



# February's Moonstruck

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## **Mulțumiri colaboratorilor:**

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- Anda Boțoiu
- Alexandru Micu
- Alina Bârlădeanu
- Alina Crăciun-Ștefaniu
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- Anca Voicu-Ghenghea
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- Mihaela Manolache
- Petronela Postolache
- Ramona Dragu
- Mihaela Rușconi
- Simona Maria Popa
- Victor Popescu

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- Colegiul Național „G. Ibrăileanu” Iași
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- Colegiul Tehnic de Căi Ferate “Unirea” din Pașcani
- Liceul Tehnologic “Petru Poni” Iași

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**Juriul** a fost format din:

- **Mihaela Onuță**, professor
  - **Petronela Postolache**, profesor
  - **Anca Elena Rotariu**, profesor
  - **Revi Ianciac**, bibliograf
  - **Isabela Savioli**, bibliograf
- 
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Tehnoredactare și copertă: *Laura MAHU, Cezar BACIU*

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# First prizes

**VÂRLAM ANA MARIA**

cls a X-a, Colegiul Național  
"C. Negruzzi" Iași



## *Selenophile*

Somewhere, sometime, without your knowledge, someone looked at you and thought that you must be the most beautiful being on Earth, because, simply, it could not have been something else, it would not have been a truth, but only a degrading lie. There are, however, a few dilemmas when such a person looks at you in this way without knowing that you are not on Earth actually, and your feet are far from the ground. And when you don't even have legs, it becomes downright frustrating.

For 12 years, since the hand and the pen were taught with the touch of each other, on each February 14, as in a late winter limerence, he has been writing letters to her. He put them in a lantern, which, consumed and twisted by the cold mists of the night, always reached her silvery forehead, and her large eyes, wrinkled by craters. When he was a child, his mother carried him in her arms so he could see the night, and neither the restless and crowded lights of the city, nor the stars calmed him down, but only she, in her astonishing beauty, which fascinated him until the tears of pain turned into signs of an almost obsessive love. She was the Moon, and he was a simple mortal, but his love far exceeded the limits of any other ephemeral lover. He had calendars of the phases of the moon, and no matter how frozen the night was and how difficult life was, he always watched her as she appeared, and although he had no idea, the curse of human feelings had her also in love. This year, exactly one day before Valentine's, which would encompass all the midnight kisses under the suave light of the full moon, the Sun made an unprecedented compromise. It will allow the Moon to take her human form, but only until the horologe beats 24 times.

„ For the stranger I love,

I don't remember ever being born, I always existed, without having the slightest control over the perception of time. For me eternity had no time, it was a river, a flow like a dream of fever, far from the unravelings of the Universe, so dizzy through galaxies and Black Holes. The Earth has always been my only certainty. I don't even see the Sun so often. And I looked at people at first with a lot of amazement and gentleness. I watched them die and create themselves again, crying and smiling, killing themselves in bloody wars and agonizing for their own mistakes.

However, no matter how many looked at me, no matter how many studied and analyzed me mathematically, and even no matter how many visited me, none of them charmed me like you did. Because while you were getting lost in my shady eyes, I was getting lost in yours and we both got lost irretrievably. When you read this message, I will have already returned to my rightful place, with the solemn promise that I will always love you, as you love me, so loyally and sincerely, and that I will watch over you, patiently. We will meet each other again one day."

In the morning of the 13th, he had realized, from the sight of her bright face, that his lover had finally fulfilled his wish. Tall and glorious, the Moon had a white candor. The features of her pale face were perfectly ordered, and her long, slightly gray hair flowed over her shoulders, reaching up to her soles and looking like a glorious train. They talked all day, and at the darkening, he grabbed her by the waist and brought her by a lake on the outskirts of the village. Although it was supposed to be a full moon, the world was immersed in darkness, for she wasn't there, even though the sky was clear. Slightly disappointed that he could not admire her and in her astral form, he sat by the shore. She gave him the letter she'd written and then she kissed him, pressed, for the first and last time. The clock announced Valentine's Day. That night, she was shining peacefully, under his gaze.





## *Dear mother,*

When I think of your gentle face, shivers run through me, emotions that cannot be expressed in words. I start to write and the words flow by themselves, because everything I feel for you is inexpressible.

Your personality is about strength, comfort, love, suffering, longing, courage. The word "longing" takes on a deeper and more pressing meaning when I think of you. You are my mentor, model, aspiration, and your way of being and seeing the world gives me strength and desire to overcome any obstacle in life. Where did you learn so much, mom, if not from your own experience? Your diligence is immeasurable, you are stronger than I imagined a woman could be. I am proud of you and all the achievements you have made! Thank you for teaching me to love life, to value true friends and unique moments. Thank you for teaching me to love life, to value true friends and unique moments. When I have you together, let time stand still, soak in your looks and savor these moments. Unfortunately, they are becoming more and more rare, but life has shown me that I can love you even from a distance, feeling the emotions with the same intensity.

Forgive me for sometimes causing you suffering, disappointment and sadness in your eyes, but I promise to you mommy, I will offer you a better life in the future and a lot of happiness in your harmless soul. You will be proud of me and you will understand that the tree you took care of for so long will bear fruit. I am grateful for the values you passed on to me, the moments when you taught me Eminescu's poems in the evening and you helped me recite with expressiveness, for the vacations we spent together, and that you taught me to value money. Your tender voice, the energy you exude is what defines you as a woman, mother and wife. Your simplicity and modesty surprise me, it makes me calmer and glad that you are my mother. You always understood me, invested time in my education and proved to me that in life you can achieve everything you set your mind if you work on your dreams. When I think of you, I feel like a child again, free of worries and problems. You give me that safety, peace of mind and immeasurable joy. You should know, my dear, that sometimes you appear in my dreams like a fairy, you are just as beautiful, cheerful and full of life! Your voice is like a cure when I'm stressed and suddenly I feel better, braver and full of confidence in myself.

At the end of the letter, I want to tell you that I love you and I can't wait to see you again! I wish you to live every moment to the fullest and enjoy everything. And don't forget that you are the most beautiful gift that life gave me.

With endless love,  
your daughter Margaret

**ȚIPLEA CĂLIN ȘTEFAN**

cls a X-a, Colegiul Economic  
Administrativ Iași



## *Childhood love*

Our story begins with a gorgeous youth named Ada. She was the daughter of a prominent nobleman from Bucharest at the time of the independence war of 1877. The war had been raging for months now and who would come out on top was still a mystery. But Ada couldn't be worried by the conflict since she was ordered by her father to choose a suitor and get married. They were many: some strong and handsome, some smart and some rich but none of them caught her eye.

