but still functional. Finally, I ripped my hand back from his, more reaction then thought.

Taking a deep breath, I followed him, hearing his soft chuckle as he went, only a few steps ahead of me. We met up with Daniel and Beth at the worn-out picnic table. This table had every initial from every relationship that visited this bayside park for the past five years. It was almost a work of art, the graffiti you can see on city walls, like Baltimore. For some reason the old weathered table sticks out the most for me. The four of us were sitting, drinking something vile and alcoholic Beth had pulled out from that oversized bag, and talking. However, the dynamics of my entire world had changed. The boys sitting across from me were no longer "just" friends. They were cute boys, one of whom had held my hand. My blonde friend was the alcohol provider and troublemaker my mom always claimed she was. I no longer was a rule- abiding citizen in my parents' home. I was an instigator, a rule breaker, a teenager. The phrase my parents should have said is that "for kids nothing good happens after dark." For myself, I grew-up just a little more than the day before.

Laura Minton

Remembering My Husband

In the circle of your arms,
I was safe and sound.
Your hard-working hands kept me from harm,
Tightening the ties with which we're bound.

I cried when the time came for our farewell.
The days were dark and never ending.
Our children kept me from going downhill.
They stood by me while I was mending.

Looking back on the light from your smile
Represents all that we had together.
Especially the day I walked down the aisle,
Knowing your love was what I treasured.

I've had to learn how to survive.
It will a long, long time before I thrive.

Rhonda PPool



Hannah Waroway

Grandson in His Image

His best friend is three feet tall.

The connection between them is invisible, but strong as steel.

No flourishes or expendable words are needed.

The little one follows footprint by footprint,

The same as a duckling following its mom into the pond.

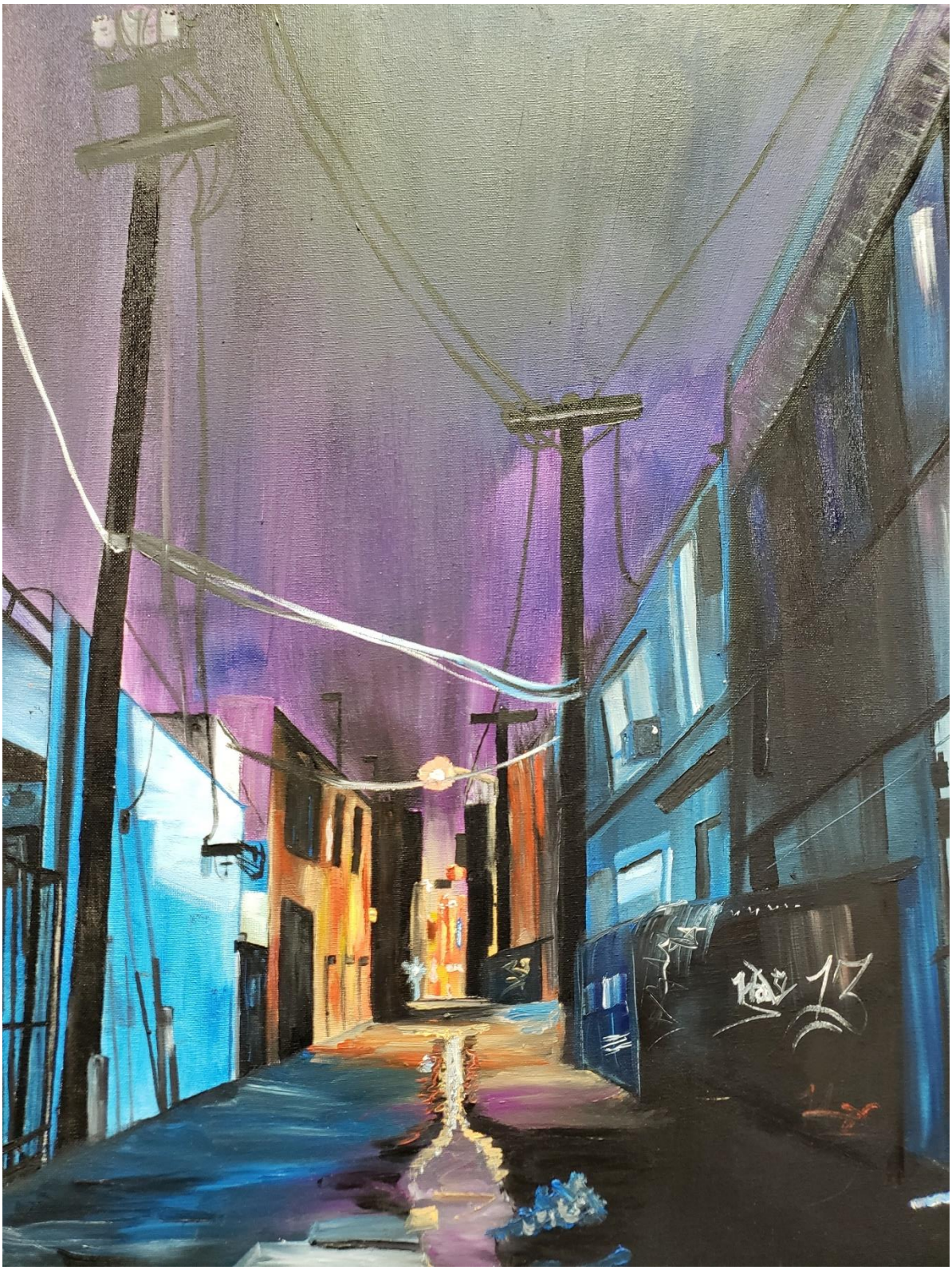
Rain or sun, work or play. One is always following the other.

