

# Commentarius

Cooper High School : Fall 2023



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Clear the Mind  
Brayden Althaus

You must clear your mind of darkness.

That darkness revolves around your past.

You must not dwell upon the past.

Dwelling will only cause you more pain than you have already suffered.

Sitting and pondering upon these memories will not bring back that joy.

That joy you have experienced is gone,

but there are other ways to bring yourself a new sense of joy.

You must go out there and enjoy the world to its fullest and make new-

memories that will bring you joy.

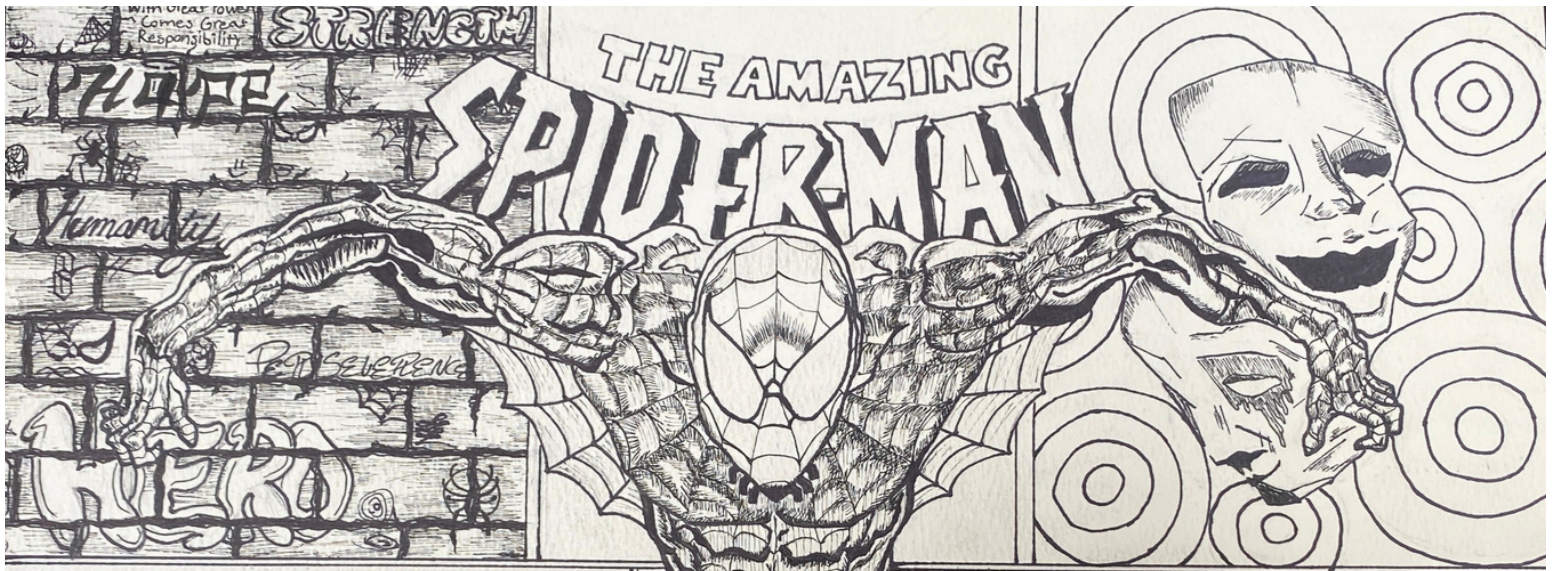
Remember that you are not alone in this.





The Love I Have  
Anonymous

I love the way you call out my name,  
Your eyes shine bright like the sunset,  
I love the way you make my sadness go up in flames,  
You make me forget all the words unsaid,  
I love your hair every curl,  
I love our memories out of everything at most,  
Dancing at night in the rain makes my stomach twirl,  
I love the memories we will never forget and can post,  
I love the way you break a smile,  
I love the soothing music of your voice,  
I love the way you make me feel I can run for a mile,  
I love how picking you feels like the right choice,  
Out of all my love I have for you it can't fit on paper,  
But it won't stop me from trying my best to tell you all of it  
later.







