



# Inspired Minds

## Literary Magazine

**Vol. 8**

Spring 2023

A TALON STUDENT MEDIA PUBLICATION



# *Mission Statement*



**Through The Patriot: Inspired Minds Literary & Arts Feature, we hope to enlighten the community to the endless capabilities of the minds roaming the UT Tyler campus of today and tomorrow. This magazine connects each individual voice to that of its brothers and sisters in the arts. It boldly states, “We Are Here and no longer will we hide in the shadows.” Join us as we cast the light on writers, artists, playwrights, musicians, and many more.**

*Here to illuminate your work.*

# *Editor's Note*

Dear Readers,

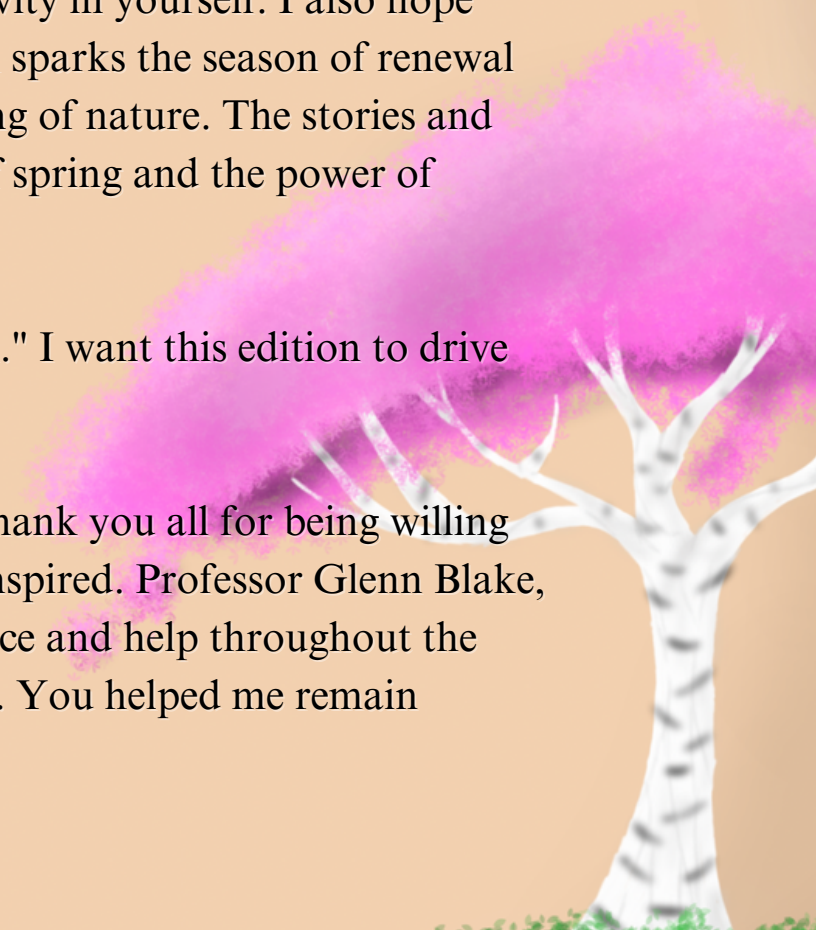
Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of the magazine! We were thrilled to receive so many wonderful submissions for our theme of "Tell a Tale." I also want to thank the many friends and family who have been with me on this journey to create this journal representing our UT Tyler community. I could not have done this without you.

I chose the theme "Tell a Tale" to encourage writers to craft stories or poems that would take the reader on a journey by storytelling. What you can expect in this edition are tales that explore the depths of love and emotion and, of course, spark creativity in yourself. I also hope the art illustrated throughout the journal sparks the season of renewal from budding romances to the blossoming of nature. The stories and poems in this issue capture the essence of spring and the power of storytelling.

Ultimately, each of you has a "tale to tell." I want this edition to drive you to tell your story next.

This journal is only possible with you. Thank you all for being willing to share your voice and help us remain inspired. Professor Glenn Blake, thank you tremendously for your guidance and help throughout the semester. With you, I was able to do this. You helped me remain inspired.

