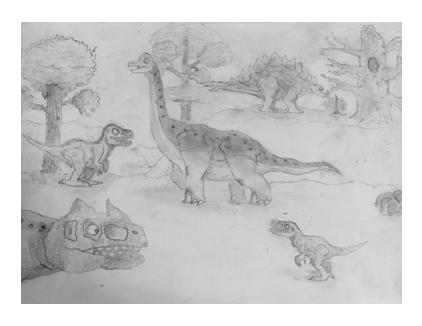
# CrossCurrents



Spring Issue 2019 JAMS



Eric Lima



Reese Thai-Sandoval

#### **LABELS**

By April Ocon

Ever since I was little, I never understood labels. I thought they were silly. What's the point? We're given names for a reason. I still don't understand them, but I understand why we have them. We will all be forgotten at some point, I understand that. No one will remember my name, even if I make an impact on the world, negative or positive, my story will slowly lose detail, until it is forgotten about. It's like a scarf being knitted, as it circulates, everyone either provides another row full of intricate details, or just passes it down to the next person. It may not be pretty, but it will provide the warmth it was made for, until it isn't needed anymore.

I know of my ancestors, I know that they were strong, brave souls. Their blood provides me with the strength I need to survive, to live. They empower me, though I know nothing about them. I know my grandma, how much she's gone through. Prejudice, injustice, and so much more. I know my mom, how much she has sacrificed to protect and provide for me and my siblings. I don't know about who came before them, or even before that. I will pass down the stories of my mom, and her mom. I trust that my children will do the same.

Sometimes I ask myself 'what's the point? I'm going to die and be forgotten anyway.' Yet I always remind myself that no matter what, the things I do will always have an effect. For every action, there is an opposite reaction. I don't need people to sing my name with joy or grit it out like a curse. I don't need to be famous, or popular to be remembered.

I don't know why people do bad things, but I know why I do good things. It makes me feel good, knowing that I made a positive impact on others. I feel strong knowing that others can count on me to hold them up when their legs are too weak to do it themselves.

I am nowhere near an optimist, but there's a tiny part of me that knows I should try to be. I was forced to grow up due to trauma. I see the bad in people before I even try to look for good. I have walls up, and it takes everything in me to fully trust someone. It's terrible. Nobody is a completely good person, nor a completely bad person. It doesn't matter though. I see the bad in everything because I'm scared. I need to know how or why they could possibly hurt me, before I let them get close to me. I wouldn't wish that upon anyone, to see the world through black colored lenses. At some point, you begin to lose faith in others. I want to give others the hope that I've lost. I want others to look back and remember the time a stranger helped them, for no reason other than the goodness in their heart. I've never experienced anything like that, but I want others to. I imagine it's a lovely feeling.

My friends and I have been called many things by strangers. Faggot, tranny, unnatural, etc. Every time, I am not surprised in the least. I push it to the back of my mind and comfort my friends. Each time, they look absolutely crushed. It infuriates me that my friends begin to question their right to simply exist, whether they deserve to be treated in such a way. Every time, I confront the stranger. Every time, they don't even remember what they said. Their words have the power to ruin my friend's week, but they don't even think twice about it. They don't even ask our names before they begin to judge us. We've already been labeled as the group of queer kids who sit at the 'gayble.' They look at our labels before they look at us.

Our actions hold a weight that we don't even consider. We carry how others treat us on our shoulders, whether we realize it or not. If you continue to pile up negativity, we will eventually begin to break under the pressure. If I can get rid of even the tiniest bit, I will. I don't know exactly what anyone is going through, but if I can provide even the tiniest spark of happiness, I will. I try my best to provide for others in the hope that when I need it, they will provide for me.

We use labels because we need to what others are before who they are. We don't think to even try to know them before making assumptions. What we fail to realize is that you can't describe someone in one word. You can't even describe someone with all the words you can possibly think of. You can't completely know others, nor yourself. If I'm going to be forced into a label, into a single description, though, it's going to be 'caring.' One day, I will be called my name. By those who matter, at the very least.



Hayley Mullane

#### Ode to Sleep

#### By Sophia Canny

Sleep means different things Sleep smells like lavender and peach, It is peace. Sleep is an escape, An escape from the world. Sleep is so necessary, yet so hard to find. Small little friends keep our heads at bay, chemicals reach our heads And our eyes shut. Sleep reassures us It's all okay and we're together. Our wildest dreams come to life As sleep keeps watch on reality. Sometimes sleep lets us down. The monsters get in Sleep disappears Our hearts beat faster and we wake up. Soon though, soon enough Sleep finds its way back to us Intertwined with it the vibrant scent of lavender Distant dreams approach us, Because of sleep.



