

THE SHEAF ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE



ART BY:
PHILLIPIE-HENRI

2 UNION
0 COUNTY
2 COLLEGE

This magazine contains all original writing and artwork of Union County College students. The best works of all the students who participated were chosen.





ART: SOPHIA MORALES

**DESIGNER OF THE MAGAZINE:
ISABELLA BETANCUR**



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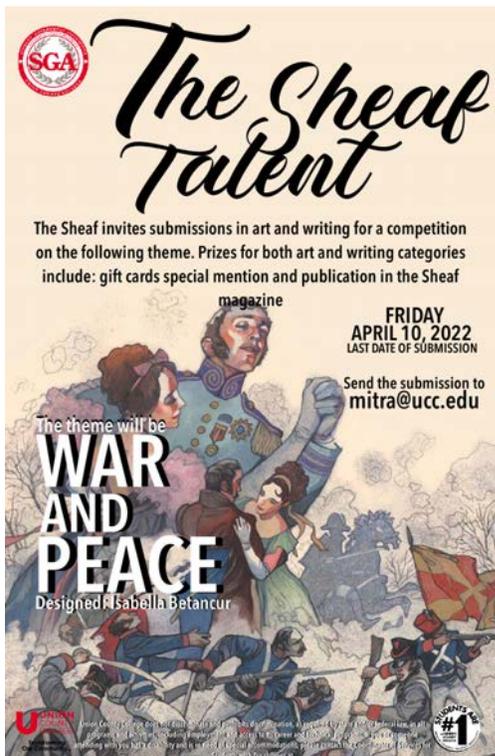
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On last page include the following
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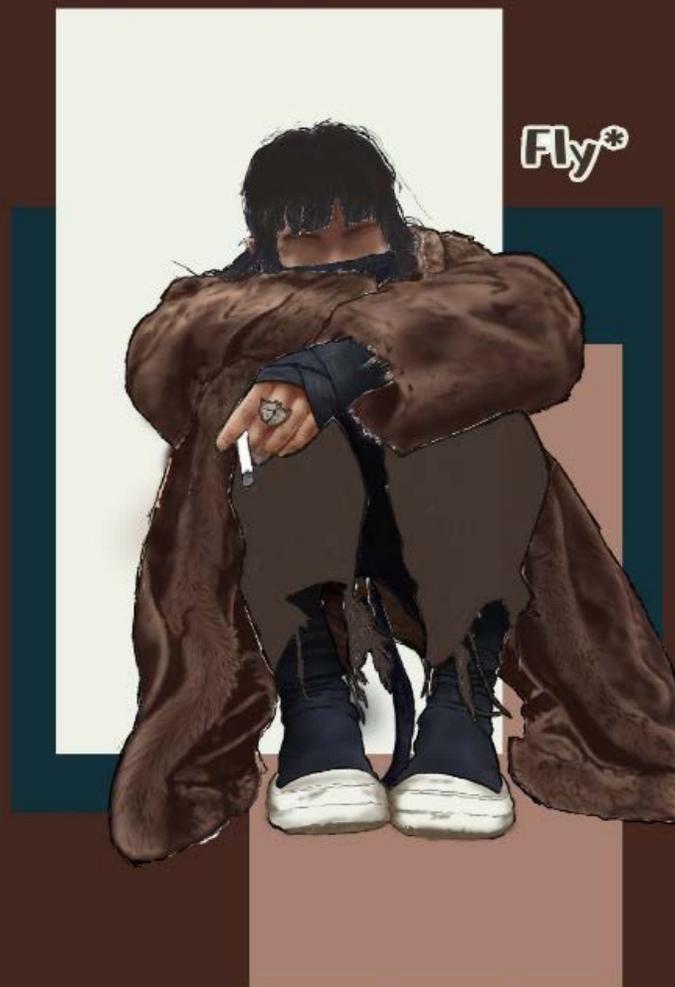
About Us

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Design by Isabella Betancur

Hello, my name is Philippe-Henri Apollon and I am a graphic design student achieving my last semester here at Union County College. I am a writer who began to write, so that I may not lose my passion in producing music. Writing and music has helped me to develop a passion for the fine arts. I've written multiple introspective texts, which I believe shape most of my writing style. I draw a lot of doodles, graphic designs, and abstract works which I would like to share with you all.

I am currently working on my brand called, BBLACC Studios, a jewelry, apparel, and visual arts young fashion house that I began in 2017 with my classmate in Haiti. Working on my life projects has taught me a lot about self-discipline, and virtues such as, patience, and faith. In my talent, work, and progress, I come before you all as an artist ready to share a little bit of my journey and perspective through it all.



THE ART OF WORDS.

➔ How it Goes Carine Medellus

Medellus He doesn't take the keys
when he goes And leaves the door
open a little He'll only be gone for a little
while He knows that I know He doesn't
close the door
When he goes Because it leaves hope
in my soul He knows that I know He
doesn't say bye when he goes Because
it leaves worry in my soul He walks
through the door, And kisses my puffy
eyes and red nose He only holds me for
a little while I know that he knows I'll
never shut the door Because that's just
how it goes



