

# NEW YORK POST

Founded by Alexander Hamilton in 1801

35 CENTS

FINA  
TONIGHT: Cloud  
50s TOMORROW:  
mid 60s. Details:  
Stocks: P. 4  
TV listings: P.



## 'gay cancer' epidemic in U.S.

### Tourists help spread of AIDS

# MAGAZINE 2019-2020:

## Full House

## THE 80s

## MADONNA



WELCOME TO THE WEDDINGS OF  
**MARK & KATHY**

Back to the Future  
PHILIP, ARIEL, TOMMY, KICK, MARK, KATHY, ARIEL, HANIC, MARK, JOHN

Rewind  
FIND YOUR TABLE  
TAKE YOUR SEAT, AND LET'S EAT!



The Palace  
OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER

MARK'S Mannequin  
TOPE! KAYLA, HENRY, KAROL, LUCY, SIMON, PAUL, VERONICA

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF  
MICHAEL, PIERRE, STEVE, GRADY, ANNE, MEL, MORRIS, KRISTINE, ALISON

Thank you all for coming, now let's Party!

A.I.D.S.: WE NEED  
RESEARCH,  
NOT HYSTERIA!



NOW NO ONE IS SAFE FROM

# AIDS

# DOON THE SHELF-IS!

RONAVIRUS PANIC BUYERS RIDICULED AS THEY FIGHT FOR TOILET ROLLS

# The Daily Telegraph

## Life put on hold

Third of population warned to stay clear of social contact from this weekend

Avoid pubs, theatres, large gatherings and work from home if possible



### NYC public schools closed

Preparing for the 'new normal' Parents scramble to find child-care get ready to help their children learn

### Deaths in Italy soar as 16 million put on lockdown



## HARRY STYLES

## FINE LINE LIVES MATTER



To our wonderful readers,

This year's magazine was quite the interesting project. On a base layer, it likely looks like any from years past, but this year it was made possible through many a google meeting and the true dedication of those who put all they could into maintaining contact despite no longer being able to meet in person. To sum it up, this year's magazine was created remotely, and I couldn't be more proud of the results. Thus I must thank our amazing "quarantine team" who made it possible, so a big thanks to my official co-editors: Karina Faille, Chloe Eosso, and Alana Gerald, as well as our art director Billy Worrall. However, I also must also give huge thanks to those, many of whom are new members, who despite not starting out with an official role, stuck it out through these interesting circumstances and made the final project possible. This thanks goes out to Ella Centofanti, Lauren Janson, Emma Kanis, Emma Eitel, Sarah Woodworth, and Nicole Zeveney. I would also like to thank every one of you as well as our advisor, Mr. Waldron, for creating such a fun and inviting working environment. Finally, thank you dear readers as you are our inspiration.

Now a little bit about the magazine. This year being only my second one working on the literary magazine, I know I only have so much to compare it to, but this year's project really does feel special. We chose the theme of the 80s as many elements of the decade seem to be coming back to our culture today. Teenagers especially have begun taking on elements of fashion that our parents likely wore, in addition to an appreciation for the movies and classic TV shows of the time. Our theme made this project especially fun to work on from creating the cover to choosing our two "groovy" borders. Additionally, I am so proud of the works we received this year, from beautiful poems and engaging short stories, to the incredible variety of artworks. I hope you all will enjoy them just as much as I have.

-Greta Guarneri



Dearest readers,

Creating this magazine has been a fun challenge during quarantine. Our very talented and dedicated crew of members has been working diligently to get this magazine ready for publication. A special thanks to our members Ella Centofanti, Emma Eitel, Lauren Janson, Emma Kanis, Sarah Woodworth, and Nicole Zeveney for being at every meeting, contributing, and helping put the magazine together. Also, thank you to Billy Worrall for being the art director of this magazine. Thank you Karina Faille, Greta Guarneri, and Alana Gerald for all their hard work organizing, double checking, and putting the magazine together. Without these people the magazine would not be as incredible as it is. Lastly, a special thank you to Mr. Waldron for dedicating his time to run this club and allowing us to spread our creativity as far as we can reach.

As a three year member of this club I can say that the literary and art work that is submitted is always a pleasure to read and view. All the contributors of this magazine are so talented and I'm so grateful to be one of the people to publish it all. Thank you to all who read this magazine and enjoy as much as we do : )

Chloe Eosso



To whoever is reading this,

Working with the Literary Magazine the last few years has been great. And while the circumstances have been less than ideal this time around, I am insanely proud of everyone who worked to get it done and out there. To anybody who submitted works and to those who helped to make this magazine the best it could be, I want to thank you. I want to personally thank Ella Centofanti, Emma Eitel, Lauren Janson, Emma Kanis, Sarah Woodworth, Nicole Zeveney, Chloe Eosso, Alana Gerald, and Greta Guarneri for making this magazine possible through quarantine.

I also want to thank Mr. Waldron. Four years ago I had him as an English teacher, and he pushed me to become the best person that I could. Over the course of the year, and many hair jokes later, he had continually asked me to join the LitMag, and the rest is history. He has connected me to many wonderful driven people, and led us to create something amazing. He was also there for each of us individually, and has given advice that I will take with me through the rest of my life. So, no matter how much I joke about his nonexistent hair and shining head, I wouldn't be the person I am today without his advice, help, and a lot of pushing for me to try harder.

Being a part of the LitMag has been something to look forward to over these years, and I'll miss it dearly. I also wish the future teams of the Magazine the best of luck, and for all the great memories you could make in four years.

So, to whoever is reading this, thank *you* for taking the time to do so, and supporting us in your own way. It's been a pleasure, Literary Magazine. I know you'll do great things, and I'm proud of who you'll become. Even you, Waldron. Best of Luck. ♡

- Karina Faille



The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of colorful cassette tapes. The tapes are in various colors including teal, purple, pink, orange, and blue, and are arranged in a slightly overlapping, grid-like fashion. Each cassette tape is oriented horizontally and features a white label with the text "Maxell A90" and a small logo. The tapes are set against a dark, almost black background.

Dear Literary Staff Members, JLHS Community, and Readers,

In my 14 years having the privilege to serve as the JLHS Literary Magazine Advisor I have never contributed to the magazine as a writer in any capacity. My philosophy has always been this is a student driven endeavor; as such, my role is to guide these truly wonderful people. The emphasis is on people, as they are much more than students, these young ladies and men are exceptional people. More importantly, it has less to do with their talent or creativity; rather it has a great deal more to do with their character!

Throughout my 18 years as an educator I've had the good fortune to work with young people far brighter and talented than me, but even more importantly, far kinder than I can ever could have imagined. Yes, they have a proclivity for the written and spoken word; coupled with adroit artistic skills the likes of which I can only dream...

Regardless of the myriad of talents this year's exemplary staff embodies, at least to me, their greatest attributes is their empathy, kindness, and genuine love for this club, one another, the Jackson Liberty High School Community, and the world! I write this because the world as we all know has proven challenging for this generation in ways that are unimaginable. Yet, they have demonstrated the grit, perseverance, and generosity of spirit necessary to overcome whatever obstacle they faced to produce the 2019/20 Edition of the JLHS - Roar Literary Magazine.

So do not fret; in spite of all the turmoil and darkness we see in the world on a daily basis we are in good hands nonetheless. The hands of these extraordinary young people who are truly a beacon of light for today, tomorrow, and many years to come.

THANK YOU Staff, I think the world of each and everyone of you! I would be remiss if I didn't give a special thanks to our Co-Editors Greta Guarneri whose infinite talents were the engine that drove this year's magazine and of course Karina Faille whose sense of humor and willingness to embrace the challenge of Co-Editor is evidence of your tremendous potential! In addition, the Executive Team and those who distinguished themselves this year making it clear they will have essential roles in our club throughout the years to come: Billy, Alana, Nicole, Sarah, Chloe, Lauren, Ella, Emma K. and, Emma E. A 1000 apologies if I am guilty of any oversight with respect to recognizing your contributions please know I am fully aware of your efforts!

Mr. Waldron



# CONTRIBUTORS

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Toni Dornhard

Emma Eitel

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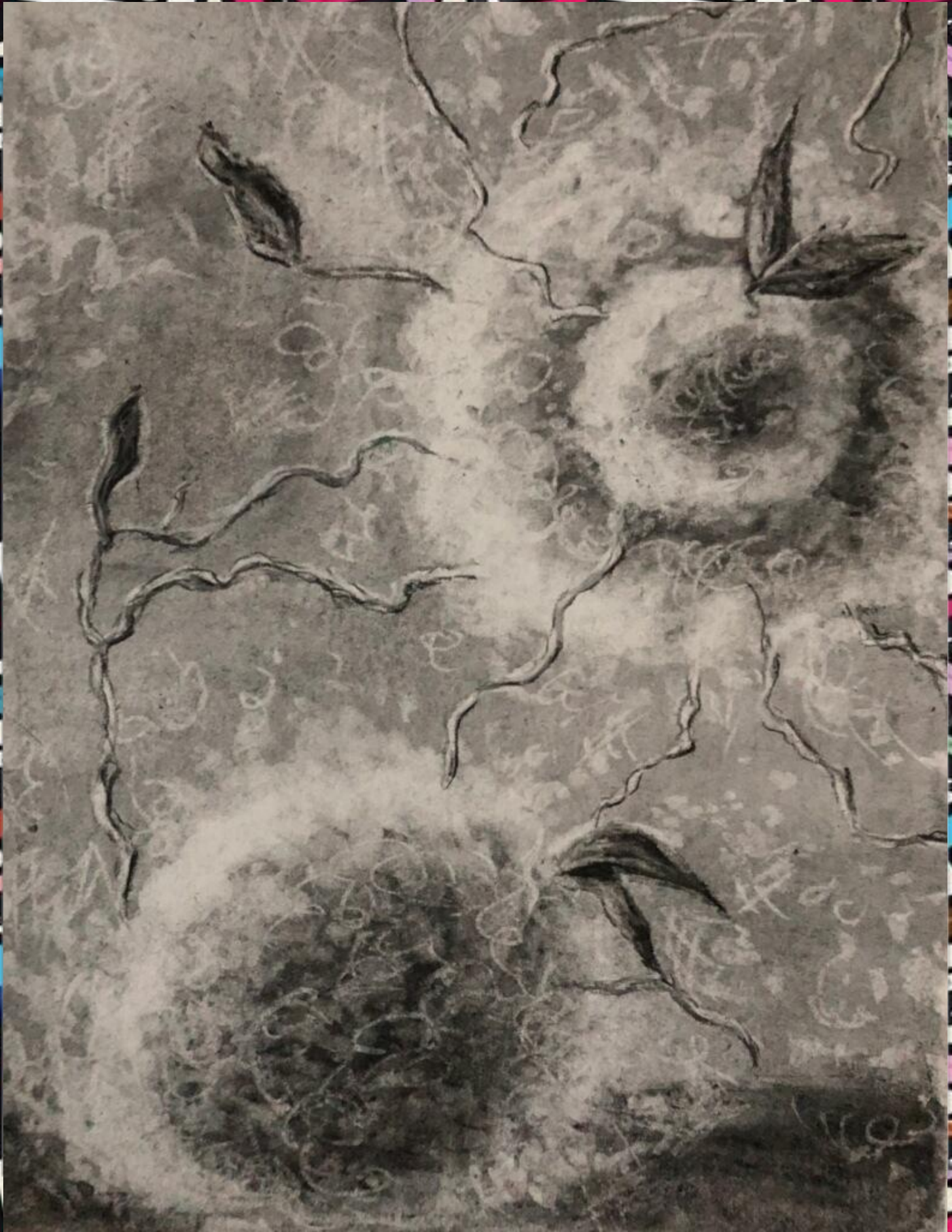
Perhaps the Best One You Had

