



INLIGHT

Volume 5, Number 1

Sarah Marghub '23

Letter from the Editor

Dear Bullis Community,

Thank you for reading our eighth issue of *InLight*. *InLight* is a student-led platform for dialogue that explores cultures, lifts voices, and sheds light on injustices. Contributors narrate their own stories, shedding light on their experiences, customs, politics, and the social issues of their communities. *InLight* strives to provide a safe space for self-expression where people can share what matters most.

I am incredibly excited to share this year's edition with you and my second as Editor of this publication. The theme for this year surrounds identity and affinity.

I came up with the idea for this theme largely because of the introduction of Affinity Groups. I had never heard of an affinity group until we introduced them in the Upper School last year. I was immediately interested in the idea of having dedicated engagement spaces for individuals who identified with a large umbrella identifier. However, as someone who identifies with many identities and labels, I thought exploring that idea and how it relates to the Upper School community would be fascinating.

In this edition, you will find everything from photos, paintings, poetry, articles and more about the many things the Upper School community identifies -or doesn't- identify with.

We hope that you enjoy reading the stories of Bullis Students and come away with a new understanding of our community and the issues that matter to us as Upper School students.

Special thanks to Art Director Shri Khera '23, Dr. Romeyn, Mrs. Cabell, Ms. Watkins, and the Upper School Administration.

Sincerely,

Akshara Santoshkumar '23
Editor in Chief

Table Of Contents

Name of Love 2

Beauty Standards 4

This Is America 6

The Outsiders Club 7

Tres Leches Cake Recipe 8

Half + Half 9

Embracing Myself 10

What Meets Your Eye 13

Songs of Autumn Winds 16

My Second Bar-Mitzvah 18

Worlds of the Binary 20

Marathi-Ish 21

Name of Love

Some parents name their children based on the names of singers, artists, or whoever inspired them the most. Some parents go to a fortune teller to ask for a name that brings luck. My parents, as some other parents do, planted their wishes in the name of their kids.

In school, I am known as Anita Chen; ‘Anita’ is a name picked by my parents, but the purpose of it is to have a name that has an easier pronunciation for non-Mandarin speakers. On the other hand, my legal name—陳子愛 (Chen, Tzu-Ai)—holds a fun, hopeful, and loving energy that my parents passed on to me. Besides my surname ‘陳(Chen),’ the first character of my given name, ‘子(Tzu),’ also has a family origin. The literal meaning of the character is ‘child;’ my parents chose the character for my family solely for two reasons: first, it is easy to write, only three strokes; second, it is a connection with the extended family; all of the girls in households of my uncle’s and ours have this character in their names. What makes my name so special for me is the last character—‘愛(Ai)’—meaning ‘love.’ This ‘love’ is not just the love from my parents. My mother once told me that she picked this character not just to show how much I am loved by them; but as a wish that she has for me to be loved by people in my life. My name is a constant reminder that I am loved and have the potential to radiate the love outward. The gifts of hopefulness and genuineness that consist in my name have become a part of me ever since I learned its origin which I continue to radiate everyday.

Tzu-Ai (Anita) Chen ‘23



Shea Moisture
Independent

ECO
STYLER
Tenacious

Shea Moisture
Competitive

Reliable

Shea Moisture
JAMAICAN BLACK
CASTOR OIL
Artistic

tgim
Multifaceted

Diliger

MIELLE
HONEY & GINGER
Funny

Shea Moisture
JAMAICAN BLACK
CASTOR OIL
Courteous

MIELLE
HONEY & GINGER
Kind

Schwarzkopf
got2b
Speed

Shea Moisture
JAMAICAN BLACK
CASTOR OIL
Smart

got2b
Pretty

tgim
Courageous

Out Spoke

Three letters.

One word.

An all encompassing neon cling wrap with thick red letters spelling my fate.

FAT.

Doctors prescribing diets and remedies, athletic coaches telling me I didn't have the "body type" for sports.

