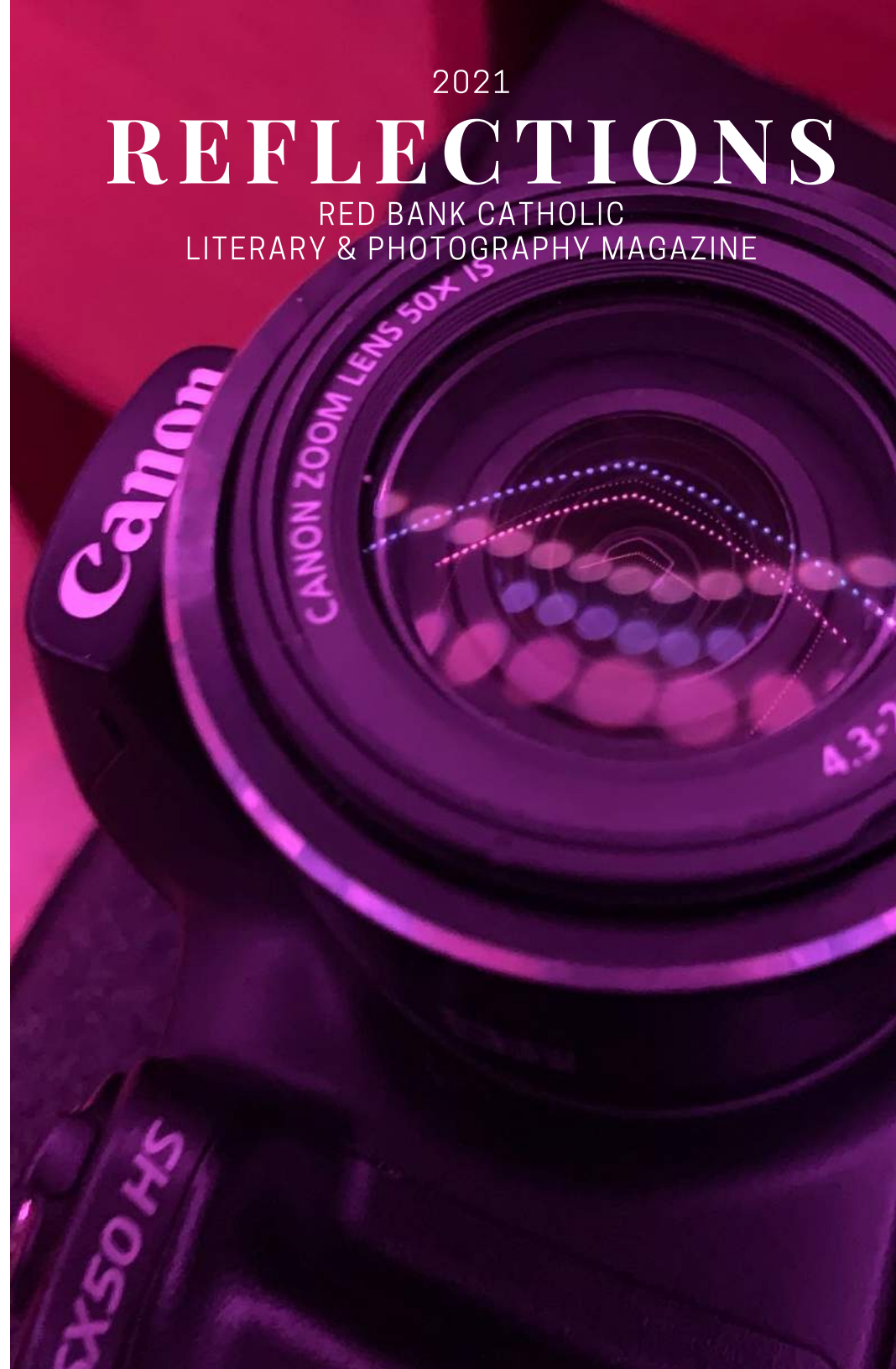


2021

REFLECTIONS

RED BANK CATHOLIC
LITERARY & PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE





The Key to Life

The key to life is loving the air
and holding on tight even if they stare
instead of dreading death with despair
leave loving your soul even without a care
cherish yourself without regret
and I'll bet
that if we die young
our lives will have already shone as the sun
experience everything the world has to offer
from the pyramids of Egypt to standing at the altar
so when you go, you know
at the strike of death's blow
fear will not rise
because we truly lived our lives

Carmen Gemellaro

A photograph of a rocky coastline. In the foreground, there are large, dark, jagged rocks, some of which are covered in green moss. The ocean is turbulent, with white-capped waves crashing against the shore. The sky is overcast with heavy, grey clouds.

