



Indelible

Plaid Magazine
Volume LIX
2021

2021

Plaid Magazine

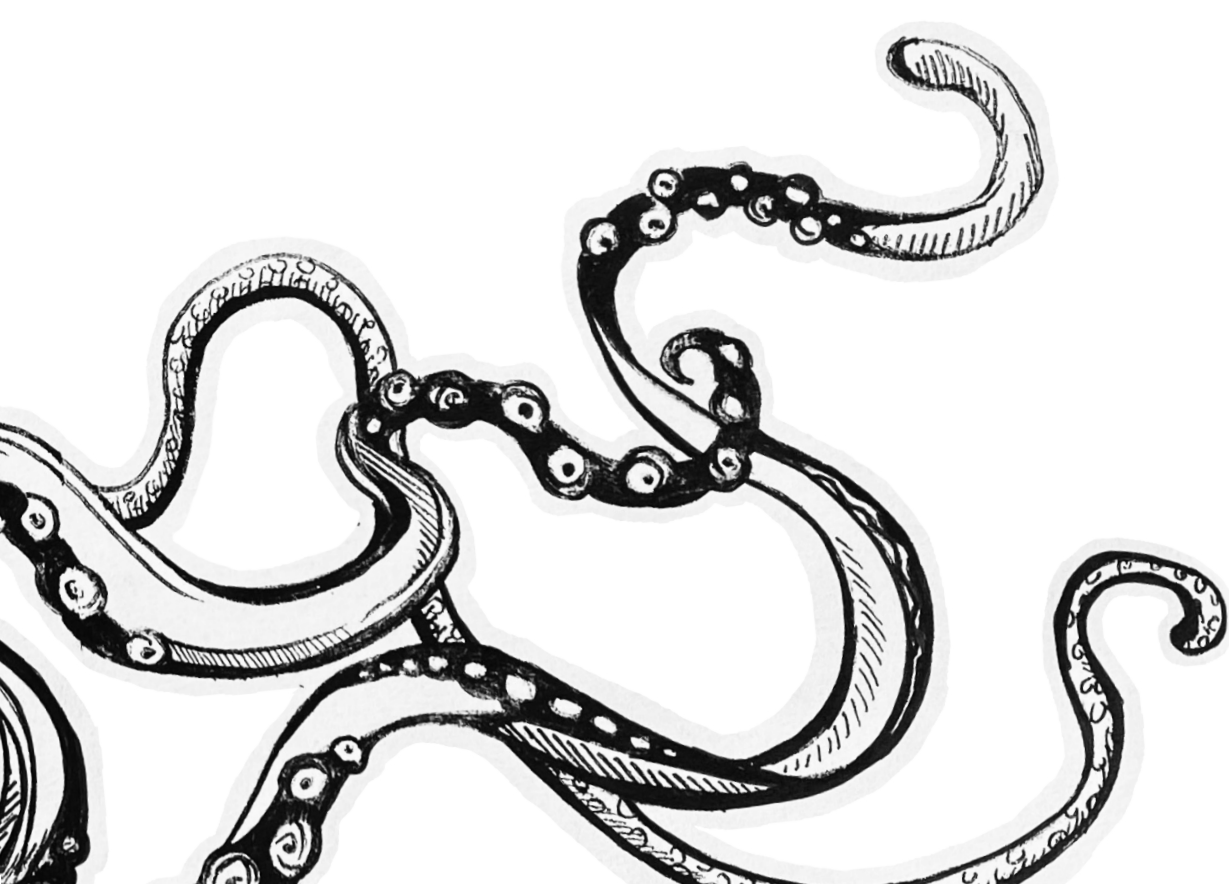
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Indelible



This edition of Plaid is dedicated to Ms. Sharon McDermott, Plaid's incredibly dedicated faculty advisor for the past ten years.

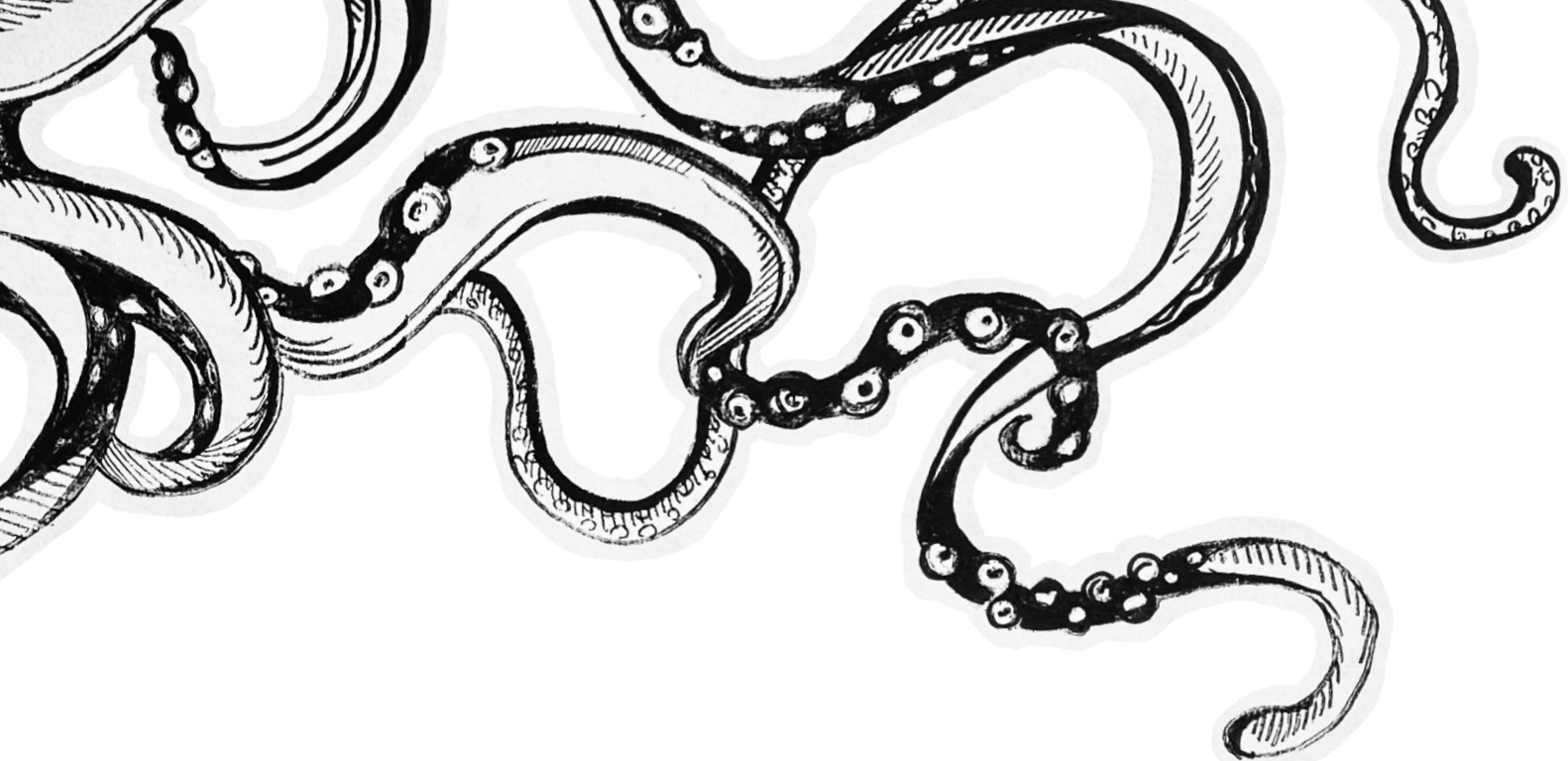
To say that Ms. McDermott has been integral to Plaid's success would be a vast understatement. During her time as faculty advisor, Ms. McDermott completely transformed Plaid into the high-quality magazine it is today, exposing a myriad of students to graphic design and instilling a shared appreciation for art and writing within every staff member she taught. She has also helped 10 groups of student editors transform their visions into a physical magazine, not only sparking a passion for the humanities within them but also shaping their career paths and future aspirations along the way. While we are all sad to see Ms. McDermott depart from Plaid, we know that even in her absence, she will always remain a core member of our Plaid family.





INDELIBLE

The literal meaning of indelible is “(of ink or a pen) making marks that cannot be removed.” However, this word has gained a second meaning over time: “not able to be forgotten.” This is the meaning that we considered when determining the theme for this year’s Plaid. Nothing about this year has been forgettable; not the pandemic, the politics, or the protests. In choosing Indelible as our theme, we encouraged writers and artists to reflect on the monumental year we have had. The art and writing within this book reflect the creativity, passion, and personal experiences of Winchester Thurston students throughout the 2020-2021 school year.



DEAR READER,

In one all-too-overused word, this year has been unprecedented. Faced with a global pandemic, we have had to adapt to a completely new way of living and learning. We have marched in the streets against racial injustice, lived through a tumultuous election, and experienced the vast repercussions of climate change. In short, this past year has left a lasting effect; to us, this impact has been indelible.

Our goal in setting *Indelible* as the theme of Plaid's 59th edition was to encourage students to reflect upon the ways in which this year has impacted them as a whole, from their views to their identities to their values. The submissions we received certainly did not disappoint. We were struck by the way that students were able to address social issues through their writing and craft poignant artwork in response to their experiences. The work we received this year showed the creativity, persistence, and passion of the Winchester Thurston community, and we couldn't be more proud to publish it.

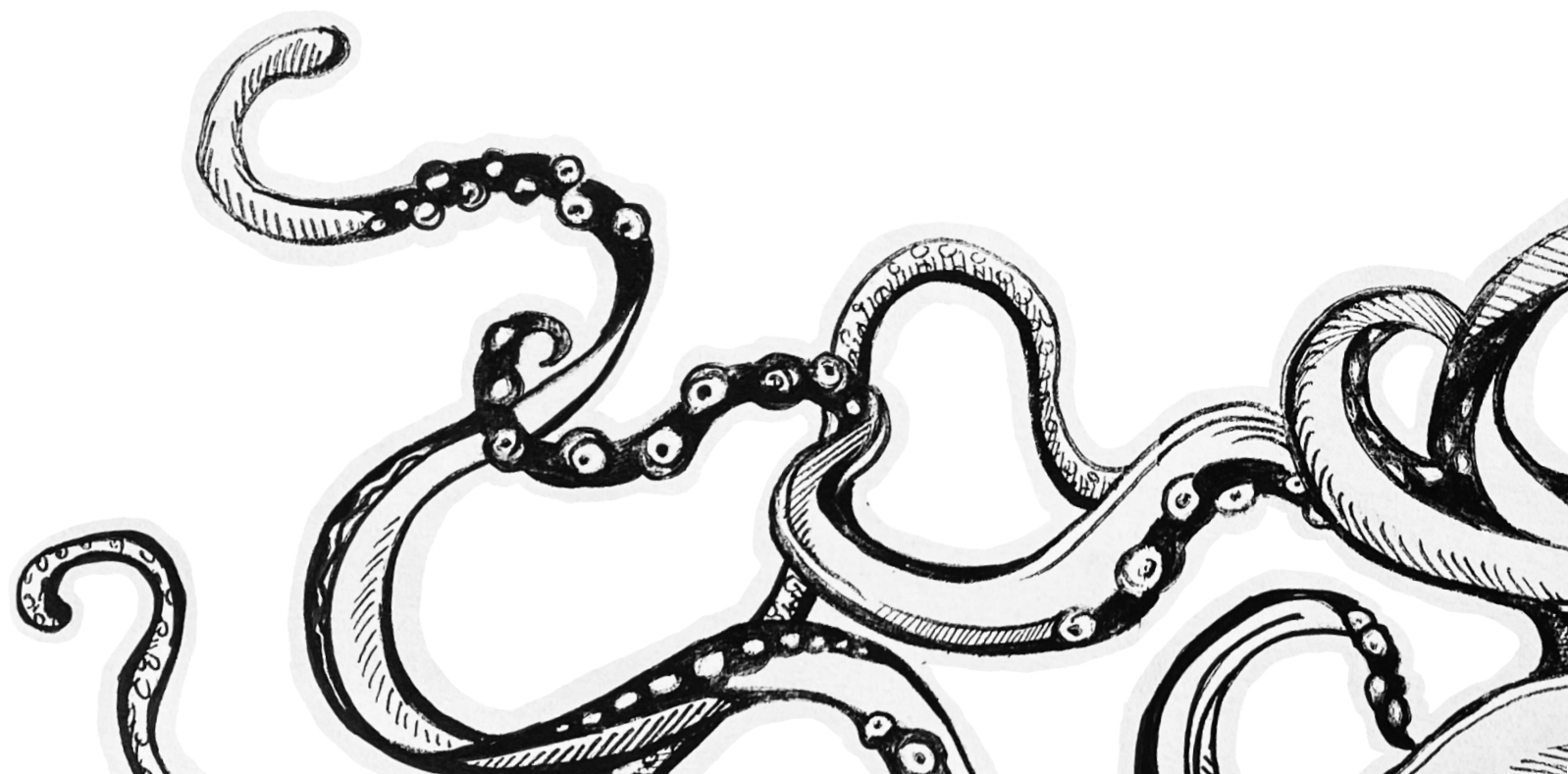
This year's contest winners also highlighted the complex ways in which we all were affected by the crises of the past year. From capturing the passion of one of the many Pittsburgh Black Lives Matter protests to introspectively reflecting on feeling small during this time of isolation, we were blown away by the quality of work we awarded. In particular, we would like to commend Addie Zwicker-Jones '21 for photography, Phillip Leong '23 for drawing, Jocelyn Hayes '23 for digital art, Sarah Gimbel '23 for painting, Hannah Chang '22 for 3D art/multimedia, Peyton Thomas '22 for poetry, and Benjamin Gutschow '21 for prose.

Reflecting upon Plaid as a whole, as Editors, we also took the theme of *Indelible* to heart, adapting traditional poetry readings and writing workshops to an online format and pioneering a virtual Plaid Launch Party in collaboration with a local bookstore. We also examined the ways in which we had been designing the magazine and adopted a more minimalist theme in an effort to lessen the chance of obfuscating the incredible student work we received. While we are beyond proud of the magazine we produced, we hope future generations of Plaid Editors are just as eager to place a critical eye on the magazine and leave their own indelible mark on the club as a whole.

To anyone reading this, we hope you acknowledge your power to leave an indelible mark on the world through creativity. The world needs artists and writers who create not in a void, but in the context of the world in which they are living; we hope this edition of Plaid conveys the ways that Winchester Thurston students embraced this notion.

Plaid has been a defining (or, indelible) part of both of our Winchester Thurston experiences, and we cannot thank our fellow editors and dedicated team of 21 staff members enough for all of their hard work over the past four years. We would also like to thank our inspirational advisors, Ms. Sharon McDermott and Ms. Emily Mohn-Slate, for their guidance and passion in creating this edition of the magazine. Without Ms. McDermott's transformative ten years with Plaid, we would not have the magazine you are holding today. As graduates, we will always look back fondly on our time as a part of Plaid, and we absolutely cannot wait to see how the magazine evolves in the years to come!

