



The
Johnson
Mirror
2017-2018



Johnson Mirror

2017-2018



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Preface

Welcome to the 2018 edition of the Johnson *Mirror*. This is the *Mirror's* 20th year of publication. We would like to sincerely thank all staff and students who contributed written and artistic work for publication. We received almost 100 pages of written submissions this year! The editors had a difficult job choosing the pieces you see. Thanks to all of those who contributed, and if you're not graduating, keep writing and submitting pieces for publication. If you are graduating, keep writing!

Poetry and creative writing are alive and well at Johnson. Once again, we entered the Poetry Out Loud national poetry recitation contest, once again a student, Alina Vang, went to state (our third consecutive year) and once again she was one of six finalists. The Johnson competition brought back former English teacher and published poet, Noritta Dittberger-Jax to act as judge along with Principal, Micheal Thompson, and a two-time state winning coach from Woodbury – Phil Bratnaber. Thanks also to accuracy judge Jon Tufte and prompter Shannon Kearney. Poetry Out Loud is an excellent way to see how poetry is at its best and most entertaining when said aloud. Check out the website, pick some poems, and give it a try next year.

Congratulations to Mirror editor emerita, Isabel Patrick-Pacheco, for receiving the top rating of Superior from the National Council of Teachers of English Achievement Award in Writing.

This has been a year marked by the power of the words of our youth. Many adults have commented with some surprise at how articulate these voices are. To that end, we are proud to share with our surrounding community this reflection of Johnson students and their world. Our goal has always been to emphasize the accuracy of their voices over the perfection

of their diction. We think it best to keep it real. It is called *The Mirror* after all.

The editors of *The Mirror* are always deserving of a very loud and grateful round of applause, but this year we took it to new heights. Editors emeritas Mai Moua Thao, and Isabel Patrick Pacheco, along with current editors Kelvin Vue, and Mai See Yang, have logged many hours to create what you are now holding. Also, a special shout out to Yeng Lee for helping with the tough stuff: page numbers and the dreaded Index of Authors.

Our editors attended meetings with the Payne Arcade Business Association, and the East Side Area Business Association and were inspired by the reception they received and the opportunity to work more closely with our neighbors – particularly the businesses of the East Side. The editors spoke to these various bodies about the importance of this publication and our hope to reach a broader audience. Students got to see how small businesses working together can be a powerful force in helping build and strengthen a community. Thanks again for your support and giving students the opportunity to make their pitch. Because of the support of the Payne Arcade Business Association and the East Side Area Business Association, we were able to upgrade our software and purchase a laptop dedicated to assembling *The Mirror*.

Congratulations to this year's winner of the Editor's Choice Prize: Diana Yang for her short story, "Painted."

The Arts Committee would like to especially thank Micheal Thompson for his support of our efforts in publishing *The Mirror* and his continued encouragement for all students to find an audience for their voices.



Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." *Henry Ford*



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Bright Futures* at Cookie Cart!

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The front cover artwork was created by Nuci Yang, grade 10. The inside front cover artwork was created by Meng Lee, grade 10. The inside back cover artwork is by Yee Win, grade 12. The back cover artwork was created by Tshajlij Fang, grade 10.



Memories
Andrew Yang
Grade: 12

A House Below the Sunny Sky

Inspired by Lewis Carroll's "A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky"

A house below the sunny sky,
unchanged to the eye,
with memories that cannot be denied

children that would play,
until the visible sun ray
arose in the opening May,

months pass, time goes by.
A change that says good-bye
to that once familiar sky.

Memories will haunt me
on the new boundary,
lingering dreamily,

children in the new May,
waiting until the visible sun ray,
attempting to play

in bliss they lie,
memories coming as days go by.
Memories coming as birds starts to fly.

Staining my mind
as it leaves me blind
and remembering now it's better left behind.

Pa Her
Grade: 11

The Infant Under the Gutting Table

Inspired by Patrick Suskind's Perfume

The infant under the gutting table
began to squall.
No one wanted to keep it.
He probably could not have survived
anywhere else.
But here, with this small-souled woman,
he thrived.
She expected no stirrings from his soul
because her own
was sealed tight.
The cry that followed his birth,
was the newborn's decision
against love
and for life
and for his soul.
He required nothing.
He was an abomination from the start.
He decided in favor of life
out of sheer spite
and sheer malice.
He lived encapsulated in himself
and waited for better times.
He possessed the power.
He held it in his hand.
The invincible power to command
the love of mankind.
"I am the only one it cannot enslave.
I am the only person for whom
it is meaningless."

