

SOUTH PLAINFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL  
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## **The Life of the Green Leaf**

That time of the year rolls by, one where everyone falls in love.

The brown leaves fall as quickly as our little hearts do.

The green ones, yanked from their tree, feel like they shouldn't be a part of the brown leaves, they promised themselves they would only fall when they found the time to be a brown leaf.

The hand that yanked the green leaf off was so strong that the green leaf had no choice but to give in.

The green leaf, thinking that it would be fine with the other brown leaves that are in love, slowly sinks to the bottom.

One can see the color of the green leaf slowly fading away.

But that's the process of falling in love right?

Sacrificing what little of your brightness that you had inside of you to fit in.

The green leaf looks around for the hand that yanked it down.

The hand would surely save the leaf from drowning right?

The hand was nowhere to be found.

For the hand, the leaf had just been a little fun game that you can just fiddle around with.

Pick random leaves and throw them.

Wont hurt that much, just a few leaves from a tree that was keeping the leaves sacred for the time that the green leaf should actually turn brown.

The green leaf finally loses all of its color.

One might think that the leaf would have been brown, like the other leaves that were in love.

But this leaf was a bit different. Black around the edges and a little hole in the middle.

The leaf shouldn't have let the hand pick it right now. Thus, that's the outcome it gets for being so reckless and not listening to its tree.

A foot walks by, not caring about the leaves that are scrambled on the ground, brown or black. The foot crushes them, not caring what color they are.

The black leaf is now where to be seen, disappeared between the cracks of the sidewalk and the mud.

By Nandhana Pradeesh Nambiar

### The Story Behind Autumn

Leaves fall of trees without thinking twice  
Leaves falling like secrets that can't be kept in anymore  
We walk on green grass shifting into yellow  
With the sudden crunch of the leaves underneath my feet

The air is cool and makes my face numb  
Still somehow it makes me feel awakened and alive  
The sun hides faster, making it gloomy and relaxing  
Still making autumn feel like home

The moon shines brighter, stronger  
Making stories shine in a way I've never been before  
The night was soft, in a different way  
As if it feels everything happening inside of me

Autumn reminds me of something beautiful  
Even when it's cold around you, the breeze embraces you  
Making you feel warm and loved  
Trust the season to hold you, if no one else does.

By Kayleann Ruiz



By Rayna Turk

## **The Forest**

By Lindsay Czerwinski

My eyes fluttered open, and I instantly regretted it. Snowflakes stung my eyes, and melted snow made me feel uncomfortable. I scrambled to my feet, wondering how long I had been lying there, cold in the snow. Questions flew through my mind, but one stood out. How exactly had I gotten there, and why? I looked at my surroundings, which were snowy woods that seemed to go on forever.

It seemed I had no choice but to trek through the woods. I picked a direction and quickly started walking that way. While most people would be worried about getting lost, well, I already was. But as I journeyed through the snowy woods, I had a feeling that I wasn't alone. I turned around to see footprints, some mine and some I could not recognize. Turning and sprinting, I rushed away from whoever was chasing me.

Tears fell from my eyes in fear as I tried to find my way out of this labyrinth of a forest. A twig broke behind me. I jumped in surprise and stumbled, but kept on running. Whoever was chasing me was right behind me, and my only hope was trying to outrun them.

After hours of running, it was starting to get dark. I decided that whoever was following me had given up, and I was too far away for them to catch up. I sat myself up against a tree, hoping that I could fall asleep tonight. Between the cold snow, rough bark of the tree, and uneven, rocky ground, sleep seemed to be a world away. But then the rush of adrenaline started to disappear, and I felt calmer and calmer. Until the exhaustion consumed me and I fell asleep.

The next morning, I woke with surprise to see I wasn't in my bed, but still in the snowy forest. And what surprised me most of all, was the person in front of me. When I looked up at him, I saw him staring at me, and a black hood covering his face.

