



# *Harmony*

Literary & Arts Magazine

2022-2023



## Mission Statement

*Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* is dedicated to enhancing the cultural and intellectual environment of Culver-Stockton College by providing an outlet for creative and artistic contributions to the campus community.

“Untitled”  
Morgan Zavoral



## Editorial Policy

*Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* is published by a student staff and supervised by a faculty advisor. The staff encourages all Culver-Stockton students, faculty, staff, and alumni to submit artwork and literature for possible publication. Submissions are presented to the entire *Harmony* staff as anonymous work, and the staff then reviews and selects pieces for publication.

**Disclaimer:** The content of works published in *Harmony Literary & Arts Magazine* does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the editors, staff, or Culver-Stockton College.

**Trigger Warning:** The works contained within this edition of the *Harmony: Literary & Arts Magazine* may include sensitive topics and language regarding mental health, identity, abuse, and more. We advise that you be responsive to your own mental health and safety while reading this edition.

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## “To be a Weed”

Noah Klauser

It must be easy to be a weed. Taking up space that belongs to others. Anything you need is yours so long as you grab it before someone else does. Weeds have it easy. What’s a flower to do if you steal its water? It wilts and dies, and you will be strong and alive. It must be easy to be a weed. Flowers have to compare themselves to others. I suppose they don’t have to, but it’s hard not to when they come in so many beautiful hues. All the reds and oranges and purples and blues. It must be easy to be a weed. Flowers get picked up and wrapped up and given as gifts. They’re set in a vase, but only to die. When they aren’t pretty enough anymore they’re tossed out. Not weeds, though. With weeds what you see is what you get. It must be easy to be a weed.



## “Untitled”

Isabella Mitchell-Wheeler

## “My Forever View”

Ahmed Barrow

I want you  
I want you yet I never needed you  
I want you yet I never knew I needed  
you

Wants slowly turning into needs...

I want to be the reason for her smile  
I want to wake up beside her  
I want her to need me  
I want her to be... my forever view

The view I will return to after a long  
day of work  
The view I see the moment I open my  
eyes, stretch out my arms, yawn and  
say,  
“...Good morning love”

The view that will never get old  
Every time I look at her it's like I'm

looking at her for the first time  
Noticing something new each time  
Her view consists of perfect eyes that  
look upon me with such warmth and  
hope  
Reminding me that I have yet to learn  
the greatest parts of her  
Her lips that remind my ears that the  
best sound in the world lives off the tip  
of her tongue  
Her lips do this thing where they  
stretch wide and her cheeks grow  
dimples and you can't help but to try  
and match her perfect smile

She  
Is the view, I want to need, for the rest  
of my life  
In short, I love her  
And I can't wait to make her  
My Forever View



## “Love You With All My Hart”

Reagan Jackson



## “My Father’s Hearing Loss”

Noel VanderBol

I woke up to the burning of bright headlights in my eyes and the sound of pure terror coming from my father’s lips. My father swerved into the grass on the side of the road while slamming on the brakes. The end of the car fishtailed a bit before the car completely came to a stop. We sat in silence. I turned to look behind us, the car that had previously ran us off the road had corrected itself and was now driving in the correct lane. My father remained silent, staring through the front windshield. A few minutes passed before my father started laughing.

“Nothing like a near death experience to start your camping trip off right, am I right?”

My father insisted on a camping trip, something about bonding. He’s been on a father son bonding kick ever since Mina came into the picture. He doesn’t quite understand that it’s not Mina that puts strain on our relationship, but his lack of attention towards what I’m actually saying. You see, I say things like, “I want pizza for dinner,” but he hears, “I want Italian of some sort.” He gets so close to getting what I mean but then it’s like at the last minute he swerves. Just like he did with the car on the road. For a moment I wondered if the car had used a turn signal, or indicated somehow that they were turning, and my father just missed it. Probably not, that might be a little too metaphorical for real life.

We got to the campsite about a half hour after we nearly died.

“So what should we do first?” My father asked.

