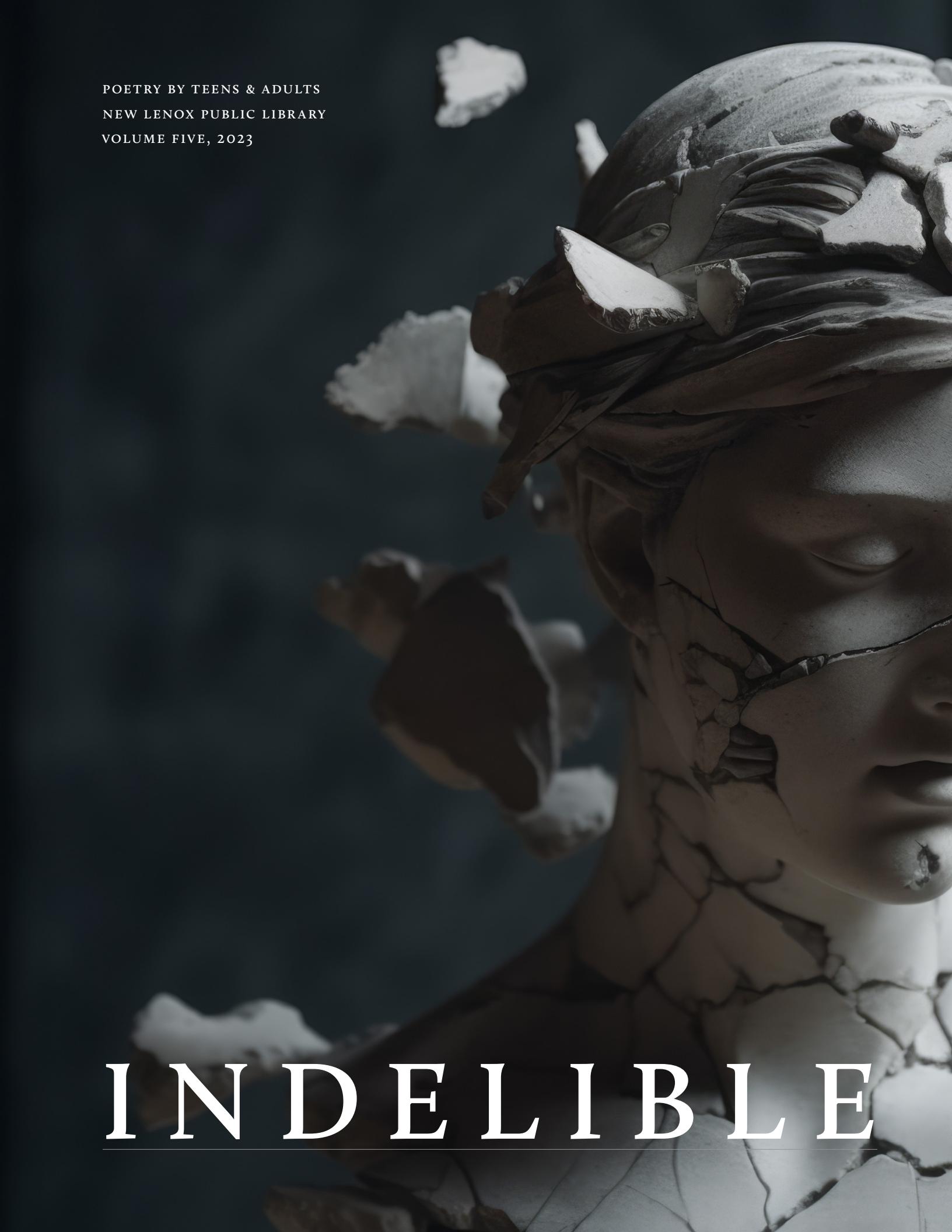


POETRY BY TEENS & ADULTS
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INDELIBLE

/in' deləb(ə)l/

adjective

1. (of ink or a pen) making marks that cannot be removed
2. not able to be forgotten or removed