# Frostbite

By Leandro Monroy

Everything around Peter felt still, and he shivered. He tried calling out for Tod. He didn't really know if he had called out. Peter couldn't hear, he couldn't see, He could barely even feel. The floor beneath him was slippery and cold. Peter could feel something around his body. He couldn't tell what it was, but it hurt. He felt warm and cold at the same time. He slowly lifted his hands to his eyes. He felt the same thing that he felt on the ground stuck onto his eyes.

"Oh god," Peter finally started to realize what was happening. He tried to stand up, but he couldn't feel his legs. He put his hands to his feet and tried to feel for something, but he couldn't feel anything. Finally, he realized what he had to do. He took both his hands to his eyes and forced himself to pry the ice off his eyes. Peter screamed in pain; at the very least, he could see now. Everything around him was dark, and everything still felt the same. He took a deep breath in and exhaled. He felt a little warmer, but the feeling as if being trapped in an ice box still haunted him. Peter looked down at his legs, or at least what was left of it. He still had his left leg, but half of his right leg had been sliced clean off. The wound had frozen which explained why he wasn't bleeding to death or really feeling any pain from it. Peter looked in front of him, he saw an arm not his though Tod's.

"We'll be fine, these things usually aren't that big of a thing." That was the last thing Tod had said to Peter. He was with his family- mom, dad, grandparents. They were celebrating Christmas Eve, right? It was hard to remember now, everything seemed fuzzy now. One thing was for sure though; he was under his house. Suddenly, he felt like he couldn't move; his head fell to the cold and hard ground. He tried to remember what had happened; he was about to give Tod his gift. Then the alert came on- the sound of the alert rang inside Peter's head. A blizzard was normal at this time of year, but nothing this bad. He had heard a crashing sound, and then everything went black. Peter had to come to the obvious conclusion that his family was dead. The very little bit of energy Peter had left was slowly starting to fade away from him. Finally, as Peter accepted his fate, a single tear emerged from his eye.



By Rayna Turk

Prompt: The package under the tree wasn't there the night prior, and I lived alone...

The Package  
By Alexis Sienkiewicz

I awoke at the time I always had: four fifty-five in the morning to the chill of my bedroom which lacked a heating system. The crisp crawl of frost consumed my upper shoulder into my neck, the one part of my body exposed to the freezing air.

I closed my eyes, wishing for that comforting blanket of sun which shone through my window during the summer. The time when sunrise occurred the same as the beginning of my morning; when that warm feeling would await me as patiently as one awaits their loved one.

Just as I was able to grasp on to the feeling, a church bell rang, announcing to the small town that a new hour had arisen. Its deep chimes didn't silence for my tranquility, rather they continuously echoed until they forced me awake.

Surrendering to the man-made alarm, I feverishly rose from my bed, my blanket sliding off of me in the process. As the soft warmth of cotton slowly vanished, a sharp chill ran through my bones.

"At last," I sighed with sarcasm, "It's finally Christmas."

I scavenged around my dresser, my eyes struggling to stay open. My hand grazed every piece of clothing I had. It only paused when I could feel that recognizable warmth; that softness I could only determine to be one item.

The thickness of it, that gray sweatshirt, made it feel as if there was fire encased in its wool. The moment it surrounded my skin in its grasp, the bitter chill of the winter morning disappeared. And yet, as I glanced at myself in the smudged, overlooked mirror, the sweatshirt flowed perfectly, not stuck in a static placement.

*If I cared to get one thing for Christmas, another sweatshirt just as heavenly as this would do.*

But the sweatshirt had been limited; the craze gone in just two weeks after it had been released into stores.

Not like I could get another one even if it was still available.

I lived in Hollowood: a small town in the middle of nowhere. Just deserted land which no one cared enough about to attempt replenishing it. As far as I knew, the nearest human-populated area was miles away.

Most people here were stranded unless they owned a car. A vehicle that would have enough strength to carry you for tens of hours without growing drowsy. And yet, most residents lived life to the fullest *without* one, because if they wanted to continue to live here, well, there would be no use to waste such a grand amount of money on something so useless. All the necessities were just a couple blocks away at most, and the entire town spanned a small 96 acres.

I hated it here.

