



ARKANSAS NORTHEASTERN COLLEGE

ENERGY

Energy

Spring 2018

Seventh Edition

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Energy would like to thank Dr. James Shemwell, June Walters, Deborah Parker, Deanita Hicks, and the Arts and Sciences Department. We would also like to extend gratitude to everyone who encouraged students to submit work. We are grateful for all the words of encouragement and support for our seventh edition!

Energy Submission Guidelines: Any part or full time ANC student can submit to our student magazine. Each student can submit a total of five different pieces, consisting of writing and/or art. Submission Categories: Fiction: Short stories should not exceed 3,500 words (about 15 pages). Poetry: There isn't a restriction on length, but poems must be submitted in the exact form that you desire it to be published. Non-fictional Works: These should not exceed 3,500 words (about 15 pages). Art/Photography: We accept all forms of visual arts; please send a jpeg file of the photo of the artwork. How to Submit: Please send your work as attachments to mburnette@smail.anc.edu. In the body of your email, please make sure you type your name as you would want it published, the titles of the works, and a phone number. If you have any questions, contact mburnette@smail.anc.edu (or come by the C-Wing). We are accepting submissions from June 1, 2018-April 1, 2019 for the next edition of the magazine.

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“Bide”

By Tyberius Real

I wrote a poem for you to start the day

I wrote a poem for you to start your day

I wrote a poem for you the nicest way. And I hope it is the righteous way. And I hope that if you're mad or if you're sad that it would brighten your day.

I wrote a poem for you. And in the nicest way, I hope you smile, like a child, and you love it in the slightest way.

I wrote a poem for you. And in the nicest way, I pray you see light in me, just enlightened me and take me to the brighter days.

I wrote a poem in the nicest way, and I would love for you to be a part of me and not depart from me, it doesn't have to be right away. In my heart it's just the righter way.

I could tell you, but this is just a writer's way.

I wrote you a poem and I hope you have the nicest day. And in my heart, I pray your heart carries the lightest weight.

Realizing patience so this the lightest wait.

I wrote a poem for you.

Fear

By Megan Reynolds

It's an emotion every human has but fear for me is different. It's an aching feeling in my heart burning my chest. Not just fear no but fear of everything. Fear of losing fear of failure fear of living. Each day I wake up knowing something might go wrong the fear of death or the fear of just getting hurt. Even the fear of the future, good or bad. Yes it's not just fear it's anxiety wrapping itself around me laughing at each decision I make telling me I'm wrong to run back and change it all even if I can't. No it's not always an issue in day to day life, its small then just in the back of my head then change in even given second to being the only thing I can think about. I can be on my way minding my business then I'm smacked by a glass wall in Chicago's Willis Tower. My mind is telling me to jump from the fear but my heart is trying to keep me sane telling me to calm down even though it's racing like a horse about to cross the finish line. My fears are simple to complex to things I should not even fear. My fear is topped off with lovely worry and doubt. Not only do I doubt myself but also I doubt others. I doubt that I am truly loved and cared for. I fear that I'm not worth anything unless I have a good day but those days can turn. In a matter of hours. I can go from having a good time to being slammed back into the glass wall of fear. I try to get back to safety only to worry again about unrealistic things. It's my fault that I fear of living. All of this worry is tearing me down into what I fear I truly am, nothing.

“Under the Sea 3”

Black and White Print

By Rachel Johnson



“ACNE”

By Talaysia Cole

Acne is like going to McDonalds and receiving the wrong order. Instead of receiving the #1 clear skin special like I asked, they decided to give me the dirty face with a side of pimples. Growing up with acne feels like trash being dumped all over my face. I couldn't breathe a whiff of smooth air knowing that I could possibly wake up to a zit horror scene. Acne played a stressful role when growing up into a teenager. It slowly chilled the warmth of my young gracious heart. Acne became the evil villain that lies beneath my skin waiting for an attack at any sudden movement.

