

**ETHS LITERARY
MAGAZINE**



Short Stories



Non-Fiction

Visual Art



Poetry

THE PAPERCLIP

THE GRAND RETURN

A HUGE THANKS TO OUR STAFF!

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the Grand Return of The Paperclip! We are thrilled to be back at it, sharing stories and ideas from the ETHS student body. Our goal as a literary magazine is to create a space for students to express their creativity, share their opinions, and connect with each other on a deeper level. For this issue we weren't expecting such a wealth of pieces to be submitted (due to the time off Paperclip has taken) and it was a positively delightful surprise to see how many of our peers are eager to get their work out into the world. We hope that everyone is able to see at least a little bit of themselves in these pages and experience the wide range of talent and insight here at ETHS. From poetry to social commentary, to digital art, it is clear that our generation has a lot to say, and a knack for self-expression. It is our honor to be a vessel for that expression and share it with you all. To all those who submitted their work, we thank you for being brave and making your voice heard. If you don't see your submitted work in this issue, don't fret, it will likely be transferred to our next installment due to the large volume of pieces we received! So, without further ado, dive into the long-awaited comeback of the Paperclip!

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Well hello there!

Okay, we've got...

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And that's about it!

Some pieces were too long to fit on a page, so we just took an excerpt. You can find the full version on our website, tinyurl.com/ethspaperclip !





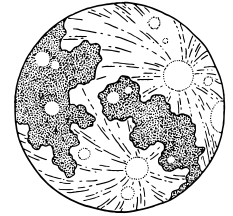
I like to dream.
In my dreams, I have the power to be whoever I want.
I have enough curiosity to learn whatever intrigues me.
I'm no longer surrounded by these fences built around me by society.
By school.
By boys.
By people trying to "teach me a lesson" about being a girl.
"Sit up straight."
"Walk straight."
"BE straight."
About "what it means to be a girl".
Here's what it means to be a girl:
Being afraid to walk alone.
Having schools tell you that your skirts are too short.
Having adults tell you what to do with your body.
What to wear.
What to say.
"Cover your shoulders."
"Cover your legs."
"Don't speak out."
They expect us to measure up to the idea of the "ideal woman" constructed by boys.
To be quiet.
To listen to boys.
To care what boys think.
A boy's opinion or approval is the last thing I want.
People never listen.
Not people who can change things.
We feel alone.
And like no one cares, because they only do if we match their heteronormative societal mold.
So yeah... I like to dream.
In my dreams,
I am free.



אמיגיל

Are you prepared?
They ask,
and she is already beginning to paddle
in the sacred pool that
embraces her like a father to his child.
Are you ready?
She listens closely,
her mother holding on to her
her brother to the left treading,
their arms and legs not yet tired.
Are you up to this?
She recites the words
that she has practiced during a full rotation of the earth
and the water seems to clutch her more
as each syllable escapes her.
Are you sure?
She hears the woman question the group
and affirmations echo against the walls
the water collects every answer
and remembers it closely.
Are you tired?
Her mother leans into her
the droplets of the mikvah
clinging to her skin
even after climbing out.
Are you up for it?
Repeated continuously
to a girl as she grows, still bathing in the water
not yet overcome by fatigue
floating gets more comfortable after a while.
Out of the pool
yet still plunging in it
from the very first second then.
to her very last second now,
Yes, she is.

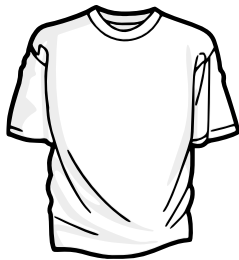
Amia H.



fresh laundry

um I wore your shirt
to bed last night, and I had
just done my laundry

-Anonymous



Reader's Love Song

It all starts with a cracking of a spine
I look down and think
What do you have to offer?
And they answer.
They say twists and turns through worlds unseen
Falling in love on paper
Being dropped then caught
Again and again and you'll never tire of it
Dreaming, wishing, wanting, waiting
Frantically happy
Desperately heartbroken
As everything fades around me
And I am left only this
I say
What do you have to offer?
And they answer,
Adventure.

Anonymous

The Last of the Real Ones

the adventure of friendship and the thrill of first love
sounds of their laughter echoing
and you are stardust
reflecting in the rippling puddles under your feet
you are mirrors, shattered, forming prisms in the sky
still in each other's arms but no longer trembling
graffiti scrawled on old brick walls
from those who came before
no defined beginning, no certain end

Charlotte G.