First Love  
Jazmyne Roberts

Maybe it was the sparkle of your eyes,  
Or the inflection in your voice.  
Whatever it was,  
I was left with no choice.

Leading with my infatuation  
Your words held importance.  
Obtained from my hearts isolation,  
You weren't just some boy to me.

Everyday I catch myself glancing,  
Hoping that you would notice.  
Not only was I entangled in your world,  
Colliding with you was a bonus.

The moment our eyes connect,  
My heart is overthrown with devotion.  
For some reason you have this effect,  
Like my mind, heart, and soul is set.





Haunted House  
Jazmyne Roberts

Some of us were born into houses  
Confounded by our parents'  
Sadness and animosity.

Our monsters weren't in our closet,  
Or under our beds,  
They were in the kitchen,  
The living room,  
The bedroom.

They watched us  
Go to school in the mornings  
But we tiptoed around them  
At night.

We weren't scared of the dark,  
We were scared of the  
Violence that was hidden in  
Stygian.

It's hard to feel safe in the world  
When you were raised  
In a haunted house.





## Jazmin Reynolds

When you left the world started drastically spinning. Seeing you come home was such a relieving feeling. You'd been gone for three years and a lot had changed since then. I knew you were coming home but I still didn't feel anything until I saw you walk through the door. It was like time froze and instant relief overcame my body as I hugged you. Laughing and crying because it still felt surreal, I was at peace. Seeing all the struggle happen when you were gone made me grow up faster. Though I was thirteen I felt much older. I became very cautious about the world and how I should approach it. Mom was always stressed but she still tried to make us not worry. I could see it though, her pain made me feel guilty. It felt like I became a nanny, taking care of my sisters, doing laundry, cooking, cleaning the house all to relieve even just a little stress off her. Eventually I realized it still wasn't enough, she was missing you and couldn't hide it. I would hate only getting to see you once a week, but I loved when we got to catch up and be in your presence. At thirteen I was at peace because you were finally home. Knowing that you weren't alone anymore was such a great feeling. Being able to come home from school and tell you about my day was something I took advantage of. I loved how I could just go down the hallway and talk to you if I needed to or just to annoy you. I loved watching you sitting on the porch laughing with your friends again. I loved seeing you eat meals that I told you about and you finally getting to taste them. I loved how you would get dressed up and I got to take your pictures again. I loved hearing you snore and comfortably sleeping in. At thirteen I realized I didn't want you to leave again, having you here made so much of a difference. I didn't have to watch mom stress out anymore, she could finally relax and that made me relax. Exhaling at thirteen I knew everything was okay when you came home, the world wasn't spinning anymore.







## What is Restraint Dawid Gaszewski

What's life without friends? A prison, cold and stark,  
Where good possessions lose their sweetest spark.  
When things defy your heart, remember well, my friend,  
Guard your peace and happiness, until the very end.

No one can lend a hand or share your plight,  
And if you're cautious, no one's joy takes flight.  
In people's eyes, suspicion often breeds,  
They praise you openly, then sow discord in their deeds.

The truth remains unheard, the warnings fall on deaf ears,  
They'd think you grew horns, should you voice your fears.  
May such a life be spared, I humbly pray,  
Give me love aplenty, with less gold, I'll find my way.





Trust  
Sienna Hernandez

In the scariest moments,  
The ones with unexpected endings,  
Not knowing what will happen next.  
Like a movie,  
Building up suspense.  
Trust is the feeling of comfort  
In the darkest times.  
Needing something to lean on,  
And it's always there,  
As a friendly reminder that  
Everything will turn out  
Just right.