When I think of acne I instantly experience a gag reflect. Disgusting right? It literally makes me want to puke a river of disappointment all over my body. Acne comes in all different shapes, looks, sizes and areas. Pimples & Zits are the main acne curse. They look like frosted volcanoes ready to erupt whenever pressure is applied. Oh & you don't wanna know about blackheads. Blackheads are like using black pepper to cook. It won't bother you but you'll always see the black spot that it left, if it's there long enough. Whiteheads, Papules, and Pustules look like white wolves with red eyes. Meaning, there are so many packs of these vicious, puss infected wolves it'll drive you insane! These wolves will have you crying, leaving you with bloody eyes. Acne usually comes in the size of a bead depending on the area and the damage it has done. Severe attacks from acne can leave major scarring and deep bruises on the affected area. They all have this one crazy super attack where they make you look like complete crap. No matter how much you try to fight them, they'll fight back harder. Acne is truly the devil, it never makes anyone happy.

I got acne at an early age. When I experienced it, my heart cracked. It came into my life like an atomic bomb. It came so impulsive and damaging. It wasn't the most pleasant way any pre-teen should experience their first puberty marks. One day I was in school when a boy asked me if I tried Proactive (cure). I ignored it and kept my day going. Later on throughout the year, he started to call me Proactive. My heart instantly cried. I didn't know what to do. I felt so insecure to where my happy heart walked outta my body and moved to the next

happy soul. I tried to pop the acne monsters but failed every single time. It wasn't fair that I had to basically say goodbye to clear skin for the rest of my life.

As I grew up into a teenager I found ways to cure this evil skin curse. I've tried creams, scrubs, masks, lotions, and all types of amazing cures. These items became are part of the main factor to healing this curse. The real cure is an amazing man in my life named "The Facial Cleansing Brush". He came with all types of brushes. His brushes were so sexy to where I actually got starstruck looking at him. He came into my life about a year ago. He told me that I promise I will make your skin and heart happy. So I trusted him and he did not fail. My heart moved back in and my skin was gradually becoming clear! My skin was finally riding a smooth sail to a healthier lifestyle. Without him I wouldn't be as happy with my skin as I am right now!

All my life acne has kicked my butt! It attacked every single inch of my life. Acne slowly made my skin cringe. Every day, acne village was attacking my skin. I couldn't stand the fact of officially saying farewell to enjoying amazing skin forever.

“Jelly Fish”

By Jennifer Pearce



A Normal Day at the Office....Maybe?

By Paige Minton

I've always hated my job, working in cubicle wearing khakis and a stupid button-up with a tie that chokes me. Staring at this computer will make me blind before I hit 40. I take the elevator every morning to my office on floor 246 A.6. This annoying old man always tells me to smile and enjoy the day because tomorrow is never promised. I brush him off. I know I'll be here next week, especially since we have an office party for Kevin's retirement. Kevin is the only guy around here that I enjoy associating with. 360 floors and he is the only guy I can talk to. Kevin is the type of guy that probably was in some kind of war (or something like that). I also like that Kevin is a single guy like me. No need for women when we can spend our money on "reasonable" things. I always tended to agree with him and we always talked trash about the women in the building. "Look at that hooch" Kevin pointed to a random woman "her boobs are bigger than her paycheck!" I always enjoyed Kevin's jokes and rude outbursts.

I always thought I would hate women and their foolish ways until I met Kelly. Kelly was an angel to the eyes. She was tall with long wavy brown hair and the deepest blue eyes I have ever seen. I could tell she wasn't from around here due to her Southern accent. I've tried getting her to notice me, but it ends up horribly and Kevin ends up making fun of me. However, it finally happened after a few days of embarrassment. She did what I dreamed of, she asked me on a date. The smile she gave while she spoke those miraculous words melted me. What would I wear to the date? I've never felt this way about anyone. We ended up going to my favorite restaurant and eating the best gosh dang burger I've ever ate. She politely ate a salad, was she nervous or scared? We then made our way back home. I dropped her off in my old dodge and was about to leave when she grabbed my hand and told me thanks then followed it up with the kiss of a lifetime.