**LaKyndra Larkin**  
**Chief Editor**





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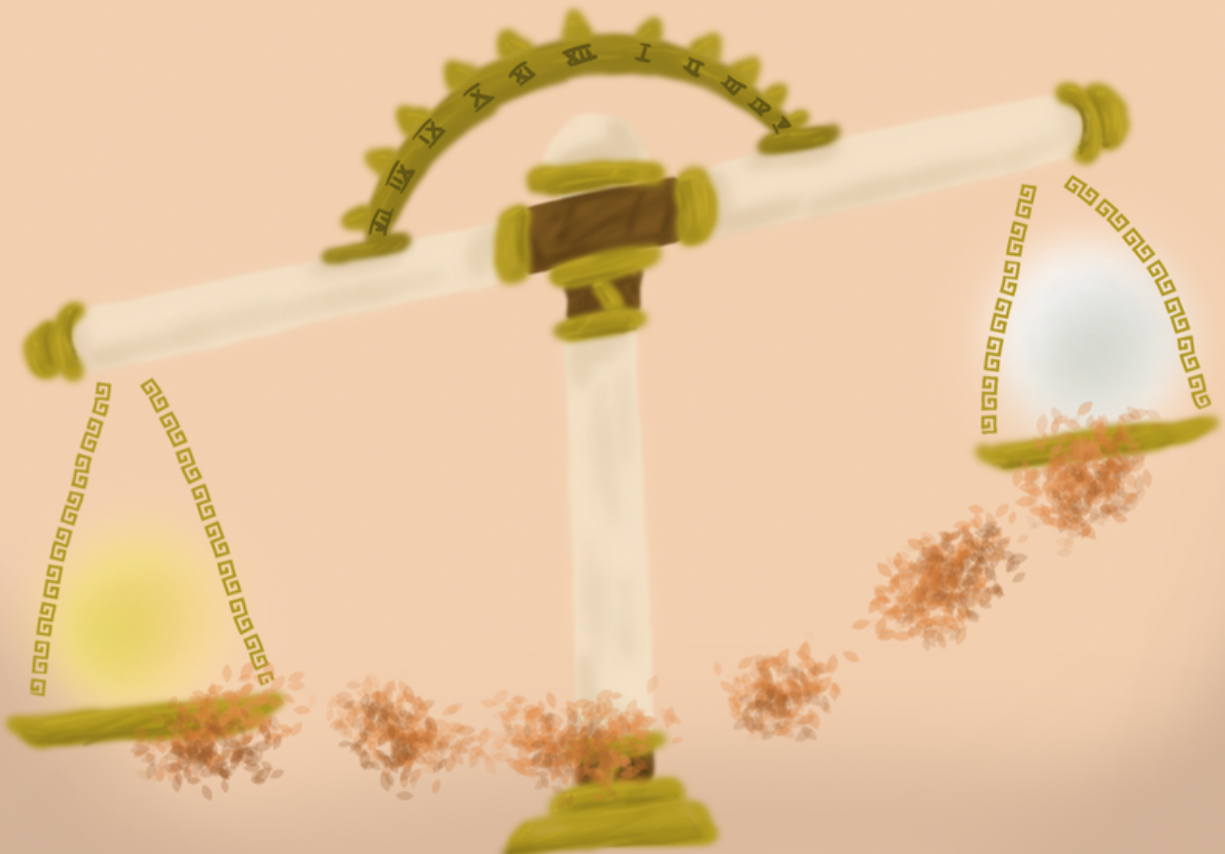


