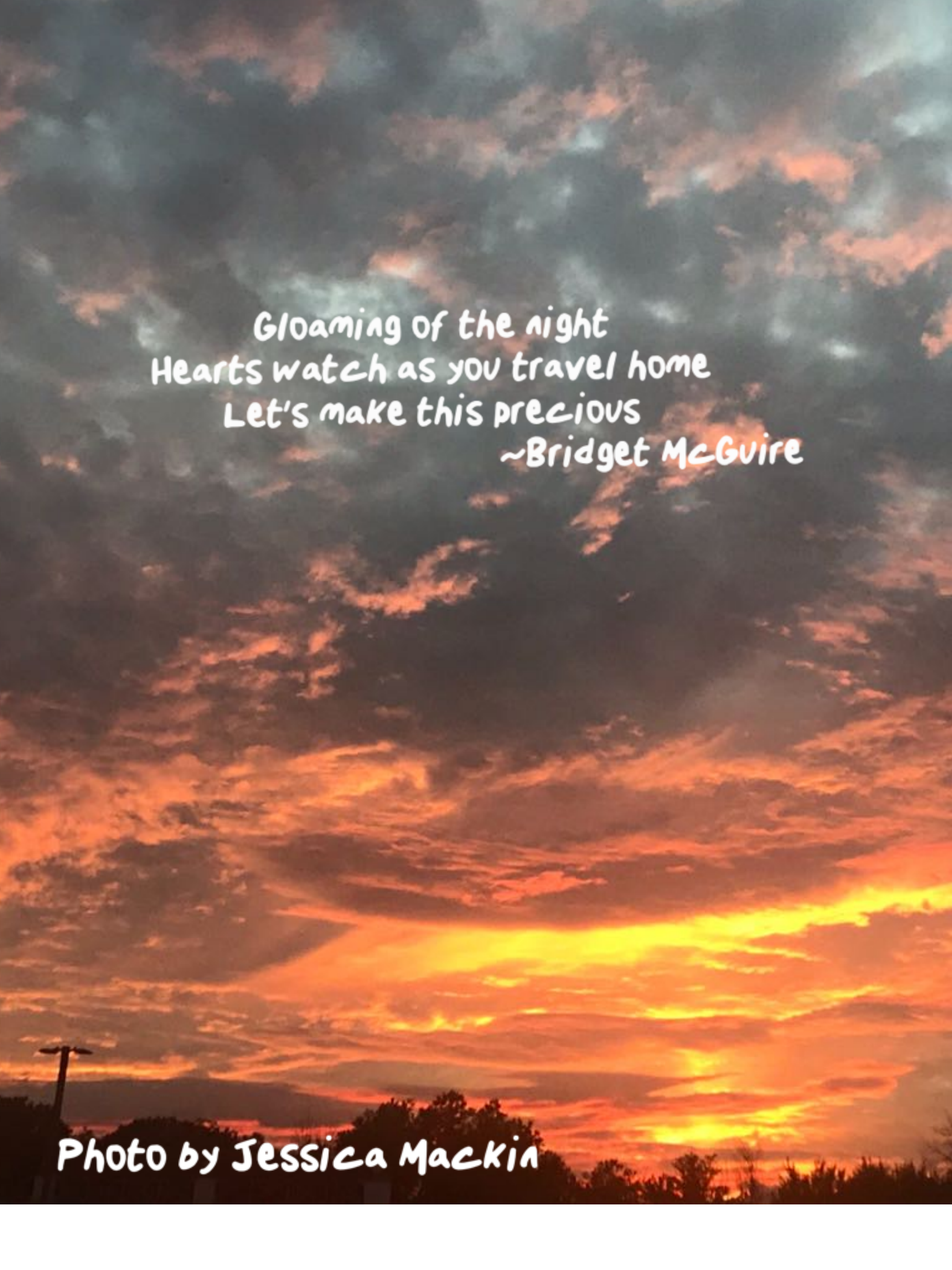


# Our Lady of Lourdes Literary Magazine

Summer 2020





Gloaming of the night  
Hearts watch as you travel home  
Let's make this precious  
~Bridget McGuire

Photo by Jessica Mackin





**Photo by Mrs. Margaret Soltis**

Watch your head held high to see, to match mine.

Wings neatly clipped, you follow my lead.

Heart, little heart, held by your breast,

Beats against these fingers.

I invite you to fly, but no.

You stay, you love,

As your kind has

Learned well.

Admirably

Devoted.

Loved.

That is what you are to all of those on whom you have rested.

~Bridget McGuire

Trapped in a space of which I have seen too much  
Barely home, barely free  
Time moves, light shining ethereally  
Through the branches, nature's loving embrace  
Dripping from blades of grass  
Spring has sprung and so do we - to new life



-Photo and Poem  
by Jacob Cerdena





Photo by Jessica Mackin

*Flower of Springtime  
Bursting bright as Summer sun  
Bring peace to my soul*

*-Ms. Graham*

## What Time Away Teaches

I awake to the sound of my son climbing out of his bed. The floor squeaks with the pitter patter of small feet. With a light nudge and whisper, he says, “Daddy, can we have breakfast”? I reach for my glasses and peer at the clock, it reads, Friday, 7:45 am. “Sure, I say, as I lumber to my feet and make my way toward the kitchen. The smell of coffee fills the air as I search for a favorite mug. “Andrew and Olivia”, I say, “what would you like to eat?” “Cereal”, they both say. “Kids, I say, are you ready for school today?” A collective yes is the reply. Breakfast served, I sit down to read the news of the day and open my chromebook to check my emails. I work on new topic ideas for my class while fielding many questions on number bonds and main ideas. The time reads 8:30 am, the days worth of assignments continue to role in via the digital classroom format. Just before lunch we finish up our last bit of assignments for the day. After lunch, we head outside to talk and go for a brief walk. The rustling sound of wind gusts through the trees as I squint my eyes with the sun shining down.

