

Salt Lake Teens Write

Earliest of Music

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This edition of Salt Lake Teens Write was compiled and edited by Jesse Focht, the CWC Staff Members, and Director Melissa Helquist. Cover art created by Paula Dee.

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Preface/Acknowledgements

As our title poem, “Earliest of Music,” by Selena Williams-Perez explores, our preferences and opinions are always changing as we explore and experience more of life. Writing is one of the best ways to track our own changing views and to better understand the experiences of others; this year’s Salt Lake Teens Write anthology offers a compelling and diverse collection of ideas, experiences, and worlds—some that we inhabit and some that we can only imagine.

The SLCC Community Writing Center (CWC) is pleased to share this publication to celebrate the 2015-2016 Salt Lake Teens Write (SLTW) program. SLTW pairs teens in grades 9-12 with community mentors who use writing in their daily lives and professions. Our mentoring teams work on writing throughout the year, exploring a variety of genres.

Salt Lake Teens Write depends on the hard work of our Youth Programs Coordinator, Sandra Salazar-Hernandez. Christina Walsh and Stephanie Costa of the Salt Lake City Public Library have been wonderful collaborators and supporters. A special thanks to local podcasters Conor Bentley (Consider Our Knowledge) and Kristal Starr (Hello, Sweetie!) for sharing their talents, enthusiasm and expertise at our podcasting workshop.

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If you are interested in joining Salt Lake Teens Write as a teen writer or a mentor, please visit slcc.edu/cwc or call 801-957-2192.

Melissa Helquist



2015-2016 Salt Lake Teens Write

Salt Lake Teens Write Mentoring Teams: 2015-2016

Teen Writers	Mentors	Mentoring Teams
Katelynn Isle	Alexis Isle	Alexis Isle and Katelynn Isle
Sajid Safiullah	Amy Childress	Amy Childress and Sajid Safiullah
Riley Muir	Kat Ibrahim	Kat Ibrahim and Riley Muir
Qwinton G Moore	Garrett Seaberg	Garrett Seaberg and Qwinton G. Moore
Dego Gabo	Jeannine Marlowe	Jeannine Marlowe and Dego Gabo
Jennifer Sepulveda-Lopez	Kenedei Faber	Kenedei Faber and Jennifer Sepulveda-Lopez
Isabel Wilson	Margaret Opatz	Margaret Opatz and Isabel Wilson
Brooklyn Emery	Marie Akerman	Marie Akerman and Brooklyn Emery
Soe Meh	Morgan Holman	Morgan Holman and Soe Meh
Arie Parra	Nancy Wakefield	Nancy Wakefield and Arie Parra
Selena Williams-Perez	Natalie Moldover	Natalie Moldover and Selena Williams-Perez
Jordan Mills	Sarah Rose	Sarah Rose and Jordan Mills
Leeyan Buclatin	Paula Dee	Paula Dee and Leeyan Buclatin

Salt Lake Teens Write Intern: Holly Packard

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Earliest of Music

by Selena Williams-Perez

Earliest memory of music
Mexican & Western country singers
Thought it was the weirdest music

First hearing of Mexican music
“What is this nonsense?!”
“What are they rambling about?”
I was amused with the music

Western country was the lamest music ever
Embarrassed by my grandpa
because he full blasted it in the car
& the other people beside us could hear
Country didn’t appeal to me
Mellow tunes dozed me off

I don’t mind either of them
Started listening to Mexican & country singers
Oh how the tables have turned
Who would’ve known?

This Place

by *Deگو Gabo*

She was always wondering what kind of a place this place was. She had never seen a place like this. This place was very different than what she had seen before. Before coming here she lived in a place that was very green and rained a lot. It was summer all the time. This place was something she had never imagined.

Here, there were no green trees. There was no green grass either. It only had trees that were very thin and no leaves on them. The grass was a little brown and green mixed and it was very very short. This place's grass was covered with snow all the time. She wondered why it even snowed here. Why couldn't it be like the places she's been to? Why were the trees like this? Why is it not raining? Where are the birds? Doesn't this place have any birds? Why is it cold? What kind of a sun brings sunshine but no heat? Why are the clouds always dark? Why isn't she able to see a clear blue sky like she always did? There were so many unanswered questions she had.

Every time she went to school it was very dark and quiet except for the cars passing by making "whoosh" sounds. She barely saw any people on the roads. It seemed as if not many people lived here. The only time she saw a lot of people on the roads was when she came back from school. Even then, when she saw people they would disappear. It killed her to know that when she looked back outside the window where she saw people crowded just an hour before, she saw no one.

Even her friends and the people that also walked from school would disappear into their homes. She wasn't that stupid to not know they wanted to be warm as she did. But she worries it would always be like this. If so, she would be so disappointed.

After a few months she came, she saw beauty. She first noticed that the snow was melting away and the grass began to look greener. The trees came

back to life.

The kids would climb up the trees to get cherries. She too started to climb the trees and she loved the taste of the cherries.

People started to come outside to have fun and play lots of different games. Now the place held a lot of people unlike before.

The place started to look alive with a lot of green trees, grass, and lots of different kinds of flowers. The sky began to look amazing as well. Birds were around now and she could see butterflies.

She came to know that in Utah there many different seasons. And she loved the idea of that and couldn't wait to experience all of them in just one year! How much more exciting would that be?! She couldn't wait. She would always think that this place was amazing and very lovely.

And that was the story of my first spring in Utah.

Passage of Time

by *Natalie Moldover*

Fresh air and sunshine. That's what I crave during my workday. I work in a windowless office. Because of the lack of natural light, I try to make time each day to walk the work neighborhood.

I listen to my podcasts and get to feel the sun, cold, rain, and wind on my face. This is a light industry neighborhood. One that lets me wonder if the propane canisters and the Coca Cola plant will ever explode and decimate us all. I walk past each of these potential hazards.

My ability to actually hear my podcasts is interrupted frequently by the overhead airplanes. We are on the approach for the Salt Lake Airport. On this day I'm out there—with my hand weights and my comfortable stride. Hazards and jet noise will not stop me. I love being outside.

I pass a field to the right as I hear kids from the nearby charter school play at recess. I think it is really weird that a school sits in an industrial park. Kids don't get to walk to school here. The school buses line up outside to ferry these kids to and from this neighborhood.

When I was young I heard often how I was a great finder of things. Little things. Big things. Jewelry, money. All sorts of things. Today, I passed a curious sight. At first, I gave it a bit of a glance and a passing thought. But as I kept walking—listening to the happenings of the business world, I couldn't escape the thought—"Why is there a brand new pencil sitting on the ground?"

I doubled back and revisited the pencil. I picked it up for closer inspection. It was out here a long time! It seemed dried out by the sun, wind, cold, heat. Its yellow skin peeling and flaking.

It is proud of who it is. It tells me proudly, "I am a Dixon No 2 / HB." What did all that mean? I figured out later that this pencil got separated from the hive. The Dixon company created this badge of my childhood. The No 2 / HB means it is a number 2 grade lead that is also "hard black."

My No. 2 HB has company now. Never to be cold, windblown, snow covered or heated to flake it's yellow skin. It gets to now live in my windowless cubicle. Space to live out the rest of its pencil days.

I can only imagine a kid at that charter school has some arm! To have flung that new pencil all that way.

Midnight Dance

by Rylie Muir

One, two, three. One, two, three,
the metronome is clicking.

One, two, three. One, two, three,
the clock stopped ticking.

Four, five, six. Four, five, six,
we haven't misstepped.

Four, five, six. Four, five, six,
across the floor we've crept.

One, two, three. One, two three,
time is slipping.

One, two, three. One, two, three,
our shoes keep tapping.

Four, five, six. Four, five, six,
along the room we prance.

Four, five, six. Four, five, six,
in one more Midnight Dance.

Little Sisters

by Jordan Mills

Dear Nobody,

It's me again. What's it like, being imaginary? I think it would be pretty cool sometimes. Other times though I think it would be really lonely. Do you get lonely Nobody? Do you have friends? Are they imaginary too? I'm your friend Nobody, if you don't have other imaginary friends. Having friends is good, sometimes they say hi and hug you when you need them.