Tania Ayon Ramirez
Grade:12



Mending
Rang Thao
Grade: 9

Pang
9/14/17
Period?



Sugar Skulls
Christina Yang
Grade:11

To A Mother I Am Leaving

Inspired by "To a Daughter Leaving Home" by Linda Pastan

I remember
The first time
Eyeliner had ever touched my eyes,
As they watered
from the felt tip stab
Of that first step into
womanhood.
The raccoon eyes I wore
Until I was able
to perfect it,
Your disapproving looks
Of my bold eyeshadow,
And the makeup wipes
You handed over
To wipe the darkness
from my innocent eyes.
As you did,
I saw that look:
That you had finally realized
Someday you wouldn't be teaching me,
Someday, I'd be teaching myself.
And saying
Goodbye.

Jasmine Flora
Grade: 11

The bee buzzes by,
noticing blooming flowers;
but finds my hair.

Jasmine Flora
Grade: 11

A Human Needs To Be Fed Every Day

A human needs to be fed every day,
to meet its basic needs.

A human needs to be loved,
and maybe a little more.

When one wanders the world
and can't find solace,
one really begins to wonder,
what this world is really for.

For a family connected
by the blood they share
and the memories they've had,
also want love.

I find that every day I am fed,
yet, I still wander the Earth,
along with my family,
who all want love.

Alex Hilsen
Grade: 12



Still- Life
Aaron Bender
Grade: 12

Where We Stopped

There was a place that we stopped by,
so beautiful and alluring was the sky.
The sand was silky and the clouds ran along the mountain
tops.
Then that place, it became filled with touches of rain drops.
The clouds got dark and that place became silent,
and the waves grew more violent.
The seagulls flew low,
and all I felt was the wind's strong blow.
Everything, even the time
moved in rapid motion.
That place?
It's the ocean.

Pa Lee

Grade: 10



Mill & Main

Martin Kocher

Grade: 11

Listen carefully and you can hear the rumbles,
the cries and mumbles.
The streetlights are lit,
and the mood is blue. I admit
the raindrops hit the window sill
as the bucket outside becomes overfilled.
Music is softly playing,
scared kids are misbehaving when
everything goes dark.

I see a little shiny light and mark
this thunderstorm is rough.
This peaceful night is growing tough.

Pa Lee
Grade: 10



Lights

Mai Kong Xiong

Grade: 12



Seoul

Catherine Vang

Grade: 11



Kwangmin Kim
Kim Kwangmin
Grade: 11



Window
Yeng Thao
Grade: 11

2016

Leaves are falling off the trees,
the nights get darker as the year of '16 fades.
All I want out of life is the chance to be happy
And free of the wall that locks me down.
So many people are quick to judge

But don't realize what their baggage claims.
Life was never expected to be this way.
Lights shine, but mine is slightly dull
From the ran out fuel of my engine.

Diamonds sparkle, but my diamond inside is drained
From long anxious nights that have ripped me of my sanity.
Some days are better than others but the good ones
Don't define my complete happiness.

Ariel Owens
Grade: 12

The wind is blowing
as colored leaves are falling.
Days are much shorter

Pa Lee
Grade:10



I Love the Rain
PajFuabcha Vang
Grade: 12

Music Café House

The coffee house stands tall with its smooth cedar wood tables.

The counters are full of different flavors of syrup
each too sweet to devour alone.

The stools stand tall.
I sat and spun around
as if I were a child.

On each wall there was a different
vibrant painting
each inspiring.

All these paintings of places and people
which I strive for
knowing the beauty will always be more meaningful
in person.

The smells that captured me,
the sweetness of the syrups and berries,
the bitter smell of black coffee,

the waffles were so fluffy and sweet,
the lady who gave them to me was much sweeter.
Her smile captured me, and I never wanted to leave .

Cynthia Espinoza
Grade: 10



Home
Amy Lee
Grade: 10



Seine River
Danica Vang
Grade: 12



Placard
Diana Yang
Grade: 11

Succulents
Angela Cheng
Grade: 11



ROCK and ROLL DINER
Dang Her
Grade: 12

Backyard Mischief

White and red
Flourishing garden,
Steep hill to roll down.

Basement with a monster
Fridge with fruit cups,
Room full of CareBears,
Bathroom filled with bubbles.

In the backyard,
A rusted cabinet; filled with match sticks.
Behind the tree is a girl,
her eyes filled with fire.

Jasmine Flora
Grade: 11



Angel & Devil
Linda (Mai Pha)
Vang
Grade: 11

MARIA
Maria Arroyo
Grade: 10

1.

