“Teenagers these days”
all the people say
What does that even mean?
Are they shaking their heads
at the way ours are continuously bowed
staring at our phones?
Are they tsking their tongues
at the sight of our messy rooms
and sloppy clothes?
Are they sighing in defeat at the
way we seem to do almost nothing
or how we only seem to care about
ourselves?
Maybe we are just scared
so we hide
beneath this facade
of disinterest
Not wanting to get attached because it makes the
losing so much harder
And we will lose that which is dear to us at one point
We know that
We have seen firsthand
the unspeakable violence that has
reached out and managed to destroy so many lives
We know how fragile life is
We are glued to our phones
because we want to see and capture and remember all the fragile moments of life
We are constantly connected but our screens make us safer
So that we cannot fall in love with that person’s smile
or the way they flip their hair
or bite their nails
or the tiny freckle by their eye
It is safer this way
Teenagers have put up walls
too afraid to see what the future holds
stuck between growing up or clinging to our mother’s hand forever
Society pushes us towards adulthood
forces us to grow up too fast
so we put up barriers to hide how much we love and care
and feel
So people will always say
“Teenagers these days”
No one will ever say
“Teenagers these days...
are afraid”

**Longing**

*By*

**Maisie Wieser**

Pushed to the side and ignored
not noticed for their
true worth
The elders in our world
are so often just at the very edges of our vision
barely hanging on
What if we remembered all the wisdom they hold in their hearts?
All the things they have seen
All the places they’ve been
All the stories they have to tell
Their lives so different than ours
filled with such simplicity
No Instagram or Twitter
computers and phones
Unimaginable
Do they long for the simple things?
They had real connections face to face
They struggled to produce work they were proud of
because convenience was not yet real
Family meals, so much time outdoors
Do they long for their childhood?
They have so much to give
They would be so willing to teach us
of the true beauty of the life we live in the world we live in
They are not afraid to whisper secrets of how to laugh the longest and
love the hardest
how our blood, sweat, and tears are such a beautiful gift
because that shows we are living and breathing
They know more than some history books because they were there- present in that time
They know the pain and relief of wars long gone
They know the loss and gain of movements long ago
Do they long for the past?
When will we learn to just listen
to all the stories of the years gone by
filled with the most beautiful unknown- family, faith, and love
tears and joys
memories forever cherished
Do they long to step inside their memories?
Instead the ones who hold these precious moments
are put at the bottom of our lists
although they mean so much more than a night out with friends or any basketball game
Barely there
The elders are in the shadows
and for that I am
truly sorry

**Invisible**
*By Danika Temoshek*

Life has withered away like a dead flower’s petals;
curled up and cold from the frozen winter.
It’s a period of waiting for me now; until I slowly fade out of existence.
I see
the way they look at me without feeling the weight of my worth.
They talk over me, not knowing what I’ve lived.
My children have left me with only myself to keep me company.
Listen to me now: cherish the young respect you receive, because it won’t last.
I yearn to turn back time and to start over again.
To love again.
To really live.
But I cannot.
The beauty of the world is starting to crumble before my fading eyes and deep wrinkles.
I am waiting.
And fading.
And praying for respect and
love, I have earned.
A glance.
A touch.
A word.
That says I still have worth.

**The Seas of Sorrow**
*By Alice Crowell Silberling*

The hazy blue din of the television reflects off of her mother's glazed over eyes
There’s something so serene about the situation unfolding in front of her;
She does not realize it’s the calm before the storm
But then her mother doesn’t wake up in the morning
Doesn’t drive her to school
Doesn’t pick her up from school
And the waves are crashing down on her
Inhibiting her from taking a single breath
She’s struggling to stay afloat
Desperate not to drown
In the sorrow surrounding her
And her mother can no longer say her name
Can no longer look her in the eyes
Can no longer say I love you
But just as that final wave pulls her under
She grasps onto a life preserver
She wonders if she should grab it
Wonders if she should take the easy way out,
She’s reached the eye of the storm
Where everything around her implodes
But she, she feels
safe somehow
She clutches on anyways
And the waves subside
And the clouds depart
And the sunrays warm her tear
stained cheeks
As she reaches the shore.
As her mother voyages off to another rehabilitation center,
She digs her toes into the sand as the waves
lap at her feet
Strangers pass by
Mocking her for not wading into deeper waters,
For sitting in the sand
Where life is... easy
Little do they know, she’s been drowning all her life

The Farewell Reception
By
Alice Crowell Silberling

The lilac flowers contrast against the drab burgundy carpet
That suffocates me with the dust
And the ashes of the lost
The face of a woman I do not know...
Who does not know me
Sits among the lilac flowers
Smiling ... forever
Captured in an everlasting state of bliss,
The last 17 years of her life were anything but.
But in this moment she looks happy.
I was not shocked when my grandmother passed away
The 17 years of my life coincided with the 17 years she suffered at the hands of Alzheimer's.
Behind the closed doors of the memory ward,
She slowly withered away
With
the army veterans who roam the halls, never to be discharged, and the other gold
toothed ladies who are forgotten
But they don’t realize they’re forgotten because they can’t remember the loved ones
who left them there
And if they remember they’ve been forgotten,
we can rest easy because they’ll just forget again
We forget about them
I do not want to forget my grandmother
The gold toothed woman who I am blessed to share a name with
The woman abused and robbed by the caretakers meant to protect her
The woman incapable of anything but love
The woman sitting among the lilac flowers
Because that is where we left her
I can’t say I ever knew her, Alzheimer's stood in the way
But I remember the days we would sit on the beach
Swinging on hammocks and crafting crowns of lilacs in our hair
And while those memories may not have lasted,
In that moment we were happy