FLY ME TO THE VOID

AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited by Mary Pinard's Elegists
“Life is for the living.
Death is for the dead.
Let life be like music.
And death a note unsaid.”

--- Langston Hughes
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Áine R. Folan

Aine Folan, a Boston, Massachusetts native, is approaching graduation. She has enjoyed the last 3 years at Babson, after transferring in from UMass Amherst. Outside of the classroom, Aine is interested in banking, holistic healthcare, yoga and adores animals of all shapes and sizes.
Young Girl in Profile, 1948

I am sturdy in the rhythm; since I've known nothing more;
Yet, the concert lies on the other side of the door;
Muffled, yet potent; I dream of the man
Who conducts the orchestra with his own two hands

I wonder if he ever heard my father’s name;
or if all black soldiers are considered one of the same.
His corpse was never recovered from that Normandy shore-
Abandoned by the very country he was fighting for.

Today, I give my father the burial he was so long-ago denied;
As I sprinkle rose petals into the retreating tide;
I imagine the waves may carry my offering all the way to France,
And I can finally end this mourning dance.

I watched the petals drift towards that dreadful shore;
and cursed the entirety of the ‘war to end wars’.

and in that moment I was embraced by a warm breeze-
and I knew my father was with God, above the trees.
The Gray Area

And now I know what drove us apart

after many nights wrapped in your arms
and the nagging insecurity of us hasn’t faded; although your touch has,

and as you fade away, I struggle to remember the contours of your face,

and the calyces on your knuckles, where they used to interlock with mine,
even the lesser qualities, like snoring in your sleep,

though I am confused, and I am not sure if this is truly the end,

though I’ve given up on
us, or so I’ve convinced myself during the daylight hours

but at night, I imagine how much better I would sleep with you,

in this moment, I think of how many nights we have slept apart,
though it is clear, it is; but it isn’t

that we existed on the inflection point

of where unregulated lust became toxic.
Stephanie Rodriguez

Stephanie Rodriguez is currently a senior at Babson College graduating with concentrations in Operations Management and Business Analytics. She is from Guatemala and recently moved to Belize. She is part of the Cross Country and Track team at Babson. She loves to travel, play with her dogs, and hang out with her friends and family.
A Stone to the Heart

Goddess, maiden, woman, lady
Which one could she be?
Broken by face
Broken by heart
Who did this to her?

Perhaps she was born in the wrong time
Stood up for herself and got stoned to death?
Or was her lover caught with another?
Stoned to death or heartbroken
Both can deform a beautiful maiden’s face

Goddess without a face and heart
Broken. But strongly standing
Beautiful, brave, blooming
She strokes her chest
Desperately waiting to get her heartbroken again.
Love with Limit

That first winter of college, I realized I had fallen in love. Now I lost him, I thought I had experienced it before

clearly I was wrong. mistaken-

Imagining myself, lying beside him and him no longer there
I was floating right there next to him, an imagined shadow.

***

It was my first winter without him. I wanted to visit him, maybe call him and that one afternoon,
lying outside:
looking at the grass, the sidewalk all covered in white snow

still could not fathom he was gone. Lying there, in the cold by myself
could not even bring myself to move and create snow angels, damaged

there I was, I didn’t want it to be over
guess I brought it upon myself. I let him go, it’s my fault

There I was wearing a white sweater that camouflaged into the snow
could the darkness I was feeling bring light into my life

Light that could bring happiness again
light that could lift this burden.
But it was still there.
On June, months later, I still thought of him
remembered him, on occasion.

A tear fell, rolled down my cheek
I was not just crying because I missed him, I was crying

Because even though I did, he was able to be a part of my life
an important one, one that taught me how to love without limit

I laid there, again and remembered him
His smell, his laughter, his touch
I found comfort, just thinking about him
Lying there on the cold stone sidewalk on a hot summer day

We didn’t talk anymore
I didn’t know about his life.

As I felt the cold stone slowly melt into my body
I could feel the heat, it was time to get up.

I guess I knew it was over - I just didn’t want it to be.
But then I stood up as I tried to leave my past behind.
Anya Spirito

Anya Spirito, a Providence, Rhode Island native, is a senior at Babson College. Aside from studying entrepreneurship, she enjoys spending time with her adorable miniature schnauzer, Nora, eating Italian food, practicing yoga and spending time with friends and family.
Bowling for a Coach

The bowling brotherhood
is what Coach Karuso missed most.
You would think after fifty-five unforgettable years, mentoring mild-mannered young men
greatly yearning to be the best high school bowling team in the Southern charm state of Kansas,
that Coach K was satisfied with his long list of astounding accolades: seven Coach of the Year awards,
a 1946 USA Today National Bowling Player of the Year, Twelve all-region honors, and ten Kansas High School State Championships.

But now, at the nimble age of ninety-two, Coach K sometimes lets his mind meticulously ponder “the what could have been.” What if Suko Takashi did not drop an angry bowling ball on his unfortunate foot during tryouts? Could he have been the next “Williams”\(^1\) without this career-ending injury? Or what about the astute strike sensation Tornado Samuelson? His golden arm was like an old battleship at sea, reliable each day of the week. But a boat with drugs led the young man down a dark path to nowhere. And then there’s the story about “Duckpin Demon” Billy Cumberbatch, who, like a graceful swooping stork, could roll a ball with indescribable popping precision. Until one day he ran away only to never be seen again. It is these few instances which motivates Coach Karuso like a determined locomotive. But what defines Coach is the lasting legacy he leaves behind. His 99% player graduation, 517 program wins, and a 10 all-Americans reflect what the man was all about. From Topeka to Lawrence, our courageous coach was the guy everyone “could call Al.”\(^2\)
Hat Trick

Irreversible, fleeting away
Yet each time you ask it’s as if
you’re attempting to turn back
the clock; a do-over

“Who are you?”

“Who are you?”

“Who are you?”

All in under three minutes.

You’re face no longer carries the same glow,
Only a blank Aretza stretched canvas
that used to resemble a Number 48
heavily layered lines, now erased, taking away a true masterpiece
All in under three minutes.

Soft kisses atop my head, stroking my long matted hair
warming my icy feet, making me feel whole
I knew you were special even back then
a true inspiration --
Always elated to greet me, your only grandchild.
Best Friends. and it went by
All in under three minutes.

Now you’re consumed, lonely even in a house full of love
Your mind failing you, and you know it
But the single moments of clarity embody the significance of it all
And I'll do anything for it
Even if it’s only for three minutes.
Tianchen Li

Tianchen Li is a senior at Babson College, majoring in Marketing and Entrepreneurship. He is from Shandong, China. He enjoys swimming, watching anime, cooking, and taking care of tropical fish. Through his poems, he wants to share his ideas about love and time.
Endless Love

A huge brown sarcophagus
lasts for thousands of years,
lies in the Museum of Fine Arts.
A couple was sleeping inside of it.
They did not wear any costume,
but only a single sheet.
There was nothing to hide for pure love.
Her arm on the back of his neck,
five fingers locked him tightly.
His arms cross to hers
and hold her shoulder powerfully.
They eternally embraced and gazed to the other,
at the moment, they passed away.
At the moment they passed away,
Greeks still fighting Amazons.
At the moment they passed away,
more soldiers were joining the combat.
But no need to worry, war and kills would not
affect their peaceful love.
Their love was lions,
pulling down any obstacles.
Their love was griffins,
ever change until death.
They might have more romantic stories,
but everything was buried in the tomb.
Such great love could not avoid death,
but death shaped this greater love.
**Time**

I recorded tremendous videos from my past experience.  
It was no use. The time would erase them.  
Or like a bullet it would never go back into old path.  
Whenever I turned  
I saw the only thing in its hand was futures.  
In the night I would recall an old memory to another memory  
Like a pirate checks his treasures.  
I would ask myself what changed in recent years.  
I changed in everything.  
I had many responsibilities.  
I had less free time. No more simple happiness.  
Growing pressure keeps jumping on me.  
And I have to carry them keep walking.
Lizzy Baer

Lizzy Baer is a senior student-athlete at Babson College. She loves long runs, a good book, and anything west-coast. While she has never written poetry before, she is excited to share her words with the Babson community. Throughout her poems, she explores how death, whether it be of the self, a loved one, or the life phase, is to be reckoned with. She hopes her work inspires you to transform your grief into a blessing.
Plain Sight

You look at me with hunters eyes.
I'll be good cooked, fried.

