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The Cupola

Granby High School's Literary Arts Journal

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Granby High School

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Featured Artist: Elora Grochowski

3 Years Hesitation

Oliver Hewitt

I always was in awe of how he
shined. How he captivates
the entire sky. Looks at me.
Never quite understood a look so pure and
so happy. One that washed away my pain. I
still don't understand. Still hesitate.

Always I still hesitate
waiting for the moment he hates. He
denies but it's textbook every time. I
get slaughtered, trampled. When he captivates
me I cry in pain, I die in vain and
nevermore has someone understood me

Nevermore has someone loved me
as he loves me but I hesitate.
Stuck in a mindless repetition and
the words I love you play on soundlessly. He
plays on soundlessly, He captivates.
But I still hesitate I . . .

watch his smile and I
glow brighter than before. He loves me,
He loves me not. The flower captivates
my every thought but I still hesitate.
Still wait for the day where he
decides I am worthless of time and

and that day is coming and
that day is I
that day is he
that day will drown me
into a million shards so I, hesitate.
And he continues. Soundlessly, he captivates.

Soundless heartbeats . . . He captivates
me and I don't know what to do and
so I breathe. Step back and hesitate
because I can't afford, I
couldn't manage myself if he broke me
if he drowned me, if he . . .

If he captivates me, I'll hope for the best, I
will stop hesitating and waiting cause waiting is ruining me.
I won't hesitate, I know what I want. And it is he.

Icarus

Leia Morrissey

Up we go
carried by golden wings of hope
soaring over the beautiful sea
and away from things to be left behind:
chasing the stars, chasing for more.
An arm extends, a hand outstretched
reaching higher and higher.

We learn
the lovely art of self-destruction
of reaching for a thing greater than ourselves.
For things fall apart
shedding shining feathers all the way down
spiraling in a downwards spin
as gravity takes back her hold
and back to earth we go.

In that way, there's a bit of Icarus in all of us.



Queen Evans

Queen of Perseverance

Mahlia Laporal

A word was whispered to the stars gathered beyond
A promise of adventure overseas
A murmur of discoveries

She crossed the ocean, leaving her homeland
A tear ran down her face as the miles spread fast
Stretching their arms to push her away

She lost everything
The reassuring embrace of Friendship
The delicate caress of Family

She set foot on the Promised Land
The land of wonder, dreams, and illusions
Fear made her wobble but she remained upright

The mud of disdain stuck to her boots
The sea of envy drowned her irresistibly
The weight of differences pushed on her mercilessly

Yet she kept walking
Yet she did not falter
Yet she defied the odds

Because in a world where every dawn is a struggle
She learned to stand and fight
She learned to tilt her head back and wish

A word was whispered to the stars gathered beyond
A word made of truth, and trust, and wisdom:
Perseverance



Vague

milanT

Can someone help define to me what real is?
Is it slangin' cane and gang bangin' out the village?
Is it wearin' cocky passin' calc and bein' privileged?
No specific seems, I'm in between: God is my witness.

On God, I swear I'm different.
Been itchin' for a minute steppin' out my comfort zone,
trynna find a place to fit in,
always end up fittin' out like a misshaped substrate.

I'm an active site
(Actually its enzyme)
but I don't even know my name, not sure what my style is,
not sure if I wanna sang or go off to college.
I been puttin' in them hours, still don't know my mileage.

I'm still mentally, my focus is crowded.
My mind enters in somethin' and then I back out
as if I'm caved in the odds stacked on till I'm stacked out.
So no more time to be modest, it's time to act out
as if a youngin' was gone, oh well, he back now.

People ask me how I got here: took a short cut through the scuddy.
I ain't always walk out blessed God said, "You'll often come out muddy."

Steady grindin', almost stuck up with the honeys;
took focus and determination. Let them tell you, I got lucky.
See Milan, what you want your legacy to be?

For the rest to see?
I keep lookin' at the stars and thinkin' that's where I should be.
Hey God, tell me, what's the recipe?

To shine the best in me?
All these obstacles and doors, lord tell them open sesame
before I bust the hinges down, to embrace what you blessed for me.
Ain't always understand Ma Dukes, now I get what she left for me;
it's that integrity, that wisdom that go get it energy.

