

# WORD

# OF THE HERD



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## **Growing Younger**

**by Brooke Gillaspy**

**Have you ever wished to go back?  
Instead of growing old, you backtrack?  
To be young, helpless, unknowing,  
At the least, maybe just stop growing?**

**Our young selves were optimistic  
Their imaginations almost unrealistic  
We see this all as silly  
But we were happier— so is it really?**

**Family pictures were taken, but we're too old to remember  
Our parents say, "look!....it's you!...You're in the center!"  
Only— who is that child, a smile so immense?  
The un-recognition makes us tense  
Oh, "it's me," you finally say  
Asking yourself, "why didn't I put my smile away?"  
And that's when you realize, it was nothing really  
You just saw the world as another faultless activity.**

**Now I ask you, reader, would you want to grow younger?  
Would you want to forget things that you pushed down under?  
And maybe you wish it wasn't just you  
Maybe you wish you could be those mindless people too  
But what would happen if you could go off track?  
And start over... and go back?**



## **Broken Heart**



**What does a broken heart say:**

**“Why didn’t they stay  
Am I not good enough?”**

**You’re left wondering:**

**“What did I do wrong,  
How could I have done better?”**

**Truth is you did all you could**

**They left you,  
They are missing out,  
You are perfect.**

**That’s what a broken heart says**

**But in the real world**

**You know it takes time...effort  
You know you have to work at it  
And it may take time  
Before you  
Prevail.**

## **I Gnocia**

I venture down into The Valley,  
I, Myself, In total,  
From my golden-laden silver-plaquet palace,  
Way above in The Mountains,  
Snow soaked peaks prime with wonder,  
Every ego thoughtfully thrives over yonder,  
Deep down into The Valley now He runs,  
Surrounded by those He knew once,  
Drowned by their perceived shuns,  
Softly trigger His wisened one.

He dives His staff upon the unworthy earth,  
Unworthy of His mind, unworthy to bare His birth,  
He deigns the downtrods with simply silken truths,  
He deigns the world with rotten real revelations,  
He deigns the skies with finally fluttered wings,  
He deigns their minds with wretched woeful things,  
He speaks an Oracle,  
He thinks a Sage,  
He tells a sorry shackle,  
He warns them of His bitter rage,  
He tells them of His life, a mighty great tale,  
He warns them of all strife, that would be found in deep betrayal,  
For when their mind would turn to dust, the world would do so as well,  
None here are ready for His all-encompassing song,  
None here are prepared for glittering shining stars,  
None here are ready for what they'd know as naive teenage lies,  
None here else are deigned yet also doomed by true divine eyes.

**by Bodie Jernigan**

## **Light within the Dark**

**I lost my way, no path to guide me home  
to safety, to the comfort of my bed.**

**Scared, I panicked.  
Running aimlessly within the dark.  
My mind, screaming within the noise.**

**Then I saw it, hope.  
A light at the end of the endless tunnel.**

**A second chance.**

**I reach out, grasping onto the shining opportunity.  
I leap through the exit of the dark abyss.**

**Beautiful emerald fields surround me.  
Flowers a plenty coat the plains.  
Bright blue skies spread overhead.**

**At that moment I could feel it.  
I could let out what I kept in for so long.**

**I love you.**



**by David Lodwick**

## The Hut

A hut sits in the depths of the woods. Its roof decaying and its walls buckling. The trees around this dying home hold memories long forgotten. A kite's bones sit high in a tree and a swing sits on the ground with a rope that failed to keep it floating. A garden sits overgrown, no longer recognizable as a garden. In the hut, with its slightly ajar door, stands a memory. The Memory repeats its movements daily, not knowing anything else. It is, after all, only a memory. It raises its hands, as if grasping a partner, and begins to dance. It bends, twists, and turns. The dance continues in a silence the Memory can't hear. Instead, the memory is dancing with a piece of a memory. That piece was once a man. In the Memory's mind, the hut is a home with spices and flowers drying from the ceiling. Sunlight streams through the windows that are dark and broken outside of the mind. Music plays only in the Memory's mind. The Memory will continue to dance then stop and stand until it is time to dance. The Memory will continue its movements until long after the house is dirt. Long after the garden is its own forest. Longer than when the trees turn to rot. It will never stop. It knows not how; after all, it is just a memory.