The Burdens of the Titans



## **THE SUN AND THE MOON**

“Wave your beaming rays of light to me  
And my stars and I will bid a farewell to the eyes  
That look so longing at us,  
To wish for a moment more,  
And we will disappear behind your light,  
Dying for hours before you let us rise again,”  
Said the moon.





## **THE SUN AND THE MOON**

“I love you so very much,” said the moon,  
“which is why I must do this.”

He began to fade away,  
Dying in her bright rays,  
To let her live for this day  
And all of the rest to come.





# THE SUN AND THE MOON

“Why must we never meet?” asked the sun to the moon.

“Because if we do, I don’t think I would ever be able to stay away from you.”

“Why is that a problem?” questioned the sun.

“Because who would rise for the eyes to wake and set for them to close?”

“Because who would send out the stars for eyes to gaze upon and make them dance for the desire of a wish?”

“Because who would cast light over the lives of thousands below and who would cast the dark?”

“Because who would shine the rays to reveal one’s tears and who would cast the shadows to hide them?”

And with the moon’s final words, he bid the sun a farewell and slowly disappeared to allow her to rise once again.

# THE SUN AND THE MOON

The stars danced in the night sky to distract her eyes from the beauty of the moon,  
But not even the twinkling lights could keep her gaze for a moment too soon.

She sat with her hands pressed against the window glass for nights on end,  
Waiting for this life altering change to finally mend.

The news had come as such a shock,  
Now there's nothing to do but wait for the clock.

Time was quickly coming to an end  
As the cells continued to spread and bend.

What else could she do but watch the moon  
That promised her life after the noon.

When the sun arose, there was a boy standing behind the front door,  
Waiting for the girl he knew could want to see more.

But when she left her window and saw the light,  
She crawled under the covers and said goodnight.

The boy went to the girl's room and tore off her sheet  
And told her he had a promise he needed to keep.

The light that had been taken away from her hopeless eyes,  
Would soon return before she dies.

But the sun was not strong enough to destroy the dark,  
So she lay there motionless without a remark.









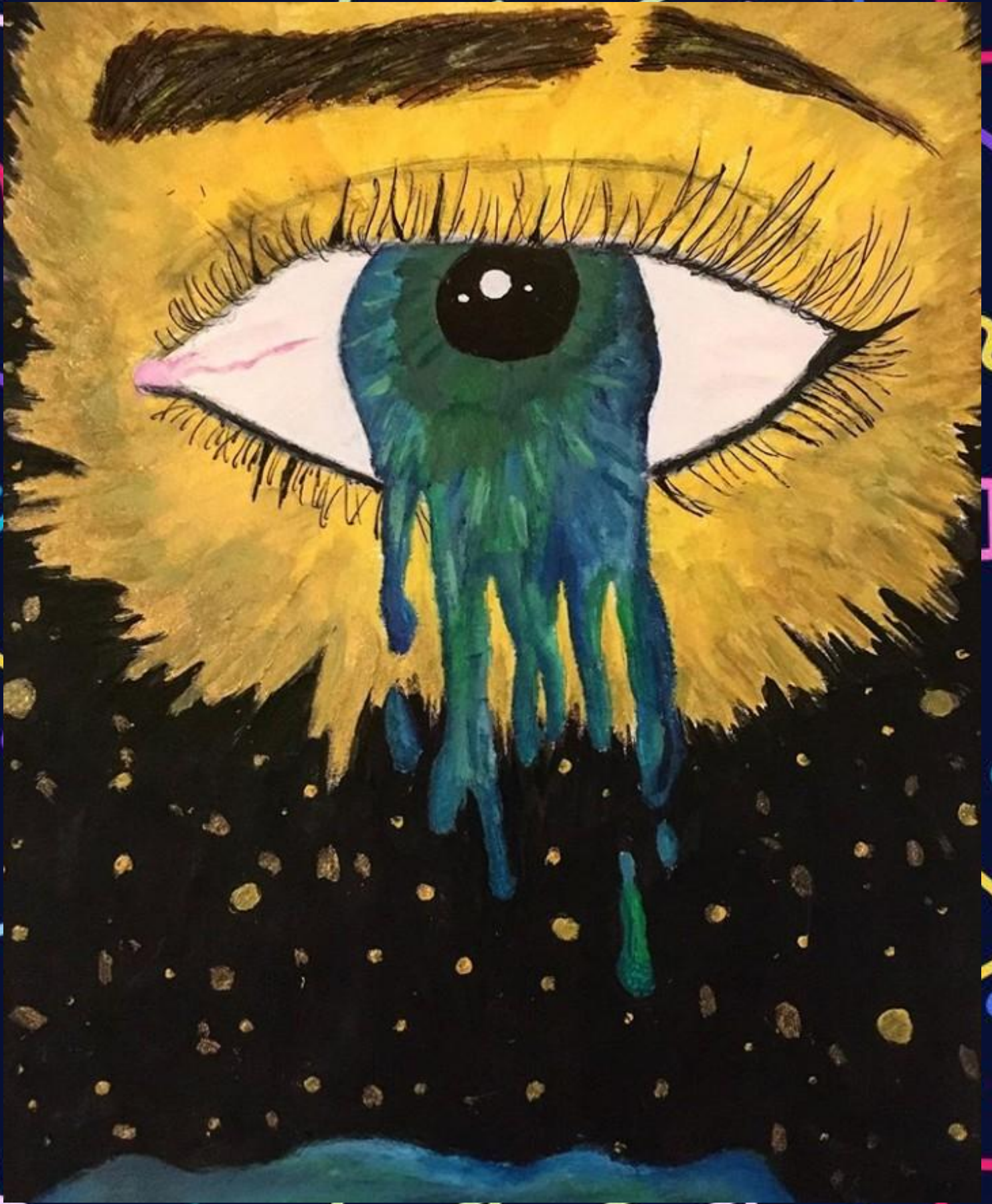
## THE RIVER IN HER EYE

A fast flowing river  
Blocked by a gate,  
Pushed and pulled against  
But never had it break

Not a drop escaped  
Nor would it ever,  
She was too strong  
This wouldn't make it better

The river in her eye  
Would one day win,  
She may not see it now  
But only if she lets her guard down.









## TOO MANY COLORS

He was splattered in paint,  
So many colors  
I just couldn't keep up anymore.  
Everyday something new,

Blue

Red

Yellow

Green

Pink

Orange.

Choose one color and make it ombre  
Because I can't keep wasting paint to color myself like you.









## A BEAUTIFUL DEATH

How can we love something that is dying?

Coated in beauty, thou art more lovely.

As green does fade to red, satisfying,

Yellow, orange too, o twas so comely.

A crisp Fall breeze was all that could be need.

The trees undress show'n all of their bare skin.

Scattered leaves are strewn all 'round, uncaged---freed.

Sun shines down, o glorious days within.

But thy beauty so sweet, takes its last breath,

From here till the morn' when the flowers bloom.

Yet even now, I hear the cries as death

Encloses in. Autumn will be dead soon.

So long have we loved this dying season,

So long has its beauty hid the reason.









# HOUSE OF MIRRORS

Someone anyone please  
Break me out of here  
I'm trapped, lost in a maze  
Nothing but my reflection to guide me

I've been wandering for hours, days  
I don't know which direction to follow anymore  
My only company, my reflection  
Taunting me with every wrong turn I make  
Bumping into the same walls over and over

Light playing tricks on my eyes  
Leading me to believe I've discovered the way out  
Permitting me the freedom to escape  
Only to be fooled once more

Someone anyone please  
Bring a hammer and shatter these reflecting walls  
Shatter this taunting reflection of judgment  
Save me from this maze



# THE GREAT RACE FOR SANITY

My mind is racing  
So many cars driving around the track  
They're all moving so fast

All racing for something different  
Which will prevail  
Which will fail

Will it be the red one running on passion?  
Perhaps the green one fueled on pure ambition?  
Maybe the yellow one powered by doubt?

