

# The Roar

2022



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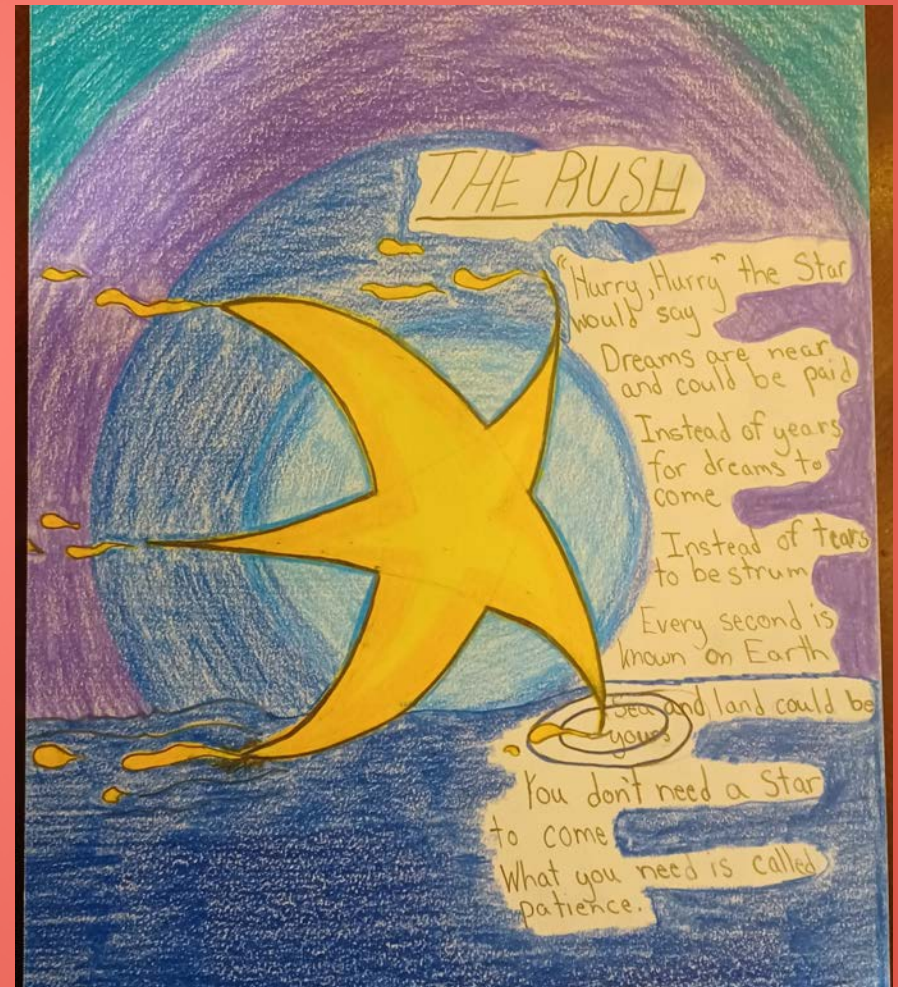
*The Roar* is a student created publication helmed by the members of the Swenson Literary Magazine Club. All works included are original works by members of the Swenson student body. *The Roar* staff reserves the right to deny submissions based upon appropriate standards and coherence with theme.

## Sonnet - Mirayah Dooley

Is true love ever really true to you?  
The superficial emotion you see,  
So many people do not have a clue  
Love can affect one to a third degree,  
Some people say they are deep in this thing  
Love does not last forever as some say  
Because it is only a minute fling  
Relationships can end in one short day  
Affection talking in your ear seems great,  
When in reality love runs you dry  
But you'll never know when it is too late  
Some people never find the reason why  
Maybe time comes for them to drift apart  
Or love was never really true in heart



Original Photo - Evon Mukhortov



Original Art Work - Mary Nieves-Rodriguez



Original Photo - Brianna Yankus

## Don't Talk, Just Listen - DeShaun Hamilton

### Panic

No, more like hysteria  
Hear us cry out because another has fallen in our area  
The unity in united is breaking at the seams  
It might seem foolish to still believe in dreams

### Dreams

No, more like delusions  
Why are we ungrateful because we fight for more inclusion?  
These are not the dreams of America and King  
We try to keep hope alive but it's not working

### Working

To a better reality  
One where our children can live in peace and sovereignty  
One where our kids can look up to more than Black  
Lightning  
It's for their future that we keep on fighting

### Fighting

Because we know that you aren't hearing us  
Cities on fire like they were touched by Hephaestus  
We are not fueled by our past torture  
But instead, we keep looking towards a prosperous future

### Future

Yes, a prosperous future  
Where I can be my sister's keeper  
And my mother's daughter alike  
However, as I look to the horizon where that future shall  
glisten,  
I ask that you don't talk, just listen

# “The Wind Beyond Us” - Benjamin Suarez

## Chapter 1 - Society Built As One

Over a thousand thoughts a person has, in a day. Over a hundred emotions a person has, in a day. But only one outcome is decided, in a day. As humans, this is the burden we are placed with. But as humans of society, these are the things we are forced to conceal within ourselves.

Kitten, a dropout student at only 17 years old finds this out the hard way. Being forced to struggle with anxiety and depression as her past haunts her and hides in the shadows of her figurative imagination.

As she stumbles across a nearby entertainment district, hoping to find somewhere to relax, intakes the sweet smell of curry that consumes the air. She admires the bright neon signs and vendors patiently waiting for new customers as people walk past her, casually laughing between one another. She wonders to herself how one can simply just communicate with others and not fear being judged or criticized. What could they be doing right that she isn't? These thoughts mostly dwell at her when she lies in bed, waiting as time slowly passes with each living breath being made. She truly does wish to be liberated from the burden of the Devil himself. But how?

“The marketplace is a really beautiful place,” Kitten tells herself, almost in a whisper.

