



Fearsome Distress  
Haley Yelverton • 8 • oil pastel

When the Morning Rings  
Lydia Tidwell • 8 • lyric poem

Dwelling in the night  
Flying through the air  
Hunting by starlight  
With not a single care.

Trying to survive  
Screeching in the rain  
Taking a quick dive  
To see what I can gain.

Looking through clear eyes  
Gliding with my wings  
Soaring through the skies  
Until the morning rings.

Rising with the moon  
Sleeping through the day  
Drawing out my doom  
Aware that I can't stay.

# Plastics

Evans Reynolds • 8 • stream of consciousness

*You may say, what is plastics? Why is this something I need to know, or better yet, understand?*

Plastics. Something reactive, a facial expression that carries motion. Lesser known as expressions that pass from person to person and transcribe feelings from heart to heart. A smile, so contagious and routine. A simple gesture that has dictated the world in ways the law cannot. A smile that influences the masses and promotes an image. Along with a smile comes eyes that wander. A curiosity spinning within the mind. A sense of wonder with a limit as far as the eye can see. A spirited smile with deep and daring eyes or, of course, a mask. A wonderful face hiding emotions between its shifting expressions. A smile so tight it demands attention, but only for a moment before the day is spent away. A smile that hides trials and tribulations. A routine expression that has boundaries and expectations. An expression that performs as a mask and not an act of human nature. Plastic is elastic, ever so able to stretch, morph, and mold to the feeling or structure needed. Emotions that lie deep beneath the surface but are sealed with skin. A stamp of accomplishment. No need to be an actor or earn an Oscar. In this time and place, it is never enough to just be a friendly face.

