

# THE END



**Volume 17**  
**DRHS**  
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# THE END

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Deep Run High School

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The staff members of Deep Run Literary Magazine do not disqualify entries on basis of race, gender, or age. The authors and artists, however, must be students at Deep Run High School at the time of the magazine's publication. After this first barrier is passed, the entries are then selected by quality of submission.

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# What You Carry on Your Walk

Caesar Itou

Why, why do we do this?  
It's over, man, it was over a long time ago.  
It's time to move on, there is no point.  
The warmth you feel, you felt--  
You expose your heart to the world in hopes of finding it.  
Your hope has no value here;  
you owe hope in this world.

Even within your own dreams,  
I see the forming of a slicing maelstrom.  
I know you do too.  
It's not worth it.

They always say that we'll look back,  
regretting not having said or done anything,  
but they don't consider the regret of having said too much  
tried too hard,  
dug too deep,  
revealed too much.  
It's far worse.

It's better to have loved and lost?  
I don't think so.  
We've dug our own graves.

## The Hike

Kalilah Kroll

The way up was rough,  
Over large rocks,  
Cold streams,  
Steep climbs,  
Fumbling along the way.  
Just when I thought it was done  
It had only just begun.  
As I got higher and closer toward the peak,  
I could see my goal  
shining brightly in the evening sun.  
As I looked out at the beautiful scene of colors  
I realized:  
That this was the end of this climb.



Sunday Morning

Riley Bragg

## Faded Light

Maggie Liu

“It’s coming.”

We stand, hands clasped, amidst the crowd, as the darkness moves closer and closer to our sun. Around us, they panic, sobbing for their gods, praying to those who do not exist, or exist no longer. Only we are silent.

“It’s coming,” he says, voice choked. He tightens his grip, and I lose feeling in my left hand. “It’s really coming.” He’s angry, I can tell. Angry at them for coming, at the world for letting it happen, at life for giving us no chances.

“My hand,” I say, and he relaxes slightly, enough to loosen his hold. He tears his gaze away from the darkening sky to look at me, briefly.

“It’s coming,” he says again, gaze boring into my eyes. I nod. “I won’t leave you.” I nod again.

He falls silent. The darkness grows ever closer. Finally, as the edge of the darkness begins to blot out the light, he tugs me away. The crowd breaks, and sounds of screaming fills the air. The only thing keeping me grounded is the feel of his hand in mine, leading me away from the chaos.

“Even if we die, we’ll die together, alone.”

Despite the situation, I laugh. I can’t help it. It seems so trivial, right now, where we die, since we’re going to die anyway, and then it won’t matter where we are. Above us, the darkness eats away at the light, slowly, confidently. Our death is imminent.

But that doesn’t mean it has to be tragic. We didn’t choose our end, but we can choose how it ends.

And we choose to end it quietly.

With each passing second, the light grows dimmer and dimmer, until I can barely make out his silhouette beside me. He shifts, drawing me closer to him, and I welcome his warmth in the night that is not night.

This is the end.

*When comes a time where night is not night and day is not day.*

*That will be the end.*

# Perish Song

Noah Scholle

There exists a sacred anthem,  
one which calls forth death.  
A hymn for all the fools,  
breathing their last breath.

Those who've tried to hum it,  
were outcast for their violence.  
Any chorus which could sing it  
would be a cult of silence.

Sung with an aria,  
spanning time and space.  
No bribes of diamonds and pearls  
could change the prolonged pace.

Rubies and sapphires and silver and gold  
fade away in time.  
The sun and moon and black and white  
won't outlive this rhyme.



Security  
Zoë Fields

## hiding in plain sight

Rachel Christina

i never get to settle into these bones this  
    skin isn't the one for my soul  
i dress in silk and  
    jewels for the  
    mirror  
for the window  
i peacock in my armor  
and that's all i'll be good  
    for  
a magnificent  
    show.



Discovered  
Andrew Angel

# Mend

Caesar Itou

Our days are filled with ambition, with failure, with hopes, and with despair. We have our goals, what we want to do, what we want to avoid, who we want to woo, to make smile, to make your heart race. We want to feel fulfilled, warm, loved.

For what?

