



IN
BIG RED LETTERS

LAKEVIEW-FORT OGLETHORPE HIGH SCHOOL

FEATURING:

Red Follett
Cassie Childress
Taylor Billegas

May 2018



**IN
BIG RED LETTERS**

**May 2018
Edition No. 3**

A Publication of
Lakeview-Fort
Oglethorpe
High School

1850 Battlefield Pkwy
Fort Oglethorpe, GA
30742

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“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

- Winston Churchill

From the desk of:

TINY WARRIOR

1850 Battlefield Pkwy
Fort Oglethorpe, GA
30742

Feather’s up, y’all!

WHEW! This school year is flying by! Look at all that’s coming up soon: Prom, baseball Baccalaureate, soccer, Class Night, track, Senior Week, tennis, Graduation, golf, End of Course Exams, and finals--obviously not in that order ! With all of the activity, I think it’s time to remind you of something very important:

Safety.

I know... I know! You’ve heard a lot about that lately from your teachers, your parents, and the news. But now Tiny Warrior is going to weigh in for a minute--about YOU. The biggest factor in YOUR every day safety is..... YOU! That’s right! You cannot control other people, but you CAN control yourself. Here’s some ideas on how to PERSONALLY keep safe.

Be careful with your social media! -- Tiny Warrior LOVES some social media #tinywarrior #lforocks #feathersup! BUT, you need to be very careful about what you post! You shouldn’t post your every thought--you might want to take back what you said, but the Internet IS FOREVER.

Be careful with YOURSELF. Look, I’m tiny... and plastic. I live in an office cabinet most of the time. Unless someone puts me on blacktop in July heat or drops me in the garbage disposal, I’m safe. YOU, however, are out in the real world. Do not trust your safety to just anyone.

Don’t trust PICTURES of yourself with anyone--ever. (Remember, the Internet is forever--including text messages.) Your SnapChat doesn’t REALLY disappear.

Do NOT get into a vehicle with someone who is NOT safe to drive.

Do NOT text and drive.

Do NOT let yourself be around drugs and alcohol. Even if you’re not using it, you’re in a dangerous situation!

Be careful with OTHER PEOPLE! Everyone has feelings, even if they don’t show it. You never know what is REALLY going on with someone--so always BE KIND. Always report if you think someone you know is in any kind of trouble.

Warriors are strongest when they are united. WE are strongest when we support each other every day, all the time.

Make safety part of your attitude! #WARRIORNATION is strong because we are united! Let’s be united in keeping each other safe and strong!

Remember: Attitude is Everything! Believe you can. Do your best. If you fail, TRY AGAIN. Find someone to help you. Try again. Learn something new every time. Watch out for each other!

WARRIOR NATION

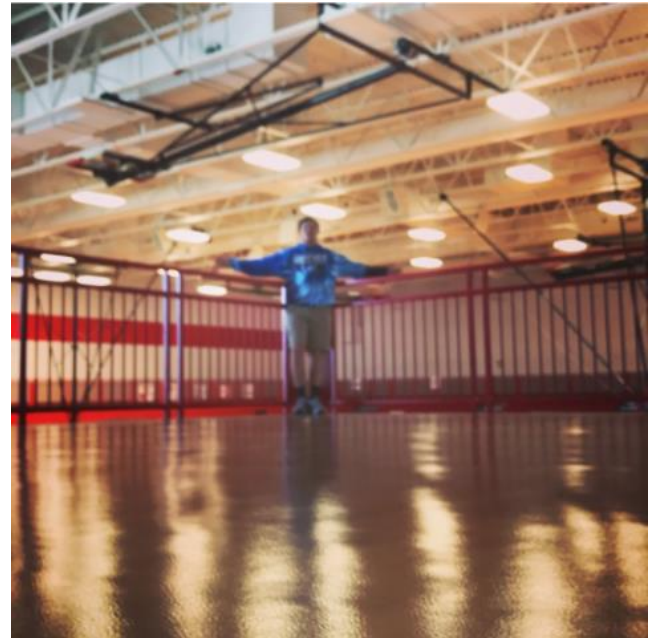
A PORTRAIT SERIES



His love and commitment were only supposed to be towards one person.
-Gabi Hughes



“When my great grandmother died it was very upsetting. She was there for my father when his parents divorced. Seeing my dad upset about her death made me realize how much she meant to him. Don’t take life for granted.”
-Noah Haney



“We had to constantly move schools because my mom was in the Army, and she always was deployed to different places. This constantly moving was a blur in my life. It was going too fast. It was hard for me to make friends because I knew I wouldn’t stay there for long.”
-Carson McCammon

NPCs
Red Follett

You know the lady down the street with the loud dog?" Eric looks up from his notes on normative economics to look at his mother while she speaks.

