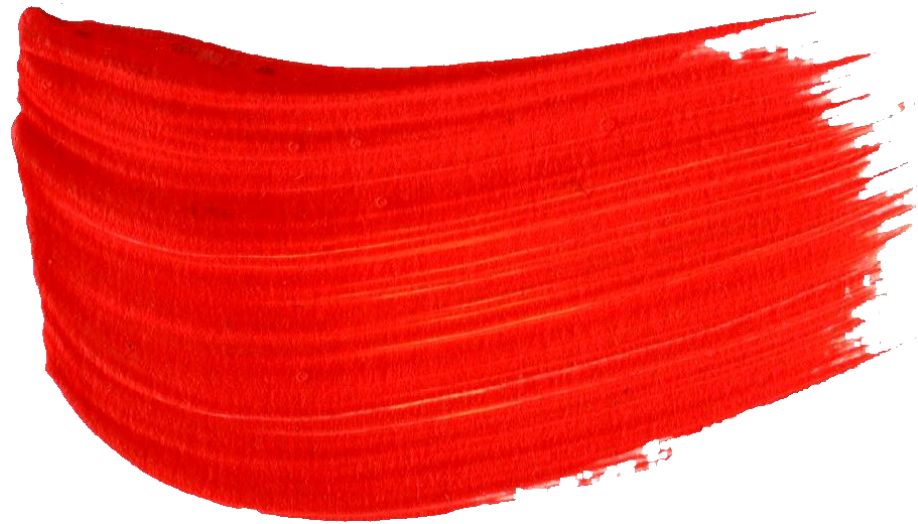


Prism of Life



RED



energy, war, danger, strength, power,
determination as well as passion, desire,
and love

smile
Alex Alansalon

I cannot speak - I am not allowed
and you may ask
why not rebel?
but I cry, I scream, I yell
and they yell louder, they interrupt, they shut me down
tell me I'm out of my damn mind
now it's so cold - I cannot speak
and tears well, but don't make sounds
because I am not allowed.

Fight On
Alex Alansalon



A Mountain

Alex Alansalon

I was going to kill him. I had only agreed to this because I thought we would drive to the mountains, I would suffer through one night in a campground and then we would go home. Jesse had a different plan, and with every step, I had to withhold the urge to not throw something at the back of his head. But then again, with the over fifty pound pack on my back, and the lovely incline we were trekking up, I probably would end up falling on my face if I tried. This wasn't fun. This was torture. My swollen feet, and the sweat draining down my neck were a testament to that.

Jesse unlatched his pack and set it down next to a creek. He faced me with a big smile. I didn't understand how anyone thought this was fun.

"Let me help you get that off."

"I can do it," I muttered. I struggled to get the top buckle undone.

He grabbed my hand. "Still as stubborn as always." He released the two restraints and lifted the pack off my shoulders.

Thank god, it felt amazing to be free. I knelt at the creek and splashed water on face.

"Don't be drinking that," said Jesse as he sat down on a rock

"I know," I glared at him. "I'm not stupid." I really wanted to just lay across the creek and cool off, but being wet for the rest of the fun hike we were on wouldn't end well for me, and I'd make sure it wouldn't end well for Jesse.

"Come here." He opened his arms.

I shook my head. "Someone will see, and I'd rather not run into a homophobe in the middle of the forest. Too many places to hide the body."

Jesse chuckled. "Alex, come here. I'm pretty sure no one is going to be coming up this far. They would have stopped at the lower lake."

I stared at the crystal clear water. "Why didn't we stop at the lower lake?"

He leaned forward and grabbed my arm. With a sigh, I let him pull me over and wrap me up in his arms.

"Because," he whispered in my ear before brushing a strand of wet soaked hair from my forehead. "I don't really want to have sex with my husband when there is a troop of Girl Scouts fifty feet away."

"You're not funny." I pushed on his chest, but he wouldn't let go.

Jesse just smiled and leaned back against the boulder. I didn't have much of a choice but to lay against his chest and rest my head on his shoulder. He grabbed my hand and spun my wedding ring around my finger. He kissed my forehead.

"Don't," I leaned away from him. "I'm sweaty." And I wasn't feeling at all attractive at the moment.

"I've kissed you when you covered in sweat before," he squeezed me tightly to him.

"You just dragged me up a mount-"

He grabbed my chin and kissed me before I could finish. "Yes, and I am really happy that you're doing this for me."

My shoulder shagged, and I took a deep breath. "If you wanted sex, there were easier ways to go about it then this."

He shifted his body to get comfortable. "I needed to get out of the city. I thought you liked the country. That's where you grew up, away from all the noise and people."

"This isn't the country," I muttered. "This is the wild. We're probably going to get attacked by some mountain lion, or a bear."

"I'm pretty sure I can keep us safe."

I glanced down at the pistol in the holster on his belt. I hate guns, I really hate guns, but I didn't want to get eaten by wildlife either, so I let him bring it.

We sat there for awhile and shared a bag of chips before putting our packs back on. Jesse made sure my straps were adjusted.

"I can take some of the weight, if you want?"

I shook my head. "I can do it. I'm not a little girl." I trudged past him and proceeded to slip on a slimy rock. Jesse snatched my arm, before I fell into the water. My face was bright red. Not looking at him, I cleared my throat and hurried across the creek and down the trail. Jesse quickly caught up and grabbed my hand. He didn't say anything, but that smile on his face let me know exactly what he was thinking.

Moments In Time
Lauren Piro



Put It Off
Allissa Brown

12:00 pm- damn i woke up late i really need to get started on my work

im going to make breakfast

1:30 pm- alright well i have to get ready for the day

3:00 pm- okay I don't want to do my work at home I should do it

somewhere else

4:00 pm- lets get started

5:00 pm- Okay ive done alot im going to try and talk to people

6:00 pm- well i can still kind of work on it while i talk

7:00 pm- im going to take a break and get some food

8:00 pm- well im going to be leaving soon might as well hang out with

people i have plenty of time

11:00 pm- im going to give this person a ride and when i meet up with

my friend ill do my work

12:00 am- well one more game of pool wouldn't hurt

2:30 am- alright time to do my work

4:30 am- shit im not going to get everything done

5:30 am- Okay evrything due is done but i still have to study

7:00 am: Maybe i should skip my chem class to study for my art quiz

Oh shit I have a quiz for that class i haven't studied for either

Ring Ring
Jaime Mejia Morales

Ring ring in the morning my alarm sounds

I can hear the birds sing as I arrive to school once again

I walk into the class and I know I am to know my bounds

As I stare at the board and lose track of how long it's been

I've been coming here twelve years to find my place but have simply been given one instead

I can't wait to be free so I may choose my own path in life and not the one they have set

I'm off to college next time, the place of choice and freedom they always said

Ring ring the final bell has rung and we are free to go only because their standards we have me

Rooted Against the Current
Jaime Mejia Morales



by Haley Barton:

If you are a Male and you are dating a woman many years younger than you, you caught a catch

But,

If you are a Female and you are dating a man a lot older than you, you are a “gold digger”.

If you are a Male, no one tells you to shave your body hair and sometimes it can even be considered attractive

But,

If you are a Female, you are told it’s “disgusting” and you need to shave since it expected of you.

