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**SPECIAL EDITION:**  
Slam Free and Fly Poetry at Exeter High School

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# Slam Free and Fly

Hello, Readers!

Creative Guts was honored to be invited to emcee the annual Slam Free and Fly poetry event at Exeter High School on February 17, 2023. The evening was rich with original poetry from freshmen students participating in the Arts in Action project, a school to community partnership supported and funded by the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the Racial Unity Team.

This zine contains original poetry from 20 young gutsy people. These recitations represent some classroom favorites, as well as some reciters who returned to the stage from Slam Free or Fly in years past. Throughout this project, students are challenged to consider what change they want to see in the world and how they can affect that change.

Creative Guts is endlessly impressed by young creatives, like those featured in this zine who bravely took the Exeter High School stage and shared their thoughts on love, life, death, and more. What better way to continue to celebrate their work than with a zine! It's rarely easy to bare your soul under a spotlight, but these students (many of whom recited their poems from memory) showed everyone their creative guts.

Listen to a podcast recording of the event, and learn more about Creative Guts, at [www.CreativeGutsPodcast.com](http://www.CreativeGutsPodcast.com).

So with that, show us your creative guts!



Laura Harper Lake  
Co-Founder + Co-Host



EXETER HIGH SCHOOL



# LILAH SMALLEY

## *Calm Of The Storm, Poetry*

### Music

It surrounds us, been there since day one  
It makes the world a bit more calm in all the rustling of the city to the plows in the fields  
Music is calm, refreshing  
Music understands

### Lyrics

They shape the song  
Tell the story  
Shape the beat  
They drag you in and hear you, help you  
They scream out what you can't explain, they know what your feeling, they don't judge  
Lyrics relate

### Melody

It's the song that gets stuck in your head without warning  
The song from your childhood your parents always played that you instantly remember  
The perfect mix of notes that hit your ear and are too beautiful for words  
Melody speaks

Music is the life that you wish you had  
It perfects life and the way we wish it was  
Makes life ok  
Makes life a little less gloomy  
It calms me down when I'm in a mood  
It brings me back when I'm torn up  
It picks me up, never gives up, fixes what it didn't break  
Music saves

When I was a little girl I taught myself to play Yankee Doodle on the piano  
I was so proud that I had done it by myself  
I showed everyone  
That feeling of achievement  
That's music  
When you get lost in the song because the song finally found you  
It makes life a little more bearable

Without music life would be quiet, lonely  
Without music there would be no birds to sing when you wake up in the morning  
No summer days when the breeze runs through the trees  
Music is there when nobody cares  
There to fill the air  
There to take you home when you're sitting on the porch trying to hold it in but it's ok  
Music doesn't care, it's always gonna be  
There

Everyone has a song, weather they realize it or not  
The song that makes life look good  
Writes the dream  
It brings you to this moment that you never wanna give up and you would give anything to experience  
It romanticises life  
Makes you jealous  
Music writes the future you wish you had, now you just have to get there.

# LILLIANNA BORGES

## *Love, Poetry*

If I am going, to be honest,  
I don't know much about Love  
I may say I do  
but I don't  
I've said I've been in love and I would explain how my heart would beat out of my chest  
And how I wanted to be around you every second of every day  
I want to know about your family and what you love and hate  
What's your favorite color, when is your birthday  
But I don't even know your last name.

I've never been in love  
But I know I felt something for you  
Something so indescribably wonderful that I can't explain  
So I may not know what love is or is supposed to feel like but I do know how I felt about you.

We see love all around us  
My cousin and her boyfriend are what I think love should look like  
He picks her up and swings her around  
Both of them laughing with each other  
like no one else was in the world around them.

I overhear him talking to my uncle about how he could maybe be a safer driver  
As soon as our uncle says Not with my niece in the car right?  
The tone of his voice completely changed and he says  
No of course not, never with her in the car  
I have never heard such a loving protective tone  
I couldn't help but smile.