My mother telling me "know your size."

Eating and eating was my solace, a learned practice from my father.

Onlookers seeing two zombies mechanically eating one puff after the other staring blankly into the pulastingly mind numbing T.V. screen.



Anonymous

Art by Shri Khera '23



Devon Hushon '25

This is America

This is America!
Speak English!

“You just come here to take our economy from us!”
“You should go back to your country.”
“You will never be good enough for them.”
“Why do you think anyone would like an immigrant like you?”
“What?! I CAN’T understand your broken English!”

Stop!
Stop this hate
Stop this ignorance
Stop this prejudice

We are also human
We have stories, lives, passions, fears,
Emotions
Some of us are not here by choice
But by necessity.

Our lives matter just as much as yours

We work twice as hard just to get less than half of what you have
Yet you will never hear us complain

We are not here to take something from you
We are here to help and grow
We are here to give our children a future
We are here to fight for our own future

And yes
This is America.
But we don’t only speak English.

Rafaella Effio ‘24

The Outsiders Club

Words coming left and right

Questions

That I never know how to answer

Expectations

That I can never meet

I'm too gringa for the Latinos at home
Yet I'm too Latina for the gringos at school

I either talk too much
or I don't talk enough

I'm either too loud
or I'm not loud enough

I either try too hard
or I don't try hard enough

I never know what to say
I had to teach myself how to watch
How to observe

Always changing
Camouflaging myself
Just to finally fit in

But it never seems to work.

Because I sadly know
I will forever be the outsider
Even in the outsiders club.



Rafaella Effio '24
Art by Shri Khera '23

Tres Leches Cake Recipe

Rafaella Effio '23

Ingredients:

Cake:

- * 3 eggs
- * 1 cup of sugar
- * 1 tsp of vanilla
- * 1 cup of flour
- * 1 tsp of baking powder

Milk:

- * 12 ounce can of evaporated milk
- * 14 ounce can of condensed milk
- * ¼ cup of whole milk

Whipped topping:

- * 1 pint of heavy whipping cream
- * 3 tbsp of powdered sugar
- * ½ tsp vanilla extract
- * *optional cinnamon sugar for topping

Assembling:

- * Once the cake is cool, poke a bunch of holes into the cake
- * Pour the milk mixture over the cake evenly
- * Add the whipped topping
- * *optional: top with cinnamon sugar

Bake:

Cake:

- * Preheat oven to 350°
- * In a bowl whisk the egg whites and sugar to create a merengue
- * In a separate bowl mix the egg yolks and the sugar
- * Combine the egg yolk and sugar mixture into the merengue
- * In a separate bowl mix the dry ingredients
- * Fold in the dry ingredients into the wet batter
- * Grease a pan
- * Put the batter into the pan
- * Bake at 350° until the cake is golden brown
- * Once done take it out of the oven and let it cool completely

Milk mixture:

- * Mill all of the milks together in a bowl

Whipped toppings:

- * In a large bowl add the milk and whisk in the sugar and vanilla gradually

Half + Half

I'm half and half

Half a subcontinent
Half an island

Half a land of temples, history, tradition, lost kingdoms, convalescence
Half a land of imperialism and monarchy

Half a land of rainforests, of mists, of deserts, of monsoons, one where the birds sing and the animals
growl, as they roam the land of my ancestors, with towns of bustling streets filled with people
Half a land of sea, of hills, of towns, of streets, of ruined castles, of stark buildings and rivers running
through cities, where the cold fog sets in every winter setting sleep on the tireless cities

