

# GUILD OF YOUNG WRITERS

SHORT  
STORIES

POETRY

BOOK  
RECOMMENDATIONS

**VOLUME #13**  
**SUMMER**  
**2024**

Story Studio Writing Society is located on the traditional territories of the **WSÁNEĆ** and Lkwungen-speaking peoples. We respectfully acknowledge and thank the Lkwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, for allowing us to live, work, learn, play and create on their lands.

Through the work we do on the territory, we are accountable to the following communities: Esquimalt, Songhees, **STÁUTW** (Tsawout), **WJOLELP** (Tsartlip), **BOKEĆEN** (Pauquachin), **MÁLEXEŁ** (Malahat), **WSÍKEM** (Tseycum), T'Sou-ke Nation, Scia'new Nation and Nuu-chah-nulth: Pacheedaht Nations.

We acknowledge that the historical relationship to the land and territories of these peoples continues to this day.

As an education based organization, we recognize that we have the responsibility to work towards truth and reconciliation, and to remain open to suggestions, consultations, and partnerships, especially with local Indigenous communities and organizations, on how our organization can continue to work towards reconciliation.

We hope that Story Studio's programing and publications create a safe, welcoming and engaging environment for all people, including Indigenous peoples.

**We acknowledge the support of the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service, the City of Victoria Strategic Plan Granting Program. and our generous donors.**



GUILD OF  
YOUNG WRITERS

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## *Editor's Note*

I find myself sitting here contemplating the passage of time. How is it already summer, and almost halfway through, at that?! How have I already been a part of this incredible team of word-lovers and storytellers for a year? At once, it feels like I only just started and also like I've always been here among my people.

I am looking back on the past year as one packed full of discovery, insight, and joy. I cannot express how impressed I am with the young writers of the Guild. They are constantly surprising me with their talent, courage and their willingness to share.

Thank you to those who dedicated so much of themselves to this Zine this season and throughout the years.

As our Guild members get older and look for new experiences, we thank them for their mentorship to others and their many contributions to this writing community. We know that they will continue to inspire others with their stories.

We look forward to welcoming back returning Guild members, as well as new writers, in September.

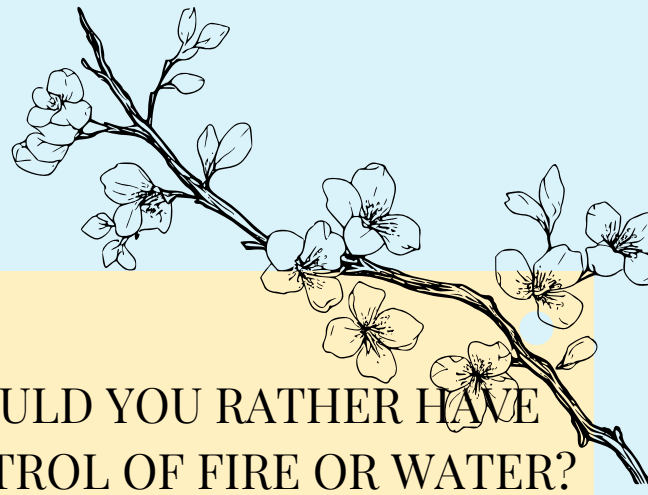
*MSirna*

Marja Sirna

PROGRAM COORDINATOR



# Get to know the Authors



WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE  
CONTROL OF FIRE OR WATER?

WATER, BECAUSE MOST  
THINGS CONTAIN  
WATER.  
-SAMANTHA

I would rather control water because I can control  
things like temperature, mass, concentration, and much  
more with water, rather than with fire.  
-Abby Quirt

I'D RATHER BE ABLE TO CONTROL  
WATER BECAUSE IT WOULD BE FUN  
AND ESPECIALLY WITH HOT SUMMER  
WEATHER, IT WOULD BE NICE TO BE  
ABLE TO HAVE A COLDER MAGICAL  
ABILITY THAN A HOTTER ONE.  
-ABBY H.





# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

What we're reading and loving these days

*Stranger Music*  
-Leonard Cohen

*All the Yellow Suns*  
-Malavika Kannan

*Visiting Hours*  
-Shane L. Koyczan

*Crushed Wild Mint*  
-Jess Housty

*The Girl From the Sea*  
-Molly Ostertag



This is for the trans youth, the ones who loved Disney, sang all the Frozen songs, put their hair back with bows and jumped, danced and shimmied along to "Let it Go." This is for the young girls with their picked out dresses, light up, pink glitter shoes, who climbed on the playground and sang their ABCs without any worries. This is for the "cishets" that didn't know different because they weren't taught it, so of course they bought it — that different was bad and "normal" was normal. This is for the confused by This is for the hard-hearted who had with stardust dreams. This packed up their shoes along is for the ones who opened their up their boxes, turned on radios

And  
"Let it Go."





## ARTIST STATEMENT:

Abby is a sixteen year old interdisciplinary artist based in Victoria BC. They have been creating art since they were little and has continuously drawn from their community, their history and questions they have to create their art. Over the past year they've worked with textiles, digital art, collaging and drawing.

Abby wanted to create an art piece that centered around childhood and past experiences and how that intersects with growing up queer and wanting to be seen as “trans” enough and giving up these things that they actually enjoy so that they seem “normal” and fit in, but realizing that no matter if you like Disney, or pink shoes, or if you’re different, you’re enough. There’s freedom in being yourself. In letting go.



