

The Mirror



Fifteenth Edition
Winter 2019

Foreword from the Editor-in-Chief

As the winter months come to a close at St. Francis, pause to consider what you have experienced. And as you consider, perhaps you will question why you are even "considering" in the first place. *Why do I think what I think? Where does the mind wander? Does it follow a logical path, or does the mind break all boundaries, drifting where it will?*

In this edition of *The Mirror*, we explore *The Workings of The Mind*. Sometimes this exploration will take us to fanciful and beautiful scenes that defy logic and reason. At other times, the mind takes us to terrifying places, where reality is questioned and the scope of wisdom is challenged by our creativity. What is real, and what is imagined? Where does the human conscience take us if it is given the freedom to diverge from normality?

After all, to quote Bromden in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, "It's the truth, even if it didn't happen."

~Anneke Zegers

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The Loading Sign

Gabriella Thomas

What I hate the most in life? Running out of time. Time is just so frustrating. Sometimes I swear it is driving me insane. Time is something that repeats over and over again and doesn't stop and the tick tick tick of the clock keeps going and I can feel it throbbing in my head and I just want to scream. Deep breaths. Deep breaths.

Time is like waiting for the internet to load. Unpredictable, aggravating, and so damn slow. The little loading icon just continuing to go in circles around and around over and over again. That loading sign is literally my brain in any timed situation.

Take, for example, this test. Regardless of whether I am prepared for this test or not, time still seems to go really slow and then suddenly it's over. My brain is like the loading sign for the internet: goes to 80% then stops for an hour for absolutely no reason.

What's also frustrating? Paper cuts. Yeah, those awful suckers that somehow manage to make life a living hell of pain. They pop up at the most inconvenient moment. Like now. The worst thing is getting a paper cut while taking my test and looking at the clocking realizing there's no time left and I'm still in pain because now I'm bleeding everywhere and can't even hold a pencil.

To add to stuff that is frustrating are things that fly in your eye. Doesn't matter what it is. Eyelash, piece of dust, rocks,

Russia, literally anything and the world stops because I'm so focused on the fact that I can't even see and I'm still taking a test and the stinging paper cut is still bleeding and the time on the clock seems to be going twice as fast and the loading sign in my brain has stopped because now it's like I won't succeed in life. Deep breaths. Deep breaths.

Furthermore, it starts to rain outside and I'm only in a short sleeve shirt because I wasn't thinking this morning and the forecast said it would be sunny and it's not and now I'm going to be cold. I'm going to be cold, and bleeding, and blind, and failing a test and yet time still seems to be ticking by so quickly at an alarming rate that my poor loading sign can't keep up.

The paper in front of me seems to be mocking my failures. The circles I am supposed to be filling in blurr through my tears. "You can't do it" it taunts me, "you won't succeed." To prove my test wrong I pick up my pencil with my hand that's not bleeding and look at question 18 of 40. I place the pencil on the scantron to fill in the answer and the lead breaks. My mind snaps with the pencil as I clench the half piece of trash in front of me. Blood stains the writing utensil, tears fall on the paper, and a shiver is sent down my spine just thinking about the rain awaiting me outside. Can this get any worse? Yes, yes it can. Because now I can't even answer the questions regardless of whether or not my damn loading sign of a brain actually worked. Which is doesn't. It is somehow inevitably getting so much slower to an impossibly idle pace. And yet, time still seems to be going by so rapidly.

Then suddenly, the teacher calls time. Pencils down. Well, my two halves of my pencil down. Test not even half finished. Blood stains everywhere. Eyes watering in pain. Rain crashing on the

ground outside blurring my mind. The loading sign is no longer rotating - it's frozen. Time is no longer going by quickly but is practically dead. Everything moves in slow motion. Time is up. It doesn't matter. The feeling of frustration is replaced with shock and numbness. It's over. And then anxiety swoops in and that feeling of irritation resurfaces. I could have done better if I hadn't gotten that paper cut, if that stupid thing hadn't flown in my eye, if the weather hadn't decided to be unpredictable, if the clock hadn't decided to move time quicker, if my lead hadn't snapped and if my pencil had actually did what it was made to do, if life hadn't decided to be frustrating and if the damn loading sign in my brain had decided to work. I would have been done. I would have succeeded. I would have just...

