An interdisciplinary, multi-cultural journal celebrating the creativity of SHU students during the academic year 2018-2019
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The Masks We Wear

Letter from the Editors

The inspiration for the theme of Vistas comes from the idea that human beings have three masks: public, private, and secret.

Public masks are what you show to the world, and what you want people to see. We are so comfortable with our public masks that sometimes we forget about the other masks, or that we’re even wearing one at all.

Directly behind what we show the world, lies our private mask. We wear these masks with those we care about. We can be open with them, but while still being careful in plain sight.

The last mask comes out at night, when you’re alone with your thoughts. It may be frightening to accept that part of this mask is a reflection of who you are.

Everyone wears a mask, and even if you don’t realize it, they all become parts of who you are.

In this issue of Vistas, writers narrate their experiences wearing their own masks. Maybe this will help you accept yours.
Public Masks

“We all wear masks, and the time comes when we cannot remove them without removing some of our own skin.”

— André Berthiaume
Emily DeGennaro

by Hector Gutierrez
Charred Sun Petals
Devin Gavigan

water wilts the cold summer flower petals on his third porch step.
the sun chilled his neck and made his elbows ache.

the grass was growing longer now as his hair began to tickle his dry collar bone.
pain from the warmth keeps his grudge stiff and heavy.

a red keychain twists and scratches between his clipped fingernails.
the healing scab on his left knee bleeds from the August breeze.

his search for blindness can be found
in the cracked cement between white and black.

hidden behind the mask.
“Why is this place always so fucking busy?”

I muttered to myself as I stepped onto the platform. I squeeze and weaved my way in between an array of people hoping to find space away from everyone else. I hear the chitter chatter of people, buzzing and ringing of cell phones and the crying of infants. I heard the pressure being released from the train as we slowly took off. I glanced down to check my phone ‘No new messages huh? Shocker’ while also checking the time.

3:00

‘I should be home in an hour.’

I begin to bite my lower lip and lift my head up circling everyone around me. Men and women of all backgrounds. I looked up and saw a woman with a baby strapped to her chest while reading a book.

*Maria, a single mother of one new born child. Her husband had been fatally shot and killed overseas in Iraq. She’s taking the subway to her mother's house in Queens to drop her beautiful daughter Isabella. Maria’s taking night classes to get her education in hopes of giving Bella a better life than her own. The old stained baby shall, her wrinkly jeans, the worn out books. Maria had bags under her eyes clearly showing she hasn’t slept in days.*

3:15.

‘Ugh, 45 more minutes’.

I heard someone's phone ring and looked over.

*Brittney, a 22-year-old who's got more going against her in life than for her. She tries to cover the scars on her arms, neck and legs with a turtle neck XL long sleeve t-shirt and jeans.... It’s June. She keeps looking down at her shoes afraid to make eye contact with someone else. She’s on her way to see her boyfriend Carlos of 4 years. 4 years of physical, emotional and verbal abuse. 1,460 days on this train awaiting to arrive home to be met with fists. No wonder she’s staring at her feet.*

I feel my phone vibrate, it's just snapchat.
3:30.
‘Halfway there’

I chuckled to myself. The doors slide open behind me. I feel a hand grab upon my shoulder, “Sorry boss, can I get buy quickly?” “Oh shit sorry” as I shift myself over to the side a few steps so the gentleman can get through.

*John, a businessman who is up for a promotion at the firm. He has a beautiful wife and 3 healthy children. John is addicted to cocaine and Methamphetamine and has been for the past 2 years. He finds himself slowly deteriorating as he becomes more disconnected from life. Seeing his family once or twice a week maybe. He’s chasing the high to mask the lows. Money can't buy happiness.*

“Next stop, Fairfield” rang over the intercom

3:45.
‘Thank god’

I heard light sobbing. I looked to my right.

*Jacob, an 18-year-old High School student. He's holding his face into his jacket as he lets out gut-wrenching sobs and tears hoping no one hears. He’s just been kicked out of his house. He’s on his way to see his boyfriend having nowhere else to go. Jacob came out to his family as being gay. Instead of hugs and kisses, Jacob was met with fists and screams. His father beat the shit out of him and his mother threw his stuff in the driveway and told him to “get the f*** out of this house. We don’t allow that fag stuff to go on here.”*

The light illuminates the door in front of me as it slowly slides open.

I take a sigh of relief, and step off the train and onto the platform.

They stayed.
Little Lillian

Sara Paul

When I was younger, people would say I was the “mini” version of you. From our shared curly hair to our dark, defined eyebrows to our noses that have been passed down through generations, I certainly see why they would call me Little Lillian. But even beyond our physical characteristics, there is no doubt you gave birth to me.

We both like our steaks medium rare, and our favorite color is blue. Your crazy love for the Beatles wore off on me, for I know every song and have seen Paul McCartney in concert with you, twice. We are both sentimental towards hand written letters; we’ve written each other countless cards and notes and we’ve never thrown one away.

Unlike most women in the world, we both can’t stand the artificial scent of vanilla and all other extra sugary smells. Whenever we walk into Bath and Body Works or Yankee Candle, we avoid about half the store on the spot. We also hate being disorganized. Every item has its rightful place and taking the time to properly organize will save you so much time in the future. Plus, it just looks nice.

Possibly our greatest shared joy in life is food. We love introducing each other to new foods, and since I went away to college, I’ve outgrown my pickiness. Though you weren’t a big fan of Halal, we recently went to a new Greek place in Queens, and we both loved it. Sunday pranzo is a tradition and always consists of pasta, some sort of meat, and of course, sauce. I’m not just saying this because you are my mom, but you truly make the best tomato sauce. Prego and Chef Boyardee do not even deserve to reside in the same category. I’m usually helping out next to you in the kitchen, but I can’t wait for when I’ll be able to make it all by myself. I hope, someday, it will be just as good as yours.
By the way, you have me to thank for your second child. At first, you weren’t too keen of having a running, barking, pooping cotton ball in the house. But now, you cannot deny Willy has slowly become your favorite kid. If it wasn’t for me, you would have never gotten a dog in the first place. So, you’re welcome for that.

Though I am a “mini you” in many ways, there are some things we are not on the same page about. For one, you are currently begging me to move back home after graduation. As much as I enjoy being home for short periods of time, permanently living back at home after living on my own for four years would be rough. I can already hear it: “Sara, where are you going? Who will be there? When are you coming home? You go out to eat too much. You didn’t need to buy those shoes. You need to save money. Did you like those 15 dog videos I tagged you on Facebook?”

Yeah, sorry… not gonna happen.

Another thing we butt heads on is socio-political topics. I hate to say this, but you’re seriously stuck in the 60s. I know you mean well, but many of your views are incredibly outdated, and I try my best to open your mind and bring you up to the current year of 2019. You believe every life is sacred from the very moment of conception, whereas I believe women have the right to choose what happens to their bodies. You are a supporter of our current president and think the changes he is implementing are beneficial, whereas I think his policies are bringing our country backwards. You do not approve of interracial marriage, whereas I approve of people falling in love no matter who they are. But because of how you were raised, I know some of your opinions are too enrooted to change. We need to learn to “agree to disagree” on some things.

As for our personal styles, we aren’t exactly in the same boat. I try to look my very best nearly every day. I like dressing in heeled boots with a good amount of makeup as well as take diligent care of my hair. Though you don’t do the same, you (almost) always likes how I look.
Your #1 priority when it comes to appearances for yourself is practicality and a good price. You like your clothes with maximum comfort and will only buy them if they are on sale or a “reasonable price” (in other words, not much money at all). As for makeup, you don’t feel the need to wear anything more than mascara and lipstick. I often give you hair products that I didn’t like for myself, as well as some shoes and scarves, which we jokingly call “hand me-ups.”

Despite everything, you are the pinnacle of love and support in my life. Whether it’s an academic accomplishment like making the Dean’s List or a small, personal feat like going to the gym one day, you never fail to tell me that you are proud of me. You encouraged me to study abroad in Ireland despite my apprehension, which turned out to be one of the best experiences of my life. From breakups to fights with friends, you always take the time to listen to my problems and help me in any way you can.

Though I have developed into my own self over the years, I credit so much of who I am to you, Mom. There is no one else I’d rather have make me laugh or wipe away my tears. Despite the bickering and eye rolls, you are my best friend.

Deep down, I will always be “Little Lillian.”
Rey

by Emily DeGennaro
The 9 ½ Hours I’ll Never Get Back

Josiah Hardwick

I hate flying. I’ve been on plenty of planes, done my fair share of exploration, but I really hate flying. I arrived at JFK International Airport on a mild March afternoon, ready to go on the longest plane ride of my life. Alitalia flight 423 direct from New York to Rome. Nine and half hours of sheer anxiety across the entire Atlantic Ocean.

*Breathe*

I came prepared. If I’m going to make it through this flight, I need music. Not just any normal music, I need the vibes. John Mayer, Bob Marley, Kid Cudi will serve as my metaphorical Xanax for this unbearably long flight. My Playlist consisted of 74 songs, 3 hours of music. If I listen to this playlist 3 times in a row, then I’ll be in Rome.

*Exhale*

Nope.

First of all, Alitalia is definitely not the gold standard for European Airlines. As I boarded this crammed plane, I was rattled. All different kinds of languages were being spoken. The flight attendants spoke broken English, everything on the plane was in Italian, and even the god damn pilot spoke Italian. I began thinking to myself, if something happens on this plane I might be fucked. But I took my seat and got myself mentally prepared. Middle seat, not the best start, but it’s those that accompanied me where obscurity of this journey begins.
As I put my headphones on ready to escape to my unconscious oasis, I couldn’t help but notice the one-handed, Hassidic Jewish man that was to the right of me. He didn’t speak a lick of English, so I bowed my head at him out of respect as if he was a Buddhist monk. Bold move, but if I got bowed at, I’d like it. His phone was entirely in Hebrew, I never saw anything like it, and he had this incredible method of using his nub to type on it. That was cool and everything, but his phone turned out to be a bit of an issue for me.

*Palms Sweating*

The plane entered the runway and the journey had officially begun. I don’t care if it’s your first time on a plane, when you’re taking off or landing you know to turn you phone off or on airplane mode. I couldn’t believe what this guy was doing. I’m already anxious enough as it is and this guy whips out his phone to have a full blown conversation as we’re ascending thousands of feet into the air. Total idiot.

Where in the hell is the goddamn flight attendant to tell him to turn that shit off?

I’m already not fond of this guy, and on top of that, every hour he had to get up and go to the back of the plane to pray with his family. I’m all for that, do what you gotta do, but if you do the math that’s 18 times I had to get up during the course of this flight. Brutal. Still, there was enough prayers coming from him alone, I knew there was no shot this plane was going down.

*Big Exhale*
To my left, was this kid named Senzo. A bro from Atlanta, Georgia who was going on a service trip to Rome with a group of kids from his college. He was wearing a tank top and shutter-shade glasses, to be honest I actually thought he was on the wrong plane. He smelled like Hawaiian breeze Old Spice deodorant and I guess was an aspiring DJ.

Senzo must’ve been God-sent because he got me through the flight. Forget my 74-song playlist, after sitting down and having a little small talk, a friendship blossomed. The flight attendant kept making her rounds and suddenly small talk turned into deep philosophical conversations about space, earth, and life. Bacardi and Coke, the drink of choice for us both, was the catalyst to our intellectual talks. Anything to keep my mind off the turbulence helped and he brought a whole new perspective on things. He went on this wild rant about how we’re so small in the grand scheme of life, and that the Milky Way galaxy was one of 50 billion galaxies in the Universe. I guess he watched one of those Planet Earth documentaries, but I fucking love that shit.

Before I knew it, it was time for the first meal. I’ve never had a meal on a plane, so I’m thinking maybe this could be a sandwich, cookies, and crackers. Nope, how about a knock-off hot pocket with weird meat and vegetables inside accompanied by a fruit cup and single slice of bread. What a hearty meal! Fuck the meal, I was just glad half the trip was over. Four and half hours down, five to go.

*Massive Exhale*

I was mentally drained from my talks with Senzo, and the smell of about 100 of these hot pockets was making me nauseous. I decided if I wasn’t going to be able to sleep due to the frequency of times I would have to get up, then I might as well put a movie in. Senzo and I
decided to watch Django Unchained, one of the most violent, profane movies of all time. This movie was fucking insane, and three and half hours long was literally perfect. We looked like absolute psychopaths watching it, but it saved me almost four hours that I would’ve spent contemplating all the different ways something could go wrong on this plane. The Jewish man seemed a bit appalled, but he kept busy with his hand-size miniature Torah.

*Plane drops and Big Inhale*

My heart fell to my stomach, the plane was beginning its descent. This is my least favorite part of flying. I figure if nubby can get up every hour to pray, I can make a quick sign of the cross and throw one up to the big man to calm my nerves.

“Please God, let this plane land safely.”

