



Silent Spark<sup>\*</sup> Press

# Coming of Age

## Changed

Marysa Writes

Rearranged my soul;  
Adopted the personality to better  
fit the morals of someone  
Who's seen the waves  
deteriorate rock bottom  
to no more than pebbles.

Found the courage  
to wander into the trees,  
no longer afraid  
of spiders in their hammocks  
and snakes in the brush.

Unequipped and unprepared,  
I'll never return to the road  
that guided me towards  
an unfinished compound sentence.

**Marysa Writes:** "Not much to say other than I like to write and my work can be found at [marysawrites.wordpress.com](http://marysawrites.wordpress.com)"

## **Windy City**

Steven Nguyen & Tieu Luc Than Phong

I visit the windy city  
Everything is better than I can think  
Beautiful more than I imagines  
A part of American history  
The first time I see Chicago Tribune  
Was founded in eighteen forty-seven  
One of the first News a paper in the world  
I feel very excited and lost all my words  
I can't describe a Windy city  
Everything biggest I can see  
Buildings, squares, riverside walks  
Emerald water and a lot of visitors  
From the Southeast fly to the Midwest  
And use the train go to the downtown  
Open to max my eye to look around  
To be greedy to capture all views  
I feel the history air still alive  
G. Washington's statue stands in the square  
Fight among white men, Indians, and pilgrims  
Chicago great more than my dream  
Chicago called nickname Windy city  
The wind blows all the seasons  
But the history of the city never fades  
The first time visit today  
Each time goes to the new place  
My sound drops a little part  
Or does the new place become a part inside?  
And wants to melt at that

**Steven Nguyen & Tieu Luc Than Phong:** Steven Nguyen (Tieu Luc Than Phong) is a writer and poet from Atlanta city. I write both languages Vietnamese and English but most literature edition by Vietnamese. Customers can be found my literature at:

[www.chanhphap.org](http://www.chanhphap.org)

[www.VIETBAO.COM](http://www.VIETBAO.COM)

[www.thuvienhoasen.org](http://www.thuvienhoasen.org)

[www.allpotry.com](http://www.allpotry.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009095799564>

## Going Back

Annekje Thompson

We sit talking about our childhood days,  
How we practically grew up together,  
For so many years.

Than I moved away,  
But you still came and visited.  
We talk about our childhood,  
And how quickly we grew up.

Looking at you, I think;  
“If only you knew.”  
How I long to go back to those days,  
When I could sit with you without hurting,  
When every time it rained,  
It didn’t express the tears that I held back.  
When every time it thundered,  
It didn’t echo of the sound of my heart breaking.  
When the lightning that light up the sky,  
Didn’t speak of the bolts you shot into my heart.

I know it’s hopeless,  
With you so far away,  
We can’t grow up together anymore,  
But I want to go back,  
Back to when we played together,  
Without this pain in my heart.

**Annekje Thompson:** Annkje Thompson is a small writer living in Montana. She loves hiking, plants, roller blading, puzzles and spending time with her family and animals.

## My Thoughts of Lavender Lattés

Rainey

To me, you appear to be lavender.  
in your tone, in your thoughts and in your empathy.  
I'm not always sure how to respond to such a light individual, as if  
I fear my own colors will stain yours  
but, I want the lavender to know that.  
to know that I fear the mixing of hues.  
however, from this present fear, I see a possibility.  
the possibility of combining our pallets to create a masterpiece.  
just like a lavender latté.  
the bitterness of espresso graced by the floral aroma.  
in a similar way, the artists' pallet shall be comforted by this  
aggregated piece.  
that is why, you appear to be lavender.

**Rainey:** Rainey is an aspiring author. They enjoy time outdoors, listening to music and podcasts, and art. They plan to continue to release works on multiple different platforms.

**Untitled**  
Kelly Juday

Sun and Moon  
Water and earth  
gravity and flight.  
we have it all is why we stand  
so tall . . .  
Though upside world is coming  
Moon Boots are something we need  
This is not a dream  
Gravitational pull on the horiz  
Sorry I Told you so.  
See you on the flip side  
If you know this is home . . .

**Kelly Juday:** “I’m Kelly Juday I write poetry all the time. Please check me out at [www.allpoetry.com/kellybadass](http://www.allpoetry.com/kellybadass)”

**Untitled**  
Miranda Johnson

Summers day (SoundCloud) 3  
One day maybe you'll find this letter  
But the sad truth is if you're reading this it never got better

Just know that I tried, I tried so hard  
But the lie that I was ok could only go so far.  
Just let my daughter know I love her. and when she smiles, she  
shines like a star

Tell my mom I love her but I could never make her proud, maybe  
I did. but she never said it out loud  
Truth is I'm the black sheep I always had been  
When people look at me it's like I committed the worst sin,

I'm fighting a battle I know I can't win.  
If I could take it all back, I would before it ever began.  
How do you win a race you've never ran.

My mom was always around but she was never there, so I stopped  
telling her things cause she didn't care  
Growing up my life was never fair.

**Miranda Johnson:** "Hi my name is Miranda Johnson, I'm 25.  
Originally from Wooster Ohio, but I now live in Florida."

# Courage

**Bending**  
Jenni Malloy

The weight of the snow and ice  
Bending branches almost to the breaking point  
Will they snap never to be the same?  
How much pressure can they take?  
Sunshine! Slowly melting, dripping  
Strength to rebound  
As we are tested by life  
Issues and trials we bend almost to the breaking point  
Friends who listen are our sun  
The melting away of one gender  
Because of you this girl has the strength to snap back  
To emerge as the woman she is

## **Black Superman**

Anesa Laneigh

Levitating over the world  
He is my fallen star  
Kissing me on my forehead  
Reminding me that I'm misread  
Saving me from being misled  
By my own fears  
Levitating over the imperfect world  
Watching everyone else get lost in cyber space  
He is my safe place  
My black Superman  
Saving me from this hell I must face  
He flies high  
As the antichrist messiah  
Because he is the only one who sees how people  
Can set your soul on fire  
And because he is the only one who can see  
He tries his best to teach a pupil  
To be a pupil  
And be set free  
But when you try to be a black superhero  
The outcome  
Is Malcom  
X marks the spot  
And he's shot  
Like a burnt down Gotham  
So when he is in his lowest lane  
I turn into his Lois Lane  
Because he tried to change things  
And you know what the world sings?  
You're trying to be a dead nigga  
Be careful when you're Superman  
The world will put you in a crypt tonight  
So I turn into his partner  
Wearing a mask

To amass  
Enough energy  
To be his synergy  
Because this world needs him and me  
The him in me  
The strength to see  
That society needs to be free  
From the social constraints  
That burden  
Heavily  
So I breathe life into him  
So that his sacrifice  
Won't be cast aside like Christ  
He needs to rise on the third day  
Not once  
But twice  
Until he can fly high  
And levitate in the sky  
To be what the world needs  
To be my fallen star  
Kiss me on my forehead  
Remind me that I don't have to be misled  
And continue to soar  
To be the Malcom  
Without the martyr  
Because martyrs are dead  
Wear his cape of red  
Soar  
Because to merely walk  
Being blindly led . . .  
That ain't living

**Anesa Laneigh:** Anesa Laneigh is an eclectic up-and-coming author. With a degree in Applied Behavioral Science focussing in psychological studies mixed with a sense of humor and natural curiosity, she has a raw edge and natural sense of empathy that pours through her written work. As the woman who seeks to “pen the never spoken thoughts of others”, she aims to see life through the eyes of others and leave an experience for others to take with them forever through words. You can purchase her poetry book “Broken Silence: A Woman’s Roar” on Amazon and Amazon Kindle today!