#### Ode to the Ocean

#### By Ilana Frid-Madden

The water becomes a hand, reaching out to the sun burned sand Its fingers curl over the pure white grains and draw back Back to the clear blue depths that turn turquoise. navy. black.

Waves rise up and c e down,

u v down,

Crashing and sending the ocean floor into chaos.

The ocean is a home

To dolphins

To whales

To fish

To crabs

To lobsters

To oysters.

The world is our oyster, but the ocean is the pearl.

It leads sailors home,

Travelers on a journey, Crash Of

And sinners amiss. Every A Wave

With And Turn

And Of The Tide

The Ocean Tells its story

To those willing

To listen and hear

To the tales of the

Ocean. Of the pirates who knew to respect the ocean and her power. Who knew to thank her and honor her. The tales of the unknown adventurers, too egoistic to listen to the warning cries of the ocean, who now would do anything to get out of the cage of their own making in the deepest parts of the darkest sea the ocean has. The story of the fishermen on a quest, some who understood the ocean, some who didn't. The surfers, riding the wave to fame. Some not able to keep up with the game.

The ocean has watched lovers on the beach, gazing out onto the endless waters. It has swirled around young children running, toddlers playing and babies laughing in the warm water. The ocean has scared some off of it, and others in, it has beckoned some to follow and convinced others to lead.

