



2025 Session 3 Chapbook

EDITOR'S NOTE

The official theme of the summer was “Those who Sow in Tears will reap in Joy,” and it was reflected in the process of creating and finishing many of these pieces. What impressed me about this session’s Bonim and Shorashim campers, though, was how eager they were to collaborate, whether they were co-authoring a horror story or giving each other feedback on their almost-finished pieces. Writers gave each other suggestions and encouragement, and the results are something to be proud of. I hope this session’s writers take joy from their ongoing process and their finished products.

Meir Hoberman

Creative Writing Session 3, 2025

Mentor

Meir Hoberman

Faculty

Rabbi Elisa Koppel

Counselors

Zenobia Calhoun

Fayvel Selch

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Cursed Locket	Sydney Robinson and Karolina Mandell	Bonim and Shorashim	6
My Shoes	Sydney Robinson	Bonim	15
The Story We Wrote is Somehow Camp	Sydney Robinson	Bonim	16
Owling	Karolina Mandell	Shorashim	17
Creatures	Karolina Mandell	Shorashim	18
My Name	Karolina Mandell	Shorashim	19
Wires	Hannah Bea Grober-Morrow	Bonim	20
Cat Tails	Kylie Fine	Bonim	23
My Girl	Zoe Kossovsky	Shorashim	29

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Author's Note

I started this piece alone in the back of the library, trying to think of a unique ghost story that was Camp. I couldn't think of anything. Luckily, Karolina was sitting in a rocking chair reading. She offered to help, and I was so happy. The story relates to the theme, those who sow in tears will reap in joy in many ways. The characters go through a lot of hard things (like fighting an evil shadow demon) But in the end they work it out and are happy. And, while writing this, me and Karolina disagreed a lot. We argued about Mr.Pickles name (I won) Andy's lila Toveing (I won again) and so much more. But we are very satisfied with how it turned out. We got really attached to the characters. Some characters like Mr. Pickles were going to die, but we loved him too much to say goodbye. It was also a challenge making everything Camp, but somehow we managed. I hope you enjoy the cursed locket.

Sincerely,

Sydney Robinson

Hi! I'm Karolina and I'm the co-author of The Cursed Locket. As Sydney can tell you, making this story "camp" was a big challenge. We argued sometimes, deleted a lot of sentences, and stayed up late thinking about how to do it. But somehow, we did. I loved dreaming up these characters and bringing them to life. I fell in love with them, and hopefully you will too, whether it's Violet, our 13 year old heroine, or Ness, the shadow demon. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Karolina Mandell

The Cursed Locket

Sydney Robinson, age 11 and Karolina Mandell, age 13

Once upon a time, a girl named Violet was cleaning up after her epic thirteenth birthday party. It was truly a day she would remember, but not for the reason she suspected.

A few hours after the party, her mom approached her. "Wow," she said, "you're thirteen now, and I have a very special gift." "Why didn't you give it to me with all the others?" Violet asked. "Well, V," she said, "this is very special. I wanted to give it to you in private."

She held out a small, rectangular box wrapped with blue wrapping paper and a gold bow. "Oh, thanks mom," said Violet curiously as she took the gift and unwrapped it. Inside was a small, heart-shaped, golden locket with many scrapes and bruises, and a bit of rust. Violet thought it was really ugly, but she would never admit it to her mom. Her mom saw her disgusted expression and blurted out "it was passed down from your great-great grandma. We'll clean it up in a bit." Violet nodded and tried opening it up to see what was inside. "It's jammed," she said, "it won't open." "Oh, it's always been like that," said her mom, "it's never opened." Violet turned it over and saw a keyhole. "It's locked," she said, "where's the key?" "Uh...the key...the key is lost," said her mom, "I don't know where it is." "But what was inside of it?" Violet asked curiously. Her mom shrugged. "Probably nothing," she said. But Violet could tell by the look in her eyes, something fishy was going on. And it wasn't the salmon her mom was cooking for dinner.

Late that night, Violet sat on her bed, under the covers with her flashlight, trying and failing to open the locket. She tried everything. From tweezers, pliers, stepping on it, throwing it, even scissors. Nothing worked.

She growled in frustration and peeked her head out from under the covers to check the time. 12:09 AM. It was after midnight. I should probably go to sleep, she thought to herself. But she just HAD to open this locket. She stared at the keyhole and wondered where the key was and what was inside it. She held the locket close to face, the smell a mix of grease and old metal. She had so many questions. Why would her mom give her a disgusting locket, how old it was. So it belonged to my great-great grandma. She did the math in her head. This locket is about 102 years old, she thought in awe. But why would her mom give something as old and precious as this to a careless thirteen year old? She shrugged. Moms are weird, she thought as her eyes began to droop, sleep finally finding its way to her. She ended up falling asleep right there, the locket still on her neck. She wasn't sure if it was real or a dream, but she swore she could've heard a small whisper come from inside the locket.

A month later, the locket was still around her neck and her mom never got around to cleaning it. She still wondered about its origins, but she knew she

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

wouldn't get any answers. So for the most part she forgot about it. Until the tragic news when her Grandma Patricia passed away. Her family was devastated, including Violet, but she had lived a long and fulfilling life of 89 years. Violet called her an old fart while she was living, but now regretted it. She and her mom were given the duty of cleaning out her house of old belongings. It was a hard, sad job to be in Grandma Patricia's house without the smell of cookies baking.

She stepped into Grandma's old room, and tried to open the bottom dresser to see if there were any clothes, but it was jammed. After a lot of yanking and angry grunting, she finally got it open. But inside was not what she suspected. It was filled to the brim with old papers and magazines covered in dust. It looked like no one had opened the drawer for a long time. She took them out one by one, and when she saw a tiny golden key, about the size of her favorite crocodile croc Jibbitz. She held it up to her eye, taking it in. Wonder what this goes to, she thought as she slipped it into her pocket. Her mom called her and she stuffed the papers back into the drawer and sprinted down the stairs.

When she got back to her house, it was late, so she started getting ready for bed. She had completely forgotten about the key and the locket. But when she slipped off her hoodie, the key tumbled onto her floor. She picked it up and examined it closer. She had never seen a key so small and old before. Her brain clicked. The locket. She took it off her neck and compared the keyhole to the key. It was a perfect match. Her hand, trembling with anticipation, stuck the key into the hole and twisted it. She heard a soft click and the locket opened. But inside was not something she would've ever suspected. Instead of an old picture or painting, was white wispy smoke. Suddenly, she heard a bang from the locket, followed by a slow soft voice. "I've been waiting for this day for a loooong time," she heard the voice say. She whipped around, her face pale with fear. "What the...who are you?!" She shouted, "is this some kind of prank?" Suddenly, she felt a small tap on her shoulder. She turned around but saw nothing. "It's no prank, Violet," she heard the voice say again. "HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?!" She screamed. She heard the voice laugh softly. "You really think I wouldn't know your name after wearing the locket for a month?" "LEAVE ME ALONE!" She screamed, scrunching her eyes. This is all a dream, she thought desperately trying to reassure herself, you're just tired. You'll wake up. Suddenly, her mom ran up the stairs, bursting into her room. "Are you okay, honey?" She said, "What's wrong?"

"The...locket..." She stammered out, "It opened with the key I found in grandma's...dresser..." Her mom gave her a confused look. "What do you mean?" She asked, "the locket never opened." Violet looked down at her neck and was given a shock. The locket was closed, just like when she first got it. "I...I swear..." Her mom sighed. "I think you're tired," she said, "you should get some rest." Violet nodded and went into bed. But she couldn't stop thinking about the locket.

Suddenly, she heard the voice again. "Can't risk you telling Abigail about this," it said. "How do you know my mom's name?" She whispered. "She wore me too," said the voice, "I know everything about the women of this family. Their

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

names, their favorite colors, how selfish and controlling they are.”

Violet turned over and saw a dark shadow of a young woman on her bedroom wall, her eyes and smile burned against the wall. “Who...who are you?” Violet whispered. “I’m Vanessa,” she said, grinning, “but please, call me Ness.” Her shadow then slunk from the wall to the bed, her shadow cast against the headboard. Violet’s heart stopped, her mouth dry. “What, no words for your great-great aunt?” She said, giving out a soft, high-pitched laugh. “This has to be some sort of prank,” she whispered to herself, not wanting her mom to hear and come up to her room again. Suddenly, the shadow vanished.

It was a restless night, but she must’ve drifted off at some point, because she could hear her mom yelling at her to get up and saw the sun streaming through her window. She glanced at her clock. It was 9:00 AM. She slept through her alarm. She then glanced at the wall and headboard. Nothing, but she could’ve sworn it was a little tinted black in some spots. Probably my imagination, she thought, relieved, last night was a dream.