"Runner?"

"What?" She gives him a confused look and he wants to sigh, but she'd told him off for sighing before and he was in no mood for lecturing.

"Runner, I called her dog Runner when I was little. He chased me up and down the fence line."

"Oh, well yes, her. She died a few days ago. The neighbor across the way just told me."

"Oh." There's a hundred or so thoughts that go through his head before he continues, but it's just a second and his mother would care for few of them. "That's terrible; when is the funeral?"

"Yesterday." She says and then changes the subject to talk about the nephew who will be inheriting the house. Eric doesn't listen though.

He thinks about the dog, a golden retriever, who would chase him back and forth for hours and hours. He thinks about the woman whose name he never learned, old enough to be his own grandmother and kind like one too. She had one child, a daughter who lived far away and had never wanted to come back to their small town. It was understandable, a city of twenty-two hundred most of which were over fifty wasn't exactly The Place To Be.

He has plans to leave too, to come back only on holidays and breaks. He plans to send his mother flowers on her birthday and call her every Sunday afternoon to hear about the awful weather and horrific gardening of the young couple up the street from them.

He plans to leave though, to let his roots grow somewhere else. He plans to say goodbye to the hills that hid him from school bullies and cradled him as he had his first kiss. He plans to do something amazing one day, and he's going to do it of course. He studies and practices and tries too hard for it not to come to something. He will carve a path if he has to, because six years ago his father died and someone told him he lived a life with nothing to it. He refused to live a life like that.

But he thinks of the widow, her husband who died in some war long back. Her dog died a few years ago as well, but he was old and dogs don't live forever. Neither do humans, but sometimes that's so easy to forget.

Somehow there are those humans in the background who seem like they they'll never die, as if they are simply part of how the world is. He supposed that for the librarian he is one of those. He checks out books once every two weeks, always on time and always a mystery novel in the stack of nonfiction. The homeless man who camps outside the bank knows him has the guy that sometimes buys him a sandwich from the cafe across the road and once gave him a fiver. There used to be an old lady down the road that knew him as the kid who biked by her house a hundred times to play with her dog.

Now there isn't.

I Thought I Had it Under Wraps

Red Follett

There's something disconcerting
about looking up
and seeing someone do something silly
and realizing,
quite suddenly,
that you're in love.

I suppose I only have myself to blame
since you have not known
that my gaze lingered on your smile,
or rather, on you.

You did not know, in fact, how could you?
I never spoke a word of my affection
beyond that which friends might share.
I never let you know.

And now today, at roughly eight-thirty,
I realized that I've been remiss in my observation.
It is not a simple thing, a passing fixation of youth.
It is the kind that wrenches one's soul,
that leaves one wanting and yearning for that
which they know they cannot have.

I cannot have you, not that you are a thing to own,
for I cannot bear to risk what we have.
I cannot bear to expose my so scarred self
to someone as perfect as you appear.

I know better of course; you are not perfect at all.
But yet, oh yet. It is your eyes that meet mine and leave
me weary, wanting to know what lies behind
such lonely lonely eyes.

And I romanticize, it's what I do.
But I don't need to make this feeling more than it is,
because as you waited for this other person to move
you did something silly, something meaningless in the scope of
it all.
And it made my heart flutter in my chest, in a way
I did not think it could.

I have claimed to be in love before,
and it was innocent loves each time.
The kind where I say I love you, and they giddily answer back.
There is no shame in that youthful fling, but I know now
that while I loved truly then, it was not truly love.
I was to them, what they thought they needed, and
to me they were a rebellion.
But we did not love one another for who the other was,
we loved each other for who what we made the other.

I will not claim to have outgrown that, because of course
I am growing still, as we do till death, but I will wonder
at this thing in my chest, beating louder than I thought it could
for you, and for the love I would offer.

I still do not claim to know what's best, and
fear holds my tongue
(but enables my hands it seems,
to write so much to you).
If you read this, what would you think?
I cannot claim to know either, but
I want to.

I AM

Dumb Gamer

Damian Solorzano

I am a dumb gamer.

I wonder how long will I be a gamer.

I hear people from all over the world next to me but its just my headphones.

I see ways to be dumb and make my games fun.

I want to stay a gamer and be an idiot so I can play with my friends forever.

I am a dumb gamer.

I pretend to be dumb because it's better to play games that way and they don't get mad if I mess up

I feel gaming takes you away from reality.

I touch my controller and it feels like I'm in the game but it's just the controller vibrate.

