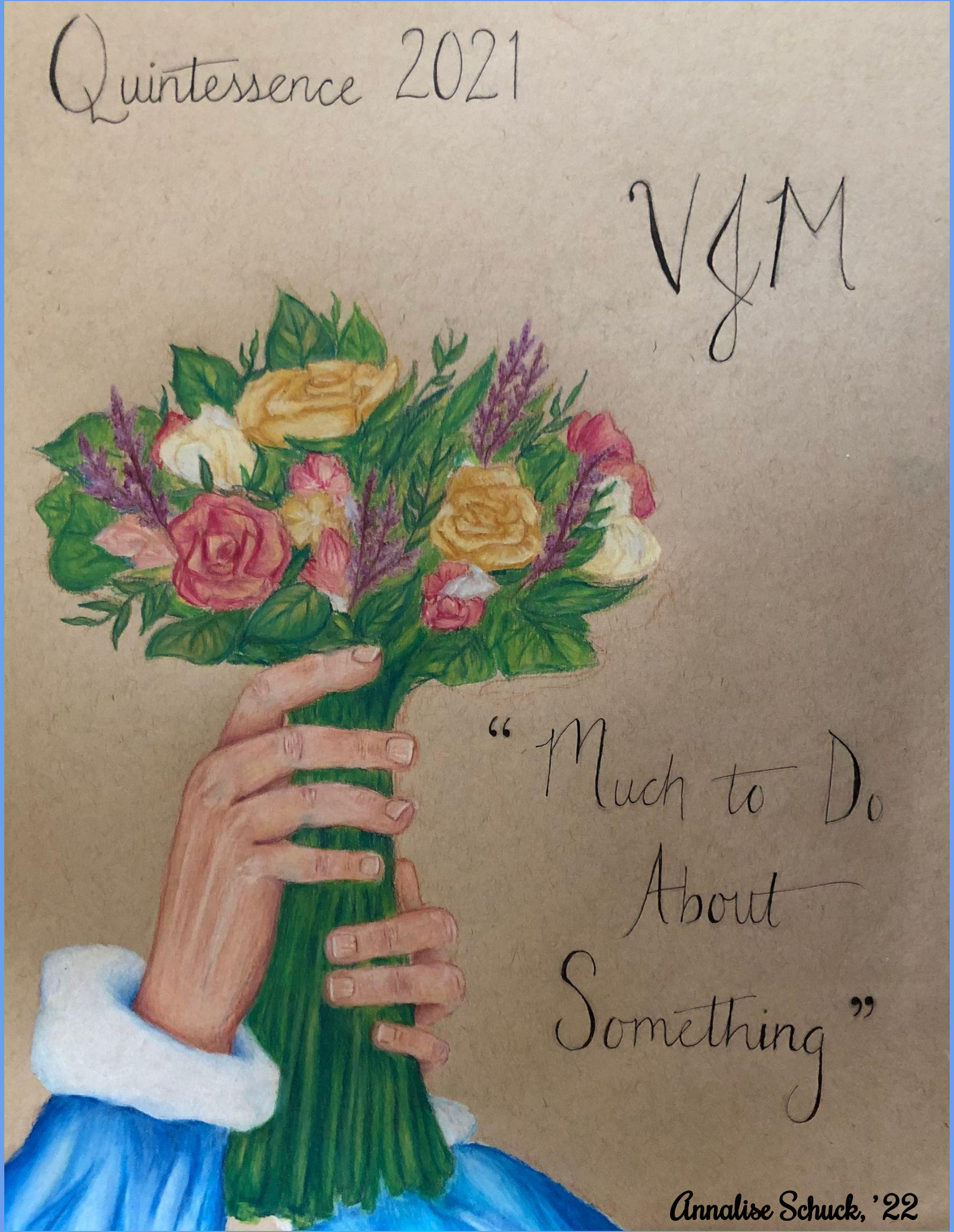
Quintessence 2021

V & M



"Much to Do About Something"

Annalise Schuck, '22

Introduction

2020 took us by surprise! On Thursday, March 11th, we were sent home for what we thought would be a two-week shutdown, which soon turned into the start of a new, virtual reality. We found ourselves quarantined for the rest of the school year with little to no semblance of normalcy. Sports and clubs were suspended, Canvas conferences became the norm, and we were introduced to masks and social distancing. The COVID-19 pandemic was upon us, and who would have thought we would see a pandemic in our lifetime?

Given the passage of time, we were fortunate enough to return to the classroom at Villa under new COVID-19 guidelines for the 2020-2021 school year, and surprisingly, students were overjoyed to return to the classroom after summer break! Re-creation was key to our highly anticipated return. Temperature checks, a mask mandate, socially distanced desks, Zoom events, boxed cafeteria lunches, and modified school assemblies are just some of the ways Villa "re-created" our in-person school experience. While certainly no one had envisioned the new societal norms in place, Villa embraced our newfound situation and stayed strong as a community, triumphing over adversity. Our introspection and insights from our period in quarantine made us all the more strong, and enabled us to embrace the changes at Villa with grace and gratitude. Of course, it was this intermezzo that led to the development of new hobbies and skills that we brought back and shared with our Villa community this year.

When considering this past year, one could imagine reading about it in an apocalyptic novel or a Shakespearean play. This year, in our second online version of *Quintessence*, we reflect on the impact the pandemic has had on our community drawing inspiration from the theater world. Therefore, without further ado, we present *Quintessence 2021: Much To Do About Something.*

Grace Matwijec, '21

Senior Editor-in-Chief



Mya Papouschek,’22
Overall Winner of Collage Contest

Act 1: Re-Creation

Everything begins anew. Through the ashes rises creation, through despair emerges hope, and through the darkness shines light as rebirth gifts us the unique opportunity to metamorphose ourselves. The COVID-19 pandemic has afforded the world much time to experience a self-discovery–and though we remained isolated within our own homes–we spend this time with ourselves: learning, growing, and maturing. Some of us may have taken up a new hobby while others may have stumbled upon a newfound passion. And yet, no matter what our path of discovery looks like, we are able to reflect on who we once were and discern who we have yet to be. The pandemic may have forced us apart, yet we flourish together in spirit as we each embark on our own individual paths of re-creation.

Allison DeFriece, ’22

Junior Apprentice



Rebecca Morein,’24
Freshman Winner of Collage Contest



Shelby Brodhead, ’21

What is one thing you had to adapt to during COVID-19?

We had to learn to be flexible and go with the flow a little bit instead of planning things out so much (Sophia Werbo, ’23)

=====

I had to adapt to the new AP testing system, the changes to the college admission process, the new school dynamic, and an entirely new way of life. (Alex Venth, ’21)

=====

One thing I've had to adapt to during Covid-19 was not being able to see my family as easily… It has been difficult but we have adapted. (Alessia Baricelli, ’21)

=====

One thing I had to adapt to was being inactive - usually, I am swimming once a day, and now I am lucky if I swim once a month! (Madeline Patrick, ’22)

=====

I had to adapt to not being able to read lips. (Jamie Hannigan, ’22)

=====

I’ve had to adapt to staying inside and not seeing my friends everyday like I used to , but we figured out ways to stay in touch using game nights and video calls (Katie Frain, ’21)

=====

I have definitely had to adapt to a new schedule with my kids, in terms of working and teaching my son at home. (Mrs. Bedrosian)

What is one thing you had to adapt to during COVID-19?

I've had to accept that I have far less control over my schedule than ever before. I am a planner, both in my professional life and personal life. However, the pandemic has caused myriad changes on an almost weekly schedule that, at first, caused much frustration. Given my choice of living in constant vexation or becoming more fluid, I am learning to embrace flexibility. (Mr. Bender)

=====

Being around my family ALL THE TIME (Grace Kelly, ’21)

=====

The biggest thing I’ve found myself adapting to during COVID has been parenting. When quarantine started, Hope was 6 months. From that point on we had to shift our idea of what effective, responsible parenting looked like. (Mr. Dennis)

=====

Everything (Jillian Schmuckler, ’23)

=====

Not being able to plan ahead- as a planner, this was challenging, but at this point, I have learned to feel comfortable planning anything only a few days in advance (knowing guidelines and protocols have constantly been updated) AND recognizing that not doing everything exactly as it had been done in the past is OKAY...sometimes even better ideas come From changing things up. (Mrs. Carr)

=====

I had to adapt to not having as much human interaction (Aria Moses, ’22)

=====

Wearing a mask. (Ms. McKeever)

=====

Everything! Everything has changed, from school and church to going to the food store or missing the opportunity to attend sporting events. Thankfully it all seems a bit better recently. (Mr. Kardish)

=====

Not being in control. (Mrs. Wisniewski)

"Quarantine."

It was hard, depressing, and draining.
It was also awakening, relieving, and life-changing.
It's the reason I don't spend as much time on my phone,
It's also the reason I'm able to remind myself I'm not alone.

Quarantine helped me learn it didn't matter how I looked or what I ate,
Because everyone worried all the same.
We all went through a brand-new experience; it's one we'll never forget.
It's full of memories, moments, and hilarious trends and frets.
Coming out of quarantine helped me realize we're all the same—
Every teenage worry, experience, right down to every little detail and grain.
Quarantine helped me lose my judgmental ways and see things in a new light,
Perhaps it was the thoughts that kept me up late at night.

Quarantine is the reason I made new friends, it helped me grow from the stem.
I probably wouldn't be anywhere near this happy if it weren't for them.
It's the reason we all budded into beautiful trees,
After way too much time spent making stupid choices and being too free.

Lily Pyfer, '24

"Cento Poem"

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

Don't judge a man till you've walked a mile in his shoes.

Life is too short to judge people—

Big, small, tall, short, pretty, plain, friendly, shy.

Beauty goes deeper than the surface.

You're not boring or typical—

You are wanted.

You're different.

You're you.

You should know you're beautiful just the way you are.

I am amazing.

I am magic.

I am a superstar.

You don't have to change a thing;

You are beautiful no matter what they say.

Words won't bring us down.

We are beautiful in every single way.

Madeline Sarachman, '24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, and quotes from their selected YA Novels.

"Starr's Cento Poem"

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

I'm not even sure I belong.
I can't share that part of me.
Being two different people is exhausting,
I can't stand myself for doing it, but I do it anyway.
I should be used to my two worlds colliding,
I have to watch what I say and how I say it,
I've taught myself to speak with two different voices.
My two worlds just collided.
That means flipping the switch in my brain;
I wanna puke and scream and cry.
The kind of normal I really want,
The normal where I don't have to choose,
My normal.
I think I'm done!
My two worlds just collided.
Surprisingly everything's ok.
I've mastered it

Mary McAlpin, '24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

The world we know today is filled to the brim with all sorts of things. Molecules, atoms, items, objects. Things like eggs and bacons, other things, like beds and chairs. Quadrillions of years ago, however, there was nothing. Try to imagine this world; emptiness, blackness, pure nothingness. You can't, as even the atoms that make up your brain cells that imagine these things weren't there either.

The only being that has been around this long is Aaris. She was not created, but has always existed, and always will. Because she was the only item in all of existence, she didn't have much to do. She finally entered the darkness one day, and she took a big, deep breath. As she exhaled, molecules appeared; the first ever element of creation. She inspected them, intrigued with their complexity and newness, and decided to produce more. Over the course of many years, she breathed and breathed, until she had all the molecules one could ever need.

Excerpt from "A Creation Myth"

Sophia de Jesus, '24

"The Dreams of Libby Strout"

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven



Loss does that, hits you out of the blue.

When I'm finally alone, I turn on my phone.

I did not think this through.

My heart skips a beat, no one can see it though.

A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.

As I stand there, I can almost feel it unfold, petal by petal, beat by beat.

It is better to be hated for what you are than to be loved for what you are not.

Of all the people in the world, I feel like the girl would understand.

I'm selfish, impatient and a little insecure.

The girls on the bleachers are standing up and whistling.

I wave but she doesn't see me.

That old saying about girls being sugar and spice and everything nice.

Have I mentioned, you have my attention?

Your vibrant style makes me smile.

The hazy- gray, early-morning sky morphs into the night sky.

Delaney Reynolds, '24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

“Jack’s Cento Poem”

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

The world stops.
I can't recognize faces
But, before my eyes, I can see
beauty I feel my stomach drop
I’m smiling at her and she’s
smiling at me Our eyes are
holding hands
My eyes, reaching for hers.
It's a moment.
The air is filled with some kind of
electric current I think, don’t
disappear before my eyes This is
where we can stay
I close my eyes
I say, “I love you”
She says, “I love you too”
I take her hand, and I’m home

Niamh Cole, ’24

“Ekphrastic Poem”

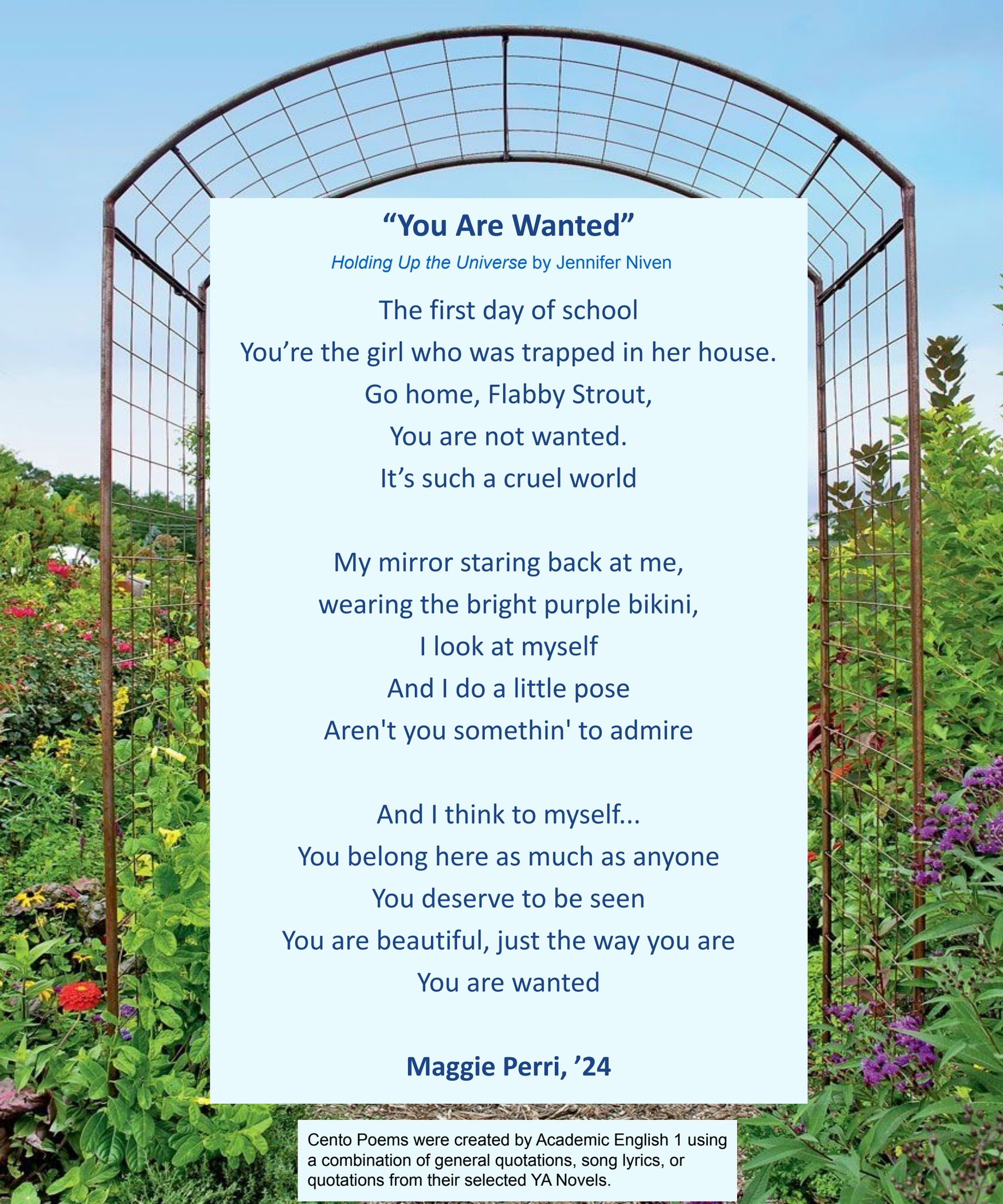
Twirling and turning.
Trying to keep poised.
Nervous but doing my best.
I must keep up with the other girls.
There is no time to rest.
This is my chance.
I must perfect this dance.
Feel the music.
Count the steps in my head.
Practice is the only way to get ahead.
The teacher is looking from afar.
I know he thinks I can be a star.

Gianna Potero, ’24



The Ballet Class 1880-1881
Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, French, 1834 - 1917

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.



“You Are Wanted”

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

The first day of school
You’re the girl who was trapped in her house.
Go home, Flabby Strout,
You are not wanted.
It’s such a cruel world

My mirror staring back at me,
wearing the bright purple bikini,
I look at myself
And I do a little pose
Aren't you somethin' to admire

And I think to myself...
You belong here as much as anyone
You deserve to be seen
You are beautiful, just the way you are
You are wanted

Maggie Perri, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

“As In They Lock”

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

Are you okay?

I stand inside, heart skipping beats

They shut the door.

I’m pacing down the hall.

She might like you back.

Being out in the world is different from being alone with her.

And now my heart is nowhere on Earth to be found.

My night has become a sunny dawn because of you.

I want her to look up.

Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get—only with what you are expecting to give—which is everything.

She is real.

Real love is able to awaken your soul.

Forever is a long time; but I wouldn’t mind spending it by your side.

All that you are is all that I’ll ever need.

Lily Pyfer, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.



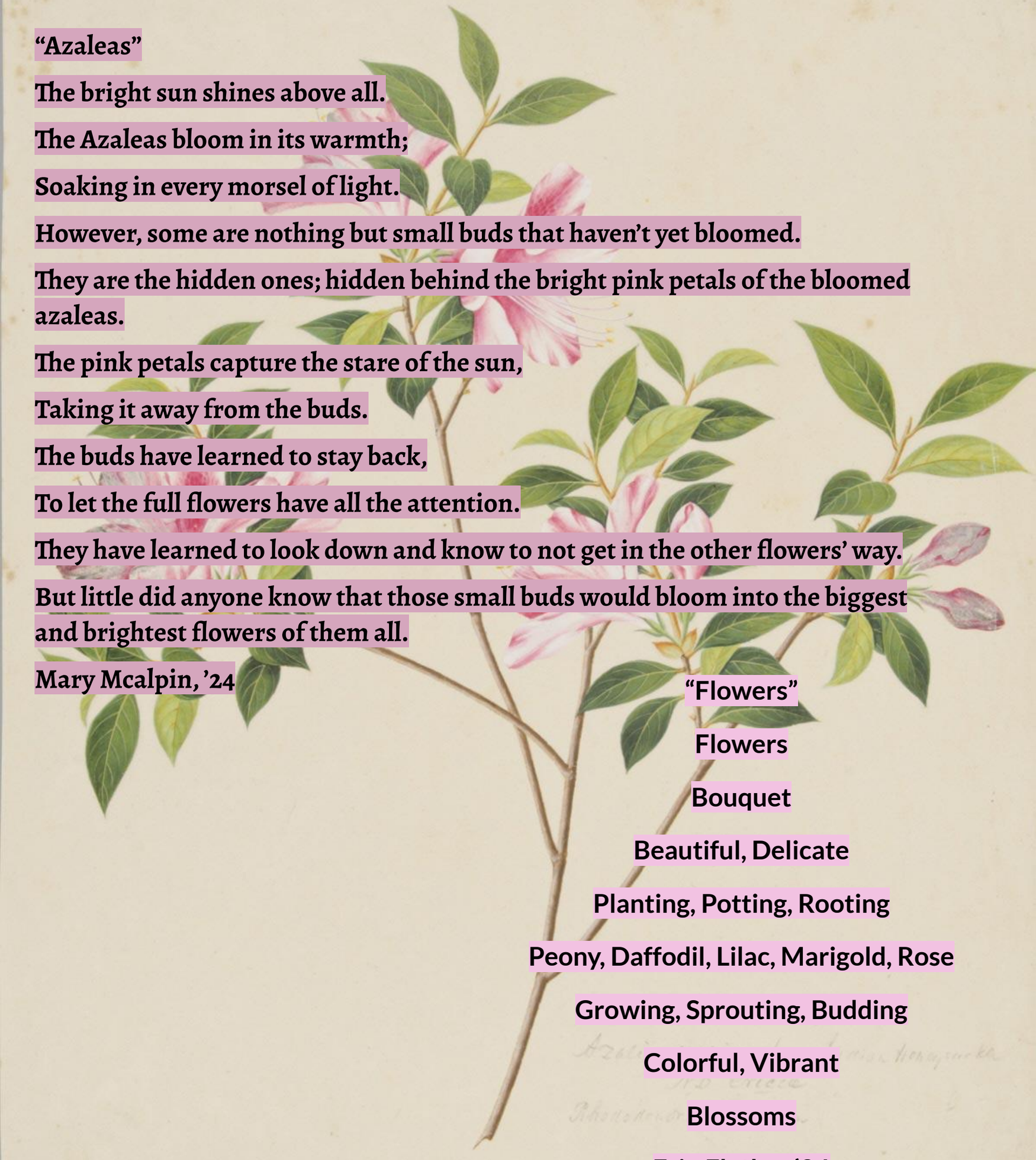
A young girl sits alone
She thinks about her past and future but is present with mind.
As she contemplates all her life decisions,
She mysteriously looks down.
With her head in her hand,
She watches her reflection flow with the water in front of her.
The light pink rose petals fall from her gentle hand down her clean white dress.
She sits with herself, solely, no one else in sight

A young girl sits alone
Her pale skin and curly hair show in the water ripples
The stream's little noises give her peace and help her think.
She sits on her plaid blanket
As she contemplates all her life decisions,
She hears the birds chirp and the wind blow
She sits with herself, solely, no one else in sight

Erin Mallee, '24

Young Woman Seated by a Stream (Contemplation); Before 1886

Wilhelm Amberg, German, 1822 - 1899



“Azaleas”

The bright sun shines above all.

