



# OUR VOICES



## WHO WE ARE

Our Voices is a multifaceted biannual newsletter that is broadcasted to teens all over the city. With an aggregation of student work such as art, poetry, photographs, and even individual interviews, we strive to provide a space for all teens to express themselves in any way they choose. Since our publication is "by teens, for teens," we hope to help raise mental health awareness in the teenage community and take steps towards shattering the stigma.



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## RESOURCES

### National Suicide hotline:

1-800-273-8255

### Crisis Text Line:

Text "START" to 741-741

### Talbert House Crisis Care

#### Center:

513-281-2273

### Psychiatric Intake Response

#### Center (PIRC):

513-636-4124

### Children's Mobile Crisis

#### Team

513-558-8888

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Hey everyone.

\*sigh\*

If we were to come up with one word to summarize how it has felt to be a teenager these past few months, "difficult," "chaotic," and "stressful" are quite possibly some of the largest understatements of all time.

But hey, our vocabulary is only so vast. And there are only so many times we can say the word "unprecedented" without getting sick of it.

However, when we think about it, there is so much to be proud of. We get up everyday. Maybe make ourselves breakfast. Maybe send one text message, one email. Do some school. Read a book. Maybe go outside for a bit, or go to work for a few hours. Make some lunch. Draw something. Listen to music. Make dinner. Go to bed. We realize that some of these things seem like the bare minimum, or staples of a daily routines. But for some of us, that is all we can do. And that is enough.

Before you read on, we ask that you give yourself a hand, a pat on the back, or a fist bump. You. Are. Amazing.

And you are making it through this with us, believe it or not.

For those of you who maybe still don't feel 100%, that is okay. No one is telling you how to feel, or expecting a certain thing from you. So remind yourself that you shouldn't expect it, either, especially in this "difficult," "chaotic," and "stressful" period of our lives.

It's so weird to feel like there is nothing you can count on.

However, one thing that you can count on is us, and these pieces we have to share with you. Read them. View them. Admire them. Soak them all in. Because these submissions not only remind us what it feels like to hit rock bottom, but more importantly, how to rise up. This is not been easy for any of us, and though the end may be in sight, it seems like eons away. So remind yourself to breath.

Unclench your jaw. Relax your shoulders. And with the help of the authors and artists on the following pages, allow yourself to be proud of how far you've come, and how far you have yet to go.

Lovingly,

The team at Our Voices

# PHYONA FOSSETT

## PHOTOGRAPHER

Mental health is a very serious topic for me. I have family members, friends, and even myself included struggling with these topics. I love bringing change and knowledge to the subject, by spreading what I know, and what I learn along the way. I was motivated to make this piece to show people around my school what mental health truly looks like, and not just the “normal” image. I want to show others how they can help people with mental health, and show that everyone struggles in their own ways, and that we should all talk about it, and help out.

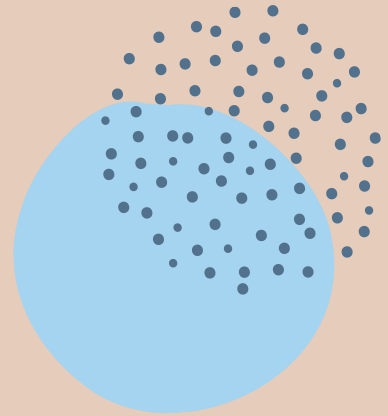




# PHYONA FOSSETT

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JUST BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE  
CAN HEAL OR DO YOUR  
WORK FOR YOU DOESN'T  
MEAN YOU CAN, SHOULD,  
OR NEED TO DO IT ALONE.

- LISA OLIVERA



I LOVE YOU. AND YOU SHOULD  
LOVE YOU, TOO.



# LEVITICUS 20:13

## ANONYMOUS

I beg on my knees  
Before a man who plays God.  
In halls of stained glass  
And statues  
The patterns of sin burn my body.  
I hunger for forgiveness  
But I,  
I am the sinner in the hands of an angry God.  
I cry out to the shattered sky  
On my hands and knees I beg  
I am the condemned,  
The cross in front, my saviour.  
In front of mother Mary  
My knees bleed the crimes  
I am too ashamed to speak.

I fill my walls  
With the words of sermons past  
Until they cloud my dreams  
Until I cannot see  
I am the sinner in the hands of an angry God.  
I cry His tears  
As I question why  
I wish to be the flowers  
I wish to be the trees  
I wish to be the wind in the orchard.  
I am the sinner in the hands of an angry God.

# LEVITICUS 20:13

IF A MAN HAS SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A MAN AS ONE  
DOES WITH A WOMEN, BOTH OF THEM HAVE DONE WHAT  
IS DETESTABLE. THEY ARE TO BE PUT TO DEATH; THEIR  
BLOOD WILL BE ON THEIR OWN HANDS.