I worry that people don't trust me because I act dumb.

I cry when I lose touch with my family.

I am a dumb gamer.

I understand I don't need to worry about gaming too much.

I say gaming is not an addiction it's just fun.

I dream about what's going to happen next in the game.

I try to be smart but I'm still just a dummy.

I hope to meet my gamer friends and be dumb together.

I am a dumb gamer.

I am Damian.

Broken iPhone

Timothy Henriques

I am desperate and heartbroken

I wonder if it's fixable

I hear all the notifications that I never see.

I see 100's of likes.

I want the iPhone X.

I am desperate and heartbroken.

I pretend to have a phone.

I feel desperate for a phone.

I touch the sleek shiny glass

I worry that I'll never have a phone.

I cry about the broken screen.

I am desperate and heartbroken.

I understand the phone is broken.

I say I will have a phone

I dream about the glowing touch screen.

I try to save money.

I hope I can buy a phone.

I am desperate and heartbroken.

I am Timothy

After Failure and Defeat

Red Follett

Pride is terrible,
Or so I thought, as it holds you back
From doing what is right and lets you
Continue on with what is wrong. But growing older,
I humbly think wiser too, I am learning it to be important.

For when like this, after failure and defeat
When the only one to blame is myself
(For I had all to gain)
It is all the holds this hollow frame together-
The scaffolding I think.

And I could cry out, for it isn't fair.
And I could break down, for I've done it before.
But pride holds back, what I would become,
Lets anger instead take hold and drive me from the edge.

For I have tried, and I have won! But defeat is brighter still.
For I have bled, and let myself bleed for things I should not have done
All so that one day I might be better, better still.
You could be better, I could be better, I should be better

But a bell is ringing, (stupid, stupid, stupid) and I know it rings for me
Announcing it is time
That I admit my own defeat.

I do not think I can deny hearing it, but
Yet pride screams the war is not over yet.
I lost battle, but I have more to come.

Fear

Taylor Billegas

You open your eyes and look up
All you see are stars.
You open your eyes and look down
All you see are scars.
Running all around you are your fears.
All you have to do is open up your ears.
You try to play it all cool
But all you ever do is look like a fool.
You take your last breath and think nobody cares.
You take your last breath and everybody's there.

HAIKU

Brave is he who hurts
To keep the wolves away from
The doors of others.

**Warrior spirit –
Never broken, always true
Even in defeat.**

**Experience can
Transform mistakes and stumbles
Into lessons learned.**

Flying Supermen
Cannot always see all the
Regular people

A nurse with tired eyes
Her golden heart is breaking
Beneath her disguise.

**A baby's first steps.
Learning to balance a bike.
Rewards of courage.**

Summer approaches.
I'm ready for what it holds:
Sleep, sunshine, and rest

Summer should hurry.
We all need a vacation
To bask in the sun.

**Time might be money
But my time is worth more than
A dollar can buy.**

**Jayna is Hero
She makes me happy all times
Jayna is funny**

Is this a haiku?
It may be quite incomplete.
Syllables? YES! But...

“Oh, no.”
Red Follett

He leans in
talking softly, almost whispering.
It's math he's saying
and explaining,

but I'm caught on the tone-
on the sympathy
and caring that seems so strange,
and still so tangible.

Earlier he joked about-
or was it a joke?
It could have been real
as real as I joked about, well,
everything.

Maybe this isn't a crazy thing
to hope for something
so he smiled, small and fragile
and shared a joke only I would get
and my main thought was just

"Oh no."

12:28
Red Follett

We start, we start
to breathe, if breath
is something tangible
like a road
diverging on our way
rotted figs telling me
which way to go

We try, we try
each moment
if ever there is
only one
glorious moment
in which we are
eternal, forever
while elsewhere
we are forgotten

We end, we end
like the treacherous fly
meaningless in our flame
here we test the memory
but we of fading glory
as bricks break
we fall apart
as all men must
and more

More, so much more
I can go on
I swear!
but we start, we end
we begin again

01:18
Red Follett

In the little movements
of a fragile heart
I think I hear
where we depart

In the tiny moments
before the end
I finally learn
that we were friends

In the sigh escaping
from lips shaking
I feel the love
I could have had

In the cold morning dew
of something new
I taste the end
of what never began

America, the Brave and Strong

Erin Mantooth

How very wonderful are we
For just a moment to be
Part of life's everlasting song
How very wonderful are we
To spend my time with thee
America, the proud and strong!

The Mighty Sun's warm face,
Kisses the Earth and Moon in space.
Those two lovers suspended in time
Day by day they slowly dance
Ah, such a beautiful romance
So glorious and sublime.