If you are a Male and you have erectile dysfunction, the government will fund and give you Viagra for free

But,

If you are a Female, when you get your period you are forced to purchase feminine products even though your period isn't optional.

If you are a Male with a high body count, you are congratulated with a “good shit bro”

But,

If you are a Female with a high body count, you are a “whore” or “slut with no self respect”.

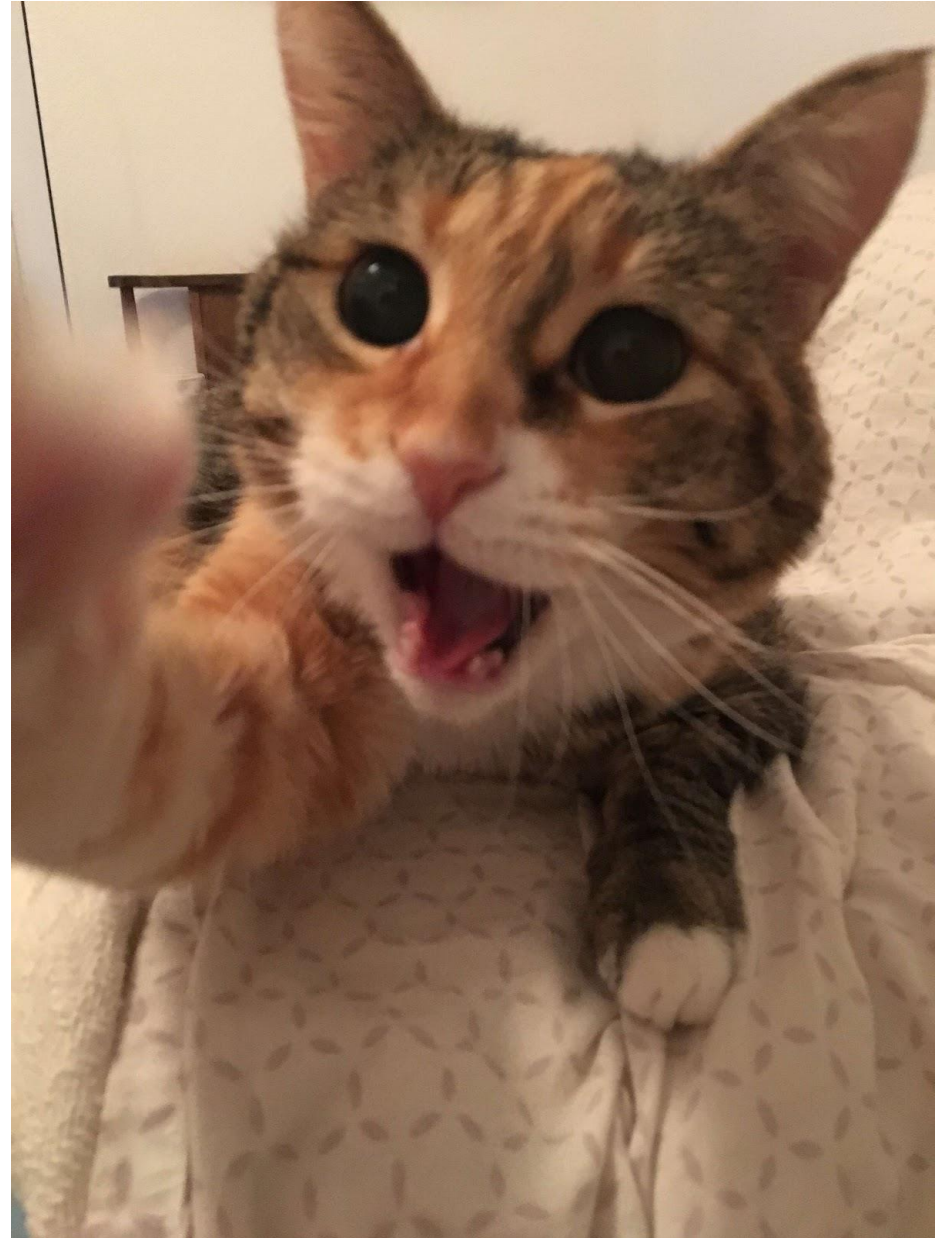
If you are sick and tired of Double Standards

And,

you want it to change, start defying them by being yourself and accepting others.

Roar
Heidi Link

Males,
Always seen as strong
Like if they own the world
Even if they are not breadwinners
So Females have no leverage
For the Females,
Everyone perceived as fragile but
Many don't understand the hardships.
Although to overcome one must be strong
Like a Lion in the wild
Everyday fighting to survive,
Some Females even stronger than Males.
Lions have different social norms,
It's the queens of beast whom are dominant,
Of the females who do the hunting and reproducing, Males take
spoils of victories.
Now why in the wild can females be strong but in the real world
they are shunned?



Jungle Gym
Heidi Link

Cheryl looked at the Jungle Gym
She was amazed by what she saw
She started to walk towards it
When she went in
It became the wild
Cheryl hiked up hills
Climbed the side of mountains
Swam through rivers
Encountered bears
But with hill descending
The men exceed and
She stumbled
She continued though
She strengthen herself
Cheryl worked harder
And with the work
She surpassed the boys
She left them in the dust
At the end of the day

Cheryl noticed that
She could overcome the
Ropes, slides, and stairs
That no one or boys
Could stand in her way
They cannot ruin her determination

Heidi Link



Once you find a place that is beautiful to you, then you have found yourself

YELLOW



joy, happiness, intellect, and energy



Home

Rachel Klopfer

For the first time in my life, I am living away from home. Seven hours and fifteen minutes away from home to be exact. I packed up my belongings and left Las Vegas, Nevada to move up to Turlock, California on August 12th. Leaving behind the comfort of my home terrified me. Las Vegas has a reputation of being wild, glamorous, and scandalous, but that's not the Las Vegas that I knew.

The Las Vegas that I knew was the small house on Crystal Breeze Drive that I lived in with my mom and my brother. The hot sidewalk on a 110 degree day where I would play hopscotch and draw pictures. The grassy park hill where I learned to ride a bike. The pool in my grandparents backyard that I could spend hours in.

The Las Vegas that I knew was the quaint two story house in a Green Valley cul de sac that I moved to when I was 13. The red rock mountains that we would hike even in the scorching heat. The dry lake beds where we would have bonfires. The lunch spot behind school where we would eat Mexican food everyday. The yogurt shop that would let us sit inside for hours as we talked about nothing.

I left behind Las Vegas. I was the only one out of all of my friends who was leaving Nevada for college. As the fateful day came closer and closer, I grew utterly terrified that I was going to drift away from my best friends as they continued to create new memories without me. On August 12th, I said goodbye to all of my best friends and loved ones. I hugged them and I smiled and laughed as they all wished me good luck. Then I got into the car, pulled out of the driveway, and as soon as I was out of sight, I bawled my eyes out.

As I drove further and further out of town, I began to second guess my decision to leave. I thought of all of the family events that I would miss and all of the things my friends would do without me. I was scared that I would become a distant memory.

I arrived at Turlock and moved into the dorms at Stan State. I'm not going to lie, the first week or so was extremely difficult for me emotionally and physically. I would text, facetime, and call my friends

and family constantly. I would cry at night in the solitude of my dorm room. I craved the familiarity of home.

