

Rise & Shine

Call it a comeback
 A game changer if you will
 You need to beef up
 You got what it takes
 So make it happen
 See the bigger picture
 Making big plays
 Shotgun formation
 You're a multitasking beast
 You got the power
 Turn up the heat
 You'll feel the burn
 Be a mean machine
 Fuel the grind that leads to the great
 Be a Gronkowski mastermind
 The best and the brainiest
 A pure jean-ius
 Have the mindset that
 Unbelievable is achievable
 Incredible is inevitable
 You can be a star
 Now line up
 Focus on you
 Defend yourself
 Remain alert
 Use what you have
 Be flexible
 Set the stage
 It's prime time
 You were made for greatness
 Why settle for a single local rep
 There is going to be a lot of snap mishaps
 Don't be afraid of mistakes
 Ignore the haters and always be true to you

Shalyn Zwegardt

Future Me

Dear Me,
 You're okay
 Sweet darling just take a breath
 Just look beneath
 And you will see
 You are so much more than me
 You made it this far
 I know it may sound bizarre
 But from what I've seen
 You are so much more than me

You're okay
 Sweet darling just slow down
 Pick up your golden crown
 And take a look around
 You are not bound
 To society's frowns
 One day you will see
 You are so much more than me

You're okay
 Sweet darling just put the blade down
 I know it feels like you are drowning
 And I know it's more than you can take
 I know it's a never ending ache
 But please sweet darling
 Hear me out
 One day you will see
 You are so much more than me

By: Danielle Frink

Ordinary is overrated

Real is beautiful
 Free your most beautiful self
 Follow the beat of your own drum
 It's not just a phase
 Every mood; every moment
 Live every second
 Live it like you mean it
 Don't ever doubt yourself
 You were born to shine
 Expect the unexpected
 Fortune favors the bold
 Celebrate every moment
 Life happens in 5
 What you do with you is up to you
 Embrace what makes you geek out
 With eyes wide open
 You must remember this
 You are never alone
 It's not about what you can't do
 It's what can be found inside of you
 There are fates worse than death
 Own your everyday runway
 Forget about today's tragedies
 Look forwards to the memory making of
 tomorrow

By: Danielle Frink

You

I was broken inside
 Things were unclear
 Then you came around
 Made me forget my fear
 I felt hopeless and lost with nobody
 near
 Then I realized I'm not completely
 alone
 'Cause you are always here
 You are my savior
 My knight in shining armour
 without you I'm lost
 with you I'm stronger
 You brought cheer to my life
 My mind is now clear
 I'm thankful to have you
 Now that you're here
 You brighten my day
 with those sweet words of yours
 Your smile and hugs are the best
 I will not lie
 You always seem to catch my eye
 You're the light to my day
 The blue in the sky
 I'm starting to like you more
 As each day goes by
 I like you for being you
 You're so different from the rest
 I just wanted you to know
 To me you are the best

April Fernandez

You Think You Know

It was completely unexpected
glorious failures
who is he?

You know what they say
He's neither man nor beast

He be flying with hoops

Boyish good looks

Little savage

A loyal subject

His brown eyes were stars

what you don't know

He's got senioritis

His life story

By my word

watch out!

The evening was chill, but clear

Suicides can be contagious

To his horror

The killing was clean

The sharp pain in his stomach

An ambulance will take forever
with good reason

IT WAS ALL A BIG JOKE

I CANNOT FIND THE LIGHT

I CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST

THE PRESENT IS SO HEAVY

Man, You complain a lot

He glanced away

FORGET YOU, MAN

You really are afraid aren'tcha?

That's the big question

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

I WAS, BUT NO LONGER AM

I AM WHO I AM

You're crazy!

I AM A FRIEND OF NO ONE

Man, you trippin'!

I FELT SO LOW

Tell me About it

IT IS WHAT IT IS

I'LL NEVER FORGET

Nor will I

But we keep trying

You know I got you

THANKS, MAN

Of course

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

BE STRAIGHT UP WITH ME

Live without fear

Make your own fire

Writer's imagination hit him hard

I'll teach you

THE LIGHT PLAYED TRICKS WITH MY EYES

I'm slowly healing

I'm regaining control

I worked hard to get where I am

His eyes fixed unblinkingly

Hope one day you'll do the same

April Fernandez

DEPRESSION

Julia Davis

The Love Inside

It traveled through me like a breeze from the ocean
current.

Grazing my skin
Making its way up my spine
All the way up to my mind

It consumed my everything.
Not leaving room for anything.
Enveloping all I was.

I ripped at my skin
Trying to get away from that sin.
But was it a sin?
I didn't know then.

It took all I had.
Now what do I have?
The answer to that?
I have no clue.
All I know is
This is because of you.

But it wasn't all you.
This was my choice.
Now I have no voice.
How was I to know
That those orbs that glow
The deepest shade of green
Could have so much mean

But no matter I still have that sin
It rests in the crevices of my skin

It owns me.
And what is that sin?
Perhaps it's love.

