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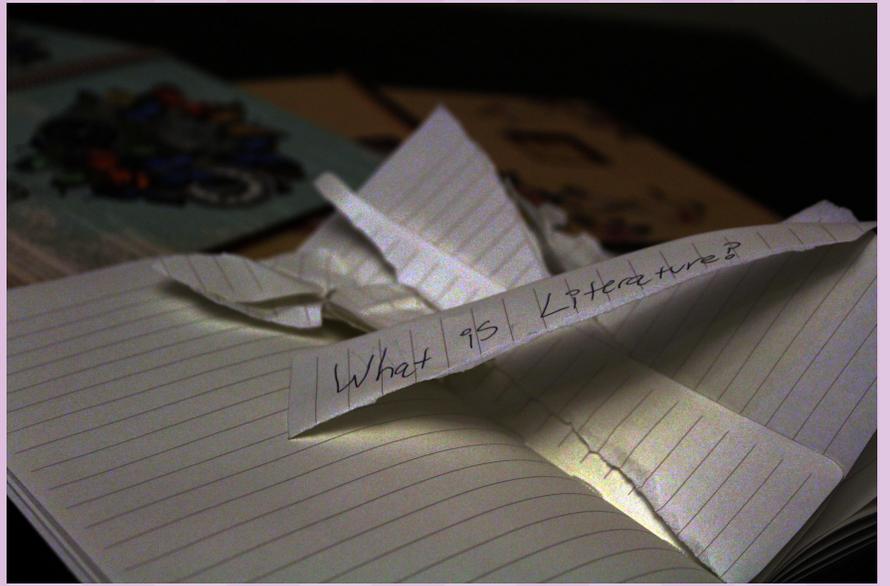
THE IRIS



Illustration by Kaitlyn McCormick

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Those interested in making a submission can contact us at theirislitmag@gmail.com. We're looking for original poetry, prose, illustrations, photographs, comics, and book reviews.

Photographs

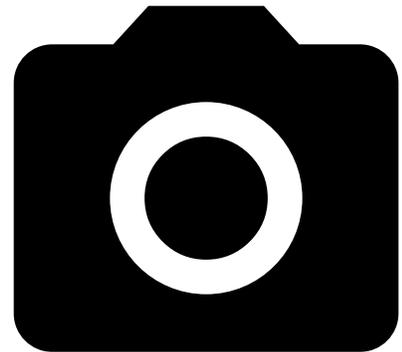
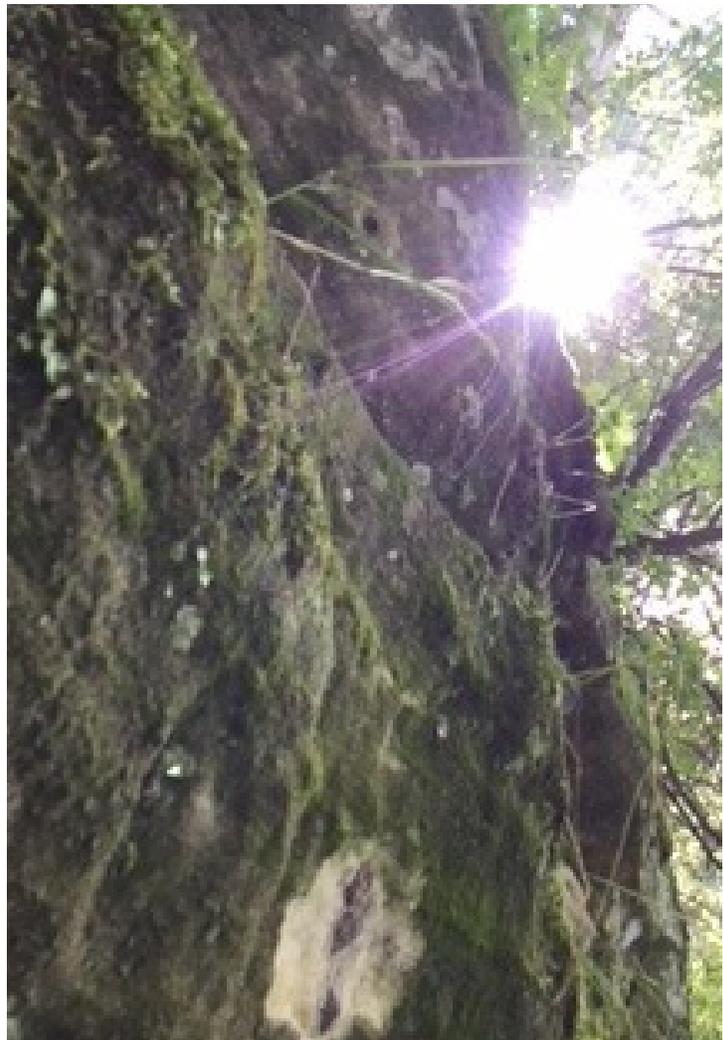
BY: MORGAN LYONS, ANA RANSOM,
CHLOE MARTIN, AND DANIELLE
MARTIN