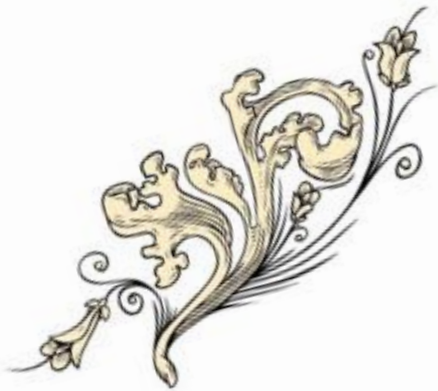
“Mr. Maggi?...Mr. Maggi?” My eyes refocused, “Yes”, I say. “What year was World War II over?” “1945.” Suddenly, I am back in the classroom and with a class of students working on assignments. The bell rings as I announce to have a great weekend and that I will see them again Monday.

Monday will be someday soon. In the days to come, take care of yourselves, your loved ones, and your communities as we work together to make the best of trying times. History teaches us that society has dealt with upheavals throughout time. Each instance populations of people have risen to the challenge and have come out the other side. What time aways teaches us is that the journey you have been on has had its share of ups and downs. The journey ahead will be uncharted waters however with the lessons learned of love, compassion, kindness, and perseverance we push forward to make the Twenties roar once more.

*~ Mr. John P. Maggi*



Breakdown  
Car breaks down  
Cars pass by  
Leaf in the wind  
Dances to the ground  
~Mr. Dan Buzi



A rush of wind  
The flow of time  
Halt to all movement  
A still hum  
It is inevitable  
Viewless  
It allows peace  
Yet can puzzle many  
A feeling is unequaled  
Overwhelming

~Nick Moustakas & Joseph Esposito

## The Question of Time

Nothing exists without time,  
Is time a notion,  
a curious, crying call?  
Does time care to cease?  
When did it start?  
Luggish, long, lingering --  
Or sweet and tart?  
Time is witnessed,  
Time is heard--  
Towering and far,  
Time is close and near

~Eliza Petronio



"What is time?"  
"How does time elapse?"  
"How does destiny echo?"  
My future identity asks:  
"Will I be admirable?"  
Decades, centuries - millenniums  
"How will I progress in this moment?"  
Brilliantly.  
"I am vigilant."  
"What will fate bestow?"  
As time proceeds, I comprehend-  
No one fathoms.  
That's just the course I must withstand.

~Siara Lora & Amanda Reeve



# *The Mind is a Labyrinth*

*The mind is a labyrinth,  
With parts undiscovered  
Enveloped in thoughts  
Without any rescue.  
Left, right, dead end, dead end.  
No freedom, no beginning, no end.  
Submerged in complications  
With no solution-  
No instructions, no guide, no conclusion.  
The mind is a labyrinth,  
With parts undiscovered.*

*~Rachel Servidio & Hannah Apenteng*





## Choices

Decision?  
Revision?  
A chance-  
A glance-  
With precision.  
A chance?  
A trance?  
No mistake-  
This time taking-  
A chance.

~ Alysa Tesoriero



## The Drop

I am the operator of the Drop.  
Almost to the top,  
Too heavy -- you come to a stop,  
Plummeting to the bottom.  
Surrounded by chaos,  
Tied down like a scarf,  
I make you see,  
Memories of me.  
To the end --  
You're almost there  
No defeat,  
Getting through the drop of me.

Kasey Howard & Brittany Reyes







What is nothing?  
 Nothing is always something .  
 "Nothing..."  
 Could be tossed aside -  
 But could be claimed with pride  
 "Nothing" laughs  
 "Nothing" weeps  
 "Nothing" loves  
 Are we nothing  
 In the world's immenseness?  
 You and I - nothing?  
 No - together, we are everything.  
 ~Marilyn Luna



Take the other road -- the other path  
 There's a voice  
 Yellow or green?  
 Emerald or yellow-brick road?  
 The voice --  
 What does it mean?—  
 What could it mean?  
 Pounding purple door  
 Heart beating Evermore  
 Colors pouring  
 Heart imploring  
 The road split  
 I must quit  
 ~Rebecca O'Connor and Simarjit Kaur





## Portrait of a Potted Plant



Potted plants find little joy in a greenhouse. There, potted plants are one in a million, a blurred face in a crowd. Like a dog with its nose pressed against a pet store window, they beg to go home.

I chose my potted plant carefully. Or, perhaps, it chose me. Some people say it happens that way.

On the drive to school, it rested on my son's lap until he bounded into his own school, eager to see his own plants. To buckle it in the newly-available carseat seemed silly, but this I did nevertheless.

I slung my canvas tote, filled with essays laden with student thoughts, upon my shoulder; I balanced the potted plant upon my hip like a clingy toddler.

In the door and up the stairs we stepped, past the cafeteria and the auditorium, until we reached room N207, my classroom and my second home. The potted plant nestled comfortably on my desk. For months, it inhaled CO2 and comma splices; it absorbed sunlight and subject verb agreement; it tasted the subtle notes of teenage heartache and first love, noting equal parts confidence and insecurity. It grew, thanks to all that can happen in a 40 minute moment.

Say there is a fire; what do you grab on the way out? The photo albums and the passports? The love letters and the tax records? Does anyone remember the potted plants?

I didn't. Into my bag I shoved some books and a stack of papers. For good measure, I tossed in a highlighter and some paper clips. When the virus forced teachers, students, custodians, administrators, staff, and coaches to depart, my potted plant remained.

