

KALEIDOSCOPE
kaleidoscope

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------|--|
| Page 5 | "Casey," Alexis A. Harper "Untitled," Cassidy Boehl |
| Page 6 | "Travelling Through Time," Emily Jordan |
| Page 9 | "On Holiday," Trustin Kimbrough |
| Page 10 | "Untitled," Ted Eifert "ADHD in Women," Kate Thomas |
| Page 11 | "Foresight," Trustin Kimbrough |
| Page 12 | "Raindrops," Margaret Toothaker |
| Page 13 | "Sneakers," Elliot Dalpiaz |
| Page 14 | "Colors," Kate Thomas |
| Page 18 | "A Sea of Green," Margaret Toothaker "Alone," Savanna Smith-Coulter |
| Page 19 | "Colorado Sunsets," Margaret Toothaker |
| Page 20 | "Playwright," Sydney Sager |
| Page 21 | "Tree Frog," Ted Eifert "Traveller," Elena DeWees |
| Page 22 | "Sticks and Stones," Sarah Davis |
| Page 25 | "A Drink," LeeAnna Riddle |
| Page 26 | "Chicago 2," Dakotah Walker |
| Page 27 | "Untitled," Ted Eifert "Seasons," Cassidy Boehl |
| Page 28 | "You Want What I Want, Right? –Abby & Owen," Savanna Smith-Coulter "Nara Visa, NM," Elena DeWees |
| Page 29 | "Green Chili Brunch," Elena DeWees |
| Page 30 | "Driftwood," Savanna Smith-Coulter "Chicago," Dakotah Walker |
| Page 31 | "The Night We Met," Alexis A. Harper |
| Page 32 | "Midwest Mountains," Elena DeWees |
| Page 33 | "Chicago 3," Dakotah Walker |
| Page 34 | "To an Artist," Makyla Marvel "Roar," Elliot Dalpiaz |
| Page 35 | "The Seat by the Window," Leeanna Riddle |
| Page 36 | "Starburst," Savannah Smith-Coulter |



Meet the Editors



Elena DeWees

I am an avid lover of the outdoors, literature, art and adventure. I am always trying to find new ways to look at the world and am always curious to understand the things going on around me. I think that the Kaleidoscope is a wonderful outlet that allows many different people to share the way they think/see things and also to experience the world from a different perspective!

With Joy :)

Elena DeWees



Emily Jordan

I am in my second year at Spoon River College and will transfer to Knox College in the fall to work on my degree in English Literature. English has always been my favorite subject in school, and my favorite books to read are classics, especially Gothic Literature. I aim one day to teach English Literature and/ or Writing at a college or university level. My favorite book is Wuthering Heights, and other interests include listening to and playing music, film analysis, participating in theater, and travelling. My own piece can be found in this issue of Kaleidoscope, titled "Travelling Through Time," and I hope to continue writing in the future.



Elliot Dalpiaz

Since I am majoring in graphic design, I just had to get involved with Kaleidoscope. Along with graphic design, I love to take/edit photos, edit videos, draw, and write. I am glad to have had the opportunity to get involved with Kaleidoscope this year. I hope the collection of art pieces in this year's Kaleidoscope will bring joy and inspire others to get creative.



Casey

By: Alexis A Harper



Untitled
By: Cassidy Boehl

Travelling Through Time

By: Emily Jordan

Just the flight from Chicago, Illinois to London, England would be enough to drive anyone crazy, let alone me. I had already assured myself in my own imagination that the plane would crash into the Atlantic halfway through the nine-hour flight because that was just my luck. I sat in my uncomfortable, small seat next to the window, not being able to sleep, and watching whatever Marvel movie I could find on the little screen in front of me. And I can tell you this: after the first three and a half hours, you stop checking how many hours, minutes and seconds are left before you touch the ground again. If for nothing else, for sanity's sake.

My dad was able to fall asleep quickly in the seat next to me, sometimes snoring loud enough that I would wake him before anyone noticed, and I envied his ability to tune out the world around him. Well, beneath him.

After four Spiderman movies, three crappy meals, and too many failed attempts at napping, we were finally in London. I did not realize it yet, but I had truly traveled in time. When I called my mom from my hotel to let her know that I had in fact not died, I realized that simultaneously, my present was her future. (Time zones, and all that). But really, in many ways, traveling has the power to throw you on a rollercoaster and lunge you backward in time so fast you get motion sickness. What they do not warn you about is how witnessing history makes you really think hard about the present. But unfortunately, there is no "Warning: The following experience may cause epiphanies and existential crises" in the roller coaster of life. In other words, I truly feel like I was forever changed by this journey. Seeing cities and places with my own eyes that were once locked away inside screens and postcards was a feeling that is almost impossible to put into words. I was part of a bigger tour which included a mirage of people from Pennsylvania to Illinois, to Texas. My own party was just myself and my father. I was desperate to get out of America again after the school trip I took to Europe three years previous, and so was he.

