



MLD TEEN E-ZINE

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Contents

Path to Light	front cover
Photograph by Deborah A.	
The Atrocities of Being a Mannequin	2
Short Story by Ella N.	
it will be okay	4
Poem by Erica L.	
Shadow Queen	5
Photograph by Deborah A.	
So, I Guess I'm in Therapy Now?	6
Short Story by Ella N.	
Words	8
Poem by Deborah A.	
Roots	9
Drawing by Annabelle J.	
The Chicagoan Stranger Everyone Knew	10
Short Story by Ella N.	
Surprise, Surprise!	13
Personal Essay by Sadey O.	
Bubbles	15
Photograph by Deborah A.	
Tuesday Night Battle	16
Poem by Trenton M.	
Friday Night, No Place to Go	17
Short Story by Ella N.	

The Atrocities of Being a Mannequin

Ella N.

11th grade

Compass Honors High School

The mannequin felt very violated. Its first memory was being in a strange room, naked. It was terribly embarrassed, for who wouldn't be? But then a young man with a stack of clothes walked in. *Oh, joy! Those must be for me!* The mannequin thought. But then it found out that being naked was much better than being manhandled and clothed by an absolute stranger. *Why didn't he let me dress myself? I am highly capable of such things! How demeaning!* And the dreadfulness continued. After forcefully being clothed like a small child who couldn't quite fit both of Barbie's arms in her dress and had resorted to rough pulling and tugging, the mannequin was picked up and carried out of the room. *How dare you! I can walk by myself, thank you very much!* The offended mannequin thought to himself.

The young man set him down in a large room with glass doors and windows that opened up into the outside world and then walked away. *Finally, that cruel man is gone!* The mannequin wanted to look out the windows, so it tried to turn its head. Nothing happened. It tried again, nothing again. It tried and tried to no avail. It was quite a concerning thing to attempt to

move one's body and find that you are, like a statue, frozen in one position.

The mannequin was unable to look out the window, but it could look straight ahead. *Another one of my kind!!* it thought gleefully. On the other side of the room was another clothed mannequin. The mannequin felt a pang of pity for its doppelganger since it understood the trauma of being dressed.

Hello, there! It tried to greet the other mannequin, but was surprised when no words came out. *Hello!* it tried again. *Hello? Helllloooooo? HELLO!*

Once again, no matter how much it tried, it was frozen. The predicament was terrifying. Abandoned, unable to move, unable to speak. Against its better judgement, it wished for the young man to come back.

At that exact moment, the outside doors opened and a group of people walked in. They looked like varieties of the young man with all different sizes, shapes, and colors; no two the same. The people talked amongst themselves and mingled around.

Whenever someone walked by, the mannequin attempted to say hello, but was rudely ignored.

A few days passed by and everyday was like the last; people would walk by all day, never acknowledging the mannequin's presence. Except, on occasion, when someone would stop and stare at its clothes, which just made the mannequin more uncomfortable than it already was. Or every once and awhile, a child would walk up and change the mannequin's position and move its fingers around, which was quite annoying. But then that young man would sternly tell the children to stop messing with it. *He stands up for me...Maybe he is my friend.* The mannequin would think. *But then again, he never talks to me, so maybe not.*

Then one day, something magical happened. A group of teenagers were wandering the room, chatting, and not paying attention to their surroundings. (As the mannequin had often observed this size of human did.) One of them ran right into the mannequin; which was a normal occurrence at this point.

Unlike every other person, however, the teen apologized. "Heh, sorry dude." He chuckled as they steadied the mannequin.

The teen's friends all laughed and poked fun at their friend who talked to the inanimate object as they continued to walk. And yet, for the mannequin, it was the best moment of its young life. It was the moment he was truly noticed.

~

Poem

it will be okay

Erica L.

12th grade

Renaissance High School

because doctors in china
donated supplies to people in italy
and wrote a quote from a roman poem
on the boxes:

"siamo onde dello stesso mare" --

"we are waves from the same sea"

because we are waves from the same sea
because we will not let each other sleep
because love persists in the time of
quarantine

everything will be okay.