I knew she was lucky  
but will I ever get what she has  
Will I ever get there  
Or will I end up in a toxic relationship  
That will leave me in tears heartbroken and in pain  
Oh I hope not  
I wish I hung onto you  
Because with you I honestly understood  
Love

# MIRRANDA SESSLER

*Saying What I Wish I didn't Have to, Poetry*

The date is July 5th 2021

I wake up in a rush

“Nash isn't doing well, we have to go home. Right now.”

We're at their house

We have been for hours

He can't talk anymore

He doesn't move either

The hospice nurse has arrived

His breathing slows

I knew this moment was coming

For months I had been preparing

Taking advantage of the time we had left

But it's only now starting to feel real

Now that I am saying what I wish I didn't have to

How do you say goodbye to someone who you have known since you were 4?

How do you say goodbye to someone who would always play family with you even though you were already related?

How do you say goodbye to someone who was technically your cousin but was really your little brother at heart?

How do you say goodbye to someone who chose you to build legos sets with over the four other kids, every single time?

How do you say goodbye to the daring little boy who would slide down the stairs in a pillowcase?

How do you say goodbye to the silly little boy who always stole your third piece of garlic bread at family dinners?

How do you say goodbye to the happy little boy who would belly laugh at your silly inside joke?

How do you say goodbye to your bike riding buddy?

How do you say goodbye to someone you aren't ready to lose?

I started with 'I love you.'

# MORGAN ROSSET

## *Body Worlds, Poetry*

My skin falls on me like a rug  
Smothers my body and leaves everything up to the imagination

I have a line of four freckles on my left arm below the scars  
I asked my mom in a panic how I would know if these dark-colored dots could kill  
me  
She was too busy marveling at how they were in a perfect line  
Sometimes I still wonder if they could kill me

My small ears crave music my parents call horrible  
Except Hamilton  
My mother likes Hamilton  
But she does not like Bikini Kill

My soft jawline is a byproduct of being born a female  
Or not using contour

The tendons in my fingers are too short  
My scarred hands keep me from asking for three things at a time  
As I stare at my hands to type this I worry that my tendons aren't the only things  
that are too short  
So I slap fake nails on my fingers to make them look long, beautiful,  
deadly

I've decided after I'm done ripping your perfect heart out I'll crush it with the black  
boots I'm addicted to  
Because my canine teeth are not sharp enough to tear it apart  
but I promise I will try my best

As I'm stomping  
We make eye contact  
You are drawn to my left eye which droops lower compared to my right eye  
Between you and me?  
I can't really see out of either

You decide you will reserve talking about my lopsidedness for your friends  
This is a smart choice because I only seem to be able to take criticism through a  
computer

I can guarantee you I will cry over this  
I cry over everything  
I cried over a science test two days ago

But I can predict where the tears will fall on my constantly flushed face every time

I can predict where my eyes will crinkle and give me premature crows feet  
Where the lines next to my mouth will show all of the times I've smiled and meant  
it  
Where everything I've done leaves scars and lines and heartache

My wonky eyes can barely learn how to wink but I will practice in the mirror while  
I try not to pick out everything about me I have told you

# KALEY CAHILL

## *Growing Up, Poetry*

When I was in third grade,  
I punched a guy for making fun of my friend.  
He deserved it,  
But I was the one who got in trouble.  
I hate boys.  
This is growing up.

When I was in fourth grade,  
I got a boyfriend.  
It didn't last very long.  
It didn't mean very much to me back then.  
This is growing up.

When I was in fifth grade,  
Things changed.  
I have more than one teacher now.  
I can get used to this...

Things are changing again.  
We are going to the bigger school.  
No more recess.  
No more... same few kids  
I've known all my life.  
And this time,  
"Elementary" is not in front of the  
word "School"  
This is growing up.

When I was in sixth grade,  
I moved.  
A new State.  
A new house.  
A new life.  
I left all my friends behind.  
This is growing up.

