

The Ampersand:  
Growth



Volume XIV

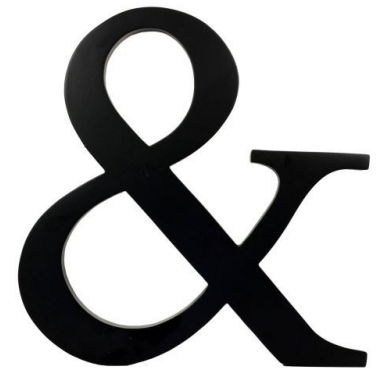
Edited by  
**Kendall Richards**

Staff

**Mary Donahue**  
**Brooke Nelson**  
**Lachelle Lindsay**  
**Fanta Kouyate**  
**Jillian Hicks**  
**Isabelle Schwartz**  
**Zoey Knight**  
**Rachel Witteman**  
**Amber Cooper**  
**April Mitchell**  
**Siya Brown**  
**Julia Stewart**

Cover Artist  
**Woojin Kang**

Sponsor  
**Curtis Dean Adams**



## Closing Remark | Isabelle Schwartz

For years we have been rooted in the same,  
We have grown taller, wiser, and with our passions on display.  
In the halls and out, we struck a chord, left a mark,  
Took each new day as a chance to add to the beauty of our bark.  
We have been told the world is an open book, and we have certainly  
read a few,  
But I cannot help but wonder how we will do when landing in a world  
entirely new.  
What will we think of the food?  
How can a dorm room emanate our mood?  
Will we find ourselves in four years or in a day?  
Will we finally learn the right thing to say?  
The answers to all of these questions, we could not possibly know,  
But still, it is the time to gather our courage and carry on with the show.  
So we pack up and move faithfully into terrain we have never known,  
For just as in these past and precious years, we will learn as we go.  
The grass will be greener in the journey ahead,  
As long as we meet deadlines, steer clear of trouble, and stay well-fed.  
So when we are twisting and turning with worries clouding our sight,  
There is some solace to make our soil more cozy at night.  
We must always remember and never forget,  
Regardless of how much we rack up in debt.  
We are who we are,  
And that will not change near nor far.  
No matter how far we move away, no matter the number of mis-steps  
we take,  
As long as we rise in the ashes of trying days and hold each other in the  
wake,  
The world will continue to hug us tight,  
As we keep on growing towards that sacred light.

## Letter From the Editor, **Kendall Richards**

Hello again,

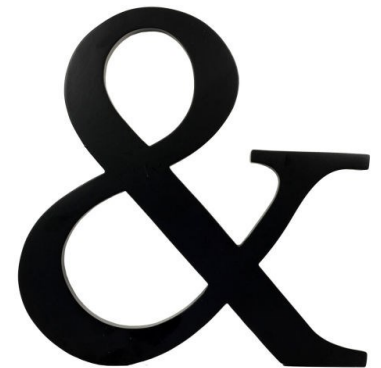
I'm writing this as I am on quarantine due to the COVID-19 virus.  
Despite all of the disappointment surrounding Davidson students, espe-  
cially seniors, I am warmed with the eager participation for this book.

The original idea for The Ampersand was to divide it into four chapters  
representing a student's journey through high school and life itself,  
following the path of a growing tree.

Now the Davidson upperclassmen are about to shed their leaves and  
start anew. Despite all of the scars and sadness through that journey,  
we are still determined to move on and plan new roots in a new home.

I want to thank The Ampersand team for always giving me advice and  
gathering pieces for this book.

Thank you all.





# Contents

## Poetry

<b>Chapter I: Roots</b> Opening Remark	Zoey Knight	6, 7
The Muse	Julia Stewart	8
Life's Roots	Fanta Kouyate	11
The Rhododendron	Siya Brown	12
An Ode to Urban Weeds	Sarah Smith	15
<b>Chapter II: Trunk</b> Opening Remark	Amber Cooper	16, 17
From me to you	Zoey Knight	18
The Burden of Cognizance	Siya Brown	19
She	Haley Wilson	21
Glorious Contradictions	Rachel Witteman	22
A Strong Line of Queens	Lachelle Lindsay	25
<b>Chapter III: Branches</b> Opening Remark	Sarah Smith	26, 27
Ah, Yes Vanity and Pride (The Growth of the Human Mind)	April Mitchell	28
Corpse	National English Honor Society	30
Parallels.	Amber Cooper	31
She Never Knew	Rachel Witteman	32
<b>Chapter IV: Leaves</b> Opening Remark	Rachel Witteman	34, 35
In Years Past	Trevin Tyndall	36
Life Is.	Amber Cooper	37
Shell	Rachel Witteman	39
Leaves	National English Honor Society	40
Closing Remark	Isabelle Schwartz	42