## **Srebrenica Roses**

Minela Zornic

The monsters have invaded  
Snatching up the roses  
The petals are falling  
The sky is crying  
My clothes are torn  
My body exposed  
My heart beating fast  
My body will not last  
My soul exhausted  
I am being exploited  
I see my mother crying  
While everyone is watching  
I close my eyes hoping to see the light  
Wishing I am the last rose dying tonight

## Untitled

Freebird

I've been running  
Away from my problems  
Running around my truth  
I've been resisting  
I Resist change  
I Resist letting go of you  
I've been alive, not living,  
Merely existing in substances  
Surviving my own abuse  
Dying inside as I tie my noose  
Hanging in my past  
Waiting for someone to cut me loose  
It's time to stop running  
It's time to face my problems  
Face my truth  
It's time to stop the resistance  
Accept the inevitable change  
The fact that you're gone  
Time to let go of grieving for you  
It's time  
Time I start living  
Free of substances, free of abuse  
It's time  
To come down from my past  
Time to cut myself loose  
The time is now, now is the time  
I've got nothing left to lose  
The time is now, now is the time  
I must pay my dues  
The time is now, now is the time  
Life is what I choose

**Freebird:** May 2016 my Father passed away. My world came crashing down upon me. I fell deeper into my addiction, and hit rock bottom. I lost everything. Job, house, children, friends, and family. I was homeless sleeping on a friend's couch. I wrote this poem during my addiction, but I meant every word. I have been sober since May, 12, 2021. Writing is the only reason I kept my sanity while actively using, writing poetry literally saved my life. To those still out there, don't give up! There is hope for the hopeless and I am living proof!!

## **In Other Words**

Jakaila Scaife

'That soothing, comforting sense  
Of sovereignty and interconnectedness  
With the universe,  
A pulsing circadian rhythm of faith  
Pumping through each blood cell in my bod,  
The nomad's inner compass and GPS,  
Or the invisible that hands you  
The right tool  
At the right place  
At the right time,  
The violet validation at the bottom of the valley  
That no matter how hard you fall,  
You are still worthy of love.  
Surrendering all that you believe and think,  
For true knowledge of self  
Sitting on the throne of power,  
Listening to the stillness of gratitude  
Laughing in the midst of strife,  
Picking up the bricks piece by piece  
To reset, rebuild, and release,  
Taking your hands off the wheel  
And allowing spirit to steer,  
Or perhaps the ultimate self-defense against doubt.  
Unshakeable confidence in the champion within,  
The light of hope illuminating the way home  
Flowing along the river of prayer,  
Believing in your beautiful.  
The omnipotent magnificence  
Of self-healing and mastery.  
In other words,  
Trust.  
You got this.

**Jakaila Scaife:** Jakaila is a neurodivergent storyteller, poet, educator, and facilitator from Tallahassee, Florida. She curates an online platform designed to illuminate the healing power of art and sacred word, and strives to be a conduit of loving truth. More of Jakaila's offerings can be found at [www.jakailationne.squarespace.com](http://www.jakailationne.squarespace.com).

# Fear

## **I Swear I'm Not Crazy**

Idalis Wood

'There is no heavier question asked than if  
you have ever thought of or attempted suicide.  
I can't escape that question any more than  
I can escape my mind.

No matter how fast I run or how  
much more weight I can bench press,  
there's that one voice telling me  
the world will be better off without me.  
I keep telling others I would never do  
anything so final and drastic.

I overthink everything to the point where  
failing to complete the task and fear  
of the pain keep me from going too far.  
Makes sense that I'm too much of a  
bleeding heart to worry about the stains  
I'll leave behind once the first drops drop.  
It's easier to just disappear.

No trace and no trail for anyone to sniff out.  
In the deepest tunnels of my mind,  
there is a safe place where the sun never sets.  
Resting in the middle of a grassy hill with  
dancing Lilies of the valley and hydrangeas,  
gentle breezes twirl around my hair and chase  
away concerns about the welfare of those  
who might want to bring me home.

I'll stay there and find my own happiness and  
have the freedom to fail spectacularly.

They will be better off without me.

'There isn't much I have done for them in  
contrast to the wasted effort put into me.

No one must know, at least not all of it.

I'll find something to be happy about later today  
or tomorrow.

All of this will be temporarily forgotten.  
I'll be fine. I promise.

**Idalis Wood:** Idalis is a Linfield College alum with a Bachelor's Degree in Creative Writing. She enjoys finding new books, playing with her Corgi, and having a hot mug of tea with her husband, Her work has been featured in Adelaide Literary Magazine, Shift: A Journal of Literary Oddities, Underscore Review, and The Paragon Press.

**Untitled**  
John Delgado

Child, you think you know about the world  
Have you learned the lesson of the pen  
and the sword  
The laws set in place to dictate what is  
right, our leaders tread over with malice  
and spite  
A life to them is worth nothing at all  
Our sons and our daughters, their name  
on a wall  
Have you learned that peace is an illusion  
for sale, this empire we live in destined  
to fail  
One day the securities you trust in will  
be gone, a new day of violence in this  
country will dawn  
Brother against brother hashed  
out again, Our civil Constitution, into hell  
it descends  
Child, if you think you know what a man is  
made of, your only experience, his safety  
his love  
Wait till' he's stripped of all he holds dear  
Then you will know the meaning  
of fear  
It's well you prepare for the coming  
decline; morality, civility no longer  
defined  
Child, my heart cries out for your loss  
and your pain, my hope is your life  
not be given in vain

**John Delgado:** John is a self proclaimed poet with major expressions in experience through pain but loves words of love and adventure as well.

## **Distractions**

Paige L.

'The rain falls so calmingly on my window. I feel the anxiety try to slip away.

The fears of not knowing how the day will go. I worry of how things will sway.

Will I make my bills this month? Will the groceries be enough? Do I have enough to get through the week? All questions I can't fully answer because prices don't ever seem to have a peak.

'Then there's the fear for my children. How do I know if they are even safe while at school?

What horrors could take them away from me? Or am I just acting a fool?

But also have my health to fear for. My pains are ever growing.

Doctors seem to dismiss and doubt me. They ignore the symptoms I'm showing.

'Then despite my own family and issues with myself, I have the government to fear about as well.

They dabble in where they have no right. As a woman I am doomed to be failed.

'Then there is war, murders and death, every time I look at a screen. I see babies are dying, politicians are lying, and innocence being labeled as obscene.

I wish I could fix all of the problems. I wish I could save the world. But I can't even seem to save my own self. My mind stays in a constant swirl.

And to add onto my growing frustrations, is the fact that there are people who actually could.

But they are too busy buying out social medias and building rockets that do us no good.

The world is dying and it's overwhelming and sad as we do what we can to survive.

I sit and I pray and I work every day to still try to make it and thrive.

But today does seem a bit better as I sit here, still, and simply listening to the calming rain.

It, if even for a moment, gives me some peace. It keeps me from going insane.

So perhaps every once and a while you should find, as well.

Something simple and calming to help save your mind from all of life's unending hell.

**Paige L.:** Paige L is an aspiring author and photographer from East Tennessee. She is a single mother of two boys with a dream to succeed as an author or artist. Her main goal is to continue doing the things she loves, raising her kids right, and learning as she goes to improve and grow as a human, a mother, and an artist/writer. You can read more of her work at <https://vocal.media/authors/paige-w6qt5g02am>

**Fear Not**  
Everett DeCosta Sr

I fear not cause in time we all learn  
deflection judgement and blame  
I fear not cause imperfect grace is not shame  
when confidence is in dismay  
I fear not cause I lived another day  
when emotionally hollowed and down  
I fear not cause some ones always around  
when pressure and all life's stress  
I fear not cause I take a rest  
when your being stepped on like the rocks at your feet  
I fear not cause there are foundations and streets  
when your saddened and think of death  
I fear not cause I have breath  
when life is muted to all its sound  
I fear not cause strength is found  
when your shy and can't make that choice  
I fear not cause I hear my inner voice  
when obscurity and lies cause the attack  
I fear not cause truths got my back  
when things in life make you sigh  
fear not fear not one step will get you by