**The Patriot Talon  
Inspired Minds  
*"Tell A Tale"***



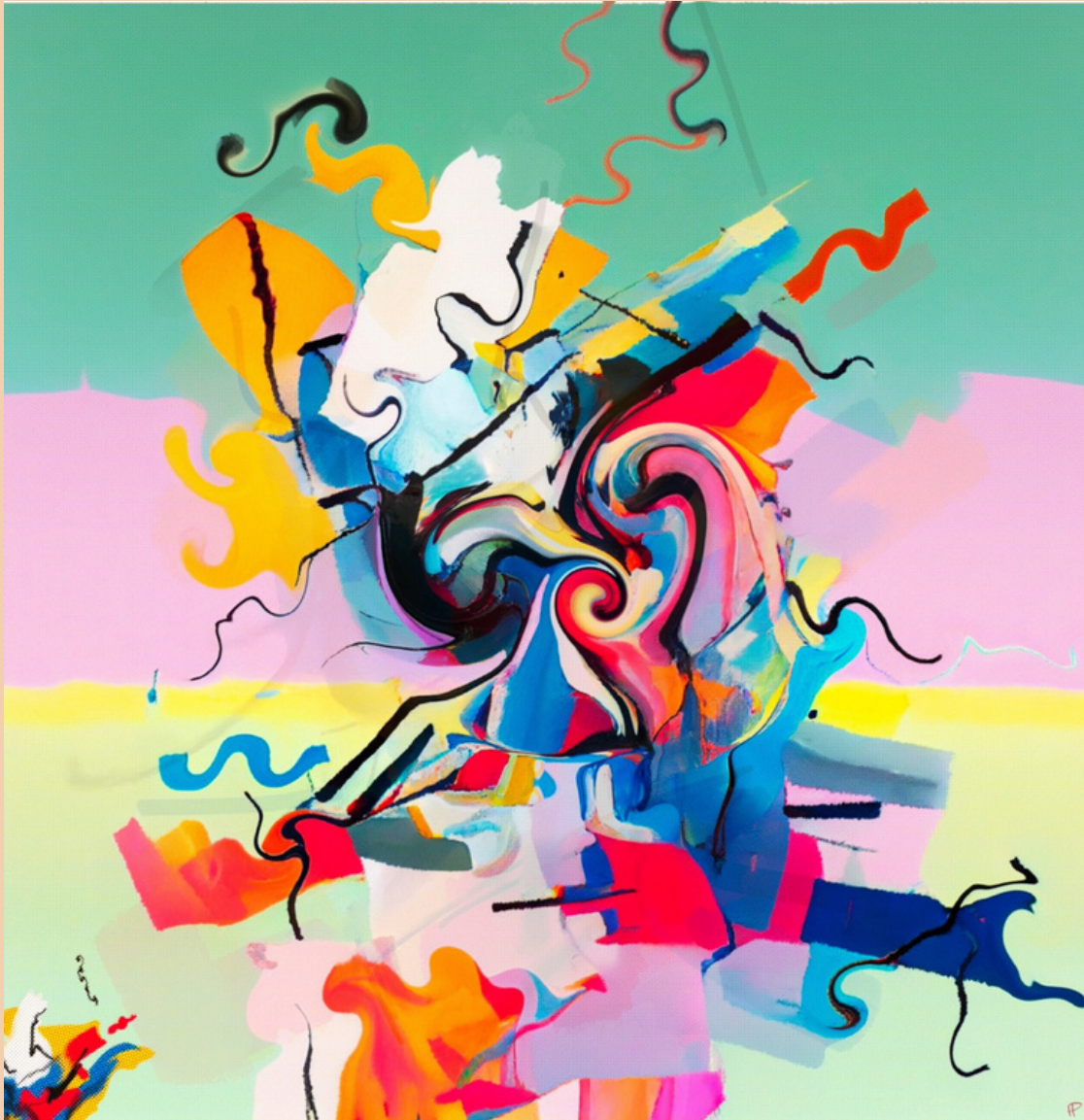
*Equinox*  
By Gabriella Vazquez

September gifts the month of balance  
To bring days of warm crisp air  
And nights of cool autumn breeze.  
Exact opposites of one another  
Fostering such intense harmony.  
The sun and the moon as parallels  
To illuminate the sky with consciousness and slumber.  
Each serving their equal sentences,  
The display of gold and pearl beams like clockwork.  
Earth is at peace in the fall;  
Her soul at a complete rest of equilibrium  
As she hosts a land simply brimming with  
Calmness and  
Contentment.





*Untitled*  
By Francisco Perez



*To Have Loved and Lost*

**By Reece Hopkins**

Love is not what people think.

Love is not fancy dinners, a diamond ring, or a wedding  
That makes a star pale in comparison.

Love is not five kids, two dogs, or sharing a bed.

Love is sitting in the rain, sharing the tears of Earth, tracing my fingers,  
Down your scars to feel the words that live in your skin.

Love is sharing our breaths, feeling my heartbeat and swoon,  
As it gets closer to yours.

Love is when these butterflies blossom to poems,  
Yearning to kiss your ears and your heart.

And yet these poems are not written by me, but rather I read them,  
From your eyes, the stories from the stars within,  
The songs of your thoughts.

Love is seeing you in all the places I never knew before,  
Forever changing My eyes, that long to gaze upon yours.

Your smile is the moon, pulling on the tides of my heart.

Your beauty is the Grand Canyon, I can see from the stars.

Your touch makes me the world, held in the loving hands of God,

Your breath playing melodies on my heart strings,

Like the whistling of wind through the tallest of trees.

I would let myself drown, if I knew,

Your hands were the one holding me under.

I would feel the fire of Earth burning, lashing out at my skin,



And bear a smile, as long as I felt you were truly looking at me.  
If passion were strength my love would move the mountains,  
Just so you could see the moon,  
That I hung for you in the stars.  
For what is love if not loss,  
Of my imperfect heart to her perfect soul?  
And what is loss?  
For it is not the absence of love,  
But rather the perseverance of passion.  
We cannot love without loss,  
Or lose, without love.  
For what is my love if not loss,  
Where I am cursed to give more than I receive?  
Is my only potential to see it in her?  
Am I forever her painter, but never her muse?  
Love is not what people think.  
Love is loss, fear, the precedent to grief,  
The knife that cuts out my wanting heart,  
For her to hold or forget.  
But oh,  
What a gift to love.

