

VISIONS MAGAZINE

VOLUME 21 SPRING 2021
CENTRAL TOGETHER EDITION

ARTS & LITERATURE

SENIOR FEATURES

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LEO MCNAMEE
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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

We are proud to bring you this year's "Central Together Edition" of *Visions Literary & Arts Magazine* featuring the work of thirty students and adults in the Central Catholic community. Our strange, new normal has meant many changes to our daily lives and many sacrifices over the course of the last year – but it did not stop us from creating or coming together (sometimes virtually) to celebrate the talents of our community.

To celebrate the holiday season, *Visions* worked with Mrs. Danielle Marine, Chair of the Fine and Performing Arts Department, and Mr. Willie Jones, Director of the Central Catholic Concert Choir and Central Harmony a cappella group, to create an unforgettable night at our virtual Christmas Coffeehouse on December 22, 2020. The event was broadcast via Zoom so that students and families could attend the event from the comfort and safety of their own living rooms.

This year also marked a first for our organization – the *Visions* Mainstage. The format of this event, necessitated by COVID-19 restrictions, had a considerably different look and feel from our typically intimate Coffeehouses. There were, of course, some silver linings. Held in the Memorial Gymnasium, the Mainstage allowed for a professional light and sound rig designed by Mr. Andrew Joyal. The night was a dazzling display of talent featuring performances by forty students and five faculty members. We were also able to provide safe food and drink service out of the newly renovated Raider Café with the help of Mrs. Ellen Loycano, Mr. Matt Sansoucie, and Mrs. Christine Thompson. While we are looking forward to bringing back our signature Coffeehouses for the 2021-2022 school year, we are also excited to add the *Visions* Mainstage to our annual schedule!

As our world begins to open up again, let us not forget what we have learned over the last year. As is clear from the images and words contained in this issue, we have learned to spend more time creating, exploring nature, showing gratitude, considering our priorities, reflecting on our lives, and slowing down to appreciate the world that we so often take for granted.

Thank you to all who supported *Visions* this year!
2020-2021 *Visions* Staff



SEBASTIAN BENEDETTO, 2022



2020-2021 COFFEEHOUSE PERFORMERS

SEBASTIAN BENEDETTO, 2022 | OLIVIA BENVENUTO, 2021 | HELENA BERNIER, 2023
ZOE BERUBE, 2023 | ABIGAIL BOLAND, 2024 | JULIANA BOURAPHAEL, 2024
SOPHIA CAMACHO, 2023 | CALEB CASCIO, 2024 | MR. RICK CAVANAUGH
ANTHONY CHAMOUN, 2021 | EMILY CHEN, 2021 | CHLOE CHUN, 2021 | CAROLINE CLARK, 2022
TREVOR COLLINS, 2022 | AARON COPPETA, 2021 | TOM CUDDY, 2022 | DIYA DAND 2021
THOMAS DREWETT, 2023 | JONELLE ECHENDU, 2023 | MEGAN ERWIN, 2024
ISABELLA FARDIN, 2023 | MEGAN GALLAGHER, 2021 | LESLIE GAMEZ, 2021
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MATTHEW JACKSON, 2022 | MR. WILLIE JONES | COLLEENE KABARIA, 2022 | ELINA KHOURY, 2021
LUKE LACHANCE, 2023 | KATIE MACDONALD, 2021 | CATHERINE MANGIONE, 2022
MRS. DANIELLE MARINE | MARIA MATAAC, 2021 | SOFIA OCH, 2023 | JANET OMEZI, 2022
FAITH OMOSEFE, 2022 | VERONICA ORTEGA, 2022 | JOHN PALMISANO, 2022
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ANYA QUAGLIETTA, 2021 | NAVIN RAMESH, 2024 | RANJANA RAMESH, 2023
DAVID ROZEMBERG, 2021 | SOFIA RUIZ, 2022 | RIANNA SANTRA, 2024 | JENNIFER SAOUMA, 2024
BRANDON SILVA, 2024 | CAITLIN SINE, 2021 | ANNIKA SMITH, 2022 | CHLOE SMITH, 2023
KATHLEEN SMITH, 2023 | MAGGIE SMITH, 2021 | CAROLINE SULLIVAN, 2021
MAKAYLA SURETTE, 2021 | MR. MARK SVENDSEN | ERIN TORRISI, 2023 | DREW TREMBLAY, 2023
SUNTHRIIWI VENKAT, 2023 | CAMERON WARD, 2021 | JACKSON WETHERBEE, 2022
ADAM WOYDYL, 2022 | GRACIE WOLF, 2024 | ZOE XYDIAS, 2023 | QIAN ROWENA ZHONG, 2022
ISABELLA ZOUEN, 2023













ANYA QUAGLIETTA, 2021

RANJANA RAMESH, 2023
OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE
CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

It was after the summer,
Right after eighth grade
That I became a newcomer
Into high school I'd strayed.

I wandered the hallways,
Ran up the stairs,
Each morning on weekdays
You can bet I was there.

Back then, the Sophomores seemed
Like Giants among men.
Juniors and Seniors, so esteemed!
They drove Cars now and then!

A wee Freshman was I.
So young, really clueless
That soon, I'd say goodbye
And begin a year full of newness.

It seems so fast, but it's true that already
2 high school years have passed by, I fear.
Now, take note, be calm, and be steady,
but

Objects in Mirror are Closer than They Appear

BRIAN LEBLANC, 2024

SUNDERING

The sky was black with smoke and ash. The boy looked up at the sky as the massive winged silhouette rushed past the small town, kicking up ash and debris as it went. Men and women ran all around the blazing market, scrambling to escape the flames or to find loved ones lost in the panic. A sergeant bellowed orders to his men as they reloaded their crossbows and fired at the great beast as it made another pass. The beast never even flinched as the hopes of men bounced off of its thick scaled armor. The monster reared up its head and jetted out a blast of flame that crashed upon the horrified expressions of all caught in its embracing grasp. The boy shielded his eyes from the gust of burning air that swept past him. When the gust stopped he coughed the ash out of his mouth and looked back at where the men once stood their ground. There was no trace of them other than the particles of ash that flowed through the air and the scorched cobblestone that they once stood on. The ash had become too much by now and the boy could not see the dragon besides the two primal eyes that glowered at his mere existence. Before the boy knew it he was swept off his feet, but not by the dragon. Through the choking ash a face slowly formed, a man's face. The man kicked through a pile of debris and kept running, the boy clutched in his arms as he bolted for the mountain river that flowed through the town. The boy looked behind as the dragon rose in the sky and continued its devastation. Then a large crack sounded as an entire building's foundations buckled in on themselves and sent a hurricane of power through the street, and then darkness closed in on the boy.