“Benevenuto A Roma” – English Translation: “Welcome to Rome”

*Biggest Exhale of All-Time*

We made it, but I’m already anxious about the plane ride back….
Before I offer to pass you this blunt, let me share with you some interesting facts about weed. Statistics show that more than half of Americans believe that weed should be legalized for recreational use.

With a majority of people agreeing to this, why is weed only legal in ten states? Many states have it legal for medical use but that is just a tease.

Here are four reasons why those who do not agree should reconsider…

**Why ruin your liver or give yourself cancer when you can just chill?**

If you drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes, you are harming yourself more than you would be if you would just light up a blunt. Alcohol not only gives you a nasty hangover and regret the morning after hitting the bars all night, but long-term use can also lead to liver problems. Tobacco is addictive and can lead to cancer, yet cigarettes are sold in convenient stores across the nation but weed is not.

**You can’t even get addicted to weed, people.**

Contrary to popular belief, cannabis is not as addicting as one may think. It is call dependency, not addiction. There is a difference. Trust me. There is less than a ten percent dependency rate on weed but a thirty percent dependency rate on tobacco. Notice a difference? Also, it is a lot easier for a person to quit weed than it is to quit smoking cigarettes.

**Weed isn’t only for the loser, stoner kid who went to high school with you.**

Not only can weed take the edge off, but marijuana can help relieve nausea, which is extremely useful for cancer patients. It can also relax muscles for chronic pain and anxiety and weed gives people without an appetite the munchies. Many scientists, along with the American Cancer Society, support the need for further scientific research on the use of marijuana to treat medical
conditions. Moreover, ACS took a survey of over 400 oncologists and found that almost 70% of them viewed marijuana as a helpful aid and over 75% have discussed weed with their patients.

**Selling cannabis (legally) can help this shitty economy.**

Research shows that states with weed dispensaries have had a positive impact on tax revenue than those states that do not sell weed. Moreover, dispensaries create jobs. What is better than legal weed you may ask? Bettering the economy *and* having legal weed!

Bottom line is: weed is not as bad as some people portray it to be. Nowadays, it is more dangerous to have it on you rather than smoke weed. There are shows about it. Movies about it. People even sing and rap about it. The discussion is not going away. In fact, more people die from an overdose of prescription drugs. I mean, when was the last time someone overdosed on weed?

Therapy is expensive but weed is only ten bucks a gram. Remember that next time you are having a bad day.
Life’s a Beach

Kelly Hendricks

Every summer, my family and I would drive down to our vacation rental on Long Beach Island from our home in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. No matter what is going on in our lives, we make it a priority to all get together for one week and try our hardest to disconnect from everything else going on, and fully experience this time together. We pack our car like a huge, real-life Tetris game, fitting as many things in it as we could. Everybody gets a seat, including the dogs, which means that everyone is squished together. And with that, we are off.

It is the summer of my junior year of college, and I haven’t been to LBI since my freshman year because life got in the way. I haven’t been there in a long time, but nevertheless, I survived. As we began our drive, I immediately felt a sense of relief. The thought of the sand between my toes and the sun beaming down on me brings me such happiness, that the mere thought puts a smile on my face. We cross the bridge to the island, and we are there. With the windows down, I can hear the sounds of the waves crashing against the beach, even when we are blocks away.

We drive by our favorite breakfast spots and pass all the shops my mom and I would spend hours in. LBI Pancake House, where I will indulge myself in pounds of pancakes, still has a line all the way down the block per usual. Bay Village, which was filled with all sorts of different shops and boutiques is always a favorite for us because its variety appeals to everyone. This town holds so many memories that despite being gone for so long, I felt as if I never left.

Each morning, we would pack up our beach trolley with the essentials and make our way towards the beach. Water, towels, sunscreen, umbrella, a cooler full of food and we were ready
to go. I could feel my shoulders relax, as I did not have the pressures of school weighing down on me, or any responsibilities for that matter. The walk was short but varied every summer; if we were ocean side, it took about a minute. If we were bay side, it took about 5 minutes. Whatever the distance, the walk seemed like a second in my eyes, as any time spent there was time well spent.

Even the walk to the beach was relaxing. The pebbly roads that used to feel like sand paper, now feel effortless to me. The skies were blue, and the sun is almost always shining. We get to say hi to the other renters, even some “returners” as well. I walk up and down these blocks every day. It’s just a road, but it holds so many footprints of mine.

When we finally get to the beach, it is time to unwind. It doesn’t matter if we were lying on our towels ready to sleep the day away, body surfing in the salty sea, or playing a competitive game of Kan Jam. Whatever it is, it was better because we are together.

After a long day on the beach, it’s finally time for dinner. We make our way back to the house, covered in sand from head to toe. Our skin is crisp from not putting on enough sunscreen and our hair is salty from splashing in the water all day. Regardless of how it may sound, I couldn’t picture it any other way.

After showers, we lather ourselves in lotion, hoping to get rid of that burnt feeling. Into the car, and off to dinner at Yellowfin. Since it’s the first night, we splurge and get whatever we want, because we know the rest of the trip will be burgers, hot dogs and fries cooked by my dad. We laugh and talk about how our first day was and plan out the rest of the week. Even though our plans will change, nothing could go wrong in this place.
When the week comes to an end, I always wish we had one more week, and one more after that. This place makes me feel so happy and if I could be anywhere at any time, it would be here.

My favorite people in my favorite place.

Nothing better.
Jefferson

by Megan Keane
**Blanket-Sized Tissues**

*Sara Jean Haas*

She is basic in the most original way. She likes her ice cream with fries, sleeping with socks and her coffee decaf because she gets nervous when her heart beats too fast. She gets nervous often. She gets nervous when the wind blows too hard, in silence and when she is not in control. She discovers greatness in the air. She sees the world in a different way than the people around her.

You listen to music to escape the emotions and she listens to feel them. She turns the volume so loud that it becomes quite. You say that crying does not solve any problems but she believes it releases all the bad feelings holding her down so she can solve them. She wraps herself in blanket-sized tissues to protect her from the world. She cannot tell which hurts more, her heart or her head. She is hurting when she is not allowed to hurt. How the hell is someone allowed to tell her when she’s allowed to hurt?

She has an intricate mind and a passionate soul. She captures memories and moments in still time to embrace for entirety. A memory that even Cam Jansen would be envious of. She has a journal with stories and their details of every important moment of her life.

She thinks. She thinks a lot.

She thinks perfection is within the soul and not the skin. She thinks it is rude to reject a gift given to you. She thinks it is disgusting that people could dislike someone for the way they look when they were made that way on purpose. God has given you the gift of your looks, how dare we be so hateful or try to change them. God spent his time on each of his creations, we should love and appreciate. God looked down and decided to bless her.

She has a big heart, a really big heart that she wears on her sleeve for others to see. She is seen as sweet and thoughtful. She is seen as a target. The bigger your heart, the more delicate. She is taken advantage of. She is a doormat to most. She does not know how to say no. She lives to please others and cannot be happy unless she makes the people around her happy. She was blessed with a curse to be kind.
She has been broken, cheated on and mentally abused. She is timid to share herself with others anymore but wants to fill someone else with joy. She is hopeful that her future will obtain someone to hold her heart with soft hands.

She can fall apart and organize the pieces to put them back together. That is the obsessive compulsive in her of course.

She cannot be replicated for she is far too complex and that is what makes her extraordinary.
Change

*Nik Kakaletris*

The repetition was a signal for change
a scene shown in the movies way too many times
‘true love’ crumbling in the hands of those who have it all planned out
the location, the dress color, the style and even the cake

‘Mrs. Carpacceli’

Defined by the name of another, never getting to be herself
as she merges into one
Years in medical school down the drain upon taking his last name

Your name has meaning, but who you are is even stronger
The power of one isn't defined by the accomplishments of the other

Feminism...
becoming a joke and an internet meme
Yet the word has meaning
It means way too much

Equality…
a forgotten word
Defaming an ideology which the definition is unknown
Men bearing the label ‘fags’ and ‘gay’
While women are called ‘cunts’ and ‘bitches’

Ignorance is an indifferent thing
Sticking your face in the dirt won't give birth to life
Hate spews out of the mouths of others who have always had a silver spoon to pick it back up

Empathy…
becoming hidden in the shadows of larger words that drew more attention
A sense of connection lost long ago, no one bothering to find it

A ‘trigger happy’ society trying to prove its worth to those who don’t deserve it
Hands fall over the mouths of those who cry out for acceptance
We race to the finish line while others throw rocks and shout names,
\textit{yet we still run}

We fight for generations after us, ones who won't be called a nigga or faggot
Where being ‘nice’ is looked at as normal, not different

\textit{I refuse to get praise for being a decent human being}

Where being ‘woke’ means more than sharing a video on Facebook
This social world we live has done more to divide than unify

We have closed ears and open mouths
Happy

Kelly Hendricks

There are few things in life that truly put a smile on my face.

I enjoy being with my family, even though it’s difficult for us to all be together at one time. With everyone being all over the country, I rarely see all of them at the same time. So, when I finally have them together, I like to soak up as much time with them as I can.

My brothers and their odd sense of humor bring me joy. I didn’t know it as much when I was little, due to our age gap, but now I find them more important than ever. They are always there to provide me with their ‘wisdom’ whether I ask for it or not and are constantly picking me up when I fall.

My parents bring me a love like no other. I know that no matter what’s going in my life or where I am, I can always pick up the phone and call them and will always be given the support and recognition I sometimes itch for. I know I can ask them anything and will receive the best advice in return.

My friends bring out the happiness in me that at times, I didn’t know was there. No matter what is happening, they are able to make me laugh until I cry, allow me to live in the moment, and always be there for me when I need them.

My boyfriend is someone special to me and that’s close to my heart.
In Public Light

by Hector Gutierrez
The little girl who lived below me was born with an enlarged heart. You heard her when she first arrived from the hospital. A soft thumping grew beneath my floors. Her veins ran through the walls.

She cried more than usual newborns. I’d like to believe it was because of the swollen heart. But when someone made her laugh, she made the entire complex feel lighter. Her heart was intoxicating.

When she grew old enough, her father taught her how to ride a bike. That afternoon she fell off it while riding down the hallway. When she cried, the building shook. Books fell off shelves and plates came flying out of cabinets.

A few years later a boy her age moved in down the hall. The building’s temperature rose 15 degrees higher than normal. When they would pass each other, the thumping beneath the floors sped up. One day passing by his eyes met hers. Windows shattered. The building’s furnace exploded almost instantly.

Her heart had gotten too big over the years. Any emotion triggered the growth. The older she got, the more the walls shook. Temperatures got colder. No one knew how to make the little girl laugh anymore. One by one people started to move out. The thumping grew faint. Everyone
thought they failed her. I didn’t leave until the week I realized that, for the first time in years, the thumping had stopped altogether.
Private Masks

“I was never really insane except upon occasions when my heart was touched.”

— Edgar Allan Poe
End of a cycle

Andrew Starr

So when I fell, did you dare to catch? Or did you want to watch my skull crack on the pavement?
Did you yearn to see my pain? Did you wish for me to die?
I wasn’t the one that put you through this pain.
I was the bystander that bought into your cynical selfish plan.
I was the one who jumped backwards from you, who wanted to fall.
I hurt and such was life, I wished to no longer fight. I prayed for the pain to leave, but it didn’t. It crept away as a tiger leaves its prey. And I stayed down and laid, like a victim brought on by my own decisions.

I broke my ribs while I opened my chest and gave you my heart. And you plunged your poisonous claws into it and clenched it close. Then ripped it away from me, and as my soul left my frame, you wept surprisingly. Because as soul separated from flesh, what was left beating in your hand was suddenly smoke and mirrors.

You tricked me to fall in love, and fall I did. I fell head first onto the compact concrete. As I lay there bleeding, your shoulders bounced while you cackled at my agony.

But what you mistook for weakness and suffering, I proved you wrong in using my pain as fuel. I then stood and limped away as you stopped and were distraught. And then I began to sprint.

Away from my past.
Away from my future with you.
Away from an elementary stylistic logic for passion.
Away from this pain called “love.”

And you chased me, as fast as you could. But your endurance and determination lacked because you had never been faced with someone like me. Someone that had their heart hurt so badly that it was comical.

So badly that it took a toll on their love.
So badly that the pain was almost pleasure.
So badly that it changed him for much better.
In the end of all this,
Thank You.
Thank you for what you did to me.
Thank you for letting me fall.
Thank you for not catching this 300 pound man.
For all the mental warfare you caused.
For making me a pessimist.
For making me psychotic.
For making me a fighter.

But, I’m comfortable now, because this fighter has returned to who he once was. . .
A lover.
That’s how his words taste
When he fed them to me
Tenderly,
With care,
A bite of each syllable
Bitter
Juice dribbled down my chin
Sunk into my taste buds
Stomach
Churning
Him and I

*Sara Jean Haas*

Yesterday is what we know.

Today is what you’re teaching me.

Tomorrow is for you to watch me discover.

My story has already been written and every day I am reading.

