

JOHNSON MIRROR  
2019-2020







# Johnson Mirror 2019–2020







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## Preface

Hello and welcome to the 2019-2020 publication of *The Mirror*! We'd like to thank everyone for helping us with this year's *Mirror*! To Mr. Boyt, thank you for guiding us even though there were some setbacks. To the artists and authors, thank you for sending in your pieces. We had a difficult time choosing the pieces because of how amazing they all are! We'd also like to thank our principal, Micheal Thompson for all he does to make *The Mirror* possible. As well as the Arts Committee who stuck by us and supported us along the way.

Congratulations to the winner of the Editor's Choice Prize, Gisselle Quintanilla. Your work "Ghost King" drew us in at first glance. It was an entrancing story, one that my co-editor and I could not keep our eyes off.

This year we decided that there should be an overall theme. We call it Seasons of Emotions. We've ordered the stories and poems based on how we felt when we read them. Certain poems and stories gave us a happy and blissful feeling, while others were dark and deep. We really wanted to emphasize the different feelings that each piece can have on its readers. An important factor to the table of contents is in Winter. As the Winter section progresses the poems become deeper and grimmer leading into the heart of Winter. Other aspects we looked for was humor and uniqueness. We all know that "unique" is an intimidating word, but for my co-editor and I, we really wanted to see a piece that brought out who the person was, and how they could incorporate that into their work. We have been able to see with our own eyes the talents and potential Johnson students truly have and can't wait for you all to enjoy it too!

-Editors

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The front cover artwork was created by Ezekiel Lo, grade 11. The inside front cover artwork was created by Anonymous. The inside back cover was created by Pa Thao grade 11. The back cover was created by Kao Yang.





# That' s How They Are

## By: Joseph Lothrop

I really do like them,  
In fact they make up most of my friends.  
It' s so helpful how good at math, my friends are.  
But I feel like if I get out of line  
They could karate chop me.  
But I really do like them.  
Also at cookouts though,  
All I wanted was some watermelon  
But they had taken all the slices.  
Can you blame them though?  
Without a dad I' d be misled too.  
Down in the South White Supremacy reigns.  
And they all voted for Trump.  
But can you blame them?  
That' s how they are.

Inspired by Kenneth Rexroth' s  
“Discrimination”



## Relaxing in Fur

By: Alaya Ortiz



# You' re New, Welcome!

## By: Charles Gadea Dominguez

It was July 28, 2012, eight year old me was woken up by my Tía Rosario, "Despierta, we' re going to the hospital," she said.

*Wait a minute*, I thought to myself, *That' s where my mamá is right now!* I got up instantly to get dressed, we had a quick breakfast that I can' t recall. It was pretty hot outside, probably because it was summer. My cousins, both my siblings and I were in the car and waiting for our Tía to drive us. We were all brothers, which meant that we didn' t know what having a sister was like, we were going to find out during the next couple of years.

Our excited little selves couldn' t stop talking and asking questions, questions like, "How long until we get there?"

"Are we there yet?"

"Is the baby ok?"

"Hasn' t it been hours?" You know, standard annoying children questions.

*It' s been hours, hasn' t it?* I wondered. It had only been ten minutes. As an eight year old, I still hadn' t fully grasped the concept of 'time' and neither had my siblings and cousins.

Once we arrived at the hospital, we entered and waited in the lobby. *She' s behind those doors, or those ones, maybe the ones over there!* I didn' t know what room it was. A nurse walked out, our Tía led us into the room. There they were, my mamá, my papá, and my baby sister. We all rushed in, quietly of course, considerate children. I gave my dad a hug and he carried me and put me back down, I loved it when he did that. Next I went to my mom and sister, *Ew, why does she look like that?* The answer was, because she was less than a day old. My parents had the biggest smiles on their faces, I remember that they had wanted a daughter for the longest time. First had come the blessing known as I, my brothers followed a couple years later. They now had a daughter.

She looked at me, the initial shock on my face was long gone. I held my hand out, *Oh my God, she has my finger!* Her small hand was holding on. Inside I got that warm and fuzzy feeling, I' m sure you know it, the feeling of joy, the overload of emotions, my heart was filled with as much as it could with love for my sister. To top it all off, this child smiled, her first smile and it was to me (Or so my parents have led me to believe)! I was ecstatic, when a baby smiles back, that smile hits different. Then it hit me, as the oldest, I was going to be responsible for her too, *Can I really handle another sibling?* I didn' t know the answer at the time, and just brushed that worry to the side, filled with joy again. Right then and there, I was expecting to make so many happy memories with her, so young, so happy, so full of hope.

"What' s her name?" I asked my mamá.

"Su nombre es Estephania Amanda Dominguez," she replied.

*Wow that is a very long name*, I thought to myself. I liked the name, it fit her, although I had just met her less than ten minutes ago, it fit her.



Malaya  
By: Gabby Liebcott

# Love

By: Lue Xiong

Oh love, what is that,  
Something crazy I suspect,  
the moment we met,  
I love you, and it was attached.

For the hours, you put in,  
I shall love you then.  
When you give me a kiss,  
It gives me a bliss.

Love has felt like a checkpoint,  
For us to be together.  
It must be a dream right now  
Because it will be ending.

In the streets, as I saw you,  
With someone else,  
I didn' t know who,  
Maybe it' s just, your friend.

BOOM, Chairs were flying,  
Desks were breaking,  
I felt like crying,  
For I gave everything to you.

Now it' s all wasted,  
It was a good lie,  
For this love, you created,  
At least now I can cry.  
Oh love, what is that,  
Something tragic perhaps,  
The moment we met,  
I saw you, and felt regrets.





Untitled  
By: Paige Cha



Untitled  
By: Angie Baez Rios

# Spill Your Love

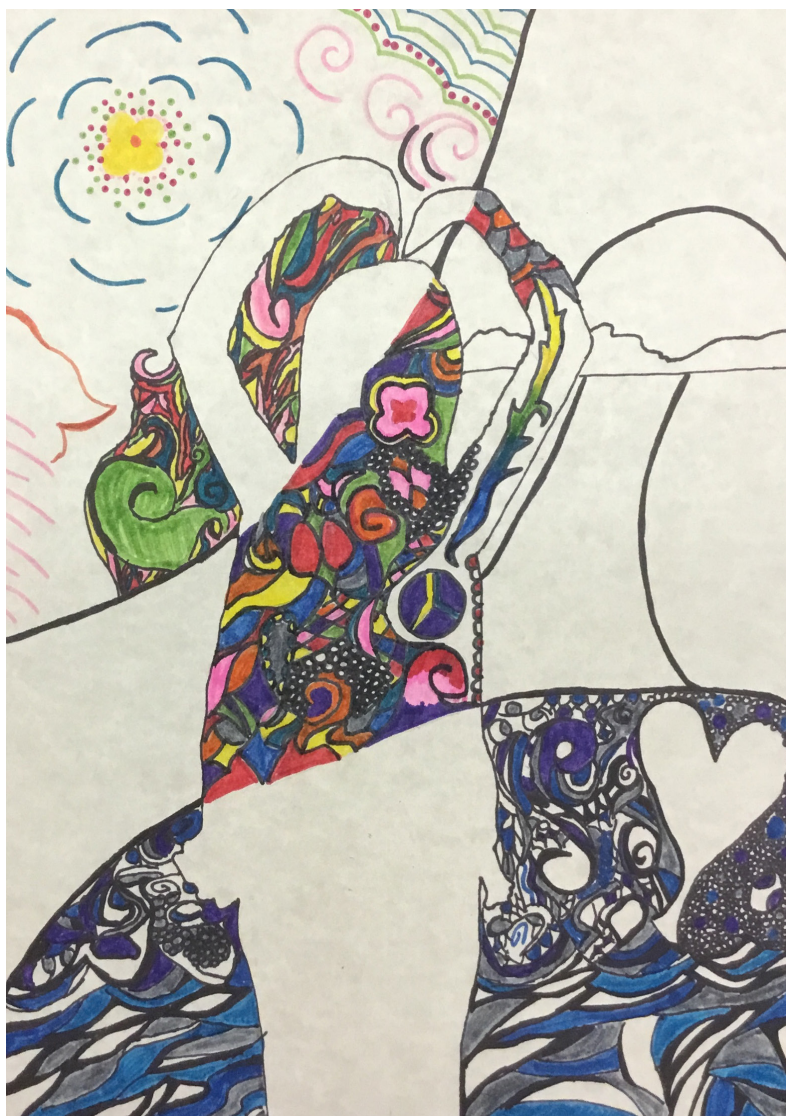
By: Khadija Pickett

Come to me when times are hard  
Or come to me so happy.  
Come and fill my empty heart  
With words so sweet and sappy.  
Invite yourself to come and stay  
And spill your love upon me.  
Bring me light on darker days  
And hold me when you need me.

I welcome you with open arms  
A love I love so dearly.  
So come to me when times are rough  
And lift my lips softly.  
Come to me in light and dark.  
Even come and taunt me.

I welcome love into me  
And when you find your way to me  
Just stay right here beside me.

Inspired by Paul Laurence Dunbar's  
"Invitation to Love"



Untitled  
By: Cynthia Cariveau

# A Night Alone With Someone Special

## By: Shylynn Cha

*For my dog, Peter; may you live a happy life with your wife and new family*

In the house, everything was quiet and dark. Only one of the bedrooms had their lights on, a warm dimly lit yellow light coming from the tall lamp in the corner of the room. On the twin sized bed was where I laid, reading an online novel I found a few days ago.

About half an hour ago my family was leaving the house to go watch a movie and I decided to stay home.

"Shy, are you sure you want to stay home," my mom had asked me at the door. "You're going to be home alone."

I was sitting at the dining table eating my food and leaned back in my chair to answer my mom, "It's okay. I want to stay home. I don't want to watch the movie either."

"Mm, okay then," then my mother was going to say goodbye but...

"BYE SHY!!" "BYE SHYLYNNE!" Yelled my two little sisters, Faith and Hope. Faith was the oldest of the two but she was only 3 years old. Hope was 2 years old, a year younger.

"Bye, have fun," I said. Then I ran to my mom quickly and said to my other baby sister, Alaina, that my mom was holding, "Baby! Give me kiss!"

Although she was only almost one years old she was very smart, so she gave me a kiss on the cheek and laughed adorably. Then my mom really said bye.

Then they left to our van and drove off. I watched them leave then I closed the door and locked it. Quickly, I ran to my room, ignoring the unfinished food on the table, and jumped on my bed. I grabbed my iPad next to my bed and then went to chrome to read the novel that I had left off on a cliffhanger.

Then, I hear something in the living room coming straight for my room! It was Peter, our long coat chihuahua. He ran quickly from the living room to my room and jumped on my bed. It was so hilarious! Then he sat on my blanket. Well, basically he was lying on my bed but his chin on my lap. How could something be this cute?

As one of my hands was holding the heavy iPad and the other one occupied with Peter, I read my novel. His long, soft fur, warming my hand from the cold air outside. His bright eyes were open, but every now and then, it would slightly close, drowsily. He was absolutely adorable but I was getting to the interesting part of the novel, so I went back to my iPad.

"As she looked on, her eyes lined with silver. Her hound floated away on his little boat memorial. Her last ties to this world. Gone."

As I read this, I look at Peter. What a funny-but not funny, it's actually really depressing-coincidence. The one night I am alone with my dog, I read a novel about a dog dying. It was taunting me. But Peter is very

important to me and I know that when I' m with Peter, I will never let him die in any unnatural way.

Peter is still our little baby. He is only three years old. He loves to run around the house full speed and jumping over chairs and pillows like an obstacle course. He is the most active dog we' ve ever had and being with him makes me really happy. I wish to be with him always.

In my little conversation with myself I fell asleep. I don' t remember what my dream was about.

Then, I woke up.

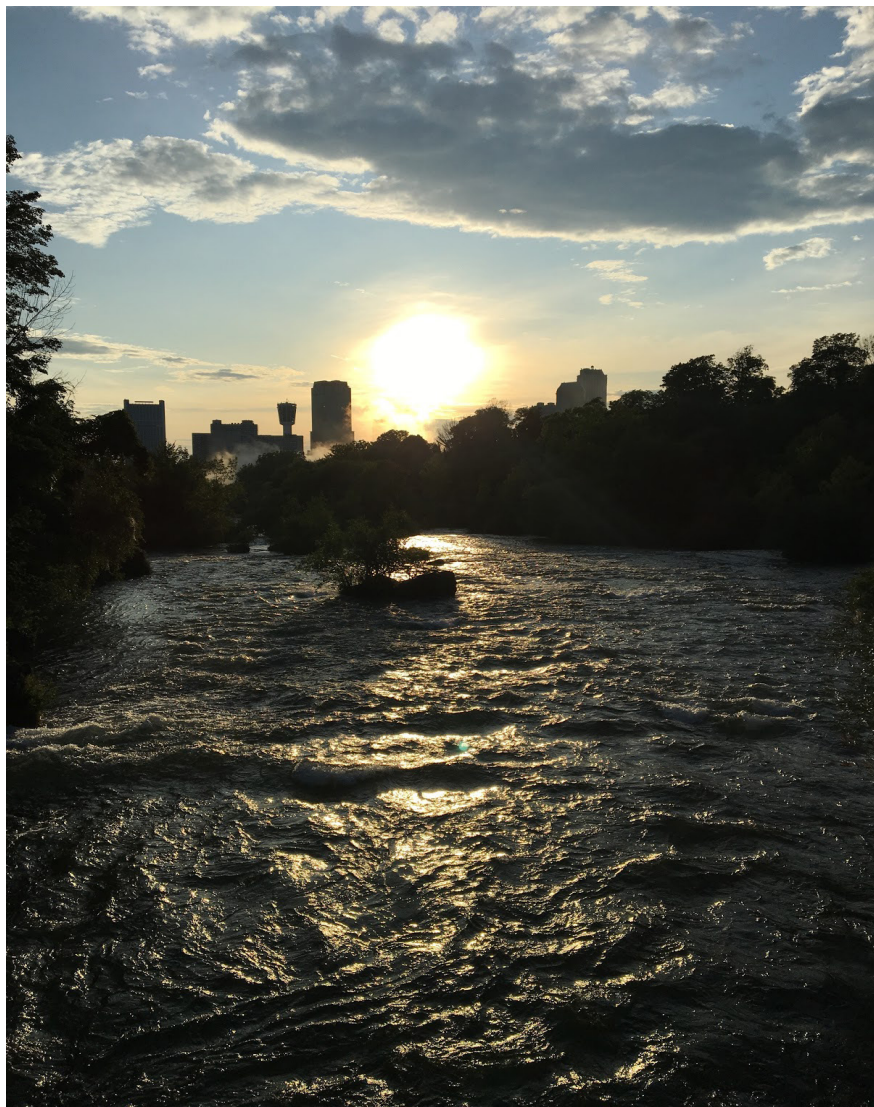
And on my hand, Peter was sleeping, his tiny, soft golden chin on my hand and his eyes, that I know are blue, are resting. This is one of the most wholesome moments of my life and I hope to be with Peter, my beloved dog for as long as I can.

Dedicated to my dog,

Peter;

May you live a happy life with your wife and new family.





Niagara Falls Sunset  
By: Grace Vang



# Peace

## By: Chai Yang

I feel at peace when I' m with you

But as soon as you leave it feels like I' m at war when you' re not there with me

And sometimes when it gets bad I feel like I' m drowning in a deep blue sea

Sometimes I feel chained and you set me free

There' s just so much to say, I can' t say it all

If I say too much I feel like I might fall

So why don' t I let my heart say hi?

Are you ready?

( Hi there its heart,my body' s a little shy so I' ll take the wheel for a little drive, I just want us to survive, through all the hardest days, you once told me it was darkest before dawn when it was one of my darkest days, I been through so much darkness you make it feel like dawn like when the light shines through when the sun comes up)

Wait hold up heart let me jump in quick, I just wanted to say

That I feel at peace with you

Spend 10 hours with you and it' ll feel like 10 minutes

But it feels like it' s been 10 years since I last saw you

It' s also been 10 seconds since I last seen a picture of you

(What I' m trying to say is, is that I love you maybe that' s why "I carry your heart with me" was picked, just like Cummings everything in life just clicked, we' ve never had conflict that' s why you' re my peace, love for us will never decrease, cause everyday it will just increase, my love for you is so fatyou could call it obese, sorry for the little joke but I just love you)

Let me take it from here, You' re like my peace when the war is over, like my luck in this life when I find a four leaf clover, I' m sure you know that I love you and that' s no disclosure, we can even dance and take it a little slower, in our little journey girl there is no exposure, you' re just like my peace when the war is over, a happily ever after in this unfair world, and when you' re by my side I know that it' s all okay, cause only you... can bring peace to my world.

(What I' m trying to say is, is that I love you maybe that' s why "I carry your heart with me" was picked, just like Cummings everything in life just clicked, we' ve never had conflict that' s why you' re my peace, love for us will never decrease, cause everyday it will just increase, my love for you is so fat you could call it obese, sorry for the little joke but I just love you)

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Untitled  
By: Kaia DeCamp



Lighthouse  
By: Anthony Thao

# Before and After

By: Lillian G. Yang

Before it was always for fun,  
after was always for later.  
Later turned into after,  
and before into later.  
The later the play,  
the longer the after.  
The after grew darker,  
and the later grew lighter.  
The before into later turned  
water to ashes.  
The ashes grew darker,  
and before became after,  
the after to later,  
and later to gone.