The summer robins sing their song,
Oh, what a gift they give.
Then autumn days grow cold and long,
Oh, what a joy to live.

How very wonderful are we
For just a moment to be
Part of life's everlasting song.
How very wonderful are we
To spend my time with thee
America, the proud and strong!

The snows of December melt away
And children come out to play.
Our seasons change once again,
So days become short and slim.
America, the proud and strong.
How very wonderful are we
For just a moment to be
Part of life's everlasting song.

The Poorest Man

Maguire Shaw

The man of the Slums
Was the poorest of men.
With makeshift drums
He played 'amen.'

Buried in rags
And standing tall
The man of the slums
Was known by all.

It did not matter the price of his pants
Or the endless love beyond romance.
His heart was pure and that was enough
For the richest man of the slums.

Child of the Tennessee
Meg White

I am a daughter of the Tennessee River,
delivered into those brown-muddy waters,
nursed with the taste of algae.
No other waters have the comfort of her gentle curves
or the native scent of catfish and mud,
mixed as the familiar elixir of my childhood.
She calls to me from mid life,
but perhaps she will no longer recognize
the little girl whom she raised.
She grabs me with her slippery banks.
The mud between my toes glue me to our memories,
and I wade out to embrace her.
Mother, I'm home.

Summer Breeze
Taylor Billegas

A swing in the distance could mean a lot
To you, it could be a plot.
A weeping willow sound asleep
Could be the tears you try to weep.
A summer breeze swift by
Could be the wind telling you a lie.
A swing in the distance could be so little
Or maybe it's just telling you a riddle.

Grief
A.B.

Sitting in the kitchen floor crying
I'm being held by my best friend -
with waves of tears and uneven breaths
from new thoughts and realizations

Flashes of him keep coming to mind
of where the coroner didn't even try
to close his mouth from that stupid breathing tube
And I saw where his ears were already purple and blue
and his grin was gone with his spirit and warmth

My crazy old man left -
unexpected
But I know that he's happier now in Heaven
to see Jesus and to praise Him more
to get his retirement and ultimate reward
to be with Grandma
- out on the shore...

But as I am slowly coming to peace
I'm still dazed
knowing
one of my closest friends is deceased...

Writing

Taylor Brittingham

Ray rolled over in his bed to avoid the strands of morning light seeping through his half-opened window. He hadn't slept well. It had been one of those nights where the bed isn't quite comfortable enough and it's just a bit too cold to stick your feet out from under the covers. He still had half-finished dreams floating around in his brain that made him want to turn away from the window and go back to sleep. He shut his eyes and re-positioned himself on his wilted pillow to feel the morning breeze whisper softly through the room and slip back into sleep, but he couldn't. Instead he found himself staring out the window and watching the morning breeze and listening to all the sounds of the spring morning outside – the bees stumbling around, the singing birds, and the faint murmur of the creek down the hill out back of the house, flowing high from the last two days of heavy spring rain.

Ray reluctantly swung around and placed both feet on the cold hardwood, looking for his shirt and pants on the floor and almost stepping on his cat, Cleo. He put the shirt on over his head and gave the cat a swift kick to get off his pants and then put those on too. The cat jumped up on his bed to stare at the brown thrasher chirping in the old oak tree outside of Ray's bedroom window.

Ray's apartment was small. For \$400 a month including utilities of course it was small. But Ray didn't mind – signing his name to the rental agreement last summer had been his first venture out into the *real* world. Although it wasn't much, it was his, and that was what really mattered.

Ray made his way to the kitchen, made a pot of coffee, and walked bare-footed to the old teak desk in the far corner of the living room that housed his laptop, multiple coffee-ringed stains, a dog-eared copy of *The Old Man and the Sea* that Ray had started to read three times but never finished, and a bonsai tree that his ex-girlfriend bought him six months ago right before she called it quits and moved back in with her parents in Lexington.

Shaking off the last bits of dream residue and placing the bonsai tree on the ground out of sight, Ray sat down to write.

The first ten minutes of writing were effortless. Words came out of his fingertips with the same rhythmic movement as the beetles knocking on the screen of the window. His fingers couldn't move fast enough.

After half an hour, Ray leaned back in his chair, took a deep breath, and with the slight outline of a smile on his face, got up from his desk chair to get a cup of coffee.

Ray wanted to be a successful writer more than anything else in life. In college, his professors had often quoted the words of men who had important things to say. They said things about love, and family, and law, and ethics, and government, and God, and grief, and loss, and purpose.

