



# *Whispers from the Wood*



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Editor-in-Chief: Kerrion Bowens

Design Editor: Kamora Everett

Faculty Editor: Amber Weyland

Assistant Editors: Creative Writing IV, III, and II

Special thanks for Mrs. SheehanSmith and Mrs.  
Stetar (for everything).

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## Interviews with Kerrion, Kamora, and Ms. Weyland

Interview with Kerrion Bowens, Editor-in-Chief

**Interviewer:** Is this your first experience editing a literary magazine?

Kerrion: Yes. I've never done this before.

**Interviewer:** What persuaded you to apply for editor-in-chief?

Kerrion: I wanted to leave a legacy for the underclassman, and since this is our first literary magazine, I wanted to make sure it was on the right path for the editor next year.

**Interviewer:** Do you want to continue editing and writing after high school?

Kerrion: I don't want to do it as a profession, but if it's a club or something in college, I would. I want to do the coffeehouse thing with the snapping.

**Interviewer:** Slam poetry?

Kerrion: Yes!

**Interviewer:** What's the most stressful part of this position thus far?

Kerrion: It's all been really stressful with all the deadlines and technology fails and trying to be objective when I know the writers. It's been hard.

**Interviewer:** Now that the first edition is out, do you feel more prepared for the next one?

Kerrion: Yeah because now I know how to manage it better. I know how to manage my time, and I plan to do different deadlines for different grade levels so it's easier to manage next time.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time.

## Interview with Kamora Everett, Design Editor

**Interviewer:** Describe your position as design editor.

Kamora: I basically created all the pages. I came up with little ideas of what to put on each page. I made the logo.

**Interviewer:** What else did you do?

*\*Editor-in-Chief, Kerrion, interrupts\**

Kerrion: You're the backbone of the magazine. Without you, this magazine wouldn't exist.

Kamora: Oh my gosh. I'm gonna cry.

**Interviewer:** How did you learn how to use Photoshop and how to design a magazine?

Kamora: I took Web Design my sophomore year and Computer Art my junior year. I incorporated what I learned in both of those classes into designing the magazine.

**Interviewer:** Will designing this magazine help with future goals?

Kamora: Yeah. I want to be a graphic designer. Well, that's not the major thing I want to do, but that's one of the things I want to do.

**Interviewer:** What is the major thing you want to do?

Kamora: I want to be a computer scientist.

**Interviewer:** You're also a writer. Do you find it hard to balance your scientific and mathematic side with your artistic side?

Kamora: No. Because a graphic designer has to incorporate all of those things because they make billboard and things so they have to use proper grammar and all that from English and art so I find it easy.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time.



Interview with Faculty Editor, Ms. Weyland

**Interviewer: What made you want to start this magazine?**

Weyland: I was the faculty editor in Roanoke when I taught at Patrick Henry. I was also the editor-in-chief of my high school lit mag, and I worked as an editor in a formal capacity as an editor for *The Lindenwood Review* so literary magazines are near and dear to my heart. I believe that art and writing are important and necessary, and they need to continue to be showcased.

**Interviewer: How will you advance this next year?**

Weyland: Well, we have a fifth creative writing class that all the juniors are taking next year so we will have a lot more time to dedicate to the magazine. Whereas now, y'all are doing the lit mag and writing all the time, they'll have more time to dedicate to both. I plan to have an electronic publication every quarter and a print magazine in the fall and in the spring.

**Interviewer: What was your favorite part of working on the magazine?**

Weyland: Getting it published. \*laughs\* Really though, reading all the submissions. You can really tell who really poured their heart into it and actually wanted to be published, and that was really powerful and really special. I really liked that.

**Interviewer: Do you ever consider leaving teaching and going to work for a magazine?**

Weyland: I feel like this is a really tough question to ask at my work. \*laughs\* So I want to do everything. I love teaching, and I love Woodside. I'm also in a PhD program so short term, I definitely plan to be here for at least five years. But I also really

want to live in New York City. I think editing part-time and teaching at NYU would really be the dream for me so I think one day in the future, that will hopefully happen. They say my generation and your generation have a lot of different careers though, that we haven't been told we only have to do one thing forever and we have lots of talents we can use to do different things in our lives, and I think that is the most fulfilling way to live. I want to really experience a lot of things and get to showcase all my talents before I'm gone, you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I know what you mean. Thank you very much for your time.

## Swallow

As a woman, I am not easy to swallow

I was not made to just exist

I walk into a room and I fill it all up

No, I will not shrink for you, no I will not “calm down”

As a Muslim, I am not easy to swallow

I was not made to just exist

I am a loud, in your face, unapologetic

Muslim Woman

As an American, I am not easy to swallow

I was not made to just exist

I know my place, I know my rights

Do not tell me I don't belong

Do not think your pathetic attempts will work

I am a glittery, bossy, smart

American Muslim Woman

*-Sohila Elziny, senior*

## Romansa

He looked older than his picture on Facebook. I was kind of caught off guard because if he was 22, why was his face so wrinkly? Why did it look like he stayed up all night knitting with his grandmother? He looked old. But, nobody ever really looked how they did on the internet. So, I gave it a shot.

