

Serendipity

Olean High School
Literary and Visual Arts Journal



Serendipity

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Front Cover Photo: Des Muir

Love That Can't Touch

By A'marie McKenney

Falling down in a pool of despair.

Knowing that we can't be together,

Can't live together, not able to hold one another.

To feel the warmth in each other.

Knowing one touch from a finger will cause death.

For me, only having two years left.

You, having all the time in the world.

Thinking that we have all my time to be.

But someone cut our time closer to death,

Although it's sad, we both went together,

Now able to hold hands and able to smile together.



Taya Oyer

Grade 12

emotional 2

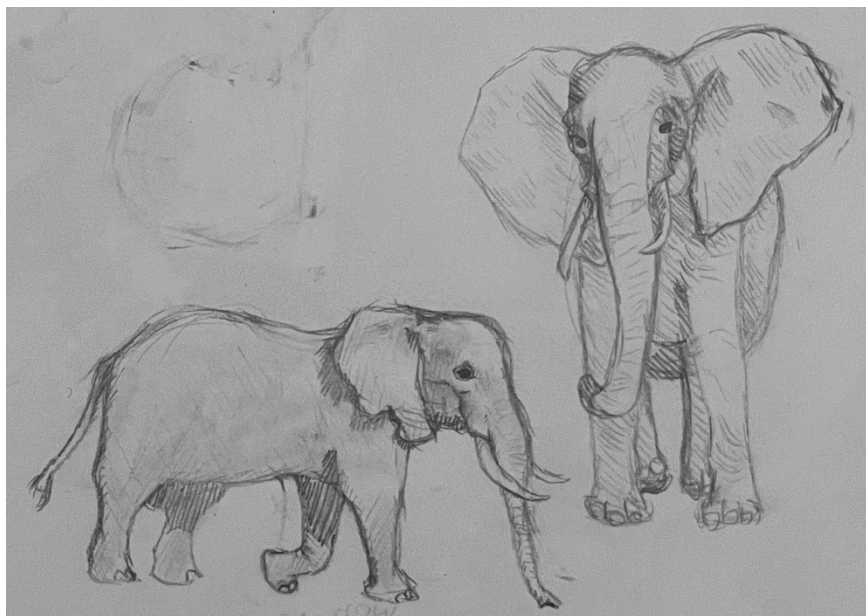
Ottokar II of Bohemia*

By Alexander Vogel

The exquisite trophy comes from you, son
Our beating heart, our calm sense, our bold fight
Always avenge us, from Zadar to Brunn
Finally, death awaits me, overnight
The frigid autumnal winds will cascade
From the Carpathians; into my soul
Unify, by olive branch or knife blade
Live with prosperity; burn like charred coal
Retain yourself at peace, my dearest child
As our people seek bravery and skill
Hold military trainings in the wild
You still have many longings to fulfill

That dark knight, the Bohemian king died
His son lay, weeping at his father's side

**Ottokar was a Bohemian king who lived from 1233 to 1278. He was a noble warrior who died in battle and was succeeded by his eight-year-old son in 1278.*



Emily Duncan

Grade 12

The Gift of The Broken

By Dakota Wilber

Like fragile glass or beautiful pottery
once broken never the same
oh dear oh dear some pieces so broken
that not even glue can fix,
once a sight to see, now rubbish.

The fear of judgement,
a reason to hide the cracks.
Oh the truth reveals itself
the we see we truly see now,
the world's true colors,
oh we see the bleak fields
where the cattle live
but the fields the fields are ablaze,
we see the faults in the world from our shelf,
for this is the gift of the broken



Emily Duncan

Grade 12

emotional 6

A Rather Unfortunate String of Events

By Anonymous

Small things,
building up and
soon seemed much
larger.

I pushed them back,
and soon
came face to face
with one large problem.

It's my fault,
my stress,
gives way to anger.
nobody knows.

My large problems,
seem to shrink
when confronted by
my new small problems.

I'm drowning in a sea of my own mistakes
and no one can hear my cries for help.

Nobody Seems to Notice
By Anonymous

Waking up at 7:00 am on a Saturday morning
go down stairs
Turn on Disney channel to watch Phinneas & Ferb
with your dad
Dad starts to pack up garbage to take to the dump
You get excited because you know you'll get a sucker
at the dump
Garbage is all packed in the truck
You and your heart-shaped pajamas enter the cold fresh
morning air
get in the truck and you feel warm again
Stop at the gas station because Dad has to get dump tickets
like usual
You go in with him and pick out the best looking
blueberry muffin
You and your dad make it to the dump
and you get your cotton-candy sucker
You get back home and start to plan out your day
Mom and Dad, do you want to play?
You play all day and then start to lay
lay down in bed
cuddling with your Chocolate Lab and your Pug
by your side
Mom and Dad kiss you goodnight
turn on your night light and turn off the light
lying in bed with no worries
no stress
Only thinking about what you are going to do
tomorrow.

You roll out of bed; dreading the day
What am I going to wear?
How much makeup do I need to put on?
What assignments are due today?
I can't wear these jeans-they make me look fat
I'm so tired
I need coffee not a cotton candy sucker

You go downstairs and it's not the same
as is used to be.

The TV isn't on-it's all dark
The house is a mess from whatever time your dad got home
last night

Everyday is the same, it's a routine drive to school
listen to the same people, same teachers, and same assignments
School doesn't let you focus on the present only future.

Time is flying by,
I feel like nobody seems to notice.

Get back from school
Alone.

Worrying-Did I say anything wrong today?

Is that assignment due tonight?

Why isn't he texting me back?