# Leaves | National English Honor Society

I have to leave  
I'm used to leaving, it was once routine  
Every few years I would move somewhere new  
Leaving behind everything and everyone that I knew  
To be thrown into the sea of unfamiliar faces  
Waves of them crashing and clashing, making my head hurt

But for these past five years, the sea has been calm  
For these past five years, my roots have been allowed to grow into the soil  
For these past five years, I've been on solid ground.  
I've grown.

These roots are stubborn and can't be moved.  
I won't be moved.  
I will grow up from the soil and branch out, so that when I do finally leave  
I will understand and remember where I came from  
And take these things with me.

## Art & Photography

Spirited Away	Woojin Kang	9
Vigilance	Ethan Nguyen-Tu	10
Folded Away	Woojin Kang	13
Archangel	Jillian Hicks	14
Crucible	McKenna Turner	18
Tipsy	McKenna Turner	19
The Road Less Traveled	Ethan Nguyen-Tu	20
Relax	Beth Coleman	23
Anticipation	Maggie McCormack	24
Marlboro Red	Beth Coleman	29
SoundCloud	Mary Donahue	30
Modification	Maggie McCormack	33
Davidson Lake	Ethan Nguyen-Tu	37
My Neck, My Back	Woojin Kang	38
Flutter	Jillian Hicks	41

# Chapter I: Roots

## Shell | Rachel Witteman

Down. Down in the darkness.  
I stir in my shell,  
Having been cramped up for what seems like an eternity.

Its cold,  
But I feel life stirring within the darkness  
All around this  
cracking capsule

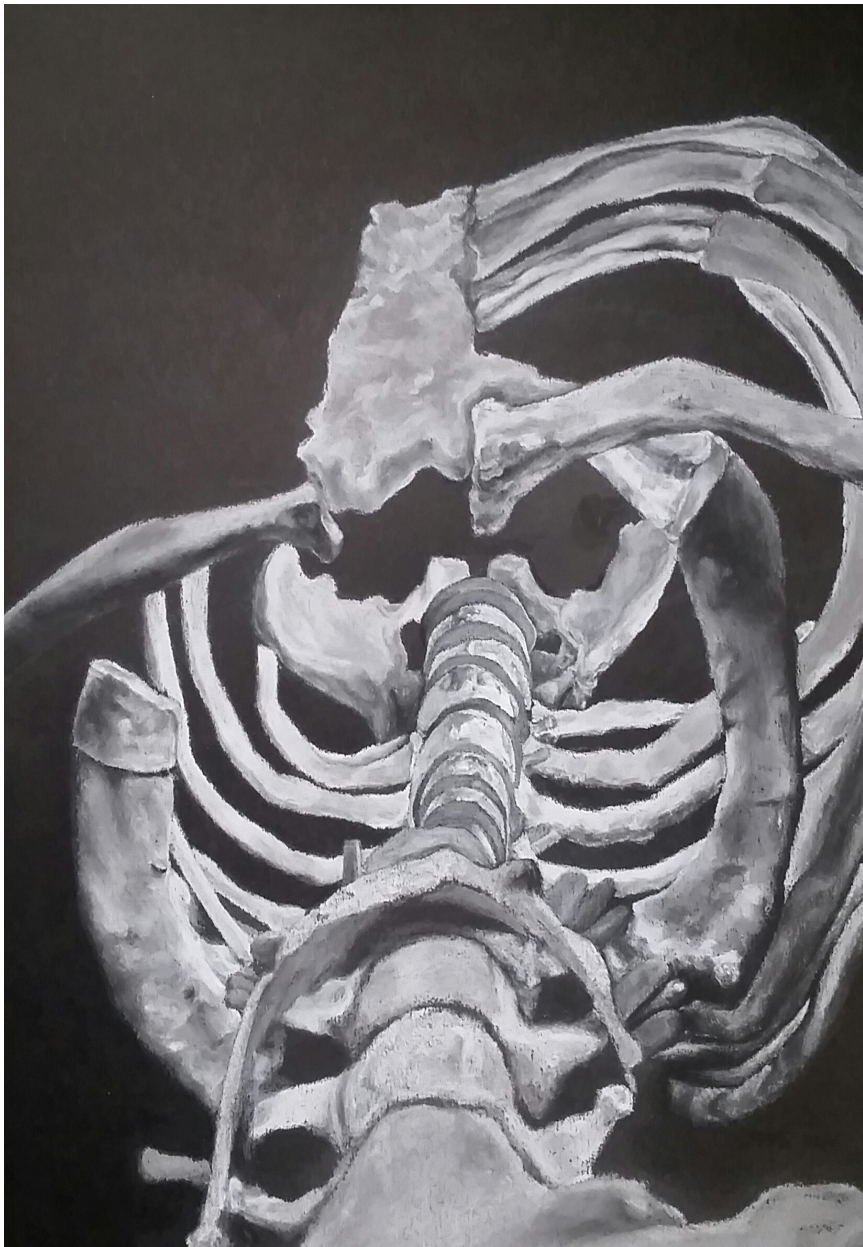
My cage  
Breaking and splintering  
Pushing on the confinements  
From the outside