Echoe Lennox

Be Yourself

Ignore the haters
Just be you
Undefined by those around you
Embrace
The good
The bad
The colorful
You're pretty tough
Now break out the brick lipstick
Slip on furry slides
Play hair-color peekaboo
Lighten your leather
Be a trailblazer
And glow from within
Punk up pink
With your heavy metal ruthless eyes
And saturated lips in liquid chrome
Metallic intensity
No negativity
Find your zen space
Tuck away clutter
Ignore the traumarama
Don't play the shame game
Tell it like it is
Break out of your shell
You're fresh and understated
Be confident and sophisticated
A real page turner
Throw caution to the wind
Walk on the wild side
Live loud
Boost your meow factor
It's a bright new day
Go for bold
And make it happen

Shalyn Zweygardt

Vexed

You left me alone
 So why are you here
 Begging forgiveness
 But guess what I don't really care
 You were such a jerk
 A punk if you will
 So get your scrawny self up out of here
 I don't need you around
 Messing everything up
 Your words never meant nothin'
 Now you're in front of me on your knees
 Saying please forgive me
 Forgiving is one thing
 Forgetting's another
 I won't fall for that again
 I'm forever a goner
 I'm sure it's an honor
 To have had me before
 But guess what idiot
 You'll have me no more
 I was such a fool
 To have ever listened to you
 I know now that none of it was true
 You played me like a tool
 So shame on you
 My answer is no
 I let you try
 I gave you a chance
 Now it's forever goodbye

Shalyn Zwegardt

Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing. --Benjamin Franklin

A lot of writing takes place in the subconscious, and it's bound to have an effect. --George R. R. Martin

Karma Kills

Worlds can turn upside down in just
 one moment. Imagine what can happen in a
 couple hours. I'll tell you what happened to
 me.

It started with an innocent curiosity
 of went on at night in the scruff of the city.
 I have heard stories. We all had. No one
 ever dreamed of them being true, but for
 some reason they were still scared and told
 to stay away. Most of us did. For those who
 didn't listen... Well, let's just say those
 weren't people you saw again. Everyone
 said the sin dragged them in by the neck
 and never let go.

One night I finally decided I couldn't
 take it anymore. I was 16 living in a large
 house on the north side of town. Dad was
 never home. He was always working or out
 getting a drink with his dim-witted
 assistant. Usually a slim blonde with the
 brain capacity of a goldfish. Pretty to look
 at not so much a companion. That is unless
 you enjoy stupid comments and never

ending waterfall of stupidity that eventually turns into random crying sessions about her favorite clothing line shutting down right before fall weather.

Anyway, I was over it. I know he loved me, but he didn't spend enough time with me. After mom died he became very distant. Perhaps he was always distant, but in a different way. Who cares? At least is happy.

I grabbed my bag and snuck out a back door. I knew he wouldn't be home, but there was always a maid wandering the halls to watch out for. Since my dad worked for a car company, I was regularly trying out new models. The one I was currently driving was supposed to be the safest version of the car line yet. I jumped in and headed to the southeast side of town. As the lights got closer, the people got thicker. I took a particular interest in what they wore: suits, dresses, jeans, vests, three hats and a pair of sunglasses. Didn't matter down this way. Everyone was himself down here. Everyone was very different

compared to my school where everyone wore the same things. I was tired of all the crazy, preppy kids; more specifically, I was tired of being one. I parked when I finally found a spot. I hopped on out and walked into a club near me.

"Welcome whoever you think you are! As usual tonight's party is hosted by yours truly. Let's give a warm round of applause for the club owner: the Prince of the streets himself! Let's hear it for Mr. Kringe!"

The crowd roared with celebration of tonight's mistake no less. However, I felt watched. I immediately found who was sending the eerie feeling my way. A man in a suit was sitting in a balcony above the crowd. His eyes pierced my soul. Was everyone like that this time of night? I threw it to the back of my head. My dad always said I had an overactive imagination.

"Hello," a man said. It is the same one from the balcony.

"Oh, umm... Hello," I was honestly startled at how quick he was to hunt me down just to say hi.

"What's your name?"

"Leo," I said not really thinking about whether it is a good idea to give my name away or not. Honestly, it wasn't. I had a hard time deciding if I truly cared despite the common danger of talking to strangers.

"I'm Dominic. I work at the asylum."

"Yeah, I haven't seen you here before."

"Really? I've been here before. We must have come on different nights," I said lying through my teeth like trash.

"No, no. I'm here often enough to know you're new. I would not have missed you before. No way."

A sudden discomfort came over me. Maybe I was wrong to want to come here tonight. The goosebumps on my neck were enough for me to know it was time to go elsewhere.

Making my way through the crowd, I was stopped abruptly by a group of men.

They looked at me as if I was a steaming steak fresh off the grill. I realized I much preferred the other guy. Their beady eyes glared down at me. I felt like a helpless fawn in a crowd of tigers. I felt one grab me, only it wasn't one of them. It was the man from the balcony, Dominic. He pulled me behind him and addressed the group.

"Got a problem?" he asked.

"Nah. We just getting to know the little lady."

"Find someone else to prey on."

"Fine! This party's rank anyway!"

The group left in a less than mannerful way. They occasionally knocked a person over. I'm sure they were fairly frustrated with what had just happened. I almost laughed before realizing Dominic was a fed up guy. He didn't find it nearly as humorous.

"You didn't think it was funny?" I asked.

He looked at me dumbfounded. "You have no idea do you?"

"About what?"

"The danger. You shouldn't be out!"

"Of course I know. That's what makes it fun! The thrills are what drive me. The feeling of terror thinking you won't escape is absolutely phenomenal. You get that feeling only so often."

"You're crazy. Time to go back."

"No way!"

"It is my job to take care of you!"

I became upset at what he had said. I immediately found a way to get lost in the crowd. Making my way through a large group of people, I got so mixed in, he couldn't find me. Thank God. I want nothing to do with someone like that. It was time for me to be free and have a little fun for once in my life. That is just what I did.

