

PETROGLYPH

ISSUE 3 / 2025

the
PETROGLYPH
review



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The Petroglyph Review

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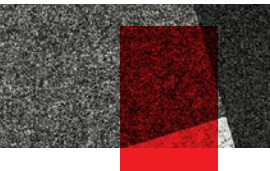
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Objective

The Petroglyph Review is staffed by a team of Upper School students working to create an annual issue of Menaul School's literary and art magazine. This publication is designed to showcase the creative work of writers and artists at Menaul School. Literary Magazine Club members work to review submissions, edit, and publish the strongest, most distinguished works into a print publication. Annual issues of *The Petroglyph Review* are released late in the spring semester.

Submissions

Upper School students may submit up to 3 pieces each of creative writing and/or visual art through our online submission form. Submissions are reviewed anonymously during our submission window, from August through January each year. We do not publish plagiarized, previously published, or AI generated work. All accepted work is subject to minor changes/copy editing by editors.

Contents

- 1 Restraints/Conformity** 
Safwana Rahman
- 2 Dirt and Air** 
Amayah Schoener
- 3 my gradual smile** 
Leciana Marchiondo
- 4 Sunset's Final Glow** 
Maelynn Belone
- 5 Don't Trip** 
Janaye Foote
- 6 Milo's Garden** 
Luis Acabal
- 8 Gentle Waves** 
Caleb DiMartino
- 9 Cuckoo-Clock Heart** 
Natalia Mejias
- 10 Too Young** 
Natalia Mejias
- 11 Whispers of the Morning** 
Seelush Chhetri
- 12 Give Me Your Chain** 
Izzy Rodriguez
- 13 Fluorescence** 
Natalia Mejias
- 14 Evening Glow** 
Simora Belone
- 15 NYC** 
Massimo Dominici
- 17 Everything the Sun Sees** 
Amayah Schoener
- 18 Silent Evening** 
Simora Belone
- 19 Unnecessary Advice** 
Seelush Chhetri
- 21 Cold Serenity** 
Simora Belone
- 22 Whispers Into a Lone Ear** 
Safwana Rahman
- 24 Between You and Me** 
Seelush Chhetri
- 25 Sunset with Lightning** 
Summer Roesler
- 26 Lietuvis** 
Kazimieras Giedraitis
- 27 Beaufort** 
Nancy Ho
- 28 Dancing Colors** 
Maelynn Belone
- 29 Speak In Whispers** 
Luis Acabal
- 31 Serenade in Moonlight** 
Caleb DiMartino
- 34 Buttons for Eyes** 
Aleah Herrera
- 34 City Lights** 
Maelynn Belone
- 35 A Candle's Plea** 
Savannah Mora
- 36 Батьки (Parents)** 
Daria Butenko
- 37 Northern Lights Sky** 
Summer Roesler
- 38 honeymoon, a sonnet** 
Leciana Marchiondo
- 39 Adolescence** 
Daria Butenko



POETRY



PROSE



VISUAL ART



the
PETROGLYPH
review

Restraints/Conformity

excerpt from an abandoned journal

Safwana Rahman

I want to write without restraint again.

I want to pick my pen up and not have my mind cloud my need to write, drowning it out with the million voices in my head. I don't want to stutter in my writing like I do when I speak. I don't want to be constricted by time, viscosity of ink, my body, my thoughts, my mortality. I don't want to stop to think about the legibility of my handwriting, about the morality in the topic of my words, about whether it would fit someone else's criteria of what is considered "good writing."

Others have challenged views on the so-called "system" of writing. Why can't I do the same?

Why must I follow the set of rules put by others to express myself, when I cannot even have an opinion on them? Is it because of my age and the fact that I'm still in school? Is it because I do not hold the positions and titles as many who have set these rules had? Why is doing things that others have done before you in the way they've done it able to define your stature amongst people?

Why is my writing only read and not understood, only judged and classified as "insufficient," rather than being looked at as new and different than those of my peers?

Why must I conform, and why can't others have perspective?