The smallest thought of my unhappiness reminded me of the longing I wished I hadn't felt. The tingling reminder of the comforting feeling of the city — constant noise, streets bustling

with people — the days I wanted to grasp on to and *feel*, however, also the ones I wanted to forget. Because maybe if I forgot them, I would be much more content with my current life. My current life which I could never escape.

I glanced out my window, absent-mindedly watching the snow fall in steady waves; each snowflake forming the beautiful, pure white cover over the ground. The beauty of the natural climate overcame me, the exquisiteness hiding its underlying cold demeanor.

It was the only thing I looked forward to during the holiday season anymore.

Finally, I pried myself away from the window, solemnly strolling to my living room. Even on the brink of my despair, I couldn't fight the urge to put up a tree. And although its bark was empty without thorns, the Christmas spirit still exalted within me...

*Wait.*

I paused in my steps, unable to form thoughts... *words* at the scene across from me. There wasn't just a tree, no, there was something else underneath it, gleaming in the faint white light of the glow outside.

A present. A present wrapped in glistening red, as if the paper had been made from the stripes of a candy cane themselves. The box almost seemed to have a faint glow itself, its reflection bouncing off the walls of my dark home that echoed with solitude.

Whatever it was, whomever it was from, it couldn't have been an accident, nor a gift of goodwill. I forced myself to look away, focus on making fresh coffee for the morning, however it continued to teem with my head. Its white bow teased me, its perfect look reminding me of the anticipation I got as a child. The excitement for what was once my favorite time of year...

Not able to resist the temptation, I crouched down, resting the present on my thighs. My fingers played with the velvety ribbon, the faint feeling making me laugh with joy... with *happiness*. A feeling I thought I'd lost so long ago...

I ripped the wrapping paper fragilly, the shine it gave off creating the illusion of glass. With each rip, I uncovered the thin, white rectangular box. One that always held clothing...

And then, with a silent slide, I revealed the content.

That familiar feeling of soft wool and warm comfort that was equivalent to sitting near a fireplace on a snow-filled day. My fingers tingled with the addictive feeling and — before I could stop myself — I held the green sweatshirt close to my heart, my body rejuvenated; filled with life...

And that comfort continued. My heart felt like it was burning with passion, like it could carry me through a freezing day and keep me from ever feeling cold. I could barely move, worried that with one twitch, the perfect moment would flee...

As if an invisible force was pulling them open, my eyes widened, glancing at the tag attached to the present.

*Jake Malor*, it read. However, the curves and twists of the — although I'd hate to admit it — *elegant* cursive made the name hard to distinguish. Yet, at this point, I couldn't dare to miss it.

The present was shallow now, practically empty except for a folded piece of paper which rested on the base. With all of my grudges, I wanted to tear the note to shreds. Make sure not one word could be formed anymore. Nonetheless, my curiosity overtook me.

*I don't think it is necessary to address the person I am writing this too,*

*No matter how constantly I try to forget, the memory seems to always pop back in my head. The way you enthusiastically spoke about it. The way you smiled every time you wore it. The way you always laughed when I said I'd buy you a new one. It's like you always could perceive my lies, and always knew I wouldn't be able to find it there. In that small town you must find so infuriating now.*

*I've tried to push away my regret, and yet fear overcomes it. I've loved you so dearly since we first met, and I still do. However just the thought of that town... just the thought of my past relationship with you makes my breaths run quickly. My heart pounds, trying to break through my own skin and bone. I brought you there so we could be together forever, next to my family which made me whole. It wasn't a life decision, as you know, only until they got better. Until the day when they'd stand and smile, and wave goodbye to us as we continued back to a normal life.*

*I dreamed of that day. I could almost feel your head resting on my shoulder as you fell asleep on the car ride north. When only the rustle of your breaths and the swoosh of the wind would keep me company as I drove us back to our dream. The bustling city, why, I could practically taste its fondness back then. I imagined, after we unloaded our furniture and such into that apartment space, that we'd go out in the evening. Eat at a fine class restaurant, walk back with the lights of the skyscrapers, the only thing guiding us to home. That was your dream, I know. And yet, it was likewise mine.*