“Hey Romansa, you know who I am right?” He chuckled when he says this.

“Of course I know who you are,” In my head, I didn’t because he looked so different, “Benny, right?” I say. I pretended as if I didn’t know his name because he didn’t look like a Benny, he looked like an old man named Cyrus.

“That’s right,” He said this with a smile on his face. I’ve never been so nauseous. His teeth were yellow, like the sun. There was plaque caked up on each tooth. I was in complete disgust.

“Well,” he said, “Let the evening begin.”

We drove for about thirty minutes before we reached The Stinking Rose. It was a new restaurant that had just opened. I’d never been. When we walked in, I was astonished and completely taken back. For something called The Stinking Rose, it didn’t look so stinky. I also noticed that there’s nobody there.

“Where is everyone?” I mentioned in confusion.

“Oh, I rented the place out just for us.” Benny said. He said this with a sort of win in his voice. Like he’s proud of what he’s doing.

“Wow,” I said in amazement. Nobody had ever done anything like this for me.

The waiter seated us to our tables and when we got there, Benny pulled out my chair. “Thanks Ben,” I said, “I can call you that, can’t I?” When these words came out of my mouth, he looked confused. Has he

never had a nickname before? “Y-Yeah, I guess you can call me that.” He stuttered when he said this.

“Waiter,” I called out, “Can we get the menu please?”

About 25 minutes later our meal had arrived. Oddly, they bring the dessert as well.

“Why did you bring the dessert?” I said in an uncertainty voice.

“Oh,” Benny said, he wipes his mouth with his handkerchief, “I told them to just bring the food out and then they’re free to go, I want us to have the night to ourselves.” Even though he looks pretty old, He’s very charming and I like that.

We’re done with our first plate and we’re on to the dessert. I reach for my fork the same time he reaches for his, our hand touch. I start to blush and his bright, yellow smile begins to show. I slowly pull my hand back which changes the mood. It seems as though he’s offended. He crinkles up his eyebrows and throws his handkerchief on the table, “If you didn’t want to go on this date that’s all you had to say.” He says this in a kind of annoyed yet angry way. “Ben, what are you talking about?” I say in perplexity.

He’s angry. “I don’t want to be called that, Romansa!” He yells again. I hate when people yell at me. At this point I feel disrespected. “I’m ready to go, Benny.” I say this with an attitude. “What do you mean you’re ready to go? We’re not leaving until I say otherwise.” He says this with a grin on his face and he then unbuttons his suit. “Excuse me?” I say with a sort of attitude and confusion.

“You heard me.” He says like he’s my dad or something. I swallow my drink in one gulp. He begins to laugh. “Why are you laughing?” I say. My speech is slurring and my eyes are moving uncontrollably. “You don’t feel sleepy yet?” He thinks what’s happening is hysterical. “You, you put something in my...” After that, everything was pitch-black.

The next day, I wake up in a daze. I am unclear of where I am. As I try to scratch my face, half asleep, I notice my arm won’t move all the way.

I look to my left then my right. I am tied to a bed in chains. I look down and my green dress I had on is now a cut up dirty shirt and I have on big, baggy cargo pants. I am so angry with myself! I knew something was wrong with that man, I knew he wasn't who he said he was! But, me being me, I gave him a shot. Now, I have no idea where I am. Am I being held captive? Oh my god. This is a dream. It has to be!

I pinch myself three times hoping I'd wake up to my comfy bed in Santa Monica. I don't. 5 minutes later a dark skinned man comes in the room and has a clipboard in his hand. "What's your name?" He asks. "Where am I? Who are you?" I say in complete confusion. "I am Donny Parkway," He says. "Now, who are you?"

*-Brooklyn Cooper, junior*

## Letter to the Anti-Feminist

Dear Anti-Feminist

In a world made for men

Women are constantly shamed

Shamed for the things we wear

Shamed for the things we say

Shamed for the way we walk

I live in a society

Where I'm more likely to be murdered

Then to stay married

All because I'm a female

If I get raped is it my fault

When all I wore was a shirt and jeans

Am I considered stupid?

If I say the wrong thing

And is it my fault

When my walk entices you

I will not apologize

'Cause I could be the next

CEO of a major company

Commander in the military

First female President of the United States

But you wouldn't know because you deny me

Just because I'm a woman

So I'll stand up

And fight for my rights

Because being a female should not punishment

And this poem is for all the anti-feminists

~Love, A Feminist

*-Madison Trahan, sophomore*



## The Last Swing

So there she was, the girl that I have loved my whole life, since the sixth grade. She was sitting right in front of me, on the swing of many family generations. She would look up at the sky and watch the sun set. Meanwhile, the trees around her lost their leaves, one by one, elegantly falling all around her.

