

reflections



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Vol 46, Issue 1

The Berkeley Carroll School



◀ *Foggy* ▶

JORDAN HICKSON
GRADE 9 | PHOTOGRAPH

reflections



Vol 46, Issue 1

Cover:

< **Tuesday, 6:30** >

AMANDA ENNIS

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH

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 kettle corn and 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 feedback from the entire *Reflections* team before choosing and editing the final selections and laying out the magazine. Editors then submit all materials to our fantastic printer, review the proofs, and distribute 800 copies of our beautiful magazine—through our library, at admissions events, and, most special of all, at our senior dinner in May.

Reflections is a student-run, -led, and -organized coterie; neither the editors nor the staff receive class credit for their work. We are proud members of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The striking artwork and writing in this magazine were 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 year's *Reflections* would not have been possible without our faculty advisers, Dr. Hughes and Ms. Drezner, whose support was crucial in producing this volume. The publication of this magazine would not be complete without the help of Melissa Goldin in the Berkeley Carroll Communications Department and the design talents of Bob Lane at Studio Lane, Inc. And of course, *Reflections* would be blank without the thoughtful writing and intricate artwork that is shared with us each year. The sheer number of incredible submissions we received this year is representative of Berkeley Carroll students' willingness and excitement to create and share art. I believe that the art and writing included in this magazine reflects that passionate attitude, and I hope you can feel this energy while perusing our Upper School students' work.

GEMMA SIEGLER

Editor-in-Chief, Spring 2017

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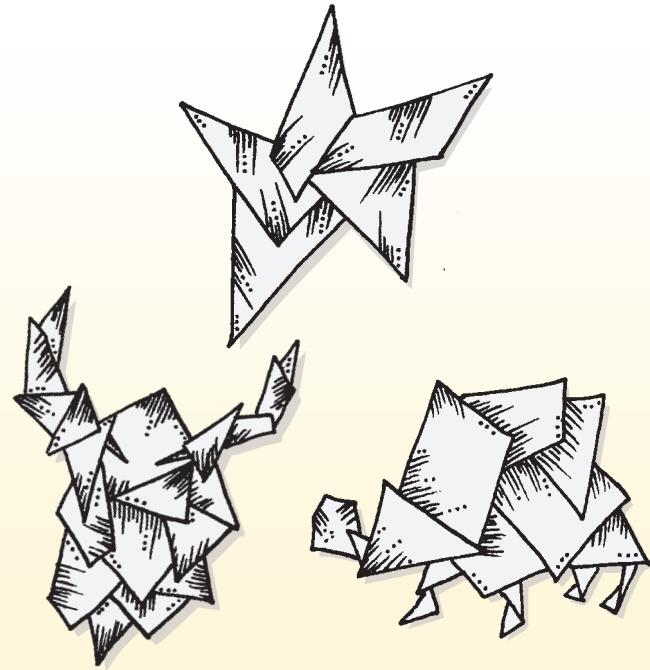
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GRADE 10 | DRAWING

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GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



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Art

The Broken and the Cracked,

< **Abstract Landscape** >

RACHAEL HIPKINS

GRADE 9 | OIL PASTEL



Personal

I am waiting for the sun to blind
the things I can't understand.
I want the sky to become as blue
as the highlighted words I'm deleting.

I will not allow these poems to resemble anything but fluffy clouds. I am listing—strawberries, bubbles, ice cream. I tap these words out rhythmically.

I need to be known differently
from the way I know myself.
Butterflies, kittens, fairies.
Not a good way to express emotion.

My headache continues to scream
as I dump the container of sugar
into the mug of once-black coffee.
Ponies, sprinkles, daffodils.

This isn't what I wanted to do.

< **Donyale Luna, 1966** >

MARLEY DUNCAN

GRADE 11 | DRAWING



White Man Looking

The white man stares into my soul and questions my existence:
How dare you?

As I ponder an answer, I rephrase the question:

How dare I? No, rather, how do I dare?

I dare to live in a world where my skin is a target for shooting practice.

I dare to be human in a world where my skin makes me a beast.

I dare to love in a world where my skin makes me unlovable.

I dare to laugh in a world where my skin makes my life a spectacle.

I dare to breathe in a world where I am suffocated by whiteness.

I dare to speak in a world where my skin mutes my words.

I dare to be black in a world so white.

And one day, hopefully, my existence won't be in spite of yours, white man.

And one day we can be in harmony, white man.

And one day it won't be so daring to be alive or to have ever lived.

Snow Angel

He died six days before the first snow of winter. For weeks, Jackson and I had woken up at five in the morning and tiptoed to the living room window. We would wait, watching for the sun to rise so we could see if there was any snow covering the grey cobblestone. And every morning, when the first rays of sunlight shone—just enough light to see that there was no white powder lining our dark red windowsill—we would sigh. Jackson would smile at me, and in an attempt to mask his disappointment would talk about how excited he was to be going back to sleep. I would watch as he walked back to his room, his shoulders drooping, knowing that all he wanted was to go out and make angels in the snow.

Jackson was born in the middle of a snowstorm. I remember how excited I was to have a little brother, even though I was just 4 myself. Exactly one week after my mom and Jackson came home from the hospital, I removed all of the stuffed animals from my little toy wagon and put Jackson inside instead. Desperate for a playmate, I bumped him downstairs and out the front door to play in the snow. I was 10 steps out the door, scooping up a handful of snow and trying to place it in my new best friend's clenched red hand, when my mother's instincts sent her racing outside. She kicked open the front door, scooped the baby out of the wagon, wiped away the snowflakes that had fallen on Jackson's cheeks, and brought him inside, all the while scolding me for what I had done. She fussed over Jackson, wrapping him in blankets to warm him up. He burst into tears, and my mother shook her head, sending me to the hall closet to retrieve another blanket.

I remember how badly I felt, thinking I had made my brother cry by taking him out into the cold snow. I now know that he was crying because my mother had taken him away from it. Over the next seven years of his life, my brother's love for all things winter earned him quite a reputation among our friends and family, along with the nickname Jack Frost.

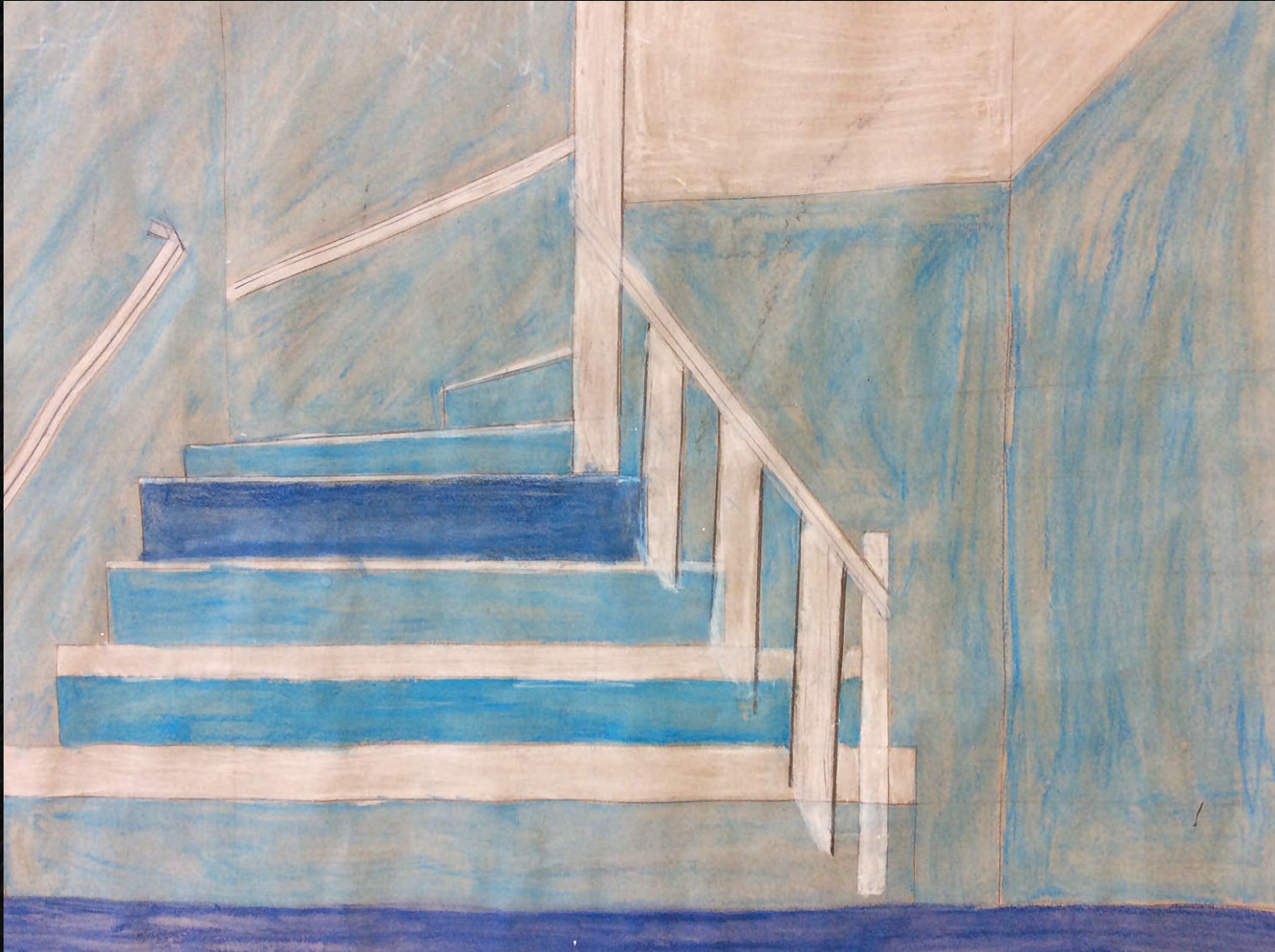
Because I no longer had a reason to wake up at five, I didn't know that the snow had come until nine in the morning on that next Saturday. My mother, who had left my brother's room exactly as he had, with the bed unmade and wooden train tracks on the floor, was awake and sitting at the kitchen table looking through an old photo album. She had been doing this every day since Jackson's death, organizing and reorganizing photographs from the moment she woke up until the moment she fell asleep. One look at her face made me realize that she hadn't woken up early that morning; she hadn't gone to sleep.

The snow was perfect. Although he was never one to be critical, I knew that Jackson got upset when the snow he waited for all year was unpackable and melted at a touch. I shaped some snow into a small ball and brought it inside.

< **Stairs** >

CAMILA BRIK

GRADE 9 | DRAWING



The first time I cried was when the freezer broke. I came home from school to find my parents kneeling on our kitchen floor, throwing out boxes of ice pops and wiping up the mess that the melted containers of ice cream had made. I knew right away, but I still raced to grab my ball of foil. I unwrapped it, and as soon as the cold water spilled down my hands the warm tears began to roll down my cheeks.

I would come home from school every day, open the freezer, and gently unfold a layer of tin foil, exposing the top of the snowball.

[. . .] Holding the tin foil package carefully in my hand, I would tell the snowball about my day.

< **Five Minutes' Peace** >

CLEO LYNN

GRADE 9 | DRAWING



The Wrath of Sabina

LIAM and SHAYNA, both between the ages of 15 and 20, stand a little ways apart from one another in a classroom of a high school. They have pushed a few desks away from the center of the classroom in order to create a decent-sized stage, which they are confined to. They both hold scripts titled, “The Wrath of Sabina.”

Liam: Your line first.

Shayna: “The silly thing is, I had actually thought that you were capable of love.”
(*She raises her eyebrows slightly.*)

Liam: “Oh, stop complaining. You’re just jealous of my happiness with Veronica.”

Shayna: “I’m far from jealous! You would understand if you just looked at me, for once. Really looked, *deep* down.” *Deep* down? Is that the right inflection? (*scoffs*) God, this play is so moronic.

Liam: *(not paying attention)* I don't know, it sounded fine to me.

Shayna: I mean, really. This poor guy has been chasing after her for months, and the moment she realizes, he moves on. It's not exactly original.

Liam: (*mutters*) “All my being has been devoted to you for so long . . .”

Shayna: Sorry, sorry. Let's keep going.

Liam: Okay, where were we?

Shayna: “. . . if you just looked at me, for once. Really looked, deep down.”

Liam: “See, that’s just the thing! I have looked. I looked and looked and looked, and while I was looking you were screwing other guys. All my being has been devoted to you for so long. But I’ve moved on and found something real with Veronica.” *(coughs)*

Shayna: Do you need water?