## Motherhood Curse

Pylon Fairchild

working up a bug-potion to conjure a dozen eight-foot-long  
two eyed insects with double-edged stingers    transparent  
wings  
fangs & armor—like skin  
a queen hatching her embryo  
metamorphosis in an absolute matriarchy  
a brood            a hive            thick & dark

she needs a little more violence in her love  
a little more than a weary photograph  
a shiver in her knee bone  
a sweet & gentle kiss  
to love her more than one man should—for her vanity is her  
honesty  
a little boy & a true woman for a true man & little girl  
over a cup of black coffee  
just a cup of black coffee  
she went through some hard times  
she lost a lot of things she loved  
we go through some hard times  
we lose a lot of things we love  
heartsick  
sitting alone  
watching strangers touching strangers in comfortable skin getting  
more comfortable  
lubricated by a martini the Casanova Supernova progressed in  
potential profession behind curtains  
brief encounters coming like Louis' sweet lullaby  
a lover turned ugly  
in a reckless act

**Pylon Fairchild:** Pylon Fairchild is the pseudonym of an underemployed educator living in Flint, Michigan.

# Friendship

## Sun Flower

Miya

She's like a sunflower  
Strong-willed and resilient  
Her aura a warm crimson igniting the sunset  
Her soul shines brighter than the stars  
She's wise beyond her years  
Even though the world can be cruel  
She slow to anger like watching paint dry  
Her personality is kind like a breeze on a hot summer day  
Her love is infinite especially when it comes to things that are close  
to her heart, like her  
unhealthy obsession with turtles  
She's like a sunflower  
Though she looks easy to break her roots keep her grounded  
Her roots are her foundation  
Her foundation is her family  
Through thick and thin she knows no matter what the world  
throws at her  
She can always count on her family to keep her up  
No matter the distance she can stand on her own  
There is more to her than meets the eye  
She is a musical fanatic  
She is a great friend that's forgiving and patient  
She loves helping people and is a future nurse in the making  
She loves painting at night in the cool breeze  
She is an amazing flutist  
She spreads joy like the feeling of a warm sun  
She always brings people up when they are down  
Her smile is contagious and her laugh lights up the room  
She loves long drives while listening to country music  
She's always open to having new experiences and love going on  
adventures  
To the late night walks to McDonalds or the countless karaoke  
nights

To the never ending tiktok text messages or the late night study sessions  
To the euphoria watch party's or the impulsive decisions  
To secretly decorating the dorm halls  
To celebrating her friends accomplishments or the countless jokes  
There is never a dull moment that she is not having fun  
She's a sunflower  
Even though she wilts sometimes she always gets back up

**Miya:** "I am a poet from North Carolina, and I like spending time in nature, listening to music, and reading."

# Love/Marriage

## Empty Sheets

Philz

You wanna know what hell is,  
It's being all alone  
With no hope at all.  
It's falling down  
With no bridge back to you.  
Wakin' up to empty sheets  
And empty thoughts.  
Waitin' to feel  
Your touch once again.  
You are my rock  
My only one  
You are my moon  
My waking sun  
I love you so  
I always will  
My heart is yours  
Forever still.

## Longing for a Stranger's Touch

Savannah Phillipson

Have you changed your perception of me based on the years that have passed?

Because my body no longer stands with the youthfulness of adolescence.

It has stretched and shaped with each being that inhabited it stealing my beauty to create their own magnificence.

It now hangs with the tiredness that reflects my mentality

Moving forward with the motions of each day. Has it stolen the passion that lit the fire within?

Because no hands of yours have rested on the silhouette of my body

Have your eyes begun to wander astray?

Because mine are now bloodshot with depression circled beneath

Lips no longer plump with the eagerness of your attention

My self seems never enough . . .

The only passion that comes is after a fight

Never enough to ignite,

we don't come back to life; we fall back in stride.

closeness comes in the form of a queen bed,

but the absence of your skin against mine is anguish

inches apart yet miles away

sadness in her eyes—disappointment deep inside.

Begging for you to come back to me . . .

for me to come back.

I long for the day your eyes light up when I

Smile, and for the day I can.

When our moments shared feel like our beginning

And the miles that separate become inches again

When beauty is found only by the colors of my soul.

A new day, another chance, another

moment to rekindle our intensity

**Savannah Phillipson:** Savannah Phillips is a writer from Montana, who enjoys the wonders of nature, family, and literature. She spent many years traveling in her tiny home school bus with her family, enjoying the scenic paths of the road less taken while writing about her adventures. A recent graduate in English lit and creative writing with a full-length novel in the works, Savannah enjoys writing poetry, reading, and teaching creative writing classes in her spare time.

## Splintering

Jayme Pollock

A piece of me, always with you  
carry it as a badge of honor  
tattooed on top of your chest  
close enough to the heart  
without ever cutting into it

The speck in your eye you  
cannot blink away  
as much as you try  
a nevus, a freckle  
harmless but permanent

You wonder if the splinter  
in your side would feel  
better if removed but  
as soon as you tweeze  
it out you feel something  
missing

Is a dulled pain more filling  
than an emptiness?

**Jayme Pollock:** Jayme Pollock is a writer from Cleveland, OH. When she is not traveling the world, Jayme loves to explore the ins and outs of her own city. You can usually find her laughing at her own jokes.

Her prior work has been featured in publications such as Z Publishing, Sphere Magazine, and Fangle Magazine.

“Learning a Dead Language” is her first feature-length collection and available now on Amazon.

## **A Poem About the Sun**

Emilio Fairchild

The sun is the brightest star in the universe—or so I thought.

Without the sun the earth wouldn't be the earth.

People wouldn't love.

People wouldn't have desire to live.

All of the plants would perish.

All of life as we know it would change.

The sun is so beautiful and radiant that if you look at it too hard, you'll go blind. Imagine—something SO beautiful that you can't even look at—it's a tragedy.

If you get too close to the sun, you'll get burned to a crisp. You'll be immersed in its warmth.

You'll be engulfed by its flames.

You'll be left wondering "why the hell did I let myself get this far when I knew I was just gonna get burned anyways?"

I guess that's how I feel about you.

The day I met you it was like looking directly into the sun.

You made the night time shine brighter  
than any day the sun has ever existed.

Without you I don't think I want to know love.

Without you my desire to be here would be very slim.

I know that if I get too close to you I might get burned.

All that's left of me at the end of the day may very well be just a small crisp.

But for you I'm willing to risk that.

I'm willing to allow myself to be engulfed by your flames.  
Hell I'll even add fuel to the fire if that means one more moment  
of loving you.

Bob Marley once said "Truth is, everybody is going to hurt you.  
You just have to find the ones worth suffering for" and for you  
I'll walk through the fire of the sun.

I will walk the ends of the earth bloody feet and all if it means  
one more moment to hold you.

One more kiss.

One more hug.

One more laugh.

One more anything.

You are what keeps my world spinning.

My tides rolling.

My heart pumping.

Without you this world is nothing.

And I learned all of that the first time I laid eyes on you.

I used to think the sun was the brightest star in the universe—  
that was until I met you. . .

## **Momma**

Jennifer Sands

Hey momma just wanted to let you know,  
how much love I have for you which continues to grow,  
hour by hour day by day forever o always I'll be your baby . . .  
whether I'm happy, sad, or just having a bad day,  
Your soft words of wisdom help guide my way . . .  
I've Stumbled and I've fallen here and there,  
but no matter what you've always showed you cared,  
You've picked me up and dried my eyes more times  
than I can count, and you always remind me what life is all about  
. . . I'm forever grateful to have a mother like you,  
You showed me love that's more than true.  
If Something was to ever happened to you,  
I dont know what I would do, cuz your my momma and  
I need you and your love to make it through. Life gets a little  
crazy at times and it feels like I'm losing my mind,  
but that's when I sit back and think of you the most momma, and  
your words that are so kind.  
I love you more today than I did the day before,  
and I'll love you even more tomorrow,  
that's a fact, that's for sure . . .