As a young college student looking to make his mark on the world, Ray would listen intently to the words of these men and wonder if one day he would have something to say too. He would often find himself daydreaming in class about his future – his name emblazoned in college textbooks, *his* words in the ears and minds of young college students looking for clarity and purpose, looking to the words of men of prestige and power for guidance.

Ray, again almost stepping on the cat, turned from the kitchen counter, coffee in-hand, to return to his desk.

The sun whispered through the window as Ray sat back down and read through his words on the screen. The outline of a smile no longer visible, Ray began the painstaking duty of editing his work. Moving a comma here, moving this word there – an uninspired drudgery.

It didn't take long for Ray to realize that he was daydreaming again.

He looked back at the blinking white page and tried to find where he left off. The coldness of it hurt. The screen itself seemed to ask Ray to write something that *mattered*.

Ray stared blankly back at the screen, thinking about all the words he learned in college. He thought of all the men who came before him who waded through the crud of memory and emotion and created worlds – who wrote words that comforted, empathized, instructed, propelled – whose fictions impacted the *real* worlds around them.

Ray turned his longing gaze to the yard beyond the window pane - the birds dancing and singing in the daylight - the wind gliding lightly through the uncut grass - a bee landing on the screen of the window.

He felt like there was something inside of him that needed to get out, but he couldn't find it. He just didn't have the words.

Without saving his words on the screen, Ray turned off his computer, placed the bonsai tree back on the desk, grabbed his cup of coffee, and walked back towards the kitchen.

“Maybe tomorrow, Cleo.” Ray said to the cat.

“Maybe tomorrow.”

ESSAYS

GAVIN HAMILL

Perspective

I've seen a lot, I really have. I have seen so many wonderful, breathtaking things that occur around me. I have seen the colorful leaves of autumn, only to be taken away by a cold unforgiving winter. It's all how you see things. Many people would never look twice at a barking dog, or maybe take a quick glance back at that pedestrian who just said excuse me so politely.

Okay, so maybe I'm a little odd. I see things from a different point of view. You see an upset teenager I see a misunderstood young adult. You might see a homeless man asking for spare change, I see a hurt soul looking for their next meal.

It's all about your *perspective*.

I don't own much, I never have. An old mattress, a few pairs of clothes and my notebook is good enough. The more stuff you own the more you have to worry about. It's all about the simple stuff in life.

I don't own a car, I know crazy right. However in my opinion cars are terrible. They are too fast, too quick, you can't ever take things *slow*. I love to watch, I love to examine, I love to take things in and really study and comprehend how other people live and go on with their daily lives. I don't know maybe I am crazy, maybe I am insane.

What is *insane*?

I'm a smart girl, I really am. I could be in college right now studying books about people who died 100 years ago. Where's the fun in that, I mean someone telling you about someone else's story? The real joy comes in discovering and uncovering the lives of the people around us for ourselves. Not for the purpose of getting a good grade, but for the joy and happiness of knowing how others around you actually feel.

People are always trying to go from start to finish. Look at the world around us. Everyday millions of people wake up, go to work, go home, eat dinner and then go right back to bed only to wake up the next morning and do it again.

Why can't people appreciate the journey of life and take things slow? It's not about when you get there, or how fast you get there. It's about the way you get there. What did you have to go through to get that hot-dog cart? Who along the way pushed you to get that diploma? Sometimes I can't tell if I'm simply unique, or completely insane.

Well come to think of it, I might just be both.

Oh well. What's so wrong with that? I enjoy who I am. All of my complex and unique characteristics that form together and make me who I am. Everyday is new. You have 24 hours, 1440 minutes, 86400 seconds to do something different every single day. Go do something different. Make people take another look at you when you pass by them on the street.

It all comes down to one thing, your *perspective*.

CASSIE CHILDRESS

Graduation

Graduation. Ending a new chapter in life to start a new one. What does all this really mean? When I hear the word graduation I think of leaving a part of me behind and growing into a new sense of self and identity. When I hear the word graduation I think of all the friends and all the people I have met throughout my high school experience that I might not ever see again. When I think of graduation I think of the fear of growing up too fast and not knowing what exactly is in store for my life.

On the other hand, when I think of graduation I think of moving on and starting a new beginning. When I think of graduation I think of the beginning of the end. When I think of graduation, I simply think of all the possibilities the future holds for each and every person who leaves high school and begins their new chapter in life as they head towards what some may call their fate or destiny.

The word graduation means many things, but not all are positive meanings and not all are negative. Graduation is scary but also something high school students look forward to. Graduation is happy but also sad because once you walk across that stage you realize that this really is the end of your high school career. Graduation is an ending but also a beginning.

