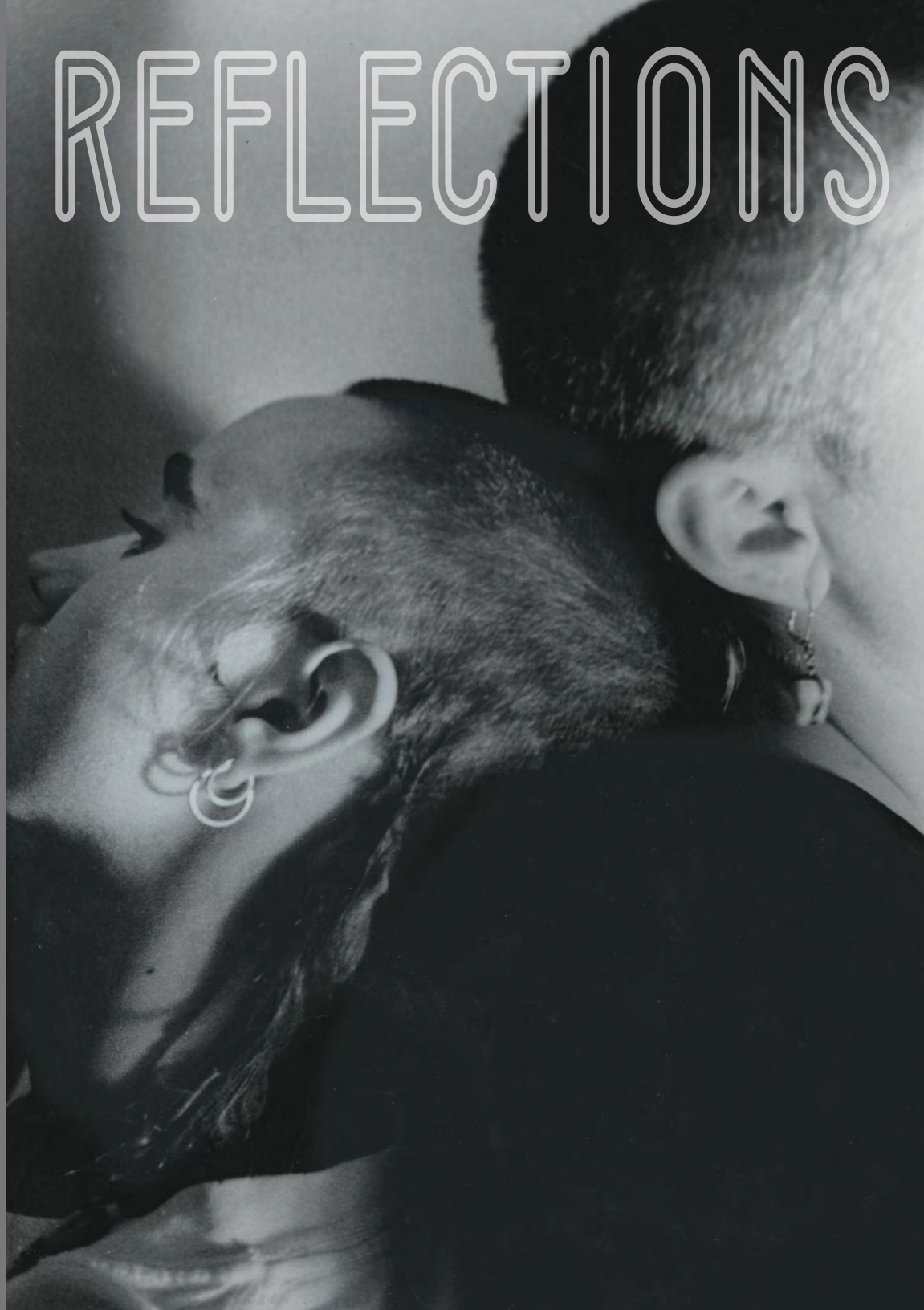


20  
16

Vol 45  
Issue 1

# REFLECTIONS





**EMMA RAIBLE**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

**MOXIE FESTIVAL CLOUDS**



Cover:

LYDIA AND SACHI

ELIZA SCHMIDT

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

# REFLECTIONS

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Reflections*, the annual literary and arts magazine of The Berkeley Carroll Upper School, seeks to tap the vibrant, creative energy circulating in the classrooms and hallways of our school. Berkeley Carroll's mission is to foster an environment of critical, ethical, and global thinking; *Reflections* contributes by making space for artistic conversation and collaboration—in our meetings and in this volume. We hope this proliferation of prose and poetry, this cornucopia of painting and photography, this panoply of visual and written artistry from Upper School students, will make you think, make you question, make you wonder, but above all make you feel.

## EDITORIAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The *Reflections* staff is a small, dedicated group of students that meets weekly over Goldfish crackers and Golden Oreos to discuss and develop a shared interest in art and literature. In the fall, *Reflections* members establish the magazine's high standards, solicit submissions, and refine their own works in progress. In February, the editors preside over small groups which read and critique anonymous student submissions. After the preliminary critiques, the editors carefully consider the feedback from the entire *Reflections* team before choosing and editing the final selections and laying out the magazine. *Reflections* is a student-run, -led, and -organized coterie; neither the editors nor the staff receive class credit for their work. The striking artwork and writing in this magazine was all crafted by Berkeley Carroll Upper School students, occasionally to fulfill class assignments, but always from the engines of their own creativity.

## EDITOR'S STATEMENT

This has been a record-breaking year for *Reflections*. New, energized staff bolstered the many dedicated veteran members and provided fresh perspectives for the magazine. *Reflections* will no doubt continue to expand and flourish under their leadership. Our never-tiring faculty advisers, Dr. Hughes and Ms. Drezner, were steadfast with their support of this volume. The process of publishing this magazine would not be complete without the help of Berkeley Carroll's director of communications, Linda Adams, and the design talents of Bob Lane at Studio Lane, Inc. Finally, thank you to all who shared their work with us. Without you this magazine would not exist.

Natasha Strugatz

*Editor-in-Chief*

Spring 2016



**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

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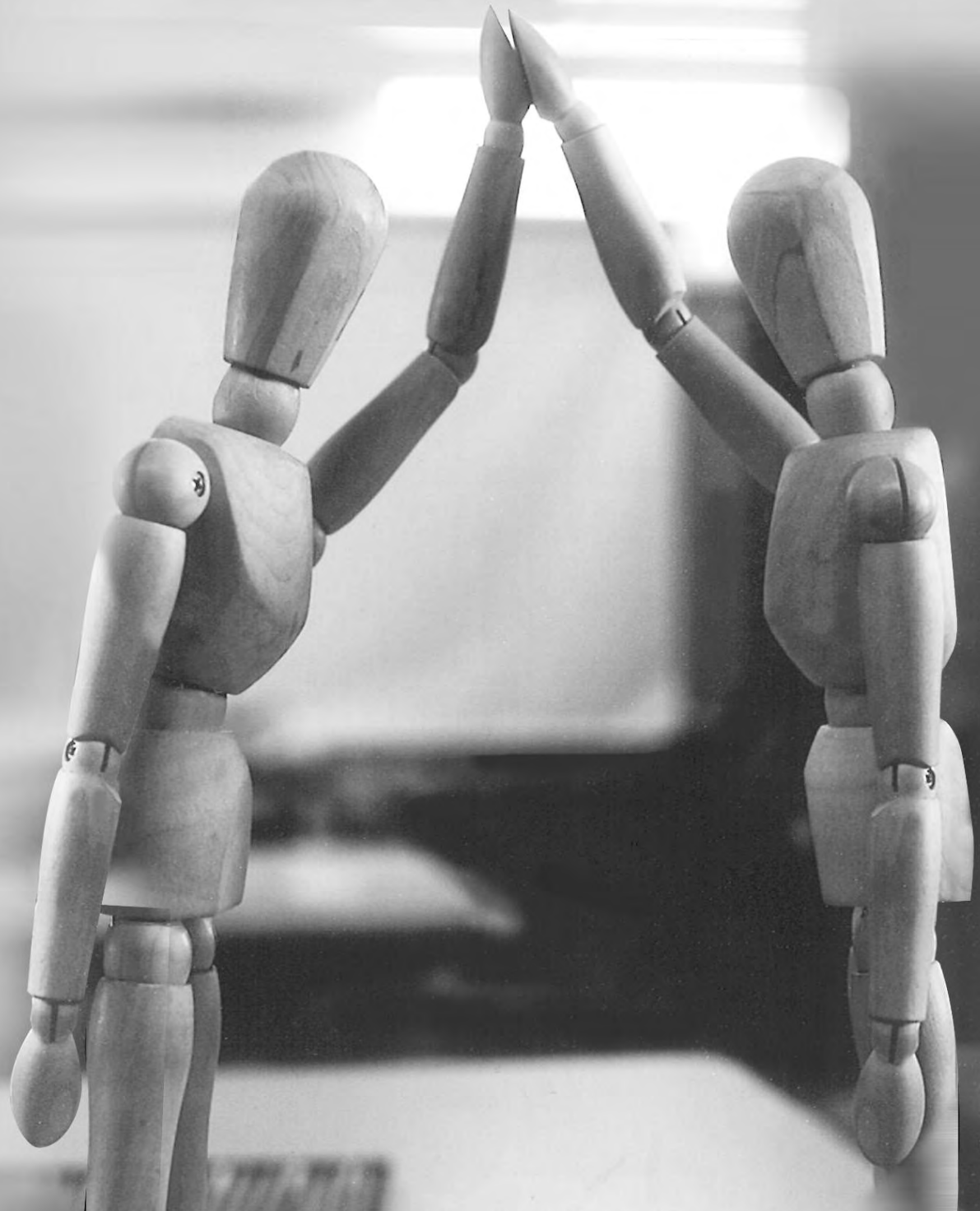
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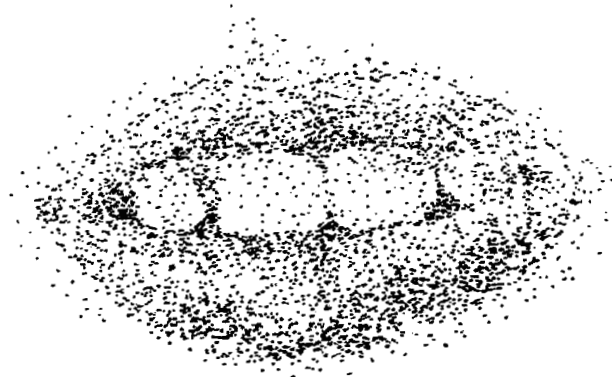
GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH



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**EAR, TEETH, NOSE**

**ANA KONYK**

GRADE 12 | DRAWING

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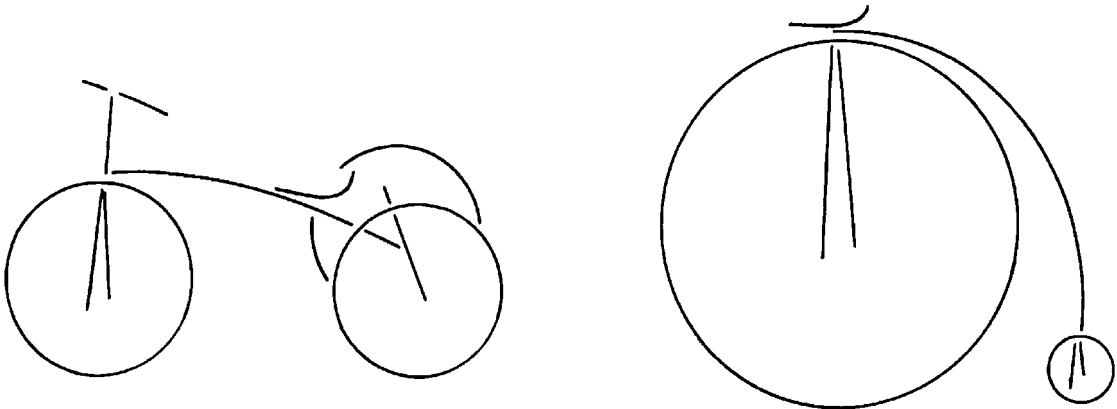
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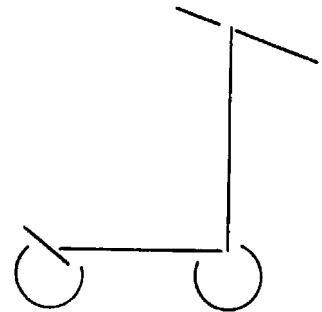
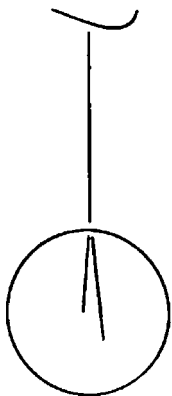
ANA KONYK

GRADE 12 | DRAWING



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**BRONWYN O'CONNOR**

GRADE 10 | PHOTOGRAPH

## NIGHTTIME GLASSES



## Gordian Knot

*Stop trying to untie it, cut it through with a sword.*

—PETER ELBOW

It's interesting to think  
about what I am. A knot  
if you think about it, not

just one string over another  
and through the loop, but  
rather the way your head-

phones look after they've  
been in your pocket for  
too long: confusing and

frightening and frustrating  
but mesmerizing at the same  
time, as you wonder how it

even got to that point. Which  
end went through the other  
first? How did it connect

there? How did it tie together  
there? But this time I don't  
care about the 30 or so dollars

my headphones cost. I'm  
frustrated, angry? Upset?  
Happy? I don't want to deal

with it anymore and I'm cutting  
through to get . . . pieces. Just  
pieces and pieces of the cut-

up mixtape that is my identity,  
strands of an ever-growing  
story that make up my life

and together make up who  
I am. And I sift through the pieces  
but they are so interwoven that

cutting it up leads to just pieces,  
a confusing, confusing, confusing  
mess. Intersectionality at its finest.



