



Commentarius
Issue 9
Autumn 2022

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School

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Special thanks

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Sherry Griffith
Jimmy Pogue



Community Haiku

Kai Rosario

**Heaven is the gift,
Compassion is the duty;
Diligence Forges.**





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Lonely Child

Jesse Jackson

A little kid stood in the road.

A toddler, actually. Noah saw them the instant he rounded the street corner, and the sight was enough to shock him into nearly falling off his bike. He kicked the stand down, feeling an overwhelming sense of panic rushing through his veins. Today's been a bad day, and the only thing that would make it worse would be to watch a two-or-maybe-three-year-old become a bloody smear on the pavement. Thankfully, there were no cars on the street at the moment, but that didn't stop him from nearly tripping over his own two feet trying to make it to them.

He ran towards the child, whom he observed was a girl, her wispy blonde hair pulled into pigtails. She wore what appeared to be a bluish-gray sundress, and was apparently playing with a hot pink rubber ball that had pictures of... princesses printed on it? Or maybe candy? He couldn't see much detail from this distance.

Just this luck that this sort of thing would happen today of all days. This was the day he went to Mom's house to spend the week. Mom didn't like it when he was late, but then again he didn't like showing up to her house at all, so it wasn't fun for him either. Every day he spent at her place was about a month or so off his lifespan. He was far from in the mood to deal with her harpy shrieking at him or her refusal to let him leave her line of sight, and now he had to deal with some random girl about to get run over. Well, at least this time he had a decent excuse to be late.

At least, he hoped it was decent. Last time he had been late, it was to help an old woman carry her bags into her house, and evidently, that wasn't a good enough excuse for Mom. As a consequence, he'd been on the resulting end of a vicious slap.

He shook those thoughts away. Right now, he had to focus on saving the kid.

It occurred to him that a little girl might see some random kid running towards her at top speed and get scared. What would he do if she ran from him? Come to think of it, what the heck is she even doing out here alone? Where's her mom or dad? Were they nearby? Would she run to them if she needed them? God, please don't let her run from him. Or get run over, or snatched up, or any number of horrible things that could happen to a kid her age alone and where on earth are her parents?!

Thankfully, when she spotted him, she clapped her hands excitedly and waved at him. He slowed down a little bit, still checking for cars, and when he got close enough, he was sure to wave back.

She giggled and started to waddle over to him, and the tightness in Noah's chest alleviated somewhat. His mind was still racing a million miles an hour, but at the very least, the toddler was making her way out of the road and over to him.

He held his hand out and tried calling her over. "Here, girl, come here! That's it, over here!" He felt like he was beckoning a dog over to him, which caused some small amounts of guilt to creep up, but he ignored it.

It seemed to work, as the girl's eyes lit up and she toddled over a little faster, closer and closer until finally, Noah was able to scoop her up into his arms, quickly backing out of the wide street...

Oh no.

Up until he saw a sleek black car turn the corner.

Oh no no no no, oh god no.

Given he was still standing in the middle of the road, Noah did the reasonable thing and panicked.

All of a sudden, he was thanking every god that Dad made him start playing all those meaningless sports like basketball and football, because the little rugrat was squirming around so much that he wouldn't have had the strength to hold onto her otherwise, being a scrawny twelve-year-old. The car was speeding, and he had zero time or patience to turn around, so he took several rapid steps backwards, as fast as he could go. His heart thundered in his ears, his stomach twisted in fear, and the car seemed to be approaching far faster than he could move.

The vehicle barrelled down, and the driver sounded the horn, sharp and loud and harsh like a wail or mournful roar from an evil monster. It startled him so bad that he cried out in alarm, but he couldn't go any faster, and he was sure for a brief moment that this was going to be how he died, the only thoughts in his brain being oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god OH MY GOD-

Until he made it to the edge of the road, and the car sped past without so much as touching them. It continued down the lane without a care in the world.

Legs shaking, Noah collapsed onto the edge of the curb, cradling the girl. She squealed in delight as they went down, completely oblivious to the fact that her soul was nearly divorced from her body. Noah envied her.

