

Inner Beauty



Imagination

Wilson High School 2024-2025 Literary Journal

“Imagination”

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May 25th

It was about 10 o'clock. The sun's shine was contradicting the cold air outside. In my office, it's quiet. I can't tell if I like it or not. The peace reminds me of the lack of calls. The lack of work. In an instant, Rando, my assistant, rushes through my door.

"Anything stirring?" I ask.

He tells me we have a job. Apparently, someone gave us a ring saying they would pay us a lot of scratch to investigate a monster. "Whoo boy, I caught us a great job didn't I?"

"What are you, a yuck?!" I retorted. "How are we going to find something that doesn't exist?"

"We don't need to. On his daily stroll, he said he saw something mucking about in the woods and gave us a ring."

"Well, what does he want?"

"He's a schnook. All he wants is for us to go out and ward it off."

"Ooh you're about to make me flip my wig, I'm an ace detective and you're trying to dump a rattle-brain case on my lap?!"

"I'm sorry Mr. Booker, I thought we'd need the dough and it seemed such an easy case. Sorry."

"Well don't worry about it, just pick up the Ameche, give him a ring, and tell him we can't accept the job."

"Um, well sir, about that... I already accepted the job."

I let out a heavy sigh, "Get out Rando, before I do something I'll regret."

"We're also meeting him for a consultation tomorrow at 11."

"RANDO!"

Rando swiftly leaves my office.

As my blood comes from a boil, the silence fills me with doubt of this job. How could we complete it?

Could we finish it at all?

What did the caller see in the woods... is it real?

That rookie is going to put me in an early grave.

May 26th

He's a high school teacher.

Couldn't schedule the meeting outside of school, so we came in during one of his free periods.

"Michael Booker. It's a pleasure," I say, reaching out for a handshake.

"Clive Donovan. I'm sorry this is my only free-time and I want this matter settled quickly."

Donovan and Rando shake hands and we sit across from each other. I figured I could just show up, apologize for my rookie's actions and turn down the case. "Listen..." before I could finish my sentence, Clive cuts in.

"It came by my house last night. I think it's hunting me."

In a stern voice, I ask, "Do you have proof?"

"My still shaking hands should be proof enough. What more do you want?"

"Actual evidence, something I can hold in my hands. If what you claim is true, I can't put my life in danger."

"That's the job you signed up for!"

"That I didn't agree to! Rando accepted this on my behalf!"

Donovan lunges across the table and grabs me by my collar, "What am paying you for?! Keep me safe!"

"Get your paws off of me!" I exclaim.

He lets go, "PLEASE," he pleads, "five thousand dollars if you get rid of this thing."

“Sleep one more night and, if it shows again, call us. Rando and I will be talking this ordeal over.”
“I’m sure in the morning I’ll be belly up.”
“Sleep on it. we will be back with an answer.”

May 27th

It’s 3 o’clock in the morning. I fell asleep in the office after arguing the pros and cons with Rando. Rando won.

The phone, blaring, waiting to be answered, pried my eyes open.

It was Mr. Donovan. He said it showed up and he fought it off but nicked it on the arm. Apparently, it got into his house and into his watch collection.

After I got off the phone with him, I went straight to work. Nothing made sense. I checked out the address where he had first seen the monster and it was a park. And when the monster first broke into his house, it went straight for the watches.

Nothing made sense.

This was a monster with a motive but what monster needed money? How did it know about the watches?

I have to find out.

After another call with Mr. Donovan, I had my answer.

Here’s the story: Mr. Donovan showed a small sample of his collection to his class and I assume a student thought they could make a quick buck selling them. And if the culprit is one student from Donovan’s class, the list will be easily narrowed down because of the injury.

By 10:30, the list hasn’t been whittled at all.

All of the students are completely fine (this gave relief to Mr. Donovan because he couldn’t believe one of his students would steal from him) but someone passed by with a bandage on their arm.

It was the janitor.

I chased him down, caught him, and got the truth. My hunch was spot on. The only part I got wrong was my group of suspects.

“I’m not a cop so there’s nothing I can do. This is between you two.”