When I was in seventh grade,  
I made new friends.  
I talked to them through a screen.  
And this time,  
"Online" is in front of the  
word "School".

When I was in eighth grade,  
I lost all my friends.  
Again.  
It hurts more than the last time.  
I hate girls.  
This is growing up.

I am in ninth grade.  
I'm not even sure I know  
What growing up means anymore  
All my life  
I have been told,

"Oh, look how tall you are"  
"Look... how you've grown"  
But have I grown?  
Do I even know what that means?

When I was in fifth grade,  
Growing up was going to the big school.  
When I was in eighth grade,  
Growing up was learning what it felt like  
To lose something you cared about.

But maybe growing up is just to learn,  
That you will never stop growing up.  
To know,  
That even when you're grown up,  
You're growing.  
You're learning.  
You're changing.

Maybe if I ever stop growing up,  
It will all make sense.  
Everything will be so incredibly clear.  
Until then,  
I will grow.



# ALP MATOGLU

## *My Twisted Casino, Poetry*

Table 46

Sleep is a time of comfort  
Sleep, a time of rest

During their sleep  
Thousands of people fell  
Their floors like cards  
The earth a magician  
Two big rocks touching each other  
Led to a trick greater than any  
A flush a shuffle some underhand dealing  
All cards,down on the table  
Three thousand people gone  
Countless more beneath the rubble  
Legs beneath rocks  
Arms under stores of cards  
Mouths without food  
Ears without sound  
Eyes without hope  
Hearts without beats  
Sometimes sleep is a time of uncertainty  
A time of fear, a time of calamity

Day is a time of work  
Day, a time to enjoy

During the day millions more affected  
Thousands more gone  
Thousands more hurt  
The weather a knife  
The snow little bullets  
Matoglu  
The land is a battlefield  
The sky has no mercy for the earth  
The earth none for the people  
Planes dodge the flying weaponry  
Bringing players to and fro the table  
The sky isn't all  
Still people underground, still in need of help  
Cards cover everything  
The table now riddled with bullets  
Turns from green to red to pink  
Back to red  
Children not old enough to gamble a cent  
Live in a world where everyday they gamble a life

# CAROLINE POWLEY

## *A Love like my Own, Poetry*

I have a hard time believing love exists  
Maybe because It was glamourized and maybe I was polarized  
By the idea of being prioritized  
But There is something so real about the way I love you  
It actualized the idea of love  
It made real that I deserve a love like my own  
That heats up every room  
That paints the sun  
That makes eyes sparkle and smiles widen  
That makes up my absence by drowning in your presence  
And I will hold onto this love like full grocery bags  
Fighting not to pierce the thin layer making me admit it  
Maybe one day  
maybe through my lucid eyes  
You will understand that  
    I tried to stop  
    Believe me  
    I really tried  
    I have now for years

Because sometimes I wish I never met you  
I wish I never met you so I wouldn't hurt whenever you weren't around and  
I wish I never met you so I would never know the pain of you not wanting me  
but I do enjoy the pain of restless nights and  
the girly sense of dangling legs  
that comes with liking someone you know will never like you back  
and in the hallways  
I hope the extra coat of makeup or the new shirt  
will catch your attention and yet it never does  
So I guess it's like Shakespeare said "To thine ownself be true."  
And I guess that means always loving you.

# CHARLES MORRIS AND COLE LABORE

## *A Haircut, Poetry*

It's been seven months  
Since the sides of my head have seen  
the sun  
My vision impeded by my luscious locks  
I look nuts  
I reckon it's time  
I meet my maker  
I venture off, to Super Cuts

The holiday-themed electric chime  
Alerts me to my senses  
I have one job,  
Like a machine needing repair  
My movements dilapidated but familiar  
Will the final product be fruitful?  
Or will he leave in certain despair?