Only time will tell  
From the sidelines, a waiting game  
Which will outlast the other, on the road to victory



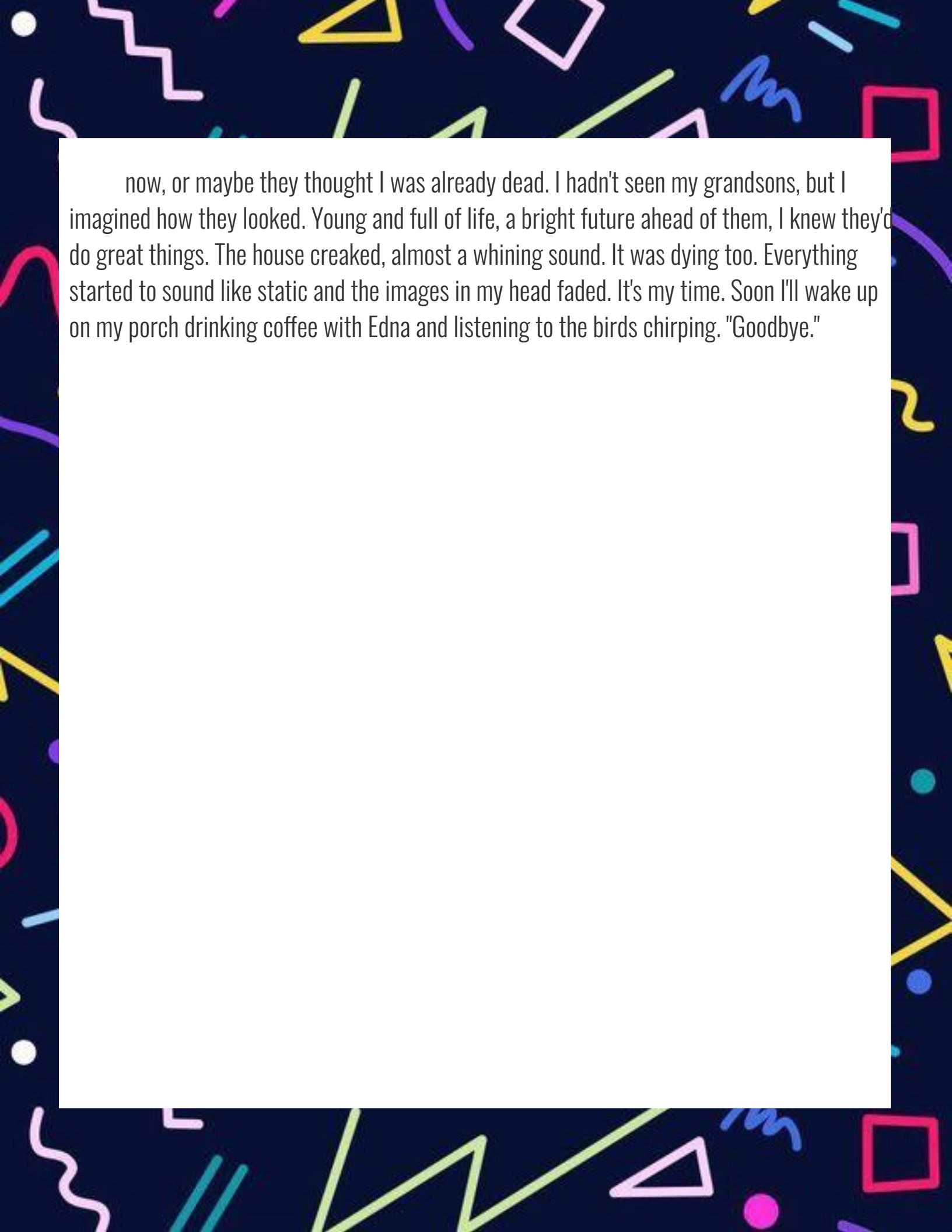
## EMPTY HOUSE

The sound of trains passing by echoed through my home and kept me up all night. The walls shook, making the pictures hanging go crooked. Bright lights would shine into my windows, blinding me if I dared to look their way. One would think I'd go mad living in a house as disastrous as this one, but I find it quite relaxing. The house has its history, a story with no words. Alone and old, am I describing myself or the house? I don't remember. I didn't think there was anything older than me still standing until I met this house. It sits alone on a hill, trains always pass by but never do any stop. No one stops. It doesn't mind though, it has plenty to watch over. So high on the hill, it can see everything below it. We enjoy it, the house and I. We have each other so we never are truly alone.

I wasn't always like this, neither was the house. My wife Edna passed away five years ago. She was 76 and I was 81. She was the light of my life, my purpose for living, the calm after the storm. After she was gone I felt empty. I took down everything in my house that reminded me of her because I couldn't stand the heartache. Soon the house was empty just like me. Everyone in my family was either dead or forgot about me. My sons haven't talked to me since Edna passed away. No one even knows I live here. From the outside, the house looks abandoned. Edna was always in charge of the house. She planted flowers and we even had a vegetable garden. It hasn't been watered since she left. All the plants died with her and now this house is empty inside and out.

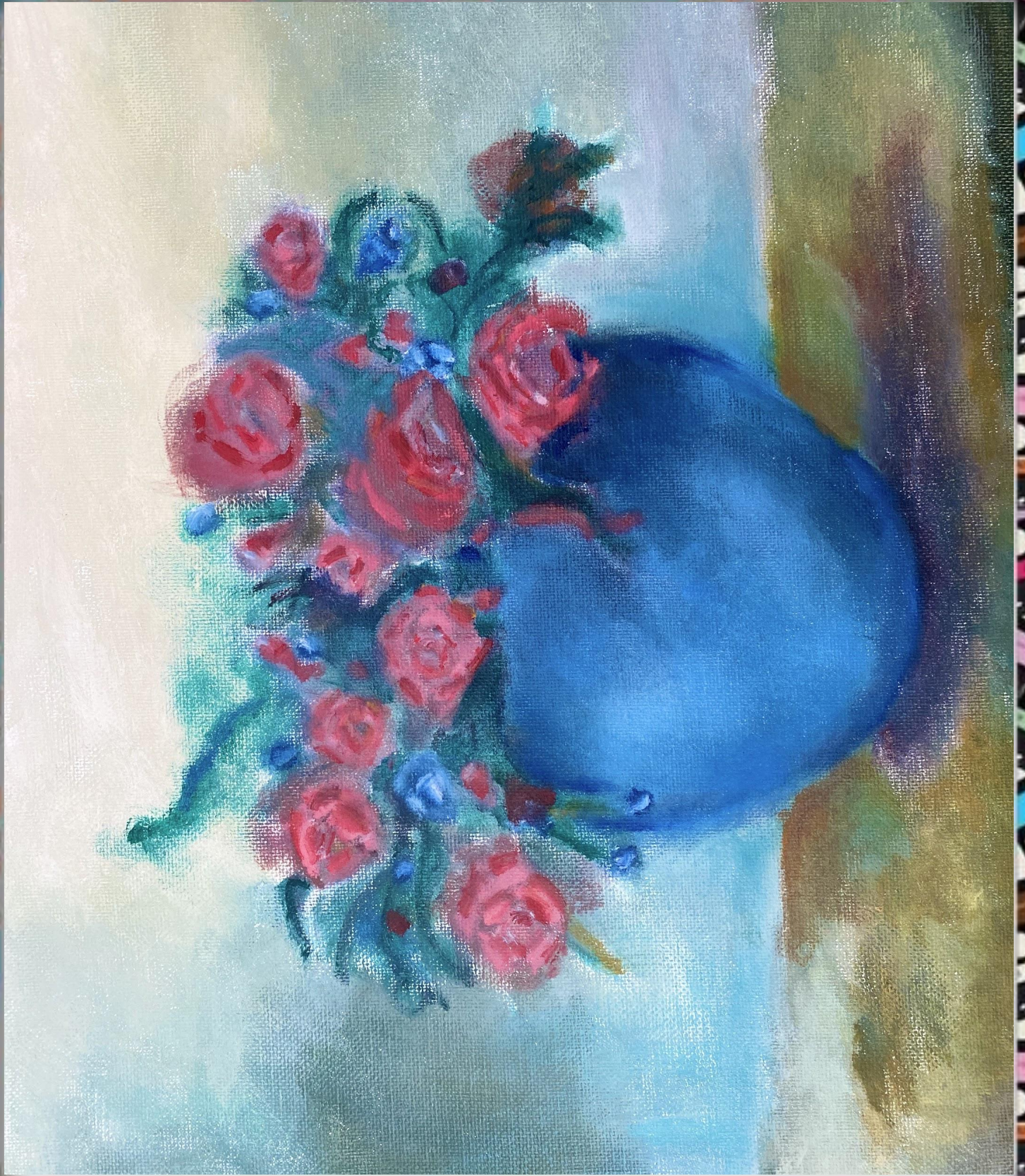
I know my time is coming, I'll be with Edna soon enough. No one will know about me leaving this world. I have notes stored away. For my sons and my grandchildren. I don't know if they will ever see them, but it puts my mind at ease to know that I tried. I took the notes out of the drawer they were stored in and laid in bed, holding them against my chest. I started coughing hard and my vision got hazy. I felt tired, but a type of tiredness I've never felt before. My eyes closed, too sleepy to keep them open. I thought about my sons. I tried reaching out, but they never got back to me. They must have forgotten about me by





now, or maybe they thought I was already dead. I hadn't seen my grandsons, but I imagined how they looked. Young and full of life, a bright future ahead of them, I knew they'd do great things. The house creaked, almost a whining sound. It was dying too. Everything started to sound like static and the images in my head faded. It's my time. Soon I'll wake up on my porch drinking coffee with Edna and listening to the birds chirping. "Goodbye."