A Rainy Storm

Life is like a rainy storm
When the clouds consume the sky
Covering the sunshine that was once there
The cold wind takes over
You wish it would go away
And once it does
The rainbow peeks through at the end
Happiness consumes us
There are always rainy storms
We need to know
There is always a rainbow
At the end of a storm.

Gabrielle Merlo



Love

What really is love?
How do we know it is love
If we have never experienced it before
How do we know what it feels like
If never experienced
Love is your own version of joy
Your own version of comfort
Your own version of every feeling possible
All found in one thing
Love isn't only for another person
Love can be anything that makes you
Feel these things

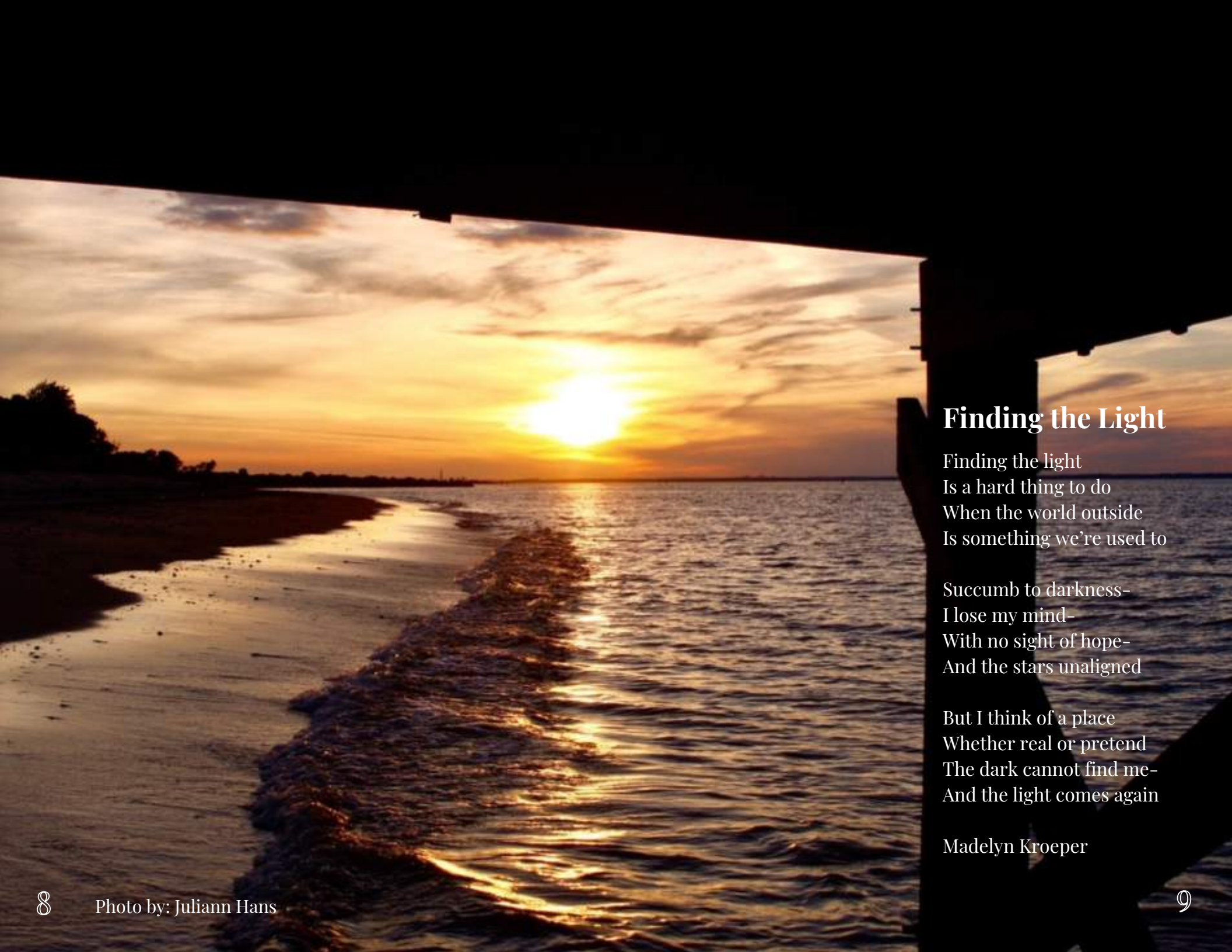
Jenna Dziedzic



The Light Went Out

The light went out, it was pitch black,
The feeling of loneliness began to come back.
Suffocating, killing, leaving me sad,
Ungrateful for the life so great I have.
How could one feel so low,
The fake smiles I display
So nobody will ever know.
These thoughts take over my brain,
Only when the lights are out
Do I feel such pain.
When they are on,
These thoughts are gone.
Life is full of hard times,
Mostly felt in the nighttime.
So I decide to keep the light on
The feelings disappear long past dawn.

Reese Zimmermann



Finding the Light

Finding the light
Is a hard thing to do
When the world outside
Is something we're used to

Succumb to darkness-
I lose my mind-
With no sight of hope-
And the stars unaligned

But I think of a place
Whether real or pretend
The dark cannot find me-
And the light comes again

Madelyn Kroeper



The Hill We Climb

The hill we climb every day is a long adventure that has just started.
The hill we climb every day is darkness with no light in view.
The hill we climb every day has problems and rough days.
The hill we climb every day is never-ending days that feel like forever.
I question... is this hill going to help me?
As seconds go by, I have no idea what is going to happen.
I do not stop believing though,
Questioning... does this hill have an end?
I hope that one day I will see the end and it will be worth my climb.

Katelyn Lakefield

