

*Inner Beauty*



*Dreams*

# Wilson High School 2023-2024 Literary Journal

## “Dreams”

### Contributors:

“The Unknown” La’emiah Baker.....(Illustration)	Page 2
Saw Ba Blut.....	Page 3
“Past Remain” Khaung Shu .....(Sculpture)	Page 4
‘Terza Rima” Krystalee Cruz Sepulveda .....	Page 5
“Future” Eh Ser Ya.....(Illustration)	Page 5
“Sista Willow” Olivia Patterson.....(Sculpture)	Page 6
Cynai Morgan.....	Page 7
“To Me” James Preston.....	Page 8
“Pleasant Gloom” Isabela Grimsley.....(Illustration)	Page 8
“De Donde Vengo/Where I Come From” Santiago Gonzalez Robles.....	Page 9
“Beyond” Linda Lu.....(Sculpture)	Page 9
‘Sonnet’ Saw Ba Blut.....	Page 10
“Journey” Eh Ser Ya.....(Illustration)	Page 10
“Right Here, Right Now” Ny’Sean Buchanon.....	Page 11
“Nature’s Future” Samira Mohamed .....	Page 13
“Soulful Eden” Janai Blake.....(Photo)	Page 14
“Spring Cleaning” James Preston.....	Page 15
“Pile” Edward Caine.....(Sculpture)	Page 15
Jayde Kelly.....	Page 16
‘Terza Rima’ Ny’Sean Buchanon .....	Page 17
“Avarice” James Preston.....(Sculpture)	Page 17
“Where I Come From” Nezami Rahmatullah.....	Page 18
“Like A Dream” Isabela Grimsley.....(Illustration)	Page 18
“Party of the Century” Krystalee Cruz Sepulveda.....	Page 19
“Joker” Wiljenber Rozo Medina.....(Illustration)	Page 22
“The Power of Emotion” Sohil Rai.....(Sculpture)	Page 23

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On the island, under the ocean blue sky with clouds that parted with the seagulls that flocked from the shattering earthquakes, sending waves of the seas crashing towards the shores of every chain of islands from every mainland, I spawned.

The bright sun glowed on my green skin as I followed them to the ship dock, lacking ships and people.

There was a man with a green circle surrounding him that prevented his character from moving. He dressed of a merchant with a sailor's hat and stood beside his fish and rum.

"Sir, sir, Grant us a ship!" My brother gave the man four thousand berries for his service then a large wooden vessel with wide sails appeared out of nowhere on the dock, floating on the water's surface. Awaiting the crew for our voyage.

"Set sails!" We boarded and my brother took the helm.

Above the crows nest our Jolly Roger waved, a four eyed skeleton with two bones that crossed. The sails dropped and the ship sailed, gliding smoothly across the open sea of clear crystal water which the ship's bow divided.

In the waters, the fishes swim against the current of the ship's stream. The merchant with the sailor's hat stood on the island behind us that disappeared out of our sight, in front of us, a ship sailed.

"Enemy ahead!" We caught sight of a lonely ship in the lonely waters.

The crew on board fired at us as we approached. My cousin unsheathed his sword and jumped into the sky. He slashed and cut at the air, red waves of strike charged at the ship and damaged the crew. As he landed on the water, the sea froze into an icy glacier floor under his steps which he used to board the ship.

"He's got a devil fruit!" they typed in the chat.

"Attack!" The chat spammed.

As their ship began to sink, their captain rose with flaming hands and scorched our ship, burning all of us alive in a fiery inferno.

"We gotta fight as a team!" my brother yelled after our defeat.

We lifted our heads from our screens, disappointed at one another as we continued to our next class on our computers, hiding our cameras from the teachers.

In my room, we sat wrapped in our own blankets, covering ourselves from the chill creeping in, leaving frost on my silvery window. Bags of open chips, candy wrappers and unfinished drinks littered around us as we huddled by the warmth of the air vent, a blue screen in our faces as we boarded the ship and hunted for the dragon fruit that dropped after a pirate's death.

"He dropped it! Go get it!" The chat spammed after hearing about the battle that took place on the marine island.

Pirates and marines raced across the great ocean, from storms and windless seas, hurried to claim the fruit. Muskets fired and cannons exploded as we approached the island. Hundreds of ships crowded the waters as if forming an island of their own, swords clung and clashed, slashing and cutting into flesh and bone.

The sea formed into a bloodbath of corpses that's attracted the hungry sharks that lurked and devoured the pirates and marines casted overboard.

Devil fruit users fought on the land and among each other, their special powers of light and shadows destroyed entire ships and buildings into rubble.

We reached the island and passed the chaos of slaughter. As we searched for the fruit, we encountered the pirate crews who attacked with their pistols and swords and powers of thunder and lightning.

My fingers slid across the screen, tapping on my selection of attacks, my avatar created a sand tornado that lifted their crew and sucked them in the attack until they're weakened.

"Whitebeard has spawned," was written in the chat.

In the center of the island, The pirate captain Whitebeard appeared, and stood at twice the size of the average man, a white coat hanging on his shoulder and, in his hand, he held a large naginata, a spear-like weapon with a long continuous black line spiraled around its staff that reached his shoulder with a large white silver blade that's as big as his head where a big white mustache curved like a smile planted.

Earthquakes erupted and cracked the island as players attacked the boss without avail. The chat spammed their deaths, one by hundreds, dying by a single punch and slash of his weapon.

We hid in the alleys of the buildings, afraid of what could happen. Outside, we could hear the ruckus of

the fight, the brave died like fools and the cowards shaking in their holes, hidden from struggle.

“We can’t hide here forever,” my cousin said, “What do we do?” my younger brother asked.

“Find the fruit, we’ll hold them off,” my brother said to my cousin and my younger brother as he took charge.

I followed him out to battle.

“Kill him! Kill Whitebeard!” They allied among each other in the chat, the entire server fighting as one to defeat this overpowered boss.

A phoenix flew above the red brick buildings, its colors of golden and ocean blue shining like a star in the ice and fire that formed from the players. He struck the boss with his attack and pushed him against the hill as the players began to jump on him and fight him until he’s on his knees and on his last few bars of health.

“Tsunami!”

Whitebeard ripped into the air, cracking its fabric, pulling the island apart and sending waves crashing in causing a large tsunami, larger than the mountains of the island, rush towards us, drowning almost all the devil fruit users, pirates, and marines.