Not paying attention in front of her, she accidentally bumps into an unfamiliar woman. Kitten jumps and faces the woman.

“O-oh” Kitten stammers. “I-I’m sorry. P-please forgive me.”

The woman stares at her for only a few moments until she begins reciting these words; *You are suffering, for only I can see. You seek guidance, for what you cannot receive. For if you come with me, I will give you what you very desire.*

Kitten, distressed by these words, takes a step back. Who is this woman? What makes it okay for this strange lady to tell her, who she had just met only a second ago, what she was feeling? Even if she is right, it's hard to believe that anybody would be willing to help her overcome this battle she faces.

“Wh-who are you?” Kitten asks nervously.

“My identity remains nothing but a mystery.” The woman blatantly states. “However, if you wish to learn more about my proposal, please, follow me, for I mean you no harm but to set you free from the cruelties of your own mental state.”

There's a lot that Kitten finds suspicious about all of this. However, if there was only a small chance that what she is saying is genuine, then what difference would it make by not going? She doesn't really have much to lose if things don't go as planned.

“S-sure. Okay.”

They arrive at what seems to be a shop. Kitten's anxiety but also astonishment triggers itself as she fixates her eyes on everything around her. Shelves of potion bottles, books, jars, and a fairly big mirror were made evident. It made her feel like she was in a fairy tale. It was a satisfying thought since those were the type of stories she enjoyed reading as a child and every once in a while as they allowed her to escape the real world, even if it were only temporary.

Occupied by everything surrounding her, she didn't notice the potion handed to her by the woman. She regains focus and looks up at her. The woman now has on a long, purple hat and a black cloak; An entirely different look from the baggy pants and plain shirt she wore not too long ago. Noticing the dynamic change, it's apparent that this is no ordinary woman. She must be a witch!

“Drink this, and watch as your problems slowly drift into the far abyss.”

Kitten draws her eyes on the bottle in conflict. Would this really be the answer she long sought? By drinking this, would she really be free? She stands still in complete conflict by her raging emotions.

Finding a place of control over them, she takes a deep breath, opens the bottle, and slowly begins to drink it. In an instant, Kitten's heart beats rapidly. So rapidly, in fact, that it feels like it's about to explode out of her chest. Her entire body drops heavy as she becomes lightheaded by the intensity. She didn't understand what was going on with her. All she could do was envision herself slowly giving herself away to her inner demons. As she loses her balance, she passes out into a deep sleep.

## Chapter 2 - New Faces

Kitten sees herself locked up in a cage being taken away by an ominous aura. Faint voices can also be heard in the distance as the darkness fully consumed her. It draws closer and closer until she is able to hear it more clearly.

"Save for what you have yet to grasp on and you will soon be free," it calls out.

Could that be the voice of the witch? What exactly does she mean by that, anyway?

She jumps up, placing her gaze on the unfamiliar environment that surrounds her. Tall trees and chirping birds can be seen all over as the sun glistens on the horizon. Where in the hell was she? The wind gently pats her feet as she notices that her shoes and clothes are all missing. All she had on was a ripped-up gown.

Kitten reaches into one of the pockets to grab her phone, hoping that she'll be able to track her location. Empty. She reaches into the other pocket. Also empty. She begins to freak out at this discovery. Great, now what is she going to do?

Soon, three of what is presumed to be bandits appear before her. The sun, which was previously exposed, is now hidden by clouds, covering the sky entirely. With rusty pocket knives in hand and the busted clothes they wore, she could tell they were either attempting to rob her or take her own life from her.

"Look what we have here, boys," One of them says dramatically. "It seems we have ourselves a little lost girl."

Without hesitation, she runs deep into the woods. It's all she could do in a situation like this. She continues running until she is met by a dead end. Unfortunately, they were able to keep up with her and she was trapped with nowhere to go. Would this really be the end for Kitten? All alone in a world she's no longer familiar with?

Suddenly, a man equipped with iron armor appears in front of the three musketeers. Screams of terror instantly emerge from them as if they had known exactly who he was. They didn't even fight him. They just ran away as if their very life depended on it.

The armored man lets them get away before shifting his focus onto Kitten. He calmly walks over to her. She backs up as he approaches,

tripping over a branch in the process. She shrieks in fear, not long before his hand opens out to her. Wait a minute, is he helping her? She slowly grabs onto his hand and he gently pulls her up.

"What are you doing here all by yourself?" He says in an authoritative tone. "This isn't a place for a pretty young girl such as yourself to be in."

"I-I-" Kitten struggles to get the words out. "I'm not sure... I sorta just.... woke up here..."

"Hmm. Apologies, but allow me to introduce myself first. I am Sir Light, the royal knight of this kingdom. May I ask what your name is?"

Wait...

"Th-this kingdom? Wh-where are we?"

"Why, this is the Iberia Kingdom. Are you not from around here?"

The Iberia Kingdom? What did that witch do to her? Did she kill her? Could this just be some horrible dream? Something definitely isn't right here. There's no way this is real.

The racing thoughts swirling in Kitten's mind make her nauseous. Her shallow breath slowly thins itself out as her heart pounds with the fear of being lost in this place forever. She passes out once again.

A couple of hours later, Kitten reawakes herself, this time in a small room containing nothing but a bed and dresser. She rises up from the bed, slowly making her way to the door, petrified at what's waiting for her on the other side.

Before she could even place her hand on the knob, the door swings open and Sir Light appears.

"Ah, you're awake," He says. "Please, follow me. The Princess is waiting for you."

Kitten was super lost on what was going on but she just sucked it up and followed him. Maybe she'll get the answers she's looking for by cooperating with him.

Leaving the room, a beam of sunlight shines at Kitten's head. They seem to be in a courtyard, surrounded by a bunch of small buildings, each with its dedicated purpose. They walk through it until they reach a relatively large building located in the middle of the yard.