Smiles and laughs were the common lingo of the night. I had a lot of fun and even met a few people I thought I would be friends with for life. One of my friends from fifth grade appeared. Her name was Kat. She seemed nice. We weren't best friends when we were little. I had a prissy family where hers was more middle class. It was a

shame because we practically became best friends within half an hour of realizing we knew each other. As time went on I realized it was around two in the morning. Kat and I decided to go for a drive. A rumor was going around that there would be fireworks and we were determined as we could have been to get as high up as we could to see them.

As I took a right turn onto Abbey Street, I heard the tires of a car skid. I looked over my left shoulder and just as I opened my eyes there was the grill of a truck emerging with my car door. The glass shattered and the door bent inwards. Kat's airbag went off, but mine didn't. I thought to myself in that moment of the car spinning wildly down the road. "Thank God I have my seatbelt on."

The nose of the car hit a street light. Finally, the spinning ended. The spinning was absolutely putrid. I was on the verge of thanking the heavens for making it stop right as my safety belt snapped and sent me hurtling into the city canal. The

unforgiving winter had made the water an ungodly cold. I felt my lips turn blue and my mind shut down. As I looked to the sky for the last time, I saw all my sins in front of me rather than the pale light of the moon. I sank deeper into the canal until all I saw was darkness. Before closing my eyes for the last time, I felt the hand colder than the water that consumed me, grab hold of my soul and pull down deeper than the earth's crust.

I saw all my wrong I had ever done. I saw the denial in which I had lived for three years. I told myself mom had died of all sorts of things. Illness, cancer, plane crash, car crash. I told myself dad was alive, he just never came home. He was murdered months after mom was. I told myself I lived in a home, but I lived in an insane asylum where Dominic worked part time. I had broken out and stolen my psychiatrist's car.

I lied to myself for years. Mom and Dad died at my own hands and I refused to accept what I had done. It was my fault no

matter how many times I tried to convince everyone it wasn't me. It was my imaginary friend telling me to do it. My friend was now pulling my soul into the depths of Satan's lair.

I felt myself miss the unforgiving canal. I cursed myself for calling it such. What came after was much worse than anything anyone living could ever imagine. I was forced to accept what I had done. I had murdered my own flesh and blood and lied to myself for years after regret had washed my soul for my actions. I was being convicted for what I had done. Escape was not an option.

By Peachie Storms

The Girl

(a one-syllable story)

She stands where the sun meets the sea, her dad's last cry was heard by the cool waves. She didn't need a spell to lure a man. In her dwarf hands sits a bright red rose. There's not a soul to be seen.

How long would she be in this state? A world full of grief and

loss. Will her heart ever feel
loved? Would it thrum in her chest
like bird wings?

The girl with the rose is in
a ray of sun, bright with life.
This is where the boy will steal
her heart and make her whole. She
will not know of pain or of loss
for the boy will find her and will
love her, and at a slow pace make
her heart thrum like the beat of a
drum. His charm and her looks work
as one. They stand down by the
moon in a mood of glee. For once
they are both whole. Not one piece
of their souls are gone.

Julia Davis

Write every day; never give up;
it's supposed to be difficult; try to
find some pleasure and reward in
the act of writing, because you
can't look for praise from editors,
readers, or critics. In other words,
tips that are much easier to give
than to take.

—J. R. Moehringer

The Tomb

(a one-syllable story)

The crypt, dark and damp; drips fall from the roof.
In the torch's wane, the boy treads yon in the dark.
The fear of the rift crept in his mind, yet the boy did
not part, for he had not yet found his prize. Deep in

the void he walks. Two hours gone by and the boy
darts on in the black.

The light of the torch dims, murk draws close.
The boy's hope is now gone. But still he does press
on, deep to the heart of cold. Past the bones, past the
mort, all through the vast crypt. As the boy draws yet
close to his goal, he mulls it in his mind. Is it worth the
trip round the crypt? Do the dead know where I tread?

Some time has since passed, and the boy
sees the glow. The glow of pearl and gold fills his
woe. The torch does yet flash its last breath. He grabs
what he can, and snuff to the rest. He has no time, he
has no lull, he must go or he will be null.

He sees it. There it is. He must reach the light
of day, past the casks, past the mort. He leaves the
gloom that is the crypt.

Best Friends Meant to Be

We are best friends
Friends come and go
No one can break us apart
We stuck together
Like a mother and her baby
You Love me I love you
We are there for each other
You are always here for me
To lift my spirits high
I will help you out too
Together we party
You Change my frown
Into a smile
I will always be beside you
So will you
We both don't have regrets
You're my life's brightest star
Best friends stay together forever
--Chad Sherman

Pay (a one-syllable poem)

completely filled. We were just about to leave when, an extremely overweight middle aged woman (probably 300 pounds) decided she wanted to ride the bus, too. She looked around nervously for any open seats. Then she saw it, the only empty seat on the entire bus, and it was right next to me.

The lady wobbled with some difficulty to get to it, almost tripping on her own two feet. She looked at me and said, “Do you mind if I sit here?”

“Not at all,” I replied, But deeply I really DIDN’T want her to sit next to me. She looked like a giant humpback whale. She sat down, barely fitting in the seat and her fat body squished against me crushing me against the window of the bus.

After what seemed like hours, the ride finally ended. “Not soon enough,” I whisper scornfully to myself. After a few minutes, I recover from the near death-oxygen deprivation, from being clamped against the window seal. After exiting the bus, I began to think about the presentation again. This presentation could either make or break my career. I began walking

the rest of the tedious journey from the bus stop to my office building.