Growing up, I never pictured travel as much of a learning experience. But there is something about being transported and dropped blindly into a wacky version of Wonderland where they talk funny, drive on the other side of the road, and think beans on toast as normal that opens your eyes in ways you can never imagine. On my second night in London, my dad and I went to see King Lear at Shakespeare's Globe Theater and it was one of the most memorable nights of my life. Through school, my literary interests almost never aligned with my peers since I enjoyed works of Shakespeare, Bronte, and Austen to an obsessive extent and they, for some inexplicable reason, did not. The first time I read a Shakespeare piece was in the fifth grade, by choice if you can believe it, and I chose to read Romeo and Juliet. I remember being disappointed because it was a play and not a novel. It was my dad who sat down, recited an impressive rendition of the "Queen Mab" speech, and explained to me how exciting plays are because they can only become what you make them. They allow you to control the words, not just read them. You get to involve yourself and interpret lines in unique ways and personalize them. My dad was not sure if going to see King Lear would be worth it, since he had never been a fan of the play, but I talked him into it. Sitting in the Globe Theater and watching the opening orchestra of drums and brass play the overture with my dad sitting right there next to me, it felt like one of those moments where everything is coming full circle. After the night had passed, my father finally realized that even if King Lear was not his favorite play, just being there inside the Globe Theatre was enough to blow his English teacher mind away.

I gained an experience that night which has passed through people going back five hundred years of history, and I felt like the past was bleeding into the present in front of my eyes. There is a key moment of the play, where the characters are wandering through the heart of a tempest, and that moment, like magic, drops of rain start to drizzle into the open-roofed theater like nature was eager to be a part of it. I thought as I watched the drizzling rain coming down on the people watching the performance from the floor, of how it used to cost only a penny for people to purchase groundling seats and watch Shakespeare's creations as something brand new. Back when people understood inappropriate jokes and did not take everything "classic" so seriously. I thought about how that point in history was a time full of poverty, plague, and incredible fear. A time of witch trials, power hungry monarchs that could kill you for looking at them the wrong way, where people turned to murderers over a loaf of bread and lived life without medicine and even plumbing. But somehow, authors such as Shakespeare managed to romanticize such a brutal world with the power of words and words only. It made me want to weave that

kind of meaning in my own life, and since then I have aspired to find beautiful moments in little pieces of my little world. I try to write more, read more, enjoy the sunlight, and listen to my music when I have the chance instead of letting myself waste away in front of a phone screen.

I tried to memorize the moment while I was there; sitting in my uncomfortable wooden seat looking over a wooden railing of the balcony, the old wooden stage (complete with a trap door), the red and gold art that littered and decorated the design, the beautiful costumes of the actors, and their passionate voices rising throughout the entire theater without any microphone that I could see. It was one of the moments of my life when I just felt effortlessly myself, connecting with a part of me I was unable to share with friends. No concert in any auditorium in or stadium in America would ever be able to compare to that quaint Shakespearian theater. I was a part of something that I had wanted to be a part of for so long, and from that moment I aspired to keep finding that feeling and being effortlessly myself with or without a shared connection with others.

There is a definite aspect of travel that likes to sneak up on you. Something that just appears for the hell of punching you in the stomach when you least expect it. Realizing that America is just so young, and adolescent compared to what else is out there. That America is the spoiled younger sibling of the world, getting so much credit in so little time. Staring face to face with the Stonehenge monuments, the "Great Mystery of England," was the first moment I got that punch. Constructed between 3000 and 2000 BC, hovering over history, my dad had the audacity to be disappointed at how it was smaller than he expected. They told us that day, Ancient Romans used to behold Stonehenge as tourists, and there we stood in 2022 and it was reduced to being too small? A group of people in history somehow put this huge structure together with nothing but their minds and what nature provided them, and it has managed to survive thousands of times' trials. Isn't that enough to be impressive? After visiting Stonehenge, we went to Salisbury Cathedral where we saw an extensive line of flags put up in a row. From brand-new banners with shining colors to disintegrating rope, flags hung for almost every country Great Britain had ever fought a war against. After a quick look, my dad noticed the flag missing from the line-up.

"Where's the American flag?" he asked. It seemed so stereotypical of him, asking that question in his old t-shirt and ball cap."

The tour guide looked at him with a sparkle in his eye, already partially laughing, before simply putting, "Oh, we just call that 'The Disagreement.'"

The Revolutionary War defines so much of American history. To them, compared to everything they have fought against in history, it is like nothing. I think to this day, my father is still wrapping his head around that.

I got the same feeling of history staring me in the face while I was touring the Roman Baths. I would constantly get a sense of the weight the stone structure I stood in held against me. It is hard to describe the intimidation, facing something which was here hundreds of years before me and will continue for hundreds of years after me. Knowing that if these walls could talk, they would be screaming for thousands of years all at once. Compared to the four hundred America has seen since our constitution? Who are we to say we are on top? The Roman Baths were a piece of history built in 200 BC, buried under dirt until the 19th century, but like a miracle, the water system still works. Born a world ago, and to reawaken centuries later, still alive. A museum was connected to the baths, and the lowest floor gave people the opportunity to walk a bridge over the remains of what used to be an Ancient Roman city. To see the uncovered cobblestone once walked; the remnants of great buildings reduced to beat-up blocks of stone. It is haunting, and it made me feel so small. Witnessing something that was so ancient in comparison to my youth and the obvious naivety that goes with it, history started to really seep into my bones. I felt entirely overwhelmed at the idea that something has lasted so many lifetimes. The only way I could think of to comfort myself was by being as much a part of it as I could. Whether by grazing my hand along the soft stone, or taking videos and pictures, I felt that even if I were merely a blip in this establishment's history, I could also leave my own tiny traces to face time with it.