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Solitude

Josie Hillegass | 7th-9th Grade

If you were in the past, you would be dirtied denim,
And oversized hoodie.
Standing under powdered moonlight,
A cigarette dancing between your fingertips.
Under the street lamps,
You observe the petrichor in your veins and the melomania in your mind.
You lay down on the hood of your car and catch stars with your hands until sunrise,
(No sleep, as you promised)
You are alone.
Meanwhile, the boy in my class who reminds me of you has pulled a glass bottle from his desk,
His teeth like marbles as he drinks,
Shoves the empty glass shards out the window when he is finished,
And a piece of it finds its way into the rough edges of your fingertips.
You take it home and use it as a guitar pick because you are out of uses for some things broken,
You are out of uses for yourself.
Therapeutic metals shines like a national melody,
And when you wake up the next morning you forget how many days have passed.
You instead count time in decks of cards, tears and hand-holds, ripped paperbacks and forgotten postcards,
Your life is supposed to be meaningless,
But you are starting to find the meaning.
You are writing stories in your mind, reframing memories, recounting losses.
You are amidst a quiet life,
You are small,
And you are beginning to like it that way.

Melancholy Hill

Dylan Hurley | 7th-9th Grade

I sit on top of my melancholy hill
Below is a long winding river
it is something that I only do not fear
But it is an accumulation of my tears
On the top is a tree with a little bluebill
It sits atop while I try to find a way my heart can be filled

Nothing on here can grow, no plants below us
But there is one plant, a lotus
I don't know what it means
But it gives me good dreams
It has other plants around it, like some beautiful purple crocus
On this hill it is always winter
But when I am near the lotus I feel warm
And it gives me hope
And my little lotus helps me cope

With the feelings of depression and anxiety
I visit it every day
and there is always something good that it will say
It fills me with happy thoughts not ones of sadness and wow
But with things that make me glow, with hope of better days

Maybe my hill doesn't need to be melancholy
Maybe it can be full of happiness and holly
I could change the river, strip it of my tears
And fill it with things that make me jolly
Stop thinking about the bad and focus on the good
Finally I was on top of my hill and stood
I can overcome my sadness and the bad
And think of all the good times I've had
And what helped me was my lotus, my hope, my one thing that filled me with happiness
Finding that for yourself is priceless
It can be a friend, a hobby, anything that gives you the motivation to keep going!
Now I can tear down the sadness and put the melancholy aflame
And "Melancholy Hill" will no longer be its name...

The Never Ending Night

Azlynn Witthaus-Strait | 7th-9th Grade

A frosty night, a night so quiet but bright.
I couldn't see anything this night, but the bright light.
There was nothing in sight, it was so bright.
I walked and walked but there was nothing
But, the bright frosty night.
I searched and searched for something.
But, there was nothing.
There came a breeze which made me unable to see.
That made me realize, the bright night was not so bright.