Secretive smiles
twinkling eyes, fiery passion,
hushed talking: three words.

2.

The way you love me
like waves crashing on a shore:
small then all at once

3.

Tears falling slowly.
Forever is now never.
Say goodbye, for now.

Anayeli Manzanares

Grade: 9



Mexican Sugar Skull

Evangelica Thao

Grade: 11

It's Not Broken

Inspired by Rita Dove's "Heart to Heart"

It's not broken
or torn.
It doesn't melt
or break,
separated into pieces or lost
so how does it know how to feel pain,

betrayal, and love?

It isn't pink,

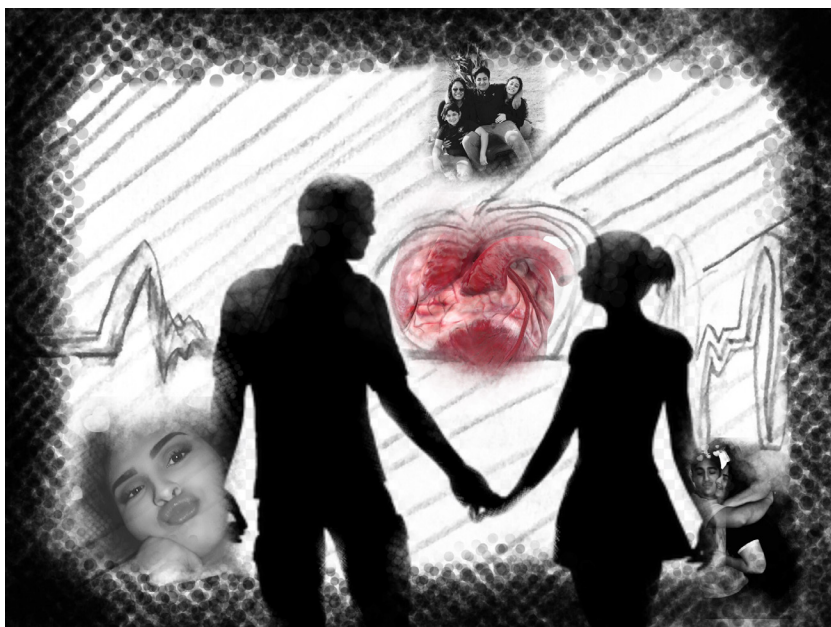
and a heart isn't even shaped like a heart.
It's just one thick clump of organ
pumping
and alive
but still,
I feel it in me
and it's suffocating
I want, I want so much —

To stop it,
but I can't.
There's no opening to my heart.
I can't touch it,
or talk to it,
or explain to you
how it hurts,
but here, it belongs to you
because that's where it longs to be,
but if you take it, take me too.

Pa Lee
Grade: 10

I am up til three
longing for the missing love
that you took with you.

Pa Lee
Grade: 10



Commitment

Oscar Camarena Rosales
Grade: 11

Painted

The gentle breeze of summer caresses her, blowing the glowing brown hair out of her face. She rests her back on the cool morning bed of grass mounted on a small hill. Her eyes observe the soft puffs of cumulus clouds as they paint the sky with strokes of white. The man with the tan overcoat slowly trudges up the small hill. He reaches her and lays on the opposite side of the hill, his head besides hers. His hands retreat from his pockets and intertwines behind his head. He lets out a breath as he turns to observe her. A single hill in the middle of nowhere, a beautiful nowhere, with a woman whom he was destined to never be with. For he was destined to be alone. She realizes that the scene was beautiful, too beautiful, as if it were a painting.

She doesn't know how many days it's been. Perhaps years even. Her mind goes back to when they first met.

She had attempted to wipe his painted tears away. When her back turned, he raised his head. His mind spoke to her.

"Who are you?"

She looks around to find the owner of the voice.

"In front of you," It spoke again.

She turned her attention to the painting again. This time, the man's position had moved. His arms no longer covering his face. The tears that had filled his eyes were replaced with a painful loneliness. His focus was on her. She stepped back in fear of the man. She turned and ran back to her room.

"Don't leave, please."

He came to her in a dream later that night. He spoke with her, loneliness still at the tip of his tongue. He continued to come night after night, losing his loneliness by the bits from every visit. One day, when morning came, she went to search for the painting again. There she found him, sitting in a green field admiring the bees while they pollinated the yellow flowers. She came to realize that she had loved the paint-

ed man past normalcy. When a single white light remained in the black sky, he took her hand and she happily disappeared with him. The gentle breeze of summer caressed her, blowing the glowing brown hair out of her face. She rested her back on the cool morning bed of grass mounted on a small hill. Her eyes observed the soft puffs of cumulus clouds as they painted the sky with strokes of white. The man with the tan overcoat slowly trudged up the small hill. He reached her, laid with her, their shoulders beside each other. His hand retreated from his pockets to intertwine with hers.