She walked downstairs, her eyes drooping from the lack of sleep, and sat down at her breakfast table. Her mom was waiting for her with an ecstatic look on her face. In her arms was a cardboard box with holes poked in it that seemed to be moving. Violet cried in joy and took off the top. Inside was a small pug puppy. “I LOVE HIM!!!! Oh my god!” Violet said. “I don’t know what to say!” Her mom just smiled. “Happy birthday,” she said, “I know you’ve been kinda lonely since dad left and you always wanted a pet. So.. What are you going to name him?” Violet thought for a moment, but then decided. “Mr. Pickles.” Her mom laughed. “It’s perfect.” Violet declared. She gave her mom a hug, and carried her new puppy to her room.

She walked into her room and closed the door, Mr. Pickles cradled in her arms. As she played with him, she let her mind go wild. So mom has noticed I’ve been lonely. I guess I haven’t been hiding it well. She thought, I mean, I have Andy and Zia, but she probably thought that wasn’t enough.

Her parents had gotten divorced the summer before, almost exactly a year ago. Her dad moved all the way out to Nevada and she hadn’t seen him since, only spoken with him on the phone once. It seemed like he was pretty much done with the family. Her best friends, Andy and Zia, were the only things that kept her going during the divorce. And even though she had mostly gotten over it, she still wondered what her life would be like if her dad never left. She remembered how he would sit on the couch early on Sunday mornings with coffee and the newspaper, how late at night he would yell at the TV, cheering for the Ravens. How he was never far from a bag of chips, and always took her to watch ice hockey games. Violet LOVED ice hockey. She watched games all the time, and begged her mom to let her play. Her dad had already said why not, but her mom used her mom power to shut that idea down, saying it was too dangerous. She then called her best friends over to meet her new puppy. That night, she went to bed with Mr. Pickle curled up at her feet and completely forgot about the locket, dismissing it as sleep paralysis, or a weird dream.

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

The next day was hot and dry, so she invited Andy and Zia over. They got out the water guns and went to the backyard. They played for hours in the hot July sun until they were sweaty, tired, and soaking wet. They went inside, dried off, and went to Violet's room to play with Mr. Pickles. But when they got to her doorway, there was something that made the stop dead in their tracks.

On the wall above her bed, there was a completely black shadow of a young woman with pearly white eyes, what looked like twisted horns, and sharp, perfectly white teeth. "I've been waiting for you," she said simply, "and it looks like you brought some friends. Oh goody." "What the... what is that thing?!" Cried Andy. "Yeah!" said Zia, "is this some kind of joke?" Violet just stared in shock. She had seen the shadow before. But where? Right! she thought, in my dream. At least.. I thought it was a dream. But now... I'm not so sure. "You're the... the thing from the locket!" She cried. "I thought I already told you," she said, "my name is Ness." Andy backed into the corner of Violet's room. "So what are you?" Asked Zia fearfully, "a demon?" Ness just grinned her expressionless smile. "Yes," she said simply. Zia's eyes widened as she grabbed a lamp from Violet's desk. "You think that's going to help you? Ha! Oh, foolish child. How old are you? 12?" "14!" Zia yelled, clearly offended. Ness just laughed loudly, her shadow shifting against the wall towards Andy.

Suddenly, Ness sped across the floor in a black blur and appeared behind Andy, grinning like a madman. Andy started screaming, but it was immediately cut off when Ness' shadow passed through him and he collapsed onto the floor. Zia screamed and sprinted over to Andy. "ANDY!!!!!" She screamed. Violet just stared at Ness, blinking back tears. "What have you done?" She said, Ness just stood against the wall, still smiling. Like she was happy with what she had done. "You're a monster," said Violet through gritted teeth. Her smile faltered a bit.

"If I'm a monster, then so are you," she said, "we're not so different, you and I."

"WHAT?!" Screamed Violet, tears running down her face, "WE'RE NOTHING ALIKE! LOOK AT YOURSELF! YOU'RE AN EVIL SHADOW DEMON! YOU'RE JUST..." she trailed off, thinking about Andy. "A monster."

"We have to go," said Zia, picking up Andy's body. Violet nodded and her and Zia ran out of the house. Ness didn't even bother to chase them. She just stood there, a shadow on the wall. Not smiling. Not frowning. Just watching. Almost thoughtfully.

Zia and Violet ran through the dark, lamplit streets. "Where are we going to go? It's already almost 9:00!" Zia asked. "The one place I know we'll be safe," replied Violet.

She and Zia sprinted until they reached Grandma Patricia's old house. The For Sale sign was up in the yard, but no one had bought the house. She secretly hoped no one would.

She took off the yard gnome's hat and grabbed a house key. I know this is where she would hide one, she thought as she unlocked the door, for emergencies.

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

She and Zia stepped into the house. Zia laid Andy on the couch, trying to get him to wake up. But inside, they both knew that he was gone.

Violet went upstairs to her grandma's room, where she had found the key to the locket. Why was it here? She wondered to herself, Why did she keep it? Suddenly, her foot got caught on the handle to the bottom drawer of her grandma's dresser and she tripped. She felt her ankle to make sure it wasn't twisted, and then stood up. It was the same drawer that she had found the key in, the newspapers and old magazines scattered all over the floor. She sighed in frustration. Just what she needed right now. A giant mess. She started picking up the papers and stuffing them back into the drawers. They were all pretty normal, standard things. But one article caught her eye. It was a newspaper, yellowed with age, possibly the oldest one. At the top, in faded black letters, it read Stone Family Lilah Toved By Vanessa Stone. Only One Survivor. Violet felt her mouth go dry. Vanessa. Ness. She...she had....she...

Suddenly, she felt a pair of eyes watching her. Turning around, she saw Ness on the wall watching her with an expression she couldn't read. "Go away," said Violet. Ness didn't move or say anything. Just stood there. "Just...why...why would you do that?" She said softly, wanting to cry, "why?"

Ness just sighed. For once, Violet saw her great-great aunt in a different light. Like she actually had feelings and thoughts instead of just being a demonic monster. "I can tell you," she said softly. Violet nodded. "Well, when I was a child, I dreamt of going to college to become a doctor..."

July 12th, 1923

Ness was cleaning up after breakfast, scrubbing dishes while her older brother Henry talked to her father about his college plans. He was going to college to become a banker. Her parents were not very wealthy, but he had gotten a scholarship. Her parents were so proud. Ness had gotten a scholarship to a college too, but her parents wouldn't let her accept it. "You're a woman Ness," said her mom, "college is for men. You can meet a wonderful man, get married, and have children for the Stones." While her parents congratulated and practically babied Henry, all she felt was a hot boiling rage as she angrily scrubbed the dishes. If only they could see I'm so much smarter than him, she thought, but they can't, because I'm a girl. I'm smarter than Henry could ever dream of being! I'm top of my class, and have gotten so many scholarships. I want to be a doctor, to do something important and helpful for once. Not just stay home and cook. If only my parents understood. And Henry's been bragging more than ever after he got the scholarship. The only person that ever truly felt like family was her younger sister, Rose. She had listened to her when she vented, hung out with her, and accompanied her in the "unladylike" games when she was younger. But, after she had gotten engaged to Albert, it seemed like their sisterly bond had taken a backseat. So really, she was all alone in this house.

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

One day, her brother was bragging so much that she just couldn't take it anymore. "STOP IT!!!" She screamed. Her brother just smiled. "I'm just saying, it's not like you can ever go to college. You're a girl. Oh and also, mom just set you up." Ness turned pale. "What?" She said softly. "You're lying!" She yelled. Her brother just smiled. "So, you can quit your dreams of being a stupid lady doctor and focus on a husband."

That did it.

She grabbed a stapler off her desk and chucked her brother's head and watched him fall. She gasped. "Henry?" She said softly. Nothing. "Henry!" She said louder. "HENRY!!?" She ran over to him and tried to wake him up. Nothing. "What have I done?" She said to herself. Suddenly, her dad walked into the room and stopped dead in his tracks. "VANESSA!!!!" He screamed. Ness was frozen in fear. Completely on autopilot, she grabbed a rock from the fishtank on the kitchen counter and hurled it at her father. She didn't notice, but the fish was holding on for his life. A crack. Silence. She didn't say anything. She just turned around and ran into the shed. Oh my god! She thought I just lila toved two of my family members in 5 minutes!

