

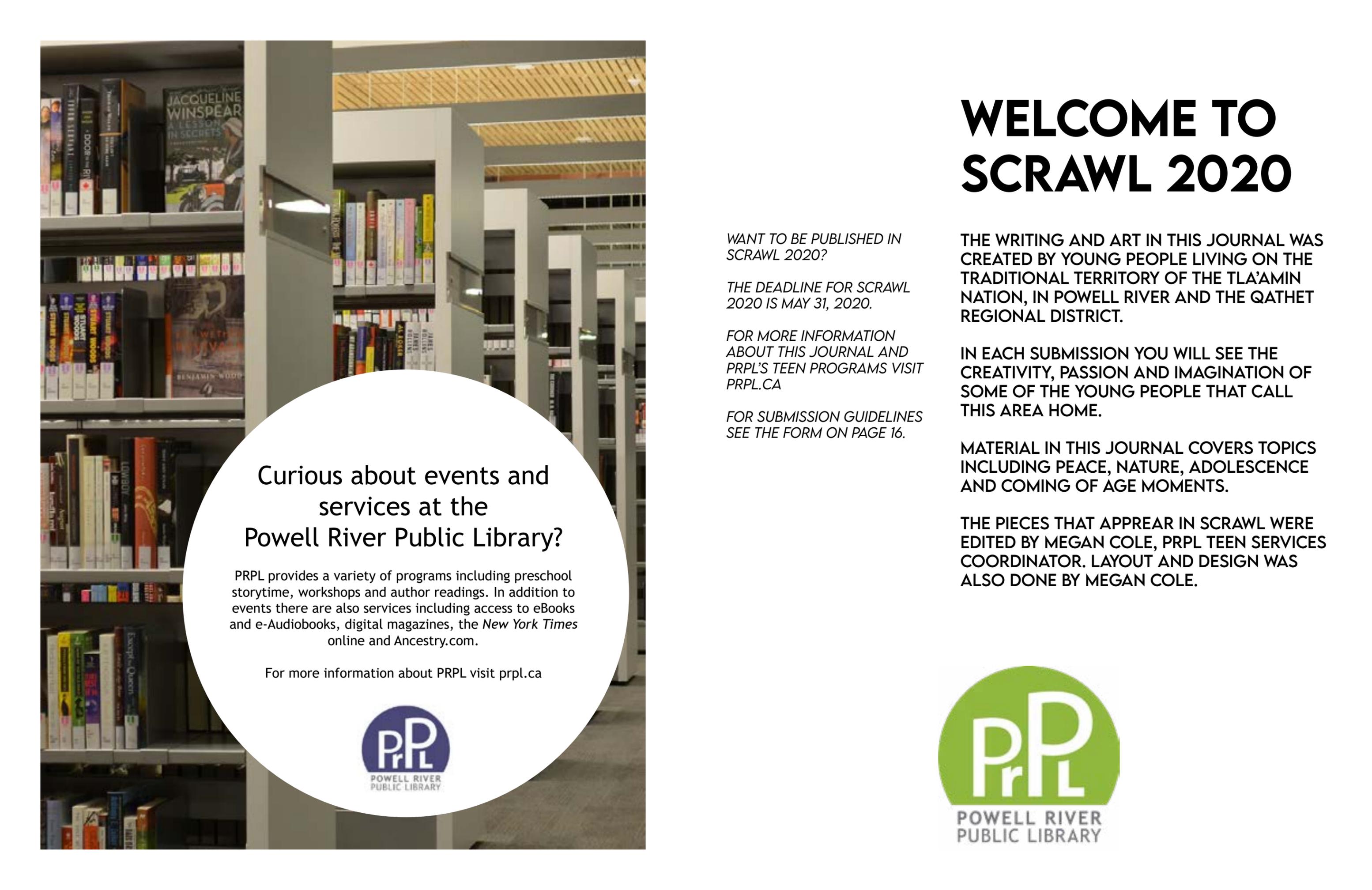
# SCRAWL

YOUTH JOURNAL FOR  
WRITING & VISUAL ART

JULY 2020 | VOLUME 1 | POWELL RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

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# WELCOME TO SCRAWL 2020

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*FOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES SEE THE FORM ON PAGE 16.*

THE WRITING AND ART IN THIS JOURNAL WAS CREATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF THE TLA'AMIN NATION, IN POWELL RIVER AND THE QATHET REGIONAL DISTRICT.