Kevin was waiting on me the next morning. “How was your date?” Kevin asked in a sleazy manner. “It was actually pretty great.” I replied. Of course, Kevin retorted “Did you get some dessert?” I punched Kevin in the arm and assured him that she was really sweet and wasn’t into that. As soon as my boss came in we heard an awful noise, the building shook really hard and everyone fell to the floor. My heart was racing. “Where is my love right now?” I thought to myself. We heard sirens, ambulances, and firetrucks in the distance. What the heck was going on? We received a radio message that the building was on fire due a plane crashing into it. We tried to find a way down, only to discover that floor 136 was the floor on fire. There was something gloomy that struck me when I heard that number.

Floor 136 was the floor Kelly worked on. My heart sank and in spite of the chaos I asked Kevin “Kevin, do you believe in God and prayer?” “Sure do” Kevin replied. “It is what has kept me going during war.” Kevin and I sat there and prayed long and hard that Kelly was alright. I didn’t know what hit me at the moment, but I began to pour tears from my eyes as I fell to the ground. Moments later the radio stated the firemen could not make it to the floor. Everyone on the floor was burned alive. Kelly, the angel of my world, was dead. I never knew heart aches could ever feel this way. I lost my Kelly, my one chance at love. We received word that the plane that crashed into the tower was hijacked and part of a terrorist attack. Rage built inside me. My anger was out of control and my heart ached. I began to think that the phrase the old man told me was right, we are truly never promised tomorrow. My beautiful Kelly will not see the morning lights of tomorrow. Her beautiful face will never again be seen. The firemen were trying to reach our floors, but the flames were getting closer to our floor.

Time was running short and we knew we were trapped. I heard Kevin say the craziest thing in the world. He suggested we jump to our inevitable death. The thought of it echoed in my mind. I looked at Kevin as if he was insane, then I slowly began to accept the facts. It was both of our final moments and we knew it. Kevin was always the kind of person to find humor in anything, however, tears were rolling down his eyes as he spoke

“David, you’ve always been like a son to me, I’ve watched you go through hard times. Your dad’s death, parent’s divorce, and your cancer. I’ve grown to really like you kid.” I was crying uncontrollably by the time he had finished. We gave each other a long hug and a good glance in the eye. I spoke my final sentence with what little breath I had left “If you make it to heaven before I do, save the best babes for me, ok.” “Sure thing kid.” he replied. After those final words we took the leap of faith. I thought my cancer would be the death of me, but I guess there were other plans for my tomorrow.

“Gnome”

By Jennifer Pearce



Drakon Tournament

By Jerry McKaskle

“Today is the day, Seth wake up, today is the day”

Seth’s eyes shoot open as he looks up at the tall lankly kid looking down on him. “Carl, I told you to stop waking me up.” Seth says through a huge yawn. He sits up stretching out. “I know today is the day, you don’t have to remind me”

Carl laughs, stepping back “yes, I know, but it’s really exciting that today we will be chosen. What do you hope to get? Maybe the fire dragon, (insert dragons name here), since that’s what your dad got.” He sits and waits giddily watching as Seth gets out of the bed. Seth towers over Carl as he pulls on his dark green tunic. He heads towards the door, Carl following close behind.

“I personally hope to get the water dragon, Ryu. But I personally wouldn’t mind to get (insert fire dragons name). I just don’t want to get (insert earth dragon). I have no love for the outdoors.” Carl keeps following Seth as they leave the barracks heading towards the barrel filled with fresh water. Seth dips his hand in bringing water up splashing some water in his face.

Seth turns around staring at Carl “it’s too early for you to worry about this. We both know you are going to get chosen by the dragon Ryu. You fit the requirements to be chosen. You are the most laid back kid I know.” Seth says with a laugh as he heads back inside.

