

# the Lit

Spring Issue 2023





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**Front Cover** GIGI CHEN

**Back Cover** GRACE WALTERS

## Letter from the Editors

As this year comes to a close, there are bittersweet feelings as we witness our beloved seniors saying goodbye to their high school years and moving on to new challenges. The season has changed with blooming daffodils and buzzing bees returning to our campus. Along with this seasonal change, the campus has seen many exciting activities, such as partying it up at school dances and coming together to cheer on our peers in spring sports. With new growth comes new and creative minds, and we want to appreciate the great year we have had with The Lit. It has been a wonderful year of creative art and writing, and our meetings have truly been times of relaxation, music, and laughter.

Our final spring issue of 2023 has been a pleasure to put together. We would like to thank every literati who has sent in their writing, art, or any other creative media they created this term. This issue embodies the beautiful spring vibe of campus and displays our Choate community's work during this term. The Lit cabinet hopes you will enjoy this issue and are grateful to the Choate community for supporting and encouraging creativity on campus.

Lastly, we would like to thank all our wonderful attendees who have supported The Lit, whether by coming to our exciting Tuesday meetings, submitting their own work, or supporting their peers' work. We would like to thank our advisers Dr. Siperstein and Ms. Ashford, for their hard work, passion, and advice. We would also like to thank Ms. Nolan and the Copy Center for their integral contributions for making every issue possible. A special thanks to our patrons, donors, subscribers, and benefactors, as this publication would not be possible without their generosity. Thank you for your support and we would like to introduce the 2023 Spring Issue of The Lit! We hope you enjoy it!





## My Best Friend

Addicting and Fulfilling.

Rare

And treated without care

It wears.

Yet, I stare.

I feign.

I do not dare

to wonder to dream to hope

to wish to want to win

to bear to live to believe

what a day

it would be

without my dearsweetcaringwelcomingjoyousshiningprosperinggrantingleaming friend

Death.

CARTER LINARDOS '24





## Untitled

white moon stares at me through the leaves

we sing

under the bedsheets

— unprompted.

misty air

white & blue — light like a nightingale

flows

through me, a blanket of songs

[we all need a story.]

white hills contoured with fork lines

curves ascending

crest—trough—

into infinity

a reality

we can't grasp.

[i hope you can hear me.]

YOYO ZHANG '24



## Elegy For Love/Spring

Spring blooms,  
It melts our bodies  
And our minds  
And our hardened hearts.  
We're popsicles on a summer's day,  
Red, white, ocean blue,  
Dripping onto our hands  
Sticky and saccharine sweet  
Here, have a taste.

You are a taste I can't quite get  
Rid of, a perfume I cannot  
Get out of my clothes,  
My hair, my heart. Oh,  
My heart.

Scuffling feet on a warm evening,  
Staring at my shoes  
As if they would distract from this  
Vexing high of hearing  
The pretty words you say.

I will love you forever,  
And I don't know what to do

With that. I don't know where  
To put my hands.  
Maybe love isn't

The right term.

I will always let you have a piece of my heart,  
The last bite of dessert, the final popsicle.  
And if that isn't love, I don't know what is.

I don't know how I can be so young  
And so old at the same time,  
I have lived a thousand lifetimes,  
And in all of them, you are just out of reach.

I don't know what love is,  
But I would talk to you for hours  
And never get tired of hearing you,  
I would watch you trace the patterns  
Of the carpet for eternity.

I would trade all the knowledge  
I've filled my pretty little head with  
To sit and watch day turn to night  
Winter into spring  
Days turn into a lifetime by your side.

And if that isn't love, I don't know  
What could be.  
I want you to dawdle in the doorway  
Of my life for an eternity,  
I want this feeling to exist  
Sparingly, eternally,  
Like rocks weathered down  
By ocean blue.