The Princess makes her appearance as soon as they walk in with a small elf boy not long after, analyzing a map that hangs on top of a wall. She notices the door opening and walks over to the two. She looks to be around the same age as Kitten.

Buddy waves over to them cheerfully. "Heyo!"

"I don't think we caught your name yet?" Sir Light brings up.

"I-It's Kitten," She tells them, unable to fully grasp what is going on.

"Listen, Kitten?" Princess begins to walk over to where she was positioned earlier. "I'm not sure if you are aware of this, but the kingdom is declining pretty quickly. There aren't many resources and housing for the townspeople and because of this, everyone is either depressed out of his mind or going out of control. Unfortunately, there isn't much we three can do at the moment. Not after we had been kicked out of the castle for simply disobeying the King's desires that is. In fact, he's basically the reason this kingdom is in poverty right now."

Sir Light nods and takes over. "There are even rumors spreading around that something deadly plans to be released sometime soon. However, we are unsure as to when. It could be today, tomorrow, next week. Next *month*. Hell, it could even be a year from now!"

"But maybe you are what we need to help change that," Princess says, finally getting to the point. "There's potential hidden deep within you, that I can very much see. Maybe you don't, but your aura makes that evident. Maybe with your aid, we can finally put an end to the King's greedy wraith. Perhaps we could even find a way to bring you back home."

One of Kitten's strengths that you probably didn't know of is that the smiles of others are what push her forward. To hear that the kingdom is in this state puts a frown on her face. She loves helping others who are in need, even though she has a difficult time expressing that. She clearly sees she is needed upon. Is this why she was brought here?

Kitten takes a deep breath and, with a bit of confidence, agrees to help them. What she didn't know was the long hours of training and socialization she would soon be met with. Coming out of her comfort zone *too* often was something she couldn't handle so to be forced to do this would be a living nightmare for her.

### Chapter 3 - Learning the Ropes

For the next several months, Kitten was, indeed, living in Hell. If she's really committed to liberating the kingdom, then she has to get stronger; physically, mentally, and emotionally. She'll never be able to be of use if she doesn't push herself to these extreme limits.

Ten hours of her day were spent learning how to fight. Sir Light and Buddy were her mentors as Sir Light was a master of the sword and Buddy

was a pretty decent spell castor. Princess, however, was always in and out. She would stay to watch one minute then disappear the next and wouldn't return until evening, almost nighttime. It got to a point where she rarely even showed her face. One could only imagine the amount of responsibility a woman of royalty might have.

The rest of Kitten's day focused on her agility and stamina. She would typically have to run all over town delivering supplies to businesses and giving aid to the homeless by providing them with food, water, and other forms of support. There were even days where she was tested on her fighting skills by not only being an errand girl but having to stop those who oppose a threat. This usually took over 6 hours, leaving her with minimum amounts of hours to sleep.

None of this was easy for her. While Kitten had been doing an outstanding job with her training, the withdrawals from all of it were too powerful for her to handle. She wasn't very good with social interaction and because of this, it gave her mental breakdowns, which sadly happened almost every night. Of course, she didn't show this to her newly developed friends or anybody she had met in that manner. Even in this fantasy world she was still suffering. It really troubled her that she was unable to pinpoint exactly what it is that's causing her to feel this way. Did she feel she wasn't producing the same amount of effort as everyone else? Did she feel she was doing something wrong? Maybe she had wished she'd handled a situation differently? It was a burden she had been placed with and it pained her to know this.

It was about six months after she had begun her full-time training where all of her hard work was being put to the ultimate test. She'd gotten much more confident and most of her anxiousness had slimmed down. Even her mental breakdowns decreased to where they almost never trigger. With this, she was ready to defeat the King once and for all.

Kitten stands on the front lines of the soon-to-be battlefield as thousands of others wait idly by for a signal to rush into combat. Nothing but determination and willpower filled their hearts as they prepared themselves for the unexpected. Who would have thought that this was the same girl who had been too afraid to defend herself against a group of ruthless thieves months prior?

This was truly the beginning of a hero in the making.

"Charge!" Kitten yells, blowing into her horn as all of the soldiers push in the direction of the castle, shouting with their chests held high.

While everyone else was fighting off the wave of guards that suddenly emerged, Kitten and the others focused primarily on getting inside. If this rebellion is a success, civilization could finally go back to the way it was. Not like Kitten has any idea what that was like.

The group eventually makes it into the castle grounds until they're completely in. It's dim and silent. They were expecting something much more, but all that could be seen is a long hallway leading down a narrow path, torches mounted on the walls. Sir Light grabs one of them and begins to walk forward with everyone following behind. They were pretty much aware that this was a trap but that did not stop them from their mission.

They stop at a fairly huge door. Perhaps it could be the throne room. Kitten's body shivers slightly as she mentally prepares herself for what's behind this door. She inhales deeply and exhales everything out of her before signaling to Buddy to open the door simultaneously.

Entering the room, no form of life could be found. However, it was much brighter than the hallway they had just walked through.

"Where is everyone?" Sir Light asks as he surveys the room. "Where's the King?"

"I'm not sure," Buddy wonders to himself. "But here, lemme take care of that for you." He uses a wind spell to extinguish the lit torch still in Sir Light's hand.

"Thanks," He throws it to the side.

"Father must be here somewhere," Princess declares. "We should look around for clues."

There really isn't much that is revealed in the throne room. Only a lengthy table with chairs all around it and a few thrones which seemed to be for the King, the Queen, and the Princess make its presence.

Buddy walks over to one of the thrones, specifically the Princess. He stares at it for a good minute as the friends watch in curiosity.

"Is that a button?" Buddy whispers to himself as he presses it.

All of a sudden, the floor which supports both the table and chairs flips itself over and opens itself up in two, revealing a staircase.

"Hey Princess," Buddy looks at her suspiciously. "What is this button doing here?"