IN EACH SUBMISSION YOU WILL SEE THE CREATIVITY, PASSION AND IMAGINATION OF SOME OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT CALL THIS AREA HOME.

MATERIAL IN THIS JOURNAL COVERS TOPICS INCLUDING PEACE, NATURE, ADOLESCENCE AND COMING OF AGE MOMENTS.

THE PIECES THAT APPEAR IN SCRAWL WERE EDITED BY MEGAN COLE, PRPL TEEN SERVICES COORDINATOR. LAYOUT AND DESIGN WAS ALSO DONE BY MEGAN COLE.





Chloe Elzer → Bro's Bluff

BRO'S BLUFF  
BY CHLOE ELZER

## POWELL RIVER

*BY MADYX WHITEWAY  
AGE 11*

The sun rises on beautiful Powell River, as the trees stand tall  
concealing the luminosity of the sun.  
Birds singing merrily as they ascend through the skies.  
Boats speed through the water searching for a pleasant place to  
cast their rod.  
The immense mountains surround us.  
The night-time sunset forms a pacifying violet in the sky.

## PEACE

*BY PIPER LEAHY-MCHUGH  
AGE 12*

Sometimes I wonder what peace is. I close my eyes and  
think. I see a sunset being cast across the clear waters of a  
freshwater lake. A light breeze blows in my face, hitting my bare  
legs and giving me a slight chill. The sound of the smallest ripples  
rolling up on the sandy shore gives me a nice warm feeling inside.  
As the sun slowly dips below the horizon, I lay down on my  
back and stare up at the stars. I see many constellations, and I  
create some new ones in my mind. I can feel the warm sand in  
between my fingers and I slowly start to fall asleep.

# GO IN A CIRCLE!

BY SAVERIO COLASANTO  
AGE 18

The past few months have helped reveal flaws in our society and economy. During times of prosperity, such as the past decade, it is easy to lose sight of the less fortunate, and even of those vital to the day-to-day functioning of our economy. However, a few months of economic shutdown, with only essential businesses remaining operable, have shown that society's essential workers are also often its least acknowledged, valued, and well-paid.

We as a society have come to place the utmost value upon free-markets and deregulation (in a word, neoliberalism), resulting in unintended consequences—the most dire of which has been environmental degradation. Our economy has come to consume natural resources at an increasingly unsustainable rate (we overshot the earth's biocapacity in the '70s), and relies predominantly on polluting, non-renewable fossil fuels to meet its energy demands. The result has been biodiversity loss—we may be in the sixth mass extinction, with species going extinct at 100 to 1000 times the background rate—and rapid global warming. This ecological depletion, necessitated by the current structure of our economy, is by no means sustainable.

Acting unsustainably comes at a price—one that will be paid by youth and future generations. Acting unsustainably discounts the lives of future generations as lesser than our own. By demanding that all of our material wants go fulfilled, we are not taking into account the ecological needs of our descendants (today's youth will be some of the first to experience the disastrous effects of global warming and unfettered natural resource consumption). This discounting is unjust—a deprivation of future wellbeing. It is also poor economics.

If we continue to deplete natural resources (the main input of our economy) at an unsustainable rate, then we can be certain that our economy will become depleted as well. Many people will turn to technology for an answer to this dilemma, but therein lies a problem. Gains in efficiency, particularly energy efficiency, enabled by new technologies, often lead to increased consumption, in what is known as the Jevons paradox. Efficiencies equal increased productivity, creating lower prices (since one can now get more for his or her investment), which in turn causes demand to increase. We have seen this in British Columbia, where,

despite greenhouse gas emissions per unit of gross domestic product declining roughly a fifth since 2008, when the province enacted a carbon tax, annual greenhouse gas emissions remain largely unchanged. Provincial improvements in efficiency have been offset, pretty much in their entirety, by the province's subsequent economic growth.

