

Salt in the Air, Static in our Bones

Issue 4



UNTOLD JOURNAL

Editorial Note

This issue documents voices from victims of natural disaster.

Some contributors use their real names. Others have chosen to remain anonymous, to protect themselves or to hold onto something private. We respect both choices deeply.

Thank you for reading. And more importantly, thank you for listening.

@theuntoldjournal

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WHAT THE WATER TOOK

The water climbed the stairs
like it had a key.
It didn't knock.
It didn't care that I was sleeping.
My sneakers floated
like dumb boats,
my drawings turned
to soft pulp prayers.

They said category four.
I said category childhood gone.
They said evacuation route.
I said where? home's already leaving.

When the power went out,
I could still see everything —
the memory of light
still hung in the room,
like it refused to drown.

Author bio (as written by the poet's old phone):

Battery: 3%.
Owner: Jay, age 14.
Last photo: flooded living room, timestamp glitch 0:00.
Drafts folder: 17 poems, 1 text unsent.
GPS: unknown.

Stop Saying 'At Least You're Safe

Stop. Saying. That.

“At least you’re safe.”

Yeah, safe where? In a gym full of folding cots and someone’s
cough?

My town looks like it got erased and rewritten by a drunk god.

You can’t eat “safe.” You can’t sleep inside “safe.”

The sky chewed up our houses and spit them into the bay.

And everyone keeps talking about rebuilding like it’s a video game
with infinite materials and no grief meter.

I don’t want to rebuild.

I want my before back.

Author bio:

Name: Rami

Status: “Evacuated (again)”

Pinned messages:

- “bring the dog”
- “don’t look back”

Typing...

then nothing.

The Day the Air Forgot

When the hurricane came, nobody screamed. Not even the trees.

It was like the air had given up — too heavy to carry sound.

Jules watched their dad tie the boat to the mailbox, like that could stop anything.

Afterward, the only thing that worked was the radio, and it played a preacher saying God tests the strong.

Jules wanted to ask why God needed to test the plumbing too.

They found a fish in the bathtub, still alive. Jules didn't flush it. They named it "Faith," but not because of God — because it refused to die in freshwater.

Q



The Quiet After by Andrew

The quiet after a hurricane is different.
It's not peaceful — it's like the world's
muted itself out of guilt.

I remember walking barefoot to the
church where they had Wi-Fi and air-
conditioning,
and feeling like I was walking through
someone else's dream.

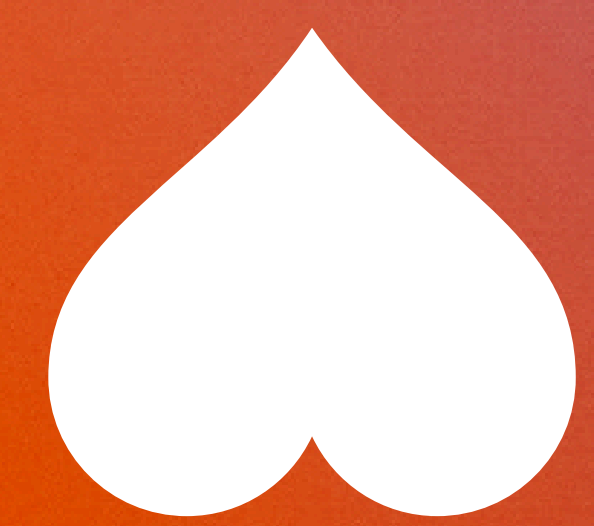
Everyone was pretending we'd be fine.
But when the news vans left, the water
smell stayed.

You learn to live with it.

You learn to joke again.

You start school online, because your
real one's a skeleton now.

You become the kind of person who
checks the sky too often.



The Ceiling Dripped for Weeks

The smell came first —
not rot, but something tired.
The house sighed when I walked through,
like it remembered me heavier.

Mom says we're "blessed."
Blessed feels like wet shoes
and canned peaches.
Blessed feels like homework
done by flashlight.

I used to think storms were exciting.
Now thunder sounds
like someone dragging furniture
in the sky.

The author prefers to remain unnamed.

The One Who Stayed Behind

When the news said mandatory evacuation, Miguel said nah.