As the pages turn with the rise of the sun, I am granted the greatest gift.

I don’t consider myself lucky, I am blessed.

The words thank you cannot collect and capture all I need to express to you.

I don’t know how many pages you have left written for me but I know this is not something I need to fear.

When I turn my last page and gravity releases me to you, I will be home.

Being granted entrance and safety in your kingdom.

Looking you face to face for the first time, the one I owe it all to.

Will my knees hug the clouds?

Will I be transformed by your omniscience?

Will we embrace over what I’ve become?

Completely surrounded by your glory in an unfamiliar way.

My heart will eternally be warmed.

Until that page comes,

I hope I make you proud.

I hope you’re peeking through the clouds with a gracious smile.

Please grant me the strength to read every line in your voice.

See you, someday.
Yes, I take responsibility when you fall in love with me.
I collect your soul
& for some reason I like that game.

I’m surprised at the power I have over someone;
wanting him to ask for more & to never stop coming back.
But hurt people don’t always hurt people.
Hurt people can save hurt people;
hurting themselves more
& you wanna know how I do it?

First I pick my pawn & how do I do that?
Here’s a hint;
I choose the most relaxed, confident
& powerful person in the room.
The one with the most reflective soul.

I start to people watch.
Taking a sip from every soul in the room.
Breathing in their energies & funnelling mine into their gasps.
I know I can seduce with my eyes, so I unintentionally intend eye contact,
shifting your concentration.
The green in my eyes grabs you.
The blue in my eyes calms you
& the grey in my eyes gets you to rummage in your mind the future we could have
…all from across the room.

My soul floats above the others, lifts you off your chair
& entices you to join me.

I like the challenge of conversation.
Seeing what parts of me you’ll fall in love with, what you’ll appeal to.
I’ll listen just the right amount.
Pulling out your strengths & weaknesses because,
I know you don’t want someone to love,
you just want someone to listen
& then you’ll realize maybe you do want someone to love,
but I’m only here to listen.
I’ll make you think you don’t have a chance
& your ego will tell you otherwise.
I’m intently a challenge for you
& no one can resist a challenge.
The worst part is I mean everything I say. My dimples don’t allow me to tell lies, but you can still be deceived by them. I twiddle darkness between my finger tips with empty intentions. I show you what you want, need, crave, desire, deserve. Whatever you think I am, I play to that. I am what you need me to be.

I’ll never let you get to too close. I’ll only make you think you can. That, will make you nervous.

Then at the end of the night, when we kiss, our lips will unpeel, there will be stillness in the air & all you’ll hear is the sound of my inhale. You can tell a lot about me by the way I breathe.

I’m sorry for being authentically me. I’m just trying to be honest with myself & with you. Sometimes I confuse my identity with my purpose. I’ll be the women to teach you a lesson. Not because you don’t deserve me, but because I don’t deserve you.

I’m not capable of loving. I’m only capable of letting someone love me.

The funny thing is, I don’t have a lick of confidence.

That’s not me. ...
I don’t know which part of me that is.
No,

Nicole Soto

No, I don’t hold you responsible when I fall in love with you.
I am easy to love, but hard to heal
& for some reason I like that game.

My biggest strength is my biggest weakness.
I am so self-aware, sometimes too aware,
so my perception of myself is jaded.
I’m in constant conversation with myself;
already convincing myself the compliment you just gave me
couldn’t be true.

Can you relate?
I look back, never forward.
I try to influence how you see me, but that doesn’t always work.
Then, I over-analyze every move.
Creating things, I could have said or done to echo more of my soul.

I people watch you, people watch me.
Trying to understand you, to understand me.
I won’t let myself fall all the way, because I’m afraid of it being right.
I observe subtle variations in your behavior compulsively, unconsciously.
Trying to make my unconscious, conscious so I can have the power,
but I’m not comfortable enough to share some thoughts with even myself
….so how would I share them with you?

My soul is a tourist in your life.
I’m only here for a visit
& I’m safer traveling alone.

It’s hard to talk about myself.
Giving up information allows you to use it against me, to hurt me.
I’ll listen too much.
Fearing my words will have hollow meaning
& be inauthentic, because my feelings change so quickly or leave out details,
because my mouth will lie to protect my heart.
I’ll second guess your motives like you don’t really mean them,
because reassurance is a lot to ask for from someone.
Or was I just taught to believe that?

I am far more different than you think.
I find satisfaction in staying a mystery,
withholding things because, I see it drives you insane
& I’m the sanest insane person you know.
There’s a little extra taste in being broken, but I think about what I’m missing & all the fun we could have.

That, makes me nervous.

At the end of the night, when we kiss, our lips will unpeel, there will be stillness in the air & all you’ll hear is the sound of my exhale.

You can tell a lot about me by the way I breathe.

I’m over apologetically me. I’m just trying to be honest with myself. For us. Sometimes I confuse my purpose with my identity.

I’ll be the women to love you into loving me. Not because I want to, but because I have to.

I’m only capable of loving. I’m not capable of letting someone love me.

The funny thing is, I’m ironic.

That’s not me.

I don’t know which part of me that is.
Rachel Vogt

by Hector Gutierrez
Frostbite

Nik Kakaletris

Frostbite nipped the tips of your fingers
Turning them an off-white shade of blue
Chills were sent down your spine
The breeze made its way under your favorite coat
As soon as you exhaled, warm breath from your cold heart,
I took it away

I told you not to swim in my ocean

Most dip their toe in but immediately pull it back,
no one dives in

Have you seen your inner demons in someone else?
Have you seen the things you try to hide thrown in your face?
No...

A lighthouse leads ships in the dark
leads people when they’re lost...
What happens when the fog is to thick to see?
What happens when the darkness isn't outside?
Within yourself?
Light hurts your eyes
While the darkness hurts your soul

**You jump in**

You immerse yourself in me
Air forced out of your hollow lungs
The sheer cold penetrates your pores
Your limbs go numb
You feel like you're falling into broken glass
Every shard is a piece of you

*A memory*

But it doesn't matter

**You're mine now**

You sink deeper n deeper
The darkness engulfs you
You float to the bottom of my ocean
Where the bodies lie
The bodies of those brave enough to jump in
Who never stood a chance
The Guardian Angel, The Silent Saint, and The Grounded Demon

Courtney Daly

About him…
The guardian angel

Consumed by numbers, that’s what he gave me.
Every anniversary that comes around I get a sign that he’s still with me. A random smell of roses, the radio changes to his favorite song or even my car alarm going off for 2 hours the day we were all laughing at his sunburn. They always talk about angels singing. They never told me they could talk.

He connects me to the rest of the world. On days my head is in the clouds. He brings the sun to beam on my face, the kind that blinds your eyes. He makes the world a little less lonely sometimes. Even when I’m alone, I had a guardian best friend.

About her…
The silent saint

Consumed by a dream I might never fulfill, that’s what she gave me.
I made her a promise when I was seven that I would be brave and follow my dreams. So as a reminder I branded myself with my promise in her writing.

I was so used to talking to the dead. I thought this might not be as big a of deal. I felt like I was been given the silent treatment. Maybe the silence is speaking louder than his actions. But silence scares me. It always has. I guess I was mad at heaven or something for breaking the communication line. But angels don’t have voices. I guess they sing through me.
About me…

The grounded demon

Consumed by the darkest light, they’ve made me feel more like me than I’ve ever felt. Both of their cards lay above my head while I put myself in the most danger. Maybe it’s a shield for when I do something stupid. I’ve tried to swerve from everyone’s path for a long time.

I’ve never been good at goodbyes. I hang up the phone saying love you, nothing more. My grandfather taught me the “I” is unnecessary, because while sitting in the hospital with one hand of a beating heart holding one hand of a stopped one...the “I” is understood. Now it’s all monologues to a stone. The grounded demon was left to live.
Brothers

by Megan Keane
Hair.

*Ashley Soules*

It took a long time for me to love it from end to root. When my hair was 3, little curl swirls popped into two, sometimes three pigtails. I didn’t have to worry about it much. That was my mom’s battle. Infinite tangles took time and tact. She found her way through every strand, whether using soft brushes or brute force. When she tried a comb the first time I screamed and after that she used the widest toothed comb she could find. At 6 my mom was still in command of my hair and for school she wouldn’t let me go with my hair down. Mom knew things would get stuck in my hair if left wild. Who knows what would get stuck up there? Tree leaves from the school yard, maybe a pencil. Braids cascaded down from my scalp and bounced around when I ran. The curls continued to wind further down my neck, tickle my shoulder blades, stretch to my tailbone. At 8 mom supervised as I washed my hair for the first time. At 10 the comb and brush were handed down to me. It was time she said. Fighting with my hair left my arms tired and me in tears. It showed no mercy. It made me want to rip it out. Instead, I kept it like a snake coiled on the top of my head in a bun. I’d compare myself to the girls around me. Pin straight silky strands the trend when I was 14. My hair would not be tamed but I knew I could overcome its rebellion. In the mirror, early mornings, before school, I took the fiery iron to each section. No regard for the cries of the roots over their sizzle. The iron sent smoke signals into the atmosphere. No one answered. Fire purifies impurities. I thought I had done just that. Conquered my hair. I didn’t see it for what it truly was and what it represented.

Me.

After 4 years of straitening my hair at 18, I wondered if I could bring my curls back or if they were gone forever. It took time, for the vivacious volume to sprout out. I’m tired of satisfying societal beauty standards. There is no right way to feel beautiful. At 21 I keep my head held
high. I take pride in my mother’s gift of curly hair and my wide tooth comb. now from end to root I know what my hair means.

Love.
A Cursed Blessing

Courtney Daly

I walked the path less traveled
Yet, here I am with nothing to prove

No trophy, no congratulations, no stability
Only my own made up mind wishing I could have been one of the followers
But I’m not
I’ve never been able to conform to the things they think I should
I’m divergent
But where has it gotten me
The confidence of others is lacking when they believe you should have chose their path
But I can’t
I don’t know how
I don’t want to

So I’m left with broken pieces of myself
And no one likes to do puzzles anymore

After a lifetime of winding roads and broken doors, I think I’ve finally received the message

God helps those who help themselves but the devil is the one handing you an apple

Pain relative for everyone except writers
Their ROYGBIV world is processed to us as whispers
A thought in our minds as we see the world unfound

Lucky for them we write it down on paper
Because they need to see to believe

My biggest trepidation— the one they call a dream
A blank page
An everyday life
Content wrapped around a serenity filled lifetime
With nothing worth marking a stainless white page for

I chose my own path
I wanted to write my way with words of unexpected adventure

It’s a blessed curse

A tumor filled with secrets you didn’t know was there

A death that brings peace
A heart that has been stabbed a million times before learning it just might not have been as broken as they had thought

I’ll spend a lifetime burning the midnight oil
Trying to figure out why.
I long to be here after a day filled with excitement or fatigue. I long to be here after a day that may have been too exhausting or maybe a day that was completely worth all the aggravation that it took to be absolutely wonderful.

The splash of orange covering four walls, the water-colored art that drapes down one of the walls creates my perfect view.

The sun, moon, and stars float upon another wall with the florescent string of lights making the room a little more soft and peaceful.

Everything around me completes my safe space, except the openness where a door should be. This room is door-less. However, that’s another story waiting to be told.

Adventures, horrors, mysteries, loves. Each novel is wrapped into this space making me feel comforted when the words of the outside world can no longer do that for me.

Faces of loved-ones, friends, and my world experiences sit upon the dressers, shelves, and nightstands throughout my sanctuary.

I love this place. This space that I get to call my own.

After a long day creeping into what seems to be an even longer night, I flop on to my cloud and find myself drifting to a better place. I dream soundly until the morning breaks and the hectic world comes for me all over again.

Tears, laughter, arguments, silence. It’s all been seen and heard within these four walls. Break-ups and bad news. Relationships and good news. All experienced here.
When there is nothing more to do and nothing more can be said, I run to this little piece of isolation.

My bedroom takes the time to feel my sorrows, happiness, joy, and pain.

There’s no judgment made here, but also no advice given.

It is just a simple place that makes everything else around me feel so much better.

I never had to share my space before, unless there was a night where there were too many drinks and the intoxication that lingers throughout my friends’ heads causes their slightly unwelcomed stay.

My bed is there for safety and the joy.

My happy place; my judgment-free zone.
Hugo

by Sandra Young
Untitled

Madison Shea

It begins with hello,
Her heart says oh no.
They joke, they laugh,
Her heart torn in half.

With every goodbye,
She wishes good kisses.
Wearing the mask of a friend,
She wishes it would end.

Fly little bird fly
Your blue ocean called Sky lays
Waiting for your wind

Through the glass window
She gleams her golden ribbons
And hugs you with warmth

Do you think it’s cool?
Acting like a tool.
Do you think you’re pretty?
Acting so shitty.

It’s such a pity
To know you’re not witty
To think hiding behind plastic
Is better than being a classic
how (not to) deal with a heartbreak.

