

**Fearful**  
**By**  
**Maisie Wieser**

“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