

Low Entropy is headquartered in Kwikwetlem First Nation Territory of the Coast Salish people, and in the shared territory of the səlilwəta?† təməxw, xwməθkwəyəm, Stz'uminus, Qayqayt and S'olh Téméxw nations.

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About Low Entropy: Founded in 2015, the Low Entropy Foundation is home to free programs and events that focus on personal and community growth through empowerment, authenticity and meaningful interpersonal connections.

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Foreword

Movement without stillness is maddening, it is incoherent babble. There is a time and place for most things, but push an idea toward endlessness and you lose all sense of time and place in general. It is untenable.

No. I need negation. I need quiet every so often. I need precious things, encapsulated in times and places. Perhaps I am old-fashioned, stubbornly entrenched in my unreasonable attachment to contrast.

We live in pocket experiences, clipped memories that have edges — they slice through our thoughts as they float in a soup of ill-defined murk. We define ourselves by these fleeting intruders. They give us the familiar to which we instinctively cling.

I have been so lucky over these 13 issues. Thank you to our creatives for allowing me the privilege of handing your gifts to others as if they were my own. Thank you to Vanessa, Shazia and Breanne for making it all fit together, like it was always meant to be this way.

And thank you. For making this a time and a place for you, if only for a cursory glance, if only on a tiny glowing screen.

Editor, Low Entropy

Simon Cheung

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Photo by Jasper Wilde

NEEMA Besties, is showing in YouTube Japan and Prairie Kids. When she's not writing or mentoring, she manages her household with her very supportive husband and three children.

Woe Future

Neema Ejercito

Homage to Margaret Atwood's "Oh Children"

Woe future, how can you be about lack? Water will still be drinkable, in your time? Calla lilies will still be natural flowers? Squirrels, maybe. They'll all be stuffed.

There'll still be stars. There's always been stars. Nebulae, black holes, galaxies. Solar systems, too. Rocks. There are always rocks.

The more dust there is, the more breath-taking the sunset.

Woe future, what will music be like? If winds blow only through rock and dust?

NAVEED A. Before immigrating to Canada, Naveed Siddiqui ran his SIDDIQUI own family law firm back home in Karachi, Pakistan. A former third-generation lawyer, he has a passion for writing and presently runs his own business management firm, SNCO Business Consulting, in Mississauga, Ontario, and is also a director of a fast food franchise, Paradise

Chicken, in Ontario.

IF YOU ASK **ME...FOR JUST ONE** LAST TIME

Naveed A. Siddiqui

If you ask me, for just one last time, of epic moments how pulses weep, thoughts shiver, and eyes drift? for one last time, place your silent five fingers touching mine, let the fate of palm lines clinches let bonfire ignite itself, lit colorful twilight themes

Rising from anguish, from among five seeds refract swaying heart will then whirl, dance among flames all those sparks shall glide, affecting the sky, pearls of grief, the despair shall flap without a name a butterfly in rain, deep breath touching the skies, how fire erupts the heart, near, far, inside and outside If you ask me, for one last time, let me show you the sight . . .



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Photo by Kevin Wolf

ALEX ANDY Alex Andy Phuong earned his Bachelor of Arts in English from California State University, Los Angeles in 2015. He now writes with the sincerest hope to inspire readers while fully supporting the ones who dare to pursue their dreams.

The Reality of Scarcity

Alex Andy Phuong

Unlimited wants Limited resources The basic pillar Of economics, And in reality, Eradicating Dire desires Can help the soul Soar higher, And the aspiration To become A source of inspiration Can definitely create A more utopian civilization As the humanity That interconnects everyone Could help anyone

The End of Who You Were

Cristina Crescenzo

■ othing in this life is ever promised, since forever is a concept foreign to time, and the proof is in your vacant eyes. I always knew the end would come, and that the memories would slowly fade, despite my resistance. I wanted to stay embedded in your mind and history for more than one lifetime, and because I took life for granted, my punishment was unfair and cruel. I wish I could pinpoint the exact moment I started to slip from your grasp, because had I known once I fell, I could never return, I would have held on with every fiber of my being. The one tiny hope I still cling to is that in the dimmest corners of your consciousness, there is still the essence of who I am and what we have been to each other. Whenever I hold your hand or look into your eyes, I continue to search desperately for it. I remember when I clung to you, and you comforted me during my most significant loss, and the thought that I will never feel that sense of security again frightens me. You gave me faith that I could survive; now, I don't know anymore. I wish I could will you to remember, because the person I knew has run away and no matter how fast I run, I can't reach them and never will. As the gap between us grows, the end creeps nearer, and I am cheated of time in your presence. I never liked endings, and I hate this one the most because it's you and it doesn't make it easier when you say, "We had a good run, you and I."