Meg Keane

step one.

make up your mind

be selfish for once

put yourself first

break up with him  cry for the loss of something beautiful

a friendship  a relationship a confidant

step two.

pretend you’re okay then lose yourself in alcohol

in weed

in boys

kiss one new person

or two

or three

maybe get in too deep

feel the threat of heartbreak again drink until you kiss another boy  kiss another boy until you get over it

step three.

spend time alone  your mom says you need to get to know yourself again

so do your friends  so do your tarot cards

step four.
reality
cry
give yourself a pep talk in the mirror

*but just cry again unsuccessful*

*step five.*

channel your energy somewhere else realize that heartbreak is a normal feeling

*stop pushing it off*

lose yourself again

*but not in boys or alcohol in writing, reading, maybe a Netflix marathon try to find yourself again*

allow yourself to heal

*he has someone*

*you have no one*

*and cry some more*
The Substance of Souls

Austin Smith

“He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.”
— Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights

Henry learned masking his Asperger’s in public, but Henry fought his autistic urge to draw while he was on campus.

It was a Monday, the first day of classes of the Fall semester, and Sacred Heart University was brimming with life. Henry was seated in one of the booths eating his breakfast in 63’s dining hall. In front of him were a maroon plate with two triangle slices of French Toast, a glass of Oj that was three quarters empty, and a bowl with only three plump dark navy blueberries remaining. To his left was Henry’s messenger bag filled with a copy of Salem’s Lot, a couple of blank college ruled notebooks, a sketchbook, and a tin of sketching pencils. Like telepathy, or the shining, Henry could feel the sketchbook and pencils calling out to him. It was a tingling sensation that traveled up and down his spinal column. Little surges of energy urged him to take out the sketchbook and draw.

Henry ignored his urge as he watched the Bride of Frankenstein on his phone. Of any fictional character, Henry felt he could best identify with Frankenstein’s Monster. They both had fathers who despised them, and they both were born with abnormal brains.

Henry finished the last two slices of French toast as he watched. In his peripheral vision, Henry noticed that 63’s was filling up. Students crawled around the dining hall like an army of ants at a picnic. Each student carried plates full of breakfast food. Eighteen jocks corralled around with caramel and dark maroon couches to eat their breakfast. They shovelled eggs into their mouths as they talked about sports. Henry tried to ignore them.

Just beyond the jocks was a busboy cleaning tables with a wet rag. The expression on his face was blank, and he was lost in conversation with himself. Those symptoms were enough for
Henry to diagnose the busboy with a form of autism. If the physical distance between them represented where they stood on the spectrum, Henry was closest to “normal”.

A couple of girls emerge, walking towards the empty booth next to his. Both of them had brunette hair. One was wearing a moss green t-shirt with ripped jeans at the knees and the other was wearing a gray t-shirt with SHU on it with camouflage colored leggings. Henry’s nerves steered. He was single, and he found both of them pretty. He knew trying to spark up a conversation with either of them would be fruitless. Henry knew that the odds were against him.

Talking to a girl was easy for Henry, but transitioning from talking to flirting with the opposite sex is difficult for someone on the spectrum. He would run the risk of missing a flirting cue or misread her response. He also feared that his attempts at flirting would not come across as flirting. He also knew that his feelings would not be reciprocated or they would also be taken.

The Bride of Frankenstein was concluding as Henry checked his watch. It read 10:41. He had an hour and thirteen minutes until his creative writing capstone started. He finished his breakfast, and exited 63’s. He walked through the campus hallways, blending in the best he could with the other students. He felt like he was like a wolf hiding amongst sheep, but he wondered if anyone could tell if he was on the spectrum.

Once on the second floor, the noise and commotion from downstairs was silenced. Henry approaches classroom HC-223. The door was closed and no one is in the classroom. He jiggled the silver metal doorknob, and the door opens. The mid afternoon sun illuminated the room until the motion sensor light automatically turned on as soon as he walked into the room. An assortment of chairs with either maroon or orange-red cushioned chairs sat behind eighteen tables that were lined into seven rows. They faced a projector screen, two dry erase whiteboards and a light brown podium. The podium was equipped with a desktop screen and a camera for the overhead projector. Henry quietly rejoiced because these few moments of a silent empty classroom meant that he can draw undisturbed until class started.

Henry took a seat in the front row. He liked to sit in the front and center of the classroom. Henry glanced at his watch which read 10:47. He had plenty of time to draw before class.
Henry’s drawing skills are equal to that of a savant. He learned to critique his constant autistic urge to stim and self-soothe into drawing. Drawing was a socially acceptable form of stimming. He could spend hours drawing. He eventually started to draw his own comic. He would become emerged in his imagination due to his stimming. Henry often chooses not to draw in public because he wants to be blend into society better. He could manage a life without stimming. He could go days without it, but like a junky he often would relapse do to withdrawals.

Henry planted an earbud in his left ear. *Turning my life Around* from the *Anna and the Apocalypse* soundtrack started to play in his ear. He withdrew his sketchpad and a tin of Fiber-Castell drawing pencils from his messenger bag. Henry opened his sketchbook to my most recent unfinished drawing a rose. Whenever Henry was not drawing his comic, he tended to draw roses because they were easy to draw, and they manage to finite details that he loved to convert to the page.

Henry’s fingers led his pencil in a waltz across the page. The closed rose’s shape is complete, but he drew lines of shade as delicately as if I was touching the pedals of the actual rose.

*Prison Sex* by Tool started to play in Henry’s left ear. Henry always feels guilty listening to a song about prison rape on a catholic university, but the instrumentals are so addictive and poetic. Henry feels the creative juices in his brain churn like chaos theory that results in something of artistic beauty.

Someone knocks on the doorframe.

3

“Hey are you here for the creative writing capstone?”

Henry turned to the door, and saw the most beautiful girl standing in the doorway. She was wearing a loose fitting long sleeve red tunic blouse with a lace stitching trim. Her jeans were stylishly torn on both legs resembling window blinds. A waterfall of long dark blue hair cascaded down over her right shoulder. She resembled the Northern Lights, vivid colors dancing in the sky to hiding the dark void of space beyond.

“What?” Her question finally registered with Henry. Henry quickly grabbed his iPhone, and turned off *Prison Sex*. “Oh yeah. Yeah you’re in the right place.”
“Good! I’m surprised to see someone else here. I thought I was the only one who likes to be super early to class.” She said. She walked into the classroom. There was such an elegance and grace about her. She took the seat right next to Henry. “I’m Lucy.”

“Hi, I’m Henry.”

Her eyes were like sapphires sticking out of sharp white snow. They were piercing and captivating. Henry realized that they are making direct eye contact. Henry did not like making direct eye contact often because he felt that the person he is making contact with is staring straight into his soul. As an alternative, Henry found that looking at a person’s head is a good substitute for direct eye contact. Staring at a person’s head gave the illusion that he was making direct eye contact because he was looking in the general area. But she was looking him directly in the eye, and he could not help but do the same. For the first time in his life, Henry feels comfortable staring into each other’s souls.

Her eyes shifted Henry’s sketchpad. “Wow! Did you draw that?”

“Oh yeah,” Henry says.

“You’re really talented!” Lucy said as she leaned in for a better look. “Do you mind?”

“Sure go ahead.” Henry handed over his sketchbook.

She studied the drawing with great intent like someone admiring the craftsmanship of a boat or a rustic one hundred year old house. She then closed the sketchbook, and reopened it starting from the first page.

She flipped through every one of Henry’s drawings: several roses, a couple of Venom from Marvel Comics, a portrait of Boris Karloff as Frankenstein’s Monster, a couple portraits of a couple of pit bulls. Her face lit up with an expression of wonder as she uncovered each page.

“Oh my god!” She said. “These are amazing Henry! Are you an art major?”

“No,” Henry said, “Art is my minor. My major is Creative Writing.” Henry kept eye contact easy with her.

“Really? Why creative writing? I mean your stuff is really good! I’m surprised you’re not a double major.” She looked me straight in the eyes. A reflection of intrigue flashed in her eyes.

“Thank you.” Henry blushed as his blood went from warm to hot. “I could do a double major, but it would be a waste of time. I know I’m talented enough that don’t need a degree in art. But I chose creative writing because I’m working on a comic book series, and I want to produce the best story as possible.”
“That’s awesome Henry!” Lucy said. “I wish I had the talent to draw? I couldn’t draw to save my life. If you put a gun to my head and told me to draw the Mona Lisa, the best you’d get out of me is a stick figure.”

“Drawing isn’t hard, but you could always take up basket weaving as a minor.” Henry said.

“Oh god!” Lucy said with a laugh.

Henry could hardly believe this was happening. A beautiful girl was talking to him, and she was intrigued by him. This conversation felt natural. He urged himself to talk to her more, but he kept thinking that she probably had a boyfriend already. He also kept reminding himself that she is probably just really nice and an outgoing person, and wouldn’t see him in that way. If he didn’t say anything, he would drop the ball. “So what’s your major?”

“I’m double majoring in creative writing and music,” Lucy said.

“Really? Why the double major?” Henry said.

“I’m a glutton for punishment, but to be honest I’ve always loved reading and I’m a musician.”

“Do you play any instruments?”

“I do,” Lucy said. “I play several actually. I play the guitar, bass, drums, and piano to name a few.”

“I’m actually taking two capstones this semester: this one and a musical performance capstone.”

“Really? What are you going to do for your music capstone?”

“I am doing a one man show for my recital. It will be a mini concert where I use my musical looping gear, hop around from instrument to instrument, and I sing a few songs.”

“That sounds awesome!” Henry said. “I’d love to hear some of your music? Is the recital open to the public?”

“I think so.” Lucy said. “It would be great if you could come Henry.”

They both exchanged a smile with each other. Henry asked, “So what year are you?”

“I am a Junior,” Lucy said, “How about you?” She playfully poked Henry in the arm.

“Same. Did you recently declare you second major in English? I’ve never seen you in any of the other English classes.”

“Nope, I’m a transfer from a community college out in Maine.”
“Really? What made you want to come out here to Connecticut? Maine to scary for you?”

“Scary?”

“You mean that you don’t know that Maine is the scariest place to live on Earth?” Henry said, “why else would most of Stephen King’s books take place in Maine.”

Lucy laughed. “Oh no, Maine is very laid back. I love it up there. It is so peaceful that the world could end and you wouldn’t even know it. I wanted a change of pace, so I moved in with my grandparents in Willoughby in the middle of July.”

Neither of them realized that time was rapidly approaching the beginning of the class. The classroom eventually filled up, but the two of them did not notice. To the two of them, they were the only ones in the classroom.

Henry’s watch read 12:00 pm. At that exact moment, Professor Zydanys walked into the room carrying a briefcase. He resembled a tall Robert Redford with graying red hair.

Professor Zydanys went over the syllabi, and explained that the students could created a short story, a bunch of poetry, a one act play, or a memoir so long as it was twenty-five pages long. He then gave the students to pair off into twos, so they could introduce each other to the class.

Henry and Lucy were the only two sitting in the front row, so they paired up together.

“Well I already know you’re a junior majoring in creative writing, so what is something interesting about you that you want me to share?” Lucy asked.

“You could say that I’m drawing my own comic.” Henry said. “What do you want me to say about you?”

“Just say that I moved here from Maine.” Lucy said.

For the first time there was a silence between the two of them. Lucy brushed her hair back and she smiled at Henry. Henry kept thinking that he needs to say something. He felt comfortable talking with her already, but he needed to work up that courage to say something. She smiled at him. Blood rushed through his veins like a raging torrent. The words are on the edge of his tongue like a child frozen in fear on the edge of a diving board. “Da… do you have class after this?” He managed to get the words out.

“Nope,” Lucy said. “This is my only class today. How about you?”
“Me too,” Henry said. “Do you want to grab something to eat after class?” Henry collected himself enough to ask her the question. He hoped it didn’t come across as too forward. He kept telling himself that it wasn’t going to be a date, they were just going to hang out just in case she had a boyfriend or she wasn’t really interested in him.

“Sure,” she said. “Where would you want to go?”

“Do you like ice cream?” Henry asked

“Yes! I love ice cream,” She said with a smile.

“Have you ever had MilkCraft?” Henry asked

“Nope.”

“Do you wanna go after class?”

“Sure.”

The two went silent as the rest of the class continued to make noise. They are maintaining uninterrupted eye contact. Henry smiled at her, and she giggled in return.

“What?” Henry asked.

“Nothing. Really it’s nothing.”

Professor Zydanys interrupted their conversation to ring in the class. Each of the students introduce each other.

When Professor Zydanys dismissed class, the two exited and entered a crowded hallway.

Students roamed the hallway like they were ants in their colony. A small group of four girls and two guys with meet me at McDonald’s haircuts formed a misshapen circle in front of the door downstairs. The group is in the middle of transitioning their conversation from their summer activities of underage drinking to what classes they are taking this semester.

Henry accidentally bumped into Lucy in order walk around the group. His hand nudged Lucy’s hand. Despite having skinny fingers, her skin was soft as silk. Henry immediately retracted his hand as he apologized for bumping into her.

