

2020

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# HIGH SOCIETY

# heartbeats



by Abby Lu '22

## welcome.

*heartbeats* race in each and every one of our bodies. *heartbeats* form the connection between us all. while winter term can get cold, and maybe even isolating, *heartbeats* have the power to bring our school together in ways that we have yet to experience.

and so we asked: what makes your heart beat? is it listening to tales of the epic love stories that are so often depicted in the media? is it learning how to reconnect with your culture -- one that you thought you had lost? or is it something that we have yet to consider?

our views on *heartbeats* have been transformed along the journey of creating this issue. while on the surface, imagery of the heart signifies love -- one of the most powerful emotions humans can feel -- we have learned from the following pieces that it symbolizes so much more. thank you to all who have embraced vulnerability to explore what drives you, what motivates you, what makes your heart beat.

*heartbeats* is dedicated to all the passionate souls on our campus, from the hopeless romantics to the performers, to the sports fanatics, and to the inquisitive scholars. thank you, for being our heartbeat.

love,

**jamie, lily, and ethan**  
*editors-in-chief*

# (heart)BEATS

a curated playlist  
by Jamie Shin '20



toast ..... koffee  
you little beauty ..... FISHER  
summertime in paris ..... jaden, WILLOW  
2/14 ..... the band CAMINO  
friends ..... francis and the lights (feat. bon iver)



crew ..... RAYE, kojo funds, RAY BLK  
good news ..... mac miller  
mean it .... lauv, LANY  
tomorrow night ..... loote  
landslide .... oh wonder

## THINGS THAT KEEP ME WARM

by Bianca Rosen '21

Mint tea: hot water slides down my throat like a stream, my insides sizzle and spin, heat rushes to my brain, and I blush a little. Warmth. Your eyes. They sparkle. I trace my hand around them, *pretty*. Your gaze stings and soothes. It smells like rainwater -- refreshing, promising, new -- but pricks like a cold wind. Temporary love. It's the worst kind of warmth.

A shower: intimate, solitary, and renewing. The layers unravel. Take off your mascara. Scrub the grime. Leave your jeans in a pile on the ground. Massage away the marks they left on your hips. You revert to your original avatar: gleaming skin, naked eyes, resting face. There is no pretending. The tears blend -- they meld, they hug, they intermix -- and are eventually reduced to their natural element: water. Warmth.

Music: it vibrates from the tips of my toes to the knots in my neck. *One*. Take a step. *Two*. Take a step. *Three*. The music picks up. Step. Step. Step. Step. The world shakes with a rhythm. Warmth.

The train rumbles, shyly at first. My head presses against the window. *Take me somewhere far*. Warmth.



by High Society Club Members



## LEGACY

Leaving a mark like incense burning into the night,  
Disappearing never to be seen again.  
It accomplishes a goal we all have,  
To be remembered.

We marvel at its beauty, moths to a flame.  
Names and stories  
Of what could've been  
In hopes of becoming something greater.

The sand in the hourglass falls and crumbles away  
Each grain proves witness to impermanence.  
Because time is not a limit or a restraint  
But instead a challenge, beckoning, "how much can you  
achieve?"

So do great things and be happy  
Take every hit and keep running  
Because pain is just temporary  
And anything temporary is just a challenge to strive against.

— Pearson Mewbourne '20



*by High Society Club Members*



*by High Society Club Members*

## UNTITLED

My lover's heart beats  
A cacophonous rhythm  
All out of time with mine

These are the days of singing frogs  
Of the pickled hands  
Preserving something that should have rot

The dim light of a room built for two  
But I'm alone woman amongst the windows

When the day turns dark  
The drums patter  
The horns blare

The gentle shake of a shoulder  
And the blue paint streaks from salt

— Eliza Marovitz '21



I have always lived surrounded by nature. It is no surprise, then, that trees make me feel most at home. Sitting at the base of this tree, I can feel my heartbeat slow. Calm. I breathe in the oxygen, released from my tree, allowing my heart to beat.