Within The Moment

Kaelyn Ver | 10th-12th Grade

The still dew drops that glisten

The still whisper of serenity

The feeling that takes over my being

The love a little girl once felt

The wistful memories of morning walks as a baby

The endless bowls of banana oatmeal

The warmth that caressed

The morning sunrise

The comfort hidden within

The faded skirts of the horizon

The yearn to chase the stars again

The tingle to catch fireflies as

The bonfire cracks heat behind you

The desire to taste a smore for

The first time

The nervous ache in your heart

The crash of rain ringing in your body

The rainbows growing thinner each storm

The butterflies that wrenched your stomach

The future in front of your eyes

The affliction though now is

The dust I ever so swiftly brush off my shoulders

The sun shines once again

The world caves in with a hug

The dew drops still glisten

It makes me sit in tranquility

It overflows my worries

It exhausts all the distress

It sits within her spirits

It reminisces the geese in the pond

It was healing to the soul

It's hands upon mine

It allayed my panics

It illusioned what the world had to hide

It sought peace in me

It gave me hope that I could dream

It flickered in between my fingers

It was moments you never wanted to end

It awakened your senses

It felt like love was in everything

It doesn't drag anymore

It's pitter patter is no more

It seems the colors are now more vibrant

It now flourishes within you

It presents itself with promises

It's disappeared

It becomes lighter each time

It brings happiness in each moment

It grabs me by the hand once more

It's endless love never dries

self-sacrifice for a healed world

Ella Hansel | 10th-12th Grade

From the words of my mother, a question—
“Have you ever held the door open for someone else?”
Of which she meant not metaphorically, but even so,
Lead me to ponder whether it was the verbatim, the words themselves, or the fallacy of her “truth”
That I loathed more.

It seems that to others, weary arms are warrants for delinquency,
And unbroken backs are only a product of negligence
because it’s said that “hard work is the fruit of all construct”,
And in the tongue of the system, “kicking your feet back
implies you never raised a light to the flame in the first place.
So if you’re deaf, why not listen?
And if you’re blind, simply open your eyes
For society should not hold doors open for you
So long as you remain idle,
And sooner or later, you’ll find yourself cozied in cardboard
With a dagger pressed against your neck
Or printing your final note while the echoes of your refuge
pat your shoulder, cradle your tears
And remind you that there’s nothing left for you anymore.”

Humanity has torn only your sins from your legacy
Gesturing to each in a stance of judgment,
And as you close your eyes, yearning to vanish,
They’ll plead of you, and demand from you,
“Why must you wave the devil’s flag
And yet clothe yourself in a saint’s robes?”
Now, for the first time, your hand wavers at the door
that your mother always told you to hold.

You’ll reminisce to heydays of past yonder
Feet poking at wood chips, sight drifting toward the clouds
Where your peers will chime that, “If you count to a hundred, we’ll all run away
And in due time, when you discover that each door has a lock,
Latches that tie you out of fates and write you out of wills,
We’ll wait for you in a coffin of the bygone
Craving a day of which your ignorance betrays you,

Counting each tear that sneaks down your face while you fumble past digits
Splinters now goring your soles like thorns, pinning you in situ,
Until finally, the clouds whisk away,
and you find yourself met with a desolate black sky.”

It leaves you to ponder
Why lifespans are sentenced to a hundred,
But numbers launch past infinity,
And why you could never count to a hundred
Because your voice silenced at “sixteen”.

So, bloodied heels grazing the floor,
You tell yourself- or was it only ever me, all along?
That there's nothing left for me anymore.
Dear society, does the parting of life prove a message of escapism?
I quietly shut the door behind me.

Views

Sophia Baczak | 10th-12th Grade

Anchored to your sail.
My movements contort to your waves.
A few feet from the edge.

JUMP

Do I let you harbor my splintered limbs?
Your breaths stirring my insecurities.
So I may smooth my figure to fit your frame.
How can I leap into the surface of deaths waters;
when all I remember is the times you took from me.
Even clothed I am left bare under the scrutiny of your unsatisfied stare.

You BELIEVE your suggestions will turn the tides of my callused mind;
but all they do is aid in your ideas for my complexion.

Handing over broken pieces.
Each carved out of my stitched body to fit your puzzle.
Here's a corset you'll look lighter.

aye aye captain

Shall I salute you for your gratitude or rather curtsy?
I forget you like girly; or was it curvy?
Here let me dive into your eyes so that I can see the ideal me.
Maybe then I'll finally be free.

Free?
A phrase I have not learned to pronounce.
From birth, the light was out from the old lighthouse.
My mind could not navigate the sea in society's view.
Set up to force my conformity and succession of predetermined rules.

Boys don't cry; girls remember to hide.
keeping me chained to a mantle over your fireplace.
The essence of the word is unfamiliar.
Even as I bleed out what's left of me that is mine.
I feel exposed as my bones can't hide from your further adjustments.
And as my flesh churns like butter from my wrists.
I scream out for just one wish.

People!

DON'T YOU SEE?