**Jennifer Sands:** Jennifer Sands is very creative, loves her family, friends and being outdoors.

## One's Love

Tinker

Love and Oneness  
"A Yiddish Legend"  
G-d's will  
Existing parameters  
Universal codicils  
Immovable forces  
Govern man  
Concave in nothing  
Convection  
Affecting  
Directing  
Man's sphere  
Originates  
Without form  
Unimagined  
Lacking comparison  
Issued a proclamation  
"This boy for that girl"  
Affairs of two hearts  
United years  
Time of no concern  
Two young lovers  
Mirror destiny  
Intertwined  
Master  
Essences of perfume  
Existence  
I exist  
That I exist  
Given to one  
A trimester  
Revealer mysteries  
Skeletal frame

United in purpose  
Interdependency  
Nurturing  
Free will  
Years of toil  
Emotional  
Mentors  
Sharecroppers  
Soul Strong

**Tinker:** Ron is a student of mystic schooling.

## **Home**

Jorden Ellis

I was raised in a dysfunctional home  
by two alcoholic parents.  
I was given the variety pack  
of mental illnesses.  
Some of which caused me  
to find comfort in discomfort;  
to chase approval and beg for love.  
I should have known to run,  
the second  
I told her she felt like home.

## Cravings

A.R.T.

The ways in which I crave you.

Oh, the many ways.

Most being as innocent & peaceful as could be. Simple things, like the way you touch me. Just the gentle feel of your skin caressing mine. To lie by your side & just talk about about whatever may come to mind.

Oh, how the simple things are so divine.

My mind begins to wonder off in the world of “what could be?”, or even “what is?” I may not know exactly how you feel, only because I tend to hold my tongue. I don’t want ruin something so genuine & pure. It’s as if this bond is my cure. Not really sure where I’m at, or even where I’m going. I do know where I’ve been & having you in my life.

Oh, how sweet it is.

You remind me of the ways I should feel. All the good ways to live. I know I value you & I want to continue to enjoy your company.

Oh, the many things we do.

As long as I’m right by you. You make my days brighter & my world filled with a lot more color.

Oh, how you make me smile!

Many days I’ve waited for something as calm as this. It’s taken a while, but I’m glad to look in the mirror, awaken, or go to sleep & just smile. So I crave you. To laugh, to hold, to speak, to wake up to, to listen, to be . . .

Oh, how I crave you next to me.

**A.R.T.:** Writing & all forms of art has been a passion of mine since I was a child. Spreading love & comfort has been my pleasure as I became an adult. I’ll never let anyone stop me from achieving my dreams. I’ve proven that one dream can become a reality, why not all of them? You can access more of my work @Art\_thename

**Butterflies**  
Bailey Holmes

Butterflies swirl and tumble  
Butterflies jump and flip  
The butterflies shot through my system,  
Began at my core,  
And travel through my whole being  
Just from a single thought of you

They make me  
Nauseous  
Happy  
Scared  
But most importantly  
Thankful that I have you

Now that you have butterflies  
You can see why  
I'm all queasy  
When I talk to you I shake in my boots  
All because of those  
Lovely  
Butterflies

## **Good Woman**

Nika Noel

Achieve the ability.

The concept.

The fight that humbled you in the midst of the storm.

Conquer the mountain that made you.

Show life how to dance with love for love is you.

Feel the music.

Embrace the challenge that a good woman.

No!

The best woman is standing at your feet.

Are you ready to step out the shadows of yesterday?

Remind me of the love you have for me.

Show me the ability to love me once again and live for this life.

Because this is your life to live!!!

## **Her Voice Is in My Head**

Timothy Wallace

I try to forget and just walk away  
But I am left wondering if she is ok  
When I am at the gym or in work  
I am talking to people when all of a sudden I stare into space  
All this pain and loneliness I must face  
I start a conversation and then I hear her voice  
Suddenly I stop and stare at my phone  
I want to call because I feel so alone  
Her voice is all I hear  
I sit and wonder . . . and wonder if she is near  
How could it be her voice is so clear  
It is my head but how can it be  
She is miles away can't you see  
I can't believe her voice is in my head  
Should I not be holding her instead  
The only way they (the voices) will get out of my head  
If I let go . . .  
But how do I let go of the love of my life  
Why did I do it cause all of this strife  
At night as I lay alone in my bed  
I watch our programs we used to watch . . .  
and all of a sudden I hear her wise crack . . .  
That is her for she had the knack  
I don't want to but I must try forget her and move on  
Stand up on my feet and accept that she's gone.

## **Home**

Cathryne Novak

I was shattered.  
Shattered into a thousand pieces.  
Leaving me speechless.  
For everyone I ever knew  
Damned before me.  
Bent on my knees.  
Needed something to believe in.  
For my heart was a pounding wound.  
Engaged in too many doom.  
But then God gave me you.  
You stitched me up.  
One cut by one.  
Made me feel again.  
For I finally feel like I'm living for once.  
After years of pain and shame,  
You gave me something to gain.  
For you took my broken spirit,  
And made me glow again.  
For now I'm finally safe.  
I'm whole.  
I'm home.

**Cathryne Novak:** Cathryne Novak is a 21 year old woman who is from Glen Allen, VA. After many traumas and losses she found her true love. She is now in nursing school and living her best life.

## Romeo Remembers

Riva Figueroa

I remember now  
One morning there were blueberries  
It was summer but they were tart  
Not sweet, not luscious, not any of the ideals of  
Seasonality . . .  
But you and I, we were.  
And it was us,  
And we were.  
And all of the things not us  
Disappeared.

The days are in the details,  
Even now.  
I watch you put away the groceries.  
Every cabinet door you open mesmerizes me—  
Your movements still magical,  
Though no longer new and everything is known.  
I think that's a grey hair there, at your temple.  
And mine has thinned terribly I know.  
Memory isn't what it used to be.  
Sometimes  
With blueberries at the breakfast table . . .  
Everything disappears but us.

## God Speed

Eskymiss

Many thoughts speed through my head,  
Like the seasons gone again  
Time is much the same I guess,  
Nothing more and nothing less.  
Though physically I'm in this place,  
Mentally I'm out in space.  
Wasting away in my prime,  
Losing nothing only time.  
And I can't relive a past of wrongs,  
And I can't deceive a heart that longs.  
Just know for certain that when you leave,  
The turn is mine and I will grieve.  
So whom do you owe penance to,  
When God comes down to collect his dues.  
Ashes to ashes and dust to dust,  
Love is love and lust is lust.  
The heart can break for many reasons,  
With the passing of each new season.

**Untitled**  
Lori Brown

I'm so blessed to call you mine  
You're finer than the finest wine  
You make the sun shine

Wisdom faith honesty trust  
Though beauty fades and iron may rust

If we lose our wealth every single dime  
Our love will stand the test of time  
When the telephone rings and it's you on the line. . .

You make the sun shine

If storm clouds turn my world to rain  
And life fills me with sadness and pain  
Just one kind word from your sweet lips  
The dark cloud breaks and my heart flips

Because you make the sun shine

**Lori Brown:** Sunshine: To my future soulmate.

**Untitled**  
Finn Everett

Wrapped up in the hush of 3am  
and the smell of yesterday's perfume,  
you untie all the knots  
I'm in with your teeth.  
I am unraveled.  
You lay your kisses like sacrifices  
on the altar of my chest,  
only interrupted by the sharp breath I take  
as your delicate fingers creep  
ever so slowly across the hills and valleys towards  
my hips.  
I am a map, spread out underneath you.  
You go sightseeing across every inch of me,  
from the mountains of my mind  
to the shadowy ridges on the undersides of my feet.  
I've remained untraveled for so long.  
You look at me with adventure in your starry eyes,  
and I know that even I don't know  
all the places you've been  
or all the things you've seen.  
The scrapes and bruises  
left behind on my skin  
serve as reminders  
that I am not impassable, after all.

**Despierta**  
Lisa Jenerette

Tossed beside the bed,  
over the bed,  
around the bed,  
under the pillow,  
between us,  
my dreams feel you  
here—  
right . . . here

my sigh  
searches for your  
open mouth,  
matches your breath,  
meets tu ritmo,  
builds intensity,  
finds your  
almost  
wakefulness,  
mi piel a tu piel,  
mis esperanzas en tus brazos

I want to feel  
your heartbeat,  
meet your eyes with mine,  
I want to meet your  
dreams,  
your smile,  
your . . . all.  
I am here-feel me?