# Lily's Tales

## Alexia Brandon

Once upon a time, there was a young girl named Lily. She had a heart full of shadows and a mind tangled in worries. Every day, she would put on a brave face, but inside, she felt like she was drowning in a sea of thoughts. The weight on her chest grew heavier with each passing day. Lily's world became smaller and smaller as she withdrew from the things she once loved. Her laughter became a distant memory, and her smile faded away. She felt trapped in a never-ending cycle of sadness and fear. But one day, as Lily sat alone in her room, she stumbled upon a forgotten journal. With trembling hands, she picked up a pen and started pouring out her thoughts onto the pages. The ink became her voice, and the paper became her safe haven.

Through her journal, Lily discovered the power of self-expression. She began to write about her deepest fears and insecurities, giving them a voice outside of her mind. The more she wrote, the more she realized she wasn't alone in her struggles. Lily also found solace in nature. She would take long walks in the park, feeling the warmth of the sun on her skin and the gentle breeze in her hair. The beauty of the world around her reminded her that there was still hope, even in the darkest of times. Slowly but surely, Lily started opening up to her loved ones. She shared her fears and worries, allowing them to support her on her journey. They listened without judgment, offering love and understanding. As time went on, Lily began to heal. The shadows in her heart started to fade, replaced by a newfound strength and resilience. She realized that her struggles didn't define her, but rather, they were a part of her story.

Lily's journey wasn't easy, but it taught her the importance of self-care, self-expression, and the power of connection. She learned that it's okay to ask for help and that she was deserving of love and happiness. And so, Lily's story continues, filled with ups and downs, but always with the knowledge that she is strong enough to overcome anything that comes her way.

# The Perfect World

## Steph Hines

The perfect society to me wouldn't be built on the education system. We would have a lot more freedom and room to expand as people. I shouldn't have to spend 8 hours a day learning things I know for sure I'm never going to use again. Like, what even is factoring? I'm not going to go out and factor. I just won't.

There'd be less empty buildings, more full houses, and easier ways to live a life here without going so deep into debt that I have less than \$5 for some ramen noodles when I get to college. The world would have a healthier economy and stars would shine brighter at night, trees would be everywhere. I'd be able to breathe easier, outside and around people. The world would judge less, be much kinder all around. There'd be less violence, more opportunities for everyone. There'd be less fear, and hatred, where someone could speak out loud and not hide their face. We'd definitely be a nicer place.

People wouldn't judge or question everything- from their religion, sexuality, or race. We would all live as one. Everyone would be treated the same, regardless of religion or color of skin.

Racism would be eradicated.

It'd be a paradise of beauty. No matter the problem, there's always a way, justice for all, punish the bad, reward the good and show the poor we care.

A world built with selfless love with each other. A world where we honor all beliefs, rituals, and mentalities (Unless actively dangerous). A world ruled by selfless love. That is my perfect world, a world where we can all share in peace. Harmony.

But, that's only in my perfect world.



## 48 Hour Fling Alexander Hall

A group of friends sit around a campfire. The energy in the air was palpable, felt by everyone in the circle. No one felt uncomfortable, they all wanted to be right here at this moment...

“Yeah, yeah, the vomit was everywhere, it was so bad, but that was it...”

“OK, OK James, Your turn.”

James puts down his drink, and laid back in his chair.

“Alright so, in middle school I didn't get that much romantic attention-”

“You still don't!” someone heckled

“You have no room to talk Stacy!” James blew a raspberry in her direction, she did the same. Some rude hand gestures were thrown before James got back on track.

“Now... Before I was rudely interrupted ....”

\* \* \*

When I was in 7th grade, I thought I was it. I was the coolest guy I knew. In reality, I was dumb and stupid. I was just a prideful little guy. But weren't we all in middle school.

I could never understand why no girl my age wanted to date me. Obviously I was so nice and no one ever gave the nice guy a chance. Needless to say I was a pinch misogynistic. Despite all of that, this poor, misguided girl was somehow into me.

I could never understand why no girl my age wanted to date me. Obviously I was so nice and no one ever gave the nice guy a chance. Needless to say I was a pinch misogynistic. Despite all of that, this poor, misguided girl was somehow into me.