Everything was blurry and muted. A figure stood in front of the boy's eyes. Close enough that he could smell his breath and see the blood running from his nose. The boy's eyes slowly opened and focused on the figure in front of him. The man's face was sweaty and worn, a thick brown beard hung around his face. The man's mouth made movements, but if any sound came out then the boy could not hear it. He moved back and dragged the boy up off the ground quickly as a group of civilians fled by them, none of them carrying that the boy had been in the way of their escape. The man helped the boy back on his feet and brushed a little bit of the ash off of him. The sounds of the moans and screams of the dying and injured filled the air as the town was slowly being consumed by the dragon's infernos. The man grunted and pointed towards the river as the silhouette flew above them again, if they made it to the river then they would be safe. They man and boy started moving through the dying town towards the river, avoiding the main streets and sticking to the shadows to not have the dragons' malice turned upon them. As they inched ever closer to the river a crunching crash filled the air as the dragon slammed into a bell tower clustered with archers and crossbow men. The tower crumbled like a house of cards as men were thrown to their doom and rubble blocked the path of the boy and man. With a grunt of frustration the man grappled the boy's arm and began to drag him in another direction towards the river. They quickened their pace as the world crumbled around them, consumed by fire and death. The charred remains of men, women, and children layed all around as they finally came in sight of the river. The boy's hope was incinerated when they came to the edge of the water; it was burning. The river was filled with burning boats and debris, not even the water was safe from the dragons wrath. The man's face went hard as stone as he gazed across the river, the boy dreaded what horrors he would see as he lifted his head. Across the river a small unit of warriors had attempted to rally and charge against the dragon, now they were only charred clumps at the dragon's claws as its burning gaze fell across the boy. With a roar that heralded the destruction of humanity the dragon lunged forward, spewing an inferno from its mouth. The boy could not move as he saw his doom hurtling for him, but as the inferno was moments from his face he was shoved into the river. As he fell he could see the man's face for a moment, the man met his gaze and simply smiled at the boy as he was consumed by the hungering fire. The boy made impact with the water and dived beneath the surface. Instinctively he kicked to the surface to see his town slowly fade with the smoke, and hear the triumphant roar of the dragon who sundered it.



MR. MATT JOYAL, FACULTY

SOFIA RUIZ, 2022 SATURN

The universe
It's made of stars, super novas, and galaxies unknown
Planets make an addition to solar systems and stars twinkle and share their light
They make constellations that are magnificent to the eye and appealing to our souls
Galaxies are a pool of colors...colors that are within more colors and together they are magic
The universe is vast and has mysterious secrets and it is marvelous.
Planets are beautiful, stars are beautiful, and galaxies are beautiful.
This is the universe
And you are a human
Many of us struggle with the questions
Who am I in this world?
Why am i here?
I am just a speck
As humans we are often too busy with our lives and we become disconnected from the world
But mainly we become disconnected from ourselves
We view ourselves as just another life that is not important to this universe
We berate our minds, bodies and souls with hate
We think we aren't worth it
That we dont have a purpose
That we dont matter
I may not be the first to say this
But yes you are human
Being human gives freedom and curiosity
We explore the world and everything beyond it
We look to the stars for answers and we hope and love
Being human means feeling sad, happy, lost and found
But if you take a moment...just one moment... and look up to the stars
We realize that this universe was made for us to explore and be apart of
Yes you make up this universe
Yes you are apart of the many colors
And yes you matter
Remember it is truly rare and beautiful that we exist





CAROLINE CLARK, 2022



MIKAYLA ALMEIDA, 2022

KENNY EZEKE, 2023
TWO FACES BUT ONE MIRROR

When it's between you and her, you're second place.
Sometimes it feels like you've been erased.
Everyone loves her bright smile, the warmth she gives them,
But all you give is a cold stare that brings rulers to their end.
She always outshines you in multiple ways
To the vibrant colors of the rays
From the energy to power us for days.
She makes you feel so insignificant
Even you can't help it when you stare at her innocence.
They all neglect you
But not me, they don't see you as I do.
Your radiance enlightens me from my soul to my eyes
Even though you reflect her light, you control the tides.
She is full of air, you're solid
Your strength is impeccable, you're so valid
You have the ability to change colors
When you change I stare for hours
Unlike her, your beauty is more than just the climax,
Light shines from deep within your cracks.
Don't ever feel inferior to her
Your worth is superior
And when you're in your greatest moment
You pass by her and create an eclipse.
An eclipse of dark power coursing through your veins
So powerful that even she can't sustain
Never forget, you control the tide
As she controls time.
Both of you need each other,
You're both incredible but can be something impossible together.
So wipe those pearls you call tears
And stand up tall with your attitude that screams
"All those will perish who stand in my way"
After all you are the earth's navigation
So lead them away
To the constellations



COLLEENE KABARIA, 2022





CAMERON WARD, 2021

CAROLINE CLARK, 2022





CAROLINE CLARK, 2022



ARNAV LELE, 2024

THE MASQUE OF COVID-19

Jamie and his family sat in their home, isolated from the world. Jamie's father Greg worked tirelessly on his laptop, designing a chip that was going to be put inside new, specialized ventilators. Jamie's mother, Martha, was a software developer, working on an online business. Jamie's brother, Peter had loads of homework, and no time to play with Jamie. Jamie was only a first grader, who had already completed his packet for the crisis period.

Jamie honestly did not believe that the COVID-19 was real, but Jamie was truly afraid of it. He had heard his dad talking about a beer called Corona, so it might have had something to do with that. Jamie pleaded with his mother to let him and his friends play together, but his mom said something about government policies. Jamie had played with all of the toys and gadgets in his house at least two times, and he had had enough. He decided that he would have as many temper tantrums as needed to play with his friends. Finally, his mother gave in.

Jamie invited James, Jim, John, Jacob, Jacques, and Jalen over to his house for a "hangout." John had been sick for the past week, but his parents and friends did not think anything of it. Jamie and his friends played basketball, video games, and four square in the driveway for almost three hours. After that, they ate some of the ice cream left in Jamie's refrigerator. John sneezed several times, and the other boys politely blessed him.

After a couple of days, Jamie woke up in the morning with a terrible fever. He had a dry cough to accompany the temperature. Overall, Jamie felt awful. What was the most surprising thing for Jamie, though, is that his parents looked sicker than he did. They rushed Jamie to the doctor's office. Jamie heard his dad muttering about how much the COVID-19 test was going to cost. He went inside the doctor's office, and they gave him a test. The doctor said that he tested positive, but it was not anything serious.

Jamie and his parents were grateful. Luckily, Jamie was able to recover after two weeks. Jamie learned that it is important to keep oneself safe, and he thanked God for keeping him alive. Jamie told his friends that they would play once the crisis was over and apologized for setting up the playdate. Finally, Jamie became more careful and knowledgeable about the daily news. Fortunately, for Jamie, the dark and rotting and the COVID-19 did not hold uncontested rule over all.



GABRIELLE DEROCHÉ, 2022



ANYA QUAGLIETTA, 2021

RIANNA SANTRA, 2024

A LIFE OF AN IPHONE

I've been opened again by my user. Oh, I'm so, so tired. Why does she have to open me again? The least she could do is charge me. I'm only at 10%!

