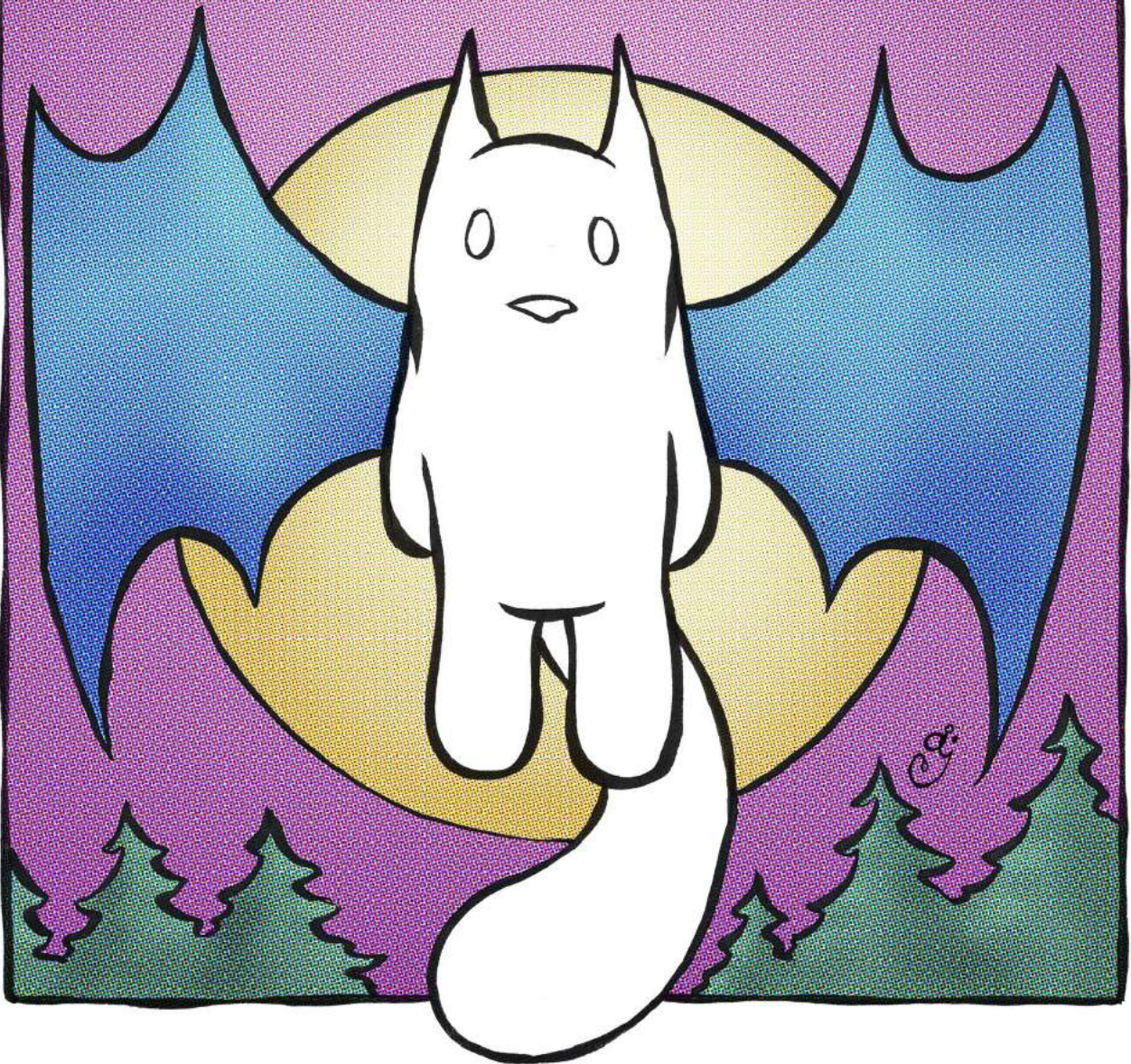


# ARTEMIS

## ANTHOLOGY





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Story Studio Writing Society

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# ***ABOUT ARTEMIS PLACE***

**Artemis Place Secondary** is a tuition-free, Special Education Independent School. Grades 10-12 are delivered through self-paced, personalized learning to meet each student's goals and needs. Individual and group work is often cross-curricular and a low ratio and small class sizes enable a supportive atmosphere for students who struggle in large schools. In addition to required courses, other learning opportunities include Visual Arts, Foods and Nutrition, Yoga, Environmental Science, Family Studies, Life skills and Career planning. In the Counselling and Life-skills programming, each student works one to one with a Youth and Family Counsellor to set and attain goals. Skill-building workshops are offered on topics such as non-violent communication, budgeting, healthy relationships, mental wellness, gender diversity, and Indigenous ways of knowing. The Artemis Young Parent Program serves pregnant teens and young mothers in a nurturing community while also providing a safe, stimulating environment for their children. We have an on-site licensed infant/ toddler centre where the staff of Early Childhood Educators provide responsive care for the children along with building respectful, trusting family relationships.

Learn more at [artemisplace.org](http://artemisplace.org)

# ***ABOUT STORY STUDIO***

**Story Studio** is an award-winning Victoria-based charity that inspires, educates and empowers youth to become great storytellers, transforming lives and strengthening communities. Since 2010, we have delivered innovative, 'fun-first' workshops to almost 10,000 youth, improving their narrative capacity and encouraging a life-long engagement with literacy and the arts.