I don’t know what happened between them and I don’t care. I received my paycheck, and I am just glad the monster was fake.



Happy?

Are you happy?

Are you happy now?

Now they're crying, now they're dying,
now that in the streets they're lying,
are you happy?

Now they're getting cold,
now they'll never grow old,
now the rats are getting bold.

Are you happy?

Are you happy now it's over,
now they'll never get their closure.

Are you happy?

Do you think that it is funny,
now that you have got your money?

ARE YOU HAPPY?

The thought of him brings a smile to my face
That freshness of his perfume wafts over me
His touch connects and I feel free and safe
Wanting to travel with him across seas

I ache to see him, with my eager eyes
Thou art handsome, my feelings will shine
And my lips, they're yearning to touch thy sighs
In kissing you, my core doth entwine

Your gaze, though brief, fills my soul with might
The game has captured you, I'm left awhile
His words, like gold, in cleverness take flight
Each phrase he brings, I find a peaceful smile

Loving you, my darling is my heart's rhyme
Your kindness and love precious gifts of thine



It was the second day of school for Malina. In the early morning, she stood at the bus stop and stared at the bright and colorful sunrise. She was nervous because she was new to the school, but the air was warm, soothing her comfort and everything felt perfect in that moment. She moved to America from Thailand and understood and spoke English with an accent.

But as she stood there, memories of the previous day's events slipped into her mind. Stephine and Rebecca, two girls from her school, had started bullying her because of her English accent. They had made mean comments that made Malina feel alienated.

As she entered the school building, Malina felt too nervous. She was a little introverted and found it somewhat challenging to interact with new people and it was hard to navigate the unfamiliar places. She wished she had friends to share that similar connection but, so far, she was on her own.

When she entered her first class, she spotted Stephine and Rebecca sitting next to each other. They glared at her and then burst out into laughter.

Malina's heart sank, and she felt her anxiety escalate.

Stephine and Rebecca slid into the seats beside Malina, their eyes beaming with mischief, as they prepared to tease her. Their words, sharp as thorns, ready to bully her. When the teacher wasn't looking, they tossed a crumpled piece of paper to Malina's desk.

Stephine whispers at her, "Read. It's for you."

Malina's eyes widened as she unfolded the paper and read the mocking message scrawled on it.

'Go back to your country, accent girl,' the note read.

"No one wants you here."

Malina felt a sting of sadness and anger. Malina thought, "I had been trying so hard to fit in and this was the result?"

Just then, Mr. A, Malina's English teacher, stood next to the girls. "What's going on here?" he asked, his voice firm but kind.

Stephine and Rebecca exchanged a nervous glance and Mr. A continued, "Malina, why don't you come with me?"

Mr. A led Malina to his desk and listened as she recounted the bullying incident. Mr. A's expression grew increasingly concerned and he promised Malina that he would do everything in his power to put a stop to the bullying.