One night Ada was standing on the balcony of her room, deep in thought when suddenly someone knocked at the door. Startled she slowly opened the door to reveal a servant had brought her a letter from her childhood friend Liviu. She then proceeded to send the servant away and sat down at her desk. She was ecstatic to open the letter since she had secretly loved him for years, but it was also worrisome since Liviu was an active combatant on the frontlines. The letter said "I hope this letter finds its way to you. I will in a couple of minutes be captured and most certainly be executed before the sultan in Istanbul. Even if we never see each other ever again I want you to know that I have always loved you". After reading, Ada began to cry and shake uncontrollably. She couldn't fathom the thought of losing him. In that moment a thought had popped in her mind, why not try to save him. So, she did just that. She put a thick robe on her, took some food and a pouch of water and left on her beautiful black horse to go and rescue Liviu.

At the same time Liviu was thinking about the same thing, escaping. True to his word he was imprisoned in Istanbul and was going to be executed in two days. Fortunately for him, the guards didn't notice his knife. The walls of the prison were



made of brittle sandstone and the iron bars of the window were only held by this soft material. After some hours of scrapping at the base of one of the bars he managed to get it loose and grab it out of the wall. With it he leveraged his way out of the cell and ran straight to the sultan's stables. He stole one of the horses and a musket from a sleeping Janissary guard and left for Romania. While this was happening, Ada managed to get to Varna where she stopped to rest. When she got off the horse the Ottoman garrison stopped her for questioning. After they deduced that she was Romanian they sent her to Plovdiv for further questioning. As the carriage was approaching the city a bear jumped in front of them and attacked one of the horses. The mortified soldiers quickly fled and left Ada alone. After the bear left, she began to run to get outside the forest. As she was nearing the edge of the wooded area she heard a muffled galloping sound. When Ada looked she was dumbfounded because the rider was none other than Liviu. When Liviu spotted her, he was as confused as her but nevertheless he stepped down from the horse to hug her. They then embraced so hard that they both remained out of breath. They then looked into each other's eyes and shared a passionate kiss that felt like an eternity. After this intimate moment between the two lovers they returned home to Bucharest. When they arrived home they found out that the war had ended in their favor. They finally felt safe, but not because the conflict was put to rest, but because they were at last together.

In the end they had a big wedding and they lived happily ever after. The end!

**BORȘ EMILIA**

cls a IX-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *A Calling for the Goddess of Love*

It is said that February is the coldest month of the year on these lands. However, nothing is colder than Aphrodite's shoulder for a foolish mortal in need.

Someone dares to disturb her again, another young soul aching for a nobody's love...

"Oh, cherished Goddess,  
How have I wronged you?  
Why won't you give me a clue?"

If only you knew the Goddess of Love always listens  
At best once in a blue moon she glistens...

"I cared too much.  
That I could not show it,  
Still it's a flaw of mine.  
I cared too much for her,  
I felt like an amateur,  
These feelings, so new to me  
That the others around I could not see!

I wanted to give her everything I had,  
And even what I'd never owned.  
I wanted to give her flowers everyday,  
And even then I'd be alone.  
Because if we held hands,  
We did it just as friends.

I've always been bound to loneliness.  
And it's something about that special coziness  
Of not having to share my emotions.  
I'd rather be alone forever  
Than wanting her to want me.

Just the two of us we walked,  
Away from everyone.  
Then we laughed together,  
Being our only surroundings.  
I dare say we only liked each other  
When it was just us two.  
-My heart is aching for you,  
As yours awaits for another-

I wish she danced with me under the stars.  
Under the Moon, under the sacred Ether,  
We needn't a certain song,  
As we'd listen to the melody of nature  
Flowing with the wind  
And the song of our hearts,  
Our rhythmic beats...  
Or at least mine, longing for you.  
We needn't know how to dance,  
Since the night covers what we miss.  
Just be you and I just me,

Because why shouldn't we-  
Two lovers in the dark!

I'm not keen on embraces, kisses,  
Simple affection-  
But I wouldn't mind yours.  
That simple attention...  
But that was long ago,  
And now my consolation  
Is in these simple written words."

The Goddess has made her decision, as she responds to the foolish girl.  
"You don't have to be alone, to be lonely.  
You could have a swarm of flying bees around you  
Singing their bee songs, the rhythmic buzz,  
A harmony with the beats of your longing heart.  
Even if they chose to be around you,  
Such special insects to such special human.  
They give you their song, but what do you have to offer?  
You aren't a flower, but your perfume is enough.  
You fall in love with them-  
The only ones who show attention,  
To your soul who lacks affection.  
Oh, but what will you do  
When the night comes up?  
You wish they danced with you under the stars.  
Under the Moon, under the sacred Ether,  
You don't need a certain song,  
As you listen to the melody of nature  
Flowing with the wind.  
You needn't know how to dance,  
Since the night covers what you miss  
Because why shouldn't you?  
Just lovers in the dark...  
Foolish of you to think like that.  
Bees get sleepy at night.  
You should sleep too,  
But oh no, no, no!  
You stay up thinking...  
You like the attention,  
But that never lasts.  
It will only take a month  
Until their simple souls vanish;

They will die, leaving you alone.  
Alone again.  
Good luck, foolish teen, you already know what to do!"

**BACIU ALEXANDRU TUDOR**

Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *Words spoken by a heart of ash*

I am a man loved by none. I am a man built out of ashes that aren't mine and tears that weren't shed neither by or for me. I am a man that can't recognize himself in the word "I", and is incapable to address a certain "you", so at the border of these two words can such a man know "love"?

"I love you"

I think of "you" as an inescapable destiny, as my non-perceivable fate that I am naturally meant to love, for I would've loved you no matter whose ashes was I born from, or whose tears hold my limbs together. Have my ash scattered through fields and valleys and should it all return to you. Should it all recognize your name and the love I have for you. I pity the ash that will forever love you, I pity a soul damned to passion that cannot be expressed, acknowledged, even less so returned. Who should I beg for mercy now, when all I have left is an urge to refrain myself from needing you so hopelessly?

You see, if you're the earth I'll spend all my years envying the life that grows out of you, I'll waste all seconds I have left on this world stepping on every single blade of grass; if you're a star, I'll forever curse the sunrise that fades you out of my sight and all I'd be left with is jealousy for another that might look up at the night sky, slightly in your direction, or for an astrologist that'll meticulously trace with his finger a constellation that you're a part of; if you're the sea then I can't help but feel resentful that you so kindly admire the moonlight reflected on your waves, and at day I'd watch aggrieved the couples taking amorous walks alongside you; oh and if you're flames all I could ask for is to burn to my bone marrow for the rest of eternity, and while my love for you deepens I wish the pain to worsen equally.

I am a man selfish to my core, I miss what was never mine to begin with, but is there really anything that could belong to my faceless self? Can you really put

something to the name of a man that never died, but was always the farthest from living? "I" am so much less than a person, my ash crumbles and scatters away at the slightest move. Parts of me die now writing, parts that I will never meet again but will forever remain belonging to you. You are my eternity, I live this life only through the undying love I have for you, only for you does my chest rise with soft breaths of air, only for you does a heart pump blood through an ash vessel that finds no need for it otherwise. I am a man that only lives through love, and what a hideous man I am.

