

Love Letters

Teen Creative Magazine



Issue #03: Joy
Remastered August 2021



Editor's Note:

I

The third issue of our magazine: Joy, was originally released on January 3rd, 2021. Remaking it in this new format was a fascinating experience for us. It was interesting to see how we were feeling at the beginning of this year versus how we are feeling now.

This winter-themed issue might seem out of place in the summer, but it's always nice to look back on the previous seasons before moving onto the next.

We hope seeing this old content in this new form brings you some joy in these troubling times!

Best,

The Love Letters Team



Table of Contents

II

<i>A Cup of Cocoa With You</i> – Maritreyi Parakh...	1
<i>Foy</i> (Op-ed) – Ruby Bennett.....	3
<i>Foy</i> (Art) – Naomi Leites.....	6
Ask The Edtiors – The Love Letters Team.....	8
<i>Sleepwalking</i> – Ash Reynolds.....	9
<i>Fishing for Wishes</i> – Meily Tran.....	12
<i>How to Settle in Foy</i> – Amy Carranza.....	14
<i>How to Create Foy</i> – Amy Carranza.....	15





- *A Cup of Cocoa With You* -

1

Maitreyi Parakh

please, could you linger a while longer by the door / the porch
/ your car

& we could talk about nothing while the world finds their

breath and caramel toffee love? please, could you linger a while
longer

while i piece myself together and hold on to the last murmurs
of the fireflies

in my belly? the sunflowers have gone to bed & the bread is
only just done

cooling off on the windowsill, and y(our) palms have made a
promise to

always live in each other's shadows. and come back inside
before the rain

grows heavy, come inside / not for long, only until the smell of
jasmine fades away

and we can remember when we threaded ourselves together &
how we wove

a line over a line over a line / to keep from falling over the
edge, together until the end.

but now, all we see is the fire crackling inside / don't go yet,
there are still so

many things to remember & so many memories to create.





Maitreyi Parakh

About the Poet:

Maitreyi Parakh (she/they) is a teenage, Indian-American bisexual poet from Seattle, USA. Her other hobbies include screaming into the void about Anne Carson's essays, listening to Lorde instead of doing calc homework & baking with way too much sugar. You can find more of her work published or forthcoming in Thimble Lit Mag, Southchild Lit, Paper Lanterns Lit and Serotonin poetry.





- Joy -

Ruby Bennett

3

I can feel confident saying that 2020 was a year without joy...

In a year where days blended together, bad news filled every corner of the media, and politics took the forefront of our lives during an unprecedented election, I, and many others, were left feeling drained and depressed by the end of it. 2020 brought up many new emotions and experiences for so many of us. I still can't believe that the massive BLM movement after the unjust murder of George Floyd, the wildfires that ravaged California and the West Coast, and the impeachment of Donald Trump happened within the same 365 days as Parasite winning the Oscar for Best Picture and Prince Harry and Megan Markle leaving the royal family. And the viral cherry on top, the Covid-19 pandemic laid on top of it all like a weighted blanket that was more suffocating than comforting. By the time we reached the new year, over 20 million people in the U.S alone had been infected, accompanied by around 340,000 deaths. No matter who or what you blame the pandemic on, whether that be poor leadership from the government, or far-left liberals blowing everything out of proportion, those statistics represented a culmination of losses and heartbreak for so many people.

By the time the holidays rolled around, a crucial feeling was missing from the usually bright and festive season: Joy. In a year like 2020, how was one supposed to find joy during a season of giving when so much had been taken?

On New Year's Eve, as my family and I tried to be joyful on the last day of the year, we watched the new Pixar movie "Soul". About a middle school band teacher who aspires to be a jazz musician, the movie follows Joe Gardener's journey into the afterlife following a tragic accident, right after he has finally gotten the gig of a lifetime.

During his journey back to his body, he sees his life from a new point of view, realizing that he has missed out on so much because he was so focused on what he was losing and had lost. Along the way, he learns to appreciate the good along with the bad. It ends with a new beginning for Joe, something that many of us have longed for this entire year.