"I-I-uh, I'm not too sure actually. It's been a long time since I've last been here. Who knows what could've happened during my absence."

"Hmm, okay. Let's just see what's down there then why don't we."

Buddy takes the lead and they all walk down the staircase. Something very strange is going on here; Kitten could just feel it.

When they reached the end of the stairs, they were set aback by what they were looking at. Was this like some kind of command center? The many monitors in the room show surveillance of everything in the entire kingdom. There's even this strange, shiny orb inside a glass case that sits in the center. What the hell is all of this?

As Kitten and Princess Fleur become paralyzed by this unexpected discovery, Buddy and Sir Light just look at each other, unfazed by all of this as if they knew exactly what was going on here.

Next to the main monitor, a journal can be found. Sir Light picks up on this and begins to walk over to it, reading it aloud; *Everything is in motion. The people are hopeless. They want nothing more than to wither away as their last dying breath is a simple apology, their screams agonizing intently. All that's left now is to find a successor capable of absorbing the orb and it will be the end of this miserable world as we see fit. It's a shame things must end up this way, but there is nothing else left for me here. Mother is long dead and Father already got what was coming to him. Forgive me, my Lord, but it must be done. Sincerely, Princess Fleur of the Iberia Kingdom.*

#### Chapter 4 - Cutting Ties

An evil laugh could be heard shortly after he finished reading this mad entry.

"So, you found out the truth, eh?" Princess Fleur remarks. "How rather unfortunate is that?"

Suddenly, an army of guards shows up out of nowhere, making a formation around her. Kitten regains focus and quickly pounces herself back towards the other two. They were stuck. The staircase in which they had just entered was now closed off, unable to be opened back up from where they stood.



“How could you do this to us?” Kitten screams at her. “I thought we were your friends?!”

She could only shake her head disappointingly at this outburst. “You’ll never understand,” She signals for the guards to attack them as she makes a run for it towards an alternate set of stairs. That must be the exit.

“Go, I’ll fend them off while you two chase after her,” Sir Light orders Buddy and Kitten.

This is a job for the royal knight. As much as they didn’t want to leave him behind, they know what needed to be done here. There was no time to let emotions take over. It’s up to them to stop her.

“Good luck. Don’t lose alright?” Buddy says teasingly.

The two make their way up the flight of stairs Princess had taken, fighting everything in their path. They find themselves back in the throne room, completely empty this time.

“Stop Princess, please! What is going on? Why are you doing all of this?” Kitten says, unable to control her emotions any longer.

“What’s the point of living when death is inevitable? What’s the point of living when happiness is just a reward? What’s the point of living where liberty is not an option?! Answer me that, Kitten? Why does life have to be such a damn mind game!”

Buddy laughs to himself after hearing her nonsense. “I knew something was off about you the moment I laid eyes on you. How much of an idiot are you, really?”

Princess blasts Kitten and Buddy back onto one of the walls. The impact knocks Buddy down unconscious. When did she learn how to use magic? What other secrets has she hidden from them?

“Oh, what do you know? You don’t understand a damn thing about me! Do you even know how it feels to watch as your mother dies right in front of you? Do you know how it feels to see your father slowly lose his mind as he forgets your existence? Or maybe the feeling of being alone? To be given anything and everything because you’re made of royalty without being worried upon? It’s completely pointless just being here!”

Kitten stands up, shocked that she had hidden this away from her this whole time.

“Look, I’m sorry you had to deal with all that but this is insane if you think destroying mankind will fix any of it. What are you trying to say? We’re all trapped in this place. You don’t have any knowledge on what’s waiting for us after death.” She draws her sword, making a fighting stance.

“You talk all that but how about you show me what you’re really made of.” Princess places a barrier around the three of them.

Kitten dashes forward, striking her sword at Princess Fleur as she defends herself, using a variety of spells to stop her from getting any nearer. This was a fight to the death. Nothing could stop them from letting their emotions out. It truly sucks because they don’t even know that they are both suffering. That they aren’t alone, but they’re so focused on their own selves that mentally, that’s what they concluded. It didn’t matter if Kitten had improved tremendously from the first day she had been brought into this world. She was still a mentally unstable mess.

At last, not one, but both girls dropped to the ground. All of their energy was completely depleted. They had dealt severe damage to one another.

When Buddy had finally regained consciousness, he noticed the two lying on the floor, blood leaking out from both of them. He runs over and checks on Kitten, preventing her from going into the light.

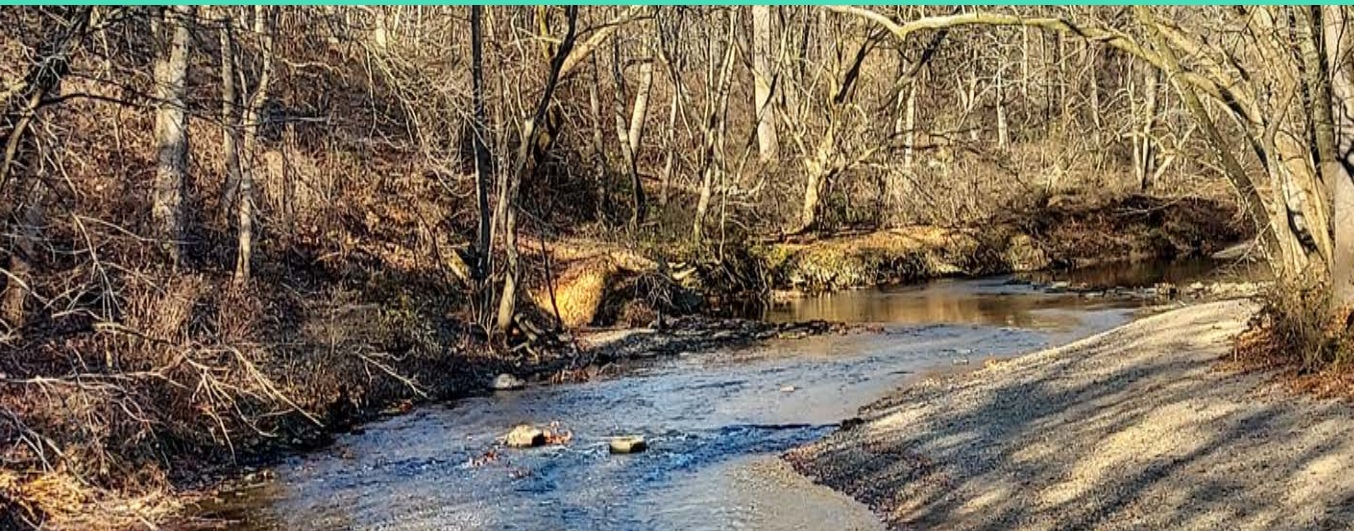
None of Kitten’s senses were working as they should. Her entire body had grown completely numb. Nothing but the wind filled her ears as it grazes her body. She was going to die. She knew that already. All because she wanted to better herself. Why was life so cruel to her? Was there really no answer to these feelings she kept locked up deep within her? It seems that death is the only option now.

