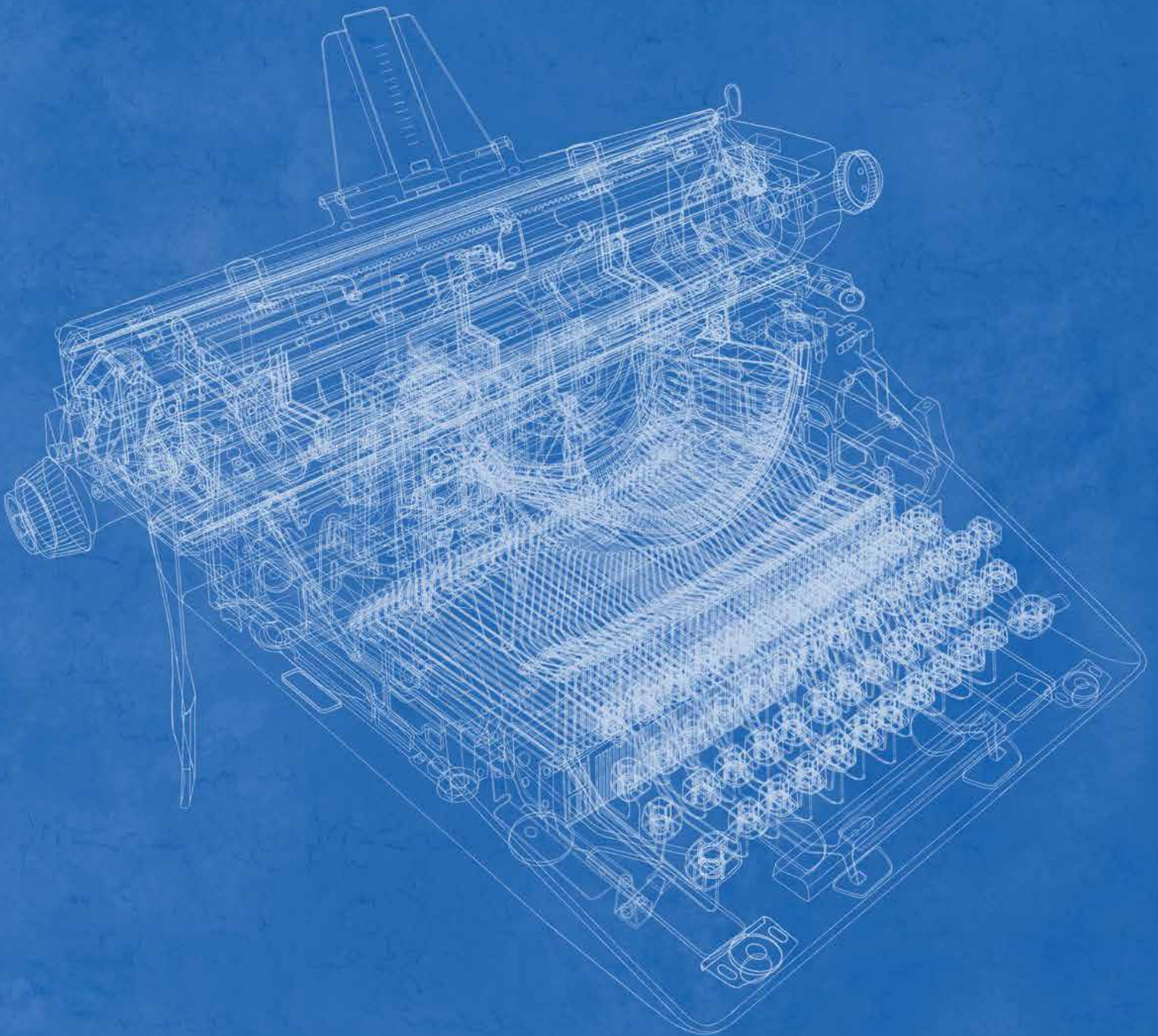


Arcadia

Literary & Arts Magazine 2024
Clarkstown High School South



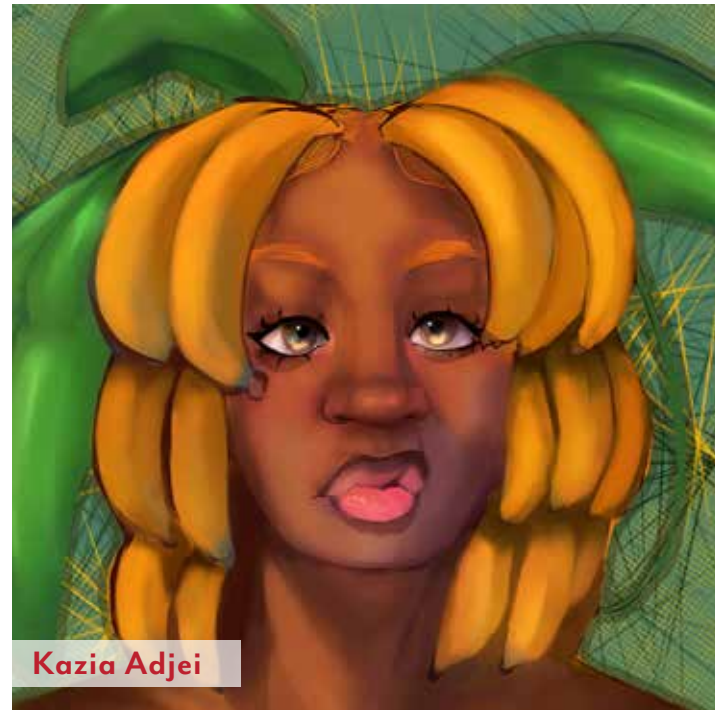
Arcadia

Literary & Arts Magazine 2024
Clarkstown High School South

Cover Art by Joey Amodeo



Alexandra Fianza



Kazia Adjei

Introduction

Arcadia has a special place in my heart. Even though I joined this wonderful group just last year, I've always felt a connection that, for a long time, I couldn't put into words. Admittedly, I'm not much of an artist, but that hasn't stopped me from loving art. Every time we came together to create this magnificent magazine, I felt at home. Perhaps it was the passion and talent of our artists. Perhaps it was the tireless dedication of Ms. DiSavino and Mr. Sandomir. Or perhaps (I think this is it) it was the snacks. Whatever it may be, I felt like I was a part of something bigger than myself. Arcadia allowed me to express my creativity in ways I never had before, and to share that creativity with others. Looking back on that connection I could never verbalize, I think it could best be described as love. Love for our magazine, love for our community, and love for our art. Arcadia has been one of the most memorable parts of my time in high school, and I will forever cherish the memories I made here. Thank you Ms. DiSavino and Mr. Sandomir, for your constant guidance and benevolence. And thank you to all the brilliant students who made Arcadia what it is today.

Christian Cruz

Christian Cruz

Staff

Mallory Dinsay, *Student Editor*

Kazia Adjei

Ahla Bommareddy

Haile Byers

Christian Cruz

Caitlin Fitzgibbons

Teagan Novotny

Ailish O'Sullivan

Nicole Pisetzn

Cara Reddington

John Reshnoft

Advisors

Mrs. DiSavino & Mr. Sandomir

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Editor's Note

As I reflect on the pages of Arcadia, our beloved school magazine, I can't help but feel nostalgia and gratitude. Arcadia has been more than just a publication to me; it's been a part of my high school journey, a space where I could pen out my thoughts, and a sanctuary where my words found their voice.

Since freshman year, Arcadia welcomed me with open arms, offering me a platform to express myself, to share my passions, and to connect with others who shared similar interests. Through its pages, I discovered the power of storytelling, the beauty of language, and the joy of art.

This magazine, the last I will work on, means a lot to me. The group of students working on this piece is brilliant, and the students who volunteered their work have made this magazine what it is. I am so proud to be a part of Arcadia because of our drive to make something so special.

I owe so much gratitude to Ms. DiSavino, whose guidance and encouragement have fueled my love for writing. Her support and belief in my abilities have shaped me into the writer I am today. Thank you, Ms. DiSavino, for igniting the spark that continues to burn within me.

