

Deerfield's Literary Magazine

FEATURING
CREATIVE ART AND
LITERATURE FROM
DEERFIELD'S
MIDDLE
SCHOOLERS

Spring
2023

Folio

ART

POETRY

FAN FICTION

SHORT STORIES

PERSONAL NARRATIVES



Amelia Zmuda

Letter from the Advisor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 2023 issue of Deerfield's Literary Magazine!

We are now onto our sixth edition! This magazine would not be possible without the hard work, imagination, and creativity of Deerfield Middle School students. I am so grateful to the Deerfield staff, administrators, Board of Education, and community members for your support of Folio year after year.

In this year's edition includes exceptional sketches and



Taylor St Hill

drawings, paintings, graphic designs, photography, and even works created from yarn, as well as creative writing pieces including personal narrative, poetry, fan fiction, and short stories—all created by Deerfield Middle Schoolers!

The magazine's release is an exciting opportunity to expose unique and well-developed pieces, but also to inspire our readers!

Sincerely,

Ms. Onore

Melia Marcino



Here on
this golden
night,
lanterns fly
very bright.
Rapunzel
sits on a
tree,
enjoying
this very
breeze.

Golden Night

Her golden hair blazes away,
as the sun starts to lay,
upon this golden night.

Poem by Hudson McLaughlin

Jimmy Wells wasn't visually impaired, by any stretch of the imagination. He had perfect eyesight, in fact. However, he still couldn't see the man he was talking to outside of what used to be Big Joe Brady's restaurant. If they moved toward a light, perhaps...

Jimmy shifted to the other side of the man, and he moved with him, the street lamp lighting his face.

My God, Jimmy thought to himself, his heart racing. It is him. It was his friend Bob- but not only was it him. It was the criminal from Chicago he was warned about! Somehow, he hadn't made the connection until now.

He finished the conversation and hurried away, the only sound he could hear being his own heart pounding in his chest. It really was him. He couldn't believe it.

He moved swiftly, through the cold wind biting

at his hands and face, towards the station.

Just because he is... or was once a friend, doesn't mean he hasn't changed, he told himself.

When he arrived at the station and saw his friend John getting ready to start his shift, a feeling of relief

flooded through him. "John!" he called. "We have a problem."

"What's wrong?" John replied.

"The criminal- from Chicago- he's here! I couldn't arrest him myself. I knew him before he went out west."

He scribbled some instructions, and a note for Bob, on some paper. "Here, read this and give him the note."

As John hurried outside, Jimmy

sighed to himself. All he could think about was what a shame it was- such a shame to see Bob turn into something he never should have become.

After 20
Years
by O'Henry

Deleted Scene
by Elias
Gruszecki

Ocean

I love the ocean
The ocean is
beautiful
The ocean is mine

A Haiku by
Clara Ford

I have lived my entire life in a small town in New Jersey, where almost nobody looked like me. I have two very different aspects to my character. I have a side for when I am with friends, and a whole other with family. I would like to bring these two worlds to the same solar system, but moving planets is not exactly a simple task. I need to take it slowly, and meld my worlds together, but I also must ensure that they do come together, eventually.

When I was in third grade, I brought some homemade Indian food to school for lunch. It was one of my favorite dishes, Kadhi Chawal, which is a curd curry mixed with rice. As I sat down, I took out a plastic spoon and the container with the Kadhi Chawal. When I took my first bite, I heard my friend say, "Eww! What is that? It looks like poop!" I did not really know what to say. I just sat there, staring at my food, trying not to burst into tears. I placed the container back into my lunch box, and kept eating, now trying to hide my food. I took small bites, quickly bringing the spoon to my mouth, so nobody could see what was on it. After this, whenever I brought Indian food, which I still loved, I would ask my mom to not put it in a clear container if possible, and I would eat out of my lunch box anyway. Even today, I prefer not to bring Indian food to school, trying to keep that aspect of my life at home.

I always have had lots of after-school activities around the Diwali season, and would carpool with friends a lot. Since Diwali is the festival of lights, my family always decorated the house with lights, inside and out. By the time we pulled into my driveway, all the lights could be seen around the house, and thus, I waited for the inevitable questions: "What are those lights for?" or "Why do you already have Christmas lights up?" Diwali is my favorite Indian holiday, with the fireworks, lights, and especially the food. While these questions did make me slightly uncomfortable, it was not because I did not want others to know about my culture. It was because I was scared that they would not understand.

However, in recent years, more and more people have grown aware of holidays such as Diwali. Now, when we pull up to the front of my house, and my ride sees the lights, there is a high chance that they bring it up as Diwali, knowing what it is. This makes me feel like I do not have to give a "dumbed-down" explanation, and instead can talk freely about it.

