

## *student works*

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### **1st Grade**

by Anonymous

The class is silent  
And so are you.  
Eyes like daggers  
Piercing into your soul  
And in an environment so dense,  
it's enough to make you suffocate.  
There are no words.  
Just the sound of a ticking clock  
And the slight thumping of your teacher's feet  
Moving up and down  
as she waits for the tiniest notion to leave your mouth.  
But there's nothing.  
Only the feeling of droplets sliding down your face,  
as it makes its way towards the floor.

### **Growth**

by Anonymous

You have sat on the window sill for as long as I can remember  
Over the years I have watched you grow  
The sun hits your soil in an unexplainably delightful way, such that I could spend hours admiring  
the way you hug its beams  
But recently you do not look quite the same  
Your pot is dusty, and your leaves wilted  
Your soil has turned grey and colorless  
I began to wonder if this was all my doing. Did I not water you enough?  
But I know that sometimes this is just the way it goes  
Oh you were so beautiful when I first saw you, and I don't think your beauty ever went away  
I just don't see you how I used to  
As I lift you up from the windowsill, I can't help but notice the mark that you left  
It is whiter and cleaner than everything around it  
I look at you one final time, before tossing you out the window, where you will grow into  
something new

## **cheddar and sour cream ruffles**

by jamila abdilahi

deafening colors  
big, bold marketing  
scheming  
“i know u want me.”

perfectly posed chips &  
sour cream dolloped just right  
on a block of half-eaten cheddar.

blue, white and orange life  
trapped in plastic lining,  
crimping between my  
orange coated fingers.

when i touch u  
are those cries that reverberate through my ear drums?

easily crunched, snappable:  
strong product engineering or  
a genetic defect,  
doomed victim to natural  
selection.

ur strange tangy nuances to an artificial  
starch smell.  
a guilty culmination of numerous,  
inexplicable ingredients  
which completes u.  
an insult to nature

ur flavors explode on my tongue  
catalyzing ur death between  
my molars

ur salty, cheesy after  
calls me for more.  
nonconsensually, i suppose.  
but

ill-fated arent u?

& with each crunch,  
sets of serotonin skyrocket so  
how does it feel for  
your pain to go  
forever  
unnoticed.

i think i notice.  
i think.

\*crunch\*

### **Ode to my Dacha**

by Katrina Menshutkina

Oh, remember those times where little did matter  
We'd take trains to grandma's quaint, fable dacha  
Splitting up to pick the newly fresh harvest  
Reuniting to mama's side to peel heaps of potatoes  
We worked hard to prepare for the Easter day's potluck

Oh, remember those times where little did matter  
Fields stretched along the countryside's horizon  
We'd bounce balls, play with dolls, and strut through long halls  
Our hearts pure and sheltered away from merciless violence  
We played and pretended, filled every crevice with desire

Oh, remember those times where little did matter  
We skipped through the orchards in our schoolgirl skirts  
Overripe cherries stained our lips rouge  
The sweet, sweet fragrance clung to our clothes  
Our imaginations danced up castles like thick twines of vine

### **No Longer my Mothers Daughter**

by Anonymous

You will always be my daughter, she said, no  
I will never be her daughter, no more, no longer--  
My heart, my brain, my  
body, is tired of being my mother's  
Golden child, plastered in pink, daughter



## **Mirror World**

by Anonymous

Formless  
Myriad shapes  
Rioting colors  
Attention grabbing  
Eye catching  
Consciousness trapping

A world of endless images  
A world of infinite repetition

A jail of boundless reflections  
Countless mirrors,  
bending lights  
thoughts  
you.  
Engulfing  
you in a world  
of endless refraction,  
locked in a timeless moment.

Trapped by the mirrors.  
Trapped by your mind.

The surroundings shift  
the scene changes  
the reflections distort  
the prison of your mind releases you

Time resumes.