He hadn't realized he'd been somewhat hyperventilating until he had a chance to calm down enough. He could feel his rabbiting heart pulsating throughout his whole body, right down to his toes and fingertips. The child in his arm continued to babble cheerfully, and he merely held onto her for several seconds like a teddy bear, still shaking.

At some point, the trembling subsided, along with the adrenaline rush. He was able to think more clearly, and if the car had still been there, he might have gone out of his way to yell at them for not slowing down, but now wasn't the time.

As for the kid? Still obviously happy.

Good. This won't be a traumatic experience for her, then.

"Hey, kiddo," he tried his best to put on the sort of voice that he sees adults use on their kids, all high pitched and chipper. "What's your name?"

The girl just giggled and stuck her fist in her mouth, suckling on it. Maybe she's hungry? Well, he didn't have any food, so tough luck for her.

"Your name?" He repeated emphatically. "What's your name?"

She heard him that time, thankfully. "May," she chirped.

"May?"

"May-May!"

He doubted that was her actual name; more likely, it was a version of her name that her toddler self could pronounce. Still, it was all he had to go off of, so May it was.

"Okay, May. Where's your home?"

May merely stared at him as though he were a mildly entertaining cartoon.

Noah didn't know how old you had to be to understand the concept of home, but he had a feeling he wasn't going to be able to get any answers out of her until he figured out how to catch her attention.

"Where's mommy or daddy?"

In hindsight, that seemed like the obvious answer. It certainly worked, as the girl clapped her hands together again, apparently excited by those words. "Mommy!"

Noah nodded. "Mommy, where's mommy?"

"Mommy! I want mommy!"

Noah shifted her in his grip, letting her rest against his hip. "That's right, I'm taking you to Mommy. Can you point to where I can find her? Point to Mommy, May!"

She nodded vigorously and pointed her slobbery finger over to a house down the street, one that didn't have any lights on and was dead quiet, at least as far as he could tell. May frowned. What in god's name was May's mother doing? Shouldn't she be outside, looking for her daughter? Maybe she was, and that's why it was so quiet? Or did she not realize her kid was missing? As a matter of fact, how did she manage to lose her daughter in the first place? You'd have to be blind, deaf, and incredibly stupid to not notice someone as energetic as May- who is still not holding still! Noah recalls getting lost quite a few times as a kid, but he doesn't remember ever almost dying via car accident like May nearly did just now. Maybe it happened to him a few times as a toddler, and he just doesn't remember, but he's almost sure that Mom barely let him even an inch out of her sight since his birth, and Uncle Tyler, his father's step brother, was a locksmith, so Dad's place had no shortage of childproof locks installed everywhere in his house. On top of that, he doesn't think he was ever a very stationary child, and had an adventurous streak a mile wide. Still, every time he got lost, no one ever told him off for wandering away, or encouraged him to stay with the adults, or even gave him a lecture about stranger danger. Mom would yell at him for a while until he cried, and she'd punish him by sending him to his room, but she wouldn't explain to him why what he did was bad. As for Dad, he just hugged him for a while and then left him to his own devices, or made someone else watch Noah. Like Mom, he never explained to his son anything about why wandering off was dangerous. It wasn't until he was five and his first grade teacher taught them how to avoid getting kidnapped that he was able to grasp the concept of grownups being potential threats, and going anywhere without an adult you trust isn't a good idea.