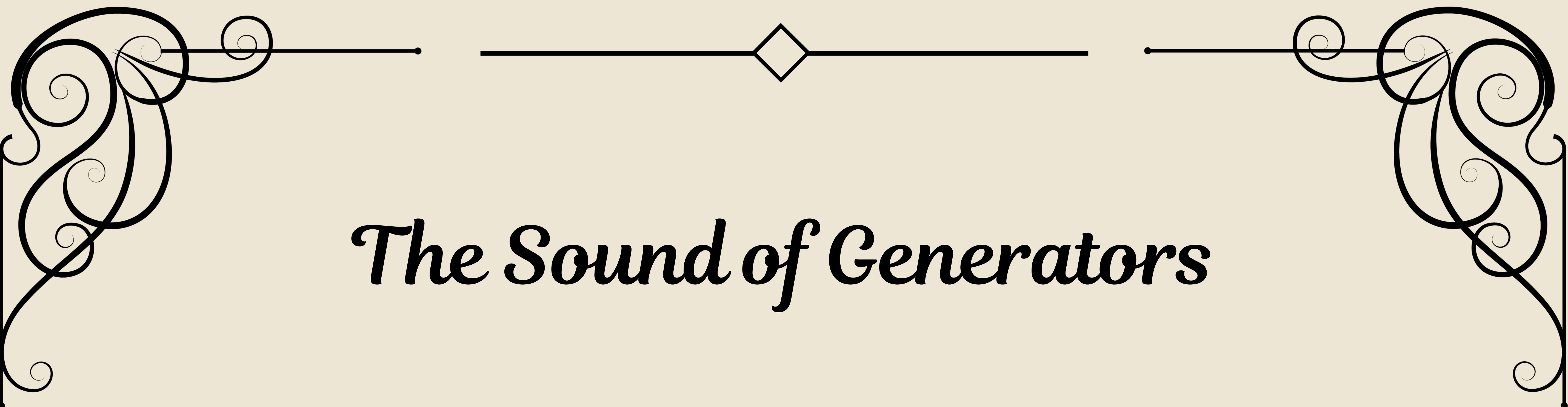
He said his dad's boat needed guarding,
and the dog gets carsick anyway.

When they found him, he was sitting on the dock
with his feet in brown water,
listening to the radio that didn't work anymore.

He told the rescuers,
“I was waiting for the music to come back.”

Author bio:

Castillo is a sophomore in high school. He is a fiction
writer

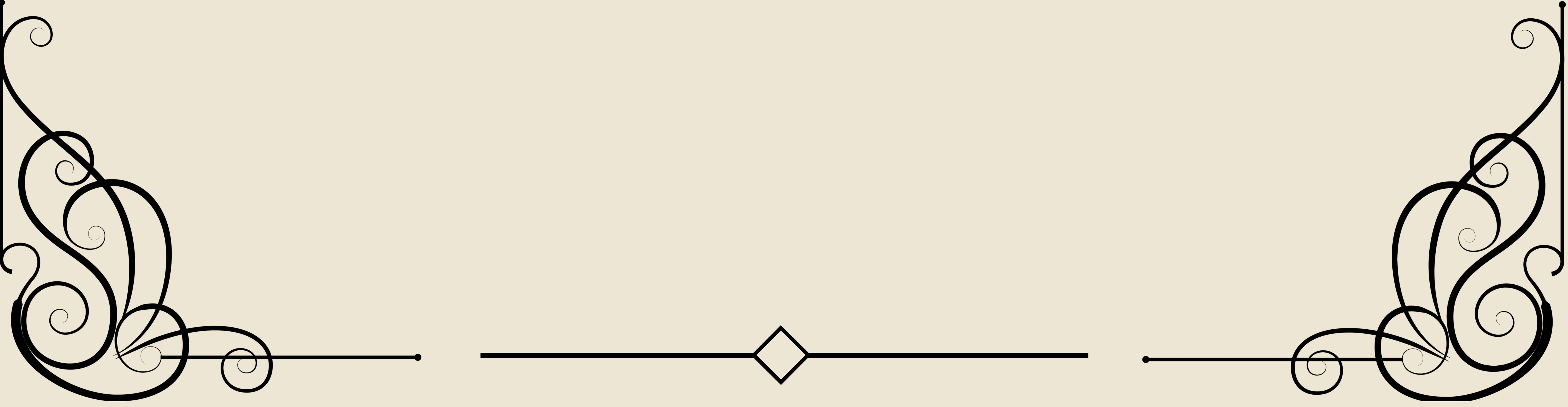


The Sound of Generators

I used to think silence was peaceful.
But after the hurricane, silence meant no power —
which meant no fridge, no news, no idea if your people made it.

The new sound of safety became the buzz of generators.
They purred all night in the neighborhood like stubborn
animals,
keeping our milk alive and our fear quiet.

My brother called it “city heartbeat.”
When it stopped, we panicked.
When it ran, we couldn’t sleep.