**CHLOE SHANE**

GRADE 10 | PAINTING

**HOLD ON**





JESSE BERMUDEZ-DEANE

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH

## SPRINKLER





## Dreams of Youth

Floating through the air on a bed of mist,  
he watched the buildings and cement pass by.

The city blocks looked like a parquet floor.

All maladies

dissipate

and die.

As the humid air caressed his face,

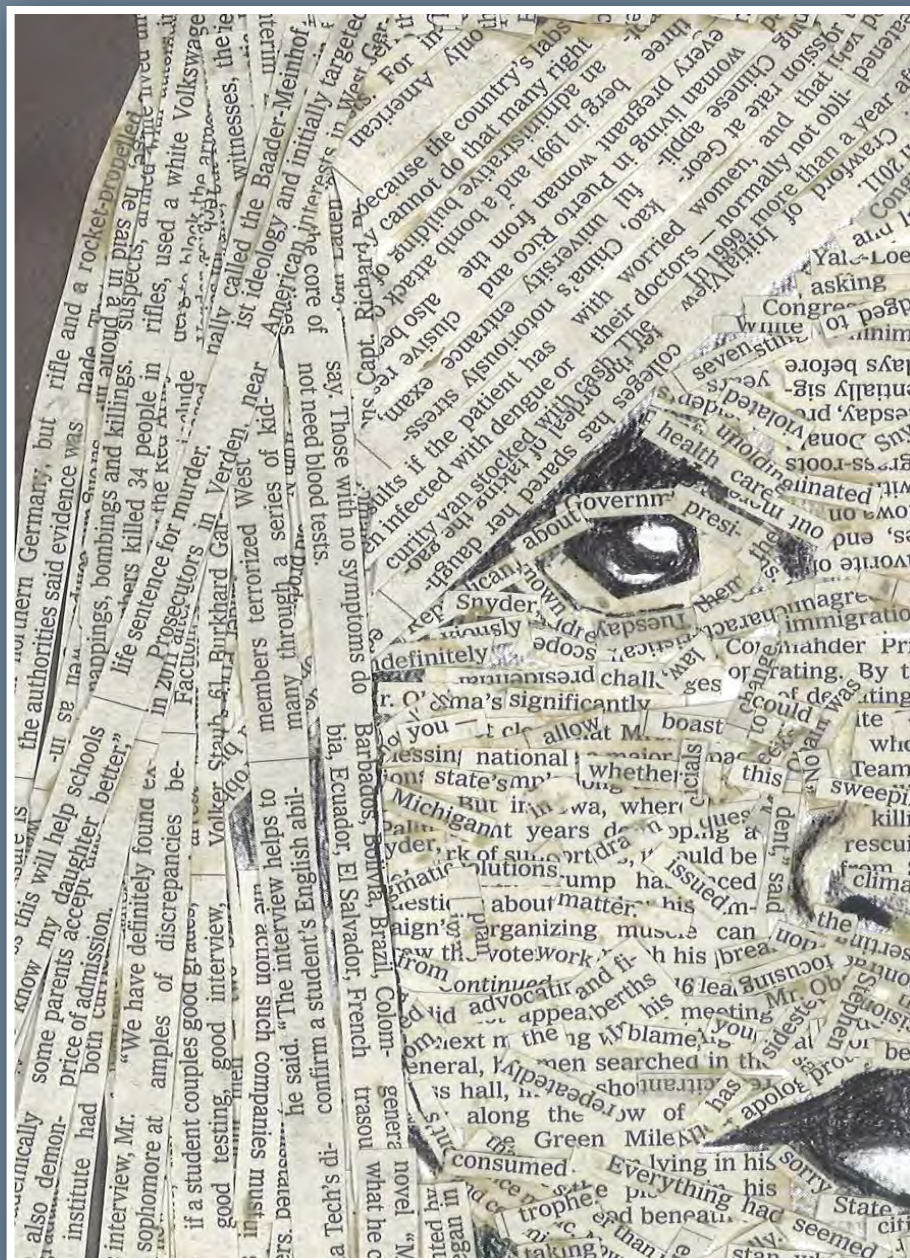
a tear accumulated in his eye.

But it wasn't in anger or distaste.

It was provoked

by the beauty of

the sky.



## A Black Girl's Predominantly White Private School Glossary

*(after "The Unathletic Camper's Glossary" by Marc Philippe Eskenazi)*

### Predominantly White Private School

The result of white America's backlash to the Supreme Court's deciding to allow black children, like yourself, into all-white public schools.

### Your Enrollment in a Predominantly White Private School

The result of your parents' wanting what's best for you.

### Your Teachers

People who do not look like you.

### Your Peers

More people who do not look like you.

### The Men Working in the Cafeteria

People who do look like you.

### Youth Group at Church

Your parents' way of getting you to spend more time with people who look like you.

### Hair

You are done teetering on the thin line between little girl (intricate braided styles, a pom-pom on each side of your head, the works) and young woman (perm). Your perm is imperative to your experience at school. Without straight hair you'll turn into a goat at a petting zoo full of small children.

### Sassy

The adjective you are assigned when passionate about any topic.

### Justin Bieber, Harry Styles, and Nick Jonas

Average-looking white teenagers you will be infatuated with for a while.

### Swimming

Something no one in your family does and that dries out your hair.

### Hips

Something eating healthy will not help you get rid of.

**Brandy Melville**

Clothes that do not fit over your hips. Sorry.

**A Personal Fan**

That air that slaps you in the face as all your classmates swivel to look at you when your teacher projects a picture of segregated water fountains.

**Lotion**

Something you need a lot more of than your friends (trust me).

**Crocs**

Something your black friends outside of school will make fun of you about.

**The Martin Luther King Assembly**

One of 180 days of school.

**Blush**

Something you should NEVER borrow from your white friends.

**“Black Card”**

Starting a sentence with “As a person of color . . .”

**Predominately Black Public Schools**

Places full of kids who look just like you, but feel so far away.

**The “Dougie” or “Jerk”**

Dance moves white boys will want to show you to prove they are “down.”

**Doing the “Dougie” or “Jerk”**

One of the only ways to impress your friends.

**Mousy Voice**

The persistent, high-pitched baby voice you unconsciously start using at around age 3. This voice insures no one sees you as a threat (as long as you are talking) and separates you from other black girls. The mousy voice does what it needs to do, but unfortunately you become so accustomed to using this voice that it has stayed with you through your senior year of high school. Yikes.

**The N-word**

You are still figuring this one out. Try to stay away from it for now.

**Tamarind Balls**

Your favorite Caribbean candy that you are afraid to eat in front of your friends.

**Your Badge of Honor**

Knowing you are supposed to say “any” and not “none” in the sentence, “I do not like none of these places.”

**High School**

When you start to snap out of it.



**ARI BROWN**

GRADE 10 | PHOTOGRAPH

## PALIMPSEST

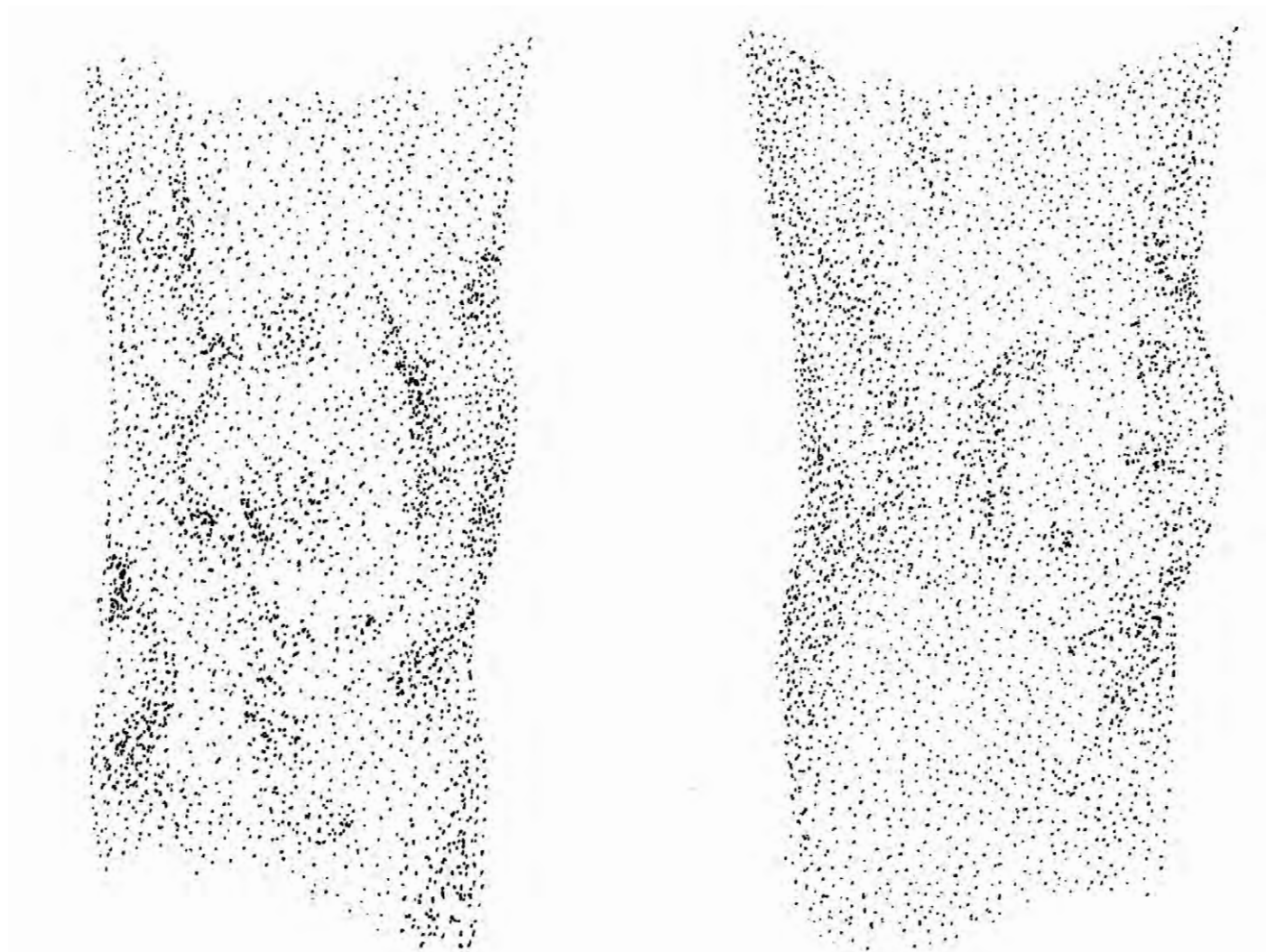


## Satin Sheets

Silk sheets  
layers of thick frosting  
smothering  
the mattress

Stains of sweat and  
bleach  
sewn into every stitch

The sheets are hammered down  
with shiny new nails  
A human pocket.



## I Am China

I am China  
Living in another country  
Full of white-caked creatures,  
Creatures with wider eyes  
Larger hips  
Bigger breasts.

I am China  
And this world I've come to know  
For 16 years  
Is full of blistering beauty boundaries,  
Where beautiful comes in lighter tones,  
Where onyx almond eyes are a  
Contamination to beauty,  
Where headlines trash concrete,  
non-conforming gender roles.

I am petite,  
Corrupting the standard  
Of a stunning, white, double-lidded, hourglass  
Body that forms an S shape—  
No stomach, big hips, nice butt.  
I live on streets  
Warped in face paint and mountains  
Protruding from chests.

I am Chinese American,  
Cursing you with my exoticness.  
Men trail behind my pungent, tangy scent,  
But no less than other women,  
“floral and sweet” with pale sand strands  
The ocean swimming in their spheres.

I am fine, black hair,  
A trait most famous  
For “Chinxes”  
Just like me,  
Where hair is just hair  
But those egg whites pry at my hair.

I am Asian,  
But my almond eyes  
are trapped in this world of stereotypes:  
Intelligence, high-pitched accent voices,  
the sidekick, the geek, the mumbling quiet girl.