At the end of first period, she gave me a note. It was a nice note, it was in an entire friggin envelope. It had a heart sticker holding down the flap. There was obviously effort put into this love note. She ran away to her next class after she gave it to me. I felt great.

The letter talked about how she liked me for weeks, and I was the only guy that she had her eyes on. The fact that she had specified that should have clued me in.

Middle school me did not know how to treat the subject of “having a girlfriend.” All I knew was that it was important and it's something to be obtained. (Messed up that that's all we think about romance, but whatever.) So I didn't try to see her after school or anything like that. I waited for the next day to talk to her, like an idiot.

\* \* \*

“Wait, is this before or after your mom left you?”

“My mom never left me??”

“Oh sorry, you just seem like you have mommy issues.”

“Shut up.”

\* \* \*

The next day I gave her back the letter, now the “yes” box under the question “Will you date me?” ticked off. We talked the rest of the passing period, exchanging glances and awkwardly trying to communicate with each other across the room.

After the period was over, we tried holding hands but we both had separate paths to our next classes. It just looked like I grabbed her hand, fiddled with it, then threw it away in another direction.

\* \* \*

“-Now I must remind you that I had a *huge* ego-”

“You say that like you *still* don’t.”

“Frankly, I think you’re insulting me because you are jealous that I’m better than you in every way. “

“Nuh uh.”

\* \* \*

I bragged to almost everyone I knew, even to people that I didn’t know. None of them cared, and I couldn’t understand why. That didn’t stop me from bragging to this random girl. I boasted my piece, she stared at me inquisitively.

"Diane?"

"Oh yeah!" I said, smug as hell.

"Diane Harvard?"

"I'm pretty sure that's her last name yes."

She gave me a sad, tight lipped smile and said "Good luck with that."

I took that at face value and I said,

"Thanks!"

Lunchtime came around.

In my table that I sit alone in, I hear the kids in football talk about someone who I assume had the same name as me. I held that opinion until one of the kids came up and shoved my food tray down the table, out of reach. While the kid was in football, he was very scrawny. (Not unlike myself at the time, maybe Diane had a type.) He was known to be benched very often, and is often called “Waterboy” by his teammates.

Waterboy puffed his chest out. Trying to compose himself like a high school bully in a teenage drama. He said something about how I “messed up” and that I’ll “regret the day I talked to Diane.” Corny stuff like that.

I really don’t remember what he said; my brain power was being used in thinking, “Man, what would a person with a girlfriend do in this situation.” *Obviously*, the answer was to fight Waterboy. Though I use the word fight lightly...

I make the first move, I aim a punch to his stomach but I miss and only graze the side of his stomach.

Waterboy, in turn, pulls back a punch that takes 3-4 business days to reach my face. I did not react in any way that helped me dodge it. After the impact, my nose started to bleed; that was the only solid hit in the whole fight.

\* \* \*

“Are you dumb?”

“Chronically.”

Everyone in the circle nodded in agreement, as if they all related to the statement.

\* \* \*

My face hurt enough for me to throw out all rational thought.

I went down for his legs. I grabbed the back of his joints and pulled them toward my direction to make Waterboy fall backwards. He caught himself before he made impact with the floor. He had pretty good reflexes.

From there it was a scuffle on the floor, none of us were able to stand up due to each other bringing each other down. It was like in those cartoons where the characters fight into a big ball of dust and limbs, but a lot more pathetic.

Diane then came up to both of us and pleaded to us how “This wasn’t you!” and “I know that you're better than this.” (No you didn’t Diane, you met us just that year.)

Both of us were too caught up in the moment to pay attention to her ironically.

Until, someone else *COMPLETELY* walked up to Diane. She talked to him, then hugged him, he put his arm around her shoulder, and he walked her out of the scene right after.

Seeing this I stopped the fight almost immediately, waving my arms around, gesturing that I was backing out. Waterboy, after calling me derogatory things that equate to the word coward, looked in the direction I was looking in and saw the same thing I did.