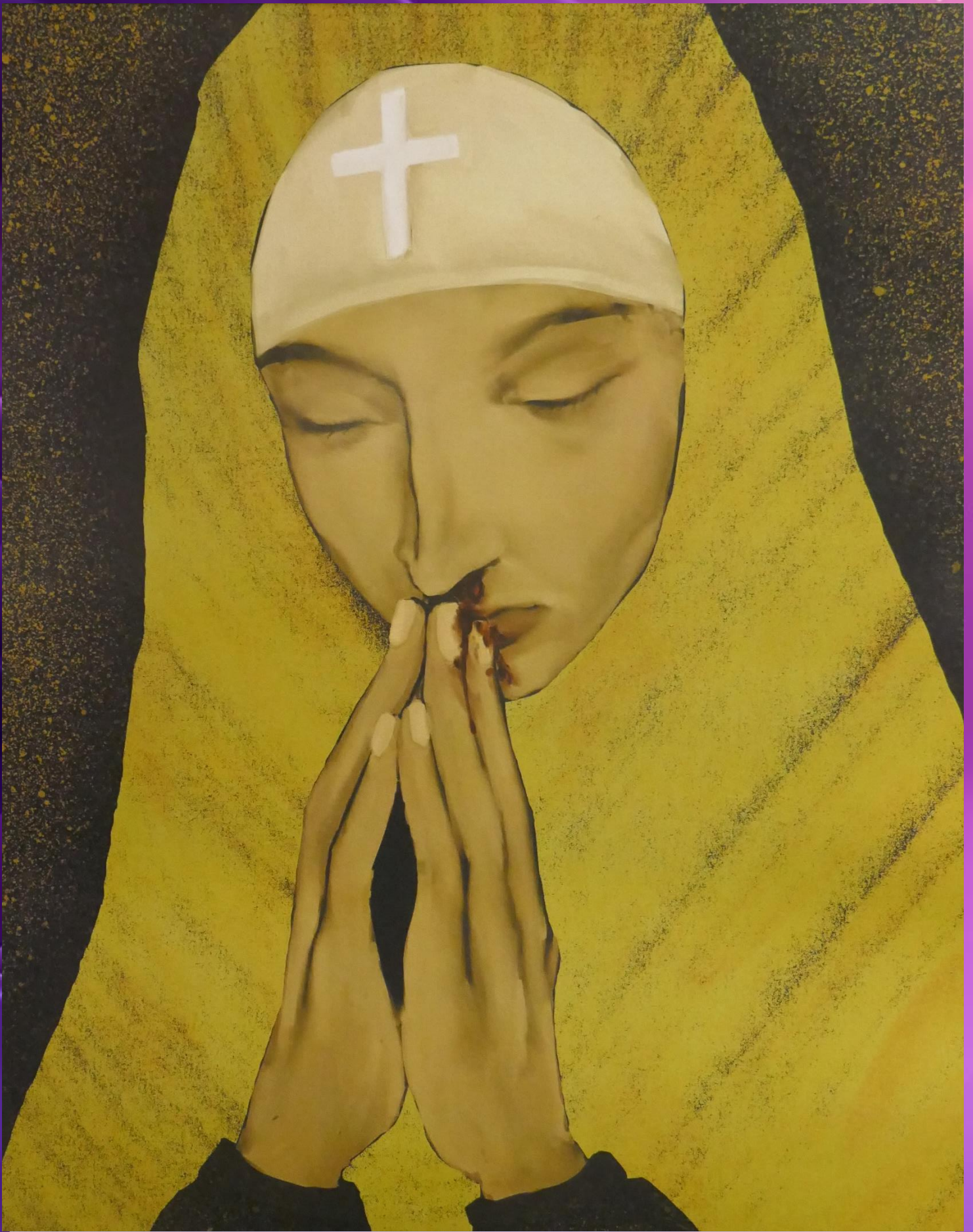
As Malina left Mr. A's desk, she felt a weight lift off her shoulders. She realized that she wasn't alone and that there were people who cared about her. Mr. A had given her the courage to stand up for herself, and Malina felt grateful.

Time passed and lunch began. Malina walked down the hallway and saw Stephine and Rebecca glaring at her. But this time, Malina didn't feel intimidated.

She looked them in the eye and smiled. Stephine and Rebecca looked away, defeated and walked away.

Malina had found courage, and she wasn't going to let anyone make fun of her again. From that day on, Malina's confidence blossomed like a lily flower: starting with new friends, engaging in classes, and Mr. A's guidance – ensuring a bright future. She joined clubs and discovered her passions.

Malina realized that starting over wasn't so bad after all.



Love

Love turning rotten, never forgotten
Love can be a lovely and peaceful thing
And love can leave you heartbroken
Love can make people feel all loving

Love is the beginning to a romance
Love can be amazing and judgmental
Love is when you fall in love at first glance
Love can be harsh but sometimes gentle

Sometimes love can make people go crazy
Love can be toxic but brings out the good
Sometimes love can make people feel lazy
When people can't love right, they are done

Love is something that can be amazing
Love can sound lovely in the warm spring

Art is my Best Friend

How much you mean to me you'll never know
A cliché sure but we were meant to be
Years have passed, yet we still need time to grow
Without you what kind of life would I lead?