As I await, the augmentation of my hair  
I begin to ponder whilst in my chair  
Am I a dunce?  
For a dunce is easily swayed  
As the grass is by the wind  
Expectations of others dictate  
My voice alone, hiding within

Does a god forgive those who sin?  
When he who has given his creations  
The freedom as a bird has  
Should not the blame be upon him?

My mood is damped as is my mane  
The scissors cut and slice  
Parts of me fall to the floor  
What is the source of my pain?  
Is it the nipping of the clippers  
Upon the nape of my neck?  
Or the flame of a candle  
Overworked and tired  
Finally, Going. Out.

Have you ever gotten the feeling  
Or the sensation, like an itch  
that something bad is about to  
- AAACCCHHHOOOOO!!!  
Oh god...Oh god...  
I look down and see  
A strip of white light  
Amongst a dense dark forest

As my head jerked forward  
In reaction to the ear deafening sneeze  
I feel a little something, a slight breeze?  
Cole's head goes down  
My visions goes black, my ears are ringing  
The words, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry" awake me

It was an accident, I swear!  
I didn't mean, to buzz all that hair  
Please find it in your heart  
To forgive me and

-My hair!  
Look what you've done!  
You've done to me as  
Mount Vesuvius to Pompeii  
The Chicxulub impactor to the dinos  
Nuclear Reactor Unit 4 to Chernobyl  
All of which can not compare  
To which you have done, to my hair!

My deepest apologies,  
But do not blame me  
For societies ideologies  
Maybe next time do not go to supercuts  
To get a haircut.

# OEL LEO

## *Invisible, Poetry*

What are we?

We are, I pass out, get dizzy or hot, to cold, too tired

Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome

We are, I hurt, my skin stretches and is transparent, Organ problems and joints, yet

I feel fine today,

Ehlers Danlos Syndrome

We are, I learn words slowly, and have trouble reading, I can't memorize the same as others.

Dyslexia

We are, I can't write strait, have trouble holding my pen, accidentally write in reverse,

Dysgraphia

We are, I can't sit still, fidget too often to be normal, can't concentrate, act without thinking, and can't wait a turn.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

We are, I can't touch certain fabrics not because I'm allergic, the light is too bright, the sound is too loud, poor balance, or the texture is off.

Sensory Processing Disorder

We are, I feel sad, detached, annoyed with things,

Depression

We are, I am too thirsty, lose weight without trying, hungry, blurry vision, numb toes and fingers, dry skin or too tired.

Diabetes

We are, I can't count backwards, I'm slow in math, have trouble estimating, and am nervous in math.

Dyscalculia

We are Invisible Disabilities.

We hide from those that judge us,

We are proud of who we are, or fear what we may become

Scared to be criticized by those who don't understand

How can we be seen when others are afraid to face the truth.

There are brave souls that tell people who they are

And they face hardship

The world that shapes around us has been naive

We have hid for decades

But when will we be visible

When will we been seen by ourselves not just our disability

When we try to show who we are

We are pushed back

Held down the the self impending doom that is judgment

We are invisible to those who don't understand.

So we fight to be seen

We are no longer going to be invisible

We will be heard

We could be proud of who we are

Because

We are ourselves not anyone else

Our disability doesn't define us visible or not

We are us, not just what we hide.

We are visible.

# MARIE KING

## *Spending the Years, Poetry*

I remember when I was 6,  
I wanted to be 10, because that's when I can sit in the back of the bus and I hit  
double digits  
But my dad told me  
Don't spend the years wanting to get older  
And when I was finally 10,  
I wanted to be 13, because I can call myself a teenager  
And teenage girls are cool because they have phones and boyfriends  
But my dad told me  
Don't spend the years wanting to get older  
And at last, when I hit 13,  
When I could finally call myself a teenager  
When I could finally start entering the early stages of womanhood  
I wanted to be 15, because I can get a job and have my first year of high school  
wrapped around my- finger  
But my dad told me,  
Don't spend the years wanting to get older

