S E N T E N C E 2015-2016



Table of Contents

11

12-13

14-15

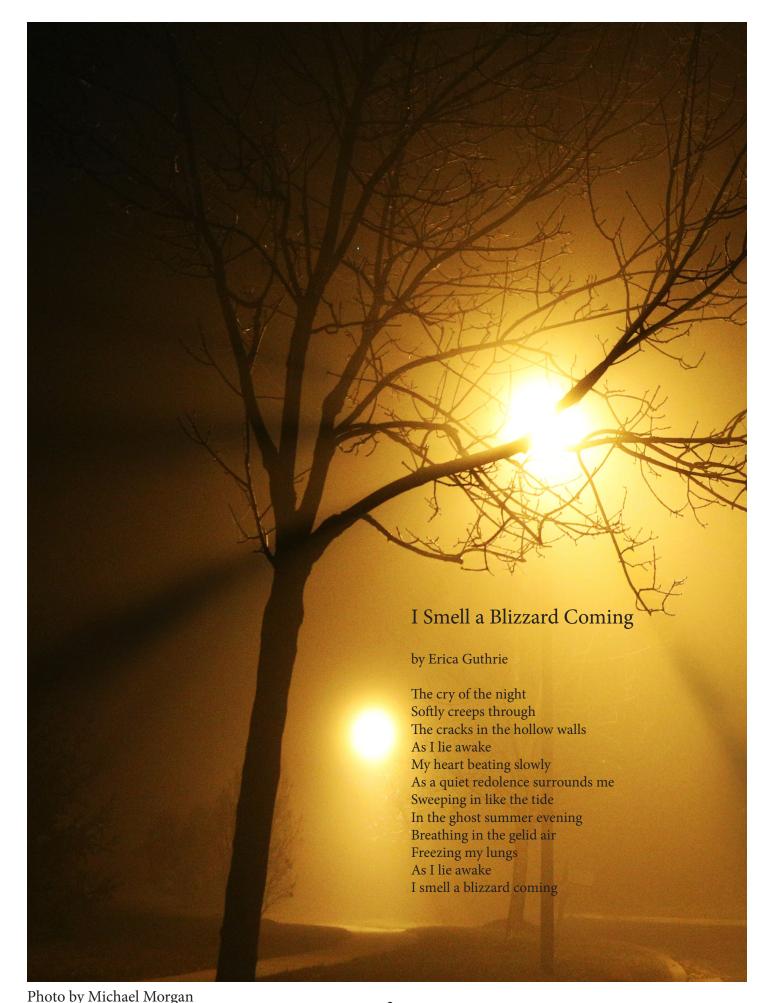
20-21

22-23

Cover Art		A Tissues issues by Grace Howard	11
Photo: Julia Jo <mark>rdan</mark>			
Table of Contents Photo: Julia Jordan		Abandoned by Kaitlyn Yang Photo: Jovi Aragon	12-
Photo: Julia Jordan		Promise by Cathy Xie	14-
Photo: Michael Morgan	1	Soon by Izzi Gibbs Photo: Allie Goldman	14
I Smell a Blizzard Coming by E <mark>rica Guthrie</mark>	2		
Photo: Michael Morgan		Artwork: Sukalp Bhatija	16
Twenty-Four Hours to Live by Apurva Raghu Photo: Maristela Romero	3	Eleven by Ankit Sheth	17
		Flash Fiction Excerpt by Ryan Carroll	18
Ticking by Annie Tran	4		
Photo: Flo Ning		Photo: Annika Land	19
Waiting at the Station by Christina Lingfu Photo: Brianna Roche	5	My Language by Pauline Mnev My Identity by Saran Kaur Jose by Jose Roque	20-
Six Word Stories by Deepti Agnihotri	6-7		
Patchwork by Saran Kaur Photo: Carley Pera		Three That Stay by Shriya Singh Photo: Allie Goldman	22-
The Evening Escapade by Erin Choi Photo: Mercedes Blankenship	8	Walk by Ben Gherman Photo: Carley Pera	24
Talking to the Cashier by Megan Tatum Photo: Allie Goldman	9	Staff Photo: Sukalp Bhatija	25
Photo: Carley Pera	10		



Photo by Michael Morgan



Twenty-Four Hours to Live

by Apurva Raghu

wenty-four hours. I have twenty-four hours to live. My life ends in twenty-four hours. That's a lot to take in.

