

IMAZINE 2019

VOLUME 9

DELAWARE LIBRARIES' TEEN MAGAZINE

cover

A Mask Hides All Sides

Athena Wayne, age 15

acrylic paint

IMAZINE 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MASK HIDES ALL SIDES BY ATHENA WAYNE	COVER
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
FRIEND BY YING ZHANG.....	8
ANONYMOUS BY PABLO THEODORE CHARRIEZ	9
A GUIDE TO DATING BY RHYS COTTLE-VINSON	10
THE WEDDING BY STEPHANIE BOYS.....	11
LIZARD IN THE CLASSROOM BY MICHAEL ANTHONY BOYS.....	12
MYSTIC BY FAITH KIM	13
AINA'S EYE BY AINA PURI	14
UNTITLED BY ERYCCA CURRY	15
TIME TRAVELS BY HANNAH YE	16
TIMELESS BY GRACE BENTLEY	17
SHINING BRIGHT BY SADE SOTILLO.....	18
FIDGET SPINNER BY AEDIN MCKENNA.....	19
MAKING PLANS AS A TEENAGER: AN ANALYSIS BY MIKAYLA DAYTON.....	20
DEPRESSION BY TAHIRA KIARA AHMED	21
BRICK BY CARSON JENEY	22
DEATH BY TAHIRA KIARA AHMED.....	23
THE LITTLE YELLOW HOUSE BY KATIE BRYAN	24
DOOR BY KATIE JONES	25
DISTRACT ME NOW BY MIA NGUYEN.....	26
GRACE BY KATIE JONES	27
BLUSH BLOSSOM BY AMBER BARLOW	28
MEADOWS BY GRACE BENTLEY	29

POINTILLISM TREE BY MICHAEL ANTHONY BOYS.....	30
I'M FROM BY MICHAEL ANTHONY BOYS.....	31
FIRE AT JADE COVE BY RAE FU	32
EVERLASTING BY RAE FU	33
ROAMING FREELY BY RAE FU	33
CAN'T CHILDREN BE LOVED? BY ASAIAHYA GREEN	34
UNTITLED BY LIZZIE ZOLANDZ.....	35
SPRING FLOWERS BY PAIGE RICHARDSON	36
EIGHT LETTERS BY HANNAH CAMPBELL	37
ON HOLDING THE WORLD BY CASSANDRA FANTINI.....	38
ETHEREAL BY CHARIS NEGLEY.....	39
BEE YOURSELF BY LIZZIE ZOLANDZ.....	40
LIFE BY PAVAANI GANESHKUMAR	41
WILD SPIRIT BY RAYNA HOSSAIN	42
ITS MERCILESS PARTNER BY MATTHEW NJOKA NJUE	43
THE END BY KATIE JONES.....	44
REMEMBER OLD FRIEND BY AEDIN MCKENNA.....	45
MEMORY OF A SONG BY CHARIS NEGLEY	46
TRANQUILITY IN A GAZE BY RAE FU	47
EXORCISM BY MIA NGUYEN.....	48
OCTOBER 31ST BY SINDHU SIVASANKAR	50
BUTTERFLIES BY CHARIS NEGLEY	51
CLOAKED IN CRIMSON BY AMBER BARLOW	52
FALLEN BY MUKTA KANTAK.....	53
SPACE POEM BY AEDIN MCKENNA	54
ECHO BY FAITH KIM	55
RED WHITE LINES BY COLLIER	56
ODE TO RUNNING BY HANNAH YE	56

SODA POP ART BY CHARIS NEGLEY	57
SKELETON FILTER BY ASHLEIGH UMBRECHT	58
BOY WHO CRIED WOLF BY SINDHU SIVASANKAR.....	59
BREATH BY JOSEPHINE MAYER.....	60
BAIT BY FAITH KIM	61
BACKYARD BLOOMS BY AINA PURI.....	62
THE SUN’S FLOWER BY HANNAH YE	63
THE MYSTICAL ADVENTURE BY AUDREY GATELY	64
UNTITLED BY HANNAH CAMPBELL	66
BROKEN BY CLAIRE UYEDA	67
DEEP THOUGHTS BY SADE SOTILLO.....	67
WET LEAVES BY MADISON FULLER	68
THE ARCHER’S ATTACK BY LORNA RYAN	69
2 BY YING ZHANG	70
UNTITLED BY ERYCCA CURRY.....	71
WINTER BY HANNAH YE	72
MUSIC BY ELLA AUGUSTINE	73
AWAITING BY AMBER BARLOW.....	74
HOME IS AN UNSPOKEN CURSE BY CASSANDRA FANTINI	75
END OF AN ERA BY RHYS COTTLE-VINSON.....	76
WEST LAKE BY EVA DOLDE.....	77
NATURE’S CANDY BY HANNAH YE	78
A SUMMER’S DAY BY CLAIRE UYEDA	79
PROOF WE LIVED BY ARUSHI SHARDA.....	80
BABY AT SUNSET BY SAVANNAH BENNETT	81
FLORAL DARKNESS BY SAVANNAH BENNETT	82
LOVE IS DECIDUOUS BY SINDHU SIVASANKAR	83
TOUCHING BUSHKILL FALLS BY ASHLEIGH UMBRECHT	84

THE SEA TURTLE BY MIKAYLA DAYTON.....	85
THE DEVIL APPEARS AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT BY EMMA RYAN.....	86
SUNDARA EREB BY HEATHER SHARP	87
TOO YOUNG BY ARUSHI SHARDA	88
FIVE SILHOUETTES BY DORCAS OLATUNJI.....	88
HALF BLIND BY MACKENZIE RUIZ	89
SLIPPING AWAY BY VIOLET PERLOFF.....	89
NIGHT LOTUS BY CHRISTINA LAW	90
TO MY SIMILAR SISTER BY DORCAS OLATUNJI.....	91
FAV BY YING ZHANG.....	92
DIALOGUE BY JULIA PHILLIPS.....	93
TROPICAL SUNSET BY ASHLEIGH UMBRECHT	94
SKY BY CHRISTINA LAW.....	95
ICE BY EVA DOLDE	96
DISTORTED BEGINNINGS BY HANNAH YE	97
SAND BY RHYS COTTLE-VINSON.....	98
TOUCAN BY MUKTA KANTAK	99
UNEXPECTED RISE BY COLLIER.....	100
MADDY THE PHOTOGRAPHER BY SAVANNAH BENNETT.....	100
FUTURE SIGHTS BY DORCAS OLATUNJI.....	101
AURORA BY RASHEED BASHIR.....	102
CADILLAC MOUNTAIN SUNSET BY KAYLA R.....	102
CADILLAC MOUNTAIN SUNSET (CONTINUED) BY KAYLA R.....	103
RAINBOW SKY BY VIOLET PERLOFF	103
DREAM BIG BY LIZZIE ZOLANDZ	104
DON'T GIVE UP BY ATHENA WAYNE.....	105
AUTOGRAPH PAGE.....	106
BLOOD MOON BY MACKENZIE RUIZ.....	BACK COVER

Your 2019 *IMAZINE* Team:

Submissions Correspondence Chair

Scott Businsky, Elsmere Library

Editors

Jean Kaufman, Brandywine Hundred Library

Denise Knestaut, Brandywine Hundred Library

Elisabeth Simmons, Kirkwood Library

Stephanie Struglia, Rt. 9 Library & Innovation Center

Release Party Team

Julia Tucker, Claymont Library

Rachel West, Appoquinimink Library

Emily Ellinger, Lewes Library

Layout & Design

Cheryl Clem, Hockessin Library

Manager Liaison

Jean Kaufman, Brandywine Hundred Library

A very special thank you to

Julia Tucker and Sara Thomas

for their years of vision, dedication and commitment to *IMAZINE*. You continue to inspire its evolution.



Look for the online version of the magazine at:

<http://www.nccde.org/371/IMAZINE> and
delawarelibraries.org/imazine

The submission period for Volume 10 is March 1 through November 30, 2020.

Look for information on our website on how to make submissions
and about upcoming workshops.



Friend

Ying Zhang, age 17

Anonymous.

Pablo Theodore Charriez, age 14

Eyes the color of mud stare back at me, with disheveled brown hair falling over them, struggling to decide which side to settle on. His mouth is an upturned smile, maybe a product of his environment, or maybe because he doesn't like looking at me. It depends if I'm optimistic or not. I've known him for 14 years of my life, though he has only become prominent these past few years with a disconcerting frequency. By this point, I've memorized all the features I love to hate and sometimes hate to love. I love how he is smart, but hate how little he shows it. I love how he's creative, but hate when he begins to doubt it. I hate how he loves recognition but recognizes that's not something that can easily be changed. I used to only see him in my dreams, maybe when he was fighting off zombies dressed as superman when I was younger, but now he's become the zombie without any heroes to change him back. Silently, wordlessly, he goes through the motions of life without letting himself be known. I see his piercing eyes watching me in class, or his taunting scowl when I can't seem to do something. Thinking of his leering face brings me back down to reality, the same reality that rotates around the reflective metal circle in front of me. I take my eyes off the mirror and leave.

A GUIDE TO DATING

BY JIMOTHY “STUD-FINDING STUD” THUMPER

Rhys Cottle-Vinson, age 18

Introduction

Oh, hello! I didn't see you there. If you're like me, then you want to get out there, meet people, and maybe even find that special someone...

Well, never fear! With these handy tips, you too can become a supernova casanova!

Part One: Getting out there

The Chinese say that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The same thing applies in dating. The first step, of course, is to not make one! Just let them come to you. If you take the initiative, it'll make you look weird, or even worse, desperate. Just occasionally make eye contact from across the room, and you're already on your journey.

Part Two: Getting to know them

Of course, dating is more an art than a science, and you should get to know your potential partner before going further. Ask your future partner questions about themselves, so that you know if they're right for you. Maybe find out their favorite color, what they like to do in their spare time, or which local sports team they root for. But beware: if you ask questions about someone too frequently it might seem bizarre, unnatural, or, god forbid, desperate. Instead, ask all the questions you can in as short a period of time as possible. If you put it all into a single package, they won't mind as much!

And now, a Word from our Sponsor:

Protect everything you love from the elements! Fire, rats, time, nothing can shake our snowfall - white, future is bright product: **Asbestos!** Try some today.

Part Three: Rivals

Unless those pesky soviets started a nuclear war and the Earth's population is dwindling, you will no doubt be facing other competitors. There's as many types of people as there are fish in the sea, so you'll have to do some battlefield analysis. At around this time, the reconnaissance that you performed for part two will come in handy. Figure out what the competition has that you don't. Once you have that, you might think to compare these things to yourself, and to the person that you and (probably) your rival are both after.

But slow down there, sport! There are certain criteria that you should input as well before doing anything... rash.

Part Four: Of Bears and Bulls

When you are comparing yourself to a rival, of course you want to make sure that nothing goes haywire. In your time chasing after love, I'm sure that many a time things started going south, and you probably broke off *immediately*. That's because it's the best option. But, by the by, when in doubt comparing yourself to a rival suitor, compare as if your best qualities are at their worst, while their best qualities are at their best. That way, even on a bad day, you can still come out on top!

Part Five: Imbalance of the Humours

One of the strongest tools in your arsenal is that old chestnut: humor! If you're at all like me, your trusty narrator, you love seeing the smile on your surefire spouse's face and **will do anything to keep it from stopping**. So liven up the joint by cracking wise, slapping knees, and tickling funny bones! You've been saving up that joke for weeks, let 'em have it!

Oh. Uh-oh, you messed up the delivery a bit, but never fear! You managed to stick the landing, so they're definitely going to start laughing anytime now! Anytime now. Anytime now...

Oh. Oh shit. Oh, shit, they didn't think it was funny. Fuck. FUCK! FUCK, ABORT! ABORT MISSION! ABO-

Part Six: After the Action

Well, that went tits up really quickly. Whew, alright... so... there's- uh- still a way to recover from this, I think! Your first instinct might be to apologize once, make sure that everything's level between you, and then keep going with whatever you were talking about. But don't let the passion of embarrassment- er, damn, uh- *love* lead you astray! The trick here is to just keep quiet. You don't know if they're still angry at you, so clam up for the next little bit. Feel free to punish yourself a bit internally, just for good measure! You never know who might be watching to see that you're truly sorry.

Conclusion

That's all the time we have for today. But if you still find yourself lost, have no fear! "A Guide to Dating: Part 2", once more narrated by Jimothy "Grapefruit Spoon" Thumper, is available on VHS and Betamax! This installment will answer many a burning question, such as "How will I tell them my feelings for them?", "What's a classy place for a first date?", "Why do I hurt inside?", "Why do I hurt outside?", and "How the hell do I work their shower?". Pick up a copy from your local Blockbuster Video or RadioShack!



The Wedding

Stephanie Boys, age 14

Lizard in the Classroom

Michael Anthony Boys, age 12

“Ow! You stepped on my foot!” Thomas yelled to his bratty 7-year-old sister, Phoebe, in the hallway.

“Sorry, Thomas.” she said sarcastically. Thomas, being the average 12-year-old, thought all 1st graders were weird, but he knew that his sister was the worst of them all.

“Thomas, come down here. Your going to miss the bus!” his mother called from the kitchen.