Now I'm 14, just a month away from being 15  
And you know what?  
My phone is cracked,  
I don't even have a crush  
And the thing I dread most at the end of each month is bleeding through my jeans  
And I wish  
I wish I had a receipt for all the times I wanted to fast forward my years  
Because I want a refund.  
I want to rewind  
Back to 13, before I had to take 12 advils at the end of each month  
Back to 10, when my biggest worry was getting to the one seater first  
Back to 6, when I should have listened to my dad  
When my pockets were full of change  
But now, my pockets will soon be flipped inside out if I keep spending my years  
Wanting to get older.

# STEPHIE HEELEN

## City Boy, Poetry

We're pretty used to telling stories.

Stories about ourselves.

Like where we grew up, or that epic coffee shop down the street you tried out last Saturday.

But today I want to share with you a legendary tale about my dad.

When he was young, in his 20's, adventurous, courageous and stupid.

You see, my dad was a city boy. The type who had a mind for a map, a brain for a boss. While he was never truly lost, when you're a city kid, you think you know it all.

Which is why I'm here to tell you a story when he didn't. A story when his college friend Sean called him up and was like, "Hey dude, wanna spend a few days down with me in Puerto Rico?"

My dad was like, "Ah, hell ya"

Which is where our story begins.

He flies down to Puerto Rico, and up there. Up on the balcony, watching the ocean catch fire to the sunset and

glistening off their margarita glasses like a disco ball. When Sean turns to my dad and poses the ultimate question.

What do you want to do tonight?

And for any normal person "what do you want to do tonight" is probably grabbing something to eat before you hit the hay, or getting lost in a book before you get lost in your dreams.

But for Sean, "What do you want to do tonight" is the equivalent of "What rambunctiousness and upright craziness do you want to get yourself into for the next few hours?" So they're sitting they're thinking about what they wanted to do when suddenly-

BAM

Speak of the devil, Sean's phone rings and soon as Sean gets off that phone his smirk is directed toward my dad saying

I know exactly what we're going to do tonight.

Which is how my dad ended up joining Sean on a trip to their friend's house. With the new title of "Unofficial Wild

Boa Constrictor Wranglers" and a brand new objective to lure a wild snake with armor thick skin and razor sharp teeth into a puny cardboard box that probably came from some rip off Home Depot.

Ya, great idea.

As you could probably guess, Sean was over the moon for this newborn adventure. My dad on the other hand. Well, you could probably also guess how the city boy was feeling. This wasn't a mere spider in the kitchen cabinets, he knew he wasn't in Kansas anymore, or should I say Boston?

It's midnight who greets them when they enter the house, followed by their friend who introduces them to the lonely kitchen, and a single flashlight cashing out a dim light as he lays down some random shit he found in the kitchen onto the wooden table in front of them.

A candle holder, a broom, a flashlight, a spoon, some duck tape, a frying pan, and, of course, the rip off home depot box.

Sean selects the broom, and my dad

Select the box.

City Boy tries to convince himself that this is Massachusetts. City Boy tries to convince himself that a snake's fangs won't hurt. City Boy tries to

convince himself that street smarts are wilderness wits. City Boy tries to convince himself that his bones do not want to shiver to dust, that his skin does not want to jump off his body, that his mind doesn't want to collapse at the thought of stupidity leading to death. City Boy, City Boy, City Boy.

Sean and City Boy venture toward the slumbering beast. The one entangled on the vases and candles. Seans looks at him, and City Boy nods. Sean wacks the boa with the broom like a bat to a baseball.

And City Boy.

He lunges toward that snake like there was no tomorrow, and slaps that rip off home depot cardboard box over him like a funeral's goodnight. His other friend dashes toward it and wraps that box in tape like a mummy ready to be sent to the pyramids. And Sean comes back, poking a few holes in the side with the back of a spoon so that the beast can breathe.