Learn more at [storystudio.ca](http://storystudio.ca)

# ***MIDNIGHT***

by  
Ava

Bess sighed, sitting at her bedside, her head still light from the blood loss in her left ear. The needle gun had pierced through her lobe; she only got one done since the woman who did it pierced right through the cartilage, making a popping noise and blood spurt. Bess remembered her cries sounding muffled and drowned out going partly deaf to the noise from the pain she felt. All she remembered was her mother's horrified expression as the thick splash of her own blood hitting against her face slowly dripped down and hit the floor.

Mom had rushed her out of the mall and into a drug store for medical supplies. Bess cupped her hand on her left ear while her mom held the other. They sped past cars across the road like they were on some type of mission.

After her mom made the big scene they sat in the car in silence until she spoke, "We should've gotten that haircut first, huh?"

She nudged Bess lightly but Bess wasn't in the mood for jokes. *'I lost my chance to finally look decent and not look like a freak,'* she thought to herself.

Mom fell silent, her eyes made it back to the road as she started, "Your dad said that needle guns are a hazard, I should have listened to him. I'll get him to take you somewhere next time okay? We'll do the hair cut."





Bess gave her a nod and sighed as she looked back out the window, her long black hair in the way of her sight, that memory now glaring out her bedroom window.

She curled her feet in and pulled up her sheets, sliding down the mattress and tucking herself in. She turned out her lamp light and laid down, closing her eyes, hoping this was all a nightmare.

***UNTITLED***

by  
Caesar

The sounds of the squawking seagulls filled the stiff morning air, the sounds of the waves crashing against the cliff side like a lullaby. The clock on the wall began its morning threadbare song, echoing off the walls and into crestfallen ears. The smell of burnt coffee filled the blue stone house, but it did nothing to brighten the spirits of the bed's occupant who lay, eyes wide open, silently cursing after another sleepless night which ended in sweat soaked bed sheets. Hair tangled again from tossing and turning, he rose from the rigid bed like a vampire from its coffin, feeling the weight of sleeplessness seeping into his bones.

Sticky was the perfect way to describe how it felt to peel off the scratchy blanket. Despair was the perfect word to describe the emotions that he felt after waking up from another one of the seemingly endless piles of night terrors that seemed to get bigger day after day. You would think after ten years it wouldn't fester for so long.

Time waited for nobody and the day began. Dragging himself out of the soaked bed, he shuffled toward the vanity. The house was still, quiet, and exactly what was needed with the pounding in his head starting all ready. The sun was rising steadily, and the clouds were slowly drifting by.

He looked in the mirror, and regretted it. The bags under his eyes were only getting deeper, his face becoming more hollow by the day and the colour once

filling his face fading. The once bright amber eyes of a young sapling of a soldier that once saw all the beauty in the world and admired it with an awed gaze were dwindled down to nothing more than those of a pitiful man who now saw it with nothing but the selfishness of cruel men.





# ***CHLOE'S KINDERGARTEN CLASS***

by  
Emily S.

It was Chloe's first day of kindergarten. Her teacher's name was Mrs Fletcher. Chloe was super excited to make new friends, and was looking forward to learning lots of new things.

She was also hoping that she could practice her super powers in class to help with any problems.

As Chloe walked into class, the first thing she saw was two of her friends fighting over a toy. She ran over to them and asked, "What's wrong?"

Mark cried, "Vanessa won't let me play with the toy."

Chloe didn't like seeing her friends upset, so she figured out a solution!

She went over to the bin of toys, used her super powers to find a similar toy and brought it back over to Vanessa. She said, "Why don't you play with this for a while, and then you can switch with Mark when you're done. Then you can share both toys!"

Both Vanessa and Mark agreed and they all continued to play happily.

As Chloe was playing she heard another student, Susan, crying and panicking because she couldn't find her special teddy bear in the pile of stuffed animals. Chloe then used her powers to make all the stuffed animals float in a line. Susan then went down the line and the fourth one was her teddy!

"Thank you, Chloe!" said Susan.

Chloe has found that with all the responsibility of having super powers, it is the pleasure of helping others that fuels her powers. So the more she helps, the more powerful she is. And her favourite activity is to have fun with her friends, and try to help whenever she can!

Suddenly, there was a loud "*BANG*" and a huge crash! Mrs Fletcher was reaching up to a top shelf for a book, when the whole shelf fell down, right on top of her leg!

Chloe ran over and used her super strength to lift the shelf up. "1,2,3 LIFT!" Chloe grunted as she heaved the shelf and put it back into place.

Then Chloe ran over to get the bandages out of the first aid kit. She started wrapping Ms. Fletcher's leg.

"Oh, thank you!" says Ms. Fletcher.





When Chloe heard the bell ring, she waved goodbye to her friends and teacher. She ran to her mother, who was waiting to pick her up.

“How was your first day?” her mother asked.

“It was so good!” Chloe explained all that happened that day, and how she was able to help with her super powers.

Later, Chloe's mother made supper, and set the table for a family dinner, with Chloe and her father. Chloe was exhausted after such an eventful day. When bedtime came, Chloe's father read her a bedtime story, just as he always did. Chloe couldn't keep her eyes open, and she fell fast asleep instantly.

She had to be rested and ready to face any situations of the new day to come!

***THE END.***

# ***SPRINGTIME BLUES***

by

Emma

Winter and Spring are the best of friends, spending all of their time together, but Winter has to go and Spring is not happy about that at all.