With love,
Anna Nesbitt and Emma Stewart, Senior Editors



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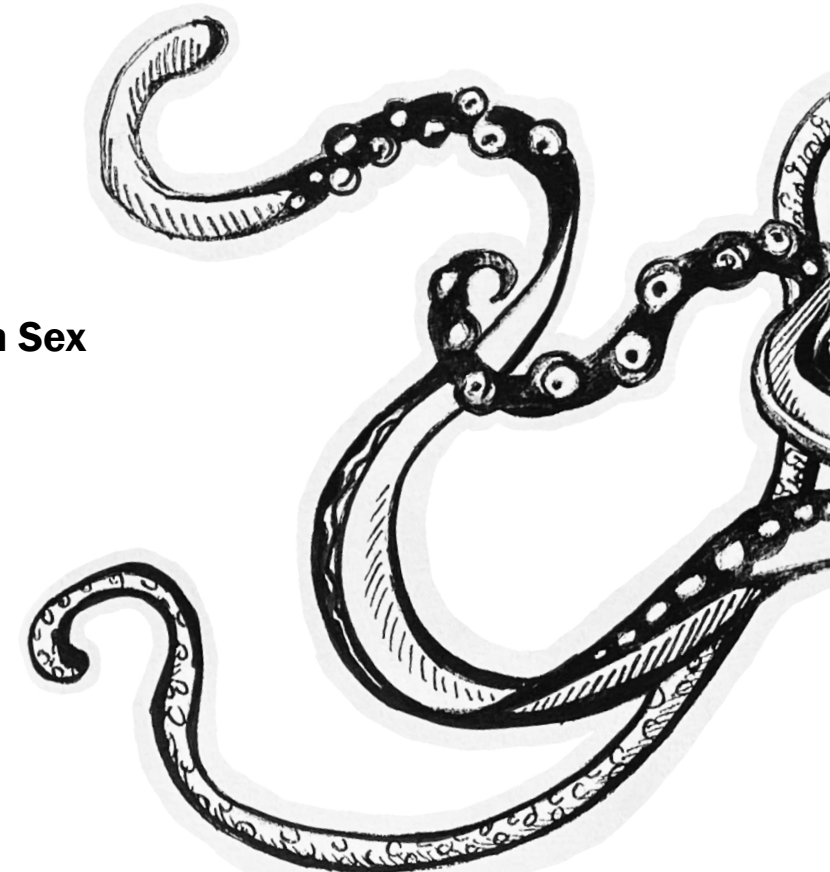
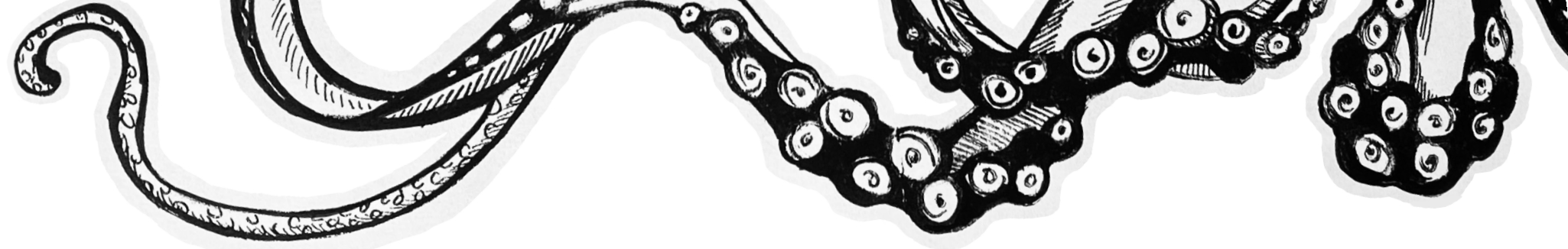
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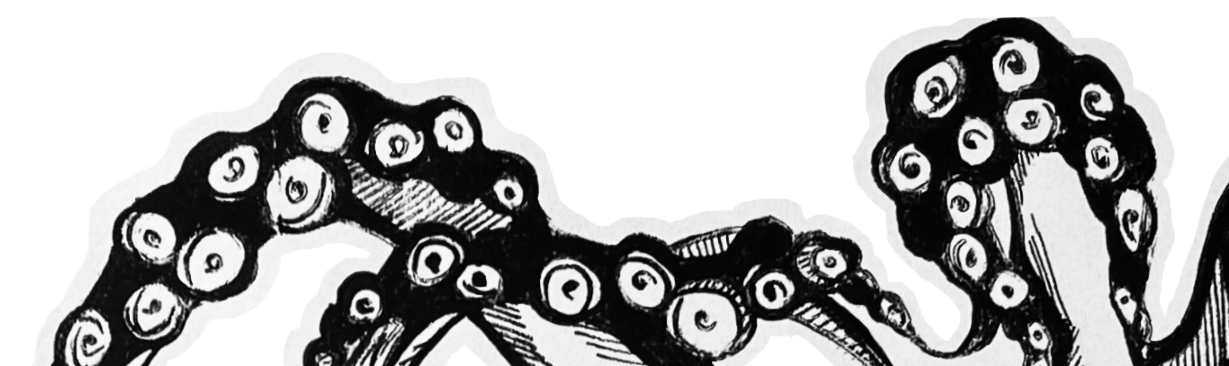
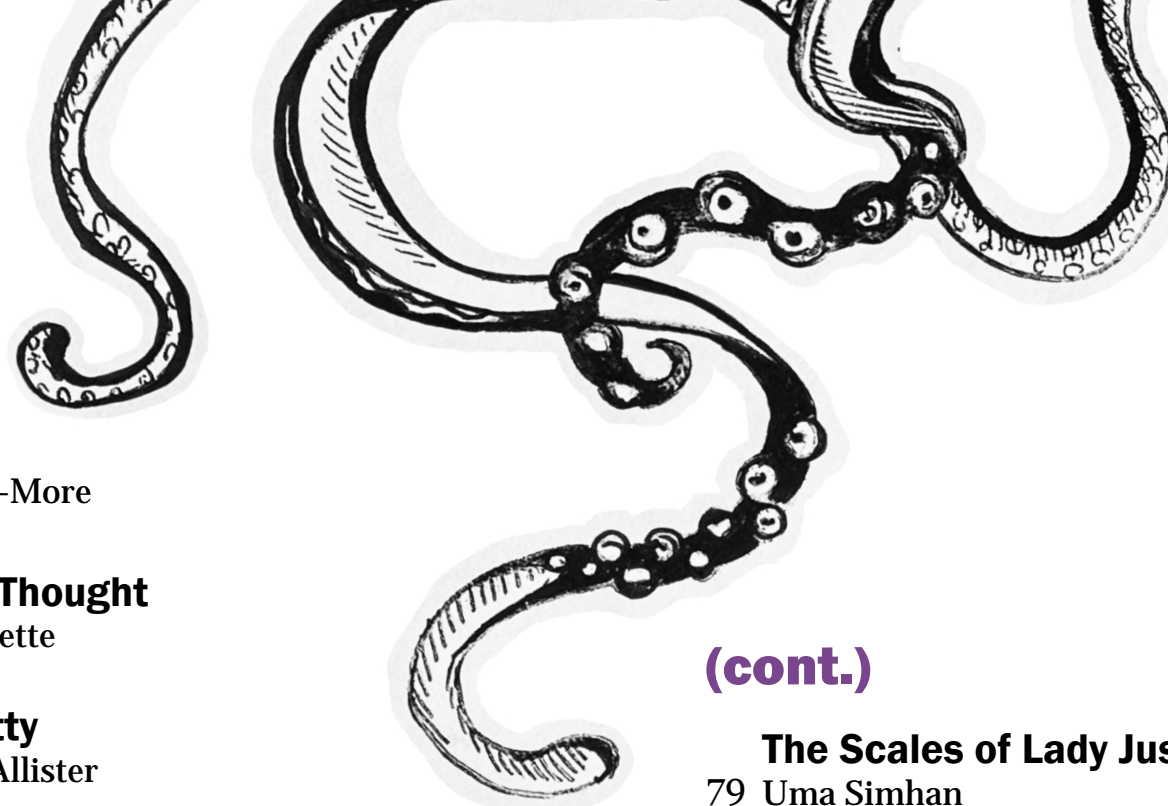
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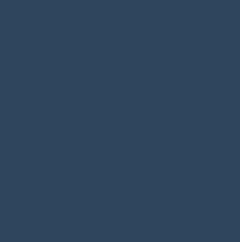
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Ours

Jocelyn Hayes




i sink in my body
watch my ghostly arms raise up
not knowing where i am
in this world or in yours

i stand on the creaky couches of strangers
watch the light leak
from moon crescent eyes
moon drunk eyes
they have told me everything




numb
my body giving up
surrendering, a ragged white flag
reminding me of the cracks in sidewalks i avoid
whilst i hear your voice in the passing leaves
whilst i smell your tears in the smoke of blue candles

i'll make a friend out of shadows
both yours and mine
watch them dance around my room
shift and shape themselves at night
tell me secrets in languages only i know



hot and cold slide down my cheek
moon crescent eyes blink them away
in this world or yours
in both yours and mine



my new friends press me down
they pause their snickering to whisper a secret:
we can do no wrong
for we do not know what wrong is



Dawn
Jingqi Li



electric slide

Jocelyn Hayes

The Language of People

Kate McAllister

One of my favorite activities when I'm away from my familiar space, home -- a heavy word with no definite meaning -- is to sit in a park and watch the hustle of people moving by. I see it in the quaint parks of Pittsburgh's suburbia -- benches spread by thirty feet, inviting us to take time away from interaction to simply be with ourselves -- and the fast-paced Washington Square Park in Lower Manhattan, the canyon between towering buildings, where so many versatile people gather (my favorite

place to observe). It is in these places that I take time to watch how people interact, how people react to their surroundings, and how people's expressions fluctuate. Foundations to understanding the real world -- as if our monotonous daily lives are some sort of fantasy where we attempt to ignore and disregard the struggles of peers.

For example: I find it memorable how different people react to a young child. Their reaction being ignorance, or a blanket of joy

which falls across their face when a parent and their small child idle next to them -- the baby smiling stupidly, showing off their newly grown front two teeth and their small tongue slightly exceeding the threshold of their lips. Both the parent and the stranger become fixated on the child -- one proud, but protective of their safety, and the other stupidly smiling back, waving while muttering a high pitched "Hi, aren't you adorable." Both parent and stranger, deceived by the child's grin, connect like two individuals in a blind interaction -- visual judgements blooming like a new plant popping through the soil, but the discussion of character remaining untouched.

The judgements we make contest our own beliefs and reflect the society we were raised in ("Raised," a strange expression implying we are no different than cattle. Are we all awaiting the inevitable slaughter of adulthood?). People watching is all judgements, and for each different person, a new flower budding marking each instance of interaction. My strolling attention catches the simple expressions -- the shuffle of someone standing outside conversing with a friend, their feeling of comfort being stripped away, vulnerable to those passing by. My strolling attention catches the small details, most often wishing to remain unnoticed yet expressing a person's individuality the most, more than personal communication ever will.

Those who I surround myself with are primarily extroverted people. My strategy is this, surround myself with those who naturally cannot resist the urge of interaction, their innate tendencies like a scab a child can't resist itching. Extroverts find people watching difficult. Like the natural tendency to itch, an extrovert must interact with the others around

them. I think of my mother, the director of finance and operations at a small independent school, greeting new families by verbally communicating. She cannot enjoy the delight of getting to know people through observation -- people watching is not an option. The itch from the scab is too intense. At the same time, I, an introvert, find myself standing in the corner at social gatherings. My role is simply to voice others characteristics. Without me observing, subtle hesitations would go unnoticed. The extroverts around me enable me to do this; without them, I cannot hide as easily.

When I was little, I was the biggest holiday-gathering enthusiast (as most children are). I would get dressed two hours prior to the gathering, anticipating the rest of the day to be spent chatting with my extended family, but when I arrived at my uncle's house (where I spent most holidays) I was met with a decision, approach the crowded table filled with family members -- all of whom were stuffing their faces with nuts and cheese, passing time until dinner, where they wouldn't have to speak to each other anymore, or resign to the couch -- the spot my father had already claimed years ago, where he watched the family interact with muted disappointment. Despite my earlier desire to talk to the family I saw only yearly, year after year I always made the decision to sit next to my dad. I would mimic his actions, silently sitting and simply observing, no words were ever spoke, for if I had chosen to speak, I would have never discovered the lessons I've learned from the silent language of my family's bodies, which are kept safely away in my field full of flowers always awaiting a new bud of observation to spring up through the soil.



Circa 2017
Benjamin Gutschow

Giver
Alexander Sayette

A hand—maybe two, woolen mittens pressed together share a single space, subject of a photo *I*

Have, my fingers flex alongside the glossy outlines of our bodies, I *thought*

The sky was beautiful, the day brighter than the way laminate can capture, *there*

On slick paper, the color white, of silent snowy trees. Grandma's coat, *was*

It always rosy red? Maybe plush and stuffed with goose feathers—but she would never. If *only*

I could remember. No one left now to remember—but of course, the photographer, *now*

Asked too many questions, their answers not his to hand over, her son, my father, *there's*

A lump, maybe my reaction from a photo, too much snow inside my throat. Too *much*

I forgot to ask. A hand, a glove wrapped round a mitten, showed me the world and on to so much

more

The Delight in Feeling Small

Benjamin Gutchow

Throughout my eighteen years of existence, I've learned a lot of lessons, but one of the most important was to take time to not think about my thoughts. What I mean by that, is to take time to try to stop thinking about how certain thoughts came to be or might affect/connect in society. So often I, (and when I say 'I', I really mean we), go through life so caught up and lost in our own heads—creating scenario after scenario, from unlikely catastrophes to possible vitality, and of course the ever important personal dramas like breakups and makeups—that we lose touch with the other parts of reality. The parts that don't attach pressure. Sometimes that's our senses; like sight, smell, or touch, that are sent to the backburner of our brain when we overthink. For me, it's most often sound that is muted due to my many thoughts. The surrounding noise is silenced to make space in my psyche for the perpetual and compulsive repetition of words, i.e. thoughts, which usually create more stress than relief. But when I sit on my windowsill under the midnight sky, I begin to stop overthinking and start seeing how small I really am in the grand scheme of things, and the delight this feeling of smallness can bring.

Yes, I know feeling small isn't what most people think of when someone says delight, and perhaps part of it is because I'm 5'2, but the feeling is truly amazing. The first time I can concretely remember this delightful epiphany was in early spring of my junior year when I sat on the windowsill in my bedroom to get some fresh air after the news broke that I wouldn't be going back to school because of COVID-19. There were so many thoughts in my mind, none of which had any clarity at the time, like how it [the pandemic] would affect applying to college and most importantly, how it would affect humanity. In that moment, on

March 21st, all I wanted was to forget the fear that filled my head. I didn't know what sitting in silence would achieve, but the continual bad news and the cynical scenarios created by yours truly, made the idea of sitting in silence seem like a possible way out. Out of where you may ask? Out of my mind. Out of the anger, confusion, and future-planning that pushes my anxiety over the edge.

So, I sat outside my window for the first time in mid March, and guess how I felt? Cold. I know, you're waiting for some superior realization that connects to the cosmos instead of the winter, or to a stupendous sentence which will bring you back to the paladian window where I first sat, but unfortunately no. The only realization I had was that March should be considered part of winter, not spring. From the moment I sat outside, it was clear that I needed layers—a hat, a jacket, and gloves to actually be comfortable—which was weird because I thought that March was warmer than it actually was. You know, more like spring and summer when I can wear whatever I want. Like one time in July, I wore only my underwear outside because it was so warm, but unfortunately after ten minutes (and seeing someone pass by my house) I felt compelled to put on more clothes. However, feeling cold and contemplating why March is technically part of spring was a step forward from contemplating the exact date when humankind would meet its fate, and the role I felt obligated to play to ameliorate the situation.

On that same night, I went back out and tried to sit in silence again, this time for much longer. I sat in the same spot on my windowsill with my feet dangling three stories above the pavement, and after sitting for some time I began to feel dangerously relaxed, away from the chaos in the world and in my head.



Bumblebee
Emma Stewart

Relaxation can be scary, yes, just like skydiving or landing a plane at night; Both have a special sensation brought by silence and serenity.

Skydiving for example, you jump and immediately go into shock. But a few seconds later as you begin to free fall from gravity, you can see the world from a new perspective. You hear the sounds that are loud yet often go unnoticed, you see the size of the people in comparison to the grandeur of nature; you feel part of something bigger than yourself. The same idea goes for landing a plane. You come out of the clouds and feel the turbulence followed by terror, but outside the small oval window you see the surrounding area of houses, cities, and street lights pass by at 180 miles per hour and you feel relaxed.

After a while of feeling cold and sitting on my windowsill watching the world go on, the excess thoughts about the pandemic

subconsciously were pushed to the back of my mind. Instead, I started thinking about who and what was around me. I really forget sometimes that other people have lives—that they dance and sing into their kitchen spoons too, and cook the same kraft macaroni & cheese that I do. I may be the “main character” in my world, but so is every living person in theirs. You see, the world is perceived individually. I know this to be true because I've met Philadelphia Eagles fans, who somehow believe that their team is better than the Pittsburgh Steelers; obviously an untrue and individual sentiment shared ONLY by a certain few. We as people have our own individual perception of the world, yet often expect others to see it in the same way that we do.

The stupidity of this expectation became abundantly clear under the midnight sky three stories above my street on that third Saturday in March. It was then that the chaos

in my head went away and I could finally hear the sounds that were around me. The occasional ambulance and helicopter requiring urgent care. The rev of a car engine typically coming about every ten minutes. The long, repetitive, and held-out whistle signifying, somewhere in the distance a train is coming, followed by a flurry of rail squeals reminding me that I live in the remnants of Steel City, now just a part of America's Rust Belt.

Pittsburgh is a weird place. A place where most folks are in their homes by ten and getting ready for bed. My city is not like New York City (NYC) or Chicago where one is bombarded with never ending noise throughout the night; in Pittsburgh one has to scout and patiently wait even to see/hear someone go by or get out of a car. My city is a peculiar one; the topography is mainly made up of hills and valleys, like the residential street that I live which sits on top of a hollowed out mountain known better as the Squirrel Hill Tunnel.

What's nice about such a mountainous environment, is that it's easy to see and hear the movement around me. I can see cars

in the distance going up and down the rolling hills, with their headlights making clear the direction and elevation they will travel towards. I can see a distant downtown to the right of me, and a hundred feet in the same direction down the street, I can hear, feel and see the rumbling highway of I-376 which works its way through the Squirrel Hill Tunnel. Around me, there are houses and apartments filled with light; all which are home to the lives of men, women, families and friends trying to make it through the pandemic.

Even though I can't see what specific actions are happening in the houses across the street or the ones directly next to me, I can still see people's silhouettes and the signs of life inside. There is a lot of comfort that comes from realizing that each person who passes by, whether in a car or in a window, has their own life and probably doesn't think about mine. The fact that I'm so small in the grand scheme of things, takes away some of the pressure that I put on myself to save the world when my head is filled with too many thoughts. When I'm alone under the midnight



sky, I feel like nobody is counting on me, like everyone in the world has a small role to play, but no one specific person is in charge of fixing society.