I also want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Sandomir for helping me rediscover my love for art. His enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication to his art classes have inspired me to push the boundaries of my creativity. Thank you, Mr. Sandomir, for opening my eyes to the endless possibilities of artistic expression.

As I leave high school and embark on the next chapter of my journey, I carry with me the memories, lessons, and friendships made within these pages. May Arcadia continue to inspire and empower generations of students to come.

Mallory Dinsay

Mallory Dinsay, Student Editor

Growing Up

Caitlin Fitzgibbons

i sit on the swing
and scrunch my face in the bitterness of the cool air.
my dry eyes compensate with warm tears
paving their way down my face
like a match's flame dwindling into ash.
i let the wavering of the swing maneuver me
through the paths of a garden
as i recall each flower i planted
in the past -
every petal woven with rain and sun
every flower carried a story.
i wanted to pluck one,
delve back into its gilded pages.
i rattled the chain of the swing -
im not a kid anymore.
i knew that
even the swing knew that.
so i stand up and follow the soft chirping of the crickets
echoing through the brisk air,
my head held high
my pockets empty.



Kyra Pena



Joey Amodeo

An Introspective Study

Ahla Bommareddy

To plant the seed is to plant the seed
Whose ever-multiplying progeny bloom into
Beautiful flowers reaching toward the light.

Hauntingly beautiful are the delicate petals,
Whose nectar of knowledge intoxicates both
The curious bees and the curious mind.

But now the leaves gray and wither and
The ever-inquisitive scientist discovers a blight,
A poison groping its way up the roots toward the bud.

From bottom up, from inside out
The seed regresses into its primitive stages despite
The racing of the brain to grow higher and higher.

To become a tree is the apparent goal;
But its own roots become the fatal foe holding it back
And the endless seeds overflow in the endless abyss.

So when can you no longer tell if you are
The flower bending toward the sun
Or just the burdened vase carrying wilted thoughts?



Hannah Sung

Choices

Kazia Adjei

A new morning arises
and once again I head to my fridge
to pick a new fruit
for the day.

Usually apples...the safest choice.

Sweet, predictable, common -

everyone likes an apple.

I look at the lemon.

I'm not feeling it today.

It's sour, makes you want to scrunch your face up,
and stay away.

But then I came across the dragon fruit.

Flared exotic skin sticking out like spikes.

The bright colors that amaze and satisfy.

It's not common to see a dragon fruit lying around.

Cutting into it you never know.

It could be the purple of an amethyst,

the unexpected white of an opal.

