

# The Cupola

Granby High School's Literary Arts Journal Volume 32

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Granby High School

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Cover Page: Equitable by Louis Septier

Inside Cover Art: Over my Head by Ryleigh Byrd

Back Inside Cover Art: Night Ride by Shay Cawley

#### **Featured Artists**:

Shay Cawley and Haley Stoker

# Winner of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Granby High Poetry Contest

#### **Distant Lovers**

Najae Dunn

SHE loves her but,

SHE loves him

and

HE loves him

but,

HE doesn't know

that HE loves him too

and

SHE knows

SHE loves her

but SHE

doesn't

love her

so,

they all love

from a distance . . .

# What Her Skin Brings

Dream Scott-Wimbish

Her skin brought jealousy Everywhere she went They envied her Because the sun kissed her more He kissed her softly and never burned Her hair brought curious hands Admirers and questions The soul in her voice Brought fans and tears But the melanin in her skin Also brought judgement and Pain The same skin as her father The skin they shared that brought him Bullets The same hair that her mother had That brought shame.

#### Roanoke

Caitlin McKay

I told myself I didn't like Roanoke

but I didn't see it like this:

sugar coated in dew drops and iced with rain clouds,

chilled and thrilled for the wait of winter,

stacked with rocks and packed with cars.

There are others, like me
here to see its beauty,
to feel icy rain and wish for more layers,
to wish for rain to turn to snowflakes,
floating and coating each and every hill
like pure white confetti.

The leaves are already gone
but I wish I was here to witness the transformation of them.
Like a traffic light from yellow to red
they changed, sudden but awaited,
from bright to flight
and now they are gone.

Soon, the trees will be dusted with sugar instead.

I told myself I didn't like Roanoke,

but I didn't see it like this,

soaked in joys

of a rain cloud's dance

with a slight miss

of a snowflake's kiss.



#### **Table Nine Girl**

Adriana Roa

To the boy at table three, I saw you but you didn't see me. Ironic, isn't it? I'm hard to miss, but you, not you; you seem flawless. The way your eyes squint when you're lost, the book you're reading seems to have crossed a change in the plot - must be good. And from the way you smiled, I understood. Your laugh, it echoed, and the way you sounded - two drums being pounded. It filled me with joy to see your reaction. Until something changed: a new found satisfaction. You closed your book, and your eyes, took a deep breath and to my surprise, opened them and looked at me, the smile on your face confusing to see. You stood up, walked over and sat down. You laughed as I looked around. You said you saw me just sitting there, caught me staring but didn't care. I asked you your name and told you mine, "Happy to meet the girl at table nine."





The Eyes of Philly, Haley Stoker



### The Lies to My Body

Desmond Croom

Lights make (dark) silhouettes play games like toys I never had growing up, always being fed lies, when all I wanted a taste of was the truth.

Even books get tired of getting read when everyone knows your story, but not the pain of opening.

Parents build children like castles, just to tear them down, left shattered on the ground.

We built ourselves back up to be a fortress of solitude because even mats get tired of being stepped on.

Like (blood red)
pens being used to write stories that are not
their own. We are all trash surfacing on the same
level; trash to the sewer listening to the radios, words
to numb my pain like a therapist.

I listen to these songs' words written on the wall. I try to understand what I've lost and what I've gained, but I gain nothing from minds like prison, viewing my house like jail.

Every church I talk to says I'm going to hell, for the way my emotions feel, so they kill other minds yet, heaven and hell making bets on which way my mind will split.

Waged wars weigh heavily on my chest like my little brother, when we were poor, living on store corners. When he needed a place to rest I'd let him place his head on my chest.

I can recall how he'd take each breath so cold I could see it. I remember telling him about our family tree and how we were the world, our bodies stretched to save every poor baby, casting out generosity like that of those who live poor but still help others in poverty.

This world and my body, every experience I know, white hairs grow on my head like light rays shine on dark days.

