

Inner Beauty



New Beginnings

Wilson High School 2021-2022 Literary Journal

“New Beginnings”

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Cover Photo: Kalaiyah Knox

Back cover: *Fish* Morgan Grandberry (Illustration)

Editors:

Kalaiyah Knox
&
Tahira Robinson

Staff Adviser: Mr. Burns

Journey to America

There are events in life which can change yourself or your way of thinking. As for me, I think the major change in my life occurred when I moved from Africa to America. Coming to the U.S. has changed my life.

I was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and grew up there until I was like nine years old. Then we moved to Uganda and stayed there for three years. Then we came to America.

At first, my reaction was somewhat neutral, not even panicking or shivering. I didn't know how to feel. I didn't immediately realize the effects that this major change would have on me. It all happened so fast. I didn't know how it would feel to live in a completely different country and new house. I didn't instantly acknowledge the effect that leaving my friends would have on me. I didn't know how it would feel to be the new kid in school. I didn't even know how to speak and write English at that time. I couldn't imagine that I would have to restart everything in my life. And I was too scared to think about the difficulty of fitting in with all the new things around.

Life was really hard because everything was new to me... taking into account the fact that I had never experienced a transition so little as shifting from one residence to another. It was hard for me to communicate with others because of the language barrier.

After I moved here, I struggled to make new friends and get good grades. The language barrier was one of the biggest issues that I encountered. For the first few weeks of elementary school, I was a breathing statue who couldn't talk. I felt like a useless rock. I couldn't do anything. It was one of the most difficult times I've ever had in my life. Without language, I lost the ability to communicate and make friends in school. Everything was new for me and my family.

As far as I am concerned, moving to the United States has taught me a lot. I received an education that I would not have received back in Congo. Moving to America made me realize how much freedom is limited in my country. Moving from Africa to America made me a better person and taught me to understand people better. It gave me opportunities to change my lifestyle.

Coming to America has helped me with my soccer career. Back in Africa I used to play soccer just for fun in the street and never thought about playing in an academy or college. Now I have the opportunity to do all that and to go as far as I can with my soccer career.

Also, my father and mother have become very successful in their occupational fields.

All of this happened because of the opportunities America has given my family to grow.

Rain

the calming sounds of rain hold timeless joy
the puddle-seas fill in the trodden cracks
my children playing what fine joyous boys
the sounds of play persist mud leaving tracks

the rain will clean mistakes away with you
fresh start and new day shining sun so bright
the sky clear blue and rainbows glisten true
scenic day song birds singing her cloud sight

while sitting here i think about my wait
and hoping to hear your laughter again
rain snuggled close as your heart dilates
your smile so warm branded inside my brain

when i die the skies cry as my soul drains
we shall just as you did return as rain



Turning Point in My Life

It all started August 8th, 2013. I didn't know much about God at the time, I thought I was too young to start learning. I felt as if I had my whole life. Suddenly my whole attitude was changed off of this one incident.

I was nine-years-old at the time and my mother got a phone call from my Aunt Kim saying that my Uncle Tim was in the hospital. The doctors didn't figure out what the issue was but it did not look good. My Aunt Kim said, "It would be best if you came down here."

So that night, my mom went and bought a plane ticket for my sister and herself to Arizona. I couldn't go because I had summer camp to attend and she didn't want me to miss any days. The next morning, my sister and my mother got up around 8 am because their flight left at 11:45 am. My oldest sister and I dropped them off at the airport and they landed in Phoenix, Arizona around 8 pm.

My mom and sister got to my Uncle's house, they settled in and the next morning they went to go see him. The morning came and my sister, my mom, my aunt, and my cousin went to the hospital to see if the doctors had any new information about what was going on. As they were sitting in the waiting room, my mom just kept praying that everything was going to be okay. Moments later the doctor called my family in and told them that my uncle's cancer returned.

It struck my mother extremely hard. She had a panic attack and passed out. It took almost 10 full minutes to get my mother conscious again. Once they did, they got her some water and she had a vicious headache that didn't go away for about 6 whole hours.