The older of the two might leave this world soon, but who really knows.

I know that if one departs, a piece of the other's heart will follow.

Laura Minton





Hala Ayyash

Closer

"To the moon and back"

but it must be

that I never noticed the moon crumble

and fall

down

down

and crash into the blue abyss

whose hands ground the rock into sand

that traveled to the sole of my shoes.

Alexandra Flynt



Hala Ayyash

Not Alone

To not be alone, you seek a mate.
The process begins with the very first date.
For Life is intended to be shared.
You find you have reason to celebrate.

If you take your time and stay prepared,
It keeps you both from being scared.
If all goes well, marriage will follow.
The love you have has been declared.

You'll realize that your life's not shallow.
It helps to have a great bedfellow.
Children will come and make you complete.
Honesty sweetens pills bitter to swallow.

When they arrive, hearts skip a beat.
It makes you desire to do a repeat.
Life moves fast, it needs to slow down!
There are times when you really need a retreat.

You blink your eyes and your children are grown,
You find you two are again on your own.
The fear that someday your mate will be gone
Lies heavy on your heart, bringing your spirit down.

No one wants to have to move on.

Whoever's left must carry on.
You both know one will be left behind,
Which means that one will be all alone.

Your lives for so long have been aligned,
It is now revealed you are unassigned.
You feel that life has been unkind.
Your constant light has ceased to shine.

Rhonda PPool



Hannah Waroway

Kitten Season

Spring and summer have always been my favorite seasons. Even long before I truly knew what seasons were, I had a fondness of the two. Instead of common reasons, such as the greenery or the warmth being the reasons for my love of these two seasons, my reason was simpler. These were the seasons when kittens were born.

As I grew older, I came to learn that kittens were born throughout all seasons, but as a child I had only seen kittens being born during the spring and summer months. Rarely did I see kittens in late fall and I never saw kittens in the harsh winter.

My favorite spring and summer was almost 14 years ago. I was young, seven, soon to be eight when the fall rolled around. I trailed one of my momma cats around our yard for days because I knew she was about to have her babies. I was extremely excited because it had been a couple of years since we've had a cat survive our busy road long enough to drop a litter.

Days turned into weeks and the mama cat still wouldn't pop the babies out. My parents would call for me to leave her alone, telling me she would be more apt to have them if I would just give her some privacy. It seemed the next day that mama cat gave birth to her kittens and it was then I was introduced to who would become my best friend for the years to follow.

Sadly, the mama cat was unable to produce enough milk for all her kittens, and the two kittens who survived the first couple weeks on her limited supply had to have their milk supplemented with bottled kitten milk, which was extremely expensive. Then almost as soon as we began supplementing, the momma cat was hit by a car and killed. My parents were quick to go out and buy a supply of milk that would hopefully feed the kittens until they were old enough to be weaned. My parents would let me feed the two kittens three times a day, and they covered the other times. Each day they would remind me that the babies weren't very strong and there was a strong chance they would not survive past a few weeks.

