FUSION

STANDLEY LAKE HIGH SCHOOL
CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

INSERT COIN

> YES  NO
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NOSTALGIA
By Adyson Meyer

She takes my hand and we prance through the sun, laughter bubbling from rosy lips, the corner of our eyes smeared with wrinkles.

I remember frisky looks beckoning me forward. I remember how we sat knees together, pinkies kissing.

At night, she strung up the stars, dipping in all the right places, weaving verses into my mind. She tries to lure me in, a web of consciousness not unlike that Clotho we despise so much.

In twilight, our legs tangle under the covers. An arm is slung around a shoulder. She brushes the tears from my cheek with a fuzzy thumb. Briefly, I wonder how we got here—why the dense smell of chocolate chips fills my nose when I think of the word “home.”

Nobody knows her name. The bed is empty, its comfort inhuman.
But I will be struck by her image fifty years from now, shuffling through the kitchen, watching my mother’s legacy rise.
On the Nature of Desire

By Atlas Gieg

What a cruel mistress you are. Your tantalizing, echoing glow has taunted a many and tackled myself.

We have warred with you eternally, and you’ve always won. Yet your belligerence never stops.

What do you want from us? What do you desire, Desire? Do you wish for us to bow down to your will? Or is the hunt a victory - a reward- of itself?

The best we can hope for under your unyielding rule is to desire to be free of you. Trapped in your eternal Catch 22.

You’re a villainous primordial yet always born anew.
Born innocent, honest, and fair.
“It’s always been thus and always thus shall be.”

Just, go away.
By Casey Lynn Gregg
ONCE FILLED

By Grace Keatinge

An empty chair.
Something familiar
A place where resting is permitted and implied
A place one can run to and suddenly belong

A gentle indication of something that was once filled
A shadow of what was once the sun itself
A place in your heart that once danced to the beat of laughter

And yet it’s empty now?

Four legs will never be enough to hold the weight of time.
Permanence
By Georgia Aragon

Blue-green chipping paint,
I see you all the time.
On an old carousel ride,
you show up adorned with
gold accents and oil paintings.

You are also there, in an old
maze of mirrors,
that I sometimes wonder
if I ever did find my way out of.
For when I see my reflection,
I know that some part of me
must be stuck
in that old amusement park.
That old amusement park
where the paint is always chipping.

I believe it has always existed
in that way, perpetually antique,
but everlasting.
Maybe it is my own creation
but it will always exist,
because you exist, blue-green paint.

You are there on an old toy chest.
Teal, and brown, and bronze.
You contain all of my childhood,
all of my creations,
every world I’ve dreamed up to live in.

Somewhere, my past is safely tucked away in a closet.
I know this, my turquoise-stained memories are proof.
LIVING?
By Casey Lynn Gregg

The streetlamp on the corner, crudely planted in the concrete, has grown up and died. Simple as that. It grew old and rotten in size, turned inward with lackluster age. No silver fox, no shining star, just an old pole with no components left to scavenge.

Sometimes it flickers. Sometimes lightning strikes or some construction sends shockwaves just down the street but it has always been temporary, temperamental. My dad complains about it but never makes the call to the city to get it replaced, cursing it, saying things like, “Damn thing, it’ll get someone hurt.”

He says the same thing about the trees, worried they might come crashing down without care.

He’s said the same thing about all life once.

All metal was young, spritely once. The lamp remembered teens saying “goodnight” and planting a tender kiss before disappearing into the dark beneath its spotlight stage. It had protected young girls from the nighttime if they ever came to lose themselves on the fear-forgotten streets; it let others know to come help when no one else could find them in the dark.
It became our fathers, defending us from the dark of our homes when no one else could be there to save us.

Now older than me, older than my home here, it flickers and bends, hornets nests coiling around the wires of its belly while young girls, fearful and scared, no longer fled to it for safety or comfort but to put up missing posters; they were more lost than ever when they spoke to it again, knowing it couldn’t hear them anymore.

The silence was deafening. No one spoke. No one came to care. The people complained, yes, but could it hear? Could it listen? If it could, would it give its light to those below just for a moment? Would it be snatched away before it’s seen?

Will that little girl, now older, ever come to find solace under its tall figure, swallowed up by a dark that no longer spelled forgiveness but fear? Will she find comfort in the shallow light of the object where no sane individual would turn to look behind them when they found themselves beneath it?

Will she come to find that the light flickers for her, just for a moment, because it sees her again?

Man hates to be avoided, so does metal.

So who said streetlamps couldn’t dream?
Remember the Voice?

By Addy Morrison

For those who know me, and I mean *truly* know me, you know that I stay quiet. You know how hard it is for me to be loud. You know how far I fall into myself, and how hard it is for me to climb back out, but what do I know?