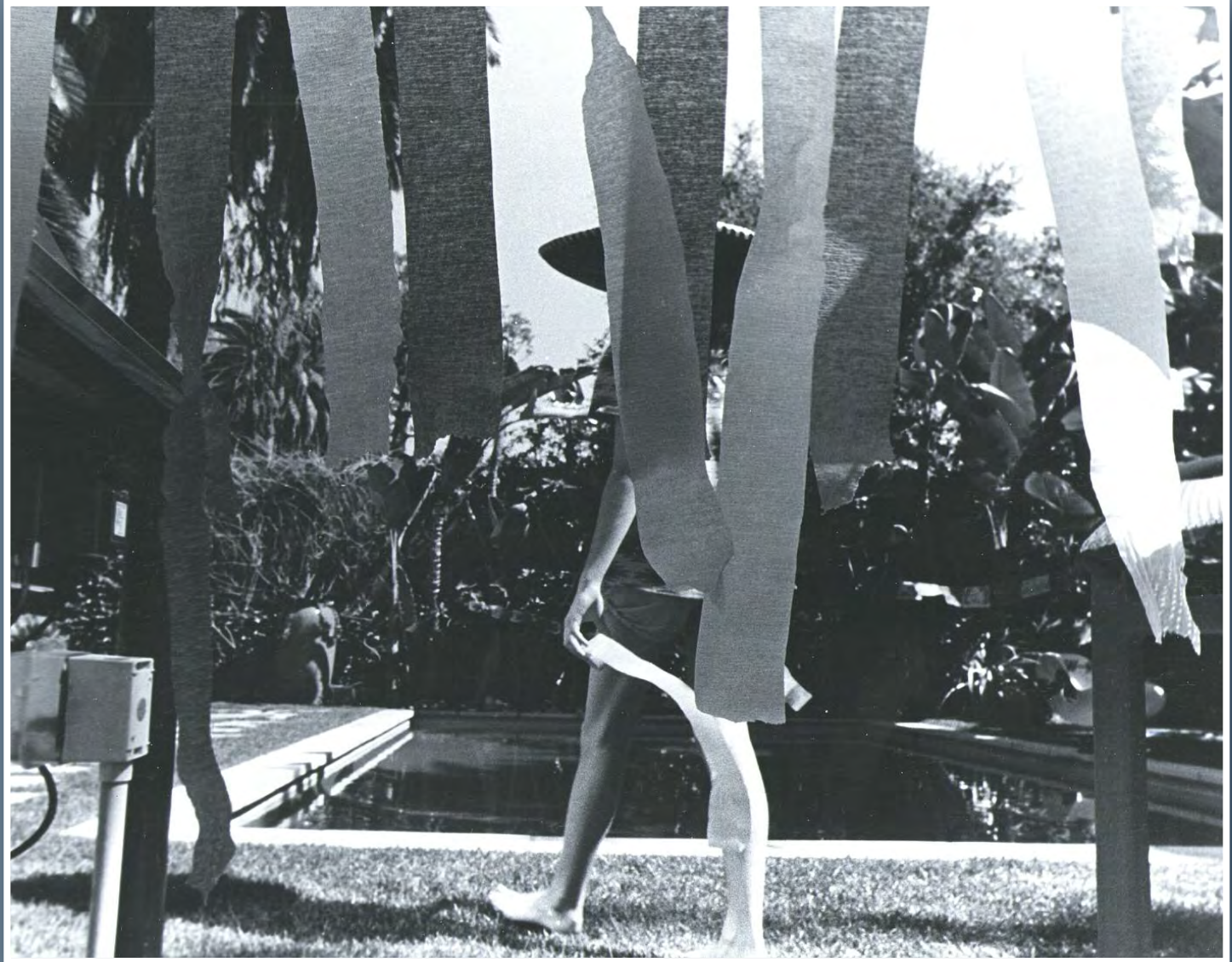
But I am different.  
I challenge this white chocolate country  
Condemned with a long line  
Of washed blood on the hands  
Of perpetrators in denial,  
Where sexes aren't balanced  
And expectations are in the hands of a mediocre  
Society, always seeming to know  
Which way the scale tips.

I am me.  
No, I am not those graceful girls  
Or those pale pear figures.  
No, I do not have the ocean waves inside my almond vision,  
But I am different.  
I am the one who notices.

**ZOE DENCKLA**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## VIOLET'S BIRTHDAY PARTY



## So I Continue

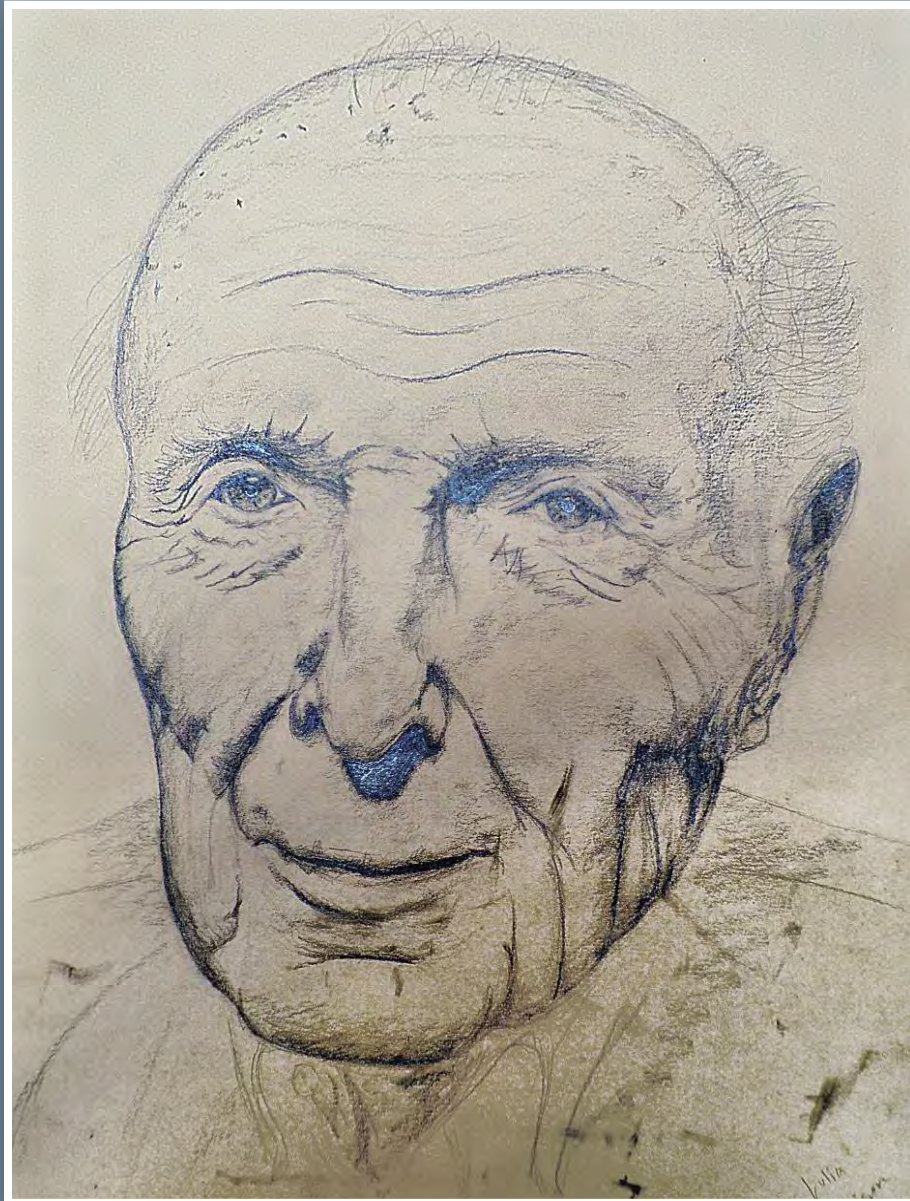
don't worry she said, but it is just too damn hard, so I continue  
it's overwhelming, gross, sweaty hands, fear,  
all the not knowing  
the cold air, wind, my boots clunking on the concrete,  
the same every day  
giggles, the laughs, the happiness lasts,  
until I go home  
she says don't worry, but it is just too damn hard, so I continue  
it's nerve-racking, to live, to stay happy, I enjoy it though  
the cold air, wind, my boots clunking on the concrete,  
the same everyday  
stress disappears, goofiness and smiles, until I go and  
she says  
don't worry,  
but it is just too damn hard,  
so I continue



**JULIA HARRISON**

GRADE 10 | DRAWING

## NAMELESS





## Fifty-Five

The glass table reflects the white sky, the vases, the extravagant bouquets. It was at this table that, years ago, my grandmother, Farmor, taught me how to fold napkins into floral boats. Our traditional Norwegian dresses, *bunads*, were untucked as we sat there. Her delicate hands (fingernails polished and skin thoroughly lotioned) poked napkin fabric in designated spots, her gold watch clanking against the glass. I knew she would redo mine afterwards.

The apartment that day smelled of cardamom, orange zest, and roasting, marinated pork. The scrawny Christmas tree was hidden in white lights, strung paper Norwegian flags, and gifts covered in scotch tape. I am not sure she remembered my name, but she did remember the designated spots for each magnet, tablecloth, and ornament. As we worked, Farmor reminisced about her days working at primary school, but I was too preoccupied with my mission to impress her to follow. Once in a while she punctuated her sentences with, “*Skjoner du?*” which roughly translates to “Do you understand?” It was an irritable habit of hers.

Farmor stopped saying “*Skjoner du.*” Farmor, herself, stopped understanding. Farmor had Lewy Body Dementia. When she remembered that she was forgetting, she tantrumed with her fist at her side and tears of anger and confusion poured from her eyes. Soon she was alone, incapable of distinguishing my grandfather from my father, me from a student she taught at her primary school. And soon, a shoe from an animal, a shadow from a ghost. Her legs moved to the rhythm instinctively while her arms pawed down at her hips, periodically adjusting her volumized thin hair. Before her soul left her body.

Then, for six years, we visited her soulless body in a home for soulless elders. Her instincts stayed and so did my grandfather. He held her hand and fed

**Once in awhile  
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habit of hers.**

**Farmor stopped saying  
“*Skjoner du.*” Farmor,  
herself, stopped  
understanding.**

her soulless food served by happy people. Her body began to disintegrate inside out and outside in. Every year, I visited and watched her. I watched my mother cry in a frumpy chair which gave no sign of what color it had been while my dad held a pale hand of a petite body that had once held his quirky, soulful mother. If she had managed to ask me, "*Skjoner du?*" I would have said no.

Today the mourning table serves as the only acknowledgment of Farmor's passing. Each of us stands a foot apart, feet pointing to the center.

"How many people are coming?" my mother blubbers as she, my grandfather, and I still stare at white bouquets.

"Fifty-five." My grandfather's back is straight, his hands clutching one another behind his back as usual.

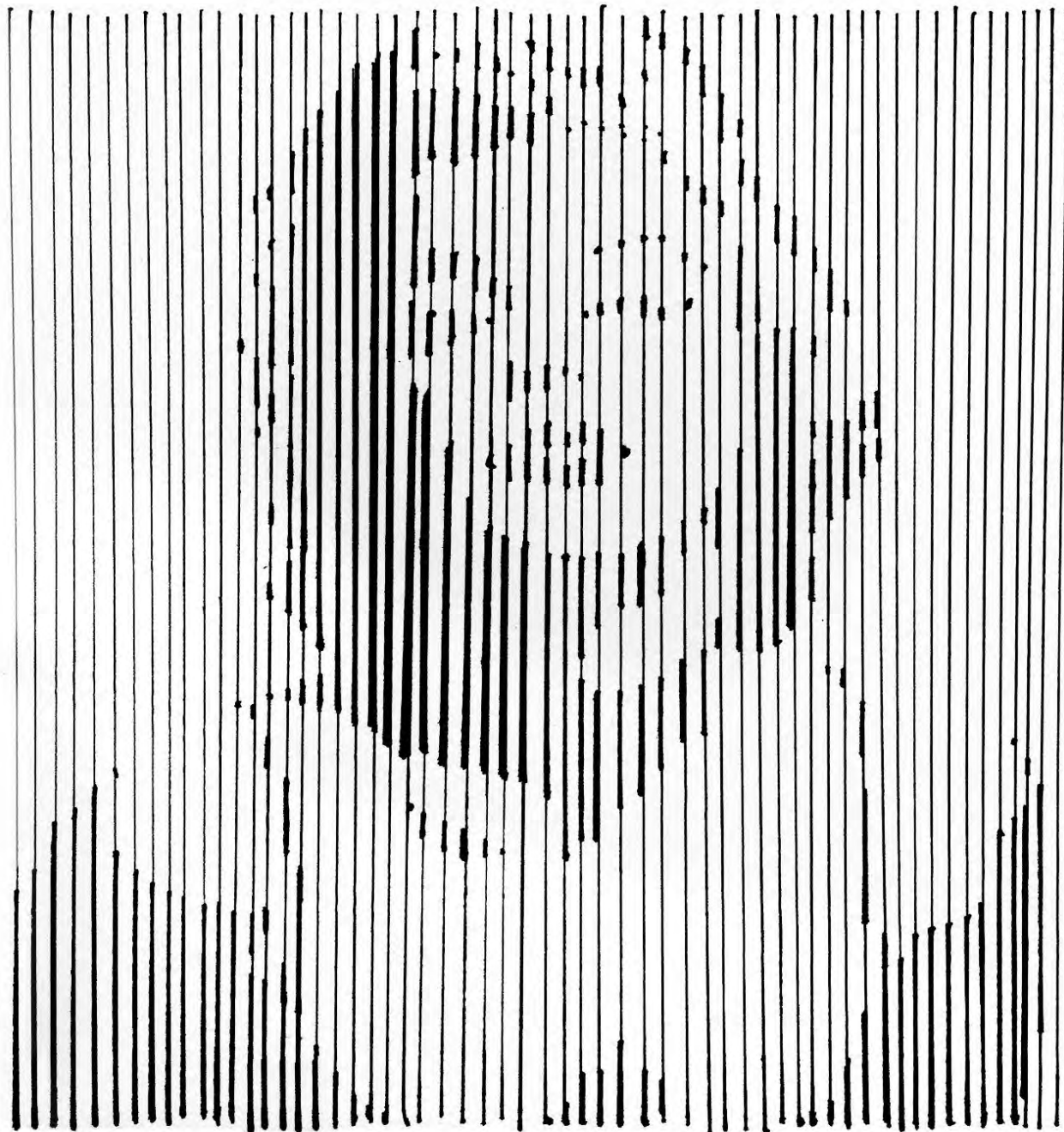
He glances at my modest button-up shirt, which he compliments. My mother's gulping tears boil. She disappears into the bathroom. Again, no one acknowledges. I follow the back of my grandfather's full head of white hair to the kitchen. His full, red-tinted palms wrap around the back of a light wood dining chair which I sit on despite the fact I have just been sitting on a seven-hour plane ride here.

I thank him, but "fifty-five" rings in my head. Fifty-five. Not more, not less. Fifty-five people existed in her life until the end. I wonder what is normal. The last time I saw her, I held her hand. She believed measuring hands was bad luck, but when I felt her hand in mine, I knew hers was smaller. I laid her hand down against the eating rag, then clanked the fork against her teeth, jamming the birthday cake in. I *skjoner* that it was then that I said goodbye to her soul no matter where it was. I *skjoner* that that day was the last time, and she was done. It is why fifty-three people did not matter as my dad cried in my arms. Now, instead of flowers, I honor her with folded cloth napkins.