What are we but wrinkles to eventually be lost in the folds of time? Nothing before our short time and nothing after. Nothing unto nothing, nothing lost and nothing gained. Why try, when nothing is to come of your efforts, your toil and your happiness. When, at the end of your mortal coil, all that awaits is (probably) nothing?

Well, why not?

Nothing matters if nothing matters, so why not do what you want? Why feel that pang in your heart when you see that person you'd rather not see? Is it part of being human? Our minds trying to place worth upon our lives that are ultimately worthless? Why not just feel happy, as the things you lose are just as worthless as yourself?

Such is the enigma; nothing matters so nothing matters, and if nothing matters then nothing matters. I am insignificant, ergo an early checkout constitutes no change in the world. If I am insignificant, then why leave when I can just do whatever I want? It is this mental turmoil that forms the human condition. The higher mental power behind your dreams and ambitions. The ghost that lies behind your emotion, behind your concerns and despair, behind the happiness and love, hidden- Until it is too late. When your life comes crashing down, and you must decide.

Choose wisely. Mend.

## My End.

Karanvir Singh

All my laughter is gone.  
So is my brawn.  
I am a dead pawn.  
This is my last dawn.

Each second drains my will power.  
Everything tastes sour.  
I have nowhere to cower,  
Since this is my last hour.

This is my last stand,  
I'll only go down on my command.  
Even though I don't have the upper hand,  
This is no man's land.

I will fight till my last breath, my friend,  
Since every breath is a godsend dividend.  
Leaving me along is what I recommend,  
Because this is my end.



Ghostly  
Andrew Angel

## Tornado Alley

Vivian James

I like to think of my mind as a peaceful place, Where all my wild thoughts can race,  
But sometimes I wonder if I should have been taking those pills,  
For I can't help it when my mind fills,  
Fills with anger, and stress, to the point where I wouldn't mind if a bolt of lightning would come and crack open my head. Maybe I need to talk, to let the overwhelming thoughts pour out  
But everyone has a mind with thoughts that go through, Everyone has to fight their own storms too.

So why should they worry, if my storm's winds are a bit stronger than theirs... A tornado some might say,  
Well, all my happy thoughts are the little houses made of straw instead of clay, And they just happen to be sitting straight on tornado alley.

So when you feel the wind start blowing a bit stronger, remember that your house is made out of straw not brick, and... RUN.

# On Being a Catfish

Hannah Lawrence

Slimey-

    With foundation

Light shining down-

    Strobing, colored

    I watch you

Submerged in my pond

    I see your sighs and I see where you stare

Upon the other fish and their fishy mates

    Do you wish you were one of them?

I reach out a fin to you

I want to touch you, want you to hold me

    So the loneliness would be driven out of both of our bodies

I reach out a fin

    A hand

Barely, because I can't move it far

    I raise it an inch

You're so far

    Just a few feet away

    You turn to your friend

    You hope they don't play anything slow

My catfish body itches to wriggle out of the mud

    To walk over

To break the surface

    To say hey

But with no water, how will I breathe?

For now I can only watch from below

Your distorted beauty

    Under the lights

    I can only hope that my feelings reach you

    The scraps of paper I leave when I'm feeling brave

A splash in your still pond

    That you're a little less lonely

Even if you can't see the fish in the pond

I'm here

    I'm here

I see you

    I see you

# Glass

Jason Leung

He started to lift his hand, but paused. The chatter of the room was... difficult to detach from. The sagely folk, desperate to comfort themselves with their reverence of their homeworld. The younger adults equally desperate to leave this crowded chamber.

His eyes focused on the reflection in the glass, on the crowd behind him fighting for a good view of the central screens, ignoring the glass walls that shielded everyone. There in the center, the monitors displayed images from a fixed telescope pointed at a single star system 4.24 light-years away.

He shifted his focus back from the mirror images, through the glass bubble across the open landscape. Raising his hand to the cold glass, he could imagine the searing heat of the exposed surface. Where stories of Proxima Centauri b depicted lush, life-teasing forests on the irradiated surface, this planet seemed to be a radioactive corpse, equally as inaccessible.

Confining, all the same.

The crowd's voices were raising, and the boy sighed. He turned away from his special place on the window—wait, no, he'd almost forgotten. He turned to face the nuclear wasteland, brimming with its rolling hills of withered plant-life and towering cities of dust. Standing a little taller.