The Azaleas bloom in its warmth;

Soaking in every morsel of light.

However, some are nothing but small buds that haven’t yet bloomed.

They are the hidden ones; hidden behind the bright pink petals of the bloomed azaleas.

The pink petals capture the stare of the sun,

Taking it away from the buds.

The buds have learned to stay back,

To let the full flowers have all the attention.

They have learned to look down and know to not get in the other flowers’ way.

But little did anyone know that those small buds would bloom into the biggest and brightest flowers of them all.

Mary Mcalpin, ’24

“Flowers”

Flowers

Bouquet

Beautiful, Delicate

Planting, Potting, Rooting

Peony, Daffodil, Lilac, Marigold, Rose

Growing, Sprouting, Budding

Colorful, Vibrant

Blossoms

Erin Flatley, ’24

"The Eyes of Society"

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

Everyone else just sees me for how large I am.
I feel my chest clenching but not unclenching.
I sneak check my pulse,
Everyone is staring.
My palms go clammy.
Just lose the weight.
Fake people,
No need to cry.
I breathe.
I stand there.
I know how far I've come.
I've got a good personality.
I start to strut a little.
I'm starting my own dance club.
You're going to make a difference.
I AM WANTED.



Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

Rebecca Morein, '24

“Within Shadows, I Burn”

“Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.” – Maori proverb

They say be a Flower
Petals and leaves soaking in nourishment
From the light found with every sunrise
But what happens when sunrise never comes
What happens when your face can’t find the sun
When the shadows surround you
When there’s eternal night and starvation
Petals falling and leaves crumbling
Be a flower and you’ll wither
I say be the Sun
Turn your face outward and burn the shadows away

Estella Griffin, ‘21

“Looking at the colors”

Soft shades of pink and green
It's simple
The way the delicate flowers lean
Even the simple blooms
So graceful and clean
Blow so delicately
The way those flowers lean
There is beauty in small things
Even those thin twigs
Holding up the light petals

Megan McCord, ‘24



Gianna Carradorini, ’22

“Cento Poem”

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

You got this

Everyone has a moment in history which belongs particularly to him

This belongs to you

There is nothing they can say about me that I haven’t said myself

Life is too short to judge others

You made your point

It’s not our job to tell someone what they feel or who they are

You are wanted

Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise, even yourself

You are worthy of all the love you’ve been given

If you don’t love all of you, who will

Overcome how you think about yourself

Let what will be, be

You are bound by stardust

I mean *you*

Olivia Berkey, ’24

“Identity”

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful

Your voices matter

be a voice not an echo

be roses that grow in the concrete

be a fountain not a drain.

I can’t change where I come from or what I’ve been through I realize that being real ain't got anything to do with where you live

It isn’t where you came from it’s where you’re going

Sometimes you can do everything right and things will still go wrong Something to live for, something to die for

If I persist...I will win

You can't destroy a movement

God gave you a brain. You don’t need theirs.

Go on even though you're scared

Rise above the storm and you will find sunshine

Identity...emerges from within when one has the courage...

Abigail Gillespie, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

“Chosen”

“You can’t do anything!” She yells at him, this boy who isn’t anything special, who has done nothing but get in her - her! Captain of the Guard! - way. “You aren’t the Chosen One. He *died.*”

Along with her hopes and dreams, the future for her siblings, the fate of the world.

(Why had the Prophecy just picked one, fragile human being to save it all?

Because, a voice whispers, quiet in her mind, *The Chosen One was supposed to be special.)*

The boy before her takes a step back, small against the giant sword carried loosely beside him. He’s - he’s *nothing*. He’s weaker than her, more foolish, more naive. He’s got *nothing*.

But -

The boy looks at her, fire in his eyes and his grip tightens around the sword. There’s - there’s a shift there. Something small. Something big. “Maybe I’m not. Maybe he did die -”

“Maybe?”

“But that doesn’t matter.” He continues as if she’s never spoken. There’s an energy to his words, a determination, a steadiness in the face of her overwhelming doubt. “The world is ending - and if the Prophecy can choose someone to save it all, so can I. And I choose *us.*”

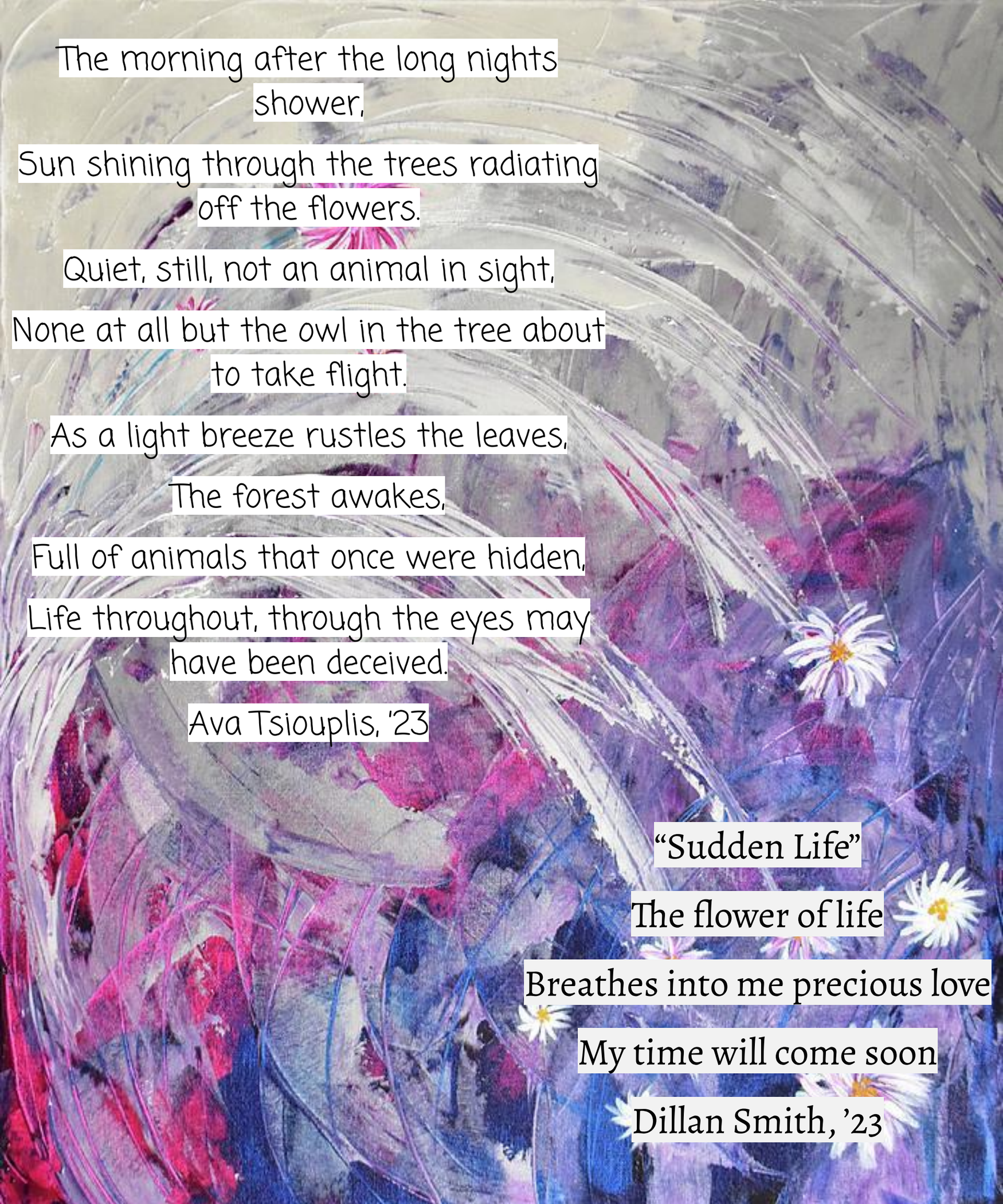
He holds out the sword to her, the sword they took from a dragon’s cave, the sword the Chosen One died holding -

And looks her directly in the eye.

“So?” The boy - the man - the *hero* of this story says. “Will you save the world with me?”

What can she do but say *yes*?

Madeline Patrick, ’22



The morning after the long nights shower,

Sun shining through the trees radiating off the flowers.

Quiet, still, not an animal in sight,

None at all but the owl in the tree about to take flight.

As a light breeze rustles the leaves,

The forest awakes,

Full of animals that once were hidden,

Life throughout, through the eyes may have been deceived.

Ava Tsiouplis, '23

"Sudden Life"

The flower of life

Breathes into me precious love

My time will come soon

Dillan Smith, '23



"Rappaccini Diamante"

Poison

Ugly, Evil

Breathe, Touch, Kill

Friendship, Love, Family, Treasure

Support, Cherish, Aid

Kind, Compassionate

Love

Meredith Glunz, '23

5 Prepare man to live

7 Under the notion of worth

5 Though he matters not

7 Unless he is called to work

7 For none other than himself

Meredith Glunz, '23

"Young Love"

They stand in awe of the sight of each other,
In love, they embrace,
Young love is a bother,
It is something I can't bear to face.

I watch them hug and laugh and chat,
My life doesn't need that,
I watch them kiss and my body shakes,
Love is nothing but a waste of time,
It truly does make your heart ache.

They stand together under the beautiful blossom tree,
His hand around her waist,
They look so in love...

People dream of finding loves all their lives,
But soon everyone finds out,
Love is just a waste of time.

I once loved and felt and longed for someone so greatly,
But they shattered my heart,
So, I shan't ever love again,
In hope of not being, once again torn apart.

Lily Pyfer, '24



Lovers under a Blossom Tree
By 1859
John Callcott Horsley, English, 1817 - 1903

https://www.ashlarmuseum.org/collections/permanent/82725.html?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3168

“Body Image”

The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo

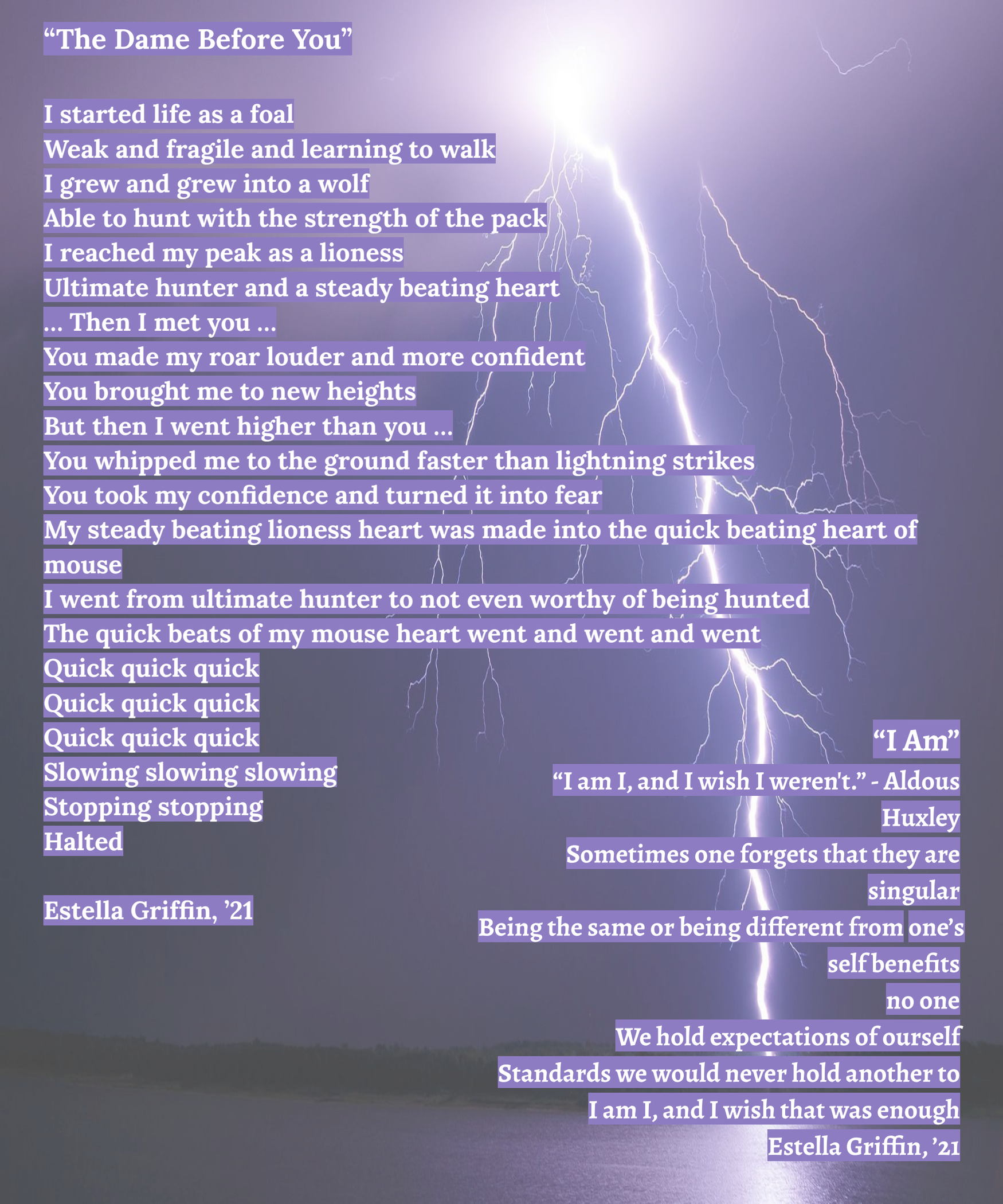
Do you know what it's like to feel ugly all the time?
I feel like I'm disappearing; getting smaller every day; but I look in the mirror;
and I'm bigger in every way.
A little too much fat for a young girl,
When your body takes up more room than your voice.
They tell us from the time we’re young; to hide the things that we don’t like
about ourselves.
I wish my body would fold in the tiniest corner.
I try to make an ant of myself.
I’d have to pray extra so my body didn’t get me in trouble.
Even my father calls me the names all the kids have called me since I grew breasts.
I am a cuero.

I smile over my shoulder at my bubble butt in the mirror.
I let my body finally take up the space it wants,
It feels more like a gift.

There’s nothing wrong with loving who you are,
And I know my creator didn’t make no mistakes on me!

Kaitlyn Angelucci, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.



“The Dame Before You”

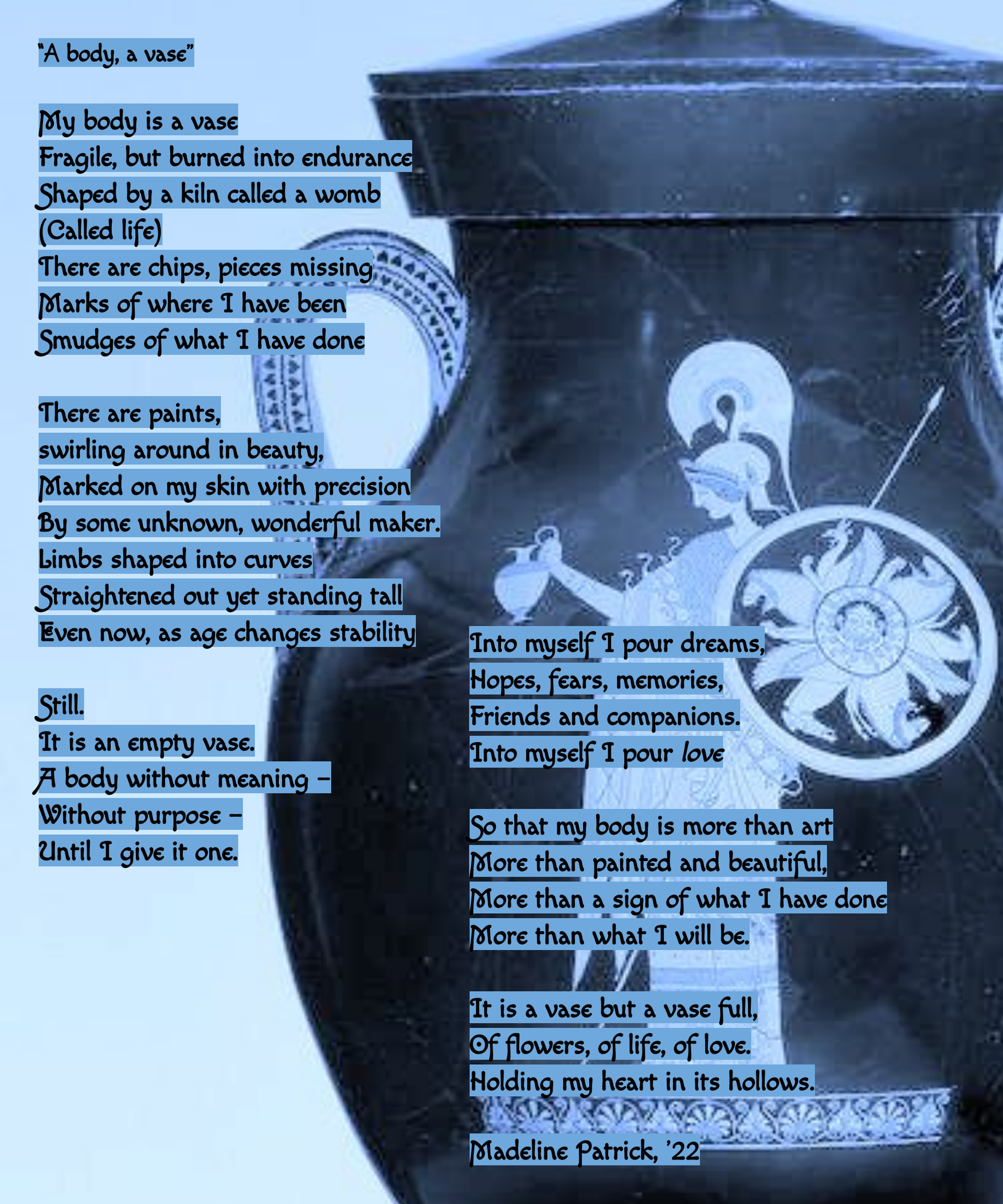
I started life as a foal
Weak and fragile and learning to walk
I grew and grew into a wolf
Able to hunt with the strength of the pack
I reached my peak as a lioness
Ultimate hunter and a steady beating heart
... Then I met you ...
You made my roar louder and more confident
You brought me to new heights
But then I went higher than you ...
You whipped me to the ground faster than lightning strikes
You took my confidence and turned it into fear
My steady beating lioness heart was made into the quick beating heart of mouse
I went from ultimate hunter to not even worthy of being hunted
The quick beats of my mouse heart went and went and went
Quick quick quick
Quick quick quick
Quick quick quick
Slowing slowing slowing
Stopping stopping
Halted

Estella Griffin, ’21

“I Am”

“I am I, and I wish I weren't.” - Aldous Huxley
Sometimes one forgets that they are singular
Being the same or being different from one’s self benefits no one
We hold expectations of ourself
Standards we would never hold another to
I am I, and I wish that was enough

Estella Griffin, ’21



"A body, a vase"

My body is a vase
Fragile, but burned into endurance
Shaped by a kiln called a womb
(Called life)
There are chips, pieces missing
Marks of where I have been
Smudges of what I have done

There are paints,
swirling around in beauty,
Marked on my skin with precision
By some unknown, wonderful maker.
Limbs shaped into curves
Straightened out yet standing tall
Even now, as age changes stability

Still.
It is an empty vase.
A body without meaning –
Without purpose –
Until I give it one.