## *What a Ride*

*By Kasper Dunlap*

At the start of our marriage, we always went down to the lake house her parents used to own. We would sit out on the porch, hold hands, and talk about what it would be like to grow old together. She told me she'd remind me I was divine as the goddess herself when my features get polished over by wrinkles. I would tell her that when she is too weak to talk, I would take her for a joyride in my wheelchair. The days would bleed into nights, and we would fill the air with idealized fantasies, hoping that the wind would fulfill our wishes. The future was something to look forward to. Fantasize about even. We had nothing to fear. Nothing to taint our perception on life.

I hold those memories close for the both of us now. They are my inheritance that I must keep alive, alone. Out of all of our scenarios that we conjured up, neither of us could have predicted this reality. I'm looking at her now the way I did all those years ago. Hoping that somehow our fate will change—that her brain will somehow rewire itself. I am too old to believe in fairytales, but if true love was real, I would kiss her 'till I was blue and erase the misfortune that time has laid upon her. I am happy with the life that we have made with each other. I just wish we had more, more of it all. She is still alive, and yet I grieve the woman before me. To think we could have beat this feels so foreign to me. I miss that lake house and I miss my wife.




*Love Me Again*  
*By Kristinoba Olotu*

In your presence  
How fast the time passes  
An hour is like a minute  
I just can't get enough.  
The sun and moon stand still  
Just to stare in admiration  
A moment where nothing else matters  
But just the two of us.  
It seems to me that love tales of old were  
Written with you and me in mind.  
The Daffodils are blooming  
The birds are singing  
It is Spring  
So pour me some fresh wine  
Love me fiercely  
Love me again.

*An Ode*  
*By Calista Segura*

Oh, how the pain  
Has wrought the heart,  
Held together  
Yet torn apart!  
Sinewy strings  
And a mesh  
Of flesh  
Fill the  
Gaping wound  
That has been  
Blown straight  
Through my chest.  
To love is to hurt  
Down to the bone,  
To run the risk  
Of true  
Romance  
At the chance of  
Once again  
Being alone.  
In the moment  
It was sweet,  
Or at least,  
That's what  
I'd like to believe,  
But  
All the same,  
I've still been left  
Battered  
And beat.  
With my teary  
Eyes I look towards





Spring skies at  
The sunset  
Coloring the death  
Of the day.  
While love is dead  
And  
My heart has died,  
I still rise  
To brush off my knees  
And swallow  
The blood  
Soaking my teeth.  
I stagger into  
A limp for  
I need to get up,  
I need to walk.  
Under my breath  
With every step,  
I repeat this thought:  
I need to walk.  
I need to walk.  
I need to walk.  
For today I am walking  
Forward with my  
Feet pounding to the  
Sound of a new beat  
As to stay strong,  
But this time it will be  
An ode not to our,  
But my song.

*Baking Soda*  
*By Calista Segura*

There is some  
Sort of solace  
Found within  
Sitting in the  
Chasm of your mind;  
With nothing but  
Your thoughts to  
Pass the time.

I have grown bored with the  
Blue glow humming  
Off of my phone.  
There is beauty found  
In being alone.  
In embracing silence.  
In starting over.  
At this current moment  
I wish for nothing  
More than to get back  
On the track.  
That feeling of running  
So freeing as the



Sky fades into black.

In terms of us,  
Or what once was us  
That has since turned  
To dust,

I am accepting that  
What we had was passion  
In the moment, heat  
At most.

You fell in love with an idea  
And in time I did too,  
But slowly we slid  
Away into our corners  
Across the floorboards  
As mere ghosts.

I fight the urge to villainize  
What precious time we shared,  
For it was never sour,  
Truly there was only sweetness and care.  
Although innocence and blissful ignorance  
Blinded us to the disparities we  
Carried.

Sometimes things just

Don't work and we can't force it  
Or fix it.  
So I must leave you  
And face me.  
Which is scary,  
As change always is;  
For a lover to turn into a stranger  
All over again  
Or to come back  
From an injury and  
Smile through the pain.  
But there is no turning back  
As the dusk turns into dawn,  
I know what I want and now  
I must face it head on.



