

# SCRIBE

## DECEMBER 2021

*winter//reunion*



**MACAULAY HONORS COLLEGE**  
**SCRIBE DECEMBER 2021**



# **E-BOARD**

**PRESIDENT**

**DANIEL WRONSKI**

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**MIA CARRANZA**

**TREASURER**

**JOSEPHINE VACCARO**

**EVENTS COORDINATOR:**

**MOITRAYEE DASGUPTA**

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
COORDINATOR**

**ELIAM JUNG**

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

**RIDA AHMED**

**EDITORS**

**ABDALLAH AHMED**

**ANISA PERSAUD**

**ANGEL SHAJI**

**ERIN FOO**

**MIA GINDIS**

**SOFIA ROTHERMEL**

**TZIPPI APPLEBAUM**

**DESIGNERS**

**ELIAM JUNG**

**BRIDGET LI**



# CONTENTS

**8. WHY I LOVE CHRISTMAS**

**10. SNOW DAYS**

**12. THE SNOWMAN**

**15. THE STARS SEEM CLOSER & CLOSE  
TO THE WIND**

**25. SMALL SNOWFLAKE**

**27. TRAIN STOP VIGIL**

**28. WINTER POEM**



## DEAR READER,

What does the winter remind you of? Is it the scent of freshly-baked gingerbread men, or the sight of cozy lights adorning the houses along your neighborhood?

What about family and friends, who come together in their ugly sweaters and get drunk off of eggnog? Or perhaps you are reminded of the sparkling white snow that coats your lawn and the roof of your home with its angelic presence.

Each of these memories is the foundation of a beautiful story—whether it be in the form of a poem or short story... and these are what we present to you in this month's SCRIBE publication. Through these works, you will find the theme of winter and reunion delicately interwoven in beautiful imagery and enchanting metaphors.

SCRIBE would like to leave you all off on a pleasant note that aptly captivates the vibes of this semester. We hope this month's issue accomplishes just that. With that, I hope that you enjoy reading our stories as much as you enjoy the holidays!

Warm Regards,  
Rida Ahmed  
Editor-in-chief

# SCRIBE RECOMMENDS

here's what our club members have been reading...

## LEAP OF FAITH

by Valentina Schembri

a poem perfect for those who need a little bit of courage to step outside their comfort zone.

encouraging and provides a new perspective through beautiful metaphors.

## SHINE YOUR ICY CROWN

by Amanda Lovelace

poetry that is relevant to many people, especially women and non binary people.

Lovelace's writing is poignant, touching, and inspiring.

## TREASURE ISLAND

by Robert Louis Stevenson

for those who need a good pirate story. perfect for Pirate of the Caribbean fans.

filled with thrilling adventures; you will always be engaged while reading this.

## OF WOMEN AND SALT

by Gabriela Garcia

I would recommend this diaspora story to those who are curious or empathetic to the stories of those who do not have the privilege of choice, of those who sacrifice their choices so that their children and the ones after have infinite.

A story of legacy, a story of mothers, Cuban history, heart-wrenching, beautiful, honest.



**NEW  
YEAR  
SILE**

**WANT  
WANT  
WANT  
MORE?  
MORE?  
MORE?**

**IN  
TAP  
RAN**





# Rosalynn Ye

## Why I Love Christmas

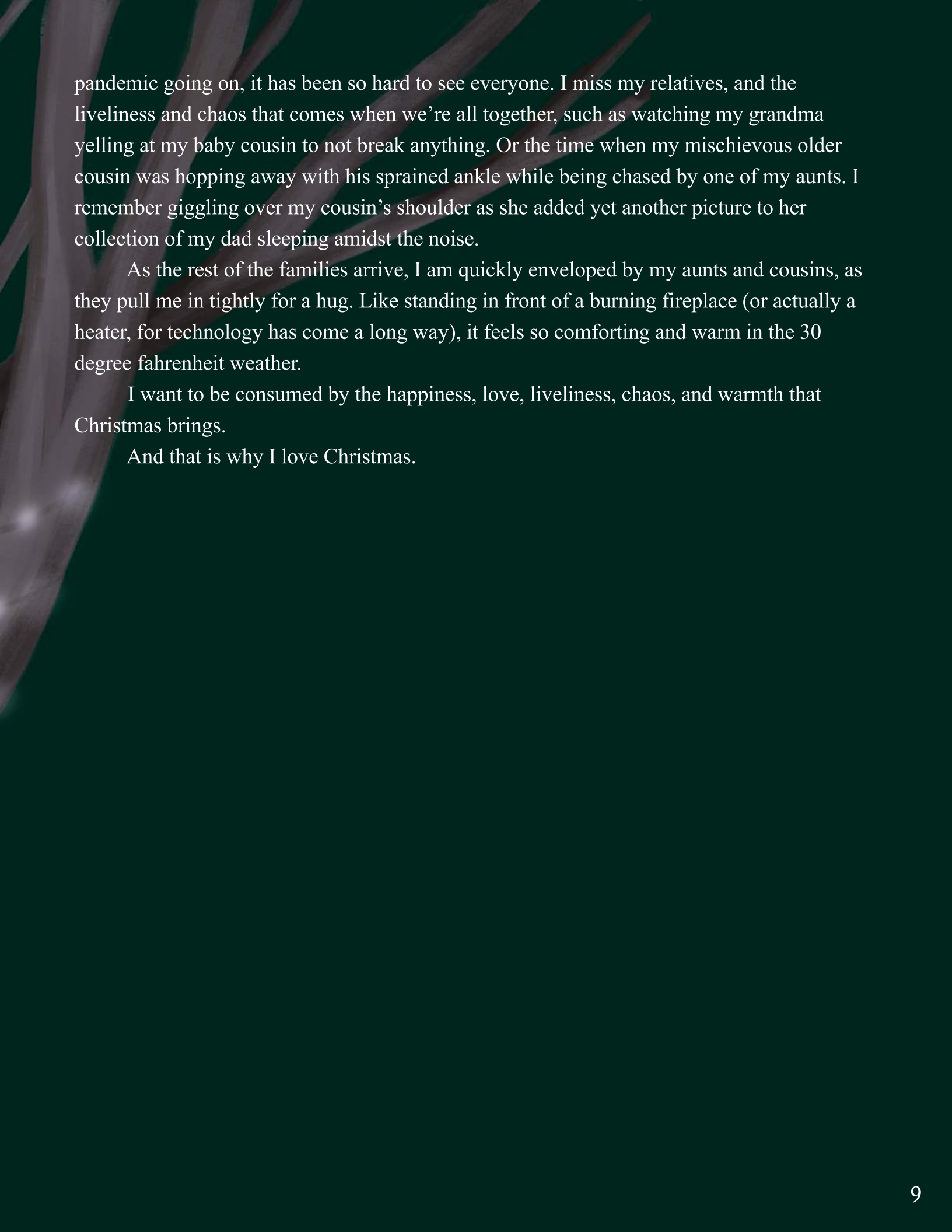
Every Christmas Eve, my mom's side of the family and I gather around the large Christmas tree set up at my po po's (grandma's) house. The Christmas tree is dressed in the usual - shiny silver and red balls hang from its branches and a silver tinsel and a long green string of little light bulbs wrap around the tree. A cute blue and white penguin wearing gold earmuffs lays on the top of the tree in place of a star. As my siblings and I wait for the rest of the families to arrive, I think about the reasons why I love Christmas.