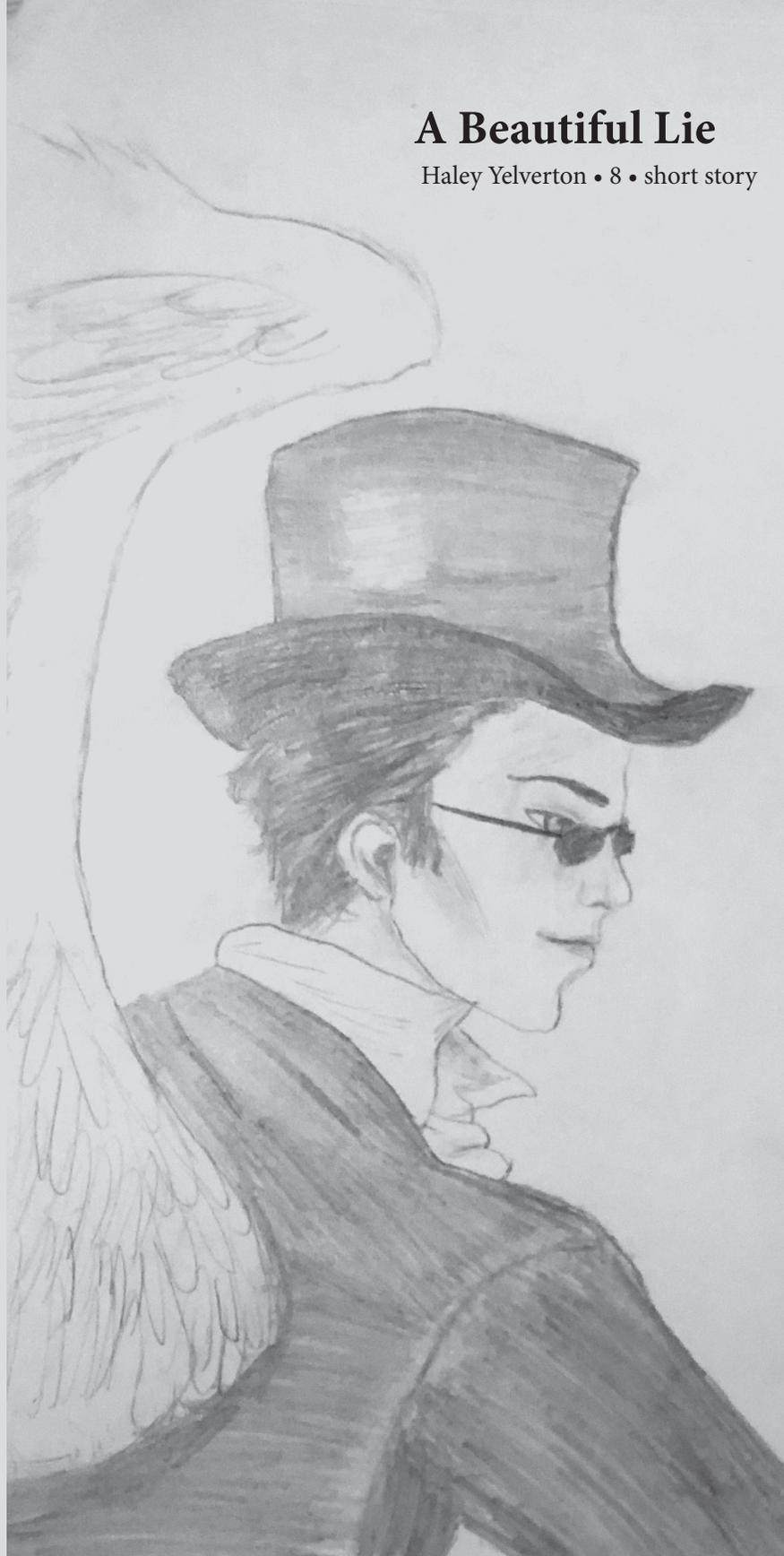


Unmasked

Haley Yelverton • 8 • painting

## A Beautiful Lie

Haley Yelverton • 8 • short story



A man waits outside his shop on a hot summer day, his foot tapping against the concrete with the beat inside his head. His customers come to him one by one, some acrimonious, some weeping bitterly. The man looks up as a young woman walks inside. “What kinda coffin you looking for,” he asks. Some answer this question immediately, and some tell the man they need to think about it. He waits for the woman to pick, his foot tapping quicker now as he grows impatient. Usually once they finally pick one, they start weeping again. The man, sighing under his breath, tries to be understanding, but this is his job. He does this every day.

Once this group leaves, another will come some time or another. It saddened the man that so many people die all the time. “It’s almost like we are dying from the moment we are born,” thought the man. He waved his thoughts away and walked to the register. The lady had picked his most expensive coffin, and the man was shocked. He asked her why she had chosen this one and

she responded with, “I want the best for my father if he is going to leave me so soon.”

“Well, he is in a better place now,” said the man in a gentle voice. The young woman’s face turned bright red and steam poured from her ears.

**“Because you are a beautiful lie, and I’m the painful truth. People refuse to see us as one, so they fear me,” said Death.**

She began ranting about how people keep telling her that, but it doesn’t help. The rant ended with her turning and slamming the shop door. “What a bizarre woman,” the man thought.

About three hours later another couple came in. It was a while before they left, and they ran their mouths the entire time, although the man didn’t hear one word either of them said because their was much on his mind. Why did the woman get so angry? Why does death

hurt people so badly? He searched for the answer to these questions as he walked home that night. When he couldn't come up with one, he decided to go to sleep. Much later that night, the man had a dream.

The dream started with a young boy. His light skin glowed, and his name was Life. The boy was sitting on one end of a see saw in a sunny garden full of flowers and animals. He looked upset. The man figured it was because he had no one to play on the seesaw. All of a sudden the sun disappeared and the flowers in the garden died. A tall, pale man with dark hair and glowing yellow eyes named Death sat on the other side. Life started crying as he was lifted into the air, and even harder as he dropped to the ground again with a thump. "What is the matter with you?" Death's deep and rumbling voice rang out.

Life, still crying, said, "People love me and hate you, yet I do not exist without you. Why is that so?"

"Because you are a beautiful lie, and I'm the painful truth. People refuse to see us as one, so they fear me," said Death.

"People need to cherish the present and realize that their loved ones will die eventually; otherwise, the future is a sweet lie."

"Yes. It is not I that hurts people, but themselves," said Death in a now meek voice. Nobody said anything else after that, not even the crickets made a noise. Death and Life just kept moving up and down on the seesaw.

The man awoke from his dream in tears; he understood now. He understood why the woman was mad. He stumbled out of bed in a hurry and went to the phone, where he dialed the number of his father, whom he hadn't spoken to in years.

The Countdown  
Haley Yelverton • 8 • drawing