by Emma Haughey





## **Just Because of It All**

**The noises in the hall,  
Echo through my mind  
Shaking all throughout my veins  
Just because of it all.**

**Stomach is turning  
My hands so sweaty  
Constant shiver of fear  
Just because of it all.**

**My palms are prunes,  
Everything spinning  
Skin ripped from my cuticles  
Just because of it all.**

**This feeling is real.  
It engulfs me whole.  
Stuck in an endless spiral  
Just because of it all.**

**by Kendall Vondran**





## **Mistakes**

**Mistakes pull us, shape us,  
Make us who we are.**

**They find our weaknesses  
To shape our change.**

**Caution, relaxation and patience  
Minimize Mistakes  
Like a cough drop on a sick day.**

**Mistakes are our friends  
Mistakes are our foes  
They smile at your misery  
Only to help you improve.**

**Mistakes: the precursor to success.**

**by Luke Zagrocki**



## Nothing More

I have slept through the dream,  
I have lost its flowing touch,  
I have no more solace in its lovely grip.

I shall receive no more.

My heart wells with regret,  
My body cries through the sweat on my brow,  
My mouth whispers begs of forgiveness as I sleep.

I shall receive no more.

The earth weeps where I walk,  
The skies scream where I stagger,  
The seas scorch where I swim.

I shall be relieved of my bearings.

Oh please, may God make me a stone,  
May He tear out my tongue so I spit no more delays,  
May He make molten my marvelous yet malicious mind,  
For all it does is harm me,  
Oh friends, I beg of you,  
Worship the Almighty a million times over so He may grant me my feeble wish:

Nothing more than a grain of sand I ask to be now.

Nothing more.

But that is what I am.

The beach of all humans to and was upon this spinning surface is here.

The world rambles in peril and screams its sorrows of tumultuous hearing,  
spouting to my very ears.

I want it no longer.

Let me change it.

Let me expel the wrong.

May I remove the impure from our frame with myself.

And then I may be free.

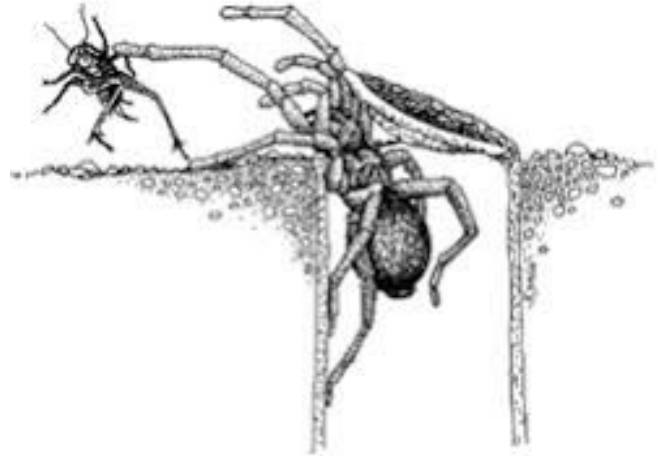
And then I will have met my cause.

And then I would be happy.

As nothing more than a stone.

by Bodie Jernigan

## **Run**



**I must keep myself concealed  
Like a spider under a trap door.**

**I must stay away  
Like a deer running  
Because it knows it is prey.**

**If I am found.  
Then I will run.  
And if I am too slow in my bound  
And still never be caught.**

**Because you have no evidence for my crime  
And anything you claim  
Was fabricated by you  
And whatever darkness swirls  
In your hateful brain.**

**By Alex Vaske**



## **To Her**

**I hate you.  
I will never say that  
I love you with all my heart.  
I can truly say  
You have changed my life.  
I hope you know  
How you feel, but  
I know  
You hated everything about me.  
I was naïve to believe  
You would never try to hurt me.  
The truth is  
I despise you.  
I would be lying if I ever said  
I love you.**

**(Read it backwards.)**

## **Hello**

**People:**

**One of the most common, unrecognized fears**

**Many people afraid to say a simple “hello”**

**Going out of their way to avoid their peers.**

**I used to be overwhelmed by this fear**

**Hiding behind parents, praying to be invisible**

**They helped me through this though**

**Forcing me to meet and greet new people: the key.**

**Many people would find this traumatizing**

**It helped me though**

**Each new friend, breaking my shell**

**With the help of everyone around me**

**I’m no longer afraid to say**

**Hello.**

**by Reagan Lesser**



## **Finding My Peace**

**Four years.  
That's a long time.  
I knew you  
Heart and Head**

**I remember the days  
We used to lie in the grass.  
I could say anything  
And you wouldn't judge**

**But maybe it's because  
You just didn't care.  
After all  
I couldn't get you to stay.**

**And when your words became empty  
When you broke every little promise.  
I began to loathe myself.  
Somehow I thought I wasn't enough.**