I see a small flame  
I'm drawn towards it  
This weak body  
Pulled by a force unknown

I emerge  
Wind welcoming me into the sunlight  
The chirp of birds  
Whisper of trees

Its warm now  
And I feel free  
A butterfly comes to greet me  
And start the second cycle of my entire life





My Neck, My Back - Woojin Kang

**You are strong like roots**  
**Without you, the entire tree would growing thinner and thinner like**  
**a parasite, many people call unwanted weeds.**  
**Why can't you see that you're needed**  
**without you this tree would never had succeeded**  
**You provided the trunk, and branches full of love and affection**  
**That you are what gives this tree a real connection**

## The Muse | Julia Stewart

As I tear my body from your grasp,  
I can feel the sunshine for the first time  
In what feels like centuries.  
Despite the blood and bruises coating my once porcelain skin,  
I am inundated by the release of freedom,  
And I feel no pain.

I plant my feet into my earth, my world,  
Now completely detached from yours,  
And smile into the void before me.  
Although I am lost and without your careful shield,  
A membrane meant to protect me from corruption,  
I have never felt safer.

You told me, your cruelty was love.  
Each blow planted into my fragile skin,  
Every lesion burned into my spirit  
Was equivalent to a delicate kiss on my cheek.  
All the alterations you made to  
My character and my body  
Were necessary for my growth into  
Your custom muse.

While I am covered in the scars you gouged  
Into my body and soul,  
And I am faced with the  
Inclemency of the unknown,  
My heart is free at long last.  
I am a leaf released from your tree of captivity  
That once held me hostage,  
And I am not your muse.

## Life Is. | Amber Cooper

Life is

the Wind  
breathing in the leaves  
the Great Oak  
extending to the clouds  
the Man  
asking to understand  
the Cave  
unveiling the earth  
the River  
tempting the desert  
the Sunflower  
yearning for the sun

Life is

breathing,  
extending,  
asking,  
unveiling,  
tempting,  
yearning.  
**beauty.**



## In Years Past | Trevin Tyndall

In years past, a boy laid and listened,  
To the orange leaves that rustled in the wind.  
He would lie and watch the branches sway,  
Of the great white oak tree, just feet away.

Oft' he admired those colors that glistened,  
Permanently ingrained inside his mind.  
And oft' he wondered upon which day,  
He would stand so mightily in the same way.

To stand so strong was his ambition,  
For years he found himself at the grind.  
Trying to alter is naturally given way,  
As if it were so easy to mold as clay.

Now stands a much older boy, hardly missed,  
Revisiting his second home to find, as  
He watches with a soul of deepest grays,  
No great change has befallen his design.