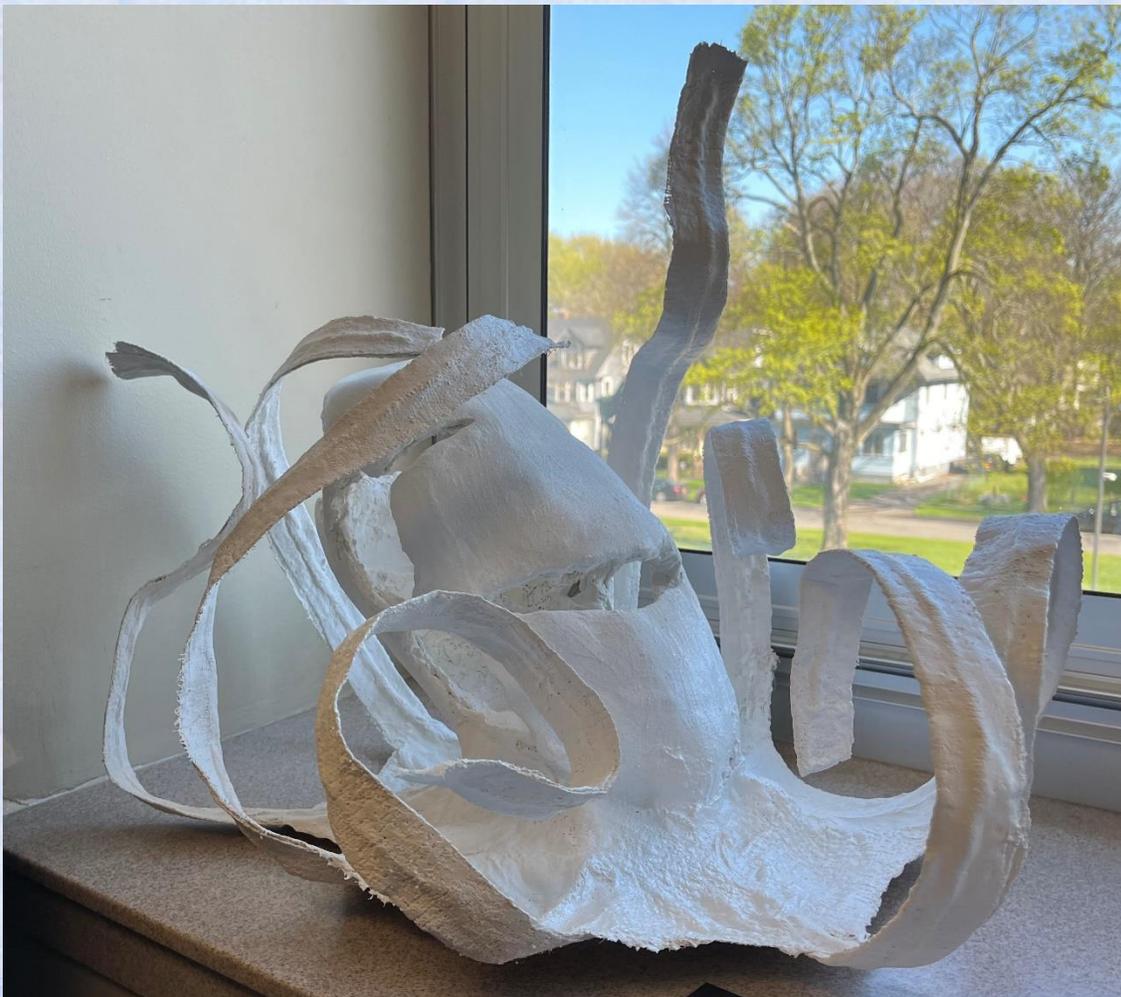
Clouds darkened the sky and covered the bright yellow sun. Upon our struggle to fight, Whitebeard stood firmly with his blade, cutting down the survivors who were too weak to escape from his wrath.

“I got it!” my younger brother said, eating the dragon fruit.

In our despair, the dragon with its flaming tail rose above the dark clouds and swept down, breathing its fiery breath towards Whitebeard who looked like a small sheep compared to his adversary.

His fire burned Whitebeard and took his last few bars of health as the chat exploded with, “He’s dead! Yay!”

We jumped and hugged each other, leaving the phones behind as well as our teachers, calling for us on the computers.



I have been familiar with my own dreams.  
I escaped reality and walked back.  
I've seen it all, I've felt the break of seams.

Nightmares are dreams we decide to attack.  
I have had nightmares. I have seen visions.  
Visions of terror, of gray, of pitch black.

I am confused, stuck in a division.  
The home in my head is safe...and more clear.  
I am afraid dreams will be gone and done.

As much as I wish, I can't be a deer.  
I cannot escape and run in the dark.  
Every time tried, random thoughts just appear.

I know I have strength, have ability.  
My mind can be my safe spot, my safe place.  
A powerful will to live and study.

I have a dream, a dream I can go chase.  
The world has me in chains, I hold the reins.  
And this feeling, this freedom, can't be changed.





The hair seemed to tangle so much and, in the moment, I contemplated putting it down and saying forget it. Looking back I should have taken that as my sign to leave it alone and do it some other time. The water switched between hot and cold different mixtures of shampoos and conditioners trying to configure what would work better to get this curly ball of falsely claimed human hair to detangle. It seems as though I just made matters worse.

The way the kitchen sinks are set up is built in with two sinks side by side, I'm on one side fighting with this hair from hell while on the other side there's dinner defrosting. In the midst of me doing the hair in the kitchen sink I was detangling the hair so hard and rough that some of the suds from the product got into the water for the meat. Of course I noticed the suds in the water and I had planned to get them cleaned up.

Chloe, my oldest sister, walks into the kitchen. I see out of the corner of my eye as she observes the "mess" I've just created.

"I'm hungry, can you hurry up?" she says with no patience at all in her voice, almost as if she was rushing me to go now.

I was so into it I brushed her off with a quick, "Just a second I'm almost finished."

Her face scrunched up and her body stiffened up as she got into her 'did you seriously just tell me to wait stance.' Of course, I see her out the corner of my eye and, with every strand of control in my body, pettily continued doing what I was doing, making her stand there longer than she could hold.

After what seemed like eternity she states again, "I said I'm hungry. You need to move," with a more authoritative voice with a little more aggression.

The tone in her voice made me stop in my tracks, "I just told you after I'm finished with this I would move and clean up. With you talking over me I bet you didn't hear me."

Her face filled the color of a ready to pick tomato in picking season. She reached her hand over me and turned off the sink water I had running while detangling the hair. Without hesitation I snatched the faucet back and tried to continue detangling the hair but, before I could she pushed me, knocking my balance off quite a bit.