“I don’t know I’m pretty hungry but I’m thinking we should set up the tent while there is plenty of light.”

“Exactly! We need light to set the tent.” He said. For a moment my heart lifted, for the first time since Mina my father listened to me. Like, he really listened.

“Which is why I’m going to set up some rocks to start a little pit for a fire, and you’re going to go and find some sticks.”

My heart dropped as fast as a log in water. How silly of me to think he would listen. How silly of me to think he would even want to listen. I should know by now that he must know best.

Oh well, maybe next year.

## “Untitled”

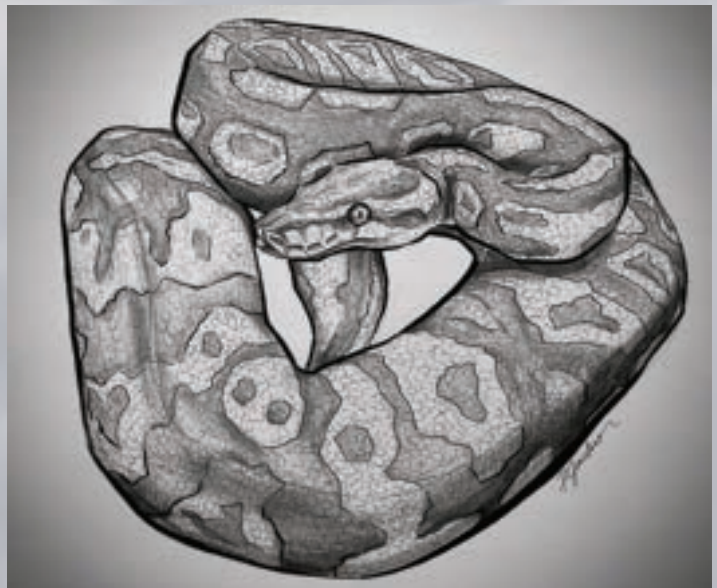
Isabella Mitchell





“Koi Fish Unity”  
Haley Dotson

“Scary Noodle”  
Reagan Jackson







“Untitled”  
Isabella Mitchell-Wheeler

“A Gardening Cycle”

Haley Dotson

I plant the new seeds into the rich, dark soil  
Poking, digging, separating  
The earthiest smell to exist  
Densely packed with nutrients  
Helping my plants grow  
I am a gardener.

Pulling starters out  
Placing them in their new home  
An open world  
Waiting for them to grow toward the sunlight  
The sun warms and comforts them  
They are safe  
I am a gardener.

But storms come and go  
A dreadful part of life in the Midwest  
Tearing my plants to shreds  
Ripping them apart  
Drowning every ounce of strength they once had  
They are weak and approaching death  
I am a gardener.

I replant them  
Giving them a stronger base  
More soil to keep them steady  
I pick weeds  
Whose sole purpose is to kill  
And to cripple  
I am a gardener.

A heat advisory  
Pulling the last drops of hydration my plants have  
My body isn't big enough  
To provide shade to my plants  
They die.  
Shrivel, weep, and wilt away  
I am a hopeless gardener.



“Sunset on the Hill”  
Morgan Zavoral



“T+N/2 = Me”

Ahmed Barrow

I remember as a kid  
A story told to me  
The story goes  
Father Time was just letting the seconds go by  
Not caring about tomorrow  
And not stressing about yesterday  
Then in time  
He met her  
She had a voice that was more beautiful than the birds chirping in the early morning  
Her eyes a rich dirt brown  
Her hair softer than the clouds above  
She waved to him  
And from that moment  
It's been them against the universe  
I was told this story from my Father  
Time  
And my Mother  
Nature  
They came together Time and Nature  
To make something that would withstand the test of time yet still be forever nurturing to others  
And here I am  
Their Sun