- Joy -

4

Ruby Bennett

There was a scene towards the end of the movie where Joe is sitting at his piano, reflecting on moments from throughout his life. Eating his favorite pie, teaching his students music, going to the beach with his mother and feeling the sand between his toes; moments that seemed insignificant before, but held new meaning once Joe had learned to find joy in those times rather than focusing on the big things he couldn't achieve.

This scene stuck with me afterward. Here, we had a man who realized what he had missed out on and decided to live his life to the fullest. This is probably far from what happened with a majority of people who lived through any part of 2020. I definitely didn't watch the news one day, see that doctors were telling us to stay home, only to go hang out with my friends because I didn't want to miss out.



Still, the scene illustrated the feelings that I had been lacking so much in 2020. So many of us have felt trapped in the present, which is completely understandable; there haven't exactly been things to look forward to. However, Joe's reminiscence on those simple moments caused me to remember similar moments from the past year. Petting my dog, watering my plants and watching them grow, cooking eggs in the morning; the simple joys in life that I had always taken for granted finally came to the forefront of my mind, reminding me of all I did despite the circumstances. Perhaps those moments saved me from going insane in 2020, we may never know.

In a "year without joy", people still found ways to be joyful. I saw people learn new ways to see friends and family. I saw teachers continue to work at a job that made them joyful, even if it was through a computer screen and camera. I saw vaccines be created that could help with the reason so many of us lacked joy in the first place.





- Joy -

Ruby Bennett

5

So while I could feel confident saying that 2020 was a year without joy, I can also feel confident saying that I discovered joy in places that I didn't think I could.



Here's to 2021, a new year to find joy in.



About the Author:

Ruby (she/her) is a junior in high school from Seattle, Washington. She has been a fan of literature her whole life, and enjoys reading and writing in her free time. She is also a co-editor of prose for Love Letters Magazine!



- Foy (art) -

Naomi Leites

6



About the Artist:

Naomi Leites (she/her) is a senior in high school living in seattle! she has loved writing, music, and art in general for as long as she can remember. she writes short stories, poetry, and songs, and is the song editor at love letters magazine.



10/4/20



- Ask the Editors -

The Love Letters Team

What songs make you joyful?

Retro (rough)

Childish Gambino



Everybody Loves Somebody

Dean Martin



Dyanmite

BTS



no tears left to cry

Ariana Grande



Junk of the Heart (Happy)

The Kooks



Christmas Tree Farm

Taylor Swift





- *Sleepwalking* -

9

Ash Reynolds



Ophelia sleepwalks...

This is a known fact if you are close with Ophelia or her family. In fact, sometimes her siblings take turns making sure she didn't sleepwalk into the middle of the street and get plowed down by a drunk driver. Tonight, however, she isn't sleepwalking.

It is 2:54 in the morning when Ophelia gets in her bright blue Jeep and speeds off into the dark night. It's freezing outside and the streets are empty, but Ophelia is nice and warm in her Jeep. Her nightgown gets in the way of the pedals a little bit, but not enough for Ophelia to get angry. At any other time of day, Ophelia would probably have cursed the nightgown out and ripped it into a million pieces, but alas it was 2:54 in the morning. Ophelia was too jittery to be angry.

Ophelia speeds on the freeway until she reaches the 24 hour department store. The employees are grumpy and tired, angry that someone would come visit them so early in the morning.

"Welcome," grumbles an overworked teenager from the front desk.

"Hello," says a cheery Ophelia as she skips past him to the dress section of the store.

After scanning the crowded shelves for a little bit, she finally finds what she is looking for. A silk pink dress that she has been eyeing for months. She has never had the courage to buy it, as it is almost \$300, but tonight she is going to take that step.

After a particularly rough month, Ophelia thinks she deserves some joy. She doesn't like to think about it too much, but in the past month both her grandfather and her dog passed away. With all the weight of loss and bitterness on her shoulders, Ophelia takes her dress to the counter and gets ready to pay for it.

Someone enters the store and catches her eye. A man with a gleaming gold chain around his neck and a dark bowler hat on his head enters the store, swarmed by bodyguards in tight black suits. Ophelia can't quite make out everything about him from where she stands but she can see sharp features and brilliant blue eyes.



- *Sleepwalking* -

10

Ash Reynolds

“Buy me something,” he says, handing a wad of cash to a nearby bodyguard, who apparently waits on him hand and foot.