I'm easy prey,
Lord knows why.

How do I run?
How do I hide?

“She's so chill, she won’t mind”

Grief always comes from behind,
If only I could look it in the eyes.

Maybe then I could spot its signs,
Stop being so blind.

I must redesign, find a way to survive.
I can’t keep getting eaten alive.

I must change my state of mind.
Falling Fast

Falling fast, roaring towards a crash.  
Can’t deny I had a blast.

The landing was in stark contrast.  
Feeling pain, I am drained.

Alone now, unclaimed.  
Looking for a tribe, where I can vibe.

Must rebrand, demand respect.  
Create a mindset I can accept.

Where do I go from here?

I don’t know,  
Anywhere is better than here.
Fengqi Guo

Fengqi Guo is a Chinese international student studying at Babson College. He is planning to major in philosophy for graduate school with a specific interest in continental philosophers and psychoanalysis. He intends to infuse his poems with philosophical ideas together with personal memories.
Freedman

So here is my freedom, contorted, spasmodic, impregnable. A contrapposto made of some clunky metallic stone, a reclining posture that was compelled, that looked like a distorted cupreous smile on the face of a maniac, and I am. I started in that immemorial epoch with color and texture splashing, posing cozily in the plein air, in nature’s fullness, and then I got obsessed with this unfathomed concept of freedom, which transformed into a obsession with reduction, with this self-mutilated compulsion of shaving my hair and pubes off my skin, razing my skin, uncovering them tearing my flesh off my bones, clipping my musculature and cords in the middle, extruding and sucking my blood out, venous or arterial, drop by drop, until the end, I watched them decompose, turning into dusts and ashes, drifted away in the void. And I loved it.

Then the twenty years nothing happened, nothing moved I laid in stillness and pain before the rework the new work forward, one step and two losing more, more, and more I recalled the spell the password, my freedom so here is it I sing:
Streetlights

My father's death was a burial
with no flesh or blood, no rotting corpse,
no visitors, no wandering pigeons,
It was a cry without tears,
a sentence I wrote as a kid,
when I did not know about grammar.
He read it and liked it.
Write poems, not novels,
he said
you do better in that way,
and I have never written a poem since then.
It's a winter evening in Toronto without snow, a small
dazzling gardenia without that smell, a smell of
nostalgia, of our dirty dark alleys, our dumps, dim streetlamps, and
the old woman,
selling those little white flowers, in a basket
and it smelled just right.
It's an apocalypse that will never come,
It's the easy way out.
when rain drops in the pond, there is no
ripple;
when I howl in the abyss, there is no
echo;
It's the silent poet,
the shadow of a word.

What are you writing?
He came in asking
Your elegy.
I answered, and read him about his own death.
Melancholy,
he laughed, delighted,
I'm too old for that shit.
The street was empty,
a man turned off his light and started to play cello.
I need to write this.
I replied,
There is a deadline.
Wes Woodson

Wes Woodson is a senior at Babson College. He is from Sharon, Massachusetts and he enjoys writing, reading, and playing basketball. In addition, he is the founder of thehidden Company which is a creative storytelling company that empowers the youth to understand others and understand themselves. He is also a rising national motivational speaker.
A Loss Predicted

I am no fortune teller
But I know the days we share are numbered.
You lay, rested for once as I watch the hands of life try to help you.
Yet there is no response.
Only stillness. Only the sound of your faint breath
I am told you are still with us. Although your days are numbered.

Your wisdom will forever ring against the drums of my ears.
Your writings will always stay locked away in my dresser.
Your laugh will always bring joy into the rooms of our family.
You will always be here, grandpa.

It’s just weird because you’re not gone yet.
You tend to believe that you’re gone, like the wind
But you’re still here.
I stand beside you.
Waiting. Preparing.

For I am no fortune teller. I only predict my loss of you.
The Lady Behind The Glass

It’s hard to live a life of speculation.
By that I mean that no one ever knows who I am.
They never know who made me.
They never know where I came from
Or They never know when I will leave.
They just never know.

Instead they only choose to speculate from outside of the glass
While I stare blankly listening to all of their speculations.
Some say that I was a greek goddess
Some say that I was an artifact meant to honor gods.
Some even say that I even stayed in cemeteries

“Ha” I say.
Ha to all of those speculations.
Me? Stay in a cemetery?
Me? Stay firm in the presence of gods?
Please. I think not.

I tend to often believe that I serve an even higher purpose.
I can get behind the idea of being a greek goddess.
But I guess the world may never truly know...
Sarah Mangiacotti

Sarah Mangiacotti is a junior at Babson College. She transferred from the University of Vermont. Although she has not spent much time writing poetry, she is working to hone in the craft.
Who I Am Not

Angel no I am not your
Angel I am not
Your or his or her or their or our
Angel no divinity has called upon me to become that
Angel no

Bird no I am not a humming
Bird or a dove or a hawk no to be a
Bird is to be free free from the
Gravity that hinders my wings from soaring
Bird I wish I could be how could I be a
Bird without a flock to follow no
Bird am I no

Warrior no I can fight or battle or crusade but
Warrior I have no claim to imply my
Courage as courage or gallantry may serve a
Warrior but I am not courageous no I have no choice
Warrior no me yes
A Trip to San Francisco

Full House, lazy boy, feet up,  
I was there in that room. Ready to cut it out.  
I was naively content, free of worry.

Your footsteps are never light  
Heavy transfer of weight from foot to foot  
Your breath crossed rooms all the way to that frame.

You got it dude, dude Michelle and I alike.  
What I got though, Michelle could never  
Want, no. Not Michelle or Danny or DJ or Jessie,

None that anyone would ever  
Want. No. San Francisco was far but  
Not far enough to escape the inevitable episode.

The wooden frame wasn’t enough to  
Hold you. Your fingers clenched to what once  
Was a door, what now is empty.

Do you want to watch with me, I  
Thought, the words that almost came out, but  
Then you did not respond to my thought, and I

Knew. San Francisco no longer. No. I was somewhere  
Else. A place I wished and wished and wished I  
Would never go.
Catherine Diamond

Catherine Diamond is a senior at Babson College. She is taking the course Poetic Elegies and expresses her loss of her grandmother or other family members through her poems. Her favorite style of poetry is a sonnet. Cate is from Hingham Massachusetts and lives at home with her family.
Cottage on the Pond

Clouds of dust billow
And my car shakes driving down the dirt road

The same dirt road I’ve driven down for 18 years
The road where she would stand at the house
And eagerly wave to greet us
Embraced with hugs and kisses

Her smell fills the humid house
The heat from the oven filling the cottage
Hydrangeas overflowing from the front
They serve as centerpieces on every surface

Today the road still billows with dust
And my car still shakes
But, there is no warm face to greet us
No hydrangeas overpowering the tiny cottage
Her smell no longer lingers inside the house
The house is now icy cold with a/c

We still go back to the cottage on the pond after she is gone
She taught us to love it like she did
The Bears

Teddy and Honey

Teddy was an old soul since we got him
Honey was rambunctious and wild, always causing chaos

Honey lived quick.
Her energy never withered until it one day abruptly stopped.
She was taken from us with no warning.

Teddy was there for us to help grieve
To remember her and console in him

Teddy was everyone's favorite for the next 8 years.
My dad’s best friend, my sister’s pillow in her bed, my brother’s frat dog, and my running buddy

Dog years go quick and before we were ready
Teddy was ready to leave us.

The lonely hanging leashes, the dog bowls too difficult to put away
The lingering dog hair is a constant reminder of what is missing
Shira Berkin

Shira Berkin is currently a second-year student at Babson College. She is from Hingham, Massachusetts, and enjoys doing yoga, spending time with family, and going for walks with her pug, Lucy.
Letter to A Little Dead Fly

Hi, little dead fly.