And the most frustrating thing is the fact that as I get up to turn in my paper, all the other students in my class are happy and think they did well with their clean, white sheets of paper not stained with blood. I stand up and as I pick up my test with my non-injured hand, the paper slices through my fingers once again. My eyes aren't welling up now because of the particle that flew in my eye socket but because I am genuinely about to lose it. My body shakes in frustration and anger. The only positive thing about the rain is that it will mask my tears but then again the whole class can now see my crippled pride as I turn in my half completed paper. Brain fuzzy and lost, I sit down and reflect on all the things that have gone wrong today. A lot. Life really isn't on my side. Maybe it's my parents. My mom is so smart at math and dad is so good at test taking. Aren't I supposed to inherit all their good genes? My parents gave me my smarts which it seems I don't even have.

Life is just so frustrating. I really hate life sometimes. Actually, a lot of the time. Especially times like now. Time, like history repeats itself over and over again. I can only hope that in this situation, time does not replicate. Time is the tick tick tick of the clock on the wall that reminds me of all my failures that have presented themselves to me today. It it just one bad tick, one bad thing after the other because my damn loading sign in my brain won't work. Deep breaths, deep breaths.

Hysteria

Anneke Zegers

Anxiety is reality
and not my partiality.
Screaming, crying,
aching, longing, breaking.
I live a hysteria,
a poisonous nightmare
clawing at my heart.
Manic, panic, painful,
partial, particle, discord.
Why has my hellish dreamland lingered on
when the night is long gone?
Living, breathing,
dying, fighting, spiting.
The knife hangs from the clouds
above my head.
Hateful, hurtful,
Hindering,
Haunting
Stopping.
This is my hysteria.

The Little Robot That Watches

Alyssa Appel

The little robot sits on a rolling hillside
Painted golden glory by the Sun's caresses.
Behind him stands a magical forest
Bustling with life and roots yet to be pruned.

It watches a cluster of houses with little people,
Who think themselves big. They call themselves
A town. Clank and Clatter! They have large bells
Brashy and garish. They think them wonderfully regal.

The robot questions how long it will take
For them to discover the forest, and how long
It will take before they fell the trees for a new salon.
No--it should be 'how short.' What a mistake!

It watches the people that run in the same circles
With something close to sadness in its electric eyes.
It wonders what nothing fills today's spiritless minds.
They are the unliving walking with fleshed skulls.

A not-so-insignificant child stands in the town's center,
And smiles, watching the rising sun. Was it hope
That it felt when, in chemical shock, it stared down the slope?
When it looked upon a girl, and they saw that sun together?



Imaginary Friend (Part 1)
Kristina Woodling

My Best Friend Simon

Megan Melavic

My best friend's name is Simon. I don't remember how we met, but as soon as we were introduced, we were inseparable. Our kindergarten teacher learned to always put us at the same table for us to pay attention. I even have a special seat in his mom's dark blue minivan whenever I go over to his house. I know everything about him, and he knows everything about me. We are going to be best friends forever.

Simon and I starting our first day of third grade today. We've been best friends for four years now! Simon is a little different than when we were in kindergarten; he's making more friends. Sometimes he ignores me. Even though it stings, he's still my best friend and we still do everything together! I try talking with Simon's new friends but they just walk away or talk to Simon instead. Simon knows how awkward I am so sometimes he invites me to play with his friends. I still don't think they like me. Simon made the basketball team, but I didn't. I'll try out next year, but in the meantime, I'm still going to cheer Simon on!

I can't stop myself from bouncing back and forth on the bleachers. Today is Simon's first basketball game. I clutch my handmade shirt nervously in one hand while the other one traces the badly drawn words "SIMON" and the slightly crooked number eight underneath. The deep buzzer echoes throughout the gym and the game starts. My throat is sore from cheering. Twenty minutes go by and Simon's team is two points behind. The ball gets passed to Simon. My new bright green basketball shoes squeak against the

hardwood floor as I stand up and cheer as loud as I can. Simon's arms slowly raise towards the hoop. The ball leaves his hands, my eyes following it. The swoosh of the hoop is the only sound that can be heard in the room. It was like all other sounds were muted, the parents beside me cheering but making no sound. The next thing I know the game immediately starts up again. Simon flashes down the court and shows me one of his smiles I haven't seen since the beginning of the year.