*words and artwork by Lulu Louchheim '21*

## TWO VOICES OF NAME AND PURPOSE

by Athena Liu '23

what is my reasoning, what completes me  
but the pumping that keeps me alive  
the blood sent to my fingertips boils  
I keep with me the token of rage  
red that stains so mightily across worlds  
on violated sheets  
augmenting banners of rebellion  
blood in the hands of the upper crust  
smell the metallic tang in the air.

*the heart pumps for passion  
for justice and peace  
and when so many are pushed down  
fight for the pulse of whoever stands beside you  
resonates, merges with your own  
and creates a song.*

sing along to the beat  
hymns of refuge and safety  
to preserve spirit in hard times  
sing over the screaming hate  
keep the music going.  
half note whole quarter rest  
I touch your hands and put them over the cavity  
of my life, my chest, your body  
and the rhythm is unreplaceable.

*feel the words I could utter  
let me turn your anger into speech  
pull them from your lips, golden auditory elixir  
that can preserve a heartbeat  
lead them with your helping hand  
and rise up above the ruin  
to see rebirth and feel the hot sun again.*



by Abby Lu '22

## A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

by Emma Hermacinski '22

i am an aquarium of intentions,  
each one a fickle droplet in a massive sea  
of azure and aquamarine.

without a doubt, You're breathing the same air as i.  
but i know Yours doesn't taste like strawberry tangerine,  
a twist of color that bites the shadows of winter.

yet, You hammer at the glass walls of my thinktank  
like You know all the salt crystals inside.

to misuse some of Your predetermined words,  
i'm kept alive by the motion of a central organ,  
slimy and flimsy and fearful.  
the concepts flow from head to blood and back again,  
a ball of yarn waiting to be unstrung.

Your office, a practice of sorts,  
specializes in inbuing arrhythmia  
in the hearts of those who swim in their olympic-sized pools  
of multi-faceted ambition.

it takes a little logic to understand  
that a slight offset of the rhythms of arteries and thought  
leaves the wearer of the machine  
upended on the floor of Your dirty hierarchy.

so before You donate blood of a type that doesn't match  
to a girl who doesn't want it,  
think about the sickness You spread  
by polluting my lake with sour dye  
ladled by Your heavy hand.



by High Society Club Members



## IN MEMORIAM

by Alex Denhart '20  
*(charcoal on paper)*

Inspired by experiences with nature, I wanted to capture a fleeting moment spent with a praying mantis. This drawing is a celebration of a transcendental connection between human and insect, accompanied by the realization that life is sudden and short-lived. It's this connection between our heartbeats that drives the world. As Brian Doyle once wrote, "we all churn inside."



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## Happy memories

Happy memories are small, little postcards that I keep in my back pocket. When I get sad, I pull them out and smile.

Today I felt sad, I unfold a memory:

- Muddy maroon converse chipping against the concrete
- Wet hair, wet skin, and wet laughs bursting against the deep, dank water.
- The light that morning, golden spotlights from the sun.
- Screaming into the night— and for once I felt so free.

When everything is dark, I find light in my memories. Sometimes a light, sometimes a flame. A little thing I can keep in my heart, and in my head, that leaves me warm. I close my eyes, and suddenly fly.

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## Happy

There are two types of happiness:

The feeling of happiness is a temporary rush of emotions, a flow that is eventually expended. Such as a sudden rush of the heart; a running start. For a second you feel invincible and you can't stop running (see also: invincible super star in Mario Kart). But it gets dark, and as you're lying in bed, you feel depleted.

The state of happiness is a constant stream. Sometimes it sprays and sometimes it is slow; yet it is constant, true, and unswerving. It manifests when you think you have reached your low, but at the end of the day you lie in bed and can smile, even if the only remnant is the fact that you are smiling.

Me, I realized my happiness had become a stream when I was bouncing with some people I loved, in a place I loved. The sun was shining, the smiles were smiling. And I realized that this was now a life I loved. And it hit me like a tsunami. And I thought:

Damn.

I am happy.

