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Honorable Mention: "Conscious" by Braum Robinette, Richlands High School

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Conscious

By Braum Robinette

Sometimes I struggle to stay here
Most days I collect confusing eyes
Always gathering my own internal fear
Trying to find my way away to rise

Though, upon myself I look down
I've never been able to find the right part
Looking through a false grin, waiting for the frown
Staring brightly is a hard habit to start

Whenever the mirror reflects to me
My head begins to spin, and in pours gloom
I struggle to find self-happiness to be
The overbearing weight of dread appears in every room

Now that I understand how it will always feel
I can hide behind a mask of my construction
Not knowing my idea can heal
Never following my mind's instruction

'til Death Do Us Part

By Haley Brown

There is something comforting in familiar skin

He lets his guard down and admits to sin

The scarlet letter burns his chest and scars his heart

He would do anything for the chance of a restart

She is heartbroken as is clear to see

She thought she was his bride to be

But when she opened her door one afternoon

His secrets shone like the light of the moon

An act of lust

A loss in trust

A breaking pain

A man's great shame

She burned her veil and slashed her gown

He tried everything to calm her down

She turned her gaze to his pleading cries

Her splitting head thinks through his lies

She grabs her lighter, he grabs her knife

Neither of them wants to lose their life

She sparks it up through tearful eyes

He steadies his stance and straightens his thighs

She turns the lighter to their bed

Desperately trying to clear her head

The pillows burn the feathers scatter
Air to smoke exchanges matter

He starts to cough and loses his grip
She throws a pillow at his lip
She doesn't see his empty hand
Or where the knife is going to land

Right through her foot, it pins her down
The flames grow larger and move around
His face blisters, flames melt his clothes
He tries to run, she pulls him close

She clears her burning throat, prepares to speak
It's rough, but quiet and comes out weak
Her cracking whisper draws breath from her heart
She softly speaks "'til death do us part."

The Healing

By Breanna Dacanay

When your name re-enters my life

I take a breath.

Not because you still have a hold on me,

but because I am able to still breathe.

Inhale.

I take in all of the heartache.

All of the tears and late nights.

Exhale.

I pat myself on the back for moving on.

For forgetting what you smelled like.

When I hear your name, I do not get sad

I do not wish the devil's works among you

Instead I smile.

And with a genuine heart I pray.

I wish you happiness.

I wish you love.

And even though you were incapable of loving me,

I hope you'd learn to love the next.

I hope the bouquet of flowers never stop,

even if you have to pick them yourself.

I hope she never has to question.

Never has to worry.

I hope she is loved with a full heart,

and she loves back with a full heart.

See,

when I hear your name

I am thankful.

Thankful that chains that once attached me to you no longer exist.

I am free.

I am happy.

This is **HEALING**.