However, while I wasn't looking, Turlock became a new sort of home to me. I've developed new little routines that I'm sure will turn to memories as time progresses. Whether it's blasting music late at night with my roommates or bonding over the lack of food options on campus with my teammates, I have little moments that make me feel like I'm finding a new place in Turlock.

I still talk to my friends and family often, but I am reaching out to them to update them on the new things in my life not trying to hold onto the old. Moving away has made me realize, home is not a singular entity. The concept of home is ever evolving. As many new friends and memories that I make in Turlock, Las Vegas will still be home. When I go back to Las Vegas, a piece of me will still be in Turlock. The most amazing part about this life is the freedom we all possess. After I graduate, who knows where I'll go next. All I know is that wherever it is, I won't be scared.

“Mi hija, ¿por qué llevas el pelo así?”

“I don't know Nana, I just wear it this way”.

Pienso que deberías soltarte el pelo, a los chicos les gusta eso.

“But I like to wear it like this, who cares if boys like my hair a certain way.”

by Haley Barton

The Sandals

Taylor Chavez

“Mija, traeme mis huaraches por favor.”

Those sandals could tell stories if they could talk. They would speak about about the man who wore them as he worked in his jungle of plants in the backyard, his skin weathered and red from years of working under the heat of the sun. Face hidden by the shadow cast by his hat, he was in his element amongst the corn stalks that seemed to scrape the bright sky. And as he disappeared into the tall green stems, following closely behind his large heels, a little girl, no taller than his thigh, clutching vegetable seeds in her hand.

The sandals were well acquainted with the child. They knew her from her tiny hands as she sat on the floor, holding them one by one as she carefully slid them onto the man’s feet. The only girl and the youngest amongst four grandchildren (for the fifth, Emmanuel, had not yet been born), the sandals knew that she was his favorite. She had only been in the world for a few days when he had begun to raise her. She was as much a part of him as she was of her parents. She never called him abuelito, he had always been Papá Nacho, her second father.

They were as thick as thieves, Papá Nacho and his granddaughter. On those warm summer days, it was often just the two of them, the sandals, and Rúti, a little blue whale tied to a tree branch in the backyard, swinging low and then high. In her young mind, the little girl believed that she could reach past the leaves of the tree and grasp the sunrays themselves if her grandpa pushed the swing hard enough. They always had a grand old time, eating ice cream, watching novelas, and peeling fruit outside. He made sure that she never went hungry, sometimes overfeeding her. The little girl never knew why he was so insistent that she ate; in fact, as much as she loved him, she didn’t know much about him. He seldom spoke about his past back in Mexico, only ever mentioning that his childhood was a sad one. She

didn’t find out about his history til much, much later, when she was older. But the sandals knew.

The sandals knew from the way he walked, 6’2” and with the pride of a man who looked adversity straight in the eye, who never backed down against what he knew was wrong. He carried himself the same way he had in youth, fearless and confident, yet with humility. His sandals knew him, Ignacio Ramos, who came from money but worked for everything that he had, who valued kindness and believed in generosity, who lost his mother at a tender age, who went hungry as a child because his stepmother would starve him. He, who stood up for his father’s workers because they were not being paid enough. Ignacio, who paid them himself what he knew they deserved, because he believed in fairness and understood that they needed to feed their families. He, who stole food, medicine, and chickens from his home to give to his starving young nieces and nephews. Ignacio, whose niece Gloria praises for saving her life as a child.

Papá Nacho, who spoke not one word of these things. But his sandals did.

Only his sandals were large enough to carry this great man.

His granddaughter realized then why he took such good care of her. He had been ensuring that no one, especially her, would ever go without again, as long as he had any say in it. He had seen too much of that already, in the workers, in his small nieces and nephews, and in himself.

Generosity, Equality, Compassion, and Hard Work. These were the things he had instilled in his granddaughter for years without words.

I hope I can one day fill a third of those sandals.



Letter to my 14 year old self
Rachel Klopfer

Dear 14 year old Rachel,

High school is starting and I know it's intimidating, but don't worry! I'm here to tell you that everything works out in the end. But first I have a few pieces of advice for you...

First of all, stop worrying so much about what others think. If there's anything I remember about high school it's that I put way too much effort into trying to impress other people. It doesn't matter and most of these people are temporary. Secondly, hang on to the people that aren't temporary. They do matter. Also, don't be stressed about not having a plan for the future. I still don't know what I'm doing I'm just taking it day by day. If I've learned anything it's that the journey matters as much as the destination.

I know that right now you feel like you know it all and no one can tell you what to do, but please appreciate this time in your life when you're surrounded by people who want to guide you in the right direction. Take it from me, there are a lot of days where I wish someone could tell me what to do. Speaking of being told what to do, please listen to your mom and be kind to her. She's doing more for you right now than you could possibly imagine. Even when you mess up, which I can assure you that you will, she's one of the few people that will always be in your corner.

Branch out of your comfort zone, but don't force yourself to be something that you're not. Stop trying to fit into places that are unnatural. I know that you have a vision of who you want to be in high school, but let me tell you, that's not who you are. Don't worry, you'll find your place with time. Trust me.

Do things that make you happy. Drop people that don't. I want to tell you that everything will be great and you're going to have endless happiness, but that's not completely true. Times will get rough and life will be hard. But no matter what, remember that everything and I mean everything you're going through is temporary. See you in four years, 18 year old Rachel

La Cherry

By Anonymous

The sun hasn't risen yet and a cool breeze flows through the Garcia casa. It's a Saturday morning about 4:00 am, everyone and thing are asleep except for the resilient and family oriented mother. She has done nothing but worked her whole life and today is no exception. Today she leaves to The Cherry, however, she will not enter it alone, she'll bring her son. Even though he knows he doesn't want to go. And leading up to this day her son, Sam, dreaded it because it would be entering a whole new world he knows nothing about. She goes to his room already expecting him to try and sleep in.

"Time to work, wake up Sam get ready and wear a jacket it's going to be cold." his mother said.

"Ahhhahh..." he moaned, "It's way too early for this mom... fine at what time will we leave?"

"A las Cinco, so hurry it's already cuatro media. Oh, and I made you tacos para almorzar."

As he gets ready, anxiety builds because of the daunting hours of work that he will face, yet it's countered with the excitement of the outcome of his first paycheck. We see him exit his room in a deep black cap and layered clothing of gray. This depressing image of a teen is me. I'm soon greeted to the decadent smell coming from the kitchen. The

whole room was filled with the smell of egg and beans, homemade tortillas, and coffee.

"I made you your favorite food huevos con frijoles and my tortillas." my mom says as she lays it all on the island and filled with glee, "When you're done eating go get the two sillas on the side and put them in the red car."

As I was eating I can see the sun rise through my glass window. The golden yellow rays filled the kitchen and as it touches my skin I feel its warmth and it melts away the chilling breeze that roamed my house. I finish eating and I see my mom packing food for the day. It was just a ton of tacos, 2 ham and cheese sandwiches, bags of chips, two small water bottles and one giant bottle. While she packs she calls her friends that need rides to the foreboding place. Meanwhile, I enter the garage to be greeted to a full-blown walk-in freezer. The four windows on the garage door had icy streaks webbed all over. So I ran as fast as I can to the side door where our chairs dwell. I go over to grab them but I lost my grasp when the guardian of the land popped out of nowhere and started sniffing my butt. She was one chubby, rusty red Doberman that cared so much for its loved ones and whenever she had the chance snuggle with them on the couch. I pet her and just tell her, "I'll be back Ruby don't worry but I don't know if... I should really do this or not. Well bye, and have fun."