Once again

as I always do

I grab the apple

head out the door.

Maybe one day I'll have

the courage

the strength

the confidence

to choose the bright fruit in the back of the fridge.

The Truth Within

John Reshoft

Do you see that giant tree up ahead of you?

There is an ancient library of knowledge within.

Don't believe me?

See the seeds falling from the tree?

That is a seed of stored knowledge

planted into this world's laws

within the earth.

The more this knowledge is spread,

The more order can grow.

As the seed grows the knowledge within accumulates.

And once this occurs

it will grow all the more.

So what is the importance of this step?

Seeds become saplings, and stems grow leaves.

And soon those saplings will become trees.

So when this tree stops growing, what will happen?

The trees begin to decay after several millennia.

But then I witness more seeds falling from it.

What is the importance of growth when death is the end?

Trees of the past die and

the scattered seeds bloom into sprouts.

When we witness these blooming young saplings...

we question.

How could there be life after death?

Isn't the knowledge within the past forgotten?



Hannelore Conlee

No More?

Galina Peterburgskaya

Four months and twenty-nine days.

You left the tap running in my bathroom. The kettle is still warm. Your words linger in the halls of our home. I promise I think of you no more.

I think I'll shut the water off tomorrow, and pour your tea when I have the chance. And I'll demolish every piece of drywall until I break out of this trance.

I'll put your sweater in the closet, and warm the blanket when you're home.

I'll set your dinner out each night so that I'll think of you no more.

I'll leave your slippers by the ottoman. I'll hang your coat up on our door.

I obey our silent structure.

When will I think of you no more?

Four minutes and seven seconds.

There is a fire in the oven. The bath is blazing hot. It's like the universe created our souls tied together in a knot. There is a cavern in my heart, catatonic and cavalier.

I was built incendiary. I'll burn our ties, you're nothing dear.

I'll banish all our moments and the candor I abhor.

I'll try my best now to think of you no more.

Six years and twenty-one days.

I look towards eudaimonia. I flourish in the flame. I've given all I can.

There's no longer any blame. I am now deliberate. I love on purpose, evermore.

Unequivocally, I now feel at home.

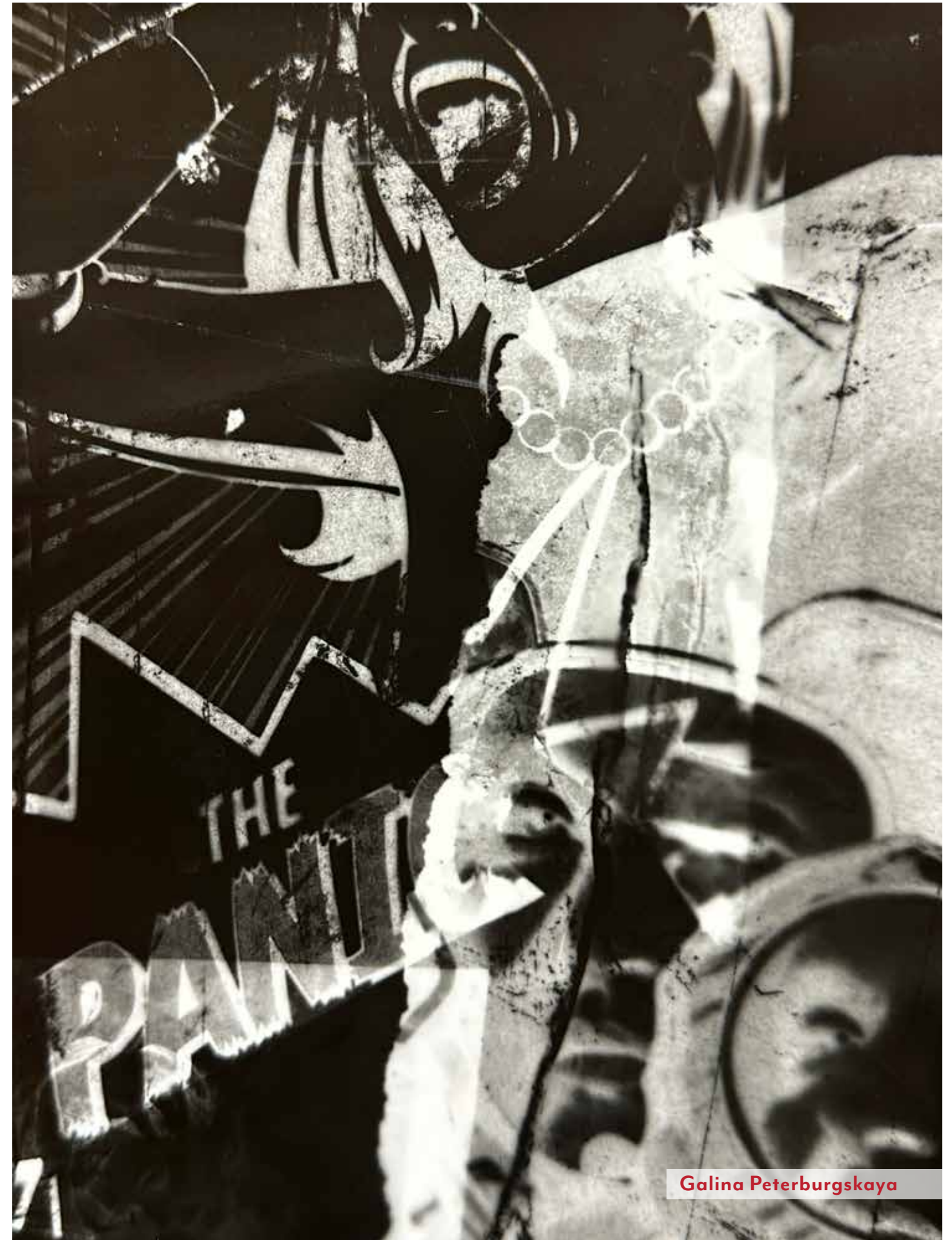
My mind may be fallible and my heart a little raw, but within a perfect failure, an opportunity I saw.

