

REFLECTIONS

THE BERKELEY CARROLL SCHOOL VOL 49, ISSUE 1, 2020



**China's Left Behind
Generation: Lost Childhood**
CLEO LYNN
Grade 12, *Digital*

Agitation
REED ZUVER
Grade 10, Photograph



REFLECTIONS

THE BERKELEY CARROLL SCHOOL VOL 49, ISSUE 1, 2020

the
BerkeleyCarroll
School



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, hallways—and, this year, Zoom calls—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.

Reflections

What's in a name? "Reflection" implies both a mirroring and a distortion: something recognizably strange and strangely recognizable. In selecting and arranging the visual and written work in this magazine, we seek to create this experience of broken mirrors: reflections that are just a bit off, refracted and bent to reveal uncanny resemblances. Take, for instance, Daniel Chian's "I Want to Live in a Greta Gerwig Movie" paired with Shailee Sran's "Filter." The delicate diaphanous effect of Sran's photograph, capturing light filtered through and framed by several screens—translucent sky-lights and paper-thin parasols—reflects Chian's sepia-toned summer desires, his yearning to "feel framed in gold on a silver screen." Here the broken mirror effect seeks to provide the audience with new frames and filters through which to re-imagine everyday experience. We hope in these pairings of written and visual reflections that you catch glimpses both strange and familiar, new patterns from ordinary encounters.

Editorial Policy and Procedures

The *Reflections* staff is a small, dedicated group of students that meets weekly over homemade brownies and popcorn dusted with Himalayan pink salt—even during Quarantine, even during Dr. Hughes's paternity leave—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 art and literature submissions. After the preliminary critiques—and with helpful suggestions from the art department—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 copies of our beautiful magazine—through our library, at admissions events, and, this year, to anyone lucky enough to find the PDF on our school website.

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, sometimes to fulfill class assignments, but always from the engines of their own creativity.

STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Jordan Hickson

ARTS EDITOR

Shailee Sran

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Noa Brown

FACULTY ADVISORS

Erika Drezner

Jacob Hughes

STAFF

Bernadette Frishberg

Charlotte Hampton

Ella Sran

Ellie Schneider

Zoë Krashes

Lucija Jurevics

Editor's Statement

This year's *Reflections* would not have been possible without our faculty advisers, Ms. Drezner and Dr. Hughes, whose support was crucial in producing this volume. The publication of this magazine would not be complete without the help of Linda Adams, Berkeley Carroll's director of strategic communications, and the design talents of Bob Lane at StudioLane, Inc. We're also grateful for the guidance and support of Dr. Daniel, Ms. Nguyen, and Mr. Smaller-Swift in the Art Department. And of course, *Reflections* would be blank without the thoughtful writing and intricate artwork that is shared with us each year.

This year, as is tradition, we are excited to have a wonderful collection of personal essays from our Voice & Style writing courses as well as our Senior Essay class. We also have an abundance of poetry from both our 10th-grade poetry class and our Spring Intensive, Poetry in Performance. Finally, we're excited to feature several pieces of art made on calf-skin parchment and pressed with gold foil created in our Illuminated Manuscripts Spring Intensive.

Even though our normal publishing process had to be quickly adapted to an online setting this year due to the turmoil of COVID-19 and the inability to return to school after our Spring Break, my amazing co-editors and our fearless faculty advisers worked through this unexpected challenge to create a beautiful and insightful magazine as always.

Lastly, I would like to highlight how many of my peers have used their individual crafts to address and take part in the much larger conversation around race, especially around Asian-American and Black identities, that is currently happening in our country. Cleo Lynn's extraordinary work, through a wide array of media, specifically her pieces "Cleo's China" and "My Fight Against America vs. Asia," were already powerful in a pre-COVID age. However, in the context of the Anti-Asian sentiment sparked by the novel coronavirus, her pieces regarding her own Chinese-American identity take on a new layer of meaning. Likewise, in light of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery and the resulting national protests, certain works in this year's magazine have become

especially important. Among many other powerful and historically resonant works in the magazine, Maris Hayes' painting "The Founding Fathers Dispel Africans from The Shining City on a Hill" urges us to examine what our country was built upon, and Brianna Johnson's outstanding personal essay "How to Think Like a Black Person" does the emotional labor of delving into Black experience in the United States—specifically in New York City. Both of these works are integral to the ongoing conversation about institutional racism in our country and, further, the movement to end police brutality.

I believe these pieces reflect the way that Berkeley Carroll students engage with, observe, and challenge the communities around us. I hope you find the work inside these pages as enjoyable and enlightening as I have.

Jordan Hickson

Editor-in-Chief, Spring 2020

POETRY

- 10 **The Path**
Ella Sran, Grade 10
- 27 **When Atlas Sobbed**
Asa Khalid, Grade 10
- 32 **I Want to Live in a Greta Gerwig Movie**
Daniel Chian, Grade 10
- 38 **for the two women named Jane,
who were buried with their husbands**
Nichole Fernandez, Grade 11
- 45 **My Ancestry.com Results**
Asa Khalid, Grade 10
- 51 **Elegy for Laurel Hollow**
Noa Brown, Grade 10
- 64 **Recipe for Attraction**
Talin Schell, Grade 10
- 71 **Pantoum of Refusal**
Ella Sran, Grade 10
- 79 **Dear Angry Black Girl**
Asa Khalid, Grade 10
- 89 **Bath**
Abigail Lienhard, Grade 12
- 105 **What I Miss**
Charlotte Hampton, Grade 11
- 110 **Bird**
Ella Sran, Grade 10
- 117 **Intent**
Nichole Fernandez, Grade 11
- 108 **Prophecy for October, 2003**
Ruby Salvatore-Palmer, Grade 11

FICTION

- 13 **Enjoy Your Stay**
Julian Ansorge, Grade 12
- 16 **Scarcity**
Evelina Levy, Grade 12
- 53 **Life And Death Often Meet In Waffle
House Parking Lots**
Bernadette Frishberg, Grade 12
- 90 **Closet Body**
Irene Madrigal, Grade 12



**Contemporary
Garments**
LUCA YANG
Grade 12, *Digital*

HUMOR

- 41 **How to Completely Screw Up
Getting Your California Learner's Permit,
In Three Easy Steps**
Clay Johnson, Grade 12
- 61 **The Ped**
Kalif Levine, Grade 12
- 81 **Wretched Child**
Hope Swetow, Grade 12
- 101 **Ulta Would Never**
Samantha Rosario, Grade 10
- 113 **Sasha**
Hope Swetow, Grade 12



**Contemporary
Garments**

LUCA YANG

Grade 12, *Digital*

PERSONAL ESSAY

- 20 **True Horoscopes**
Bernadette Frishberg, Grade 12
- 22 **Tapping In**
Abigail Sears-Mauro, Grade 12
- 28 **Hey, Bees**
Zoe Kortess, Grade 10
- 35 **I am God and It Gets Worse**
Bernadette Frishberg, Grade 12
- 46 **Sleeping Bears**
Jordan Hickson, Grade 12
- 67 **Apartment 7E**
Julian Ansorge, Grade 12
- 75 **Concerts in the Forest**
Emily Li, Grade 12
- 93 **How to Think Like a Black Person**
Brianna Johnson, Grade 12
- 98 **Squeak**
George Humphreville, Grade 12
- 106 **9 and Under**
Noa Brown, Grade 10
- 118 **Realms of the Dead**
Jordan Hickson, Grade 12

ART

Cover

China's Left Behind Generation: Lost Childhood

Cleo Lynn, Grade 12, *Digital*

Inside Front Cover

Agitation

Reed Zuver, Grade 10, *Photograph*

5-9 Contemporary Garments

Luca Yang, Grade 12, *Digital*

11 Acacia

Noa Brown, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

12 Girl in the Mirror

Adeleen Rosner, Grade 11, *Photograph*

15 Adrift

Ruby Kass, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

18 Seasons of the Soul

Jordan Hickson, Grade 12, *Mixed Media
(Linoleum Block Print, Ink, and Watercolor)*

23 Fruits of Life

Daniel Chian, Grade 10, *Mixed Media
(Oil Paint, Watercolor, Light Modeling Paste,
and Modge Podge)*

24 Orifice

Alma-Lilas Anzalone, Grade 11, *Ceramic*

26 Eye Contact

Billie Wynn, Grade 11, *Painting (Acrylics)*

31 Persephone

Sophia Sondey, Grade 12, *Ceramic*

33 Filter

Shailee Sran, Grade 12, *Photograph*

34 Convalescent

Rowan DeWitt, Grade 11, *Painting (Acrylics)*

37 I've Got Ideas

Isabella Rykoff, Grade 12, *Mixed Media
(Vellum, Gouache, and Gold Leaf)*

39 Invitation

Sophia Sondey, Grade 12, *Ceramic*

40 Avenue U and East 15th

Daniel Chian, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

43 AVX

Charlotte Hampton, Grade 11, *Photograph*

44 The Founding Fathers Dispel Africans from The Shining City on a Hill

Maris Hayes, Grade 11, *Painting (Acrylics)*

49 Headache

Caroline Tuck, Grade 12, *Painting
(Pen and Watercolor)*

50 Study in Glass

Zoe Kortes, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

52 The Way Home

Shailee Sran, Grade 12, *Photograph*

57 The FDR

Anya Renzi, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

58 My Fight Against America vs. Asia

Cleo Lynn, Grade 12, *Mixed Media*
(*Gauche and Acetone Transfer on Watermarked Paper*)

59 Cleo's China

Cleo Lynn, Grade 12, *Ceramic*

60 Arachnophilia

Kyra Maynard, Grade 12, *Mixed Media*,
(*Watercolor and Colored Pencil*)

63 Peeled

Daniel Chian, Grade 10, *Mixed Media*
(*Oil Paint, Watercolor, Light Modeling Paste, and Modge Podge*)



65 Didi

Maya Karmaker, Grade 12, *Photograph*

66 The Marigold Altar

Miguel Tejada, Grade 12, *Mixed Media*
(*Cardboard, Construction Paper, Markers, Crayons, and Modge Podge*)

69 Polhemus

Oscar Trujillo, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

66 Glimpse

Shailee Sran, Grade 12, *Photograph*

73 Woman at Coney Island Beach

Adeleen Rosner, Grade 11, *Photograph*

74 She Weaveth Steadily

Sita Pawar, Grade 11, *Mixed Media*
(*Vellum, Gouache, and Gold Leaf*)

77 Dujiangyan Bridge

Shailee Sran, Grade 12, *Photograph*

78 Jetsam

Alex Rubin, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

80 Try Me

Mika Chang, Grade 9, *Painting (Acrylics)*

82 Prophecy

Anya Renzi, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*

85 Saturday

Kyra Maynard, Grade 12, *Painting (Acrylics)*

87 Blind Attractions

Billie Wynn, Grade 11, *Painting (Watercolor)*

- 88 Tea**
Wen Yu Chen, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*
- 91 Grandparents**
Maya Karmaker, Grade 12, *Photograph*
- 92 The Kolache Kitchen**
Luke Lamazor, Grade 10, *Photograph*
- 95 Times Square**
Maya Karmaker, Grade 12, *Photograph*
- 97 Where You Came From**
Lucija Jurevics, Grade 11, *Ceramic*
- 99 Lamented and Assured**
Amba Darst-Campbell, Grade 9, *Mixed Media (Vellum, Gouache, and Gold Leaf)*
- 100 Ampersand**
Caroline Tuck, Grade 12, *Mixed Media (Measuring Tape and Scanner)*
- 103 Americana**
Charlotte Hampton, Grade 11, *Photograph*
- 104 Distancing**
Jade LaDeux, Grade 9, *Painting (Acrylics)*
- 107 My Soul is Painted**
Anya Renzi, Grade 10, *Mixed Media (Vellum, Gouache, and Gold Leaf)*
- 108 Madonna and Child**
Andreas Welch, Grade 11, *Mixed Media (Vellum, Gouache, and Gold Leaf)*
- 111 Nap**
Sophia Sondey, Grade 12, *Drawing (Charcoal)*

- 112 Syncope**
Noa Brown, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*
- 115 Kian's Peak**
Luke Lamazor, Grade 10, *Photograph*
- 116 Jay**
Zoe Pyne, Grade 10, *Painting (Acrylics)*
- 119 Prayer**
Rowan DeWitt, Grade 11, *Mixed Media (Vellum, Gouache, and Gold Leaf)*
- 121 Strand**
Reed Zuver, Grade 10, *Photograph*
- 123 Essay**
Charlotte Hampton, Grade 11, *Painting (Gouache)*
- Inside Back Cover**
Odette
Rachael Hipkins, Grade 12, *Painting (Acrylics and Oil Paints)*

**Contemporary
Garments**
LUCA YANG
Grade 12, *Digital*



The Path

ELLA SRAN, Grade 10, *Poetry*

O had happened upon the path
When midnight still gazed at the sky, preparing
The time, you see, it runs, it runs—
And I had other places to go.

I had oaths expected of me
And who was I to choose?
Steps were taken, onto the path
As I had everything to lose.

The midnight had caught up now,
My hands nowhere in sight.
The shivers held my every breath
And I begged them not to leave.

I saw golden eyes around me,
And I willed them to be dangerous.
Killing time is no crime.
Faceless men are never seen.

My mind wandered beyond my path.
I let it go, for now.
I hadn't felt it leave in a while.
I had forgotten the joyous sound.

So fool me once, but I haven't been fooled—
My path went longer than the midnight promised.
They've long forgotten me by now.
I've been here for a while.

You'll hear my tale one day again,
The one who fooled the time.
My path goes on forever now;
I left much of it beyond.

Acacia
NOA BROWN
Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



Girl in the Mirror
ADELEEN ROSNER
Grade 11, *Photograph*



Enjoy Your Stay

JULIAN ANSORGE, Grade 12, Fiction

Maybe you know what I mean.

You check in at the pristine front desk where you meet a stranger who is friendlier than usual. You are given a number which will float around in your head for a few days.

When you enter the yellow room it is probably a little too cold, and it smells overwhelmingly of *nothing*. It is so neat. You feel awkward plopping down on the bed and disrupting the stillness.

You see the popcorn ceiling, dull white or pale yellow. And the pilled carpet reminds you of other people's feet, which reminds you of other people's heads on the pillow you sleep on while looking at the strange popcorn ceiling thinking *popcorn*.

The marble bathroom is shiny. You will quickly empty the little packets of shampoo and conditioner. Each one has its own scent: *bourbon*, *beechwood*, *bedtime breeze*—packets of comfort that release unfamiliar, soothing aromas.

The thermostat is so precise that it feels medical and not at all cozy.

Your room will always have a painting or photograph framed on the wall. A bunch of shapes or a muddled landscape, something that you would

find on the curb and pass. Maybe it's something regional. Maybe you are staying at a Hilton in a coastal Maine town—hanging over your bed is an ocean, a small island swarmed by ospreys.

Maybe you are at a Marriott somewhere in Missouri. A portrait of a blue girl hangs in your room, and you get to know her so well that you almost greet her when you enter. Maybe that's the point. The art brings shapes and colors, people and landscapes; it is a presence that just barely drowns out the dawning, resounding thought of *I'm alone*.

You pull those thick cloth curtains over the window. Now the room is so dark that you can't be certain of the time of day. You turn on the old television to a regional weather station with cartoon illustrations of the sun and clouds. Familiar faces talk casually. They don't look like the over-pampered mannequins on the big channels. They are like that distant relative you just met for the first time at a family gathering. Someone new, yet recognizable and unintimidating.

Now it is night and you are wasting your time in this little room. Maybe you're pacing back and forth over the carpet, feeling something new under your feet. Maybe you lose track of time watching a pixelated cooking show; you just can't wait to see

what the cake looks like when it comes out of the oven. Or maybe you are sitting at the little desk, staring at the hotel stationary in its little pad. Why are you staying in this room after all?

You try to pull up the sheets but they are tucked in too tightly. You turn over to check an old alarm clock that scares you because it is so capable. The little gadgets on the ceiling stare down over the bed. As you doze off you hear footsteps in the hall, reminding you of the many lives taking place around yours.

You wake in the middle of the night unsure of where you are. On the ceiling a strange green light blinks on the smoke detector. You dream of old friends and old places. You dream of dinner parties—no identifiable faces but just warmth and cheer. You see autumn days, stripped of foliage and colors—only the cold sun. The images come tapping like a fly hitting a window over and over. Like the quiet *clink, clink, clink*, of the room service cart in the hallway.

In the morning you pull back the cloth curtains to find a view you don't recognize. Maybe it's a highway or a parking lot. Maybe it's an intersection with a glowing, irresistible *Denny's* sign. Inside, you imagine lights beaming down on booths, stacks and stacks of golden pancakes mellowing in golden syrup.

Adrift

RUBY KASS

Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



Scarcity

EVELINA LEVY, Grade 12, *Fiction*

You call her on the second Monday of April. You say it's spring now, it has been for some time, and does she know what that means? She knows, she knows, she doesn't need reminding. She asks you if you know what it means to be loyal. You hang up the phone.

It's summer now. The second Thursday in June. The days have never been longer and the leaves have never been greener, so green they're almost blue. You contemplate calling her. Summer had been your second season, second only after spring. You pick up the phone and put it back down. You dial some numbers, pretend they're hers. You hold the phone on your cheek, act like you're having a conversation, give up. Gently, you place it back next to a Chinese take-out menu and a Post-it note reminding you to buy avocados. You think about chucking it across the room. You think twice. The next morning, she calls you. You remember how you used to talk about telepathic communication. She once said that, in the future, words would be obsolete. Everything would be obsolete in the future, and words were no exception. Some other things that would be obsolete: board games, meat, and romance. You told her that's nonsense. She

was being a pessimist. Romance will always exist, even in the future.

Now it's the future and she calls and says it's summer. You know, you know, you've always known, and does she remember what she said about telepathy? Of course she remembers, and that was the night you screamed at her for wearing high heels to a work party. You snatched the heels from her sore and blistered feet and threatened her with their spiky end, picking and prodding them at her face. You loved the power bestowed by a pointy object. You thought she loved the helplessness of bare feet and empty hands. You think about apologizing. Instead, you ask if she knows what it means to put the past in the past. She hangs up on you.

You forget about her in fall. Fall meant nothing to you. Neither of you cared much for orange leaves or lengthening nights. You could do without apple cider, and certainly without apple picking in an orchard upstate. You only remember her in winter. You remember her in winter because winter is almost spring, and spring is your number one season. Also, you are cold in winter. Constantly

cold. And she was human, which meant she was warm. And in bed, you would get close to her and relish her humanity. And sometimes you would watch a movie but mostly you would just sleep, warmer. You don't call her though. There's no reason.

You only call her in spring. And sometimes in summer. And once or twice in fall. And once you get a girlfriend, to let her know that romance is still alive, not yet obsolete. And it goes on like this for a year, two years, many, many years. Until the meat industry goes bankrupt and words are spoken only in scarcity.

“ *She once said that, in the future, words would be obsolete. Everything would be obsolete in the future, and words were no exception.* ”

Seasons of the Soul

JORDAN HICKSON

Grade 12, Mixed Media
(Linoleum Block Print,
Ink, and Watercolor)





True Horoscopes

BERNADETTE FRISHBERG, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

ARIES

Nothing reverberates confidence as strongly as you do, but I wish you would find a better go-to crying spot than the first floor bathroom. Your lucky items are a ballpoint pen and 200 Robux. Your patron saint is St. Cecelia.

TAURUS

We're both well aware that your body is a useless meatsack that carries you from room to room, but hey, at least you can decorate it. Take several short naps. Your lucky items are an Ocean Green Pearl crayon and a cat older than seven. Your patron saint is St. Marina the Monk.

GEMINI

Don't believe too seriously in something that you could have written yourself. You know this already, but vinegar doesn't sterilize houses as much as it does soothe paranoia. Your lucky items are a bushel of dried flowers and a paint-stained T-shirt you stole from your dad in 2009. Your patron saint is St. Catherine of Bologna.