Into myself I pour dreams,
Hopes, fears, memories,
Friends and companions.
Into myself I pour *love*

So that my body is more than art
More than painted and beautiful,
More than a sign of what I have done
More than what I will be.

It is a vase but a vase full,
Of flowers, of life, of love.
Holding my heart in its hollows.

Madeline Patrick, '22

“Tanka:”

My heart feels like stone

You dropped it in the water

Sinking, sinking down

Until it hits the bottom

And shatters just like a bone

Jillian Evans, ’22

“Rappaccini’s Daughter”

A girl pure at heart,
A man with a poisoned soul--
Tainted love, heartbreak.

Olivia Burke, ’23

“2020”

Scary, Never-ending

Distancing, Quarantining, Protesting

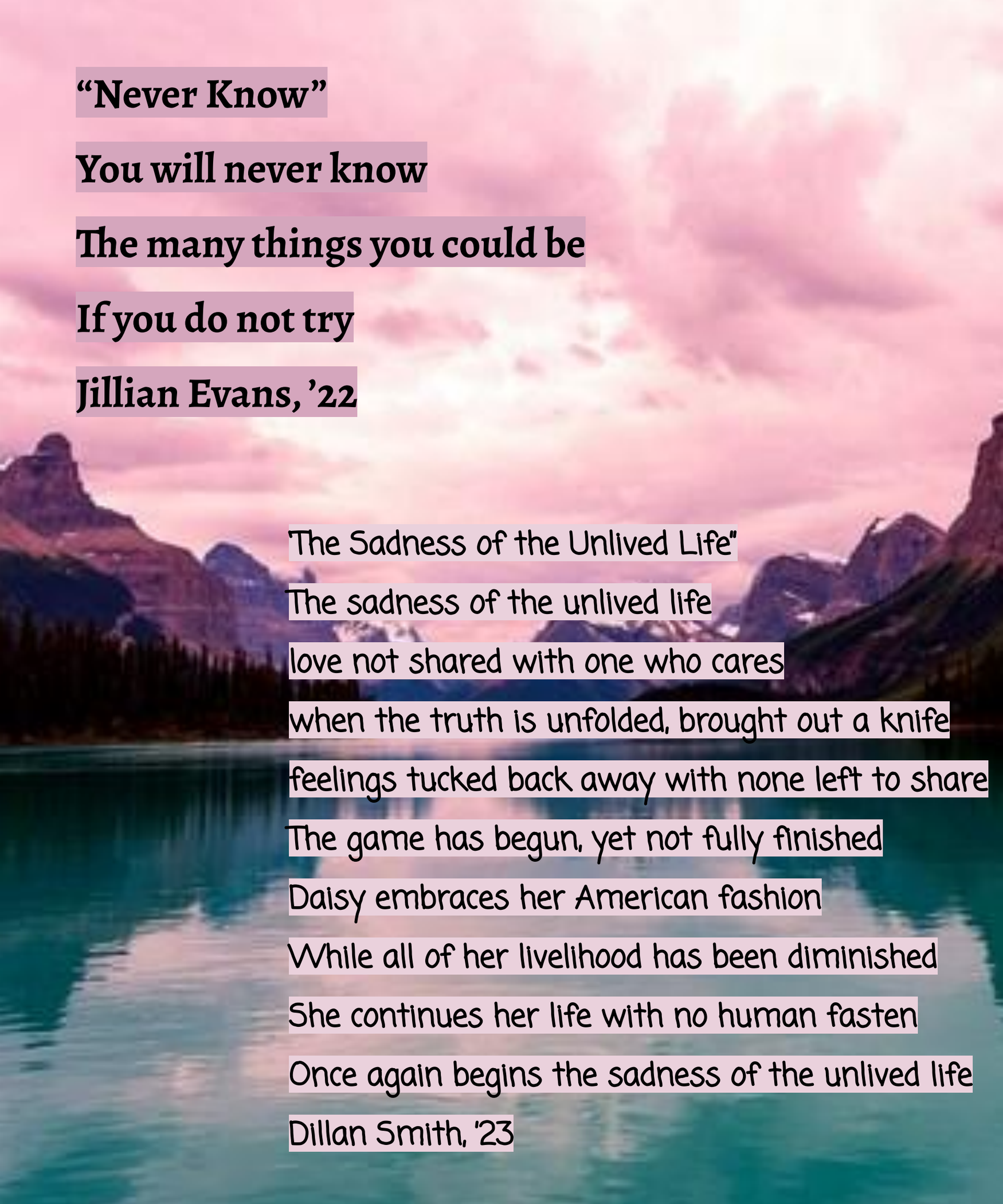
Fear, Change, Opportunity, Chance

Hoping, Dreaming, Wishing

New, Unknown

2021

Jessica Angelucci, ’21



“Never Know”

You will never know

The many things you could be

If you do not try

Jillian Evans, ’22

'The Sadness of the Unlived Life"

The sadness of the unlived life

love not shared with one who cares

when the truth is unfolded, brought out a knife

feelings tucked back away with none left to share

The game has begun, yet not fully finished

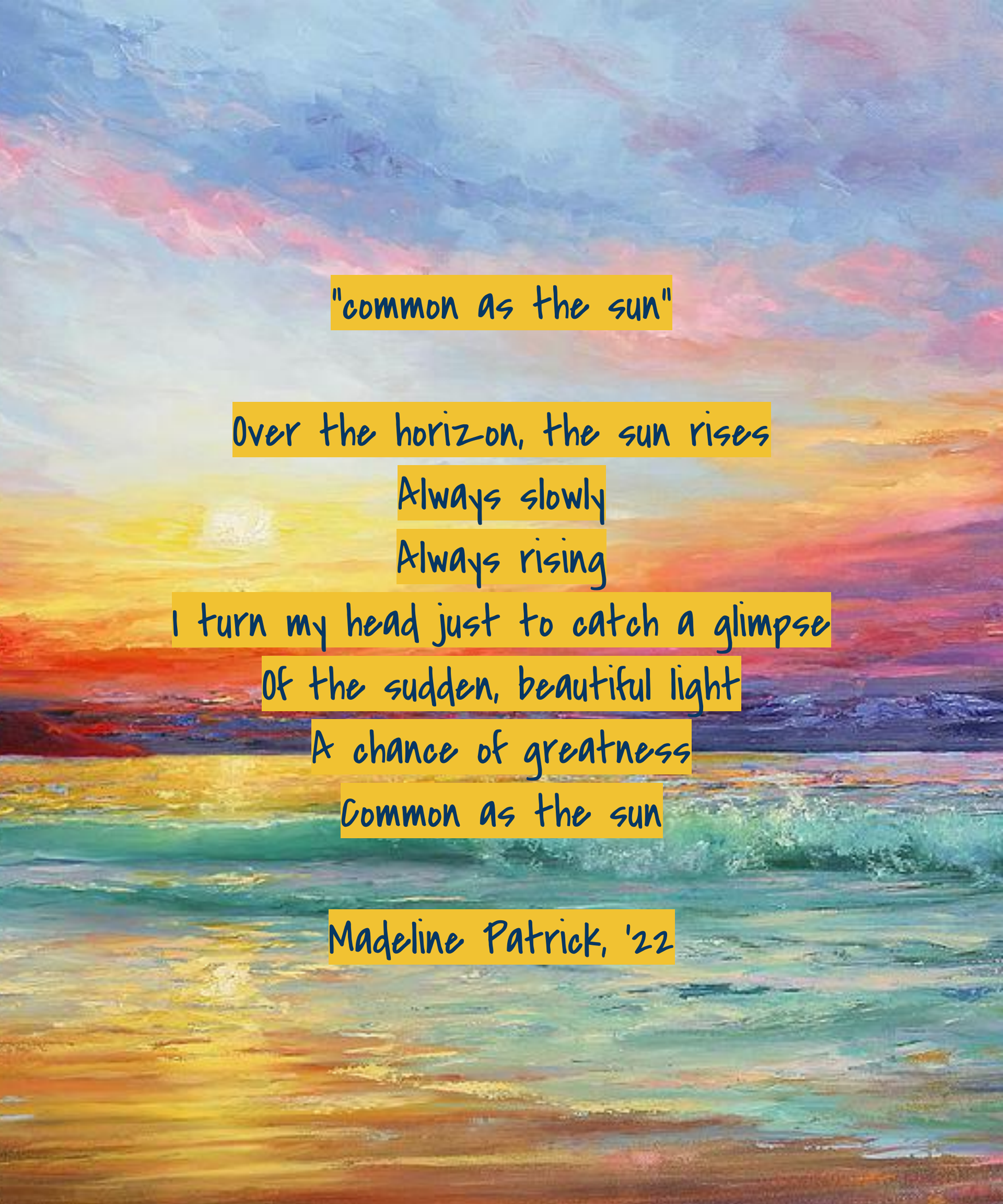
Daisy embraces her American fashion

While all of her livelihood has been diminished

She continues her life with no human fasten

Once again begins the sadness of the unlived life

Dillan Smith, '23



"common as the sun"

Over the horizon, the sun rises
Always slowly
Always rising
I turn my head just to catch a glimpse
Of the sudden, beautiful light
A chance of greatness
Common as the sun

Madeline Patrick, '22

“Sunshine”

You can find sunshine
Even on a cloudy day
In a joyful smile.

Gianna Carradorini, ’22

“In-Person vs Virtual School”

Classroom
Busy, lively
Writing, talking, learning
Teachers, students, desks, chairs
Typing, conferencing, working
Isolated, lonely
Bedroom

Alyson Beck, ’24

“Beatrice and the Flower”

Beatrice
Beautiful, Pure-hearted
Talking, Laughing, Breathing
Sisters, Victims, Dangers, Experiments
Blooming, Growing, Killing
Delicate, Poisonous
Flower

Sophia Werbo, ’23



Shelby Brodhead, ’21



"Happines/Sadness"

Happiness

Bright, Yellow

Enjoy, Love, Delight

Feeling, Perception, Sensation, Emotion

Detest, Hate, Dishearten

Dark, Blue

Sadness

Sarah Taylor, '23

"Changing"

My life is changing

For the better? For the worse?

Only time will tell.

Jillian Evans, '22

“An Envisioned Paradise”

As she ran past the blooming flowers painted in sun-kissed gold, her mind was clear with only the purest happiness filling her soul. Her old life was nothing but a distant memory, feeling as though it was a blink of an eye. Running faster, her senses were overwhelmed as she smelled the once intangible sentiments of love, hope, and even friendship. The colors of the trees were so glorious and plentiful that they seemed to blend together yet she knew the name of each of them. Each new shade of crimson and altered variation of lilac came to her by heart as easily as one could recite the alphabet. She kept running free of exhaustion because she had regained her youth she had once tragically lost. She continued to run as if each new stride she took anew in a reality bound by nothing, not even time or space. Joined by the company of others, she laughed without anyone needing to utter a word for everyone knew what was in one another’s hearts. She ran, but she never grew weary of the path ahead for there was no destination, only her everlasting journey in an eternity with God.

Grace Matwijec, ’21

“A Day In and Out”

Gleaming from the side of the boat
I ride upon water and wood
Searching for something in an empty sky
Searching for something not really there
Searching for something to search for
I ride upon water and wood
Gently swaying to the tide

Estella Griffin, ’21



“Moments”

I chase the white clouds and blue skies ahead with the grey storm behind me
I sway in the calm lake but soon am thrashed about in angry waves
I fly above all and even still my wings must rest
I breathe and my chest expands and deflates
The rise and fall reminds me that life is never perfect and neat
But I can fly above the land into beautiful skies and land in a calm lake
In those moments life is messy and beautiful and worth it

Estella Griffin, ’21



“Springing Hills”

Springing hills with leaves of gold
Too much beauty to be told
Nature looks so innocent
As if it will never grow old
The soft wind created such a sound
The bow in my hair danced around
I walk barefoot, toe to heel
Wildflowers carpet the ground
Mountainsides filled with green
So captivating it could be a time machine
Colors surround me from the grass to the sky
Together, it creates an enchanting scene

Erin Flatley, ’24



"Live"

Give up your safety.

Make life an adventure.

Live the way you want.

Gianna Carradorini, '22





"Moments To Live For"

Life is made up of moments

Big and small.

Good and bad.

Concerts, car rides, birthdays,

Sleepovers, movies, weekends,

Treasure those moments.

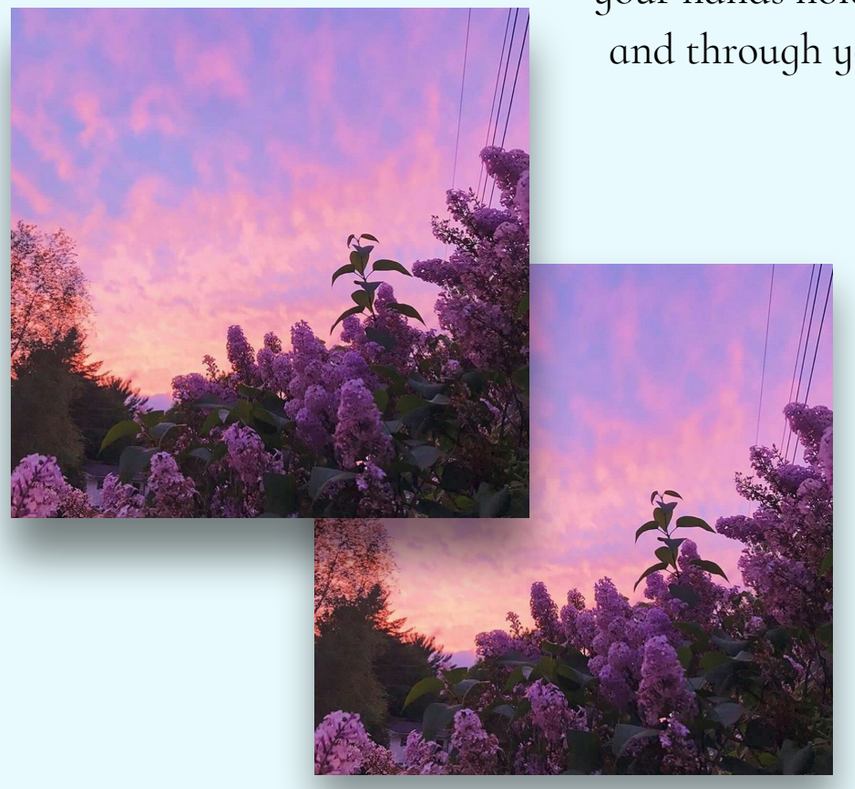
They're what make living so great.

Gianna Carradorini, '22



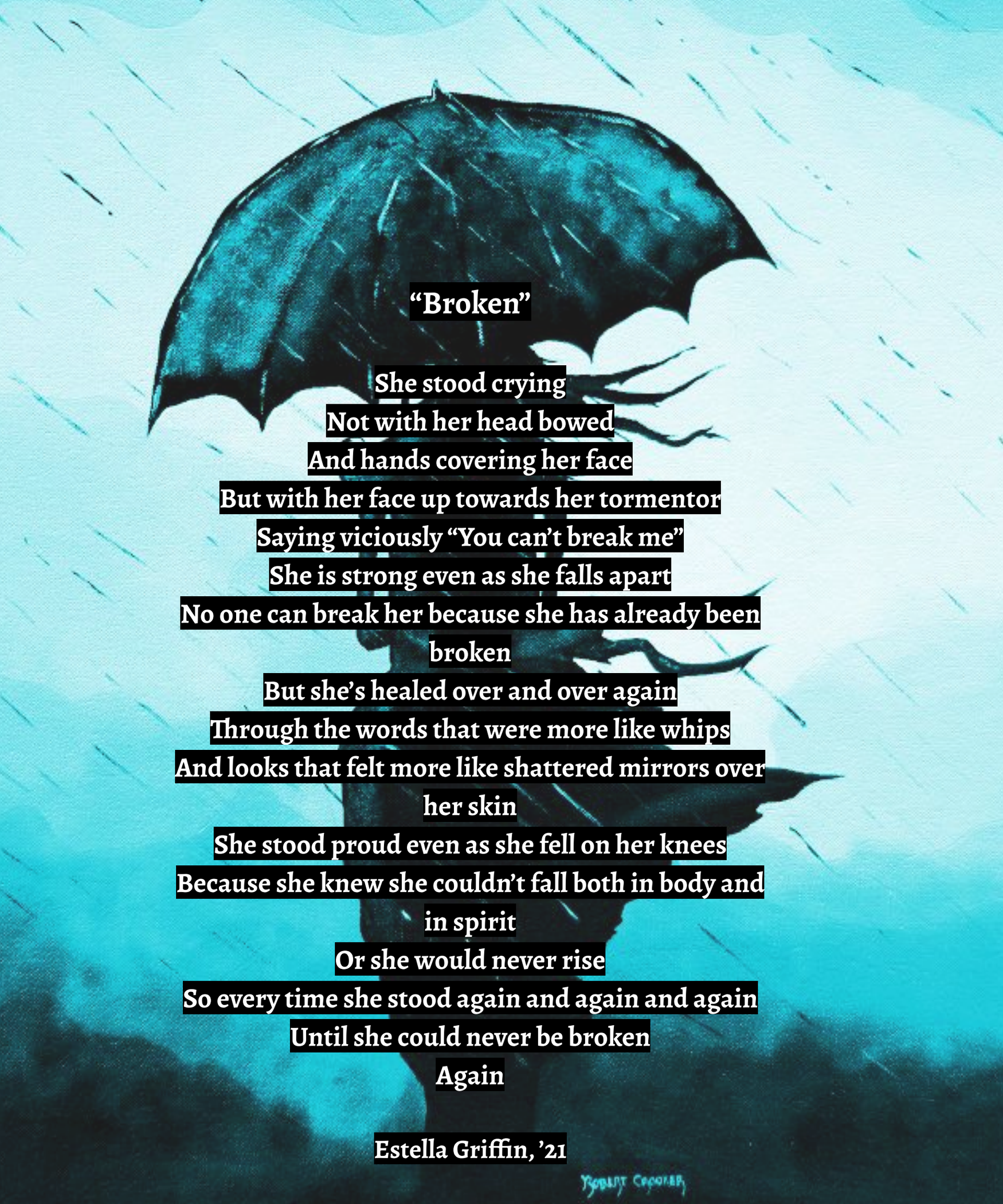
*“**eclipse**”*

asteroid girl,
draped in celestiality,
with eyes crafted from dying stars,
and flowing hair that wraps around the milky way.
seraphic venus,
your hands hold the fragments of rocket ships,
and through your veins courses immortal life.
Autumn Andrejczak, ’22



*“**a hubble observation: stellar rebirth**”*

i never expected to share a connection this deep,
one that carves through caverns and reshapes ancient statues.
i never expected to look into your defeated face,
and see an image of my lonely and stifled self.
yet i realize now that the two of us share,
the same fresh scars,
identical fragmented mindscapes,
and hearts that have been fractured and poorly stitched together,
over a million times each.
i guess the truth is, we don’t connect with those of our metaphorical flesh and blood,
and we don’t long for the ones with whom we share a heart and mind.
really, our souls yearn for the people who are born of our own rib,
the ideal reflections of ourselves that we might have let pass by for so long.
Autumn Andrejczak, ’22



“Broken”

She stood crying
Not with her head bowed
And hands covering her face
But with her face up towards her tormentor
Saying viciously “You can’t break me”
She is strong even as she falls apart
No one can break her because she has already been broken
But she’s healed over and over again
Through the words that were more like whips
And looks that felt more like shattered mirrors over her skin
She stood proud even as she fell on her knees
Because she knew she couldn’t fall both in body and in spirit
Or she would never rise
So every time she stood again and again and again
Until she could never be broken
Again

Estella Griffin, ’21

Intermezzo: Dear *Quintessence*

Stop. Breathe. Take a break, and welcome to *Intermezzo,* the center portion of this year's magazine.