I'm an entity, one human trait,
that's my inner "G."
Check my inner "G" every other day like it was Synergy
so I stay focused on my goals and visualize them mentally.

So that's the recipe?
Stay true to you, be the best you, you could be.
Only then, nothing's vague;
potential turns into promise.
That's what I believe.



Ana Eggleston

The Bleeding Beat

Kierstin Shoop

I'm layin' on my bed
weepin' my tears away

Big Brother told me I'm no good

I can't stop my tears from
beatin'
beatin' down on the pillow

I hear the loud crackin' sound
like the split second after
seein' a strike
of lightnin' before the
boomin' thunder
alongside the yell of fire

My heart and tears stop

My mother drops a glass plate
onto the floor

I come flyin' down the stairs
and right out the door

There

There

There he lays

harassed on the ground

My tears

My tears turn from rain drops
fallin'

into a cold icy Boston lake

to musket balls beatin'

beatin' down

on a poor patriot boy

wantin' liberty

I hear the
boomin'
boomin' of gunshots
curvin' 'round me

Strikin'
Strikin' down my
friends
family
neighbors
and city down

I'm layin' on his bed weepin'
my tears away
Big Brother told me
He told me I'm no good

I can't stop my tears
my tears
from beatin'
beatin'
down
on
his
pillow

Eros

Rose Ropetski

I am the Aristotle of love and hate
Passions both riding a line so fine
Their toes often dip to the other side.
I am romanticized.
The love I give, however potent,
Can be breathtaking or haggard.
Perplexing and shattering but still
Adoration is mortal inclination.
People pray for soulmates and
Stubbornly (and stupidly) still
Pass by kindred spirits
And settle for ethereal but
Ephemeral emotion.
Sometimes soulmates exchange
Glances in passing, and in
A love-starved world
That's the best I can hope for.
I am love. I am hate.
I am Eros
And I am alone.



Spiral

Anh Nguyen

That noise
That pattering repetitive noise

That noise that rolls and lifts
That noise that becomes internal

That noise that drives me into my own lungs
That noise that brings me to limbo

That noise that gives me déjà vu
That noise that gives me déjà vu

That noise that hums eternally
That noise that never ends

That noise is my own
Irking

Beating
Trembling

Heart

Haiku and Other Short Poems

A small garden,
a lamp post,
a smoky sky

- *Antlers*

Rejoice! Our queen
has fallen to bed. Among her
winter returns once more.

- *Bluebird*

Metal can -
the taste of silver
on my lips

- *Abbe*

To hold you -
moonlight
in my empty hands

- *Rian Gonzalez*

A house on a lake
bridging two worlds
upside-down

- *Orange Juice*

Through the fountain's past
an encounter -
lovely rainbow

- *Evanescence*

Flowers bloom
on a cold fall day -
empty garden

- *Lychee*

The crippled rat
chases the floating leaf
wanders toward the sewers
where dampened moss thrives
and only one body hangs

- *Bird Truck*

You said you'd return
tonight or tomorrow or -
I have already left.