It's just a tower of mirrors again  
as you freely walk on by,  
Leaving the world of reflections empty  
For the mirrors to draw in  
the next person who views it.

## **Mosaic**

by Anonymous

And such is the nature of friendship  
We cling so hard to one another,

Keeping hold of the irredeemable mess,  
Afraid of life without.

It would've been easier to let go,  
To jump rather than to fall.

To let a dying star explode in your hands  
Is more painful than to relinquish your possession of it

And yet we needed each other  
Until we needed too much, and fell apart.

The inevitable fractures like a shattered mirror,  
Showing us ourselves within each other.

And as we picked up the pieces,  
We found ourselves working the shards of glass

Into our own mosaics

## **Ode to Pike Place**

by Adriana Hernandez

The waves are hypnotizing.  
Glistening and shining.  
Waving back at the blue sky.  
The splashes recoil at the hum of the air.  
The clouds rippled like grilled salmon.  
The whip of the wind  
matches the call of the birds.  
I want to be here forever

Like a rotating wheel  
new faces every time but it's all the same.  
Fresh flowers don't last for eternity  
but they do here.

Even when the rain  
percolates into the bay  
Melodious tunes flourish around.  
I want to be here forever

Poised houses peeking out  
from the wondrous trees.  
Promising lands inviting me to stay  
Even the breeze tries to carry me away  
But I don't want to be a visitor  
in my own home.  
I want to be here forever

### **when i was young**

by Anonymous

when i was 10 years old i wanted to be 13,  
so i tried on some mascara and lipstick.  
when i was 13 i wanted to be 15,  
so i tried on my moms high heels.  
when i was 15 i wanted to be 17,  
so i tried to dress older than i was.  
now i'm 17 and i don't want to be 20.

now i regret being someone i wasn't.

at 10 i should have prioritized capture the flag,  
not scrolling through instagram.  
at 13 i should have worked in building friendships,  
rather than building my snap streaks.  
at 15 i should have focused on being a high schooler,  
rather than being liked by everyone.  
at 17 i now want to embrace who i am.  
at 20 i hope to have no regrets.

## **A Window of Opportunity**

by Anonymous

We are born with a window,  
that is right in front of us  
the window changes for every person.  
Some windows are meant to pass through,  
others meant to keep you in,  
but we all try to reach the other side.

For some the window in front of them  
is a casement window,  
with a large swivel handle opening it like a door  
letting them through with ease  
it's only purpose to let them pass.

For others the moment they are born,  
a sliding glass door sits in front of them—open,  
the light on the other side attracts them,  
they pass through as soon as they are born.  
Someone opening the door before them,  
so they would be able to pass through.

Some have cottage windows in front of them  
the edges are sealed with a flexible white paint  
they sit and pick away, chipping white flakes off,  
drawn towards what is on the other side.  
Picking away until their fingers turn red  
only a few open the window  
others just stand and gaze past the glass

Some from the moment they are born  
are confronted by a concrete wall with a small hole  
crossed with steel rebar leaving just enough room to see through.  
They sit waiting and watching through the gap,  
watching others open their casement windows,  
and here they wait looking through the rebar,  
hoping that someone will help them,  
break through to the other side.



## Dear Little Brother

by Anonymous

Dear Little Brother,

One night, I had a dream.  
You were there  
On the pavement. Motionless.  
I woke in a cold sweat  
And cried.

6 years old, I asked our mom, *why can't we just go to the store and buy me a brother?*  
I suppose I was lonely  
It's the coldest feeling.  
I would've disliked the competition of a sister,  
It's even more suspicious  
That fate agreed with me.

7 ½ years old, I wore my purple Juicy Couture sweats and held you for the first time.  
A dumb smile stuck on my face for weeks  
Like how I was stuck by your side:  
Watching you tentatively in your crib,  
Giving you clothes though they were too big,  
Making tents from furniture and blankets as roofs,  
Taking you on walks on that Little Tikes bike  
With my name written in faint Sharpie.