She just curled up in the shed, crying her eyes out, her hand still closed around the rock. Suddenly, she heard a piercing scream from inside that sounded like her mom, and another one that sounded like Rose. She closed her eyes, feeling more tears run down her face. Oh Rose, she thought, please forgive me. Suddenly, she heard clomping footsteps coming toward the shed. They must have heard her crying. The shed door ripped open, revealing her mother, her face tear-streaked and huffing like a wild animal. "SOMEONE LILAH TOVED THE BOYS!!!!!" She screamed, "WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!!!!!" Ness just sighed. "Mom...I..." Her mom's face fell. "You...WHAT?!" She lunged for Ness but Ness was faster. She grabbed the crowbar and swung. Again. And again, anger and hurt swirling through her.

When everything was finally silent, Rose ran over, tears running down her face, her eyes going wide when she saw the crowbar in her sister's hand. "It...it was you," she said angrily, "WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS?!" "I'M SORRY!" Screamed Ness, "I DIDN'T MEAN IT!!! AND IT'S NOT LIKE YOU EVER SUPPORTED ME IN THE FIRST PLACE! IT'S YOUR FAULT!" "WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DIDN'T MEAN IT, ?!" Screamed Rose, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT!? THREE PEOPLE ARE LILA TOVED AND IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU!!!!!" Suddenly, Rose threw a rake at Ness' head and she felt everything go black.

Ness felt her eyes slowly open. Huh, she thought, looking down at herself. What the....

Ness didn't see her body when she looked down. In fact, she didn't see anything. She looked at Rose, who was frozen with fear. "Ness..." she said, "you...you're..."

"I'm what?" She asked, confused. Rose just began backing away slowly,

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

her eyes wide. Then she turned away and ran.

"Hey!" She cried, "Come back!" She tried sprinting after her, but she couldn't run after her. She stuck to the wall. She tried moving, but she could only move across the wall. What's going on? She thought, Can I move across the floor? When she realized she could, she crawled across the grass at inhuman speed, speeding through the door and ending up on the wall again. She raced up the stairs and found Rose in her mother's room with an open book. The locket she wore around her neck was open, a mirror behind her. Ness' heart fell. She didn't see herself in the reflection. Instead, she saw a shadow thing with white eyes and strangely sharp teeth. Horns poked out of her skull. She wasn't human anymore. She didn't know what she was, but it wasn't herself. So what am I? She wondered, some sort of...demon shadow? Shadow demon? Well, At least it sounds cool. She didn't laugh at her not funny joke. What happened?

Rose started reciting these weird words while looking at the old book. She recited them over and over again. Suddenly, she felt a strange pull toward the locket.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ME?!" She cried, feeling the pull get stronger, "I'M YOUR SISTER!"

"You're no sister of mine," Rose said sternly and sadly, "not anymore."

Suddenly, there was a small pop, and she was pulled inside the locket. She could still see outside though, sense what was going on. But she couldn't move. She could whisper a little bit, but not much. What did she do to me? Ness thought. She was scared and angry. "You're a demon now," said her sister, "a monster."

Ness just sighed, wanting to cry again, if she even could cry. But she was able to muster a small whisper through the locket.

"I am a monster."

Violet just stared at her great-great aunt, her eyes wide as she finally finished her story. There was a strange look in those weird, white eyes...almost like... sorrow. "Wow," she said finally, "you're own sister... trapped you." Ness just nodded. "See?" She said, inching a little bit closer to her, "you're like me."

Violet went silent, remembering her own struggles. How she desperately wanted to play ice hockey, how her mom wouldn't let her no matter what. How she had shed many tears over it. "No," she said sternly, "I'm nothing like you. You lilah loved your family."

Ness just sighed. "You're exactly like me," she said softly before disappearing.

She heard Zia yelling. "Violet! Get down here!" She darted down the stairs. "Andy..." Zia started, "...Theres nothing I can do." Violet and Zia fell into silence, mourning their loss. "Look what I found." Zia said, breaking the silence. She reached into her pocket and pulled out an old, brown book. "It's a diary," she said, "of someone named Rose." Violet immediately lunged forward and yanked it out of her hand to flip through it. "Thanks to that old fart for keeping everything,"

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

she said under her breath. “What? It’s just an old book,” said Zia. In the book there was a bunch of strange wording and a picture of a locket. Violet’s heart skipped a beat. “Zia,” she said softly, “we’ve struck gold.”

“Uh... is gold an old dirty book?” Zia asked doubtfully. “No,” Violet replied, “this isn’t any old book. This is the diary of the person who trapped Ness for the first time. My great-great grandma.” Zia looked even more confused. “Huh?” She asked, “You’re...what?” Violet sighed, realizing she would have to explain everything she had learned. So she did.

“Wow” Zia said when she had finally finished, “Deep.” Violet nodded. Then they discussed their plan to trap Ness once and for all. When they had finally reached a conclusion, they decided to start. They both agreed this couldn’t wait. They had to start now.

They stepped out into the dark streets, heading toward Violet’s house. They walked through the unlocked door into a silent house.

“MOM!” Called Violet, “MR. PICKLES!” The dog suddenly came running down the hall toward them. Panting and barking, not wagging.

“What’s wrong, boy?” asked Zia. Suddenly, they heard footsteps coming down the stairs. “Mom?” Asked Violet. Mr. Pickles started whimpering, and that’s when Violet noticed he was covered in scrapes and bruises. “What happened to you?” Asked Violet.

“Hello,” said a strange, cold voice. A voice she knew all too well.

Her mom approached her slowly, but something was off. Her normally beautiful green eyes were now a milky white. “M-mom?” “Hello, Violet.” Said her mom, but it was Ness’ voice, “I have a host now. Time to go out and wreak my revenge against humanity.” Ness spoke this so causally, it almost sounded like a normal sentence, yet it was laced with ice and twisted pleasure. “No,” said Violet, “we can’t let you do that.” Ness just laughed. “And who’s gonna stop me?” She said, mocking them.

“Us,” they said in unison. Suddenly, Zia threw herself at Ness/Mom and knocked her back. “HOW DARE YOU?!” She screamed. She grabbed a spoon off the kitchen counter and knocked Zia off her. He then pushed her back with a dark, shadowy blast.

“ZIA!” Cried Violet. Zia groaned. “I’m...okay...” She said, rubbing the back of her head. Then, Mr. Pickles leaped towards Ness/Mom.

“Pickles, no!” Violet screamed. Mr. Pickles pounced onto Ness/Mom, barking and growling. She went flying back into the wall, hitting her head. Her Mom’s eyes quickly turned from white to green and black mist threw itself out of her mouth, forming Ness’ shadow against the wall. Her physical host was gone.

“NOW!” Ordered Violet as she ripped open the locket and the book. They started chanting the strange words until Ness was being pulled inside the locket.

“What the...NO!!!” She screamed, turning to Violet, “please! I can’t go back there again! I’ll go crazy! Please!” Violet paused for a moment, once again seeing the side of Ness that was human and hurt.

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

"I'm sorry," she said softly, "but I have to." Ness got smaller and smaller until she was sucked into the locket. Violet slammed it closed, and her and Zia rushed towards her mom. "I feel like I missed something." She said.

"Yeah. you did." Said Violet. They sat down and told her everything. About Andy, Ness and Rose. About how they had locked Ness in the locket again.

"I'm glad that's over," said Zia, "I never want to deal with some evil shadow demon again." Violet shook her head, holding the locket close to her heart.

"She wasn't evil," she said softly, "just...broken." Zia rolled her eyes.

"I mean...I guess," she said, "whatever you say." Violet nodded, her eyes getting a little blurry.

"I'm sorry Ness," she whispered to herself. "And I thought ice hockey was dangerous." Her mom said.

"Can I play now?" Violet asked, full of hope.

"Oh, definitely not."

30 Years Later....

Violet watched as her daughter Quilla dismissed the last of her guests from her thirteenth birthday party. The house was silent now, except for her son AP playing Mario Kart in his room upstairs with the volume on full blast.

"Well," said Violet, "now that that's over, I want to give you something." Quilla's eyes immediately went wide.

"Is it the locket?" She said, Violet nodded and took the locket off her neck and placed it in Quilla's hands. It was cleaned and polished, and was nothing like it was when Violet's mom gave it to her.

"Oh, thank you!" Quilla squealed. "And remember," Violet said "Never open it." She and her daughter said in unison.

"Ugh. I know mom. You're the only one who knows where the key is anyway." Violet nodded.

"Take good care of her, 'kay?" Quilla nodded and put the locket around her neck. Suddenly, they heard a soft whisper come from inside the locket.

"Happy birthday."

THE END

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

My Shoes

Sydney Robinson, age 11

My shoes are named

Theodore and

Ed

Named after characters in a book my
Teacher

Read.

On the left,
Theodore. And on the right,

Meet

Ed

They've been to Japan! NYC, too. Sleepaway camp,
And in my room.

They've been on
adventures!

None without me, you see

They're always on

My

Feet.

My shoes are named Theodore and Ed
Named after characters in a book my teacher read.