Sean and City Boy place the box in the backseat of his car, Starting up the engine ready to go set this boa free into the wild. Just like how I'm closing up this story so I can return to my seat. But enough about me, because this is someone else's story, my dad's story.

The city boy's story.

# LILY BOZENSKI

## *Superpower, Poetry*

You know that one icebreaker question,  
“If you could have any one superpower, what would it be?”  
Yeah, I hate that question.  
In fact I hate icebreakers,  
But that’s not the point.  
I wish my answer could be something cool like  
Laser eyes or flight.  
But, these glasses are expensive and  
I’m scared of heights so those are off the table.  
Really, I’d want to be invisible. Disappear  
Whenever I want. Become as noticeable  
As the air.  
If only I could be invisible.

Not so that I can sneak into some supervillain’s base and  
Sabotage their plans for world domination.  
No, I don’t have the confidence for that.  
And not so I could play pranks on my brother.  
It would be fun but, I don’t quite have the confidence for that either.  
I’d want to hide.  
I’d want to make myself impossible to notice.  
If only I could be invisible.

Because, it hurts when people notice me.  
When he notices my handwriting and  
Makes fun of it because it doesn’t look perfect.  
When she notices my geeky shirt and  
Gives me a look of disgust.  
If only I could be invisible.

Instead of just sitting there  
I could simply disappear.  
Become as easy to miss as a breath  
And escape fear’s grip of death.  
But my ego is so easily divisible.  
If only I could be invisible.

Then the teacher asks a question and snaps me out of my invisible thoughts.  
A question I know the answer to.  
No one else raises their hand so  
I guess that means mine should go up.  
But, she looks the other way.  
I hold it higher.  
“Please look at me!” My hand begs.  
She doesn’t notice.  
It’s like she can’t see me.  
If only I could-  
Oh.

# RYAN DIXON

## *Overthinking, Poetry*

Make it neat  
Then mess it up  
Don't say why  
Just do it  
At the end of the day  
You'll see  
Not everybody  
Has somewhere to be  
And on that note  
You take a breathe  
An realize  
Everything you just did  
Is what life is really like  
Puzzles and challenges  
In the way  
Make it easy  
And walk through it  
Because when  
You go through it  
You become  
Stronger and smarter  
Then you thought you were  
Because everything you do

Had an impact on someone  
Or something  
Because life  
Will never  
Go your way  
So make it yours  
And just be you  
Cause at the end of the day  
You're just overthinking



# MORGAN PETERSON

## *Who Are You?, Poetry*

“Who are you” is the worst question to ever exist.

I answer with my name but a name showcases nothing about who I truly am.

Who am I?

I am more than the 6 letters that label me.

I am the scars on my hands and knots in my hair.

I am the longing for being passionately desired.

I am lost in the whispers of the wind and I look to the ever-changing leaves.

I am the stories of past lives that fill your ears with mystery in endless nights.

I am in love with the morning dew on the petals of a rose, growing drunk on the smell and bleeding to its thorns.

I am the flowing waters of the rivers. I fight against the current just as I fight the current of time.

I hold the universe in my eyes, and see new galaxies in those around me.

This is who I am.

I am the art that scares the comfortable and comforts the scared.

I dance with the thunder and use the lightning as my spotlight.

I feel the world around me completely, even when there is nothing to feel.

I befriend the moon and oppose the sun, existing as a star in a world full of sun rays.

I am driven by the unknown, the confusing, and the impossible.

I lose myself in art, books, and the idea of new possibilities.

I wake to the songs of birds sailing on the wind, draped in a gown of fresh morning light.

This is who I am.

I am the masterpieces created by wounded artists.

I am silent, calm and patient, waiting to take a long overdue breath.

I am learning to accept that beautiful things end and with it comes gorgeous beginnings.

I am the empty stare, watching my life fall apart, unable to stop it.

I travel the expanse of my mind, afraid of the horror I may find within it.