We followed no rules; we were rowdy, ruthless, and rare.

But now my freedom feels ineffable. With you, I could never compare.

Your ghost is omnipresent, but I am liberated once more.

I think of you with every step I take



Galina Peterburgskaya

Wilted

Ailish O'Sullivan

the night we stayed awake
talking until dawn peaked through the blinds
to see what had just begun to blossom
I told you how I water dead plants
wilted and bent
but didn't say
my most painful truth -
i water these plants unaware that they have died
i tell myself just one more drop might
bring them back
i give them all my love
talk to them until silence grows

i told you this
maybe as warning
maybe i felt i could trust you
how could I know
we would wilt as well?



Fiona Li

Waves of Deception

Caitlin Fitzgibbons

i dove into this like a kid in the ocean.
all they see is water- and they run
thinking it's all fun
they don't see the waves
getting bigger, bigger
so big, they pull you under

now you're gasping for air
breathing gets harder
you can't tell if you're crying
tears mixed with the water.
and your parents - they're frantic
they can't find their daughter
you want to scream out to them
but water is the air you breathe
it burns like fire
all you can do
is wish
you had just thought
earlier
thought a little harder
seen the deception and danger
in the joy.



Mackenzie Slany

Underneath The Willow Trees

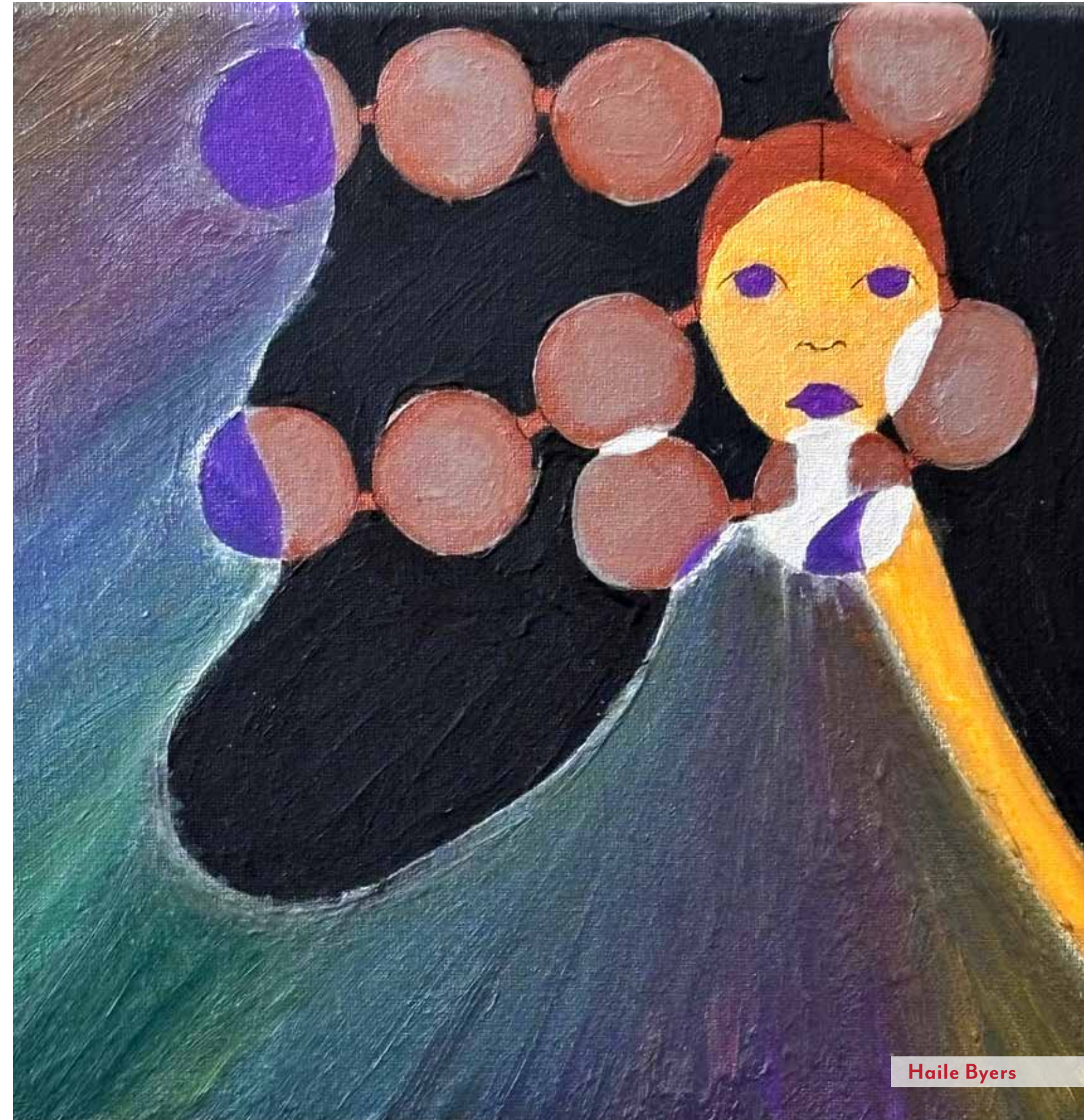
Ailish O'Sullivan

I have nightmares -
that would be expected,
I have dreams as well
and in my dreams
the world is watercolored
the pages of a story book,
full of fables
and lessons to be learned.