She closes her eyes, hoping that she’ll be taken away sooner rather than later.

“Congratulations, child.” A familiar voice says encouragingly. “You have made it past the first stage.”



Original Photo - Evon Mukhortov



Original Photos - Evon Mukhortov

## Untitled - Alyssa Novak

Fish come swimming in your head.  
backed by sailors dread.  
Come see my faults through broken  
mirror,  
What you will see doesn't need to be  
feared.  
Yet you treat me with hatred after?  
We'll discuss this now, not later.  
Come and talk to me,  
Even if you hate me.  
Because I am the fish that swims in  
your head.  
As always I'll bother you.  
I already know I'm being a nuisance.  
You can't convince me not to.  
Just as the fish swimming in your  
head.  
I'll look your way once in a while,  
You've caught my attention, sad to  
say.  
You put up a wall without letting your  
voice be heard,  
Just like an idiot, you acted and  
toyed.  
But I was not a fish, I was your friend.  
I will no longer be swimming in your  
head.

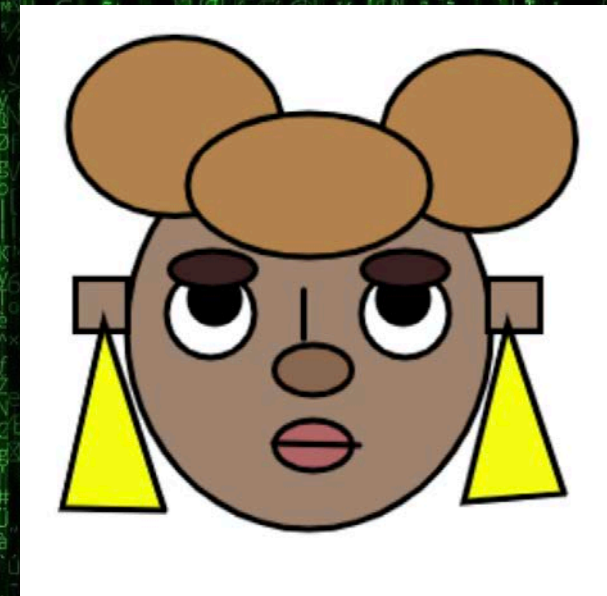
# CREATING WITH CODE!!!



Joyce Joyner-Houston

These are not regular drawings. Both these faces were created using HTML code during Mr. Espinal's Intro to Web Design class.

Joyce and Kasey are 10th grade students who display how much fun code can be when using ellipses and line code to produce the creative pieces you see here.



Kasey Simon

"To you, who is living her life and not giving one thought to me."

Don Debrah,  
January 14th, 2009

I've been carrying around your letters for weeks now, waiting for a moment for my head to clear, the time to pass and to have a moment alone, but it has been hard to find it spent December and the beginning of January traveling - first to see my family in Michigan, and then to see Sam in Philadelphia. I came back on Tuesday, exhausted but happy to be among my family ready to create.

Yesterday, for our anniversary, Sam and I took acid together. How you live with psychedelics? My trip was intense and it's still trying to understand it. I felt like I was on the inside of a music box - it was the little dancer who popped out of the center. The box was closed but still animated. The walls trembled and transformed, and showed us things and images and played songs all the while as it turned. I moved down in a spiral, revealing more and more as I went. "This is what I'm going to show you now. And this is what I'm going to show you next." I was in a state of awe. That was revealed just as it was before, but in a way that was exactly as it was before, but in a different way, as if it had multiplied in dimension.

Sam and I tried to communicate, but we were seeing and hearing it would seem for a while, that we were able to communicate, until something would come up and made us realize how far we ourselves we had traveled. I thought it perhaps it was possible that we really did understand each other, but that the way it took shape in our minds differed, things would appear to me in my own language of symbols and tricks, and to him in his own.

I spent a lot of time laughing. I always do. I feel like my course to laugh in conjunction of the divine - not to laugh, but because I am overjoyed, it is too. I feel overwhelmed, it feels like I'm being completely and utterly consumed by you.

# Forever And Always, Your Lilah

By- Johanna Garcia

"There was no way out of being completely and utterly consumed by you."