I’m sorry you died. It looks like you didn’t even grow to full size.
I think I understand why you died here, on the windowsill of the Reynolds Global Lounge.
I think you wanted to go outside and escape this weird, climate-controlled microcosm of a human world.
You probably thought these windows were escape routes.
Eventually you gave up, maybe from hunger or exhaustion, or both.

And now I’ve found you
Lying on your back, six hairy little fly legs pointing to the ceiling
Already starting to collect dust
I bet nobody thinks about you
I bet you feel forgotten
Or maybe you don’t feel much
Because, well, you’re dead now.

Anywho, I’m really sorry about all of this. I wish I could’ve done something for you.
I wish you had a little mini iPhone so you could’ve called me up
And asked for a little assistance.
But, I guess technology just isn’t there yet.

I’m emailing Tim Cook tomorrow.

Your friend,

Shira
My Grandmother; Pieces of Us

I had never met someone so romantic.
Her words to me
The way you walk, the way you move
You are so beautiful

The love letters that were my birthday cards, the most passionate cursive I’ve ever seen.
You were well-read, a librarian
The smart one in your marriage
although the world would never admit it.

You were so in love with your child, your David.

I have his eyes
Everyone said it was my brother who bore the resemblance
Never the girl.

I remember one of the last conversations
You called, and I didn’t want to pick up
Because you could talk with me forever, even as you lost your words, my name
you were so in love

The last time I saw you, it was over a little screen
Your sleepy eyes, tiny body, bald head,
on my little screen you looked different
You didn’t know who I was, but all we could see was each other

I remember the way your hand reached out to touch the screen
Over and over you stroked it
so beautiful you said.

You didn’t know who I was
We knew each other
I said I was David’s daughter; your glazed eyes widened

So beautiful, you said.
Jess Chartier

Jess Chartier is currently a senior at Babson College studying Global Business Management and Entrepreneurship. She is from Andover, Massachusetts, where she lives with her parents, Judy and Jeff Chartier, her two older brothers, John and Joe Chartier, and her dog Jynger (Ginger with a “J”). In her free time, Jess enjoys spending time with her family and friends, working out, and reading. She hopes that her own articulation of her struggles, dealing with the loss of her loved ones, will make others feel more comfortable exploring their own struggles processing loss through elegy/ writing.
The Departure

Your driveway crowded
Like the traffic we just departed.
Ambulances, fire trucks, and police officers
Kept coming, trying
To empty your house.
But the house remained full—
the stretcher rolled out your body, and
the uninhabited rooms
cried for answers.

When approached the curtain,
your soft voice shot
through my head.
When I retreated from the passageway, I stood
separate, blind to the observatory
The others entered the room,
trying to cherish
the fleeting palpability.

When I sat down in the car
I sunk into the abyss
of my own mind
and became my family
unwavering, unfaltering
as an ambulance, responding to a call.
I stood outside because it was the only
decision I was sure of. I even asked.
I thought it was the right choice.
Behind the Bride

Oh, joyous day!

Her dainty dress, 
delicately, 
Draped tenderly 
over her chaste, 
porcelain skin. 
Her opulent 
veil conceals her 
eager smile and 
languishing eyes. 
Shrouded, she walks 
down the aisle- 
her hands have no 
pair beside her. 
She clutches the 
bouquet of orchids 

Before trading them for the hands 
of her lover. Such a dapper, 
debonair man. He will be to 
their child, who she did 

not 
have walking 
her down the 
aisle. His kind fingers 
entangle 
hers. As he removes the veil from her face 
he replaces 
him. He demonstrates demulcent ardor 
for her heart. 
Two hands in hers and two on her heart, she
can
accept his
vows. They kiss.
Forever is a long time.
The future
seems so far away. Oh, joyous day! She cries.
She misses
the man who couldn’t give her away. Her tears
misconstrued.
She’s never felt so sad to be so happy.
Brooke Daly

Brooke Daly is a junior at Babson College studying Entrepreneurship and Strategic Management. She is from Dover, Massachusetts. She enjoys spending time with her three brothers, spoiling her three dogs, yoga, hiking, and reading. Her poetry is dedicated to her late grandfather and late cousin Caroline. She hopes that sharing her poetry inspires others within the Babson community to step outside their comfort zone.
Reckless

Your orange pills still sit in the medicine cabinet
Your mink coat still hangs in the front closet
Your car still is parked in the garage

I want to remind you to take your Prozac
   One last time
I want to see you bundled up in the fur on a chilly night
   One last time
I want you to pick me up from school in your white Lexus
   One last time

“Don’t tell your mom”

was what you said

When you gave me a sip of your Pinot Noir Christmas Eve
When you let me play with your colorful makeup
When you told me what rehab was really like

People tried to put your aurora into words
They chose “reckless”
to whitewash your problems
to summarize your struggles

I would have chosen “honest”
You always told me the truth
Even when no one else would
Current

When grief hits you like a tidal wave, you want to hold your breath. You want to capture the memories of the long car rides, and the plans for the future you want to prepare to swallow some of the salty ocean, the briny water stings your blue eyes and the back of your throat. I refuse to drown. I have been swept away before but now I recognize high tide, as it rises up the shoreline.

This time, when the moon is full I know its coming, I dig my toes in the sand, and listen to the swell, from the bubbling surge. Today it gently pulses up along the coastline, letting me reminisce about the summer days and I think back to when he sat next to me on his Tommy Bahama chair so serene observing the waves approaching. I don’t know why but I miss him the most at this very beach.

The waves flow, the same way they did every July afternoon. We sunbathe for an hour, where he tells me how I worry too much, thinking about the past, spending hours focused on every detail and do-over, all those minutes caught up all in my own head. Finally the tsunami swallows me whole I was not prepared, it swishes me around like Listerine, and all of a sudden I remember the times when I didn’t answer. So I feel seasick, the guilt is washing over me. All the unanswered calls, this time I try to press answer and the ringing stops because there is no signal underwater I feel anxious at every vibration of the telephone. Dizziness? Is that it?

Worrying about the words left unsaid, mindlessly walking towards the shore colliding with the water like a car accident on I-95, the sound of that liquid saline crash and how greedy it is, how unfair that the current can wash away the good memories and not the bad.
Steven J. Heintzelman II

Steven “Steve” Heintzelman is currently a senior on his journey through Babson College. He is fond of many art forms and once was selected to be the backup wizard in his 8th-grade production of Once Upon a Mattress. Despite struggling in many formal writing classes, he finds that poetry offers him an outlet to convey his complex ideologies in a fluid form. Haiku, Ekphrastic, and Concrete poetry top the charts of his favorite forms.
Formal Dinner Party

The lawn had to be perfect
Not a blade out of place.

The day had to go on,
guests coming our way.

The disease, as it grew,
clung to his flesh like a moss.

My mother cleaned the windows with a rag,
but my Papa would never notice.

He was dead, gone, killed by the cancer,
but the grass was cut, windows clean.

The tears can wait
for the guests are on their way.
Floating

The clock has stopped. Tick tock, tick tock, ti. I am suspended in all dimensions. The gravity of my past pulls me down. The defiant spirit to continue lifts me high. I am floating. Peaceful, yet anxious. A water lily floating down a river. Or a child’s balloon floating into the sky. Beautiful, though tragic. Catch me,
mother. But you are not there. The couch wants to give me comfort. I do not want its comfort. To caress my curves with its untreated leather. I will find comfort in myself. Floating, floating, float.
Lexi Lenaghan

Lexi Lenaghan is currently a senior at Babson College, taking a course in Poetic Elegy. She loves to write about her personal family and the loss of her grandmother as a way of grief but also about her experiences in college and how she is moving on from this chapter in her life. She lives in Hanover, Massachusetts near the water with her family and dog and will be moving home after graduation.
Stage Fright

As I am standing here, my chin towards the sky
I remember my teacher telling me to point my toes.

I look out to the crowd
My hands are shaking, my thoughts running through my mind.

The endless practice and focus and dedication
all lead up to this coming moment.

The moment before the music starts
is the agonizing silence where your doubts creep in and your focus goes.

Pushing these thoughts away is the hardest part
Knowing that you are expected to perform as close to perfection as possible.

