

- The Literacy Society of River Ridge -

May 2019

T H E
Q U I L L

The Debut

art - short stories - poetry

Table of Contents

Born Blind - 1	Watercolor Landscape - 30
Dark Green - 2	Moonlight - 31
Daydreams - 3	Woodblock Print Art - 32
Grey Moon's Life - 4	The Legend of the Blue Sea - 33
Sunflower Seeds - 5	Graze - 34
Mourning - 7	Human Influxion - 35
Under Ice - 8	Ice Cream Buddies - 36
Eye of Wode - 9	Lunar - 37
Fragmented Mind - 10	Turtle Life - 38
You Left Me - 11	Dangers of the Endangered - 39
Treason - 12	3D Art Collection - 40
Soldier's Battlefield - 13	
The Curse of Eurydice -14	
The Humble Sapling - 15	
Ode to Decay - 16	
Come Back to Me - 17	
Requiem - 21	
Here I Stand - 22	
The Meaning of Friendship -23	
I am not a Poet - 24	
Eyes of Heaven - 25	

Letter From the Editors

Jillian Recharz, Binaka Norris, Avery Lane

Dear Readers,

The Quill was a challenge to put together and we hope you enjoy reading it! This year in the River Ridge Literary Society was a memorable adventure. We welcomed new members and new perspectives as we laid the foundation for the club. Our journey has been turbulent; however, it was well worth the strife. The hours we spent reading and editing pieces were refreshing as the talented staff and students of River Ridge allowed us to see into their hearts and minds via short stories, poetry, and art. We are truly impressed by the caliber of professionalism shown to us by those that submitted their work. The raw emotion and vulnerability of these pieces floored us. We cannot express how grateful, humbled, and impressed we are by all the submissions and we wish we could have included more. We hope you enjoy these pieces as much as we did.

Sincerely,

Your Editors

Born Blind

Barbara Dukeman, Teacher

born blind and raised as such
even though
the sound of pale white light assaults our ears
the delicate violets we know to be near
the ice satin touch of a heart that is dear
can direct the man
through hollow doors
and keep him all as one.

although his visions razor tight
he still cannot behold such light
that overcomes this darkest night
of our very experience.
the day will come
when his eyes will open
and
like a newborn with the sun
his empty thoughts will cease to run
and the blindness will be done
as his sensing knowledge comes to be.

Dark Green

Gil Duckworth, Senior

There's a soft breeze in the air but it's already cold out here, so you don't really notice. What you're more focused on are the leaves. They rustle against themselves and make small noises but in this silence, it sounds like an oncoming hurricane. When you reposition your feet, you feel the bumpy, pitted dirt. You know there's a stain on your pants from when you tripped earlier because it's sticking to your shins and making them even colder than they already are. You just hope that it'll come out in the wash. For a brief second, you close your eyes and just listen. You open them again. Where are the birds? The sky isn't that dark, the sun is still -barely- filtering through the leaves. You haven't seen a squirrel since you entered this trail either. Speaking of the trail, you should probably find that again. You move to look around for the trail. Nothing looks familiar and you feel groggy. You start walking.

You walk for an unknown amount of time. The sun continues to go down and you still don't know where the trail is. You still can't hear the birds. And at this point, the leaves blend together and all you can see is that dark green. Now you feel like you're suffocating in the green. It's getting loud; your blood is coursing through your ears. The air doesn't feel chilly anymore; now it's freezing and you feel the ice crystals in your throat. Your hands feel the dirt; you must've fallen again. You try to stand but your balance is off and you end up on your knees. You close your eyes again and feel your chin hit where your collarbones connect. You breathe deeply and just for a second, you think you hear a dove. And then you feel the dirt on your cheeks. You take a last breath and you sleep.



Daydreams

San Coffey, Junior

Pleasant dreams, warm sunbeams.
Cotton fluff and sugary stuff,
Somewhere flawless at the end of dream's light.
A comforting solace to nightmare's unforgiving fright.

The sudden cease of life, and the emergence of strife.
Ghastly spirits, loneliness for those who fear it.
These horrors torment many innocent lives,
To dispose of these fears, a goal which we strive.

Prevalent distractions, social retractions.
Quelling insecurity, provoking anxiety.
Blindness common, in the luminous tunnel.
Reality escaping through only a funnel.

Inattentive days, peaceful malaise.
Restless thoughts, where memory stays.
Imaginative fields to let the mind graze,
Ridden of the soot-stained foals and their violent neighs.

Grey Moon's Life

Benjamin Mason, Senior

In some ways I feel like the moon
Hidden away at day, I'm only seen from afar so
grey
The people don't know much about me, just my
name
Like the moon I feel invisible come day
At night I seem to shine so happy,
The man on the moon smiles to you,
But hiding away my other side I'm feeling crappy.
Always a shadow only seen because of the sun,
I am the night's only friend, just there for extra
light,
Second to none the sun takes all the pride.
Every now and then you want to see me in the
sky,
The days I missed, were too long, bye bye.
Spinning around the earth I latch onto you,
Like a leech, I hope I am associated by the star,
The sun which we all in one way somehow
follow.
Pulling and pushing at your tides,
Disrupting the world, I try to get close,
I was meant to sit back behind the crowd,
But someday I reach a tsunami mound.
Part of the broken me, the world they worship
above.
The moon was just a figure, the sun was a god.
Wiped my dry tears, not a drop of water left,
Just a dead rock floating by myself.
From below all you see are my worst features,
A reflection in the puddle you walk right over,
The craters are natural, the words thrown out.
You rather ignore the brittle rocky truth.
Instead you look at the things the stars and sun
can do,
I think to myself you just have such a different
view,
You get to see the sun, not behind a moon.
Down in the valleys lush and green,
You'd rather look around than stare up ahead.
When I say I feel blue you don't care to
understand,

You already have an ocean, a world with a plan.
I'm like the moon, not a flower
I do now glow, I don't have the power.
Even the ones who visit me don't say long
They say a few things and leave me all alone.
Probably because they'd choke without air,
I check out the air, I am surrounded by the air of
despair.
Compare me to the things that you are,
The earth is beautiful a crystal jewel,
The moon isn't fruitful, my skin is not deep.
I've worn away the plants fallen off my place,
The ground is too shallow, nothing kind can stay.
Here I am like the moon, my craters remain,
Your footprint forever stays.
Land on the moon, what a trophy,
Did one thing and now they watch you empty.
Compare the moon without its trees
The flag left long ago doesn't wave back to me.
No matter the world that visits,
I always feel fine, at least that's what astrology
predicts.
Fall asleep to my spinning grip,
Fall in a hole knee deep.
Here I am like the dead grey moon,
I don't know what to say so I don't speak my
own tune
A quiet space, not a life to save,
I am unsure how I feel, but when I try to see,
Forever shadowed by the sun in space.
The world below could care less of me,
In that some days, I am just like the moon,
Times go by and people move on,
But here I am still in the sky, the world rings no
alarm.
The earth below is a petty swarm,
Your gravity outweighs my choice to escape the
norm.
Here I am a grey moon out in space,
Without a voice,
Too far to say,
And too cold to dream,
The only thing that keeps me sane.

