June 2017- We are proud to offer up the second issue of The Round Table. Join us in reflection, creativity, and a celebration of Lancer spirit. As always, there’s room at the table, and you’re welcome to pull up a chair.

THE ROUND TABLE (Volume 2)-
Reflection/Illumination

The Krewe of The Round Table

ART/LAYOUT EDITORS

Kate Porter
Rachel Dondero

LITERATURE/THEMATIC EDITORS

Kate Porter
Avery Collet

ADVISER
Ann Marie Keating
annkeating@waterfordschools.org

The Round Table joins Excalibur Yearbook and The Lancelot Newspaper in the fine tradition of WHS Lancer Media Publication.

Waterford High School (Waterford School District)
Phone: (860) 437-6956 Address: 20 Rope Ferry RD. Waterford, CT. 06385

Front Cover Art: TJ Mcbride
Inside Cover Art: Gloria Norris
Back Cover Art: Leah Terrell
# TABLE of CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 1. THE BRILLIANCE IN ME</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt McKinzie</td>
<td>The Sour Patch Kid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Gianakos</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Feldman</td>
<td>My Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Lovell</td>
<td>Coarse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassidy Gallagher</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitlyn Serafino</td>
<td>The Concession Stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connor Kuenneke</td>
<td>The Turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla Job</td>
<td>On the Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloe Zerio</td>
<td>Status Quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaela Owens</td>
<td>Cheerleaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Pacheco</td>
<td>A New Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naliseanna Colon</td>
<td>Labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe Beausoleil</td>
<td>Blood Money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 2. ECHOES OF LIGHT AND INSIGHT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Saucier</td>
<td>Where To Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Spinnato</td>
<td>The Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla Turpin</td>
<td>The Heart is a Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaylene Henault</td>
<td>The Trouble with Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtney Sandora</td>
<td>The Ride to School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Stilphen</td>
<td>Trapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill Zemko</td>
<td>Trapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Gianakos</td>
<td>The Gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Saucier</td>
<td>Kinds of Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily Watson</td>
<td>Let Sleeping Dogs Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Lincoln</td>
<td>The Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Smith</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla Job</td>
<td>Not Enough: More, More, More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briahna Borysewicz</td>
<td>The Fudge Has Fallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitlyn Serafino</td>
<td>Purple Glaze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 3. THE MIRROR IMAGE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nick Gigliotti</td>
<td>A Single Snowflake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill Zemko</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt McKinzie</td>
<td>After the Storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi Jones</td>
<td>Kids Cooked for Thanksgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Tomatania</td>
<td>Migration- Joshua Flint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Houggy</td>
<td>The Starry Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe Beausoleil</td>
<td>No Such Thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tessa Dipallina</td>
<td>Life is like an Ocean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MUCH APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

to April Brown and Shelly Concascia, who continue to inspire their art students to new heights; Kim Thibeau and her Journalism students, whose help was invaluable; the supportive staff and administration of WHS; and the wonderful and creative writers and artists of Lancer Nation!

TABLE of CONTENTS

ART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ana Magano</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paige Miller</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Close</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leila Hyde</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Zemko</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Cleary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella Dazzi</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Bednarz</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leila Hyde</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Brown</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Ward</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micky Greene</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella Secchiaroli</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Feldman</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Pope</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah Larson</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellia Lokken</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Martin</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1. THE BRILLIANCE IN ME

Ana Magano

Paige Miller
The Sour Patch Kid
by Matt McKinzie

Oh sour patch kid,
Long have I lived a gluten-free existence
without your presence to soothe my soul.
Deprived of your dichotomous delectability,
which you have possessed
and I have neglected.

Here I sit upon a sofa not mine,
in a house where I do not belong.
You, a stranger
your flesh, spongy and abrasive, leaving diamonds
in the crevices of my hand.
Sweet paradise within you.

I hold my breath as you graze
the folds of my palm, staring back at me.
A luscious red creation,
a blast of ruby.
A lost gem that I cup with
wonder and uncertainty.

I balance anxiety and desire, a rush
of adrenaline gushing through my veins.
You meet your bittersweet fate
between a mountainous terrain of molars
squeezing the life out of you.
Your pezzottaite insides bleed over my tastebuds.

Your paralyzing flavor rivets my tongue,
holding it prisoner until
it cannot take any more pain and you melt
away into a magma
of sugar and strawberry.
And I am reborn.

Identity by Olivia Gianakos

Do you know my name?
Of course not.
Nobody knows who I am
and that’s okay.

I am invisible to the majority.
Those who worry about what they look like
and how they are perceived,
they do not know my name, and that’s okay.

I can’t concern myself with the viewpoint of
others.
Rather I focus on the person I know myself
as.

Because what is truly important is how you
view yourself,
not how others define you.
My Memory by Emily Feldman

When I was about 10 years old, I had been notified by my doctor that I had been diagnosed with a rare brain disease and was expected to go in for surgery in the summer time. For most children, when they are about 10 years old, all they really think about is what their future will bring them in the distant years. The only thing that was occupying my thoughts was whether I’d make it through the surgery or not, and how all of this would affect my future.

For the longest time, I was filled with anxiety on the whole situation, but then my mother came home with a letter informing me that I had been accepted to the company Make a Wish. Make a Wish looks for children who are sick and they offer to make their wish or dream come true. When I saw that letter, I was filled with joy and was reassured that if I made it through this surgery, I could get the chance to go to Tokyo, a place that I’ve wanted to go since I was a child.

In the months following the surgery, I was overjoyed, and my fear was completely paved over with confidence that I’d make it through the upcoming surgery. The summer finally came, and I was admitted into the hospital for my surgery. My family was very eager to see the outcome, and luckily, I came out all right. After healing in the hospital for another two tedious weeks, I was finally released back into the world as a new healthier person.

Ever since that experience, I have learned not to take life for granted so much. People usually do not see themselves being in such danger as I did, and I learned that it could come when people least expect it. If I had not gotten surgery back then, who know where I would be today?
Christmas Eve
by Kassidy Gallagher

Locked inside a house of happiness;
air and voice muted by a dress,
escape prohibited by heels,
yet many of family as witnesses and tormentors.
“How are your studies?”
Terrible.
“You look lovely!”
Don’t feel so.
“Does anyone strike your fancy?”
Nope.