We both sat on the floor together in silence for a solid minute before he sighed, grabbed his bag, and walked out of the cafeteria.

I took my food from the table and finished my meal on the floor, my nose still bleeding. I just let it pour down on my shirt.

\* \* \*

“Now Diane should not be judged by the actions made in my story. We were all dumb middle schoolers at the time, creating drama for no reason,”

James sat up.

“But do you guys wanna know the funniest part? In retrospect at least...”

“Oh my God, *what* is it James?” One of the friends said in a sarcastic tone, not looking down from her nap.

James finishes. “Waterboy, the guy I fought, was Darren.”

That got their attention. The entire circle erupts into a mixture of confused and bewildered reactions.

“No way, No @&\$^% way!”



“Wait wait wait wait, like *Darren* Darren? Your *boyfriend* Darren?!”

“What other Darren would I be referring to, idiot?” James reacts.

“Did you too fall in love after bonding over that experience orrrr...”

“No,” James said, equally as dumbfounded as he assumed the other felt. “I didn’t even know that he was the same guy until we told each other the same story!”

James let the excitement in the area continue until he felt that his time in the spotlight was up.

He spoke up for the next person in line.

“Alright, alright, Christina, it's your turn.”

\* \* \*





## Eight Ways of Looking at Money

Kadence Kures

- I. Money makes the world go round  
No matter how big or how small.
- II. The world goes crazy and brawl.  
Will they get some or all?  
The gamble is strong,  
Addiction has won.
- III. Every dollar gone to waste  
Over the huge stakes,  
Will you win or lose?  
Lose your life to game  
Or rise to fame?
- IV. Green, Green, Green.  
The thin layer of paper  
That everyone needs  
To pay to survive.
- V. No money no life,  
No money no will.  
Drain yourself just to win?  
Or survive and do it again?
- VI. Gambling for life.  
A cycle that never ends.  
The lucky feel jolly  
For all they get.
- VII. When the luck runs out,  
The lucky fall flat,  
Over and over and over  
Again.
- VIII. It will never end.  
Money makes the world go round.





# Stories From the Fade

## Talon Kitchens

There is a smoky, writhing mist that snakes across the ground. It rises up, just a few feet from the sheet of fog that no one dares enter. It swallows anything and everything. Some say a net of lightning hides inside. Others say magical creatures stalk it. But all that is simply a guess, a fantasy for the small to conjure. It's been around since time was first a thought. It has steadily shifted forward as time goes on. So, without further ado, let us hear some stories from the thing called the Fade. A warning thought. Don't ever stray into the Fade. You'll never come back.

### A Strange and Magical Thing.

Don't ever stray into the Fade. Isn't that what they said to me when I was young? Then, it was little more than a myth, a thing to try and scare me. At least until I saw it up close in person. The day my parents died, and they were sent into the Fade and lost to its ever-shifting depths.

I remember staring at their lifeless eyes, my brothers' hand on my back. We said nothing as they shut the lid to the clear, glass coffin and sent them away. I wish I missed them, but I was already forgetting them. Those were the rules. Anyone sent into the Fade, whether as punishment, or anything else, they were to be forgotten. Else, you might be tempted to go and try and retrieve them. The population couldn't afford another loss like that. Not since the Abandonment. Too bad I was never good at following rules.

My breath mixes with the air as my brother and I make our way to the Fade. I can see it from here, even in the tiny illumination they call a street lamp. Before it sits a large church not yet overcome by it. I used to go to that before they declared it a hazard to be in, in case the Fade decided to swallow some more stuff. Fun times. My brother mutters a few choice words as he trips on a rock and I chuckle. "Come on man, it's not that hard to see. God, if you trip over your feet even more, you'll be regulated to the fumble feet at school-" I should've kept my mouth shut because I promptly fell on a hard solid object.

