

Grandview High School's

The Writers' Den



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If you would like to provide artwork for 'The Writers' Den, please see Mr. Eggleston or any of the Visual Arts teachers.

“A Passion”

Writer: Inspire-Sun

It is still as time,
Valuable as breathing.
His voice so strong and pure
That I faint to my knees
If it were so.
I can never describe it.
He is the knight of my story,
The mysterious prince.

His glorious honey skin shining gold.
His mysterious dark eyes
Make even the night jealous
Of the beauty that his silence brings.
The twinkle in his eyes
Can only mock the marvel of the stars.
His pitch black hair makes me get
Lost in a world of wonder.
Is it his laugh? Or his smile?
His look? Or is it simply his love?
I don't know what makes my stomach
Flutter most.
He is dark and cold but
Hides a true deep nature for love.
A love I hope he spends with me.

Our love has become triumphant over death.
Over scolding and darkness,
Over the sadness and depression of the cold.
And as the leaves brought change and fell
Into our cold hands,
It couldn't change our feelings, not for a minute.
It has overcome even the hardest seas,
That blew and blew and knocked us around.
No matter, it has come this far

And I want it to keep going.

I have this passion for someone,
Yes it's true.
It's a rhythm of love I can finally dance to.
A dance that keeps me moving
That keeps me going on through life.
He brought me back to my feet,
I can't deny it.
He has opened my heart to new possibilities,
And new voices and melodies to dance to.

Yes, I've been broken and torn
But he picked up the pieces of my heart,
Let me rest as he put them back together.
And as I cried and cried
He listened and did not go like most.
Yes, this is love.
I won't have it any other way.

“Popcorn”

Writer: Carmen Rose

To start off this letter, I, in no way, condoned what happened to that poor kid or what I did to them. I will tell you all the truth of what happened, and even what I did in detail. I was only trying to help them in all honesty, at least that’s what I told myself. They were just so young at the time, especially for them to be running away. It happened all in less than a day. It was dark and foggy that night, which was pretty rare weather for Texas. I was kinda driving the bus around when I saw this kid with this bright hair. They had a suitcase and backpack, wearing some shorts and a anime looking t-shirt. And their hair was the brightest color I’ve ever seen. It was way too bright to be considered blonde, it was almost completely yellow. At the time, I didn’t know if their hair was dyed or not, but I learned later that it was their natural hair color. It was uncombed and it sagged down their back in long curls. It was such beautiful and happy hair for a sad person standing there underneath the bus stop. I made my last stop for the night in front of that person. They were pretty quiet when they paid the bus fare and sat in the seat nearest to me.

“Where you headed to, sweetheart?” I figured the kid needed a ride to a hotel or something, although I was kinda hoping it would take less than 10 minutes.

“There’s a train station at the edge of town, can you just take me there?” They asked. I didn’t question it at the time, just did my job. But I think they were thinking about hopping the train to get out of Texas, which is pretty much illegal, and the kid looked young as well, so I drove for a while till I said, “Are you thinkin’ of hoppin’ the train, sweetie?”

They were silent for a moment before they whispered a soft “yeah”.

“How about you stay with me for the night? Ah know it sounds suspicious, but ah don’t want you to be freezin’ out here in this cold.”

Their answer was quicker this time when they agreed to it. And then there was more silence. I figured they weren’t in the mood to talk, but my nosy

self was also curious, “So is there a reason why you were standin’ out there in the rain?”

“...I ran away.” They said. I was surprised they trusted me with that info in the first place. Texas laws didn’t exactly like runaways, neither did the snitching folks here either. They were either naive or had nothing to lose.

“Is there a reason why you ran away?”

Silence. I decided to ask again later.

“You gotta name, sweetheart?”

“...popcorn.”

“Could you repeat that, sweetheart, ah couldn’t hear ya.”

“...Popcorn.”

It was a weird name, I’ll give them that. No parent would ever give birth to a child and think of calling them “Popcorn”, but I didn’t ask anymore questions. I couldn’t exactly look at them, but I could tell they were tired and didn’t want some rando interrogating them. They finally got some sleep as I headed back to the office. Just as I parked the bus, the boss caught me unfortunately(the privileged bastard had the audacity to carry HIMSELF an umbrella) and I couldn’t exactly just lie about there not being a kid literally sleeping in the bus.