BY ZULEMI GOMEZ



BY YULIANA DE LOS RIOS

BURNS

By Carine Medellus

Medellus It is the steps that scare me. The stained rags lay across the floor followed by their labored breaths. Mona wheezes behind me. "How close are they?" "Just keep running!" Everything was good in the lunchroom as I sipped my iced tea until a scream came from the kitchen. It was the sunken eyes, empty skulls, and meatless bodies that sent us running; jumping over the lunch tables, and tripping onto the hallway. There were zombies inside the school, and one had gotten to the cafeteria lady. Mona plummets to the floor and a zombie claws at her ankle. "Run!" She throws her car keys into my hand. The zombie looks up with its far apart eyes that only Trump, the algebra teacher, could have. He sinks his loose teeth into her skin meeting warm blood. Cries leave her throat as I run past the classrooms, hurling through the red exit doors. A cool breeze brushes against my flushed face as I grab a mop and slide it through the door handles, locking them in. I soon realize Mona's car trunk has empty beer bottles scattered across pieces of paper. Loud bangs rattle the door, startling me. Lighter in hand, I ignite the papers inside the glass bottles and hurl them at the door's window. It shatters straight into Trump's head. He stumbles a few steps along with the others. Rattled and confused, he lifts his arm to remove the bottle but fire catches. They may be resilient, but everything burns.



BY ZULEMI GOMEZ

Sad pinks and happy blues
Mía Euceda



sad pinks and happy blues
are the hues i choose to use
no more mellow yellow and
pessimistic purple
for i've outgrown the act of being
servile

Sad pinks for sadist flattery
and happy blues hushing apathy
i set fire to my old palette
watching it go up in smoke
i paint over faded strokes
with my sad pinks and happy blues

The Sheaf Talent Winner



War Torn Landscape
by Tuana S McQueen

The once green and fertile
Turned soot covered landscape
Representating a fight, non verbal
Displaced families, unable to escape
A gift for human, animal and herbal
Life to inhabit harmoniously, a dreamscape
For a deed-less land a mortal quarrel
Leaves nothing but a dark smoky skyscape

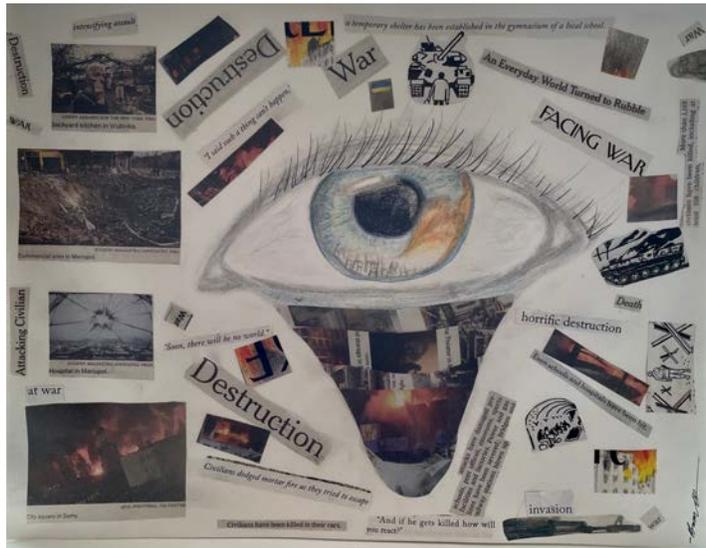


The 99 - Kettney France
I was lost looking for my soul But
each time I reach for it The
farther it goes I was trapped in
my own darkness Trying to find
a way to escape But I could not
let my demons consume me And
let Satan blind me with his lies I
chose materialistic things to
keep me content But slowly I
was losing myself Until a day I
heard a voice come to me, My
child I could not understand why
the Lord would want me, For I
am a sinner and I do not deserve
his love But that's what the
enemy was whispering in my ear
As my Lord was calling me He
left the 99 to find me and I am
no longer sitting in the pool of
darkness

➔ Love Can Kill Kettney France

As my world starts to cave in with each day passing Our memories began to fade and hallucinations of you Spread through my brain like a disease that has no cure My brain cannot fully comprehend what death is So it could not feel that my heart was no longer beating That there was no blood to pump my veins and slowly everything begin to shut down All it knows is that at one moment everything was functioning and then there was nothing left.

The Sheaf Talent Winner



Art: Grace Ng

➔ THE NIGHT BIRD By Michelle Crownie-Wright -2018

It is springtime this time of year,
Summer, it feels like I say, I swear.
A little after midnight a bird came out singing,
Like the scratch record, it keeps on playing.

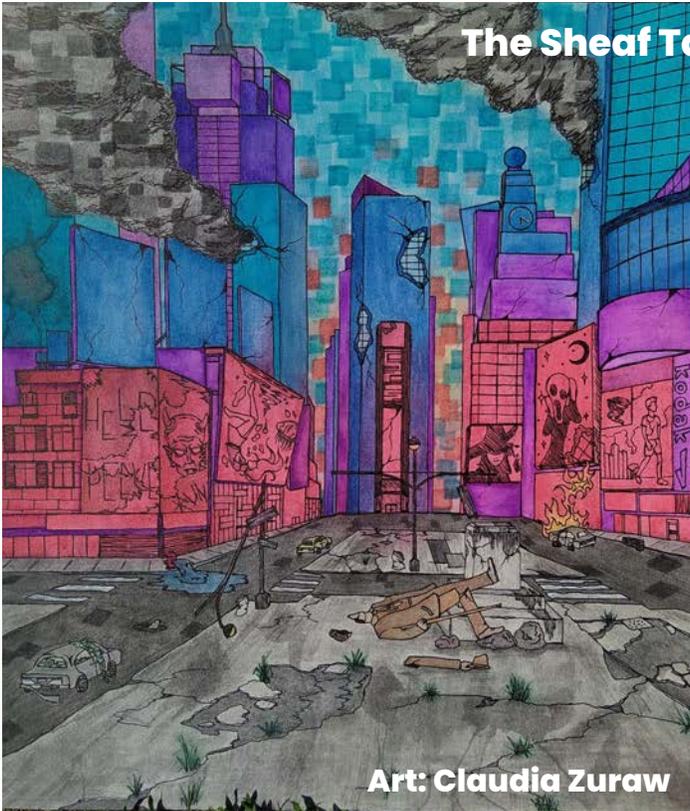
All I needed is a peaceful night's sleep,
But this tune only makes me weep.
Forbidden thoughts run to my head,
Am I wicked to wish this bird dead?



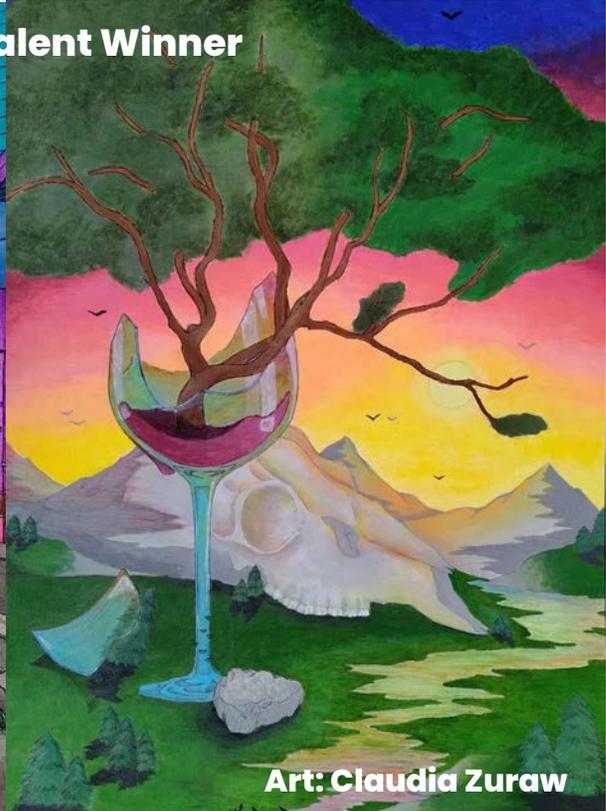
Art: Sophia Morales

I wrote this poem, spring 2018. I was in my bed one night about to sleep when this bird sat in my back yard of my apartment on a tree. It was 12:05 when I looked at the time. I have never heard a bird so early in the morning, making so much noise. I thought I was going crazy. I know early bird catches the most worm but this bird was way too early. Usually, birds comes out around 4 AM to find food. This bird, however, was a strange selfish one. I had to put earplugs in so I could fall asleep before writing this poem.

The Sheaf Talent Winner



Art: Claudia Zuraw



Art: Claudia Zuraw

➔ I think by Elthon Gonzales

I was eating with my father on the dinner table, and like usual, with resentment. It was only the two of us that night, something we'll have to get used to. My brother just moved out and my mother was working her regular Sunday night shift, leaving a pair of oversized eggshell egos. Foreign, poor quality soccer was the mediator until he turned it down to speak to me. He commented on the matter of his father, my grandfather, whom I've only met once. His situation is unpleasant, mentioning how he just finished a three-day stay at the hospital, connotatively alluding to his imminent demise. His weighted elbow to hold his shiny forehead trembled the dense, thick, potion, inviting to be flipped over and sail to its contrived habitat. Home. Wino, I said in my head. Though said nothing as he stared. The direction in which was the floor, but was staring into oblivion. He saw, himself, his father, everything, probably saw god; spoke to him maybe. I looked back after turning off the sink and briefly considered him; intaking his crooked posture, disproportionate sized, wrinkled arms, and his grey hair. And at that very moment, he was the center of the universe, the only person in the world, or he felt like. Rigin coldness, grief, and sharp pain ran through every vein of his. . There was nothing but what he saw, what he was made out of, and the never-ending cycle of thoughts that hold no true value in this American world. You can't touch them, yet we spend our whole lives trying. I turned and went back to my room to have the same happen to me. With a dejected exhale, I, too, was in the company of the same things as my father. My flesh, my life, and my thoughts, all came into consideration that same rigid coldness. That same grief, that same sharp pain, that flowed through, though my veins, meets the same blood. and there's fear. Fear that I, like him, will pass this same pain down to my own future seed. A pain felt in my legs, arms, and inside my chest. I only had was what I felt, what I saw, and what I thought. What I think.

➔ Interior Monologue by Laura Schuberts

Those pale eyes look right through me. You don't see me, you never have. Yet, your hypnotic stare blinds me, deafens me, scares me. That pain. My gut flutters. It makes me feel like I'm defying gravity. I don't mean anything to you. But with this poison swimming in my bloodstream, I don't care. Who am I kidding? Even without it, I still wouldn't care. That pain. Knowing no matter how close we stand together we will never be one. You talk to me. About nothing meaningful of course. I know you just want to fill the air with noise. You just want to be liked. We're not so different; you would know this if you cared about your words and mine. Those pale eyes look right through me. But when I look at you, I give my gaze everything I've got. But you are so beautiful; I am only human. I am desirable to you for as long as the moon is visible. I know I have an expiration date. We are not so different; you would know this if you cared. You call me over. How do I look? What should I say? What should I do? These floorboards are unstable. My lungs need air. I sit next to you; the rock in my stomach anchors me to the couch. It's so uncomfortable. You move so effortlessly, so fluid, practically floating. I talk, you don't listen. But you are so beautiful; how could you mean any harm? Those pale eyes look right through me. The speaker is muffled, the lively chatter is dulled, and heavy feet stop hitting the floor. The whole room quiets as if your eyes command silence. That pain. Of being so venerable to you. Time stands still, yet your animated body ignores this cosmic pause. The poison in my bloodstream kicks in; triggering my body to move on autopilot. We interlock, confirming what I already know; I don't mean anything to you.

➔ Stunned By Mikaella Castor

As the moon rose in the east,
She rose with it.
Dancing like an eagle,
With wings long enough to tickle her feet
She rose again and lived.
The eagle wings took off.
As she soared through the air.
Her feet lightly touched the clouds
As she nimbled on them.
She wondered to herself,
Does it ever get old?
To soar through the clouds
Without breaking her thoughts.



By Marina Romero Grullon



Candles Noura Elgazar

You loved them.
You used to say that everything dies, melts, breaks.
Everyone wanted to alight you with fire.
Like addicts, they fed off of your warmth.
It was easy to get you to smile.
how ephemeral.
how menacing it is to know that soon, the last trickle of wax will drop.

what will I do when the first love of my life crosses the great divide?
My mother, the blooming rose.
That smelled of happiness, fierce love, and unconditional kindness.
Like cinnamon, or warm vanilla.

My mother who is an incomplete symphony.
Warm, unbalanced notes.
Often, I've asked myself.
How shall I repay her?
As we grow older we tend to notice the sadness a bit more.
When I grew up, I've come to realize that all my mother's eyes bore was
sadness.
How can she be so selfless?
Hiding her pain in the midst of a bewildering world.

Ah! That rose that allowed no one to inch closer to her petals.
For if they did, the thorns would prick them.
My mother, my protector.
Oh, how the years have passed, and withered the rose, once vibrant and
vivacious
Now stricken by the burdening years.

How shall I repay her?
Oh, my mother, the petals may have withered
Yet you still smell the same.

Art: Hannah Rose Vargas



Art: Zaida Bonilla

➔ **Nature vs. Nurture**
Noura Elgazar

I was angry.
I admit.
Writhing pain, and agony.
I was angry.
I admit.
Or was I?
Was I that smiling little girl?
Pig tails, red, and purple balloons in one hand?
SpongeBob SquarePants yellow Ice-cream?
Stalling to catch a glimpse
Tom and Jerry in the background.
Was I that smiling little girl with the pig tails?

It was, wasn't it?
I am her.
She is me.
I am the product of cynicism.
No.
I am cynicism.
No.
I was born into cynicism.
No, no, no.
I am the victim of cynicism.

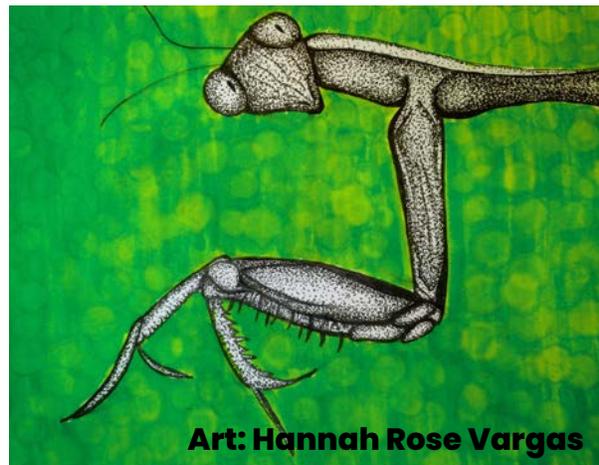
She brought me up this way.
She really did.
I picked up the pine-cones,
I searched for the perfect ones.
The ones I thought would smell of cinnamon.
Like the perfect ones at the stores.

She threw them away.
She threw all of them away.
The good ones, before the bad.
And I am helpless.
Heartbroken over my perfect pine-cones.

I am the smiling girl.
The pig tails and the balloons.
I am helpless.
I am cynical.

I smile anyway.
A broken, creased smile.
I am cynical.
But I smile anyway.
That's what she wants.

My nature, my happiness.
My cynical nurturer
Killed my nature.
Killed my happiness.



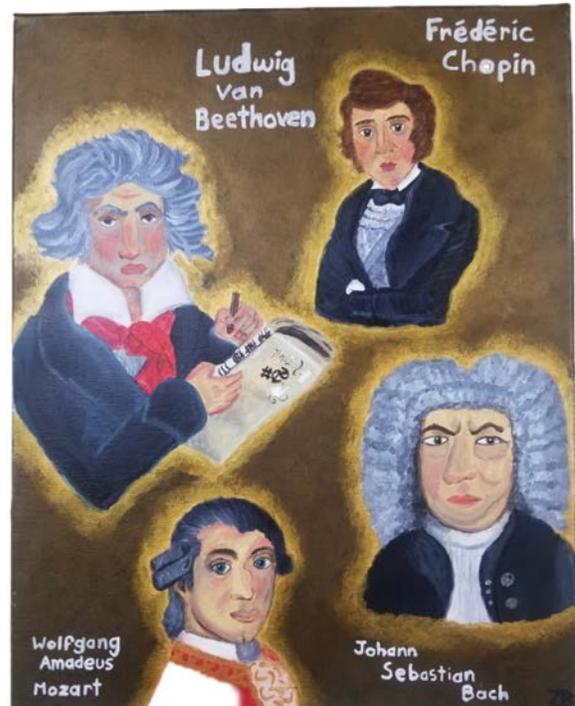
Art: Hannah Rose Vargas

The Fallen Leaf

By Danielle Vasquez

The wind blows and here I go again.
Flowing carelessly through the wind,
Life may seem easy when there are no directions.
But the truth is there are fewer connections.
You think you will find a place of your own.
But where is the solitude, where is the *home*?
A fallen leaf adrift from its comfort
No tree around, only places to wander.
Colors pass me and I move, and I go.
Shifting endlessly, endlessly alone.

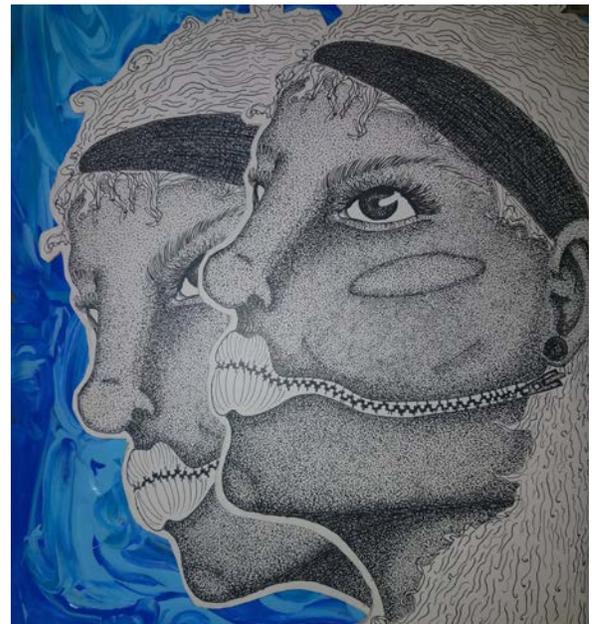
Going through the days & all its seasons
But somehow Finding love feels like treason.
There is no place to settle, no place to grow.
Out here in nature
A place I call *home*.



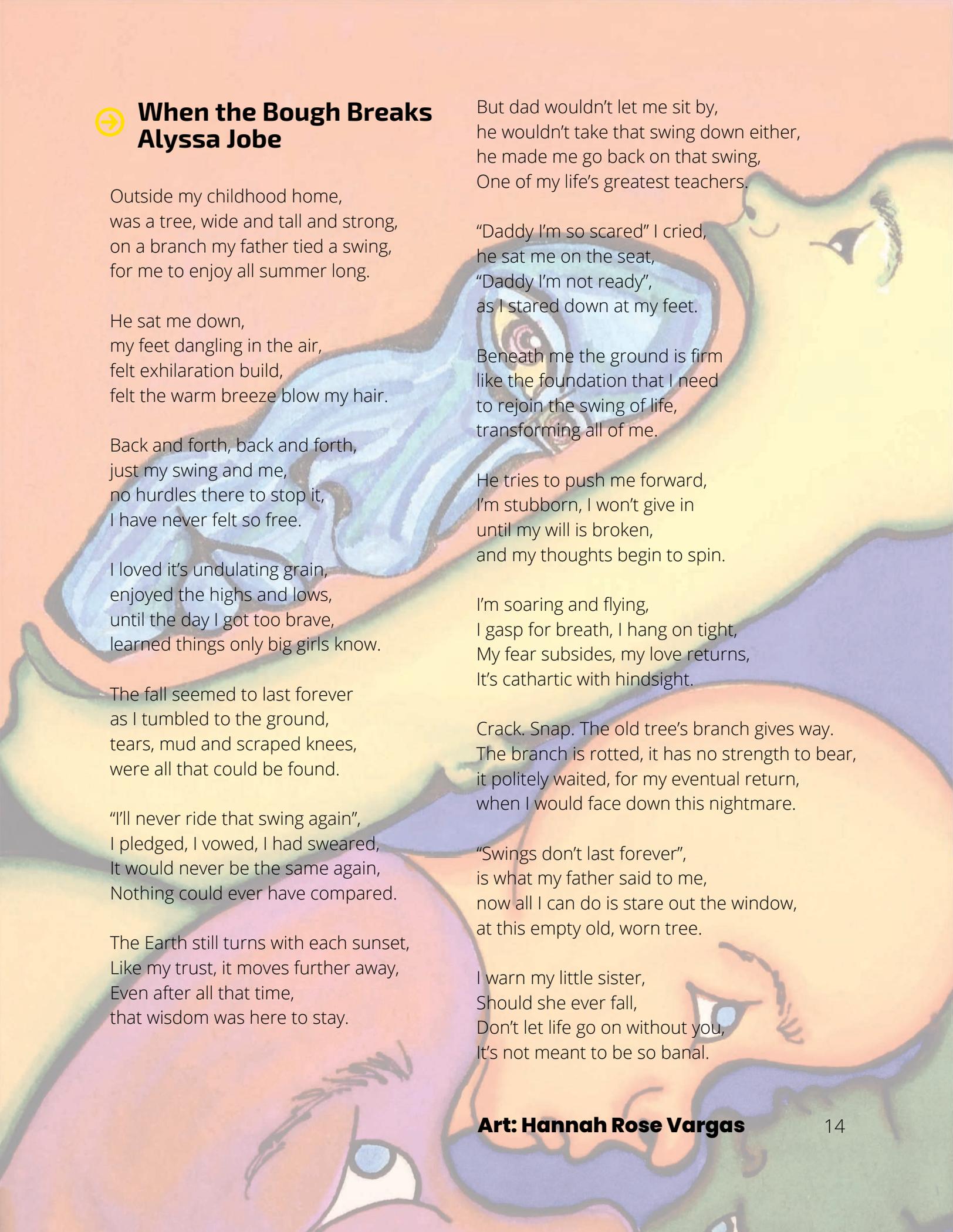
Mama Bird

By Carol Torres

Raindrops fall down her cheeks
A hint that she carries sorrow in her heart.
As she walks down the park, fall leaves give way
Natures respect, a carpet made just for her.
Night and day her eyes illuminate
Paths of those that look at her.
As she passes through the trees,
Leaves perform a joyful dance
To Touched her noble and sweet soul.
Her little birds fly close to her
They seek for warmth and shelter.
The birds do not want to leave the nest mom created
With love, wisdom, and respect.
When thunder is heard, the birds and the trees
Count to three for mom to calm down
And she gives them a little of that love that she hides.
The sky clear after that storm and shines.
Days come and leave, and mama still remains loved
Soon it will be time to leave the nest.
The birds are afraid of not seeing mama pass the park;
A place where mama lives with the trees and fallen leaves.



Art: Hannah Rose Vargas



→ **When the Bough Breaks**
Alyssa Jobe

Outside my childhood home,
was a tree, wide and tall and strong,
on a branch my father tied a swing,
for me to enjoy all summer long.

He sat me down,
my feet dangling in the air,
felt exhilaration build,
felt the warm breeze blow my hair.

Back and forth, back and forth,
just my swing and me,
no hurdles there to stop it,
I have never felt so free.

I loved its undulating grain,
enjoyed the highs and lows,
until the day I got too brave,
learned things only big girls know.

The fall seemed to last forever
as I tumbled to the ground,
tears, mud and scraped knees,
were all that could be found.

"I'll never ride that swing again",
I pledged, I vowed, I had sworn,
It would never be the same again,
Nothing could ever have compared.

The Earth still turns with each sunset,
Like my trust, it moves further away,
Even after all that time,
that wisdom was here to stay.

But dad wouldn't let me sit by,
he wouldn't take that swing down either,
he made me go back on that swing,
One of my life's greatest teachers.

"Daddy I'm so scared" I cried,
he sat me on the seat,
"Daddy I'm not ready",
as I stared down at my feet.

Beneath me the ground is firm
like the foundation that I need
to rejoin the swing of life,
transforming all of me.

He tries to push me forward,
I'm stubborn, I won't give in
until my will is broken,
and my thoughts begin to spin.

I'm soaring and flying,
I gasp for breath, I hang on tight,
My fear subsides, my love returns,
It's cathartic with hindsight.

Crack. Snap. The old tree's branch gives way.
The branch is rotted, it has no strength to bear,
it politely waited, for my eventual return,
when I would face down this nightmare.

"Swings don't last forever",
is what my father said to me,
now all I can do is stare out the window,
at this empty old, worn tree.

I warn my little sister,
Should she ever fall,
Don't let life go on without you,
It's not meant to be so banal.

Art: Hannah Rose Vargas

➔ **The Intangible Mystique** **Alyssa Jobe**

Loving someone's never easy
we're as opposite as can be.
I'm a lowly peasant,
you're the bourgeoisie.

You're the breaking news
I'm just a pop-up ad.
You're the soaring rocket
I'm your launching pad.

You're the star quarterback
I didn't make the team.
I'm your worst nightmare
you're the sweetest dream.

You're a new Mercedes Benz
I'm a rusty, old Ford car.
I'm a long lost black hole
you're the shooting star.

You're an A plus paper
I'm just a mediocre C.
I'm always out of pitch
you're a melodic symphony.

I'm some scribbles on a paper
you're Michelangelo's greatest art.
You're the winning runner
while I'm still stuck at the start.

I'm just an understudy
you're the main attraction.
You are the addition
and I am just subtraction.

You're a radiant diamond
I'm a cubic zirconium stone.
No one has loved you better-
yet here I am alone.





Sunrise **By Juan Gomez**

I breathe in the crisp morning air and settle down in my wicker chair.
I can't help but think this is the best morning I've had in a long while,
but I wonder if the sunrise tastes the same when you're the first to it.
My eyes feast on the bleeding crimsons and violets that dance with gold;
Cream cotton clouds that caress other colors, softening the sharp tints.

I stand up and greet the morning light because I am its steward;
It is a simple job to welcome the majesty of a new dawn.
It is a selfish pleasure, then, that I alone hoard these pastel hues.
These paisley patterned clouds, mine for a short time and each day I revel;
For a precious few seconds I hold all of the color in the world.
A gradient symphony shines into a succulent golden disc,
dripping juicy light in streaks from the prismatic canvas in the sky.

I rise from behind a curtain of dark satin space, rippling with light.
My sentinel waits for the streaks of cherry blossom and deepest plum.
He is the first I greet but there are more that appreciate my art.
I paint the sky so your eyes can feast and I do it for everyone;
The blended paint of my light leaves soft brushstrokes, a texture to the soul.



My Happy Place **By Melissa Bisner**

Peace and quiet is how I like it.
Doing my own thing;
Like nobody's watching,
I nap basically slacking off.
Music from my playlist
Fills the room with such joy
Not being surrounded by idiots in public
Not having to deal with nagging old lady called mom
Be in my own world, dream a different reality.
Be a queen in my own right, in an alternated universe.
I see myself as a human hybrid when going to
Sleep at night, with powers, a wolf, and a dragon
All will end when old lady ruins it all.

By Marina Romero Grullon 16

THE ART OF WORDS.