And he nodded. At least his people wouldn't destroy themselves. At least they had this second chance of a planet. At least, he hoped. Smiling, softly.



Grabbed  
Andrew Angel



Nomenclature  
Zoë Fields

## **I Am Time**

Karanvir Singh

I am inevitable.  
I wonder why people try to stop me.  
I hear the sound of greats falling to their knees, and begging for my  
mercy.  
I see the defeats of those who try to defy me.  
I want you.  
I am inevitable.

I pretend to love everyone, and grant you riches only to take them  
away painfully.  
I feel stronger, then the strong.  
I touch your precious lives, and finish them with my whim.  
I worry about nothing.  
I cry crocodile tears at your loss, knowing you will be next.  
I am inevitable.

I understand how much you want to live.  
I say that in the end I will always win.  
I dream that which will one-day deal the same fortune to you as  
countless others.  
I try to give you some hope, and aspiration, only to cause more  
pain.  
I hope you enjoyed your life because time's, almost up!  
I am inevitable.

# You

Hannah Klose

You're a habitual liar.  
It's a preservation technique.  
You lied when you wrote invitations  
to your 5th birthday party.  
You lied again when they asked your age at the station,  
and you said 17.  
And you lied when you were in an interview  
and claimed you were born in 1883.  
You lied when you turned 30  
and 40  
and 50.  
You lied when you died,  
and they wrote "87" on you grave.  
You lied every time  
you never spoke what you felt inside  
and went along complacent with time,  
knowing full well it did not define you.  
Still, you let others define you by it,  
though it knew nothing of you,  
nor you of it.  
You lied,  
and now you lie  
despicably one hundred and thirty-five,  
bereft of life,  
and still judged  
by us,  
young and old,  
frail and strong,  
re-reading the letters you wrote  
for a different time,  
proving your theories  
now through mine.



Peyton  
Lindsay O'Neill

## Shooting Stars Are Just Comets

Wardah Shabbir

Why is it that  
when all life is  
silent, we look up  
to the night sky  
and confess our dreams?  
Why do we whisper our wishes  
to the heavens, when we're  
aware that no soul is listening?  
Why do we hope our fantasies will come true  
when we know that our desires are but broken  
glass, shattered delusions that not even the  
stars can repair.

# Your Last Empire

Maggie Liu

终究我们会一起坠落。(In the end, we will fall together.)

This is what you said to me that day, as they called for your head.  
This is what you said in the rain, as I refused to leave your side, as  
the assassin was executed, as the empire broke apart.

This is what you said before the battle, as you rushed against  
hordes of rebels. This is what you say after everything is over, as  
a rotten, metallic stench pervades the silence, as the setting sun  
paints the sky red with your army.

I cradle your body in my arms, holding you close, feeling the  
blood seep into my clothes, staining my skin. Your hand trembles  
with the effort of touching my face, as you gather the last of your  
strength, tracing your finger along my tears.

You smile, and I can see just a hint of the man I fell in love with.  
Your eyes close, and I can see the full extent of your vulnerability.  
Your hand drops, and I can see why you did what you did.

It wasn't for power. It wasn't for love It wasn't even for yourself.

It was for the world, in hopes that it could become a better place.  
It was for society, in hopes that it could learn to grow. It was for  
the future, in hopes that it – more than us – could rid of crime and  
advance humanity.  
But you couldn't do it.

You lie in my arms, robes as red as the silk tassel of your sword,  
skin as cold as the white jade of my hairpin, breath as still as the si-  
lence of the battlefield. You lie in my arms, and I lose track of time,  
sitting with your body, drenched in your blood.

When night finally falls, the stars emerge, twinkling. Their light is  
cruel, mocking us for our sorrows. How dare they? How dare they  
continue shining over the world with their laughter? How dare they,  
when my entire world is gone?

No one will help me, I realize. No one will even pity me. No one will mourn you, no one will cry. Instead, they will rejoice. They will celebrate, and they will laugh. That's how much you were hated.

I cannot bear to see you denounced, reduced to a mere villain in the eyes of the world. You must live on. You must continue to win your battles, continue to lead the way. No one must know that you are dead.

As far as they know, you are still alive.