We all are being objectified.

Decades of one image ingrained in our mind.

Portrayed in photos where we compare, compare, COMPARE.

Who's better you or I?

How can you not see the ways communities

have made us a manikin for the betterment of their view?

Shall I pose for you too?

Position me in place; so I can finally be enough for you.

NO

The day women aren't held down by a man's brand.

And you don't fear sending your children to school;

guessing if theirs is the one to be shot up next.

Is the day they'll hear us.

There'll be no more tucking falsities behind a child's ear.

Or added lies of equality within all earth's roots.

NO

From then on they'll see us.

The ones working 9 to 5

Just to keep up with the climbing wages.

So your kid's bellies stay full, and they'll never have to worry.

Is mommy coming home?

Can daddy wake me so I can tell him I love him before

he goes to work extra hours.

Just to see his children smile when they open their lunch each day

to find their favorite snacks.

Even then children worry when the sitter is there more than them.

Clamming for affection their small hands grow years

to finally grasp their mother's hands, and grow in height to tussle dad's hair.

Praying from dawn till dusk for the day you came home on time.

Just like you promised.

Always wondering when.

I ASK YOU

WHEN will the world see its people?
The ones building up its land and scowering its oceans.
Bringing in new life and even death
when we lie six feet closer to your burning center.
The sky's tears corrode away our names from our tombstones
and eat away at our bodies till there's nothing left but dirt.
Shadows of what we once were.
Our souls leave the earth.
As if we hadn't even existed.
Erased from view.
when?

The better question is how long do we have to wait to see the real you?
Society, it's time to change your view!!

Eat the World

Avery McKeown-Robbie | 10th-12th Grade

People need to eat more of the world
Not country hopping in first-class thrones
gazing down like gods on her majesty mother earth
No, people need to eat more of the earth itself.
Get down on their hands and knees and eat dirt
Devour all three layers, each getting hotter and more unknown
Those self-titled gods need to be knocked off their oil and methane-filled horses and fill their senses with dirt,
The nutrients deprived dirt from overfarming
Filled with the careless thrown trash from ignorant pedestrians
Contaminated with toxic chemicals and pesticides from lawsuited labs.
Fill every taste bud with the screaming bugs and microorganisms
Who beg on their hands and knees for sins that they did not commit
Stop praying to the lord instead get down and beg for the forgiveness of mother earth at her holy decaying body
Because there can be no man in the sky if there is nowhere for his sinful subjects to live
Take the early communion
The blood
The sick rivers filled with trash, who gave their fountain of youth away for your plastic convenience
Because without the sweet water, he couldn't have washed the feet of his disciples
The body
Those charred trees, who died for your industrial gain
Because Christ couldn't have passed without the wood his arms and legs were nailed to
People need to eat the reality of the world
Get down onto the decaying solid ground
And eat till they are sick
Sick from the acid dew found on the green-dyed morning grass
Poisoned from the industrial-modified leaves
ill from ingesting the decaying flesh of our extinct mammal ancestors
Screaming in pain from the trench of toxic tears of our mother earth
And then
Will will all be ill
Sick in our skyscraper, concreted hospitals
In our crinkling plastic beds
Heartbeats beeping on the industrial machines
And breathing through metal tanks and plastic tubes
Maybe then
People will want to eat the world that they destroyed

A Tunnel of Light

Alex Patras | 10th-12th Grade

In my dark empty room,
you are a tunnel of light.
Flowers that no longer bloom,
shine at the sight of you.

You are not like other tunnels I've traveled in the past.
I sit and I pray that you don't leave too fast.

In my dark empty soul,
you are a tunnel of light.
You make my half heart whole
I have lost all control.

This is not a love poem.

I guess, in a sense, it is.
But not how you assume.

This is a poem for me and my light,
that I have worked so hard to make shine so bright.

For years I have worked, grinded, and tried.
Today I can finally tell you; I've left it all behind.
The trauma and drama and fighting and crying,
Your impressions of me are what I am defying.