HARPER MARSDEN-UREN '26





## Weighing Puddles

The torrents are out to get me today, God says. Here I am  
unleaded and wrapped in rainboots, swimming with soaked socks among the

sinner. The Reckoning is when I blow soap bubbles and watch  
them shot by the rain, taste the gliding rainbow suds on the

pavement. Out pours a simulacrum. A roadtrip to  
nowhere, cracking out wet streams of runoff down the car

panes. Listen to the flies through the drizzle. Pinned down, they might  
have something to say in the aquiferous shattering of their

wings. Watch me plead a doubling, a tripling of being. Anything more  
or less. A singularity of any raindrop. These truths pour

out. Down the blubbling rubber. Hailing from my heart.  
Twofold droplets. The weight separated between them.

GIGI CHEN '24







## Yoken Kinesis in Slats of Time

To *delignate*, transitive verb:

1. to describe, portray, or set forth with accuracy or in detail
2. to deprive or strip of wood

Harnessed, the floorboards speak riddles and splinters.  
I ask more clearly of resonances split between my toes  
what of their delignation,  
of biocide: Theseus' ship perverted into my living room;  
—are you still your kin? your cultivated constituency—  
towards a neat, spickenspan deflowered defoilaging.

The second inhibits the first, puffs of grain cricking into  
gaps of empty time,  
exhaling out towards wounds that cannot be healed. Words unexpressed.  
The unmaking of my body shreds the imagination; nail beds peeling upwards in strips of bark.

Lodged whorl to whorl: my great hallux to their great rings; I imagine  
their great web of inter-wooden mycorrhizal networks  
now pressed and glossed spline-dust-spline, a more intimate unawakening.

GIGI CHEN '24



## I push madlibs into excess to

disconnect ambiguate appropriate excavate your self armpits mother eyes into my crater skin vapor. I want to pry calcify crack our nodes cavities wounds bodies together to a point the yard down yonder and rain burn dig wilt so they will never be seen again. Our inner ears bite marks surrogate-silences bleed words though, and when we truly look lacerate listen we cannot stand support duel suture each other. Please excuse my revitalization mortification armament amourment of being known, we drown plead interrogate of the other.

When you flourish cower about me I transition burgeon murder madden plunder away from palpitations creeds stitches obligations and realize the ways in which our retrograde gobbledegook querling querulous cumuliform communication makes you me our dog our secrets into spilled milk the butterfly effect tsunamis. Eventually, we decide that everything floods fools gold madlibbers lead(s) to hell you people anyways, and unbind reravel illuminate chomp gab jab at each other,

pull to a loss.

GIGI CHEN '24





## Bent Out of Shape

It's your fault that I broke my glasses.  
If you hadn't been sitting there,  
silently, unbothered, unaware,  
I wouldn't have felt like I was shrinking  
smaller and smaller and smaller.

It's your fault that I started speed-walking,  
speed-stomping across that walk of shame,  
feeling eyes on my neck  
but  
knowing you hadn't even looked up.

It's your fault that I slammed into the nearest door trying to get out, noticing  
a sharp pressure against my temple,  
my shoulder already starting to bruise,  
my headphones crooked on my head as I resurfaced to fresh air.

It's your fault that I was standing on the second step from the top of the stairs,  
glaring at the twisted metal frames  
glinting with all your guilty laughter.

It's your fault I reached for the mini-hammer in the bottom drawer, wrapping  
it in a tissue to protect the surface of my precious spectacles, slowly tapping  
but eventually  
swinging it down helplessly.

It's your fault that I broke my glasses.

FRIDAY ACUÑA '26





## Why I Want to Write—an Addendum

Because a friend reminded me why I write.

I want to write the heartcrushing lyrics to the music that ensnares my soul. I want to write to express my emotions through language—to myself, and to others. To articulate the emotions I can only describe as hidden land mines within the landscape of my own words. I want to write the words that will speak to others; not just resonate, but reverberate, within their minds. I want to write the serendipitous lines that come so easily to so many, but struggle to emanate from my own pen. I want to write on the creamy parchment I once wrote about rather than the robotic, calculated, blue-tinted screen that absorbs my brain. I want to write for myself again. I want to write in a collected way. I want to write in a disorganized and pure way. I want to write to achieve accolades. I want to write to claim my own inner peace. I want to write to pacify the thoughts that tumble over the folds of the gray matter that is gradually shrinking in my skull. I want to write the kind of fluid motion that inspires movement. I want to inspire movements. I want to write poems about orange slices and gold string. I want to write without feeling so desperately choked by the need to write that nothing real comes out. I want to write to catalog the memories I'll leave behind. I want to write myself a legacy.