“It’s not your fault Henry. It’s theirs.”

Even though he brushed her hand by accident, he wished he could just reach out his hand and offer her to hold hers.

As the two walked among the other students, Henry’s nerves started to explode like fireworks on the Fourth of July. Walking next to Lucy made Henry feel conflicting storms of
emotion within Henry. Henry was always able to hide in plain sight. Playing “normal” was something he was used too because all he had to do was just blend in. No one noticed him, but walking next to Lucy, he felt like the two of them stand out amongst the crowd. Lucy’s stunning expression of her personality is like an amplifier pronouncing the fact that they are both different. Lucy smiled at Henry, and instantly a wave of comfort just dissolved any insecurity he felt.

4

The refreshing midafternoon breeze redeemed the summer heat as both of them trekked across campus to Henry’s cavalier. Henry wanted to make it across campus before he was drenched in sweat. The last few days would be a slow burn until September 22 like a fledgling candle refusing to flicker out. Henry longed for the sweet change of the season where lemonade was alchemically transmuted into apple cider, and farmers’ trade-in watermelons for pumpkins. Once at his car, he opened the door for Lucy and closed it once she entered the vehicle.

5

The cavalier pulled into the Brick Walk plaza’s parking lot. The businesses that occupied the white plaza building are a Dash N Drizzle, a dry cleaner, a Mecha noodle shop, making Milkcraft business at the end of the plaza. Henry parallel parked right next to the white building right outside the noodle shop.

As Henry got out of the cavalier and rounded the front to open the door for Lucy, he could hear the start of some new pop song off in the distance, and the song got louder the closer they got to Milkcraft. Entering the ice cream shop the music was blearing and the air conditioning was cold. To their right was three flat pieces of wood, which listed all the different flavors of ice cream and different items to buy. To their left was a bar mounted on the window with five stools to sit, and the far wall was a black chalkboard wall with a food pyramid. Just above the food pyramid was a drawing of a tapestry that read “No. 1 Best Choice Milkcraft Small Batch Company.” Word boxes with arrows perturbing out of them pointed to the items in the different items of food pyramid. A box that read “Mint” pointed to a drawing of a mint leaf, while a box with the word “Milk” pointed out an old milkman bottle full of milk at the top of the pyramid. Behind the counter was a collection of four or five white
mixers, a fridge full of milk bottles full and labeled of the different flavored creams, and two waffle irons ready and waiting to make either a bubble or traditional Belgaum waffle cone.

A stay at home mom and her four years old were the only people in line ahead of Henry and Lucy.

Henry and Lucy studied the menus.

“What do you think you’re going to get?” Henry asked.

“I think I’m going to get the Cookie Butter Blue,” Lucy said. “You?”

Out of the fifteen or so flavors, Henry narrowed his choices to two the Strawberry Sorbert and the Strawberry Balsomic and told Lucy his decisions.

“Hi, welcome to Milkcraft,” the girl behind one of the two registers whose nametag read Amber.

“How can we help you today?”

Approaching the counter, Lucy said, “Hi, can I have a Cookie Butter Blue?”

“Would you like that in a bubble waffle cone or regular waffle cone?” Amber asked.

“Bubble cone,” Lucy replied with a bright smile.

“And for you sir?”

“I’m gonna get the Strawberry Balsamic,” Henry said.

“What kind of cone would you like that in?”

“I’ll try it in a bubble cone,” Henry replied smiling at Amber and then turning his gaze to Lucy.

The girl making our ice cream poured cream and other ingredients into a sharp white blender. The beater spun clockwise, integrating all the ingredients into two thick colored creams. While mixing the ice cream, the girl put a stainless steel pitcher under a tall necked facet. The neck of the facet was encapsulated in white ice. A puff of white steam arouse from the pitcher as liquid nitrogen sprits into the metal pitcher. Pouring a bit in at a time the separate pink and cookie monster blue cream froze on contact.

A refreshing burst of cold white steam blasted Henry and Lucy in the face as they watched in amazement in the process. The two of them couldn’t help but laugh.

Not long after the ice cream was scooped into the bubble waffle cones and topped with their respective toppings. Balsamic sauce zigzagged all over the pink globe. A drip of the balsamic sauce was already starting to drip down the side of the card paper cone. Henry was
apprehensive to lick it up, but he did anyway. The bittersweet tart sauce insulted Henry’s taste 
buds, and he hoped that it was not going to ruin the ice cream. Harpooning his spoon into the 
pink sphere, he scooped up a spoonful of creamy pink earth, and shoveled it into his mouth.
Henry’s taste buds sung praises of joy as the strawberry flavor masked the tart flavor of the 
balsamic sauce. The ice cream was rich, full of flavor, and creamy.

She said as her eyes rolled over to Henry as if this was the best ice cream she has ever 
had. Lucy moaned with delight upon taking her first spoonful. “So good! How is yours?”

“I love it,” Henry replied. “I had heard tons of good things about this place, and it lives 
up to the hype.”

“Definitely!” Lucy said. “You know I read somewhere that you can tell a lot about 
someone’s personality just by what flavor ice cream they get.”

“Really?” Henry asked just before shoving another spoonful of pink cream into his 
mouth. “Do you remember what it said?”

“Not really, but hold on a sec,” Lucy pulled out her phone, and started a Google search 
on What your favorite ice cream flavor says about your personality? “Ah here it is.” She started 
to read,

“According to Reader’s Digest, you are an introvert Henry.”

“Really?”

“Here read for yourself.” Lucy handed her phone to him. Henry impaled his spoon into 
his ice cream. The article read that vanilla lovers are impassive, and sure enough, the second 
flavor listed was strawberry. Strawberry lovers are introverts.”

“Damn, I guess that’s true.” Henry said as he scrolls down to find that chocolate lovers 
were flirtatious and mint chocolate chip lovers are argumentative. A shiver of fear traveled from 
his brain to every single nerve ending in his body as he remembered what happened with 
Harmony. Henry questioned if he should tell Lucy about his Asperger’s.

“You okay Henry?” Lucy asked.

“Huh? Oh yeah, I’m okay.” Henry said as he snapped back to reality. “It’s accurate, 
but…” Henry could not bring himself to admit to Lucy his secret.

“But what?”

“Well I was born with Asperger’s.” The dread of Lucy rejecting him because he is 
autistic sunk his heart.
“Really? I never would have guessed.” Lucy replied.

Her response shocked Henry, “Really? You never would have guessed?”

“No,” She said, “and so what if you do. It doesn’t define who you are. I can kind of relate I suffer from depression.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, but my music and my poetry helps me to manage it.” Lucy said. “So what was it like growing up with Asperger’s?”

“Well I could tell you, but I’d have to kill you.” He said smiling from ear to ear. The truth behind his smile was a dark secret. He thought of all the trouble it caused him. Autism to Henry was a blessing and a curse. It caused the end of his parent’s marriage and the source of all abuse from his father. All of this was because it he was not the son he wanted.

“You are such a tease,” She flirted.

“You’ll find out soon enough,” Henry said. “I was thinking of writing my memoirs for our class project.”

“Really? You really are a tease! You’re going to keep me in suspense until to find out more about you?” She shoveled a spoonful of ice cream into her mouth.

“All that will come in time.”

“Alright, I guess I’ll have to wait.” She sighed. “Do you have a title in mind?”

“A is for Autism,” Henry said.

“That is an awesome title!” Lucy said. “It is simple yet powerful. It really speaks volumes.”

“Thank you. Do you have any ideas of what you’ll be writing?”

“Well I was thinking of writing a story about a guy who took a vow of abstinence, but he starts dating a nymphomaniac.” A flirty smile stretched across Lucy’s face. Her teeth were shining.

“That has the potential for a lot of conflict. Don’t tell me you’re a fan of the Fifty Shades of Grey books?”

“Oh God no,” Lucy laughed. “Those books suck! They are badly written, and the plot is unimaginative. Honestly I was thinking of writing a book of poetry for class.”

“Nice! What kind of poetry do you like to write?”

“I’m looking forward to reading them. I’m sure they’re great.” Henry said. “I’m sure you’re a better poet than I could ever dream to be.”

“Don’t say that! I’m sure you’re a great poet Henry!”

“Do you want to read one?”

“Definitely!”

Henry pulled out his phone and opens Google Docs. He quickly scrolled through and located his poem called “Smile”, and handed over his phone to Lucy.

She read out load:

“A smile as beautiful as yours
makes me feel as if rays of sunlight shine upon me.
You cannot hide your beautiful white teeth behind your lips,
when you move them to smile.
You have a smile so unique that Mona Lisa herself would grow jealous. Your smile is my favorite feature on your face. Oh, I can’t tell you how much your smile means to me. As if your face was not pretty enough, your smile brings out your beauty that much more. It is much more beautiful than any sunset that I could hope to witness.

This I promise you. When there is no sunlight in your day
and diamond-like tears trickled from your eyes,
I will push back your gorgeous locks of hair,
cup your face in my hands, and smile at you in the hopes of getting you to smile.

For I promise you I would do anything to return that smile to your face.”

A smile grew across her face with every word. “This is beautiful Henry! Who is this written for?”

“No one,” Henry said

“Really?” She asked giving him a disbelieving look. “You don’t have a girlfriend I don’t know about Henry?”
“Nope. No girlfriend.” Henry said with confidence. “Sometime I just get in a romantic mood, crank up some Sting, and write poetry like this. But I’ve never had anyone to share those feelings with though.”

The drive to Willoughby was not congested with traffic. Henry took the Merritt Parkway to exit 60, and traveled through Hamden and Cheshire before getting to Willoughby. Willoughby is a quiet Connecticut town. Not much happens in the town. Most of the town is very affluent, and many of the houses are mini mansions. Henry wondered what Lucy’s grandparents did for a living.

The town of Willoughby was rich with pine trees, and the emerald scent drifted through the open windows of Henry’s cavalier. His sense of smell rejoiced.

They arrived at Lucy’s grandparent’s house. It was by far the biggest house in Willoughby. It is a massive country style house two-car garage built into it and a long drive around driveway. There was a spectacular fountain in the center of the drive around. It has seahorses spitting water into a fountain bowl.

“Wow! What do your grandparents do for a living?” Henry asked.

“Grandpa Alan was a surgeon and Granny Loretta was nurse.”

Henry opened the car door for Lucy and he walked her to the front door. They stood in front of the front door for what seems like an eternity. For the first time all day they are at a loss of words. A violent storm of nerves and excitement rage in Henry’s veins and heart the more he looked into her eyes. He loved how different she. He loved her tidal waves of blue hair that personifies her personality. He felt like his heart is magnet, and it is being drawn to her. She just smiled back at him.

Henry laughs.

“What Henry?” She laughed in return.

“This feels so Hollywood.” Henry said, “You and I, I mean.”

“Oh God I hope not!” Lucy said. “I mean I just don’t want one of those dime a dozen romance plots Henry. I want something real, but I just want to take things slow. Is that okay with you Henry?”

Goosebumps crawled all over Henry’s skin.

“Yeah, that’s okay with me. I’d rather take it slow to be honest.”
“Fantastic,” Lucy said as she fished through her purse for her keys. Then her eyes opened wide as if she just came to a realization. That flirty smile crept onto her face. “So are you doing anything on Labor Day?”

“Nope,” he answered.

“You should come over to my grandparents’ house. It is just her and I, and I’d love to have you over.”

“Your grandparents won’t mind? I wouldn’t want to impose.”

Lucy latched onto his arm and said, “They’ll be more than happy to have you over. I promise.”

“Okay, would you want me to bring anything?”

“Nope. Just bring your appetite. Grandpa Alan bought a whole rack of spare ribs on sale. I’ll end up cooking them, but we won’t be able to eat them all.”

“Ribs are my favorite!” Henry said. “But are you sure? You don’t want me to bring anything to drink or eat?”

“If you really want to, but it’s up to you.”

“Okay,” Henry said.

She found her keys and opened the front door. Before entering she said, “I had a really great time today Henry. I can’t wait to see you again. Call me later.” She kissed him on the cheek. “Good night.”

“Good night”

Despite their goodbyes, they lingered outside. They were lost in eye contact. Time seemed to stop as they gazed into each other’s souls. They couldn’t explain it, but there was a magic between them. Whatever the substance their souls were made of, they were the same.
Secret Masks

“There are two kinds of secrets. The ones we keep from others and the ones we keep from ourselves.”

— Frank Warren
The Lemonade Stand

Devin Gavigan

he was 8ft tall
with hands like tarzan and feet like Big Foot
his long forehead was as shiny as a greased coffin,
cold sweat dripping down his hands in encouragement.