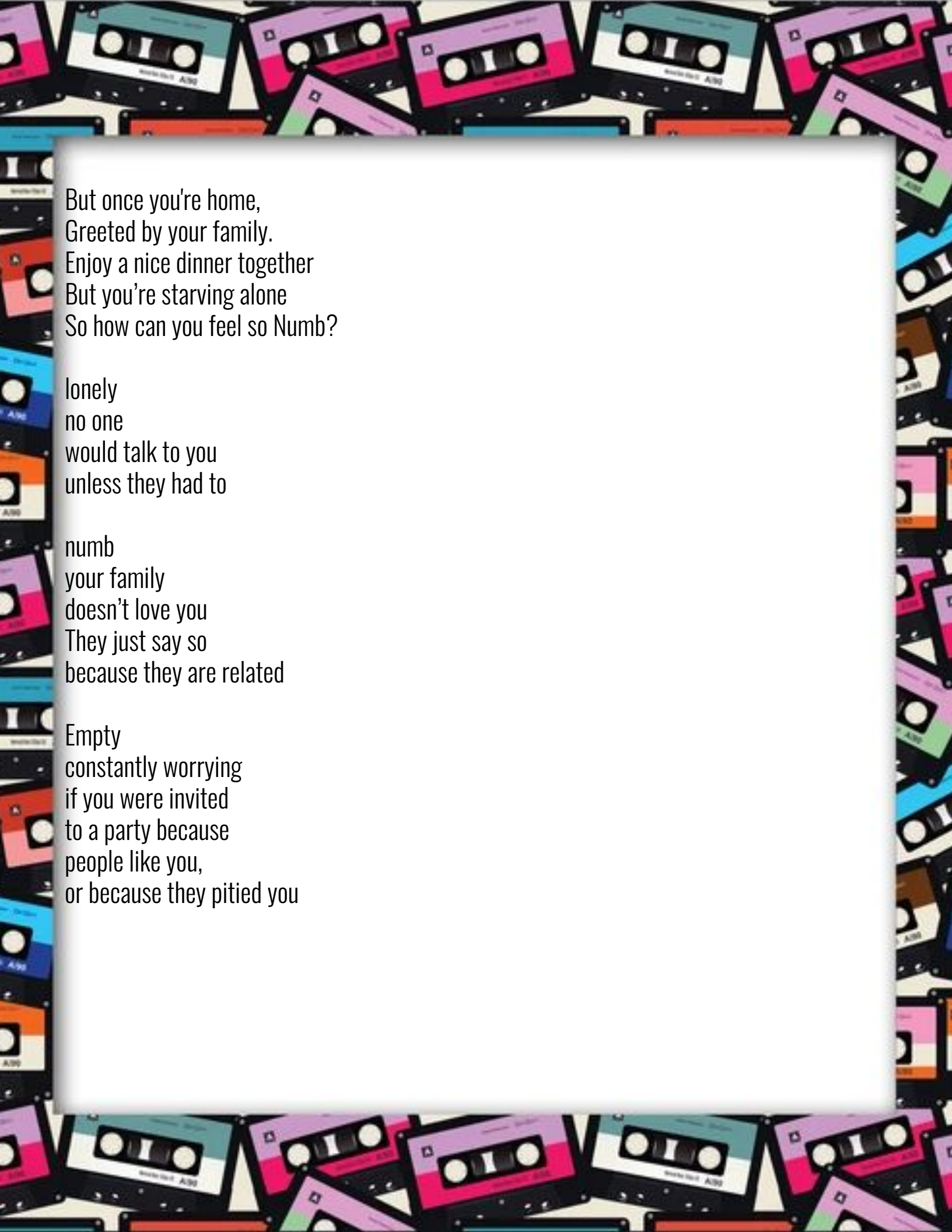
# Loneliness

How can someone feel so lonely  
Around all these people?  
But I'm still the one and only

Go to school.  
Feel like a fool  
Talk to your friends.  
Maybe it's the end  
Your teachers, smiling and encouraging.  
Really challenging and disheartening  
So how can you feel lonely?

Go to work.  
You feel like a jerk  
Talk with workers.  
Just waiting for four o'clock  
Speak to managers.  
Just want my advantages, just want to talk about my damages  
So how can you feel Lonely?

But once you leave  
And walk home alone  
You feel the emptiness within you  
You only hear the wind picking up  
and it speaks to you barely above a whisper  
*"Alone.....Forever"*



But once you're home,  
Greeted by your family.  
Enjoy a nice dinner together  
But you're starving alone  
So how can you feel so Numb?

lonely  
no one  
would talk to you  
unless they had to

numb  
your family  
doesn't love you  
They just say so  
because they are related

Empty  
constantly worrying  
if you were invited  
to a party because  
people like you,  
or because they pitied you



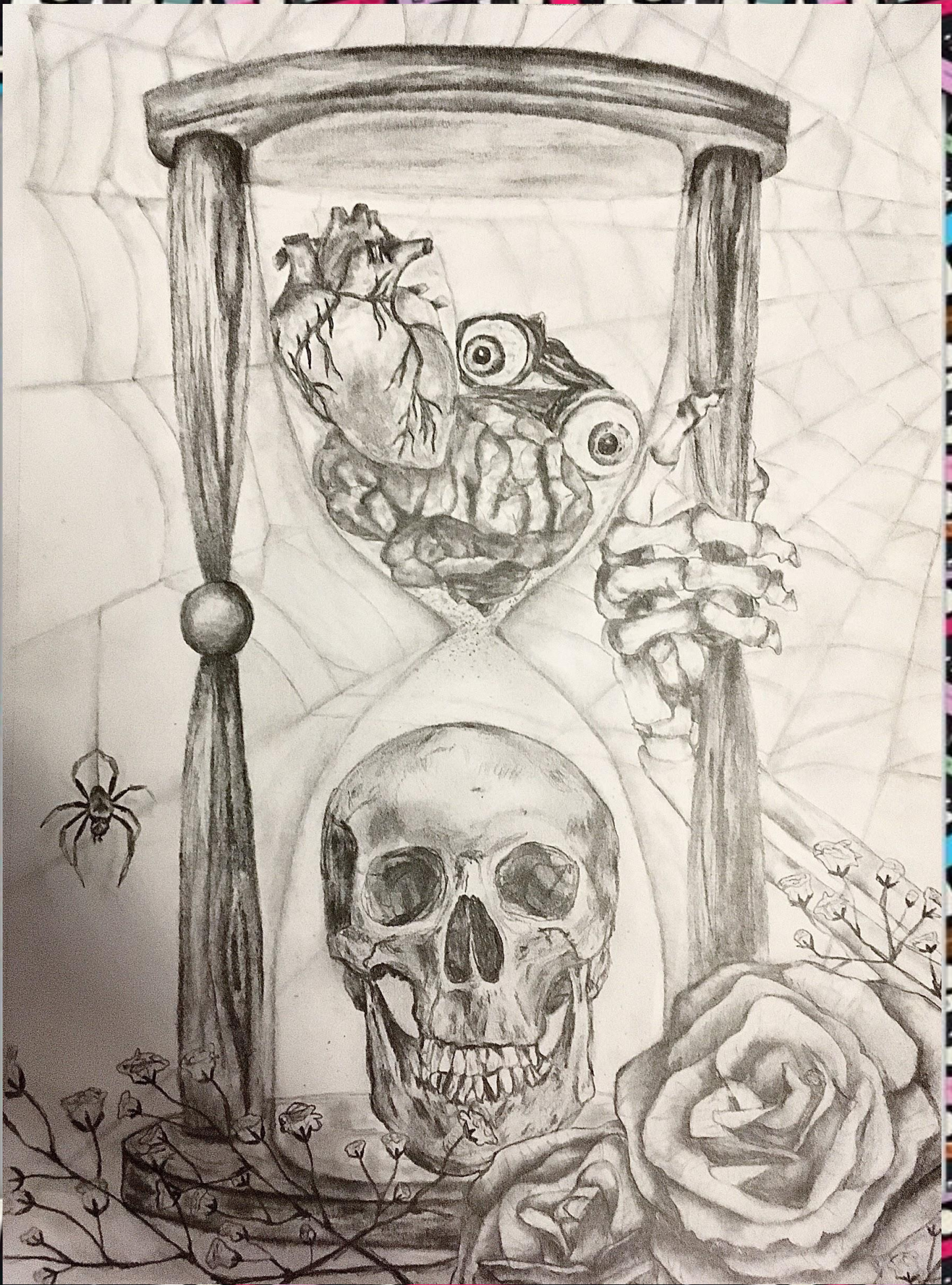
You sit back  
and avoid being a bother,  
which makes you feel even less

So yeah,  
you can be surrounded  
by friends,  
workers,  
family members,  
and still feel as though  
you are by yourself.  
Because you  
convince you that  
you will always be  
*Desperately Alone.*

*No matter how many people are around you,*

*You feel dead*







# ANXIETY

The battles are tough

Neither win or lose

Pulls the heart rough

And never gets loose

The sharp swords clash

As the tears splash

My arms around me fast

As I try not to dash

When I explain my half

My friends make a laugh

Family says it will pass

But the anxiety still lasts

# JOHN DOE

Up and down the halls, Johnny runs. He smiles, excitement bubbling in his stomach. What a fun game his class is playing at recess today. He hears his classmates' gleeful shrieks, and sees them all rush to hide. It seems as though Johnny is it, he is the seeker in this game. He picks up his pace a little, his friends are quick to their hiding places. Some of them are silly though. They decide to run instead of hide. They are the first out of the game, of course. They fall to the ground as Johnny tags them. Finally Johnny finds a group of his friends hiding. One. Two. Three. Then four. All of them out in one go. Johnny found them. Then a funny thing happens. Someone gets their games mixed up, thinking they are playing policeman instead of hide-and-seek or tag. That's no fun, Johnny doesn't like policemen. Slowly, as the confused boy playing policeman points his weapon and yells, Johnny raises his arm and tags himself out of the game.