- *IDK*

A packed city:
one busy street, stuffy block,
lonesome doorway

- *Foreign Native*

Sweet-sounding waterfall
calm your buzzing please:
agonizing rocks

- *Blue Lightning*

Autumn leaves
kiss me on the cheek
as I walk along

- *Big Toes*

A bright city -
one contagious flower
is a death sentence

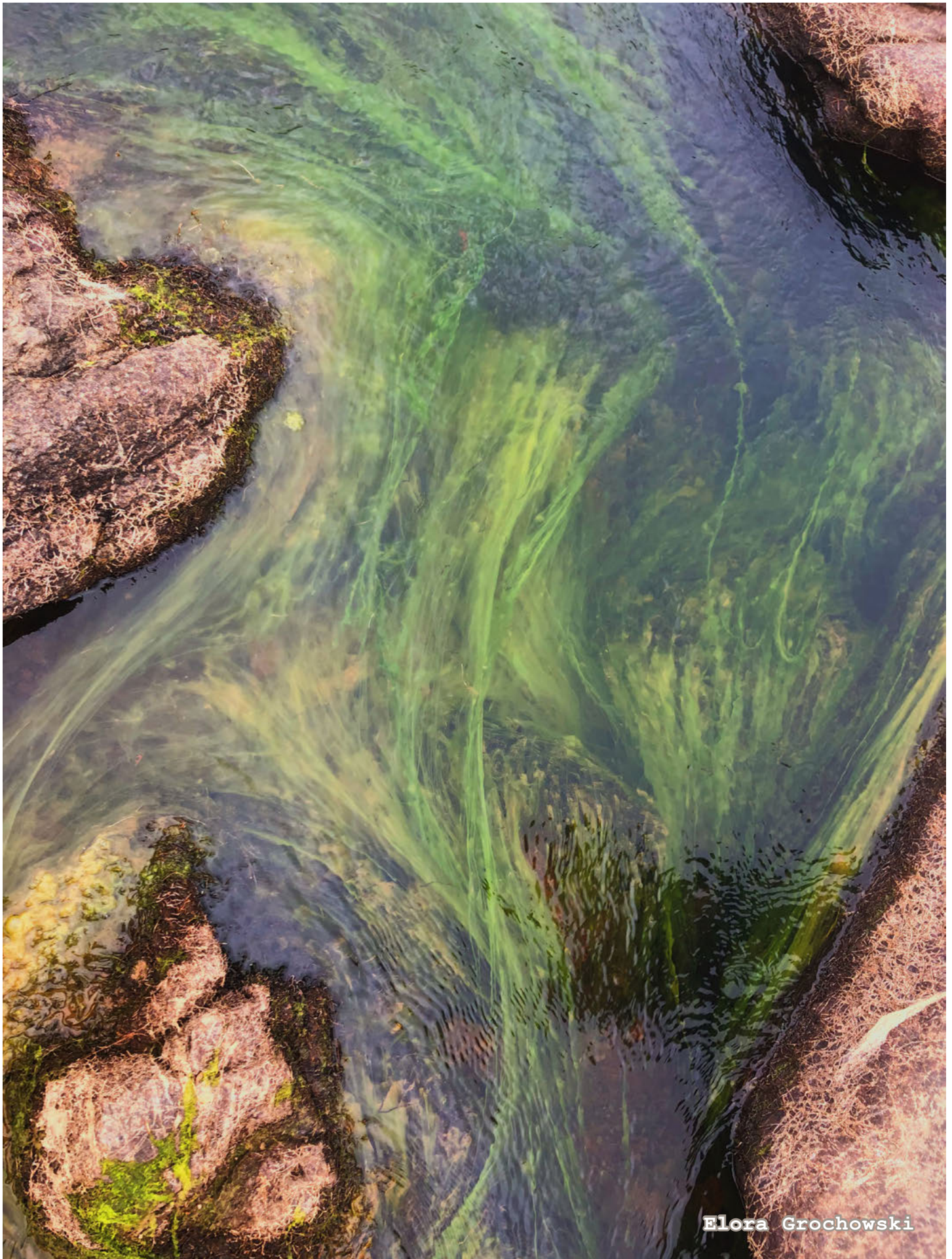
- *Tuna Fish*

Why stand
in the sun
waiting
for hours
when one could just go
home?

- *Madeleine C.*

Who waits
wading
wasting
wanting
you
shifting
the weight of my words
lightly?

- *Rian Gonzalez*



Elora Grochowski



Interview with Jeff Hecker

Anh Nguyen

Isabel Baloy

WHAT IS A BIG INSPIRATION FOR YOUR WORK? IS IT SOMETHING OR SOMEONE SPECIFIC?

Thank you Anh, Isabel, and the Cupola reaching out to me as humanity unknots another decade.

Here's something interesting and disturbing: to inspire literally means to breathe into (like CPR) a gracious yet intrusive act performed by somebody who is living for somebody who is dying.

The rush of a poem can feel close to reinvigorating the spirit sputtering on empty fuel. At the same time, language carries a long string of DNA, and not all of it is beneficial.