As I pet her one last time. I grab the chairs head over to the garage and when I close the door the wind takes it and slams it to the frame and it echoed throughout the place. My mom comes into the garage and opens the big frozen over garage door and I put the chairs in the trunk of the car. We both enter the car and she starts with her music. While she backs out and we start heading out the court my mom informs me, "Now you're going to see how we worked. And learn how to work." "I know", I said in a depressing manner, "and you know that I'm really tired and it's super early."

“I can’t believe you. Are you serious? Sammy?” as she giggles.

“Mom. Don’t. I don’t need this right now. Okay.”, I said, “And that was back then, this is a whole different time and era.”

My mom says angrily and with love, “Cállate, okay it's not even that hard. I did a lot more than what you are going to do. I would go around and pescar fruit and pick cotton. Okay, if I can do it when I was chakita then you can do it now. Your 18.”

“I’m 16 mom, Why can’t you remember that?-- Well, I’m gonna try and sleep before we get there” I stated.

Even though I said that it wasn’t true. I couldn’t go back to sleep even if I wanted to. We pass by so many homes with their roofs and yards covered in a pale white thin coat of ice. Then we passed by this long blueish green picket fence that would block the sun in a rhythmic pattern that tortured my eyes. And we begin to pick up one... two... three other women all of which are my mom's friends. They all tell or ask me, “Cómo estás? Are you excited? Estas bien. It’ll be super easy.”

And I tell them all the same things, “I’m doing good. Mas o menos, but I don’t really care. I hope.”

Soon we safely rafted out of my small town Riverbank. And we take off to the dreaded destination. As we go my mom pumps up her music even more and the whole car was engulfed with this traditional Mexican music. I see my mom just shimmying and shaking her head to the beat unknowingly while she drives to The Cherry. Before we get there we pass by so many beautiful locations. We go through huge fields of vineyards in this twisted road all of which were placed on top of hills. Then we traveled in these great plains enchanted with grass as yellow as corn. And the only thing inside was this tiny bull rodeo arena. I always questioned, “How the hell can someone host a full bull rodeo in that tiny place?”

It was so small I could only assume that 20 people can fit in there.

Then its sign was just a complete contrast to it. The advertising was larger than life with a white background and in red and huge letters “Bull Rodeo”. But I still wanted to go see the show, even if the place might have been run down. Soon we came to this little ghost town where the architecture represented the wild west. It felt arcane and it just gave me the creeps the whole time. The whole three minutes we were passing by felt like a century. During the time I just told myself, “It's all in your head. Nothing wrong.”

But what really topped the experience was this terrifying naked mannequin. The lifeless plastic body was covered in paint as red as blood and pitch black paint, and it was all beaten and missing limbs. The “thing” was placed in the middle of a wooden patio and surrounding it, and coming out the windows, was tons and tons of clutter. Thankfully we were able to escape this place; unfortunately, we entered a dirt road cover with cherry trees and as we get deeper in, the sky went from blue to gray. And we reach La Cherry. When we park and get our stuff out of the car I just see herds of people, primarily Latino people, from all age groups, except babies, entering the break room. As we set up I look around and examine the people with a closer eye.

“They are just like the people you grew up with when you visited Texas and Mexico. Everything is going to be okay.” I said to calm myself and my anxiety down.

Before I can work my mom took me to this stark white little house to fill out a job form. Little did I know that my mom and her friend that works there was cheating the system by allowing me to get the job. I’m just on the side listening to them laughing if they should mark me as married and how old I should be. I felt like crap during and after the whole situations because I was so nervous that we would be caught because knowing my luck, this can get real ugly. We leave the tiny

house to get these thin tight white gloves and hair net. Awaiting for the higher-ups to give us the ability to enter the huge gray building. We just waited in line in front of these clearish flat tentacle flaps covering the entrance. It took 5 minutes and we entered and all you can see were huge conveyor belts where cherries are sorted by many people and then placed in these boxes to be closed and set in the fridge. In one corner there were these two monsters operated by three “Oompa Loompas” compared to it and in the whole back side was this enormous cherry washing beast. I was just in awe and distracted by all the movement that was happening that I lost my mom. In my head, I’m like, “What the fuck am I supposed to do? Oh, my fuckking God, I’m going to get caught? I’m sor...”

“Ven Joven para colocar estas cajas en estos tres convertibles. Entendido?” this lady with glassed hazel eyes told me in a soft but firm tone.

In reality, I didn’t know a single word she told me. I felt like an alien when she spoke. So all I did was say “Sí” and nodded even though in my head I was like, “I’m sorry... WHAT THE HELL DID YOU SAY.”

I was so confused and scared but I think hazel eyes noticed that my Spanish is weak. Who am I kidding she knew my Spanish was terrible. So she was kind to show me what to do and where to get my boxes. After she showed me I began to do my work. I would slip and fall so many times from getting the boxes from the spot they are being made to the assembly lines. Even though it was just 10 steps away. At one point I grabbed way too many of them and I couldn’t see where I was going. All I saw was the white and brown of the boxes and the gray from my peripheral vision. The stack was so tall that I ended up hitting these flying boxes traveling all around the factory on these hooks causing most of my boxes to fall on the floor. For some reason out of the hundred or so people in there, no one noticed my toppled tower of

boxes, so I just picked it all up and fixed whatever I had to fix to be able to put them on the line and be filled with the rich velvet red cherries. Soon all of the faint background noise stopped and I noticed the women sorting out the cherries on the top left and people on the floor started to leave to. I didn’t know where so I just followed, only to find out we are having our 10 min. Break. I go back to my mom and her friends and just sit staring at my hands. As if I was enchanted or hypnotized by them. The gloves became translucent and I was able to see my own brown skin and pink nails. There were also spots of white all over them. It just felt...

“Hey! How was it Sam?” my mom said as she freed me from my paralysis, “Hurry you don’t have much time eat your tacos.”

“It was something. It’s not hard it’s just that it is boring and I’m alone worker putting boxes of different sizes into the lines.”, I mumbled to her with food stuffed in my mouth.

When I swallowed my last bit of tortilla in my mouth I saw all the people surrounding us pack their stuff and started to leave the break area. With a sense of urgency, I spoke, “Mom? What are they doing?” “It’s been ten minutes already it’s time to go back. Come on.”, she said in a condescending and humorous way.

I got up and went back and in the whole journey back to my spot I spoke to myself in my head, “This can’t be ten minutes. Like what the fuck. COME ON. I have to wait FIVE MORE HOURS until our half. I want death.” We go back and for some reason and it was colder in there than before and the cherries became brighter than ever. I felt like a moth to a flame with them. There were these tiny water aqueducts that these cherries traveled in after they were sorted out, that were next to my station. The site of these scarlet red and deep violet spots just swimming along the water just made me grow a huge smile. Only a few minutes have gone by while I stared at them even though it felt like an eternity to me. It was broken by a darker skinned lady with a

black hairnet and a bright pink sweater. The most memorable thing about her was her pink sweater because of how bright it was compared to what every other person was wearing.