During this time of the year, New York City is sparkling with magic. I remember, the moment my friend and I stepped out of the subway station in Manhattan, we were immediately struck with awe. With either yellow or blue Christmas lights strung across the streets and wrapped around every tree, the city looked so pretty. It's as if someone had set off fireworks, bursting with color and bright light in the pitch dark, except the magic in those moments became frozen in time. The city isn't the only thing that's lit up. People's faces glow like stars in the night sky. The streets are filled with crowds of people laughing and smiling, as they sing along to Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You" and other jolly Christmas music blasting from the stores. Like one big family, people gather around the Rockefeller Tree to admire its beauty and celebrate this joyous time of the year. The entire atmosphere is full of so much happiness.

And then, of course, there's the presents. I'm not a child anymore, and yet I still hope for presents. You could call me shallow when I say that this is one of my favorite parts of Christmas. However, I don't care about materialistic things. What I crave is the feeling of knowing that someone thought of me - that someone remembers and actually cares about me. It makes me happy to think about how one of my friends or family members look around the store or browse the web, thinking something like, "Ooh I remember her favorite color is yellow!" or "I think she would look pretty in this dress!" So of course, I don't really love Christmas because of the presents. I love the holiday season because it's a time when we remember to think of our loved ones.

And finally, the warmth that comes from the reunion. During the months prior, everyone's busy working and too consumed with their own lives. Especially with the





pandemic going on, it has been so hard to see everyone. I miss my relatives, and the liveliness and chaos that comes when we're all together, such as watching my grandma yelling at my baby cousin to not break anything. Or the time when my mischievous older cousin was hopping away with his sprained ankle while being chased by one of my aunts. I remember giggling over my cousin's shoulder as she added yet another picture to her collection of my dad sleeping amidst the noise.

As the rest of the families arrive, I am quickly enveloped by my aunts and cousins, as they pull me in tightly for a hug. Like standing in front of a burning fireplace (or actually a heater, for technology has come a long way), it feels so comforting and warm in the 30 degree fahrenheit weather.

I want to be consumed by the happiness, love, liveliness, chaos, and warmth that Christmas brings.

And that is why I love Christmas.

# Adrianne Nemchik

## Snow Days

Waking up to cheerful chirps  
As the birds begin their day.  
Rushing to the windowsill,  
Stopping just midway.

For you can see it from afar,  
The snow - a big white cloak.  
It has hidden even cars,  
Bringing joy to many young folk.

Racing to the television  
Eagerly scouring the news,  
And joyfully hearing the decision  
That attendance from schools would be excused.

No school today means time for fun,  
Scarfig down your breakfast,  
You rush to round up everyone  
To enjoy the weather at long last.

Bundled up from head to toe  
In warm mittens, scarves, and socks,  
Children throw small balls of snow  
Joyful yells are heard for many blocks.



After a day out in the cold,  
A steaming glass of hot chocolate awaits.  
It feels so nice and warm to hold,  
Melting all the chills away.

As the day winds down,  
You settle in by the fire,  
Looking across the night town,  
The snowflakes' dance is a scene to admire.



# Tzipora Applebaum

## The Snowman

It was the beginning of January and I lay on the ground, a thick blanket of soft cold snow. Little snowflakes fall from the sky and land on me while small flurries fall off the leaves of the trees in the gentle wind. I am on someone's lawn. The house number reads 9 Ardor Lane. The house is made of brick with four windows on either side of the door. It is identical to every other one of the ten houses on the block. As I lay there with the small snowflakes falling on me, everything is calm and peaceful. No one is there to disturb or to trample on me with their boots or even to shovel me to the side.

But then, the blue house door bangs open and two pink slippered feet clatter over me, making footprints in my smooth sheet of snow and yanking me out of my quiet peace.

"Amber," come inside "it's too cold without a coat," someone calls from an upstairs window.

The pink slippers disappear inside, and I am left in peace for a while but then a man rushes out of the house to a blue car covered in snow. He brushes the snow off with a tool and drives away. Soon after, I see the neighbors coming out of their houses. Men and women rush out to their cars. Some are shoveling the snow and there are even some dogs barking outside. A large yellow bus drives up to the house and now two pink boots run out the door followed by a larger pair of dark blue ones. They climb onto the bus and a woman waves goodbye from the front door.