To say I was infuriated was the least. I was tired of my older sister trying to take the place of my mother even though my mom was right there. Besides that fact, I hated that my mom never corrected my sister and only backed her up... even when she was wrong. It pissed me off even more when my mom added her input as if I wasn't already on the verge of tears from the push.

That was my last straw. I screamed at the top of my lungs for her to never put her hands on me again. As I made my way into the bathroom that was just off of the kitchen, still infuriated, she continued to talk smack while I walked away, "You shouldn't have been in the kitchen in the first place."

"You're crying cause your mad."

Then my mom butts in, "Cynai, you know you shouldn't have been doing hair in the sink. That's unsanitary."

In my mind, I'm losing it but physically I'm trying my best to keep my composure because I'm about to lose my marbles.

I grew tired of it all. I say I'm over it and I stop, drop the hair where it is, and go upstairs while still hysterically crying, packing my stuff up. I already had plans to go out but I was for sure not coming back tonight. I finished packing and left them to deal with my problem.

## TO ME

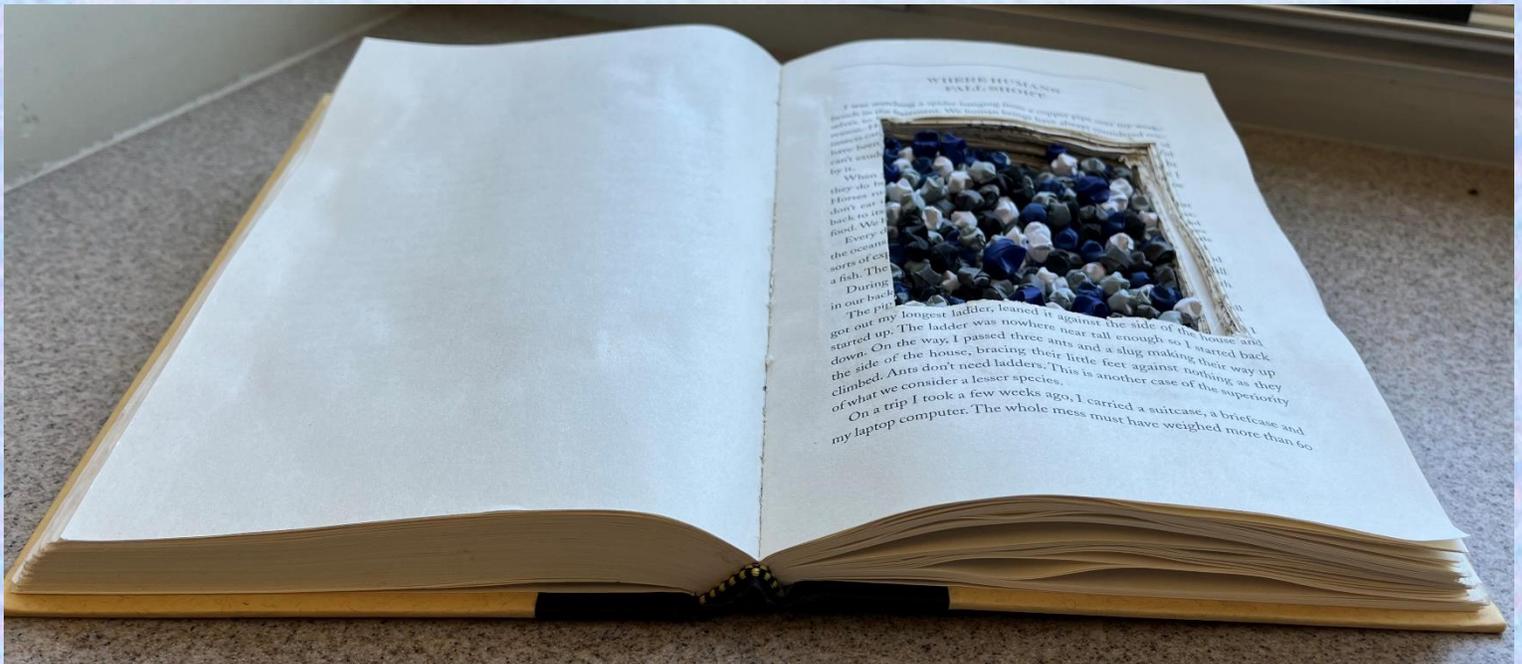
to me he is the sun.  
bright and warm  
everything he touches seems to shine  
a brilliant storm of fire  
to shield me from the frost  
i love the way he smiles  
like every beautiful thing in the world is painted across my face  
to me he is the sun.  
a searing warmth that melts the wax of my wings  
at times i think it would be better to brave the cold  
to hide beneath the shadow of a cloud and to pull the darkness close to my chest  
but then the chill bites at my bones  
and I find myself again in his light  
to me he is the sun.  
so close yet so far away  
just beyond the tip of my tongue, scraping against my teeth  
i cannot hold him close, the heat is too much to bear  
and even far away he burns his smile into my skin  
melting the skin from my bones  
to me he is the sun.  
to look at him is agony,  
his brilliance is beyond blinding  
a star I can never touch  
to me  
to me  
to me he is the sun.



## De Donde Vengo/Where I Come From

I'm from Maracaibo, Venezuela,  
A place of maximum beauty, full of gentle people  
I'm from a beautiful city,  
Full of culture and traditions,  
A place, where in December,  
We honor the Virgin de La Chinita.  
I am from the Robles and a hard working family.  
From Mariel and Wolfgang.  
I am from a gentle and hard working family.  
From the tallest grandson and the darkest child.  
I'm from a very Catholic family.  
I'm from Maracaibo, Venezuela,  
I love arepas, cachapas, patacones, etc.  
From the death of my uncle,  
A person who helped shape the person I am today.

Soy de Maracaibo, Venezuela,  
Un lugar de suma,  
Belleza en donde todos somos personas amables.  
Soy de una ciudad con bella culturas y tradiciones,  
Un lugar en donde cada diciembre celebran a la virgen.  
Soy de Los Robles unos y familia trabajadora y fuerte  
De mi madre Mariel y mi padre Wolfgang.  
Soy de una familia trabajador y amable  
De que creció como el nieto más alto de la familia.  
Soy de Catolico una religion que me inculcaron de niño  
Soy de Maracaibo, Venezuela, familia Robles y Gonzalez  
De las arepas, cachapas, patacones, comida tradicional  
Desde la muerte de mi tío Manuel, una persona que  
Me enseñó a ser quien soy en la actualidad.