And this night was supposed to be joyous and
gifts and loves,
but the old I get, the less it is so.
Hiding in the bathroom, my costume abandoned.
Myself: Dangling my legs over a hillside, the moon
like
a dear friend in a late night chat.
The dark bottomless sea slowing my heart,
with a spotlight
cast across it and me.

Coarse by Marcus Lovell

I’ve had the same hair all my life-
curly but straight,
not really much I could do but fade.

Everyone always talks about how they love my hair.
Well, I don’t.
Shouldn’t my opinion be the only one that matters?

Everyone else in my family was blessed with
the one trait I wish I inherited.
My brother doesn’t know what he has.

If I had coarse, curly hair I could do so many different
things.
The amount of styles for the type are endless:
Twists, dreads, waves, and many more.

But no. I’m stuck with long, curly hair.
If only I could’ve been bestowed with the opportunity.
But having hair is better than having no hair at all.
The Concession Stand by Kaitlyn Serafino

My stomach tossed and turned, but I didn’t move. It’s not like I couldn’t move, I didn’t want to go up to the concession stand alone.

I tried to focus on the fog of dirt kicked up by cleats making their way around the diamond, but hunger black-dotted my vision. I shifted in the flimsy lawn chair, curling my knees into my chest to kill the force building up inside me, but nothing helped.

The thought screamed in my head to just ask. But I didn’t want to ask for money, and I still dreaded the thought of having to talk to the person working the concession stand. The words never came out right: They fumbled out of my mouth and tripped over my anxiety of messing up. The hunger was unbearable.

“Can I go get a burger? I asked.

“Yeah, just watch the foul balls.” My grandmother yanked a couple dollars from her purse, and I made my way across the patches of grass leading to the stand.

I watched the laces from my Converse unravel more with every step until they completely untied when I stopped in front of the menu.

Looking up, my eyes locked with the same pair of brown ones I caught staring at me the day before while I was waiting with my grandma for a sandwich.

My legs lost their sense of sturdiness and began to wobble. As he made his way toward me, I couldn’t remember what I wanted to order. I had to look down at the blue marker that spelled “Cheeseburger” on the menu at least three times, but the word was erased by his brown eyes each time.

“Can I have a cheeseburger, please?”

He smiled. “Sure. Will that be it?”

I couldn’t tell why he was smiling. Maybe I had something on my face.

“I’ll also take a blue Gatorade,” I said.

“What color?”

“Cool blue?”

He walked over to the cooler, pulled out my drink, and then grabbed my burger.

My legs were useless under my weight, threatening to fall at any second.

“Six dollars, please.”

I inched my fingers down the end of the ten dollar bill to avoid being too obvious about touching his hand. I couldn’t help but notice the way the wind sifted through his hair or the way his eyes dug into mine as if trying to see who I was.

I stood there motionless while he banged the cashbox on the counter to pry it open.

He looked up helplessly and awkwardly. That’s when I laughed.

I tried to smother the laugh with my hand, but trying to suppress it made it worse.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “Just hold on.”

I laughed again, and my feeling of falling diminished. Finally, he opened the stubborn cash box and handed me my change. I grabbed the burger, but he placed the Gatorade in my hand.

Our hands slid past each other.

I pulled back, the contact zinging through my fingers.

“Thank you.”

I kept my head down as I turned away from the counter, but I couldn’t help but smile. His brown eyes watched me walk all the way back to my lawn chair.
**The Turtle by Connor Kuenneke**

When I was in preschool, I went on a field trip to the Mystic Aquarium. I was young at the time, so I do not really remember why I did what I did.

Anyway, the group was at the touch tank part of the aquarium, and I picked up a turtle and licked it.

Lo and behold, I got sick. My poor mom did not know what I was sick with, and she took me to the doctor after a good three days of being sick. The look on this doctor’s face as he came in and told her that it was salmonella was priceless, but she immediately began to interrogate me so that was not fun.

It took her a while to remember the preschool field trip I went on earlier that week. When she did, she asked if I had touched any animals when I was there.

I looked her dead in the face and said “I LICKED A TURTLE.”

I still remember the look on her face. It was awesome.

On the downside, I almost died from the salmonella.

---

**On the Field by Kayla Job**

I guess it could be said that I’m not a fan of showing emotions. Crying is not something I do in front of my friends, or my family, for that matter. While playing sports, if I was injured, I would never cry, which is why dad always told everyone I was “tough as nails” and my team referred to me as that sometimes.

For example, getting hit directly in the face with a softball warrants some time to sit out and ice it, and my coaches always knew when I was fake being okay. I never cried. Never. Which explains why my dad accidently making me cry in front of my team embarrassed me to no end.

My dad wasn’t the head coach, more like a helper. He has always been into sports, coaching for my brothers and I every year. My dad raised me to always give it my all, and to never back down even when it seemed impossible. So, having a bad day is a horrific excuse not to give it my all. Especially to my dad. Now, keep in mind that this is my dad, who has two older sons and a huge family filled with guys. To say he need a little briefing on how to treat a girl, on her offday, is an understatement.

So there I was, on the plate, lazily giving half-hearted swings at pitches that weren’t even strikes. Of course I struck out, a first in a long time, and my dad was not happy about it. I cannot perfectly recount what he said, but I can tell you it was something to do with his disappointment with me. I was already having a bad day, and getting yelled at just added to my awful mood. So of course I cried. In. Front. Of. My. Whole. Team. Which I have never done before, and can honestly say was horrific. This was a couple years ago, so looking back I realize that I definitely blew myself out of proportion. Even though I don’t like to cry in front of people, it isn’t that big of a deal. I realize that my dad just wants me to become the type of person who doesn’t give up.
**Status Quo**  
*by Cloe Zerio*

Being the athletes and the popular kids is their job.

Let them stick to the status quo.