**MERET BAUMANN**

GRADE 12 | DRAWING

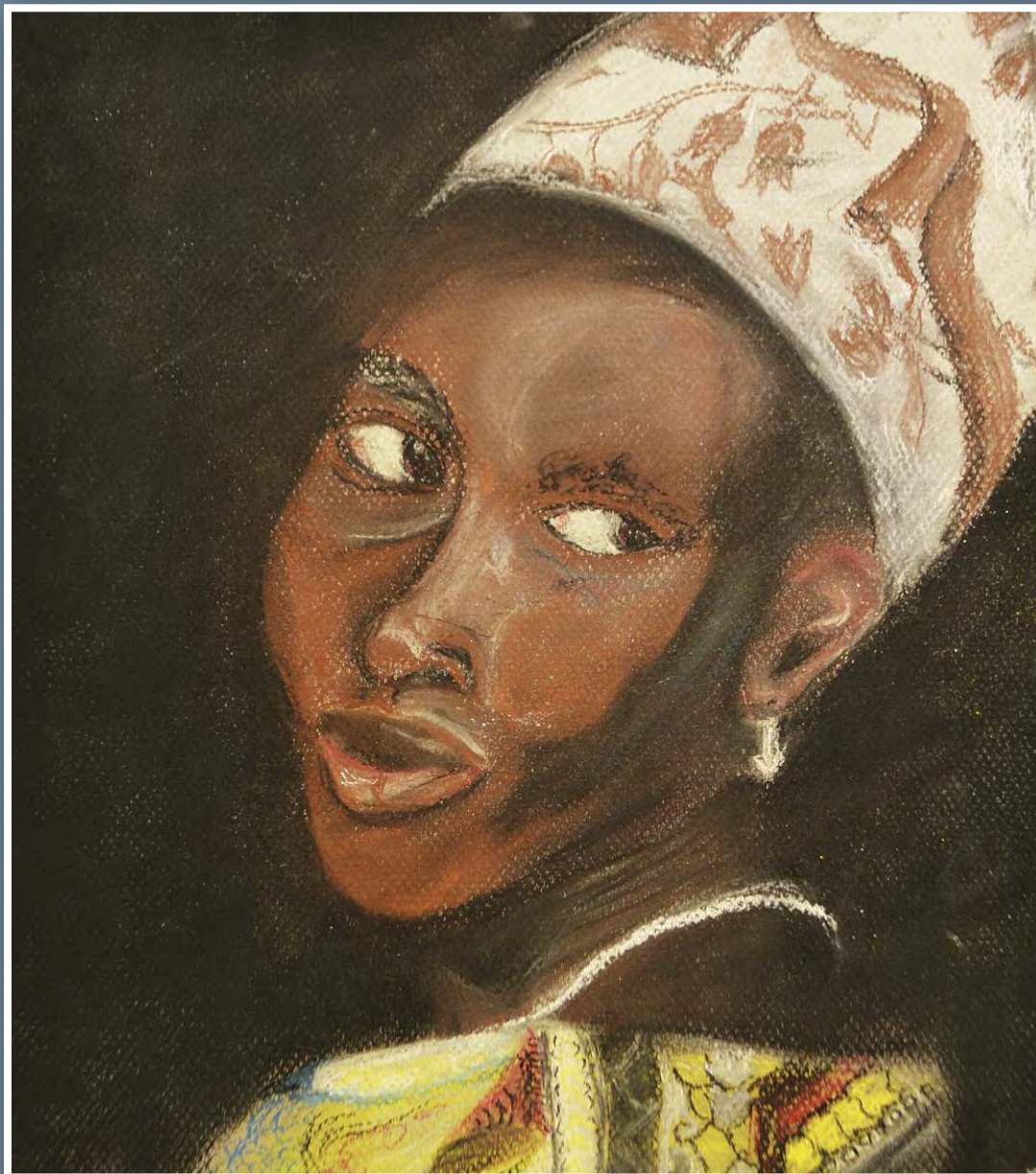
**MARILYN**



## EVE BLANK

GRADE 9 | PAINTING

## THE GAZE





## Steps to Starting an Owl Collection

1. Give in to your parents' wishes to walk around a Pennsylvania Sunday flea market. Dad holds your hand as he scans numerous tables looking for a 19th century, handmade clock imported from Europe or matching bronze wall sconces that would likely be found in an abandoned castle, to add to his and mom's antique furniture collection. Mom walks in the opposite direction with your brother to specifically look for a headboard of a similar style to put in your room.
2. Stop when Dad finally settles on a table stacked with dusty Shakespeare books.
3. Take one of the books from the table, open up to a page filled with faded words, and smush your face against it, inhaling the ancient fumes.
4. Turn to your dad and the nice seller lady who are looking at you like you're some monkey practicing a bizarre ritual.
5. Put the book back on the table and chuckle off the embarrassment as your dad thanks the nice seller lady for her time.
6. Continue to pass tables, tents, and turkey rotisseries in search of a hand-crafted chest or stone-carved mirror to be displayed in your house-turned-museum, admired by all guests who enter and comment that they no longer need "to waste their money going to the Met or MOMA."
7. Allow your eyes to explore just as much as your legs are walking throughout the market. Look for plush mice, more books to smell, and anything bright pink.

8. Stop. Stare. Just think about it for a good minute. Why are there so many owls perfectly crowded together on this long table?! Dad must know why, he knows everything. “That’s an owl collection.”
9. Observe the different sizes, feather colors, and pupil radii. Some are carved out of wood; others are ceramic. There’s even one made entirely out of iron. Some have pointed ears while others have none. Some are six-inch piggy banks while others are halves of salt and pepper shakers. They are all owls.
10. Shyly ask Dad if he can buy an owl for you from the old man in a navy blue cap sitting on a green camp chair. Let him know that you need at least one from this collection, something to help you remember your time purchasing an owl from an owl collection owned by a man in a navy blue cap sitting on a green camp chair.
11. That glass, light blue one with painted yellow feathers looks cute . . . but too cute. You already have enough Hello Kitty plush toys lying around in your bedroom. You want this collection to be more sophisticated. Or maybe that tiny metal owl with glowing red eyes. That one looks pretty cool. But wait, what about at night when everything’s pitch black, and those eyes are the only things you can see? Too creepy. You just have to keep looking.
12. In the mess of indecisive voices inside your head, you finally hear the angels sing. This owl’s like nothing you’ve ever seen before. Look at the wooden carving of the statue: its pointed ears, its eyes elevated just enough to distinguish them from its wooden face, the centimeter-tall platform perfectly edged and painted a darker brown compared to the rest of the body.
13. Let the words that best explain how you feel about the decision you have made come out of your mouth: “I want that one.” Point to it, make it as clear as possible, and remember to say thank you once the old man with the navy cap hands it to you.

- 14.** Now that the inch-tall, wooden owl is in your hand, take a look at all of the things your eyes missed when you were still waiting to make the purchase: feel the wood first of all. Imagine whittling this masterpiece yourself, professionally handling an edged knife when you're not even allowed to use the big scissors.
- 15.** Show off your purchase (Dad's actually) to your mom and brother, who are each carrying white plastic bags that probably hold nifty purchases of their own.
- 16.** Set this goal in mind the moment the day ends and you're buckled into the backseat of your car: you're going to start an owl collection. You hope to add figurines, magnets, piggy banks, salt and pepper shakers, mugs, pins, and necklaces purchased from more New England yard sales and antique stores. You'll actually commit to this collection. It'll be made entirely by you, and no one else.
- 17.** Put the wooden owl in one of the plastic bags your brother got from the stuff he bought. Peek inside every two minutes to make sure its ear or beak didn't chip off, that it's in perfect condition. Then smush your face against the car window and watch the wheels of nearby cars turn as you head back home.

## Hanukkah 2AM

The credits roll  
and I am left  
with that sinking feeling  
that I'm the only one left conscious.

But as I shift  
and turn my head  
I see one other pair of eyes illuminated,  
staring up at the screen.

I sit up to let her know  
that she's not alone  
among the heartwarming music  
and "schoolboy #2s."

We kick off the blanket in unison  
and giggle as we dodge the splayed  
limbs of our sleeping friends,  
their chests rising and falling as they float  
among Ikea blankets soft as clouds.

We lock arms as we climb the stairs,  
in part for security in the milky darkness,  
but mostly out of solidarity  
in knowing that we stayed awake for the whole movie.

There is not much to do in this late hour,  
but as we pass by the mantle,  
she has an idea.

The menorah is pushed forward,  
stubby, hard candles replaced  
with slick, new ones,  
lit one at a time by shaking hands.

She begins a prayer  
and that silence so compatible  
with the thick darkness  
is broken.

When she's done we take hands  
and circle the menorah,  
stepping to the beat of a joyful chant,  
the sounds of which are unfamiliar to me.

Our celebration is over,  
and we know without saying  
that this time will remain a secret  
to our friends in the morning.

One by one, we blow out the candles,  
sneaking in an extra wish,  
even if it's the wrong holiday,  
and begin to climb the stairs.

The smoke  
leaks into the blackness,  
eight fragrant ribbons  
and one  
for good luck.



**NATASHA STRUGATZ**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## EARLY MORNING RISE



**GEMMA SIEGLER**

GRADE 10 | PHOTOGRAPH

**HEPBURN**



## Edith Piaf

Pain is relative.  
Emotion is relative.  
Edith had the deepest of all the broken emotions.

It is easy to touch the tips of sadness,  
But it is a challenge—a struggle—to arise from the depths of brokenness.

It is tough to surrender to the ocean water  
That is desperately trying to drown  
Me, you, we.

I don't know how to swim, but I'll try,  
I can't hold my breath for long, but I'll do it.

Because it is tough to give up.

Edith with her string-like eyebrows and her bright black personality—  
she drowned.



**LYDIA DOBAN**

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH

**UP**



## As Life Approaches Infinity: An Exploration in Mathematics and the Mind

### Infinity

Think back to the first time you contemplated infinity. Your first grade teacher is asking you to think of the biggest number in the world. Then she tells you to add one. And add one again. Even if you continue adding one forever, she explains, you can never truly reach infinity. You are blown away by the power of mathematics—that something will never end. You sleep well that night.

### Geometric Series

An infinite series is the sum of a list of numbers that never ends, but follows a specific pattern. In a geometric series, for instance, you can find the next number in the series by multiplying the previous one by a ratio, such as  $1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 + \dots$

It is helpful to apply complicated mathematical subjects to your own life in order to understand them in an orderly and logical fashion. When you are born, everything is new to you—your parents' warm smile, your cozy crib, the soft, carpeted floor of your room. The first year of your life—filled with joys like these—seems to last a long time. But by the second year, everything feels shorter, perhaps half as long, now that you're used to life. And the year after that feels even shorter, maybe half as long as that. As time progresses, each year feels half as long as the last, such that even by the time you're a teenager, the length of a year has decreased in your mind so much that the years seem to be flying by uncontrollably.

### Convergent Series

A convergent series is one that, even when you have an infinite number of numbers to add together, they miraculously add together to form a real number.

**Even if you continue  
adding one forever,  
she explains, you can  
never truly reach  
infinity. You are blown  
away by the power of  
mathematics—that  
something will never  
end. You sleep well  
that night.**

Consider the geometric series from above:  $1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 + 1/32 \dots$ . When you add these numbers together, they, as if by magic, equal one.

Take the first time you contemplated your death, for example. You are just 8 years old, staring at the picture of three skeletons on the front cover of a *National Geographic* magazine, when suddenly, it hits you. You're going to be one of those *things* one day. This is little more than a convergent series; when you add all of your years together, they converge at a single point.

### **Divergent Series**

There are exceptions to convergent series; when you add an infinite number of terms together, you may not always find yourself with a real number. When summed, these series, known as divergent series, do not stop growing. You have started to contemplate whether your soul could persist long after your body has decomposed. And you tell yourself that, much like how a divergent series never stops increasing, you *will* believe in eternal consciousness.

### **The Harmonic Series**

A famous example of a divergent series is called the harmonic series:  $1/2 + 1/3 + 1/4 + 1/5 + 1/6 \dots$ . Even though each term in this series is smaller than the last, when you add them all together, the sum is infinite. As you did with the geometric series above, consider each number in the series representative of how long a year feels to you—the first year of your life feels relatively long, but each one after that begins to pass faster and faster. And yet, unlike with a convergent series, this divergent series sums to infinity. You're starting to wonder if an afterlife really does exist, and you ask your rabbi at the synagogue for advice. The rabbi smiles at you. "Of course there is an afterlife! After you pass away, your spirit will pop right out of your body and float all the way up to heaven where you can talk to all the relatives you've lost."



**A series with each term larger than the last**

While sitting in bed one night, you realize all of a sudden that there cannot be an end, your body rocking about. If an afterlife does exist, then you'll truly spend all of the rest of time there. Alternatively, if no afterlife exists, your mind will cease to exist forever. You will never regain consciousness, and still the series will grow. And grow.

**When every term in the series is zero**

When you're adding  $0 + 0 + 0 + 0 + \dots$  forever, you will never get anywhere. It doesn't matter how long you hold out, because you know that the series cannot amount to anything greater. And it doesn't matter what you do, because there is nothing out there waiting, down at the end of the series. Zeros and zeros and zeros.

**Add one**

Pick your favorite number. Like 17—one year before you become an adult when you will get all the great things that come with age, like the ability to vote and work legally, and sign legal documents. Then take that number and add one. Add one again. And again. Add one long after you've decided counting like this is a frivolous thing to do. Add one even when your mother, whom you told one night of your fears, has suggested you to go to a therapist for it. Add one even when that therapist has told you countless times to forget about the numbers in your head, eternally growing. Add one. Add one. Add one, and although your life is approaching infinity, even if you never stop adding one, even then you aren't quite there. You'll be adding one forever, even when everyone you know has passed away and you have been forgotten to time. Even then you'll be desperately adding one, one number at a time. Even then. Even then. Even then.