CANCER

The laws of physics apply to us all, dragging down our muscles until we can't take it, and that you're still coping with that as well as you are is really kinda great! Audition for a role in the next upcoming show at your school. Your lucky items are sacred geometry and carillon keys. Your patron saint is St. Agatha of Sicily.

LEO

Remember that you're an angel, and remember to do things for yourself, because, if for no other reason, it's a good habit to get into. You smell nice; are you using new deodorant? Your lucky items are anime figurines, hair picks, and sheet music to the hymn *How Can I Keep From Singing?* Your patron saint is any given archangel.

VIRGO

You'll be okay. You *will* be okay. You'll be okay even if I have to rip out my tongue to help you be okay, but I am begging you to stop being afraid to tell people when you don't think that you will. Call your mom and talk to her about that thing (you know the one). Your lucky items are an 1896 Maxim-Silverman Automatic Pistol, matcha Pocky, and a Fleet Foxes vinyl. Your patron saint is St. Barbara.

LIBRA

The world doesn't revolve around you. The world doesn't revolve around your city. Pull your head out of your back pocket. Your dog has to go out, so let him out before he pees on the rug. Your lucky items are a film camera, multiple Subway tokens, and solid gold Adidas. Your patron saint is St. Frances de Sales.

SCORPIO

Friendly reminder that homesickness is temporary, but chronic depression is by nature forever. Sell your valuable Pokémon cards, and use the money to buy more, slightly less valuable Pokémon cards. Your lucky items are a 50 pence coin, a jacket made from pastel pink acetate cloth, and the kidneys of your abuser. Your patron saint is St. Rita.

SAGITTARIUS

The Internet is an icy cold void and it won't help you with your problems. Stop picking at your skin. Your lucky items are a Gideon Bible, baby teeth, and a pair of clean socks. Your patron saint is St. Nicholas.

CAPRICORN

You're stronger than nigh-everyone, especially when it doesn't feel like it, and the incredible progress you've made is more than worth the chipped nails from the crawl. Clean out your bookshelf. Your lucky items are Double Stuf Oreos, the brightest red lipstick the drugstore has to offer, and Mrs. Meyer's Dish Soap. Your patron saint is St. Genesius.

AQUARIUS

Talent blossoms from you like weeds and snails from the sidewalk cracks after a heavy rain, and the fact that you're blind to your own skill is beyond frustrating to literally everyone who knows you. Get fitted for new bras. Your lucky items are succulents and anything with Frida Kahlo on it. Your patron saint is St. Dorothy.

PISCES

You do not understand the degree to which you are helping more than the average person, but take my word for it and, please, give yourself credit. Cancel your landline whenever you get the chance; who even calls you on it anymore? Your lucky items are any foil Magic: the Gathering card, keys to any house but yours, and a spinner ring. Your patron saint is St. Dymphna.

Tapping In

ABIGAIL SEARS-MAURO, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

The phlebotomist starts by asking for my name and date of birth. He tells me his first name, which I immediately forget. He is young, I assume around my sister's age. The lab room is rectangular and has minimal furniture in it. There is a special blood drawing chair with an attached side table that is red, a white desk and computer in the opposite corner, a few racks, and a fridge that I assume holds blood and vaccines, and a rolling doctor stool next to the blood chair. As I sit in the chair and clench my sweatshirt, I look to the side table and notice seven plastic vials with my name and date of birth printed on them.

"Are all those for me? How long does this take?"

"Yeah, it seems like a lot, but once you get started it shouldn't take long." He ties a rubber strap around my right arm and begins hunting for a vein.

I always think about heroin addicts and maple trees during blood draws. The phlebotomist eventually finds a vein and I look away to avoid seeing the needle. The sharp pain is fleeting, but I continue staring at the brick accent wall to play it safe. Eventually, I look over in curiosity and am disgusted to see that the vein he has found is C-shaped and the needle has pierced it at an angle. I fill up the first vial pretty quick, but with the second the flow hits a sap-like pace. I notice that

he has to adjust the needle and hold it in place in order to get the vein to cooperate.

"This is a tricky one . . ." He adjusts the needle once more.

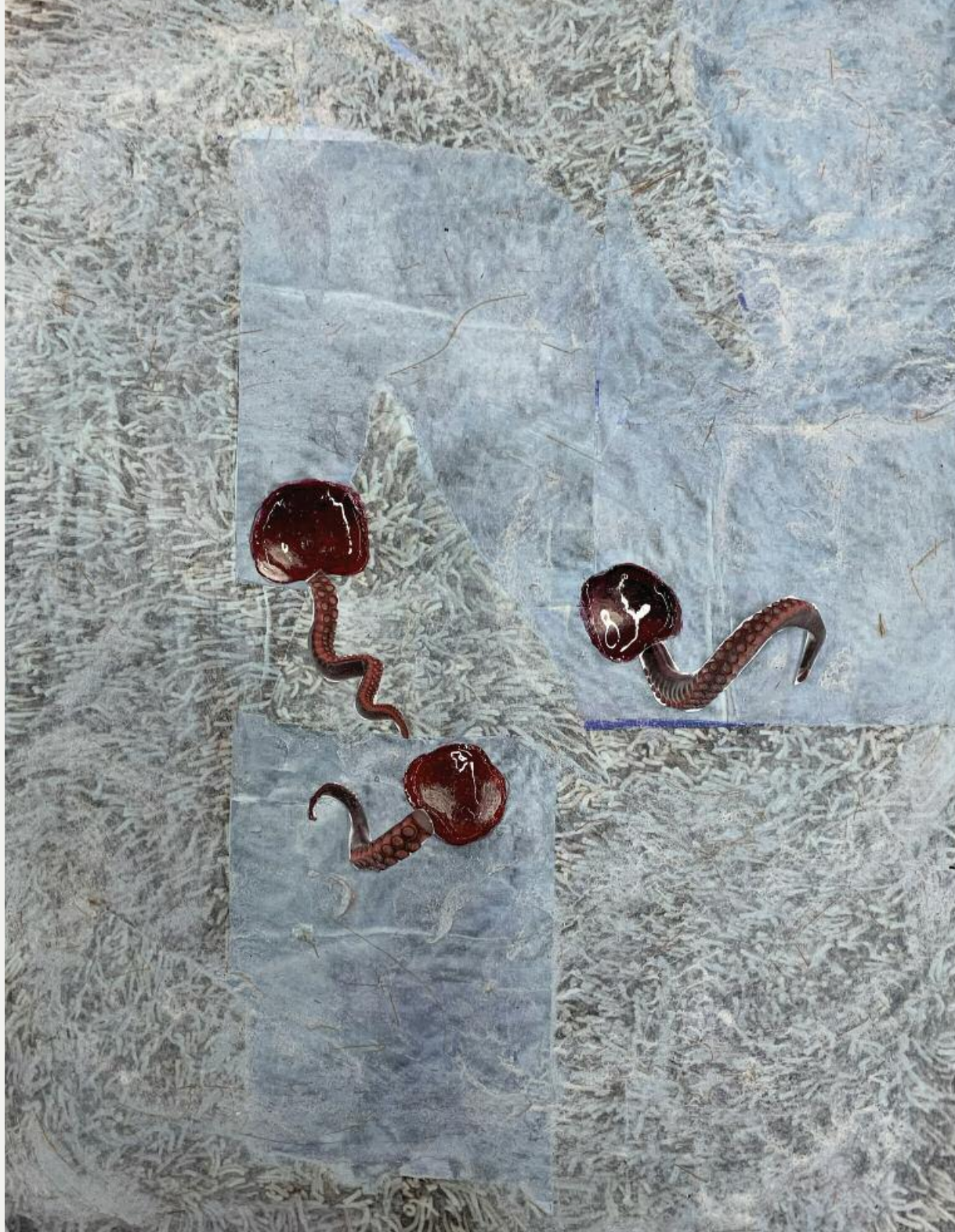
"It's like a broken iPhone cord. Is this normal?" The iPhone thing feels stupid as I say it.

"Most younger people have increased circulation due to exercise, but things are moving slowly for you today. I exercise every day, so I have very fast circulation."

I get the feeling the phlebotomist has maybe drawn his own blood on occasion. He continues with a story about his mother being very insistent on keeping a broken iPhone cord that ultimately ends up pulling through in the moments it is most needed. It feels very convenient.

I drift into thinking about what kind of school and qualifications are needed to become a phlebotomist and contemplate asking him about it, but become queasy. On the third vial my vein starts to make small whistling noises accompanied by air breaks between blood spurts.

He adjusts the needle once more, but it seems that the vein has decided. Eventually, he shoves deeper into the curve of the vein and things begin to move



Orifice

ALMA-LILAS ANZALONE

Grade 11, Ceramic



again. The hissing noise starts up again. This, combined with the purple coloring of my blood, makes me nauseated and dizzy. I sit back in the chair and hope that the remaining four vials will fill up quickly. As we reach the seventh vial, I black out and hunch over. The phlebotomist notices that things are heading south, waits for the vial to fill halfway, then hands it to me while he steps out.

The warmth of the blood in my hand and watching the outlines of it flow through the tubing sends me over the edge. Thankfully, I am unable to see it fully because my vision has mostly faded out. The phlebotomist returns lickety-split with a can of apple juice, and recognizing that I am a bit tied up, opens it for me. As I drink the juice, he hands me a Kind Bar. I devour the bar, and a few bites in I realize it is dried cherry. Normally I would be disgusted by a cherry bar, but this one really hits the spot.

After finishing the bar, I put my arm down so he can take the needle and tubing out. I look down and it becomes clear that I was so immersed in the Kind Bar that I didn't notice my blood continuing to flow onto the chair as I ate. A small puddle has

collected beside my right leg on the seat cushion. Blood Chair has actualized.

Naturally, now that the collection is over, my vein seems to be in full force again. When the phlebotomist slides the needle out of my arm, the vein does a few drips and then a final dramatic gush before clotting off.

The phlebotomist presses a piece of gauze over the hole for a moment and then puts a small circular bandaid over it. I take the final sips of my juice and ponder where my seven vials are going, how they are getting there, and if they are stored in the fridge or stay out in the racks.

“ A small puddle has collected beside my right leg on the seat cushion. Blood Chair has actualized.”

Eye Contact

BILLIE WYNN

Grade 11, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



When Atlas Sobbed

ASA KHALID, Grade 10, Poetry

The story goes that Atlas led the Titans into war with the Gods, and when the Gods won, Zeus gave Atlas the world and told him to put it on his shoulders.

I had always wondered if Atlas ever cried, ever sobbed so hard that the earth and the sky shook with his shoulders, ever stomped his feet and whined, ever let his head hang down and the world roll on his neck, ever trembled so hard he woke up Mother Gaia from her slumber.

Sometimes I will just have a bad day and when I take off my shirt I'll want to take off my world with it

but Atlas knows I could never shrug

my heavenly body is stuck to my shoulders with Gorilla Glue.

Hey, Bees

ZOE KORTES, Grade 10, *Personal Essay*

I remember getting out of the car and onto a stranger's grass lawn. I was probably wearing a cardigan, even though the day was warm. I leaned against a tree and read a few sentences off my Kindle while waiting for my dad, Abba, to finish his phone call with the voice he had put on speaker in the car. After a few page clicks, a man came out and greeted Abba. To my uncertain recollection, he was red-haired and standoffish. He led us into a nearby white barn, one of the many structures in view. There was a huge fan stirring dust motes in an early beam of sunlight and—was that a buzzing noise? I didn't quite see him reach or into where, but when he emerged he had what we had purchased: an overwintered nuc of bees.

An overwintered nuc is simply a mini-hive of bees, ready for implanting in a larger, empty hive. They're good pals with the queen and have survived a fierce Connecticut winter together, as opposed to package bees, who are a young queen in a sugar cage and a lot of worker bees united by their collective weight of 3lbs. The advantage to the nuc is that one is guaranteed a honey harvest in the first year, although I've found you usually get that with a package.

Abba said goodbye and thank you to the red-haired man, and I waved without looking. Abba carried the box into the car, but I walked close, almost tripping over our feet.

Soon, in the car and on the road, I touched my fingertips to the mesh window, feeling the slight prickle of countless little bee legs. There was a constant buzz coming from the white box, louder than I would have liked. I withdrew my hand, shivering.

"I think the air conditioner's kicking in," I remarked to Abba, who was driving. He nodded in time with his music. I sang along.

The man at the bee place had told us to keep the bees cold until installation. It had reminded me of receiving an ant farm as a holiday gift. The instructions had said to put the ants in the fridge. When I had shaken them out into their blue gel habitat, they had barely been able to move.

The bees, however, were very much still buzzing despite the car's chill. How exactly did they make that sound? Peering through the woven wire, I could see their industrious little shapes, darkened by lack of light and by their stripes.

They were kind of loud. Were they angry? No, probably not.

"Hey, bees," I cooed at them. Abba snorted.

"Are you doing the 'hey, kitty' voice for the bees?"

"Heyyyy, beeees."

Outside the trees blurred green.

We had arrived back home. I was too nervous to pick the bees up (I had better get over that quick), letting Abba reach through from the left and grab the buzzing nuc. With me following, he carried it out to the road-facing side of the house, which cast a shadow on the adjacent grass.

There wasn't anything to do from that point except wait. I crouched for a bit near the box, but seeing the bees move about had rather exhausted its novelty over the hour-and-a-quarter car drive and so I went back inside. I was starting to get hot, anyway—the day was warming up.

Abba made me boxed mac and cheese for lunch, and then took a break. He had spent last night driving us both up to Connecticut, and this

morning driving too. I wasn't opposed to taking a rest myself.

It was a beautiful day. I sat at the oak breakfast table with my lunch, in front of the large glass window overlooking the property. The sun shone through handprints on the glass to illuminate the oak, making it shine like honey.

A bit later, Abba phoned up Marianne. Marianne runs the local horse farm. She's kept bees for many years. That May weekend, she had kindly offered to install the nuc for us.

I listened to their conversation in snatches as I sat on the couch and read off my Kindle. Abba's loud when he takes calls. The phone was located in the kitchen, so Abba started there, shifting on his feet and sounding angry (he wasn't). He walked around into the living room and up the stairs to his bedroom. Soon, he stomped back down, the sound of the stairs creaking under his loud phone voice.

"Uh, yeah, about two hours ago."

I tapped to turn an electronic page.

"Uh huh. Yeah. Ohh . . . uh huh."

We had made an amateur mistake. Abba gave me a terse explanation, but I learned the bulk of it 30 minutes later when Marianne's pickup truck arrived. Stuffing pine needles from a plastic bag into her smoker (smoke sedates bees), she explained in her drawling voice that it had been a bad idea to leave the bees outside for so long on a hot day. They would likely swarm, which means the queen would leave with half the hive to colonize somewhere else. Worried, Abba and I slipped into our new oversized bee suits, and, behind Marianne, trekked over to the small box by the side of the house. Approaching, Marianne began nodding and making

"yeah" noises. Inexperienced as we were, Abba and I, too, could see cause to worry.

Or, rather, hear it.

The din was incredible. The bees were buzzing to raise hell, and when, with a stained hive tool, Marianne opened the nuc, the sound got even worse. The air hummed with heat and with the fury of thousands of bees in spiraling flight, darkening the air around us. I stepped back in fear, tripping on the cuffs of my bee suit.



I Want to Live in a Greta Gerwig Movie

DANIEL CHIAN, Grade 10, Poetry

I want to live in a Greta Gerwig movie. I want to be Saoirse Ronan running through a field, falling in love, crying at a camera. I want every candle I light to be looked at for a while and I want to have long fun montages of me eating ice cream or doing homework or writing or tossing and turning. I want to make boys with beautiful hair cry over how I don't love them even if I do. I want my summer to be in sepia tones and I want my stories to win Oscars and Grammys and Golden Globes. I want to feel framed in gold on a silver screen and I want to live through everything.



Filter

SHAILEE SRAN

Grade 12, *Photograph*

Convalescent
ROWAN DeWITT
Grade 11, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



I Am God And It Gets Worse

BERNADETTE FRISHBERG, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

Preface: This meditation is based heavily on a conversation I had over text at 11:55 PM.

I enjoy writing. More than I like to write stories with plot, I enjoy writing about people. Sometimes, I think that I'm less a writer and more a character designer with a flair for dialogue. I have created a lot of original characters (abbreviated to OCs hereafter), often focusing more on their individual development as people than the greater scale of the story I'm writing, if there is a story at all. While I enjoy sometimes going a little crazy and writing about ghosts or werewolves, for the most part I like to write stories that are based in reality; thus, these characters have religions—some are Jewish, while others may be Buddhist or Catholic.

However, for these characters, none of those religions are technically correct. Because in the world I built, the earth was not created by God or science, it was created by me.

Yesterday I was writing about a particular OC, Piers, who is one of my favorites right now. He was the product of the question "What does your perfect boyfriend look like?" mashed with the quote "God gave me depression because otherwise I would have bested Him by age fourteen." Piers is basically the perfect boy: relentlessly sweet and smart, patient and kind, gentle, and good with kids. That was boring, though; as a writer, I know there is no story without conflict. So I put some obstacles into his life to make things more interesting, namely burning down his hometown in the 2018 Camp

Fire. The trauma from that triggered his schizophrenia, which brought with it the even slower onset of bipolar disorder. I did the research and everything.

I was thinking, yesterday, about Piers discussing how he's been unable to keep up with his religious obligations because of his illness, and how sometimes it's hard for him to even believe in God. Because what kind of loving God would make him suffer like this?

Me.

As stated at the top, this essay is heavily inspired by a text conversation that occurred at 11:55 PM, five minutes after I had told her I was going to sleep. When I started making the mind-blowing observations stated above, I was met with the response of, "You're not their God because they don't worship you."

But! They do! They have religions; again, their world is parallel to mine. They worship a God. I created them. I am, by extension, their God.

"They don't know who you are," she said, getting fed up at this point. It was nearing midnight, if it hadn't passed it, and we had both had long days.

Okay, but we don't "know" who God is. That's, like, half the premise of Judaism. When we thank God

for fresh strawberries or summer rain, we're not thanking one specific person as much as we're thanking the thing that let it happen, whatever or whoever that is. We worship the thing that deemed our existence in the universe acceptable. In the case of my characters, that thing is me.

"Do you really believe," replied my friend, "that they are real? And that you, like them, are real/unreal, and that someone else in a larger universe just like ours created us this intricately and then we came alive?"

Then she went to sleep, leaving me to scream into the void.

Let me make clear: I am not God. I don't think I'm fully God. I am not that pretentious. Thank God for that (ha!). My personal theory for religion is as such: I think that evolution, the creation of the universe and space, is basically the result of a cosmically proportioned Rube Goldberg machine with no clear end goal. I think that God put a ball of everything into an ocean of nothing, like one of those capsules you put in the bath that turns into a foam mermaid, except instead of a foam mermaid, it created space and time and consciousness. And I do think we all create our own worlds, and thus we're Gods of a much smaller, less intelligent scale. Maybe that's existentialism? Maybe it's deism? I don't know. But bear with me.

The parallel universe theory suggests that every single action taken, no matter how minute, creates

an infinity of parallel universes where events change based on that event. The permutations for this are so infinite it is giving me an actual headache to think about; there's absolutely a possibility that one of them might have my characters as real people.