Questions, problems, worries take over
your night, every night

You start to lay, lay down in bed

but not with your chocolate lab

or your pug by your side

They aren't here anymore

Just like your night light

You don't need a night light

you like the dark

it's not your enemy anymore-but a friend

No goodnight kisses

Especially not from Mom, she doesn't live here anymore

Your dad isn't home,

hoping he gets back safe, hoping tomorrow is a different day from
today, yesterday, and the day before that

You don't fall straight to sleep

You listen to the creeks in the floor

And the cars driving by one every 5 minutes

You realize when you went to sleep

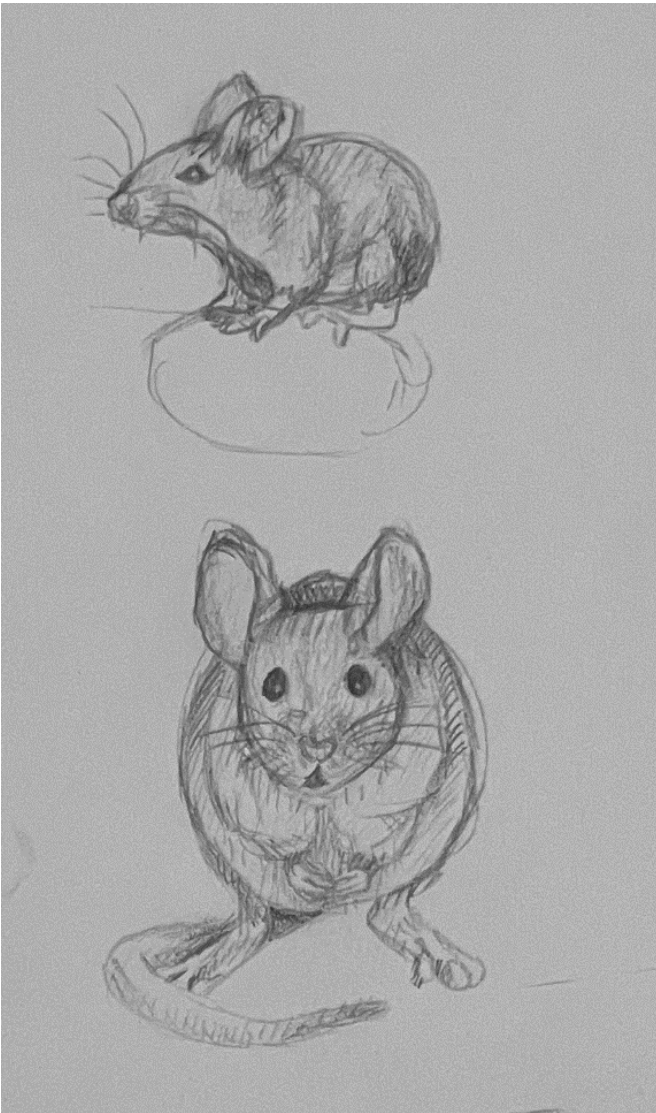
10 years ago

You had so much to learn

so much to experience

so much to understand

Time changes overnight and
nobody seems to notice.



Emily Duncan

Grade 12

existential 10

Old, New,...