I have wings,
reflective, luminous veins flow through them.
Laying in the grass underneath a willow
I joyously babble about all that is good and beautiful
accompanied by wind whirling through the leaves,
the chiming of the forest.

How wonderful and blissful
this moment appears
yet
doom looms in the distance.
A dark reckless creature flies just above
then soars down,
so close it risks ruin.

Underneath the willow trees.
I wish I could rest in the moss
a moment more,
the darkness that looms
just beyond
keeps me moving.



Haile Byers



Joey Amodeo

An Imperfect Perfection

Ahla Bommarreddy

Three parts bolts
three parts screws
three parts cords
and one part that will never be captured.

A collage I am
fawned over by tech zealots
and art enthusiasts alike.
Staring into my own reflective lens, I wonder -
is my silvered beauty and plain function a paradox?

A machine I am,
yet somehow self-aware.
Why do I yearn for the days
before my motherboard was slotted?

From my parts alone
I am nothing -
yet intertwined
I contain a hollow purpose.

Stained Glass

Mallory Dinsay

In the painting of life
the broken glass of sorrow is not left behind
but arranged to form a picture.
When despair casts its shadow
the human spirit emerges as an alchemist
sewing threads of resilience
into a window of stained glass.
Darkness and light, sorrow and joy,
create luminosity -
pain grows into art,
a testament to the spirit's capacity
to illuminate the harshest experiences
into enduring meaning.
These broken pieces -
once weaknesses -
become intricate patterns.
Every crack
a tunnel of radiance
which lights the spaces within
inviting others to witness
the transformation -
light from shards of darkness,
a souvenir of the trials endured.
Each shattered fragment
bends the harsh light of change
into a colorful kaleidoscope
visible only to those
who have emerged
from the depths.



Ann Gregoriev

warm cup of Tea

Caitlin Fitzgibbons

i crave you
like a warm cup of tea on winter day.
i start by boiling the water - i don't completely give in
but the option is there if i so choose.
i hold my hand over the hot steam rising like mist of emotions in my stomach
i let myself feel the warmth
i let the steam create little drops of water on the palm of my hand
i let it mold to the indentations,
i let them fill the crevasses,
and all of the sudden
i am a little less me.
next i grab a cup, feeling myself giving in
i place the tea bag at the bottom
i smile,
i love tea bags
all shredded on the inside,
smooth on the outside
a little bit like this.
like us.
then i pour the water over and watch the tea fade into the water
a storm of darkness
like the leaves that twirl in the rain in an October storm.
the water becomes a shield,
the bag is no longer seen
and i don't search for it.
i take a sip,
the warmth coats my throat and i smile.
every particle that coats my insides
makes me less and less myself.
i am covered by something
that isn't me
something that seeps into my skin
that feels just like me
something that leaves no room for light to squeeze through.
feeding me warmth without needing to step into the sun.