切都会好起来的

~

because opera singers in italy
leaned from their windows
and sang, beautiful like the birds,
and people around italy
paused their daily activity
to join in:

"nessun dorma" --

"let nobody sleep"

tutto andrà bene

because in new york city,
heads poked from windows
to watch two young lovers
marry on the streets,
their officiant five stories up
reading from
"el amor en los tiempos del cólera" --
"love in the time of cholera"

todo estará bien

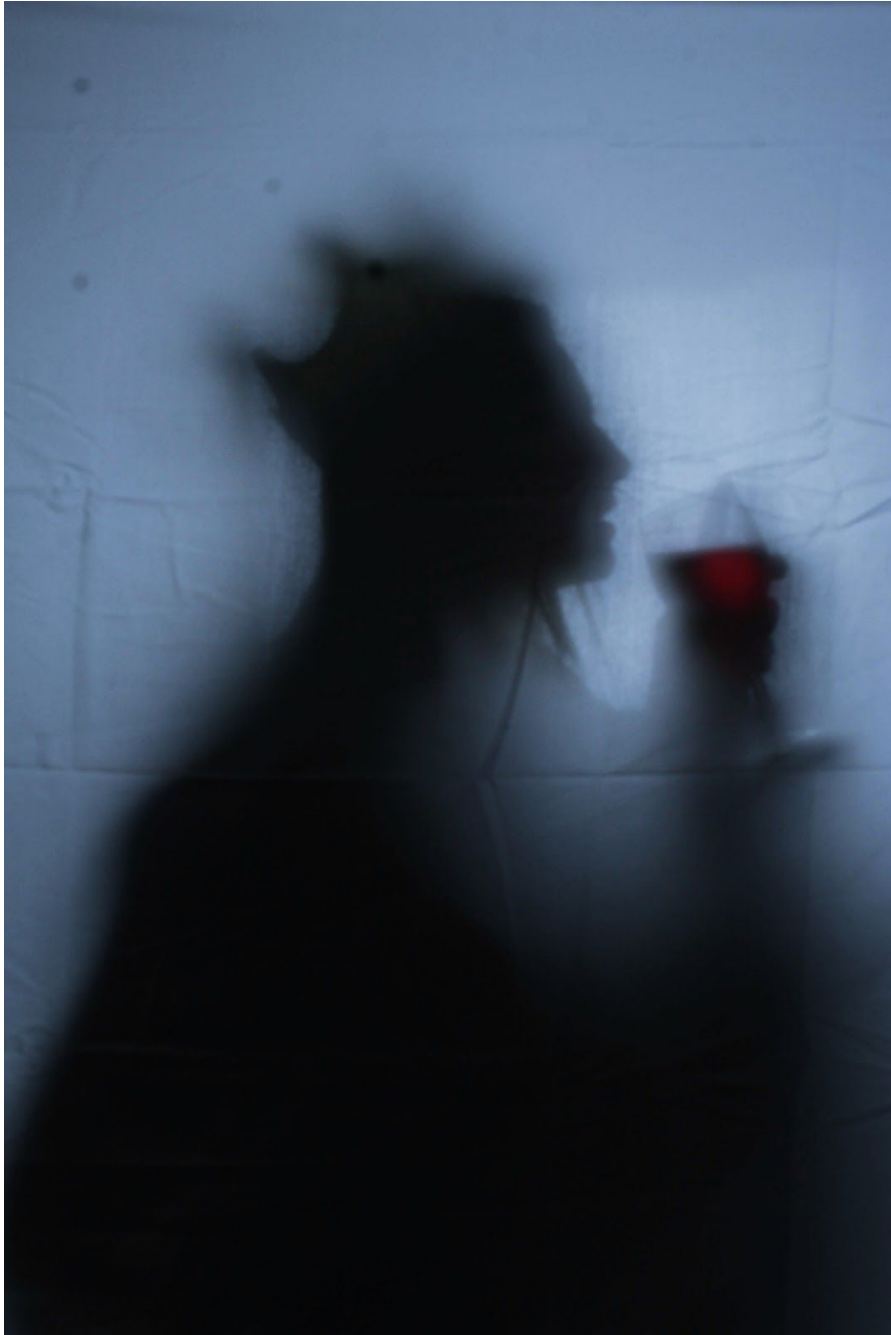
Photograph

Shadow Queen

Deborah A.