The Story We Wrote is Somehow Camp

Sydney Robinson, age 11

The story we wrote is somehow camp. Some
Get *lila* toved,
Injured or
Possessed.
We spent hours in the hall,
Deleting the blood,
Spent days thinking how to make it nice.
Spent nights awake when I should be asleep
Brainstorming alone.
Deleting and adding,
Just to
Delete
Again.
How to make our story camp?

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Author's Note

I wrote many poems over the course of the session. Some during my short stories elective, some during free write, some during menucha (rest time). For showcase, I've chosen three of my favorites, each one sharing a little bit about me. I hope you like them!

Sincerely,

Karolina Mandell

Three Poems

Karolina Mandell, age 13

Owling

Birding is different for everyone
It can be competitive or chill
I'm a hardcore birder
If I'm given the chance, I will.

While others are in the woods at midmorning
I'm in the woods at three
The owls, the dark, the mystery
It means a lot to me

Owling is not for the weak.
It means brutal wake-ups at two.
The day becomes a marathon
Sleep threatening to consume you.

But if you have donuts and a sleepy parent
Then go set out at two
Prepare to witness a beautiful sunrise
The adventures of the night await you.

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

Creatures

The night comes at the end of the day
When the sun sets orange and gold
When the creatures of the dark choose to come out and play

I don't care what some may say
But the creatures don't hie in the dark no more
The night comes at the end of the day

With the world all black and gray
This is the time when the mysterious comes out
When the creatures of the dark choose to come out and play

Creatures slithering, stalking, moving as they may
After the glowing sun goes down
The night comes at the end of the day

As the line between worlds begins to fray
The world sound asleep
When the creatures of the dark choose to come out and play

Some will hide, sleep, or pay
Under the dark, starless sky
The night comes at the end of the day
When the creatures of the dark choose to come out and play

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

My Name

My name is something that belongs to me
It brings both joy and pain
It's the eight letter word I write on assignments
The thing I whisper while out in the rain.

My name was never just mine
Though it doesn't have a lot of fame
It belonged to my long gone ancestor
Who survived Chicago's flames.

My name's meaning is a strong one
It means "warrior," "strong," and "free."
Karolina was a survivor
In a way, just like me.

My name isn't always a shield
Sometimes it's a heavy load
Mispronunciations and teasing creations
Face me down a depressing road.

My name is something that belongs to me
Like my mind, my spirit, my game
It carries ghosts of the past and hopes for the future
The eight letter word that's my name.

Author's Note

During this session, I worked on a multiple part story. In the book 'Wonder' which is a book that I really liked, it has multiple parts about different people, but all the stories are connected. In my book, I have I think ten people shown. Throughout the book. All of them are connected in some way to at least one other person whether they know it or not. Like the assistant knew that her husband was there, but not that her brother was. I have featured about one and a half of my parts. I haven't actually finished my story, but the last few ones I did write were from a narrator's perspective. I hope you enjoy the story of my story.

Sincerely,

Hannah Bea Grober-Morrow

Wires

Hannah Bea Grober-Morrow, age 10

Clara:

It was getting late and pouring on all of us there. This was very disappointing and I was very disappointed. The car felt like it was almost a mile away, and it might actually have been, but either way, it would be very hard to get my umbrella saying that it too is miles away, in the car. Even if the car was closer, or even right outside of the gates to enter, I still wouldn't be able to get the umbrella saying how big the crowd was. It would be practically impossible to even move, like, three feet! So there I was, stuck in the crowd with my daughter, getting peed on by the sky. Why we were even at this concert is still unknown to me. I believe my Mom had bought the tickets for us, for some stupid reason, 'cause even if we had the money to buy them, I still wouldn't have, saying how young my daughter is. But unfortunately, my Mom bought them mainly as a gift for Ariel, my daughter. As the sky poured on us, I could tell Ariel was getting kind of upset. Although, I actually wouldn't blame her. This was very upsetting. Even I was upset. Ariel was shivering on my leg, sticking to it like honey to your hand. I looked down at her. She was wearing a small hoodie. It was of a tiger. She

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

continued on shivering. I looked at myself. I was wearing a bigger hoodie from my college. I felt her cold hands on my legs and knew what I needed to do. I slowly took off the hoodie, embracing the freezing air that was now surrounding me and my skin. I could see why Ariel was now shivering even harder. She looked up at me. I was holding out the hoodie. "B-but Mom-mmy," she shivered. "You need it. Ta-take it." I shook my head. I might, but you need it more," I responded. I picked her up and wrapped her in my hoodie. I kept her in my arms. Her shivering didn't stop, but it did calm showing it was at least sort of working. It felt like we had been waiting for almost an hour when people started turning their heads to the stage. I had expected like thirty minutes ago that people would start filing out, but no one was. Now, practically everyone had their heads turned to the stage. I was very confused why no one was leaving 'cause I didn't expect anyone to even want to be at a concert in this weather, but I guess this is how the band likes to perform. Their name is Rainbow Lightning and they are like the band. The band everyone needs tickets for. I look over at the stage to see if anything is going to happen. I mean, I expected something a bit more, how do you say it, I guess impressive. I was still squinting at the stage to see if I was missing anything. I couldn't see anything. It was way too dark to see anything well. I'm pretty sure that if I saw a unicorn, I would think it's a horse. Ariel was still shaking her head off and I could tell very easily that the rain was getting a whole lot stronger. My temper was getting shorter and shorter for these girls and that is not a good thing, at least not when you're with me. My face was getting redder and redder, and not just from the cold, if you know what I mean. Everyone was still looking forward, getting more and more excited. As soon as I thought they would explode if they got more excited, a light flickered on stage. And then another one, and another. Little by little, all the members of Rainbow Lightning appeared on stage. Rainbow Lightning is an all girl band with five different girls. So many people love this band and Ariel is one of their biggest fans. She knows lots of fun facts. If you can't name all five of their names, get ready for a three hour lecture about them. So let me save you the trouble. Their names are Ellie, Sarah, Cameron, and Saidie. Well, those are all the backup people. But, the best person, by far, I'll add, is obviously Jessica, the final member. She does whistle tones!!! That's just amazing. She's just pure gold. But, of course, everyone else rocked, too. Sarah started the concert out. She was playing the piano, obviously. Then, without a doubt, the guitar started. It was very quiet, but we could still hear it. That was definitely Saidie. I heard, and yes, this was from Ariel, that she's been playing guitar since she was five, soon to be six. Now, she's about twenty-two. Everyone in the band knew how to play at least one instrument, but they weren't always used. Like Jessica hardly ever used any instruments because she was the lead singer. For this song, it was only Sarah and Saidie using the instruments. Ellie and Cameron were humming, lights shining onto them when they started. They were all wearing the same type of clothing: Jeans and a rainbow T-shirt. Finally, a light shined onto Jessica and the real stuff began. It all started out quiet. She hummed with everyone, then, it got loud. When I say loud, I mean loud, loud. Ariel had now been looking at the stage. She was not going to look

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

away at all. Until that moment. The guitar, the piano, and even somehow the humming. The singers were practically screaming. Ariel's eyes opened wider than I had ever seen them. Then, she started crying. She wasn't a baby or anything or really young, and I'm not saying that people who do that are babies, I'm saying that people who do that usually have a good reason to. Ariel really hates loud noises. She covered her ears as soon as she could. Everything started seeming really loud and really overwhelming. I soon found myself trying really hard to push myself through the crowd. I failed enormously and found myself even farther in the crowd than before. Even I was getting scared from the noise. It was really good music, but it was also really, really loud music that was getting too loud for me to bear. I just wanted to fall to the ground and stay there, but I kept reminding myself that this wasn't just me I would be choosing to do this to. Ariel can't leave without me. Apparently, though, I was reminding it to myself too much. I was still holding Ariel, or rather, she was holding onto me, on my back, to be specific, when I tripped over some drinks that were on the floor. I tripped onto my back, but quickly pulled Ariel out in front of me, last minute as I remembered what the thing on my back was. I hit the floor with my back and all the pain absorbs into me. My eyes open wider than Ariel's had. That was it. I got up, swallowing the pain and an ear piercing scream. Ariel was quiet, after all that. She had a few scrapes, now, and looked scared. I got up, slowly and painfully, and shoved through the crowd. After tens of minutes trying, we were out of the gates where I rested. Suddenly, 'BOOM'!

To be continued.....