Would You Like the Time

Would you like the time?
In exchange, I would like a dime
Remember, the hands tell all
In this silly little plastic ball
Circling and tumbling down
All around this vicious town
Oh dear, I've blinked a bit
Now we're a bit further in the pit
Ticking ticking,
Clicking clicking
Time bomb
Reset, world alarm

Metaxia Dimitroulako



Sometimes I Wonder

Sometimes I wonder,
where do we go
when it is our time,
when we will no longer show.
What will happen
to everyone we meet,
when we vanish, without a beat.
It makes me sad
to think of such things,
but I always remember
what life has to bring.
At least I have love
that surrounds me
while times flies by
right past my eye.

Isabella Politan



Joyfulness

Joyfulness keeps me alive
and lets me live a carefree life
joyfulness fills my mind with happy thoughts
joyfulness is like the rainbow
that appears after a storm
it shines and sparkles in my life
and makes me a better person

I listen to the little things
the song of birds or the laughter of others
they bring good feelings and brighten my day
like a bird I can soar through the sky and
through bad times I face
I keep going and do not stop believing

and every morning I wake up
it's a bright new day
yesterday is in the past
today is a new page in my book of life
although some days seem to go on forever
I get through them and feel joy in the end

Sabino Portella





Life Was Easy

I remember when life was easy,
Times when we woke up
With cereal on the table
And colored in our notebooks,
Only looking forward to tomorrow,
But as these days repeated,
So did the tomorrows;

Now here I am today,
Barely looking forward to tomorrow,
Wishing these days would go by
As fast as they used to,
Each day getting longer - and longer,
Feeling like days kept repeating,
Wanting the tomorrows to turn into years,
Wanting to leave and start my life over again,
Slowly realizing how much I want to be
The kid I used to be-
Happy and excited for tomorrow,
And excited to wake up
With breakfast on the table,
But now, I wake up wanting to go back to sleep,
And hoping that someday the tomorrows
Will go by as fast as before,
Just as life was when I was a kid.