“Joven... Joven! Necesito que pongas bolsas de plástico en conos aquí,” her pink sweater aggressively told me.

All I did was show her a face of confusion and she started to signal me to follow her, thank god, and told me where to stand. Then she left and I was around four other guys and I notice that they were just opening plastic bags and placing them on cones, so I just followed them and did my best to do them as fast as I can. That might have been a mistake to go fast because I started to get scratches from the thick plastic cones. My gloves began to wither away and get all raggedy from its cuts. I didn't get any new ones because I couldn't find any so I continued on. Soon the same thing happened again. The faint machinery noise stopped and people started heading out. I was ready for this so I swiftly ran out the huge exit only to be greeted by this freeing but an intense heat breeze. I walked back to the place where I had my last break.

“This better not feel like five minutes like last time Mom... Oh and mom what does ‘Joven’ mean? Why does the lady with hazel eyes and the one in the pink jacket always tell me that?”, I told my mom.

“Ooooh... It just means kid or young. They call you that because they know you're not a grown up or old person”, my mom explained.

“Well, why can't they call me by my real name? It's not that hard. Samuel, Sammy, for crying out loud Sam. It's literally a basic name.” I said sarcastically. I made all the other women at our table laugh but my mom just handed me a sandwich and chips to eat. Then pulled out the huge water bottle. As I munch away at my food I can see how the groups were laid out. They were all grouped up as families. One of them even had a cake and ice cream to celebrate someone's birthday. I know I wanted to be apart of that and eat their food, that was on my

mind most of the time we were on break. When I finish my food I just look at the different colors I never saw when I entered this black and white land. The dark green canopies, the yellow and white chairs, even the little bits of colors in the people's clothes. I didn't notice before. I looked past all the black and gray colors and saw all the light blues, pinks, purples, greens, even the chartreuses and salmons in them. But really was in my mind as I looked at these colors was... “How were they able to keep the ice cream and the frosting on the cake from melting from this heat? Like what in the hick heck paddy wack give a dog a bone this old man went rolling home they were able to do this.” But never mind that. Once again I noticed that people started getting up and going, so before my mom said anything I was packing everything up. I was able to take 5 steps only to be stopped by my mom.

“Mijo, you need new gloves. Here take mine. I can get more. I know where they are at.”, my mom said.

“Thanks, Mom. Well see ya later after this last bit of hell.”, I replied back.

The gloves she gave me were a little withered out but were still usable. They were a bright light blue as if it was matching the sky at the time. And they were able to stay intact during the few minutes I was on cone duty. I went back to boxes once hazel eyes ordered me to. And I spent the rest of the time then. It was almost time to go and I was getting distracted by the faint noises of the factory until I noticed that one of the old men on the conveyor belts was messing with my boxes. He would get the first one then push it back so that they might fall off if I don't pay attention. He would do it every time he saw me dozing off. I would always see him as turtle man. Because he was dressed mostly in green and his body type and clothing looked like he was wearing a rounded shell. From that point on I always was comfortable with working on box duty when turtle man was in charge of the

converable. It was as if he was my only “friend” or a familiar person in the factory, besides my mom, who would constantly wave hi or mouth the words “You can do this. I love you. Go ahead and eat a cherry, mi Gordo” That last part I don’t like because I don't like being called my fat. But then again I’m a huge hypocrite and I would call my mom and dad my fat as loud as I can because it’s funny. Anyways, the noises stopped once again and this time it stopped for good because the monster machinery went to sleep, and many of the women sorting the cherries were able to leave. However, the men on the floor, including myself, had to wait until all of the last bit of sorted out cherries were put into the box. About 10 minutes gone by and I was able to leave. I took off the sweat filled blue gloves and tossed them in the trash. When I went outside, unknowing of the time, I went from a well light building to a pitch black outdoors with just one light guiding to the break area. The light was this translucent light green color that was catching the eyes of multiple flies, mosquitoes and myself. I was able to see my mom and her friends having everything already packed up into the car and they handed me two huge heavy bags to carry. While we walk my mom asked me, “So how was it, Sam?” “What? La Cherry?”, I inferred, “I don't want to talk about it.” So we got all the stuff in the car and ourselves. Once we started to leave the factory I shut my eyes thinking that I’m just resting them, but I passed out. I woke up in front of my home, thinking it was all a dream, and my mom tells me. “Guess what, you have to do this again tomorrow.” I just replied with “Ahhh” as loud as I can and just went inside to my bed only to get up once again at 4: 00 am.

Oh to be a Balloon

Nikohl Jordan

I see a balloon in a tree
It is blue amidst orange and yellow leaves
The wind torments the trees
The wind is a friend to the balloon
But the balloon is being pulled and tugged by the tree
The balloon wants to leave but hesitates
Now it is experiencing struggle
Now it needs to be strong and patient
Inch by inch it wiggles from the tree
The balloon does not notice, but I do
I can recognize the it's desires and I want to help
All I can do is cheer the balloon on
In hopes it can endure the tree
The wind does not go away, but comes and goes
The balloon is a little looser now
I want so bad to help the balloon
But I should not for it is fragile and may pop
This is something the balloon must do on its own
It is so close
Don't give up!
It gently separates and floats away from the tree

Maybe to another tree

I do not know

I helped without harming, my goal was support

I am proud of the balloon

I cannot take credit for the balloons actions

I am lucky to have been a part of its journey

This time, from the outside looking in

Letter to Future Nikohl

Nikohl Jordan

Dear future Nikohl,

Right now you are in your freshman year of college. You are sleep deprived and hungry all the time but not as much compared to the beginning of this school year. You are writing this letter in the honors student lounge and have an earl grey latte with almond milk and sugar free vanilla syrup to your right. Sip... next paragraph.

You are also on the track and field team at Stanislaus. Some days are harder than others like yesterday's four 400m workout, but you did it, with the help of flexol of course. I could sit here and talk about all the things I could fix or that I am doing wrong, but I think also I want to talk about the things I'm doing right. The first week of practice was really hard and every day the thought crept into your mind...it's not too late to quite now... it would be a lot less painful. But your stubbornness and competitiveness go the best of you and here you are, still on the team. Is it painful, well yeah almost every day! Is it worth it, completely. The coaches are proud of you and they want to see you succeed. Remember, they chose you to be on their team. You have a duty to your coaches and to yourself to give 110 percent at practice every day. And while you're at it, HAVE FUN! Life is short so push yourself out of your comfort zone every day.