As I entered my work complex. Nothing is really out of the ordinary. In fact, shockingly enough, things seemed a little *too* normal. On an average day, this place is an absolute madhouse with all the unpaid interns running around. It wasn’t unusual to have a few of them bump into you, when walking through the entryway.

Grabbing my usual cup of coffee from the break room, I walked out the doorway. If only if it was that simple: on the way out I trip and fall, flinging my coffee. Where did the coffee land, you may ask? Well the answer to that question is very simple. It flew right into my BOSS’S face!

I made a break for It and SPRINTED to the elevators. I honestly think that was the fastest I’ve ever run in my entire life. I ran purely on the hope that he didn’t see me fling the coffee at him. After riding the elevator up to my floor, I went into the bathroom to attempt to calm myself down. After finally achieving calmness. I stepped out into the hall, looked at

the clock, and realized I only had 20 minutes till my presentation.

As I started the walk to the conference room, I see one of my coworkers. But not just any co-worker; that would have been too fortunate. It was Frank. He was gossiping with his group of “friends” as usual. I greatly disliked Frank from the moment we met, and the feeling appeared to be mutual. Frank was the kind of guy who liked to really kiss up to his superiors. He always tried to undercut people for his benefit. As I walked by he looked at me, and put out a sort of grunt in my direction. After that he turned his head back to his click. As I walked by, I heard him whispering something, probably talking trash about me. I wanted to punch him square in the face, but instead I used this as an opportunity to practice restraint, and walked on.

As I reached the conference room, I once again sat down on the little bench outside the room, and I practiced what I was going to say on the cards. But, as fate would have it, I left them in the bathroom along with my briefcase. Included in the briefcase was my laptop, which also contains my powerpoint, the entire

backbone of the presentation. My heart sank. I didn’t have enough time to run back and get them. All heck (substitute) had broken loose, and I was the catalyst. There was only one more mere minute till my presentation. And I would have to wing it.

I felt like a dead man entering his tomb. I walked through the sliding glass doors shaking and sweating drastically. I look around the room as if I were a prisoner headed to the execution chamber. The executive VP walked up to me and shook my hand. He then took his seat and said “You may begin.” Never have words pierced my soul in such a way. Never have words physically hurt me.

My voice staggered a little. “Hi,” I managed to scrape out. “My name is..... Tom.” I paused for a minute to regather myself. “Today’s presentation will be a little “unconventional.” I don’t have a powerpoint for you today, because....” Just then my boss walked into the boardroom and said, “Sorry I’m late, some foolish numbskull thought it would be funny to throw coffee all over my new shirt.”

I almost chuckled, The whole situation somehow gave me newfound confidence, and I was able to successfully BS my way through the entire presentation. Yep, I was able to effectively discuss Company Communications, despite losing my powerpoint. I managed to trick them into thinking I intentionally didn't include it. But to this day I'm not sure what gave me this burst of quick thinking and confidence. Maybe it was the thought of my boss, getting what he deserved, or the irony of it all. Whatever it was, to this day I am thankful for it.

I gathered my things, shook the VP's hand again and left. I then walked to the bathroom to retrieve my lost stuff; thankfully nobody had taken it. As I was about to leave the office complex, I heard a soft female voice shriek "Wait!" The voice seemed familiar. I turned around and saw the 300 pound lady from the bus. She walked up to briskly and said, "Your presentation, It was by far the best non-boring display I've ever seen. Perhaps I should introduce myself. My name is Rachel, I'm the CEO here at DonaCorp. I just wanted to

say thanks. This morning you let me sit by you on the bus. Normally, because of my weight people really don't like me to sit by them. I don't really ride busses much being the CEO but this morning, I had no other option. Anyway, I just wanted to say, I enjoyed your presentation, I hope to see great things out of you in the future, That's why I'm promoting you!" The whole ordeal left me speechless. She then shook my hand and walked away.

How had I not noticed her presence in the conference room? Come to think of it, WHAT HAD I SAID IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM? The whole memory of what happened during my conference seemed to have been blurred. I started the long journey back home. "Wait till I tell Max!" I exclaimed!

Alex Queen

Cruel Indenturement

The roof tumbled right above him, without a moment's hesitation Timothy rolled to the right barely avoiding the flaming log that almost fell upon him. The smoke was appalling, but Timothy had no

choice but to keep moving to escape the burning building. Then he remembered. How could he forget, Vennessa, his baby sister, was still upstairs-- still in her crib! He dashed back into the flames to save her, but he was too late. The room was already permeated with fire.

"Wake up you little...." yelled Dredge angrily, "I don't feed, water, and clothe you for nothing! Don't make me lash you!" Timothy awoke almost instantly at the sound of Dredge's bellowing voice. His headmaster was not a man to be messed with, and Timothy knew that quite well. Dredge resembled a middle aged, slightly overweight Englishman. His pastimes were scolding at us "workers" drinking, and smoking a pipe while revelling in all our misery. This wasn't much of a problem however because he rarely got involved in the matters of the younger indentured servants.

Sometimes when the slave overseers were not around, Timothy would leave his assigned group of indentured

servants and seek out a place where he would not be disturbed. He always enjoyed being on his own more, after losing his parents to smallpox. It just made him feel like he had control over his life when nobody was around, and he relished every moment of it. He hoped one day to finally work off his parent's debt and be free from all of the burdens of being a servant.