Dear Lilah,  
12-21-22

*It's been a while. I haven't had the motivation to write to you at all to be honest. I want you to know how I'm doing but I really can't get past your lack of knowledge of them. I've blocked your number and social media so i don't know you exist beyond these letters anymore. I'm so in love with you, but I can't get over you if I don't let myself. This is my last letter to you. I need to be able to be myself without feeling an attachment to you. To you, who is living her life and not giving one thought to me. I guess I'm doing to you what you did to me two years ago, and I hate that. I hate it so much, Lilah. Sometimes I convince myself I hate you but god i don't. I could never hate you. Not one bone in my body has the ability to hate you or anyone like you. You're amazing and funny and just all around such an amazing individual. I'm so in love with you I think I'm starting to hate myself for it and I just can't let myself go down that path again. I thought I was in love with Emmy; believe me I did, but she is absolutely nothing compared to you. I liked her, but I never loved her like I loved, and still do love you. Emmy never had my heart while you were gone, you always held it, and you never once let go. You never once let go of the hold on my heart, even after not talking to you for two years. Even after trying to get over you with Emmy, you never once let me go. But, it's been a year since I've been with Emmy; and it's been two since you've been gone. I don't know how much longer I can take this Fallon. I love you and I don't exist to you anymore. Therefore, I'm done. God you're so amazing Fallon Delilah, but this is goodbye. Until we meet again, I just cannot do this anymore. You're forever my American woman.*

Love always,  
Tom Simons.

I read the letter many times over again.

The feeling I got, never went away. The safety washed over me as I read every little. The fear, the fear consumed my every thought.

Maybe he was saying he was done because he wanted to be with Emmy.

I was thinking about the fact that this could be all over because I am too late. The heartbreak this would cause me on this eleven hour flight.

I've finally realized, he is a habit that I can and will never break. As I sat in the airplane, legs bouncing, hands shaking, I grabbed a pen and a paper.

I started doing what I did to him two years ago.

I started doing what it started two years ago.

I started writing a letter.

A letter for the memories, a letter for the good times, a letter for the bad times, a letter for my feelings.

Because him, Tom Simons is my ending.



Dear Tom Simons,  
12/24/22

*I always said that I'd mess up eventually.  
Two years ago.*

*Two years ago when we first met, and it was two years ago that I left you. I left you the same way I am writing to you on my way back to you right now.*

*I don't regret leaving two years ago. I needed that time, I needed that space, and most importantly I needed to find myself. I found out about Emmy. I'm glad you found her after me...*

*You say you don't love her the same way as you love me, but the thought that you might be with her made me completely terrified. I've been holding myself together, and for once in two years, it's not just an everyday thing. It hurts. Everything is becoming more real. I never thought the change from two years ago would affect me as much as it did now. It seems to have affected you as much as it hurt me. It wasn't a very hard decision to figure out whether or not I was going to find you again. I knew I had too, you are my ending. I talked with my cousin, Tate. It turns out you were mailing letters to me, while I was traveling. Everyday since I left you, you have mailed one. For 730 days plus, you mailed letters to me. All different words, all different moments, all different memories, and all different meanings. But the one main meaning they all held was love.*

*No matter what any of them said, no matter how much you tried to convince yourself to hate me, you couldn't. You loved me. No, you still love me. I made a mistake of not coming to see you sooner. I wish I would have. But at the same time, I don't regret it. Not one bone in my body is allowing me to regret it.*

*Traveling the world was such a big dream I wanted to complete. And I didn't even get to complete it because you were clouding my mind. Every second, every minute, every hour, every day; every week, every month, every year, I always in some way; shape or form, thought of you. You were everywhere and there was no escaping.*

*There was no way out of being completely and utterly consumed by you, because you were and still are, everywhere. One hour into an*

*eleven hour flight. And the only thought that was keeping me motivated was you.*

*The moment I knew I was in love with you, was the best moment of my life. It was filled with happiness, and I knew at that moment I would never be alone again. And even after two years, we still are finding our way back to each other. We will always find our way back to each other.*

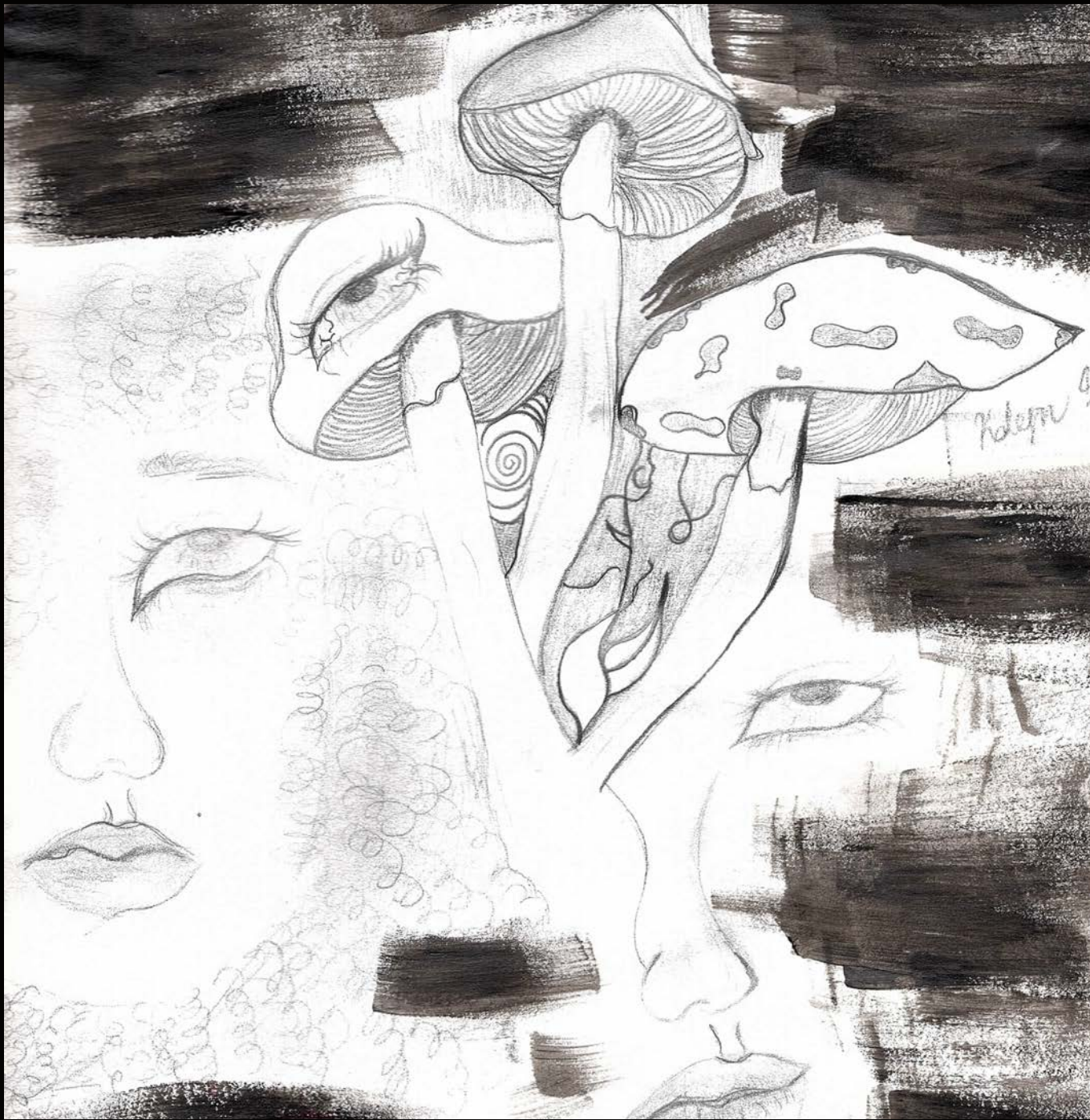
*Love is an intense feeling of deep affection. It's a complex set of emotions, behaviors, and beliefs associated with strong feelings of affection, protectiveness, warmth and respect for another person. True love is a combination of three components. It's full of intimacy; passion, and commitment.*