*the overthinker*  
*Francisco Perez*

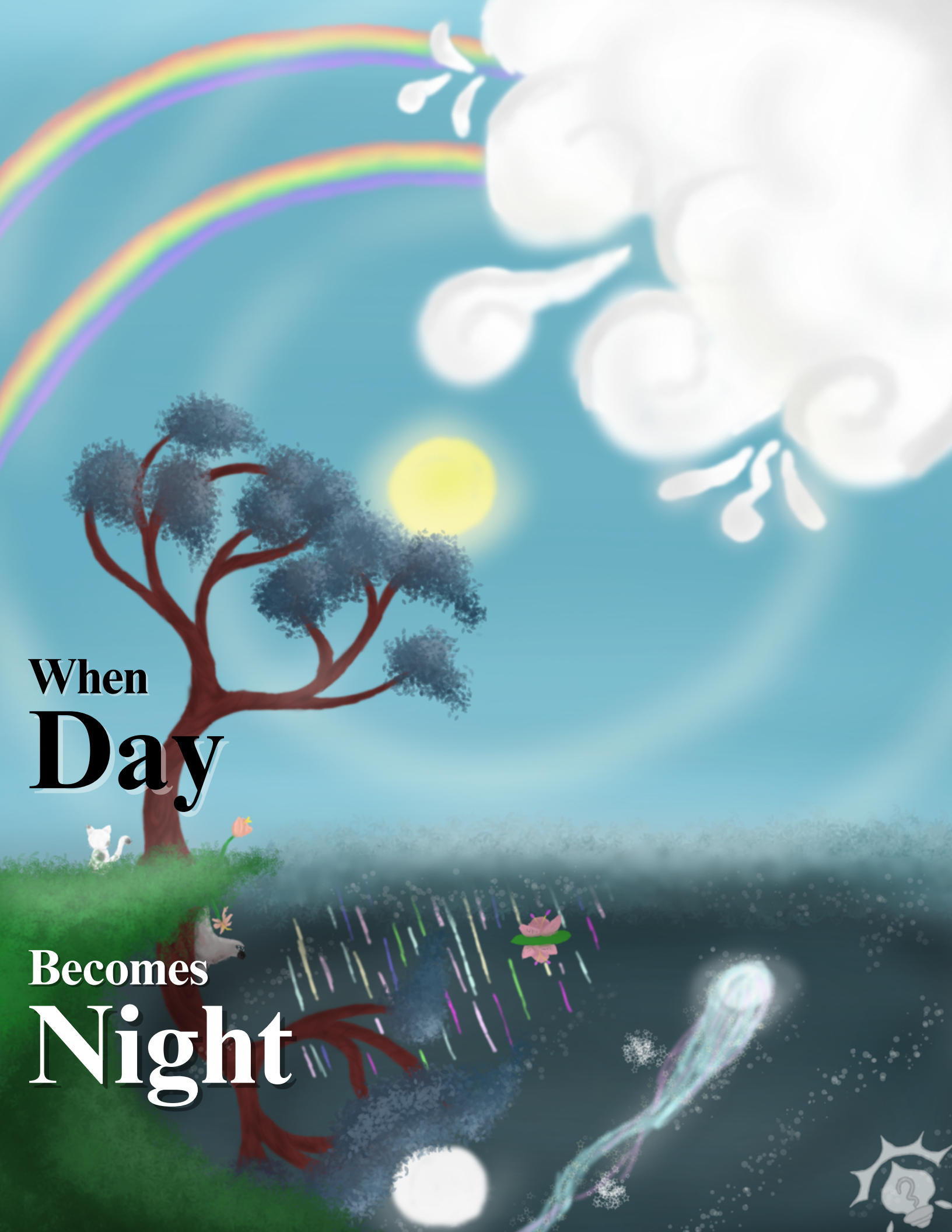


*chapel*  
*by Melody Wilson*

empty chapel on a hill,  
only you and i,  
but i can't help my smile,  
when i'm by your side.  
they never liked you,  
but i never cared.  
i've loved you from the start.  
and you...

you look so lovely right now.  
you make that dress look beautiful.  
you've made white my favorite color,  
and your voice my favorite song.  
he asks me some long question,  
but i don't hear the words,  
all my focus is on you,  
but still, i say "i do."





When  
**Day**

Becomes  
**Night**



*Adobo*  
*By Gabriella Vazquez*

A man ripped from  
His island,  
His language,  
His culture,  
Finds home within Adobo.

He waits  
In the scent of freshly fried tostones,  
In the red, white, and blue walls,  
And framed flamboyant paintings,  
In the shared experiences of fellow Boricuas  
To revisit a piece of his childhood,  
Of himself.

A man ripped from  
His family  
Brings his children to Adobo  
To experience a sliver of  
Puerto Rico.



*Love and Loss*  
*By Gloria Lovett*

**Love**

“You’re early,” the Grim Reaper rasps, a hint of surprise twisting in his tone. I stare at his shrouded body, shadows trailing after him like snakes.

“I am,” I hear myself say, my voice echoing across the distance. “I couldn’t let them go first.” The pain in my voice nearly shatters me, and the specter in front of me stills. The Grim Reaper doesn’t say anything for a while. His form is so still you would think he is my own shadow, but I no longer have one. He tips his head up, his dark hood revealing his sunken, skeletal face.

“I see.” His unearthly eyes flaming. “The one thing stronger than Death,” he continues as he turns away, his voice fading with the dying fire in his eyes, “Love.”

