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## *Who Says*

Holly Bokash  
*University of North Georgia*

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## *All those “one more chances” soon turned into five years of my life*

### Cover Art Contest Winner

**Holly Bokash**  
*University of North Georgia*

“I looked at everyone and wondered where they came from, and who they missed, and what they were sorry for.” — Jonathan Safran Foer.

Our identities have become dependent upon how other people envision us, so we’re reinventing ourselves all the time. In today’s society, we are so focused on negative stereotyping and preemptive judgment, with an “assume first, ask questions later” attitude, that we’ve been taught to hide our hearts and bury our true nature because we’re afraid we’ll be misunderstood. Because of this, we never really get to know the true identity of a person—what makes them who they are.

*All those “one more chances” soon turned into five years of my life*, is a piece from my senior show *Who Says*, which is made up of five digital portraits of females whose identities have been obscured.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this work is to focus on the idea of getting to know someone. Not only for who they are now, but who they used to be and what experiences made them grow. While photographing my model, we spoke in the hopes of getting to the core idea of who she believed herself to be and what life events brought her to that conclusion. I asked her questions regarding her biggest influences, dreams of the future, moments of failure, who she’s forgiven, and the quiet moments that seem the loudest in her mind. “What does vulnerability mean to you?” I asked to which she replied, “being susceptible to some form of harm.” She said only one person has the ability to make her feel truly vulnerable—a past love. “All those ‘one more chances’ soon turned into five years of my life believing he had changed time after time only to find, he hadn’t. Not even a little bit.” This type of raw vulnerability she experienced helped mold a portion of her because every memory, every scar, and every day made up who she is.

Identity is fleeting and people are constantly fighting to be seen the way they see themselves, which gets lost along the way due to society’s notion of who they think you should be. But who says people’s opinions of you are the right ones? Who says regression in life won’t allow for your personal growth? Who says the path you’re walking isn’t the path you were meant to be on? Only you can say who you are and who you will become.



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<sup>1</sup> For full access to *Who Says*, visit <https://hollybokash.wixsite.com/whosays/blank-5> or the QR code at left.

### **Contributor Bio**

Holly Bokash is a portrait and landscape photographer based in Charleston, South Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Art Marketing from the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega in 2017, concentrating in photography and graphic design. Bokash's journey as a photographer began at a young age, always being inspired by photographs and the stories behind them. Portraiture, her main passion, allows her to connect with the subject through their personalities. Holly loves capturing moments frozen in time that tell a story and compel the viewer to experience an emotional response.

### **Acknowledgments**

I'd like to thank my family for their support, my mentor for his guidance, my friends for their encouragement, and my anonymous muse for her inspiring story. Without all of you, this wouldn't have been possible.

*All those "one more chances" soon turned into five years of my life*



Digital Photograph  
20 inches x 30 inches