Quickly getting in front of Seth, turning to face him as he walks backwards, Carl says “yeah I know I fit the part but still. I don’t see why you aren’t worried about this. This helps chose what our life will be like in the army.” He stops seriousness coming across his face, his voice drops low as he adds “there is also the chance we don’t get picked at all. That would mean our time going to this academy to be knights would be completely wasted. We will have to either join the regular army or go and learn a trade. I really don’t want to have to be a tailor like my dad for the rest of my life.”

Placing his hand on Carl's shoulder Seth says "you won't have to be, you will get chosen. Most kids who can go through the academy get chosen. They planned the drills to test whether or not you have what it takes to get chosen. We both passed every test they threw our way. We got this." Seth gives a reassuring smile as he pats Carl's shoulder.

Carl looks up with a smirk on his face. He nods "yeah fine. I will stop worrying about it for now. You are so good at motivational speeches" he says in a teasing tone, causing Seth to punch him in the shoulder.

Laughing as he rolls his eyes, "come on we have to go do our chores. I want to go talk to my dad before we do though." Seth says as they head into the tall stone building, an oak sign hung above the door which read *Drakon Spirit Academy* in bright red paint on a green background. They push open the large double doors and walk in.

They walk down to the end of the grand hallway stopping at a big dark oak door. Seth reaches up knocking hard saying "Father, are you in here? I need to talk to you about the choosing ceremony" he steps back as the door swings open a tall man with short dark brown hair steps out. His face was handsome in a rugged way with his nose being crooked from being broken one too many times. A scar ran up from the bottom of his chin following his jaw line. The resemblance to Seth was uncanny. The only difference between the two was the eyes. Seth had a light brown color resembling honey, while his father had bright blue eyes.

"What do you need to know Seth?" He says as he steps out of his office. He looks over at Carl nodding in his direction. "Carl." He looks back at Seth "hurry up and ask. I'm expecting a messenger today with a list for me, and you have chores to do" he says as he gestures for them to come inside.

Carl and Seth follow behind and sit down in the chairs. Seth raises an eyebrow and asks "what are you expecting a list for?"

A knock on the door interrupts them as a slim man walks into the room carrying a leather messenger bag. "Professor Jerry?" he says looking up from the sealed package in his hand. "I have the list for the *Drakon Tournament*." He says as he holds out the package.

Jerry walks across the room holding the package up “thanks, here is the gold piece” he hands it to the messenger. He quickly nods and leaves the room. Jerry turns towards the boys and says “if you need to know it’s a list for who we are entering into the *Drakon Tournament*. Once all of the students have been chosen by their dragon we will send them to enter the Tournament after the week following the ceremony. The winners will be entered into the best squadron of the Knights of the Elements and get the 2000 gold coin reward. This list needs to be sent off right after the ceremony.” He sits down laying the package on his desk. “Now what do you need to know where we can both get to what we need to do.”

Seth and Carl look at each other with uncertainty. Seth slowly looks back at his father “well I was wanting to know how the ceremony was going to play out but now I am much more interested in this tournament” he says as Carl nods in agreement.

Jerry laughs and says “you will have to find both out when they happen. Now go and get on your chores. We will call all of you to the yard when we are ready. Now go.” He waves them out. Seth groans standing up knowing it isn’t a smart idea to push the subject. Him and Carl head back outside.

Once outside Carl stops Seth “So there is this tournament we will be entered in. That’s so cool. It will give us some time to be able to get use to the dragon spirit” he says with a huge smile, he quickly shifts between his feet as he adds “and that two thousand gold coins will really help out. My family could finally get to buy that new house and get out of old quarter.”

Carl’s smile slowly drops as he looks up at Seth. “Aw man. If this is a tournament and we both are entered there is no way I will be able to win against you. You are the best swordsman here. Well you are pretty close to the best. And if he is in the tournament I definitely don’t have a shot.” He said as his head drops. He leans back against the academy doors sliding down.

Seth walks over to Carl sitting down next to him. He looks over at him “fine I will make you a deal. If I win the tournament I will give you the prize money. You have been my friend this past couple of years and you have helped me be able to get through this academy. Plus your family has been kind enough to me. I would be

glad to give you the money. Not like I really need it. My father gets paid a lot just to run this academy. So we diffidently don't need the money" Seth says with a laugh.