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So
Next time
You feel the water swirl around your feet
as you're standing on sun-warmed sand,
remember all of the secrets concealed in the ocean,
ready to come out,
but only to the person
Who
listens
to
the
whispers
of
the
```

#### The Battle at Sandstorm

by Noah Zucker

In the fall of my 4th grade year I played in a lacrosse tournament called The Battle at Sandstrom in Palm Springs, CA. It was a very competitive tournament and teams from all over the United States came to play. I played for the Santa Monica Dragons. This was my team's first time at a big lacrosse tournament. Although we were nervous, we couldn't wait for that first game. We practiced for weeks, learned new plays, and grew together as teammates.

At our last practice before the tournament, Coach Max went over our upcoming schedule. He said our first game would be a tough match against a team from Texas. I remember Coach Max saying, "Everything is bigger in Texas." I looked around our team huddle and I hoped I didn't have the same scared look the rest of my teammates had. If that didn't sound alarming enough, Coach Max said our second game was against a team from New York. At that point, Tommy yelled in the huddle, "I heard those East coast kids eat, drink, and sleep lacrosse. We're gonna get killed." We hadn't played one game yet and you might have thought that we were 0-2.

We showed up on Saturday for our first game and we were thrilled, yet worried, about our competition. As our team was watching the Texas team warm up, Jimmy said, "Coach was right. Those kids from Texas are huge." Jamie piled on and said, "We have no chance. Our biggest guy is smaller than their smallest guy."

Coach pulled us together five minutes before the game and said, "Don't worry about your competition, just play your game. We have practiced hard, and you are all prepared for this." The whistle blew and our tournament began. The first 5 minutes flew by and the score was still 0-0. My team was passing the ball really well, and we started to get comfortable in the game. We realized that

while the team from Texas was much bigger than us, our little team from Santa Monica was much quicker and better skilled.

The first half came to a close and the score was 2-2. During half time the team rested and talked about the game. The team was surprised at how well we were matching up against the bigger Texas team. Coach Max looked around at the team and said, "I'm not surprised at all how well you are doing. I had confidence in you the entire time."

"We can win this," I said. "Let's believe in each other, fight as one team, and together we can do this!" The second half started and we got off to a fast start. Jimmy scored on a breakaway, I scored on a great pass from Z, and Simon was like a wall in goal. The game came to a close and we came out victorious 7-4.

After the game Coach Max brought us together. "This was a great start guys, I'm really proud of you. Not because you won the game, but because you believed in yourselves and worked together. You didn't let your fears overcome you, and you came out triumphant."

While the rest of the tournament didn't go as well as our first game, we fought hard together as a team. We were no longer intimidated, and knew we belonged on the field with anyone. Coach Max was right, we never should have doubted ourselves. As a team, we are strong, and can accomplish anything that we work for. We ended up losing our next two games, but ended the tournament with a win in the final game. Now, 4 years later, my team is still together and has played in many tournaments. We continue to grow and learn as a team, and it all started with that first tournament game at the Battle at Sandstorm.

#### **Ode to Los Angeles**

#### By Elva Loomis

A city full of outcasts and freaks, a city full of error, a city full of broken ties, a city full of terror, but it's also a city with lights that sparkle like diamonds, and roaring cars that run like lions. it's the city of angels, the city where you fell in love. where you sat in the grass and gazed at the stars. blindingly beautiful, where you rode a rollercoaster for the very first time, and screamed against the wind for the thrill of it. and where you watched the sunset over a whispering sea, not a care in the world. because the colors scream your name, screaming that it's your city, your home, Los Angeles



Alondra Hernandez

#### Procrastination by Isabel Arias

Science class, 7th grade.

"As a part of the science magnet class," spoke the teacher, "you have to do a report project on any disease you choose, it'll be due in a month."

One month later...

I haven't started the report.

I'm an expert procrastinator, the whole time I had to do it, I was "researching" (but not actually writing anything down) to make me feel like I wasn't procrastinating. The project was due tomorrow, I can't do it, I thought to myself. I had to at least try. After school, I went straight home onto my laptop, and began to type. The night before I only typed one sentence, I'm doomed.

How could I let this happen? Despite me regretting everything, I typed and researched as much as I could. There were about ten tabs of medical websites on my computer.

"Dinner's ready," my mother called for me, "Take a break from the computer and come eat."

That was the fastest I've ever eaten. I usually take a long time to eat to enjoy my food, this time it took me only five minutes.

It was getting late, it was already 8 pm.

"You're still working on that project?" My mother was getting concerned. "It better not be due tomorrow."

"It is," I said nervously, still furiously typing.

She sighed. "You better finish it soon, you have to be in bed by 10."