My mom and my family were devastated but also determined that my uncle was going to overcome every obstacle that was thrown at him.

My uncle was in a coma and every day my family went to the hospital and prayed over him.

About a week later, my uncle finally opened his eyes. My mom and sister were finally at peace and that night ordered a plane ticket home for the next day.

The next morning, they got on the plane but my mother was having really bad chest pains. She felt like she was going to throw up and the flight attendant wanted to get her some water but everything she tried didn't work. My mom laid on her back on the plane for about 15 minutes until the pain subsided. Once it did she sat back in her seat and called her doctor to tell him what was going on. He scheduled an appointment for her as soon as she landed and my mother agreed to come in.

The plane landed in Rochester at about 6 pm and my mother was so tired she just went home and went to sleep. On her way home, she called her doctor and told him that, "everything was fine at the moment and that she would come in tomorrow."

He agreed and the next morning, she came in at about 11am.

They took some cat scans of her heart and ultrasounds to see if the blood flow was flowing properly. Once they were done with all the tests, the doctor sent her home and said that they would send her the results in a few hours.

My mom left the doctor's office and, not even 15 minutes later, the doctor called my mom and screamed to her, "I NEED YOU TO GET TO A HOSPITAL RIGHT NOW!"

My mom replied, "But I feel fine doc."

And he said, "LACHELA SAMPLE, GET TO THE DAMN HOSPITAL RIGHT NOW."

Hearing the doctor curse at her threw my mom completely off, which meant that it had to be serious. She rushed to the hospital and checked in. She told them her doctor's name and the whole hospital crew went into a panic. They rushed her into the back and started asking her the baseline questions. They asked, "On a scale of 1-10, what's the pain level in your chest?"

"Can you raise your left arm?"

"When did the pain start?"

...etc. They gave my mom some medicine and told her that "I don't know if you believe in God or not but you had a heart attack on that plane and survived all the way into a new day. A higher power had their hand on you."

They also told her that the bottom half of her heart is dead and they have to do an immediate surgery to place stents in her heart. My mom couldn't do anything but just cry and say, "Thank you Jesus."

Hearing my mom say this to me opened my eyes. It's never too late to start learning about God.

This situation gave me full proof that He is real and that it was time for me to start doing research for myself.

This turning point in my life taught me a lot: not only that God is real but to cherish people while they are still here.

Holding grudges is pointless because you never know when it's your time.