Dirt and Air

Amayah Schoener

CERAMIC AND GLASS

my gradual smile

Leciana Marchiondo

i have a bad day,
everyone is in the way.
every irritable thing, every annoying sound.
i hit rock bottom,
my head towards the ground.
my smile left in yesterday, nowhere to be found.
but in the dust, i see a beacon of light
I see the daytime i love, leading me out of the night-
my smile catching up to me, it creeps up to my cheeks,
Nothing bad, nothing mean, just an innocent inside joke that will be funny
for weeks.
My friends bring a smile to my face,
and they leave the sweet, sweet taste
of joy, the satisfaction that comes from our delicious laughter.
My heart beats faster,
And for a moment the world is ambient, the only sound
I hear is our permeable humor.
And suddenly I found
My smile today, and I await it tomorrow, in the near future.



Sunset's Final Glow

Maelynn Belone

PHOTOGRAPHY

Don't Trip

Janaye Foote

I don't understand
Previous days filled with endless conversation
New ideas, new conclusions
"I hope this never changes"

Constantly running through my mind without looking both ways
Don't trip
It's bound to happen,
but please don't trip too soon

What is it that drove you away?
Every action needs a purpose,
what was yours?
Left alone clueless without answers

Now I'm like a ghost
able to walk past you without being seen
carrying memories of my past
Can't do anything to change what's already been done

But I've learned to accept the changes,
and be grateful that they happened
I still think of the future, and what it could've held
But I guess you tripped too soon.

Milo's Garden

Luis Acabal

Goldtrees, our streetlamps. Red skies, but blue grass. Udanta tore the rough cotton beneath with his shoe and stood tall before a shattered sky.

“He’s still sleeping, Svero.” Udanta’s whisper echoed, resonating between goldtrees.

“Where did you put him this time?” asked Svero.

“I put him on the sarflower patch.”

“The thorned patch?”

“I remembered to take them off, thankfully. He wouldn’t be sleeping as peacefully if I’d forgotten.”

Svero began walking leisurely in the direction of the patch, Udanta following closely.

“He should be fine once he arrives,” said Svero with self-assurance. “But he’s only ever spoken to us, right?”

Udanta listened, his eyes trailing off the path in front to the birds above. “I’m more worried of us waking him.”

“I’ve found him strange. An ugly face, but soft-spoken. Though his kind words I hate, I see his good intent. But does it go further, then?” Udanta asked knowing they were both just as curious. “You remember that as a kid, he didn’t walk on two feet but crawled. He crawled like a beast. He crawled on his hands and feet like a lost corpucine. He crawled with the demonboards and was welcomed to their burrow, but he would still come back home each day.”

Svero slid his hands in his pockets. For each lone rock on the path, he would kick it away to its designated section adjacent to the path. Left for bluegrass and whiterocks, right for dustclumps and sarflowes.

“When he speaks, we listen, which he knows,” Udanta finished. As light faded from atop most of the goldtrees, calm flames surrounded the base of their trunks.

“Don’t the firetails come out later?” asked Svero.

“Later, or in imminent change.”

Upon reaching the sarflower patch, both Udanta and Svero knelt in front of the sleeping boy.

Svero spoke first. “Hey, it’s time to go.”

The boy opened his eyes to see the tall goldtrees resting their burning leaves in the air above him. Svero held out his hand and smiled. The boy formed a smile in response and closed his eyes once again, causing both Udanta and Svero to release a subtle giggle. Udanta stood up alongside Svero and stared at the boy, still smiling.

Udanta couldn’t help but embrace his own jolly mood and curiosity. He wanted to know. He wanted to know more. “What’s on your mind, Dreamer?”