"Don't worry, I'll have it done by then."

10 pm:

"I'm not done."

"What?! You said by 10! You HAVE to sleep!" My mom was getting impatient with me. She always tells me not to procrastinate, but I do it anyway. Usually, however, it's only with homework or small assignments that I could do within an hour. This project was huge, something you really do need a month for.

"I'll give you 30 minutes, then it's straight to bed!"

1 hour later, 11 pm:

"I'm still not done." I was still sitting there, typing away.

"IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT! YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROJECT ALL DAY! WHY WOULD YOU SAVE SUCH A HUGE PROJECT FOR LAST MINUTE?!" She was furious.

Though I hated being yelled at, she was right. It was very irresponsible for me to do this, now I had to sacrifice my sleep to do this project.

It was midnight, I was in huge trouble.

"I'm almost finished... kind of."

"HOW ARE YOU UP THIS LATE STILL WORKING ON THIS ASSIGNMENT? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND HOW LATE IT IS?" My mom was even more mad then she was before.

"I know, I know, I'm going as fast as I can."

"Why is she still up, make her go to bed," I heard my dad say grumpily from the other room.

2 am:

"I finished!..."

"Great, now go to bed," my mom said in an irritated tone.

"...With the writing portion."

"WHAT? You HAVE to go to bed now it's TWO IN THE MORNING! YOU NEED SLEEP!"

"Now all I have to do is the poster part, it shouldn't take that long."

"I'm done. I give up. I'm not helping you with this, you're on your own. I'm done."

My mom was so done with me. She didn't even waste her time yelling at me. She went off to her room to sleep and slammed her door. Though I wasn't furious like my parents, I was still worried. I was scared, anxious, tired, and mad at myself. I was in the living room at 2 am by myself doing a science project because I was stupid enough to save this major project for the last minute.

It wasn't until about 20 minutes later of me trying to cut out letters when my dad came out of the room. He was mad at me.

"You're just wasting your time cutting letters out like that. Just come here and tell me what you want to print, already."

I was so thankful my dad came out at 2:30 am to help me with this. He printed what I needed to print out. With his help, I was able to finish the project by 3 am.

"Don't you ever do this again," my father said with the coldest tone I ever heard, as he made his way back to their room.

### Ode to Sleep

By Madeline Cruz

Sleep, sleep, sleep...
Wonderful, drowsy, sleep.
Sleep can be peaceful.
OR, sleep could be
THE BLACK HOLE
Of joy and light.
You can never be sure.

Sleep, one of the necessities that every living creature needs.

A place that is somewhere deep in your mind.
A place that only you can access.
A place where DREAMS are made.
A place where reality...
is scrambled.
Full of
BROKEN PIECES
Of your Life,
Scattered everywhere
Throughout your mind,
like CRACKED SHARDS of GLASS
that BROKE
upon IMPACT
With the GROUND.

Sleep, The Gateway of Imagination.

In this place, the Fabric of Reality Is twisted, bended, and is totally UPSIDE DOWN. You sometimes dream things you have Witnessed in YOUR PAST that could be real or just fantasy. FAMILY,

FRIENDS,

The list goes on and on and on. Never ending, In inite,

Forever.

Until you

## **WAKE UP!!!**

So KeEp on SleEPINg. Awaits.



Jackie Cruz

#### Ode to Radio

#### By Nori Quist

I turn on the radio, to summon the voices. My left earbud broke, but my right ear rejoices.

Talk shows, game shows, short stories, and more; NPR has entertainment galore!

Game shows and talk shows start in similar ways.
The host marches in, and the theme music plays.

Then it's time for them to bring out the guest.
"This next star," the host boasts, "Is up there with the best!"

Then the host and guest sit, they chat for some time, about the guest's recent work, and their start as a mime.

And this is where the two show types differ in style, the talk show host says, "We've been here a while, our time is up, get out, be gone."

Then, I imagine, the host gives a small smile, "Bring out the next guest," he says, "she wrote a song!"

But the game show host says, "I'd sit here all day, and keep talking about your fame, but we brought you here to play this fun game!"

Then they ask some trivia, The answers to which I can't guess, but the star gets them all right, because she's up there with the best.

Then on comes the news, which can't ever be good.
It tells me the the shutdown has lasted longer than it should.
It tells me other bad things, 'cause the world is a wreck, and just when staying informed becomes a pain in the neck, just when I know that I've had just enough, NPR switches to the light-hearted stuff.

They bring on the short stories, which are good as can be, and relatable, like the radio is talking just to me.

NPR makes my stereo an infinite book, and I don't even have to keep my eyes open to look. I can drift off to sleep, my last thought in my wake, "Thank you NPR, for the noise that you make!"



Emma Brownrigg

#### Crystal

#### By Denise Hernandez

Something that changed my life is when my brother got with his first real girlfriend. My brother had always brought over girls, but as far as my family was concerned, they were just friends. Until one day one girl came over that I'd never seen before. At first I'd thought she was another friend until my mother stopped my brother just outside the door, and asked, "Who is that?" I was wondering the same thing. I didn't want to ask him myself so I just let my her do the asking. She wasn't like the rest of the girls that would come over, she wore dark clothes, wore dark lipstick, was shorter than me, and was so skinny it was unbelievable.