With every push I made, her wavy, golden brown hair would whip in the wind. With every burst of wind that Mother Nature gave, her elegant autumn colored dress would fly like a flag in the direction of the wind. When she started to fall back down she would look back and smile at me, as if she wanted to say "One more time?" For once in her life she could live freely and live with nature. All I could think about is how brave she has been. Throughout her whole life she has been through thick and thin. Truthfully, her life has been a real rollercoaster, with every drop on the metallic track, caused one less day she could spend being happy.

I kept telling her to move along with life, and get over her past and live her life freely and with no worries. However, it was hard for her to do and with every day passing it just got harder, knowing that at some point it would all end. She always tried to be cheerful around the family, but at times everyone wanted to cry with her. At times she just couldn't even think straight, so I took it as my duty to go and take a walk with her and refresh her thoughts. I would try to keep her mind off of everything bad and only think of the good things in life.

I will never forget the day when she gathered up her courage to tell me, "Yes this may be very sad, but everything has to end at some point. And it just might be my time next, but you need to understand that I have loved everything you have done for me. And it's okay because with one ending leads to many beginnings." From that point on she began to give up. We tried and tried to get her to not give up, but all she would say was, "It's my time, and I'm not afraid."

Not too long after, she passed in peace, feeling loved. That is really all she wanted... to be loved. I will never forget the day that she was diagnosed

with cancer and told she had but so many days to live. That is truly the worst way to end, knowing that you will not live for very much longer, and you will not be able to see your loved ones live. Before she passed she had two twins, they looked exactly like her, just with one difference. They did not have any signs showing they might have cancer in the near future.

One day I went to the children and asked if they wanted to take a walk, and go see someone. They all followed me down the trail with icicles dripping down the limbs of the trees. We ended up on a hill right next to the lake. With one big tree on the top of the hill and connected to that tree was the swing. I just looked at the swing and whispered to the children, "So there she was."

*-Brant Rogers, senior*

## Engulf

She spotted him in the fluffy clouds on clear, sunny days. She felt him in the warm air that blew from the waves. As she watched sunsets, she knew that he was right beside her. His eyes twinkled at her on starry nights. He wiped her tears away in the mornings. The car accident meant that he's gone physically. She won't be able to cuddle or hold him again. But, she locked his memory in her heart. His bright smile and laughter filled her soul with hope. Hope for the unknown. Hope for a vague future without him.

"Ready?"

*-Tamber Mauney, senior*

## Reflections...

I honestly hated my job; I had gone to business school like Dad wanted me to and gotten my degree. Second in my class, a prodigy in the eyes of the world. Newspaper articles, certifications, worldwide recognition. You may say the solution is simple, just quit your job. Even beyond the factors of letting down your parents, especially dad, wasting college years, a better part of early adult life, killing friendships, business relationships, and countless favors owed over the years, there was one I heard chirping my ear constantly by my own thoughts and other words, "You're too good to quit, no one else can do it." Now that's a predicament, because it's true, I was sadly the best at what I did, and I hated it, the money was great, the benefits were cushioned, but I was at the point of taking a job paying a quarter as long as I could muster a smile in the morning about what I was waking up for. The inner struggles of a man in these situations lets him separate what's real and as I dwell on it every day, I realize I'm just stuck in a routine almost, doubting myself and saying just work it out until you retire, you'll be set for life. I've felt two forces fighting in me for years, and decisions still haven't been made, you begin to think you'll just sit stagnant stuck in your troubling thoughts about the future while you live out what you're worried about. Why do I do this? I come home every night frustrated from work. I hate it. Sometimes I take it out on my wife, sometimes on my son. I don't mean to, but separation from the two never seems to happen. I want to walk into my house without heaving a sigh and shrugging off my laptop shoulder strap. To not be frustrated by my wife asking me questions about my day, I hate that I get mad at her sometimes for that and give her the attitude she doesn't deserve at all. Fights and arguments erupt from simple situations, sometimes I can't separate home from work and I talk to people like I'm the boss still, it can be really demeaning to my son and the face of him after I've done it has torn me up for too long. I wasn't spending enough time with my wife in the few hours I was home because I wanted time to myself. I had begun to drink to calm things down every night, a breath away from the hectic mayhem around me half the day. I needed an escape, that was a problem all its own, the revelations had hit me, the pain has numbed out, and the cycle just sits on

rewind, I had to break it, it was breaking me, it was breaking everybody I worked for that mattered. I needed to change, but will I sit and do nothing.