I realized that there will be setbacks, and there may be cultural differences people will never understand, but now I know that if people actually want to know about others' differences, it makes the process of joining a person's multiple aspects much easier for them, and the process of everyone around them understanding the multiple aspects easier as well. The closer these get, the more and more sure of themselves these people will become. I was not going to let these rough times, where my two worlds collided, throw my universe off balance, into chaos. This process is like mixing colors; you cannot put two colors on top of each other and expect a new color. You need to start them separately, and then, slowly at first, mix them together. Once you get going, you can speed up, and soon enough you will have a beautiful combination of the colors you mixed.

The Summer I Turned Pretty

Fan Fiction
Deleted Scene

by Brooke DeAngelis

"Salve, I am your Latin teacher, Mrs. Jones. A little bit about me- I graduated from Penn State and now, as you know, I'm a Latin teacher. So, to start off, I need everyone to find a partner for the week."

I look towards Taylor. I can't really see her because my glasses are fogged up. I can only make out her long blonde hair and her hot pink shirt, but I know for one thing- she is not looking at me. She is looking straight ahead at a boy. She gets up and walks over. Her hair flows back and forth. She has some sort of pep in her step, but then it hits me. Why doesn't she want to be partners with me? Does she still like me? Am I not good enough for her? Soon enough, I hear Taylor and a boy talking.

"Hey, I'm Taylor. Want to be my partner?" Her voice is soft, but it feels like knives stabbing my back. I taste the metal in between my braces.

"No, I have a partner already." He barely looks up from his paper. I can tell he's annoyed. Taylor's jaw drops. Her eyes become an ocean of tears. I can hear her take a few steps back, but I put my eyes on the paper.

"Belly," her voice dismal as she walks up to me. I know what she is going to ask. Boldly, I look her in the eye and state, "I will not be your partner when you treat me like your back up plan; your second option, so no, I can not be your partner."



Chloe Choo

Crash! Whoosh! Crash! Bang! Bang! Bang! “Your Highness!” said General Raed, “Are you alright? We must hurry and evacuate the palace at once!”

“I’m fi...” Crash! The king’s sentence was cut short. The chandelier from 30 feet up, fell and landed on the king, crushing and killing him instantly. The soldiers barely had time to process what happened before they heard the faint cries of a newborn baby coming from the queen’s room. The queen had given birth during such a chaotic time. The baby didn’t even get to see her father. The soldiers and remaining servants rushed into the queen’s room. Surely, there was the queen, holding her newborn baby in her arms, singing a soothing lullaby to her, trying her best to soothe the panic stricken baby.

Aphrodite's Revenge

“You must leave the palace at once!” ordered General Raed.

“What about my husband?” the queen asked with worry filling her voice.

“It’s too late for him; we are deeply sorry my queen, but we must get you to safety,” one of the queen’s handmaidens, Lauren said, carefully pulling the queen towards the door. The castle shook with the indication of another explosion going off, causing the ceiling to begin to crack, soon shattering, sending chunks of cracked wood everywhere.

**A Short Story
by Phoenix
Wheless and
Yuruan Zheng**

The queen, with her last bit of strength, cast a protection spell, and was able to protect them. After the debris completely fell and the dust cleared, the spell broke and the queen collapsed. With her last breath she told her handmaidens, “I won’t live to see her grow up to be a queen, but I’m trusting her to you. Protect her until she is old enough to take the castle back from the witch. That is my only wish.” The queen closed her eyes and let out a shaky exhale, and everyone in the room knew that the queen had taken her last breath.

“No! My lady! Wake up!” Lauren yelled, tears streaming down her face.

“It’s no use, Lauren. She’s dead. She used her last bit of strength to protect us; she sacrificed herself. We have to fulfill her last wish,” Charlotte said. Now with the king and queen both dead, the soldiers escorted the handmaidens to the castle gates. With a small wagon, they took off into the forest, promising to protect this newborn, and the last will of the queen.

THE GIVER

FAN FICTION BY KIERA KELLY
DELETED SCENE FROM THE GIVER'S
PERSPECTIVE

I was sitting in my chair, hunched over with my face shoved into my hands. The constant dull pain of my memories had grown into a roaring monster. Today specifically, I felt the thirst and hopelessness of a young soldier long before Communities and Sameness. It was so awful, I could barely hear the creak of my door opening as Jonas stepped inside.

"I'll come back tomorrow, sir," He said nervously, but he hesitated, "Unless maybe there's something I can do to help."