“Coming mom!” he said. As he was walking down the stairs, he realized he had a test (which of course he didn’t study for, by the way,) in Science, which is his least favorite subject in school. He hated it because the teacher, Mrs. Bartholomew, was the worst teacher ever. She was stern, strict, and watched Thomas like a hawk.

“Hey, Mom, did you... well, you know, ever have a teacher that you thought was... um... mean?”

“Huh? Why do you ask?” Thomas thought she sounded confused.

“No reason, I was just wondering.” He lied. He knew that if his mother found out, she would e-mail the principal, who will tell Mrs. Bartholomew. Then, Mrs. Bartholomew would yell at THOMAS for getting her in trouble.

“No. As a matter of fact, all of my teachers loved me!” she said with a chuckle.

“Don’t be confused, Mommy. Nobody likes Thomas because he’s a troublemaker.” Phoebe commented. Thomas stuck his tongue out at her.

“Oh, I know.” she said, winking at Thomas. His face felt hot. He knew he was blushing. The truth was that Mrs. Bartholomew lived on the end of Thomas’ street. NO ONE liked her.

The next day at school, Mrs. Bartholomew called up students to her desk to get their tests back. When Thomas was called, he got his test back. It was a ‘C-.’ “Great.” He muttered.

As he was walking to his desk while looking at his test, he tripped over a wire and fell. He didn’t know that was the plug for the heat lamp for the class pet, a Komodo Dragon named Bisa, meaning ‘venom’ in Indonesian. Mrs. Bartholomew had said that Bisa was very dangerous, but Thomas thought she was trying to intimidate the class. Anyway, the heat lamp was forgotten about and never got plugged in.

The next morning, Thomas went to science class and was told that Bisa died. She told the class that it died because the heat lamp was accidentally left unplugged.

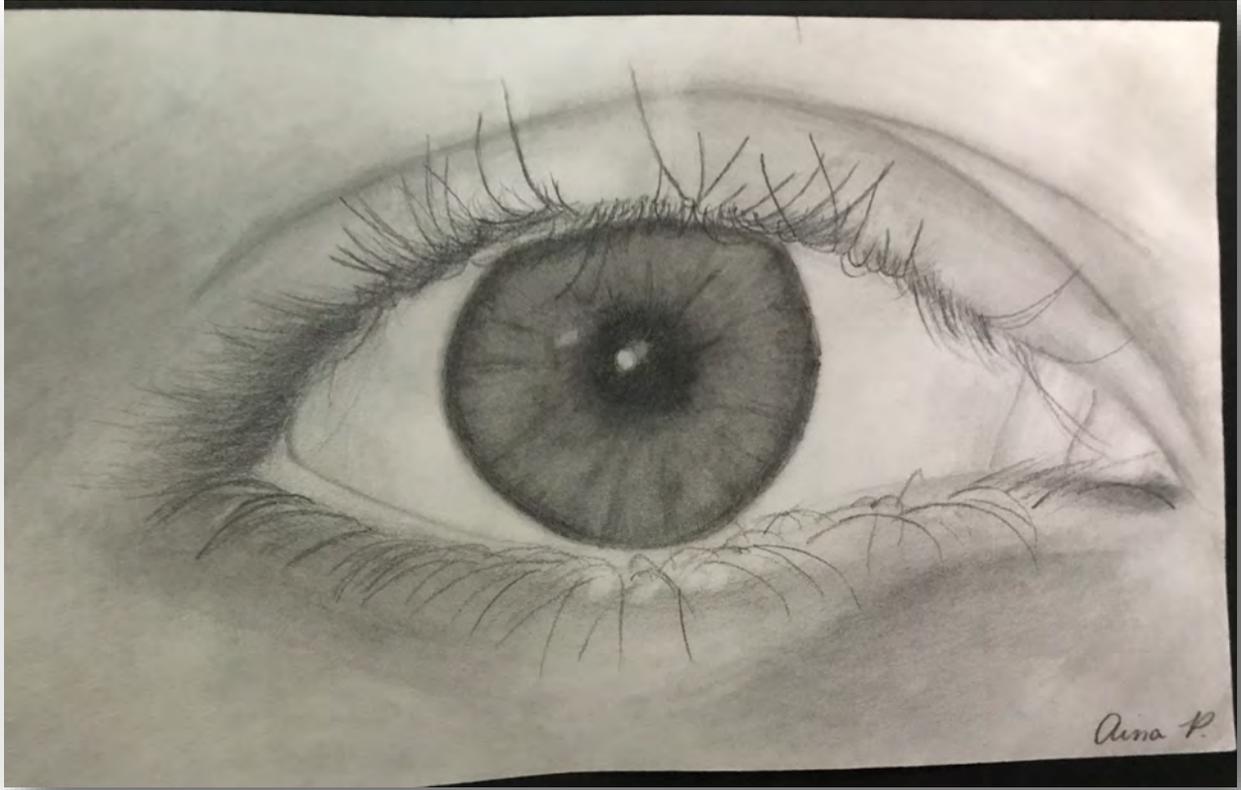
After class, Thomas told Mrs. Bartholomew what happened. He told her he didn’t mean to do it. He didn’t know the plug lead to the heat lamp. Surprisingly, she was not mad at all. In fact, she was nice to him. She said “ It’s ok, Thomas. I understand it was an accident.”

While he was walking home, Thomas thought to himself, *Maybe she isn’t that bad after all.* What he didn’t know was that Mrs. Bartholomew walked home to her house and went inside her basement to a whole inventory of Komodo dragons. She picked one out that was even more aggressive than Bisa.



Mystic

Faith Kim, age 18
watercolor



Aina's Eye

**Aina Puri, age 14
graphite pencil**

untitled

Erycca Curry, age 15

People told me I had no potential, no value, no worth
God says he makes something out of nothing he breathed life into dirt
Crazy how our demons look so beautiful when in disguise
Never thought my dad would be the type to tell my lies
Now he holding out his hand after he let me down
I'm still coughing up the water from when they let me drown
I don't know when I'll be able to trust again, lately it's been a lot of suffering
But you can't heal wounds if you keep touching them
Many people have no voice, they don't even make a sound
We all have a chapter that hurts us to read out loud
And I ain't tryna speak, I'm faded and anxious
Some people get a lease but I'm still making my payments
I never tell nobody no because I hate being hated
And I done took so long to blow I know I can't get deflated
This is the long haul, working all night like I'm on call
I'm unsolved
Jealous of them people that feel unflawed
And if I had a wish, then I'd wish for one more
Because I'm so darn unsure
You ever end up losing someone and it's hard to breathe
You ever been so used to someone it's just hard to leave
You know someone can make you blind if they all you see

~Lil E



Time Travels

Hannah Ye, age 16

timeless

Grace Bentley, age 16

it would be unfair
to grab the hands of a clock
turn the gear that moves the hands of time
control the only purpose it serves
and convince it that the job it claims
is anything but useful.

just as much as we cannot limit skies to infinite days of shining
as the rain needs a small stone in the gravel path
paving the way of the world
alongside pebbles, paths bearing autumnal scents
december nights
spring mornings
or even a thunderous summer.

i cannot imagine the heavy heart of an ocean
simply calming itself for safer travels
nor the ridge of a mountainous landscape shortening its peak for one man to climb
as we should never command countryside estates to bring about cityscapes
as we do not ask skyscrapers to trade their metal infrastructure for fields of missed opportunity.

we do not ask the world to change
though that may be what we desire most-
but life is not fair
and we must take what is given
and live with the foundation we have been left with.

it would be unfair
to ask for love,
only to choke on its smoking ashes when it burns
then ask for something better required.

but i guess what i am saying is
the world may not be perfect.
and i am not asking you to change
but i will say
i have never seen something so imperfectly human until now.

timeless.
lovely.
human.

it would be unfair
to compare you to the very thing we all wish to have most- time,
but it would be more unfit
to walk away without saying i proudly held the world in my palms
when i held you.



Shining Bright

Sadé Sotilleo, age 13
oil paint

WhAt
UsE i(s a)
fidget sPinNeR thAt
caNnot (spi)n?
RusTy
DUStY
as
An O(Ld sCre)w
CrackEd
like a (sidewalk)
BEiGe WitH
aGE
Beari(N)gs
VisiBLe

Fidget Spinner

Aedin McKenna, age 13

Making Plans as a Teenager: An Analysis

Mikayla Dayton, age 15

Cast:

Average High School Girl: a person of average popularity and social standing, she yearns for the day when her friend (see below) would want to hang out with her as much as she wants to hang out. She has been known to spend hours putting together party plans, even if very few people attend.

Socially Glamorous Friend: A physical manifestation of the term fair-weather friend, she is willing to attend a certain number of Average High School events, but when something better comes along, she will diplomatically cancel last minute. Her parents are always strict and rumor has it that she no longer wants to associate with those who are less popular.

Setting:

This communication occurs over text, while the two parties are otherwise occupied in their respective bedrooms.

Average High School Girl: (texts as she eagerly attempts to make plans) Want to hang out on Thursday?

Socially Glamorous Friend: (texts, while polishing her perfectly shaped fingernails) I have plans.

Average High School Girl: Oh. What are you doing?

Socially Glamorous Friend: (tries to think of a valid excuse for why her parents would not allow her to attend) I have to scrub the toilets.

Average High School Girl: What? Seriously?

Socially Glamorous Friend: Uh...yeah. It is taken very seriously at my house. My parents are always making me clean. I have found that cleaning the bathroom is a very invigorating experience. You know. "Chores must be done before the fun."

Average High School Girl: (skeptical but still committed to making a plan) Right... Friday?

Socially Glamorous Friend: Busy.

Average High School Girl: Oh?

Socially Glamorous Friend: (texts as she tries to think of a better excuse than the last) My uncle's, friend's, dog's petis celebrating her 50th birthday. It was like a last minute surprise party that was thrown together. But I can't miss it. Sorry.

Average High School Girl: (now desperate) What about this Saturday?

Socially Glamorous Friend: No. Can't.

Average High School Girl: (beginning to think that her "friend" doesn't really want to hang out with her) Oh. Why?

Socially Glamorous Friend: (tries to think of yet another reason for her future absence) I have a thing.

Average High School Girl: (more desperately) What thing?

Socially Glamorous Friend: You know.

Average High School Girl: I guess I forgot.

Socially Glamorous Friend: You forgot? Literally, I've told you a million times.

Average High School Girl: (She would definitely know if she was told something a million times, but she went with it) Oh sorry. What are you doing?

Socially Glamorous Friend: The fact that you even have to ask again is even more insulting.

Average High School Girl: Just tell me okay?

Socially Glamorous Friend: Nope. I just can't believe this.

Average High School Girl: (She is quite annoyed by this point) I'm so sorry that I don't keep an agenda of all of your weekly plans. Are you free on Sunday or any day at all this month or year?

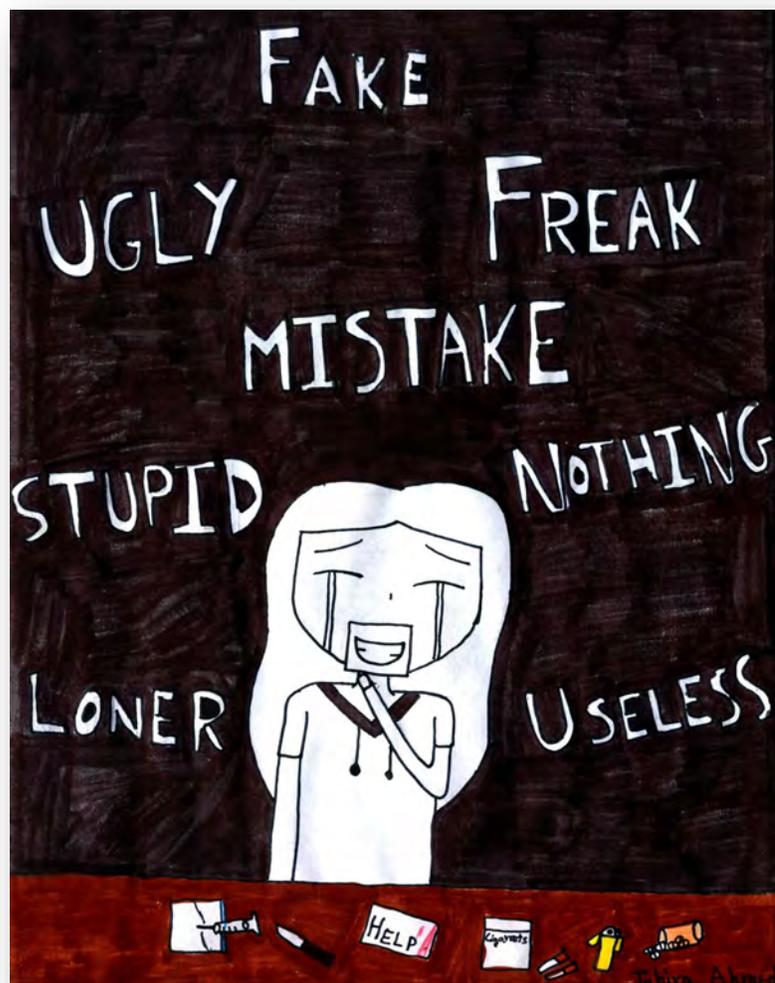
Socially Glamorous Friend: (Must. Think. Of. Way. Out.) No. Sorry. On Sunday, I have to work, which you know lasts all day. Monday, I have a family thing. I have another family thing on Tuesday, too. Wednesday, I have to work again. I think my family is going to New Jersey on Thursday, too. But, we'll only be gone for the morning/early afternoon, so we'll be back around 5. Are you free then?