Time and time again, I have gone through these steps and the motions
Have become unconscious, but the stage fright creeps in once again,
knowing this is the real thing.

So I point my toes, and put my chin to the sky and radiate the confidence
That I know I have in me to dance without fail.

And the music starts.
The Beach House

That summer was the most ideal setting for my family and the beach, and we soaked in every second that we could with the house and the people around us. My fourteen cousins and I,

Playing on the beach together, and running down the stairs, as if we were still 10 years old,

And while we missed the presence of my grandmother, we knew her soul wanted us to love each other and love the beach house she created with warmth and love. The sunsets were the most memorable, all of us standing on the porch, with sad eyes and playful hearts as we sing to the song on the radio, we would do anything to keep this space forever.

When it came time to let go, we were defiant and angry, with the elders making the decisions.

But that last night, we spent from dawn to dusk, remembering the good times, and the sad times, and danced as the sun went down.

We knew this was a sign of my grandmother, telling us to let go and be ok with her soul leaving us.

But the older we became, the closer we grew, and the more we had drawn from the courage of my grandmother.

We knew she was with us that last night, watching the sunset, on the porch of the beach house.
Dany Khoury

Dany Khoury is a senior at Babson College and is currently studying marketing. He is from Fair Lawn, New Jersey. He hopes to move people with his evocative personal elegy and thought-provoking ekphrastic elegy.
Elegy for My Dad

Antoine Khouri 1954-2019

1
A Void

As I look down,
Your eyes are gently closed,
As if you are just asleep.
Something is missing.
As I look down,
Your hands lay on top
Of one another about your stomach,
As if you are just asleep.
Something is missing.
As I look down,
I slowly reach to grab
Your hand. It is cold to the touch.
For over twenty years,
All I have ever known is
Warmth.
Something is missing.
As I look down,
I utter the words
“i miss you.”
No response. To such a seemingly simple phrase.
Something is missing.
It is you.
2
Wind of Uncertainty

What am I to do without him?
   As his covered body exits the house.
How will I continue to live life as normally?
   As the body makes its way into the car.
When will things start to look up?
   As the door slams shut.
Why, of all people, has this happened to me?
   As I look up at the sky into the gleaming sun.
Will everything eventually be OK?
   As I walk back into the house.
I. Don’t. Know.

3
Lowering of the Casket

The anticipation draws on and on
   As we wait for you.
The crowd that surrounds the bottomless plot
Of land stands beside their respective cars
   As if in a hurried mood
As we wait for you.
The Priest arrives, standing tall beside the soon-to-be
Newly engraved stone, an inscription that seems too bizarre
   As we wait for you.
Gathered around the Priest, the crowd begins to sing
In prayer
   As we wait for you.
The wait is over. You have arrived.
A flood of tears fill each and everyone’s faces,
As holding back is a distant thought.
You have been situated on the platform,
As the cemetery workers blankly put you
Down. Into a ground you are unfamiliar with.
With those that have come before you,
You have finally arrived.
We enter the Church, and a crowd awaits us. Awaits us? No. Something else is happening. A forty-day memorial for the mother of another family. Wrong timing for us? No. As we watch the procession, our minds drift into another world. Why are we here? Here for our own purpose, to mourn his loss. And no one else’s. Stop crying, he will always be with you, says one woman to my twin brother. What audacity. What lack of compassion. What lack of empathy. But who am I to stop her? Anyways, back to what really matters.

I have yet to talk about how I feel. That is because so much has happened. In these past nine months. A new Chevy SUV. A new Kia sedan. Loads of schoolwork fogging the reality of the situation. I have yet to take the time to reflect to gain a deeper understanding of death. Yes. I know it happens to all of us, but we are never prepared once it happens. At that moment. This is where I am, overwhelmed.
How are you feeling?
This is the first of many questions I am asked
As I make my way back to campus.
The things around me haven't changed.
Yes, change is certainly hard to go through,
But it is those who care
About you
About your day
About your family
About the next time you'll visit him
That matter in the end.
Here She Comes

She is here to stay
Below a bed of flowers
That shape her body.

She is here to stay
Away from all the anguish
That we cannot see.

She is here to stay
Near an unending comfort
That was quite distant.

She is here to stay
Inside her marvelous dress
That no man has seen.

She is here to stay
Among the calm and peaceful
That never hurt her.
She is here to stay
Outside of her hectic home
That caused her great pain.

She is here to stay
On behalf of all the rest
That never caused grief.
Mild Laohapoonrungsee

Nannapat Laohapoonrungsee, known as Mild, is a graduating senior at Babson College. She is from Bangkok, Thailand. Apart from studying entrepreneurship, she spends most of her time writing and listening to music, traveling places with her family, and playing with her cat Latte. She contributes two poems to this anthology, one being an ekphrastic elegy, and the other dedicated to her maternal grandfather and paternal grandmother - both of whom she lost on November 22, 2018.
November 22, on Instagram

In Memory of Grandpa Supote & Grandma Hui Hiang

“I wish you happiness, always: in the blooming flowers of springtime in the sky where stars align, and in the meantime, everyone will live their best lives until we all meet again…” was my Instagram caption.

But, I was never worthy of writing anything fancy like that.
Not for you. Not about you. Not on this one gloomy day.
Not when I barely visited you, despite everyone else giving you all their time.
Not when I made the trip up north, more for sightseeing than for cherishing fleeting moments with you, Grandpa.
Not when I barely understood any word you said because of your mixed accent yet never tried to figure it out, Grandma.

Not when I thought of writing that caption even before any of you were gone.
What was it that I wanted to capture?

Number of likes? Number of consoling comments?
Number of people who were more than just followers?

One year later, I think I know now.

What I wanted the world to know: exactly as I wrote.
What I wanted to say, truthfully, from me to you: still - exactly - as I wrote.

I might have been a corrupt digital age child. I might have cried just because I was supposed to. But, there were still both of you in every letter I ever typed and deleted.

Keep it? -- No.
Delete it? -- No.
Archive it? – Archived.
Still Life is Dead. Long Live Still Life.

He made me bleed colors.
Together, grew senile.
Cannot change what’s defined.
So, I died and reborn.

Objects out the window.
Then, throws me to the wall.
He cuts me like a doll.
Here, I fall on the line.

Place me on this table.
Just idle, I will lie.
Staying still on my side.
So, he primes our showpiece.

Never been so alive.
He might display me now.
Pop-up art, Stockholm-bound.
Catch the crowd with syndromes.

Loves me now, loves me not.
Might have fought your own mind.
Just take it that we tried.
Vitalize what art means.
Kaan Yuceland

Kaan Yuceland is a senior at Babson College and, is currently creeped out because of the third person point of view. Kaan plans to graduate with two concentrations: Economics, and Literary and Visual Arts. Kaan plays drums, listens to records and writes. Kaan likes nature, art, literature and his dog. Kaan does not like greed, corruption, selfishness or opportunism disguised as pragmatism.
De-Valued De-Composer

I wouldn’t like to be a decomposer;
to be chained,
into a labyrinth
of obstinacy. To be
absorbed by the cyclical time,
and to dissolve into the cold, damp soil.

The decomposer must be living in excruciating anticipation,
for the coward
to be struck down by the plague.

The decomposer must have some unseemly fetishized compulsion;
for,
it never finds it dull, to gratify the degenerate who stands upon unused - second
hand - e-bay listed cradles.

The decomposer cannot match the vaporous nature of men,
somehow,
it always claims the most refined ones; dries up the juice and the aroma of rarely
seen,
delicacies.

I wouldn’t like to be a decomposer;
there would be no one scowl desperately to,
there would be no superior being who unapologetically dashed ploys on you.

I wouldn’t like to be a decomposer,
there would be no body left,
to preserve.
No sacred limbs,
to conserve.
There would be nothing.

No subscription to Daily News,
No possession of a polished CV,
No weekly web updates- if you know what I mean-,
No crooked politicians,
No beloved,
No black gold.
The sheathed would be stripped,
And my lungs would be upheaved.
I would be the silenced abstinent,
doomed to feed of from the ciphered corpse.