Liam: Yeah, maybe. I think Angela left her water bottle . . . (*rummages in bag*)

Shayna: (waiting, eyes darting to Liam's bent back and quickly away again) How is Angela?

Liam: *(taking a long drink from the bottle)* She's good. Colorado is nice. I've visited her a few times since she left.

Shayna: How's long distance?

Liam: It's weird. Hard to keep up with her.

Shayna: Oh.

(Beat.)

Liam: Let's keep going. Mrs. Hansen will get annoyed if we spend all of rehearsal back here.

Shayna: That woman will get annoyed with us no matter what we do.

Liam: *(slight chuckle)* True. But c'mon. "I've moved on and found something real with Veronica."

Shayna: "How real can your relationship possibly be? Howard, you've known her a month. I'm the one you've spent countless nights dreaming about, the one who you always assumed would end up sleeping in the bed beside you." See, another thing about this scene: how would she even know that?

Liam: She doesn't know whether or not he has been dreaming about her. She's just trying whatever she can to get him to remember how he used to feel about her.

Shayna: *(embarrassed, trying to save face)* Well, the writer should be more clear about that.

Liam: Hey now, don't attack the great *(checks cover of play)* Jenny Burmato over your own little mistake.

Shayna: *(sarcastic)* Wow, I didn't realize I was standing in a room with Jenny Burmato's number one fan!

Liam: I'll have you know, I've read every single play she has ever published. I think she's brilliant.

Shayna: *(laughs)* I never know when you're kidding and when you're serious.

Liam: That's part of my charm.

Shayna: Oh no, that's so tragic . . . Has no one felt the need to inform you? You have no charm, Liam. You're literally charmless.

Liam: Oh, please. I have 10 times more charm than the rest of the guys at this school. Have you seen this muscle? *(bares his skinny arm)*.

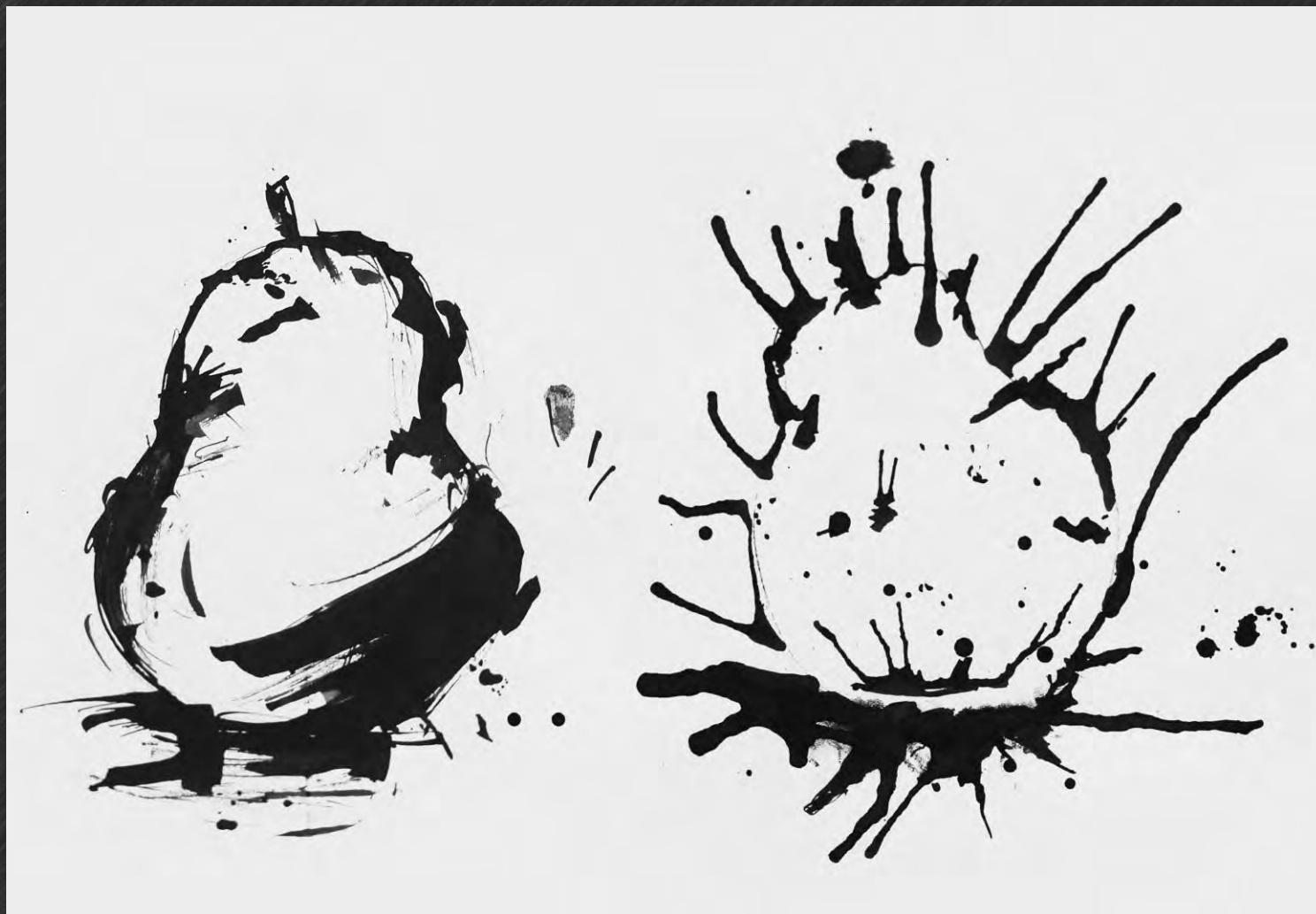
Shayna: Ten times zero is still zero . . .

Liam: *(laughing)* I think if we read some more of the GREAT Jenny Burmato's dialogue, you might be convinced of her brilliance.

< **Ripe & Rotten** >

RACHAEL HIPKINS

GRADE 9 | PAINTING



Shayna: *(not looking at him)* I really did like you, Liam. A lot. I'd never felt like that before, like my own life was dependent on someone else. And I felt everything, all of a sudden. I don't know how to describe it. It was like discovering a new planet, like walking on water. I don't know. Just—yeah. I liked you so impossibly

< **Hello** >

EVE BLANK

GRADE 10 | CHARCOAL



A Feminist Sestina

*Written to Break the Stereotype that All Sestinas Must be Six Stanzas
with a Three Line Envoy, as the Sestina was First Written by Arnaut Daniel, a
Troubadour Living in the 12th Century, Who was, as You Probably Guessed, a Man.*

Waking up and we are pre-
determined. We open our blinds to the light
stinging rays into our dark,
blinding our comfort. The little girl
we all have in us taps the little boy
we all have in us, de-

composing the finely twisted fibers of sleep, de-
compiling the pre-
aspirations expressed in dreams of our boy,
and we rise, drawn to the mysterious light.
Our little boy whispers to his little girl
And his whisper cuts the dark

in half and rumbles through what is left of the dark
and his whisper rumbles an earthquake of de-
authorization and into our stomach sinks the girl.
A slippery esophagus leads her to our pre-
adolescent voice box, a slit of light
blocked now by our little boy.

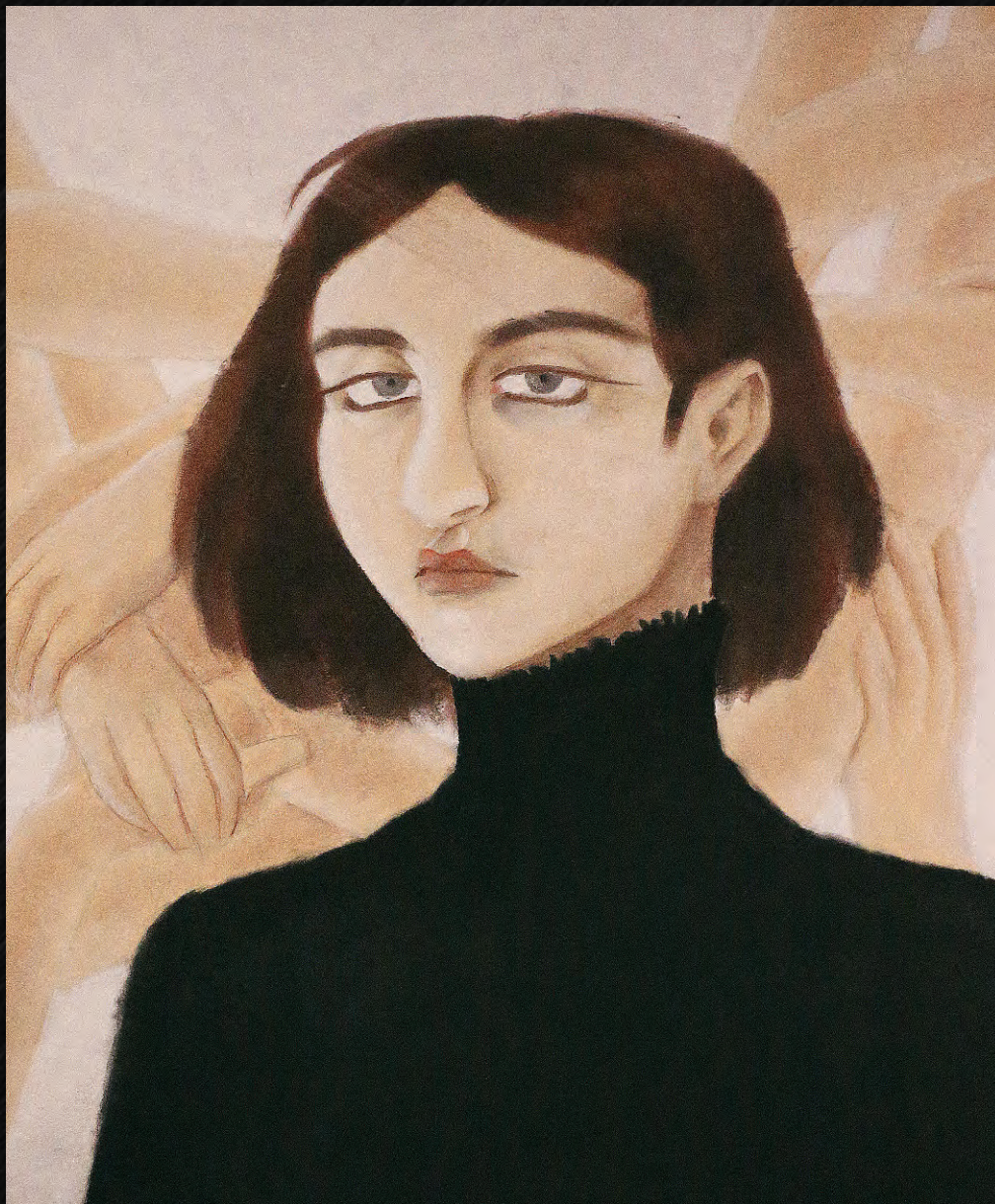
And she begins to climb towards the boy.
Slipping through the foggy, dark
innards of our body, to get to the light.
We composed the maze, we composed the de-
tours. We think we disposed of pre-
dispositions. We retch to show the light to our girl.



< **Anaphema I** >

LEILA McCLAIN

GRADE 10 | OIL PASTEL



The Wolf Puts on Mother's Clothes

When her mother held her body for the first time in trembling arms, she was lovely, fragile as a moth's wings, a little rabbit heart beating strong against her ribcage.

As she grew, she withered.

Blonde dulled to mousey brown. Porcelain skin turned pale and pock-marked as the bark of her father's favorite birch tree. She was born soft, wide-eyed, and eager. When no one was watching, something changed. Her mother looked down at the hollow-eyed thing in her daughter's bed, thinking, "It isn't her. It can't be her."

On winter nights, the girl's mother would catch her scrubbing her face with dish soap until it was red and raw, shiny with the fragility of too-new skin. The girl would stare at herself, eyes distant and cold, until her mother called her away, to dinner, or chores, or anything that would make her stop.

On summer days, her mother watched her play with other girls. They leapt around her while she sat, stagnant, on the ground, watching silently. One child took her hand, smiled, asked to play. The girl smiled like a shark, dead eyes and gleaming teeth, before dragging her nails down the other girl's wrist until they drew blood. The other girl shouted at her, pleaded, but the girl stayed silent, vacuous. She wasn't asked to play again.