Average High School Girl: No. I think I'm going to the Find New Friends Convention. It's an all day affair.

Socially Glamorous Friend: (She breathed a sigh of relief) Darn. Maybe another time then?

Average High School Girl: (That was the last time she would try to make plans with her ever again) Yeah. Sure...

Depression
Tahira Kiara Ahmed,
age 13
graphite pencil,
colored markers,
colored pencils



Brick

Carson Jeney, age 18

Brick woke up to the hearty aroma of bacon wafting through the air vent in his bedroom, with a scream hitched in his throat. Although drenched in sweat from last night's nightmare, the smell immediately comforted him.

After chugging down half of the bottle of water on his nightstand, Brick swung his legs out of bed whilst throwing back the covers and sat up. The room was cold, and chilled his sweat soaked body. After a moment or two of trying to recollect his nightmare, and failing yet again, he stood up and put on the gym shorts and tee shirt left on the ground the night before.

Opening his door and going downstairs, the aroma of breakfast became stronger. Morning summer sunlight breathed through un-blinded windows and lit up the downstairs. Walking into the kitchen, his step-mother favored him with a warm smile and a plate of scrambled eggs and crispy bacon. Her smile faltered once she noticed the drying sweat on Brick's face.

"Another nightmare?" She said.

"Yeah," Brick sighed, "unfortunately."

"Well, some breakfast and a hot cup of coffee should help take your mind off it" she said, handing him the plate then turning to the Keurig.

I don't even remember it, Brick was going to say, but told her thanks instead.

Brick grabbed a fork out of the drawer of silverware and took his meal to the kitchen table. He began to eat, and was delighted with the amazing taste of the simple plate.

"You know, we can call Dr. Aziki's office and schedule an appointment if you'd like." His step-mother said, turning away from the Keurig.

"I'm okay, Bridge, thank you though." Brick replied.

While Brick liked Dr. Aziki, thought he was a laid back guy and was easy to talk to, Aziki never truly understood the fragments of nightmares Brick remembered, and Aziki was the best psychologist on the east coast. Seeing him wouldn't help.

"I'm always here to talk too," Bridget told him, grabbing the newly brewed cup of coffee and creamer "and so is your father."

Brick was always appreciative of how Bridget was willing to help, but knew in his heart there was no way she could.

"I really appreciate it, really, and I'll talk to you if I think it'll help" Brick responded, as she was crossing the room with the coffee and creamer and set the creamer on the table.

"You know," Bridget started with a smile, "you were always my favorite."

And with an evil grin appearing faster than a bullet shooting out of a gun, Bridget splashed the steaming hot coffee out of the mug into Brick's eyes. It happened so fast that Brick hadn't had the chance to close his eyes, and screamed with a mingled form of pain and horror as his eyes began to bubble. Brick, pawing at his pained face but even more pained eyes, fell backwards in his chair and smacked his head on the tiled floor. The sound made was the same sound a melon thrown downward upon a concrete ground would: a dull, wet thud. Brick, still in excruciating pain but unable to scream because of now being semi-conscious, heard a mug breaking and then a blurry image of Bridget standing over him holding a shard of a ceramic coffee mug. Brick could make out the words on the shard, which came out to Pulp F instead of Pulp Fiction, his favorite movie on his favorite mug.

Brick's eyes moved to Bridget's evil grinning face and exhilarated eyes.

"W..why wo-" and before he could finish, she drove the shard into his right eye, and the lights went out. Even though they went out, there was some light, light peering through the blinds in Brick's bedroom

and Brick sat up in his bed covered in sweat. He could smell bacon. Brick stood up out of bed, trying to remember just what his nightmare had been about, and put on gym shorts and a tee shirt left on the ground, and went downstairs into the kitchen. Bridget turned to Brick with a smile and plate of bacon and eggs, but her smile faltered as she saw the sweat caking Brick's hair and shirt. "Another nightmare?"



Death

Tahira Kiara Ahmed, age 13
graphite pencil, colored markers, colored pencils

The Little Yellow House

Katie Bryan, age 14

The kids ride their bikes by it every day, it's the little yellow house that's been uninhabited for decades. A part of their everyday life, but they never look twice at it. At first glance, you see an overgrown house but when you look closer you see that it's balanced chaos where everything depends on the little structure that someone used to call home.

The sunlight hits the painted sun on the east side of the house. The ivy grows around it like it knows the sun resembles hope. Beams of light being shot from the sky, breaking through the vines and casting web shadows on the golden wall. The wind blows the trees and the shadows sway along with them. The vines are being swallowed by the cracked windows and the front door seems to be held up by branches. The house has accepted the wilderness to be a part of its structure. No one dares to venture inside, not for fear of what they might find by what they might disturb. It seems so innocent, it belongs here. Everything seems welcome, the spiders and their gossamer threads, the birds and their fledglings. Only the sparrows and the mice know what goes on inside.

I stroll along the street, looking into this overgrown lot knowing I am only seeing a small portion of the extraordinary like me, like you. We're surrounded by our own spiders and mice. Hiding behind the wooden shutters and making them our barricades. They are the ones we hide behind every day.



Door

Katie Jones, age 17

Distract me now

Mia Nguyen, age 17

Distract me now,
with your fingers in my hair
and your murmur 'gainst my neck.
Distract me awhile,
from these thoughts that flood my head.

Distract me now,
with your eyes that shine like stars
and your smile that calms my heart.
Distract me awhile,
so my jealousy does not hurt.

Distract me now,
with your head on my shoulder
and your chest which rises and falls.
Distract me awhile,
people and life can wait.

Distract me now,
with your legs weaving with mine,
and your feather-like kisses.
Distract me awhile,
from this abyssal loneliness.



Grace

Katie Jones, age 17



Blush Blossom

Amber Barlow, age 17

Meadows

Grace Bentley, age 16

You are not this broken body,
Not just skin and bone.
Not the girl crying on the scale.
Not the one that is alone.

You are not made up of thigh gaps,
Empty stomach and cold veins.
You are not the girl who 'eats too much.'
Nor the one who abstains.

Your plate may be empty,
Stomach too, but mind full,
You are not the world's oyster;
Don't be so light for the ocean's tides to pull.

Your beauty is not a garden
So instead treat it like a landscape.
This outer shell need not be hardened;
Neither determined to fit a perfect shape.

So please, dear, stop cutting weeds that don't exist,
Let your garden grow.
Beyond the horizon you will find
All flowers can be meadows.



Michael Boys

Pointillism Tree

Michael Anthony Boys, age 12
colored markers ³⁰

I'm From

Michael Anthony Boys, age 12

I'm from small-town Newark, dogs, cat GIF's, Kirkwood Highway

I'm from soccer, catch, 3DS, annoying my sister,

I'm from leather jackets, Skechers, Nike, shirts with a tie

I'm from realistic fiction, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, My life

I'm from singing, soccer, clowning around

I'm from Gilligan's Island, The Three Stooges, Abbott and Costello, I Gotta Feelin', Welcome to My House

I'm from Save money, Grass needs to be cut, Clean the House, Clean your room, Geico can save you 15% or more on Car Insurance, "Really, seriously?"

I'm from Poland, America, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Texas, Grandmothers

I'm from Shriners Hospital, therapy for my arm, Disney World, Wildwood NJ, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Robin Hood*

I'm from 3DS, illuminati, Boy scouts, computers, LEGO's



Fire at Jade Cove

**Rae Fu, age 16
oil paint**

Everlasting

Rae Fu, age 16

Towards the shore, the tide flows,
beyond the coasts, over mountains,
the rows of trees it maintains
that took some dangerous blows.

Scattered pebbles, shattered jades;
a calm and peaceful ocean,
an open sky; stormy yet clean.
Dream so strong, it never fades.



Roaming Freely

Rae Fu, age 16
oil paint

Can't Children Be Loved?

Asaiahya Green, age 16

What is love?

Its meaning is endless.

Meaning overlap meaning broad as the ocean we see every day.

That's why some would say "love is love".

It's too complex to be broken down;

Yet too simple to do and say,

That's why some people say,

"Love is confusing".

But it can be taken in different ways.

People can string each other up on love.

Meanwhile others put blood, sweat, and tears for love.

Some use love to play games for others its fragile to the touch.

That's why people would say,

"Take caution to who you love".

You can joke around with it.

You can be casual with it.

You can hold tenderness in your heart while speaking in love tongue or be stone cold by conveying an emptiness in your words.

Some would heartlessly say it just to get it out of the way or to ensure their manipulative games doesn't have a loophole.

That's why "I love you" can contain a relationship under a lock and key, regardless of how toxic or sugary it can be.

Yet children can't get that feeling for myself. Why can't children get a loving embrace? Why can't children get a loving kiss? Why can't children experience the loving look in the eyes of people they care about? Where's their HAPPY ENDING?!

Is it hard to ask for? Is it hard to ask for love? Are we here just to be in a cat-n-mouse game for love? Why do my desires want to hurt people who want it just as much as me? We just wanna be loved. We just want to be loved.



untitled

Lizzie Zolandz, age 13



Spring Flowers

Paige Richardson, age 13

Eight Letters

Hannah Campbell, age 17

A word has many different meanings
But an eight letter word can mean so much
A good feeling, a bad feeling, leanings
Only eight letters makes me miss your touch

Her comforting smile, loving nature
The kindest eyes and the warmest heart
The flowers have lost their perfect posture
Knowing she left, we weren't unhurt

Every single day I think, I do
There is only eight letters I can say
Eight letters that mean the most, "I miss you"
I tell you this every single day

I love you even though you are not here
I know that I will always keep you near

On Holding the World

Cassandra Fantini, age 17

The thing about thinking that someone deserves the world
Is that
You can never give it to them.
Everyone would think
It was selfless,
Beautiful,
But there is no beauty
In the way that you sometimes feel
Like you're underwater
When you think of them.
It's deep blue, and you can pretend
That it is gorgeous like the night sky
But the similarities don't end there;
Both can be deep
and dark
and cold
and empty.
Sometimes it's as if the weight that Atlas held
Has been passed to you,
But you are no god.
You cannot hold the world,
And you cannot, cannot give it away.



Ethereal

Charis Negley, age 18
soft pastels



Bee Yourself
Lizzie Zolandz, age 13

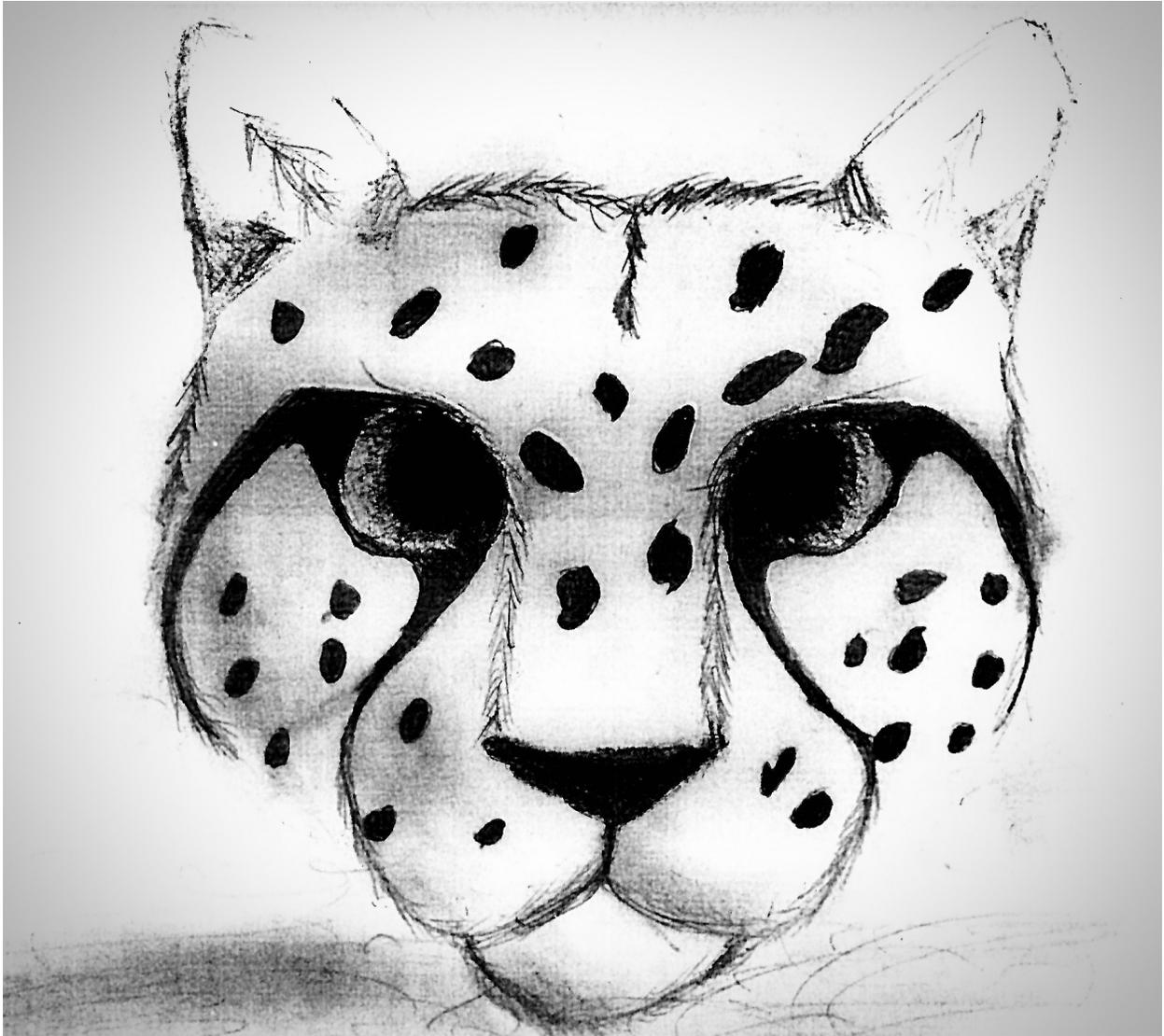
Life

Pavaani Ganeshkumar, age 14

The door wheezed shut behind me. Finally. No suffocating. No typing. No writing. No staring until my eyes burn so much I need to shut them and press them. No aching limbs. I don't need to think. For a few minutes, I don't need to do anything. Out of the corners of my eyeballs, I can see part of the yellowish wall behind me. I can see the curvy pavement, arcing and jerking away, just like all my anxiety. But my attention wasn't there. I go down the stone steps of the porch, hiking straight toward the Rock. When I get there, I walk towards the little slope on the left side. Unlike the other side, this one had footholds.