"This is my friend," my brother stuttered.

"I gave birth to you and raised you myself, I know you're lying. What's wrong? You never lie to me," my mother said in her quick Spanish voice.

"She's my girlfriend."

My heart stopped for a split second. I couldn't believe what I'd just heard, I was absolutely shocked. My brother had never brought home a girlfriend before, he'd never brought just one alone! This girl was a complete stranger to me, I didn't trust her. I didn't WANT to trust her because I didn't like the fact that my brother was closer to a girl than me. I was jealous because we are family and I wanted to get closer to him, because we never have been until recently. He was my step-brother and I thought he was one of the smartest people in history, or at least, one of the smartest people I've met. He was the person I looked up to. I always thought he was so independent, I never even considered this day would come but, it did, and a bit too soon, in my opinion.

"Kevin, is she nemo?" My mother asked.

"What?" My brother said laughing. "Nemo?"

"Yeah, is she?"

"You mean, emo?"

"Whatever, you know what I'm asking you."

My brother was absolutely dying of laughter and couldn't even speak.

"Don't laugh at me and answer the damn question!"

At this point, they weren't screaming and both angry, but were more like loud whispers. I personally thought my mother was overreacting. I know this was something different and new but she didn't need to be so rude about it. Even though I never even thought of this situation, my mother should've seen it coming. I mean he was a 19 year old in college, he was bound to bring over a girl at some point.

"Mom! Why are you overreacting so much about this!
"I'm not overreacting! But if you wanted to bring over a girl then this is how I'm going to react!"

"Mom! Think about what you're doing right now! Think about how you're acting about this situation! She's my girlfriend, she's important to me!"

"Ok, but she doesn't look normal! She looks emo and weird, and look at the way she dresses! What's her name?"

"Her name is Crystal and there's nothing wrong with her or the way she dresses," my brother calmly stated and walked away to his room where Crystal was waiting.

My mother had always been those people that weren't used to things being different. I don't know why. Maybe it's because she was from Mexico and was so used to her own ways, maybe it's just the way she is. Anyway, after this little argument, I later found out that he went to tell Crystal EVERYTHING that he and my mom had talked about. I'm not sure exactly how she felt but judging by what kind of person she is, she must've taken it very personally. I've gotten to know her more and she's told me about her past, about each of her family members, and we've had many deep conversations since the day we met. I've learned she's a vegetarian, she is very obsessed with any and every animal, and we have way more common interests than I thought. She is also a very caring and giving person. She is always buying me little presents and snacks, taking me out at 1:00 in the morning to get something if I'm hungry, and giving me hand-me-downs. I'm glad that first conversation didn't affect anything between them. My mother and whole family have come to love her and accept her into the family. Honestly, she's not anything like you'd think she'd be like if you first saw her, but in a good way. I'm glad she's my brother's first girlfriend.

#### Ode to the Activist - Scarlett Tropea-Lester

March by the Millions,

Together We Stand;

Fierce,

Strong,

Defiant

We hold each other's hands

We raise a fist or two

Hold our signs up to the

Sky

#### Feminists;

We stand together and fight for women's rights

LGBTQ+ and allies;

We celebrate our pride

Black Lives Matter;

We change injustice in society

We raise our fists and punch a hole in the

Sky

Our fists take flight

As we fight for what is

Right

Our voice is our Power

And we use it,

Our lips move like birds

As we chant our beliefs

One by One,

Voices add in until

We are one.

Our voices are titanium

Loud

Strong

Fierce

We Unite under our beliefs and what is Right

We Unite.

#### Ode to Rain

By Giselle Avila

Oh, tears from the heavens

You pronounce your coming with dark and

Gloomy skies

But bring nothing but a joyful delight

My lungs inhale cool crisp air in your presence

Umbrellas and rain boots only fuel my anticipation

You nourish all life on earth and cleanse my soul

Oh, tears from the heavens

The first drop on my palm is that of love at first sight

Every jump in your puddles splashes bliss and laughter

They say after every storm is a rainbow

What about everything in between

I guess I truly do enjoy dancing in the rain,

even if I come out soaking wet!

Oh, tears from the heavens

You teemed from above like there was no tomorrow

Probably came down 1 inch per hour!

You're a marching band pounding drums

Or a gentle pitter-patter

Yes, even, Dibble, Dabble, dop

Regardless,

your sound is as awfully soothing as Symphony No. 40

Oh, tears from the heavens

Rain makes everything beautiful

You make the pavement shine like silver

And tone all plants a dark green

You bring out snails and slugs

Childish spirits in the city are released to their mud puddle calling

Heck! Even people who do not savor you like I do

Are overcome with a feeling of nostalgic coziness in their homes

As they sip hot tea and gaze out the window

Oh, tears from heaven

Nothing like the memories cherished with you

Yes, some fear you for your

abrupt thunder claps

Repulsive muddiness

Or the cold virus span

But can't we all just appreciate you for all the wonder you bring

Rain, Rain, please do not go away.

