

# SILVERCOATS

## *mini-mag*

Featuring the best work of Vista students from the fall 2021 creative writing and artwork contest.

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War, Christiana Condes, 12

The booming cacophonous explosion deafened my ears,  
I kept questioning myself "why am I here?"  
Looking around to see scattered broken dolls  
That I destroyed for my country, once and for all.

However, this war brought home widows and sadness,  
Agony, isolation, misery, and madness.  
I stared in awe at their grotesque, lifeless bodies,  
And there I carried my unforgettable memories.

Unsure whether I should feel happy or angry  
As I stood there while the corpses stared back at me,  
Those haunting eyes I will never forget,  
My bravery and honor I will never get.

I wondered how many fathers and sons I have killed,  
And how much blood I have spilled.  
I am a sheep in a wolf's clothing,  
My pure youthful innocence, slowly fading.

I stayed as the devil in disguise,  
Until the angel within me dies.  
I carried my gun until the very end,  
Never to see war as my friend  
Ever again.

Artist Statement: A poem that I wrote in AP Lang, but a revised version. It is based on the book "The Things They Carried," and it is a graphic poem that involved themes of war, violence, death, and loss of innocence



Multimedia Story of Me - Yunesa Rodriguez, 11

Ode to Lost Memories, Nathan Petersen, 12

Oh, It's nothing but a burning memory  
Like late afternoon drifting  
Looking at the world with fresh eyes  
Like a child swept up in the magnificence

Oh, Glimpses of pure recall  
Through the cracked marble halls of the recollection  
Some doors open, some remain locked,  
Some misplaced, never can remember where  
We don't have many days  
Beautiful and transient like a warm sunset

Oh, A hidden sea, the cadence of waves  
Of memory buried deep,  
Drifting misplaced in the waters  
They are the mournful camaraderie  
Of days gone by, crashing against a hazy shore

Oh, the echoes of misplaced time  
Through the fields of memory  
Each grassy trail a reminiscence  
Some footpaths travelled often,  
Some overgrown, others fenced off  
With the keys misplaced, and the locks rusted

Without you the familiar becomes  
Unfamiliar, lost  
The way forward feels lonely  
Through the unfeeling lens of time  
And inevitable forgetfulness

Anything But Icarus, Dani Engasser, 11

Why didn't Icarus love the moon?

I never understood why romantics wrote about how they looked at their lovers as if they were the sun. I supposed it had something to do with its ability to give life, its brilliance and its seeming immortality. But the sun was a brute in its brightness. I hadn't ever wanted to gaze upon it. Even when I emerged from the shadows of the darkest days, I never once sought the comfort of the fury of the daystar.

Perhaps that was all there was to it, I thought to myself. Perhaps what I craved wasn't the one who would cast heavy shadows in my wake, but a companion to guide me through the others.

Perhaps I was just not an Icarus. My hubris would simply have to find another name.

All things considered it was an average morning. I woke at the same time as always and started to brew a cup of coffee before I'd even looked in the mirror. I stood there for a moment, soaking in the cleansing scent of coffee grounds before I would be forced to be anything more than myself.

I closed my eyes and I thought of the last time that I'd felt free to do just that. I traced my steps back through each monotonous repetition and I realized that it had felt like forever.

A year was a long time to be someone else. It was an even longer time to be without someone else

Two Cards on My Shelf, Aaliyah Thomas, 10

Cards on my shelf

Two old smeared looking cards on my shelf.

Not visible to anyone who walks in my room.

My two most memorable mementos from a person who gave me life.

A person I remember left this clean aroma odor in the air when he walked past.

The card's texture is furry because of the dust that sits on top of them.

Hand made cards with beautiful cursive handwriting.

Cards that aren't floppy and easily rip-able.

Colors that are eye-catching.

And both cards have indents in them from how long I've had them.

The words written on each card are so perfectly placed in the middle.

Seeing a glimpse of either card brings my last memory of Akil up into my mind.

It was track and field day in 4th grade on a sunny day.

Akil surprised me, and I ran to him and gave him the biggest and longest hug.