I know many high school students look forward to graduation; they just want to get out of school and start their lives but what people need to understand is that you need to enjoy this little time you have. Four years might seem like a long time but when it comes down to it, this time passes before you know it and then you realize you walk across that stage wondering if you've made an impact while you were in high school. Graduation means leaving behind memories that you treasure and what's important is to learn to make those memories last while you are still in high school.

Make memories, have fun, live life, do extracurricular activities, participate in clubs, find an organization you truly love and make it your goal to take part in it for as long as you want and make these memories last. Get a lead in a play, be the best quarterback on the football team, be the vice president or president of your graduating class, take an officer role in a club, become a committee head in drama or even just a member, participate in every talent show you can, do what you truly want to do and what makes you happy.

High school is about you; high school is your time to shine so take every opportunity you get to make longtime memories.

Because you know what? Graduation will be here before you know it.

Eighteen

Eighteen. It's only been a few months since I have been eighteen and yet I know and have experienced more than most eighteen year olds I know. At least that's what I have been told. Honestly, I'm not here to tell you that I've been through more than you. There are many other people who have been through more than I have - but I want people to know they are not alone.

No one should feel alone and feel like they are secluded from the world, because in this world and in this life no one is alone - but what I would like to know is what comes with taking the role of an eighteen year old. Already at the age of eighteen I feel so heartbroken and depressed. It's because during this eighteenth year, during this time of graduation and high school endings I begin to realize not only my dad is gone but so is my brother, and in a way I just feel lost and confused. It hurts losing your best friend - losing a part of your identity - but as life goes on, you make it through. Well, at least that's what I tell myself.

People tell me as I keep moving on and going through each day,

“You are so strong! You'll make it through.”

Can I tell you a secret? I am not as strong as people think I am. I know that sounds like an understatement because I can be strong when it comes down to it, but right now, at this very moment, I am not sure how strong I really am. I mean I believe I can be confident and happy and gain strength, but at this very moment since my brother is gone, it's really hard for me to even think properly. I miss him - God I miss him - but I know he won't come back. He is gone, and all I am left with is the memories we have had in these short eighteen years we've had together.

Eighteen, and I've already lost one of the most influential people in my life, one of my biggest supporters and best friends, my very own brother and confidant. I know I may sound annoying and I may be grieving his death a little too much and talk about him everyday but I can't help it. I really can't because no matter how hard I try to toughen myself up there are days when I just remember him and the memories come flooding back along with the tears or emotions that I hide in myself from time to time.

Am I okay? Will I be okay? I honestly don't know the answer, but I do know as time goes on within this eighteenth year I will be able to ease the pain and learn to move forward. I know I will. I just need a little time.

Eighteen and my heart is falling apart, but maybe this is just a beginning to the path that lies in front of me.

Lux in Morte

Autumn Wisenbaker

Before there was civilization, before the first living cell was even formed, eons preceding the big bang, there was darkness. For an unprecedented amount of time, there was only an endless void. There was nothing, no light or sound, not even a breath was whispered in a breeze. Only a blinding, onyx space, and on occasion that space would take shape, its true form incomprehensible to the human mind. But mankind was always good at seeing what it wanted to see. What it would have seen, should it have had the luck, or misfortune, to set eyes on the being and live, it would not be able to put a name to it. It was neither male or female, little of both and none of all, with clothes of wisps of the darkness around it clinging to its frame. This was the entity that lived in the darkness, that with which was the focal point of nothing.

This was the first being with a conscious mind to walk the cosmos. And for eons, it was happy this way. Content to living its life in peaceful solitude, to never have to worry or fear, to experience stress or ponder over its choices. Existence was great. Until it wasn't.

One day (was it really a day, when time had no meaning?) the dark entity lay clutching at its chest, an indescribable feeling tearing at its heart. Tears streaming down its face, carrying sparkling lights and the first flashes of color, dripping down into the blank space. This went on for a long time, years in human standards before the entity reigned the raging and despairing emotions in and looked around, surprised at the scene that played before it. There were light, brightly shining stars and colorful nebulas, all around it, filling in the emptiness and, unknowingly, chasing away the loneliness that had been weighing down the dark entity for quite some time. Some of the stars had clung to the entity's clothing when the tears had dripped onto it and stained the material. It was marvelous, an eye-opening experience. For the first time in all of existence, it could see. The realization that there was more to existence than just darkness dawned, and that marked the time period when the universe finally started to grow.

And the moment where the Darkness became Life.