## “Roses N Thorns”

Ahmed Barrow

The people with the rosiest  
smiles  
Often have the biggest bouquets  
of pain  
I never got that  
You know I remember  
Being eight years old and  
wondering where do trees come  
from  
And why around them were  
millions of these micro strands  
of hair from the dirt called grass  
And only a few roses  
I saw the tree as the big bro to  
the flower  
And the flower the big sis to the  
grass  
I lost my big bro to a tree  
I described the loss as  
A string tied along a taller flower  
Back then no-one understood  
Losing him forced me to be  
strong  
And grow my roots  
even further into the  
ground  
He said  
The people with the  
rosiest smiles  
Often have the  
biggest bouquets of  
pain  
I still don't get that  
One day someone  
tried to pick me up  
I tried with all my  
might but still ended  
in the palm of their  
hand

That's when it happened  
Suddenly people saw me as more  
than a pretty appearance  
They saw my quote unquote rough  
side  
They saw all of my thorns  
These thorns  
Form only to protect me  
From being hurt the same way again  
by anyone  
Each time I cry  
It's because someone misused me  
Or lied to me  
Or even  
Left me alone to rot  
I grow a thorn there  
To protect me from the world  
The people with the rosiest smiles  
Often have the biggest bouquet of  
pain  
I never got that  
Until now

“Untitled”  
Morgan Zavoral





## “Bloodhound Blues”

Reagan Jackson



## “Death and Delirium”

Hayden Roberts

There is not much difference  
Between the two of us  
You're mad that you're sick  
And I'm sick of being mad  
We're both ill in a sense  
But insolent we are not

There is no doubt we know how we got here  
Between your time in the mines and my fascination  
with yore, but  
You're wanting to leave this life behind  
And I'm fighting to stay  
We're always going to be striving for the other side  
But the grass is grey

There is nothing green anymore for us  
Between us there is a busy interstate  
You're in a field of chrysanthemums  
And I am among the alyssum flowers  
We're both trying to find asylum  
But it evades our view

There lay on a table  
Between us a journal  
You're filling its pages with your memoir  
And I can't bring myself to write  
We're reciting our times together  
But gasping for air between each word

There was a time of joy  
Between our childhood and today, but  
You're wiping your feet at death's doorstep  
And our comradery is the mat  
We're both trying to be presentable  
But only one of us will see Charon tonight

There is little difference, when all is up  
Between death and delirium  
You're gone from this world  
And so is what I know to be real  
We're both stuck, slowly rotting away  
But nobody cares to give us our final resting place



## “Dinnertime Snooze”

Reagan Jackson

## “Those Hands”

Ahmed Barrow

I trusted those hands  
I befriended those hands  
I let in those hands  
I left those hands with my most prized possession  
My heart  
At first those hands were covering and protecting my heart  
But as seconds turn to minutes and minutes turn to hours  
Days went by where those same hands squeezed harder and harder  
Years went by before I actually saw those hands  
Suffocate my heart  
And now  
I can't trust those hands



“Babushka”  
Haley Dotson



“Self Portrait”  
Bradley Collins

## “The Beast Inside Me”

Samantha Smith

I feel the beast,  
He tears apart my heart,  
He claws his way up my throat.  
It is hard to breathe,  
I can't speak.

He tears at my eyes,  
The water is uncontrollable.  
A river of tears,  
They stream down my face.  
It is hard to breathe,  
I can't speak.

The pain in my chest.  
The beast is wringing my heart out,  
like a wet towel.  
The love and happiness,  
being taken from me.  
It is hard to breathe,  
I can't speak.

My knees are pulled to my chest,  
My arms locked to my torso.  
I struggle to break free of a child's pose.  
I am unable to move.  
It is hard to breathe,  
I can't speak.

I writhe in agony,  
Just like what the monster wants.  
I feel everything and nothing in that moment.  
Then as suddenly as he came,  
He goes away.  
I can finally breathe,  
And I can speak.

## “Lion of Judah”

Reagan Jackson





## “Painting the Sky”

Reagan Jackson



## “Amongst the Stars”

Noel VanderBol

My name is Noel and I am a senior in English. I wrote the first few chapters of “Amongst the Stars” about a young girl who went through the tragedy of losing an older brother. In the first few chapters, the audience will first hear what happened to the older brother from his point of view, then will hear from the sister about how losing her older brother impacted her family and life. This excerpt will open the mystery of her brother’s disappearance as well as detail the protagonist’s grief.