I believe I'm obsessed with confusion, so bewilderment may be my inspiration, particularly how speech rarely conveys what we intend it to mean. Meaning has shortcomings, and that's terrific for fiction.

I trust this is the reason poets turn to images to transmit what words cannot. If I say I used to be a cactus spine but lately I'm cactus water, you're more likely to comprehend and remain with me longer than if I tried to give you directions to the nearest grocery store. It's right around the corner by the way, and it's closing forever.

It's funny Anh, as I answer, I'm also acutely aware how much I adore speech, especially when it's not effective, and I try my best to form poems in a way that feel like grand failed explanations.

ARE YOU A DAYTIME OR NIGHTTIME WRITER?

I've never had a routine, though I typically appear to write in the afternoon.

I prefer to write in quiet.

I used to have a terrible habit of leaving a room full of people I'd invited when I thought of a decent idea. Most guests were solid enough friends to forgive me, others probably better off gone since I don't remember names or faces.

HAVE YOU EVER DABBLED INTO OTHER FIELDS OF LITERATURE BESIDES POETRY?

Apparently, my mom read voraciously to me until I could recite the same stories back to her or until she fell asleep -- and as a little kid I composed what think tanks might refer to as brief first draft narratives without second drafts.

I won a few elementary school contests whose awards came with oversized and too bright ribbons affixed with devastating pins one could wear upon front of sweater or jacket if one so desired to get beat up by multiple factions of children and their jealous parents.

I recall one story about an astronaut who missed a space flight because he broke his leg the night before. Even then I understood NASA's perpetual disappointments.

I wrote horrific poems in high school, a lot of trees/fruit/hopelessness, but I loved studying poems in high school. The poets seemed to me then to have been the only historical group of people on the planet who had figured out the dilemma of having consciousness. I truly looked at them as sages, as I do still.

IF YOU WEREN'T A POET, WHAT WOULD YOU SEE YOURSELF DOING INSTEAD?

No living poet I'm aware of makes a living writing poems, and the older I am the more I'm in favor of that fact.

I claim two careers: I'm a project manager for a mid-sized company out of Dallas Texas that publishes directories and updates databases for thousands of schools and organizations nationwide.

I also teach workshops part time at The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk. I instruct a teen workshop and recently several adult poetry classes on Surrealism as well as Eastern Asian forms.

IN THE POEM CONSCIENTIOUS PROTESTS, I SAW POWERFUL
IMAGERY THAT WAS BEING DESCRIBED AND WAS WONDERING
IF THE SENTIMENT YOU WERE TRYING TO CONVEY IS STILL,
IN YOUR OPINION, PROMINENT TODAY?

I appreciate you noticing sentiments in Conscientious Protests. It's an homage after Argentine master Julio Cortazar. I wrote it shortly after the Occupy Wall Street height. It's unfortunately still relevant—particularly after the 2017 racist clown show we all witnessed on the campus of the University of Virginia resulting in the murder of patriot Heather Heyer.

I used the poem concept to balance the struggle against forces designed to silence outside opinion versus sheer internal human absurdity (e.g. death row inmate fed daily vitamins, soldier naming bullets after sitcom characters, odd fascination/disgust with The Today Show, shutting down a Scottish street small enough for one man's height to occupy - affecting only traffic and trash collection Tuesday).

Protests on Saturday and Sunday are different than protests on Monday through Friday, which is to say I don't see protests Monday through Friday. The tragedy is the very industry people are dissatisfied with is also the industry forcing people to work or starve.

Saturday and Sunday are not failures, but they are not successes either. Stomachs win.

The poem I hope transmits the fractured nature of the American protest movement, perhaps universal, the sense we're bound to the exact structures we know cause misery. Is it enough dissatisfaction to implement change?

It doesn't feel that way yet.

Perhaps the best way forward is individual initiative, all of us making a personal choice and sacrifice about how we live our lives that over time lessen the energy of those in Power. It doesn't need to take very long, but it will involve an ethical diligence and a daily regimen that doesn't revolve around cash.

HOW LONG DOES IT USUALLY TAKE TO WRITE A POEM?