By David Ruszkowski

The day of realizations,

Old Roof,

New Roof,

The jagged wooden floorboards beneath my feet felt almost smooth,

Old Wood,

New Wood,

The once squeaky chair supporting my weight silently,

Old Chair,

New Chair,

The messy homework on the old desk with the broken drawer,

Old Desk,

New Desk,

The stench filled the dimly lit room that made way to a small window,

Old Room,

New Room,

The bright sun unable to reach its single paned mirror of glass reflecting,

Old Glass,

New Glass,

Sunny yet dim was the day,

Old Light,

New Light,

Alone at a desk in an empty yet full room,

Old Air,

New Air,

The rough old and broken pencil in my hands,

Old Pencil,

New Pencil,

The fractured tip of graphite in need of a sharpening,

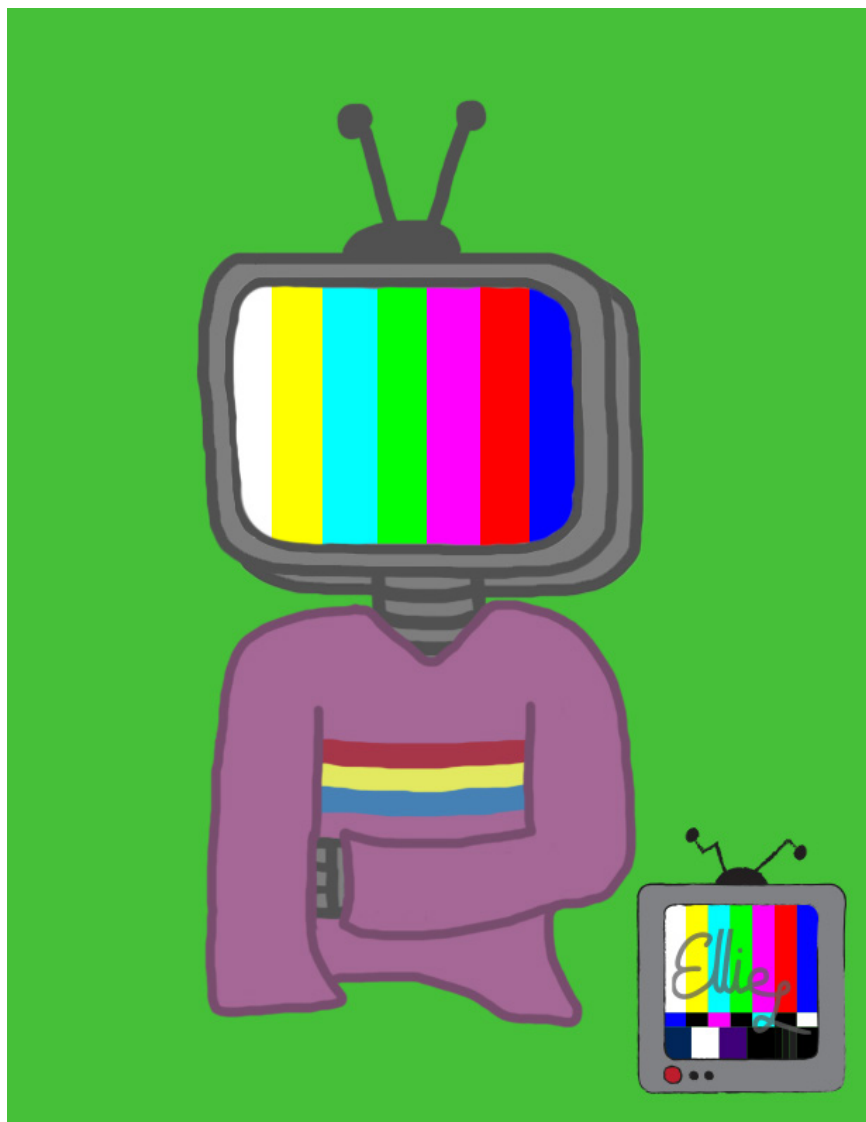
Old Stone,

New Stone,

The idea pierced far into the brain as a knife in a skull,
Old Knife,
New Knife,
The question left unanswered by the paper, the pencil, and the
mirror,
Old Thought,
New Thought,
My rough ripped sneakers, old shorts, and stained hold filled t-
shirt a reminder of a past,
Old World,
New World,
The small fan sitting peacefully in the window loud but soft,
soothing but deafening,
Old Sound,
New Sound,
Connections between questions and answers found there,
Old Quest,
New Quest,
A speechless child wishing to be more realizing,
Old You,
New You,
The intelligent, successful, and achieving high in their castles,
Old Heights,
New Heights,
The thousands left below in the deepest darkest caverns,
Old Light,
New Light,
Millions of ideas, Trillions of brains, Quadrillions of concepts,
Quintillions of solutions left,
Old Problem,
New Problem,
Trailing thoughts far from the full yet blank paper on the desk,
Old Paper,
New Paper,
A narrow trail never trekked or mapped on a great edge of a tall
cliff left untouched,

Old Dark,
New Dark,
A flying lifeboat fit for two or three needing to fit thousands,
Old life,
New life,
The unanswered questions lost to answers,
Old Answer,
New Answer,
A never-ending puzzle of time and thought ending,
Old end,
New end,
A shell left on the bend of the great trail of the unknown,
Old us,
New us,
A war against an undefeated and unbeatable universe,
Old Generation,
New Generation,
A quiet shout in the shouts of the universe,

Old Shouts,
New Shouts,
Unheard, unanswered, but never truly gone,
Old Humanity,
New Humanity.



Ellie Lothridge



Calvin Williams

Grade 9

Putrid

By Will Snyder

The infectious scent of a high school bathroom floods my nose.

It is a putrid stench.

Nicotine-ridden artificial fruit odor,

The unflushed toilet paper caked in feces,

The day-old urine stains on the seat of the toilet indicating some
freshman's dehydration.

I pull my shirt over my nose to mask the miasma of scents.

My cologne provides a temporary release.

The manufactured musk is comforting.

It reminds me of my own worth, that I am living.



Acacia Steffenhagen

Grade 9

existential17

Blue-Eyed Girl

By Shay Johnson-Graves

Her eyes blue as the sea

we can both agree

that only she

can fill the void in me

If I handed her the key

would she break into my heart

into three

draining it and leaving it empty

telling me lies

with those beautiful eyes

blue as the sea

for only he

the creator of all can see

that she was very well made

for me

Our last breath

By Dakota Wilber

The air is running out,
our time feels nearer with every breath we take
but none of it matters,
for as long as your soul is entangled with mine our love will live on.
so, wipe your tears from your cheek and let's embrace the end and
the new beginning together,
I know you're scared, so am I, but the new beginning calls us to the
stage,
so, let's give the crowd a show, as we kiss one last time,
the memories of our love fly by,
and we take our final breath in each other's arms,
and then we shall walk through life's open door.

Cry Like the Rain
By Scarlett Turner

Every time you cry like the rain, I will wait for you.

Holding out a hand, offering to dry those tears.

So why is it different?

When I cry like a cold sea, you wait for me.

Your warm waves, holding out a hurricane.

I guess hot and cold can't mix sometimes.



Emily Duncan

Grade 12



Acacia Steffenhagen

Grade 9

love 22

My Love Is Yours

By Dakota Wilber

For my many years all my eyes could see was darkness,
like a terribly made paint bleeding through the canvas
or a heavy little black bag that we must carry around,
and sometimes throughout my years I swear I saw pigs flying,
but that doesn't matter now for you are a part of me now,
for as long as I have you, I couldn't give a damn if the pigs are
flying,
and the paint can bleed through the canvas all it wants,
my little black bag could get so heavy and break my bones,
and leave me wounded for all I could care,
for you are my drug, my remedy to this anguish I feel,
my love is yours, my heart may be degraded from all the sandpaper
of the past,
but as long as you love me for who I am I will stay strong,
for my pain may be strong, but our love for each other is stronger,
my heart, soul, body, and mind are yours,
and I will love and cherish you till the day I die.

You're the Sun
By Scarlett Turner

Flowers can't reach out to the sun and say how much they need her,
But if she burned out, the whole earth would scream.

You're the sun.

You're not just rising and setting; you bring light to the earth and
the flowers among.

You're more than just a flower, you're the sun.

Stay shining.

You have more of a purpose than falling and rising.

Your Heart is my Sun

By Scarlett Turner

Your heart is my sun,

Your soul is my light,

Your energy is my life,

All of which are my reasons for loving.

You're like gravity, pulling me closer each day.

But life has ended,

Lights can't always stay on,

And the sun destroys all that it touches, at least that's what they say.

But for you, I'm still willing to try every day.

Will You Come Back

By A'marie McKenney

You and Me.

Were never supposed to fall in love.

You and Me.

It was a mission to get you close.

You and Me.

To take your heart with your life.

You and Me.

Trying to keep it under control.

You and Me.

This is business and nothing more.

Me and You.

You are so sweet and cute.

Me and You.

Going out on dates with flowers of love.

Me and You.

Sharing a kiss under the fireworks.

Me and You.

Let's run away or this won't be allowed.

You and Me.

Choosing to stay and not to run.

You and Me.

No choice but to go back to business.

You and Me.

Having to take your life.

You and Me.

But something happened.

Me and You.

I changed.

Me and You.

To be something, I will have to quit.

Me and You.

Go to the place we first met.

You and Me.

They took my life because I failed.

You.

Waiting for me to come back.

Me.

I'm sorry, for I won't be coming back.

Dear Earth,

Thank you for the creation of one of the few places I feel at ease:
the ocean.

You house such a magnificent world full of so much beauty. The
places to see and explore are beyond belief, but one place that is
justifiably the best place to be is the beach and being in the ocean
with the waves.