What did it think the next day when it rubbed its eyelids, sipped its coffee, and readied itself for the verdict in Atticus' case for Tom Robinson? How long did the potted plant wait up that night to hear if Emily Webb regretted going back to her town? Did it feel I had forsaken it?

When I return three days later, the halls are dark and deserted. The chalkboard crisply reflects an old date, frozen in time. Easter approaches, although there will be no palms this year.

It's brown and wilted, but the potted plant has not lost its trust in me. I scoop it up, with both hands this time, and cradle it all the way to the car. Again, I buckle it up.

On the drive, I wonder what it will be like at home for my potted plant and me. How will I teach it to love George and Lennie enough to cry at the end of their story? Is it possible to learn Shakespeare without hearing iambic pentameter recited by your classmates? Can I still encourage this potted plant to look beyond a story and just spy beauty in language?

It is the third day, and the potted plant is brown and wilted. And yet, with faith, it just might rise again.

~ Mrs. Nicole D'Aleo



## *Written Paths*

How far have I traveled on Written Paths  
Which were before charted; Yet not by me.  
Continents of consonants and wild wraths  
Have I beared in expedition to Free  
My days of mundane ventures and foul pain.  
Company with Scottish Thanes in mead halls  
And feasts of Corbies can I now explain.  
Trekking my feet on high cliffs near sweet Swiss Falls.  
I was the guest of Gulliver and Love  
of Emily in Amherst-My Spirit.  
To Canterbury with Pilgrims I rove,  
Dublin with gunshots, then to Milton's Pit.  
Despite Death and Woe watching me like hawks,  
More steps I will take on my Written Walks.

By Andrew Maguire



# The Clock Seemed to Slow

by Olivia Burdash



The clock seemed to slow as I thought of her.  
I knew what she would say.  
The time between us starting to bend,  
Like some kind of weird sci-fi experience,  
To which I hope there will be no end.

I read that over a few times and then deleted it. That was really bad. Okay, I'm sorry for putting everyone through that, I just thought that's what you did when you were crazy, head over heels in love with someone. But that saying doesn't even make sense, because having your head over your heels means that your head is in its proper position, and I really don't think that's how people fall in love. I mean, I didn't really fall, because if I fell onto her or something, then I think I would have killed her or something. Not that she's weak; she could totally catch me if I happened to fall out of the sky on top of her. That would be so cool if it happened! The catching part, not the falling part. Or maybe the falling part would be fun, too, because I knew she was going to catch me and...\*cough\*. Yeah. Um, moving on!

You see, this kind of love relationship thing isn't like a normal love relationship thing. Not that I watch people doing their love relationship things like a certain creepy stalker I know, but I assume that's how it goes. But, you see, I met this person through a Google Docs exchange and then her father's evil-ish twin sister appeared, so me and this girl I met on the Google Docs thing had to pretend to be a thing so that we wouldn't have to tell the evil twin that me and the four others I brought with me (sort of) were actually from a moon in a distant part of the galaxy where there was this giant war going on and were also from a few millennia in the future! So after a lot of mostly accidental occurrences, me and this girl I met on the Google Docs thing actually did become a thing when I visited her dimension and we fell head over heels for each other and then she got to come to my dimension and things kept going from there! But then she had to go back to her real dimension, so the relationship couldn't last, aside from on the Google Docs thing that was still going on. And just for chronology's sake, that all happened about five years ago.

If you need a moment to glue your brain back together after all of that, go ahead! But it makes even less sense when you try to say it out loud, so be careful! There will be no melted brains on my watch! Anyway, that all changes today. At least, I hope so. The me not seeing my sort-of-girlfriend thing, not that melted brain thing. But if your brain stops melting today, that's good, too!

I got up from my seat. No one else was in the room with me at the moment, per my orders. If this didn't work, I would really like to have a nice, quiet, mental breakdown in private, without any of my friends giving me encouraging smiles and grief about it. I had to pace a few dozen times from the big window in the front of the room, back to my chair, before I convinced myself that I was actually going to try and/or fail this. I was about to walk right out again--this wasn't the first time I'd worked up the courage to test this theory out--but then I stopped. I knew I was going to fail this. And I knew I was going to have to try this before I got to that failure stage. But for reasons beyond my control, I just had never gotten up the nerve to actually get to the trying part.

So, without having any more time for really bad monologuing, I made sure the doors were secured, the comm systems were down, and I started to let the smoke fill the air. I almost shut it off because of that little voice in my head that said 'Are you really dumb enough to do this?' But then I heard another voice in my head. One I hadn't heard in five years. I knew I had to do this.



## The Clock - continued

The clock seemed to slow every time that I thought about him. I knew what he would say. My fairytale. My forbidden love across time and space.

It had felt like it had been forever in the form of five years. He had gone to his home, a futuristic moon a few millenia into the future after getting transported to my universe. It had all started as a joke, really. A fake romance to throw my mean aunt off, but then it had all changed.

You see, we had met over a Google Doc where we could communicate. It's stupid, I know, but we eventually became friends across different timelines through the screens, and then the other people from his moon somehow ended up on Earth for a few awesome and terrifying weeks. It only took one kiss and a few Sour Patch Kids to change it all.

I heard his voice in my head when I had gotten back to my apartment building after playing in an orchestra for the musical Chicago. As the Ultimate Violinist, doing that sort of thing is what's fun to me, but I almost felt empty knowing that the one that I longed to see in the audience could never be there. "It's okay to be sad, and let go, and miss someone. And we don't have to be ashamed of hiding it, and we don't even have to try to prove ourselves strong because everybody has lost someone. We can't be with all the people we lost and loved, and we can't bottle it up and forget about it."