Carl looks up raising an eye brow. "Really, you would do that for me?" he smirks and adds "that would make you my knight in shiny armor." He laughs as Seth lets out a groan.

"Must you ruin everything? Yes I would. You are my best friend" Seth says giving a playful smile. He sticks out his hand and adds "I promise I will try my hardest to win this tournament for you and your family as long as you try also."

Carl smirks bigger and says "that's what I am here for. To ruin all of the nice things people try and do with crude humor" he laughs looking down at Seth's hand. He pauses for a bit then nodding he takes his outstretched hand shaking it, "Deal."

Chapter 2

Seth lets out a hearty yell as he swings his broad sword in a wide arch slicing through the hay dummy in one swoop then quickly spins and changes his stance to thrust the blade deep into the chest of the dummy.

A small clap is heard causing Seth to spin around looking for the source. Carl jumps down into the practice arena and laughs, "you're getting better at that routine."

Seth laughs as he pulls out the sword, "yeah I am, let's see you do it all wise one" he says flipping the sword handle out towards Carl. "Your time to show me up, and do this routine with no fail at all." Carl steps forward taking the sword from Seth as he playfully swings it around.

"As much as I want to show you up and decapitate this dummy, I have to pass." He says tossing the sword back to Seth, with which he catches with ease sliding it smooth into the fine leather scabbard at his waist. "So why are you here Carl? You've never been a fan of swords." Seth says as he unties the dummy from the stand hoisting it on his shoulder.

Carl walks over grabbing the spare dummy and follows Seth out of the arena. “Well, can I not check up on my best friend ever?” Seth glances over at a smirking Carl as he adds “yeah even I didn't believe that one. We got switched over to feeding duty today so we have to go feed the animals.”

Seth nods and says “sounds better than kitchen duty today. Who are we working with?” he asks as they reach the old worn down storage shed that the academy keeps all of the training equipment in. Opening the door and walking in, he sets the dummy down and starts to take off the training blade he was borrowing.

Carl follows suit and sets the dummy down next to the other and laughs. “Well you might not want to hear it but we have to work with Lesivic today. He got switched over as well.” He leans against the wall, amusement across his face as he looks at Seth.

Seth groans as he sets the blade in the weapons closet and slams it shut. “Oh come on, why him? Who assigned us together? It never ends well, he is always so cocky. It makes me want to punch him in the face.” Seth rants as they leave the shed together. They see a crowd of people rushing to join them.

Carl busts out laughing and says “well your bitching will have to wait for later. And I'm sure there will be more of it. Hey Olivia, what's going on?” he asks reaching out to stop a girl that is rushing by to get to the crowd.

Olivia smiles with giddy excitement as she says “Geoff and Lesivic are getting into it again. Apparently Lesivic smarted off again and Geoff got mad, again” she chuckles as she pulls away and rushes off to the crowd leaving Carl and Seth alone once again.

Both of them sigh in unison as she rushes off. “I will go get the nurse, you go handle that” Carl says as he heads toward the main building. He calls back with a laugh “don't let him kick his ass to bad” before silently slipping in the double doors. Seth shakes his head as he starts to jog to the crowd.

As Seth gets to the crowd and starts to work his way through, telling kids to get out of the way, a tall muscular kid, with a cubed shape head covered in short dark brown hair, stood in the middle of the crowd

towering over the other kid. The second kid, who was a head shorter with long shaggy black hair barley covering his eyes, was staring up at the other harshly as Seth finally gets through.

“Who do you think you are Lesivic? A king? I will teach you to watch who you smart off too.” The brute growls out towards the smaller kid he called Lesivic. He keeps the harsh stare as Geoff gets more into his face.

Seth sighs as he steps in-between the two. “Come on guys, haven’t you learned from last time that this doesn’t work out well. You both got stables duty for a week last time. You need to give this up” he says looking back and forth between the two.