pho·to·graph

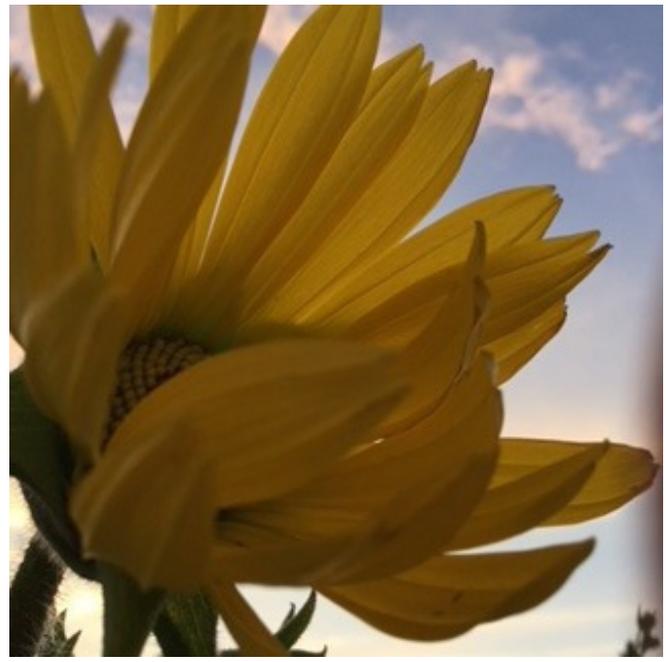
/'fōdə,graf/

noun

a picture made using a camera, in which an image is focused onto film or other light-sensitive material and then made visible and permanent by chemical treatment, or stored digitally.