EMMA RAIBLE

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## CORNER STORE BOY



## Sidewalk

The sidewalk breathes,  
gulps like an old machine gasping for oil—  
soil,  
cobblestones,  
concrete,  
the ongoing funerals of decades past.  
The sidewalk drinks  
the drop of stale coffee  
sliding off the corner of a stubbled chin like an exquisite snake,  
slithering down,  
layer upon layer,  
through decades and decades.  
Faster, like a graceful sparrow, it glides  
down rivers and gullies  
until it finds its destination,  
an ocean of stale coffee,  
fueling the memories hidden among the layers.  
The sidewalk hums,  
The song of too much coffee pulsing through its cracks and crevices.  
It hums the car horns and the rumbles of the subway.  
It hums the jingle of coins in a paper cup and the cigarette stubs sizzling out their last light.  
The soil, the cobblestones, the concrete,  
they harmonize.



**ELIAS CONTRUBIS**

GRADE 12 | PAINTING

## MAGIC HOUR



## Trash Day

The last time he had seen a haul this boring was over a month ago. Leafing through discarded fruit peels and junk mail, he thought that this trash day might be a bust. Lionel did not enjoy touching half-eaten food any more than the rest of the human population did. The lack of interesting goodies left him distressed; it was not often that her trash failed to disappoint. He pushed her disposed shampoo container to the side and took a seat on the dark floor.

It was one of his hobbies, going through her trash. A hobby which he did not find a bit out of the ordinary, at least no more than others' obsessions with collecting stamps or playing guitar. She had a hobby too, from what he could tell: every trash day, there were little heaps of melted wax mixed in amongst her general muck, the smell of which led him to believe that she had a passion for homemade candles. She lived on the seventh floor of his apartment building, and all their trash went to the same room in the basement, so it was easy for him to sneak in. Lionel always went at the same time—4:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning, right before the trash was taken out to the curb by Sheldon.

Sheldon didn't mind Lionel being in the trash room, even though it was technically his job as doorman to ensure the relative safety of the residents. Lionel guessed that Sheldon himself might partake in the same kind of activity late at night, in the privacy of the sleek darkness.

While examining a clump of used tissues—she must have had a cold this week—Lionel thought of last week's prizes. It had been one of the best weeks of his life. She had had two empty Jack Daniels bottles in her recycling bags, his first clue that something was wrong. And it only got better from there.

Ever since he had accidentally ripped open her trash bag two years previously, he had been hooked. The sight of not one, not two, but five negative pregnancy tests spilling onto the trash room floor lit up his imagination and his hands moved without his mind's permission to sort through the rest of the mess. After a half hour of getting lost in a half-pieced together narrative of the girl who lived two floors above him, that doorman Sheldon had walked into the room. He had surveyed the scene for a few moments: there were salty tissues, punctured trash bags, and empty yogurt containers littering the floor around Lionel, who stared back at the doorman with innocent raccoon's eyes. After a moment of contemplation, Sheldon had ducked his head in a neighborly nod and backed out of the room, avoiding eye contact.

Because of the rude interruption, Lionel had forced himself to create very specific regulations under which he could indulge his craving. First off, he could only go once a week; there were technically more opportunities to sort through the trash, because she brought two bags down every week, but he needed order. He needed to know that he could quit if he wanted to. Yet he still found himself living for the small hours of Wednesday mornings. Second, he could only spend an hour (at most) in the trash room. This was a practical rule, since there was a larger chance that he might be caught if he stayed longer. In addition, the strong scent of the trash room might stick to his clothing with prolonged exposure, another thing he didn't want to risk. Lastly, and perhaps the most important rule of all, Lionel could never take anything from her trash. He could examine it for an hour, but at the end of that hour he needed to put everything back.

Last week, Lionel had dug around desperately, trying to find out why she was so upset. It broke his heart that his pretty, quiet neighbor, the one with the tortoiseshell glasses and the high brown ponytail, would feel prompted to drink so heavily, especially since it was rare for her to discard even a single beer bottle. His worry grew until he unearthed an item at the very bottom of the trash bag. There, he found the answers he had been looking for. He fingered the slightly soggy paper of the envelope with care, recognizing its



fragility. It was postmarked three days prior and sent from someone named Simon. Although Lionel himself would never think of throwing out a letter, he could forgive her for this action, as it bestowed upon him the insight he craved so deeply. It was short and curt, and read:

*Danielle:*

*I'm sorry we ended things the way we did. If I could go back and change things, I would. Nora was just a distraction, and I never meant for her to come between us. I know that she was in the picture for almost two years, but I want to assure you that the time we spent together was still real for me. Please pick up my calls. I still love you, and I'm willing to fight for you.*

*—Simon*

Lionel's jaw was left agape. Had this "Simon" been cheating on his lovely neighbor for two years? It certainly seemed that way. And she seemed hurt: the Jack Daniels and the tissues were more than proof of that. How many times had this man walked past him in the halls of their building? Would Lionel be able to pick him out of a lineup? As his mind raced to conclusion after conclusion, Lionel's blood picked up its sluggish pace, and he felt an unnatural heat.

How had he never figured out her name? Danielle. So dainty, so pure. After two years of filtering the garbage of this woman's life, he had only now learned her name. "What's the importance of a name?" Lionel asked himself. "I've loved her all the same without one." Yes, and yet now he used "love" freely, whereas before he had only hinted at it to himself. Danielle. Without even stopping to consider the ramifications, he pocketed the note and strode out of the trash room. He had broken his cardinal rule, but his joy colored the miserable sky a cerulean blue and everything he ate while the note rested in his pocket tasted like young grass—alive, vibrant, free.

After he'd broken his most important rule, his determination to uphold the other two crumbled like Danielle's half-eaten coffee cake. He felt this

**After two years of filtering the garbage of this woman's life, he had only now learned her name. "What's the importance of a name?" Lionel asked himself. "I've loved her all the same without one."**

**ELIAS CONTRUBIS**

GRADE 12 | DRAWING

**TUPPENCE A BAG**



desire to finish the puzzle, to get to the end of the mystery, to figure out who Simon was and what he had done to her. The week slithered along, Thursday blending into Friday. The weekend was the most taxing: Lionel had nowhere to go, no obligations, no work or companionship to busy his mind, and the trash room was just five measly flights of stairs beneath him. He decided to leave the apartment building to keep his mind off of the uncovered treasure trove beneath the staircase, and yet everything he saw brought images of her small, supple body dancing through his mind. There was a store with 15% off holiday candles, there was a happy couple exiting a baby goods store, there was a squirrel with a peculiar loop to its tail that reminded him strongly of her ponytail bobbing up and down as she ascended the stairs before him.

The suspense had risen too high, and Lionel could no longer deny himself the pleasure. That was how he found himself on the floor of the garbage room a day earlier than usual, surrounded by the disappointing remains of her week: an empty carton of milk, a magazine, and copious amounts of cherry pits. There was only one bag today, a curiosity Lionel did not give a second thought to in his haste. Catching sight of his watch, Lionel's mind spun—he had already spent over an hour breathing in the unfiltered air, and was due at the office by 6:15. Driven half mad by the lack of information he had been so desiring for the past six days, he tore into the bag in earnest, his fingers quivering, his heart beating out a song of love and yearning that could not be silenced. Feverish and desperate, he resolved to find something in that one bag which might suffice. Yet still his fingernails caught on insubstantial fruit peels and pencil shavings, spirals which mimicked his blood cycling in his veins, his mind warping itself over and over.

Nothing was enough to satiate Lionel. Nothing ever would be.

The minute hand wrapped itself around the origin three times, four, but still Lionel could not find what he hunted for. Something in the air changed, just then, and a sliver of light painted itself across the pitch-black floor, growing steadily. Lionel was mildly angry. Why should Sheldon come into the trash room now? The doorman's duty entailed picking up the trash



Wednesday afternoon, and today was only Tuesday morning. No, Lionel decided, this could not be Sheldon. The silhouette that was outlined in the light of the doorway was too small, too gentle. Then, in the split second before she turned, it dawned on him.

Yes. There she was. As beautiful as ever. Her brown hair was tied up in a pink elastic, aside from one strand which had evaded capture and now wrapped itself around the contour of her cheeks. Her body was enveloped in a gray sweatshirt. The signature tortoiseshell glasses were pushed up onto her forehead, so he could see that her eyes were rubbed raw. She looked even more girlish as a result, a sprite of the woods. One could never guess what Lionel knew about her from first glance. She carried the second trash bag, the bag he had not bothered to wait for in his thirst to begin.

Lionel was cross-legged, with her muck spread across his lap, cradling her now void trash bag. He had a redness in his eyes, perhaps brought about by the redness in his mind. The heat in the little room seemed only to intensify, and Lionel sensed that the only thing which would ice his steaming body was her presence, so he reached out toward her as if he were blind.

He said the only thing he could think to say.

“Hello, Danielle.”

**EMMA KATRINE NYLUND**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## TENT ROCK



**EMMA RAIBLE**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## MEDITERRANEAN





## The Beach

I watched as the last figure, now just a yellow speck of a lifejacket, disappeared around the bend in the shoreline. Miles and miles of pink and white sand stretched out on either side of me like a white moon crescent. Behind me, a sparse coppice of green shrubs and Casuarina trees. The only sign of movement was from dead pine needles, swirled up and then laid back down by the warm breeze.

In front of me was the undisturbed horizon, so great in its vastness, outlined by the stillness of the sea and the cloudless, darkening sky, like a line inscribed around the ends of the earth to keep it from overflowing. And the water was nothing like the tormented Atlantic Ocean with its restless waves continuously pushed and pulled. The water in front of me now was a peaceful, delicate surface of glass, the most pure and luminous blue, stretching on for miles. Its radiance filled my vision, the way it leapt and glowed off the setting sun. It was almost too much for my eyes to take in all at once.

Suddenly the silence of my setting finally sank in and hit me like a gust of wind. The only noise that filled up the whole earth around me was the rhythmic sound of the small cresting waves lightly foaming up on the sand. I had an unusual urge to hear my own voice and I yelled out into the sea. With no one around me for at least a mile, the sound of my own voice was a comforting blanket and I talked myself to sleep the first night.

The next morning felt less lonely as morning rays of sun burst through the clouds like golden spotlights and heated the sand. Sitting down by the shoreline I let the breaking waves wash over my feet as I ate part of a soggy cheese block that had been wedged into my empty water

bottle. The sand became too hot and the cool water beckoned me in. I took a couple of steps and then dove under the rippling, crystalline waves. After coming up for air, I lay on my back and closed my eyes, letting my body sway back and forth. I was completely alone with nothing but myself, but I felt a greater sense of energy and peacefulness surrounding me than I had ever felt anywhere before. I let the world sink into me.

**LYDIA DOBAN**

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH

## CLOUDY WAVES





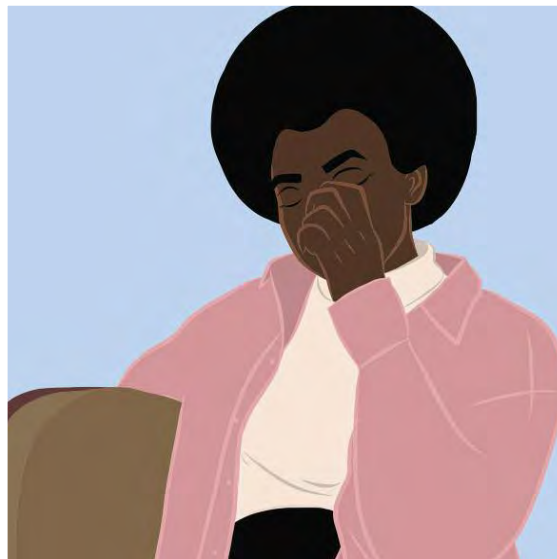
## Allegory of a Wallflower

not so much of a wallflower as  
an entwined in the wall  
and cannot possibly get out flower  
twinges of sorrow for the debt owed  
set posed, poised for rays of light  
toyed with pinpricks of precious water  
out of reach, and never caught  
the sarcophagus closes in  
made of brick and cement  
highly not recommended  
trick the vine to stay alive  
pine for those sips spaced  
to quench what cannot be replaced  
lasted years now  
grown fears now  
it appears how  
the wall constructed  
and how the flower not consumed  
was an eternal struggle  
breaths rugged, entwined  
forever within the brick.

**MOSAB HAMID**

GRADE 9 | MIXED MEDIA

**CAMERA SHY**



**FLOWER CHILD**



**LOOK ME IN  
THE EYE**



**SAD GYAL**



**EMMA KATRINE NYLUND**

GRADE 12 | PAINTING

## MORNING MASK



## I'm Home

I was at the infamous 42nd Street-Bryant Park Station, surrounded by paper maps of the subway. I was in the background of a tourist selfie in a classic New York scene. But I stood there drowning in a green jacket that was two sizes too big for me, my body heavy. The subway platform was not worth a picture. I was in between two cement columns, in front of a yellow stripe. My hair was flat in a braid and my ears remained closed off. Throat small, toes numb. I held a paper cup of chamomile tea, burning my hand, but I saved all my sips for the seat I would take on the train. I had just spent four hours in the darkroom, beneath the busy heart of New York City. Rooms filled with chemicals specifically set aside for people with minds like my own.

My knees wobbled in the *whoosh* of the incoming train and knocked my perfect stance. I chose my orange seat through the window before the doors opened and made my way to it, next to a mother who was reading a novel to her young daughter, while rubbing her baby's shoulder. I remember trying not to stare.

The girls across from me on the train were sparkly and perfect. They didn't see something like me. Their eyes looked fancy: black liquid liner and sparkles coming down their faces. Whiskers painted on their cheeks, and hands filled with pink shopping bags. They were all wearing tight, black cat uniforms, midriffs exposed. Selfies selfies selfies, but I was not in the background of these.