“You just finishin’ up?” He asked as I stepped out of the bus.

“Yeah, caught a runaway on my last round.”

“What, you kidnappin’ the kid?”

“No, Imma report them to the cops.”

Unsurprisingly, he went to check himself. The poor kid was wide awake, glaring at us in confusion, anger and betrayal...and it wouldn't be the last time they did that. The boss flicked his cigarette away, "You picked up this dirty ass girl on the side of the road?"

"I'm not a girl." They snapped. The boss snorted, "Don't tell me you picked up a kid that has gender problems."

"It's called being nonbinary."

"Ah, so you did. You might need to get this girl to the police asap."

"Will do, boss." I lied, "Wouldn't want the poor kid to be all alone anyway."

"Night, Lizzy."

"Night, boss."

I didn't expect the kid to go after me after he left. Popcorn seethed, "So what, you manipulate me and now I'm going back? Back home? Is that what you do? Manipulate kids and snitch on them?"

"Woah woah woah, kiddo, ah ain't doin' shit. Ah only lied to boss to protect you."

They froze for a moment, feeling clearly guilty. They were a sweet kid, and they were probably on edge. After putting a few pieces together, I figured out that they weren't exactly running away, but more or less kicked out, or at least that's what I figured at the time.

"You were kicked out, weren't you?"

Popcorn tensed up, looked away from me for a while. I think they were expecting me to kick them out or take them to the cops. They finally looked up. I think they were trying to cry, but didn't want to at the same

time, “No. I ran away because my mom didn’t accept me for being nonbinary.”

Again, I was shocked. I didn’t really expect them to open up that easily, but that was probably the naivety of the young.

“She didn’t let me go outside anymore because she was ashamed of me and tried to take me out of school. It didn’t work, but she told me to never come out of my room until college unless it was for school.”

“All that for the fact that you were nonbinary?”

“...yeah. She’s been trying to find a therapist to help me with my ‘problem’.”

“What makes you think you are nonbinary?”

They tensed up again and glared at me, “It’s not that I think, I AM nonbinary. I just know it. I’ve just...never felt like a woman. It just never sit right with me. I hate my chest and just hate the way my cheeks are shaped, but I really liked wearing skirts and stuff because it just felt like it fit me well...sorry, this is all personal stuff and I know it’s confusing-”

“It’s fine, sweetheart.” The words felt empty in my mouth, “Imma trans woman.”

Popcorn’s eyes lit up for the first time we’ve met, “Really?”

“Really? Ah ain’t never had my ma been that much of an ass to me as yours, but ah understand what it’s like, especially in a place like Texas.” I felt my stomach churn. I wasn’t exactly lying per say, I really am a trans woman, and my mother was such a supportive pillar in my life for that. But I held it back, helped the poor thing out because what was I supposed to do? Leave them on the bus? I was in it for the long haul now, “So where to?”

“Um...if it’s not too much to ask, I’m headed to Lawton, Oklahoma.”

It wasn't too far at all, just an hour away, maybe even less depending on how early we left in the morning. I nodded, "Mkay, ma car can take that. We leave in the morning."

They deflated and looked a little nervous.

"We're prolly both tired, sweetheart. You just left your ma, ah drove drunk people around today, ah think we should head home."

They looked a little more convinced, but they probably decided they had nothing else to lose at this point. I think they preferred to be kidnapped than to be taken back to a transphobic parent. We got to my house just a few minutes later in my dinky little pickup, the rain wasn't slacking any less. I've seen rain before, it has rained in Texas before, but the rain made me more nervous than it was supposed to. It was almost like God knew what I was gonna do, and He was giving me a chance to just make it right. I didn't listen. And no, to clear up some rumors, I didn't do anything to Popcorn that night. I never even touched them without their consent. All we did was shower, talk, eat and sleep.

They talked about how they had always been nonbinary ever since they were a kid. They never considered themselves a girl or a boy, but they found the term online. They connected with other people in the LGBT+ community and actually fell in love with two people. I didn't know their genders at the time (One was a trans man and the other was a cis man, I am very sorry to the two men I hurt). So, after their mother locked them in their room, or at least tried to, they planned to move in with one of their boyfriends since his family was okay with it. They were hoping to apply for emancipation before their mother found them again so they could make it official. I was a little surprised at how much they thought about this elaborate plan, like they had been planning for months instead of days like they insisted they did.