This poem is my take on religion, sexuality and mental health. I tried to encapsulate the stories I have heard from those who struggle with their own sexuality and the church and how this impacts their mental health. This poem is an ode to those who feel as if their religion is trapping them into a certain lifestyle and they are therefore unable to be themselves.

With purple knees  
I lie.  
The wine on the crest of my tongue  
The body and blood.  
I stand before God  
"What are we,  
That we should think  
To stand before him?"  
Sharpening His knife on the edge of my sins  
His flesh burning  
Through the back of my throat  
"At whose rebuke,  
The earth trembles"  
Arms open I scream  
Who am I to feel this way?  
I am a sinner  
A sinner  
I am the sinner in the hands of an angry God.  
"They deserve to be cast to hell"

The devil waits.  
Not a demon,  
Not a God  
But the perfect picture  
Of fragile temptation  
A smirk,  
On the face of a sinner.

I am the sinner in the hands of an angry God,  
He tells me.

I wake.  
My blood is on my own hands.



# TODAY I DIED

JAYME RODRIGUEZ

Today I died  
And I'm afraid to say  
I've seen it coming  
Denial blocked my brain  
Like a brick wall and a train  
But the thing about crashes  
Is that the train still leaks through

Today I died  
And yes my body lives on  
And a small part of a soul  
That makes me me  
But the child in me has died  
As it's been dying for a while now

Today I died  
And you should have seen the reveal  
The perfect facade of me  
Crumbled to the ground  
Burnt up ashes  
That smelled of trash and rot  
Blown away in the wind  
Like it never carried any weight

Today I died  
And now it's time to live  
Yet death seems so real now  
I'll live until I die a thousand times  
Until each stage has left  
Until each crippling  
Piercing  
Screeching whisper  
Of me  
Has flown away  
Today I died

I WROTE THIS AFTER A CLOSE FRIEND CALLED ME INFORMING ME SHE HAD ATTEMPTED SUICIDE AND I HAD TO CONVINCE THEM TO TELL THEIR PARENTS SO THEY COULD GET PROPER TREATMENT. I WAS SHOCKED. A WORLD THAT I HAD CREATED IN MY HEAD, A PERFECT UTOPIA, WAS DESTROYED. MY "DEATH" WAS REALLY THE DEATH OF MY INNOCENCE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH. WHILE I WOULD NEVER WANT TO LIVE THROUGH THAT AGAIN, I AM GLAD I HAVE REALIZED THE IMPACT MENTAL ILLNESS CAN HAVE. WHILE I WANT TO GIVE REPRESENTATION TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING THROUGH MENTAL ILLNESSES, I FEEL LIKE THAT IS THEIR STORY TO TELL. THE BEST THING I CAN DO IS SUPPORT THEM AND SHOW THEM THROUGH THIS SUBMISSION THAT IT IS OKAY TO BE VULNERABLE.



# VICTORY

ANONYMOUS

In the night  
I slip by  
The quiet gas stations  
And field and cars  
Blurring together.  
And so I'll drive  
Until my wheels burn  
With the longing for home  
Until I am in a small town In northern Georgia  
Where everybody knows everybody  
And the farthest a daughter goes  
Is to the corner shop  
And the only time  
She gets on her knees  
Is to pray.

I will rebuke my past,  
But not my sins.  
I allow them to  
Burn through me  
Peeling me apart  
From inside out,  
Until I stand In the middle ground  
Between heaven and hell  
My body suspended  
One with the stars  
Until the blood on my lips  
Tastes like victory.

This poem is a way to discuss the struggle between wanting to please my family and wanting to live my life the way I wanted to. I tried to encompass the split sense of mind I feel when I think about my future.



# TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

## ANONYMOUS

"To have and to hold"  
Until holding me  
Means holding me  
As I cry on the bathroom floor.  
Until holding me,  
Means much more  
Than my body  
And the imperfections  
You once called perfect  
Rise to my cracked surface  
Bleeding through the bandages  
You so delicately wrapped.  
Your temporary solution  
To a permanent problem  
"To have and to hold"  
Until you are holding  
Nothing more than  
The broken fragments  
Of who I pretend to be.



IN THIS POEM I WANTED TO WRITE  
ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
ROMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AND  
THE IMPACT THAT CAN HAVE ON  
RELATIONSHIPS. I USED  
TRADITIONAL LINES FROM WEDDING  
VOWS TO SHOW THE BOND BETWEEN  
THE 2 PEOPLE IN CONTRAST TO HOW  
BROKEN ONE OF THEM FEELS.



Special thanks to our submitters Phyona Fossett, Jayme Rodriguez, and our other anonymous writers. It is voices like yours that make the quiet feel heard.



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QUESTIONS? FEEDBACK? COMMENTS? WANT TO SUBMIT TO OUR NEXT ISSUE? CONTACT US!



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<https://ln5.org/our-voices-2/>