If only I knew

by Stem



Even now you know,
How I'm feeling inside
Your whispers of love
Float through the wind
And brush against the leaves of my
tree

Even though the trunk is
Hollow inside

I bear my fruits
And shed my leaves
But my roots are still severed
Cut because of your disease

We used to help each other grow
Or at least that's what I thought
was true

But you never opened up

Excerpt from "We Were Promised"

Hard asphalt on his cheek like a million little knives.
Some stranger's knee crushing down on his neck, choking him,
smothering him,
I can't breathe!
But this isn't just some stranger.
A police officer, supposed to be a protector and peacemaker for
all.

But for all?
It must be for all, as the centuries old parchment with fading
ink,

Written by men made immortal by these few pages,
Claims that these rights are for all.
But as the man is forced on the ground, heart racing, mind
bracing, still tracing,
From where in the worshiped document called the "Bill of
Rights" says
That this can be a reality.

But it doesn't.
In fact, the fading ink illustrates the opposite,
That nothing he did warrants this, this pain is not fair, I need
air,
I can't breathe.
I can't breathe.

Breathe what? The poisoned "rights", the freedom and life
That he and all others were promised?
But what is a promise when it is made by people who care more
about power and control
Than the real lives and people as a whole
Who are the country?
But they don't care about us.

We were promised.

-Anonymous

Lies (Anonymous)

The lie was as slippery as a sidewalk on an icy winter day.
New lies told are like legs struggling to hold you upright.
Not knowing what to expect if someone finds out, falling forward,
Or backward.
Broken faith resembling a bruise
People lie all the time.
Sometimes little white lies like tiny snowflakes,
Or huge ones like a thick layer of sleet covering everything
Streets, stop signs, and trails
Lies are hard to sustain.
Whenever someone lies and tries to clean it up it's like
The sidewalks aren't salted
There's no way to keep you from falling.
Eyes darting
Palms sweating
Knees knocking
Sometimes, you need to lie to survive
When things just seem off
it's better to put the truth on the backburner
Life or death can come from lies
Others might deceive for fun,
Finding it to be like a maze, puzzle, or game.
Waiting to see who will stumble and plummet first,
And who will have the worst consequences.
There's no perfect formula to deceiving others.
Some people are just more naive,
More clumsy, and likely to skid easily.
Flopping around and floundering
You never know what you'll get
What do you lie about? What is it that you seem to
Throw yourself out on the slippery sidewalk for?
Is it school? Work? Or keep your mouth shut with a smirk?
Getting back up from a fall, like a lie is always hard.
People's trust is questioned, no one seems to believe you anymore.
It feels like a hole you just can't seem to get out of.
Lies are a slippery slope, where you
Fall and don't get back up

Paper Dress

By LG

I could read my favorite dress.
It hung in my closet, resting against the lilac walls. Leftover paper lay
lost in my white and green flowered carpet.
At seven, I concluded that I was having a fashion emergency.
Scraps of fabric lay beside me like fallen leaves, missed by a rake on its
last legs.
I saw potential,
The potential of my owl puppet to become a new hat,
Hairbrushes as microphones,
Flowers as hair accessories.
Light was pouring through the door. I squinted, my dad was leaning
back on a knit brown chair reading the paper. I asked,
"Could I borrow a couple?"
"Sure thing." He replied.
My right hand gripped our large red kitchen scissors, a stapler in my
left.
Clouds glided by my open window leisurely, going unnoticed as I began
to cut, staple and crumple my way through the morning news.
By noon, I slipped it on.
My skin felt cold against the thick pages of BREAKING NEWS- I was yet
too young to understand.
I peered into the hallway mirror, edges kissed by small fingerprints.
I saw staples holding thin strips of print, ruffled together forming a
skirt.
My hair hung over the paper now fitted to my top.
Paper twists held the dress by my shoulders.
I twirled.
Words spun encircling my hips and waist.
I discovered my own superpower.
A vision of something I wished to be, and the potential to create it.

Gen Z Anthem

How can you write an anthem for a generation that is so clearly
divided
While we may seem united
the closer you look the more you begin to see the cracks
There are people who want to ban transgender children from
playing school sports
While other wants to support transgender children in
transitioning into whoever they want to be
Will an anthem unite us?
Probably not
So why bother
We have bigger issues to solve in our world right now
I would rather solve the issues of racism and misogyny in our
country
Then write an anthem that only might unite us
If I could guarantee it would unite Gen Z
Then I would be telling a different story.

