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

eye 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