While I was in Edinburgh, Scotland I visited Greyfriars's Kirkyard which has a haunting history alike. The first thing to know about Edinburgh is that it was the birthplace of Harry Potter and many people come to the Kirkyard to peek at the original Hogwarts Castle and find the gravestones with the names Thomas Riddle and McGonagall written upon them. But below

the unusually topsy-turvy surface and all the wizard-boy fame, is a mass grave for the plague victims who lived here in Edinburgh. Greyfriars's Kirkyard is a cemetery named after the owner

of a dog who is more famous than he is, but the cemetery was born to hold the dead that St Giles Cathedral ran out of room for. This cemetery was also the main site of a massive outbreak of grave robbing when the new University of Science and Anatomy opened and was willing to pay for corpses to study. Some graves are still protected by iron tombs that families purchased to ensure that their dead would stay buried. While I was there, I noticed a gravestone for a man named George McKenzie who lived, died, and was buried in Greyfriars's Kirkyard in 1707. He lived here in Edinburgh, walked the rainy cobblestone streets, and saw the same castle on the hill I could see which looms over the city on a dormant volcano. A man who had lived an entire life before our constitution was written. People lived in this city even before McKenzie, living out their lives without any thought or idea of America in it.

As you may have noticed, it is easy for me to get lost in the past. When I read literature like *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Pride and Prejudice*, I start getting the crazy idea that I was stuck in the wrong time. I picture myself going on walks, writing poetry and novels, and learning how to play the piano instead of getting ready to go to work. But then, I realized, realistically with my joke of an immune system I would more likely die of croup or pneumonia before I got a chance to learn the alphabet. I am better off where I am now. But it is insane to think how because of the prose I read, it is so easy to romanticize a time that was so horrible in medicine and politics. I have since learned to understand that there really is never an "ideal" seen in the present day. People like me want to run away to a time when poetry dominated media. People who lived in the 18th Century dreamed of the Renaissance over what they were dealt with, but who knows. If they could make something important and beautiful out of her life, so can I.

There is no other peace of mind than what comes with the countryside of Ireland. The sunlight hits every shade of green, and there is a comforting glimpse into the past shining out to you like a rainbow when you least expect it. The remains of homes and churches once standing with power and grace now stood without roofs; half consumed by ivy but for some insane reason, I liked them better that way. In the USA I have gotten so used to the destruction of the old, for new, bland industrial buildings to take their place. Here, history can fester and crawl under your skin. Castles crumbling at the edges exist despite themselves, and you get to witness the echo that remains of what was once something powerful. I toured a church that was constructed in the 12th century. A stone inscribed with the Latin alphabet stood lonesome in the corner. Trees and grass grew around, hovering like it was trying to protect it so that it would not break. We drove past the ruins of a castle that was once home to one of the most powerful, blood thirsty royals around, crowned by history as "Red Mary." The legend goes, that after her husband's death, refusing to relinquish power, she turned to murder, attempting to single handedly defeat an army which was posed against her. She killed at least 25 soldiers before her brutal end, and now her castle sits weak and broken in Leamaneh, but still standing stubbornly for her, for history, and I get to say I saw it. Stories such as hers still haunt me, and I doubt I will ever shake them.

Since traveling abroad, my mind continues to reach beyond myself. It seems the ghosts I met throughout Wonderland have followed me home, and I have become overwhelmed with the idea of living up to them, but in a way, I am thankful for the awareness. Unavoidably, days pass by me that feel wasted because I did not have the headspace or energy to live like I feel I should; but I try not to let those moments overwhelm me. I spent most of my childhood wishing to be somewhere else, older, or at another time, but now I realize that I can find ways to appreciate the present. After an infuriating, painfully long shift of working, instead of shutting out a difficult day, I redeem it by taking the long way home and driving my frustration away and drowning myself in embarrassingly loud music.

My dad always tells me that my grandmother used to caution others to "Not wish their life away" in anticipation of what is coming. I did not truly absorb those words until I traveled and realized how small I really am in the timeline of everything that has or will happen. I am only one person and am unlikely to do anything too wild and revolutionary, but that does not mean that the time I have been given is insignificant. Art, music, and poetry keep me breathing in fresh air even when I am suffocating. Rainy cobblestone streets and Medieval castles map out my mind and remind me why I am alive. The smallest things in life can be beautiful, and the more I travel outside of my world the more easily I can handle my melodramatic epiphanies and learn more about who I want to be now and into the future.



On Holiday
By: Trustin Kimbrough



Untitled
By: Ted Eifert



ADHD in Women
By: Kate Thomas

When you think of ADHD, do you think of a rowdy boy bouncing around, or do you think of the quiet girl sitting in the corner? Most people would answer the first option, but what if I told you the little girl also has it? Many girls go undiagnosed with ADHD for years because of these stereotypes, and it can harm them more than you can imagine.

In “ADHD in Girls: The Symptoms That Are Ignored in Females,” Maureen Connolly explains the two distinct types of ADHD: the commonly known ADHD and the lesser-known ADD (attention deficit disorder). Most women fall under the ADD umbrella, which means they have more trouble concentrating and keeping their focus on a task. Connolly argues that because most women do not have the stigmatized “hyperactive” symptoms, like dramatic gestures, blurting out answers, or restlessness, it can be hard for teachers and adults to notice them and get them the help they need. On the contrary, researcher Isabelle Weigel-Mohamed asserts in “Questioning the Legitimacy of the Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Construct” that adults might be over-diagnosing ADHD in young boys because they cannot see the difference between a kid being a kid and a child struggling to catch up with their peers.