Now I don't know what most people would do in this situation. Spend time with family, finish off a bucket list, say goodbye to loved ones, make their life meaningful... people do different things. Some just act like it's another day, even if it's their last.

Having twenty-four hours to live sounds like a clichéd love story from a John Green novel or a teen romantic comedy. It sounds unreal and unbelievable, and honestly, it feels like it too.

But I have twenty-four hours to live, and I have to decide what to do with it.

I look down at the intricate oak pattern on my wooden desk, and my eyes wander to the envelopes at the corner. Letters written to all of my loved ones for the past few weeks. Final goodbyes, inside jokes, everything that I could possibly put in there is there. I don't have cancer or some other terminal disease. I just have twenty-four hours to live. The clock is ticking. I slowly walk down the cold steps to the messy kitchen and look back up, wondering if it is the last time I will do this. Behind me, I hear my friend's voice.

"You ready?" she asks, holding a helmet by her hip. Taking a deep breath, I look down to my own vest and suit, unable to believe that this day has come. I give her a slight nod. "Yeah," I whisper, hoping I won't regret the word. Step by step, we walk to the car in the bright summer light. Our feet against the wooden floor seem to pound in chorus with the blood rushing through my head. This is it.

Soon, we are at the sight, and on the plane. There is no risk of heart failure in midair or death from fear. I'm going to die in a few hours anyway.

My gloved hand reaches for the closed screen, opening it to see the clouds below. We gain altitude faster and faster. Houses shrink in size, cars become minuscule, and we keep going up and up and up.

Finally, the plane levels to a good altitude, and the pilot instructs us to put our masks on as he opens the main door. My fingers tremble as I walk to the open door and look down into the never ending sky.

I feel a steady hand slip into mine followed by a reassuring squeeze. Taking a shaky breath, I close my eyes and step one shaking foot out. No going back now.

With one final whoop, I make the first jump.

Photo by Maristela Romero

I'm falling, falling, falling. My arms flail in the thin air, and my eyes remain tightly shut. A loud scream escapes my lips, and fear courses through my veins. There is nothing below my feet, no solid ground. Over the rushing wind, I manage to hear my friend's voice.

"Open your eyes!" she commands. "Stay calm!"

Her words pry my eyes open until the bright sky is in my view. I take a deep breath of pure oxygen in my helmet and my arms stop flailing. My fingers fall limp in awe, and all I can do is watch.

The world rushes past me, and I feel like I'm flying. Remembering our training from a few days ago, I move one arm past another and "swim" to my friend.

We link hands, and I feel the pressure of friendship and trust and complete happiness as we fall through the sky. Who cares if I only have a few more hours to live? At least I'm fulfilling my dream.

Suddenly, the cloudy sky parts to show me a grassy plain, fast approaching. Refusing to let fear consume me, I pull on the string at my side with all the energy I have left. A ruffle of material later, I am slowly floating to the ground. My feet carefully land on the ground, and the parachute envelops me. I lift a tired hand and look up at the blue sky I just fell from, a sigh escaping my lips. The past years of my life flash by, and I smile, reliving every single moment. My heart slows, and my chest wells up with absolute content. I have lived the best life I could.

What would you do if you had twenty-four hours left to live?

Ticking

by Annie Tran

I see time flying by, in the graying hairs of my mother and the weary eyes of my brother.

The sighs of the others and the age as it's uncovered.

I hear time passing, in the laughs of the babies and the unspoken maybes.

The fanciful daydreams and the musings of the crazies.