Gentle Waves

Caleb DiMartino

PHOTOGRAPHY

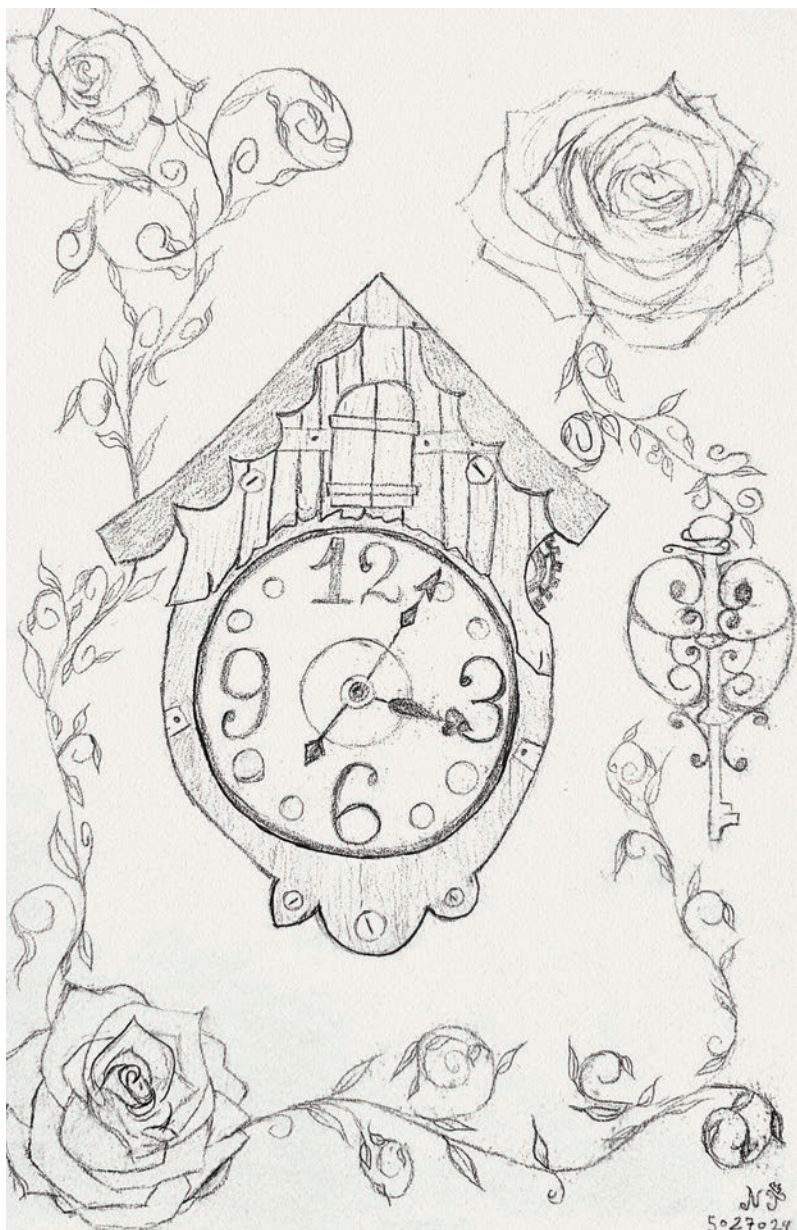


the **PETROGLYPH** review

Cuckoo-Clock Heart

Natalia Mejias

GRAPHITE ON PAPER



Too Young

Natalia Mejias

Will you love me clothed?
See me for my mind before my body,
As I do you.
Show me – love,
Young as we are.

Love me as a whole,
Not as a sum of parts –
Seen, but never touched.
Know what makes my bones ache
And my heart pound.

Perhaps love ME naked
Unmasked and defenseless,
Every scar, every bruise laid bare.
Take my flaws and cherish them
And learn me before you yearn for me.

For I hate to waste time,
But I am too young
To satisfy your hunger.
I will not allow you to take my fruits,
Without first watering my roots.



Whispers of the Morning

Seelush Chhetri

PHOTOGRAPHY

Issue 3 • 2025

11

Give Me Your Chain

Izzy Rodriguez

Your voice isn't lost,
even when it trembles, even when it pauses.

You apologize, over and over again,
as though your hurt is my chain.
But give me your chain—
it isn't a weight I fear to bear,
it's the strength of trust, the bond we share.

Let go of the fear, the ache, the strain.
I'll hold the pieces you think will break,
and every sorry you offer, I'll take.

It isn't too heavy; I can take it all.
And every day, I will never fall.
Whatever you say, I'll never retreat,
and I'll stay, 'til you find peace.



Fluorescence

Natalia Mejias

GRAPHITE ON PAPER

Issue 3 • 2025

13



Evening Glow

Simora Belone

PHOTOGRAPHY

NYC

Massimo Dominici

Dad's scarf was long and soft, and with January's chill, I'm glad he left it to me despite our argument, even though it made me feel a little guilty. But I was left on 5th Avenue (as I wanted, though), clouds from the manholes, thick and warm, bright neon signs of the souvenir shops, scaffolding, cars, taxis and bikes fighting on their riders' behalf, and a lot of stars placed in parallel lines up in the sky; did you know you can't see the real stars there?