Life, as it was later dubbed after creation, went to work filling the void in the universe and in its heart, creating star after star, barren planets awaiting further touches of color and such, not stopping until the shining light sprinkled the vast, ever-present darkness. It was beautiful, pride filling the air as Life looked around at its creations. This unknown power had come as a surprise, but a welcomed one. But the loneliness was still there. Beautiful as it may be, the light brought an even greater awareness to the gaping hole in not only existence but in the balance. So, with renewed vigor, Life pulled together several strands of light, stars and nebulas and pure light alike, pushing away the suffocating darkness as it fused this blindly spectacular things together. Once the job was done, Life leaned over the new figure, much like itself but a certain glow that emanated off of them and a chilling aura around them, and breathed into it.

And thus, the Light took shape.

This was a joyous occasion for Life. Not only did it now have a companion, but it had created its first instance of true life. With the loneliness now gone, Life set it upon itself to teach Light everything it knew and to travel the universe together, to create others like them in their image.

New adventures and discoveries lay ahead of the two, and they couldn't have been more excited. Immediately upon creation Light and Life set out to create an empire, so that they would never have to be alone again, nor their creations. It was perfect, the future imagined with nothing but success and happiness. But what should have been the most desired of times took a turn. For better or worse, that remains to be seen.

Eager to begin teaching its new partner, Life quickly showed Light to one of the newest star systems, infantile in age, but mighty in its brilliance. Life was trying something new with this star system, it was hoping to create a civilization in its image, to create more like it and Light. If all went well there, they would move on to other star systems, maybe try to outfit some of the older ones with life, or just experiment with various ways that can create differentiating and unique life forms. But for now, they had a task.

Life patiently and carefully explained to Light the process of creating life, guiding it through every step of the way and making sure that it understood everything that came with this great power. Once Life was sure that its companion could handle something simple, like manipulating a star into another form, it let Light try its hand at it. Gently cradling the small star in equally bright palms, Light began to concentrate, to try to copy what Life had shown them. For several moments, nothing happened. Then finally, something did, but it wasn't what either entity was expecting. Instead of new life blossoming and the star changing form, the tiny ball of gas and light quivered and shook, dimming with each passing second.

Panicked, Light tried to stop the process, eyes wide as the small star seemingly melting in its palms as its skin absorbed the light. Life tried to intervene, thinking that Light had merely made a mistake, it were a beginner after all, but was unable to as the power wafting off of Light, equal to Life's own, kept them at bay. In the struggle, neither entity noticed the scene before them stopped until a cool aura wafted off of the dark and crumbling star in Light's palm. Still panicked, but now highly curious, Life gingerly reached over and placed one long, grey finger on the star, trying to bring that light back and dismiss the whole thing as a fluke. But nothing happened, aside from the star dissolving into dust. It was a curious spectacle, but worry gnawed at Life. This wasn't supposed to happen, how had they gotten it wrong? Did Light make a mistake, or had Life?

Determined to find out, Life made Light do it again, against their sudden reluctant and fearful attitude towards their power, and again and again and again until they were surrounded by dead stars. Over half of the would-be project of Life was gone now, and the rest of the star system poisoned by the rippling waves of scorching heat sucking the life out of the area, emanating from the distraught and blindly glowing newborn entity. The aura of death and emptiness suffocated the two, causing them to vacate the area to clear their minds and recuperate.

And at that moment, the Light also became known as Death.

SENIOR CLASS POETS

Soar

Devin Lentz

Standing with goose bumps on the edge of the nest,
On the brink, a bird's-eye-view of the imminent fall,
All reflect at the flock that flies behind.
Resting eyes gaze on the journey that lies ahead.

Opened eyes reminisce at memories shared,
Upon this refuge that was once nested.
Time flies, so sing while you still can.

In time, as you fly the coop and lay your first batch,
Never forget to count your chickens after they hatch.
Take new risks never sought before,
Outstretch your wings, take flight, and soar.

Tokens of memories may tassel on your talons.
Heed the remnants of foreign feathers woven onto yours.
Even with weights on your wings, you drift to the sky and soar.

Coalescing the heart rests the wind from other's flutters.
Let loose an echo to the ones who migrate in different directions.
One day, you may fly back to this place once again,
Uniting in flight with all of your friends.
Don't blink, this is the moment you've been waiting for,
So outstretch your wings, take flight, and soar.

How

Amber Scott

How do I move on
From my nest,
The only nest I have ever known?
How do I fly,
I have only ever hobbled, or wobbled around.
I am scared of where my wings may take me.
I hear it is something great but I cannot see it.
Do my wings work?
How do I fly away and forget?
I will not forget,
I will fly.
It is time.
Time to see where they will take me,
Time to be alone,
Time to fly solo.

