

Brave Voices



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Featured Inside:

Members of the Creative Writing Cohort

Andrew Skaflestad

Class of 2011

Ashia Geise

Class of 2012

Brittney Jack

Class of 2013

Cody Anderson

Class of 2010

Brandi Roberts

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Diloolaa Erickson

Class of 2012

Judy

Cody Anderson, Class of 2010

The eyes so worn,
yet as sharp as a dagger.
The nose so delicate,
yet unbreakable.
The cheeks scarred
from a battle with a beast.
The jaw can shatter metal,
but when she smiles,
the years rewind.
When I felt beaten and scared
she was there.
When I felt confident
and happy
she was there.
When she stands behind me,
nothing is impossible.
My opposition tumbles,
My problems easily solved.
My thoughts are at ease.
I learned how to forgive,
I learned how to cope,
I learned how to truly live
from her.
The family's heart can't beat
without her.
Life wouldn't be the same
without the grace
of my grandma.



FLIGHT OF SOLACE

By: Andrew Skaflestad

He stands on the slippery wood of the high dock, looking out over the water and boats. Every now and then a lone tear leaks out and washes away in the rain. He watches the birds flying through the air, emancipated of the gravitational bonds that he is forced to endure. The rain pelts his abuse-weathered face, each drop stinging in the cold wind. His coarse fingertips reach out and find the crooked bridge of his nose, and they pinch it as he sobs softly into his hand. The wind beats at his baggy work shirt, and the rain seeps through his shoes.

The wind picks up under the arms of his shirt, and he feels light. He climbs up onto the wooden railing of the dock, arms outstretched. Eyes closed and face covered in rain, he smiles. His hat blows off from the intensity of the breeze, and his hair dances in the wind. The gust is strong, obliterating the fear and sorrow of his past, carrying it off in the salty air chasing after his hat. He feels his life has been leading up to this point; all his suffering, all his loss has been for this.

He leans forward and plummets off the railing. The wind beats his face, and he smiles at the ecstasy the fall is causing. The water waits to be stained by the nectar of his actions -- but is instead surprised by the gentle touch of an eagle's feather.



FOREVER AND ALWAYS

By: Ashia Geise

The calm, sparkling water flows with the sway of the trees. The sun pokes between the mountains. A pink and orange blanket stretches across the sky. The flat-surfaced rocks edging the ocean break the waves which gently crash across the jagged shoreline.

She lies there, watching the birds fly by. She wants to soar with them. This miracle child who has had everything that she ever desired, and now she believes that she wants to be a bird.

But what about her unbelievably great life? Not perfect, that's for sure. But a loving family, friends and her ideal boy. "Forever and always," he says.

And she still gets more. Beautiful gifts from relatives, nice clothing and accessories from her parents. An amazing house to live in, accompanied by food to come home to at night.

"What more can a girl want?" she thinks, "what's worth giving up in your life to be an animal or something that you know you can never be?"

She feels someone walk quietly behind her and sit down. Just the person she's been waiting for.

He can tell something is troubling her in some way. "What more do I need in my life?" keeps running through her head. "Nothing." She's fulfilled.

She looks over at this stunning person who kisses her swiftly. He holds her carefully. "I love you. Forever and always." he says.

GOODNIGHT

By: *Brittney Jack*

Goodnight,
 Village lying in bed,
 Peaceful streets,
 Nothing but the dim lights,
 To give it some feelings.
 Loneliness with no action.
 Voiceless thoughts linger
 From one mind to another.
 Late night phone calls,
 To the ones we love.
 Lights out,
 Sleep tight baby.

Awakening at dawn
 Chirping birds.
 The fog rests in to secure the area.
 No one will leave now.
 Everyone showers for the school bells.
 The children scurry to find their places
 With worries about their faces.
 Good morning here and there.
 Pandemonium in the halls,
 Scurrying roars of stomachs
 Peace runs back.
 Sun shines retrieving our attention.
 Walking down the street,
 Clouds cover the water to keep it warm.
 Everything will be okay,
 Hold on tight, Baby.
 Secure.
 The day goes on,
 Minds wander off from the teachers' words.
 Focus loses it's interest,
 Then dissipates.
 School's done.

Hours pass.
 Daylight diminishes,
 Streets calm.
 Night comes without thought.
 Bedtime now.
 Goodnight.



WHEN THE HERO FALLS

By: *Cody Anderson*

Growing up, everyone has an idol, a hero, someone they just look up to. When they see this person, they think, "That's the man (the woman) I want to be."

There are a lot of reasons why these people catch our eyes. It may be that this person saves the world from an incoming comet. He may also be the one who puts the bad guys away or she might simply stand her ground on her beliefs. Whatever the reason, we practically worship those people. The turning point in our lives is when we lose those heroes.

Superman goes to another planet, vowing never to come back; the noble cop gets shot in a firefight; your grandmother dies. The goodbyes are said; the hero is laid to rest. The tears fall.

This sense of loss weighs on the spirit. It's as if someone punched you right in the chin. Some people get knocked out, some stagger, and some simply keep moving as if the punch didn't land. However, matter how we react, we still feel it: the pain and the fear.

Everything changes. Mountains get taller, valleys get bigger, and dark spaces become darker. How do we face the world without our hero, our shield, our armor? Some can't. Some stay down, crushed. Some move on and live with the pain in their hearts. Some become another's hero.

TO MY DEAREST FRIEND

By: Brandi Roberts

You're gone and nothing could change that. I know death wasn't something you would have chosen -- but you did. What's done is done, but remnants of sorrow remain. People may move on with life, but I see them hurt from an unexpected goodbye.