This is why I like to think that the people I look at can't see me—that the two large trees ten feet from my house hinder anyone's ability. But when the leaves disappear like they currently are in November, the neighborhood can see me with little to no effort. In this I fear that people will peer through their windows and judge me for sitting on mine to watch the time go by, or for singing the Edge of Seventeen into my ruler like I'm Stevie Nicks in the 70's. This fear of others looking at me is really just another way of saying that I don't want pressure put on me. When someone stares at me, even while I'm on my windowsill, I begin to overthink. "Am I obligated to do something? To help, hold, or hide? What does this situation call for?" I become hyper aware of everything around me, eventually getting so uncomfortable that I leave. That's what happened back in March.

Even though I was able to get out of my head and away from the stress of society for a little while; my escape was quickly ruined by a couple who lives across the street from me — a man and a woman who look in their 30's and drive a nice red Mazda but parallel park terribly. They are who I often see when sitting in my serenity, and generally seem as happy as can be.— They stepped out of their car dressed fancily after what looked like a date,

and the guy (who I still don't know the name of even though he's lived a hundred feet from me for five years), made direct eye contact with me, somehow spotting me three stories high and behind the two big trees. Granted, like I said about March being winter, the trees were missing their leaves. Nevertheless, I still wondered how the man across the street was able to see me. How we had an intimate and uncomfortable interaction that sent shivers down my spine, which may have just been the cold March breeze which at that point was more apparent than ever, but I still strongly believe that it was really more about the judgment I felt from him looking at me. It was almost like both he and the wind blew my body back into my room away from the Palladian window, bringing back the other part of reality. The one where I think and contemplate what I should be and put pressure on myself to serve society.

Without pressure, we are not expected to amount to anything. We feel small. Small enough that we don't matter. Small enough that we can't disappoint. And this feeling of smallness, a temporary societal-serenity, is what occurs when I don't overthink. Now, I'm not saying that thinking is bad. Like everything else, it's good in moderation, but if we want to feel part of something bigger than ourselves; to achieve the delight in feeling small in the grand scheme of things, we must take time to not think about our thoughts.



With a Cup of Tea
Julia Stern

Nervous Hands

Joel Williams

I, who was always so maladjusted
to your paucity,
feared your fragility.

My loving words would cause
you to shatter
into glass.

You cut my hands when
I picked you up.

My meek compliments warped into
sharp attacks
in your ears.

It was as though you were,
not possessed,
but the opposite.

Hollowed out.

You had a sizeable
hole in your heart which,
I thought I could fill

I would fantasize about
the day that I
would take away your pain

But I couldn't
I was not enough
To save you

My shaking hands were
not enough
to
save
You were beauty's conduit
in this enigmatic world.
You were a sky full of stars
but I now use my hands to cover
my eyes in order to forget
their uselessness.

my eyes in order to forget
their uselessness.

Remembering the Past

Margee Dever

My mother was born and raised in Munhall, a borough in the Steel Valley when the steel mills were on their way out. My father was born and raised in Sharon, in the Shenango Valley, when Westinghouse had one of the largest factories in his hometown. Their parents and extended family either worked in the steel mills or for Westinghouse or worked in businesses that thrived because of the industry. My mother's family, for example, owned a restaurant in Homestead whose customer base was the steelworkers once their shifts finished. Now, many of these towns are a ghost compared to what they used to be. Sharon, a town once thriving due to the jobs provided by Westinghouse, is almost unrecognizable from when my father grew up there. The factory once owned by Westinghouse is a shell of what it used to be, now boarded up with weeds growing out of what used to be doors. The same is true for Munhall, Homestead, and West Homestead, all boroughs of the Steel Valley; what was once a powerful presence that brought jobs and a way of life to the Mon Valley is gone, leaving the Edgar Thompson Plant in Braddock and the Clairton Cokeworks as some of the only industry still employing workers.

With this family history, it might come as no surprise that I feel a connection to a lot of these industrial structures, many of which are still standing today. For my mother and father, these structures stand as a reminder of how quickly times change, how their communities changed when these big businesses left. For a lot of other people, there might be a sense of pride in these structures; this is what put Pittsburgh on the map! This is what built the Empire State Building in New York and the warships that helped win World War Two! For me, it's a connection to a lot of the family I never met. I can't even begin to count the number of times I've heard stories of my family that revolved around the mill. Stories about how getting to school was a challenge for my grandpa since there were always trains bringing deliveries to the mill so kids would have to jump the trains, leading to many kids losing limbs or even dying. Or how important the mills were to people in my community and so many others, despite the fact my great-grandmother despised the mill with every fiber of her being for how dangerous it was. Even though I never got the chance to meet much of my extended family, I feel as if I get to know them through these stories.

Growing up and hearing all of this, I have always tried to imagine what my grandparents would say today about what Munhall is like. A lot has changed in the area with the mills closing down. The area is quieter. The sounds of the mill, trains running chugging at all hours, constant hammering of machinery, and the rhythm of deep thuds coming from an iron press are all gone. Instead, it's become almost normal to hear a loud bang every other night and wonder if it was fireworks or something else. The air is much cleaner now; instead of big smokestacks billowing out tons of black soot and smoke, the skies are clear enough to see the stars at night. The stench of the mills, what has been described to me as a faint dusty, dirty, almost sour smell is gone; replaced with the sweet smell of grass and trees. Having access to abandoned industrial buildings and a mother with stories to tell about them is something that I probably take for granted. The history and heritage of the steel mills are slowly being forgotten, despite their impacts and how they shaped the surrounding communities. I feel as if these stories have shaped my perspective on not just the industrial era in America, but how I view myself and my family, many years later.



yesterday's beauties
Kate McAllister



Escapism
Hannah Chang

Elegant Awaiting

Ayisat Bisiriyu

Someone
is waiting for me.
upon a valley,
looking over the sea,
hair blows in the wind,
eyes are glowing,
a smile on their face,
they already know me.
Long chestnut coat,
high-knee boots,
rustic and soft,
alluring and sweet.
A light drizzle
embellishes their face,
a person has never looked
so
comforting.

■ They open their arms wide

leather boots can't move fast enough.
As the sea collides,
so do I.
Like a gloomy day,
they are security,
and I breathe in the dewy scent,

I run,

Offtopia

Liam Kress

(Intro)

Let's remember what we saw

And fly off to Offtopia

(Verse One)

I know you've seen what I had to see

A felicity sea filled with ecstasy

Off taking what it needs, purely pride and greed

Greedy needs of the sea looking back at me like

Let's fly up

We gotta come down

Start the breakup

Drown with the breakdown

We see it churning, lurking in the blue night

Out goes the light, vapors rise taking to flight

(Chorus)

Cause we're wandering in noise

Surrounded by the choices of the night

Entered in darkness; when will light appear?

The shadows of the disemboweled drawing very near

And the world begins to fall

The ground crumbles into all that's lost

(Verse Two)

Take it while we break it

And make it onto the finish line

Diminish my insistence on

Making it way ahead of time

Carefully it might fall down through the heavens

Offtopia's a place where not everything is a blessing

(Come on)

Let's fly up

We gotta come down

Start the breakup

Drown with the breakdown

Waterfalls churn and burn the fuels of fury

Where everything around your eyes is dangerous and blurry

(Repeat Chorus)

So let's remember what we saw and

Fly off to that special place

Where choices make themselves

Within the floating palace sinking in



Arabesque

Sahana Borrero

(Interlude in 7/8 Time)

It's a hard road to travel

Go channel the back roads

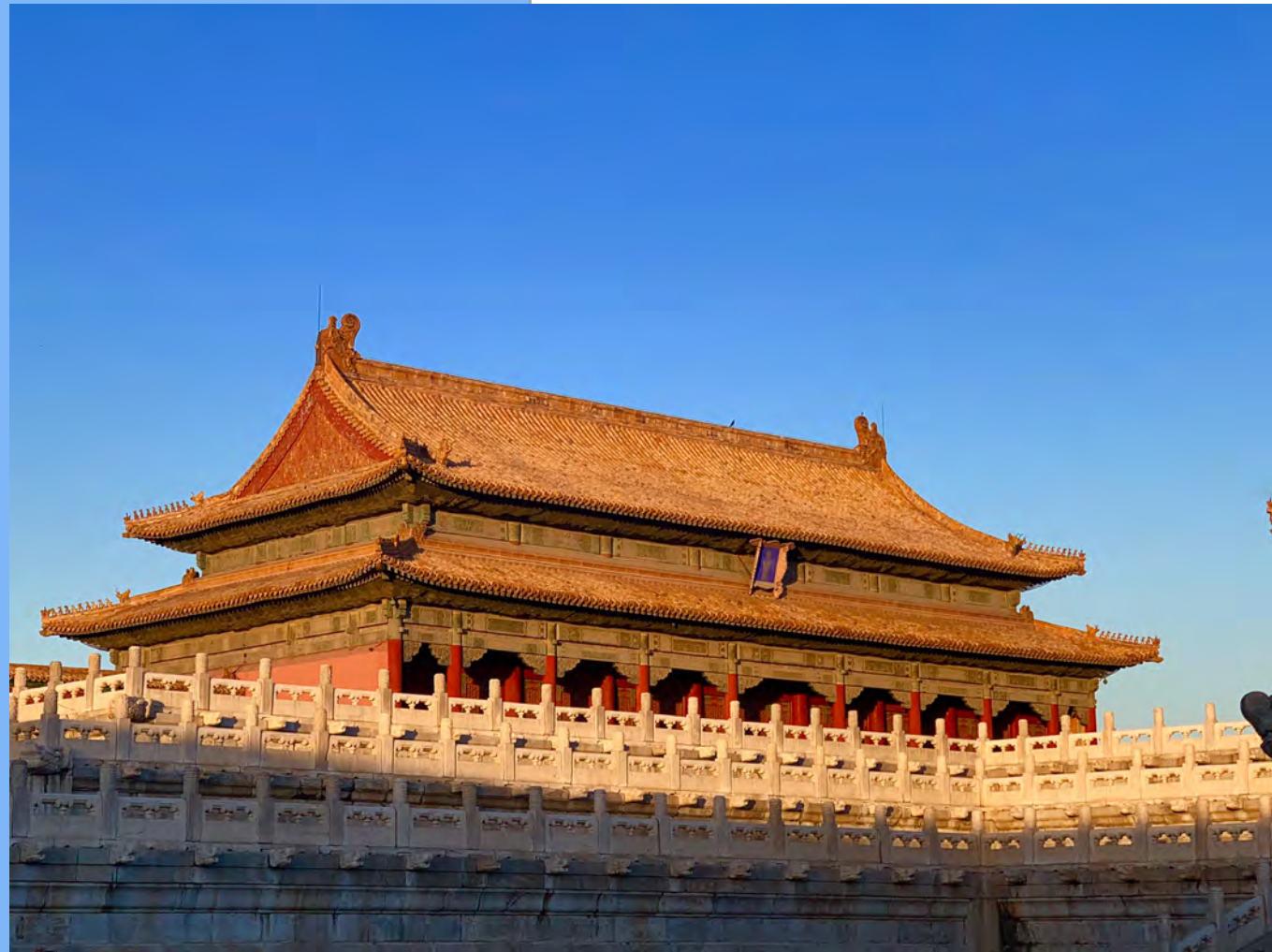
Sympathize with all who have taken

The same roads, they all patiently waiting to station

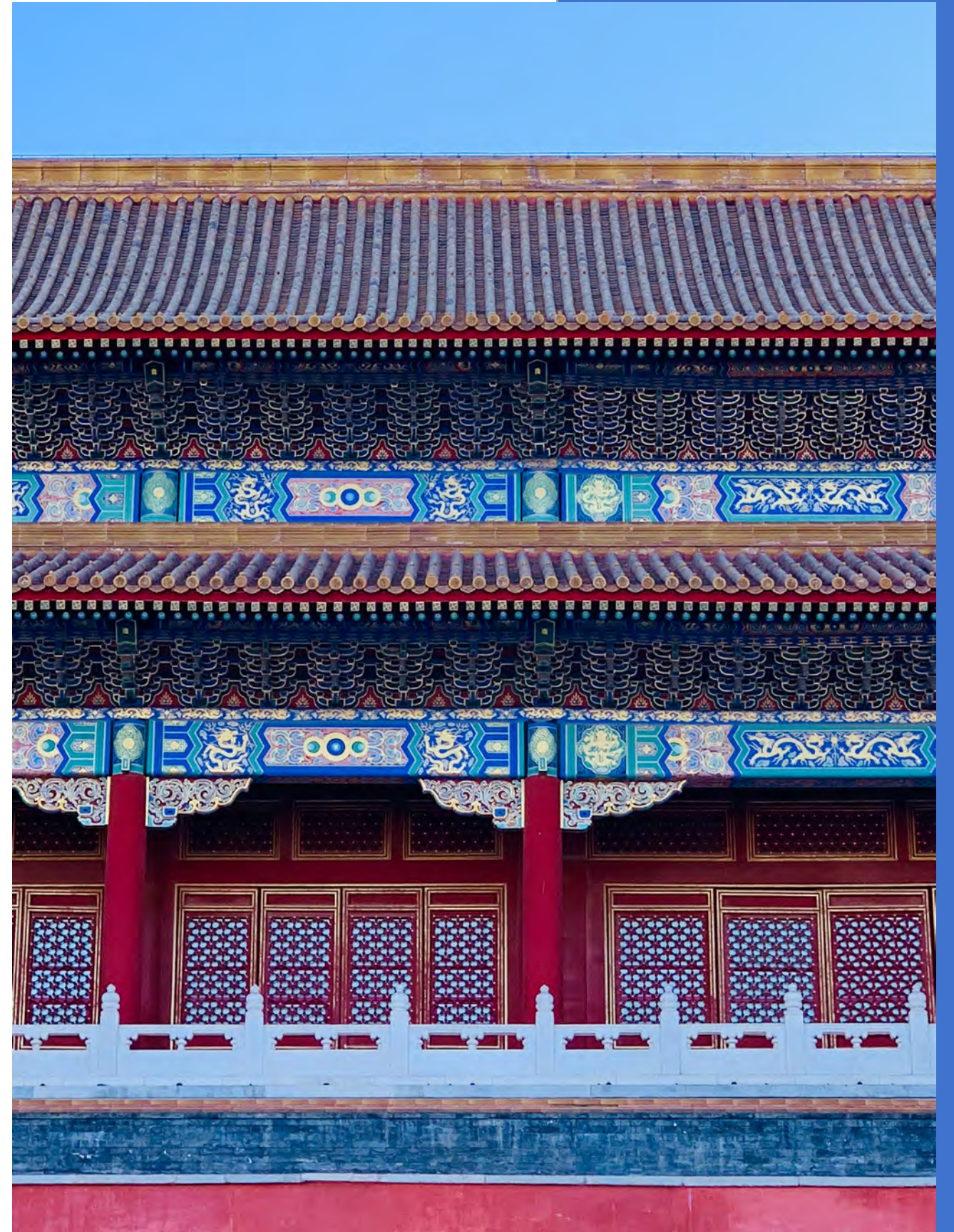
The off-road all the way to the sea in the sky

That's why

(Repeat Chorus 2x)



The Forbidden City
Jingqi Li





Meditation
Hannah Chang

What to Learn From a Language

Illyas Khan

I hate rules. I spend a lot of time learning languages and the first thing I'm told are always the rules. Day in day out; learning verb tenses and genders, how to put your words to-ge-ther, spelling, pronunciation. "Lift your leg like so, bend the knee at a 45 degree angle, and spin. Very good! Now your arm above your head and do it again. Now keep going until you're dizzy and disoriented." Learning languages in America feels like being taught how to dance as a form of torture. It's dizzying, disorienting, and, most distressingly, impersonal. How can we expect people to grow up as tolerant, kind and understanding individuals when their first exposure to a foreign language makes them feel horrible?

In 2015 my family whisked us off on a year long world trip. It was in Japan where I first became capable of deeply empathizing with a culture through language alone. Japan is probably the most "foreign" (in terms of an American perspective) country I've ever been to. Meaning: if you don't speak Japanese you cannot access the culture, and odds are if you're in Japan you aren't there for much else. My parents refused to learn Japanese, so the task was left to me. At first I hated the lessons on Rosetta Stone with a burning passion. "Kuruma untenshiteimasu," over and over

until the very intonation of the robotic speaker was bored into my head. To this day I can repeat with the same accent and pitch the few words I retained from that course. It wasn't until we actually arrived in Japan that I took an interest in the language, because I needed to and eventually wanted to talk to people. I learned to speak enough to buy things at the supermarket in Kyoto, find my way around that Shinto temple, locate the bathroom, and apologize to passersby for my Aunt's exuberant American attitude, which she proudly beamed as she walked down the Meiji Dori in Tokyo, hands clasped together hastily saying "Konnichiwa!" like a Yakuza. (a Japanese gang member) The more time I spent there the more I realized: I enjoy this. I enjoy talking to these people and learning about their history and culture and problems and lives. I can empathize with them because I can understand, in little slivers, the foundation of their cultural existence.