*A library is like an  
island in the middle  
of a vast sea of  
ignorance,  
particularly if the  
library is very tall  
and the surrounding  
area has been  
flooded.*

*- Lemony Snicket,  
Horseradish: Bitter  
Truths You Can't  
Avoid*









# THE END: BORN TO BUT NOT LIVING

AN EXCERPT

BY SAMANTHA L.D. MARTIN

READ THE FIRST CHAPTER OF SAMANTHA'S  
STORY IN OUR SPRING 2024 ISSUE

## Chapter Two: Basic Training

The next morning I am still shaking as I walk into the armoury for my basic training. Everyone around me seems to have one of two demeanours, the first being proud and frankly a little scary, and the second, which seems to me to be the majority, terrified and pale. I fall in with the second group. I follow the herd over to the line to get a uniform.

"Name?" The officer there asks.

"Friedrich Müller." I respond.

The officer nods, ruffles through some stacks of uniforms and finally hands me one.

He points to a washroom. "You can change there."

"\*Danke..." I take the uniform and make my way to the washroom.

Once inside I lock the door and listen carefully. I don't hear anyone else in here so that in of itself sends shivers down my spine. I quickly put the uniform on and squirm uncomfortably. Then opening the stall door I nearly crash into another man coming in. I quickly mutter apologies, put my head down and rush out.

I see a bunch of other men in uniforms lined up and I quickly join them. Even though we are roughly the same height I feel tiny and invisible.

"\*Achtung!" An officer shouts.

The whole group quickly snaps to attention, I am a bit slower than the rest but I hide my fumble. My eyes shift from left to right hoping no one saw. I make eye contact with a man much physically stronger than I and he glares at me. His eyes feel like weights and the longer he stares at me the more I feel like I am sinking into the ground.



The man who had called the order is tall and looks to be in his early forties, his hair peppered with greys. His uniform is impressive and his boots sparkle in the light, everything about him seems intimidating and powerful. The aura that surrounds him is that of the Reich's ideal German soldier, minus the slight limp in his right leg.

"I am Major Förstner, I will be your training officer! Now listen up! If you are going to fight for the FatherLand you need to be willing to give up your life!" Förstner yells loudly.

At this even the scary glaring man turns pale. Who in their right mind would be willing to give up their life! Hell I only accepted being here on the deal of I wouldn't be shot!

A young man, who can't be more than eighteen, raises his hand. "And if we don't comply?" He has an air of arrogance and everyone in the room stares at him.

"If you don't comply..." Förstner pulls a handgun out and points it at the young man's face. "Then you are of no use."

The room goes silent. Fear grips my heart, are we going to watch a man die!?

"Are we clear?" Asks Förstner, loading the gun.

"Y- yes- sir..." the teenager stutters.

Major Förstner puts the gun away. "Good,"

He walks away and the young boy breathes a sigh of relief. I however am left shaking. It was clear, any form of resistance would lead to death but would the phrase of 'I was following orders' suffice as an excuse for any atrocities? So many people say they would rather die than participate in the war but when it really means something they will do anything to save their necks...

"You there!" My heart sinks as Major Förstner walks straight up to me.

I blink. "Y- yes sir!?"

"Don't look so distracted boy! Have you no loyalty to the Fürher?!" He shouts at me.

"I... I am so sorry sir..." I mutter.

Major Förstner glares at me. "I don't want your apologies! I want your full attention! You look so skinny, a strong wind could kill you!"

My cheeks tint pink and I quickly avert eye contact. As if it wasn't bad enough that I am stuck in basic training now I am being humiliated!

"I assure you sir I have not been killed by a wind thus far."

I frown.

The Major glares at me, I don't think he likes my response. No matter, as long as he gets off me about it.

His gaze feels like fire as he analyses me before the clicking of his shoes follows him away. "I expect full loyalty from each of you! Once you get an order you will do everything in your power to heed it!" He stops and glares at the young man who had asked the question of if we didn't. "Either wise, as you have seen the consequences will be... severe to say the least. And not only will you be putting yourself at risk but anyone whom you have any affection for. I suggest you all behave."

*Jesus... in other words don't step out of line unless you really don't value your loved ones lives... this is bad now not only am I at risk but my family!?*

Beads of sweat accumulate on my upper lip and in the palms of my hands, it is taking everything in my power to stay standing. It's very clear another man feels the same as I for he falls to the ground. The men around him back up and gasps fill the room. Förstner whips around.

"\*Dummkopf!" He growls as he walks over to the unconscious man, his cold eyes glare down at him visibly annoyed.

Even I back up slightly terrified as to what will happen and we all state in shock. The officer stares at the man also, almost as if he is unsure of what to do now.

Finally Förstner points at two of the men in line. "Take the unconscious fool away and into the infirmary! The rest of you start exercising!"

"Yes sir!" We all say.

We scatter out of line and head off into our separate direction. I stop and watch as the other two men pick up the unconscious man.

*I wonder why he fainted... was he standing wrong or was the fact that his family could die enough of a shock to knock him out? Either way I hope nothing harsh comes of him, after all I feel for him. God knows what would happen if that were me...*

I shake just thinking about it but I force myself to tear my gaze away and head to the training. There are three stations: weights, push-ups, and climbing. I make my way over to the weights. Why not? I already do similar things at the farm and may as well start in my comfort zone and go from there.

*As if being here at all wasn't enough out of my comfort zone.*





After training, a heavy puff of air escapes my lungs as I sigh heavily. The weights were easy, for me at least, push-ups were a little harder but the climbing sucked. I had fallen far too many times. No matter, now we can go home and I can relax with my family.

"Müller!" A voice shouts just as I am out of the door.

I sigh and turn around. "Yes?"

It's Förstner, his face is hard and I can't make out what emotion he looks at me with. "You did pretty well, I see you have high potential for things that need lifting. You from a farm?"

I nod. "Yes sir, I am."

"I see, that would explain why climbing was a struggle for you."