An *Intermezzo* is defined by Merriam Webster as "a usually brief interlude or diversion" typically taking place between acts of a play. This is our place for all the moments in-between Recreation and Re-creation. The moments where we fall from the crescendo of creating something anew to the peace of taking time for ourselves. It is the brief moments of careful self assessment; what has just occurred? How have I changed? What is going to change? What will come next? In the *Intermezzo,* our worries settle as life takes its course.

The past year, with quarantine and the slow reinstating of ordinary life, has been an Intermezzo of sorts. It has been a break from the typical motions of life as all but nature seemed to still outside our windows. This section is a reflection of that, and how we have grown in-between the pauses of motion. It is a letter to ourselves, to take the time to write about that reflect, to write about motion, to write about life.

So - relax. Breathe. Reflect. This is the *Intermezzo* of *Quintessence 2021,* and it is time to enjoy a pause, but not a stopping, from life.

Madeline Patrick, '22
Junior Editor



Grace Matwijec,'21
Senior Winner of Collage Contest

What do you miss? Write a brief journal entry to your pre-quarantine self. What's one thing you have learned about yourself?

I miss being able to go places and do fun activities; it is weird to think back on normal life and how it was before corona; I think I learned how to be content with the unknown. (Jenae Hallett,'23)

I miss being able to hang out with my friends or going out to a party and not wondering whether someone I was with testing positive or getting sick… (Nevaeh Vecchione,'21)

Dear Grace, Remember to cherish every moment you have because no one is promised a tomorrow. In everyday discover the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Life is always subject to change, so trust in God and His Will for you because he knows what is best for you. Grace Matwijec, '21

Hey Lizzy, Life is so valuable. Every day that you get to live is a blessing; another chance to experience and to grow. Even though life doesn't seem as productive as normal, and you may not always feel fulfilled, remember that you are still doing wonderfully and you are still in the process of growing. I am happy for you that you've learned patience and sincerity… (Lizzy Mimm,'21)

I have truly missed seeing all of my cousins in Chicago and my friends. I've also missed giving hugs so much. Elbow bumps are just not the same! I learned that I am a lot tougher than I thought I was. Starting my school year off in the hospital and in school virtually made things ten times harder on top of everything else, but I still made it to today. I think quarantine has also taught me that it is okay to struggle and that everything will work out. (Meredith Glunz, '23)

I miss my old friends and my old way of life. I was so different before quarantine. My fashion sense, friend group, music tastes, and personality has been greatly impacted by quarantine. It is weird to look at pictures of myself from last year, I seem so different! In ways, I do really miss my pre-quarantine life. It was more laid back, and less stressful. But I love all of the new people that I have met in the past couple months at my new school. I have also learned a lot more about myself, and who I truly am on the inside. (Marygrace Ricci, '24)

One of my favorite games, CODENAMES, became available online. Myself, family, and friends did weekly zoom calls and battled each other. It was so much fun and helped us all stay connected. (Mrs. Wisniewski)

What do you miss? Write a brief journal entry to your pre-quarantine self. What's one thing you have learned about yourself?

Dear pre-quarantine me, I am so proud of you for finding yourself during this quarantine. I know that not being able to see your friends and family has been hard on you but you are doing so well. You've picked up so
many new hobbies and talents which is so cool. You 100% are an extrovert, wow. (Alessia Baricelli,'21)

I miss the old normal. I have learned that I would rather spend a Friday or Saturday night with family because you never know when something could change. (Lindsay Morris,'21)

I have learned that I am resilient. I got through the challenges of this year and grew from them. (Jillian Evans,'22)

I miss people. My life used to be so full, but now it's so monotonous… (Kate Abdalla,'22)

To my Pre-quarantine self;Value the time you have with your friends! That assignment can wait another hour - go accept that invitation to hang out. You never know when you will need happy memories to look back on - or when you will never be able to hang out again. You need interaction to stay happy! (Madeline Patrick,'22)

Music and performing changed a lot because of Covid-19. I miss performing in front of live audiences on stage (Anna Schmidt,'22)

Dear Abby,These next 6-9 months will be the craziest, yet, most boring time. Try to remember to be grateful for all that you have, a comfortable house, a great family, a food to eat. You will learn that some complaints you have had in the past are so ridiculous. You will soon learn that the only important thing is having a safe and healthy family. (Abigail Gillespie,'24)

I most miss seeing my kids and my students being able to act like kids. From canceled dance and gymnastics lessons at home, to the removal of flexible seating in my classroom, to the loss of activities like Winter Formal at school, I really miss being a part of that childhood experience and energy that drives my love of parenting and teaching.
(Mr. Bender)

I miss seeing everyone's smiles and facial expressions! I miss walking around school with its crowded hallways and lunch tables. I wish I had enjoyed the aspect of just going to school every day more. I've learned that as much as I like being independent, I really enjoy other people's company. Like on the weekends, I need to see friends as sort of a therapy for me. (Jaclyn McDade, '22)

Dear Will,

You aren't going to believe me when I tell you this. You're preoccupied with and excited about the upcoming move into the new house. You're taking cute photos of Hope inside cardboard boxes and deciding whether or not to bother bringing the curtains or just buying new ones. You're arranging for someone to watch Hope so you and Danielle can unpack boxes. You're planning where to eat first because you are so close to so many new options. Here's the deal, though: don't bother. Your entire world is about to change.

In a few short days, the world will come to a screeching halt. You won't have to decide where to eat because every restaurant will be closed- some forever. You'll have plenty of time to enjoy that new house because you won't be leaving it anytime soon. The playroom will have to wait because it's going to be a makeshift home office/classroom for a while first.

This summer won't have any visits to the shore. Hope will have to wait to go on the rides. No mini-golf or Manco's pizza, no beach, no Johnson's popcorn, no fro-yo. I don't mean to be dramatic, but you aren't even going to see your family for a long time. Months. Get used to Netflix, homemade meals and the three of you. That's all you've got for quite some time.

Here's the good news, though. You're going to fall even more in love with your wife. Together, you're going to hear Hope's first words and watch her first steps. Sure, her 1st birthday will be via-zoom and a video clips, but you'll be there when she hits each new benchmark. You'll be there when she points and says "Daddy," you'll be there when she say her own name for the first time, you'll be there when she makes animal sounds and masters her flashcards. Her new best friend may be Roomba, but you'll be next to her when she makes pretend that Roomba is chasing her. You'll be there when she plays in her first snow. You'll be there when she falls down and gets a bo-bo and you'll be there when she finds out she's going to be a big sister.

It's going to be a tough year. Teaching will be harder than ever and your business is going to suffer big time. You'll have to close the physical studio and only do business online. You'll be scared when you go back to work and you'll start normalizing the wearing of a mask. When the toughness clears, though; when the fear subsides; when the darkness passes over, you're going to be left with the greatest gift you could have hoped for… you will have been there.

Stay positive but test negative,

An older, wiser, greyer but "there" Will (Mr. Dennis)



Shelby Brodhead, ’21

“Loneliness”

As she sat there in her wrinkled, white dress,
Even though she’s surrounded by beautiful, tall trees,
All she could think about was her stress.
Loneliness.
The scent of the flowers that lay in her hand,
And her sad slump in posture,
Loneliness.
Hearing nature around her made her think of him again,
His cloak, dark blue, in her hand,
Loneliness.

Delaney Reynolds, ‘24



Young Woman Seated by a Stream (Contemplation); Before 1886

Wilhelm Amberg, German, 1822 - 1899

“Bartleby, the Scrivener”



Isolation

Reserved, Disconnected

Restrict, Suppress, Bottle-Up

Standards, Society, Solitude, Imprisonment

Dehumanize, Smother, Stifle

Misunderstood, Selfish

Detachment

Olivia Burke, ’23

“Downfall”

The king is gone
Something rides in his stead

As beautiful as a swan
Dark times are ahead

Times of war and brawn
A world that has bled

Peace as fragile as a fawn
A kingdom to end at the snip of a thread



Estella Griffin, ’21

Pantoum: "Bartleby"

In a passive way, Bartleby resists
Not loud, he's quiet but strong
He's different from the other copyists
How much longer will the lawyer let him go along?

Not loud, he's quiet but strong
"I prefer not to" is his favorite phrase
How much longer will the lawyer let him go along?
He tries to get rid of Bartleby a number of ways

"I prefer not to" is his favorite phrase
Bartleby refuses to write
He tries to get rid of Bartleby a number of ways
But he lingers there, day and night

Bartleby refuses to write
The lawyer wishes Bartleby would go
But he lingers there, day and night
A problem is beginning to grow

The lawyer wishes Bartleby would go
What is he supposed to do?
A problem is beginning to grow
The solution: move somewhere new

What is he supposed to do?
Did the lawyer try everything that he could?
The solution: move somewhere new
Are we done with Bartleby for good?
Did the lawyer try everything that he could?
Bartleby's window faced out at a wall
Are we done with Bartleby for good?
Has he made a difference at all?

Bartleby's window faced out at a wall
The Dead Letter Office was all he had known
Has he made a difference at all?
No wonder Bartleby felt so alone

The Dead Letter Office was all he had known
Did the lawyer treat Bartleby right or wrong?
No wonder Bartleby felt so alone
There was no where he could have belonged

Did the lawyer treat Bartleby right or wrong?
He's different than the other copyists
There was no where he could have belonged
In a passive way, Bartleby resists

Sophia Werbo, '23

“Away”

When I die I hope that those after me remember
I hope they see me through the pieces I left behind
The only husk I leave is my body
The only empty thing I leave is my house
Pieces and pieces and pieces of my soul are placed and hidden away
Even now as I breathe and my heart beats and I write
I am placing so carefully a piece of me

Estella Griffin, ’21

“An Object’s Love”

The Way of the World
Is to give love
And to be loved in return
These are not my own words
They have been said time and time again
By those Holier and Wiser
The Sad Truth is
We mistakenly give love to objects
We love and are loved in return
But when giving love to an object
Nothing is Returned
Love and love and love and love but
Silence

Estella Griffin, ’21

“Your Dad”

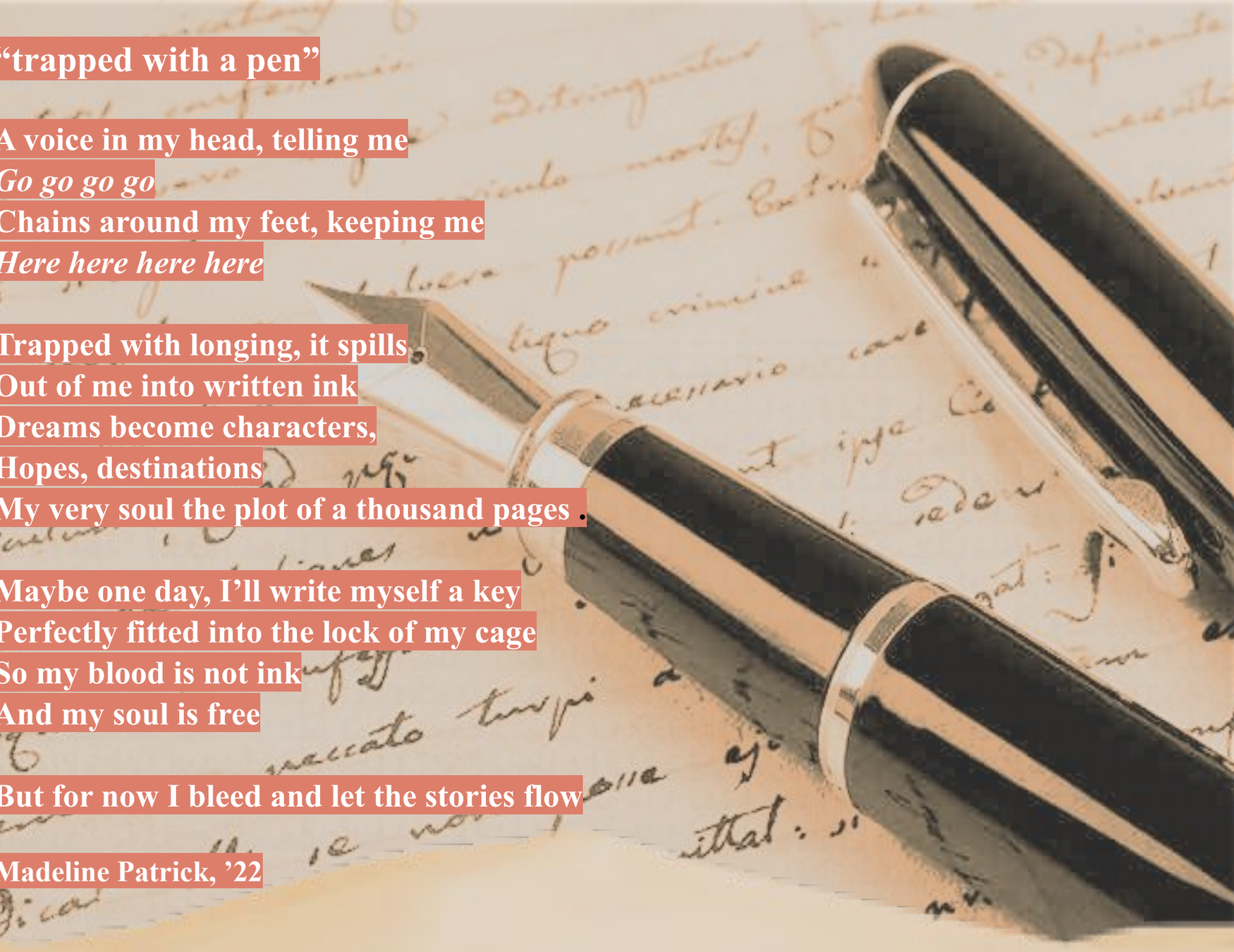
I asked my mother as a child “Who’s your best friend?”
I didn’t understand at the time how
Beautiful her answer was
She said: “Your Dad”
I was exasperated because Daddy was her husband, not her best friend
But now looking back I understand that
She understood
Something most go their entire lives not knowing
Love, true and beautiful love, has a foundation
They built upon that foundation to become one soul in two bodies
My mother loves my father and my father loves my mother
They’re best friends

Estella Griffin, ’21



“Stoic Man”
Does the Stoic Man cry?
If we never see the salt pour out?
A tree in the forest makes a sound when it falls.
Even if no one is around to hear.
But the crying of the Stoic Man is unknown.
If you follow the logic of the tree than somewhere somewhen
He does.
But a tree is not a man.
And a man is not a tree.

Estella Griffin, ’21



“trapped with a pen”

A voice in my head, telling me
Go go go go
Chains around my feet, keeping me
Here here here here

Trapped with longing, it spills.
Out of me into written ink
Dreams become characters,
Hopes, destinations
My very soul the plot of a thousand pages .

Maybe one day, I’ll write myself a key
Perfectly fitted into the lock of my cage
So my blood is not ink
And my soul is free

But for now I bleed and let the stories flow

Madeline Patrick, ’22

“Lost”

I lost myself in the dunes,
Of some unknown desert place
In the sands I found a piece of you
A compass, leading me all the way
home

Madeline Patrick, ’22



"Flowers still blooming"

There are flowers
(Still Blooming)
In cracks and windows
abandoned lots and street cars
the petals fall in my chest
Filling my lungs
Choking my air
(Still Breathing)
Beautiful love given form
In places I'd never think to look

Madeline Patrick, '22

"Waiting"

Quarantined at home

Soon we'll be together again

But until that day

We will just wait patiently

Living each day completely

Alyson Beck, '24

“Crystalline”

Snow – all the poetry of a thousand years surmised in but a

single syllable.

I give you: Snow.

The winds smelt of snow today as I went forth into the world;

biting my ears,

rushing color into my cheeks as though I had been

kissed by an Angel of Winter.

And I felt at peace.

The world grows ever quieter as it snows,

As if the cold forbids any company save the

Young shrieks of blissful believers.

If the flakes did not fall so gently on the brow of the traveler -

Kisses, drifting from heaven from those loved ones

who had gone before -

I may be apt to concur.

But I remember my own childhood,

Marked with the outlines of long melted snow angels;

My God, as if we could have made such a tender blessing any more lovely.

Take heed, friends, and listen for the crinkle of snow

By your ears as you rush home,

As you lay near bitter

Cold flakes, so eager to draw near your own warmth,

And consider yourself unfathomably lucky to have experienced such beautiful poetry as Snow.

I smell snow in the winds.

Will you too hear its call?

Anna Wendel, ’21

“Perfect Ands”

Soft talking,

Slowing music,

Repetition,

Smiles just for one.

New experiences,

Far away precipitation,

Premonitions and futures,

Checkmarks in lined up boxes.

Percents and

Lamps and

Flaky salt and

Whiteboard words.

Crisp, clean paper

With clicking pens and

Lilting accents

Guessing correctly.

Patterns

Or chaos

Or subtle differences

Or total acceptance.

Any and all and

None at the exact same

Completely different time.

Ashley Rosica, ’22

“Up to You”

Hear me out.

I know I wasn’t

Supposed
To end up here
But what could it hurt
If I were to stay?

Not much
But maybe the decisions
Are solely up to you
So I’ll yield.

Don’t worry, I’ll yield.

Ashley Rosica, ’22

“Cento Poem”

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

What will my story be?
Sometimes all I did all day was just wander around in my mind.
I think what an amazing world this would be if we all danced everywhere we went.
It's the suddenness of life changing in an instant that makes me anxious when I sleep and makes me tell myself to breathe when I'm awake.
We never know how long we have. were never guaranteed tomorrow I could die right now, right here.
Everyone has a moment in history which belongs particularly to him.
As scary as it is to go after your dreams, it's even scarier not too.
If you walk away don't come back. you don't get to do that and come back.
We don't ever leave the old world behind. We just create a new one.
It's the experience that the people who are most afraid are the ones who hide behind mean and threatening words.
Everyone in life is a stranger and that includes me.
We can't fight another person's battle, no matter how much we want to.
You might not want to burn your Bridges when you're standing on an island.
I want you to know I'm rooting for you sometimes we need to hear that even from a stranger.
You can't stop living.

Kendall Gayton, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.