I shut my eyes and listened to soft music and let the train rock my arms and legs to a state of pure zen. I was completely checked out, eyes only available for emergencies, as my route home was achieved through utter muscle



memory. The next thing I remember was placing freshly cut apples in a bowl and the smell of lavender lotion in my house. I made my way upstairs and slipped my hand underneath my pillow to reach for my journal.

**October 31st, 2014**

*I am alone again tonight. I don't want my parents to know that I'm sad because I am scared that they'll make me go see a therapist. I'm not scared of seeing one, I just don't want to spend my time talking out loud about all my problems. I worry I'll realize how lonely I truly am. Right now I am alone, not lonely. I saw these girls on the train ride home tonight going to a party. I think I knew one of them. I feel like she was in my Pre-K class at Montessori. I hate Halloween. It's not even a holiday anymore. It's just a reminder that I am no longer a small enough kid to be taken care of. I miss spending Halloween in Park Slope with my oldest friends. I miss dressing up in a costume my mom would spend at least two weeks making me.*

– Emma

I had forgotten to text my parents when I got home. I grabbed my phone from my coat pocket, knowing I would see phone calls from them. They always worried about me. Four new voicemails. “Hey Emmy. It’s me, Mommy. Where are you? Are you ok?” “Hey. It’s me, Daddy. Call for an update.” “Emmy, pick up the phone. I am at work, but want to talk to you and hear all about your day. Are you okay?” “Em, Mom has called you twice. Please pick up, for her sake and for mine!” And there I was, sending my parents a text on Friday night, on Halloween at 10:00 p.m. “I’m home.”

**I really didn't want to go to a party dressed as a cat with my midriff showing. It was hard to know whether I felt bad, or if other people felt bad for me. I am confused about whether being alone is the same thing as being lonely.**

I looked up at my dimmed overhead light—creating shadows of geometric shapes all over the walls. I let my eyes close until they reached the maximum amount of water accumulation. I was sad until I opened the slits of my eyes and began to cry. My face became red and blotchy as tears ran down my face, finally. The pain was gone. Everything was going to be OK. I really didn't want to go to a party dressed as a cat with my midriff showing. It was hard to know whether I felt bad, or if other people felt bad for me. I am confused about whether being alone is the same thing as being lonely.

***October 16th, 2015***

*I hate the nights when I am not here, tucked under my duvet with my smooth legs against my white cotton sheets. I think my friends are jealous that I am so okay with being alone. I remember last year on Halloween when I saw those girls on the train. I remember feeling bad for myself, for not being with them. Now I don't care. I am so happy I wasn't with them.*  
– Emma

ELLA GATES

GRADE 9 | PHOTOGRAPH

## AFTERNOON AL MERCADO DE PESCADO



## Blue Sky Time

My dad and I drove for six hours into the heart of Virginia. Well, Dad drove. I slept a lot and read some formulaic sci-fi. My parents have always told me that the United States is divided into two regions: New York City, and Out-There-in-America. I knew we'd crossed the threshold into America proper when we stopped for lunch at an Arby's. From there, it was fields of corn and soybeans, and corn and soybeans, and soybeans and corn. Dad kept driving, and I kept reading, until finally we reached the right soybean field.

The Blue Sky hang gliding school is almost exactly what it sounds like: two hangars filled with flocks of gliders, two runways in between the soybeans, and enough sky to make even Thoreau agoraphobic. You can actually see the horizon. Green fields meet bright blue in a single, unbroken line wherever you look. I wanted to photoshop in a skyscraper or two just to make myself feel human again. Anything to reassure myself that I wasn't just a speck in the massive countryside, or one of the iridescent beetles crawling among the clover and, yes, soybeans, while tiny gnats took up residence in the corners of my vision. It was more nature than I'd experienced in the last three months, compressed into one week. And it itched.

Yes, the city girl in me was writhing. I was wearing loose, straight-legged jeans, streaked with muddy grass, and a baggy T-shirt under a harness. My sunglasses were streaked with sunscreen, yet my skin was losing its battle with the sun. Worse, my classmates, natives of a nearby sprawling suburbia, kept trying to tell me which restaurants to eat at during my visit. To them, Richmond, Virginia was the cultural epicenter of the world. "Oh, have you had Thai food? There's this great place . . ." I wanted a bagel more than you can possibly know.



But the rest of me was reveling. Relishing the knowledge that cute little cumulus puffballs mean thermals, and that when birds are flying, you can, too. Forgetting that dew had soaked through my shoes and socks, because the tow rope was tugging at my front. All there was to do was run to keep up, shouldering the weight of my newfound wings, until the wind could carry it for me, until my feet left the ground.

It isn't silent when you're flying through the air. The wind is going past your ears too fast for silence. But you can't hear anyone, even if they yell. And you can't worry about them either, since your main concern is keeping the mass of metal and fabric and you from crashing into the soybeans. It's not that bad, though; by your 12th try you can cross your ankles, just like Dad, moving with the wind as if you've known it all your life. And by the end of the week you can release the tow line, so nothing is tethering you to the ground. It's just you, the glider, the sky, and the horizon.

**ZOE DENCKLA**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## MY OFFICE



## The Lovers II (after Magritte)

Two lovers are kissing  
but both have their faces covered  
in veils. The veils covering their faces  
are very heavy and opaque.  
I wonder if the veils are actually there or if

it is a metaphor.  
Maybe it is a metaphor

because neither of the lovers seems to be bothered  
by the veils. Maybe it is something they both understand.

Or it is a metaphor

for a barrier between the lovers,  
something that is stopping them  
from really seeing each other  
or from being together.

Or maybe it's a metaphor

for the dying love they share,  
that they will suffocate themselves to be together.

Or does it mean that they have blind love,  
that it doesn't matter what either of them looks like?



**NOVEMBER 16th**

**CHLOE SHANE**

GRADE 10 | PAINTING

## The Lovers II (after Magritte)

I see two lovers kissing  
each other through a sheet.

Do they know each other  
. . . really know each other,

like lovers think they do?  
Are they hiding from something?

Are they more afraid to lift  
their own sheet or their partner's?

Are they genderless?  
Are they in love?

Are they tricking each other?  
Do they know that

they are wearing a sheet or  
know if their partner is?

Hidden an entire life, hidden  
by a veil like a beautiful

ghostly mask, afraid to open their  
eyes or take the sheet off because it's better

trying to lie than lying that you tried,  
when you didn't. She is beautiful hidden,

showing what she thinks  
he wants her to be.

They are happy, they are happy  
not knowing the truth,

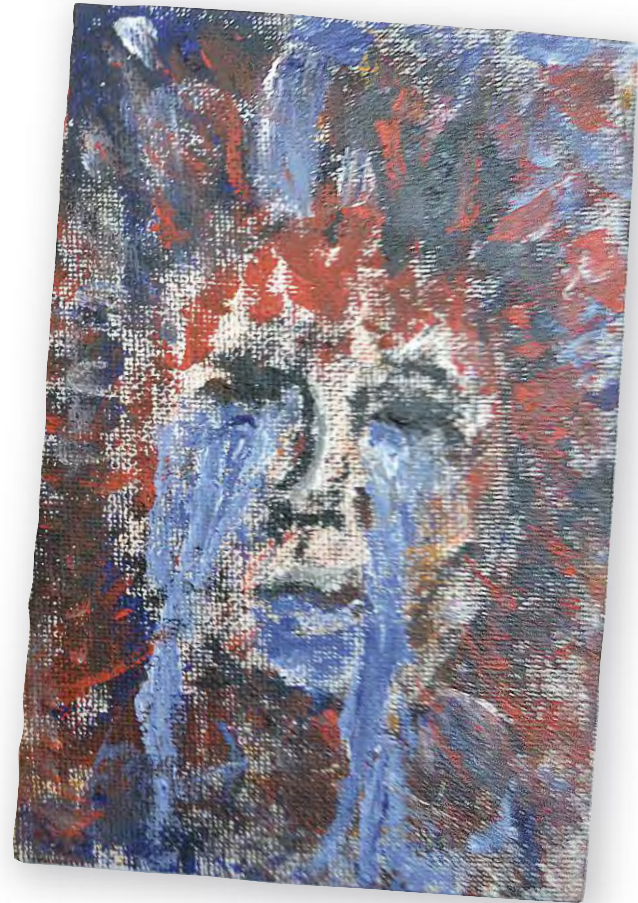
because the truth sucks,  
and people run and leave

and you need to hold it together,  
all the weight on a couple of strings.

The very fabric that separates them  
is the fabric that keeps them together.

It's better to be happy and hidden  
than honest and sad because

It's not lying if we all are.





LUCY EDELSTEIN

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## HOME



## The Trip

“Natasha, don’t forget to make the reservation,” my mom reminds me a week in advance. I call the number saved in my contact list and automatically dial 1 without listening to the recording.



A week later (4:40 p.m.):

I open my black backpack. I fill it up without even thinking about what I am putting in there. School work, chargers, laptop, clothes that I brought home last time, and my dinner for the ride. This system hasn’t changed in four years. My mom asks me as we rush out the door, “Did you remember to pack your charger?” My answer is always yes, and I really don’t know why she keeps asking at this point. We pull out of the garage. 5:30 on the clock on the dashboard. Right on schedule. Park Avenue South up to 40th Street. Best Buy on the left, Children’s Place on the right, my favorite Barnes and Noble off the side street, Organic Avenue on the opposite side. As we turn left on 40th Street, Waffles and Dinges is always parked on the corner. We head down three more blocks to Third Avenue, passing the Starbucks. We arrive and pull up right behind the spot where the bus stop is. “Oh, no. Here we are 20 minutes early again,” my mom says like it is new information.

A passerby might wonder what the people on the sidewalk are lined up for, but I have been waiting in the Jitney bus lines since I was 5 years old. My dad used to clutch my hand as we waited for the bus to arrive. I used to hold the plastic bag filled with the snacks that he bought for us. The line closest to the corner is for Southampton to Montauk. The other line is Manorville to Wainscott. I watch the people in this line, wondering what they see out the window and whether they wonder the same thing. I walk to the line near the corner and wait.

At 6:30, the bus arrives. I approach the attendant as she says, “Last name?”  
“Strugatz.”

“Okay. You are in seat number 13.”

I walk up the three big steps of the bus gripping the railing. I read the labels tucked into the headrests until I find STRUGATZ. After all the passengers have filed onto the bus, the attendant starts her routine. If I was hired right on the spot, I would be able to do the routine from memory. The video appears on the TV. A hand flashes across the screen holding a ticket, cash, and credit card. “Payment on board can be made by prepaid ticket, cash, or credit. Exact change is greatly appreciated.” The next screen appears. A girl slips on the last step of the bus. As the attendant catches her, her boyfriend’s cheeks become red with anger. “The last step can be a doozy.” It is the most cheesy, clichéd video of all time, but that is what makes it so great and catchy. We slowly make our way to the tunnel. The billboard to the right is always displaying *Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb*, *The Intern*, or *Tomorrowland*.

The attendant then heads to the front of the bus to start the movie. I usually decide if I want to watch the movie within the first 10 minutes, depending on if I have a lot of work to do. On Sunday, I will realize that I should have started my homework on the bus. I never learn because I always end up watching the movie anyway.

The attendant asks, “Party mix, pretzels, Goldfish, or granola bars?” “Water or soda?” I select Goldfish and water every time. As I bite into a Goldfish, I taste the familiar, salty, artificial cheese flavor. “Trash!” she shouts, carrying the garbage bag down the aisle. I stare at my half-eaten Goldfish and water, thinking to myself, how is anyone already done with their snack? I pull out one of my tickets that is stored in my wallet. I fill out last name, pick-up and drop-off location, and the date. She thanks me as I hand her the ticket and I place my headphone back in my ear. The genetically-modified dinosaur has just escaped his crate, causing havoc for the whole island.

To see where I am, I press my face against the glass. I reflect on the previous week and recollect the past events. I feel the bus turning right as it exits to switch highways. We pass Cumberland Farms and Starbucks. It is still another hour.

After the movie finishes, I stare out the window. I think to myself that all of these passengers are complete strangers, yet we take this three-hour trip together, never speaking to each other. I scan down the rows as I wonder what their lives are like. I stop my glance to stare at the two people sitting in the row across from me. She leans her head on the man's shoulder as they discuss the movie. How did this couple meet? I turn my head to look at the back of the bus. Did the man who is sitting next to his young son have a happy childhood? Where did the older woman who was talking on the phone too loudly grow up? What school did the guy go to who is watching *Game of Thrones* on his iPad? What events have led everyone to be on this bus today? Who are they meeting at the end of this ride?

We pass the BMW car dealership and light store.

8:30:

Southampton

I send a text message to my dad:

Natasha: Dad I am in Southampton.

Dad: K

We pass the windmill and Soul Cycle.

8:45:

Natasha: Watermill

We pass Bridgehampton Commons, the Carvel store, and Citarella.

8:55:

Natasha: Bridgehampton

Mom: How's it going?

Natasha: Good

Mom: Are you almost there?

Natasha: Yeah



“Anyone getting off at Wainscott?” Nobody raises a hand. “All right. Next stop is East Hampton.”

Natasha: East Hampton is next

Dad: Okey [He always spells it that way.] Leaving now

We pass the giant white house and turn left. I stare at the pond that I can't seem to make out in the dark. But I know it's there.

9:05:

East Hampton

Dad: Here

Natasha: Okay

We pass the gas station and Amagansett Square.

9:12pm:

Amagansett

I walk down the big steps thanking the driver and the attendant. I approach the Prius and throw my black backpack in the back and then sit in the front. “How was your trip?”

“It was good.”

Natasha: I am with dad.

Mom: Okay. Have a great trip! Love you <3

I watch the bus drive away. I will be on it in less than 36 hours.