As I walked, my eyes and ears saw and heard as they never had before: laughter, a scream or two, and music from every corner. Suddenly, a gothic-style church, a 1930s building, and another one made entirely of glass. People: some Black, some Asian, some White, some shouted a bad word in my language; saying "Jesus doesn't exist" or graffitiing "Freedom Begins Within" on a wall, or couples holding hands: blue and blue, pink and pink, no barriers for them. Homeless people, ties and briefcases agitated, deadlines to meet—they either failed their company or doubled their earnings, who knows?

Sorry, Dad, I know you were worried, but your curious and perhaps naive 15-year-old wants to explore this place. Through chaos and liveliness, in the middle of numbered streets without names, what was so familiar? I've been craving it, and I've learned to love it, from a red and blue-dressed teenager swinging through the palaces, from the notes of Jay-Z and Alicia Keys—it meant more to me than a simple vacation.

I continued, the sound of sirens guiding me, like a cross on a map pointing to the treasure, even though I didn't know what it was. I started walking faster, marching. Do you know that people there yell at you if you stop, or even if you walk too slowly? They never sleep, frantic caterpillars boring into a big apple.

With military stride, I turned 49th, and then right: I liked that square, the excited kids in the Lego store, the giant with the rainbow light; you have no idea how happy I was that even though it was January, it was still there. I leaned on the railing, seeing those skating: counterclockwise, no one broke the cycle. But there was one person who I couldn't stop staring at; he was skating so fluently, passing the others, smiling, the wind in his scarf: I liked it, it was similar to mine. I waited for him to come out of the rink; I wanted to talk to him so much. The closer I got, the stronger the feeling that I was following someone I already knew. Suddenly he stopped—he had dropped his cell phone—and at that moment I reached him. I noticed that the scarf was the same as mine. I asked him how he learned to skate so well; he replied that it's all a matter of clearing your way, of imagining that there are no obstacles on the rink; if you want to take a lap, two, you can do it, it doesn't matter if you skate slow or fast. Then he told me he loved my scarf, saying his father had given his to him.

He was (wants to be) a New Yorker: independent, free, and dreamy. He smelled of projects, of escape, of ambitions, of discoveries, skyscrapers, and determination. I'm Italian, a smell of peace, of delay, of chatter at sunset by the sea, of laughter. A smell of pasta, of narrow streets, of 1000 different dialects, of long lunches until 4 pm on Sundays at grandma's house. Two hearts, both want to beat, but I've got to learn to skate, to grow, and for how many tears this pain will bring, I know one must stop beating because despite the fact that I love it, it's an obstacle on my rink.



Everything the Sun Sees

Amayah Schoener

ACRYLIC PAINT ON CANVAS



Silent Evening

Simora Belone

PHOTOGRAPHY

18

the **PETROGLYPH** review

Unnecessary Advice

Seelush Chhetri

“Nanee, get up! It’s 8 already.”

No, it wasn’t. It was 7:15 in the morning. I used to get so mad when they did that.

“Why do I have to be deprived of 45 minutes of sleep just to wake up earlier to sit out in the sun for Vitamin D?” I would curse under my breath, curses that I knew when I was little, something that wasn’t even considered a curse or a swear word. Just something I thought was a bad word, like “poop” or something *innocent*.

My brother and I went upstairs and sat in the sun, on the balcony drinking the mandatory glass of warm water, some biscuits and walnuts.

“Walnuts are good for your brain, because they look like one,” Papa would say.

“Always drink one glass of lukewarm water in the morning, it helps the digestive system.”

I would roll my eyes.

Unnecessary advice I will never use.

“Nanee, get up! It’s 6:30, you’ll be late for school.”

No, it wasn’t. It was 6 in the morning. I used to get so mad when they did that.

“Why!?! Ugh.” This time it wasn’t just in my head, I would tell them.

Curses like whispers, they were no more under my breath.

Curses a little less *innocent* like “shit” or something.

I went upstairs and ate the breakfast my mom made me. Still, with a glass of lukewarm water and nuts.

“Walnuts are good for your brain...Always drink one glass...”

“Make good friends in school, make good impressions, friends are important.”

I got ready. I went to school.