In my dark empty room,
I am a tunnel of light.

In Defense of My Mother

Esmia Garza | 10th-12th Grade

My mother
Is the brightest person I know.
No one else sees that though
Until their lives fall apart,
Because her talent and love
spreads with the wind,
Like a wildfire's glowing cinder.

People say she's no good for me.
That she'll burn me up,
Then snuff me out.
When drugs are top priority,
I'll be left sitting on the ground
When the siren sounds.

They don't understand
That I'll never forget
Wintry evenings as a kid
Sitting on the kitchen counter
Asking my mom about her day
As a fragrant pot of hot cocoa
Fills the air.

Or late summer nights
Where we color each other's hair
With bleaches and dyes
that sting our scalps
and stain our chewed-up fingertips.
A bad habit I got from her.

Every bad memory
Is followed by the good.
So In defense of my mother,
She's human
Not a match ready to light.

The Disconnect Between the Head and Heart

Madison Ulanowski | 10th-12th Grade

Why are you the first person that comes to mind
Even though I'm trying to leave those feelings behind

When I'm sad and crying and need to vent
You're the one I think of first even though that connection is bent

I had loved you once, and what a rollercoaster ride it was
It's scary to think about all I felt for you, I hope it never comes back, but what if it does

I wrote, cried and sang about you
I even tried to be your friend though you broke my heart in two

I want to move on and forget we have a past
But the feelings won't go away it's like they want to last

Maybe I still love you despite all the pain
But I don't want you in my heart anymore, or on my brain

So I'm going to do all I can to get them aligned

Because when I cry and need to talk, you're the last name I want on my mind.

Broken Fairytales

Caitlin Ashe | 10th-12th Grade

Experiencing a kiss can turn into an impossible moment of death.

Which is to say poor love experiences can break hearts to where they feel every moment close to love
is impossible

At that moment the center of our body has shattered and died.

A first kiss is painted into minds as a moment that is never forgotten; its straight out of a fairytale.

A first kiss from someone you love is supposed to create new stories and new endings.

However, I did not know that my fairytale would be abruptly so suddenly.

I did not know the family lured him to a broken mirror; but I did not know meeting you would turn
my once upon a time into a nightmare.

You string me along as you promise impossible things

You string me along as all I see is your words to me change from what you verily believe

You string me along as I see that all we had was an act in a big stage play.

Reluctant to let go of someone I had finally found but looking through the blinds led me to see that
people deserve more.

A first kiss can say a lot, like how a first impression can change in the moment of a poor applause

Little did I know my first experience would be unlike Snow Whites where it saved her

Instead it poisoned my heart like her poison apple.

It changed so fast that it altered the outcomes of what I thought love was

A seemingly impossible moment of death

Little did I know fairytales can be altered and fairytales can be broken.

Vudu Doll

Emily Wedman | 10th-12th Grade

I would have let you rip me to shreds
Tear out all my cotton pieces and fill your own holes
Let you use my backbone as your own
Unsew my own thread and stitch yourself back together
Take what you need to repair yourself
To leave me broken as you once were before

If I could inflict the same pain that you gave me
Hope these pins and needles struck you
Like how your needles speared my insides
Using me as your own pin cushion
Ripping out my own heart to keep yours still beating
While I'm barely breathing

If our connection was still tethered
I'd make my leather skin tougher and more put together
Make my heart impenetrable and less weathered

Your vacant heart could never measure
And I will no longer feel pressured
Between me and you, I've only bettered

I'm not your toy to play with any longer
Now you are gone I've only grown stronger
And to be honest you deserve an Oscar
Because pretending like being with me wasn't your biggest honor