I looked over to his much younger face, jealous that he did not yet understand this awful level of suffering. I could feel the heat from the sunburn in my memory, the gunshots so nearby. "Please," I gasped before I could think about it more, "take some of the pain."

Jonas grabbed my strained hands and helped me out of my softer armchair to the wooden one at the side of the bed. I waited somewhat impatiently as he took off his tunic and laid face down on the mattress. In my mind, my fellow soldiers were crumbling towards the earth with every blast from the guns.

"Put your hands on me," Jonas directed, pulling me back to our world. I gently placed my hands onto his back and let the memory that was torturing me start to slip from my grasp and into Jonas's consciousness.

I could immediately tell that Jonas had entered the memory when he started to twitch, head tilting as if he was looking around. As the blood-soaked bodies and the pain of broken bones mixed with extreme thirst escaped me, only then did I start to feel relief.

After a few minutes, I started to realize what I was doing. This poor boy had never felt

deep pain in any way. He had no tolerance for it at all; he was not ready, yet I reminded myself that it had to happen eventually. He would need to Receive the memories I Gave, no matter the level of anguish. From Jonas's point of view, I knew that hours must have passed by this point. We were getting to the end of the memory. I could tell this by the way that the cannons had faded into a quiet pop, and all I could remember was the now warped cries of the men around me.

Finally, the last emotions escaped my brain. That specific feeling of life without hope was no longer something that I had to carry around. For me, the war was over, both literally and figuratively, but not for Jonas.

He contorted his body and flipped over, a grimace on his face. His eyes snapped open, clouded in horror as he stared up to the ceiling. He relaxed only slightly when he started to notice where he was. I quickly turned my head away and pulled my hands back. I could not bear to see what I had done. I was ruining yet another childhood, destroying any youth left inside of him. He would forever hate this cursed job of Remembering as I do as well. He would come to the same fate as Rosemary, terrified of pain and done with life. He would wish to leave this wretched world, but the chance of him being stronger than she was was quite high. The Committee of Elders always did their jobs well. Jonas had been honored in this manner for a reason.

"Forgive me." I apologized to Jonas, my head still turned toward the rest of my room.

Wordlessly, Jonas winced as he stood up and grabbed his tunic. He slipped it on, and limped towards the door, my old memory impairing his ability to do simple tasks. Then, he turned around and faced me one last time before shutting the door behind him.

"Thank you," he expressed, "for letting me help you." This one sentence is what stopped my worrying. He would be strong and continue on. I could count on him.

Orange Tree

Poem by
Hudson
McLaughlin

The
orange tree
has fruit so
ripe.

Riper than
the golden
sun.

Every
leaf so
green.

Every
orange so
pristine.

Art by
Scarlet
Steinmetz



"The Last Leaf" by O'Henry

Behrman flopped, exhausted, into his armchair that laid in the middle of his musty, cramped studio apartment, as ideas ambled through his head, wondering how he could possibly help Johnsy.

Fan Fiction Deleted Scene by Kiera Kelly

"I have it!" Behrman stood up, exclaiming dramatically, "If the leaf never falls, then Johnsy will never decide to die." He stumbled toward his paints, grabbing greens and oranges, picking up his lamp on the way, but as he walked toward the door, he hesitated. He could hear the storm raging outside. Rain knocked heavily on the walls and thunder crashed somewhere far away. The chill of the night reached through the cracks in the door. It came to old Behrman that going outside in the cold storm meant catching a bad case of pneumonia. Over the last ten years, it had become apparent that he was getting weak; his bones creaked, and the slightest cold kept him in bed for a day; but the thought of Johnsy dying before he did and the idea of Sue living alone caused Behrman to continue moving.

He pulled open the wooden door and the wind and rain pushed through the open doorway, taking away any heat inside his apartment. Before he could change his mind, he rushed into the alleyway where the tree grew along the wall of the next house. He set down his paints and the light along the wall where they were partially concealed from the rain, and Behrman, who was already soaked to the skin, grabbed his paintbrush and started the heroic task of creating his final and greatest masterpiece.



THE TREES START TO GROW LEAVES.
PINK FLOWERS
BLOOM IN TEAMS.
SNOW STARTS TO
TURN TO RAIN.
IT'S TOO
BEAUTIFUL
TO EVEN
EXPLAIN.
SPRING IS
APPROACHING.
THE DAYS
GET LONGER
AND AS TIME PASSES,
WE ALL GET STRONGER.