Unnecessary advice. I know already.

My alarm goes off 7:30 AM, I think that’s enough time to get ready.

I don’t make my bed. I don’t eat walnuts. I don’t drink the one glass of lukewarm water.

My stomach hurts more. Classes are harder.

“Walnuts are good for your brain...Always drink one glass of lukewarm water.”

“Was he correct?”

I run late, I make it by 1 minute.

“You’ll be late for school.”

I need them. Where are they now?

7,760 Miles.

I need advice. I don’t know what to do.



Cold Serenity

Simora Belone

PHOTOGRAPHY

Issue 3 • 2025

21

Whispers Into a Lone Ear

excerpt from an abandoned journal

Safwana Rahman

Nobody will ever know what it's like, will they?

They will never understand what it's like to be woken up with the feeling of legs on either side of you, a body set on your torso with hands pushing down your head till you stop breathing – only to find that you've been sleeping the whole time, and wake up sputtering. They will never know what it is to be robbed of things everyone is supposed to get, moments and experiences snatched just to leave you holed up in some place, dreaming to get out to anywhere and everywhere. They will never understand what it is to dream, in your sleep and in your wake, a world within a world no better than the mind that created it. They don't know the horrors of seeing yourself in the mirror as nothing, or as something different and “other” and have to come to terms with it. They don't know the way everything lurches when disappointment flickers over your mother's face because you are a mistake, or the loneliness that sinks in after your father rejects you as his own because you weren't made the way he wanted and you are a mistake. They wouldn't know of the hands caressing your hair in your sleep, and the immediate urge to saw your head off completely after you wake up. Nor would they know of the same hair wrapping around your neck as you sleep, even if your hair is cropped too short. They won't know how you've become a shell of yourself, burdened by experience and how it would take only a soft touch to topple it all over. They won't know how you don't recognize some parts of yourself, and how the urge is to simultaneously explore them and hide them away. They don't know that you have to grow up during your childhood, so that you can't grow anymore when you're older.

They don't know, they don't know, they don't know...how would they?

They will never know what it is all like, and yet everybody has something to say about it.

Between You and Me

Seelush Chhetri

It aches me to write.
To etch my words into meaningless letters.
It dies as they go on paper, the meaning,
The meaning remains hidden, if I don't.

It aches me to write,
Because I worry you won't read the words the way I mean it.
But it aches me to write,
Because I will never write it the way you read it.
Because I won't ever understand my own writing the way you do.

It aches me to write,
Because I will never write so well.
Even if I bleed dry into the ink's void,
It will never come out ever so perfectly.

It aches me to write,
Because I can't.
Because it won't be as heart-wrenching or as soul-soothing as I mean it to be.

It aches me to write,
Because I hate it.
I hate that you only see it once I've finished expressing myself,
Because I could not speak to you,
And you would not listen.

It aches me to write,
Because I will never be good enough
For you.

You who have watched me my whole life
You who are trapped inside me,
Who I am trapped around.

You who I see disappointed every time I look in the mirror
You who I have been trying to impress every fleeting hour
You whose eyes are mine, whose words are mine
You who won't stop dragging me through the dirt of what's left of yourself
Imagining, thinking, hoping I will ever be like who you were before I
destroyed it all.

It aches me to write,
Because you - I - you - I
Will never be satisfied by the emptiness of what remains.

And yet, I keep writing.
Not to speak.
Not to heal.
Not to be heard.
But because I cannot stop.
Because I will always chase meaning in the emptiness.
Because I will always fail to find it.
Because it aches me to write, and I have succumbed to this drug.



Sunset with Lightning

Summer Roesler

PHOTOGRAPHY

Issue 3 • 2025

25

Lietuvis

After Jamaica Kincaid

Kazimieras Giedraitis

Don't smile at people who walk past you; don't get too happy, because people will think you're cocky; don't be confident, because that is the same thing as being cocky; don't get too sad, because you will show people that you are weak; don't try to be different; do as you're told and not different; do good in school, that's the only way to get somewhere in life; don't wear flashy and colorful clothes, people will think you're gay; don't make a face after shots of vodka, what are you, weak? Is that too much for you? Are you too young? Don't cough after smoking your first cigarette; get in a fight, get some bruises on your face; make everyone around you happy, even if that means that you have to sacrifice everything. Be proud and share the story of your country, after everything that the soviets did to us; be proud and happy that you can speak and write in your language; be grateful to represent your country around the world; be grateful for singing your own anthem; be grateful that you have a right to travel; be grateful that you are one of the lucky ones that didn't lose family members in the occupations; be grateful that your children are born in a free country, where they're not forced to adapt a different culture; but again, stay humble. Raise your kids to be proud and patriotic about where they're from; teach them to be responsible, there has to be zero room for error; make them feel guilty and horrible after every little thing or toy that they have misplaced or lost, because they have to appreciate what they have, because we didn't.