Diana Yang
Grade: 11



Hike to the Lights

Uriel Vang
Grade: 9

The Flying Dutchman's Curse

Once there was a man
bewitched by the endless waves and wind.
A pirate did he become;
upon the sea he laid his claim.

Once there was a man you see
who loved the goddess of the sea
but a duty she first gave him --
reuniting in ten years.

A ship she gave him, crew, and task
to ferry the souls of those who passed,
but when the promised day arrived,
spoken love he could not find.

Cruel plot did he contrive
to chain the goddess in a mortal bind.
Sorrow and guilt he could not stand
so he locked away his aching heart,
his charge all but cast aside.

He trained his guts for monstrous strides,
ship and crew warped just as well,
sailors and crew dragged to deep blue hell.

Once there was a man you see
who thought that love could be forgotten.
He asked me with his final breath,
"Are ye afraid of death?"

Carlos Sanchez
Grade: 12



FISH

Daelen Whitfield
Grade: 11

FISH

Jai Chang
Grade: 9

Fish

Nkaujjaim Shuj Vang
Grade: 9



FISH

Nuci Yang
Grade: 10

FISH

Evangelica Thao
Grade: 11

FISH

Chayeng Max Vue
Grade: 11

Biology Narrative

My cell theme is a ship. I have never been on a ship, but I have been on a boat many times. I enjoy the way the boat moves when the waves come and rock the boat. I chose a ship because I was short on time for picking a topic, and I noticed a picture of a ship on the classroom wall. Some parts in the cell are performed in a ship.

The captain takes the part of the nucleus on a ship because they are the center of the ship that knows the ship inside and out. The deck of the ship is cytoplasm because it's at the center of where everyone is. The wind takes the place of mitochondria, and that supplies energy needed to breath. The deck fence on the ship is the cell membrane because it's where everything is stored. The cell wall is the ship's walls, and the ship walls keep everything together. The ribosomes are the fish, because they give off proteins. The endoplasmic reticulum is the ocean, because it's where the ship maneuvers around.

Golgi apparatus is the workers on the ship because they help to deliver items. Chloroplast is the kelp, and kelp provides energy. Lysosome are the sailors, and the sailors help remove unwanted items off the ship or fire the cannons when attacking another ship. Vacuole is the ship room, because you can store packages, treasure, food, and anything else a ship might have.

What I liked about this activity was the drawing portion of the project. I do enjoy free hand drawing. What I didn't like about this activity was how it was hard to come up with what each cell part goes into whatever topic it is that we chose. I was able to connect my cell parts to my ship with the help of my teacher for some parts I did not know.

Chambrey Ly
Grade: 10



FISH

Andy Moua
Grade: 12

FISH

Luke Bender
Grade: 9



BLUE BIRD SET

Tecaliana Kindred
Grade: 9

My Gift

I have given you the sun
who shines brightly for you
every single day.
I have given you the moon
who shines a ray of beauty
every night for you to sleep.

For I have given you the land
for you to grow your food
and for you to relax under my trees.
For I have given you the wind
for you to fly away with your dreams.

For I have given you this much,
but what did you give to me?

For I have given you water
for you to drink
and to clean yourself before bed.
For I have given you heat
for you to cook your food
and to warm yourself.

For I have given you this much,
and look at what you did to me.

For my gifts have been treated carelessly
destroyed and broken in pieces.
Now I can no longer fix and heal

Only time can tell when your punishment
will come,
and by then, I wish you'd learn your lesson
about my gifts I have given.

For they are not for bad
but for good.
Not for evil
but kindness.
My gifts are more special
than you think they are.

For I have given you this much
with what can you repay me?

Ci Vaaj
Grade: 9



Skyline
DeQuaia Crenshaw
Grade: 11

Natural

The city. Cold, unforgiving;
An overgrown forest, masses of steel
Rising up like gray, dethorned roses.
But the wind does not bend them.
Not one bright red bud sits atop invitingly.
The rain does not make them tall and strong,
And when the sun breaks through the thick
smog
It does not nourish them.
They are only fed by a flow of minds and
ideas—
Nothing else.
Even the aura of malice has no effect;
Its poisonous crawl settles, polluting the living
below.