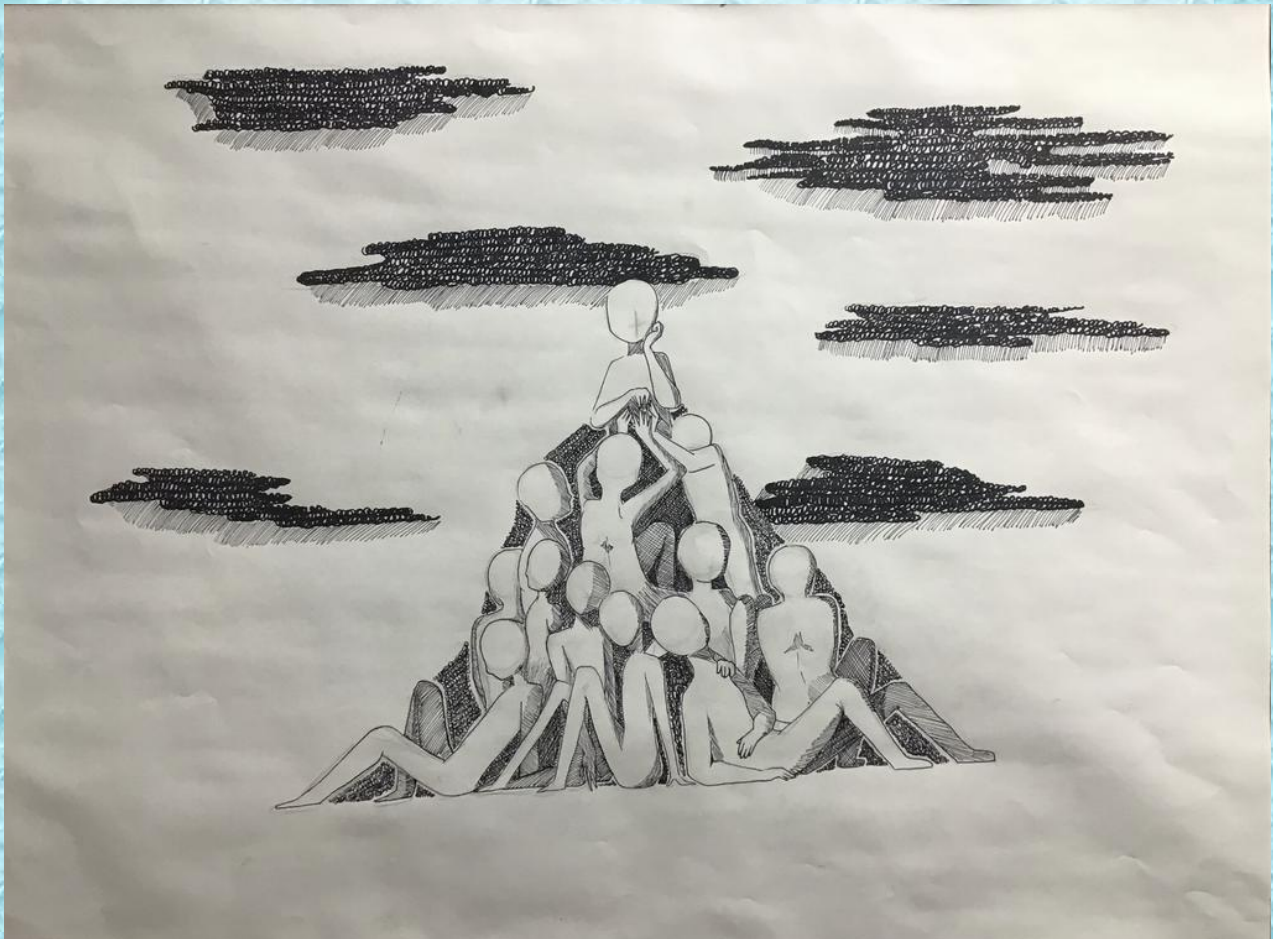
Perfection in Peace

Filling the air with chocolate smells
Mixing eggs, butter, and flour
A masterpiece that contains love spells
Baked for at least an hour

Slice into the sweet treat
With colors so vibrant to reveal
Fold the dough to where its ends meet
Serve it after a finished meal

Interruptions flood the room
Frustrated hands start to slip
Now the moments filled with gloom
And fondant starts to rip

Errors corrected, no more negative nerves
A final dish that the chef serves



The End

Adrenaline rushed through the dressing room as Andrea and her bridesmaids were getting pampered for the wedding. After being away from her fiancé for a few days, she's finally going to see him, excited and couldn't describe the emotions she was currently feeling.

"Does my make-up look fine?" Andrea asked frantically.

Joan, her maid of honor, pulled her to the side to calm her nerves. "Drea, everything will be fine so stop overthinking," she said.

"I know, I know. I just want everything to be perfect. I've been planning this day for almost a year and now it's finally here," Andrea said emotionally.

Looking at herself in the mirror, Andrea took a few deep breaths, calming her nerves. The feeling of nervousness starting to diminish from her spirit. Staring at herself, she became lost in how pretty she looked: her outlined lips combined with brown lip gloss complimented her complexion; along with matching eyeshadow and a hint highlighter placed at the bridge of her nose; her tribal braids were shoulder-length with brown beads at the bottom, the edges around her head, and swooped into a fashionable style... she truly felt grounded and content after her stare down.

Hearing a knock on the door, Andrea turned and saw Maria, heart slightly dropping knowing it was showtime. Maria, the wedding planner, came into the dressing room and told Andrea it was time to put on her dress.

Filled with nervousness, Andrea slowly walked over and started putting on her dress with the assistance of her bridesmaids. Joan watched the scene with a ping of jealousy and guilt in her heart knowing that today the love of her life and her best friend were getting married. Jealous at the fact that Andrea was the one to get the ring. Guilty at the fact she shouldn't be jealous.