— Mai Ly Hagan '21

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## The way the soda fizzes when you twist the bottle

I found love in a twenty-four-hour gas station,  
among the constantly crackling candy bars.  
Peace on the back of an orange bicycle,  
the air pedalling my hair into a static blush.  
And spirit while pouring peanuts,  
into a glass of cherry coke.

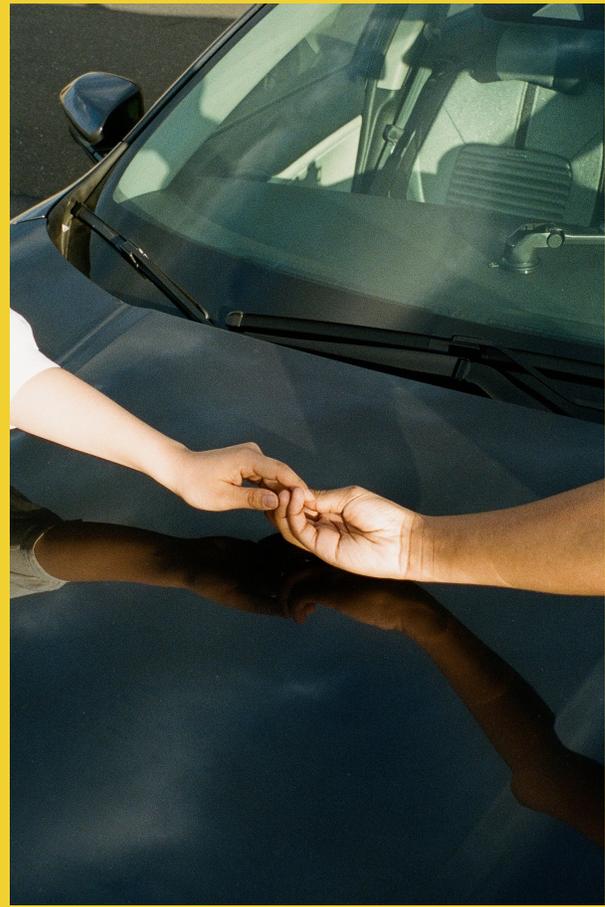
My life fizzes. Ever constant and true.  
I don't know whether that's good or bad,  
All I know is that it always will.  
And for whatever reason; that fills me with joy.  
(Joy, which I found upon a sizzling grill,  
when the tortilla steamed against the press.)

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— Mai Ly Hagan '21



photography by Sabrina Wang '23



*by High Society Club Members*

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Love has always been a constant in my life -- a beating heartbeat that never stopped. It wasn't something that I took for granted, but just something that I always knew was true.

Familial love wasn't a confusing type of love; it was a stable, supportive love. As a kid, that love was always there. I knew that my parents loved me, and I knew that they loved each other even more. I believed that love lasts forever, like the ending of a Disney movie.

For the longest time, I believed my life was a Disney movie. You never realize how important love is until it's not there anymore -- until your life isn't the Disney movie that you had imagined. There's a harsh moment when you take off the childhood lens that you've had on your whole life and realize for the first time that your life isn't perfect. Or rather, that no one is perfect. It's hard not to question everything you believe to be true when something as big as love disappears from your life. But I've come to learn that there are many types of love. It never comes from one place, one person, or one belief. I've learned to accept a different meaning to having my own Disney movie life. The heartbeat never stops -- it just changes.

— I.M.



# LETTERS

by Bella Capuano '21, Emily Goodwin '21,  
Niki Gummadi '21, Mirielle Ma '21, Isabella  
Mandell '21, Hannah Wallinger '21