Going forward, solving our environmental woes, and achieving sustainability, will require not just a transition to clean renewable energy, but also a deliberate conservation effort. Our economy operates in a linear fashion: resources are turned into goods, which are purchased by consumers, and eventually end up in a landfill. If we could transition to a circular economy, we would be able to reduce our resource consumption, since our economic outputs—waste—would serve as our economic inputs—resources and energy. This would mimic natural ecosystems, where nothing goes to waste. (Yes, my advice on economic policy is pretty much the same as Peter Griffin's advice to NASCAR drivers: "Go in a circle! Go in a circle!") For our food supply, care will have to be taken to ensure that agricultural land is kept healthy and productive (soil, while a renewable resource, can be depleted). We must prevent agricultural and residential development from encroaching too much on natural habitats, since failure to do so will contribute to existing biodiversity loss. Additionally, enough area in the ocean must be protected as to prevent not only biodiversity loss, but also fishery collapse (such as that experienced by BC's herring fisheries in the '60s).

Achieving a sustainable economy should be our chief priority. So should achieving a more economically egalitarian society. During the pandemic, it has been made clear who society's essential workers are, and that many of them are underpaid—not even making a living wage. The pandemic has also accentuated existing racial and ethnic inequities, with minority populations being hardest hit by the virus. Meanwhile, despite the Canadian unemployment rate hitting thirteen percent, David Thomson, the wealthiest man in Canada with \$34.6 billion, saw his wealth increase six percent between March 2019 and May 2020. So he's doing OK.

A barrage of policies should be utilized to reduce wealth inequality, while addressing racial and ethnic economic inequities. The tax rate for Canada's top income brackets should be raised, and a wealth tax should be imposed upon the richest Canadians (mind you, it would be taxing levels of wealth impossible to accumulate without the collective effort of hardworking Canadians). The additional tax revenue

could be returned to citizens by a basic income, or invested in public services (such as fulfilling everyone's right to clean water—61 First Nations are under long-term drinking water advisories), employment programs, and the social safety net. University for all, public housing initiatives, and even universal dental care would go a long way for many Canadians struggling in a neoliberal society. So would the universal right to a living wage.

Unquestionably, any expansions to the social safety net must come with rigorously enforced anti-discrimination laws, to ensure that minority communities (who experience prejudice, oppression, poor socio-economic conditions, and environmental racism) are treated fairly and with the respect they deserve.

For decades we have pursued compassionless economic policies, that frown upon societal intervention on behalf of the general welfare. Both the public and environment have been left exploited by a single-sided pro-business ideology. However, it does not have to be this way. As we endure the worst pandemic in a century, think about the direction society takes when we emerge on the other side. Throughout history, humans, working together, have achieved amazing feats. Let us, as a society, achieve the grand aspirations of ecological health and sustainability, and economic rights and wellbeing for all.



# TENDER

*BY LUVY VISHEK  
AGE 18*

Tender is the gooey center of a warm chocolate chip cookie. A soft hand holding a dandelion. Long, silky hair that is curled at the tips. The cracked top of a freshly baked loaf of bread. Dogs and cats and delicate bugs. Ants and spiders. The space between your eyebrows, where your migraines develop most. Open wounds. Pink flesh. Tender is the moment after a kiss in a dark car. The minute after a breakup text. The month after a family member passes away. A young girl's emotions. Tender is beautiful and hurt. It is the way your arm feels when you fall asleep on top of it. Fingers after playing guitar for too long. Chicken breast. Mother's breast. Baby's head. The time it takes to heal. A toddler sharing his toys with another toddler. Tender is soft and squishy, easily disturbed. Bathe in these times of tenderness. Drink them in their unaltered and watery states. Drown in these times. They don't last forever.