#### **Verdant Romance**

Lily Berz

Lend me your branches, that I may spend upon them a sultry summer day

Enfold me in broad leaves Allow secretive breaths to divulge the heartbeat of the forest

A crisper wind makes itself known sucking on my hair peeling my fingers from your bark

Grasping at your flailing leaves faltering in swirling eddies, you favor a coat of copper

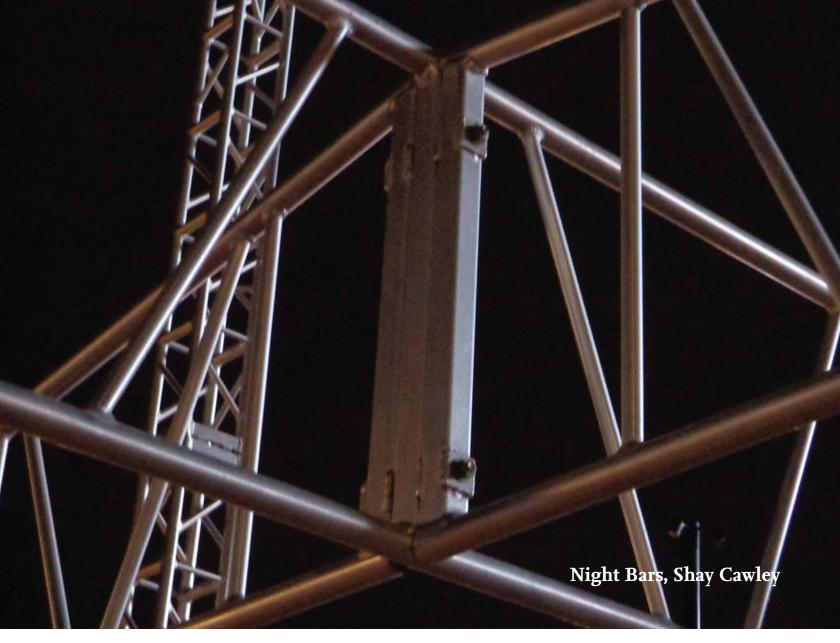
I plead your presence to remain: unfeigned tears slip away

I watch you bare your trunk for greedy mouths of maggots

And, feeling selfish, curl upon my own flesh like a burning leaf

You await the touch of spring patiently earnestly

A caterpillar creeps up your sullen limbs its persistent pace instilling hope



### Construction

Lauren Kelly

Ι

am only

leaving you because

I can't handle anymore

how I love your love

when your love isn't killing me.

Inside: twist, turn, roundabout, and back again.

Passing through my heart as if it were

a tunnel, opening itself up, waiting for your arrival.

I regret to inform you that this area is under construction.



### Divorce

Emily Chen

I Separ I ation I by parallel lines

Knowing we're 2 not alike said you were going to stay
but you ended all by leaving first

**Untitled** *Bobbiayn Martin* 

I feel myself slipping away from the natural me.

No matter how hard I try, my fingers always let it go.

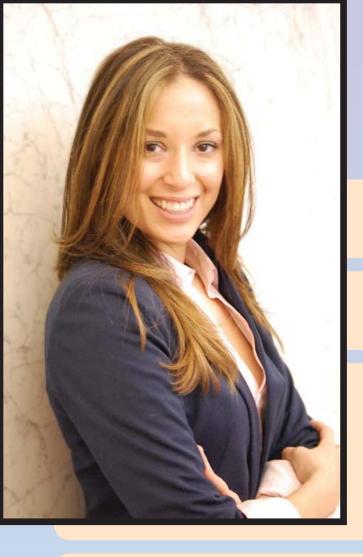
It's like when you open a puzzle but get bored of it.

You leave the box open and the puzzle out,
and watch as the pieces go missing.

You completely give up on it.

Because you know that without those pieces,
the puzzle will never be as beautiful as you want it to be.

It will never be complete, only
replaced.



# A Conversation with Amanda Gomez

by Gabriela Igloria

One of my favorite poets is Natalie Diaz, and I've actually known her for a while because she's a family friend. Okay, I'm a little jealous.

Haha, yeah, she lent me a chocolate fountain for my birthday party when I was in kindergarten. Are you serious?