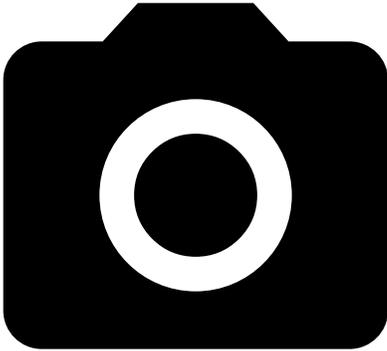


Photographs by
Morgan Lyons

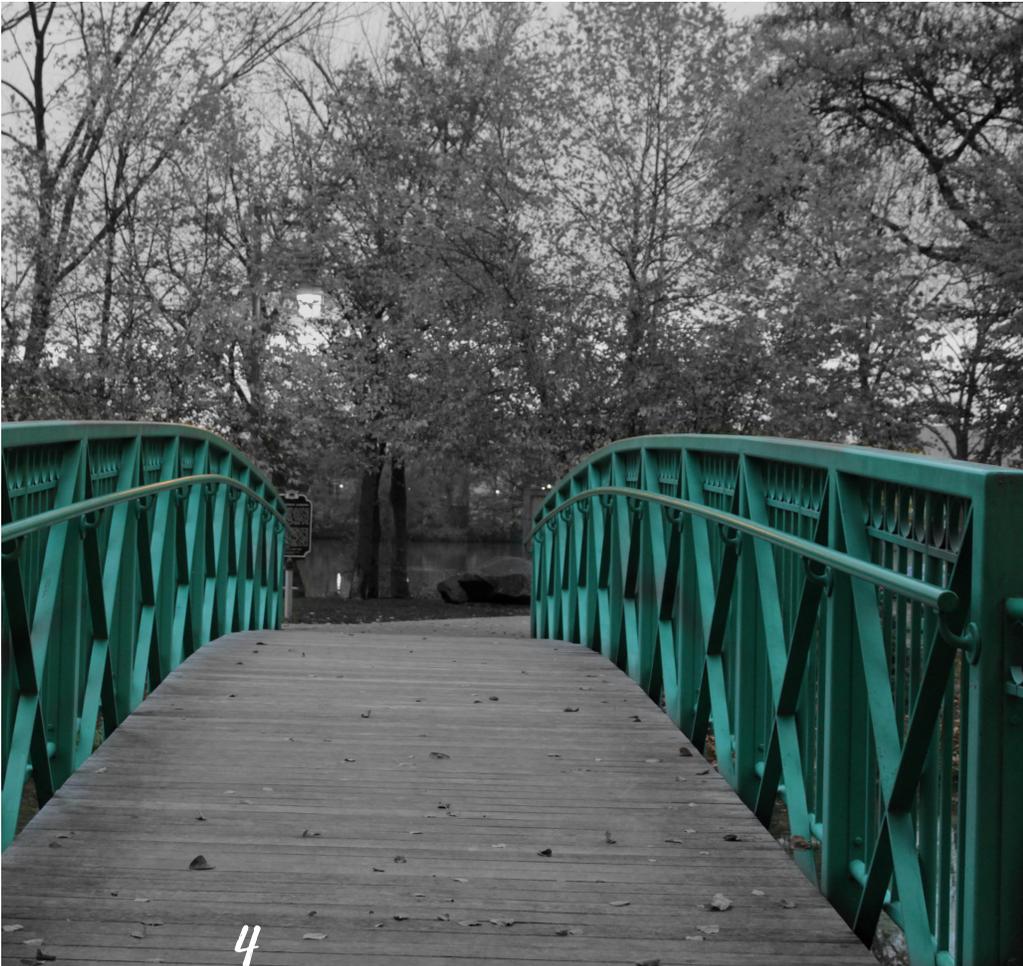


Nature is always hinting at us.
It hints over and over again.
And suddenly we take the hint.

-Robert Frost



*Photographs
by Ana
Ransom*





*Your hope lies in
accepting your life as
it now lies before you,
forever changed.
If you can do that,
the peace you seek
will follow. Forever
changed. I am forever
changed.*