Midnight alone in the darkness a bore  
Tiredness has not yet arrived to doze;  
Falling to wonderland would be a chore  
But in this moment, whatever goes, goes

Pictures in mind are all I can think of  
Of trees, and seas defiled by chaos  
Stories of heartache and stories of love  
Stories of heroes stricken with loss

Excitement is short for the search is long  
Time is dying and I am uncertain  
To stay a while awake to hear a song  
Of the sun singing gold through the curtain

Searching is not long and boredom will cure  
A Galaxy far away will assure.



## Right Here; Right Now

It was a morning like every other morning, me and my brother would wake up to our dad in the doorway saying, “get up time for school.”

But, I mean, what kid gets up right away when they are told to?

But my dad seemed upset that morning and we didn't want to hear him scream so we got up and got ready.

As I'm getting ready I think to myself about the dream I had last night: it was scary but at the same time I heard a voice say, “Keep going – It might be scary now but it'll be worth it in the end.”

What did it mean?

Before I could even answer, my dad said we have fifteen minutes so I threw on my clothes and searched for my backpack. As I looked for my bag, I passed my parents room to see my mom sleeping, which is understandable because it was six in the morning plus she hadn't been feeling that well for the past couple of days. I find my bag and head outside with my brother to go wait for the bus.

We get home and I put my backpack in my room and head to my parents and notice mom is still in bed. My dad wakes her up and tells her she needs to eat something because she hasn't eaten due to her not having an appetite.

I make her a cup of ramen because, if she won't eat the noodles, she can at least drink some broth.

She takes three bites and says she's full before she ends up throwing it all back up.

I get nervous because I freak out when people throw up so my dad says he will take care of it and tells me to go back to my room.

I eat some candy and watch YouTube.

My dad comes in and tells my little brother to get ready because he has a wrestling meet tonight. They get ready to go but, before they leave, my dad tells me to go sit with my mom until he gets back just in case she needs something.

I climb in bed with my mom and lay on her thigh while I watch tv. Time passes and my mom says she needs to use the bathroom. She stands up but her face gets a little pale so she sits back down.

She didn't make it to the bathroom in time so I grabbed a rag and a towel to help her clean up. I handed her a change of clothes and I saw a tear in her eye so I asked, “what's wrong mommy?”

She tells me she's embarrassed that her child has to help her clean up herself.

I reassure her that it's not a big deal and I'll do anything for her because she's my mom.

She lays back down and falls asleep so I continue to watch tv until my dad gets home.

I heard the steps and the door and my dad comes in and asks if everything was ok and I tell him what happened while he was gone. He freaks out and tells my mom to wake up so they can go to the hospital. She looks at me and my brothers nervous face and says no but she will go tomorrow morning. My dad was fine with that and told me and my brother to go to sleep because we have school tomorrow.

I head to my room but get a weird feeling in my stomach. I ignore it and lay in bed but, before I fall asleep, I go to my parents room and hug my mom goodnight and kiss her cheek and tell her I love her. She smiles and I tell my dad I love him and goodnight.

That night while laying in bed I felt lost and confused. I began to just talk to God while I looked out the window. I tell him about life so far, but I mean you can't really keep any secrets from God so I tell him about healing my mom and making her feel better because I hated seeing her like that. I tell him to also heal her because my birthday was coming up and I knew she was planning something special. We talk a little bit more before I say amen and fall asleep.

I don't remember my dream from that night, I just remember seeing black.

The next day comes and my dad's alarm never went off so he woke us up late. He was upset because we would have to get dropped off at school instead of him and my mom going straight to the hospital.

Me and my brother get up but instead of getting ready we begin to play fight with each other. We continue to play fight until I hear my dad saying, “babe wake up,” a lot more than he should be.

I go into the hallway, stand in my parents doorway and see my dad trying to wake my mom up but she's not moving at all. His voice gets louder and louder but also more worrisome. He rolls her over and I see her eyes

roll back and mucus come from her nose and mouth. My heart drops and I'm terrified but sad but angry and confused at the same time. I run to the steps and begin to scream and cry.

That's when my aunt and uncle open the front door because they live in the apartment underneath us. She asks me what's wrong and I try my best to speak but nothing is coming out. She freaks out and tells me to breathe then tell her. I breathe then all I could tell her was, "mommy isn't waking up and I think she's dead." She screams what and runs by me to my parent's room and I hear her scream and freak out.

We go to my aunt's apartment and sit on her couch and all you can hear is crying and screaming from me and my brothers and from the adults upstairs. I don't know if she was dead or in a coma, I just remember praying to God that she's in a coma and not dead so she will still be here with us. We continue to cry and we see the ambulance and police pull up.

I can't stand being inside so I step outside and see my aunt so I go up to her and she looks at me while crying and says, "Baby I'm so sorry." Immediately I scream and freak out when she wraps her arms around me and tries to calm me down but I can't hold back anything anymore so I keep screaming. I just keep thinking to myself about how so many bad things happened the night before, the party, mommy was throwing up, dad's alarm never went off, and so many other things.

I see my grandmother's car pull up and my older brother gets out with tears pouring out his eyes and I go up and give him a hug. It's strange because I was never that close with my older brother. We used to fight all the time and rarely had that many heartfelt moments but I didn't wanna pick fights with him anymore. I wanted to let him know I love him and it'll be okay. My uncle came downstairs and told me and my brother to get in our grandmother's car because we were going to the store. At the time I never knew why we had to leave. But we went to the gas station and each got a drink, we drove around for a little bit then headed back to the house, most of the police and ambulance had left.

I didn't wanna be outside so I headed upstairs to go in my room but, as I was walking to my room and passed my parents' room, the room felt so empty. My mom was no longer there. The happiness was gone and the room no longer felt like a room. It felt like a void.

I wanted to walk in the room but I just couldn't so I stood in the door and looked around the room as memories with my mother came flooding back to me. All I could do was cry and cry and cry. That's all you heard from everywhere: crying, screaming, anger.

I go to my room and lay in my bed and my cries are no longer loud but my pillow becomes darkened from the tears soaking it.

All I could think about is how I saw my mother last night and she was alive and sleeping. To see my mother's body on the bed this morning... it's a memory that I'll never be able to forget. It's burned into my brain and it haunts me when I'm alone with my thoughts.

I stop crying and lay in bed. I feel empty. Like I'm just a shell with no emotions. I just wanna keep them shut off so I can't feel the pain anymore.