12th grade

Meridian High School



So, I Guess I'm in Therapy Now?

by Ella N.

11th grade

Compass Honors High School

"Listen, I don't care how refined, mature, or intellectual you think you are. Everyone believes in the unbelievable at some point in their life. And you may think you are courageous, fearless, or macho, but everyone gets scared out of their wits one way or another.

"Now, I know what you're thinking right now. I know because I was you. Sure, you're three times my age, but we had the same mindset. Facts. Logic. Reasoning. My world ran on logic and I devoured knowledge. I was smarter and more reasonable than most of the adults I knew. That was why, obviously, I was going to be valedictorian. Ever since I learned the word in the 4th grade, it has been my sole aspiration. Every test I took, every final I studied for was leading up to that oh-so-glorious moment in senior year. I only have one more year of A+'s before my crowning achievement now. Well, I had one more year, but I doubt anyone will take me seriously now.

"Disappointing, isn't it? To have your dream of academic perfection crushed during junior year. Well that's me, the disappointment. You can't even imagine

how devastated I was when my grades plummeted. It was beyond reasoning and logic. No one could believe how it could happen to me—Lucy Samantha Davis—smartest girl at Benchford High. It makes sense that they couldn't understand it, I guess, because I never told them why it happened.

"'Them' doesn't include everyone, though. I told my best friend and my mom. I don't know if my mom really counts, though, because she didn't believe me. That's why I never told anyone else. If my own mother, the woman who birthed and raised me, couldn't believe me... her daughter, her honest and trustworthy daughter, might I add. Then who would?

"It all was a blur, you know? A downward spiral towards being a car salesman, not a Harvard Critical Thinking Professor. I can't believe I gave it all up for some silly little goose chase. An unbelievable, absurd, irrational notion. I probably did go mad. I really can't blame my mom for making me come talk to you. Hindsight is 20/20. It's cliché, I know, but very true. The statistical probability of an actual monster is zero to none."

"Ah yes, you have finally arrived at the point," says a stuffy, old man.

I don't like him. He acts like he's above me. Sure, he didn't drop everything to prove the existence of a monster taking up residency in his house, and he has a doctorate in psychology, but still. He has one of those faces that look eternally smug.

"Now, now, Dr. Stewart. Miss Davis just gave a good rant. Ranting is a very underestimated, but effective way to distress and reevaluate your thinking."

This one I like. Dr. Jensen is significantly younger than Dr. Stewart. My most educated guess is that he is around 25, straight out of college. He is very kind and amusing; plus he kind of looks like Zac Efron.

"Thank you, Dr. Jensen. I completely agree," I say as I think to myself how glad I am that it's not just grumpy Dr. Stewart and I.

"You can call me Jordan," Dr. Jensen tells me.

"Dr. Jensen! That is completely inappropriate!" Dr. Stewart reprimands.

I try to stifle a giggle as Jordan tells me to pay no mind to the old man and tells the old man that being on a first name basis

with a patient is a technique that encourages openness.

"Now, I believe that the young lady was trying to tell us a story," Jordan says to get back on track.

"Yes, yes, of course. But please, Ms. Davis, stick to the point," Dr. Stewart sighs.

"Well, I believe that you will understand me and my predicament better if I tell you everything," I tell them.

"And what exactly does 'everything' entail?" the old man asks.

"Stellar student turned monster hunter. Best friend turned fake boyfriend. Classmate who's crazy and obsessive. SATs..." I list off.

"Oh, joy..." Dr. Stewart mumbles.

"In all fairness, my mom is paying you to listen to me," I tell them matter-of-factly. When I hear no arguments, I begin to tell my story. From the very beginning. "I guess it all started when I was five," I began.