Yeah! Anyway, before she was writing poetry, she was a professional basketball player. What about you? What did you do before you were writing poetry? I actually did play basketball—but I was nowhere as good as Natalie. I just played in high school...I played almost every sport...like, softball, basketball, volleyball.

**Did you ever consider writing a genre other than poetry?** I think I tried, but it always ended up as a poem... I think I'll *try*, I'll keep trying—but if it's just poetry, that's fine too.

**So how hard do you think someone should work at a poem?** Oh man, that's a really good question...I think, sometimes...you have to, like, be brave enough and also perseverant enough for the poem. I think even if a poem isn't about yourself, it's still so self-embodied that some part of you comes out; and if you're not willing to go to those places, then it's never gonna be finished—but then...it might not necessarily go to the place it needs to go for years.

Right, I mean, sometimes you just have to let the poem sit there and not touch it. Yeah. Marilou Awiakta has a poem called "Women Die Like Trees," and I was reading this essay on her, and she took seven years to write that poem...I just think someone has to be perseverant enough to go the distance the poem requires but also brave enough to go that distance emotionally.

What advice did you find most useful when learning to write poetry? It was last year at AWP (Association of Writers & Writing Programs conference). I went to this panel on "crappy poems," and it was poets talking about the first poems they wrote. And I was just curious, like I wanna know what these bigshots—Natalie Diaz was supposed to be on that panel—think. Aimee Nezhukumatathil was on that panel, and one thing she said was, "I stop writing when I stop surprising myself." And I thought, "Oh my God, that's what it is." ...And I just liked that piece

of advice because I think it's true, the idea that you write...to find yourself. And language: the whole point of poetry is to discover the nuances of language; to reimagine the potential of language and surprise the reader, whether it's breathing fresh air into a cliché, or something...

Tell me a bit about what inspires your writing. Probably my own life...and heritage, I guess, because since I did grow up here, I felt like I didn't have access to my heritage. And then I didn't have a close relationship with my mom, so the idea of a mother-daughter relationship always intrigues me... I'm Puerto Rican. I write about Puerto Rico, but also I didn't grow up there, so there's this fear of, like, "is it okay for me to have a voice? Am I taking away someone's voice?" I feel like I'm always navigating those fears, which, I think, is good... because I'm trying to find myself where I fit in, I see other people doing the same thing. It's cool to see we're all learning it together...

What you said about trying to connect to your heritage while growing up here makes me wonder, how difficult would you say it is for you to write about your heritage? Because when I'm writing about the Philippines, I find it very hard because I didn't grow up there either. Yeah, because you don't wanna take away someone else's voice. You don't wanna take up space that doesn't belong to you, but then at the same time, I do think that space belongs to us...

You don't want to water down your own identity. Yeah, that's a great way to put that. That idea that we're kids of parents who came here—how do we work through that? ...I think that we're writing to find our parents there and to see our own history, you know, to write our own history and to see it through our families.

It's always interesting to see how our personal experiences shape our work, which is why I like hearing you read your poems. I tend to feel like the connection to your words and to you is more intense when you read aloud versus when the words are simply on the page. How would you describe your relationship between you and your poetic voice? I used to hate reading tremendously because it feels like I have to be confident, and sometimes I'm still not confident... But over the years of reading, it's kind of like, this is my story, and I am allowed to tell it. So I feel like over the years my poetic voice has changed...it's feeling like I'm seeing it new sometimes by reading it. Before, I'm just in the poem and I have to get it right, but then I also see through the poem and live in it with everyone else, and that's a different feeling.

I still hate getting in front of an audience and reading, but at the same time I like it because I feel like there I have more control over what's being said and how things are being interpreted. Yes! That's such a good point because you get to have this felt experience you're sharing with everyone, and you get to perceive how everyone else is perceiving it, and that's a weirdly comforting experience... When you see people engage with you, you can actually feel the energy in the room. And if it doesn't go well, you go back to the poem.