I taste time disappearing, in the rotting of the fruits and the worn-out pursuits.

The bitter notes of disputes and the sweetness of our roots.

I can feel time drifting, in the cold air of good byes and the chill of sentimental skies.

The discomfort of hard lies and the "I swear I really tried."

I smell that time is invading, in the overpowering perfume and the heavy air that looms.

The flowers that have bloomed, and the loneliness of the moon.

I sense that time is here, and that it means to take us all.

And through my senses I see, I am awaiting its call.

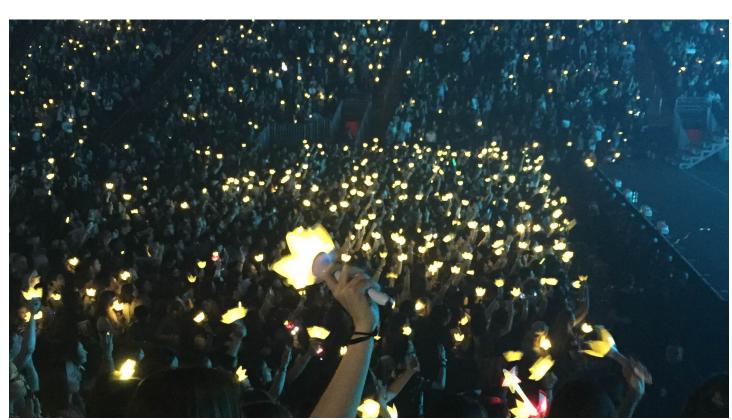


Photo by Flo Ning

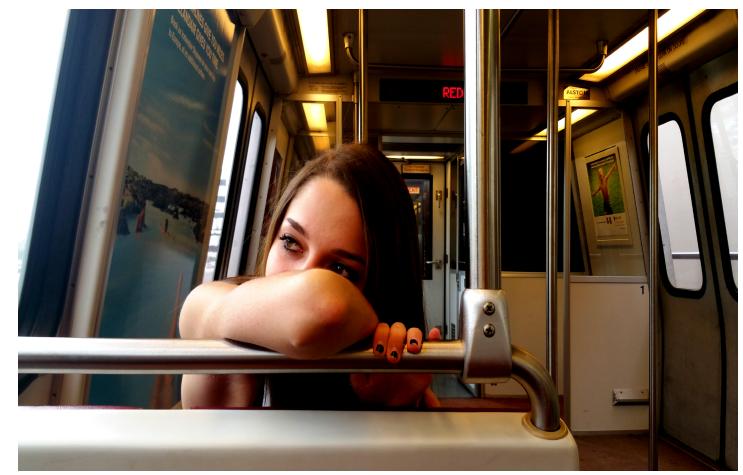


Photo by Brianna Roche

Waiting at the Station

by Christina Lingfu

A woman waits at a station Barefoot and wind-blown She wears but stained rags Fatigued and alone

How boorish it all is, she thinks As she gazes at the moon When drifting snow tastes of liquor Her mind of vacant tune

Like fickle flames, she thinks Is the will of man Strong and bright and quick to quell Days that can't get any worse So is how hers began

To sing again, she thinks Of what would she sound? Perhaps of ceaseless pain Cold as the snowed ground

Yet as a tune plays on her lips And the icy wind blows Of what freedom sings she? Surely nothing she knows

For she has only her repugnant past Her quixotic dreams Her dilapidated towns Her boundless tear streams

So she sings not of this world Relinquishing her hell It is she alone who can make Her song a farewell

Dear My Hateful Past To you is this song Nights that last too long

Tomorrow will die out too And seasons will revive I sear my pain into this melody Because time will survive

And as she blows her wind Her train car is dry She steps in, turns around And whispers "Goodbye"



Photo by Carley Pera 7



Photo by Mercedes Blankenship

The Evening Escapade

by Erin Choi

Lo! deep in the penitentiary of the middle floor
Whose grey metallic gleam beckons villainy
Like a pure dairy devil, lies enticingly
The past night's cheesecake, the nosh of crime and war!
How nimbly doth the lid uncover the sweetened scent
Of unlawful sugary offense, and unconsciously
Behind the hidden counters, away from sibling rivalry
With succor and success begins the grand descent.
O my beloved, my sweet Cheesecake!
My morning and my evening food of conflicting love!
My enemy and partner in crime! for my sake,
To rid the evidence of your escape thereof
Dost thou meet thy end at midnight,
And with your scent also fades your sight.