*-Noah Jordan, senior*



## Blue Dream

My afternoon dream I am still thinking of Blue Dreams

Blue Dreams

I couldn't imagine life without my blue dream

All of your perfections

The crisp scent that you have

The hula hoop movement of your waves going in slow motion

When I visit you my perception of the whole world changes

All year long I crave you

Blue Dream

Don't wake me up because I'm in love with everything you are

My Blue Dreams

*-Nina Middleton, senior*

## Beauty

"Beauty marks are cute," Pesci remarks, tying his tie.

"Not cute. Awful," Claudia whines. She picks her face in the mirror, scrutinizing every detail. She sits back in defeat and sighs.

"Cute," Pesci repeats, kisses her forehead routinely, and leaves for work.

Claudia peeks at herself, wondering what he sees.

*-Captain Howard, senior*



## I miss you, mom

It had been four years since I lost my mother. She died from cancer when I was only ten, the time when a girl needs her mother most. I now live with my aunt and three cousins because my dad doesn't care to be in my life. Every day I think about her and how I hope she's praying over me every step of the way. I miss my mom so much...

Sorrow fills my heart

Everything is torn apart

I miss you a lot...

*-Kamora Everett, senior (design editor)*

## Within Reach

Some things are within reach

Having Goals

Making your Dreams a reality

Getting Good grades

A Successful life

Falling in Love

And many more

Some things aren't within reach

Humans flying

World peace

The top shelf

And many more

But if you stretch the things that aren't within reach can be reachable

*-Chastity Krier, sophomore*

## Haunted

Looking at you,  
It almost feels like the weight of your stare  
Pierces through the walls of my heart,  
Entangling with the strings that hold me together.  
The brightness of your eyes lit up the shadows of my life.  
You were the lone star that I looked upon  
When life wrapped its hands around me,  
Suffocating me with the cruelest of reminders.  
But you stood with such conviction  
That your words could heal the scars  
That lived on the surface of my soul.  
Your hands held my perfect flaws,  
And the phantom of your love lives in my heart.

But then your eyes feel like daggers,  
Piercing through the walls of my heart,  
Entangling with the strings that once held me together.  
Your grip on me loosened without hesitation,  
Pushing and prodding me  
To live under the darkness that is you.  
But your words were disguised with the sweetness of your voice,  
Chaining me to what I thought was your love.  
And then your words cut through my skin,

Seeping into the veins of my every waking thought.  
Your hands choked me with so much hatred,  
The ghost of your love haunting my mind.

-Bernice Pimentel, *senior*

## Skin

Her skin is paper thin, notebook paper. It rips with a mumble under your breath. Every crumble leaves a crease but she forgives you and everyone else who has ever left a dent. You'll never forget her. She leaves a mark.

She's the childhood scar

Truly unforgettable

Good or bad, she's there

*-Erica Boonpiem, sophomore*

## Too Late

Don't say you want to press rewind

Get used to what you've got

That old façade you hide behind

The person that you're not

They've become a part of you now and you can't turn away

You don't know who you were before

Your true self has gone astray

Don't say it's just a mistake

Don't consider what's at stake

Don't come back thinking that things would stay the same

It's too late

It's too late

-Kiara Nichols, *senior*

## Loaner

The obese loan officer fell asleep for the first night inside the prison to conduct the dangerous experiment. The experiment was for the research of middle aged men suffering mid-life crises, and how experiencing new environments can affect their moods. The loan officer thought it would be best for him to participate in this experiment for the better for his life and in the future after he gets out, but there were also the risks that he could be mutilated by any of the other prisoners, while also having a scarred impression on life.

I don't know what to expect from this whole experience, I just hope that somehow or someday it can help me get better, so I can come back to my family as a happy father and husband. I know all of the things I've done in the past haven't been the best, but I'm finally making a change for my own good. I'm riding the departure bus right now after saying my last goodbyes to my family. I'm on this bus with two other guys who have these impressions on their face as if they were both killers in the real world. It just starts to dawn on me that it's my last day before I start a full day in prison; I try to take the best of the situation by thinking of some of the good things going for me right now, like at least it's not raining. The bus finally starts to stop and right as I start to get out it started to rain, I was practically shoved all the way towards the gate. Once I arrived at the front, I was greeted by a man dressed as if he was the next Albert Einstein with a shaggy cardigan followed with a deep dark pair of dress pants.

"Nice to meet you Mr. Swanson, how are you this afternoon?" The Albert Einstein man greeted.

Mr. Swanson responded, "Good to meet you too I guess, I've been better."

"Good to hear, you know what we're here for today, right?" Albert Einstein man asked.

Mr. Swanson: "Yes, I understand, let's just get started to I can get in and get out."

“Fair enough, just follow me, and I’ll lead you to your dorm for the next month, as well as getting your clothes and toothbrush.” Albert Einstein man explained.