If Noah could be reigned in by parents that hardly cared about him, then who were May's parents? What were they doing to keep their child safe? May was still wiggling around in his grasp, talking his ear off in brief, incomprehensible sentences, and Noah found himself diving into the very depths of his patience, grateful to not have any younger siblings. He had a long day, he was tired, he was stressed beyond reason, and he knew that his mom was going to kick his tail once he made it home, so when he finally arrived at May's house, he was so tense that he could have snapped from the slightest movement, ready to give this woman a piece of his mind. His fist pounded the door, the sharp noise resounding as it echoed through the house. He heard someone let out a yell of surprise, followed by a few seconds of silence, and then a lot of confused rustling. He tapped his foot impatiently, waiting for her to open the door already. May started reaching one of her hands out towards the door, her enthusiasm almost making Noah drop her. "Mommy!" She called out. The lights flicked on inside, flooding through the windows. There was a soft click as the door unlocked, and Noah got ready to start yelling the second the door opened. Except whatever fire he'd been preparing sling at the lady died on his tongue and fizzled out of existence when he saw her face. Noah could be forgiven for thinking she'd just gotten out of prison, or the morgue. She was far too thin, nearly all sallow gray skin and bones. Her hair must have been blonde at one point, but it was so greasy and matted that it was hard to tell. Dark bruises rested under her eyes, which were bloodshot and sleepy.

He could swear that she'd only gotten an hour of sleep within the past week or so, because it seemed to be taking her a considerable amount of effort to just stay awake and standing. That is, until she saw Noah carrying May. "Mommy!" "...Maisie?" The change was instantaneous. Her exhausted eyes suddenly gained life, going wide with horror as her face somehow paled even further.

“Oh my god, Maisie, how did you get out?!”

She launched herself at her daughter, snatching her out of Noah’s arms and squeezing her tightly. May, or Maisie apparently, let out a joyous laugh, and her mother, holding her with all her strength, laughed as well. Their laughter was so infectious that Noah found himself smiling. All the tension in his body melted away as he watched the happy reunion. “Mommy, I’m home,” Maisie told her mother comfortingly. “Yes you are, baby… Mommy is so sorry… oh lord, I only laid down for a minute…” Noah wondered if he should just turn around and go on his way. He’d successfully gotten Maisie home safe and sound, and clearly he didn’t need to intervene any further than that Except. The woman spotted him through the veil of tears over her eyes. She sniffed. “Y-You’re the one who found her?” Her voice was small and weak, yet clear as day, like jingle bells. She stared at him as though he had hung the moon. Noah’s face heated up- how was he supposed to deal with this?

“Y-Yes, ma’am.” And here he was, about to shout at her. His guilty conscience decided to scream at him instead.

“She was in the middle of the road, and I just-”

The woman didn’t say anything. Instead, she pulled him into a tight, one armed hug. Noah froze, heart stuttering in surprise.

“Thank you! Oh Lord, thank you!”

Maisie hugged her mother and the boy, babbling nonstop, but Noah couldn’t hear what she was saying, because his head suddenly throbbed, and his throat burned, and his chest was so tight that it hurt.

Noah didn’t want to cry, didn’t want to let the tears fall, but he did it anyway, never wanting to leave this hug, never wanting to return to the cold, dreary prison of his mother’s house, never wanting this beautiful warmth to fade away like it inevitably would.



Side Character Brianna Swanner

Every word. Conversation.
The silhouette sees it all,
watching in isolation,
constrained to the wall.
No thoughts cared to be heard
out of its forgotten mouth.
The words are now blurred,
and head filled with doubt.
Where home resides,
the wall, though cold and unwelcoming,
is where the shadow hides.
A world that's less threatening.
Here it shall stay
for the remainder of time.
It'll sit and decay
For committing no crime.



My Friend

Bria Jackson

My friend is the best you could ask for.

She's patient, pretty, and gives great advice. Sure, I even strive to be her.

We meet at my desk in my room every day.

She always sits on my desk and she shines from the light of the sun gleaming out the window.

We talk, she listens, and I rant on and on. But she never looks tired or annoyed, just perfect.

Sometimes she falls off my desk and we smile at each other and laugh.

When she falls she never shatters. Never cracks, never dents, never cries.

She gets back up on my desk, sits there beautifully.

After we chat I get ready for bed and she still sits at my desk.

In the morning I wake up to her still sitting on my desk.

I get out of my bed and giggle, saying goodbye to my urn of a friend.