It's now December of fourth grade. Simon and I have been talking about going sledding in the mountains for the past couple of days. I got so excited I packed my entire bag the week before. I heave my bag over my shoulder and excitedly trot over to Simon's desk. We eagerly start chattering about all the plans we have for the trip not realizing class started until the boy to Simon's left elbows him in the ribs. Mrs. Franklin slowly walks up to Simon's desk, arms crossed, and eyebrows furrowed. I feel my face heat up and my heart drop to the bottom of my stomach. I look over at Simon and I can tell he is also embarrassed. He always hates being yelled at by adults. Mrs. Franklin, it's not Simon's fault! I was the one that started talking! She keeps her usual stern look directed toward Simon. Then she asks who he is talking to. Did she even hear me? I've been in her class for over five months now. How can she not know that I'm always talking to Simon? Does she even know I exist? I try telling her again louder this time but I immediately stop when Simon says he isn't talking to anyone. Confusion fills my head. Hot tears well up in my eyes as I run out of the classroom, leaving my snow bag behind. What hurts more is Simon doesn't even spare me a glance.

It's now sixth grade and Simon hasn't started a conversation

with me in months. Ever since that day in fourth grade, Simon and I haven't been the same. He only talks to me when we are alone. I know he'll be back to normal soon! I look down at my red converse that used to be the color of the firetrucks that passed our street but have become the muted pink of a cat's nose. Today is different. Today I woke up with a warm, searing feeling of hope in my heart. Today is Simon's big basketball tournament. My leg is sporadically bouncing up and down as my eyes flicker from the clock to the whiteboard. The annoying ring of the shrill bell now plays like my favorite song. I rush out of my seat, tripping over my feet on my way out the door. Racing towards the parking lot, I see the now ash grey minivan with Simon's mom in the front.

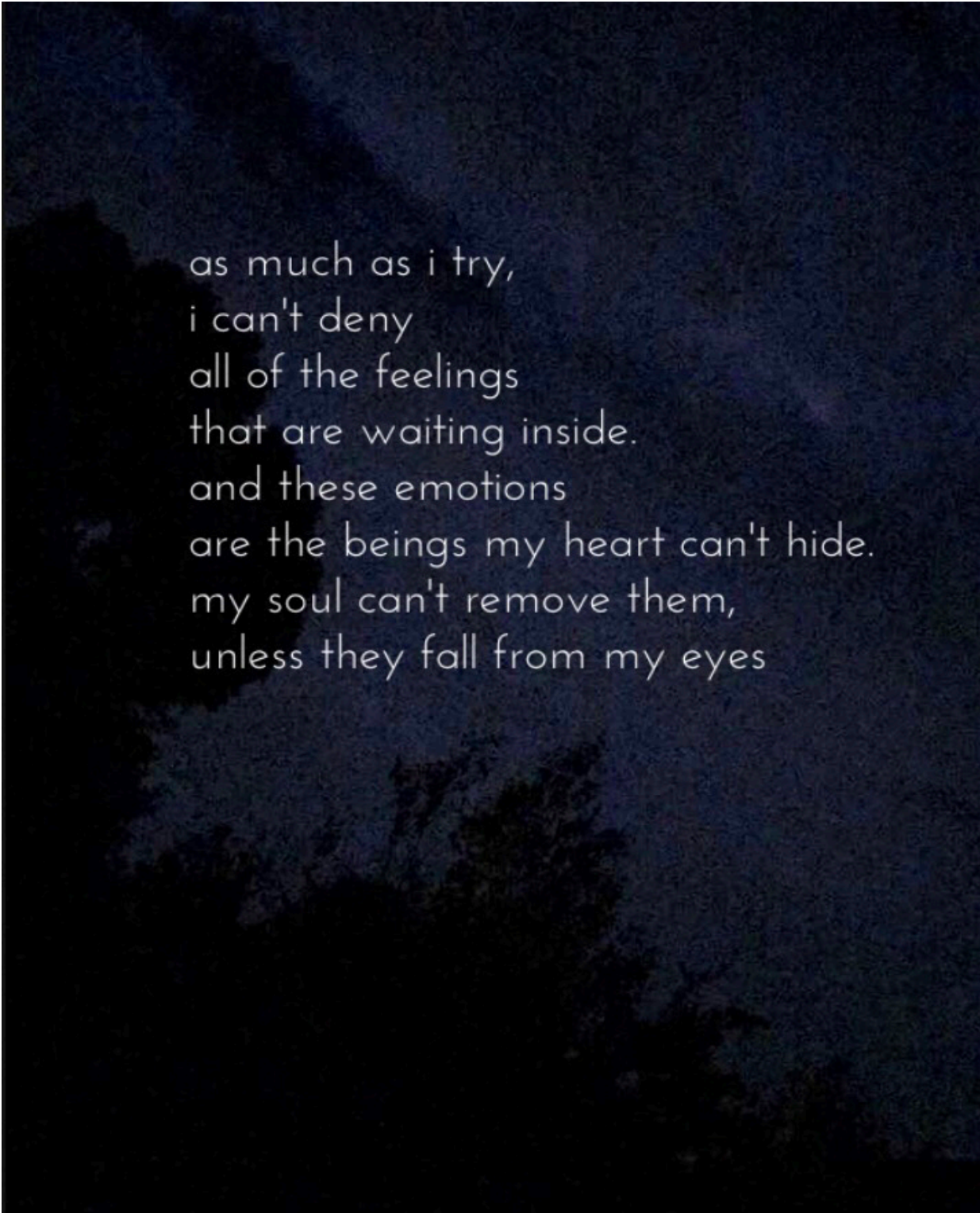
Simon and his friends are running in front of me, some slowing down to lift their athletics bag on their shoulders again, some balancing running and putting their basketball shoes on. The backseat doors open and everyone starts piling in as if it's what they were born for. My body starts moving on autopilot when I see my usual spot in the back left corner. My body gets pushed to the side as Jackson, the team captain, takes my spot. I look for another spot but they're all taken. I go to ask Simon's mom where I'm supposed to sit. The rumble of the engine starts up, the sliding doors close, and the minivan starts to drive away. Panic immediately starts flashing in my mind. My delayed reaction is to run after the van that was now stopped at the pale pink light at the parking lot exit. My feet are slamming against the hard concrete as I start to get closer to the van. Why isn't she stopping? I'm supposed to go with them! My outstretched arm is about two basketballs in length away from reaching the grey van. The pink light turns a barely visible green. The van gets further and further away. The green light seems to be mocking me now.