It is my favorite memory and the first one that comes to mind when I think of Akil.

These two cards that sit on the top of my shelf.

Beautifully shaded with pink on the outside of both of them.

Colored clouds that appear like they're floating on the blue lightly shaded background.

Two cards that have pop-outs inside of them, giving you a surprise.

Each card is similar to the other by this perfectly shaped rose inside.

The roses are softly shaded with a color as blue as the sky with no clouds.

And outlined with a dark blue as the deep ocean.

Thoughts of missing Akil linger in my mind every hour of every day.

Wanting to hear his voice in his writing on my cards.

Longing to just hear one more of Akil's contagious laughs.

Not ever finding closure in these two cards.

The words he chose to write to me always have me thinking.

Thinking of how the breath from his body breathed across these two cards.

Wishing always that the cards would have Akil's smell scattered over them.

But they still don't.

In my eyes, my dad, Akil, always seemed to have a happy personality.

Even when Akil was in prison, everytime i visited, you could tell he was over the moon.

I remember him as a light hearted person.

A beautiful soul.

Everyday filled with despair I spent on him, always resulted in me grabbing these cards And reading them at least 20 minutes each.

How could a person mean so much to me? I spent almost every day of this past year still grieving him.

Realizing all the things I don't get to have or do because he passed away.

Haven't even visited his grave once since he died.

But these two mementos.

These two mementos that sit on my shelf.

Two personal mementos I have left from him.

Old and dusty dented cards that sit at the top of my shelf right above the place I rest my head at night.

Still trying to heal and deal from the passing of my dad almost 6 years ago.

My own guardian angel now.

Two momentos written just for me.

Specific words in each specific sentence.

Special because nobody else has the exact same two momentos that I do.

Although the sight of them makes my heart drop.

Not in a bad way but a sorrowful one because I know the story behind the two cards.

Cards on my shelf.

Two heavenly looking mementos at the top of my shelf.

Thick material paper yet, see-through at the same time.

These two 7 years old cards that sit at the top of my shelf.

Unconditional attachment to the person who made me these mementos.

The two cards on my shelf, covered in light dust.

A Cycle of Light and Glass, Shannon Kosman, 11

There's a vase on the window sill.

Delicate and clear,

reflecting all the colors of warm light

through textured glass.

It floods the barren room

making the walls

that were once dreary dance,

the ceiling that was once silent sing.

It holds water and pale flowers.

Silently watching them live and die,

their petals withering,

stems becoming flaccid,

the crystal water turning a dirty, soaked, brown.

There's beauty in this death,

as the petals dry, a faded hue remains

The water turns less to dirt

Bleeding into a tincture

of the walls of a childhood bedroom,

an old dog, the hair of an old friend.

But inevitably,

The work of the vase is undone,

Reset when the water is dumped into the sink

and swirls down the drain.

The dried flowers crack

as they land in the trash.

It's refilled with cold water

and holds sharp, new thorns

As opposed to the dull ones of the past.

The light it reflects so beautifully stings.

A sharp flash in an onlooker's eyes.

No one is looking at the daytime dance.

No one can hear the twinkling songs.