As I was saying,
I am glad,
that, I am not a decomposer.
Just imagine, if, we were all self-absorbed sadists- who justified our sins as the natural order and cycle of things.
Waving My Arms in the Air with Syd

And I looked up, gazed
into the fragmented sea of frogs;
and the raining hogs suffocated me.

It is a Monday
and it is strangely warm.

I had a sip from the mellow piss inside the beer bottle,
and got lost in the sight of a devious harbor.
A harbor,
that had disowned its essence; a harbor that is lost in grand illusions of Atlantis.

Beatles were singing his name;
And the screeching stealth of the metal infused into the needle.
I took an observant look,
before saluting the sea above me,
and laid down with the winter flies.

I wrote down a masterpiece,
But the ink of dog piss,
faded in two ticks.

Those muses and flowers got strayed in ignited ignorance.
The liberating self-pity,
got condensed;
and found its way into the bleak intestines.

And, once again, raining hogs suffocated me.

Smoke of the tobacco dispersed;
And a familiarly gaunt man in purple appeared.
He had a wicked smirk,
and had forgotten to wear his underwear, again.
The shabby suitcase that he had been using to commit consensual intercourse with the blemish floor,
was now empty.

It is a Monday,
and it is strangely warm.
I could use some of his, menthol flavored cold treatment,
And, I- very well- could, desperately internalize the floating particles.

Finally, beetles stopped singing,
perhaps some stones.
Sea of frogs, piss of dogs, raining hogs.
They all let it bleed.
Kenny Ma

Kenny Ma is a senior at Babson College, whose plan is to work in the entertainment industry in New York after he graduates. He finds poetry as a coping mechanism to express his inner emotions, which allows him to create poetry that connects with the readers. He would like to impact those who read his work and find meaning, so he would like to thank everyone who supported him through this journey.
Silence

I was never the one to get angry.
I dismiss. Disassociate. Even run away
From my problems. But never mad.

It’s such a waste of time to be angry.
Time that I do not have to spare.
Though there was this one time.

The ticking of a clock. Tick-tock.
It aggravated me. I punched. Numbness
Swelled. The clock ticked no more.

The initial crash, then complete silence.
An unsettling silence. That bottled anger
I hold until it overflows and it emerges.
Phases

Butterflies dipped in
Intricate patterns of spring.
The allure scorches.

* * *

Crickets chirp in the
Summer fervor sears my flesh.
We fall deeper in.

* * *

Decay and death creeps
Through the barbs that rot away.
Frost crawls in my blood.

* * *

Snowflakes so pure with
Life that carries through the wind
Eventually.
Authors’ Inspirations

Áine R. Folan

Young Girl in Profile

This poem is ekphrastic, written from the point of view of the unnamed subject of Consuelo Kanaga’s 1948 portrait. Kanaga was a woman ahead of her time, as she rejected racism and sought to showcase the beauty and resilience of African American communities. Kanaga’s intentions shaped my own, as I aimed to continue her legacy of empathy. In the wake of World War II, President Harry S. Truman issued executive order 9981, which abolished discrimination in the armed forces. At the time, African Americans were majorly discriminated against in the armed forces. Even after victory, blacks were segregated in military parades and celebrations. This poem is written from the perspective of a teenage girl who had lost her father on D-day. She witnesses the impact of the war first hand, yet feels distant and uninvolved from the men who led her nation and her father into war. She feels conflicting emotions of pride, betrayal, and confusion.

The Gray Area

This poem is an imitation of “Coda” by Jason Shinder. Throughout his life, Shinder was chronically lonely. He felt destined to a lifetime of failed relationships and oftentimes contemplated and analyzed his past relationships. Reading his work, it is evident that Shinder often asked why love failed, how he ended up alone and when things went wrong. I was inspired by Shinder’s willingness to admit how he still thinks about long-gone relationships. Reading Coda, I was inspired to imitate his raw emotion with my own spin. I chose to write about a failed relationship of my own, which is largely mysterious to me to this day. I intentionally chose not to hold back and to display the relationship holistically, not sugar-coating things. This authenticity is what I admired about Shinder and tried to translate into my own poetry.
Stephanie Rodriguez

A Stone to the Heart

This ekphrastic poem is inspired by the statue Lady of Auxerre. Each stanza is five lines in order to create order in a statue that is chaotic. I used different kinds of punctuation to draw the reader in and to create pauses in the poem. I tried to explore what could have damaged her face through contrasting ideas. One being physical damage done by other people as punishment and the other one emotional damage that lead to physical destruction. I tried to incorporate my knowledge of the bible by using actions like stoning people to death to try to uncover what could have damaged this face. I also draw attention to how internal damage, such as a broken heart, can lead to destruction in the outside.

Love with Limit

This poem takes after Mary Howe’s poem “The Grave”. This poem situates the speaker in three different times in their life at different points of the grieving arc. The different stages use different kinds of imagery and personification to embody what the speaker is feeling at different points in time about the same incident. This is a poem about personal growth through grief and learning to be okay with losing someone and moving on. This poem has three very clear parts that have a different tone to portray how the speaker is finally ready to let go by the end.
This poem was created as an imitation of Richard Wilbur’s piece “The Lilacs,” written by Richard Wilbur from *The Art of Losing*. I was inspired by this poem as it is rich with diction and patterns. There is a saying in baseball that there is often “a game within the game,” meaning within the actual game of one team versus the other, there are smaller ‘games’ being played. For example, a manager may face the decision of when to switch a right-handed pitcher from the bullpen into the game to face a right-handed batter (pitching advantage). There are so many of these micro-decisions during a game that may seem unimportant at the time, could actually play a huge factor in the game’s outcome. Similarly, Wilbur does a fanciful job of making “poems within a poem.” If you extract the stressed syllables in his lines, the three words paint an extraordinary image that is so powerful, it could be a poem of its own. If we steal the emphasized words from each line, together they create such a remarkably stark picture. The fictional storyline came to me to effectively embody these tactics, all while also exploring a tale of passion, love, loss, honor, and memory. I believe this really helped the reader not only see the personalization in the poem but also get a chuckle out of it. Who says elegies have to be sad!

**Hat Trick**

This poem was inspired by my grandmother, Florence aka “Nana” who was recently diagnosed with Dementia in the last year. The news has been incredibly difficult for me as I started to recognize I was losing one of my best friends. To cope with uncertainty and loss, laughter has always been the best medicine in my life, especially my Nana’s fleeting memory. The first signs were accompanied by forgetfulness, which caused her to ask the same questions, make the same statements, etc., in just a few minute spans. To signal her recurring questions and make light of the devastating reality, my family and I would enthusiastically yell “hat trick!” upon her mentioning it for the third time. Despite always trying to have a positive outlook, this elegy was the first attempt I made at digesting the truth while coping with the new reality. By speaking about a heavy topic and also naming it after a running family joke, it allowed me to stay level headed and explore a new space of loss I never previously had the chance to.
Tianchen Li

Endless Love

This ekphrastic poem is inspired by the sarcophagus in the Museum of Fine Arts. It was the first time that I saw a couple buried in one sarcophagus, and the five sides of the sculptures seemed telling the stories of their love. To let the poem closely related to this sarcophagus, I only used a long stanza of this poem to show the rectangular form of this artwork. I tried to make the process of reading this poem as same as viewing the real sarcophagus in the museum. The great love and gesture of the couple on the top side are the most attractive points. Then the side stories give us more details about what happened after they passed away and the meaning of their love. I wanted people to feel that even they passed away, their love was carefully reserved in this artwork and never ended.