*It's ironic how it only takes one day to break a dream. To crush and crumple it into millions of pieces. I know I overreacted. I know I shouldn't have done it. And it's pained me every day since. Some days, I can't take the guilt. The regret. That day fills me with overflowing scars. Not only did I lose the ones I loved... but I lost you too. I lost you to my own anguish. As if losing my family wouldn't have racked me with enough guilt... but to run away? To abandon you in that old town so distant from the world? To leave you without a second thought?*

*I know how infuriated you are with me. I feel the same way towards myself. I wouldn't doubt that you read this far, that you even glanced at a single word. I wouldn't either. But it somehow feels better to write the words out. To finally tell you how sorry I am. Even though words won't change a thing.*

*Not that you would care, but I never made it to the city without you. The closest I got was replaying those past dreams in my head. Those dreams that forced me into realization are the reason I am here now. The reason I left our — your — car outside our house. I left you in this place for too long. It's time for me to stay here as you explore the world as you always dreamed.*

*Because my only dream that is left is for you to get yours.*

*Get to the city for me,  
Jake Malor*

"Flurries" by Addison Sanchez

**Flakes of snow**

**Love**

**Underblanket**

**Reath**

**Reindeer**

**Icicles**

**Eggnog**

**Snow**

**Snowflake Acrostic Poem**  
**By Lindsay Czerwinski**

**S**now fell all throughout the

**N**ight, making the ground look like it was covered in a large,  
white blanket.

**O**vernight, many snowflakes, each unique, had fallen to the  
ground, signaling

**W**inter has come. The next

**M**orning, children came out to

**A** snow day, playing all day long, until the

**N**ight, dreaming of the snowman they longed to still be there.

**SNOWSTORMS****By Alexis Sienkiewicz**

**S**ea of white covering the land  
**N**ot a sign of any end  
**O**verwhelming chill, an icy scene  
**W**inds whipping; must be zero degrees  
**S**nowflakes dancing across the sky  
**T**wirling and spinning, none alike  
**O**thers dislike the art of the storm  
**R**ely on the sun to keep warm  
**M**ay the freeze of the world outside be alive  
**S**o the warmth of love can thrive inside

- Lexi Sienkiewicz

*The first day of Spring*

*By Nandhana Pradeesh Nambiar*

*The grey sky loosens into a bright blue,  
I sat where restless grass grew.  
Petals stretch and wake the yard,  
Mornings don't feel so hard.*

*A warm wind brushes past my neck,  
Seeds drift softly past the deck.  
The air smells green, the world feels new,  
Like something good is finally coming through.*

*The sun steps out from where it stayed,  
No longer hidden, no more gray.  
And in my chest, a quiet play,  
A joy that feels like spring's first day.*

“A Spring Story” By Alexis Sienkiewicz

“Are you okay?” The girl who sat next to me grazed her hand on my arm, her touch like a flame on ice. The momentary warmth was relieving, however it was overcome with a chill before I could indulge in the feeling, “I mean, are you *feeling* okay? You seem upset in a way; exhausted.”

*I am exhausted. I am anything but okay.*

“Yes, I’m fine.” My words didn’t feel like my own, expressing a monotone demeanor. As if my body were a simple facade, rather I was a marionette in the hands of its holder. Controlled. Emotionless.

She smiled, one as radiant as the sun itself, “I’m glad to hear it.”

She spoke without looking up, focused on the lead-stained papers covering her desk. She began to write on one, moving her pencil with such precision that it felt like a work of art rather than an English assignment she was forced to work on.

Unlike her, I didn’t glance at the work. Rather, my eyes were glued to the transparent window which expressed the sorrowful world outside. It was as if the world was tinted with a blue filter, making the freezing feeling on my skin travel down to my core.

*Winter is the true culprit. The puppetmaster of despair.*

And winter it was, as it had been for the last four months. And the longer it continued, the more it drained all life from my eyes. The continuous cold extracted all my energy, forcing my mind to long for warmth and relaxation. The deep blues that painted everyday life was simply a constant reminder of the sorrow that threatened to consume me; and while many perceived the outdoors to be a beautifully constructed piece of art, it felt rather cursed to me.

