

Born into a generation choked by expectation.  
Told to keep our eyes to the stars  
Because anything lower is a disappointment.  
We build wings of paper in search of the stars  
Only for the rain to make them soggy.  
GPA, class rank, and grades press roughly into our shoulders.  
Atlas stands impressed.  
We mutter under choked sobs and shallow breath,  
"We shall pluck the stars from the heavens."  
When we gaze upon the ebony sky, the stars are no longer there.  
The Adyts clutch the stars in their grasp.  
Cold, dead eyes. Sharks in the water.  
The hunger for knowledge thrums in our fingertips,  
But the Adults clutch prejudice tightly to their chest.  
We cannot learn if we are kept in the cave.  
Mother knows best, but does she really?  
You are the future! Be intelligent!  
Be involved! Be creative!  
Change the world! Reach for the stars!

The mirror tells her she is old.  
So do her creaking joints and leathery skin,  
Blue veins coursing like rivers through her form.  
Her failing sight makes the whole image  
Blurred edges. Her failing hearing makes  
Every conversation sound like it's happening underwater.  
Coddled by her own children.  
They make her feel like a child again.  
She wears the faded golden band around a chain;  
Strangers look at her with pity and she is suffocated  
By the sympathy she does not need.  
Fine china left dusty on the shelf.  
A permanent chill settles in her bones,  
But a fire ignites on the surface.  
Though she is not as young as she once was,  
Or as agile or as strong, but she can stand on her own  
And defiantly look death in the eye.  
She is not a piece of fine china.

*We the Elders*

We, the elders, are:

Fountains of sage wisdom and timeless omniscience.

Knowing and deep,

Experienced, enlightened.

Or...

Longing and wistful,

Looking to the past with a melancholy smile,

A prayer for remembrance,

And an eye to the sunrise from the porch.

Or...

Slipping away and

Watching the grieving faces of those who haven't yet lost.

But are ever so close.

Falling, deep, a spiral of senility.

And a deep, aching knowledge of what comes next.

Or...

Tethered, still, to youth

But fueled by regret and a desire to go back

To try again,

One more chance, please,

one more chance.

We, the elders are looking to the past, to help the future.

Weak as we may seem, we are strong.

*We the Youth*

We, the youth, are:

Entrenched deeply in our own thoughts

Dreamy romantics with our heads in the clouds

Looking too far into an improbable future.

Blind to the world around us.

Or-

With our eyes cast down.

Looking away from the things that trouble us.

Fingers in our ears

Screaming our indifference.

Or-

Fiery, ambitious, spontaneous.

Ready for the times ahead

Ready for the current world

Ready to have a voice

Ready to leave our mark on the world

Or-

Anxious.

Fearful that every painful second that passes is time wasted.

Fearful that our world will soon be destroyed of beauty and nature and clean air.

Fearful that we and our children will have to live in a world of violence and hate.

We, the youth, are ready for the world.

Afraid as we may be, we go ever onward.

high school :  
talking a lot  
never saying how i feel  
the truth finds its way out  
getting scared of what's real

they want perfection  
I live for the night  
I crave affection  
I always mean what I write

dancing in my room  
all alone  
crying in the shower  
throwing my phone

playing music too loud  
to drown out my thoughts  
my head's in a cloud  
I keep my door locked

could hate me or love me  
from best friend to worst foe  
can try to avoid me  
can't forget who you've known

rumors are wildfire  
spreading so fast  
leaving a scar  
that might always last

saying be different  
staying the same  
wanting an escape  
too scared of change

just another girl  
head glued to her phone  
.... no one's calling  
I guess she's alone

they all love a show  
she gave them her life

still no one calls  
staying up all night

it feels so empty  
so shallow so trapped  
in a cage  
there's no turning back  
want to see the next page

but live while you're young  
be wild and free  
I think they forgot  
that hell is a teen

grandpa paul:  
halfway across the world  
my grandpa lives all by himself  
they say respect your elders there  
here they say focus on yourself

but see grandpa is a wise man  
listened to what he has to say  
somehow he always smiles  
no matter what he's been through in a day  
it is him who passed on this gift of poetry  
learning many things over a cup of Kenyan tea

he endured a lifetime of loss and pain  
it has shown me  
you can't always get your way  
lived a privileged life I can see  
yet I still get down and question things

but I know across the ocean  
he would smile when I frown  
he would laugh in a way  
that fills the room with a feeling of sunshine  
he would say my dear what troubles your mind

he once told me it's not all about every single win  
we learn from our losses  
they transform us from within

he was in so much pain  
yet he still managed to smile  
a smile forged in flames  
will last quite awhile