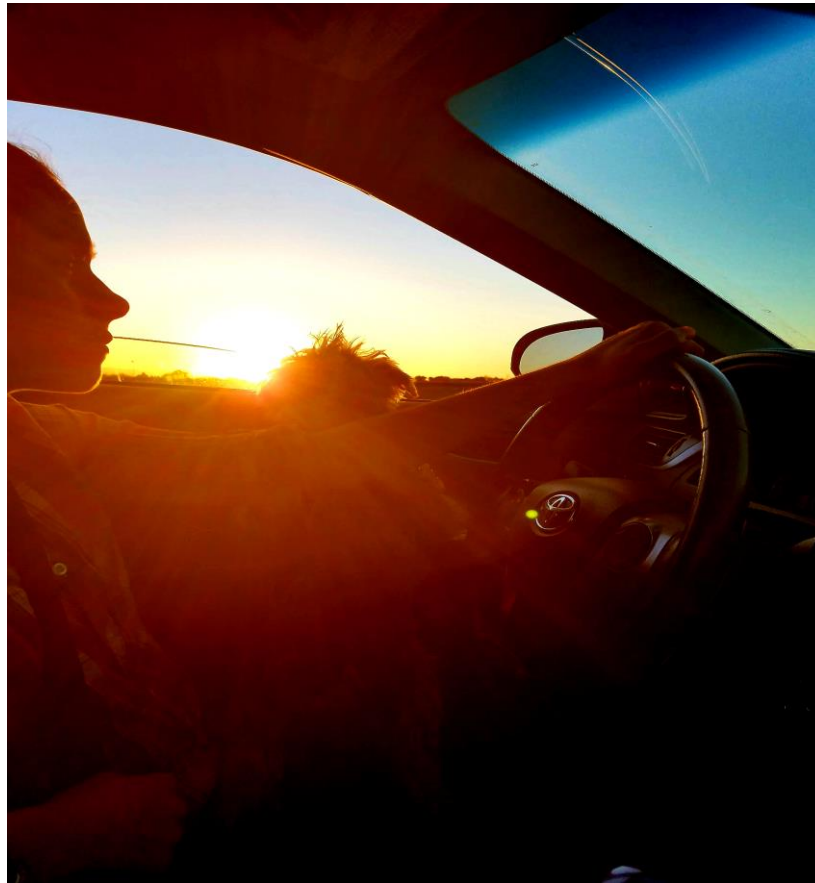
Also, don't forget about your family. They are there for you when no one else is. Your parents raised you and are helping you get through college. Immediately after you read this in the future, go thank your parents for their love and support. I know I'm sounding all warm and fuzzy but sometimes that's ok.

I hope you have a future full of excitement and fun. When you make it to the Olympics don't forget where it all started. Whether it be the athletic Olympics, or the Olympics of life... or both :)

Your friend,

Nicholioli

Beyond the Light
By: Samuel García



BLUE



despair, injustice, healing



Brooke Nawrocki
Not Everything Is Broken, 2017

*Not everything is broken
Not everything is broken
Not everything is broken*

I am transcending through brokenness like a bird. Life is finally a task I know with boldness that I can achieve, and I embrace the wind high on my cheekbones with open, ready arms. I am standing on top of the highest mountain and I am free. Below me I see all that I can be and all of the brilliant, beauty that I am. This place is where I am meant to be. My place is in the forest, because my hair is made of pine needles. My place is in the ocean, because my arms move with the waves. My place is in the desert, because my smile is made of sunlight. My place is in the river, because my name is a stream of magnificent flowing water. My place is in the world, because I belong here.

*Not everything is broken
Not everything is broken
Not everything is broken
And neither am I.*

Brooke Nawrocki

Lavender

Before:

When I was six my room was a pinky-lavender color. I had light wood furniture that was covered in pink flower and butterfly stickers. I had a white net hanging above my bed full of stuffed animals. I had a small tv on my dresser across from my bed.

I loved *Care Bears* and watched one of their movies nearly every day. I was outspoken and loved dressing up. I loved school and did well in kindergarten. I loved reading and was already ahead of my grade level. I was happy and full of life and spirit.

After:

I was raped for the first time in that lavender room. I stared at the walls and that net full of stuffed animals while it was happening. This was only the first time of what was to become a nearly daily occurrence for the next six years of my life. I hate that shade of lavender now.

I watched *Care Bears* after he left trying to make myself feel better. The opening song was the only thing that made me stop crying. I watched the rest of the movie and was able to go back to sleep. I can't watch *Care Bears* now.

I was suddenly very shy and reserved. Reading was an escape now instead of just a fun past time. I ended up being able to read at a college level in six grade. He used a book to get in my room under the guise of reading me a bedtime story.

Now:

I still hate lavender and the *Care Bears*. I loved reading throughout high school and even still. I lost a lot of myself that night and every night after. But trying to chase the person I was before is pointless because that person doesn't exist anymore. I am different now. I am me and I like who I am. I'm okay.

Anonymous

Acknowledgement is Needed

**Just stop – I don't care -
We're not working out -
sorry
I found – someone else**

Trevor Johnson

**Why am I no good? Stop
trying to hide me.**

**Don't suppress my personality because you can't handle it.
All I wanted was acceptance and the ones I should love take that
away from me.**

**I'm caged in because of your embarrassment as if I'm an unloved
animal.**

If I love you then why don't you love me and who I am?

Why do you want to change the person I am?

Just Stop! Leave me alone!...

**I'll stay. You won't ever have to experience that dreadful emotion
again.**

**I will lock myself away for you and for your acceptance of me
Just know...**

Nothing can change me no matter what.

**I will not change so you can be comfortable. You need to except
that.**

**I love who I am and what I have become as a person but...
I don't like what you have become and what you have done to me
so... I will leave this shelter and travel somewhere else that I can
call home. And at this home, I will love them and they will love me
just the same. They will not conceal me as if I'm this wicked
secret that damned them.**

**I will find this home because it'll give me an emotion I have been
deprived of and that you have experienced your whole life...
Acceptance.**

Sammy Garcia Jr.



Kayla Eddy
Still Waters, 2017

Alone

It was that one day, that one day changed everything. It was a gloomy, rainy day and she was walking to school when a group of girls from her school passed by her. They were talking about all the plans they had for the weekend: the movies, the mall, going over each other's houses. It was in that moment that she realized how different she was. She didn't have any plans or in that case many friends. It had been that way since she was in middle school. She was in high school now. She was always at home with no one to hang out with and no plans, but she did have one thing, art. Every day after school and during the weekends she was at home drawing, drawing anything that came to mind. With art she was so happy she felt like she didn't need anything else. However, she did need something else, she needed a friend, someone to talk to, to share her passion with.

One day, when she was in class, she didn't talk to anybody like usual. She sat in her desk in the back of the plain, boring classroom all by herself. But something changed that day, just as it had that day she was walking to school, but different. Someone came up to her desk and talked to her, as they started talking she found out that

they were BOTH interested in art. From that day on she had plans, she had someone to talk to, to share her passion with. She found her place in a world that felt like she didn't have one.

Daniela Gomez

It feels like there's two me's
Like one bad thing happens and my world
is split
On one hand I look fine But inside I am a
tsunami Crashing into the rocky shore
Trampling all of the little pebbles.

It's an accumulation
Of everything everywhere all at once--
It's anxiety.

It's the weight of the world on my back
And the horrible feeling of panic in my
mind.

But my name is Brave,
And I will battle it to the end. My name is
Strong,

And I will prove greater than it.

Because this is not my place. I
am not my illness
And it is not me.

I am brave strong growing learning
Striving healing believing living.

Anxiety holds a part of my mind
In its wicked palms
But it does not
And will not
Hold me.

Brooke Nawrocki

“Social Media”

head down with fingers moving
rapidly across the screen
pictures of people who are
unrecognizable
thinking only of
Likes, Followers, Strangers
comments good and bad
dictate lives of all these people
together and eternally
Bound

Kayla Eddy

Injustices

When is it going to end?
The discrimination, the inequality.
Can it end?
The gender inequality, poverty.
Will it end?
Not until we do something about it
Not until we speak up for what is right.