Mom's a little better today. She's only cried four times so far, new record. She still sleeps in the baby's room though, she's too tired to go anywhere else. Sometimes I sit with her. We sit quiet and look at the folded blankets in the crib. It's hard to sit with her. She's so sad and scared and sitting with her makes all those feelings happen inside me too. We sit and hold each other and cry. Nobody, do you have a brother or sister? I almost have a sister. We couldn't bring her home though, she's too small and she got sick. I got to meet her. She was in a box with holes where we could reach in and touch her. I brought her some stickers to make the box pretty like she was. I didn't know I wasn't supposed to do that. Mom had to hold my hand after that.

Do you have a mom Nobody? Does she hold your hand sometimes? I like holding hands, you can never get lost when you hold hands because you're always touching them and they are keeping you safe.

Mom thanked me for putting the stickers there after the lady in the white coat left. She said it would make my sister happy. I was happy I put the stickers up then because I wanted to make my sister happy.

The lady in white said something about how little my sister was, then she said maybe we would someday get to take her home, but not yet. Do you have to wait for your sister Nobody? Is she too little? I hope not, because little sisters you don't get to play with are not very fun. Thanks for listening, Nobody.

Love, Cedar Merrill

Isiana

by Nancy Wakefeild

Isiana Veela Harrington

An unusual name. I wonder if her parents, my great-great-grandparents, felt adventurous in naming this little girl. Would the name have seemed interesting or unusual to her neighbors? Or is it exotic sounding only to us? Isiana would have been born about five years into their marriage. That's a little long perhaps. Was she a long-awaited first child? Does that gap suggest I ought to look for another infant who died? But I want to explore that name.

Isiana

Even with the wealth of the internet at hand, I can find little reference to the name "Isiana." Google came up with a restaurant named Lue'isiana Po Boys—in Carrollton, Texas no less—and a teacher or administrator named Isiana in the Houston Independent School District. Interesting since I grew up in Texas and I know both of those cities. The first response page offered little else except a link to Kabalarian Philosophy. Not that particular road less taken for me.

Digging into the name sites offers current usage as an alteration of Isabel. More like Isabel Anne, I'd say. We run into "Izzy" as a nickname for Isabels, or Isabelles, or even Isobels, but that doesn't seem much of a reason to directly connect Isiana back to Isabels to me.

Was it a fanciful name that her mother heard somewhere? A character in a novel maybe? Did they feel as though they had created a new name? I'd love to look for more clues.

Veela

As we moderns know, "The Veela are a race of semi-human, semi-magical humanoids reminiscent of the Sirens of Greek mythology," from the wizarding world of Harry Potter. (Note 1.) Somehow I don't think the Harrington's use of the name was a foreshadowing of Fleur Delacours's lineage. However, one

never knows—far be it from me to limit my ancestors’ imaginations and foreknowledge.

Harrington

The Surname Database says that Harrington is a “long-established” surname and probably derives from multiple Anglo-Saxon sources in English and perhaps is an anglicized version of an Irish name to boot. (Note 2.) In English only the first syllable “Har” seems to have multi-meanings. The -ing and -ton endings seem to allude to “people of the tribe or place of” and “of the town or settlement of.” So, a Harrington was of the people of who live in the town of “Har” from whichever of its variations applied to a particular person. A place name like so many others.

Why explore this name?

Exploring her unusual name is my way of remembering this small child. Isiana died on the 3rd of December, 1849. Her death record tells us she was two years old and died of smallpox. There’s no one to tell stories of her short life. There were three more children later, one of them my great-grandmother Ella. Another story for another day.

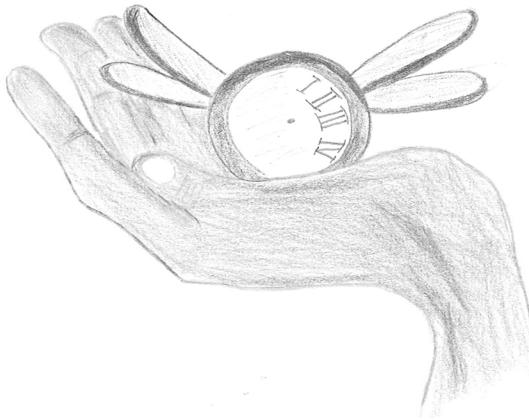
Note 1: <http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Veela>

Note 2: <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Harrington>

Flash Fiction

by Leeyan Buclatin

Mom always said, “I wish I could afford a watch to see how much time I wasted.” It used to be funny back then, but now I couldn’t afford to waste more time. I really have to save them, I already destroyed their parents’ lives it’s the least I could do. I really need to control this time traveling spree, I don’t even know how it works; a minute ago I was at the beach with Jackie, right now I’m back in 1953. I’m trying to find the twins’ parents based on the stories they told me, they said that their parents met at a cafe called Clockwork. Their parents were about seventeen in this time period, so they would definitely look a lot younger. Two hours had passed and they’re still not here, my travel from 1978 to 1953 might have changed the way they were supposed to meet. It’s hard finding someone in a place where time was altered just to fit me in it. There are times when I actually think I should isolate myself from my friends, it’s actually hard referring to them as friends since they already forgotten me, it’s hard for me to know who I even am. I already altered so many time periods, if I keep this up, then I might as well not exist. I tried everything to save the twins, but maybe I was wrong, maybe finding their parents wasn’t the answer. Even if I did find them, it wouldn’t have changed anything, what would I even say especially when I’m not even sure what I should do. The only option I have is to prevent myself from being born. If I don’t exist then time would reset and everything I done would be erased from history. Ceasing to exist isn’t any different than standing aside and watching people live their lives, people complain a lot even though they have something to live for. I can never have what they have. I’ll fade away like time, I just hope that it works.



Juncture

by Leeyan Buclatin

Blank

by Alexis Isle

Blank
Everything starts out blank
We are born blank
We start school blank
We write on blank paper
We create on a blank canvas
Things don't stay blank
They get dirty
They get messy
They get crazy
But things don't stay that way either
Things get easy sometimes and hard the next
Things can so smoothly or roughly
Our blank canvas gets ripped
So we tape it up
It gets that coffee ring stain
So we try to wipe it away
But that doesn't work so we just make it apart of the picture
When you leave this world your canvas is full
It's full of
Beautiful mistakes
Achingly glorious heartbreaks
And
Terrible coffee or tea stains
So leave your canvas here
So others can see how
Magnificently messy life can get.

The Art Gallery

by Holly Packard

The first painting is white. Horizontal grey criss-crosses the canvas. A smudge of shiny, heartless black lurks in one corner. The canvas is the size of a small book.

You watch as the man walks across the painting. His clothing is dark, and not nearly warm enough to withstand the cold. He is halfway across the landscape when the bear appears from beyond the edge of the painting. The man glances behind him, glances to the sky, and the bear falls upon him while he screams.

The plaque beneath the canvas reads “Cold.”

The second painting is red. Thin, smooth strokes of crimson gradient towards black, and loop in on each other like the petals of a flower. The edges of the canvas are a glowing orange.

The flames start there, with the orange edges, and eat their way around the petals until there is nothing left but ashes. The pigment leaks towards the floor and puddles in a black expanse; it stretches across floorboards, languid and slick, as the edges turn sharp and the stroke marks form feathers. The pattern rears its cruel beak. Its wings curve up and reach back down, and it soars up the wall. It curls there, at eye height, as the soot black fades to iron red, and it screeches for the things it’s lost.

The plaque beneath it reads “Phoenix.”

The third painting is mottled gold. It is the biggest by far. It stretches from the floor to the towering ceiling, and the edges run towards the far wall forever. It is gold with patches of amber and orange, tinted here and there with yellow, and the entire thing is webbed in black. You could never want to look away.