## “If You Were the Rain...”

Ahmed Barrow

I once heard a song titled  
If you were the rain...  
Well let me tell you  
If you were the rain  
I would go outside every time there was a storm  
I'd dance in your beautiful rainfall every night  
I would shower in your love  
Bathe in your skin  
If you were the rain  
You'd be liquid sunshine  
How with each drop I thirst for more of you  
You sprinkle your way into my mind, body, and  
soul  
But my days are deprived of you  
I got sunshine on a cloudy day, but I'd rather have  
you

## “Thunderstorm”

Morgan Frankenhoff





## “Life and Death”

Randi Green

Life is a warm welcome  
Sweet and nurturing.  
Death is a cold kiss goodbye  
Swift and quiet.

Life gives so much  
Like an oasis.  
Death only takes  
Like a disease.

Life makes legends  
Like Arthur and Camelot.  
Death takes them  
Like a weapon.

Life is a gift  
Soft and precious.  
You live it to the fullest  
And let go of everything.

Death is a sword  
Swift and silent.  
You fear it, but  
In the end, it conquers all.

My heart strives for life,  
But when Death comes I embrace it.



“I chose Reagan Jackson’s ‘Fire and Ice’. It is powerful. It symbolizes the fear of the unknown, such as coming to school for the first time. The birds flying out suggest that we can survive.

The composition sucks you into the scene and the energetic brushstrokes and vivid color give energy to the scene. I would like to add kudos to Haley Dotson, Morgan Frankenhoff and Isabella Mitchell.”

-Professor Debra Myers

“Fire and Ice”

Reagan Jackson



## “I am Stuck”

Noel VanderBol

I am stuck.

Sand pools at my feet while more pours on my head.

I cry out begging for it to stop, to give me one moment to breathe,

But nothing changes.

I try to dig at the sand at my feet if I could just move it.

My theory doesn't work, the sand pouring in moves too fast.

I try to stomp down on the sand, if I could pack it down then I could stand on top of it.

But this sand doesn't pack down like that, this sand simply readjusts so it can again grab my ankles and hold me firmly.

I put my hands on the glass surrounding me, trying to pull and push myself up and out but my hands are too sweaty and sandy.

Time. I just need more time.

If I had more time then maybe my family or friends would notice I'm gone.  
Maybe they'd come find me and help me out of the mess I'm in.

If I had more time then maybe I could think of something that I could do.  
Maybe I could have broken the glass.

I pull my shirt off to cover my mouth as my eyes water at the sand scratching them.  
If I had more time maybe I could've done life the right way.

I take one more breath and pray for more time.  
I feel the sand scratching against the skin of my hands holding the shirt in place.

I try to ignore time as it passes by, mocking me with each grain of sand that falls.

I ignore time as my eyes grow heavy along with the sand pushing down on my chest.

I ignore time as I think about my family and friends.

They have more time.

I ignore time as I take one last breath

I ignore time as I wait to become its next victim.

I'm out of time.



“I chose ‘I am stuck’ by Noel VanderBol. The overall mood exhibits a visceral reaction for time being finite for the freedom of opportunity. The voice does an exemplary job balancing between the lyrical and the narrative. The unstoppable tension sinks into the reader’s fear of taking life and its opportunities for granted. I would also like to extend my praise to Noah Klauser, Ahmed Barrow, and Haley Dotson.”