I won’t, because that’s not my job. If they jumped off a bridge, I would stay on land.

I wouldn’t follow.

If they spent their Friday night glued to a football game, I would be inside all at rehearsal.

If I’m seen as different or weird because of this - I don’t care.

What I do makes me happy. And when you’re happy and when you have found whatever it is, the idea of status quo doesn’t sound appealing.

So let me stay inside.

Let me study the way the actor glides along the stage and how her bouncy curls help her persuade the audience.

Let me spend hours studying the character beneath the name so that the audience can see who she truly is from her hair to her shoes.

You can continue to watch your soccer games and gossip about other players. Let me make magic for the people who care about the arts and who understand how important they are.

---

**Cheerleaders**  
*by Michaela Owens*

Let them be as cheerleaders always jumping, tumbling, and stunting - not idle on the mat. I’d rather be a flexible flyer lifted aloft like a feather by the strength of my bases. To rise to the greatest height and be living in the spotlight. Pumped up by the competition and the spirit of my team working together to win the title. I’d rather be a flexible flyer.

---

**A New Life, a New Beginning**  
*by Olivia Pacheco*

I’ve been in the back seat all my life. I want to the front. Where the air is fresh and the freedom is present Where you can do what you want and make your own journey. I’m tired of the same thing every day and night.

I want to go to the front seat now. Perhaps I might go to the mall with some friends, where people shop until they have nothing left. I want to have fun just like them. They say it is not worth it. It’s dangerous. They tell me to be safe, they tell me to have fun. To have fun means there’s no safety, right? There are so many great things about the front seat: You can change the route, not them. Being free from the past and having more adventures in the future.

I say it’s great, I truly do. And I like to be an adventurous girl as well. The keys in my pocket. The pathway to freedom with my face as an ID.
Labels
by Naliseanna Colon

They say we need to be taught discipline but those who teach discipline, teach mania in replacement.
Those who bathe in the misery of others are praised upon society's grounds.
The leaders of our dystopia yearn for systems and categories, then preach about social communication.
Revolving around the effect of their unworthy cause, they say they want equality as they shove us into our boxes.
We wonder if we are at fault for the burning human race.
We hold hope within us.
We are the only way this planet runs with its defaults and diseases.
Pity those who crave attention for their sickening ways, manipulating their way across our minds.
They fight for love while throwing hate towards us, anger and loss, we have no escape from what people think.
Our brains molded into you're right, he's wrong.
The worst is to come.
You don't know what they tell you- they teach you lies.
They teach you cruel fibs instead of logic.
The logic is inside of you, these people hold none.
They tell us we are trash as the light shines through our pure bodies of innocence and hope.
We just want love and peace; they tell us it’s our fault when we choose to resolve the issue created by society’s misleading temptations.
They hold us captive under laws we refuse to follow, codes disrespected.
A system of no correction except for those who stand on our heads, pressing down on our necks as we choke back the last words that may save our last breath.
The truth among us all, we hold it within us.
They tie rope around our core and tell us we failed.
Society shows us how to live with their indecent rules of utopia, their disgusting settlements and arguments proved wrong by default.

Shut down the system and rise against the godforsaken army of the human race.
Give us our name back, we are more than our labels.
One in the afternoon, and Walter planned to waltz into the small bank on the corner of the street next to the grocery store. A black ski mask covered his face, and he wore a baggy jacket with his hands tucked into the pockets. His gloved hand in one pocket gripped a pistol, and the hand in the other pocket grasped a wadded-up, hot pink pillowcase. As he walked up the stone steps and opened the door to the bank, he prayed fervently under his breath to any and every god willing to listen.

The three bank tellers were working with customers, deep in conversation until one teller spotted Walter. She froze and her jaw dropped open. Her shocked reaction drew attention to her and then directed it to him. Everyone stared at him dumbly in disbelief. He cleared his throat nervously.

“Uh, this is a robbery. Everyone put their hands on their head and drop to the ground!” He pulled the pistol from his pocket and pointed it at the teller closest to him. He pulled out the pillowcase and threw it to her. “You’re going to fill that with all the money it can fit. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, sir.” She bent to retrieve the pillowcase and began stuffing it with money from her till. When she finished, she went to the next teller, and they both began to dump money into the case.

Walter spun around and pointed the pistol at the customers on the ground to make sure they were following his orders. He knew one of the tellers probably pressed the alarm, but that didn’t bother him in the least.

“Hurry up- I don’t have all day.” He gestured with the gun, and the teller nodded, stuffing two more stacks of bills into the pillowcase and handing it to him. He savored the weight of it, more money than he had ever seen in his life or held at one time. As he turned around, he was faced with two police officers, one officer had his gun drawn and raised at him. He hadn’t heard them enter because the blood pounding in his head was the only noise he heard.

“Put your weapon on the ground and your hands in the air right now!” The officer nearest to him yelled. The officer behind the one yelling was Walter’s good friend, Desmond.

Desmond winked and pulled his pistol from his holster and shot his partner through the head. He dropped to the floor, and Desmond stepped forward.

“I hope you got us a good amount of money. We ought to relocate to an island deep in the Pacific or something. The feds will be crawling all over us,” Desmond said with a chuckle.

“Right, right,” Walter said, and they walked out of the bank together.

Desmond spoke into his radio as they walked down the steps. “I have our suspect in custody, everyone is safe, and we’re bringing him in.” He unlatched the radio and threw it on the cement of the sidewalk.

The men drove off in Desmond’s cruiser, Walter sitting shotgun where a partner usually sat.
SECTION 2. ECHOES OF LIGHT AND INSIGHT

Jessica Cleary

Bella Dazzi
Where to Go by Catherine Saucier

Hey, where are you going?
There? But you can go here!
Or here
or there!
Go wherever you choose!
It’s not my decision.
No, not there.
There?
I guess.
How about this way?
No? Why not?
Go wherever you want!
No, not that way-
this way is better.
No! Stop!
If that’s what you really want
I’m disappointed.
The Box by Nicole Spinnato

Knock, knock
the box is dark.
A single light peeks through a crack.