But the stupid man of ash will always wish for that what he cannot have, he will always earn for what will inevitably return his unsteady hands to crumble in the attempt of reaching it. Oh where should I look for you, my love?



# Second prizes

**IORDACHI CRINA DANIELA**

cls a XI-a, Colegiul Economic  
Administrativ Iași



## *Unaccomplished love*

"If a writer has fallen in love with you, you will remain immortal." And yet she didn't know how to place him between the lines. Every time she tried, he'd run away with the letters on the page. The ink seemed dry as she put the pen on the paper with him in mind. She knew what she was feeling, but he stole the only strength she was fully in control of, the words. All that was needed was for her feelings to disappear the moment they saw each other, for her strength to become null. She tried countless times to write about him, but she could never quite grasp all that she really wanted to convey. He was hidden between the lines, behind ink blots, sometimes behind the letters, but he never left her alone. His absence yet present created a confusion to the lines she wrote, and they conformed in such a way that you could tell that he was the main subject.

One day, she found her words and she sent him a letter:

"You run through my veins and become my ink. I am writing you down in a hurry, afraid that you will remain just a memory. Aren't you tired of walking through my mind and soul? Every day I feel your footsteps in my heartbeat, and when you arrive in front of me, it's BigBang. You've born thousands of universes in me just by looking at me, in your eyes seeing ours. We don't say anything, but all around us we feel the power of those three words. You and me and the universe, a so-called "ménage en trois". Our monotony is their madness, what we have, they seek deep in blind love's withdrawal. We have separated from the rest of the world, now we have our own. You said to me, "We'd rather lose ourselves in our own meaning than let the false world love us." I was going through life blind, and now I walk with you by the hand. Trusting

in us remained the only lucid sensation, because your presence sent me in a trance.”

Except, what she didn't know was that he was one step ahead of her, writing her a letter on the very first day they met.

“Give me the moon and I'll give you my sky to find a place for it. Give me the sun and I'll give you reasons to make it shine. Give me the stars and I'll give them our names. Give me the world and we'll put it in our universe. Give me your soul and I will make it an offering with mine for an everlasting covenant. Give me your body and I will give you mine in exchange. Give me your thoughts and we will share them forever. Give me your feelings and we'll paint them in colour in all the gray pictures. Give me sacrifices and I'll use them so we can conquer the world. Give me love and I'll give you life. Give yourself to me and I'll give myself to you.”

The two letters never reached their addressees. They were lost in time, along with the love of both of them. Instead, only the longing for him remained.

“People are time travellers, their luggage being suitcases full of memories of other people. Tickets? What tickets? There's no time for that, no one is being waited on. I'm a traveler too, but you are my time and you don't pass me by and I can't pass you by. You are neither baggage, nor companion, nor traveler; you are time. A beautiful time that will accompany me no matter what train I take, no matter if I change carriages or not, no matter how much I pass through other times. Time doesn't solve everything. There are some things that are preserved, pressed, squeezed until you can't hold them and they explode. I can hear the sound of the clock, beating steadily and calculatedly. How long has it been? I can hear the sound of your footsteps, walking hard and confident behind me. Which way? Tick-tock, I think I have confounded you with the clock.”

**TĂUTU DANIEL**

cls a XI-a, Colegiul Național  
“V. Alecsandri” Iași



## *Thoughts on true friendship*

Everything in our life comes and goes: money, work, possessions. Only people remain with us. Moreover, only those people who are dear to us and who are dear to us. And often it is friends who become much closer to relatives and, in some respects, even loved ones. And today we will talk about what friendship is.

Friendships are an indicator of how cherished, important and valuable people

are to each other. The main qualitative indicators of friendship are such things as trust, tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, the ability to meet and help, to be there in a difficult situation. True friendship is something much more than just pleasant communication in a cheerful company. It is even a kind of sacrament between people.

True friends, due to the fact that they know each other perfectly (and sometimes for some other reason) are able to understand each other at a distance, without words, by hand movements, glances, facial expressions, gestures. Sometimes it even happens that friends who have gone through "fire, water and copper pipes" together have some kind of invisible, somewhat telepathic connection: one can know what the other is thinking, the second can predict the actions of the first, and so on.

A friend is someone who cares about you. The one who pays attention to you, supports you, participates in your life, is not indifferent to your emotions, problems, successes, victories and defeats. A friend is someone who will put any point of view behind his belt and go forward for the benefit not of himself, but of yours – his friend.

The meaning and value of friendship relations consist of the fact that everyone can rely on the other in any situation or provide the necessary support and assistance. Loyalty, perseverance, equality, understanding, acceptance of each other with all the positive features and shortcomings reign in friendly relations. And if, for example, in a love relationship there can be disagreements and misunderstandings, because of which two people can part, friendships do not accept this. Here no one says: "And I, and you, but I, and here you are." And even in those cases when one, so to speak, puts more of himself into friendship than the other, the feeling of friendship remains mutual and confidence in the other person remains.

When people are friends, each of them will not hesitate to experience with the other both moments of joy and happiness, as well as difficult situations, troubles and failures. In friendship, each understands that he plays a very important role in the life of another. That is why friends trust each other with their plans, dreams, thoughts, ideas, secrets and secrets, sometimes even life. The greater and deeper the trust and respect between people, the stronger and stronger their friendship. It cannot be measured either by the amount of money or by any other merit. It is priceless. And only a true friend, if he really is part of your life, lets you know that you are not alone and gives you strength.

Friendship also shows the inner strength of a person, his qualities. And often this is what becomes an indicator, because the person reveals himself. People who have not passed the strength test move from the category of friends to the category of good acquaintances, and sometimes to the category of those with whom you just once knew, and now absolutely nothing connects you.

You can't choose a friend – he just becomes a friend, irrespective of his appearance, habits, worldview. You may not like something about them, you may even criticize them from time to time. But when all the good-looking and nice ones make off somewhere and wave their hands, when none of them have time left for you, it is this person who will be next to you and do what no one else had the strength, desire or courage to do.





## *The Eve of Valentine's Day*

Valentine's Day, one of the most beautiful holidays in the world when love is celebrated... Or that is how most of the people think, except for her. She does not agree with the other people. She is different, special, and definitely dislikes this holiday. Not because of the influence of her family, who love Valentine's Day, but because she thinks she has no one to celebrate it with. This is what she thought until she met him. Compared to her, he loves this holiday. He believes this is the perfect holiday for any single soul out there, to celebrate love, any kind of love.

She was madly driving away from her parents' house after a long fight on the Eve of Valentine's Day. He was happily driving away from his parents' house while talking to his friends on the phone. And suddenly a loud noise and an extremely bright light was spread along the whole street. They did not even realize, that was the moment that would change their lives from that moment on, which would make them look at the world from a different perspective.

A beach, an everlasting sunset and two lonely people walking along it. It was like they had been walking forever, meeting no one, no living creature beside the ocean and the sky. It was lonely, it was sad but something, out of the ordinary happened: a person, finally. They met, did not talk at all but they knew they were destined to be there, together. They felt like they knew everything about each other, no words were needed. It was amazing, like no other feeling. They have never felt like that before. It seemed surreal. It felt like home even though they were on a peculiar beach on a far, far away land that they did not know anything about. Suddenly, it seemed like everything started to fade away, to lose its color and to turn into an odd room.