The painting starts to shine. It is the brightest thing you have ever seen, and you want to look away. But more than that, you want to see what it will become. The light grows brighter still, and you can feel the heat. It glows and glows until you can no longer see the light but feel it in your skin and your heart and your bones. You can feel the bright points of stars in the sky and the stones and beetles in the dirt beneath your feet. The painting opens its jaws and swallows you whole, and the gallery is left empty and silent.

There is no one there to see it, but the plaque beneath the painting reads, "Truth."

Mad Batter, My Queen

by Brooklyn Emery

In summer had myself a Batter fair,
The kindness shone through lightly freckled cheek
With gaslight green in eyes and rogue in hair,
Soft bones, but hidden strength without a peak
Like pauper, giving all yet still sweet trill
A singing Majesty of kitchen stew.
House full with flurried friends yet beds to fill,
Her charity a virtue ringing true.
She can't be lost, she shan't be lost this day,
For if there's need a guardian I will be.
And though I travel, often am away
My Batter, she will always wait for me.
And even though soon shall we both be dead
We'll wake again tucked into soulmate's bed.

Not a Soul

by Isabel Wilson

Written about undocumented immigrants trying to cross the USMexico border and the struggles they faced. Inspired by the book Crossing the Wire.

All around me nothing but desolation
A pit of desperate souls
Searching for a way out
Death, just another fact of life
A path to freedom
In a barren land
A pit of churning lava
An inescapable fate
Running, running, always running
Running to get through
Fleeing from a forcefully forgotten past
Progressing, not just away but also towards
Rushing toward lush green vegetation
Clean rivers and blue skies
Sprinting to not just finery
But a better life
Reaching with all my might
Using everything just to get there
And in my way?
In my way a torrid land
Empty, lifeless and deserted
A chain link fence climbing into the never ending sky
An impassable mountain
Filled with only death and destruction

A giant iron wall
Loaded with spikes, guns and bombs
All opposing, vying for my destruction
And me, determined to succeed
But who to help me?
No one
And who to understand?
Not they
Who to find me if I die?
Not a soul
A ragged body, putrid
Weak and lifeless
With no will to go on
The desert had won
A shallow breath and one final thought
Not a soul
Not a soul

Orphic: Mysterious; entrancing

by Katelynn Isle

Orphic: Mysterious; entrancing
I exhale the breath caught in my throat
My eyes orbs of emotion
Filipendulous: Hanging by a thread

Shaking hands, unsure what we wrote
Caught in an ocean, trying to keep a forward motion
Orphic: Mysterious; entrancing
Filipendulous: Hanging by a thread

Trying to stay afloat
Filled to the brim with devotion
Orphic: Mysterious; entrancing
Filipendulous: Hanging by a thread

Mysterious and entrancing
In a deep moat
My head filled with commotion
I am hanging by a thread

The Story of the Lunar Eclipse

by Paula Dee

*Watching as the phases passed, hauntley ever so slow,
As the fluid brightness shone, though as liquid silver poured
around the edges of the moon,
The luminescence waxed and waned, then blood red hue glowed through,
and burned deep within my soul.*

High above the city lights, I gaze into the clear night sky. I hold a solitary and priveleged view. Far above my reach, it slowly passes by—my faithful friend —shining bright and full.

I sit grounded firmly on this blue-green sphere I call home. Watching, wondering and waiting for something yet unseen. In quiet contemplation at times holding my breath. Nighttime shadows gleemed and I was alone. The solar shadows cast: the phases begin to pass, hauntling ever so slow.

The brightness that lights my day and always leave at night, now pours its luminescence like liquid silver at its edges. That beautiful moon now named—yet still somehow unexplained.

If I had lived a thousand years ago, tales surely were told of this great event. “Reflecting on what knowledge held then of the Gods or Goddesses perhaps stretching forth a finger ever so gently stroking the edges moon. Commanding it to glisten, shine and glow ever so slow. Up and down, rounding through and through, causing the light to go this way and that, as if liquid lighting slowly flowing on the right side-edge, the only side we see. When the brightness waxed and waned, about midway through, not quite sure which way it would go. Full circle or only half way around. Just as soon as it stopped, then it travels back again. Beholding all the beautiful glory, yet not knowing what the Gods were thinking or what they might do. Was it a sign for good—or

bad. Could the Gods be angry to darken the moon and make it turn blood red. What was this sign? Would Gods smite my mere existence? Need a sacrifice be made, a penance to pay? Yes it is a wonder.

Now I think even with limited knowledge back then the sheer beauty and amazement of what I beheld before my eyes would have put my soul at ease.

Now in 2015 I knew the very day and hour of its arrival and exactly how long it would stay. Anticipating, as it made its presence known to me, a beckoning deep within my soul. I have an understanding of things that are to be, there is peace in side of me. In awe of a phenomenal sight, beauty, happiness, not sad must be true. Of this I hope to know, how could anyone be mad. As the peace of all time set, the color changed its hue. As the silver left my view and blood red glow became new.

Within my primal being I longed to reach, and pull it close to me. Then before I could contain the breadth of this all encompassing wonder, I knew it no more, eluding my grasp, as the darkness began slipping into the light and turning into the day. Grateful and amazed at what I had beheld. Having no power to control I felt it slipping away, an unquenching desire, a longing for it to stay. Regretfully I acquiesced to the dawn of a new day. With naked eyes and wounded spirit I saw its beauty and truth. There it was, and peace was all I knew.

Sorry Mother Nature

by Soe Meh

You are beautiful. You created a beautiful land, where we live in. You give us life, but yet we betray you. We cut you down and make you into piece of paper, use you and throw you away, like nothing would matter. So much pollution, that went through your beautiful ocean and killed your fish friends. Your moist green turn into dry brown Your clean, blue ocean turn into an ugly smelling dark black. Dear mother nature, I am so sorry, I am so sorry we destroy your beauty. So sorry for not appreciating the beautiful gift we receive from you. I hope we humans will come to understand the importance of having you. Please bare with us and continue giving us your kindness, because if there is no you, then there is no us. I hope we humans learn to appreciate your gift.

The Pull of Gravity

by Kathryn Ibrahim

When you are sixteen you are fragile,
only you don't know it.
At any moment the earth will open up
swallowing you into its fiery belly.

Spencer died—he took his own life,
he put his father's lawnmower in the back of his car,
the fumes silently snuffing out his fears.

And that is how it goes—one moment you are
watching a film with your friends,
and the next you are sitting in your front room seeing your mom fade
into the furniture, while the floor opens up pulling you downward.

Spencer's hands are cold and stiff,
but his cuticles—still red-stained from making pizzas—scream life.
I wait for him to jump up and say, "Syke!" He doesn't.

Days, weeks, months go by, and I am both at once
on the earth, and in the earth.
I am clinging to the surface with all my strength,
although, it too seems to want to silently leave me.

Spencer's voice fades from my memory,
I forget what he smells like. I can't seem to remember his laugh.
I try to talk to him just like we used to. But he doesn't want to talk.

Yet, the world still turns, and with each turn
I inch out of the gaping hole that grips onto me—trying to keep me inside.
But it can't. Because when you are eighteen you are stronger
than you thought you were.

Spencer's absence still clings to me. But I no longer ask, "Why?"
I've seen the gaping hole in the earth. I've been inside
—felt the unstoppable pull of gravity.

Somehow I succeeded in pulling myself out. So now, I search
for the sinking, reaching hands, bringing them back to the spots of the earth
where there are no holes. Because at thirty-three you are smarter than
you thought you were. You know why you didn't sink.

Lenses

by Rylie Muir

I ran through the dark, bare feet softly landing on the ground despite my harsh pace. I had to run. I had to leave, because I had no other opportunity like this one. The escape took months to prepare for, years to tediously plan. I was finally out. Outside of the dreary underground encampment I was forced into, out of the militia that I was groomed to join, out of the brutal conditions of life in The Compound. I was as free as the little brown-feathered birds I remember watching soar outside the barred windows when I was a child, as free as the wind that would gently breathe by. I didn't know who else made it out, but I could learn later. I would, without fail, find at least some of the others who had escaped. For now, however, self-preservation was paramount. I wouldn't be able to help those still trapped if I was recaptured, after all. I just had to get far away, build myself back up, and make my way back. That's the only way this mad scheme of mine—to return and save who I could and try to take down the mastermind of the experimentations—could possibly work. A creature, a monster like me, I could only do so much, and right now saving everyone was far beyond out of the question. Right now, I could only vow. As I heard the various distorted calls of my fellow hybrids—some vicious, some injured, some victorious, some panicked, some suddenly falling silent—I made a solemn promise. I would come back one day to that horrible facility, and I would get as many out as I could.