-Professor Ralph Buckner



“Bleeding Color”  
Reagan Jackson



“The Last Performance”  
Haley Dotson







“Lux Aeterna”  
Reagan Jackson



“Not a Chicken”  
Reagan Jackson



## “BLM Summer 2k20”

Ahmed Barrow

The nights shine brighter than the days as sparks of  
guns and lit buildings illuminate the night sky  
Screams of “we matter” fill the atmosphere  
The only thing louder than those screams  
Is the silence before and after it  
The silence between us

The words empathy and sympathy becoming one  
People not understanding that you can care for  
someone’s situation without being able to relate  
Relate to the bullets being flung towards your body  
Relate to thousands wrongly convicted and thrown  
in jail  
Relate to the millions of oppressed souls, that get  
discouraged and dismantled by these games of  
racism and injustice

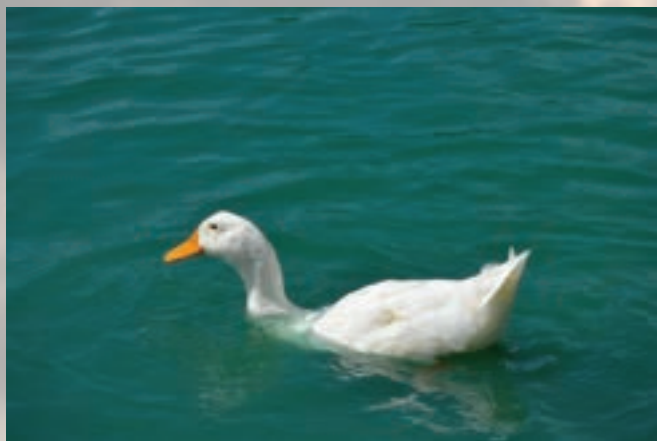
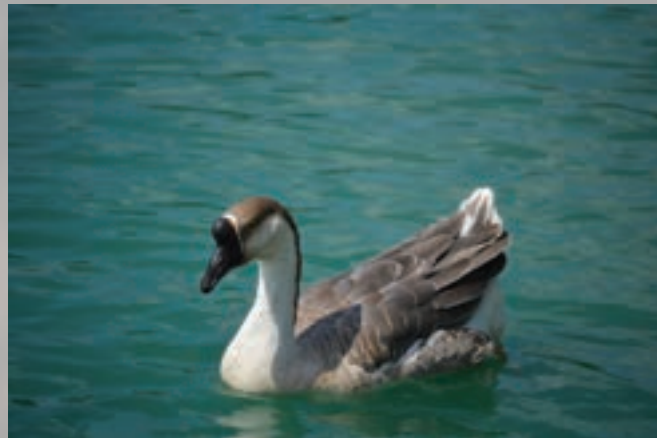
Pieces of glass  
We are all broken  
Yet we hold all of our parts together  
Each crack found within the frame of my reflection  
is a point in time where I broke a little bit more  
But we are all broken

Let me ask you, what’s harder than losing a friend?  
Watching them grow silent  
As you scream to be heard

## “Carry On”

Ahmed Barrow

I carry the loss of my best friend due to gun  
violence  
I carry the parts of my anatomy that have been  
assaulted, now twice  
I carry the pain of people propping me up on  
pedestals just to bring me down  
I carry the cries of hundreds of people I know  
Comforting them  
In their time of loss and despair, in an attempt to  
take some of their burden  
I carry a brain that is almost as tired as its body  
A brain that says “give up” every single day  
A body that says “you can’t” every single day  
I carry a crown on my head  
Not because I wanted to be a king, but because  
that’s what happens when a king dies  
His son takes over  
Since the loss of my father I’ve had to step up  
Make choices of a king, while just being a young  
prince in this world  
I even carry the empty seat next to me  
Where my Queen use to sit  
I don’t carry all the world’s problems  
But I do carry my everything  
Because in this world if I don’t carry my burdens  
who will?



“Untitled”  
Isabella Mitchell-Wheeler



## “Daze”

Ahmed Barrow

There are days when my feet stay stapled to the ground  
I'm unable to move as if my shoes were my weight in gold  
I try my best  
Not to move

There are days when my tongue feels heavy  
People around me talk to me  
I am compelled to talk back but I don't wanna move my lips  
My lips are like a door  
They open up like gates  
But today  
I lost the key

There are days when my smile feels like a page out of Where's  
Waldo?  
My smile is like camouflage how you barely see it anymore  
My smile turns into my best friend  
Who so happens to disappear at times when I needed it the most  
There are days when I'm in a daze

## “The Fifth Day”

Reagan Jackson



## “Apocalyptic Suicide”

Alexia Tekell

Another town, empty as usual.