I place my fingers on the cool, sturdy granite, avoiding the staring green moss, put my right foot first, then left, change hands hoisting myself up. Soon, I inch myself onto the slanted surface at the top. I prefer to sit, but since there is so much moss, I rise to a stand.

I just listen. Just like I normally do when I get up here. I can hear two birds chattering to each other in the trees and a car farther away. I hear and feel the wind letting out a breath, fanning the leaves, making the same sound I hear anywhere outside my barriers.



Wild Spirit

Rayna Hossain, age 12
graphite pencil

Its Merciless Partner

Matthew Njoka Njue, age 15

The outside was my refuge, a haven like no other for me my entire life. Going outside and seeing and smelling the grass and the flowers-- beautiful. No matter what anyone said, me and my town were the followers of the outside.

Finding a single person who did not admire the grass swaying in the lakes was a truly difficult thing where I lived.

Our mothers would weave baskets from straw they find near the docks. Our shirts were pure cotton picked not more than a walking distance from where they were worn.

Our houses and buildings stuck out harshly against their natural canvases. Even so, the trees near them would pull them back into the soil, occasionally swallowing a family or two. Nothing to mourn, like the many plants our town had swallowed.

My lifelong friend and I usually swam in the river downstream from the docks. We must have seen dozens of boats taken into the hands of mother nature. I even laugh to think of how she had been made an orphan by trees, whose roots took her parents from their overworld.

Thinking about it now, our little town has struggled quite a bit against its land. How long has it been since I recounted my fellow townspeople?

I feel the soil beneath me rising into a narrow plateau, lifting me to see the entirety of my now empty town.

Its cars scattered across the trails. Our buildings camouflaged by the trees which hugged them so tightly.

I rose to see my entire world. Green and blue, the property of Mother Nature.

This would be the end of my people's small mark on the world.

My body resigns to its superior, admitting defeat to its merciless partner.

Oh, well.



The End

Katie Jones, age 17

Remember Old Friend

by Aedin McKenna, age 13

Remember when my absurd mind told you that you looked wet?

Remember when you told me that you would never change?

That was a lie! All that you told me, all that you promised has faded, your smile I no longer make, the tears you make me shed, when you would dry them at one time.

Remember when you wrote that comic with me?

Remember when you said that you would always be with me?

That was a lie! All that you told me, all that you promised has faded, your smile I no longer make, the tears you make me shed, when you would dry them at one time.

Remember Puzzle and the others?

Remember when you swore that you would never give in?

That was a lie! All that you told me, all that you promised has faded, your smile I no longer make, the tears you make me shed, when you would dry them at one time.

Remember when we always played hide and seek?

Remember when we agreed never to go into the darkness?

That was a lie! All that you told me, all that you promised has faded, your smile I no longer make, the tears you make me shed, when you would dry them at one time.

Remember when you defended me?

Remember when you had me go up to the highest link on the climber so I would finally be taller than you?

That was a lie! All that you told me, all that you promised has faded, your smile I no longer make, the tears you make me shed, when you would dry them at one time.

Remember that I'll always be there.

Remember that I miss you.

Memory of a Song

Charis Negley, age 17

“Would you please play that song again?” the awestruck man in the bar asked the piano player after she finished her last melodic chord. “I heard the song long ago,” the man went on, “at a carnival.”

The musician’s face brightened with interest. “When was this?”

The man laughed, recalling embarrassing moments of his youth. “Back when I was young and awkward; my juvenile days when all I had to worry about were homework and girls.”

The woman chuckled in response. Her stringy red hair shone in the dim light of the bar.

“You see,” the man continued wistfully, “the summer of my junior year, my buddies and I took a trip to the carnival. Like most teenage boys, dumb and clueless, we were only there to joke around and flirt with the carnies.

“That was the day I met *her*. That girl could tickle the ivories like there was no tomorrow. She wore a costume the same maroon color as the balloons that adorned her piano. She wore a mask, but that didn’t keep me from seeing how beautiful she truly was. Her lithe fingers danced across the piano. When she finished playing, I asked her name. She giggled in response, her lips sealed. I asked her to play the song once more, and she graciously complied.

“I’ve tried to recreate the melody, but nobody yet can tell me the song’s name, nor has anyone heard it... until I heard you tonight. So please,” the man smiled gently, “won’t you play it again?”

“I’m glad you like it,” the woman said, beginning to play. The careful, graceful movement of her fingers reminded the man more and more of his day years ago. Her fingers suddenly lingered, and she gave the man a knowing smile. “I wrote it myself.”



Tranquility In a Gaze

Rae Fu, age 16
oil paint

Exorcism

Mia Nguyen, age 17

I exited the elevator, and double-checked the business card I was holding for the floor number. The building was spacey and modern, lit with bright white light that made the tiled floor shine and the decorations sparkle. A citrusy scent filled the air: a smell that was pleasant for most, but rather problematic for me — I suppose you could say I'm allergic. Trying to fight the growing itch in my nose, I began to walk along the hallway towards the pair of glass doors waiting at the end. It was so quiet that for a moment, all I could hear was the pounding of my heart. *This is probably because you haven't had to do this in such a long time*, I thought, and instinctively swallowed. Glancing around for a distraction, I realized that some of the plants lining the walls had begun to wilt. If everything I've heard about *him* was true, then it was very strange indeed that these dying plants were still left out here for decoration.

I stopped in front of the doors and knocked, trying to still the trembling of my hand.

"Come in."

I hastily entered, and even though that citrusy smell once again attacked my nostrils, all my worries vanished. There was no mistaking that powerful presence. The man I was searching for — the famed exorcist, the "god among men," the only solution to my current problem — sat at his desk, straight-backed, a slight gleam in his eyes like he somehow knew I was coming, and had been waiting all along.

"Please, sit." He gestured to one of the chairs in front of himself, smiling as I hurried over. "Can I get you anything to drink?"

"No... no need, sir." A funny sensation rose in my stomach. I diverted my eyes to the far corner of the room, and was surprised to see another plant with yellow and brown scattered among the green of its leaves. *He's so absorbed in his work, he doesn't even pay attention to his surroundings!* Noticing my gaze, he chuckled:

"Such a pity, isn't it? I have to replace my dead plants so often. But enough of that for now. Tell me, young Miss: what has been troubling you lately?"

"The apartment next to mine is haunted. I just know it."

He licked his lips, then nodded pensively. "Could you please elaborate?"

"I've been hearing strange noises... though the landlady says nobody even lives there! Just, noises like... like the taps running, or the locks closing and opening, or... or sometimes even people eating... *really noisily*." My throat grew dry, and I swallowed again, this time with some difficulty. "And that's not the only thing. I have to walk past that apartment to get to mine, and we also share a wall.... And I would feel chills sometimes... *all the time*, when I'm near it. Please, sir, tell me... do you think it's haunted?"

He stared at me for a moment, warm eyes focused, concerned. The reply that followed was firm:

"Unfortunately, I do. But this sounds like a classic case of spirits refusing to pass on, which won't be too difficult to deal with. I will need to examine the area first though, just to be sure. Is that possible?"

"Of course, sir!" I nodded immediately, relief overflowing in my words. "Anything, as long as you can put them to rest..."

“Definitely.”

The sun was setting when we climbed out of the taxi, and in the shadows the run-down apartment building looked creepier than ever. The once-beige walls were now stained and covered with dead ivy roots, making it seem like a cracked structure that could collapse at any moment. No trees, not even grass, grew in the yard; the heat from the day wiped out all traces of the taxi’s air conditioning. But the sensation clearest to me now was the terrible tremble that seemed to originate straight from my stomach, and had spread all over my body. He must have noticed it as well, for when I began walking towards the building he followed me closely, as if watching out for any potential threats. *What a nice and careful man he is.* We finally reached my floor and I paused, giving him a worried look:

“It’s number four. The second to last.”

He stared down the hallway and quickly licked his lips, before turning back to me, his voice low and serious:

“It’s dangerous for you to wait here alone. Follow me.”

Without waiting for my reply, he approached the haunted apartment and rapped on the cracked wooden door. Five sharp knocks, then silence; and then, a stream of hisses and whispers erupted, chilling the air and making my tremble even worse. Fearlessly, he seized the handle and forced the door open, his eyes flicking over to me:

“Come on.”

I immediately nod, and together we sunk into the twilight of the apartment. Just as we were inside, the door slammed shut, so hard I thought it would splinter. The air grew eerily still; for a moment, the only part of me that moved was my frantically-beating heart. He, on the other hand, stood very still, not facing me but rather the dark void ahead. I swallowed.

“Don’t you think it’s so pitiful?” He abruptly spoke, uncharacteristically rough and cold. I asked:

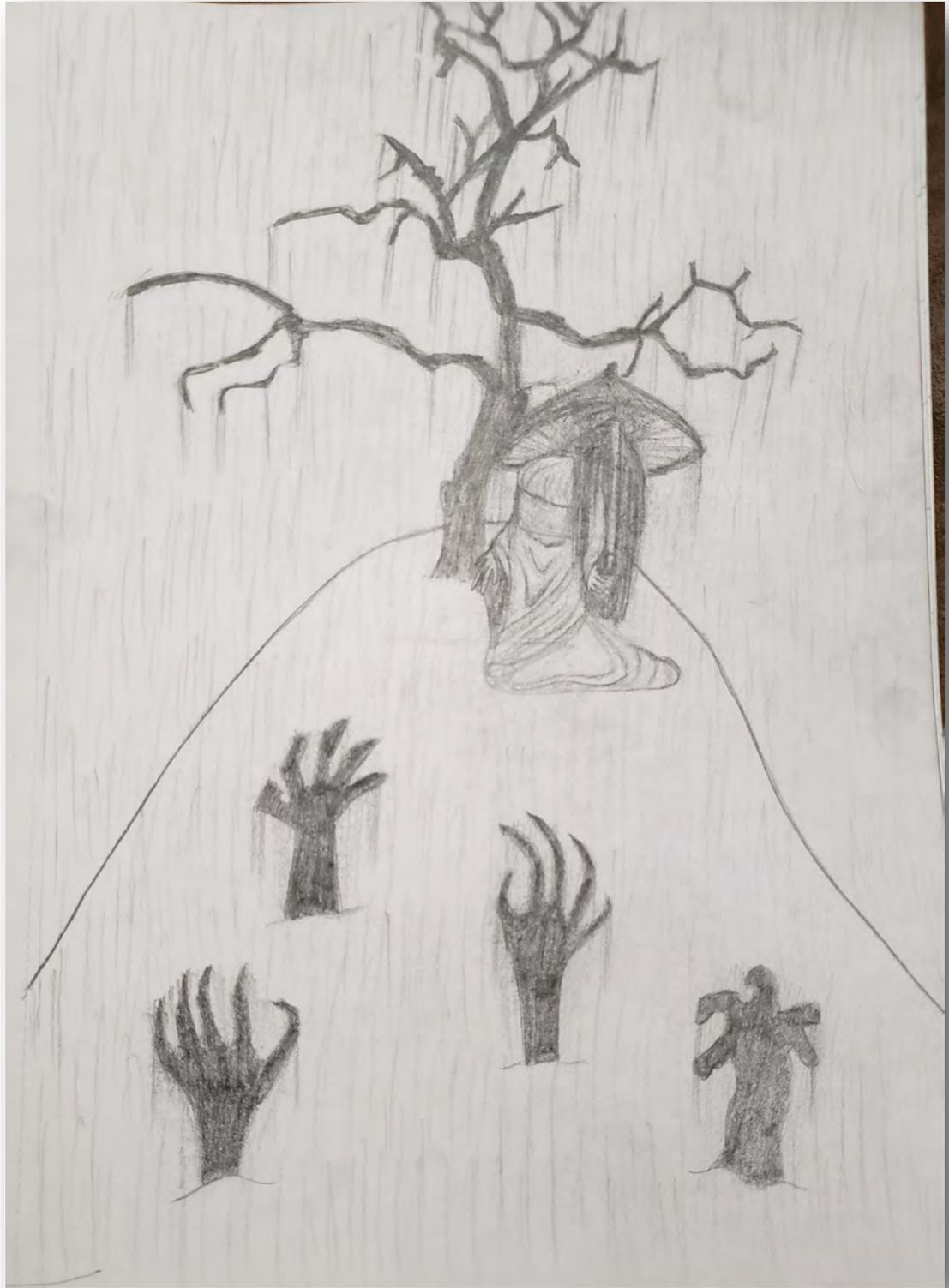
“What is?”