The bodyguard says something obscene under his breath and walks off into the store. The flashy man catches sight of Ophelia and walks suavely over to the counter.

“Another late night shopper?” he says slyly.

Ophelia smiles politely. “Just doing some er... emotional shopping.”

“\$304.05,” mutters the poor employee.

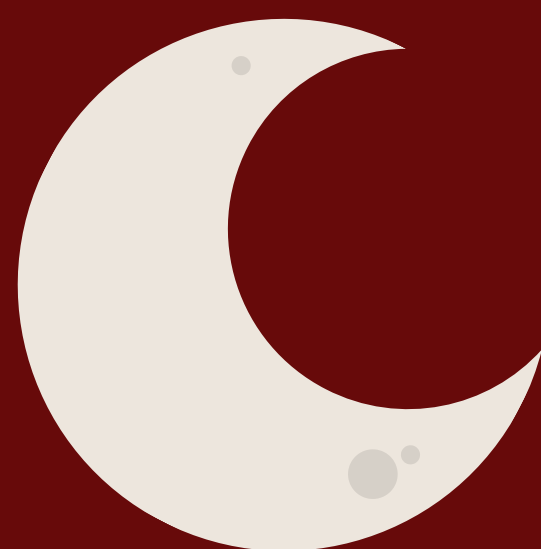
Slightly embarrassed, Ophelia pulls out her credit card and pays for the dress.

“I’m doing some emotional shopping as well,” says the flashy man. “My girlfriend broke up with me.” “I’m sorry to hear that,” Ophelia says, curtly. “I best be going now.”

And so, Ophelia does just that. She takes her pink silk dress home in her bright blue jeep and has a peaceful night's sleep, feeling much better than she did before. It is important to note that after buying that dress, Ophelia has yet to sleepwalk again. It was expensive, but Ophelia knows she made the right choice.

What she will never know, however, is that the flashy man in the department store had a name. His name was Bill and he too struggled with sleepwalking. Bill came into the store that night afraid that if he fell asleep he would sleepwalk out into the middle of the street and get plowed down by a car. His bodyguards claim to stay by his side when he falls asleep, but he knows that the second his eyes close, they leave him all by himself.

Feeling stressed about his upcoming SAT test and the fact his girlfriend just broke up with him, Bill thought he deserved some joy. Using his Dad’s credit card he hit up an ATM and went as the pretty girl in the store put it, ‘emotional shopping’.