I couldn't help but reflect on my time in The Organization, which was a mysterious and strange place even for those of us that lived there. When I had first arrived I was only a small child, about eight or so when they abducted me. It went smoothly enough for them, carefully driving down the street in their ironically labeled 'Animal Sanctuary' van. Then the wolfish people jumped out, plucked me from the lawn, and added me to their collection. I was placed into a cage with another child, a small and dark-haired boy that had a strange Brit-

ish dialect and even stranger amber eyes, who introduced himself as William.

The first compound was an old, deteriorated hospital building. It was dingy from years of abandonment, or so I assumed. Most of the windows were broken, and the letters previously proclaiming the name of the hospital were mostly gone—save for the faded red ‘R’, the ‘a’, and the collective ‘Hosp.’ William and I, along with three others this particular hunting party had managed to swipe, were herded through the doors. With occasional prodding from the guards, we made our way through the main hospital building before descending down multiple flights of stairs. The march continued down a large hallway, its lights flickering and inconsistent with the amount of lumination it shed. There were many doors along this hallway, and we were escorted to a cell-block and directed into the rooms that would be our own—for a time.

The cells weren’t horrible, they were rather sterile and more than a little lackluster, but I had an egress window I could see out of, despite the rusty metal bars that blocked most things from my line of sight. I had a room neighboring William’s, and I was able to uphold a friendship with him for a while, until our evaluation tests. These tests calculated many things—intelligence, stamina, strength, as well as other abilities. They lasted a year before the evaluators selected what we were to become—a predatory creature such as a lion or a hunted animal such as a gazelle, a member of the battle-based Warrior, Assassin, or Guardian Guilds, or a member of the Nursing, Caregiver, or Healer Guilds. Despite the Compound seeming like a mass of different creatures all socializing with each other, they knew well. The more unstable predatory animal hybrids were not allowed to be around the easily panicked prey animal hybrids.

I was sorted with the other victims that were recently culled from the general population. When my test results were satisfactory enough, I was taken from my cell to a surgical room far from the living quarters, where my molecular structure met that of a Snow Leopard. My new form allowed for different assets, and my increased stealth, stamina, and senses earned me a spot in the Assassins Guild of the Organization. It was at this point in time I met Roselia,

a tall woman with red hair and forms of a doe. At the age of twenty she was a Caretaker for the hybrids in the Battalion section of the compound, of which my Assassin's guild was a subsection. Caretakers and young predators were among the few exceptions to the law of no mingling between the hunters and the hunted.

Roselia was a little frazzled—scatterbrained, easily distracted, and not always able to manage all of us. Yet, despite these factors, she was also fun. She would play games with all of the children she had under her care, show us love and devotion, as well as teach us ways to be good people—a feat in and of itself, as caring for newly created predatory children was above and beyond a handful. She took a special shining to me—a young, shy, and insecure hybrid—and said the reason she liked me so was because of how similar we were. Some days, when most of the other hybrid children had fallen asleep, she would talk to me and tell me about how much she wished to take me away from the Compound and keep me away.

Of course, that was just one of many fantasies. The rebellion wouldn't happen for another ten years, when I was nineteen and she was thirty. Now it was my job to get Roselia, William, and the other hybrids far away from the Organization that had held us captive for years. We fought back and a new war has started. And while this first battle may have been won, we have many more to go.



Another View/If I Could Fly

by Isabel Wilson

The Train

by Jordan Mills

“Momma? I’m scared.”

“Oh baby, come here,” I murmured, reaching out to my little girl. I pulled her close to me and held her tightly. As I held her I could feel her shaking and her heart racing. “Sweetheart, we’ll be ok, I promise.”

The train rattled on the track, the noise drowning thought as we passed through a tunnel. The open car door gave no protection from the swarm of snowflakes swirling in the wind. This was the big one. The biggest and worst snow storm of the year. White was all we could see. Hunger and the cold were all we could feel, gnawing at our bodies like wolves.

All of us were huddled in our units of Masters and descendants, trying to stay warm. Masters Kaunarah sat at the open door together. Their descendant sat near them with the unit’s blanket around his shoulders. The Masters were whispering. We all knew what about. Each unit would have their turn at the door, to sit and whisper and decide if they would take the jump. It was the highest sign of rebellion, to jump. If you didn’t die from jumping out of the train the Masters from the Brighter District would surely kill your entire unit for disobedience.

Amma Kaunarah stood up and walked back to her unit’s selection. “We will stay and serve the Brighter,” she said. Her descendant and partner followed her back to their space. They, like every one else ever selected from the Feeder District, had chosen that to die by slavery was better than a death in rebellion.

“Masters Nim and Ander Lazon, you and your descendant may go to the door,” said the Head Master.

I held my little girl tightly as Ander and I shuffled to the frame of the door. We sat together in the current of freezing wind to mask our voices. I knew what I would choose, but the vote had to be unanimous.

“Stay,” I said.

“Jump.”

“Ander, no, we can’t. We’ll all die if we jump.”

“We’ll die if we stay.”

“We’ll die faster if we jump.”

“Good, it will be over faster than if we stay.”

“We won’t have a place to go to. You’re already injured anyway, so we can’t run even if we make the jump. We don’t have warm enough clothes, or food, or water. It’s not safe Ander. We can’t jump.”

I was about to stand and declare our loyalty to the Brighter when Ander pulled me closer to him than laws allow.

His mouth was by my ear, his hands on my arm, our bodies sharing a tiny shiver of warmth across our shoulders in the frozen wind. His breath on my neck was warm as he whispered: “Nim. Nim, please. Nim, my love, listen.”

I pulled back slightly and looked at him. Didn’t he know there are laws against what he was doing? The words he whispered in my ear and being so immodestly close are both more dangerous than telling me to jump.

A cold hand brushed from my brow to my jaw as Ander leaned in again. “A short life in the light with those you love is better than a long one in the dark being tormented by the hands of your enemies. Please Nim. I know we might not make it, but I can’t bear the idea of you suffering in the Brighter District. I love you. Jump.”

I know they can’t hear us. I know that I am the only one who heard Ander say he loved me, but I am still terrified for his sake. I pulled his hand away from my face and held it tightly in mine. Now I was the one being unlawful.

My little girl tugged on the collar of my shirt. “Momma, I’m scared.”

“I know, but you don’t need to be sweetie, everything is going to be just fine.”

Without a word, my little unit–no, my little family–stood up at the door and watched the snow fly around us. I took a step forward to the edge of the train car.

A short life in the light with those I love.
We jumped.

Kaleidoscope

by Rylie Muir

There's something in my head,
It keeps me up at night,
It won't let me go to bed,
says I'm not worth the fight.

It plagues my dreams,
distorting them into nightmares,
and when I awake it seems,
nobody truly cares.

From what I can gather,
It likes to play games with a twist.
A messed up game of 'Would You Rather,'
"Create shame or recall an opportunity missed?"

I know It is a liar,
my own little devil that misguides me,
quite the opposite of a Friar,
It is intent on not letting me see.

Not the truth, at least,
just a barbaric kaleidoscope,
It is a carnivorous beast,
and I'm just a trope.