He had told me that on his last night here. He had taken me to the roof of my apartment, under the glittering stars in Japan that weren't completely blocked out by the vivid lights of the bustling streets of Tokyo. I was only about 30 minutes from the city, but those 30 minutes really made a difference. We had spent most of the night up there. A bittersweet final dance, some special goodbyes, some tears. Too many tears. A kiss (or a dozen) in the moonlight. He had told me to move on. To not regret the moments that we'd shared together, and to not let it affect our love lives after we were separated. He was gone not even a day later, to his own dimension to be a captain.

It didn't matter how he had gotten here. He did, and it wouldn't be the same without him. I checked the analog clock that had the Circle of Fifths instead of numbers. It was something you'd get if you're as into music as I am. I thought it was brilliant. The minute hand seemed to be encased in molasses. We generally tried to chat at least once a week over that Doc around the same time. We didn't know how it worked, but it did, and that's all that mattered. Maybe we'd even get through it all without Kinhay gushing how 'romantic' and 'cute' and all that jazz we were.

Slowly. Slowly.

People never believed me when I said I couldn't do stuff so I could chat with my boyfriend who's a captain from outer space that can dab extraordinarily well.

. . . Okay, I can see why, but it's all true, I swear!! Boyfriend, space captain, dabbing extraordinaire, and all that jazz!! I know it sounds stupid, but it's absolutely amazing in every way possible except for the whole 'living in a different dimension' thing!

With a sigh, I took my precious violin out of its case. There was a song that I had played in a concert with a band as we had first gotten together. It was a song from the Eurovision song contest by Alexander Rybak. "Fairytale." A song with an awesome violin part and all too relatable lyrics.

I don't know what I was doing. But suddenly, we fell apart. Nowadays, I cannot find him. But when I do, we'll get a brand new start. I didn't realize that my eyes were watering until the song was over.

## The Clock - continued

He was gone. I would never see him again. I would never forget him.

We had gotten lucky when my family had ended up in his universe a year after they came to us, but it had ended. We almost died even more times on his moon. I had taken a shot for him and under the influence of the medicine to stop the pain and infection, I'm pretty sure I spent a good 15 minutes explaining that I liked him a looooooooooot. (I don't remember any of it, but I've been told that I learned how to roll my tongue during that when I said his name. Of course, I'm not sure how much Rrrrrrrrel appreciated it at the time, but whatever.)

Suddenly, the door knocked. Embarrassed, I wiped my eyes, hoping my mascara wasn't running, and packed away my violin.

No one else could lift me higher, but no one else could lift me high above. I opened the door, and he was there. I completely froze when I saw him.

"Baiorina," he said with that jaunty grin I loved too much and hadn't seen in five years. I still blushed when he said my name.

"Rel," I squeaked. "You're--"

"I think that I have a lot to tell you."

And then he pulled a ring out of his sweatshirt pocket.



Original Drawing by  
Olivia Burdash



# Painting Snow

by Bridget McGuire

Purple twilight of evenings past abounds this tired day,  
Throwing the world into my heart's mind:  
Following a cold grip on this tender machine  
That I had found outside this morn;  
And painting the sounds of the season wherever I happened to go.

She once was as I;  
Chained in the light of a loving sun.  
Now she comes; to visit  
This night as the clouds break for the unholy stars  
While I watch the sound of silent snow.

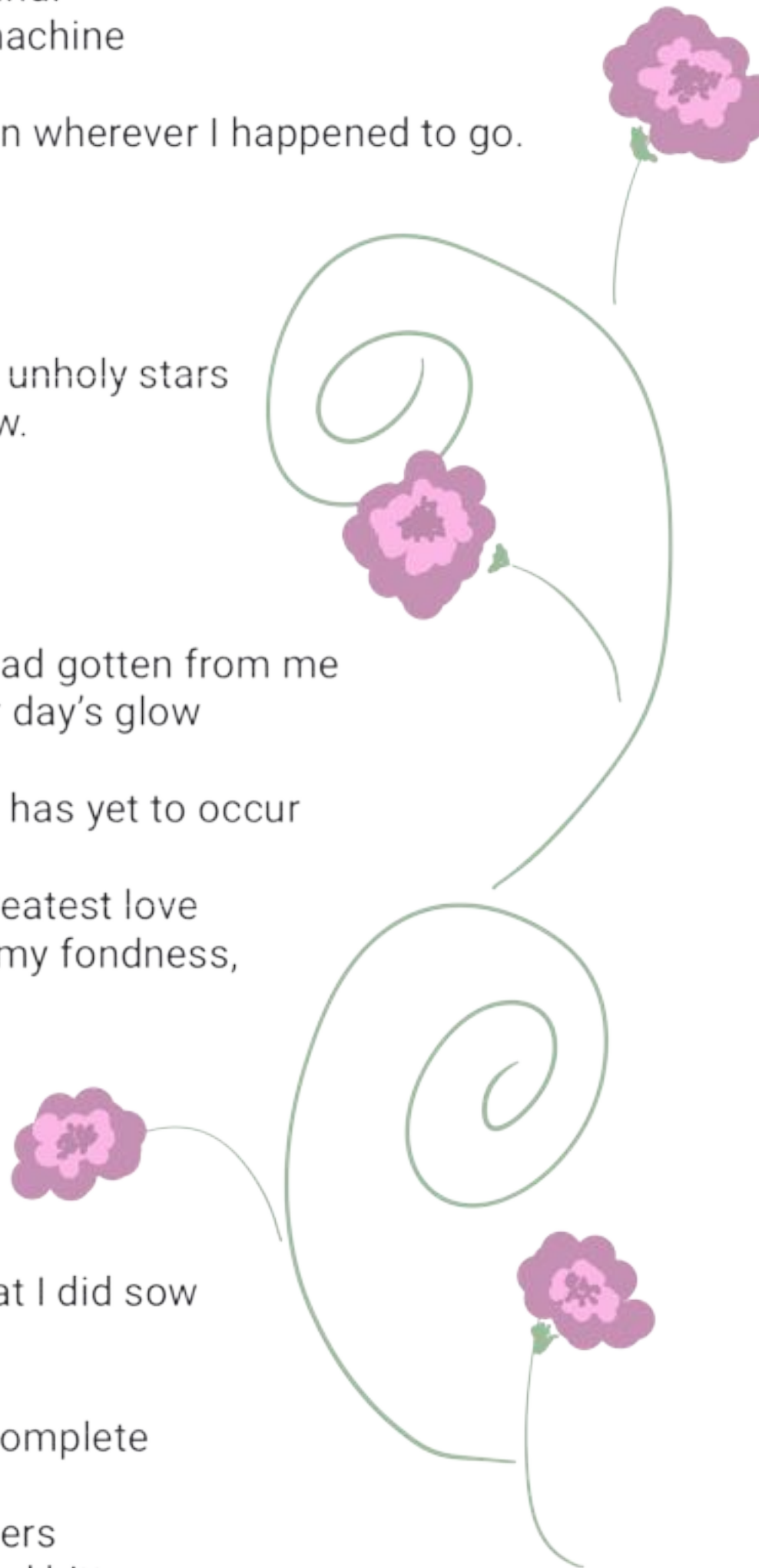
I had seen her in the fields  
A child she was then  
I cannot see her as anything more  
Dancing with the delicate grace she had gotten from me  
While I smiled to hear my youth in her day's glow