Geoff growls and says “but the wimp called me an incompetent waste of space.” He throws out his hand towards Lesivic as he does. “I will make him pay for it this time. He won’t get away with it.” He steps forward quickly trying to get to Lesivic. Seth puts a hand against his chest to stop him.

“Again I will bring up last time. That didn’t work out. You want to do that again?” Seth asks calmly as Lesivic stands behind the two, tense. With a quick glance back at him Seth faces Geoff again and says “come on man. We have a week after the choosing then you will be scot free from him. Do you want it to be filled with stable duty?”

Geoff growls once again and says “I don’t care about stable duty. He will pay this time. And I will be the one doing it.” He grabs Seth shoving him out of the way as he storms towards Lesivic.

With a heavy sigh Seth glances to Lesivic and says “well fine, but don’t come crying to me” he turns around and starts to make his way back out of the crowd. Behind him Geoff reaches Lesivic and rears back a fist taking a swing towards him.

With a quick duck Lesivic dodges the swing with ease, as he stands up he quickly punches Geoff in the ribs shoving him away. Geoff stumbles and then regains his balance quickly, standing up straight glaring at Lesivic. He yells as he charges once again swinging rapidly towards him. Lesivic laughs as he dodges each swing. He steps to the side carefully extending his leg tripping Geoff and sending him crashing to the ground.

Punching the ground he stands up “oh you think you are so bad just because you can dodge. But I will hit you eventually and you will pay for it.” He says as he charges once more.

Effortlessly Lesivic plants his legs pulling his hands into a fighting stance. When Geoff gets close enough, Lesivic spins on his front heel bringing the other leg up in an arch, He plants the top of his foot against the side of Geoff’s face causing him to lose his balance and fall, sprawled onto the ground. Lesivic follows through and plants the foot bringing the other one straight up, then swings it down kicking Geoff’s face into the ground.

Stepping back he smirks at the unconscious body of the bigger kid. Lesivic dusts off his pants as he heads into the crowd. As he does, Carl comes back with the medic and sees Lesivic leaving the crowd. “Darren owes me five Drachmas,” he says with a laugh as the medic goes into the crowd. Carl glances around looking for Seth, finding him over by the chicken pin. He quickly jogs over as the crowd disperses leaving the medic to tend to the still unconscious Geoff where he was.

“I tried to warn him that the outcome would be the same as the last fight.” Seth says throwing out the chicken feed onto the ground for the chickens, making sure to spread it around evenly. Once done he turns to face Carl and shrugs “the idiot would not listen to me. Wanted to show him who is boss” he says with a laugh as Carl grabs a bag of feed.

They head off towards the next pin as Carl asks “and you didn’t stay for the fight?” he laughs and adds “come on man. Every time they fight Geoff says the same thing over and over, it never changes” he chuckles as they stop and start to toss the food.

“And he always winds up in the infirmary afterwards as well.” Lesivic says as he quietly walks up joining Carl and Seth, causing them to jump in surprise. They exchange a quick glance between each other before Lesivic keeps speaking. “But next time Seth, don’t jump in and try to stop it. Or else you will get it next,” he says as he glares Seth down as he comes to the pin.

Seth chuckles as he sets down the bag of food and starts to throw it out to the chickens, “yeah we both know I am the better hand to hand fighter. You can try all you want to but you will end up like Geoff back there” he says gesturing back at the still unconscious boy being carried by two other students.

Lesivic laughs and says “yeah you are the better hand to hand but we won’t always spar in that. Wait until sword practice tomorrow and we will see who comes out on top. Especially one we get chosen this afternoon.” He finishes the final bag of feed as the head medic comes forward with a red face. Lesivic turns and faces her with a sly smirk on his face “yes, can I help you Liz?” he asks.

“Come on this is the third time this month. Can’t you two just get along?” Liz asks with an exaggerated sigh as she gestures for him to follow her. “Come on you know the drill. I have to drag you to headmaster Jerry.” She says as Lesivic follows close behind.