Sunflower Seeds

Craig Onspaugh, Freshman

You had sunflower seeds spilled down your lap the moment I first locked eyes with you and I could tell from your panic that you were going to cry.

Your pale face turned red, your lip quivered, and your baby blue eyes filled with enough tears to put a flood to shame.

I'd seen you before. I had watched you from across the classroom all month long, with your blanket laced tightly within your fingers that were always brushed up somewhere along your lips. I'd watched the way your lashes had batted when you didn't understand what Miss Claridge had said, the purple and blue on your tiny, chubby arms when your father had learned you had misbehaved.

I watched how you had brought the same sunflower seeds to school every day, eating them one by one throughout the day because I was so captivated by how you managed to sneak it so clearly into class and never once get caught for so, so long. You always finished the bag.

I remember the day you got caught with them for the first time.

Miss Claridge pulled you aside after the recess bell rang and told you that it was no longer acceptable to eat in class, and I remember the big tears welling at the corners of your eyes. Your snacks had been confiscated, and there was still half a bag left. It wasn't finished.

I remember the wailing of "please, please," and begging to just finish the bag, but it never worked. You watched as she tossed it in the bin, much to your distress and you shut up so quickly it was almost scary. I stayed entranced by the way your eyes dried despite the swollen outer redness and the lashes that clung together for dear life.

I remember that you didn't bring sunflower seeds to class for the rest of the year.

I remember when I went to your house for the first time.

It was second grade. Your house was much bigger than mine, fancier in the most minute ways that any person would consider average and middle class; your bright lamps and family photos that had no scratches or shatters and seemed perfectly intact had held me by my breath as I wandered up the stairs to your bedroom.

I remember sitting on the floor while you told me stories about your goldfish and how he was your best friend in the world. You'd rather die than let him go. How much you loved dressing up in the Batman costume your parents had bought you for your birthday. How you wanted so desperately to run away and live in a movie like all the kids on TV, which was frightening—I wanted the same. We sat on the carpet for so long; two eight-year-old kids who were planning their great escape from the hell that was our dinky little town.

You taught me how to tie a cherry stem with my tongue.

I went home and immediately showed my mother who drunkenly slurred about how she could do it, too (because, obviously, I was not very impressive for an eleven-year-old). I remember the one piece of hair on your head bouncing back and forth as you bobbed your head in excitement when you stuck the stem out in pride. You giggled so suddenly and hard that you nearly inhaled it and choked but spat it back onto your plate as we sat in that Denny's booth and laughed like the children we were. You tucked the stem you used to teach me with into the pocket of your jeans just before we left. Your therapist told you that you attached too much value to things that were more trash than treasure, and despite the fact you were walking out of a Denny's with a cherry stem in your pants, you had no idea what she was talking about.

You told me that day that you heard trains outside of your window the last night. You'd never actually heard them before. They'd started up the railroads through town again. You were so excited to see them that night.

You called me at one in the morning on your house phone.

You had seen the train go by, and you were so happy.

I remember when we ran away.
We were fifteen.

You had gotten so angry, so infuriated with your father always bossing you around. Ever since we were little, shoving you from place to place like a ragdoll, never being the support he was supposed to be. You'd decided we were going to leave that night, and I felt as though I had nothing left to lose. My poverty-ridden broken home where bottles and tobacco boxes littered every smoked-scented room in the house were all that I had in this world except for you. You were my best friend, and I was willing to go anywhere for you. So, that night was the night I packed my bags and snuck out to your house.

And we left.

We ran to the train station and hitched a ride on an empty car to who-knows-where. It wasn't until we saw our town fade out of eyeshot that we'd realized exactly what we'd done, and we simply looked at each other and blinked. It was no big deal. We had each other, and each other was all we needed.

I remember you falling asleep on the car that night while I only scanned over your face like a paragraph I couldn't quite grasp. We hit a small bump in the tracks, and something fell on the floor from the open pocket of your backpack.

It was an open pack of sunflower seeds, expired nine years past the date, and it was unfinished.

Mourning

Katrina Quinones, Senior

I loved her, I truly did
She was my light when it was dark,
I wanted her bad, she was all I had I want her to take me back, but I
don't deserve her
I wanted to propose to her after high school, but I played her like a
fool
I wanted a future with her, I truly did, I still don't understand why I
did what I did
I waited months for her to realize she wanted to be with me
I texted; I called; I was there for every heartbreak and every time
she would fall
She was my baby and I risked it all
I should have just given her my all instead of lying to her
All she wanted honesty, love, and loyalty
And I gave her nothing at all
Mi amor, I'm sorry for it all
I just don't understand why you stayed
Why did you wait?
Why did you make sure I was okay?
I was the one who hurt you and you still stayed and wanted to be
there for me
You were such an amazing girlfriend and future fiancéé
And I am glad you stayed but don't dwell on me you have to be
strong and move past me
I know it will hurt because it hurts me, but I made a mistake
So, don't stay please or I'll chase after you for the rest of my life
And we will live in internal misery
Just know that I am in love with and I always was
Just know this isn't goodbye; I'll be with you in another time

Under Ice

Barbara Dukeman, Teacher

Winter, and once again alone on the ice. This is where she came to forget about her troubles. This is where she felt strongest. Guiding power into her legs, Mara glided across the frozen river, leaving little white lines and circle arcs on the surface. The sound of splitting ice spitting snow and carved designs thrilled her in the chilled air. Arms outstretched, bitter wind on her face, she breathed in energy and breathed out art. She shifted her weight, and started flying backwards over the light dusting of snow on the ice. The banks, trees, all brilliant white, deadly silent.

She pumped her legs and pushed into an axel jump, something she had done countless times. Up in the air, she spun, the world a blur. Arms pulled in tight, she was in control. The blade on her silver skate blade caught a chip in the ice, and her carefully arranged world came crashing down. Falling hard, she hit the ice amid the white lines and circle arcs that made up her life and came to a standstill lying on her back.

Deadly silent.

Mara's eyes open, and she blinked to get the flakes of snow out of her gray eyes. "That was not the most graceful landing," she said to herself. She leaned up and looked around; the deafening quiet began to feel unsettling. Turning over, she put her hands on the ice in an effort to push herself up. Looking down, she saw something moving under the ice, a dark form, just below. She turned over completely, and used her gloved hand to wipe away the soft snow from the ice as one would erase the misty fog from a window.

She looked again and terror seized her; had the ice become a mirror? A woman's face appeared, eyes wide open in horror, bubbles escaping her mouth as her hands scratched at the hardened ice. Her face seemed familiar, but Mara didn't recognize her. Mara's screams echoed across the empty river, but no one was there.

She violently pounded the ice, trying to find a weak spot, a place for this woman escape the cold water. Panic started setting in, and Mara redoubled her effort. She pulled off one of her skates and tried to pierce the ice with it. Her sweat froze as she kept hitting the ice, pieces of the frozen river exploding into tiny bits. After moments of full desperation, Mara heard the ice begin to split.