Time

The poem was an imitation of Ruth Stone's poem "Loss." The speaker of this poem focuses on the personal feelings and reactions towards the loss. The speaker was unprepared for the loss because it came too sudden and overwhelming. The sense of powerlessness was throughout the whole poem, and I believe the loss of time is an excellent way to show this idea. Time is continuously losing since birth, and people usually hard to realize that. The small loss will accumulate to a big one until people finally notice it, but it was too late. Time flies so fast, and we cannot stop it or even trace back to the old memories. The only thing we can do is move on.
Lizzy Baer

Plain Sight

In “Death of Respect,” I detail the clever and tricky nature of grief. Whenever I experience a loss, grief outwits, outruns, and outmaneuvers me at every corner. Despite constantly adhering to this pattern, I’m always surprised by griefs’ ability to catch me off guard. It accounts for all my vulnerabilities, missteps, and blind-spots. In this poem, I recognize and grapple with that fact. Hence, the poem is titled “Plain Sight.” Once death strikes, I am in plain view of the “hunter”, which symbolically represents grief. Then I go on to ask “how” I can run and, or hide from grief wrath. At first, I am begging for help, but by the end of the work, I acknowledge that if I wish to survive it is I who must change. As a whole, this work is about grief’s ability to motivate one to change. In regards to the poems’ structure, it is a sonnet. The fourteen lines are broken up into two-line stanzas, with only two one-line stanzas placed in the middle and end of the poem. Both one-liners are of paramount importance, hence I choose for them to stand alone. Furthermore, I used end-rhyme throughout the piece to create a meaningful connection between each line. Symbolically, this tool reinforces the idea that transforming grief into motivation is an interrelated, complex process. Not to mention that end-rhyme is extremely phonetically pleasing and a great way to hold a reader’s attention.

Falling Fast

In “Falling Fast,” I describe the grief that accompanies the death of a life phase. Unlike an external loss, such as losing a loved one, an internal “death” lives, and chirps within the confines of our heads. This poem is written post “crash” and details the ambiguity surrounding what the next phase of one’s life will look like. After a part of us has “died,” it can be hard to imagine who we truly are and where our life is headed. When personally in this phase, your only wish is to escape it, no matter where that “escape” might be. Hence, this form of grief is plagued by loneliness and is the point of view from which “Falling Fast” is written from. As with my other poem, this work suggests that grief can be transformed from a crippling sorrow into a motivating force. Structurally, the poem is six stanzas and eleven lines long. Line nine stands on its own, which was a stylistic choice made to emphasis that “Where do I go from here?” as the central theme of the entire poem. The work holds a mixture of rhyming techniques, which were used to transition the reader from one stanza to the next in a way that was both phonetically pleasing and symbolically significant. Lastly, “Falling Fast” is a “poetic sandwich,” where the narrative is held together by the “bread” of the first and last lines, which is why both hold the same syllable count.
**Freedman**

A concrete elegiac poem based on Henri Matisse’s sculpture *Reclining nude I* and *Reclining nude III*. The forms or shapes of the two sections in the poem are each corresponding to *Reclining nude I* and *Reclining nude III*. The first section of the poem has longer sentences with complicated sentence structure and difficult dictions, while the second section of the poem has shorter, simple sentences with simple dictions. The contrast between the two sections indicates a loss of the forms in sculpture, and further, in humanity. This is something that Henri Matisse illuminated with the two sculptures across twenty-two years, and what I tried to capture in this poem.

**Streetlights**

An elegiac poem on the imaginary death of my father, which will eventually come in the future. This idea of the mourning of a future loss is based on the Freudian concept of melancholy: a superficial mourning of a future loss. Therefore, in the first section of the poem, I intended to use multiple metaphors to intensify the feeling of a superficial mourning, and its illusionary nature, mixed with some of my personal memories with my father. The second section of the poem is an imaginary scene where I discuss the poem with my father, which in the end claims that the melancholy is somehow inevitable. As the last few lines say: I need to write this, I replied, there is a deadline.
Wes Woodson

A Loss Predicted

This poem was inspired by my grandfather who I also like to describe as my role model. As time has passed and as he has gotten older, I’ve come to understand that the days we share together are numbered. Although he is still alive, I took this opportunity to reflect on what could happen in the near future. I fully realize how morbid and pessimistic that sounds, but I took this opportunity to prepare for the grief that is to come. My grandfather, as I stated before, is my role model. He has bestowed wisdom on me that will stick with me for as long as I live. Therefore this poem is a celebration of our relationship and an opportunity to give back to what he has given to me. I’m not sure if it will be hard for me to share this poem, but I hope people know that it comes from my heart.

The Lady Behind The Glass

This ekphrastic poem was created as a response to a specific work of art, in preparation for our field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts. I had chosen to respond to the artifact entitled “The Lady Of Auxerre.” Through this exercise, we were instructed to research the history behind the artifact and then construct an ekphrastic poem about the work of art. In this case, I was able to discover that little is known about this artifact and its origins. While most of its back story is unknown, many researchers were able to use other clues in order to piece together her narrative. After learning this, it was almost like a light went off inside of my head: “personified artwork is frustrated with everyone speculating who she is, instead of knowing her actual roots. However, she entertains the idea she is more than they think but is frustrated because it isn't true.” While this idea sounded very entertaining, I also wanted to touch upon a deeper lesson. That lesson can best be described as women, in our society, still struggle to gain a form of agency or control over their own narrative; which can also be described as lack of individuality or independence. Overall, I asked, “why can't women control their own narrative?”
Sarah Mangiacotti

Who I Am Not

“Trans Liberation: Building a Movement (CeCe McDonald)” depicts CeCe McDonald, a transgender woman who, in 2012, pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter. According to Ben Davis for Artnet, “after being physically attacked on the street she defended herself with a pair of scissors... Her attacker ended up dead, and the state refused to accept her argument of self-defense” (Davis). Bowers’ depiction of McDonald demonstrates McDonald’s fight for equality by “defending herself from a hate crime” (Davis). I decided to write this poem from the perspective of the woman in the photograph. I wanted to show the stereotypes and boundaries that transgender people face and how they do not define a person.

A Trip to San Francisco

The poem is about when I found out my aunt was dead. At forty-eight, she had been fighting breast cancer for five years. One day, she experienced a blood clot in her neck and died within a few hours. I wanted to explore my experience that day, how it felt like any other. I was sitting in my grandma’s room in her reclinable lazy boy chair watching the TV show, Full House. I wanted to show how a normal day could suddenly be completely turned upside down, with one piece of news. The “you” I refer to in this poem is my dad, who was the one to tell me about her death. I wanted to go back and forth between talking to him and the life within the television, as I felt transported between worlds within that moment. This experience was at the beginning of the arc of grief for me, as I struggled to even accept that her death was real. Writing this elegy has given me a new kind of perspective that I did not have before, for which I am very grateful, and want to explore even more.
Cate Diamond

Cottage on the Pond

This poem is written from the point of view of myself and is a personal elegy about my grandmother. This poem takes place at her happy place that she made our families happy place on a small pond in Plymouth Mass. This is an elegy about the warmth my grandma used to bring to my life and also an elegy about the cheerful memories of coming home to the cottage for the summer with her. The memories my family shared with her during our time at her cottage are memories that get brought up every summer. We sit around the porch reminiscing about how much she loved to have us with her.

The Bears

This poem is about my two old dogs Teddy and Honey. We called them the bears. This is an elegy written from my point of view and is about the loss of our two most lovable family members. This is an elegy about how they can be in your life for such a short time and leave such a large imprint on your family.
Letter to a Little Dead Fly

Sometimes, it’s easy to forget just how many living things are on this earth, big or small. As humans, we are lucky enough to have voices and technology which enable relatively easy communication. However, we tend to get caught up in our very human-centric world, so it takes a concerted effort to remember the tiny, voiceless critters that exist all around us. I took this poem as an opportunity to pay more attention to the seemingly mundane aspects of everyday life and remember those other beings, no matter how small. Instead of making this a dense, sad poem, I decided to reflect in a lighthearted space about the complicated dynamics between human activity and nature. I’m glad I had the opportunity to capture even the smallest sliver of these complexities through my “Letter to a Little Dead Fly.”