MIKAYLA DASILVA '24



## Double Edged Sword

An anxious young man named Samuel set out one day to try and find the key to success. He searched all day long, through mountains, lakes, and high mountain lakes, until he stumbled upon one old blacksmith and one double edged sword. The sword was beautiful, and the wise old man boasted that it would bring money and fame to whoever wielded it.

Samuel's eyes lit up, and he said to the blacksmith "I must have this sword! All I seek is success and happiness, and having money and fame would be the key!"

The smith replied, "I will give you this sword but beware; as this sword is double edged. It takes away the same as it gives."

Samuel snatched at the stunning sword, proclaiming that he had found the key to success while paying no attention to the man's ominous warning.

So Samuel returned to his life, wielding the sword with pride. Everywhere he went, money and fame soon followed. Eventually, he became so greedy that the sword drove him mad, and he felt as if he had no purpose. Samuel took some time away from the sword and realized what he had become. The sword had pushed away his family and friends, cut out simple pleasures in life, and stabbed a hole in his heart so deep that he knew what had to be done.

So, Sammy threw the sword into the deepest ocean and returned to his simple life, realizing that the real key to success was not in material possessions, but in the gratitude for life and companionship of those around him.

And thus, Sammy's search for success ended where it began, with a simple truth that he had overlooked all along.

JOHN MARKLEY '25





## Dear Achilles, Come Home

*Oh, Achilles (you're a hero, can't you see? Your eyes  
Shone with the might of a thousand suns, all extinguished By a mortal's spear. The line of life and death,  
now gray As you, champion of men, threat of the gods, sweep through  
The Trojans, remorse dead with your soul. Where is the one I knew? The fire you once burned with  
consumed your soul, The embers of your heart erupted into this show  
Of bloodied dance, dead eyes only sparked with death. Achilles...)  
Come (now, listen for my whispered hope, words I printed On your soul; Your song, now synonymous  
with the death Of Troy's best. Your gentle hands, now washed in blood, dreadful Call of death blazing  
your path. Ah, but I see the truth:  
Hector's spear took two lives. Even the gods fear you, as The blessed arrow soars. But here, it all comes)  
back to me*

## Invincible (vulnerable) heart, after TC Tolbert

*I am only (a man, after all—Not a god, not  
Immortal—The Styx doesn't protect your heart—doesn't Protect *him*—Now, just a shell—nothing but  
bbbbbbblind madness— Before, with a singing, leaping heart—With a reason*

*to beat—Now, icily bump-bumping—My blood-splattered shadow dancing—There's nothing to look  
bbbbbbback for—No one Left—Just his ghost, haunting—My own, as I run through them— My sword  
tasting bbbbbbthe blood of hundreds—I stand *fighting*  
(For nothing—My future burned with his body—All thought Gone—Now, my twisting blade—Enter,  
bbbbbbexecutioner—*

*To Hades! To Thanatos!—Glory to the dead!—to  
These Trojans—to the gods that cannot stop me—to the  
Kiss of death—to Patroclus, my love—and the arrow  
Piercing my heel—It all comes back to one thing: *for him**

VIC GLASS '23



**tick**    ANONYMOUS

no one has won my heart as many times as you  
has snuck in through a window and lit the eternal fire  
the sky is dark and your eye is glittering with embers  
you watch it from afar on a log of your own, one step back,  
your eyes smoked over, far away, pensive,

i wake up from this dream, or nightmare,  
and feel a tap on my shoulder. you are there, i can feel you  
by my side like a dizzying breath, i can see your  
smile as you crouch down in the aisle beside me,  
muted blue light contrasting with

visceral beams of connection running eye to eye,  
from the side resembling a rough amber shade,  
like wood hollowed out by the sun through its cracks and edges,  
from the front a piercing green, pastel as a jacket, flecked of gold,  
a lion's breath in the cold air, a star, a spark, a sparkle;  
i wish you knew how to read the constellations of my heart.

adventurous, but maybe scared, you are playful and tease  
open the pickle jar and whiff, and tell me  
about the night sky, about your six year old braids, about  
we speed ahead of them all and suddenly don't even need the words,  
you are ok with silence, more than  
depth is a metaphor for the sky, you tell me,  
and the stars, they are suns, and without them, its so blue, you tell me,  
you remember  
the sound of the stream washing over itself  
our footsteps compounding.  
there are so many of them  
and there will be more.  
you're not very good at goodbyes  
so how about don't say them.