# THE DIVE

*BY PIPER LEAHY-MCHUGH  
AGE 12*

I walked over to the rocky ledge beside the chilly rippled waters of the ocean. I could feel a cold breeze brush my hair out of my face. Then I sprang forwards and hopped gracefully into the air, making a perfect arc in the sky. As I started to turn down towards the water, I took a deep breath, inhaling the salty air the moment before diving deep into the dark, lively sea.

I could feel the water being compressed around me as I went deeper into the black ocean. As pressure slowly built up more and more, I started to lightly release some of my breath. I looked up, and I could see the jiggly bubbles of air float up to the surface and burst open. I lightly kicked my legs as I headed back up to the surface myself.

I reached my arms up as I pulled myself into the air, as if I was a butterfly opening its wings. My hair was wet, slicked back from my forehead. I floated onto my back and stared up at the stars. I thought to myself, "This is my happy place."

# NO MISTAKE

BY LUVY VISHEK  
AGE 18

She seemed to know what she was doing. Like she had done this many times. Watching her, my heart fluttered and pounded all at once in my small rib cage. Guilt and excitement surfaced to my throat. She reached up to the top cabinet, her arms stretched as far as they could and the blue friendship bracelet I had made for her slid down her arm. The word “best” written out in letter beads climbed up her right arm on the woven strands of string. She stood on her blue-painted toes to reach up. Our inferior, short height being amplified in this moment. Her tank top with the tiny, blue butterflies on it rode up her stomach a bit. Finally she grabbed the small bottle of the clear liquid that I knew wasn’t water and that I knew tasted like gasoline. Her eyes met mine and then squinted slightly as she smiled. She headed for his bedroom.

“He always keeps a couple cans under his bed,” She reassured me.

Mold grew in the corners of the camper, where the walls and ceiling met. Mildew and musk filled my lungs as I stood, watching. Tiny fruit flies hovered around a plate on the bed with remnants of a burger on it from last night’s dinner. I trusted her with every bone in my fourteen year old body. She was like an older sister who wasn’t mean to me. Her head popped up from her search to indicate she had found what she was looking for.

We took the path from the campsite and up a hill. Tall grass brushed our bare legs and feet. I walked behind her. I always followed. A butterfly passed by my head and almost landed on one of my long braids. She had braided my hair that morning, weaving daisies into the braids. When we reached a flat spot on the hill, close to the edge, she took off her mini backpack and unloaded the bottle and two cans of a drink that tasted like pop, but could make me dizzy and throw up if I tried to keep up with how many she could drink. Though keeping up with her was hard for me, I always attempted to. Any backyard party we went to where the boys were obnoxious and the girls were seeking approval, I would try to match my every sip to hers.

Nothing was around us. Nobody could see us. In our own world, on our own beautiful planet. Sun burnt our eyes and faces. We were sweating, sitting on a moth-eaten towel. She took the red cap off the bottle and took a sip from it, wincing after swallowing. I sat with her, my knees touching hers. My eyelids heavy and stomach full of insects. Not just butterflies, but worms. Wriggling up and down the walls of my insides, swimming in the stomach acid. She handed me the bottle and I looked at her before taking a sip. Her brown lashes covered her blue eyes as she looked down at the bottle in my hand with her eyebrows twisted, still trying to recover from the taste. I gulped. The taste was worse than I remembered. But I also remembered that the more I drank, the less worse it became.

Some time passed and we were giggly and stupid. Things were spinning in my peripheral and we swayed as we talked and laughed. Our sweaty faces, clear of acne and age, got close to each other as we told stories about nothing, that were somehow so entertaining in the moment. She took her shirt off so that she was just in her pink padded bra. The one I was so jealous of because I was still in training bras. She said it was too hot, and I found myself not looking at her. I opened a can of the fizzier drink and took longer sips. The worms crawled faster.