When I was a child, my parents took me to a therapist so I could get tested for ADHD. In the end, he diagnosed me with anxiety instead because of one thing: I could read books for hours on end, unlike other male patients he had. He wrongly believed that, because I wasn’t in constant motion, I couldn’t have ADHD. Since he only saw stereotypes when diagnosing me, I spent years struggling in all aspects of my life, thinking things that weren’t true about myself.

ADHD is commonly perceived as a mental disorder found only in rowdy and rambunctious young boys, and because of this, their quiet and shy female counterparts get overlooked. The stigma that people with ADHD are loud and disruptive causes women who don’t show those symptoms to get ignored and misdiagnosed, while they still suffer from the negative impacts that come with the mental disease.

Foresight
(The Manhattan skyline as seen from Liberty Island, NYC)
By: Trustin Kimbrough



Raindrops
By: Margaret Toothaker

Poetry is like photography; the imagery, the creativity, the possibility. These two forms of art are a way of expressing how you see the world. There is nothing more beautiful than seeing the world through someone else's eyes, expressed through art. It's a way of telling every person apart. Like, when people say they hate rainy days, I can show them a photo of a foggy haze. I can show them how the rain drops fall on lemongrass, on rose petals and pine needles, when you haven't seen a sunset in days and days... But you, friend—look at the sunset photo that I have taken. Because it always stays. Poetry is the same way. You paint your image whatever way, with what you wish to say. It is another way to show someone how you see the earth. A gift to show someone what they are really worth.



Sneakers
By: Elliot Dalpiaz



Colors
By: Kate Thomas

I've always seen people as canvases and paints. Some are blue, some red, but most are a beautiful mix of magentas, violets, sky blue, or violent yellows that slap you in the face whenever you look at them. It's fascinating to watch the colors change a little every day. Some become duller and duller, while others shine so brightly that you need sunscreen and a pair of sunglasses just to glance their way. I remember when I used to be a brand-new palette, bright colors of the rainbow ready to be plastered proudly on a brand new, stark white canvas. But then I saw the person who would be painting with my colors.

School.

I started noticing how I was treated in sixth grade but, looking back on it, it started around first. I had never really liked teachers, or school in general. The only reason that I tolerated kindergarten was because I had an absolute queen as a teacher. Teachers just noticed my presence whenever I walked through the doorway, but whether that was a good or bad thing was up to the teacher.

• • •

I tried hard to be likable, I really did.

I did all my homework, at least what I could understand, I stayed quiet for as long as I could, and tried to keep my jitteriness on the down low. I had plans- entire battle strategies- for when my energy couldn't be kept in. Play with my pencil, doodle, draw on my arms, bite my lip, anything, anything, to not distract the class. However, my little plots could only last for so long. Teachers began to take notice of my compressed attitude and bit by bit they would take away one of the things I used to cope with. After years of suppressing, in third grade I finally snapped.

"Kate, come up to my desk please," my teacher asked.

I sighed, before stomping up to her desk. I didn't even bother to be annoyed by the looks I got from my fellow classmates. This happened every day, so if they were still surprised then that was their problem.

"Do you need something?" I asked, throwing a thin layer of caring over the venom in my voice.

She gave me a warning glare, but I just smiled at her. I remembered having good teachers who understood and took the time to teach me, and I knew she was not one of them.

"I need to talk to you about the drawing," she said, crossing her thick arms together. She wasn't very tall, although as a third grader she was much taller than me, and that probably added to her weight gain. "I don't want you to do it in my class any-

more. It is distracting you from my lessons."

I blinked, my smile now replaced with a confused frown. What? My drawing never bothered her before! It's the middle of the year- if she didn't like it, she would have said something by now. I know that Jesse also draws on her homework during class, but why am I getting singled out here?

"But-"

"No buts," she said, already turning back to grading. "Every drawing I see on your homework is a point off."

I gaped at her. She ignored me. I stared some more. She sighed, shifting some papers around and picking up a pencil.

"You can go back to your seat now. And I would appreciate it if you would work on your homework and not some drawings. It's completely unprofessional," she said coldly. And that was the end of the conversation.

I stormed back to my seat and dropped into my chair, a loud screech interrupting everyone else as the chair slid backwards against the cold marble floor. Students and the teacher alike looked up in annoyance, before turning back to their work.

Unprofessional? UNPROFESSIONAL?! WE'RE A CLASS OF NINE-YEAR-OLDS!!

After that day, I grew a reputation with teachers across schools. I was never sure what it was, but my friends told me all their teachers knew me, even if I had never met them. Very few teachers could earn my respect, and those who didn't treated me just as badly as my third grade one.

I wasn't bothered. I was used to it.

• • •

That was the first day that my palette of color was put onto the canvas. But it wasn't in beautiful swirls of color or a dazzling landscape like I had always dreamed it would look like. No, it was violently splattered all over, like a toddler's first art session, and mixed around until it was only an ugly smear of violent reds, blacks, and greens.

• • •

Five years later, about a year before Covid19, I heard about a family who was moving into town who had a teenager. They told me she was about my age, 16, though I was 14, and that she was excited to move here. As it was, she approached me first. Despite my extroverted appearance, I hate meeting new people.