After some time, most of the cars on the block leave and the barking stops. I am left in peace for the rest of the day, except when the woman comes outside to shovel the walkway.

But then later in the afternoon, the large yellow bus pulls up again and I see the pink and dark blue boots run into the house. They laugh as they run inside and I can hear books shaking in their knapsacks. Not a minute later, they are back outside and running all over the snow. They make snow angels, tossing and turning in the ground. They are playing on the other side of the lawn and I keep hoping that they won't come over to my side to ruin my soft smooth snow. The boy is still making snow angels, but the girl runs straight onto me, bends down, and starts rolling me around in a ball. I am pressed and smacked and shoved together. It hurts to be squished into this small ball. After clumping me together, she rolls me



around and around in my soft powder. Some of my snow slips off as she does so and it only keeps hurting as more and more of me is pressed together. When she's finished, she places me down on the ground and starts to form another round ball out of my soft smooth snow. While she works, the boy runs in the snow occasionally throwing snowballs in the air. He throws them left and right. They whiz past me and one of them hits the girl squarely in the back. She shrieks and rolls over in the snow. She lays there for a few minutes, not moving.

"Amber, Amber," the boy says hesitantly, coming over, kneeling down next to her.

He yells as snow hits him in the face and the girl laughs. The boy falls back and they start throwing snowballs at each other. Each one throws snowballs at the other, sometimes hitting each other and sometimes hitting the windows, trees, and bushes. They never hit me but I wish they would. I want to be smooth and flat again, not rolled up into these balls.

The woman's voice soon calls out to them "Amber, Aiden, come inside, it's getting cold."

Their faces red and their coats soaking wet, they head inside.

I am so happy to be at peace again except when the man comes home and hurries inside. The wind keeps blowing heavily and I hope it tips me over so I can lie flat again, but I don't. It starts to get dark outside and it is colder. I like the cold but this time I wish it was warm so I would melt. The girl and boy don't come out the rest of the night and I am at peace. The next day brings the same routine: the man leaves early in his car, the neighbors and their dogs make noise as they head outside, and the woman waves goodbye to the girl and the boy as they clamber onto the yellow bus. The rest of the day goes by so nicely- no one bothering me or touching me.

But when the two children come home, they run outside and roll one last ball of snow to place on top of me. Now I am three balls of lumpy snow all pressed on top of each other. The children run inside and come out with a black hat, a red plaid scarf, and two red mittens. They place the hat on top of me and my snow clumps around the fabric, making it stick to me. The boy breaks off some branches from the nearby trees and sticks one on either side of me. He places the two red mittens on the ends as the girl wraps the scarf around my neck. They smile gleefully and run inside, coming back with three buttons and some candy. The buttons go down my front and two pieces of round chocolates are pressed onto the front of my top ball of snow. Then they stick red licorice on me as if to form a mouth. Next comes a long carrot stuck right in the middle of my face. It hurts so much and I just want to collapse but the two children just squeal and run inside to get their mother. The mother comes out and takes a photo of them standing next to me. They like the way I look but I hate it. Instead of the smooth, sleek, flat sheet of snow that I was, I am now three uneven clumps with a hat

and candy stuck onto my face.

When their father comes home, they show him to me like I'm a toy. I don't like them staring at me that way. When the night comes, I hope and hope that the wind will blow me over, but it doesn't. The children made sure I was clumped together very tightly. I stay like that for the rest of the winter. As each day goes by, I watch the neighbors get up and get ready to leave, I see the father leave in his car, and I see the two children climb onto the yellow bus. Sometimes birds land on me and sometimes the wind blows my hat away. But when the children come home, they always fix me up and make me look as good as new.

As the days go by, the snow on the ground begins to melt and I melt along with it. I shrink and shrink, but the children always try to fix me up. But soon there is not enough snow left for me to stand tall and I am a heap of snow, flat on the ground. When I'm flat like that, I can't see very well. I can hear the cars, buses, and neighbors, but I can't see the dogs and the father running into his car anymore. I can't see the children's faces as they run onto the bus and run off happily when they get home.

Soon enough, even faster than I expected, I am the only lump of snow on the ground. The rest is just dull green and brown grass. There are even some flowers popping out of the ground. That day, the children rush off the yellow bus into the house. They come outside and I can only see pink and dark blue shoes standing next to me. Amber scoops me up into her small palms and she places me into the bowl that Aiden holds out. They bring me inside and place me into a cool dark place that their mother calls a freezer. Every day after school, Amber and Aiden check on me. I don't have my hat and mittens anymore or even the candy but they come see me anyway. I can't see the neighbors or the dogs or their father but I can see them. I am not the flat large sheet of snow I once was, instead I am a small cold ball of snow in a bowl inside a freezer. It's cold and there's not much to see but I like it here. Amber and Aiden make sure that I don't melt away.



# Daniel Picker

## The Stars Seem Closer & Close to the Wind

### *Part I*

We both stood looking straight ahead out the kitchen window that early morn. I took heart that we were both boys from the same town and the same school, and we were both not unlike other boys our age after a few years of high school, and the ocean and beach here in this coast town were not unlike the ocean and beach I knew from a similar beach and town I knew a bit further north, and I hoped I could meet the new challenges here as I met the old challenges there.

“Help yourself to some cereal and juice if you like,” he said. “I have to use the head.”

He stepped behind me, then walked toward the first-floor bathroom, and stood before the mirror.

Later, as I walked by with a cup of orange juice, I heard his mother implore from across the kitchen, “You need to shave Finnegan,” using his full name, which he never used.