I see my aunt from my mom's side pull up in the driveway. She gets out and all the feelings I pushed down come right back up so my tears come back and I run and hug her. Her light gray t-shirt already had a dark gray spot from her tears. She hugs me tight and tells me to look at her. I look up while crying and she tells me, "Listen, you gotta be strong. We will get through this. We have to be strong." But as she's telling me I see all the tears and pain in her face. She heads upstairs and talks to the adults before coming back down and says she's going to the store. My brothers and I hop in her car to go with her because we don't wanna be there anymore.

We come back and I head upstairs and see some of my mom's friends who we called our aunts. They see me and give me a hug and look at me and smile. I stare back confused and they say I look just like her and they see her in me at all times. I smile and go to head back to my room when my dad hands me the phone – it's relatives saying their condolences and asking if I need anything. I say no and give my dad his phone back. My dad's face is all red from crying all day so I give him a hug to let him know it's gonna be okay.

My other aunt from my mom's side pulls up with my nana and I give my aunt a hug and run to my nana to give her the biggest hug ever. I was extremely close with my nana so we sat in the car and cried together. I think to myself about how sad me and my brother are after losing our mom but then I think about how sad my nana must be after losing a daughter. And how sad my aunts must be after losing a sister. Or my dad who lost a wife. Or my "aunts" who lost a best friend. I never realized how many lives were affected by my mother.

I just wish she knew how much love people had for her and continue to have for her.

Night comes and me and my brother are in the kitchen, our aunts brought us food but no one really ate it. I sat at the table but every time it got quiet I just kept crying and having to leave the room and come back.

It's just hard to think about how my mother is no longer with us anymore. I go to the car with my nana and my dad comes downstairs with a box and hands it to me. I see some shirts and toys and a pair of character slippers and was confused. He tells me these were some of the gifts my mother was gonna give to me on my birthday. I start to cry and scream because she's not here to give me the gifts or celebrate my 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Everyone begins to go home or to a hotel and I head back upstairs and I head to my parents room but hesitate before I walk in. My dad's standing by the bed and staring at the floor. I step in and ask why he's staring at the floor. He tells me they put my mom there and tried to use a defibrillator on her.

I stare at the floor and just feel empty. I begin to cry again and my dad hugs me and says it'll be okay.

That night me and my little brother slept in the parents' bed. It felt so strange lying in that bed. That night no one really slept.

We have my mom's funeral and I see a whole bunch of people. Some I know, some I don't. It's time for it to start and I sit by my aunt.

I cry and my aunt hugs me and rubs my shoulder.

It's time for people to come up and talk. I want to but I can't get myself out of my chair. Part of me regrets it but, at the same time, I don't wanna say that much because half of the people at the funeral claim to have been there for us but they weren't.

After the funeral people come up to us and say they will be there for us and if we need anything ask them. Plot twist: they weren't there and they didn't help us.

I go back to school and it's all eyes on me in class. I hear some whispers and see people just staring at me. My teacher tells me I can sit at the big table and put my head down if I need to and tells me he's sorry for my loss.

The school year goes on and I just keep to myself, I feel alone and lost and scared.

At the end of the school year, I'm happy. It feels nice to be happy instead... but it's not long till the sadness takes over... which is then taken over by anger... and I don't wanna hurt anyone's feelings so I usually stay in my room.

There were times where I lashed out at people that I didn't mean to – turns out I inherited my mom's bipolar issues with a mixture of depression. A lot goes through my mind and, when I'm alone with my thoughts, I tended to harm myself just to feel something else. I did it a lot and honestly didn't even care about the consequences because I was ready to go and be back with my mom.

But I lived and kept pushing.

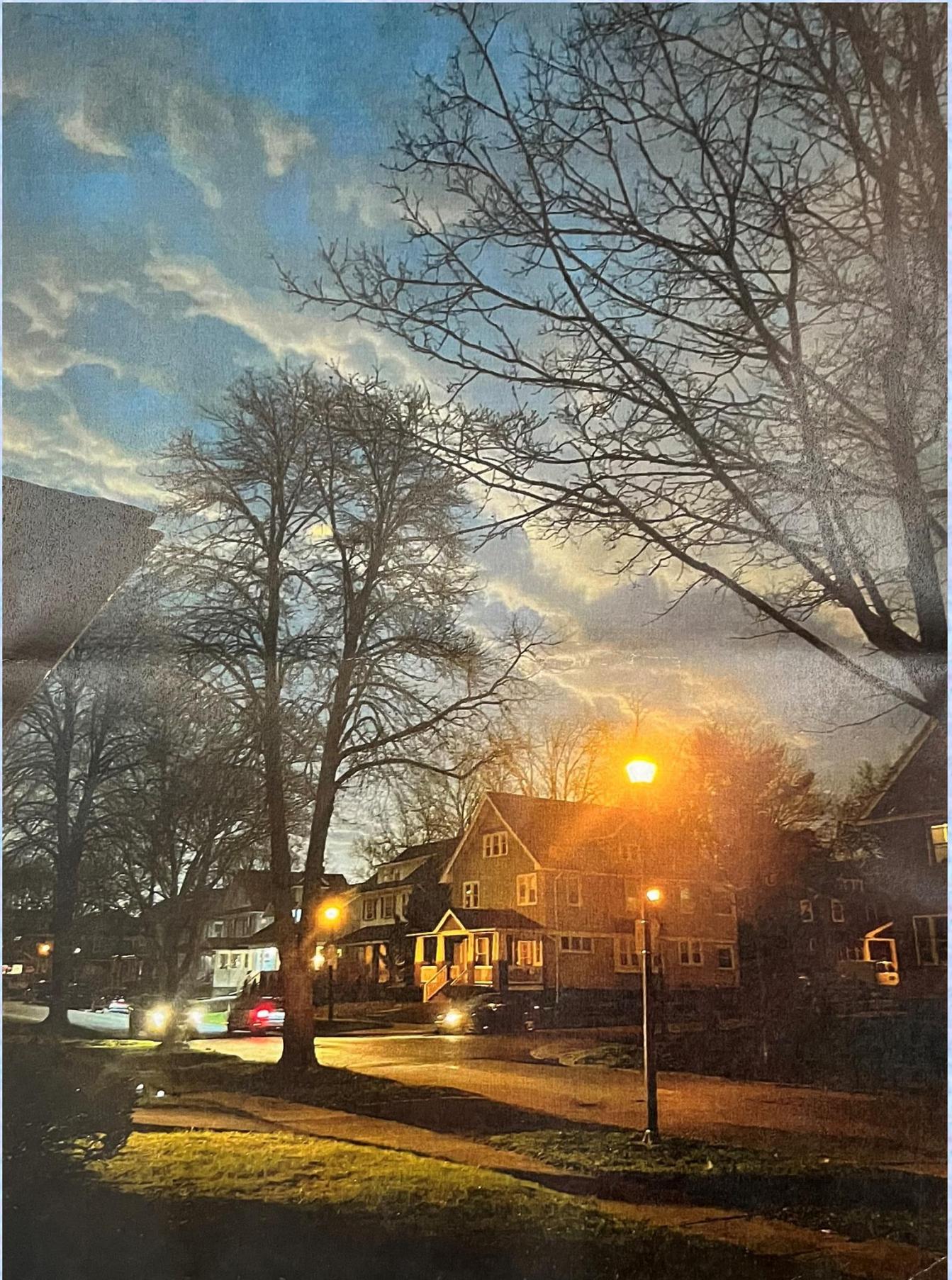
I'm still pushing to this day. I'm still trying to be the best that I can be.