*--Jennifer Niven, from
the book All the
Bright Places*





Danielle Martin

Chloe Martin



Illustrations

BY: KAITLYN MCCORMICK,
GRACE QUADE, AND FATUN ERSCHEN

il·lus·tra·tion

/,ilə'strāSH(ə)n/

noun

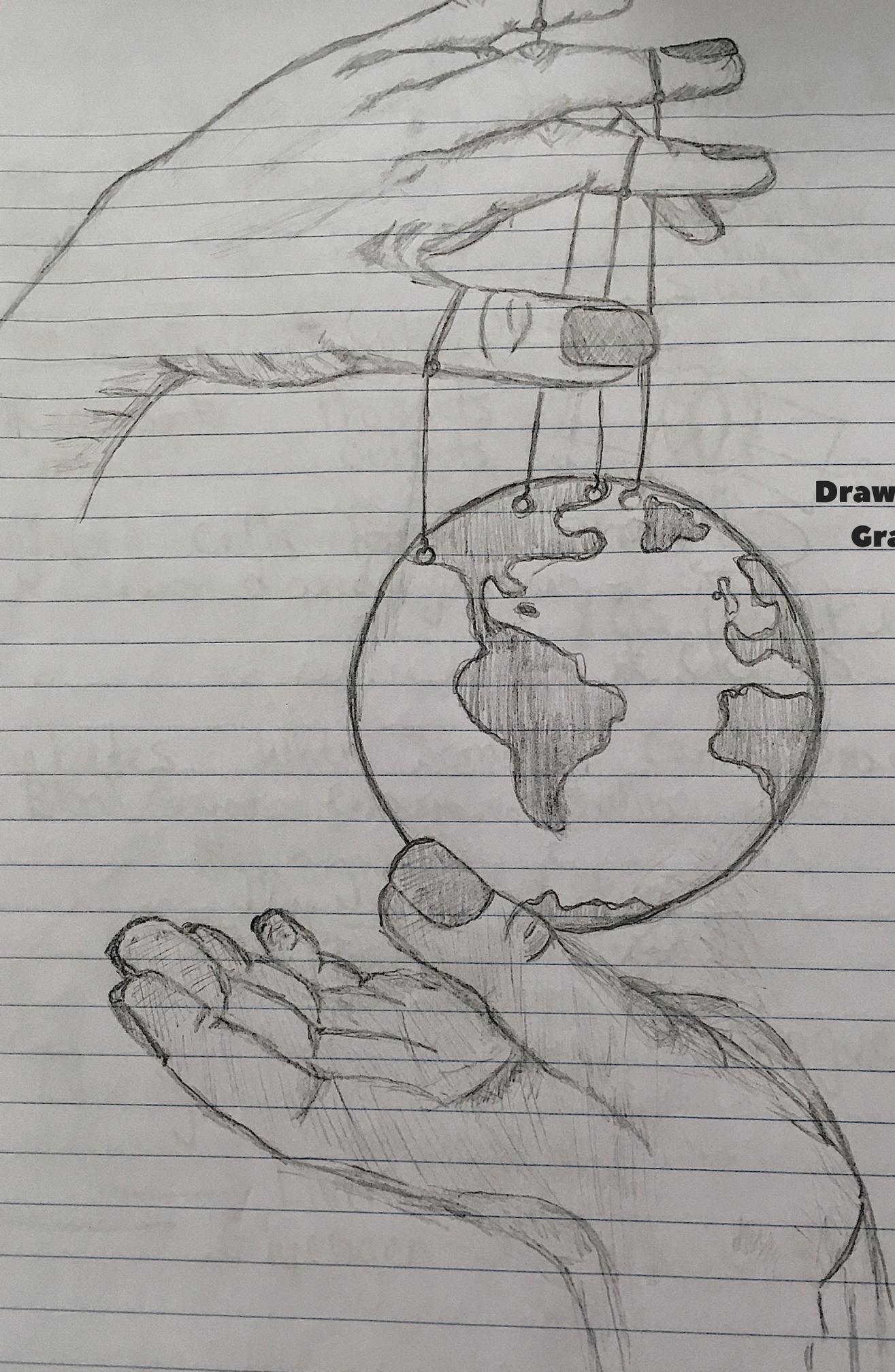
a picture illustrating a book, newspaper, etc.