She was a wolf born in a lamb's skin. If she had listened, her mother would have heard it; the splash of blood between claws, the wet slurp of entrails, the tear of flesh between teeth. She would have smelled the viscera on her daughter's breath.

She didn't want to hear. Or smell.

The girl's mother taught her soon after to mold her face into what it should be. Tinted liquid transformed her face into The Face, the smooth, putty-like flesh her mother loved more than the real thing. At least she could look at the mask without flinching.

Early every morning, the girl dabbed on powder to make her eyes bright. She melted a thick cream into her skin, erasing herself. Onto a pale canvas, she drew herself reborn: supple skin, pink-bow mouth, pink cheeks to match. She turned her thick animal hide soft and pliant as warm clay, tucking, smoothing, adjusting.

Over time, she wiped words her mother whispered in the dark from her thoughts. “She doesn’t look like my baby. My baby would be kind, and beautiful. My baby is nothing like that thing.” She drank in the replacements. Her father called her “Honey.” Her mother called her “You,” or “Liar.”

It was easy enough to alter her shell. Her skin was a blank page, her body a molting cocoon. She'd been hiding her whole life, a wolf in her mother's clothing. The inside stuck around, though, carved into bone and woven through sinew.

The inside was monstrous.

< Associates >

< Baby Bird >

JULIA HARRISON

GRADE 11 | MIXED MEDIA



Williamsburg

Try to look for someone under fifty.
Bet you can't find one.
We did, but even he looked cool,
With a scraggly style—
like a hip version of Santa.

There were legs, too—
tattooed legs partially concealed under
fishnet stockings
scratched with crosses and roses, and girls
with big hips and long hair.
My mother hated it.

It all looked intentional.
Ripped shirts were ripped for a reason;
rusty buckets weren't left in store windows—
they were placed there

(intentional in a way
that I am not—
purposeful dirt and grunge
that could make you feel
like you had no purpose at all).

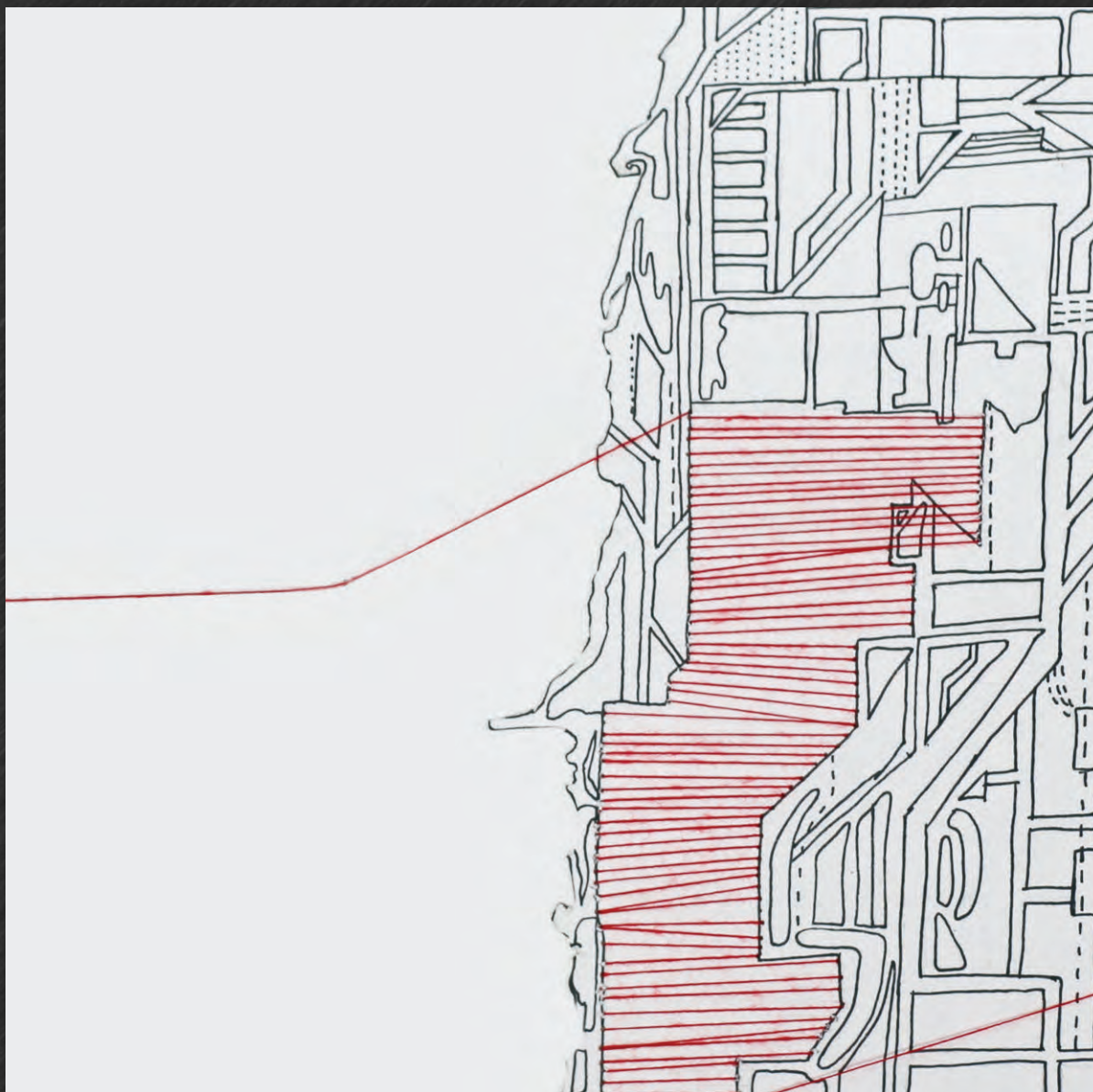
And I know I *do*
and I'll find it soon,
but for now
it's easier to think
about that café,

the one that was called
“coffee”
—just “coffee”—
and it annoyed
the hell out of me.

< **Redlining** >

CHLOE SHANE

GRADE 11 | MIXED MEDIA



Replaced?

When I was an only child I had my own room, but slept with my mom, never shared my toys, and was the cutest. Mom spoke of 8-year-old me as if I were a saint and she constantly reminded me that I would be what she left in the world once she passed away. “You’ve done such a great job raising him!” said anyone. That’s what I loved the most. But maybe it was too much pressure or I just didn’t want to fight back alone anymore or I needed a friend really badly—I decided I needed a sibling.

“Maaahm, can I please have a sibling to play with, please?” By that time I liked this new dad enough that maybe a brother or sister would trap him. My mom glanced at George, my stepdad, and responded, “Well, we will see and try our best.” I waited. I lost my third tooth. I waited. I started my first day of Shotokan karate. I waited. I got the acceptance to Prep for Prep. I was too old for a sibling now. An 11-year-old doesn’t need a brother anymore and I certainly didn’t want to play with a baby.

My mom waited to announce that she was having a baby until Thanksgiving because this time she had to be sure. When my uncle announced that his girlfriend Ayana was pregnant, my mother found her opening. My grandmother and I both hit the highest opera note as we cried out.

“I’m finally getting a brother or sister! I want to name it! I’m not sharing my room with it though! If it’s a boy he can even have my Hot Wheels cars in the big blue car under grandma’s bed!” I ran to the room and rolled out the gift I had saved for a younger brother for seven years. If this was a girl I would not be prepared.

My mom was only a little disappointed 16 weeks in when she found out that she was having a baby boy. We narrowed the names down to Hunter, Jayden, and George. I shook in the bed next to my mom because this was the most important part, naming. Weeks passed and all the names seemed too clichéd. “Let’s just drop the J in Jayden then, mom!” Ayden ended up being the most popular, and thus most clichéd, name of 2011.

“Okay, sit down in that chair and Grandma will place him on your lap.” I sat in the blue chair next to the television with my back facing the glass so my new baby brother could look at the view. He hadn’t opened his eyes yet, but he was so warm and so real. “I want to carry him inside!” I screeched. “Wait, let me help you.”

And yet it was late for him to come. What if I had to share a room? “Wait, but I want to talk to you about what happened in math class today, it was so funny—”

I didn't mean that.

But when I was 9 and 10, I believed my mom didn't have a baby because she was too busy. She woke us up at 5:30 to get us to Sweet Melissa's on Court Street by 7:00, where I slept until we walked over to PS 29 by 8:15. She was too busy going to those doctor's appointments all the time. After those appointments my mom always cried too much. Only after many doctor appointments and years of maturity did I realize what had happened. Four times. "I am trying though, baby," was all she said.

< **Heranjalu** >

ARI BROWN

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



Empty Eyes

Every morning, before heading to the office, he goes out for a run along the *Dársena Nacional* in the Barcelona Port. He runs down *Via Laietana*, crosses *Passeig d'Isabel II*, and goes out onto the docks. As he passes the aquarium, the smell of the ocean always wafts up with the coursing wind. The various sailboats and triremes sway in the wind and rock with the waves. Every day, after his run, he returns home to his one-bedroom apartment above the pizzeria in *el Barrio Gótico*, across the street from the Barcelona Hemp Museum, showers, and then takes the train to work. During his train ride to the office, he thinks back on his morning run. He attempts to recall all the things he saw. What new life did he see? Were there any new boats? How many taxis with green lights drove by? Are those kids still smoking pot under that bridge? He's never really sure—he always runs too fast to take that much in—but it passes the time when he doesn't have much else to think about.

The one thing that hasn't changed for a long time now is one boat. The boat always crosses his mind during those moments on the train. It arrived a few years ago and never left. It looks like a yacht, but much much bigger, maybe the size of six yachts. He doesn't know that much about yachts. All he knows about boats is from what he sees as he runs. Since its arrival, he's been wondering what kind of boat it is and where it's going to go. Perhaps it's a cruise of sorts and he can go buy a ticket to travel around the world. Or maybe it's a private boat that belongs to a rich man. Or woman. Who's to say? But he always runs right by it, looking at the matte-black hull and the little circle-shaped windows, trying to imagine its secrets. If only there were a man standing there that he could talk to, ask about where to get a ticket or a tour of the inside.

But the boat always leaves his mind once he's at work. He likes his job, and he spends the majority of every day working, even weekends. He's always been a very solitary guy, so he doesn't often socialize with people. He's friendly with his coworkers, but he prefers himself as his company when he goes out—not that he goes



out that often. He never knew his father, who walked out a long time ago. The only thing he left behind was a vague memory and a lot of money, so it hasn't been too difficult to have him gone. They were happy without him, he and his mom. It was just the two of them, spending time together and admiring his steady stream of achievements through school and work. But then she started to forget.

It started with small things. She would leave the water on, and they would come home to the whole house flooded. "Oh, silly me. I left the tub overflowing. Could you help me mop it up?"

*Then one day she forgot
her keys at home. Then on
another, she forgot her train card.
Then, one day, her purse. Then
making dinner. Then her insulin.
Then her birthday. His birthday.
Her ex husband. Her son.
Herself.*

He would smile, "Haha, how forgetful you can be. Let's go get the mop and bucket." And that would be it.

Then one day she forgot to turn the stove off. They came home to the smell of gas. "Quick, put out the candles! How silly of me, I left the stove on!"

He would always respond, smiling and laughing out of love, "Haha, *mamá* you need to keep your head on straight." And that would be it.

Then one day she forgot her keys at home. Then on another, she forgot her train card. Then, one day, her purse. Then making dinner. Then her insulin. Then her birthday. His birthday. Her ex-husband. Her son. Herself.

He always remembers these things as he writes the checks he sends in the mail to *Centre Stauros* retirement home in Barcelona. He misses her so much. He misses the movie nights and the smell of popcorn wafting through the apartment and the Spanish classic rock she would put on the radio while she cooked. He misses her face. It's too difficult for him to see her in person. To see those eyes look at him—the eyes of his mother,

sway in the water as the tide rolls in. It's the first time he has passed through just walking. He goes around the separate docks, reading the names of the boats.

La Marea II

La María Posada Segunda

La Lancha Baja

El Recuerdo

El Olvidadizo

Suddenly, he starts to jog across the dock, then run, then sprint, like he hasn't sprinted since he was a little kid. He runs across the pier and to the aquarium, looking for the boat, but as he arrives he notices a great hole in the aesthetic of the pier. Where an enormous and mysterious, matte-black ship once floated, is just another black lot of water. He stands there.

The next day he doesn't go for a run. He does go to the docks, to pass among all the boats, but he does something new. He walks, and he reads every single name of every single boat. He doesn't want to miss a single detail.