*We feel love by a genuine rush or high when you think of a certain person or certain thing. Sometimes we can't get them out of our heads. We then experience loss of sleep and sometimes loss of appetite. Our heart rate almost jumps out of our chest and synchronizes when we think of that person or thing. You are that person. You are my person. And I want to scream it from the rooftops. I want to shout it to everyone in the world. I want everyone to know that you, Tom Simons, are forever, my always. The rush and high I get from you, is the best feeling I have ever felt. Love means letting go of expectations whether things work out or not, but love doesn't play the victim role or blame others. Love includes letting go and the willingness of being hurt sometimes. It doesn't require you to continue a relationship. Love is the absence of fear and is not needing and wanting.*

*We both were hurt by my actions, we were both unprepared, and we were both too young. People fall in love sometimes and get hurt. Love hurts. It always does. You have to go through the pain in order to know you're in love. You try your hardest not to give up on each other. Love has many stages. Everyone loves people differently: You could fall in love easily and live happily ever after. Or love could not play in your favor and you continuously find yourself getting hurt.*

*We had that pain, we lived that pain. That pain was an everyday thing for both of us.*





Original Artwork - Kalya Gardener



## Senior Satire - Seth Rivera

### ***Breaking News!! Electronic Usage Now Allowed In Theaters***

Unprecedented news from Broadway presented at 11:59 PM. All Broadway theaters will now allow electronic usage during shows. No more usher escorting or putting the audience's phones on silent. Feel free to have phone calls during the dance break or make a smoothie during intermission.

Long since Broadway has gotten many complaints about how the viewers are getting bored and how them using electronic devices makes their experience better. After getting 100,000 signatures on Change.org, Broadway has taken the vital step and took out that rule of no electronics. So now all and any types of electronic devices can be used. Ranging from phones to full on computers to microwaves if the audience wants to heat up their snack while watching the production.

Of course, Broadway has taken measures to make sure that this will happen smoothly. They have closed down for new renovations. High class engineers, construction workers and electricians have been hired to install outlets and plugs to accommodate any and all electronics. There has also been some speculation that a drive-in parking lot will also be built for those who will want to watch their show from their car. These new renovations will take a course of multiple months as there haven't been any finish date to when it will happen yet.

Of course this step forwards has gotten some backlash. Hardcore fans of old school Broadway and respected Broadway actors and actresses have given backlash. As they do not support this new step forward into the future of

Broadway. Tony Award Winner Patti Lupone who is known for being the electronic police of Broadway was confronted about this change. She angrily stated and quoted, "This step is ridiculous! Why would anyone want to bring any electronics cameras phones while we are here to entertain them. This is disrespectful and I will not stop trying to stop this."

Multiple news outlets have been interviewed and they say that the percentage of adults aged 18-31 who use their phones is 31%. Most want that percentage to continue to increase right up. That will support Broadway and fund them in any way possible. Of course Grammy Award winner Lin Manuel Miranda was recently interviewed and he is fully behind this step. Lin says, "I love this idea. This will be great for my next production as the abundance of outlets and electronics ports will be useful for my budget and make it even better."

With this new change already set in motion, the future of Broadway is going to be grand. With great electronic sponsors behind and funding this project. So bigger and better productions can be expected. One new show, "Birds The Musical" where the actors use drones to act instead of them. Of course everyone in Broadway, staff, actors, stage managers will have training on safety and how to use everything with efficiency. What will Broadway surprise us with next? No one knows but the people and everyone in the community is waiting and ready.