And so, I decide, you will become me, dead in the war, and I will become you, crowned in victory. I will take your place and continue your legacy, be it good or bad. I will live out your dream and bring it to fruition, no matter the price.

I will shoulder the sins you collected. I will finish the road you began. I will forge the way for your empire.

I will become the person you wanted to be. I will see the world bow before you.

And the world will remember your name.

天堂无路，地狱无门。(No road to Heaven, no door to Hell.)



Waves Grow Sweet  
Hannah Lawrence

# College Board HATES This Man!

Adam Elwood

The rush to prepare,  
and the seemingly infinite time it takes to hear back.  
Endless pursuits for money to attend our dream college,  
even if we're taught money isn't happiness.  
Being in a constant state of distress,  
rather than thinking if we should attend  
in- or out-of-state.  
Taking a test whose number  
will define the rest of people's lives.  
Despite its "non-for-profit" status,  
College Board nets over a billion dollars a year.  
Colleges scoring cheap points  
by saying how much they "care" about the individual.  
No matter their claims,  
they want to know how smart we are  
not who we are.  
The preference of virtue  
over sanity.  
These points are heard,  
not heeded;  
perceived,  
not considered.  
But who cares,  
everyone does it,  
so who am I to complain.



Photo Redu  
Andrew Angel

## New York

Hannah Klose

We walked three blocks and fell off the end of the world.  
With that kind of haste they call luck,  
we landed between the arms of the city herself.

She had no material prejudice in her heart  
and let us sit at her table and feast on what she produced.  
We spoke her name in soft tones  
and sung it gently in songs,  
afraid it would break on harsher tongues.

She smiled as we tried to enshrine a king and make a name for the  
known.  
She pitied us when we could not pity ourselves.  
She led us on with a strange sort of hope  
that hobbled and crawled but moved on still.

And when at last we left her  
she held fast our hearts  
and buoyed all her splendor in their creases,  
so we would return  
in pilgrimage,  
in homage to her care.



Self Portrait  
Lindsay O'Neill

# Birthday Visit

Yooeun Lee

December 12th — it's a special day today. Yet I don't deserve to be special. Everything is gone because of one mistake. They say it's okay, that I can forget someday, that I will be able to smile when I remember the distant past.

It's my birthday today.

“Lucia? Hello...? Mrs. Johnson!”

A familiar voice breaks my tsunami of thoughts. I turn to see Miss Alice, one of my new recruited workers, holding two cups of coffee in her hands. She's panting; it seems like she ran here from across the hall. “It's your birthday today, I'm pretty sure.” She pauses, waiting for my nod of acknowledgment before continuing. “Happy birthday!”

“Thank you.” I smile. “I'm surprised you knew. Especially since you just came.”

“Oh, memorizing these things are a must!” Alice gushes, and hands me a cup of coffee. The rough paper is warm against my wrinkled hands. Then, probably out of courtesy, she asks, “Who are you going to spend your special day with?”

This question, I don't have a clear answer to. Hardly anyone mentions it anymore. I hesitate, but Alice stays, peering at my face, searching for an answer.

“Someone... I love.”

Alice looks puzzled for a second, but then, realization flushes over her face. She squeals. “It must be so romantic, spending your 50th birthday with your husband! I want to be with my boyfriend for fifty years...”

She rambles on, blindly driving daggers through my already-ragged heart. But it's not her fault, I know. I offer her a tight smile and send her off to end the day.

Tonight, the moonlight shines brighter than usual, mocking my loneliness. I walk toward a bench at the park near the company building. The seat is cold and sends my body into shivers. I breathe in and then out, watching my breath form miniature clouds. They disappear as quickly as they form. The harsh wind stings my eyes, blurring my vision. I look up at the lights of the city, trying to illuminate the darkness of the winter sky.

But what good is it? Artificial lights cannot substitute the brightness of the sun. Suddenly, my throat closes, and I can't breathe. The emptiness within my hollow heart grows even deeper, and even the newspapers blowing across the ground sound lonely. If today was any other day, I would try to erase him from my thoughts, but in this moment, I want to remember. I don't want to forget.