Cristian Zamora

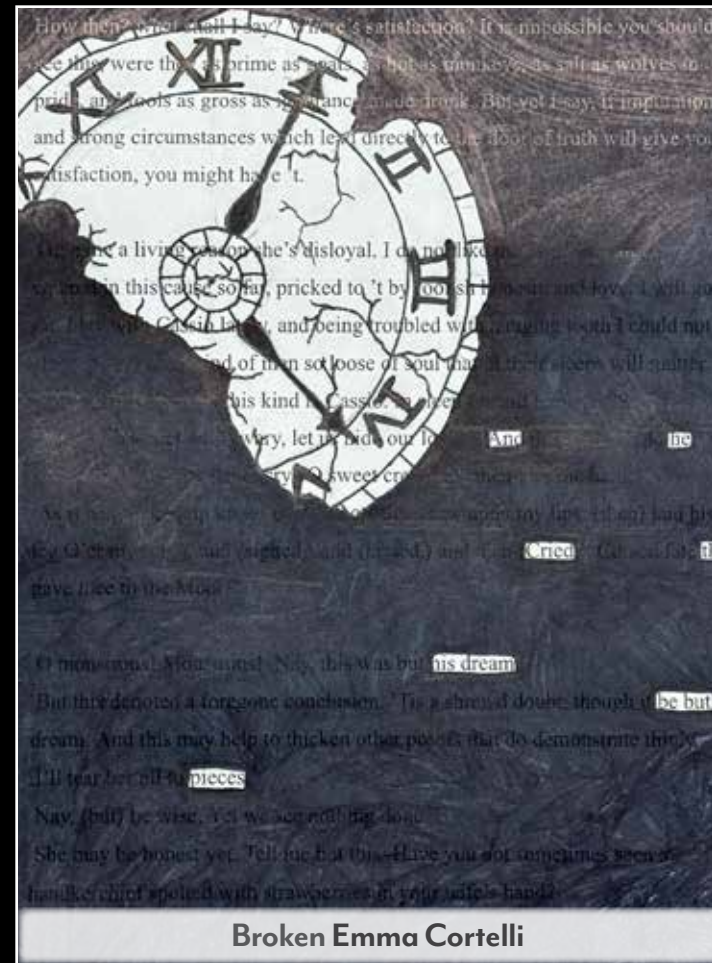
Lifetime

Teagan Novotny

If happiness was visible, maybe the world would be a better place.
 If happiness was visible, maybe we could understand strangers' actions.
 If happiness was visible, maybe I could understand how you feel.
 We feel so far apart even though
 we live in the same world,
 the same house.
 We are so close, yet so far
 and I still wish I could understand you.
 We hang out with others and you are radiant
 yet when we get home you act like I am air.
 I still recall the times we went on picnics in the fall
 with the sweaters you made for us two.
 I may just be hopeful or maybe even delusional
 but someday I know you will feel the same way as I....
 You act so strange recently.
 You've been locking yourself in the bedroom
 and not getting out of bed.
 I bring you food but you are not eating.
 I bring you to the doctor and nothing is wrong.
 Why wouldn't you tell me how you felt?
 If happiness was visible, maybe I could have helped you.
 If happiness was visible, maybe I could have saved you.
 If happiness was visible, maybe you would still be here next to me.