Seth and Carl sigh in union as they realize they have to finish his part of the chores themselves. They turn back towards the shed and head off to feed the rest of the livestock. Carl glances over at Seth and says “do me a favor, and show him up tomorrow, the guy deserves it.”

Dear Bully

By Brandy Caldwell

Your words constantly spinning around in my head and staying attached all day long. No matter what I do to distract myself those words keep reminding me of the pain. Why do you choose me to pick on? Why do you choose HURT as a key word? When you speak those words are they said because down deep you have those feelings about yourself? Take a few seconds to sit down and try this demonstration at home. Take a paper plate and a tube of toothpaste and squeeze some of it out and then once it's done and try to put it back in the tube. Impossible right? Yes because when words come out of your mouth it's hard to take it back. No matter what I do it don't satisfy you for some reason. Are you Jealous or just rude?

At a young age I was always was bullied whether it was about the clothes, shoes, or the car my parents drove or if riding the school bus every day. Education is important especially at that age? Why ruin that? Because they might actually like going to school. You never know kids may go to school every day in order to get away from the bullying or abuse at home and if they are getting bullied there too it will make them want to seclude themselves in an abandoned room or place to be alone from your words.

As getting older approaches usually social media starts becoming popular and kids will always want to have the newest account. Social Media is the most harmful and the most killer due to Cyberbullying which is online bullying or it can be all anonymous. The girl you called a whore today in class which I overheard has problems trusting a guy cause of all the times she has been hurt. The little boy you called Stupid in the hallway he is suffering with Chronic Down Syndrome and don't know how to talk right. The girl you made fun of for getting pregnant at a young age she was Kidnapped and Raped by a 40 year old man that lied about his age. You never know other people's situation outside the walls of the school and sometimes they just need a break or a friend to talk to and YOU could change in percentage of teen suicide or missing children rates.

“Holy Cow”

By Rachel Johnson



“The Broken Purple Crayon”

By Madison Nowlin

A year ago today February 28, 2017, my family and I was supposed to celebrate the life of my grandpa. Instead we received some devastating news; my cousin shot and killed himself. He was a backslid preacher, who had a voice of an angel, and loved the game of basketball. Being my favorite cousin, when I received the news, it shattered my heart, like it was ripped out by a hungry lion’s tongue. When people would ask me how I was doing or if I felt any better all I could say was “I’m fine,” purple one can say. I was the lightest shade of purple in the sixty-four count box of crayons. I was the one that’s still the sharpest but could break easily like all the other ones. I was a sad, lonely purple just ready to break.

Like a bird with no wings, and helpless as I was, I didn’t have the right words to say anything. No right words could have been said to make anyone feel any better. A cold rainy day is how I felt all the way up until the day of the funeral. The day of the funeral was devastating. Cars lined up and down the road side, the church was filled with familiar yet saddened faces. Walking into the church building, I thought I would be able to hold everything in until after the funeral. As soon as “God Bless the Broken Road” by Rascal Flatts played, the crayon broke; I broke into millions and millions of pieces. I couldn’t keep myself together like I was a piece of ice melting. Tissue after tissue wouldn’t stop the river that was flowing out of my eyes. After the heartbreak of the service was over everyone moped to their cars. Starting their engines, they followed the hearse to the cemetery. While following behind the line of cars, the traffic slowed to a crawl. Everything was silent in the truck with my parents all I could hear was the clinking of the flashers and the dinging of my mom’s seat belt going off. As we entered the graveyard and came to a stop, we got out and walked to the tent that was dancing in the wind as if happy to do its job. We listened to the little service, shed some more tears and said our goodbyes. The men took their roses off and flung them down onto the casket, while tears trembled down their faces and watered the grass. The hardest part was watching the backhoe twisting, turning, and throwing dirt to

fill the six-foot-deep hole. All anyone could hear was *thunk thunk thunk* the dirt hit the casket and split into little dirt clods to fill the hole along with the precious life it was now holding. Whimpering and sniffles fell upon everyone again. Loud cries, soft cries, even the cries no one could hear because they were out of tears. I'm purple again today just thinking about how he is celebrating his heavenly anniversary with our Lord Jesus Christ.

