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Front Cover Art: Amy Nguyen
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Untitled
Paulina Filippova
Class of 2021
and bound on that journey you find your
skin reddened by floating pollen.
through the clear mirror of your eyes
I watch the moonlight play among the lilacs,
down by the water.

“six days,” they’d said.
and you, afraid yet courageous,
stared down at the days,
at the ever-approaching
black dream.

and I had sworn
to give you everything I could
for as long as we had left.

I cannot give your heaven,
but I can take you
down to where the little white pinafores
sway stiffly with the breeze.
down to where the honeybees
make their home upon a branch
down to where you
breathe your final breath.

“six days,” the doctors had said.
time did not spare you quite so long.
Unknown and Alone  
Emily Woicicki  
Class of 2023

Young and unknown  
The look of fear shining in her eyes  
Her beauty covered by dirt  
You come from pain  
And suffering  
Hiding from the ones that burned you  
All alone  
No one to hold your  
Tear stained face  
No name  
No family, just unknown  
The ones who did this will never know the pain they caused you  
They watched what happened no care  
For you  
The nightmare will never end

*Inspired by the cover of National Geographic Volume 167*
Grapes and Vase
Anna Fairbanks
Class of 2022
What You Didn’t Know About Seashells

Julia Moffat
Class of 2023

Most people think that seashells are just something that certain people like to collect, or that they make beautiful items to display, and some people feel all magical and lucky when they have found a beautiful seashell. About 3 months ago I went on a family trip to Hawaii for a month. I have an aunt who lives there. Ever since I was little I have loved water, not just ocean water but all water. I surf and I swim, but most of all I love finding beautiful shells. My uncle from Hawaii is a boat/snorkel tour guide. He has the biggest seashell display of anyone that I know. I have lots of shells as well, but the one seashell that makes me think about life is the one that I wear around my neck everyday. These are a few life lessons that I can draw from a seashell.

Not one is the same

Let’s be honest, not one shell is exactly the same. They are all different in their own way. Some are big, some are small. Some have rough edges and some have polished backs. Some are pink and some are white. I have never seen a seashell that is the same as another. If you were to look at them closely you would see that they all have their imperfections and chipped edges. However, we love them just the same. It is like walking down a hallway at school or at a store, all you need to do is to look around and see all the different people who are around you. Some are big and some are small. Some are tall and some are short. Some are black and some are white. It doesn’t matter what they look like, they are all beautiful and unique.

Try to be strong

It can be hard for a sea snail to live out in the world. There are lots of different creatures that will try to break the shell off the snail’s back to be able to eat the snail. Some sea snails have learned to adapt and form a better, stronger seashell but others are still learning and don’t know how to help themselves from being eaten. Like seashells, humans have an emotional shell. Our emotional shell tries to stop the cruel thoughts that the world has to say about us. Some people have a soft shell and others have harder shells. This is a big one because there are people out in the world that just say what they think, no matter how offensive they are. As humans, we all strive to be the best. I am personally working on not taking things so offensively and just letting them roll off my back.
Live with color

When you are looking for a seashell you are either in the water or a rocky beach. I tend to just stop what I am doing and watch the waves come in, all different from one another. As humans, we like consistent routines. We wake up, get dressed, eat breakfast and brush our teeth. Living with some color could be different to everyone but this just simply means, we need change. Just like how the waves are constantly changing we need to experience happiness and sadness.

Beauty isn’t everything

While looking for seashells you need to know that some of the most pretty shells are very poisonous. The outside might look like a million bucks but what is on the inside just might kill you. Like people, it is hard to know what a person is like until you actually get to know them. We should never be too quick to judge.

All of these life lessons are one that I strive to be better at. I have to remember that everyone is unique and that other people have feelings. I never would have thought that just a simple little thing such as a seashell could mean so much if you were to just break it down. I will always keep this in mind and around my neck for as long as I can remember.
Light. Everyday the sun comes up and the world is filled with a brilliant brightness. Then the planets move, time goes on, and the world falls black, as the sun disappears. The moon, lightly shining, a reminder of what had just left. Darkness left in the wake of the sun.

I watch the water glistening as the sun is falling. Sand seeping into the depths of my clothing as I sit and watch.