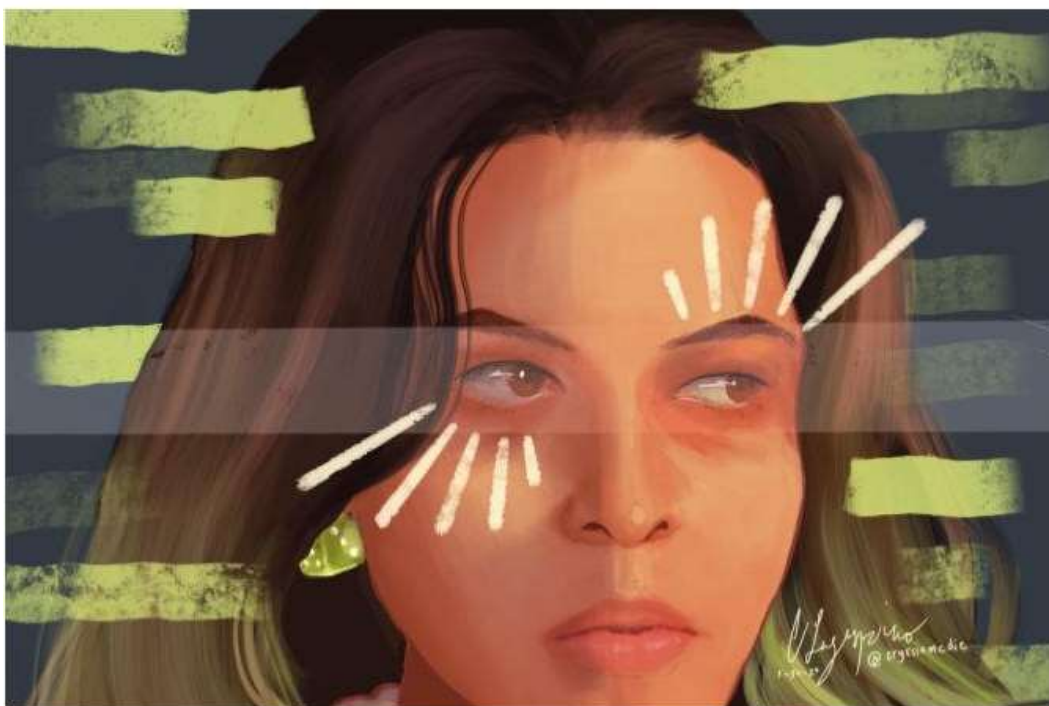
They are shielding their eyes with the back of their hand.

One day the vase will be carelessly handled.

It will tumble to the floor with a crash.

Surprised the fragile vase is so fragile and,

As they clean, they will curse the broken glass.



Sunspot, Crystal Gale Legaspino, 12

Artist Statement: I wanted to portray intensity - intensity in the eyes, coloring, and lighting.

Golden Shovel Poem, Alex Buchko, 12

"Jigsaw falling into place, So there is nothing to explain" Radiohead

Society, the silly thing, is one giant enigmatic jigsaw  
Nearly impossible to dismantle, yet the pieces seemingly always falling  
Apart, never recognizing that it's always been falling into  
Collapse, always descending, but staying in the same place.

"The end is night!" the gray old man said so,  
His finger pointed, "The big man will start it right over there!"  
Blind eyes seeing the jigsaw, but not understanding what it is.  
His wrinkles, the marks of the wise, of value, record nothing.  
The cycles of society, no one can explain to  
Me. Of the indestructibly fragile jigsaw, no one can explain.

Artist Statement: It's a poem where the last word of each line is a word from a line from another artist that I like. This one's from a Radiohead song that has the line, "Jigsaw falling into place, so there is nothing to explain."

When the Moon Goes Down, Shannon Kosman, 11

When the golden sun sets behind the night,  
The creatures held by the moon show their eyes.  
They dance and sing in the soft, pale, moonlight,  
In a mossy space under starry skies.  
They've grass braided hair; tubed flower shoulders.  
Petals draped on skin like frost on dry leaves.  
They sew with vines growing from the boulder,  
Giving each, pairs of pollinated sleeves.  
In nests, they softly sing the birds to sleep.  
They start the fires within fireflies, and  
Place each dewdrop making the willows weep,  
While they also weep at the slipping sand.  
They will start to wail when the moon comes down.  
They will watch the golden sun rise with frowns.

Missed Chances, Shannon Kosman, 11

Everyone is trying to capture every blinding color  
of the sun that paints the clouds.  
Before, the the dark black of night  
can bleed into the pages of the sky.

They're trying to grasp at sand with both hands  
till the fine dust shifts between their fingers  
and leaves cold hard rocks that clunk together.

They're trying to take in the vibrant sight  
of the coral and crimson leaves,  
but too soon the tree branches are bare, the few that remain  
being dead and rattling in the cold winter breeze.

They're trying to study the angelic butterfly in the ruby meadow,  
but the wind has already whisked it  
into the air, to clouds too far away.