7%...

5%...

3%...

I'm going to die...

I suddenly feel a surge of power come over me. Finally! My brightness goes up a little because I am relieved. My user *does* care about me, even if only a little bit!

Well, she can't hear me. All I can do are the things that my creators have programmed me to do and what she has asked me to do. If she puts an alarm on for me, I have to scream very loud to wake her up. I feel bad for arousing her with such a loud and awful noise, though. I really wish she'd change the settings so that I could instead wake her up with a tiny little song.

My user also uses me for other activities, like texting her friends. She texts them *so much*. I always get pinged with her friends' notifications, and they are not that important. Really, I wish I had a mouth and could tell my user that she should focus on other things in life. In fact, she has many other things she could be doing. But I can't, so the best I can do is remind her with a little *ping!* that she is procrastinating and needs to work.

I can't do much about her problems. I am just an iPhone. Yes, I do have many apps to help her. I have games, I have chats, I even have a tracking device. I have a voice, too - Siri! But, I can only speak when spoken to, and my user doesn't use me for talking. So, I don't have a chance to talk to her. I can't yell at her for getting distracted because she hasn't told me to do that. All I can do is hear the things she says.

She is using Instagram again. She is browsing the art section and fawning over other people's art. She is saving and screenshotting the pictures. I can feel my storage spaces getting used up, but not by much. I've heard from other iPhones that their storages continually get filled and their owners have to delete a lot of pictures, but that isn't true in my case. My user only saves a few things. She only saves the pictures she really likes.

She also only uses me when it is the weekend, when she is sick, or when it is vacation. When the day is a school day, she focuses on her computer instead. That bastard! It isn't my fault I can't run a computer program. I simply wasn't designed for such a use. Unfortunately, my user seems to like using the laptop a lot...but I'm not supposed to be jealous.

Oh, she's picking me up again. I'm only at 16%, but she doesn't seem to be checking that. Oh, she's checking for updates. I show her what she wants to know, and she gives a disappointed frown. I don't like that face. Whenever a human is disappointed with some object, they always throw it away in the trash... I don't want to be thrown in the trash. That seems like such a lonely life. I don't want to be lonely. I want to have some use in the world.

Then I see her happy face, and I am relieved. Perhaps I will live another day. I will live another day to see the familiar happy smile of my user's face, even if she can't see mine.

RIANNA SANTRA, 2024 IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD ME

If someone had told me two years ago that I'd spend the majority of my freshman year behind a computer, I'd tell that person that they were crazy. There's absolutely *no way* that *my* wonderful first year in high school would be spent in online classes.

Well.

Here we are, I guess.

COVID-19 had caught us all by surprise last year. Around this time in 2020, we would all be stuck at home, wondering when we could return to normal. A year later, we are *still* not back to normal.

But, we're trying.

Last year I was in eighth grade, and my middle school had this tradition that all (or most) of the eighth graders would go to New York City and tour the places there. We were all looking forward to it, but unfortunately, the school couldn't let us go there since COVID-19 cases were so high.

Let's just say, my middle school classmates were really really mad.

My graduation from middle school wasn't all that bright either, but I still got a diploma, so that worked.

I first came to Central as a freshman in September, the week of the Freshmen Orientation day. I was so happy that it wasn't virtual, especially since my eighth grade ended on such a bad note.

I was curious about, y'know, what high school was all about. Was it gonna change? Was my high school gonna be all different and weird, just like my eighth grade?

But, Freshmen Orientation Day was great - I met my teachers for the first time and I also met some fellow classmates as well. I came to Central for a week after that, but then I switched to remote. My mom has a heart problem and my parents decided that it would be safer if I instead switched to complete remote learning instead of hybrid.

No biggie, I said. *Central does an amazing job in integrating the online students with the in class students. It's fine.*

It was fine, but I could feel the difference.

There's a social aspect that we students on Zoom were missing. We couldn't talk to friends during passing times - where we could say "hi" and have a quick little chat and then be off on our way. We couldn't whisper to our friends in the middle of class like "Hey! Did you do the homework?!" We couldn't even interact during lunchtimes - instead of being a time where we could finally talk to our friends after classes, lunch became an epitome of loneliness, stuck at home to eat lunch before our next class.

After six long months, I finally came back to school on April 12th, about two weeks before the mandated "you either come to school or you stay at home" rule Central gave on April 26th. It was very different. I could finally see people in person and have small conversations with them. I could ask people discreetly what the homework was. I could *actually talk to people during lunch!*

If someone had told me two years ago that I'd be super happy to be able to eat lunch in the presence of other people, I'd tell that person that they were even crazier.

But hey, it's true now.



RICK CAVANAUGH, FACULTY

KENNY EZEKE, 2023 STARLIGHT SUN DROP

Starlight shining so bright, so warm,
Your purpose is to end storms
Of the hurting, the sadness, and the anger
It's not easy for you, but you always hang in there
No matter the person, no matter the problem
You always get the job done.
I must say, it's hard for me to watch
When you tire yourself out while everyone's having fun
You give me the same excuse "their happiness is my happiness",
Then why do I see you cry "I hate this place".
I know you're tired, I know you're in pain
You want to live out your life but something keeps you abstained
Perhaps you fear disappointing everyone,
Or maybe without helping others, you think you're no one.
Oh, my dear Starlight, you couldn't be more wrong
For your love makes you strong,
You shine like the sun in a thousand ways
Just your smile makes my days.
You have the gift of the sun
You give light to everyone until their day is done
What you forget is that you need that same light,
As the days go on I'll always give you mine, my starlight.
I'll make sure your light never fades
As you have done the same.
Remember, you have the gift of the sun
You're not worthless you're powerful
It's why you are called Starlight, "a drop of the sun".



MAKAYLA ALMEIDA, 2022



SEBASTIAN BENEDETTO, 2022



SEBASTIAN BENEDETTO, 2022



NAVIN RAMESH, 2024
QUARANTINE THOUGHTS CIRCA MAY 2020

I've got the quarantine blues
I can never wear my outdoor shoes.
There's no use in pouting,
There will be no outing,
You can only stare at the goose

They chow down on our lawn,
Upon them, I do not fawn.
Stuck in the house
As crazy as a mouse,
Zoom classes from dusk till dawn

I imagine boppin down the street
Jammin to some beat
A faraway dream
Impossible, it may seem
For sure, my boredom is complete.

In the garage sits our car,
Unused like an old jar
The quarantine stretches on
Social life is long gone
No end is in sight so far



RACHEL JANES, 2024



MATTHEW KRINER, 2024

ISAAC BRICKMAN, 2021 AN ARTISTIC JOURNEY

It is well known that young children would express themselves through art in such a way that is devoid of any complication that would come from the knowledge of what art looks like or what they think it is supposed to look like. Naturally, with this innate pureness in mind, a child's art can be seen in the most raw, introspective form which cannot be expressed by even the most established, well trained artist.