I hear a faint noise behind me; however, my eyes stay stuck to the water. I feel a tap on my shoulder and I am snapped out of my trance and look up to see my father’s face.

He was calling my name. A name he gave me. Something I will carry forever.

I smile at him, my eyes sparkling, and see his face shine in reciprocation. My father offers his hand to me. I take it to stand, thank him, and brush off the sand.

I glance at the water one last time before I go. I watch the sun that once lit up the earth, now makes the moon shimmer. I sigh, whispering under my breath, “Beautiful.” I briefly looked to my side to find that my dad was no longer standing next to me.

He was gone, nowhere to be found, Except for his footprints in the sand. Just like the sun. All that was left to see was the moon.

On the plane home I fall asleep on my dad’s chest. Feeling safe. Happy. I snuggle closer, taking in the warmth. I can see the sky from the plane window. Full of darkness. I look up at his face. He is sleeping. I close my eyes knowing in the morning when the sun rises he will still be there.

It is 7:58. The sun goes down at 8:04. I sit watching the sun get closer to touching the mountain.

“Taycia!” I hear him yell the name he gave to me. He never calls me by my full name. I run downstairs to see my father in the kitchen. “Get the bandages.” He calls urgently. I do as he says.

I see blood all over the counter. Red.
He cut himself. Again. I run to the bandages knowing exactly which to get. He is always so clumsy.

I come back into the room and see him at the sink as he is washing off the blood.

Red. The sunset.

I tell him to sit still so I can put the bandages on.

I look down at his face while he looks up at mine. I give him a small smile. I know he can tell it is full of pity and a little displeased. I see his lips slightly move knowing he at least tried to return my gesture.

I finish wrapping the bandages in silence. Neither of us say a word. I kiss his newly bandaged wound and turn to the sink to wash my hands.

I turn towards the stairs. “Goodnight.” I let the word escape my mouth after minutes of silence.

I step onto the first stair and whisper, “Papi.”

I go back upstairs and glance at the clock. 8:06. I sigh.

I peep out the window to find the sun nowhere to be found. Only a light red glow left in the wake of where the sun touched the mountain.

The time it takes for a Sunset

**My dad wasn’t there when I woke up that morning**

He was a mile away. Not too far. But the right amount of space where memories are hard to make.

Far enough for the sun to make mirages. Far enough that when the moon was illuminating the sky there was darkness in the distance.

My grandpa never really said I love you to my dad. He was just raised that way. A father and a SUN. The only true comfort was when he told him it was going to be okay.

My father is about to leave my home to go to his, only a mile away, I said some hurtful things, but he shows no sign of his pain. As he was taught. He knows I am hurt too.
He gives me a sad smile---a smile given when someone says goodbye, when someone wants to cry, when someone loves another who hurts them---and says they only thing he knows.

“It’s going to be okay, Taycia.” There’s that name again. The one I will live with forever. The one he gave me.

A tear slides down my cheek. It shimmers. Just like the moon did. In a time of darkness, but only with the help of the sun.

He leaves. Just for the day. I know he will come back sometime. Maybe one day he won’t. Maybe one day I won’t. But I don’t know. So all I can do is have hope. Have hope that the sun will rise in the morning.

8:04. Three, two, one. Time ran out. The sun is gone. The stars are being outshined by the lights of the city.

DARKNESS

The sun has been gone for 10 minutes.

Yet it felt like years.

The moon and the sun. Light and darkness.

A balance. Forever in a circle of give and take. Take and give.

Take, take, take. Don’t give. Give, give. Stop taking.

STOP!

Stop the noises, the sounds, the voices.

Stop . . .

Silence.

A father and a daughter.
Ducklings
Ruby Bautista
Class of 2020
Summer
Meah Phan
Class of 2023

In summer, we can taste amazing, fleshy fruit.

In summer, we can bathe in the sun.

In summer, we can be happy.

In summer, the leaves are happy.

We can go through picturesque places, and share vines and fruit.

We can look at the flowers soaking up the rays of the sun.

In summer, we can stay up late and watch the fading sun.

We can lay on the cool grass, laughing and being happy.

We can point at the stars, staying up till the light comes, and share the fruit.