The Einstein man led the way to the inside of the prison facility where the first thing I see is a metal detector and a K-9 dog next to the detector. I then walked my way towards the room where they had all of the prisoner uniforms and tools for hygiene. I was then led to the main area where all of the other prisoners were, and it was as if everybody greeted himself to me at once, and after a while I found myself falling asleep in my bunk with three other prisoners in the room that have most likely done much more horrible things in life than I have ever done. It’s the second day; I’m just starting to wake up to all of the commotion of prisoners messing around waiting for breakfast to be served. While in this prison I think it’s probably the best of times to pick up a new hobby, so I take up reading as something that will keep me busy while I’m here. After breakfast was served to all of the prisoners I made my way towards the library that had a good amount of books for a prison, so I try to pick out all of the books that seemed the most interesting to me. After visiting the library, I went back to my cell with all of the prisoners just messing around like before, and I spent almost the whole day reading, I never thought something so plain could be so compelling and mind boggling it’s almost as if I’m actually in the story. I read myself to bed with only great thoughts of thinking what an alternate world would be like where everything could just be right and nobody had a problem with anything or anyone.

It’s the third day being here, I read all of the books I checked out the day before, and so I have plans to get back to my new favorite thing as soon as breakfast was done being served. As I was making my way towards the library for the second straight day I started to overhear other inmates’ conversation talking about how they can’t wait for a so called “Birthday” and how there’s going to be a cake at four fourteen and all I could think of was “Yeah right, like they have a cake in a lock downed prison facility.” After hearing that, I went back to my mission of going to the library to get more books, and as I got closer I started to speed walk faster and faster



once I made my appearance into the room I went straight towards the fantasy section in the library where it felt as if the books were glowing at me. I did what I did last time and just picked out each book that I thought sounded the most interesting. A short while after my library trip I was back in my cell reading again, and by each hour I would just read more and more, and as each hour changed the talk about the “Birthday Party” and “cake” would become more and more consistent, but I didn’t care less I was almost inside the book it felt. The clocks all just suddenly hit four fourteen right and as they changed it felt like something big was going on a man from a cell to the far left came out with a birthday cake while also singing the birthday song, and right as he stopped singing the song he threw the cake towards a wall when an explosion just comes out of nowhere from the cake. Prisoners just started to cheer and run towards the hole, and I had no instinct to escape whatsoever, and I just kept reading and reading as the prison started to fall apart, I felt like a new man as the prisoner’s escaped as if I could see my family again new, but I still have 27 more days to go and more books to read day-by day.

*-Cody Potter, junior*

## Postcards

Inside the envelope was a sunrise over a crescent island – beautiful, artistic, stunning. The words on the back read: “Hey, little man! Sorry I couldn’t make it to your birthday again, maybe next year! Happy (belated) birthday! –Dad.”

Disgusting, obnoxious, boring. Every year.

*-Kalia Brown, sophomore*

## Shoreline

Amidst the azure water  
Weaved and shimmered a ribbon of red  
As smooth as a blade committing slaughter  
And as red as the sun refusing to bed  
Twisting in the water, she was made for it  
Made to control the water with a push of a fin  
Made with a certain astounding beauty to exhibit  
Yet what was amiss was a grin  
Above the tail she was as fierce as pythons  
With a scowl that would ward many off  
And a muscular torso of bronze  
Their eyes met, and for once, she did not scoff  
    The human approached with a stretched hand  
    Awed by the mermaid – a female from the land.

*-Kalia Brown, sophomore*



## Interview with Kalia Brown

**Interviewer:** Almost all of our editors chose one or more of your pieces for publication. How does that make you feel?

**Kalia:** Just like good recognition because I used to think I was a good writer but I never really showed it to anyone so I never got complimented on my work because I didn't show a bunch of people. So I just thought maybe I wasn't a good writer. Now this and I just feel really happy.

**Interviewer:** What inspires you? Do you have a muse or something?

**Kalia:** Really anything inspires me. A lot of my inspirations comes from things I enjoy like video games, books, just those kind of media, I guess.

**Interviewer:** Any specific kind of book?

**Kalia:** I like fantasy and science fiction.

**Interviewer:** Ms. Weyland says you're shy about presenting. Do you think you ever want to overcome that to reach a wider audience?

**Kalia:** I hope I will, but I know it'll take a lot of effort. Maybe I just like being in the background of things, not to have the spotlight on me but maybe I'll get courage to present my pieces.

**Interviewer:** That was me too. I'm still like that. I get stage fright. I may be loud and outgoing, but it's hard to be up there. Do you want to continue writing after high school?

**Kalia:** Yes, I do, but I don't like really want to be an author for what you do in college. I think I want to use it for web design, like I could write scripts for video games.

**Interviewer:** What do you want to gain from the creative writing magnet?

**Kalia:** I want to learn how to be able to share my pieces and get constructive criticism for it, to find out where I'm bad at writing and where

I'm good so that I can focus on the bad and I'll try to improve that and hopefully become a better writer.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you.