Water and ice mixed, and sounds like cracking glass filled that moment. The ice caved in and an arm reached out from the river, feeling around like starving child grasping for bread. Mara tried to catch the arm, but instead the hand clutched onto Mara's wrist, pulling her down.

A voice from the water escaped, "This moment in time, it doesn't belong to you!" Mara screamed as she struggled to stay on top of the ice, with nothing on the ice to anchor her. The voice bit again, "It belongs to me." The icy hand was stronger, and Mara felt herself slowly getting closer to the hole in the ice, a crossroad into the next world. Her shoulder was next, pulled farther down into the river. She turned her head, struggling for her life and gasping in the last of her breath before the final moments fell. Her head down, the rest of her body was pulled through the hole.

Her eyes open, she blinks to get the flakes of snow out of her hazel eyes. "That was not the most graceful landing," she says to herself. Leaning up, she looks around. Down the river she sees the hole in ice, and a single ice skate near it. Gingerly she gets up and skates over to the area, and checks out how much the ice is cracked, making sure not to get near it. She stares at the hole and whispers, "Wouldn't want that to happen again, now would we?" Out loud she muses, "It's my turn to live, girl. Never say goodbye to my part of your life." Her life fresh again, she shakes out her wet hair and skates up the river, her dark smile never fading from her face. She looks back over her shoulder and laughs, "Where on your palm is my little line when you're written in mine as an old memory?" Turning forward, she skates away from her past and embraces her new future.

The Eye of Wode

Cody Smith, Senior

Beards dangle through the trees, among the moss and leaves.
A burrowing eye is brought to me.

Burning, burning, filled with wode, Does it not know?
It's time is over, sealed and done, nothing but a tale to some.

Burning, burning, filled with wode,
Does it not know?
It's halls have fallen, it's keep is shattered, nothing but a tale to
some.

Burning, burning, filled with wode, Does it not know?
Old men, wise men, and scholars too,
say it's but a tale to see.

Burning, burning, filled with wode,
Yes - it knows!
It knows of the wyrd² that men sow,
It knows of young men, strong and handsome, It knows of old men,
weak and haggardly,

Burning, burning, filled with wode,
Yes - it knows!
All-seeing eye, alone are thee among the trees.
All-seeing eye, alone are thee among the moss and leaves.

Burning, burning, filled with wode!

¹ Wode - adj. Angry, mad, furious, frantic, crazy, possessed.

² Wyrd - n. a concept in Anglo-Saxon culture relating to fate or personal destiny.

Fragmented Mind

Binaka Norris, Sophomore

Do I conform to the
insanity of reinventing the wheel
When the wheel works well?

The end of each day
Should bring sunsets
Sonatas
And sublime sorrow

The blue in your eyes
Is no match
For the fire in mine

When we reach
The end of
ourselves
We may find
We never really began



You Left Me

Ashlynn Madden, Senior

You told me to choose
I did not want to
You told me you were done
Yet you couldn't bare to let me go

You say I chose someone else
But you are wrong
You don't know what I went through
You think I can't hurt

You don't know the tears I've wept
The songs you've ruined
You don't know the pain
Apparently I can't have emotions

You were the one who said
I hate that I love you so much
Not Me
You

You said you wouldn't leave
Promises are meant to be broken
It was so easy for you to disappear
You Left Me.



Treason

Katrina Quinones, Senior

There are circles underneath my eyes where I cried
I can't eat, I can't sleep
The pain I feel is on repeat
He had my heart and tore it apart
Why did he do this? Someone please tell me why
He told me many lies, now I want to cry
He was my soulmate, my everything now he is nothing
He hurt me in ways I could never imagine
I have been burned by a dragon
I hope she had what I didn't
I hope you found what you were looking for, did she do for you what I didn't before
I'm here, laying on the bathroom floor
I want you back, please come back, I will change, I'll do anything
I'll forgive the lying and the cheating
Please say something, baby please, my heart is breaking
You promised you would never do this, but I guess the joke was on me
I love you and it pains to say goodbye and I just don't know why
What about marriage and the rest of our lives
You said I was the love of your life, I guess that was me giving you the knife
I was in love with you I truly was, but now our memories are faded
Just know that this isn't goodbye, I'll be with you in another time

Soldier's Battlefield

Haleigh Hodgson, Senior

The wind bellows against his ear
Everytime he turns around,
There's something new to fear.

Defenseless, he stands.
A whisper he hears;

"Don't you fear,
For I am here.
Do not attempt
To shed a tear,
All you must do is
Take it slow,
Day by day,
Year by year."

The Curse of Eurydice

Barbara Dukeman, Teacher

I. Descent

Descent into the depths of sorrow borne
Upon the innocent Persephone
Her struggle into darkness, full forlorn,
The sadness of her deep resounding plea.

Beside the blackened ashes down she fell
Into the arms of Hades, strong and cold
She looked into her future citadel,
And wept her bitter tears in fears untold.

Persephone, the queen of mortals cursed,
Remembers well departing souls in pain
With unforgiving eyes she finds the first-
The wife of Orpheus, her newest gain.

As death approaches, Hades looks to win
Another heart from castigated sin.

II. Search

Eurydice, her wedding day destroyed,
In isolation teeming in the dark
She hears a sound – like music – in the void
Sweet Orpheus approaches toward his mark.

His voice and lyre charmed the Loyal Beast
Fierce Cerberus lay calm, his eyes dark pearls.
Impressed by mankind's passion – lasting peace –
In tears the peers of Hades' underworld.

Without a cause or vanity denied
From Hades, mercy flowed to Orpheus
To let his wife and love ascend with pride
As long as never he should lose his trust.

Persephone awaited suffering's end
But could not from her ceaseless spirit lend.

From out of darkness seek we to ascend
To join Eurydice along her way –
Such boundless joy and living without end
To see the shining stars and brilliant day.

Apollo's daughter longing for the sun
As nearer to the portal both they climbed
From Music whence she came and, now undone,
Her Orpheus would lose his love, his rhyme.

Forever gone, her lover up thereof;
Or so Eurydice believed this lie
Until her Orpheus – her earthbound love –
The Maenads carved his infinite good-bye.

Her love secured, so smiled Eurydice,
And blindly cursed the living ecstasy.

The Humble Sapling

San Coffey, Junior

Oh, humble sapling,
How miniscule and frail.
Awaiting the spring,
Hoping to bloom,
But miserably fails.

Oh, humble sapling,
Withering away,
For today you face drought,
Your leaves will not sway.

Oh, humble sapling,
You mustn't fear further,
For a loving hand will appear,
Willing to nurture.

Oh, humble sapling,
Then you shall grow,
You will see results,
You will surely know.

Oh humble sapling,
You will finally see,
That you are truly beautiful,
For you are a tree.