*I don't think it was just me.*

Förstner smiles and it looks horrifyingly out of place on his hardened face. "You will be pleased to know that you are in top physical condition, probably won't be long before you are out on the battlefield!" He pauses to take a breath, letting that statement sink in like a burn. " "Tomorrow we will be doing some more of the same, anyone who finishes early will make it to shooting, after that more stations will be added. You have already passed the weight lifting requirements and you are only a few push-ups away from meeting that requirement too, I might just move you over stations tomorrow. Sounds good?"

I blink in shock, had I really been doing that well? The Major keeps staring at me, obviously awaiting a response.

Shakily I say. "S- sounds perfect... sir..."

*\*Schisse...*



### Chapter Three: Shooting

I sit with my right leg crossed over my left in the morning sunlight eating a breakfast of \*apfelkuchen and \*kartoffelpuffer, both of which Frieda made earlier, a special New Year's treat that I assume is meant to lighten the load of my being drafted. No matter the reason I am thankful. My first spoonful of the apfelkuchen is barely up to my mouth when I feel Frieda stare at me eagerly as I prepare to eat bite by bite.

"Well?" She asks, practically bouncing.

I smile thankfully. "It's delicious," I take a bite of kartoffelpuffer and smile happily to show my enjoyment of the dish.

Frieda's eyes light up while Avila scoffs. "Oh please," she mutters. "All you did was make something that will disappear after one or two meals, I made him this."

Avila hands me a gorgeous beaded bracelet. It has wooden beads, each with a different colour engraved in a thin line. I slip it on my wrist and it is surprisingly comfortable for being so tight.

"It is weather proof so you can wear it in training!" Avila exclaims.

I hug both of my sisters. "Aww, you two are the best!"

"Heyyyy don't get all mushy!!" Frieda groans.

"Yeah!! You're being weirdddd." Avila adds.

"Alright, alright, pardon me for finding my baby sisters adorable." I laugh.

"We aren't babies!" They both shout.

"Yeah, sure you aren't," I joke.

I laugh at myself as I get up from the table, grabbing my bag and straightening my uniform. The basic training uniform isn't exactly comfortable, mainly because a fair amount of the parts are ill fitting, but the fact that the fabric is stiff and thick isn't a huge comfort booster either. The boots squeak while I slip my foot and laced them quickly, balancing shakily on one foot in the entryway. I stumble and my arms flare out as I try to rebalance myself.

"Lame-o." The twins' voices mock from behind.

I scoff and roll my eyes. "Whatever~ see you after work."

I hear the twins mumble something that I don't catch but I smile as I close the door behind me. Despite my situation, with my family I can catch a break. The smile remains on my lips as I make my way to my car and even when I pull up to the base, however when I walk in the smile quickly dissipates as my eyes lock onto the training guns lined up neatly.

Memories of the previous day flutter back and a now familiar knot tightens in my stomach. I was to be moved to shooting today. The officer from yesterday, Förstner, approaches me and his face cracks into a smile that, I suppose is supposed to be welcoming, in reality it is more of a sadistic and disturbing grin. I shudder and the knot in my stomach tightens once more. This is not how I wanted to start off Nineteen-Forty-Four...

"Good morning, son!" He bellows.

*Son? When the hell did this happen? Rather chummy...*

I nod politely. "Morning sir,"

"Are you ready for shooting today?" He asks as his cold eyes crinkle.

My hand grips my arm, I don't think he wants to hear my real answer. Instead, I swallow the lump in my throat and whisper. "Yes sir,"

"Good! Good! You will work two other men who have excelled in yesterday's training as well as some officers from the firearms department just to help you get into the swing of things. I'm sure you three will do well, just don't shoot each other, save it for the ones who defy the Fürher if you know what I mean." He chuckles, as if killing people was a joke.

The knot tightens. How can he be so lighthearted about war? How can anyone *enjoy* genocide and murder? I feel sick and my hand locks harder onto my arm.

Upon hearing my silence Förstner's uncomfortable smile slides away and his stern glare looks me up and down. "Do you have a problem with that son?"

"No sir... I just didn't get much sleep..." I explain.

"Just don't lose your record." He commands. "Now! Go to your station Müller!"

I quickly nod and head to my station. The other two men at the shooting station are much burlier in stature as well as taller. The one closest to me has a short buzz cut and a sharp jawline, his eyes gleam dangerously at the guns. The other man was a bit shorter than the first as well as thicker round waist and skinner in the shoulders. His hair was combed straight back and his posture wide and ready to attack. I gulp as they both stare at my frail form. I break their gaze and look at the other men, I see the young boy who was threatened with the gun struggling to lift the weights, the burly man who glared at me sloppily climbing the wall and the man who fainted attempting push-ups slowly with Major Förstner yelling at him sharply. It only now dawns on me how well I actually am doing, how proficient I am at being a... nazi...

"Attention!" The range officer shouts, his name tag reads Lieutenant Beiler.

*Lieutenant... that seems to be a lower rank compared to the Majors and Colonels I had seen.*

Beiler is a very strong-looking man with scars along the left side of his face. There are faint lines of a tan and on the chest of his well-kept uniform displayed the eastern front service medal.

"So you three are the golden soldiers..." he says bitterly.

"Do you think you have what it takes, men!?"

"Yes sir!" The two men next to me shout confidently.

Beiler marches up to me. "What about you boy!?"

I swallow hard. "Yes sir..."

*No... leave me be...*

"Good!" His tone gets louder but his face remains cold.

"Now then, the gun is a powerful beast! It can be used to save a life... or annihilate one... either way you need to know how to tame it! That's my job and I will not tolerate any wishy-washy nonsense from you three! Understood?"