Christina Gabriel



Light After Darkness

I hope to live a life-
Live a life without fear
Live a life without tears
A life where I am happy

I hope the light will guide me
I hope that the darkness doesn't find me
I hope to be the light in someone's darkness
I hope to help others and myself

I see the light at the end of the tunnel-
The light seems to grow closer
I want to go towards the warmth-
And finally reach the light
At the end of the tunnel

Ella Jensen



Color of Sadness

You look up at the sky
You see it's blue
You look down at the grass
You see it's green.
You look up and down and see colors.
On some days the sky is grey
On some days the grass is brown.
Those are the colors of sadness.
The seasons change
and green turns grey.
The world is full of sadness.

Allison Tiefenthaler



Untruthful

The leaves of a tree unveil the truth we see
Each one falls and falls slowly as it dies
All groups fail to avow its true green
Growing faint to the real colors of actuality
Soon these leaves die with the deceit
No leaf can be unjust
They bloom until secrets leave them in demise
Lying on the ground no room to apologize
On the grass I lie and wonder if one day secrets
Will drive me under
Each leaf falls on my chest with a purpose to breathe
All leaves off my chest I feel free to grow for summer

Christian Ungemah

Calm Before the Storm

The calm before the storm
 Is expressed in weather
 Thunderous beams strike hard and fast
 No one can see the yellow and white flash
 No more ease in the air- the storm is here
 People change moods soon to be ash
 The storm was not expected
 All good things have gone past

Nicholas Cosimano

voice warns me I shouldn't take the bait, but
 for something, Jake?"
 "It's not like you're defending my whole
 ly who'll listen. You're a Goddamned
 Oh, wait. That's exactly
 together. That was didn't seem to be together
 Jake shakes his head, eyes glimmering. "Addy has
 "But your dad . . . forgave your mom, right?
 "Yeah, they're together. Nothing's
 new manicure place that opened in Bayville
 burgers and his mom was talking to Addy
 mal. Like always.
 "Yeah, they're together. Nothing's
 never been the same." Jake's staring in
 disgust that I don't know what to



Live on the Edge

some of us live our lives on the edge,
doing things some can't even think about
life begins when we are at the edge
of our comfort zones
we don't feel like ourselves
without an adrenaline rush
living on the edge is an opportunity
always to be prepared
for whatever comes our way
life's short- the world's big,
waiting for us to explore it.
if you're not living on the edge
you are taking up too much space

only living on the edge
can we truly understand the joy of life,
we learn the most living on the edge
rather than behind a desk
life is a dream for the wise,
a game for the fool,
a comedy for the rich,
a tragedy for the poor
so don't waste it-
live on the edge.

Brendan Kopec

A Pilgrim

A window is a window
only when the stars shine.
Hope is hope
only when you have hope.

The window is beautiful
only when there is wind.
Hope is beautiful
only when you never lose hope.

Still, there is a man opening the window
and singing the stars
in this despair and darkness

Pain produces patience

Patience does not produce hope
A stranger, who got lost that night, chased by gunshots
A traveler tracing the road of death

Mountains are beautiful
only when there is a sea.
Windows are beautiful
only when the stars shine.

Hope is a pilgrim in loneliness.

Sanghwi Park





Be A Star

I used to pitch a baseball
And now I just sit and stare at the wall
Thinking about how my life has changed
And only having a dollar in change
I could have made it big one day
But now I just end up as a stray
Wishing on how I could better my life
And wishing on how I could be a star
And how I can end up pitching the ball
And how I can end up doing it all
I want to make it big someday
But oh-boy it's oh so far away

David Nieves



Without You

I'd rather have loyalty than love
Cause love really don't mean jack
See, love is just a feeling
You can love somebody and still stab him in the back
It don't take much to love
You can love somebody just by being attached
See, loyalty is an action
You can love or hate me and still have my back
I gave you my all
You were my friend
I would have gone to war with the world on your call
Thought you had my back
Then you let me fall
You were the one that healed my pain
Then you caused it
Now I gotta go on without you.

Nicholas Cosimano

Journey

I lie down in the tall green grass
I'm looking towards the sky
I'm grounded by my body
But my spirit is soaring high

My imagination
Is my ticket to the sky
I'm tasting life, I'm living life
I'm flying up so high

I'm drifting on a cloud
I feel the comfort of the sun
I am seeing life so clearly
And my journey has just begun

Noel Pauwels





A New Normal

In just one year,
Everything flipped upside down.
2020 unlike all the others
Was terrible all around.