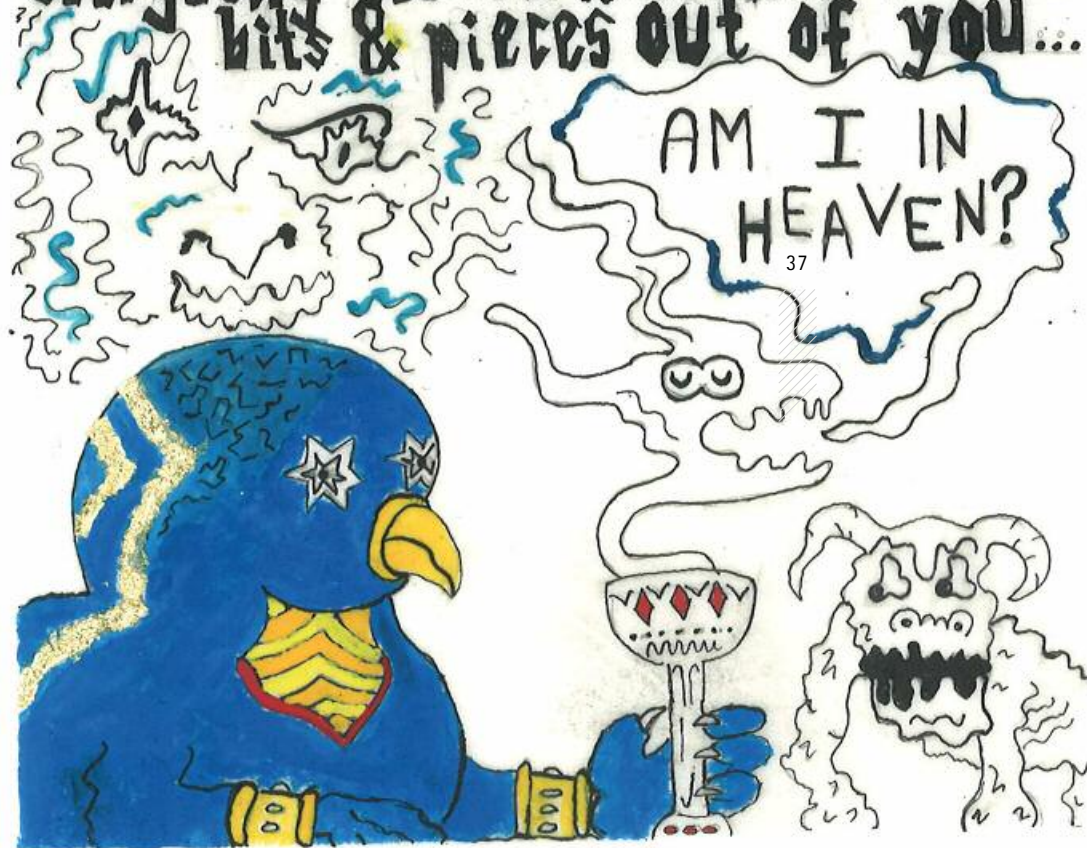
What if there is a bigger person, not in the sense we're familiar with, but literally just another teenage girl? And if so, what if our universe is the way it is because that teenage girl gave this universe parallel traits to her own? It could go on infinitely, like how if you look in a mirror that looks into a mirror long enough, the image turns a shade of green.

If I'm aware of the person who hypothetically created me, she's the one who made me aware of her; she's the one making me write this essay under the watch of my tutor, whom she also created.

Is it easier to believe firmly that all existence is a coincidence? Or is it better to imagine that we were created with intent and love? I'd like to believe the latter; it's much more comforting to think that someone has plans for me. But really, I have no conclusions; every question is answerable only with more questions, like a philosophical hydra.

I made a universe and I allowed pain in it. Am I guilty of the sin of pride? Maybe one day, you will face the thing that created you and ask it why it allowed suffering. What will you do if it shrugs its shoulders and says "Character development?"

I've got ideas in my
brain about the end of
the world that I won't even say
when all the bricks that built
our brain will be turned into sand
by the eternal wave and
everybody that I know has taken
bits & pieces out of you...



**for the two women named Jane,
who were buried with their husbands**

NICHOLE FERNANDEZ, Grade 11, *Poetry*

I hope you love your men
and remember lying in bed in awe over the transformation
of hands dedicated to cradling heads over kissed knuckles.
That through rotting walls you can whisper how your bodies have changed
and the minor gratitude of having a darling man hoard your memory.
That you can smell coffee faintly when the sun lights up your bed.



Avenue U and East 15th
DANIEL CHIAN
Grade 10, Painting
(Acrylics)



How To Completely Screw Up Getting Your California Driver's Permit, In Three Easy Steps

CLAY JOHNSON, Grade 12, *Humor*

STEP 1 Learning

Ask your mom to find an online driver's ed class. This part is essential because you will never do anything if she doesn't find it for you. Spend \$30 on the class and begin the journey. Try to skip through the whole thing in 15 minutes. This likely won't work, but it's worth a try. The software will probably force you to spend time reading each screen. Open a new window and spend this time playing Grand Theft Auto; this game will show you the importance of road safety. The process of completing driver's ed will take around 10 hours and as long as you don't pay attention, it won't be so grueling. Once you reach the end of the class, you must take the test to get your certification of completion. While you might think you are slightly unprepared, you must realize something: this test is taken online, and the internet contains the answer to every question that has ever been asked. You will get a 100%. This will be a sign of things to come.

STEP 2 Perfecting

Now that you have completed the online driver's ed class, it's time to schedule a DMV appointment for your test. This will be easy. Ask your mom to do it. For picking a DMV, you want to find one with an appointment available as soon as possible. You don't want to forget all that information you spent hours learning. If there are no available DMVs close by, go afar. It doesn't matter if you have to travel 100 miles to San Jose—in fact it's *better* if you have to travel 100 miles because you will be able to drive home once you pass. After you have scheduled your appointment, you won't have to worry. The next few weeks will be a breeze; you won't need to study until the car ride to San Jose. Continue playing Grand Theft Auto if you are doubting your knowledge of car safety. The big day will come, and you might feel underprepared. This is a normal feeling, but you have a long car ride ahead. Spend the first 25 minutes doing some random person's Quizlet, and then get bored and go on Instagram. You are ready.

STEP 3 Executing

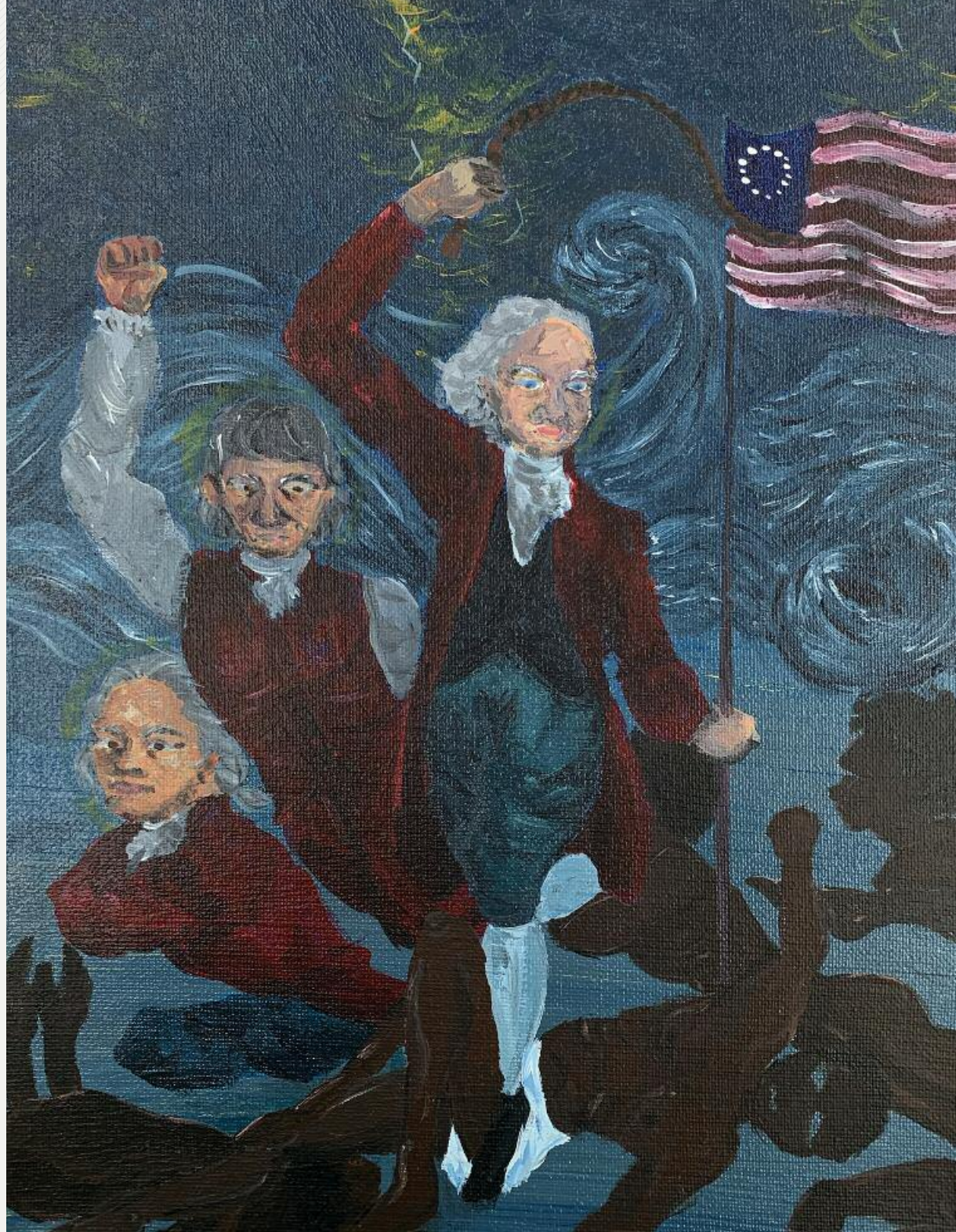
When you arrive at the DMV, the pressure will start to build. You don't want to let people down. Luckily you told your parents that you were studying the whole time, so they think you will ace it. You will wait in a line for a while; you can either study or play Clash of Clans, your call. After fighting off barbarians for 20 minutes or so, you will arrive at the front of the line. The lady at the desk will give you a number and ask you: *Why did you come to San Jose? You realize you don't need an appointment for a permit test.* You will make up a story about why you are in San Jose, which will help alleviate your embarrassment. She will dismiss you and you will wait, holding your piece of paper with the number on it: G060. It may feel like a while, but this time is valuable. This is where you go back and look at the Quizlet. You will know everything at this point. A DMV employee will call you up after 35 minutes. You will walk with pride to the test-taking computer. You will begin the test, and realize that you may not know who has the right of way when two cars meet on a hill. Or what California's "Basic Speed Law" says. Or what you should do if your vehicle starts to hydroplane. You don't even know what a hydroplane is.

Now is the time to get angry. Start blaming other people, as it is clearly their fault. Leave fast to avoid public humiliation, and go sit in your car stubbornly, as your mother drives you back home. You will proceed to have a family lunch, where everyone will try not to mention what happened at the DMV.



**The Founding Fathers
Dispel Africans from The
Shining City on a Hill**

MARIS HAYES
Grade 11, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



My Ancestry.com Results

ASA KHALID, Grade 10, Poetry

10th st held us down harder than grandma did
U could smell 10th st from a mile away
U could smell it when u weren't there.

The story goes that in 19 none of your business 3, great-grandpa poured his entire life savings into a busted old house in NYC. He would spend his entire life working on that house, his sweat melted in with the cement and bricks

"This will always be ur little piece of something Carrie Mae," grandma said he told her

My family history doesn't trace back to the 1600s
But I feel my ancestors in my blood when I stick my middle finger at stupid ass white kids when they stare at me
The raspiness of my grandma's gospel music
The smell of hope in her gas stove

So my history begins in 19 none of yo business 3, in a busted old house in park slope before park slope was park slope

My history begins because an old man I will never meet thought abt me before I was born and wanted to give me a piece of whatever gold god gives to white folks

Sleeping Bears

JORDAN HICKSON, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

Every night from the age of two to the age of seven I refused to sleep in my own bed. My parents love to tell stories of all the strange places they would find me asleep—at the top of the staircase (which offered me easy viewing of whatever crime TV show they were watching, all the while staying hidden from their vantage point on the couch) or draped across the foot of their bed (I migrated there one night after they fell asleep and managed to go a few hours unnoticed . . . until they woke up to see what they had just kicked off the bed). While most of my parents' stories revolve around all the ways I managed to encroach on their full night's sleep, my favorite place to go at night was not next to their feet but into my brothers' bedrooms.

My room was the only one out of the three of ours that had a window. Outside, vines covered the wall of the building next to ours, and from my bed, I watched each night as they wrapped themselves around each other choking out projections onto my fairy patterned sheets. My parents put up curtains in my room after I told them I was scared of the shadows, but by then other boogeymen had woven themselves into my cotton blankets. I had visions of being snatched or attacked like those kids on the television which, from my position in the very back of the apartment, was likely to go unnoticed by my

sleeping, dead-to-the-world family. Or worse, I'd creep into their bedrooms one morning to find one, or two, or all four of them, cold and stale, positioned in crooked ways on the floor, perfect for the black and white freeze frames that appear before and after each ad-break. "Family annihilation" they called it.

I probably should've loved having my own bedroom—even if it was a New York sized one and the width of the bed was the width of the room—but if my refusal to sleep in it was any indication, I don't think I wanted it. Truthfully, I don't remember the reasoning of my two-to-seven-year-old self. I can only go off of what I remember:

I remember softly opening the door to my brother Maddison's room and, since his bed was too small for me to lie next to him, lying on his back instead, which, on one occasion, gave him a nightmare about being pinned down by a boulder in a rock slide. I remember the wooden bunk beds in my brother TJ's room and how, at that age, it felt like a massive oak tree in the middle of our concrete apartment. I remember the night they both locked their doors and how they remained unbudged even when I grabbed the handle and threw my entire body weight backward. I remember still not wanting to return to my bedroom and so instead I

opted to sleep in the hallway between their bedrooms. I should have been mad. Furious, even, at how their hearts remained cold and unrelenting even as I screamed, whined, cried their names through the plaster walls. But in the end, four-year-old me was just content knowing that not only would my brothers feel guilty in the morning when they found me wrapped up on the floor outside of their doors, but perhaps such a pitiful image would soften the heart of any would-be-ax-murderer that came to visit us.

////////

When I was in 2nd grade I took an after-school science class on Tuesdays. One day when we were learning about the solar system, our teacher decided to share his infinite wisdom by explaining that the sun was a star and, like all stars, eventually it was going to explode and swallow the Earth up with it. To put it lightly, I was horrified. I had nightmares about what I was sure would be my future: some about the flesh melting clean off my body and others where I felt pure desperation trying to get everyone I had ever loved onto a spaceship to fly us all far away. At some point during this particular iteration of nightmares, I was buried beneath the covers of the bottom bunk, TJ seated with his body perpendicular to mine, the

way parents do when they put their children to sleep. His back was hunched almost flat to his thighs and the mattress caved under his post-pubescent weight—he didn't fit so well in our oak tree bed anymore. I relayed to TJ what the weird after-school science teacher had told us about the sun swelling up and the whole Earth burning too.

"Jordy, that's not going to happen for a very, very long time. We'll all be dead by then anyway." I didn't like his version much either—we both still ended up dead.

////////

After college, TJ moved back in. The summer before, Maddison had graduated, gotten married, started a

“ *I had nightmares about what I was sure would be my future: some about the flesh melting clean off my body.*”

new job, and moved across the country. My biggest accomplishment thus far had been finishing middle school, but now at least I wasn't the only one who had to put up with my parents arguing or living in a one-bedroom apartment. TJ became the lynchpin in the functionality of our family.

Recently, I fell asleep on the couch while trying to connect with my mum in the only reliable way we have: *Law & Order*. The next thing I remember is inviting people through our front door and into the back of a commercial aircraft. My brain delights in distorting all rules of space and reality. Inside the plane were the ones in the world whose company I enjoyed the most: family, childhood friends, old teachers, adults who raised me, my dog.

It was my stomach that registered the descent in altitude first. Here, the speed of light is horribly untrustworthy. Darting to the tiny oval window I watched the plane brush the tips of evergreens. In the distance, tiny lighthouses created blips of light that dotted the water's edge and illuminated the lulling ocean water we were headed for. As the belly of the plane bumped against the Atlantic, my eyes shot open.

I felt the rough, familiar texture of our couch and managed to grasp that I was in the living room, but I couldn't recall getting there. For a long stretch of time I pressed my fingertips against my eyelids, pressing them deep into my eye sockets, but each time I did I was pulled back into the dream, like a car that tries to accelerate after braking suddenly—

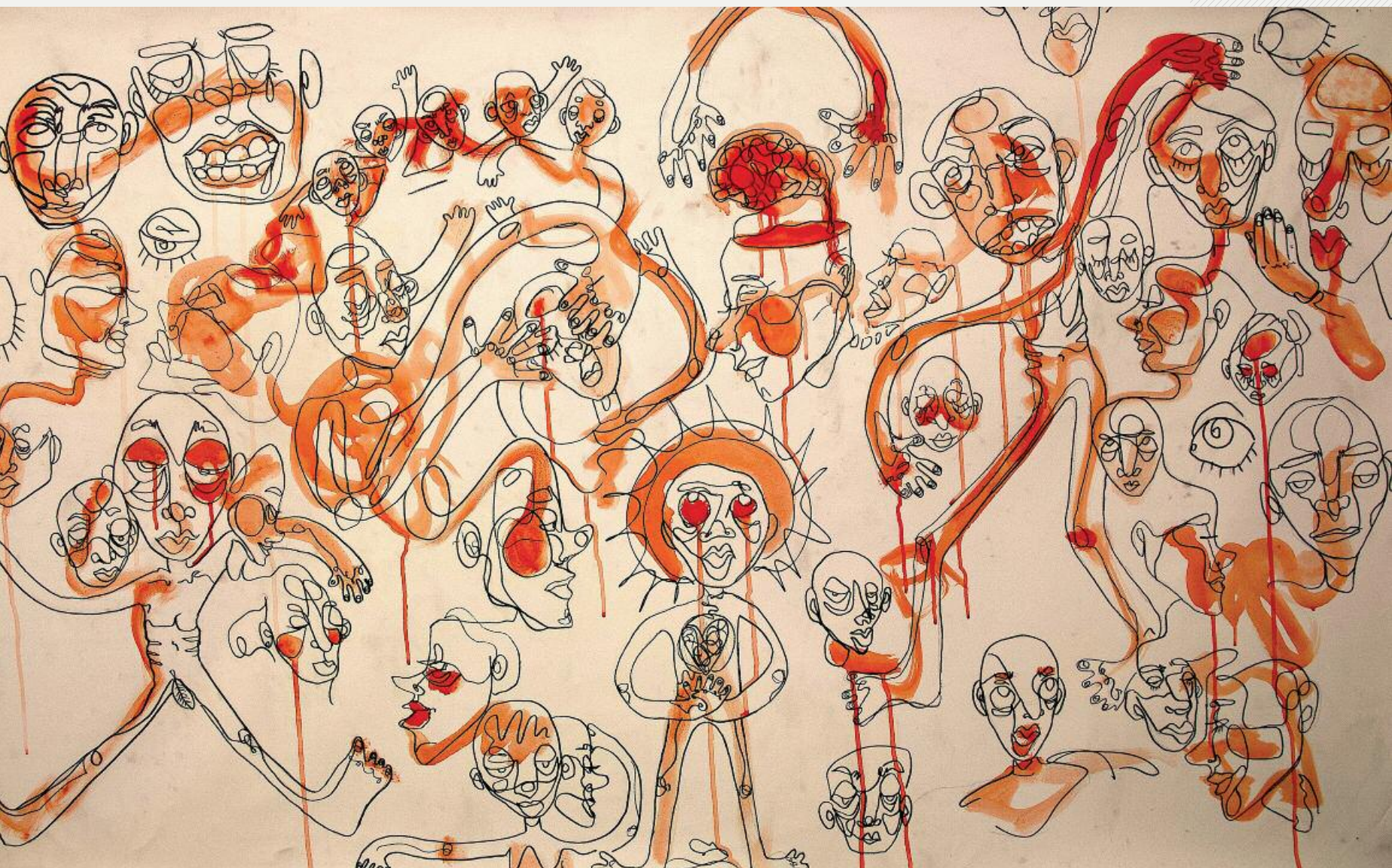
the wheels skidding on asphalt and the smell of burning rubber in the air. I could see water seeping through the floor and trapping us all in the metal tube. I felt my muscles strain as I tried to pry the emergency doors open.