**Loss**

“You’re early,” the Grim Reaper rasps, a hint of surprise twisting in his tone. I stare at his shrouded body, shadows trailing after him like snakes.

“I couldn’t live another day without them,” I hear myself say, my voice echoing across the distance. “Have they been waiting for me?” The pain in my voice nearly shatters me, and the specter in front of me stills.

He doesn’t say anything for a while. Then he tips his head up, his dark hood revealing his sunken, skeletal face.

“Yes,” he finally says, his unearthly eyes flaming. “The one thing stronger than Death,” he muses as he turns away, his voice fading with the dying fire in his eyes, “Loss.”

*Blue Brushstrokes*  
*By Rachel Shai Emerine*





*Crying Wolf*  
*By Elizabeth Haws*

There was always something wrong with the girl who cried wolf. Sitting in story time, there was only shame. The teacher introducing a classic tale to the class by likening the boy to a girl who couldn't sit in class without a feeling creeping in and making her sick to her stomach. There was not anything specific to cause it at first, but the more life happened, the tighter the knot grew. This knot reached its breaking point with the tension finally snapping the rope and forcing the village to finally believe there was a wolf out to get everyone who didn't believe the child. Sitting in various offices, all containing different opinions but with the same quiet distaste. "She wants attention" was the consensus, and even the child who wanted nothing more than for someone to believe her reached this conclusion as well. The solution came in the form of a small pill that she didn't even know the purpose of at such a young age. It changed something she didn't even know was present.

Eight years later, the pill had undergone various changes in form and chemistry to fix the chemical imbalance, and the residual effects of a wolf slowly eating away at the flesh of a child too young to articulate the danger of a creature everyone could clearly see feasting on a young mind.

## ***COLE***

***By: Jakob Hoisington***

Cold, iced eyes, Cole steps to the Ferryman  
Who patiently awaits for payment to pass to the Other Land  
Long, furred fingers twisted 'round a rotten oar,  
Like a guard standing tall at walls, protecting a sacred door, he  
Breathes murky dust from Schrodinger's Lungs  
As the boy before him grapples with his story being done  
And as he realizes he will never again see his loved ones  
He clings to the tattered cloak outlining the skeleton,  
Tears well up and make wells out of his eyes  
As he begs n' pleads to go back, he can't possibly die  
Ironic, as he is already within Death's grasp  
And as the Ferryman points, he realizes there is no turning back  
It all happened in a flash  
Going from Cole's last gasp  
To the light on Shiloh n' 5th  
Red light runner, nasty crash  
Shards of broken glass  
Chest pain  
Broken ribs  
Broke bones  
Broken body  
While the other party lived,  
Vignette, fading sight, a drunken philistine  
Stumbling out of the whip, his being just fine  
Confused at the commotion of the car collision  
Only to turn to Cole and see his body, cold quiet and rigid



Eyes lock for a moment, but in a moment Cole is gone  
Now standing at the place where souls are passed along  
There is no hope of cheating Death despite feeling as if Death cheated  
But the Ferryman understands the pain of being broken and defeated  
So in a rare moment of empathy, he gave Cole what he needed  
And allowed the boy to release the pent up rage and pain from what he perceives as  
An unfair trade leaving two lives ruined  
Before calmly explaining there is no easy solution.  
There is no coming back from death.  
There is no body to return to.  
He wishes it played out differently,  
To tell him it's all untrue  
But his last breath has been drawn, and now he must see it through  
It is time to leave this mortal coil and step into the wild blue.  
Tearful eyes and runny nose, Cole nodded in understanding  
And stepped onto the boat as it departed from the landing  
With raspy breath, the Ferryman pushes oar through water  
As the spirit that was Cole became Cole no longer.

## *What Society Tells Women*

*By Sara Orellana*

Cover up!

Don't you respect yourself?

Show more skin!

Why are you self-conscious?

Don't dress like a whore,

You're practically asking for it.

Don't be such a prude,

That's why guys don't approach you.

Play dumb around men,

So the White Knight can help you.

You're a strong woman,

You don't need a man.

Don't get plastic surgery,

Love your own body.

Change whatever you want,

It's so empowering!