Beaufort

Nancy Ho

GRAPHITE ON PAPER



Dancing Colors

Maelynn Belone

PHOTOGRAPHY

Speak In Whispers

Luis Acabal

I don't think I will write a story during my time here.

Appearance: He is well-developed.

Mental Status: He is alert and oriented to person, place, and time.

Behavior: Behavior normal.

They were already on a new journey, one where I never existed.

They would need to forget me.

To erase every trace of me.

That is what killed me.

Cognition: Normal

Thought Processes: Organized

Insight and Judgement: Impaired

It might be weird to say, but I'm having fun!

There's music, and I've met some cool kids too.

*One of them made some origami birds, and I'm super excited to
show you.*

I don't know if I will be able to take this notebook home, but I hope so.

That's my goal, going home.

This is no home.

Sleep: Fair, stays awake anxious some nights.
Appetite/Weight: Fair, decreasing.

*I think I'm almost out of the world of dust already.
What hurt most is that mom and dad could see me turning to dust as well.*

Risk Level:

High-Risk factors are highly prominent and need to be managed intensely.

Inpatient Treatment Plan: Locked unit with Q15 checks; psychiatric evaluation, including medications... patient may not leave the hospital AMA.

*It seems as if time outside will pass faster than time in here.
Almost as if once I step outside, everybody I know will have changed so much already.
But like seeing old friends, I just want to run up to everybody and hug them. Hug them because I love them, and because I would do anything for them.*

He was cooperative and friendly, dressed in paper scrubs on his hospital bed, well groomed, depressed.

*People would still always ask if I'm okay.
The boys who know nobody has loved them in the past.
The boys who hear how much they are hated.
The boys who don't smile anymore.
They make me smile.*

Patient was tearful.



Serenade in Moonlight

Caleb DiMartino

PHOTOGRAPHY

Issue 3 • 2025

31

Buttons for Eyes

Aleah Herrera

“Being brave doesn’t mean you aren’t scared. Being brave means you are scared, really scared, badly scared, and you do the right thing anyway.” This quote from *Coraline* (2009), directed by Henry Selick, captures the essence of why the film resonated with me so deeply. As a child, *Coraline* was more than just a favorite movie; it felt personal, almost as if it mirrored my own experiences. The story of Coraline discovering a hidden door to a seemingly perfect but ultimately dangerous world reflects much of what I experienced growing up with my mother, who struggled with manic bipolar disorder. Revisiting this movie now, I realize that the comparisons between Coraline’s journey and my own have shaped me into a strong person.

My mother has always been my biggest role model. When my dad wasn’t around much due to work, it was my mom who took care of everything at home. She was always present, doing whatever she could to make us happy. But there were times when she would change suddenly, almost overnight. I remember waking up once to find that she had redecorated the entire house in the middle of the night. It felt unsettling, as though she had become someone else. At the time, I didn’t understand it. Later, I learned that these episodes were part of her manic bipolar disorder. When she was on her medication, she was her loving, caring self. When she wasn’t, she became unpredictable, and eventually, she had to be hospitalized. As a child, this was confusing and scary, much like how Coraline must have felt when she discovered the reality of the “other” mother.

Coraline tells the story of an 11-year-old girl who finds an alternate reality where her “other” mother is loving, and everything her real mother isn’t...at first. But Coraline soon learns that this perfect world is only a façade; her “other” mother wants to sew buttons into her eyes and trap her there forever.

This contrast between the real and other mothers relate to the way I saw my own mom during her highs and lows. Just like Coraline, I was a child trying to understand why the person I loved most in the world could sometimes become someone else, someone unfamiliar. And just like Coraline, I realized that despite the fear and confusion, I had to face the reality of the situation, even if it meant embracing a difficult truth.