-Charlotte

Do You Hear The Quiet?

Do you hear the quiet?
Not the soothing kind
But the kind after someone takes another person's life
An unsettling stillness
People stay inside
Too afraid to leave their own homes
To step outside is to risk being shot
And the person who did this?
They will go unharmed
While the victims' families?
They suffer, crying over their children's bodies

-Audrey H.

Music. The foundation,

A factor that unites entire
generations.
“I got loyalty inside my DNA”
These lyrics would tremble
our bones
With pride as beat after beat
Fills our ears.
The collective jump when No
Problem by
Chance the Rapper would
blare over speakers,
The empowerment and
femininity felt when
Meagan spits “Rich Bitch
Energy”
The subtle cringe of shoulders
when Whip/Nae Nae
Comes on, even though 6
years ago
We couldn't get enough of it.
Everybody jumping in to pose
At the high-pitched “ding” in
Doja Cat's Kiss Me More.
The hoarse but passionate
screams of
“Why am I so easy to forget
like that”
Whenever SZA plays.
The instant camaraderie
music makes of us
And how easily we forget
about it.
Gen Z,
A generation united by music.

Anonymous



Who Am I?

I am a human
A human on a planet that is rapidly
deteriorating
I am a woman
A woman in a world where we are
thought of as “less than”
I am a United States citizen
A citizen in a country rooted in
systemic racism
I am an ETHS student
A student at a school that on the local
news for gun found inside the
building
I am a daughter
A daughter to parents who constantly
worry about my future
I am a sister
A sister to an annoying middle school
student
I am a cousin
A cousin who is also a free babysitter
at family events
I am the daughter of an immigrant
A daughter of an immigrant who has
trouble connecting with both sides of
my culture
Who Am I?
The question that haunts us all
Who really are we?
Are we really the amazing people we
seem to think we are?
Or are we actually an insignificant
population compared to what is out
there in the rest of the
universe
Will we ever know?
That I can not answer
But I think most people can agree that
no matter what or who you believe in
We are not alone in this universe

Anonymous

METAMORPHOSIS

Anonymous

As children we chase butterflies around.
They flit and fly and seem to be magic
their seemingly glowing wings reminiscent
of our hopes and dreams.
We're told that they're good luck
they exist purely to demonstrate hope.
We would ensnare their beauty
taken into the palms of our hands
we cherish that moment
The delicate creature now one with us
Even if only for a few seconds
We were never told to fear them
Why shy from something so beautiful
It's only when we're older
and they've flown to our stomachs
that we envy our naive past selves.

FREE AS A BIRD

A 100-Word Memoir

My fingers brush the translucent turquoise water, skimming tiny ripples stirred up by the movement of the chalk white board beneath me. The angry knot in my chest has unraveled, leaving behind only an empty space, broad as the sky above me. I breathe out a fatigued sigh. Suddenly, the magnificent sun streaked horizon is interrupted by a small, delicate bird, flapping its wings slowly as it flies. It looks completely and utterly free. The broad emptiness in my chest does not fill; it simply disappears, leaving me light as a feather and free as that bird.