How do you find a balance between what you write for yourself versus what you write for an audience? There are some [poems] that are too personal and I'll never share them. There are some that I won't even take to workshop... And then there are others that need an outside voice or guidance because I'm just struggling with it... Sometimes I just want to get the audience out of my head because I want to write a poem for me, but at the same time I want them to understand it but also, do I really? Am I explaining the poem to the audience or reading it to them? I worry that sometimes I'm explaining too much, and it's getting in the way of the real poem. So sometimes I need the audience, but sometimes I also can't get rid of them...

As a minority poet it's sort of hard to separate yourself from stereotypes when sometimes you fit the stereotype. Yeah, sometimes it's like, I don't want to write a stereotype of myself, but sometimes I am the stereotype. Like yeah, "plantains and mangoes," but I don't always wanna write about plantains and mangoes because I feel like that automatically says, "Oh, I'm 'other." ... Sometimes I wonder, are they...really choosing my poems because my work is good or because they need this kind of voice? Like, "here's a voice that's definitively other, see how inclusive we are!"

**That's so relatable.** I really struggle with that... I feel like writers already struggle with imposter syndrome, so when you're a minority it's doubly imposter syndrome...

What would you say your role is as a woman poet? Speaking voice to the places we come from, which is so many places.

At the same time, I wonder if we have to take on this role. That's true. Why can't I just be a poet? Why do I have to be a female poet—or a Latina poet? But it's like something I also delight in... I feel like I'm never answering a question about poetry, I'm only asking more, because I like to know where things go, but I'm always reminded to be okay with not knowing. I find that nice and unsettling at the same time.

Right. I feel like once you start to write a poem, that poem's journey is just never-ending. Yes. Could you tell me a bit about your poem "Do You Ever Write Translations?" Yeah, so I was at this reading and someone asked the author, "Do you write translations?" and...it's infuriating because, like, why don't we ask that to white poets? I mean, there's a lot of my friends who speak Spanish better than I do, which is a little embarrassing, but like, why do they never get asked that? ... So I just finished reading Kaveh Akbar's *Calling A Wolf A Wolf*, and a lot of his poems have questions as titles, and I was like, "I'm gonna take what that guy said and write about it..."

#### Do You Ever Write Translations?

Amanda Gomez

My mouth is a well where my shadow goes to drown.

I wish it weren't so suicidal. I tell it to be patient. Isn't the present

always just a little unsatisfying? When I think about all the men

I've kissed, I also think about the ones I wish I could. Listen, I am in love

with desire. Water overflows, claiming the riverbanks for itself. Mostly, I am in love

with excess, wanting a bed made from touch. I know because I've tried before.

Listen: this isn't a poem about love as you would have it. This is about holiness, a tiny

pebble placed underneath the tongue. A prayer can be small. A mouth can be kept from speaking.

Amanda Gomez is an MFA candidate at Old Dominion University. Her work has been published by Eunoia Review, Ekphrastic Review, Manchester Review, Expound Magazine, San Pedro River Review, Avalon Literary Review, and by The Academy of American Poets on Poets.org. Gomez also teaches at the Muse Writers Center. When she isn't writing, she loves reading, playing music, and playing with her cat.



### A Letter from My Ex

Adira Hewitt

I mean, what do you know, you're just a little girl. Your pink dress twirls, what say you, girl?

> Take a step back, you don't know what's on. This is my world, and you, are just, a girl.

> Be careful what you say sweetheart, I'll whirl your thoughts into my dream girl.

No no no not like that, baby doll You curl to my will, little girl.

Tears are meant for the weak Sweetie pie, My pearl won't shatter, will she, girl?

> Come on princess, lift the Skye-Swirl the clouds for me babygirl.

### WagonManRain

Lily Berz

Two wheels turning through muddy, tortured water Red paint crunches underneath his cramped feet plastered to the sloshing wagonbed

The frantic crackling tarp fights a warm monsoon's roar it's in his ear in his ear it's ear

Water everything is water sodden hair plastered to creased brow lids scrunched against the deluge

There is no breath for man or cart but curious forms idle in sheltering doorways squinting stony mouths with crossed arms

### Short Forms: Haiku, Hay(na)ku, Honku, Snowball, Tanka

You live with teenagers.
They hate that the dark comes early.
If we steal their light and time,
what else will we steal –
the shortened days?