\* \* \*

It didn’t seem that wrong. Though I knew it was. The night before felt very wrong. Mixing different alcohol with iced tea in a plastic princess cup. Drinks stolen from her dad’s camper yet again. Chugged it before her dad came back from the campsite’s bathroom. He yelled because, obviously, he found out. I cried silent tears next to her as we lay awake and shaking in our tent. The salty taste of tears still in my mouth the next morning from sleeping on my side the night before. Her arms had wrapped around me and I held her braceleted hand with my own. Tiny mosquitoes screamed past my ears and I don’t think I had slept the whole night. That felt like a mistake, but this seemed natural. Her dad occasionally shared his drinks with us. What was so different about taking them from under his bed?

\* \* \*

The lake made my teeth clench and my hands balled into fists. We didn’t bring bathing suits. I wore my most grown-up underwear, the pink ones with lace around the waistband. I wore them partly because they were my favorite underwear, but I’d be lying if I said it wasn’t a desperate attempt to impress her in some way. She waded in, broke the barrier of the water with her fingertips first, then her arms, then her head, then the rest of her body, all without hesitation. She started swimming out into the nothingness. I looked down at my toes in the water and thought about

all the creatures that could be living in that lake. I thought about how she wasn't bothered by them. Reemerged, her orange hair clung to her shoulder blades and back. The sun caused a glare on the lake and she looked over her shoulder at me. She looked me up and down and I immediately wanted to hide myself. When her eyes met mine again, one of her brows was raised, confused as to why I was only in at my knees. Why I was not following her. The worms were doing backstrokes in my stomach acid. The butterflies were flying up my esophagus, but my eyes still felt relaxed and were half-closed. We looked into the other's eyes from a distance, waiting for the other to do or say something.

"Come on," She said quietly. So I did.

I waded the rest of my body into the sparkles and swam over to her. Facing each other, our legs scissored the water to stay afloat. Our thighs sometimes brushed against the other person's. I was so aware of the insects inside me, but I couldn't look away from her. We smiled sleepily.

"I'm hungry," She said.

\* \* \*

Homesick is a pink bedroom that doesn't belong to you. With picture frames on the wall, nostalgic to somebody else, and cookie crumbs in the floral sheets on the twin bed. Familiar smells unfamiliar to your nose. mismatched empty plates on the nightstand which once housed different food. Lipstick kisses on the vanity mirror, dirty underwear on the floor. We slept together many times in that tiny bed. Her own stash of drugs and hard liquor was safely hidden under it. I would stare at the dark ceiling, laying on my back, listening to her steady breathing beside me. Sometimes we would wake up tangled together in a mess of limbs and hair. Her dad would make us breakfast if he wasn't too hung-over. He would come into her room with two plates of eggs and bacon, wearing just his underwear and a stained white shirt that was too tight on his beer belly. He would start drinking around noon. We would too.

# SCRAWL YOUTH JOURNAL FOR WRITING & VISUAL ART

A project of the Powell River Public Library

## Submission guidelines

You may submit up to four pieces each year:

- Two pieces of writing per person
- Two visual pieces per person – a piece of artwork, a comic, OR a photograph.

Art work: 8 ½ inches by 11 inches preferred. Black and white art work preferred. You may be required to submit your original artwork if your work is selected for publication.

Digital Art: High resolution. Minimum 300 dpi. Black and white artwork preferred.

Photographs: High resolution for electronic submissions. Minimum 300 dpi. Black and white photographs preferred.

Written Work: 1,000 word maximum. Typed entries required.

Comics: On 8 ½ inch by 11 inch page maximum.

We welcome voices from youth (12-25) in the City of Powell River and the qathet Regional District. We are looking for creative, original, thought-provoking, diverse and engaging work. Submissions including hate speech, exclusionary language, or excessively graphic depictions of sexual encounters and violence will not be published. Please review and edit your work for any grammatical errors before submitting.

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## Submission Form

Please email your submission and a completed copy of this form to [cole@prpl.ca](mailto:cole@prpl.ca). Submissions must be received by midnight on April 30, 2020.

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Submission date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of submission (art, comic, fiction, poem, essay, other)? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about *Scrawl*? \_\_\_\_\_



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