Shouts from everywhere
get louder,
the box gets smaller.
Words break my skin.
My screams are
worthless. No one listens,
no one cares.

My blood isn't red-
my blood is clear,
drained of everything.
It's not what they want.
They want my everything because
it's for them.

The box is open,
bloody and cut,
I face a mirror.

Compliments flood in but how?
This is not me.
This is not my reflection.
My tears burn my cuts.

This is not me I yell
Who am I
Where did I go
How is this liked?

I don't want it
I am not me, can't you see?
The shouts silence.

Hands push me
drag me across the cold floor.
The darkness of the box fills me:
I am myself again.
A shout says, Until you are me,
you will never come out.

knock, knock.

The Heart is a Book
by Kayla Turpin

Pages filled with black ink lie
bound together by leather.
Some are crinkled, yet they will forever
be legible to whose story has been told.
Memories may have faded in their minds
however they are forever etched in the
heart.

Don't get me wrong, the heart
can be misleading, memories can turn to
lies.
But the heart holds secrets not even our
minds
confess to. The heart is bound by leather
that is the heart strings. They are told
to keep strong, to hold the weight of your
life, forever.
The Trouble with Parents by Kaylene Henault

It was a Sunday afternoon and the new week was about to start. I needed to go to the store to pick up food to pack in my lunch for the week ahead. I dreaded waking up my dad to bring me to the store because I knew in my head that he was going to do something to embarrass me, like he had done many times in the past. This time was different because I had just started my job at ShopRite and all the people I work with would be there. I asked my dad if we could go somewhere else so I could avoid seeing people I know, but he said no because ShopRite was right down the street.

When my dad and I got in the car, I warned him that he better not do anything to embarrass me. He agreed, but the goofy smile on his face told me otherwise.

After about two minutes, we reached ShopRite. I was contemplating whether or not I should stay in the car and save myself the misery of walking in with him.

Before we went inside, my dad said to me, “Are you ready?”

I nodded my head with a straight face and stepped out of the car quickly. I wanted to make a run for it before he had the chance to embarrass me.

But my dad was right behind me, wearing a cheesy smile on his face. I glared at him and said in a sassy tone, “I swear, Dad, you better not-”

Before I could finish my sentence, he shouted as loud as he could, “Tater tater, alligator!”

The people in the parking lot stared with judgment at my father and me, surprised that he was shouting random words that made absolutely no sense.

My face turned bright red, and I ran away from him. I knew he was satisfied by shouting it only once. He had accomplished his goal of humiliating his daughter.

That day, I was annoyed with my dad. I realize now that he was trying to be funny and do what all parents do, which is embarrass their children. My dad has always acted like a comedian, and my mom even says that he is like her third child.

Today, I look back on that day as a funny memory and get to share a laugh with my dad about how embarrassed I was.

The Ride to School by Courtney Sandora

One morning I asked my dad to pick me up from school because I really didn’t feel like taking the bus in the afternoon. When I asked him bright and early that morning, he was mad at me for waking him up. After I begged him, he finally agreed to it. I also made him promise not to pick me up in the Cadillac because I find his old enormous car embarrassing.

After school I walked out expecting to see his truck waiting for me by the flagpoles. Instead I heard someone screaming, “Courtney, I’m over here”.

I looked over. There he was with a cardboard sign that said my name on it in big, bold red lettering, and he was wearing a black cap like a limo driver would wear. Of course he drove the dreaded Cadillac.

Everyone stared at me and at my dad, who was still yelling my name and waving the sign. I was so tempted to walk the other way and walk home.

One of my friends elbowed me and said, “I think your dad is over there waiting.”

I looked back at my friend and said, “No kidding. Thanks for that.”

As I walked away from my friends and toward my dad, I could hear them all laughing at me because my dad decided to pick me up and make such a scene.

When I got in the car, my face was still bright red and I wouldn’t say anything to him. When we were almost home, he looked over at me and said, “This is what you get for waking me up early. Plus I love embarrassing my kids!”

I remember the event like it happened yesterday, but now it makes me laugh thinking about how crazy that was for him to do.
**Trapped**  
*by Ben Stilphen*

I sit and wait  
down in the tomb with the others.  
They come and go when they’re ready.  
However, I am not.  

Trying to find my way,  
I need guidance.  
It comes by and hands me a key,  
then leaves with no instruction.  

The light shines through  
giving me a view of the keyhole  
only for a short time.  
I inch my way closer.  

---

**Trapped**  
*by Jill Zemko*

An oppressive society  
people held down and held back  
from the most important elements.  
Deprived  
of knowledge  
the feeling of being trapped  
locked in your house and left  
with what little you have to mend.  
But there is no feeling.  
It’s normal.  
You were born into this,  
nothing new, just that state of normal.  
A slave to society  
emotions  
there aren’t many, but when there are,  
they’re very clear.  
You can’t distinguish  
anger from sadness  
fear from excitement.  
The line between them  
broken  
like it was so cut and so thin  
it grew weary and slowly diminished over  
the last year.  
At first, only a feeling- this sense of  
coldness  
and now it’s complete numbness.  
There aren’t any types of  
outside communication.  
There is no sense of feeling  
toward that.  
Eat, sleep, and watch TV.  
The people on the screen  
are the only source of human activity  
and it’s virtual.  
The government picks  
a spouse for you and you stay  
with them forever.  
This is the life we live here.  
Imagine that.
The Gift
by Olivia Gianakos

Freedom gives us the will to work hard, allows us to pursue our dreams. Without it, we would have no inspirations. There would be no prosperity, no innovations, no passion. Freedom gives us the right to pursue what we admire and allows us to learn from our mistakes. We grow and evolve from those mistakes.

Without freedom, we’d have no sun. We’d never see our accomplishments. Without, we stagnate, we are oppressed.

We thrive on freedom.