What a beautiful face his lips hissed with venom drooling through his teeth

His scorpion eyes pierced my skin and burned my clothes to ash.
He drank my innocence to quench his thirst
Chomped on my thigh for a midday snack
and left nothing but the bones of what was once a little girl.

childhood was no longer an option for me after.
my 10 year old body was scraped and torn
like a fawn preyed on by a starving mountain lion
A new secret became hidden behind a sequined dress and pink high-tops.
a mask of innocence was painted with bright watercolors across my barely alive
54 inch body.
I lost everything I knew in just 27 minutes
As he
sat back in his topless red corvette

and drove into the dark and lifeless sunshine.
S.O.S
Nicole Soto

...  
I lost my soul one day in January

10:35:12 a.m.

she wasn’t in my usual cup of coffee
I did get whole milk instead of skim by accident
I get nervous at the drive thru sometimes
I don’t know why
I always order the same thing…
nevertheless
I didn’t think much of it

11:00:41 a.m.

she didn’t show up to my first class
I did have to sit in a different chair today
someone took my unassigned assigned seat…
she’s makes me say things out loud I normally wouldn’t say
I’m shy sometimes
even when I feel confident…
she probably overslept
she’s still my soul after all

12:15:34 p.m.

I thought she’d come out when she heard that song…
I did put it on a little too loud
guys walked passed my car looked & laughed
I hope it wasn’t because of me
I like to think my car makes me invisible

01:11:03 p.m.

I waited for the silver smoke to form her
but she didn’t appear…
I got an email saying my second class was cancelled
no one can ever tell the difference anyway
not even me
I’ll never admit that to anybody other than myself…
the first hit
it burned…
I love it
& every time I close my eyes
I can finally breathe

02:45:23 p.m.

I woke up without seeing her in my dream
I did have that abstruse dream again
I’m constantly in R.E.M
somehow I was more tired than I was this morning
that innate misbalance drained me & wired worry…
maybe she’d be at the grocery store

03:33:33 p.m.

in the sun
she wasn’t tied to the soles of my shoes
I only needed a few things
I don’t eat much anymore
I get fidgety when I have to pay for something
I was pulling at my lip again…
I have to stop doing that…
yesterday mom told me her & dad were back in court again
I reminded myself to breathe
there was an empty ambience in the air

04:09:17 p.m.

I tried talking to myself
thought she’d join the conversation
I did have trouble remembering things about myself again
some are gone though
maybe for the better…
I thought about last night
I’ll never allow that again
he didn’t let me say no…
anyway
then I had this intense urge to take a walk

05:12:07 p.m.

I always preferred the cold
& I found a lake not too far away
my soul stared back at me in the reflection
I saw a smile
the one I’ve been looking for all day
she looked happy there & I wanted to go in
so I dipped a toe

I didn’t want this life; I wanted that one
the one where souls can dance freely outside their skins.

00:00:00

I found my soul one day in January.

…
I’ll Stand by You

Ashley Soules

she told me she did a bad thing
but I knew that already
long before she picked up the payphone

when her mom called
all she said was
it happened again
and truth be told
I thought it would be much worse
the numbers sat on a post-it note
scribbled in red ink
967-9743

I went back and forth about making the call
is this a good time
did she want to hear from me this soon
I pushed past the tiny voice in my head
hit the green button
waited
I could hear her throat closing through the phone
the tremble of her voice made my chest hurt

she sounded fragile
she didn’t mean to let it get this bad
she thought she had it under control
she didn’t want to start over
she said she was sorry
she asked if I would be there for her

No need to worry.
I’ll stand by you.
Even when you don’t want me to.
It happened.
I never thought it would happen to me.
21 years old, living with a man who broke my trust.
A man that did nothing but make me smile, laugh; believe in the word love.
I loved you more than I could write about over and over.
You meant everything to me.
It was really supposed to be us beating every odd that was thrown our way.
Then this. This is what you did to me.
You are destruction masked by a beautiful smile and soft eyes.
“I love you. Nothing will ever change my love for you”
Direct quote.
What changed?
Why wasn’t I good enough?
I only wanted you.
I only wanted to be good enough.

This is how she felt:

Ten years we’ve been together.
How did this happen?
This wasn’t supposed to happen to me.
But it did.
With a 21 year old girl.
He was mine and he broke our trust.
Everything we built was now completely destroyed.
Did he even love her?
He always told me that he loved me more than anything.
“Our bond is unbreakable.”
Direct quote.
How could so much change for us?
I thought I was good enough...
We are 30 years old; we met when we were 19.
He met her when she was 19.
She was a child.
I got cheated on by a man and a child.
Where did I go wrong?
In all of this, was it really my fault?
Was it her fault?
It was his fault.
I know that.
It will always be his fault.

This is how he felt:

I hurt them.
I hurt them both.
I really love them with everything I had.
I needed that 21 year old girl to feel something.
I needed my fiancé to feel everything.
“I love you. Nothing will ever change my love for you.”
Direct quote.
“Our bond is unbreakable.”
Direct quote.
How could I do what I did?
I couldn't help myself.
Did my feelings get the best of me?
Did love get the best of me?
Did the sex get the best of me?
I couldn't help myself.
I destroyed these two girls.
These two girls who meant the world to me.
I hurt them.
I hurt them both.

Yes you did.

Yes you did.

I know I did.

There really isn’t anything more to do.
I told you: “I love you.”
Direct quote.

I need to let you go.
Why can’t I let you go?
I told you: “Unbreakable.”
Direct quote.

I hurt you.
I hurt you both.
I love you.
I love you both.

Bullshit.
I do know.
I do know who I am.
I am both confident & insecure.
I prefer the sunset over the sunrise.
I breath easier at night.
I collect movie tickets, writing the names of the people I went with on the back & lighters
My wall is covered in pictures from ceiling to floor & it helps me travel through time.
My cure for hiccups is to place a paper towel over a glass, then drink the water through it.
I’m extremely picky with men, not food.
I’ll put salt on just about anything, but buffalo wings are too spicy for me.
I’d drink pickle juice if it didn’t make me sick & my favorite holiday is Thanksgiving.
If I could have dinner with anyone alive, it would be Ellen DeGeneres, & dead, my uncle Joey.
My favorite color is red, but it’s really green.
I never wear matching socks.
Sometimes I where a second pair over the first.
I talk to Him when I can’t fall asleep & do the sign of the cross when an ambulance passes me.
I am not religious.
I stick my tongue out before I eat & my power of choice would be to read minds hands down.
I can’t go anywhere without my seven rings & I prefer the moon & snow over the sun & shine.
I always forget to close my windows & sloths are my spirit animals.
I once slept for 21 hours’ straight.
I can definitely do that again.
Two things I must do before I die: Ride in a hot air balloon & see the Northern lights.
I want to own a horse someday & I have an overwhelming fear of birds, particularly geese.
I pay close attention to people’s walks & I’m completely incapable of telling a lie.
I never wear my hair in a high ponytail because my hair is too heavy.
I hate my birthday & I always see the clock at 33.
The Alchemist is my favorite book & I crave coffee at all hours of the day.
I know I talk in my sleep sometimes & I may twitch slightly, but at least I share the blanket.
I have to live thirty minutes away from the water just to be able to look at it.
Montauk is my favorite place.
My biggest pet peeve is when hair sheds.
I can whistle, loud, sometimes without even realizing it.
I’m extremely indecisive, so I’ll usually settle for chocolate, occasionally mint chocolate chip
& asking me to crush a bottle of wine & buying me sunflowers will definitely make me fall
in love with you.

I have one tattoo, “Think a Happy Thought” because I have a fear of growing up.
I’m stuck in the present.
Reflecting on what I’ve said or done to better prepare myself for what I’ll do or say.
My reflection of my past leads to my actions in the future.
I admire those who push me enough to cry, that’s how I know who cares.
I am both easy & hard to love, but I can gulp pain in a single sitting.  
It’s difficult to give myself credit.  
I am an extremely awkward human being.  
I can’t tell the difference between what I want & what I need.  
My biggest secret—I always thought I was meant to die young.  
I always feel like I can do more.  
I’ve realized I am a perfectionist.  
I want to save the world someday.  
I can feel the stress in my eyelids before I even open them in the morning.  
I’m constantly calculating how much money I have in the back of my mind.  
I always end up putting my confidence in other people’s hands.  
If I focus too much on getting it right, I get it wrong.  
I’m working on being comfortable with being uncomfortable.  
I want to see myself as a threat emotionally, mentally & physically.  
I would never psychically harm myself, but I do emotionally, mentally.  
My car is the safest place in the world to me.  
I have a weird thing with lights, when I look at them they either turn off or on.  
I wish my brain was better at remembering & loving itself.  
One of the hardest moments of my life was giving my great grandma’s eulogy & watching my  
dad walk in & sit in the back of the church after not seeing him for over a year.  
I fear I won’t have an impact or have no right to want, to take or receive.  
I’m done with trying to stop certain things from happening.  
The most annoying question I get is, why don’t you just stop?  
People feel comfortable approaching me & telling me how they feel or what they think of me.  
I work hard for certain compliments.  
It took me a long time to get to the level of confidence I have now.  
I don’t think I’m ready to give that up yet.  
If I had to live one moment of my life on a continuous loop, I would pick the moment when… actually, I’ll save that one for myself.  
I detach myself as a third party in my drive for self awareness.  
If you see me chewing on a straw or pulling at my lip, please leave me to my thoughts.  
I breath, I listen & I watch.  
This is what I do to survive.  
You can tell a lot about me by the way I breathe.  
I am an extremely private person.  
I am set in desire & that is different from love.  
I want someone to fall in love with me as organic as possible.  
Willing to hear all the things that go on in my head.  
To constantly reassure me, I can’t pursue perfection.  
I want someone who knows struggle like I do, who knows what I need before I need it.  
If you can give me what I want, I can give you what you need.  
I will do just about anything to escape.  
I have addictive personalities.  
My purpose is my identity.  
Life is a game to me.  
If you want to be in my life, you’ll have to be willing to play with us.
Aketzali touched the sand, expecting it to feel different.

The Juárez family traveled every summer to Veracruz. For the first time since Aketzali began working for them, she was allowed to come. She wore an old swimsuit that the eldest daughter, Felicia, had outgrown. It was yellow—Aketzali's favorite color—and was decorated with tiny sunflowers all around it. Felicia didn't throw it out like she always did with the clothes that no longer fit her. She had called the swimsuit naco, but Aketzali felt beautiful in it. Even when it was concealed under her clothes.

She buried her feet further into the sand and lost all sense of herself for a second. The grains tickled the soles of her feet, and even when the beach was more soil than sand, it compared to nothing she had ever seen before.

"You're not swimming, Zali?"

Pablito, the youngest son, held tightly to her hand. He was the only Juárez to see beyond their differences. To him, Aketzali was not just the help, but a woman of her own. It proved to her that children are the stars of the universe.

"Quizás," she half promised.

Pablito let go of her hand and ran unafraid towards the water as if it were the sea who should fear him. Aketzali watched him with a lingering smile. There were a few other people at the beach, but most of them stood too far to witness her yellow suit when the moment was right.

She fidgeted with the fabric of her shorts. For a moment, she thought of removing them, but a quick sight of Mrs. Juárez stopped her. Mrs. Juárez wore a hat too big for her head and a dress that perfectly outlined her figure. Aketzali wondered many times if money would turn her into a cold-hearted woman if she had as much as Mrs. Juárez. She imagined she'd have a white, beautiful home next to a golf course or something along those lines. She would wear a different dress every day because she could afford it—shoes too. Her long hair wouldn't be black no more, it would be blonde with blue on the tips. But to give attention to Mrs. Juárez when the sea was so
close to her was rude. In order to contain her emotions, Aketzali fell on the sand and stared ahead.

"It's so warm out," Felicia said, and took a sit next to Aketzali. She buried her hands in the sand and stared at Pablito, playing with the waves. Felicia rested her head on Aketzali's shoulder. "Why don't you go? I can tell you're dying to feel the water."

Aketzali laughed. "Quizás después."

They sat there for what felt the longest time. Aketzali thought of the sea as a beautiful, chaotic woman. Her waves were rough and uncertain because of the men who went in it without asking for permission. They brought their beers and threw their empty bottles into the water, as if no one noticed. But from time to time, a woman would do the same thing. This time it was Mrs. Juárez. She poured the rest of her mojito into the water, and then left the cup to be washed away by the waves. If the sea were a chaotic woman, there would be no more drowned children. Just adults who taught they could take without giving.

"I wish I had her body," Felicia confessed. Both women stared at the voluptuous figure that Mrs. Juárez had furiously built through sex with rough men and surgeries. "Maybe more people would notice me if I did."

"No digas eso, mi niña," Aketzali comforted her. "Eres hermosa."

Felicia smiled at Aketzali, but she didn't believe her. Women never believed other women who called them beautiful, especially when they didn't consider those women pretty.

Mrs. Juárez laid on top of her towel, exposing her body to the sun. Seeing someone so comfortable with themselves made Aketzali uncomfortable. Her mother always said to her that a woman had to be modest if she didn't want to be bothered by a drunk. And if Aketzali feared something as much as she feared the sea, it was a drunk.