Half first generation
Half last

Half brown
Half white

Half oppressor
Half oppressed

Half one culture
Half another

Half west
Half east

But Half accepted
And Half forgotten

Half family
Half

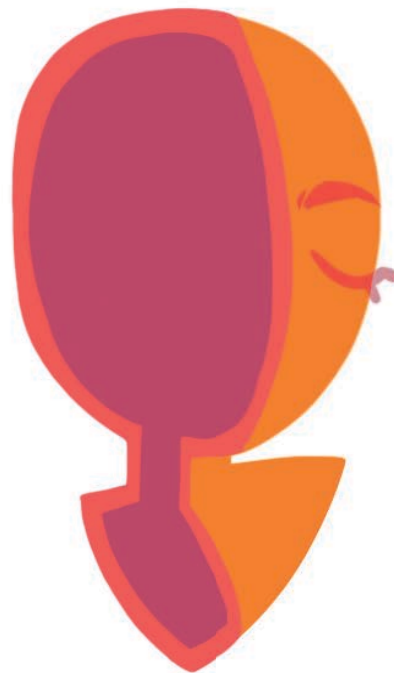
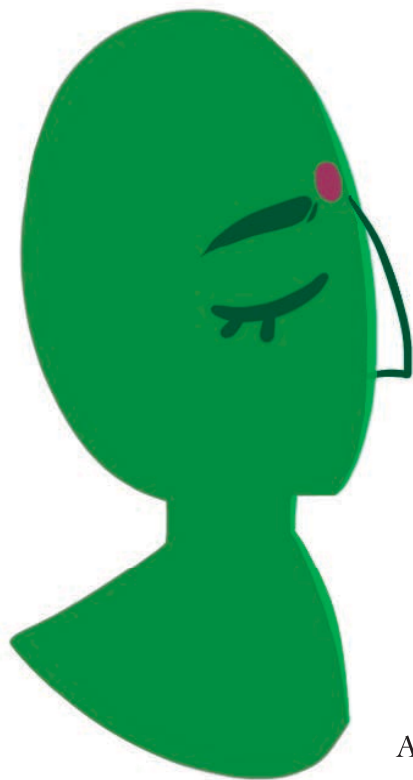
Yet
One identity
One champion

One mix
One nonpareil
One full

As I rise above a world of fracturing,
melding the cracks within me
As I unify myself
I am the one who determines my destiny
There is no half, but whole, complete, as one

One Me

Anonymous



Embracing Myself

So let's just get it out of the way, I'm gay, and I feel that I've been gay nearly my whole life. I still don't know how I feel about even writing that word, gay. The word has no real weight to it, but when you fully write it out, it can carry so much more meaning than just saying it out loud. I've never really been one to be prideful, and I almost feel shameful about that. The community is meant to be open and proud and shameless about their sexuality but I don't have that kind of freedom or confidence. Now you might be thinking, "come on what's stopping you?" and while sure nothing is stopping me physically from it, it's hard to embrace being gay for me. The idea that I may be judged just for being gay alone is enough to prevent me from speaking out about it.

However, I think that the reason that I am not fully open and "out" to everyone is because of my parents. Now every gay person you meet will have their coming out story, and some people have stories that go better than others. But my story went quite as bad as it could possibly go. After having a huge argument with both of my parents, they asked me for my phone and the pass-code to it, and from there it all went downhill. I had recently just told a friend of mine that I was gay over text, and just my luck, they went through the entire conversation. Now I wish that I heard the common phrases like, "We'll always love you" or "We don't care who you love" but I didn't get either of those. Instead, my mother and father were divided in their views, though they both had an umbrella idea for their feelings about it. You see, both of them were not happy that I was gay, and so they thought the best course of action would force closet me.

Now, the reason I say they were divided was that their responses to these had different outcomes. Both refused to ever talk about it after a week, and I was forced to sit in silence about it. My father believed that in high school, I should no longer talk about it and just wait till college. However, he also said to go tell every single person I came out to that: "It was just a mistake and I was confused when I said it." Reasonable, am I right? Trust me, compared to my mother he is a saint.