You provide comfort through the darkest hours
Or during class time where I'm so very bored
I scribble small sketches of pretty flowers
A small addition to my growing horde

Feels so strange when we have to drift apart
The pain inside yearning to be let out
When you're gone sadness overcomes my whole heart
As does huge feelings of shame and self doubt

Friend, an eternity spent together
Let's hope it'll stay that way forever

Cannibal Witch

It's been only half a year since we've first caught word of a crazy maniac roaming the streets. This guy is incredibly sneaky and leaves nothing for forensics. We still haven't found a suspect yet, either.

I refuse to give up, as Chief would say. It baffles me how he has yet to slip up--no witnesses nor evidence of any kind--but once he does, I will be the woman to slap the handcuffs on him and put him to justice.

Just tonight, I found out a family was out camping when the mother was kidnapped while the rest of the family were asleep in a tent. The dad then called the police and gave her description. The Chief informed me the family was camping in the forest near my house.

My team and I went to talk with the family soon after the call.

I found what can only be a miracle from God. Not so far away, I spotted a pool of blood near the trunk of a tree. Our guy has gotten sloppy. Could this evidence put an end to this chase? I feel like I got too excited over this for a second and then remembered: it was extremely upsetting. This also meant the woman was more than likely killed too. That is, if the blood belonged to her.

While forensics investigated and did further testing, the team and I searched the majority of the forest for potential evidence and stumbled upon a dilapidated house. Every hair on my body stood up just from the sight of this building. Every last one of us was a bit hesitant to even knock and we assumed the place to be abandoned. There were no other buildings besides this one and I was desperate for any leads. "Let's go in," I suggested to the Chief.

He protested my idea but quickly changed his mind. One problem though was that the front door of this suspicious building had a massive lock on the door handle. Shining my flashlight at every angle of the house, I found a window that was just barely boarded up. My best friend Cheryl acted as my personal step stool and, several seconds later, I fell through the opening, breaking my fall on what I hoped to be a couch.

My flashlight illuminated giant bookshelves, candles and weird, satanic paintings. I turned around to check what I landed on. Something with a tarp over it. A shiver came over me. I tried to quickly process it all until suddenly I heard a female voice ask, "Who are you?"

A light was switched on. How does this place have electricity? I froze then announced, "I'm with the FBI and we are investigating an ongoing murder case. What do you know about a kidnapped woman last seen in this forest?"

The lady figure leaned towards me and my badge. She ignored me before walking away. Her long, wavy charcoal hair brushed my arm. I averted my eyes for a moment before finally examining the unknown woman.

I must admit, she was extremely pretty. She towered over me. She had three eyes; two with yellow cat-like irises and one on her forehead that was the color of the sea. She urged me to leave and I took one last look around before obliging.

There was an odd jar full to the brim with something I couldn't make out. I felt her eyeing me eyeing the jar. "Don't worry about that. I like to go hunting," this strange woman told me.

I had never wanted to leave a place faster. She sounded like a genuine psychopath. Did I even want to know what was in that jar?

Walking out of the house, I could feel my team's eyes glued onto me.

"So? What was in there, Davis? I heard chatter," said Chief with crossed his arms.

"Oh, just a homeless person squatting. They were just a bit startled to see me there."

We moved on and have yet to find a suspect.

That woman appeared in my dreams for days. Her voice lingered in my mind. So did that house. Why did I lie to my team? I should've let them investigate her and that house right there so what is wrong with me?

Something inside me didn't want to see her locked away.



The end of a story
But your stories will be passed on
Your work brought you glory
That will not be forgotten though you are gone

Your work inspired other creators
And will inspire more
Most of your fans are debaters
They are far from bore

Your time has passed your work hasn't
Your work will be continued
Your craft needs hard work not talent
Your light will still be spread from within you

RIP Akira Toriyama



A Perfectly Imperfect Mom

A rich turmeric aroma fills the whole kitchen
Steamed fish cooked with precision, fine

Her heart stitched together with forgiveness
My mistakes that hurt
But strong enough to care
When my bright red jacket hangs clean in the closet

When sickness got hold of me,
Her care carried a sense of warmth
A broth that nurtures me back to health

When we argue, we create new scars
Her old ways not always right in this new place
But always wanting best
Yet live to forgive, a perfectly imperfect mom





Funeral

The rain is falling down around me,
yet I remain quite dry.