“The futility of life. Plants, animals, even humans... everything just *dies*.” He sneered, turning around to look at me. His eyes were blood red. “Makes sense that your kind is at the bottom of the food chain, doesn’t it?”

I watched as his torso twitched once, then snapped and bent, twisting into the terrible hunched back of a demon. From his jaws, fangs began to sprout, replacing his human teeth like corn kernels popping under heat. His hands, so courteous and gentle before, have morphed into jagged black lumps with talons for fingers. The skin on his forehead began to undulate, then split open to give way to two razor-sharp horns. The demonic exorcist glared at me, hungry, the gnarls in his throat blending in with the apartment’s spirits chanting *feast, feast, feast*.

“It does.” I said, my throat as dry as if no food or water had touched it in months — five, to be exact. Now that that revolting vinegary odor was gone, my nose picked up on the only smell that could soothe the shivers of hunger plaguing my entire body: the scent of souls, dead, damned and delicious. “But just for tonight, I think I can make an exception.”

My forked tongue flicked out from between my lips; and within seconds, the apartment was haunted no more.



October 31st

**Sindhu Sivasankar, age 14
graphite pencil**

Butterflies

**Charis Negley, age 18
markers**





Cloaked in Crimson

Amber Barlow, age 17

Fallen

Mukta Kantak, age 14

being in love with you is like
looking up at the night sky
and seeing a single star.
constellations? galaxies?
worthless.

in my eyes,
nothing exists but you.

is it supposed to feel like this?

they say it is just a
mindless phase
and that it will pass

but i have
fallen
too far
into this hole
that i dug for myself
and i cannot get out.

B u c n
o N i g
like a

pogo
s
t
ic
k

Across the screen

the s
pac
eship

SOARS

cOntrolled only by

Ar----->row
Keys

hitting
the

S p a c e

Invaders

one

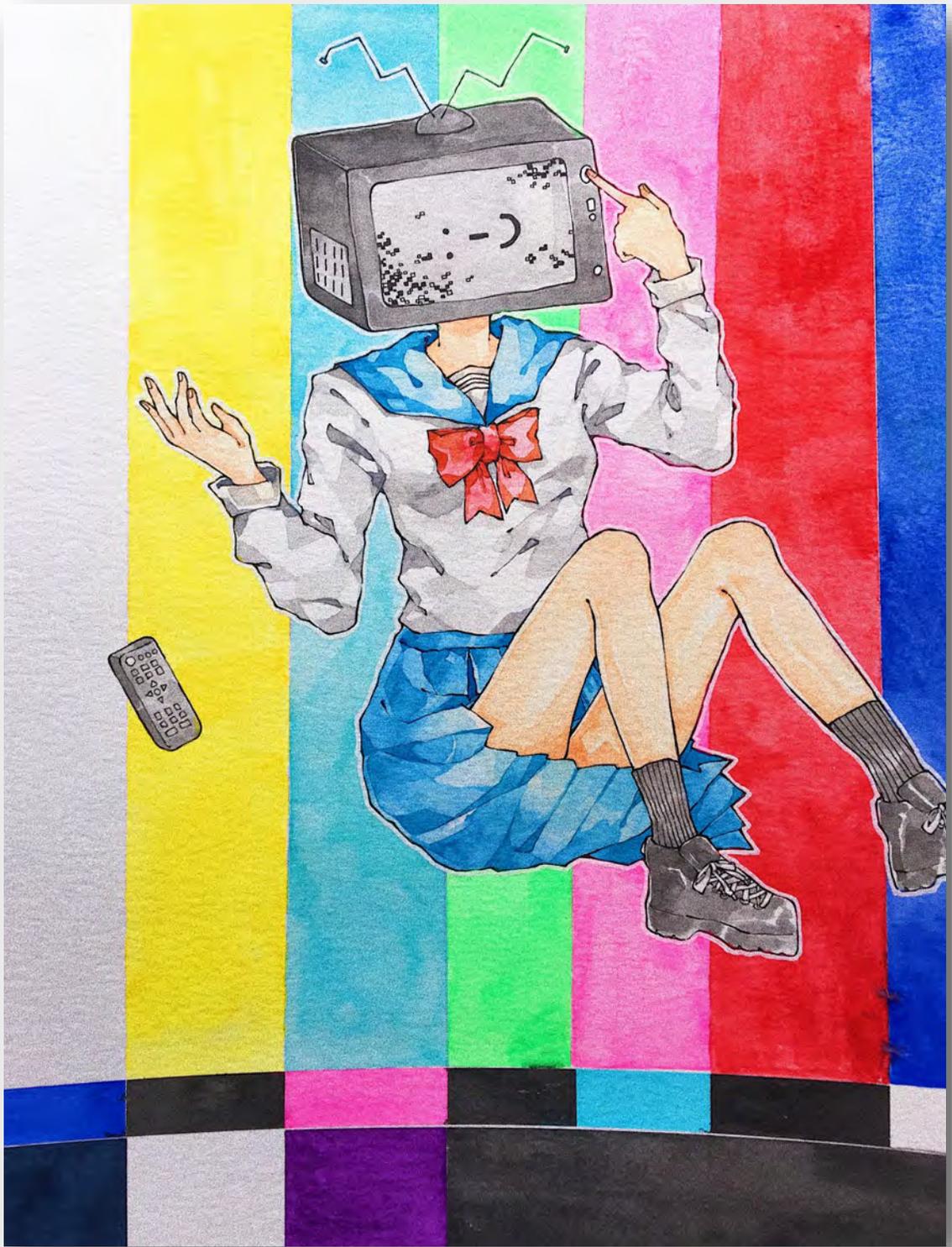
at

a

time

Space Poem

Aedin McKenna, age 13



Echo

Faith Kim, age 18
watercolor

Red White Lines

Collier, age 14

My shoes slide through the clay, stained a light red. The latest of the thousand prints pressed into the court. The white lines frame the court, sprinkled with dust. My breath is coming fast in ragged spurts. My muscles tense and bend. My hand, primed, ready to twirl like a dancer to my head. I am hopping now, waiting for the move. This moment is being created before my blank eyes, seeing nothing but the court. Not the fence, tall perpetual metal. Not the trees, immovable giants, watching over us. I see the yellow fly like a flash of paint, and then, *crack!* Every cell is released and I move without thinking, sidestepping. I see the blur chasing me but I am not afraid. It grazes the white line, and for a second, I have a flicker of doubt, but I brush it away. I dart back to the present, quickly leaning down to hit up, a paradox of movement. *Wham!* The ball sails back over the twined net, spinning like a top. My wrist twists and my arm glides up pulling my racquet with it as my eyes fly to my opponent. He darts and lunges for the prize, desperate to catch the speeding sphere, but it hits twice. 15-love.

Ode to Running

Hannah Ye, age 16

Toes on the line, body leaned forward. Every runner beside you is in the same position. This is your moment. This is what you've been training for over the past couple weeks, months, even years. You brace for the crack of that gun and the drop of that flag. Your heart pounds out its own tune and your muscles are tensed up with anticipation. Suddenly you hear it: "CRACK".

Six seconds. That's all you have to fly as fast as you can. The adrenaline will wear away soon—the pain and agony will set in afterwards. The rhythmic click-clacking of spikes on gravel. The pushing and shoving. The huffing and puffing. You love this.

Your lungs strain to take in more air. You're near the 2nd-mile mark. Everything hurts. You regret all the decisions that have led you to this moment. There's the din of your pounding heart that's telling you it isn't over yet. The stretch of the path ahead fades into the distance, showing no end. You catch a glimpse of someone running up from behind you—the thud of their shoes on the dirt path is deafening. Every muscle in your legs screams to slow down, to take a break. You don't. You can't give up now. You hear Coach's voice resonating through your mind, "You're gonna feel like dying in the race, so SUCK IT UP BUTTERCUP." With this in mind, you take in a deep breath and pump your arms faster than ever.

The last 100-200 meters. You see the finish line but you're not there. You see the red numbers on the time machine blinking at you, taunting you to run faster and to hit a new PR, a personal record time of your fastest race. You see the runner in front that you know you're going to pass. You hear the pounding of the shoes of the runner coming up behind you. You hear the angry clanging of cowbells and the festive cheering of crowds. You lengthen your strides and give it your all—it's the last stretch after all.



Soda Pop Art

Charis Negley, age 18
colored pencils



Skeleton Filter

Ashleigh Umbrecht, age 18
pen

Boy Who Cried Wolf

Sindhu Sivasankar , age 14

Once upon a time, in a village far An innocent boy resided within But fires are caused by a simple cigar
As fate lets its merciless teeth sink in

The villagers adored this little boy For not even a fly he could kill And so, they granted him the greatest joy-
Protecting the sheep on the hill!

"Guard the sheep! Don't let them stray!" "Not one must you misplace" "The scariest wolves, we'll
chase away!" "We promise, you will be safe"

If only the villagers could protect him But there are foes unable to bind You could slice their skin from
limb to limb Yet they'll never escape your mind

The villagers took the boy to the hill And ruffled his hair goodbye He grinned from ear to ear until His
kin were no longer nearby

For the boy saw things they couldn't see The nightmares from his sleep His fears were alive and
roaming free Black among white sheep

Unaware the name of any other foe "Wolf!" the boy cried and cried The villagers rushed, not a
moment slow! But stopped when they saw he lied

The love they had for him vanished His reason they did not care But the monsters he saw were
banished So he smiled while they all glared

Again and again, the day would repeat "Wolf!" he'd cry and cry The villagers no longer thought he was
sweet So they never asked him, "Why?"

If only the villagers had inquired But they assumed the joke was planned The boy could have spoken if
he desired But he knew they'd never understand

"Does he think it's funny? Look at his smile!" The villagers were seething with anger "How could a
child be filled with such guile!" "Let's not answer to his silly banter."

By the time the villagers had these thoughts The boy's monsters had only grew No matter how hard he
resisted and fought He could no longer tell what's true

Every word he spoke felt so untrue For he was used to telling lies So when he noticed a wolf came
through
He asked, "Are you yours or mine?"

The wolf growled and slaughtered the flock The boy was frozen in fear He was next, he knew, so he
cried out in shock, "Wolf!" But no one wanted to hear

It took some time before his body was found No wolf was there to linger All the villagers had gathered
around And spotted sheep blood on his fingers

The little boy thought the monsters he saw Was chaos trying to haunt him But his hand had become a
wolf's brutal claw The chaos was inside him

If only the villagers realized their mistake If only they hadn't conspired Though the real story strays
from this fake In both, the boy dies a liar

Breath

Josephine Mayer, age 13

“No-no-no”. I feel the pit in my throat starting to form as I swim my last lap of one hundred free. My hands hit the wall as I’m prepared for the worst. I slowly get out of the pool my heart is going faster than a race car at its highest speed. I feel as though I’m being strangled with little air to use. I sit down on a bench. My family and friends surrounding me, all of them are talking but the only thing I hear is my heartbeat and all I can think of is I can’t breathe. I see my mom looking like she is in the most frightening haunted house she’s ever been in. Her face pale and her eyebrows scrunched, her mouth moves but the only words that I can make out are “breath in and out Joey.” I then look to see my friend Kate sitting next to me rubbing my back, her eyes closed trying to take in all that surrounds her, she’s saying that “it’s going to be okay. That I’m going to be okay.” But somehow I’m not sure I believe her. I feel as though I’m suffocating, the walls slowly closing in on my throat. As I’m struggling to take in the air, I feel as though there’s no possible way to get out of this state. The walls seem to be closing in faster as my breathing quickens, leaving almost no room for what’s left. But when I feel like the walls might meet, I look around at my whole swim team all their faces looking horrified at the events going on, then I feel something in my hand, it’s my savior... like an angel being sent just to save me. I put it in my mouth one puff, 1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10 then again. My eyes meet the ground the walls slowly start to open up until there is plenty of room for air to pass through. As I sit there looking at the ground I just think that the air has never tasted sweeter in my life. It tasted like candy when you first try it when you are young. I then look up feeling as though I could jump up happily because I’m no longer suffering feeling with a loss of air. I can breathe.



b a i t .

Bait

Faith Kim, age 18
watercolor



Backyard Blooms

Aina Puri, age 14
graphite pencil

The Sun's Flower

Hannah Ye, age 16

Framed by golden petals silky smooth

Her round little face

Basks in the sun's warm embrace

Smiling ever so cheerfully

Her vibrant evergreen dress

Lightly sways in the afternoon breeze

As she gracefully dances with ease

Along to an invisible melody

And where the bright sun rays go

She will never depart

For the sun fills her heart

With the radiant smile of tomorrow

The Mystical Adventure

Audrey Gately, age 16

Audrey knew that today was a special day. Not only was it her birthday, but it was the day her friend, Andy was coming over from the neighboring state of Pennsylvania. They were very close; and had known each other since they were in 6th grade! Being in 10th grade now and dealing with Andy going to another school was difficult. Luckily, because of the new technology shipment that had been coming in, Audrey had been able to talk to him about once a month and video chat.