### <u>Hope</u>

#### Citli Carrera Arenas

"Do you think we're moving on?" I asked Ben, as him, Nathaly, Clare, Dylan, Joaquin, and I were walking towards the award ceremony.

"I don't know," he replied. He shook his head as we entered the gym.

We waved to the rest of the team and sat down next to them. I felt like there was butterflies in my stomach. At the time, I thought that was the end of our robotic dream.

Earlier that day we had a robotics competition for First Tech Challenge and honestly, we did terrible. The other teams were all high schools. It seemed as if we were the prey, and they were the predators; they were giants, and we were tiny ants ready to be squashed by their enormous feet. Since we did so terrible during the competition, our only hope to move on to regionals was to win an award. I felt like my head was about to explode as the Marlborough High School team passed by us and smirked. We were kind of like a joke. No one took us seriously because we were a middle school team. We wanted to proved them wrong. I knew that we were a great team, but a lot of other teams didn't think the same. The thought of not moving to regionals made my head hurt. Everyone in our team looked the same. Pale, wide-eyed, frowning, sick-looking.

"We still might have chance," said Zander. "We might still be able to move on to regionals."

"Yeah, maybe," Araceli replied with a slight smile on her face.

Everyone looked so sad and I really wanted them to be happy, but there wasn't really much to say. It isn't

easy to win an award, and that was our only hope. So I decided to stay cheerful and hopeful.

"Guys, stay hopeful. We did a good job with outreach and gracious professionalism," I said with a enthusiastic look on my face. "We have a really good chance of moving on."

Some people on the team smiled, others still had the same blank look on their faces. We didn't want to look like hopeless prey, we wanted to look like fierce predators just like the other teams. I had mixed emotions, I felt like my body was about to collapse from all the stress. There had to be a hopeful person on the team, and if no one else wanted to be that person, it had to be me.

"Good evening everyone, we will be starting the award ceremony!" said the host, frantically dancing around.

When I heard these words, I felt my stomach drop, and I suddenly just drifted into my sea of thoughts and questions. It was as if I stopped functioning.

"Guys, this is it," sighed Clare.

"It was a fun season, and it was nice working with you guys," said Jack.

"Don't lose hope and be faithful, we have a shot at making it to regionals!" I exclaimed, trying to remain faithful.

"SSSHHHH, guys be quiet!" said Mo, who is our coach.

"The Connection Award goes to Marlborough High School!" screamed the host.

I heard a thunderstorm of stomping feet, and waves of screaming washing over me as they went over to receive their award.

"Stay calm," I thought, "Don't you dare lose hope, not today."

"The Inspire Award goes to Marlborough High School!" said the host.

At this point I didn't know what to think. Were we going to win an award and move on to regionals? Or were we not going to win an award and it would be the end of our season?

"The Creativity Award goes to Monrovia High School!"

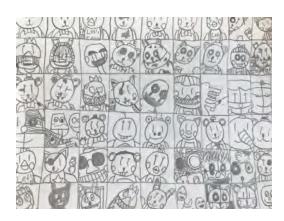
This was it. The next award was the last award, and if we didn't win it, we weren't moving on. My hands and legs were shaking, and I felt my eyes start watering. The whole team was looking at each other with frowns and blank stares. Even our team captain was biting her nails.

"And for the final award..."

I hugged the nearest person, which happened to be Clare.

"The Outreach Award goes to.......", there was a dramatic pause, "Team 9887 RoboVikings!"

When I heard this I was completely stunned. I just couldn't believe it. We were moving to Regionals! The whole team united for a hug of victory. The whole team was so surprised and we were all so excited. I heard my heart bang against my chest, as I heard the rest of the teams cheering for us.



Jesse Bengoa

#### Ode to My Best Friend

By Tahlia Porter

My best friend,
So sweet and kind,
Like chocolate on Valentine's.
He makes me so happy,
When he's around I feel so safe.
I tell him all my secrets just like he tells me his.
I never wanna lose him because then I'd lose my mind.
Every time I'm around him it feels like it's just me and him.
Like the world stops.

Nothing else matters but us.

I love him so much words can't explain.

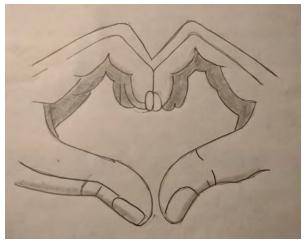
He heals all my pain and makes everything better.

He's just like my bodyguard, he protects me no matter what.

No matter how far we are, we never ever leave each other's side.

Forever in my heart, I will cherish him and never let him go.

He can be a devil, very, very mean But at the end of the day I know it's because he loves me.



Freddy Paniagua

# Starpressed Seas By Clairty Seymour

I fell in love with the Starpressed Seas It was real, no more of my dreams

Under the light of the liquid moon
The stars flourish, they have their own tune

Their song was so bright, the song was light The sea rose up, to greet the opulent night

And the stars came closer, so that it made a bond No one could've broken, there's no one so strong

The waves touched the sky, flying high The water grew wings, now it could fly

They created a song called the Starpressed Sea The song is timeless, so still they sing

About a love, a life minute gone But here I am, writing this song

About the stars and the ocean breeze
About the wonder and hope, I have gleaned from thee

Here is a wonder, the dear Starpressed Seas.



**Bree Duncans** 



Jackie Oram



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