Kinds of Freedom
by Catherine Saucier

There are different kinds of freedom—they all fit under 2 categories—Mental and Physical. One freedom can result in another. Freedom of responsibilities, for example, can lead to freedom from stress can lead to freedom from depression. Being free of depression can lead a person to be who they are and do what they want. Though one freedom leads to many, what if a person has no freedom, not one?
Faces are silly little things, as they can never stay the same. Observers may notice a fresh scar on the cheek, or a new wrinkle in the brow, but most noticeably a new person to emerge from change. Fate seems to always be the culprit behind life’s adjustments. However, I can’t help feeling as if I never changed in these past years, watching the young women crossing Grey Street.

“Excuse me!” she yells while opening the rusty gate to the cemetery. I rest my shovel in the freshly-turned dirt, and look up to find the woman now hovering in front of me. I knew her face and name from the inky byline of the morning paper.

“Grave robbing is illegal,” she barks sternly.

“No need to call the cops, Miss Pierre. I’m not even digging on a grave,” I answer, drawing an invisible line around the circumference of the pit. Picking my head back up, I find her squinting into my eyes. In her puzzlement, I can see her searching for answers.

“Cold day it is,” I whisper, breaking the growing awkwardness. Around us silhouettes of trees and mailboxes call out underneath a grey sky. Dogs in the distance bay into frigid darkness, and the hushed sweep of tires cry out only for a second. I watch Miss Pierre shiver a little, and pull the edges of her pink trench coat closer together.

A slight simmer of concern radiates from her. “I doubt I will ever see this grave again, so I came to spend what little time I have remaining.” I cough, feeling my lungs turn to frozen stones. My hand fiddles in my pocket, finding a rose-colored inhaler. Bringing it to my lips, I inhale the plastic-tasting cloud with a press on the grey button. My lungs relax and my breathing is calm.

“Cold air does that to ya,” I mutter, holding up the L-shaped device for Miss Pierre to see. “Would you like to hear a story?” A sense of uneasiness covers Miss Pierre. She glances at the house behind her, that only ten minutes ago she had exited. A single light shines from within the empty house, pleading for Miss Pierre to come back and take a warm shower. I know she won’t listen to her yearning because as a reporter, she doesn’t understand when to let her sleeping dogs lie.

“Six years ago I’d probably laugh if you told me I would be digging a grave. Life was my own Eden.

“Years ago my wife, Katherine, had passed, leaving me with a healthy baby girl. However, at this point in my story that baby was now six, and I no longer lingered on the pain of my wife’s passing. I never married after Katherine, though I could have married. Guess I just never considered it a priority at the time.

“I lived in a comfy home at the end of a long dirt driveway, hidden in the sharp smells of Oak Forest. My daughter Mary Mae always called our home ‘the secret cottage,’ and I guess you could call it that. It wasn’t a huge house, and being hidden in the forest gave it a sort of magical feeling. The stones were a grey carpet up to the door, with moss placed so perfectly a human could have done it. Gentle ivy crawled up the smoky chimney with elegant fingers. At night the soft glow from a fireplace emitted from a huge window, and danced on the clean-cut lawn. It truly was our secret home.

“I worked most days in a barbershop within the busiest part of town. A young girl we called Blue babysat Mary every day. She was like my older daughter. Sadly, Blue’s mom spent more time with a bottle than caring for her own daughter, so she spent most of her time at our house. So much time in fact that I eventually let Blue transform the guest bedroom into her own. Little Blue had been with our family since Mary took her first steps.

“We never fought. We just loved each other. At nights I would strum songs on the old guitar for the girls. In the morning I left pancakes with syrup smiles on the counter for them. Everything was perfect. Then one day on my way home from work … it wasn’t.

“That afternoon it had rained so hard that the shop lost power. When I locked up around five, the afternoon rain had glazed the little town, leaving an orange streak of sun in the clouds. I took a left down Leary Lane and entered a narrow opening in the forest between two small homes.

“The path I had entered wasn’t new to me. I never had a car, so instead I used the path to get to town and back. When I had stepped onto the pooling brown river of forest path, I only made it a minute before seeing it. Covering the path in bold was a sign with the words, ‘Dangerous
Conditions, No Trespassing.’ I believe Mr. Call must have put it there earlier, as he typically took his afternoon walks down the same route.

“I didn’t want to risk it, so instead I took a right down a stealthy path laden in green. Every day I used the main path, as it got me to town faster. However, the untouched little path to the right slowly started disappearing back into the forest in those years. As result, I could hardly find the red smear painted on trees to mark where I was going. It took me about 15 minutes before I had realized that I was lost. By then the sky was teeming with a vibrant red, and the cold whispering night seeped into my lungs.”

“I’m not sure what this has to do with anything right now,” Miss Pierre interrupts. I grin slightly at her impatience and resume my story as if she never said anything.

“I came into a clear opening thinking it to be an exit, but found something much more unexpected and disturbing. The image still twists in my mind. Under the wine-stained sky stood a dark tree twisting its limbs upward. It looked as if all the other trees had ran away, leaving it to weep alone in a patch of dying grass. Strange that I had never encountered the ghostly figure before. As I approached the dark roots, I could feel the silhouette of a man watching me- waiting for me, but maybe it was just paranoia.

“In the chest of the tree I found a hollowed opening. I could have left and continued home, but a deep urge to reach down into its heart overcame my senses. My work case was laid next to my foot before I reached into the tree. I leaned slightly forward to feel a warm tingle from something vibrating at my fingertips. When I lifted the object from its depth, I found it to be a stone. A nervous flush had come over me when I saw the name ‘Jared Call.’

“Of course Mr. Call could have planted the stone there. Maybe even years before he let me start using the path, as the name could have been preserved in the untouched hollow somehow. I managed to convince myself of that when I returned the stone, and picked up my briefcase to head home. But when I finally found the marked path again and exited the overgrown trail, a weary fear was still planted in the bottom of my stomach. Almost as if the imaginary man I thought was watching me before, had followed me home and waited for me at the entrance of the little path.

“The next day I took the dry main trail to the shop. It was the afternoon, about the time when a steady stream of Friday’s customers started coming in. I had turned on the clinic TV, when a young reporter turned to the camera with breaking news. Jared Call had died.