"What are you doing up here?" said Dredge. Timothy was so startled by the sound of his headmaster he almost fainted. "Nothing sir! I was just.... looking for my watch, see!" Dredge looked at him inquisitively "Now you listen here boy...." The headmaster stopped talking. His eyes appeared bloodshot and he was sweating heavily. He fell backward on the ground and lay there. Timothy, petrified by what had just taken place, looked at the body. Thankfully, Dredge was still breathing. Timothy had seen this before, Dredge was stone drunk and conveniently passed out on the grass.

Timothy rarely saw Dredge get as hammered as he was, in fact the only time he could recall Dredge fainting from alcohol was when he had heard the news of his sister's death last December. Something terrible must have occurred in his life, probably a loss of a family member, or his wife finally leaving him. Whatever it was, it impacted him greatly. And Timothy knew Dredge would take it out on him and the other servants later.

Timothy, rushed home in order to tell in detail, what exactly had transpired between him and Dredge to his friends. As the day past by, Timothy, began to feel an unsettling feeling of unease. Something foul was in the air, he just couldn't exactly put his finger on it.

Alex Queen

You will never

Your hugs will never be felt
 Your voice will never be heard
 Your smile will never be seen
 Your food will never be smelled
 You aren't forgotten
 You aren't lost
 You were just taken
 You were called home
 now you're an angel
 Looking down
 At your family
 At your loved ones
 Living their life
 As if nothing happened
 You left a hole in our hearts
 That can never be filled
 I love you

I miss you

Julia Davis

Falling in Fall

"Look at that odd thing in the transparent looking glass," thought the squirrel in the tree, "Why do I see such odd things each coming fall?"

The girl, named Jane, has left the window now. This left the curious squirrel wondering why. Later, the squirrel peeked out of his home and noticed that the girl was looking at the neighbor's tree. The neighbor's tree, full with leaves, had not even begun to shed its green solar panels. She seemed to be disappointed, but hardly angry. She walked back into her red brick home and did not return to the window for another few days.

"Why," thought the curious squirrel, "does she not care anymore? Has she lost interest in the neighboring tree? I would think not. She comes every year to see this tree and rake its leaves. Every year."

Precisely a week later, the majority of the leaves had fallen. The girl watched them day by day. She finally decided it was time to

rake the leaves when she stopped in her tracks to see a silver moving truck had parked in her neighbor's stone driveway. A newer neighbor would be moving in on this sunny day. Jane seemed to frown. She looked at her rake and looked at her door. She sat the rake down and walked inside, feet dragging.

"It is not good weather to rake the leaves anyway," She said reluctantly.

A few more gloomy days passed. The new neighbor had settled in and the colorful leaves still lay on the ground. Jane seemed nervous when she walked out of the house. Jane took a deep breath and began to walk across the yard and knocked on the neighbor's door. A short stocky old man came to the door.

"What do you want?" asked the old grump of man.

"I was wondering if I could rake your yard. It is kind of a tradition for me," she explained as her eyes darted to the man and back to the ground.

"Yeah, I suppose that would be okay. Don't tire up my yard though."

After a short conversation the lonely old man went back inside and Jane went back to

her porch and grabbed her rake. She began to rake the leaf-covered yard.

That was the end of that fall and the squirrel went into hibernation. The squirrel was eager for the following autumn to observe Jane again. Half of fall had passed and he had hardly seen anything concerning the girl. Until one day...

Lovely, redheaded Jane had come walking up to the house with a boy. She must have been 15 years old by now. They both sat on the porch drinking hot beverages. Soon the boy had to leave. Jane continued to sit on the porch for around 20 minutes. She watched the sunset and then proceeded to go inside not to return until a day later and rake the leaves.

The girl finally came outside and began to rake the leaves once more. She moved much slower than the year before. She occasionally would stop to get a hot sip of tea from her mug that sat on the porch ledge.

The girl fell into the pile of leaves. Not in a playful manner like she had in the past. The leaves flew into the air as her long red hair landed softly. Leaves, no longer in a perfect pile, covered the girl and even got tangled in

her hair. Her eyes closed and her mind still, the girl was unconscious and alone.

“Is she just playing in the leaves?” thought the squirrel balled up in his little home since being scared of the loud sound of Jane falling to the leaves.

For hours she lay there until her old neighbor came running. The ambulance came just shortly after and hauled her away to the hospital. She was not seen by the squirrel until the next fall.

Finally, the girl had come home and it was, indeed, fall. The girl came out of a car with a pink bandana wrapped around her head instead of her long red hair. She seemed to have lost a lot of weight. Her eyes had sunken and she seemed to be paler as well. The squirrel took interest in her new appearance and the gadget that was dangling from her arm.

Assisted by the boy, from several seasons ago, Jane began to walk inside for the first time in nearly a year only taking a few moments to catch her breath and look over at the scattered leaves strung across the yard. They continued to make their way inside taking an unusual amount of time to go up the three

steps that lead to her door where she would barricade herself for several days.

Here and there the boy would come to check up on her despite her attempts to hide herself in the dark of her room. One day he finally convinced stubborn Jane to come outside. She stood in the yard with her eyes squinted from the bright sun. She noticed the rake still sitting on the side of the house. The handle, now splintered all the way down, was still sturdy and functional. She picked it up and stumbled over to the old man's yard. With little strength she still felt the undying need to rake the large yard.

Jane was happy to hear the sound of the leaves as they cascaded across the yard occasionally getting stuck in the spine of the old rake. The sound, like few things, brought joy to her. She nearly fell a few times. She got too excited and would forget how weak she had become from the year of illness and the treatment that followed it. Sadly, it was not over; she was only home for a short while. For now she enjoyed her time in the yard.