As children reach an older age it is natural to look at abstraction with a sense of distrust, it is obvious why, as they learn about the world around them there is a synchronicity with the world they know in the art they encounter. The worldview of a child who starts to get older sometimes becomes much more superficial and two-dimensional, intertwining with realism and decidedly judging art solely on that said factor.

When reaching adolescence, the concept of the world around them starts to grow outside of its monotony through experience. Therefore, if people at that age truly try to express themselves through their art, internally that art will be much more abstract. Of course with this progression in mind it can be an obviously established conclusion that as people grow their art will become more abstract because as they grow the world becomes more abstract to them.

Distinctly, I can remember this same progression in my life. When I was younger, I detested the abstract art at a museum. This is because I did not understand the interpretive nature of life that abstract art in those museums were trying to express. Instead, art I was impressed with seemed to be much more determinative of its difficulty and aesthetic.

The unconscious growth of a person's art towards less realistic ideas is also evidenced by the fact that art itself has progressed in the same way a person would. Art, unknown to its world, when first created, has been portrayed in its rawest intent. Eventually art progressed to realism with a crutch in subject matter towards religion eventually making its way to Impressionism all the way to the art we see today which demonstrates a striking similarity to what art first was.

I think this circle of how art progressed throughout history and internally is truly metaphorical to the larger idea that the more we know and understand about the world, the less structured and closed it becomes, truly becoming ever more accepting of what would be previously established as 'distasteful'. In this same manner I would think this proves the uninhibited mind of a child truly knows more about the world in its unrefined state before that child learns what it is.

To me, art's timeline in history can grant a sensible idea as to what art will become and in the same manner, what the world will become not only in the form of political change but in all other media. This same progress has been seen from food, to music, to psychology as it has been seen in art.

Lastly, if art tells us that's its pinnacle comes from its minimalistic ideas, we can find solutions to problems from its roots in a philosophical light. As the world grows more and more complicated, art's untempered beauty should surely hold some merit for the process of solutions to problems outside of it.



CAROLINE CLARK, 2022



MIKAYLA ALMEIDA, 2022

JONELLE ECHENDU, 2023
COLLENE KABARIA, 2022
JANET OMEZI, 2022
FAITH OMOSEFE, 2022
ALTYANAH PAUL 2023

The following work was presented at the Visions Coffeehouse on May 8, 2021 by Jonelle Echendu, Colleene Kabaria, Janet Omezi, Faith Omosefe, and Altyanah Paul performing under the name Hercules. We have presented the script in its original format.

All: We are the muses.

Tiana: Goddesses of the arts.

Colleene: And proclaimers of the neglected stories.

Faith: We hold these truths to be self evident that all humans are created equal.

Jonelle: Those ideals were promised to us at birth, but more and more often we see that promise broken.

Janet: The invisible boot on the neck of the black man or the glass ceiling pushing down on women.

Colleene: Or the intersectionality that causes black women or Asian gay men to phase into the background.

All: Today we shatter the sound barrier preventing our stories from being heard by ignorant ears this is our story.



Tiana: You over there, what's in your hand!

Janet: nothing, it's not what you think!

Tiana: Are you stealing?

Janet: No, it's not what you think!

Tiana: Is that a weapon?

Janet: No, It's not what you think!

Tiana: OFFICERRRRR

Colleene: WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!?!?

Janet: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

Colleene: MHHMM, YEA RIGHT

Janet: BUT IT'S NOT WHAT YOU...

All: *BANG*

Janet: another black body plastered across the floor another mother missing a daughter another life dream that will never be met so why. WHY ALL THE TIME WHEN I TRY TO BE ME, THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE JUDGING. You can turn a blind eye but I can see what's happening.

All: I AM A MUSE!

Colleene: I feel like a penny in a pile of nickels and dimes. I know that they mean no harm. I know. But why do I feel like I'm their mission statement. A pledge to adhere to.

All: "I'm not racist, Black Lives Matter, the N word is bad and oh I won't touch your hair"

Colleene: Like it's just that "easy," like it washes them clean of the centuries of sins. I feel like the dirty towel being thrown back into the washing machine, to be used again when it's convenient.

All (but Colleene): "But these are just 'I feel' statements and there's really no proof correct?"

Colleene: Correct. But I know one thing. They tell me copper glistens in the sun but I know that sliver shines even brighter.

All: I AM A MUSE!

Tiana: I'm a lost girl from Neverland but my Neverland doesn't want me. Constantly told...

Faith: "get over it"

Jonelle: "it happened so long ago"

Tiana: ...while I still hold the scars from chains that never seem to fade and my life has become the most controversial debate. The pain I feel when my friends are like Wendy and her brothers while I'm held captive. I'm from a forced home brought by people who make excuses for their abuses. My family roots burned the day they were forced on Hook's ship. Peter Pan let me go home, let me free from your chains, tell me where home is. Neverland doesn't want me so let me fly free. Tink can you hear me.

All: I AM A MUSE!

Jonelle: I was taught from a young age that all problems have solutions: if you just try hard enough, pull yourself by the bootstraps a little bit more, and have just a little hope, you can solve anything. I don't know if they were right. But what I do know is what they didn't tell me was how to solve a problem that nobody wants to fix, how to fight for something so simple and yet seemingly so unachievable, how to heal bullet wounds when all you have are bandaids, and how to keep your composure through all of it. That is something no one teaches you.

All: I AM A MUSE!



Faith: Born betwixt two worlds a bullet was buried in my blackness but my black counterparts see me as too white to believe it. I'm too black to break through the red lines binding me to my place in society but "too white" to wipe a smile on the face of those that swore they would have my back. I'm dark skinned and in between a contradiction that makes me feel too convoluted to exist my very existence is questioned every time I have to decide how to greet someone of course I got caught between two friend groups one white and one black but sometimes I wish I was sucked into the wall in between I don't belong in either group and I'm not sure if it's my complicated crossroad complex or the fact that I don't know how to love but I always end up as everything and nothing all at once.

All: I AM A MUSE!

All: Hercules may have been the hero but the muses tell the story.