Ode to Decay

Jillian Richarz, Sophomore

Her tears roll off the sweet mountain grass
She knew what the foxglove would do
Her decision was made just moments ago
When she ground its pink petals between her teeth
Her chest heaves and her eyes burn
The heart in her breast pumps too slow
Her airways force up blood
Her throat and mouth are slathered in it
Her heartbeat is even more lethargic
Then it ceases altogether

Her once smooth is skin torn and leathery
Spiders crawl from her mouth
She no longer has lips
They were chewed off by the wolves
The soft parts of her went first
Insects inhabit the flesh left in those empty cavities
Beetles scurry across her ribs
Inside her chest and down her spine
Flies buzz around what used to be her ears
Maggots consume what remains

The flowers of the earth
Rise slowly from her skeleton
The tendrils of their roots spread out beneath the ground
Curling around her bones
Her eyes are replaced by poppies
Her tongue is now made of thistles
Harsher than any words she ever spoke
A dandelion grows from her navel
Its stiff stem bends with the wind
And the feathery seeds float north

Come Back to Me

Olivia Camarotti, Sophomore

"It's been three years since I've seen your face, heard your voice, it been three years since I've seen your brown eyes twinkle and your freckled nose crinkle; It been three years since I've had a stable parent." Dan paused to gather his thoughts. "Since you passed dad has only gotten worse, he... he said we'd always be there for one another and then he leaves me to grow up on my own. He goes out every night and comes back an emotional intoxicated mess. Most of the time he's too drunk to remember what he says, but that doesn't make it okay. He hasn't gotten physical yet; he just yells drunken slurs at me. Remember how at school those jocks pushed me around? James and Kurk? That has only gotten worse, I tried standing up to them but... but that didn't go over very well. I'm sorry, I should probably be heading out now but thanks for listening mom, I'll see you tomorrow morning before school. I love you." Dan's voice faded towards the end of his monologue, expecting to hear her voice one last time, but it never came.

Dan sighed as he stood up. Dreading what was about to come, he trudged to his house, never have been so glad that it was a Monday morning. School didn't start for nearly another three hours, so he had plenty of time to attempt at sobering up his dad in the slightest bit. Dan shoves his hands into the pockets on his jumper, the frosty air nips at his fingertips. Walking out the gates of the graveyard, he turned down his road, taking in the sprinkles of white resting on the tops of the trees.

It was early December; the snow under Dan's feet making a soft crunch sound as he walked down the empty pavement. This was his favorite time of da. It was around four in the morning, and no one was outside except those who worked the graveyard shift. Even then, no one would pay attention if he was there or not.

He seemed to be invisible to everyone, only noticed when someone needed a punching bag. The stench of alcohol burned Dan's nostrils as he peeked his head through the front door. His dad was passed out on the couch, different types of alcohol surrounding his tall frame.

"Dad?" Dan whispered. Hearing no response, Dan started to clean up the mess that littered throughout the house. He could hear his dad moving on the couch, slowly sitting up from his cramped position on the sofa.

"Daniel! Bring me another bottle of whiskey will ya?" his dad called.

"No."

"What'd ya say to me boy!?"

"I said no. No, because I'm tired of having to always clean up after you. The bottles, the questionable stains on the couch. I'm tired of having to politely ask the women you bring home to leave. I'm tired of acting like the parent of the house! So for once in your miserable life, get up and do it yourself, cause I'm done. Kick me out if you wish, anywhere would be better than this broken home. But before you respond, would mom have wanted you to take up alcohol?" Dan stood his ground, slowly raising his eyes to meet the raging fires that were once his dad's hazel eyes. "And for the record you may be my biological father but you are most definitely not my dad," Dan finished. Dan turned to walk through the front door, but an icy hand gripped onto his shoulder before he could get away. Dan whipped his head around to meet the callused palm of his father's hand. He stumbled backwards, his face frozen in a state of shock.

Before his dad could scold him about 'being a man and fighting back', he grabbed his ripped backpack and sprinted out of the house he had grown to hate in the last three years. Dan violently wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, gathering any tears that threatened to fall. He slowed to a walking pace, his ivory-tinted hand meeting the light purple print on the side of his face. Dan walked aimlessly through the dark alleyways of his small town.

Stopping and looking around every time he heard a shuffle behind him, Dan took his phone out of his pocket to check the time. He sighed, realizing he still had an hour and a half before first block. Dan turned on his heel and started to jog to the main street.

"Hey kid! You alright? Ya seemed a little lost in space." Dan turned his head to meet the worried glance of a nearby store owner. Dan shook his head yes and started to walk in the direction of his school. He kept his head down, focusing all his attention to the intense game of Flappy Bird he started. Dan heard the roar of a nearby engine coming to life, causing his head to snap up in fright. Dan continued to whip his head around looking for the source of the noise. His eyes landing on the only two people who could make this day worse: James and Kurk. Dan turned around and broke into a sprint, running straight for the school. He didn't bother to turn around when he heard heavy steps behind him. Dan ran and ran, trying to get to the school gates before James or Kurk could grab onto his jacket. As he rounded the corner, he slipped on a patch of ice. Dan fell backwards, grimacing when his head hit the cool pavement.

"Well, well, well, look who we have here. Kurk, it's our little Dandelion! Why were you running away? That hurts our feelings Danny," James mocked, wiping a fake tear.

"I-I was just-"

"Being a pansy? Oh Dan, what shall we do with you?" James interrupted. Kurk burst out laughing, James glared at him, causing Kurk's mouth to snap shut. With one swift movement James lifted Dan by the hood of his jacket and pinned him against the wall.

"Hey Kurk, why don't we have a little fun with our sweet Danielle." James mocked.

"It's Daniel." Dan snapped. James moved off Dan slightly, pulling him off the wall. James forcefully shoved him back into the wall, earning a small grunt in return.

"How about you shut up when I'm talking to you. Kurk, would you like to do the honors?" James stepped back from Dan, Kurk taking his place. Dan could smell the cigarettes wafting off him, he tried to suppress a gag.

Kurk stepped closer, whispering in Dan's ear, "Just go with it, I won't actually hurt you." Dan could feel his breath on his face as Kurk stepped back a little. Kurk pulled his fist back as if he was going to hit Dan in the stomach. Kurk brought his fist down stopping inches from Dan's actual flesh. Dan toppled over, acting like he was in pain. Kurk repeatedly did this, James looking at them with a satisfied grin on his face.

"Alright, Kurk, that should be enough, don't want the teachers to get suspicious," James called. Kurk dropped his hands off of Dan. Slightly pushing him so Dan would get the hint to fall over. Dan obeyed, falling over to show he was in pain. James and Kurk walked off laughing. Dan waited until he couldn't hear their bickering anymore before standing up and starting his walk to school again. Dan pulled out his phone, checking the time. He still had forty-five minutes before first block started. He reached around in his bag until he found the tangled wires of his headphones. He turned on his music to block out the vehicles that now over-took the streets. Dan started to hum, trying his best to not break into song. He bobbed his head to the beat, scanning his eyes over the stores and restaurants as he walked. He took in the graffiti on the walls and the fliers that laid crumpled on the pavement. Dan's eyes scanned upwards as he approached the school. Kids were spread throughout the courtyard, talking or playing on their phones. Dan searched the yard for his blue-eyed friend. He eventually found him sitting with his back to the wall, doing Friday's math assignment.