I see Dr. Stewart massage his forehead, clearly annoyed; Jordan leans back in his seat, clearly intrigued. I take a moment to wonder why these two were paired together, and then continue with my story.

~

Poem

Words

Deborah A.

12th grade

Meridian High School

They are in every part of life
from songs to ads to essays to talking.
People are judged based on words.
You do not have a full account to life
if you can not use them right.
But many people struggle with words.

So what do they do?
You try to talk
to explain to people
but you fail.
You feel angry
frustrated
even sad
cause you will always have a barrier
between you and people
that you can't take down

~

Drawing

Roots

by Annabelle J.

9th grade

Idaho Fine Arts Academy



The Chicagoan Stranger Everyone Knew

by Ella N.

11th grade

Compass Honors High School

It was too calm for a famously crowded city. The people who should've been on the street were packed around televisions in restaurants and bars.

"This'll show them," Carrie thought with a grin as she remembered her friends and coworkers who advised her not to go to Chicago all by herself.

It had been impossible to find any airplane flights or hotel rooms, as if everyone wanted to come to Illinois this weekend. The authoritative click-clack of Carrie's heels as she walked to her fancy hotel was the only sound outside.

The entire city collectively held its breath.

Then, the explosion.

The city screamed at the top of its lungs. The crowded establishments erupted as everyone flooded into the streets; a wave of blue and orange blobs. Carrie jumped. She blinked hard and opened her eyes to see grown men celebrating in the streets. These weren't shouts of fear or agony.

They were happy. No, ecstatic. Chicago was hysterical with joy.

Carrie felt uneasy. She was caught clueless in the middle of a mass of jubilation. Trying to keep calm, she repositioned her purse. Her purse! Carrie spun around and saw a ragged looking man, around the age of fifty, running off with her purse. She was too stunned to chase him, and had no chance of catching him.

"Hi there, could I help you, ma'am?"

Carrie felt a gentle hand on her shoulder. She turned to see a man of 70-something years with espresso skin. He was wearing a navy blue jersey with the white number fifty outlined in orange under a gray peacoat, which made him look more dignified than the other Chicagoans. His head was bald and round and he wore glasses. Carrie could see his Christian cross necklace and wrinkle lines on his face from a lifetime of smiling.

Seeing Carrie's startled expression, he put his hands up. "Sorry! I just noticed that you look distressed... and a bit out of place?"

"Oh," Carrie said as she thought about the peculiarity of being robbed one second and meeting a kind stranger the next. "Well, that man just stole my purse."

She pointed to the thief, who was trying to blend into the crowd, with one hand and ran her fingers through her red hair with the other.

"That's no good. Follow me." The old man started casually walking in the determined direction. "Come on, I won't bite," he called back to Carrie. "What's your name?"

"Carrie," she said, catching up with him. "Thank you for helping me, Mr...."

He looked slightly surprised. "I'm Mike. Pleasure to meet you, Carrie. Happy to be of assistance."

The crowd had thickened and the thief was nowhere to be seen.

"I saw him run into that bar over there, " Mike said, responding to Carrie's unspoken question.

"You sure seem to feel comfortable here. Are you from Chicago?" Carrie asked as they walked.

Mike smiled and shook his head slightly. "No, but I lived here for many years; it's a second home to me. I'm just in town for the game."

"Game? That's what this is all about?" Carrie felt stupid as she looked around at

all the people obviously in coordinating football jerseys.

Mike immediately turned to look at her, his face of pure astonishment. "Why, yes. The Chicago Bears just won Super Bowl LXIV! It's the first time since 1985!" The old man suddenly seemed less old and a youthful sparkle came to his eyes as if he was recalling a happy memory.

"Chicago really takes football seriously. The entire city is losing its mind," Carrie commented.

Mike laughed heartily. "You have no idea."

They were quite an odd couple as they fought their way through the crowd. A red-headed young woman in a professional pantsuit and an older black man wearing a football jersey. Carrie couldn't help but notice how people kept looking at Mike and excitedly whispering.