“I have to leave, you'll be okay. Just head to the garden, Summer will meet you there after you're done your duties.” Winter places her hands on Spring's face and leans in for a kiss on the cheek. \*Kiss\* Spring blushes and grins as her head bows and tears begin to trickle.

“You know I can't stay forever.” As Winter slides her cold but soft hands down Spring's neck and then her arms, Spring's smile weakens and she starts to cry. Winter fades down the halls of time and fog fills up the empty corridors. All Spring can do is cry because her best friend has left her. She turns around and starts to drag her feet across the cold floor tiles.

Then Spring stops in her tracks and whips her head around.

“Winter, wait! Please!” But Winter is already far down the deep, tall hallway and out of sight. “She's gone. She never said if she was coming back,” Springs sobs at the thought of her friend disappearing. Needing to head to the garden, Spring crosses her arms and holds herself for comfort.

*‘Is she lost? Does she need me too?’* Spring is stuck in her own mind, thoughts swirling. *‘Winter, please come back. Please.’*

Spring looks up and out the windows of the door to the garden and lets out a quivered sigh. “Well this is my time to shine,” she says as she wipes her tears off



her cheek and places her palms on the cold door knob, twisting it. As she walks down the brick alley she can't help but let out all her anger and sadness. Anger that Winter left with little to no explanation, but sad because Winter was her closest friend. "Oh Winter, it hasn't even been that long but I miss you so much. Your hair, big and soft like a huskies coat and your eyes, blue like a frozen lake. Your skin is soft like fresh snow, I know a cliché, but it's true." Spring sits down on the bench next to the sunflowers as her tears flow down, watering the flowers as they sit up in their soil.

"Hey! Spring?"

Spring turns her head in confusion and looks over the hedge, "Oh, hi Summer." Her surprised expression turned back to sad and droopy.

"I knew it was you. It's your time in the garden right now but is it okay if I join you?" Summer runs around the bush fence that divides the garden from the beach.

"I don't know Summer, I'm not feeling the best right now, I don't really want any company," Spring said, bringing her arm up to rub her shoulder.

"Oh. Well are you sure? I'm not doing anything right now." Summer takes a seat next to Spring, he looks over at the sunflowers and smiles.

“Well, I guess you could stay and help out for a bit.” Spring looks down at the forest of semi-tall grass and blushes, she looks up at him and his natural soft golden glow brings up her mood; but just a little.

Summer stands up and walks over to the daffodils and puts his hands on the lime tinted stem so gently. He closes his eyes and the flowers spring up and flourish even more, the yellow turns brighter and the green of the leaves gets darker. Spring watches as Summer does this and drags herself over to the silk hydrangeas and suddenly Winter races through her mind.

“Oh Winter, your beauty is so dominant in my mind,” she says as tears stream down her face and track through to her hands as she kneels down and pulls her fingers across the soil to hydrate the bushes.

Summer stands up and makes his way over to Spring. She looks up at him from her crouched position as he towers over her. She glances up at him and she can't help but admire his golden glow. He notices tears on her face but Spring wipes them away quickly. Summer holds out his hand motioning for Spring to take his palms so he can lift her back up to her feet. She obliges and grabs his hand; He pulls her up with some force causing Spring to jump a little when she gets up. He gives her a hug, wrapping his strong warm arms around her petite torso. Spring perks up in surprise and proceeds to enclose her arms around his shoulders. His grip gets a bit tighter as he starts to twirl around to try and get Spring to smile bigger but Spring gets a bit scared, letting out a squeal almost like a giggle.

“Is there anything you'd like to talk about?” Summer asks as he sets her down on the grass.

They start walking through the butterfly section of the garden, bright and vibrant colours surrounding them like guests at a wedding. She glides over to the milkweed and places her hand on the bundle, gazing over at Summer, a tear starts to form and drizzle down her cheek. She says, “I can't stop thinking of her, Winter. She's just so candid and she's left me here all alone. Why did she just leave me like that?”

“You know why she left, Spring. We know that we all have our own responsibilities and timing. I'm not even really allowed to be here with you, it's too early,” he says as he waves his arms around for some expression. Spring knows he's trying to help but all she wants to hear is that Winter will come back and run into spring's arms with a huge hug.

Spring scrunches her eyebrows but just a little as she begins to get irritated with him. “Well if you're not allowed to be here then why did you come?” Spring crosses her arms in disapproval.

“I'm here for you. I wanted to see you and give you some company,” he says as he puts his hand on his chest and runs it up through to the back of his neck. He starts to blush and Spring uncrosses her arms although one can tell she is still annoyed. “But we don't need to talk about me, I want to hear about how you're feeling and how I could help.”

Spring hesitates, giving him a smirk and then a hug. “Thank you for caring about me, but you can't be here Summer, I don't want to get you in trouble.” As Spring grasps onto Summer's hand, his eyes get a bit wider and he starts to blush a bit harder. She leads him down the path on her way to the exit, but Summer stops her in her tracks.

“I won't get in trouble,” he says, “Now stop avoiding this conversation.” He puts his hands on her shoulders and she looks to the side, trying not to make eye contact with him.

“I don't know what you mean.” She raises her hands a little and Summer loosens his grip.

“You're upset, that's obvious. I just want to help; please just let me.” He slides his hands down from her elbows to her hands, and Spring stares up at him. *‘Why does he care so much?’* she wonders, trying to study his body language. She looks him up and down and can't help but notice he's getting a bit upset as well. He tries to keep eye contact but can't help it as he starts to examine her too.