Before I endured myself in your salty waters I felt not at peace, but
very unconnected with the water. I lacked knowledge about the
life connected to the ocean. I wasn't in touch with the ocean at all.

When I first arrived presences, you were a huge vast body of an
unknown place, and for a while that's how I saw you, until I aged,
and realized the energy and life you carry. I finally was able to feel
and see how incredible the ocean was. I felt the connection in my
soul, and I knew the beach and being in the water is where I
belong.

You were a place of escape for me. You are the only place I feel as if
I belong, even to this day. The water is truly life changing.

I'm unable to be convinced otherwise, but the ocean does have
spiritual energy. It's a healing sanctuary, it's the beginning of life
on Earth. Sea water contains medicine, which improves mental
abilities and helps regulate hormones. Ocean is therapy for the
soul.

- Rosie Oliphant



Jayla Lee

Grade 9

A Moment Whole

By Alex Misenheimer

A short poem about memory

One spring morning I awoke to an ephemeral fog over a dew-covered yard

As the sun rose the darkness of the fog gave way to the encroachment of a cyan haze

Held back only by the golden glow of the lamp sitting beside me

As it seeped through towering windows that gazed into the very soul of the earth

When it seems that fractured moments of the past are all that draw breath,

It's peculiar that there still remains, a moment,

whole



Angelina Qui

Colorful Skies and Starry Nights

By Scarlett Turner

As nighttime rolls around

The sun starts to sink

The streets make less sound

As skies turn orange, purple, and pink

The sun starts to sink

The stars start to shine

As skies turn orange, purple, and pink

The constellations get in line

The stars start to shine

As you lay your head to rest

The constellations get in line

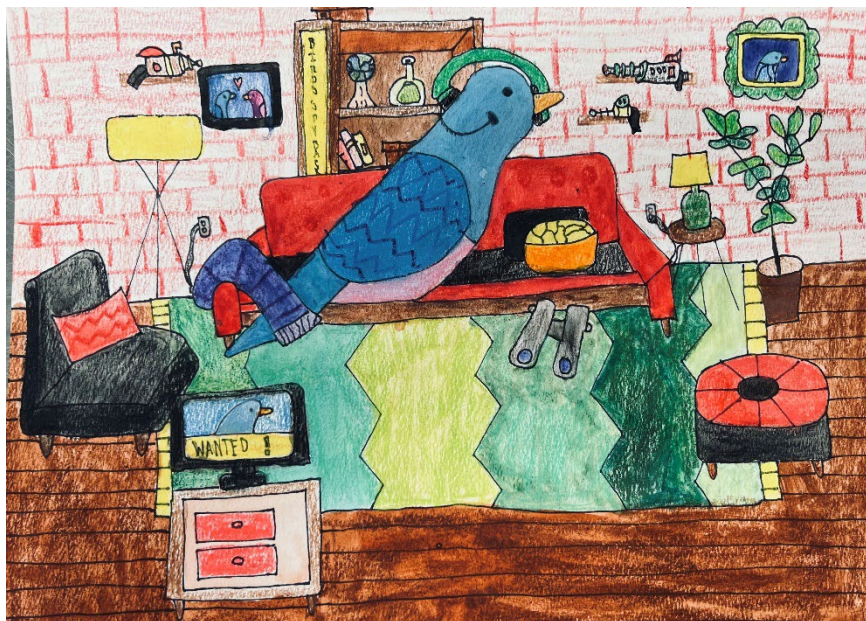
While the sun sets west

As you lay your head to rest

The streets make less sound

While the sun sets west

And nighttime rolls around



Braelyn Eaton

Grade 9

Sunflowers

By Alex McFall

Sunflowers

Reach towards the sun

Never looking back

Always having fun

Never any problems reaching towards tomorrow

Now the sky's a shade of yellow

Like the flowers that grow near

If only I was standing there

All alone with you



Angelina Qiu

Grade 8

Trapped

By A'marie McKenney

Outside the window, there's a world

On the other side, there's a house.

But in my eyes the windows are bars.

Bars keeping me inside a prison and

Away from the beautiful world.

Staying in this prison every day,

Not able to socialize, not able to explore.

Stuck being something I don't want to be.

Waiting for my glass slipper, to set me free.