"Why are you in Chicago?" Mike asked, interrupting Carrie's thoughts.

"I'm on a business trip," she replied, head held high. "It seems I came at a very inconvenient time," she chuckled.

"Or just in time to witness America's greatest football fans celebrate a long-awaited victory," Mike smiled.

As they reached the bar, Carrie thanked Mike as he held open the door. She pointed out the thief—who was busy rifling through her purse—and walked behind Mike as they approached him; Mike seemed to know what he was doing. The thief glanced up and, starstruck, his mouth fell open.

“Sam-Samurai M-Mike!” he stuttered. Mike’s eyes grew intense like a tiger ready to pounce. Even Carrie was frightened and began to doubt trusting this stranger. The nickname “Samurai Mike” couldn’t be good.

“That’s right, kid,” Mike said sternly. “And I think you should give that purse back.”

The thief nodded as he held out the purse. Carrie grabbed it, then walked back to the bar’s entrance. Mike stayed behind, but had returned to his cordial demeanor. After a few minutes of chatting, Mike signed a napkin, gave the poor man some money, shook his hand, and walked away. Seeing this, Carrie’s faith in his character was restored.

“Thank you for your help!” Carrie earnestly told Mike as they reentered the street. “How could I repay you?”

Mike smiled and dismissed the question with a flick of his hand. “It was my pleasure to help. You take care, now.”

With that, Mike walked back into the crowd, and a couple immediately stopped him to say something. Carrie stood thankful for crossing paths with this stranger and in awe: how did everyone else know him? She pulled out her phone and hopefully searched “Samurai Mike”. A photo of younger Mike stared at her through the screen with the description: Mike Singletary, #50, nicknamed Samurai Mike for his intensity on the field, was a linebacker for the Chicago Bears and part of the ‘85 Super Bowl team. Carrie smiled to herself as she looked up at the kind-hearted man, then resumed her walk to the hotel.

~

Surprise Surprise!

by Sadey O.

7th grade

Meridian Middle School

On September 16 of 2018, my dad's birthday, we were opening his present. My dad knew what it was all along. It was a puzzle. So we both started putting it together, it was a picture of us at Disneyland with a saying on it. This made me curious. We put half of it together and saw there were no more pieces. My mom had the rest of them. My sister and I found them and when we finished the puzzle, it said: we are going to Disneyland. I said it two times before I got it. My sister and I were shocked. My mom said we were going in 2 weeks; we screamed to the top of our lungs. Our puppy jumped and looked at us. The next day, I was so tired at school because I had thought about it all night. Tessa and I told everybody at school.

On the day we left for Disneyland, I got up to go to my mom's room and started dancing. Mom said we could stay in our pajamas, we hopped in the car and drove off to the airport early in the morning. It was still dark outside. We turned on some music and sang the whole way there. It was a lot of singing. As soon as we sat down at our boarding spot, my mom said, "I have some very special surprises in store for you." We were so excited, but she would not tell us the surprises until we

arrived at Disneyland. It was an hour and half flight so we were on our kindles watching movies the whole way to California. We took an Uber to our hotel. In our hotel room, we saw some treats on the bed. It was Mickey and Minnie crackers dipped in chocolate. We ate our treats and were still wearing our pajamas.

As soon as we got all our stuff unpacked, we left the hotel and started walking to the park. Mom told us our first surprise. We had an appointment at the Bibbity Boppity Boutique. At the boutique, you get to pick a princess dress and get your hair and make up done like a princess. I was Belle from Beauty and the Beast and my sister was dressed up as Cinderella. After our first surprise, we had dinner at the Plaza. I got fried chicken and mashed potatoes. After we had dinner, we saw a character named Belle and had our picture taken with her. Next came the ride on Space Mountain. It is like a roller coaster but in the dark. Since it was Halloween, they added fire breathing ghosts. We also went on a ride called the Tea Cup ride. You sit in a tea cup and spin yourself. We decided to go to California Adventure. It is mostly cars and sporty type things. We visited Pixar Pier where most of the cartoon movies like Little Mermaid, Incredibles, and Toy Story

have rides. The Incredible Roller Coaster has big drops and it is fast as heck, but the best part, it goes upside down.