Finishing my juice, then rinsing the cup in the sink, I walked from the kitchen back toward the living room and I saw my classmate standing before the mirror with the white sink below and his chin half covered by shaving cream. Although we were both about the same age and same height and attended the same high school, I didn’t shave. I realized then I had left my Aussie tennis hat in the bathroom. When I strolled by, I saw it on the towel rack below his left shoulder furthest from the open door as he shaved.

“Finn, I forgot my hat, sorry.”

“Well grab it,” he said.

“Ok, thanks.”

I slipped past him and reached for it. Then as I turned to stroll out, I glanced in the mirror over his shoulder to see our faces nearly side-by-side briefly, one behind the other. Except for his reddish hair and my wavy light brown hair, we both had freckled cheeks and arms and, both wore polo shirts, and except for the stubble on his face now half concealed by white shaving cream, we seemed so similar in height and features we could have been brothers.

I had borrowed another friend’s orange sunburst surfboard, and it fit nicely in the back of his mom’s Country Squire station wagon with faded, wood panels on the side. I’d never



met his father; I heard he was an officer in the Navy. He, like many fathers was rarely seen. My father was not in our house anymore.

But it was summer. A relatively new friend I'd known for only a few years had invited me to the shore. That spring, as classmates in Great British Writers we sat near the front, but off to the side, but side-by-side. The room was modern with plain walls painted a semi-glossy, creamy light beige. Our teacher, a newly-minted alumnus of an august school had graduated just four years before from our high school too.

The most beautiful girls sat in the opposite back corner; all juniors or seniors; we heard Stephanie, headed to Yale, would study at our teacher's alma mater. We had read Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" and an excerpt from "Beowulf" for which I completed a large pencil drawing. We read another story later that semester, which seemed a mysterious sea story; reading it seemed like walking down into an unlit, dark cabin. There seemed two ways to understand it, neither clear. I cannot remember which tale it was now. The teacher had given us a typed, single-spaced chronology of all the important British authors and their major works, going back perhaps to Caedmon and his "Hymn."

That spring, while I was finishing my drawing at home my mother walked by and reminded me that "your dinner is getting cold" and my pencil skidded across the page and I became upset and yelled, "OK!"

That spring, a few weeks before this summer, in our old hometown, when I stayed overnight, once at his house, he had shown me some old postage stamps of JFK, and he said, "They are based on engravings, I'm interested in that sort of art." His remark surprised me; I did not know he had any interest in art. My father, like JFK and RFK, was a Navy man too, or had been, I should say. He had been in Officer's Training School, but lost rank due to his height. He became a radar man during World War II in the Pacific on Destroyers.

With my father, before he left our house, we had spent summers at the shore. I could not really recall the summers on Cape Cod before those other summers. We spent many summers on the Jersey shore near where he grew up, looking out beyond the broad, pale sand beach on both cool blustery days under overcast, hazy clouds and sky, and on clear, sunny, blue days when the sunlight seemed so bright and the white sand seemed too hot.

He always reminded, "You can get sunburn even if it's overcast; put some lotion on. Put a hat on!"

We would look out beyond the breakers to the boats cruising north and south in the far distance, and watch on occasion, the lifeguards row their heavy, wooden clapboard rowboats out past the breakers for rescue practice. My dad had been a lifeguard too and an ice cream salesman other summers, hauling a heavy, square, metal box with a canvas strap over his tan



freckled shoulders or over his white t-shirt. He tried to teach me to swim amid the breaking waves, which came in parallel to the beach, but his lessons did not boost my confidence as he yelled over the breakers and the rolling and crashing waves.

I had not seen my father for some time, and this, only the second time invited to the shore with a family other than my own brought welcome possibilities, all of which remained mysterious. I wondered how well I might measure up to my friend's abilities and confidence, this my first time on the coast with a contemporary not one of my brothers, and he a new friend still. His family owned a home near the coast. This seemed a smaller town than where my grandfather lived and where my dad had grown up, and this place seemed unknown. A broad harbor opening out into the ocean separated the two "barrier islands" as my father called them.

From where my friend lived when on the shore, we could walk the few blocks to the beach, and he agreed to venture with me as I carried another friend's surfboard to the ocean. When we arrived at the bottom of the beach and stood on the wet sand in bare feet early that morning, we could see absolutely no waves of significance breaking before us, just tiny rollers, less than a foot tall, cascading near the wet sand and then running back out with the tide. In the distance, the grey ocean just rose and fell, undulating as a sleeping body would, its chest like the breast of the sea rising and falling as an expanding ribcage breathing in and out. Occasionally exhalations of mist rose, and small white caps formed, but no actual waves.

I had never surfed before, but I had skateboarded a lot, so the crucial movement of going from lying on my belly, up onto my feet remained foreign to me, but the actual regular-foot stance and balance seemed familiar and not beyond me. I didn't stand goofy foot on the board. But with no waves and it still early morning, we decided to trudge back to his house and think of other things to do.

My schoolmate had several tennis racquets back in his hall closet. We walked to the tennis courts nearby; I carried two old wooden racquets while Finn dribbled a basketball. Years before my father had encouraged me to not wear my eyeglasses at the beach to let the sun brown my cheeks and face, and I'm uncertain whether I brought them or not, but all the events which follow seem still quite clear in memory.

That late morning, we played a little tennis, just batting the ball back and forth over the knotted net. We didn't keep score, just rallying, enjoying the early morning coolness. The mid-day summer heat had not yet hit. After tennis, we shot a few hoops, lay ups and long shots. I had played JV Tennis as a freshman in high school just a few years back and then later lost interest and devoted too much time to skateboarding and reading. I had played

on a YMCA League basketball team in Middle School too a few years before that and scored five points coming off the bench in one game. I recalled running up the bright-lit court determined to not miss my chance to score. But I did not make the Boys' Team two years in a row, and thought I was too short to ever be a starter and make a mark in basketball. But Finn had some confidence in basketball as he dribbled below the basket and flipped in shots with the rim above and behind him, and he showed panache as he dribbled around the perimeter at the top of the key and lofted low-arcing shots which swished through the net.