Spring is flooded with emotions and bursts into tears, falling into Summer's arms. “It's her, I love her.” Summer struggles to catch her as Spring falls to her knees. “I want her with me, not just in January and February, I want her all the time. She's the only one who understands how I feel.” Spring hugs Summer as she sobs. He hugs her back and they just kneel on the floor. Spring sits there in Summer's arms sobbing as Summer holds her, tightening his grip to try and



comfort her more. Summer pulls away from the hug to look at her, and they lock eyes.

Summer says, “Everything will be fine.” He pulls Spring back in for another hug before he stands up and assists her up before leading the way to the organic section of the garden.

As they walk through the all the gourds, Summer can’t help but point one out that looks funny. “Hey look at that one, it looks like it has a hat on. And that one looks like a watermelon.”

“Yeah it kinda does,” Spring lets out a nervous laugh and continues to walk a bit faster to get ahead of Summer. She quickly struts over to the fruits and rushes to the strawberries, they are still white and drained of colour. Spring smiles and Summer asks her what she’s smiling at as he starts to walk toward her. As Summer approaches Spring, the strawberries start to gain some pigment.

“Summer, wait there.” Spring lifts her arm up and flings her fingers up to tell Summer to stop. The strawberries are now pink and beginning to look more full.

“I’m just looking at the strawberries and how they are still sprouting.”

But Spring is displeased that they are no longer white but a soft pink. “I don’t think you should be in here. Your presence is disrupting the growth of the fruit.” Spring is sad to say this as she wants Summer to stay.

“Why do you say that?” Summer asks as he slowly lowers his arms to his sides.

“Look at this strawberry, it's not supposed to be pink yet.”

He glances down to her hand that is placed on the strawberry bush and then to the strawberries next to the ones she is holding. “Whoa! How did they change colour so fast?”

“It’s you. You're making them ripe when you get close.”

Summer jerks his head back in disbelief, “What do you mean I’m making them ripe?” He takes a step forward and looks back at the strawberries, they start to get more lively with red and one falls off its stem. Summer gets more distraught and starts to apologize, “I’m so sorry, I didn't know.” He jumps back in surprise as he lifts both hands up to his face.

“It’s fine, but I think we should get out of here.” This time Summer grabs Spring's hand and heads toward the demonstration section. Spring is a little hesitant to go as there is a huge Cedar tree there. Winter’s favourite thing in the whole garden. A memory sparks Spring's thoughts.

*“Spring get down from there, you're going to hurt yourself!” Winter yells at Spring as she jumps from branch to branch, her brown hair flowing as the wind picks up, causing Spring to look back at the branch she had just leapt off. But when she looks forward to catch the next branch, her arms are too short to reach. Spring's eyes widen as she comes to the realization that she is falling. Winter gasps and throws her hands over her mouth. “Spring!”*

*Winter rushes to the bottom of the tree but her gown is too long. She grabs a lower section of her dress and lifts it up to try to pick up speed but Spring is already so close to the ground. Spring and Winter make eye contact as she plummets to the ground below. Winter throws out her hands in the direction of the tree stump and suddenly snow appears and Spring smacks into the pile of snow, breaking her fall and burying her.*

*Winter drops down to her knees and lets out a small whimper. “Spring you idiot, you could have gotten hurt really bad.” Winter storms over to the pile of snow that holds Spring. She pops her head out and looks at Winter who is now right in front of her with a furious expression and heavy breathing. You’d expect winter to go crazy, but all she did was grab Spring and hold her close with a big hug. Spring was obviously confused as she was expecting a lecture from Winter as she would have given Summer.*

*“I’m okay, Winter. Thank you for catching me,” Spring turns over to get up but as she places down her hand a sharp pain runs up her arm and through to her shoulder. She falls back down into the snow.*

*“Are you okay?”*

*Winter puts one of her hands back on Spring’s shoulder but Spring jolts back, “OUCH!” Spring rolls over revealing a large bruise on her right shoulder blade.*

*Winter stands up and smacks her own face by putting her hand over her mouth, “I knew something bad was going to happen.” Winter starts pacing back and forth wondering how to help Spring, but more about how she’s going to explain the situation to Naas (creator, day). Winter walks over to Spring and attempts to help her up. Spring latches on to Winter's arms and struggles to stand up, her legs trembling from the fall.*

*“I’m fine, really, don't worry about it. Look,” Spring attempts to raise both her arms above head. Her right hand only makes it to her neck before she scrunches it back into her torso. “Ugh, well I can't do that.”*

*Winter puts her cloak around Spring and rushes her back to her room. “You're going to be okay,” she says as she grabs a towel and a cup of water. The water in the cup begins to freeze and Winter turns the cup upside down and a pile of snow like slush slides down to the towel. “Here,” Winter raises her hand to give Spring the ice pack.*

*As Spring grabs it she touches Winter's hand, "You're always so cold," she says as she sits down on Winter's bed. She puts the ice pack on her shoulder, and Winter sits down beside her, putting her head on Spring's shoulder.*

*"That was so scary. I really thought I wasn't going to be able to catch you."*  
*Spring looks down at Winter and wraps her arm under her chin and places her hand on Winter's cheek. Winter glances up at Spring and they both face each other and hug.*

Summer grasps onto Spring's hand, pulling as he runs to the tree. Spring struggles to keep balance, memories escaping her as she runs behind Summer, almost dragging her.

"Why are we running?"

Summer slows down, still holding Spring's hand. He looks back at Spring and sees that she's getting flustered and then looks down at her hand that he is holding, and back up to her.