**I didn't want it to be this way  
But I guess it was bound to happen.  
We parted the way  
Moses split the Red Sea.**

**Friends come and go,  
Didn't think that was true until...  
And now I know the weight I feel,  
Is on you.**

**Four years.  
That's a long time.  
Right?**

**Zoey Bell**





## **Bananaconda**

**Oh sleek bananaconda!**

**How your yellow scaly skin worries me.**

**Your deep eyes have seen more than I could im-  
agine.**

**Slithering across the world, observing**

**Your brown splotches are only**

**The test of time.**

**by David Pimentel**



## **Riding with You**

It was not that long ago—the best day of my life  
We journeyed into the water from morning to night  
Then swam, ate, and explored with only us four  
Dancing and singing to our hearts' content  
And watched the sun fade and the stars take over  
the sky

When the night fell, we rode the waves home  
The sun kissed our faces  
With intent to burn  
Though the day was long and I spent it all day with  
you  
As soon as you left,  
I only wished for you to come back soon.

**By Haley Newman**



## **Who's That There?**

Who's that there?  
They look quite odd.  
That face looks like  
A mistake of God.  
Their selfishness is that revolting,  
Those eyes of nerve, the way they're  
jolting.  
Make them leave.  
Get them out.  
The way they stare in an ugly pout.  
Looking pathetic in every way.  
Like only something vile to display,  
What's that, you say?  
Speak a bit clearer?  
Did you say  
That it's only a mirror?

By Ellie McDonald



by

**Ellie McDonald**

## **Tell Me Now**

Tell me now—don't tell me then.  
You'll only make things harder.  
Spare me your lies and withered  
truths,  
You'll spread us even farther.

## **War**

**My home is on the border of Poland and Ukraine,  
I live in constant fear that missiles will rain,  
Upon my home, my family, upon the streets I walked.  
Like acid rain, dissolving even rock.**

**My town houses refugees,  
Victims of selfishness,  
Brings food and water to  
ease the restlessness.  
But how can you stay calm when bombs  
explode outside,  
whistle overhead,  
And people scream and cry?**



**Yet, all these cruel acts will not shake us.  
We have lost our homes before,  
Concentration camps remind us  
how much we can endure.  
We will not let it happen anymore,  
If we have to—we will fight,  
And I, too, will go to stand with my flag and, if needs be,  
go down with my home.**

**By Elizabeth Zolkos**

## **Sad Thoughts, Good Days**

Sitting at home, walls all down  
They swarm like black moths,  
Each praying to worm their way in  
I sit, watching and praying, in pain of their ways.

Music, stars, ocean, but none matter  
For they wrap me with their dark thoughts.  
Black moths of pain and sorrow  
Clouding me in ways I know nothing about.

Then I heard her voice.  
Nothing like an angel's yet,  
She is my savior.  
It makes me forget.

She makes me laugh  
Makes me cry with a smile  
Those little moths become butterflies,  
As she numbs my warm heart.

Though I dance where we stand  
Emotionally, I know this:  
I have a friend like no other  
As sad thoughts go and bring me good days.



**By Hannah Leitzman**

## Academic Validation

In school I strive and demand  
That perfect graded list  
When getting it I reflect  
My academic excellence

It is, in fact, an achievement  
After continuing to persist  
But why does my brain rely  
On that stupid graded list



If it's not perfect, I feel weak  
Like I have failed some treacherous race  
Without this graded list  
I feel this sort of emptiness

But soon I won't have this sheet  
To tell me I've done good  
When someday college comes to a close  
And I'm out there in the world

When it's not there to assure me  
It's comfort I'll surely miss  
But soon I hope to stand without  
The treacherous graded list.

By Kayla Geyer

## **Remembering The Flames Try-Out**

**My hands shook as I tied my laces  
The locker room smelled of sweat and gear  
“Let’s go!” yelled the coach—I knew it was time  
To lay everything on the line.**

**My nerves settled when my skates hit the ice  
Stick in hand, I felt like I was flying  
Coaches shouting drill after drill  
If they only knew how hard I was trying.**

**Around the defense men I flew,  
The puck glued to the end of my stick,  
Quick wrist shot followed through  
Goal! Home went the biscuit!**

**Back to the benches to wait  
Will the roster hold my  
name?  
What will be my fate?  
This is it! I I am a Flame!**



**by Asher Hamlin**

## **Memento Mori**

Timely Death, how you steal away the light  
Nothing left to do so I sorely cry.  
Silencing my mind throughout day and night,  
Always nothing: a dark and withered lie.