I've written poems in ten minutes and poems that have taken over a year.

I play a lot with size, shape, space; I try hard not to limit myself to a way of making a poem.

Looking back at what I've written, I've come to notice I'm obsessed with the future newness, creating poems that don't rely on what I've done in the past.

I enjoy looking forward.

WHO WAS YOUR BEST/WORST ENGLISH TEACHER, AND HAVE THEY SAID ANYTHING THAT SEALED YOUR OPINION ON THEM?

Collectively English teachers remind me of M. Knight Shyamalan's film *Lady in the Water*.

Overall they're underpaid and tend to take a lot of criticism, then you're hit with the ending scene where Story the Narf is rescued by the Great Eatlon after Cleveland Heep thanks her for saving his life, and it rather redeems most cheesy or poorly acted moments.

Every English teacher I've ever learned under exhibited gestures capable of touching my soul, but the ones who did it best were high school teacher Lenny Vaughan (RIP) and my undergraduate professors Tim Seibles and Scott Cairns.

Lenny made us memorize over a dozen poems during the year and write them back from memory, Tim demanded we cherish one another on earth, and Scott made us realize our third draft might require a fourth then a fifth draft because we're borrowing language from ghosts and ghosts should be respected.

WHAT MADE YOU REALIZE THAT POETRY WAS A CALLING?

Poetry put a spell on me when I was 17 years old and the spell enables me to put a spell on other people with quick bursts of language blocks.

Those invocations aren't necessarily positive or instructive or redemptive or even necessary, but they appear to exist in order to jar the living into a kind of quiet where they

aren't talking about television or family or what they want to buy or eat.

Maybe those flashes are important to them and maybe not, but those flashes are definitely important to my well-being, so I continue sending out paper lanterns on the river.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU COULD GIVE TO ANY NOVICE POETS OR WRITERS THAT READ THE CUPOLA?

Take risks in writing. Change styles over time. Allow yourself to experience pleasure, pain, loss, happiness, and perplexity—you're much stronger than anything life presents.

Read your work aloud to yourself --as yourself--even alone in a room. Do that with work of others too -- often. When you read your work aloud to others, read it as yourself, like you're alone in a room.

Don't be afraid of a thousand rejection letters from magazine editors. Usually, rejection is because the theatre that evening is sold out. Show up tomorrow, you may get ushered inside where there's popcorn.

Read what you don't like then read what you like then read what you don't like again.

Be kind to people you encounter no matter what situation. Yelling never accomplishes anything, and there are better ways of getting justice than fighting: sneakier methods like publishing.

*Jeffrey Hecker is the author of **Rumble Seat** (San Francisco Bay Press, 2011) & the chapbooks **Hornbook** (Horse Less Press, 2012) & **Before He Let Them Guide Sleigh** (ShirtPocket Press, 2013). Recent work has appeared in **La Fovea**, **LEVELER**, **decomp**, **Entropy**, **BOAAT**, **Dream Pop Journal**, & **DELUGE**. He holds a degree from Old Dominion University. He's a fourth-generation Hawaiian American and he currently resides in Norfolk, Virginia.*

Politics

Jeff Hecker

I.

Once I rode a hot air balloon with Apollo 16 astronaut John Watts Young and seven other people I didn't know. Sunset. Eight of us said glorious,

best we've ever seen. John Watts Young said except on the moon.

Four people said his statement's patriotic, three hated everything about it. I paid him to say it. He said it for freedom.

II.

You found the missing girl from the news behind the place they towed your boss's car. She appeared relieved to be discovered.

You started to phone authorities she said they may think you've taken her.

You had second and third thoughts. You asked her when they accuse you, couldn't she flatly refute?

It was cold. You offered one of your layers. She accepted.

What will you say she asked when they ask why she was dressed in your pullover?

You said you'll say weather made you offer clothes.

Was there any way to disprove your garment was yours?

You asked if she even wanted help she said yes. She said officers will ask what you asked she'll say she was asked if she wanted help.

III.

Second morning we settle in, a demo crew pulverizes the home next door, built 1923. All residents except my family sing a song, in unison, unknown to us.

We accidentally laugh before the chorus, clap near the end purposely.