Daniela Gomez

Hearsay

Today we shout all lives matter,
That we are all the same.

Today we say we've overcome,
But is that just hearsay?

I've been called names, pointed at, and judged.
I've been mocked teased and disheartened.
I've wept, screamed, and fumed,
Thinking of all hate.

Today we shout all lives matter,
That we are all the same.
Today we say we've overcome,
But is that just hearsay?

Recognition? I've been neglected.
Awarded? I've been passed over.
Resentment? I'm above.
Tolerance? I have plenty.

Today we shout all lives matter,
That we are all the same.
Today we say we've overcome,
But it is just hearsay.

You say I'm too tan,
They say I'm too white.

You say my clothes are too dull,
They ask me why I wear so little.
The gunk on my face they ask me to wash off,
That's the makeup you say would look nice on me.

You say I'm too tan,
They say I'm too white.

You say I'm funny, that you love my sense of humor.
They say I talk too much, and to keep to myself.
You want to go out, to have fun and party,
They want me home for family and dinner by seven.

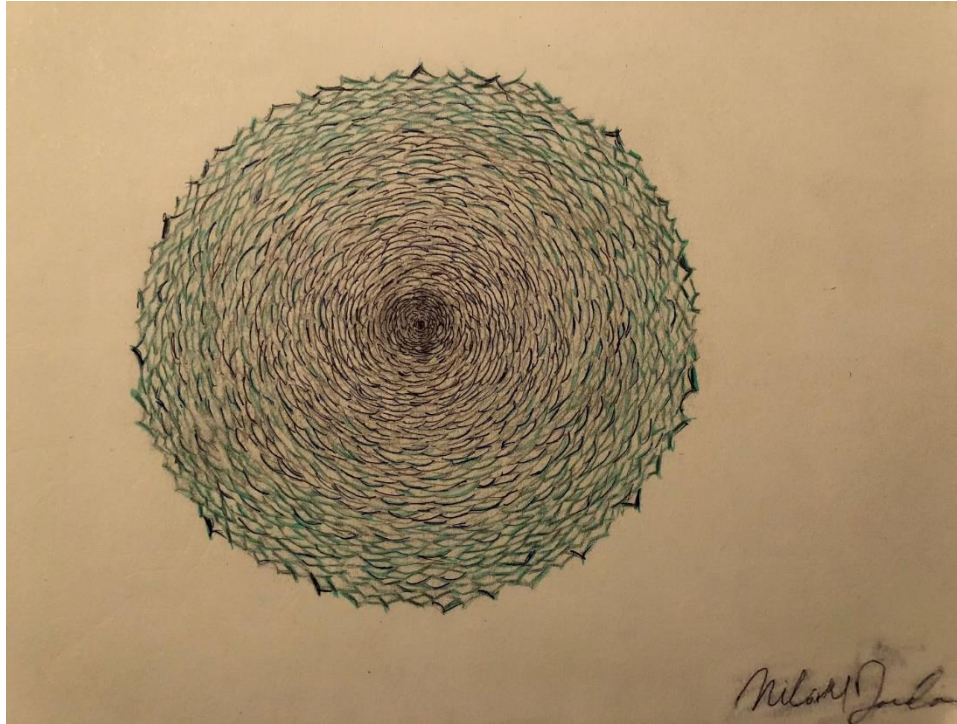
You say I'm too tan,
They say I'm too white.

They say I speak too much English.
I can't read and write like them.
You want me to teach you the bad words,
For the jokes and laughs in our friends faces.

You say I'm too tan,
They say I'm too white.

Harjeet Gill

Harjeet Gill



Nikhol Jordan
Past, Present, Future, 2017

In Loving Memory

Lauren Piro

The death of a family member is supposed to bring families together. Instead, my grandpa's death tore mine apart.

He was a tall, strong man; I felt safe in his arms. Every time I saw him, he would have a gift for me: a coloring book, makeup, barbies, etc, and although I remember and appreciate all of this, I treasure his smile the most. I remember wanting to spend every waking hour with him, despite having seven cousins to keep me busy. If you ask me why I was so attached, I wouldn't have an answer. He treated all his grandkids equally and I received various daily presents, but I looked up to him. He kept our family together, which must have been near impossible due to us all being arrogant and prideful people. But he managed to do it, *with* a genuine smile on his face. Everything was absolute, but it was short-lived.

He was terminally ill with a disease that, in a few short years, left him unable to talk, eat, or stand up. Now, during my infrequent and insincere visits, I was the one giving him the gifts. Except I remember being forced to give him dishonest hugs followed by hollow conversations. I was forced into telling him what happened at school

that day or explaining the newest video game my cousins were playing. I recall not being able to look him in the eye. Once so strong, now so fragile. I did not believe this was my grandfather; it was a stranger's skeleton. At any second, *my* grandpa would walk in, take my hand, and lead me out of that insensitive hospital room. When this didn't happen, I was indebted into looking him in the eyes. We both knew his genuine affection was not returned.

When nothing could be done, he was returned home, where he died in the company of his closest family. When the news got to me, I didn't feel different. He was already dead to me. Worst of all, I was dead to him.

He didn't deserve what happened to him, and I tore myself apart because I couldn't fix him. I was distant and angry at the world for wronging him, and in doing so, wronging me. I took my pain out on him, unsure what else to do. I was a bitter person after his death; I didn't deserve happiness or peace of mind. He passed away during the coldest time of the year and six months later, in the heat of July, I was still cold.

After months of being in a bad place with myself, I decided to change. I couldn't take back how I treated him, but I could change

how I treated everyone else. I attempted being as sincere as I was before. Blocking out my feelings, I projected happiness towards everyone around, *needing* to make them feel as joyful as I longed to be. I made sure no one around me was having a bad day, doing anything I could to keep them from feeling bad. No one would ever see me without I smile, I waited until I was alone to sulk in guilt. *You're fine, you're fine, you're fine* I lied to myself until I believed it. This was my daily life, and by the time the one year anniversary of his death rolled around, I found that I wasn't lying anymore. I'd slowly changed into the person I was pretending to be.

I haven't forgiven myself for what I did to my grandpa. I never will. But I've stopped letting the guilt eat at me. I now have a hunger to make people happy. After all, everyone deserves to be. I've changed myself for the better, and I'm okay with the place I'm in. I found myself and, finally, *I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine.*



Sammy Garcia Jr.
Finding Your Way to the Light, 2017

The Last Thought

The day was fine but the
Night was a storm
With emotions of
Hatred and Hurt
Not knowing whether
To stay or go
Loathing, wanting, bound
Absurdities
Long gone
Feelings
Ruined

Kayla Eddy

GREEN



growth, harmony, freshness

I Got Older

Yessenia Cardoza

Growing up I was always told to be silent and do as I'm told.

I was told that I needed to do as my father said because he was the head male in the house.

I was not allowed to choose my own hair cut.

I was told that I, as a woman, needed to cook and clean He wanted everything done as he said and exactly when he said it.

He never was one to abuse physically, but managed to mentally.

Those may have not been his intentions but they came across that way.

He wanted to appear like a perfect and united family. He didn't want anything imperfect to be shown outside of our own house.

If I wanted to go to my friends' houses growing up, he would say no.

If I wanted to go out anywhere, he would say no.