When he came over with his family, he was very worn out, but ecstatic at the same time. After he was settled in, it was gift-giving time. Even though it wasn't even Andy's birthday, Audrey had made the sweet gesture of buying him a gift for their two-year friend-anniversary. It was a pretty cheap gift, but it had come straight from the heart. It was a scrapbook she had made of all of the funny and exciting moments they had together so far. Andy said it was really nice; and since it was his now, he would continue to add to it. When she saw Andy's gift though, she gasped with pleasure! It was a leather-bound storybook; and he said the unique thing about this was that you could write whatever you wanted in it making the story seem to come to life. To test this theory out, Audrey decided to write a sentence about how Andy and she had commandeered a ship called "The Floating Beauty" and looked for clues about the rumored rainbow bridge that they had both learned about at the beginning of 6th grade right after they had met. That was what had bonded them to this incredible friendship in the first place. Right as Audrey finished writing, the book was bathed in a light of gold, and the book opened all on its own! Then a blue light shot out of the book, and Audrey and Andy were zapped right into the book!

When Audrey came to, she saw Andy in a sailor's uniform steering the ship that she had written about when she saw what they were steering towards! An island that was shaped just like the rainbow bridge itself! Audrey was so excited when they docked she practically flew off of the ship and ran around exploring the island, while Andy just laughed to himself over how silly she looked. As Audrey took a good look around the island, she noticed a spiral tower at the top that almost looked like a decorated seashell. As Audrey went up to explore the tower, Andy covered the shore to see if there were any clues to the bridge like Audrey had written about in the book. Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a poem that was written in the sand that also looked well-worn. He took out a magnifying glass that he thought he would use for a situation just like this, and

began to decipher the fine print. Andy was so astonished at what he read, he shouted for Audrey to come down and take a look! A few minutes later they made out the words “travel through the sea to get your true reward.”

A few days later after traveling through every island in the vicinity, they finally found the ultimate clue they had been looking for! They had been through 6 islands trying to find hints to the rainbow bridge and how to get there, while also strengthening their friendship along the way. On the last stop of their journey they concluded that every island they had stopped at had the first letter of each island spelled into the word, RAINBOW. They had gone to Rainwick, Omalu, Insdale, Netherland, Boonswill, and Oldale. The friends also found out the first island they had stopped at was called Washerwell; so they decided to go back there. After all of the written clues they had found on each island were gathered, they docked their ship, and entered the spiral seashell tower. There were only two objects in there - a telescope and wooden table; so they pieced the clues together and put them on the table; then looked through the telescope! As soon as they did, the bridge appeared right in front of their very eyes! Audrey and Andy were so excited, they didn't waste any time crossing it and had the time of their lives! As they ran, they held hands and shouted gleefully while grinning at each other.

As they neared the edge of the bridge, Andy took a good look at Audrey and realized throughout this adventure, he had been falling in love with her! To show her that affection at the end of the bridge, he kissed her cheek. Audrey blushed as red as a tomato! She then realized she could deal with this later, because the bridge had officially ended! It opened up to a beautiful meadow with flowers; they would always remember this spot. Audrey knew her adventure was coming to a close. They decided to live there until their college adventure started.

THE END



untitled

Hannah Campbell, age 17

Broken

Claire Uyeda, age 17

Looking at this old photograph of us
I wish I had made more of a fuss
It just makes me feel naive
If only I had told you to leave

Now tears are streaming down my face
I shouldn't have let you into my place
In my mind the room gets dim
Angry at myself and angry at him

Now I stare at his face in this photo
And this feeling I already know though
I rip it into two without any fear
And along with it the memories disappear



Deep Thoughts
by Sadé Sotilleo, age 13
oil paint



Wet Leaves

Madison Fuller, age 13

The Archer's Attack

Lorna Ryan, age 17

An archer sat, waiting for a shot.
The enormous enemy party lay ahead.
Running from a battle from which they had fled.
They staggered and bled, remnants of the battle they fought.
The archer crept close; they didn't know they were caught.
His enemies looked back, eyes tinged with dread.
His allies approached; the call for attack went unsaid.
He fired his bow without a passing thought.

The arrow split the air and a man's skull.
They screamed in panic and watched him fall.
But other than that, this battle was quite dull.
They were not fighters, just people who liked to brawl.
Soon after, their battle experienced a lull.
The enemy lay bloody while the archer stood tall.



Z

Ying Zhang, age 17

untitled

Erycca Curry, age 15

If life was easy
It wouldn't be worth living
God gives all of his soldiers different missions
I have been crying tears for years I'm always reminiscing
My momma died when I was nine and I'm still pushing
Pressure on my shoulders I can't mess up cause my little brother looking
I don't want nobody pity or they dollar bills
But you can never say you feel the same pain that I feel
My own daddy broke my heart yes the pain is real
I had a knife in my back nobody helped me remove it
Ten toes down one foot in the grave I can't let myself go through with it
I have been trying to right my wrongs
Lately I been feeling alone nobody's house ever felt like my home
Sorry to the loved ones I lost I feel like I disappointed you and let you down
Nobody tried to rescue me and I let my demons get the best of me
I'm supposed to be holding it together but honestly I'm going insane
I think the bruises that are on my body are messing with my mind
Laying down staring at the ceiling wishing I could go back in time
Gotta learn how to depend on myself since everyone is always leaving
Can't expect nobody to stay 'cause I can't give them a valuable reason
I was there when they needed me but where the heck was they when I fell through
My sister said you can't be mad at the world 'cause one person hurt you
She said you're angry and it shows
You take it out on the people that love you the most

~Lil E

Winter

Hannah Ye, age 16

Mismatch of icy flecks swirl through the sky
and soft, warm blankets cover everything in sight

The frigid cold air softly kisses you—
leaving a trail of icy cold kisses peppering your skin

Bright red splotches dot round apple cheeks
The smell of cinnamon and pine waft throughout the air

As children gleefully run from door to door

Enchanting others with their angelic voices



Music

Ella Augustine, age 13



Awaiting

Amber Barlow, age 17

Home Is an Unspoken Curse

Cassandra Fantini, age 17

There's something sinister about that stretch of road that lies beyond the cookie-cutter homes along the water, with all the nuclear families and nuclear power. You'll see it when you travel past the farmland that may or may not exist, after you've spent half an hour wondering "where am I" and realized that you now understand the true meaning of "the middle of nowhere". Beyond all that, things will feel normal again. Indeed, you could be forgiven for not giving the signs a second thought when you first see them, but you'll see them again and again and again, looming over the road. *You could be home*, they say. *Wouldn't you like this to be your home? Of course you would. Come home.*

And you ignore them, for you have no intention of making one of the beach towns that lie ahead your home — you can't afford it, and anyway, you'd be alone: just you and the waves, slamming against the shores, just you and everyone who belongs with somebody.

So you spend the week in the static of the seaside, and find that suddenly, life outside the town seems far away. It's someone else's problem. Everyone is happy here.

But almost none of them live here. They'll have to return to mundanity, most of them by the end of the week, and yet they keep coming back, year after year. They surrender themselves to this town that almost seems disconnected from the every day. It's a temporary fix, but you pretend it's forever. You pretend you'll never leave, for along the streets of this seaside town, home is an unspoken curse

"End of an Era"

Rhys Cottle-Vinson, age 18

*O heroes, o heroes to us you sail
At this, this turning of the age.
Come to us, o heroes from across the veil.*

*Come on the wake of death of an unknown scale,
And somehow pierce the crystal cage.
O heroes, o heroes to us you sail.*

*Try and come to us safely, to no avail,
For you are sundered by His Stellar Rage.
Come to us, o heroes from across the veil.*

*You must travel far and wide o'er dune and dale
To come to me, the most ancient sage.
O heroes, o heroes to us you sail.*

*You then must heist that ancient symbolic grail:
An ancient marker of evil's last stage.
Come to us, o heroes from across the veil.*

*You'll defeat the invaders who rain on us like hail,
For my body already will be ceased in rage.
O heroes, o heroes to us you sail!
Come to us, o heroes from across the veil!*



West Lake

Eva Dolde, age 17



Nature's Candy

Hannah Ye, age 16

A Summer's Day

Claire Uyeda, age 17

The ladies' laughter flutters across the front yard of the estate,
They sip on ice cold lemonade and share town gossip,
The postman walks up, their eyes flit toward the gate,
The hostess picks up the letter and opens it with a rip.

Bright sunbeams shine down upon the note,
A parasol is lifted above the young woman's head,
The gossip stops and the other ladies ask what he wrote,
As she reads the love letter aloud her cheeks turn red.

The ladies tease the hostess about the gentleman,
They think it's some rich fellow travelling abroad,
For they have no idea it's the local mailman,
Her rich gentleman is simply a fraud.

Proof We Lived

Arushi Sharda, age 15

when we all were born
we took our first breaths
as a newborn
as a blank canvas
that sought life
a deep desire within us to live
to paint experience
in different colors

they show up differently
on everyone's body
some have freckles
or stretch marks
some have no limbs
or scars
some have bruises
or birthmarks
some people even hold them all

and these aren't imperfections
as some mistake them to be
it's all proof
that the sun shone upon us
that we grew up
that we fell down and got hurt
but we got right back up
and those memories were sketched
onto our skin as a reminder
that it's okay not to be perfect
after all, it is just
proof that we lived



Baby at Sunset
Savannah Bennett, age 14



Floral Darkness

Savannah Bennett, age 14

Love is Deciduous

Sindhu Sivasankar, age 14

As our eyes met, the first bud of spring grew
The rose soon bloomed; its thorn like a love dart
I watched and felt as the butterflies flew
Your warm love melted the frost on my heart
The days got longer, and with it our love
I could feel warmth from the sun and within
You are a rose in a field of foxglove
I wish I had trusted your moonlit grin
But I feared our fruit had over ripened
Red roses can bring both beauty and blood
I saw the leaves fall off, and grew frightened
So before you left, I fell to the mud
These winters will be hard; though time goes slow
I'll be the first snowflake to touch your nose



Touching Bushkill Falls

Ashleigh Umbrecht, age 18
oil pastels

The Sea Turtle

Mikayla Dayton, age 15

The year 2100: As described by a Sea Turtle
(English translation)

“Grandpa, tell us again about the old days, when the ocean was still clean. It must’ve been so beautiful,” says my granddaughter.

“Well, there were lively and vibrant coral reefs that were all colors; red, yellow, green and more. As you know, they now have pieces of plastic bags entwined around their beautiful arms. Our once clear ocean floor now appears to be a landfill of plastic bottles and straws.”

“What happened?” she asks.

“It rapidly got worse. In a matter of years, the amount of junk that was littering our home doubled.”

“Will it ever be pretty again?”

“It is still pretty, my dear, but you just have to look harder.”

We see a colorful school of fish pass by, so we prepare to eat breakfast. I choose a patterned blue and yellow fish.

“These days, we have to be very careful to avoid mistaking plastic for food. That’s why I try to pick the most colorful fish and crustaceans because most plastic is clear I think.”

“Grandpa, what would happen if you did eat plastic?”

“I heard that consuming it is fatal, however, my eyesight isn’t too good, so who’s to say that I haven’t already had a bite of the deadly product?” A deep chuckle erupts from my mouth as I try to make light of the dark topic. “It’s time to travel up to the surface again.”

As we inch closer to the surface, I warn her again of the dangers of traveling so far up. “The surface is often more dangerous than the deeper parts of the ocean because there are countless patches of plastic that float on the surface.”

“I’ll be careful,” my granddaughter says nervously.

“We must be grateful that we can hold our breath so long. Other animals have to make the trip to the surface even more often than we do.”

These days are so much more dangerous than in the past. There is more plastic in the ocean than sea creatures. I spend each day like my last because one day, it will be—whether the cause is natural or from a piece of plastic that suffocates me. Each night, before I go to sleep under my rock, I hope that my life will not be just another claimed by the endless amount of junk that litters my once flourishing home. However, I do not want to scare my granddaughter with these thoughts.

After dropping her at her home rock, I head nearby to my rock to get some shut-eye. When I wake up, I head out on a swim to see what I can find to eat. Oh...I spot a jellyfish! As I take a bite of my favorite food, I realize that I just took a bite of a plastic bag, like the ones that were wrapped around the corals. These days, telling the difference between plastic junk and jellyfish can be very difficult. What if I, like many others I’ve heard about, also die from consuming this poisonous garbage? What about my family?

I feel a sharp pain in my body and it doesn’t stop. I can’t breathe. As I gasped for air, I realize that this won’t stop. Only more turtles like me will die. Help me... Please... Someone...

A long silence.

“Grandpa! Grandpa!” Oof

The Devil Appears as an Angel of Light

Emma Morgaine Ryan, age 17

The water: so still, so clean, so clear.
It is so far away, yet it seems quite near.
It's glossy sheen twinkles in the light.
Staying the same as she watches from great height.