Along with her friends help, they managed to rake the whole yard within just a few hours. Jane had missed the feeling of

accomplishment and the cool autumn air on her face. It made her feel very much at home. Her neighbor had decided to bring Jane and her friend some more hot chocolate and said thank you for raking his yard as he did every year.

Little did he know he would not get to the next year.

This fall, the girl did not rake the leaves. She was never seen not even for a moment. However, one day, a very cloudy one, the neighbor came out in the yard and stared longingly at the tree and the weak, old, rake and the leaves that were usually piled up by now. He picked the rake up and began to slowly and sorrowfully rake his gloomy yard. To his surprise Jane's friend had come along with two mugs.

In that moment, the squirrel, grown gray with age, in his last days, had passed away. Jane and the curious old squirrel had made their way to a different place beyond the earth where their families stayed. They left behind their lives, but not without a fight. Jane fought an impossible fight against her illness and the squirrel satisfied his curiosity. Finally, the grey squirrel understood why she loved to rake the leaves in the old man's yard. Just before the squirrel had passed,

he saw the neighbor man and the boy come together to rake leaves and drink tea. All along, it was not about doing a job. It was kindness of heart that kept them all warm in the cool autumn air.

Peachie Storms

Writing is like driving at night in the fog. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way. E. L. Doctorow

Oh My Soul

A stone
alone

Jagged rugged snuggles
Into a mossy bank
Abutting the glittering stream
Basks in the sun
Needs no one
Seated, heated, and still...
Retreated from the rille

Then

Disturbance upheaval unrest

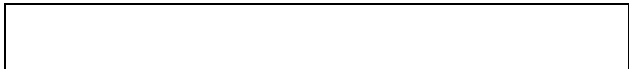
Awakened

Tumble turn traverse
The comfort
Into the water I go.

'Neath the rippling stippled sheath
Reflected not rejected
In the Son's embrace
I know this space,
Placid in this place
So clear
that this, now I see,
Has ever been my destiny

J. Cole

**A
P
R
I
L
F**



Let Me BE

I don't need your negativity
 My life is my responsibility
 You may hate me
 But your words can't break me
 You may be strong physically
 But I'm strong emotionally
 You don't think before you speak
 That's one thing that makes you weak
 We all know that you are lying
 One day you'll end up crying
 Then you'll understand
 There will be no one to hold your hand
 I suggest you start changing
 Before the love others have for you
 Starts fading
 For one part I am thankful
 I will never be ungrateful
 I will always remain strong
 Hope one day you'll admit you're wrong
 But until that day
 I will pray
 And let God lead the way
 April Fernandez

Of Wing and Wind

The wind is an extremely relentless
 force. Even worse, the wind is as
 untrustworthy as it gets. When the wind
 decides to, it helps the birds fly to where
 they have chosen to go. On the other
 hand the wind may decide to blow with
 terrible power in order to hinder the bird.
 The wind may harm or even kill the poor
 defenseless bird that has gotten swept
 into its wicked power, sending the
 forsaken bird plummeting to its death. Yet
 the bird continues to rely on the wind
 for every flight it decides to take.

The bird will forever trust the wind.
 Even if it has been betrayed before by
 the wind, like its countless brothers and
 sisters before him. The bird will continue
 to leap into the wind over and over again
 trusting the wind to catch him and help
 him soar to the heavens. The bird trusts
 the wind so far as to use the gales to
 take it south when the sustenance it
 requires to live grows thin. Then to take
 the bird right back to where they both
 began when the winter warms again.

why would the bird trust the wind? I
 found myself wondering this while

watching a bird flying as high as it could on a blustering day. I believe I have finally found the answer. The bird may be betrayed by the wind but it grants him something that some of us have forgotten we have. The freedom to go through its life on its own path. The bird will always take the path it wants entrusting the wind to carry it to its destination even at the times it has to fight the wind.

I believe that is the way life was meant to be lived. Like the birds "winging" our path to where we want to go. Something that some of us have long forgotten. So when we're wandering how to get through our path remember the little bird that trusted the wind even if it may betray it. Always remember however that even though the wind will help, it will also try to push against the path we choose to take. At those times we must fight the wind in an effort to carve out a path for our own lives.

So when the wind blows in a direction that we want to take don't miss the opportunity and dive into the gusts for they will take us as close to our

destination as possible. Though be wary for the wind may decide to change, and we might end up having the most incredible battle of our life to guarantee we forge our own path. The opposing gust will eventually fade to nothing more than a memory and another gust will come along with our path to take us closer to where we want to go.

Taryn Zweygardt

The most important thing is to read as much as you can, like I did. It will give you an understanding of what makes good writing and it will enlarge your vocabulary.

—J. K. Rowling

I learned never to empty the well of my writing but always to stop when there was still something there in the deep part of the well, and let it refill at night from the springs that fed it.

Ernest Hemingway

A Carefree Life

Once when I was out for a walk on an early fall morning, I came across the most beautiful orange and black butterfly lying in the gutter. It was fluttering its frozen wings weakly and I felt sorry for it. I took it back home with me and sat it outside beneath a dryer vent so it could be warm, at least for its final moments. Later I asked my mother what had happened to it and she told me that it must have not made it to the migration and had frozen to death. As I came to find out, the butterfly I found was a North American Monarch butterfly. It belonged to the one and only species of butterfly that flew south for the winter.