When I started learning foreign languages in school, I felt that our hallowed halls of education are teaching us more for the sake of teaching than to make us good, knowledgeable, worldly people the way the brochures always tell us. For a mixed, bilingual individual I lived a large part of my life not being very

worldly. Sure I knew the borders of Germany like the back of my hand, but if you'd asked me to do something about the Syrian refugee crisis I wouldn't. Growing up Muslim and Latino in the post 9/11 world you'd think might make me more caring and empathetic for people in other countries, but it didn't. I didn't know them, I didn't speak their language, I didn't look like them, or anyone for that matter. Why should I care? Thankfully I've grown, and I owe a lot of it to travel and, more specifically, language.

When I got back to the States the 2016 election was in full swing, and when I saw Trump win I had a sudden realization: this is all because nobody here knows about Mexican culture, people, problems. Nobody sees through the eyes of the Muslims Trump insists are evil. Not simply because they don't know them, but because they aren't interested. People like that need to interact with different people on a deeper level, because their unhealthy indifference, or blind hatred, has dug us into a disease infested ditch. But really, we all need to do our part too, and we all have the ability even if we don't believe in ourselves

right now, or can't stand another minute of Rosetta Stone, or aren't confident enough to talk to someone at all. If I can be tossed into a sea of strange sounds and people with a phrase book bought at the Melbourne International Airport and connect, learn, and become a better, kinder, more tolerant person, then everyone can, and should. It's time to toss out the rule books and learn languages the real way. The human way.

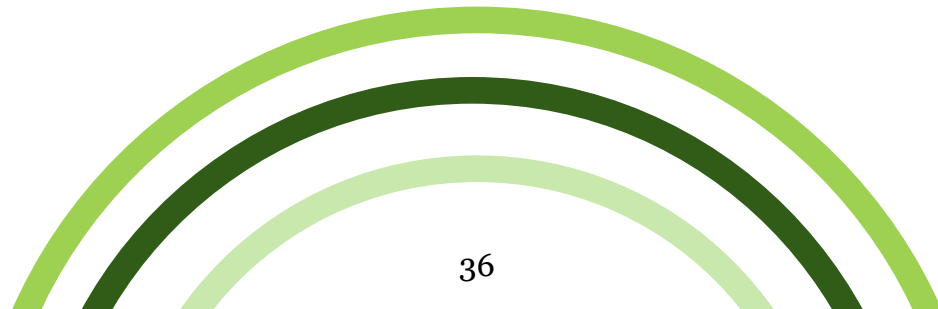
You don't have to leave your couch, or your desk. Get off Trivago and stop booking that trip to the Philippines because odds are you know someone who speaks a language other than English. So find someone. Ask them about it first, learn a few words, ask questions, be soft and gentle and sensitive, the way you peel a kiwi to get to the rich, sour meat within. You'll find that you can better appreciate them and they you. In the process you'll find that you lose your ability to dislike other people for being different, and you come to love the world, its imperfections, shortcomings and flaws. That's what you learn from a language.



generation c
Rohan Sykora

every day, every moment, seems to creep by, inch by inch.
how is this possible?
one minute ago, time was flying in the crisp, blue sky.
or was it one year?
each tick of the clock
a sharp stinging slap across the face.
how much more can our cheeks take?
they're numb and raw from the cold. Numb and raw
from uncertainty. numb and raw from repetition.
how can you blame us?
too old for childhood, too young for true independence.
where does that leave us?
where do we turn?
if only time would relent
from its methodical torture.
maybe then, things would be easier.
every screaming alarm
a testament to times past,
and to another nine hours spent at the desk.
will we ever be free again?
will these years come back?

what i would give to be six years old again,
completely oblivious to the world, again.
i want to go back to Funland.
i don't care if I am too short to ride the big rides.
i want to taste the delicious sharpness of vinegar on my boardwalk fries again.
i don't care if my face contorts.
then, when I would turn 16,
i could have a birthday party.
then, highschool would be more,
more than just one room with one chair at one desk.



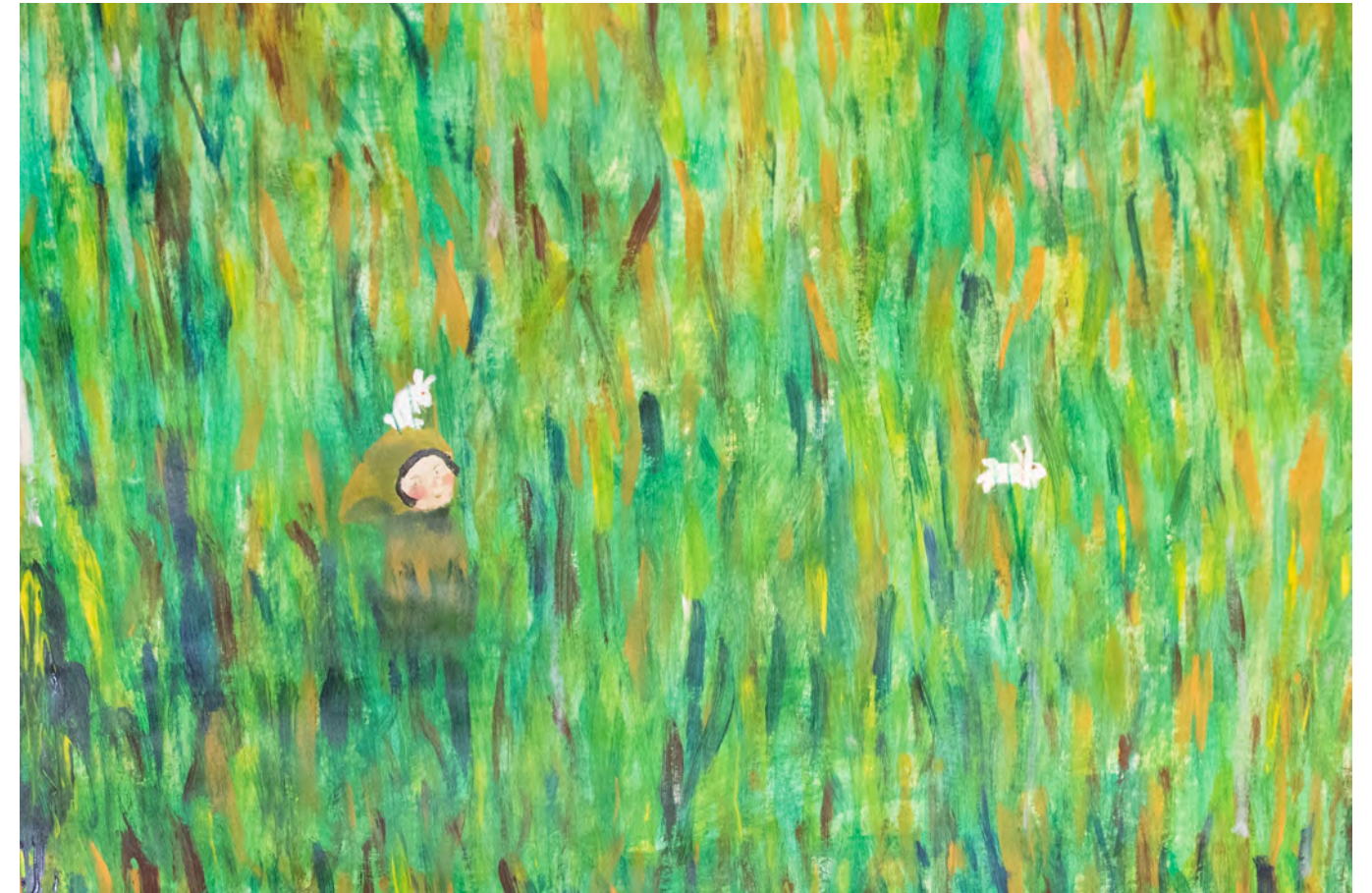
Zoned Out
Emma Stewart

are we looking into life through a broken mirror?
seeing glass fragments of what could have been?
why is looking into this mirror so hard for us?
how can they hand us a taste,
a fragment,
a sliver,
of how things are supposed to be?
questions and questions
fill up so much space.
questions and memories.
songs fill our heads and
pain swells in our chest,
now we're thrown back to how things should have been.
are we stuck in a loop?
why is everything the same?
do your eyes hurt?
my eyes hurt.

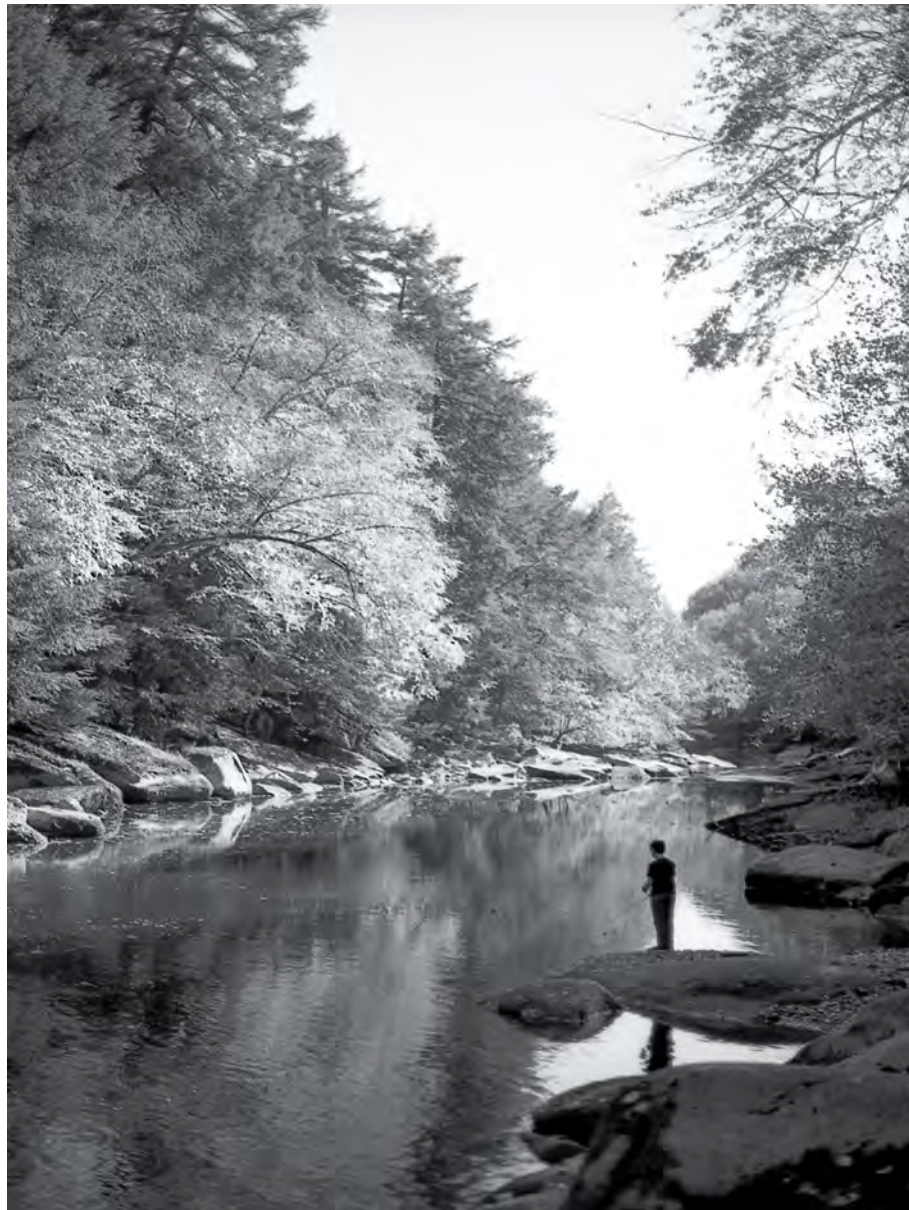
Tart

Elie Stenson

Apples portioned out for fall and
stocked in stacks upon themselves,
people flapping jaws as they assess the autumn spoils.
Grocery splurging is limited to one
member per household now, no more pilfering through aisles,
smiling at people, buying cartons of
apples and peppercorns
or cloves to spear through the plush skin of an orange.
Alluring, isn't it? The smooth remnants of
apple skin on the cutting board; the cliché
that every fairytale mother can peel an
apple in one go, slip apart the pearly rind from flesh
and eat slices from the knife tip.
Don't eat apples in the summertime.
They're a cold fruit, meant to be pursued when the air
is heavy with the archived year, meant to
crunch with the first, second, and fifteenth cold snaps.
They're meant to be cut at and gnawed and rolled, to become
tiny suns, to burn through clouds, to slip under
tables and replace eyes, to shatter, to filter
out all that's gone in our bodies and tumbled from our minds
out between our teeth, to embrace the pared-down day,
and to hand us Fall
on a platter so that she can say 'Look, here I am as I was
the last time you left me.'



vert clair
Coco Chen



Ponder
Kate McAllister

On Being Anonymous

Julia Stern

I was waiting in Grand Central Terminal at roughly 3:00 PM in front of a worn-down ticket machine that only took cash bills. There were thousands of people swarming around me, people with fleece-ball crew-necks, and muddy sneakers, and every type of headphone, and not-warm-enough glazed donuts from the Dunkin Donuts a block down the road from the station entrance. It was there that I finally attached a

label to the pleasurable impressions I met in these moments—*anonymity*. In the scurrying and hurrying of Grand Central Terminal, the truth was simple: no one cared about me. No one was caught on my face for a little too long—no one waved, with apprehension or enthusiasm—and I realized that I was very much a fly, latching onto the wall of an outdated metro ticket booth, watching the world as it flew dangerously away from me. I was

a vagabond amidst the rush of Grand Central Terminal, who would return home and be Julia again, and my light features and tall frame would spark a rogue mix of neurons in my classmate's brains, but right then, I was just a flat face—maybe less than that—a proudly meaningless mechanism in a big churning machine.

I'd say that *anonymity* is the most kicked-around and walked-over pleasure that I could name; after all, to many people it barely classifies as pleasure, but a curse you should carefully tiptoe around so you can delicately avoid any face-to-face confrontation. I never understood Banksy until that afternoon in the train station, when I imagine, a very theoretical lightbulb exploded over my head, and I stumbled across the realization that being completely anonymous was a most pure and beautiful euphoria, and Banksy had called it from the start (even though, in my opinion, their *anonymity* backfired in the end, poor person). During the months, or even years, leading up to my breakthrough in Grand Central Terminal, I encountered roughly thirty free-thinking individuals everyday that had a wide assortment of reasons to form thoughts about me, reasons that jumped from approving to thorny to myopically neutral, but in Grand Central Terminal, that number dropped to zero. Do you know that freedom of occupying no one's mind? I savored that little morsel of security in a great tempest of people—the freedom of *anonymity*, when, for a moment, I could trace the uncut glory of my half-baked thoughts, or I could do anything, or act any way, and two days later it wouldn't matter to me or anyone else in the slightest.

And I followed that winding path of freedom to other anonymous delights, the delight of darkness and food-induced brain fog at a foreign table, where I lost my fear of mispronouncing "neck" in French, or the delight of being underwater, which I discovered at the age of nine or ten, when kids started to

get real serious about diving-board tricks, the front flip, the back flip—the esteem of those aquatic acrobatics brought great anxiety to my nine-or-ten-year-old self. I would summit the board, dragging my feet across discolored white plastic, hunting for an ounce of courage or athleticism (finding none), and all the eyes, the middle-school boys, the power-hungry lifeguard, the crabby Church lady, plus the brightness and the noise of the day, would antagonize me to the point of cannon-ball. Always cannon-ball. But momentarily, I would plunge into the bliss at the bottom of a swimming pool, when I felt no need to flip or dive or flaunt any of my faux pre-pubescent coolness, and there were no eyes, no noise, and soothing rays of soft sunlight. That was *anonymity*, when I could no longer be perceived, and I wished I could stay in my sequestered palace of tranquility for the rest of the day, maybe even the rest of the week, but I could hear a muffled whistling noise, so I warily approached the surface, and my senses grumbled and whined as the fourth-grader behind me nailed a perfect backward flip.

I dutifully seek those soft moments of *anonymity*, in a concert venue, or a crowded restaurant, or the overgrown trails of a park far away from home. They feel rare. To be known is to be perceived, and perception is what scares me the very most in the world, not the foolish perception about that swollen zit on your right cheek, but a subliminal perception that lives on the bottom shelves of our brains, poking you, rousing you, waiting for you to dye your hair green, to move to rural Alaska, to date a guy that gets bad haircuts, waiting for you to break and give in, poking, prodding, poking, poking, poking... Then you're at a ticket booth in Grand Central Terminal, and for two rotations of a neon blue digital clock, your shoulders fall, and a sticky breath leaves your lungs, and perception takes a mid-afternoon coffee break, and for the first time in five months you feel perfectly free.

A Letter From Cordelia

Margee Dever

What does it mean to love? O cruel sisters,
you've driven him insane. He mourns the loss
of girls he used to know. Instead posers
who fight about affairs that turn to dross!
O sisters, why must you behave this way?
You should have seen the things that power changed
about the both of you. Position, praise
above your father? Have you been deranged?
If you can hear me sisters, listen well.
Please think about these words if you do care:
Can daughters be so cruel, to turn their tail
on family when they are in despair?
If love is strange, a family is more,
consider that before he's out the door.