My mother has been openly homophobic her entire life, always making it very clear that if I was gay, that I was no longer her son, I would not get a dime from her, etc. So I never really considered ever telling her about me being gay, and I now know that I was so right to not tell her. She completely refuses to talk about it, constantly talking about me dating women like I would be interested. In fact, she is in complete denial about me being gay, and that is the part that really bothers me. I can never once have a boyfriend or husband and go to my mother so that she can meet him. I won't be able to invite her to my wedding. All these types of things because she decided that a gay son is something that she will completely deny, and hopefully it will go away. If she has to face the reality of me being gay, I don't even know what she will do.

Did I follow any of their directions about what to do? Absolutely not. They grew up with values that are so old they are in black and white. Instead, I have just accepted the fact that sometimes you can make a family outside of the family. And I have made so many great friends that make me feel comfortable, that truly make me feel loved more than either of my parents have put together. They are family, they support you no matter what, and if you tell them you're gay? They will say "*So what?*" They are my real family, they are the people that I know will stick with me. They are the people that keep me strong.

Anonymous



Sarah Marghub '23

What Meets Your Eye?

When you see me, what do you notice first?
Is it my smile, my sparkling eyes, my confident stride?
Do you see my joy, my tears, my hopes, and my fears?
Or is it my hair at which you stare? Does my skin bring you discomfort?
Am I the villain in your story or the underdog in need of guidance and protection?
I am so much more than you could ever conceive. I am my ancestors' wildest dreams.
When will you let me live in peace?

The two pieces on the following pages titled "What Meets Your Eye" are a societal commentary on how respect for different cultures and people is often warped based on our own biased perception of them.

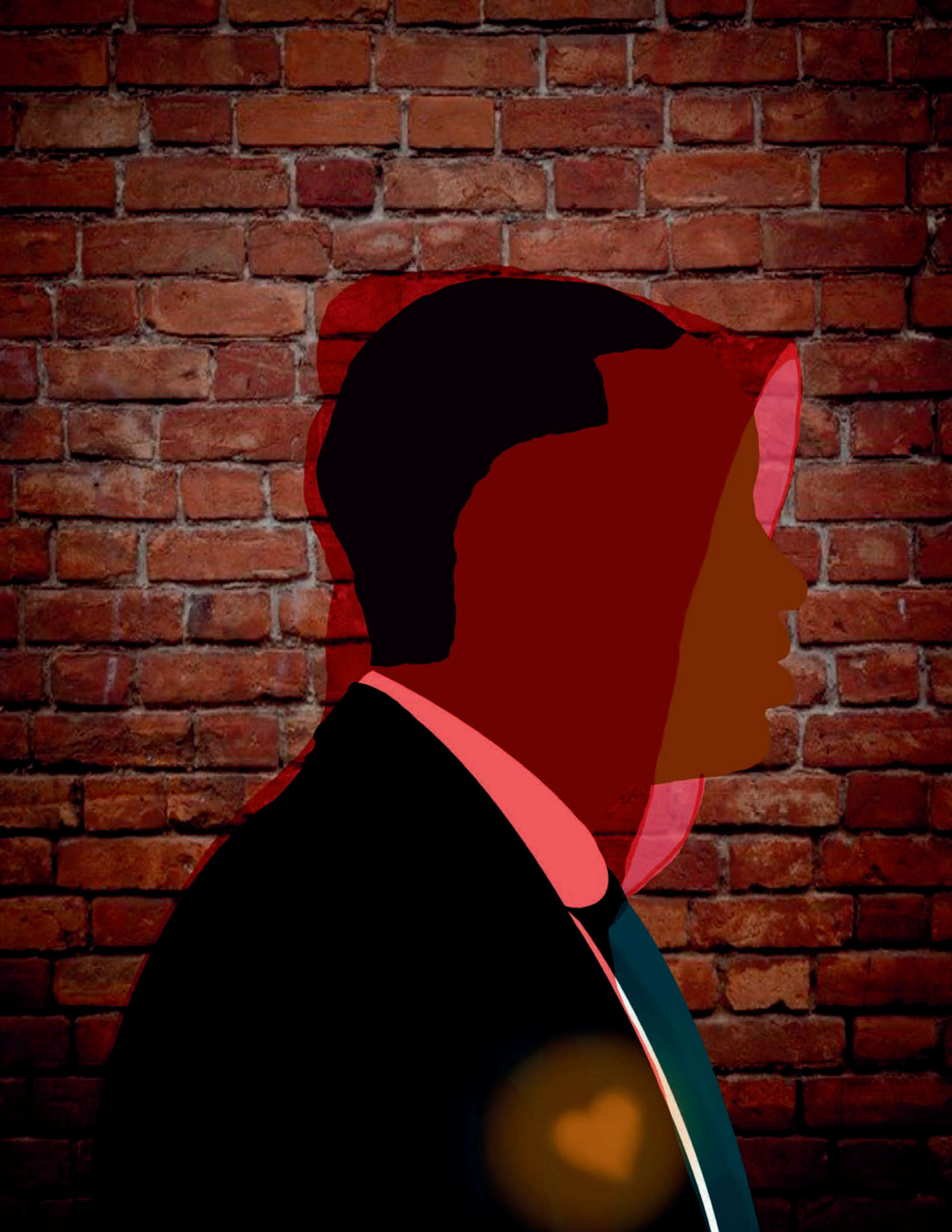
The main portraits are layered with items in the background and foreground that play off of stereotypes typically found in American media. As you observe each piece, allow yourself to have a mental conversation about the importance of recognizing stereotypes and how they can harm others.