Talking to the Cashier

by Megan Tatum

I feel rather pressured to say something witty back to the quiet sarcasm that is assaulting my pride.
But instead my mind wanders to how I shouldn't care if he cares because I don't care what he cares

Do I? No.

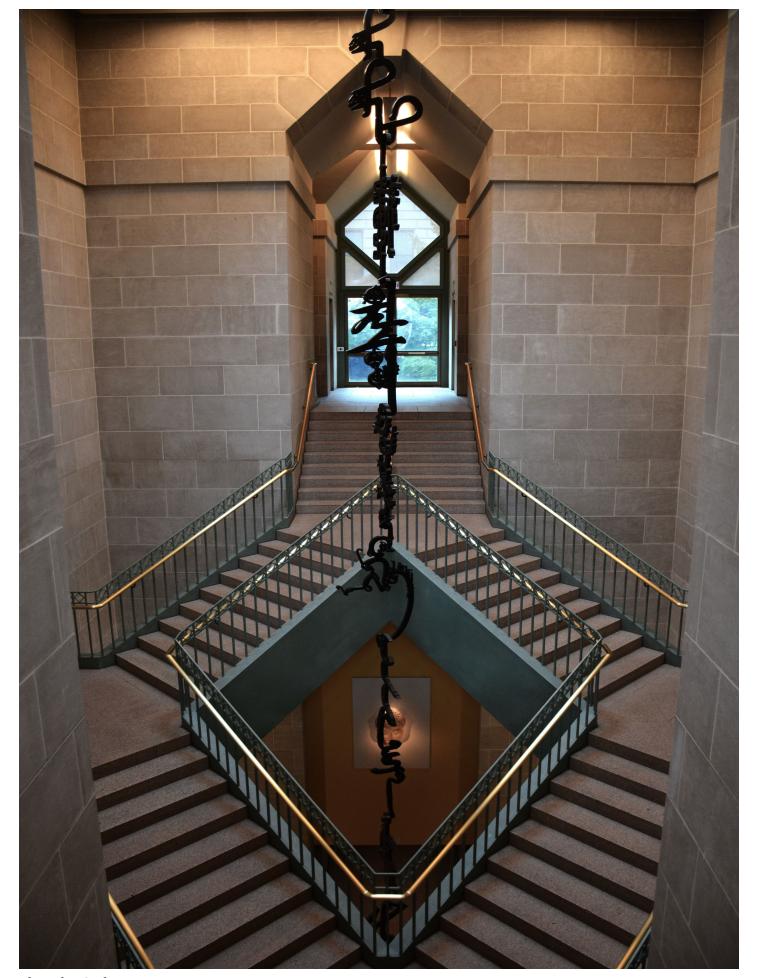
about me.

Instead I wonder
if he will remember me
and my nerve-shaken
painfully awkward retorts.
Instead of remembering me
he will probably erase the memory
to make room for someone who can string
two words together
without stumbling.
Instead of that,
what if he's wondering
if I will forget the harsh but beautiful boy
who couldn't string two words together without cruelty.
Instead of saying something witty,

I take my coffee and leave.



Photo by Allie Goldman



A Tissue's Issues

by Grace Howard

It's common knowledge that tissues gossip. Why wouldn't they? It's not like they have much else to do with their time, what with being kept in a box all day long. The rumors always originate from the top of the box and sink down through the sheets all the while becoming more and more distorted. Once, a human simply sneezed, but by the time the news reached the end of the box, the sneeze had turned into a violent barrage of mucus.