Someone once told me you can't die in your dreams, and I pondered the idea of dying in that plane with everyone I loved; at least I wouldn't be leaving anyone behind; at least nobody would leave me behind.

Feeling more stable, I slid off the couch and down the hallway, but when I reached my bedroom door I turned around and opened TJ's door instead. The light was still on, a strange choice for four in the morning, but his bed was just a pile of unkempt sheets.

////////

TJ used to play a game with me when I couldn't sleep. He would be Big Bear and I would be Little Bear. As Little Bear, I could climb on his back and hook my arms around his neck as he lumbered his Big Bear Walk on all four paws from one side of the room to the other. As Big Bear, he could wrap his arms around my entire body and I could curl my spindly Little Bear body as tight as I could. When I could hear his Big Bear heart thump against his chest there were no dancing vine people or exploding suns or family-annihilating serial killers, only two bears sleeping soundly in their oak tree den.



Study in Glass

ZOE KORTES

Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



Elegy for Laurel Hollow

NOA BROWN, Grade 10, Poetry

When I was younger
and my wingspan was less than now
and the basketball got stuck in the fence
and Dad checked my ankles for deer ticks
and the tree by the mailbox with 1414 was not dead but only lived in,
I let my hands touch the top of water, and I let wet clothes dry on my body
and Grandma knew very well that I wouldn't eat that tomato but put it on the plate
and Jack said sorry for the black eye he gave me
and I dropped the box of cubans Grandpa hid in the garage
and we plowed the snow when his knees turned 78
and I scraped the soles of shoes on the second porch step (but I stubbed my toe on the third)
and my eyes burned from smoky holidays
and I closed the junk drawer, taking a post-it.



Life And Death Often Meet In Waffle House Parking Lots

BERNADETTE FRISHBERG, Grade 12, Fiction

Between the mood lighting, the overwhelming smell of syrup, and the hushed conversations in a muddle of Spanish and English, it felt to Danny he was not in a Waffle House in New Mexico, but in fact in the classic Edward Hopper painting "Nighthawks." He did not particularly like Edward Hopper, or art history, or, really, any art that proclaimed itself as "art," finding it to be pretentious and the entire community to be one massive self-congratulatory cocktail party. This, however, was the kind of thing that made people tell him to calm down. Danny pulled out his phone and almost started checking Reddit when his friend JJ sat down at the table, signaling his presence by putting an enormous plate of smothered waffles and sausages in front of him.

Danny started eating without thanking JJ, as customary. "Long shift?"

"Hell yeah, dude," said JJ, stretching. JJ was short and dark brown, and his face sported several quarter-sized moles which had frequently been misdiagnosed as melanomas by the armchair dermatologists—vinyl acetate booth dermatologists—who came in to his Most Sacred And Holy House Of Waffles™. JJ's name was short for Jesús Juarez, and he despised it when people called him Jesús, but he wore the Jesús nametag at work because people would make jokes about the second coming being with waffles, which he found funny, because they were probably right. Danny did

not call him Jesús, even as a joke, because the last time he had done that JJ had punched him in the face. It had been suggested this was unfair, because Danny stood at 6'3," but punches in the face had been their response to off-color jokes since third grade and they didn't want to change it.

Halfway through Danny's third bite, JJ started talking, which was unusual; he was almost always too exhausted. "ICE came by today."

Danny put down his fork, which unsettled JJ, as the consuming of the waffles was always done with a ridiculous, almost inhuman degree of momentum. He made a wordless gesture for Danny to keep eating, and Danny did, albeit slower than normal. JJ continued talking.

"They walked in during the lunch rush, full gear and everything, those stupid vests with 'ICE' on the back in big white letters."

"Sweet Christ," said Danny. A bite of sausage fell out of his mouth and into his lap; he placed it back on his plate without an iota of self-consciousness. "What else happened?"

JJ grabbed the mouth-sausage off of Danny's plate and ate it. "I don't know. The manager—you know Lily—told me to go into the kitchen and tell the cooks and dishwashers and whatever to take an early break, 'cause she doesn't speak Spanish. I went back and told them to not freak out, but ICE is here, and they *scattered*." He laughed, bitter.

"No se asusten, pero ICE está aquí y ustedes debería ir a sus descansos." Scattered, man. I told Lily I saw a bunch of 'em drive home, just so she knew, and she told me she expected as much and it'd be fine."

Danny had stopped eating again; more than half a waffle still remained on his plate. JJ found himself annoyed by this pause in the usual rhythm of the night, and made another gesture for Danny to keep going.

"Are they coming back?"

"No clue." JJ pinched the bridge of his nose.
"Pinches Christo. Is your mom . . . ?"

"Yeah, she was born here, remember?" Danny paused from eating to answer. He swallowed thoughtfully, nervously, not making eye contact.
"Everyone in my family was. Just like yours."

"Did you eat dinner before this?"

"No, I'm just . . . not hungry anymore."

"Pinches Christo. Okay."

“ *No se asusten, pero ICE está aquí y ustedes debería ir a sus descansos.” Scattered, man.*

As JJ took the plate to the back, presumably to bag it, Danny turned to the window. The sun had almost finished setting, staining the New Mexico sky deep, dark purple. A few single stars twinkled, and the moon was a slender white C. It looked like a painting, but he didn't like paintings.

////////

In the parking lot, Danny started telling a joke, the worst he could think of.

"Okay, so a pirate walks into a bar."

"Sure." said JJ.

"A pirate walks into a bar with a steering wheel chained between his knees."

". . . sure." said JJ.

"The bartender asks him, 'Hey, why do you have a steering wheel between your legs?' and the pirate goes—"

JJ elbowed Danny in the ribs. An ICE agent, still in full riot gear, stood on the far end of the parking lot, looking at his phone. Danny nodded, and they tiptoed to his car, a black 2005 Lexus Sedan he'd gotten from his mother.

Once in the car with the keys in the ignition, JJ looked at Danny, borderline frantic. "Finish the joke."

"Really?" Danny cocked an eyebrow. "It's not even funny, I just wanted to lighten the mood—"

"I don't care, finish the damn joke."

"I don't even remember—"

"Steering wheel on his legs."

There was a knock on the window; it was the ICE agent. Danny rolled his window down.

"Hi, sir, can I help you?"

"Do you work here?"

"No, sir. I mean, yes sir."

"Well, this is reserved parking for employees. So unless you work here, you're gonna have to move. Which is it?"

This was a trick question. This was the kind of trick question bored white men ask Mexican kids when they go to drive home from Waffle House in August; everyone knew this guy knew the answer and realized Danny had just lied through his teeth. He had never felt so conspicuously syrup-scented.

"All right, get out of the car," said the ICE agent, and Danny complied in an instant, stepping out of the car and standing up as straight as he could.

"Christ," said the agent, "you're the tallest damn Mexican I've ever seen. What've you got in your pockets?"

"My phone, sir."

"Got your passport?"

"No, sir. Got my license, though, uh—"

Danny fumbled into his back pocket and in one motion, peeled off the case from his phone, pulled out his license from underneath, and handed it over. Behind him, he could hear the noise of the Waffle House door opening, letting out a stream of customers speaking rapid-fire Spanish, and in a moment of violent self-righteousness, Danny felt proud to be the one biting this bullet for them.

"Date of birth?"

Danny snapped back to the land of the living. "Sorry?"

"This is your license, yeah? So what's your date of birth? *Cumpleaños?*"

"August 4th."

"Year?"

"1999."

"Your parents from here?"

"Yessir. Well, they're from Texas, but I'm from Truth or Consequences."

"Uh-huh. You *sure* about that? Says here you're from Los Lunas."

Danny hesitated here, too taken aback at the degree of disrespect for human dignity to explain that yes, he was a human being who moved

around, and yes, he'd lived there in high school, when he got his license, but not before or since; and in the pause, he saw the nauseating smile of someone who'd just had their power complex validated, and he realized, with a sour twist of his stomach, this could very well be the last moment he spent in America.

"HEY!"

Both the agent and Danny turned around to see a short black woman, her hair in a bun, standing in the opened kitchen door. A shiny nametag gleamed from her shirt pocket.

"IS THERE A PROBLEM, OFFICER?"

She dragged out each syllable of *off-iss-er* in a voice so loaded with spite JJ spoke up, a quiet *"And there's Lily,"* from inside the car, causing another synchronized movement between Danny and the agent as they both jumped.

"Who the hell was that?" said the agent.

"I thought I told y'all to get out of here during lunch," called Lily. *"We don't have any damn Mexicans. Y'all got nothing better to do than sit in my goddamn parking lot and bug people?"*

"Is there another kid in the car? How the hell did another kid get into the car?" said the agent, looking into the car, and jumping again when JJ, who had blended almost seamlessly into the leather of the headrest, gave a tiny, jerky wave.

"Jesus!" said the agent.

"Yeah?" replied JJ.

"You gonna get out of my goddamn parking lot, off-iss-er?" Lily repeated, still standing in the door.

"Cause we're a stand your ground state, you know!"

"Yeah, lady, I know," the agent shouted back. He looked from Danny, stock-straight and anxious, to Lily, still silhouetted in the doorway, to the kitchen, to JJ, who was sitting stiller than humans are supposed to be able to sit, and shoved Danny's license back into his hands.

"Don't park in the employees only spot, kid."

"Yessir. My bad. Have a good night."

Danny climbed back into the car with only a brief moment of eye contact with JJ, whose posture suggested he hadn't even breathed since the window had first been rolled down, and drove off as fast as he could, thanking Latino Jesus for Waffle House managers and turns of fate.

JJ and Danny sat in complete silence for about ten minutes of uncrowded interstate highway.

"Pirate walks into a bar with a steering wheel between his legs," Danny announced. "Bartender asks him why he has a steering wheel between his legs, and the pirate goes, 'I don't know, but it's drivin' me nuts!'"

There was another few seconds of silence before JJ cracked up laughing; he and Danny laughed the entire way home.

The FDR
ANYA RENZI
Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



**My Fight Against
America vs. Asia**

CLEO LYNN

Grade 12, Mixed Media
(Gauche and Acetone
Transfer on
Watermarked
Paper)

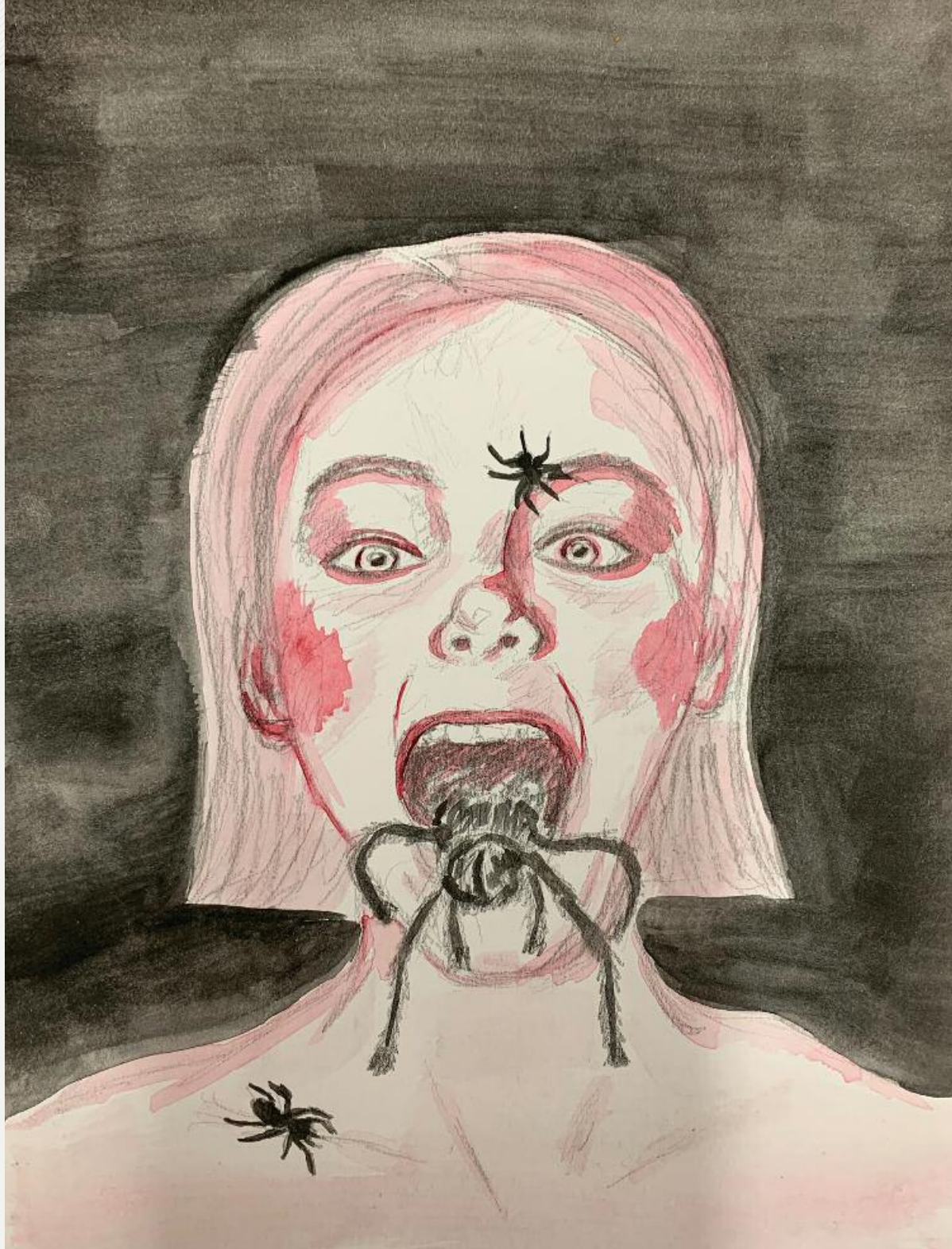




Arachnophilia

KYRA MAYNARD

Grade 12, Mixed Media
(Watercolor and
Colored Pencil)



The Pede

KALIF LEVINE, Grade 12, *Humor*

On my 8th grade trip, we went to a resort in the DR for three or four days and visited an orphanage for six hours on two of those days, so that the school could slap the words "Service Trip" onto the whole event and feel morally righteous.

The bathrooms were connected to the bedrooms and after a long day of appeasing the school's agenda, followed by relaxing in a jacuzzi and a hammock with a view of our pool, my friend Shehryar and I decided that the best way to waste our time was to scare our other friend, Brendan, as he was coming out of the bathroom after his shower. We turned off the lights and stood in a corner by the door, essentially standing on each other so we could fit. After a minute of standing there, just as I was starting to get bored, I felt something on my foot. Then I suddenly felt a lot of somethings on my foot. Naturally, I freaked out. As I tried to move, I felt the somethings stab into my foot and adrenaline enabled me to kick faster. A light thud. Then little legs scrambled to find purchase and run. Through the shadows, I managed to identify a my-foot-sized centipede.

I hopped over to the bed in pain, telling Shehryar that there was a centipede over there and, after he switched the lights on, trying to assess my foot. He suggested going upstairs to the teachers and

asking for help. On my way up, I managed to accrue the attention of the occupants of the girls' bedroom. The door was open and all six girls were inside and, when seeing my newly adopted form of transportation, asked me if I was okay, not because they genuinely cared, but because they believed it to be the polite thing to do. After hearing my explanation, they thought I was trying to psych them out or something and didn't believe me, no matter how many times I insisted that I was telling the truth. I decided to leave the unbelievers to their damnation and crawled upstairs.

I found the nearest group of teachers and explained the situation and they gave me some Neosporin to rub on my feet. One of them asked me to describe what the centipede looked like and explained that some centipede bites have deadly poisons. So now I had an injured foot, was afraid that I was going to die in some rich person's summer home in a tropical paradise, and wished that I had just sat my sorry self on the couch in my one bedroom apartment.

The teachers returned to whatever conversation I had interrupted as I dejectedly rubbed half a tube of Neosporin on my foot, hoping that it could stop my seemingly imminent amputation, only for us all to be startled by multiple screams. The teachers

rushed down as I hobbled behind them, only to discover all the girls running out of their room into the hall and game room. When a few of them calmed down, they explained that a centipede had crawled into their room, a big one, too. Now, I didn't feel sorry for them because I had warned them of such a thing and they-of-little-faith had told me that I was a liar, and I made absolutely certain that all of them knew this.

Then, in order to solve the issue, our math teacher, one Mr. Lyman Casey, grabbed a crutch right from under the arms of an injured girl and smashed its tip onto what he thought was the thing's head,

realized that he got the wrong end and then smashed the other end. He then ran out to the kitchen, came back with the largest steak knife in the entire estate, and proceeded to behead the centipede as a group of 13- and 14-year-olds looked on in abject horror. After a few swings, he finally cut through it and flushed both sides of the centipede down a toilet. Noticeably, he flushed it down the boys' toilet, although the girls' one was closer, but, whatever, you can't win them all.



Peeled

DANIEL CHIAN

Grade 10, *Mixed Media*
(Oil Paint, Watercolor,
Light Modeling Paste,
and Modge Podge)

Recipe for Attraction

TALIN SCHELL, Grade 10, Poetry

Manmade Moon Man cries
Cast a cheese tear from your eyes
And surprise my frowns away
Devil doll maul my cell wall
And cram my flesh with clammy crawls
Fray the splayed tendrils of my ego
And undress my sprawled demeanor
Drown my downtown clown cone spite
Spike my 5-hydroxytryptamine
Pull my tap water
tacky laffy taffy
laced with
trowed
towering thoughts
And consume my sin and bones, starting with my lips
Slit my slithered selfish throat
As you rake away my flaws
Pause
With bitter oaths of shrill protections
professed from midnight imperfections
Possession lust and mind dissection
Just to make a (thin) connection
Should I be blind to misery
Let me
drown
Complacently

(Sauté gently)

Didi

MAYA KARMAKER

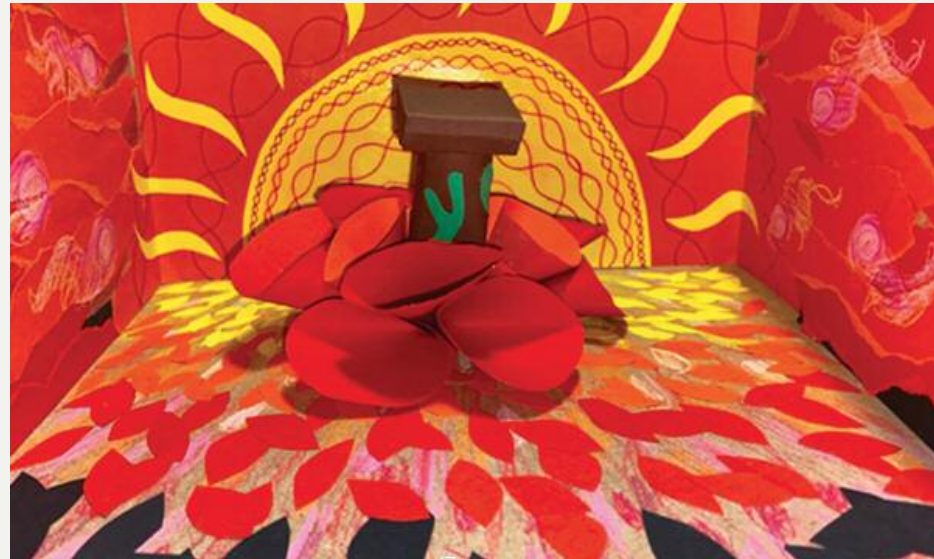
Grade 12, *Photograph*



The Marigold Altar

MIGUEL TEJADA

Grade 12, Mixed Media
(Cardboard, Construction
Paper, Markers, Crayons,
and Modge Podge)



Apartment 7E

JULIAN ANSORGE, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

I can't remember when I first got to apartment 7E in SoHo, because it was the only place I had ever known. My parents had moved there in the 90s, and I arrived from the hospital in 2002. It was an A.I.R building, so to live there you needed an artist-in-residence certificate from the city. This made for some interesting neighbors: Jennifer the architect, Shaul the shaggy, lecherous painter, and Vincent, who rescued reptiles and kept them in his penthouse. Vincent fed the reptiles cockroaches which led to an infestation in the building.