-Anonymous

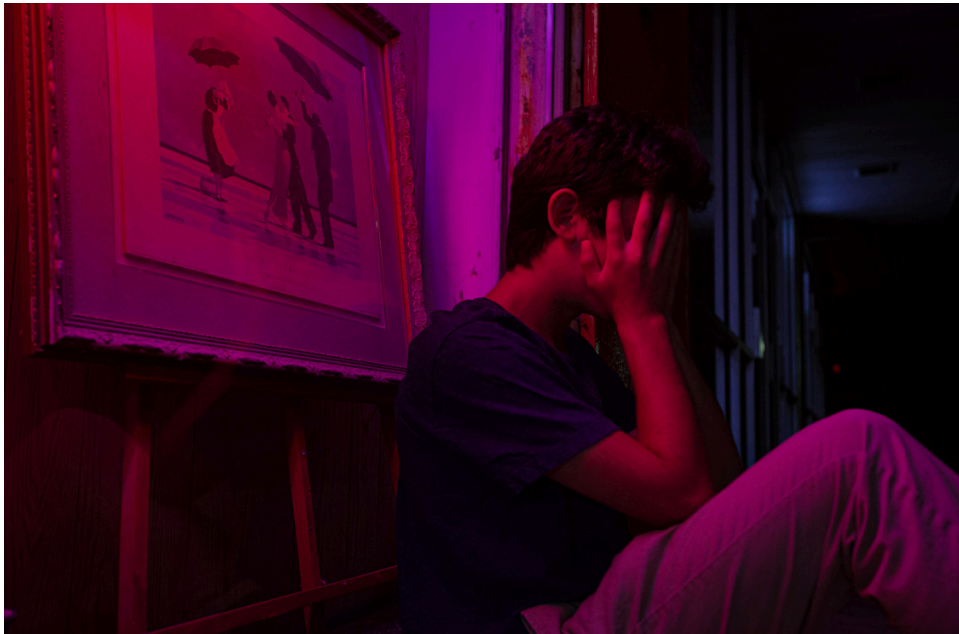




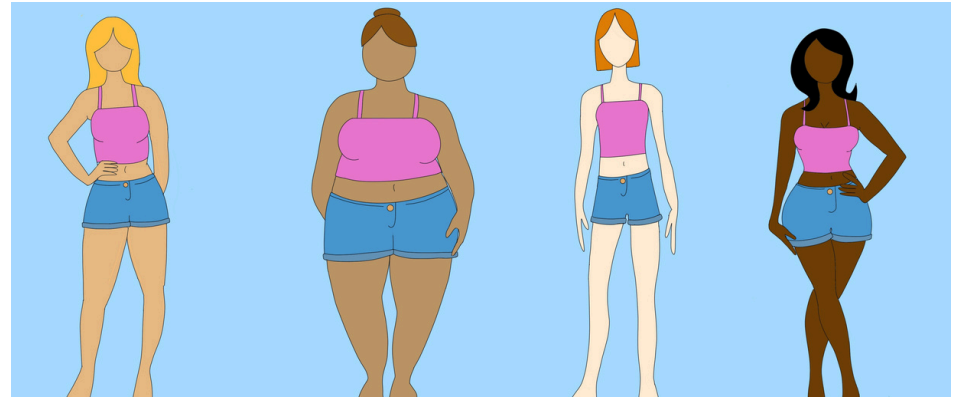
Pictured to the left is a piece of digital art entitled “Evanston” It pictures the lighthouse on Lake Michigan and was submitted by an anonymous creator.



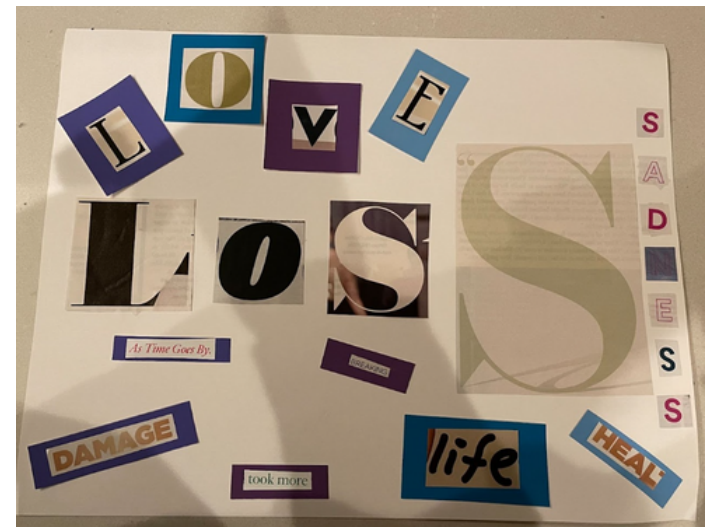
Below is a photograph titled, “Pray You Catch Me” submitted by Ben L.



NORMAL BODIES



LOVE & LOSS



Excerpt from an Anonymous Letter to the Illinois High School Association and the ETHS Athletic Department



"As a student, I am taking multiple advanced placement classes as well as other challenging classes that all give a lot of homework. As an athlete, I play hockey and baseball for the school. I am no superhuman, I cannot work with the utmost efficiency, I cannot avoid the trials and tribulations of daily life, I am like most other people at this school. As a student athlete, balancing schoolwork, sports, and leisure is the single most difficult skill to harness. There are only so many hours in a day, and when most of that day is spent at school and practice, as well as taking care of our day to day tasks and needs, tell me, where does sleep fit? How are we supposed to get the eight hours of sleep each night that doctors say is necessary for our age?"