"Hey Pete! Slacking off are we?" Dan called.

"Oh piss off Dan. Not everyone can be on top of their work like you." Pete joked, rolling his eyes.

"Just saying, a little studying goes a long way." Dan sassed. Pete shrugged his shoulders in response, causing Dan to laugh.

"We should probably start walking towards first block, shall I escort thy maiden to her lesson?" Pete teased.

Dan playfully punched Pete's shoulder. "Ha. Ha. Very funny. Let's go, dork."

Pete stood up and followed Dan to the doors. Dan pulled the door open, stepping to the side and bowing with his arm out to allow Pete to go in first. Pete shoulder checked Dan as he walked in, making Dan stumble.

He corrected his balance and scoffed as he walked into the corridor. He looked around and notice all eyes were on them.

"I think that's our queue to blast. Let's go Dan." Pete mumbled to his friend. Dan nodded and followed Pete to their section of the corridor.

"Well my friend, this is the part where we split. I'll see you afterschool," Dan said to Pete. Pete nodded and walked into the classroom across the hall. Dan sighed and went into his class. He took his usual seat in the back, putting his head onto the desk.

Dan cheered as the last bell rang. Today had been boring, as James and Kurk had their daily 'beating' earlier this morning. The only eventful thing that had happened was the school stoner had gotten caught dealing marijuana to the head cheerleader. Dan gathered his belongings and walked to the front gate of the school, where he promised to meet Pete.

"Hey freak, let's get going. My mom needs me home by two-thirty," Pete shouted as he jogged to where Dan was standing.

"Agreed, my dad called me during lunch. The funny thing though is that he was sober, he said he had something really important to tell me about my mom," Dan told him. Pete started to walk without warning, Dan stumbled as he tried to catch up. They walked in a comfortable silence, each thinking about something different.

"Well, this is my stop, see you tomorrow Danny boy," Pete joked as he walked up his driveway.

"Okay Petey, see you tomorrow," Dan called back.

"Stop calling me Petey!"

"Not until you stop calling me Danny boy!"

"Never Danny boy!" Pete yelled.

"Fine, bye Petey!" Pete huffed in defeat as he opened his front door. Dan laughed at his annoyance and continued his walk. He took a few side streets as cut-throughs to his neighborhood. Dan scanned his eyes over his worn-down house, he noticed that for once his dad's car was parked in the driveway.

To say Dan was nervous is an understatement. He cautiously approached the door, wiggling the knob slightly.

"Dad? Are you in here?" Dan called as he stepped into the living room.

"In here, Dan," his dad called from the kitchen. Dan took his time walking to him.

"So, what did you need to tell me?" Dan questioned.

"Firstly, I wanted to apologize for this morning, I stepped out of line. Next thing is, I haven't been completely honest about your mother's death. I never told you why she was out driving so late." His dad started.

"Go on," Dan stated.

"To start off, her death was completely my fault and-and I'm starting to admit that not only to myself but to everyone else." His dad's eyes started to tear up. "There are no words to express how sorry I am for keeping this from you. I'm so sorry for everything I've put you through the past three years. I always used alcohol as a coping mechanism for what I've done, to you and to your mother. This morning was a wakeup call to get my life together. Before you got home, I took it upon myself to turn myself into the police. I-"

"What did you do that was bad enough to call the police?" Dan interrupted.

"I, um, I was and still am dealing illegal substances, for verbally abusing you, for drunk driving on multiple occasions, and the list goes on," his dad answered.

"Let me guess- Mom found out about your little side job and got upset. Left the house and that's when the car hit her?" Dan joked. His dad weakly nodded his head, his tears now freely flowing down his cheeks.

"Oh my god, I was joking. Is that the actual reason?"

"Yes, and I-I was going to tell you eventually but, I didn't have the heart. I'm-" The doorbell rung, interrupting his father's speech. A constant pounding soon followed another ring. Dan watched his dad walk over to the door, wondering if it was the police arriving to take him away. He could hear mumbling but couldn't make out the words.

"Dan, could you come here please?" his father called. Dan made his way towards the front door where two police officers stood waiting.

"What's up?" Dan asked.

"Dan, I'm off to my temporary life behind bars. I won't get a trial, seeing as I am the one who turned myself in. You're welcome to visit if you're ever in need of a chat. I'll miss you. Goodbye for now," his dad said.

Dan watched as the officers put his dad in handcuffs and tuck him into the back of the police car. Dan sighed as he shut the door. He reached for his phone, texting Pete about what just happened. He grabbed his house key and started his walk to his mother's grave. Dan's mind wandered to this morning, sitting by her grave, talking to her about his problems. Even then, he wouldn't have imagined himself watching his only parent being ripped away from him. Dan doesn't care about what he did earlier, the only thing he can focus on is the thought of his closest relative being taken away, out of his clutches. He snapped himself out of that mindset. Instead Dan tried to focus on the crunch of the snow under his shoe. Dan sat at the foot of her grave, wishing he could hug her one last time.

"Uh, hey, Mom. I just came to tell you that um, dad got arrested. He actually turned himself in for everything that he's done. In all honesty Mom, I wish it was him lying six feet under instead of you. He's done so many horrible things." Dan paused to wipe his eyes. "He hit me today, this morning though. There's a light bruise on my cheek. But that's not important. I just can't wrap my head around the fact that everyone has been ripped away from me. You, dad, what's next, Pete? I just want someone who I can confide in, someone I can love. I want you back." Dan leaned over trying to quiet his sobs. "I know it's impossible but, please, I beg of you, come back to me."

Requiem

Barbara Dukeman, Teacher

Spiraling solely outward-bound
She raged against the dying of the light
Floating backward, voices cannot follow

Arms outstretched, reaching up –
A guiding hand –
Into the past
Where recollected figures,
Foggy in her memory,
Provide a welcome respite on her final journey home.

A daughter, left behind,
Through half-shed filial tears
Sees little but that journey –

A separation –

Preparation for the future
Waiting for reunion:
The final meeting
In the twilight kingdom

Until then,
Dear Mother, go gentle
And once again you'll dance with dad –
A dervish without agony or sorrow
Forever sing familiar songs
Into that good night may you rest in peace

*In itinere finivit
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine*

Here I Stand

Sean Coffey, Junior

Here I stand,
Before the withered bridge,
One more step,
Until I enter the ridge.

Here I stand,
Clinging onto the rails,
Just one slip,
And I will surely fail.

Here I stand,
Fearfully observing the height,
Balancing on a strand,
Living in fright.

Here I stand,
It's now or never,
I must vanquish these demons,
Or become stuck here forever.

Here I stand,
Only a few steps further,
These voices in my head,
Are now only a murmur.

Here I stand,
Almost reaching the end, No fear anymore,
For hope is my friend.

Here I stand,
On the other side,
No longer afraid, with no need to hide.

Here I stand,
Continuing my travel,
For once I am excited,
For my story to unravel.