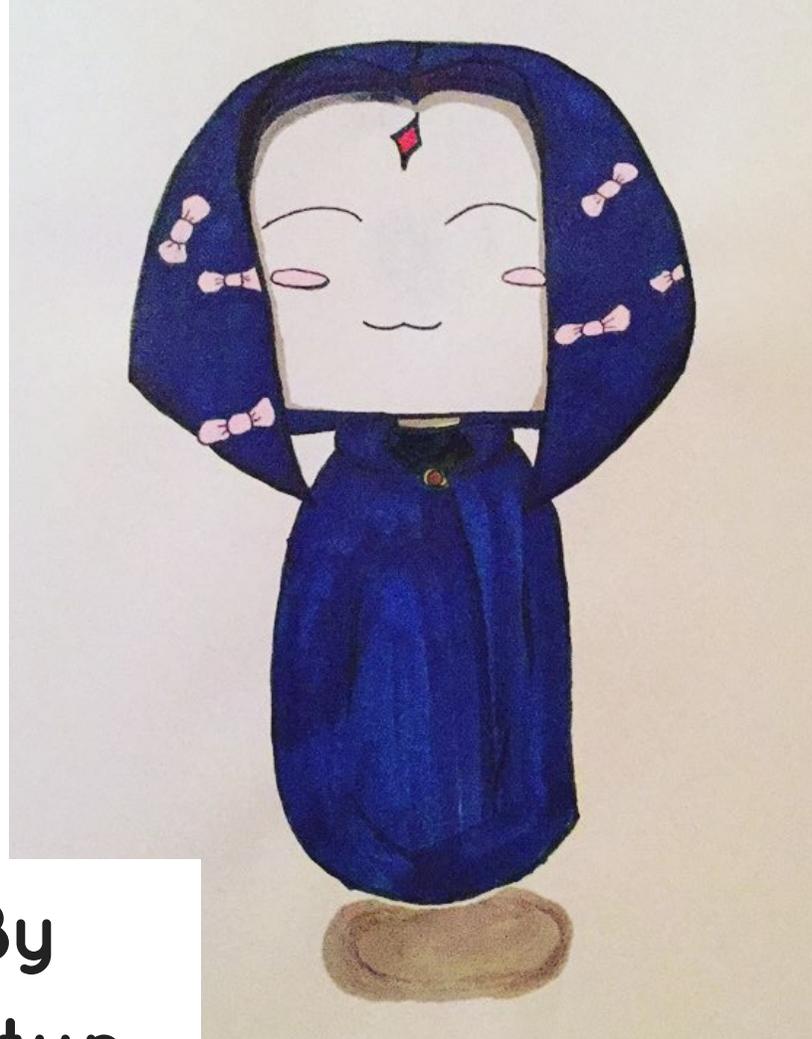
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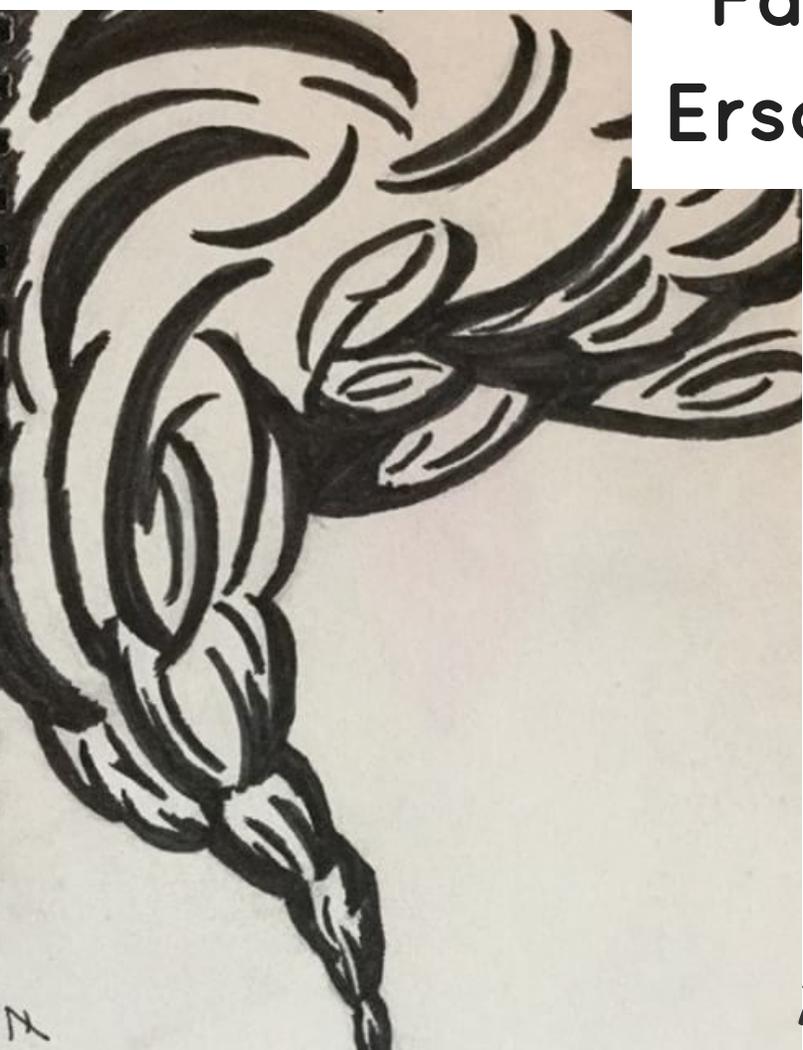
by Kaitlyn McCormick