For Halloween we were every iconic duo:  
Bacon and Eggs.  
Mario and Luigi.  
Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd my all time favorite,  
With those innocent, crooked-toothed smiles in each photo to commemorate.  
Year after year,  
They would fade  
until only one of us was holding a pumpkin bucket.

My friends didn't understand me,  
Our mom was angry with me,  
Our dad was disappointed in me.  
They keep saying I've changed.  
Our love changed.

It began with your dumb question,  
Then my irritation your disrespect my ugly words



Snap.  
You cry  
Repeat.

14 years old, you're in school now  
Your cute features couldn't keep up with your witty remarks.  
You were also a Mimic:  
Every ugly laugh, expressed lie, and favorite food  
Repeat.

Anger replaced you, filled my days in your stead.  
No matter how simple or reasonable, I wouldn't answer you.  
I hoarded my dusty old toys, scowling at you for eyeing them.  
No matter how simple or reasonable, I wouldn't help you.  
I thought not helping was helping, he needs to be more independent!

Your natural curiosity invaded my space:  
*Don't come in my room*  
*Don't touch me*  
*Stay away from me*  
*You're so annoying*  
*You're not listening to me*  
*I don't care*  
It just isn't fair!  
Why must I give you my toys just because you asked  
Why do you think you know better than me  
Why do you act like me?  
Why can't you take the bus by yourself  
Why can't you stay at home by yourself  
Why can't you do anything  
Yourself?

This is normal. Siblings fight.  
It's just because of our age gap, the gap  
It's normal  
Right?

But when I held you with utmost care on Mom's bed - the gap was the same  
When I was Bugs Bunny and you were Elmer Fudd - the gap was the same  
When I kept your photo from your first picture day, front teeth wide apart,  
Our gap was the same.

Every now and then, I am You and You are me.

A reflection flickers in your eyes and I see a little girl your age  
A past self I've tried so desperately to forget.

18 years old, I wear a cream sweater with jeans and look in my rear view mirror.  
You're sitting with earbuds in, volume maxed out  
Teachers used to yell at me for doing that.  
I don't dream anymore  
It's unsettling, short visions unlike pure nightmares.

One night, I had a vision.  
You were there  
On the pavement. Motionless. I woke in a cold sweat  
And cried.

I think about you. I regret things  
Said. You probably thought I hated you. I don't.  
Do you have bad days  
Do you struggle in math class  
Are the other kids mean to you  
Do you have friends to play with?  
But it can't be how it was  
When I was Bugs Bunny and you were Elmer Fudd.  
Should I give up? I don't want to be forever damned, estranged

One day.  
Mom (or Dad) asks me to help you find Bunny. I do.  
Another day.  
You ask for a cup of water. I pour you one.  
Another day.  
I grab a bag of candy at the store and pause. I grab two.  
Another day.  
You ask if I can help you solve a math problem. I say bring it here.  
Yesterday.  
You offer me a crudely molded clay thing. I take it, saying thank you.  
Everyday.  
I drop you off at the classroom. We hug briefly. I say have a good day. You say okay.

One night, I had a thought.  
You were there  
On the pavement. Motionless.  
I was awake  
And cried.

Dad used to constantly nag me  
*Do you even love your brother?*

Dear little brother, I never had that dream  
I made it up.  
But I think about you.  
think about me without you  
and then I cry.



## **Notebook**

by Anonymous

Life is an overflowing notebook.  
Inside lie experiences  
and events  
that turn into memories,  
many good  
and many bad.

But the memories we call awful,  
terrible,  
ones to forget,  
those that want to escape  
to scrape themselves off the paper,  
become the boldest.  
Permanently etched onto the clean white sheets  
and the yellowing sheets  
and the ones that no longer remain.

But the memories that long to stay,  
the ones we want to remember,  
to cling onto,  
to cherish forever,  
slide off the pages  
as quickly as they came.  
Each new fond memory  
written on the page,  
instantly shrouded  
by the ones forever imprinted.