The Meaning of Friendship

Morgan Johnson, Freshman

Although life gets rough
Because this world is full of hate
Consider lightening up
Don't have so much doubt
Even at your lowest point
Friends will always have your back
Good bonds are always healthy
Helping you through all life's problems
If you're going through heartbreak or
Just some hard times with family
Know that friends always have a solution
Letting you vent to them or
Maybe taking you out for the night
Never will they leave you upset
Or depressed to the point of breaking
People like that are irreplaceable and make you
Question if you are worthy of them
Remember that if you're a worthy friend
Someone like you would do the same for them
Trust plays a huge factor, though
Underneath sometimes lies a lie
Very disappointing, but
Worry less, you'll know which one's aren't using you
Your real friends will take care of you if you face a fake.

I am not a Poet

Harry Andrews, Junior

The fact that I'm not a poet,
Is a fact that stands true,

I don't try to show off that I'm a writer;
Throwing words at a reader like some, hoping they
grip onto something in the mess.
There is no rhythm here, nor poetic structuring:
Any iambic pentameter, tetrameter, or whatever
meter naught to be found in the mess of prose.

The fact that I'm not a poet,
is a fact that should be obvious.
And if that point is not gotten by now, one must be
actually daft.

The final words don't rhythm in any stanza, nor
hold any relation that is sound.
The exception, of course, being the last two lines,
but that was for irony's sake.
And even then, they are separated by a block of
text, about the lack of poets, so it's a stretch.

The fact that I'm not a poet, is as true as the value
of diamonds.
The words are chosen based on the whim of the
writer,
Leaving it sans any feeling of flow, or of rhythm.
The imagery is poor at best, comparisons to
crystal abundant.
I, the author, am running out of words about syntax
now, and don't have anything else to say,
Except that,

The fact that I'm not a poet,
is a fact that should be clear, because I'm the one
writing.
And writers always know everything about their
pieces, even when they don't.
Because authority creates the best types of
arguments.
But, if one has not gotten the point yet, and needs
it bashed further in their head,

The fact that I'm not a poet,
Should stand as true as the poor use of repetition
in these two stanza beginnings,
Having been done without a purpose, and only
being a simple copy and paste of a line.

Now, without any doubts, how non-poetic these
lines are should be clear.
As clear as diamonds, in fact, abundant in
warehouses letting out tiny amounts at a time.
"But wait," a random disembodied voice asks,
trying to convince me I'm a poet.
"What about the bashing line? Or the crystal line?
Isn't that a metaphor? A simile? Some type of
rhetorical device found in poems?
There has to be something in here! Writing doesn't
exist without dissection!
You're a poet, admit it!"

Ah, that fun thing. For that, let me ask a question
back.
If one digs that deep in a faulted attempt to find
meaning in something,
Pulling out a simple comparison to make a point
contrasting the entire piece,
in a piece singularly dedicated to saying there is
nothing there, nor to look,
Don't you think that... there is perhaps a bigger
issue at play?

...
No response, as to be expected from voices
coming from nowhere.

So, now that we have reached the end, my good
friends,
I hope it stands true to you that I am not a poet.
If you are still not convinced, I wish you luck in
trying to dissect this piece.
For there is nothing here to be found, and what
little there is,
Stands only to mock the same people trying to rip
apart pieces for a hidden meaning.

Good day, or good night, if for some reason this is
what is considered bed-time reading.
I wish you luck on this search for hidden meanings,
if you feel the urge to embark on it.
As this is not a poem,
nor am I a poet,
and this was simply a waste of the last several
minutes of your time.

Eyes of Heaven

Barbara Dukeman, Teacher

On the serene beach shore of the fishing village Somnium Stilla, a young boy with long, wavy, white hair was laying down in the sand with his hands behind his head. Another young boy, Lux Fugaces, looked at the stars in the night sky, humming a relaxing melody as the waves were pulled on and off the shore.

"Lux, why do you think there are so many stars in the sky?" A girl with sienna eyes, short umber hair, and a pale complexion asked monotonously.

"That is simple, the stars are the eyes of the Gods. They shine bright, so everyone knows they are there, watching over all of us." Lux said lackadasicaly.

"What if the Gods you speak of aren't real? What would you do then?"

"I know they are real, because I believe them to be. If I believe in the Gods, they will never forsake me, and they will never abandon me. If the Gods were not real, this world wouldn't exist. Impius, what do you think?"

Impius gave a sigh. "I believe the stars in the sky exist just because they can. Many things in this universe are given a reason to exist, but some things like stars, don't."

Lux got up, yawned, and turned to Impius. "Isn't that a sad way of thinking? Stars are so beautiful and bright, they just are so far from our reach, yet they still are so vibrant."

"Beauty is an opinion. Stars are indeed bright, but they only emit energy. Nothing more, nothing less."

Lux started to walk past her and said, "I won't try to change your mind, that would be too much work. Maybe we will never know what the stars truly are, but I will always believe them to be Gods."

As Lux finished speaking, two stars fell from the sky. The closer they got to the ground, the

the closer they got to each other. The two stars soon became one and crashed in the distance. The ground shook with tremendous force, the waves slammed against the shore with great power, and animals started to run away from the impact zone.

Lux and Impius are sent straight into the ground from the force of the impact. They both sat up with a puzzled expression.

Impius turned to Lux and said, "I'm quite surprised to see that you aren't scared, a normal person would panic."

Lux proceeded to get up and helped Impius up, before responding with, "There is no reason to fear something I don't know. The fear of the unknown doesn't exist in my eyes, the known is much scarier than you may think."

"What an unusual way of thinking."

Lux smiled and said, "The same can be said about you."

Impius sighed. "Well that doesn't matter at this moment, we should investigate where your supposed 'Eyes of the Gods' landed," Impius said as she headed towards the direction of the impact.

Lux grabbed her arm and said, "Wait!"

Impius stopped. "Why are you stopping me? This is our chance to confirm whether the Gods you speak of are real, unless you don't actually believe in the Gods."

Lux said with agitation, "I do believe in the Gods! That's one of the reasons why I don't think we should go."

"What do you mean 'One of the Reasons'?" Impius turns back to look at Lux with a stern look.

"The Gods could be upset, so it could be dangerous."

She grabbed him by the shoulders and said, "Listen Lux, sometimes we have to put our concerns to the side and explore the dangerous, explore the wicked, and explore for answers. This doesn't just happen any day, it happened once, and that would be today. We may not have a lot of time, so let's go and seek those answers and make the unknown, known."

Lux dipped his head down and thought for a moment. After a few seconds passed by, he said, "You are right Impius. This is the prime time to seek answers and find out if the Gods are real, but there are bigger concerns, is our village alright? We can't

can't just run off and abandon our village, we must see if everyone is alright. Even if we go to the impact zone first, we could be too late in saving our town from a danger we didn't know about."

Impius nodded her head. "Lux, you know I don't care about anyone in the village. Luckily for you, I want to make sure my home is alright. I accept your proposal to go to check on the village first, but after that, we shall visit the impact zone. Do you agree to these terms Lux?"