Later that early evening in summer with the sky still filled with the late afternoon light before five o'clock my friend informed me from his front porch,

"We're going to church."

His mom stood ready to drive us and as I scooted around the back of the car, I noticed a faded green bumper sticker which said, "Save the Whales." I slid into the back seat, and she soon backed out of the driveway, turned, then made another turn at the corner, then headed down a wide yet mostly empty street. I'd never been to church on a Saturday, only Friends Meeting on Sunday morning back home in our old Quaker town. Mrs. H. parked in a half empty side lot, and soon we stood within a light, wooden pew of Saint Brendan's Church. I'd never been to a Catholic Mass before, and I was at a loss what to do. I did not take communion, nor did I know its meaning. I could see white light ahead streaming through the windows behind the altar and hear the priest intoning prayers. But soon we were outside again, and the summer sun still shone above. A cool wind lifted my hair from my eyes and put a lift in my strides as we walked outside the church toward the car, and Finn said,

"We're going back to the house for sandwiches."

His mom made us tuna sandwiches with "dill relish" she said, unlike the crisp cut celery my mom put in tuna salad with mayonnaise. After eating Finn said, "It's still light out, let's go up to the boardwalk and beach; the lifeguards are gone by now."

We walked out over the front porch and let the old wooden screen door smack shut behind us. Walking up the street I realized I still had my swim trunks on under my shorts. When we reached the boardwalk and walked past a pizza place Finn joked, "That joint should be closed by the health department."

We saw the old slices coagulating in the late-day summer sun.

We stood on the edge of the boardwalk with some of the old-fashioned kids' rides behind us; the beach appeared mostly empty of sun worshipers. Finn turned to me and said,

"I've really got to take a leak and number two."

"OK."



As I stood alone along the grey railing watching the waves break in the far distance beyond the sand, I heard a voice behind then beside me,

“Billy, I’m surprised to see you here.”

And there standing before me in her soft blue bikini and tan all over, I saw Emmie from school, with her long chestnut-brown hair.

“Hi Emmie,” I half stuttered with a dry throat.

Her beauty and friendliness stunned me; we sat next to each other in Physics class last year.

“Do you want to go swimming with me?” she asked.

“Uh,” I hesitated, then said, “Sure,” I gulped out, and just as I said that Finn walked up behind me.

When he saw us, he turned to me and said, “Hey, I gotta tell ya something.”

“What?” I asked.

He pulled me aside, and quietly muttered, “She’s a babe.” Then he said, “I couldn’t use that bathroom; it’s too dirty; it’s gross; I’m going back to the house; I’m not feeling so good. I’ll see you back there later.”

“OK.”

Emmie and I walked down the steps to the hot sand. She, in her flip flops kept hopping up from the sand while the wind kept blowing her hair in her eyes and across her tan cheeks, and she kept moving her locks aside from her eyes and face. I could see her smile and her long hair, I heard my mom called that color “chestnut brown.” She walked briskly over the sand.

“The hot sand is getting on my feet when these flip flops sink down; hurry up. You’re like my little shadow,” she said.

“OK, OK,” I repeated.

When we reached the edge of the dry sand, she dropped her woven shoulder bag and pulled out a rolled towel and unfurled it in the wind. I stepped on the back of one sneaker to dislodge my foot, and quickly pulled off the other one while hopping on my burning right foot.

“You’re like a crazy penguin on a pongo stick!” she joked.

I pulled off my t-shirt and unbuttoned my baggy Bermuda shorts that I wore over my trunks, and just as my shorts hit the sand, she called out, “I’ll race you to the water!”

She ran ahead and I tried to catch up, but she ran like a gazelle, and I saw her bounding over then into the low waves, then dive headfirst yards ahead of me. As she swam out past the breaking waves, I dove headfirst and felt the first shock of the cold water, then swam and

paddled to catch up to her. Her tan shoulders glistened in the early evening sun as she turned and smiled to me.

“I cannot believe seeing you here,” I said.

“I cannot believe seeing you either.”

“Are you down here for the summer?” I asked.

“No, just for a few days. I just felt like a swim after work.”

“But it’s a long drive.”

“I don’t mind,” she said. “I had to get away for a bit.”

“When are you going back?” I asked.

“Well, I don’t know exactly; I’m gonna hang out with my brother at the surfers’ beach later, but I wanted to get a swim in right away.”

“You’re really a good swimmer,” I responded.

I watched the soft ocean water slid off her shoulders which glistened in the water and sun. Her smile by her freckled cheeks and below her glistening eyebrows mesmerized me.

“Thanks. Let’s go back in; I’ve gotta find my brother.”

“I should probably go back and see how Finn is doing.”

“That’s good you look out for each other.”

“Well, he invited me to stay at his family’s place. I’ve only been to this beach about twice.”

When we got back to her towel she started drying off and I could not think of what to say she seemed so beautiful.

“Let’s walk back up to the boardwalk,” she said as she pulled a pair of faded, cut-off jeans from her satchel and pulled them up over her tan legs.

We trudged up the sand as the sun slipped further down the sky and behind the buildings back toward the mainland.

“I’ll see you later,” she said. “I’m walking up this way to find my brother.”

“OK,” I said.

I walked back across the grey, splintered boards looking down, then over the other side of the boardwalk. Then down the street as people walked by heading toward the restaurants on Asbury Avenue for late desserts of ice cream. When I got back to the house, I saw Finn sitting on the porch on a wooden chair.

“You’re still wet. How was the ocean?”

“Nice.”

“She’s really pretty.”

“I know. She’s easy to talk to in school, but too beautiful in a bikini.”



“I know what you mean.”

“Are you feeling better?” I asked.