But sometimes I mess up... and that's fine.

Because what I learned is that I'm human. I needed to let go because everything that I can have is all right here.

Right now.





## Spring Cleaning

I cleaned my room yesterday  
Under my bed I found a pile of wonder  
It was smaller than I remembered  
Covered in dust and faded in hue  
Underneath the desk there was a box  
I opened up and found  
All the things I used to love  
Magic wands and trading cards  
Strawberry cake and broken wristwatches  
Behind my door there was a bag  
Old and worn, weathered by time  
Spilling from the seams  
Were all the dreams I'd ever had  
They filled my hands and broke the skin  
On my shelf I saw a book  
Written on the yellowing paper  
Were all the things I used to hate  
Towers of broccoli and rivers of math homework  
Ticking clocks and loose bike chains  
I scooped them up into my palm  
They used to loom over me  
It was strange to see them look so small  
In my drawer there was a list  
Of all the things I'd ever lost  
For better or for worse  
Friends that said goodbye  
Family that never got the chance to  
Headphones and crumpled dollar bills  
Love letters and cell phone chargers  
They crawled their way into my throat  
And choked the tears out of my eyes  
Stuffed in the back of the closet  
I found myself  
His knees hugged tightly against his chest  
His eyes wet with despair  
We sat together in the dark  
He did not know my name  
Perhaps because it had changed so much  
Since he was last alive  
I cleaned my room yesterday  
I gathered it all into my arms  
And tucked it behind my beating heart



I had a JV Volleyball game at 5:30 and me and my teammates were excited and ready for our homecoming game. We burst out of the locker room, running around the lines of the volleyball court with posters in our hands and above our heads. I look into the stands and see so many familiar faces all over. As my eyes hover over to the middle of the stands I see my mother, father, and grandmother all sitting together in the stand. This threw my brain off for a little while because it made me wonder why they were talking... this wasn't something I would see too often.

Me and my team played a hard and strong game against Churchville Chili and ended up winning by two points. Everyone cheered and shouted out me and my teammates' names. It was like a moment of glorious fame. As the game came to an end, we lined up to shake hands with the other team and ran off into the locker room jumping and cheering. The coach told us we would be having a mini pizza party at our practice on Saturday and we all cheered and took pictures in the joy of our win.

As I and my best friend walked away from the locker room with our bags in our arms, we approached our parents who had been sitting not too far away. We said our goodbyes and went home. I got home and to my surprise a delightful whiff of some baked food hit my nostrils before I could even get through the door. Upon entering, I threw my bag on the couch and walked over to the kitchen. What was that smell? I opened the oven to see a tin foil pan with aluminum foil wrapped around it. I opened it just to take a peak and it was my FAVORITE, Lasagna !!

I grabbed my bag off the couch and ran up the stairs to my room and once again threw the bags, this time, on the floor in the corner. I walked over to my drawer and grabbed some pajamas and a towel from the closet next to it. As I took my shower, all I could think about was the lasagna and how good it would be because I haven't had it in ages. I had always been so hungry getting home from school and games, considering I was gone from seven am to eight pm, during the season.

I walked into the dining room after getting dressed and cut a medium size slice out of the lasagna then sat down. It was me, my mother, my grandmother, and my brother. We began eating, laughing and talking.

Come, about three quarters through the dinner, I come to find out I would be moving. However this time would be different, I wouldn't be with my mother. How could a girl live without her mother? She is sending me to live with my father.

Yes there were other girls at my father's house: I had my sisters and his girlfriend – and I also loved my father very much – but I had never lived with him. This would be so different for me.

I always went to my dad's house on the weekends with my brother but I guess things would be different now. My brother wasn't here to fend for me anymore nor would he be there to go on weekend trips. My brother wasn't too far from us, maybe about 30-45 minutes, but he was a college student and always busy.

I didn't know how to take this new news but I stayed up all night thinking about it. What about my friends? My best friend? What about all the sports and clubs I had been participating in?

I have been here almost my whole life, in this same community, and I'm just supposed to leave it all behind?

I wasn't too happy about it but it was a change and, possibly a chance for opportunities.

On moving day, my father picked me up and I had many bags packed with clothes and necessities. It was the beginning of summer and I was excited in a way because me and my sibling always did fun things with my father in the summertime. We enjoyed the whole summer doing things like going to Darien Lake, Seabreeze, bowling, the movies, parks, and so much more.

Then, September of 2022 hit and school came back around – it was time to go to a new school. I ended up liking my new school to an extent but it still didn't feel like that was where I was destined to be. Although I enjoyed being able to hang out with my sisters, the rest of it wasn't for me.

The water comes rushing in on the rocks  
It's unexpected since the sky was clear  
waves come in and scream like they're in a flock

The sound piercing in and out my ears  
The quickest way out is off the edge  
I'm heading for doom unable to steer

To the love of my life my heart I pledge  
You've stolen my love with quickness and ease  
My heart has been stabbed and you hold the wedge

You stole my heart though I begged and plead  
Can't go back and erase what I said  
I've been tainted your love a disease

The room felt empty as we lied in bed  
Others went slow but we wanted the rush  
I told you I love you and then you fled

I hear your screams and wish that they'd hush  
Your smooth talk draws me like a magnet  
Restarting cycle when making me blush



## Where I Come From

I'm from hanging rugs with a blue and white flower design  
in my apartment in Kabul.  
I'm from Ramadan;  
Fasting from four in the morning until seven at night.  
I am from Eid and going to friends' homes.  
From my mom and my dad  
I am from kindness and helping my Mother get food from the basement.  
I am from do not smoke and show respect.  
I'm from praying.  
I'm from Afghanistan, Panjshir,  
Mantu, and Kabob,  
From respect for all people.