Ariel:

As I clung on to my mother's back, I closed my eyes tightly shut in panic. I was getting probably the worst piggy-back-ride I had ever gotten, but to be fair, I probably hadn't lived long enough to really be saying that. Suddenly, I saw a cluster of five drinks on the floor. Actually, let me correct myself. I saw a cluster of five drinks on the ground right as my mother tripped on them. There she was, tumbling down onto her back. Yes, my Mom fell onto her back and hit the ground hard. But luckily, she quickly swooped me from her back to stomach right as she hit the ground. I gave a little yelp as I felt some random stranger stand on my little arm. I instinctively covered my ears even though it hurt like crazy. It was so, so, so, so, so loud. I really couldn't believe how this could be so loud. I was the last one in my friend group to go to a Rainbow Lightning performance, but none of them complained more than, 'It was a bit louder than I wanted,' so I wasn't expecting it to be this insane. I got up but couldn't see anything. I walked forwards a bit, trying to get someone's attention, but it didn't work. No one was looking at me. I was too short to do anything. The other day, people at the ice-cream shop were giving away free ice-cream and had only one more. I was the only kid left, but they couldn't see me so they gave it to someone who was already having doubles. Well, Jordan, I didn't even have firsts. This kid goes to my school and is going into the third grade. My ears ached as well as my arm. It hurt like crazy, crazy, crazy, crazy! Then, I realized my Mom wasn't with me. I searched around then found her on the same spot. "Get up," I told her. She gulped. "I can't."

To be continued.....

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Author's Note

I wrote this piece as part of a prompt where I was supposed to have the emotions change throughout the story. I chose to write according to that prompt in this way because I like cats. In the first part, in the beginning Luna is scared, which can be attributed to her "sowing in tears". At the end of her chapter, she is content- or "reaping in joy"- because she fell in a basket of fish.

Sincerely,

Kylie Fine

Cat Tails

Kylie Fine, age 12

A black cat creeps carefully across a windowsill, three stories above a busy moonlit street. Cars whiz by and buses stop at the street corner. The cat takes a quiet step toward an open window, stealthily inching across the threeinch platform. Finally, she bounds into the apartment, landing on four feet on the wood floor. CREAK.

The floorboards whine as the feline's paw comes down. Noise erupts in the black cat's ears; a shaggy white dog three times the cat's height sprints in from a corridor, barking its head off. It snaps its jaws, narrowly missing the cat as she leaps right over the vicious canine's head. Heart thumping in her chest, fear clenching its maw around her throat, the black cat streaks through the room and catapults through the open window. Spiraling through the air, she freefalls toward the street.

CRASH! The cat lands in something soft, cushioning her fall. Sweet aromas fill her nose. Hunger rumbles in her stomach. Contentment replaces the panic in the black cat's chest as she gazes around at the basket of fresh fish she'd landed in.

A fluffy white persian strolls down an alley, a collar jingling on his neck. Smelling food, he peels around the corner and comes to a halt before an ornate door of painted wood. "Meow!" he calls toward the obstacle before him. The door opens, and a tall woman with braided blond hair maple syrup brown eyes stands in the

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

doorframe.

“Snowcone, you're home! And just in time for dinner.” Snowcone struts into the apartment, sneering at the shaggy white dog stretched out on the carpet. He thumps his tail on the carpet.

I've got something to tell you.

Snowcone rolls his eyes to the ceiling. Save it for someone who cares. After filling his stomach with food, he curls up on the couch, taunting the dog on the floor. The canine bares his teeth and growls.

You'll regret this later.

Snowcone swishes his tail lazily. Oh, so now you have two things to tell me.

The dog stands up, towering menacingly above the cat. His sharp teeth and claws gleam dangerously in the light of a chandelier. He looks about ready to tear Snowcone limb from limb when the woman, their owner, scolds,

“Down, Sweetiepie! Bad! Bad dog!”

Reluctantly, Sweetiepie lowers himself to a sitting position, resting alertly on his haunches. He raises his tail from the floor and twitches his ears. An intruder.

This gets Snowcone's attention. His already pointed ears perk up even more with interest. Really? Who? Then gives Snowcone a knowing look. Did they get away?

Sweetie pie eyes snowcone with a disgusted glare as if the questions were too disgraceful to deserve answers. Then he replies with a thump of the tail and quirk of the ear. It was a cat. A stray. Came to steal food. I tried to catch it, but it jumped out the window. Probably dead on the street like any old roadkill.

Snowcone mulls this over. No, he hisses. I didn't see a corpse on my walk. Odds are, it's dead. But I don't take chances. Here he stands up and hops off the couch. Tomorrow, you're gonna help me find it.

A sleek orange mackerel tabby crawls through a tight tunnel. Bracing his face against a cold wind, the ginger cat forces herself through the air conditioning vents. Finally seeing light, she pushes into a vast room. She gazes upon an elaborate rug, a poofy couch, and an open window five cat's heights from the carpeted floor.

The kitty leaps onto the windowsill and peers out. Exiting the building three stories down are a blond woman, a poofy, pampered persian, and a shaggy white dog. The cat and dog appear to be communicating. Intrigued, the tabby strains her eyes to see their ears and tails, listening for meows and barks.

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Yes, I know you're on a leash, says the fluffy white cat. I have eyes, you know.

The dog growls back, So I can't help you. I'm stuck with Giant Twolegged Dog, at least until you figure out how to magically disintegrate my leash.

That's strange. In the eyes of the orange cat, being a pet was to be wished for. Free food and shelter and all that. So why did these fortunates want to run away?

Don't worry about Giant Twolegged Cat, the persian continues. All you have to do is follow me. With that, the pretty pet dashes into a sidestreet. The huge dog follows, sprinting so fast he pulls the leash straight out of his owner's hands. Amazed at the scene playing out before her, the ginger leans forward through the open window for a better view; and falls.

The black cat lay still in the fish basket, belly plump from fish. There was still more in the basket, so she saw no reason to leave until she spotted a figure falling from the sky. At first, she strains to see what it is. But when she realizes it's coming straight for her, she tries to scramble out of the way.

An orange streak rockets toward the basket of salmon and trout. Instead of getting buried within it, though, as the black cat had done, the ginger tabby bounces off the fish and lands squarely on top of the black cat.

Oof, both cats groan as they rub their bruised limbs. The black cat is about to yell at the orange feline for landing on her when she sees Sweetiepie.

Hey, she says to the ginger. Can I ask you a favor?

Sweetiepie scans the area for any sign of the black cat's body. Nothing.

Maybe a giant twolegged dog threw it in a dumpster? he proposes hopefully.

Snowcone shakes his head. He points toward a basket of fish. That's directly beneath our window. It could have cushioned its fall. Then he hisses at sweetie pie. Now let's split up and find it.

Sweetiepie obeys, trotting left down a dark alley. He glimpses a flash of black fur and takes off after it. He sprints towards the cat, who jumps over him. Again. Sweetiepie growls, Not this time, stray. He takes off down a busy avenue.

Dodging between the legs of passerby, the black cat dashes away toward a city skyline.

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

Sweetiepie charges through the crowd, tackling giant twolegged dogs as he tails the feline. Finally, he corners her against a wall. He lets loose a growl like that of a lion and grabs her by the scruff with his bared jaws.

The ginger cat leaps from the window, falling once more into the basket of fish. This time, though, he'd brought a prize with him; a large slice of heavily frosted vanilla. Cats can't taste sweetness, but that doesn't mean the fatty bread didn't smell delicious to the highly trained nose of a feline. She'd timed it perfectly, so that the fluffy white persian cat sees her land in the fish with cake from his kitchen.

The white cat hisses at the orange, You! I'm gonna kill you, thieving stray! Thinking the ginger was the black cat from the night before, he pounces, raking his claws across her back.

The stray yowls and takes off.

The pet quickly catches up. Who do you think you are, stealing from me?! he screams as the tabby cat gobbles down the slice of cake.

Crookshanks, local stray and master thief, Crookshanks hollers proudly midbite.

Snowcone only scowls. Crookshanks? What kind of name is that?

Hmmph, crookshanks scoffs, slowing to a stop. The kind your actual parents give you, not some twolegged stranger that thinks it's in their place to name us just because they put milk in bowls! She swipes at Snowcone, brushing his fluffy fur as he ducks away.

The persian returns the blow, drawing blood.

Crookshanks sprints away again, stopping when she reaches a busy train station. Only one place left to go. Crookshanks peels through the crowd, dodging between legs and then jumping into the train.

Sweetiepie clutches the black cat in his teeth.

Please, the stray begs. Let me go!

The gigantuan dog starts to stroll down the street. I don't know a thing about you. Why would I do that?

The cat squirms. My name's Luna. I was just hungry!

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Sweetiepie ignores her, and they don't speak for the rest of the walk, Luna hanging limp in his mouth, at times trying to wiggle free. After a few minutes, they come across the train station. The train is about to start moving, and Sweetiepie eyes the section of track in front of it. If he times it right, Luna won't have time to jump back out again.