- *Sleepwalking* -

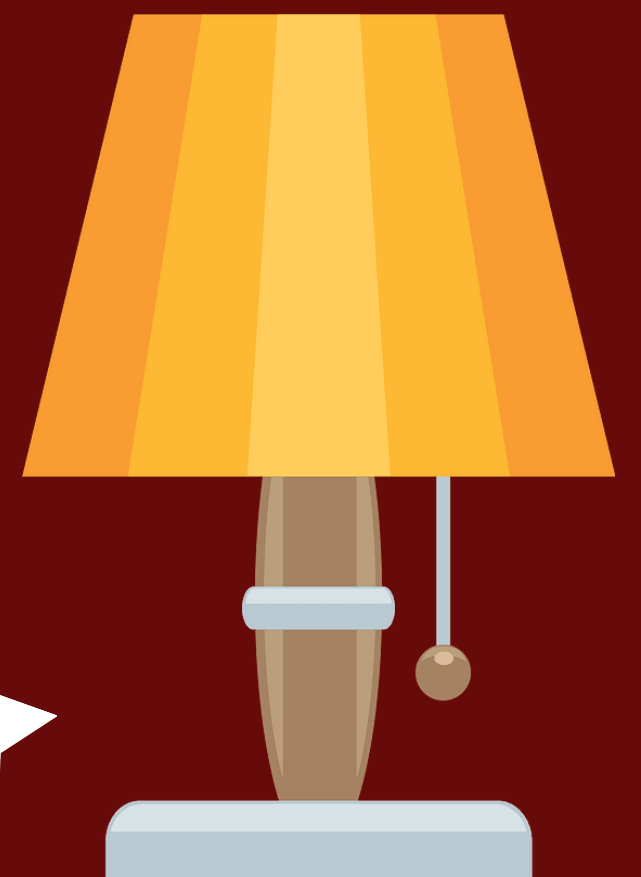
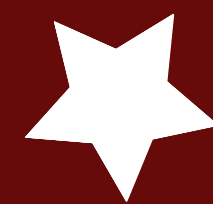
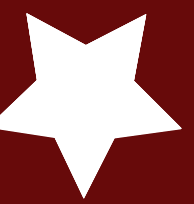
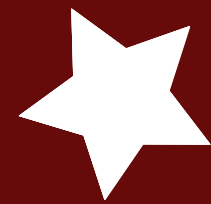
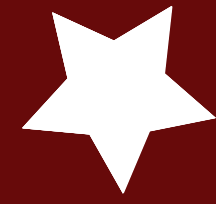
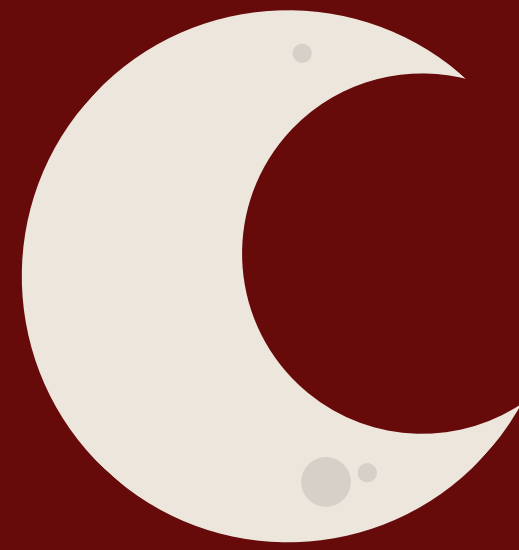
11

Ash Reynolds

Ophelia and Bill would forever go their separate ways, never to see each other again. Ophelia would wear her expensive dress wherever she could and she always looked glamorous and elegant in pink silk.

About a week later, his father asked Bill where his new chain was and he shrugged a simple, “I don’t know,” and went on with the rest of his day.

The two both felt that perhaps they deserved some joy in their lives that night, but it is quite obvious that only one of them ended up feeling better.



About the Author:

Ash Reynolds (they/them) is a junior in high school. They have always loved writing and have been doing it since they were a little kid, as well as other forms of art like drawing, photography and music. Ash is the social media co-runner and prose co-editor at love letters magazine.



- *Fishing for Wishes* -

12

Meily Tran

When I marry my future wife, I'm going to buy her a star
and name it after her

To remind her that she is the universe's most perfect
accident.

The fragmented planets, stars, and meteorites reunited
after years of separation,

Light years away from each other until they finally
exploded then recombined and

Made her.

When stargazers at the Griffith Observatory glance up at
the

Freckled sky and point their stubby fingers at her
namesake, it'll remind everyone that

She is a star, my star, the everlasting sun to my orbiting
earth

In daylight, when the dandelion dust drifts in her haloed
rays,

And during nightfall, when the crickets' chirping greets
the moon with a chaotic lullaby.

The joining of our hands will be the deuterium and tritium
Yielding helium, rippling waves of warm radiation through
my skin.

And yes, there may be trillions and trillions of stars out
there, too many that you can't find her

Blinking faintly behind Ursa Minor, but after years of
hearing about all the star-crossed lovers

Immortalized in an endless game of connect-the-dots, I'll
finally be able to map out my own.



- *Fishing for Wishes* -

13

Meily Tran

On the night of the Ursids' descent, I'll cast my line into the
sea of wishes, my ship bobbing
Through the moon's glassy reflection of the water until I
reel in
My dream come true. And my shooting star, she'll soar
Over the Milky Way's fallen bridge and crash down to
earth,
Bathing me in her stardust.

The rings from the planets she used to be a part of will
always outshine the
One resting on her finger, but I will only have one ring on
mine and
It will be hers. I will be hers.
Her small astronaut,
Her tiny explorer that only cares about one tiny star.