< *The Broken and the Cracked* >

NATALIE SHEA

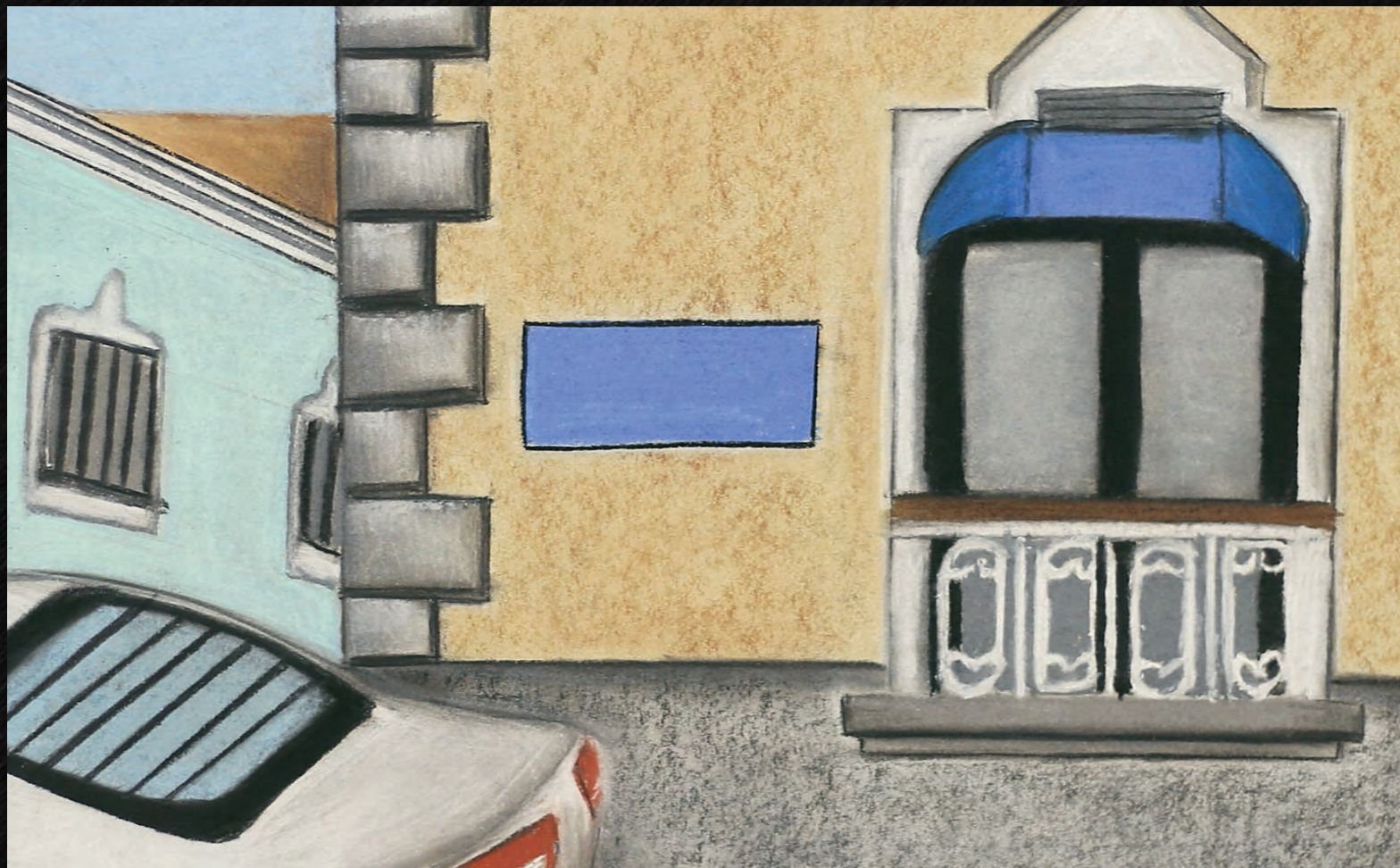
GRADE 10 | CERAMIC



< **Parked** >

VICTORIA SOTOMAYOR

GRADE 10 | CHARCOAL



An Ether of Men

(after Magritte's Golconda)

Everyone always
thinks businessmen
are falling from the
sky, like rain. But

they aren't. The whole world is actually covered in a three-dimensional

lattice of men. Like
the marshmallow
toothpick structures
you used to make in

elementary school.
Or like a diagram of
ice, frozen in a
crystal formation.

Rest Heavy

Describe what happened,
they ask me, because even
after I had told the transit

worker, the conductor, the
sergeant, the policeman, my
family, even after I wrote it

down for the world to read, it
wasn't enough. They start
small: What train did you get on?

Where were you going? Where
were you coming from? As if
my agenda had mattered to him.

What stop were you on when
he touched you? How do I
explain that in the very moment

his hand reached over I was
not thinking about the time or
the place? Where exactly did he

touch you? Does whether or not
it was my thigh or my butt,
whether on the left or the right,

whether his hand traveled up or
down, really matter? They say
he grabbed me, but how do I

describe that his fingers danced
across my thigh, leaving fire
in their wake and a hollowness

in my stomach? Do you not realize
that your questions mean nothing?
So let me ask you something . . .

Does the embarrassment ever go away?
How do I respond to
how are you feeling?

Honestly? Or do I lie to spare
the feelings of my family? Am I a
victim or a survivor? Will I ever

be able to feel safe again? In my
own home? My own city? There are
some questions that rest heavy on the heart.



< *For Better or For Worse* >

SARA TOBIAS

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



Elephants Never Forget

At the beginning of this year I was gifted a small fake gold beaded bracelet by my mother. A delicate elephant charm dangled from a metal hook between sixteen shiny blue beads. It split them into groups of eight.

The bracelet began to lose
its glint as I wore it every day.
In the shower, to bed—I fidgeted
with it all the time.
The gold beads began
to wear away, some rusting,
some turning grey.

The bracelet stretched.
It wriggled on my wrist
and would fall off on occasion.
The string went from clear to black and the
bracelet became frail.
Thinning out, it could barely hold its own weight.

Then the elephant charm
fell off.
“Elephants never forget,”
my mother had told me when she gifted
me the small fake gold beaded
bracelet with the delicate elephant charm
at the beginning of this year.

“Why do you still wear that?”
she sometimes asks me now:
“I can buy you a new one you know,
a cuter one.”
Has she forgotten its
meaning?

Barbie

I had to hide my Barbie dolls on the top shelf in a blue Lego box so that Mom wouldn't find them. She hated Barbies. She would raise her eyebrows at me whenever I ran up to her in the toy store cradling a Barbie in its long, rectangular, plastic casing. I eventually stopped bringing Barbies to meet her, knowing that the answer would always be *No, Hannah, you can't have a Barbie. Put it back on the shelf.*

But I still managed to find Barbies. I had to be sneaky, of course. At the height of my collection, I had seven. The first two were hand-me-downs from the girl whose dad worked with my dad and who picked her nose once at an office party in front of everybody. One of them was blonde, like me, and I called her Alexandra. She was beautiful. She wore a short dress with orange and green flowers and bell-bottom sleeves. I didn't like this dress at all, so I stripped her almost immediately and hid the dress in my sister's room. Unfortunately, that left Alexandra naked for a little while, but sacrifices had to be made, and I did not like orange. Her sister, Jane, was a brunette, so I liked her a little less, but I never would have said it to her face. She was beautiful, too, but less so. She had a necklace of pearls which was not removable (I tried to transfer it to the nude Alexandra unsuccessfully), and a baby blue dress that was slightly too short. Alexandra tried on the blue dress, but it looked better with Jane's eyes, so Jane got to keep it. Alexandra made do with a form-fitting dress made of Kleenex that I fastened with tape and a short piece of pink string.

The first two Barbies were not just sisters because they came from the same source: they were also identical. Aside from the thin, pliable strands of their plastic hairdos and the color of their abnormally large eyes, the two dolls were the same. When I received them, I assumed that this meant they were twins. I was unaware that every single Barbie doll is created in the same mold.

The Barbies were safe from Mom's disapproving eye when they were concealed on the top shelf. Even she couldn't reach them when they were up there. I had to

I don't know who gave me the Ken doll. He came with only a pair of blue balloon pants, similar to the style MC Hammer made famous. Those pants were hideous, but the Ken doll was beautiful. He had electric blue eyes, shellacked blond hair, glistening white teeth, and abs of the hardest plastic (which were conveniently always on display because he had no shirt to cover them). I might have been a little in love with the Ken doll. When I created stories with my Barbies, I would never let him flirt with Alexandra or Jane, out of fear that he might prefer them to me.

< **Passerby** >

GEMMA SIEGLER

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



I found Broccoli a few weeks before I learned that I had to get glasses. I told Mom that I didn't want glasses, that they were ugly, that the other kids would probably like me less now, but she was not deterred. I chose to get frames the same color as Jane's dress: baby blue. When I put the blue glasses on for the first time, it was like entering a whole new world, where there were a million books with titles I could read on the shelves at the bookstore, and each person on the street had their own face that was distinct from everyone else's face, and I could tell you what was happening in the house across the street simply by looking through the window. It was miraculous. The world was so vast and detailed and beautiful. The only thing that looked uglier through the lenses of my glasses was my own reflection.

My second boy Barbie was actually a G.I. Joe which my dad received as a Hanukkah present. I stole him so that the Ken doll could have a friend. Unlike the rest of the group, he was not beautiful. He had a gash along his cheek and his plastic lips were turned down in a cruel sneer. He came in an army uniform, a nondescript beige thing with stars on the lapels. He asked out Broccoli almost immediately and they went steady for a long time. The third boy was originally a girl Barbie whose hair was cut so short that it stuck straight up, and who sported a puffy purple coat that hid his rather feminine breasts. I drew a slick goatee on this one and he became the flirtiest of the group, even though he was nowhere near as beautiful as the Ken doll. Sometimes he got a kiss or two for his pains, but most times he directed his attentions at Broccoli and received a slap instead: she was very much in love with the G.I. Joe.

I never had that moment when I looked in the mirror and compared myself to a Barbie. You know what I'm talking about: that moment in the ads for body positivity when the little girl puts down her doll and goes to stare at herself in the mirror, sucking in her gut, pursing her lips, measuring her body against the doll's. I was never so obvious as that. But the Barbies did affect me. They patiently tutored me in beauty, teaching me how cheekbones and hips and clavicles should look before I knew the names of any of those parts. I learned about eyelashes, how they were supposed to be longer on the top eyelid and curl outwards; I learned about thighs, how they were supposed to separate to form a gap; I learned about hair, how it was supposed to be perfectly straight or perfectly curled and so blond that it was almost yellow. And I may not have had that movie moment when I looked in the mirror and wished I looked like my dolls, but I had many moments when I could have looked in the mirror and chose not to.

I tricked my grandmother into buying Anna. It was nearing my 10th birthday, and I walked into the toy store to get my hair cut, and there she was. Technically, she was named Rapunzel, which was why her hair reached below her waist and why she wore a crown. When you pulled a string on her back, she would sing a little verse from the Barbie Rapunzel movie, which was enchanting. *This*, I thought, *is surely the most beautiful Barbie of all time*. Her dress was lilac, coated in fairy dust, and lacy in all the right places. Again, the only difference between her and Jane or Alexandra or Broccoli (or the boy Barbie, for that matter) was her hair. But her hair was oh-so-beautiful, so blond and straight and long and perfect. I pleaded with my grandmother, who glanced at Mom through the store window and hustled me to the cash register.

Over and over again, Anna got engaged to the Ken doll. The boy Barbie got slapped in the face by Broccoli. Jane and Alexandra fought to win the attention of the G.I. Joe. I covered the group with blankets as Mom stalked by the door to my bedroom. Broccoli and Anna had arguments (Anna won) and Jane wanted to become Anna's best friend (Anna decided she did not need a new best friend) and Alexandra tried to steal the Ken doll from Anna (Anna kept the Ken doll and stole Alexandra's

Long after the Lego box started gathering dust, I signed up to volunteer at the daycare of the homeless shelter. When I entered the dimly lit room for the first time, a cry came up from one of the tables. *You are so beautiful*, smiled a little girl, whose black hair was in tight cornrows, with plastic bows clipped on the end of each strand. She had brown skin and brown eyes, big and melty and curious. She was perfectly plump, a little more cushy than her peers, and her little tummy peeked out of the gap between the top of her pants and her shirt, which was hot pink, with a sparkly design of a kitten plastered on the front. She would prove to me in the coming months that she was kind, funny, and thoughtful.