That's when he sees Snowcone. He can't leave him. Ignoring timing, he throws Luna onto the tracks and races after the persian. He hops through a hatch and lands with a thud inside. Sweetiepie is about to grab Snowcone and get out when the train starts moving.

Luna leaps off the tracks and onto the train just as it starts moving and chugs over the spot where she's just been. She carefully crawls across the top of the train, knowing she likely won't have a basket of fish to fall into this time. She finally makes it to the hatch and drops in, landing squarely on top of Sweetiepie. What are you doing here? she asks Sweetiepie at the same moment Crookshanks asks,

What happened? and Snowcone exclaims,

Who are you?

Sweetiepie explains that Luna is the culprit from the night before.

Crookshanks explains that she had pretended to be Luna to trick Snowcone.

Snowcone explained who she was and how she was involved in all this.

And Luna explained she was in the train because Sweetiepie had thrown her on the tracks. And now we're stuck on this train with no way to get home.

Author's Note

Hey guys! I've never shown anyone my work, aside from my friends, and even then just barely, so this is all kinda new to me.

Anyways, I'm Zoe, I wrote this short story and these are the characters I use constantly because I'm too lazy to come up with new, deeply complex characters. Especially, since I've been workshopping these ones for about 2 years now. So if you're interested, I'm gonna list some information on them that may have not been shown.

Kai - eyes: #331e06, Skin color: #e9dbbe, Likes to do wood work and glassblowing, 20 (3 months older than Haley)

Haley - eyes: #478627, Skin color: #dab37, Likes to bake, primarily cakes and small pasteries

This story was written over the course of about a week and a half and I have struggled with wording and ideas, but I think it turned out well, so if you happen to like this story...Thanks!

^_^

Sincerely,

Zoe Kossovsky

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

My Girl

Zoe Kossovsky, age 13

Part 1

Haley sat on the edge of the stone bridge, the degraded and crumbling rocks providing a calming view of the ocean beyond, the sunlight reflected off of Haley's sage green eyes, the foam from the soft ocean waves adding a fluffy look into her irises. She took a deep breath, her legs crossed gently, held by her feet intertwined at the heels. She leaned back on her hands and inhaled the ocean air with full, prepared lungs. Her blonde hair was streaming out behind her as the wind hit her face, when the wind slowed, her hair began to cover her eyes as she turned her head. Her hair cascaded her vision and blocked the view of the face next to her, however she could be sure it wasn't someone she expected to be there. A soft, slightly deep, but undeniably feminine voice came from the person next to her,

"As much as you like the ocean, it seems like it's out to get you." she laughed softly. Considering the fact that Haley didn't control herself in her dream she spoke in response,

"Yeah, well, at least a seagull didn't steal my fries."

The other girl lightly pushed Haley's arm and they giggled.

The alarm went off and Haley was snapped back to reality, her little apartment and her phone alarm screaming at her to get to her botany lecture. She groaned and sat up, hair a mess, bed's fluffy white sheets thrown to the side, half off the bed, and phone still blaring. She turned off the alarm and sat there staring at the wall in silence for a few seconds before hoisting herself out of bed, looking down at her pajamas, thin, baggy shirt and thin, short-shorts. Haley shivered in the new cold of her apartment, the white bed was definitely much more comfortable and warm. She finally started to move, walking over to her full-size mirror. She looked at her hair, unbrushed and a mess, blonde strands everywhere, some blocking her eyes, providing just a light annoyance to her vision.

She walked to the bathroom, small, white walls and white tile. Shower and bath in one in the wall at the end, no more than 5 feet from the door. The curtain was a bit too small so a sliver of the bath was always visible. Toilet to the left of the bath, sink next to that, shelf lining the whole right wall (aside from the towel rack) filled with unopened soaps and lotions, makeup, etc. basic bathroom material. She brushed her teeth and her hair and put on some lip gloss and applied a thin layer of perfume, rose water scented. She grabbed her gold ring from the counter and slid it on her left middle finger.

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

Then, she went back to her room, to the calm, sky blue walls and the white sheeted, blue pillowed, queen bed in the upper left corner, next to her lamp and side table. The mirror mounted on the wall a few feet from her bed on the left side wall, a white wood closet next to that. On the other side of the room was her small blue sofa, her black desk, and her white chair. A stack of books was placed on the sofa and the table had notes, highlighters, pencils, 2 books, her laptop, and a succulent. Haley walked over to her closet and put on a white flowy blouse and light blue shorts. She turned and went over to the kitchen, same white wall tile, a steel and black stovetop and oven in one, a microwave above that surrounded by cupboards. Haley stretched her arms up and made a little groan as her muscles loosened, then she walked over to a cupboard and took out a glass and a mug, she put the mug under the coffee machine and set it to 'hot water', then she filled her glass with water, grabbed her pill bottle from off the counter and took 15 milligrams of adderall and vitamin D.

When her hot water was done she picked up the mug and grabbed a tea bag from the counter, after putting her glass in the dishwasher, she let it sit in the water for a moment before tossing it out and grabbing a croissant that she had baked the previous day. She didn't even bother to grab a plate, she just took her mug and her croissant and sat at the table.

Haley took out her phone and saw a couple of messages, all from her boyfriend, Andrew.

'Goodnight',

'I miss you',

'Good Morning',

'I want you to meet someone'. Haley had slowly been floating apart from Andrew lately, as he got more dry, she got more distant. However, she had convinced herself she was in love with this guy. So, she slowly responded one by one, to

'I miss you',

'See you soon', to

'Good Morning',

'Morning', to

'I want you to meet someone',

'?'.

After she had finished eating, Haley put her dishes away and slid on her white sneakers, grabbed her laptop bag, went to her room, put in her laptop, books, and wallet, went back to the kitchen, and grabbed her keys before leaving the apartment.

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Part 2

Haley parked her BMW convertible in the parking lot of the campus, she got out and looked at the saturated blue reflecting light off the paint, she locked it and the head rolled up, the white seats looked new after the detailing she got done just last week. She walked into the building and found the lecture hall, she sat down in her usual spot, third row, aisle seat. Easy exit, no awkward 'excuse me's and a good view. She took out her laptop and opened to her class notes and the professor started his lecture. She listened and detailed all about the different uses plants had for the ancient Greeks, medicines, perfumes, memorial, etc.

As she listened and took notes, Haley's mind began to wander, she thought about Andrew and what made her initially interested in him, was it his fluffy brown hair or his height? She appreciated how he was taller than her but other than being just an average guy her only reason for being with him was to say 'I have a boyfriend'. She spent the whole lecture thinking about him and how she didn't even really like him in the first place.

Once the lecture was over, she got back in her car and met at the spot Andrew had texted and she got out...the aquarium? Once she got over the initial confusion, Haley entered and saw Andrew standing at the front desk, she walked over and smiled.

"Hi! You wanted to show me someone, right?"

"Yeah, my new friend!" he leaned in for a kiss and Haley quickly backed up and pretended to be interested in the counter,

"Where is he?" she asked, assuming it was one of his guy friends

"She's doing her job so if you wanna meet her, you can come follow me," he said, correcting her, Haley looked confused and shrugged, just sighing and following her boyfriend.

She followed him through the warm, slightly moist hall past the visitors and into the 'employees only' door. Inside, there was a large pool with a wall roughly three feet tall and a wall full of buckets with shrimp and worms, next to the shelf in the fluorescent lighting and the beige walls was a tall, light skinned, black haired girl. She had a wolfcut cascading to the ends of her shoulder blades and a silver necklace. On her fingers were a few silver rings with basic designs, she stood up from tying her shoe and grabbed a bucket of shrimp, Andrew called out to her.

"Kai!" he said happily and she turned, she looked like a deity, frozen in time like

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

how a statue captures someone's presence through stone. She smiled back and waved, Haley noticed her huge black tshirt, cropped at the waist, but still baggy, and her light tan shorts going down to her knees, her legs looked soft and shaved and her eyes a comforting deep brown, the kind of eyes where if sun shone on them they'd turn to a heavenly amber.

"Hey," she said, grunting softly as she hoisted the bucket up into one arm to come over to the couple to shake hands, "I'm Kai...Haley, right?" she said, making direct eye contact with Haley, confident and strong-willed. Haley nodded and reached out her hand to shake Kai's, she was pleasantly surprised by her muscular, veiny hands, not veins that popped out, but clear enough that she worked out. Her grip was firm yet gentle and she smiled softly as she shook Haley's hand, when she pulled back Haley realized she was staring at Kai's hands,

"You good?" Kai asked, concerned for Haley's stare, unaware that it was in awe.

"What? Uh, yes ma'am." Haley blurted out, immediately recognizing Kai as an authority figure. Andrew laughed at her response and Kai giggled,

"No need to call me 'ma'am' just Kai is fine."