## Party of the Century

The busy streets of New York were filled with people. Some stood at street corners, talking about the football game that played the previous night. Others walked with capes and masks, going from door to door, yelling ‘trick or treat!’ with excitement as their bags filled with yummy treats that would last them two months.

Each step swished the violet flapper dress as I peek out from under my cloche hat and play with the pears around my neck. The Fall breeze caresses my fair skin, glistening under the light of the city streets, my heels clicking on the sidewalk, making my way to the giant, two story house.

It had been a long while since I wore these clothes. Decades maybe. Time was lost, only the phone’s calendar helped to keep me from falling into insanity. Although moving, I felt undead.

Short brown hair tucked, pinned and curled. I redid it over and over for an hour before it was done to perfection. Even now, I make adjustments to it as I walk up the front stairs of the frat house, music booming against the walls, hurting and straining my ears.

“Humans...they never learn,” I roll my eyes, “More of that loud music and they will be as deaf as armadillos by twenty.”

I open the door and step into the crowded house.

Countless people resided inside. The usual Halloween costumes: witches, nurses, doctors and spiderman, poke into view as soon as I step through the doorway of the home. Making my way to a drink table, set far into a corner of the living room, I look for the food table when some guy in a vampire costume bumps into me, looking at me with a glare. As if I was the one that spilled his drink.

Narrowing my eyes, I moved around him, disgusted and utterly offended by such a cliché and badly represented costume.

There was the occasional peek of a vampire or werewolf costume walking around. At least there weren’t any ghost costumes...yet.

A mix of ax-spray and sweat greeted me. Not the best combination for a scent but it was a frat house after all. It was bound to smell as bad as a gym locker room after a football game.

Walking further into the house, maneuvering through the crowd of dancing college students, humming to the song “Goo Goo Muck” by The Cramps, a classic Halloween song. Especially since that Netflix series, *Wednesday*, that went viral with her dance. I have to give it to Jenna Ortega, she has some talent and class when it comes to acting.

Everyone was trying to dance the same way she did. Laughs from the crowd and their friends erupting as they failed miserably, making me chuckle ever so slightly.

“Mildred!” Someone called for me. My neck craned towards the stairs of the house, and the sight made me smile.

There, at the top of the ballroom like stairs that headed to the top floor, were my sisters. Their long brown hair curled the same way mine was, albeit differently styled. We had decided to plan accordingly for our Halloween costumes. Lois had pearl clips weaved into her golden curls, while Elyzabeth had just the normal brushed down style she had during those times. It was not very different from her usual hairstyle, but it gave the costume the extra class it needed. It made me almost instantly remember how hard it was to choose our costumes...

\* \* \*

*“I keep telling you to let me wear the blue pearls, Elyzabeth. We came to an agreement a week ago!” Lois, my youngest sister, pouted as she crossed her arms at Elyzabeth.*

*“Oh shut it, Lois. These are my pearls, I can decide whether to share them or not.” Elyzabeth huffed as she rolled her amber eyes and tried on her pearls in front of the full-length Victorian mirror we had found in an old house some decades ago. The only type of glass that ever allowed us to see our reflections.*

*Lois continued to pout, hissing as she spun around and looked into the dresser filled with all kinds of clothes from all the eras we had lived through. From the World War, all the way to the early 2000s, there was enough clothes to give to the whole population of homeless people in the city, but she refused to get rid of any of them.*

*“Lois, when will you ever grow unattached to the clothes?” I said as I appeared in their room, putting*

*away a folded up blanket that had just been washed in the laundry. Lois almost hissed at me, her small fangs poking out of her lips at the idea of getting rid of her beloved outfits.*

*I gave a half smile, "I am kidding, dear sister, I wouldn't ever dream of making you throw them away." I pressed a small kiss to her temple, making her giggle with delight.*

*"But I am still wearing those pearls." She snatched the pearls from Elyzabeth's hands and tried them out gleefully.*

*Elyzabeth and I laughed as we heard Lois speak, not sure how our sister was still as stubborn as she was when she was human, but loving her nonetheless.*

\* \* \*

So many decades have passed...and, yet, Lois was like the little girl we cared for and loved when we were still human.

I walk up to them, heels still clicking with each step as I approach.

"About time you got here." Elyzabeth crosses her arms as she spoke to me, her stance completely straight, her chin held high, but it is clear she is tense.

"Oh please, just because Lois forced you to come, doesn't mean you have to be so uptight, dear sister" I grin at her, seeing her frown, but she couldn't hide the small smile on her red tinted lips.

"Who cares? Let's have some fun!" Lois laughs as she wraps her slim arms around Elyzabeth's arm with a toothy smile.

Our eyes had turned from amber to a dark red...but they could pass as brown. Our teeth were starting to sharpen into long fangs and our nails grew longer than we usually kept them. Clear signs that we need to feed to survive the night without any massacre happening.

I chuckle, "Before we have our fun, we must drink some 'wine'...we don't want any accidents now, do we?" I hint at them, making their eyes dilate slightly as they nod.

I pull out a small bottle, a wine bottle to be exact, and three solo cups. The bottle resembled many of the ones on the drinking table. The dark green outer glass, yet the inside was so different and more... tasty for us. But we could not drink out here, no. Not when there were so many people who could confuse our special 'wine' for the normal one.

"Lois, find us an empty room, will ya?"

She nods, walking down the hall of the second floor. She tilts her head as she stops in front of each room, listening to see if anyone was inside before moving on to the next.

She passes a door, then another, and another, before she finally stops at the end of the hall, pausing in front of the last one. Her clipped up blond hair bobbed as she looks back at us, smiling.

"It's empty."

"Good." I smile back at her.

I was glad no one was nearby. Our reflections did not appear in the mirrors as we pass by them. As if no one was there. This glass was too new, too... modern. It would not allow our reflections to show, unlike the Victorian glass littering our home walls. Elyzabeth and I look at each other, nodding, before we walk towards the room, passing at most four different rooms on our way.

As we enter, someone comes out of the bedroom right next to us. It was a guy, part of the frat that owns the house. All three of us freeze, our undead hearts stop as we see him.

He turns to us, his face contorting from calm to confusion and suspicion as he looks at us and barks over the music, "Hey, what are you doin' up here?! No one's allowed-"

Before he could finish his sentence, I held his gaze with my glowing, deep-red eyes. "You did not see us here. You will guard this door for us, won't ya, handsome? Do not let ANYONE in." I watch as his eyes dilate and turn glossy.