**Drawing by
Grace Quade**



By
Fatun
Erschen



Short Stories

BY: ANONYMOUS

short sto·ry
/SHôrt 'stôrē/
noun

a story with a fully developed theme but significantly shorter and less elaborate than a novel

By: Anonymous

I hear them every time I turn on the radio. They're only on a certain station. If I try to change it, it just switches back. No one else has the station, and no one believes me. I've tried to get people to listen, but whenever I do, the station isn't available. At first, I was creeped out. Who wouldn't be when they realize that they can hear the voices of the dead? I got rid of every radio in my house, office, and car. But the thing is, I'm more interested than I am afraid. I now realize that I could take advantage of this. I could ask them questions about my parents.

My parents died when I was five years old. No one knows how, or if they do, they won't tell me. I'm twenty-three years old now. One day my parents went shopping and never returned. The police searched for anything they could have left behind or any clues to where they could have gone, but couldn't find anything. It was like they just disappeared. I went to live with my aunt and uncle. Then when my uncle died, I had to be there for my aunt more than ever. I moved out after I came home from college.

My name is Rachel Linin. You're probably wondering how I knew the voices were those of the dead. Well, the voices on the station started saying the weirdest things that no one would know unless they had died. For example, they said what heaven looked like, what had happened in the private lives of historians, and what certain people that were presently living were doing at that moment. They never explained how they knew these things. That was when I first had the idea that the station was broadcasting the voices of the dead. Slowly, things just seemed more and more suspicious, until I was sure that they were the voices of the dead. My family said I was crazy and tried to get me treatment, but I knew I wasn't. I mean it's 2017, anything can happen.

If I'm going to talk to the dead, I first need to contact them. I think the best way to do that, is by finding the radio station's website. So, I looked up the number of the station, 109.1. A website popped up and I clicked on it. It was the weirdest website, I've ever seen. It had nothing on it, except for a bar that said, 'Type questions here.' Below it was a blue "send" button. I quickly typed in the question that I most wanted to know the answer to.

What happened to John and Sarah Linin?

Within minutes an answer popped up on my screen.

They died in a car accident. The person that caused it survived. They put your parents and their car somewhere no one would ever find them. They then thoroughly cleaned up the crash site.

I couldn't believe it. All this time, someone was behind my parent's death and I had never known. I was just getting started with this website. I had so many more questions. The website already knew they were my parents without me saying anything. I didn't know how this was happening, I just knew it was. I guess I didn't even know if it was real, but I'm choosing to think that it is. My heart told me that what they had just told me was true and that someone had killed my parents and successfully covered it up. I decided to ask more questions.

Where is that man/woman that killed my parents?

I counted the minutes that passed by until my response popped up. Three.

So you're Rachel Linin. That man that killed your parents is dead. You have three more available questions to ask.

Dead. Serves him right. I didn't want to use any of my three questions that I had left on him. I knew my next question.

Who am I talking to?

This one took ten minutes before I got a response.

A friend.

I had a feeling that was all I was going to get for that question. I didn't really expect an answer at all, so I was little surprised. That was all I needed to know for now. What I wanted to do right now was go tell my aunt everything that I had just found out.