Lo! Why would purity be below?
Hell always lies below Heaven, don't you know?
But could this be wrong? Should they descend?
One doesn't wish to be in the wrong at the end.

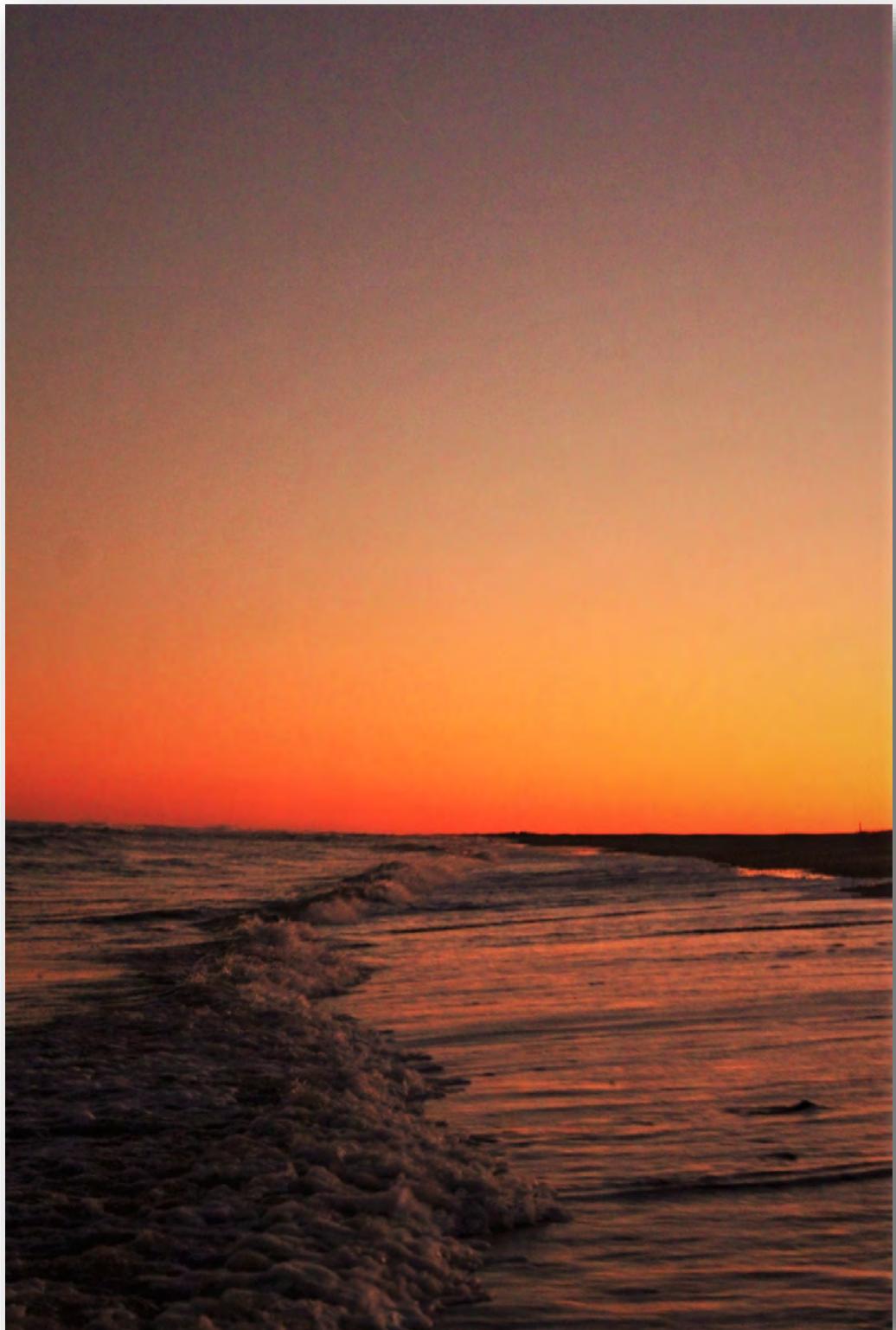
Such beauty, such grace holds no anguish.
Could the pure preserve people as they languish?
Is up now down? Do they know at all?
Is their perception off? Did Lucifer fall?

Or maybe the earthly realm was wrong.
Were they upside down or right where they belong?
Hell's torment cannot make such beauty.
Yet she had faith in all the angel's duty.

She couldn't deny when things were awry.
For under the water, doesn't everything fly?
If she then were to fall, would she rise?
The pure, clear water was now her newest skies.

Reaching now for the newfound twinkle,
Forgotten stars, her purity shall wrinkle.
But as she fell, she rose in spirits.
Though she went towards not quite what she merits.

The finish on the surface rippled.
And from high heights, her body had been crippled.
Once she fell, she was taken aback,
But she knew it was too late as all went black.



Sundara ereb

Heather Sharp, age 16

Too Young

Arushi Sharda, age 15

People say that my generation, Generation Z, is too young. Too young to know our sexualities, to be depressed, to hate, to protest, or to be an activist. We're classed as too young, too stupid, too naïve because we don't know the real world. And, you know what? They're absolutely right. We are too young. Too young for homophobia, racism, sexism, rape, self harm, suicide, gun violence, and public shootings. As of December 12th, there have been 409 mass shootings in the USA solely in the year of 2019. We are too young for these to be normal to us. We shouldn't be so desensitized by this violent reality we live in. So yes, we are too young. But is that our fault? They say we are too young to know real pain and that we haven't seen the real world. But the world we live in defines people because of their color, their race, their beliefs, their financial standing, their appearance, and even their gender. Is that not pain? Or is that something we need to abide by? This world belongs to the youth now; we've been introduced to the real world at a young age. So now what? Do we just go with it or do we complain about it? Neither. My generation will be the ones to fix our society, and ensure that we can form a more perfect union. But if you take a step back, and think about it, my generation having to do this, it makes sense to say we are too young to have realized that society is messed up, and that we have to be the ones to fix it. So we're joining our hands and rising from the ashes, we will be the ones to put out the raging fire. Watch us all make life better when they said we were too young.



Five Silhouettes

Dorcas Olatunji, age 17



Half Blind

Mackenzie Ruiz, age 17

Slipping Away

Violet Perloff, age 14

He's almost gone. Almost. Cosmo. The sweetest pile of fur. Fading, almost gone. Laying there, my few problems of childhood, melting away as Cosmo's soft white fur surrounds my head like a fluffy cloud I hear the rhythm of the steady breathing, the soothing heartbeat. My dad reading a book but it is just words. Meaningless words. Words that sound like a lullaby none the less. Too young to understand that this won't last forever. Too naive to cherish it. This moment. This exact moment. His soothing purr. My small hand on his soft white fur. No judgment. A sponge. Soaking up my worries, my problems, my pain. Without saying anything he knew it all, the problems, the pain, the worry. Just a cat, but so much more. So, so much more. Precious moments lasting forever but the memories fading over time. He is slipping away. The feeling of slipping on ice, grasping for something that's not there. One last memory of someone. More than a cat. More than I can explain. A childhood falling away. The only thing I've ever known. I never knew how to say goodbye. So I didn't, I didn't face reality, no one expected me to so, I didn't. Now he's gone. A life awaiting without him. One with problems. One with stress. One with death.



Night Lotus

**Christina Law, age 14
watercolor**

TO MY SIMILAR SISTER

Dorcas Olatunji, age 17

We both know how this goes.
I spend some time away,
Back with a suitcase of memories
Of stories you weren't a part of.
You'll make that marinated Adobo chicken about
four times
When I'm gone,
Because our little sister Testimony will eat it too
quickly.
My similar sister,
It feels weird to be away
Not just from you but
An 8 HOUR drive from a face to face interaction.
We'll have facetime, I know,
But it doesn't compare to
Seven-year-old us running from a toddler
Testimony.
We'll come to realize that though
Our closet will **never** be clean,
We have tons of closets full of stories, injuries,
almost heartaches
And more, that only feel important
When we give them meaning.
I don't miss you yet,
As it's only been a day since you refused to hug
me,
Which I sort of understand because you hate
hugs.
But this is the longest we've been away from
each other,
And I know we stopped doing the same things a
while ago
But it still feels weird turning the page without
you.
I sometimes wish I could record these reactions
for you,
To really understand every intricate portion of
my experience.
But that would take far too long.
You'll have movie snippets
Feathers everywhere sleepovers
Summer sunset secrets
And statements I won't understand,
Because I wasn't there.

I wasn't there for Men in Black 4
There for that ice cream social on the 4th
Our first Fourth away from each other...
We'll miss this whole two weeks of each other's
life without
Fully going into every detail.
But you know, I'm starting to feel okay about it.
We have to grow separately to truly grow.
The crazy talk about finding yourself ain't so crazy
at all.
I'll find who I really am and who I want to be
when I---
Away from your influence on EVERY decision
Trapped by my own morality and conscience
It felt a bit daunting at first but---
These are the weeks, months, years,
We NEED apart.
You'll never understand my retellings of stories
cropped
And experiences edited because it'll be my choice
what to tell you.
Only because I want to.
The truth is, you'll never be able to see the full
picture.
When I return, you leave the next day.
10 days of adventures I'm not there for,
Of stories in your suitcase.
But we truly need to find who we really are.
That comes from taking that half of our closet
away from each other.
This identity crisis has gone on for too long
Like seeing all nine seasons of The Office---
It's BORING.
I have to turn my own page,
I'm already on my fifth one here, and it isn't even
the afternoon,
My similar sister, my twin sister, without you.



Fav

Ying Zhang, age 17

Dialogue

Julia Phillips, age 17

A light vibration was felt by his left knee. His hand nudged another leg as he reached for his phone.

It was a text from his manager, "All good in closing up? Let me know if anything needs to be restocked." The corners of his lips creased into a smile as he took his thumbs to the screen.

"Yup, all good here. I will let you know if anything comes up!" he replied. As he sat up with a straight back, weight shifted dramatically in the bed he lay in. The dark yellow crud on his keyboard scraped against the screen of his phone as he slid it back up again. He pulled his head back and squinted his eyes as he pressed in a phone number.

He hit enter and slowly put his phone up to his ear, just enough so that the quiet hum of the call was audible. Three rings went by before a gruff voice answered. He waited for him to finish before speaking.

"Hey, Earl, it's Joe from Don's Home Store. Don said that we needed more blankets and pillows. Proud to say we're close to out!" There was a slight pause. A muffled bass traveled through the large, empty room. "Yeah, I know it's after hours but we really need it before morning-" Distant drip drops landed on the flooring. "Yeah-yeah, Do-" Joe anxiously tapped on a thigh. Joe waited impatiently as Earl talked in his ear. "I can come pick them up right now, I really need 'em." Joe waited for a moment before smiling wide. "Perfect, I'll come on down right now. Okay- thank you." Joe tried to blurt out before hanging up. However, Earl had more to say. "What do you mean you don't want to keep helping me out? You've been such a huge help to this company. It's just blankets and pillows, who do you think I am?" Joe calmly said back to Earl. "Apology accepted, I'm on my way now."

He climbed over blanketed humps, and his feet slammed on the floor. A crunching sound came from the mattress he was once on. Nonetheless, Joe trudged to the front of the room, grabbing his keys off the counter. As he closed the door behind him, he frowned at the paper that was stuck on the outer wall. "Man, I need to shave and get a haircut. I look like a mess."

It was a peaceful drive to Earl. The air was cool and the stars were shining bright. Moonlight shone on the Earth below, creating a gorgeous blur of night colors. As he pulled into the front of Earl's building, he slyly cleaned up the inside of his car. "Can't have Earl seeing my car like this, how embarrassing," Joe said to himself. He took a handkerchief and wiped stains off the dashboard and seats until they weren't visible in the dark. He slowly opened the door and shouted for Earl. "Earl! It's Joe, I'm here!" Everything was quiet. Squeals of muffled crunching under his feet bounced off the trees.

"Hi, Joe." Earl spoke in a quiet voice as he came outside of the building.

"Hey bud, where's the blankets and pillows?" Earl looked down at his feet.

"I'm sorry, Joe." He said before Joe felt a cold metal clasp around his wrists.

"Earl? What's going on?"

"I just had a feeling you were him. Why did you show your face to me if you knew you'd get caught?" A man behind Joe started shouting demands and shoved his body inside a gated car.

As the police arrived at Don's Home Store, they soon realized that the store had been closed for years. It was an empty store with only one singular mattress all the way tucked in the back room. Their flashlights revealed dark red stains on the floors, walls, and ceilings. The blankets weren't moldable and the pillows were flattened. Cylinder shaped blankets were wrapped up and stacked in the corner of the room. Two distorted shapes lay on the mattress, both still wet.



Tropical Sunset

Ashleigh Umbrecht, age 18
acrylic paint

Sky

Christina Law, age 14

Fluffy clouds drift away
On cotton candy lanes
Strung upon a gold ray
As birds sing the sun in flight

The sky shifts to blue hues
Earth goes about her day
Winds blow while waves break loose
Sun shows the brightest light

A serene twilight sky
Twinkles in the darkness
Pearl moon ascending high
The world sleeps in peaceful night

ICE

Eva Dolde, age 17

I remember the ice.