Excerpt from an Anonymous Critique on ETHS Homework Policies



Homework is something that every student at ETHS has to endure. Students at ETHS are completing hours of unnecessary homework every night. Due in large part to the dedication and professionalism of the teachers at ETHS, our school is one of the top rated academic high schools in the country. However, the homework that is given does not contribute to the success of the students at ETHS. An abundance of research now shows that homework is unnecessary and detrimental to students' health. Homework should be limited every night due to homework not being beneficial because it creates undue stress and does not aid in the learning process.

Excerpt from an Anonymous Argumentative Piece for Four Day School Weeks



The four-day school week in various schedule forms is already being tested by several schools in the country, and offers several benefits when compared to the current five day schedule. These benefits include the potential for schools to allot extra funds to projects that help students learn, increased student and teacher morale, and a better attendance rate among students. Moving (gerund) to a four day school week may solve these and other problems and create new opportunities for student growth and development.

Excerpt from an Anonymous Critique on High School Athletics



We as players and families have been exploited, taken advantage of, and abused for far too long without mention or observation. Though my experience has been in baseball, it rings true for many other sports as well. The exploitation and capitalism within youth sports are being repeated over and over. What we are asking for is bigger than one person, we are asking for a culture change, and an even larger societal change, because no game should have the right to be so anxiety-provoking, time-consuming, and family-disrupting. If legislative action is what is needed, then we shall make it happen. It should be made criminal to abuse power like the coaches and organizations continue to do. What should be normalized is the competitive fun that we look forward to, not the stressful time management and financing that we are accustomed to these days. It's simple, let the kids play.

How Relationships Are Affected Through Bereaved Adolescents

A Multi-Genre Reflection on Influence of Childhood Loss.

By Maya Neikrug

Editorial Excerpts:

"Society usually misses the real reasons for why someone's behavior may be reserved, or sad or angry, because they are unaware of the burden this person is carrying on their shoulders. The stakes for depression and damaged relationships are high for [grieving teens]. Adolescents have difficulties moving forward with their lives in a healthy way and may end up in toxic, abusive, distrustful, bitter, detached or overly dependent relationships if they do not heal properly from their own pain and trauma. However this is a generalization and although there is demographic-related data, there is no clear cut result, as it is situational for each person."

"Spreading more awareness on parental loss is something we can improve tremendously. As a society we need to do a better job at representing this demographic of adolescents more in TV, movies and magazines and children's books and songs to help build awareness of these struggles. Nobody should struggle alone. It is my hope that by building awareness, these adolescents will feel less ashamed and less depressed, and so they can get the daily support they need to heal, recover and to ultimately be able to be in healthier relationships."

Excerpts from an interview with Neikrug's cousin, who lost their mother to cancer at a young age:

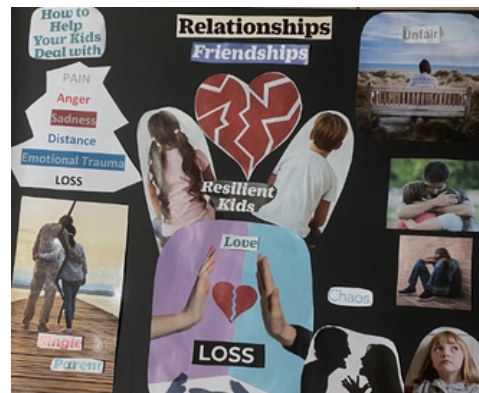
"You grow up fast when tragedy strikes."

"I was bored because a lot of my friends were not at the same maturity level that I was forced to be at a young age."

"In high school, I felt a lot of anger and I think that affected a specific relationship for a very long time."

"If I could talk to myself as a younger me, I would tell her to find someone- find anyone - well, find a woman and ask her whatever you want because, I was afraid and I did not have anyone to ask those questions to, so finding someone like that to share and be there for those questions would have saved me a lot of pain."

A Visual Representation:



Conclusion:

Every child deals with things differently, and how one chooses to grieve most of the time (despite data) is situational. However, every source that I read mentioned how having good friendships, and a strong support system make this difficult time a bit easier.



Bagel Art Cafe Review



Though I've tried a few different bagel sandwiches at Bagel Art (they are all phenomenal), the Lox n' Key is my go-to. The layers of bagel, chive cream cheese, tomato, onion, capers, and of course, lox, always hit the spot. A close second, and also one of my frequently ordered items, is the Egg Cheddar n' Avocado. It's outstanding. And of course, you can't go wrong with a simple bagel and cream cheese to pair with whatever your favorite coffee is. I really think that there is something for everyone there with their wide variety of bagels and combinations that they've made, and of course, the ones made up by customers.