"I really didn't think my mom would react like that." Popcorn's voice sounded tired, probably just too tired of crying now, "Dad used to be an ally, he loved to show his support. He died during a pride parade shooting,

it's just...shitty for her to disrespect his memory like that, and disrespectful towards everyone who died that day.”

I heard about the shooting in 2005. It happened just in this same town, just down by my road before I moved in. At least 23 people had died, including 5 children. I felt my heart twist more. All I could think was ‘*God why, this poor, poor kid just wanted to live their life.*’ We went to bed right after that, we had to leave early in the morning, or at least that’s what I told myself. Boy did I cry myself to sleep that night. I don’t think I’ve ever had that many tears fall from my own eyes. Normally I’d have my ma comfort me, but what the hell could she do while she was stuck in the hospital. And I really don’t mean to guilt trip you all into forgiving me, but I don’t want you all to think I just did what I did for the hell of it or for the money. I really did feel guilty for doing it.

We left in the morning like I said. Popcorn was happier when their stomach was full of pancakes (I had never even met a person who inhaled pancakes as easily as them). They were beaming with joy that day, even though it was raining. And their beautiful, beautiful hair was so much brighter and fuffier. It almost guilted me out of doing it. *Almost.* I don’t think I did that much talking that day, and I don’t think they really cared/noticed. They really were excited on the way there, and their excitement didn’t let up. Their excitement got worse when we finally did arrive.

I think the rest was a blur, or not a blur per say, but I guess the rest was kinda like watching my body doing it. Like I was just another person watching it all happen. We both got out of the pickup and they practically bolted up the driveway even with their suitcase. They were so happy. I ain’t never seen a happier and more genuine smile in all my life. They rang the doorbell more than once, screamed their partner’s name so loud I think the neighborhood had woken up. That boy who recorded most of it was having a smoke outside, I think he had to be as young as Popcorn. The door opening in front of them was the slowest door opening of my life. I don’t mean to be dramatic, but it was like it went on for hours but it was also like it happened in a few seconds.

I could feel the excitement out of Popcorn just vanish when that door was violently thrown open (yes, violently, the door was almost off the hinges). And I just watched it all happen. It was their mom, screaming and yelling at them so loud that if Popcorn's yelling didn't wake the neighbors, you were damn well awake now. I think she said a bunch of slurs at Popcorn, called them an attention seeking brat, a suicidal psychopath and some other stuff, but I don't really remember the rest. I just watched. What else could I do?

Their boyfriend (the trans one) stood in the background, held back by his parents because what could they do? If their mom was going through that many hoops to keep her kid, only God knew what she would frame the poor boy as if he tried to do something. The parents couldn't do nothing either as long as Popcorn was a minor, especially since they weren't emancipated. The court would easily rule in favor of Popcorn's mom.

To this day, I never knew what strings she pulled to get into their house and invade their property just for the sake of her child. And no, they couldn't have warned Popcorn because their phone had been taken away, and they didn't leave with it (at least that's what I think, I didn't know if they had their popcorn). I kept my tears in, I didn't deserve to cry at the moment, I thought. At least until Popcorn turned around and gave me the most painful look I had ever gotten. Yeah, they were pissed, but they were also confused, hopeless, and just...hurt. Very hurt, obviously. I think they knew I knew.

“Why...you took me back to my mom? I trusted you! I told you everything! I...I gave you my entire life and you just...go behind my back and did this? Weren't we supposed to stick together in this community?”

I felt a lump in my throat. I wanted nothing more than to die right then and there. It was too late then, though. It was done. I made my choice and the dye had been cast. I placed a hand on their shoulder, and they flinched away.

“How could you?”

Damn, I really wanted some to just jump me right then and there.

“Listen, sweetheart, Popcorn-”

“Don’t call me that!” They shouted. I think their mama had enough, “That’s enough (deadname)! You should be thanking this woman for protecting you! You had no right to run away from me!”

“You locked me in my room!”

“Because you are insane! You are a girl! I birthed you and I raised you as such!”