“Though I was both sad and shocked, no emotion could compare to the terror that ripped through me. There was no way that a little stone in the woods could have predicted Mr. Call’s death. It didn’t take me long to decide it was a coincidence, but still my curious heart craved to see the stone again. To prove that the name on the stone would still be there, and the tree was just a tree.

“Around five I locked up the empty shop, ran down Leary, and just about dove into the forest entrance. When I got to the intersection, I swung right and sprinted through clumps of blurred green. At one point a tree limb tore a gash in my left trouser, leaving a scarlet stain, which I wouldn’t notice until later that evening.

“I can’t tell if it was luck or fate that guided me through the mob of branches, but somehow I made it into the clearing. Sitting alone in the shadows was the same tree from yesterday. As I slithered toward the bellowing wood, birds nestled in leaves around me started singing quieter. By the time I was face to face with the hollow opening, I couldn’t hear a single chirp. Everything went silent.

“When I reached into the darkness, it was then that I realized the man from the night before was still watching me. Quickly I pulled the rock from the tree and took a full 360-degree glance to find there wasn’t a person in sight. I brushed away the thought and casually flipped over the stone to find my daughter’s name, ‘Mary Mae Amare,’ in clear thin letters.

“Now I’m sure you’ve jumped to the conclusion that someone switched out the rocks. However, there was no mistaking the stone with my daughter’s name from the one with Mr. Call’s. Even under the dimming red sunlight, I could feel the exact smoothness and shape of the rock from the night before. Almost like Mr. Call’s name was erased for a new sketch.

“I remember throwing the rock into the forest as far as I could with my trembling hands. Then I ran home without a second glance, and dashed through the back door. I tried to close its three locks, but my hands were shaking so violently that the only progress I made was grunting a few cusses. Eventually I managed to slide shut the last lock and flop down in the brown armchair. Blue had just put Mary to bed before she snuck downstairs to witness my struggle.

“I could see her concern, so naturally I spun a lie and told her about getting sidetracked on the way home and how the stress from work was making me sick. This, I think, helped both of us
calm our nerves a little and even allowed me enough control to get Blue a glass of water and tuck her into bed.

"That night I had terrible dreams of the stone under the red sky, and watching Mary die over and over. At one point in my dreams, the invisible man emerged from the woods, and started taping on the back door whispering Mary...Mary...Mary. The knocking got louder and quicker with each word, until it became violent slamming. I ran around trying to escape, but the exits were gone. Then the chaos became a dead silence. I turned to the door and watched a white hand slide around the edge, nudging it open. Before the dream door could open, I woke up in a cold sweat, and spent the rest of my night listening for knocking of the white hand. It never came.

"The next day I called into work sick. I spent the morning making smiley pancakes for Blue and Mary. It was nice talking to the girls. Being with them made the whole stone situation seem just like a dream. After breakfast Blue ran upstairs to get her books, while I helped Mary put on her purple backpack. She was wearing a pink polka-dot dress, and a sparkly headband that morning. I hugged the girls, and waved good-bye as they raced up the long dirt driveway.

"The steady sprinkle of morning rain increased. By mid-afternoon the house was drenched. The lights began flickering, so I made a fire in the fireplace and picked up a book. It was around three when I got the call. I couldn’t believe it at first when the man on the other end of the line told me. Mary Mae Amare was pronounced dead.

"At first I felt so exposed to all the old pain I worked so hard to bury after Katherine. Then all I could do was drop to the floor and feel caged by my thoughts. No more would I make my daughter smiley pancakes in the morning. No more would I help put her purple backpack on. No more would I watch her curly brown hair descend down the staircase, behind Blue, on Christmas. And what would I do every time I walked past her pink room or found a princess dress laying around? What would I tell myself when I called her name and she didn’t come? If I can’t tell her how much I love her?

"It took a while, but I managed to put on my jacket and call a cab. I waited in the dark house for a while until a horn beeped outside the front door. My shoes slipped on easily since I didn’t bother to untie them the night before. I opened the front door, but focused my last glance at the back one. The locks were still closed.

"Later I would find out the details of Mary’s death. Apparently the wind and rain got too extreme on the way back from a field trip. The bus spun out of control and smashed sideways into a tree. Everyone survived except Mary."

"The years that followed weren’t that exciting really. I stopped working and let the old guitar turn to dust. The next time I visited the tree, I was unsurprised to find the stone back in the hollow with a new name. At this point I was too broken to be surprised. I got into a cycle of visiting the tree, having nightmares of the white hand and spending my days in paranoia looking for the man outside my window.

"Blue eventually left in fear of the man I had become, and honestly I don’t blame her. Within a month the constant fear had turned me from 40 to 60. My hair turned grey, there were constant bags under my eyes, I became underweight, plus my shoulders started caving, and my skin turned a ghostly white. Today I’m still afraid of the face fate has given me. At least Blue made the right choice, and left before the darkness could get to her too. In fact, last I heard, she graduated college as a writer. I only wish I could’ve told her how proud I am.”

I stare at Grey Street, unaware Miss Pierre is watching me. A forced cough from her, urges my brain away from distraction. Pulling my thoughts away from the street, I bring my focus back to Miss Pierre.

"Right ... anyways, I went to the tree this morning and was shocked to see the name on today’s stone. By now I’m used to reading a random name or two, and finding it in the obituary section the next day. However, when I read this name I knew there wasn’t much time. I came to this graveyard, Miss Pierre, not to rob a grave, but rather to dig one next my daughter. After all, this is where her family is meant to go ... by her side”.

I look up into Miss Pierre’s quiet blue eyes, and I see that she has caught on to the truth by now. Is she brave enough to ask the question? She cups her hands over her mouth, and a thin layer of tears forms at the bottom of her lids. I listen to the howling dogs in the distance go off again, as I wait for Miss Pierre to decide.

"Whose name will go on this grave?” she inquires, pointing a shaking hand at my work. I smile a little and take my inhaler out of my pocket for the last time.
“The man who has followed me down that path and knocked on my back door hasn’t blessed me with death yet, Miss Pierre.” I chuckle, taking a loud puff of medicated inhaler. Two coughs erupt from my chest as I return the device.