## **Amour de Vie**

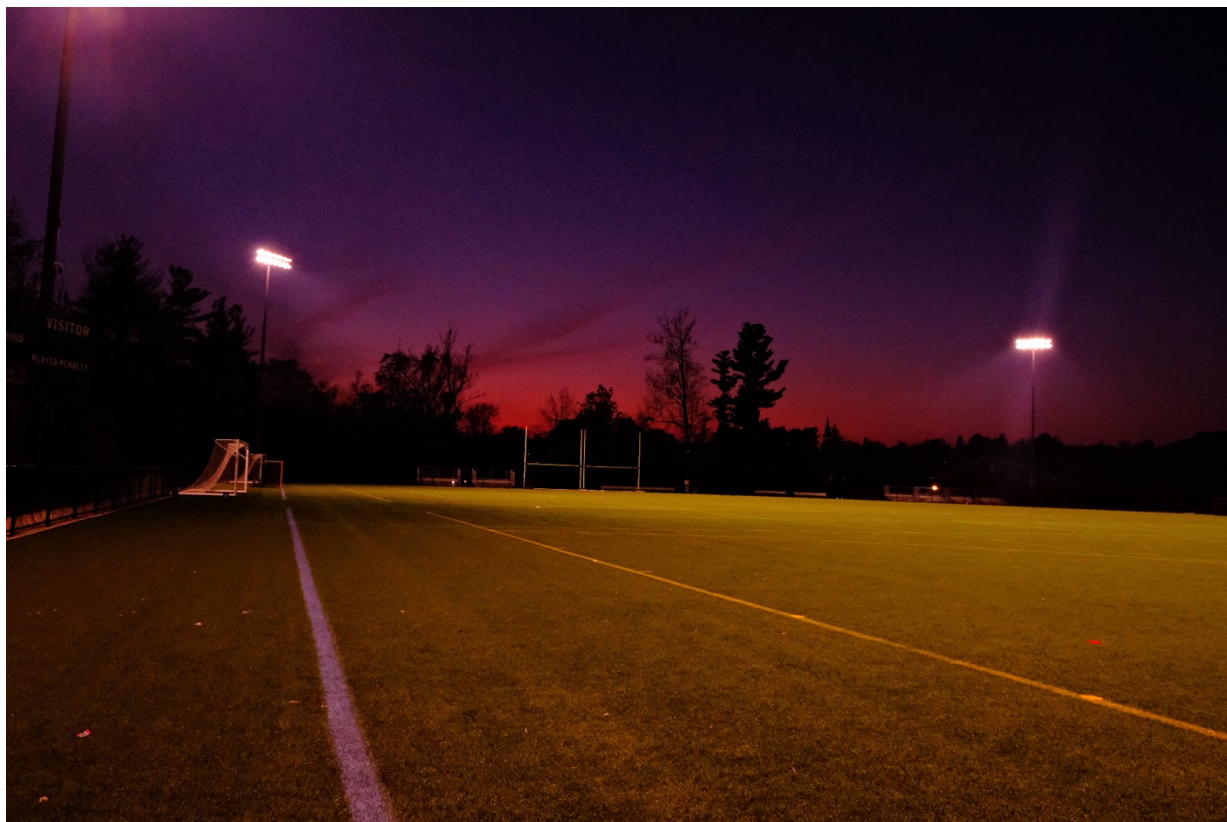
I found myself as a child swinging from trees  
Drifting in rivers  
Living in sun

I found myself as a child racing in cars  
Exploding with the stars  
Flying with the wind