From afar, a vague beeping interrupted their peace. They did not know what it was. In front of her bed, her parents were crying and a sad hospital wall bore the room. And right next to her, holding her hand, was him. The strange man from the beach, the remarkable man she saw right before the accident and the coma and the happiness and the love she felt. His eyes made her feel the warm sun on her skin and hear the waves crashing on the shore again. He made her feel happy and relaxed, an unknown feeling to her. And she was sure he felt the same, she was as sure as she could ever be. He looked at her for reassurance and they started smiling.

That is what I think love means, when you look in the other's person's eyes and feel at home, no matter what kind of love you feel, for your parents, for your siblings,

your friends, your significant others. Love is one of the most interesting, unusual and marvelous feeling that you could ever feel, special and definitely different.

As for the happy couple they understood in the end what love is, even if it happened the hard way. And after a few years, they finally married and...

**HUMĂ IOANA TEODORA**

cls a IX-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *My Flower*

February was slowly approaching, a month full of love, a sacred moment for all the soulmates that lasts twenty-eight day. However, not everyone has this mellow spirit dancing in their pure hearts. As for me, life in an orphanage didn't bring me such waves of fluttering emotions.

Not so long ago, I managed to enter a suitable high school since I had been learning a lot in order to escape that unloveable location. My class seemed pretty similar to the old community from the orphanage, except it sure was full of people with more mind and heart. The only empty seat that seemed to be calling my name was next to a pale girl, whose name was Hana from what I'd heard. Even if I was analyzing her from the door, I could see her long blonde hair, reminding me of the beautiful fields, which shelter sunflowers, that I could only see in books. Those shining "petals" were slightly covering her blue eyes, but a shade that could be only seen on a spring sky after a long rain. No wonder why her name was Hana...it meant flower in Japanese, everything about that young girl somewhat drove my mind to a mesmerizing landscape.

Hana was more than my deskmate, I felt like she understood me so deeply. Everyone disgusted me, because none of them were striving to become a better self, just sitting at the bottom where they started. All of those hard school days were always brighten up by Hana. But the desk wasn't a place fit for my discussions with her, I needed a quiet and peaceful place, one which would make her smile. We were lucky to have a charming garden right around our school, which I was strolling by with her after the lessons. I had a feeling she would just analyze the aspect of the garden, but she was actually writing something.

"What are you writing?" I finally asked, looking at her with my shadowy eyes.

“A poem... the 14<sup>th</sup> of February is getting closer and closer, I need to write something special for someone, Eli”. She answered me with a soft smile. Her gaze seemed tired, I had already found out she was terribly sick, but I felt like that wasn’t the case.

Hana suddenly put the pen she was writing with in her pocket, and gave me a sad look. She always had such expressive movements. She grabbed my hand gently and led me somewhere in the back of the garden. In that moment I felt like I’d known her for an eternity.

“Elnara, do you know what tomorrow is?” It was a rhetorical question, of course I knew.

I saw a tear running down Hana’s cheek, than a calm river started to leave her pretty eyes. That situation was rather alarming me, making me more confused than I already was.

“You know Elnara... I have always wanted to meet someone like you, a young lovely girl whose emotions slowly got hidden by the veil of pain. It takes someone like me to show you that love truly exists... as well as those feelings that always confuse you. However Elnara... I’m ill, I don’t have any days left to watch the sunset with you... I deeply feel today is my last day, I’ve never told you because I would have hurt you! So I want to find my end here, in your arms.”

I didn’t have time to react, she embraced me tragically and made me fall on the many flowers that I will never have the chance to compare her to again. With those sweet words, I could no longer hear Hana’s calm heartbeats. My body was aching. It felt like I was dead as well, but I could feel my cold tears hurrying to escape my face. My shivering hand slowly laid on hers, which was holding the poem made for... me.

That day was the day I learned how beautiful love can be...but also how hurtful. But Hana wasn’t really gone... to me, she was there, in the poem, in the sunny fields, in the school garden, in the calm sunsets... Because love is everywhere, in any place where I can see my Hana.





## *Eminet's adventure*

Once upon a time there was an ancient land, far from all the others, where people were happy and friendly, and there was no trace of malice, hatred or anger. The people of that land, called Arbes, helped each other: "Hey Mark, can you please come over tomorrow to help me repair the house?" asked one of the locals. Well, the next day, Mark and 7 other locals came to help Stander.

When it was better and more beautiful, Kandor created an appearance among the locals. This was one of the worst heroes ever. Kandor scared the world with his presence and casted a spell upon it. This caused all the Joy, Goodness and Harmony among people to be trapped into his chest and instead he breathed into them Hate, Strife and Fear. Eminer heard all that and came to the aid of the citizens of Arbes. He tried to talk to them, but their lack of collegiality and the fact that they were constantly arguing about everything did not help the benefactor Eminer, who wanted to help them. Without any help, Eminer wished to stop fighting Kandor, but the burning desire to bring Friendship back to the city was stronger.

Knowing that the chest is on top of the highest mountain in the world, he sets out on an adventure. He sleeps under the willows, under the bridges and on the banks of waters. One morning, when he woke up because he was tired and dejected because he couldn't find the way to the mountain anymore, he fell asleep near a forest; a rabbit and a deer were looking at him insistently. He was frightened and wanted to run away, but the little animals were friendly, and Eminer saw this. They became friends and the little creatures made the hero reach the foot of the mountains: it lasted neither more nor less than 9 days and 9 nights.

Eminer asked the animals not to climb the rocky mountain with him because it was very dangerous: "I can handle it from now on, thank you very much for helping me and I will remain indebted to you." He climbed and climbed and climbed until he reached the middle of the mountain. There, Eminer met Kandor who was transformed into a Cyclops because he saw Eminer coming for the box. He told Eminer several riddles, hoping that if he guessed them he will be able to climb the mountain and then secretly look for the treasure. Even if Eminer guessed them, Cyclops kept making up new ones until Eminer made a mistake in not letting him climb the mountain.

Suddenly, he told Eminer to go to the plateau of the Explosive Fountains and wait for 30 minutes and if he did not get wet he would let him go up. It was only when

he saw what happened did Kandor cast a spell to make it rain. The two little animals, Eminer's friends, seeing this, instantly came and distracted Kandor. Thus, Eminer managed to climb the mountain and get hold of the treasure. Arriving back in Arbes, where everything was destroyed by the malice and jealousy of the people, he opened the chest that could only be opened if 3 very good friends said a spell holding hands. The rabbit together with the deer and Eminer uttered the spell and all the Joy, Harmony and Friendship returned to the souls of the people, and Sadness and Evil returned to the chest.

Finally, the jubilant people thanked the three heroes and since they were all such good friends, they mobilised and the whole village regained the exact same appearance as in the beginning.