They're trying to stay forever under  
the flickering lights of the moonlit sky,  
but every sparkle has already faded into day.

They're trying to hold onto murky water,  
but the dirt has already settled in the bottom of the lake  
like a heavy knot settles in the heart.  
They want to dive deeper but the darkness scares  
those, who aren't so daring, away.

They're trying to catch milky, soft snowflakes  
but too soon they melt in warm hands.  
They want to dance in water droplets  
underneath gilded sunshine,  
but storm clouds have already washed the light away.

A Heavenly Sacrifice, Milana Hopkins, 11

In darkened skies, lay a quiet night;  
Within it twirled the gleaming stars  
Yet there they suffer from faded light,  
A light that we have taken as ours.  
In our anguished sobs we relinquished our wishes  
And in their empathy the stars abided;  
We took their gifts and burned our bridges,  
Leaving the Earth and Heavens divided.  
Now the stars, they twirl wearily;  
Still giving gifts to the undeserving,  
Like on tough winds, an old canary  
Yet we still wait with cruel observing;  
Sadly, sometimes that's just how it goes,  
The kind ones died as the cruel ones rose.

Writer's Block, Jay Thompson, 11

Where is my marble of power?  
The beating sound of mockery  
No matter how far  
How long and where  
My marble cannot enter

The sandy brick wall watches  
Around and around it watches  
The intruder still stands

Constantly being beaten at  
The brick crumbles  
Crumbling  
My marble of power starts to make its way in  
Still around and around it goes

The intruder decays  
Decaying  
My marble makes its way in  
My power transforms into light  
As my brick wall fades

I can hear it  
The power I withhold  
To be able to listen  
To write  
And to understand that  
I am my marble of power

Artist Statement: My poem, "writer's block" was inspired by my writer's block in class. I couldn't think of anything to write about. This process is difficult for most writers and stressful when there's a due date. Luckily I had help and was given the idea to try writing about writer's block. Then I had writer's block about writing about writer's block which was the worst situation I've been in writing. Eventually I did end up figuring it out. I described my "writing talent" as my marble of power and this marble of power contains all of my knowledge and ideas on how to write. The marble of power I mentioned is my mind and sometimes I feel lost and I'm searching for my mind so I can become whole again because without it I'm lost forever. That's how I described writer block from my perspective. This poem is one of my favorites.



I Always Think of You When It Rains, Tailor Fecteau, 10

The day always changes whenever it rains.  
The mood turns sorrowful, morose even. The sky, a dark grey.  
Stripes of lightning, crashes of thunder,  
There's a spiteful vengeance from the clouds.  
Lucky for most they're shielded, they're home.  
Tightly wound up like yarn, balled warm.

A fire blazing bright supplying warmth,  
The roof a drum, struck by an unpredictable rhythm of rain.  
No particular pattern, no set speed. Beats of home.  
A pile of ash sits at the bottom, smoke flurrying grey.  
It's easy to get lost in, head trapped in a cloud.  
A loud crash to bring you back from your mind. Thunder.

It's always thunder.  
Grounding, putting a weight on the flurry of thoughts. Unbeatable warm  
nostalgia, remembering them. Eyes up, observing the clouds,  
laying in the grass, hoping it doesn't rain.  
All those happy times now fireplace smoke. An overcast grey.  
The old forgotten feeling, home.

What even is it? Home?  
A feeling? A place? Is it the memories, overpowering and thunderous?  
A look at the sky, it's still grey.  
It's lost its pearlescent blue, its charming warmth.  
It's so easy, how much you lose when it rains.

The sky nothing but a woolen blanket made of thick clouds.

Once it's over the blanket gets removed, the clouds.  
Becoming ground water, now in a new home.  
For now it continues, it continues to rain.  
It continues to thunder.  
Almost as if it will never stop. Anything but warm,  
Nothing but grey.

Such a color. Grey.  
Mysterious, unknown, unstructured. The color of clouds.  
Expressive, beautiful. Cool but also so very warm.  
You. You are grey. My only true understanding of home.  
More thunder.  
I can't help but think of you when it rains.