The next day we had another surprise. Mom made us sit down on the bed and she told us that we have tickets to go to a Halloween party. As it got dark, it became magical. The villains started heading in like the Evil Queen, Jafar, Hades, Maleficent, and Ursula. When they walked out I screamed. Mom and Dad thought I was hurt, but then they looked at the castle and saw the villains. Mom and Dad knew why I had screamed; we all laughed. We got in line to meet all the characters. It was the most amazing surprise. I had more fun than any night in my whole life. After a couple of hours, we headed back to the hotel and went straight to bed.

The next day, Tessa and I were still asleep and there was a knock at the door. It was Grandma and Grandpa. We ran up and hugged them as tight as we could we were so happy. We headed down to the park and rode as many rides as we could in one day. It was so much fun. The next day they came again. We were the first in line so we got to open the California Adventure. We were the first on Soaring Over the World. You sit on this chair and it goes up. It was so much fun. That night we went to the Riverbell and sat outside on the porch eating our food. We were outside because there was an event called Fantasmic. It was the show about Mickey's dream where he defeats all the villains and saves the world. That was the end of our trip and we said goodbye on our way out.

~

Photograph

Bubbles

Deborah A.

12th grade

Meridian High School



Poem

Tuesday Night Battle

by Trenton M.

9th grade

Renaissance High School

I awoke to the sound of rain,
a-tapping on my glass.
I drew away the curtains and,
I found the sea, so vast.

A storm was brewing, overhead,
the water hissing underfoot.
To my horror, my home had changed,
from a house into a boat.

I heard a blast, and a flash of light,
crashed into the hull.
I was caught in a deadly fight
off the coast of Istanbul.

I ran up to the mizzen-mast,
and unfurled to quarter sail.
I had to flee the battle soon,
My only hope a strong gale.

Some grapeshot tore up the deck,
explosive shells boomed all around.
Why oh why was I trapped at sea,
instead of anchored, safe on ground.

I clambered to the cannon, and,
I aimed it at a frigate.
"I better take one down with me,
while my boat leaks like a spigot."

To my luck, the smoothbore had,
been loaded, and fused to boot.
All that was left for me to do,
was point it, and to shoot.

My sloop was lurching now,
and the decks were submarine.
I only had one chance at this,
so I made sure my aim was keen.

The cannon sounded, and soon I saw,
a hole punched right through the scene.
just below the waterline,
and into the magazine.

It blew to a thousand chunks,
My foe had been destroyed.
But as it sank, so did I,
and we vanished into the void.

~

Short story

Friday Night, No Place to Go

by Ella N.

11th grade

Compass Honors High School

With a sigh, Evelyn slumped onto the couch. The relief that came with peace and quiet quickly morphed into dread. There was literally nothing to do. Mom and Dad were having date night — for the first time in months — so she was home alone. Well, “alone” now that her little brother, Logan, finally went to bed. He was eight, but the amount of effort Evelyn went through to make him stay in bed made him seem like a toddler. On any other Friday night, she’d be hanging out with her friends or Josh, but no. She couldn’t even text them; her parents had revoked all her privileges after she tried to give herself a new quarantine hairdo... and stained nearly the entire bathroom counter with electric blue hair dye.

Overcome with boredom, Evelyn laid upside down and let her long, naturally platinum blonde hair (which did not have electric blue streaks in it) cascade over the edge of the couch. Her feet thumped rhythmically against where her head normally rested. If she hadn’t been under the present restrictions, Evelyn would have propped her phone against the bookshelf, taken a timed photo of herself making a funny face upside down and sent it to her

best friend, Leila... and maybe Josh. Leila definitely would have responded to Evelyn’s photo and witty caption about listlessness within a minute and said something about Evelyn’s cute pajamas. They had only been friends for one school year so far, junior year. The second half of it had been distanced learning, so they strengthened their bestie-connection over text through sarcastic quips, lyrical quotes, and unexpected questions. Talking to Leila would have gotten Evelyn’s mind off of things. Or the lack thereof.