How can you sleep at night? friends would ask on hearing the incessant car honking and sirens. In bed I would listen to the traffic below, which at that point was a familiar humming, and wouldn't know how to explain it. It was practically white noise.

I loved living on the seventh floor, because I could look out my living room window and see much of the city. In our neighborhood, rows of pale beige buildings with door-shaped windows towered over the streets. Each one had intricate black fire escapes that zig-zagged down the front. My older brother Ethan and I spent much of our time at these windows, sitting opposite each other on the windowsill and sharing what we saw. We spent hours looking into the surrounding apartment

buildings, wondering about the compartmentalized lives stacked in rows. *Does the purple room belong to a child? Why does the lady on the 3rd floor have so many plants? Does anyone actually visit the psychic's studio?*

When our parents left, I'd alert Ethan with a note through his bedroom door mail slot which was left over from when our apartment was full of offices. We would take our positions in the window and play one of our favorite games. First, we would make a few paper airplanes, folding each one eight times. Ethan taught me the "master fold," a final fold on the edge of the wings which would make the airplanes glide further. This was a craft we took seriously, making each fold carefully to ensure that the planes were prepared for the long journey down to Broadway.

We would open the windows, letting the granular city air rush in, and toss one down towards the street, where everything looked tiny. The planes would glide and twirl, and we'd watch quietly. When a plane would loop and catch a gust of air, I would turn to Ethan with wide eyes as if to ask *did you see that?* There was no way of knowing where they'd end up. As they neared the street, they'd fade into just another piece of the impossible puzzle of taxis and pedestrians—the intersection of

Broome St. and Broadway, our backyard. We'd toss them over and over, some landing on taxis, others flying out of sight into narrow alleys, cutting between buildings. Sometimes, I thought the planes had ended up in the gutters and I'd feel sorry for them. I wanted to watch them twirl without falling. I wanted them to glide and spiral forever, to fit into the bustling frenzy below. *It's still going*, Ethan would say, pointing, and I'd look into his eyes to see if I could find where he was looking. *If they catch the wind right, they could make it all the way to Brooklyn*. I didn't know how far away that was, but I took his word for it. I always did. Ethan was four years older than me and next year he'd be in high school.

Ethan would quickly grow bored of the paper airplanes. I could play forever, but he always decided when the game would end and we'd switch to our second pastime: car race.

We'd scout cars stopped at a red light and each pick one, hoping that when the light turned green, our car would speed down Broadway, leaving the others in the dust. When the cars were stopped, my brother and I would fight over which one we wanted, and the faster-looking cars always went to him since he was older. He told me how the fastest cars were always the most colorful. From high above, they looked like the remote control cars Ethan used to let me play with—shiny and mechanical as they awaited their cues. By focusing on the cars with our eyes, we felt as if we were

making them slide them down the street. We were the ones making the rules, and the chaos below was just our little board game.

One January day, Ethan and I were at the windowsill. It was snowing, and the buildings and streets were covered in white. I wanted to go sledding but Ethan insisted that there was "too much that had to get done." I sat at the window alone. Behind me, in the living room, our parents were boxing up our things to move. But I was busy following airplanes and watching cars race down Broadway—the same games Ethan and I had always played from our little watchtower. In the sheets of snow, the airplanes would fly off and disappear. In the gusts of wind, plastic bags and pieces of trash were thrust around in circles. A newspaper would fly past the window and hover for a few seconds, suspended in the cold. I'd glance over, looking for someone next to me, while the newspaper disappeared into the blank afternoon.

Polhemus
OSCAR TRUJILLO
Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)





Pantoum of Refusal

ELLA SRAN, Grade 10, Poetry

I once heard a lost man laugh
As though he could see refusedly.
A sparrow sang to the hollow chuckles
And he found a beat as new as to a newborn.

As though he could see refusedly,
Old memories were instantly unneeded,
And he found a beat as new as to a newborn.
Coffee stains were the newest thing that gray morning.

Old memories were instantly unneeded,
As if they had meant nothing at all to him,
Coffee stains were the newest thing that gray morning,
Still warmer than his worried mother's heart—

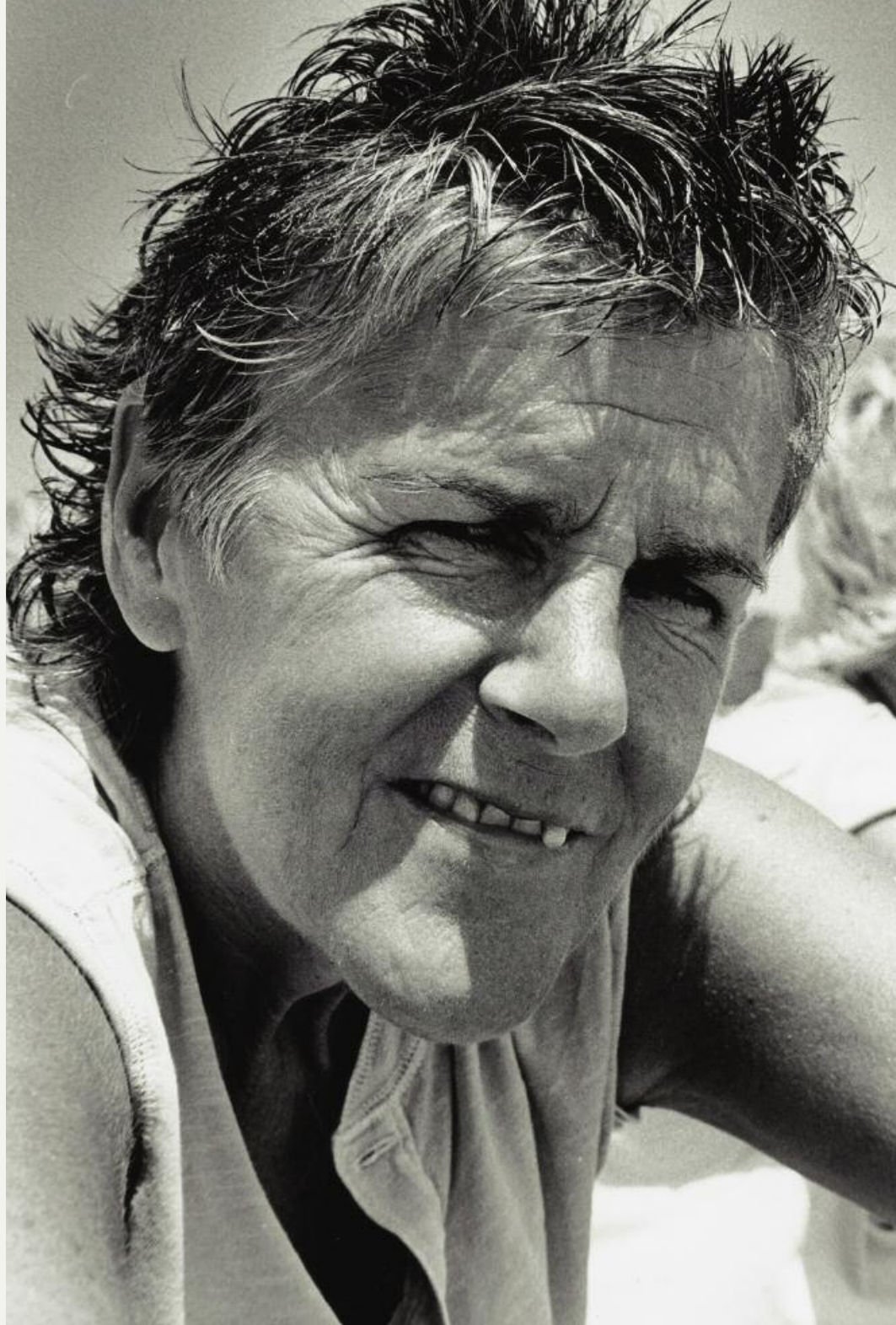
As if they had meant nothing at all to him.
The memories were the only promise of character,
Still warmer than his worried mother's heart.
Was not the promise that he would never truly laugh,

The memories were the only promise of character?
Otherwise who was one with no face for his demons to be?
Was not the promise that he would never truly laugh
Only a dream of the ignorant?

Otherwise who was one with no face for his demons to be?
Was the deprivation of any demons at all
Only a dream of the ignorant?
Was it foolish to see golden light instead of gray?

Was the deprivation of any demons at all
Another something his worried mother wished for him?
Was it foolish to see golden light instead of gray
After he began to dream again?

Another something his worried mother wished for him.
I once heard a lost man laugh,
After he began to dream again:
A sparrow sang to the hollow chuckles.



Woman at
Coney Island Beach

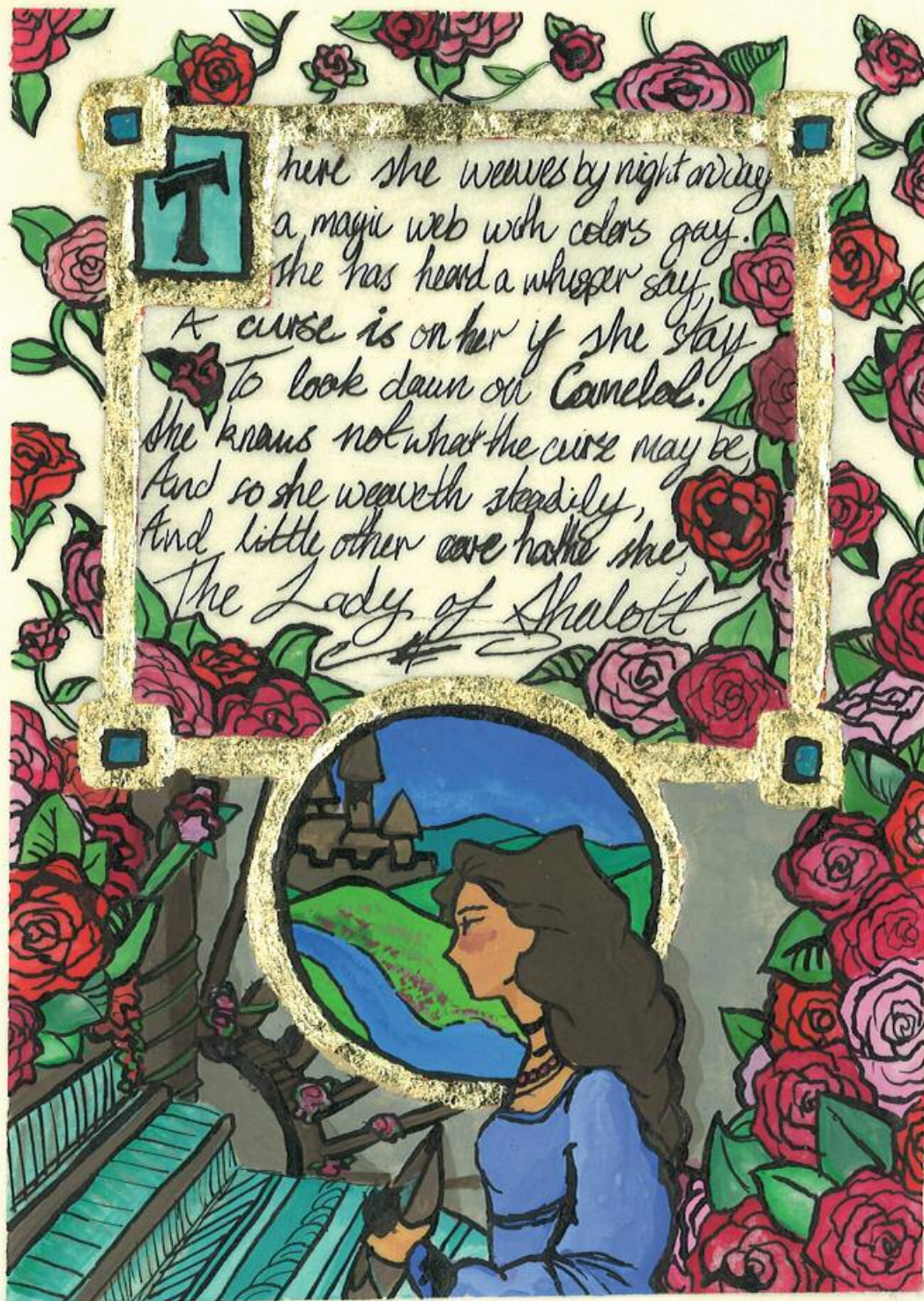
ADELEEN ROSNER

Grade 11, *Photograph*

She Weaveth Steadily

SITA PAWAR

Grade 11, Mixed Media
(Vellum, Gouache,
and Gold Leaf)



Concerts in the Forest

EMILY LI, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

The past day had been a series of mundane events: sitting in a hammock, cooking ramen on a little solo camping stove, and purifying my two one liter Nalgene bottles with Aquamira. It's strange because I was alone (and would be for the next three days and three nights). One would think the time would pass slowly, but it didn't. I was prepared to be bored. So I planned to fill the loneliness with two books, a homework assignment, my journal, and colored pens. I didn't expect the time to be flying by so fast and to feel so . . . not lonely.

But I didn't have the right company. One of the books I had brought with me was a water damaged paperback copy of *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov: a book through the eyes of a child molestor. Twenty pages in and I realized that wasn't good company for a girl staying alone in the forest. Whenever I was reading, I became more sensitive to sound; any rustling or sound other than that of rushing water put me on edge. Whenever he mentioned any body part, shoulders for example, I would become hyper aware of my own, even if they were under a sleeping bag and two fleece Patagonias.

But as I sat by the brook waiting for my Aquamira to activate and listening to the current gurgling and swishing by, songs I'd been listening to in the

last few months (and a few songs I used to love but haven't heard in a while) started playing in my head.

I heard Ciara singing, "*Level up, level up, level up, level up, level up*" and ran through the accompanying Zumba moves that Kareen, the French and zumba teacher, had taught me and my friends every weekend. I heard Rex Orange County singing, "*I want to know where I can go when you're not around and I'm feeling down. So won't you stay for a moment?*" I remembered staring out the window at the beginning of the semester when I should have been doing my homework. I remembered how nervous and lonely I had felt in a

“ *But as I sat by the brook waiting for my Aquamira to activate and listening to the current gurgling and swishing by, songs I'd been listening to in the last few months (and a few songs I used to love but haven't heard in a while) started playing in my head.* ”

new school, in a different state that felt more like a different country. I had started paying for a Spotify Premium subscription two weeks into the start of the semester, and to get my money's worth, of course, I used it every day. It was during this semester that I started experimenting with new types of music, like angsty teenage bands, recommended by my Californian friend, Sofia, with song titles like "I Don't Like You" and "Juicebox Baby."

Back when I was at the brook, I even heard Teresa Teng singing, "*Ni wen wo ai. Ni you duo xin*" in Mandarin. This came as a surprise, because Chinese music was the one type of music I didn't listen to. Nonetheless, I was brought back to a few summers before when my mother's friends came to visit New York and we all went to karaoke. I was the only one who couldn't sing in Chinese so I just hummed along.

These songs and more came to me in entire compositions, assembling into an entire water purifying concert. They followed me around everywhere for the rest of the three days.

In the last few years of his life, music followed my grandpa, too. He always carried a little red cassette player in his pants pocket. It was about the same

size as the red box of cigarettes (the same kind every grandpa in Chinatown smokes while gambling at Columbus Park) he had quit a few years before he started carrying around the little cassette player.

He played Cantonese opera *all the time*. We would be driving home in my dad's 10-year-old Toyota Sienna, and he would be playing his staticky Cantonese opera. I tried to understand what they were singing, but all I heard was changing octaves and the occasional clap of cymbals. I don't know how a Mao Preacher could have come to love something so traditional, but of course, when the time came, we buried him with that little red cassette player he loved so much.

On my own, in the forest, day and night was confusing because I took so many naps and woke up so early. I loafed with the music playing in my head. On my second or third morning, it snowed, and there was nothing in the world that could have brought me out of my hammock until it was over. I stayed in my hammock and journaled, watching the snow fall down on the flaps of my tarp, "Brown Eyed Girl" playing in my head.



Jetsam

ALEX RUBIN

Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



Dear Angry Black Girl

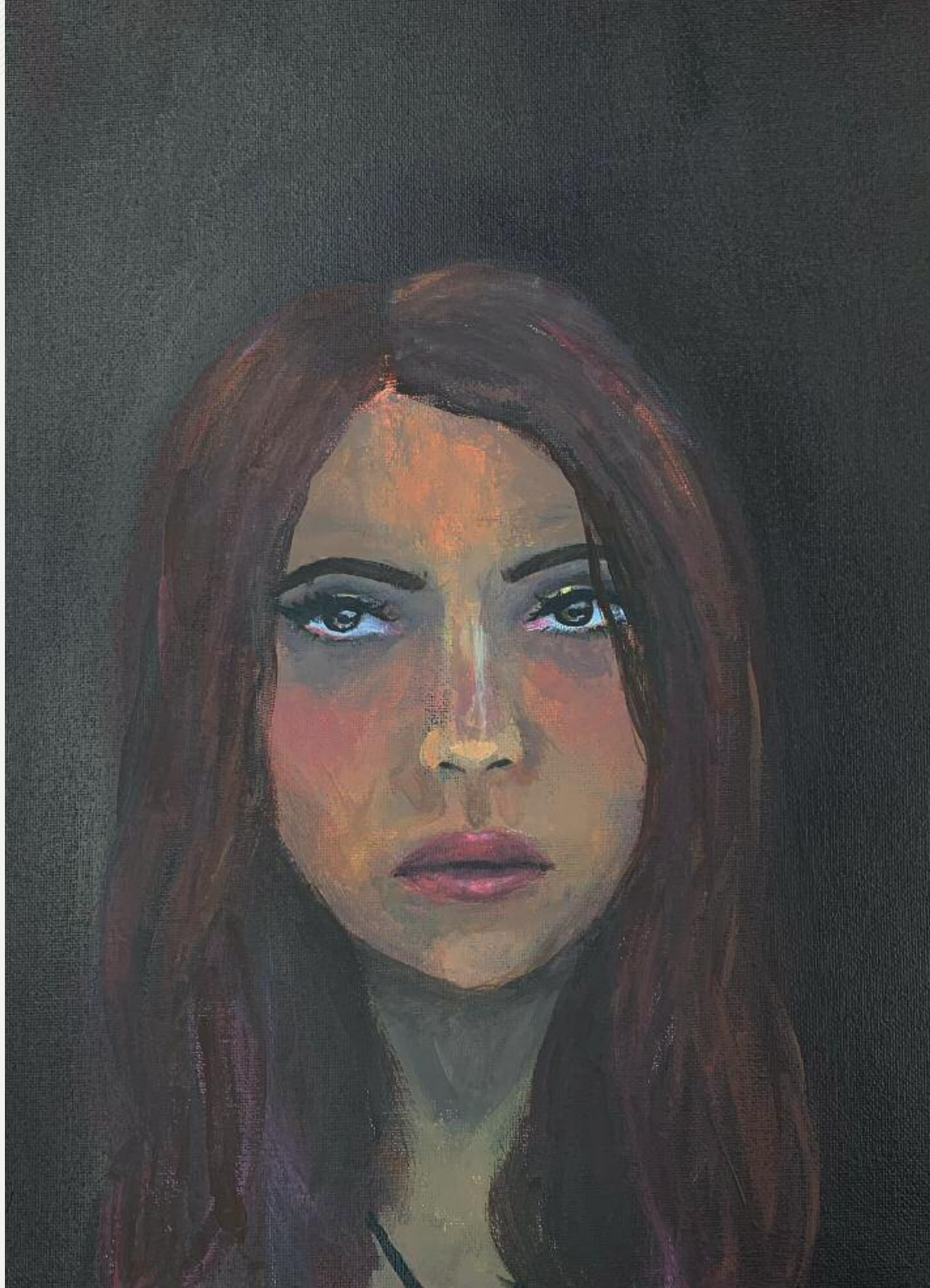
ASA KHALID, Grade 10, *Poetry*

Sometimes U feel things so hard that the words can't even fall on a paper without destroying it. Sometimes the, "that black girl looks like an ugly monkey," jolts U so hard that U can't even think straight for the rest of the day. Sometimes U are so angry that U need to scream and cry all at the same time but the only thing U can do is cross Ur arms and lean far enough back in Ur chair so that U can't hear the, "It's not my fault I have a preference." Sometimes being a black girl suffocates U so much that U feel like U can't breathe right even with an oxygen mask on.