Taking Flight

Colby O'Haver

Taking flight
The end's in sight
Sometimes, it can be a fright,
Growing up is hard every now and again
But we made it through, because of friends.

Once alone,
Our true colors have shown
I take this time to realize,
All the people that put on a disguise.

But we made it,
We're here,
Somehow along the way,
We never really strayed, too far away.

The way we started was all the same,
From the bottom and here we came.
Now we will start a new chapter in our lives,
We don't have long, sort of like flies.

From the beginning, and to the end
We all discovered a true friend.
One's that will stick by us forever,
To leave us, they would never.

Now we have reached these final moments,
Taking flight, we now will show it.
We have come this far, and cannot blow it.
To the future, our peers bestow it.

The Final Walk

Jaylan Nintirat

It's moments like these that we don't notice that time flies
Who knew that we would have lasted this long?
As the sun beamed onto us from the sky
We never noticed how fast it would be gone.

Soon then came the time for the leaves to fall
And it was time to see our closest friends
Coming into school the first day listening to roll call
Then hearing our names walking across the stage calling it an end

Some people have been friends for all those years
They have been through the thick and thin
Throwing up our caps in cheers
Who knew that a new life would soon begin

The countless amount of homework and hours spent at school
We would soon see empty halls
The thought of eight hours of constant nagging made all of us drool
Some of us would actually bawl

Being with the same people for years created so many memories
There were obviously the good and the bads
We have established new discoveries
There were the happy and the sads

Now that the time is near to finally say goodbye
Possibly never seeing your fellow peers
They all had to deepest sigh
Then shed a tear

It was finally time for us to turn our shoulders towards a new life
We knew the time was going to come
Some would become a husband or a wife
Or have something else planned to become

How would we forget all of this time we spent together?
We watched the tassels swing back and forth in our face
As Mr. Nix called for our feathers to be up
Who would have thought that graduation would have been a scary place
The final roll call made tears and were in desperate needs of touch ups.

It was now that we realized that time flies by fast and it was time for the final walk.

The Take Off

Bailey Mann

The runway is clear
The sky is high
It's time to leave here
It's time to fly

It's okay to be scared
To be terrified
After all
We are first time flyers

But this flight, we must take
So with your knees shaking
And your hands clenching onto the memories
You find your seat and wait for your name

It was a long eight years
And an even longer four
And no matter how much you swear you hated it
Part of you just wants a little more

A little more time to be a kid
Or a little more time to grow
But this is the end of an era
And you know it's time to go

But don't worry
There will be more flights
And I want you to know
This won't be the best one of your life

There is so much more out there
In the open skies
So you board that plane
And prepare for the ride

The tickets we have are one way
No matter how boring it seems
One day you'll want it back
By then it'll only be in your memories

Life is flight
And fate your captain
So dry up your tears
And take off laughing

Graduation Day

Red Follett

So now we're perched
on the edge of the nest,
wings just barely outstretched.
To fall or fly, we'll soon find out;
in this I have no doubt.

Our family, our friends all waiting close by
this old building to which we'll soon say goodbye.
We entered young and carefree
or arguably not, but leave with the key
to some chosen destiny.

Some were lost, some were gained,
so is life, so we go our way.
Now together on this happy day
we smile unrestrained.
Now is the hour of a great test
to fly and leave the cozy nest.

No wings may carry you
but your own
as you make way to a new home.
Now we learn too
that life is ever new
and like the spring planted sapling
we *grow*.

Time Flies

Aubrie Raines

Time flies
but the days seem to drag on
the hurt and lies
the laughs and the smiles

From small children
to young adults
we've been learning together
from each other
continuing a legacy for our country

Through Anger
Sadness
Jealousy
Fear
Grief
Anxiety
Depression
and Tears
We've made it.

Here we go
into the real world
to show off our independence
and our "aged" intelligence

Time flies when when you're having fun
looking back
We see more than the stress and being done with it all
School wasn't just a place to learn
These walls are filled with memories
These desks hold our most tender moments

Our first friendships are made in these buildings
Sounds of joy fill the halls
Tears have been shed here
Not only out of distress

I mean the tears that roll down your face
Laughing so hard your stomach hurts
And your cheeks are stuck in smiles

These buildings hold so much significance
Not only as a place of education
But as a safe space
The teachers that protected us
The classrooms we ran to for comfort
The subjects that we found passion for
The assignments we poured our hearts into
These were the things that brought us into adulthood

As we get ready to cross the stage
As we cross into our new lives
Walking away from our innocence
our childhoods
and from everything familiar

Time flies when you're making memories
But now it's time to make continue our stories...