Good Luck and Godspeed

Alexander Sayette





Power to the People
Addie Zwicker-Jones

Black Lives Matter

Nur Turner

I walk down the street afraid to die
Scared because I believe the color of my skin will set off the trigger
I think, is my time up? But the clock is still ticking
My heart beats faster by default as soon as I see those flashing blue and red lights
We plead “Don’t shoot!” but in reality all hope is lost by the cock of a gun
We know the system has failed us
Throughout the bloodshed we fear there is more to come, we know there is more to come
So many lost without a fight, no chance to say goodbye
I wonder, will there ever be a chance where all men are created equal?
Will we ever not have to fight for our basic human rights?
But I know, we will rise together to combat these injustices
All around me I see other’s fighting for our rights
Now we know the time is now because we can finally see the light
We finally see the change we’ve been fighting for our whole lives
Many say “Will protesting even help?”
What they don’t know is how our anger has built to the brim
Finally it’s spilling through America
Our strikes will be written in history books, we know we matter
Now it’s time to make our promises into actions
My hope is that my son can walk down the street not afraid because of the color of his skin
I believe our voices will finally be heard
As we shout from the rooftops “Black lives matter”



Most Wonderful Thing

Alexander Sayette

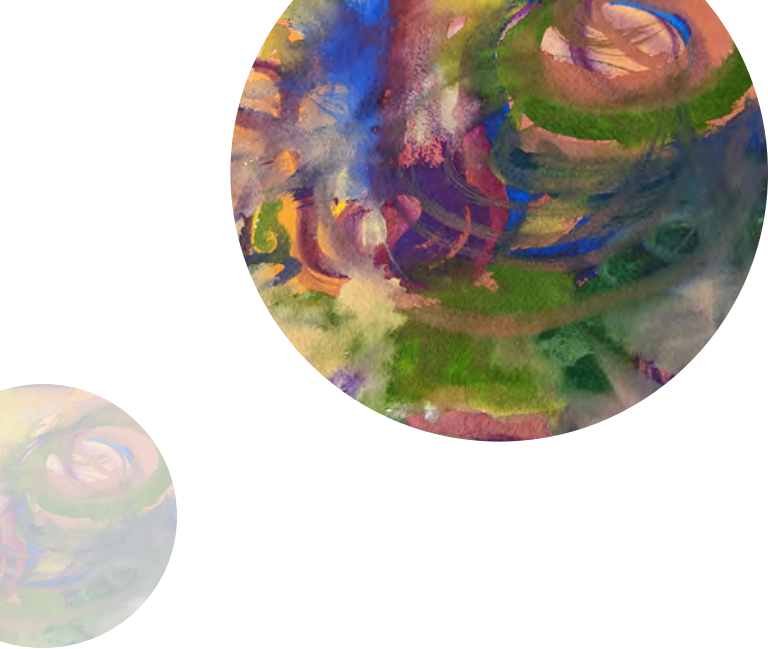
Eight months, and a home becomes a kingdom. The porch, supported by stilt-like wooden legs, stands as the greatest observation deck. Each seat presents a different background, and captured in each angle is a painted backdrop for our little world of four. Eight months of stay-at-home and I've seen the shifting seasons transform our home with each budding, blooming, passing flower. One space with so much space. Yellow and soft, the citronella candlelight laps against my face; I am made of sand and it, the ocean's pull. I look away to clear my gaze of its warm and hazy breath—or perhaps, to see something less obvious, something that candlelight might flood. I face the darkness—a place obsessed with the absence of passing cars, devoid of glinting reflections cast from the “Steel Valley” onto the still surface of the Monongahela River. Across the way, whispers of Pittsburgh's steel legacies haunt steel mills, jumping train tracks with the far off call of a whistle. Only when the leaves grow sparse do their lonely songs like sighs pass beyond this river. I smile as the telephone wire, which winds its way between the various pine and hemlock, transforms our yard into a ski resort (minus the snow), equipped with cables for a single slowly descending gondola. I linger on the fact that the softly humming floodlights cannot reach the far edges of the yard, and in the dimness, the grassy carpet continues without

bounds.

Tonight I tip my head and continue with this space-bending game. The broad and stable body of “my tree”—an aging linden, affectionately named for the way its upper branches sweep across my bedroom window—takes me far away, placing me in memory at the center of Muir Woods. I listen to my father's voice as the subject changes; we have nothing left but these trees to talk about. The air is cool and my skin prickles with each dropping degree. I ask what brings him delight in a night like this. My father speaks of changing leaves, and points to the halfway barren limbs intertwined above our heads. Viscerally, I feel an urge to disagree (as all things father and teenager tend to cycle towards—the entropy in an interpersonal system). There is no fire in these leaves, no fury which bursts forth in violent color. My tree was never one to flaunt, at least not in the way that others burnt their leftover sugar, showcasing a display of warmth and crimson-redness that reminds us of the summer's passion. The linden's leaves choose between muted yellow and a patchy, speckled green, the mix resembling the tender flesh of newly broken branches. My father says that when understood, all the colors have equal beauty—the burning of their surplus nutrients for a single, dramatic display (although I'm sure there's more to it)—and that the surrendering of their



Ripples
Eli Dorsey



leaves before the setting stillness of winter is a wonderfully melancholy sight.

Our discussion of trees was inspired by a wayward memory of a book review my dad read in *The New York Times* a few years back. After struggling to share without spoiling what the reviewer had claimed was so special about the book, he gave up, spilling its secrets like water. He told me that the story takes you alongside the lives of different people and their connection to a certain group of trees. Except, by the end, you realize you've been listening to the life of the trees alongside the changing world, and that the story runs much

deeper than the lives of its human characters—the people like my dad and me.

We grapple with the grandeur of the trees. They follow our families through generations, and as people come and go, they watch our homes change hands. There are trees alive today that have witnessed a pre-Columbian America—even this Linden matches our home in age, both born as neighbors, destined to a dance of root and metal. To these ancient giants, human life is such a short and narrow thing. Do we fascinate them when we paint them in our art? Nothing is so full and bursting with beauty as is nature. As we learned



to look up, our portraits blossomed under the inspiration of winding trunks and tender palm-like leaves. My tree's muddied green and yellow leaves have a richness of beauty beyond their colors, something impossible to capture on paper or in anything less than a memory. It's the sugar in their veins, how delicate and unique their inner structures are, that seizes me; I am more convinced with each cascading leaf.

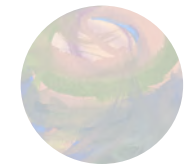
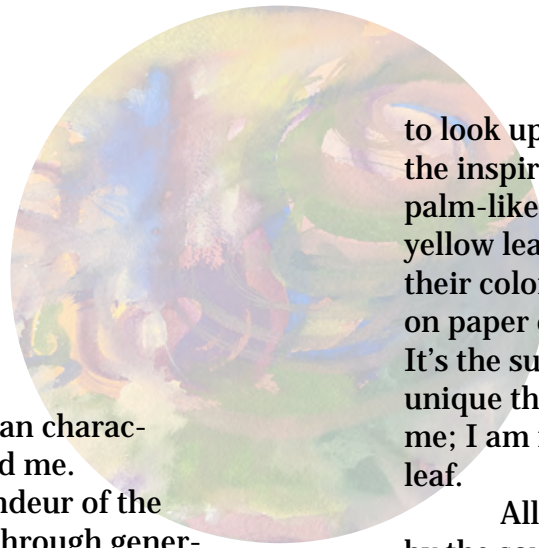
All this talk of nature is complemented by the sound of jazz, spreading through the air in ripples from a plastic pill-bug speaker. We watch as autumn resists encroaching winter and I sit back and absorb "In a Sentimental Mood"—Coltrane on Ellington, such elegant names. Luckily for us, we've captured these musicians in recordings, their passion expressed through calls of brassy bells and dancing fingers. In one sense, the exchange of music becomes a balancing act between nature and humanity. We've made this music, yet it inhabits a space thriving with nature, which is located on a tiny plot of land—our mighty kingdom—inside a city of steel. So, whose music is it, and who is it for? Either way, it mixes well with the broad ballad of night.

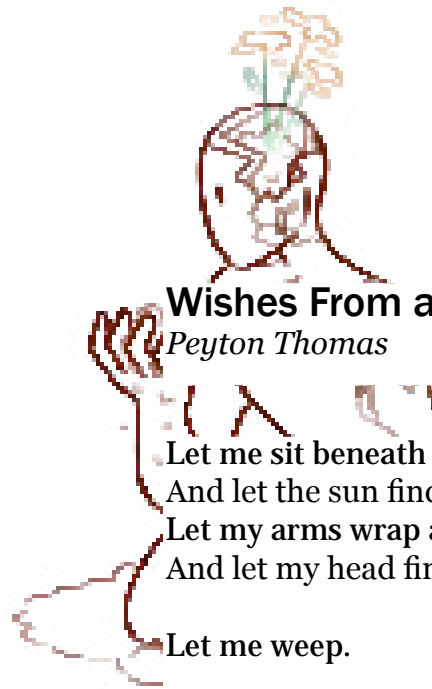
I allow the moonlight, which bleeds between the edges of a scattering leafy canopy, to touch my skin and cast me in its whiteness.

Leaves will breathe under just the right conditions, their rough underbellies swelling with the humming of the night. Even their veins will stretch and constrict as light turns murky through their kaleidoscope skin. This backyard kingdom is as much mine as the trees', as the music belongs to both performer and the night. My father takes his glass indoors, and I am cued to do the same. Two minutes, and now I find myself on the other side of my window. I meet the swaying linden with longing eyes.

As winter works its grip around the tree's barren limbs, I watch it take its final temperate breath. Eyes catch where there are none to reciprocate the stare—a melody exchanged in vibration between two unhearing bodies.

I will never understand your silent majesty, just as you will forget my music once dispersed like falling leaves. I move too quickly, age too soon—our experiences all too incompatible. But tonight I turn my stories into jazz so they may pierce through bark like armored skin and find ears where there are none. My music mixes with yours, and it lives on, finding breath where there is wind—it spins song from silence, and it is the most wonderful thing.





Wishes From an Angel to Be

Peyton Thomas

Let me sit beneath the trees.
And let the sun find empty pockets to flow over my shoulders.
Let my arms wrap around my knees.
And let my head find a place to rest in the warmth.

Let me weep.

Let my fingertips dig into the sand and feel each grain individually.
And let the salty blue waves cover me.
As I feel the cool waters, let me breathe.

Let anger envelop me.

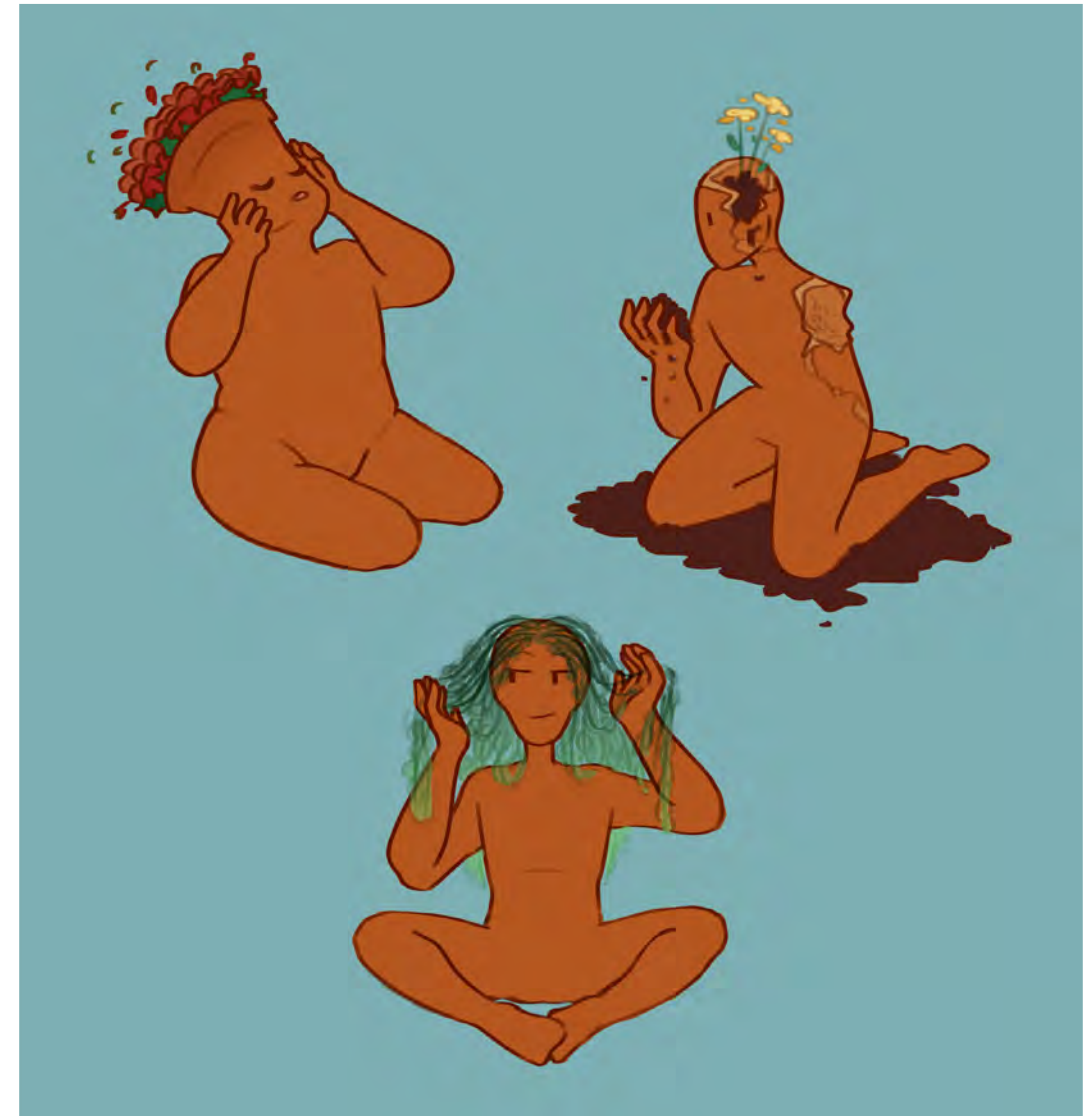
Let me go into the mountains and scream till warm tea can't save me.
And let my face rest however it wants without it being seen as a probable cause.

Let me smile.

Let me be a Black Girl Dreaming.
And for now let me be carefree.

Let me, please.

Until flowers and candles fill where my body will once have laid



Grow
Lucy Lee-Moore

Jil Sander and the Fourth Sex: How Do They Collide and Balance (Excerpt)

Eric Jiang

People who have never heard of, never seen, never worn, never bought Jil Sander are everywhere. As a brand, Jil Sander has become more of a genre than a figurative vehicle. Quietness, adeptness, confidence, and dynamic vitality are what Jil Sander wants to leave as a source of inspiration for those who recognize her creation. The male or female wearing Jil Sander don't need the approval of others to gain a fleeting and pleasurable sense of self-identity. Their sensitive personalities, maverick judgement and self-motivation mean they have a strong grip on their emotions. In other words, Jil Sander has no desire to please everyone.

The concept exhibited in *The Fourth Sex: Adolescent Extremes*, co-curated by Simons and Bonami in 2003, defines the Fourth Sex as 'teenagers' in fashion trends after male, female, and androgynous. It's like the indescribable *Seventh Sense* in Masami Kurumada's *Saint Seiya* or Schrödinger's cat. How did Jil Sander become a fashion genre for teenagers? Viable clues might be found through uncovering the journey of the brand-making. Particularly, the short, blond, elegant, heavily German-accented founder, who is both the soul of minimalism and a purist in the fashion industry and the rise of Raf Simons (2005-2012), the exit of Rodolfo Pagliaguna (2014-2017), and the competence of Luke and Lucie Meier (2017-present.)

As early as the 1960s, the concept of "less is more" was coined by Jil Sander, a fashion editor by trade. Tired of the dominant dressing code for women at the time, she used her mother's old-fashioned sewing machine to create streamlined clothing. Sander's idea of simplicity is about logic, and not just a matter of accentuating the figure and adding unrealistic details of exaggeration: "I'm

always looking for ways to dress as a working woman."

The experimentation between fashion and street culture targeting youth subculture that Raf Simons was doing in his own label was picked up by Jil Sander after 2005. Raf Simons and his new-era protégés had no interest in targeting the existing traditional consumer base. A key turning point was Fall 2005 Ready-to-Wear collection, when the designer made an unprecedented shock on Jil Sander's famed minimalism with a dress made of copper sequins. Jil Sander conveyed a mood of serenity and reflection.

Sadly, after Raf Simons, Rodolfo Pagliaguna's ten-year venture as Prada's Womenswear design director has not blossomed and lucked out in Jil Sander. Pagliaguna had his own way of deconstructing the artisanal spirit of minimalism, and his pragmatic and understated character seems to fit seamlessly with the brand's positioning, but rarely do consumers resignate, and Pagliaguna just happened to be the lone creator of an unearthly art made behind closed doors at the wrong time.

Aside from the continued support of regular consumers, Jil Sander seems to be unattractive to the Fourth Sex, and ignores the power of younger consumers and social media, as evidenced by the fact that it didn't open its official Instagram account until 2017.