Try Me

MIKA CHANG

Grade 9, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



Wretched Child

HOPE SWETOW, Grade 12, *Humor*

I am the one to make "snarky" comments at the dinner table.

I am the one who warns others away from her Ben and Jerry's New York Super Fudge Chunk with a threatening note.

I am the one who never brings an umbrella.

I am the one who loses her key several times a week even though I am told to put it in the same place.

I am the one whose bedroom floor is no longer visible because it is littered with La Croix cans and outfits I decided not to wear.

I am the one who tells my mom the truth when she makes a meal I am not a fan of.

I am the one who played music so loud it broke the kitchen speaker system.

I am the one who knows how to deal cards the right way but I do it wrong anyway.

I am the Wretched Child in my family. Are you? It's okay if you don't know. I didn't know either, until March 20th, 2019.

It was a typical Swetow family vacation dinner. I have my classic sun rash that I get every year from going from the freezing New York winter to the aggressive tropical sun. Augie and Carter sit beside me, Nike slides on, debating whether there is a separate dessert stomach. My dad makes a toast about

family and my mom sips her decaf cappuccino which no longer has any foam after I've attacked it with my spoon.

A woman begins to approach us. "Is that Luca Broder's mom?" my mom whispers in my ear. I turn my head to see a woman who looks nothing like Luca Broder's mom.

"No," I reply but the woman is already standing inches behind me. She is about my parents' age, I think, but she has let her curly hair go grey. She towers behind me beaming at my brothers. "Wow," she says, looking back and forth between their unamused faces. Then she asks what everyone asks: "Are you boys twins?" I can only imagine what they think to themselves when people ask them that; every time I think *no kidding*. To the outside world they are exotic. Blah. Blah. Blah.

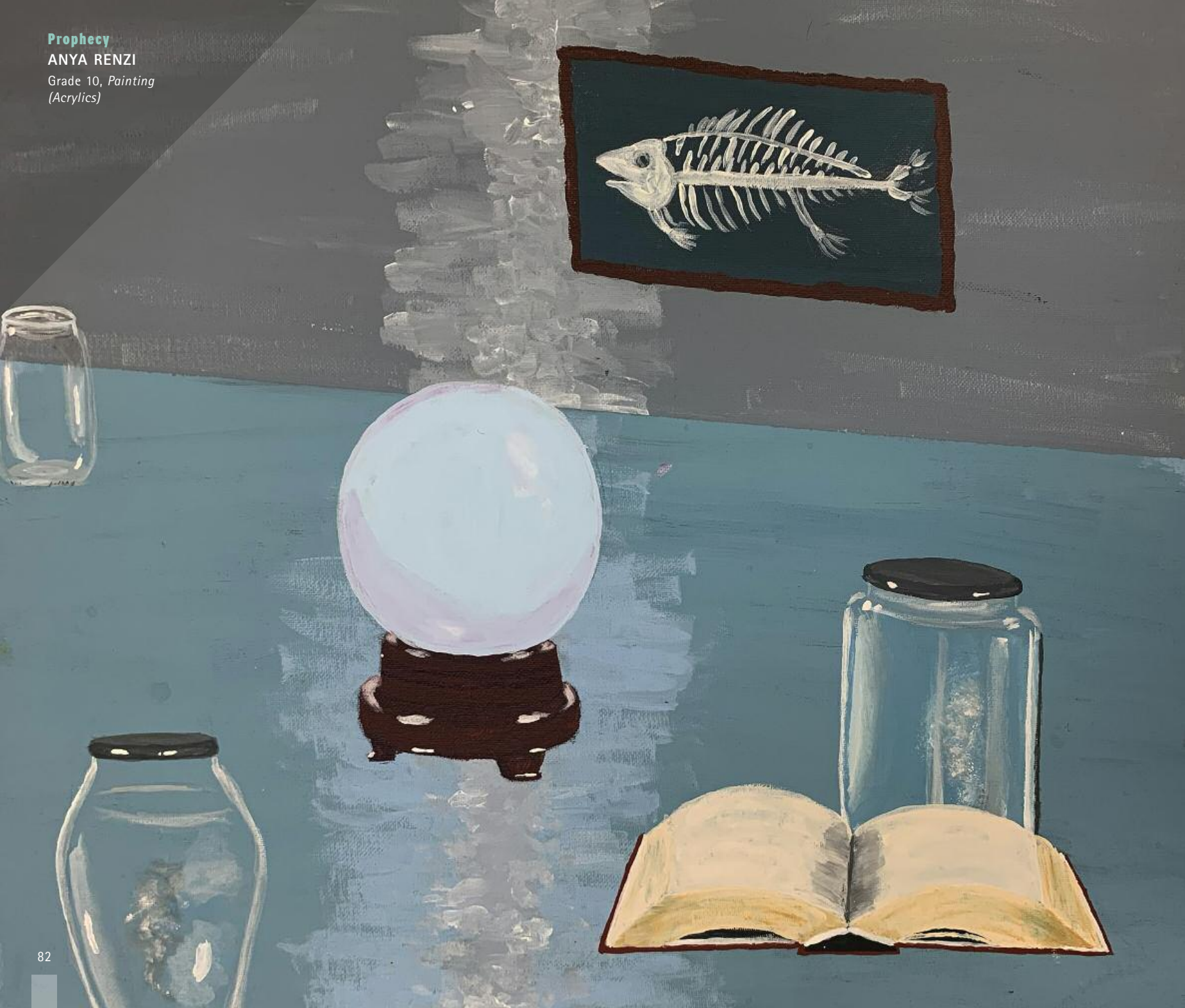
This woman goes on about how her daughter's friend is a twin and she just so happens to be sitting across the restaurant. My dad makes a joke about an arranged marriage but the woman doesn't pick up the sarcasm. She looks at him. "They are only 16."

At this point, I have had enough of all this twin talk. I turn my head over my shoulder to get a good look at the woman; she is staring down at me. I decide to let her know (a total lie) that we are in fact triplets. She has never met triplets before!

Prophecy

ANYA RENZI

Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



This woman has now been standing here for 10 minutes. While that may not seem like *that* long, it is when a creepy lady is hovering behind you. My mom decides that it is time to ruin my story and tell the truth.

The woman looks me dead in the face, her smile disappearing quickly. "You wretched child" is all she says before taking one last glance at my brothers and then strutting off to the table where her daughter and her daughter's friend, who is a twin, are sitting embarrassed.

At first I thought her comment was hilarious. I mean, who says that? Then I was offended. How dare she say that to me when she doesn't know anything about me? In the car I thought it was hilarious again. But later when I was lying in bed replaying the dinner over in my head, I realized that while she was crazy, she was kind of right. Maybe I am the Wretched Child.

When my brothers were born I asked if we could return them. I hated them because they got new stuffed animals the day they were born and I wanted a new one too. But I was also the only one who could tell them apart on my own when they came home from the hospital and my mom had to paint their toenails different colors so we wouldn't mix them up. I was the one who wanted to move my room from the floor my parents slept on to the floor my brothers were on so I could make sure they were always okay.

I have not pinpointed what exactly makes me the Wretched Child of the family. Is it because I am a girl? Is it because I am the oldest? I don't think it really matters. For those of you still confused what the Wretched Child is, I have decided that the Wretched Child is the one who can kind of be a pain sometimes, someone who doesn't follow the rules like their siblings, the child who talks when they should really shut up... it's hard to put into words. When my family walks down the street my parents walk hand in hand. My brothers walk ahead babbling to each other. Often I walk behind in my own world. This is when you know you are the Wretched Child.

“ When my family walks down the street my parents walk hand in hand. My brothers walk ahead babbling to each other. Often I walk behind in my own world. This is when you know you are the Wretched Child.”

A classic example of the role of Wretched Child arose during The Shoveling Incident, which went down on a February morning. My mom asked my brothers the night before a storm to shovel the front of our house in the morning. I was not asked because as the Wretched Child I am lazy and I rarely wake up before 11:00. Augie and Carter of course agreed. My mom returned home from her workout at 9:30 to find the pavement icy and unshoveled. Augie and Carter had slept in. Bad move. There are little things that can set parents off when you least expect it. Unfortunately for my brothers, this was one of those things for our mom—she lost it. I watched as my brothers struggled to stand their ground and I knew that I had to intervene. I was uncomfortable sitting there listening to them argue about snow. It was pathetic. My brothers stood in the doorway of the kitchen, still in their matching plaid pajamas, looking defeated. My mom threw her hat on the counter. I said, "You are overreacting."

I do not recommend saying this to your mom. My mom immediately redirected her rage to me (all according to my plan) but I heroically hid my fear. Sometimes when she gets mad at me I laugh because I know it will just make her even more angry. It continued like that for a while: she yelled and I laughed. For a moment, I forgot why I had even inserted myself into the argument. I knew

that it wasn't really any of my business, but since when does the Wretched Child mind their own business? I executed my part perfectly.

For those of you squirming, wondering in horror if you *are* your family's Wretched Child, I have some news for you. The Wretched Child is loved just as all the other members of the family. I sometimes wonder what my family would be like if I weren't there to make dumb jokes at dinner or shriek while playing Apples to Apples. Would car rides be silent if I wasn't there to sing? Would it be 74 degrees in our house if I wasn't there to insist that 73 degrees is the perfect temperature? Would my brothers still be eating *glomp* (a meal my mom used to make that tastes as gross as it sounds) three nights a week because they are too nice to complain?

This is a job I did not get to sign up for; it took a while to come to terms with it. But you must have pride in it and commit. It is your duty to disrupt the stability of your family to keep things interesting, to build character.

The Flip Flop Incident ruined a perfectly normal night. It occurred during the spring break of 2018 (just one year before I was labelled the Wretched Child). It was dark as we walked along a narrow pathway lined with shrubs. The shrubs were dense

Saturday

KYRA MAYNARD

Grade 12, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



and during the day I had seen lizards running in and out of them. My mom pointed at the stars and said she saw Orion's Belt. My dad scoffed. He doesn't believe that people can actually see constellations. I am pretty sure this is just because he can't really see that well in general. My brothers ran ahead. We thought we were drunk because we had eaten one scoop of Khalúa ice cream for dessert.

Though I couldn't make out exactly what they were doing, it seemed like they were playing a fascinating game. I ran toward them. They were kicking off their Nike slides high into the air and chasing them. It looked fun. I wanted to prove that I, too, could make my flip flops soar several feet in the air. It sounds like a simple task to an outsider, but I assure you, it is not. In the heat of the moment, I choked. I managed to launch my flip flop high into the air, over my head, and into the dense, lizard infested bushes. We laughed hysterically for a few minutes until our parents caught up and asked what was so funny. I expected them to laugh. They did not. I was told to find the navy Havaiana flip flop immediately. I scanned the bushes but it was too dark and I was scared of the lizards. My parents quickly became furious (another

moment that I didn't expect to be a big deal) and my mom stormed off muttering about me being a brat.

My dad told me to check my attitude. Apparently kicking your flip flop is an idiotic and immature thing for a 17-year-old to do. My brothers had been playing this game for days and their flip flops had never disappeared. I thought to myself, *of course this happened to me*. At the time, it didn't make sense because I did not know that this kind of thing only happens to the Wretched Child.

For a few minutes we stood like that, my dad yelling, my brothers giggling a few feet away, and me standing in disbelief rubbing my bare foot on the concrete. The Wretched Child can cause chaos by just one flick of the ankle.

Blind Attractions

BILLIE WYNN

Grade 10, Painting
(Watercolor)



Tea

WEN YU CHEN

Grade 10, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



Bath

ABIGAIL LEINHARD, Grade 12, Poetry

Love yourself.

Just for a moment!

Step out of the bath
Reach for the towel
And catch yourself in the full length mirror of your mother's closet.

Smooth down your hair
Unfold your stooped form
Find your right hand wandering curiously across your left breast.

Walk into the closet
Brush your thighs together
Stand close enough to see the green in your eyes and far enough to ignore your nail beds.

Be very, very clean
Remember your freshness
Forget about your paunch and your acne and your eye bags and the white lines on your hands.

Do not blink!

Closet Body

IRENE MADRIGAL, Grade 12, *Fiction*

My grandmother had never been able to escape the duties conferred upon her by her father. There she sat looking out into the distance, to a future she would never have because it wasn't hers to have. Writing in a run-down motel on the streets of Paris, climbing the Machu Picchu mountains, even just walking in the jungles of the Amazon could never be hers. Her white silk dress hung loosely upon her body. It barely reached her knees—much to the dismay of her mother who saw it as unbecoming of a lady. The dress was alien to her body because it was never meant to belong to her. The flowers, prickly in her hands, blended too much with the dress for her taste. Nobody in the photo would ever know they were there, except for her—the jagged red scars alongside her hands a reminder of what she was enduring.

Though his arm rested upon the chair, she could feel his suit jacket brushing along her headpiece. The pressure upon her head was too much and she knew she would be punished for not smiling. Not in the next few days because the photos would take time to develop. She would spend that time in agonizing worry, twiddling her fingers, waiting for the postman to arrive with what would help to consummate their marriage in blood. Even if it weren't for the pain, how could anyone smile when such a fate awaited?

My grandfather could barely stand straight on a good day, and today wasn't a good day. His legs had been made weak by the war, so he leaned against the side of the chair to assure that nobody would learn of the shame he felt for being an invalid soldier forced to marry the girl from next door because he was almost 30 and could not go another year single. He wanted to scream, take his anger out on the closest body, but he knew those movements would be captured in the photo—and the shame it would bring to his family would be unbearable. The cameraman prompted him to smile, but how could he smile on the day where his wife would see the leg that lay no more, that was nothing more than a wooden peg? He couldn't bear to smile while thinking of the things he would need to do to keep her in order—to keep his secret safe.

Grandparents

MAYA KARMAKER

Grade 12, *Photograph*



The Kolache Kitchen

LUKE LAMAZOR

Grade 10, Photograph



How to Think Like a Black Person

BRIANNA JOHNSON, Grade 12, Personal Essay

Being black is great for many reasons. We practically created the arts and whole genres of music and dance. We are innovative and skilled and we *fo-sho know damn well* how to properly make mac and cheese.¹

But being black causes you to be stressed and forces you to think too much, leading to high blood pressure and death. Yet that thinking can also save your life. You are most definitely reading this like, "She really dragged that" or, "Is it really that deep?" My answer to you doubtful souls is *yes the hell it is*.

This is how I think and I am a black person so trust me on this: thinking is surviving.

1 Breakfast

You woke up later than humanly possible for you to catch your school-provided transport from "the hood" and of course, you did not eat breakfast because you just could not have Eggo for the 55th time this week. You sit through first and second period waiting for break so you can head out to grab a baconeggandcheeseonaroll with the \$5 sitting in your wallet. While waiting, you slip into a daydream about the New York staple breakfast with melted swiss cheese and juicy pork bacon you will have in 50 minutes and where you will go to get it.

There are two options:

- a. You can walk to 7th Ave Gourmet Deli and get a baconeggandcheeseonaroll that will be \$5.50, beg your friend for 50 cents, come back with no change but an okay sandwich with turkey bacon (not the tasty artery-clogging kind) or . . .
- b. You can walk to Flatbush and get a baconegg-andcheeseonaroll from the affordable deli and likely get stopped by truancy officers² on Sterling Place just like two black seniors from your school told you they were stopped at the same spot on their way to the same deli. Naturally, you will be stopped because you have no bookbag on at 10:55 am and you should be in school.³ You want to prove you go to the Private White Institution of Brooklyn and not John Jay⁴ so you try to reach for your school ID, but if you reach and they feel threatened they can shoot and you can die all because your greedy black behind wanted a baconeggandcheeseonaroll during the school day.

After snapping back to reality you realize class ended a while ago and the thought of bullet holes in your stomach is not worth getting a sandwich for so you can wait until lunch. You may be hungry but you alive, right?

¹ Don't even think about adding raisins and ketchup, Susan. Don't even think about it.

² Fancy word for police who lock up kids.

³ Fancy word for you are black and look suspicious, kid.

⁴ School down the avenue from your school where the black people who couldn't play it up enough landed.

2 The Function

So your white friend (let's call her Sarah) invites you and the girls to a function⁵ on Saturday. It is being thrown by her friend⁶ who might be a college student. Everyone else seems on board but your blacktuition is stopping you. There are too many flags. Like any black mom, you search up the address provided by Sarah. It leads to an apartment complex in Williamsburg. You ask a million questions: "Who gon be there? Whose apartment is this?" Sarah assures you she knows the people⁷ but your blacktuition tells you otherwise. The day of, the address changes. Twice. It's now in a warehouse in Greenpoint⁸ and alcohol is in the mix. You see so many reasons to not attend but here are the main two that stop you from going at all:

- a. You go to the function in the warehouse and everyone is drinking and smoking themselves to nowhere. Someone complains about noise in the warehouse and calls the police, and they show up and say "NYPD! OPEN UP!" bust down the door, and attempt to arrest everyone there for drinking underage. Then someone (most likely someone who runs the party) comes up reaching in their pocket for their "permit" for the warehouse, the cops

“ Sarah still goes to the function—she would not have been shot anyway.”

get scared and shoot up the place and you die from a stray bullet.

- b. You don't go to the function but your girls do and for the most part have a good time until, all the events of Part A occur and your girls end up dead because they were too drunk to follow you outside to safety. Now your entire circle of black female friends is dead and you turn to protest in the streets screaming, "No justice! No peace!" at the 94th Precinct. The protests get violent and the cops start to shoot out into the angry crowd. Lucky you. You still die.

After considering these options, you tell your parents about the function, they call the girls' parents and stop everyone from ending their life trying to have a "good time." Sarah still goes to the function—she would not have been shot anyway.⁹

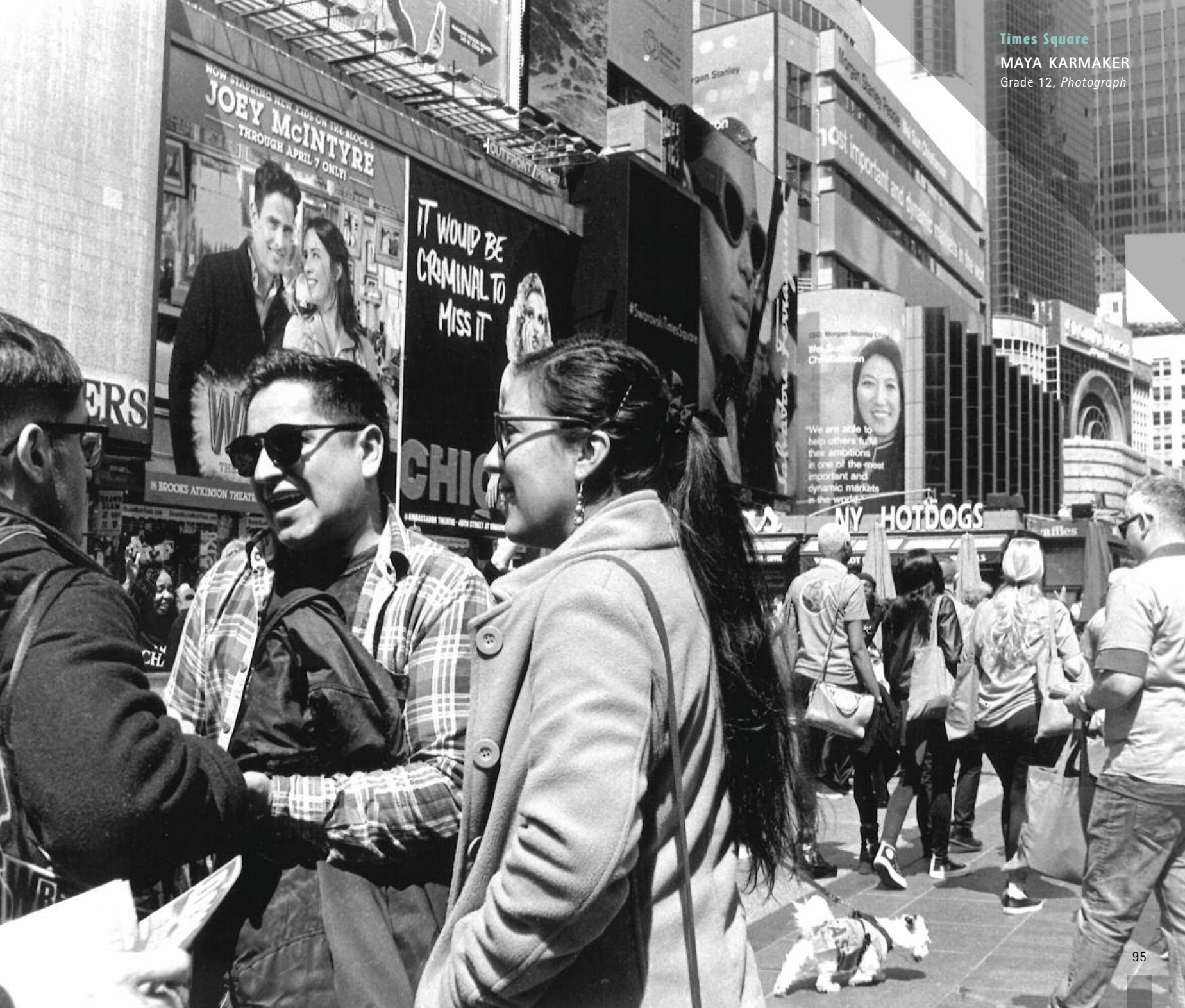
⁵ A sketchy "party" where everything but partying exists.