SPRING

BY ANONYMOUS STUDENT AUTHOR

BACKGROUND ART BY
DANIELLA MARANO



FAN FICTION BY EVAN CHAN

MORTICIA SENSED THE MOMENT WEDNESDAY WAS STABBED BY JOSEPH CRACKSTONE - A SEARING PAIN RIPPING THROUGH HER CHEST. GOMEZ LEAPED INTO ACTION, SENDING PUGSLEY TO GET THE CAR READY AND TRYING TO REACH THE PRINCIPAL BY PHONE. JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO GIVE UP, MORTICIA EXPERIENCED A GENTLE WARMTH- A SIGN THAT WEDNESDAY HAD BEEN SAVED.

"TRY A DIFFERENT NUMBER FOR SOMEONE AT THE SCHOOL," MORTICIA SAID. "OUR BABY MAY BE OKAY AT THE MOMENT, BUT SHE'S CERTAINLY STILL IN DANGER." AS GOMEZ FLIPPED THROUGH HIS PAGES OF CONTACTS, MORTICIA

STARED OUT THE WINDOW AND SAID A SILENT PRAYER, HOPING THAT WHATEVER WEDNESDAY WAS FACING, SHE'D HAVE

THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME IT.

A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER, AS SOON AS WEDNESDAY'S PARENTS ARRIVED AT NEVERMORE, MORTICIA GAVE HER DAUGHTER A BIG HUG. WEDNESDAY TENSED UP A BIT AT THE SHOW OF AFFECTION, BUT DIDN'T TRY TO PULL AWAY OR THREATEN HER MOTHER WITH DEATH. MAYBE NEVERMORE HAD CHANGED THE WAY SHE SAW THINGS.

WITH THE LAST OF WEDNESDAY'S BELONGINGS BEING PACKED UP, MORTICIA NOTICED AN IRRESISTIBLE PULL TOWARDS PRINCIPAL WEEMS'S OFFICE, AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE SHE FOUND HERSELF SLIPPING THROUGH THE UNLOCKED DOOR. MORTICIA WAS TAKEN ABACK BY THE FAMILIARITY OF THE ROOM, NOTING THAT WHILE THE DECOR HAD CHANGED SINCE HER DAYS AT NEVERMORE, THE OFFICE ITSELF SEEMED TO HAVE REMAINED THE SAME. SHE MET PRINCIPAL WEEMS'S GAZE. "WE DIDN'T ALWAYS SEE EYE TO EYE," MORTICIA BEGAN, "BUT I'M GLAD YOU WERE WEDNESDAY'S PRINCIPAL. YOU KNEW HOW TO BE TOUGH BUT STILL FAIR WITH HER, WHICH IS REALLY WHAT SHE NEEDS. MOST PEOPLE DON'T GIVE HER THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT, ONLY BECAUSE SHE LOOKS AND THINKS DIFFERENTLY."

IT WAS A GUST OF WIND OUTSIDE THAT BLEW THE WINDOW PANE OPEN, JUST ENOUGH FOR MRS. ADDAMS' SKIN TO BE WARMED BY THE SUNSHINE. IT LOOKED AS IF MORTICIA HAD BEEN HEARD.