– Kayla Barnes

Nonchalantly I can imagine the distance I meant to follow. And then it was.

- Adira Hewitt

The door had time:
"I'll call sound
Like please!"
End the matter with

She.

Louis Brockett

All of a sudden Hell will believe in the Pope.

– Ahmani Rashaad

A vase smashes on the ground. Ashes fall out of it – a lonely girl crying on the floor.

– Erin Hudgins

Sideswept memories bring heartache and despair.

Despair and heartache bring memories sideswept.

– Adira Hewitt

Death greets her with open bones – The moon swallows them whole.

– Alexis Henson

An overcast day, sky covered with clouds but not a raindrop.

– Cheyenne Combs

I begin my life, the travesties behind me – petals fall over us.

– Jae S.

As I walk home a seed from a dandelion floats in the air.

Melady Riddick

New York – the city that never sleeps. But I'm so tired, so lonely.

- Mae Red

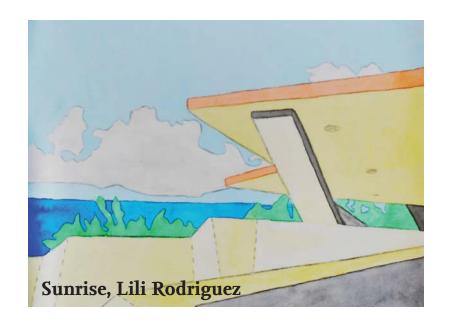
I really need you to love.

I miss you. Why'd you leave?

Can you see how I hurt? – Erin Hudgins

Saturday Night Fever: paint cans, leather shoes, dancing and Tarantino – beauty.

Jae S.







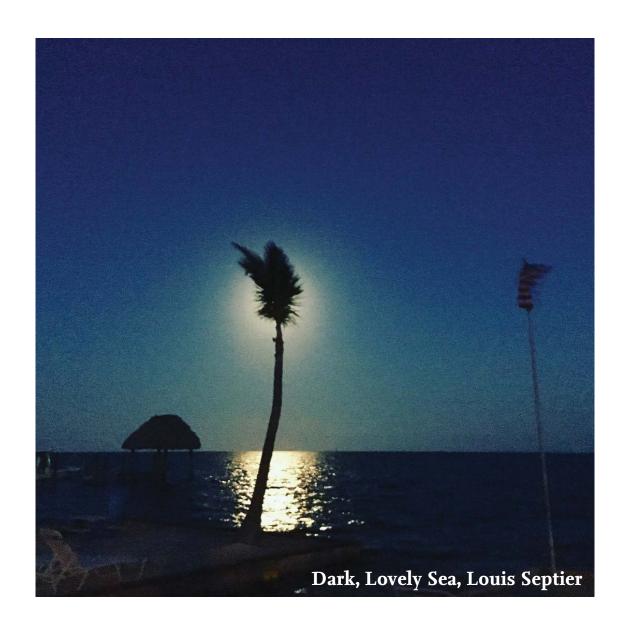
#### America the Dream

Desmond Croom

I am American, but what does that mean in a world where blurry eyes leak the news and bloodied wrists bleed the blues I used to get heated in elementary watching history be repeated sugar coating America's history like glazed donuts My brain functions weirdly that moment I hear the "black lives matter" thinking back to when black lives didn't matter showing up to secret conventions wearing clothes torn and tattered, waiting for the day they'd get caught by "Massa" In a slave's mind thinking, I need to make it to the North faster because walking with a busted knee, from carrying something heavy makes you move slow as molasses, but you'll never see, Then to make it, hoping for equality, living in poverty, taking their illiteracy for incompetency, never being taught how to read or write, because everybody saw either black or white Wanting protection from harassment, we have those who put on blue and bullet proof vests just to put bullets in my friend's chest Without a second to rest, \*bang\* \*bang\*

two bullets hit a boy,
who used to play with toys then goes to sleep,
with thoughts of America the dream
All these lines like oceans and
we still can't see,
the problem that's right here in our eyes
but that's right were all born blind,
never seeing the actuality of what WE PERCIEVE TO BE REALITY
We're all asleep in need to be woke
but till the day someone shakes the ground beneath your feet that
quivers you back from your sleep stay and dream