“Popcorn.” I tried to explain, but I don’t think they were listening, “Popcorn, listen. Your mama made a deal with me. My own ma is stuck in the hospital and ah just don’t have the funds for the doctors to help her. Your mama promised me at least \$10,000 for her surgery. My ma has a chance to survive, ah just needed the money.”

The last thing they said to me was, “So you’d sacrifice someone else’s life for money?”

I really didn’t think much of it at the time. I thought that they just didn’t understand at the time because they were young. Especially where we lived, people would do anything for money, I just wanted my ma to survive. And that was also the last time I saw them, obviously. Popcorn’s mom paid me and I left without another word. My job there was done. I drove off while their boyfriend and his parents were trying to comfort them, or they were all probably saying goodbye. I wasn’t exactly sure. I don’t think I did anything for the rest of that day other than just sit there and just think about what the hell I had just done.

The rest was history, as you all know. Popcorn had meant what they said: They had killed themselves a week later, the community was pissed upon learning what had happened. Then the interview happened with their mom obviously training to gain sympathy, but we all know what the real outcome was. Riots and protests broke out, mainly with parents of lgbt+

kids, because of the fact that their mom repeatedly used their deadname and misgendered them. And I was practically in the middle of it all, just like Popcorn.

Yes, I know my situation is controversial, especially in the community. Maybe I shouldn't have gone through with it and told Popcorn, maybe it was a good choice. In the end, though, despite my efforts, my ma did die. It was rough, it really was. Despite literally putting Popcorn through hell, despite getting all that money, my ma didn't survive the surgery. Now I'm just lost in this world. I lost two people all for nothing. I murdered a young person for nothing. All that money for nothing but riots and more inequality and hate. And maybe some of you are saying that I should've never even thought about betraying Popcorn, but here's my question: Wouldn't you do the same?

I never would've known it would end like this.

“To Be Silent”

Writer: Inspire-Sun

To be silent is not merely a form of disability.
It isn't a sign of non-educational entities,
Nor should it be taken for granted.
For it is the silent that have much to say.
Much to do and much to flow about for.
For you see, I too was silent at one point
I too possessed the inability to speak with the tongue.

It was a curse that haunted me since birth.
But I was rather normal
For a young girl who would just sit silently.
Now who wouldn't want that?
But the curse began to progress.
I enjoyed no one's company but my own.
Lost in a way of close fantasy
But that made me an easy target for an evil
That presented itself towards all the Earth.

And school wasn't any different.
There I am, sitting in the corner of the class.
In the middle or in the front
And sometimes even in the back.
Watching my peers as they all raise their hands willingly
To answer a question the teacher offers.
My hand slowly goes up, trembling.
We are taught that it's okay to be wrong.
But is it really?

Is it okay to not tie our sails
And hope the wind will just carry us through
In the right direction?
Is it okay to adorn the sky in a bloody red
When it should really be painted a bright blue?
Such ideas, if presented, would have been judged

By all and mocked.
And so my hand goes down with no hesitation.

In utter silence, my world was captivated.
I could hear the laughing and joy of others
As their kites drifted away by the wind.
I could see phosphenes twinkling in front of me
Illuminating my very picture of what I ought to see.
And then I was presented with the most
Formal way of speaking:
Writing.

Yes, it was that time the pencil in my hand
Could no longer be guided by it.
It was at that moment when the words caught on my
White piece of paper floated high and above,
Coming to life with every emotion I felt!
The key to the cage was turned
And my heart fluttered out as free as a bird!

I am still silent.
You will still see me with moving eyes.
My graceful brown hair being blown about by the wind,
Drifting away into another world in my sleep.
I may not have much to say,
But when I lay down my work of art in front of you
You'll see,
The words have been spoken!
And I have been set free.

“Live the Life That You Desire”

Writer: Annie Rodgers

Love. A word. A feeling. A warmth. A breaking point. A mystery. Love. I've put a lot of thought into this one word. This one word that drives me crazy. It is a complicated word. It is something that I think a lot about. Love is interesting. A good friend once told me that love is being vulnerable enough to let someone hurt you but trusting that they won't. It is giving a person a gun pointed at your heart and trusting that they won't pull the trigger. That is the fall. The moment you trust the person you are in love with to catch you. The catch is when they put that same faith in you as you did in them to hold onto you. The catch is what we all hope for. The catch is euphoric. The crash is what we dread. The crash is when they don't catch you. When they let you keep falling until you hit rock bottom. Except, that bottom can be very arduous to find. However, that bottom is crucial. So crucial that you may even have to build one yourself. That can be strenuous. That is why we fear the fall. Because we know that it could lead to the crash. So, really it isn't the fall that we're afraid of, it's the crash.