My Scripture

Naima Morris | 10th-12th Grade

My body is an overflowing chamber of love
Each curve is a line of scripture
Written with delicacy in order to preach what I want
What I need
Something to read over, study, and memorize
Praying that they get a chance to read my verses
And remember what lines to live by
Each muscle is dripped with glamor
Admired by many
And wanted by even more
Something I use to carry the weight of my peers
To be a symbol of my independence
My body is a multi-use tool that is perfected
It is the hammer that hits the nails
It is the drill that tightens the screws
It is the sander that smoothens the wood
It is the body that lures
And also the body that attacks to protect
I have crafted my body to mold into your perfect needs

Yet, I can't stand my body.
It is the object that has influenced my view of the world the most.
The world's perception of me:
Sensual, smooth, sexy, temptatious.
I can't wear spanks inside the house
Even when I am covered in salty sweat
I can't wear tight dresses outside
Without carrying my keys intertwined with my knuckles
I can't step out of my own home without a bra
Without my mom dragging me by the ear back inside for a mean scolding

Yet, I can't live without that attention
The looks, the stares, the touches
Are all a part of my regular human-prescribed medicine
I need it.
I thrive on it.

Every comment that has ever been said
Every kiss I have ever received
Have made me sharpen my look
If anything is out of line
I push and work and grind to change it to constantly be at its peak
Maintain the captivity that it has on others
Chasing the high that I receive from them
In every partner, fling, and looker
If I am not at my best,
then how will I ever get any attention
unless it is laced with perfume, seduction, and lust?

Awakening

Zeffy Esguerra | 10th-12th Grade

Blot my lipstick, swipe the smudge
Off my eyes along with the lingering stain of fear
As best I can, with shaking hands and breath;
One last check in the mirror
Before I leave to face the numbers,
The click-clacking of my heels
Reverberating in my ears like a pinball machine.

As I walk along the shadowed curtains,
A breeze drifts in through the door
That's always slightly ajar,
Sending a small shiver that skitters
Down my spine and across my frame;
I make a habit of smoothing out
Nonexistent wrinkles, absent flaws,
Feeling the heat radiating from my body
Though the beam of spotlight is not yet on me.

As I step closer to the sliver of light
Peeking through the break in the darkness,
I stretch and pull and twist every limb,
Attempting to release the zealous butterflies
Flittering around in my stomach, stuck in my throat,
And with my hands outstretched to the sky,
They slowly make their way clasped in front of me,
My head now bowed, and I mouth a silent
Prayer.

With a breath that is exhaled
As soon as it's taken in,
I push aside the curtain and step out
Onto the illuminated platform
That takes me a few blinks
To adjust to, borderline blinding,
But I unclench my fists whose knuckles
Rival the white lights and take notice
Of my slightly heaving chest,
Reining in the mustang that is my beating heart
And as my eyes close,
My mouth opens.

The next moment I recall
Is awakening, opening up again.
Then I'm walking alongside
The waves of curtains,
The cool breeze, refreshing,
The butterflies settled,
My chin and and shoulders raised
To the heavens,
And for the first time today,
My breath is full and unshaken.

Ito y sus defectitos

Diana Hernandez Gomez | 10th-12th Grade

Dear -ito i feel as if you and i have somethings to discuss
Some unresolved issues
And honestly it's starting piss me off
See i'm tired of all the
Hijitos, peditos, y pendejitos
I'm tired of all the mujercitas whos voices you have taken
Tired of all the cositas which we don't speak of
Those things that scare you
Those that would tear you apart and sell you for parts
I got a bone to pick with your methods and their ethics
The way in which you discredit every thought and word i feel before i even speak
"Muchachita jovencita con una cinturita bien chiquita "
You think i don't see it
You expect my mouth to hear it
Baby why do you got a problem with a home you don't own?
This body is mine mi amor
Curvas infinitas
Boquita bonita y todo, corazón
How many times do my syllables gotta slap you before you stop
How many times did she say stop
Pero no one believed that
Someone's hijito, papito, o esposito
Could ever act like that
Because she came with intention to gain attention
"Y no le viste el vestido "
She had it coming
Fajate down to the size of his ego
And accept all the besitos y florecitas
Romanticismos esperando recompensa