She glanced at the clock. Mom and Dad should be home within the hour. Not able to stand doing nothing any longer, Evelyn hopped off the couch, straightened the collar on her silky pajama shirt, and walked over to the bookcase that was the living room’s right wall. Maybe she’d read something. Her hand ran across all the bindings absentmindedly; most of them indicated the book was one of Dad’s, something confusing about phenomenons beyond the Earth’s atmosphere. She went farther down and found all of Logan’s books: random Hardy Boys books, comics from one of the many Marvel universes he was so well-versed in, and of course, the

Wimpy Kid series. Evelyn's eyes rolled as her hand continued along.

She had to pause in the middle of the bookcase where Mom's vintage record player lived. She had taught Evelyn to use it when she was Logan's age, and given her free rein, as long as she was careful. Evelyn hadn't touched it since she started high school; she then started having more important things to do and less free time between shopping, friends, and boys.

Her hand jumped down a shelf to where the records were kept. The more aesthetic ones were placed decoratively in front and the rest stacked behind. Quickly lifting and glancing at various record covers, she tried to find ones she recognized. In the end, she decided on one she hadn't recognized. ABBA Gold? The sleeve was well-loved, so it had to be good. Using muscle memory, she gently slipped the record out, lifted the lid to the record player, popped the record onto the peg, turned on the machine, raised the needle, and set it back down over the first song.

You can dance. You can jive. Having the time of your life.

"Bet," Evelyn thought, as she laid on the floor, listening.

Digging the dancing queen.

Evelyn's mind flicked back to a memory: Grandma used to call her that when she danced, or more accurately flailed, around the kitchen.

Friday night.

Yep.

And the lights are low.

Low lights, check.

Looking out for a place to go.

Places. I remember them.

Where they play the right music.

This music is actually pretty great.

Getting in the swing.

Evelyn realized that her fingers were drumming along to the beat.

You come to look for a king. Anybody could be that guy.

"Like, Jooooosshhhhh..." the singsong voice of a little brother poking fun came from the hallway.

Evelyn shot up and instinctively threw a pillow at the voice.

"Ouch!" Logan exclaimed as it bounced off his head.

"Baby. It was just a pillow. What are you doing up?" Evelyn was annoyed and she didn't intend to conceal it.

"You're listening to my favorite record without me," he responded matter-of-factly as he sat down next to his sister.

"You listen to records?"

"Mom didn't just teach you, ya know. I listen to one every afternoon, but you're

not home a lot.” Logan was still using his matter-of-fact voice, but the twange of hurt in it didn’t go unnoticed.

“I’m sorry... Do you wanna listen with me?” Evelyn smiled.

Logan jumped up. “You mean it, Evey? I’d love to!”

“Why not? Mom and Dad can’t be too mad,” she said with a wink.

Logan not only stayed standing, but also started dancing a dance that he definitely had danced before.

You are the dancing queen. Young and sweet. Only seventeen.

He mouthed and improvised by pointing to his seventeen year old sister. She laughed, jumped up, and did her best to

follow along with Logan’s elaborate choreography. They might have lacked a tambourine, but they could dance, they could jive, and they were having the time of their life. The song ended and the next one began, then the next, then the next. Until...

Thank you for the music, for giving it to me.

After the final “meeeeeeeeeeeee...,” Evelyn and Logan noticed their parents smiling at them from the doorway. They obviously had assessed the situation, and weren’t too mad about Logan being awake (not to mention as energetic as ever). With a sigh, the family slumped onto the couch. The exhaustion that came from an hour’s worth of dancing and the surprise of being caught quickly morphed into laughter.

~

We asked Meridian teens to share their art and writing to fill this zine. Submissions could be on any topic, but we suggested these three themes for inspiration:

"Dancing Queen,
Young and Sweet,
Stuck in Quarantine"

"Something Strange
in the Neighborhood"

"An Unexpected Journey"

Thank you to all our
contributors and readers!

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