However, we can't always be focused on that. Life is so short. Sometimes we must take that risk without thinking and without knowing what the outcome will be. We just have to trust that in the end, even if it ends up hurting us. That we are stronger in the end because of it. The time that you spend investing your heart in the people that you love is what will matter in the end. So, even if it is only for one minute, to tell someone that you love them because that one minute could change their entire life.

That one minute can change everything, because a lot can happen in one minute. Sixty little seconds. In one minute, Usain Bolt can run over 745 meters. In sixty second 255 babies are born around the world. In that small amount of time, your heart beats an average of 72 times. But, bad things can happen in that time too. Around the world, 105 people die every minute. That is why when something significant happens that alters the course of our life, like love, we begin to say things that we never would have said before that. All of the mistakes that we have made or the people that we have upset, that all becomes insignificant.

So, my question is, if life can be gone so quickly and unexpectedly, why don't we say those things before we might not have the chance to? Well, it can be hard to live in such an extreme way; a lot of people might not know what to say. But there are certain times where it is better to say too much, then to not say enough. Think about it. What's the harm in doing so? Even if you end up being hurt or embarrassed even, nothing lasts forever. That is the true beauty of time. Eventually, things will fade away. Why wouldn't you say too much?

So, while you're at it, love too hard. I don't think it's possible to love someone or something halfway. Either you do or you don't. So, if you do, give it everything you have. At least if it fails, you'll know that you laid it all out on the table. You gave it everything you had. Pride gets in the way of a lot of potentially beautiful moments. After some time, all the little things that you could have said or done start to pile up. And then, you are left with a heavy heart and all kinds of regret. All because you wanted to stay safe. I've been in relationships where I knew from only a few days in that it wasn't going to work out. But I gave it a shot, because, in the long run, each and every one of those relationships helped sculpt me into who I am today. I went for it because of the chance that I could find the thing that we all strive for in our relationships. Something rare. That thing being love. Even if those relationships didn't work out, there is always a lesson to learn from each person who enters your life.

I'm an endlessly hopeful person in that way. I usually end up getting hurt. However, I'm still here and I'm a better person because of it. You can't let the hurt change you, as hard as it may try. Stay vulnerable, stay kind, stay understanding, and stay gentle. We are a result of the experiences life hands us and how we react to those experiences. Not all the experiences are going to be the happiest, but that doesn't mean that they aren't important. If you have lived all your experiences in that "halfway" range, what kind of a person does that make you? Of course, the events of everyday life can't be extraordinary. That just simply isn't realistic if you factor in all of the responsibilities and obligations we have to keep up with daily.

Make the days with more responsibilities important too. Make life fun. You're not going to be how old you are right now forever. You could die after your next birthday. When your mom asks if you want to sleep in her bed, say yes. One day she'll be in a hospital bed and there won't be enough room to make up for right now. Stop canceling plans; go out and use your legs while they work. You're guaranteed nothing. Stop denying affection. You'll never be able to love someone as a teenager the same way at thirty-five.

Someone, many someone's, are going to tell you they love you. Don't keep quiet because you've been told it too soon. If you love them, say so. Be brutally, beautifully honest. Go out and change the world. Fight for peace, equality, and change. When you're seventy and can only watch the news all day you don't want to see the same issues still going on when you had every chance to fight it. Stop romanticizing the "I don't need anybody" and "I don't have feelings" attitude. It's easier to make friends in high school than in nursing homes. Embrace feelings and intimacy. Don't apologize for caring and don't let anybody make you feel guilty for caring even if it's one-sided. You're only a teenager for 2,555 days and then you're twenty. Life never slows down. Bones become fragile and break, people die, and hearts become weak. With every atom in your body, live right now. And live the life that you have, at this moment, to the fullest.

And honestly, for me, sometimes living life to the fullest means going back to bed and getting those extra hours of sleep that my body is begging me for. But we can all do ourselves a small favor by saying what we need to say and saying it a little more often. Even if it only takes a minute.