In fact, Sander herself was not unaware of the challenges, in an era when not everyone was thinking of passing on Sander's designs to the next generation, the emergence of Uniqlo +J collaborations demonstrated the spirits of Jil Sander brand as self-reflecting, just like a teenager struggles, confuses, but never stops to explore, not even after clarity has arrived.

Luke and Lucie Meier, who became



Lost in Thought
Julia Sayette

Jil Sander's new creative directors in 2017, clearly did their history homework and came prepared. With the high street pretensions of OAMC and the success of Luke's involvement with Supreme, and Lucie's with Dior, the couple team who have had deep high street roots and are well-experienced in luxury culture, launched their first Spring/Summer collection after joining Jil Sander, which is both eye-catching and déjà vu. It is as if one sees a reflection of Sander's own designs some 20 years ago. As the people who wore her designs two or three decades ago, it was the classy air of masculinity and femininity that broke through the confusion of the Fourth Sex

or the aesthetic rhetoric of androgyny.

When people finally began to tire of the noisy, frenzied feast of fashion crowds, and the dried up, thinning purses, the classic and timeless design seems to have returned to the forefront. The increasingly mature Fourth Sex suddenly find themselves comparing a five-year-old Jil Sander tailored black wool jacket to a Gucci jumper with a giant bee on the chest, and realizing that Jil Sander is more like a sophisticated strategy for strong women in the workplace to highlight their competence with ease, or for men to be themselves without being put into a stereotypical box of manhood.

Four Person Sidewalk

Joel Williams

We walk down the beautiful tree-lined road now
riddled with potholes.
That's how I think we look. Beautiful on the edges
but riddled with potholes.
I don't like it. I don't focus on that too long.
We are laughing and talking.
Well, they are laughing and talking.
I am 5 steps behind because
the sidewalk is not wide enough for me.
They are in lockstep and the road is not wide enough for me.
I realize that I don't know them. I will not be in lockstep.
I am always a few feet behind.
I wonder what it's like to not have to call
"Wait, I tripped." Maybe
we
would have tripped.
I would've taken them down to the uneven sidewalk
then we'd smile
and forget the fact that we
forgot to wear our coats.



kitty kitty

Kate McAllister



Lights
Sarah Gimbel

Why We Run

Alex Sayette

You wouldn't believe I-70 could draw in boys and send them shooting out like bullets across the country. The real trouble's when folks follow exits and offshoots, tributaries that lead winding, oneway paths down the veins of America. Eventually, you find a home or a family you can't just observe from the outside. That's when the spell breaks, and you remember you're not here to draw lines on an empty map, but rather, to run fast enough to blur your eyes so you never know quite where you are. I have a talent for running and eyesight that's just bad enough to stop me from reading the names of exits and street signs. Not everyone is born so lucky that they can run free forever, and in fact, I think that's how I lost my friend.

Ron and I split at the crossroads of I-25 and 70, somewhere near Denver. But really, we'd left each other on the interstate in Kansas City, Missouri. Ron was good; I was too foolish to stick tight to him, and I traded partners with a gang of truckers outside a rest stop. For six hundred miles Ron trailed us, hoping I'd either turn around and face him or forget him. I tried the second before the first, and I don't think he saw me catch him stealing looks at me in my mirror. I often did that, pretending I didn't see, didn't feel, his tired eyes at my own.

He lost hope at dawn and went back home; I haven't called him. Two months for two kids who dreamed of getting lost, chasing odd-numbered interstates, snaking west across the country on roads divisible by ten. Sometimes I catch him trailing me in my mind. If you asked him, he would say I was the one who left, that he lost me on the roads. Maybe, I needed to lose him. You know, people will do that to you; they'll tie you back to home. I was too quiet, even for myself. The problem was, I thought I liked the quiet. I found the type of people I was racing toward becoming—at rest stops, stuck tracing circles in the road. I saw how easy it was to slip into their life. Once, I got too close; I burnt my palms on the steering wheel, felt my feet hover above the brake I couldn't admit I wouldn't have used, not even to save their lives. But still, I found myself running. How much did I need to break before I could come back home?



Autumn Night

Vanessa Gonzalez Rychener

I see an eerie,
orange glow
from street lights, modern
years ago.
The tiny squares
of houses' lights,
the beauty of
these autumn nights.
It's 6 o'clock,
already dark.
I had been playing
in the park
The tennis ball
I could not see;
the stars are blinking
down at me.
Now underneath
the eerie glow
to home and homework
I must go.



Blurred
Eli Dorsey

The First Winter

Ben Winslow

Long ago, in a world much like ours, lived a tribe of people. They were a joyous group of people, and they lived their days basking in the sun, eating lavish meals, cultivating the arts, and teaching their young. This tribe built their home along a lake called Erela, and it had some of the clearest and purest water in all of the world. The sun radiated down from the sky every day of the year with no clouds in sight. The trees were as green as can be, and the grass grew tall. The air was pure and the children would play in the fields and the lake all day long, with not a care in the world. The people of this tribe were favorites of one of the gods up in the clouds named Yurgeh, and as a gift to the people, he filled the sky with some of the brightest stars in all of the world. Every night as the stars rose in the sky they would reflect brightest on the lake and the people would thank Yurgeh for his gift with worship and praise.

The tribe's leader was a strong man named Gitortua, he had led them for the past twenty years and the people of the tribe respected him. One year, the leader of the tribe noticed that the amount of food they had was dwindling. The building that had once been full with their food had empty shelves, and hundreds of clean jars waiting to be filled. The lake had become cloudy and murky, the fish that once were plentiful in the lake had seemingly sunk to the depths. The tribe's leader came to his people to tell them the disappointing news. He told them of the tribe's situation

and the people, who had never once gone a day being hungry, began to panic.

"What shall we do?" one young man asked.

"How will we survive?" another chimed into the conversation. What the tribe did not know was that high up above them Yurgeh was listening to the conversation. He opened a small door in the clouds and the brightest light shone through it. His heavenly figure, half man and half fish, glided down from the heavens. As he touched the ground, the grass around him became greener, the once short trees began to stand taller, and the murky water of the lake became as clear as it had been before, almost as if to show off for their god. Yurgeh had been listening to the tribe's fears and concerns and, as the god of nature and prosperity, he took it upon himself to give the tribe members three seeds. As he put the small green seeds into the hands of Gitortua, the seeds had the faintest glow around them. Each seed would grow into a food that the tribe would always be able to rely on for sustenance. The seeds were magical and they would never stop producing food unless the tribe members abandoned them. He told the tribe:

"Grow these seeds every year and you shall never be hungry again. Teach your children to grow them, and pass this information from father to son, mother to daughter until the end of time. If you abuse my gift, you will face severe consequences."



Paradise
Hannah Chang

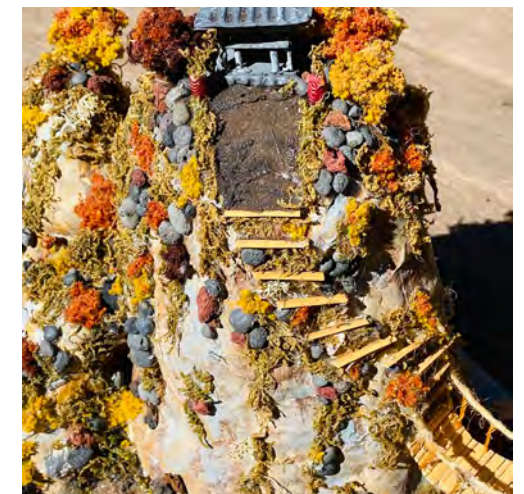


The tribe thanked him and for the next week they celebrated with lavish parties every night all in Yurgeh's honor. Yurgeh watched the parties from the clouds and smiled as he watched his people celebrate him.

For many years the tribe lived in peace and prosperity. Their numbers grew once again, the tribe was thriving like never before, and the land around them sensed it and improved with them. The tribe decided to name a festival in Yurgeh's honor: "The festival of the three seeds." They celebrated it every year with lavish displays, parades in Yurgeh's name, and food that was almost heavenly. Music would fill the streets for days and days, and the people would dance all night long.

One year, almost 300 years after Yurgeh originally gave his gift, a small man hobbled out of the dense woods around the tribe, and walked his way right into the festi-

val. The tribe was shocked as they had never seen someone from the outside world before. They treated the man with hospitality, as they were kind people. They took his cloak from him and fed him their food. They stuffed the man full of their ripest fruits, their creamiest soups, and their finest drink. However, when the man reached down to grab the fruit, it withered at his touch, so he tossed the apple to the side, before the tribe's people could notice. What the tribe's people did not know was that they had just let Igoba, the god of mischief and suffering, right into their home. Igoba ate their food, and he whispered to the children of the tribe stories of his travels. He told them of the people of the mountains, the people of the sea, and the people of the trees. What he did not tell the tribe was that death and despair soon followed his visits.



Sunset

Helen Zhang

The shadows of the trees elongate themselves into skeletons like figures,
Bathing themselves in the last of the light before night comes
To swallow them into the sea of darkness,
Rendering them insignificant among the silent screams,
Of shadows all packed tightly together with nowhere to breathe.

The birds perch themselves on the trees and chirp.
Their noises reverberate through air and through houses.
Some repetitive like the beat of the human heart,
Others like the burst of bullets from a rifle when the trigger is pulled.
All retreating when the riptide of the motorcycle speeds by.

Among the ground where rain's decay lays,
Two birds dance in the sky, combating for superiority.
Their wings flap, their talons show, their feathers fly,
Their tiny bird bones crack as they attempt to maneuver
Around the other's defense with a lack of luck,
Forcing them to retreat and become the hunter once again.

Meanwhile, the landscape begins to move into dusk.
The pinks of evening play with blues of the day,
And the threads of the cotton candy clouds,
As the cool cool night approaches soon.

On the old white wall baring well-aged scars,
Vines slither between the cracks,
Attaching themselves to the chipping paint,
Taking over with a network of stems and leaves,
Leaving no wall left to be seen.

Rootless

Mitra Nourbakhsh



Between the blades of grass on the baseball field,
Dandelions sprout from the once friable soil,
Letting the wind carry their wisps away.
With no cleats to pound and suck the nutrients away,
The scoreboard with broken screens and rusting letters
Becomes the sole witness to their breeding cycle.

As the time moves by, so do the clouds to their homes.
Pink blends with blue and purple morphs into black.
As the puny finches retreat into their shelters for the night,
The owls replace them one by one
With each unique and plentiful chirp of daytime
Replaced with uniform and sonorous hoots of nighttime

As streets lay desolate and night has fallen,
It won't be long before sunrise comes.

Love in the Time of Uncertainty
Eli Dorsey



Take Me to Church
LA

I watch as she sits there still as death is she breathing is she your girlfriend, they say. no more hiding, a sweeter time flashes before she lost her innocence. Mom and dad glare, brighter than the sun. They're our captors, no more gentle than the whip of sin

Cancellation

Liam Kress

(Verse One)

Everything's getting canceled
It's the crumble of today
Something we all can't handle
Looking hard to find a way
They say to wash our hands to watch the
hands of life deal health
Our way of life is stealthily canceling out

(Verse Two)

Call it the stars aligning
Population shaving down
And by down I mean declining
With all the rumors all around
To take the curve to where it's safe, you stay
alert inside
Don't break the nerve and stray away outside

(Chorus)

With all the recent cases in our cities and our
states
The news isn't great
Schools are down and switching to a pretty
bland spring break
It's no longer fake
Events are being handled
By that, they're being canceled
There's nothing more for us to do
And it's hard to find a cure for boredom too

(Verse Three)

You've heard me say it all now
People gather what they want
And leave the rest to the plow
To shred their saying nonchalant
Vacations being canceled as the
Flights dip from the sky
I can't begin to understand how and why

(Verse Four)

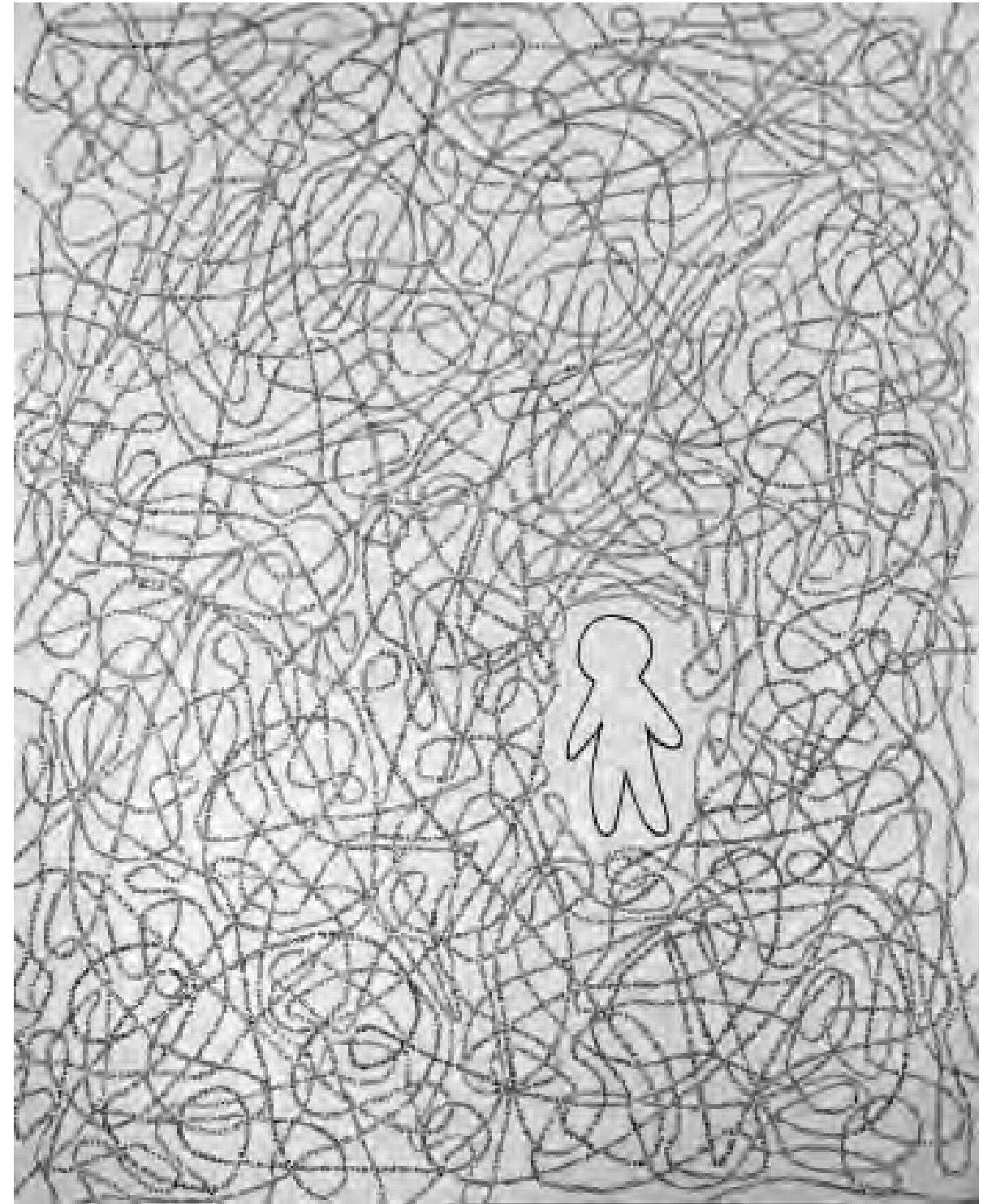
It's hard to find a reason
Aside from Covid taking us
But the planets in this treason
It's not just us with canceled trusts
To isolate yourself means 'stay away from
everyone'
One singular case could infect a line to the sun

(Chorus)

With all the recent cases in our cities and our
states
The news isn't great
Schools are down and switching to a pretty
bland spring break
It's no longer fake
Events are being handled
By that, they're being canceled
There's nothing more for us to do
And it's hard to find a cure for boredom too

(Outro)

To isolate yourself means stay away from
everyone
One singular case could infect a line to the sun



2020
Jayanthi Simhan

How Sudden That Pink and Blue Should Fade

Cyd Kennard

I

My first best friend's favorite color was pink
she wore it the first day of first grade, when we sat together at lunch



I wore it too, and together we giggled at the flamboyancy
and traded peanut butter and jelly sandwiches

we had PB & Js for the rest of the year
we had sleepovers on the weekend

and huddled together on the playground, scheming plots
to take over the world or to stay up past our bedtime, whichever came first

on the last day of first grade I decided that I had grown out of pink
my new favorite color was blue, deep like heavy waves

like a shifting sky to echo the mind of my 7-year-old self
a sky faded past the golden pink sunset, cast mere minutes before

II

In second grade my best friend decided that blue wasn't so bad a color
and together we wore it the first day of the new year

we planned weeks in advance to wear the same hue
but at the last moment I picked a different shirt, two shades darker

we sat across from each other at lunch
we didn't giggle or scheme, didn't plan to sleepover on Saturday, just talked

and she pulled out her PB & J
at the same time I stuffed my bread crust out of sight

the next day she wore pink while I stayed blue
to me it seemed the end of the world

a fracture in the forever seamless fabric of us



III

I tell myself that I don't know why we drifted apart
but I think I've told two lies, because I do know

and because it wasn't a drift but a slam
slam of change, or maybe just realization of growth

when I look back on those years I find it funny
to write about her in past tense as if she's not still around

she is, but it would take time for us to recognize each other
to look past the years apart and acknowledge the friend underneath

because even years later, especially years later
I can grow again, now and every day after

maybe this time to realize that nothing is without change
to find patience for others' growth

as well as for my own

Flight *Julia Sayette*



The Judgment That Fills Me

Tamia Pugh

Eighty percent of the world we know and love today is composed of volcanic rock. Most volcanoes are found where the tectonic plates of the Earth are converging and diverging, separating and connecting. Magma from inside erupts and starts to cool down. It melts within the Earth's surface and molds with all the other minerals inside the surface. It creates a new, beautiful ground for humans to walk on every single day. A ground that supports our daily needs and tasks. Without this continuous cycle, our species would only be alive for a brief moment. We see volcanoes as these mass destructors of the world instead of an admirable flaw on the planet. They're seen as only killers instead of inventors of the vital things we need today. Once that lava emits from the center of that crater and sprouts out, oozing down onto the old surface, something so precious and so rare is made. What we don't see is that magma within those volcanoes are just like the darkness we all have bubbling inside our minds, bodies, and hearts. Deep inside that volcano is a void. A void filled with all of our swirling judgment.