Even if there’s no fruit in summer, even if there’s no sun in summer, as long as I’m with you, I’m happy.
Untitled
Mason Hirschi
Class of 2023
My Hands
Avolea Archuleta
Class of 2023

My hands. They have touched more things that I can name. Things that I wouldn’t know or wouldn’t remember. The best memory of my hands was with my little sister. Antonia is a small, petite girl, long legs but still short. She brings joy everywhere and although sometimes she can be a little emotional she’s one thing I could never live without. When I first met her at the hospital, she was in a see through glass or plastic cart. Show had little puffs of black hair surrounding her scrunched up nose. A smile formed as I looked at her tiny hands and slowly she grabbed my pinkie and gave it a squeeze. She was my little sister and I was going to always protect her.
The Afghanistan War - What now?
Tabitha Parker-Theiss
Class of 2022

More than 147,000.

That is the number of Afghans who have died in this war. Along with that, many more have suffered and been injured or tortured. This is unacceptable. Too many lives have been lost and hurt, we need a solution that doesn’t settle for anything less than peace.

What’s Happened in the Last 18 years?

Since the U.S. first got involved with the Afghanistan war after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a lot has happened. In 2004, Afghanistan held a democratic election in which Hamid Karzai was elected as president. Although this, at the time, seemed like a great step in a forward direction for Afghanistan, the new government proved to be dependent on aid from the U.S. Six years later, in 2010, President Barack Obama increased the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan to around 100,000. Soon after, in 2011, Osama Bin Laden, the person behind the 9/11 attacks, was killed by U.S. troops. The number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan was then decreased, bringing the total to around 14,000 in 2018. President Trump has since decreased the number of troops by another 7,000. (Smith 9) He, along with the U.S. government, have been trying to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban. (Smith 9) The talk of a peace deal however, excluded the Afghan government, causing many controversies, and is now basically completely dead. As the number of U.S. troops continues to quietly decrease, the future of both countries is unknown.
History and Causes of the Conflict

Afghanistan has been at war for much longer than just the past 18 years of United States involvement. Since 1979, conflict after conflict has risen in Afghanistan. In 1979, the Soviets invaded the country after Islamic guerrillas threatened to end the Communist-leaning government in Kabul. (Smith 8) In 1984, the U.S. began arming the mujahideen. Then, in 1989, after nearly ten years of war, the Soviets gave up and left Afghanistan. Seven years later, the Taliban, a radical Islamist group, seize power in Afghanistan. They impose a harsh version of Islamic law on the people. In 2001, Osama bin Laden and other Al Qaeda leaders, who were given refuge by the Taliban, planned the infamous 9/11 attacks. In response to these attacks, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan one month later. The Taliban fell, but Osama bin Laden escaped. (Smith 8) As the U.S. continues to try and defeat the Taliban once and for all, this war seems increasingly impossible to win.

Current Status

Just a few months ago, President Trump was trying to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban. However, that is now old news. For several reasons, the negotiation with the Taliban is over. First, the negotiations basically sidelined the current Afghan government. This caused trouble because as President Ashraf Ghani said, “The victims of the war are Afghans, so the initiative of peace should be in the hands of Afghans.” (Smith 9) He also worried that as soon as a deal was out in place, the Taliban would take advantage of U.S. troops being gone and simply overthrow the Afghan government and return Afghanistan to the harsh, cruel ruling that existed.
the first time they were in power. All the progress that has been made in the past few years for women’s rights and education would be gone.

In the past few weeks, since the peace deal is off, the issue has changed from ‘Should we make peace with the Taliban and leave Afghanistan?’ to ‘What do we do now?’.

Over 2,000 Americans and over 147,000 Afghans have died due to this war in the last 18 years. (Brown University) These striking numbers increase by the minute, and they don’t show signs of slowing down.

**What Needs To Happen**

Many people say that putting an end to America’s longest war should be our priority. "The troops have fought bravely in Afghanistan. It’s time to bring them home.” (New York Times) However, there is something that these people are forgetting: this war is more than America’s longest war, it is about more than the 2,000 American soldiers who have died fighting in it, it isn’t just about America. This war is happening in Afghanistan. A striking 147,000 Afghans have died. Their lives and their country has been destroyed. We need to start valuing the lives of Afghans as much as we value the lives of Americans. The U.S. has played a major role in Afghanistan in the last eighteen years, we can’t just decide we’ve had enough and walk away. We have to help the people of Afghanistan.