The 100th tissue was very afraid of her fate. Her whole life she'd heard horror stories of bloody noses, dry erase boards, and deep dark pockets, of her fellow tissues being shoved down purses with the other undesirables—lip balm and hair ties. What terrified her the most, though, was the thought of being used to dry wet hands. Why can't humans just wipe the water on their pants? Or find a towel? Tissues are never the answer.

Every few days, 100 would move up the queue, coming closer and closer to the opening. It was all very scary. She tried not to think of her impending predicament. Thankfully, 99 was a good distraction. 99 had a case of mistaken identity. He thought he was a Kleenex. "When I get picked, I know I'll be used for something amazing. I'm a Kleenex!"

"99, we aren't Kleenexes. We're off-brand," 100 said knowingly.

"No. They call us Kleenex all the time."

"I think the humans get confused. They know we're just regular tissues." 100 could hear a sound of agreement coming from 98.

"You're wrong. I am a Kleenex."

Poor 99. He was a bit delusional. 100 hoped he would get chosen to do something good with his life. He certainly didn't deserve to be hidden away up a sleeve.

A week later, 98 was chosen to wipe gunk off a computer screen. Ew! 100 was happy that it wasn't her. Eventually, 99 was selected by the little human girl. He was folded and used as a pillow for her paper dolls. Thank goodness. 100 wouldn't have been able to bare it if he met a terrible fate.

Without 99 to talk to, 100 was constantly worrying about being chosen. What will happen? Drying hands. That's what will happen. When the day finally came, 100 had worked herself into a frenzy. She was so worried.

The little human girl was cutting dresses for her paper dolls when she sliced her finger with the scissors. 100 saw it all. Oh, no! The blood! She tensed as the adult human grabbed her, hoping for it all to be over.... But wait. This isn't so bad. 100 dared a glance. She wasn't touching the cut. Relief swept over her. She was wiping a tear from the girl's cheek. It's okay, little girl. 100 was proud of herself. She didn't know why she was so nervous before. Everything turned out perfectly.

Abandoned

by Kaitlyn Yang

he roads are empty, the stores are closed. It's silent except for the occasional breeze, sending the few leaves that managed to stay onto the tree, dropping down to the dying grass below it. I readjust my backpack strap, slinging it over my shoulder and tucking my long hair behind my ear. The slightest movement or noise from the other side of town could probably be heard. Which made it especially easy to detect the footsteps coming up from behind me.

I ignore it at first, continuing my walk down the abandoned path. The person matches my pace and my footsteps. I stop, they stop. I walk, they walk. I quicken my pace, making sure it's not obvious that I know that they're behind me. I slip into a dark and cramped alleyway that led to the back of an abandoned shop.

The town has a simple layout that I know by heart. I first explored it a few months back, creeped out yet weirdly intrigued. I wanted to know the story behind it and how it managed to get so run down. There was no name of the town, there were no signs of civilization within the town. When I had gone back a few days after I first explored it, I bumped into a small group of people, taking pictures of the desolate shops.

"Do you know anything about this town?" I had asked, hoping for some hints on what happened. They simply shook their heads and continued walking. And so I decided to find the mystery behind the town.

The footsteps behind me get louder as I hear them coming closer and closer. I head into the shop, taking cover under the slowly, cracking counter. I hear the person enter, look around and leave. I let out a small sigh of relief.



It's a dusty shop, one of the few I had yet to explore. The layout is obviously for a bar; the tables are still standing, but the chairs look like they are in bad condition beside the stools that are lined up in front of the counter. If there was ever any color in the room, it was gone now, leaving a decrepit, wooden shop with the only light coming in between the planks of wood. There are jars on the wall, dusty but not empty. I grab one off the shelves, wiping off the layer of cobwebs that had formed from the years of no use. The words on the bottle are fading, but it is still easy to tell it was a bottle of brandy. I hear the door to the shop open again. I freeze up in surprise, slowly turning around to face whoever had been following me. I can't see his face; he's wearing a hoodie with a pair of jeans that seem to be as old as the town. I put the brandy down on the table.