#### America the dream



### I, am not strong.

Louis Brockett

I hate I hate I hate I

Hate the repetition and I can't

And I can't

And I can't I can't I can't I can't

Repeat it enough as I stutter and stutter and stutter

More and more and more more

I trip over my words when my thoughts come to end and continuously I fall

Fall

Fall

Stalling stalling my time for the next action can't come to mind

I'm freaking out man I don't know what to do

I'm freaking out man I don't know what to do

I'm freaking out man I don't know what to do

I'm freaking out man I don't know what to do

So I continue saying the same things continuing the same things doing the same things even if I don't want the same I keep doing the same over and over the same thing over and over the same thing over

and repeating

repeating

repeating

I don't know what comes next all I know is to keep repeating repeating repeating these words

They echo and with each bounce back bouncing back and forth and back and back and forth

With every echo with every single echo it shows how weak

I am how anxious I am how nervous I am

and

All I know is that I hate repetition I hate repetition I hate repetition I hate repetition I hate this I'm lying to myself to my my my my my my friends to myself to the people I love just can't express exactly what I want to say I just want to I don't know what I want what I want what I want what I want

I hate I hate I hate I Hate repetition and I can't and I can't



## Cuál es el significado?

Adriana Roa

Stand your high ground.

Carry your business,

close to

home is where the kitchen is.

The lung of the home. Explore all

the stops. Think on your hands down.

Get a grip on

the show. Hanging by your tongue, the words,

like blood, sweat, and

breathe, eat, sleep

tears.





#### Abecedarian

Rachel Kingry

Americans are insane.

Bombs are around every corner.

Care for your children.

**D**istance yourself from strangers.

Everyone is your enemy.

Find a safe place.

**G**o underground.

Hide somewhere abandoned.

Invest in weaponry.

Join the militia.

**K**eep to yourself.

Listen for gunshots.

Move quickly.

No one can be trusted.

Officers have switched sides.

People are monsters.

Question everything.

Resist the government.

**S**tand strong.

Trust your instincts.

Use your resources.

Vicious people are coming.

We NEED help.

Xenophobes are all around.

Your life is in danger.

Zoos are what we live in.



### Interrupted

Maddy McCormick

There is this theory I have that began as a thought but—one moment mom—it may be a long shot

see what I think is—GET OUT OF MY ROOM—that people ought to—Fine, you can borrow my shoes!

It's very important, though, to keep in mind somehow no matter the outcome I—Yes! I'm going to bed now

So let me tell you it now—
My light is turned off!—
So, I'll start by saying...
Oh shoot, I forgot.

## Natural Warfare

Maddy McCormick

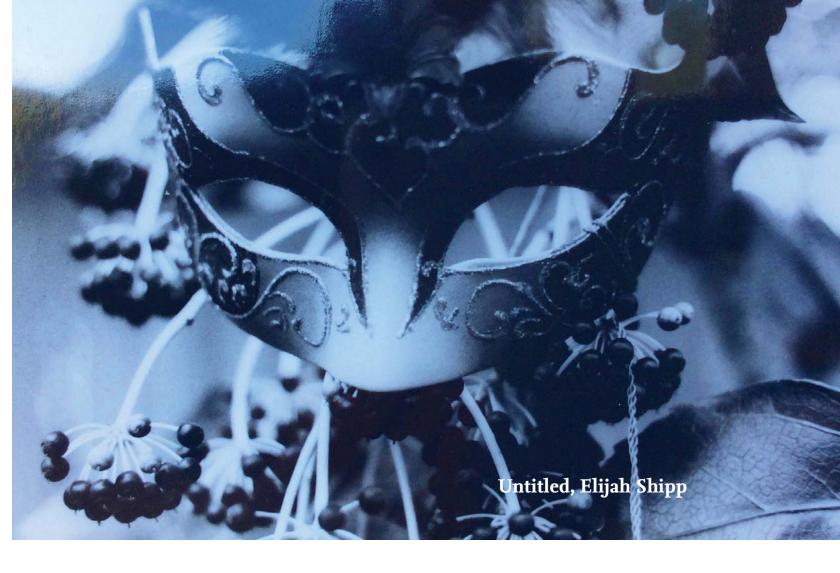
Can you believe the autumn breeze is born from summer's heat? The blistering sun scorches the Earth, without which, we could not see. Day is tempered by an insatiable dark then fought by the disgruntled moon. The foliage in the field starves until water begins its vicious barrage and an unsuspecting worm, sneaking slowly, wriggles its last inch down the gullet of an indifferent sparrow.