“A lot. . . . Hey, do you wanna walkaround town? The sun has not completely set yet.”

“Yea, let me take off these trunks and put my shorts back on.”

“OK.”

We walked down the porch steps ready to explore the island. The sky was still lit at dusk, and he suggested, “Let’s try to hitch down the island and across the other causeway bridge and buy some beer. You can’t do that in this town.”

We stuck our thumbs out on one of the main roads that ran the length of the island and soon a dark, battered, and rusted van slowed and pulled over for us. A hirsute dude with long brown hair and a scraggly brown beard stuck his face out the driver’s side window and said, “Get in the back,” after we had trotted up beside the van. We pulled open the back doors and got into the dim van replete with brown shag carpet and strewn with empty beer cans and a surfboard on its side leaning cater-corner across the back. The van smelled of stale beer, fresh fish, and old smoke.

His companion, another guy with long light-brown hair asked, “Where you guys going?”

“To get some beer,” my friend said.

“Well, we don’t have any. You’ve got to cross the bridge for that.”

“We’ll take you toward the bridge, where it crosses over.”

“OK,” we said.

But it soon became hard to hear as they started blasting their stereo and Lynyrd Skynyrd’s “Freebird” at a near-deafening volume. Then one guy lowered the volume a bit.

“See that vista in the sun with the green reeds and dark cat tails,” the yellow-haired hippie asked looking back toward us over his left shoulder.

We both nodded, and said, “Yes.”

“Well, take good long look, ‘cause you ain’t never gonna see that again.”

There was a long, strange, quiet pause, then his friend blurted out, “He’s just messin’ with you guys! Don’t listen to him; he’s crazy.”

“Well, we’ll let you out there; you need to walk down that road toward the bridge.”

We said, “OK.”

“Well, get out at the next block; you can cross the bridge down past there.”

Soon, we both felt relief outside on the gravel shoulder with the sky a deep grey blue.

“Do you still want some beer?” I asked.

“Not really, how ’bout you?”

“No, not really. It’s getting cool now and I don’t have much money anyhow.”

“Let’s just walk back and walk along the ocean,” he suggested. “We’re way past the boardwalk. Maybe we can find some wild surf. Maybe we can meet some girls once we make it to the boardwalk?”

“OK,” I agreed.

We walked further east up a half-deserted street and climbed over some grey wooden pilings to see the ocean; the sky now nearly dark above it. The waves roared in far off with an unearthly noise, a menacing crash at intervals. An empty clapboard apartment building stood beside us, many of its windows missing, with others recently replaced, with the manufacturer’s stickers on them. The place had no lawn, just sand with dried, muddy truck tracks. We walked beside a murky body of water with sandy banks where the pungent salty aroma of the sea rose amid marshy green reeds.

"Do you think there are any fish in there?"

“I think there might be one,” he joked.

We walked down to where the wet sand started and took off our sneakers and headed north and walked along the breakers. At first it felt good to feel the cold water on my feet. After what seemed about a half hour, we could see the lights of the boardwalk far off in the distance.

“Let’s head across at an angle, then walk along the boards, and maybe head back toward downtown,” he suggested.

By the time we reached the boardwalk we had tired of trudging through the sand. We walked past the side of a kids’ amusement park.

“I think were too old for those rides,” I said.

“You got that right.”

After we reached the boardwalk, on the corner, we walked past a narrow, little clapboard house with faded, peeling paint, a used bookstore, with the door open. All the books on a small wooden bookcase by the door, seemed old and worn, but they reminded me of old folks and how they sat and lounged on low folding chairs on the beach for a few weeks every summer. I noticed one book amid many; this one had a faded green cloth cover like a book I read in our library at home. On the spine I read, “The Shadow Line.” I held it in my hand, the Finn said, “Let’s go.” We walked over toward the boardwalk and up the wooden steps, and I said,

“That seemed a lot of walking.”

“Sure was,” he responded.



“Those hippie guys in the van seemed slightly crazy.”

“Right out of Cheech and Chong! Dude!”

We saw a long line of kids and teens near the tall Ferris wheel which held white curved gondolas that held four passengers at a time. Two pretty girls, one with wavy, dark brown hair with sun-lightened strands held up in a ponytail stood at the back of the line. A girl, with thick, long reddish-brown hair, who stood about our height leaned beside her, and as we walked up, we both soon realized she was in our grade. She was tan in short, faded cut-off jeans and her long hair lifted in the night air.

As we walked up behind them, the one girl in the cut-offs looked over her left shoulder toward me.

“Hey, Billy, how are you doing? You’re here.”

“Hi Emmie. You’re still here. God; this beats Physics class, doesn’t it?”

“Definitely. Hey, that swim was refreshing, wasn’t it?”

“Yea.”

“Are you gonna keep coming down for the summer?” I asked.

“Probably, right now I’m just here with my brother’s friend,” Emmie said.

I did not know her friend, but her wavy hair tied up in a ponytail seemed nearly as beautiful as Emmie’s long flowing hair.

Emmie remarked, “We’ve never ridden this ride; let’s try it together.”

Soon we boarded a white car which had L-shaped benches on opposite sides. The ride turned and we rose into the cool deep grey-blue sky high above the glimmering boardwalk. I sat close next to Emmie. I could see her freckles on her cheeks. I enjoyed the sweet scent of her close to me when the wind lifted her long locks close to my face. A cool, nearly cold wind blew up there.

I could see across the grey-shadowed space of the white gondola, Finn making out with Maria, and I thought I should try to kiss Emmie.

She turned toward me and said, “We’re so close; the stars seem closer too. Look at the stars and the moon above the sea, you can see the lights on the water of the ocean.”