Anyone at a glance could see that even, a broken megaphone—wanting so badly to yell and scream but every time all that comes out are broken whispers. I can’t scream, I couldn’t, even if I tried, but what do I know?

Godforbid I speak louder than an early morning bird, a good (Christian) girl ought to learn some manners. Manners on how to speak, Step 1: Don’t. Being unable to articulate any emotion might just save your skin this time. Afterall, we all know what happens if you do, but what do I know?

Get up, speak up, get up.
You can’t lay here forever, you can’t sit in yourself— in your consciousness— forever. Nothing is accomplished when you do nothing. Why are you doing nothing? That’s not what you wanted, it’s not what I wanted. Do I even want anything? How can I want anything if I can’t even ask for it? But what do I know?

One thing I’ve learned, if anything, is that I have to be loud if I want the chance at being heard. I have to speak my mind if I want anyone to know what’s going on. I cannot be complacent, we cannot be complacent. You don’t know you’re not complacent until you’ve said something. You don’t know if you’ve said something until you’ve given up complacency. You don’t know what you don’t know. But what do I know?

“There’s only so much I can do” until there isn’t. Telling, speaking, shouting, you can do almost too much. But what do I know? Afterall, I can’t even speak. Remember the megaphone, remember how quiet you were,
remember yourself, and speak up.
By Owen Folman
MEAT
By Mick Gilbert

I watched my dad
cook a steak last night,
and it made me feel
alien, too human.

I thought of how earthly
this gross, raw piece of meat
on a cold, white, glass plate is,
sitting in front of me, not breathing.

It made me think more:
’i am just an animal
with the luxury
of packaged flesh’
and how we don’t know
if it’s animal or human,
or if there truly is a difference.

Is this meat the closest thing to me,
or is it the orange, or banana
sitting on my granite countertop?
We wouldn’t know.
We just believe that this raw meat
came from a cow, now dead,
but we still have no proof.

The knife goes through this flesh
as it would my own leg.
EDEN
By Skylar Feller

In the Garden of Eden, a fragile bloom,
Tendrils wither in the gloom.
A confidant’s embrace, now lost and cold,
As secrets unfold, a tale untold.

Like a ship adrift on a fickle sea,
Waves wash over me.
A shadow intertwined with the past,
A glow once shared, shattered and cast.

Yet, from the ruins, a seed takes hold,
A new beginning, a story untold.
You emerge, steady and true,
A sunlit path where joy anew.

As seasons change, and the heart finds rest,
In the mosaic of life, we paint our quest.
The canvas shifts, emotions rearrange,
A symphony of healing, through moments strange.
By Julie - Ann Pardis
GRANDMA'S SWEATER

By Ziv Brott

The sweet musk
Bible verses sang like song birds
A baby turned old
A child who lost their innocence
The smell of her hugs
And stale cookies
With too much butter,
And just enough love
Waiting for the new cookies
And the smile she has
The smile that everything will be okay
Laced with a warm embrace
And the sweet musky smell
Of grandma’s sweater
I’m sitting in an apple tree
A tree of peace
A tree of history
A tree of Adam and Eve
or perhaps it is just an ordinary apple tree

Looking into the sky,
is there really someone watching me deep within the clouds,
or is it just another man in the moon?
A man known as god,
but a fairytale drawn from a frail book
written centuries ago,
finding a way
to still inspire
spreading stories as if it’s contagious

But what’s there to believe?
Is it an ordinary apple tree,
or a history of Adam and Eve?
With the forsaken deception of a wicked devil,
a fallen angel from the gates of heaven,
or an apple that just fell too far from the tree,
creating a speculation of gods
By Casey Lynn Gregg
Growth, A Hollow Victory

By Lana Taylor

Bright blue skies over brighter-colored hopscotch, Vivid eyes gazing down before a moment’s kiss. A whiff of chocolate pancakes after waking, The scent of Chipotle after a long drive.

A burn of sweetness coming from Halloween candy cause “Mommy said so,” The tenacious exhaust of coffee held within lips because “Mom gave me money,” A ringing bell from the diaphragm arrayed by hands, A group of smiles from sleep-deprived friends.

You locked yourself and cried cause “Mommy yelled,” Not knowing you’d do the same because no one noticed (Do I exist?) You push the doctor’s wood away from your throat The liquid drips into your veins, the third this week. You hold the stuffy close, afraid your tummy will rebel The stuffy straps in with you, afraid what they found is serious.