“He still wants me to suffer for not letting the sleeping dogs lie.” By now the howling in the distance became sharper in the black air.

“If it wasn’t your name that was found on the stone, then whose was it?” She shivers. With a sly grin, I let her stare at me with tearing eyes.

“I think we both know whose name is going here Miss Pierre or would you still let me call you Blue?”
The Fall by Peter Lincoln

At the age of 9, I was outside playing with friends at the park with my mom watching from the bench on the side. While I was still little, I wanted nothing more than to be cool. After playing for a while, I fell from the monkey bars and twisted my ankle. I felt pain right away, and my mom realized I had fallen and came rushing over to help. She overreacted to the small ankle sprain, asking if we should go to the hospital and kissing my forehead to make me feel better. I felt embarrassed instantly as my friends watched on. I felt that they thought it was weird how my mom reacted to such a minor injury. My mom cared about me so much and most likely did not even think about embarrassing me, as all she wanted to do was make sure I was not seriously hurt.

Looking back on this moment now, I realize my mom was only trying to help, and it was because she cares about me. I also realize my friends at the time probably didn’t think this was weird, as I was hurt and my mom was coming to help. I don’t understand what I was so embarrassed about now that I look at it, but in the mind of little kids, a lot of things don’t make much sense. I love my mom and know that she cares about me and my well-being, and to her, that is more important than anything else.
Identity
by Chris Smith

I have searched oh so long
never truly finding what I’m after,
ever finding what I have sought all my life

I searched for the answer in the strings of my guitar
Yet no amount of strumming rewarded me

I searched for the answer on the stage under the lights
Yet no amount of acting cracked the code

I searched for the answer in the hairs of an Appaloosa
Yet no amount of support pushed me through the gates.
Standing at the edge has taken its toll.

Soon to be lost, I stare at the map,
ink rubs off with each touch.

Every attempt to find it makes it harder to see.
Slowly but surely, gone
Gone but not forgotten. Never forgotten.

The gates open and the path unwinds.
Finally it’s all clear.
Finally I understand
the map is gone, but it leads me here-
it has led to my destiny.

The understanding washes over me:
True identity is found by getting lost along the way.

Not Enough: More, More, More
by Kayla Job

I’ve been happy for as long as I can remember, but I’ve always wanted more.
To see what I’ve missed, I get sick of the same walls.

I want to explore—
travel place to place
and meet new people
who can show me what I’ve missed,
what I strive for.

My father wants me sheltered:
He doesn’t want to see his little girl grow up.
But my mother, she understands.
They can’t keep me from what I’m destined for.
They can’t keep me from what happens next.

It’s fine.
I’ll stay for as long as I need
until the day comes
when I pack my bags
and leave.
The Fudge has Fallen
by Briahna Borysewicz

I apologize for eating
the last piece of chocolate cake.
The slice was so tempting. It stared
me down and begged me to eat.

I was strong in resistance
until I saw the chocolate sauce
slowly melt off the cake’s side and
onto the counter.

I figured I should clean it up, but
instead of using a sponge, I let my finger
dance along the surface of
the fallen fudge.

From the moment that
warm, rich chocolate glazed
the tip of my tongue,
there was no going back.

I said I was sorry, and I am.
Nonetheless, I do not regret indulging
in that chocolate euphoria.
Forgive me, my dear. For I still
love you more than I did that piece of cake.

Purple Glaze
by Kaitlyn Serafino

The top wasn’t on.
I opened the container and watched
the specks splatter from the cap,
seeping into my clothes.

I was a little busy scrubbing my shirt,
so really, I shouldn’t be
responsible for not closing the bottle.
After all, you
didn’t clean the cap,
you stained my clothes.
Of course, you didn’t know
I was the one who didn’t close it.

You were too busy screaming:
“Who did this?”
Too bad I convinced myself I didn’t
do it. Funny that I remember now.
SECTION 3. THE MIRROR IMAGE

Ella Secchiaroli
A Single Snowflake  
by Nick Gigliotti

If I were to choose  
between a single snowflake or a snowball,  
I would choose to be a snowflake.

I’d rather be independent and unique,  
falling from the frozen clouds just being me.  
Not limiting myself to where I’m supposed to fall.

I’d rather not be stuck  
in a cluster of similar and have my shape  
be determined by the bigger snowflakes.

I’d rather be a single, solitary snowflake  
than a categorized, unoriginal shape.  
If I could be myself and not an exact remake,  
I’d rather be a small, unique snowflake.
After the Storm by Matt McKinzie

Her name echoes from Em’s throat with the sound of fear deep, visceral, and agonizing. She places her hands to a face lined with years of loss, of false hope.

An arid, prairie wasteland frames the burlap edges of the decrepit house. A twisting, twirling hell gone savage on the Kansas plain, swallowing Dorothy in its unkempt path. Now Em’s niece is nowhere.

Years of frustration, of poverty, of shattered memories slip away like tears falling into the ashes of her sister. Em cries for Henry. She wants to feel his warmth.

But she only feels the edges of his bones. He is hurting, too. And Em is all alone. A woman far too loving whose love was sacrificed to tragedy on the frontier.

A dust-filled breeze tears through the clouds, the air, the dirt, and scraps of vegetation. Then the clouds part, and rivulets of color seep through the mist. Riveting reds, bombastic blues, gorgeous greens, arresting ambers. After the storm, there is always a rainbow.

Anger by Jill Zemko

I’m Anger; who are you? I come in many forms, I come in many stage! I have power over you that people wouldn’t imagine. No matter how many times you try to get rid of me, I’m here to stay, old friend! Push me away? I’ll come right back. I’ll cover you from the bad emotions! I’ll help you fight! Together we can be stronger! I’ll take care of you! I can shape or guide you! All in all, together we become stronger to than anything thought possible! My name is Anger and I come in many forms.
On Thanksgiving we lit a few too many candles,  
but sweet and bright that beastly fire was.  
I could see every flicker and smell  
the bittersweet aroma. The kids cooked for Thanksgiving  
And they'd never done anything like that before.  
They had to prove they wouldn't starve later this evening.