About the Poet:

Meily Tran (she/her) is a high school senior and aspiring creative writing major from Southern California. Throughout her years in high school, she has contributed to her school's newspaper, creative magazine, and slam poetry club. Currently, she is working on expanding the reach of her work outside of school by submitting to competitions and literary magazines (and universities, if college applications count). Most of her works are first drafted at 1 AM and are inspired by her tragic sapphic love life, sporadic identity crises, and beloved pet chihuahua. Other than writing, she is interested in music, technical theater, and LGBTQ+ rights!



- *How to Settle in Joy* -

14

Amy Carranza

here's the simple answer:
you don't.

::

you wander it: travel in its piled photo
gallery.

time capsule its zestful laughter bursting in
golden,

citrus summer.

you follow it: take its chosen path by hand,

and dare to dream in color, at full
brightness.

::

let the euphoria sway you down a vast,
gaping field of blooming marigolds.

::

the skies will keep on soaring in grapefruit
mornings,
with an abundance of beloved sunshine.

and all you ever need to rest in this
phenomena,
in this living canvas: painted in the sun's
gleaming rain.

for just a little longer,
is will.





- How to Create Joy -

Amy Carranza

15

I

release yourself from the heaviest bed covers.

shimmy and shuffle in your pajamas.

slip-on some slippers and head to the kitchen make a few butter toasts. fork the avocados and sizzle a dozen eggs.

crush some summer citrus oranges and chug the pungent juice.

eat the breakfast buffet in no shame.

see the morning fly while cruising in the bedroom.

watch teen romance.

maybe some *Pride and Prejudice*?

get on the laptop for an hour or two: browse on the latest anime, sink into a puddle of boredom.

type on a blank google doc, but don't like, fill a whole page, just leave the fragments in unfinished beauty.

pile in on the stanzas of an ocean metaphor and give houseplants a shower.

II

safety pin the heaps of laundry onto the house's lavender wall. turn on the ceiling fan for once. watch the black blades swirl up a breeze.

perform the post-it note saved poems from newly ordered books, film the reading. save it to Instagram, but never share the video. scroll through the leftover notifications,

don't respond to the messages.

instead, take a canvas out to the backyard, and snapshot all the gaping orchids into gold. sculpt a vast field of *wild* on the bleak page.

stroke the rickety brush until the sun begins to die, one late summer night.





- How to Create Joy -

16

Amy Carranza

III

in the living room, rewatch the morning's cartoons and shovel down some dinner:

a cup of noodles with some salad to dress.

then start to open up a hot Cheeto bag, leave them to marinade in some lemon.

return to your bedroom and place the headphones to your ears:

full volume, turn the decibels higher. twirl and prance and dance and twerk and rumble and stumble and shout for a while longer.

go searching for the Cheetos while hip-hopping "*Rebirth of Slick*" down the living room aisle, and munch on their red powdered sour.

hustle rap and gentle sing and hum to the heart's liking.

IV

start writing lovers prose in a composition notebook lying around on the wooden school desk. camera shot yourself facing the moon's sunshine with an animal plush.

take out the polaroid and capture this lineage of time. save this memory. save this space in your slumber.

• • •

after a while, open the ruckus in mind.

dress up in the mirror. go outside. grab a ladder and reach for the restful, blossoming stars.

wake up to the watercolor sunrise, and gleam.

take time to stare into the horizon. savor the sun's eyes.

remember this smile out in the world.





- *How to Create Joy* -

17

Amy Carranza

camera shot this

in mind:

*the littlest of places,
the tiniest pleasure
can create.*

can be reborn.

*can remember
new joy.*



About the Poet:

Amy (she/her) is a quirky Salvadorean-American teenager, and one hell of a dreamer. Now aspiring to be a writer, she desires to seize her learning with all kinds of artistic expression. She has previously competed in the GetLit - Words Ignite Middle School Slam Competition in April 2020, and since then, she has been taken under the wing of so many creators, unapologetic to write their world in words. One of her earliest pieces of work can be found on "Voice of the Future" Zine (@voice_future).

Thanks for Reading!

Looking for a little more joy in your life?

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www.thelovelettersmag.com



Check us out on social media:

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Cover art by our poetry co-editor Naomi Leites!

Love Letters Chronology

#02: Gratitude

#03: Joy

#04: Fresh





Love Letters Magazine

