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Helena Trifillis

Fifth District Elementary School, Upperco, Maryland:

In grades 1-5, Helena was writing poetry and her mother was submitting it to the Young Author's Contest. She was apparently the only kid writing poetry because she kept winning first prize every year until grade 5 when she got complacent and wrote an uninspired poem about Santa Claus that got no awards.

Hereford Middle School, Monkton, Maryland:

In grade 7, Helena wrote a poem called "Maturation Sonnet" and her mother submitted it to the Young Author's Contest. Helena won first place for the state of Maryland in the grade 7 poetry category. She and her mother attended the award ceremony where the announcers made Helena read her poem in front of the audience. Apparently, the contest also sent the poem to her 7th grade English teacher who read it aloud to her other classes without telling Helena. Helena found out when a kid on her bus told her about a month later. Helena still has the certificate hanging in her room.

Hereford High School, Upperco, Maryland:

English literature was always Helena's best subject in school. When her twelfth grade English teacher asked her if she was going to pursue teaching English in university, Helena laughed and responded, "No, I don't want my whole life to be school."

University of California at Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California:

In college, Helena majored in marine biology and wrote a few poems here and there. One of which she performed at a poetry open mic night for the first time ever. All of her friends and housemates came to support her. In her sophomore year of college, Helena started experimenting with psychedelic substances for the first time. She graduated with a B.S. in marine biology in 2017.

Post College; San Francisco, San Diego, Dana Point, San Jose, back to Santa Cruz, CA:

Post college, Helena moved to a new city and had a new job every year. She does not recall writing much though she probably wrote a few things that have since been lost.

Lille Aeske Arthouse, Santa Cruz, California:

Helena loves to sing and play the guitar but not really in front of anyone. Her friends hosted an open mic night and her other friend signed her up without telling her. Helena performed the song “Change” by Big Thief.

Across the USA:

In 2023, Helena quit her job, said her goodbyes, packed her Honda Civic literally to the brim, and moved back to her parent’s house in Maryland. She borrowed her dad’s car, a Honda CRV that she put an air mattress in the back of, and took to the open road to Utah to see the national parks. She wrote a lot and thought a lot during this 3 week trip.

Treehouse Byron Bay, New South Wales, Australia:

Helena traveled to Australia. In Byron Bay, Helena and her friends went to Treehouse, an outdoor restaurant with live music. The performer enjoyed her group’s energy and came up to thank them for listening to him. Helena told him she liked to sing and play guitar too and he invited her up on stage to sing a song of her choice but she was too shy and declined.

Krishna Village, Murwillumbah, New South Wales, Australia:

Helena volunteered at the Krishna Village, a Hare Krishna (ISKCON) community that hosted a yoga retreat center. She was in community with other volunteers her age and hosted two poetry evenings. They were intimate events where volunteers sat in a circle and shared their poetry by candlelight. Additionally at Krishna Village, Helena was playing guitar and singing one evening in the empty yoga studio and one of the retreat guests heard her and asked to join. As it turned out, he was a music producer who lived in Coolum Beach. They performed at the Village open mic together, Helena sang “Dog Days are Over” by Florence and the Machine while he accompanied on guitar. He invited her to come to his home studio and record original music at no cost. Helena wrote two original songs and provided the vocals and the vision while the producer handled all the

instrumental and technical aspects of the song. She has both songs in her possession but doesn't like how her voice sounds so she refuses to share them.

Liquid Lyrics, Coolum Beach, Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia:

Helena performed her poem "Babina Boulders Pt. 1" at a poetry slam called Liquid Lyrics. She has never performed "Babina Boulders Pt. 2: The Little Mermaid" because she thought it was too strange for most audiences but now she doesn't care about being perceived as weird and is ready to share both parts of that poem with the world.

World Tour:

Helena has maintained her home base at her parent's house in Maryland and traveled many parts of the world. She learned a lot and wrote a lot. Mainly writing about snapshots of a day in her life or particularly poignant moments in another country.

Manor Mill, Monkton, Maryland:

Helena performed her poem "Alright Already" at the Manor Mill poetry night. She was hoping to do so with unwavering confidence but noticed her hands were shaking uncontrollably the whole time. She also performed two cover songs, at the Manor Mill unplugged open mic night and partook in the Manor Mill's monthly actor's meeting where she got to act out a scene onstage for the first time. Currently, Helena is pursuing any experience that allows her to step out of her comfort zone.

Catonsville Library, Catonsville, Maryland:

Helena has free access to the recording studios at the Catonsville Library. She wrote a ballad about her brother's experience with what their family thinks is psychosis. She will continue to utilize the studio space more and hopefully write more original music. She is working on accepting and loving her voice and expressing herself.