(An excerpt)

-Clara G

Melanie Martinez Review

Melanie Martinez today is growing more into the public and growing in her fan base as more people take in the greatness that she creates and works so hard to accomplish. Her k-12 album is something that everyone should listen to and relate to if they have had a similar experience growing up and going through middle school to high school to an adult. What Ms. Melanie Martinez talks about and shares with the world should be better recognized to more people because it deserves more attention and appreciation to a point of an award.

-Anonymous



An excerpt from

Why are Conversations about Mental Health in the Black Community like Oil and Water?

By Cecily J.

I can't count how many times I've been at Thanksgiving or visited my grandparents and have heard the words, "I don't need therapy, it's unnecessary!" My father went to five therapy sessions after my grandmother died and declared himself "fine" or cured, Although he still displayed obvious traits of a depressed, anxiety-ridden person. But this belief isn't just exclusive to him. This idea has plagued the Black community for too long. According to The New York Times, it's common fact that because of much adversity, the Black community believes that they must walk around with a tough shell all the time. We must begin to dismantle these ideas.

Much longer than I've been alive, there has been internalized stigma within the Black community surrounding conversations about mental health or seeking help. A study states that Black people are 20% more likely to experience mental health problems than White people. This is understandable seeing as dating all the way back to slavery, the medical field was known to discriminate against people of color. It's imperative we abolish the stigma perpetuated by society that Black people shouldn't seek help.

But that doesn't mean that we as a community haven't tried to seek our own solutions to help remedy hardships. It's a common fact that oftentimes the Black community seeks refuge in their faith for help. Although this is true, it shouldn't be the only source of aid for our mental health. Christine Williams-Kelly, a licensed mental health counselor and advocate insists that "The Church" shouldn't be used in lieu of professional assistance.

Luckily, as generations move forward conversations have started to blossom. Generation Z has had numerous conversations surrounding the benefits of talking about mental health with your peers. I've had a safe space to talk about the struggles I have gone through. For example, I see the social worker and get to talk about stresses of school and family trauma. I feel grateful to be more blessed than those before me who didn't have these resources and were shamed for talking about mental hardships. Spaces like these have been proven to help and must be prioritized. According to the Chicago Tribune, grants were placed in multiple underprivileged areas for mental health professionals of color and have helped teens immensely.

The Problem With Efficiency

My dad is an avid reader and book collector. He enjoys all types of books, but Fahrenheit 451 is one of his favorites. He appreciates the complex story that makes you think about the society that we live in, and the complicated stories and many layers to the characters. Ray Bradbury portrays this complex story with complicated characters through this dystopian novel featuring a society in which books are banned. In Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury characterizes Faber and Montag as individuals who seek knowledge and power, no matter the risks, as they value the choice to learn.

Bradbury characterizes Faber as someone who values the power of knowledge. He used to be a professor, and when he was no longer able to continue that career, he started to teach himself how to work with electronics because of his desire to learn.

"I've lived alone for so many years, throwing images on walls with my imagination. Fiddling with electronics, and radio transmission has been my hobby," said Faber to Montag while they discussed Montag's desire to read books (Bradbury 86). Faber continues to try and learn despite all of the obstacles that are in his way. In this quote we can see that Faber is currently learning about electronics and radios.

Bradbury characterizes Montag as someone who is extremely curious and values the choice to learn. He wants to have the option to read and gain knowledge because it will give him more power over his life. Montag is telling Mildred about his desire to read the books that he has been hiding in their house, which she does not support: "We can't burn these. I want to look at them, at least look at them once" (Bradbury 63). Montag thinks reading and gaining knowledge will give him more power over his life. He thinks if he learns more about the world, it will make him happier. He is willing to risk getting caught and going to jail, if it means he can gain more knowledge.

As we learn more about the characters Faber and Montag in Fahrenheit 451, we learn about their desire to grow their knowledge and power, even if it means risking everything. Parts of this story seem eerily similar to today's society. Even though this book was written years ago, it can be used as a tale of caution. It warns us about what the possible outcomes could be if we keep trying to make life more efficient and take the thinking out of everything.