She continued, *You look just like a Barbie*, and I wanted to cry.

< *Exploring Kintsukuroi* >

TOLUWANI ROBERTS

GRADE 12 | CERAMIC



Synonyms for Racially Ambiguous

(after Marc Philippe Eskenazi)

Racially Ambiguous: A conversation starter! People love to play “guess your ethnicity.” In third grade the whole class plays. There is one class where instead of doing the math worksheet, people just yell guesses from all over the room: “Hawaiian? Portuguese! No way, she’s definitely Chinese, guys.” You think this is funny, so you don’t stop it.

Racially Ambiguous: A term you understand applies to you, even when you do not know how to spell the word ambiguous.

Racially Ambiguous: An inconvenience. The general public is unable to accurately pigeonhole you into a series of common stereotypes, and now people have to get creative, which just opens the microaggression floodgate.

Racially Ambiguous: “So, you’re Chinese?”

Racially Ambiguous: A reason for strangers to stare at you on the subway. This will never stop making you uncomfortable, but you learn to deal with it, and now you know exactly how quickly you have to speed walk if you want to switch train cars in between stops.

Racially Ambiguous: “No, I mean, where are you *really* from? Like, Taiwan or whatever, right?”

Racially Ambiguous: “That’s not your mom.” When your mom comes to your classroom to drop off something you forgot at home—homework, a drawing, your favorite eraser—she walks in the room, declares herself to be your mom, hands you whatever it was, and then leaves. In awe, your classmates huddle around you asking if that was really your mom—of course it was *your mom*, who else would have access to your favorite eraser?! Finally one girl, we’ll call her Anastasia, says what you guess a lot of people are thinking: “That’s not your mom. You’re Asian, that lady wasn’t Asian. She can’t be your mom.” You go home crying and ask if you were adopted, because the whole class thinks so, so it must be true.



Racially Ambiguous: Being really self-conscious of your accent when you speak Spanish, because people already don't believe you when you tell them you're Hispanic.

Racially Ambiguous: A pickup line. On your first subway ride—by yourself—a strange man grabs you by the shoulder and says, “Hey, beautiful, what are you?” After being coached for years on how not to talk to strangers and because he is creepy and you are 11, you say nothing and switch trains cars, but not without hearing that same stranger yell that you are a bitch, and he was just asking a question.

Racially Ambiguous: Not looking like your siblings.

Racially Ambiguous: Not looking like your friends.

Racially Ambiguous: Not looking like anyone you've ever seen on TV, or in magazines, or anywhere really.

Racially Ambiguous: “Can I count you as one of my black friends? I just don't have that many, and if I count you that makes three.” Your childhood best friend says this to you while you are getting ice cream together one night. You don't realize how uncomfortable it makes you until months later, because you always just assume she means well.

Racially Ambiguous: Other. This is the bubble you filled in for standardized tests, until recently when whoever makes standardized tests decided that it's not *actually* that much of a hassle to let you fill in more than one bubble.

Racially Ambiguous: Not your identity. There is nothing ambiguous about who you are.

Racially Ambiguous: “Hey, can you do my math homework? No actually, are you good at math?”

Racially Ambiguous: “Excuse me, is this your daughter? Where did you get her from?” You go on a walk with your mom, and some random lady asks your mom this. You are fully aware that you were not adopted, but wouldn't it just be easier to tell her you were, because what does it really matter to her? Why should you have to keep explaining yourself to people?

Racially Ambiguous: A convenience. Despite the fact that you see no ambiguity in terms of your racial identity, it is easier for other people to label you that way. You keep finding yourself accommodating other people's *curiosity*—assuring them that they are not part of the problem. Even when they might be.

< **Social Fraudulence** >

GALA PRUDENT

GRADE 12 | PAINTING



Faded Mauve

The silver rose burns tonight,
dark chocolate fire,
midnight unrest.

The room recoils,
strung with curtained hells
tortured needles wreak havoc
on tiny strings.

She's in her faded mauve,
her worn sewn 90s throwback,
her seamless silence.

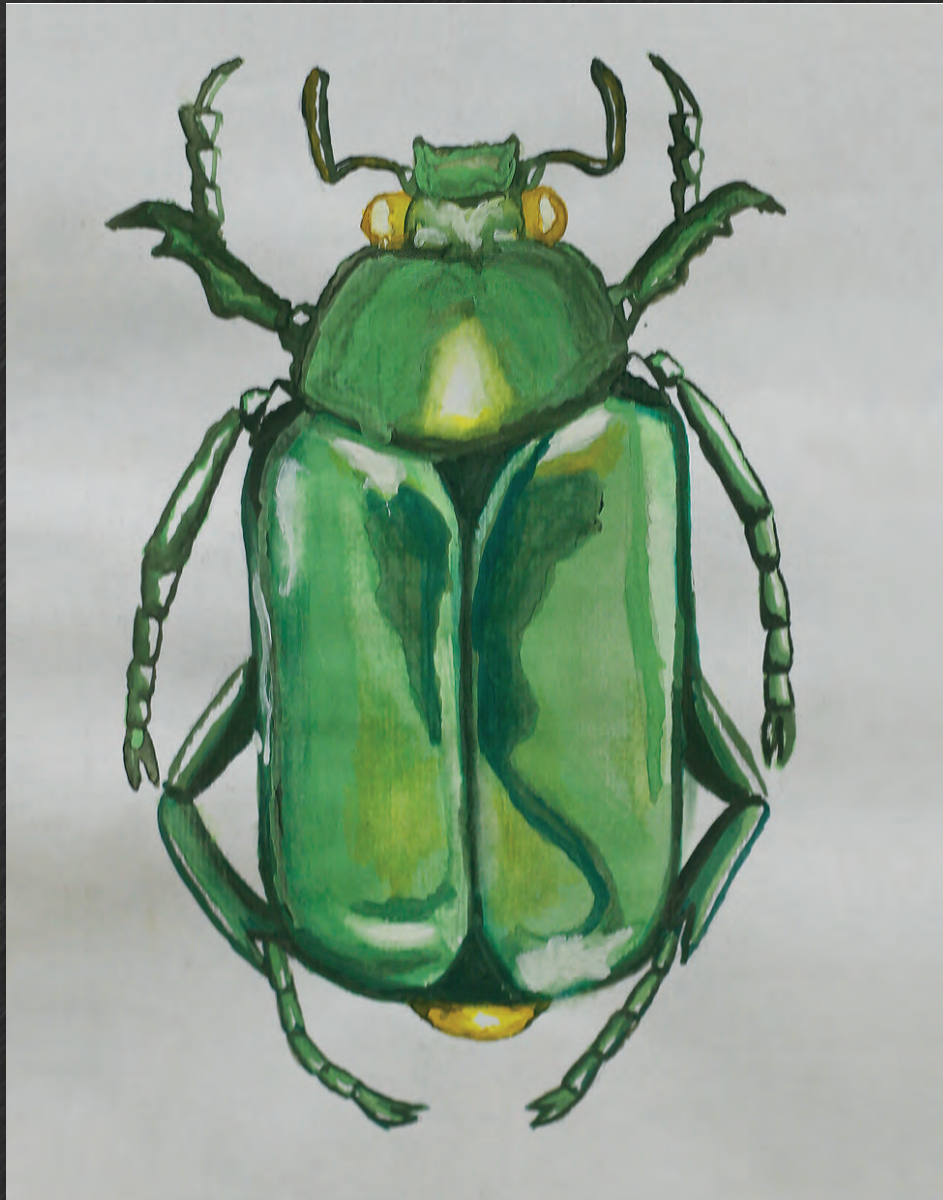
Ceilings break down walls,
the cusp of dawn shattered,
the night is still young.

< ***Dog in the Dunes*** >

SARA TOBIAS

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH





< **Covered** >

EVE BLANK

GRADE 10 | CHARCOAL



Dramatic Irony

The formal definition of dramatic irony is “a literary device, originally used in Greek tragedies, by which the full significance of a character’s words or actions are clear to the audience although unknown to the character.” But perhaps it is more helpful to think of it as those moments that make you and your friend look at each other and raise your eyebrows.

Example: Imagine you're at your friend's birthday party and you've just wet yourself. In pants that are slowly growing cold around your legs, you find yourself glued to your spot. If you release yourself from it, the other girls will see the stains on your pants and connect them to you. This is why, when Alison makes the long-anticipated call to cake, you don't join the sugar-bound stampede. Through the chaos, Alison somehow notices that she is one shy girl short. When she finds an ashamed you hiding on the bed in your darkened jeans, she doesn't even make you say anything. In her usual boisterous, unapologetic way, she tells you a story about a time she peed her pants. You can't remember what it is now, but you didn't feel that you lost any dignity when you stood up and asked her to take you to the bathroom. Before you leave the room she lets you pick out a pair of her daughter's pants and undies. The birthday girl is not mean-spirited when she asks you why you're wearing her pants, and she unselfishly agrees when her mother tells her "I just think she looks so cute in them." Had this been a play, the birthday girl would have been the character in question and Alison and I would be sitting side by side in the audience, making this an example of dramatic irony.

Another example of dramatic irony: when you tell her you think she looks so cute in her new pixie cut. She thanks you and zips you into the dress she made for your costume. It fits perfectly.



Understatement:

Understatement is the presentation of something as smaller or less important than it actually is. It is also often used in theater. It's what you use in place of catharsis (the process of releasing, and thereby relief from, strong or repressed emotions. See *catharsis*.)

Example: You see Jesse crying in the hall. Her mousy blonde bob hangs in unbrushed strings around her head. You've never understood her hair, though you've tried to emulate it. You ask her what's wrong. She says she broke the art teacher's

*When your mother
tells you that nobody's perfect,
you think that she is wrong,
because Jesse is perfect.
And if Jesse isn't perfect,
you don't want to be perfect.
You want to be Jesse.*

felting needle while making her little wool dog that she was going to give to her mother on her birthday. She says she's stupid. You say that she's not. This is an understatement. You don't just think she's not stupid, you think she's the smartest person you've ever met. You think she's the kindest person you've ever met. When your mother tells you that nobody's perfect, you think that she is wrong, because Jesse is perfect. And if Jesse isn't perfect, you don't want to be perfect. You want to be Jesse. You want to be boyish, honest, left-handed, neat, buck-toothed, funny, extroverted. No one ever yells at Jesse. Mom says that Jesse's mom probably yells at her, but you don't believe her.

Another example of understatement is when you see Jesse crying in her coat at the school's front door 10 years later, and she tells you she's not feeling well. You'll tell her that's too bad, and go back to practicing your lines.

Overstatement:

Overstatement is formally defined as "the act of expressing something too strongly." Overstatement is often linked to *catharsis* (see *catharsis*). Overstatement is the thing that makes you look at a friend in a new dress and say, "Well, damn."

Example: You are on a little league soccer team. Your coach's name is Francois, and he is French. During games, he screams "GRACE! Get BACK in YOUR

POSISHUHN!” until you can’t remember anything else he’s ever said to you and you can’t imagine a game if it’s not set to the tune of coach Franc’s hysterics. You think that he is a very special person because he’s European and doesn’t smoke. You’re pretty sure he doesn’t smoke because his voice is loud and clear enough to make kids three fields away stand at attention. This is an example of overstatement. You’re all 10. It’s not right to make little girls cry. But it’s okay, because you think a grown man having a temper tantrum about little league soccer is the funniest thing you’ve ever seen.

Another example of overstatement is when he takes 30 seconds to cry in the middle of his speech. You've never heard anyone speak so quietly. So maybe it's not an overstatement.

Rehearsal:

The last place where you'll have all your baby teeth. The place you were before they were ripped from your mouth to make way for sturdier ones that could chew what you were forced to swallow.

The place where you will not be on Saturday, even though everyone else is there.
Except Jesse.

Plot Twist:

Plot twists are what make the rest of the play feel like a farce.

People don't talk about the plot twists, because they're afraid to spoil them.

Example: Why didn't you tell me, mom?

She didn't want anybody to know.

How long?

Remember when she had that cute pixie cut? She was losing her hair.

That was the last time I saw her.

You didn't even see her on Saturday.



Catharsis:

Catharsis is formally defined as “the purging of strong or repressed feelings,” but to you it is the muddy sludge that settles in cities after a snow. It is ugly, and it is everywhere. It’s in your bed, watching you sleep. It’s in your shower, camouflaged in the other water droplets. It takes up the seat next to you on the schoolbus. It sits next to you on the couch in the dean’s office.