Landscape, 1979

Minol Araki, Japanese, 1928 - 2010

All you can see are the mountains, sea, and the sky
The mountain tops disappearing behind the cold, cloudy mist
The winter weather is setting in
Soon the snow will engulf the ground

All you can see are the mountains, sea, and the sky
The surrounding waters reflect the mountains
And bring life to all that inhabits
The waters will turn to ice if the winter becomes too frigid

All you can see are the mountains, sea, and the sky
How the cold has left a dull haze
And there is no person in sight
For they will come back once the warm weather succeeds

Grace Scotto, ’24

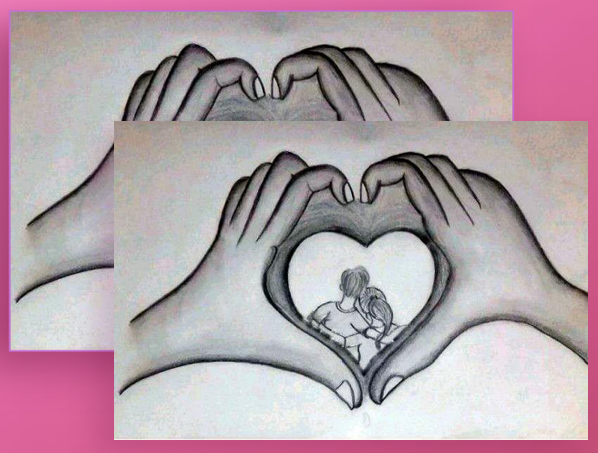
“Cento Poem”

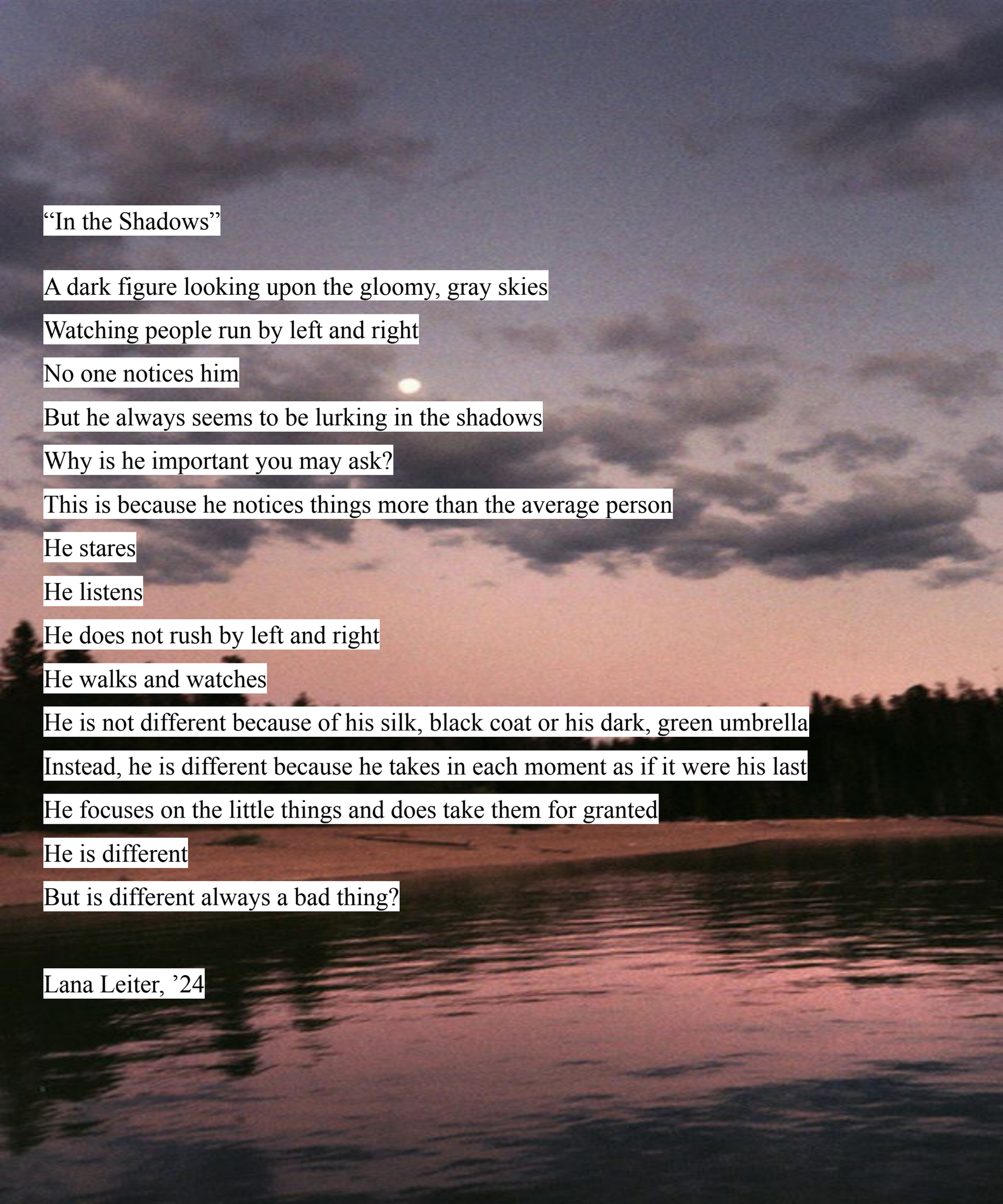
Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

The universe took its time on you.
You’re fearless.
You are the only you there is.
You can’t stop living.
It’s easy to give everyone what they want,
This belongs to you.
Life is too short to judge others.
Nice is different than good.
Have courage and be kind.
It's easy to lose track of yourself,
I’d rather not lose me.
So value your life.
Never stop caring about the little things.
Good luck to you, you’re on your own.
It’s a great big world out there.

Anna Racz, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.





“In the Shadows”

A dark figure looking upon the gloomy, gray skies
Watching people run by left and right
No one notices him
But he always seems to be lurking in the shadows
Why is he important you may ask?
This is because he notices things more than the average person
He stares
He listens
He does not rush by left and right
He walks and watches
He is not different because of his silk, black coat or his dark, green umbrella
Instead, he is different because he takes in each moment as if it were his last
He focuses on the little things and does take them for granted
He is different
But is different always a bad thing?

Lana Leiter, ’24

“What Makes a Hero?”

Superhero

Strong, Powerful

Flying, Helping, Fighting

Spider-Man, Supergirl, Fauci, Curie

Solving, Curing, Saving

Smart, Brave

Doctor

Sarah Barats, ’24

Between rounds

The anxiety ridden room

Will the gamblers lose all their money?

Or will they come home with some more money to gamble

The scared boxers wondering if they will get some more scars on their face

The sound of the bell tells the boxers it’s time

The sight of blood and sweat is gruesome for some, but normal to the others

The boxers give it their all fighting for their pride

Both boxers are getting tired, but need to keep going

The judge anxious to see which hand he will be raising by the end of this

The stakes for everyone are high

Julia Mack, ’24

Cento Poems

Happy

She's not happy

She just seemed very sad

Pretty strong

The wind is so strong

So strong that tears sting your eyes like a perfect storm

Stupid

No, por supuesto que no

I'm not stupid

Tired

Nothing

I'm just tired

Angry

One minute she's angry

The next she's making a joke

Nicolina Macolino, '24

Hopeless

I'm hopeless, broken

Because hearts get broken

Antidote

'Cause there's no antidote for this curse

Oh what's it waiting for

Dying

I feel like dying

It was months and months of back and forth

She's helped me so much,

Ticking away the moments that make a dull day

That's when I could finally breathe

Loving you's the antidote

I'm not ever going back

Happy

I'm happy

Nicolina Macolino, '24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

“Sad Empty House”

As I fish memories come flooding back; I become trapped in my own lonely thoughts.

I try not to look back at the sad empty house,

I hear her laugh in my head as if she’s right here on the boat with me.

But…she’s not.

I close my eyes; it only makes it worse

I feel her hands as she wraps them around my neck; dancing to the slow music.

My fishing pole tugs on me… I let it go.

Fishing is the only thing that makes me happy yet; I don’t feel happy.

I feel empty…

Exactly like the sad empty house.

Maddie McCarthy ‘24

“*Holding Up the Universe* Cento”

There is something wrong with me

I know what it’s like

We’re all weird and damaged in our own way, you’re not the only one

You’re definitely not alone

You just keep on dancing

People can be great but they can also be lousy

Life is too short to judge others

After a while, you learn to ignore the names people call you and just trust who you are

It’s about the important things, like the way their face lights up when they laugh

I really don’t care what people think of me because I believe in myself and I know that things are going to be okay

I know I made a lot of mistakes, but I don’t regret making any of them because if I haven’t had made them, I wouldn’t have learned how to makes things right

You're your problem and you’re also your solution

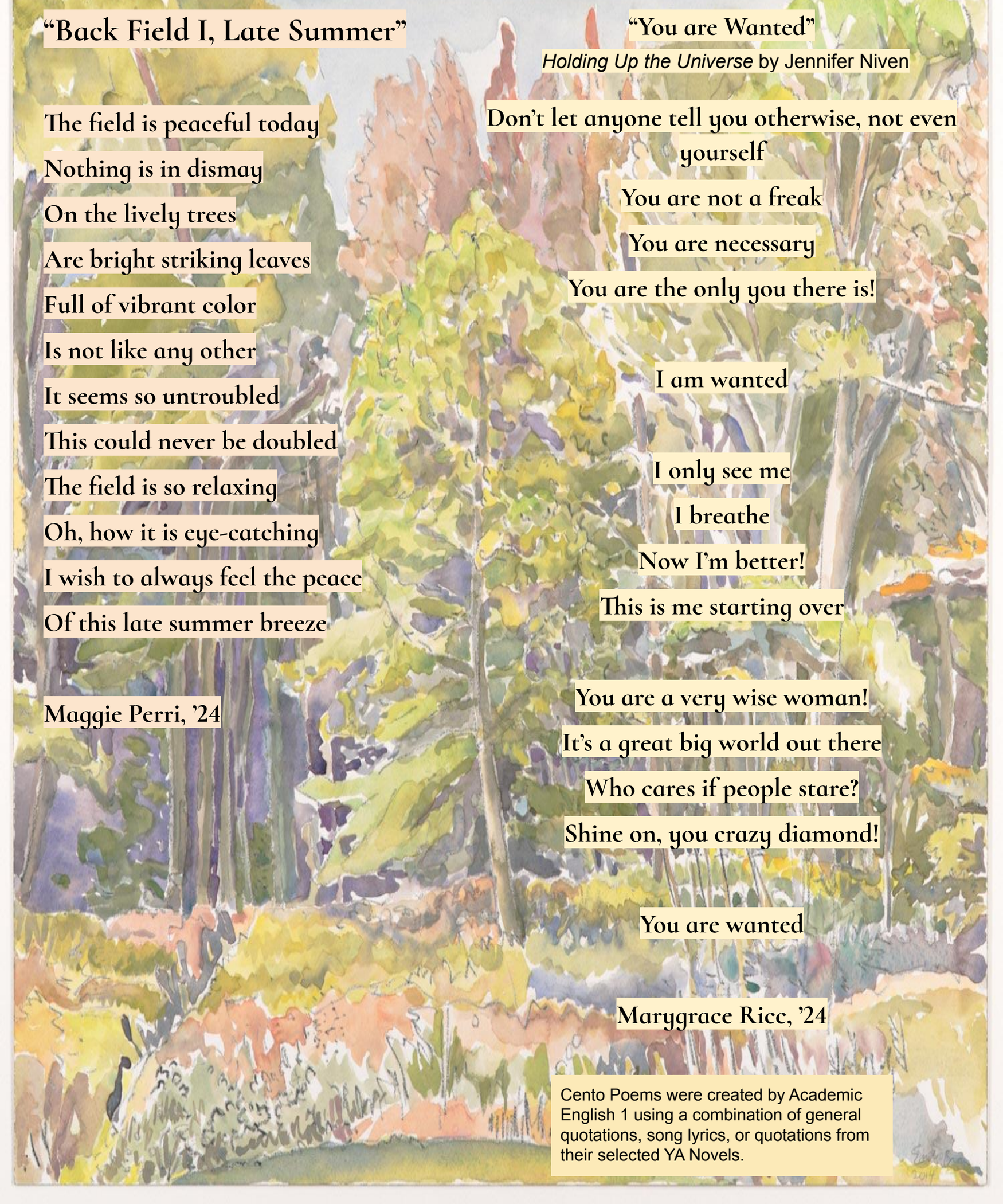
Spend a little more time trying to make something of yourself and a little less time trying to impress people

You are wanted

What will my story be?

Gabriella McIntyre, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.



“Back Field I, Late Summer”

The field is peaceful today
Nothing is in dismay
On the lively trees
Are bright striking leaves
Full of vibrant color
Is not like any other
It seems so untroubled
This could never be doubled
The field is so relaxing
Oh, how it is eye-catching
I wish to always feel the peace
Of this late summer breeze

Maggie Perri, ’24

“You are Wanted”

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise, not even yourself
You are not a freak
You are necessary
You are the only you there is!

I am wanted

I only see me
I breathe
Now I’m better!
This is me starting over

You are a very wise woman!
It’s a great big world out there
Who cares if people stare?
Shine on, you crazy diamond!

You are wanted

Marygrace Ricc, ’24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

“Confession Song”

I love your dogs,

But that’s not why I sneak into your house to pet them when I’m there.

You’ll never see this,

But maybe it’ll come in handy one day.

My friends know your name,

But I’ll never get the chance to make in-person introductions.

You saw me months ago and I made fun of your sunglasses,

But I didn’t do it because you looked stupid, even though it was dark out.

Ashley Rosica, ’22



“On edge”

The power of love is overwhelming

Each of us must let go of all that is within us

To give ourselves fully to another

It will wait until there is an ending

As the lying begins, so does mistrust

One takes time to recover

The bond stays as life awaits

Each must forget past times

God speaks from heaven's gate

To inform us that it is not our prime

Dillan Smith, ’23

“Conversations in a Darkened Room”

I don’t have the words to begin this,

But it doesn’t matter because they may not make it to you anyway.

Your mom has your ring now.

I know I want you to know that, at least.

People were angry for you.

We never spoke before this,

But I find myself talking to you a lot now.

Ashley Rosica ‘22

“Ode to Mom and Dad “

How blessed am I to have such special parents.

You are the true embodiment of the word “role model.”

You have sacrificed so much for me for which I am forever grateful

You are committed to each other, showing me the true definition of marriage.

Because of your values and actions I am who I am today

Because of your strong faith, I love my Catholic faith that permeates my life in every way.

Because of your constant love for me, I feel confident in who I am today.

“Thank you” mom and dad.

Grace Matwijec, ’21



"Young Woman Seated by a Stream" (Contemplation)

Why is it like this everyday
Why can't my thoughts just go away
I sit here and ponder,
I hope to completely disappear
Why has my life become this way
Nothing to do
Nowhere to escape
With the flowers in hand
How did this fail?
I loved him;
Why didn't he love me back?
As the leaves crackle,
I can't help but think back to that day
The day we truly fell in love
In the beautiful scenery of the garden in my backyard

Abigail Rosenfelt, '24

"Libby Strout"

Libby Strout. I'm amazed by you.

I want you to know I'm rooting for you.

It is never too late to begin our love again.

As long as I hold her hand, she won't vanish before my eyes.

Across the seat, our eyes are holding hands,

And now my heart is nowhere on Earth to be found.

It's a moment. A definite moment.

You can't tell but I'm smiling on the inside.

I want you. I've always wanted you.

If I were the moon, I would want you to be my night.

I'm going to collect all the stars for you so that you can keep them.

Love could be labeled poison and we'd still drink it.

She's the poison I'm dying to drink.

It took every ounce of me not to fall in love.

I realize every word is true.

Julia Hobson, '24



"Cento Poem"

You are the only you there is.
Sometimes we need to hear that,
even from a stranger.
Everyone in my life is a stranger,
and that includes me.

We never know how long we have.
We're never guaranteed tomorrow.
Life is too short to judge others.
Remember this,
You are wanted.

You can't stop living.
So I want you to know I'm rooting for you.
Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, not even yourself.
It's my life and it's now or never.
I want to live while I'm alive.

I believe most people are good.
And I know the smallest voices,
They can make it major.
I watch them grow.
What a wonderful world.

Darby Spencer, '24



Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

People are a distant shadow

Never heard nor seen.

Muted by the sound of the crashing waves,

Distracted by the sail boats sailing.

This is hell on earth.

Monstering mountains covering mankind,

How will we ever be found?

Together we plead, together we fail,

Forever lost, forever unfound.

This is hell on earth.

Anicea Tassone, ’24

“The Garden”

The garden sat in disarray

To housekeeper's forlorn dismay

And over hills of gold and green

Came distant sounds of childsplay.

Alas, the manor could not outweigh

A pasture full of rocks and whey

Disapproving, the maid turn'd round

And left the garden another day.

Ashley Rosica, ’22

“Colors”

A girl,
Simply an amalgam of shapes,
A fusion of limbs

A machine,
Simply a composition of nuts and bolts
A machine without power is of little use

A face,
Simply insignificant and of little purpose,
True power lies within...

A noggin,
In which lies the mechanics for life
Frontal, parietal, temporal and occipital,

A lobe,
Each hemisphere displays our true colors
The colors that express our identity

Those colors displayed only through our surroundings
Those colors can be interpreted in infinite ways
Our intent may not always be conveyed

Abbigail Turco, ’24

Act II: Recreation

Sometimes life places unforeseen obstacles in our path. This can be challenging and frustrating to overcome. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected hurdle in our normal way of life. We had to learn how to be content with the unknown, which is something many people struggle with. We were also faced with isolation and could no longer rely on social interactions for enjoyment. During these calamitous times, we turned to recreational activities to keep us sane and provide us with something to feel normal again amidst the chaos. Perhaps we picked up a new hobby or strengthened our existing skills. Maybe we learned how to play an instrument, started jogging more frequently, or picked up a new book. These types of activities helped our time in isolation become less monotonous and despairing. We can still practice these hobbies and use the new skills we learned when life returns to normal. There is no doubt that we have experienced troubling times, but we should applaud ourselves for overcoming these challenges. The recreational activities we turned to help take care of our mental health and remind us that life is what we make it. If we maintain a positive attitude and find ways to keep ourselves satisfied, we can find happiness during the most discouraging times.

Erin McFadden, '22



Meredith Glunz, ’23
Sophomore Winner of Collage Contest

Much To Do About Something
Quintessence 2021

What did you do for fun during quarantine? New TV show, book, music, hobby?

One cool thing I did was learning the electric guitar over the summer! (Paige Veneziale, ’23)

==========

I spent quite a bit of much needed time with my kids during quarantine; they are at a great age to observe them grow and develop. (Mrs. Bedrosian)

=======

I started running and, later in May, I signed myself up for a virtual 10k in July. Throughout my time preparing for it, running helped me keep a routine and give myself some time to think and have “Lauren Time”. Most people dread to run, but after finding the right Spotify playlist and got used to running, I found it an award and the best part of my day! When running, I got to look around and enjoy the nature around me and it felt peaceful. Quarantine has changed me for the better by having a girl hate running to loving it and hating to miss it! (Lauren Abbamont, ’23)

==========

I re-did my whole room. I redid my closet, painted my room, got a new desk, and decorated it differently…. (Allison Ginnetti, ’23)

==========

I started learning how to speak Dutch, and I got back into reading more. (Hannah Buckleman, ’23)

==========

We did family basement parties. Where we would decorate the basement really well and then dance, eat and watch movies. (Abigail Turco, ’24)

==========

Nope I just watched tiktoks all day. (Lauren Luca, ’24)

==========

My younger sister (a future gem!) and I *attempted* at playing tennis, though I may or may not have hit my neighbor's car! I also listened to a lot of audiobooks and music which was very relaxing. (Meredith Glunz, ‘23)

==========

I bought a bike and began riding neighborhood trails daily throughout the summer; my four year old son and I have been bonding over building Legos (everything form 35 piece sets to 1000+ piece sets); weekly Family Quizzo tournaments via ZOOM-where each week a different family member hosted. (Mrs. Carr)

What did you do for fun during quarantine? New TV show, book, music, hobby?

My family and I played a lot of board games together, and I spent a lot of time knitting and playing piano! (Grace Matwijec, '21)

========

I watched Outer Banks, Nurse Ratched, The Social Dilemma, and various documentaries. I read some books on feminism and psychology and spent valuable time with myself and my parents. I became more consistent with working out and being more active, and cleared up my skin. I learned to drink more water, as well. (Lizzy Mimm, ’21)

==========

I used to write all the time when I was in middle school, but when I got to high school my creative writing reserves dried up. Being home with all of these new experiences and emotions have given my hands the fuel they needed to write. This time not for school but for myself. (Kate Abdalla, ’22)

=========

During quarantine for fun i started weight lifting. It really made me happier and it was just something to fill the time! (Brooke May, ’22)

==========

For my birthday, I got some equipment and started recording and mixing. I had always wanted to get my songs recorded so I figured why not do it myself? I plan to release music as an independent artist sometime soon, but I am currently trying to hone in on my mixing skills to get my tracks to sound the way I like them. Quarantine allowed me to develop a new hobby, refine my past skills, and set new goals. (Erin McFadden, ’22)

==========

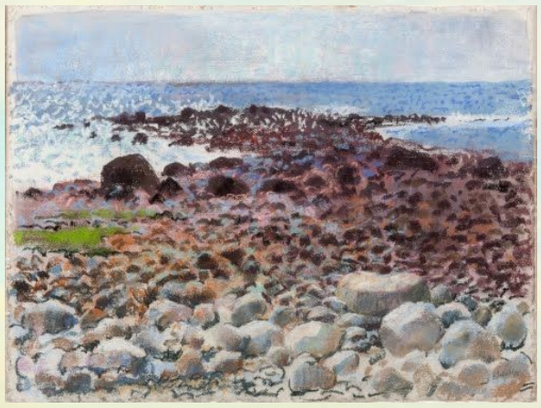
During quarantine me and my family played games, did dress up dinners, watched movies, and cooked and baked a lot of new things. I myself picked up new hobbies like jewelry making, diamond paintings, resin art, clay crafts, and watched a lot of new shows and movies. (Alessia Baricelli, ’21)

========

I painted often and listened to a lot of new music. I also go on drives a lot just to get out of the house and play music in my car. (Jaclyn McDade, ’22)

========

I developed my baking skills and now I bake all the time. I reverted back to listening to the artists I listened to a couple years ago just to try to remember what it was like before this year happened. I also got a job to keep me busy. (Jamie Hannigan, ’22)



“Cape Ann Beach”

Take me back to the beach again
Where the salty air smacks your face from the strong oceans core
The waves pulling back and forth coming in for more
The rocks line the cove sharp and slick
The sky a bright star shining in the distance
Birds screech as more people dig their chairs into the warm sand
Smiles spread across faces as they dart to the water
Seaweed wraps across the land like an octopus' tentacles
Families gather to peer out at the scenery
As I lay in my bed dreaming about the mystical ocean
Take me back I beg

Olivia Berkey, ’24

“Bright Lights in New York”

Bright lights as I sit on my rooftop,
Looking down at the busy streets,
Families rushing home, nonstop,
To then go and turn on their lights,
Bright lights.
Cool night breeze as I sip my soda pop,
Sirens blair, as taxis speed down the street on one of New York's brightest nights,
Not a single light making me want to drop,
Instead dancing to my favorite song on these rooftops,
Bright lights.

Annalise Aballa, ’24

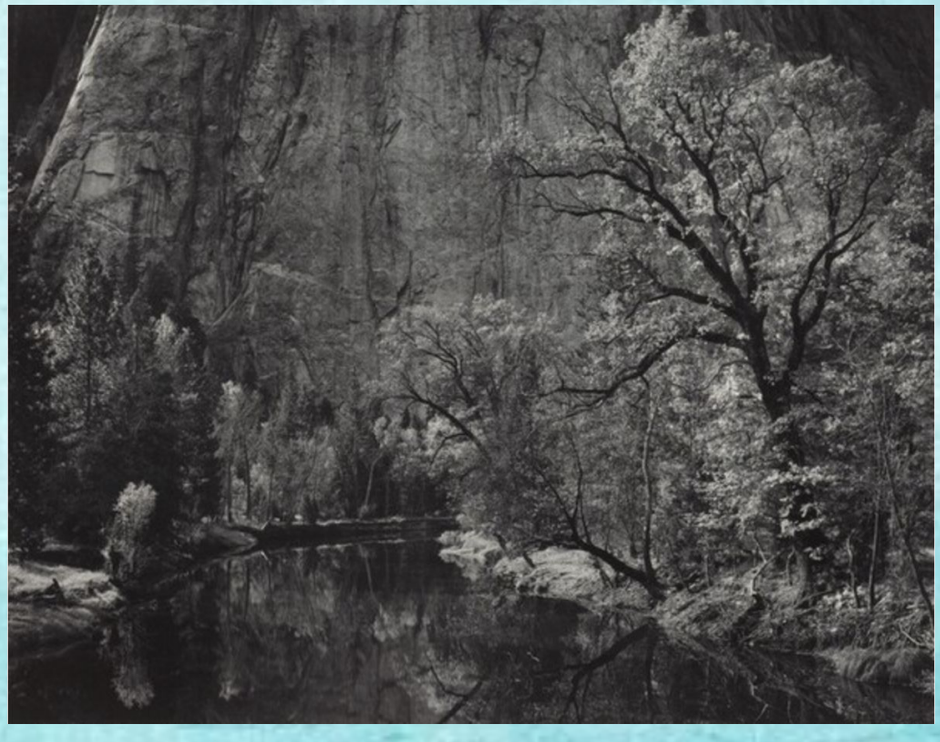
"This Scenic Place"

The steady stream flowed no matter the day,
the lovely trees gently swayed continually,
the massive cliff stood tall through the roughest of the storms.

Comfort, relaxation, and ease came with visiting this scenic place.
When one visited the world stopped around them.
The only thing that was moving was,
the sparkly stream which breezily flowed,
and the towering trees that danced with the wind.

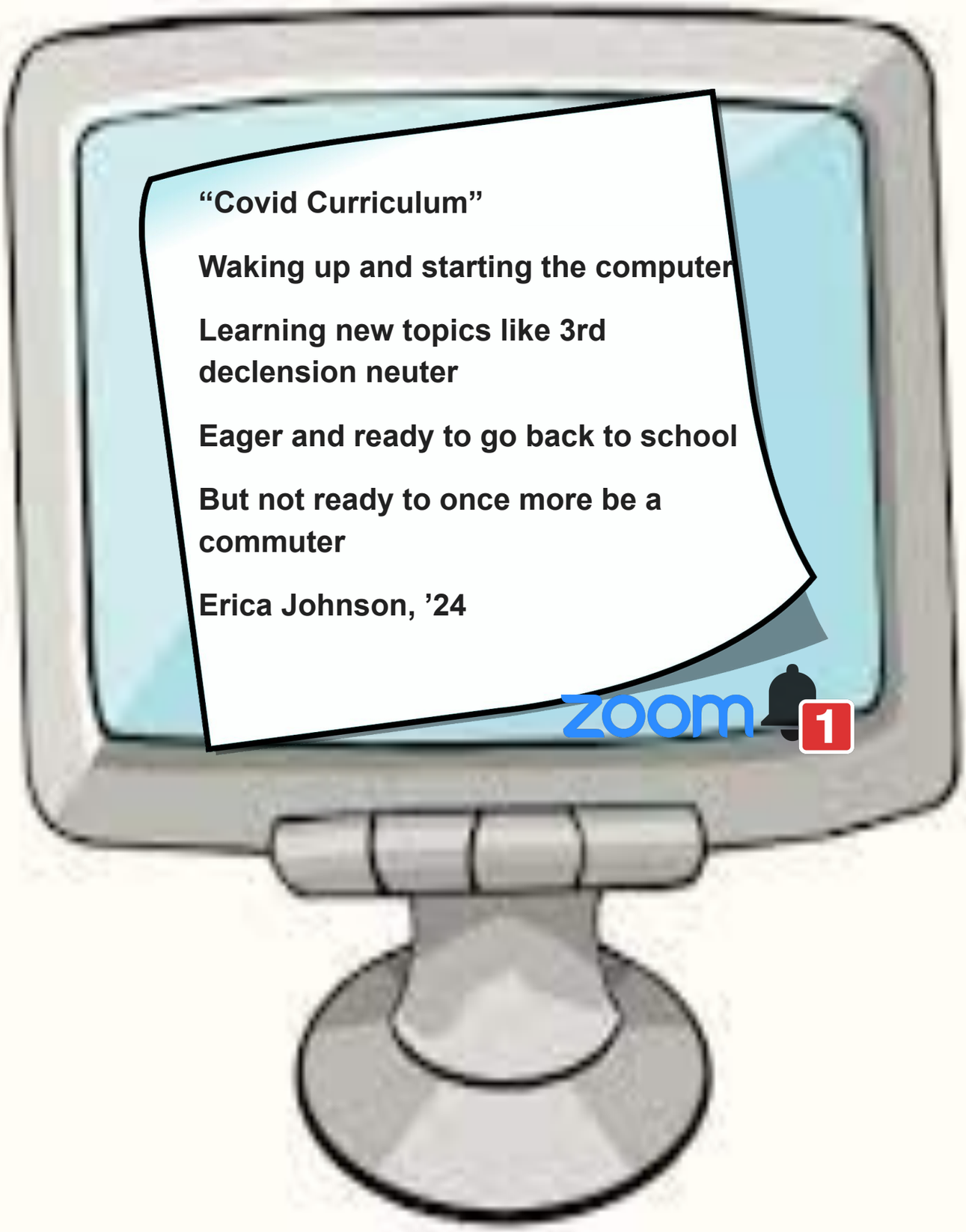
Like all good things, it must come to an end,
so, when one got up and began to ascend,
a memory of this scenic place,
will be forever ingrained in case,
one ever needed to return to this scenic place.

Abby Gillespie, '24





Shelby Brodhead, ’21


“Covid Curriculum”
Waking up and starting the computer
Learning new topics like 3rd declension neuter
Eager and ready to go back to school
But not ready to once more be a commuter
Erica Johnson, ’24
zoom
1

"Subtle Nods to Not Subtle People"

I live for finding people

Who will automatically turn at the sound of your tears

Who will text you their password for the express reason of "so I wouldn't forget"

Who will reply 28 seconds after you ask about plans

Who will easily and unconditionally say "I love you and I'm so glad we're together right now"

Who will never judge your unconventional taste because they gave you recommendations that fit it last week

Who will commiserate with you when you can't seem to make anything go your way

Who will discuss heavy topics like you're not both 16 and naïve

Who will think about you and say "I would gladly tell you I respect and love you for the rest of our lives"

Ashley Rosica '22

"Ciao"

Italy, a timeless site to see

The bridge, like a tunnel to an endless world of beauty

Surrounded by onlooking tourists and locals

The view like a painting of a place to perfect to exist

The calm and gentle water disrupted by the paddle of an oncoming gondolas

Italy, a timeless site to see

Big buildings with windows for the perfect view

A nice stroll along the edge or on top the bridge

Few people tending to their work, they can't see the beauty before them

This moment will never be again so take in ever second

Time stops and all you think is

Italy, a timeless site to see

Arrivederci

Isabella Clark, '24

"Moonrise"

The moon rises over lonely mountains
All is calm and all is dark but the bright white moon
There is a crisp breeze in this mountainous outside
For there are no clouds nearby, they all fell aside
The moon glows, for Yosemite is off tomorrow
With all the stars gone, they do not have to worry about all the shadows
The sense of peace fills the mountain range, which is oddly strange
This place seems mysterious for a quick change
While the mountains soar high one last time
I want to touch the top of the sky

Sarah Warunek, '24



Moonrise from Glacier Point, Yosemite National Park
Ansel Adams

Obtained from Archives from Philadelphia Museum

"Storm"

The striking storm was about to start
The sunlight barely peaking through
As everyone begins follow home
The storm will still continue to grow.

The ocean blue water begins to blow
As the storm begins to show
The boats begin to come to shore
There could have been more

I look up at the sky
I see the buildings that shelter us all
The smoke fogs the air
I really wished they cared

Lauren Luca, '24

“The Red Umbrella”

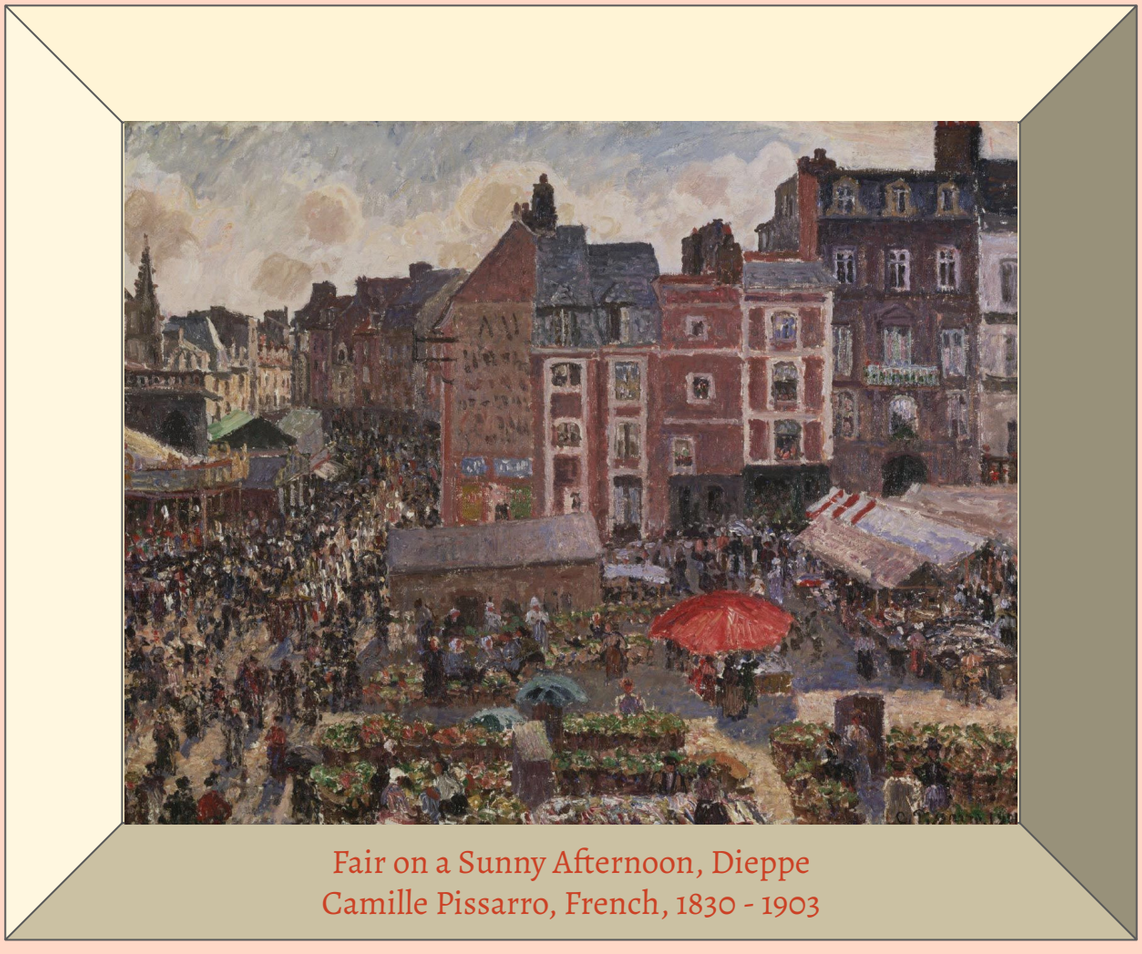
People flood the streets
Clouds soar above
Providing some shade from the sun

Carousel in the corner
Calling the children
Allowing the parents to stray
Although it's just a quick get away

Tall towers lead them down the aisle
Farmers’ market full
Hoping to fulfill their desires

Blurred but bright
They make their way down
Each their own red umbrella

Madeleine Todd, ‘24



Fair on a Sunny Afternoon, Dieppe
Camille Pissarro, French, 1830 - 1903



"Cento Poem"

It's her
I catch a whiff of something- *Sunshine*
It smells like her. *Sunshine*
I can see beauty
I know that you're scared
because hearts get broken

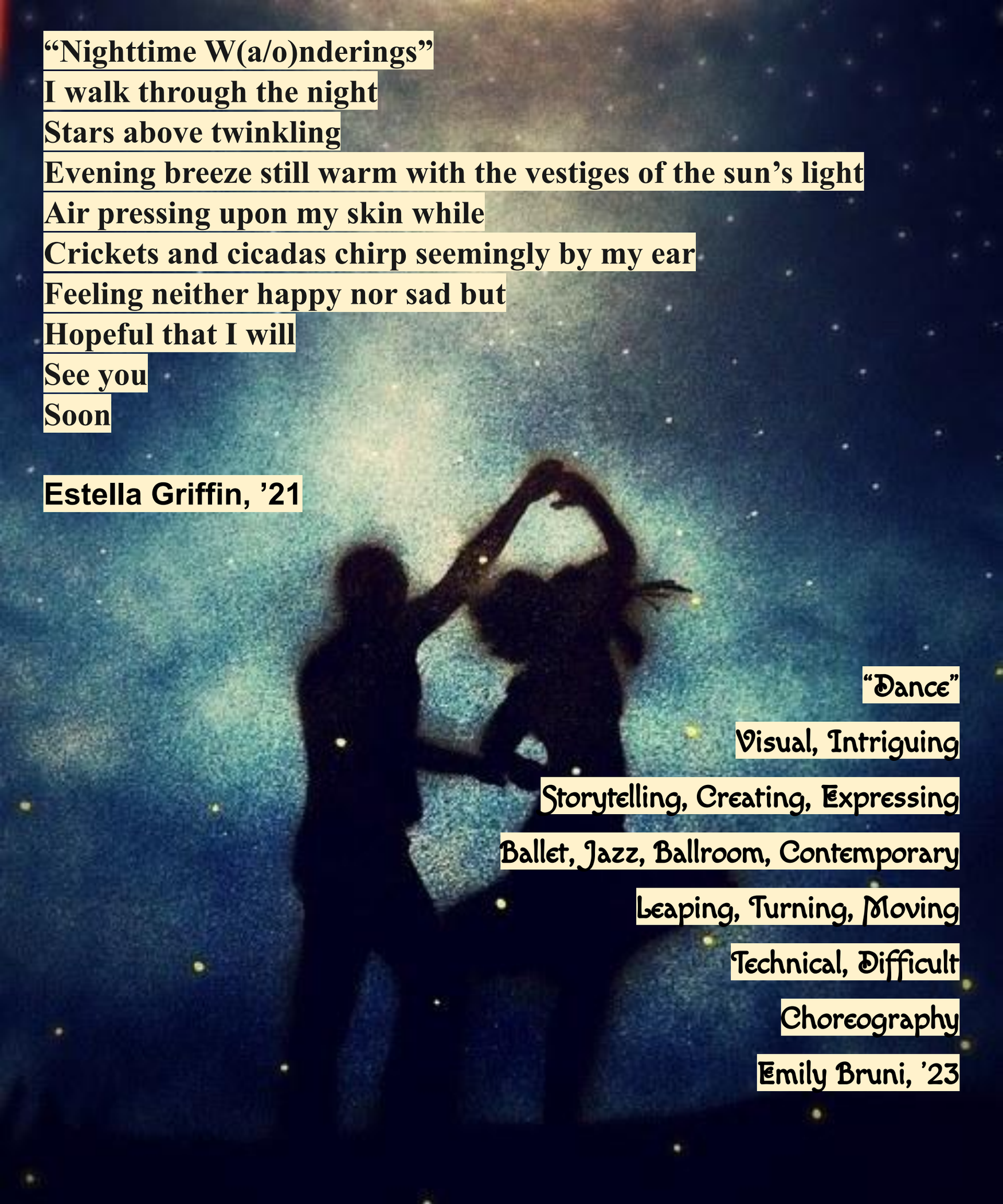
As long as I hold her hand,
She won't vanish before my eyes
Maybe this is where we stay
Don't go away
I don't wanna be alone

And I realize every word is true
You need her,
As in you love her
Loving is the antidote,
And i'm hopeless
Take me back to the light

Madeleine Todd, '24

Cento Poem from:

"Golden" by Harry Styles
Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven



“Nighttime W(a/o)nderings”
I walk through the night
Stars above twinkling
Evening breeze still warm with the vestiges of the sun’s light
Air pressing upon my skin while
Crickets and cicadas chirp seemingly by my ear
Feeling neither happy nor sad but
Hopeful that I will
See you
Soon

Estella Griffin, ’21

“Dance”

Visual, Intriguing

Storytelling, Creating, Expressing

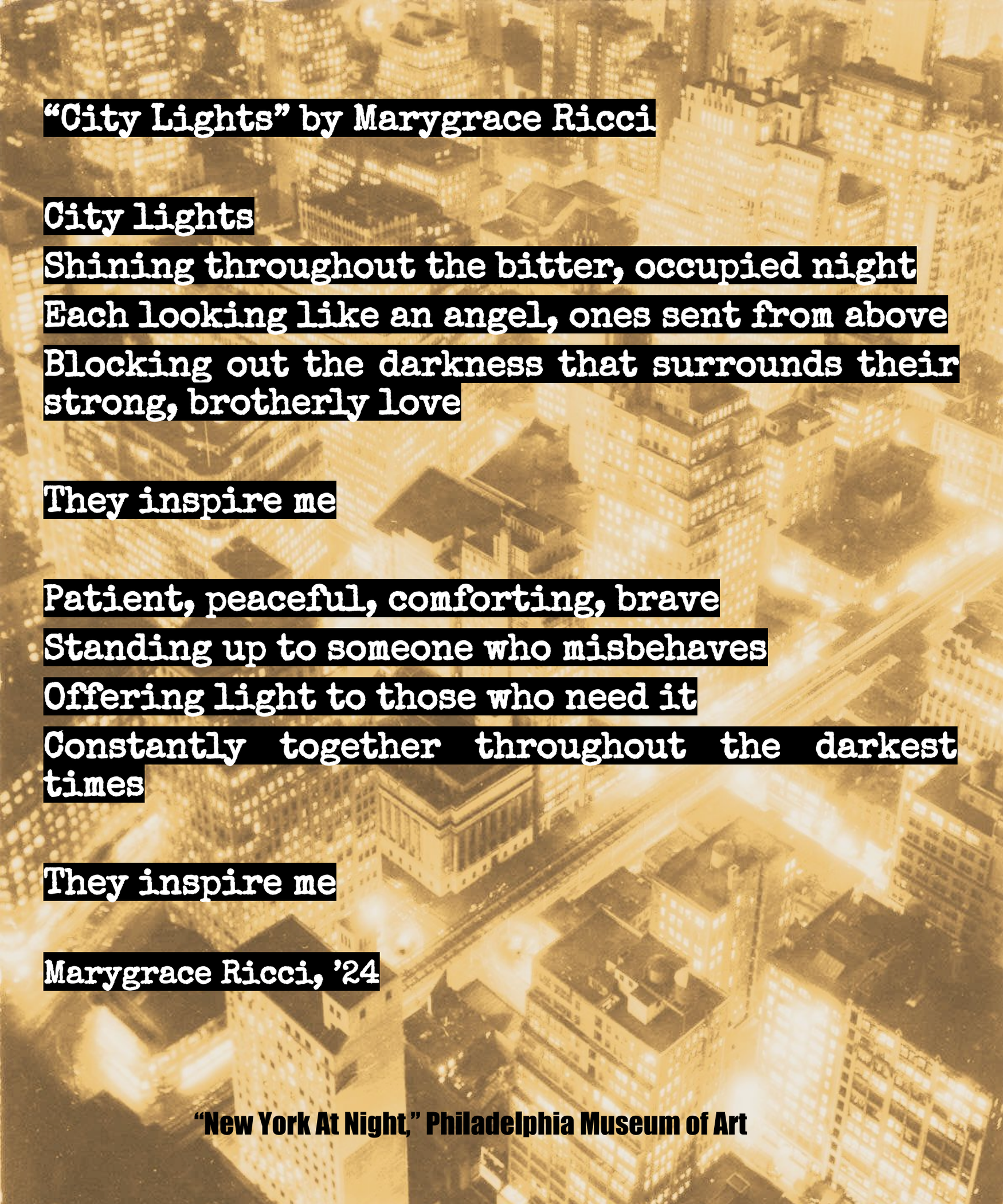
Ballet, Jazz, Ballroom, Contemporary

Leaping, Turning, Moving

Technical, Difficult

Choreography

Emily Bruni, ’23



“City Lights” by Marygrace Ricci

City lights
Shining throughout the bitter, occupied night
Each looking like an angel, ones sent from above
Blocking out the darkness that surrounds their strong, brotherly love

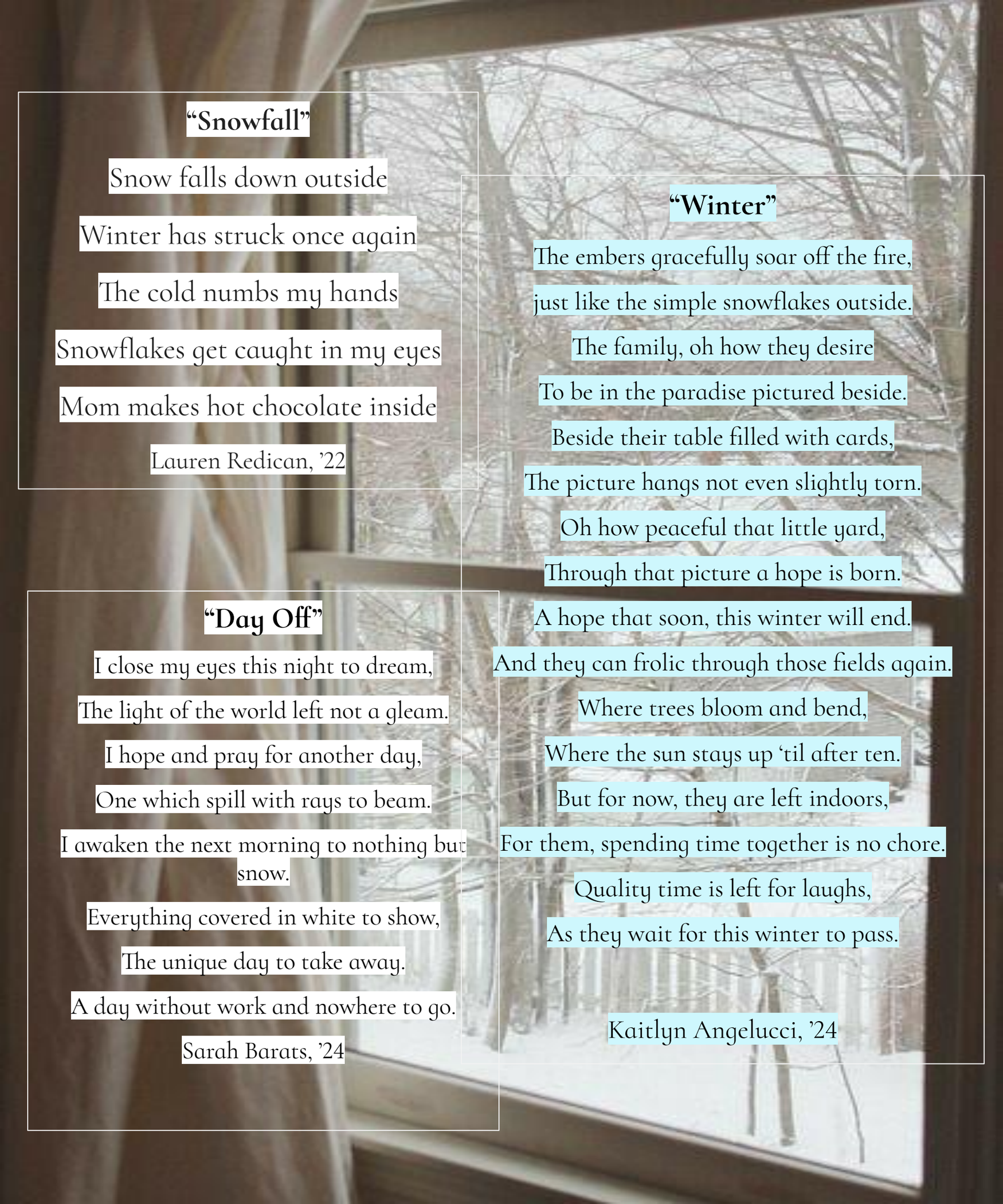
They inspire me

Patient, peaceful, comforting, brave
Standing up to someone who misbehaves
Offering light to those who need it
Constantly together throughout the darkest times

They inspire me

Marygrace Ricci, ’24

“New York At Night,” Philadelphia Museum of Art



“Snowfall”

Snow falls down outside

Winter has struck once again

The cold numbs my hands

Snowflakes get caught in my eyes

Mom makes hot chocolate inside

Lauren Redican, ’22

“Winter”

The embers gracefully soar off the fire,

just like the simple snowflakes outside.

The family, oh how they desire

To be in the paradise pictured beside.

Beside their table filled with cards,

The picture hangs not even slightly torn.

Oh how peaceful that little yard,

Through that picture a hope is born.

A hope that soon, this winter will end.

And they can frolic through those fields again.

Where trees bloom and bend,

Where the sun stays up ‘til after ten.

But for now, they are left indoors,

For them, spending time together is no chore.

Quality time is left for laughs,

As they wait for this winter to pass.

Kaitlyn Angelucci, ’24

“Day Off”

I close my eyes this night to dream,

The light of the world left not a gleam.

I hope and pray for another day,

One which spill with rays to beam.

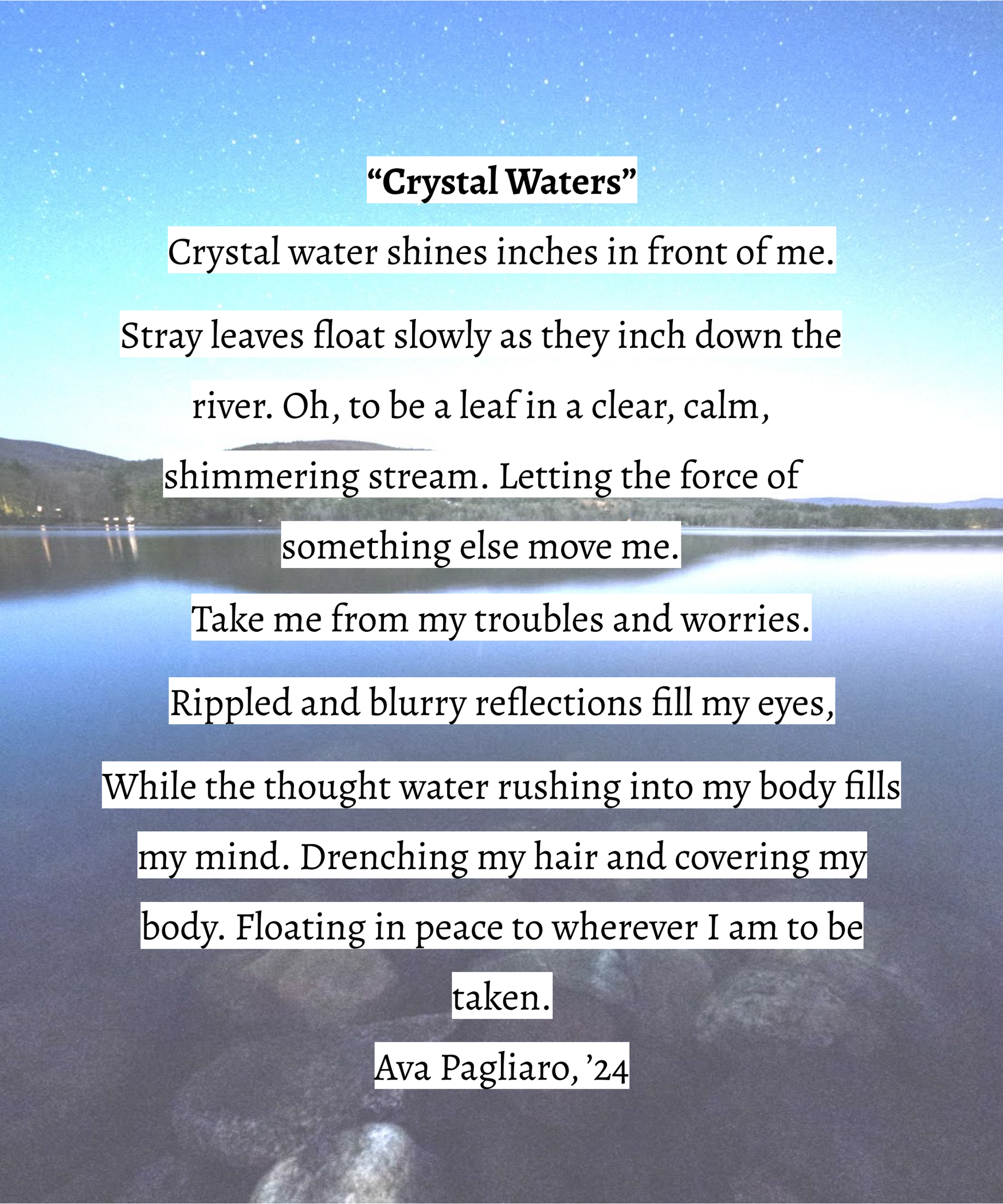
I awaken the next morning to nothing but snow.

Everything covered in white to show,

The unique day to take away.

A day without work and nowhere to go.

Sarah Barats, ’24



“Crystal Waters”

Crystal water shines inches in front of me.

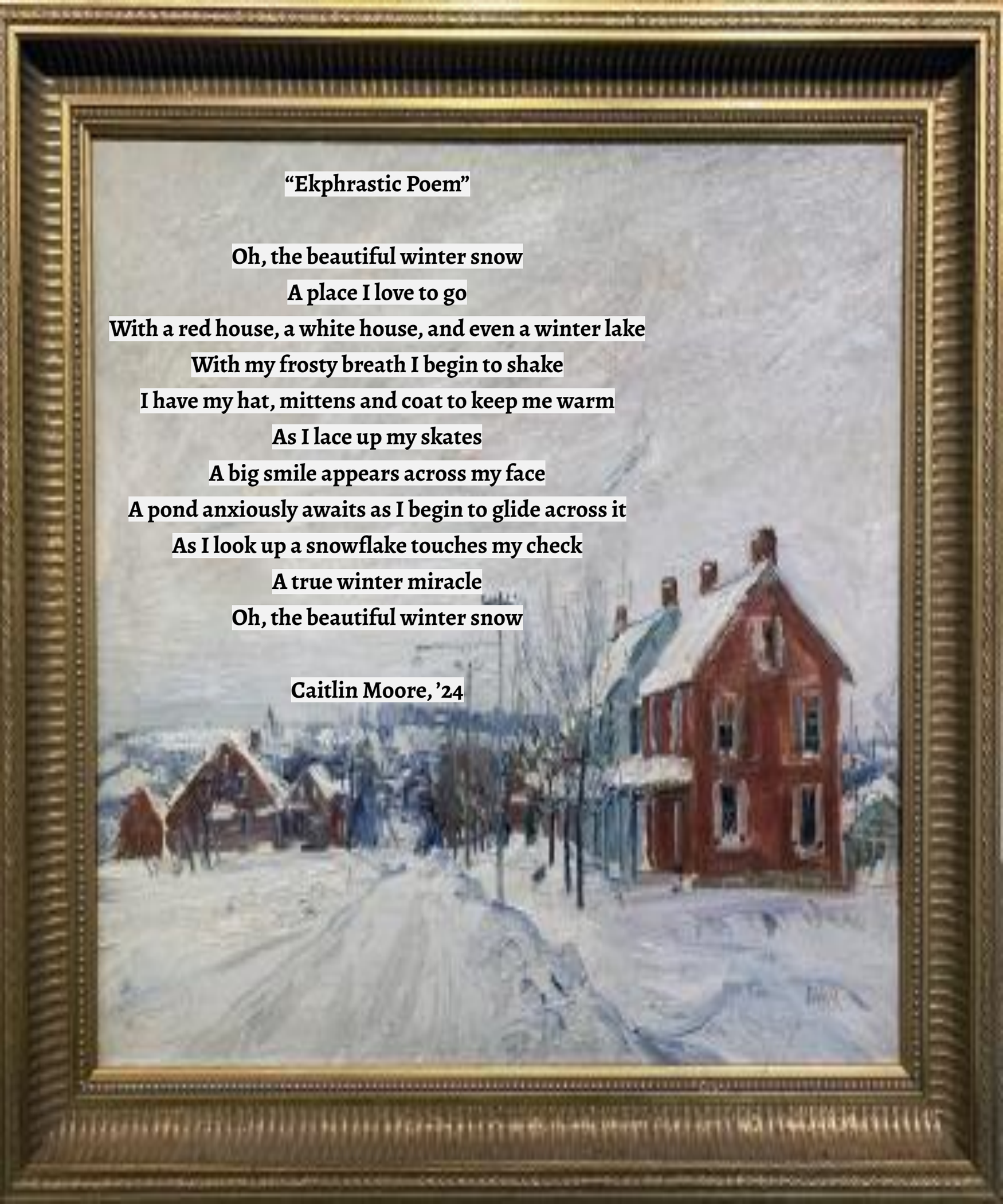
Stray leaves float slowly as they inch down the river. Oh, to be a leaf in a clear, calm, shimmering stream. Letting the force of something else move me.

Take me from my troubles and worries.

Rippled and blurry reflections fill my eyes,

While the thought water rushing into my body fills my mind. Drenching my hair and covering my body. Floating in peace to wherever I am to be taken.

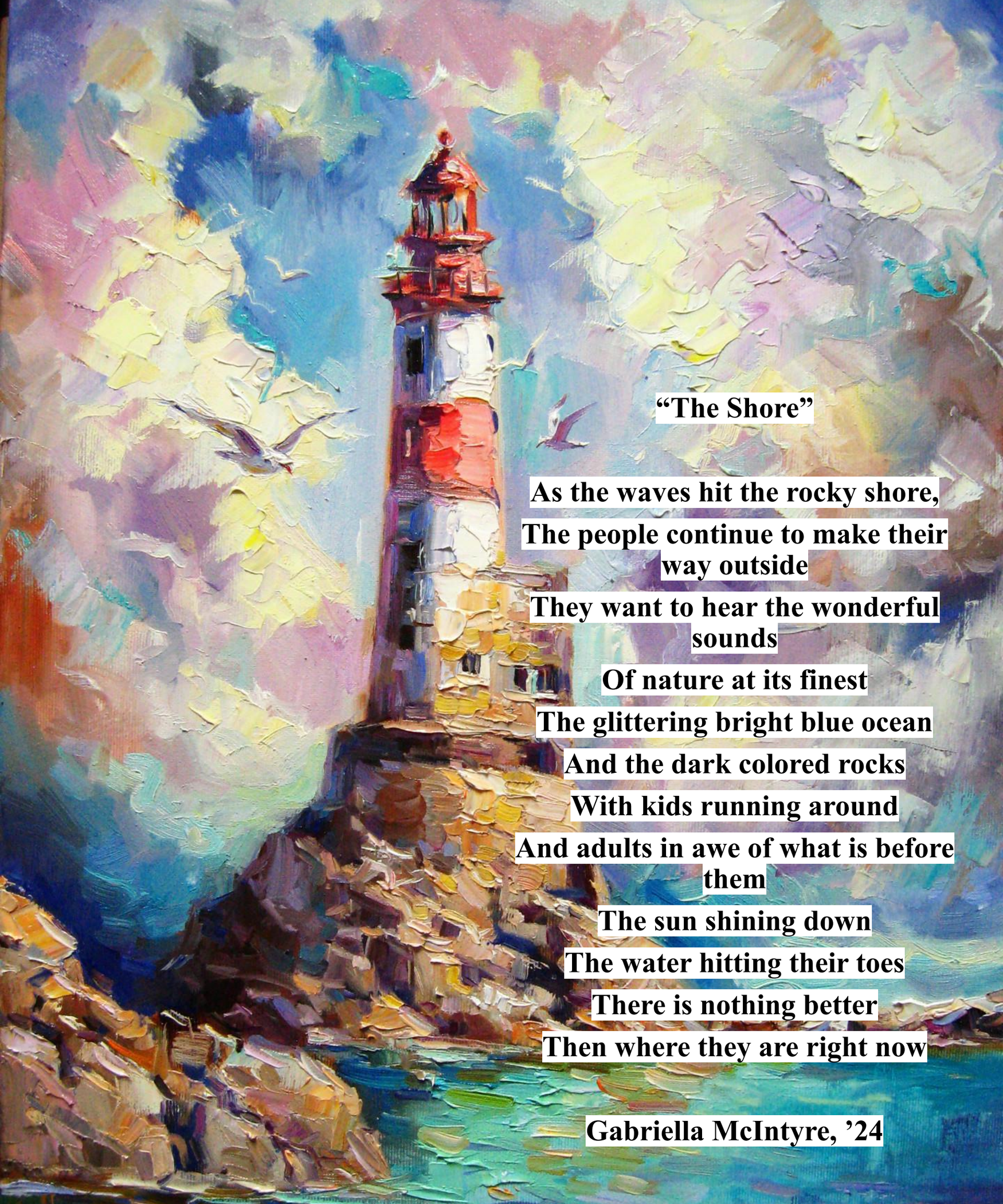
Ava Pagliaro, ’24



“Ekphrastic Poem”

Oh, the beautiful winter snow
A place I love to go
With a red house, a white house, and even a winter lake
With my frosty breath I begin to shake
I have my hat, mittens and coat to keep me warm
As I lace up my skates
A big smile appears across my face
A pond anxiously awaits as I begin to glide across it
As I look up a snowflake touches my check
A true winter miracle
Oh, the beautiful winter snow

Caitlin Moore, ’24



“The Shore”

As the waves hit the rocky shore,
The people continue to make their way outside
They want to hear the wonderful sounds
Of nature at its finest
The glittering bright blue ocean
And the dark colored rocks
With kids running around
And adults in awe of what is before them
The sun shining down
The water hitting their toes
There is nothing better
Then where they are right now

Gabriella McIntyre, ’24

“Rocky Seashore”

I gaze into the dusky blue sky,
As my footprints leave a track behind me.
My feet, tired, and covered in the grainy sand.
The sailboats sway back and forth on the water,
As the bottom of them lay face down, into the depths of the ocean.
I watch as the icy water clashes upon the slippery rocks.
The sound of the waves soothed my soul,
It cleared my conscience, it made my body less tense.
My eyes fixated themselves on the moon,
She peered from the ominous night clouds.
She reflected herself onto the cold, clear ocean.
They danced together.
Always with rhythm, always in perfect sync.
She pulled her back in every time.

Hannah Klingenberg, ‘24



Rocky Seashore
Ivan Konstantinovitsch Aivasovsky, Armenian, 1817 - 1900

This hidden wonderland

With spring green trees

And small critters buzzing like a band

Grasshoppers, butterflies, and bees

A grey wooden bridge

Spread over a Lilypad filled stream

Beyond the trees stands a ridge

Where the sun beams

Where the flowers flourish
And fish dance around in a whirlwind of water

Ones eyes become nourished
By the hidden wonderland.

Sienna Israel, ’24



Japanese Footbridge and the Water Lily Pool, Giverny
Claude Monet, French, 1840 – 1926

“In the City”

On a calm beautiful night in the city

Traffic was chaotic, buildings all light up, the car lights flashing

People trying to get where they need to go

Crazy day for people

Trying to get to work, trying to get home, trying to go shopping for clothes, food, and more

And some just want to roam around the city and explore

Explore the buildings, the people, the lights shinning everywhere, and looking at the beautiful city

Having a nice cup of coffee on warm winter night

Having a coat and gloves to keep warn on a freezing night

The wind blowing the cold breeze

The sky so dark but the lights shining everywhere around it

All the shops open ready for customers

The coffee shops brewing coffee with the jazz music playing

And the beautiful city shining everywhere

Elliana Endrigian, ’24



Dark Basilica by Logan Circle, Philadelphia, 2004

Yvonne Jacquette, American, born 1934

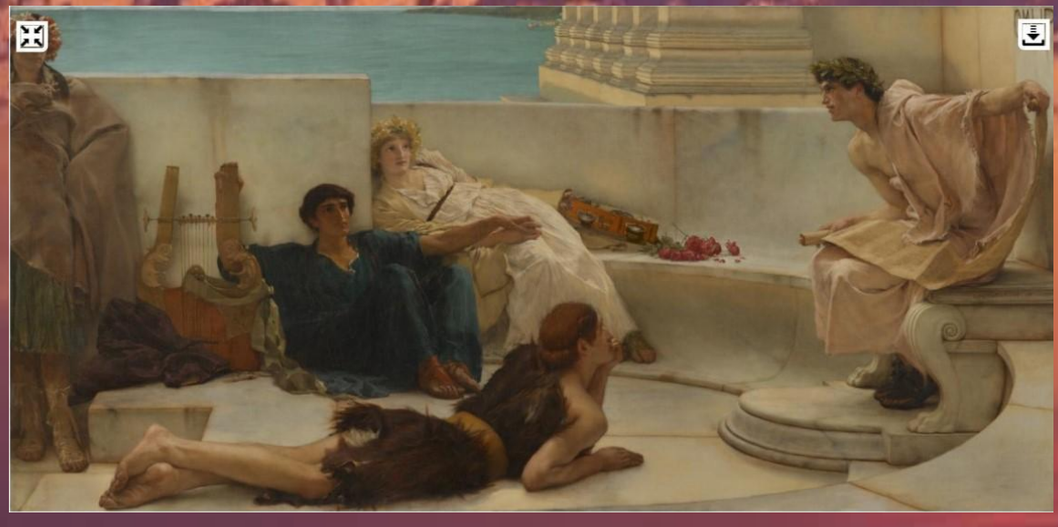
Ekphrastic Poetry: “The Many Stories Homer Tells”

The warm, sunny, summer day,
By the clear, blue, calm waters
All four gazed with excitement for
The many stories Homer tells.

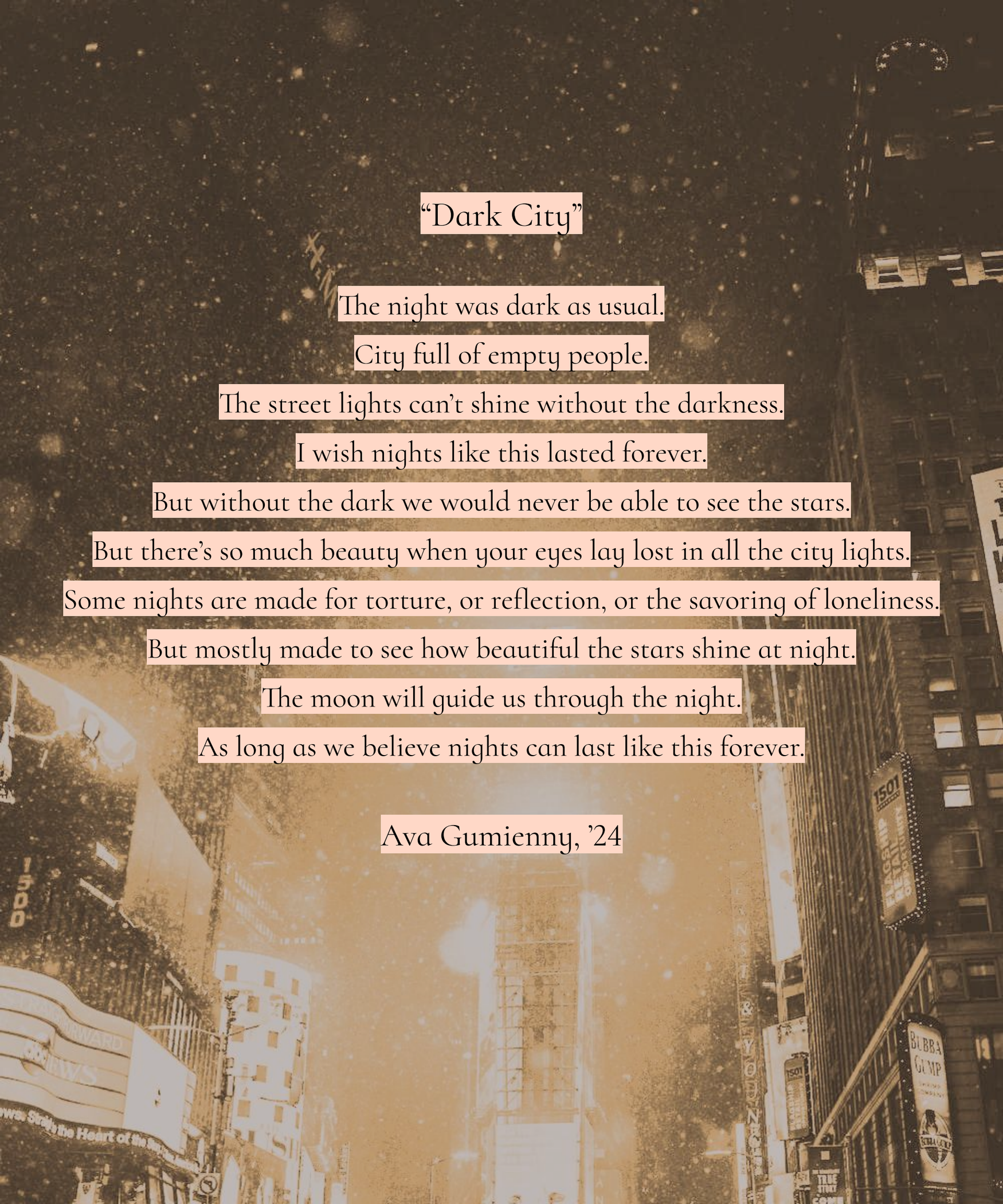
Music surrounds them
With harps and tambourines,
Their minds dance while they listen to
The many stories Homer tells.

The red roses sit inertly on the wall
So bright yet so dull,
We are all listening to
The many stories Homer tells.

Julia Hobson, ’24



“A Reading from Homer” oil painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema



“Dark City”

The night was dark as usual.
City full of empty people.
The street lights can’t shine without the darkness.
I wish nights like this lasted forever.
But without the dark we would never be able to see the stars.
But there’s so much beauty when your eyes lay lost in all the city lights.
Some nights are made for torture, or reflection, or the savoring of loneliness.
But mostly made to see how beautiful the stars shine at night.
The moon will guide us through the night.
As long as we believe nights can last like this forever.

Ava Gumienny, ’24

"Holding Up the Universe Cento Poems"

Imagine it
You're staring up into the dark
I'm feeling pretty lonely today,
I smile so everyone can see
So, I breathe
Without the sky falling,
I feel my soul die a little.
So, Let's go
Miracles can happen every day.
Don't stop living your life.
So, I breathe
And now I'm better.
Once upon a time,
I listen...
I am doing alright.

Ainsley Gondek, '24

Miracles happen everyday
I wait for the panic attack to come
So I breathe
Staring up into the dark
I tell myself to sleep
I grab a pillow and throw it over my ears
My alarm goes off
Happy note
I get to go home one day
And now I'm better
I'm feeling pretty lonely
I feel my soul die a little
I float out of there like I'm full of helium
I smile so everyone can see
I will always love you

Erin Butler, '24

Cento Poems were created by Academic English 1 using a combination of general quotations, song lyrics, or quotations from their selected YA Novels.

“Getaway”

A quick getaway,

To a place far, far away

No masks required

Would for sure be nice and yet,

One can only imagine

Madeline Goldner, ’24

“A Year’s Difference”

A year’s difference.

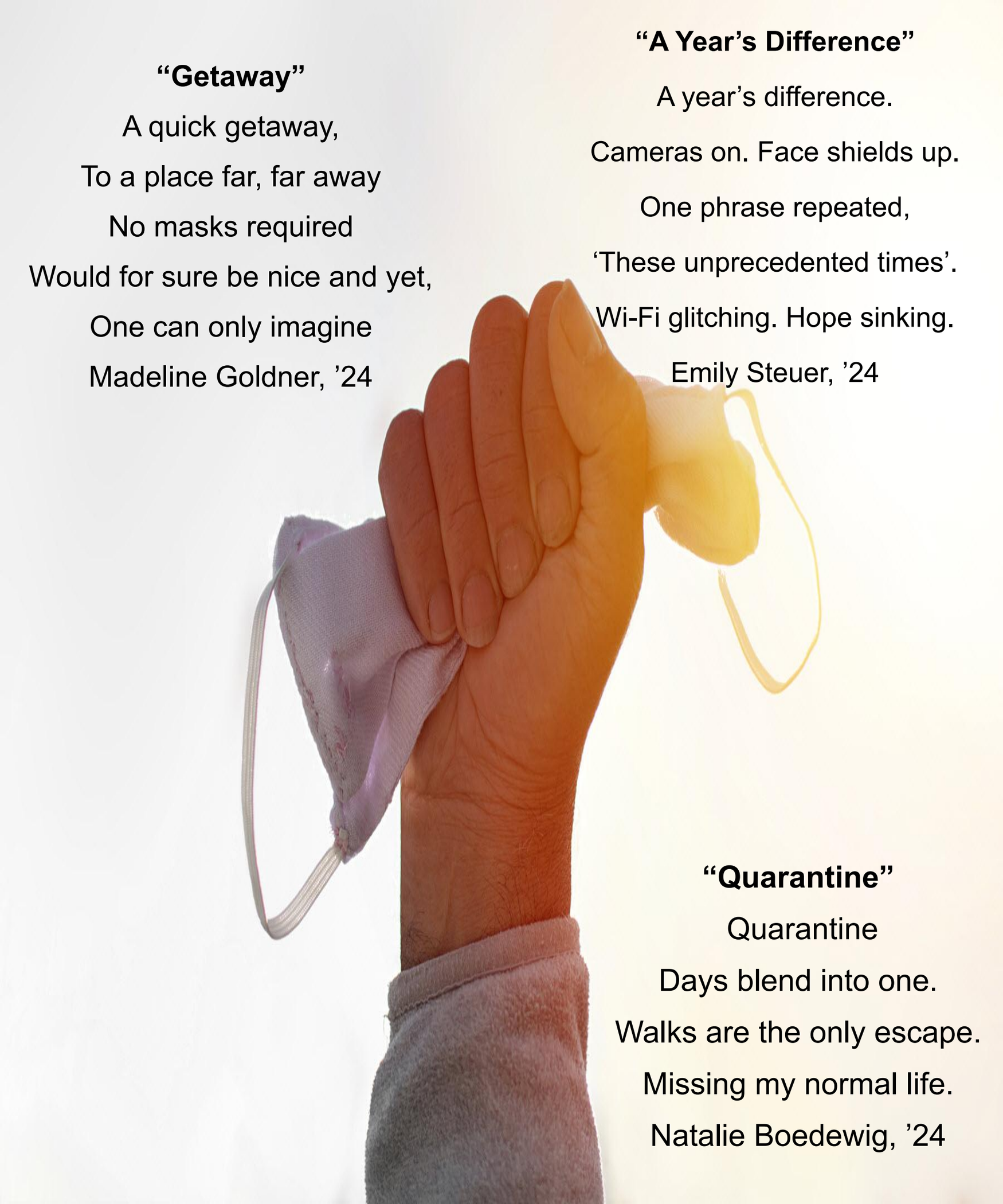
Cameras on. Face shields up.

One phrase repeated,

‘These unprecedented times’.

Wi-Fi glitching. Hope sinking.

Emily Steuer, ’24



“Quarantine”

Quarantine

Days blend into one.

Walks are the only escape.

Missing my normal life.

Natalie Boedewig, ’24



Ava Pagliaro, ’24

“car show”

capsules to the past reflecting sunlight and sporting wheels,
are lined up along the street and deemed oldsmobiles.
ice cream on the pavement melts in the blazing summer sun,
and drips down hands and fingers while children play and run.
antique stores and convenience shops host strange people and objects,
unknown vhs tapes that serve only to perplex.
feedback from old radios that lay on the red shag carpeting,
is almost unheard under the sound of the phone’s ring.
step onto the street again, observe how the night came by,
and settled in for now, as if time seemed to defy.
find the old tunnel, the one someone painted with graffiti,
strange symbols that reflect the stars’ famed glory.
a time when they fought beside the moon and sun against the darkness,
then reclaimed the sky as their eternally divine canvas.

Autumn Andrejczak, ’22

“the art of tarot”

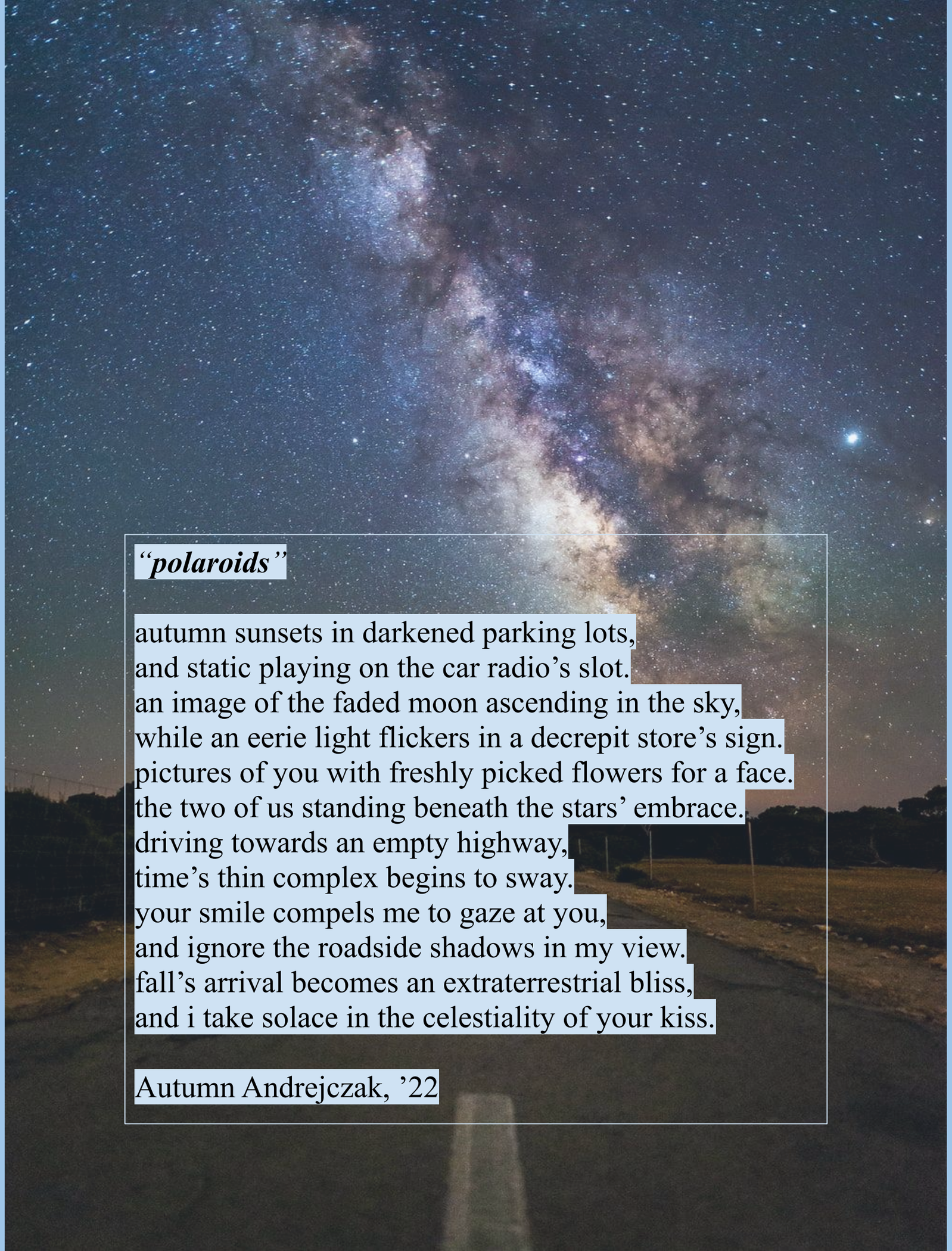
love painted in shimmering palm lines.
the gentle moon’s mirrors are your crystal eyes.
a lost ufo crashes in this desert tonight.
just outside the house of the dreaming psychic,
i hear the crackling of the neon signs,
which act as a beacon for alien kind.
i see the lights that move too quickly to be planes,
as the two of us romantically stargaze.
the desert winds are a gateway for people of shadows.
dark figures take refuge in abandoned trailers.
signs of warning are ignored by nonbelievers of the fall,
as they are ignored by those who lived it.

Autumn Andrejczak, ’22





Shannon Rusnak,'21



“polaroids”

autumn sunsets in darkened parking lots,
and static playing on the car radio’s slot.
an image of the faded moon ascending in the sky,
while an eerie light flickers in a decrepit store’s sign.
pictures of you with freshly picked flowers for a face.
the two of us standing beneath the stars’ embrace.
driving towards an empty highway,
time’s thin complex begins to sway.
your smile compels me to gaze at you,
and ignore the roadside shadows in my view.
fall’s arrival becomes an extraterrestrial bliss,
and i take solace in the celestiality of your kiss.

Autumn Andrejczak, ’22

A Note on Images and Artwork

Artwork created by Villa students is indicated with the student's name and graduation year.

All artwork used to inspire Ekphrastic Poetry was obtained from the Philadelphia Museum of Art digital archives. The title and artist of these works are listed on each slide.

All other images were obtained from Google Images unless otherwise specified.



Quintessence 2021 Staff

Editor In-Chief:

Grace Matwijec

Junior Editors:

Madeline Patrick

Erin McFadden

Apprentice Editors:

Allison DeFriece

Autumn Andrejczak

Staff:

Erin Flatley

Katharine Frain

Estella Griffin

Nicole Lenker

Abby McGrody

Delaney Reynolds

Sophia de Jesus

Moderators:

Ms. McBrinn

Ms. Chirico

Art Department:

Annalise Schuck

Gianna Carradorini

Thank you for reading!