Inspired by Tom Clarks'  
"Then and Now"



Untitled  
By: Jeremiah Searcie

## #2

By: David Norby

If you shed the need to talk  
and can communicate just by being close,  
what happens when the closeness disappears  
leaving no one to not talk to?



## Untitled

By: Anonymous

# Soaring to the Floor

## By: Kaylie Youngberg

The feeling of flying is all I desire  
    As I swing to great heights on my hoop.  
I push off of the floor as I strain to get higher,  
    And I pull over with the rest of my group.  
I look out to the crowd with a breeze in my face  
    As I soar through the air like a bird.  
I style and wave with such elegance and grace,  
    But my next trick leaves me feeling deterred.

I dismount from my hoop with a lump in my throat,  
    Afraid of the trick that comes next.  
I start swinging with power and attempt my "boat"  
    With every one of my muscles flexed.  
As I attempt the big mount up onto my hoop,  
    My skirt has been tangled beneath me.  
I am now on the floor after one more clean swoop,  
    Spotlight shining for all one thousand people to see.

I didn' t even see her fall,  
    Since the arena is so vast.  
A rigger told me about it all;  
    The fall had happened so fast.  
I went to go search around  
    And found her extremely distressed.  
She was distraught that she had ended up on the ground,  
    But her resilience left me feeling impressed.





Untitled  
By: Birdy S. Xiong

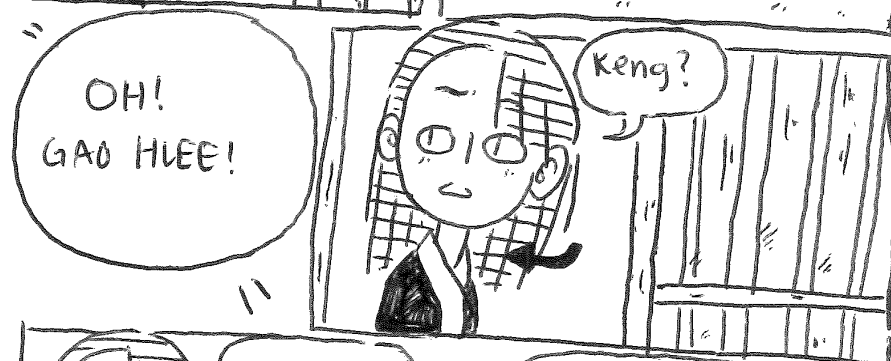
# ♥ THE MARRIAGE ♥

BY:  
LINDA LOR

PART 2



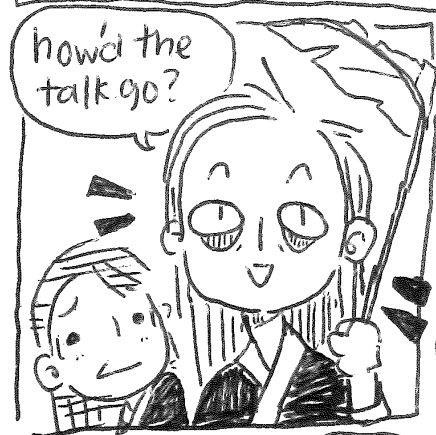
CHECK OUT PART 1 ON [DOODLELOR.WEEBLY.COM](http://DOODLELOR.WEEBLY.COM)



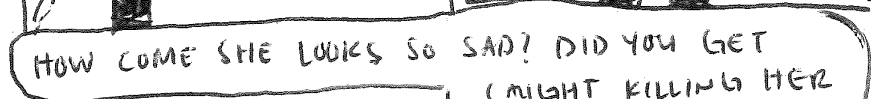
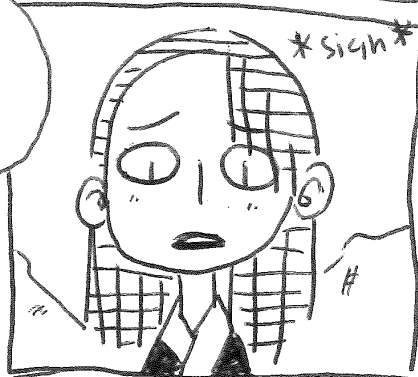
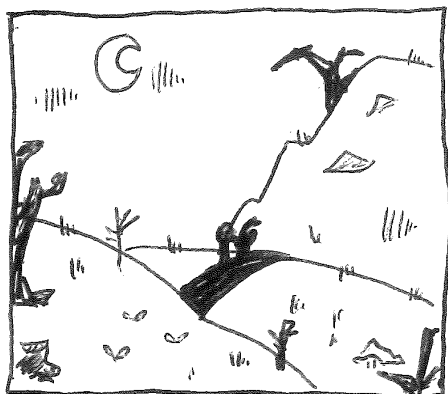


LINDA LOE

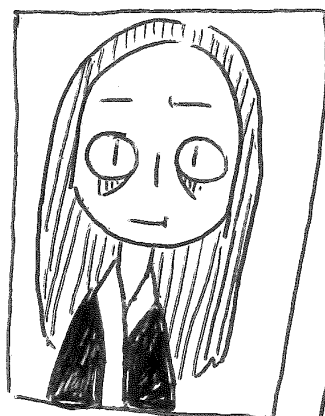








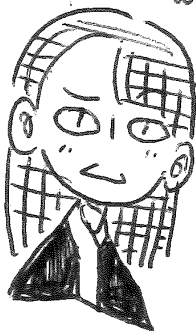




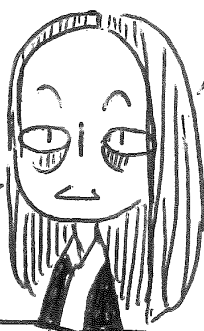
I think you'd  
change your  
mind if I told  
you something about  
your boyfriend..



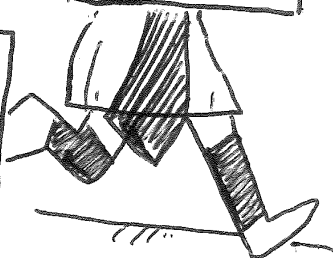
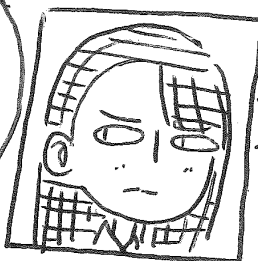
W-what about  
my  
boyfriend..?



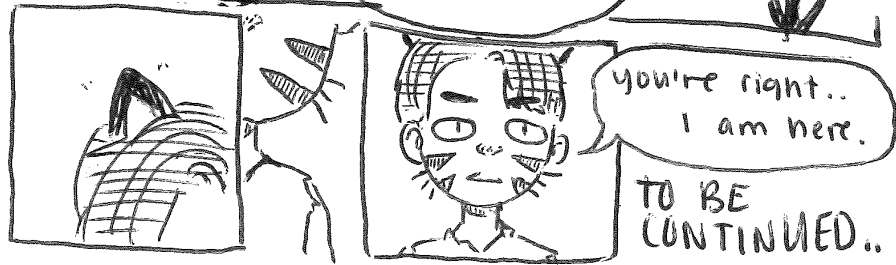
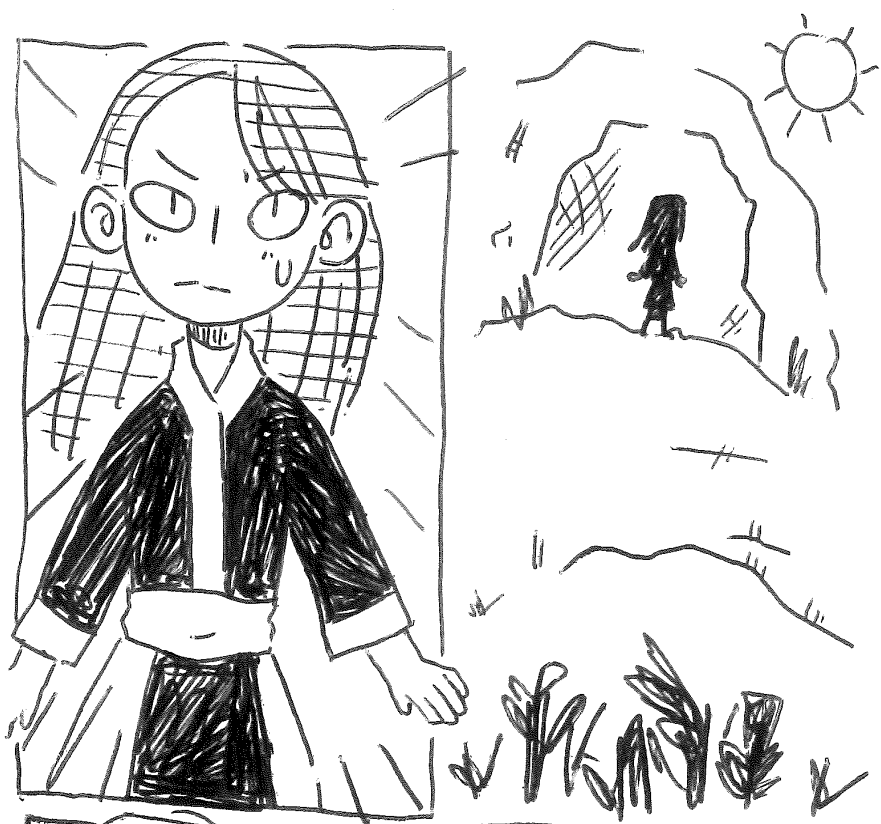
I think  
you should  
go see it  
yourself



He's  
outside right  
now..







# Who do You Perceive?

## By: David Norby

The one believing in wisdom through patience  
purposefully considering options  
the quiet thinker  
patient

or

the one hesitating to offer up thoughts  
never as insightful as others  
nor as quick  
Insecure



# Serendipity

## By: Gisela Perez

# Organs Music

## By: Raeann Wheatley

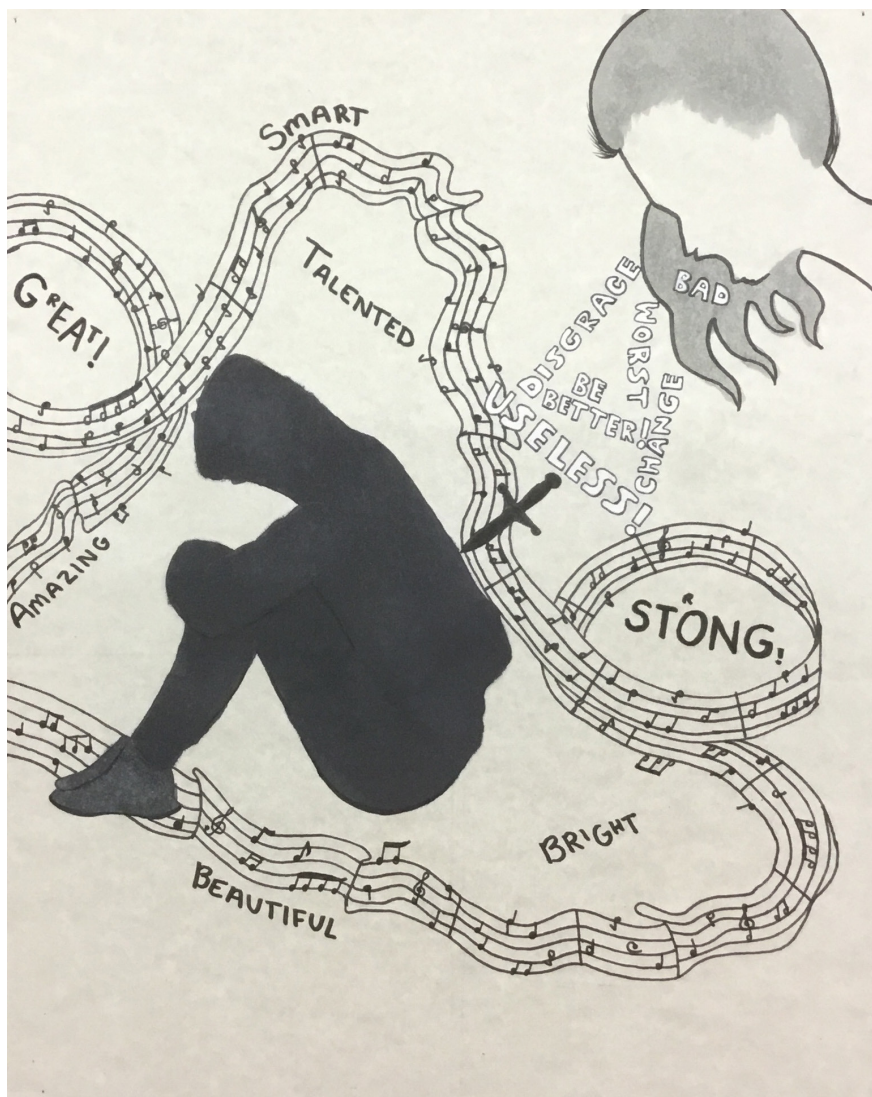
No need to  
disregard  
No need to want to wish that you were a bird.

Obviously it is hard to have feelings for those who hurt you  
Read the books off of the low cut shelves  
And learn something actually important  
Everyone has to know how to defend for themselves.

Why be an amputee? 1..2..3..4  
Why eat the green summer grass that scraps your palms?  
Why is your head hollow? Or are you brainless?  
Why is your tongue feeling like you just drank boiling water?

Obviously it is hard to hurt those who you have feelings for,  
But don' t come running to me when it doesn' t work out  
But don' t come running to me when it hurts when you go back  
Just fall down and sleep.  
You don' t like looking out for others, even yourself  
You have disregarded all.  
You would just decide to  
jump? Pathetic person here.

A baby can not chew a piece of meat,  
He can only swallow it once its blended smooth.  
But he' s so small, but great minded  
But as he passes, his great grandchildren morn.  
Generations by generations, generations forget the past.  
You blew his mind away,  
But missing him won' t bring him back.  
For what is done is done and happened.



Untitled  
By: Mistie Lor

# Context is King

## By: David Norby

If one was to hear  
    'I have a feeling it' s almost over,'  
  
Would you think  
    'Yup. There' s no way we can win this one'  
or  
    'What a great show!'  
or  
    'But it was fun while it lasted'  
or  
    'I really learned so much'  
or  
    'I don' t know if I can go on.'



Ni Soe  
By: Anonymous



# Ghost King

## By: Gisela Perez

Valentina watched the arrow sail through the air and strike the bark of the tree, its nock quivering from the strength at which it had been shot. It hadn't missed its target- valentina rarely missed a target- but it also hadn't hit the boy. The arrow had merely passed through, only affecting the boy by making his image ripple as if she were skipping stones on a pond. The boy's eyes widened and looked at her in shock.

Valentina's own eyes had widened then narrowed as she took in the boy with caution. What was he, if her arrow had just passed through him? He certainly wasn't human, but there were many creatures that roamed these lands that weren't human. Valentina simply did not know any that were intangible.

"Did you just shoot me?" he asked, his shock having faded away was replaced with an expression of merriment.

Valentina did not answer. She studied him, attempting to figure out what he was. She kept her distance from him. While he did not seem like he was going to attack her, she did not know anything about him and she wouldn't risk getting near him. The canopy of the trees cast shadows on him, with small spots leaking sunlight through. His figure appeared solid, but upon looking closely, one could see a faint image of what was behind him.

"Hello? Did you hear me?"

Valentina finally responded, "Wasn't it obvious that I shot you? There is evidence of it on the tree behind you."

He glanced behind him and caught sight of the arrow. "Ah right. That question was rather unnecessary. I had not thought you would shoot me though. Run away perhaps, but not--"

"Why is there an arrow through your head?" Valentina interrupted. The arrow had not been there before and certainly wasn't hers. It had manifested itself slowly, and Valentina's confusion had only increased.

He brought a hand to the arrow, "That is a story for another time, little oddity."

Valentina watched as the arrow faded away and the boy looked content with his action. He then fixed his hair, brushing curls of his pale blond hair away from his eyes.

"Will you tell me about the crown on your head then?"

He looked at her with curiosity, "You would rather know about the crown than why I was following you? or what I am?"

"I already know what you are--" which was true, she had already figured it out- "you're a ghost."

A ghost. Something that despite there being many stories of were rare to ever be seen. Yet, here one was, conversing with her.

"But you still do not want to know why I was following you? You really are odd," he said.

"I'm sure you will tell me, seeing as how you're insisting, but



no one wears a crown anymore. There are no more kings or queens, and you're a ghost wearing a crown. That sounds like something with a story. I want to know about it," Valentina stated, slung her bow over her shoulder, crossed her arms, and waited.

The ghost sighed and relented.

"I was a king,"

She made a 'go on' motion with her hand.

He leaned against the tree, her arrow still embedded in the bark next to his head, "I was a king for only a short time. My father had died in combat and my mother was murdered only a few days later. At the age of twenty I was made the king of Ptakan, my kingdom. I tried to be a good king but my er, reputation was not the best. Many did not want me to rule."

"One of the best archers in the kingdom shot me on one of my trips to the outer towns of the kingdom. I was there to oversee the construction of new buildings. Advisors said it would make me look good for the public. Obviously that was not enough."

He shrugged, "My death was quick. It was an arrow through the head—the one you saw—and another ruler was quickly chosen."

Valentina vaguely remembered reading that story when she had been in school. She hadn't paid much attention, history of the land she lived on had never interested her. She preferred learning about the history of those around her.

"Huh. Interesting." then she turned and began walking away. the sunlight was dimming. She had to get going and make camp.