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When I first came to Choate, I was worried that I wouldn't find any friends. I know it sounds like a cliché concern. But I really thought I would be that person that would sit alone in the dining hall or spend all his or her time alone. And for a time I wasn't wrong. While I did have people to sit with for my first two terms here, I honestly hadn't found my place. Then, I took Dance History. I'm not going to lie; I complained about that class to anyone who would listen. I complained even more when I had to dance in the March dance show. I may have embarrassed myself in front of the whole school sliding through a chair, but I would not trade that experience for the world because I found my best friends through that. This year, I'm sure many of you have seen us at the first SAC dance wearing the same obnoxiously shiny shorts. Or our liblob gatherings (where I have to apologize for all of us about our lack of volume control). Or the countless Instagram and Snapchat posts that we post way too often (sorry, we don't have many friends). I want to introduce you to the people who have changed my life: Buckeye Nut House. Here are Emily, Hannah, Mirielle, Niki, Isabella, Bella, and, of course, Taylor (who didn't submit because she didn't respond in the group chat). Here are my friends, my safe haven in this crazy place, my home. Here are the people that make my heart beat.

- Alicia Xiong '21

"Some people arrive and make such a beautiful impact on your life, you can barely remember what life was like without them."

- Anna Taylor

Hannah Wallinger is one of the funniest people I have ever met, while also being one of the smartest and kindest people in the world. Hannah Wallinger is truly special and unlike anyone I have ever met. She continuously impresses me everyday with her hard work and dedication. She is extremely talented and deserves the world on a platter. Because I could go gushing on about how awesome she is for several essay pages, I decided to make it more concise and write a poem about my dear friend:

**H**annah, a star who always shining,  
**A**lways knows what to say to make me laugh  
**N**ever ceases to amaze the people around her and  
**N**ever fails to put others before her.  
**A**s it is true that your brother is pretty cool,  
**H**annah, you still hold the title for being the coolest Wallinger  
**W**ell, your dancing puts everyone around you to shame  
**A**nd I certainly think dancing could lead you to fame!  
**L**ikewise, she is kind, warm hearted and  
**L**oveable too  
**I** know that everyone wishes they could have a fashion sense as perfect as  
yours  
**N**ow this may seem cheesy, but she is rly  
**G**rate.  
**E**mily thinks she is amazing and she is  
**R**eally, truly a best friend who can do everything while still  
**B**eing there for everyone around her.

- Emily

Dear Mirielle (a.k.a.  
MiMiMaMa),

I can't remember a time when you weren't by my side at Choate. We first met in the whirlwind of the first week of freshman year, and I can trace our friendship back to some cringey pictures of us in the SAC. From there, we were inseparable. Together, went to that first day of dance, and reluctantly nodded when Kalya asked if we knew each other. We have spent long nights at dance together, and many days in the third floor study rooms of the library (rest in peace). Through everything, you have never failed to brighten my day.

There is so much that I love about you, so I am certain I will forget some, but I'll try to get them all. I love how you are one of the few people who can deal with me on an everyday basis. I love how you never get annoyed when I obnoxiously yell your nickname across the room. I love how you somehow had the patience to listen to my singing voice for hours, explaining that I was nowhere near the right note. I love how you are truly one of the most well rounded people I know, but I wish you'd give yourself the credit you deserve. I love how I can go to you for help in practically any subject, because from essay editing to math problems, you are somehow a pro at it all. I love how you're always willing to help, no matter how busy you may be with your millions of extracurriculars that you handle with grace.

I love you because I can always look to you for strength, as you are one of the most resilient people I know. You have gone through so much, yet you can rarely be seen without a smile on your face. I love how you can put on a brave face, but never refuse a hug. I love how you take things both seriously and not so seriously at the same time. I love how you can go from cracking up with me one second, to yelling at me to get in the right spot backstage the next. I love how you take nothing for granted and work to achieve every accolade. I love how you inspire me to be the best version of myself.

I hope this serves as a reminder of how truly amazing of a human being you are. You are loved, Mirielle. :)

— Hannah

There are some people on this campus that I could not survive without, and one of those people is Niki Gummadi. The Choate bubble can be such a pressure cooker and sometimes the reassurance of a friend is the only thing that will get you through the day. Niki has one of those calming personalities who will drop anything for her friends. There are so many times when I need someone to vent to and I can always count on Niki to be there for me. Always. She is kind, funny, insanely smart and just the best friend a girl could ask for.