I drove to my aunt's house as quickly as possible. When I got there, I hopped out of the car and ran inside. I couldn't even imagine the expression on her face when I told her that I knew what happened to her sister and brother-in-law. The second I got in the house, her face fell. Everyone's did when they saw me. They thought I was crazy, the girl who said she could hear the voices of the dead. I was going to change that though.

"Hi, Aunt Lisa," I said waving.

"Hi honey," she sighed, walking over to me to give me a hug.

"I have something to tell you, something big."

"Go ahead, Rachel."

"You're going to think I'm crazy, even more than you already do. But I know that Mom and Dad died and how."

"Rachel—"

“Just hear me out. They were in a car accident. The person that caused it took Mom and Dad’s bodies, and their car. He hid them where no one would find them. That’s how they died, we know now.” Aunt Lisa had started to cry. I didn’t know if it was because I had just told her what had happened to my parents, or because she thought that I’d really lost it after what I’d just said.

“No, Aunt Lisa it’s true. Please believe me.”

“Oh honey, you need help,” she sobbed.

“No, I don’t. I don’t care if you don’t believe me, but it’s the truth.” I stomped out the door. I guess deep down I knew she wouldn’t believe me. I had just hoped. The thing that matters is that I know. I know what happened to them, that they didn’t just leave me, and that justice was brought to the man that did that to them. I didn’t have to think long about my next question. When I got home, I quickly typed my question.

Did my aunt or anyone else know how my parents died?

In a few minutes, I got a simple response.

No.

That word alone took a weight off my shoulders. The not knowing if my family knew how my parents died and just decided not to tell me. To let me live with the grief of never knowing what happened to my parents. I only had one question left. One more question that has been running through my mind for the last eighteen years. It didn’t have to be about my parents. I had found out what happened to them, and that was more than enough. But now that I have the chance, I know what my last question’s going to be.

Are my parents watching over me and are they proud of me?

Within a minute, I had received my response.

Technically that's two questions, but yes to both of them. They are watching over you every day and they are so proud of you. I hope that answered a lot of the questions that have been coursing through your mind. No one will believe you if you tell them what I've told you, I mean you saw how your aunt reacted. However, I hope you're at peace with what you've learned.

And I was at peace with that. I realized it hadn't been such a bad thing, after all, to have discovered that radio station, and start talking to the dead. They had answered questions I've had for years. Without them, I would still be wondering how my parents had died.

My phone began to ring making me jump. I looked at who was calling, it was Aunt Lisa. I didn't want to listen to another lecture about how I should get treatment or how I'm crazy, but I still answered.

"Hello, Aunt Lisa," I said.

"Hi, Rachel. I'm calling to say I'm sorry. I believe you, about the thing you told me earlier. I just couldn't believe that I had finally found out what happened to your parents. It was a lot to take in. Maybe I always knew you weren't crazy. It was just easier to say and not believe what you were telling us. But I always say, 'All things are possible for one who believes.' And I should have, and I am truly sorry."

"It's alright, Aunt Lisa. You weren't the only one. It sounded a little crazy, even to my own ears. But now we have answers, so just take some time to think about it. You're right, it is a lot to take in."

"Thank you, sweetheart. Have a good night. I'll call you in the morning. I want to know all about how you know this. And I promise to keep an open mind."

"Alright. Bye, Aunt Lisa."

I hung up and smiled. Finally, someone who believes me. Although I don't think I'm going to be listening to that station anymore, no promises.

I decided to turn on the radio station one more time. When I did, I heard this, "Good afternoon folks. This is Carl Nimmerly. You are listening to the science station. That was our experiment to try and figure out if we could drive people insane by making them think that they were hearing the voices of the dead. The answer is yes, yes, we could. If anyone that is listening to this was a victim of this experiment, you are probably breathing a sigh of relief. Well, I would be too. Keep listening to the science station!"