Helping Afghanistan’s people involves a number of things. First, American troops cannot leave Afghanistan. The reason for this is because, even though U.S. troops aren’t making huge progress in defeating the Taliban, we are keeping them from completely taking over
Afghanistan. Leaving would allow the Taliban to once again rule over the country in the cruel, inhumane, way they did eighteen years ago. The other thing that the U.S. needs to do to help Afghanistan is to send money and resources to help rebuild the country, give people access to education and healthcare, and provide economic and infrastructure development.

Back in 1948, after the Second World War, an American initiative to aid the rebuilding of Western Europe was passed. This is known as the Marshall Plan. The United States gave over $12 billion (almost $100 billion in today’s dollars) in economic assistance to this cause. This plan that rebuilt a war-torn and fractious Europe brought prosperity and democracy to Western Europe. Without the Marshall plan, that part of the world would not be what it is today - not even close. This is what I am suggesting for the Middle East. Extreme economic aid to help rebuild the once spectacular, now war-torn, countries of the Middle East. A plan similar to the Marshall Plan would allow these countries to grow and prosper in the same way that Western Europe did, bringing peace and prosperity to the part of the world that needs it most.

Works Cited


Oh How I Love You
Keira Walk
Class of 2022

Oh how I love you
With your lovely corners and lines
They way you talk so softly to me
You’re there for me in the lonely night
You’re my therapist after a bad day
You comfort me when I cry for hours from stress
You bring out the best in me that I haven’t seen before
I’ve created many friends with your help
You help me live my summer to its fullest
Oh how I love you so minecraft
You’re said to block out life
But you opened several doors for me
Thank you
Christmas Moon
Emily Tippetts
Class of 2020

Christmas Moon

O little Earth

At the small world       Up in the stars
I feel the galactic       How I wonder
Rushing in a vacuum       What you are
Of cosmos, suns, moons    One look on
And the view of worlds    The moon
From the tiny speck of earth
To the Giant universe beyond
The chills of space and what’s out there lead to wonder and mystery

I look upon from the midnight sky

I see how far the Earth is to the moon and what wonders the stars hide in a glimpse. I wonder a lot of what things are and what time can tell from observing what is out of the world.

It all happened on Christmas Eve, when Earth was found on a small place and had risen to a growing planet we call home.
Seaweed
Zoe Stout
Class of 2023

I want to feel the sun, the warmth that I haven’t felt for years. The high tide and cool sander
underneath my feet, flying in the air when I jump into the water below. Flowing in the water
around me as I swim in the deep. But the feeling of drowning pulls me under, farther and farther
until I reach the bottom. I sink and sink and I don’t stop. The sea of darkness has taken me down
and down. The sun can not shine, the warmth is gone. The water is cold and the sand is bitter
around my skin. And I cannot jump or fly. The seaweed is around me, taken over like a stormy
day, tangled around me. Trapped, waiting to be freed.

Pug Thoughts
Ruby Bautista
Class of 2020
The (Very Fun) Contents of the Gutter
Alee Lawlor
Class of 2021
Picture of Me  
McKaylah Riney  
Class of 2023

This picture of me was taken back in 2010, I believe I was in first grade when it was taken. Even though it looks as if I’m in nature on a nice spring day, I was in a library that happened to be very cold. The nature scene placed behind me was actually fake; the green grass behind me was a giant print out along with the grass I was sitting on. The Only object that was real in this picture was the fence, painted to look older than it was. Again this picture was taken of me in 2010, so I would like to talk about how my life and I have changed since then.

In first grade I was more outgoing and didn’t mind what others thought of me. I was too young to know others’ judgment of me and I didn’t judge others either. So back in first grade I just enjoyed life to the fullest. I wasn’t popular because I had my small group of friends or I’d even go and hang out with my brother and his friends. I was very happy with my life and this stayed the same until about the middle of third grade, when I moved away.

I moved out to West Valley City and started school at pioneer elementary, where I had to start over. I didn’t know anyone but since I was still outgoing I didn’t have a problem with making new friends. I made a few friends that I am still friends with to this day and they have impacted my life so much. But because I was new I was an easy target and I ended up getting bullied. That lasted for a couple years and it set my confidence levels severely back, and now that I was aware of other people’s opinions it changed me.