Lux nodded his head and they both begun to run off to their village.

Along the way, Impius said, "If you break our deal, you know I must end your life."

Lux laughed nervously. "Now is not the time to joke. We have to hurry to village before anything bad might happen."

They arrived in their village five minutes later. All the villagers are gathered in the center of the village for a group meeting. Impius turned to Lux and said, "The villagers are fine, and my house appears to be in good condition. Let's head out now."

"Yeah, I guess you are right. Let's head out," Lux said, relieved.

As Lux and Impius left, all the villagers are turned into big, twisting trees. The tree's bark is an ashy white and the leaves are yellow like butter. The once crowded village was now a mysterious forest full of trees of wonder.

Lux said to Impius as they headed towards to the impact zone, "Do you think Noctis will be excited when I tell her about our little adventure?"

"She is your sister, so it's very likely. Her love for science will make her want to pounce on this information like a tiger does to its prey."

Lux chuckled. "You are right, she really loves science. She was introduced to the world of science by our mother and since then, she has focused on continuing our mother's work. Noctis has been working twice as hard since our parents died and since then, she has been clinging onto me."

"It's only natural to cling to family, especially if that family can meet the same fate as their predecessors."

Lux expression softened and saddened, before he said, "I won't meet the same fate that my parents as long as I don't go down into the ruins in the mine. I know how much she loves me, and I love her just as much, so I don't want to leave her all alone and sad. If anything happens to me, can you watch over her for me?"

Impius shook her head in denial and said, "I can't fulfill that request. I have no reason to as it doesn't benefit me in any way. That question also makes it seem like you plan to die."

"I have no plan on dying. I will live a long and prosperous life and make sure my sister becomes a famous scientist that changes the world... Also, you could have been a little nice and said you would think about the offer."

"Sorry Lux, but I don't live my life to be nice. I live it for my own gain." Before Lux could say anything else, Impius grabbed him by the arm and ran full speed in the opposite direction.

Lux shouts as he is being pulled, "What are you doing?! We are going the wrong way!"

Impius looked around quickly until she found a nearby cave. She then jumped in the cave, dragging Lux in with her. Lux landed on his face, while Impius landed on her feet.

Lux pulled his face up, rubbing his nose and saying, "Oww!"

Impius leaned back, closed her eyes, and says, "We will be here for a while, it's currently too dangerous for us to leave this cave at this time."

Lux stopped rubbing his nose and looked at her with confusion. "What do you mean we will be here for a little while? Even though I could go for a nap right now, we are in a hurry."

Impius sighed and pointed her finger towards the cave entrance. "You know I don't like wasting time, but there is nothing we can do at this moment. It's raining glass outside and if we were out there a moment more, we would have been dead."

Lux's face went from that of confusion to that of pure shock. "D-D-Did you say it was raining... glass? There is no way."

Lux proceeded to get up and walk to the entrance of the cave and then stopped and fell back onto his rear.

Impius turned on her side, facing away from the cave. "I told you Lux, but sometimes you are too stubborn to listen, that will lead to your death one day."

Impius yawns, "I'm going to take a nap. You should too, you consume too much energy as it is."

Lux looked a little upset by Impius's comment but brushed it off, before then proceeding to look at the rain of glass. Each piece of glass crashes into the ground like it was water, but unlike water, it didn't make any noise and disappeared after it shattered on the ground. Lux soon fell asleep, due to the silence that the rain of glass had brought. After about an hour, the rain of glass stops and Impius woke up, stood up, and stretched. Impius walked over to Lux and looked down at him as he lays across the floor sprawled out. She let a small smile crawl onto her face as she then pulled her leg back and launched a powerful kick into his side.

Lux was thrown outside the cave with the kick, and screamed, "Oww!"

Impius laughs like she was the devil itself, her smile going from ear to ear. Lux remained on the ground, rolling in the mud like a wounded warrior. He held his side tightly and asked in a pain-stricken voice, "Why did you do that?!"

Impius pulled her finger to one of her eyes and wiped away a tear, her laughter slowed down, and she said, "I love hurting you, didn't you know that?"

"I totally forgot that you are a sadistic person."

Impius's laughter finally stopped, and she said coldly, "It would be a good idea to remember something like that, if not, you may go to sleep and never wake up again."

"Yeah, I will keep this mind. I want to be alive. Knowing you, you would probably make me suffer slowly until I finally died."

Impius begun to walk toward their objective. "You are deathly correct."

Lux got up and followed her. They see many anomalies around them, like the ocean shooting water droplets into the air as if it was raining backwards, plants turned into pure metal, and the sky had become a mixture of various pinks, greens, and yellows. The animals that couldn't escape were left frozen in time. There were many other bizarre occurrences Impius and Lux encountered, but they didn't stop for any

of them, because they had a goal and were in a rush. They soon arrived on the outer rim of the crater left by the impact, a bright glow emanating from the inside.

Impius turned to Lux and asked, "Do you still believe that a God is in this crater?"

Lux smirked. "At first I thought it might be a God, but after seeing everything that has happened along the way, I now know it has to be God in the crater. I don't know what else it could be besides a God."

Impius's face looked as emotionless as ever.

"We will see what awaits us in this crater. Are you scared?"

Lux's smirk turns into a big smile. "Yes! I am! But I won't allow my fear to keep me from the truth."

"That's all I had to ask, let us see the facts with our own eyes."

Lux's smile faded as he nodded, and then they proceeded forward. Once they entered the crater, they saw it filled with nothing but flowers and a bunch of woodland creatures roaming. In the center of the crater was a woman in a dress as white as pure snow, and a bunch of gold jewelry with rubies in them. Her skin was tanner than most people in the area, like those raised in the desert. Her hair was long, scarlet red, with black highlights. The woman stood in the center, facing away from Lux and Impius. Lux and Impius carefully approached her, and as they got closer, they walked around to the front of her, so they can face her directly. This woman seemed to be exceptionally beautiful, muscular, and tall.

Before Impius and Lux got to ask this woman a question, the woman spoke strongly, "Hello there. I will not harm you two."

Lux stood there confused. "How did you know we were here? Your eyes have been closed the entire time?"

Impius said disappointedly, "She must have heard us."

The woman smiled and said, "I found you not by sound or sight, but with your spirit."

Impius said in a harsh tone, "That isn't logical, spirit isn't real. You're clearly making this stuff up as you go."

The woman laughed. "You must be a non-believer! Spirits do exist, but it takes a great amount of spiritual energy to even see it. The amount of spiritual energy is determined when a living creature is born, and there are three ways to increase one's spirit. Before I tell you two anymore, I think introductions are

in order," the woman opens her bright, saffron eyes and said, "my name is Fervidam. Goddess of passion, fire, and spirit."

Impius scoffed, "A Goddess? You must be joking. There is no such thing as a God or a Goddess."

Lux ran in front of Impius and bowed his head. "My name is Lux Fugaces and I am a pious follower of the Gods. I would like to apologize for my friend's rudeness, she never believed in the Gods, her name is Impius."