• • •

She was like the sun, blinding to look at. Most of my life after middle school had made me colorblind. After all, no one at high school actually wanted to be there. The school walls were white, as if to say to the cautious parents in the hallways at the opening ceremony, 'Hey! Don't worry! We'll paint your kids for you! You won't even recognize them!'

They technically weren't lying.

Even though the colors were repetitive, they were still colors. Although, if red, black, blue, grey, or brown (all the normal colors at a place made to leech bright colors out of the world) were colors you wanted in your child, then maybe the world should just stay white. Rarely, very rarely, did you ever see a color like yellow. If you did, you did at least three double takes to make sure you saw it right. That's why, when I saw Megan, I was flabbergasted.

The girl in front of me, Megan, was more vivid than any other person I had seen in my entire life. It was like no one had ever even looked at her paint. It hadn't been mixed—there was no brown or gray or black. It was like I was looking at myself when I was a child.

I despised it.

• • •

"Hey Kate! Wanna hang out tomorrow? I can drive," Megan asked, running to walk next to me.

At first, I was curious about her. She had a boyfriend (something that no girl in our tiny town could even think about getting) and loved to talk about animals. She was brunette, a little on the bigger side, and very, very talkative. I'd hung out at her house a couple times, and we had fun, but I just couldn't shake the feeling that things weren't going to end well.

So, I avoided her.

"I'm busy tomorrow. Maybe next time!" I replied, practically running away.

• • •

My dislike for her wasn't just my jealousy of her brightness, although that was a huge factor, and I wasn't alone. Many of my friends, at church or at school, didn't like her either. She liked to talk over others, including teachers or any other adults, and would never let you get a word in edgewise. If she started talking to you, you weren't allowed to leave the conversation unless you wanted to insult her and her entire bloodline; and because of this, she often found herself ostracized by her peers. As much as I would've liked to do the same, somehow the job of being her handler and friend fell to me.

• • •

"Kate!" my friend whined as we talked in the girl's bathroom at church. "Megan's at it again! She's taking over the lesson, and the adults aren't doing anything about it."

I sighed. The adults in the room never did anything about her, so I was always the one to tell her to shut up in the most respectful way possible. It was like trying to take care of a child. I distracted her with snacks, coloring books, drama that happened at school, anything. The grateful looks I got from the teachers only fueled my ever-growing anger.

They are adults. It's literally their job to deal with stupid kids like her, not mine. Why am I stuck babysitting? None of my 'friends' are even helping me, and they know that I hate her more than the rest of them combined!

• • •

As much as I despised the job, I kept at it. Three years of babysitting and being friends with Megan caused my mental health to plummet to new lows. It didn't help that the more I hung out with her, the darker my colors became, while hers became brighter than ever. She would get new boyfriends every couple of months and EVERY SINGLE TIME, she would gush about how he was 'the one'.

Then she would trash me. Replace me with her boyfriend. Not surprisingly, she got into a toxic relationship with a guy I told her wasn't a good idea. She had called me "unsupportive" and "a jerk," then didn't talk to me for a week.

Four months after dating, she got the first death threat from him.

She told me it was all his fault, tears and snot running down her face. It was the first time I'd ever seen her colors so dark and twisted. I went to her house, tissues and everything. Three days later, I decided to prank text him to make him nervous. He sent photos to me that I will never forget. Photos that proved, undeniably, that she had lied to me about parts of their relationship. When I called her to confront her, she lied, straight to my face.

• • •

"You're joking, right? You really think I'd ever do something like that?" she said, accusation and hurt dripping from her voice like ice-cream on a hot day.

"I'm not saying you did, but that photo in the back of the Snapchat is literally the one in your room. And the walls are the same. And you use the same slang. Megan, just tell me the truth," I said, exasperated.

"You're a horrible friend Kate. I can't believe you could even think that I did anything like that!" she yelled, but there was panic in her eyes and a slight tremble in her voice. "He's a liar, remember! You told me that he was bad for me and that I shouldn't trust him! So why are you turning your back on me now! You're my friend, no one else's!"

I blinked. She was right. I wasn't anyone else's friend. I wasn't even a friend to myself because she made me feel like crap.

"Yeah," I sighed, and I actually started to smile when I came to the realization. "Well, I think I'd rather have no friends than be friends with someone who doesn't care about me. Good luck with your boy problems."

I hung up.

Then I blocked her.

• • •

In those few seconds before I ended the call, I had recognized myself in her warped rainbow. I saw pure black and green colors swirling angrily behind her, with blue splattered violently on top, like a crime scene from a movie. Her face had been twisted into a snarl, and her eyes were dripping violent reds and purples, and I couldn't see a single bright color could be seen through the empty void that was around her.

And then it hit me.

The colors that others gave me were only a base. Once it dried it acted the same as any old canvas, even if it wasn't stark white and ready to be painted. I looked up, seeing a muddy, messy version of myself in the mirror. I looked at the paint palette next to me, covered in the mixed colors I'd been looking at all my life, but there was something different this time. A glob of yellow paint was in the corner. It was dried and fading away, probably had been for a long time. I tentatively mixed water into it, and it returned to a somewhat paint-like substance and placed it onto a brush before returning my gaze to the dull colors before me. I took a deep breath and steadied my hand.

Then I put the first stroke onto the canvas.