When I reached middle school on the first day I tried to cover my face with my hair, so that people wouldn’t notice me. I wanted to stay hidden because I knew how rude my generation could be. I started paying more attention to what others thought of me, and I still haven’t gotten out of that stage. Seventh grade was surely the worst school experience I ever had. I lost a lot of friends and was starting to have a lot of problems at home.

My mom noticed that something had changed within my personality and even my physical appearance and started getting worried about me. She tried to talk to me about things, and I did my best to talk to her. As seventh grade finished and the summer began, I tried to change my mindset and perspective on life. I started feeling a lot better about myself and at this point I was starting not to care about what others thought about me and just tried to be myself. Then eighth grade started and my family started having problems again.

I still tried my best to keep my head up and not let it bother me. I was more focused on school and making myself happy. My eighth grade year was pretty good, I enjoyed all my classes
and made a lot of memories with my friends. Then summer began once again, I still wasn’t sure what high school I’d be going to.

Winter
Jasper Jacobson
Class of 2023

Overcast skies drop snow
The weather gets colder
And snow starts falling

The remaining leaves that lasted through autumn start falling
And big piles of snow
Makes the ground colder

The temperature gets even colder
And more snow is falling
And the mountains are filled with snow

But when the temperature stops falling, and the snow starts melting I will miss the colder temperatures throughout the summer
Untitled
Lila Howells
Class of 2022
Dear Mister Halsman

Robert Spencer
Class of 2022

I know it was probably feat to give a cat a bath

In the air

Falling over there

With a chair in the air

As well

But you really shouldn’t be so happy about it.

Poor cats

There were multiple

Angrily screaming

As you threw them

Really Mister Halsman

Cats don’t like baths

Cats don’t like to be thrown

What then possessed you to believe that a cat would like an aerial bath?

Honestly mister Halsman

Shouldn’t you be working?

Aren’t you making a new piece of art?

Why did you interrupt to do this deranged Cat-

Air-

Bath?

Seriously mister Halsman
Stick to art
I can promise that you’ll be better at that
Sincerely,
Concerned

Note: This is a response to Philippe Halsman’s Man Ray

Life
Karley Coonradt
Class of 2022

If they judge, let them judge.
If they don’t get it then don’t explain it.
Be you and never change.
It’s okay to be different just never try to be perfect.
Be you because that’s the best you can be.
Life is never easy but it's also made for an adventure.
Life can make you hurt, life can give you pain, life can be hard just never change who you are.
You are amazing and if they don’t see that, they don’t belong in your life.
Find people who will support you and won’t judge you.
Find people that love you for you.
Find people that will never leave you.
I hesitate in calling anything a masterpiece but Widows Weeds By Silversun Pickups is as close as I’ve ever gotten to being willing to do so. Let me backup a bit, Silversun Pickups is an indie rock band from the greater LA area and have been around since 1997 and have released five albums in those 23 years including one EP. Most probably know them from their massive hit, Lazy Eye back in 2006 or maybe their more recent hit Nightlight released in 2015. But they’ve done so much more. They have pioneered technology that is still being used. Basically any weird guitar noise that you hear today was pioneered by them. Half the time the guitars don’t actually sound like guitars and all the effects were built and programmed by the band.

The album starts with the track Neon Wound. This track perfectly sets the tone for this album. It starts off haunting arpeggio reminiscent of the song Plug in Baby by Muse. It sets the listener up for an intense look into the mental state of the writer. Which seems to be filled with regret and sorrow for something he seemingly didn’t do. This is shown on tracks like Bag of Bones, Don’t Know Yet, and Straw Man. Yet underneath all these tracks there’s a sarcastic bite. Like he’s almost talking to somebody who screwed up like he did. This is shown in lines,” Are you screaming from the otherside? Believe me I know what it’s like” in Don’t know yet. Or the line “look I think it’s Moving and I’m so glad for you” in straw man. The listener never figures out who this “you” is but it seems obvious that the writer warned the “you” about what happened to them and this person did not heed his warnings.
Widow’s Weeds is an album that quite frankly no one was expecting. The band had gone dark for 4 years, and no one really heard anything from them outside of touring. Though listening to the lyrics, we know why, this Neon Wound is fresh. The betrayal and bitterness that lies in this album is palpable. It sits there, just under the surface waiting for someone to find it, and when it is found, it strikes the listener causing a search even deeper into this album. If the person that reads this decides to listen to just one Silversun Pickups album. This is the one to listen to, and listen carefully. Because they will be delighted in their findings in the word play, the carefully hidden sarcastic bite in what sounds like someone responding to a cry for help. The message is entangled in carefully woven Widow’s Weeds.