The sharp, bitter wind bit my skin as it forced the untamed brush and overgrown grass to bow down. I hiked along the broken streets of an unrecognizable town, examining the crumbled buildings and lifting my worn-out scarf over my nearly frozen nose. I held onto the scraggly black shawl that covered my shoulders as I entered the tallest building in the area - an old church - and ascended the crumbling stairs. I slowly reached the top of the bell tower and leaned against the half-destroyed wall to rest my tense muscles. I brushed the hair out of my face and into a ponytail for the millionth time as my lips and throat begged for water. I opened my backpack and pushed aside the granola bars and canned food from destroyed grocery stores as I grabbed one of the five water bottles left in my bag. I downed half the bottle, then put it away for the rest of the day.

“You know, this wall behind you could break and you could fall down,” the voice in my mind explained. Instead of moving, I listened to the wails of the wind bouncing off the building as I gazed at the barren town below. The agonized wind was the only outside voice that had spoken to me these last four years, and sometimes even it wasn’t around.

My mind wandered deep into my memories from before the end - they were all I had. I remembered the suffocating feeling that tied my lungs from laughing with my sisters; the gentle smell of Clorox and the sound of a joyful toddler’s squealing as I chased him around a church playroom; the always ice-cold yet always soft hand of the boy I adored in my own; and the feeling of hardwood on my legs and warmth of my mother’s meal as her caring voice asked about my day. An abrupt spike of overwhelming grief stabbed my heart and dominated these feelings as I remembered that these individuals were no longer around to enjoy. This church I sat in had once been a place of hope for lonely wanderers. However, I, a literal lonely wanderer, hadn’t felt hope for the last couple of years. This church was no longer a church since it could no longer fulfill its purpose.

“Emotions are not your friend,” I scolded myself. I promptly stood up and left the beaten building, leaving my emotions behind.

I ran to the scraggly hills ahead, quickly stopping before a drop-off. I looked at the glaring rocks that sat hundreds of feet below as the edges of my torn dress tickled the broken ground beneath me. This cliff was definitely an offspring of the quakes, as the trees dangling from the edges were mere saplings. I sat motionless, staring at the sharp deliverers of death below. My knees began to tremble and my breath quivered as I imagined an end.

It could be right now if you want.

I watched a bird set itself on a nest hidden away in the cracks, welcomed by the chirping of its young. Tears began to well in my eyes.

Look at that bird. Your whole life, all you wanted to do was grow up and raise a family of your own. Now, look at yourself. You haven’t seen another living human being since the end of it all. You won’t get what you so desperately anticipated. Instead, this small, meaningless bird gets it.

It became harder to breathe as I glared back at the rocks below.

If you don’t jump, you’ll probably die in some slow, gruesome way like those countless bodies you’ve encountered these last few years.

The unnatural smell of decaying corpses seeped from my memory as I continued to analyze the quick and easy option below.

Jump and end your lonely wanderings, useless girl. We both know you don’t fear death. It was just a voice and listening to it had never done me well before, so why should I listen now?

“I’m not useless!” I screamed aloud to the cliff. After taking some deep breaths, I recomposed myself and traveled along the edge of the crevice.

The loose gravel crumbled with every step. For the most part, I stared at the ground, listening to the symphonies of the empty world. After about an hour or two of walking, the undeniable stench of gasoline filled my nose. I quickly set my eyes towards the smell and beheld a treasure.