All started in March,
A global pandemic spread,
Schools began to close,
Horribly, people wound up dead.

Today masks are everywhere,
Classes from home seem typical,
Standing less than six feet apart is rare.
We call it the new normal.

Isabella Holovach



Swimming in the Rain

Water surrounds me below and above
I let the waves consume me and swallow me up
Floating at the surface with a steady pace
I look up at the clouds and feel the rain on my face

The perfect image of a sunny, happy day at the lake
Can sometimes feel fake
But when the sky is painted pink and its tears rain down
The world is on the brink of harmony and sound

The beauty in our planet's vulnerability
Will always strike me willingly
And while endless clouds pass and suns set
The stream of water carries on eternally with no regrets

In this moment, as I drifted in high tide
I was one with the author of the lands far and wide
The world was making me an offer
Throwing me into the cycle of water

Without the ring of the phone or a honk of a horn
It's easy to realize how peace is born
There is pain and beauty in the sky's stain
That is why I choose to swim in the rain

Carmen Gemellaro

Cheer of the Crowd

The cheer of the crowd as the batter comes to the plate,
The pitcher starts his wind up and throws the pitch,
The ball crosses the plate- I'm ready for it to be hit
I hear crack of the bat and see the ball coming to me,
All I can think is please field the ball,
I see the ball go into my glove and think, make a good
throw,
"Turn two" I hear in the distance, I make the throw and hear
"out",
The second baseman makes the second throw and I hear
"out" again,
I am ecstatic: we got two- one more to get out of this inning,
New batter comes up and pitcher gets to work,
First pitch ball, next one ball again,
third one another ball,
all I can think is
put something over the plate for him to hit,
All or nothing on the last pitch, the ball crosses
the plate and the hitter crushes it deep into the outfield,
center fielder running towards the wall,
then he jumps and catches the ball
to save a run, end the game, and win the championship.

Brendan Kopec



Positivity

Happiness to me is most important
It fills my life with comfort and assortment
The people who care about me support me
Through thick and thin
Through ups and downs
In the best of times and in the worst of times
As I make an attempt to compensate them for their love
I hope that one day things will not be so tough
Smiles make those brighter days
That we all wish to see today
My life without this seems so empty
It fills me up with positivity
Happiness is all I need
This will help me to succeed

Sabino Portella

My Heart Dances

My heart beat dances down my chest, through my legs,
down to my feet,
then hitting the floor like the rhythmic beat of the music.
I stretch, and practice my routine in the halls.
I do some turns, and drink water.
My breath is heavy, my heart is racing.
Not a single brown hair is out of place, each glued eyelash sits
perfectly on my eyelid; I am ready to go.
I enter through the side of the inner stage, four numbers left
until I go on.
Three. My air pods echo the beat of music back and forth,
a song I know inside out, a routine I could perform in my sleep.
Two. My heart races with the thought of each movement.
I can hear my teacher correct me in class.
"Straighten your legs." "Point your feet!"
One. One more aching moment of stress consumes my body.
My exhilarating heartbeat in sync with the tune of the song,
I take my first steps on the floor.
"Welcoming to the stage, number 304".

Ella Duborg



A photograph of a sunlit forest floor. In the foreground, numerous dandelions with their characteristic white seed heads are scattered across the ground. The background is filled with the trunks and dense green foliage of trees. Bright sunlight filters through the canopy on the right side, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene with a warm, golden light. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Ups and Downs

The sun isn't going to shine every day,
You may be drowning in the feeling of not being okay.
Lost, a way we sometimes feel,
Will open up a door for you to learn to heal.
The light will eventually shine through,
And the numbing darkness will have a clear view.
Some days you might want to walk away,
But always remember there is a reason to stay.
It's not always bad thoughts that cross your mind.
Sometimes the happy ones are just harder to find.
Mental health is a serious issue,
That can't be wiped away with a single tissue.
Don't be afraid if that smile turns to a frown,
Just know it's ok to have ups and downs.