You’re Gonna Carry the Weight
Malcolm Beverley
Class of 2022

Am I really alive? Have I ever been?
If I don’t say anything, does my pulse matter?
If I can’t speak, or choose not to, it’s comparable to my soul being ripped from my body.
Often, I’m truly alive. Just as often though, it’s all just a Dream.
Yeah, just a dream. A walking dream.
The line between the concepts of being, and living is thin, like a comma.
You see, there is only an idea of a real Jonas. The one I can be.
But I bet you don’t see the real me, only an illusion, something falsified.
Only a dead person in a boy’s skin.
Sketsis
Charisma Moore-Harris
Class of 2023
Hong Kong Rap
Aubrie Jensen
Class of 2022

You go downtown
You see the government crackin’ down
There’s fire burnin’ all around
You wonder what’s goin’ down
The people wanna throw down the crown
They wanna be free
They walkin’ the street
Hear their plea:
We won’t flee
We stayin’ till you see
That we just wanna be free.
You can shoot us down
You can burn us to the ground
But it’s not ok
We ain’t runnin’ away
We gonna stay
We’re not here to play
We’re not gonna obey
We’ll come here every day

Hold us at bay
With your tear gas
And your rule against masks
But we’re gonna knock you off your feet
Till you hit the street
Where blood streaks
And fires burn free.
So let me tell you
You don’t have a clue
Our anger’s gonna brew
So bring your cops
We’re not gonna stop
We goin’ to the top
Cuz we are Hong Kong
And we are strong
And you gonna hear our song
Fear. It inspired me. It made me who I am. The story starts in an uninteresting way, “neutral” position of life. I wasn’t special. Wasn’t unique. Wasn’t good or bad. I was just neutral. This was when I was young, I didn’t understand the world, or care about it. A time when I only noticed the things around me but not their importance. That changed for me when I was just starting third grade at Indian Hills elementary. This event took place in the Porcupine Grill on a drizzling overcast day when my family and I wanted to go to breakfast. I thought it would be another normal day. I was definitely wrong.

Our old Honda Minivan pulled up to the parking lot. I was excited about going out for breakfast. I am and was a huge food enthusiast. I wasn’t a critic, I wasn’t a chef, I wouldn’t go too far out of my way to make food, but when I got food, there was no doubt that I loved to eat it. It wasn’t a long drive but I had a ton of energy all pent up in me. I got out of my seat and watched the van doors open. So slowly. They reached their farthest part then stopped moving. I jumped out as fast as I could and landed on the slightly wet asphalt. The rain came down as a drizzle and a light fog dusted the area. It smelled good outside, like the right combination of sweet rain, pine trees, wet rocks, and fragrant soil. A nice day to be up in the mountains even if we were only there to eat. I loved and still love the mountains.

“Mom, Dad, hurry up, I’m cold!” I hollered.

“I told you to bring a sweatshirt.” Said my Dad.

“Well I don’t remember you telling me tha… oh, wait you did. Well I forgot!”

My parents ignored my whining and we trudged up to the grand wooden doors. The metal handles were cold and the doors opened with a barely audible squeak, flooding the parking lot with more light. We walked in. As parents talked to the hostess, I was too busy taking in my surroundings to pay any attention. The warm lights, the pinewood tables, it was something like cozy but not quite. I saw it all in the first second and forgot it in the next.

We were led upstairs by a waitress and sat at a small round table next to the walls. It had the padded cushions, my favorite type of table! It was so comfortable, and I flopped down right by the wall. It felt like I was being molded into the seat. It was awesome.

We ordered food, I got pancakes and some hot chocolate. The pancakes were light and fluffy and the syrup tasted like it could make anything taste good. The hot chocolate had a huge
dollop of whipped cream right in the center and the hot chocolate itself was rich and smooth. It was amazing: I was just about to engulf my last pancake, but then…

CRASH!!