"What are we doing here?" Spring looks around to avoid eye contact. Summer gazes around the garden and walks up to the blossom tree with the flowers not sprouted yet. He puts his hands on the tree and the flowers begin to bloom, Spring watches in amazement as her eyes widen and her cheeks flush.

“Wow Summer, that’s so beautiful.” Spring walks closer to the tree and sits down at its base and Summer sits down next to her.

“Winter loved this section of the garden,” Spring says under her breath, as she pulls her knees into her chest. Summer just looks at Spring with blank expression as he crosses his legs to get more comfortable. Spring buries her head in her knees and takes a deep breath, she lifts her head and looks at Summer, giving him this soft smile. He smiles back with his teeth; Spring chuckles and Summer starts to laugh as well and Spring drops her head back into her knees.

Summer looks away and scans the garden before turning back to Spring. He inches closer and lifts his large yet gentle hand to Spring’s cheek. She looks up at him as he presses his warm hands on her cool cheek, cold from her tears catching the breeze. Summer leans in for a kiss as he closes his eyes, *‘It’s cold. Why is it so cold?’* The warmth of Summer’s hands on her small face is the only thing Spring can feel. Her cheeks flush as she closes her eyes, their lips touch and chills race up her back. Spring sways her hand across the grass. The grass is so cold, what used to be dew is now frost.

Summer pulls away quickly as Spring is still locked onto him. She opens her eyes and makes eye contact with Summer as he whips his head in the direction of the entrance to the garden. Spring, confused, follows his gaze in the same direction. Her eyes instantly widen as her mouth drops. Her chest sinks like the titanic as her eyes lock on her, the iceberg. Spring raises her hand to her mouth and lets out a soft whimper, “Winter?”

Spring sits there in shock. Winter has her hand on her chest as her nose scrunches up and she raises her hand to her chin, simultaneously a tear falls from both Winter and Spring's eyes.

“Winter! You're back?” Spring struggles to process the situation whilst coming to the realization that Winter, the love of her life, is before her. Her mind filled with what can only be described as terror, she pushes away from Summer and jumps up to run to Winter.

Winter wipes the tears from her own face and turns around to start walking away.

“Winter, please wait.” Spring jogs to try and catch up to her.

Winter glances back and lifts her gown a little so she can run but she steps on her own dress and trips and falls to the ground. Spring starts to run faster. *‘Oh why did I come here?’* Winter whispers to herself. Crouched in the fetal position she lifts her head and looks back at Spring as she runs through the field. Spring catches up to Winter and drops down beside her.

“Please let me explain,” Spring says, setting her hand on Winter's shoulder.

“No!” Winter snaps back at Spring and winds her arm, basically smacking Spring's hands away. “You don't need to explain anything, I saw it. I saw the kiss.” Winter stands up, looking down at Spring kneeling on the grass.

Summer walks around the corner of the gate, confused. Winter snaps her head to look at Summer, “I came back to see you and tell you something.” Winter looks back at Spring as she comes to her feet and steps towards Winter, who jumps back as to keep her distance from Spring. “But that doesn't matter now,” she closes her eyes and lifts her chin in disapproval as tries to storm off once again.

“Please, just listen to me. Let me explain.”

Winter stops her tracks and glances down, taking a deep breath as she turns around and makes eye contact with Spring. “Explain what? How I left you two alone for what, two weeks? And I come back to this?” Winter throws up her hand to point at Summer.

“Please it really isn't what it looks li-” Spring tries to talk but Winter cuts her off.

“Not what it looks like? Well it looks like you two are romantically involved.”

Summer finally makes it to the two of them as Spring says, “It just happened. Please, it meant nothing.”

“Meant nothing?” Summer takes a step back from them.





“No, ugh, that came out wrong.” Spring tries to get herself together as she runs her hands through her hair in distress.

“You two just wait until I tell Naas about this.”

Spring pauses and raises her head, “Tell Naas?” Spring leans in just a little. “No, don’t tell him. Please, it was just a kiss.” Spring leaps forwards and grasps onto Winter's shoulders.

Summer stands behind, filled with shame. “You can't tell Naas, he'll separate all of us, for who knows how long.”

Winter lifts her eyebrow and smirks, “Maybe that's a good thing.” She slowly turns around and her body follows. She walks towards the manor. Her walk turns into a strut and then a jog. She wants to cry but her tears turn to frost on her cheeks like snow.

Spring tries to cants up with her. “Please wait,” Spring shouts to Winter and picks up herself to run. “I can't keep up. Please Winter, be reasonable, you know we all work better together.”

“You should have thought about that when you were kissing him.” Winter stops in her tracks and turns around to look at Spring. Spring just stands there speechless. “I thought we had something.” Winter closes her eyes and bows her

head as tears rush down her face, simultaneously freezing in place like candle wax.

“Please forgive me, I love you,” Spring calls to Winter as she approaches the doors of the manor.

As she gets to the doors she grasps onto the handles and pulls them down and towards her, and rushes down the hall. Spring turns around to look at Summer. They lock eyes and he begins to cry. Spring runs toward Summer but suddenly she's back in the garden by the cedar tree, in the dark.

“Summer?” She turns her head side to side confused. “Winter? Hello?” She runs out through the trees and to the organic garden. “Anyone, please,” she cries, breathing deeply and fast. She’s panicking now.

“No, she did it, she told him.” Spring falls to the ground and sobs, crying with everything she has. Gasping for air between tears, she looks at the sky shouting, “No! Not like this!”