I hear it, see it, am surrounded,
yet I remain quite dry.

None who's around me's spared,
yet I remain quite dry.

They're soaked to the bone, shivering now,
yet I remain quite dry.

The rain has soaked their clothing black,
yet I am wearing white.

They're huddling close, and bowing low,
yet I remain upright.

I've always heard that rain is normal,
so why am I so dry?

The rain is falling down around me,
yet I can't seem to cry.



how the enjoyment of getting that rest
the way i sleep determines my school time
how i wake up today feeling the best
the way my day goes i get in my prime

when i pick up my fruit i make it turn
i enjoy fruit and i take a close smell
when i consume it the fat i will burn
when i inhale them the feeling of well

sometimes i lay on my bed like a sheep
lying around i pick up an apple
the disruption that makes me lose my sleep
when i look closely it's brown like scrapple

the music that i hear i check the tone
i sit inside my room sitting alone



Depressing

I'm in the 10th grade and barely scraping by, not doing well in school but trying to turn it all around. I'm not doing well mentally.

I'm isolating myself from people at school, basically just hiding in plain sight until school ends.

My mother isn't at home and she's been away for some time. I was worried sick waiting for my mom to come back home. Prior to this, she's been clean for four years but now, I notice she's smoking and drinking.

I've drifted from school by now. I'm at home with my stepdad and little brother. My mind was constantly at war with itself. I wasn't going outside and all the time I've spent has been in bed rotting away. I was still on Zoloft but it still felt like I was drowning.

Eventually, my mom comes back. I am oblivious to what's been going on, but she has relapsed.

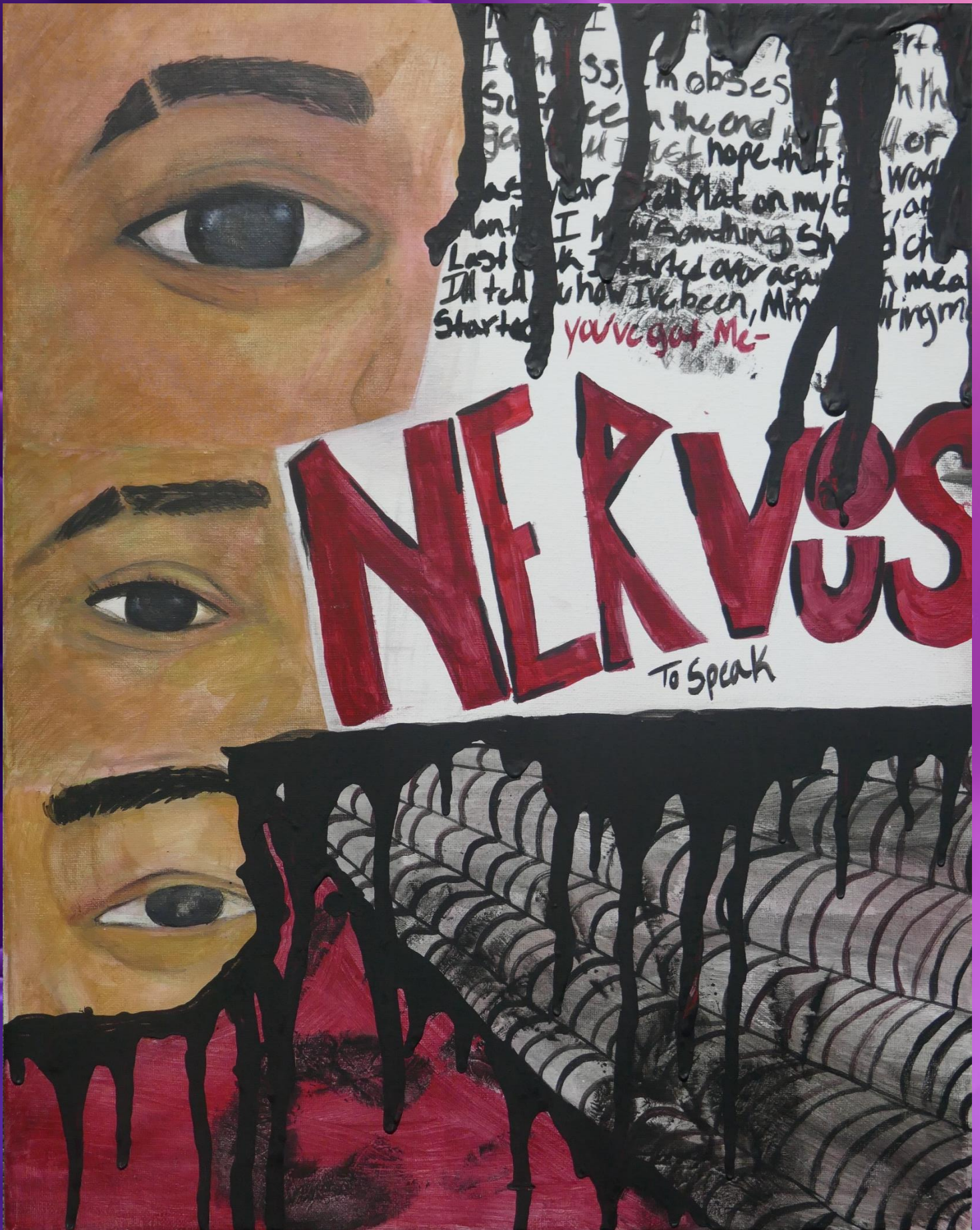
All of this had hit me like a freight train. I love my mom deeply, she's the most important person to me and if I were to lose her my world would end. This whole situation went on into 2023. I was a wreck. It felt like I did lose her even if she was at home with me. The drug completely changed her. She was an addict before my birth but seeing her like this ruined me.