I am thankful for my present As little ones endure medicine. I Have Survived A Hollow Victory.
LA SEDILA
By Shianne Ribble
JETSTREAM

By Tyson Reeke
OVER YOU
By Casey Lynn Gregg

When I once was
the bitter to your heat
and shadow devoid of feats
warrior of pessimism, a match for your zeal

you
the sun who etched stars
into my eyes;
you, family o’ mine,

were the mirror of my mind
of cloth shorn from cloth;
a captain
of a glacial eyes

and orange tinted wings
soot covered
convicted by a vulnerable tomorrow;
my dear butterfly

your rose tinted glasses
darken my doorway
on a cloudy day;
I should have learned

a tie around the neck
you found dreams far away
rocking moon of eclipse
that nobody had seen

an ineffable foreign sound
of concrete mouths;
drowning in ruin
and running to wake

what are the chances
of a sunset
on the bluff
where you no longer exist

visages haunt with
visions of dreams
and time taken on auburn offers
of everything she knew

so maybe it’s time I learn
how to play alive
a opposite possum;
grow up

wrong, a midwinter bloom
and summertime decay
where I grow and change
while you stay the same

find yourself over the rearview verse
as I take to my life
where I can’t find myself
Over you
I WISH I WAS SITTING BY A RIVER

by Amy Burns

I’m scrolling through sites
knowing none will fulfill me
but distraction is a medicine.
Certainly Socrates would argue the
significance of nouns and verbs:
A scroll
versus
to scroll.
Not just my finger on glass but
the pucker of paper.

Can digital artificiality replace experience?
Can it grow in the interstitial space
between clay and brain matter?
between synapse and neuron?
Artifice is a peacock—
turquoise plumes like fowl-play and
word-play—
its promises
an empty Gilded Age.

I look up and see your empty chair.
Where are you?
How many hours have passed?
My eyeballs feel concussed.
The air is strained,
holding up the molecules we share.
By Liam Gilbert
By Casey Lynn Gregg
WITH A BANG?

By Avi Bender

does your life really flash before your eyes in the final moments
click of boots on pavement, echoing through the cement corridor – each step a gunshot fired into the dimly lit hall
do your memories get played like the silent films, quiet and way too fast
gruff voices whispering, arguing who gets to stand guard, who has to open the doors
one by one, showing all that has happened that will never again – all the regrets and dreams, successes and shortcomings and fears and longings
grunting, the shuffling of heavy set bodies as they prepare, prepare, prepare
do you go out with a bang
clinking of keys, and finally the scraping of a cell door as it opens, swinging open
on rusted hinges
or as a little whisper, a forgotten breath snatched by the wind
so that it may never be returned
the weak light of a corridor spilling into the room, filling it with a bright yellow
unsuited for its environment
is it all silent afterward, existence wiped clean like it was never there
get up, we don’t have all day
or even before you are gone, just a dull white noise, the beginning of nothingness
calloused hands hoist upwards, then give a rough shove leading down a hall
full of regret and despair and sadness and fear
but the memories do come, trickling, slowly, as if shy at first
a never ending hallway, packed on either side with barred doors leading
to shadows and emptiness, stretching into the distance, refusing to end
the stage lights gleaming a hot, sticky yellow, a bow, and well deserved
applause showers down
a room, wide and tall and dark, full of people who wear expressions
of anguish, sadness, apathy, contained glee, boredom
a summer night spent in italy, in a garden
surrounded by brick wall, by a fire coughing its last embers into the air
introduction speeches, thank you speeches, interlude speeches,
announcements, handshakes
holding hands for the first time under a starlit sky,
enveloped by warm happiness
and yellow light from a nearby streetlamp
grave looks cast across ailes, secret words whispered to neighbours, opinions mouthed
at family sitting rows ahead
trading rings in front of crowds of those known and those sort of known, all background
to the happy shouts and celebrations
and then it was time, quickly and unexpectedly, and yet anticipated for months prior
hot chocolates sipped together in the perfect snowy weather, cold fingertips
pressed against warm mugs
any last words
candles lit at night, amongst darkness and uncertainty
there were none
tears, shed in the dark where no one was watching
shrug, oh well then
sharp words ripping wounds that can’t heal, torn
paintings strewn
on hardwood floors, shattered dreams leaving only sorrow and regret in their wake
three
smashed glass covering the kitchen floor like glitter, blood staining pools of maroon
into violet carpets
two
and then quiet, a barred room in which to think before all comes to a close, the dull rushing of days passing as the only accompaniment to the silence of dread
one
and the only thoughts lingering are all the concerts and meadows and nights and trips
and laughter and fears and sadness and hope and happiness that was missed,
all what would have become, all that should have happened
bang.
FORGOTTEN
By Parker Grote
CITRUS

By Mick Gilbert

Every piece of my voracious heart, is a pre-peeled orange slice.

I’m choking on everything mundane, but I’ll forever love the taste of citrus.