Eyes Firmly Shut

by *Katelynn Isle*

Eyes firmly shut; not wishing to see
Hands in fists; willing to still stay
Ears plugged; not ready to hear
Lips glued together; afraid of what they may say

Eyes opening; accepting
Hands releasing; ready to let go
Ears hearing; not quite listening
Lips opening to let out a breath, unknowingly held

Eyes filled with salt; accepting but not ready
Hands on chest; why won't air enter
Ears reverberating; unwilling to listen
Lips forming an unheard cry

Eyes shining; life brought back to them
Hand holding another's
Ear listening to ineffable peacefulness
Lips forming sweet smiles

Lungs working again

The Hail

by Isabel Wilson

The hail pounded against the window.
Outside all was darkness, it was late
but the noise had woken me. Softly
rap tap, tap, tap. Rap! I had to see
what was going on outside, so I
climbed out of bed to stare out the
window. It was too hazy from the wind
Blowing the hail to see, so I just sat.
The hail pounding against the window.

To Forget

by Jordan Mills

“She’s awake.”

“Bring her.”

Peller nodded and retreated out of the room.

My muscles tensed as I sat a little taller in my chair behind my desk. The smell of pine and lemon drifted through the room, filling my lungs with a cool feeling of healing. The sun blinked through the gauzy curtains and kissed the back of my neck with soft warmth. There was a small knock and a shuffle as Peller and the girl entered the room. I stood up and helped Peller lead her to the chair in front of my desk. Once the girl was settled Peller bowed and left the room with quiet steps.

“Welcome, my dear, to the Chapel of the Forgotten.”

“Where?” she asked.

“The Chapel of the Forgotten. This is a sanctuary for those who wish to forget.”

“Forget what?”

“Anything,” I whispered. I sat down and regarded the girl. Soft blonde curls framed her face and stretched down past her shoulders. Her wide innocent brown eyes darted around the room, soaking in all of the new information. Her hands were clasped tightly together in her lap; a ring glittered on her left hand. “Some come here to forget love loss, responsibility... Grief.”

“Can they remember if they want to?”

“Yes, eventually the serum will wear off and you will be given a choice of remembering or forgetting again. Many people bring little things with them into the Chapel to help them remember on their own. Most return to their lives when they feel they remember enough. Some here have chosen to forget and start new lives, and leave the Chapel after the disorientation fades. They live their new lives and as the serum wears off the memories come back as distant

whispers, like a story someone told them long ago.”

“I don’t have anything to forget, why am I here?”

“My dear, you’ve already forgotten,” I said. I pulled the girl’s box from the counter behind my desk. “I will not tell you what you’ve chosen to forget, but I will at this time return your things to you, and possibly you will be able to remember on your own.”

The girl opened the box slowly and pulled out a small card. “Savannah Rowey. Born September 17. 28 years old.” She set the card aside and pulled out the next item. “A baby blanket? Why is this here?”

“I can’t tell you, but you believed it would help you remember and help you heal from whatever you’ve forgotten.”

She brought the blanket to her face and took a deep breath against the soft fabric. Something glittered in her eyes as she exhaled. “Why did I do this? I wish I could remember.”

“It must have been a very important reason. As I recall, upon your arrival you said you would choose to forget everyday if you had to. I suppose we will learn just how true that is as you remember. I’ll leave you to your things. Peller?”

Peller opened the door and picked up the girl’s box. “Follow me,” he said. “Thank you.”

“Oh Savannah, don’t thank us yet.”

As the door closed behind her I silently grieved for her. She couldn’t remember them, didn’t know she was grieving. Someday she would remember her husband and child. Someday their death would be a distilled memory she would always wish was an imagined nightmare.

The Fall

by Paula Dee

What calls leafs on trees allowing the colors to change?
What signals now is the time?
Departure from their branches high above our reach, slowly floating through
the air.
Their journey replenishes the earth, from where it all began?
Preparation for Spring has begun as the cool Autumn slumber sets in.
The trees spirits are old, strong and sturdy, knowing just what to do.

Birds songs now quieting, some have departed, no more shelter there in.
Finding a place of refuge where we may never go.
Sights and sounds escape our awareness of distance places beckoning.
Squirrels quiet their chattering, burrowing somewhere deep inside.
All of this temporarily—until it is time for renew.

The beginning, the end, cycles—continuums lay in waiting,
It is the place nature goes that we are not allowed, yet are part of.
From where did it all begin and hope there is—it never ends.



The Tree

by Paula Dee

Abused

by Alexis Isle

Dear person in an abusive relationship,
Past
Present
Or Future
I am you
I was you
They say that they love you but part of you doesn't feel whole
Part of you does trust them
You tell yourself you do
You tell yourself you love them
You tell yourself that whatever they say or do is out of love
When they tell you to choose them or the other people who matter most
"They just love me that's all" you say that smile in place
When they tell you what to wear or how to talk
"They just know what's best"
When they beat you down with words or fists
"I deserve it, I made them angry."
When you leave them and you see people who resemble them
You stop in your tracks
Your breathe gets heavy
You start to feel lost
Tears threaten to fall
Until
Someone comes and keeps you grounded
Someone tells you that the abuser was wrong
Someone tells you that you don't need to change
The only hand or word that those people let touch you are of love and care

You may have been abused

It will hurt

It will be hard

But someone will come along, a stranger, a family member, a friend

They will shield you from that pain, even shield you from yourself

They will show you that you are worth everything and deserve none of what
you got

Your abuser can't hurt you anymore

Only you can do that.

Always yours,

A fellow abused

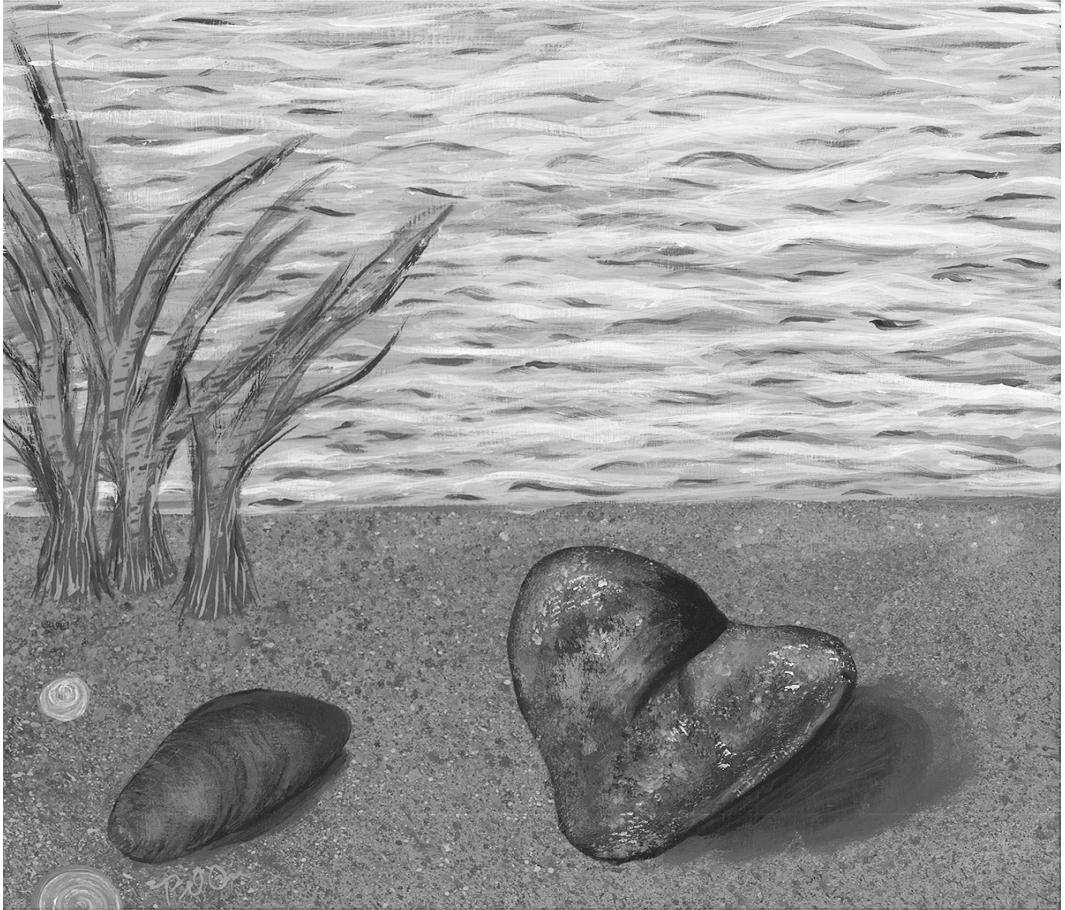
Heart Shaped Rock

by Paula Dee

They are everywhere all shapes and sizes. All you have to do is look; yes there is a little known phenomenon until you are made aware! Now that you are reading these words. I can almost guarantee you will see, although a different meaning there will be for you and me.

One day you might see a treasure so grand and mighty that all you can do is adore its beauty. You will hold it first in sight, then perhaps cling to it tight. Take it in—it's more than a mere stone. It's been there for millions maybe billions, yea—eons of time. It's composed of elements of the beginning of life itself. It's not a mere cold, lifeless, dead thing, it has a story tell.

Go ahead stop: look, touch, pick it up if you can. Hold it close and listen deep within, now you have a story tell and pass on. The first one was given to me by my granddaughter Alexis on the beach at Ediz Hook, in Port Angeles, Washington.



The Rock
by Paula Dee

The Fox and the Hare

by Rylie Muir

Little rabbit, swift and shy,
Trusted the fox, dark and sly.
Let him in your head,
His words you cannot shed.
False betrayal you believed,
Rage and hurt have taken seed.

Oh, woe is the rabbit,
Who just can't handle it.
Lost and seemingly alone,
Allowed the fox into your home.
Poor rabbit, a mistake you've made,
Now you have joined the shade.

A shadow just as much as he,
The fox that allowed you to 'see'—
His lies, making you second-guess,
Now your insecurities won't allow rest.
Certainty you've lost, little rabbit,
Trust in an enemy caused it.

The Lights

by Jordan Mills

Everyone I know thinks stories start with a profound realization or a sentence provoking deep thought, but all I can see is a veil of mystery placed stiffly in my hands. Why does everyone seem to have a mystical and fictional love for dead trees? It seems silly, really. I'm not an avid reader, as you can probably tell by now, but I am encouraged to tell you about my experience by writing you a story.

Right now you need to know I am talking to you. Not to anybody else. You chose me, now I choose you. I choose you to know my secrets and my feelings. I choose you to see my side, and I'll try to see the other side too, I heard that some people like to read both sides of a story.

So here I'll begin my story with my thought provoking profound realizations: Where do books come from? Where do stories begin? How do we know where a story really ends?

To answer my own deep questions, I can only say I don't know. Because it's different for everyone. For some people, stories begin on page one and end on the last page. But how did the main character get to that specific place so you could join them on their journey? Where do they go after you stop thinking about them?

Mysteries, mysteries.

That's why I don't read very much, (if at all) because I want to know how the story was possible. I want to know the work the writer did to shape such a character that could do this exact thing at this exact time so their readers could be there too.

In speaking with my peers, I received strange looks and they said things like "overcomplicated" and "weirdo." But that's okay, because you're here now. Hello my friend, I'm Scottie. Now you can hear my side of my real story, this first bit was just a ploy to tell you a little bit about myself. It hasn't worked, has

it? Anyway, I guess I ought to start my story before you get bored. I heard that happens in books sometimes, too.

It was a simple beginning, really.

I knew it was morning by the sound of my mother's soft footsteps coming down the hall towards my bedroom. Her footsteps sounded happy this morning, like she'd heard her favorite song on the RD (Rhythm Display) while getting dressed. I heard her pause at Sadie and Connor's bedroom doors. She knocked and tapped in the 'Start' code on the door panel to open their doors and windows, turn on their RD and set their closets to their Risdin Hospital uniform.

"Up and up my darlings!" she said. She didn't knock on my door, though. She quietly opened it and stepped inside softly. I turned my head towards her.

"Good morning," I said. I sat up a little, pushing off my blankets and scooting up onto my pillows. "You sound happy today."

"Good morning. I am feeling happy, I'm glad you can hear it," said Mom. There was a shuffle of fabric as my mother fussed with her uniform, maybe tugging the fabric into a more comfortable place on her body, maybe just fidgeting, unsure what to say next.

"Is it time to get ready to go to the hospital now?" I asked. I ran my fingers along the soft fabric of my pajamas, enjoying the texture of the fleece on my skin. It felt like wearing sheep. Except without the squirminess of the live animal. That would be cruel and weird.

"Oh, um, sorry, yes. It's time to get ready for your last check in." Mom took a couple jerky steps closer then stopped.

It took me a moment to register why she had apologized to me. She must have taken the half of a second reply of a head nod, instead of saying the words out loud. My thoughts were interrupted by my mother's quiet fingers on my shoulders.

Once her fingers were wrapped around the collar of my shirt I grabbed the bottom of it and started to pull it off. Chills prickled on my skin as it was ex-

posed to the cool morning air. After making sure the shirt didn't pull away any of the bandages on my back and neck, my mother discarded the shirt onto the floor and pulled a fresh Uniform from the dresser and laid them at the end of my bed. She checked the bandages to make sure I hadn't pulled the stitches or the tubes leading into my nerves before pushing the collar of the fresh Risdin Hospital shirt onto my forehead and down onto my neck.

The morning ritual by this point was at a stage where I was no longer irritated with it, but I wasn't yet grateful for this adaptation of my entire life. The surgery was happening in stages; first was the acceptance that something could change. It was my responsibility to accept and agree that I personally (not just my mother) wanted to continue on the course of fixing my eyes.

It was a difficult first step. I was quite comfortable in my familiar surroundings, knowing where everything was by how it felt and being able to hear better than most of my classmates. But I was also uncomfortable with the quiet conversations never truly quiet enough to not be overheard about my weaknesses. So what I had to ask people to read to me? So what I had to have a special board so I could write? What really made me want to have the surgeries was the fact that I had never seen the biggest holiday celebration; the Inyabin lights. As my brother and sister cried out in awe every winter at something so beautiful I sat quietly, listening to the dull hum of electricity and cars and cold feet stomping off snow.

Everyone loves the Inyabin lights. And so, with the lights to look forward to at the end of these painful procedures, I agreed to have the surgeries.

The next step was the preparation. I had to be as healthy as possible before the procedures so the decline of health during the series wouldn't be so dramatic and catastrophic. By the time of my first surgery I had gained forty pounds of muscle and fat to accommodate the medical gross I would have to endure.

After the first few surgeries I was tempted to call it quits because of the pain, and the idea that after all of this, my eyes still wouldn't work. After being blind my whole life I was beginning to feel dread creep into my soul because of

what I might see, or what I might not. I had imagined what my mother might look like for months, years, even. I pictured her as the most beautiful person in the world. She would have kindest, warmest face of anyone I knew. Connor and Sadie I pictured as having stronger features, sharper, more defined, because they were so outgoing and brave. But the idea of actually seeing them all for the first time scared me deeply. What if they didn't look the way I saw them in my head? Would I recognize them when I met them with my working eyes?

After a while I consoled myself with the simple thought I'll get there when I get there. I decided I wouldn't worry about it until I could actually answer my questions.

The last, and so far the most challenging stage of the surgeries is the healing. Because the doctors have been inside my body so many times my body has found it harder and harder to heal after a surgery. Thus the bandages on my back and neck. After my most recent surgery they decided to put in an NVM (Nerve Vessel Monitor) tube to help the healing of my spinal cord. If I listened very hard I could hear the purr of the machine buzzing in my back using the newest technology of Light Arrangement to encourage my cells to mesh together, leaving no scarring or strained tissue.

"Scottie," My mother said softly, nudging my arm a little. "Did you fall asleep there?"

"No, I was just giving a little bit of back story to my memory," I said. "Reminding myself how I got to this place, this time, this now."

"You always say the strangest things," she said.

"Maybe it's because I can't see," I joked. "I lose my spot on my life story and have to remind myself. I have to internalize it all over again."

"Well, from what the doctors have seen in your tests, which, I must say, have been extremely promising, you'll be seeing the Inyabin lights very soon."

"How soon?"

"Dr. Warren said she can get you all ready to see by this Inyabin. But it will all depend on how today goes."

She helped me to stand and held me steady as I changed into my pants.

Once she deemed me properly dressed she hooked the NVM power-capsule to my belt, taking care to keep the tubing from tangling. She pressed my Guider into my hand and followed me to the dining room. I tuned out then until I realized we were sitting across from Dr. Warren. What a jump, I'm never tuning out in the Mobile, I thought.

"Scottie, focus. Can you feel this? Are you in any pain?" Dr. Warren asked. Loud clicking was ringing in my ears. Someone was snapping their fingers. I tried to feel something other than the zap of the snap in my eardrums but couldn't identify another sensation.

"Feel what? I don't know what I'm feeling," I replied. The snapping stopped and I was suddenly overwhelmed by the feeling of my NVM buzzing violently under my bandages. "Stop! What is that?" I cried.

"Don't worry Scottie," my mother said, rubbing my shoulder calmly. "We're just trying to take the monitor out, Dr. Warren said your nerves are ready to heal on their own. You were convulsing so we were worried you were in pain. You didn't respond, we were so worried!"

My heart slowed from its panicked pace, my muscles relaxed and the doctors were able to remove my NVM. After a few more routine checks, the Risdin doctors concluded that I would need only one more surgery, this time on my eyes, and I would be able to see the Inyabin lights.

I began the countdown that night, and continued by celebrating and panicking a little more each day. Finally the day came that I was required to fast to prepare for my new vision.

The day of my final surgery was three days before the Inyabin lights would be turning on for the first time of the season. It was uncommonly warm and the sun tickled my cheeks as I removed my scarf to try to stay cool and collected.

My mother told me while I was in the recovery room that the procedure had gone seamlessly. Part of me didn't believe her because my eyes itched under the bandages like they were being danced on by a hoard of ants. Dr. Warren had warned me the Light Arrangement could be uncomfortable, but she

hadn't warned me for this.

"Your eyes are beautiful Scottie, the doctors were able to use your birth eyes, so you don't look any different than you did before!" said one of the nurses as he changed my bandages the next morning. He sounded overly bubbly about my eyes. I had no reference to what my eyes looked like before. He could be lying. I didn't know what to believe. I resolved to ask my mother when she returned.

I didn't get the chance to ask her. Dr. Warren came to collect me the day of Inyabin Awakening, later in the evening the lights would begin to glow and the celebrations would start. She helped me into the Mobile, taking my Guider and giving it to a Risdin Hospital worker.

"Scottie will not need this anymore," she said. She climbed into the Mobile with me and we started off in a direction I couldn't identify.

Soon I was so lost trying to orient where we were and where we were going I began to feel dizzy and had to put my head between my knees, being careful not to disturb my bandages. I didn't notice the Mobile come to a stop until Dr. Warren put a hand on my shoulder.

"Come on, you don't want to be late," she whispered.

She took my hand and led me through the hoard of people assembled for the gathering. People were talking and singing, stomping their feet and eating the extra rations they had all saved for this huge holiday.

Familiar hands touched my face, and I heard my siblings' voices for the first time in two days. They had to attend their lessons before the holiday, so they couldn't come to Risdin as often as they wanted to, my mother had responsibilities as well, so I was desperately homesick after spending so much time in the hospital and away from their presence.

"Hey Scottie, Happy Inyabin Awakening!" Connor said, taking my thin, medically gross body into a tight embrace. He held me longer than the prescribed four seconds, but with Inyabin Awakening drawing ever closer the Keepers wouldn't be watching for this small breach of conduct.

"Hurry, it's almost started!" Sadie said. The excitement was trembling in

her voice, my heart began to swell with anticipation.

Dr. Warren helped me into a chair and began to remove the bandages from around my eyes. The Inyabin Awakening music began to rise up from the people, singing along with the melody playing from the community RD. Finally the bandages were completely off—for the first time in two years.

I opened my eyes. I saw nothing.

“What’s wrong? I can’t see anything. Why can’t I see anything?” I cried. My heart began to pound in my chest. All that medical gross for nothing. Nothing! How could I have been such a fool?

“Scottie, calm down!” said Sadie. “The lights haven’t turned on yet, it’s just dark.”

At the loudest point of the Inyabin Song, I saw it. The first flicker of light in my whole life. I almost screamed with joy. The lights grew in brightness and intensity as the people began to add their own songs to the Inyabin Awakening, singing about what they learned and how they had worked and all of the things that happened to them since the last Inyabin celebration. Everyone held a personal Beacon and swayed to the soft song playing from the RD. I stood up and looked around for the first time ever, soaking in the lights of Inyabin, the biggest holiday in the Frinek calendar.

Something shifted behind me, so I quickly turned my head to listen, eyes closed. I laughed a little at the habit, and opened my eyes very slowly.

There they were, standing in front of me like a row of angels. I knew them. My mother smiled at me, “Hello Scottie, Happy Inyabin sweetie,” she said.

I ran to her, tears falling from my eyes making it difficult to see but I could see! I held her and cried. Sadie and Connor joined in the embrace, all of us singing to Inyabin the praises of this moment. It didn’t matter about the lights then, while I was holding my family. All that mattered was them.

Stories are supposed to end with a wonderful closing phrase, right? One the reader will remember forever and love? Something that will show them the whole of the story in one sentence, but also leave a little room to show you that

the story doesn't end, that the characters continue.

If I could tell you something that would give you this peace it would be 'and they died' because we all know what happens in the end. But I won't say that because I'm not dead just yet. I will instead say that this story, these characters, my family, my culture, my people, my thoughts, and your reading is all
To Be Continued.

Profanity: Why People Swear

by Leeyan Buclatin

Swearing has become more common. According to The Washington Post kids are learning to swear at an earlier age because it solidifies their place in society. Hearing this language from adults influences their behavior. In an article from The Daily Mail, a Psychologist claimed that it's also good for people. Cursing is such a natural part of human speech development that it also became an outlet for people to express their feelings of enthusiasm, astonishment, or just simply associate it with any emotion. Above all, what's the real reason people swear? Is it beneficial? Is it also positive?

In fact, taboo words have been in pop culture for so long that it's in graphic novels, video games, books, movies, and especially in social media. According to psychcentral.com, from the Association of Psychological Science's Perspectives on Psychological Science, "Taboo words can be used for a variety of reasons, including to achieve a specific reaction from others. Swearing injects

a direct, succinct emotional component into the discussion, usually in order to express frustration, anger or surprise (up to two-thirds of our swearing is just for such expressions)." In fact, if swearing is used to offend someone, then it can be a substitute for physical abuse. "We then learn that we may be able to say a swear word in one social context, but not another."

Of major concern is the fact that children are learning to swear earlier than they used to. From The



Washington Post, according to Timothy Jay, a psychology professor, “By the time kids go to school now, they’re saying all the words that we try to protect them from on television,” Jay said. “We find that swearing really takes off between [ages] 3 and 4.” Since they are children it’s obvious that they don’t know what they’re actually saying, but they usually hear it from adults. Children also mimic words to make sounds and see how other people respond. Also stated by The Washington Post, “If children are not exposed to profanity, they will not begin using it. Though television, cartoons and the world at large are full of curse words, children are most likely to hear adult language at home.” It’s also a natural part of human speech development as stated by psychcentral.com, “We learn which words are taboo and which words are not through our normal childhood development.”

Nevertheless, it has beneficial and positive aspects. According to The Daily Mail, from senior lecturer Dr. Stephens, “We want to use more taboo words when we are emotional. We grow up learning what these words are and using these words while we are emotional can help us to feel stronger.” He also stated that, “The stereotype is that those who swear have a low I.Q. or are inarticulate is wrong. It is rich emotional language.”