CRISTINA My name is Cristina Crescenzo and I love to write. Low Entropy CRESCEN- is a great organization that lets me do that with topics I am interested in while I am still trying to figure things out. More ZO than anything, I just hope that my writing connects with someone and that I continue spreading positivity and awareness of mental health and the disabled community

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SHRI ing long-form content like blogs and articles, but in my free time, I always find myself walking back to poetry. Other hobbies include watching films, reading and playing video games.

PRIYASHA I'm Priyasha, a writer based in Burnaby. I enjoy write



To Meet an Ending

Priyasha Shri

First, there was the burning, the destruction. Pages turned hot from keeping a record of it all.

How many years have homed your questions?

Then there was the barren land, the mud, the rich soil you find after a fire. There was the decision to bend at the knees and plough and plant.

Is there nothing more hollow and hopeful than Hard work done without promise?

There was the wanting and the waiting, The decision to be the fool who continues

Are these the last few days perched before goodness?

There is a shudder when you look at the things left behind, The feet that move without command The furrowed brows at what might be ahead

Is the sun starting to hold the nape of your neck? Do you understand why the only way is Blindly through?

I believe if we were to hold an autopsy for the death of those stacked calendars, You would be the cause.

How does it feel to meet an ending? Describe it to me.

"When he decides to run off [...]we'll let

when the world went quiet

Gurleen Kaur Bajwa

uke was starting to think there was no end to the world. Perhaps, he thought — as he padded along at a brisk pace past another tree and another tree and then yet another tree — the world simply went on forever. He changed directions just in case there was an end. He didn't want to fall off the edge, after all. Rose would not have liked that. She would have done that thing where her eyes widened and lips trembled. Like that time he'd wandered too far off his leash and then had to be brought back by another friendly human who knew her. She'd looked like that for the whole day after he'd come home, no matter how much he'd tried to bring her her favorite slipper. It made Duke feel sad.

She looked a lot like that at the end.

But Duke didn't like thinking about that. He stopped, sniffing around the leaf-carpeted forest floor, trying to catch the scent of something appetizing to distract him. Unfortunately, there wasn't much. So with a sad, lonely bark that prompted no reply, he started off again.

It had been a while since he'd seen a human. He remembered in the old place he'd lived in with Rose — there he went again, thinking about Rose — he could hardly go a few steps without seeing one. They'd all been very nice back then, he thought. Nice and gullible. Always stopping to rub his head or crouching to talk to him like they talked to their pups. Sometimes they gave him food that didn't taste very good. But ever since the world had gone quiet — Duke couldn't remember how long it had

been — the humans were much fewer in numbers. "Who said that?" Less nice, too. Whenever he did see one, they ignored him. Or sometimes ran away. Most of the time they didn't seem to notice him at all. Duke could smell a miserable emotion off of them, but he didn't know what they were miserable about. The world had never seemed so bright and cheerful as it did now.

Ever since it had gone quiet.

Sometimes, when he'd get past a few forests, chasing rabbits back and forth, he'd wind up back in the homes Rose and the other humans used to live in. The ground was firmer there under his paws, and he'd wander through all the dull, colorless landscape — tall blocks of gray reaching to the sky that were now crumbling downwards in decay He'd been walking since then. His coat smelled and free of any activity. No one lived here anymore, it seemed. Everything was abandoned, with his ear. He sniffed around a bush, snapping his green climbing all over it nicely.