There was a day where the wind fell  
Where the river went dry  
The car crashed, blinded by the sun  
Where the tree died  
And in the night there we no stars  
Only the night

Yet then you came  
And I found myself  
A man whose smile could barely reach  
Swinging from a tree  
Drifting in rivers  
Living in sun  
*Amour de Vie*

CARTER LINARDOS '24



## L'Chat du Oïl

Once upon a time a small boy built a magnificent castle out of sand. It took him years to shape its towers with his bare hands, and he was very proud of it. But soon the castle started to crumble as waves lapped against its walls, and the small boy, who was now a man, realized he needed to find a way to preserve his creation.

One day, he discovered that if he poured oil over the sand, it would harden and become resistant to the water. And so he started to pour oil over the castle every day, digging it up from a nearby mud pit. He watched the oil gleam in the sunlight, and he marveled at his ingenuity, and at the castle's newfound resilience. Yet each day the oil repelled the water more and more, and the sea started to dry up.

At first the man did not notice this, but when the castle's moat finally emptied, he could no longer turn a blind eye. He stayed up all night watching the tide as it slithered, slothfully, towards the castle. When the moon fell, he chased the tide to its source.

As he ran, the tide seemed to ebb faster and faster in front of him, and no matter how hard he tried, he could not touch the water. Soon he was in the middle of a waterless sea, and he could barely see the castle, still glowing with the sheen of the oil in the moonlight, behind him. He could barely see the shore, but he kept running away from it.

When the sun was almost completely above the horizon, and the man could no longer squint to see the shore, the water stopped running away from him. Instead, it receded into a plug—a large solid metal plug, almost the size of the man's shadow if gathered into a circular form. There was no more water.

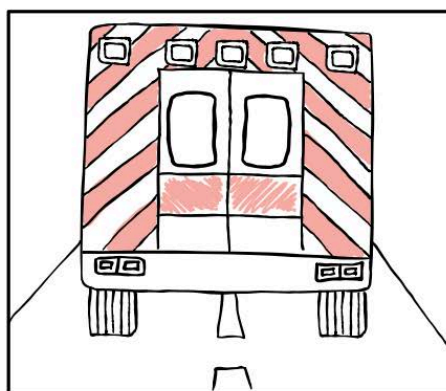
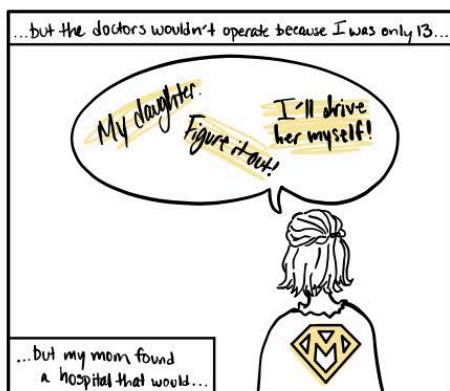
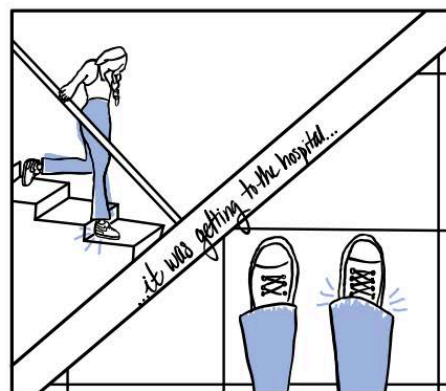
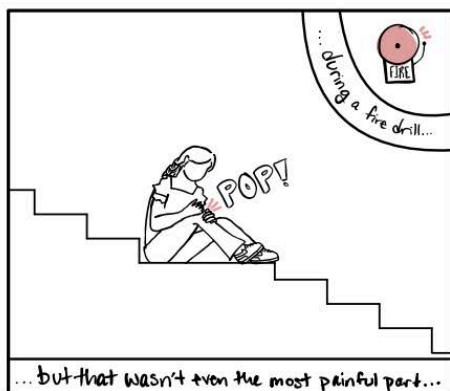
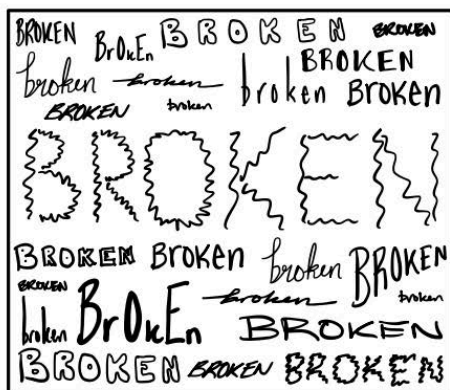
The man tried to pull the plug. It was heavy. The man's fingers bled after a while, and he lost a few nails.