Haley swallowed hard and blushed slightly in embarrassment,

"Right, sorry...Kai." She added quietly, however, she was internally very confused as to why she was so nervous and careful and prepared to address Kai as higher than herself. Especially, since this girl was standing there holding a bucket of live shrimp.

"You're all good."

Kai backed away and went over to the pool and took a handful of shrimp and rang a bell, the sound waves went through the water and a mob of stingrays came up to the edge and Kai threw the handful to the cartilage creatures. They ate happily and Kai went to the side a few feet to her left and a stingray with a huge scar on its back swam up slowly and she hand-fed it. Then, Kai took a bottle of something next to her, poured some on her hand and rubbed it into the scar, then she spoke softly to the animal,

"Shh, I know it stings your scar, but it'll help it heal." She then gave the stingray another piece of shrimp, "Good girl, Jet." Kai spoke calmly and reassuringly to the stingray, her voice was deep but still clearly feminine. Haley found herself entranced by the voice of the tall woman, she entirely forgot her boyfriend was there and found herself walking over to the edge of the pool, next to Kai.

"What happened to her?" Haley asked softly, pointing to the scar along the back of the stingray.

"That's Jet, one of the cownose stingrays. She was rescued from a fishing net on a

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Jersey beach fishing trip. They picked her up from the current as she was hunting. The net pressed into her back as she fought the net, at least, that's what the vet said." Kai informed Haley, "Now, she just needs her daily scar ointment until the end of the year and she'll be okay, she likes it here with all her friends anyways." Kai added, with a smile, trying to lighten the mood.

Haley nodded and watched the stingray glide around in happy little circles in the pool, Kai held out a piece of shrimp,

"Wanna feed her?" she asked, and Haley nodded silently, she took the shrimp in her hand and let Kai guide her hand into the water,

"The flabby pieces aren't the mouth, they just help guide food to her mouth, under her body. So it might feel suction-y, but that's just her trying to take the food, okay?" Kai asked softly, like a guiding and understanding parent, Haley nodded and let out a little "mhm" before letting the stingray suck the food from her hand, Kai was right, the suction tickled and Haley let out a small giggle, which caused Kai to giggle, Andrew just stood in the back looking at his phone. He finally spoke up,

"Babe, I need to leave, I have a meeting." he said and walked out,

"Oh...okay." Haley said back, confused, but understanding, she was just left with a woman she barely knew but desperately wanted to know.

After Kai had finished her work and Haley had washed her hands, Kai showed Haley around the back of the aquarium, all the spots where they would teach the animals how to feed correctly, or train them for enrichment purposes. Haley was mesmerized, not just by Kai's knowledge of the sea creatures, but of her dedication and passion towards their wellbeing. Haley's phone buzzed and she looked down at it, it was a message from Andrew

'Meeting running late' nothing else, just that. It confused Haley because of how dry he'd become and because of the fact that he didn't even have a job aside from his internship at the auto shop. But, nonetheless, she shrugged it off and focused back on Kai.

"Do you want me to take you home?" Kai asked after a few minutes of silence, staring at the jellyfish tank.

"Oh, uh...thanks, but I brought my car so I'm good actually." Haley said, laughing nervously. Why was she laughing nervously? That was a completely normal question, what was happening to her? Kai nodded and sighed, turning her attention back to the jellyfish,

"Beautiful aren't they?" Kai asked, and Haley nodded, "Kinda like you." she added, smoothly, Haley almost didn't notice. But when she did her face went dark red, she blushed so hard her vision blurred and got a pink hue,

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

“Cute.” Kai commented,

“I- I have a boyfriend! I need to go!” Haley yelped, standing up too quickly and losing her balance, falling over her own feet back onto the bench. Kai immediately stood and helped steady Haley,

“Hey, hey, I didn’t mean anything by it, I was just complimenting you, relax it’s okay.”

Haley nodded and took a deep breath, fidgeting with her hands.

“Right, sorry...I’m just nervous because Andrew is being dry with me, and he might be cheating on me, but I don’t wanna break up because...because w-what if he’s not and that makes me both a bad girlfriend and a bad person?”

Kai nodded and slid back a few inches, she held Haley’s hand gently and spoke in a soft voice,

“It’s okay to break up because you’re unhappy, Haley. I’m not going to say he’s not cheating on you because if he is I’d be lying to you, so I will say this instead; if Andrew is cheating on you, I can help you break up with him and I’ll bring you anything you need to get over him, okay?”

Haley nodded as she slowly processed this information,

“T-thank you. Could I...have your number?” she asked nervously, Kai nodded and they exchanged contact info.

Part 3

Haley pushed open the door to her apartment with a sigh, she was exhausted, and at the same time she somehow had enough energy to run around in circles before breaking down in tears in her own frustration. However, she didn’t do that. She took off her shoes, put down her keys and went to her room, she quickly changed into her pajamas and got into bed, within a few minutes she was asleep.

There was a ringing on the phone, Haley forced herself awake and looked around her dark room, she checked her phone, 2:34 am. Who could be calling? She checked the caller ID, Andrew. She answered and groggily spoke up,

“Yes?” but there was no response, Haley sat in silence until the phone fell on the floor, there was a brown haired woman sitting on Andrew’s lap in his apartment, on his white couch with dim lighting, she and him were making out, it had been a butt dial, but it had showed Haley her worst nightmare. She stayed silent and hung up.

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Haley stared in silence for a few moments, her dark room clouding her thoughts like the scene in her head, replaying over, and over, him grabbing her hip, her panting. Haley gathered herself and silently stood up, she went to the kitchen and made a cup of earl grey tea. She sat in silence at the table, drinking it, zoned out and emotionless, to state it plainly, she didn't know how to react.

“...I was right. He was cheating on me....” Haley laughed, she was in shock, then she began to violently sob and whine, she pushed her tea and it fell over, spilling all over the table. She sobbed, and sobbed, her face red and puffy, she unconsciously called Kai and she answered on the second ring,

“Hello?”

Haley didn't answer, she just sobbed, Kai got the idea and through a lot of hiccups and sniffing she was able to get the address, and within about 30 minutes Kai knocked on the door and Haley croaked,

“Come in.”

She was curled up on her blue sofa in a tan, fluffy blanket, a pile of used tissues on the coffee table.

“Woah, you are a mess, Haley.” Kai chuckled, trying to relieve some tension. She turned her gaze to the table with the spilled tea, she had come straight over, her hair was unrushed and she was in a loose tan crop top and plaid pants. Haley turned her head from her shaking hands and looked up at Kai, her eyes were glassy with tears, yet still, there was awe for the taller girl in the depths of her look.

Kai immediately got to work, she used a towel to clean up the spilled tea, she put the cup in the dishwasher and then took the pile of tissues from Haley without complaint and put it in the trash can next to the counter. She came over to the couch and sat next to Haley, Haley instinctually threw herself into Kai's arms, just letting her cradle the crying wreck that was this confused blonde girl.

After a few minutes Haley calmed down, she was still sniffing and shuddering, but she was calm. Kai spoke up and offered to make some food, Haley didn't respond but didn't reject the idea. Kai stood up and went over to the stove top, she put a pot on the stove and a pan next to it, she began to boil water in the pot and she crafted a red sauce in the pan. Kai poured the sauce into a bowl and walked back over to the couch while waiting for the water to boil.

“Does pasta sound good?” she asked softly and caring,

“M-mhm.” Haley sniffled quietly, Kai came back and sat next to her,

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

“How about we watch a comfort show or something until the food is ready?” She left it as an option so Haley wouldn't feel pressured.

“B-Bluey.” Haley said softly, trying to get out of her own head. Kai didn't shame or comment, she just turned it on and held Haley.

After they finished eating, Kai cleaned up, Haley was in a much better mood now and giggled a bit,

“Housewife, huh?” she laughed softly,

“I'm just taking care of you. Don't get too comfy because I'm not someone's domesticated housewife.” Kai teased back

“Right, of course, sorry your royal highness.” Haley said in a posh voice,

“Shut up.” Kai rolled her eyes and said playfully.

“Make me.”

Kai's eyes widened at the flirty teasing, she didn't want to be too forward and kiss Haley, that soon after a heartbreak anyways, so she rummaged through the freezer and found a strawberry popsicle, she unwrapped it and giggled mischievously.

“W-what are you doing?” Haley asked nervously, Kai ran over and put the tip of the popsicle in her mouth, causing a startled gasp and a pant for air that made Kai's stomach swirl. She wanted to make Haley pant, she wanted to make her gasp for air and beg for more. But, nonetheless, she pushed those thoughts aside and just watched Haley suck on the popsicle, desperately trying to distract herself.