He was happy, at least, that Rose wouldn't need to scold him about running around anymore. He hadn't seen a car in a very long time. Everything was very quiet. He did like it, but it made him feel lonely too. There used to be other dogs where Rose had lived. Sometimes she'd take him out to the park where there were even more, and they'd all been oh so kind to him. Not to mention it was very hard to play fetch by himself. He'd tried, in vain. There was no one to look at all the very sophisticated collection of sticks he'd amassed either. His ears drooped, and he settled down in the middle of the street, sad. This is why he didn't like thinking about Rose. He hoped she was okay. But he couldn't be sure. She'd sent him away, crying one day, and then he'd been locked up in a cage with a lot of other dogs, all of whom also fretted over their Roses that they'd left behind. There was a little pup human who would come to give them food and pat their heads through the bars, and sometimes there was an older human with him too, and their voices would float over them as Duke nibbled on the food they pushed through.

"Do we really have to leave?"

are . . . people are getting sick."

There was quiet for a moment.

"They said everyone's going to die."

"Everyone's saying that. They said we're all going to get sick and die."

"We won't Noah. That's why we're evacuating. So we can be safe. Okay?"

The next day, nobody came. His stomach growled the entire day in complaint, but he tried to be brave for Rose. It wouldn't do for him to whine over a missed meal while she was off fighting for the human race. It was a few more miserable days before a raggedy poodle found a gap in the cage that they could wiggle out of.

strange, and there was an irritating itch behind jaw at a small furry animal hidden within before it scurried off.

"Oi, you! Shoo!"

Duke started at the voice, seeing a woman approaching him on quickened steps, looking angry as she waved a long stick in the air at him energetically. Duke perked up, feeling his tail start to wag. Fetch! The human wanted to play fetch with him!

He bounded up happily, only to be swatted away. He tried once more, but was again kept at bay with angry shouting. Duke padded away to a safe distance in confusion. This wasn't usually how fetch went.

"It's hard enough to find something to eat without having competition," the woman said angrily, pocking around in the bush for a few frustrated seconds before groaning and moving on to the next. Duke didn't think it was a very productive way of hunting, if that was what she was doing.

"Mom!" a voice rang out in the woods, highpitched and feminine. "Something's caught in the

"They're evacuating the whole city Noah — people The woman nearly broke her neck at the speed at which it twisted before she hurried into the overgrowth. Duke followed her curiously. Perhaps she would have had a problem with it if she'd noticed.

> "Good job, Brenda," she said excitedly, running up to the small girl standing in the centre of the clear-

ing holding up a bound-up rabbit. The small Brenda, beamed at her, showing off her catch proudly, not unlike Duke used to show Rose his own. He wondered if the woman was Brenda's Rose. She certainly acted like it, pulling her tightly into a hug, chattering happily at a speed Duke couldn't even bother to differentiate from noise.

"Mom."

Brenda's eyes landed on him, widening. Duke sat down obediently. Rose had loved that. Always looked very proud of how the other humans would gush over him and his ability to sit down. For some reason they found it impressive. Duke wasn't sure why. It wasn't that hard. They did it themselves all the time.

"Oh."

The woman unfortunately took note of him as well and raised her stick again, but Brenda quickly grabbed it out of the way.

"Don't, mom!"

"Brenda-"

"Doesn't he look like Zeus, mom?" Brenda gushed, coming up to scratch him behind the ear.

Duke stood attentively still, hardly believing his luck. He hadn't had a scratch behind the ear in a very long time and had forgotten how nice it felt.

"Brenda . . ." she looked exasperated as Brenda sat down cross-legged in front of him, using both hands to scratch now. Duke happily lolled his tongue, panting. "We need to get going."

"Can't we take him mom?" she said suddenly. "Take him with us?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Brenda, we can hardly feed ourselves."

"He could be our guard dog!"

"He's a golden retriever sweetheart, not a rottweiler."

"Mom!" she whined, drawing it out very long.

She pouted her lips, which must have been very beneficial to her argument, cause the woman rolled her eyes and sighed, but didn't reply again, instead starting to walk off.

"We're not keeping him," she said sternly, as Brenda got up and encouragingly made a gesture with her hand over and over until Duke took a step to follow her. "When he decides to run off, and he will do that, we'll let him go."

"We'll see," Brenda sing-songy said, happily walking backwards to watch him padding after her. She reminded him a lot of Rose, now that he thought about it.