"Hey wait! Are you just going to leave?"

"Yes." She scanned the landscape before her, trees of all sizes reached up towards the sky, then she made her decision and headed left.

"The village is that way," she heard his voice say. Briefly, she glanced back at him. He was pointing in the opposite direction she had headed towards.

"I'm not going to the village,"

Despite him having no solid form, she still sensed his presence following her. His footsteps had no sound, like hers. Unlike his, however, her footsteps were light from practice. In order to acquire her food, she had to be stealthy. In order to steal and eavesdrop, she had to be invisible. In order to survive, she had to learn a great variety of things.

"Then where will you sleep?" he asked.

"Clearly you have not been following me for long enough or else you would have known that I do not usually sleep in areas where there are more people."

Suddenly, he appeared in front of her, causing her to come to a halt. His eyes were studying her, she realized. Under his scrutinizing gaze she felt uncomfortable. Valentina preferred to be the one observing, not the one being watched for then she felt no expectations from anyone.

"You are different," the ghost stated, "I intend to find out why."

Valentina shrugged, and felt the tension in her shoulders ease. She walked around him and continued forward, adjusting her backpack straps.

"Do you not care? If I accompany you?" his voice was lowered to a whisper, and Valentina turned to look at him at the sudden change in tone.

He looked almost timid, something that surprised her. In the few

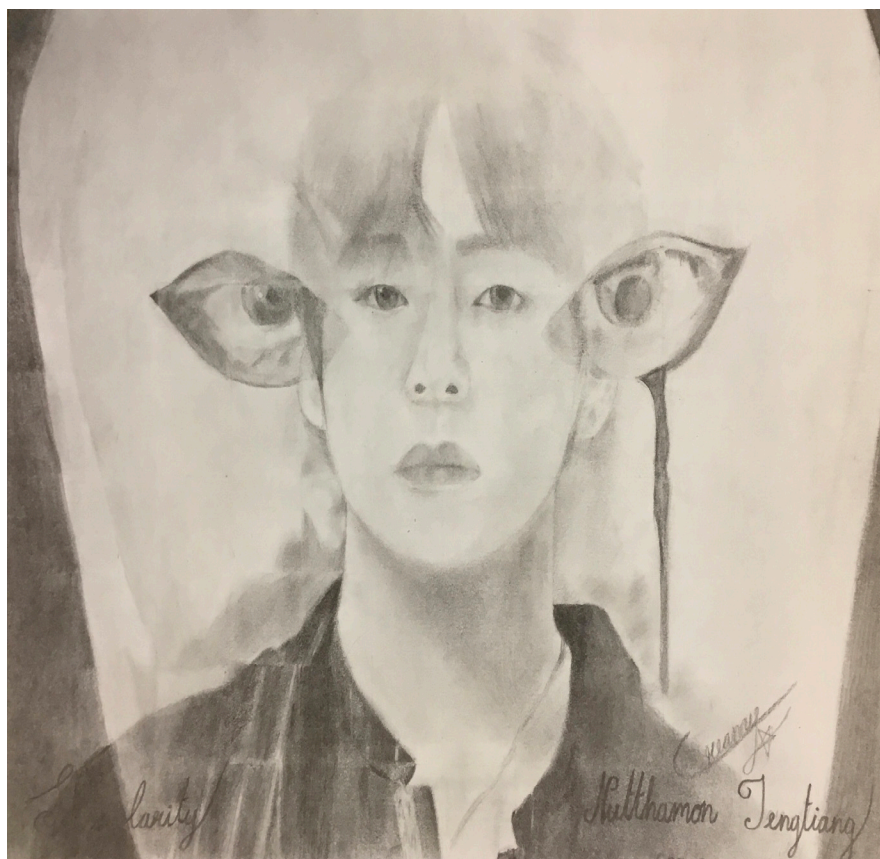
moments she had spent with him, he had projected a mirthful and confident aura. She had not expected this apprehensive behavior.

"Not really, and a bit of company might do me good. I haven't had someone to talk to in a while," she said.

But Valentina would not get attached. She reassured herself this every time someone was her company. She already knew what would happen next: they would leave. So many had left in her life that some days she questioned if she had been born with a curse, one that always left her alone.

"My name is Emory Bronwyn," he smiled.

She could not help but give a small smile in return, "Valentina."



Singularity  
By: Nutthamon Tengtiang



Untitled  
By: Anonymous



Untitled  
By: Tou Lao Moua

# Just An Old White Lady

## By: Mandy Wohlers

Written for the young men at the Juvenile Detention Center who participated in a poetry writing class

I may have grown up different from you,  
So I might not know all you' ve been through.  
Never had to hustle, scheme, or steal,  
But I' ve learned through the years, what' s out there' s for real.

I' ve been listening to your stories for the last 18 years  
Heard about hard times, sad times, gave you tissues for tears.  
I' ve been around a while to see.  
You never know, I may be more than just an old white lady.

You' ve told this old white lady all about who you are,  
And I' ve listened with my mind and heart.  
Stories filled with pain, how I don' t know my daddy,  
Big brothers locked up, mom tries but now has a new baby.  
Homies in the grave, gotta watch my back  
Revenge, payback, kickbacks, man I ain' t never comin' back  
How many of you have said that?

So when I see you come back time after time,  
And you give me the same ol' line  
About how you' ll never be back again, no for real!  
To survive you hide away how you feel.  
And I believe you really believe what you say,  
But believe me I see it every day.  
I' ve just gotta ask what will be different, what' s gonna change  
Cause day in and day out you keep doing the same things.  
I tell you to talk about what' s going on in your life  
And that if you don' t, it' ll eat you alive.  
You can' t keep it all jammed up inside.  
It' s destroying you I can see,  
But what do I know, I' m just an old white lady.

I know if I had all the answers you' d be sittin' here watchin'  
me on t.v.  
But maybe I do know some things as an old white lady.  
I know that streets and gangs and drugs will suck you dry.  
I know they kill spirits, and that you' re too young to die.  
If you keep doing the same things, I can pretty much guarantee  
You' ll be right back here writing poetry with me.  
So do what you do but give it a tweak  
Livin' life more square doesn' t mean that you' re weak.  
Who cares what they say, they don' t know who you are,  
And I know you get tired of seeing life through those bars.  
Here' s what I do know, be that little engine that could.  
You do have the power to conquer the 'hood.  
I know that you can be all you want to be,  
But what do I really know? I' m just an old white lady.





Untitled  
By: Anders Madson

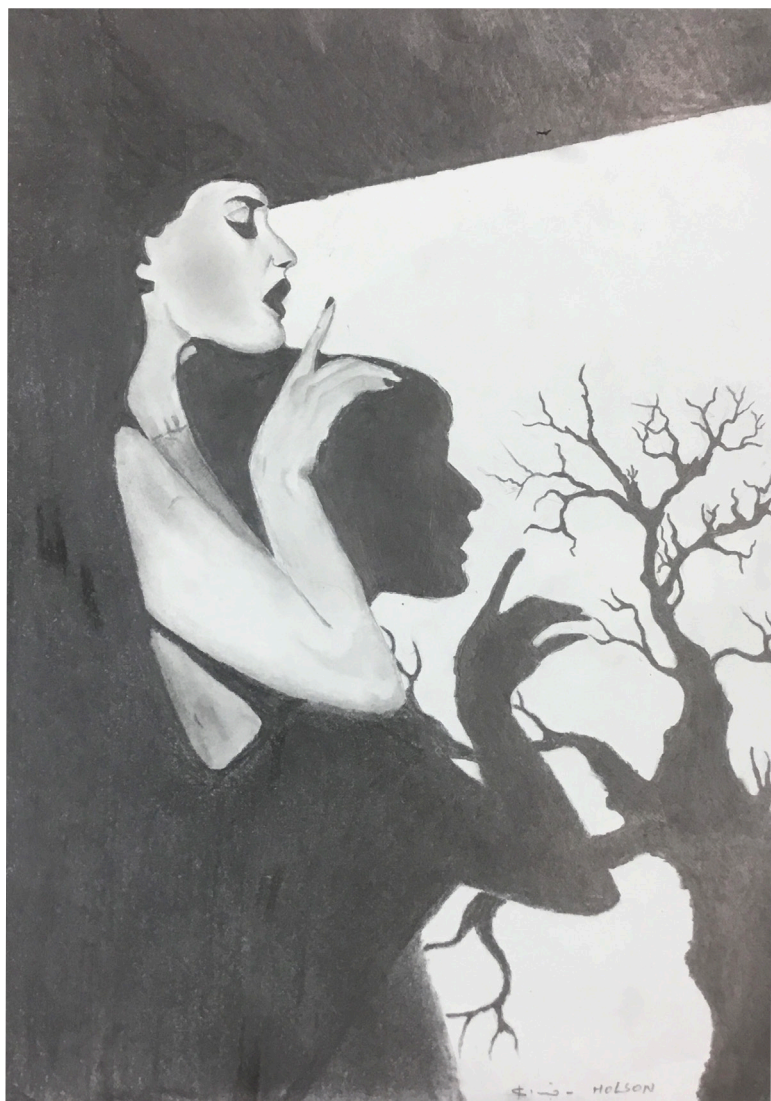


# Don' t Bother

By: Lillianna Vang

If you have this or that, then you will be satisfied. If you act, think, or talk this way then you will be recognized. Will this change you? Yes. For better or worse? Worse. You will be trapped inside someone unfamiliar. Someone different. That someone is not who you truly are. Don' t bother being that someone.

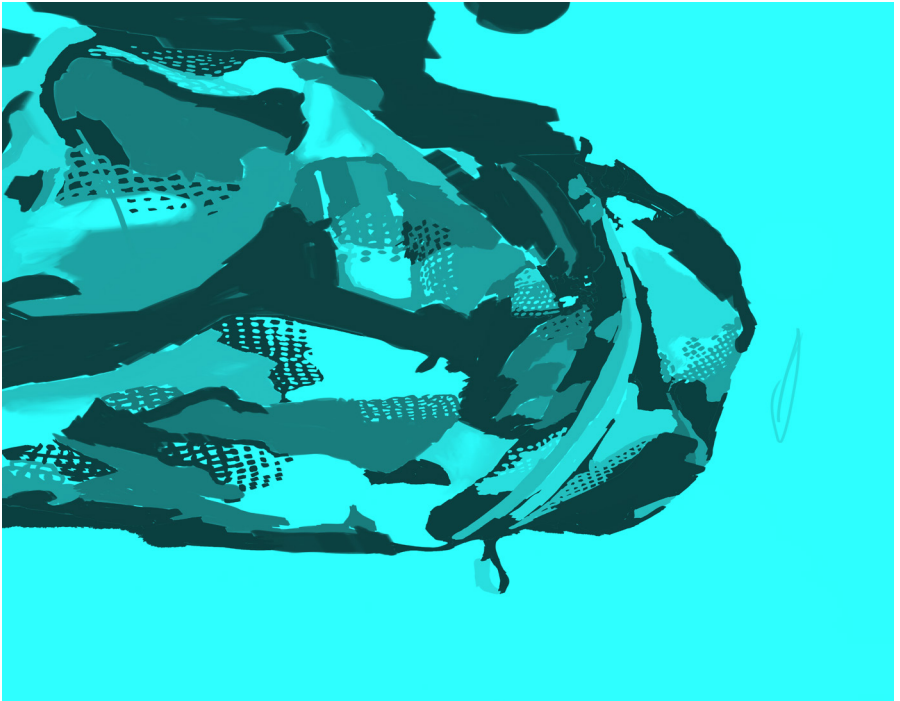
Inspired by Joy Harjo' s  
“Don' t Bother the Earth Spirit”



Woman' s Love  
By: Holson Francis

#1  
By: David Norby

Snowshoes  
Soft silence  
Solitude  
Woods bathed in blue  
Exhilarating cold  
Wandering thoughts  
Repetitive movement  
Connected

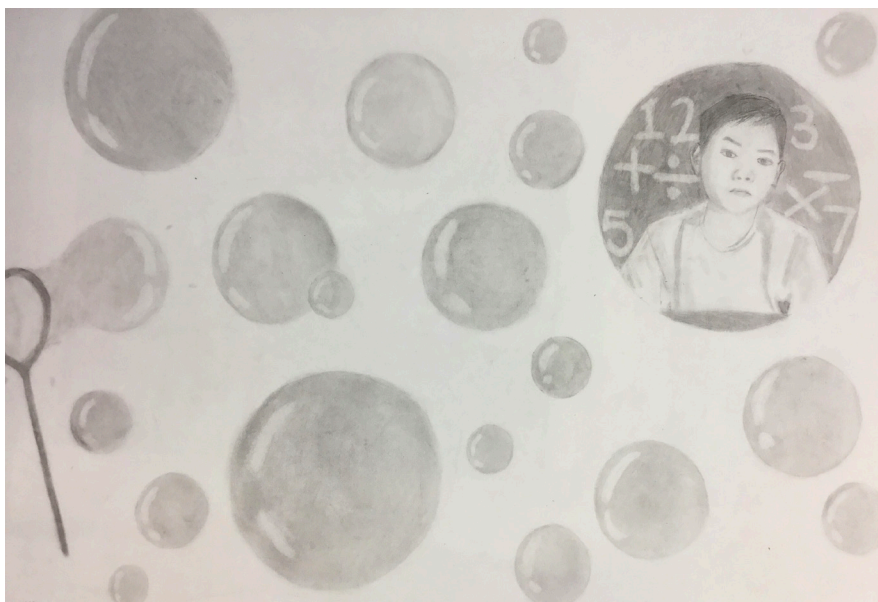


Untitled  
By: Anonymous

# How Do I Write?

By: Mai Xiong Khang

I' ve been sitting idly by.  
Nothing, or anything, catching my eye.  
A pencil and pen in hand  
I couldn' t understand  
why I can' t write.



# Untitled

By: Liya Guan

# 100 Word Memoir

## By: Pedro Herrera

My friends and I stare at the broken glass. While we are in shock, the door flies open. In that second I felt my heart drop. "Who did this?" "It was you guys wasn' t it." We were terrified, so we ran. You could hear the man screaming "I already called the police!" . We ran it was cold and dark, I couldn' t see where I was running, I could feel my body shivering as I ran. We ran down the street and into my friend' s house, we heard the sirens. We explain everything to our friend as we catch our breath.



# Untitled

## By: Jayvon Lockhart

# The Hands That Feed You.

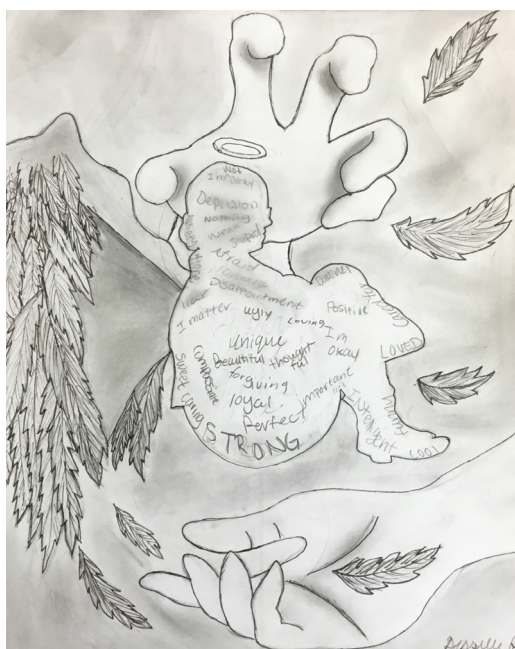
## By: Mai Xiong Khang

It holds secrets  
in the palm.  
And lines mark its every move.

It stretches and  
then  
strangles you in your sleep.

The hand that feeds you  
holds a pillow over your face.

It is the hand that ends your life.  
It is the hand that deals your fate.



# Untitled

## By: Gisselle Quintanilla



# Do I Need a Boyfriend?

By: Nou Yang

I walked into the car thinking it would be a normal three-hour car drive, but I was wrong. I slumped down onto the seat and immediately took out my phone, plugging in my headphones as I listened to "Walk It Talk It" by Migos. Feeling the breeze of the opened window, I couldn't wait to get to Lacrosse, Wisconsin. I turned up the volume of my song, just loud enough for me not to hear the Hmong radio my sisters and mom had put on. Like any typical teenager, I was texting my friend; he was more than a friend, but in front of my family he was only a friend. My family is super overprotective and they're brutally honest if they didn't like a certain thing, especially my sisters. While I put my head on the window, my mind went into outer space. I closed my eyes and turned down the volume, just enough to where I won't be able to hear myself breathing. Picturing the smiles of my nieces and nephews, I couldn't wait to see them.

Then I heard my sisters talking, I knew something was going on. Was it serious? Or was it ME that was in trouble? Trying to stay calm, I then heard my sister questioned me with a heavy tone,

"Nene do you have a boyfriend?"

I turned my head towards my mom; she was the only person I told. How did my sisters find out!?

"Mom, did you tell them?!"

No response.

I didn't know how to answer them. But all I could feel was the sweat on my palms and my anxiety raising. I cautiously answered them with a quiet voice,

"Yeah..."

My sisters went off, they started talking about the fact that I was too young, or that I don't know what I'm doing.

"Where did you even meet this guy?" questioned my sister.

"At school..." I answered.

A moment of silence passed by, and I thought to myself; Is dating this dude even worth it? Can I really commit my time into someone else at 15? With a heavy heart, I tried to ignore the questions my sisters have asked about my boyfriend.