“The Lake”

Writer: Elly Reussow

The year is 1908, there has been a string of missing children in Midwest North Dakota. So far 10 kids, ages 8 to 15, have vanished. Nobody knows who is doing it or where the kids are going. Parents are terrified and barely letting their kids leave the house, the only time you would see people are on the streets were right before the school day and after the day ends.

I was sitting on my bed reading through my assignment for school when there was a tapping sound outside my window, my body seemed to jump about three feet in the air. I looked out the clear glass and saw a brunette standing at my window with a huge smile on her face. I get off my hard bed and walk over to the window, sliding it open, “You are a terrible person,” I scold.

“I’m sorry Tess but you should have seen your face,” She laughed crawling through the medium size window.

“What are you doing here Allie? I highly doubt that your mother let you out of the house,” I scold.

“I snuck out obviously,” she says jumping onto my bed and laying on her back.

“When you get kidnapped and murdered brutally, don’t haunt me because I warned you,” I tell her, pushing her over so I could continue doing my homework.

“No matter how I die, I will be haunting you, and if you die first, I expect the same”. She tries to pull the papers from my hands but I just swat her hands away.

“Let’s go do something,” she pleads.

“No. One, I don’t want to get murdered, and two, I need to get my homework done,” I say, turning my attention back to the page in front of me.

“Please,” she begs.

“Fine but only for a short walk, if my mom finds out I left, we will never see each other again,” I sigh and place my work down on the bed. After my shoes are on, I lock my door and we crawl out the open window.

“How about we walk down to the lake and back?”

“Yeah, ok”. I love my best friend so much, but I really hate that she can talk me into anything, without hardly trying.

We continued to walk and talk about things, mostly about school gossip though. Once we reached the lake, Allie started to take off her shirt, “What are you doing?”

“Going swimming,” she says nonchalantly.

“You said we would walk down and then back,” I fight, as she strips down to her undergarments.

“I did but I never said we wouldn’t stop and go for a swim.” She flashes me an evil smile, turns, and jumps into the large dark lake.

“Allie,” I whine.

“Common, loosen up,” she smiles swimming in circles.

“Fine,” I say then slide my top and bottoms off and jump into the dark abyss.

After I come up for air she laughs and says, “see isn’t this fun?”

“Yeah it is,” I laugh. She seems so happy; I can’t disagree with her. Not that it isn’t fun but it’s not as fun as she thinks it is. We float there for a few more minutes laughing at nothing, when all the sudden her body goes underwater, and it doesn’t come back up.

“ALLIE,” I yell repeatedly. I continually yelled her name for what seems like hours until finally her body reemerges, and she is laughing. “I hate you”.

“No, you don’t,” she laughs as I make my way to the shore and start to climb out. “Hey, wait. I am sorry, don’t go yet.”

“I love you, but I have homework and my mom will kill me if she finds out I am not at home,” I say before pulling my pants on, then moving to my shirt. Once my shirt is over my head, I look over the water and see nothing.

“Really Allie, I am not going to fall for it again,” I laugh.

When nothing happens I start to panic again. “Allie common.” Finally her body came up again, only this time she was not laughing, her body was face down in the water and completely still. “Allie?” I ask shakily.

When no response comes, I jump back in the water not caring if my clothes got wet. I pull her body back to land and climb out before pulling her with me. When I flip her over, I see her face, for the first time and I jump back and scream. Her whole front side is covered in deep cuts. There is no blood coming from any of them, they’re just there. It doesn’t make sense that she isn’t bleeding, she was only under for a minute or two, that is not enough time to bleed out or even get that many cuts.

I look back at the lake and see more large items start to float to the surface. There were the bodies of all the missing kids. I stand to my feet, turn and run as fast as I can back to my house.

I am about to turn the knob when I feel something grab my feet and pull me down. I try to scream but I can’t, I can’t make any noises. I claw at the

ground trying to stop but it doesn't help. I am pulled all the way back to the lake full of children.

Whatever is pulling me pulls me into the water, which seems colder than before, and continues to pull until I am at the bottom of the large lake. I try to move and swim to the top, but I can't, my body is paralyzed.

I feel pain at my side then everything goes black.