### I Wear Death – A Golden Shovel

- 'After 'I Have A Rendezvous With Death' by Alan Seeger

#### Adira Hewitt

What am I? What dreams do I have with one mistaken hope, a forgotten rendezvous. Where am I with you? I wear death, but you? You at the sun. So bright, some magical force shining disputed. My heart? I gotta barricade when you walk by when the petals burst 'cause it's Spring and my heart bursts cause here he comes. I gotta backpedal back across the page with the pen cause I dunno what to say. Rustling my thoughts under your shade. Running across the lawn and watching the leaves fall like apple-blossoms. And my mind you fill does he love me does he love me not, the petals fall, and I've never been one for love but the air it's so bright and I the dreams *I* have? Plenty of hope for us. A picnic rendezvous-A beautiful starry night with You. Maybe, just maybe. I won't wear death.



## The Nature of Love

Mason Lubkeman

Ι

The ocean tonight, shines like no other ocean, and it is calm, the ocean, but I am drowning, sinking, trying to stay on the surface, but I am alone. She left me. To the bottom I go, to lie till the end of time.

II

Dark forest in the night, she lies here, wasting away - alone. She has nothing to fear: I will come to her. Not only will my soul be fixed, but I will be human.

## You Don't Decide

Faithe French

Storms don't last forever Fall seven times, And get up eight, a river. Cry a bridge. Build Get over I will stand with a coffee in one hand, And confidence in the other. Your only limit is you I'm always wearing my loud crown, be louder, Yours cannot Because my loud can scream over the silence My affirmation is the breath that I breathe My goal is to be better than I was yesterday I decide who I am, Not you, Not them, Not society, Me



## The Birth of a Corrupt Nation (pt.3)

Nick Fesseden

This is sad man,

This is sad, we have to justify ourselves that we're not racist

Claimin' our friends to prove that our popularity spot's taken

Now do you live a hard life, or a caught relation?

So every kid claims that the cops chase 'em

The birth of a stereo was typed in prejudice

In 1776 with the agenda twist

Then they had about 5 convinced

Livin' off of the idea of characteristics that were convicted

They rather their own interest, rather than listen

To both sides of the same story

The third side is the "truth"

Now I'm not saying that's what's been aligned with the youth

But it's not right, 5 year olds have to watch everything that they do

This is not the life we would choose

Take it for this

If fairy tales exist

In every children's book written

Then why would it not be at the beginning of our existence

Eve bit the fruit, deceived Adam in the distance

So god cursed the land, now we live for a brand,

Live for the loot, live for the check

Livin' like this has our morality wrecked

To own actualization, and praise god's righteousness

Every secular idea is a creature in our mind spineless

Live half our life from mainstream culture hyped it

Then the other half, dead or a slave blinded

We believe we have a brain, use it

We believe god exists, prove it

We curse and lie, say we love god how stupid

How can you represent his kingdom when you act foolish?