So when we finally open the notebook,  
and the millions of words  
finally stop falling out,  
all that is left are  
the indefinite reminders  
of the scars from the past.

## **The Things I Loved to Hate**

by Anonymous

Relentless winds shove my hair into a never-ending tornado across my face  
Each strand gently slicing my corneas  
shameless in its destruction

The waves beside me seem endless: one wrong move and you could be gone forever  
Disappear into the abyss of seemingly calm but vicious ripples

The clouds above me are endless too but  
this isn't the type of endless that you endearingly get lost in  
horrifyingly captivating  
with their jagged and repetitive streaks,  
mesmerizing you  
with their swift movements like a figure skater's line: calculated and elegant

While I used to love believing that all of these things were dreadful  
my reluctance to look away says otherwise.  
I am captivated by the wind and the sea and the sky that  
it makes saying goodbye so hard

Even if only for a day

## **Presence**

by Anonymous

Leaning against a cold cement wall,  
he observes.

Watching the busy city from his corner.  
This icy town is full of unique people.

Something that no longer exist,  
presence.

Now this scene would be complete with tourists,  
then that man in his corner was  
present.  
Observing.

## **Spiders For Christmas**

by Anonymous

One Christmas day  
I was gifted a spider  
It was cold and spiny  
and docile  
and small

I didn't mind spiders  
until it began to shed  
It peeled and whined  
and ripped  
and tore

My parents had to brush it  
and I swept after  
then we brushed until  
we could brush no more  
Then for our safety  
metal bars in between  
we put the spider inside  
and there it was stored

Last Christmas day  
I learned to hate spiders  
They're cold and spiny  
and furious  
and scared

Now I keep  
the spider downstairs  
But every Christmas  
it returns  
"once more"



## **The Sea's Call**

by Sam Wheeler

a light in the dark  
a beacon of hope  
all swallowed up  
all sailors must cope

a bottomless curse  
a bottomless sea  
accepting of all that there is  
and can be  
yet many have tried  
yet none have prevailed  
for this voyage is thout  
simply doomed to fail  
a coral tomb  
a coral shrine  
all hidden deep  
in the depths of a mine  
so seek not the heart  
so seek not the mind  
for thou shalt be scarred  
by what thou shalt find  
if thou dost continue  
if thou take not heed  
the thou art doomed  
and to thout i concede

so let him be  
so let him rest  
thoust shalt know  
tis for the best

## **The Night at the Den**

by Anonymous

12 o'clock

We start a warm fire  
To keep us entertained  
The brown bear slouching above me  
Warm and kind who offered us it's den  
We get lost in the flames  
There's nowhere I'd rather be.

1 o'clock

The bird sings its final song for the night  
We wish it sweet dreams,  
resting upon the window sill.  
It dreams of long days in the sun,  
And Singing in the fields  
Accompanied by the bear, and they would be happy

2 o'clock

The bear helps me put out the fire,  
We are ready to rest.  
The lion next to me lets out the yawn of yawns  
It too, ready to sleep.  
Sweet dreams, Lion.  
The bear and I share whispers  
Not tired enough to sleep

3 o'clock

The bird let out a coo,  
Laughing mid dream  
The bear and I chuckled  
Before resuming quietly.  
I talked about my childhood  
And what it meant to me.  
But the real question I wanted to ask  
Was "What does she think of me?"

## **They are full of BS girl**

by Anonymous

Politicians think their technique is flawless  
The lack of effective immigration policy is making my mind whirl  
We are tired of being cautious

Politicians think their technique is flawless  
While people are forced into memorizing their rights  
We are tired of being cautious  
I fight with all my might

While people are forced into memorizing their rights  
This issue has been around forever  
I fight with all my might  
To those who say we don't belong; whatever.

This issue has been around forever  
We lobby for our rights but politicians just squirl  
To those who say we don't belong; whatever.  
*They are full of BS girl.*