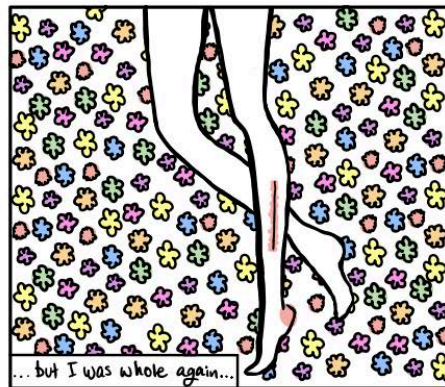
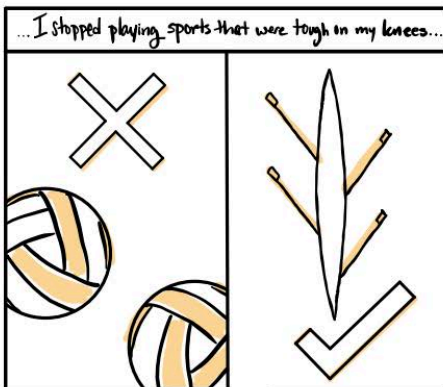
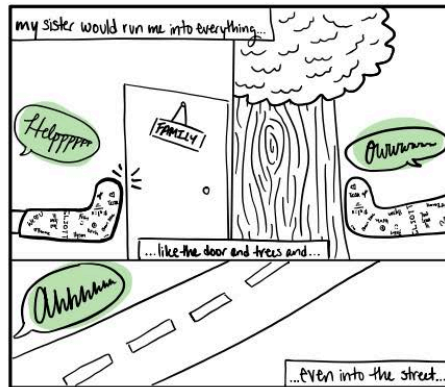
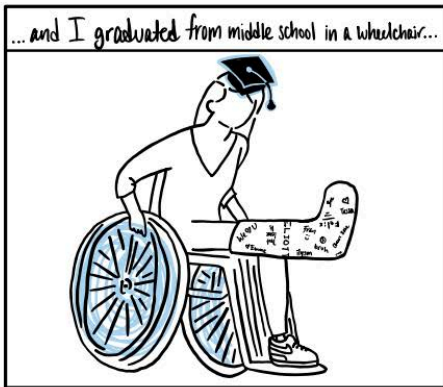
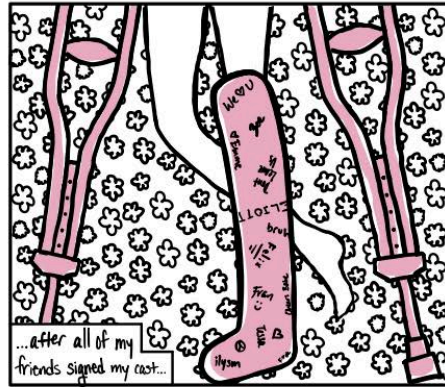
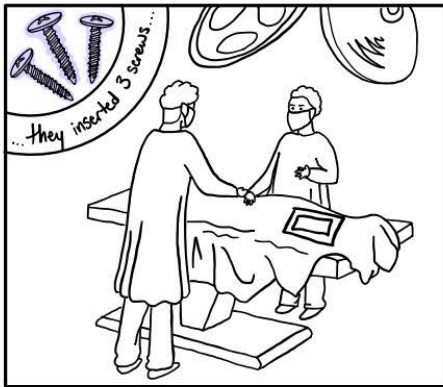
Finally he stopped trying, and he heard a voice from above him, and from around him, and from under him. He felt oil covering every inch of his skin. Like milk, it was not very thick, and not very sticky, but it stayed there, and he could not wipe it off like water. When he opened his mouth the oil entered, and it repelled all the water, which swam out of the man's ears like smoke swims out of the chimneys of a train. And the voice said he was clean. And they said he was clean. And he was clean.