They talked as he followed them, but he didn't bother to pay attention. The sounds they made never made much sense to him anyways, besides a few key ones. Occasionally he would stop to sniff at something or another and Brenda would stop too, calling him an unfamiliar name until he responded by moving again. He brought Brenda a stick, and she was more than happy to toss it far for him, allowing him to rush through the greenery before bringing it back. They had fun like that a few times, before she accidentally threw it into a stream.

A day before the first snowfall of the winter, Brenda and the woman started to cough. A few days later the world went silent again.

Duke set off in search of the end of the world once more. Sometimes he thought about Brenda, but he didn't like thinking about Brenda because it made him sad, so instead he thought about how beautiful the world had gotten since it went quiet — colourful and vibrant and big. Much bigger than he'd ever thought possible.

He never saw humans anymore.

GRACE My name is Grace and I am a university stu-YOUNG dent from Vancouver! I wrote this poem inspired by Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and later resonated with it even more deeply when one of my friends passed away.

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Grace Young

Inspired by Tennyson's "In Memoriam (IX)"

early light beckons your sailboat at ease in waters placid yet untamed wild like untouched plains it is a bold journey to sleep in his mourner's arms once more

the boat moves with favourable speed urged by the worry that pure love may lose its perplexity and recall its right to anger (boy, we have wondered why do you make us like widows?)

and yet, like how you passed through the waters of birth, you arrive with full wings wafted over by gentle winds the dew on your deck like tears from heaven that you shed like tears to heaven that we wept

when we cry instead of sleep in peaceful watching of the stars at night we come to trust you are there vet close

So, sleep gentle winds as he sleeps now cradled in reunion's embrace

End to Amend

Alex Andy Phuong

Commandments might sound commanding
As well as demanding,
But through the virtue
Of good standing
Allows people
To stand tall
Rather than stumble and fall,
And even though the end
Of anything
Is inevitable,
Simply do
Anything possible
To make the most

While also expressing wonder Over the sublime way Of every day From the break of dawn While continuing on Even after daily sunsets

Of finite time

"From the break of dawn

Photo by Guille Pozzi

WOUDZIA

Kathy Woudzia is a mother of four children (one deceased) and three grandchildren, the loves of herlife. She is passionate about her family, activities with her dog, fitness, reading, drawing and, most of all, writing poetry and short stories. Kathy has a profound interest in mental health and the destigmatization of it.

Where's mommy

Kathy Woudzia

Please note that this poem contains a reference to sexual abuse and contains one instance of strong language.

Photo by Orkhan Farmanli

■ ana, where's my mommy, Where did she go? Answers you don't want to know

She's been taken by the lord Out of my mouth, the words they poured She's been taken by addiction What I'm about to tell you, it's not fiction

See little one, this problem started long ago She was only two and was starting to grow In a hurry, up too fast Her alcoholic dad didn't know it, but he put her last

He acted like she wasn't there But little Jess was all too aware Of a father she could never please A father that would always leave A question in her innocent mind

A question that was kind of tough "Why am I not good enough?"

A little scar began to form The calm before the inconceivable storm The shit would really hit the fan The blame, her dad, confused as a man

You see he only showed her love Drunk in bed, where he would shove In her privacy — hopes confirmed,



Finally, daddy loves me, "is what I've learned"

He proved to her she's only good When she behaves the way she should Keep her mouth shut; don't tell mom . . .

> "If I do, she'll keep me from, ever seeing her daddy again"

Young Jessica was so confused back then, especially when it came to men

Her daddy died at forty-one Addiction killed his devastated mother's son Alcohol, drugs, then death killed his pain Closure for this little girl in vain The cycle to be repeated again

Her father dead, that's no surprise He was dead long ago in this girl's eyes But scarred her he did; this is true A life can be ruined by a father without a clue

In your abuse of a little child

You've created a girl who feels defiled

A beautiful young lady, she became, A string of boyfriends who were lame She chose boys who treated her bad Her mom, confused, perplexed and sad

To see a girl with so much love to give have it used and abused by those who live

This amazing woman wants to teach Troubled teens that she might reach To all who'll listen, she gives advice For us, she'll pay the ultimate price

She's didn't think she was worth fixing a victim she lives Everything inside of her she gives, To the lives of other victims She can't save herself by her own convictions

She had to die so others could live There is nothing to forgive She did her best with what she knew But childhood trauma could give you a clue