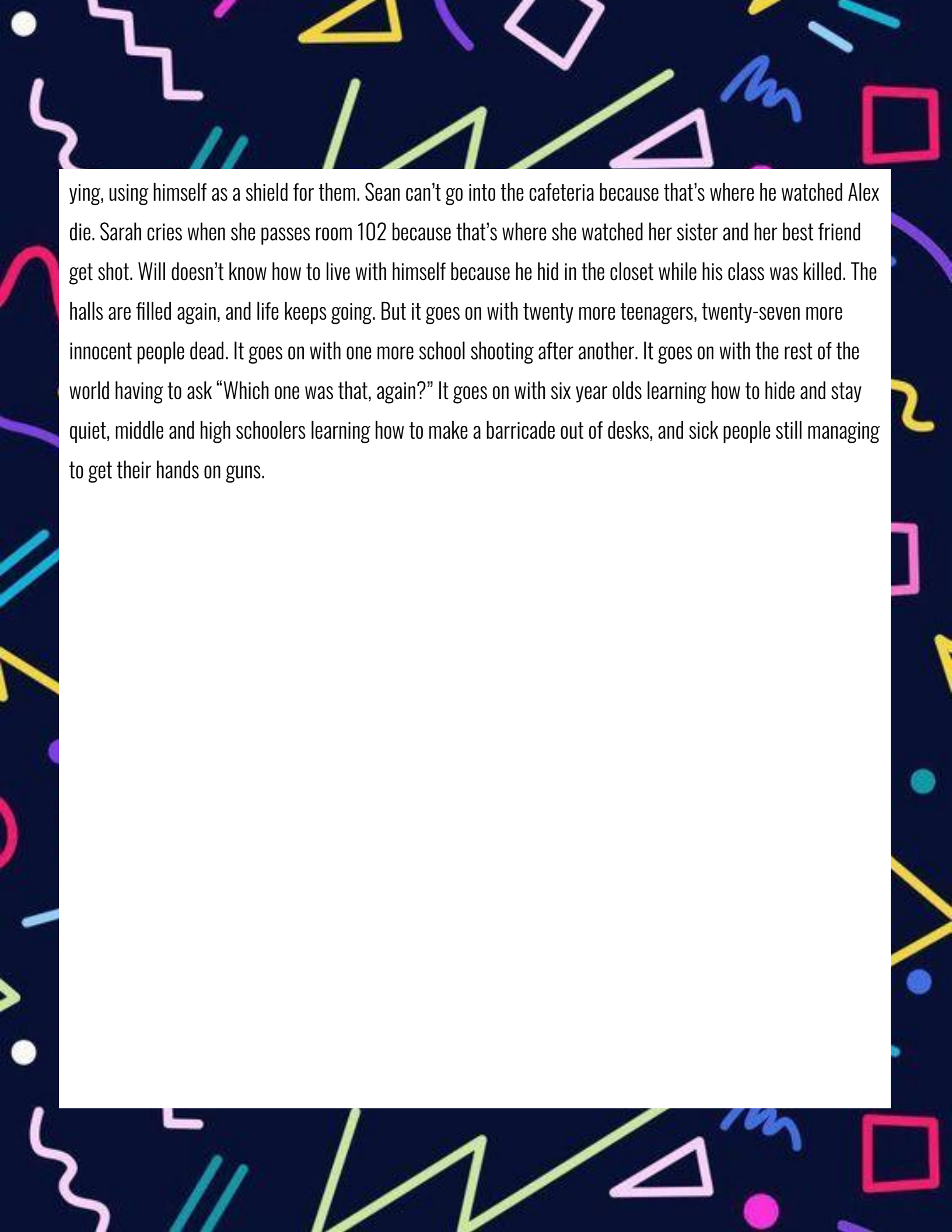
"The suspect is down, I repeat the suspect is down. It is safe for paramedics to enter the building," the policeman says into his radio.

The policeman stands, having confirmed that the boy on the ground has no pulse. He rakes his fingers through his hair and sighs, looking at the blood seeping from the young assailant's head. Students, crying and trembling, begin to emerge from their classrooms, escorted by other officers. Some will have to leave in an ambulance, others in body bags.

"Tragedy struck in Cityville yesterday, when an armed shooter infiltrated Cityville High School. There are twenty students and five faculty members confirmed dead, while fifteen others have been hospitalized. Police have confirmed the shooter to be Johnathan Doe, a junior at the school. Interviews confirm Doe to have been a troubled boy, often acting out of aggression and unable to relate to his peers. He shot himself before an arrest could be made."

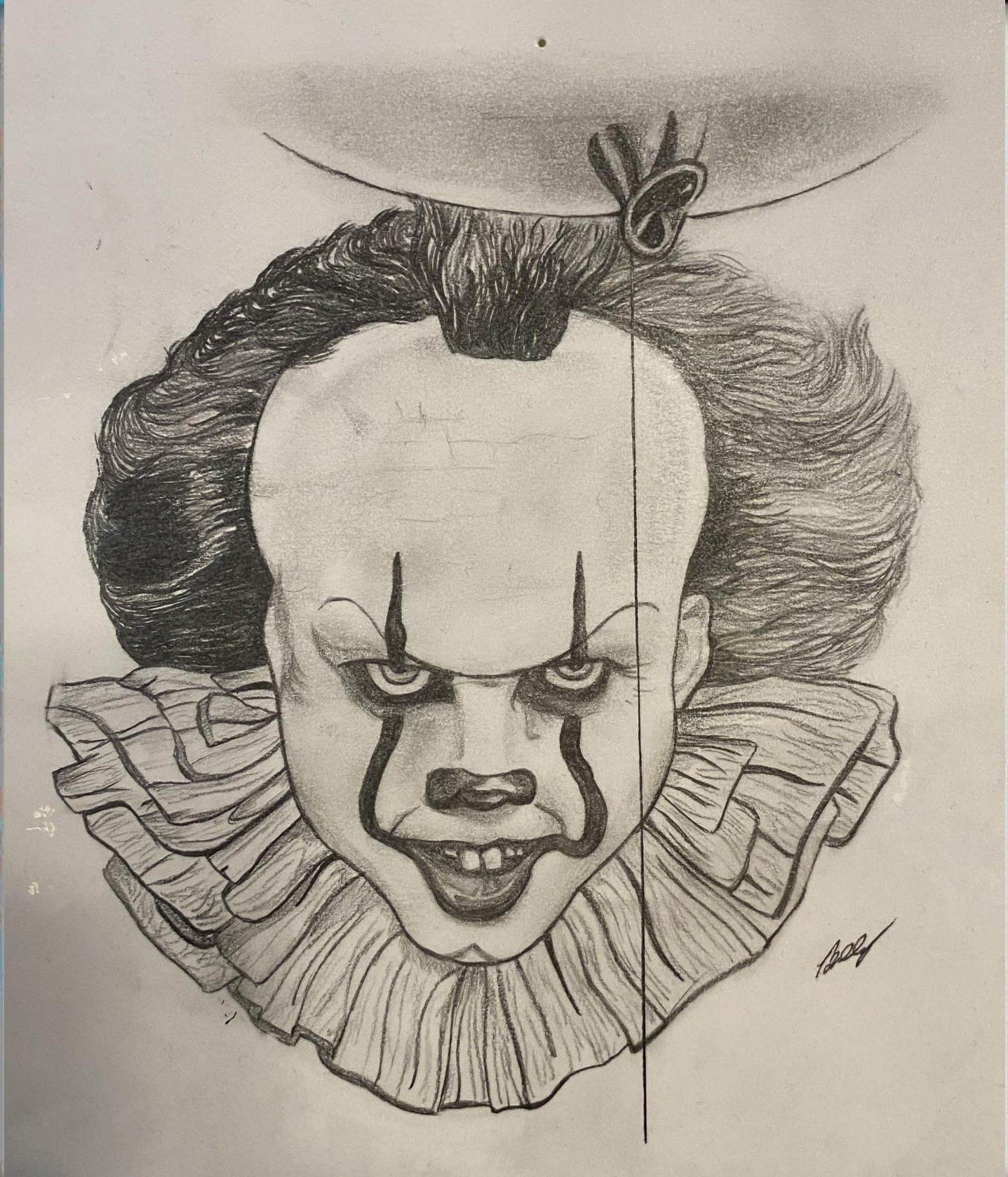
A month later. The halls are filled again. The school brings in therapy dogs. They offer counseling. But Jessica can't stop thinking about that spot in the hall; the spot where they must have just wiped up Johnny's blood. Mr. Smith's classroom isn't used anymore, but his students can't walk by it without remembering him d





ying, using himself as a shield for them. Sean can't go into the cafeteria because that's where he watched Alex die. Sarah cries when she passes room 102 because that's where she watched her sister and her best friend get shot. Will doesn't know how to live with himself because he hid in the closet while his class was killed. The halls are filled again, and life keeps going. But it goes on with twenty more teenagers, twenty-seven more innocent people dead. It goes on with one more school shooting after another. It goes on with the rest of the world having to ask "Which one was that, again?" It goes on with six year olds learning how to hide and stay quiet, middle and high schoolers learning how to make a barricade out of desks, and sick people still managing to get their hands on guns.







# WOULD YOU READ IT?

If there was a book written about your life

Would you read it?

Would you sit down and open the book

Bound in leather

Starting from the day you were born?

Would you laugh when you married your best friend in the second grade?

Under the slide at recess that one day in April

With dandelions you picked under the tree

Refusing to kiss him because "boys are gross"?

Would you cry when you found out your grandpa died?

Unaware of what death is

Sitting on your couch

Your mom sobbing and your dad holding her?

Would you shake your head and smirk when you got your first boyfriend?

That seventh grade relationship

Where you didn't even talk in real life

And the chocolate lasted longer than you guys did?

Would you wipe away tears when you were bullied?

Belittled for how you looked

Laughed at for the scars on your shoulders, legs and biceps

All by the mean, 'popular girls'?

Would you smile when you climbed the mountain?

Feeling larger than the world

The breeze on your shoulders

And for the first time in your life, okay?

Would you allow yourself to relive all the happiness

Sadness

Fear

And joy that comes along with living?



# THE MISSION

The scream sounded far away. Ringing inside my head as if I heard it from inside a cave. Each sound bouncing off the walls and making me feel surrounded and small. I knew the scream wasn't new though. I heard it just an hour prior to me rushing out. Getting into my red Honda Civic and driving off in a hurry. I feel numb and my heart is filled with mixed emotions. Am I Satisfied? Yes. Crazy? Perhaps. Scared? Absolutely. I like to think that the events of tonight were just God's plan or karma sorting things out. But I wonder if this kind of karma is directed towards me instead. I've been a good person, at least that's what I'd like to think. I never failed a class in high school, I never participated in trying drugs and I volunteer at an animal shelter every Saturday. Maddy's Mission is an old rustic ranch house farm with the biggest barn in town to keep abused and abandoned dogs. Maddy's actual mission is to keep as many dogs alive and to find them a welcoming home. How could I be a bad person if I help defenseless animals? I halfheartedly laugh at the question. To be completely honest, just moments ago I did kill an animal. At least in my eyes she was. You're probably wondering what happened. I am still trying to wrap my head around me actually killing someone. Whoops, I guess I kind of ruined the big surprise. Let me explain myself before you get your panties in a twist.