Freshman fall, Niki and I were in the same public speaking class but weren't really friends. We bonded over our extreme love for Christmas and listening to Christmas music in October and laughed for days straight together about a particularly memorable speech by Tilden Jackson about worms. Since the day of the worm speech back in freshman fall, we've been best friends. The past two years have seemed like a whirlwind of inside jokes, birthday celebrations, and Christmas music. There have been so many long nights studying for tests we had forgotten about, so many classes that we didn't pay attention in and labs where we simply had no idea what was going on. But I couldn't do any of it without Niki.

I love her sense of humor and her ability to make a witty comeback to any comment. I love her because I know that she will always have my back and stands up for me when I don't have the courage to stand up for myself. I love how hardworking she is and the fact that she is willing to struggle through everything with me. I love that she is willing to try new things like becoming the budding ballerina that she is. I love that she is one of the kindest, most caring people I know. Anybody would be lucky to have Niki in their life, and I know how lucky I am to have her in my life.

Plus, she's from Ocala, Florida, only the horse capital of the world of course. What more could you ask for??

— Mirielle

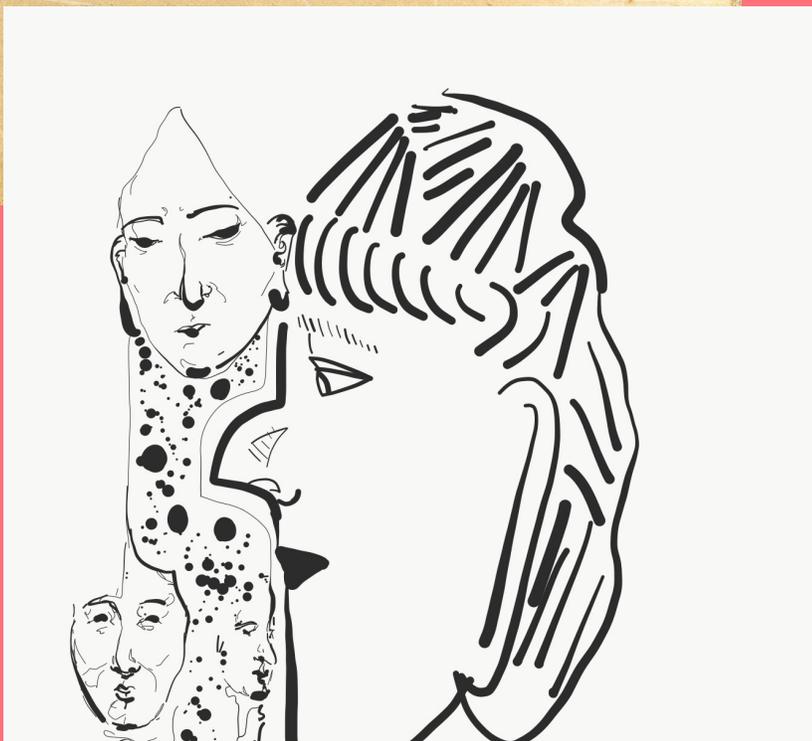
Dear Isabella (a.k.a. Izzy, Isaballer),

I can still remember the first time I met you; it was freshman fall and I somehow found myself on the third floor of the SAC with you, Mirielle, and Bella while I attempted to start and finish an English essay in about an hour. Even then, when we had barely known each other for ten minutes, I knew I wanted to be your friend. I hope that even without this letter, you are aware of how much love I have for you. Nevertheless, I could probably write a whole book about all the reasons why I love you, so I suppose a letter is a good place to start.

I love your contagious positivity and how you can make even the worst days seem not so bad. I love your ability to masterfully reference vines and come up with puns on the spot. I love that you hate conflict but would never hesitate to stand up for someone you love. I love how you genuinely care about every single person you see. I love all the good luck messages I get from you before every test I have. I love how you care about me even when it's hard for me to care for myself. I love how carelessly you dance at every school event. I love you despite your Bachelor spoilers and the fact that you cover my face with stickers in your Snapchat streaks. I love you because I feel like the best version of myself when I'm around you. I love your kindness. Your empathy. Your intelligence.