However, a few weeks quickly passed, and the two kittens were growing strong and healthy. I remember looking at the two young babies who seemed to be opposites of each other. Both were females, one was a light gray stripped tabby and the other was a dark gray and black stripped tabby. For the next five weeks my parents and I continued to bottle feed the kittens. Then as they turned eight weeks, they were almost fully weaned.

At this point my dad was quick to stake claim on the darker kitten because he thought she was beautiful, and he moved her inside. He decided the lighter one could be left as an outside kitty since we had a rule that only one cat could be an indoor cat. I didn't

mind his taking the darker one; she was sweet, but she wasn't my favorite. I wanted the lighter gray one.

As spring turned to summer, I spent more time outside with the young kitten and slowly started sneaking her inside at night. She quickly caught on to using the litter box and my mother would look the other way when I would drag her in through my window. She quickly became my baby and I named her Sweetiepie.

Sweetiepie grew quickly over that summer. She started off as a small fluff-ball with piercing green eyes and ended the summer as a fierce mouser with thousands of shades of gray covering her body in stripes. She was my companion and would follow me everywhere. Often, I would simply sit outside and pet her, reminding her that she was my baby and that I loved her. She would purr and rub her body against my leg as if to say she also loved me.

Almost fourteen years have passed and my Sweetiepie is still my sweet baby. The years have been rough on her and now her tail is broken, she's missing one of her canines, and she has arthritis in her back. However, even though her sharp eyes have dulled, and her body is not as strong as it once was, she's still my best friend.

Now as I type this, she lies beside me and purrs, reminding me that even after all these years she still loves me as much as I love her. There will come a day when she will pass on from this life; and although it breaks my heart to think she will not live my entire life, I'm blessed to be in her entire life.

I will always love spring and summer because these were the months that gave me Seweetiepie.

Josette Isaacs



Hannah Waroway

Where the Water Goes

Walking by the creek behind my house
The stream that it is flows swift
But not quite as quick as others may go.
It is not clear water. Instead a murky brown
And as it may seem is not quite clean.
During the night you hear toads croak
Near the bend leading into the bamboo forest.
The creek connects to the river,
The river behind my house.
It, too, is the same, color and flow,
And it is what it is. That's where the water goes.

Emme Warren



Laura Minton

Faith or Flee

You think everything is going the way it should.

The cards are playing out and there's no reason to fold.

Life is manageable.

You're making it through every step, knowing that God is listening to your heart.

Then, the world turns around and God gives you exactly what you didn't pray for.

"Why? I was running through fire and instead of water you poured on gas? Do I choose to have faith, or do I run?"

"Agency and accountability."

"Which I don't understand. How do I know which way to go?"

"Hear me. Listen with your heart. You make the choice and I will follow you, as I have always done. Do you trust me?"

Ryleigh Bonk



Hannah Waroway

Shadow

As I close my eyes

A shadow appears

His hair is a curly mess

Covered in paint

All over his face and hands

Ripped skinny jeans and a leather jack

Sitting across an easel with a paintbrush in his hands

We make eye contact

Greeting each other with a smile

We have already connected before

Many times before in fact

Every time I sit across my easel

I reflect

My shadow has a Halo

The light appears with each brushstroke

Whispering revelations in my ear

Thoughts and Ideas, I can see clear

Asking me to come back to the canvas more often

But I explain that life has other obligations

He becomes sad and confused

Because painting is what I am supposed to do

We are still trying to find a healthy balance

A design that complies with the divine

Convincing me that this is what I should do

All the time.

Hala Ayyash



Salah Shakir

Sonnet

Oh, that damned ever-fixed mark,

That's sent to drive me mad and hurt my heart.

It brings to light the truth with vivid spark:

Equality and love exist apart.

I know not how winds blow or earth does spin.

The future lays its paths, each one's life test.

What hand to grab and hold throughout the end?

Which demons to endure in this tempest?

Each day brings cataclysmic revelation:

The faith of many or loyalty of few.

Then breach through fog and cloud the rising sun.

Is this my sign, the answer to my cue?

Have faith in self, to pass will come the rest.

God holds the meaning and the path is set.

Laura Minton

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