The next time I hang out with Simon is summer going into seventh grade. Simon's mom is making lemonade in the kitchen. Simon and I are watching a football game on the small television across from the kitchen table. I get up to bring glasses of lemonade to our seats. Lemonade has always been Simon's favorite drink. The golden yellow of the drink has faded into the color of the pastel yellow eggs Simon and I dye every Easter. I ask Simon if he wants a glass. My words seem to go straight through his ears. I ask again. He still doesn't respond. I start to poke his shoulder. No reaction. I feel something snap inside of me. I shove the now grey lemonade towards him, slightly spilling some on the placemat. I start to get angry. My chair scrapes against the linoleum floor as I angrily stand up. I grab him by the shoulders and try to make him face me. He doesn't budge. Now I'm screaming. Why isn't he answering me? Why has he been ignoring me? Did I do something that annoyed him? I start to scream these questions at him. What happened to us? I go to shove him again but I don't feel anything. Looking down I see my hand has slowly faded away, like someone took an eraser to a mark they pressed too hard on. Don't you remember me? All the years we spent together? I'm your best friend! Why don't you remember me? My name is-. My words stop mid sentence. I don't know my name. Realization drips down my spine like cold thick water. I never knew my name. My arms start to fade along with my consciousness. I almost miss Simon's mom asking him what ever happened to his old friend, almost in a mocking way. What are you talking about? I'm still here! I never left! I feel my body start to feel empty and fade like fog in the heat, trying to cling on to the only thing I've ever known. I vaguely hear his response before I completely let go: "Who? The imaginary one?"



Imaginary Friend (Part 2)

Kristina Woodling



as much as i try,
i can't deny
all of the feelings
that are waiting inside.
and these emotions
are the beings my heart can't hide.
my soul can't remove them,
unless they fall from my eyes

i try
Emily Pu

Consumed

Tessa Crouch

October 20, 2018

The water starts to gush in from all sides. Feel the cold liquid enveloping your legs. It moves slowly up your legs until you look down and see nothing but black liquid. Fear surges into your heart. Panic flashes in your eyes. You start to gulp down air. Soon you are submerged in water. You look up and see pinpricks of light dancing on the surface. Kick your legs with all your might, but you quickly realize that it is a battle you will never win. You begin sinking downward, letting the darkness swallow you. Every fiber of your being screams for a breath. In a desperate attempt, your lungs take a huge gasp of water. Your lungs burn as the water spreads through them like a fire. A drum begins pounding in your head. Wave your white flag and stop fighting. You no longer care whether you sink or swim. A faint smile catches your lips as you let the water take you.