With the blaming and self shaming Life can be so very draining When you face life's ups and downs Relationship currency keeps you sound

Cling to hopes and hug those present Today is all we have, it's evanescent Fleeting moments we should seize Ahold of as if we want time to freeze Memories are left behind Questions linger in your mind Between happiness and sadness, your mind will

Your mom's life, tragically ended — She lost the battle

With the drugs, addiction's spell That last tryst with fentanyl did not go well It sucked the last breath out of her No time to tell you how you were Loved by mommy, oh so much You became her special crutch But sadly one can never be A person's excuse for recovery

See, when things in life went wrong She couldn't cope or be that strong In her mind the constant barter Between the drugs and being a martyr

If she slipped on that very thin line The cost of life could be the fine Young daughter don't ever blame yourself for this You're most in life that mommy will miss

She tried to do it all for you She lost herself in trying to, Believe that she was worth the try In the end we all just cry She paved the path with years of grief Few human connections for relief

Mommy's still here in her spiritual being she's at peace; she wants you to be seeing You should never live in victimhood If you want your life to be good Keep your loved ones close to you And remember that she loves you too

Mommy didn't get a chance to say goodbye She didn't plan that night to die Every tear that has been shed Is a constant reminder that she is dead

Don't be a victim or a saint Live your life with some restraint Beware of vices, for they're your best friend first But then they give you an insatiable thirst

For more and more, there is never enough Getting off of them is tough And once you're off it's not the end They continue to entice you like

they're your best friend

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Constantly in the back of your mind You'll go crazy before you find Yourself back in for one more try And that may be the day you die

Cause many things are not for certain But for mommy's life, this was the closing curtain.

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BALREET I may have started writing with the inspiration from my teacher. The journey forward is dedicated to him. In the dark night of the SIDHU soul, I cannot undermine his role.

> With his help, I made it to my goal. In that morning stroll, I understood the difference between diamond and coal. I dedicate this writing to him and at every mention of him do tears brim. I hope to never see him grim and aim to never let the eternal light dim.

The endings

Balreet Sidhu

Turning the chapter to a new beginning.

Gone is summer Fall is for rain and thunder

Morning coffee and a donut, To removing the snow from the car's bonnet

A merry Christmas from Mr. Claus, And trick and treat at Halloween's pause.

Winter light displays and Holiday shopping To keep me hopping and then wood chopping

With your loved ones by the fire, To some cocoa and cookies retire.

"ending is essential to rebirth and rejuvenation"

A Continuum of Endings

Anna Mallikarjunan

soft autumn light spreads across a grey stone wall. On its coarse surface, the gentle movement of leaves and branches from a nearby tree casts a moving shadow. A hawk flies across the street, clasping a pigeon between its claws, and lands on a tree just beyond the wall. On a branch of an ash tree outside my window, a goldfinch pair suddenly appear. The female shares some food she has collected with her partner. They can't see me, but they are so close to me that I watch without batting an eyelid. In a nook between the branches of the same tree, a squirrel settles down to sleep. Traffic whizzes by on the street below him, and pedestrians on the sidewalk go about their day, laughing and talking. But nothing disturbs him; he sleeps deeply.

As autumn begins to take hold, a squirrel is refurbishing a nest on a high branch of the ash tree. Every morning for a few days, he scurries up, down and across the tree, looking for the perfect leaves and twigs, which he either plucks with his forefingers or bites off with his teeth. He shoves the collection into



Photo by Madeline Ragsdale

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his mouth, rushes up to the nest and deposits it over both to oneself and others, but instead of rooting they disappear from view. A few minutes later, how- ance are equally essential to this undertaking. ever, the industrious worker is back to carry on with his labours. Once in a while, he rests. He closes his Satsangam, a Sanskrit word that roughly translates dramatic transformation —

his rest is as intense as his work.

leaves. Birds and bees come in large numbers during terns in myself. For dullness and repetition are as has come visiting. He hops from branch to branch, while it is par for the course to make mistakes on jumps up to reach the leaves, hangs upside down this journey, not heeding life's nudges has irrevershe rests on a branch. A day later, he brings three of and complacency. Nisargadatta Maharaj, the great his friends, and this time, they enjoy plenty of nour- 20th-century sage, said of the inner teacher, which ishment on the stems, leaves and branches. I won- he often referred to as the self: der if he was prospecting on his earlier visits. On closer inspection, I find that these fascinating birds "[I]t must be taken seriously. It calls for attention and are called golden-crowned kinglets. The following obedience; when it is not listened to, it turns from day, the tree sheds most of its leaves. Autumn has persuasion to compulsion, for while it can wait, it shall come to an end.