I smiled, then leaned forward and kissed her and felt her soft, full bottom lip. When I leaned back, she smiled toward me, then I slid my hand over her shoulders and felt her cool soft hair and neck in the night air, and she rested her head below my shoulder and put her hand on my chest. We had stalled at the top of the ride and the wind blew and the gondola rocked and creaked on its hinges like an old sailboat awaiting wind. The gondola swayed back and forth eerily in the cold gusts with the dark cold ocean far below us. I could hear the “shoosh” of the waves rolling far below. She felt cool, yet warmer than the air.

Later, after we rode back down, Emmie asked, “Maybe I’ll see you tomorrow at the same spot?”

“That would be cool,” I said.

Then she added, “Do you want to go swimming with me late in the afternoon?” and she smiled back toward me as she brushed her hair back from her face.

“Sure,” I said, nearly dumfounded again, my voice cracking into a slightly higher pitch.

I saw Finn hug his new girlfriend across the grey boardwalk over by the railings, then she walked back over toward Emmie.

She called, “See you later,” then they began walking back up the boardwalk.

We looked out over the dark beach toward the darker ocean, as the waves rolled in and crashed, then exhaled in a muffled roar, then rolled back out with a shooshing sound.





# Maya Demchak-Gottlieb

## Small Snowflake

There once was a small snowflake who slipped from the sky.

He was sad when he looked to his left and his right

And saw others glowing,

brighter than bright.

There was a flake up above that glittered and shone,

One scattering below him that refused to lie prone.

It twirled and it swirled,

Great big loops, swoops, and whirls.

There were two other snowflakes

In a race to the ground.

They were faster than Small Snowflake,

The first to be found,

And another large snowflake had the most ornate crown.

Small Snowflake felt solemn

As he finished his descent.

“I’m not special,”

He couldn’t help but lament.

The snow-covered grass was growing closer in sight

But then Small Snowflake was smashed into a stunning surprise.

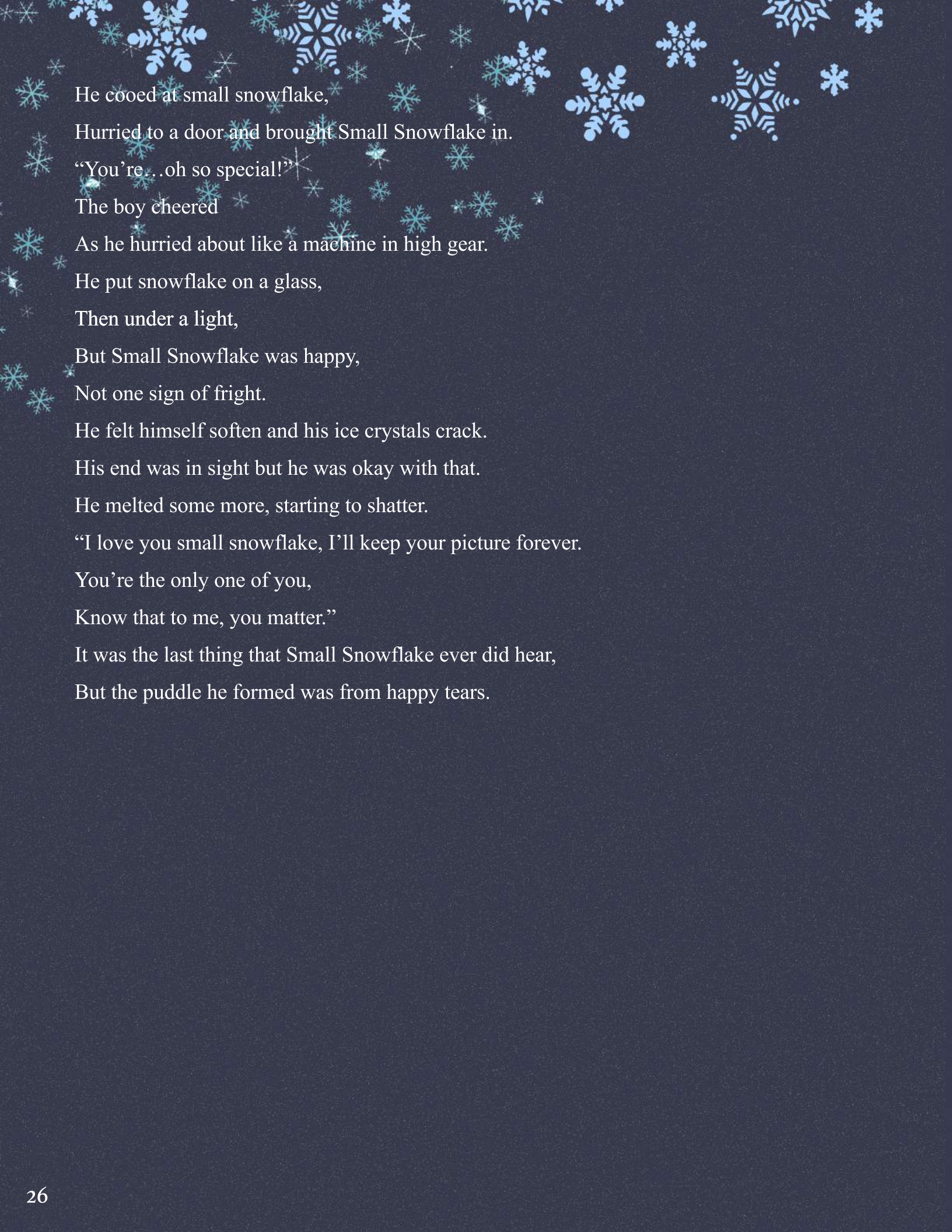
Something peered at him...

Behold: two round eyes!

It was a young human boy,

Aglow and agrin.