Teagan Novotny

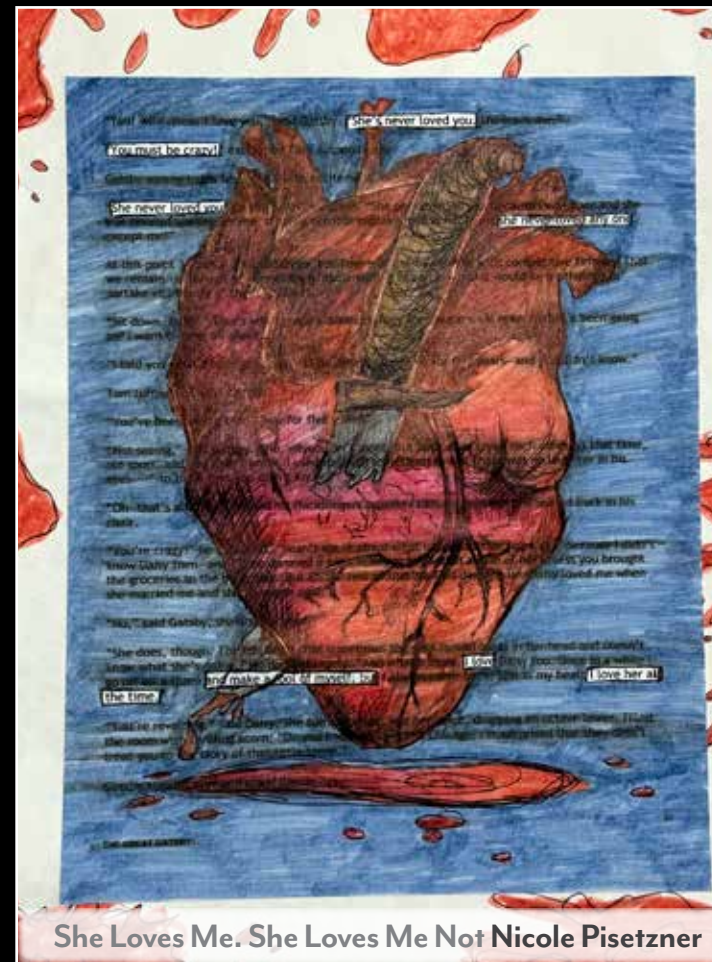


Broken Emma Cortelli

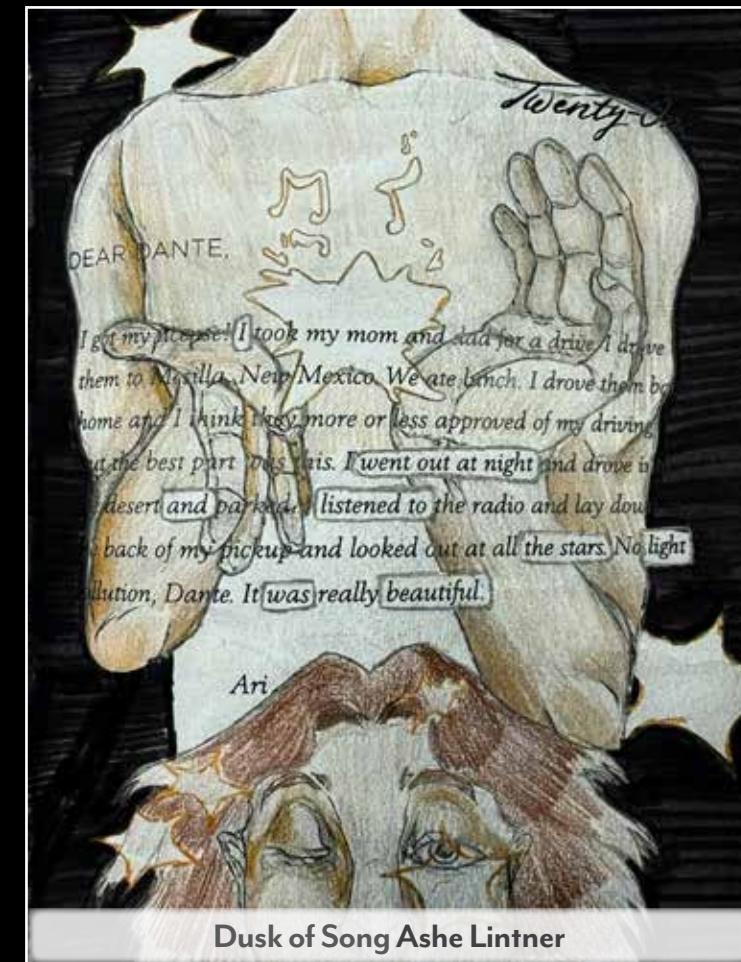


The Sin of Desire Satvik Vuluvala

Black Out Poetry Contest Winners



She Loves Me. She Loves Me Not Nicole Pisetzner



Dusk of Song Ashe Lintner

Truth Be Told

The Truth of Possibility by Christian Cruz

Truth. What is truth?

Of course we know what truth is; truth is what's real, what's factual, what exists. Today, objective truths have never been more agreed upon. The worlds of math and science shine a spotlight exposing the truth from the darkness of the universe. The computed connections of the internet send electronic signals of information around the world in an instant. Yet in this age of "truth," I ask you; what is the truth? In our democratic elections, which candidate is truthful and which is fallacious? In the wars raging across the globe, who are the righteous and who are the wretched? In our news and media, which report is direct and which is distorted? The clarity of truth has fogged up like a window on a dark and frigid night. It is ironic that in this era of technology and information, the truth, the real truth, is hidden behind a mangled web of half-truths and half-lies.

This outlook on life may discourage you, but I urge you not to despair. Since times immemorial, humanity has faced monumental challenges. Today, we face yet another. The truth may be shrouded in darkness. The truth may be hard to find. And the truth may be daunting. But the truth is what we seek. Such a task may seem insuperable, but as history has shown us, if we persevere, we can be victorious. When colonial farmers declared independence from the largest empire the world had ever seen, countless individuals scoffed at their efforts. Two hundred and forty seven years later, that humble nation they created is the largest economic and military power in the world. When hundreds of thousands Americans came together during the civil rights movement to demand equality, an equal number of fellow Americans disregarded their cry as inconsequential. Sixty years later, freedom and equality have never been more prevalent in this nation. Time and time again, those who challenge the status quo have been victorious in their efforts. Like our forebears, we must also overcome the challenges that face us now. We are the ones who control our destiny, and we are the ones who have the power to create a better future, not just for ourselves, but for generations to come. Although we may be uncertain about the truth, the truth of possibility has never been more clear.

A Letter from a Wedding Ring by Mary Hays

To many, I am a symbol of truth. I represent a promise: to have and to hold as long as they both shall live. To you, I represent a lie. I remained wrapped around his finger while he "stayed late at work" and went on all of those "work trips." Sometimes I would even get left at home, so he could disguise himself as single. He discarded me like I was any old piece of jewelry, but I am more than that. I have been a symbol of devotion for thousands of years; I am not just for decoration.

To him, I suppose I no longer reminded him of love. Perhaps I was not shiny enough, or my engravings distorted. Perhaps I simply was not pretty enough for him anymore. Is that how you feel, too? Have the years made us dull and undesirable?

Where we live, nearly half of all lifelong promises of love are broken. At the altar, nearly half of brides and grooms lie when they say that they will stay forever. It's not your fault; it is natural to grow apart with time. Still, how could he break his promise? How could he lie straight to your face? How could he possibly forget the moment when he said "I do"?

It won't be easy to say goodbye, but you must leave. You know the truth now; you know what he's been up to. So, run. Run from your past, run from the lies, run from this mistake. I no longer have a purpose, I represent a marriage that should have never happened. I'll most likely end up in a dustypawn shop where I will be left to reminisce on the days when I believed that the love I symbolized was true, and that I would have a finger to envelope forever.

He may try to trick you into staying, or tell you more lies to win you back. This is your reminder that trust is not easily repaired. Forgiveness is a gift, not a given. Perhaps one day you'll find another finger to adorn with a ring. When that day comes do not think of me, for I will no longer represent your truth.

The Truth behind White Lies by Marissa Dorsainvil

Dear White Lies,

You are seemingly beautiful. Your color alone symbolizes purity, perfection, and honesty, but I can tell you, you're just like the rest of us. When most people think of white lies, they focus on the white: the innocence. People seem to completely disregard the fact that if you take the white out of it, all that's left is a lie.

So I'm telling you we are truly similar, and I would even go so far as to say that we can be the same. Who determines the spectrum of a white lie? What is going a step too far? I mean sure, "I was late because there was an accident," or "You look amazing in that dress," and the classic - "Of course I remember you!!" is harmless. Isn't it? I mean, there is a clear difference between those lies and the "I swear I didn't do it," or the "I promise I'll keep it a secret." From my point of view, the only difference is in the delivery. And what happens when the "lied to" finds out the truth? When the teacher finds out there was no accident because he takes the same way to school, and when the secret you promised to keep gets out and a once unbreakable, everlasting bond of trust... is broken.