By that time, I had given up on school. I felt there was no point, I didn't care about anything anymore. My stepdad didn't force me to go either, neither did my mom. Now that I didn't have to go to school, I had all the time in the world to eat, sleep, lay in bed, draw and just rot away in my room. My mom would use in my room and still does to this day. I've cleaned the room a couple times the best I could until I realized there was no point. I hate even stepping foot in there. It feels as if the devil himself is there with her.

I felt as if my life lost all meaning. I was still depressed and not even thinking of returning back to school. Months pass by and I've become numb to the whole situation. I feel as if I'm just spectating inside my mind, watching life pass by. It's hard to explain how bad I felt and how guilty I felt during this time. It felt like all hope was gone for me and my mother. She and my stepdad argued all the time so home life was very chaotic. The only way to escape it was by distracting myself and sleeping.

After several months and therapy appointments, I finally realized how bad my life had gotten. How I basically threw school out the window and said, "screw it" to my future. It was time for me to overcome it. It was time for me to realize that my mother needs to work through her problems on her own and that ruminating on these problems forever was not going to help me... and only make me feel worse.

So I went with my stepdad to get enrolled into summer school at Edison. This was my first step to turning my life around. Summer school got me out of the house, away from the warzone for a while, and a chance to make up some grades. Finishing summer school gave me enough courage to finally return to high school and now here I am.



Light

This is a eulogy,
to the one who has always been with me.
Though you are gone from my lips,
you will remain in my heart.
Haunting me.

Every smile, every laugh, every flick of my hair,
you will always be there.
Every greeting not addressed to me,
every hidden word and secrecy,
you will never go away.

Every quick-changed sound,
and dancing around.
You live in my head, my heart, my body.

You live in the back of my throat,
waiting to be let out.

You live behind their lips too.
I can see through their faces.
They'll never forget you,
and I'll never too.

This is a eulogy,
to the one who will always be with me.
Though you are gone from my lips,
you will remain in my heart.
Haunting me.