# Third prizes

**PURICE GEORGIANA ANDREEA**

cls a XI-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *Missing you*

I woke up thinking of you,  
I always wake up like this,  
But today seems to be so true  
Of missing you I can't resist.

I wish I knew that you  
Will wake up the same as me  
And won't think of someone new,  
In your mind all day I'll be.

Let your thought catch wings  
To fly for hugging mine,  
Watch it as it swings,  
Let them bring us on cloud nine.

And if the thoughts leave and come back,  
I'll take yours and give you mine  
And I hope you'll see by that,  
That my feelings are divine.

You will see through my eyes  
How much I can love you,

Without you I can't arise,  
Just tell me you feel that too.

We'll experience strange emotions  
From that much affection,  
We'll get lost in the blue oceans  
Of our love's imperfection.

But I know today you're not,  
Mine I think you never were,  
Since that day, I've missed a lot  
All the love that you swore.

Believe me, I don't want to say it,  
To say that I miss you now,  
Perhaps I don't want to admit,  
But to show, I don't know how.

Return to me, stay till the end,  
Even if you left me down,

I simply don't want to pretend  
That for you I wouldn't drown.

Make your own thoughts tell me  
That you will come forever,  
But please don't let them be  
My source of sorrow ever.

I don't want to hear sweet words,  
I just want you to be honest  
And tell me what is the worst  
That you left or that you promised?

**CRIVOI ALEXANDRA MARIA**

cls a X-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *Thanks to our dogs*

I've just finished watching my favourite romance series. I have no idea what I'm going to do now with my life. I feel extremely empty with no will to get up from my bed and do my homework. I was so focused on finishing the series that I completely ruined my daily routine. I just want to be lazy and do nothing. My mom is forcing me to get up and take the dog on a walk since yesterday my sister took him, today it's my turn. I took the leash, fed him and left the house.

My dog is so heavy, every time he pulls I'm almost flying so I'm always trying to avoid people with dogs. It would be a pain for both me and them, he never listens so separating them won't be easy. But I guess today was not my lucky day. I could see a very tall, slim figure from far away, as he got closer, I could see his soft, medium short Havana brown hair, he was slightly tan with really beautiful gemstone green coloured eyes, his reddish kissable lips were big and plumped with a heavy lower lip. As our dogs were getting to know each other we held a very deep eye contact, I most of the time had to pull my dog and look at him so he wouldn't do anything weird, but the guy never took his eyes off of me. After some time, we had to split up, he gave me a big smile and said goodbye. I smiled back and waved at him. His voice was very deep and raspy, leaving me speechless, how can it be so deep and have such a sweet looking dog.

After that night I thought we would never meet each other but I just keep on bumping into him and his dog every single time I go out. We both go walk our dogs at the same hour and I guess he doesn't mind us meeting since he doesn't change the hour he goes out with his dog; I personally don't mind anymore. My dog got used to his dog's presence so it's not that big of a deal anymore. We slowly started walking our

dogs together. His name is Ethan, he has a very beautiful name, just like his looks. One night he walked me home and asked me at what time do I actually leave the house.

Ethan started showing up in front of my house and from there we walked our dogs together, we slowly started speaking a lot more freely. We laugh, talk and even have some short moments of silence where we just speak with our eyes only. I wish this would be a lot more than simple walks.

One night he was in front of my house, but without his dog. I left mine as well and just went out on a walk with him since that's what he wanted. We went to the store close to the stadium. He bought two ice creams. We went on the upper side of the town where is the army, because you can almost see everything from up there and the view is pretty beautiful, at least at night. We were holding hands almost the whole time. When we reached the end of the road, we both have finished our ice creams, we turned around and looked at the beautiful view, the town in pitch dark, only the lights inside the houses being the only source of light since the big lights that are on the street barely work. There is only one on each street that works properly, all of them being broken or burnt.

While I was enjoying the view, he randomly said "so beautiful", but he was not looking in the same direction as I was. He was in fact looking at me the whole time. I turned around and looked in his eyes. His eyes moved slowly on my lips and then back at my eyes. He was slowly leaning in, I closed my eyes and I could feel his soft lips on top of mine.

**DONEA MĂDĂLINA ELENA**

cls a IX-a, Colegiul Național  
"V. Alecsandri" Iași



## *A tragic love story*

A long time ago,  
In a dark civilization  
There lived a woman named Raven  
That for a man she looked like heaven,  
But for the others like the devil  
And they saw at her nothing special;



Ryan started talking with Raven  
And with time loving her to another level  
That he would dream about her every night  
And will stay every time on her right;  
He saw his future wife in her  
And slowly saw hope in the darkness of the world;  
Her eyes were like the deep ocean,  
Her lips tasted like sweet poison,  
Her smile was like beauty in pain,  
He wanted with Raven to stay,  
For the rest of his life,  
But little did he know this decision was  
like stabbing himself in the heart with a knife;

Ryan was a well-known witch-hunter  
Like his proud old father;  
The witches were publicly killed  
And their black souls sealed,  
Far away from the village and its light,  
Far away from people's sight  
Where darkness was trapped forever,  
Screams echoing in unimaginable terror together;

Since Ryan and Raven first met  
He could not make her even a single word to say  
About her unknown past,  
About things that didn't last;  
She said that she was not ready,  
Her breath becoming shaky,  
Then calming herself fast  
And covering away all the dust from her uncertain past;  
Then on a gloomy day  
She decided to speak the truth  
And started shyly to say:  
"We have known each other for quite a while,  
So I think that it is time  
To tell you that I am a witch  
Without being scared that you are gonna break up with me  
And never want my face to see;  
I am not like they think  
I am also a human being  
That gets hurt by the others,  
But I would rather  
Hear all this stuff, then not be myself, like how used to say my lovely mother";

Ryan felt in that moment how his heart ripped into a million little pieces  
And his future ideas  
Burning to ashes in front of his eyes  
While he painfully and slowly dies;  
He tried to make himself look calm  
While Raven was looking for an answer  
And said with a fine voice, without any darkness:  
"I will always love you  
Even more than my life  
I will value you more than all the diamonds combined";  
She leaned softly for a kiss  
But when their dark red lips touched  
He felt how his legs got weak,  
But suddenly a spark in his heart lit  
A new idea came,  
A new chance  
She didn't know about his work so he could keep it hidden,  
He could protect her,  
Because he truly loved her;  
Deep inside he knew he should have not,  
But didn't want in his way any kind of this thought  
It was a selfish decision that he made  
And one that would be paid;

Time passed by  
Everything seemed fine,  
But suddenly on a gray morning  
He heard his mother angrily come to his room  
And shout "I can't believe you could do this to me,  
How could you feel  
Such things for a witch,  
You horrible monster  
At least this is not gonna last for her,  
Your father found out,  
She will get killed in the middle of the village";  
He could see in his mind the horrific image  
Not thinking much  
He rushed to the place  
And saw his future wife's beautiful face  
Covered in mud and blood,  
Her body completely destroyed,  
He fell to the ground  
The world started spinning crazy  
He could not hear any sound from the background

He started screaming like a rabid animal, tearing his skin apart with his pale  
nails,  
Blood was coming from his mouth  
Then the stillness of the air was broken by a shout  
Then a shot aimed at his heart,  
No other start  
That was the finish line  
Where nothing ever shines;  
He collapsed on the ground  
Choking on his blood  
Next to his broken lover;  
A heartbreaking failed love story  
With no glory;  
Right person, wrong world,  
Don't play with fire  
Unless you want to get burned.