At some point in our lives we come across the question of "Would you marry for love or for wealth?". Most of us would like to believe we would do it for love. But not her. Her name was Amanda Hayes. She has soft cinnamon skin, curly hair in a bob and a pretty face. She's 24 years old and only went to college for a year and a half until she dropped out. But that's because she met her future husband at a fancy restaurant named Hermes Palace. She worked there as a waitress trying to pay off her student loans. But this is where she got everything she wanted. By marrying Daniel Hayes who happens to be the richest man in Woodlands County. I wouldn't be surprised if he was the wealthiest man in the U.S.. Owning the largest ammunition company in the United States, all of his products are crafted and sent to the military. In conclusion, Mr. Hayes makes millions of dollars. By marrying him, she gets a million dollar home, a sapphire Convertible, an outdoor and indoor

pool, and she can have as many pets as she wants. That's how we met in the first place.

If there's one thing we have in common it's for our love for our furry friends. Granted she already had six at the time of our meeting and I like to think it's quite unfair that she needs another one. I remember that day more clearly than I would have liked. She walked into Maddy's Mission wearing tight blue jeans and a beautiful off white blouse. She took each step carefully but with determination.

Enough to knock you over if you didn't get out of her way. Now, I like to play this game with myself to guess if each customer will adopt a dog. If so, which one? I scanned the area to see which dogs were available to her.

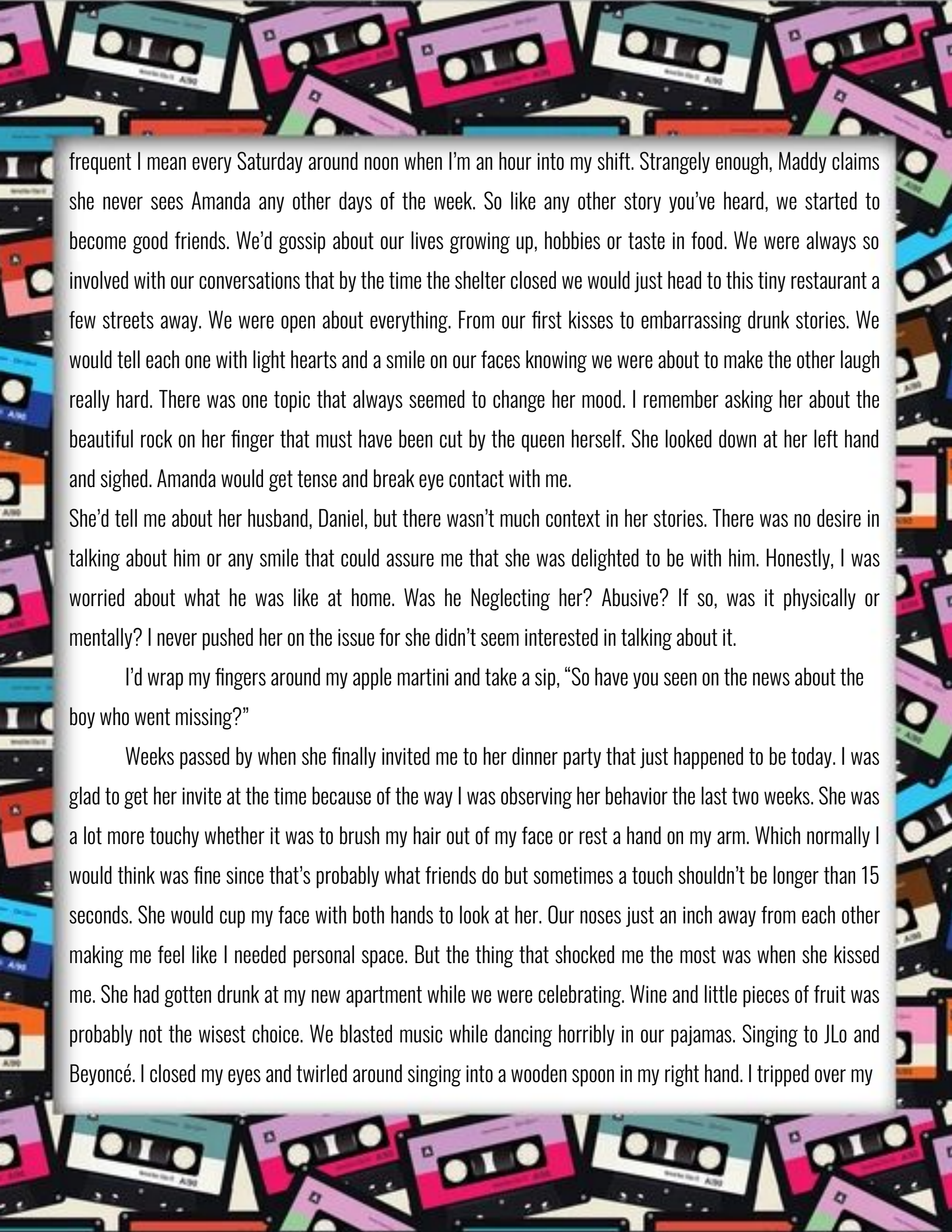
A King Charles Spaniel? Too much grooming. A Golden Retriever? Too Basic. Perhaps she'll go for a Boston Terrier. A small dog with a short coat sounds perfect for a woman like her. She scans the room to see if there is anyone that could help her. She glimpsed at Maddy but before she could make her way over to her, I happened to be seen. She stopped dead in her tracks and floated towards my direction. I stood up from petting Bingo, a cute little fawn pug.

"Good morning! My name is Layla Stone, can I help you with anything?"

She nervously laughed and told me she wanted to take a look at the Doberman we had named Charlie. Her whole demeanor changed from when she first walked in. Her back slouched over and she kept crossing her arms over herself. If she wasn't doing that she was fiddling with her slender fingers. Every word she said had a sense of unsureness and I figured she probably won't be getting a dog today. We chatted about our love for animals and she seemed like a very sweet person. When she discussed with Maddy about possibly adopting Charlie she acted like a completely different person than when she was talking with me. There was sternness in her voice and a sense of control she filled the atmosphere with. Looking back at it now, I probably should have known the kind of person she was. Dobermans are a beautiful breed just like she was but they can also be very dangerous if you anger them or leave them unsatisfied. I just hope Charlie doesn't infuriate the animal when he gets home.

I thought I would never see her again after that day but she started making frequent visits. And by





frequent I mean every Saturday around noon when I'm an hour into my shift. Strangely enough, Maddy claims she never sees Amanda any other days of the week. So like any other story you've heard, we started to become good friends. We'd gossip about our lives growing up, hobbies or taste in food. We were always so involved with our conversations that by the time the shelter closed we would just head to this tiny restaurant a few streets away. We were open about everything. From our first kisses to embarrassing drunk stories. We would tell each one with light hearts and a smile on our faces knowing we were about to make the other laugh really hard. There was one topic that always seemed to change her mood. I remember asking her about the beautiful rock on her finger that must have been cut by the queen herself. She looked down at her left hand and sighed. Amanda would get tense and break eye contact with me.

She'd tell me about her husband, Daniel, but there wasn't much context in her stories. There was no desire in talking about him or any smile that could assure me that she was delighted to be with him. Honestly, I was worried about what he was like at home. Was he Neglecting her? Abusive? If so, was it physically or mentally? I never pushed her on the issue for she didn't seem interested in talking about it.

I'd wrap my fingers around my apple martini and take a sip, "So have you seen on the news about the boy who went missing?"

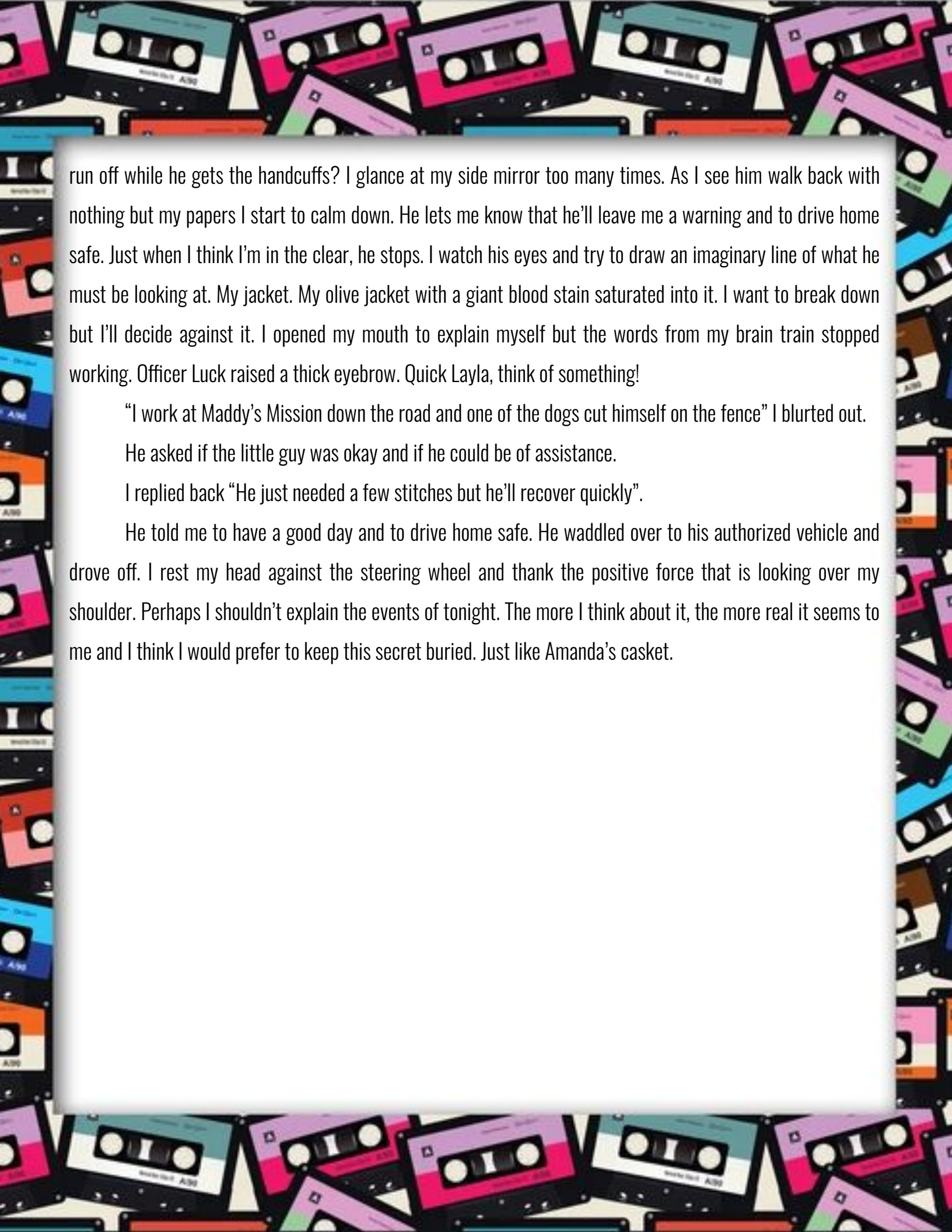
Weeks passed by when she finally invited me to her dinner party that just happened to be today. I was glad to get her invite at the time because of the way I was observing her behavior the last two weeks. She was a lot more touchy whether it was to brush my hair out of my face or rest a hand on my arm. Which normally I would think was fine since that's probably what friends do but sometimes a touch shouldn't be longer than 15 seconds. She would cup my face with both hands to look at her. Our noses just an inch away from each other making me feel like I needed personal space. But the thing that shocked me the most was when she kissed me. She had gotten drunk at my new apartment while we were celebrating. Wine and little pieces of fruit was probably not the wisest choice. We blasted music while dancing horribly in our pajamas. Singing to JLo and Beyoncé. I closed my eyes and twirled around singing into a wooden spoon in my right hand. I tripped over my