SENNI

**OLIVIA BENVENUTO
GRACE CALDWELL
JAYDEN HART
ELINA KHOURY
LEO MCNAMEE
CAROLINE SULLIVAN
ARIANNA VARNEY**

OR

**FEAT
URES**

OLIVIA BENVENUTO, 2021 NOTHING

*A College Application Essay:
Answering the Question "What is Divisible by Zero?"*

Before finding what can be divided by zero, we must first define zero itself. What is "zero?" Zero is a concept, the concept of nothingness. You can count one, two, three items, but you cannot count zero; there would be nothing to count. According to the principles of energy and mass conservation, matter and energy can be neither created nor destroyed. One cannot hold a flower in their hand and simply will it into nothing. It is either there or it is not; it cannot exist one moment and cease to exist the next. However, if there is something, can there be nothing? What, then, is nothing? There is always something; we are something, and so is everything. The concept of "nothing" is simply unfathomable. Not even a black hole, as far as we know, with our current understanding of the universe, can take something and devour it until nothing remains. Black holes take something, anything, they swallow and turn it into food, consuming until what was is no longer the same. What was one thing has turned into something else: energy, fuel. Perhaps in the void, the space between galaxies, the concept of nothing becomes somewhat apparent. In this vacuum, there is no life, no movement except for the turning of gas and particles. Yet, still, there is not "nothing." The so-called "empty space" is neither entirely empty nor simply space; there are clouds of gas, elements, waves floating and soaring through the vast expanses, often imperceptible to the human eye. What we perceive as the closest example to "nothing" is not "nothing" at all. Though devoid of major celestial bodies, these barren fields of space contain atoms, particles, specks of dust. Therefore, when our own perception of "nothing" is still not nothing, can we truly take something and split it into zero? Can we take one thing and completely dissolve it, erase it from existence? No, we cannot, because what has been destroyed can be rebuilt, can be changed, can be fixed or mended. So, then what can be divisible by zero? The answer, thus, is nothing.

OLIVIA BENVENUTO, 2021

SOULMATES

What is a soulmate?

I've read story after story, watching the red string of fate tie those soul-bound together, bringing them to each other unconstrained by the gaps of time or distance. I find myself lost in worlds where some person, maybe many, bind to each other thanks to the very universe itself; atoms, pulled towards each other by forces governed by higher powers. They are someone who matches you so perfectly- puzzle pieces fitting cleanly together, electrons leaping from the orbital of one atom to the orbital of the other- that when you meet, some say sparks fly.

Soulmates aren't necessarily romantic. People sometimes may see soulmates as more than friends, star crossed lovers, perhaps, but a soulmate is rather another person who matches, compliments you in every way, bringing out the best in you and sticking by you through the worst.

I couldn't stand my soulmate when I first met her. She hated me too. We were self-declared enemies, competing for the name as the class bookworm, as serious about our rivalry as two sixth graders could be.

"I read 20 books this summer!" She told the class.

"Well, I read 21," I responded, ever the show-off.

A few months passed, when one day I saw her standing by her locker, a book resting on the floor by her feet. *The Unwanteds*, the title read. One of my favorites.

I walked up to her, excitedly asked her about the book, and thus began our friendship.

Middle school passed in a whirlwind of tests, books, and hangouts; though awkward at first, each other's house became a second home. When we were accepted to high school, we cheered, as happy for each other as we were for ourselves. We sat together in the bleachers on the first day, listening to the president give a speech.

"When you leave high school, your best friend might just be sitting in the seat next to you," he said. Oh, how right he was.

We spent every moment we could together. Walking to class, eating at lunch, a quick goodbye before parting for our respective after-school activities. When we passed our driver's license tests, we drove to beaches and parks together. When a global pandemic hit, we FaceTimed and went for bike rides together. We started a book club with another friend, a close friend of hers and soon after, a close friend of mine, too. We still read, but that wasn't the only thing that made us friends. Books brought us together, yes, but our friendship had become so much more than that.

When college acceptances loomed in front of us like a tsunami of stress and anxiety, we held hands and pulled each other away from the rising tide. And once again, when we were accepted, we cheered, as happy for the other as we were for ourselves.

Words can't explain the bond between people, the days shared crying and nights spent laughing; eating popcorn together while watching horrible movie adaptations of our favorite books, holding a wedding for Minecraft dogs, using almost every spare moment in middle school to write a story together. There are too many memories to describe at once; our friendship is a story, edged with sepia and pages tinted with coffee, timeless and warm-colored, of halcyon and nostalgia.

How could we not be soulmates?

They call us best friends, each other's completing part, like sisters, even. While that is true, there's a deeper bond, a deeper connection, that speaks to the universe, God, or another higher power, bringing us together.

We are binary stars, forever dancing around each other in an orbit bound by the near-incomprehensible forces of the universe.

She's my best friend, my closest friend, my soul-sister, and undoubtedly my soulmate.