It makes you mix up the tenses.

Example: She was . . . is so joyful. She is . . . was . . . like a mother to us.

Tragedy:

Formally known as a “play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending usually involving the downfall of the main character.” But a real tragedy doesn’t have an ending. Ending would imply that the play was finished. A real tragedy just stops.

Example: Alison Thompson was born in Georgia. At college, she met and fell in love with a French boy named Francois Mao. After graduation, they were married. Years after their marriage, they conceived a little girl. When she was born, they named her Jesse. They moved to Park Slope, sent their daughter to school every day, and bought a cat named Felix. When Felix died, everyone knew. The entire kindergarten class offered their condolences.

Everybody knew Alison, for she demanded to be known, much as a perfect peach demands to be eaten. She was six feet tall, fleshy and rosy. Her only flaws were that she was honest to a fault and never on time: but the sun doesn't always rise exactly when we hope it will. Rough around the edges but pure at heart, she gave genuine love such that the people who received it knew that it had been baked just for them.

You never thought enough about what it takes to make love like that. How much it means to give it away for free.

At 45 years old, she was diagnosed with leukemia. With the help of your mother, she started a blog about it and it was not called “My Struggle.” It was called “Send Lawyers, Guns and Money” because she loved rock music. On it, she wrote funny

Coach Franc told it much better in her eulogy. You think you learned more about her at her funeral than you'd ever paid enough attention to learn during her life. When he stopped to cry, you noticed how pretty it was outside. The funeral was held in the playground of your elementary school. Her daughter's elementary school. Jesse's elementary school. You guess Alison lived in your childhood. When it went, she went.

As I write this, teardrops fall onto my keyboard. I've been trying to teach myself to cry on command for months. Even so, my eyes have been dry as bones up to this very second.

< *The Future* >

MAELLE SANNON
GRADE 9 | DRAWING



< **Smoke Break** >

ALLEN LI

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



But I do have a little subplot all to myself.

As a child, I wasn't well-liked. Much as I am to this day, I was strange and bewildered. Give me a script and I was completely at ease, but offstage I was always missing my cues. Something inside me didn't work quite right, and because of it I convinced myself that I was utterly incompatible with everybody. My hobbies included watching other people, biting my nails, being in quiet places, and counting my friends, which I only needed one hand to do.

Even my own family was perplexed by their little Wednesday Addams. This didn't seem to faze Alison one bit. In a way, she was kind of like Jay Gatsby. She saw you the way you wanted to be seen.

On Fridays, my dad took me and my sister out for pizza after school. To him it was father-daughter bonding time. To me, it was my weekly playdate. It was the most ordinary time of the week. Monday 8:30 am through Friday 3:00 pm, I sat in solitude pulling my hair out in anticipation of my next fix of normalcy. Sometimes Alison would show up with Jesse and her friends. Jesse alone was fine, but with those other girls it was just . . . awkward. It wasn't so much that they wanted me to go away, just that they couldn't figure out why I was there. *Why am I here? Well, why are YOU here? Yes, that's why I'm here.*

Nonetheless, Alison would saunter over in a blaze of flowy linen. Then came the heartening “Hey, Grace! Why don’t you come sit with us?” I thought it was pure luck that we happened to be in the same place at the same time. I never considered that if it had been anyone else, it wouldn’t have been lucky. Just a coincidence.

The Castle of the Pyrenees

(after Magritte)

There's really no escape.
People can wander and hope but
if they ever work up the courage to leave
they'll just fall. Fall into the churning ocean below,
swallowed up by the violent tide.

The whole town's a castle,
and the royal ones live at the top
where winding staircases lead to
slanting towers. On clear days
they wake up to a brilliant view.

A blue expansive canvas dotted
with puffy clouds. They can see for miles,
as the water gets blurrier and the sky gets
softer and it's good to know that there is
something besides this rock.

The others, who live below,
never see the sky. They've heard
rumors, of course, about what lies above
this stone trap, the putrid and hard
darkness, all they've ever known.

Those who live the lowest can
sometimes hear the ocean:

its rush, the rise and fall of waves.
They crave it, they've heard of its smell,
the salty breeze that blows over the water.

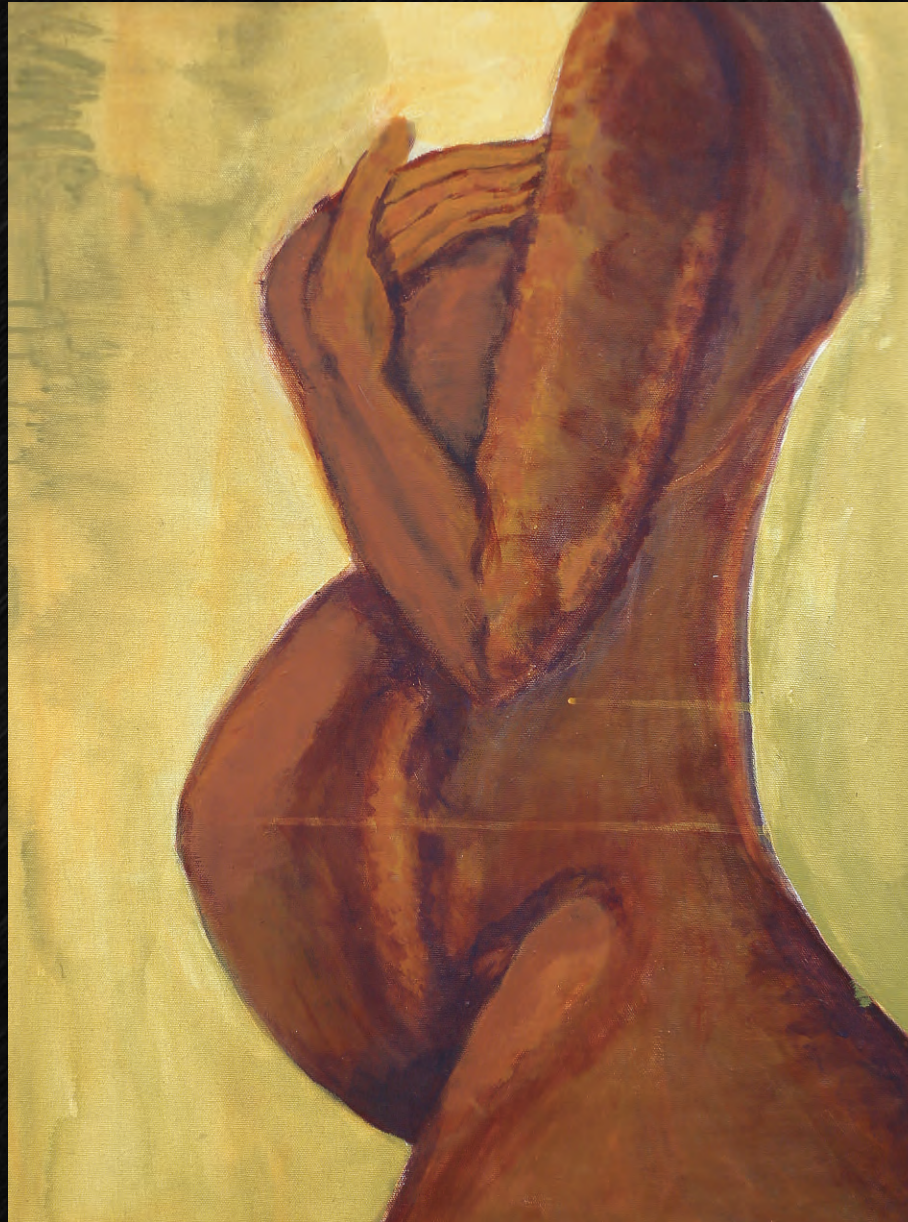
It seems so close, its whisper beckons them,
but they know the boundaries,
the thick layers of stone that
separate them from the vastness,
stone they will never break through.

In the wintertime, when it's
so bitterly cold that even inside
they can feel the frozen air, the ocean
is still, sloshy, the waves
cannot
quite
break.

< **Another Human** >

MYLANA O'REGGIO

GRADE 10 | PAINTING



Blurred

A light flickered, and then died altogether.

She had been watching it blink on and off for some time now. That, and the jolted but steady sway of the subway, had put her into a sort of trance. Her stop was coming up, maybe 10, 15 minutes away? She barely noticed. She just let the train knock her back and forth, back and forth. Her head occasionally knocked into the window on her right. She and an old, balding Asian man were the only ones riding this car of the lonely F train at 5:00 am. She had been riding for a long time. Going on three hours now. She was on her third rotation of the whole route; she had seen where the train turns around twice. She hadn't noticed. The yellow, partially flickering glow of the train lights gave her peace. Peace from the blurry thoughts that crowded her mind, playing like a badly filmed video on a loop. A film strip, but she could only catch glances. Too many drinks. Well, after that night, she'd probably never drink again.

They had called the cops and left him there.



< **Queen** >

MYLANA O'REGGIO

GRADE 10 | OIL PASTEL



Dresses

It was Lucia who decided to go buy me a dress for the prom. It was early June, and the prom permission slips had just been handed out with a hefty price of \$50 per ticket. She had already signed the paper using her favorite lavender pen, enjoying each smooth streak the ink made across the signature line. And she had already paid for one ticket: mine.

“This is the moment when a girl becomes a woman, *mi hijita*,” Lucia asserted cheerfully. She had already made plans to go pick out a dress and an appointment for me to get my hair done. “*Todo tiene que estar perfecto*,” she continued. “Everything has to be perfect.”

All I could do was groan. “Your grandma’s crazy,” Selene joked on the other end of the phone when I called her. “But you’re the one who started thinking about that prom.”

“It’s not even me!” I retorted. I couldn’t imagine myself in one of those dresses. Those frills. That glitter. The plastic diamonds and silk flowers. They were what all the girls on the coupons loved to wear. Little did Lucia know that their smiles were fake. And so was mine.

She ended up having to drag me to the mall early in the morning on June 6th, the prom only twelve days away. The streets were relatively clear on Saturdays except for the occasional old woman watering her already-worn flowers and the lonely teenager shooting layups and free-throws at a basket whose ropes were already ripped off from too many slam dunks. I wished I could run and join him, but Lucia was already listing colors and lengths. Strapless or with laces. Which roses would go in my hair.

Lucia rambled until we entered the large Marshall's in the Atlantic Mall. It was on the second floor, pulling customers in and pushing buyers out. The floor panels bounced back the bright white gleam from the ceiling lights. And the sign. Plastered out front with clearly visible dark letters against a white background, it read, "20% off on all dresses." Lucia's hand, that clenched, my own grew hot with excitement. This

“This is the place,” Lucia whispered, grinning as she glanced back and forth between me and the sign.

And then I found myself involuntarily walking beside her, my legs moving on their own as Lucia marched proudly with me. A wisp of cool air and the pungent smell of new clothes brushed my shoulder-length hair back a bit. It was almost as if it spoke to me with an all-too-familiar patronizing cheerfulness.

When I reached her, I found her already digging through identical blouses to find her size.

All I could do was groan.

A year-long 30 minutes passed, and we made it to the dress section. Goosebumps inched their way up my arm and I could not move. My eyes darted around as Lucia's arms darted around the clothespins, never taking a second to look at me and reassure me. Maybe she was blind. Blind to what I wanted and what I deserved to want. Blind to my stillness, my falsified calm as I imagined myself in those dresses. I would look like a moron. I would feel like a moron. And Lucia was blind to that.

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"No," I muttered.

"No," I said a little louder this time. My limbs slowly freed themselves. "I don't want to." I added.

"I don't want to . . . I don't want this."

“No!” I almost yelled.

“Now you’re being ridiculous.” Her left hand snapped out to grab my right arm and drag me where she wanted me to go, but I stood my ground. And at that moment, I felt like a man. It was an odd spark, a moment of superiority that lasted only as long as I clenched my arm and fist and resisted Lucia’s motherly strength.

“Entonces que es lo que quieres?!” Lucia yelled louder than I had ever heard her. All the other customers turned and looked at us, encircling our scuffle with surprised glares. After one quick glance at all the others, Lucia dropped all the dresses she had picked for me right where she stood and quickly stormed out of the store.

I was lucky enough to even be able to catch the train at the slow pace that I walked. Lucia wasn't there waiting for me outside the mall, nor in the station. As I held onto the pole of the train, I reached into my pockets and felt around for my keys. They were still there, there in my hands. I could still be there for her.

spelled loud in clear letters, was a recurring thought that replayed in my head for the duration of the trip home.