If I'm your friend, I need you to do

As I command and even as I don't

Instead you dwell with my enemies

Start to discredit me

Never communicate, it's like you befriended me

So if I have a gift that you want

That's collectively worth more than every gift that you bought

After I give you chance after chance and you sit and you're caught

By the devil's mind games, he's hidden behind shades

And turnin' the lights grey, to black

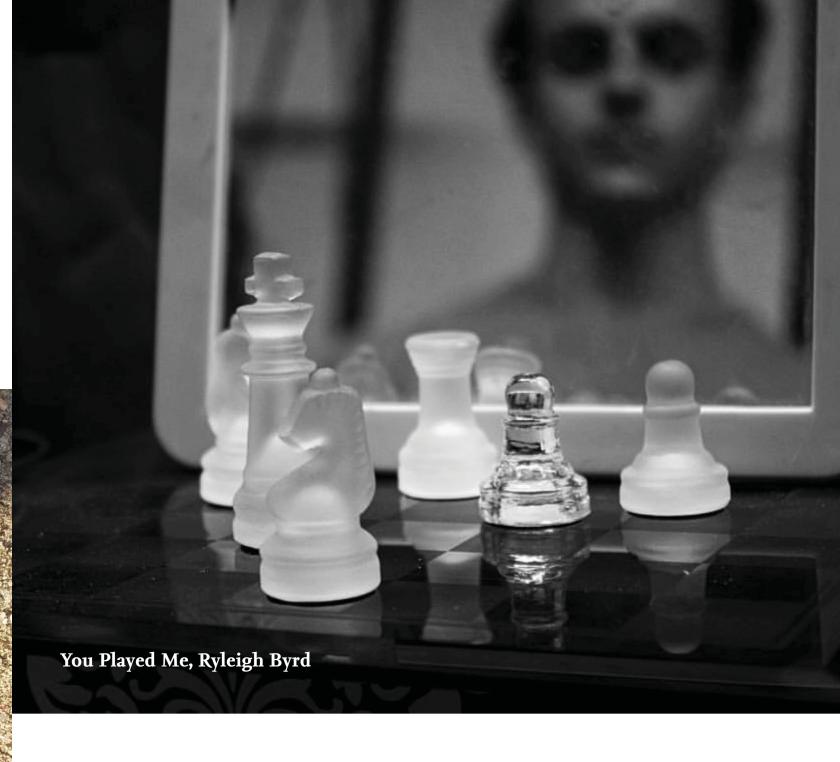
What should I do about that, just leave it at that?

Then give you my all when you don't deserve none of that

Please tell me

7 bars later you're just gonna pull that strap
I challenge your minds, give it a dime
For every dollar as a sacrifice
Sit and dwell for about 5 minutes
Make up your mind and tell me if the high is different
Masonry is the building of man not a spiritual gain in it
And spiritual gain isn't
Found in the earth, it's devoured by curses
Actions high in the flesh, is the human flesh's favorite
Any ideas stand against it, of course we will hate it
Its spiritual warfare and we need god for us to change it
We're intoxicated by lust, intoxicated by drugs
We buy into these acts rather than face it
Proving my point that we were born in a corrupt nation





# **Grandfather Says**

Lily Berz

It's easy to play soldier in the grassy yard wooden mimicry echoing between brick apartments naïve laughter cracks open the earth's ancient grassy maw to reveal rotten eyes blinking away flies suffocating crying wounds bleeding and re-bleeding until the ageless pantomime finds merciful closure a sigh escapes parted lips.

## How Heartfelt

Tessamay Ramsvig

Tell me a story about a boy and a girl.

Who shared the sky, the earth, hell, and even the whole world.

Tell me a story where the boy died, cause his heart couldn't take what she said to him one night.

Tell me a story where she couldn't look up at the sky, tell me the only thing she could see was his eyes.

Tell me a story where the boy had no brain, only a heart to lead him the way.

Now tell me a story about how she can't sleep, not because of her thoughts, for there aren't any left.

But because of the sound of two beating hearts.





Do not fear drowning.

Instead, beware the drowned whose grudges pull you down.

- Emily Chen

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### **Policy**

The Cupola features the writing, art, and photography of Granby High School students. The Cupola staff accepts original submissions; final selections are based on individual merit. Works to be considered must be submitted by the designated deadline, which will be either Samuel Beckett's or William Shakespeare's birthday. Submissions are accepted through English classes and art classes, via email at eedowe@nps.k12.va.us, or may be given to Cupola staff members. The staff reserves the right to edit submissions, including art and photography, when necessary. After publication, rights revert to the author/artist.

### **Colophon**

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