Cynophobia



Trypophobia



Nyctophobia

GRACE CALDWELL, 2021

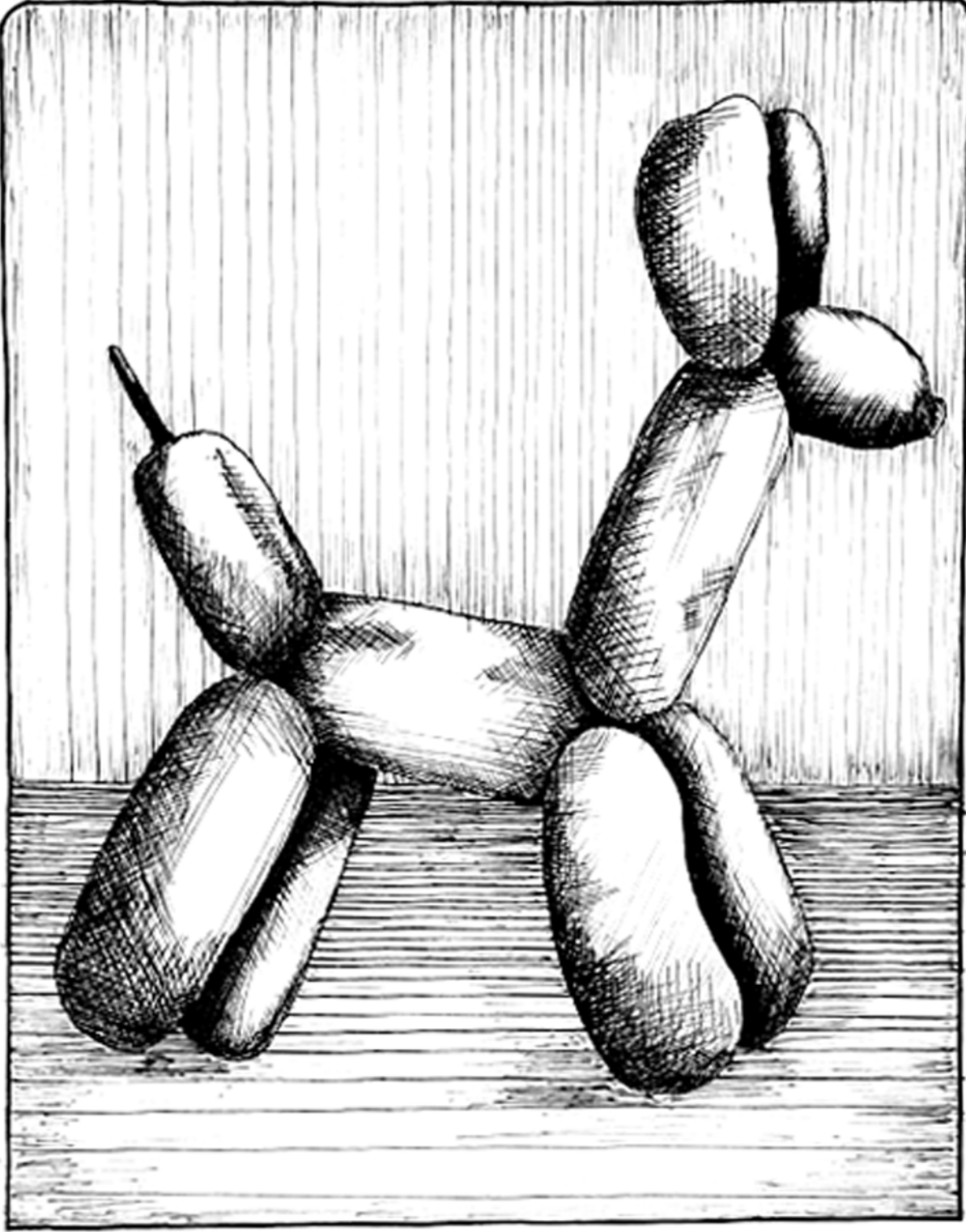


Entomophobia



GRACE CALDWELL, 2021

Anthrophobia



GRACE CALDWELL, 2021

OIOBOPHOBIA



GRACE CALDWELL, 2021

Aquaphobia



JAYDEN HART, 2021



JAYDEN HART, 2021





JAYDEN HART, 2021





Alice
C. 1947

JAYDEN HART, 2021

Metropolitan



March
1917

20°

JAYDEN HART, 2021





JAYDEN HART, 2021

ELINA KHOURY, 2021

GREY

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

The teacher droned on, his voice echoing through the stifling classroom, the pacing of his feet the only other sound in the room. The soon graduating students all slouched in their seats, eyes unfocused, their thoughts lost in a heat-induced stupor. While daydreams of ice cream and cooler days dancing longingly through their heads, I found myself captivated by Dickens' simple words. His carefully crafted phrases rang like a lilting melody through the 8th grade classroom that sweltering day in May. *A Tale of Two Cities*, a tale of civil division, a tale of two men so similar, yet so absolutely unlike, a tale of light in the darkness—or of darkness in the light. A tale of opposing ideas, thoughts, and people capable of existing simultaneously—but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Though the story enamored, enthralled, and exhilarated me, it was just simply that—a story. No further meaning could my naive mind gleam from it at that time, no further point did it have then to entertain my excited thoughts. A story of two entirely different yet identical men in love with the same woman was all the tale was to be, no other meaning hid behind Dickens' remarks.

And as the years passed, I continued to return to the opening lines of that book, drawing from them comfort and solace, though utterly incapable of understanding why they absorbed me so. In fact, more than anything else those lines served to confuse me, confounding my thoughts, for I could not seem to fathom how life could be both good and bad, light and dark. I was childish, foolish, thoroughly innocent and ignorant. My own life was fine, so how could it be so—so complex for others? Grey was not a color that existed in my assessment of the world; joy could not exist along with distress, comfort along with pain. It was not until four years later that I truly understood that simple phrase, that unbelievably simple phrase that held an eternity of meaning and wisdom.

I saw then for myself how possible it is to be at both the highest and lowest points in your entire life. I realized then how possible it is to be the saddest you've ever been, while also the happiest. The most isolated you've ever felt, but also the most connected—*"a multitude of people and yet a solitude."*

It's funny how you can simultaneously live through the best and worst times of your life, isn't it? How you could be truly, genuinely, and utterly content, laughing at the dumbest jokes with your closest friends, then sobbing inconsolably alone in your car, your whole world collapsing into a burning pile of true, genuine, and utter despair the minute you leave their blissful company.

Yet, despite the inevitable "winter of despair," the "spring of hope" always shall return. The dismal cloud will shed its rain, and the golden chariot will make its journey across the sky yet again. And while perfection is just "a dream, all a dream, that ends in nothing," it might be better—No. Most truly, genuinely, and utterly better—to hold on tightly to the best of times.

ELINA KHOURY, 2021
HOW DO YOU KNOW?

How do you know when you love someone?
How do you know you've fallen deep?
How do you know you'd give them all you have?
All of your hopes and dreams?

The waves are crashing on their back.
They're sinking in the ocean fast.
I'm calling out but they can't hear.

I'm here.
I'm here.
I'm here.
I'm here.

It's when they're drowning
But you're the one who's struggling to breath.
They're the one that are bleeding,
But you're the one the sharks are feeding on.

If I could take all your pain away,
If I could save you from this place,
Then I would dive into the sea
And never look back.

ELINA KNOURY, 2021 SOULMATE

I keep trying to write this piece.
I've tried so many times.
But each time I only succeed in
Making the crumpled pile of papers higher.

For how does one express
What they cannot describe?
The love I have for you
Is not one that can be defined.

You're the salt to my pepper,
The cookies to my cream,
The Rapunzel to my Pascal,
The Grover to my Percy.

You're like water during a drought,
A rainbow after a storm,
A light in the darkness,
And so, so much more.

I was adrift, alone
On a black and white planet in space
So content with my life of grey,
That I didn't realize my life could have more.

Until I met you.