***THE END.***

# ***ON THE DIRT PATH***

by  
Georgia

He sat at his drums hitting them gently as if he were scared to break them.

He sat in his dim garage playing his bright red drums. Observing the unorganized mess around him that his mother couldn't be bothered to clean up. Old bikes, tools, sport equipment and his fathers old motorbike. The garage was cold and dusty, dark as there were no windows, the only light source was hanging above. He thinks about his life and how it came crashing down when his father died, but then he thinks of his band and how two new people are joining.

He's happy, Kai Ali the nineteen year old boy whose dream is to perform live on stage with his band. His best friend Felix had suggested two new people that could be in the band. Keith Hale and Louis Wood. He knew of them but had never really met the two boys before. His first impression of Keith was that he was an asshole, and Louis was just the boy who followed him around. Louis seemed nice enough from what Felix told him.

There was one thing that Kai was worried about when meeting the boys: he has Tourette's syndrome. While his Tourette's was almost unrecognizable when he played, it was still evident in his day to day life; knocking things over and yelling random words, sometimes even hitting himself or someone else. All his life people have told him to stop, and he did... Kind of. When you suppress your tics they only get worse and end up hurting Kai in the process.

# ***THE COLLINS FAMILY***

by

Nova B.

## **Chapter One**

I'm at the spot where they said they would meet me. I've been waiting for ten minutes now. I look down at my watch.

Make that eleven minutes. I hear footsteps coming towards me, crushing the fallen leaves, and I look up. It's a man. "Christina?" he says in a low hushed tone.

I move away from the tree I'm leaning against. "Yes, that's me," I say, matching his tone.

He gives a slight nod. Then he looks around as if he were looking to see if anyone was there listening in. The man looks back at me, giving a slight nod again. He lifts his hand and gives a small wave. Four more people come out from behind the trees.

An elderly man and woman, and two other ladies come toward us. They come to stand beside the man. Now I wish I had brought at least one other person, but they said to come alone, and I need to gain their trust.

I remain silent as they look me up and down, trying to see if they can trust me or not.

“You came alone?” asks the man.

I nod. He looks me up and down again.

“Okay,” he finally says after a few moments. “Come with us.”

They walk ahead of me, glancing behind them occasionally to make sure I’m still following them. As we walk, I make mental notes of landmarks just in case I have to escape and find my way back to my car.

We soon come up to a house that looks like a mansion from the 1960s. It looks rundown and the outside is covered in ivy and dirt, but when we walk inside, the house is immaculate. I look around in awe. This house is beautiful.

They lead me upstairs and into a room with a tall window with the curtains drawn back, an old TV in the corner, and a chair beside a table that sits in front of the window.

The elderly man sits in the chair, with the elderly woman standing beside him. The two ladies sit on the floor beside the TV, and with his hands in his pockets, the man goes to stand beside the elderly woman. They all look at me.

After a moment of silence, the man says, “What do you want to know?”



“You were there. I need to know what happened,” I say, not showing how intimidated I feel with them all staring at me.

“You got it right. We were there,” the man says. “But if you promise not to say anything, we might tell you about it.”

I nod. I came here to get information, even if it costs my life. “I promise,” I say.

They look at one another, in acknowledgement. “So, you want to know about the Collins family,” the elderly man says, laughing. “You’re going to get yourself into trouble, Missy.”

“I have to know,” I say. The elderly man just laughs.

“That’s enough William!” the man says. William stops laughing.

“James,” one of the ladies says nervously. “Can we trust her?”

The man, James, looks at me. I stare back at him, silently pleading to be trusted. He looks back at the ladies. After a moment, he nods.

Relieved, I let my muscles relax. I didn’t realize how tense I was until now.

“Mary, go make some tea,” James says. The elderly woman acknowledges him and starts towards the door.

“I’ll go help,” Says the lady who asked if I could be trusted.

“No, Linda, we need you here,” James says. “You too, Patricia.”

The two ladies look at James uncomfortably and nod. Mary leaves the room.

“So, what do you want to know about the Collins family?”

“Everything,” I say.

He nods. “Well, it started sometime back in the 1960s. People believed witches were still alive and that they were ‘evil,’” he says, putting air quotes around the word evil. “Witches back then were rare to find since there were very few of them left due to the witch hunt that had taken place many years before,” James says. “The people were right; there were witches that were still alive. And those witches were the Collins family.”

“Yes, that’s right,” Says Linda, taking over the story. “The Collins family were the last witches alive. One day, one of the Collins’ had been seen playing with magic in the woods. He was caught and was used as bait to lure out the other Collins family members. When they came to save the boy, they were captured as well.

That night, the Collins' were hung. The people celebrated that the witches were finally gone."

There was a pause as they all looked at me to let this all sink in. Then James continues. "But little did the people know that the youngest of the Collins', a baby, was entrusted to the hands of their closest friends. Us. We are the Barnes. Mary and William were the ones who took care of the child. But the people were on their trail. And once Mary and William heard news that the people were coming after them, they fled with the baby. They went to an orphanage and left the child at the door and ran off, praying that it would be safe."

At this moment, Mary walks back in with tea and biscuits.

"Ah, what took so long?" William asks.

"I couldn't seem to find any more herbs, so I had to go down to the basement," Mary says.

"Anyway," James says, after a sip of the hot tea. "No one knows what happened to the baby or where she is today."

"I know," I say quietly. They all look at me.