"Who are you?" he demands. "What are you doing in my town?"

Your town? I think to myself. "I was just looking around. I'll leave now, I swear," I insist, slowly backing up towards the shelf of drinks.

He doesn't look like he believes me. "You've been here multiple times. Why?" he demands.

"I wanted to find out what's going on in this town," I explain hastily, "The town just seems like an interesting mystery."

"My town isn't a mystery," he says, walking towards the counter and sitting on one of the bar stools. "It's run down, broken, but not a mystery. People slowly trickled out over time when newer and when better towns showed up, it was the end of this town. It makes sense. You've seen this place."

"But everyone left. No one bothered to try to fix it up or anything. They just gave up and left." I look around at the broken chairs lying on the ground, which was covered with a layer of dirt. "No one cared about the town enough to salvage it? Or to stay?"

"Would you stay?" the man asks. "Look, you don't know what this town was like when everyone was trickling out. There was no water, and there was no land to grow crops on. Everything was dead and nothing was growing back. Life just couldn't handle it.

"The town is gone, and it's not coming back. So leave and never come back either. Leave before something bad happens to you." He turns around and starts walking towards the door before stopping and grabbing the brandy. The door to the shop swings shut, leaving me alone in the room.

It's an empty town, I think to myself. What bad things can happen to me?

Soon

by Izzi Gibbs

Soon we remain pondering our existence, whispering quiet melodies and waiting for assistance.

Soon we walk through the quiet halls, listening for the voices and hearing their calls.

Soon I will break out of this box, screaming and crying for everything to stop.

Soon exists in a bundle of lies, but the hope that it's true is what never dies.

Promise

by Cathy Xie

Promise.

Promise drove my family to lavish, green land. But, she stranded us in a jail called the Dust Bowl. A coarse stock of sandpaper, begging for a drop of nourishment.

The dust swallowed her life away.

My mother's fragile body stood no chance
against the billowing wrath that suffocated her.

I stood strong for my brother, even when my own body was shaking.

Too much for my father, his betrayal proved his weakness when he slipped straight out the door heading anywhere but here. He left my brother and I abandoned, and I collapsed.

I took the job of sustaining my health, as well as Franklin's. The hurling dust was not as terrifying to him as the loss of a mother who coddled him every minute, and a father who, even proved unfaithful, was an idol. Franklin needed someone, anyone.

"...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."
President Roosevelt, what if fear itself
embodies itself into barrels, and barrels
of death hurling toward you?

I ponder other forms of encouragement our lovely president could tell us. And discover not a word that can bring light to the damage done.



Eleven

by Ankit Sheth

My name has five characters, my SAT score has four.

My weight has three numbers, my GPA has two.

Forget about that and focus on me;

my eleven letters.

MyPERSONALITY

The mere eleven characters of personality meant to represent a million;

a million feelings, thoughts, attitudes, actions, experiences.

These eleven characters are what I would like to be judged by;

These are the eleven characters that make me.

But where has the importance of these eleven characters gone?

Definitely not down the drain, drain only has five.

Definitely not lost, l+o+s+t equals four.

Maybe it's at the dealership, that has eleven right?

Or maybe, just maybe, has personality become disregarded

Disregarded: Eleven letters, these seem to perfectly describe our view of personality.

Disregarded, demoralized, destructed

Now we are thirty three letters for an eleven letter word.

I did say personality represented millions of letters but,

the way we handle our eleven letters is becoming alarming.

People don't care about your eleven letters as much

They care about the fifteen characters in accomplishments,

or the nine characters in followers.