I scream so loud it sounds like silence.

I decided to decorate my own heart, allowing it to grow itself instead of waiting for someone else to water it.

This is who I am.

I am homesick for a place that does not exist, a home I cannot return to.

I wish for a time before dusk, when I was not reminded of who I'm supposed to be.

I am the pounding in my head of unimaginable ideas drowned in obnoxious and blinding voices.

I am unable to make others understand my thoughts when I cannot even explain it to myself.

I am the bravery and strength that was needed to continue living even when wishing for eternal rest.

I am the silence that follows heartbreaking words revealing true feelings.

I am a bleeding heart soaked in moonlight, being compared to a daisy's glow in the sun.

This is who I am.

Do not ask me

Who are you?

For I will merely respond

My name is Morgan.

# JAMIE HIGGINS

## *Waiting, Poetry*

I have to wait a lot,  
everyone does.

Wait for my eyes to rest  
and for my mind to go somewhere  
I've been but never known.  
Wait last minute until the world has to be real  
just to get dressed in my cold room  
which was never really that cold.

Wait to see my friends  
whoever they may be at the time,

and wait for new people to see me  
once they no longer glance my way.

Wait until I move away.  
On second thought, that's not really waiting  
more so just dreading  
my process of hopeless connection  
I know all too well.

Wait until the school day is done  
and I can drag myself out to the bus  
to go home  
sleep  
wake up  
and do it all over again  
with the wildcard of friends  
I care far too much about  
mixed with the mess of my life.

I'm alright with it though  
I know where everything is  
for the most part at least.

I've always been waiting  
for something \_\_\_\_\_

- a. better
- b. new
- c. more

a question left blank  
I can never circle any of them.  
I've been waiting for the day that I can.

Waiting is boring  
but it's hope  
for what?  
Can't answer that yet.  
Boredom is agonizing

but it makes time slow down  
and it helps you find moments

because it makes you feel  
like you have all the time in your life.

You can find a lot of gifts  
some of which  
you may have spent years waiting for.  
Boredom is the very blood  
which flows through the body of waiting

through the time not well spent.  
It will leave just for a moment  
but it never strays too far.

I've been waiting less recently  
I haven't stopped  
I'm not sure I ever can,  
but I can find joy in it now  
instead of sorrowfully dreaming of the day  
I finally get it  
whatever it may be.

# EMILY HOUDE

## *Stereotypes, Poetry*

People always put me into stereotypes:

Nerd,

try hard,

teachers pet

It is either all or none

I can't be half and half

What is the point?

Why do I have to choose between a and b?

Stereotypes just put me in a box.

When I only partially fit in the box,

The box no longer welcomes me

I work so hard to obtain the validation of others

Only for it to be taken away

Just for a second to be recognized as someone different

People always put me into stereotypes:

Band kid,

athlete,

weirdo

They consider me abnormal,

but I am just trying to be polite,

trying to accept that the world won't fit into a box

And neither will I.

# LIZZIE DELELLO

## *Missing Pages, Poetry*

One thing you should know about me is that I am independent,  
I can fend for myself,  
I can do anything on my own.

I taught myself how to ride a bike,  
How to read a book,  
How to tie my shoes,  
How to bake cookies.

But sometimes my independence isn't a strength  
I am afraid.  
It's the thought of having to speak up.  
And all of a sudden..  
My skin is melting,  
My heart is racing,  
My blood turns cold,  
My eyes start to blur,  
And I can't read the pages that were once so clear.

When I ask for help I feel like people are all over me,  
It feels like they are walls closing me in.  
Suddenly I'm claustrophobic and I can't help but try to escape

But I can't escape  
And why am I even trying to run away from my own problems?  
Asking for help doesn't make me any less than anyone else.  
And you know what,  
You can not wait for life to become easy to be happy.  
Because life will never be easy,  
It's just a matter of time till you can look yourself in the eyes and admit that.