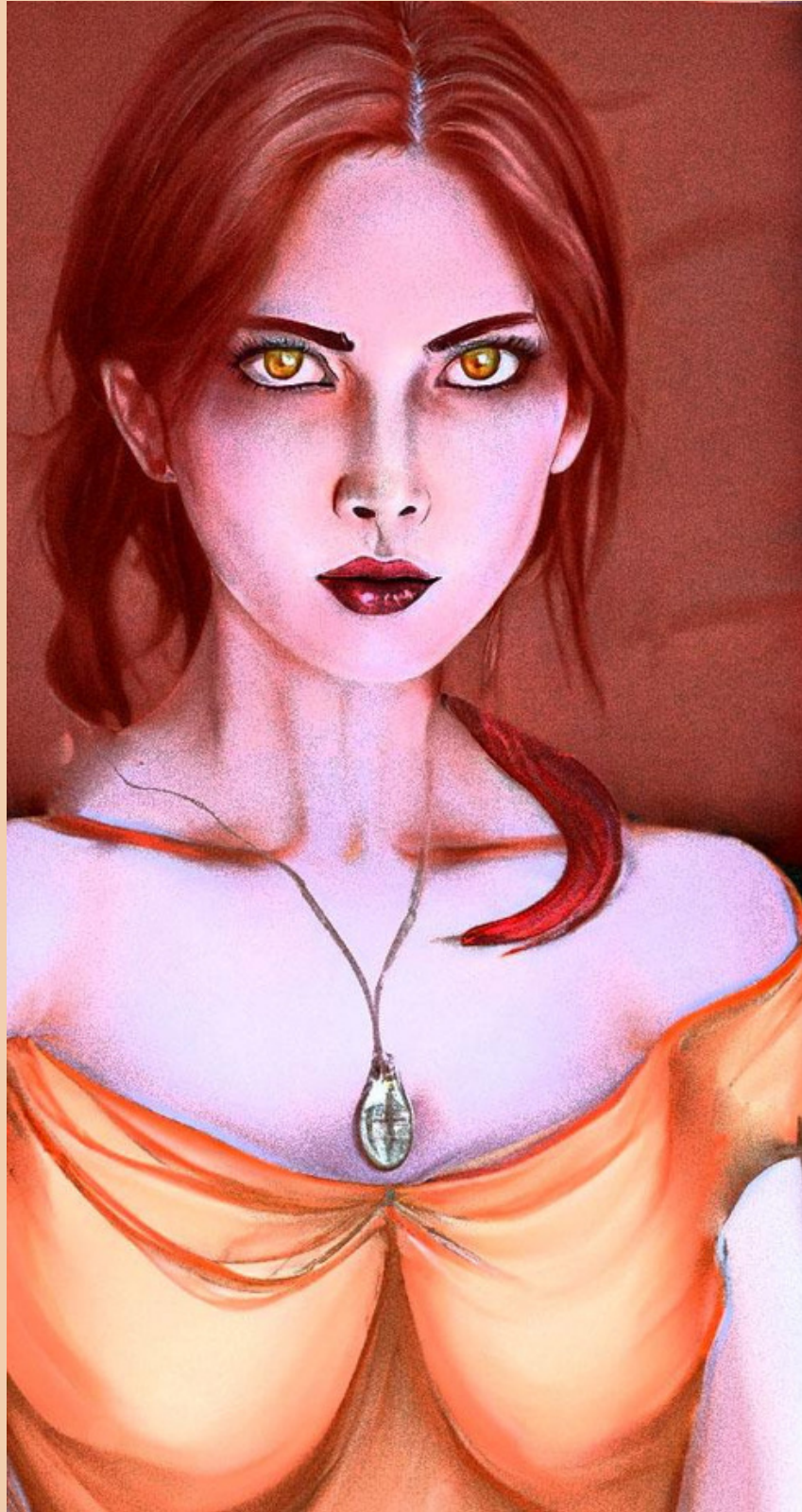
Our bodies and minds are tired of being pulled apart

By what Society "thinks" a woman should be.





*Fall of Minerva*  
*By Isaiah Hardin*



*Lighting Matches*  
*By Dallana Estrada*

Nightlight skies blend in with the cracked curtains.

I shiver inside a cocoon of blankets on a couch.

As I watch flames dance on furnace walls.

My little brother and sister lay under the Christmas tree smiling at the lights.

They laugh about what way to catch Santa Claus before midnight.

The wind howls, and the furnace goes out.

A house should always be warm.

I pull out a red match from under the couch.

The moon turns my skin blue

Flames burst from my hand.

It dies.

I struck the matches again and held the burning flame.

The furnace bursts into an orange ocean.

A house should always be warm.



*When I Was Seven*  
*By Reece Hopkins*

I was seven when Tommy invited me to his pool party.

School was out two weeks ago,  
and he spent the two weeks before that telling me  
all about the new pool he got at home  
thanks to his dad's new job.

My mom packed my bag with sunscreen, a towel,  
PJs, and a twenty-dollar bill for Tommy's mom in the front pocket.

She dropped me off lathered in sunscreen  
with a kiss on my forehead  
I stood around my friends,  
hovering near the water.

Tommy was showing Billy a water gun,  
Joel was showing Braxton his new goggles,  
and I was showing me and myself  
the way the rocks around the pool  
didn't line up how I imagined.