But how do you change their minds if papito treated mamita igual
If mami said that girls were meant to sit quiet and listen
My tongue will give you whiplash if you don't listen closely
I am no ones mamita ni esposita (wife)
Esposas (handcuffs) no me atan a nadie
I come and go as i please

So mothers fathers lets get one thing straight in this home we no longer accept
bebecitos mal educaditos

So hear my warning
Teach your hijitos how to treat women si no los quieren ver lastimaditos (hurt)

In the Cracks

Molly Crouse | 10th-12th Grade

I grew up finding god in the cracks.
In the gaps between black and white keyboard keys,
In the fractures in blacktop I jump over... cuz
I'd never break my mama's back.
Every time the weather turns I wonder if the sunshine
is worth digging away at the snow.
With every wail of a newborn I ask if they really know
they gonna cry until their frown is
cemented in the folds of their forehead.
Everything happens for a reason, right?
So I'll sit here, thankful for the motivation.

My father found god in the breaks.
In the break-up's, time-out's, and let-go's,
In the rifts of the sidewalk he drank on,
watered by the tears of broken hearts,
my atheist father sprouted like weeds.

I was taught god gives his toughest battles to his strongest soldiers,
only people who can make it out alive
are sent to hell, and
someone as stubborn as me will either fund bridges
or live under them.
But I'm tired of finding god in all the places but I need him to be.

Curly found god in the holes.
In the echo of his acoustic guitar,
In the piece of my heart I carved out for him, still
Curly found god in the barrel of a gun.

My rabbi found god in the rips.
In the crevices of coat closets.
My grandma found god in the nooks.
In the candy in the cranny of her purse.
The kids found god in the cuts.
In the sutures needed to sew them together.

I found god in the cracks. and they've taught me
I will always be threatened by time,
Love will always be easier done than said,
Humans will always find a way to hold onto something intangible,
and never, only and always will
never always be the only answer.

The Oven

Serene Khamis | 10th-12th Grade

At the ring of the iron gate,
The clanging of metal against metal
they eat the snow off each other's
backs, they are walking silhouettes
of bones, their meat stretched
and fed to the bullets they package.
The chimneys always reek smoke,
Feet shuffling as
the dense gray hovers above the atmosphere.
Brothers breathing in sisters
Mothers breathing in daughters
They are part of the air they eat
Once laughing children
who only cared about what was for
supper.
So dance, whoever you were
dance on the streets of heaven
For you will never have to dance here
again.

Yokai

Ethan Boliano | Adult

A nameless soldier
stumbles through the forest.
A proud samurai,
he was clad in blood stained armor
and decorated with broken arrows.
The ghosts of his slain enemies follow the wounded warrior.

Although the samurai's battle is over,
the ghosts torment him.
Unrelenting in their curses,
cast from the shadows.
Like a tribe of demons,
the ghosts haunt the hurt soldier.
Fiery visions of
war and death
fill the samurai's consciousness.
Although he survived the battle,
peace is still a stranger.

The soldier,
slowly dying from the ghosts' curses,
comes upon a riverbank.
A stark contrast from the battlefield,
the riverbank is filled with life.
Spotted stags drink from the clear water
whilst orange foxes dance with one another on the grass.
Brightly colored koi swim in formation around a large white swan.
The river sounds alive,
a peaceful hymn
as the water flows around the smooth stones.
The air tasted sweet,
as if the samurai found
a hidden paradise.

Sunlight shines down on the riverbank
through the forest trees.
The samurai approaches the riverbank,
stepping into the light.
He takes off his broken kabuto and mempo,
freeing his bloody head and cut face.
He turns around
to look at the ghosts of his enemies.
The ghosts are unable to join him in the peaceful paradise,
blocked by the powerful sunshine.

The samurai stumbles and falls on the smooth stone.
He crawls up to the river for a drink.
He cups his hands in the water,
ice cold and refreshing.
The samurai looks up at the surrounding animals.
Instead of fleeing,
they pay no mind to the bloody outsider.
The stags continue to drink.
The foxes continue to dance.
The koi continue to swim with the swan.
The soldier lays down on his back,
armor creaking, and blood flowing onto the stones beneath him.