My brother starts laughing. I glare at him and push myself up. “Karma, she’s a bi-” he stops suddenly, apparently eyeing something on the ground. I stare at what he’s looking at and gasp. It’s a glowing blue stone that shines quite brightly in the dim light. I pick it up and stare at him. My brother chooses then to knock his shoulder into mine and say, “Come on. We have to hurry. I don’t want to be caught.” I scowl at him. “What are they going to do, throw us into the Fade? We’re already going there.”

He shrugs. “I’m not exactly sure, seeing as how we’re the first to do this since the Abandonment.” I give him a smile. “We’ll find them. We’ll give them a proper burial, Kai. We have to. It’s the least they deserve.” We start for the Fade again, but stop when we hear a loud bang. “Hey!” A voice shouts out from behind us. We look at each other. “Hey, you’re not supposed to be this close to the church, ya’ stupid kids. Get away from there!” It’s an adult, male voice. Probably the groundskeeper, the hypocrite. “Well, I suppose it’s lucky for us we’re going into the Fade, now isn’t it?” I call out, and as one we take off running for the roiling fog. I hear footsteps and a shout. “Come on, run!” I shouted to him. A figure appears behind us, hurtling toward us like a freight train. He easily overtakes us, then grabs at me. My brother, always the bloody heroic one, shoves me aside and instead of me, the groundskeeper gets a fistful of him.” Go, go James. GO GET THEM-” The rest of what he says is muffled by the fat meaty hand blocking his mouth. I scramble up, and take off. He is being dragged away and I’m running away. I’m not sure if that makes me a coward or not.” I’ll come back for you!” I promise. And with one last look, I turn into the Fade and Fade to darkness.

I’m not sure what I expected, but a bright streaming light was not it. Or a beautiful colorful sky. Or fresh air. Any of it actually. I blink lethargically, then startle upright. I sit up on green grass to see rolling hills of red and blue. To see far away mountains and cloudy peaks. To see floating rocks and a dark storm in the distance. To see a cloaked man in front of me, his cloak ripping in the almost non-existent wind.



Since I wasn't entirely what was happening, I just sat up and blinked. Then I finally managed to spit words out. "Hi? I, um... I don't know what is happening. Or where I am. Or anything really." I noticed that the man has a hood covering his face. His hand is dark, a beautiful brown. He extends his hand and I take it. "I'm Kain." The man says. He has a deep rumbling voice, like he swallowed gravel as a child. He lifts the hood off and I'm met with startling blue eyes and a bald head. He has gold tattoos running all along his face. "Welcome to Kaiya, or as you mortals call it, The Fade." I blink again. "Come again?" I ask. He continues as if I'd never spoken. "I am the Keeper, and it is my duty to show you the wonders of this world."

I nod. "Sure. Does one of these wonders include that big storm over there?" I ask, indicating the black clouds. He shakes his head. "No, that's new." Okay then. I look around. "Um... so maybe I have this wrong, but that is moving exponentially closer." He shakes his head. "Nope. You're right." I can help but feel as if he's being cryptic on purpose. I start to respond with sarcasm when two giant wings appear from his back. "Hold on." He commands then grabs me and lifts me off the ground. I may have screamed. Maybe. Possibly. After I finally get over that we're now flying, I shout, "I'm looking for my parents... ah, bodies." He says nothing, just continues flapping his wings. "So maybe you could tell me where they are so I can be on my way."

He glances down at me, and a look of sorrow fills his eyes. "Child, your parents are gone. They've been taken by the Cri, the caretakers of this planet. They will never let them go." I give a bitter smile. "I suppose we'll see, now won't we." I say. "No, you won't. Unless you desperately want a war. Secondly, there is no getting home. Once you're here, you can never leave. Nobody can know about this place." Before I can respond, the sky itself seems to rattle before a light flashes and everything goes dark. I think one last thought before I plummet to the ground. I will find my way back. No matter the cost.





**The Cooper High  
School Creative  
Writing class thanks  
everyone for their  
submissions.**

**Sponsor: Mary Perez**