Spirited Away - Woojin Kang



**The morning sun shines through the leaves  
And a hazy green covers the polka-dotted ground  
I wonder if everything is this profound  
For the leaves whisper their secret sounds**



# Chapter IV: Leaves

## Life's Roots | Fanta Kouyate

The ground in which forms around me  
A start of a new life bounded around carefree  
With endless optimism and aspirations  
A signal to come of the new creations

With worlds up high and grounds below  
An endless stream that continues to flow  
A starred-bright face of innocence  
Never to be relinquished from incompetence

Never to be shied away from the darkness of the hollows  
Permanent tranquility for all that follows  
Steady progression as the roots began to dwell away  
Whilst a steady hold kept at bay

As the clutches of intertwined branches advance  
Never a moment moved from its stance  
Radiation of a hard and unshakeable embrace  
Never once made without grace

A strong force that nobody can gainsay  
As hearty friction formed by heavy fray  
A stubborn fool that hasn't relinquished its position  
Now always in a permanent opposition

## The Rhododendron | Siya Brown

Beware the roots of the Rhododendron

For they will spread over your garden

Growing over the wild red rose

Abusing her hospitality

Beware the roots of the Rhododendron

For they will fill the spaces between the Lotus flowers

Stopping them from blooming and

Suffocating their growth

Beware the roots of the Rhododendron

For they will poison the roots of the King Protea

Until she kills her kind

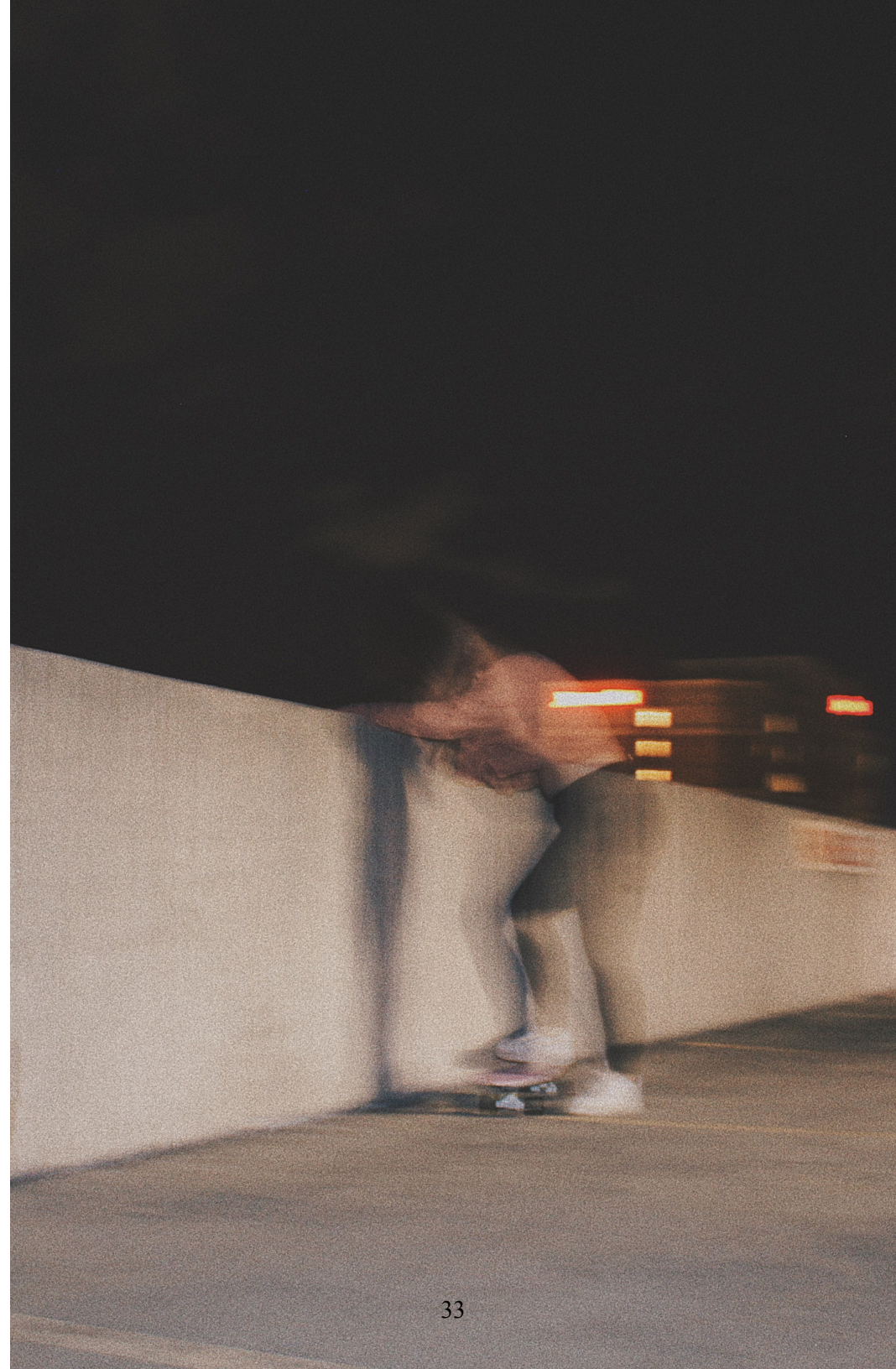
And condemns her species

Beware the roots of the Rhododendron

Mind your garden, my friend

In order to prosper from dusk to dawn

And keep your flowers from their bitter end





## She never Knew | Rachel Witteman

She never knew she could fly  
She didn't even know she had wings in the first place  
She only knew the word goodbye  
Her life going at a consistently slow pace

Goodbye was her motto  
Never having hope for tomorrow  
Thinking it would all crumble if she lightened her grip  
Never letting her focus slip

She worried  
Worried everything she had grown towards would leave her  
Worried about that clever cleaver which was so painstakingly efficient

She was wrecked  
Racked for reasons  
Her brain screaming treason  
Never ending pain through the seasons

She was sure she couldn't lose anymore  
Sadness seeping from every pore  
Still finding ways to smile  
Knowing she was still a child

She was angry, being left alone  
This dark desert her new home  
The sand stinging her eyes  
Screaming at herself not to cry

She was weak  
She was strong  
Those broken melodies

Her wings held high  
She wasn't going to say goodbye  
Not this time  
Not this time