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When I watch myself and the world quietly and have clear endings. An ailment with no known treatclosely, I realize that transience, the very essence of ment has no clear resolution and has to be borne; Nature, is a continuum of endings. And yet we cling circumstances often have a tenacity about them and to continuity. We hold our memories dear and take must be endured for a time. But unnecessary psychour imaginings to be real. We either wish for a hum- ological pain should never be tolerated, and illusions drum, routine existence, or an endless series of purmust never be allowed to flourish in the mind. We suits and activities. We are simply terrified to pause need an earnest, sincere desire for clarity and a trustand examine our lives. It was after many long years ing, yet probing mind to keep of dogged suffering that I began to see how far I had travelled from lucidity through so many wrong ideas And while all this must be done for its own sake, in vestigating their truth. Every false belief or unwise us all. idea acted upon is guaranteed to cause suffering,

the existing pile. He works assiduously, sometimes out the cause, we often run away and seek protecfor a couple of hours at a stretch. Another squirrel tion in another belief, another distraction, another joins him on the tree, urging him to take a break illusion. Unraveling the network of illusions within from all this honest toil. He chases his friend down oneself is no ordinary task — it is the most arduous the tree and across a small patch of grass, and soon of human endeavours. Hard work and the right guid-

eyes and sits very still, in what seems like a sudden, as association with the wise, is a blessing from the universe. It comes in the form of teachings, teachers and interactions that cleanse one's psyche. I, in turn, have to be alert to the lessons of life and un-Next to the ash tree is another tree with linden-like relentingly watch for destructive and lethargic patthe summer. It is late October, and a lovely little bird corrosive to the mind as negativity or self-pity. And and hovers like a hummingbird. There doesn't seem ible consequences, which are likely to be prolonged to be anything edible on this tree, but the visitor and painful. Suffering can be a wake-up call, but our spends hours on it, making friends with every inch unhealthy affection for continuity can quickly turn of bark, stem and leaf. At the end of his exploration, suffering itself into a justification for inattention

not be denied."

In all of Nature, ending is essential to rebirth and rejuvenation. And yet, not everything in life seems to

the flame of discovery alive.

and illusions. I've come to see that it is nothing less doing so, we may well be fortunate to then bathe than insanity to hold on to ideas without carefully in- in the sacred waters of transience, Nature's gift to

WITHIN THE **COLD WALLS,** LIPS OF DEATH TOUCHED ...

Naveed A. Siddiqui

There have been times, when I, felt in myself walking within the four walls, as if a vapor bare feet stumble, struggling among cold walls starring in astonishing ways, an uneasy pattern

No more than longer. I want to go far from every eyes that gaze, that behold me with such strange failure although I, may not be perfect in all my ways, but submerged madness lives within me, in my mansion

Now, only the heart is alive, and yes, my hands too they have felt, while holding shadows of death, and I am not troubled, if the ears of wind would hear, during my illness, lips of death touched mine in passion.

ANNA MAL - Anna writes from her love for the natural world, lessons LIKARJUNAN from her journey through illness and trauma, and gratitude for the wisdom of the ancients. Originally from South India, she presently lives in Montreal (Tiohtià:ke), on the unceded lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka.

PRICELLA I am a 30-year-old married mother to two little EDWARDS boys. My youngest child is non-verbal autistic. I live in the Midwest. I have my bachelor's degree in business and am a substitute teacher. I like to write, paint, cook and learn piano.

Sweet **Endings**

Pricella Edwards

Letting go of the person that I was. Stepping into the woman I always knew I could be. The days pass by too quickly. There is never enough time. My children, my peace, my heart. Each year is an ending to another stage of their childhoods. Excited for their future, as well as saddened by the end of each year. All I can do is shower my family with love. Appreciating each day, good and bad ones. For how lucky am I, to have the opportunity to have such sweet endings in this life.