I still hold the cup of coffee in my hands. The liquid is icy, has been for a while, but I clutch it as if it was my only source of heat. The tip of my nose feels prickly and numb, and so do my cheeks and fingers. Despite the cold, I relax, closing my eyes with a smile. For a while, I stay motionless, reminiscing a time when I had a reason to be happy.

The house is pitch-black, flashing into focus when I flip the switch beside the door. It's funny, how the absence of even an insignificant light source can conceal such a large space in overwhelming darkness. I take my boots off and hang up my jacket; the bright red of the calendar on the wall crosses my vision. I ignore it; today is my birthday.

The wooden dresser is covered in dust. I haven't opened it since last year. In the dim light, I see it, the box in the corner of the drawer. Slowly, I reach in. The package is tiny, postmarked ten, twenty, thirty years in the past, covered in scribbly handwriting. I open it, revealing two objects: a tarnished silver key and a large rectangular box. The key is silver, tarnished from years of handling, and fits perfectly into the keyhole in the center of the box. It's filled with him, with us, countless memories of innocent joy. After searching through piles of pictures and handwritten letters, I finally find it. It's a teddy bear, the one he gave me on my birthday, so many years ago. Trembling, I caress the once-pink fur of the plush toy, bringing it up to my cheek, lightly squeezing its stomach. The bear buzzes softly. "Zz...z..." Static crackles and fades. "Happy...birthday! Lucia... zzz... always remember I love you..."

The tip of my nose feels pinched, and heat rushes to my face. My eyes pull at the mixed emotions in my heart, and the tears rise slowly. The pain fights to surface in my throat in the form of a piercing cry, but I clamp my lips shut and attempt to swallow it. But as much as I try to resist, I can't, and the sobs break through

with a ragged gasp. Echoes of the past haunt me and torture my consciousness, draining all of my strength. I crumple to the floor, tears streaming steadily down my face. I stare at the mirror in front of me, but the face that looks back does not look like the Lucia Johnson I once knew her to be. Her lifeless draining gaze, tear stains and wrinkled skin reflects a woman out of her mind.

“How... could you...?” I stutter at my reflection and squeeze my eyes shut while yet another tear rolls down my distressed face.

“Wh... why were you so angry twenty years ago, Lucia? It was just your birthday, nothing special. Not any more special than him. Because of what you did, I now feel sorry for him every single day of my broken life. That I’m able to walk the streets wherever I would like, that I can still smile and talk with others.” I try to breathe steadily and gulp a wail down.

“I feel like a sinner, even on my birthday, that I’m still alive without him! But mostly, I am angry at you for making him leave like that, without seeing his face for the one last time!” I scream and throw the teddy bear at my reflection. When the plush hits the mirror and falls to the ground, its limp body produces another sad “I love you.”

## **A Show**

Jessica Wen

The audience extends out a camera phone,  
Leaning over and clapping after every act,  
Frantically searching and listening for their own,  
Already imagining them with their bags packed.

However, the performers feel nothing but glee,  
Shaking and shuffling with bouts of nerve,  
Mixed between the waves of the blue and white sea,  
Receiving awards for all they deserve.

Glistening with necklaces of bronze and shimmer,  
Like circus animals celebrating their last show,  
The performers realize it’s the end of a chapter,  
And they give thanks for the support to whom they owe.

There are no more classes with the friends we have made  
But there is no other experience I would ever trade.

# Mints and Japanese

Caesar Itou

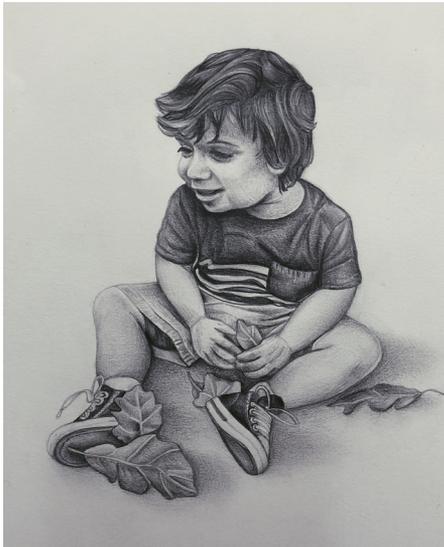
I want to feel loved.

Yeah, yeah, I know my parents love me, but they are supposed to.  
It is inherent, their love; almost biological.  
A love without any strings attached.