Rome and Andrea were high school sweethearts that had been together for 11 years.

What started off as a drunken mistake led to years full of lies and infidelity that filled guilt between the two of them. Instead of outing the truth to her longtime best friend, she and Rome continued their unloyal acts up until the day before the wedding. Now, seeing Andrea so overstimulated with emotions about how important today was to her, the guilt was starting to pick at her spirit more and more so much to the point she didn't realize it was time for the ceremony.

"Girl you okay?" Andrea asked curiously. "You look more nervous than I do."

"Yeah I'm fine" Joan answered, snapping out of her state of guilt and remorse. She recollected herself and was reminded she had done enough dirt.

Today was not about her and Rome, today is Andrea and Rome's.

"Alrighty you ladies ready?" Maria asked the bridesmaids.

They responded with a collective, "yes."

Maria then started lining up in order, "Okay Gail, Conney, Jamie, Jill, then Joan. That is the order the bridesmaids will go in and then of course you come in and steal the

show," she turned to Andrea with a bright smile that she mirrored.

She turned to her vanity to stare at the picture of her parents and slowly her eyes averted to just her dad. "He was supposed to be here to walk me down the aisle" she thought.

Meanwhile....

"Rome, man, that's your third shot," his best man Jordan exasperated. "I'm not carrying you down the aisle," he angrily continued.

But it went in one ear and out the other as the night before replayed in his head.

Flashback:

"I love you," Joan said joyfully.

"Don't do this, not the night before our wedding," I responded.

Guilt immediately started to chew at my insides, my throat tightened with fear at the thought of this mistake being revealed to my soon to be wife, family and friends.

Joan and I were never supposed to be... whatever it is we're going through, it was never supposed to be this way. It started off as a drunken mistake that turned into a rush of exciting mischief.

I just hope she behaves herself tonight.

"Come on Rome it's time," Jordan said in an irritable tone.

With sweating palms, a drunken posture and guilty conscious, Rome shamefully stood to his feet and started to fix his tie. Looking at himself in the mirror he saw nothing but a coward.

He started walking towards the entrance of the ceremony, heart thumping with each shameful step he took. Once he reaches the door he waits for Maria to signal him to walk down the aisle. He watches as the bridesmaids and groomsmen walk elegantly down the aisle with their color coordinated dresses and suits. Once all five bridesmaids and groomsmen were lined correctly beside the altar, Maria then signaled him to walk to the altar.

Each footstep left a hollow sound in his ears as he masked to be the perfect soon to be husband, flashing his charming smile and alpha male tendencies with ease.

On the outside.

His insides felt like they were burning of remorse but he couldn't stop the facade now – he was in too deep.

Finally reaching the altar, he bashfully put his head down as all the guests looked in awe. Slowly lifting his head, he instantly regretted it by making eye contact with Joan.

Joan was the kind of woman men easily get drawn to: her light brown eyes and pearly white smile was enough to hypnotize you; and when she spoke to you, her words sucked you in like a vacuum. Right now, in this moment, being so caught up with

keeping eye contact, I could've missed my wife walking down the aisle. Thank God the chorus started to sing...

"I can't believe it," I thought. "I'm about to become a wife! He looks so handsome. I wonder if he likes my dress?" I said in my head while a million and one other thoughts occupied it.

I made eye contact with him and smiled to which he smiled back but something seemed off. He seemed zoned out. Like he was physically here but not mentally and emotionally.

Maybe I'm just reading into it too much. I reassured myself that nothing can ruin today as I reached the altar. He reached for my hand to help me step up and, once I stood in place, the pastor then stepped up and officially started the ceremony: "To all present I say: We are gathered here, not to witness the beginning of what will be but rather what already is. We do not create this marriage because, with love and commitment, they have decided to be husband and wife."

The Pastor stated, "Before I continue with the ceremony, is there anyone here who objects to the wedding? Speak now or forever hold your peace."

There was a moment of silence that filled the room and the pastor thought it was fair to continue but, before he could, Joan abruptly shouted... "I OBJECT!"