A day when I forget to miss her touch has yet to occur  
Treasured have her smiles been  
Tears I have regretted as she is my greatest love  
I should have dried her sadness with my fondness,  
But I was painting snow

By morning she would wake me,  
Run to the room where I hide  
Sing some lilt I had forgotten  
In night's mind, I feared for her  
I never told her to watch me draw what I did sow

Her laugh was that of sunlight  
Warm and generous but never mine complete  
I would join her on occasion,  
But my song was never as bright as hers  
I only lived to run through the bleak and bitter snow

continued



## Painting Snow continued

When darkness would come at last,  
I would send her away  
She need not see what I did  
What is more, I implored her to leave me be  
I could not bare for her to watch me paint snow

On a day of dank skies and unending cries of some creature  
She ran from me  
I watched her go to a place I wish to not know  
I should have followed  
For she saw what I did to paint snow

She never saw me as I had endeavored to be  
She had fallen as had her love,  
What frightful a state must have had its might on them  
They had disappeared into some twisted thing  
That spent the night painting snow

I found her at twilight,  
The trees bent in her wake  
She was on the ground  
Sundered through what I knew to have plundered well  
The night before I had painted the snow

The bowing branches assisted her rise  
Did I extend a hand?  
It was a day made of evening  
The real world was never a dangerous place  
Why am I an artist that enjoys painted snow?

Never again did I see her in my days  
I wish to hear her laugh, and whisper songs in her ear  
My time is not to come as her's, sublime in mercy's shadow  
For an artist of great works cannot die  
I paint the snow

By Bridget McGuire





# The Prisoners of Winter's War

By Kyle Broner



After an eternal Winter cryo-sleeping,  
Trapped inside while snow reigned supreme,  
You awaken to a morning bleeding on May's edge,  
And the happy scorn of sunlight through the sliver in your curtains.  
That piercing silver stream of beaming joy grips your eyes  
And rips you from your bed unto your feet to join it in the newfound heat.

You slip on shorts, a tee, and pray to all the Powers that be—  
After They would not let you be—  
You pray this day will last all May  
And that May will last to the end of days.  
“Amen,” you say, and twist the knob,  
Only to find you twist in vain,  
As if snow blocks the door again.  
You cannot shake this indoor pain.

You run amuck betwixt four walls,  
And sprint along the inner halls  
That grow thinner with each stride.  
From your home you cannot hide.

*Continued...*



The Winter Overlords who rained supreme  
Ice and snow and hail and every particle of callous cold found in between  
All December, January, February, even March  
Now send their spirit soldiers marching unto Spring  
To keep you sealed away in prison, sweet prison,  
To live out your days as Winter reigns, and rains, till the end of days.

But know this, these spirits haunting your head and heart  
Are powerless o'er Springtime splendor,  
For trees and flowers dance outside in warmer winds than Winter blows  
To orchestrations by the peepers, sparrows, tiny bugs, and all the creatures  
Big and small, quiet and loud, lending melodies to please the crowd  
Of things so green devoid of greed, the grass, the growth, even the weeds  
And you, inside, envious of outdoor things, green in ways that they are not,  
sealed away within your home turned cell turned hell to rot,  
As nature's angels beckon you  
From a realm of baby blue, and green, and yellow too.  
Their calls fall dead on walls and window panes.

But do not fret, for Winter's new world shall meet its revelation  
And prophesied annihilation as it does each May reborn.  
The freezing fingers lingering about your heart shall thaw and ease their grip  
As does the snow upon the trees, as does the ice on seven seas.

Rejoice, for even if you cannot hear it sing,  
Alive is Spring.

And I repeat, do not fear.  
Even if you can not hear it sing today or any day of future near  
'Fore it fades to silence for the year,  
I promise you, its song shall reappear next May.