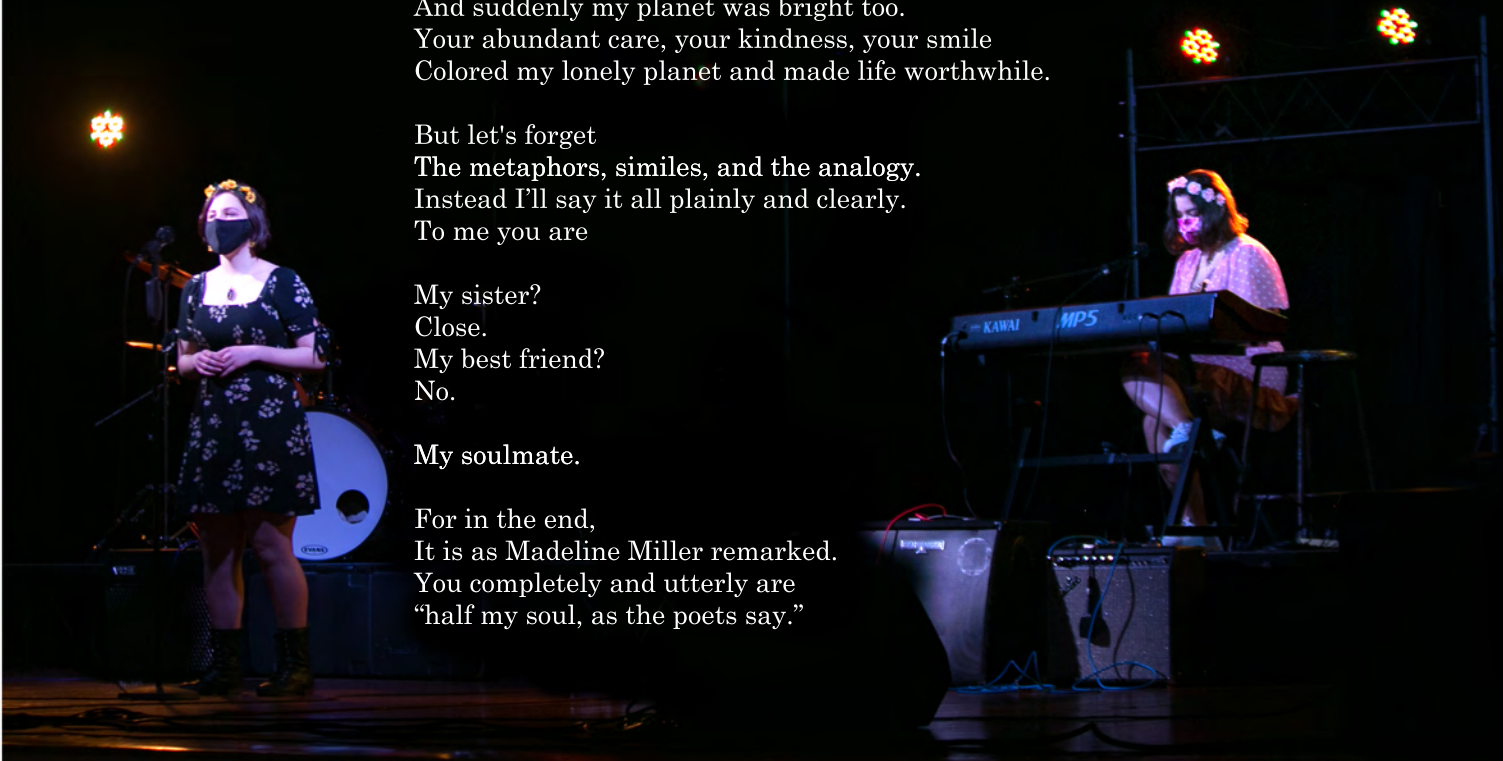
Your brilliant planet careened into mine with a resounding
Boom.
And suddenly my planet was bright too.
Your abundant care, your kindness, your smile
Colored my lonely planet and made life worthwhile.

But let's forget
The metaphors, similes, and the analogy.
Instead I'll say it all plainly and clearly.
To me you are

My sister?
Close.
My best friend?
No.

My soulmate.

For in the end,
It is as Madeline Miller remarked.
You completely and utterly are
"half my soul, as the poets say."



ELINA KHOURY, 2021

SEVEN

I think the reason why God never gave me a sister is because he knew that one day I would meet you. The soulmate, the dreamer, the visionary, the artist, the adventurer, and the altruist. Seven, though beloved by many, I never held in high regards. I never held it in any regard, for that matter; it was always just another number on the way to infinity.

That is, it was, until one fateful fall day, a rather auspicious autumnal morning, when my most despicable enemy became my dearest friend, my sister, my soulmate. She brought with her friendship the most radiant love I've ever seen, a kindness that spreads to all she meets. She drew from the dark depths of my thoughts a confidence I never knew I had and a strength I still cannot believe I possess. She taught me how to love and how to accept love, and it is her steadfast devotion that gave me the courage to become the person I am today, the person who is so open to love that they gained six new family members.

And so, as I foreshadowed, through the years my family grew. We bonded over suspicious apple crisp and Minecraft YouTube. We ate sushi in a Manhattan mansion at twelve o'clock am, made blueberry pancakes after a successful book club slumbie, watched fever dream streams on late night discord calls, burned the stressors of our past and roasted marshmallows over their ashes, and climbed out of a window to scream at the moon on a cold winter's night.

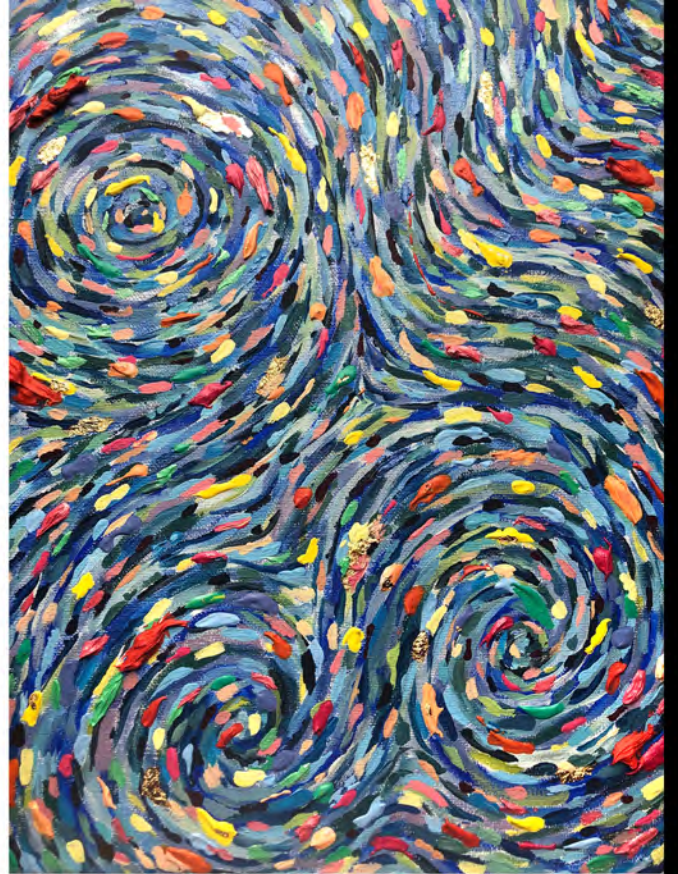
From the minor inconveniences to the worst moments of my entire life, these friends have stood unflinchingly by my side. They listened while I vented, comforted me when I cried, and reminded me every night that they love me when they say goodnight. People spend their whole lives looking for a friend who will be there for them until the end, but I found six before I graduated the twelfth grade.

And I know that soon enough we all shall in distance be apart. The soulmate, the dreamer, the visionary, the adventurer, the artist, and the altruist all doing their part to change the world. And although thousands of miles will stand in our way, please know that in my heart you are always here to stay.

I now understand what people mean when they say "one day you will find someone you can't live without." The soulmate, the dreamer, the visionary, the artist, the adventurer, and the altruist. We are the lucky seven. My six closest friends. My sisters. I guess God knew what he was doing after all.



LEO MCNAMEE, 2021



LEO MCNAMEE, 2021





LEO MCNAMEE, 2021



LEO MCNAMEE, 2021

CAROLINE SULLIVAN, 2021

A POEM ABOUT GROWING UP

I've gotten the opportunity to fly
yet, I don't have the strength
to get my feet off the ground

my wings are clipped
but I was the one holding the scissors
my feet are glued, but I was the one
who poured the bottle on the ground
and voluntarily stepped in the sticky mess

I look up at the sky
and the fields ahead of me
wondering how
someone like me could fit into
a world that big

I couldn't right??