Sometime during the evening, she forgot about her fear of the sea. The orange sun tamed the waves with each star that was born into the sky, and soon enough, the sea resembled the pool at the Juárez house—which she wasn't allowed to go in either. Aketzali buried her hands so deep in the sand, enjoying the cool sensation. She clung to it.

Felicia read her mind. "I wish I could stay here forever."

She rose her head from Aketzali's shoulder and stood up. Without another word, Felicia walked to the sea and joined her brother. Aketzali yearned to have the same authority over her
body. To walk so freely toward something as beautiful and daunting as the sea was. But all it took was a glance to Mrs. Juárez, and her hands clung to the sand again.

It's impossible to tell how long she sat there.

All she wanted was to rip her clothes off and run to the water. The clothes were suffocating her, and as soon as the day was over, they would become part of her skin once again. Still, wearing the swimsuit was nice. On that morning, she had felt normal for a second while she put it on. She felt like any other girl who was not indigenous, nor had to clean houses for a living, nor feared the sea. She felt like Felicia, and the pretty girls she invited home to drink wine and smoke cigarettes without her mother knowing. Aketzali did the dishes every time they came to the house because she loved to eavesdrop on them. She yearned for the day she'd be invited to join.

_Quizás algún día seré así_, she thought.

Pablito returned to the shore and dropped himself next to his mother. Felicia followed not too long after, and together, the three of them mused on the near sunset. Aketzali wished her mother was here. She wished she could share this with someone who understood her. But this was the life of women like her. Women who were born to dream of becoming other women.

As the light became more scarce, her arms wrapped around her body. She closed her eyes and was able to see herself in the water. She imagined it would be cold, like the water from the sink when it first comes out. Maybe it'd be more like sweat on her forehead after chasing Pablito around the house for his bath. Or it could be like rain on the days she got soaked walking home from the market. On those days, Aketzali would never run. She knew one day she'd find herself going to the ocean, and she wanted to be ready for that day.

Felicia and Mrs. Juárez stood up, gathered their towels, and carried them under their arms. Pablito put on his shirt at his mother's command and ran to the water one last time. Aketzali rejoiced in knowing that at least one of them had enjoyed the trip.

"You still have a chance," Felicia said. "Go on. It's cold now, but we won't be back until next year."

Aketzali found strength in the calmness of the moment. She dropped her shorts to the ground and took off her shirt. In the gentle afternoon, yellow and blue had never looked so harmonious. There were no more strangers left at the beach; no one to admire her swimsuit.
Mrs. Juárez called for Pablito to get to the car, but when she laid eyes on Aketzali and realized what she was doing, she held her tongue and said nothing. Aketzali abandoned her clothes on the sand and walked closer to the shore. Her hair danced with the wind just like in the movies about girls who looked nothing like her. She stopped for a moment, feeling frightened once again that the sea itself was not real. But the breeze whispered in her ear to keep going, so she did.

As she reached for the water with her toe, the sun drowned in the sea. No longer did the waves crashed violently against the sand. Instead, they rocked back and forth as if the moon was their mother singing a lullaby. Aketzali could almost feel the drops of water tickling her skin.

Her moment was broken when she heard Mrs. Juárez call for her. "Ya nos vamos!"

Everyone was inside the car, carrying the things that Aketzali was supposed to be carrying. That was the only reason they'd brought her.

She sighed. "Lo siento, mamá."

Aketzali turned around, and without feeling the touch of the sea, made her way back to the car. She picked up Pablito's sandals and hat, which he had forgotten by the spot on the sand they had settled in. Once in the car, Aketzali rested her head on the window and folded her hands on her lap. Everyone, but Mrs. Juárez and Aketzali fell asleep as soon as the engine started.

Until the very last glimpse of the blue water, Aketzali held her tears in. She had failed her mother, who named her in honor of the very first time she got to touch the sea herself.

"Quizás en otra vida," Aketzali whispered only for the sea to hear.
Dos Latinas

by Hector Gutierrez
Tip of my tongue
Ashley Soules

All the things I wish I could say are stuck
at the tip of my tongue
tethered

my mind races constantly
it never has the chance to
slow down,
words keep
building up
building up
and building up
at the tip of my tongue

words itch
I don’t scratch
I never scratch
if I scratch
and let them out
who knows what comes next

if matter won over mind
I’d feel lighter
doubt dances away
my tongue free
becoming beautiful—

Nicole Soto

I used to pray to Him to make me beautiful, on the outside. I thought if I look perfect on the outside, they won’t know how sad I am on the inside.

When I was younger I spent my nights talking to the Moon, she was imperfect too. She had dimples on her face, like me & her long hair stretched over the night sky. We never understood how our friends, the stars, got people to stop & stare at their beauty, while we heard “you’re pretty but…” What I wanted was beauty that was distracting, the kind you can’t help but look at; beauty you would fight others for to get my attention but question if you even could. But I knew I had to work on that separately. I wanted to take my soul as seriously as my body.

But there’s still a part of me I can’t stand & I’m afraid of people finding it.

I don’t remember the exact moment that thought swam by. Maybe it was when I noticed my mom removed my dad from all the photos in the house or because every time I went to sleep, I’d say goodnight to her on the couch & him in their bed. Maybe it was the time I found out my friend was sleeping with the guy I was talking to or when my best friend stopped listening because her world became louder than mine. It might have been when someone told me they loved me for the first time. Or it could be when I realized my friends from high school only cared about their parent’s money, partying & their looks. It could have been when I told my mom to divorce my dad or when she told me he did it not once but twice. Or possibly the first time I saw him cry while he told me she was a liar. Could be when I realized the only way I knew how to communicate was not through spoken words but through written ones & that I’m only able to objectively live my life unless something’s between my lips or I’m asleep somewhere playing tug-of-war between the sheets with reality.

Or maybe it was during all these moments.

To be completely honesty I don’t remember much anymore, it’s all cemented together. What I can tell you is what happened after that thought, both good & bad, because without one there’s no other.

I studied silence, sharpening my tongue over the years so my words could leave deeper scars. I learned the importance of compassion is in just about anything I do. After an anxiety attack before my 21st birthday I learned life is just a series of decisions a soul need to make to get
to her safe place & my freedom is in my mind, where I am more often than not. I’ve had people I’m not close with tell me they value my opinion when I was able to look them in the eyes & tell them exactly what I felt but I still don’t know if I’m picky or if I just know what I want. I came to the conclusion that everything is about a balance & there are different levels of friendships, so water the ones that water you back.

Music is one of five things that trigger my memories & the other four I would never admit. I’m currently practicing time travel, in my mind & in my dreams. I still haven’t figure out how to change the past or alter the future, only visit.

But I’m working on it.

Number two of those five has never put me more in the moment than it does when I’m alone but when mixed with music, my past is a weapon in the wrong hands. I’ve developed an automatic response to compliments, it’s ew & I use that word like it’s water; not because I don’t like it, I just don’t understand the taste.

Number four & five are surprisingly good, but I’m still not going to tell you what they are. Another thing I’ve learned is to save some things for myself.

Number three is probably what I’m most afraid of & when mixed with number two, I am only in search of a mirror in their eyes & feed off the words running down their lips. Doing all the things my mom did wondering which ones my dad fell in love with & questioning if those same things were ones he ended up hating; ones they’ll end up hating. Wondering if this is the life my mom wanted me to live & if this was the example my dad wanted to set for me about what to look for in a man.

I’ve learned my job is to not put my feelings aside, but right in front of your face & that’s what this is, me & my feelings, right in front of your face.

I had two stranger in my bed last night. One of the strangers I had met a few times & the other was me, tangibly. My ears heard voices of the sweetest seduction & whispers of the finest intentions. Then I stopped. There was something different about this time. It was a part of the future I saw but couldn’t alter, even though I desperately wanted to.

I used to tell myself, I didn’t care about what other people think, I only cared about what I think. My goal is to get you to think what I want so I can fulfill my purpose, but recently I’ve been having trouble reading omens. Wondering if it’s because I don’t believe in them anymore or if I’m scared because I see them too much. It makes me question if there’s a possibility of
being too temperate. Or if I’m too self-conscious & afraid to show true vulnerability in fear of rejection, because I think I already know the outcome.

I’m extremely conscious of the affect I can have on others & the way they perceive me. When I’m too cautious about the things I give to people, I miss opportunities, even genuine ones. I crave to live my own metaphor & follow my Personal Legend in the allegory of life. My problem—I’ve convinced myself I’ve read the entire book, cover to cover & that is the part of me I can’t stand & I’m afraid of people finding it.

But I’m working on it.

I don’t know the girl who used to pray to Him to make her beautiful anymore. Now, I want beauty that’s distracting, not because of the looks of my face, because the soul on my skin. Wanting you to absorb all the things you wouldn’t know by looking at me.

Becoming beautiful, without him
& for me.
Open Secrets

Courtney Daly

Everyone’s heard of the term “being an open book”
To most, it means they will tell you anything
But the questions will never be answered if there is no one to ask
All of the bindings of my life have been held together at one place, my family, and I'm the glue
Two people on my right and two people on my left, leads to a house divided
A picket fence panic room

So I stopped asking questions, and so did everyone else
I found comfort in other people's smiles, even though they weren’t mine to confide in
When they were gone, I didn’t know what to wish for anymore
It’s funny how the scenarios you make up in your head could be only ones keeping you sane

It came to a point where I was scared to hold someone's hand
Not because I was scared they would let go
But because I would hold on so tight I would hurt them
Lost in my own world, I was found missing

This self-diagnosed defect caused a truthful danger I didn’t know was there
My eyes, victims to the truths that were masked by this disbelief
My thoughts, enslaved to this notion
That everything was going to be ok
But ok it just two letters we consume ourselves with
A state of mind just as fake as my smile

To this day, my pen runs a little bit deeper than everyone else’s
The truths in my secret book mean more to me than the ones you scribbled in 140 characters
I am branded by the words that have appeared to me
But nothing heals perfectly
Maybe that’s why I’m a happy person with a little darkness
THE PHONE CALL
Written by
Eve Papa

Sacred Heart University
INT. JAIL CELL – NIGHT

BONNIE and RUBY, a couple of about 30 years of age, are standing in a jail cell. They look a bit disheveled, and Bonnie in particular has a cough.

A middle-aged, male POLICE OFFICER is locking them in.

RUBY
Oh, come on, don’t lock us up! We didn’t realize we were trespassing in an abandoned amusement park!

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK – NIGHT

Bonnie and Ruby are sneaking past police borders and hopping a fence to get into this abandoned area. They are surrounded by decrepit rides and stacks of rotting, useless material that were once carnival games.

BONNIE
Are you sure this is okay?

RUBY
No way, we’re definitely trespassing... But at least I brought this!

Ruby pulls out a bottle of vodka, which is labeled “Trespassing Vodka.”

BACK TO:

INT. JAIL CELL – NIGHT

Ruby is finally ushered in by the Police Officer.

RUBY
Okay, I guess it was trespassing... and public drinking. But like... we’re good people!
(Points to Bonnie)
Bonnie’s dying of cancer! Come on, you don’t feel bad? You don’t have any sympathy for her? She’s dying!

POLICE OFFICER
Yeah, right, and the world’s
probably ending tomorrow, isn’t it?
The Police Officer turns around to lock the cell.

RUBY
With the death of Bonnie Reeder,
country singer extraordinaire, yes,
I think it is! This is precious
cargo!

POLICE OFFICER
Nobody in this world is precious
cargo.

The Police Officer finishes locking the cell and walks away.

BONNIE
Oh. My. God. I can’t believe
we’re stuck in New Orleans. In a
jail cell.

RUBY
Thanks for the recap, sweetie.

BONNIE
No, Ruby, this is awful! Don’t you
remember? My family lives here!

RUBY
Yes I know that, you’ve mentioned
it before. But I don’t see what
that has to do with the fact that
we’re stuck in here now!

BONNIE
(Shooting a glare at Ruby)
Well maybe we wouldn’t be in here
if it weren’t for Miss Ruby’s
bright idea to go “exploring” an
abandoned amusement park in the
first place.

RUBY
Are you kidding? How can you pass
through New Orleans and not do a
little sightseeing at the abandoned
Six Flags?

BONNIE
“Sightseeing?” That’s a strange definition for blowing up a cotton candy machine.

EXT. ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK – NIGHT

The couple is walking past an old cotton candy machine.

RUBY

Oh, check it out! A cotton candy machine!

BONNIE

...That’s nice, Ruby.

Ruby whips out a lighter.

RUBY

Wanna see something cool?

BONNIE

No, no, no, Ruby don’t!

INT. JAIL CELL – NIGHT

BONNIE

That was not great.

RUBY

Hey, you had a good time too!

BONNIE

At least I wasn’t the one who thought drinking absinthe with a loser teenager on a decrepit roller coaster was a good idea!

EXT. ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK – NIGHT

The couple is sitting in a decrepit roller coaster with a male TEENAGER(18), who appears to be a delinquent.

TEENAGER

I have something that will blow your minds.