But back to our special eleven

The eleven that we were supposed to be judged by

The eleven that we want to be known by

The eleven we want to be remembered by

I know I don't want my eleven letters to be seen as the infamous thirty three

I want my eleven to be the most powerful thing

Not the four that make up logo

Or the ten in appearance

I want to know you for your eleven

And I want you to be proud of those characters

We need to accept these eleven characters

This is the only way we can unlock the millions hidden under

Eleven is already a small number; let's not try to make it any smaller than that.

An Excerpt from Flash Fiction

by Ryan Carroll

When the shrill screech of the alarm clock tore Phil from his sleep, he found that the others were there, waiting. Their voices echoed in his ears even before he opened his eyes.

"Up and at 'em, sleeping beauty," said a low, gravelly voice. "There's work to be done."

"Work?" another voice spat. "What work would anyone let him do?"

The clock's shriek seemed to have gotten even louder, and Phil cringed as the noise pierced into his eardrums.

He outstretched his arm, groping blindly at the nightstand until he found the flat, cool metal of the alarm clock. His fingers jabbed at the buttons, eventually finding their mark and silencing the alarm.

His eyes fluttered open, and he found the others looming over him, one positioned on each side of the bed. To his left was Fischer, an immense, broad-shouldered specter wrapped in a dark trenchcoat, his square jaw and sharp features locked into a stoic frown; to his right was Randall, his pale, gaunt features twisted into a snarl and his gangly body covered in a layer of perpetual grease. They peered down at him expectantly. He blinked.

They weren't usually here this early. They came unannounced, gone one minute, there the next, and then gone again, but they didn't come in the morning. They weren't supposed to come at all, now that he thought about it.

His eyes flicked to the end of the nightstand, searching intently. The bright orange bottle was supposed to be there, but it was gone. He scanned the room, and, after a moment, found it resting on its side beside the door, its cap flung aside and its contents gone. When had that happened?

"A few days ago," Fischer answered. "You had a few left, but you wondered what'd happen if you skipped one."

"Or two. Or three," Randall said.

Oh. That was right.

Phil sat up, peeling the warm sheets from his body and feeling the cold morning air strike his chest. Maybe he should call the doctor. Whenever you need a refill, he had said, or whenever you need to talk.

18



Photo by Annika Land

What's In a Name:

Three vignettes in the style of Sandra Cisneros

My Language

by Pauline Mnev

My first language wasn't the smooth and understood English. It was the sharp, too jagged, too fast Russian. It meant anger, it meant rolling your 'r's. It's like a jagged line. It's broken concrete in the road. It's the Russian 'Y, III, III's that create hard sounds like too many consonants and not enough vowels. Fast like the forward button on the remote.

It was nonsense to everyone else. It was people staring and trying to find out, where are they from? To my family and me... it was easy. It was right. It reminded us of the apartment in Russia on the tenth floor. Of the summer ДАЧЯ with our own garden and the green paint on the house my great-grandfather's father built. It reminded me of my great-grandmother.

She was happiness. She was the reason everyone had a smile on a cloudy rainy day. She was the reason I learned that my language wasn't just the reason I went to ESOL for years, it's not just the heavy 'R's, 'M's, and 'T's. It's not angry. It does sound like barbed wire at the top of a fence, but that fence surrounds your culture and identity. It's what keeps you safe.

She definitely made sure I'd never forget my culture. Don't speak in English. What are you saying? It doesn't sound very Russian. Next year you'll come and I will not understand you.

Now I know she was trying to make sure I remember that green paint on the house, the apartment on the tenth floor, the carrots in the garden, the Russian part of me that my family's carried in themselves for years and years. Just because they came to America, it doesn't mean they left their roots, culture, and identities behind. I'm sure I'll never forget her and her warmth, wisdom, and worry. I'll never forget the 'Y, III, III's that sound like sharp fast angry nonsense to everyone else.

9 letters, 2 words, 1 name, My Identity

by Saran Kaur

My name is Saran Kaur. My mother tongue is Punjabi. My language spawns from the rich country in the heart of India called Punjab. Punjabi is spoken by Sikhs. That is who I am, a Sikh.