The yearly migration of North America's monarch butterfly is a distinctly unique and awe inspiring phenomenon. Many people make the trip to southern states to watch as the Monarchs fly south in large orange and black clouds. Unlike other kinds of butterflies that can survive the winter as larvae, or even as adults, Monarchs cannot survive the harsh, cold winters of northern climates. When the weather gets cooler the Monarchs use air currents and thermal channels to make their long trip south, some Monarchs can even fly as far as 3,000 miles in search of a warmer climate.

I had never thought of a butterfly as anything but a carefree, a light entity floating on the breeze, going wherever the winds may take it. I had never considered where the Monarchs went once winter came, or what happened to those left behind. I had never thought that maybe they were not as carefree as they seemed.

I compare the butterfly to the people all around me, who seem to be so easy going but may also be slowly heading towards a certain destination. People live their lives often day to day and moment to moment but are always headed, whether it be conscious or unconscious, towards a goal.

A man who is young may live more carefree just like a butterfly may be more carefree in the spring, but as he gets older may look for more security and stability in his life, like the Monarch in the early fall. The seasons that dictate the path of the butterfly are just the same as the years of our life. If this is true it may seem as though we are all living our lives in a drearily similar manner, but just as the butterflies are carried on different wind currents, we chose our own paths in life, and each path is different. Not one person's life is the same as another, we all face different obstacles and overcome them in our own way. --Maryse

Schafer

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up our humble little first effort at a Literary Magazine for SFCHS. The staff of student writers has worked hard, sweating blood, biting nails, and pulling hair to get their pieces just right.

Virginia Woolf has said that "Every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind, is written large in his works."

As I have worked with these young people, I have found this to be utterly true. I have been consistently amazed at their willingness to put their hearts and souls and anger and disappointment on paper. You

must understand that this takes supreme courage. I applaud their bravery. --Jackie Cole

All in the Dark

Six friends, all hiking together in Alaska. They have . With a huge snow storm just starting to build. They were out in the middle of a forest,

. It got dark fast. It had it seemed like. They stumbled upon an old house in the rear left corner of the forest.

"Let's go inside" Max said.

"I don't have a good feeling about going in there, Max," said Julie.

"You'll be fine, just come on," said Max.

Max was the kind of average 17 year old who was just searching for a piece of meat to take advantage of. With a rock hard six pack, a razor sharp jaw line, he was the type of teen that every girl wanted. Julie had long black hair. Skinny as well. Chris was a little overweight, about six feet tall. But the girls still wanted to be all over him. Gage was the type of kid that had very few friends. He always go this weird look from all the people in the school . Shawn was the hottest boy in their class. Perfect body, blue eyes, blonde hair, and the cutest face you could imagine. But he was a total jerk to all the girls.

They all piled inside of the old house. It had a fireplace and a gas stove. There was a pile of wood sitting on the porch. Shawn started a fire that grew large very quickly. Julie went to the kitchen to find a pot to start to boil some water. She looked inside of all the cabinets and found a pot just big enough. She also found a mixture of hot cocoa. So she boiled the water and made everyone a cup of warm cocoa.

They were all inside drinking hot cocoa . The power had been out for nearly 5 days now. The only thing that is keeping them warm is the crackling warm fire.

A knock on the door appeared , an old man who was so skinny, he was brittle on the inside. He had white long gray hair, part of his cheek was missing, and a few teeth as well. "Well hello young fellow," said an older man. "I am just making sure that you guys are doing okay."

Max answered in return, "Yes, doing alright I suppose. It's getting colder every hour with the power being out for so long."

"Yes I agree, who are you all with?" asked the old man.

"Hold on just one second," replied Max. "Hey, can you guys come here for a second?" asked Max. "This is Julie, Chris, Gage and Shawn,"he announced.

"Very nice to meet you all," said the old man. "Well, you can all come over if you ever need anything from me."

"Thank you," replied Max.

The old man turned and left.

"Well that was strange; who was that guy?" asked Shawn.

"I have no clue; I don't know where he came from either," replied Max.

Getting through the night . Thinking about that strange old man creeped them all out. and giant snowflakes came down at a fast pace.

The cool breeze coming in the small crack in the window awoke Gage. "That's weird, I wonder who opened the window?" Gage asked quietly.

As Julie woke from her resting state, she spoke, "What are you doing up so early Gage?" asked Julie.

"I felt the cold breeze from the window"
said Gage.

Their talking awoke everyone in the rest
of the living room.

"What are you guys doing up so early? It's
only three in the morning," asked Chris.

"Well I felt the cold breeze coming into
the room from the small crack from the window,"
said Gage.

"Oh," responded Chris.

Nobody could go back to sleep. Shawn
started to make eggs for everyone. Thank the
lord for the that was in the house.

"How does everyone want their eggs?"
asked Shawn.

"Just make them all scrambled," said
Julie.

"Breakfast is ready everybody!"
announced Shawn.

They all started eating; everyone was
enjoying the eggs that Shawn had cooked. They
got done eating and threw away their paper
plates.

They were playing games until Chris said,
"Let's go outside and have a snowball fight."

As they were outside, they were all having
a blast! They teamed up into two teams: Max and
Julie on one team, Chris, Gage, and Shawn on the
second team.

"Are we all ready?" Asked Max.

"Yes!" said Gage.

The snowball fight began. Snowballs were
flying through the air as everyone was having a
great time. As Chris hit Shawn in the face with a
snowball, Shawn and
charged after Chris. This started a big
commotion. Chris tried to get out of the way
before Shawn nailed him with a good knock down.