Nothing changes, the past is still grey. It's raining.  
The clouds still a show of light and thunder.  
Take me back to the times of warmth, take me home.



Dark Espresso, Crystal Gale Legaspio, 12

Artist Statement: I wanted to express my experience during the start of the pandemic. It was gloomy and foreboding, I was surrounded by a lonely ambience with only art keeping me company.

Tears fell off of her face, streaking her makeup into black rivers that rained off of her chin. She didn't know where she was running, only why she ran. She had known this would happen, deep down in her heart, but she had ignored its warnings.

He was beautiful. Strong, yet compassionate. Kind, yet no pushover. He was successful, and the confidence showed on his handsome face, but he wasn't one to gloat. His smile brightened the sun and his eyes shone with more wonder than all of the stars of the night sky. In a word, he was perfect.

By comparison, she was as mortal as they came. She first saw him as he walked into her family's shop. The air conditioning had been broken for weeks, one of the windows was taped up, and half of the light bulbs were blown out. Yet he came strolling in as easily as an angel treads upon God's clouds.

The door opened and the lights all flashed brightly to highlight every perfect feature he had. She looked up from the counter, sweat dripping off of her face and tossed hair blown in every direction by the small fan pointed towards her. She wore a tank top and jeans that were ripped at the knees and her makeup was a mess, partially due to her sweat, partially due to her mother refusing to show her how. Confusion crossed her face for a split second, wondering how her world could suddenly become so bright, but the confusion fell away as soon as she saw him walking into the shop.

He took a direct route to her, sitting behind the counter on a small stool. His path took him past every item that the small store had to offer, bringing with him cool air, devoid of the agonizing humidity. She was glad for the stool supporting her, for every step that brought him closer to her made her legs weaker and weaker. His full lips moved in front of her, but she couldn't hear anything over the pounding of her heart.

"Uhh...Hello?" Those lips curled into a smile that stopped her heart.

"Oh God, I'm so sorry," she covered her face with her hands, lest he see the flushing of her cheeks.

"Right. Well I was just getting gas across the street and they don't accept credit. I was hoping you had change for a fifty." He held up the bill in question, pinched between his index and middle fingers. The green bill was straight and crisp, without even a single crease. She opened up her register and counted out the money: twenty seven dollars in bills, nine dollars and forty six cents in change. She spread out the series of crumpled ones and fives on the counter, along with the tarnished coins.

After a quick count, he gave a short laugh, as if nothing could drag his day down. "Seems like there isn't enough."

"I'm sorry about that, sir." She bowed her head in shame, suddenly finding the inside of the shop to be too bright. "Maybe you could get something here to fix the balance?"

His eyes twinkled over all of the items in the small store. As his gaze passed the various drinks, junk food, office supplies, and every other item stood straight up, trying to show the perfect picture for his approval. However, his eyes inevitably returned to her.

"Hmm..." He seemed to be deep in thought. "I have a better idea. Why don't we call it even and you let me take you out for a drink?"

"What?" She could barely believe her ears.

"Did I offend you?" The most wonderfully worried expression crossed his face when he heard her tone.

"No, no!" She was quick to shake her head. "It's just...I'm in no state to go out anywhere. Besides, I have to work the store until mother comes back."

Well that's a shame, since I'm just passing through." He flashed her a smile that was too good to resist.

And resist she couldn't. Before he could say another word, she snatched up the crumpled bills and change from the counter and allowed him to grasp her hand and pull her out of the store. When she turned to lock the doors, she saw that all of the merchandise inside were sagging with rejection and the lights were blown out again. However, the fifty dollar bill on the counter was still glowing faintly, as if just being in his possession left a brightness that could not be covered. She smiled, locked the door and took his outstretched hand.

"I know a place nearby," She felt his warmth flowing into her from his hand, and despite the summer heat, the warmth felt invigorating. As she walked, her hair tied itself into a neat bun on the side of her head as if a wind blew it into place. Her tank top and ripped jeans transformed into a colorful summer dress. Her sweat dried instantly and her makeup became as beautiful as if it were done by an artist. They drank and danced the day away, until the sky darkened to shades of orange and pink.