I love you.

Love,  
Niki



by Abby Lu '22

Dear Bella,

When I was around ten, you were the girl on my summer soccer team who stole my name. Now, we proudly introduce ourselves as "Izzy-Bella " and wait eagerly (and optimistically) for people to think it's funny

I love you because you make every day better. I appreciate how you wait patiently for me to understand one of your complicated jokes, knowing that I need a little time but having confidence that I'll get it at some point. I'm grateful that you'll blast music through your airpods during in-class essays and give everyone a quick laugh. I love how you remember really specific things about friends and bring them up randomly, showing us that you care. I admire how you make friendship bracelets and listen to Camp Rock with me on bus rides to crucial soccer games, and then will get on the field and shut down anyone who challenges you. I appreciate how you will spend an embarrassingly long time trying to learn a random dance with me in Lamphy, and then immediately grind out an eight page analytical essay.

You're the type of friend who makes someone love a lot of things.

Your resilience makes any challenge seem like the most exciting adventure there is. Your positivity makes baking pumpkin scones the most fun experience imaginable. I love you because your passion encourages me to be a better person.

Love,  
Izzy

**Loves everyone unconditionally**

**Outstanding at giving advice**

**Very loud especially when watching *Jumanji 2***

**Exceptionally talented at everything especially when removing invasive species**

**You will never feel sad in her presence**

**Outstanding: her performance in *Rent* literally put me in tears**

**Unique: she is one of a kind**

**Extremely empathetic**

**Makes dance history SO much better**

**I will die if she does not become a Broadway star**

**Legendary, loyal, loving, luminous, lovable**

**Yvonne Rainer Poster= major energy**

**Gorgeous both internally and externally**

**Officially a gingerbread making master and a professional gift giver**

**Optimistic when I am not**

**Day student prefect meetings freshmen year**

**Will be there for me always**

**Inspires me to a great person and an even better friend**

**Needs to become tik tok famous**

— Bella

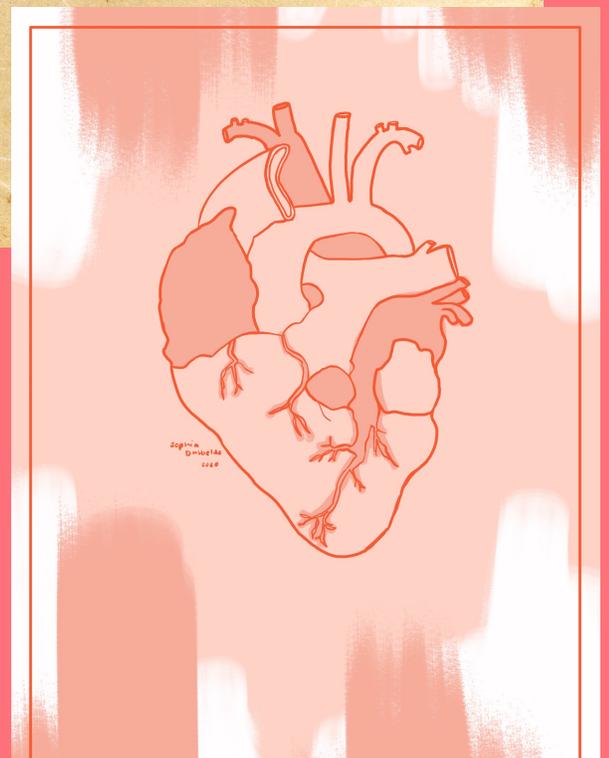


illustration by Sophia Dubbelde '23

## GROWING PAINS

It's hard to say

Whether I truly don't understand how I feel, or if I do understand and just feel immense hesitation.

I always struggle.

Do I let shame act as my barrier, do I let guilt control me, stop me from thinking?  
Or not?

I can't ever seem to find an answer that is best.  
But I do know that I'm unable to not feel what I want to.  
Heartbeats.  
At a certain fixed rate.  
Maybe it's just something that's inevitable.