**MUȘINSCHI ALEXIA ELENA**

cls a XI-a, Liceul cu  
Program Sportiv Iași



## *The Soulmate Hypothesis*

What does love mean? A question asked several times throughout multiple series of books, movies or your favorite TV show. For many, it means coming home to a person and holding them after a rough day; for few, love holds a deeper meaning than that. It may mean the mere fact that they are grateful to live at the same time as the person they are in love with. Maybe it means that their skin tingles when the smell of their significant other is in the air. Maybe hearing their voice gives them goosebumps and shivers down their spine. Or on the contrary, their sound is the only thing that manages to calm them down, makes them sleepy or tired. Some people tend to believe that if you get like that around a person, your inner child is comfortable around them, happy even, and that's why your body reacts in that way.

These days teenagers and young adults don't perceive love as anything more than a social construct that they need in order to fit in and think that is 'happiness'.

They don't understand anything more than what they've been taught and that is frankly just sad.

In my opinion, which also may be wrong and a little toxic, love is supposed to leave you breathless, questioning if that person truly is real and to stare at them in awe when you realize they are yours. Loving the way they carry themselves and the way their voice sounds when they say your name. Hating everyone but them and thinking they are indeed the most perfect person on this earth and that their soul and yours are finally coming together after too much time apart. Souls connected, hands electric at touch, gazing into eachothers eyes and never getting bored. Feeling their words caressing your skin and making your heart smile; possessiveness and craving eachother at every step of the way, wanting to always have them close.

Most people don't find that in 5 lifetimes. If all people would, we shall find eternal crazy happiness and the system won't work anymore. The system representing everything we've been taught to look for and to live after. Meeting, eye pleasing, dating, heartbreak, repeat. No connection, no feelings, no soul interaction what's so ever. Cycle after cycle, people look for people to hurt and people to hurt them, people like being emotionally hurt, then saying it turns you in a better person, it drives you to find someone better and to learn from your mistakes and I'm not saying some of that might be true but let's take a second to think...What if all people would find their soulmates? What if people have a red invisible string tied around their little finger that connects to the person that keeps half of their heart locked away tightly in their own chest?

So many questions, and unfortunately no right answer. One of the reasons might be that we're little insignificant humans that the Universe doesn't care about that much to give us what we want and need. Another, would be that one generation after the other proves that we are not capable to keep what is truly good for us and we only go after what doesn't suit us. I never said finding your soulmate doesn't begin with your heart screaming out of your chest that something is different about that person. Being confused, wondering, wanting, waiting. But if it's the right one you'll know the second you see them. The second you feel their skin while shaking their hand for the first time. You'll feel it deep down at your core.

People don't find that kind of love in this lifetime, but I hope you and I do, my dearest fellow romantic. And hopefully not letting it go without a fight.





## *Monica*

I love you. Only you can fill my heart so much I can hardly call it mine again. When I close my eyes I see a dark paradise that resembles you and your free-spirited soul.

It is hunting me, the memory of your little white pearls hugging your neck, your delicate hand that goes up towards the summer sun calling for me to buy you a pack of cigarettes, everything is hunting me. This is it, this is the time I fell for you, and you smiled, maybe because you knew, that is what I always wanted to believe.

Every day from then I would ride my bike around your house, hoping that you would hold your hand up and call for me one more time. Once I even stole my father's suit, going in circles around that little garden of yours, just so I could get a glance from you. I would look at the faces of people that were passing by, again with the hope of seeing those white pearls. But I did not. I was missing you so much I was wondering if a letter could give me a moment of your sweet soul. This is what was on my mind every day.

The time I knew my heart is not mine anymore was when, through the small hole in your wall, I saw you, your soft skin touching the cold ground. The rain was pouring over your small face like water living on a flower petal, the flower that I thought one day I could give to you. The song "La Petite Fille de la mer", your favorite song, could be heard in the background, so the next day I bought the same music disc. I would listen to it day and night while imagining you were beside me, hugging me, comforting me, and softly caressing my hair.

It is exhausting being alive and not with you, it is exhausting being in love with you. I am stronger than everyone else but you. You are stronger. You are smarter. Your existence was eating me alive and feeding me at the same time. My love for you is burning me, so much that I burn all over again with the thought that I might give some warmth and peace to your unlit soul. I would leave everything for you, just like the sun would live its precious kingdom if seeing you was a possibility.

On sunny days I go out looking at the outlined trees but I find them strangely dark and empty because when I yell your sweet name there is no answer. On glittering nights I go and look at the moon hoping that it could bring you back. Heaven knows I tried accepting the truth, so deeply that I watch your cold star through tears. But it is too hard going to the same small garden, seeing the same faces that pass by and no white pearls. I lived a long time in this world without you, in this memory without an

end. Even the angels understand my adoration for you, so much so that they decided to take you with them.

Until my eyes close for the last time, maybe then I will stop loving you, maybe then my aching heart will be at peace.

I will forever be yours Monica, but you will never be mine. Not on the Earth...



# Honorable mentions

**PAIU SANDRA MARIA**

cls a X-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *With a book*

Jo, such a small name for such a wonderful girl. Jo is the girl I will always love. Our story begins in the library of the university I was studying at the time. I know, it will sound very clichéd, but we met through the book "Sister Outsider" by Audre Lord. We both wanted this book, and with red cheeks and a trembling voice, the curly-haired little girl excused herself and left the book to me. As a gentleman I am, I couldn't accept and stuttered I offered her the much-desired book. It was very strange because I'm not a person to intimidate so easily. Very offended Jo retaliated, and I did too. We were so stupid. We passed the book to each other until it fell down on the floor. Amused, I leaned over and picked up the book from below, telling Jo that I would accept to take the book myself to read it only if she went out with me for a little evening walk. I wanted to meet this girl who aroused an inexplicable interest in me. That's right, at first Jo told me I was crazy if I thought she would accept to go out, but after a few minutes, my proposal didn't seem so awkward anymore, and she accepted.

After the walk that evening we continued to go out every night to discuss in detail each of our favorite books. She was an incredibly pleasant girl. She had a warm voice and a very excited story about her work as a writer. She had published various excerpts from her books in magazines. I read a few, she was very talented.

It had been a while since we met. We became best friends or maybe even more because I'd found out that Josephine also had a sympathy for me. Having the opportunity on one of our evenings full of ideas and opinions about books, I asked her very excitedly if she would want to be my girlfriend. She accepted very happily. Our relationship was working very well. We moved in together, I couldn't have been more satisfied. It was funny to hear Jo comment on her own books every day. It was very

tough as if it were someone else's books.