I wondered what color Tommy's new gun was  
I wondered what color Billy thought it would be  
I wondered if Joel's goggles were too tight for him  
I wondered if maybe they were loose enough for Braxton to wear.

I was seven when I jumped into the pool  
and held my breath,  
and I wondered if they missed me.

*The Lover*  
*By Lorem Wofford*

She shone like a gem through the forest's shroud. Her lover, enthralled, followed her— and when a fence barred his path, he climbed over it. He pressed deeper into the forest's folds and spared no attention for the red-lettered sign as he passed it.

The lover brushed aside a veil of leaves as he tread to the edge of the clearing. The trees encircled his love like a crown. Crystalline moonlight slept upon her face, and she glittered. She billowed outwards like the wedding dress of a goddess. The lover stood at the forest's rim, transfixed by her sublime beauty. He would have remained there for hours, but the ache within his chest became so painful that he could no longer stand it. He broke into the clearing and ran forward but stopped short of their embrace. Instead, he lingered above her, and looked down into her face.

He saw a handsome young man, brown skinned and sturdy, with long dark hair and eyes that carried an arrogance invisible to himself. Above him stretched the trees and past them sat the moon and beyond it danced the stars. He stared into this reflection and loved it.

The hidden lake beckoned.

'Draw closer,' she said, 'for I am all that you are, and all you will ever be. Without me, you can do nothing— and can be nothing.'

The lover smiled, 'Your words ring true, you complete me.'

She waited patiently as he searched for a place to dive. Then he swan-dove in the same way he had done countless times, into countless different pools, lakes, and streams. However, he thought, in none of those forms had his love been quite as beautiful as she was now.

Her mirror-surface wrinkled as he fell into their practiced embrace. It felt like sinking through silk. She cradled him and her cool touch melted everything else away. Then, when all that mattered had been forgotten, they began. Their dance was transcendent. Above him, her face glowed with moonlight and illuminated his path. She made his movements slow and graceful, and his hair light and wild. He flipped and flew and feared nothing.

After many rounds of dancing, he went up again for breath— and suddenly found that he couldn't. Something had caught onto his leg. Looking around at it, he saw only a dark shape with luminous yellow eyes. He reached for his love's arms and found that she would no longer lift him up. She had gone still and icy. Something slimy cut into his calf.



The lover felt her protection flee from him, and he became afraid.

‘My love, my love,’ he cried, ‘why have you abandoned me?’ and reached out again, but she only watched, her vast unmoving face so very far above him. His lungs lurched and he knew he’d have to fight her for breath.

He thrashed, kicking up clouds of silt. The shape let go of his leg, but this invoked his love’s fury. She swirled murk around him in a terrible torrent. The lover’s eyes stung from the dirt, and he forgot which way was up. The searing gashes on his leg dulled next to the hellfire in his chest. His body begged blindly for air. The lover searched for sensible thoughts. Scaled slimy claws seized his arms. He tried to kick— but missed. In a fatal gasp for air, muddy water filled his mouth. It was stained red and tasted of iron. The lover choked. Above him, his love’s face was still. Above her stretched the trees and past them sat the moon and beyond it danced the stars.

*Father*  
*By Isaiah Hardin*

I never truly known you.  
And you never truly known me.  
In younger days, I wanted to be like you.  
Yet, you never wanted that for me.  
I could never read your eyes.  
Which words were spoken truth?  
How many were lies?  
Buried beneath my youth.  
With me there was more effort.  
For my siblings you gave less thought.  
I was the first you gave comfort.  
But you forgotten the two you begot.  
You have shown me love.  
You have shown me fury.  
You claim faith up above.  
Your pain plagues my memory.  
I've been torn between love and hate.  
In my heart, you have left a stain.  
Created my dissonant mental state.  
Stuck to me as a part of my name.  
I learned nothing new.  
I learned to not bother.  
I learned to not be you.  
Not you, my Father.



*Lammergeier*  
*By Rachel Shai Emerine*




*Home*

*By Kristinoba Olotu*

The eyes that open in amazement as it beholds you  
That force that plants a smile on your lips  
The ears that itch to hear your voice  
The warm embrace that greets you upon your arrival  
The mouth that never misses a chance to eulogize you  
The hands that would hold onto you and never let go  
Home is not a place  
Home is a person  
Home is the heart that beats for you.

*No where else  
but you*





Poetry and prose can be polarizing, because often to express oneself is to expose the dark and painful side of life. The human experience is equal parts day and night. We at Talon Student Media value empowering all voices in the hopes that you, the reader, may feel peace in knowing you're not alone in your feelings.

If you are struggling mentally or emotionally, professional help is free and easy to access. Scan the QR code to find out more about the Student Counseling Center.







Remain Inspired