own feet and fell on Amanda. I snorted and apologized as I hugged her tight. She froze and for a moment I thought I should just let go and let her be. I loosened my grip and started to pull away but she had a different idea in mind. Her movements were desperate as if she needed this more than anything in her life. Her thumbs rest on the apple of my cheeks and her other fingers into the crook of my neck and behind my ears. She forced my lips against hers. Being sober I would have pulled away and questioned what she was thinking. But being a little tipsy alternated my thoughts and just assumed we both had one too many Chardonnay flavored apples. We had a little sleepover that night on my couch. Oddly though, I didn't remember holding her hand in the middle of the night like I noticed when I woke up 20 minutes before she did. All of these events are just leading up to what happened tonight.

As I tried to recall this evening, I noticed the neon lights of a cop car. My throat feels as if someone has a tight grip on it. Squeezing like the Grim Reaper was trying to take me away for the damage I have done. I can't feel my movements as I gradually pull over on the dirt road. I saw the silhouette of a larger man come up to my side of the car. I stared out my window to see a flashlight attempting to blind me. The man had to have been in his mid 40s. With salt and pepper hair and tiny valleys that fall along the corner of his eyes and forehead. Before I can ask if everything was okay he asked if I was. Am I okay? No, not really. Do I want to crawl into a hole and wait things out? I mean, would that be too much to ask for? "Just a bit tired. I had a long day" I forced a laugh.

I wasn't lying to him. I had a long day and it seems as though it doesn't want to end. He claims that the speed limit is 45 mph. I was going 20. He asks for my license and registrations with a monotone voice. I passed him my papers and looked at his navy uniform. I read off his name tag that had "A. Luck" embroidered into the piece of metal. I don't know if I should laugh or cry about that. I mean what are the chances that luck would pull me over. As he walked back to his car, I let out a breath I didn't know I was even holding in. My palms were layers in a thin sweat that made holding the steering wheel difficult. I love music but hearing the drumming of my heart in my ears is freaking me out. I wonder if he knows? Is he just playing it safe so I don't





run off while he gets the handcuffs? I glance at my side mirror too many times. As I see him walk back with nothing but my papers I start to calm down. He lets me know that he'll leave me a warning and to drive home safe. Just when I think I'm in the clear, he stops. I watch his eyes and try to draw an imaginary line of what he must be looking at. My jacket. My olive jacket with a giant blood stain saturated into it. I want to break down but I'll decide against it. I opened my mouth to explain myself but the words from my brain train stopped working. Officer Luck raised a thick eyebrow. Quick Layla, think of something!

"I work at Maddy's Mission down the road and one of the dogs cut himself on the fence" I blurted out.

He asked if the little guy was okay and if he could be of assistance.

I replied back "He just needed a few stitches but he'll recover quickly".

He told me to have a good day and to drive home safe. He waddled over to his authorized vehicle and drove off. I rest my head against the steering wheel and thank the positive force that is looking over my shoulder. Perhaps I shouldn't explain the events of tonight. The more I think about it, the more real it seems to me and I think I would prefer to keep this secret buried. Just like Amanda's casket.







## DO NOT PULL TIGHTLY ON THIS FRAYING STRING

Do not pull tightly on this fraying string,  
Women are fragile and cannot be tamed.  
Let go, let go before snapping this thing.

A play gives cues for all actors to sing,  
Even when they do not want to be famed.  
Do not pull tightly on this fraying string.

Like prisoners taken down with a swing,  
Only to get back up and be found maimed.  
Let go, let go before snapping this thing.

A pet on leash will try to run and fling  
Themselves away from a control proclaimed.  
Do not pull tightly on this fraying string.

A puppet will dance a beautiful swing  
And feel so out of place, yet so constrained.  
Let go, let go before snapping this thing.

And you, my lover, that acts like a king,  
Don't realize how my heart has been inflamed.  
Do not pull tightly on this fraying string.  
Let go, let go before snapping this thing.

# unrequited

It's been almost seven years since Reina has seen her childhood best friend Casey. They had been best friends since they were five years old, but the "Dynamic Duo" had been separated when Casey's family moved to Chicago when he was thirteen, leaving the pair uncertain if they'd ever see each other again.

Fast forward six years later. Reina has just gone off to college. Reina has always had a passion for art, and her dream was to attend one of the most prestigious art schools in the country. One day, Reina receives an acceptance letter from SAIC, an art school in Chicago. Reina is thrilled for a few reasons. The first being that SAIC has been on her list of art schools since she began applying, and to be accepted is such an honor!

The other reason is that Reina had hoped to travel the country when she went to college. Sure, there's so much to do in the busy city of New York, but Reina was ready for a change. She was ready to finally become the art student she always dreamed of and travel the country like there was no tomorrow.

When Reina arrives in Chicago, she is greeted with the crisp, cool air blowing through her long brown hair.

"I guess it's not called the windy city for nothing," Reina chuckles to herself as she enters a city of new possibilities - maybe more than she knows.

Once Reina is situated in her dorm room, she decides to check out the rest of the campus. The first place she explores is the library. As she is walking between the shelves, running her fingers along the spines of what seems like an infinite amount of novels and biographies, her mind travels, and she doesn't see the person standing in front of the shelf as well, until she collides with them.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry!" Reina stutters, the situation quickly becoming awkward. "Are you alright?" The other person turns around and Reina's mouth drops open. She'd recognize his features from anywhere. She stares into the boy's big brown eyes, the color reminding her of melted chocolate. His hair was always her favorite of his features. It was slightly long for a male but was still soft and fluffy upon appearance alone. They lock eyes, and all the memories come flooding back.

"Casey?" Reina questions, unsure if she is purely dreaming at this point. Casey says nothing. He grabs Reina's wrist, pulling her into a tight hug.

"I've missed you so much, Reina." Casey mumbles into her shoulder. "I thought I'd never see you again." Reina, still in a state of shock, finds it hard to say anything. She reciprocates Casey's warm embrace,





wrapping her arms tightly around him, exhaling as all tension slowly leaves her body.

“Well, this is NOT what I expected to happen at college! And I thought I had everything covered!” She laughs, scratching her head. “I mean, I assume you go to school here too?”

Casey smiles, basking in the feeling of reuniting with his best friend. “Actually yes. I just got here this morning.” Another boy runs up to Casey, assumingly one of his friends, and begins pulling him towards the door.

“Come on, man!” The boy shouts. “You said we were going to check out the animation classrooms! I wanna be the first to use the drawing tablets!” Casey feels obligated to join at this point. He is annoyed that his almost perfect reunion has been interrupted, but then suggests a solution.

“I guess I’m being forced to join them, but I’ll tell you what. How about we meet up later for dinner? I’ll take you to this really good pizza place down the street. You can’t come to Chicago and NOT try the pizza! Trust me you’ll love it. Meet me in the main lobby at six!” Casey yells out, being almost pulled out the door at this point.

“I’ll be there!” Reina shouts back. Casey replies with a thumbs up and proceeds to follow his friends down the hallway. It’s only Reina’s first day in Chicago, and it’s already her favorite.

As 6PM rolls around, Reina is already making her way to the main lobby. She decided to wear one of her more casual outfits. A simple peplum blouse and a pair of jeans should suffice. Plus, they’re just going for pizza. She wouldn’t want to take the risk of staining one of her fancy dresses. Minutes after she arrives, Casey shows up, a clear element of confidence in the way he strides across the room.

Both Casey and Reina were always such confident people, thus strengthening their friendship. Their only difference tonight is their attire. While Reina kept it simple, Casey is wearing a navy blue blazer with rolled sleeves, adding a casual feel, a pair of jeans that he clearly just purchased, and shiny dress shoes.

“What’s up fancy pants?” Reina pokes Casey’s shoulder. “What’s with the blazer?” Casey smiles sheepishly, running a hand through his freshly styled hair.

“I mean, we haven’t seen each other in a while. I figured we would treat this as a special occasion.” Reina takes Casey’s comment lightheartedly, not realizing what he meant.

“Of course today is special! I love that we’re getting the chance to catch up. But it’s not like it’s a date or anything. So come on! I’m starving!” Reina grabs Casey’s arm, ushering him towards the door. His laugh is laced with awkwardness as he follows her out.