The birthday of my wonderful Jo was approaching. The gift I bought her was the book "Sister Outsider", because surprisingly, although she reads so many books, this book is missing from her personal library, just this one. She was very happy when she saw the book on the table next to a huge bouquet of white roses. In the evening, after the party and after our friends had left, Jo received an email from a Berlin publishing house that offered her a partnership for four years. I was overjoyed for her, but at the same time I was also sad. And although none of us liked to stay apart, but in order for Josephine not to miss her chance, we made efforts and continued our relationship at a distance.

After four years, and after Jo wrote and published more than three books in Berlin, she had finally returned home. I missed her very much, I had not seen her for a very long time in reality, but only behind the laptop screen. And as excited as four years ago when I asked her if she wanted to be my girlfriend, then I asked her to marry me.

**BAZARGHIDEANU ROBERT**

Colegiul Tehnic "Unirea" Pașcani



## *Dear Me,*

It's been a while...It has been ages since we last spoke...Sorry for not being in touch for so long...Thanks a million for always being there!Anyway, how's life treating you?

Remember when at the age of seven I left Romania for my first time? The first long journey to a new country, of which I only knew the name? Italy... a totally unknown place for me.

The airport was a chaos filled with unseen faces hustling and bustling with their luggage,vibrant color clothes, tearful eyes of those to reach their destination or of those who were welcoming the arms of their loved ones.

It was also my first flight and the first time I saw a plane; there was a mixture of emotions for a child lounged on the comfy sofa, standing from time to time, hopping on to his toes trying not to panic as he slipped into the crowd. I was watching people restlessly wandering through, who were more like some obstacles, that someone rather swirl around than encounter and overcome. I was looking out to the planes that periodically were taking off and were immediately replaced by some others landing



steadily on their tracks, regular as clock work. A sigh of relief left me as my flight number was called. "That's it", I thought.

During that plane journey, never taking my eyes off the window, as only a curious child can do, the food cart passed and on the top of it they had a small model of the plane. From that moment, I knew that something magical was about to begin. I looked nearby; a little girl had fallen asleep on her dad's lap with a white fluffy blanket to keep her warm. I closed my eyes and listened closely to the small world around me. The warm sun was shining through the glass windows as if to brighten the lives of those in the plane.

'I was flying! Just like Superman....I had a superhuman strength...' And suddenly, my unrealistic dream, birthed from an unrestrained imagination, started to be grounded in reality. This impossible dream, that once was on my 'perhaps one day list', was now close enough so that, I might say, I could almost taste it on my tongue.

The next toy my parents offered to me was an airplane toy...it was that plane...in a small size. I'd love for you to know how much it inspired us just when we looked at it, it gave us so much strength when we thought life was too difficult, it gave us so much joy when we completed our small goals that brought us closer to my dream of becoming a steward.

How about when our younger cousins came to ask us if we could give them the plane to play with but I said 'no, it's too precious for me'.

I can't wait to look back in a few years and say: "I did it, I got where I wanted to...thanks to you, you opened my eyes ... From that day, my passion for flying far away, of never setting limits, bloomed.

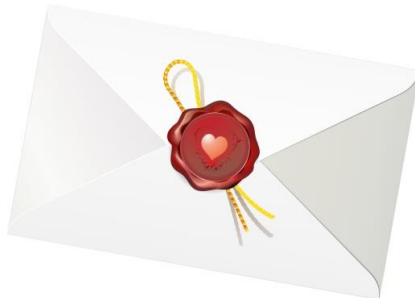
The same toy helped me make an important decision, at the end of my eighth grade, it directed me to a high school that was right for me, a high school that would offer me the opportunity to make my dream come true. The passion for travelling and visiting new places, knowing new cultures and meeting new people also came from that moment.

Well, that's all for now. I must dash. My duty calls.

And don't forget...the best thing to do is to keep your head in the clouds!

With love for the past and future me,

R





## *Within myself*

"I'll always be here for you..."

I have never heard these words from anyone. A feeling this bright and intense has yet to shine light upon my soul, but I've always wanted to feel something like this, from anyone, from anything. It never came, it never happened. It was always just something that I could only dream of. I could never understand how some found it so easy to find their half, their soul mate, and how it was this hard for me to find someone that would dare consider such a thing.

But... when one meets a deficit, they'll try to get a substitute.

In one's mind, when they meet their soul mate, a little place is created where the memory of the loved one lives on to eternity.

Seeing that the place was vacant for me, I had decided to make someone occupy it. In it, the thought of M, as I call her, lives on. M is not real; she's only real to myself. She is simply a concept that I gave life to.

I love M a lot, she means everything to me, and I know that she thinks the same.

"Hey, how are you? Where have you been?"

Hearing M's voice filled me with joy.

"I'm alright, just got some art stuff... I'm gonna go out for a cigarette, do you want to come outside?"

"Yea sure, let me get something on!"

I only have to wait a moment before M comes back.

"Alright, let's go!" said M.

She's always had this happy glee in her voice, just how I like it. Once we got outside, she got even happier.

"What do you want to do with your art supplies?" M asked.

"I was going to try drawing a bigger piece, perhaps a human subject."

"Could I serve as your subject? You know... nobody has ever seen me as an artistical reference before, it would be really nice!"

"Of course you could! Just wait 'till I'm done here and we can go back in." I said.

Once I had finished my cigarette, we went inside. M went ahead and lay down in bed while I was readying up my canvas and charcoal.

"How do you want me to pose? Do you have anything in mind?"

"Well, whatever works for you" I said.

"Do you remember how Rose posed in *Titanic*?" said M, chuckling.

"Um... Yeah, sure, whatever suits you best."

And so I began: stroke after stroke, curves and ellipses... yet nothing came out. All of the shapes and lines stood lifelessly on the canvas. I was so frustrated, I was trying my hardest to make anything come to life on the canvas, but nothing ever showed up from the fog of charcoal. I got angry, and clutched the piece of charcoal so hard that it shattered, shards cutting my skin and blood running along my hand.

M got up from the bed, worry trickling down her face. She rushed towards me, grabbing me in her arms. It felt so real this time that I could feel the heat of her body radiate onto mine.

"Calm down... Stop clutching, let go, breathe in and... let me help you..." M said faintly.

As she held me close, she moved her hands onto mine. She moved with me, picking up another piece of charcoal and beginning once more. Stroke after stroke, line through line, curves and ellipses... and then I saw how the lifeless shapes turned into a body...

"I'll always be here for you..." said M, so faintly that my mind could barely hear her anymore.

And just then, my hand stopped moving... and I felt her fade. It didn't even take a second before I felt cold. The only thing I could feel at that moment was a stream of blood running down my finger.

I looked at the canvas, and through the lines and shapes, there was now a person; a person more real than ever. She was looking at me, and as I looked back into her eyes, I felt warm again. It was really her, right there.