Some might have come to believe that people don't care. The truth is that, although it seems that way, the effects of a death are never ending. Unfortunately, this serious topic is reoccurring in many towns. However, it is something that you can NEVER just get used to, and the effects through each death will not become less. Although you didn't think at your current mind set that your disappearance would affect anyone, it greatly did. In a small town, we know everyone, and in some way have had an interaction with them. The loss of a life in a flash is one of the hardest things to go through.

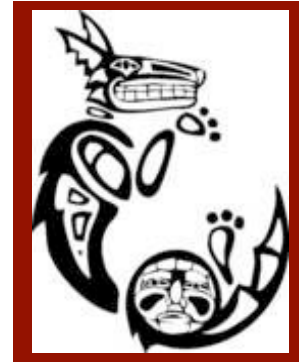
Whether suffering great pain, physically or emotionally, giving up is not the answer. It's something that you can never take back, and we will not forget. Sometimes your name slips out in conversation. Everyone quickly looks around, fearful of offending someone. A mournful pain lingers in the air with echoes of your name.

Life can be short and should be well spent. A small glitch in yours left you feeling that there was no other option. Believe me, I've tried to rationalize this hurtful action. Although I completely forgive those who have made the choice, I can't understand why.

Seeing the pain from others' passing, I believe should show us not to make the decision and pass up the great opportunity of life. Thinking positive will always mean that

things can work out in the end.

I chose to write to you because there was so much left unsaid. I know that it is too late, but this helps me express how I feel. We all miss you greatly and often find ourselves in grief.



A WHOLE NEW WORLD

By: Diloola Erickson

Tears wept by the sun fall like dry rain
Down onto the heads of the ignorant
Who try to feel but cannot think
They are left together and alone in a group
Out on the desolate fields of thought
Where they reach for your hand to help them
But as the fingers touch the light goes black
Not a flicker of truth is shown or given
And the air you breathe in to take
Is gone and blown away with the wind
Floating on to the world where it must belong
In the arms of the creatures
Who talk with literature
But live by the laws that bend the words
To what they want

MEMORY TO PASS BY

By: Ashia Geise

The heartbeat of the ocean trembles
in my head,
floating like a bee upon its flower.
The sand, so warm on my feet,
yet hard to comprehend.
How does this encounter happen?
Our toes print the sand.
Step by step, we are one,
walking into the sunset.
But why?
Why do we have to leave this savored place,
A hidden speck of Eden?
Walk away from the sunset,
wash away our footprints.
Leave no trace of this moment
but remembrance
that will drift away.
Nothing left
but the smell lingers,
holding onto the tip of my nose,
fading gently, but rapidly.
I breathe in the scent of this precious air,
knowing it is my last;
the feeling I cannot bear.
The bee disappears,
and the flower must die.
Unwillingly, I free the memory to pass by.



TRANSPARENT FACADES

By: Joe Comolli

New Year's. Masquerade. Alone... again.
There the Falcon perches with her
curvaceous glass of colored liquid, her only
companion for the night; together they ignore
the crowd behind them. Pairs of people,
turning in synchronized elegance with their
masks: personality on plastic.

The bartender is a flop-eared Swine. He refills
her best friend with booze-flavored abandon.
She turns on the barstool. Glaring at the lucky
duos, her resentment clouds the definition of
the dancers. She is Persephone, blindly
staring at the celebration of Tartarus. All the
men are dogs, cannibal dogs feigning the
nobility of hounds to woo the avian females.
All of them are mocking fearlessness, but not
the Jackal in the crowd, a figure of honesty
born from a black lake of midnight. He is
unmoving and alone as she, promising to be
nothing more than himself. His fang-strewn
grin tells tales of devoured flesh, and nothing
less.

Her barstool and drink sit freshly empty as the
feminine Falcon flutters to the Jackal, who
welcomes with a wag and an open paw. She
knows that he's the one who has been
watching her life through a concrete thicket of
broken glass and chain link, panting forbidden
heat of desire. The crowd of imposters
continues to dance, but the new couple has
crippled them with their display of careless
truth.

PUNCH-OUT, TEENAGE ZOMBIES

By: Joe Comolli

**Shove the sand from your eyes.
Forget your little white lies.
It's the morning; we're alright-
Survived the plunge
of last night's blight.
Let's divvy up the pain in four.
Shoes on, we stumble out the door.**

If we weren't the last ones alive;
We'd be poor.
Need to kill the hunger. Luckily,
We own the store.
Steady diet of Eggos & Sunny D
We're all alone, but we're free.
We live dangerous/we don't care
We got troubles/all to share.
The day is dead; time to sleep,
Young & Dumb with memories to keep.

TOMORROW'S ARRIVED
WITH A CLEAN SLATE
WE'LL BE BACK WHERE WE WERE
AT THIS RATE
. . . BUT FOR NOW,
WE OWN THIS TOWN--OURS TO ROAM.
TOO BAD NEXT WEEK,
OUR PARENTS COME HOME.
~*~

THE CONVERSION

By: Andrew Skaflestad

He holds his head in the palms of his hands
He's so frustrated, they just don't understand
There's nothing left to do;
he's done what he can
He prays to the heavens,
"God, tell me who I am."

His sorrow, like water, is drowning him
It's bubbling higher, he feels he can't swim
His anger is equal, his patience is thin.

He screams to himself,
he won't feel this again
Out in the rain, he faces his pain
Unleashing his rage, he embraces change
Taking hold of his personal strange.

He returns to the place of social exchange
Brightened clothes and a paint-less face
His hair's natural brown, he's rid of a frown
But he feels like a fool in a sea of clowns.

Though happy in the face
He feels out of place
He lost himself in the social exchange.