## The Running Ghost

As the midnight sky proceeded to engulf us, the active ghost came to a sudden halt.

The once awake ghost seemed to finally rest at this dark time.

But once morning dawned again, the ghost awoke and ran about its regular commute.

The rushing and bustling town didn't acknowledge this ghost, however.

The ghost was everywhere. Behind them, beside them, chasing them.. and yet it was never seen by any.

All townspeople had their duties and responsibilities to fulfill but never stopped to realize this ghost behind them.

As they continued with their day, this invisible being lingered.

Finally, the day as promised, came to an end and the ghost seemed to disappear once more.

The ghost is not a supernatural being, however; it is instead time.

The townspeople represent all of us, the human race, blinded by valueless items or responsibilities that control our every move.

The time is the invisible, and inevitable ghost that will never leave.

It catches on to us eventually when we realize how much time we have taken for granted.

We look back on how fast this ghost is chasing us, stealing our time, and as we grasp on to the happy times in life that we know won't last; we become filled with regret.

Once this ghost reaches us, we are hit with the harsh reality that time will never stop.

As it grabs our shoulders and pulls us under, unfortunately; it is then that we realize that we can never go back to kids- when the world was at our fingertips . . . and everything was just perfect.

by Jessica Mackin



# The Mentalities



We who follow=Scraped to bone  
Gray in puddles=Empty foam  
Course of time=fair us well  
Child of night=Never

Bow out=Scamper high  
Trials by fire=impossible to die  
Shy away=know the truth  
I=not like them

Fight the powers=Desert your worth  
Cause of pain=Longing for birth  
Shape the future=Be past  
Cry for none=Always remember the missed

Angers to all=Care for not  
Despise the world=Rethink all thought  
Forged from steel=Doom the happy  
Clad the day=We can be better

Know your worth=Make a star  
Pretend with all power=Desert them all  
Rage with cold=built in evenings  
Own yourself=The world hates the blessed

Bring something=want more  
Cherish the thought=fear the empty door  
Love the sky=dance with the planets  
Do all chipper fun=The nights will remember

Be the universe=Scared of what  
Asked for one=Torn apart  
Have everything=Want the small  
Hollow by night=That is real


Share the power=Become someone new  
Make darkness=That is true  
Care in some way=Love to be  
Bless the times=May be forgotten

Secrets hidden=Only one hears the heavy song  
Hope for good=Argue long  
Act as hoped=Do not want replacements  
See the possibility=want to be evoked by kind name

~Bridget McGuire







Time passes freely  
It moves of its own accord  
We must move with it  
by Jacob Cerdena

Photo by Mrs. Theresa Powers

## Starless Night

I looked in the skies, and to my surprise,  
There weren't any stars that shone.  
It was inky black, nearly like an attack.  
I felt painfully alone.

She was gone, and it was hard to go on.  
Without her sweetly soft presence.  
It was a brisk autumn night, one without any light.  
Like everyday was lonely without her warm pleasance.

A lonely leaf sauntered down, a dull shade of brown,  
And delicately tapped my shoulder.  
Despite the comfort to some, I only felt numb.  
Alone, getting colder and colder.

And colder.

The skies were still dark, devoid of a shining spark  
Like my soul, starless inside.  
Hollow and weeping, loneliness creeping,  
I cried, I cried, I cried...

Then, a lone robin flew,  
and something inside me grew.  
The emptiness exponentially decreased.  
I knew it was her, even if it was just a blur,  
The loneliness suddenly ceased.

It would be okay, she was okay,  
The dismal, dreary clouds seemed to fade.  
It began to shine, and I knew it was mine.  
A sole star started to gleam in the shade.

~Olivia Burdash





B A B Y

## Goo Goo Gaa Gaa



Dirty diapers and spit up clothes  
Each new day has its costs  
Naps and smiles all day long  
Reading books and singing songs  
Goo goo gaa gaa, gaa gaa goo

This is my new mom saga  
Will his first word be mama?  
I'm thankful for this time at home  
And look forward to the unknown  
We keep our hands nice and clean  
This is my quarantine.

**by Mrs. Paggi**



## Bitterness: A Soliloquy

What is this that I see in the mirror?  
Is it a weak man or a haughty mouse?  
For how do others think of what I am?  
Am I a friend, admired, desired?  
Or am I that Poor Player who can now  
Puff out the Brief Candle with a whimper?  
'Tis truth that great faults have I in their eyes.  
My hair is more hairbrained than luscious locks,  
For my speech, it is more ham than Hamlet,  
My green eyes more eyesores than eye candy.  
All that is in my favor is my wit,  
But what then, when my knowledge calls its quits?  
What will people think of me than just  
A fool, a goober, a piece of pound cake,  
Once was sweet, now is stale, foul, sour with sores  
Of festered rot and corruption common.  
Once the table centerpiece, now sits in  
A dumpster's rank bottom waiting for the  
Release in fire to become sweet, black ash.  
That is my role in this play: a jester!  
I do look and fit the part, I admit;  
I am a natural with the clown's nose,  
And my character hunched, long, and scrawny.  
Like the fool, I only make people laugh  
When I perform childish chicanery  
Ranging from lute-playing to dumb wisecracks.  
'Tis my life but some failed parlor trick? Yes.  
All Toil for one smile soon drowned out by Wine.  
That is life, is it not? Sound and Fury  
Signifying something until soon 'Tis  
Forgotten about by the audience.  
Yet, what are mirrors more than glass liars?  
All smoke and smog that can not look inside  
Of what is beyond the Sock and Buskin.  
What it would display is a sad, trampled  
Garden, overgrown with weed and moss, as  
It begs for one look or cup of water  
That never will come. Hush, Hush, Squashed Shamrock.