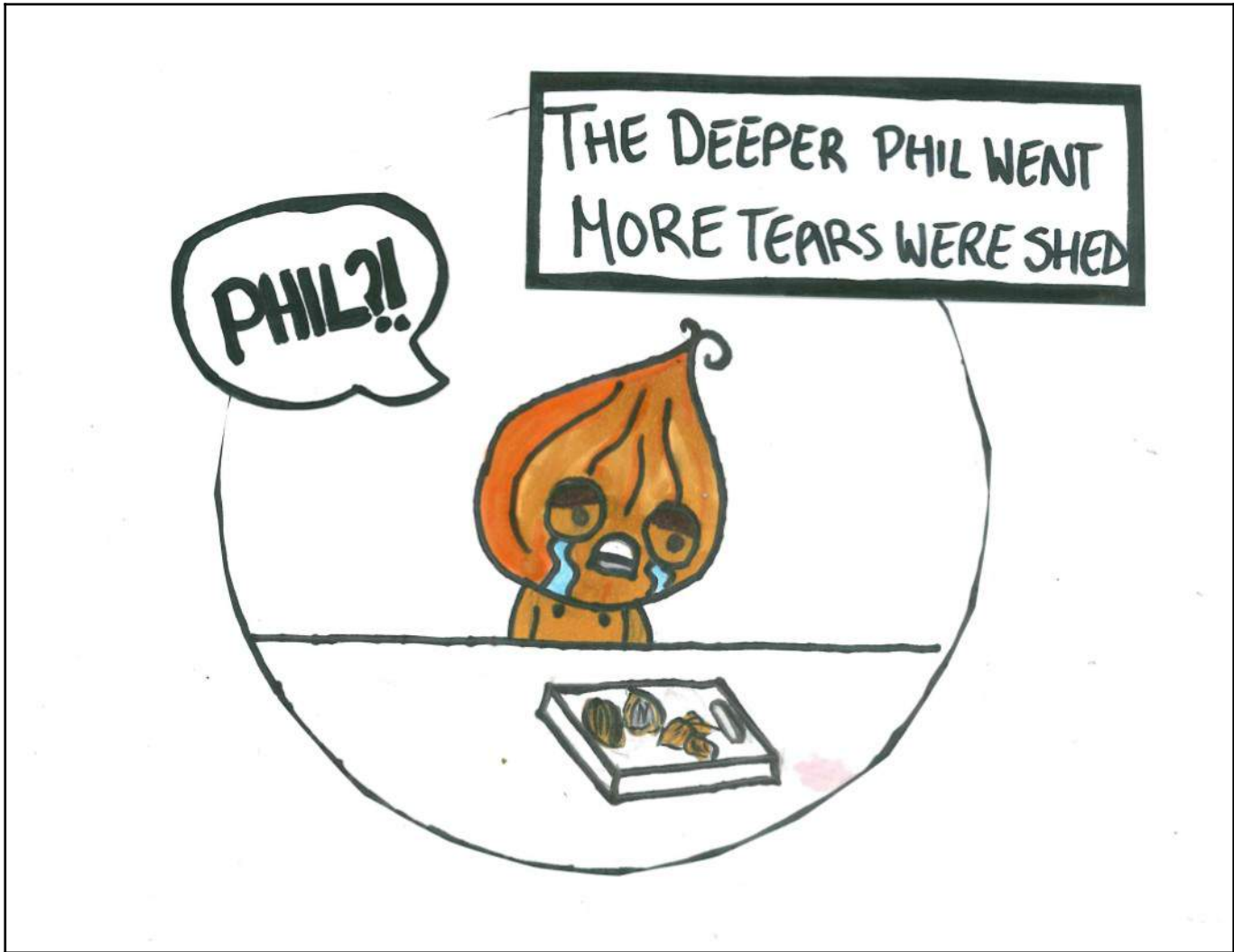
"I'm right here."

### Author Bio

My name is Nova, and I am 17 years old. I'm interested in witchcraft and witchy things, and decided to write a piece about witches. I consider myself a witch, and as a witch, I like to do oracle readings, meditation, and cleansing. It's my goal to learn how to use a crystal ball.

***COMIC***

by  
Stella S.



# ***POEMS***

by  
Ted

(1)

How long will such a beautiful illusion last?

How soon will the waves of reality bring me to shore?

Or will I stay floating in this sleepless dream?

His sheets, his lips, his limbs

Surrounding me like the rolling sea.

As I kiss and cling to him, I am a man drowning.

And he -

My last opportunity at a gasp of fresh air.

For if this is what it means to die,

I have never known such peace.



(2)

The love between two men remains shrouded in shame.

A backward glance down an empty street before daring to lock fingers,

as if the act itself is lewdly obscene.

But perhaps it is the condemnation,

that makes my love run that much deeper.

(3)

I struggle to comprehend how so many could frown upon our love,  
when they couldn't begin to grasp the joy, he brings to my life.

When the vicious, decaying monstrous creature that lurks beneath this skin  
is plucked and shredded by his restorative light,  
the mind-numbing ache soothed by his otherworldly splendour.

And, enveloped and coddled in our own world,  
beneath a tangle of blankets that he deems a "fort",  
the claws of reality can seem so far away.

Prejudices and demeaning insults melt away,  
made to be inaudible, stifled mumbles,  
obscured by his laughter.

And though I may be a man damned to a fiery eternity,

I truly believe, with his love, this is closer to heaven than  
even the most devoted will ever reach.