Reese Zimmermann

Miles

The sound of doorbell that welcomes me,
White and blue walls of my room,
LEGO bricks I used to play with,
My mother calling me out for dinner,
My father watching TV with tired face,
My younger sister teasing me out,
My friends at Korean school,
Those common daily lives
Become priceless memories far away from me

Allowing me to appreciate,
Miles make things more valuable.

Sanghwi Park



Silly Dream

Everyone says it's just a dream
A dream that is out of reach
Even out of touch from your reality
It's a dream that is un-achievable

But is that what you believe
Thought after thought you've planned and imagined
Exactly how to make this your reality
How to make it true
A dream everyone says is silly
And sometimes you think the same
It gets inside your head
Makes you believe it yourself
Makes you believe this silly little dream is worth nothing
Then you go back to why
Why this dream is worth everything
How this dream pushes you through
Because in the end
You get more than what you bargained for
You get the dream
And showing all those people that you made it
You made your dream your reality
You proved you could do it
Your silly little dream
Came true

Madelyn Kroeper

Reach The Stars

Will I ever be able to fly?
You said I could go high
They said reach the stars
It's where you are
If the sky was falling
I could grasp one
I'm left coughing
I've always been undone
I would never
You always knew
Simple mind, simple lies
Stay dormant forever

Metaxia Dimitroulako





Song to Stocks

I went down the block
to buy some stocks
they didn't seem too bad
so I went back home
my wife was sad
I said what's wrong
and she got mad
she started to curse
all because I didn't get her a purse
she was gonna burst
so I went back down the block
took out some stocks
went to a store
got her a purse
when I got back she wanted more
but now I'm sad
and no one feels bad
she called me honey
but just wanted my money
I bought her a phone
but now it feels like it's not my home

Ryan Freer

Misplaced

A glance to the clock
The hands race ahead
My face pales with shock
But white becomes red.

I tear through my things
Once well and regarded
They fly and they fling
Left to be discarded.

It's nowhere in sight
Turn the house on its head
Shake my fists at the sky
Flip over the bed

Am I done with my fit?
The house is in shambles
But just then I see it
Right there on my mantle.

Madeleine Carpenter





I Can't Keep Up

Savor the seconds
Long for its end
New moment beckons
Grief or godsend

Outside of the action
Amalgam of thoughts
I watch my life happen
But can't make it stop

Press pause or slow down.
Still yet to mature
Each instant will pass
Patience's demure

Tears while it's raining
Breeze in a tornado
Don't bother complaining
Sit under a willow

The price is potent
Pain won't last for long
But one precious moment
Will too soon be gone.

Madeleine Carpenter

Stadiums Won't Weep

Stadiums won't weep
To a single voice reciting.

Sentences on a page
Won't revive older days,
One's lost musings
And nostalgia-spiced
Youth.

You cannot be
Nourished
By the clever
Snap of stanzas.

Syllable-counting
Won't beat the slow mounting
From bridge to chorus
That creates shaking roofs.