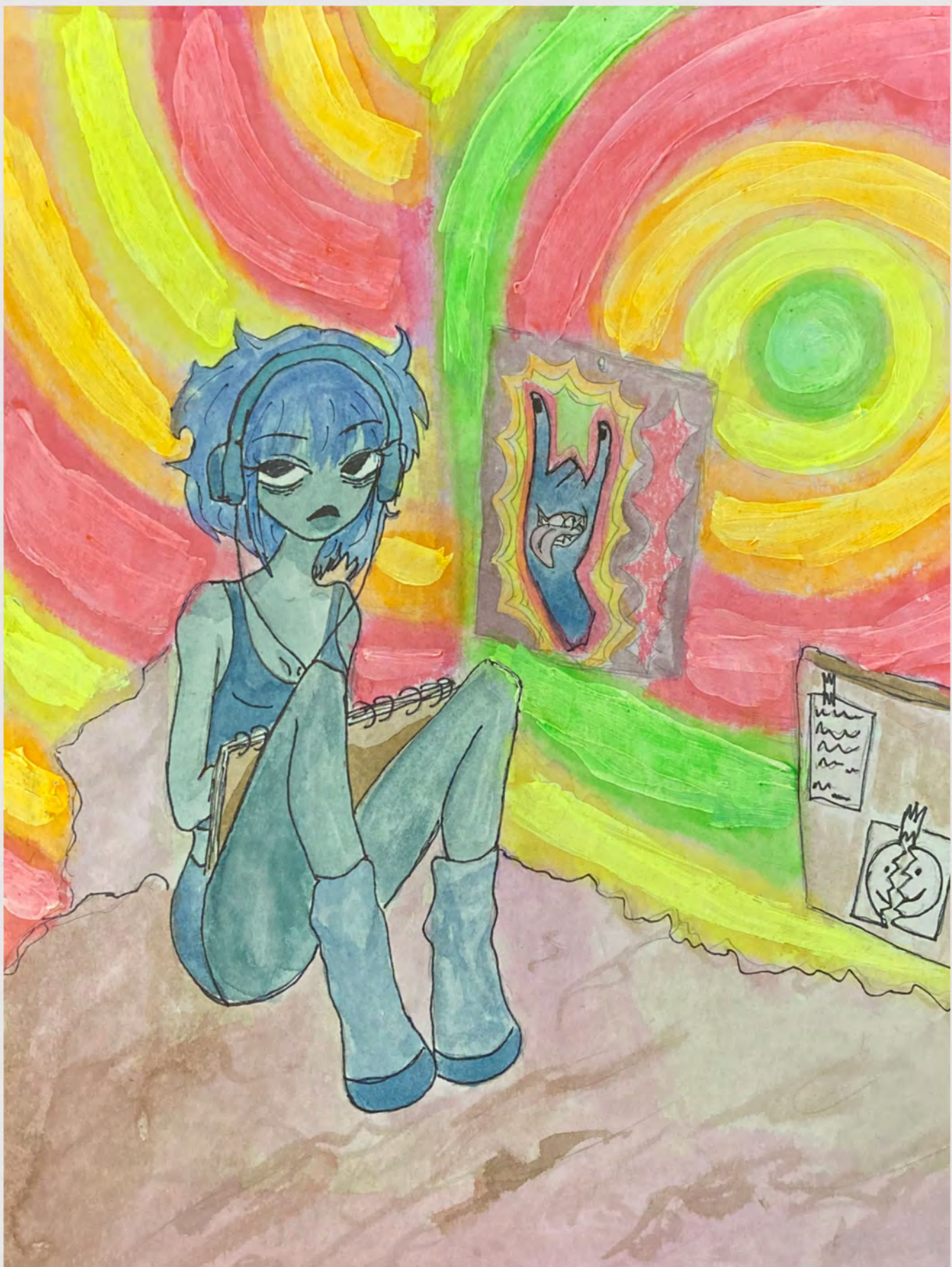
BURGER COMPANY



Piano

Evelyn Colyer

Perhaps you are feeling discontent with life.
Never fear, never shed a tear
Only dream of the melodic ivory keys
Of a royal grand upright piano.
Let your fingers dance across
The row of tiny boxed notes
And your worries will begin to fade.
Feel the hum of the tense strings
Alongside the pulse of the pedals,
While you stare off into space
Transfixed on the wall beyond you.
It looks like a vivid vision now
Of dancing colors and patterns
Instead of a simple blank brick slate.
Now you can see how the music
Has changed your demeanor:
You have no fears, you have no tears.
Perhaps now you are not discontent with life.