(4)

I found myself aching for a home.

One I'm not entirely sure I've ever actually known.

Craving a warmth that I can barely recall,

Pleading for something to call my very own.

It is something so unfamiliar, something so unknown,

that I couldn't recognize when it came.

In hindsight, it seems so blindingly obvious.

Hindsight.

In the way that his lips brush my forehead when I begin to doze,

the delicacy in which he cradles my hands,

split from where I'd laid my frustrations against the wall.

In my fluttering heartbeat as he stumbles his way through Queen lyrics,

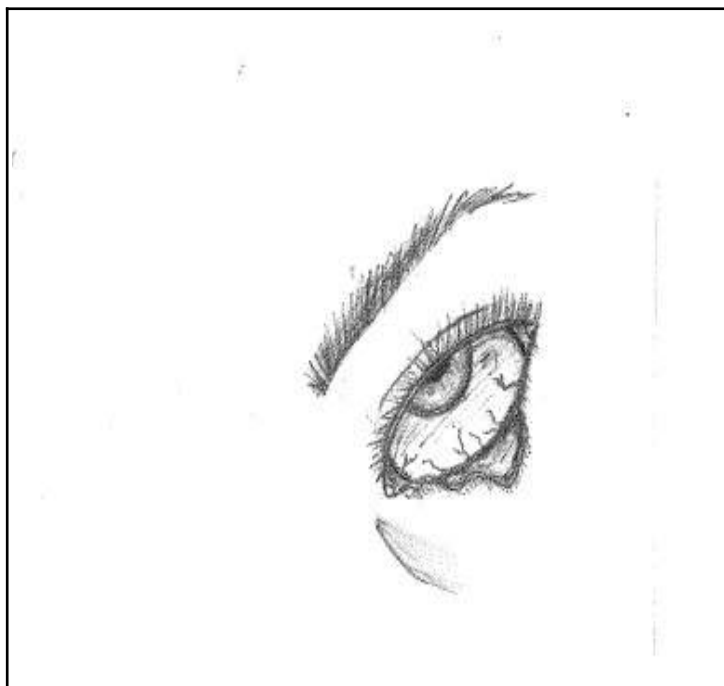
his pinkie hooked over mine,

watching him ramble pointlessly while we drive.

In the knuckles that trace the slope of my spine.

In soft breaths of affirmations, and gentle whispers of permission,

I've found home.



# ***SERPENT'S LULLABY***

by  
Velnias

Innocent child, we all once were

What you stay is up to you  
To feel your soul and to it be true

So much wisdom lies within  
You just have to find it and accept your sins

You can't blame yourself for the lessons that come  
Always remember everyone can be wrong  
Find strength in every song because to have an open mind is to be strong

This earth is beating in sight and out, a cycle of life most forget about  
All the things that are living, humans are just one  
But people aren't aware of the damage they've done

The thing about a cycle is they have an end  
But the earth is far from it and heals with every stand

Fight for your planet and it will return  
Energies will help you and leave the evil to burn

Each soul has a purpose and in it we thrive  
Your mothers is art, it helps me to survive

I hope it will heal the world, how the world has healed me  
There's no choosing what we go through, but we choose how we use it inside

Without the hardest lessons we would always be young  
The knowledge we collect from them makes us wise and silver tongued

No one knows what is life, how we are breathing  
How that breath can be stolen by a knife

What we know is we have control  
Our essence is within us it's in our blood that flows and our minds highs and  
lows  
From the wind blowing leaves, to a crow in a tree  
this essence of life is in the air that we breathe

There is power in acceptance of all that you are,  
I accept that my essence is not just a mother through all of my scars  
I am a warrior and a healer

Then you fell down from the stars  
Gave me a new purpose, made me rediscover my soul  
In this journey that is ours I will be your home until my body lies underground  
And my spirit floats from my bones



Go with the flow of life but never be shy to speak up about how you feel  
Express yourself through your face and your eyes and no one will suspect inner  
lies

At some point someone will have doubt  
Never question yourself over someone's dark clouds

If someone will judge you they aren't worth your time  
Talk freely forever, your voice is your feet and this world, a mountain to climb

Protect the purity around  
Fight with your whole soul, pour ice cold on the evil until it drowns,  
because I won't always be around

If you believe what you see is all that is there, your making your eyes a curse  
This veil is blinding liquid, wake your third eye and immerse  
The more you predict, this life gets worse

Know you know nothing, become diverse there's enough sheep  
If we all turn to white furry fluffs were all going to starve  
There's wolves for reasons, wolves destroy not leave scars

If reversed there will be too much weakness  
All these lives were in begin with a fetus and the earth grows from deepness  
When you go after what excites you, you make a change and do your part

Your life isn't meaningless  
Capture your dreams, visions with discreteness  
Be your own saviour, your own Jesus

When I sing love songs I'm singing to my soul, my higher self  
When you become it, you will never feel more whole  
Every goal you have will be a game, proceeded in flow you can spark your own  
flame  
Throw in the coals and burn your fucking shame  
Roll in the freedom rain

The spinal instinct is there for a reason  
Believe your bodies feelings

What gives you adrenaline is your higher self visiting you graciously  
Giving you dealings of keys, pushing your feet towards the doors  
needed for the future they wish for

When you choose to stand in front of them and wither away  
your damaging more than yourself  
Hurting your soul everyday

We are all bleeding and breaking

Until you don't care about the blood flow

You will howl in the hollowing agony

That is unnecessary sorrow.



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