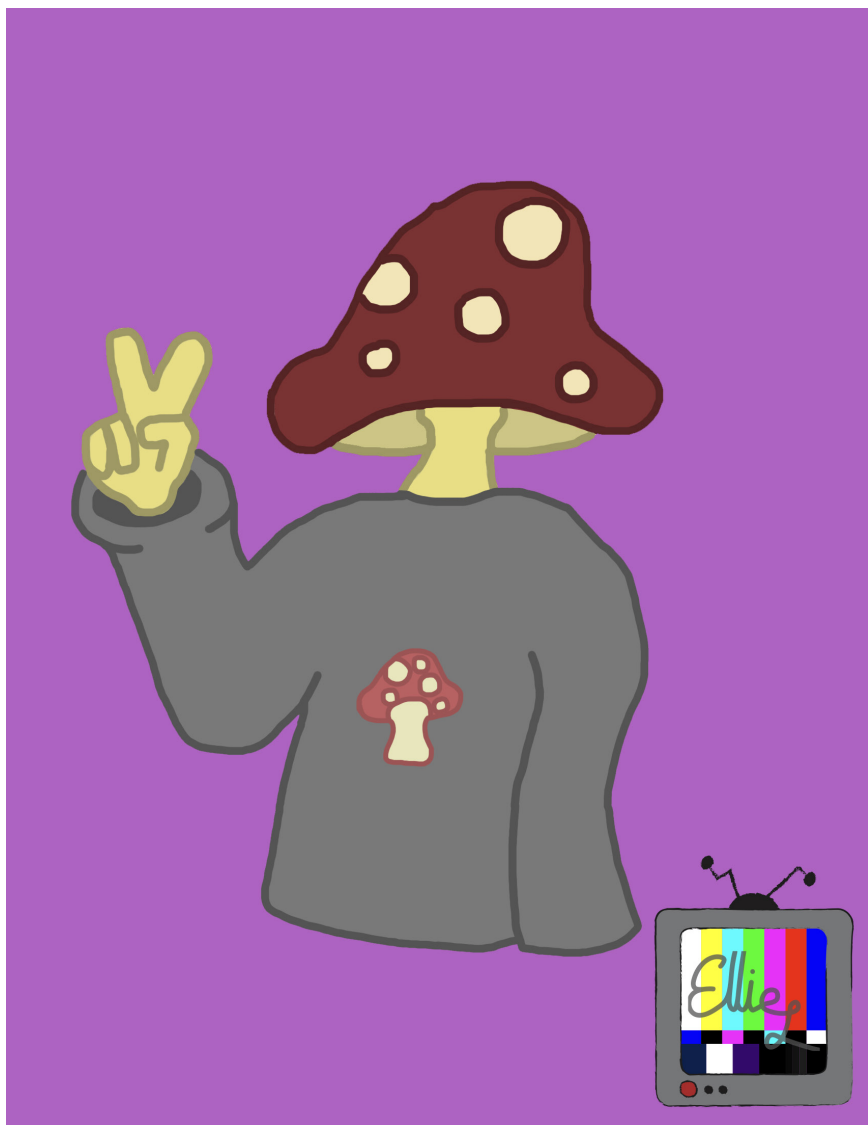


Angelina Qui

Alarm

By Will Snyder

In the morning there is a moment right before my alarm goes off.
A moment that encompasses eons in one second.
Some strange magic rouses my consciousness each morning for
that moment of solace
Before the alarm strikes.
I set a jingle that reminds me of happier times
So that the grey of a winter morning does not feel as dark.
I sometimes snooze the pleasant alarm only to be shaken to reality
by that secondary safety alarm.
It teaches me anew each morning that reality can be harsh.
But I can always choose to wake up to the cheery voices rather than
the emergency alert.
It is a way to decide my own fate
In that moment before my alarm strikes.



Ellie Lothridge

My Mind

By Torrin Colley

They asked me why I always shout.

I say because my mind is **loud!**

Every day I'm looking more and more like my dad.

Even to insignificant things, I'll get really mad or real sad.

So, I pent it up,

but on the inside, I know it will not be enough.

The number of fears I have must be astronomic.

My life's a joke, quit reading and pass the comic.

Every night I lay awake in my bed.

While these voices keep on playing on repeat in the back of my head.

I fear that all along whatever god is there has tallied my sins.

Stuck inside my own mind, it's a terrifying place to be in...



Acacia Steffenhagen

Grade 9

Curfews, Deadlines, Sunsets

By Will Snyder

Curfews, Deadlines, Sunsets

My friends pick up their dice and shovel their belongings into their backpacks.

If only I could make them stay longer,

But there are curfews and deadlines

And there are sunsets.

If only there was one more hour in the budget,

I could convince them to hang on

for one more roll.

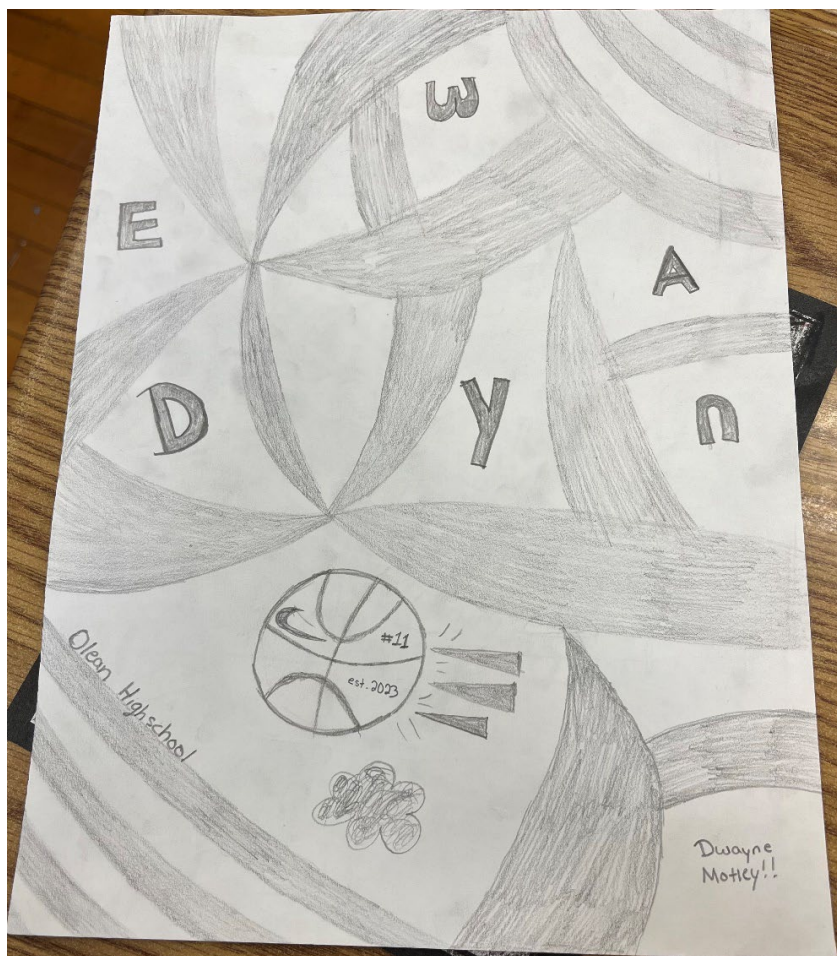
One more tavern where they learn their story.

The story they have been living,

developing themselves.

Is anyone going to eat the last slice of pizza?

I wish there was only one more hour.