And here I go again  
My mind moves a million miles per minute.  
My thoughts swarming me from every which way,  
I can't let them bring me to yet another conclusion.  
All of a sudden I am a time machine,  
What will happen in a day, a month, a year?  
But the more I'm looking into the future, the more I'm not looking at right now.  
Life moves too quick, and we miss a lot of it,  
We are skipping through chapters of our book,  
But alas the book will not make sense with missing pages.

# SHAYLA GERKIN

*The Silent Killer, Poetry*

We are structured in a world  
Full of

Desolation

Neglection

Phones are used as weapons  
We are disconnected from our prevailing selves  
Shown through the world wide web  
The intertwining spider netting  
Which makes up the curves  
And twists of our mind  
Falling down with a swift  
Strike of the hand

To be misunderstood  
Day and night  
The concept bringing us down  
We are lacking in support  
Armies of words swarm us  
Picking at every inch of skin  
We have left  
Until our defeat is unraveled

Loneliness.

The bitter result that makes up  
The students trudging down the hallways  
The music encrypting our minds  
And the emptiness we feel inside

It starts with a ripple  
The drops of water in your head  
You begin the process  
Of pulling away

A tidal wave smashes  
A first blow of detachment  
The water may pull away for a break  
Of burning salt  
Infatuating your eyes

Until the tsunami crashes and  
Washes you away

Loneliness.

Abandonment should fear me  
But only does it disobey  
And allow me to cower in the corner

People  
People  
People

They are the soul purpose  
That can change everything  
The connection is what builds  
The fundamental basis of happiness  
When it gets shipped out to sea  
And lost in the storm  
Who are you left with?

Loneliness.

The silent killer  
In all of  
us

# MARLEY BELTRE

## Cauldron, Poetry

The first B I got was in math 7th grade. Integers were never my friends. They were the ghouls that hid in the shadows. I thought my future was ruined. I would end up dropping out of school and all hope would be lost. All through elementary and middle school, learning was my life. An easy ride on cloud 9, no bad grades, and an avid spirit. Then high school crept into the picture. From freedom and ease with a snap of fingers, to a world caving in.

Anxiety.  
A constant anguish snaking up your spine  
Threatening to burst from the pressure.  
Once the cauldron bubbles,  
It flows over the rounded edge  
Drip  
Drip  
Dripping  
As it brings tears to my  
Eyes.  
Double  
Double  
Toil  
And  
Trouble.

A drop of  
The past  
A pinch  
Of the Future  
A repeated spell  
That always brings  
Pain.  
One wrong stir,  
And I have  
Plunged into the empty  
Abyss.  
All of my screams  
My tears  
My cries for help  
Can not

Scale the  
Curved walls  
Of this cauldron.  
The stew of  
Thoughts,  
Worries,  
And  
Fear  
Pour over my soul  
Drowning me  
In a potion  
Of my own creation.  
The Evil witches  
Of catastrophe  
Tease me from  
Rounded rim,  
Spilling more  
And  
More  
Over my head  
I CAN'T BREATHE  
I CAN'T THINK

I CAN'T  
I CAN'T  
Try.  
I CAN'T  
Still try.  
Through the  
Bubbling brew,  
A calloused hand appears.  
A sign of hope,  
The sliver of light  
At Midnight.  
It pulls me out  
Of this horrendous  
Hell-broth.  
Time and time again,  
Bringing me back to  
Reality  
Another chance  
To begin  
Again.



EXETER HIGH SCHOOL

Creative Guts is a nonprofit on a mission to awaken creativity within people of all ages by curating an environment for connection, collaboration, and the opportunity for gutsy creatives to share their stories with the world.

We do this through programs, zines, events, and a podcast that is focused on the pursuit of creativity. Podcast episodes are available to listen on all major podcast platforms and our website.

The special edition of this zine is supported and funded by the NH State Council on the Arts and the Racial Unity Team.



**New Hampshire**  
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