“Yeah...I guess so...”

As the night continues, Casey and Reina bond over forgotten childhood memories and the great taste

of Chicago's famous deep dish pizza. Those seven years of lost time seem so far away at this point.

"I can't believe we used to do that when we were younger!" Reina exclaims, her face turning a shade of pink at Casey's anecdote. "If I saw two eight year olds rolling down the street in an old shopping cart, I'd be confused too!" Casey hides his face in his hands to muffle his laughter.

"Man we really were a crazy pair when we were younger," Casey replies, taking a sip of water as his laughing gave him a slight case of hiccups.

"Why do you think people always called us the Dynamic Duo?" Reina reminds him. "Everything we did, we made it spectacular!" She sighs, remembering all the fun and crazy things they used to do as kids.

"Sometimes I wish we could go back to that time," Casey's mind wanders as he remembers their playful and innocent youth together, "I like being older, but I miss when we had no real responsibilities."

Reina chuckles in agreement. "I know right? It was a much better time, I'll tell you that," Reina jokes, pausing to look at her phone. "Oh, wow. It's almost nine! We should probably head back to campus. We have our first classes tomorrow so we should get a good night's sleep."

Casey nods in agreement, placing some money on the table for the bill.

"I can't believe we were there for three hours." Reina says as they're walking back to campus. The air is warm on this particular September evening, setting a comfortable mood for their walk back to their dorms.

"I guess time really does fly when you're having fun," Casey adds, a wide smile on his face as he looks over at Reina. Their eye contact is interrupted briefly as Reina's hand accidentally brushes against Casey's. Casey wants to reach for Reina's hand, but refrains in fear of ruining the mood.

As they approach the dorms, it's time for them to go their separate ways.

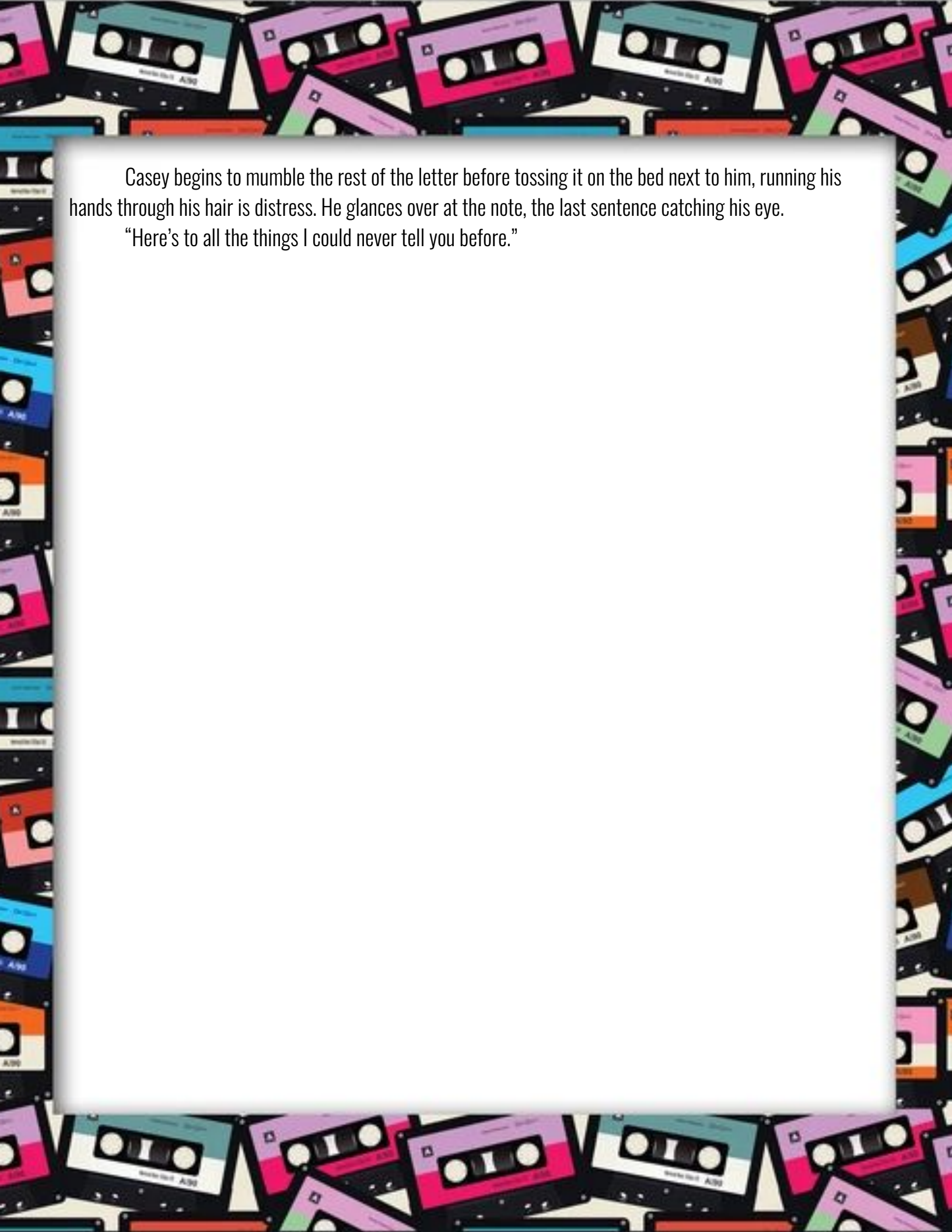
"I had a great time tonight. It was great catching up after so much lost time," Reina says as she locks eyes with Casey once again before embracing him.

"Me too. I definitely want to do this more often," Casey whispers, hugging Reina tightly. As the pair separate for the night, Reina feels great about how everything turned out. She still counts her first day in Chicago as her best one yet. "To my best friend Reina. I've rewritten this letter over and over again for the past three years. I tried so hard to find the right words, but everything just seemed so impersonal. I hoped to give you this letter the next time I saw you. I hope one day I can tell you how I really feel..."

As Casey returns to his dorm room, he shuts the door and slumps down on his bed.

"*Why can't I be more confident in my feelings?*" He whispers to himself. Casey sighs as he pulls a folded piece of paper from the pocket of his blazer. He unfolds it and begins to read aloud, as if he's done it many times before.



A decorative border of colorful cassette tapes surrounds the text. The tapes are in various colors including teal, pink, purple, orange, and blue, and are arranged in a repeating pattern around the central text area.

Casey begins to mumble the rest of the letter before tossing it on the bed next to him, running his hands through his hair in distress. He glances over at the note, the last sentence catching his eye.  
“Here’s to all the things I could never tell you before.”









## PERHAPS THE BEST ONE YOU HAD

I wish I told you the way I felt before it was too late  
Of course, just friends and now no longer for forever.  
Never will I forget the memories we share  
Walking through empty midnight cities  
And empty daytime forests.  
Corn fields we ran through, getting lost  
And cuts all over our bare feet.  
Sunsets over the stadium where I had watched you play before  
Cheering you on even though I hated the sport.  
The river we walked to at night where I stood  
Waiting for you to have your first kiss.  
Sitting on the rocks, watching cars ride past  
Living in a moment I thought I'd have again.  
You always said I was an amazing friend.  
Perhaps the best one you had.  
If that's so true then why did you leave right when I needed you?





# THE BURDENS OF TITANS

My child,  
Do you still look up to the stars  
And wonder of worlds beyond our  
Own and feel astonished?

I still feel astonished.

My child,  
Do you still play with toys that  
Power the machinations of  
Your mind and your imagination?

I still play with toys.

My Child,  
Do you still pull your wagon  
With items filled up to its brim  
Everywhere we go?

I still pull my wagon.

My Child,  
Do you believe that even  
In the darkest of abysses and  
The densest of forests we'll see the sun rise?

I believe the sun will rise.

My Child,  
Do you believe that after we  
Climb the highest of mountains and  
their immeasurable peaks we'll see the sun set?

I believe the sun will set.

My Child,  
Do you have impulses,  
Ones where you want to dance in God's tears  
And ones where you want to feel nature's breath?

I have impulses.

My Child,  
Will feelings of love,  
Those that are towards me,  
And will the ones that we have lost disappear?

I believe I will forever love.

My Child,  
Do you still contain fears  
Of the black of night  
And of the titans of destruction?

I am fearful.

My Child,  
Do you still feel hunger,  
Hunger that gnaws at your stomach.  
Starvation that makes you toss and turn?

I am hungry.

My Child,  
Do you still feel thirsty,  
An unquenchable dryness in you,  
A dryness that won't go away?

I am thirsty.





My Child,  
Do you feel cold,  
Coldness that never dissipates,  
Jack Frost's fingers that never let you go.  
I feel cold.

My Child,  
Do you feel warmth,  
Both the blazes of the sun,  
And the warmth that emits?

I feel warm.

My Child,  
Do you harbor pains,  
Pain from the giants  
And pangs from the harsh reality of life?

I feel pain.

My Child,  
Do you still bleed,  
Bleed from the destruction of life,  
From the cruelty of man and nature?

I bleed.

My Child,  
Do you ever wonder,  
Why we do feel these things,  
Harbor these emotions and memories?

Why do we?

My Child,  
It means we are alive,  
We still roam the Earth as titans,  
And we keep the ones that die from slipping away.

What are titans?

My Child,  
Titans walk the Earth,  
Some cast their shadows upon others,  
Some lift others up as their support?

Are you a titan?

My Child,  
You are the globe,  
And I am but Atlas,  
And I will bear the burdens.

Why must you bear burdens?

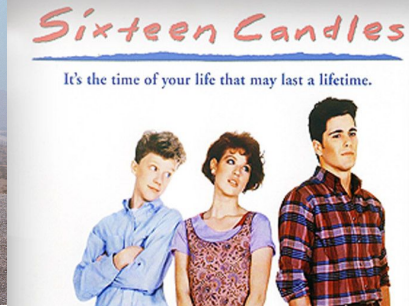
My Child, I bear burdens so you never fall.











# THE 80S