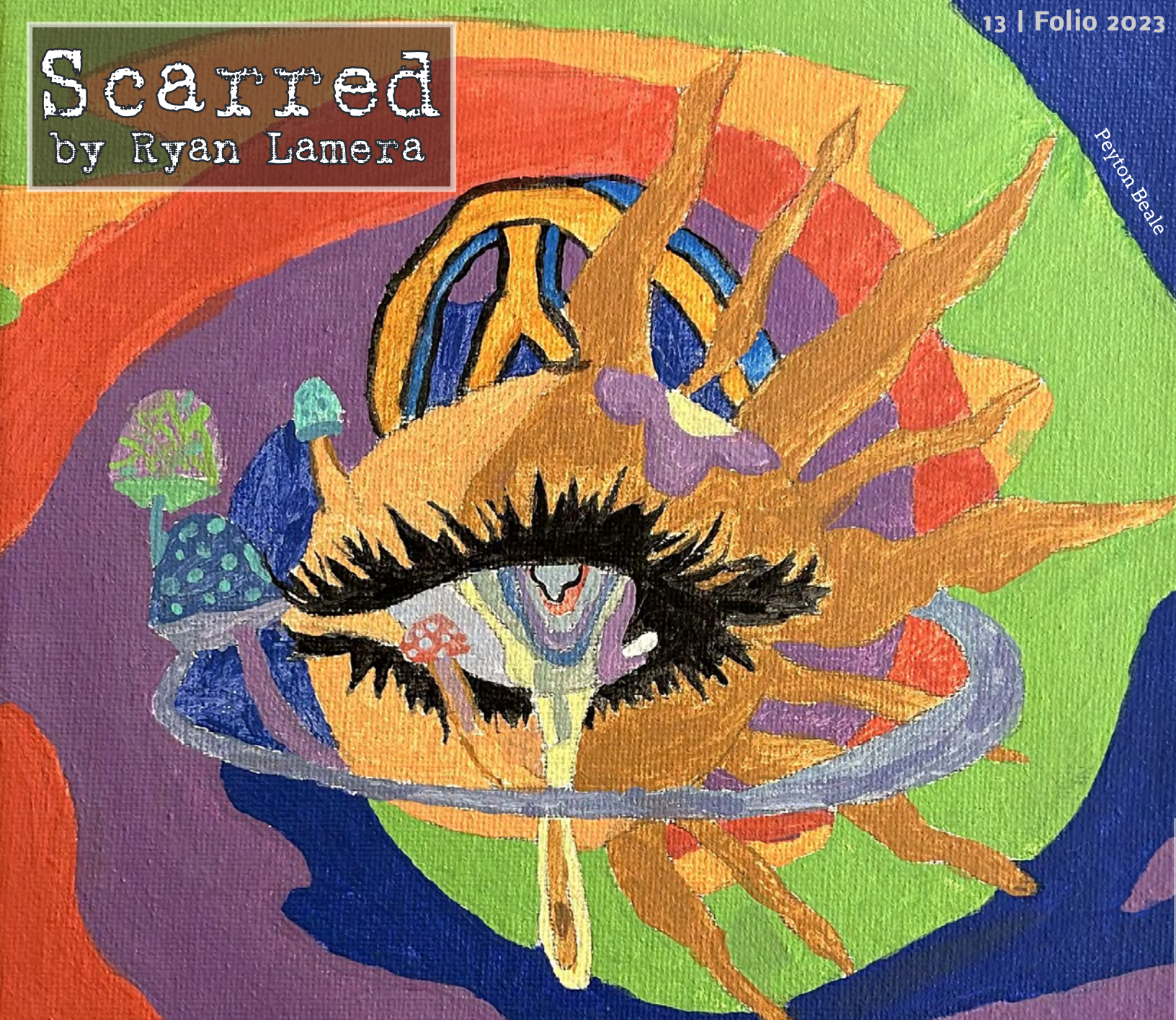


Bridget Whelan

Scarred

by Ryan Lamera

Peyton Beale



Scarred, damaged, alone
My heart completely cracked just
like a broken bone
Once again I can't adjust
to all these people who can't
handle my trust
When I give people my love,
they hit it back at me like a
boxing glove

My Pledge to Our Veterans

VFW Patriot's Pen Essay
State Finalist Emma Wargaski

Former United States Representative, Jeff Miller, once said, "The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude." Visualize this- You are a student sitting at your desk while listening to the morning announcements. "Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance," the Principal states. You get out of your seat, face the flag, and place your right hand on your heart. Any normal day, you would say the Pledge, and then go on with life, but this morning your mind has started to fill with questions. How has this flag gotten here? What is the purpose of saying the Pledge? Why do we do this every morning? The Pledge of Allegiance is a promise to our country and our veterans that we, the American people, are a group, and we will stick together.

The thirteen stripes and fifty stars on the United States flag represent more than just a pattern. Each detail has meaning behind it which represents our country and the veterans who built our nation. The red stripes represent the toughness and vigor our country has. The white stars and stripes represent innocence and purity. Finally, the blue represents perseverance and justice. My pledge to our veterans is to always treat them with honor and respect, because they have helped us live this life that the American flag represents. Our veterans have shown toughness and vigor throughout countless wars and battles. Our veterans have shown innocence and purity by loving our country and putting their lives on the line. Our veterans have shown perseverance and justice by never giving up even when the times were difficult. A few years ago for the Mountainside Memorial Day Ceremony, I participated in an essay contest through the Girl Scouts. Later, I learned that I won the contest and got to read my essay at the ceremony. I felt so proud that I was able to honor my veterans in person. This is a time that truly stuck with me.

Ever since July 4, 1776, two-hundred and forty-six years ago, our veterans have been the support our country has needed. Throughout good and bad times, our veterans were able to hold everything together. My pledge to our veterans is to always show my utmost respect, and honor them when I can.