## That Someone Is Out There

I hope you find someone that brings joy to the room just by being there with you. I hope you find someone that sees nothing but beauty in every single thing you're insecure about. I hope you find someone that supports you in everything you choose to believe in and is understanding. I hope you find someone that walks every step through a journey of love and experiences with you. I hope you find someone that talks things out with you instead of going to bed mad. I hope you find someone that cries with you and wipes away your tears at the same time, even if there's nothing for them to be sad about. I hope you find someone that loves you unconditionally loves you more and more as the days go by.

*-Lauren Howard, junior*

## **“The Six Most “Important” Topics to High Schoolers”**

Words constantly used,

Used to describe people we know,

Or people we don't know.

Words that truly mean nothing in reality,

But the main topics in high school.

The words that have so much value to students.

Number one... “freak.”

Described as a person,

A person that brings “action” to relationship.

A word that also pressures students.

Pressures them by taking away all thoughts of consequences just to hear one word...

“I love you.”

Number two... “Love.”

A word scientist says, “the average people tend to use more than five times daily”

Which is thirty-five times a week,

One hundred forty times a month,

One thousand six hundred eighty times a year,

And one hundred seventeen thousand six hundred times in one average person's lifetime.

Yet through the seven billion people in the world we still have terrorism,

Slavery,

And violence,

But will degrade our self-respect to “Love” someone that has done wrong.

Number three... “Tape.”

An object that is used against people,  
Used to expose their bodies for money.

Recording them pleasing others,  
While losing their self-respect.

Or something that was supported to be saved for after marriage,  
Is now the reason the children parent rate has increased?

Number four... “thot.”

A shorter verse of “That “Garden Tool” Over There.”

Used to degrade people of their self-worth,  
Self-esteem,  
And confidence.

A word that can turn from a “joke...”  
To several self-harming situations.

Bullying,  
Or loneliness.

Number five... “death.”

a word people used to take as a “calling home to God,”  
Going to the next life,  
Or going to after life,  
Is now being used as a guilt trip.

Students that don’t realized their self-worth,  
Are taking their own lives,



And calling themselves home.

Not waiting patiently for the sunny rainbow after the storm.

But taking such value from themselves.

~ “Well I knew she was a freak, but dang how much of a thot can you be!”

~ “He was dumb enough to do a tape with her, thinking she loved him.”

~ “Hey don’t talk about them... I have some sad news about them...”

The most commonly used words in the high school English language.

*-Amani Hamiel, freshman*

## This Love

This love is like a freshly bloomed rose. It's beautiful in every way and I can't get enough. With every touch, with every kiss our bond grows stronger than ever. At this very moment I am hurting for your love, wanting to see your perfect smile and beautiful hazel eyes. You know all of these things but words cannot express the love I have for you.

You are my first and  
my last. For I love you and  
will love you always

*-Makayla Kendrick, freshman*

## Beside Her Now

She danced through the dusky cornfield  
Her ghost laced the minds of her neighbors  
Her eyes were glued to mine  
Her blonde hair floated around her like a cloud at sunset  
I reached for her hand as she continued to dance  
She continued to dance further away  
I chased her in the forbidden area  
Her memories overwhelmed my mind as i made my way to her  
    Christmas with her family,  
    Monopoly,  
    A coca cola,  
    A hole.  
    Pain.  
    Tears.  
She suddenly stopped  
Her gaze still intertwined with mine  
I waited for her to speak  
For a  
    Sign  
My stare trailed down to her mouth  
My words collided with her thoughts  
She couldn't give me a sign  
Even through my frustration I felt as if I needed her presence

I needed

to hear her voice

I needed

answers

But more importantly

I needed to be

beside

her.

*-Kerrion Bowens, senior (editor-in-chief)*

## Language Barrier

He could not grasp the words she sang,  
The meaningless lyrics dribbled from her lips.  
Her voice carried throughout the wind,  
the soothing sound of her tongue dancing off of her teeth in a whisper.  
Within moments her whisper turned spiteful,  
Her eyebrows seized as one  
And the creases on her temple hollowed.  
The silent man stood static,  
Unable to keep up with her fast words.  
A barrier rose between them,  
Stopping all words from reaching the other side.  
The massive wall stretched from ocean to ocean,  
Running in a never-ending line.  
The barrier was never effortlessly broken,  
It took months,  
Years even.  
The barrier was mystical and uneasily understood.  
The wall that stood between the man and woman,  
Represented thousands of others,  
That separated and alienated societies

*-Andrea Navarro, senior*

## In Pieces

The thoughts of her never falter

The pieces of her body never discovered

It makes me think of how we spend our lives putting pieces together

We start at birth

1st piece-

We learn how to adapt to the outside world

2nd piece-

The way we grow up

2nd-

If our parents actually nurtured us

2nd-

If our parents didn't just try to give us a sip a bourbon to fix our problems

3rd piece-

The shelled world up until we are old enough to care for ourselves

3rd-

Making mistakes

4th piece-

Breaking out of that shell and developing into an actual person

3rd-

Making mistakes

5th piece-

Learning how to deal with stressful situations

3rd-

Making mistakes

Our pieces never end

Even after death the pieces continue

We sometimes find more pieces of ourselves after death

Where we are supposed to find peace

Instead the deceased are restlessly focusing on the pieces they didn't get.