I remember reading James Baldwin's


essay "Down at The Cross" for the first time in my junior year of high school, and some of the messages within that essay still stick with me today. One day we had to read a section of the essay where he talked about his family being Christian and what he had to go through because of their religion. Before reading that part of the book, we had already been reading previous essays and other sections of this specific essay. I was not impressed by what I had read. I was bored. Not because of the ideas but because there wasn't a real story line to go with the essay. My eyes stayed on the mashed letters for a good five minutes before going to the next. I tried to distract myself with cooking scrumptious chicken alfredo or listening to elegant classical music in hopes that my mind would focus more on the book. I dreaded having to read any page of that book. One thing about me is that I despise things about peoples' lives. Autobiographies, documentaries, most personal essays all bring me to my peak of absolute boredom.

That's how I always felt, even while reading Baldwin's essay, until there was this spark in the book that caught my attention.



Broken Blocks

Jackson Zemek



He talked about a time where he felt like he could kill his own father. All I could think about was, what kind of person would ever feel the need to do that? Why would anyone want to admit that in an essay? How absurd of him to ever feel that way towards the person that raised him! I read that section of James Baldwin's essay, constantly trying to understand the purpose of including this detail. I needed a very benevolent answer as to why he felt this way to his father. My eyes scrolled past that singular piece of paper for as close to 15 minutes. I was trying to absorb every detail he included, even the small irrelevant ones in case there was some type of clue that he left behind as to why. There was only one answer that I could come up with; the darkness we all have inside of us.

It was wrong and hypocritical of me to judge Baldwin for what he felt and what he decided to put in his essay. I had no right to judge him, especially on what he experienced because that's something he can't control. The darkness inside of myself pushed me to judge Baldwin on what he included in his essay.

Sometimes, the judgment we all have overwhelms our thinking. We are so oblivious to it that we believe it's just normal. Having an opinion on someone is normal, but harshly judging them on their own choices is not normal. Or is it?

Judgment seems to come in multiple different levels. It stems from several parts of our mind and sprouts in ways that can be either negative or positive. Judgment could come from our own insecurities that we refuse to acknowledge or talk about. For me, while reading Baldwin's essay, I was jealous of the way he could express exactly how he felt so openly and honestly. I was envious of the way he could freely be himself in his writing and include whatever he wanted to. James Baldwin was able to come up with such complex ideas and express how passionate he felt about those ideas on the page. I aspire to be able to do what he did in *Down At The Cross*. Once I rooted out that I was actually jealous of Baldwin, I started to admire him because of how powerful he actually was. All of the secret mysteries that were hidden to me while first

reading the book finally came to light. Now don't get me wrong, I still very much dislike anything that deeply describes someone's life, but it pushed me to be more open-minded about what I am reading. The volcano became a serendipity instead of a defect.

Judgment can also be something that just happens naturally and implicitly without meaning any harm. When you see someone jogging down the street while you're on the opposite side, you envision what that person's life must be like. A soccer dad who just dropped his three kids off at Shadyside High school, planning his next move in life. The fantasy never ends because as human beings, we are often way too curious for our own good. Next you see him entering his 2017 kia soul with beads of sweat slowly dripping down his forehead. His tightlined lips frown as he looks up at the sky and sees the gloomy sun plummeting into the horizon. His name has to be Ken. Definitely not something I would want to be named, way too basic. We judge someone everytime we see someone new. It helps

us actually grasp the potential someone could have. Judgment can be a positive device that leads us to a more evaluated opinion. Next time you judge someone, make sure you're doing it to gain more knowledge about someone rather than judging them because you haven't accepted something within you. If you do negatively judge someone, think of why you're doing it. Call yourself out and grow from the experience. Consistently going through that process will efficiently make you a remarkable person. I promise. Think about how glorious our society could be if we all accomplished this process of recognizing our judgment and growing from it. Most of the issues within our society would be solved, especially political and social.

Look at the volcano one more time and think of what could possibly be held inside of it, magnificent and imperfect. Notice how the volcano is just like you. It has some of the most lovely qualities and some of the most faulty qualities, but it was still put on this planet naturally, just like you.

Grow
Alexander Sayette

It should have come with breath, in air expelled
to knock out sixteen candles.
Kick-start our lungs, maybe with a skittish kiss
wake us when the world is ours.
And so it should have come with breath,
but instead, we choked on masks,
barred from spring by bedroom windows, torn
by fear. Give us winter's grieving veil, we need
a burial to mourn the death of spring.

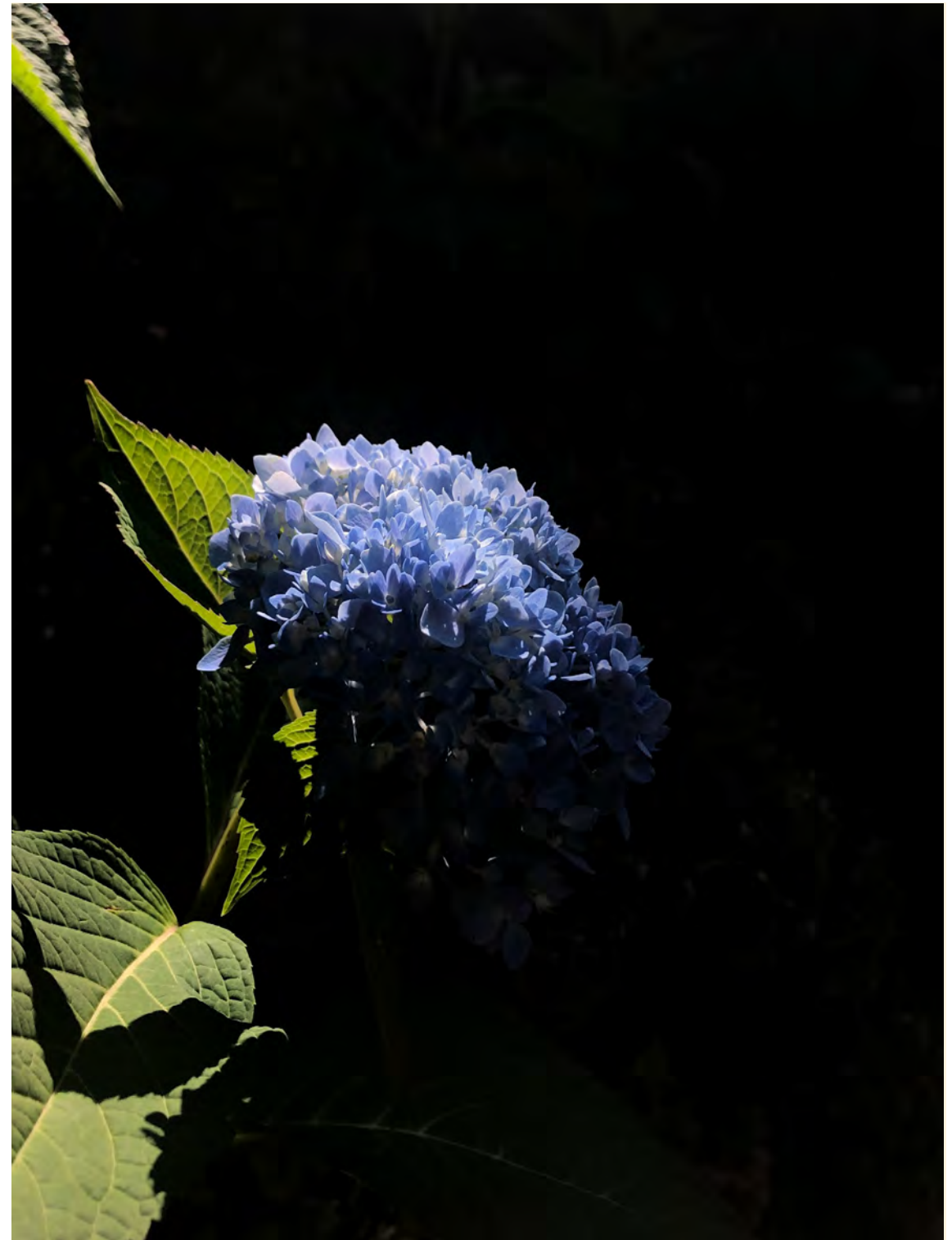
April is indeed the cruelest month, as I am
taunted, sick with envy at each blooming flower.
This is a spring that makes us
mourn the Mourning Dove. Close enough to catch,
a song that tugs at my longing ears.
Does she mock me in her flight
or is she indifferent to my urge to fly? Which is worse, I wonder
as she departs. Each milestone, each midnight dance,
a feathered flurry falling through my hands.

And yet there are things I can't ignore, beauty even
in this pain. I see shoots of daffodils
split pathways through thawing earth, as breeze
stirs through sunlight, watch the perennial blooming horn of spring,
through brassy lips, it sings a flower's song.
From a bounded bedroom window, it has taught me how to
draw up life from dust,
search for sun. Rise like flowers—dare not grieve another season.

We temper like glass, trial by fire. Pump us
full of promises, watch them fracture with age. Forged from stars,
we are made of things collapsed so many times—
pre-cracked and worn at just sixteen.
We are trees, we hold our stories in our rings. We bury
them with time as they draw nearer to our core. One day they'll
cut us open, see what we were fed,
teach kids our stories from cross-sections of our hearts. We are
deprived, we kill with kisses, but we are built to last.

This is how we grow.

Into the Light
Maité Sadeh



A Mother's Revenge

Margee Dever

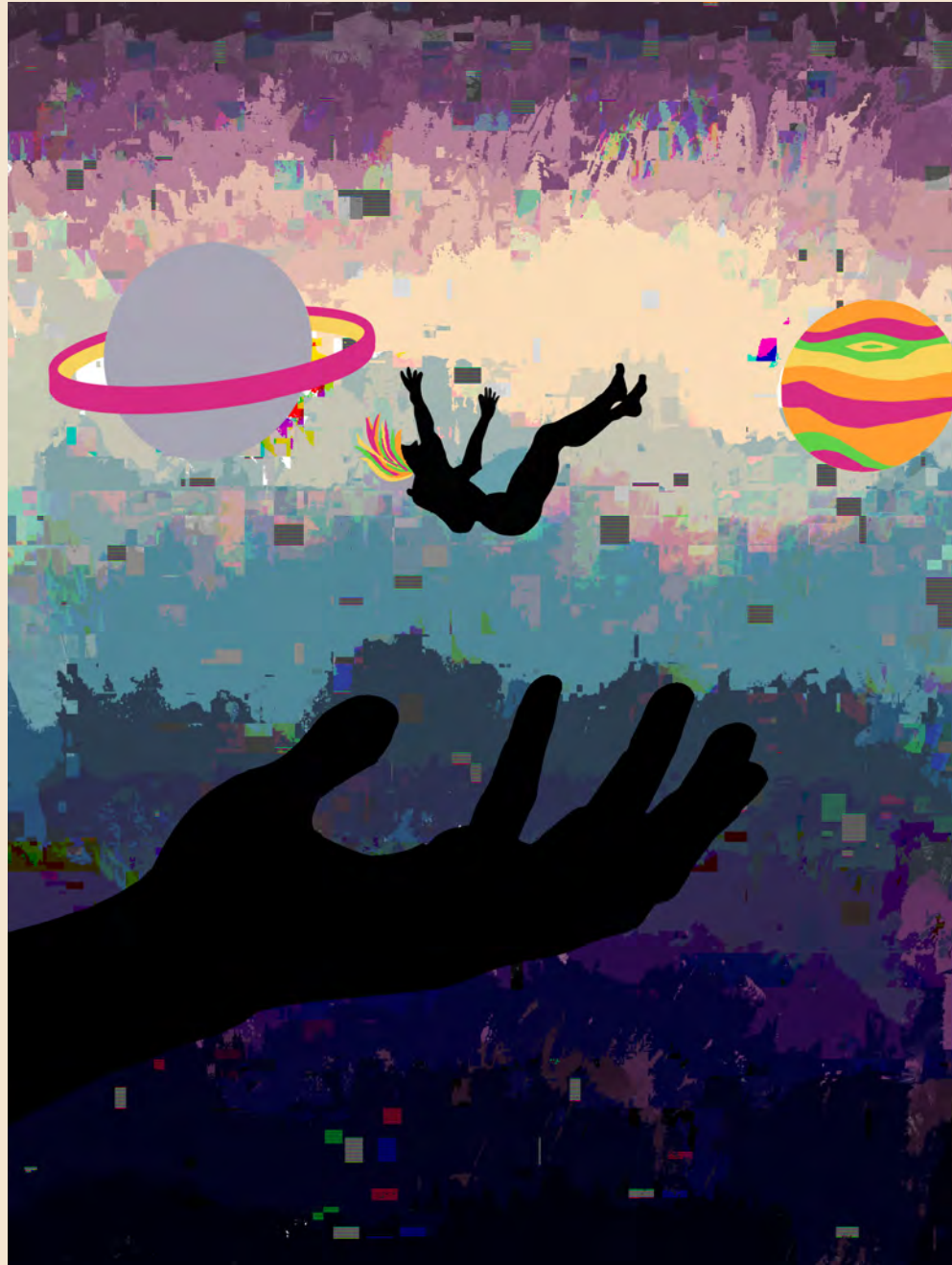
I wept for several suns when I heard the sad news.
My only son, my pride, my only joy, gone
in an instant. Driven by grief, I huddled in a corner
of my cave. My mourning consumed me,
5 I dreaded the days to come.
Would they come for me as well?
It is not their tradition to fear a female.
I heard them cheering, celebrating, laughing
from that horrid hall. How dare they celebrate
10 while I grieve in gloom! I stepped out of
that dark, dank cave and looked toward that
resplendent hall. They would regret the harm and hurt
they had caused me. I crept up to that magnificent hall.
It was bigger, brighter, more elegant and imposing than
15 other buildings like it. I peered in and saw those sick
soul-stealers drinking and celebrating. It made me
burn with rage. I summoned my strength and
burst through the strong wood doors.
They balked at the sight of me, a water-creature,
20 in their midst. I sped forward, snatching soldiers
left and right. They would pay the price.
I glanced around the hall, and my eyes fell
on a familiar item. My son's arm, fresh from
battle, still bloody, displayed as if he were a prize.
25 Horrified, I grabbed it. Tears welling in my eyes,
I fled the hall and returned to my swamp-cave.
I devoured the men I had snatched with glee,
their cries amused me. I slept soundly that night,
satisfied.
30 I awoke to the screeching of metal.
Thoughts raced through my mind, how had they found me
so fast? Would I meet the same fate as my son?
I readied myself for a battle, I would not go down without
a fight. I snatched my sword, a family heirloom, crafted
35 from iron and damascened with silver inlay, a sword so
powerful, that there was magic working upon it that
even I had never seen. It was a good sword.
I cleaned and polished the sword, waiting for
a foolish warrior to jump through the flames
40 above. I heard a commotion outside my cave,
peeking out, there stood a stately warrior.
Beowulf was his name, renowned for his bravery,
known to many as a monster-slayer, known to me as a
Slayer-monster murderer of my son. I steeled myself, this