CHLOE SHANE

GRADE 10 | PHOTOGRAPH

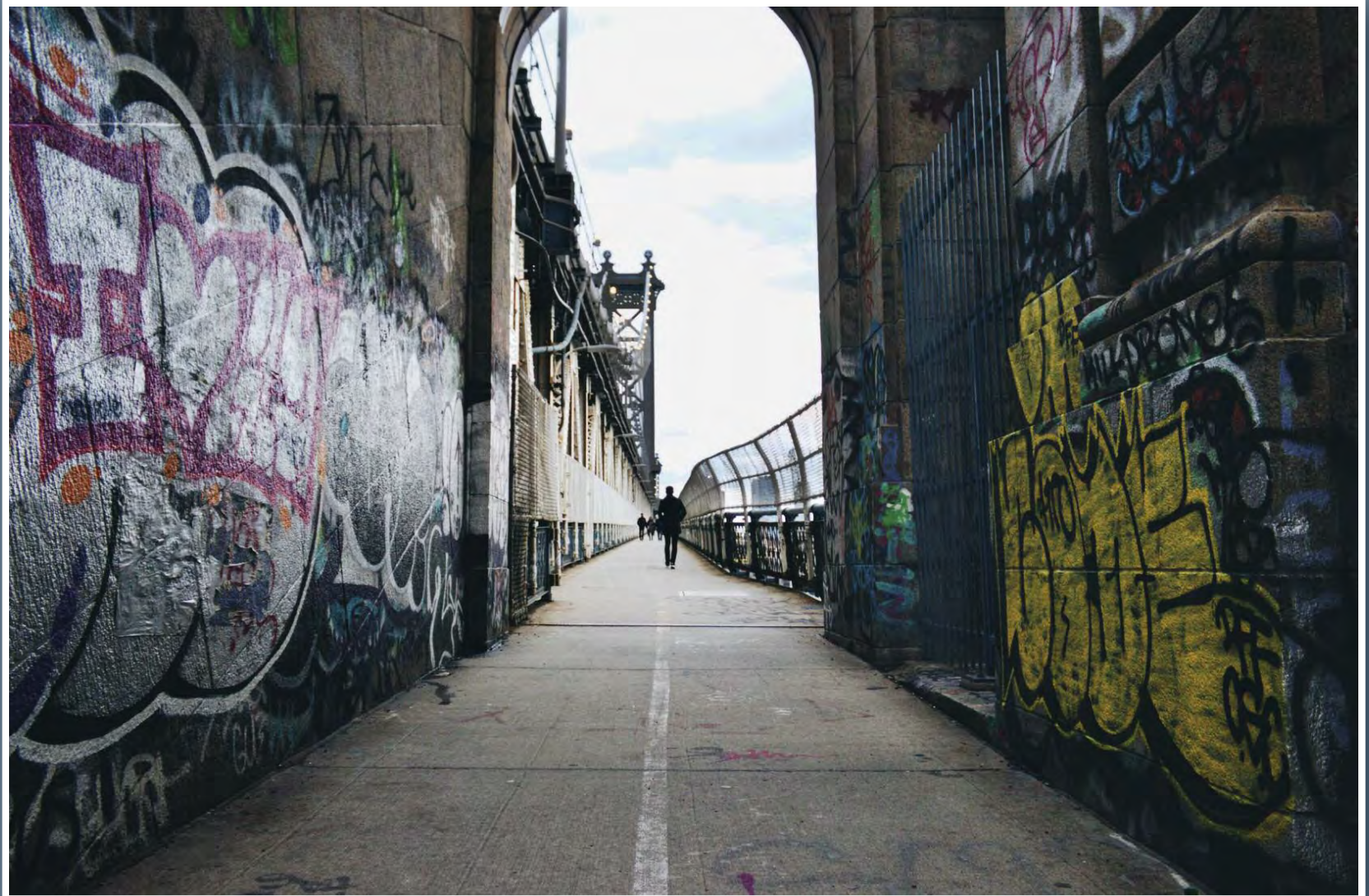
## MOTION



**JOSH MCCAW**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## GRAFFITI FROM BELOW



### Song of Innocence

Every weekend, as a little girl,  
I would go to my gram's.  
We'd sit on Rubbermaid lawn chairs  
covered with My Little Pony Stickers and dirt  
watching the occasional car pass by.

I'd go around the driveway  
on my "Flower Power" bike from K-Mart  
and once I ran over her feet  
in her fluffy Easy Spirit slippers  
that she never took off.

Sometimes she would take me to the stream  
and tell me that the sun glinting on the water  
were really leprechauns  
going to India or China.  
I could never quite see them,  
but I knew they were there.

Everytime before I left,  
she would tell me "*Ja ie kocham,*"  
and I would say back to her, "*Ja ie kocham, Gram,*"  
because I couldn't say *babcia*.

### Song of Experience

When Gram died,  
I went back to the house with the  
Rubbermaid lawn chairs.

I went through all of the  
remaining costume jewelry.  
I held the pin that my grandma  
had pinned on me as a little girl,  
its weight dragging down  
on my T-shirt.

She told me I could keep it  
when she died.



**CAROLINE NEWBERY**

GRADE 10 | PAINTING

## TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME



## Immaculate Heart of Mary

I am in-between my mother and my eldest sister, towards the back of the church. My knees are digging into the leathery kneeler, my elbows resting on the pew in front of me, my fingers clutching at each other as they support the weight of my head. I am, at the age of 6, in my least favorite position—praying.

My mom's eyes are closed, but her face twitches towards me every time she hears me shuffle, the readjustment of my knees shaking the whole row. She wants to tell me to be still, but she doesn't, knowing I am already putting in my best effort. In a minute she will probably turn to me, eyes still closed, and give me her blessing to sit on the bench, as I had asked the moment they told us to kneel. I will struggle with my impatience during mass until I turn 13 and stop attending, but it is not those last years I remember best—it is this service specifically, the one that had all the ghosts.

The Virgin Mary stares at me, her white marble eyes unreadable. My mother loves her, insisting we pass her at the end of every service, but here, in the privacy of my own thoughts, I can admit to myself that this statue absolutely terrifies me. I fear that if I touch it, it will be cold enough to freeze my fingers, a small likelihood, but something I plan to take no chances with. Her robe slides down her arm, leading to her hands, her palms facing me, expectantly. She is telling me to trust her, but I can't. There are rows of red candles at her feet, and the flames of the wicks leave a light red glow on her marble skin. It smells heavy, and I imagine that I am in a cloud. The air around me is thick, the smell of incense making me sleepy, nauseous, and old.

My ears are pierced with a sudden sound. It is loud, and it echoes through the entire church, inescapable, an eruption unending. I've never heard such a noise. It scares me, and as it continues, getting louder as it echoes throughout

the church, I shut my eyes tightly, and press my fingers against my ears. That only muffles the sound, and I can still hear the wailing, and I remember the *Sixth Sense*, when the ghosts of the dead ask Haley Joel Osment to help them rest in peace, and I want to cry because the last thing I want is to talk to ghosts. I lift my fingers from my ears, and quickly push them back down again, repeating this so that all I can hear is the wind as it swooshes back and forth, back and forth. I turn towards the Virgin Mary, who has, in my moment of panic, gained my trust. *Do something*, I beg her. *Help them, make them stop. Help them, make them stop.* I repeat over and over.

My fingers stop, mid lift, and my wrists are held by two familiar, warm hands. I unclench my face, and see my mother, hazily, through readjusting eyes. She tells me to stop, and tells me that I am being rude. It is then that she explains to me that there are no ghosts, but that the noise is coming from my two cousins who have just lost their mother. I am at a funeral.

**CHLOE SHANE**  
GRADE 10 | PHOTOGRAPH

## TUESDAY IN CAMDEN





**EVAN YOUNG**

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH

## WINGS



## The Legend of the Centuries

(after Magritte)

I happened upon a large stone sculpture  
one day on my daily walk down the beach.  
A very strange sight to see.

Upon closer inspection I saw that  
it resembled a large chair, so I climbed up  
and took a seat.

I noticed something else: that on this chair  
was a smaller, wooden chair. It appeared someone  
else had gotten here before I had.

I sat in the wood chair. It was brand new.  
Then I sat down on the rock of the sculpture,  
and upon further inspection

I saw the stone had multiple cracks. It looked its age.  
I had never seen something like this before.  
Why was it here?

Why had I never noticed it before? And finally,  
what am I supposed to make of this?  
I guess I've gotten quite old.

The next day I returned to the spot where I had  
last seen the large stone chair. It was no longer there.  
All that remained

was the small, new, wooden chair. I sat down in it  
and thought for hours. What happened to the stone?  
Where did it go?

And why is this chair the only one left?  
I watched the waves crash in front of me,  
and I understood . . .

EZEKIEL CONCEPCION

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH

## 7th AVENUE



## Fortunate Son

“Do you know why I work so hard?”

My mother, sitting next to me, leans back as I pucker my face and ponder, look back at her, and shrug.

“I don’t know. Why?”

She adjusts herself on the hard orange subway seat as she turns towards me.

“When I was little, maybe 5, I was playing in front of the house with my sister. A man, passing by, stopped, turned around, and came over to us. Silently, he touched me and my sister’s hair. At the same time, my mom, walking out of the house to check on us, seeing the man touching our hair, yelled ‘What are you doing?’ The man said that he was a fortune teller.”

My concerns about a random man touching my mother’s hair now sort of relieved, I continue to listen.

“My mom stared at him, not saying anything. Usually you had to pay, so she was afraid he would ask for money. But the man told her he wouldn’t charge. He asked if we were her daughters, and then said that my sister and I would have completely different lives. My sister, according to him, would never have to worry. She would always have food, a place to live, and money for all her life, but me—”

My mother pauses.

“I would end up having no roof over my head.”

She goes on to describe how her mother and grandmother changed their attitudes toward her, how they would point at her and constantly remind her that she would remain poor for the rest of her life. The fortune teller’s omen combined with superstition had now transformed my mother into the rotten egg, the foreboding sign of bad luck that could only stand to hurt the family.

“I was scared. I was scared of becoming a beggar, of having nothing, of having my parents not loving me anymore, and so I worked harder than anybody else. I did everything more carefully, I took any opportunity that came up, anything.”



**GARRETT COLLINS**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

## MARTHA'S LIGHTHOUSE



She leans back.

“I was determined to change my life.”



Before that afternoon, I had already known about my mother's transformation. It wasn't easy. I knew that she had grown up in rural China in the 1970s, where she had chased after headless chickens running away from her grandmother's bloody butcher knife. I knew that she had saved up pennies to buy candies from the street, and had often eaten corn reserved for farm animals or the grass from the ground when there was nothing else to eat.

But fast forward, past her immigrating to the United States, past her working since 13 to pay for rent, past her attending night school to earn her degree, I realize that there is . . . me. A product of her efforts, living in a big house and going to a good school and wearing some nice clothes and checking my email on a new phone and sleeping in a big bed and going out for great meals and hanging out with some cool friends. I have realized I owe it all to her. Not only my life, but *my life*, was and is and will continue to be possible not just because of me, not even mostly. It is because of her that Max Wu, me, exists in his form today.



I remember when my grandmother, my mother's mother, was still alive. I had only seen her out of a wheelchair in photo albums; I was too young to remember her that way. She suffered from some disease—I don't remember the name—which according to my mother apparently led to a shrinkage in her brain cells. She lost the ability to move and she struggled to speak; you had to read her lips to fully understand what she was saying. But her mind remained intact. For better or for worse, she was still aware. For all those years, even in her worrisome state, she always smiled, laughing whenever she saw me eat yet another of my great-grandmother's legendary, hometown-famous, secret-recipe Chinese pancakes.

But her situation deteriorated. Medical complications and hospital visits became more frequent. Sitting in a wheelchair for all those years had led to sores and infections. She had a 24-hour attendant, but the help wasn't enough. And her four children, although already helping her, took up the charge. My mother, most of all, did all she could. For months, every night after long, grueling workdays drafting wedding dress plans under fluorescent lights, she would go to her mother's apartment. She would help her change her clothes, get into bed, brush her teeth, eat her food, clean herself. She would walk the mile back home, ready for another work day, another day of taking care of me and my father, another day of the same cycle.

It wasn't enough. When my grandmother passed away, laid to rest in her brown wooden casket, surrounded by flowers and incense and velvet, I couldn't bear to turn and see my mother's anguish. She had tried for so long and so hard to delay the inevitable, the passage of time, the spread of disease. And she had failed.



When it is my turn, what will I do? Can I even put in half the effort that she did? Will I push myself to do the same, to visit and eat out with and listen to and take care of her and my dad as they grow older and weaker and closer to the end? How will the system work? How will I balance my life and theirs? I can't just leave them there. How will I pay them back?



My mother grasps my palm with both of her hands, counting one by one as she examines each of my fingertips.

"See? Ten full circles—." She pushes my hand close to my face so I can see for myself—"this means you will have a good life." She smiles as she lets go and leans back into the subway seat.

"You won't have to worry, unlike me."