A Sea of Green
By: Margaret Toothaker



Alone
By: Savannah Smith-Coulter



Colorado Sunsets
By: Margaret Toothaker

Playwright
By: Sydney Sager

You have the leading role of the victim in my head—
your voice, echoing when I hear any praise.
The potential I thought I had lies crumpled through your fingers

I improvise excuses that you must not know how much I care,
but with that edge in your voice and my glistening eyes, you know.
I try to be firm, but my knees feel weak when I know I would never say the things you say to me.

I bring up the conflict because you cast me as too agreeable,
but then you say a backbone must come with age.
You publicize you are only trying to warn me. I am naive and need protection.

I fall for the scripted lines because it makes me feel less bruised.
In my head, I tell you how much it hurts, and you listen with no excuses,
but the reality is you're talking down to me, never to be impressed by any part of me.

Through your eyes, I star as your dependent little girl,
method acting with the inspiration of someone with no clue what they are doing.
Can you love me if you think I deserve to hear how my accomplishments make you feel small?

Your words deliver my final blow as you announce, "You'll get the wake-up call you're in for."
The words lead to misery in the mirror when your eyes look back at me.
My wake-up call concludes that you have been the playwright.

I trusted all your words because I trusted you.
I am going to be more than what you showed me I could be.
The curtain has closed on your act of victim in my head.

Tree Frog
By: Ted Eifert



Traveller
By: Elena DeWees

"You'll be fine," my mother says, sliding the milk over to me.

"Plus, your sister will be there with you," my dad adds, not bothering to look up from his newspaper.

Today is the first day of 9th grade for me. I have never been excited for the first day of anything, and this is no different. My sister, Kari, is a junior this year, and while my campus is a separate building, I have two classes at the high school. They just happen to be right before and right after lunch, so I am supposed to eat at the high school cafeteria. My sister, who has masterfully managed to stay out of the entire conversation, finally looks up from her oatmeal.

"We are going to be late. Leave the book." At that, she brushes her long, perfectly curled hair behind her shoulder and walks out the door.

I sigh, and follow behind her, tucking my book into my backpack so she will not know I ignored her advice.

"You dress like a freshman," my sister says when I finally catch up to her. My sister and I are complete opposites. She takes over an hour to get ready in the morning, I am lucky if I find the time to brush my hair. She is into boys and shopping; I am into reading. The only thing we really have in common is that we are in color guard together. We have been best friends our whole lives; only in the privacy of our home though. I look up at her now, with her brown curls, mini-skirt, and perfectly applied mascara, and I laugh.

"What does that even mean?" I ask her, looking down at my typical tee shirt, jeans, and sneakers.

"It means," she says, looking me up and down with her bright green eyes, "that everyone will know you're a freshman."

I just roll my eyes at her. I am nervous enough without trying to decipher what she is trying to say.

We get to the school and split to our separate campuses, where my friends are already huddled in a group together. I am surprised to find out that one of my best friends, Maggie, also has classes on the high school campus before and after lunch. Our first class is color guard, so we plan to walk over together. Maggie and I are like night and day. She has short, curly, black hair and chestnut brown eyes, whereas I have long, straight, blonde hair and bright blue eyes. She is taller than me (most people are) but not by much. We only met last year, but we became best friends quickly. I feel a lot better knowing that she will be with me today.

The rest of the day seems to go by quickly. 9th grade is remarkably similar to 8th grade, and I have forgotten by the end of 3rd period why I was so nervous. I meet up with Maggie outside of the school so we can walk to the high school campus together.

"I'm so excited!" she squeals as soon as she sees me.

I smile over at her. Color guard is the class I have looked forward to most. We walk across the parking lot and head for the classroom. Being on this campus does not feel much different than the one we have just come from and, slowly, my nerves start to fade.

Maggie and I are the only freshman in guard this year. Surprisingly, no one seems to care. I know several of the girls because my sister has been on the team for going on 3 years now, and that makes things a little better. By the end of the class, it feels like we have made a lot of new friends.

While we are packing up one of the sophomores yells, "We'll save you a seat at lunch."

I look up from my backpack as the girls exit the room in a large group, their heels clacking against the cement as they make it to the sidewalk.

"That went so well," Maggie whispers to me, "and now we have somewhere to sit at lunch." She is over the moon with the entire day, and, I have to admit, it has gone much better than I thought.

We make our way to the cafeteria, and I marvel at the size of this campus. Everything is massive. The cafeteria smells like pizza and echoes with the voices of hundreds of teenagers, all excitedly chatting about their first day of class. We walk into the room, and I glance around looking for my sister in the sea of bodies. Suddenly, from somewhere in the middle of the room, the word "Freshman" is yelled so loud you can hear the echo bounce off the walls. The voices quiet and it seems like every head turns in our direction. I feel Maggie freeze beside me as we both try to understand what is going on.

"Freshman, freshman, freshman." I am not sure where the chanting starts, but it grows louder and louder the longer we stand there.

"Sarah?" I hear Maggie's voice from beside me and turn my head to look at her. Her face is bright red, and I can see the tears pooling in her brown eyes. "What do we do?"

I have no idea how to handle this. I am trying to decide if we should just make our way to the table when the first crumpled paper is thrown. Next thing I know, I am dragging my best friend out of the room and running for the bathroom. We spend the rest of the lunch period hiding in there in silence. When it is finally time to head for our next class, we make our way out and find my sister and the other girls from our team standing in the hallway.