➔ **Santa Monica** **By Jordan Brantley**

When I walked the sand, not a care
 flew by
 only the crisp cold air, balanced by the
 sun's beaming eye.
 The ocean's aroma twirled around for
 a dance,
 but the ocean water was quick to take
 my hand.
 Watching it flow, along with my
 worries, right through my fingertips,
 As slow as the sweat from my head,
 that salted my upper lip.
 While walking this path, it hurt to see
 trash with seemingly no end.
 I struggled picking up the pieces, trying
 to enjoy everything I can.
 While the oceans waves crashed near
 my sandy feet, returning them clear,
 I swear for a split second, just one, I
 could close my eyes and hear..
 "Not often do people care to make
 amends. That is why I thank you, for
 being a friend".



BY LOUISE LLAMOSO

Continue reading at next page >



BY JORDAN BRANTLEY

PEACE

By Jordan Brantely

As I breathe in, I comb through my thoughts. Laying them down with the cheap, flaky gel of peace. Outside is no different, the hold loosens as the flakes fly to the sirens. Walking through the crowded streets, each bump of the shoulder sends flakes flying. After the gel applied this morning finally breaks its hold, I reach for the transmitters of transcendence to restore what I have lost. With each vibration I rise a half an inch, eventually floating above the miniscule worries of the masses. My shields from sorrow weaken as beggars reach at the ankles. Reaching a block in the road I could feel tension crawl through my skin, And like parasites they ate at the remaining of the flakes. Removing a shield, I get through the first layer to see two men, engulfed in the turbulence of ignorance. As they clash I watch those around me, Dousing the flame until the heat melts the rest of the gel, and nearly destroys my headphones. Beggars move their cotton threads of tranquility to watch along, throwing them to the side to resume life as blankets. Store owners sneak from behind their barricades of serenity, and with each opening they return to counters. Before I know it, peace no longer lingers around looking for stragglers. Instead, it travels. Ignoring the hungry. Disregarding the prayers of soldiers. And waiting, Calmful. Longing to see you again.

I Slept That Night Instead of Dying,

A "No Suicide List" to Avoid Trying 37 reasons I should Not Die:

- 01 There are more than 37 reasons
- 02 Right now I can only come up with 37
- 03 Peeling the pepperoni off of pizza
- 04 Water slides
- 05 Driving with the windows down past the smell of summer when someone is lighting a bonfire
- 06 My younger cousin
- 07 Never left the United States before
- 08 Never had a "quesarito" before
- 09 97.1 radio is getting better
- 10 Dogs when they roll on their back for you to run their stomach
- 11 Woman on the receiving end of the suicide hotline
- 12 Hyperintelligence
- 13 Ted Talks
- 14 Blankets on clearance at HomeGoods
- 15 The feeling of waking up from a migraine nap with no pain
- 16 Sweat in the mosh pit of a concert
- 17 White noise YouTube channels
- 18 Command Strips
- 19 Free Italian Ice on the first day of Spring at Rita's
- 20 The employees at the coffee shop all remember my name
- 21 and my order
- 22 I don't think about that night anymore
- 23 The light of opportunity for myself at my job
- 24 I already memorized the menu at my job
- 25 Strawberry Acai Refreshers
- 26 Doesn't believe in Heaven
- 27 Or Hell
- 28 "Suicide is not the answer" poster in the hallway
- 29 Comfort watching The Breakfast Club and reciting the lines
- 30 The priest convinced me not to do it
- 31 My dog needs someone to walk her
- 32 Hair appointment next thursday, would be rude to not show up
- 33 Meeting someone who reinstalls your faith in others
- 34 Call Me By Your Name by Andre Aciman
- 35 The film version
- 36 still can't solve a Rubix cube
- 37 Ephemerality

BY MADSION PANNO



➔ Trust By Madsion Panno

I know how much I miss you
because your absence fills me with boiling gasoline
and Xanax and ink cartridges
and wooden planks preparing for the explosion of dams
and pumping blood and punctured water balloons
and mindless spinning of office chairs
and burns on the soles of my feet
and frostbite on the tips of my fingers.

I know how I long for you
because your absence fills me with deafening silence
and intrusive thoughts and bent metal forks
and twisted headphone wires and sizzling alka-seltzer tablets.
My tongue is turning blue again after telling stories
I normally can't pour out fast enough,
gulping water and reading your face-
I plug my ports in to the nearest outlet-
the widening of your eyes
the fireplace crackling in my throat from the pit my chest,
the supernova in my abdomen
parallels the two in both of your eyes.

Grazing fingertips for milliseconds by chance,
Mount Etna puts on her dancing shoes
for a repudiating crowd with cartons of tomatoes.
Kneading knots out of my shoulder with your thumbs
fingers wrapped around my blade
sharpening the edges to cut through onions.
My body is a Playstation controller.

Don't need to return home-
the vacancy is like eviction notices
hammered on the doorways of missing tenants.
Missing my tenant.
Missed my tenant.
Missing my tenant.

ou remind me
to mix popcorn bags with m&ms,
to leave the tip for the driver on the card,
to proofread papers before submission.
With reassurance and cacooning arms
and gentle caressing of a thumb across the cheek
between baby blue walls that were originally black
and purple and black and purple.

I could never grant another person
the power to fracture my body
and peel off my layers
like overripe mango skins.
Could I endure to lose faith in another?

I suppose that with the right balance of hope
and cynicism and history

I suppose that with the right balance
of hope and cynicism and history
and reason and rational

I suppose that with the right balance
of hope and cynicism and history
and reason and rational
and submission to filling your tank,
it's okay to hit the breaks
break the rules you have made.