⁶ Sketchy girl she met at a function. Once.

⁷ No the hell she don't.

⁸ The middle of whoknowsthehellwhere, Brooklyn.

⁹ Imagine the headlines. *White girl killed by NYPD*. The whole police system would be shut down.



Times Square
MAYA KARMAKER
Grade 12, Photograph

3 Subway

You are leaving a fantastic DAIS¹⁰ meeting at 9pm. You and all your friends from DAIS go to McDonald's for post-DAIS links, bumping ghetto music¹¹ through the Upper East Side. You and your best black guy friend soon part ways from the group and walk towards the Q train to head home. As soon as you get down there, you both realize you have no cash, no functioning MetroCard, and no way to get home without the two. You consider going under the turnstile, but right as you do, you see the MTA ad: "FARE EVASION WILL COST YOU." Cost you your life. Here's how:

- a. You go under the turnstile to unsuspectingly be faced with a policeman. Undercover. They ask you what you were doing skipping through the turnstile and your black guy friend who is very indignant and very pro-black says, "We just tryna get home." The cop looks at him suspiciously, tells him to turn around, and begins to frisk him, feeling his pick¹² in his pocket. Your black guy friend says, "We're kids, man. What the hell?" and the cop turns to you quickly saying, "She is not a kid. She looks 24."¹³ You freeze in shock, as you are 17 but have no way of proving that right now to the already aggravated cop who would definitely shoot you if you reached for ID. He tells you and your

black friend to wait while he calls for backup. Your black friend pulls out his pick and in a flash—he's dead. The cop looks at you knowing what he has done and shoots you so there are no witnesses. Congrats: you are worth \$2.75.

- b. You don't hop the turnstile but instead start to ask around for a swipe as white people pass you in the 96th Street station. They look at you and keep walking. One lady gets scared when you tap her shoulder to ask again because she could not hear you the first time. Her fear alerts the nearby K-9 who is there with his police officers who both come over, pin you down with their knees, and hold you there on the dirty subway floor until you stop breathing. That woman feels safe now because she didn't have to sacrifice \$2.75 to the dangerous black girl and her friend after her daily shopping spree at LOFT.

Coming back to reality, you and your friend decide not to hop the turnstile. You leave the station and find a sketchy ATM to take out cash and get you home. You get home by 11:30, might soon become a victim of debit card fraud, and get yelled at by your parents, but that's much better than being dead over \$2.75. Ain't it?

¹⁰ Diversity Awareness Initiative for Students—the most exciting place to spend a Friday night with other students of color from private schools to talk about the things your white schools can't handle talking about because it makes [white] people uncomfortable.

¹¹ UES white families hate hearing crowds of black and brown kids chanting the lyrics "Faneto" by Chief Keef on a Friday night.

¹² Black beauty tool used to comb out afros, flat tops, and many other black hairstyles.

¹³ *Stupid gyal, Mom told you not to wear those hoops and dark lipstick.*

Where You Came From

LUCIJA JUREVICS

Grade 11, Ceramic



Squeak

GEORGE HUMPHREVILLE, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

When I was around 8, my cat, Squeak, was slowly dying. Squeak was a very large cat, probably fifteen pounds, and got her name from the sound she made whenever she tried to jump down from counters or table-tops. What any normal-sized cat could have done effortlessly, Squeak could not do without emitting an awful sound, so it became her name.

Squeak had been around for as long as I could remember. It was a miracle, we were told, that she had lived this long in this condition. Cats usually don't live more than ten or fifteen years, making Squeak pretty old. As the year went on, she began to eat less and less and eventually even stopped drinking water. As a result, we were told, she would need an IV each day to make up for the lost water or she would die.

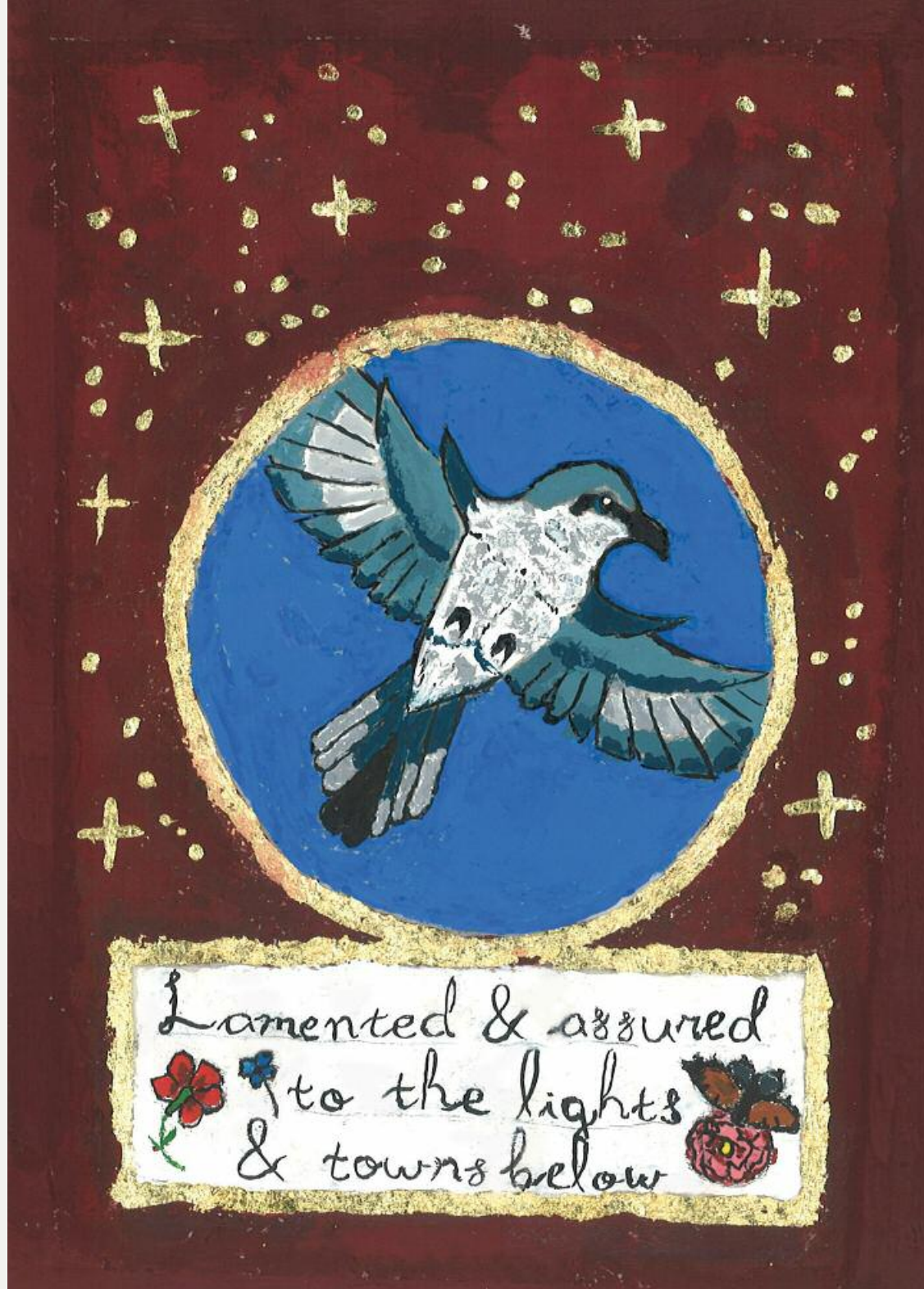
For a few weeks I watched nervously as my mom held her still and my dad stuck the needle into her belly. She would squirm for a moment and then go completely still as the IV began to work. The frantic look in her eyes would quickly disappear as they glossed over, as if they were nothing more than pieces of smooth glass.

Soon after the IV ordeal began, my dad needed to go back overseas for work, meaning I would take his place. My mom showed me how to hold her down, and soon I found myself pinning my beloved cat to the countertop while she struggled against my nervous grasp. Each day I would look away and I would feel her body tense up and then go limp shortly after. It was a strange feeling, almost as if each time she relaxed she was dying in my arms only to repeat the process again the next day, teasing death time and time again.

Lamented and Assured

AMBA DARST-CAMPBELL

Grade 9, *Mixed Media*
(Vellum, Gouache,
and Gold Leaf)



Ampersand

CAROLINE TUCK

Grade 12, *Mixed Media*
(*Measuring Tape*
and *Scanner*)



Ulta Would Never

SAMANTHA ROSARIO, Grade 10, *Humor*

First of all, I'm not someone who religiously wears makeup. Sure, I may dabble in a little lip gloss here and there, but besides that, I don't do much.

Second, in spite of myself, makeup fascinates me.

The way that you can throw all these different things onto your face and end up looking stunning is so mesmerizing. I admire people who just know what they're doing when they contour, bake, or do whatever it is makeup people do. I've realized, from my own failed attempts, that makeup requires talent, but it's just not my thing.

That probably explains my obsession with going into makeup stores like I'm a sweet-toothed kid discovering the slushies at 7-Eleven.

At Bay Plaza, there's a huge Ulta my friends and I always end up in. We explore the aisles somewhat aimlessly but we try to convince ourselves that yeah, we're gonna buy something. Half an hour later we leave the store with swatches from three different eye shadow palettes halfway up our arms and lipgloss on our faces that we know we wouldn't be able to afford had there not been free samples. We look ridiculous, I know. But no one stops us! And so I start to think, *Maybe makeup isn't that bad.*

But then I went to Sephora.

I was at a mall with my mom and I wanted a new lip gloss because, you know, the twenty-something shades I already own are simply not enough.

So, she sent me off to Sephora while she did her own thing.

The moment I walked in, all eyes fell on me, a bare-faced teenager looking raggedy. Like a kid lost at Six Flags during Fright Fest, I drifted through the store, the black and white color scheme feeling like one of those swirly optical illusions that dizzies you into a never-ending spiral.

The layout didn't make it any better. Small shelves lined both sides of the narrow space swarming with people who caked, baked and contoured their entire faces. None of the aisles were labeled at an angle I could see without walking into the middle and realizing, *I've never heard of that brand before, let me keep looking.*

Swimming through the midst of the beauty gurus, I wandered the aisles, searching for the Fenty Lip Gloss I had gawked at online, knowing damn well the price hadn't changed since the last time I'd checked.

As I was turning the corner of Urban Decay, a woman in a black waist apron jumped out at me.

"May I help you?"

I jumped back. If I'd wanted help, I would have asked for it.

When I finally got to the lipgloss, I went to grab an applicator and another employee pounced at me.

"Finding everything all right?"

Leave me alone!!!

They were everywhere—there was no escape. They knew I wasn't there to restock my collection of Mac eyeshadows. And they made it clear that I wasn't welcome.

Ulta would never.

Ulta has a more spread out layout with white and orange walls, providing a welcoming environment for inexperienced people like me. That, and the clearance section with reasonably-priced makeup.

It was like no one worked there, so I didn't have to fear being followed around or offered assistance. No one was chasing us into a corner to buy something, and the security guard didn't stare us down as we walked out empty-handed yet full-faced.

Sephora makes me feel ashamed about my half-assed relationship with makeup and pressured to buy something I can't even afford, and later judged

because I have no idea how to use the moisturizer I just spent \$30 on.

Like who spends \$30 on a moisturizer??? For that, I might as well buy a whole new face.

In Ulta, I frolic through aisles touching eyeshadows, trying on foundation, smelling perfumes, and looking at crazy lipstick shades like *dusky refined purple and electric sky blue* I know my mother would never let me buy.

At Sephora, these little girls pay with debit cards their parents got them to fuel their obsessions with looking as close as possible to a Kardashian when in reality, how old are you?

But I won't get into that.



Distancing

JADE LaDEUX

Grade 9, *Painting*
(Acrylics)



What I Miss

CHARLOTTE HAMPTON, Grade 11, *Poetry*



I miss my commute. Not just going to the places that I usually go to, but how I got to them.

I miss leaving my house on a school day at 7:49 when I'm supposed to be out the door at 45.

I want to be standing on the corner enclosed by the church, the weird deli with the waving egg logo, Regina's bad bakery, and Le P'tit Paris. I want to be standing in silence on a Tuesday morning

fumbling with my corded earbuds, trying to plug them into my phone, and opening up Spotify with freezing hands. I want to make a few clicks in the app to get to :/, and shuffle my 180 songs

just to press the green button at the top endlessly until I get the perfect one. That corner is home to the strongest, coldest, most bone-chilling winds.

I wish I was boarding the school bus at 57, with the middle school parents watching the back of my head, because I am in fact, the oldest one. I want to sit down in my seat, the second row from the front

on the right side, right across from the same person I always do. What I would do to be able to be stuck at 7th ave and 9th for seven minutes, waiting for those kids who take the longest out of everyone.

I want to curate the angriest, loudest, most teen-angsty of songs as the ride goes on, so that by the time I'm at school at 03, the strongest one is playing as I walk through the door.

That is all I want. That is what I miss.

9 and Under

NOA BROWN, Grade 10, *Personal Essay*

Grandma's Garden

On Sundays, grandma taught me to watercolor and I made tiny swirls with tiny brushes on big pieces of bleached paper. The kitchen table was wide, and I had to move my butt to the edge of my chair to reach the cup of blue-tinted water. I leaned. My back got goosebumps as my turquoise shirt rode up to follow my stretching arm. Grandma held my hand in hers: brush, splatter, paint, stroke. Now my paper had leaves and grass and other blobs of green from the garden.

Grandma was painting a garden of her own. One touch and her leaves would crumble. Hers was dainty and real.

I always forgot to add the sky until it was almost too late. Quickly, I made broad strokes of blue. I needed it lighter; I dipped my brush in water until my sky was soaked. Soon my paper's edges would start to curl forward, like a three-dimensional frown. My clouds were like cartoons—symmetrical and round.

I added the sunshine so my flowers could grow. I held it up proudly. Grandma smiled because gravity made my sun bleed down the page. Grandma added a few strokes of yellow and her page came to life!

Grandma and I made flowers in the same way. Not too careful, and not too quickly. We dipped our

brushes in pink first. I smiled big, because she said we should paint the flowers with our eyes closed.

She practically whispered, "As long as no tulips end up in the sky, everything is all right with me."

I peeked with one eye at the garden on my paper. I burst into laughter, because I caught grandma doing the same.

"That's beautiful," grandma said. We laid our masterpieces in the kitchen window to dry.

Toenails

Tuesday. The smell of steamed veggies and soured yogurt hit me first. I was nine when I went to the hospital for the first time since I was born. As we walked through the automatic doors, I told my mom my head hurt, whispering so as not to disturb the white noise of North Shore's waiting room.

Ari headed straight for the fish tank. Only two fish were inside. *Who has the special privilege of buying hospital-fish-tank fish? Probably not the neurosurgeon.* Dad brought us our passes to get to Uncle Saul's room.

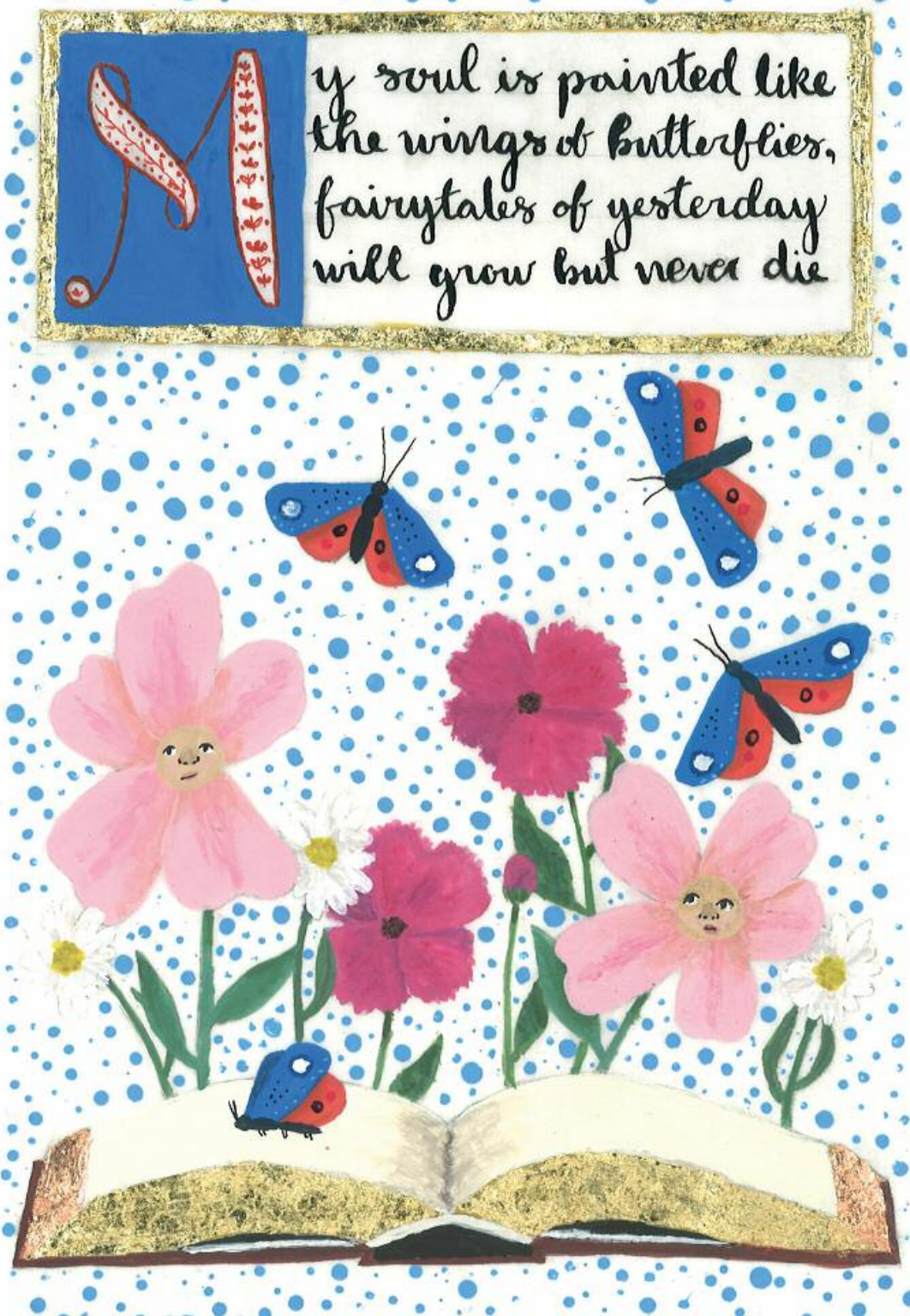
I whispered in Ari's ear: "Do you think his eyes will be open when we get there?"