The tall honey-blond boy most likely had too much to drink, because his voice died in his throat and quickly nodded absentmindedly. He turns, crossing his arms as he leans back against the door, standing in front of it as we slip into the room, looking at the darkness within as each of us steps in after the other.

All three of us let out a breath we did not know we were holding.

"That was close," Lois giggles.

"Yeah, too close. Told you we should have stayed home. We almost got caught!" Elyzabeth hisses as

she crosses her arms once more.

“Girls,” I warn, “we don’t have time for your bickering. Now,” I place away the bottle in my hand and gave a small smirk at them, “let us eat something a little more.... fresh.”

I open the door just a crack, just enough to let a string of light in from the hallway. Whispering out to our makeshift guard to come in, my voice melodic and soft as to lure him to obey me.

\*

The girls look at me, grinning at one another as the boy walks in obediently.

Our eyes are back to their golden amber colors, nails retreat back to their squared form, and fangs unsharpened into normal teeth as we step out of the room, dabbing at the corners of our mouths with dark handkerchiefs to disguise what we just did. I released my mental hold on the guard, his body, with a light ‘thump,’ slumped to the ground in a dreamless eternal slumber. Lois, ever the sweetheart, grabs a blanket from the bed and places it over the ‘sleeping’ boy for someone else to find.

As soon as the door locked for the third time that night, we made our way downstairs.

The party had not stopped at all, if anything, it got more active. There were more people there, countless costumes filled the living room as we made our way through it, Lois dancing as we did.

Elyzabeth barely bats an eye as guys start to flirt with her as she passes by, but her eyes stay on Lois the whole time as she makes her way to a corner of the room and stands with her arms crossed. Ever the party pooper.

I stand beside her, cradling some water in my hand as I watch Lois dance with some girls around where we stood.

“I missed this... seeing her so happy and energetic. Like a human” I whisper to Elyzabeth, knowing she would hear me loud and clear over the loud music. I saw her nod out of the corner of my eye, a small smile playing on her lips as I raise the cup to my mouth and take a sip of my drink.

It was calm, despite the chaotic music and the cheers from the crowd around. The house vibrated, music blaring and footsteps of everyone jumping and dancing around the makeshift dance floor. Lois walks back over to us, spent from all the dancing, despite the adrenaline coursing through her veins from her recent feeding.

It was a happy moment...until it happened.

“I hope they have good luck finding the guy you charmed, sister...” Elyzabeth's whispery voice fills my ears as she picks up a small solo cup from the table. From the smell, it was filled to the brim by vodka.

“Oh come on! It’s not my fault I can’t control my hunger yet!” Lois pouts as her arms crossed.

“Shush it! We can speak about this la-” I was cut off when I heard Elyzabeth gasp in shock when her dress was drenched in some kind of vodka drink. A guy had bumped into her. Not because he was drunk though.

“Are you freaking-?!” Her voice was cut off by yelling.

The boy, dressed as yet another football player, was yelling at another boy, accusing him of flirting with his girlfriend. The big guy was red in the face, a vein threatening to pop on his neck as he shouts over the loudspeakers around us.

There were two girls not too far away. One dressed as a gothic princess and the other as the classic cheerleader with the too small skirt. They stood off to the side, confusion etched on their faces at the argument happening in front of them.

Confusion was quickly turned to horror.

The vampire princess screams in horror as the boy swung at her boyfriend. His hard, yet messy jab almost hit the guy, but not quite. Sports players may be good on the field, their bulky form were made to tackle someone, yet the drinks this one had consumed through the night made his stance sloppy. His eyes were glossy and bland as he moved. The goth looking guy, dressed as the Grim Reaper, dodges the punch with ease. The male had switched his stance to a perfect boxing protective stance, throwing a hard right-hook to his temple and effectively making the guy stumble back and away from him.

That was all it took before all hell broke loose.

I look at them quickly, dropping my drink in shock.

I felt someone push me from behind, hissing as I spun around and saw a girl with a witch costume wearing a skirt as she stood there with a smirk. I didn’t hesitate to throw a punch, my fist landing on her chest, sending her flying to a wall, being glad no one really paid attention to us.

Elyzabeth quickly pulls a girl away from the crowd, seeing as two more guys had jumped into the fight, almost trampling her.

Shouts and yells erupt from the crowd. More and more people join in the fight. Scratching, punching, and ripping off costumes all around.

I weave through the crowd, "LOIS!?" I yell over the screams. The sound of furniture being broken under the weight of a guy's body ringing in my ears as I search for my sister.

Elyzabeth was too busy fighting a guy twice her size to even try to help me find Lois. Her strength was greater than mine; she managed to slam the guy down on a coffee table and knock him out after he tried to rip off the hat from her head.

I turn my head every which way, my eyes scanning the people for the familiar face of my sister when I spot her near the stairs, trying to shove a guy off her as he tried to drag her to a corner with a girl pulling at her hair at the same time.

"Let me go you brute!" she cries out as she scratches at the guy's face and kicks him where the sun doesn't shine. Her boot hit her mark. The boy crumbled to his knees, cradling the spot as he whimpered in pain.

My sister was spun around by her hair, almost strangled by the guy's accomplice before she backs off when Lois hisses at her, eyes glowing red for a single minute as her fangs snap out of hiding. It left the girl screaming in fear, her hand tangling in the blue pearls around her neck, breaking the necklace instantly as she scrambled towards the nearest exit with everyone else who wanted to leave the brawl.

People were trampled, pushed and shoved as everyone went through the front exit towards freedom. But I notice the back door being vacant and knew that was the best way to leave.

I zoom over, glad no one was paying attention as I grab Lois hand and pulled her along as we hurried to the back exit, watching everyone run out of the house as the fight grew worse and worse. Girls and boys join in the rumble, yet we manage to get away before it turned bad.

Once we were a good distance from the frat house, we started to speak again.

"That is why I didn't want us to go-" Elyzabeth grumbled, before she chuckles, "-although...It was the most entertainment I have had in decades."

Lois looks at her and starts giggling, "Yeah, did you see the guy who ripped the wig off a girl?" I watch the two of them laugh, and I couldn't help but smile and laugh along.

"Or the way you slammed that guy on the table? I think that is what made it all worse!" I laugh with them. Despite the dispute we caused at the party, the fights we were involved with, the guy in that room down the hall...we were vampires. We loved a little chaos every decade or so. It seems this Halloween ended in a treat and not a trick.