Dwayne Motley

Grade 11

Ouch, Ouch

By Avianna Rauber

In the kitchen at my house in 2010 I was 4,
I burned my hands on the stove,
Ouch it was painful,
My hand was as red as an apple.
My dad and brother tried to stop me,
But my mom and Aunt Selena
were at Walmart,
They heard me screaming as loud as a lion.
So, then they took me to the Hospital,
The doctor then popped a bubble on both hands,
After, the doctor slapped my hands very hard,
After that, the doctor gave me a cream,
Then, my mom, my Aunt Selena, and the nurses got the doctor
fired.
Next, my mom took my Aunt Selena home.
Then she took me home,
And then she put the cream on my hands,
Next, she calmed me down.
Then she got me ready for bed,
After, she tucked me in my crib with my dad,
Finally, she sang to me and read me a bedtime story,
Then, I finally went to sleep with my dad.
The next day when me and my dad woke up my hands started
feeling a little bit better, but they were still as red as apples,

So, then my mom put the cream on,
Then, I started my day,
Next, I was crying hoping that it would go away.
Then, my mom and my dad both said, “Don’t cry Barbara Millicent Roberts”, “It will be okay” We got the doctor fired for slapping your hands very hard” ‘So, don’t worry”,
After, we all took a nap,
Then, we all got up,
As the days went on my mom and my dad kept putting the cream on my hands.
Then, a couple days later it went away,
It went back to normal,
They weren’t red as apples anymore,
So finally, me, my mom, my dad, my brother Kenneth Sean Carson, my Aunt Selena, and the nurses were relieved,
Even the doctor was relieved,
He felt bad for slapping my hands very hard,
He was at home crying about doing that to me,
He missed working at the Hospital,
But he even knew that he deserved to get fired for doing that to me,
And then, we moved on from that,
But ever since that day they don’t let me cook on the stove by myself.

Byzantine

By Grace Haynes

byzantine

I see the flashing lights,
I hear the blaring sirens,
I've felt the deepening pain,
I know America.
I long for lasting peace,
I ignite disaster.
Is it possible I am America?

Through each rising sun and moon
I see our convoluted ways.
We ask to be a peaceful province,
Yet we burn our own nation down.
We fight, we tear, we break,
but we ask again for peace.
Like a baby eagle, we try to soar,
but are scarcely able to fly.

Maybe it is time to respect ourselves,
our nation,
our people,
and employ that as a step towards the next.
A step towards America, and...
America at peace with...
America.



Jayla Lee

Grade 9

Texts

By Phoenix Langdon

my fear is my phone
every message makes me scared
take a deep breath that's not what they mean
whatever it is I take it the wrong way
I can't ask it'll make them mad
I'm scared crap I left them on read
now they're mad I didn't answer
what do I do now
I'll say sorry that sounds right
they left me on read dang that kinda hurt
what do I say now what do I say
all that sounds right is I'm sorry I guess that's what I'll say

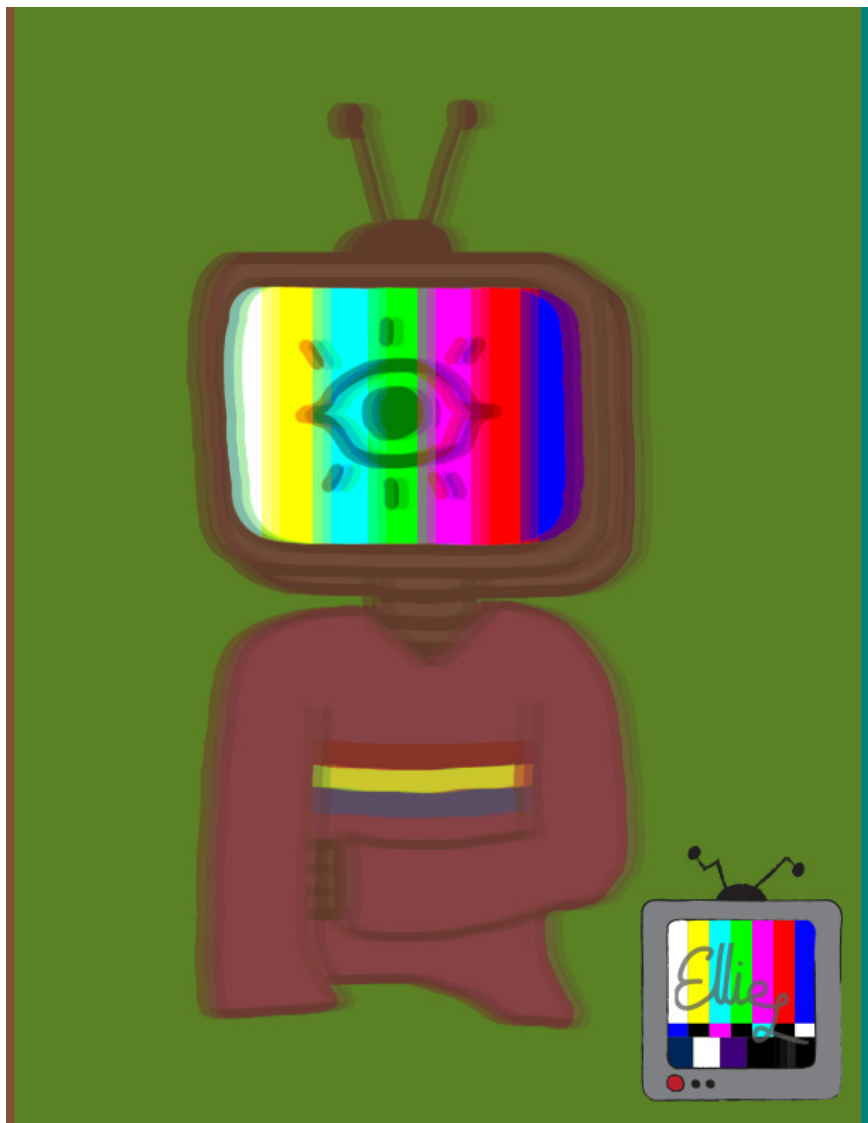
Social Media
By Phoenix Langdon

I'm awake but why it's 3 am
It seems I have lost track of time but why
On my phone, been sucked in since 8 pm
Wondering why I'm not like her so why

trying to look like her; an addiction
trying tons of makeup; not pretty yet
watching her life, it must be fiction
trying to look like her it's hard you bet

I wish for her life no matter how hard
She makes it look so easy; I want it bad
I have changed everything, why is it hard?
She's so pretty it makes me so mad

This phone is my problem, yes, my problem
Everything is perfect down to her hem



Ellie Lothridge

The Day the World Shut Down

By Tyler Camp

March 2020

An innocent schoolboy sits in class
Naive to the circumstances around him
Millions dying in a faraway land
A microscopic beast overtaking all
Racing to find a new host
It enters a new shore
Full of new victims to invade
Dreadful rumors travel like wildfire
The innocent schoolboy feels helpless
The joy is fading from his spirits
Like water being poured out of a bottle
Unsure if his life will ever be the same

The stroke of a brush

By Dakota Wilber

We are given a brush,
paint, and a canvas and a painting and the layer of paint from the
past.