"You need to set your priorities straight, you're only 15 years old,"

"You have your whole life ahead of you to worry about a boyfriend," insisted my other sister.

"Exactly, having a boyfriend will restrict certain opportunities such as going out with friends, applying for colleges, and even your own freedom," added my other sister.

"Mom, don't get Nene a car, because that's when they act up," demanded my sister.

I blasted up my song and tuned them out; an hour has passed, and I still had 2 hours with them. I'm already sick of it. I closed my eyes,

and regretful feelings started to build up. I began to regret the fact that I even said yes to him. I began to regret the fact that I was valuable to someone. Because, did I even need a boyfriend? Was he worth it? I' m still young, I can find someone when I get older. In that three hour drive, I learned that I had my whole life to worry about a boyfriend, but right now I wanted to focus on myself and my success. That might sound awful, but my self-care will always come first before anybody or anything else.



Pretty Little Flower  
By: Alejandra Villagrana Ibarra

# America' s Forever

## By: Kashia Pearl Xiong

Selfish, we are. Numb, we' ve become.  
His America to whom I' m forced to succumb.  
A monotonous life that was forced upon us,  
Yet he lies that it won' t last forever.

Tell me young child, what makes you seek,  
these blood-stained chains that makes you so weak. We' re all  
the same, you, her and I.  
We' re stuck in a race for the "American Dream."

Unhappy, we are. Selfish, we' ve been.  
His coins matter more than what lies within.  
We must take a step back, sing them right back. The lives  
that we' ve offered for the ride on his back.

In the pockets of greed,  
there lives this seed.  
When blossomed,  
will kill us forever.

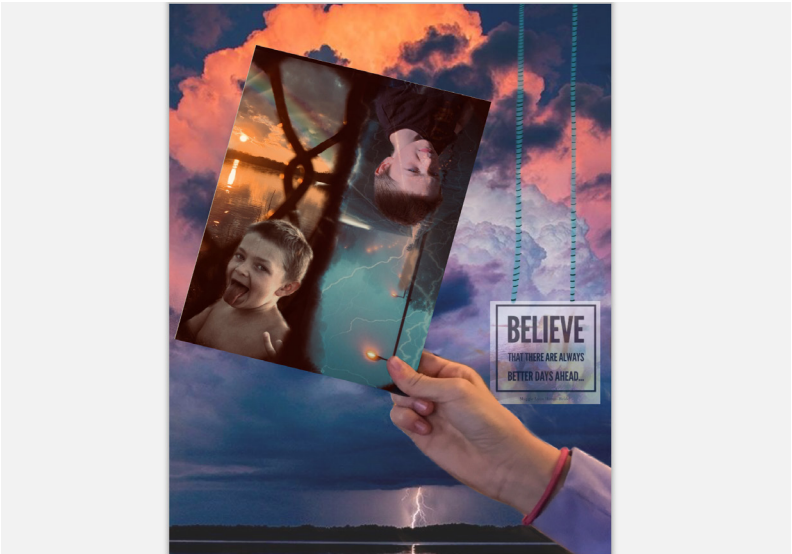


# My World

By: Maiser Vang



Untitled  
By: Dejnag Yang



Untitled  
By: Gabryella Liebgott



# Wounded Heart

## By: Sam Osborne

The frost spreads its fingers through  
the veins of the untimely sapling.  
Frigid crystals etch themselves  
into its stem.

The soft pulse of the once warm earth  
underfoot has faltered

into fledgling branches  
crawls an icy sensation  
smothering whatever warmth  
might' ve held close.

The soft pulse of the once warm earth  
underfoot has slowed.

The sun brings no respite  
The air stings the young  
sprout now stiff with rime.  
It wilts in the winter wind.

The soft pulse of the once warm earth  
underfoot has died.



Rhythm to my Beats  
By: Alejandra Villagrana Ibarra

# 100 Word Memoir

## By: Nicaela Jackson

“Flight 27, to Dallas beings boarding in 5 minutes.” I took a hard gulp with a quiet sniffle. My eyes continued to water as we got steps closer to the gate but I felt weak by showing my emotions. “Let’ s take a pic-ture!” I could feel the tears run down my face as the flash from the photo connected with my eyes. My smile became weak, I wanted nothing more than to escape from reality. My best friend was exactly who I needed by my side as I entered junior high, I thought to myself as she boarded the plane.



## Summer Sun

### By: Kaylie Youngberg

# I Am a Nobody

## By: Anonymous

To begin with, I am a nobody. I used to be known by everyone in primary and middle school. I had friends, I was never alone. People knew me, and I knew them.

In middle school, everyone became distant, or maybe I became distant. I was still visible to most people though. As the school year progressed, I became invisible. 8th grade was the beginning of my loneliness.

One of my best friends didn't seem like me anymore. I really only had one friend. It went from mostly everyone in my grade being my friend, to one. She was my best friend, the closest I have ever been to someone. I got really attached to her.

On days she wasn't at school, I was alone, no one talked to me, no one hung out with me. I wanted her to be at school with me, I was depressed. On those days I couldn't be me. She was what brought happiness to me.

Graduation eventually came around, everybody was lined up from shortest to tallest. My supposedly friend group was near each other, because they were taller. I was by myself, because I was the shortest.

After graduation, the people who were supposedly my friends had become strangers. In short, I left them. They brought pain to me. Now I only had my one best friend.

Once high school came around I thought to myself, "I'm not going to make friends, I'm not gonna talk, I'm gonna be independent and just focus on school". That happened in the beginning. Then I actually made a couple friends.

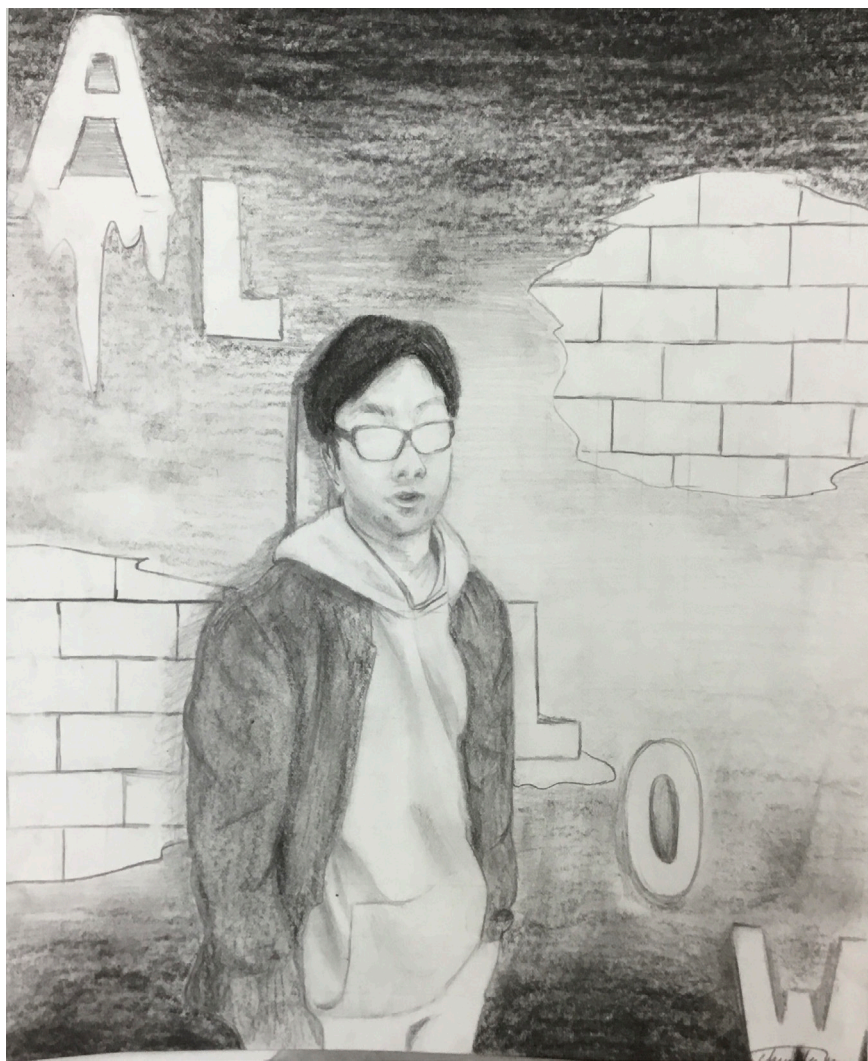
I still feel left out though, I feel non-existent. If I got up and left, they wouldn't stop me. If I got up and left, it would be as if I wasn't there to begin with.

I'm always in class, but people don't see me there, they only see their friends. No one talks to me in class, no one sees me, I'm like a ghost to them. I am a nobody.

People tell me, "You're dead," "You talk with no emotions." or "Your jokes are funny even though your voice is dead," etc. It's funny, because why do I agree about what they're saying?

At the end of the day, I bottle up my pain, anger and sadness. I begin to get worse until I finally explode. I end up hurting people emotionally and verbally, when I don't intend to, or I end up hurting something else much worse, and that's a secret I won't tell.

I have no emotions, no feelings, I am nothing, non-existent, I am invisible and inhuman, I am a nobody. All I ever wanted was to feel like I belong in this world, and I don't.



Untitled  
By: Chinda Moua

# Death

By: Mai Xiong Khang

Where mangled branches meet  
and clouds of amber fill the sky,  
I will be there looking.

I will be there seeing what I need to see.  
Cries of help would emanate through the air,  
and I would smile at the pain I made.

I will end it all.

In the forest I' ve hidden away.  
I welcome the end, this is my day.



# Pine

By: Trinity Adams



# Where Has the Time Gone?

## By: Steven Rivera

Time passing,  
    your image in my head.  
Trying to figure out  
the last thing I said.

Thoughts of regrets,  
    but who would' ve known  
The last time we would talk,  
    would be through the phone?

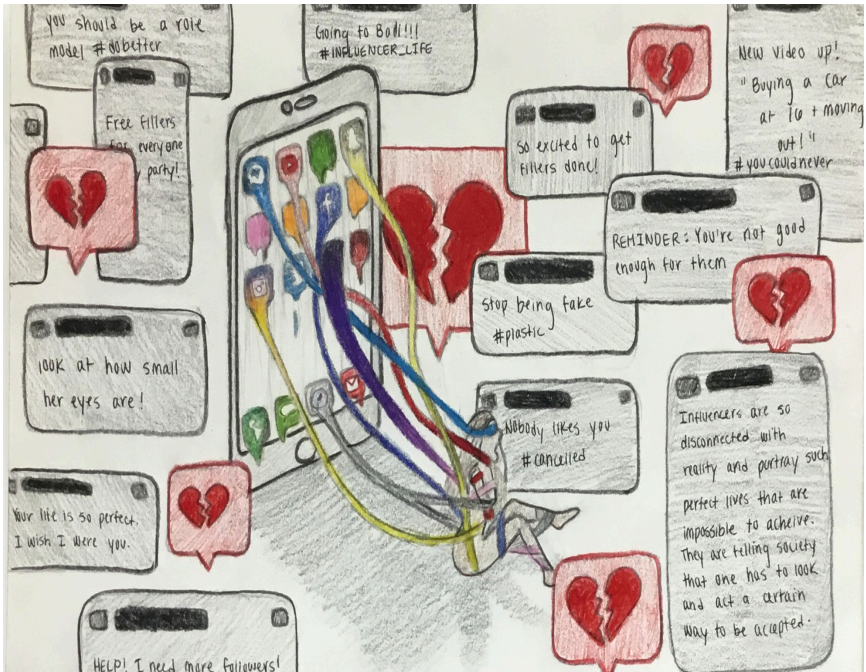
The memories,  
    fill up in my mind  
In just a blink of an eye,  
    where is the time?

Now where is the time,  
    where did it go?  
All the joy life gave us  
    as you watched me grow?

I still think to myself,  
    is this real?  
Staying strong for the family,  
    that' s ideal.

It' s God' s plan,  
    to that I say amen.  
You' re a part of me.  
    Till I see you again.

RIP Tio Tony



Untitled  
By: Anonymous

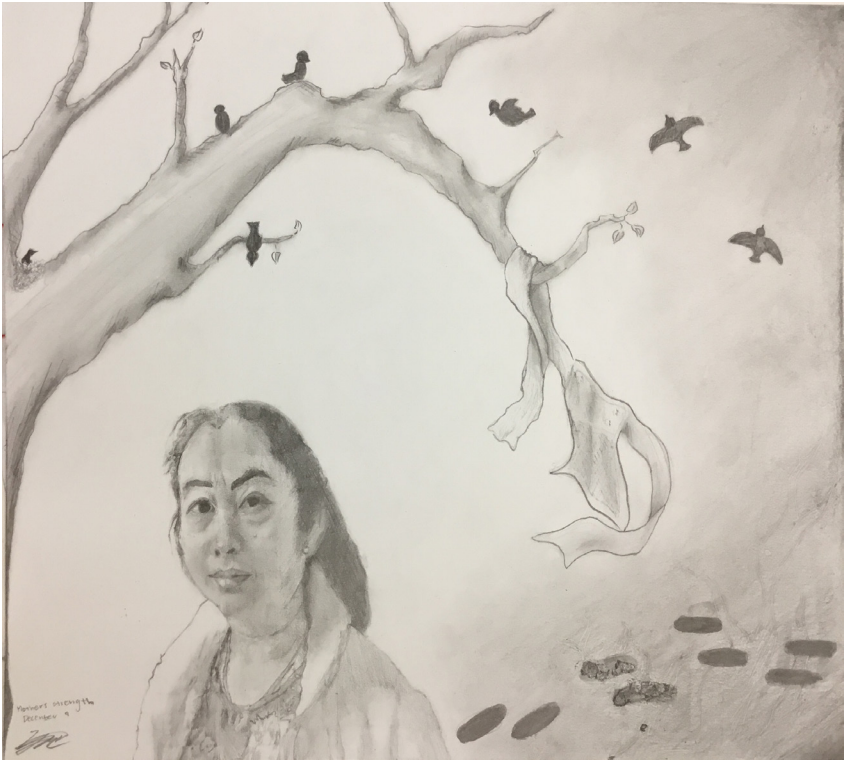
# I Didn' t Miss it Until it Was Gone

## By: Christian Jones

It is a cold night in December, eating a subway sandwich in the dining room and out of nowhere my mother says to me softly, "Nana passed away in her sleep this morning", and at the moment I really did not know what to think or how to feel because I was only 10 and that was the first person in my family that died during my lifespan. My grandma had died from a heart attack.

Let' s go to the past... I never really had that good of a relationship with Grandma Tisa (my father' s mother), I couldn' t even tell you why our relationship was how it was because I don' t know myself unfortunately. I feel bad about it because instead of spending time with my Grandma Tisa: I spent time with my Grandma Gina. The week of my grandma' s funeral was very chaotic, Because of my family members from Detroit and Georgia coming to Minnesota and having to stay with us. There were about 15 people in our house, everywhere you looked there was somebody there. In the morning the day of the funeral I still did not know how to feel, because it still felt so unreal, but shortly after that, things changed.

My Aunt, my cousin Delvon, and I went to the funeral home early and that' s when I saw my Grandma in the casket, her body cold and that' s when my cousin and I whimpered to my Aunt "please bring us back home", luckily my house was close and the funeral hadn' t started yet. Roughly 45 minutes later it was time to go to Anderson Funeral Home again. When the funeral officially started, my father put a slideshow of my Grandma on the tv and that' s when I realized she passed, and you know what came next, the water-works; To this day I regret every moment I hadn' t spent with her, but now it is too late because she' s gone. I hadn' t missed her until she passed.



# Mother' s Strength

By: Yer Lee

# Night of Death

## By: Natalie Barrett

July 18th, 2019. That was the night. The night I found out my grandpa Lou was gone from this world. To be completely honest I remember that I felt nothing. I had overheard my family talking in the kitchen while I was upstairs. Instead of crying with my mum and sister, or comforting them with my dad, I was drawing. Yes, drawing. It was interesting because all my life I was lucky to have never dealt with the death of people close to me, but this past year had been full of it. Because of all the past death, I eventually became more and more numb to the fact that someone I cared about was dead. So when the time came that my grandpa was gone, it almost felt unreal, it felt fake. But still, I chose to keep drawing pictures of faces that never had any meaning to me. I should have been prepared for this. I thought silently to myself. I mean, just weeks before I was told to write some of my favorite memories about my grandpa, but it never seemed to occur to me that this was actually happening. That I had to write about these memories because soon, he would be gone. You' re so heartless! The disgusted voice in my head yelled. I thought I was a horrible person for not being able to feel any sadness about my grandpa dying.

"You' re a terrible, selfish person for being this way," I scolded myself under my breath. I was still drawing, still too afraid to face my grieving family.

I remember thinking about the service for my grandpa, what it would be like, who was going to be there, how I would act at the service, and the biggest most selfish thought I had was how important I would be in this service. I hated myself for thinking such careless things, but I could not hide the fact that I was curious. After a while, I finally decided to stop drawing the faces, noticing that every single face I drew had tears streaming down their cheeks. Right after I was about done drawing my dad came into my room with a look of concern on his face.

"Grandpa passed away." He spoke quietly. I looked up at him and sighed.

"Yeah I heard already," I sounded almost bored. "I was listening while you guys were talking." My dad paused, probably thinking of something comforting to say.

"Well if you wanna talk-" He started.

"I know." I cut him off. I was not really in the mood to talk about my feelings with people.