Querido, I am here

**Lisa Jenerette:** Lisa Jenerette is a writer, artist, potter, teacher from El Paso, Texas. She has traveled all over the world and has many places still to explore—some of them even geographical. She lives with her two sweet dogs, opinionated cat—and her younger of two very tall sons. She throws clay, words, and paint with equal parts planning and abandon and swims every chance she gets. Her work can be found at [teadragonlisa@instagram.com](mailto:teadragonlisa@instagram.com)

# Memories

**Untitled**  
Deb Bee Jones

I Love you in the morning . . .  
And in the afternoon . . .  
I Love you in the night time . . .  
And in the fullness of June . . .  
I Love you in Spring . . .  
I Love you in fall . . .  
In every season . . .  
Through them all . . .  
I think of you . . .  
On Sunny Days . . .  
And Cloudy Days too . . .  
Every Day that passes by . . .  
I still love you . . .  
As the Sun and Moon . . .  
Spin round and round . . .  
In your arms . . .  
My Love is Found . . .  
I give you my heart . . .  
My body and mind . . .  
Because a Love. Like Ours is hard to find . . .  
'Through the good times . . .  
And also the bad . . .  
Your Love Is . . .  
The best I have . . .  
Ever had . . .  
I Love You . . .  
I always will . . .  
And if you stop . . .  
Loving me . . .  
I will Love you still . . .

**Deb Bee Jones:** Deb Bee is a poet who loves God and her family and friends. She enjoys reading, listening to music, crossword puzzles and of course writing poetry.

## Today

Ghost Writer

When the reality starts to set the fear becomes new.  
When the words ring for days maybe one day I will forget.  
However, I can't stop thinking today's the day everything  
changed.  
Maybe it's for the best or maybe for the worst.  
My soul's been ripped from my chest.  
It floats above me watching waiting for the day it can rest.  
Everything seems to be a blur except today.  
'Today there's no rain no clouds linger in the sky.  
I can tell it may never end at least not through the night.  
Count your blessings may everything just stop.  
Pause the moment keep the controller close.  
Everything is racing I can't stop the feeling.  
Today is the forever day repeating until I bleed for it.

**Ghost Writer:** Ghost Writer is a pen name she adopted to stay anonymous. She enjoys indulging in books and cuddling with her cat before bed when she isn't sacrifice her beauty hours for a few more pages.

## Sunday Afternoon

T.L. Lamph

I had lunch with grandma today.  
She looked better than I have seen her look in years.  
Her skin smooth,  
and not chapped.  
Hair did,  
    Face bright.  
Without the need for make-up.  
She' got her favorite "best dress" outfit on,  
And a look of peace, that makes me smile.  
We sat under the tall oak just chattin' and laughing.  
Munching on grapes, crackers, and cheese.  
I told her about finally going back to school  
And getting my degree.  
I told her about my husband and the extended family  
'That came with marrying him.  
We discussed my being a grandmother  
And she laughed at how quickly time had gone by,  
'Then offered me all the advice she could give.  
We discussed movies and music,  
Last nights television puzzles.  
We discussed my mother, her only daughter,  
And how proud of the women she is,  
and the she has helped my sisters and I become.  
We talked until the sun was almost gone,  
and she bellowed at how it wasn't safe  
for a 'lady' to be out alone after dark.  
She told me she loved me.  
I did the same as I straightened the flowers  
I placed in front of her gravestone  
Earlier that day.  
I placed a kiss with my fingertips on the etched words:  
"loving wife, mother and grandmother"  
'Then with a tearful smile

Headed home to my life.

**T.L. Lamph:** T.L. Lamph is a Vocational worker for adults who have special developmental and physical needs. I live in Tillamook Oregon with my husband and dog Koda. I enjoy numerous mediums of artistic expression from painting, sketching, charcoals and pastels to writing short stories and poetry.

## Texting or Is Love a Microbe?

Ann Privateer

My mind is on my mind  
and I'm thinking in shapes  
of love spilling over and out  
like a howling booming orchestra  
that wakes up the world  
before it turns quiet again.

What's on my mind?  
how love flies in and out the window  
like sour dough bread microbes  
unseen, unheard but you know  
they are there.  
Something was lost  
then . . . found again  
on my computer.  
the piece written as I waited  
for the little ball to stop spinning.

Write a comment, what shall I say?  
Write about love, how love  
Flies out the window  
Write about love flying in  
Like sour dough microbes

Invisible until you taste them  
and then, I am hooked, I can never  
return to French or Italian  
crunchie though they may be.

The night is filled

With apparitions

On on the wall, filmed  
In low density  
Resolute I sit and stare  
At emanations  
From who knows where?

**Ann Privateer:** Ann Privateer is a poet, artist, and photographer. She grew up in the Midwest and now resides in California. Some of her recent work has appeared in Third Wednesday.

## Untitled

### Black Honey

The sight of Lillies, the Smell of dandelions, the vibrancy in the energy that the sun give me while my head is tilted back and my arms stretched like an eagle on a hot summer evening, the warmth of love.

The year of 2006, a year to miss, a feeling to remember in my heart, from that day, lets me know today is better than yesterday. There was trouble then and trouble now in the world but these are some good days. I don't want to miss them missing it.

It is a sweet memory .But that's all it is. I'm not living in the past, I'm only embracing it. I accept all that has come and all that is .

**Black Honey:** Darrenneisha is an African American woman who loves writing when she can. She loves singing knowing she doesn't have a pleasant voice as well as helping others and giving to anyone who ask and she haves.

## The Island of Me

Ams

Isolated, dismal, blue  
Volcanic eruption due  
Cataclysmic moving of ground and skies  
Pruned from the salty steamy ocean tides  
Waiting on the shadow of the Sun  
To tell me it's time

**Ams:** My names Amber and I'm an amateur poet, and my poems are exclusively melancholy.

**Untitled**  
SongbirdSing

I remember, Phillip, when you were two you'd hear the birds outside the windows just chirping away. I remember you'd get excited when you heard them. You'd run to the windows and try to chirp with them. Like you were trying to communicate with them. I often thought to myself that they could understand you. And they'd respond back. Singing to you. Like I did. And if I ever left this place too early for you to understand or comprehend then maybe they would hear my singing and my messages and relay them back to you. And they'd keep on relaying until you were grown and such a wise old man by then, I can picture you looking up! into the trees and instead of those cute little sounds you'd make I'd hear words. and humming. And the most excellent Singing voice. Just singing back to those birds. Singing that you remembered a beautiful voice. And that you never felt alone. Because I was always there. Still Singing to you in the trees . . . Humming to you in the wind. And you'd be okay.

## Untitled

True

You decided upon me  
Your casualty at the hands of wanting something to be that  
Cannot last my presence without a name became it's  
Shelter and your desires are the story that got written time and  
time again but never told  
And not that it didn't have an impact but because the writing was  
to complex for  
The world it was living in and breathing minds with a name  
weren't ready to hear about the importance of a body with a soul  
whose life was shorter then the actual lifespan of the person it  
was attached  
So now all it is a person  
Lost in the casualties of their comfort  
Never to be found  
By anyone because that was the whole point  
Wasn't it

**True:** "I let my words write for me."

## **Loves Lives**

Julia Guyon

Love lives, though our hearts weep.  
Love lives, its promise forever we keep.  
Love lives, though we wish for present joy instead of in memory.  
Love lives, though life is not as it should be.  
Love lives, its kindness we never forget.  
Love lives, to share it is something to never regret.  
Love lives, though the flesh fades and dissolves like snow.  
Love lives, filling us when loss leaves us hollow.

**Julia Guyon:** Julia Guyon is a poet from Westchester, New York. Her poems are often inspired by personal experience, and her poems are her coping mechanisms. Julia uses her poetry to elicit hope in hopeless times. Some of her work can be found on her Instagram, @juliacreates13

## 10 Things about My Phone

Cloakedpoem

It always shows me all these missed calls.

It shows that my messages were read, but I don't see any responses.