It's not the same as when I was with her (them?).  
With her, it was a warmth, like I could see the face of a smiling  
god behind the sun.  
It was like I was invincible, immortal,  
Like a high on a subzero night;  
A mania following a depressive episode...

Until they came crashing down.  
The warmth of that summer only made the fall all the more frigid.

But I'll continue down the empty beach I saw in my dream,  
following something I can't quite reach,  
something I can't quite see,  
under the melting bubblegum sky.



Ryan  
Lindsay O'Neill

## **chapter two**

Shannon O'Keefe

let's rewind to a different time.  
to a time before i knew what it felt like to be completely & totally  
shattered.

this was just a few short years ago, but i was so different.  
all thanks to  
you.

losing you was the brutal end to chapter one.  
but i learned, i grew, i  
changed.

accepting the fact that i had lost you was the start of chapter two.  
& chapter two is so much more beautiful than anything i have ever  
experienced  
before.

you took our friendship.  
& you taught me  
heartbreak.

but heartbreak is so important.  
heartbreak taught me what mattered in  
life.

thank you for flipping the page.  
thank you, so much, for being the catalyst to start my next  
chapter.

## **poetry is what saves you**

Rachel Christina

poetry is the words you utter  
on the verge of death.  
the phrases you repeat when you're losing yourself; the  
mutterings of medicine you swallow when in pain.



Euphoria  
Megan Chen

## The Eagle

Hannah Lawrence

What does it mean to become whole? Is it possible to open yourself up enough that you become the person hiding inside all along? Or when you strip all that flesh off, will there be nothing left?

The secret of life, to becoming a true being, is not found inside. No, no human can find their meaning in the void of their souls. Humans are empty, vessels, slates born blank for the purpose of being filled with scrapings from life, and then we die, and we let all those scraps go from our net and into the trap of another, circling around over and over.

The secret of life cannot be read about. It is no word, or phrase, or book, skimmed over with eyes like ladles to dip out the cream. The cream distracts us.

The secret of life is in the hidden meanings we see, in emotions brought on by sheer stupidity, in tiny stars in our void of a world.

You can read a book and think ‘wow that was good’ and then put it down and never think of it again, or you can read a book and stop at a passage you just read and cry, or lay down and stare at the ceiling, then think about it for the rest of your life. You can dismiss something as dumb; put others down for liking it and take poisonous joy in laughing at it, or you can dive in and embrace it fully and scream and laugh and have the best nights of your life and hang onto every scrap of it you can. You can look up at an eagle circling in the sky and take pictures to keep onto that memory and gawk and gasp, or you can stare and watch it circle and wipe your mind and find beauty in thinking that this bird shares air with me.

I lied about that last one, I know I set up the first part to be bad, but I don’t actually think it’s bad to take pictures and gasp, because you will remember that for the rest of your life.

Actually, everything I just said might be wrong for you, because everything impacts all of us different. We’re all in different circles of life, so who’s to say that every book you read doesn’t have an impact on you as a whole? Who am I to say that? Nobody has missed anything from not seeing an eagle fly, or from not reading a certain book, no matter who says so. There’s no set path to becoming our best selves.

All we can do as humans is be kind to others, and try to live our lives to the fullest and experience what we can in our short lives before the cycle begins anew. All we can do is try to reach where and who we want to be in the short time we have together.



Summer Vibes  
by Jennie Le

## To End Suffering

Hannah Klose

How fearsome do our words become  
when we for one moment see  
that each person is as sentient as we,  
with pain as deep  
and grief as heavy,  
hearts as stricken  
and souls as longing.

We would not even suggest cruelty  
if we really understood  
the commonality  
of humanity.

And maybe that's exactly why  
it's easier to view others as inferior  
to ourselves.

## You

Anna Ho

another month, another season,  
another year draws to a close  
but,  
somewhere—in my dreams—  
we'll be forever singing and dancing  
in the magic of summer.  
the cool breeze brushing past,  
waving for us to follow  
into the sparkling ocean;  
the mountains just out of reach,  
on the other side,  
stretching towards the sky and  
calling upon mighty gods;  
the planes flying above,  
orbiting the setting sun,  
brushing streaks of colors and clouds  
across the sky;  
none of it compares to you.