After my dad left my room, I still felt that I had more important things to do than support my family, so I decided to procrastinate, looking for the strangest apps I could find. I came across this app that would show you what you looked like as an old person. So I got the app, and saw what I would look like as an old person which probably wasn' t accurate. For some reason, seeing myself as an old person made me think about how everyone I know will grow older and older and eventually die, including me. I don' t know for sure, but I think this was the random thought that finally urged me

to head downstairs and offer emotional support for my family, especially my mum. I realized that I should have been spending more time with the people I care for because I would never know when I would lose them. So I got myself to head downstairs where I found my mum standing in the kitchen crying silently. After a moment I shuffled over to her and embraced her in my arms. I had no idea what to say, and I did not want to make her feel worse, so instead I closed my eyes and whispered:

“I’ m sorry.”





Elizabeth and Nhia  
By: Angel Lee

# Am I Crazy?

## By: Pheng Xiong

I kill ants. I step on them, I poison them, and I burn them. Sitting on the rock wall behind my house, I crush any ants that cross my way with a hammer I had taken from the basement. Sitting there, murdering each individual ants, I wonder who they were, what they' ve done, and where they' re going. I' m sure each of these ants had an ant girlfriend and ant parents that were waiting for them. I' m sure they regretted dying here, not knowing what they did wrong. They probably had a bright ant future ahead of them, where they would raise a nice happy ant family. It was me who stole this from them, yet why didn' t I feel guilty?

"He' s killing ants again, he must think it' s cool," A friend would say.

"Why bring a hammer though, that' s kind of weird," Another friend continued.

Am I weird? I' ve heard that animal abuse is an early sign that you' re a psychopath. I can' t be a psychopath though; I cried when Iron Man died in Endgame. Are ants even animals? They don' t have fur or scales, they' re not even cute. It' s not like I even enjoy killing them, I only do it because I can. I would rather spend my time doing figuratively anything else. Strangely enough, I don' t kill any other insects; I cry when I see a spider. It' s ants alone that I spend time killing. Was I killed by an ant in my past life? Why do I waste so much time killing them? I don' t even believe in reincarnation, so that shouldn' t be the case.

Am I mean? Maybe I just like bullying the weak. I would take two ants and put them in a bowl, waiting to see them rip each other apart. Though they never did, they just kept walking around in circles. That' s not bullying though, it' s more like entertainment. It' s normal to enjoy watching people beat each other up, why is it any different with ants? It' s also normal to rip their legs and antennae off and see them struggling, to dip them in oil and watch them futilely try to clean themselves. It' s not like I asked them to die. It was their fault for getting in my way, for not escaping when I gave them the chance to.

Am I evil? And what is with the hammer? You don' t need a tool to kill ants, it' s easier to just step on them. Maybe it makes me feel powerful, like Thor smashing down on Thanos with Mjolnir, except I go for the head. Is that so wrong? I' m just playing around, who cares if a few ants die along the way. It' s not like I' m killing dogs here, it' s a few measly ants. People who kill dogs deserve to go to jail after all. I' m sure the ants don' t feel it anyway. Insects can' t feel pain after all. Exterminators kill ants all the time, they' re simply pests. In fact, I' m doing everyone in my neighborhood a favor by getting rid of these pests. I' m the good guy; exterminating ants for free.

Am I crazy? Is it wrong to dictate the lives of some tiny ants? It' s not wrong to decide that they could live if they were able to escape with a leg torn off. It' s not wrong to drown them in a pool of water and

see if birds would eat them. It's not wrong to pour soda over an ant hill and ruin the home of thousands of ants. I'm not crazy for killing ants, I am a god.



Untitled  
By: Anders Madson

# Mirror Mirror

## By: Gisselle Quintanilla

Mirror Mirror

Tell me something

Tell me who I am.

Mirror, what' s inside of me?

You' re from a mother born in Mexico,

Who was so poor she had no home

That she could call her own.

Working at the age of fourteen, moving to another home,

making only a few pesos each day,

She was grateful she had a place to stay.

Grandfather, Grandmother, I don' t think you loved her.

You neglected her, yet, you weren' t sure.

She traveled to the United States at eighteen,

With little money, all alone, pursuing an American dream.

You come from a father who was born in El Salvador, who was also poor.

and at a young age, was almost drafted into war.

His mother didn' t want him to go, so she lied about his age.

What could' ve happened if they had discovered this sudden change?

His father was an alcoholic who drank himself to death.

His mother had cancer and sent her son to America, to pursue an american dream.

She passed after she took her last breath.

Mirror Mirror

Can' t you see?

They' ve both sacrificed so much to provide for their family.

They tried their best to give their children the best life, even though  
it was a catastrophe.

In West Hollywood, the city of dreams, of actors, actresses, directors.

Those weren' t the dreams of my parents.

They bore my two elder siblings, they' ll forever be my protectors.

Hollywood treated them badly. Father moved to Boston gladly.

His trip stopped abruptly. Wanting a better life

Only to realize, like a stab with a knife,

Coming to Minnesota, bringing nothing but hope,

Coming reluctantly, no strings attached, later finding a job and bring-  
ing his wife and two children with.

Then later having two more children, the youngest is me.

Mirror Mirror

Please bring back my old memories,

Let me look at the young child who I used to be

Look at how she was just carefree

Yet, now she grew up to be nothing like me.

Mirror Mirror

What' s this thing I see?

Who is this stranger staring back at me?

I' m bound by dark, cold shackles

All I can hear are these evil cackles

My life is just built on these false pretenses

My cries turning into smiles of deceptions

I try to scream, but all I hear is silence,

Mirror mirror, please give me your guidance?

I' m slowly losing my self in the abyss of madness,

Will these demons drag me into the darkness?

Mirror Mirror

Please tell me what this feeling is.

I' m no longer sure if I' m dreaming

How come I' m losing my feelings?!

My depression makes me lose interest.

It makes me feel numb

What have I become?

Anxiety grips my mind.

I' m slowly becoming blind.

These actions, I don' t intend

Oh, why don' t these wounds mend?

I' ve been abused by thoughts not my own.

I' ve been used by the people who' ve been faking behind masks.

Bullies like to play games

That make my life hell.

Is it my soul that they want to sell?!

Mirror Mirror

I can' t see

I can' t see the future in front of me.

People deciding my fate and who I should be.

Pressured into a mold of this persona I can' t flee.

Sometimes at night, I stare at my medications by my side.

So many thoughts run through my mind, telling me I should die.

I look out the window at the sunset sky,

Reminding myself, how time goes by.

Sometimes I wish to say goodbye, and you' ll know where I went,

But in reality, I' ve written so many letters I' ve never sent.

Mirror Mirror

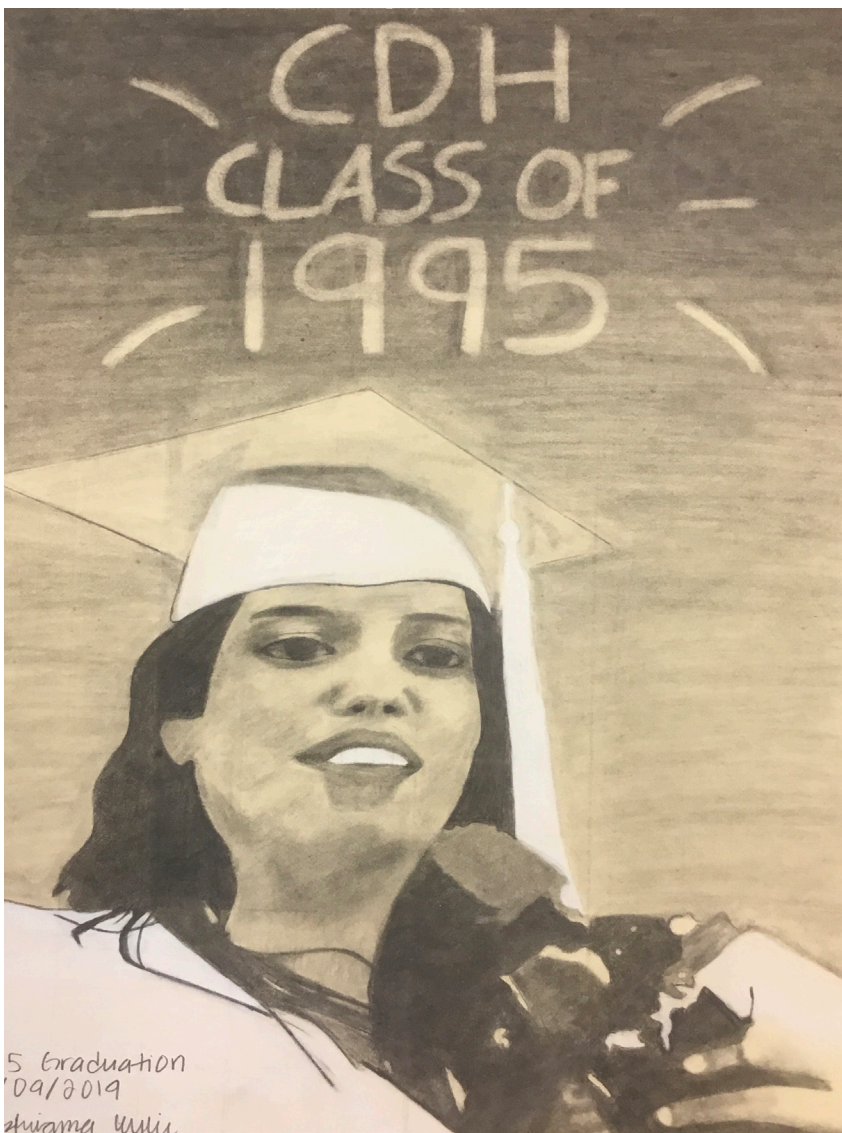
Tell me something, Please

Tell me who I am.

Who am I supposed to be?

You can be whoever you want to be.  
You decide how you want your future to see.  
Don' t let others choose your own fate and then fill you with hate.  
You are a Mexican-Salvadorian. You come from a family who began with  
nothing  
and has been through great suffering.  
You are proud of who came to be.  
Despite your struggles, you' ll be okay,  
Just breathe in the good and blow the bad away.  
You can be afraid but continue forward; even as a first-generation student, you can do anything.  
Preach to the sky where the angels sing!  
Because despite your struggles, you can accomplish anything!  
So give yourself some credit!  
Stop looking at me and go out and get it!





1995 Graduation  
By: Audrianna Wylie

# The Land of Iraq

## By: Kelly-Jovian Ngwa

One must have a mind of peace  
To regard the application of warfare;  
The destruction of structure

And have been starved a long time  
Of being scared Of worry  
Of hearing children cry.

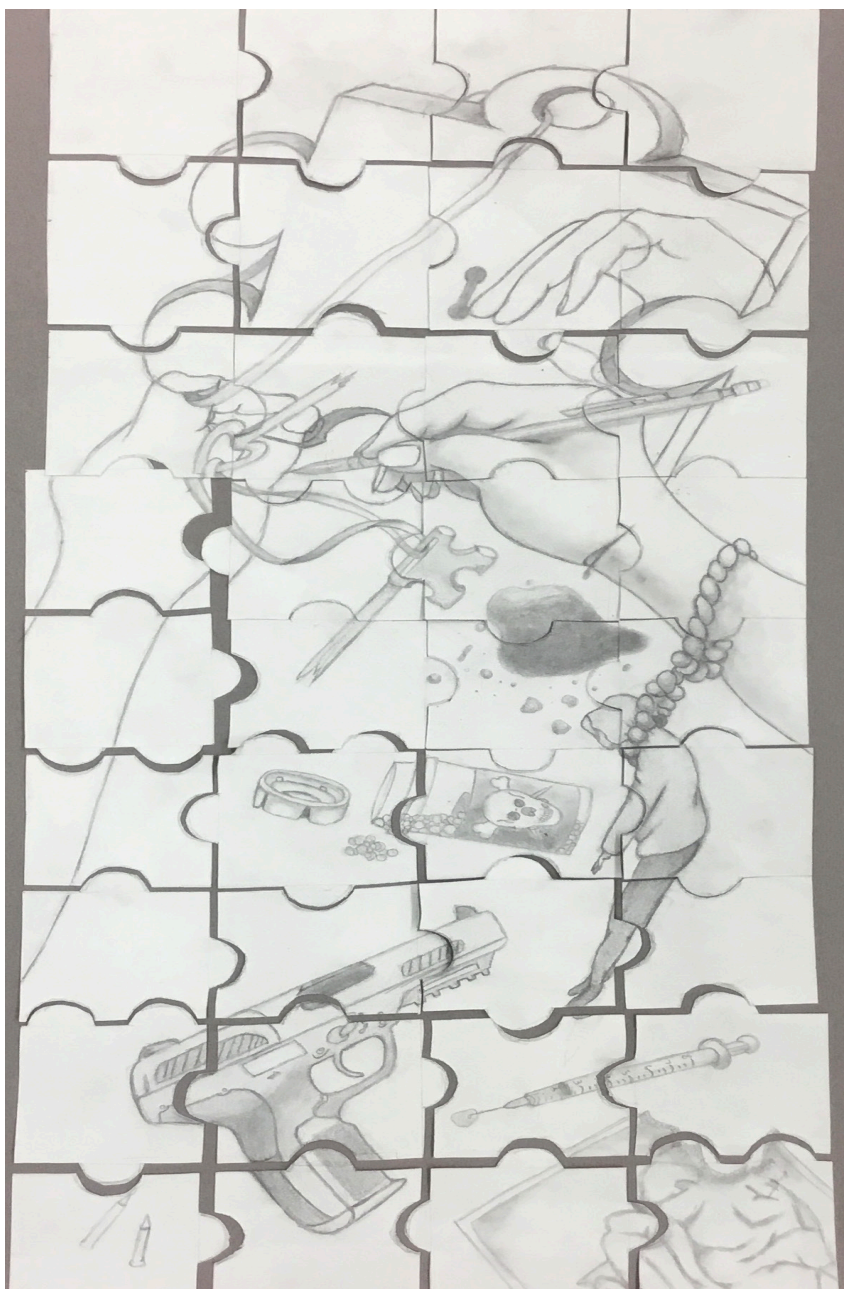
The wind blows by with the pungent scent of death.  
The scent of nuclear chemicals  
The scent of war were there was once peace

And here the mystery lies  
Here the misery lies  
Here lies pieces of unfinished puzzles

And for the land who lost so much  
For the land who suffered

Someday your peace shall return

Inspired by Wallace Steven' s  
"The Snow Man"



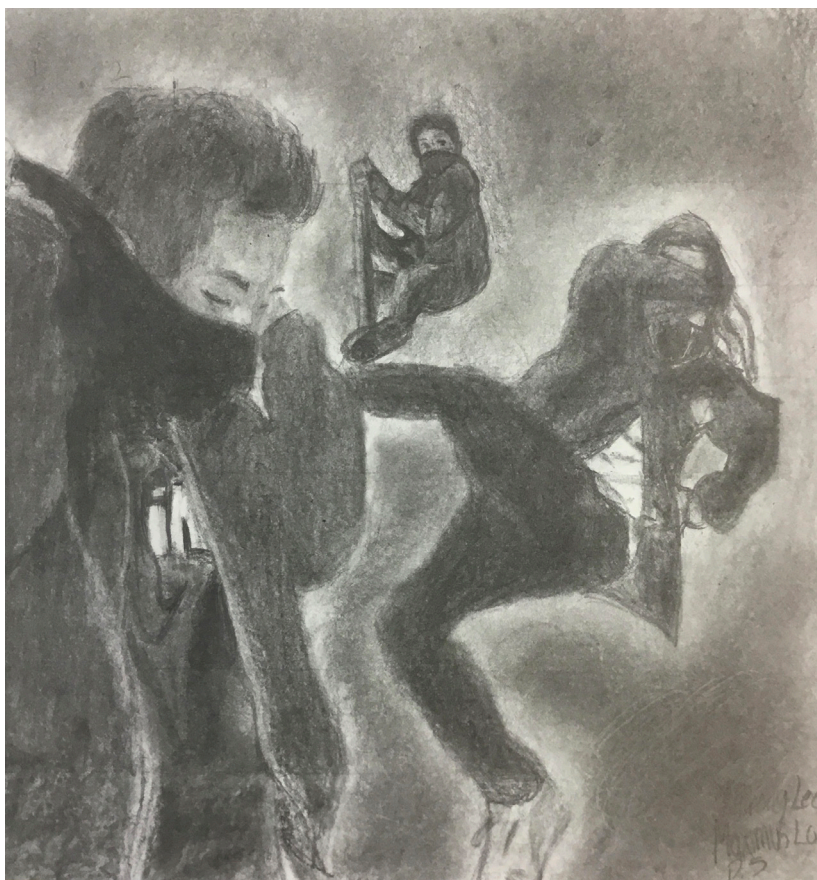
Untitled  
By: Bee Lao

# Powering Through Emotions

## By: Matt Maidl

It was a clear, cool day in St. Paul and I had just woken up. Right away I thought about him, my uncle. My uncle had been sick for a long time and the doctors had told us earlier that week that he wouldn't make much longer. I had a lacrosse game today but I didn't know if I would be able to play. If he'd passed before my game I wouldn't be able to play. I tried to go throughout my day and I couldn't stop thinking about him. Not long after I had finished my breakfast my parents sat me down and told me that the doctors had given my uncle less than 24 hours to live. This had devastated me, after putting a lot of thought into it I decided that I would play in my lacrosse game. It was a very hard decision to make because if I played and didn't go see him I may not ever get to see him again. My uncle was always a very tough-it-out kind of guy and I figured he would've wanted me to play. I couldn't stop myself from crying the whole car ride there, I was a mess. I cried my way all through warmups and even on my way out onto the field for the opening faceoff. I had performed well all year, I would usually finish games with at least 3 goals but this time was different. Today was the first time I would play without being fully focused. Thoughts raced through my mind, what if I wouldn't ever see him again? I began to regret my decision, I wished I had opted to go see him one last time. I had to work harder and harder to clear my mind and focus on the game. By the 4th quarter I still hadn't scored and I was getting frustrated with myself. Late in the 4th quarter a scrum broke out for the ball, this is where I did the most damage. I was good at waiting for the right time to run through the scrum and come out the other side with the ball. I saw my opportunity and took it, I charged through the scrum and came out the other side with the ball and I was moving full speed downfield. I already had a few chances like this earlier in the game but I couldn't capitalize on any of them. I kept charging down the field outrunning and fighting off defenders, I made it into the offensive zone and saw the 3 defenders waiting for me. Speed has always been one of my biggest strengths and I took full advantage of it this time, the first defender would bump me as I ran by him. I knew the other defenders would attack me as soon as I broke free but they were too slow to get to me. I shot the ball and watched as it flew over the goalie's shoulder and into the net. Then I just stood there, overcome with emotion, I looked up to the sky and I could feel him staring down at me, proud. My parents told me after the game that they had gotten a call from my aunt that my uncle had passed about halfway through the 4th quarter.