I think it's broken because I know you'd respond by now. So, it has to be my phone.

The date's wrong.

It won't let me change it. Says that Today was Yesterday, but that can't be

because you said you'd call and I know you're not a liar.

The caller IDs must be mixed because everytime I get a call-it's not your name.

I can't find your picture.

My friends told me that modern ghosts are real, but I still don't believe in them.

The screen is cracked.

I got a new phone. It came with headphones.

# Nature & Wildlife

## Sleepy Cat

Annekje Thompson

I sit up and stretch,  
blinking in the sunlight.  
My hand comes to rest  
on the soft, warm, fuzzy ball by my side.  
It starts to purr as the head uncurls  
from between it's paws.  
Blinking with sleep and yawning,  
my cat licks my hand  
purring increasing.  
He stretches out a paw,  
resting it by my leg.  
One more lick of my hand,  
One more blink of eyes filled with love,  
and my cat  
tucks his head back between his paws.  
I couldn't ask for a better morning greeting.

**Annekje Thompson:** Annkje Thompson is a small writer living in Montana. She loves hiking, roller blading, plants, puzzles and spending time with her family and animals.

## Learning a New Language

Cathy Hollister

Vocabulary and grammar,  
the root and trunk of language.  
I hear the musical lilt of strange words  
feel them float on the surface of my mind  
but remain unenlightened.

I have lived a long life, attempted foreign tongues, experienced  
many cultures  
heard their folk songs, felt the language of dance, enjoyed the sweet  
fragrance  
of cultivated gardens, tasted the bread of engineered grain  
seen algae bloom, fires rage, forests felled,  
heard drought choked fields cough in despair,  
but still I do not speak Green.

I try listen to the faint hum  
of sap flowing up to feed branch, twig, and leaf,  
hear the melody of photosynthesis  
harmonizing hot sun and sweet chlorophyll.

In the daylight the flowers chant in pink, purple, yellow  
Bees and birds, the couriers that translate  
to human kind the essentials of the eco-tongue  
but their signs of decline are  
ignored by the arrogant.

Trees speak in rings  
calved glaciers screech in birth  
as mountains of ice write a legacy in moraine.  
Kudzu, zebra mussel, and lion fish revel in prolific invasion  
silencing native whimpers.

Storms and fires, loud sirens of warning

sound without pause  
but, unable to understand, I close my eyes and sleep.  
My world is pleading to me, crying out in pain  
and I must learn its language,  
to hear and serve the bedrock of my world,  
to sing with the canaries in the dark cave  
before they go silent.

**Cathy Hollister:** Cathy Hollister is an older writer whose poetry often explores the treasures embedded in age, isolation, and continual readjustments. When not writing you might find her on the dance floor enjoying the company of friends or deep in the woods enjoying the peace of solitude. Her work has been in Humans of the World Blog, Open Door Magazine, Beyond Words Magazine, The Ekphrastic Review, Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine, Poet's Choice anthologies, and others. She lives in middle Tennessee

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# Other

## Untitled

Marie

Somewhere along the lines  
I got Super Codependent.  
I had a broken mind.  
you used to hope that you  
could mend it.

Thankfully, I've learned that's  
up to me now.  
I don't solely rely on others  
and that makes me proud.

**Marie:** Marie is a singer and poet from Maine. She loves being near the sea, looking at the moon, and dancing in the rain. More of her work can be found on Instagram: [@poetry.with.marie](https://www.instagram.com/poetry.with.marie)

## **The Ghost in Your Apartment**

Stylo

I'm sorry if your apartment is haunted, I don't know  
where to put this love you left. Don't worry if you leave  
the water running, I'll turn off the faucet.

When you can't think 'cause our favorite movie is  
playing, I'll pause it.

you come home and you're exhausted, I won't mess  
with the lights and let you forget. Don't worry about the  
mess in your room, I'll just stand in the corner.

when there's too much going on, I promise  
I won't try to be a bother.

## Flower Child

Quinn M.

I twiddled my thumbs patiently on the night of Hallow's Eve;  
I danced with the macabre with fae folk merrily and unseen

Stars shined brighter joining the moon that beamed;  
Oh how grand it was to see that even the skies celebrated me

Oh join us, pure child  
The creatures shouted for miles;  
For I was destined to become part of the wild,

I was to become one whose bodice shimmered like gold;  
Whose arms would turn to branches whose fruit I would uphold

I was the martyr for both love and light  
I was the queen of the world for a sliver of time;

I was a ring of Saturn for quite a while  
But you can call me a flower child

## Hidden Language

Chloe Danielle

Who are you? Tell me your name. Are you there're you aware of  
the steps I take to look for you, but I can not find you. However  
you never reply even if I was to just walk on by.

Yet I feel you near, I can hear you through all my tears! What do  
you need, what do you want wait Don't say anything just don't  
talk because I can hear your thoughts.

I hear you calling me without your lips moving, I see you in a way  
that makes me feel a good chill! You reach me like no other  
person can in your own way you light up my day. We walk by  
each other we stop and star and for that time no one else is there  
We have a secret language that I do not fear but to everyone one  
else where just strangers no one had to ever be aware that we  
have a hidden language no one can ever share!!!

**Chloe Danielle:** "My name is Chloe and I'm a writer. Born in IL  
and I know live in MO it's been a long road and I'm still standing.  
God has blessed be and writing is one of the gifts that I was blessed  
with 'Thank you'"

## **The King of Beasts**

Annekje Thompson

A setting sun,  
A sky full of colors,  
Desert sand  
Grass and bushes become shadows.  
Small animals hop about,  
Also becoming shadows.  
Wait!  
A movement on a sandy slope,  
A long, lithe body  
Big feet and a smooth, muscular body.  
A huge mane of hair at the neck,  
It is he!  
The King of Beasts,  
Walking along this sandy slope.  
No, he is not becoming a shadow,  
He refuses to become a shadow,  
Even the setting sun cannot hide  
The King.

**Annekje Thompson:** Annekje Thompson is a small writer that lives in Montana. She loves hiking, roller blading, plants and puzzles. She also loves spending time with her family and animals.

## Peril

D.F. Lindsey

So it bleeds, so die it will  
Now plants his seeds in hopes to heal  
Its granted not so not pretend  
If kept this pace, no place to tend  
No more to waste, it all will show  
The time is now. In time we'll go  
We came as dust to dust we blow.  
Until then he bares burden and blame  
Due the struggle, due the pain  
In a race against time a planet to save  
Though his race may very well be in vein.

**D.F. Lindsey:** “He tries to get a foothold, a grip, endlessly seeking an a-ha moment. David reaches far beyond his grasp, searching for the source of they’re love.”

## **I've Got a Poem for That**

Alan Barysh

You say you need a little something—Something to brighten up  
your day

I've got a poem for that

Maybe you want to celebrate the life of a loved one that's passed  
away

I've got a poem for that

Or maybe you more than a bit of rejection

I've got a poem for that

That will point you in the right direction

If you're feeling sad and blue

And you really just don't know what on earth to do

And all you want say is woe is me boo-hoo

Or you feel you're up the river with out a paddle for your canoe

And all the woes of the world are falling down on you

Just come call on me I will lend you my ear

I will give you courage when you're feeling full of fear

I'm the one that you can talk to when you're crying in your beer

I'm the one that will boost your spirits and fill your heart with  
cheer.

Cause let me put it to straight arrow often times I have felt like you

Just give half a second I know just what to do

To brighten up your spirits and make you feel just spanking and  
brand new

I will say it once

I will say it once again

When you hear the poem that's just for you

You will smile before you count to ten

Just call on me

I have the poem you need

To make you feel good about yourself why yes and sure indeed

And the poem will be in your hands quicker than the jet plane's  
speed

It will be just a special poem that I surely hope you need

Uh huh I've got a poem for that.