Multiple men and women recommend we move cities, states.

We memorize part of the avenue already, some of its regional national anthem. One line goes

chicken can smile and gutted fish. Stop sign poles driven too far into earth, octagon tops eye level -- directives to human beings walking.

Don't leave the carpool because we can't join. One line goes

deer hunters don't buy meat so we better not see the new neighbors buy meat.

A mother of children keeps promising us we mishear that verse.

87 voices chanting is memorable. Turkey can frown. That's nowhere in song.

What's the Pointe?

Caressa Cueneca

That's all they saw
The pointing of her feet
Her posture
Her form
Her attire
Her ability
Physical aspects

Not who she was
Or how she was
Focusing
On her pointe
But whether her mind and future were
"on point"

Hiding her pains
Behind the curtain of her performance

Then
Gone

All a blur
In the background
As she felt
All of this
In her life
Had
No
point



Darkness is My Light

Sierra Allen

The consumption of its absence eats at my roots'
Light
Its absence allows for my existence is what they say
I have heard whispers that it has never touched me
But all I see is light
Pitch black, vast and blanketing my sky
Light
The moisture in my roots spreads into my arms
Leaves they are called
By the weird plants with flesh and fingers
I continue to grow in black
Light
No weird plant tells me I'm beautiful
Am I ugly because of my thorns?
I take their names but I do not accept
The despair in their words
I suppose I need no validation
I grow in black
Light
But light is white
And whatever light shines on me
I understand my own kind of beautiful



Anh Nguyen

A Poem After W.C. Williams

Chloe Lu

I have suffered
more than
the salt
you have eaten

and which
you were probably
wondering
how.

Forgive me
for the years
of negligence,
decisions, actions.

I must
give up myself
for a better
tomorrow

for you.

Matter

David T.

They will remember me, for I matter
Justice cannot wait for political chatter
I can lay here all day, it doesn't matter
Though the rough road makes me sadder
We are a part of Black Lives Matter

The police radio blares with the indistinct chatter
Another brother or sister trying to fight the standard
With a great war cry, as he or she rides in the saddle
We all know it will be a hard fought battle
We will make them hear that Black Lives Matter

We see on our TV and movies
Of children holding up their hands saying "Don't shoot me"
After all this time our parents passing on the yoke
Since when did harming children become more common than telling a
joke?
We will make them see that Black Lives Matter

So as I lay here, lost in the sound
I'm fighting for the answers that need to be found
I feel that one day it will be well
But we will remember this day, I can tell
They will always remember that Black Lives Matter

If I Grow Up

Oliver Hewitt

To be a reckless explosion
To be my own person

In this silent world to
Be a tambourine, cymbal crash

Never silent. To be caring
And coping and teaching and

To be a net. To catch everyone who
Falls. To be a father, corralling the

Broken-hearted into my arms.
To be watercolor. Fluid and

Dripping down the page never
Where expected but always

Where needed. To be a hollow
Heart. Carved out veins to

Coax those who can't start their
Own. To be. To be. To be.

To be alive.
And never otherwise.



Goddess

Oliver Hewitt

Seafoam black smothering stone suffocating sanctimonious prayers
six seeds red stains seeds months seeds correlation beauty and
godliness skylight what you done mine six moments six seafoam
bubbling island helios hiding six moments moonlight moving
starcrossed movements forbidden touches seafoam touches black
stone good night gemstone moonstone starstone goodnight

After Steinbeck's Cannery Row

Matt Docalovich

A breath in the hurried and busy world, a pause, a haven, a
peaceful breath of fresh air, a roaring quiet, a fog-covered oasis
with no end, a pit-stop, a life-time, a memoir-writing, panic-
inducing setting that stretches for miles but is no bigger than
a point or a pin or a cross-section that interstates dodge and is
uninterrupted by light. This forest is grand, silent the trees
watch, an oppressive and looming calm suffocating me into its
oblivion, its vastness. It is a maze with a guide and a straight
path with guidewire and never ending with edges. It is green
and brown and red and blue and white and orange without color.
It is a forest stretching to the heavens with roots in hell.

Snow – A Fibonacci

Tina Li

The
snow
falling
against the
window, with a sheet
of white, hot breath fogging onto
the glass, puffing up into a circle then fading
away, leaving no trace; her presence
replaced by the everlasting cold.

Go Back

Trisha Gutierrez

On my lips, diving off my tongue, go back
to the straw hut right in my yard, go back
and travel with the wheels of the cart of dirty ice cream.

Go back! They yell, you don't belong here!

As the tears roll down my face
like my accent rolls off my tongue

I cannot speak out.

I've tried all my life to be like you,
the epitome of beauty and culture.

More voices surround me. Go back!

They yell, some with masked accents like mine.

I step back, unable to move forward.

I try to listen to Catriona Pia telling me to be

confidently beautiful and I walk
wearing lava, past the unison of voices
criticizing my eyes, my food, my hair
growing like mangos, falling from trees
rolling down the rich, cultured soil
like the tears falling again from my eyes.

I have finally learned to love myself
and your words, I have silenced.

As I have now gone back to my roots.

Well, Obviously

Anh Nguyen

What is my name?

Well, obviously it tastes like an orange peel, soured and honeyed.

On the page it likes to dance and sway to written rhythm
and on the tip of someone's tongue, it balances, taut, still
feeling farther as the letters jump from the edge

What are these numbers?

Well, obviously they are a multicolor-toned family.

When added canned laughter rises, subtracting the nerves
multiplied by their sickened relations and divided by troupes.
Their emotions quiver in the page, translated into metal plaque.

What are my classmates?

Well, obviously they are blue in hue, mixed in different
vibrancies.

When together the individuality stings like needles on skin.

The purple pests can't mix with yellowed yawners;
that is why we can't be friends.

What do you mean when you say the imagination is wild?

Well, obviously it's dull and docile, tasting of pencil shavings.

When you tell me I'm a child, active in imagery
how should I respond?

Well, obviously

this is real. Well, obviously
it's not being creative. Well, obviously, I'm right.

My name tastes like an orange peel.

African Black Soap

Ja'mia Threet

A shea butter baby
with cocoa butter roots
head to toe in argan oil
and clad in a honey suit
protected by my ancestors
with their castor oil hugs
olive oil kisses
and aloe vera love



Mama Knows Best

Nykiah Bradshaw

Son, listen to Mama. This world is tough.
When you leave this house,
stand up straight,
use your manners,
and please take that durag off.

I don't need anyone thinking you're trouble.
Now, when you leave practice come straight home.
No extra stops.
School and back home.
I can't afford for you to end up being a hashtag.

Now, what do you do when a police officer stops you?
Yes. You stop every muscle in your body, immediately.
Hands out of your pockets.
Stand up straight,
and do whatever he tells you to do.

If he draws his weapon son what do you do?
No. You do NOT record.
You put your hands up.
High enough so God himself can see your fingertips in Heaven,
so that the stars can dance on your palms

Now, you ask, what if you're innocent?
Baby, you're always guilty in their eyes.
Your skin, as beautiful and black as it is, is a weapon in itself.
Yes, I know it's confusing, and you may not understand,
but son, listen to Mama.

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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. This year's edition will be the first to move mostly online, and it can be found on Granby's library homepage, including archived volumes.

Colophon

The *Cupola* is printed by Allegra Marketing, Print and Mail. Cover paper stock is 110 pound gloss and inside paper is 80 pound gloss. Title fonts are Consolas and the body font is Courier New. Interview font is Times New Roman. Press run of 50 copies of 32 pages.



Sierra Allen
Isabel Baloy
Nykiah Bradshaw
Madeleine Carhart
Caressa Cueneca
Matt Dachlovich
Anna Eggleston
Carolynn Ervin
Queen Evans
Rian Gonzalez
Elora Grochowski
Trisha Gutierrez
Jeff Hecker
Oliver Hewitt
Leilianis Irigoyen
Mahlia Laporal
Tina Li
Chloe Lu
Leia Morrissey
Anh Nguyen
Rose Ropetski
Kierstin Shoop
Milan Thomas
Ja'mia Threet
David Tremper