An echo of gasps and murmuring could be heard through the venue.

Andrea slowly turned to her best friend with a look that could kill.

Joan in shock of her own actions ran off.

Andrea turned to look at her fiancé, who looked back like a deer caught in the headlights, hoping that this was an illusion, that she was daydreaming, anything but this being her reality. Tears pooled her eyes as she stormed off to the dressing room as everyone in the venue watched in pity.

Rome stood in place, his feet felt as if they were buried in cement. He felt his throat tighten with fear – he knew that today was the day she would find out his horrible secret.

As she paced back and forth in her dressing room, Andrea tried to keep herself composed. The tears were too much to hold back now. As she went to sit down in her chair, she noticed the picture of her Ma and Pa. It would've been 35 years of them being married next month. She wanted what they had, and thought she did, but obviously not. I mean, why would her best object...why? She pondered in her head raking through her brain for any answers.

Hearing a knock on the door, she gave a faint, "Come in," to which she was faced with a jittery Joan.

Joan wasted no time explaining herself, "Look it's time I tell you the truth about some things," her voice croaked with sadness. She went on to tell her about her and Rome's infidelity, the gifts, how they managed to spend time, even helped him pick out my rings.

She told me every little detail that slipped past me, that I didn't pay attention to. The deceit and feeling of betrayal that rang through my body and I couldn't bear to hear her speak of such an unloyal act. Her childhood best friend and high school sweetheart had did the unthinkable for years and this is how she wanted to tell me? The day where I think I want to spend the rest of my life with him? Did she want to sabotage me? Was it out of jealousy?

My mind was too overstimulated with many emotions. My fight or flight kicked in and I just took off.

I didn't stop until I bumped into Maria. She tried calming me but I couldn't stay here, I had to leave.

I just handed her my ring and continued running, ignoring her pleads to compromise...she couldn't believe it.

This is The End.



Untitled

The morning of my uncle's funeral, I woke up sadder than I had been all week because today was the day. Today was the day I'd watch a door close on him, he'd be lowered into the ground and I would never see him face to face ever again. I'd never hear his laugh, his singing voice or the sarcasm everyone loved so much.

I put on the blue shirt my grandma bought me, a pair of black jeans and some blue flats I found in my closet. Blue was his favorite color so all of the immediate family dressed in either navy or royal blue. My mom did my hair in a way he used to love and I waited for the limo and everyone else to get ready.

My older sister and grandma had been staying with us during this time so I had nothing to myself, not that I minded. My younger sister and I shared our rooms along with everything else. Only part I hated about sharing was that we only have one bathroom, so that was a pain. I had gotten accustomed to them being in the house with us, I actually enjoyed all the company. It was one of my saddest, but less lonely moments.

Everyone was finally ready to go. My aunts and uncles and everyone else who was riding in the limo with us arrived outside my house and got inside of our ride. It was a quiet drive. Everyone was too sad to speak, so very few words were said.

While in the limo I noticed that this was the first time since the night we found out, I'd actually seen my mother cry. She was so busy trying to make sure everyone else was alright, she didn't have much grieving time for herself. She sat with her head resting on my father's shoulder and cried silently.

My sisters and I finally broke the silence and started speaking to our brothers. I don't remember the exact conversation we had, but I do remember it lifted the mood a bit.

We arrived at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church on Adams Street and just waited. Everyone else had to be inside first and get seated before we could go in. It felt like the longest wait ever. We finally got out of the limo and stood in the hallway. The doors to the sanctuary were closed so I couldn't see anyone inside.

More waiting.

We were put into a line so we could view his body before sitting. They opened the sanctuary doors and I suddenly felt my heart drop into my stomach. My sisters were holding my hands and I felt like I was going to vomit. I hadn't even seen him yet, and tears began to fall down my face. A rush of sadness. The talking and laughing we did in the parking lot didn't matter anymore. I was back to being sad, feeling broken. It was like my world was ending and there was absolutely nothing I could do about it. We got up closer to the body and I could see him. Lying lifeless in the casket. He didn't even look like himself. Make-up on his body, looking so dull. That is NOT the uncle Marvi I knew and loved. My mother asked me if I wanted to lean down and give him a kiss. Of course not. That's not him anymore. No soul, no organs, no anything. Just an

empty shell of a person I used to know. I bawled my eyes out. Gut wrenching pain seeing him like that. He was a vibrant man, so full of life. This person right here? That isn't uncle Marvi.