"Yes sir!" The two men bellow again.

"Y- yes sir..." I stutter.

And thus the lessons begin, while taking up the rifle in my hands I feel myself tremble slightly. I had fully expected a training rifle but these... are real... a real gun with real ammunition. I have no clue what calibre or model of the gun but I know the difference between a real gun and a fake one. While loading I hear the other two men whispering about me as they struggle with their guns, their gazes malicious. I suddenly don't feel safe but breath out, preparing to take my shot.

Bam.

I hit the target dead on. The two men fall silent and Beiler's mouth drops open.

*Damnit...*

Beiler approaches me. "Boy... have you shot before?"

I nod. "Yes sir, on the farm."

"A farm.. son the men at the front can't shoot as well as that and you mean to tell me you are a mere farm boy!?" I can't tell if Lieutenant Beiler is mad or impressed, I decide on the latter as he chuckles. "And here I thought I was Germany's best shooter. Ha! What's your name son?"

"Müller," I answer.

"Müller... there are two 'Müller's here, same with the two 'Schmidt's, which Müller are you?"

"Frederich, sir."

"I see, then you aren't the Müller that passed out then! Well, Müller F, how about you and I have a little friendly competition? See who can shoot better?"

I start to sweat. I can't deny his offer because judging from his face it looked more like an order, but I fear that if I beat him consequences undesirable to me will follow. Hesitantly I agree and we take our places.

"Don't go easy on me son." He grins creepily. No Nazi should ever smile.

Beiler shoots first, he is only a few centimetres away from the centre and he scoffs as he marks his shot with a red pen. Now it is my turn. I was in luck, I could easily lose this, all would be well, all I had to do was shoot on the opposite side of Beiler's shot...

Bam.

My heart thuds loudly in time with the sound of the gun shot. I am shaky as I look at the target. They are quite close and from afar I can't quite make out which is closer to the centre of the target. Beiler and I walk over and he puts a ruler next to the shots. Mine is *exactly* in the centre...

*I thought I had –*

"Müller... you have beaten me... good job..." Beiler mutters slowly, as if he can't believe I had won.

I can't believe it either, or rather I don't want to. Beiler turns around to face me, he wears a smile but his eyes are full of fury and jealousy.

"Well Müller... I suppose you'll be wanting a reward for beating me eh?" He asks through gritted teeth, his eyebrow twitching slightly.

*All I want is to be back home... to not be here... for there not to be a war...*

Beiler continues. "I'll give you one. You're pretty good at static targets but how are you at moving ones?"

"Sir... what do you mean?" I gulp.

"Follow me son." Beiler gestures to me to follow as he walks up to Förstner, my rifle still clutched tightly in my hand.

Beiler salutes and Förstner does so back. I however stand a pace or two behind.

"Herr Major, permission to use the *filth* for Müller's practice?" Beiler asks.

Förstner looks Beiler up and down suspiciously then his gaze flicks to me. Finally he responds lazily, "very well... just clean up your mess."

Beiler's face lights up. "Thank you Herr Major." He turns to leave before quickly adding, "Heil Hitler!"

"Heil Hitler," Major Förstner returns.



Beiler turns to face me, whatever he got permission for he certainly seems excited about it. My mind whirs with possibilities, what was the 'filth' Beiler was referring to? Why does he seem so happy about it? What will become of me? The two other men from the shooting station glare at me as I pass. No doubt they want to be in my position, what they don't realise is that I will gladly let them take my place at any moment. Beiler has led me out of the training office and now we are walking along the field, I can't help but notice an unnerving scent of iron coming from the grass. We stop in front of a smaller grey building with a heavily locked door. Beiler's face hardens, he has a sadistic aura surrounding him.

He pounds on the door aggressively. "Back up you vermin! The door is opening!"

My heart sinks. *Who* is he yelling at?

He yanks open the door and a scent of mold bombards me. Inside is dark and damp which is in direct contrast to outside. Beiler marches in, grabs something and yanks hard. When he comes back out I see he is holding a scrawny middle aged man tightly by the wrist, he looks dirty, deep red scabs are all over his body and his hair cropped messily. He looks so frail... worse than me... The terror in his eyes is prominent along with the sadistic desire in Beiler's.

"*This disgusting little vermin* is supposed to help cook in the officer's mess, but recently he's decided that his life is a given right and not a *luxury*." I jump back when Beiler throws the man to the iron scented grass. "Filthy Jew."

My eyes widen and I instantly feel sick to my stomach. No wonder this man is so scrawny and scared... forced to sleep in a mildewy shack... to cook for Germans... The rifle feels heavy and tainted in my grasp. If Beiler wants me to do what I think he wants me to do I may just be sick. Beiler leans down to the Jewish man and whispers something I can't hear. The man's eyes widen and Beiler pushes on one of his scabs causing him to jump up in pain. Beiler shoves him and the Jewish man runs.

I am frozen in place as Beiler says to me. "There you go, a moving target. Aim and fire boy."

I don't know what I am doing anymore as my arms raise the rifle to my shoulder and my eye focuses through the scope. I feel numb. I feel like puking. Will I actually shoot this man...? My finger lingers near the trigger and I breathe out.

*What am I doing!? This is wrong! I know it's wrong!*

Just as I am about to shoot I freeze.

"I can't..."

Beiler frowns. "What do you mean you can't!?"

"I can't."

Beiler's fury is obvious as he wrestles the gun from my grasp.

"GIVE ME THAT!" He shouts.

I try to resist but he hits me in the diaphragm, all the air gets sucked out of me and my grip loosens allowing Beiler to grab the gun. He quickly takes it up and shoots. Bam.

I watch in horror as the Jewish man falls, the bullet making contact with his skull. A silent scream billows up in my chest but the cold terror prevents me from verbally screaming. My knees feel weak and Beiler glares at me harshly.

"Well Müller, it seems I have overestimated you. Perhaps you aren't as competent as I thought." He growls.

Weakly I manage. "But sir- shooting an innocent man —" "Innocent!? Müller, did you forget which country your loyalties lie?" Beiler takes a step closer to me and his grip tightens on the rifle. "Or do you need to be... reminded?"

I gulp and take a step back. "N- no sir... I'm sorry..."

"Good... get back to training Müller and maybe then you will be able to look me in the eye with honour."

I want to yell at him. Tell him exactly everything on my mind. Tell him how messed up this all is, how killing is *not* honour. Instead I simply walk back to the training building still in shock. The reality of everything is still sinking in and the first thing I do when I enter the building is rush to the washroom. I pass the two men, I pass Förstner, they both stare at me in confusion. I fall to my knees over the toilet and puke, painfully. After I finally finish I flush limply and rest my head in my arms. I am pale, shaking and everything inside of me hurts. I don't want to leave this stall. I don't want to go back at all. All I want is for this day to be over. For all of this to never have happened...

"What happened, Lieutenant? I just saw Müller F rush off, he looked pale." I hear Förstner's voice ask. It sounds like he is just outside the washroom.

"He wouldn't do it, Herr Major. I had to wrestle the rifle out of his hands to finish the job." Beiler's voice responds, the anger still lingering in his tone.

My stomach churns when I hear footsteps enter the washroom. I quickly sit in the seat and lift my feet up.



"Shame. I thought he would have been perfect, had so much potential..." Förstner sighs.

The tap turns on and Beiler continues. "So did I, but he is just a farm boy after all. More training and maybe he'll smarten up. Dammit this blood is hard to get off..."

"Scrub harder Beiler, it'll come off. Anyways. I'll talk to some of the others to see what we can do to convince Müller,"

I almost fall off the toilet when I hear that. In what way does he mean...? The tap turns off and the clicking of Beiler's shoes echoes through the near empty washroom. Beiler chuckles deeply. "You'll have to tell me the method you decide on, Herr Major."

"I will, Beiler, don't worry, just keep an eye on Müller from now on. We can't have him going rouge." Förstner responds, his voice also a low drawl.

I hear them leave the washroom and I release the breath I didn't know I was holding. I think I may throw up again, my head is spinning and I have the overwhelming urge to escape. I quickly unlock the stall and leave the washroom, my breath hitched and sharp.

*What should I do... what should I do... what should I do...*

I can't leave the base otherwise I will be in trouble, but if I stay I fear I will lose my mind. I walk back into the main part of the building and rejoin the shooting group, Förstner and Beiler are nowhere to be seen. The two glaring men size me up.

"What happened, squirt?" One of them asks.

"I don't wanna talk about it..." I mutter.

"Oh c'mon!" The other yells in a loud guffaw. "Don't be a wimp! What happened?"

I don't know what comes over me, as soon as he says that something strikes in me. Anger flows through my veins like lava and I meet his eyes, difficulty mind you due to his height but I do.

"You have no idea what I just saw!! How can you be so calm about all of this!? How can you stare at that gun and smile when the thought of killing crosses your mind!?" I shout at him.

"Excuse me!?" He yells back.

The other man closes in and they glare down at me ominously. Once again I fear for my life.

The buzz cut man grabs me by my collar and spits in my face. "You are just a weak pitiful farm boy! How did Beiler even think you were worthy of a shooting competition with him!?"

"Idiotic trash!" The broad one shouts.

"Hey, let's teach him a lesson." Buzz cut snears.

"Yes, this will be quite fun..." Broad chuckles.

I am very nervous now as Buzz cut's grip tightens and Broad looms closer.

"Stop that!!" A voice interrupts.

Buzz cut and Broad look over to see who is shouting and their faces pale. Buzz cut lets go of me while Broad stumbles back. My feet touch the ground again and I stumble trying to regain my balance.

"H- Herr Major- I —" Broad stutters.

I look over to see who is speaking and my face also pales. Förstner glares at Broad and Buzz cut, his gaze flicking to me momentarily. I remember the conversation I had overheard mere minutes ago.

"What the *hell* is going on here!?" Förstner asks harshly.

"Uh- nothing-g sir..." Buzz cut responds, his voice, and every part of him, trembling.

Förstner's glare turns stonier. "Then leave Müller alone."

Buzz cut and Broad are as pale as me but quickly snap to attention. "Yes sir!"

"Go back to shooting. Now!" Förstner barks.

Buzz cut and Broad nod and quickly go back to practicing their shots. Förstner walks over to me.

"You good Müller?" He asks.

I blink in shock. Moments ago he and Beiler were livid at my refusing to shoot, now he is *protecting* me?

"I'm fine sir, thank you..." I whisper.

"No worries Müller, we Germans have to stick together eh?" Förstner smirks.

It clicks. When they said 'make me come around' they meant twist my brain. Make me believe this is right... make me believe what *we are doing* is right...

*This is so sick... what a horrible start to the New Year...*

**Watch for another excerpt from  
The End: Born to but not Living in the next  
issue of our Zine.**



# Poetry



# I LOVE YOU LIKE

goodbye  
i love you  
i wish i paid more attention to your poetry  
to the intricacies  
of what you were saying  
instead of always writing down lines i like  
because it's usually most the poem

i love you  
you're leaving  
you've grown  
and changed  
and burned down  
like a forest fire  
that was meant to  
because you came back  
just that much stronger

goodbye  
i'll miss you  
i'll miss hearing about your life  
you don't always talk about  
outside of poetry  
inside this group

i wish i hugged you tighter  
i want to go back in time  
just to write more poetry  
more poetry about you  
more poetry about me  
more poetry about us  
and how much i care about you

goodbye  
i love you  
you spin words  
into winding webs  
i see a storybook unfold  
with sketches of castles  
and porches  
and campfires  
when you speak



i'm gonna miss your quiet voices  
your nervous shaking  
your over-coming-fear confidence  
when you read a poem all the way to the end  
and shrug your shoulders and look down  
as if what you read  
wasn't the most breathtaking  
world-stopping  
magnificent raw  
thing in that moment

goodbye i love you  
more than the pages of poetry i've written  
more than words i have in held in my voice  
more than you  
or i can comprehend

i'll say i love you in the only true way i know how  
i love you  
like the water rushing over top the sand on a hot  
summer day in the middle of july  
i love you like learned lessons  
scraped knees  
and faces pinkened  
i love you like book pages  
and novels  
and libraries  
and like librarians love  
their books  
i love you like worn cobble stones  
wet with rain  
wearing away under weary feet trudging home  
to curl up in beds  
next to windows  
thinking about loves  
i love you like my thoughts won't stop  
i love you like i won't forget you  
i love you like i can't not love you  
i love you like you're leaving  
i love you like goodbye

-Abby Hawthorne



This is for the used up youth  
This is your call to be powerful  
This is for the ones who got tossed in peoples' gutters  
Slipped on the mud on the backfield of their school and got laughed out of the game  
This is your call to believe in yourself  
This is for the broken down and crying but-only-in-the-dark kids  
Who are still sad and full of fear and anger and rage  
But who are finding their spark  
This is your chance to fight back  
This is for the child that grew up believing in fairies and superheroes and that your dolls came alive at night so you stayed up to watch them until your eyes were too heavy to keep open  
This is your time to be gentle  
This is for the kid in you that was innocent until one day you weren't and you wrote in your diary, "I'll remember this as the worst day of being an eight year old" so sure you'd remember, but you don't even know who hurt you that bad  
This is your time to keep going  
This is for the baby that was ferocious and clung to peoples fingers and gummed madly at your soother  
And the next second would coo and grab for the invisible magic in the air with bright eyes  
This is your time to cherish your younger self  
This is for the tween that thought they knew the hardest things in the world at twelve and wrote it in their online journal just to look back and laugh in pity, at their innocence of what they have yet to face  
This is your time to persevere  
This is for the best friend that held onto their friends like ooblek and melted crayons and tug of war and that's-my-my-little-pony give-it-back and holding down the corners of a fort made of blankets and dining room chairs  
This is your time to shine  
This is your time to hold on strong to that little person you once were and will always carry inside of you  
This is your time to breathe  
And believe  
Even when you break  
That you will get up again  
Like scraped knees on sandy concrete  
Muddy elbows from wet fields  
Wood chipp-y hair from playgrounds  
Because you got up again  
And you will get up again  
And again  
And someone will reach their hand down to where you've fallen  
And they'll get you up again  
And you'll hold them up  
You are used up youth but you are never useless  
You are glitter and polaroid pictures and little toy cars and ribbons and strength  
This is for you

# THIS IS FOR THE USED UP YOUTH

-Abby Hawthorne

I stand as the flag flutters in the wind,  
I watch as soldiers march side by side.  
Great men,  
Inspiring women,  
Growing children.  
These make our great nation.

But is it great?  
I check the news,  
The global opinion,  
My heart sinks,  
My pride flares,  
My eyes water.

I look up,  
Are they right?  
Is it true?  
No.  
No, it can't.  
This is my home.

I walk faster,  
Tuning out the noise of their complaints,  
But when you tune out the noise,  
You tune out your heart.  
Your own thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

My heart pangs with pain,  
My pride soars with the flag,  
My guilt rises in my throat,  
My hand salutes firmly,  
I am a child of my country.  
A child of history.  
Am I proud?  
Or am I ashamed?

I sit by the flag staring into the sun,  
I raise my hand to cover my eyes and I see the people  
who came before I,  
Tears well in my eyes,  
I see heroes,  
Villains,  
Those who simply want to live their lives.

I see the old,  
The young,  
The rich,  
The poor,  
The famous,  
The unknown.

# THE LAMENT OF A PATRIOT (NARRATIVE)

What makes a great nation?  
What counts as a sin?  
What is in-ignorable?  
What is acceptable?

What developed overtime?  
What ideals change?  
What is right?  
What is wrong?

Tears roll down my cheeks,  
I feel disconnected,  
I feel empty,  
I feel without love.

My country,  
My home,  
My life,  
My love.

What am I without it?  
Am I stuck?  
Stuck rewinding my rant?

My lament of fear,  
Of loyalty,  
Of past,  
Of present?

Will the lament of a patriot haunt me for as long as I may  
live?  
Or will I find peace?

For we all have sins.  
We all have marks,  
And scars,  
And secrets.

But it is how you handle these blemishes that define you.  
My country is a part of me but it does not define me.

We can honour the past,  
And right the wrong,  
But we cannot erase it.

We move forwards,  
We build a foundation,  
Together.

Together, we stop the lament of a patriot.

-Samantha L.D. Martin



# CHILDREN OF PAIN AND GLORY (NARRATIVE)

The war,  
The war that took and shaped the lives of so many,  
The war that made O so many realise their own frailty,  
Made them realise their own vulnerability,  
The slipping time,

But also the strength of a group,  
Of a country,  
Of the power of an army and solidity of the ground,  
The height of the sky and freedom of flight,  
The flow of the water and the smoothness of the ships,

Made them realise the love of a patriot,  
The resilience of the people,  
The pride of a countryman,

Made them pray for the needs of humanity,  
The need to live,  
To live for yourself,  
For you friends,  
Your family,  
Your country,

As soldiers walk step by step into the field they carry the burden of the country,  
Their families wave goodbye,  
Their children,  
Their mothers,  
Their wives,

The Grim Reaper follows the battalion,  
Watching,  
Learning,  
Choosing,

Shells and bombs,  
Tears and blood,  
Laughter and camaraderie,  
All of this haunts the dreams of those in the war,

The war that swallowed hope whole,  
The war that took a twenty-year break giving us a false feeling of hope,  
The war of which the villains are only decided after the conflict,

And the children are left to pay the price,  
To grow up too fast but not grow up at all,  
The children who cowered in their homes as bombs rained from ahead,  
To pray and shudder in the dark.

The children who sobbed at the funerals of the country's morale,  
The minds of children who went to war in the bodies of men,  
Who could never escape,  
The children who hide deep inside every man and woman,  
Longing to escape,

The child that screams at what the world passes off as 'the cost of war',  
The child that sobs at the loss of a friend and laughs at the slightest bit of sun that dries  
the tears on their face,  
The child who cheered when the war was over,

Then these children healed,  
These children allowed themselves to grow into men,  
These children allowed themselves to grow into women.  
Who grew into parents,  
Who grew to uncles and aunts,  
To widows and widowers,  
To grandparents  
And who at last lay with the fallen they cried for,

These children are our legacy,  
Our history,  
Our future,  
Our ancestors,  
They were,  
And are,  
The children of pain and glory.

-Samantha L.D. Martin



# POEM INSPIRATION

## **Children of Pain and Glory:**

The inspiration for this poem came from a school poetry project. I had to write three different kinds of poetry and found myself drawn to the narrative style. Since I already had a creative writing piece about war, particularly World War Two, which is also featured in this Zine (Born to but not Living) it was an easy topic to select. I wanted to convey a sense of impact, emotional, mental, and so on if war, from a child's point of view. A lot of my poems take a dark perspective and a non-traditional approach to poetry and I found the narrative and comparison of a child's innocence and experiences fascinating. While in reality, children who grew up in the war, especially the young ones, went about their business; the Ghost Army even reported how children visited an old church that was bombed to trade the shards of coloured glass for chocolates. While my poem may not be accurate to that particular story I feel my words convey a longing in adult soldiers or teens in the war. A longing to have that innocence and care free demeanour of the children trading coloured glass for chocolates. While I'm not sure if this is conveyed to the extent and meaning I wanted it to, the result was nonetheless a gut punch to those I shared it with.

## **The Lament of a Patriot:**

This poem is my most recent, the idea for it being that of my own experiences. I have immense patriotism for Canada but I am not oblivious of our country's past wrongdoings. Many times in history I would find myself with a conflict of emotions that I wanted to capture in this writing. An interesting thing about this piece is that I wanted it to have a conclusion, a climax of sorts. I'm not sure if this truly counts as poetry but it has a similar flow as my last piece. I chose this because it connects to Children of Pain and Glory and Born to but not Living in the sense that patriotism was high in World War Two but in many countries, like Germany which is the primary setting of Born to but not Living, have a difficult history, causing conflicts in patriotism. The line in this poem that strikes me hardest is probably 'My country is part of me but it does not define me'. It stands strong with my personal beliefs and values.

**-Samantha L.D. Martin**



# Wanderlust

by Abby Quirt

The summertime on the west coast welcomes me with its fruitful presence  
I'm adorned by the warm breeze and the heavy wanderlust that takes over my soul  
Seeing every beach at every point that outlines the continent in its entirety, in its effervescent essence  
To go everywhere and see everything for what it is and what it was is the goal  
I long to go so far and stretch my arms out into the distance  
Yearning for things out of my reach and putting it all together as a whole  
I may be a solivagant, but it's easy for me to find solace  
When I begin that search and roll like a Rolling Stone, out of control.

Seeing the smiles from tourists and no clouds polluting the sky brings tears to my eyes  
I'm adorned by the smell of lilacs and the heavy wanderlust that courses through my veins  
I drink lemongrass iced tea as I watch the sunrise  
As I watch the sky go from dark to rays of pink to one gold flame that remains  
It's heavenly  
The way how I am capable of shining as a glowing Goddess  
When I plant myself somewhere new and forget the things that constantly mar my mind for a little bit  
When I forget about you or him or all of them and let go of being so modest  
And grant myself the freedom of dreaming dreams bigger than me and find that strength to go for it.

The view of the ocean from the window of this hotel distracts me from the traffic and noises outside  
I'm adorned by the wafting scent of soap and the heavy wanderlust that makes my heart race  
Like I'm on a motorcycle I'll forever ride  
Down an open road, with the wind blowing and a blush tinting across my face  
Only the sky is the limit when you've got your freedom along where you reside  
You can leave your mark for each place you check in but you never leave your trace  
Up and down, left and right, back and forth, far and wide  
You can navigate your way to your peak but you never chase  
I hope to have nothing by the time I face God and then I can tell Him that I served my purpose and  
tried what I tried  
I may come from one particular spot but that don't mean it's my only place.





# Cassiopeia

BY ABBY H.

*When she was little, she'd liked to pretend that stars were really lights anchoring distant islands, as if she wasn't looking up but only out across a dark sea.*

~ Lauren Oliver

The low hoot of a forlorn owl echoes through the night. It slides its way through the crack in my window, reminding me that I feel lonely, too. A quiet chirp comes from my room and I sit up, looking around the moonlit space. I check my phone and open a text from Roxy.

*Hey, Ali, meet me at the pit. If you can actually manage to sneak past the Gremlin then I'll see you soon.*

I shake my head and text her back: *Come on, Rox. She's my mom.* I can't tell if the feeling in my stomach is from annoyance or anxious butterflies about getting to see her soon.

My phone lets out a little tweet. *Exactly, Gremlin's your mother! Get out here already!*

*Fine.* I press send with more force than necessary and my phone clatters to the floor. I kick some empty chip bags and the crumpled homework pages away from my phone, grab it, and shove it into my pocket.

I throw on my black jacket, and I slip my arms through, careful not to catch myself on the colourful pins' threaded through the fabric. I run down the stairs, as quietly as I can, making sure to miss the creaky spots. I grab a stack of sticky notes and quickly write, "gone for a walk, be back soon."

I flick on the porch light, grab my keys, and head outside. I open the door to my car and with a slam and a click, it closes and I put my key into the ignition.

~~

"Damn, Alice. What took you so long? Jeez." Roxy, cigarette in hand, is sitting on a piece of the crumbling stone that's fallen off the graffitied wall of the old military bunker that has been here since before I was born.

"Whatever." I hop over the barely-standing wall, now more just a boundary marking it from the outside than shelter from the wicked desert wind. I take a seat next to her and wave my hand out. "Just pass me the cig?"

Rox knocks back the cherry red curls from her face and lifts the cigarette to her lips. I pause, then look away and search for Cassiopeia in the pitch black. I feel a nudge and my own Cassiopeia, beautiful and damaged, is holding the smoke out to me. I nod in thanks and inhale. It stings my throat, but I can feel myself relaxing already. As I exhale, the wind takes the wisps of lung cancer and lifts them into the sky. I follow the trails up and there she is, climbing upwards to the dark satin: Cassiopeia.

The wind brings a snicker to my ears. My best friend is looking at me with a lopsided grin.

"You still obsessed with stars?"

I shrug.

"Come on, I know you are."

I let out a breath. "Yep, that's me. The weird, star-obsessed girl."

She stands up, her shirt slips off her shoulder, revealing skin shining like starlight. "I have something to show you," Roxy murmurs. I feel my cheeks heat up and I'm glad it's dark.

I take one more puff of the cigarette before tossing it on the ground and grinding my heel into it. With one last look to make sure it's out, I take her outstretched hand and we leave the stone walls and the fast-fading ember. Rough-jeweled rings press from her hand into mine, reminding me we're connected. I smile.

Roxy tugs me around the side of the building and down the hill. The smooth, crumbling dirt we're walking on makes me nervous about falling. Dust spins in the air as Rox skids and I stumble after her. I open my mouth to ask her if she's okay when she stops, drops my hand and lifts her arms in the air as if being arrested.

"I'm all good. Just a little sloppy."

"Are you sur—"

"Yes. I'm fine, *Mom*." My empty palm prickles with the teasing breeze. I close my hand into a fist and dig my nails into my skin. She turns away and continues walking. From behind her flow of fiery hair I hear a faint "Let's go!" thrown over the wind.

"What do you even want to show me, Roxanne?"

"Ooh, *Roxanne*, I'm in big trouble now! Leave it. It's supposed to be a surprise!"

"Ugh, fine." I run down the hill after her. The dust makes my worn down converse slide as I near the bottom, but I'm not about to tell her I'm worried about falling. "

I think you'll like it." She says.

I hope it's good. Mom's gonna be mad that I left in the middle of the night again. The downward slope starts to climb and she sprints up the hill and leaves me behind to follow her trail through the overgrown desert weeds.

After making my way through more wiry green plants, I look up at the sky, and it wraps its arms around me in a velvety embrace, Cassiopeia and her friends shining down on me in all their glory. The air up on this ridge feels fresher somehow. I take a deep breath, my throat soothed by the river-like air. The sandy expanse spreads out below us like a quilt, dotted with the browns and greens of desert plants. Dips and hills stretch on for miles and a never-ending blanket of stars is above. I finally look down from the sky and I find Roxy, knees folded up to her chest, in a solitary patch of beige grass, picking at the strands, twisting their stems in her silver-ringed fingers.

Her voice drops its usual rough quality. It's all hopeful, smooth stone. "This is what I wanted to show you. You like it?" Her hands move to her red hair and start on a loose braid near her cheek. "I thought.. Since you like the stars so much, I'd show you this.."

"It's amazing." I fold myself down next to her and bump her shoulder with mine. "Thank you."

She releases her hair and offers me a small smile giving way to a smirk. "So, you happy I didn't tell you what this was all about?"

"Yeah. Yeah, I'm happy."

"You thought I was gonna murder you, didn't you?" She wiggles her fingers menacingly in my face.

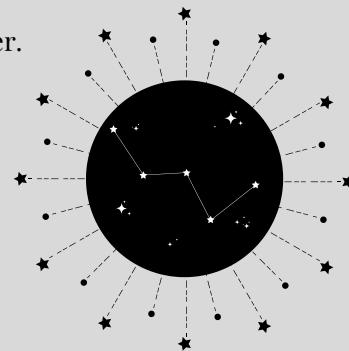
I shove them back. "No... Not at all," I say. I pretend to look away furtively.

"Oh, very convincing," she says with a laugh. She shakes her head and goes back to looking up at the night sky.

I look down at her hands resting on her tucked-up knees. I reach my hand out. Without even looking, she drops her hand next to mine and laces her fingers through.

"Yeah. I'm happy," I whisper.

"Me too."







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No panicking.  
Just writing,  
breathing.

-Marja (during Summer Writing Studio)



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& A/C!





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