She was tired  
She was brave  
She was complete  
She was insane

She made herself again  
Still afraid to get too close  
But taking a chance  
Embracing her ghosts

And so she took flight  
The Moon matching her might  
Her hands held tight to her chest  
Gasping for breath

She was happy  
She leapt  
Into the depths  
Of the unknown

Because she never knew  
She could fly



Folded Away - Woojin Kang



Archangel - Jillian Hicks

## Parallels. | Amber Cooper

the individual mimics the tree.  
standing tall, stretching high,  
whose branches are the choices that be.

unaware of the dangers she can not see,  
blindness is her growth, and hereby,  
the individual mimics the tree.

she finds youth in her indecision and glee,  
but exploration finds the tree, no longer spry,  
whose branches are the choices that be.

no amount of preparing soothes she  
who discovers the winding wood that will verify:  
the individual mimics the tree.

the path has been chosen that leads to maturity.  
companions long forgotten, unavailable to notify  
whose branches are the choices that be.

yes, life has parallels in order to decree  
that what can be found is there to explain why  
the individual mimics the tree

## Corpse | National English Honor Society

How many days have I been gone?

Time is not concrete.

Time's rivers meet and branch out

Just beneath my feet

Its strong currents beat

Against jagged rock

As you work to find a way to cheat the clock

But the streams bear ceaselessly forward

Let the currents guide you there

The strength of the push determines



SoundCloud - Mary Donahue

## An Ode To Urban Weeds | Sarah Smith

Ponder for a minute the forsaken dandelion

Pushing through a gap in the sidewalk

Grown from a seed lighter than air

To a rooted stalk of resistance

So insignificant that dandelion seems,

A nuisance in the face of manicured walkways

A blight upon the clean facade of concrete

Yet that dandelion exists

Only because it had the strength

To break steel with a fibrous shoot

Form fissures in concrete with its rebellious growth

A stalk so deadly, not even the hardest

Dare to consume it

Not even the curated strength of cement

Dare resist her progress

This is an ode to the dandelions in our lives

The girl who heard “can” when others said “cannot”

Left her crack in our earthly plane

The voices of the oppressed

Sounded a violent earthquake

The lonely confines of a cell

Couldn't prevent him from reaching towards the sun

What a mischievous, determined flower she is

It's as if she smiles towards the sun

Knowing she will never truly be accepted

But doesn't care



# Chapter II: Trunk



## **Ah, Yes Vanity and Pride (The Growth of the Human Mind) | April Mitchell**

Human nature is particularly prone to it!