We sat down in the second row while everyone else viewed his body. I remember sitting in between my mom and aunt. Looking around, there were at least three to four hundred people there... and that's not exaggerating. He touched so many people in his lifetime of course it'd be packed like that.

The service started and there was a lot of singing, a lot of talking and a lot of preaching. I fell asleep a few times because it was a very long service and my eyes were heavy from all of the crying. In and out of sleep, I remembered our happy memories.

My favorite memories were the time we spent in Daytona, him coming to Rochester on surprise visits from Orlando, and him singing happy birthday very dramatically to me every year on my birthday. When we went to Daytona Beach, he made it the best time. We swam, played in the sand, watched the color changing lights that were on the hotel and the fireworks in the distance, all while coming up with weird songs I don't remember.

He moved to Orlando, Florida about 2-3 years before he passed. He would often come back to Rochester without notice and surprise my sister and I by picking us up from school. After getting us in the car, he'd make it feel like a roller coaster. Swerving back and forth, pushing on the gas then on the breaks but only when there were no other cars around.

The last memory that was my favorite was my 11th birthday. I remembered him grabbing my arms and singing happy birthday with all my family around me. Very off key even though we all knew he could actually sing.

He meant so much to me because being around him, we always had fun. He always treated me, my siblings and cousins as equals, never belittling or talking down to us because we were children. He was the type of person you couldn't be mad around, he was a walking light.

I wanted this service to be finished. I started getting hungry and could tell that everyone was agitated.

The service finally finished and I watched them roll his casket outside and into the long, black hearse which looked like an oddly shaped limo.

We went to the cemetery, and the limo was our ride. We exited the car to walk over to the huge hole in the ground.

Freezing, a few of us tried to make light of the situation, saying sorry to all the dead guys we were stepping on to get the tent that was over his casket. Someone, I can't remember who, was quoting some bible scriptures, and saying some other beautiful things when finally, they lowered his body down into the 6 feet that was previously dug out. We all took turns putting dirt onto his casket then turned to leave. As we began to leave, I thought about the relationship I'd had with him and how I didn't have that relationship with any other uncle. I was grateful for the time I did have with

him, but I wished I had more. Getting to grow up with a man who treated me as if I were his own daughter made me feel light hearted. He was honestly like a second father. Not many people got to experience that feeling and it made me happy that I was one of the few who got to experience it.

After our final moments with uncle Marvi, we went to the repass which was held at Miracle Valley Deliverance City, the church we used to attend. Sat through yet another very long prayer, then we all ate. The day wasn't so bad after that. My siblings and I all chilled at home afterwards just doing some reminiscing, snack eating and movie watching. After this day we realized we shouldn't take anything for granted, because it could be gone in an instant.

Losing uncle Marvi changed me because ever since, I have had a different outlook on life. That was the first time I saw a casket door close on someone I was truly close to. I try to not hold grudges with anyone and always forgive where forgiveness is due, it could be someone's last moments and you'd never get the chance to make things right.





Feelings I obtain when I wear your wool
Who knew that I could love something as small,
My heart, overflowing weighing so full
I didn't know I could feel this at all

An overwhelming sense of protection
In ways, I couldn't have told you were true,
Picking your style conveys my feminine
A gold star for your overall review

Encased in your fabric, I can be hot
Sometimes creating a battle of strings,
Although I'm strongly urged to forget knot
My personal acceptance of these things

Although simply you're one of my chief loves
How enamored I've become with your fuzz





Unknown Silhouette

Every time I close my eyes I find a silhouette of a man.
A silhouette with censored eyes that accompanies me in my darkest dreams.
That silhouette with a beautiful personality, soft hands like a baby's and an elegant walk.

The one I miss every time I wake up. It comes back in every dream that I have to make me laugh, so as not to see me cry anymore.