"It's nothing personal," my sister says watching us, "freshman just need to have lunch on their campus." With that, she turns and walks away, the other girls following suit.

Maggie and I try, unsuccessfully, to eat lunch in the cafeteria two other times before we give up. We end up spending the rest of the year bringing lunches from home and eating outside.

"I would never treat someone like that," Maggie says to me one day while we were sitting outside waiting to go to class. "It's not okay."

I nod my head in agreement. "I don't understand why people are so mean," I tell her, wiping sweat from my face. It is the end of August in Texas, and it is 105 degrees outside. "I can't wait to be a sophomore," I say to her with a laugh.

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"You'll be fine," my mom says, patting my head. I laugh and kiss her cheek before walking out the door. It is the first day of my sophomore year, and I still hate first days. I walk to school with my sister, who is thrilled to be a senior this year.

"I see you actually left the book this time." She grins over at me, and I roll my eyes. She is right though. This year I have taken her advice and only brought the bare minimum with me. "Only freshman have huge backpacks," she had warned me the night before.

We meet up with our friends and go our separate ways. Even though we are on the same campus this year, we do not spend much of our time together outside of color guard. My friends and I spend the morning comparing schedules and figuring out who has which classes together. Maggie and I are still in color guard together, so we also have lunch together.

The day goes by quickly, and before I know it, I am standing in the hall with Maggie staring into the cafeteria. It does not feel any smaller this year, and it is just as loud. "It still smells like pizza," I laugh, looking over at Maggie.

"Feels just like last year, doesn't it?" she asks me, and I can tell she is nervous.

We slowly make our way into the room, but no one even turns around to give us an ounce of attention. We make our way over to a table and sit down, and, for what feels like the first time in 10 minutes, I let out a breath. Maggie and I have just begun to unwrap the sandwiches we brought from home, accounting for the possibility of having to eat in a bathroom, when I feel the atmosphere in the room change.

"Freshman!" The word is yelled from a girl sitting at the table beside me.

I snap my eyes up to the front of the room where two girls are standing, frozen in place.

"Freshman, freshman, freshman."

The chat starts up and slowly becomes a roar from the teenagers around me. I am shocked to hear Maggie's voice among the others.

She must feel my eyes on her because she looks over at me and shrugs. "I need to fit in this year," she yells.

I watch the scene unfold with a feeling of horror. I want to run up and tell the girls to just ignore it and sit down with us. Maggie is right, though. I do not want to eat my meals outside again.

My sister walks up behind me and hands me a crumpled-up piece of paper. "Throw it," she tells me, smirking.

All eyes seem to be on me, and I know I must choose. I throw the paper, adding my voice to the chorus of teenagers until the two freshman girls run from the room crying.

The rest of the year goes by quickly. I have a ton of friends, including my sister and her friends who have decided I am not too bad to have around. We eat lunch in the cafeteria everyday with the other girls from color guard where we all talk and laugh and act like there are not two freshman girls sitting outside everyday wishing they could be included. I wish I could say I realized I was wrong and apologized to those two girls. Unfortunately, I never even knew their names. I can say that, over 10 years later, I still think about that day. I have not talked to Maggie since we graduated. I quit color guard at the end of my sophomore year. I still carry a book with me everywhere I go, and I do not care if my sister still thinks it is weird. And sometimes, for no reason at all, I think about the day in the high school cafeteria I chose to make two girls cry so I could fit in.

A Drink
By: Leeanna Riddle





Chicago 2
By: Dakotah Walker



Untitled
By: Ted Eifert



Seasons
By: Cassidy Boehl

Yellow, red, green. Colors we've all seen.
But when autumn comes, we marvel at these colors.
Writers, readers, and painters are lovers, but when
autumn comes, the world shares its love with each other.
Truly, it is beautiful, how the trees bend and sway,
and even more so in their colorful array.
The days become long and the sky grows grey,
but the birds and squirrels never cease their play.
Though its sad that the leaves fall and die,
they will be back in the spring with new life for you and I.
The seasons change and we grow old in age,
but there is One who always stays the same.



You Want What I Want. Right? -- Abby & Owen
 By: Savannah Smith-Coulter



Nara Visa NFM
 By: Elena DeWees



Green Chile Brunch
 By: Elena DeWees

Asphalt, sun soaked and wind worn,
 Barrelling towards the next place,
 Cacti, just little pricks along the way,
 Don't stray too far, it's dangerous out there In the dry, dry,
 desert air.
 Echoes of the lost call out,
 "Find yourself!"
 Get going before the going gets too much, Too tough, too
 rough,
 Too quiet.
 Home, your heart will know
 When you unearth it.
 Ambrosial drink like
 Ichor in your veins,
 Just cherry coke,
 Fizzling in the glass,
 Chipped around the rim.
 Juxtaposing.
 Kick back,
 Listen to the shopkeeper's goat, Maniacally musical whenever
 someone New crosses his path.
 Old Mesilla,
 Patio picnic,
 Pistol Pete, and Pecan trees,
 Question,
 "Red or green?"
 Answer,
 "Always green, please."
 Soak up the springtime sunshine, Tell tales of triumphant trials,
 Trails and tribulations,
 Unveil,
 Vibrant vagabond,
 Feel finally,
 Whole.