I walked towards the old gas station and entered through an unnatural gap in its side. I walked onto the chunks of concrete, carefully examining the cracks. A bright orange wrapper welcomed my eyes, and in return, I welcomed it to my grasp. The wrapper previously held a cheesy cracker snack, but now held nothing. As I continued to pick through the debris, I could only find empty wrappers and my heart stopped as I inspected them further. Their openings were cleanly cut, meaning that they were not opened by the gnawing of an animal. Also, the crumbs still sat inside the bag, untouched by bugs.

I sat straight up and stared at the land ahead. Someone like myself traveled on these empty plains.

Running, I began to form goals for myself. First, I needed to find this person. If they were still alive, I would try to befriend them by offering to trade supplies. If it worked, I would finally have someone to destroy my loneliness. We would be best friends, exploring the land for any form of civilization, making jokes, sharing stories, and helping each other in our pain. Tears of joy began to make their way to my eyes and my chest swelled with hope: my prayers were about to be answered!

I slowly became short of breath as my feet pounded in the overgrown grass, matching the quick rhythm of my heart. It only took me half an hour to undo my last few hours of travel. I had to kick my heels into the ground to come to a full stop when I spotted someone along the edge of the cliff. The hope was just within my reach, but then it wasn't. My knees and heart silently fell to the ground as I then watched the lonely wanderer take the jump I had declined earlier that day.

Before I could fully process the situation, I heard what sounded like a man's scream, causing me to jerk my head toward its source. Across the crevice, where it originated, I noticed a tree tilt forward as the wind grabbed my hair and pulled me back from the crack. I concluded that it was only the wind, crying from the loss of another soul from this barren Earth.

I sat at the edge of the crevice, staring at the body below for hours, listening to the voices bickering with one another in my head.

Don't do it.

Just jump.

No, wait. You don't know what's ahead.

You know darn well what's ahead. A lot of nothing.

Please don't jump.

C'mon, look, it's even become a trend.

"Oh, shut up!"

The sun began to set as the wind only became colder. I wouldn't jump: to do that would be disrespectful to the unfortunate soul who lay beneath me. I began to take a deep breath, slowly exhaling as if I were releasing all the tension in my mind. My legs felt like cement blocks, taking all of my energy just to stand. My head throbbed from my internal fighting, and the biting wind continued to test my endurance.

Strangely, I felt at peace. The voice in my head had no weight to its words. The weight of the bag on my shoulders lightened ever so slightly, and I obtained the power to stand and take another step back. I looked at the setting sun's painted hues of red and orange ahead as the wind suddenly felt more like a gentle caress on my loose hair.



“Globelneck”  
Morgan Zavoral

“Wildcat Ward”  
Reagan Jackson



“Spooky Sip”  
Reagan Jackson





“Red Red Lily”  
Morgan Zavoral



“REDACTED”  
Cassie Williams



“Morning Light”  
Crystal DeOrnellas



“Goodwill Find”  
Alli Schattschneider



# “The Unfair Journey”

Isabella Mitchell



# “Still Life in a Frame”

Rowdy Jackson



## “A Lone Burrow: Return to Duspit”

Nick Jenkins

### A Lone Summary

This is a story many years in the making. I first came up with the character of Arlo Burrow shortly after high school, he was one of my first Dungeons & Dragons characters. And through many games and stories, he has become one of my favorites. I wrote out an expansive backstory for him and eventually decided to take the many little stories I wrote and collect them into one fictional autobiography. This is just one chapter of that story. I hope one day that not only will I finish the book but perhaps even find the courage to see it published. Thank you for reading and I truly hope that you enjoy my story. Thank you all.



## “Why Worry” Reagan Jackson





## “Shameful Decisions”

Noel VanderBol



My name is Noel and I am a senior in English. I wrote “Shameful Decisions” as an inspiration piece derived from Andre Dubus’ short story, “Killings.” The main goal of the piece was to start with a picture of grief that develops with a plot twist. To summarize, the story is about a woman who gets a phone call informing her that her husband is in critical condition in the hospital. As the story develops the audience learns about the highs and lows of the couple’s relationship. This ultimately leads to a decision of whether or not to continue life-sustaining measures.



## “Yard Sale”

Haley Dotson



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