I was broken from my trance by the echo of the school bell, it breaking the silence like a hot knife through butter. I absent-mindedly grabbed my books, grabbing them with as little force as I could before taking my leave for the day.

Millions of people pushed by me as I sluggishly walked in the hallway, their soft sweatshirts and puffy jackets grazing my arm. I didn’t dare walk any faster though, both because I was lacking the motivation and I didn’t care for those rushing behind me.

Why were they anticipating leaving when they’d only be met with the freezing biome outside?

I grabbed each piece of supplies that were necessary for the work I’d have tonight and placed it one by one in my backpack. With each second my eyelids drooped; closer to their closed state.

And what made my exhaustion so much greater was the truth that I’d be walking home today. In the freezing, devastating cold that I believed was deemed to destroy me: physically and mentally. One that bit at my skin and froze my muscles as they desperately tried to move – to push me toward any relief of heat.

*If only it wasn’t so challenging to do so.*

And yet, I continued to trudge along, a house of warmth the only motivation my body felt. It — *I* — would do anything to escape such coldness.

But all it did was surround me as my feet clacked on the pavement outside, each one louder, more carefree than the previous. I walked in utter solitude, only the whipping wind beside me, and yet I didn't appreciate its intrusion.

The world was bland around me; the sky masked by white and the bark of tree branches exposed; lacking any color...

Except for a small gem in the distance, glimmering a vibrant red that reflected the little amount of sunlight there.

Growth in a static world. Color in dullness.

A sign of life in death.

And for once in six months, I cracked a small smile.

## **“Cherry Blossom Petals”**

**By** Lindsay Czerwinski

There was always a feeling that came when spring started. The air became warmer, and the fallen snow from the now passing winter melted faster. Winter had become tiring, and after being cooped up inside for the past few months, Iris was impatient to go outside. She missed going out for walks with her friends and eating ice cream in the sunshine. But all of this was practically impossible to enjoy in the winter. Joy came with spring, and it was coming fast this year.

The hallways in school seemed brighter than usual, and there were more windows opening day by day. Iris had already made plans to hang out with her best friend, Amelia. The duo couldn't wait to be able to spend time together outside.

They had started a tradition two years before, where they would come up with a list of things they wanted to do in the warm weather. The top of both their lists this year was to go the new park that had just opened yesterday. Everything would have been way too crowded on opening day, so they made plans to meet up today.

The two girls dashed out of the doors as the last bell rang, impatient to get out of the school. They ran to each other and held hands as they walked down the pathway towards the new park.

Everyone had heard about the new park being pretty, but the two girls never thought the park would be *this* beautiful!. There were cherry blossom trees, and their pink petals fell on top of the people's heads. Amelia giggled when she saw someone's hoodie. They were sitting on a bench, and their hood was now filled to the brim with cherry blossom petals.

"Spring Haiku"

By Nayanika Sharma

Green grass starts to grow  
Flowers begin to blossom  
Spring is coming soon

***"Transitions"***

***By Humna Khan***

Winter into Spring  
Snowflakes slowly softening  
Grass cut into blades

**Haiku**

**By Samruddhi Shirodkar**

The green grass growing  
The birds in the tree chirping  
Spring is here again

## BUDS TO BLOSSOMS

By ALEXIS SIENKIEWICZ

**B**liss is the feeling everywhere  
**U**nder the bright blue sky, refreshing air  
**D**eath transformed into new rebirth  
**S**heds its hope before the Earth

**T**o Spring they praise and find such love  
**O**pening seeds, finding stems above

**B**ut even with the flowers blooming,  
**L**ight pink petals soon unearthing  
**O**thers peer into different truths  
**S**pring is nothing without me and you  
**S**pring has the power to make buds blossom  
**O**ncestrates growth and development in sum  
**M**ight the people we love do the same?  
**S**urrounded by good people is spring everyday