Anthony Lee  
By: Maximus Lo

# Cloudy Foggy Feelings

## By: Nimot-Lah Oyesla

Right now, there' s chaos everywhere  
With every chime and tick of the clock,  
I' m waiting just like a sitting duck,  
Everything is upside down,  
My surrounding is crashing now,  
I keep telling myself the distance is the cause not the symptom,  
But the more I tell myself that, the more I feel I' m reaching  
into an endless pitiless bottom,  
Hope, Faith and Belief,  
All that I feel now is make believe,  
This pain is rooted deep inside,  
And pretty soon, it' ll all burst outside,  
I keep trying to hold it all in,  
Waiting for you to comfort me and tell me you' re all in,  
But it' s now all but wishful thinking,  
A fantasy, kind of a little star twinkling,  
I guess that' s how feelings are,  
Sometimes sweet and sometimes sour,  
All I try to do is cherish past hours,  
Hoping this grief is jst all in my head,  
Nothing more than just me having a nightmare in my bed,  
Well Wake Up!!Wake Up!!  
Time is up, you have to get up!!  
Looking around me, I realize I' ve always been awake,  
It' s not a dream, and I' m about to break,  
Should I keep holding on?  
Or should I move on?  
Should I keep suffering and smiling?  
Or should I let go and start rising?  
Do I keep letting my feelings be my doom,  
Or do I let go and start to bloom,  
What to say Or what to do,  
It' s up to me to let myself through.



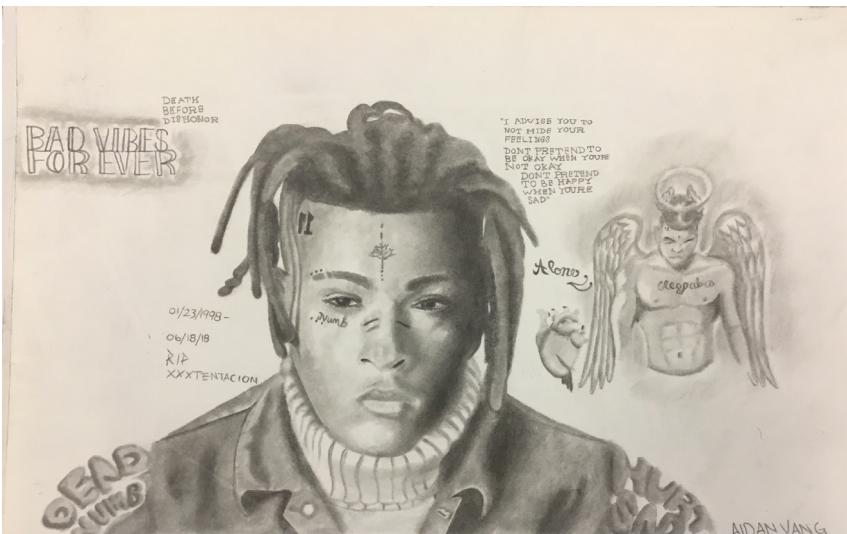


Untitled  
By: Anonymous

# Grey

By: Zaire Mays

The tears I shed  
Flow into the  
river of  
grey neither  
black or white  
just sadness  
and grief  
my smiles  
are human  
rainbows  
and my love  
for you  
is  
infinite



XXX

By: Aidan Vang

# Happiness of Creation

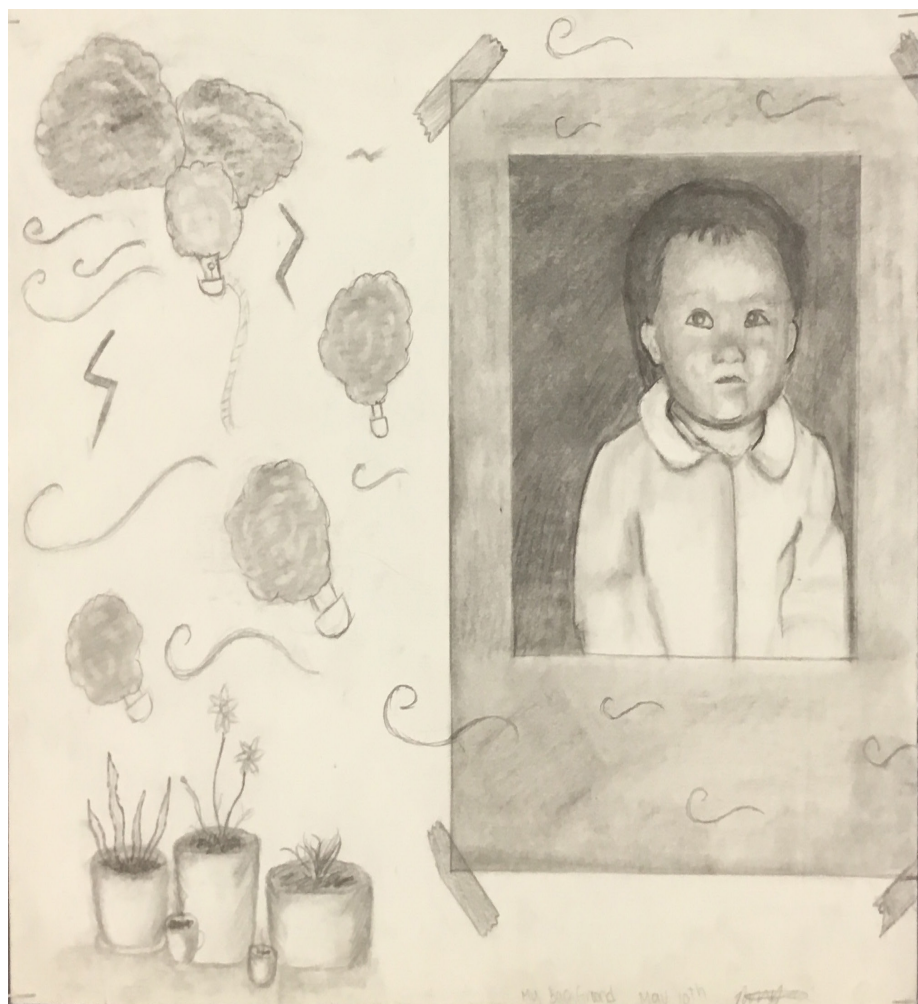
## By: Maixiong Yang

A sundry of unconscious dreams of darkness awaits.  
We can create anything yet we make nothing.  
The only emotions that can be felt is emptiness.  
Hoping for that once and awhile dream.

Then awakening to another morning losing the motivation and  
inspiration  
To only bring out mopey greetings, fake smiles, and  
Emotions only forcefully drawn out to make others feel at  
ease.  
Life itself is nonexistent to me

But then it stopped  
It' s lonely here yet-so many people and scenes  
Burst into my mind.  
The wide range of colors and emotions inspired me.  
I' ve created things.  
They' re my utmost beloved children  
Because I' ve learned to understand this happiness.

Inspired by Ha jins  
“Ways of talking”



Untitled  
By: Anonymous

# 100 Word Memoir

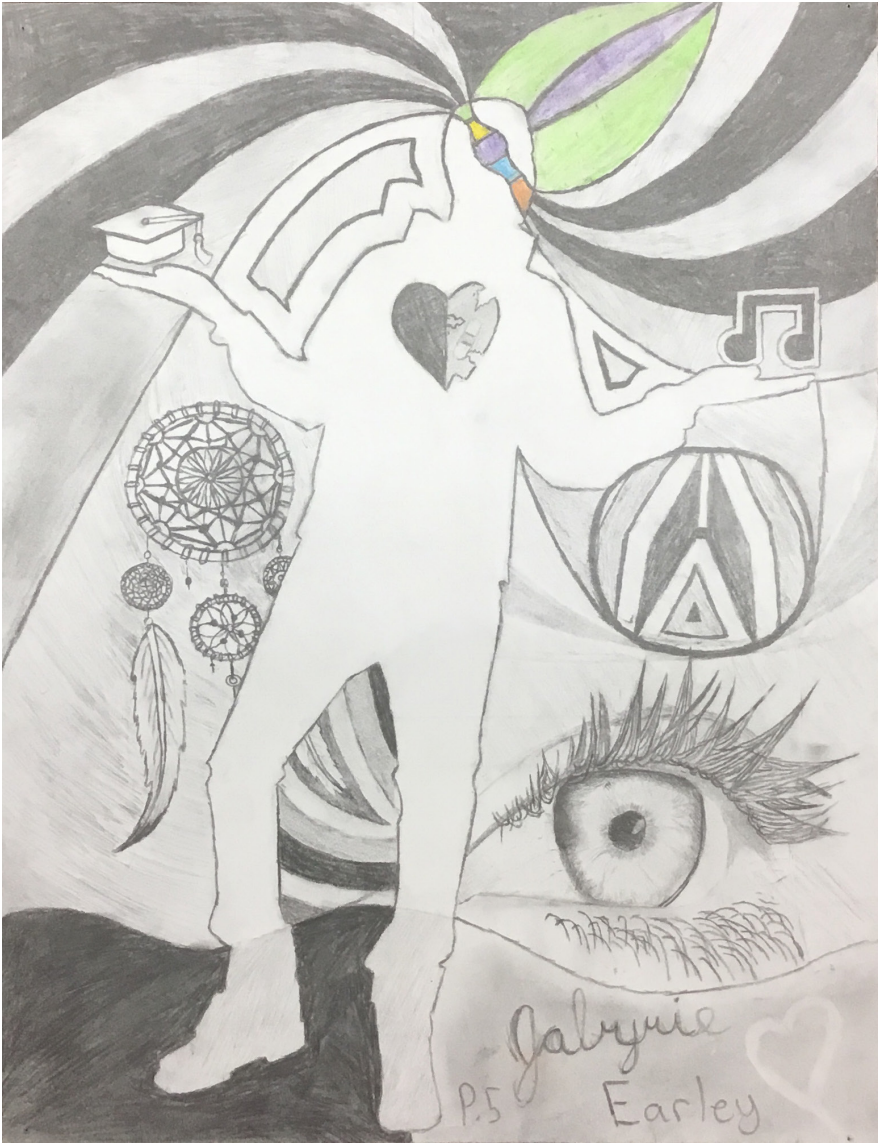
## By: Ka Moua

Today was the day we marched together. We were going to perform in front of other people proud, finishing and ending strong. It was time to perform. I rested my clarinet in my hand, holding it steady for as I was terrified. The whistle blew- chirp chirp chirp. We all started marching together in place, like as we were at a masquerade. Forward we all moved while playing the notes we kept memorized in our heads. The cool breeze danced onto our face and soon passed us. Without our knowledge, the parade was done. We did it- everything was perfect.

# What' s the Definition of Beauty?

## By: Suwannee Xiong

How would you define beauty? Does it really have to be based on your appearance? Do you have to wake up every day to cake up your face? Do you have to impress everyone? Do you necessarily need compliments? Is that how you view beauty? My definition of beauty is kindness because beauty comes from within. You have to feel confident in your own body. Be outgoing, be friendly, and be impassive. Do not let your self esteem down based on what society thinks. Now, what' s your definition of beauty?



Untitled  
By: Jabyrie Earley





What a View  
By: Dechia Xiong

# Sometimes–

## By: Talia Zuniga

Sometimes when the world crowds you  
Remember the loved ones beside you.  
Sometimes when you feel the weight crushing your shoulders  
Know that your family will bear it with you.  
Sometimes you may walk alone  
But your friends will be following behind you.

Sometimes when the darkness surrounds you,  
Remember the light will come, if not today then tomorrow.  
Sometimes when you feel like no one understands you,  
Know that there are people out there that are inspired by you.  
Sometimes the rain doesn' t seem to end,  
But the sun will come another day.

# 100 Word Memoir

## By: Annika Youngberg

I have one goal: find the exit. I' ve never been so lost in my life. I attempt to walk forward, but I' m stopped by my own reflection. Bright neon lights shine on my face as I brush my hands against the mirrors hoping I will enter open space. I see the door close by, but it' s nothing but an illusion. I can hear and view everything, and yet I' m all alone. Everyone has the same objective as me: get out. It feels like time is standing still. I want to give up. Finally, the outside world is visible. I' m free.



Untitled  
By: Ku Gay



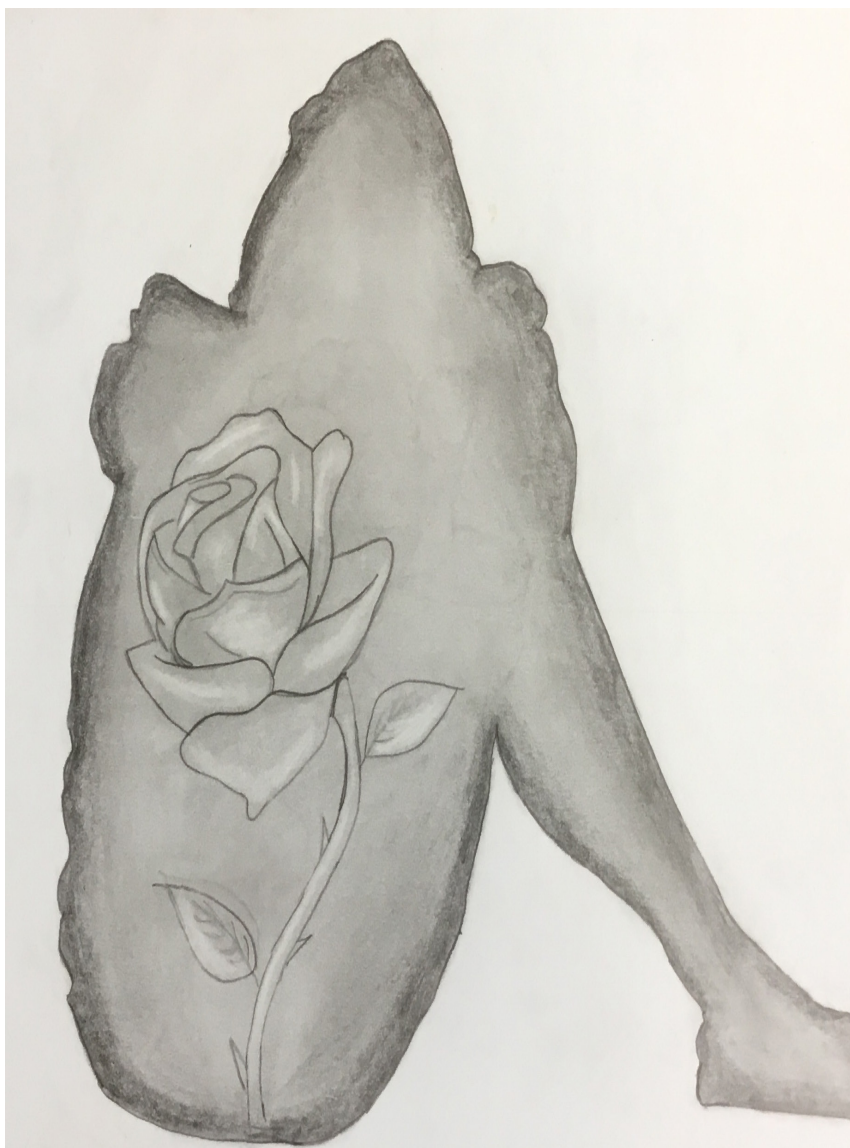
Untitled  
By: Micheiya Lee

# Seeds of Hope

By: Tyler Xiong

In our own little garden  
We cannot change a grown plant back  
into a seed  
The roots it had already planted are  
too deep  
It cannot grow from the ground again  
But we can still water the seeds  
that are yet to be  
For they hold the unknown  
Because the outcome of the seed is out  
of our control  
The only thing to do is to let them grow  
The seeds of hope that we sow  
Are the only plants we want to show

In the little garden that we own



Untitled  
By: Diana Ramierz Aragon

# Flower Field

## By: Tyden Her

Beneath the clear blue skies  
And the bright, shining sun  
Lies a flower field  
A flower field so big  
It stretches out farther than what the eye can see.