My Grandmother; Pieces of Us

This poem is an elegy for my grandmother, which I wrote about one month after her death. Hers was the first death in my family I felt the agency to write about because I was taking this Poetic Elegy course. I am very grateful to have developed the skills and confidence to express the loss through poetry. After her death, I didn’t force myself to write anything because the product would feel inorganic. But, waiting has a funny way of paying off, and this poem came to mind during class one day. I quickly jotted it down and typed it up after class. After that, I did minimal editing until about three weeks later, when I separated stanzas to give it form, took out little words, and added some punctuation. Other than that, it is the essence of what I felt towards my grandmother. This poem is just one unfinished piece of an entire relationship between my grandmother and me, hence its title. I hope that, over time, more parts of my grandmother will emerge, and I can continue my remembrance of her through poetry.
My poem, “The Departure,” is my imitation of Rita Dove’s elegy, “The Wake.” My poem focuses on the day I lost my grandmother. I tried to be intentional in the diction I used to relate not only to my experience but to hers as well, just as Dove had in her poem. Whoever it may be who Dove lost, she places as the focus of her first stanza. She constructs the stanza as if she is talking to that person, using language such as “your.” This tone shifts in the second and third stanzas to ultimately revolving around Dove herself. I followed this same structure, shifting the focus of my poem from my grandmother to myself processing her lost over the arc of the poem. I struggled with my decision not to go into my grandmother’s hospital room before she passed away- something I continue to struggle with. As much as I wanted to see her, kiss her, hold her hand one more time, it was not the way she would have wanted her life on Earth to end with me. Just as Dove had in her poem, I grapple with dealing with the business of loss both externally, as well as internally. The inconclusive nature of loss persists from the moment an individual experiences loss, plagued by their own thoughts.

My poem, “Behind the Bride,” is my ekphrastic poem from our class visit to the Museum of Fine Arts this semester. I was inspired to write my poem in response to Hyman Bloom’s painting, “The Bride.” Bloom depicts an image of a veiled bride and shrouded corpses. As the viewer looks at the Bride’s veil and they will find masks and faces in the cloth. The Bride offers Bloom’s insight and exploration of life and death. The bride acts as a symbol for bearing life and new beginnings, though she is haunted by images of those who have passed and her inevitable death. I wrote my poem as an attempt to understand the complex feelings of a bride on a wedding day, haunted by the loss of her father. Traditionally, the bride’s father plays a key role in the wedding, walking her down the aisle and handing her over to her husband-to-be. In order to emphasize the traditional elements of a wedding day further, I constructed the meter of the poem to mimic Pachelbel’s Canon in D, a song played for the procession of the bride and her father down the aisle. A wedding in many ways is a symbol of birth or new life; a bride being born into a new life, as well as the expectation for children to come after. I hoped to illustrate the bitter-sweet feelings the bride had as she went through the “happiest day of her life,” without someone who meant so much to her.
Brooke Daly

Reckless

I worked on this poem over the course of our class and modified the structure and point of view several times. This poem was inspired by the death of my cousin Caroline. She succumbed to her addiction at age 24. I was in middle school when she passed away. Caroline was like an older sister to me; furthermore, she was one of the only people in my family who never treated me like a child. After she passed away the adults in our family tried to censor Caroline’s struggles. The topic or any questions related to Caroline’s death were considered taboo. This poem was a way for me to process what it felt like after Caroline left, and how she was perceived after the fact. I used allusions, and colloquial diction to connect back to how my middle school brain processed her loss. For me, it furthered my own loss of innocence. I insinuated this within the poem by referencing things most 13-year-olds should not know about like “wine” and “Prozac”. I was sure to be purposeful with the structure of the poem. Certain lines and phrases had to stand alone and repeat to show their impact. I also utilized anaphora to repeat lines that resonated with the feelings I remembered from the initial grief of her death. These lines brought in elements of elegy like guilt, remembrance, and lament. This elegy allowed me to come to terms with Caroline’s passing and the overall impact impression she had on the way I matured.

Current

I originally wrote this poem as part of the first paper assignment for this class. I imitated a poem by Michael Dickinson called “Grief” from Kevin Young’s anthology The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief and Healing. I originally did not like the way this poem came out, so I took the time to change the order of certain stanzas so that it would connect to the message at the end. After learning more ekphrastic techniques I modified certain parts of the poem that did not fit the ocean theme and changed the overall structure to have long lines. Michael Dickinson’s poem used a “purple gorilla” as a symbol of grief throughout the whole poem to show how grief can be inexplicable and confusing. This symbol really helped me understand how one’s journey from grief to eventual acceptance can be different. I used the ocean as a reoccurring theme throughout the poem to represent the way grief can wash over someone who is dealing with loss. The loss of my grandfather inspired me to connect the ocean to his loss since as a child we would spend a lot of time at the beach together. I utilized metaphors and descriptive word choice to further the visual elements of the poem. Once I figured out the ocean symbolism throughout the poem, it was easier to choose metaphors, similes, and allusions. This poem from beginning to end illustrates the journey I had after my grandfather’s death. The two components of remembering the good times and the grief from missed opportunities spent with loved ones relate back to my theme of the ocean. At times the current can allow one to remember all the good times, and sometimes guilt washes over you like a wave. As an individual, you are helpless to either feeling.
Steve Heintzelman

Formal Dinner Party

This poem is an imitation of Terrance Hayes' *Blues Procession*. The major component in the poem is its precise form, composed of six couplets. Each couplet can stand alone, however, the entire story comes together with the combination of each set of lines. The original poem, *Blues Procession*, talks about the formality of a funeral procession. Specifically, how the formality of cleaning the car and putting on your best clothes for the funeral were detours from facing the grief of loss. It is simply a distraction from facing life with the new void from the death of a loved one. In my imitation, I focused on the dinner party that followed the funeral of my grandfather. The formality of having all family members over to show our respects is the final formality before returning to normalcy in daily routines. The dinner party serves as the final distraction before everyone parts their own way and returns back to face life with the newly created void. Once the party is over, the initial shock of loss is over and one must begin their journey to find peace with grief, but for now, *Formal Dinner Party*.

Floating

This poem is based on a photograph by Hellen Van Meene, *Untitled #465*, displayed in the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston) in November of 2019. This ekphrastic elegy explores the concept of floating between a concrete place before a tragedy happens and the full circle of coming to peace with the grief of such a tragedy. The poem is told from the perspective of the girl in the photo, who is captured floating above a couch in a bleak setting. It explores her current state of floating, feeling lost, and not being in a permanent place in her life following the loss of her mother. This is represented in this poetic form where every sentence is left hanging at the end of the line. It is not until reading the start of the following line that the sentence is completed. This shows the lack of closure the girl feels right now. She is in a mobile state of grief and has not reached any such closure of her loss. She is alone in the world and feels she can only confide in herself for comfort.
Lexi Lenaghan

Stage Fright

I have always loved Degas’ artwork and in specific The Little Dancer Age Fourteen Years Old. I saw a version of it in London and realized that pictures of the sculpture really do not do justice to the actual piece. Since I have just recently ended my career in athletics, I really related to this piece of work because of the intensity of this little girl and her sport. I wanted to talk about the anxiety an athlete gets right before the first whistle blows of a game. It’s that lack of confidence that tries to creep into your thoughts before the game starts and the doubts that you are trained to push away.

The Beach House

This elegy was personal to me because of the influence this place has had on my life. I grew up five miles away from my grandparent’s beach house on Humarock Beach in Scituate, Massachusetts. My fourteen cousins and I grew up playing on the beach together with my grandmother disciplining us as her own and spoiling us rotten, it was the perfect environment for a large family like ours. My grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease when I was 18 and from that point on, it was difficult for my grandparents to take care of the beach house. When they sold it last year it was almost as if a piece of my childhood was ripped away from me. I was scared I was not going to see my cousins anymore and nervous for the future summers. I wrote this elegy mainly about the last night we were at the beach house and how much fun we had, knowing that this was the end and we had to move on.
Dany Khoury

Elegy for My Dad

In writing “Elegy for My Dad,” I attempted to imitate Mark Strand’s structure of his poem “Elegy for My Father.” Although both elegies happen to share the same subject, two totally different experiences come out of each one. While my poem is comprised of six distinct sections, I chose to not arrange it in chronological order since I wanted to stay true to what makes sense to me. The first section, “A Void,” captures the vivid scene of visiting my dad for the last time before his coffin was officially closed. Moving on, the second section, “Wind of Uncertainty,” expresses the many thoughts running through my head, as his covered body makes its way outside of the house and into a big black car. In the third section, “Lowering of the Casket,” I have taken the reader to the last part of my dad’s funeral procession, located at the cemetery. A more conversational and casual approach is taken in the fourth section, “Church Without Him,” as I draw upon an instance at my Church, as this would be the first time we have gone there since his passing. The fifth section, “Unending Grief,” captures my own ongoing emotional state. Lastly, I wrap up the poem with a question that everyone asks after someone has died, “How are you feeling.” For me, this occurs the next week after I arrive back to Babson, hence the name of this section, “The Next Week.”