By educating yourself on the truth, and seeing people for who they are, you allow others to live freely and wholly without fear. Experiencing peace should not only come after death. Decide how you will make your world one where people can live in peace, not just rest in it.

Arielle Asare '23



Arielle Asare '25



Songs of Autumn Winds

Fold a paper crane
Make your thousand wishes and
Fly into the sky

History, learning
The breaking of human minds,
Now and Forever

Leaving the building
Looking up at the sky to see
Deciduous tree leaves

A person walks by.
I know their gaze. It is not
Looking at my eyes

Bagels are mid-tier
The quality varies but
everyone loves them?

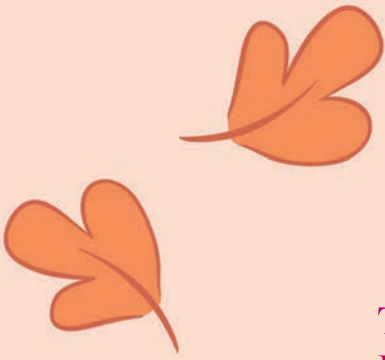
Cafeteria
Lunchtime and judgment pass
Into the afternoon

Fallacies: made by
Overthinking convos with
friends I want to see

But nobody came

I sink into ground
Leaves falling to the windy
songs of their demise

Views and likes; insta
Are my memories happy?
Am I a good friend?



The snow falls on our
Hand holding in the street light.
Walking infinitely.

I look across the
Sea and felt a warm gaze from
The sun, and my heart.

I wept happiness,
The rain in my eyes spoke love.
The tears cleared my sight.

I saw a paper
Crane floating in my wishes,
Living in my soul

I rise into sky
Leaves falling to gales singing
Songs carrying love

Rising from the grass
Summer heat; I'm now alive
The first thing I see

Red leaves falling flat
On the ground: deciduous.
I want them to fly.

And of those red leaves,
I stand and sing to the sky,
Songs of Autumn Winds.

Michael Yau '23

My Second Bar-Mitzvah

It's been 1,773 days since I went to my synagogue. My ticket for a free trip to Israel still sits in a closet somewhere, collecting dust. The seeds for the tree planted in my honor have not been sown.