*-Kerrion Bowens, senior (editor-in-chief)*

## Moon

Every time I look at the moon I think of you. You have helped me get through things I never thought I could. You made me feel special, like I was the only girl in the world. You helped me through all my nightmares and all my injuries. You cared for me when I was sick, and you made sure I was loved. You protected me from the dangers that this world creates, and you made sure I was never bullied. You did everything for me even though I never asked. And for that I'm grateful. But now you're next to the moon and I'm down here looking up at you.

-Ryen Gordon, *freshman*



## Sonnet 1

I start to feel hopeless with everything I say as if you don't hear anything  
but every other word

Sometimes I question myself, do you even want to stay?

But then I realize you haven't heard what I've heard

I always find myself trying to put you in my shoes

You tend to treat me as if we aren't equal it looks to me that you have  
nothing to lose

I get tired of this ongoing sequel but I can't seem to get you out of my way

Your body language makes me wonder what is your last thought at the  
end of the day?

Your cavernous voice shatters me like thunder

At the end of all this I begin to think on how extensive your love fills my  
heart, then I think on how you have been it from the start.

*-Marisol Tijerina, freshman*

## Listen

When I tell you loving myself is the hardest task I will have to accomplish

I was not joking

When I tell you I need to give my all to someone to feel something

When I say “anything” I mean anything

When I tell you I need to feel empty to feel the presence of my hollow body

I was not joking

When I tell you loving others makes me one step closer to loving myself

I was not joking

When I tell you I need to love to survive, I mean it

Because none of my love goes to myself

And I cannot let my love go to waste

So let me love through the hate

Because my bad days are still worth it

*-Sohila Elziny, senior*

## My love

Every day I wake up wishing you were here with me. You are the love of my life and you're all I think about. When I look at little Bella all I see is you, she's literally your twin. Her little giggle makes my heart smile instead of feel with sorrow. Even though you're gone, I can always look at her and see you.

I love you my dear

I'm glad I still have Bella

Forever yours, Eve...

*-Kamora Everett, senior (design editor)*

## Reach

I stand at the top of the stairs  
After gunshots hit the air  
I didn't know what to do  
And neither did you

I'm reaching for my brother's arms  
And I'm waiting here for you  
Mom tells me to run  
She said, "run away from the gun fire"  
I can hear the shots getting louder  
And it's scaring you, more than its breaking me

*-Zoey Gill, freshman*

## Rain

Rain stained the streets  
The small town, now a forever grey.  
The dull ink projects from the matching clouds.  
Without thought, the children go out and play,  
Their play clothes now lifeless.  
Mothers bring out the bleach, in attempt to wash the grey away.  
Bright yellow raincoats fade away in the abyss.  
A whole city, filled with nothing but dreary.  
Houses ruined,  
Clothes blemished,  
Feelings forever with a miserable doom.  
Nothing can fix this,  
Not a broom,  
Not a deluxe washroom.  
A city forever stained,  
Is a city forever changed?  
Washing washing washing.  
The clouds forever botching  
Rain stained the streets  
The small town, now a forever grey

*-Andrea Navarro, senior*

## Alive

Experience

It the best storyteller

That one could ever find.

Put down that camera.

Why live life through a lens?

Open your eyes,

And your mind,

And just be free.

Let in the vibrant colors,

The greens and yellows in the trees.

Let in the breeze, and the sunset.

Don't try to capture nature's beauty.

I assure you,

It can't be done.

Just witness it,

The clouds, the mountains, the rivers.

Just take it in,

And marvel,

And be there in that moment...

Alive.

*-Mackenzie LaCroix, junior*

## Addiction

Another black boy dead in the hood  
And we celebrate  
Celebrate because he's not "one of us"  
He "Ain't from round here"  
But when one of the homies die  
We spell out his name in candles  
Make a small shrine  
And pour out his favorite liquor in the street  
Finally, we swear on his grave  
We will get whoever did this  
And that right there is the problem  
We are addicted to retaliation  
Addicted to the sick twisted way revenge fills us up  
But that's what this lifestyle will do to you  
Feed you only twisted thoughts  
So you believe it's the dish  
But it's done in a way that'll make you crave for me  
This twisted addiction is the reason  
I won't see my uncle for another ten years  
The reason I will never see my cousin again  
Anyone on the outside looking in  
Would probably say were monsters  
And we probably are