He tried to "protect" me from everything by not letting me out.

I thought to myself, "Maybe he's doing it for my own good."

I began to grow tired of it.

I did not feel open to the world.

As time passed by, I wanted to become my own person and I began to speak out.

I began to question why he didn't let me out, why he didn't let me have my own thoughts.

I began to question why he controlled every aspect of my life.

He had no other reason than because he was the head male of the house.

I began to think why do I need to appear as something I'm not, just to please his wishes.

I didn't like living in the shadows of his "perfect" family.

I began to think about how he's so focused on keeping a perfect image that we were all drifting apart.

Maybe those weren't his intentions, maybe his intentions were pure, but sometimes one is blinded by their own thoughts, to see the real picture.

He began yelling and questioning me, "Why don't you do as I say anymore?" "Why do you go out so much?" "Why do you not want to depend on me anymore?" All I could say was, "I got older"

A Lesson in Leadership and Humanity

Brad Sanow

“A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, and a little less than his share of the credit” (Arnold H. Glasow). There is a large difference between a leader and a boss. A boss will put their own gain in front of the team. A leader puts the well-being of the team and the objective above their own title or personal gain. This is a lesson I am glad I learned early.

During my time as head leader of my troop in boy scouts I was faced with a decision. We went on our week-long summer camp trip. The largest event there was the large relay race spanning several miles. The entire trip I was planning on how we could win and bring home the prize to display. However, with a recent heavy rain the large gravel covered hills were slick and dangerous to run on. The choice was mine whether we ran or backed out. I wanted the trophy and the accoutrement that came with it, but to do so would be putting my scouts, those who looked to me as a leader in harm's way. Knowing what I know now, I made the right choice and backed out of the race. The next morning, I stopped by the med bay and talked to the medic. She told me that there were three sprained ankles and one broken leg, none of which were boys from my troop.

As a boss one sees their workers as machines to complete a task and be replaced if it is not done. As a leader, one sees their workers as humans. Humans with different backgrounds and opinions, talents and shortcomings, and feelings. It is here we see the unjust versus the just. For it is not one of the worst injustices to use other people, other humans, as stepping stones for selfish reasons, whether monetary, title, or recognition. In this world we need more leaders to light the way for all, not bosses that would hide the light for only themselves.



108 stitches make up a baseball.
Each seam has its own place.
Each one sewn tightly into the leather to make sure they don't come loose.
The ball is hit, thrown and skipped off the rough dirt.
After many bruises, cuts and scuffs, the seams still manage to stay together.
The ball has gone through so much already, but it is ready to endure more.
It doesn't have the ability to give up.
All it can do is go on and keep taking the hits.
But the ball must be taken care of for it to stay strong.
It cannot be neglected.
Each seam matters, even number 108.



**Stone to Lead
Foundry to Factory
Lead to Brass
Brass to Bullet
Factory to Country
Country to Military
Gun to Soldier
Bullet to Gun**

Trevor Johnson

My Pet Turtle

When I was born in 1999, I had my first pet, a turtle. I never named him, but he was always there for me as I grew. While I was so busy chasing after my childhood rabbit, I didn't notice my pet turtle languidly walking behind me. However, he always caught up with me and I noticed he took his time and never was ahead. I began to notice spots growing along his scutes and carapace. They entrapped my hopes for the future. As I entered high school I slowly began to pay more attention to my reptile pet. I wanted him to keep up with my hurried steps forward. Yet here he is, taking his time, reminding me not to rush the future. I was born in 1999 with a turtle of my own. This turtle is my future. The future I wish would hurry in my journey of life.

my childhood rabbit

as fast as it could
my childhood rabbit was gone
leaving me to grow



Scarlett Renteria



Beautiful?

Simply beautiful

Broken and useless

Those are just few
perspectives

Two Sides

Kind and generous

Yet that is not the
whole truth

Selfish and greedy

Told

Annelisa Cole

they told me to be different

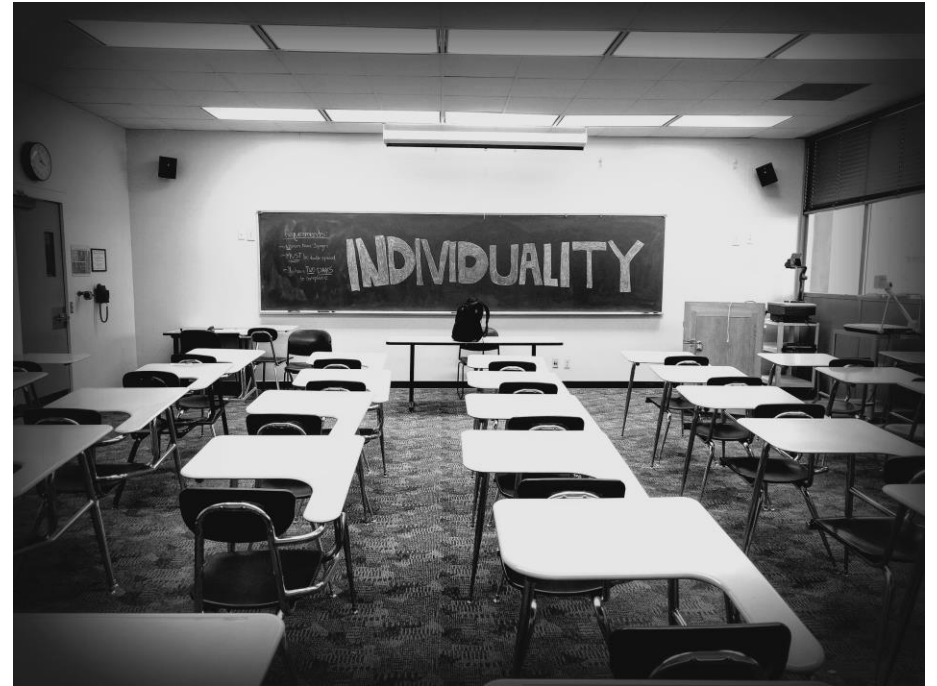
so i tried to be different

yet in the same breath,

they told me “conform”

they told me, find your own place

as they put me in my place



Annelisa Cole
Can't, 2017

My Mother

Daniela Barragan

My mother was raised in Mexico. Her main focus growing up wasn't just on school; she had many duties at home. My mother actually only studied up sixth grade. Neither of her siblings studied for very long in school. My mother has six sisters and four brothers. At home, she and her sisters had to clean, cook, and do laundry along with other duties. My mother and her sisters would have to go down to the lakes by her town to wash clothes. Because they were poor, she and all her siblings had to work. My grandpa owned a small plantation in which they would grow crops and all have to pitch in with the workload. My mother did not have the same luxuries I do. I often think of how she doesn't understand me. It is a luxury for me to go to school. My mother didn't have this opportunity. She always says she wants to work. She doesn't speak much English. I didn't think having a job was some luxury. I grew up being taught to get a good education so that I can get a good job and support myself or possibly my future family. My mother was raised to be a housewife. She does the same thing every day. She has her coffee and cleans the house. It is no wonder why she wouldn't want a job. We were raised differently. I know my mother wants me to have the opportunities that she didn't. She is supportive of everything that I do. I am thankful for the opportunities that I do have. I hope that I will be able to give my future children the same opportunities that I have been fortunate enough to have.

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