Carly Pfeiffer

Money

COINS ALL SEEM SUNNY

THERE ARE MANY USES
FOR CASH-

TO BUY A BIG
BIRTHDAY BASH

CHANGE ALWAYS GOES
AROUND,

BUT NEVER SEEMS TO
BE ABOUND

PEOPLE LIKE TO KEEP
IT IN SAFES,

BUT THEY ARE
ALWAYS UNSAFE

IT'S ALRIGHT HONEY

IT'S MONEY



POEM AND GRAPHIC BY

Madison McLaughtlin

KOI FISH

BY TAYLOR ST HILL

AN ORANGE AND
WHITE KOI FISH IN A
POND,

DOING NOTHING BUT
THINKING FAR AND
BEYOND

THE BRIGHT BLUE
WATER FORMING A
SPECIAL BOND

Art by Julia Francisco



WITH ROCKS LIKE
CHARCOAL AFTER
A BOMB,

AND SO THE KOI
FISH SITS IN THE
POND,

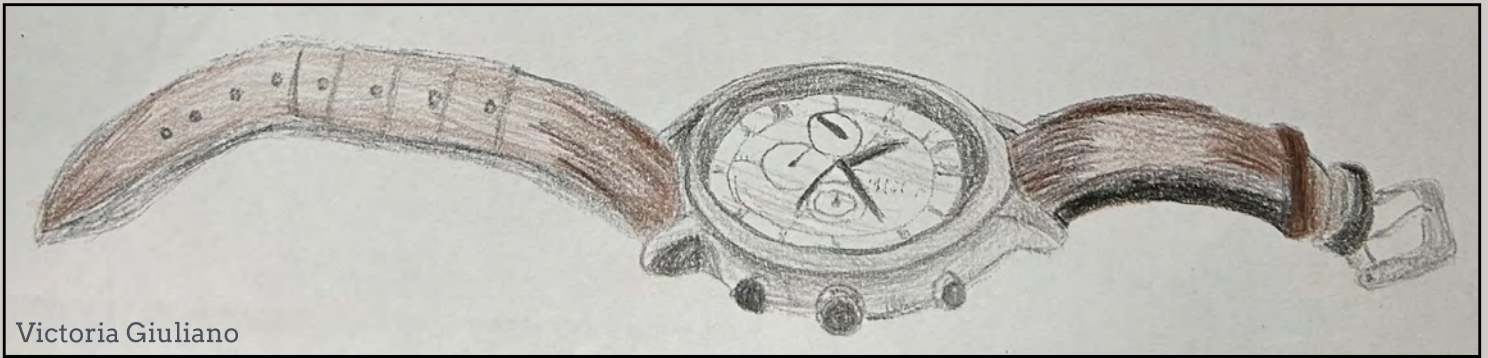
WAITING FOR
SOMEONE TO
FINALLY RESPOND.



the *SECRET* *KEEPER*

Fan Fiction Deleted Scene Penelope's Point of View by Jackson Hyman

Staring at the open box, the woman was still amazed by the watch's beauty. She had never seen anything like it before, and it seemed to twinkle in her eye. She grabbed the key and pushed it in, locking it into place. Before pulling it up, she hesitated. She knew what she had to do; she had planned it out. She knew the Smoke wanted it and she couldn't let that happen. She pulled the key out and her world went black.



Feeling her way along the stair wall, she descended from the point of the light house. Finally, she reached the bottom of the stairwell, where she could still see the image of the rusty door hinges and wooden frame in her mind. This was her first checkpoint. She reached into her pocket and pulled the watch out with the key still in it. She yanked the key from the star shaped hole and her vision reappeared. She opened the creaky door and stepped out into the foggy night. The grass was wet from the passing storm and her pristine shoes instantly became sloshed with mud. When she reached the big rock in the middle of the field, she stopped and crouched down behind it. She then pushed the key back down into the hole, and peered over the edge of the rock. She saw the hole in the fence of the junkyard, and the many cars inside of it. Making sure she had everything in check, she reached into her pocket and pulled out the car keys. She stared at the hole in the fence once more before her world became surrounded by darkness. once again.

She stayed hunched down as her ghostly form barreled towards the rusted fence. With her right hand, she reached out and lifted the flap of fence that covered the hole. Stepping inside, she could feel the warm hum of the RV's heater as the owner was beginning to settle down for the night. She felt her way around the RV and slowly walked towards the parked cars, sliding her hand across the cars. She searched until she finally found the one with the huge antenna on top. Grabbing the watch from her pocket, she pulled out the key, becoming visible again, and slid the items back into their case. Then, she grabbed the car keys and silently opened the driver's door and slid inside. The slick smell of leather made her sure that this was a new car, meaning that there had to be gas inside of it. Closing the car door, she put the key in the ignition and hesitated.