“Hey...would you maybe wanna go out? A-as friends of course, we can go to a cat cafe and just hang out to get your mind off Andrew. Tomorrow of course, because it's y'know...4am.” Kai asked, both genuine about the reason, but at the same time, selfishly wanting Haley to herself.

“Oh...um...okay, yeah tomorrow.” Haley nodded and placed her chewed popsicle stick on the coffee table, which Kai immediately grabbed and threw out for her.

“Here,” Kai reached out her hand and Haley took it, “Go to bed and I'll stay on the couch to get you anything you need.”

Haley nodded and did as she was instructed, she wrapped herself in her blanket and Kai closed her door, she felt safe and comfortable, immediately falling asleep in the comfort of Kai's protection.

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

Part 4

Haley let out a soft grumble and sat up, she checked the time, 11:32 am. She got up and got dressed, when she walked into the kitchen there was a plate of toast and egg on the counter next to a note. She walked over and opened up the paper, in neat handwriting was written,

‘Good morning, Haley. I hope you managed to get some good sleep after last night. I made you some breakfast but I had to go to work, I’ll come get you at 4pm for our cat cafe date. See you soon!

>-<

Kai’

Haley smiled as she read the note and narrated it in Kai’s voice in her head, to say the least, it was calming and made her feel comfortable.

Haley sat down at the table and ate hesitantly, especially since she didn't know if Haley could cook or not. She was, however, pleasantly surprised. The egg was runny, but the yolk stayed in one place. The toast was nice and crunchy, but not burnt in the slightest. It was easy to tell it wasn't put in a toaster, but fried in a pan.

Once she finished eating and cleaning up, Haley went over to couch and sat there just thinking for a second, then she picked up her phone and saw a message from Andrew,

‘Hey babe’

It was clear to Haley that he didn’t know he had accidentally facetimed her. She didn’t respond. She went straight to Kai’s contact and called her, within two rings, Kai picked up,

“Hello?”

Haley’s heart fluttered,

“Hey. Thanks for breakfast, it was really good. Um...you ‘re gonna come get me at four to go to the cat cafe, right?”

Kai giggled, “Yes ma’am, Haley.”

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

"Okay...well uh, how's work?" Haley asked nervously, laying onto her stomach on the couch and kicking her legs in the air slowly.

"Well, um, y'know, it's pretty normal. Fed the stingrays and helped incubate turtle eggs, and now I'm gonna go train the baby nurse shark to feed from the stick he's supposed to eat from." Kai said calmly, explaining her work and what she was doing.

"Woah! That's so cool. Maybe one day I could come to work with you..." she asked, hoping to learn more about someone she thought was so interesting.

"Yeah, of course! It's a date!" Kai said excitedly, Haley flushed,

"A date...?"

Kai laughed, "Yeah, you know, to like, come hang out at work with me."

"OH! Yeah, right...uh, see you later I guess..."

"Mhm! Bye~ bye~"

Kai hung up and Haley sat there in silence for a bit before giggling and blushing and kicking her feet like a schoolgirl with a crush.

There was a knock at the door, Haley slipped on her socks and opened the door, Kai was standing there in a nice, white, button-up dressshirt, collar down. She was wearing black dress pants and a black tie. Haley quickly examined her up and down,

"Woah, uh...you dressed up." she chuckled nervously, rubbing the back of her head with suddenly warm hands, she felt out of place in her tan shirt and beige shorts. "Was I- was I supposed to dress up?" she asked anxiously, now fidgeting with her hands.

"No, no, I...I just wanted to look...presentable...for y'know, a date. Even as friends." Kai explained, now struggling to appear confident like usual.

Haley blushed and grabbed a lip gloss from the counter,

"F-fine, but then you have to wait while I get ready, even for a cat cafe...with cats...with you...on a date."

Kai nodded and watched Haley scurry back to her room and shut the door, she walked into the apartment and closed the front door behind her. She walked around the apartment, seeing it and inhaling it for the first time when she wasn't running on 3 hours of sleep. She found it to be modern, yet comfy. Kai sighed as she soaked up the environment, she leaned against the counter and crossed her arms briefly, then she took out her phone and texted Andrew, ignoring his texts from before,

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

‘Haley’s done with you, you ruined her, she thought you loved her and wanted her for who she was until she saw you cheating on her over the phone, which you were too distracted to even notice. So you can run along and mess with any woman you want but Haley is mine, understand?’

Read

She turned off her phone and put it away,

“You done yet, princess?” Kai called out to Haley’s room.

“A-almost! Just finished putting on my dress!” Haley yelled as there was a small crash, evident to rush.

“Take your time, Hales.” Kai chuckled

A few minutes later, Haley came out of her room in a buttercup yellow dress with straps over the shoulders and a flowy piece over her collarbone. She was panting lightly and ran to the cupboard for a glass and filled it with water before chugging it. Kai blushed at her look and her throat bobbing up and down through the gulps.

She cleared her throat and Haley opened her eyes, looking over as she was called to attention, she put the glass down and wiped her face with the back of her hand.

“Ready to go?” Kai asked, composing herself once again.

“Yep!” Haley said excitedly, she turned into a golden retriever and became attentive to Kai, struggling to make eye contact but giving her all the focus nonetheless.

Kai parked her black Audi outside the cafe and got out of the car, despite being dressed fancy, her shoes were just some normal converse. She walked over to the passenger seat and surprised Haley by opening the door for her and taking her hand to help her out. Andrew had never been such a gentleman as Kai and wasn't even a man or her boyfriend. They walked into the cat cafe and got sat immediately, they slid into a booth and Kai ordered Haley an earl grey tea, lightly steeped. Kai had clearly done her research, as much research as you can do in a nineteen year old's kitchen at least. A black cat meowed and walked over to the pair, it jumped up onto the booth and Haley smiled widely, she reached out her hand and let it sniff her.

“Look! He likes me!” she said happily to Kai,

“Who doesn't?” she replied sweetly, petting the black cat who was now curled up in Haley’s lap, kneading at her date’s dress, “He’s making biscuits on you.”

“He’s my baby now. I want him.” Haley said confidently. An employee walked over and gave Haley the tea as the cat purred in her lap,

URJ 6 POINTS CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

“Wow! He likes you! I’ve never seen him go up to anybody.” the waiter said, surprised.

Kai nodded as she listened to the employee. He continued to talk about the cat once Haley said she was interested in adopting him,

“His name is Boba like tapioca pearls, but he also responds to ‘Bober’. He’s one year old, and an American Shorthair, and he has green eyes so sometimes we like to call him Toothless when he meows with his mouth barely open.”

Haley giggled at his nicknames and let the waiter explain how to take care of a cat, brushing, feeding, etc. “I want him.” Haley said seriously,

“Alright, let me put him in a crate and give you a starter kit, since we’re a nonprofit you just have to pay for your drink.”

Kai put down her card before Haley could even take out her wallet. Haley thanked her and Kai reassured her it was fine.

Part 5

Kai took Haley home and she let Boba out of his crate to explore the apartment and he walked around cautiously, but he soon got comfortable and curled up on the couch. Kai helped Haley set up food, water, and a litter box. Then they both went and sat on the couch next to the cat.

“Wanna watch some tv?” Kai asked, grabbing the remote,

“Sure. put on something you want.” Haley nodded, genuinely interested in Kai’s preferences.

Haley watched Kai’s show with full investment, but Kai’s gaze was stuck on Haley, admiring her and her interest.

Haley finally noticed Kai staring and blushed,

“Hey, whatcha looking at?”

“Oh, nothing, just a pretty woman.” Kai said, flirting with Haley,

“I think I’m a lesbian.” Haley said after a few moments,

“I know I am.” Kai said, petting Haley’s head gently with one hand. “I have a question for you, baby.” Kai said calmly, Haley’s heart raced and her stomach

SESSION 3 CREATIVE WRITING

swirled as she was called ‘baby’,

“Y-yes ma’am?” she asked, trying to catch her breath, Kai giggled at the authoritative name,

“Do you maybe... wanna be my girlfriend?”

Haley sat up, pushing herself off Kai,

“YES!” she yelled, happily, and surprised, she leaned back down and kissed Kai softly, then she curled back up on Kai’s chest.

Boba meowed softly and crawled on top of Haley, curling up in the small of her back, under Kai’s hand, resting in the same place.

“Bober.” Kai said softly, “My girl.” she grumbled lovingly,

“And your boy.” Haley said, referring to the cat.

“Of course.” Kai said and closed her eyes, letting the tv ambiance drown out her thoughts and the warmth of Haley, pressed against her chest, listening to her heart. She softly pet Boba on Haley’s back and cuddled her new girlfriend.

“My girl.” She repeated, but Haley and the cat were both asleep, so she grabbed the blanket from the coffee table and covered the three of them.