DAVID GARSTEN '23











## Tailpipes

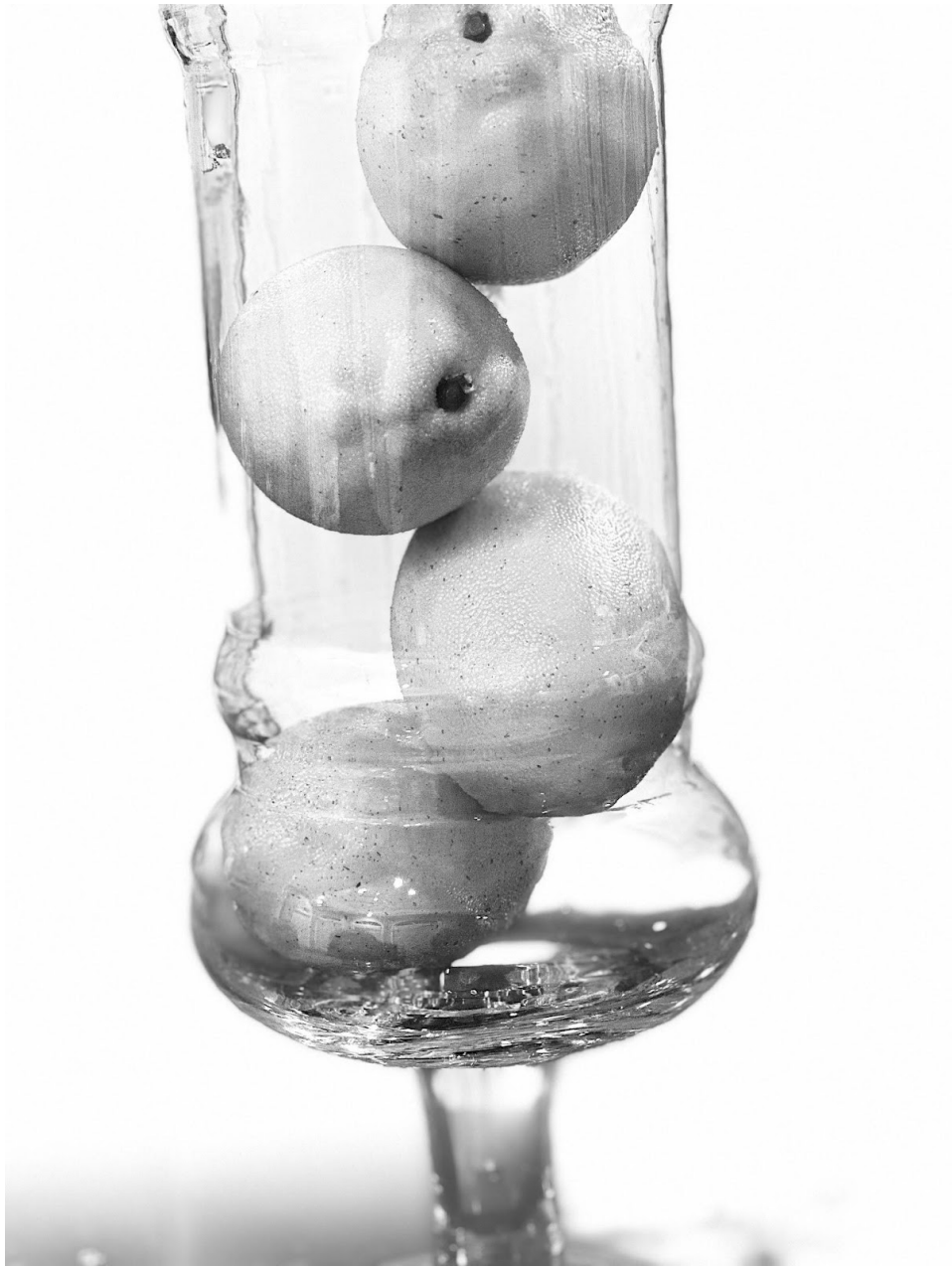
I didn't think the class had had any impact on me until I started to notice the pipes on the back of cars. I had been driving for over a year and I hadn't noticed the pipes before. I didn't even know what they were called. Apparently they're called "tailpipes."