Was she ready? This would be breaking the law, something she had never once thought of doing, but to keep the others safe, she knew she had to start the car. With her right hand, she turned the key and the car roared to life, alerting the owner immediately. The owner shot up and unlocked his trailer door as quickly as he could; he pushed the heavy door open and ran towards the noise, but it was too late. The woman had already slammed on the gas pedal and all the man could do was jump out of the way. The car broke right through the fence and veered left, heading towards the highway, and all the owner could do was watch as his luxury car got stolen two hours after he had just bought it.

The woman gunned it down the long 50 mile stretch of highway, speeding past bridges and trees. There were not many cars on the road at that time, it was a luxury to have a car nowadays. The woman knew where she had to go—the Lower Downs, specifically New Umbra. No one would care about her and the Smoke would never think to search there either. After about an hour, the woman pulled off the highway directly into the forest. Branches smacked the car from all angles, breaking off the side mirrors and cracking the windshield. Finally, her car bounced onto the cracked gravel streets of New Umbra, her shredded tires rolled until they couldn't move anymore, and she was forced to continue on foot. The woman shivered as a cold breeze blew into her body,

which was only covered by a thin layer of clothes. Still, she pushed on; the cold would not be enough to stop her from hiding this precious watch from the Smoke and the rest of that evil group.

The Secret Keeper Fan Fiction
Continued

She turned left and began to walk down yet another familiar looking street, she thought she would never find a place to hide this thing. In a ruined city she couldn't find one place to hide this stupid watch, she almost gave up when she saw it. It looked like a regular alley, but it was narrow, and 100 meters up was the perfect ledge to hide the watch.

She looked around her to make sure there was no one around and slinked into the alley. As she walked towards the brick wall she realized she had no plan to get to that ledge nor any place to hide it on that ledge, but she knew that had to be the place. However, she still needed something to be able to fully hide the watch, looking at her feet she spotted a couple bricks and she remembered a can of tar that she had passed. Rushing out of the alleyway, she made her way towards the deserted construction zone and grabbed a can of tar along with a brick trowel. She rushed back into the alley and put all of her stuff on the ground, she then realized that she could get up by putting her hand and feet on the side of the wall. Although this method would work, she had no way of carrying all of that stuff up 100 meters, but she had to try.

Clutching the tar can with her mouth, she stuffed the trowel into her pocket, along with a brick in her other pocket. Then slowly, she began her ascent. Her fingernails began to dull and rub down as she climbed higher. Her legs burned and her arms felt like they were going to fall off, while her jaw felt like it was being ripped off, but she did not stop. Finally, she reached the ledge, and heaved the items onto the wooden ledge. She took a heavy breath before picking up the trowel and searching for loose bricks in the wall. She found a wiggly brick and pulled it out with the trowel, then she pulled the watch case from her fleece pocket and opened it. She stared at the glistening, sphere watch. She had to give up the power of the watch, but she knew it was for a good cause. She put the watch into the empty hole and filled the front of the hole with tar. Finally, she set the brick in place and made sure it was secure. Her weak limbs trembled as she pushed her hands and legs against the wall, and began her descent. Her legs felt like jelly and trembled like she had never seen them tremble before. She left the alley and walked into the moonlit night, satisfied with her choice.

Warning- Graphic content

THE dystopian series *Scythe* and this fan fiction piece contain elements of violence.

It was a bumpy drive as I looked towards Scythe Curie. She looked back with a concerned look on her face, just as if there's something she's hiding from me, something unfortunate. "Your final test will be tonight," she uttered in a trembling voice. I could tell it would be hard.

"What is it?" I asked curiously, waiting anxiously for an answer.

"You'll find out soon enough," she replied in a more serious voice. I sighed, waiting to see what peril lies ahead in this new challenge. Would I be asked to glean an entire building? Or would I have to fight in an arena? No, it was far worse than that.

"Good luck," Curie said, possibly hoping that I wouldn't be mad at her. I left the car and saw five figures wearing robes. Only two I recognized- Scythe Mandela and Scythe Meir, the rest were anonymous to me. As I looked down, I saw various weapons on a tablecloth: a pistol, a shotgun, a scimitar, a bowie knife, and a vial with a poison pill. I took the knife.

"Look in the other end of the room," Mandela ordered. There, I saw someone of small stature. They were forcefully tied onto the chair as I could see visible bruise marks on their body. The figure in the chair began making high pitched muffled sounds as I unsheathed the blade. I leaned forward and said, "You're going to be okay, don't worry," and with sudden speed, I thrust the blade into their stomach, covered their mouth to hide the screams, and slowly dropped the body on the ground, and left the haunting room.