In the flower field  
Lies an assortment of flowers  
All with unique, bright colors  
Glimmering in the sunlight  
Beaming in glory.

However,  
If you search far enough into the field,  
You will soon find a patch of land  
A circle of gray grass  
With a single flower in the center.

This flower  
Desolate from the others  
Has no problems with where it is.  
It stands tall with pride  
Glowing like the rest.





Untitled  
By: Anonymous

# Reading a Ball

## By: Cheng Her

To read a ball in the sky  
You must be prepared,  
Hustling to its location  
Calmly, lightly breathing

Glancing at your hat:  
Where your team logo shines, sweat & dirt  
Could be staining your hat

Under the ray of the sun  
A baseball in the air will experience things this way,

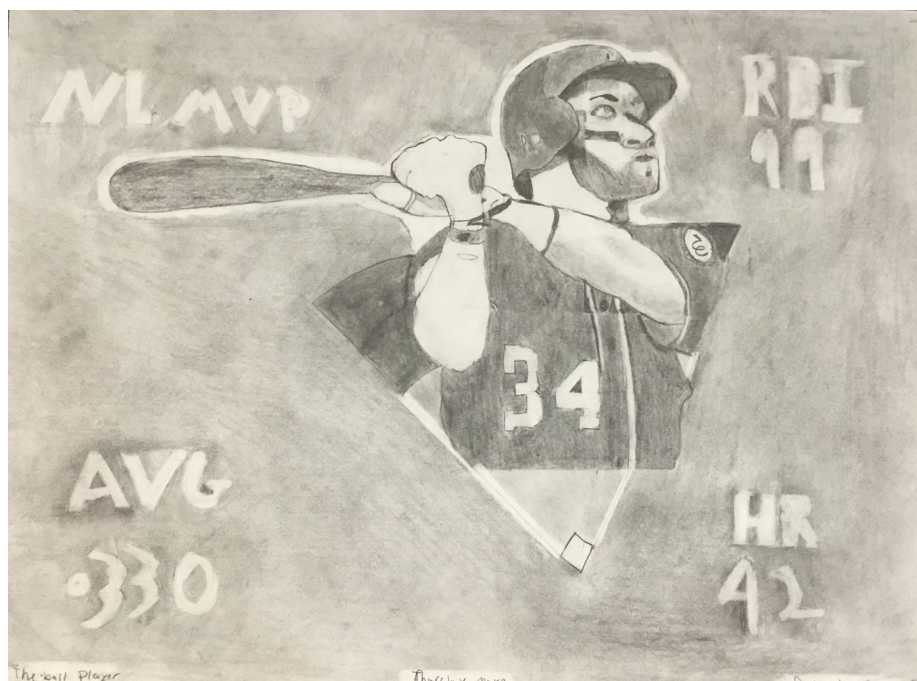
Spinning rapidly in the air while soaring over infield-

A ponderous breeze  
Catching its rotation

What will you predict?  
With what sort of technique?  
Be aware or you' ll embarrass yourself,

A ball might dispense,  
As blindsided change of directions  
Adjust your body  
On the field of baseball.

Inspired by Phillis Levin' s  
“Cloud Fishing”

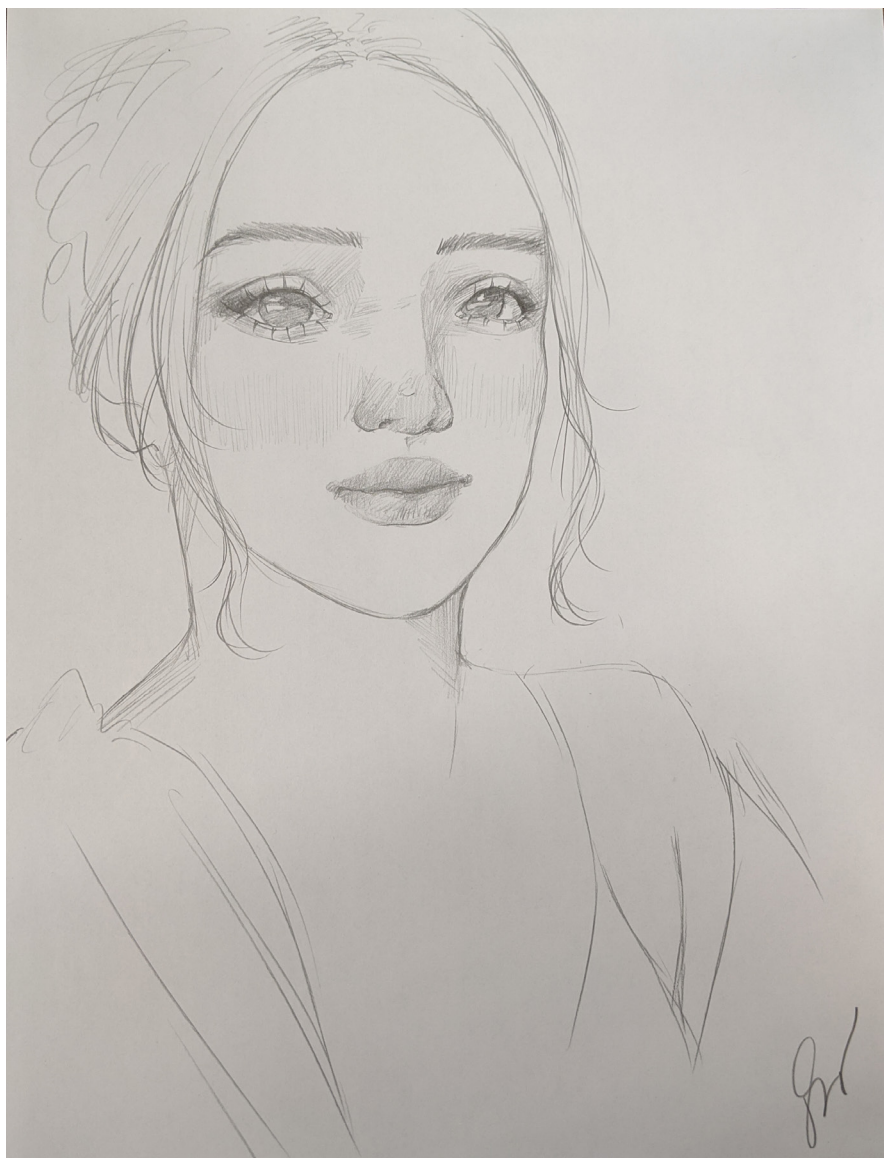


Untitled  
By: Dustin Baar

# Teddy Bear

## By: Gisselle Quintanilla

I' m a teddy bear.  
A loyal friend and companion,  
I stick with you. Everywhere you go I go.  
I Comfort you in times of need, and wipe your tears.  
I will be anything you want me to be.  
Even when you grow tired of me, I will cherish our memories  
and stay loyal to you.  
No matter how old you are or how far apart we grow, you' ll  
always be my favorite.  
I' m a little guard dog that' ll fight away your fears.  
But most of all, no matter where you go  
If I' m lost wondering about,  
Or simply sitting on your bed,  
Just know that Teddy will always love you and care about you.



Untitled  
By: Pang Thao

# Another Memory

## By: Gisela Perez

My teddy bear sits upon my bookshelf now. It's still as soft as when I grew up carrying it around my house, and then to my bed where I believed it would protect me from monsters while I slept. I wished it a good night's sleep but surely, I thought, it would alert me of any dangers. I carried it until I grew up, and I'd say I grew up too fast. I carried the belief that I had to be different, that I had to be better than anyone else, so I grew up. And my teddy bear sits on my bookshelf now.

School changed and suddenly I carried notebooks full of scribbled notes and lazily drawn doodles. I carried a backpack full of folders with papers that had deadlines, papers crumbled at the bottom, pencils, pens, a planner reminding me what little time I would have for myself. I carried my two hairbands on my right wrist, and occasionally a necklace that I had remembered to put on. Sometimes the owl one, or the black cat necklace that I received on my quince. Then there's the purse I carry if I'm not wearing my backpack. A useful thing to fiddle with when heading out to places that make me anxious, or if caught in awkward situations - as I often am. I carry my phone, as all my generation does, and I carry the alarms, the reminders, the apps, the pressures of social media, and the information that comes along with it.

I carried comfortable sweaters, beanies, and my favorite pair of combat boots. Combat boots that had been worn in the rain, been dragged through mud, and worn on day I needed an extra boost of confidence. Combat boots that now show wear and had to be fixed and that I somehow, in some way, got attached to.

I carry the worries and the memories and the words not spoken. The worries always remain, they slip in unannounced, and then they loiter around me. The memories fade and change. There's the laughter and the eyes lighting up and the snorting and the laughter, only louder. Another memory: I'm trying to walk the halls undetected, smiling at friends but just waiting for the moment. Always waiting for the moment. It always inevitably happened. Until it didn't. I carried the words and then I read them, with a new passion now. With the determination - no, with the desperation of someone who wants to escape.

I carried my books, no matter that they made my backpack weigh more. I carried tears spilled for characters and the names of all the stories I had read and I carried the knowledge that I was not alone. Another memory: I'm writing now, hand gripping a pencil, brain searching for that one word. Erase, write, crossout, give up. I carried ideas that never came to be and then ideas that were for later and the ones for now. And now I write. Then there were realizations.

I carried smiles. Fake ones. Real ones. Then I carried forgiveness. Another memory: I'm up late and I'm listening to the night's silence. I'm thinking back to old memories, or what seem to be old memories. I grew up too fast. And I'm thinking about compassion and the need to be understood. I decide then. I began to carry patience and a will to understand and empathy.

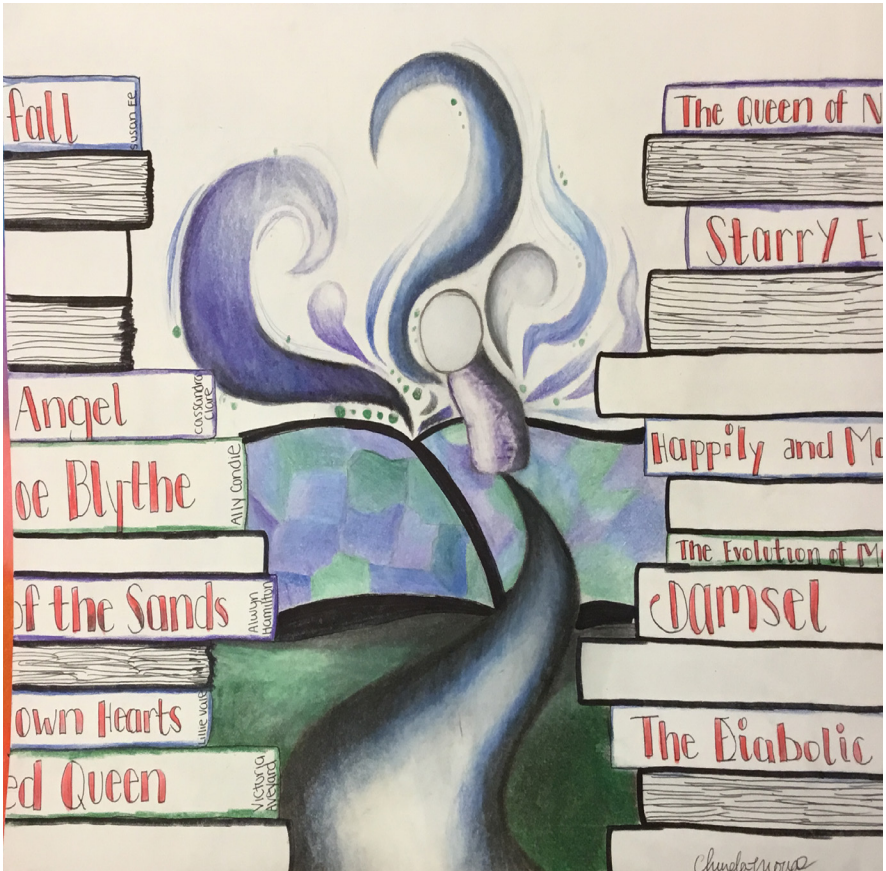
On stressful days, or what I call "no good days," I carry my favorite moments. I carry the lines of my favorite movies and I carry the memory of the trunk door open of my uncle's small red car and my cousins and I laying there on the days



after a storm. The car would start moving and we would take turns holding up the trunk door while the others waited, arms outstretched and reaching for the ground. Then excited shouting and reaching and dipping our hands into puddles. Then another memory I carried, much the same but this time more laughter and teasing. Hands dipped in mud which we had mistakenly thought was a puddle. Sometimes, to get myself to survive the day, I carried with me my favorite quotes and the inspiration I took from characters and the rare affection shown to me from my brother when it's my birthday. Few times I remember the warm embraces of my dad after a successful semester. Perhaps it is because it brings another memory with it.

I carried, and continue to carry, the expectations. It's a tangled web I can't seem to get out of, yet many times it feels as if I was the spider that spun the web in the first place. Some memories: I'm in fourth grade, determined to be different, and finally was put in the gifted and talented class. I'm in middle school, dragging my feet across the floor, convinced that I had to get good grades for my parents to be happy. I'm suddenly too old, too fast. My mind is whirling and I'm questioning when these expectations came to be. I find the answer and I don't like it. I carried my stress but tried to mask it. I carried the textbooks and the restless nights and the post-it notes and the hours locked away in my room, eyes rereading the same sentence over and over again. I carried an easily broken trust that resulted from expectations and was protected by layers upon layers of barriers.

But I carried hope; A flame sometimes dim and almost nonexistent. But which was bright and vivacious in spontaneous bursts, having been stoked by an event or a word or a book or a person. And it is hope that makes it easier to carry the backpack, the desperation, the compassion, and the memories. In the end, it was always hope that carried me.



Untitled  
by: Chinda Moua

## 100 Word Memoir

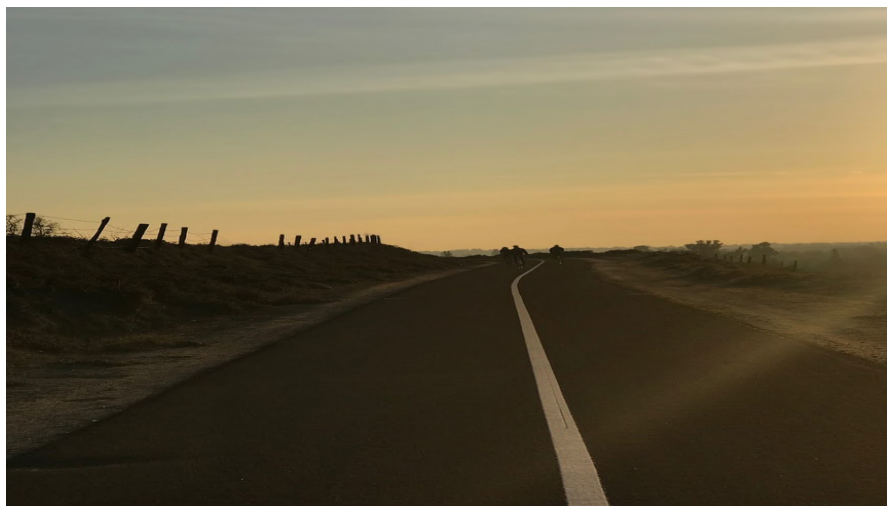
By: Shylynn Cha

It was such a beautiful day, blue skies and white fluffy clouds over our heads. We ran and we laughed, the aura of fun surrounding us. The ice cream was dripping on our hands. "Let's take a picture of all our ice cream," she said. Of all of us, I was the only one with vanilla ice cream. Dogs were barking and some of us ran, but I stayed. Then we reached the playground and we sat and sang some songs. Then it was seven o' clock and the sky became darker so we said our goodbyes and waited for tomorrow.

## 100 Word Memoir

By: Thor Xiong

I leisurely grabbed my phone and put on some soothing music, noticing the bright and gentle moon. I kept on walking and as cars drove by with their blinding lights, I became more strained. My mind is going wild hearing; seeing things that aren't there. Darkness surrounds me and as I near my dwelling, I can perceive each individual beat of my heart. Once I've reached my domicile, I've reconnected with my inner tranquility. Freeing the door that separates me from my seclusion, I've determined what emotions emerge when one's self is alone. What perturbation of the unknown is like.



Trail Path  
By: Kaydalynn Her



Untitled  
By: Anonymous

# We Were Kids

## By: Mai Xiong Khang

Wonder how it' s like?  
To see the kids that grew  
and made anew,  
by growth  
and wealth?

And the kids that have nothing to lose?

Those kids who dared  
each other and stared  
at the ones who do everything they want to do,

Those kids became something.  
They became mothers and fathers.  
Those kids became teachers.

Those kids now drive down roads  
With cars of their own.  
Their lives now told  
From their own tone.



Ahead  
By: Trinity Adams



# Time

By: Yer Lee

Let us make history  
Although our future is a mystery.  
Let go of the past,  
For it meant to be surpassed.  
Our time is now  
You may wonder how.  
Stay with me  
And you will see.  
For I will lead the way  
Starting today.  
The journey will be long,  
So please be strong.  
For it will fade  
Just like yesterday  
Into the future.  
It will be an adventure.