Here She Comes

In writing “Here She Comes,” I used anaphora to emphasize the stillness of the bride’s body, in Hyman Bloom’s painting The Bride, oil on canvas. Moreover, each stanza is either directly related to what can be seen in Bloom’s work, or, on the other hand, captures a sentiment that is quite discreet. To juxtapose the bride’s physical stillness, I made use of different prepositions or prepositional phrases as a means of creating a sense of motion and the dynamic nature of life.
In writing “November 22, on Instagram”, I was barely certain of anything except for the first part of the title - November 22. My maternal grandfather and paternal grandmother passed away on this same day in 2018, which was something I always think of as meaningfully peculiar. To approach elegy writing in a way that I had never done before, I decided to explore one of the debates among poets and readers of poetry: Is a poem more about the dead or the living/the poet? I recalled moments surrounding their passing, and realized that social media was bothering me with its two opposing effects; it helped me in the process of grieving but also questioned my authenticity in sharing my thoughts and feelings. In the poem, I voiced my internal monologue in a structure resembling a letter, which also complements the word “letter” in a line towards the end of the poem. Using the “not” anaphora, I captured a sense of constant denial to reflect the way I felt not long after I posted a picture dedicated to both of them on Instagram; I felt as if I actually did not have the right to write such a flamboyant caption, given so little I ever did anything for them and rarely any meaningful moments we shared. In the last three lines of the poem, I conveyed both what I felt and what I did with the post at that moment, through the mentioning of a very useful Instagram function: archive.

Still Life is Dead. Long Live Still Life.

In writing “Still Life is Dead. Long Live Still Life.”, I was inspired by the uniqueness of a painting called A Leg by Latvian-American artist Hyman Bloom, displayed as part of his 2019 exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In this work, the term “still life” is being explored in a new light; still life paintings usually have elements of inanimate objects being placed on a table against a wall; in this piece, the leg replaces the traditional inanimates. I was intrigued by this approach Bloom took and wanted to explore his idea further. In this poem, therefore, I combined Bloom’s new definition of still life with a short imaginative fiction that came to my mind when I was looking at his work. Written in a Thai-poem form known as “6-syllable” poem, the fictional storyline behind the poem is about a woman falling in love with a man who is an artist with aspiration, and sacrificing her life to help him redefine art. With allusion to Stockholm syndrome, sadism is hinted - with the artist being the captor and the woman being the hostage. In a relatively lighter mood and tone of mourning and more towards fiction, this poem takes death to the afterworld; I want this poem to encourage people to take a break from thinking of death as a sorrowful event, and instead, to see it in a new light.
Kaan Yuceland

De-Valued De-Composer

This poem is written for a lost friend. I was about 14 and she was around 17. I happen to struggle with using language - especially figurative - in moments of true despair. So, I imagined her journeys’ next step on the planet; and that was her relationship with the decomposers. Rather than an internal reflection, I chose to externalize and imagine/speculate the existence after death. Decomposers eventually decay the body and help the natural cycle to go on. I thought about the upsides- could not find any- and downsides of being one of them. In my elegy, there are some conventions that I have followed. One of them being the gratification of the deceased. I do not like to read my private poems which reveal my own internal world, so I rather focused on the beauty of my friend. Moreover, I tend to get fed up with the world sometimes, so I tried to show the insignificance of mundane everyday life. The daily routine has the ability to absorb one into minute details. It also has a way to chop down many different perspectives of a person down to one- which, more than often happens to be the angle of human capital theories and its derivatives. So, as a contradiction, I tried to approach the arc of grief from many different points of view. Finally, I concluded that we, the living common folks, are not really that different from the gruesome composers. We are silenced, marginalized, and somewhat cursed. At the end of the day, functionality is what matters. We love to take a bite from the body and cherish the opportunity to deny, deny, deny. Just like Mr. Richard thought us back in the day.

Waving My Arms in the Air with Syd

This poem represents a personal rock bottom. After a certain loss, I felt completely isolated from the world, and could not speak to anyone. During those days, I rarely interacted with other people. Eventually, my grief transformed into many days of hallucinatory-like states. I lost the sense of time; and the natural order-laws-of my surroundings seemed off. In this poem, nothing is in the right place. During this period, I probably listened to more than 100 records; all back to back. Most of the hyper-metaphors that I have used have many different references. Some of them are to my favorite writers/poets, films, songs, artists. However, I also tried to utilize them by using them as symbols and deeper meanings. Meaning that they are just not references/tributes. This poem is dedicated to my teammate, who was a sad, wicked, funny, wild man. Honestly, I don’t know how to describe him. Waving my arms in the air is a great song by the late Syd Barrett. In that sense, it could be said that the poem has some ekphrastic elements to it. This is the song that stuck the most with me after those days, so I decided to name my poem after it. Also, we would always joke about who would be the Syd of our own little group; which somewhat proves that one should be careful while making reckless jokes. Finally, I, also have been inspired by some early surrealist poets.
**Kenny Ma**

**Silence**

“Silence” is a piece that resonates with me on a personal level because I struggle to evoke the emotions of rage and anger. The poem is an internal monologue of what could happen to me if I were to get happy and the uncomfortable feelings that come with the feeling of silence, which is normally a comfortable space for me. I wanted to keep the poem short because anger is a short burst of emotion that leaves destruction in its wake. I wanted to show the development of the anger that forms within me, so I used each stanza to represent that progression. I use a blank verse to show the unorganized rhyming scheme, but the rigid meter. I used iambic pentameter to show the melodic nature of my anger, as well as the ticking noise that comes with a clock that aggravates many people.

**Phases**

“Phases” is a series of four haikus that represent the seasons, which represent the cyclical nature of life and death. It serves as a way to express the intricacies of the natural world and the ever-changing presence of seasons. The final line of each of the stanzas set up the next haiku by providing a deep and vivid description of the next season. This enforces the idea that the seasons are not set in stone, but rather a gradual change into one another. Starting with spring, it shows the complexities of life as butterflies are being painted with the details that accompany one. The final line of the stanza represents the negative aspect of the next season: summer. Then we go through all the seasons till we hit winter, which is written with a more positive tone. The piece envisions the wonderful qualities of winter as a season because many people associate it with death, but I wanted to show the beauty within death.
Acknowledgments

Embedded in each page of this anthology are a story of a lifetime, an intricate feeling distilled into words, and a heart upon a poet’s sleeve. This collection of poems, written by the Fall 2019 Poetic Elegy students at Babson College, was made possible by our professor and mentor Mary Pinard. Professor Pinard has guided us along the journey of elegists-in-the-making, encouraged us to stay true to our thoughts and feelings, and most importantly, established a place for the art of writing in our lives. We thank Professor Pinard for the support, which allows us to be the best writers we can be.

We also thank our families and friends (including our 4-legged companions), as well as events and moments - big or small - that we mature through, for making us who we are. Writing enables us to reflect on times and people that change our lives one way or another, turning the unspeakable and unbearable into the expressible and endurable. We hope that readers of our poetry find empathy, introspection, and healing in the words carefully chosen as part of this anthology.
**Pinard’s Praise**

To my wonderful Babson elegists:

As you well know, elegies are, at their core, poetic songs that express grief for a loss. They are, also, songs of hope, since they move toward a reckoning with absence, toward the making and re-making of rituals, and ideally, toward renewed ways that hold loss but move forward on new paths too.

With this in mind, I celebrate this anthology, and you, its makers, both for the skill and courage with which it reveals you grappling, eloquently, with loss of all kinds, and also, for all the ways you find healing and consolation through the making of meaningful poems.

With much affection and admiration,

Professor Pinard (aka Mary)

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2019