

2016 EMERGING WRITERS: PORTFOLIO EXCERPTS

from the story collection “Meye (Bangla) - (n.) girl.” by Ifteda Ahmed-Syed ’17:

He tilts his head a bit. “How about cleaning? You know... laundry, household things. Oh! And, sewing? Can you do that?” If she seemed guilty before, she now appears undoubtedly annoyed. Pursing her lips, she stirs a spoonful of sugar into his cup and shakes her head, her gaze fixed on the spoon’s motion.

from the short story “Benificence” by Molly Berinato ’17:

As the fairytale goes:
Bad things might come in threes,
But honey,
The worst things come
When three becomes two,
And two becomes one.

from the short story “City of Devils” by Paris Cipollone ’18:

Where she lived, the streets glowed red like the blood crusted on the edge of sidewalks. Everyone’s skin was a shade of red. Everyone knew there was a history behind the skin color alteration from decades ago, but most of what they knew came from mere rumor. The whole truth had never been exposed.

from the poem “Better Wishes” by August Donovan ’18:

Somewhere in the universe, there is an empty space, and you are keeping me from it.
There is a moment that comes to us all where empty space sounds fuller than it is,
sounds messier and more lovely, but you know to keep me away.
All eyes rest to the warm horizon of your blushed cheeks, and what’s more,
the world wakes to your voice.

from the short story “The Uninvited Guests” by Kaitlin Donovan ’19:

It has to be a prank. I search the whole backyard, but no one is there, either, so I head back inside the house to get a drink. Walking into the kitchen, I see three masked strangers: they are putting the girl, the one who had previously spilled the drink on me, into a body bag.

from the screen play “The Color Slate” by Jet Elbualy ‘18

Slate: the color of your eyes on the day we met.

Amaranth: the color of the nail polish that spilled on the day it all started to go downhill.

Zaffre: the color of the writing on our signs on the day you took me to my first protest.

from the personal essay “Persistence is the Secret to Life” by Johnny Eyvazzadeh ’19:

At the time of discharge, a hospital administrator presented the young man with the bill [for delivery of his baby and surgery on his wife], presenting him of course with a problem. The man approached his doctor, and reminded him that he could not pay. Dr. Johnnie asked him how much money he had in his pocket. The man reached into his pocket and revealed his iota of wealth. Dr. Johnnie simply stated, “Half for me, half for you.”

from the short story “Eyes Opening to a New Beginning” by Avery Flynn ’19:

The odd sensation I had felt earlier suddenly returned, and for a fleeting moment I considered just spending the night at home, but the promise of dancing the night away proved too much to pass up. As we pulled up to the curb of Pulse, music blared from the speakers making the walls rattle. My best friend and I were ready to have the best night ever. We walked towards the door, and with Myles' charm, we were in.

from the personal essay “A Walk from the Heart” by Meghan Hasenbalg ’19:

When he was a puppy, Koda would curl his body in a way that made him look like a donut and would fit inside my lap when I sat crisscross. My heart would ooze with warmth. [...] It was almost as if he knew when I needed him. He would lie so close to me I could feel his heartbeat and we would fall asleep together as my worries were slowly overcome by that warm sensation in my heart.

from the short story “The Education” by Jenna Ryu ’17:

The haunting presence of academic comparisons followed Fisher relentlessly into the cafeteria as well. Carrying his Math Level 3 Textbook in one hand and his Sloppy Joe in the other, Fisher would toss out his mother's homemade lunch after catching a mere glimpse of the valedictorian's superior gourmet gnocchi and advanced Calculus Level 7 books.

from the series of vignettes “The Gothic” by Liam Scott ‘19

You're still angry about the lack of pink jello. Anger isn't very pretty on you. Even though you're allergic to jello, you continue stirring because you're hungry. Sadness isn't pretty on you either, but you've grown accustomed to such an emotion.

from the poem “A Little Girl’s Room” by Sydney Steward ’17:

My stuffed animals are sending me stiff, cold stares
Drawings on the wall no longer have a childish flare
My music box plays a monotonous tune
And here I am- Standing in the middle of this monsoon
A big girl sleeping in a little girl's room

from the free verse poem “False Goddess” by Olivia Thompson ‘18:

I wanted to be a goddess, so I followed her example. I made her my goal. I crushed the powders into my skin until I was perfect. I smudged the paint across my lips until I satisfied her standards of beauty. I blushed scarlet in her glory and her splendor and her praise.

And then she whispered lies into my ears, taunting my compassion with her hate and her deception.

And I believed her, I followed her example and I walked blindly into the lion’s den.

from the poem “Pearls, Chains and the Void” by Ngoc (Bea) Tran ‘18

Under the glam is brittle orange rust,
Each bead is a link,
They clink and clank as she walks.
One by one, they work together to drag her down
lower and lower into the void,
trapping her, enslaving her mind, telling her what to do and feel,
Because women have to be beautiful.

from the passage “Untitled” by Anna Turner ’18:

They are embracing in what appears to be an impromptu moment of affection but is what I discover to be, after having stepped into the frame, for a photograph. The photographer stands resolutely between a set of ornate arches, his camera bag slung across his body, revealing a new sweat stain on the shirt beneath it with each shift. He eagerly leads the couple throughout the tunnel, capturing moments of contrived tenderness.

from the poem “Mirror” by [Name Withheld]

I look in the mirror but I don’t really look at myself.
I never notice myself, but instead I look at the oily skin coupled with acne.
I look at the excessive redness, the eyebrows I want to be allowed to pluck,
and I push down the desire to sometimes use make up because boys don’t do that.

from the poem "Untitled" by [Name Withheld]

v.

i do not exist for the eyes of boys who i once touched
i do not owe my being and my soul to those
who saw me as a pretty object
a ballerina in a music box who exists only for the
eyes of whoever
deems her worthy enough to open
maybe i'm a forward person
but if i am to be a forward person
you better be aware that i'm doing it for my damn self.
"don't you ever get awkward around him?"