Fervidam smiled. "Thank you for your kindness, I could tell that both of you are telling the truth, because of your spirit. The spirit always tells the truth, no matter what. I also forgive your friend, there are many non-believers in the world."

Impius looked down at Lux as if he was a filthy peasant begging for money. "Lux, stop being such a fool. Your faith has been a waste of your own time and most importantly, my time."

Fervidam frowned. "Why are you being so mean to him? Isn't he your friend?"

Impius said coldly, "A friend? Of course, he isn't my friend. I just keep him nearby, so I can use him for personal gain. I have no friends, because they don't benefit me, and they hold me back."

Fervidam looked utterly disgusted. "You are not a non-believer, you are evil itself. You must be eliminated." She outstretched her hand in front of Impius and light began to emanate from it.

Impius was surprised by the Goddess' actions and tried to block what is about to come with her arms.

Lux stood up and said, "Please spare Impius! She may be cruel at times, but I care about her. She may never have seen me as a friend, but I knew that! Please don't hurt her!" Lux cried out profusely.

Fervidam puts her hand down and sighs. "You really are a very good-natured person if you would throw down your life for someone who doesn't care about you. I just came up with a better idea that involves the both of you."

Fervidam spoke a small statement in an unknown language and pointed towards her finger at Impius. Impius's irises turn red, her

skin turns into an Aegean blue, she grows small horns and her hair turns white.

Impius looked down at herself. "You changed my appearance, so what?"

Fervidam said in a booming voice, "I have made your body reflect your soul. You have one year to find a way to cure yourself, if you fail you will lose your soul and become a mindless savage. It's up to you to believe me or not, I do not care." Fervidam turned toward Lux, kissed his forehead, and smiled. "Lux I have blessed you, the signs of my blessings will become apparent over time. I want you to help purify Impius, and if you are successful, I will reward you."

Lux put his hands on his forehead. "I'm not worthy of such a blessing, but I will not fail you. I'm not just doing this for my sake, or your sake, but also for Impius's fate."

Fervidam nodded her head in acknowledgment. "I know you won't disappoint me, I have great faith in you. I will now take my leave," Fervidam begun to walk away, but then stopped. "Oh wait, I will give you a hint to help you on your quest. You will find help from a self-proclaimed God. You will know who this individual is, once you meet them." Fervidam then vanished in a pillar of light.

Lux shouted out at the heavens and waved, "Thank you Fervidam, I hope you watch over us from the sky with your Eyes of Heaven"

Impius looked at Lux with confusion. "Eyes of Heaven?"

Lux turned and smiled at her. "I said before that I think the stars are the eyes of the Gods, another name for the sky is the heavens. Put them together, you get the Eyes of Heaven."

Impius rolled her eyes. "Whatever, we need to start heading out."

Lux's face lit up. "Does that mean you believe what she says?"

"Of course not, but I don't want to take the risk. Enough chit-chat, we don't have a single minute to waste."

They both began to walk out the crater and head towards the future, which happened to be the name of the road they were taking.

Lux ran in front of Impius and bowed his head. "My name is Lux Fugaces and I am a pious follower of the Gods. I would like to apologize for my friend's rudeness, she never believed in the Gods, her name is Impius."

Fervidam smiled. "Thank you for your kindness, I could tell that both of you are telling the truth, because of your spirit. The spirit always tells the truth, no matter what. I also forgive your friend, there are many non-believers in the world."

Impius looked down at Lux as if he was a filthy peasant begging for money. "Lux, stop being such a fool. Your faith has been a waste of your own time and most importantly, my time."

Fervidam frowned. "Why are you being so mean to him? Isn't he your friend?"

Impius said coldly, "A friend? Of course, he isn't my friend. I just keep him nearby, so I can use him for personal gain. I have no friends, because they don't benefit me, and they hold me back."

Fervidam looked utterly disgusted. "You are not a non-believer, you are evil itself. You must be eliminated." She outstretched her hand in front of Impius and light began to emanate from it.

Impius was surprised by the Goddess' actions and tried to block what is about to come with her arms.

Lux stood up and said, "Please spare Impius! She may be cruel at times, but I care about her. She may never have seen me as a friend, but I knew that! Please don't hurt her!" Lux cried out profusely.

Fervidam puts her hand down and sighs.

"You really are a very good-natured person if you would throw down your life for someone who doesn't care about you. I just came up with a better idea that involves the both of you."

Fervidam spoke a small statement in an unknown language and pointed towards her finger at Impius. Impius's irises turn red, her skin turns into an Aegean blue, she grows small horns and her hair turns white.

Impius looked down at herself. "You changed my appearance, so what?" Her skin turns into an Aegean blue, she grows small horns and her hair turns white.

Impius looked down at herself. "You changed my appearance, so what?"

Fervidam said in a booming voice, "I have made your body reflect your soul. You have one year to find a way to cure yourself, if you fail you will lose your soul and become a mindless savage. It's up to you to believe me or not, I do not care," Fervidam turned toward Lux, kissed his forehead, and smiled. "Lux I have blessed you, the signs of my blessings will become apparent over time. I want you to help purify Impius, and if you are successful, I will reward you."

Lux put his hands on his forehead, "I'm not worthy of such a blessing, but I will not fail you. I'm not just doing this for my sake, or your sake, but also for Impius's fate."

Fervidam nodded her head in acknowledgement. "I know you won't disappoint me, I have great faith in you. I will now take my leave," Fervidam began to walk away, but then stopped. "Oh wait, I will give you a hint to help you on your quest. You will find help from a self-proclaimed God. You will know who this individual is, once you meet them." Fervidam then vanishes in a pillar of light.

Lux shouted out at the heavens and waved, "Thank you, Fervidam, I hope you watch over us from the sky with your Eyes of Heaven."

Impius looked at Lux with confusion. "Eyes of Heaven?"

Lux turned and smiled at her, "I said before that I think the stars are the eyes of the Gods, another name for the sky is the heavens. Put them together, you get the Eyes of Heaven."

Impius rolled her eyes. "Whatever, we need to start heading out."

Lux's face lit up. "Does that mean you believe what she says?"

"Of course not, but I don't want to take the risk. Enough chit-chat, we don't have a single minute to waste."

They both began to walk out the crater and head towards the future, which happened to be the name of the road they were taking.

Watercolor Landscape

Kayla Hoak, Senior



Moonlight

Keira Wierzbowski, Sophomore



Woodblock Print

Kayla Hoak, Senior



The Legend of the Blue Sea

Janna Veneracion, Senior



Graze

Marshall Butter



Human Inflation

Marshall Butler, Sophomore



Ice Cream Buddies

Abbie Good, Sophomore



Lunar

Colby Geney, Junior



Turtle Life

Natalie Ortiz, Sophomore



Dangers of the Endangered

Aubrey Rodriguez, Junior



3D Art

A Collection

1



2



3



4



1- Reily Fletcher,
Freshman

2- Taylor Bauman,
Freshman

3 & 4- Jonica May,
Sophomore

5- Sydney Fortney,
Freshman

5