It took me about a week between when I started to notice tailpipes and when I had the courage to actually look at my own. Every time I saw someone else's tailpipe while driving, I would think to myself, "when I get to wherever I am going, I will look at my own tailpipe," but I would always forget about it when I got to wherever I was going. It was like a dream; tailpipes were a dream.

When I looked at it, it looked normal. This was weird, because everyone else's tailpipes always looked alien to me. They just felt... wrong. They looked they were added by the animators in order to make the cars seem more human. They looked they were added just to make the expression "leave someone in the dust" make sense. They looked large enough to stick your hand into them, but I didn't. I didn't stick my hand in. It came out gross.

ANONYMOUS





## **Sally and the Stitches**

She collects rocks  
by the sea shore  
not knowing how sorely  
her foot is torn open by moral allegories.

She had to get ten stitches.  
That fit with the song, so she was happy.

She collects rocks on her feet,  
which are blades.  
The sand collects water and blood.

She saved her own sole chance of survival.  
Her shoelace untied,  
her soul laced up inside,  
she showed her wound to a professional,  
who gave her an Applebees gift card,  
which she never used,  
years later,  
even though she kept the seashells.

DAVID GARSTEN '23



## Russian Doll

Like a russian  
doll me up  
    stairs  
    down  
fall  
of an empyrotechnic  
flaming hot cheaters  
    out of my own life  
time my throat like a pretzel  
salt and pepper, nothing special  
spice it up  
    my throat's on fire  
lighten up  
like the hairs on my skin  
itching like a bee sting  
    me with your poison  
i'm immune  
    to the tune  
        out all the noise.

just focus on my hand  
    me the clipper nails  
    biting my skin.  
i tear it off like its wind  
layer gone i don't miss  
it grew back like hydra  
and seek me a bullet  
penetrates my stomach full of butter  
flies off the bread like peregrine falcons  
drip off like plastic planes  
from sky scrapers  
just face me dead.



line me up on a prison wall  
me up with bars  
i spit on the tall prison guard  
i sing songs like a barred  
but im scared  
like a parrot  
squawk squawk  
innocent, empty, open, not moisturized.  
i dried up in the sand like a river in southern california,  
and each doll i peeled off was redder than the last, blushing,  
    until their outfits turned dark red and it hurt to touch them, more than before, even;  
        touching them was impossible because of the pain.

DAVID GARSTEN '23

**Patrons**

Young Kim  
Maya Moorthy  
Olga Robertson  
Cecilia Wolfson

**Benefactors**

JR Ahn  
Doungjai Gam Bepko  
Dana Brown  
Theodore and Sara Kim  
Alyssa Montler  
Patricia and Berry Stone



**Literati**  
Nicha Tongdee '26  
Elena Zhang '24  
Sophia Kim '24  
Reagan Colton '24  
Yoyo Zhang '24  
Mikayla DaSilva '24  
Cathy Liu '24  
Isabella Wu '24  
Ben Yedid '24  
Carolyn Chen '25  
Cavan Davidson '25

**Faculty Advisers**  
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Alex Ashford

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David Garsten '23  
Yujin Kim '23  
John Markley '25  
Cassatt Boatwright '24  
Portia Chung '24  
Justin Lee '25  
Rafia Pasha '26

**Literati**  
Lucy Dreier '24  
Gigi Chen '24  
Lucy Domingo '26  
Carter Linardos '24  
Vic Glass '23  
Grace Walters '24  
Harper Marsden-Uren '26  
Ava Persuad '25  
Friday Acuña '26  
Elizabeth Burgstahler '26  
Noah McBride '25