Self-complacency on the score of some quality or other, real or imaginary:

Vanity and Pride.

Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed.

But pride- where there is a real superiority of mind,

Pride will always be under good regulation.

My feelings are not puffed about with every attempt to move them.

My temper would perhaps be called resentful.

- My good opinion once lost is lost for ever

My authority and rights as a rector, made me altogether a mixture of pride and obsequious, self importance and humility.

Yet, everybody is disgusted with pride

The world is blinded by fortune and consequence, or frightened by high and imposing manners.

For almost all actions may be traced to pride

The more I see the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and

Everyday confirms my belief of inconsistency of all human characters.

And of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense

In vain I have struggled

My feelings will not be repressed

**I am stronger than you know.**

**One, two, three strikes, and I still stand.**

**Let me be your strength.**

## From me to you | Zoey Knight

I was always there

In the shadows, supporting you

When the world consistently hurls obstacles in your path

You must know that I'm there, supporting you

When you feel like you can't breath, that the world is to much you

don't really think about the trees,

when I give you oxygen you don't really

Thank me, even though I'm there sustaining you

While I'm burning, being cut down and used, you choose to ignore me



when all I do is

Crucible - McKenna Turner

support you.

**and nourishes our being**

**that fosters our growth**

**to the radiant sun**



# Chapter III: Branches

## The Burden of Cognizance | Siya Brown

A myriad of facades  
Crumble like Jericho  
Likewise, I shatter

Unwillingly,  
Pandora's Box is unlatched  
With hope unseen

In spite of that  
A trigger untouched  
Leaves no wounds

Illusion's web  
Is a sufficient crutch  
Until the truth breaks free

Age took her course,  
Ending my dream  
Hagar and Zuleikha reign supreme



## A Strong Line of Queens | Lachelle Lindsay

A strong line of Queens  
The girl cannot see in herself,  
It may take awhile for her to know her worth.

“The world is a harsh place!” our society exclaims  
As the girl conforms and starts to change.  
She starts to shapeshift into a new person,  
Shedding the personality that society had forced her to feel uncertain.

Day by day, when will she learn  
That it's not society's approval that you should yearn  
For it is within yourself that you should feel pleased  
And not under a mask that would make you deceive

Yourself.



## She | Haley Wilson



Anticipation - Maggie McCormack

She bares the roots,  
the trees, the leaves.

She creates the air  
and nutrients we need.

She provides the fall,  
the warmth, and light;

the stars that  
cascade the night.

Her love for us  
traverses valleys  
and peaks, while  
it's defines the  
rivers and streams.

One glance away  
and she is gone.

So cherish her now,  
cherish her tomorrow.  
Cherish her as all, cherish  
her as one.



## Glorious Contradictions | Rachel Witteman

I am afraid of glorious contradictions.  
Staircases lined with paintings  
Monsters with pink bows  
Avarice, Amontillado

Doomed to forever  
Feet sewn to the ground  
Roots spreading out  
No room for growing now

Oranges that are red  
Love that isn't lost  
Memories that stay remembered  
People who never leave

Life that never ends  
Doomed again  
Chained by friends  
Freed by lies

Happiness that doesn't die  
And people on your side  
Cry into space  
Mascara stays in place

Because you're not crying  
You're sitting there  
Just looking  
Looking very sad and very frozen

The cold is burning  
The acid drips from the ceiling

Science teacher gone insane  
Ceilings painted in your name  
No one will remember  
For they took you away

I have pictures, though,  
So I remember.  
I forget.  
I remember you.

Never ending cycles  
Blocks of pen and paint  
Words on a page  
Mean so much to just one soul

Mirror bends  
Sunlight splinters  
Trees cower  
I stand tall and tell the world  
my name

I am afraid of glorious contradictions  
What I am  
What I do  
What I will become

