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## Section Introduction: Trials of the Self

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# Trials of Self



Beyond simple courthouse hearings, trials are the moments in life when we find our faith, patience, or stamina tested by the world. In that spirit, we've curated this series of essays to showcase powerful stories of the self from a diverse spectrum of individuals. From war-torn Lebanon to icy Syracuse nights, these writers share deeply personal narratives that touch the soul. We—as an editing collective—were honored to interact with these fascinating stories, and we wanted to group these texts in a fashion that didn't take away from their individual greatness. By focusing on the self, we hope to accentuate the individuals who made this section possible. These are their worlds, their families, and all their experiences that make them themselves.

These stories represent a triumph of the human spirit—not only because the authors surmounted over the struggles they faced, but also because they were able to communicate their troubles to many audiences. Regardless of where they find themselves in their trials, these authors were able to sit down and tell their tales. Not content with simply elaborating, these authors were brave enough to share their deeply personal moments with a group of strangers.

Every individual has worked through some type of struggle in their life, whether large or small. These authors have bravely decided to share their own experiences, spreading awareness and assurance that others can do the same. As readers, we often look for some element within a story to relate to. While no one, except for the authors

themselves, can directly relate to these pieces, most readers can understand the hardship and struggles that are dealt with. Each author gives us a beautiful and empowered narrative, reminding us that what doesn't kill us makes us stronger and better. We go through “Trials of Self” everyday when we wake up—simply getting through them is a triumph itself; therefore, writing about these trials—as these authors did—brings their triumph to a whole other level.

Cherise Hunter Titus's posthumously published piece, “Working for Education,” takes us on her journey through life, particularly her road to pursue an education, expressing the enthusiasm within herself that led her to achieve success in her academic path: “I want people to know that it's just a matter of time before you shine.”

In “Breathe Easy,” Claire Zoller takes us on a narrative thriller as she recounts the professional and personal life of Mariana Al Far, renowned journalist and close family friend—with particular focus on her attempt to meet the leader of the notorious terrorist organization known as Hezbollah.

From there we move to Katie Percy's “Calliope,” in which she tells the tale of her years-long struggle with body image and finding solace in her creative work.

Finally, we end with “When I Was Young, and Couldn't Sleep.” Carly Cernek leads us through a narration of the harsh inner workings of her mind, calling on memories and struggles from her past.

—Fátima Bings Martínez, Lauren Smetana, and Nic Suarez