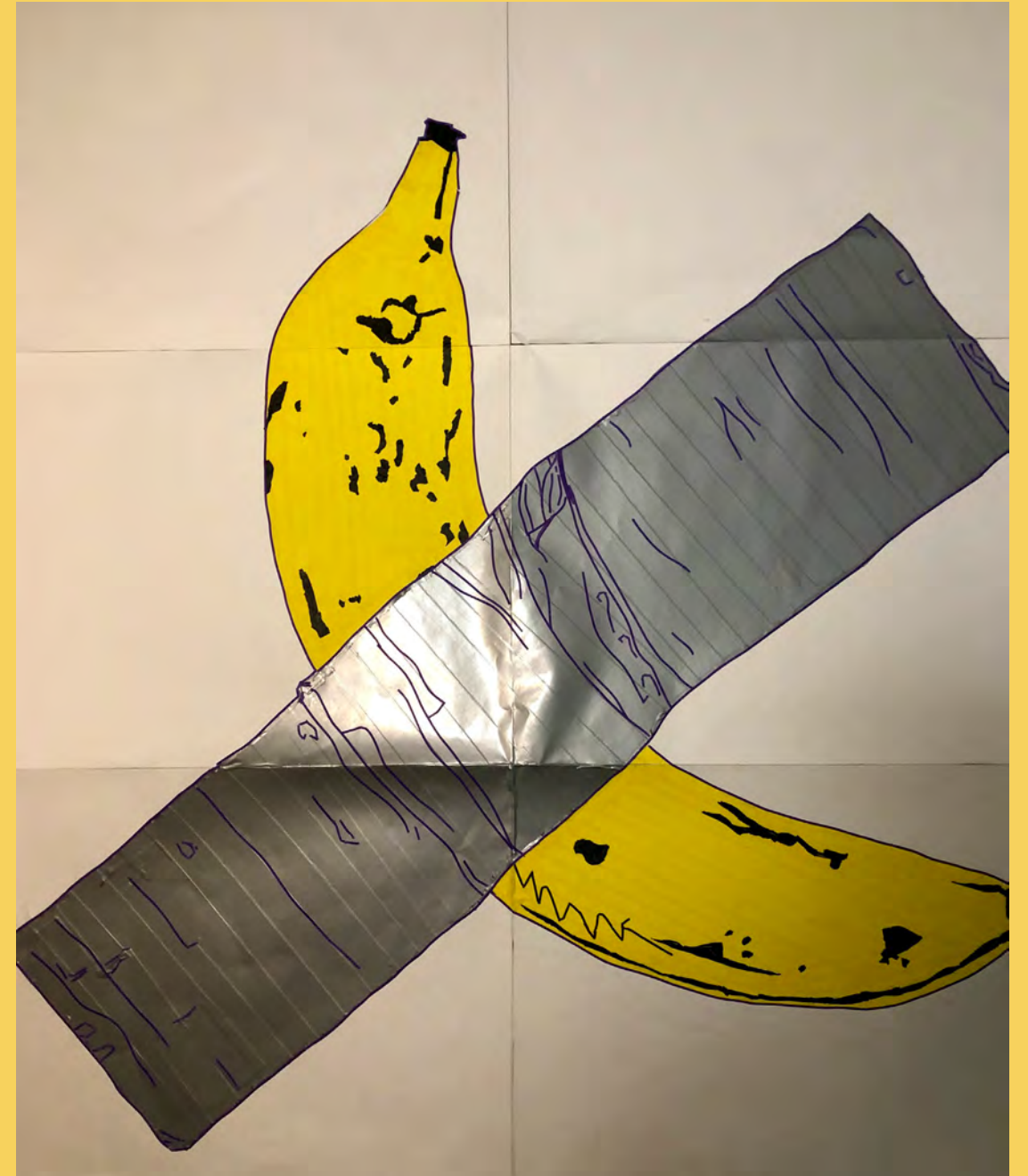
The Scales of Lady Justice

Uma Simhan

45 murderer would face failure. He made the first move,
a strike I parried easily. On the attack, I directed a hit
to his heart. He parried to the right and my blade
scratched his arm. The red sweat gushed from
the cut. He gritted his teeth and attacked
50 with an aggression I had never seen. I blocked
two strikes before he made a dent. The battle
would continue in this cadence until he
delivered a lethal blow. He fainted left and I
moved to block the strike that never came.
55 I fell to the ground, eyes dimming, my breathing
became a labor. Blood was pouring from
the wound, I felt weaker with each second.
My sword clattered to the floor. In my final minutes,
I thought of my son. I had failed him, failed
60 to get revenge upon the monsters that had
murdered him and treated him like a prize.
My breathing was getting shallower,
"I'm sorry, son." I whispered. My head fell
to the floor as my heart gave out and the
65 world went dark.



Glitch
Ella Duch



Am I Offending You
Alexander Sayette

300 Miles Away

Christopher Sharkey

Do you know what it is like to leave the place that you grew up in or in a place that is significant to you in some way? Do you hold onto the memories that you made there or, do they fade away, almost like they never actually happened? For me, my home in Philadelphia was important in my overall life, but now when I drive by it, I barely recognize it. It is hard to believe that I was living here four years ago. When I see it, it brings back all the memories that I made there. When I put those memories together, I feel like I am back there when I am not. But, as I try to remember what my life was like, in that place that now seems so far away, I am still reminded of the last time that I was ever there and the emotions I felt that day. The day that I moved. My whole life, people have been telling me that home is where the heart is, but my heart is still in that house and refuses to leave.



Cloud of Geese
Oscar Nigam

As I woke up on a bright Thursday morning, with the light of the rising sun shining through my window and into my weary face, it was almost like it was telling me to wake up. But I had no intention of getting up. When I opened my eyes, I looked at my colorless ceiling. I could hear my mom outside load up the car. I felt a tear run down the side of my face, and soon more tears followed right behind it. I couldn't remember the last I had cried, yet it was nice to know I still could. I raised my head and looked around my blue and white room. My room had two blue walls and two white walls on opposite sides of the room. As you walked in, the first thing that you would see was my black desk, now with a missing chair. It used to be covered with books, and drawings. Now it was empty, with no trace of my presence. Next to my desk was my closet. The clothes that once filled it were now gone. Just like me in a few minutes. My desk and closet were on the right side of my room. My desk was placed against a blue wall with a window above it. While working on homework, I would look out of the window and into my backyard, which housed a pink cherry blossom tree. The smell that was emitted by the tree was soft and faint. The scent was similar to that of lilac or rose. I wonder what happened to that tree, and if it is still here? I would wish to myself that I could go out there rather than be inside writing an English essay for school. I remember the happiness I felt as I ran around the yard. Running was my joy. I loved the feeling of speed, with the wind against my face, and the soles of my shoes pushing off the ground. I felt alive and free. My greatest memory from that yard was the time that my father and I spent throwing a football or a baseball with one another. I was always afraid that I would throw the ball over our light brown, wooden, fence that surrounded our backyard. As my eyes looked around my room, which now seemed lifeless and bare, I looked at my TV that was across from my bed. I saw my face that was reflected against the screen. My reflection wasn't happy nor sad, just empty. Empty, like my house. Almost any trace of me was now gone. Like the 12 years, I spent here, never happened. I, then walked out of my room, not knowing that I would never set foot in it again. This room had once belonged to my brothers. I was so excited when I was able to move in. Now it was my time to move out.

Blood

Phillip Leong

Rich folks two streets up were the best for Halloween
Family size bars for all 4 foot 2 of me.
Their elaborate decorations stretching across the lawn,
jumping out, attacking every kid on the block.
Weird to think I can't call them rich folks no more.

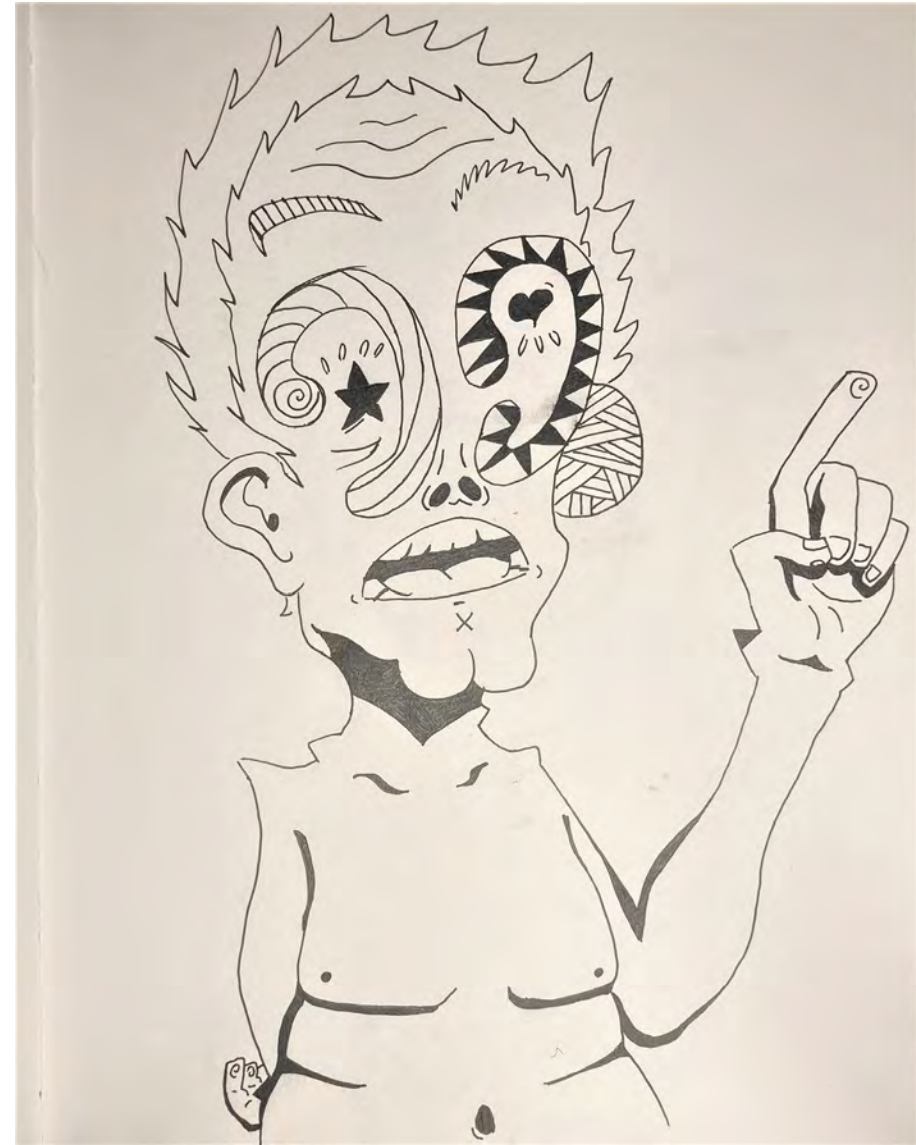
When I'm home I spend a lot of time cleaning.
Never really realized how dirty that place was.
Sometimes when I'm sitting on the checkered kitchen tile,
watching rats scurry near the bin,
faint squeaks echo from the corner.
Sounds like a whole family of them fellers moved in.
Must be a paradise here,
where the people long gone
but their stuffs left behind,
like the spices on the counter
and the rock hard crackers in the cabinet,
2 years spent catching dust,
but they'll still want it.

When I moved on to the bathroom
to scrub the black crust off the bowl,
I realized how small our bathroom used to be.
Half a porta john
with a toilet that roars after every flush
and a sink propped up on stilts,
like a clown at the carnival.
One time I kicked one of its legs,
straight swept that fool,
who nearly fell out of the wall.

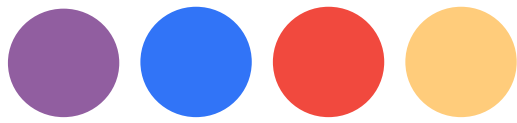
Looking back I can't believe we lived in such a dump.
God I love it.
Not then,
just now.

Cause now our kitchen is rat free.
Got a whole dish washer and everything.
Now our bathrooms are proper sized
rooms that won't give someone a breakdown.
They've got walls that won't close you in,
won't suffocate you in the smell of your own feces.

Now we're the folks two streets up.
Not even,
we're the folks 13 miles away
In the promised land:
Suburbia.
But ain't no way I'm giving them kids king size bars,
never in a million years.



Confusion will be my Epitaph
Phillip Leong



An End

By *Autum Holthaus*

When does something end by itself?
Whether it's out of your control, or you couldn't do anything, your words weren't strong enough, you panic, and something, someone, ends.

When does it happen?
What does it feel like to end?
And what causes it to end?

There are many times where it's simple. A song.
Many times where it's not. Lives and thoughts

When does your life end?
Does it end when you die?
Or does it end, much, much sooner. When throughout the years you were traumatized and scarred by the events in your life, and every night you cried and cried, listening to 21 guns, Throwing down your arms, and giving up the fight.

Or, does life end because of the anticipation of what hasn't happened. You haven't told people your 2 secrets, only a few know, none of which are who it should be.

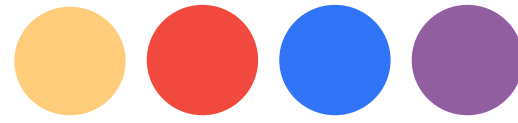
While writing my poem, my secret has changed so much. It went from being gay, but then that became known. It then went to being trans, but then I said that too. The scariest part however, is when someone finds out the one you never planned to tell in the first place. But back to the end. Well specifically, when it doesn't end. For me, it ends when you don't like something, but refuse to change it.

It happens to us a lot, when we forget to do our homework, but we wake up in the middle of the night remembering it, but don't get out of bed to do it. Life works like that. You remember, but chose to stay in bed.

I chose to stay in bed, but also stay awake because of my curiosity.

I have too much curiosity.

Curiosity killed the cat. But satisfaction brought it back.
My biggest problem has been caused by curiosity, and the aforementioned "Inability to stop".
That's how
The world ended for me.
But what about you?
Why did you end?
Why did you stop blooming?
Why did you give up?



Pieces of Me

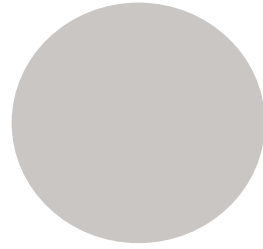
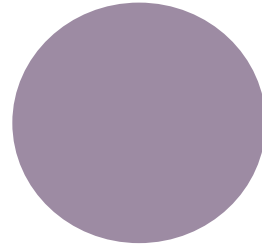
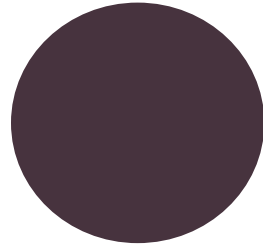
By *Hannah Chang*



Why did you give up?
Give up..
Give up..
Give up dammit.
Why won't you give up?
Why won't you stop?
Stop forgiving, stop forgetting, remember some damn stuff for once.
But, what if you don't want to forget?
The great friends you made, the experiences you had with them? So what if you did some stupid stuff with some?
Do I deserve to not be happy because I messed up?
Why do I have to suffer?

To quote Weezer, "The world has turned and left me here, just where I was before you appeared. And in your place and empty space, has filled the void, behind my face."

I'm sitting still in my room, but I'm really not alone.



Life Under the Moon

Helen Zhang

The sound of the rain is as blunt as an atom bomb, making a popping sound so short but clear as the moon stares from above, observing the microcosm of sounds from the shame-filled world below it. An owl hedges itself on the tree branch under the dry safety of the leaves as the tapping of the droplets cover the roofs of the buildings from far away, watching the blind ones waste away as dust gathers on their window sills. Only their black silhouettes, that cut through the rain, are visible from the window, illuminated by the glow of the sulfur light bulb hanging from the ceiling, projecting its sickly green hue on the people below. The raindrops cancel out the sound of wood supports creaking behind the walls and skin rubbing on freshly washed linen sheets mixing with the white noise, burying the sounds like the dirt being shoveled on top of a casket after all the others have left. The forest where the dirty little dirt children, birthed and then abandoned by mother nature, hide remains silent in the pitch black night, like a graveyard for the bones, with only the slight blue hue of midnight and the occasional glimmer of a star keeping the night from engulfing its surroundings, as a one of the silhouettes looks out their window from the wet walk-up apartment atop the hill, watching, waiting, plotting...



We Played Here
Aria Narasimhan

THANK YOU

This magazine would not have been possible without the help of many people. Their dedication, hard work, and creativity were critical in creating the magazine that you are holding now. We would especially like to thank the following people:

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MISSION STATEMENT

Plaid is a representation of the abundant creative capabilities of the students at Winchester Thurston School. It aims to celebrate student artistry. It is a place for exploration, a place for the upending of expectations. Plaid receives many more submissions than it can fit within its pages but attempts to highlight as many pieces as possible. Dedicated to representing our varied students' voices and the spirit of inclusivity, Plaid is a professional-level forum for personal expression, discourse, and communication. It is a celebration of artistic visions and the minds that produce them.

COLOPHON

Plaid is published annually by the Literary Magazine Staff of Winchester Thurston School. Plaid Indelible was created using Adobe InDesign CS6 and Adobe Photoshop CS6. All body text was set in Georgia, and all titles were in Franklin Gothic Medium and Franklin Gothic Heavy. Art and writing attributions were in Georgia (Italic). Plaid is a free

publication, available to all members of the Winchester Thurston School community. It is created entirely by its student staff with additional help from our faculty advisors, Ms. Sharon McDermott and Mrs. Emily Mohn-Slate, and our technology advisor, Mr. David Kallis. All WT high school students are encouraged to submit their work throughout the year. Submissions are chosen by the staff for publication based on quality, length, available space, and adherence to theme; we aim to publish the best work by as many artists and writers from all grades in as many mediums as possible. All non-digital work is either scanned as

a digital file or digitally photographed. Plaid is an award-winning member of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and the National Council of Teachers of English.

OTHER CREDITS

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