- Anonymous

Dear Justin Bieber,

An excerpt from an essay

You might be wondering why I am holding you to such a high standard, but it is simply because I know that you have the potential to make a track that actually upholds the qualities that make up the genre. Why? Because you've done it on multiple occasions, in fact, that's what made you the star that you are today. The covers that you did in 2007 and 2008 of Ne-Yo's songs "So Sick" and "Because of You" demonstrate that you have the vocal range and control required to achieve an R&B sound even without instrumental or backing vocals. Not only do I believe this, but Usher, one of the biggest stars in the field, believed it too. According to an interview you gave to Access Hollywood in 2007, when he saw those videos and others like them, he saw the potential in you, flew you out to Atlanta, and eventually signed you. And from that moment on you were a pop ICON. Understandably, you did what you had to do and maintained a very pop-y sound in order to cultivate the cult following you have today, but you never ventured too far from your R&B roots. So in 2014 when you released Journals, it was a pleasure to see you fully embracing the R&B sound but with the proper production backing you up. Because of this, I am genuinely confused as to why you would think that an album with seventeen songs that sound like different variations of "Yummy" can be respected in the R&B field. As previously stated, the vocal styles, melodies, and chords were all simple, repetitive, and reminiscent of pop. Therefore the statement "it is undeniably, unmistakably an R&B Album!" is very deniable.



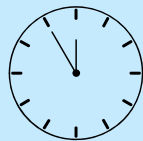
An Excerpt From

Death with Dignity: A Human Right

[Physician-assisted Suicide (PAS)] should be legal in the United States because it promotes patient freedom and people have the right to die peacefully.

PAS promotes patients' freedom to make autonomous decisions for themselves. Autonomy (the right to self-govern) is not absolute, but is a very important human right especially when it comes to one making the decision to hasten their death: "An autonomous decision to hasten one's death is a profoundly important decision for a terminally ill person that involves his or her most significant values. There is, therefore, an extraordinarily strong moral reason not to restrict such a decision" (Preston). Limiting a person's ability to exercise one of their last opportunities to use autonomous decision-making by trying to control whether they die is morally wrong. People are oftentimes encouraged to take control of their lives from a very young age, through eating healthy foods, deciding on a career, choosing where they want to live, etc. There is no reason that a person choosing to go through with PAS shouldn't be seen as a form of self-government just because death, which is final, is involved.

Modern medicine ... has caused many people to be hooked up to machines and on lots of medication just to keep them alive which not all people want. It is not and should not be their responsibility to keep the moral compass of others straight. Not allowing, it takes away from free will in a sense by limiting autonomous choice. A person's right to self-government shouldn't be limited, especially on such a personal topic on the basis of our own personal beliefs that the person actually suffering may or may not believe in. So if America truly wants to label itself as a "free country" then there should be no question as to whether physician-assisted suicide should be legal or not.



- Anonymous

Dear Lieutenant Governor Patrick,

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of critical race theory in Texas schools and to urge you to reconsider the passing of HB3979. As a student of history, I have long been moved by the words of Frederick Douglass, who wrote: "Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave." I believe that the study of critical race theory is essential for understanding and addressing the deep-seated racial inequalities that continue to plague our society.

Dear Texas, You Can't Hide History

It is the message of forbidden knowledge that Douglass gives that makes critical race theory so important, not just for African Americans, but for all Americans. It is a framework that helps us to understand the ways in which our society has been shaped by centuries of racial inequality, and the ways in which these inequalities continue to manifest today. It allows us to see the ways in which our legal, political, and economic systems have been used to perpetuate racism and to work towards making real, lasting change.

I urge you to consider the impact of Douglass's words and the importance of critical race theory in our schools. Please, consider the damage you've caused by allowing HB3979 to pass and deny students the opportunity to learn about and grapple with the realities of race and racism in our society.

Sincerely,
Vincent Mena



(An excerpt)

Dear,

I don't think we should speak until work starts again. I can't be this for you any longer. I'm not even sure what I am to you anymore. I don't think you know either. Somewhere along the way it stopped even being about me. I became a symbol for you. I became a vehicle for your comfort, your spiritual satisfaction(don't argue with that term you know it's not the point). You told me you don't care if I respond to your texts anymore. Yet, you still send them. You send your little book reviews, your little daily anecdotes. What the hell am I supposed to do with that? I don't have it in me right now to give the attention you want and deserve. I'm not your therapist. I'm not your confession (don't argue with that one either). I'm not your listening ears. You can't just dump your words on me anymore. I know you're not trying to do this and I know you'll recognize that doesn't matter. I'm sick of being treated this way like I'm not a real full person. I can't do this anymore. You told me your feelings may have been somewhat romantic. I saw that before but not anymore. You didn't know if that was true but it made more sense. Fixation isn't love even if it feels like it. I don't know if I'm still making sense. I don't want to create conflict. Just please respect this boundary. You don't have to try to fix this. Please just let it happen. I'm not saying I never want to speak again. I just need some time to myself. I love you and I hope you don't hate me for this.