"What the heck, dude!" yelled Chris. Julie
looked at them curiously. She had no clue what
happened.

"Calm down, bro. We are just having fun!"

"You call that fun?" exclaimed Shawn.

"Yes, now calm down," said Chris.

Shawn at Chris again.

"Dude calm down, we don't need to be
fighting," announced Chris. "I'm done, I'm going
inside."

"Fine, I agree, sorry," said Shawn, bowing
his head down in sadness.

They all went inside from the brittle
coldness and fresh in their
gleaming snow. Everyone got changed into
different clothes. Julie was looking around for a
bowl to cook the chili in. The expiration date on
the chili was 12/03/12.

Once they got done eating they threw
their paper bowls into the fire, The fire had a
certain . They all set up their
sleeping bags in the living room on the cold
hardwood floors. They all were sleeping in the
middle of the night when Julie woke from her
deep sleep. She got a weird sense that someone
was watching them. She woke up at exactly 1:33
A.M. As she rose from sleep, she noticed that it
was not a dream. When she looked out the
window, she saw that same old man who had came
to the door just the other day. She lay back down
very slowly. She rolled over and got out of her
sleeping bag, crawling over to Shawn.

"Wake up, Shawn," she said quietly.

"What is it Julie? Go back to bed," said
Shawn tiredly.

"That old man that came to the door the
other day. He's lurking at the window," panicked
Julie.

"What are you talking about?" asked
Shawn.

"He's out there, I promise!" she said quietly.

Shawn slowly rose from his sleeping bag and looked out the window.

"Oh crap!" he exclaimed. "Everyone wake up, now!"

Everyone woke up. They all had puzzled looks on their faces. They started to get up from their sleeping bags.

"Don't get up," whispered Shawn.

They all lowered themselves back down.

"Why?" asked Max.

"That guy that came to door the other day, he is the window," announced Shawn.

"What?are you serious?" Asked Max.

"I'm not joking," stated Shawn.

"Well what are we going to do?" Asked Gage.

"I don't know yet," said Shawn.

Julie got close to the window and peeked out.

"He's . Where the heck did he go?" spoke Julie.

They all looked at Julie with incredulous looks. The door handle made a squeak. As they looked at the door, Chris said "Oh crap"! The old man was trying to get into the house. As the door handle still was keeping them safe the door finally came open.

"What the heck are you doing?" asked Julie.

He just looked at her and .

"He has a knife!" shouted Gage.

The old guy looked just looked at him and kept walking.

"Let's go. Now!" Said Max.

They all the front door with the old man chasing them.

. They and see a bright glowing light from where they had just come.

"What IS that?" asked Gage.

"Let's turn back around," said Max.

"No, we can't" Julie stated clearly.

"All of our stuff is still in there, though," said Gage.

"Fine!" Julie said.

As they ran back in the came from they could feel major heat. They got back to the house, but it was no longer a house, , with the old man nowhere in sight.

"I wonder if he is still in there?" asked Chris.

"I doubt it," said Gage.

They looked around and did not see him anywhere.

"Well that's strange," said Julie.

"All of our stuff is gone now," announced Max

"Yes, it sure is," stated Gage.

They walked away from what had been their home for a while now. Only seven days, but it was their home. down the long steep mountain which was covered in ice and freezing snow. Gage spotted a , but there was nobody there.

"Why is there nobody here?" Gage asked.

"I hope it's not because of that old man" said Chris.

They kept walking, but never found another place to stop. .

--Chad Sherman

The Dark Nights

The darkness falls into
My soul at night

Sweet dreams are
 Demolished within seconds
 Black fills the streets
 I don't see color
 All I see is Darkness
 The bloody knife pressing
 Hard into my skin
 The moon is my sun
 The night is my day
 Trying to drown my sins
 Won't work, they know how to swim
 I cannot move or breath
 It has me trapped
 --Chad Sherman
 Behind Closed Doors

It's the biggest secret
 It's the scariest thought
 No one ever knows
 But everyone wonders
 A simple yell?
 A light slap?
 A brutal punch ?
 A swift kick?
 A little drink?
 Maybe some smoke?
 Mother in the chair?
 Dad is on coke?
 Baby in the crib?
 Sister in the pen?
 Dad may be screaming?
 Mom may be crying?
 A peaceful night?
 Probably not without a fight
 By: Danielle Frink

Anxiety

It's like screaming
 But no one can hear you
 It's like drowning
 And no one can save you
 It's like a pitch black night
 With no stars to light your way

It's like a group of thousands
 But you feel so alone
 It's like an electric shock
 And you're left to die
 It's like the open plains
 Everywhere to run
 But no strength
 It's like an earthquake
 You can't stop shaking despite the damage
 It's more than what can be seen
 By: Danielle Frink

Life Unexpected

You fought so hard
 But in the end
 It doesn't even matter
 All the effort you put into it
 All the pain and sorrow
 Asking god if you'll wake up tomorrow
 Even though you're tired
 I know you're trying
 When all you feel like is dying
 But you need to hold on
 If not for yourself
 Than for me
 Cause I'm unsteady
 Without you near
 There is
 No hope
 No fear
 Just a mere shell of
 What once was here
 You're starting to forget
 All the things we've been through
 And I'll be right by you
 Even in the lowest days
 I always told you hard work forever pays
 But that's not the case
 You were just a mirror image
 Of what once was here
 Now you're gone

And I am forever numb

By: Shalyn Zweygardt