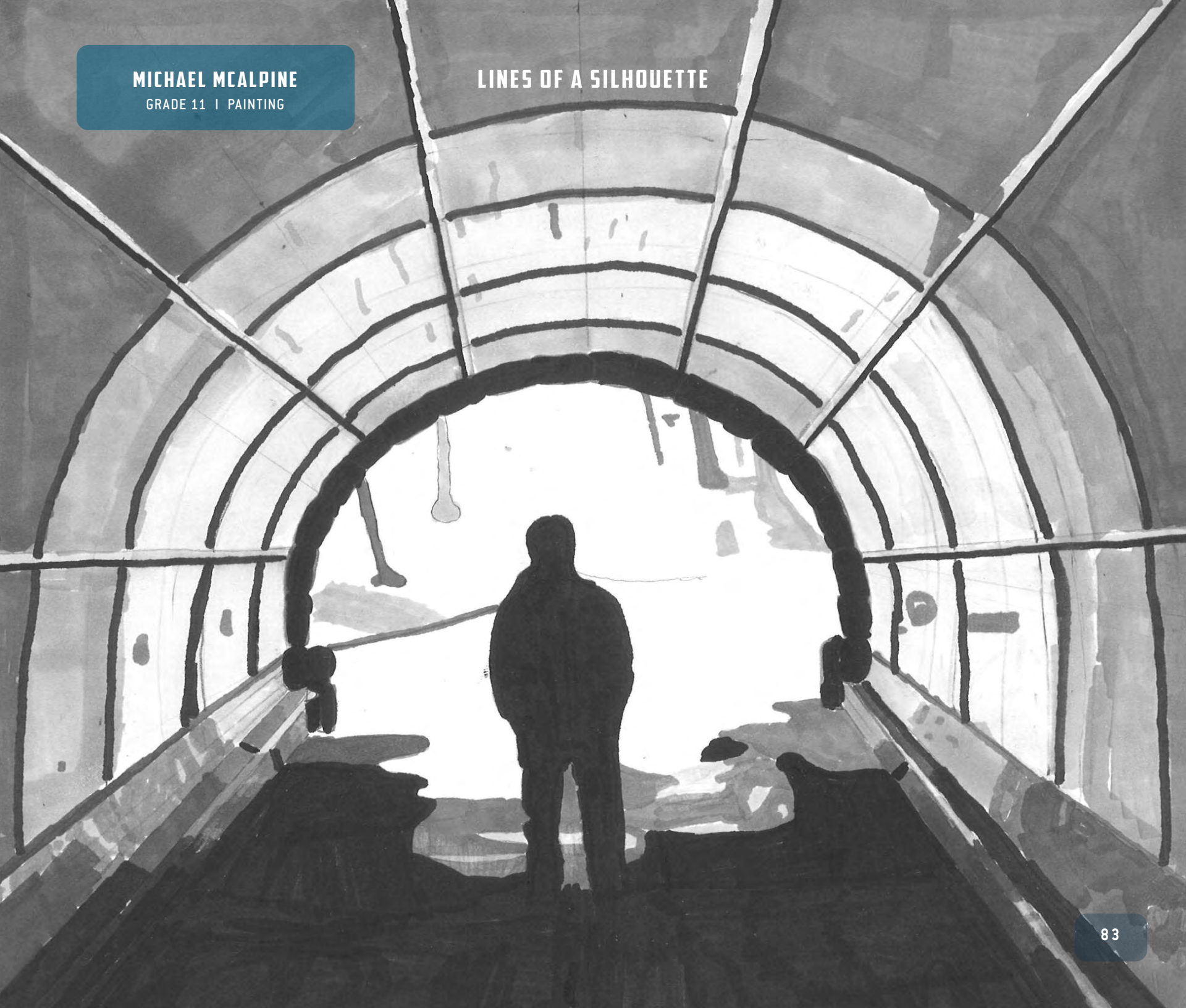
I laugh along as I examine my fingertips, wondering if she has ten on hers.



**MICHAEL MCALPINE**

GRADE 11 | PAINTING

## LINES OF A SILHOUETTE





ALESSANDRA INCIARDI

GRADE 11 | MIXED MEDIA

## ANGELS OF THE GET THROUGH



## Morse Code

The city flashes  
in broken bursts.  
Muffled morse codes.

But even when well versed,  
you try to decipher  
the crack in the roads,

Or platforms eternally traversed  
by insults swallowed.  
You try to cure

the night sky. Cursed  
by the street lamp's burning echoes.  
Cure it of grimness at first.

But you realize then,  
with courage newly grown,  
you too have conversed.

In murmurs that flowed  
and in footsteps  
unrehearsed.

**JEFFREY HUDSON**

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH

## BREAKING THROUGH



## 68.5 Inches

1

I grab my sister's feet and pull. It's 6:53 a.m. She lies there, her body motionless, eyes pressed shut, hands still buried under her pillow. The stairs groan as my mom comes to wake her up. She reaches the doorway of my sister's room.

"Violet, what are we going to do with you? How are you ever going to get up on your own? What about when you live alone?"

Violet's head pops up. "Don't worry—I'll just never live on my own!"

My mom smirks and turns to me. "How about you, Zoe?"

"Oh no, I'll be out the second I graduate from college."

It's always been the plan, to be independent as early as possible. Whether I was learning how to make pancakes at age 4, walking the long half block to school alone at age 6, or just simply always waking up on my own. Maybe it's an older sibling thing.

A child is simply created from a mother and father's DNA. We are our parents. The color of our eyes, the cadence of our voices, the ridges and lines on the joints of our fingers. Everything.

For a while I thought I was adopted. That was our family joke. My hair stands out in family photos. My grandma used to run her fingers down my head as she French braided my hair (an activity that pained me, but she always insisted on) and look at me puzzled:

"Where did this golden hair come from?!?"

I barely even look like my parents. I mean, I kind of look like my sister, but there can still totally be an explanation for that. I was convinced for a while that my sister's birth was staged. I wasn't actually present for the birth, so it's entirely possible that my parents just brought in some baby before I came to visit at the hospital. We were definitely adopted from the same family, and although they

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managed to fool me because I can't remember anything before age 3, they were not getting away with it a second time around.

The adoption conspiracy is just based on my looks, but other aspects go into making me *me*. Some scientists argue that genes are overrated. They say that where I live, who I grow up with, and how I spend my time influences who I am as a person just as much as the genes my parents pass down to me. Maybe I just wish I was adopted so I wouldn't feel so destined to end up like my parents. The first website I ever remember visiting was called Kids for Kerry. John Kerry was the Democratic nominee at the time. I was interested in politics from a young age, probably just because I liked going into the voting booths with my (supposed) parents and pulling that huge lever. Even so, I felt it was my duty to educate my less politically active peers about the "right" candidate. That was the inspiration for this trip to kidsforkerry.com<sup>1</sup>. I was determined to get the exclusive printable ribbon (only available through membership to kidsforkerry) which read "Kids for Kerry 2004." What is a Democrat? What does John Kerry stand for? At 6 I couldn't tell you, but of course he was the obvious choice. My parents were voting for him.

## 2

My parents made it very clear to me that I was never going to get a dog, so in an effort to appease my longing, they gave me two fish for my kindergarten graduation. Not content with Luke and Anakin Skywalker, I found a loophole in our no pets policy. They had said no to all conventional pets, but said nothing about exotic animals. Inspired by my favorite book at the time, "The Sleepy Little Lion" (filled with pictures of a pet baby lion who can't stop falling asleep), I decided I would be OK settling for a baby lion and proposed this to my parents: "Even though lions are technically dangerous, it would be totally fine because we would raise it and it could never end up like the other lions!" Surprisingly, they weren't convinced. My dad explained to me that people had tried that before, but it had never worked out. The most famous of these nature v. nurture experiments with wild animals was called Project Nim. The psychologist (my dad's professor in college) basically raised a chimpanzee as his son in order to test whether or not natural tendencies of an animal could be shifted due to a total change in environment. At first, the experiment seemed promising. Nim (the chimp) was able to acclimate to human life and even began learning

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<sup>1</sup>The website no longer exists.

sign language. Despite this initial success of integrating the chimp into normal life, the experiment had to be ended four years later, when Nim attacked one of his caretakers. Maybe a chimp, or any animal, will revert to behavior identical to its parents no matter how it's raised.

In elementary school, kids (kids being me) are fascinated with how tall they'll be when they grow up. Most of us learned our estimated height from our pediatrician at our 8-year-old check up, but it must've slipped my doctor's mind. I became numberless. I would have to figure this out on my own. I plugged my parents' heights into the formula:

$$(75 [\text{dad's height}] + 67 [\text{mom's height}] / 2) \times 2.5 (\text{for a girl}) = 68.5 \text{ or } 5 \text{ feet } 8.5 \text{ inches}$$
Unhappy with my estimated grown up height, I was convinced there was no way I could ever be that short. I mean, that was just based on my parents' heights, anyways.

I am currently 68.5 inches and done growing.

### 3

I reach the question in a survey sent out by BC's college office which reads, "Is there one quality of personality that you secretly hope people will associate with you when they speak of you to others?" That's easy. I answer, "I want people to think I have strong, unique personal opinions and the ability to support them well." Next question.

Somehow in 10th grade, my hatred of the popular movie *Forrest Gump* spread throughout our class of 56 people. I didn't mind discussing my unpopular opinion until I had this particular conversation:

"You're definitely the only person on *Earth* who doesn't like this movie!"

"That's just not true, my mom doesn't like it either . . ."

The person smiles. "Ohhhh. That makes so much sense now!"

I'm confused. "What?"

"Ha, you just hate *Forrest Gump* because your mom hates it."

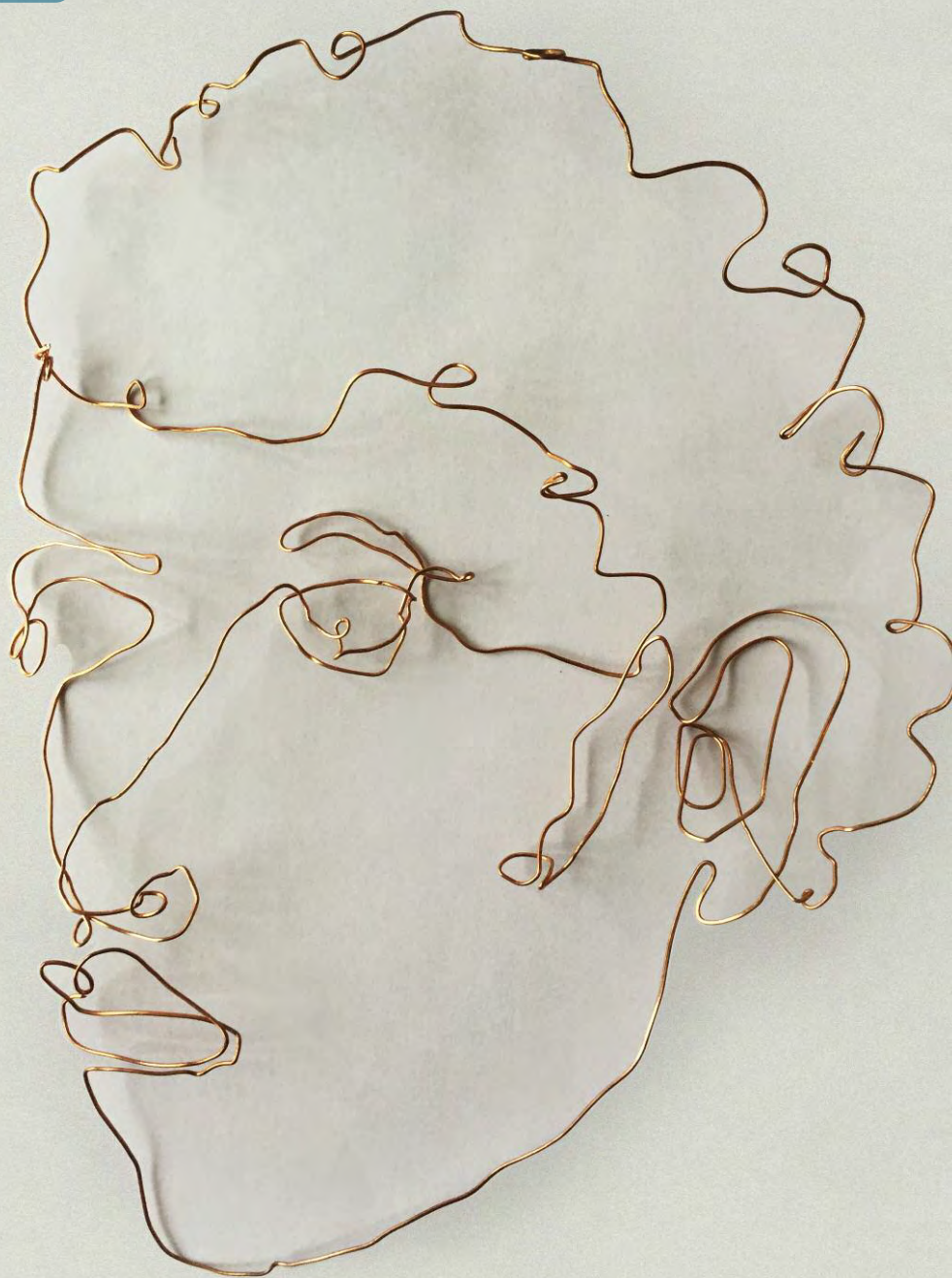
### 4

My cursor hovers between physician and college professor on the Plans for Future section of my common app. *College professor*. I erase it. *Physicia* . . . Who am I kidding? I'm going to end up being a college professor, just like my mom, and that's terrifying. Why? Because it's so inevitable.

**IMOGEN MICKLEWHITE**

GRADE 10 | WIRE SCULPTURE

## KING MIDAS' GOLDEN TOUCH



## Wanderer

She is one half shadow  
shielded by the darkness  
the stone arches have  
laid down on her, a blanket of shade.

When the harsh sun hits  
her face it shrinks back,  
hills of wrinkles deepen with her wince,  
valleys of old age.

She wears no shoes  
and her feet are callused,  
weathered and yellow toenails  
reaching for the cobblestones.

When she opens her mouth  
her cries are shrill.  
garbled words smack the pavement  
and bounce back.

But most mysterious  
are her eyes, that stare  
in opposite directions, icy blue  
and bloodshot.

Now she turns the corner,  
in search of a new spot.  
The three coins in her cup clink,  
her thick skirt drags behind.

This spot will be like all the others:  
tourists will roll their suitcases by,  
look up, then avert their gaze,  
unsure of which eye  
to look in.



**GARRETT COLLINS**

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

**MENEMSHA SUN**









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