As he exhales for the final time,
a spirit is born.
One that knows peace,
thanks only to the war it once knew.
Once a nameless soldier,
now a peaceful yokai spirit,
that will watch over the riverbank forever.

The Descendants of Scholars of a Fallen Age Say:

Mia Westfere | Adult

The lowest rustic has no house to raise,
Redeeming debts too meager to remit,
Who never even knew a better day,

His ancestors, entombed with scripts of praise,
Resigned to screeching toasts that time permits;
The disowned issue has one house to raze.

When altars set aglow a porcelain glaze,
Don't envy overmuch the bride unfit
For wedding in pursuit of monied days,

Her merits will defer her modest ways
And all her brightest clothes shall not admit:
The kindest housewife has no home to raise.

The centuries, in stone, construct this maze.
The gardens and the woods all mourn the split,
In claiming the repose of softer days.

If dreaming now betrays the ancient ways,
Unless the poorest boor awakes his wits,
The wisest teacher has no house to raise,
In seeking, without grounds, a golden age.

Bombay Sapphire Gin

Red Houk | Adult

Bombay sapphire gin
Jigger or a shot glass
Ice
Cubes
Tonic is tonic
Nothing
Mandatory
Plenty of ways to go right
Plenty of ways to go right

Culture Gone Awry

Marcia Horan | Adult

We remove God from society.
Saying only what's accepted politically.
We remove God from our government.
Causing chaos, division and argument.
Churches remove their pure identity.
And they water down Truth, God's authority.
We remove God's design for our morality.
And abuse human life with corrupt ability.
And we pray to a power above that we think is known.
Because this makes us feel good about what we condone.
We give glory to ourselves for answered dreams.
And thank the god of carnal appetites which we esteem.

High School

Lisa Conte | Adult

As she walks alone down the crowded hall, she briefly stops and stares ahead, afraid she might fall.

She keeps her head down and eyes on the floor the whole way.

She's afraid to look up.

She's afraid what they'll say.

She stands out of the image that walks with her in the hall.

Right about now she feels 2 inches tall.

Now she's getting closer and is almost there.

She cannot explain why she's so full of fear.

Then she finally gets to the dreaded classroom room door.

She suddenly drops to the ground.

She can't take it anymore.

When she finally awakens and opens her eyes,

She's right where she started,

her pain never dies.

Small History

Angelica Del Pilar | Adult

People live through history?
No, they are history!
How long would it take
To compile a list of every single
Person who ever lived?
Their hopes, their fears, their loves,
The common thread that
Connects us
Through all centuries.

Tears of a Kitten

Linda Morrison | Adult

A little kitten made this puddle of tears
Her mother had left her all alone
Left abandoned and crying from fear
Only a pallet to call a home

You see, this pallet is at a Walmart store
Will someone hear her pitiful cry
When they come or go through the door
Or will they see her while walking by

A Tuxedo kitten with a mustache of white
And under her chin, a smidgen of black
She squalls when seeing you close in sight
While peeking out through a crack

Today Lulu has found a new home
You see, I could not leave her there alone
Now both of us will take a little cat nap
While she is lying on my lap...

Light to Dark to Light

Dawn Plestina | Adult

Light tears fall, then stream
Darkness dampens my whole soul
While May flowers grow

Bright colorful blooms,
Blind to them, while depression
Leads to the black hole

Struggle to escape
Chill like winter—no success
Death becomes the light

Rush

Jessica Swafford | Adult

You rushed in,
toppled me over-
a fast-paced tide
taking out a beach umbrella.

I was drowning,
breathless, full of adrenaline,
fighting to stay alive,
struggling to keep
my head above it all.

Just as quickly
as you appeared,
you were gone.

The tide retreating
back into the ocean,
only the sting
of salt
left in a wound.



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