"I don't know."

My Soul is Painted

ANYA RENZI

Grade 10, *Mixed Media*
(Vellum, Gouache,
and Gold Leaf)





chaque communion
l'Enfant-Jésus dort avec nous
près de la porte; puis il l'ouvre sur
le jardin et se précipite à toute
lumière pour nous embrasser...

Elevator doors opened to the left-wing of the fourth floor. Every light was fluorescent and the linoleum hallways squeaked where my orange crocs stepped. My mom handed me the muenster cheese and sugar-free pudding. Viv and Meg waited for us at the end of a long hallway. First long hugs, then quick kisses.

Inside room 412 was a small, thin, and slouched-over Aunt Sylvie on the edge of Uncle Saul's bed. I wanted to hold her, but I didn't want to break her. A thin bed sheet lay over Saul's body. His eyes were crusted shut and his skin see-through. I could see every hollow, crevice, bone, and dent. Slowly, I traced his limp body with my eyes. *Bald, freckled, fragile.*

Only the tops of Saul's callused feet stuck out from under the covers. His toenails were thick, yellowed, and decayed. As his shallow breaths struggled, I closed my eyes: *signs of a sick, old man.*

Happy Meals

Saturday mornings meant fishing at 5am with grandpa and lunch from McDonald's on the way home. The ride from the dock to the drive-thru at Jericho Turnpike wasn't long, but Aunt Suzie liked to pretend yellow lights were red.

Abe, Jack, and Ari played Punch Buggy as I sat in the booster seat of my aunt's and uncle's car, trying as fast as I could to spit out the color of the nearest Volkswagen Beetle.

"Punch buggy red!" Abe screamed. In the distance, a big yellow M. A minute later, Aunt Suzie pulled up to the "order here" sign.

Out of a large speaker box, a man's voice asked, "Thank you for choosing McDonalds. Would you like to try our All Day Breakfast?"

Abe, Jack, and Ari were up first. I thought hard about my order as one by one they each rattled off their own into the bright red acrylic microphone. *Obviously I want McNuggets, but do I want fries too? Or maybe a McFlurry?*

I made up my mind: "Uncle Steve, can I please have a Happy Meal with six McNuggets and fries?"

Slowly, Aunt Suzie rolled the car up to the pick-up window. Bright, food-chain lights bounced off the foam-tiled ceilings and into the car. As we pulled away from the drive-thru window, I ripped open my red carton. I smiled big. Before I could dig in, I quickly pulled out my toy. I couldn't believe my luck—I had won the ultimate prize: the Sully action figure from *Monsters, Inc.* *Ari is going to be so jealous.*

I looked around to see what everyone else got. Nobody else had ordered a Happy Meal. Nobody else had a toy. I turned back to face the window.

Slipping Sully into my pocket, I let my hand linger for just a moment on the cool, hard plastic.

Bird

ELLA SRAN, Grade 10, Poetry

I used to dream
Before the days caught up with me.
And though fatigue was a beautiful thing,
The nights were a second
And I forgot how to dream.
This cannot be; for how would I be free?
For my mind is a bird
And my being, a cage.
And my being, a dream.

Map

SOPHIA SONDEY

Grade 12, Drawing
(Charcoal)





Sasha

HOPE SWETOW, Grade 12, *Humor*

My first word was dog. Three letters. Two consonants. One vowel. It was not an impressive first word, but at least it wasn't mom or dad. I feel like I can remember saying it but I don't think that's possible. My parents were pushing me up the block when Sasha stuck her big head out of the third story window of Neil's apartment the way she did every second of every day. I pointed to her and said "dog." Groundbreaking, I know.

Every day I would roll by and point to Sasha, who, every day, would be dangerously close to the open window. Sasha must have been lonely because she never moved from that position until one day when I went to give her her daily acknowledgement and she was not there to receive it. Sasha was dead. The only bit I have left of Sasha is Neil. Sasha was superior to Neil in every way. Her smile was prettier than his grimace. She never interrogated me as I walked by.

After her death, I needed to fill the void. I needed a Sasha of my own. First, I believed that a dance, accompanied by a song about why I should get a Sasha, would do the trick. After hours of practicing and chanting alone in my room I made my debut performance. My mom thought it was cute. My dad was not impressed. I stepped up my game and made a PowerPoint to show my dad that I was sophisticated. The PowerPoint was immediately *not*

sophisticated because the title was: "Why the Swetow Family Would Benefit From a Furry Little Friend." My dad stood his ground. No. No. No. No. "No" was all he said. I can't count the number of times I cried, screamed, and stormed out of rooms. Uncle Ralph says that the dog decision is the only battle my dad has ever won in our family. This is true, but this was not a small battle to win.

Most kids play a game called house. It's a weird game where every player is assigned a role in the family. Talia was always the mom because she is bossy and had to be in control of everything. Rachel was always the little sister because Talia wanted her to be. Laila was always the aunt because she liked to put on her mom's old heels and aggressively stomp around the house. I was always the dog.

You may be wondering, why weren't you the dad or another sister? Well, Talia wondered the same thing. Talia told me the dog is not a role in "family." I said screw you, Talia, got on my hands and knees and spent the entire playdate barking at her.

Maybe I am a cat person. This is what I thought to myself in a time of despair. I had been so beaten down that I would never have a "furry little friend" that I turned to the dark side. I got an email on the 4th Street Yahoo thread from a neighbor asking if someone on the block could catsit while the family

went to Germany for a week. I saw this as an opportunity to get acquainted with a feline. Here is how I knew I had made a big mistake:

1. I fumbled with the key as I walked across the street to meet the cat because
 - a. I am bad at unlocking doors and
 - b. I had always been scared of cats.
2. I opened the door and scanned the room for the cat.
3. Pumpkin only had three legs.
4. I panicked.
5. I ran back towards the front door, tripping over a pair of Tevas, to make sure the door was locked.
6. My biggest fear was Pumpkin running away.
7. I realized that Pumpkin couldn't run.
8. I was thankful that Pumpkin had three legs.
9. I was happy the house was empty and no one could see me freaking out.
10. I made my way to the kitchen to follow Neil's instructions about how to feed Pumpkin.
11. My heart raced because whenever someone gives me instructions I focus so hard on seeming like I am listening that I end up not listening.
12. I was scared that I would not feed Pumpkin correctly and his leg amputation would not have been worth it because I would end up KILLING him.
13. Cat pee smelled awful.

Until the Rosensteins returned from Germany, each visit went like this: panic, followed by more panic. Now, sometimes when I walk by Freya's house I see Pumpkin hobbling across the windowsill. My heart races for a second and I have to remind myself that I did my job. He is no longer my responsibility. I look back up at him and chuckle.

When I got the keys to my house in 6th grade, my mom also got me a keychain. The keychain was turquoise and had a spotted dog drawn on it with "I love my dog" written below. I walked around Park Slope with my keychain and acted like I had some kind of doodle like everyone else. When I checked out at the Park Slope Food Co-Op and the woman pointed to my keychain and told me about the dog her family adopted, I laughed and smiled like I, too, had adopted a dog at some point. When people who knew me saw the keychain they exclaimed, "Wait, I didn't know you had a dog," and I had to awkwardly explain the whole story, starting with Sasha.

I lost my keychain one day. It was devastating. My mom handed me a new yellow keychain which I accepted. It was hideous. It had an emoji on it that was sticking its tongue out. It was taunting me. Everytime I open my backpack to grab it, its round plastic face and bright red tongue make fun of me. When I use this evil keychain to unlock my front door in the afternoon, I miss seeing "I love my dog" in bold letters and knowing that I was opening the door to a house with no dog.





Intent
for Walt Whitman

NICHOLE FERNANDEZ, Grade 11, Poetry

I notice my brain and my heart
Sheltered by something much like ivory.
How delightful it is that I am alive.

These trees are all someone's children.
All bodies of water were birthed by the Source.
We love. Therefore, they live.

You, duckling, little motor of a speedboat,
Has your mother told you of the mess
Of wiring and plating inside you
That is much like mine?

Don't deny that you're God's little animal
When angels are modeled after your eyes—
And wedding rings.
The streaks of paint in your ceiling,
The boxes of a fruit fly's eye,
They are all made of the same stuff.

Realms of the Dead

For the Silitch family

JORDAN HICKSON, Grade 12, *Personal Essay*

Amniotic

We are all born of water. For ten months (not nine) we are contained in our mother's amniotic sac where we inhale and exhale the water that envelops us. It's only by this fluid that we are able to fully develop, at which point we break our surrounding membrane and are released from safety. From that point forward, we will no longer be able to spend that amount of time submerged.

Around the age of thirteen, you become fascinated with another animal who is born of the same amniotic fluid: *Orcinus orca*. You come to the conclusion that their scientific name is a little repetitive, but you know their colloquial name "Killer Whale" is completely inaccurate. First, they are not whales, they are dolphins. Second, you feel that "Killer" is really an unfair stereotype considering they don't kill more than any other apex predator. You land on "orca." You become entranced by their uncanny social abilities. They travel in matrilineal pods and every pod shares a unique vocalization that is passed down to each new generation of that same pod. When Kasatka, a captive orca, was separated from her daughter, Kohana, she began to make entirely new vocalizations that had never been heard by

“ Their genus name, *Orcinus*, means “belonging to the realms of the dead.”

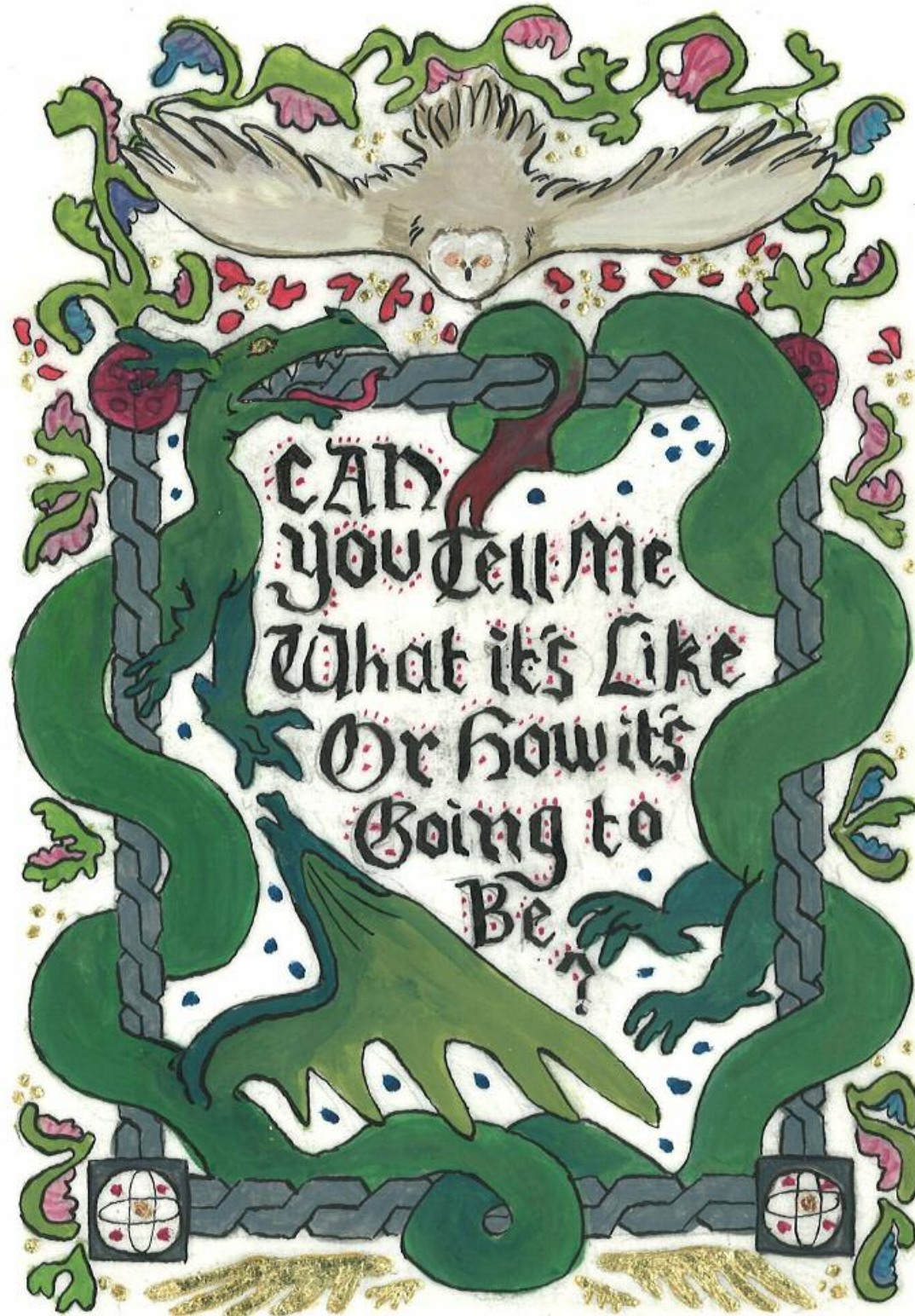
researchers before. They believe she was attempting to locate her lost child. Many years later, Tahlequah, a wild orca who lives in the Pacific Northwest coast, carried her dead calf for more than two weeks, traveling over 1000 kilometers with him on her back. Their genus name, *Orcinus*, means “belonging to the realms of the dead.”

Orcas enthrall you because they remind you of people in their purest form. And, like people, they are constantly playing a game of cat-and-mouse with the life-giving and life-taking properties of water: they can't live without it, but they are just as able to die by it.

Prayer

ROWAN DeWITT

Grade 11, Mixed Media
(Vellum, Gouache,
and Gold Leaf)



Bathwater

When you think of water, you think of when your relationship with it started: floating against your mother's chest in the bathtub. How easily you could have sunk beneath its surface, the lukewarm bathwater filling your nostrils and pouring into your lungs. But it is your mother's bare skin against yours that buoys you. And instead of turning unnaturally still, your heart continues to beat in the rhythm of another's.

Ocean

You've always thought you were a good swimmer. When you were six weeks old your parents took you swimming for the first time, at three years old you started taking lessons, and at twelve you joined a competitive swim team that, while you didn't love it, gave you confidence in your ability to not drown. That is until you swim in the ocean. It isn't your first time, but as you follow your cousin further from the shore, you realize this is not your run-of-the-mill YMCA pool. The water laps against your shoulders and your toes can barely graze the sand. Each subsequent wave since you'd waded out has been getting larger and more difficult to pass over. The tide here is much stronger than peak hour at the pool, when, as you swam laps, the collective kicking of a hundred people rocked you sideways. Suddenly, your cousin bails on you and swiftly catches a wave back into shore, but as you turn your head away from the horizon to do the same, you are smashed in the back and dragged down by the force of churning water. You surface, but your

efforts to kick yourself upwards are thwarted when, blinded by the salt in your eyes, you are caught by another monstrosity of the ocean. You are unsure of how long you spend spinning beneath the sea or how you manage to get yourself back to shore, but you are left humbled by the wisdom that the ocean is not to be underestimated—its serenity a guise for its lethality.

Snow

When water vapor becomes suspended in the atmosphere the molecules twist themselves into crystals which then morph into the shards that drip from the sky, blanket our streets, and top the mountains. Some flakes of snow evaporate, disappearing completely on the tongues of young children or a salted road. Others collect into mounds, bulging on mountaintops waiting to be triggered for their collective move. You wonder what the selection process is for who gets to go where.

Ice

Some mountains are covered by a combination of ice and snow. These are glaciers—massive bodies of ice formed thousands of years ago. Glaciers are not stagnant or seasonal like snow. They are a form of living water constantly evolving: shrinking, expanding, crumbling under their own weight to form caves and ice walls. Occasionally, they crack as the more brittle ice on the top can't keep up with the massive body beneath that creeps down the mountain. These deep fractures are called



crevasses. They are sometimes covered by a thin layer of snow, appearing filled and complete, except that when walked over, they collapse.

The first time you see a crevasse, you are fifteen. You've been invited by a friend to go skiing in the Alps, where you face the Vallée Blanche, the longest ski-run in the world, that is only accessible by a walk down a ridge two feet wide. On either side is a near 10,000-foot drop. At the top of the mountain, you are nestled between the clouds, but as you walk forward there is nowhere to look but down. With nothing man-made in sight, your view is an uninterrupted expanse of rock and frost. You ponder the possibility of a creature stirring beneath it.

On the way down, the guide instructs you and your friend to follow his tracks exactly. Crevasses populate this area of the mountain. Masses of powdered snow are only broken by abysses of aquamarine ice plunging into cobalt hues.

The muscles in your thighs begin to shake from the calculated and constrained motions and your shins throb from constantly colliding with the plastic of your boots. The snow, compact and dusted with ice granules, is picked up easily and thrown around by the heavy winds. The result: a faceful of pins every time you dare to look up from your skis. You can't move. Digging the sides of your skis into the mountain, you lean yourself uphill, paralyzed by the guide's warning and the endless cavity of blue ice resting just downhill of you. Your friend, whom you had been following behind, is now separated

by yards of swirling ice. He shouts something but it's lost to the distance between you.

He was never afraid of the mountains.

Mountains are known to swallow people whole. They don't discriminate against the young or the able or the skilled. They are careless and cruel. They take the people who love them most, people who love them not just for what they can give but appreciate their grandeur and protect them fiercely. You wonder if they stop to consider the mothers they leave behind.

Ocean

The summer after your friend's death you return to the ocean. Your relationship with it is complicated. The ocean you find in your motherland is silent and warm. The water is so shallow that you start walking out far from shore in an attempt to make it to a wading depth, but in the end, you realize this is futile. You bend your knees, pulling your body downwards, and then release. But here you do not sink and the upwards force of the water suspends you. You glide over the gentle rises and dips without effort. The span of the sky above you displays a full transition from pink to violet-blue. Your ears, which are filled with water, register no noise except the syncing of your heartbeat with the tide, and so it is here you raise your voice. You hope that Tahlequah, who carried her son inside for seventeen months only to lose him to the ocean in seventeen days, can hear your song.

Essay

CHARLOTTE HAMPTON

Grade 11, *Painting*
(*Gouache*)



Prophecy for October, 2003

RUBY SALVATORE-PALMER, Grade 11, Poetry

October 4, 2003

The frustrated bones of an African people kissed
the ground again
History unearthed
Re-earthed
history untold to be told
And then sold to a science lab
Where living tall and unmatched is white
The bones for so long lived in brown
They didn't want to see anymore white

October 4, 2003

We named bones with
Female
male
Or child
And their owners live in graveyards now
With flowers to their name
The young people find peace on the white mans
bench
They find eachothers growth
And moonlight

October 4, 2003

My mom pushed me out for 36 hours
I couldn't be born on October 3 so I held on to
Her insides
I had to come out as my mothers beacon for her
fallen people
I came on a day that my ancestors bones finally
knew
What it felt like to be respected
And I screamed loud
Loud
Loud
Because the bones underground could not.

Odette

RACHAEL HIPKINS

Grade 12, *Painting*

(*Acrylics and Oil Paints*)



the
BerkeleyCarroll
School

181 Lincoln Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217
www.berkeleycarroll.org

P: (718) 789-6060

F: (718) 398-3640

Enrollment: 317

Faculty: 71

Reflections@berkeleycarroll.org

Typeface: Regatta Condensed, Rotis Sans Serif,

Slave Only Dreams to be King

Paper Stock: Endurance cover / Endurance text

Computer Equipment: iMac i5

Software: Quark XPress, Adobe Photoshop

Number of Copies: 550

Design: Studio Lane, Inc.

Printer: William Charles Printing