Nothing is Perfection

Chasady Dodson

Constant worries swirl in my head.

Worries of scholarships, relationships,

Acceptance letters with no guarantee.

You would think they would make this process easier.

The process of deciding your entire future.

How am I supposed to know what to choose?

I am too indecisive for this.

They say these are the best years of a young lady's life.

If so, life truly must be hell.

If procrastination weren't so easy,

maybe I would be top of my class.

Nothing is perfection.

I know that one thing for sure.

Will it be enough?

The grades, are they high enough?

Will I make it through these last months,

Of the best years of my life?

Love

Cristian Gonzalez

Love has different meanings

You could say it to a friend

You could say it to a loved one

Or you can say it to a group

But they all can have different meanings

You can mean it as joke

Or maybe as something you genuinely feel for someone

You could say it to someone in the moment

But later maybe realize you didn't mean it

You could say it to anyone

And it could be in any

Love has no one definition

It can be used as something romantic

Agape

Respectful and admirable

Health

Or unhealthy

You can say it to anyone

And it mean differently every time

High School Isabella Torres

Growing up.

The next four years start here.

Take a deep breath as you walk through the doors.

Hear the feet pounding the floors.

Eyes are watching, everywhere.

Look at the seniors, we wouldn't dare.

Talk to old friends, the pressure ends there.

Decisions and choices, always in the way.

Affecting your future, day by day.

New things to learn, always a delay.

Stressful school work and pressure to try.

They say always give 110%, but you just ask why?

Overwhelming, bored...you just want to cry.

Sports, pressuring you to do your best.

But you know you will never be as good as the rest.

Everything here is always a test.

They say these years will be the best years of our lives,

but others may think it's just another few years of throwing knives.

So hold onto the memories already made, because soon it will all fade.



Pill Bottle
Luciano Mata

**I control almost every aspect their life
They rely on me to be stable
Orange and white, like the prison uniform
Indulge in me to feel numb and warm
Keep me in your purse when you feel down
I'm limited, but you take me not as needed
Gray and white, you were slumped over on the sofa
Like the straight jacket you had on
When we first met you were mellow
I made you walk and see a meadow
We went everywhere together
But you got too attached and now they're taking me away**

Friends

Aviana Varela

Can we still be friends?

The words just swallow me whole.

I can't just be friends with you.