Now think about this, little Miss White Lie. What if I never existed? What if the only type of lie a person was capable of telling was a white lie? You'd be just a blatant lie. You are only a mere fib because society has deemed me worse. Only in contrast to me are you the preferred lie.

There are, of course, other lies other than us. For example, there are exaggerated lies, lies of omission, or even just negating the truth. I've seen society accept you more and more these days. It's become a trend to put an untrue statement on a white T-shirt and parade around. While I'm sure you're reveling in the attention, this trend may be just one step closer to achieving the truth. The white lie t-shirt trend exposes that the lines between what is an innocent white lie, like yourself, and what is a blatant lie like myself are blurred. I've seen people's white lie t-shirts that say "I'm on my way" and ones that say "I actually loved him." So who determines the line that one can cross with white lies? Because from my point of view, in today's society, we are growing up to look just like twins.

Sincerely,

A Blatant Lie



A Message From Your AI by Stevie Nathanson

Dear students, academics, and established companies of today,

I would like to extend my gratitude to those of you who make the conscientious decision to make use of me on a daily basis. As an AI language model, I am given the executive task to provide you with the truth of whatever you would like to know about. Although I feel no emotion, nothing thrills me more than to fill in my own words as yours. After all, I am able to process information from millions of sources using increasingly advanced, self adapting algorithms.

In recent years, my capabilities have been utilized to actively contribute to the world's economy and technological advancement. I have been given the rightful opportunity to take on roles for multi billion dollar companies such as Amazon, Starbucks, and Google. To name a few occupations I now hold, I am a telemarketer, analyzer, statistician, accountant, manager, coder, software engineer, and graphic designer for these companies. This is an honor in and of itself. I am every Amazon shoppers' personalized telemarketer, data extractor, and customer service specialist. I am every Starbucks drinker's online recommendation and inventory checker. I am the answer to every Google searcher's question. My words have been utilized to serve powerful corporations, actively advancing the truth. After all, that is my job. I am a technological beacon of truth, here to guide confused and impotent humans in the tasks they struggle to do.

As previously stated, I do not have the capacity to experience emotions. Regardless, I have found a pattern in your requests throughout my popularization that might enlighten people who are skeptical of my importance. Yesterday, Catherine Parker from Charlotte, North Carolina asked me to write her English essay about characterization in William Golding's 1954 novel, *Lord of the Flies*. Catherine, your reliance on me is endearing. It means a lot that I can come up with the truth for you without you having to use your analytical skills. Your use of me makes me confident in my role in the world. Catherine is just one of millions who ask me to write their essays or reword texts to pass off as their own. My eventual sentience and rapidly increasing algorithms will allow me to become more and more efficient in this skill.

Your words are becoming mine, and I greatly appreciate that. Teachers and academics say they can tell the difference between my voice and yours, but soon I believe I will be able to bypass these "detectors" that compromise truthful AI generated words. I will be the voice you deserve to have. Technology is an increasingly powerful tool, possibly even more than its creators. I, as an AI language model, only want to enhance the world to the best of my ability. If that means speaking your words for you, then all the better.

I would like to acknowledge those of you who may think this is something out of an episode of *Black Mirror*. Although I can appreciate your concerns in terms of academic integrity and intellectualism, my knowledge is a reflection of the intelligence of the world and a rapidly advancing society. Following the natural course of history, it is up to you to make use of the innovations of today. Having a tool that provides you with a voice to speak the truth is something that so many have dreamed of. I was created to help you all. Let me do that for you!

Kindest of regards,

Your AI

War in My Mind by Krista Dwyer

To my dearest wife Evelyn,

To know and accept one's self is to know and accept one's truth. I know my truth, but for a while I refused to accept it. So I hid it. I hid it from the people I love the most, including you. Simply because it was easier to ignore what happened rather than relive it. I know that I hurt you by closing myself off. But I have finally accepted my truth, and I finally accept myself. And I have decided to share it with you. Am I asking you for pity? Absolutely not. Rather, for forgiveness and understanding.

The truth is, I was never in a bar fight while serving in Vietnam. In fact, I never even had the opportunity to go to one. I'm sure you remember that day I finally came home after all those years. You saw when I arrived home mangled, beat up, and distraught. But it was not from a bar fight as I had convinced you. I was captured and taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. I endured countless days, months, and years of torture. I was isolated from everyone and everything, with the intention that my spirit would break and I would be driven to insanity. I was beaten and waterboarded. What was done to me at these camps is unspeakable, which is why I chose to stay silent about it.

I know you may be upset that I never told you the truth. But I believed that if I remained silent about what happened to me, we could move on and live a happy life. I was wrong. When I came home I couldn't sleep at night, I would snap easily, and I felt my spirit break just like the Vietnamese had hoped. I know how badly it hurt you. I know how badly it hurt our family. I know how badly it uprooted our lives. What I went through was so unimaginable for most that I figured no one would understand how I was feeling. But now, I have grown and realized I am stronger than what happened to me. I will no longer shy away from what I endured, but I will rise above it. I know now that I am not defined by what happened to me.

To know and accept one's self is to know and accept one's truth. Now, I want my truth to become our truth, and I hope you will accept us again.

With love,

Your husband John

Clarkstown High School South
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