May I compare you to a crazed ember:  
More fiery and free until dark takes over?  
Strange illusions in March through December,  
And all the year asleep moreover.

How must I know reality, by name?  
A whimsical world, dark and paranoid,  
As no life in my body will acclaim,  
Though fruitful spring most thoroughly annoyed.

Now my ghastly eyes show an empty soul;  
Death, do your part—your art I now extol.

**By Skylar Jandula**





## **Airports**



**A wave of humanity  
The noise, a cacophony,  
A chatter of places unknown  
“I’m to Poland”  
“I’m to Britain”  
How lucky, how lucky  
Like birds they migrate  
Like prey they run  
Widows, accompanied by children  
Lone men, contemplating everything  
Couples embracing, nowhere to go,  
Their homes destroyed,  
But I’ve no time to watch, to ask  
With my own enemy at the front door.**

**By Owen Tomlinson**

## **Outlaw Run**

**It was dark outside  
Blacker than black  
Trees hid the moonlight  
And Outlaw Run hid its fury.**

**We boarded the back row, my brother and me,  
We were prepared to tame the beast in the woods,  
Dark and lifeless, yet full of existence.**

**We slowly ascended 100 feet high....click....click....click  
Our anticipation grew for the wild ride ahead.  
We barrel down towards the ground  
Shook to the core by The Outlaw's rage.**

**The Outlaw then goes crazy—twisting our bodies and minds,  
Ejecting us from our seats and smashing us against the sides,  
No way to tell up from down.**

**We come to a stop—breathless and confused  
What just happened?  
One thing is for sure: the Outlaw got its way.**

**by Bryce Gabbard**



## **The Mustang**

**by John Kelly**

**My Dad had a loud Mustang.  
I would walk out of preschool  
And hear it before I saw him.  
I would get in, the windows  
Open with the cold Illinois breeze.**

**Once a week we would go  
To Steak-n-Shake and share  
A chocolate shake.  
The cold crusting over our hands and ears.**

**Now in the scorching heat of Florida  
Still helping my dad with his car  
With the dripping sweat and the oil  
Blacker than the night sky on my palms.**





## **Loneliness**

**Abstract confrontations of the mind  
That seem to clear rooms in the blink of an eye.  
The sound of silence;  
More disturbing than ever-speaking conscience  
That guides us to the same end.**

**So much for taking our own path, right?  
It's worse at night  
Or when the inevitable thought comes  
That we will find no soul with which to share our life  
Oh how could we be so dumb  
We ask ourselves  
Though the answer is known,  
We just cannot bear to die alone.**

**By Erika Rademan**

# Trees

Trees— our source of oxygen  
the human medicine  
Trees—beacons that signal life,  
Not just for humans but animals rife.

Trees—our source of color  
Brightening our lives for less than a dollar  
Trees—providers of vegetation  
We stare in admiration.

Trees—sources of shelter  
Protecting from scorching swelter  
Trees—suppliers of wood,  
Allowing our houses to withstand the good.

Trees—our source of existence  
Origin of providing subsistence  
Trees—donors of survival  
And eventual  
revival.

By Ethan Le



## **Softball**

**The thought of softball thrills me,  
the idea of playing with a team.**

**When your cleats meet clay,  
A weight is lifted from your shoulder.**

**The banging of drums**

**The sound of people cheering behind you**

**It all makes me feel at home.**

**A dust cloud looms like a ferocious monster  
Its body engulfing everyone into the game.**

**A true player focuses**

**A true player cares**

**A true player loves**

**The thrill of the game.**

**Anonymous**





## **Trip to Puerto Rico**

**Loud, happy Spanish music  
Bright, colorful buildings  
Smell of salty ocean and yummy foods,  
Smiling faces everywhere  
Boricua!**

**Going swimming every day  
Flying kites against a brilliant blue sky  
Walking around San Juan, soaking it in,  
New foods—mofongo, pasteles, em-  
panadillas  
Delicioso!**



**Swimming in water so clear and blue—like crystal  
Laughing like a all day  
Sun wrapping my skin like a warm blanket  
Sand that doesn't stick to your feet.  
Perfección!**

**By Leyla Robles-Goodrich**