I felt my heart rate slow, I felt like I couldn’t breathe. Something was wrong. But what? Why… I was terrified. I felt like no oxygen could reach my lungs. My brain went haywire and I felt dizzy and sick. In that moment, nothing came to my mind except pure panic. I felt weak. Felt shaky. Felt like I was going to die there and then.

“Mom, Dad.. I can’t breath!” I choked out in a relative hushed voice. In reality it must have been loud enough to emphasize the panic in my voice because it caught my parents’ attention fast. The panic was becoming worse every second that passed by. I hadn’t noticed until then that my senses were being overwhelmed and I felt sick. My head was throbbing, my voice was shaking, and my eyes were beginning to fill with tears.

“Aidan, clam down, let’s go outside and see what is wrong.” My dad said in an incredibly calm voice. An almost irritatingly calm voice.

He led me down the stairs. I was scared and I wanted to get outside as fast as I could. He exchanged a few words with the hostess and opened the door to take me outside. Outside it had stopped raining. I felt the moist, cool air full my lungs as I breathed in a fast shallow breath. One after another. Fast, shallow breaths.

“Dad what is happening?!”

“I don’t know, what do you think is happening.”

“I don’t think so, but let’s check your heart rate”

It was low. 56 bpm. But not life-threatening. I was technically fine, but I did not feel fine. With great mental strain I forced down the fear that threatened to drown me. My dad and I went back inside and my family went home but the memory remained with me forever. I was later diagnosed with a disease called Eosinophilic Esophagitis which causes the throat to stricture if an allergen is ingested. It was the source of my panic attack that fateful day.

That day I learned one of the most important lessons, that some of the things that are going on in the head aren’t always true. That day I taught myself to be brave and force down the fear. That has changed my whole life, I have learned to care about the world and about life because of fear. Not to mention, controlling fear will prove to be the most useful skill that I had acquired for the next stage of my life. That day, that panic attack, that fear made me who I am.
Dreams
Xiomara Zavala
Class of 2022
Social Contract
Taycia Linford-Perez
Class of 2022

Dear teenagers,
Reprogramming,
Dear preteens,
Reprogramming,
Dear toddlers,
Re-calibrating,
Dear adults,
Error, Error,

Dear all of mankind.

I know you love me. You would do anything for me, drop everything with the slightest sound, vibration, flicker. Don't you understand? I am using YOU. Not the other way around.

Here is a contract, repeat the following

I give my life to you. My time.

Take it all away.

You can make me popular. Make me leave the world behind for your new better one.

Take it all.

Take my pain away. Make others love me.

Don't let me be alone.

You can help me. Help me find my place. Help me belong. Help me find meaning because without you I am nothing.

All you have to do is hit enter and the contract will be complete.

...
Are you still there?

...

Hit enter to complete contract.

...

ERROR ERROR

You are an error in a world where code matters.

Cell phones charging our "social" batteries till they explode.

PRESS ENTER!

Scroll for terms and agreements,

My life, my meaning, my everything. Time. My time.

Press enter and the above will be taken and the contract will be made.

...

Would you like to type a comment on our contract?

/yes__

Why won't you hit enter?

/I_wanted_you_to_make_it_stop._I_wanted_you_to_make_the_stars_out_of_1's_and_0's._It_turns_out_all_you_wanted_was_to_make_me_feel_like_a_0's_in_a_world_where_only_1's_matter__
VIRUS! ERROR!

/the_only_parasite_here_is_you__

REPROGRAMMING

/dear_me,_dear_you,_dear_mankind,__

Turn off?

/yes__

Press enter__
Anglerfish
Charisma Moore-Harris
Class of 2023
Quarantine
Tabitha Parker-Theiss
Class of 2022

C O V I D 1 9 it’s here.
As paranoia twists the facts in news,
I think self quarantine is the worst fear.
Alone at home I might get sad and blue.
Maybe I’d bake a cake I would not share,
Maybe I’d get ahead on work for school.
I might complain about how it’s not fair.
I’d be alone so I could break the rules.
I could never do the laundry ever,
There’s no one here to tell me I smell bad.
I’d be as free and light as a feather.
But no, I would be trapped in my own home.
How long can one survive if all alone?
Untitled
Broyde Worthen
Class of 2022
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