RUBY

Oh! What is it?

The Teenager pulls a bottle of green liquid labeled “Canadian Trespassing Vodka” out of his jacket.
RUBY (CONT'D)
This is a great idea!

BONNIE
No, no, Ruby, don’t...

BACK TO:
INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

RUBY
He said it was Canadian vodka!

BONNIE
And that makes it better?

RUBY
Listen, it doesn’t matter who had what idea. Let’s just figure out how to get ourselves out of this!

BONNIE
Oh wait, aren’t we supposed to get a phone call?

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Yes.

Ruby looks at Bonnie, expectantly.

BONNIE
What?

RUBY
Bonnie... I know that you have a tough past and all with your family, but you’ve gotta realize - we’re kind of in a jam here. We don’t know anyone else in Louisiana who could help us out.

BONNIE
My parents cannot help us. They made my life a living hell when they first found out that I’m gay, and there’s no damn way they’re gonna want to bail me and my girlfriend out of jail!

RUBY
But maybe it’s at least worth a shot.

BONNIE
No! Absolutely not! You know how much I despise them for what happened. How can you possibly ask such a thing of me? Especially when I’m dying!

RUBY
Come on, don’t pull the dying card.

BONNIE
Excuse me?

RUBY
I’m tired of hearing it. We’ve been on this road trip for only a week and every single thing is... “Oh, I’m dying. No, I don’t want to help Ruby change a tire on the middle of the highway because I’m dying! And no, I don’t want to help Ruby figure out the map because I’m dying! And no, I don’t want to see the world’s largest jukebox while passing through Alabama because I’m dying!”

BONNIE
Will you cut me a break? I don’t see how you could be mad at me for being sick. I’m the one who gets to be mad! I don’t see you dying of a terminal illness.

Bonnie sits on the bench in the cell. She is quiet, and she appears defeated.

RUBY
I’m sorry, Bonnie. I don’t mean to minimize what you’re going through.

BONNIE
Then what are you trying to say here?

RUBY
I'm saying that we just have to work as a team through this... situation... Don't you want to get out of here?

Bonnie considers.

BONNIE
Well... I don’t know... this bench is more comfortable than it looks. I could maybe see myself spending a while here.

RUBY
Oh stop it! I know you want to get out of here just as much as I do.

BONNIE
So you really want me to consider calling my parents?

RUBY
Well, yes. Unless you can think of a better idea.

BONNIE
Can’t you call your parents back in Tennessee?

RUBY
No way I’m calling my parents and making them come all the way here to clean up our grown-ass mess. Sorry.

BONNIE
Great.

RUBY
Don’t you ever think about reconnecting with them, Bonnie?

BONNIE
I never used to. For the longest time, I couldn’t have given a shit about where they were or what they thought about me.

RUBY
Until...

BONNIE
Until I got sick. Now I think about them all the time. Not that I care about them or want to be at home again, but... they just have no idea I’m sick.

RUBY
What do you think they’d think?

BONNIE
I have no idea. Honestly. But it’s just kind of crazy to think that they have no idea. And if I died, they’d have no idea... It’s just... before I got the news, I never thought of this stuff.

RUBY
Of course not. You didn’t have to.

BONNIE
All I was concerned about was making music and drinking beer.

RUBY
Okay? What’s wrong with that? You’re Bonnie damn Reeder!

BONNIE
But I don’t think Bonnie Reeder’s leaving behind much of a legacy.

RUBY
What, four studio albums and a Grammy aren’t a legacy?

BONNIE
Well... yeah, they are. But I mean that I’m not leaving behind a personal legacy. I don’t talk to my family. I don’t know if I have nieces or nephews, or anything else regarding their lives. I don’t have any kids to keep my name alive. I have... nothing.
RUBY
You don’t have nothing. You have me... And your music... And this police officer!

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
No you don’t.

RUBY
(Shouting to the Police officer)
Well then you can forget your invite to the funeral, mister!
(To Bonnie)
(To Bonnie)
Listen, Bonnie. When you get news like that, it’s no surprise that you’re going to start evaluating everything. About what you did and didn’t do.

BONNIE
I just wanted to go on a road trip with you. I want us to get all the way to California. This is my first time traveling for fun, not on a tour. And I just wanted it to be with you.

Bonnie takes her hand.

RUBY
Don’t you see? It’s not about where you go or what you see. That’s not going to make the difference before you have to go.

BONNIE
What do you mean?

RUBY
I mean you can try to see all the sights you want, but that’s not what’s going to make your last days count. You have unfinished business.

BONNIE
And that’s my family.
RUBY
Isn’t it unsettling? Knowing every
day that they’re out there up to
God knows what, and you have no
idea?

BONNIE
It is unsettling...

RUBY
It’s not about what you don’t have
in this world, Bonnie. It’s about
what you do have.

They both stop to think for a moment.

BONNIE
I’ll call them.

RUBY
Really?

BONNIE
Yes, really. I need to do this.
For me.

Bonnie goes up to the cell door.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Um excuse me, Mr. Police Officer...

The Police officer comes in, appearing bothered.

POLICE OFFICER
Yes? How’s the soul-searching over
here going?

BONNIE
Not great... Can I make a call now?

The Police officer sighs, lets Bonnie out of the cell, and
brings her to the phone. But she pauses when she realizes
that Ruby is pressed against the cell, dead silent, waiting
to see what happens.

Bonnie approaches Ruby.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
(To Ruby)
What am I gonna say to them?

RUBY
Just be honest. Honesty is the best policy, you know... Which is why I confessed to trespassing and public drinking almost immediately!

Bonnie walks over to the phone, and the Police Officer joins her and hands her the phone. Bonnie nervously dials the number, holds it up to her ear, and waits.

BONNIE
Hi Mom and Dad, it’s Bonnie... your daughter... Listen, I’m in a bit of a predicament right now and, well, I guess I need my parents.

Bonnie hangs up, and the Police Officer lets her back into the cell.

RUBY
You did really great, honey. That was big.

BONNIE
But I didn’t get us bailed out of here.

RUBY
That’s okay! We’ll figure it out, like we always do.

BONNIE
We have always made it through.

RUBY
Yes! And besides, I’m pretty sure this is just the drunk tank. We’re not in any real trouble!

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Yes you are. And I have your confession.

RUBY
Great.
BONNIE
Well whenever we do get out of here, I’m going to my old house to see if they’re still there. I can’t die without at least trying.

The jail phone starts to ring, and they both go silent and look at it. Ruby gives Bonnie’s hand a squeeze.

RUBY
You’ve got this, love.

FADE TO BLACK.

RUBY (V.O.)
Wait, does this mean we’re not going to Disneyland anymore?

END.
Editors’ Notes

Emily DeGennaro is from Wading River, NY. She’s part of Sacred Heart’s Division I field hockey team, has been the president of Student Athlete Advisory Committee for two years, is a member of the pre law club, and was inducted in the Sigma Tau Delta Honors Society. She was previously published in Vistas in 2018. She is graduating in May 2019 with a BA in English and a minor in political science. She is furthering her education at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at the Arizona State University. Emily is also the creative editor for Mud Magazine.

Hector Gutierrez is from Veracruz, Mexico. He is a student-athlete, and will graduate with a double-major an English and Global Studies in May 2019. He was previously published in last year’s issue of Vistas. He is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of Mud Magazine, an independent, online publication dedicated to telling real stories about real people. After graduation, Hector will pursue a MFA in Creative Writing at The New School in New York City.

Nicole Soto, from Massapequa, NY, has been published in the 2018 edition of Vistas and Mud Magazine. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in English and minor in psychology, after college she plans on traveling and writing.

Andrew Starr is from Norwalk, CT and graduating in May 2019, with a BA in English with a concentration in writing. Andrew played football for four years at Sacred Heart and had started three of them. He will continue his education at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL.

Megan Keane, from Farmingdale, NY, is graduating in May 2019, with a BA in English and will continue her education at Sacred Heart in the Isabelle Farrington College of Education to receive her MA in Secondary Education. At SHU, Megan was a Resident Success Assistant, Orientation Leader, Service Immersion Trip Leader, a member of Chi Omega and Alpha Phi Omega, and was inducted into the Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society. Her work has been published in Vistas and Mud Magazine and she holds the position of Content Editor of Mud Magazine.

Sandra Young
CONTRIBUTORS’ NOTES

Alexandra Ceberio is from Little Falls, NJ. A Business Management major with a minor in English, she graduates in May 2019. After college, Alexandra will pursue her MBA in the fall.

Courtney Daly from Marlborough, MA. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in psychology and minor in music. After college Courtney plans on taking a year to work and save money to travel and go back to graduate school.

Emily DeGennaro is from Wading River, NY. She’s part of Sacred Heart’s Division I field hockey team, has been the president of Student Athlete Advisory Committee for two years, is a member of the pre law club, and was inducted in the Sigma Tau Delta Honors Society. She is graduating in May 2019 with a BA in English and a minor in political science. She is furthering her education at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at the Arizona State University. Currently Emily is also the creative editor for Mud Magazine.

Devin Gavigan is from Queens, NY. She’s a recipient of the President’s Excellence award and a part of the St. Thomas Moore Program as well as the Club Volleyball team and is an Orientation leader on campus. She has been published in HerCampus, Society9, and The Wave Newspaper. Graduating in May 2021 with a BA in English, Devin also studies communications with a concentration in advertising and PR and is an Honors Minor. After college she plans on traveling as much as possible.

Hector Gutierrez is from Veracruz, Mexico. He is a student-athlete, and will graduate with a double-major in English and Global Studies in May 2019. He was previously published in last year’s issue of Vistas. He is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of Mud Magazine, an independent, online publication dedicated to telling real stories about real people. After graduation, Hector will pursue a MFA in Creative Writing at The New School in New York City.
Sara Jean Haas, from Smithtown, NY, is a student ambassador and on the Dance team. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in Business Management and minors in Human Resources and Dance. Sara’s future plans are to open her own dance studio.

Josiah Hardwick is from Edgewater, MD. He is an English and Secondary Education Major and will graduate in May 2019. After graduation he will be doing a fifth year to receive his masters and hopefully become a full-time high school teacher. On campus he is involved in several intramural sports, is a member of Pi Kappa Phi, and is a student mentor in the Academic Mentoring Program through Sacred Heart.

Kelly Hendricks is from Mountain Lakes, NJ. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in English, she plans on working for a brand marketing agency as a project manager. Aside from working, Kelly plans on relaxing at the beach this summer and enjoying being a graduate.

Emily Johnson is from Bethany, CT and will graduate in May 2019. She’s an English major whose concentration is in creative writing. Emily is a member of the National Honor Society Sigma Tau Delta.

Nikolas Kakaletris, from Trumbull CT, is a part of the Psi Chi International Honors Society in Psychology. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in psychology and minor in English. Nik’s plans after college are to continue his education in graduate school.

Megan Keane, from Farmingdale, NY, is graduating in May 2019, with a BA in English and will continue her education at Sacred Heart in the Isabelle Farrington College of Education to receive her MA in Secondary Education. During her time at Sacred Heart, Megan was a Resident Success Assistant, Orientation Leader, Service Immersion Trip Leader, a member of Chi Omega and Alpha Phi Omega, and was inducted into the Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society. Her work has been published in Vistas and Mud Magazine and she currently holds the position of Content Editor of Mud Magazine.

Eve Papa is from New City, NY. As an English major, she has an interest in writing that has led to a publication in the SHU Scholar, a previous Vistas publication, multiple Academic Festival awards, and the gold medal of excellence in English. She also has a minor in Film and
Television, which she was able to put to use in her recent NBCUniversal internship. Eve is graduating in August 2019, and she will be attending SUNY New Paltz as an English Masters student and teaching assistant starting in the fall.

Sara Paul is from Levittown, New York. She is a recipient of the Principal’s Excellence award as well as a member of the Delta Zeta sorority and SHU Orchestra. This is her first publication. Sara is an Economics major with an English minor. After college, she intends to travel before pursuing full time work.

Austin Smith will graduate in May 2019 with a degree in English. He’s an avid reader, writer, and artist from Bridgeport, CT. A giant Stephen King fan, Austin’s currently reading his entire library in publication order. His favorite movies are the classic Universal Monster Movies, especially Frankenstein and The Bride of Frankenstein; and he’s also a huge fan of Venom Marvel Comics. He’s planning to go to graduate school for his M.A and PhD, and then become a professor teaching English literature, while writing books on the side.

Nicole Soto, from Massapequa, NY, has been published in the Spring 2018 edition of Vistas and Mud Magazine. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in English and minor in psychology, after college Nicole plans on traveling and writing.

Ashley Soules is from Mount Vernon, NY. She’s a part of the Sigma Tau Delta Honors Society. Graduating in May 2019 with a BA in English, Ashley plans on attending graduate school for journalism.

Andrew Starr is from Norwalk, CT and graduating in May 2019, with a BA in English with a concentration in writing. Andrew played football for four years at Sacred Heart and had started three of them. He will continue his education at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL.