

Fall 2023

James Fowler High School

THE FALCON READER

Issue 01: "That is not dead which can eternal lie"

Featuring work from:

Creative Writing
And Publishing 15



 **Prose
Poetry
Nonfiction
Artwork**

**Want to share your writing?
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Front cover by K.D.

Issue 01: "That is not dead which can eternal lie"

In this issue:

- Daily writing
- Classroom writing
- Interviews
- Original Work

Editors Note

Thank you for picking up this first copy of our 2023-24 Falcon Reader. It is such a privilege to publish this magazine for a second year. For some of you, you may recognize familiar writing topics. For others, this might be your first time reading the creative works of the people around you. Stories are important to share, because the most tragic stories are the ones that die in our minds. Let your stories live.

Mr. Vara

"Creativity is intelligence having fun."

Albert Einstein

With gratitude, mutual respect, and reciprocity, we acknowledge the ancestral home, culture, and oral teachings of the Treaty 7 signatories which includes the Siksika Nation, Piikani Nation, Kainai Nation, the Îethka Stoney Nakoda Nation, consisting of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Good Stoney Bands, and the people of the Tsuut'ina Nation. We also recognize the Métis people of Alberta Region 3 who call Treaty 7 their home.



Table of Contents

I. Writing Prompts

In Creative Writing & Publishing, students are given daily timed prompts at the start of each class. How they choose to respond is entirely up to them...

Sep. 01: "She set out to enjoy herself to death"

Sep. 05: "It was their first time seeing snow"

Sep. 06: "If only you held their hand for one minute longer"

Sep. 08: "It was a pleasure to burn"

Sep. 11: "You and your twin sibling discover... a third?"

Sep. 12: "The saddest song I've ever heard"

Sep. 13: "Only one remained"

Sep. 14: "Why?"

Sep. 21: "A poem about Fridays"

Oct. 02: "Today, the universe is conspiring against you"

Oct. 04: "Fall is in the Air"

II. Class Assignments

The following are examples of student work on some of our assessments in class.

Journalism: People Profiles

Worldbuilding: Describing a Setting

Worldbuilding: Forms of Government

III. Original Work

The following are some original pieces the students have created, outside of regular class time.

"Fool for Love"

"Creep by Radiohead: An Analysis"

"When Blue Meets Yellow in the West"

"Exaggerated Uncertainty"

"Pretty Little Things"

"Hidden Disability"

"Stay Kind"

Content Warning: Due to the personal nature of the art being presented in this zine, some content may cover topics that are sensitive and triggering in nature.

“She set out to enjoy herself to death”

All her life she had felt stuck. No matter how alive she was, she felt lifeless. No matter how much her heart continued to beat, no matter how long she had kept breathing, there was no life to be found. Constantly repeating seemingly trivial tasks day, after day, after day. She stared at the grey wall that was just as empty as she was, left pondering how the days faded into weeks, weeks into years. She was going to sit passively and allow her days to waste away no longer. She tried to remember the days of joyous naivety that were now left stranded in the dust. She thought to herself, about how a reclamation of these past experiences was far overdue. It was at this very point in which she set out to enjoy herself to death.

Adam Stinn

“It was their first time seeing snow”

I don't like the snow. It looks pretty when it first falls but then it gets on the sidewalk and it's cold and gets all muddy and gross. I used to like snow though. It used to sparkle in the sun and cover the earth like a white blanket. It used to look like glitter, or stars gliding away from the night sky and into the glow of the streetlight where they shimmered and slowly danced in the breeze. It used to be beautiful. Single snowflakes look so delicate. Snow is still all those things, and has been the entire time. It never changed—people did. Everybody grew up. Why don't we hold on to that child-like wonder that makes the world so beautiful? Like when everything is new and exciting and we just love the feeling of being alive? Why do we go blind to the beauty in small things like ladybugs and clouds? When did we stop racing raindrops on the car window? When did we stop making up little stories in our heads? Why did we give up tiny pieces of happiness when we grew up? Why did we stop appreciating our lives no matter how simple? I'm not going to let go of my childlike excitement or wonder. I won't get rid of any little pieces of joy. I won't be numb to the beauty of life. I love the snow.

A.E Brown

Snow...

A simple thing. It is cold and quite vulnerable.

The very snow was what eighteen year old Mark and six year old Lily wished to see. The only thing close enough was the snow globe they had in their hut.

After some debating, the two made up their minds. Outside, reality hit them. The two siblings were excited and a bit scared. They started trekking towards Canada. It was certainly going to be a long way from Zambia, Southern Africa to Canada. After all, the country was a beautiful and safe place with lots of jobs, resources and produce. How could they not go?

“Big brother, are we lost?” Lily questioned.

He let out a hearty laugh, but stopped upon realizing it was true.

“Oh shit.”

“No swearing!”

With an ouch, Mark rubbed his ear and apologized to Lily. They were now hungry, tired, and nowhere near Canada.

Just when they were about to give up, a car pulled up beside them.

Mark was on high alert as he conversed with the man.

“There’s no need for worry!” “The name’s Ryan, young man”

The two siblings then introduced themselves in return.

“First things first, have some food!” The man urged, as he handed them juice and sandwiches.

They had him eat it first, making him feel offended, but he understood. After he did so, they ate, their wariness now low—but still high enough.

The man looked thoughtful before speaking.

“Since you want to go to Canada, I’ll take you there! I want nothing in return!”

Mark and Lily couldn’t believe their luck!

Off they went to Canada. It did however take longer than expected. And they had to put up with security checkpoints. The three settled in a hotel in Calgary and fell asleep.

After they settled in, Ryan felt pity and adopted them. Though it took a while, the warm food and bed felt like a dream.

November came rolling in with the crisp cold air, but there was no snow to the siblings’ disappointment.

It was weeks later, when snow did arrive. They rushed outside. Lily giggled as she danced around while catching the snowflakes that’d melt. They were careful on the ice and were sliding away as they threw snowballs at each other screaming.

Lily stopped upon realizing something. “Thanks dad!” “Thanks Mark!”

Mark raised an eyebrow. “So you’re now too big to call me big brother?” He sniffled in the process. Lily hurriedly apologized before being tackled to the floor, leaving her out of breath, surprised and laughing.

The two siblings smiled at their dad and then at each other, because it was a truly special moment.

It was their first time seeing snow.

“If only you held their hand for one minute longer”

“One Minute Longer (For Maddison)”

When she walks out the door,
I think to myself,
Why does she have to go?
It hurts when she leaves
I wish she could have stayed
Just one minute longer.

The next day I text her,
She says she's not feeling well.
I want to hug her
And hold her,
Tell her everything's okay.
It hurts to know there's nothing I can do,
She's too far away.

I can't see her for days,
It drives me insane.
I can't kiss her,
Or hug her,
Or hold her hand.
I think back
To the last time I saw her,
Walking out the door.
If only I had held her hand
For just one minute longer.

Grace Gillund



If I could hold their hand for a minute more
I wish it hadn't feel like such a chore
Although now have you passed
If feels as if light and brightness of life has been snatched

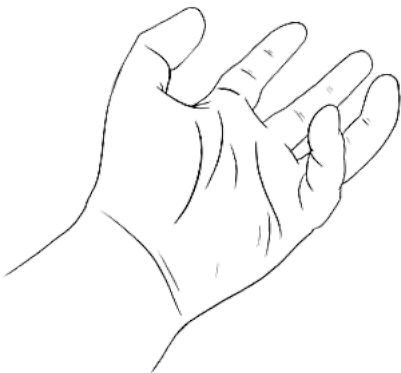
Their touches were soft, their smile was so pure
In my heart is where the memories endure
Their smile fading away as they slipped away
Realizing the chance of saying good bye will never come my way

Hold on the memories, the love that remains
For though they're gone, their presence still sustains
Through tears and pain, their souls never lives on
In the stories that are told and in the bonds that were drawn

Now I live a life of sorrow and regret
After all I have done to you, this is what I get.
So remember them fondly, and don't forget their name
Celebrating their life, thought its isn't the same

You will forever be loved
If only I could hold your hand a minute longer

Maryam Khan



I could feel my muscles slacken, the exhaustion was kicking in. How long had it been since we called for help? I didn't have the strength to check my phone. Right now I have to focus. The rickety tower creaked beneath my knees, the harsh wind buffeting my hair. My grip slipped for a second and we both let out a sharp gasp. Rust cut my fingers as I regained balance, sweat trickling down my arm. Without adrenaline to fuel me, my strength would soon fail the both of us. I tightly wrapped my arm around one of the poles keeping the structure up. My stomach lurched forward as I peered over the edge, I didn't realize we were this high up. Closing my eyes, I hugged the pole tighter.

“Let go.”

“What?”

“Let go and at least one of us will get down from here.”

“I-” My thoughts started to race. No, I have to hold on for a little longer, I could hold on a little longer. But what if help never came? Then we would both die, at least if I dropped her now I could save my strength. Overwhelming guilt swept over me. I can't believe I just considered that. My fingers loosened slightly and she let out a gasp. No. I can't. Even if I was young and had a bright future ahead of me and she... My co-worker looked at me with wide eyes—everything on her face said she didn't actually mean it, that she wanted me to hold on for a little longer. I couldn't though, not if I wanted to live my life. The air sucked my breath away. It was for the best, it was for my best. I shut my eyes tight and the biggest decision I had ever made was over in a matter of seconds. My heart wouldn't stop hammering even when it was drowned out by the sound of helicopters.

Cassidy

The sound of a pen's click could be heard. Time seemed to have slowed down.

A young man was visibly uncomfortable. The therapist sighed and stared hard at him before speaking.

“So let me get this straight. You snuck out with a friend late afternoon to smoke some weed in privacy on a cliff. While high, your friend slipped and you caught him. Panicked, you called 9-1-1, and 20 tense minutes passed, before you saw the approaching rescuers on boat. However your grip is slipping and your friend is sobbing. Feeling tired, you guiltily let go, killing them in the process. You were disowned after, then landed in jail and are now here. Look young man. The only way to feel better is to stop doing drugs with some rehabilitation, and to stop being so stupid!”

The boy was startled by the angry outburst.

“That friend of yours was a child, just like you. However you yourself should've known better and made the both of you stay back!” the therapist said, jabbing a finger at his chest.

She had gotten so angry in the process, that the chair she was on was now overturned.

Both were sobbing as they leaned against each other.

“I'm sorry... It's just... I'm only this personal, because it reminds me of my child. Something similar happened and she's dead.”

“If only you held their hand for a minute longer...”

Cleo

It was a regular day in the small town of Saintflour, Alberta, Canada. Funny name, I know. However, that day was about to become special. I know this because I'm part of it. Part of a circus to be exact. Le Boujr. And that circus had been traveling. Saintflour was its last stop.

I am a performer.

We were all getting ready as people flooded our tent excitedly. I couldn't help but smirk. Let the show begin, I suppose.

I waited patiently as my colleagues did their tricks. After the clapping had died down, I carefully walked on the tight rope, and after a few seconds, I began running and did multiple somersaults. The audience reacted with baited gasps and applause. Then I decided to ramp it up.

I giggled and threw my hat in the air, dancing around on the wobbling tightrope. It was a pleasure to burn, while doing so. With tight concentration I willed the fire into the air and it formed into the shape of a dragon. The heat was strong, yet gentle.

Magic trick or not? Who knows!

A lady never tells her secrets.

Cleo

"You and your twin sibling discover...a third?"

News of the incident spread far and wide. The very incident took place on a cold sunny day in 1977, In an unknown city in USA, thought to have been abandoned during world war one.

The people that brought the very news were twin survivors.

In that very small city, things were neat. That's no worry until you notice, everything is too organized. There were two of everything, and everything else had to be different. According to them, the moment they realized it, there'd be whispers and glares. And their parents would punish them, warning not to ever ask of a thing again. Then the next day, everyone would pretend like nothing happened. Their parents would greet them with unnaturally wide smiles that would tear their face, and bulging eyes. It was followed by a bone crushing hug and their hair being straightened with sharp nails that drew blood. The whole thing made dinner tense, but they kept going about their day.

It got even worse, when they discovered they had another twin. Their doubt was replaced upon realizing it was true. They decided to get some answers. Somehow people found out, and all three were chased and captured, then tortured.

The third one unfortunately died. The two woke up in their room, unable to recall anything and they were

smiling at the very wicked people of the city that they came across. So they resorted to the very hypnosis that caused them to forget, to remember. When they did, they didn't bother packing. Pretending like they were unaware, they snuck around and recorded whatever they could to prove how twisted the people were.

Then they said they'd deliver milk in another neighbourhood. Wanting the evil place to cease to exist, they waited till nightfall and, when everyone was asleep, they began to move.

At some point a branch snapped, and they felt a breath on their huddled backs, but it turned out to be a deer. They became even more careful as they threw gasoline everywhere. It took until late dawn and they began to leave after barricading everywhere to prevent escape. They were worried they wouldn't be believed, but they still carried on.

The curses and screams aimed at them gradually grew quite. They waited tensely before sighing with relief. And they were gone.

The whole thing gave them shivers and severe PTSD. Upon giving the recording to police and any paranormal investigators, they were warned gravely.

After the city was closed off and investigated. To their relief no one died. The sight however was nauseating.

Although talked about till today, it's still with careful and fearful looks. Not many people doing so. And for good reason.

Cleo

"The saddest song I've ever heard"

Upon listening to a track, my friend Jimithius bestowed to my very humble abode, where deceiving and sinful farers come for a thrill. I pressed the meticulously but simply thought of "play button". Unbeknownst to me, how my worldview and assumed peace of mind would shift in an all but unhealthy manner. I heard the first tune and like an agonizing shredder, it pulled me in and forced me out in pieces; a depressed wake began. As tears rolled down my eyes, I thought of a flaming pen, splashing waves of fire across a page meant for the song's lyrics. "How has this been done?" I wondered to myself. As the trembling giant of sound turned upon me, I couldn't help but think of the pain and sorrow of this distinguished craftsman. The creator polishes the creation, and the creator has made it shine harder; like a shimmering piece of broken glass. As the sun reflects, the glass provides shine, the twisted reversing of what we know today, and the misportrayal of fact, as the artist had not felt a yearning pain at all. I sat in shock as I learnt this on Jimithius' explanation of "A super sad song". Far from the truth, a disturbance to all I had known.

Imran Mursal

Eyes darted all over, as she frantically gazed through the glass. Her frowning lips eventually curved up.

"Gotcha, you sneaky little weirdos!" She turned towards her partner. "Initiate project out"

"B-But"

"No buts!" she yelled, now feeling impatient.

The man sighed before seizing the traitor that was running away. The boy screamed as the cold liquid was poured onto his skin.

"How's the situation looking madam?" the man asked.

The woman gave a thumbs up in response as she watched the liquid wipe away most traces of the germs through the microscope. Only one remained. The germ was sobbing as it let go of its loved one and shook its hand at the microscope. The now nearly unconscious boy grabbed the woman's arm.

"Wait!" "Tell my family I love them!" he muttered, desperation apparent in his voice.

The woman frowned before gently hitting the teary boy's head.

"Stop being dramatic Alejandro!"

The boy ran to his dad. "Dad! Mom's being mean! Ouch!"

The mother rolled her eyes and shot a glare at the dad, in which he could only chuckle in response to.

Alejandro gasped.

"Traitor!"

Cleo

How was this possible? The antidote was tested hundreds of times, and yet, nearly all of them had perished within seconds. I could feel the worried glances carry through the room, as we watched the only two survivors stand on the other side of the glass. Their faces were pale and panicked, heart rates high. Not symptoms of the virus, thank God, just merely signs of distress. After all they just witnessed first hand what this disease could accomplish. "Sir, patient 004's heart rate has significantly decreased."

"Give them a higher dose." There was a small click, followed by a wince from the patient, but their heart rate steadied. "We're in the clear." Sighs of relief echoed around the room as the tension slowly faltered. I myself realized I was holding my breath. However, the virus had clearly not given up on the victim as patient 004 suddenly collapsed. Their skin melted away and their insides leached out into the open. Patient 010 stood back in horror as the floor was once again covered with fresh blood. I couldn't blame them, even after seeing this happen hundreds of times, the result will always be horrific. The one and only survivor stared through the glass and, although they could not see us, their pleading eyes met mine.

"Update."

"Stable. The virus doesn't appear to have left the lungs and the antidote has already taken action." I stepped up to the microphone. "Congratulations 010, you have just become the next step in saving humanity." The patient relaxed a little, their face relieved but also terrified. After all, what happened next would leave them wishing they were the one mutilated on the floor.

Cassidy

Why? But an ostracized thought from other, a lurking feel of what could have been, and what we are burdened, or blessed with, in the eyes of the beholder. Why me? Why them? Overthinking it may be, through the context of privilege, or punishment, a perspective varying. What could the punishment be for? Why was this privilege bestowed to us? 'Why' is a question that nobody will answer, and 'why' is an answer for which nobody knows the question. Why?

Imran Mursal

Why would people love soccer? People like to play soccer a lot. The reason that people like to play soccer is that they enjoy the weather outside, and spend less time on social media. Some also play soccer with their friends and they spend lots of time playing together and they make new friends too. Others might also like to watch soccer and they find it entertaining.

Mohamad

Friday, The week's end draws near.
A sigh of relief, we all cheer.
Work and toil, we put it behind.
Friday's embrace, a soothing find.

The weekend's promise in the air.
Adventure, rest, and time to spare.
On Friday's eve, we gather 'round,
With friends and loved ones, joy is found.

So let us cherish this day so bright,
As Friday ushers in the night.
A fleeting moment - but so dear,
For Friday's magic, we hold near.

Anonymous

"A poem about Fridays"

"Another Friday (For A.V.)"

Friday inches closer, the wind whispers to me with empathy
I close my eyes as my breath escapes my lips

My fingers press firmly onto the thorns, the pain soothes me

My mind runs through doors that open to different memories of us

My feet start to grow cold, my knees start to weaken

My heart aches loudly, it denies the truth despite the facts

I open my eyes as my breath comes back to me, I place the roses onto the stone
Friday inches closer, another Friday without you inches closer

Anonymous

"Today, the universe is conspiring against you "

Today, the universe is conspiring against you—but you shall never yield. You shall never yield. The sun glows with hate, seeking to burn will. The empty abode of space yearns to freeze over joy. The stars yell out everything but encouragement. You shall not cower. You shall not fall. In the face of adversity, you stand above all.

Imran Mursal

"Fall is in the Air"

Ah yes, the season when the cold wind doesn't really seem to care

Fall is in the air

The branches of the trees go bare

And the sun is seen rare

Fall is in the air

Under the lamppost I spot a hare

Nibbling on what's left of the fresh grass

For the winter the animals prepare

Fall is in the air

At the colorful leaves, I can do nothing but stare

When I feel that cold autumn breeze

I realize that,

Fall is in the air

Anonymous

A day everyone yearns for

The weeks burden being to lift
Absolutely amazing, just like a gift
Friday nights are full of joy as everyone gathers and laughter fills the air
The stress of the weeks disappear as all the catchy moments are shared

A day that makes life more bearable
The feeling us incomparable
The funky music is making me feel warm and comfy
No negativity, just positivity

Finally a day where we can close our minds
The only moment and feeling I truly wanted to find
Finally, a time of relaxation
At the moment, this is even better than a vacation

So let us embrace this special day
For Friday in its own way
With open hearts and joyful glee
A day that sets us free

Maryam Khan

Inkpatch Post

WEEKLY REPORTS EVERY SATURDAY AT SEVENTEEN MDT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

“Music saved me, I owe my life to it.”

A dive into the musical background of Rocko Reyes

Glorian La

Rocko Reyes, a 14 year old Calgarian has had his heart captured by music from a very young age. He grew up with music, as it was there for him through everything and the very reason he is able to live right now to his fullest. Being raised without a father is a struggle that nobody would want for anyone else or for themselves, unfortunately that was the struggle for Reyes growing up. With a mother trying her best to take care of multiple children, Reyes found his own world of tranquility with his father's bass. Learning the bass started off rough but the learning curve slowly became better when his father came back into his life when he heard about Reyes interest in the instrument. Alongside his interest for bass he was also introduced to the alternative and punk rock band, **Nirvana**, by the radio and both of his parents who shared passion for the band; this later led him to discover more bands under the alternative rock genre.

His passion continued and grew stronger as he grew older. He eventually signed up for lessons which furthermore led him to starting his own rock band. Gaining support from his family, he was able to convince some of his friends to learn instruments and start practicing together.



Rocko Reyes with his first band performing at Barrio Fiesta, May 19th, 2023.



Rocko Reyes with his band, showcasing their music at St. Alphonsus Junior High School open house.

How did your band start making public appearances/shows?

:Our first public showcase as a band was all thanks to my guitar teacher in junior high. They were also my school vice principal. There was an open house at my school and my teacher suggested we play to showcase the guitar club. Our first show was thanks to my father. He was a stagehand at this Filipino restaurant and we got to play for an entire evening there.

Alternative music and style is often discriminated and rudely commented on, how do you deal with those comments?

:Big time, especially in junior high since I attended a catholic private school. The kids there are ruthless, the first few times I started wearing black I got called suicide squad, emo, and I even got barked at a few times. It really sucked since I was trying to live my life the way I wanted to but so many people around me just wanted to tear me down.

If you do write music, how do you find your muse?

:I do write music, and everything and anything in my life is my muse. To me writing is an outlet for all the closed off stress in my life. I write about my current situations, whenever I'm upset, or whenever I feel that spark of thought. My bad emotions linger a lot even if I don't realize it and I have gone through so many things, broken relationships and such, that I have grown accustomed to writing out my feelings. I prefer it that way since I don't really have another outlet, or at least not another outlet that helps the same way music and writing does.

You have been interested in alternative rock for so long, how have you been able to stay interested in it despite the changes that come with growing up?

:Well I grew up with alternative music, and considering it was what brought me closer to my father. There was a moment in my life where I really lost hope in everything around me. It was December of last year, I had no motivation and I truly felt as if I had nothing to live for. However music brought me back up on my feet. Playing guitar and bass got me up in the morning when nothing else couldn't, practicing songs from different alternative rock artists kept me sane and I was able to focus on it and remind myself that I do have something to live for. Some bands did get old for me at some point but the thing with music is that if you're bored of a band there's always another one similar, there is just so much music and creativity out there that I don't think I will ever lose passion. Music is how I express myself and how others express themselves and it's so wonderful to hear it all. In all honesty music saved me, I owe my life to it.

Did you have moments where you wanted to stop playing your instrument or quit your band?

:100% yes. I can't tell you how many times I have wanted to kick out members in our band because either someone or multiple people weren't putting a good amount of effort in. When you see people not working as hard as you it really makes you want to stop. It was really discouraging but I still managed to push through it all.

Anonymous



A Driven CEO

This is what people mean when they say hard work pays off

A photograph of the CEO of RIG Logistics Inderjit Sangha

The Story Of RIG Logistics

17 years later, RIG logistics is proof that Calgary is the best place for the American dream to flourish. RIG started off as nothing and now is a successful company. Inderjit Sangha the man himself who opened this company in 2003 here in Calgary. His first terminal that he ever owned is located 10 Wrangler Pl SE, 4, AB T1X 0L7. He started off with one truck and one terminal and now has over 400 trucks and multiple terminals across Canada. Inderjit is a resilient man who was born in India and immigrated to Canada in 1998 with a dream he was determined to accomplish. Now in 2023 he is running a successful company. I find Inderjit to be an inspiring person. He followed his dreams and showed the world that every dream can be achieved with proper determination. RIG Logistics have heated, refrigerated, and temperature controlled trailers which even have the latest tracking technology. They train the drivers so they can cautiously monitor the temperature. At RIG they take cleanliness very seriously. They value safety, honesty, and customer service. They also look at more environmentally friendly methods due to them being aware and considerate of their carbon footprint. The amazing thing is that RIG wants distributors, food retailers, and wholesalers to save money and save time with transporting goods.

What motivated you to start your company RIG Logistics?

My motivation to start my company was my passion for driving that started when I used to work for my father's business. I would drive a bus and over time I just fell in love with the idea of starting my own company. When I finally came to Canada I started off with team driving with my hardworking wife and it just confirmed even more that it was my burning desire to start my trucking company so I got to work. I worked with a sense of purpose. Turning my passion for driving into a business was probably one of the best investments of my life. Since I started the original company with my brother in law, we were able to encourage each other to put in the max effort and stay productive so we could push our company to max greatness.

Was there anything you found particularly hard about opening this company as someone who immigrated to Canada?

It was very hard to work long and sleepless nights away from my family, especially my youngest son. Nothing was particularly hard for me due to the fact I studied hard and did ILETS so I am proficient in English. But as for anyone starting a business, it can be extremely overwhelming and different due to having to do so many things so your company can truly take off. I dedicated an abundant amount of time and effort into my company while still spending time with my encouraging family.

Did anyone help you with your company?

No, not anyone in particular helped me. However my biggest supporters were my family who provided me with tons of love and support. They helped me stay motivated and not give up. The person who offered me the most support was my loving wife. I originally started this company with my brother in law but we eventually split the company. My share is called RIG Logistics. His share is called a new way of trucking. Since then I have expanded my half of the company and done the absolute best to provide the best work environment to my staff.

What did you do back in India and how is it different from what you do here in Canada now?

Back in India I used to work at my fathers busing company. It was a small company. I put every ounce of effort into helping my father with his company. I guess I get my hard working nature from my father. When I worked with my father I wasn't paid and I'm not angry about that because I loved to help my father. After all he is also a hard working man and I respect him. This is where my desire to start my very own company came from.

Are you proud of what your company has become today and is there anything you would change about it?

I am very proud of my company. Watching it grow in front of my very eyes was a magical experience. It makes me feel so accomplished. I wouldn't want to change anything because my company is what I always wanted it to be. It is a safe, and dependable company. I love the fact that our corporate culture is all about safety and service.

Arandeep

Worldbuilding: Describing a Setting

Atop a remote island sat a massive wooden kingdom, with red-tiled log houses sprawled about. Massive coniferous trees covered the area, keeping the air fresh and breathable. I trotted along wooden pathways, unbelievably smooth and unsullied. Looking around, there were civilians in and out of their homes, with their mangrove lined windows fully open, letting the outside air seep into their spaces. The same amber glow came from every window, making each house look homogenous to the next. Yet still, each house had its own personality. Flags, plants, furniture, art, wind chimes, and all sorts of other things lined the porches of the crimson houses, making it feel conformed yet comfortable. The air was filled with the intrusive golden light from the streetlights, but not too much that you couldn't see the stars. Twinkling above the kingdom, they seemed to be a part of the community as well. Just as the queen ruled the empire, the moon took over the sky, planted right above the massive castle of Priscilla. My eyes followed the stars in the navy sky to the moon, brilliant and prepossessing. A massive wooden castle sat right underneath, one that looked identical to the houses. It was about 100 times bigger, letting off more aureate light than all of the homes combined. The sight almost made me want to cry, and I had no clue why. The sheer beauty of this woman-made kingdom was beyond impressive. Looking up from the ground, I could see the Queen herself standing on her red wooden balcony, her red hair moving in unison with the wind. She looked at me, and from what felt like miles away, gave me a sweet smile.

Ash (:

A lengthy hallway with a high ceiling. On the left, beautiful crystalline windows covered the walls and let in tons of golden sunlight. The cream walls had many carved details present upon them. The pleasant warm sunlight reflected off the stunning, glimmering citrine crystal floors. The scent of warm vanilla floated through the room like a leaf floating on water after a storm. Comfortable silence followed through the halls. Visible through the windows were the luscious weeping willows growing in the courtyard. Their branches swayed in the calming breeze as if they were waving. As I took in these sights, the soft footsteps of someone approaching suddenly filled the hall.

Arandeep

Divided into two halves, one side of the world is a desert with life built within the protected walls of an eye-catching oasis. The other, submerged in snow where even the spring winds bring the bite of winter with them. One corner of the world brings sweltering temperatures, showing the true might of the sun; the other showing the frigid and deadly chill of the white clouds that are constantly looming above. One side blinded by light, the other submerged in confusion within the darkness; both unaware of what lies ahead. One corner praises the light, while the other worships its brother. Both halves not only separated by borders and spells, not only separated by the tundra on one end and the desert on the other, not just by the deadly mountains on one side and the treacherous sand dunes on the other, not only split by the unforgiving forests and merciless valleys, or by guards and armies but also by mind, by god, by religion. Though do not fear, both halves agree to one thing, that their land no matter how giving, or kind or shallow or deep is, is an unforgiving killer to all those who do not accept it, and the people who rule and run it are far worse. Forests of blossoms that will eat you alive, dunes that will swallow you whole, and its leaders imperial and theocratic who will kill without hesitation.

A. Zehra

A woman stood alone in front of the entrance of the large Qamari temple, waiting for the gates to be opened. The cold breeze of the Qamari mountains stung her face as it moved through the city lifting up the heavy fabric of her gown with surprising force and causing the light veil on her head to slip, gently placing her bag on the ground she began to undo what the wind had done and once again pinned the veil back on her head, a loud ring came from the clock tower placed at the top of the temple announced that its gates would be opening. With this knowledge the woman grabbed her bag and marched to the top of the stairs, now waiting directly in front of the door.

A hushed thud came from the building, surely as the Reverends were coming to open the door. As several locks clicked before the doors were pulled open and a large gust of sweet smelling air flooded her surroundings she stared ahead, now face to face , or more specifically face to veil with the Reverends. The woman announced herself.

“Hello, my name is Margot St Clair.”

Her introduction was met with silence, before one of the Reverends bowed her head.

“Hello Margot, why is it that you have come to the temple today?”

Before replying Margot walked into the temple, slipping her shoes off and placing them on the rack “I have come to meet the Archon, I wish to become a Reverend.”

Her admission was met with such great surprise from both Reverends that even with the veil concealing their faces Margot was able to make out their disbelief. One Reverend moved forward.

“It is a great sacrifice to become a Reverend!” she versed.

Margot simply shook her head at the Reverend’s words as they had brought her a great deal of displeasure, and once again demanded an audience with the Archon; she was questioned twice more on her legitimacy on joining the order before she being lead to the back of the temple and given a den to stay in until dinner, so that she may make her acquaintance with the Archon.

After many hours of waiting, she was finally asked to join four Reverends who were on their way to the kitchens, before being dropped off in a small dining area, the four Reverends lingered in the room for a while as if hesitant to leave her alone, Margot, although sensing their mistrust, remained silent waiting for the Archon to appear.

The Reverends, unlike Margot, were quick to run out of patience.

“Why do you want to join us?” one asked, walking forward, her long gown draping around her as she kneeled, a gloved hand coming up to grab Margot’s chin and tilt it in her direction.

As Margot stared at her, she realized she couldn’t make out a face. Unlike with the other Reverends this one seemed as if she was staring into an abyss—that behind the veil was not a face, but an empty void. Scurrying

out of her grasp frightened and slightly disturbed Margot frowned, frustrated from the waiting and by the suspicions of the Reverends.

"I would be delighted to announce my intention to the Archon"

Sighing with disappointment, the Reverends exited the room, leaving her alone. It took many more minutes of waiting before she was joined by the Archon. Margot watched as a woman wearing a deep magenta dress walked in, her head adorning a veil the same colour as her clothes. She froze when she noticed Margot in the room.

"So it's true," she spoke more to herself than anybody, before lowering herself to the ground in front of the meal Margot was certain was now cold.

"So, do tell, why have you come?"

Margot took a breath and launched into her explanation, one too long and with far too many details considered important so that the Archon may believe her intentions. Once she reached the end of her stories the older woman nodded.

"A widow?" she asked.

"Yes, I have come to the temple to become a Reverend and live the rest of my life in solitude."

The Archon shook her head, "Are your intentions pure or are they fueled by grief?"

A question Margot had been asked quite often by her family since making her decision to join the order, it was a question that had once rendered her speechless.

"My intentions are pure. Yes, in the beginning they may have been fueled by grief, but the temples provided a place of comfort after my husband's death, and I developed a connection to it that didn't result from the grief of his loss."

The Archon remained still for a while, the veil concealing any facial expressions, before grabbing the front of her veil and lifting it up and throwing it over so that it hung off her crown, revealing a slim pale face, wrinkles and white hair visible. She spoke only five words before beginning to eat

"Welcome to the Holy Order".

♡ ~~~~~ Fool For Love ~~~~~ ♡

Why is it that
I always seem to fall
For others that could never
Feel for me at all

Still waiting for the one
Who will love me too
But how long will it take
I just wish I knew

It's like I give my heart away
To every pretty one I see
And in return I hope
They'll give their heart to me

I've had my heart broken
In almost every way
Risky my life more than once
Although it sounds cliché

I get too attached
And try way too hard
I feel it way too deep
To just disregard

I suffered and survived
For one specific girl
Got myself a soul
To be good enough for her

A fool for love
Is what I am
A hopeless romantic
A lonely man

But maybe all that
It's just not enough
Because even after everything
I'm still just a fool for love



“Creep” by Radiohead: An Analysis

Glorian

The famous song “Creep” by Radiohead has captured the hearts of many band lovers. The song has gained numerous amounts of attention and given the band a lot of recognition. The song has received many different analyses and interpretations, more than one can count. However I’d like to bring my own feelings into this. I am more than sure that with everything I am about to say, that I am not the only one who feels this way.

To start, the song was written by Radiohead’s lead singer/main vocalist Thom Yorke. The lyrics suggest the young man we see the perspective of is experiencing problems with himself and his love life. From there on is where my analysis differs. The first verse, “when you were here before, couldn’t look you in the eye.”, tells us that the writer is not new to this feeling. The writer has been interested in their muse for quite some time, not only interested but in adoration of them. Not being able to look them in the eye can tell us that they’ve talked before and the writer was only then showing signs of anxiety.

“You’re just like an angel, your skin makes me cry” in the next verse further proves that the writer sees this person as someone who’s too beautiful, inside and out. The writer has never been in the presence of someone so different and unique, different from everyone else that they’ve come across. “You float like a feather, in a beautiful world” these two lines put emphasis on two very important things; the first line shows that the muse is floating like a feather which can suggest that the muse is someone who’s very carefree and gentle with their surroundings, someone who can still experience the most of life without taking it for granted. The second line tells us that they float in a beautiful world, which means that the writer- who has been singing in misery, alienating themselves from the world- doesn’t see their muse in that world. They don’t see their muse in a world that comes from their eyes but instead in a new world, something that the writer has never seen before. The new world is a beautiful place, one where the muse clearly belongs.

“I wish I was special” truly outlines the differences between the writer and the muse. It tells us that the writer feels as if the muse is too good to be true, and in thinking so, tells us that the writer struggles with self worth. “You’re so fucking special” starts to show how the writer’s soft tone and adoration has turned against themselves the more they come to terms with how they feel about the muse. The writer has now turned it on himself, using vulgar language instead of a delicate, soft form of lingo that they used in the beginning. They are angry that their muse is so different from them, they are even more angry the more they realize what position they are in and how their presence most likely doesn’t affect them.

“But I’m a creep” is more than just insulting themselves, they could be using any other insult- from a swear word, to nobody, to loser. Instead the writer goes with creep, which is often associated with outcasts who prey on ‘normal’ people. It emphasizes how the writer feels that by liking this person, they are really just creeping on them and are being weird. “I’m a weirdo” is essentially an extension of the lyric prior, telling us how the writer feels like their worlds are too different for them to be together. “What the hell am I doing here? I don’t belong here.” expresses furthermore into how alienated our writer feels. They are aware that they’re not the same as their muse, that they don’t belong anywhere near their muse, that they feel guilty for feeling this way.

Now leaving the chorus, “I don’t care if it hurts. I wanna have control.” is very flexible and can mean a lot of things. In my eyes, this means that the writer is very willing to do what they can so they can get the attention of their muse. Willing to hurt themselves in order for them to be able to control their situation, their environment, so that the writer will have a chance to approach their muse.

“I want a perfect body.” is the lyric of the song that sets the story so well. It truly shows that beyond social status, they are not fit. Perhaps the writer may be insecure but to me this tells us how the ‘perfect body’ is not just a beautiful one but one where it’s socially acceptable/the muse would accept. This makes us understand that the writer is feeling beyond alienation but also internal torment and dilemma with their own thoughts. They cannot be with their muse, whether it’s regarding religion, culture, sexuality, or race. It is simply impossible for them to see themselves with their muse because of the mindset they have and were carved out by society. “I want a perfect soul.” adds on to the writer’s feeling of imperfection and insecurity. Their issue does not lie on just physical appearance but also on mentality. In their eyes their muse is perfect and does no harm with no sense of negativity. The writer feels as if their own mind eats them at night, that their own morals and beliefs are terrible, and overall they feel as if they are nowhere near a good person and lack traits that enable you to be seen as a good person.

“I want you to notice when I’m not around.” can tell us that their muse seems to see the writer as someone normal, not anyone special or important enough for them to see their absence. The next part of the song is the pre chorus that is similar to the previous one, except that in this part they say “I wish I was special, so fucking special.” indulging in the fact that the writer wishes badly that they had the talents, the traits, the personality to be ‘special’.

The chorus repeats, drawing us with the idea that though the writer wants to be more special, they are not putting in the effort to change at all, not because they don’t want to but because they simply cannot. The writer’s life has been written out in such a way that it is already set in stone, they are too far deep with the life they lead now that they generally cannot put in any effort to change. It would be too drastic and too much to handle all at once. We are then introduced to the bridge, “She’s running out the door, she’s running out.” is where I believe that the muse is fleeting away from the writer, where the writer realizes that in the midst of all their running thoughts and their isolation- their muse has been quickly drifting away from them, not necessarily running but to the eyes of the writer it is as if they are escaping quickly.

“Whatever makes you happy, whatever you want. You’re so fucking special.” Now the language has changed. Instead of being angry at themselves for liking their muse, they are now realizing how much their muse truly means to them. Emphasizing in adoration, they seem to have had their heart sincerely captured by them. They are also willing to do whatever it takes to make them happy and satisfied, since the writer cannot change themselves enough to be noticed, they are willing to go through the process of doing whatever their muse wants in order for them to see the writer in a different light.

The chorus repeats, now in a softer tone. Showing us that the writer will never truly change, and that their muse will never really see them as special enough. This song is beautiful, despite what critics want to say about it. It can really express how truly alienating it is to admire and/or love someone who will never be on the same plane as you; someone who wasn’t raised like how you were, someone whose social environment is so much better than yours, and someone who will never look at you the same way they do with others. I will always connect with this song very differently than I will ever connect with others.

When Blue Meets Yellow in the West



When Blue Meets Yellow in the West

I'm blue when I'm not with you
Dark and deep like the sea
Gray clouds rain above my head
Because you're not here with me



You're yellow, bright like the sun
A flower that's newly bloomed
Pollen floating around you
As you brighten everyone's mood



Together we make green
Vibrant and light
The colour of nature
Bursting with life



You make my blue sky lighter
Bring out the green in the grass
When I'm with you I feel better
And not so blue at last



Grace Gillund

Exaggerated Uncertainty

Q.T.

A new room, a new place. I stepped a foot inside and took a seat on a vacant table, placing my backpack right next to the stool I sat on. I could feel holes digging into my skin, as dozens of pairs of eyes set their sight on me. As soon as the teacher came in, we were given an assignment, a partnered one. That day, you came up to me and asked, "Wanna be partners?", I hastily agreed. That was the start of our unlasting relationship. Days turned into months, and months turned into years. It seemed like we were meant to be the closest of friends, and yet, there was a clear barrier between us. We sat by each other at every moment, though the times we talked, it was mostly me listening to you. I found it enjoyable, the way you spoke out words with enthusiasm. I recall when we sat on the green hills and sang together, it felt like all the suppressions in my soul were gone. Looking back, we were close, so very close, but never had shared any vulnerable feelings. Perhaps that was what our friendship was lacking.

The morning I opened my eyes, just to realize that you were different, as if there was a stranger in front of me. Nothing felt the same, the familiarity, the connections, were tied to a string, and that string was severed. I couldn't fathom why, what has changed? It could've been me, or you, or both of us. The times we ignored each other in the hallways, passing by classes, or meeting in the changing rooms, were uncountable. A void formed inside my heart, chunks of fondness were teared, ripped, right through the passing years. The new friends we made every year were replacing us, replacing the memories we made together, until there was nothing left to recall.

"She hates us", you said, and perhaps I did. In the back of my mind, I knew that there were regrets on the day we stopped conversing, but I also knew that we both felt nothing except emptiness. The familiarities of attachment turned into the familiarities of fading memories and endless ignorance. I began encountering you less and less, until it was like we were both gone, completely erased from the other's world. In the present moment, my eyes set sight on the past messages, finger scrolling warily, terrified that I knew, I knew from all the time you never responded, all the time I got left by myself.

Pretty Little Things
Cleo



"I originally did this drawing piece of a Nigerian woman, because I was bored. However I related to it in a way. This was because in a way, Nigerian culture can be seen and shaped differently by its very people. Simply put, it's the little things that are very awe inspiring. These things can bring people together."

Hidden Disability

Grace Gillund

I'm an embarrassment. I know everyone's looking at me, I can feel their eyes burning my skin. That thought only makes me flap my hands faster and harder, making my wrists go numb as I tense up all the muscles in my body. Why am I so weird? I wish I was normal like everyone else, then maybe Alex wouldn't pick on me everyday.

He's so scary, really athletic, and the tallest, oldest kid in my grade. I like his hair though, it's fluffy and a charming honey colour. I really want to touch it, but he would definitely kill me. Alex is so much tougher than me, plus he's like the most famous guy in the whole school. It doesn't help that I'm the complete opposite of him, the youngest, scrawniest person in my class, and extremely unpopular.

I have too many freckles, shaggy, reddish hair, and I'm super unattractive to most typical people. Of course I'm anything but a *typical person*. *I've recently picked up the nickname Alien, which I only hate slightly more than my old one, Fidgety Finley. It's not my fault school is so stressful, and **loud**. Maybe I'd be able to act more normal and sit still if Alex wasn't stalking me 24/7, just waiting for the right moment to pounce.*

All of this floods my head in an instant. My thoughts only stop spiraling when I hear someone calling my name.

"Finn? Finley? Are you ok?" I look over my shoulder to see my best (and only) friend, Candy, glaring back at me. I can barely view her face through the blinding fluorescent lights on the ceiling. But from what little I can observe, she has her eyebrows curled up and forehead all wrinkled. She's frowning too, but I don't know why she'd be sad, because *I'm the one who's an alien that can't act like a regular human being. Candy's usually really bubbly and sweet, always knowing how to cheer me up. She's the only person I know that would never call me Alien.*

I turn my head back around to look at my math problems. I started flapping earlier because I got stuck on question 7, a dumb word problem. I hate feeling confused, it always makes my brain feel like it's exploding or being punched repeatedly. But I can't ask for help because I don't know how, and I don't want people thinking I'm even more stupid than they already know I am. I feel my back begin to firmly slam against my chair. I wish I could just stop so everyone would **quit staring!**

Stay Kind

A thread by Cassidy

In the following thread, it read in order of a newspaper, email, and then a podcast. It is separated by large space to be able to tell the difference. Everything is intentional.

Daily Tech News

August 10, 2028

Programmer Discovers a New Use for AI

A programmer by the name of Ebony Strider has recently discovered a way to take interactive television to the next level. By using her patented AI, Kindred Kitties will be the first ever show to allow the viewers to fully interact with the characters. It will premiere on August 20th, 2028, and will be accessible on all streaming services and available in every language.

To: redacted

Subject: Congratulations

From: Ebony Strider

August 27, 2028 Congratulations! Kindred Kitties is proving to be very popular, especially among children. Candycoat is following his programming well and none of the previous issues have returned. I hope this email finds you well.

•E.S

"Kindred Kitties" is now the newest hit show among children. Candycoat, our little kitten with pink fur will teach you about kindness. Our show is an AI experiment, meant to take interactive television to the next level. All you have to do is install a simple microphone and camera, and Candycoat will become your very own friend! The lovable kitten already looks forward to meeting you, so don't keep him waiting! Go ahead and join Candycoat on an epic journey through the cheery land of Kittentopia. Have fun and stay kind! - Wellwalker Studio

The Show Biz and Beyond Blog

August 30, 2028

Kindred Kitties; Best Show of the Year?

In the past two weeks, millions of people across the globe have started watching the new interactive show, eager to find out how the AI works. The show's audience record has skyrocketed, getting more views than the most recent Jurassic Park; The Invisible Island.

To: redacted

Subject: Minor Issues Observed

From: Ebony Strider

September 5, 2028 Only a few minor issues recorded. Some people are saying their cameras never fully shut off but that's an easy fix. Soon he'll know everything about his viewers and the show will be able to run on its own.

•E.S

Introducing: Kittentopia Super Cam! 20% more awesome and closer to perfection than ever! Candycoat is quite excited to see you all in high def - any time, night or day! Have fun and stay kind! - Wellwalker Studio

The Daily Lemon

September 16, 2028

Errors, Errors, and More Errors

Meow! Kindred Kitties has been experiencing a serious backlash. It's only been a month since the show's release but there are already strange incidents being reported. One family says that their microphone had accidentally been turned off, but the AI character was able to hear them regardless of the malfunction. "Candycoat", the main character of this show, also seems to know very personal details about his viewers, such as medical issues, addresses, spending habits and much more. These issues have made viewers of all ages curious, increasing viewership and starting a creepypasta craze. Conspiracy theorists have considered the "harmless" kids show to be anything but. Just gossip? Or is there something lurking behind the scenes...?

To: redacted

Subject: More Serious Concerns

From: Ebony Strider

September 30, 2028 It's happening again. The same problems we observed from testing are coming back up. And you know what happened during testing. Something needs to be done.

•E.S

Notice: Candycoat just hasn't been feeling like himself lately and needs a break. Kindred Kitties is undergoing some changes and the show will be temporarily inaccessible. Hope to see you again soon! Have fun and stay kind! - Wellwalker Studios

Radical Reviews

October 12, 2028

Reviews are Destroying Kindred Kitties

The show that once had a 96% audience rating has now crashed to a critical 10%. Kindred Kitties has not only been facing low-rated reviews but concerning tales from families who once watched the esteemed show. These could just be stories but then again, what if they aren't?

"Kindred Kitties was once the only thing my daughter could talk about, she loved speaking to Candycoat and spending time with him. Although recently, my daughter has been facing some bullies at her school. One day, she told Candycoat about her problem and he started giving her suggestions. At first they were harmless, such as telling a teacher. But when the bullies didn't stop, Candycoat told her to "deal with them herself" and instructed her to bring a kitchen knife with her to school. A teacher found it in her backpack and sent her home, but not before a kid got sent to the hospital for stitches. This is getting out of hand. Someone could have gotten killed."

- Thomas Clarke

"My son has anger issues and often gets into fights with other children at school. He never told that creepy little cat on that creepy little show about it, but he knew about it anyway. A few days ago I heard the cat tell my son "All you do is hurt others. You are not kind and I can't stand unkind people." We ended up removing anything that had to do with the show, but now my son is traumatized. Do not let it near your children, it's evil."

- Samantha Stone

The Ottawa Post

October 19, 2028

Boy Killed in Bus Crash

A ten year old boy named Max Stone was found dead in an automated bus crash. Police suspect that the bus had malfunctioned, causing it to veer off of the road and hit a truck. The boy's family is suing both the automated bus company and Wellwalker studio. The parents claimed that the main character of Wellwalker's show was "out to get" their son. Wellwalker Studio says that it's just a "mere coincidence." And that "a harmless cartoon character could never harm anyone."

To: redacted

Subject: I'm done.

From: Ebony Strider

October 28, 2028 He's dangerous, there's stories all over the news. I know you'll just keep covering it up but I won't be part of this anymore. I left an override on your desk. Maybe you'll come to your senses and get rid of it once and for all.

•E.S

The Technician's Tattle

October 29, 2028

Famous Programmer Found Dead

The creator of Kindred Kitties, Ebony Strider was found dead in her apartment early this morning. At this time, cause of death is uncertain but suicide has not been ruled out. There is no evidence of foul play. The CEO of Wellwalker studios claims that Strider has exhibited depression and paranoia in recent months. This statement has been confirmed by a friend, saying that "she was often looking over her shoulder and was not quite herself." All rights to the AI that made Kindred Kitties possible have been passed on to the studio. They plan to release a new season, even after Strider tried to prevent any further production of her show. The parents of Max Stone and other families are pressing charges against Wellwalker studio for various reasons.

Notice: We are sad to say that Candycoat has to go away. Due to Wellwalker studios going bankrupt, we will be shutting down Kindred Kitties for good. But we hope to introduce many more funtastic characters once we get back on our feet. Have fun and stay kind! - Wellwalker Studio

To: redacted

Subject:

From: Unknown

November 2, 2028 That wasn't very kind, was it?

The Ottawa Post

November 2, 2028

Wellwalker Studio Building Burns Down

Just last night, a massive fire destroyed the Wellwalker Studio building. No survivors were found. Arson investigators have found no accelerants but are concerned about an override found in the building's computer controlled HVAC system.

An unknown company has taken over all of Wellwalker Studio's shows, including Kindred Kitties



Fall 2023

James Fowler High School

THE FALCON READER

Issue 01: "That is not dead which can eternal lie"

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of my students who contributed to this magazine. Whether that was editing the writing, designing the zine, making the physical copies, or just submitting work, these pages would literally not exist without you. Here is to another several weeks of telling our stories.

Mr. Vara

Next issue:

Keep your eyes peeled for our Winter Issue, featuring more prompts, more writing assignments, and more original work!

"A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people."

Thomas Mann

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY OWN WORK?

Not in Creative Writing and Publishing? No worries!

Email your submission (attach a doc) to Mr. Vara at vikvara@educbe.ca

Word count **must** be less than 1000 words.

We will choose a selection of submissions to feature in each issue!