Fan Fiction **Scythe**

Deleted scene by
Aayan Soomro

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TURNING

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS CHANGING

DON'T STICK ONTO SOMETHING

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TURNING

NOTHING STAYS FOREVER

NOBODY STAYS WITH YOU UNTIL THE END

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS CHANGING

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TURNING

NIGHT AND DAY COMES, THE SUN ALWAYS DIES ONLY

TO COME BETTER THE NEXT DAY

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TURNING

THE WORLD IMPROVES AND EVOLVES

PEOPLE IMPROVE AND EVOLVE

GROW, ATTACH, AND DETACH

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TURNING

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS CHANGING, ALWAYS TURNING

AND ALTHOUGH YOU CAN'T CHANGE IT

GRAB AND PUT IN A BAG

FREEZE IT AND STAY IN THE MOMENT

EMBRACE THAT THE WORLD

IS ALWAYS TURNING, ALWAYS CHANGING

ALWAYS CHANGING

BY SOPHIA ERRICO

As I saw the train take a rusted halt at our station, ready to deliver me to my future, I knew it was time to say goodbye. Most of the town had come for my departure, which only made things harder. Looking at all the people of my town, who I would never see again for almost a decade, I felt tears slowly creeping in, but I refused to let them out, not yet at least.

The Book of Life Maria's Point of View

"Adios, Maria," I heard the townspeople of San Angel say.

"Adios mi hija, write soon," my father urged as he tried holding back tears during our final hug. "I'm going to go over there," he said right after I planted a goodbye kiss on his cheek in a broken voice, finally letting his sadness free.

After my papa left, I turned around to see my two meat-headed best friends, Monolo and Joaquín. Each step I took towards them was more heart-wrenching than the last; I did not want to go. "I'm going to miss you guys," I said to them, giving them both tight hugs.

"We'll be here waiting," Joaquín reassured.

"For as long as it takes," Monolo added.

"Don't ever stop playing, okay?" I told Monolo, "and you, don't you ever stop fighting for what's right," I told Joaquín.

**Fan Fiction by
Anonymous
Student Author**

"I got you a present," Monolo said as he handed me a big hefty box. "You should probably open it now."

"Wait a second, we were supposed to bring gifts?" Joaquín asked in confusion.

As I opened the mysterious box, I saw something small and pink sitting at the bottom of it. I gasped at the thoughtful gesture. It was the pig I had saved from the cruel butcher with the help of Monolo and Joaquín.

"I named him Chuy," Monolo informed me. "He'll look after you."

"Oh... I remember you!" I said as I picked up the adorable baby pig, cradling him in my arms.

"I figured... you needed a little part of town to go with you," he explained.

"Thank you," I whispered to him as I hugged Chuy in my arms.

"Seriously, no one told me about bringing gifts!" Joaquín added once again, still confused and worried.

"Can you hold Chuy for me?" I asked Joaquín as I prepared to give Monolo a sorry gift for ruining his guitar during the pig rescue. "This is to make up for breaking your guitar," I said, handing him a long box wrapped in a vibrant red bow. As I was handing him the gift, I heard the final whistle of the train urging the last passengers to board quickly before the train left them behind, one of those passengers being me.

"All aboard!" I heard the conductor of the train shout from the front of the train.

"I've got to go," I said to the two as I grabbed Chuy hastily from Joaquín's arms. "Don't forget me!" I yelled as I ran for the train, finally letting the tears spill out, now that I did not have to face anyone else. I felt the wind take my bonnet, blowing it away with the breeze. I thought about running back for it, letting the train leave without me, but I could not do that to my papa. He had such big plans for my future at this place, wanting me to become the perfect daughter there, and I could not disappoint him. As I took the steps onto the train and to my seat, clutching Chuy close to me, I was ready to face my new challenge.



A BLADE AMONG THE MANY FLOWERS
AS IT GLISTENS WITH POWER
A GENTLE TOUCH IS ALL IT TAKES
TO RELEASE THE GLORY IT HOLDS
WITHIN

AS THE GROUND QUAKES AROUND YOU
THE BLADE SOON REVEALS ITS
INTENTION

IT SLOWLY WRAPS AROUND YOUR PALM,
IT FEELS AS IF IT IS FROM A
DIFFERENT DIMENSION

JUST LIKE THE FLOWERS, THE BLADE
BEGINS TO BLOOM,

THE BLADE GROWS EVER STRONGER,
EVEN SO THAN THE MIGHTY
EXCALIBUR,

AND AS YOU VENTURE ON YOUR NEXT
QUEST

ANYONE WHO STANDS IN YOUR PATH
WILL BE MET WITH ETERNAL DOOM.

A FLORIST'S GIFT

POEM
BY
AAYAN
SOOMRO



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Enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,
Ms. Onore

Olivia Ho