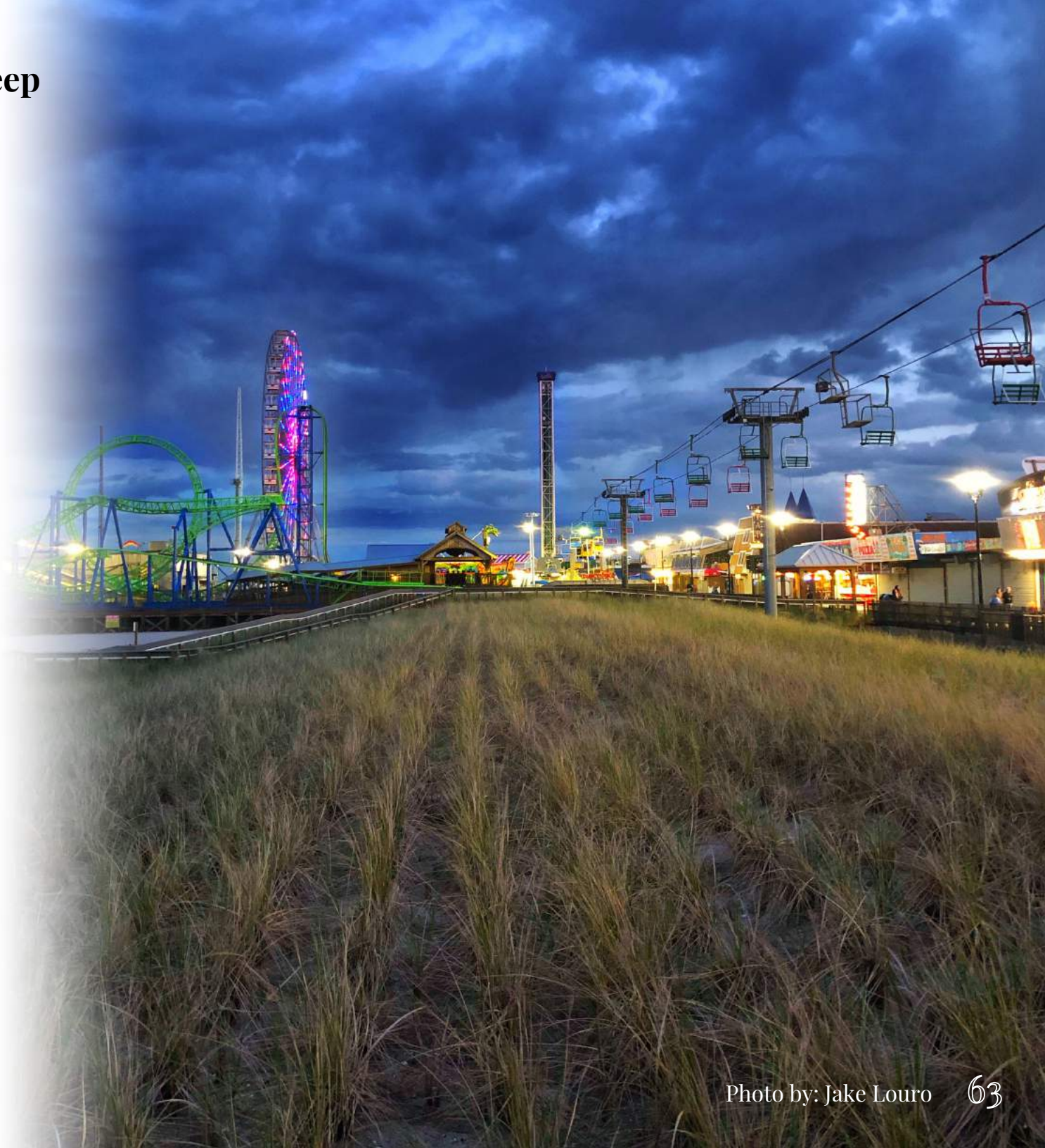
No heart becomes
Enthralled with
Speech breaking
Silence.

Snobbish pen-scratching
Still proves quite unmatching
To rhythm's quick tango
With screeches and hollers.

Crowds aren't set
Ablaze by
Letters punched
On sheets.

Quills and berets
Are just scholar's play
Next to full
Reconstruction
At the flip
Of a collar.

Georgia Bernhard



Lady Masquerade

Dear,
Call me Lady Masquerade;
for I'm always
in disguise.

Behind a lackluster
veil, my screams
fade and fester.

Under stare, I stride in
straight, tidy lines.
But when doors slam,
and once embraced
with a cupboard's darkness

I'm truly the star of the show.

I jeté in my music box
while serenading
a tearing reflection.

Emoting on Mars,
one day I'll break
the atmosphere.

At sunrise, I shrivel,
excrete my vivifying color.
Shuffling in line with our
pallid militia...
bohemian dreams of parade...

One day, dear, I promise.

Yours in proud suffocation,
One Lady Masquerade

Georgia Bernhard



Shivers Up a Spine

Shivers up a spine
Send a pulse
Down the line
To assure me
Of my
Dread.

If not for the feeling,
I'd almost be dealing
With an unmade,
Invisible bed.

Chatters from my bones
Really set the tone
For a
Symphony
Of utter fright.

Without that sensation,
I'd largely be facing
A slouching fence
At night.

Georgia Bernhard



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Special Thanks to Mr. Ross

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