In another?
In another.
Let him in.
Let him in?
In another.

THE ART OF WORDS.

➔ **Stuck** **By Lavender Otieno**

Stuck written and illustrated by Lavender Otieno

Stay at home mom, Loving the softness of life, Yet catching the blues, Whilst catching the cues that the social college life is no longer a part of you. Up in tears, Feeling fears, That my youth is leaving, Trying to be a mom, Watching people partying makes me feel like being selfless was deceiving. In this position, I sometimes get to feeling stuck, Like there's no tomorrow, sacrificed my old life, So, there must be a better tomorrow. Since I loved my seed more, And in turn, His birth taught me how to love myself like never before, Something which I neglected,



BY Lavender Otieno

I finally understand self-respect and Creator keeps me so connected. Therefore, how can I feel stuck? When spiritually, I am all the way up! I did not just birth my son, I birthed true love, and self-love, I birthed integrity, and nobility, I birthed wisdom, and excellence, An abundance of promises in many forms, 3 years ago, I wouldn't have imagined, That this is how I would grow. My mental growth, and self-care, Things I was into back then, Now I would never dare. I'm not stuck, I'm up, But pop culture says otherwise, My wisdoms not much of a not a trend, Though my once pain turned to ashes has been monetized, Something I longed for to end, That social life was so dramatized, Because now I have true love, And it's not the love found on the streets which gets compromised I might be feeling dramatic If I was stuck, I would still be in pain, Searching for love in temporary friendships that use my name in vain, God knew what he was doing, He put an end to the big question, Now I do not question, What I am, and where love is, Its right before me, and my youth is different A golden land of milk and honey.

Can't be feeling guilty because ignorance has come to an end, Life is not about parties, raves, and hook-ups I finally get it, and one day they will all look up. Freedom and laxation, Success and paid vacations, Taking for granted this soft life of ease, Because I am not what my peers appear to be. I had to mature, I had to change lanes, I feel like I was missing out, Even though being out in public, Had me going insane, And thanks to motherhood, I've never been so sane, I've never been so balanced, Peace and love, are an abundance when before Tragedy was the protagonist, chasing me down. Friends with the heavy ends, Wanna-be lovers with evil undercovers, How can this be? That I am so gracefully isolated! cannot fathom the glee that is right before me. I pray God restore me, This feeling is inept, want to be someone, But am I rushing the process? Which ultimately leads to debt? Literally, and figuratively, God's time is not mine, So, when I step ahead, I feel asinine. I am just proud that I came out the wilderness of that past of mine, Regardless of how others look at me, I am leveled up and I am not returning to the past. I glow up, I grow up, And I finally know what it's like to show up! Not only for myself, But for the blessing I birthed, That changed my entire perception of self. I remain well kept, I am up at the top!! And next time you see me, I'll be in a crown, stopping in different cities, Making an impact, crowds lining up to hear me speak that, I believe I got a head start in the game, This life is blessed, and I am no longer entertaining ravages I am up, and there, at the top, is where I will be "Stuck!"

THE ART OF WORDS.

➔ **Stuck** By Lavender Otieno

Do you even remember the last time we talked? Like at all? I feel like you forget who I am and all the moments we had together. Our first date, going to the city, meeting your family and you meeting mine. I think about it a lot, probably way more than I should. Do you ever think about it? I think a part of me just wants to remember everything. Your smile, your laugh, every letter you ever wrote me. Sometimes I read them and get a little sad, but then I remember how in the end you didn't even care. You never called like you used to, you stopped visiting, you never even asked how I was doing. Our time together was short-lived, but it hit me all the same. Do you remember the first time you said you loved me? It was late and you called me, and as the words left your lips I felt like we were the only two people on Earth. Did it feel real to you too? Did you scream into your pillow like I did? The beating of my heart filled my eardrums and I was deaf to everyone and everything else but you. I felt like that a lot of the time we were together, impaired by love. Was it even love? To be honest, I was happy that whole year. You made me happy, we rarely fought, and when we did, you listened to me. For the most part. You were the only one I ever talked to. But was it even love? When it ended I cried. You had me crying after I swore that I'd never cry for you. You made me look dumb. I hate looking dumb. I hate that you could make me look dumb. Never again. Sometimes memories of you come to me as a daydream. The sound of your voice. Our hands interlocking on the subway. My head on your shoulder. The smell of your t-shirt. Do you ever miss it? The way your hands cupped my face whenever I cried. The sound of your heart as I lay on your chest. It's good to remember what once was, but even better to move forward. After everything: the love, pain, and heartbreak, I'm still grateful for the time we shared together. I love and loved you, but now you're just a memory. Just a fleeting moment on my life's timeline.



BY **Claudia Zuraw**



➔ **Colleen's Flack**
By Clarissa Blue

I know it all, and you've been nowhere, that's fine with me.
 Though we never do much, my shoes sit untroubled,
 and you hardily speak of the things that make your stomach woo;
 at the end of the day, you're with me.
 Yes, the days are often short, the sun rarely seen. With this retreat, my mind
 despairs,
 and yet another breath remains, and you're next to me.
 I can blow the glitter for a while, but you know the fluorescents
 get to me. Maybe you'll run away, and it'll be certain this time.
 Remember who taught you how tie your shoes, and to howmove your hips?
 My time is coming, any day now too. Whatever you dreamt of
 can happen, with me. My lovers, past and present, don't giveleg room.
 They'll all give way, though. I want you with me.



Art: Sophia Morales

THE SHEAF EVENT



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