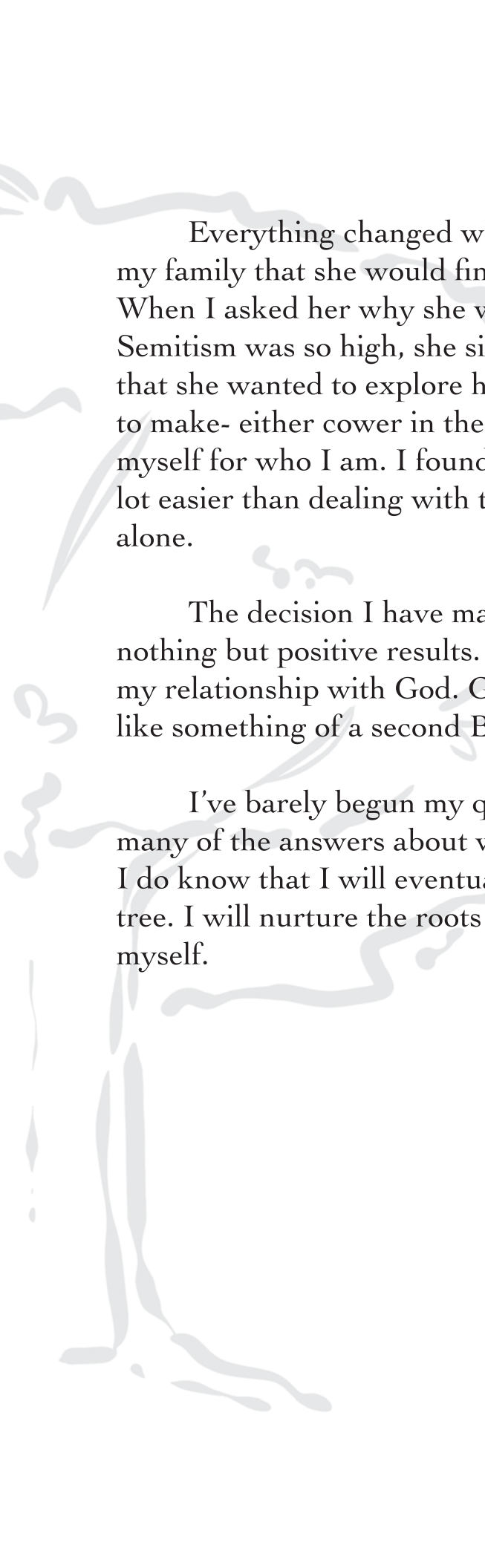
It wasn't always like this for me, though.

In Jewish culture, boys become men when they have their Bar-Mitzvah- a phrase that means "son of the commandment" in Hebrew. They read a portion from the Torah, get blessed by a rabbi, show off a fancy community service project and receive a tree planted in their honor along with a free trip to Israel.

I did the same thing when becoming a man at age 13 at my own Bar Mitzvah. I read my Torah portion, did my mitzvah project, and was blessed by a rabbi. I thought of the ceremony as something of an awakening- the creation of a relationship with God. But the idea of being a true "Jewish man" became lost on me soon after. And until recently, any desire to really explore my roots has remained unexpressed too.

It began in middle and high school, where I was frequently exposed to subtle hints of Anti-Semitism in the form of jokes about money and lawyers. It wasn't until I became aware of larger-scale examples such as the Charlottesville marchers holding torches and chanting "Jews would not replace [them]" that I realized the ugly truth: Anti-Semitism is still alive and well not only in the United States but around the world. While they shouldn't have, those marches and mass shootings scared me. A lot.

As a result of that fear, I began to repress my identity. I felt that without a set of values to guide me, I was missing pieces of myself. I was right to feel that way.



Everything changed when late last year, my sister announced to my family that she would finally be taking her birthright trip to Israel. When I asked her why she would choose to take it at a time when Anti-Semitism was so high, she simply told me that the hatred was the reason that she wanted to explore her identity. I realized that I had a decision to make- either cower in the face of adversity once again or embrace myself for who I am. I found that confronting the issues I faced was a lot easier than dealing with the feelings that came from leaving them alone.

The decision I have made to dive back into Judaism has had nothing but positive results. Already, I feel as though I've rediscovered my relationship with God. Going on this journey has really felt to me like something of a second Bar-Mitzvah.