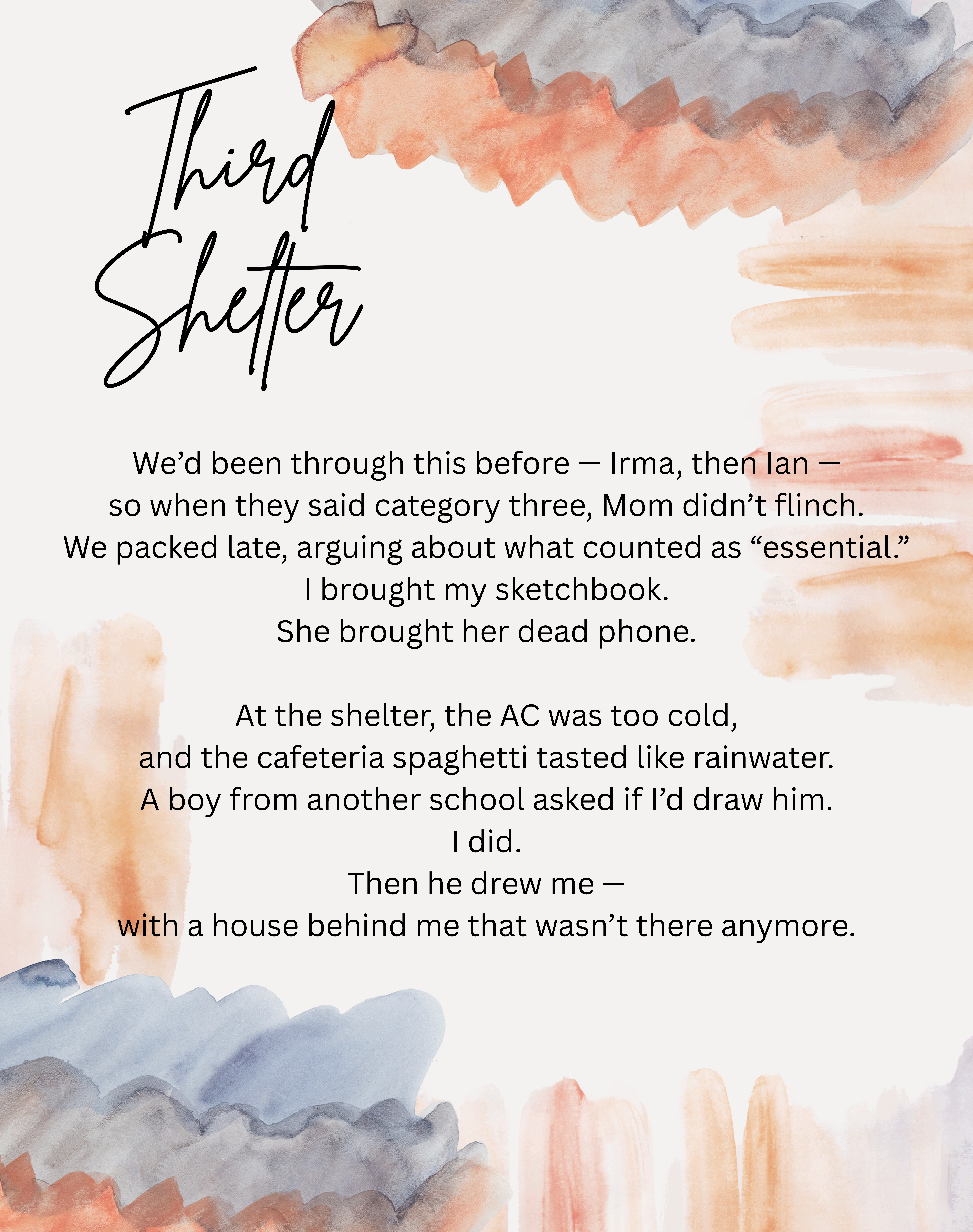
The Sky That Forgot Its Color

We spray-painted our names on the
boarded windows before we left.
Not to vandalize — to remember.
When we came back, the paint had
washed off.

Only a ghost outline stayed.
Maybe that's how memory works —
the outline remains,
the color leaves.

Devon is 15. He likes clouds, basketball,
and photography.





Third Shelter

We'd been through this before — Irma, then Ian —
so when they said category three, Mom didn't flinch.
We packed late, arguing about what counted as “essential.”

I brought my sketchbook.
She brought her dead phone.

At the shelter, the AC was too cold,
and the cafeteria spaghetti tasted like rainwater.
A boy from another school asked if I'd draw him.

I did.

Then he drew me —
with a house behind me that wasn't there anymore.

We Don't Watch the News Anymore

Dad turns off the TV when there's
weather.

He says he's done watching our
street become a headline.

I check Twitter anyway.
Someone posts a drone shot of our
town —
a smear of blue tarps and brown
water.

I zoom in until I can't tell
which roof used to be ours.

I scroll and scroll,
but it's all the same ocean,
just from different angles.