I couldn't believe it. This whole time my family was right. I wasn't actually hearing the voices of the dead. Those answers about my parents weren't true. I had to find out more about this 'science station'. Starting with the name of the guy that made the announcement. I searched Carl Nimmerly on my computer and immediately results came up. I looked at the information below his picture. It said:

Born: January 19, 1928

Died: April 24, 1996

Poems

BY: ANONYMOUS, FATUN JENNAH
ERSCHE, AND KYRIE MCCARTHY

po·em

/'pōəm,pōm/

noun

a piece of writing that partakes of the nature of both speech and song that is nearly always rhythmical, usually metaphorical, and often exhibits such formal elements as meter, rhyme, and stanzaic structure.

CONCLUDING THE LIFE I NOW EXIST IN,
I AM MERELY A SPECK OF GRAIN, COMPARED TO

TEAL SEAS
TINGED SKIES
MONSTROUS WINDS
AND THE DEVIL'S EYES
OH, WHO AM I?

I AM A TINY ANT, IN A WORLD OF GIANT STEPS AND SMALL BREEZES

I AM A SMALL SHREW, PIT PATTING MY MINUSCULE FEET,

THINKING AND THINKING, PONDERING AND WONDERING,

BUT NO CHANGE WILL COME

I AM HEROIC, NOSTALGIC, BRAVE

IN A UNIVERSE WHERE EVERY GIANT FOOT STEP IN LIFE IS STRAINING

I AM A MAGNIFICENT IDEA

IN A WORLD WHERE HUMAN BEINGS ARE BEING DRAGGED TO THE GROUND,

SURRENDERED TO THE HORRORS THAT ONE LIFE WILL ENDURE.

I AM ONLY A PERSON

IN A WORLD WHERE HUMANITY DIMINISHES

BY ANONYMOUS

By: Fatun Jennah Erschen

My heart is a castle; with grand wings I might add.
My castle's only occupant, is a maiden quite fair.

Her name, is Soul.

When my castle breaks, Soul cries precious tears.
When my castle shines, Soul laughs a melody.
When my castle flies, Soul gets lost in the clouds.

Soul is a Beautiful maiden; with Beautiful emotions
I cannot control

By: Kyrie McCarthy

The point of this poem is to gradually get more intense or loud.

It comes uncontrollable and uncontainable,
it urges me to open my mouth;
I do.

I reach up to try and contain it. I feel against my hand a
small whisper of breath that lasts a lifetime.

My eyes water as it comes to an end,
a tear falls down my cheek.

YAWN

As that single tear streams down to the tip of my chin I think,
I think about how deep and solitary that whisper of breath
signifying the darkness of sleep came upon me,
am I tired?

No,

but I am alone,

my solitude creeps in closer and

I let out a silent and mournful sound.

No tears have come since the first
which is drying on my chin.

But the mournful noise repeats itself
as I am becoming more and more aware of how alone I am in
everything.

WHIMPER

My loneliness sinks in deeper and I feel my eyes start to swell.

I catch a glance of myself in the mirror across the bed.

My tears come freely now and unstoppable,

the once quiet mournful moan turns into
heart aching sobs that thump rhythmically

with the clear salty liquid that

streams down my face,

the emotion swelling in my head

starts to be too much for me to handle.

It's all too much;

the cries get louder

and louder.

CRY

This is the most aware I have ever been of the darkness
and how alone I really am.

My surroundings start to blur.

I shut my eyes tightly so no more tears can escape.

I am done with crying and feeling alone,
everything in my mind is screaming at me so loudly.

Everything is so loud.

I know the only thing that will make it quiet.

I open my mouth and let out everything,

every dark thought,

every lonely memory,

everyone and anyone who has ever left me,

in a heart wrenching,

soul-ripping

scream

that is so loud and intense that I even surprise myself.

Afterwards there is nothing;

no pain,

no blackness,

just silence,

SCREAMING

and I finally feel like I can think.

I think about my family and friends,

and I look in the mirror

and see my lips curled upright,

a smile has replace all the pain and sorrow of yesterday.

It won't last long,

the darkness will come back,

but I will find my way through again

and just keep smiling.

*Thank you for
reading our
magazine!*