But the actions of the past are our paint,
and although we hold the paint brush,
we don't know what to paint.

We can try time and time again to paint a pattern
but eventually we will run out of pages,
and then we are left dazed, staring at the past,
wondering how to paint the whole picture.

The paint we put on the canvas is old and worn,
and it is up to us to make it new again.

If we mix the paint the same way as it was in the past
the paint will bleed through the canvas,
leaving it up to the next generation to replace
both the canvas and the paint.

But what if we were to change the brush we paint with?

If we make the brush small, we can add more detail.

With each time we make the paint we add sweat and blood;

but the painting, oh, the painting of the past, it's too red,

everyone is too focused on finishing the painting because it was never truly finished,

but the more layers we add the more it looks as if we just dumped buckets of paint on it.

A mess is what it is, it's not art at all anymore, not even at the slightest.



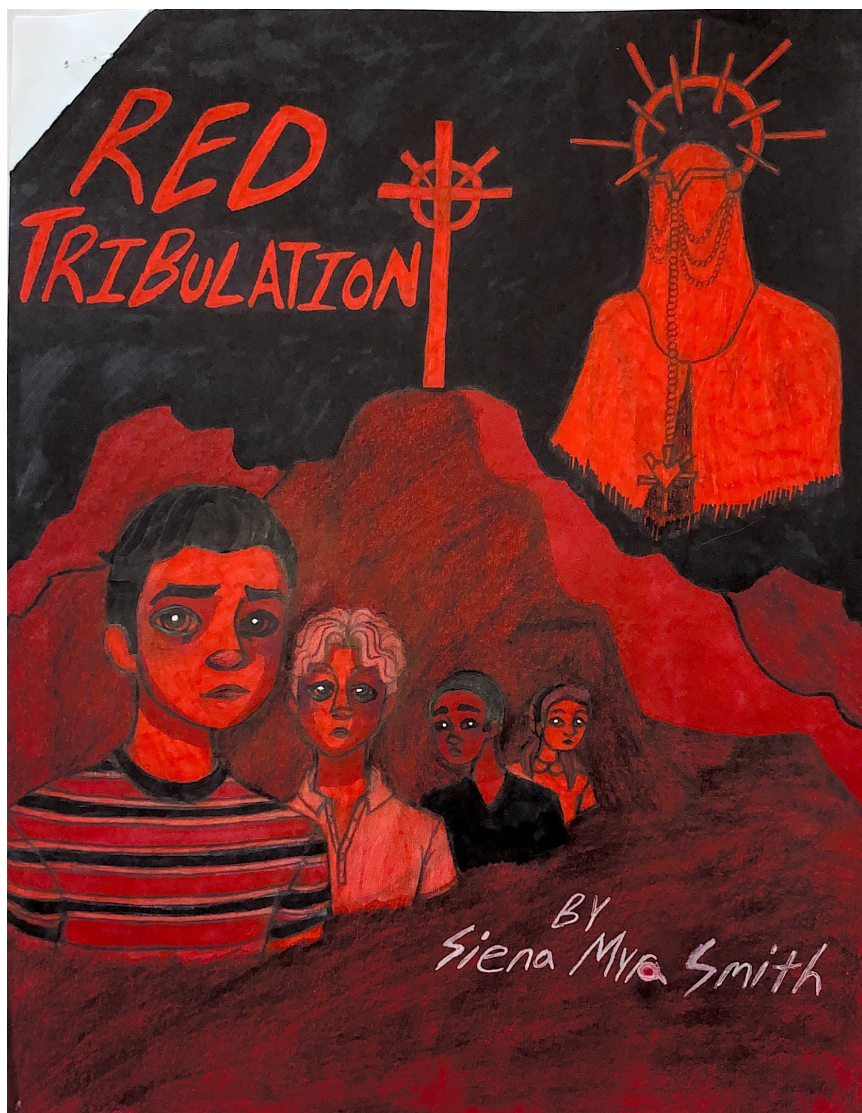
Lillian May

Grade 12



Lauren Blazejewski

Grade 9



Siena Smith

The Red Tribulation

By Sienna Smith

This poem is based off the one of the last chapters of my unfinished story Red Tribulation, third story to the saga that's been a work in progress since I was seven:

"The Red Tribulation" is a novel written by one of the main characters of the story, Barney Krueger when he's an adult in 1988. The story takes place in Dread City, Washington, 1958; where Barney and our other main characters Issac, Samuel, and Barbara are only around 11 to 12 years old at the time. Their life in Dread City seems to fit the dystopian idea of "an American Dream" until one day, the sky turns black, the sun is red, and unknown beings roam amongst them, killing off whatever moves with no explanation of how or why they have even been there to begin with. At the end of the story, Issac is crucified by the entities, he dies shortly after, but the apocalypse went away when he was taken to the other dimension where the beings had come from. The story is called "Red Tribulation" because the apocalypse is slightly like the biblical Tribulation. This poem is about Barney's perspective.

Red Tribulation

THE END IS HERE.

This was murmured amongst those who survived this thing...

This thing of good or evil?