Entonces que es lo que quieres?

Then what do you want?

What I wanted. Freedom. Specifically the one where I could pick my own prom attire and I could feel like myself. Not like the other girls I saw on a daily basis. What I thought I wanted was something that fit me personally. What I wanted now was to be home.

I turned the key in the lock and pushed open the front door to the apartment. There was no smell of food in the kitchen, no pots and pans on the stove slowly heating our dinner up. There was no sound of novella actors dramatically announcing their love on the television, there was no Lucia to enjoy the novella. All there was was the semi-distant thumping and whirring of the sewing machine. Lucia sat in her room, cautiously pushing and repositioning a mahogany cloth under the needle.

I mustered up the courage to go walk in her room. For some moments I stared at the mahogany dress being moved back and forth by Lucia's coarse fingers, how silky it looked, the patches of hand-crocheted flowers. It was a dress Lucia had made with the things she took with her when she left the Dominican Republic a young woman. Her mother, who had passed just a few weeks ago, was the one who taught her to sew and to make her own clothes.

Now she was alone, and all that was left of her culture was the dress she had put months into.

"Lucy?" I called softly.

She didn't respond.

"I . . . decided that I should wear a dress to the prom."

Still no response. I looked at the dress. "And I want to wear that one."

A soft grin finally poured life into her sunken face as she turned slightly to look at me.

"Good, because I made it just your size."

< **Love Triangle** >

AMANDA ENNIS

GRADE 12 | CERAMIC



Last Rites

I went to three funerals before my grandfather died. The first was for Snuffles, my sister's gerbil, and lasted 47 minutes and 56 seconds because Gaia, my sister, insisted on singing the entire *Adele 21* album in order to properly memorialize her glorified rat. The second was for my stepmother's ex-boyfriend's father—she said that we would just be stopping in to pay respects. They had cubed cheese laid out. The third was the funeral of my stepmother's bird Stanley, which made Gaia's near-hour-long gerbil funeral seem restrained and tasteful. Currently, I have no living grandfathers, I have been to two real funerals, and I think funerals are overrated.

Massimo Getzel was my father's father, but I called him Nonno. He lived in Italy during fascist occupation. His father, Demetrio, was injured and moved from MASH unit to MASH unit, was presumed dead, and was in a military hospital at the time my grandfather was born. Nonno left Naples and went to Rome in order to escape Nazi bombings. His mother, Marta, had a miscarriage which rendered her infertile: she blamed Nonno, arguing that his leaning out the window had given her a *fright*. However, the primitive nature of 1940s Neapolitan reproductive science was no reason to hate my grandpa. When the Nazis began to roam the streets, looking for able-bodied men to *volunteer* to dig trenches and fortified battlements, my grandfather hid behind a false wall with his cousin, Sergio Barengi—the man after whom my father was named. They spent hours at a time standing in silence inside a closet-sized refuge. When fascist occupation ended in 1943, Sergio and Massimo took to the streets to find the remaining Nazis in Rome and bash their noses in with the butt of a rifle. My grandfather was not a fan of violence, but he was even less of a fan of fascism.

Massimo Getzel was born and raised as an aristocrat, but he was a man of the people—or at least he considered himself to be, though he never bothered to ask them. He played in an all-Dominican baseball league in Spanish Harlem. When he vacationed in Massa Lubrense, he insisted that he stay at the Gocce di Capri, which can be best

Which was why Angelo was the first person we called when we had to organize my grandfather's funeral. Massimo wanted his ashes to be scattered by il Vervece (a cliffside below which, on the seafloor, rests a statue of the Madonna). My grandfather always told me that Vervece is a derivative of the Latin *vervĕx* meaning *virgin*. Unfortunately, *vervĕx* literally translates as "castrated lamb"—make of that what you will. The main problem with our heartwarming sendoff was that most of the Amalfi Coast is under oceanic protection and they don't generally appreciate people dumping ashes into the sea.

So Angelo found a guy he knew who would ferry us out onto the Bay of Naples. My Nonna insisted that we travel incognito and pick a biodegradable bag for Nonno's ashes and also that we weigh the bag down with rocks ahead of time in case we needed to do a *drive by disposal*. Which was why we were all riding in a motor boat one afternoon in July, holding a plastic *Buona Giornata* bag containing a bunch of rocks and the remnants of my grandfather. As we rode out to sea, Gaia did vocal exercises—probably for an oddly-fitting rendition of “Hello From the Other Side”—and the five of us recounted the same 13 family stories that we tell every time that we see each other. My father got up to tell the driver, “This is a good place to stop so that we can do the ‘thing.’”

< *Pollen and Rouge* >

CHLOE SHANE

GRADE 11 | PAINTING



Who responded, "What thing? We are already on the boat tour."

My dad sat down next to me and my aunt and whispered, “This is not Angelo’s guy. We need to *delinque*.” “Delinque” is an imaginary English verb meaning “to commit delinquency.” It comes from the Italian *delinquere* and is a byproduct of my grandfather’s half-Italian, half-English, all made-up-nonsense way of speaking. My dad got up and wrapped his arm around the driver and used the oldest distraction technique:

“Oh hey, what’s that over there?!”

My Aunt Allegra and I seized our opportunity to delinque: we tossed the bag over our shoulders and into the depths of the Mediterranean. As my Nonno's ashes floated down to the castrated goat statue, my family attempted to process the events of the *service*: Gaia was distraught that she hadn't gotten to sing or make a speech, Nonna was vaguely irked, but also relieved that she didn't have to sit through a lengthy memorial. But I thought it was perfect because now we have 16 stories.

My other grandpa died when I was 13, but we had to wait longer for his body to catch up with his mind. My grandfather on my mother's side was named Norbert Blessing, my uncle was *also* named Norbert Blessing—he legally changed it when he was 21—and my grandfather offered to pay for my college tuition if my mother named me Norbert—an offer that my mother now likely regrets passing up. However, everyone called him Buck and many were surprised to find out his real name at the funeral. He was bullied as a kid because he skipped two grades and was therefore the youngest (and shortest) in his class. He married my grandmother at 20 (an age when he looked regrettably similar to a less muscular Biff Tannen). He completed high school in two years and started working as soon as he finished. He was a tool- and die-maker spent his lunch breaks studying for night classes in the bathroom.

“Delinque” is an imaginary English verb meaning “to commit delinquency.” It comes from the Italian delinquere and is a byproduct of my grandfather’s half-Italian, half-English, all made-up-nonsense way of speaking.

Everything that Buck Blessing was, his funeral wasn't. The funeral, which my grandmother felt was more important than the fate of the entire free world, was held five days after the 2016 election. My grandmother cavalierly explained that "personal loss really contextualizes how immaterial these things are." My grandfather, the personal loss in question, would have taken issue with that: he had been heavily active in unions, had marched on Washington, and had been threatened at gunpoint for canvassing for Obama in rural North Carolina. He would have been the first one to call that bull out: he would have been furious that someone suggested his death was more tragic than a Trump presidency. The ceremony itself was held in Trinity Church, which is admittedly historic and beautiful, but my grandpa was not religious.

The ceremony itself had several prayers that I was too unfamiliar with the whole Jesus-thing to follow, and was led by a man—who looked more like a mouse than like a human—in a white robe waving a pole with a metal cage of burning incense suspended beneath it. I remember obsessing over whether or not he was more or less important than the priest leading the sermon: after all, he never got to speak, but he

Currently, I have two grandmothers, two parents, one stepdad, one sister, two stepsisters, and a former stepmother (who, although still breathing, is effectively dead to me); chances are I am going to go to at least a few more funerals. And then there's me: will I spend my last moments talking with my lifelong friend or will I spend it lying in a hospital bed unable to recognize my family? My likelihood of developing Alzheimer's or dementia is 2.5 times greater than that of the average person—so odds are the latter. My mere 18 years of life have been centered around my memory: what that joke was, who that actor is, what the greater significance of Federalist 10 was in antebellum America. What happens when I cannot remember the plots of the books that I love, when I no longer know Bartlett's monologue from the season two finale of *West Wing* by heart, when my family all look like strangers to me?

The Garden Atop My Head

I have a garden growing atop my head.
In it you will find every root, every tree,
Every herb, every leaf.
My mother parts the soil
Like the ocean that divides us from home
And sows the seeds into my scalp
With the swift motion of her fingers.
Every cornrow sprouts dark brown follicles
of love,
Glistens with the dew of natural oils,
And smells of olive, hibiscus, shea, and castor.
And when the time comes,
The rows are undone,
And the plants in my garden shoot up to the sky
So as to reach for the sun:
The same sun that shines on the motherland.
Home.

When my parents left home, they took with
them the soil
That they used to plant the garden atop my head,
And so wherever I go
I feel the tightly wound curls:
The roots that tie me to my ancestry.
I smell the aromas

That remind me of home,
I see the brown shining in the light of day
Like the skin of my people.
And so whenever I feel alone,
I pluck one of the plants in my garden
And I follow the strand back to where my spirit
runs free,
Where my smile is wide,
And the faces of my family shine brighter
than the sun.
I follow the strand to home.



< **Vacancy** >

GEMMA SIEGLER

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



Unicorn Pajamas

I stood in front of the sink, and let the water run. I had come in here with the intent to wash the filth off my hands, but the water flowed so beautifully it felt evil to disturb its purity. Yet I could not let her see me like this. I took a step towards the sink, my burning hot fingers inching towards the liquid, but once again felt a tugging in my stomach, a familiar sort of lurching that promised vomit. My hands itched, and pulled me one way, my stomach lurched, and pulled me the other. I felt as if I had been placed on a pyre, burning darkness at my feet as I struggled to free myself from the cutting ropes that bound me tight. I caught myself in the mirror, my shirt spattered with reddish-brown tears. I was responsible for them, but they were not mine. I felt the flames grow hotter as I stared at the creature before me, at her matted hair, the ugly stains, the slowly drying red liquid dripping from the sharp-edged blade. Her face was warped and wrong, odd lines stretching across it, lines of fear, of hatred, lines I remembered vaguely wearing myself. But suddenly it changed, hardening into a cruel and twisted sneer, and I felt bile in my mouth, and even more lurching as I watched her open her mouth to speak.

“She must not see you like this,” she said, “You did this for her, you did this all for her. But she must never know.” The woman in the mirror took a step towards the running water, and my feet moved with hers. I heard shuffling behind the wall, then a strange creaking noise. The sound froze my bones and even as my hands felt the licks of hot flames I could not move, could do nothing but watch the woman in the mirror, her cruel smile frozen on her pallid face. The light in the hall flicked on. Then she was there, standing in her light pink unicorn pajamas and froggy slippers.

I did not turn to see her, but I knew she was not looking at me, but the bathtub, the torn curtain, the soiled bathmat, the discolored arm that hung lifelessly over the side with a horrible stench like stale beer, its fingers still clenched.

I felt my own hand tighten on the bottle shard until it cut.

“What’s wrong with Daddy?” she said.

< *Two* >

JORDAN HICKSON

GRADE 9 | PHOTOGRAPH



The Lost Art of Reading

I hope there are readers out there. If there are, then you know how to lose yourself in a book. I have missed many train stops because of well-written narratives and stayed up in pitch-black darkness with a head lamp on, my eyes tearing from sleep deprivation because I must know how it ends. The story continues even if you don't have time for it, so you make time and inevitably disappear between the pages. And then they are not pages anymore, but part of your moment and that moment can go on until acted upon by an external force like Newton's Laws and before you know it you are at Times Square 42nd-Street and only realize because the person who has just sat down next to you smells like cigarettes.

This is how it happened for me. A book is usually slow to start. But good books grab you fast, and before you know it almost two weeks have passed since you called your parents from your semester program because you don't have enough time to read *and* interact with the rest of the world. Instead you all pile onto a mattress on the floor deemed the "sex bed," which is just Lilian's old bed, and scream out the Lumineers. Suddenly you are peeing in the woods holding hands and staring at each other, wondering how you could all be so beautiful when your faces are pressed together in front of the stove and the lights are off and everyone is scared to talk because only the shadows know what to say. *One more reason to keep my eyes open.*

Julia is a self-proclaimed pyromaniac. I will build a perfectly good fire, and then she will continue to sit in front of the stove and stuff wood and newspaper and kindling into it until the fire starts to leak out and she screams and makes a joke from Amy Schumer while I must burn my hands closing the little door that separates flames from our flammable cabin. *Not till we are completely lost or turned around do we begin to find ourselves.* We did this with “Landslide” and stolen blueberry muffins.