She really was there for me. And always had been.

**CONDUR CODRIN FLORIN**

cls a XI-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *Timeless Love Story*

Once upon a time, in a small village nestled in the heart of the countryside, there lived a young woman named Maria. She was known for her kind heart and gentle spirit, and many of the villagers had sought her hand in marriage. But Maria was not interested in any of them. She was waiting for someone special.

One day, someone came to the village. His name was Alex, and he was a

handsome young man with dark hair and piercing blue eyes. He had come to the village to start a new life, and he quickly caught Maria's attention. Maria was captivated by Alex and she found herself drawn to him like a moth to a flame. She couldn't help but feel a connection to him and she knew that he was the one she had been waiting for. Alex, too, had felt a strong connection to Maria from the moment he met her. He was drawn to her beauty and her kind heart, and he knew that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her.

One day, Alex mustered the courage to ask Maria to go on a walk with him. They walked through the countryside, talking and laughing. As they walked, they grew closer and closer and they both knew that they were falling in love. As they reached a beautiful meadow, Alex turned to Maria and took her hand in his. He looked into her eyes and said, "Maria, I love you. Will you be mine?" Maria's heart skipped a beat as she looked into Alex's eyes. She knew that she loved him too. She smiled and whispered, "Yes, Alex. I will be yours."

From that moment on, Maria and Alex were inseparable. They spent every moment they could together, and they knew that they were meant to be together. They were happy and in love, and they knew that they would spend the rest of their lives making each other happy.

Years passed and Maria and Alex's love grew stronger with each passing day. They built a beautiful home together and started a family. They had two children, a boy and a girl, and they were the happiest they had ever been.

As they grew older, Maria and Alex's love never wavered. They still looked at each other with the same love and adoration that they had on the day they met. They knew that they were blessed to have found each other, and they cherished every moment they spent together. Maria and Alex's love story was one for the ages. They had found each other in a small village in the countryside and they had built a life together that was filled with love, laughter, and happiness.

In the end, Maria and Alex's love story was a reminder that true love is out there, waiting for us all. And when we find it, we should cherish it and hold on to it tightly, for it is the greatest gift of all.





## *The thoughts of a heartbreaker*

It's almost February 14, and I can't even put on a smile to make people think that I'm fine.

Actually, I can't remember how many days have passed since my last, because I stopped counting when I knew that we would never smile at each other again. I lost my joy when you hugged me goodbye and I knew that was the last time when I could feel at home in your arms.

I see boys with flowers and girls with gifts, and I feel a sudden need to get out of this movie where everyone is falling in love  
—while I'm failing at it.

It's almost February 14, and I'm a failure, and from all the people in the world, I failed you.

A failure because I will never be able to write enough words about how much you loved me, and I will never have the time to apologise for the way I loved you.

It will take years for my mind to forget you and for my soul to gather the pieces gone with you. I left you heartbroken. You left me heartless.

We left on different roads some time ago but I'm still here, yet I  
—can't help but thinking of that "almost" us.

It's almost February 14, and I can't bear the love songs anymore.

My skin is itching when I hear those words on the radio because I know that no matter what I would say to you, nothing will make things right.

I just listen and wonder, "What if...", hoping that maybe, in another life, it would be a chance for us. The hope that you will love again in this one, is what brings me some comfort while I'm waiting the next.

Humming some lyrics, being cold in a way that only a lover can be, empty of your touch, alive but useless without you  
—just counting days, stars and hearts.

It's February 14, and here I am, alone in a universe full of love, but not for me, where I'm sentenced to live the same day endlessly. I'm cursed to see your love for me dying slowly along with the happiness in your eyes.

I had to make the same mistake poets have made for centuries and kill my love with words. I had kill every butterfly, until I felt nothing at all.

That's what I did when I told you that I don't want you anymore, even though it took everything in me to not tell you that it was, obviously, a lie.

—last year, on February 14.

**SAULEA DENISA MARIA**

cls a XI-a, Colegiul Național  
"G. Ibrăileanu" Iași



## *Valentine's day*

It was the beginning of the second semester of my senior year in high school. I had changed schools for my senior year because I wanted to change my major for university. The first semester was a bit difficult, with housing, but I eventually managed to make friends and have good grades. There was a coffee shop near the high school which my friends and I just loved. We spent all our mornings, free periods, and afternoons drinking coffee or tea while doing homework, assignments, or just enjoying ourselves. The manager was young. There was also this lady, the barista, and she was brilliant, she made really good coffee and was so nice too. But then there was this man... His name is Michael. He's tall, has brunette hair (a little curly), brown eyes, and such a pretty smile. Michael is generally good-looking. I didn't know much about him, but from small talk to small talk I learned a few things about him, I got to know him on a deeper level. I didn't notice him at all in the beginning, I didn't go to the coffee shop that much my first semester. I didn't pay much attention to him, and I don't really know what changed. Maybe it was the fact that I got to school early and we spent a lot of time alone together, maybe it was the fact that he learned my coffee order, at first he used a shortcut to make sure it was my regular coffee, but after that he only saw me in the morning and prepared it without saying anything, maybe it was just him being him. I decided I should do something, I just told one of my friends about him and she advised me to do it, so I really thought I had nothing to lose.

One morning I approached Michael and asked him if he'd give me his phone number. He seemed surprised at my question, but he gave it to me with a smile. I was overjoyed, but felt a little embarrassed at the same time. I waited until I got home to text him, we started small conversations but soon turned into deeper conversations. We talked about our families, important things we had done before we met, and other

things like that. I loved talking to him about everything, really... Michael was just a dream. We continued to talk and see each other almost every day, but we just stayed friends, kept it casual. I guess we had to expect the unexpected...

Michael made a move. Honestly, I was speechless. I mean, I liked him, but I didn't think it was mutual. It was Monday, the beginning of Valentine's Day week, which was on Saturday. He approached me at the coffee shop in the morning and told me he wanted to talk to me privately. He asked me to go out with him on this romantic holiday, mentioning that he wouldn't accept a refusal and had already prepared everything. I didn't refuse, of course, but I was very nervous about the big day. Valentine's Day came and Michael picked me up. I picked out a really pretty outfit, put on my makeup and just waited for him. I got in the car and noticed that he had brought me this big beautiful bouquet of white roses, my favourite flowers. We listened to some music on the way to the surprise restaurant where he had reserved a table.

When we got there, I was totally amazed because it wasn't that easy to book a table there, and it wasn't cheap either. I had never had the opportunity to go there before, and I was very excited about it. We got a seat at our table and were able to admire the view that made the restaurant so special. It was located so you could see the city from above at night. We ordered the food and some drinks, everything tasted so good, it really lived up to my expectations...

I had a great time, Michael and I laughed, talked and everything was just perfect. It was by far the best night of my life!







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Compartimentul American Corner  
Telefon: 0722566432 / 0751769118  
E-mail: [iasiamericancorner@gmail.com](mailto:iasiamericancorner@gmail.com)