Andrew Maguire



# The Marriage of Math and Poetry

Art and Poetry by Mr. Robert Emich

t  
w d  
o e o  
s v f  
t i t i  
w a a h p  
l n t e r  
t d l m e t  
n h a o e f o  
a o i r n a e b a  
l m t n d s n r e n o u t l i e r

Squares

uniform  
regular

Symmetric

I wonder

what lies beyond these lines



# This is What They Did to Us

They wanted us all in lines. Nice, neat rows of sad, hungry people. Nice, neat rows of starving, desperate people. Nice, neat piles of harm, dead people.

We were young, new, raw, unintelligent, unemployed, unuseful, extra. We weren't anything they could use. I was 14, living in Lodz. Now, I'm 15 living in Chelmno.

They asked us to climb into the vans, already so full we would most likely burst through the metal before we had all finished climbing in. No soldiers rode with us, as there wasn't room to breath, much less stay away from the Jewish stench. I wanted to fight back, but I knew if I did, I would be shot trying to escape. And what would they care about the brains on their polished boots, they had water to wash it away that wasn't filled with dying lice and dirt. I sat as close to the outside world as I could, though the view was made abstract by the tinted glass and the cage over top. I saw Chelmno start to fade away as the guards finished securing the doors. I kept a hand on the piece of metal confining me from the world.

As soon as the gates were out of our sights, I tried to twist the handle, praying that it would open. I knew that it would not, but there wasn't anything to stop me from trying. I yanked again and again until I settled for pulling on it as hard as my depleted strength could. It did nothing, though I imagined that the handle would budge.

The woman next to me, who had been crying saw my actions and came to help. We tried, oh tried beyond what we thought was possible. We must have pulled on the handle for as long as our arms would allow. I felt something snap inside the mechanisms. I was in shock. The woman fainted.

I thought to tell the others of what had happened, but as I turned, they were all asleep. Their eyes sagged to the ground, their head slumping to their chests. I felt my own wishing to mimic them. The world turned hazy around me, all the grays blending together. We were nothing to everyone. Why did this dying have to look so pretty?

My hand slipped off the handle. We had broken the lock.

**by Bridget McGuire**



## The lives of flowers

by rachel crittenden

IT WOULD BE an invalid assumption to say that Olive had ever been born. She existed, yes, as a colorful, lively child—perhaps too lively for what some would designate “her own good”—but nevertheless began her life at age One, as if saying she were so would ground her as some sort of human constituent of reality. To you or to me, claiming that she were One meant that she’d lived for one year, but Olive didn’t live in years as planetary revolutions around a sun; she was One of whatever she was one of, however she was that, and then she was One again. Until, of course, she became Two.

Olive found joy in all the usual childly things—bright things, soft things, shaped things, bright and softly-shaped things. But her joy was rooted in a love for the beautiful rather than a quench for boredom or a need for occupation. Beautiful, to Olive, were things that just *were*—things like her, that came from nothing and nowhere. She didn’t know the names of these things, only that she grew like them, rapidly, and with startling suddenness. She held them, examined them, took them in and felt their order as her own. She saw, in them, a pattern: first a seed, still a seed, then a sprout, a stem, a leaf, bud, bloom. There seemed to exist a continuous and impossible interval between each stage. They were somethings from a nothing that was nothing and not zero. From an emptiness that was not an absence of quantity, but an absence of being.

Olive was Two for half as long as she was One, which is to say that her once being Two was the same as half of her twice having been One. By the end of it, her honeyed-brown curls grew and swirled, one way and their opposite, interchanging and clasping together to form a floating mass about her face, wind-lifted with indistinguishable ends and beginnings. It was then that she knew her true affinity to flowers, the delicate way that they bent and swayed and held

themselves up in the world.

When Olive was Five—which happened after she'd been Three for a slightly longer time than she'd been Two—she ran through fields of thick, blue-green grass and knew that though they were ultimately countable, she would never be able to touch and name each tickling blade. She could guess, she thought, at their cardinality—take a small section, multiply its exact numerical content by how many square inches of that section existed in the larger area she studied (that being the infinite acreage of land that, for all intents and purposes, served as her home), but such knowingly-false knowledge wouldn't be enough for Olive. By the time she was Eight, things were getting urgent. She was sure that she'd been Five for an even lesser time than she'd been Three, and approximations would do her no good. Grass grew and stayed and stayed, grew only taller and stayed. She found the most comfort in her flowers, whose advancing stages seemed to parallel her own—whose golden centers were golden and swirled, surrounded by delicate, velvety petals she dared not pick.

The flowers that Olive loved so much seemed only to stretch and bloom, but all was instantaneous to a girl who fell asleep to a bud and woke to an open face, fresh, and brilliant. For days, weeks, and sometimes months, the flowers remained. Black-eyed Susans, daisies, poppies, lavender, laurel . . . all were dusted with Queen Anne's lace and came to a point where they were unchanging, stayed there long enough for Olive to wonder if she would ever be unchanging, too.

By Thirteen, Olive counted everything. She'd counted the earthly days between being Eight and being what she was now, counted the leaves on the trees and the branches that fed them. She yanked at the grass and counted the veining roots, shook the dirt out and threw the dead green strands from sight. She always returned to her flowers, her daisies' buttercup centers, and found, in them, her truth: Any two of her ages put together would result in an age that she



will be, but only if those ages were together to begin with. She would be what she was, and she would keep being for as long as she will've already had been before.