But we've been brain washed to believe  
We are our own enemies  
This fight is bigger than us  
We need to come together  
Be bigger than this  
We have the power to change the world  
We have the power to become more  
We have the strength to rise up  
That's what they fear  
Not us  
I refuse to let this addiction consume me  
This is not my destiny  
I am destined for greatness  
And so are my gang banging brothers and sisters  
Don't fear our actions  
Fear our power

*-La'Neka Williams, junior*



## The chest

I always knew that Maria was a secretive person but this was just strange. I didn't expect to find a door in the back of her closet. I definitely wasn't expecting it to swing open just before my hand grazed the door knob and show me an eerie case of stairs. The last thing on my mind was to see what was at the bottom but the curiosity overcame me and I found myself slowly walking down the creepy steps wondering what was waiting at the end.

A retched smell of mold and mildew found its way into my nose and I suddenly felt the urge to puke. An uneasy vibe came across me and but the feeling in my gut compelled me to keep moving forward. I walked lightly, going deeper into the abyss of darkness. I was losing light the further I went and I was becoming nervous. I grabbed my phone, turned on my flashlight and watched the room illuminate. Once my eyes adjusted, I spotted a giant wooden chest lying on the ground in the corner. Against my better judgment, I made my way towards it ready to see what lies inside.

I knelt down in front of the chest and saw that the latches were unlocked. Slowly, I opened up the lid and to my horror, I saw a person. Not just any person either. It was Jason Mendez. Jason had been missing for three years. He was loved by everyone. He had been the quarterback for our high school's football team. He kept good grades, had a beautiful girlfriend, and was always kind to people. A lot of girls fawned over him, including Maria. For four long years, she was fixated on him. All she talked about was Jason and how bad she wanted to be with him. Unfortunately, that never happened and Maria was not happy. She went into a state of depression and wouldn't leave her house for weeks on end. I knew it wasn't healthy, but I thought she would be okay. Then one day, she called me asking if I could come over. She sounded like her usual, bubbly self and I figured she finally got over Jason. Apparently I thought wrong. That phone call happened the same day the news announced Jason's disappearance. I wish I had thought something of it.

Jason was lying on his back looking thin and frail. He was still alive but it seemed like he wouldn't have lasted much longer. I was afraid to touch him because he looked so fragile and I didn't want to break the visible bones in this body. There was a stench coming from him like he hadn't taken a shower in days. His whole body was filthy. The only piece of clothing he possessed was a thick robe. Jason was a scary sight to see and I was ready to get him out of here. It was obvious that he hadn't eaten for an extended amount of time but I wasn't sure how long. All I knew was that I had to get him out of here and fast.

"Jason," I said softly. He didn't budge.

"Jason, please get up." I gently shook his body and I watched his eyes open up. They widened at the sight of me, most likely because I'm someone that's not Maria.

"Who are you? Where's Maria?" he quickly sat up and frantically looked around.

"I'm Brynn. Look, I don't know where Maria is but we need to get you out before she finds out I'm down here."

"NO! She'll kill me. I can't leave," he said while he started to sob.

"She's not going to kill you, okay? I'm here with you. We're gonna get out together."

"Okay. I'll go. But be careful, she's dangerous when she's mad."

I helped him climb out of the chest then we made our way towards the door. As we went up the stairs, I saw a dark figure appear at the entrance. The vibe was almost demonic and it made me shake with fear.

"Where do you think you're going?" spoke a voice so menacing and wicked that it could give children nightmares.

*-Mya Carter, junior*

## Chinese Spring

The water is stirring  
The lilies are growing with ease  
Toads starting to leap  
The koi are just beginning to feast  
As flowers start to bloom pink

*-Cody Potter, junior*

## Sleep

It all started when he was young

Parents fight

They never got along

Such a terrible sight

He was just a little boy

Never getting sleep

Trying not to listen as he played with a toy

Then his dad said something too deep

Everything changed

Mom is gone

His parents are now ranged

It had been so long

No more fight

Were all happy now we can sleep at night

*-Kyle Jackson, freshman*

3:33 am

This is the closest I've ever felt to someone  
And I'm gazing at you through a screen.

The fan staggers remarkably deafening; I can't decide if it's gonna fall  
Or I am.

This moment that we've stumbled into  
Is the most vivid thing I've experienced  
And I dissociate

I ask if you're feeling the same passion as me  
And I know you are.

The space between us is patient.

My body is light.

Time is frozen and our hearts continue to claw at the seams  
Shattering with warmth and fear

Like dynamite that leaves that night engraved on our shared being.

The tears stain our skin

3:33AM: you say you like how that sounds  
I talk about atoms and being drawn to you  
And you ask if I'm saying we're soul mates  
Your voice still radiates somewhere inside me  
I still don't know how to answer

*-Larson Efhaymi, freshman*