He cooed at small snowflake,  
Hurried to a door and brought Small Snowflake in.  
“You’re...oh so special!”  
The boy cheered  
As he hurried about like a machine in high gear.  
He put snowflake on a glass,  
Then under a light,  
But Small Snowflake was happy,  
Not one sign of fright.  
He felt himself soften and his ice crystals crack.  
His end was in sight but he was okay with that.  
He melted some more, starting to shatter.  
“I love you small snowflake, I’ll keep your picture forever.  
You’re the only one of you,  
Know that to me, you matter.”  
It was the last thing that Small Snowflake ever did hear,  
But the puddle he formed was from happy tears.



# Ariana Gaytan

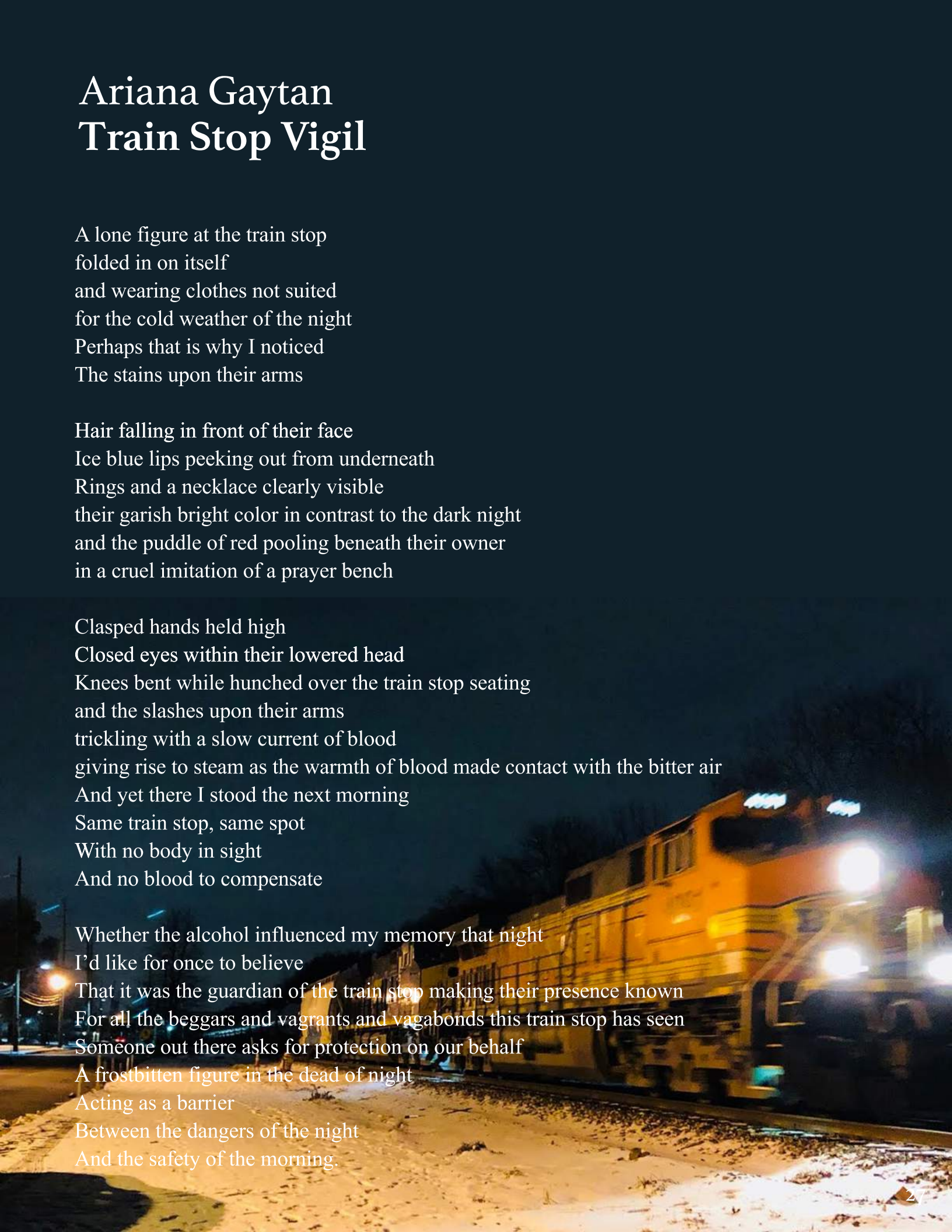
## Train Stop Vigil

A lone figure at the train stop  
folded in on itself  
and wearing clothes not suited  
for the cold weather of the night  
Perhaps that is why I noticed  
The stains upon their arms

Hair falling in front of their face  
Ice blue lips peeking out from underneath  
Rings and a necklace clearly visible  
their garish bright color in contrast to the dark night  
and the puddle of red pooling beneath their owner  
in a cruel imitation of a prayer bench

Clasped hands held high  
Closed eyes within their lowered head  
Knees bent while hunched over the train stop seating  
and the slashes upon their arms  
trickling with a slow current of blood  
giving rise to steam as the warmth of blood made contact with the bitter air  
And yet there I stood the next morning  
Same train stop, same spot  
With no body in sight  
And no blood to compensate

Whether the alcohol influenced my memory that night  
I'd like for once to believe  
That it was the guardian of the train stop making their presence known  
For all the beggars and vagrants and vagabonds this train stop has seen  
Someone out there asks for protection on our behalf  
A frostbitten figure in the dead of night  
Acting as a barrier  
Between the dangers of the night  
And the safety of the morning.





# Gadharv Kaur

## Winter Poem

Winter time

It's that time of year once again.

Carols fill the silence. Candy canes, gingerbread, cinnamon fill the air...-carrying each scent to your nose. Red, and green fill the colorless road.

As the cold weather settles in, the desire to become one with my blanket becomes stronger. Hot chocolate soothes the soul.

And yet, the feeling isn't there. Perhaps it's still lingering in the air along with everything else. Awaiting it's time until the day finally arrives.