When I daydream about the future, Sarah is always in it. We hold hands as we navigate the dried up streambeds and tiptoe across inlets. She's in the stern and I'm



backwards in the bow facing her because we can't stand not looking at each other and we scrape against the bottom of the river since we can't be bothered to return to shore before the tide leaves. *If we are blinded by darkness, we are also blinded by light.* We take walks together towards the sunset and she wakes me up so we can leave our cabin to stare at pregnant sheep when only our breath is visible against the blue night.

Before telling me anything, Izzy makes me swear I won't tell over and over until I'm deemed trustworthy. We take naps at the same time and whenever I see her in her bed in the corner of the room across from mine she tricks me with her melodic heavy breathing into taking my clothes off and collapsing under the covers. *Not even does the moon shine every night, but gives peace to darkness.* Full moons are ours and we lie on the stiff grass with our thumbs in the air.

Avi changes into her pajamas the second she walks into the room and always gives me a nod of approval when she sees I've done the same. I tell her to get away from me because I know she has me for assassin and if she gets an ounce of water on me and I'm out of the game I will be switching to another cabin, but she swears she doesn't and convinces me to leave the cabin and we run on the wooden planks leading to the Wallace as she chucks water at my face. *The river flows. The river will not wait. Let's get these boats on the current.* So you can finally learn how to paddle.

Lilian permanently leaves our semester on February the 14th because apparently national holidays don't mean anything to her. As a parting gift, I give her the piece of paper connecting my top bunk to her bottom bunk titled Bid and Uni's Dope Facts, and for the last time we are hysterical over how incredibly good looking our cabin dad is even if he does in fact neglect us for his real family and uselessly teaches us

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facing her because we can't
stand not looking at
each other.***

< *The Wallace* >

AMANDA ENNIS

GRADE 12 | PHOTOGRAPH



< **Pepto Basmati** >

JUDITH WELCH

GRADE 11 | CERAMIC



how to start a fire and light a match using our pants' zippers while we all stand in front of him in sweat pants. *The stars and planets could smash and I'd never know.* When I saw her mom and luggage and boxes and her empty bed I cried even though I had only known her for two weeks.

Tati wears a parka inside and refuses to take off her Sorels even though there is no snow. We hold hands and agree that New York City has in fact prepared us for how to not get mugged, but has sadly forgotten to teach us what darkness is, and how it comes every night and how the walk from the bathroom to Gordy is a lot farther when you are trying to dodge ice, porcupines, and your own irrational fear that you will die out here because the trees just rustled and you forgot to bring a flashlight or a weapon. *The meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea.* We only commuted together and never really hung out outside of that like true New Yorkers.

Ellie is always first back to Gordy. We have matching turquoise snow pants and they swish together as we partner up during science field trips, and then roll around in the snow licking the undisturbed patches, telling James to try it because we are not weird and it is actually good and we are cold and tired and want to get back home because going to bed early is cozy and my flannel bedding is calling my name. *When the shades of night were already beginning to be mingled with the daylight.* She finally stopped going to bed so early and actually stayed up to hang out with us and only then did I realize all the time we had together was running out.

Now I sleep alone. I have time to read before bed every night because there is no one telling me otherwise. My Gordy squirrels have all left and have dispersed across the country. I took the sign on the door to the mud room on the last day and it hangs on the door to my own room now, with Gordy in big letters and our eight names scattered around it on big green paper. There is no going back to the long nights when we would sit together not talking, just knitting.

Most of the people from my Chewonki semester are driving up to Connecticut

Then are they still my family? If we don't talk every day because school is stressful and college is stressful and time isn't a luxury like it was in the woods, does that mean the memories become stronger, or lose meaning?

Then are they still my family? If we don't talk every day because school is stressful and college is stressful and time isn't a luxury like it was in the woods, does that mean the memories become stronger, or lose meaning? Do I long for them more because they are away, or learn to live without them? I'm looking forward to the party in Connecticut with all my might, but dreading it like a child dreads the age when nap time is no longer a thing. I talk to Sarah a lot. We call each other and talk about living in Maine and farming and when all this busy work will be over and we can go back to just living.

Good books always have to end. And when it's a really good book you keep reading the author's note and the list of names they are crediting because you don't

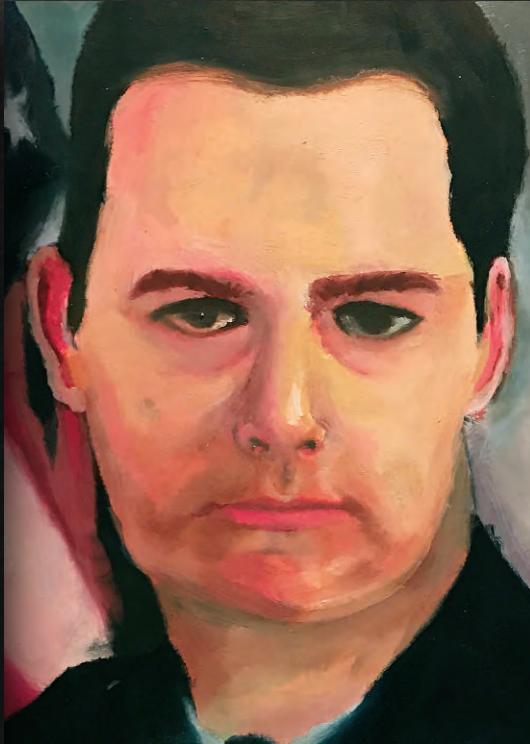
Author's Note: All italics that are not cited are from quotations that I thought were beautiful during my time with these seven girls, and now represent feelings that only words from someone else can express. Thanks to Annie Dillard, Henry David Thoreau, and Edward Abbey for your writing, and Amy Rogers for making me read them.

< **From Fact to Rumor and Rumor to Fact** >

GALA PRUDENT

GRADE 12 | MIXED MEDIA





Heart and Soul

She stared at herself. Her neighbor was banging out “Heart and Soul” on the piano again, over and over. It made Lucy want to stick a fork into the socket by her bed. And meanwhile, she couldn’t quite fit the cream-colored dress over her voluptuous body.

“Damn girl, you’ve got curves in all the right places,” construction workers would cat-call. It didn’t feel that way. In fact, she felt just the opposite. Being able to fit this dress over her hips would be a blessing. A gift from God.

It was rare for her mother to spend money on nice clothing. Let alone a dress. Lucy's family wasn't wealthy like many in town, meaning that they had to be extremely frugal. Despite this, when her mother received an invitation to the event of the year,

The Spring Yacht Club: Invite Only Social Event

An evening of fine dining and fine conversation

she became a different person. She became obsessed with finding Lucy the “perfect dress” for the spring socialite party and claimed this was it. Although it wasn’t striking, she knew her mother had pooled her paychecks from both her jobs, saving as much as she could to afford this dress. Lucy didn’t mind it like she did many of the other clothes her mother chose for her. The cream color didn’t look horrible on her—like the neon orange tank top that was currently stuffed in the back of her closet—and the cupcake style would accentuate her body. But as she was pushing the dress over her shoulders, the tag tickled her nose and she noticed it boasted the number eight.

That isn't right, she realized, I'm a size 10. Son-of-a—. She pushed again.

“Mother-Trucker!”

Lucy jumped at the sound of her mother's footsteps bounding up the two flights of stairs. She could feel the vibration of her mother's rage through the floor. Her mother barged into the room.

"Mom . . ." Lucy started; "This dress, I love it, but . . ." she trailed off.

"This dress mom, it's the wrong size, it won't fit."

“Meet me downstairs at 7:00. We’ll leave then.”

The sounds of “Heart and Soul” continued in the background as she stared at herself in the mirror, her body only half covered, and prayed she could remove some of the skin from her thighs.

< **Application** >

VICTORIA SOTOMAYOR

GRADE 10 | OIL PASTEL



What My Life Could Have Been

On Saturday, August 28, 1999, a six-day-old baby girl was left on the steps of a clinic in Shanghai, China. It might have been a bright, warm day or it could have been nighttime when the baby was dropped off. Perhaps she spent the night on those steps when the first one to arrive for work found her waiting there. Or maybe it was noon and someone from the clinic watched through the window as someone carried a baby to the steps, left it there, and walked away without a piece of their heart. Every day, countless poor babies, unhealthy babies, girl babies, were being left on doorsteps all over China, and I was one of them.

Maybe I was born to an impoverished family. Maybe I was born to a couple who could barely survive on their own, much less with a child. Or maybe I was born to a family who already had a child and did not wish to have a second. My parents may have each come from a long line of impoverished families and wanted to spare their daughter of the kind of hardship they had had to endure. They may have struggled to find food. They may have each worked low-paying jobs in a nearby market and worried every day how they were going to survive. Had they kept me, I would have experienced their hardship. I might have been the little girl who played on the street with the boys only to be called in for a very small dinner of millet or rice. I might have been a girl who couldn't clean herself on a regular basis and started to grow a layer of dirt on her face.

Is my existence an accident? I'll never know. I may have been born to a teenage mother who may have been 17—my age now—when she found out I was a cell in her body. I may have led her to many nights of tears and regret. It would be my fault that her mother and father were angry and disgraced. They may have forced her to have the child no one wanted.

I could have been born to a family who preferred a son. That could be the reason I have never completely embraced myself as a girl or a young woman. My refusal to wear dresses, my complete lack of interest in makeup, and my custom of wearing

men's jeans could be rooted in the fact that I may have been abandoned for being a girl. My parents may have had many daughters after me, trying to find their cherished son. I may have been their second or third disappointment. There may be other girls around the world sharing my blood. There maybe a single boy in China with my blood. I wonder how old he is. How many children did my parents abandon?

If I had been born a boy, my parents might have had high expectations for me, higher than the ones I now put on myself. I might feel overwhelming pressure on a daily basis. My parents could be depending on me to carry my family out of poverty and into a life of security. Or they would be proud of their successful son, knowing that I had found a better job than their neighbors and would compare my accomplishments to theirs. But I would be living the life that others wished for me, not the one I wished for myself.

I might live in a traditional family. I would have a mother and a father. I might have grandparents on both sides. I might even have siblings, if my parents could afford it. We would all look alike, share the same genes and the same blood. I may have inherited my father's round face or my mother's dark brown eyes. We might be a loving family or we might be a jealous, competitive one. We might be the model family on the block, the one that appears to have no issues, where everyone looks happy and is the perfect Christmas card model. Or we could have many issues. My father might be upset at me for not being as smart as he expected and my mother might be upset that I am not more like her.

But this is not the life I live. I don't live in an impoverished family, I was not born a boy, I was not raised in China, and I don't live in a traditional family. Instead, I lived with my single mother and grandmother until my grandmother died and our family of three became a family of two. At six days old, I was not bound to the circumstances I was born into; I was left on the threshold of a whole new life. These were merely possibilities determined in the first six days of my existence. All I have is a small, yellow note written in blue ink with my birthday written in shaky, Chinese handwriting.

< **Narrow** >

FLYNN MARSELLA

GRADE 10 | CHARCOAL



Of the Body

“Tell me your secrets,”

I whispered.

“Your body secrets.”

Like the birthmark shaped like Africa on the side of your belly,
or the way you can pull your innie (or is it an outie?) belly button out of its
little cave.

Tell me about the way your button nose scrunches up at the smell of oranges, and how that orange nail polish you wear makes you feel fabulous.

Tell me why you never grow your nails long,
and how long you've hidden the right side of your face behind those emo
side-swept bangs.

I want to know about the stretch marks on your thighs and on your back that you hide.

I want to trace them with my fingers,
To feel and know your roots.

“Tell me your body stories.”

Like the dimples on your lower back that your mother caressed into you when
you were a baby,

or the lines on the inner part of your thigh where you tried to carve her name into your skin.

Tell me about the little black dot on your right cheek that you used to think was the only thing that made you beautiful,
and about the dark spot on your earlobe where you gave yourself a second piercing with a thumbtack in fourth grade,

that says better than words that I love you.

< *Untitled 1* >

ALLEN LI

GRADE 11 | PHOTOGRAPH



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Typeface: Veteran Typewriter, Din, Berkeley
Paper Stock: Endurance cover / Endurance text
Computer Equipment: iMac i5
Number of Copies: 800
Design: Studio Lane, Inc.
Printer: William Charles Printing