Within the openness of a lonely glade, there dwelled a sheriff without rest. The embers of his campfire crackled softly, gleaming against his badge, as the critters of the night sang gently all around. It was a warm night in spring, warmer than the ordinary, without clouds and rain or mist to suffocate. All there was and all there seemed to be was the blinking stars and fireflies that hid among the grass and trees, often appearing into view before returning to shade. Yet amidst all the serenity, there lay a troubling feeling that dwelled deeper in the sheriff's noble heart, a feeling of uneasiness, of anxious anticipation of the coming day.

Three days have passed since his pursuit of the notorious outlaw Bart Bacon the Bad, wanted for murder on the highest degree after his robbery in old Schipper's yard. The man that Bart Bacon killed happened to be the deputy sheriff, killed in cold blood when he attempted to arrest the robber for his crimes. And from the scene he fled, leaving the young deputy to his untimely fate. Set to bring retribution to this fleeing killer, the sheriff counted the hours. He followed the trail leading deeper into the woods, further from the nearest town and ever closer to danger that waited for his arrival.

The day was long and hot, even with the shade from the leaves atop, the sun set blazing. There was a gentle silence among the trees, though the birds chirped and the branches swayed. It was about noon when he found clear evidence of Bart's trail, the ashes of a campfire left from the night before, kicked and watered down to hide among the leaves. He was clever, thought the sheriff, clever enough to hide in the trees, to know that someone was on his tail, to tread on hard soil rather than loose, leaving hardly a trace of his boot prints for the sheriff to track.

The sheriff reasoned that he was walking north, though his tracks were hard to find, the north was his only refuge from the law. He seemed to have trailed through the thickets, through many broken branches, all in haste to flee. The sheriff could tell he was close, so near he could almost smell his stench, hear his pistol load, feel a swift breeze graze across his face.

A shot fired and missed the sheriff's head, striking the tree bark instead. In an instant another flew over, narrowly missing his hat as he stooped to hide. It was Bart with the gun, thought the sheriff, and as he pulled out his pistol to return fire, he found no one in sight but the trees. The criminal had fled, his trail now more evident and clear. In haste, he picked himself up and pursued the outlaw, avoiding some bullets as he did when Bart would shoot blindly behind.

Tired and empty, Bart rested behind a tree for cover as he reloaded his cylinder. The sheriff stood behind a few meters from his feet, calling out to his deputy's killer.

"Come out, Bart, this ain't gon end too well for ya"

Bart, having filled his pistol, stood up from where he sat, "Tell you what, Reaper, you can have it, take the money back, it ain't worth it"

"This ain't bout the money, this is about retribution for your crimes. Either you face me here and now or you face the law. You ain't gettin outta here"

"You talkin bout the boy I killed? It wasn't my fault, all he had to do was walk away...he drew first!" he claimed.

"That don't matter now...throw your pistol behind and walk out with your hands up. I ain't gon shoot you"

"I ain't no coward, Reaper...I don't need your pity. I ain't goin in alive"

"Dead is fine with me"

Bart took a moment to think if he was quick enough to fire. His hand shook over the trigger and his mind clouded with fear. If he ran he'd be killed, If he missed he'd be killed, if he made any sudden movement that could expose him, he'd be killed. So as he made his mind, he quickened in breath and grew courage to rush out from behind his cover. His barrel scanned the glade to find a target until falling on the sheriff, who quickly drew his gun and shot Barts' out of his hand before he could fire.

Fumes rose from the sheriff's barrel as it fell on the outlaw, now disarmed and fearing. The sheriff blew at the smoke and returned the pistol back into his holster, trying to reason again with Bart before he made any rash decisions.

"I'll make it easy for ya, shoot me here, right here" Bart removed his hat and pointed at his head while cautiously reaching for his second pistol on his left. "Come on!" he shouted once more, as he drew his pistol to once again be disarmed by the sheriff, who now fired more than once, leaving Bart Bacon the Bad to fall with fatal bullet holes, dying in the instant.

In the evening after finding and bringing the outlaw to justice, Sheriff Reaper returned to old Schipper's yard with the body of Bart Bacon the Bad.





