

ABSTRACT

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Year: 2020

This collection of short stories captures contemporary problems universal to society, such as drug abuse, mental illness, and stigmas surrounding teen pregnancy and relationships through experimental plots that examine realism through a surreal lens. A centralized “coming-of-age” theme resonates through each narrative. Some of the collection is written as speculative fiction, which is a story with fictional elements with a mix of components that do not exist in the real world. I believe adding a touch of the unknown to the familiar, like plants that grow from body parts, creates a new world for readers to experience and from which to gain new outlooks on a topic they may have once felt differently about. Events from my own life inspired most of these stories. These narratives demonstrate that no matter where you are in life, mentally or physically, there will always be situations and troubles that echo from earlier times. The coalescing of these memories allowed me to form stories that are not only based in reality but crafted to utilize the imagination in order to produce a well-rounded plot with perspectives gained through wisdom and insight.