Driftwood
By: Savannah Smith-Coulter



Chicago
By: Dakotah Walker



The Night We Met
By: Alexis A. Harper

They make movies about true love.
And they say poems are food to love.
Maybe we were written in the stars.
Maybe everything leading up to this was nothing but coincidences.

The night we met, all I wanted to do was talk to you.
We sat in your car and talked on my lunch break.
Em sent me the screenshots of your messages.
You said to her,
"She's so cute and funny, and I love her laugh,
And her eyes, too."
The next night we stayed up all night and basically planned our future.

We were inseparable.
We moved in together.
I realized how much you loved me and how much I loved you.
We invited all our friends over for a game night.
And you proposed!

May 5th, 2019, I married my best friend.
Four months later, we found out we were expecting our first baby
All we wanted for Christmas was June.

At 11:33pm, June 23, it wasn't just me and you.
Every day, she grew.
She's the carbon copy of you, with curly blonde hair and blue eyes.
Soon we were expecting baby number two.
The months flew by—

On October 11 at 5:31, we met our little guy.
What I expected to be my little twin
was again a carbon copy of you, with straight red hair and brown eyes.

Seven years later, all I want to do is thank you,
Because the night we met, I didn't picture anything like this.

Midwest Mountains
By: Elena DeWees

I am nineteen turning twenty,
And I've seen the midwest plenty.
It's monotonous and stiff.
If you are lucky there might be a cliff.

Illinois especially,
Is just Chicago, corn, and beans.

But let me set this scene,
A neverending bluebird sky,
Over an ocean of golden waves,
Right on the cusp of harvest.
Then the farmers work their hardest.

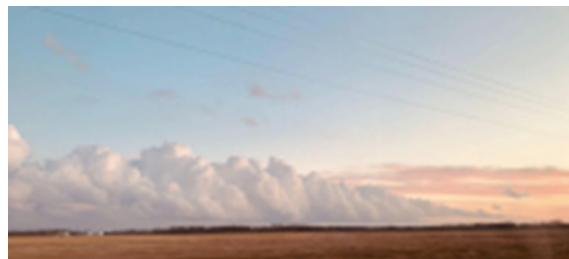
Now the fields are all out.
It changes the route.

A new scene has been set
With the sight of pavement wet,

And the smell of fresh autumnal rains. Miles upon miles of open land.

Every horizon further than my outstretched hand. Mountainous clouds rise up in the distance.

I take a deep breath in
Because I didn't think I was going to miss this, Next Year.



Chicago 3
By: Dakotah Walker

To An Artist
By: Makyla Marvel

To an artist,

To start out small, that's where we all begin; an unsteady line, messy colors. To create, to make, is the only way to win; art can be made with glue and scissors. There is no right way, there is no wrong; as long as you're happy... It's a process. You might start strong and find it so easy to access. Your art is beautiful, sharing the work of your mind. It's a wonder, what is usual, and it's normal to feel so behind. To fight in this race? Exhausting to win. To sink in this headspace? That's all that's ever been. A losing game? Depends on where you sit. Find a way to reclaim, find the way you fit. There is so much space—a place to find your joy. Love and joy you must embrace; nice and loud, there's no one to annoy. Sit up top watching the view, letting your heart spill on the page. Take a picture, it's deja vu; the whole world is your stage. No one can love, much like you; sit down and create. Thinking how you'll just know; we have no time, we can not wait. Be who you are and love will follow. Pick out your repertoire; there's always a new day tomorrow.



ROAR
By: Elliot Dalpiaz



The Seat By The Window
By: Leeanna Riddle

She sits at the window looking outside. Her mouth is stuck shut, but not by force. She waits for the shadows and the non-existent realities to suck her in and take her out of this reality.

The people outside her window beckon her, but she stays there. She doesn't know what day it is because she waits for the other world. Her heart beats inhumanly fast.

The door opens to the room she's in. The person is tall and imposing. "What do you want?" The voice is powerful and eerie. It has force behind it. It is calm.

"I have a couple of days, why now?" she says, sounding lost.

"Because this decision is the most important."

But she's just yearning to go outside. The person leaves with the door exactly the way it was—slightly open. The window is halfway open as well.

As night comes, the room wakes. The girl is about to open the door with one foot out. There is a sudden thud. The girl looks back. There is a book. The book's pages fly open. Hands come out of it, grabbing the girl and luring her in. Though she can escape, she doesn't.

It's the next day, and the girl is by the window. The person comes back.

"Why don't you step out?" it questions, opening its hands to the door. "I'm scared to." Still, she looks out the window.

At night the paintings on the wall lure her in this time. She joins the painting. She lets them take a hold of her. It is almost dawn, and she hears a creak. Of course, she wouldn't notice the door if it were the same.

The person comes early.

"It's not time yet," she says with fear.

"No, it's not." It stares her down. It takes a seat by the window. It pats the space next to it.

"Why?" she questions.

"Tell me about you?"

She just stands there. Her heart leaps out of her chest and pushes her to the person. Reluctantly she sits, nervously fidgeting. Her heart leaps into her mouth and words spill out.

After everything, the person says, "You seem to know already— why don't you step out?"

"Because if I fail..." Her voice is as quiet as a mouse.

"Then get back up and rebuild. There's always help." It opens the window. "Will you join me now?"

The girl just stares.

The girl herself is a story, and the window is right in front of me waiting for me to step out.

Starburst
By: Savannah Smith