Swearing is an emotional coping mechanism which makes people feel more resilient. When asked if this kind of vulgar language is good, bad, or just harmless. a female junior McKenna Keyes noted, “I think it’s just harmless, people just use it for expression, but it’s bad when people swear just to start a fight or be rude to somebody.” In conclu-

**“Under certain
Circumstances
Profanity
provides
a relief
denied even
to Prayer”**

-Mark Twain

sion, profanity doesn't always have to be a bad thing, it's a way for some people to let their emotions out, but not in a way that could turn verbal violence into physical violence. In addition, kids swearing at an earlier age could mean that they're discovering some new, unfamiliar language, so maybe it's a good idea to make them understand what they're actually saying. Profanity is part of society; it's a way for people to communicate with one another, it's only bad if the person doesn't express it the way they want it to be conveyed.

A Random Guy

by Selena Williams-Perez

A random guy today outside waiting for the city bus was hailing at my school bus like we forgot to pick him up at his station, but really the bus wasn't his bus it was my bus. I'm wondering why the guy did that today to the bus. Was he waving at the bus driver or at all of us students or did he see something on the bus that caught his eye and was like "hey there's something on your bus?!" The guy seemed perfectly fine but maybe he had a mental illness. Who knows though?

Hidden

by Kathryn Ibrahim

It was below freezing in Berlin. There was a howling wind outside that came in bursts and was so strong that even the trimmed hedges outside seemed to be waving like the German flag. We sat at the kitchen table in the dark—Mama, Peter, and I—all waiting for them to show up. Papa paced the kitchen floor, a visible sweat gathering on his brow.

Mama held out her hand to Papa, “Otto, please come and sit. It is half past one and we are supposed to be sleeping. If anyone sees your shadow pacing through the window you will pique their suspicion before they even get here.”

Papa stopped pacing and scanned the three of us before realizing Mama’s wisdom and quietly moved toward the table and pulled out the wooden chair at the head of it. We sat there in silence for what felt like an eternity. The seconds ticking audibly away from the cuckoo clock in the entryway. What if they never came? What if they were stopped in the street and forced to give us up before being hauled away like so many Jews had been in recent months? Would they take us away too? Suddenly there came the knock. Three light taps on the door—pause—three light taps. They had made it.

Papa looked Mama in the eyes. I had only ever seen my Papa scared on one other occasion, but I knew his look of fear. He stood and walked swiftly to the door. For such a large man at six-two he was able to seemingly float on air. He opened the door and quickly ushered them in. He gave one quick scan of the street to make sure it was as vacant as it should be at one-thirty in the morning, and then softly shut the door and locked it. Ilse and Kurt stood quietly in the entryway, visibly shaken from their secret disappearance in the freezing February night. They must have known what I wouldn’t realize until later—that they had just left behind their parents whom they would never see again.

Mother stood and ushered them in through the kitchen. No one said a word. Peter and I stayed seated at the table. Silent. Watching. With heads

bowed, Ilse and Kurt followed Mama up the stairs to the small five by ten space that now existed between the upstairs bathroom and my bedroom. We had emptied the largest cupboard in the bathroom and Papa had cut a hole in the wall large enough for a small adult to squeeze through. Papa couldn't fit, but he had me test the space two days ago to see if I fit. I could, but I didn't know if I would be able to if I kept growing. Of course, I didn't know how long Ilse and Kurt were going to be here, but if Kurt grew like Peter who knew how long it would be before he was too large to fit through. "It will have to do," Papa had said.

Mama came down the stairs. She looked tired. I don't know if it was because it was so late, but I suspected it was because she had just risked everything by doing the most selfless and daring thing she had ever done in her life—hiding two Jewish children in her house. Mama and Papa knew the Nazis were searching people's houses, but Ilse and Kurt's father had saved Papa in the war, and Papa had said he owed them. When the Nazis started taking all the Jewish families away Mr. Baumann approached Papa and asked him to please hide and save his children. Papa couldn't refuse.

That cold February night I went to bed with my heart pounding. I listened for Ilse and Kurt on the other side of my bedroom wall. I could not hear a peep, but the fear and sadness was palpable. That night I dreamt of two dark shadows holding each other as a pool of silver tears gathered at their feet.

The Ocean's Vice

by Rylie Muir

They were playing hide and seek when he disappeared.

It didn't matter that they were on an abandoned beach surrounded by cliffs on one side of the land and a sparse forest on the other. It didn't matter that the sky was made of gray cotton, which would be lit by the occasional flash of lightning, joined by uproarious claps of thunder. It didn't matter that the ocean was infuriated, colliding against the sand and roaring with a restlessness only seen during such weather. It certainly didn't matter that they were adults in their early twenties.

What did matter was that they were having fun playing a childhood game at one of their favorite locations. What mattered was the way they could be so comfortable in a situation most had avoided by staying inside. What mattered was that their simple outing had devolved into trying to catch each other—be it in a game of tag or one of hide and seek. What mattered the most was that, despite the cold, they were kept warm with the pure, unfiltered happiness they felt.

Then he was gone.

Swept away into the sea by a wave that seemed to have a mind and body of its own, reaching for him with liquid arms.

Just like that, the normally calm alcove had become a cruel reminder of what she had lost that day.

The day Catori decided to test her luck.

The day Tarren was condemned to a life in the abyss.

The Big Picture on Procrastinating

by Leeyan Buclatin

Have you ever thought of doing your homework then deciding it's better to watch Netflix instead? Or do you just waste time staring at your phone? Welcome to the wonderful world of procrastination, a world where we delay things we know should be done. Procrastination has been long specified as laziness, but apparently, there is more to it than that. Particularly, high school

students tend to procrastinate a lot, and it's more than just time management.

First, procrastination has psychological consequences. As a result, it could affect the procrastinator's overall health. It also has been described as similar to depression. In fact, according to Timothy Pychyl, director of the



Procrastination Research Group at Carleton University in Canada and author of *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle: A Concise Guide to Strategies for Change*, “procrastinators reported more illnesses and delayed doctors’ visits [more] than non-procrastinators. Some had fewer healthy habits, because they put off exercising. Others slept less because delaying work during the day resulted in less sleep at night.” In another study, Pychyl found that procrastination-prone students drank more alcohol.

Second, procrastinating is more than just slacking off and deciding to do more pleasurable things rather than actually doing tasks that must be complet-

ed. Primarily, it becomes a major factor when it comes to controlling emotions. Furthermore, according to successconsciousness.com, “Though procrastination is often trivialized, procrastinators suffer when their careers crash or when they otherwise fail to reach their potential. Long term and wide scale, ‘the big p’ can become more than just a threat to personal health, happiness, and productivity of individuals: it can carry that threat into our companies and communities.” Another example is if you were in a group and it was your responsibility to finalize your group’s work, and then after a while you just completely forgot about it. The consequences of that mistake wouldn’t just affect you, it would affect your whole group.

In summary, particularly for students, procrastinating can affect their grades if they don’t do the work that needs to be done before the deadline (this article is definitely no exception). Surely, there are negative consequences of procrastinating. For example, a Cottonwood junior stated that she procrastinated over the summer instead of working on her research paper for her English class. She successfully finished her research paper after working on it for three hours the day before it was due. Why do people procrastinate? Cottonwood sophomore,



Sarah Mallinger noted, “People procrastinate when they don’t want to do it at that moment or they don’t want to do it at all, so they wait last minute because they’re lazy.” If procrastinating has negative consequences, does it have positive benefits? Cottonwood junior, Rhiannon Tunney thinks so, “I once read this quote that said, ‘If not for the last minute nothing would get done’ which is exactly how I handle life; a way to handle life is by getting things done.” In conclusion, procrastinating is a part of life, but putting things off to do more fun things in life can also be done later. It might be okay to delay tasks once in a while, but the more work is delayed the more work would need to be done. Chronic procrastinators you have been warned.

On a Snowy Day

by Selena Williams-Perez

On a snowy day, I woke up in the middle of the night to an owl howling outside my window. It was already chilly out and quite a winter storm we had. So I got up to have myself a meal before I go back to sleep. Just as I was done with my meal I could hear the owl again howling outside my place. Minding my own business I let the owl howl as I was going back to bed. Once I made it back to my room the owl was howling again. I wonder, “What does this owl want?”



Capital Cherry Tree

by Isabel Wilson