Sincerely,

Written by Bennett G

An Excerpt From "Dear Dad, I Double Dog Dare You To Get Me A New Puppy," By An Anonymous Student . . .

"Dear Dad,

I would like to start this letter by letting you know that I truly appreciate everything you do for our family and I want you to know that no matter what you buy me, or don't buy me, I will still always love you. With that being said--this weekend--I came to you and asked if I could get a new dog for Hanukkah and you immediately shut it down saying, "One dog is enough to worry about, we don't need two". Now I very much understand the point of view you are coming from, but I just wanted to point out that you said something very similar eleven years ago when my siblings and I asked you for our first dog. Over and over again you said "three kids is enough, how could our family possibly take care of a dog". While that was a valid point at the time, I think we can both agree that now the decision to get our cute golden-doodle, Reese, was one of the best decisions you ever made. Reese lights up our day, keeps us company and is a staple in our family. So now, eleven years later, when I came to you with the same question I was quite surprised with your very swift denial. After all, I would think that you would realize from our last experience that although the short term price, effort and responsibility that comes from getting a dog might seem scary, the ends will justify the means. Therefore, when Hanukkah season rolls around, I believe you should think twice before shooting down this amazing idea. I believe for the sake of me and this whole household, you should buy me a new puppy."



Officious Winter

My alarm goes off, "AH!AH!AH!" I click stop and know that wasn't a good idea, but somehow I work my body and lean up rapped in my pumpkin orange fluffy blanket and light orange comforter with cream-colored flowers. You could tell they were done with a sewing machine but done well enough to a point where no one would complain, but if im completely honest I couldn't even see then my whole room was drenched in darkness. The only colors showing were the flowers on my closet door that a had painted a year prior. The little light peeking through my light-blocking shades that were installed in summer because of how bright my room had become made that possible, but... now I miss the sun shining. To see the light is now harder than looking through the see-through cream shades, I look at the light and move the shade to the side with my middle and pointer finger barely being able to move my arm, I realize the light wasn't making light but the snow. An Officious thing winter is, the seasonal depression was slowly dripping into my eyes like the icicles hanging on the edge of my window sill sharp enough to be used as the "best murder weapon". After looking at the crime scene I close the shade and get up out of my bed moving 200 muscles with each step. "Creak" the perforce floor makes, how to hop into the shower like a Sidewinder leaping to get its prey. I hate how mornings are colder than the nights, why now do I feel this way I think as my eyes shut and I start to fall asleep under the warm shower water as my head rests against the cold porcelain tile wall in my shower. I jolt myself awake get out and continue to get ready, as I put on my pants and throw on a sweater I then put on my shoes and mess up so I retie them put on my coat, and then, go. As I close my door, I realize this will be my life for four more years, and the cycle will repeat tomorrow.

-Madeleine F

a GOOD DAY TO DREAM

I open my eyes as my nose is assaulted by the sweet smell of all kinds of flowers you've never heard of. I look around, eyes met with sprawling forests and rolling hills as dragons fly overhead, dancing through the wind as if it was their stage. I see nearby villages, with creatures of all different sorts going about their cheerful day, children screaming and shouting with glee as they chase each other through the streets. I lean against a gorgeous multicolored tree, leaves and fruit adorned with vibrant shades of orange, pink, and red. The bark itself is smooth, soft, and squishy, begging me to rest my back against it and take a refreshing nap. I pluck a curious-looking pink fruit from a low branch, savoring the rich delightful sweetness as I take a bite. I look up, absorbing this moment under the soft vermilion sky until I notice a small crack. Without warning, the crack spreads, turning the sky from a rich vermilion into a dreadful gray. That gray seeps through the land like a malignant cancer, the flowers withering as it takes over. I watch in horror as clouds of ash blow past me, stinging my eyes. Those dancing dragons peel away like shedding skin, exposing the horrifying truth beneath them as pillars of fire scorch the land. I cry out in agony as those childish screams of glee turn into those of terror and pain. Suddenly, the forest I'm sitting in is no longer a forest, only a wasteland of barren rubble, the fruit in my hand now a piece of moldy bread. Tears begin to stain the ground beneath me. Why can't I go back?

-M.C.



*And with that,
you've reached the end.*

Thank you for reading!
We hope you enjoyed this issue, or at least are
leaving with something to chew on for a bit.

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