I've barely begun my quest to find my missing pieces. I don't know many of the answers about what being Jewish really means to me. But I do know that I will eventually take my birthright trip. I will plant my tree. I will nurture the roots of my ancestors. And that I will discover myself.

Blake Glickman '23

Worlds of the Binary

Worlds of ones and zeros.
Worlds of he and she.
Him and her.
Without you.
Worlds without your existence even considered.
Being pushed deep into a corner of hate from others and words spat at you
without even a glance.
Because you aren't real are you.
You're just a made-up joke.
Just a 'special snowflake' who wants attention.
Even through every cry for help and every deflection of a joke they can't
hear your voice.
And when they do they pretend you don't know what you're saying.
They don't understand what it's like to be you but they pretend that you are
wrong for being something they don't understand.
Something they are too scared of to understand.
And the pain of their fear and ignorance.

I can't understand how they do it anymore.
I can't understand how they pretend we aren't real
yet use it for all of their insults and pain bringing.
I don't understand why they look at me and tell me I
don't exist.
Some hide behind their screens and others say it to
my face.
Or better yet behind my back where I can't
defend myself.
Small blows and big ones. Thrown my way
and thrown at so many others
Worlds of ones and zeros.
Worlds of he and she.
Him and her.
Without you.
Worlds without your existence even
considered.
Worlds of the binary.



Sam Pepper '24
Art by Shri Khera '23

Marathi-Ish

As an Indian American, my biggest insecurity about my culture is not my hair or the way Indian food smells, it is how I speak my mother tongue, Marathi. Ever since I was a child, I have spoken Marathi with an American accent, rolling my rs and under pronouncing my vowels.

It's not that I can't speak my mother tongue; I struggle to seamlessly transition back from English to Marathi and pronounce every word, like most of my mom's side of the family.

Like many Indian Americans, the way that I speak Marathi consists of a confused mixture of English and Marathi, replacing words that I don't know in Marathi with English. This mixture is colloquially known as Hinglish.

I have always been envious of my mom's side of the family and my older sister, who is far more fluent in Marathi than I am. I never really got the chance to fully immerse myself in the language because as soon as I became a toddler, I moved to Egypt, and my grandmother (who taught the rest of my family) spent most of her time in the US.

Still, my mom and sister tried to ensure I was fully immersed in Indian culture and Marathi. They only spoke in Marathi when we were at home together, and when my mom cooked, she used Hindi and Marathi names for the vegetables and spices. There are certain vegetables and spices that I only remember in Marathi. Because of this constant immersion, I gained a decent level of fluency in the language.

But, I still wasn't at the level my cousins or even my sister were at. It still took me a second to respond when my mom or grandmother asked me a question, and there was a one-second lag whenever my brain was trying to process the rapid-fire conversations that my family was having at the dinner table. I felt like I wasn't a true Indian if I couldn't keep up as fast as the rest of my family when they spoke.

Because of this, I started to drift away from Marathi and fall back on English when speaking to my family. The English started to creep up more as I talked.

However, a year ago when I became the editor of *InLight* and had to correct people when they pronounced my name I began to take a little more pride in my heritage. I realized that I had stopped speaking Marathi because I was scared to make a mistake. But, if I didn't make mistakes I was never going to learn how to fluently speak Marathi. Especially since I am going to college, I have started to make a greater effort to learn.

For now, I'll take a lot of pride in being able to speak Marathi-ish.

Akshara
Santoshkumar'23



TRUE COMMUNITY IS BASED

ON EQUALITY, MUTUALITY, AND RECIPROCITY

OF INDIVIDUAL DIVERSITY

AS WELL AS THE COMMON

THE RICHNESS

US TOGETHER

-PAUL MURRAY

WE MAY HAVE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

OR DIFFERENT COLORED SKIN

HUMAN TIES

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

BUT WE ALL BELONG

TO ONE HUMAN RACE

-KOFI ANNAN