Care.  
I can see it.  
And I can see how they do too.  
Not everyone has such unwavering concern.  
And it's just there, something that never needs to be catalyzed or pushed,  
It just shows up.  
I can be who I am and it's understood,  
Appreciated,  
Given back.

Two and a half hours.  
Laughing too loud for where we were.  
I'm glad I learned my lesson, with trains and music and convincing people that I care about that I like their songs even though I very much so did not.  
Because I think it made him very happy.

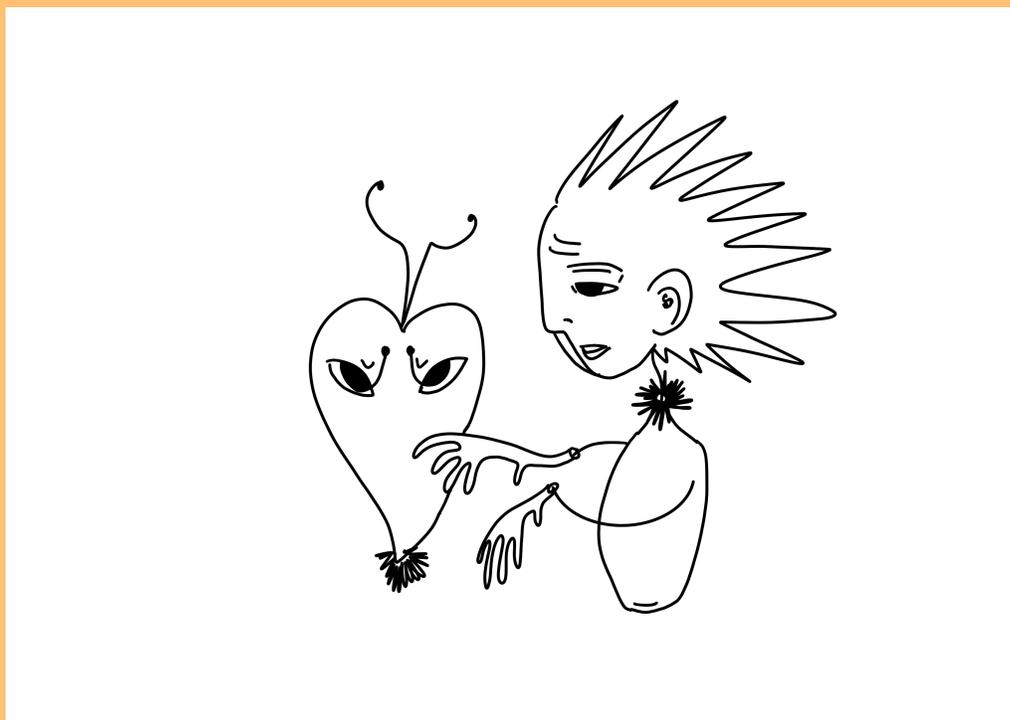
— B.M.

Love. It is a crazy thing. It is what fills our world -- songs, movies, gossip about who is dating who -- it's everywhere. Everyone is trying to decipher what that four-letter word means. The word "love" means something different to everyone. Personally, I would use this word with everyone, including my friends and family. It became a part of my casual lingo and the word lost its meaning.

But there is a difference between loving someone and being in love.

Being in love means subconsciously smiling when you think of them. Being in love means going to their performances and games without thinking about it. Being in love means nothing else matters when you're with them. Being in love is the tingly feeling you get in your stomach that you try to control, but can't. Being in love means loving their flaws. Being in love means dreaming about them. Being in love is a constant reminder of happiness. Being in love means getting lost in their eyes. Being in love means being with you.

– Roshni Surpur '20



by Abby Lu '22



## *highly quotables*

"The opposite of love is not hate. It is fear." – Gary Zukav

"Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you." – Oprah Winfrey

"I need music. It's like my heartbeat, so to speak. It keeps me going no matter what's going on - bad games, press, whatever!"  
– LeBron James

"Among my stillness was a pounding heart." – Shannon A. Thompson



**sincerely yours,**

**LILY DING, ETHAN LUK, JAMIE SHIN**

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