Saran means always protected by god. It means god's house or sanctuary. Under god's grace. God provides me with shelter. Wherever I go, I am protected. I am blessed. I feel at peace.

When things get out of control. When I am upset. When I am sad. When I am lost. I remember my name. It gives me strength. It gives me confidence. It gives me grace. It grounds me. It connects me back to my roots.

Sikhism is my faith. In my faith, all men have the last name Singh. Singh means lion. Singh means strength. Singh means warrior. All Sikh women have the last name Kaur. Kaur means princess. Kaur means courage. Kaur is my root.

We are equal. We are unified. We are bonded. We are family.

Kaur connects me to my ancestors. Kaur holds many stories. Kaur means a sea of strong women. Kaur means empowered women. Kaur embodies elegance. Kaur represents power. Kaur is a way of life. Kaur is holding yourself to the highest standard.

Kaur is being the best you, you can be. Kaur is more than a name to me. Kaur is my everything. Without it I would lose my identity.

Kaur by birth. Kaur by right.

Jose

by Jose Roque

In English my name is Joseph, but in Spanish it's a name that every other Mexican has. It means happiness and sadness at the same time. The Mexican music my father listens to in the car is drunk sobbing Mexicans. It was my father's name, and now it is mine. My father is more Mexican than me.

My father, when he was about twelve, worked his butt off because his parents didn't support him. He came to the United States at a young age, working as hard as he could. He was lonely and had no one to talk to. He would look at a plain white wall and fall asleep, and wake up the next morning just to go back to work all day. He didn't have anything to do, so all he could do after work was nothing.

I have the same name as my dad, but he certainly does not want me to go through all the loneliness and pain he went through every single day. My name has been said as Josie and Hose, but I'm fine with that. I wouldn't change my name, but if I had to, I'd change it to Paul or Corey.



Three That Stay

Vignette in the style of Sandra Cisneros by Shriya Singh Thave three that stay even when other people leave. They are all that I need.

My sister has a smile that lights up her face, but it's her eyes that everyone talks about. They contain whorls of deep brown along the edges, hints of chestnut highlighting her eyes when the sun shines upon her smiling face, the richest brown waves seeping into a black abyss, and the strokes of shades darker and lighter hinting at each tiny section, like kaleidoscopes you could twist forever.

My father is like the land you can see through a brutal storm on the water, holding hopeful and steadfast. His words are few but they ring true.

But my mother is like the first snowfall of the winter, pleasant, beautiful, and mesmerizing. Her dark brown hair, highlighted with streaks of light auburn, falling right above her shoulders. Her eyes full of the love and care that she exudes. The rosy lips from which her words tumble out in her mellifluous voice, like the soft chirp of a dove. Her words are like a warm hug. And her hugs soft and welcoming. She is like the sunset bringing peace and warmth to everyone around her, never failing to be anything less than stunning. The different colors painted across the sky, as beautiful and captivating as my mother.

No matter what, I have my three. The three who definitely love me. They are all that I need. The three.



Photo by Carley Pera

Walk

by Ben Gherman

And so a quiet wrapped itself around him. A warmth that hovered over his thoughts and obscured their view. The silence urged him to stand up tall and listen. From its words sprang a single line that stretched endlessly out before his eyes, twisting its way through the trees and barreling on towards the edge of the forest. But he did not follow. It ducked around the bushes and plowed through the leaves. But he did not follow. Feet planted, he let his gaze fall from the line as his eyes began to close. The wind could be heard as it washed up against him and painted the forest. The sun could be heard as its rays sprinkled down like rain falling through the leaves. The grass could be heard as it swayed and rolled over itself through the hills. And as he listened, motionless and voiceless, he was left with only the sounds and the forgotten path.

24



Sentience:

The capacity

To feel and perceive

The ability

To experience subjectively

To be conscious,

To comprehend the world before us

What it means

To be human.