I remember the way my heart broke into a thousand jagged pieces, like a chunk of ice crashing against the ground, never to be put together again when he said those words to me. I remember the room growing unnaturally frosty cold. Has it always been this cold, cold, cold? I remember my lips quivering as I struggled to breathe in the ice-cold truth. My lungs pressed tightly, squeezing each breath's out in a choking gasp that burned my throat and lungs. I remember feeling the pressure at my throat growing stronger and stronger still- until the ice crashed and broke, just like my heart, sending jagged sobs tumbling out of my mouth.

"Wh- What." I remember those numb words wheezing out of my mouth sounding too icy sharp add all too unfamiliar leaving me to question if I had really spoken at all.

"Your grandfather..." He tried again, pressing his hand against my shaking back.

My eyes were already stinging; My lips were already quivering; My body was already shaking before the words bombarded my ears. Cold, freezing cold, sweat dripped down my back.

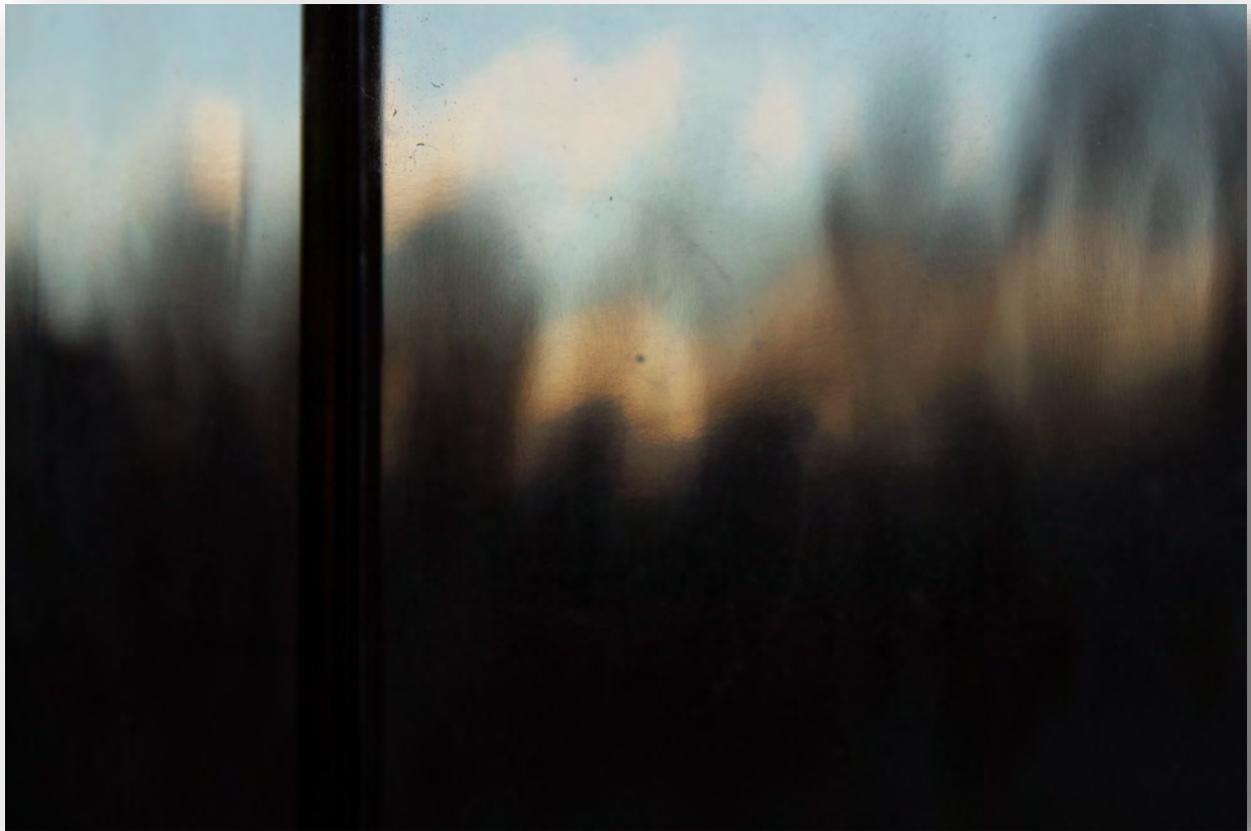
"...He's dead."

Those two words were all it took for the chunks of ice to crash. For my heart to break, for the dam to break, sending hot tears down my numb face. For my lips to be too slow to suppress my agonized cry. For my lungs to forget how to breathe. For my throat to forget how to speak. I remember it was that moment that the ice crashed. It was that moment that thousands of shards shattered into me that I felt the rawness and unbiased power of the ice.

I don't remember the man hugging me, assuring me that I will be fine. I don't remember crying until my voice disappeared like melting ice. I don't remember screaming that he's wrong, wrong, wrong.

No.

I only remember the ice.



Distorted Beginnings

Hannah Ye, age 16

Sand

Rhys Cottle-Vinson, age

On those days
Long, long ago,
On those school retreats
Where the rest of the world
Seemed to become far, far, away

We would swim to the island
Blue water bubbling in our wakes.
And then we crawled upon the beach,
Its sand a pearly white,
Soft and smooth.
And we would lie there, drying off.

We dried off upon that beach.
Caressed by the soothing rays of our sun,
We would lie there and try to guess the bird calls:
Here a soft killdeer, there a staccato “kut”,
Then a bass-filled trumpeting or a benign tweet.

But it's not like that for us anymore.
The sand of now is coarse,
And it's rough,
And it's irritating,
And it gets everywhere.

The sand of now is red and rocky,
Huge spires of the rock piercing the sand.
The sand of now leaves us feeling weaker
and worse for wear.

I have gone
Beneath those sands
And beneath those spires.
To where the bug and the bots
Create each other.



Toucan

**Mukta Katak, age 14
watercolor and graphite**

Unexpected Rise

Collier, age 14

Silence. I blink rapidly to shake the wave of sleep away. The floor creaks softly as I creep to the bathroom. A window lets me view the outside. Bushes, rocks, the road, and jets of red streaking through the sky. A painting on a fluffy blue canvas breathing warmth into the day. I feel the air whoosh out of me and my mind whirrs. This is a rare moment that I need to save. I tiptoe to my parent's bedroom, where they lie quietly, unaware. Silence. It's on the table. A flicker of doubt dashes across my mind, but I am determined. They do not wake from their slumber as I slowly grab the phone. I move slowly as I glide to the kitchen. 4:00 am. The time doesn't sway my movements. The metal handle sears my hand, like a freezing flame. Locked. I dart to drawers, baskets, cabinets, hope disappearing like the stars in the morning. I see the key, a glint of gold, dull in the waking light. I wrap a scratchy blanket around me, preparing me for outside. My mind is blank as the air slaps me in the face, and I move without thinking. As I walk through the garden, wet grass soaks my shoes, and ah, there it is. The soft clouds knifing through the vast dome of blue. Red, orange, yellow, stark in contrast to the light sky. It is fading fast. Click click click. I repeat all these steps in backward order then trudge to their room. The chill still stings from the morning air on my skin as I ghost to the table, placing the phone down on the cold glass. My heart beats frantically, trying to escape my chest. Silence.



Maddy the Photographer

Savannah Bennett, age 14



Future Sights

Dorcas Olatunji, age 17

Aurora

Rasheed Bashir, age 13

An Aurora is when electrons are drawn to the earth's magnetic poles, perhaps that's why I was so drawn to it. As I hop catlike off my top bunk and land silently, I stalk out of the cabin, the rules flying out of my mind like a bird through an open window as I see it. It's like a cosmic painters' ultimate work. The emerald greens, the rose pinks and the blue you imagine the oceans should look like, all-dancing on the purplish-black of the night sky, like fire dances on logs. Bounding and striking, it looks like they're playing. Like the artist was content to change it, and just let it be what it desires. As the light glints off the lake, it catches my eye like a mirror in sunlight. Then I see the vermilion like a lake filled with oil and lit with an inextinguishable flame. The white just brings out and accents the rest of the colors showing off the true breathtaking awe that nature at its purest can cause. As they fade into the abyss of the night sky, I blink once and it's gone but as the sun rises, I see those same flames whirl on the surface of the water, once again the same effect as before. The same freedom. Freedom. Free. All I ever wanted.

Cadillac Mountain Sunset

Kayla R., age 12



Cadillac Mountain Sunset (continued)

Kayla R., age 12



Rainbow Sky

Violet Perloff, age 14

The sky lit up by a thousand stars. Almost like day, but night. A rainbow in the night sky. No pollution, no clouds. Nothing. My sleepy eyes taking in this fairytale. The higher up the mountain we are, the clearer the sky becomes. The bus window reflecting the world behind us. Pink, purple, blue, and white. Each and every individual sun shines on the path ahead. The only way to the top of the mountain. The twisty path only lit by the moon and stars before dawn. So many colors, so hard to believe that it's natural. Not just a light show, but nature. On the road ahead the light shapes the plants, the grasses. The little flowers wrapped in darkness. The sparkling crystals in the sky. A mountain above the sleeping world. Far away from everything, in the middle of the Pacific. No extra lights. The stars have the stage. Just them, just the stars. Playing hide and seek with the world. I have found the stars. Not hiding behind pollution. Not like at home where no one wants to see them. Where people don't care if the stars go away, don't care if the beauty disappears. But here, people care. They care about the earth, the water, the sky, the stars. So here they are, not dull or dying, just in the open air, the magical lights.



Dream Big

Lizzie Zolandz, age 13

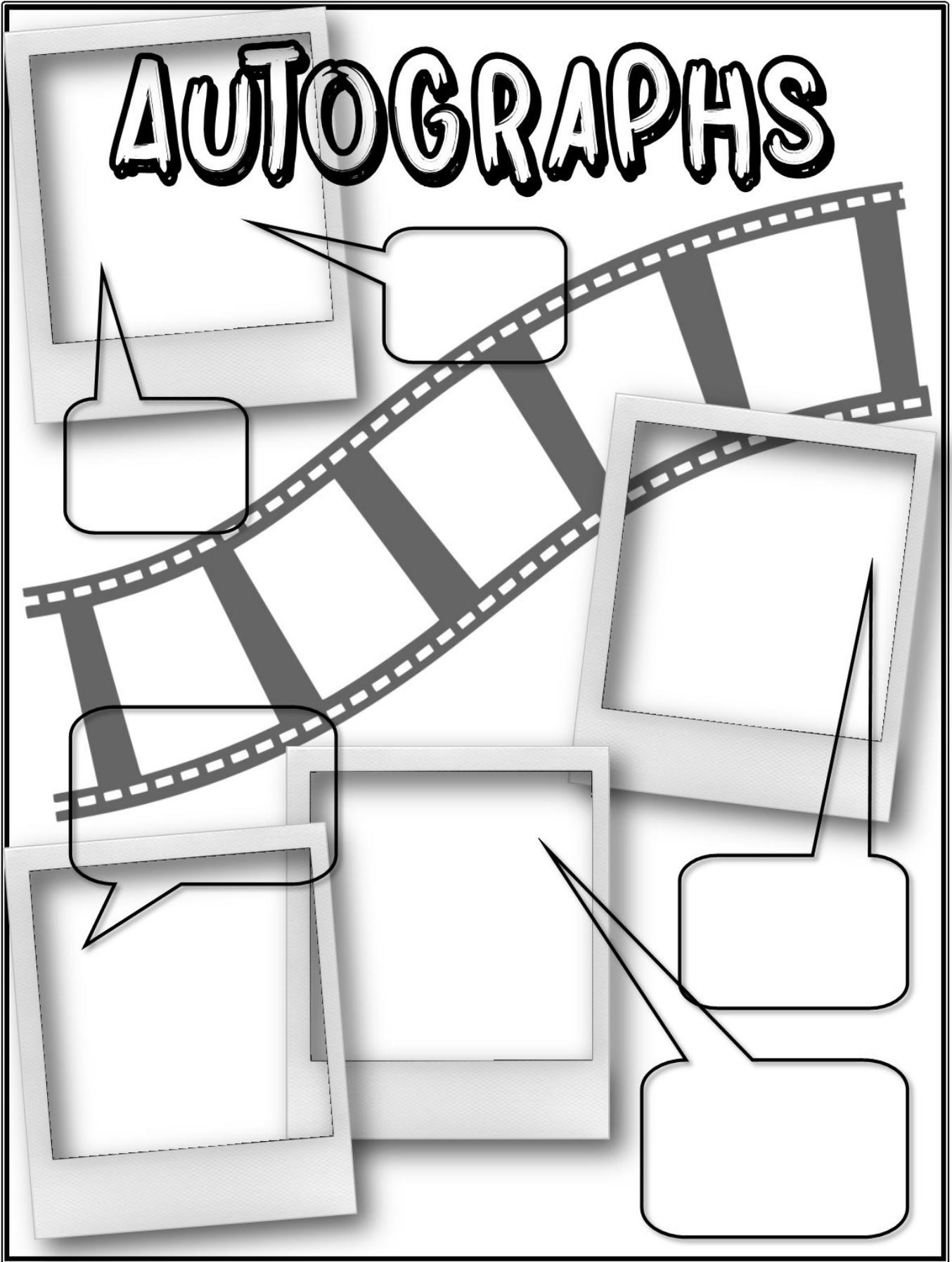
Don't Give Up

Athena Wayne, age 15

acrylic paint and colored pencil shavings



AUTOGRAPHS





Blood Moon

Mackenzie Ruiz, age 17