“How are you doing Karen?” calls out a voice.

“I’m good” you reply, wondering if she can see the water coming out of your ears.

“Is Iris excited about college? She will do so well” the voice coos.

“Yes, she will do well” you choke out. You feel the water cascading down your neck.

October 30, 2018

Help Iris with her applications for college. Her ambition wants to go as far away from you as possible. You can hear the water sloshing against you. It fills you up. It fills up your hole. You leave Iris's room and go to your bed. Lay down. The water glides from your eyes on to the bed. Drain the water for the day. Relief descends upon you as you let go of the water suffocating you. Breath comes to you like an angel offering peace, but that offer is quickly taken away when the water again starts to fill your body. An upsurge of emotions pushes against your stomach.

December 9, 2018

Pick up the iron and set it on the blouse. Move it up and down, getting rid of all the wrinkles. You do this to the rest of the clothes, repeating the same mind numbing process. Put down the iron. Move it up and down. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat until you can't take it anymore. Sit down in the chair and stare out the window at the stark trees. Winter has taken away all of the leaves.

December 21, 2018

Drive and drive down the black tar. You pass hundreds of faces that never even flick their attention towards you. As the light turns blood red, you stop and turn your head towards a woman sitting on a bench. The woman's hair is matted and dull. You can't see her face because she doesn't look up. Her skin is caked with dirt. Her clothes look like they are begging to be thrown away. Tears and rips scatter across her clothes. They look as though the sun has leached the color from them.

The apathetics keep marching to their own drums never noticing this woman. They never stop or look. They don't see her suffering, but you do. You feel the overwhelming urge to hug this woman, to embrace her

and call her sister. You want to pick her up and carry her to a haven far from her troubles. For an instant, the woman snaps her head up towards you, and you choke as you see your face. Then like it never happened the moment is gone, and the woman puts her head back down. The sounds of honking rip you back to consciousness. You drive on just like the rest of the apathetics. Drive on with a puddle of water at your feet.

As you pull into your driveway, your daughter runs outs. She puts an acceptance letter up to your driver window. She jumps up and down. In her excitement, she trips over the hose and falls down. Memories of you putting bandages on her knee after she fell off her bike when she was little, flash through your mind. The bike is long gone. Soon she will be too.

As you open your car door, the full pond collapses onto the cement. Watch as the water stems in all different directions, terrorizing the ants walking on the driveway. Watch as the ants run. You wonder if they will be consumed just like you.

December 25, 2018

Wake up to the smell of coffee wafting through the door. The strong smell alluringly dances under your nose making your feet move without permission. You used to wake up in the dark with her squealing in your ear, but now you have to wake her up and force her to get out of bed. You have to force her to celebrate and open presents.

Try to catch your breath, but the water is overwhelming you, leaving you to take short raspy breaths of air. You try painting on your face, but the paint keeps getting washed away. You eventually stop trying to fix it and allow the water to make the paint smudge and blend.