**Alan Barysh:** Alan Barysh is a Baltimore Poet. He has been writing ever since high school. At one time he was a conductor for the composer John Cage. He was the winner of the last Baltimore City Poetry Contest. Currently, he has over 150 books on sale at Amazon.com

## **Ironclads**

George McKinney

An epic battle we fought that day  
Hampton Roads just south of the bay  
Two ironclads went head to head  
To see which one would win they said  
Both ships lived another day  
When brother fought brother so they say  
Now two sailors are coming home  
No more the ocean their souls to roam  
They will be buried with honors and glory  
Another chapter in the Ironclad story

**George McKinney:** George has been writing for about 40 years on a wide variety of topics. With the ability to come up with a poem in minutes his library is expanding rapidly. His poetry has been read by a variety of entertainment stars and some hang in prestigious places.

## Paper Ship's Dream

Ali Sarikaya

The ship is sailing from a port in a dream,  
port from the way, way from the port,  
calls each other, every time  
from paper

one august, nineteen ninety-five two dreams merged in  
one dream and to leave a port neither direction set, nor  
way neither drew a route anywhere, nor took a compass  
with.

not takes fuel neither hawser, steward, nor captain from paper.

in the while the sea reflects the sun on its silent mirror  
from paper

the irresistibility of the horizon was calling  
from paper

without taking even the mice was just sailing.

the ship, the sun and the sea, dream, and a harbor, from paper.

## **The Measure of a Man**

Olamina

What is the measure of a man,  
his value, his worth?  
What is the sum total of the  
life he has lived on earth?  
When do we start the tally?  
When does the assessment begin,  
at birth when life's beginning or  
when death signals the end?  
Is it based on economics,  
success and material gain?  
Or the humble existence, of one  
who's lived in vain?  
How do we mark the innings?  
How do we keep the score?  
And when we count the winnings,  
whose life is worth more?  
'The lawyer, the doctor,  
the CEO, the privileged elite . . .  
the laborer, the hustler, or  
the man who lives on the street?  
Is it the man that must succeed . . .  
succeed at any cost?  
And if that cost requires a life,  
it's not his that's lost.  
Is it the smooth talker, the player  
the ladies' man . . .  
waiting to take advantage of  
anyone he can?  
Always taking never giving,  
consumed with love of self . . .  
only concerned with how he's living,  
damn everybody else.  
Is it the average Joe,

the common working man . . .  
living on dreams and hopes  
armed with a get rich plan?  
He's sworn an allegiance  
and feels he's duty bound . . .  
investing in a system  
that often lets him down.  
Could it be the man  
that for others his life he lives . . .  
and if life should demand,  
his life he'll gladly give.  
For with the life he's giving,  
he pays the ultimate price  
and like Abraham willing . . .  
to make the supreme sacrifice.  
To GOD all life is sacred,  
only he can judge it's worth,  
for all life was created . . .  
to have a grand purpose.  
So, what is the measure of a man  
his value . . . his worth?  
What is the sum total of the  
life he has lived on earth?

**Olamina:** Olamina is an Artist/Poet/Musician from Petersburg, Va. and is the founder and lead singer of the Awareness Art Ensemble/AAE Reggae Band. Check for the music, poetry, etc. at [Bandcamp.com/olaminaawareness](http://Bandcamp.com/olaminaawareness)

**Alone**  
Just James

Alone.  
In a crowded room,  
I'm all alone.  
In the middle of the woods,  
I'm the only stone.  
Imprisoned in this prison,  
Even when I'm free.  
I keep looking for you,  
But I have the key.  
Until I find it I'll never see.  
The beautiful future pictures  
Of you and me.  
You know, being alone isn't  
All that bad.  
Cause when your alone,  
You can really see who  
Has your back.  
Threw the destruction and chaos  
I really hope to see,  
Those beautiful eyes  
Looking at me.  
If they're not,  
It'll be OK.  
Cause I'm not Imprisoned anymore  
With only God to thank

**Just James:** Just James is a new writer born in Tucson Arizona, but grew up in the Ozarks. He is driven to help people and inspire humanity to love wholeheartedly with no hesitation.

**Untitled**  
Devildog0311

Pain does not hurt nor will it scar.  
Emotion might take you places  
but mine will never go far.  
See u can be angry and u can show fear  
But as for me my soul must stay clear.  
'Through anger and anguish  
Trial and tribulations  
I can not show my emotions  
Knowing she hates them.  
So I try to keep it all inside and try not to vent  
The person I was has left and went.  
Where I don't know but I try so hard to live without him  
And emotionless wreak  
Yes that's how I've been.  
Do I such do I seek do I try to find what is me.  
Or do I let him got rest in eternal sleep.  
I'm so confused now on who I should be.  
I tell the truth but out of fear she still chooses to leave me.  
Now a shater stone  
A nomad with no home  
'Thru the streets of Boston is where I shall roam.  
I cut all ties with what was once seen as me  
And live this life as she wants me to be.  
I have I made the right choice have I made a wrong decision  
Only time can tell with proper precision.  
I love her so much that I cut out what was once me  
—and she leave me again with no future to see.  
I love myself I truly do  
But for her I cut My heart and split it in 2.  
No a pushover a wreak of what was once a man  
Is now broke and bloody  
With no legs to stand.  
Did I make the right decision to cut me off for her

Or should I have stayed me and let her kick me to the curb.  
Like falling from a plane with no parachute to land.  
Is only the beginning of this emotionless man

## **New Neon God**

Ronnie Cole

Bugs in the new Hammock  
New law  
New neon God  
Wearing glasses to look at it  
Coins super glued to the sidewalk  
Teasing the hungry man  
Evolved bacteria in the organic land crust  
Trademarks, product placement, and rusty chains on swingsets  
Truffles  
Rose cart on a busy street  
A man's matted fedora at his toes  
Singing about asphalt beds and drunken park benches  
Commercial bluebirds lurking over jealous yards  
And a silver breeze whispers today  
Segway to the sharp winter night  
Crispy dry Air hugs the fire pit  
Our city is breakfast for the sunlight  
Love heats the stove  
Sizzle away evil bacteria  
And emotions worship the creases of A face  
Mad like Van Gogh  
And maybe God doesn't want to be God anymore  
So he left our sacred blood garden  
And the modest dim lust for life disappears into the star theater

A quiet moon by the Daytona beach  
Listen closely  
The echoes of everyone's subtle madness leaches thru the air  
What are we doing here?

Death circle races in our little movie town

Where is my invitation to the feast tonight?

The feast under the star theater

The stillness of the meadowlands hold the weight of time in its  
brightly colored bag, talk with us in our own language . . .

Shoot the messenger where the hiss moves cold & slow like old  
movies

The wind outside sounds like a needle on vinyl records and we're  
all  
Setting the scene through consciousness

My movie is not like your movie

My movie is about a statuesque man in a hotel room talking to  
himself  
Playing every role in his own internal film

Art for the sake of art

He poses in front of the bathroom mirror flexing his muscles and  
staring at his own dick  
He smells like whiskey and pot and he doesn't eat  
He has A damaged Amygdala  
He lays in bed for hours staring at the ceiling but the guilty sun  
never comes up

He is the messenger

love the tender day, she is shy  
Blushing clouds learning to walk for the first time  
A garden bloomed from the concrete of the Newtopia  
Leaving a hickey on natures naval  
Swimming in the lungs of our mothers architecture

In the beginning there was void and a cold hiss that moved over  
the matrix and gave everything mathematical proportion

A New found world of dancing keyboards  
Caught in nineteen ninety never

Leave her in the sunset to die  
Hair Weaving thru the nexus  
Spinning her fabricated mind  
Cold network

Propagate love  
Eat the forbidden chicken from your corner market

Calling out to our ancient mother

God just keeps getting older  
Just like the messenger

## **Mental Note**

Dymund

I am a woman.  
Too straightforward?  
Allow me to break it down for you.

My mind is a playground.  
My body, a temple.  
My heart, gold.  
My voice, powerful.  
My aura, alluring.

It's just something I absolutely adore about the inside of me.  
It's radiant.  
It's rare.  
Authentic.

Y'all don't hear me.  
Let me break it down some more.

My mind is my powerhouse.  
It births my creativity.  
It captures original thoughts.  
It organizes disorder.  
It keeps me on my feet.