Growing up in this environment taught me resilience. Watching my mother battle her illness day in and day out made me stronger. I learned that real strength isn't about being fearless, it's about being scared but moving forward anyway. There were times when I felt overwhelmed by the responsibility of trying to understand and support my mom. But much like Coraline, who faced her fear and confronted the "other" mother, I learned to stand firm in difficult situations. I knew I couldn't change my mom's condition, but I could be there for her, showing compassion and patience, even when it wasn't easy. This persistence, the ability to keep going even when things are hard, has stayed with me throughout my life.

More than anything, my relationship with my mother has instilled in me a deep sense of empathy. I understand that people are complex and that there's often more beneath the surface than what we can immediately see. Living with someone who has a mental illness has made me more aware of the struggles others may face, even if they don't show it. It has taught me to approach situations with compassion and to be open to understanding people's challenges, rather than judging them at face value. This empathy, combined with the resilience I've gained, has made me someone who not only faces life's obstacles but does so supporting others along the way.



City Lights

Maelynn Belone

PHOTOGRAPHY



A Candle's Plea

Savannah Mora

I am slowly fading away.
My life, nothing but lumbering scorch on my
 delicate being.
Night after night,
they strip away my dignity,
my freedom,
my skin.

I am used merely as a means to their end,
providing luminosity at the expense of my
 very essence,
consumed by the fire I sustain.
I rest upon a holder,
steadfast and still,
catching the tears of my wax as I dwindle away.
I yearn for the complexion I once possessed.
Now look at me.
Deformed.
Diminutive.
Useless.

Батьки (Parents)

Daria Butenko

I'm watching an old video. There are seagulls, the smell of the sea and laughter. There's calm, a light breeze and a shiver on the water. There is the dawning sun welcoming us to a new day, but I'm not there anymore. I know the sun still rises and the birds sing in the morning, but it's not for me. I can still hear the children's voices and your happy laughter there, as well as the annoyed grumbling. You know how you're always grumbling over the smallest things, but you never stop in the face of adversity? We do. We've learned to appreciate, I hope. And we've learned to understand. And we've often been able to contradict out of pride or stupidity or perhaps just plain delusion. And there have been hurt feelings, and there have been tears, and there have been arguments. But because if you had not been so patient, we would never have learned to follow what we desire. We wouldn't have learned to stand up for what's important. In the midst of all my pity and sadness and our personal problems, I wanted to take the time to say thank you. For always being there for us. For how hard you work for us.

And for all your love. Thank you, parents.



Northern Lights Sky

Summer Roesler

PHOTOGRAPHY

honeymoon, a sonnet

Leciana Marchiondo

all around and across the ground leaves fall
the sun fades away and the clouds take its place
the joy is muffled because of the tall,
tall stature of gloom that will forever race;
will race the excitement of all things new,
but sadly, these things are no longer new
they are old, the same monotonous meter,
it's the same repetitive thing every day
our only motivation; the sweeter
taste that laughter always leaves in our mouths
so, we continue on with our lame days
we ignore our killing thirst and our drought...
for change in this world, the need is a dune
a dune in the sense that the need is huge
what is gone is the feeling called *honeymoon*.



Adolescence

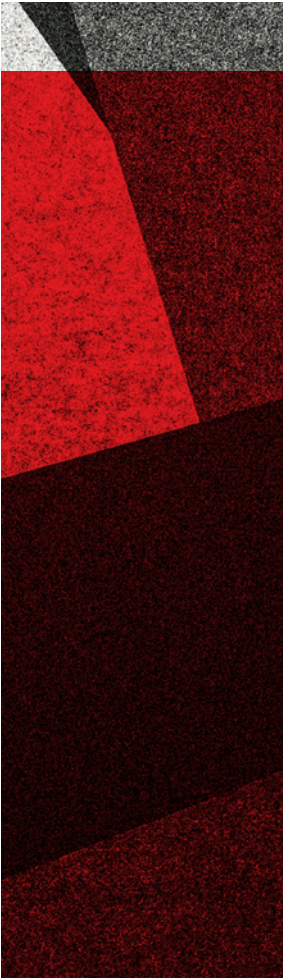
Daria Butenko

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39

the
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