When we sit in a corner, I tell him that I wish I could meet someone like him. But my expectations are very high. Someone like him could never come. Because sometimes we fall in love with dreams and not with people.

I'm curious to know whose silhouette this is. That is why I try to make a puzzle in my mind. Looking to figure out: who is that person behind that mysterious silhouette?

The puzzle doesn't fit and I lose hope more and more.

The hope of knowing who that person is. Could it be that I know him?

Have I met glances with him?

Have I spoken to him?

I don't have many questions. Questions without answers and doubts that bring more doubts. I want to find it but where do I start?

I feel trapped in a cloud of questions and doubts. So much is my desire to know who it is? So much is my loneliness, could it be that I feel alone?

I ask myself the question but I can't find an answer. But deep down the answer is 'yes,' I feel alone.

Wanting to feel someone's warmth is a nice thing. I want to feel your hands warm. Those hands that you want to hold tightly to you. Those hands that you want to rub your hair until you fall asleep.

But I still haven't found the owner of the silhouette.

That kills me with curiosity. Of desire to be able to hug him and talk with him. To be able to touch his face, his warm hands and his soft hair. To also finally look him in the eye.

But could that person exist?

Will I ever meet him?

I want to know, I am very curious. I want to be able to look him in the eye. I want to look at the sparkle in his eyes. Touch his face and stay awake looking at him for hours and hours.

But that is something that, in time, I will have to find out. Start from scratch and collect clues again.

I began to see many people. Looking for the one that most closely resembles the silhouette is tiring. I've been a long way and I'm already tired. Tired of walking, looking everywhere. Let's see if I can find someone who looks like him. It is an impossible mission.

But I am willing to keep looking. Keep going until you find it.

Today, Friday the 12th, is a normal school day. I was walking down the hallways heading towards a classroom. When suddenly I feel a strong tension behind me. I turn to look but look down at the ground. When I look at the ground I stop to look at his silhouette and it is the same as my dreams.

My heart began to beat very hard and I became very nervous.

Is this a dream?

Did I really find it?

I met my sister and we both walked to the field. On the way I asked her if she knew the boy in front of his classroom and she said yes.

That day there was a volleyball game. When we get to the court to watch the game, I look to the side and see him sitting, waiting to play. And I will support him and his team at all times.

When the weekend came, I kept thinking about him and dreaming about him.

But his silhouette was still with his eyes censored without being able to see them.

Why?

Why did I have to look at the ground?

I should have looked into his eyes without being afraid. To be able to look at the sparkle. To be able to admire his face and his smile.

But I was scared. I didn't have the courage to do it and fear won me over.

I want to look him in the eyes, speak to him, listen to his voice and contemplate his whole being. I want to be your friend, and have you tell me about your life and how your day was. I want to know what you like, what you do in your free time. Your favorite movie... in short, I want to know everything.

It is strange since the owner of the silhouette is a person who at first did not like me.

I looked at him with a look full of hatred and felt no attraction for him.

Although I still say that I have no attraction for him, I secretly think it.

But when I run into it in the hallways, it's like it doesn't exist for me. I don't want to make him see that I'm attracted to him.

Although what I feel is not attraction. It is only curious to know it and to know if it is like the one in my dreams.

I found him, but what do I do if he doesn't talk to me?

What do I do if I don't dare to speak to him?

Make a decision and put everything aside?

I will let the fantasy continue. May curiosity fade and may everything I set out to just end up in the trash. I don't want to have any false illusions. The only thing I will stay with is to admire him from afar.



Sonnet to Myself

Words are just symbols that float through my head
Their emotions gleam through like shattered glass
Keep busy with paper and pens instead
Of waiting around for the time to pass

Light hiding behind clouds dark and disdain
Still with the strength to move past chaos and woe
Rapidly new information obtain
Go and teach others with what I now know

Quite often I wait for things to look up
Dispatch a disguise and hide in abyss
bury my feelings until they erupt
Lose all the tasks my mind seems to dismiss

Though inside my head it's a constant fight
I know in the end I'll turn out alright