**Photography Spotlight - Sean Magee**

## ***Serene - Yosairis Almonte***

I have always wondered how it felt to have the sun glistening on my subtle skin. How the warmth will slowly burn the paleness of it? The wind howling at me, as I prance around without any care in the world. A girl can dream. I have been sitting on my window sill ever since my adolescence. The birds chirping up a harmony fills my arms with goosebumps. I can see the tiny hairs on my arm stick up. It makes me aware that I am here and alive. My life lacks vividness. All I can sense is my body getting ready to ache in all the right places. I have come to a realization that I am mentally and physically exhausted. Why do parents feel the need to protect their children by keeping them hostage? The amount of locks that are secured into the doors, and windows left me mute. I could feel my throat closing up and I could not get out my words. Purple bruises scattered all over my arm. The amount of attempts that failed due to my parents' knowledge tired me. I had deep wounds on my arms that they

refused to admit me to a hospital for. I have always respected my mother and father but it was beyond outrageous how they treated me. They would always tell me that they did it out of love, that if they did not protect me consequences would occur, but this love of theirs was slowly killing me. Suffocating in sorrow left me miserable, cameras were put in every corner where it was out of my reach. When I close my eyes, I can hear the echoes of my beating heart. It gushes with agony. Voices call to me, they all whisper to me that it is time for me to move on. Slipping my toes underneath the water, the barrier catches my light body. They have submerged. I am being prosecuted. I can hear the barricade swinging with force. This is my moment when the bright lights flashes my iris. One more second, and my existence ceases.

## ABORTION RIGHTS - Opinion Piece by Kalyn Gardener

Should men be allowed to make rules about women's bodies? Recently there's been talk about the Roe v Wade ruling being overturned. This ruling was argued the year of 1971 and decided on January 22, 1973. Jane Roe filed a lawsuit against Henry Wade, the district attorney of Dallas county, Texas. She challenged the Texas law that made abortion illegal with the exception of a doctor giving you a pass in order to save your life. In her lawsuit, Roe claimed that the state laws truncated her right of personal privacy that's supposed to be protected by the first, fourth, fifth, ninth, and fourteenth amendment. The fourteenth amendment is a "right to privacy," that protects a pregnant women's choice on whether she wants to have an abortion or not. This right weighed against the government's interest in protecting women's health and the "potentiality of human life. The Texas law violated this right.

Taking away someone's decision to do with their body what they want shouldn't even be up for discussion, much less having the decision be made by a man on what a woman should do with her body. This ruling has been set for 50 years, if overturned it would dramatically abandon abortion rights all over the U.S. A draft opinion made by Samuel Alito calls Roe "egregiously wrong from the start," meaning that he believed that what she was fighting for should have never been questioned in the first place. Even though the Supreme Court's opinion won't be finalized until sometime in the summer, it's still disheartening that the Supreme Court could feel so comfortable restricting someone's right.

If this ruling is overturned it could threaten other privacy rights such as same sex marriage, contraceptives, and even interracial marriages. Instead of focusing on taking away women's right to bodily anatomy because they believe they're saving a life, they should focus on the fact that they're taking the choice away from an already living individual. It's unimaginably bizarre to me that someone could fight so hard for a fetus and completely disregard the person whom happens to be carrying it. I would say I'm shocked but how could I be when it's the same thing happening from time and time again.

Women couldn't even own a credit card in their own name until 1974. In 1777 all states passed a law which took away women's right to vote. In 1855, in *Missouri v Ceila*, a black women is declared to be property without a right to defend herself against a masters act of rape. In 1873 *Bradwell v Illinois* the supreme court ruled that a state has the right to exclude a married woman from practicing law. Over and over again women's lives have been controlled by men. We are never seen as equal, always seen as beneath.

Instead of worrying about tampering with abortion laws we should worry about the hundreds of thousands of kids that go into the system each year and out of that only half of them actually get adopted. Stop pressuring women to have these unwanted pregnancies and then turn around to ignore the children that get dumped into the system, who become abused and forgotten about.

Untitled - Bianca Costa-Lana

You told me I was your favorite.  
that the euphoria of when I was brought into  
the world was an unmatched feeling  
a feeling so good you wanted to savor it  
the numerous picture albums beautifully  
decorated  
stored away became a symbol of my mother  
led astray

You told me I was your favorite  
until the color you found so perfect on me,  
seemed to be black and blue.  
The blows could be taken as acts of love  
a love I no longer want.



Original Artwork - Jayla Knight

Deshaun Hamilton

### I Was Feeling Vexed

I was feeling vexed, as the sun began to rise  
I feel like i'm at rock bottom, regretful as  
could be  
I think to myself about the pain of being alive  
And how I would give anything to be set free

My failures taunting, I can hear them clearly  
A scowl strikes my face as I reflect on my  
strive for success  
To the people who left me, I hate them dearly  
And I curse god, for I deserve to be blessed

I need the pain to fade, so I grab my weapon  
Taking a stroll at dawn feeling the slight  
breeze  
I see a man in the distance, and I think for a  
second  
For I need to see him bleed, and fall to his  
knees

I fire and fire and fire some more  
I see him drop, so I make my escape  
The pain I was feeling has left out the door  
For my bullets tore into his body, and through  
his wounds they gaped



Deshaun Hamilton

### I Was Feeling Epic

I was feeling epic as the sun began to rise  
I feel like i'm on the top of the world, happy  
as I could be  
I think to myself about the joys of being  
alive  
And how so many would give anything to  
be me

My achievements calling, I can hear them  
clearly  
A smile strikes my face as I relish in my  
success  
To the people who stuck with me, I love  
them dearly  
And I thank God, for I am so very blessed

Taking a stroll at dawn, feeling the slight  
breeze  
All of a sudden, I hear shots blaring  
With crushing weight I fall to my knees  
For through my body, bullets were tearing

The light dimming from my eyes as I  
search for who's to blame  
But the culprit has fled, the street as bare  
as before  
The blood is pouring from my body,  
extinguishing my flame  
My pride was gone, and I was feeling epic  
no more

Original Photo - Steven Jiang

# Walls - Isaac Lherisson

They block things out and keep  
things in  
They can be vaulted over and  
bounced off with a spin  
These are walls

They block people out and leave me  
alone  
I stay In the walls until I am a  
gravestone  
These are walls

The walls make me cry  
They make me heave and sigh  
These damned walls

No one can comprehend me  
But the walls defend me  
These are the walls