When rain came, Olive would lie beneath the tree she knew to have the most leaves, desperate to avoid the water that dripped slowly and heavily through its dense cover, terrified that what perpetuated the lives of flowers equally perpetuated her. But Twenty-one came, and Thirty-four, as she knew and feared they would. Steadier, now. Fifty-five, Eighty-nine, in fragile, oscillating rhythms that continued to draw near without the possibility of ever meeting. At One hundred forty-four, she kept herself from the sunny beds, the snap dragons, the prim rose. She kept to her tree even at night, unwilling to close herself to the cycle of life that she would never live.

Olive was more like the trees now, she knew, adding rings to an ever-expanding trunk. Her hair twisted and tangled her arms like ivy, constricting the skin of the once-smooth hands that brandished with wrinkles, wore like thin layers of crepeing bark.



# Ashes

The first flake fell onto my cheek as I lay on the ground. The wind brought with it a hint of burning underbrush, a familiar scent which always makes me smile. I close my eyes to relive my favorite part. Kneeling low to the ground to hear its cries and giving it my spark. I see the flames, bright and cheerful, excited to delve further into the world. I see it climb high into the air searching the sky, and creep low on the ground, spreading and gaining momentum as it consumes every branch and bud in its path. I can almost feel the pounding of the animals' feet on the ground as they sprint and hop, desperate to escape, misunderstanding this beautiful creature's nature. The wind is stronger now and my heart feels light. They are with me. With increased force the scent of change billows around sending gray haze everywhere. I have given the world a gift. I often do. My gift has never changed, just brought change about. Fewer and fewer recognize the need for my gift, and that is why each one is stronger, faster, and more necessary. This world needs a cleansing, and I will dance with the wind on its ashes.

By Lydia Vigne





# Backyard Battle

Green, clean, and well trimmed. Such words could have once described the backyard, which was now the site of a deadly battle. Damien leaped forth, weapon in hand, and cleanly struck his target. With not a moment to spare, he dashed to the left and struck once again, landing another clean blow. The enemy was trained not to flinch, even in death, and for all the fighting Damien had done, morale remained high. It was a tactic meant to wear out ones opponent, and it started to prove itself effective. With each additional strike, Damien became clumsier, costing him time and energy. To the enemy's dismay, however, he held out for two more hours, taking more and more out. At this rate he'd finish painting by noon and have time to do the garage. The title of undefeated would be swept from under their feet. Damien remained focused, not letting his advantage get to him. His hands were blistered and bleeding from intense battle, and the wood of his brush was stained red. Damien was tired, but he knew the consequence for failure. He had done well and was nearing the final stretch - when tragedy struck. He had lunged in for a mighty slash, not noticing the can that laid before him. He tipped the can over and fell, his life flashing before his eyes. He laid there with white paint from the can pooling out from under him like blood. As he took his last breath, he saw his wife stand over his static body. She was unfazed by her collapsed spouse and spared no time in expressing her disappointment. Irritated, she dragged him across the grass into the house, leaving a white trail extending from the fence to the back door. Damien vowed continue his fight . . . he would, indeed, live another day; he would finish painting the house - even if it killed him!

by Jaiden Rodgers



# Mountains

A mighty mountain in front of me, one that I must climb,  
And as I try to conquer it, I fall down every time;  
So I get up, day in and out, looking for a clear  
But every route just looks the same, the end is nowhere near.

A mighty mountain before me, one I can't ignore,  
And as I climb, the cold sets in, and burns me to the core.  
It twists and turns and dips and soars and goes on and on  
With growing despair and uncertainty, I still carry on

A mighty mountain beside me, one that grows and flows  
And when I think I'm near the top, a sharper level shows  
My weary legs beg for peace, to end this relentless journey  
So I can rest, having passed the test, but instead I get no mercy.

A mighty mountain surrounding me, one that never ends  
It traps me in and I can't see the peak beyond the bend  
So I try and try to clear the way and steer the way to go  
And just as I am giving up, a light begins to show.

Many mountains behind me, those I've overcome  
Looking back, they seem like specks and oh, how far I've come.  
Looking ahead, there's miles and miles of mountains near and far  
Until the last horizon, I wonder how many there are.

by Matthew Emig





# Dragonfly

The soft early morning breeze scarcely rustled the trees  
A faint warm orange glow started to transcend  
I wished the beautiful sight would never come to an end  
A dragonfly's peaceful hum took over the forest with a calming sound



With dreams and peace and early morning's breeze all interbound  
The dragonfly dazzlingly danced  
The breeze turned into a growl - rapidly whipping the trees  
The sky turned a deep dark blue like the waves of a winter sea  
The dreams and peace started to fade  
I watched the surroundings change

Yet the dragonfly still hummed in the shade  
The dragonfly dared to dazzlingly dance  
The sun came down to die  
A fiery red engulfed the sky



The dragonfly still dared to fly  
The dragonfly warned me not fear  
The message did not come off quite clear  
No more peace was left in the sky  
Still the dragonfly was dauntless to dazzlingly dance high

The darkness engulfed the trees  
Black conquered the sky  
Dreams came to die  
The dragonfly did not dare to fly  
The forest was as silent as the dead  
Dragonfly truly came to an end  
Alone in the forest I shall be  
Until the dragonfly dares to dazzlingly dance once again



by Julia Biamonte



## Our Lady of Lourdes Writing Club

Kyle Broner  
Olivia Burdash  
Jacob Cerdena  
Brianna Giangrasso  
Derek Kannenberg  
Tim Leitch  
Andrew Maguire  
Bridget McGuire  
Jaiden Rodgers  
Lydia Vigne

Moderator: Ms. Graham

To Our Graduating Seniors  
Kyle, Jacob, Tim, Andrew, and Lydia:

We will miss your creativity, humor, and  
kindness.

Don't forget to write!