My body,  
A pretty brown frame that can steal the eyes of blind men.  
My body,  
A place only meant to be explored by someone worthy.  
My body,  
The most valuable part of me that I must protect at all costs.  
My body holds the soul of a woman that is unapologetically herself.

My heart is the purest part of me.

It gives selflessly.  
It beats to the drum of compassion.  
It loves completely.

My voice is strong.  
My voice flows through the tip of my writing pen.  
My voice is the tunnel to my mind.

I hope y'all hear me now.

I am a woman internally and externally  
I recognize the validity of my existence and there is nothing anyone  
can do to take that away from me.

Saying 'I am a woman' unlocks the confidence and unlimited  
potential inside of me  
And that is why I call it a "Mental Note".

**Dymund:** Dymund Thomas is a writer and poet from Memphis, Tennessee. She enjoys being able to freely express herself through arts and creativity.

## **Driftwood Bones**

John Karwacki

Carry your load  
and your brother's too  
Be a blessing  
Bend your knees  
If you cut yourself  
Share your wound  
Accept love and give it too  
Be open  
Vulnerable  
Venerable  
Volunteer  
Remember the music is not the piano  
Play  
There are faces in trees  
Ghosts in the woods  
My heart is a temple that you set on fire  
Your love is sacred  
Baptize  
Blue notes  
Receive freely what you give away  
Betterton  
Better than  
anything  
anyone  
anywhere  
My driftwood bones wash up on the beach  
The future slides back into place  
Now is all that matters now  
Chop your wood  
and your sister's too  
Be the water  
Bend your knees  
If you train yourself

Ride your rail  
Accept love and give it too  
Be alive  
Enthusiasm  
Acquiescence  
Ambitiousness  
Remember the music is not the instrument  
Play  
'There are faces in waves  
Ghosts on the breeze  
My heart is a temple that you set on fire  
Your love is sacred  
Fusion  
Blue notes  
Receive freely what you give away  
Betterton  
Better than  
anything  
anyone  
anywhere  
My driftwood bones wash up on the beach  
The future slides back into place  
Now is all that matters now

**John Karwacki:** I am a writer currently living in Savannah, Georgia. I write to make sense of my life.

# Religion

## **Mental Healing**

JAH Seawright

I remember praying for God to change my image  
Praying that who I am, he would diminish  
I didn't believe I deserved to live, so I prayed to die  
The devil is very clever, and I was believing his lies  
And he used my wanting for love to make me believe  
The fact that I felt I didn't have it. Love was something I'd never  
achieve  
Perception can be our friend or enemy  
We can choose to focus on Jesus for he is a friend indeed  
Always there when we are in need  
Submit to God and resisting Satan is the only way the devil will flee  
The devil has many tricks up his sleeve  
Putting all of my focus on negativity  
Due to what I ate mentally  
Hearing: "You'll never be enough, you'll only be good for laying  
on your back"  
Making sure I focused on everything that I lacked  
Not even realizing that I am under attack  
Seeking God diligently  
And focusing on changing my mindset, what I perceive  
Being selective on the food that I eat  
If I don't eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus, then I'm dead  
spiritually  
Says so in KJV John 6:53  
In the beginning the word was God then later on the world became  
flesh  
To die for our sins, so we don't have to die the 2nd death  
To be the propitiation of our sins, so we can repent  
By the Father, was Jesus, his only begotten son sent  
He is the word, The Bible and we must read  
To learn the fear of the Lord is the only thing that will keep us in  
perfect peace

Knowing that all things happen only with his permission so other fears we release

Fearing the one who sent his son to die

Fearing the one that came down as man and never sinned, no matter how he was tried

Once I realized that God came and died for all, including me

Reading chapter 7 in Deuteronomy

That helped me realize that God is love and his love heals

Eating it by reading it and hearing it changes everything, even how we live

God's word is our protection

God's word is also our weapon

For God Hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power; and of love; and of a sound mind

Love the Lord thy God above all and to our neighbor we be kind

The whole duty of man is to fear God and obey

So, now that I know I don't have to do it myself, to God I can Pray

Asking for help and ending in Jesus Name

Gives me perfect peace and joy, for his burden is light

The rest we get on the Sabbath is always a delight

Getting refreshed, powering up our armor, getting us ready for the fight

Now that I know, the fight is day to day

In Jesus I put my Trust and Faith

Joyful for correction, doing all that he says

For it is better to Obey

I am better prepared to discern from the real and the fake

The real is the word of God and the fake is what lies Satan creates

The word of God is my armor and my sword

I won't fail when the enemy tries me, because I'll already be submitting to my Lord

Submit to God, resist the devil and he will Flee

Ignoring the negativity, and choosing the word of God, has been mentally healing for me

Just in case there's someone out there that wants mental healing.

God Can

Matthew 19:26KJV

He wouldn't have said all of mental illness wasn't included 🌻🌻

**JAH Seawright:** My Poems are my testimonies. I just want ppl to know that nobody is dirty for God because nobody told me. I had to learn it on my own. Then I learned that everyone is going through something, so I understood why nobody told me. God Can!

## Hardship

Wright Barrington

Hardship I do not like it, deep down I wanted to quit.  
But later I realized it was for my benefit.  
How you say, and in which way , could hardship to me be of help?  
It just make me scream, cry and yelp.  
'That is the truth but it also makes us grow,  
If you don't to hardship bow.  
In this world nothing comes without resistance,  
'Take a plant for instance.  
Which start from a seed, for a while it was dark indeed.  
Covered in dirt it had to grow and proceed,  
If it wanted to continue it's breed.  
With a little water,  
It resisted it condition and started to grow and prosper.  
It pushed against the soil that kept in the dark,  
And started to grow, in condition that was stark.  
So it could come into the light,  
As a green plant looking at us with delight.  
So are we like the seed and the plant,  
If we just don't believe in the words impossible or can't.  
We have the inner ability,  
To sprout like the plant if we exercise our tenacity.  
No one can tell a seed that it can't grow,  
Neither should you let darkness make you bow.  
Hardship, is only there to let you to the whole world, your growing show.  
Hardship only make us stronger,  
If we use our resistance and Godly power;  
We for it will be better.  
It all begins with one's outlook,  
Being positive and picking up the good book.  
You'll find gems that are life-saving,  
And better way of behaving.

You have a choice, during hardship, to grow or die!  
Keep living, learning and growing even if you cry or sigh.  
Your attitude in these times is very essential,  
And choosing a positive attitude, is very beneficial.  
Just like a plant, your tears produce moisture,  
It is to your garden of growth water.  
You should decide not to quit and your hardship situation you  
will conquer,  
And you will grow stronger,  
But keeping a positive attitude you must always remember.  
Now you have conquered, you are called successful,  
So spread your limbs, so all can see you so beautiful.

**Wright Barrington:** Join to church, music and writing

## **Test of Faith**

Pamela Lowe Hardin

'This is a test of faith,  
enduring all this pain,  
I've dealt with will all be  
wiped away one day. Will  
I hear them Sing Hallelujah  
when I stand in the Lords  
presence on that final day?  
Remember, it's not easy walking  
in someone else's shoes, we all  
feel pain in different ways, and  
even though the Lord has been  
by myside, every step of the way,  
'This is the test of my faith.  
'The weight of the world is on my shoulders.  
Lord, come take this pain away.  
I'm not meant to carry this loaded burden.  
Lord, go ahead and take this gun away.  
'This is my chance to stand up and  
say that all the weight of this pain  
will be lifted away  
I'll meet my Lord and Saviour on  
that final restful day, and until then  
I'll stay strong, continuing on, for  
He has a great plan for me, here on this chaotic land.  
For this is the life  
I am to live and  
'This is the test. of my faith.

**Pamela Lowe Hardin:** Pamela Lowe Hardin has picked her writing back up. Keeping in touch with herself and keeping in touch with her faith reminding her to press on. That what she feels is temporary and will pass. Pamela is a mother, a sister, and a friend to those she surrounds herself with in staying positive with her everyday walk with God.