You could smile at the chaotic sight in the evening lights. Almost see the happiness glint in too many candles  
They wanted to confirm it'd pull you in first, before  
their guilty smile captivated your heart. A magical tenderness, it was.  
Their innocent charms wanted nothing but grins on Thanksgiving!  
Everything so tender and delicious, especially that smell.

Oh that mischievous smell,  
binding noses to dining rooms on this simple evening.  
Tonight's competition was who could make the best Thanksgiving dinner. Laying under the chuckling flame on the array of candles.  
habitually lighting our mood on a delightful night. Which was,  
in a sense, earned by the overworked hungry chefs’ excitement from before.

Who could believe the result of that hectic night before?  
Each chef would brag about the success of their enchanting smells.  
What their parents knew of traditional recipes was  
on each of their plates. A perfect meal and a perfect evening.  
one spectacular sight under that army of candles,  
I’ll remember each course on this Thanksgiving.

Cooking with my siblings that bristling Thanksgiving,  
when smiling was never rare. And each plate before  
the last was served with new laughter that kindled the candles.  
‘Though, Autumn was crisp and kissed with that foggy smell,  
our blankets would heat our bodies on that cold evening.  
where we'd reminisce on what winter is and what summer was.

The spirited content and endless gratitude was,  
as they say, a laughing fire untamable. Our Thanksgiving.  
the most remarkable evening.  
The memorized reenacted gratitude of years before,  
To say ‘Thank you’ to the bakers of desserts and dinner's fine smell.  
Oh our bliss blaze of the thankful candles.
The Starry Night: From Behind Bars
by Taylor Houggy

The bars are cold and damp and filthy. The village is enchanting, nimble lights blinking in the night. The world beyond the bars is intoxicating. If only I could drink the twilight haze that hangs over me. Perhaps then my thirst for freedom would be quenched.

A realm full of life teases me with its delightfully blinding glow filled with the promise of comfort and coziness. The starry night drapes over a universe I’m no longer a part of. Swirls of cosmic dust beckon me to join them.

A silent sigh escapes my lungs, for I cannot dance among the thousand suns above me. The bars keep me here, a slave to my own psyche.

Perhaps I can change these views, which will soon become memories painted on a canvas page, and erase the ominous slits that confine me to myself.

Maybe the world will finally understand the mind of Van Gogh is not easy to comprehend. I pray that I can forget the box I have become prisoner to. My sole memory shall be the starry night.

Migration- Joshua Flint
by Anna Tomtania

Two sisters paddled an ivory kayak 'round the bend of the lazy river, the glistening blue glass underneath and the afternoon sun glaring above.

Leaning over the water to glimpse a fish or two, they floated along. The world around them adorned in vibrant colors. Brilliant emeralds, muted golds, a speck of red here and there.

Out of the river and onto a lush moss carpet that tickled their toes, they hoisted the kayak over their heads to trek home.

They came upon a waterfall. Spectacular liquid diamonds caught the lights as the water gushed from the cliff overhead to spray cool droplets on their flushed faces.

Sheltered by their little boat, the sisters walked. Barefoot, wet, onward they walked home, indenting the earth with their footprints, shallow memories left behind.
No Such Thing by Zoë Beausoleil

(Scene opens in a little girl’s bedroom. LYNNE is an eight year-old lying in her bed under a large comforter blanket. Her behavior and appearance suggests that she has been frightened.)

LYNNE
Mom! Mom! The Boogeyman is in my closet!

(Enter MOM, a woman in her thirties. She appears to have been startled awake, and is irritated with her daughter’s outburst.)

MOM
Lynne, sweetie. For the hundredth time, there is nobody in your closet. Go to sleep.

LYNNE
Mom, I swear that he is! I can hear him breathing when I close my eyes, and when I open them he stops making noise. I know he’s in there, he’s watched me every night since we’ve moved here.

(MOM sits down on the end of LYNNE’s bed.)

MOM
Lynne I know you think that the Boogeyman is in your closet, but I promise you that there is no such thing.

LYNNE
I don’t believe you.

MOM
It doesn’t matter if you believe me or not, because he’s just not in there! I believed the same thing when I was your age, and so does most boys and girls your age do too. Now go to sleep, because if you don’t get enough sleep you’re a grouch in the morning.

LYNNE
I’m too scared to go to sleep.

MOM
Maybe a glass of water would help you fall asleep? If you really want, I could sit in here with you after you finish your glass of water and finally go to sleep.

LYNNE
Okay, fine.

(Exit MOM. LYNNE intently watches the closet door. All of a sudden, a loud rustling noise erupts from inside.)

LYNNE
Mom! Mom! He’s moving around in my closet, I can hear him!

(Enter MOM, holding a glass half-full of water. She sets it down on the bedside table.)

MOM
For the last time, there is no such thing as the Boogeyman. Stop screaming because you’re going to wake up the neighbors! I’m going to open up the closet door and you’ll see for your own eyes that there is nobody in there.

(MOM stomps over to the closet door and opens it. Both she and her daughter begin to scream.)

End of scene.)
Life is like an Ocean by Tessa Dípallina

Life is like an ocean,
this cliché I grew up hearing but holds true.

I never gave much thought
to the ocean being more than the ocean
until
I started listening.

On a day that held the sun high
but with a breeze so crisp it made you
question whether it was summer or autumn,
I rested under an old maple tree
beside my mom, all dressed in black.

The voices were talking of my grandfather,
as if they knew him.

They said they saw him standing on a beach,
looking out to the waves.
A big wave in the distance
eventually demolishes into the bubbles at his ankles.

A wave of endless opportunities,
seen through the eyes of the youth,
evaporates back into the others.
A voice said life is like the ocean
that we can be calm and reflective
or gray and angry
we can be a force to be reckoned with.

We are the raindrops
that collect in the river
we feed the soul of the ocean.

The voice can see my grandfather now.
As he watches the wave receding,
he swims out after it.
Life is like the ocean, and we are life.