I was broken, but being broken and I still got put back into the crayon box of society to be used again. Purple, being the innocent color it is, can hide so many emotions for different people. No one likes losing a loved one, but that day comes for everyone. There will come a time where come a time that all crayons will break down, but know a broken crayon can still be used.

“Chicken”
by Jay Gibson

In the beginning there was only darkness and then I was laid. An egg out of my mom, sitting there with no purpose and no drive, just an egg. I spent years in that egg. I even put a face on it just so that the other chicken in the coup would not throw me away. I even had my family fooled. So I lived as an egg for most of my teenage years sitting there dormant with no activity and then, *du dum*. My body started to form. I only knew how to survive at this point not becoming sentient just yet and just living day by day.

I was sixteen, the only thing I had going for me where my moves and voice. I could dance and sing just move all around with being completely whole. Even though I spent so much time growing and developing my own brain, there was still so much to go before I became a chick. And with what I was doing now, I still was in that egg not really letting anyone in because they would only try to pry me out into the world knowing that I am far from ready.

My life as a developing chick was coming closer to an end when I turned seventeen. My family really was pushing me to do things I didn't want to do, making me into something that I am not. They wanted what they thought I should be and didn't ask what I wanted to be. So I then knew that it was time for me find out what I wanted in life. That triggered brain patterns; I was now sentient and thinking for myself, but still in an egg.

By this this time all my peers have started to grow their feathers while I have yet to hatch. Life has begun for others by giving them eggs to protect until they hatch, while I watch and hope that I hatch before I become a protein snack for a bodybuilder. I hoped that when I hatched, I would not be turned into chicken nuggets, tenders, nor any chicken based meal. I wanted to be the cock that moved around the coup all day every day and never slaughtered because of how big and strong I would become and he would want all of his future chicks to be like me.

Now I had to deal with fear of not making it. Not being able to live in society without as shell. I feared not being loved. I feared being eaten by the world as if it would take my meat off my bones and enjoy every bite

while I still felt every single thing happen to my body. I feared not being able to find “The One”, someone who could help me in this world and would be on my side. Though, I feared being forgotten most of all.

So now I had a reason to push, a reason to keep going, a reason live. I used that fear as a weapon and began breaking that egg shell piece by piece. Not only could the world see what I wanted to do, I just began to see what I wanted. I knew that if I wanted to keep that fear from becoming a reality, I would have to leave a lasting impression on everyone I met every single day of my life. I was and still am ready for that commitment.

So as I was breaking this shell that was overdue to break, I saw the world and what it could be. This is my canvas and I am Bob Ross. I was not going to let the world make me feel bad, or scared ever again. No one was going to put me down worse than I could do to myself. I was going to make the world mine. There was not a single person in the world to stop me, but there is no single person to do it with.

Having this problem, I almost started to put the shell back in place as if I messed up my room, but I met the person that was going to change my life once and for all, Grant. He was a full grown rooster, he had a purpose in everything he did. He had hatch so long ago, he was considered premature. He made up for it by growing in an alarming rate. So when met him, I was just hired to my job at the college we both attended. I was going to be stuck at the college for a good two hours if it were not him.

We quickly became best friends and we had fun in everything we did. He would mess with a lot of the chickens in the coup, but he was not the most favored rooster. He would get in fights and mess up relationships, but deep down, he had a good heart. This rooster helped me every single step of the way and never left my side. He showed me the real world and how to make it mine. He gave me feathers off of his body to help me stand out, but I started to grow feathers of my own.

I knew everything I needed to know and make it to where if I needed something, I could get it from anyone. I have skills I never knew that I could possess. This was it, the world gave me fear, passion, knowledge and Grant so that I could have this upcoming rooster can have the world.

“Lock”

By Jennifer Pearce



“Royal Duke”

By Rachel Johnson



“Sunset”

By Megan Reynolds