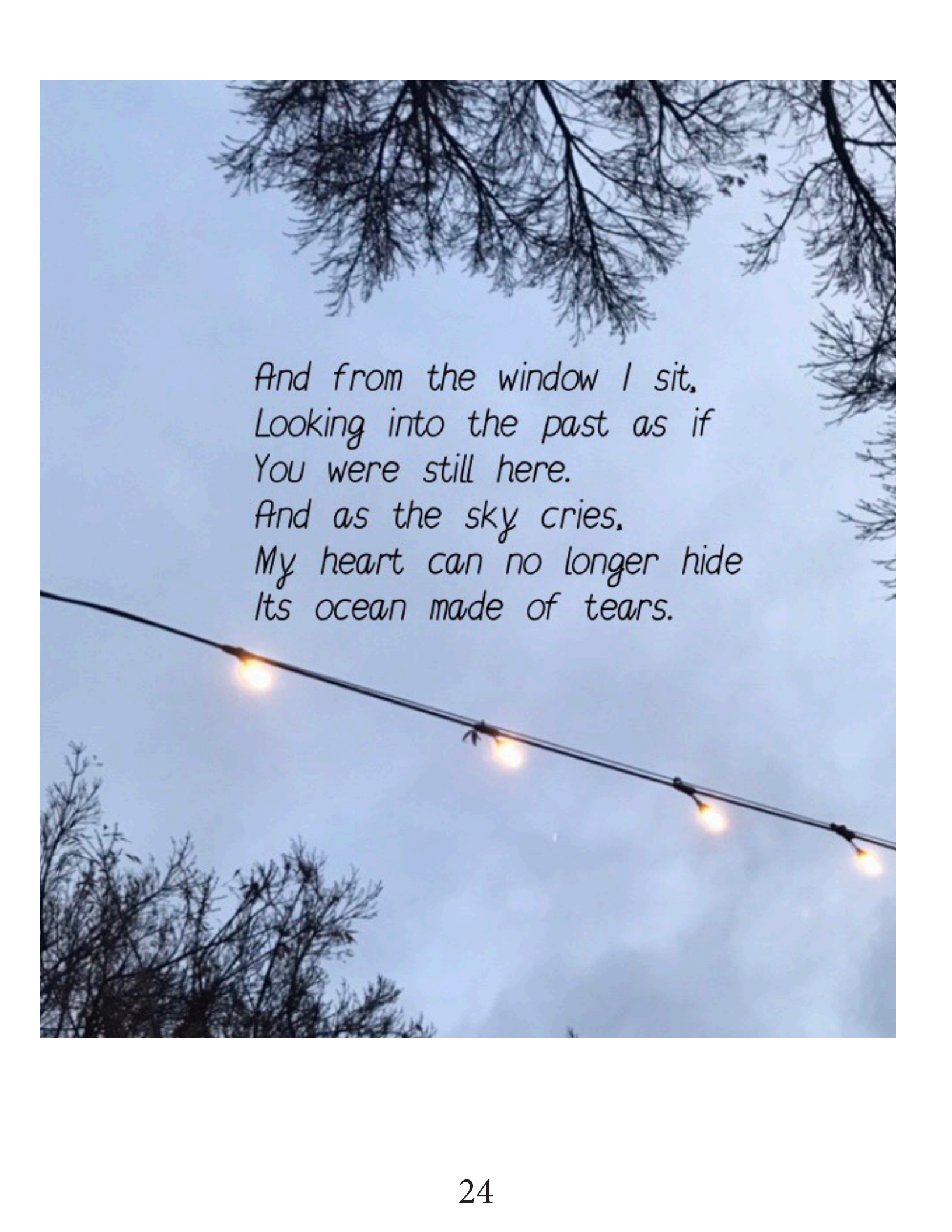
Your feet start heading towards the scent of vanilla and coffee beans. A little trail of water follows behind you. Your husband doesn't look up from his newspaper. He grunts at you in acknowledgment, and you

grunt back. The day the water came was the day this secret language came. Sit down and look out the dirty window. The sun rays come blazing in like golden knights, but they halt when they get to you. The sun isn't strong enough to soak up all the water.

Call for your daughter to wake up. No response. Call for her again. No response. You go to your room and relieve yourself of the water.

The Human Story: A Response to *Brave
New World*
Anneke Zegers

A darkness falls from high obscuring thoughts
And spreads to dull the whims of wand'ring minds,
Thus leading men astray from what they sought
And leaving them content to fall behind.
Once people lived a life of endless lust,
Not for alluring forms, but to be great:
And so the State they formed was free and just
If sometimes tainted by a natural hate.
But just as wisdom often fails with time,
They scorned the very nature in their veins;
They made a law to force men to their prime
And freely chose to bind their souls in chains.
So now with storied past of men unfurled,
We dread to call this state a Brave New World.

A photograph of a twilight sky with a string of warm white lights and silhouettes of trees. The sky is a pale, dusky blue. A string of four warm white lights is visible, stretching diagonally across the frame. The silhouettes of trees are visible in the upper and lower corners.

*And from the window I sit,
Looking into the past as if
You were still here.
And as the sky cries,
My heart can no longer hide
Its ocean made of tears.*