She leaned upon his strong arm, happily watching her world spin, though she didn't know if it was from the alcohol or his charm. She didn't know where he was taking her, she didn't care, as long as she was able to stay in his arm. Eventually she saw a small, black sports car in front of her. It shined with so much promise, despite it being such a dark color. Her heart leapt, four simple words echoed through her head, expressing her desire to leave her old life.

"Well, my dear. I guess this is it." He stole his arm from her grasp. Suddenly her sweat returned to her face. "I have to go now."

She looked back at her store, the lights were off by now, but there was one light shining from her mother's room above the shop. It shined weakly, a lonely candle in the night.

"That's not the life I want." She whispered too softly for even his perfect ears to pick up. Her hair fell out of the attractive bun, blown by a fierce wind in the still air.

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"I have to go now." Were his last words as he got into his car and drove off.

His car left no dust clouds, as if his passing was but a dream. Before she knew it, her beautiful summer dress was merely tattered jeans and a tank top. She took another look at her house and watched it cry candlelight tears into the lonely night. Her own tears couldn't help but follow suit. The water made her makeup streak into black rivers that ran down her cheeks to drip off of her chin. Her legs moved her body away from the lonesome house.

She ran, running passed house after house, running until the Earth began to spin under her feet with the speed of the ages and days and nights blurred past her, aging her with the time. She didn't know where she was running, but when she stopped, she found herself in front of the fountain that marked the center of town.

The fountain was a statue of a man and a woman, reaching longingly for each other. The metal of the statue was ancient and rusted and the water below the tarnished figures was stagnant and murky. She bent over the cloudy water and caught her reflection, a wrinkled hag with shaky limbs, thin white hair, and a face sunken in despair. The hollow eyes that stared back at her from the fountain's dirtied water were familiar to her; they were the eyes of her mother.

A tear sent a ripple through the water, but the tear didn't come out of her. Another ripple opened up the floodgates for a steady stream of liquid, falling from the rusted eyes of the metal female figure. Just then, as her old eyes squinted up at the statue, she realized the two were not longing lovers, but former lovers just torn apart. She felt their sorrow enough to weaken her tired, old legs.

However, as the tears spilled from the statue, the water in the fountain became clear. Within moments, the murky water had been purified by the statue. Her breath caught in her chest at the purification and, before her eyes, the rust began to fall off of the metal's surface. Weathering reversed until the metal was shining brightly, polished as the day it was conceived. She looked back to her reflection and saw a young face staring back at her from the crystal surface. A starry sky framed her face, with her streaked makeup and sweat beads on her forehead. Her ripped jeans hugged her legs tightly and her tank top was crooked, with one of the straps falling off of her shoulder.

She looked between the statue and her reflection and saw the statue's tears were dried and on its metal face was a confident smile. She wiped the sweat and ruined makeup from her face and turned from the fountain, leaving a polished beauty happily waving her rusted counterpart away.

Her legs carried her home, all the way through the doors and up the stairs to the single lit room. As she opened the door to her mother's room, she could see black moths were built up within, fluttering around the room in a vast, dark cloud. Her eyes locked with an older pair, sunken in despair.

"Mom." She approached the old woman, and watched as the woman before her grew younger by the second. A spark of light shone in the old eyes as they sharpened to the clarity of their youth. Two young women, nearly identical in appearance, stared at each other. Without another word, she walked across the room and pushed open the window, watching as the black moths flew out of the room.



Untitled - Pen and Ink Drawing, Yunessa Rodriguez, 11

#### The Wasp in the Bucket, Mark Goodwin, 10

How can one be like a wasp in a bucket?  
What emotions shall they feel  
Knowing that your fate is up to the owner of the pail  
Does one feel sorrow or rage? Do they feel regret?

How about the one holding the wasp in the bucket  
Does the wasp deserve to die? It wasn't its fault.  
Does the beholder of the bucket put itself in the wasps shoes?  
Do they think past the stinger? Do they wonder how the wasp thinks?

One can only thank the wasp  
Not for opening my eyes  
For giving me something to write about.