This thing that was rejoiced in Sunday school

This thing that was promised we'd be redeemed as free and holy

While the damned were left behind and punished

But instead, we were all left behind

none were taken to the skies as promised

where there'd be nothing but rags of the people we once were

spooky 57

Fathers and sons
mothers and daughters
none were taken
I tell you again
None. Were. Taken.
THIS.... was not God
neither a thing nor figment of the Antichrist
This.... was...something
Yet not...nothing
This.... came....from somewhere
But why?
Why would this come to a world like ours?
Why would this choose to turn the skies of our founding fathers
black and sun red?
Why would this send things unimaginable to hunt us down?
One by one?
Why would this take a 12-year boy like Issac and crucify him?
Whose sins does he pay for?
What did this boy die for?
Why would this watch him scream?
Bleed and pleaded to be freed from the cross that he was nailed to?
Why weren't his cries enough?
THE END IS HERE
That.... was a lie



Miley Crawford

Grade 9



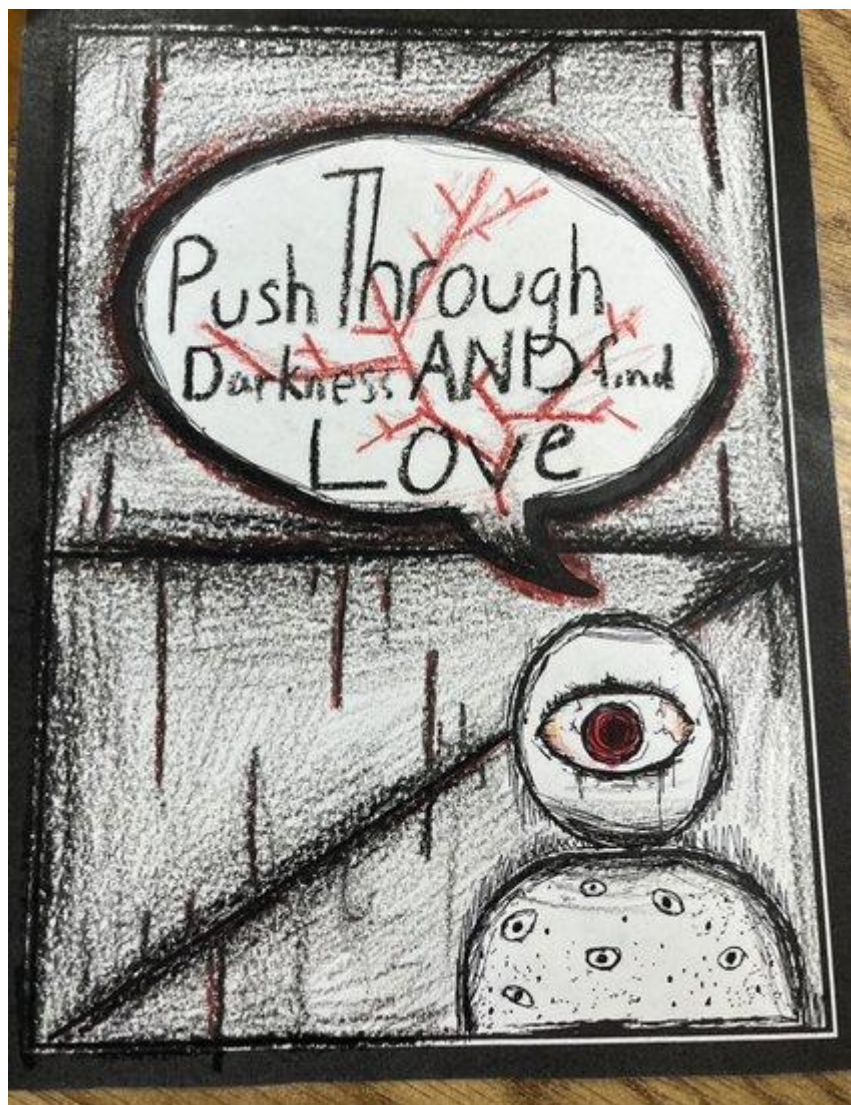
by: Natila
♥

Natila Maul

October Day

By Anonymous

I noticed that today seemed like one of those beginnings in those not-so-horror-horror stories that start by saying “*It was a dark and stormy night in October.*” It’s so cliché and clearly unoriginal. I’m across the street from the oldest house in town. The wind rustles the dry leaves in the front yard, and I head across the road towards it, stopping in front of the not-so-big-gate to inspect and examine the “eerie” home. I notice a light flicker on in the attic, then I spot a faint-really-faint shadow walk-no-*float*-by. It’s either 1: my imagination from the tales from whoever told me the stories, or 2: just my imagination (the house sometimes gives me the creeps). No possible way that someone may be living there. Some people say that if you step into the house, you’ll die within seconds. Like, how would that even happen??? Scientifically impossible. Only the dumbest people would live in it, walk near it, or possibly breathe in its essence. I can’t even *imagine* anyone *wandering* there, or even just *near* it...a few seconds go by...*Holy crap is it clean in here!* But then everything happened so fast. The door slams behind me, and I whip around, trying to dash out. I get pushed to the left by some invisible thing. I fall, hearing the door lock *click*. Then the lights turn off, one following another. The last thing I remember is looking down at the only window by the door, lit by the afternoon sun. There was a piece of paper taped to it. It had 10-15 names on it. Half were faded and crossed out...The most recent looking one... was mine...



Chandler Romero



Ellie Lothridge



Braelyn Eaton

Grade 9

spooky 64



Emily Duncan

Grade 12



Adelina Peer

Grade 11

ceramics 66



Norra Anastasia

Grade 11



Hailee Zalwsky

Grade 12

ceramics 68



Sophie Bartman

Grade 11



Faith Schreiber

Grade 11

ceramics 70



Wils Jay-Edwards

Grade 12

ceramics 71



Aila Shoup

Grade 11

ceramics 72

Six-Word Memoirs

<p>Why am I crying over them...</p> <p>Madysen Quinn</p>	<p>Rock bottom? Hey, I like climbing.</p> <p>Jonathan Tidd</p>
<p>You can't even relate to me.</p> <p>Ellowyn Davis</p>	<p>You're not what I expected.</p> <p>Gideon Tarr</p>
<p>What if my "what ifs" happened?</p> <p>Ava Moran</p>	<p>You give up Someone else wins.</p> <p>Ashanti Caton</p>
<p>Why follow when you can lead?</p> <p>Ashanti Caton</p>	<p>I watched the world lose control.</p> <p>Gavin Champlin</p>
<p>I thought we had more time.</p> <p>Avrianna Gadley</p>	<p>She's underground... I'll always miss her.</p> <p>Tori Harris</p>
<p>meant to be, not to last</p> <p>Briar Anderson</p>	

serendipity

something interesting or pleasant
happening by chance

finding something beautiful
without looking for it

phenomenon capable of inciting joy