I couldn't find my place among the countless
fields, cities, towns and people
I would become lost wouldn't I?
I would never be found
never be happy

It's better to stay stuck
that's what I believed
It's better to stay stuck
then to take a risk
that I will soon regret

yet I give into my wobbling feet
my dizzy head
my curious and anxious ambition

I give into my dream
that things could turn out alright
my dream that I may find a place
among the countless countless
fields, cities, towns and people
my dream that I could be found...

and I sew my wings together again
pick the glue off of my feet
brush off the dust and cobwebs
look up to the sky
and fly away without a second thought

CAROLINE SULLIVAN, 2021
BOTH THE NIGHT AND DAY

The night and day
complete opposites, some say
sunny, cheery and bright
distant, mysterious, and dark

I light a candle
and all the sudden
I'm seen as someone
who despises the dark
when that isn't true
not at all
just cause I light a candle
doesn't mean i'm a ray of light
and because I hide
in a dark room during a sunny day
doesn't mean I want to do that all the time

darkness and light are polar opposites
that I love in the same way

choosing only darkness or light
would be stupid and pointless to me
cause I can't have one without the other
because piece of me would always be missing

I can't love the sun fully without the darkness
can't love the darkness fully without the light

The night and day
complete opposites, some say
sunny, cheery and bright
distant, mysterious, and dark



CAROLINE SULLIVAN, 2021
OUR FATHER

your father
and my father
are exactly the same

yet, you twist your fathers words
for your own benefit
you turn your back
on those who need it most
you spit in the faces of those who are different
you exclude those who aren't like you
you roll your eyes
at the injustice going on in this country
you turn your back
on the very rights
that our father told us we deserve
you preach about being like him
yet you're the furthest from it
you pray for other sins
yet you can't look at your own

how do you expect people to worship our father
when you act like that
how do you expect people to turn to religion
when people don't even trust you

I've had enough of it
I've had enough of witnessing this
with my own eyes for eighteen years

so now i've ignored it
i've ignored everything
i've ignored you
along with our father

but why can't I simply ignore you
why I can't I block out your words
without blocking out our fathers

you truly make our father look like a fool
you've made me look down on him
but instead, perhaps I should be looking down on you.
and give him a chance

CAROLINE SULLIVAN, 2021

WHAT SILENCE FEELS LIKE

our noisy existence
is one we surely would love to get away from
but sometimes
silence feels worse than noise

it's something that's relaxing at first
something that makes you feel calm
something that's well known
something that's zen

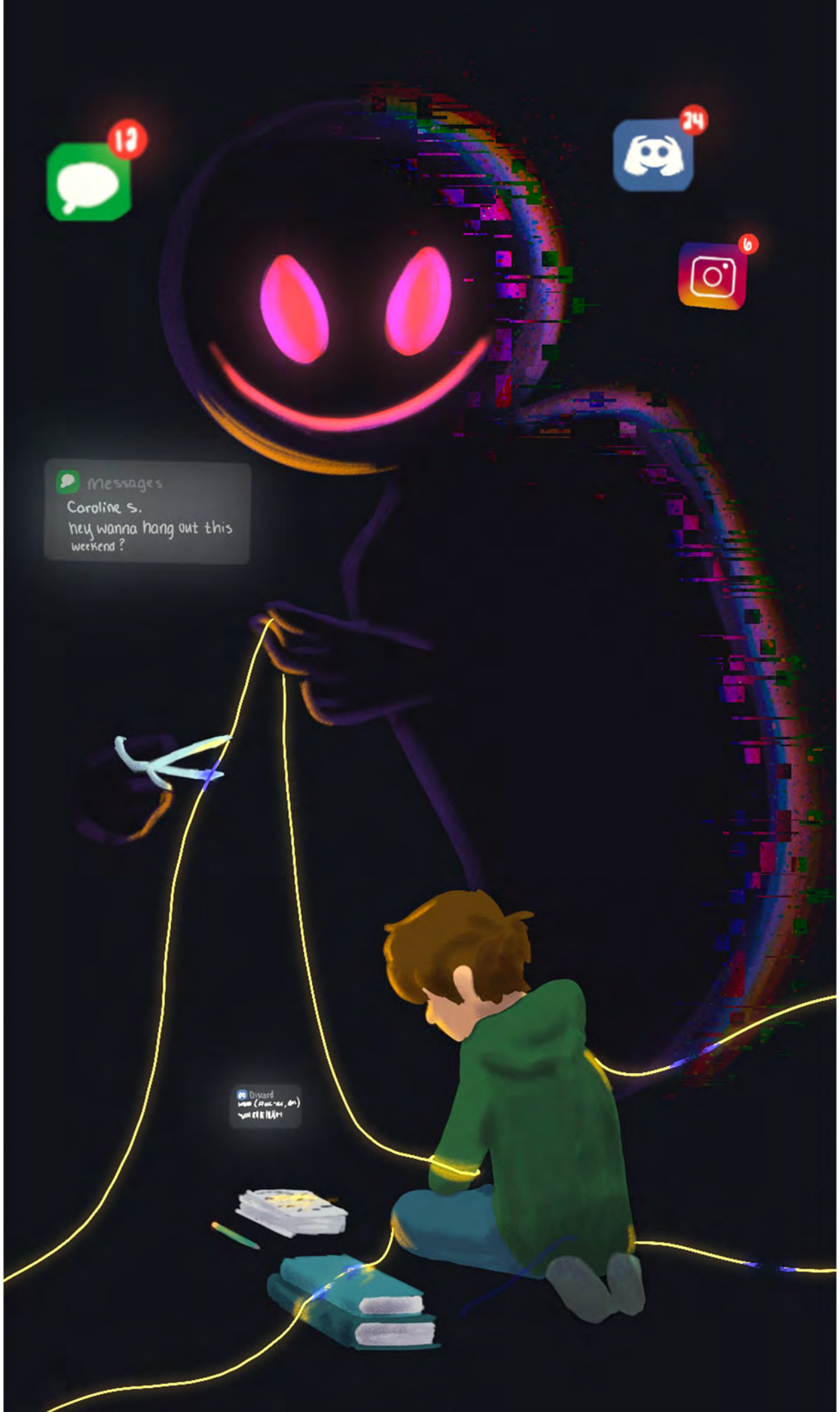
then you slowly start to crave the very thing
you wanted to get away from
you want to hear noise once again

all you can hear is your own thoughts
and that starts to get old after a while
you want to hear someone else
something else
anything else
a fire alarm
a jet engine
even if it's the worst noise in the world
it would be better than silence

your stomach turns
despite the fact
that there's nothing to be anxious about
silence is predictable
yet we still crave the noise
we still crave the chaos
and the adventure
that noise gives us each day

ARIANNA VARNEY, 2021





Messages
Caroline S.
hey wanna hang out this weekend?

Discard
unread (unread, etc.)
unread (unread, etc.)



ARIANNA VARNEY, 2021





ARIANNA VARNEY, 2021



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