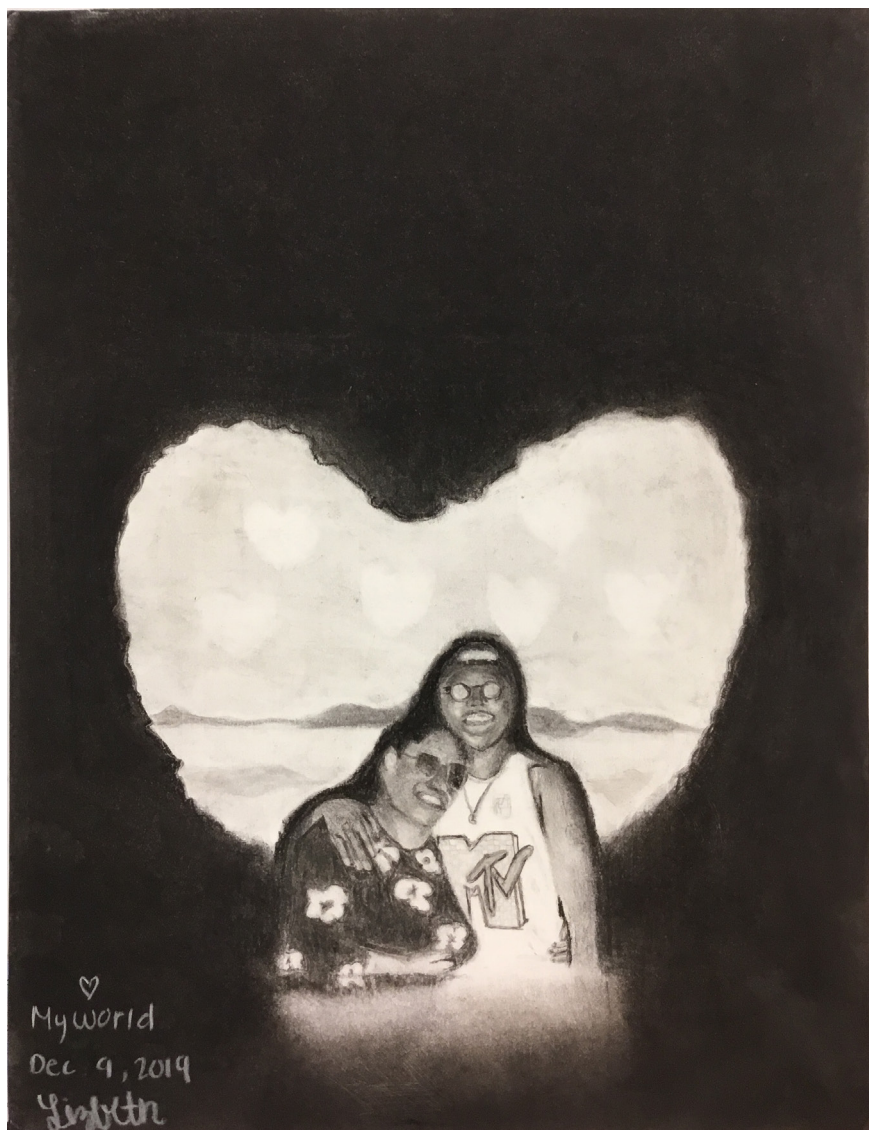


Peltier Lake  
By: Luaoxee Moua

# Guardian

## By: Love Star

I am here to help, to guide.  
But I am not always by your side.  
You may call and plead for me  
I am always trying to help, you see,  
Struggling is a thing everyone experiences,  
And you will have a couple winces  
But do know it can be helped  
All you have to do is ask.  
We don' t understand what you felt  
But you don' t have to wear that mask  
Don' t carry that by yourself  
Or else  
The demons will grow strong  
Too strong for me to fight  
I am not saying that it' s wrong  
But don' t give up and fight with your might.  
A little more time is what I need  
SO you can be freed.  
DO know that I do get weak  
During those times try not to weep.  
The thoughts and voices get you scared  
You wishing you were spared  
I will help you find your way to happiness.



My World  
By: Lizbeth Camarena Rosales

# Music

By: Steven Rivera

Music is my escape.  
From the beat of a heart, where rhythm begins.  
From amazing sounds, where joy never ends.  
Music is universal and it speaks to souls.  
Music is all around me and it plays an enormous role.  
Music is powerful, controlling one's emotions.  
Flowing through people like a current in the ocean.  
Music takes me home, and home is where the heart is.  
What is a flame without the ember? What is Christmas without December?  
Through my love of music is how I want to be remembered.  
Notes, and melodies are my genetic identity.  
Music is my escape.



Strong Girl  
By: Mariana Urbina



# Fox With Glasses

## By: Gisele Perez

Dimitri noticed the fox as it began to rain.

His small cottage was often visited by the critters that resided in the area. The woods were home to many and Dimitri believed himself to be another mere resident. He kept to himself and let the animals be. They were harmless and he enjoyed looking out the window to see them roaming around, sniffing at the small ornaments he had set outside, and more often than not stealing some vegetables from his small garden.

When he had first settled in, he had been afraid of the deer and the hawks, of the furry rabbits and mice. Soon he had welcomed them into his life. Although he still struggled to hide his annoyance when another rabbit hopped away with its third stolen carrot.

Dimitri walked outside, black hair absorbing the light and heat of the sun. He had forgotten his hat inside once again. With a shrug he carried on, taking gentle steps on the dirt path, he rounded the corner of the cottage and observed the clouds ahead. They were dark and drifting in his direction. He glanced back and saw bright white clouds. It seemed he was lucky enough to have the rain come towards him.

He had to move quickly then, he realized. Picking up his pace he made his way to the back of his cottage, where his small garden was located. The fence around it was recently built— and recently damaged. Those pesky rabbits always found a way in. They were worse than the mice and that was something.

Dimitri had decided to build the fence after he had been left without any vegetables one day. He hadn't known rabbits were such greedy creatures, and had been forced to bike to the market to get his goods. He was sure the fence would prevent the rabbits from sneaking away his vegetables but they had squeezed through, bitten through and, as he now realized, dug through it. The fence hadn't been damaged; the rabbits had dug under it.

He heaved a sigh. He was sure he could come up with a solution but he was also sure the little brown furred critters would find another way in. Based on how things were going, he wouldn't be surprised if they teamed up with the birds and were flown over the fence.

A rumble of thunder reminded him of his limited time. Dimitri stood and with fists on his hips surveyed the green around him. The trees swayed to the incoming stormy wind. The grass and dirt had lost some of their colors as the grey clouds cast a shadow upon them. When Dimitri determined there were no rabbits in sight, he walked back to the front of his cottage. Besides he didn't know what he would do if he found those rabbits. Pen them up? Move them? But how? And he didn't want to disturb the area around him. It was enough that he decided to live there.

While he had lived in the cottage for less than a year, he had quickly grown accustomed to the environment. His mother had once told him with some surprise that it seemed he had been raised in the forest. It was

a comment made after Dimitri had differentiated the rustling sound of a mouse from a rabbit. His mother had claimed she heard no difference. Dimitri insisted there was. A mouse was quick and navigated itself with a quietness. A rabbit was clumsy and had no care for the noise it made.

"What about the deer?" his mother had asked.

"They are the softest- almost inaudible. Steps so faint, as if the last thing they wished for was to crumble the grass and disturb the ants."

Dimitri smiled to himself. The deer were his favorite. So shy and rare.

But the footsteps he heard were none of those. These had a calculated silence to them, but they weren't quiet enough to go unheard.

Dimitri turned and felt the first drop of rain land on his cheek, felt it slide down and drip off his chin, before he registered the sight in front of him.

There was a fox. It was wearing glasses.

Dimitri's head tilted in confusion, and he watched as the fox mirrored his movement. With each step he took back, the fox stepped forward. His body thudded against the wooden door and he quickly turned and locked himself inside. A fox with glasses? Did he get enough sleep the night before?

He leaned against the kitchen cabinets, rubbed at his eyes, and let out a breath. Were those rabbits making him lose his mind or did he really see a fox wearing glasses?

His cottage door had a small round window. It was at a perfect height, Dimitri only had to duck his head slightly in order to look out. Curious, he crept towards the door and peeked out. A few yards away sat the fox, staring directly at the window.

Dimitri ducked, heart suddenly pounding. But what had he to fear? It was only a fox, another critter in the forest like the deer, and the glasses could have been put on by mistake. As Dimitri waited for his heartbeat to return to normal, sitting with his back pressed against the door and knees brought close to his chest, he came to realize what he found most odd about the fox: the glasses never fell off, as if upheld by some invisible force.

Thunder rumbled and caused his heartbeat to spike once again. He heard as the soft rain turned into a downpour and slowly stood up to glance out the window again. As he expected, the fox remained at its spot, orange fur drenched. This time, Dimitri stared back at it, determined to figure out how the glasses stayed on.

Concentrated on finding a reason for the glasses, Dimitri almost didn't notice when the fox stood up and walked towards the door. Even with the pouring rain, the fox stepped lightly and gracefully. It ignored Dimitri's peering face on the window and curled up on the little mat beside the door. The roof of the cottage blocked out the rain and kept a thin strip of land dry.

After realizing the fox did not intend to move, and was probably dozing off, Dimitri took one, two steps away from the door. He sighed, shook his head, and patted his overalls as if he were dusting off the situation. It was just a fox. It was taking shelter by his cottage and it was wearing glasses, which was odd, but Dimitri would continue on with his day. Surely, it would be gone when the rain stopped.

Rolling up the sleeves of his striped sweater he wore beneath his overalls, Dimitri decided some tea would soothe him. The small flame wavered as he brought it to the stove, and he quickly blew out the match after the flame sparked the burner. He brought the water and chose which flavor he wanted his tea as he waited for it to boil. The cottage was a small place and he didn't need to stand on his tiptoes to reach the ceiling cabinets where he placed all his cups.

Not much longer, he went to his bedroom, cup of tea in hand, and sat on the edge of his bed. He sipped his tea and noted he had to clean out his room. There were bits of dirt on the floor from when he forgot to change out his shoes after going outside, and his closet looked like a tornado had swept through it. The covers of his bed were old and needed replacing. But he didn't have any replacements. He had to go to the store and buy some.

Dimitri gripped his cup tighter, and studied his covers. Did he really need to go buy new ones? They weren't that bad...

Not that bad? They're tearing at the edges and are years old, his mother's voice scolded him in his head.

He was also running out of tea and he had work the upcoming weekend... begrudgingly he accepted he would have to go to the store. He could go after work and if he didn't take long, he could return home before sunset.

Taking the last sip of his tea, Dimitri realized the downpour had slowed to a tranquil rain. He set his cup down on the night table next to the bed and tugged off his shoes. He laid back against the headboard, adjusting his pillows to be more comfortable. Though he didn't intend to, he fell asleep not quite after.

To Be Continued



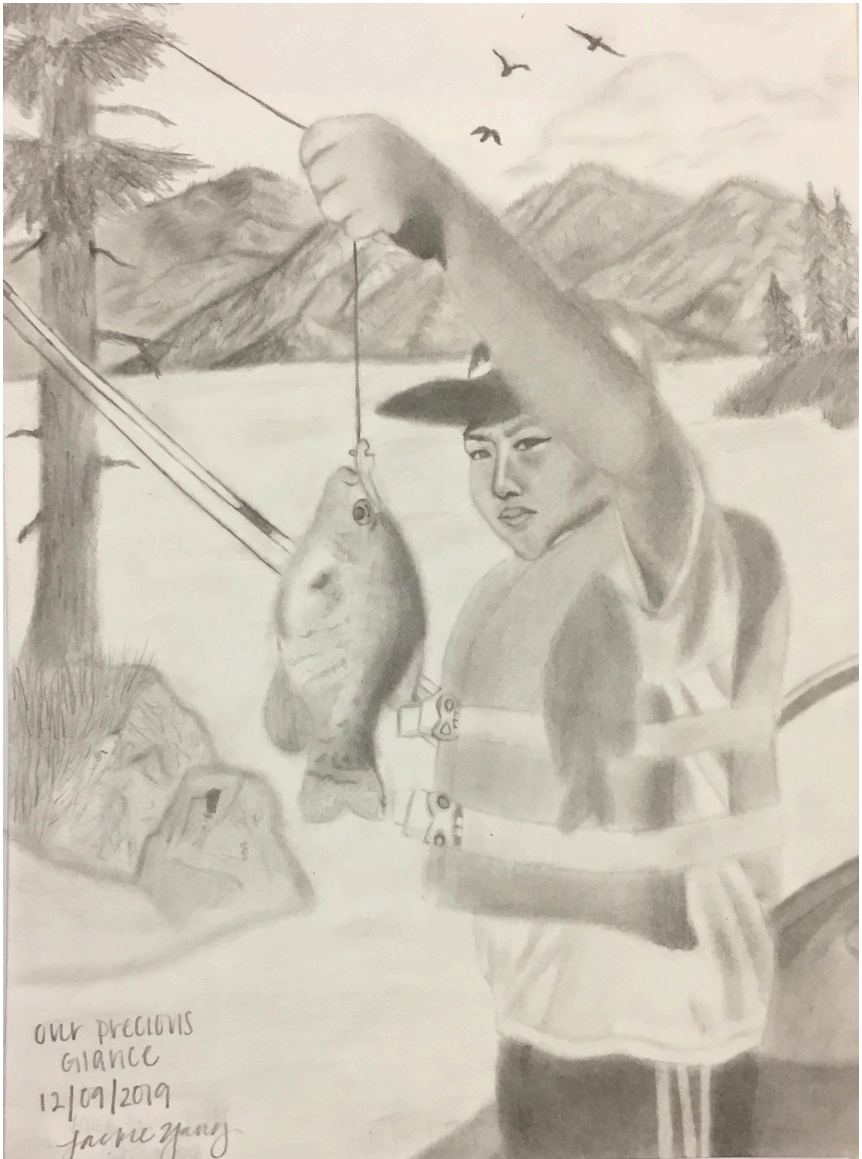
Protanopia  
By: Drake Teal

# Hooked

By: Song Yang

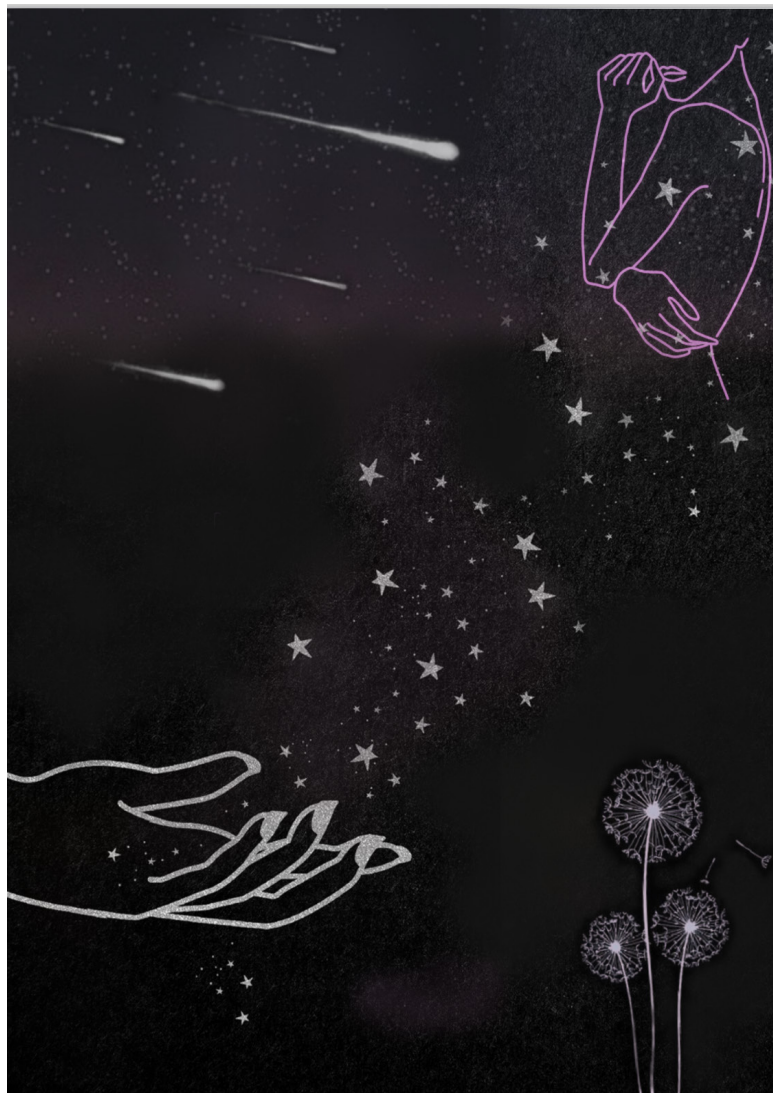
I saw a fish leap  
through the surface of the water  
and disappear downstream  
back to the trotter  
and flaps its fins  
in the dazzling waves  
and dares to lead the shoal

But a fish that' s hooked  
upon its sharp fear  
maneuvers its tapered body  
in rebel to tear  
its weight is hung  
and its tail swayed  
so he opens his mouth to give in



Our Precious  
By: Jaquelyn Yang





Untitled  
By: Mary Thao

# Heaven

By: Pang Cha Thao

Heaven where they considered theirs'

There he was, dark and alone:

His love diminishing into thin air

Betrayed and empty he' d

shone

Heaven for was their escaped

Scraped, fooled he' d been

A life wasted away by broken promises

Endure the lesson from your mistake

friend

Forgive the traitor for it shall pass

Blast a love forgotten and dead

Pain you' ve felt, karma will embrace her

Time will mend those broken

shreds

Shed your tears, sweet angel, let them loose

Who' s to say you can' t control yourself

Your feelings return with betrayal

Love yourself before anyone else

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