**Not when I have gotten a taste of what it is
like to be yours.**

**Not when I know what it feels like to be
held in your arms.**

**Not when I know how it feels to have your
hazel brown eyes interlock with mine.**

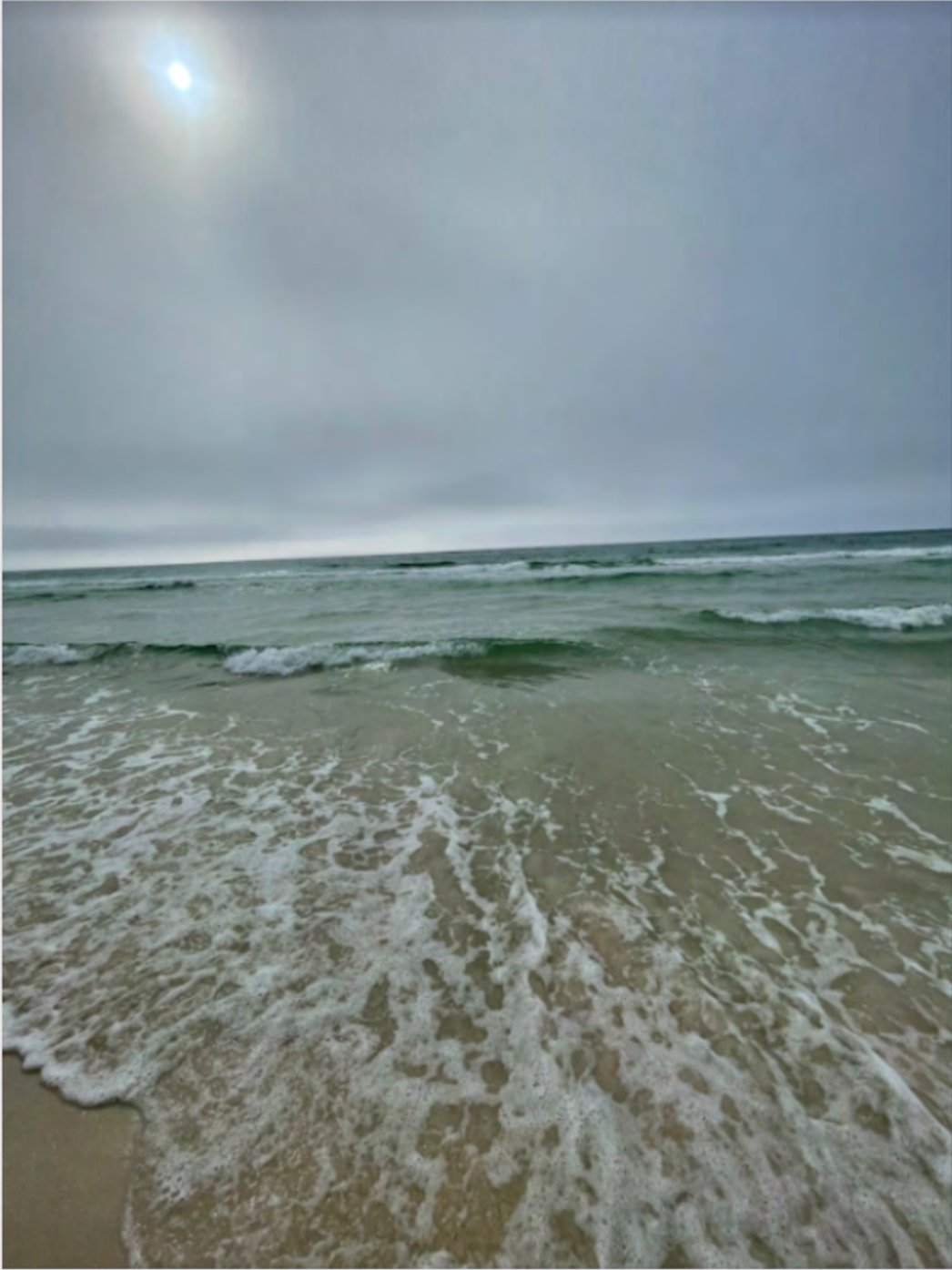
**Not when I have experienced the way your
nose crinkles when you laugh.**

**Not when I have seen your heart and the
way it loves.**



**A Moment
Ian Martin**

**Minutes grow cold as they pass away
Minutes into moments into memories decay
Here one moment-
Then the moment's gone
Leaving only cold light in a moment
Infinitely long.
Cold light falling,
One can only hope to catch
A cold frozen memory
Of a moment long passed.**



Remix of Wild Geese

Katherine Santos

You do not have to be perfect

You do not have to run to me

When you're full of agony

You only have to worry about yourself

And what you want.

Talk about agony, yours, and I will tell you mine.

While the earth keeps moving around the sun

Meanwhile the rain gets harder turning into hail

Banging on the window and ground

Sticking to the ground

Piling up and turning into snow

Meanwhile you're staring at the window

Pretending you're the wind

Blowing past people, trees, and cars

But then the pretending stops

And realize, you don't want to be the wind

You want to be free from the nightmares

Free from the agony.



A New Start

Skyla Stark

**The leaves turn brown
They crumble
They fall
The tree is bare
now ugly and small
The birds don't come by
They left
They're gone
The tree is alone
No sight of even a fawn
The winter is long
its harsh
its cold
The tree must go on
It is hope he must hold
Here comes the first leaf
It's pretty
It takes the displeasure
The tree realized
That it'll get better**