Henry Wieffering
Grade: 11



Baby
Mai Lee Chang
Grade: 12

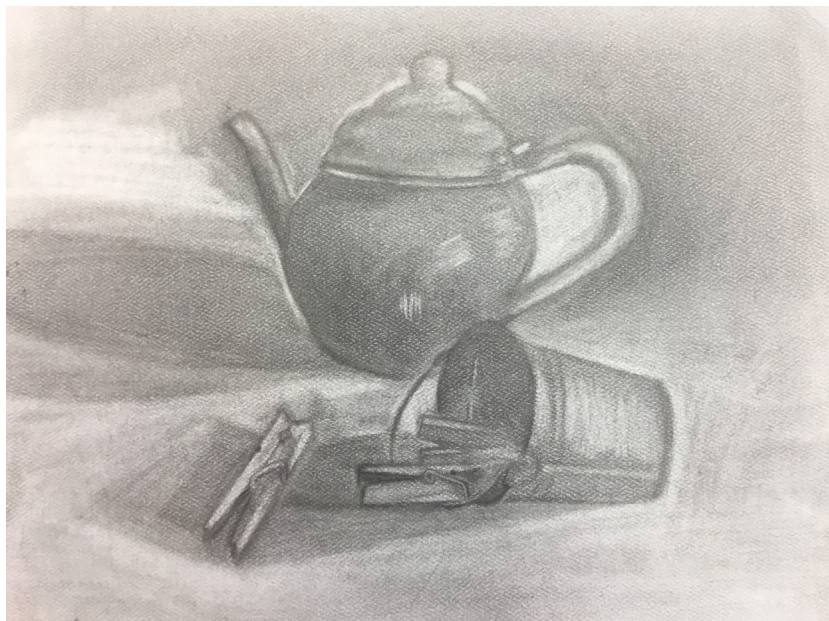
The Quiet

Inspired by Gregory Orr's "Trauma"

The wild of your mind
Voices overpower
Reminding you of your misfortune
Shouts and screams
Bounce in your head
You overcome
You tell them they're not real
Everything goes quiet

Anayeli Manzanares

Grade: 9



Still-Life

Soua Vang

Grade: 9

Hideout

She used to go to a place to hide out as a little kid. It was her closet. She would go there to get away from the world, to get away from stress, parents, and siblings. She would hide in her closet to just get away. She had a notebook with her and when she went to hide, she would write stories about mythical creatures, and she would draw people and draw animals. Every time someone would make her mad, sad, or irritated, she would take her notebook and go to her hideout spot and write or draw. It was her happy place. It was her place of peace, and she loved it very much until she had to move out of that house. She was never able to hide or go to her happy place again.

T.T. Ross

Grade: 11



Mesmerizing Mind

Tatianna Davis

Grade: 12

Truth

Inspired by Langston Hughes's "Dreams"

Hold onto the truth.
If the truth is gone
then life should not be life,
and everyone is wrong.

Hold on to the truth.
If the truth dies
then life will not go on,
and we should not be alive.

Jazzmine Mwendwa

Grade: 9



The Standard

Raggiena Rush

Grade: 11

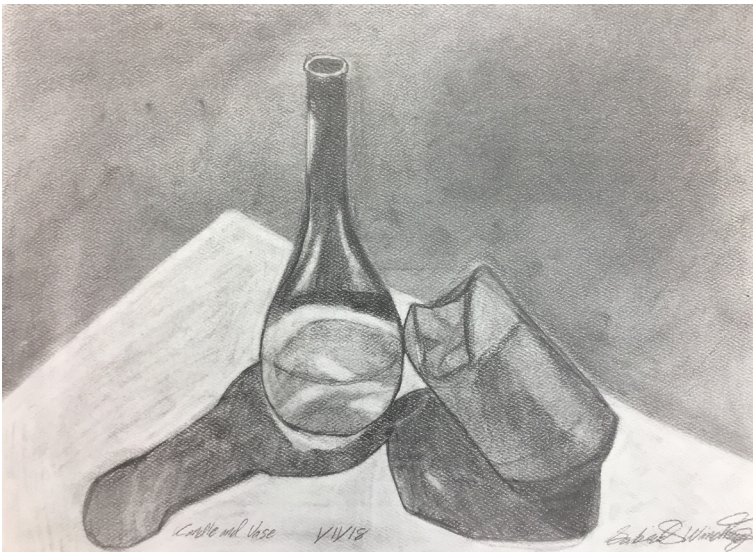
Sorrow

Do I fight the urge to give up,
Or do I actually accomplish the devil's goal?
Have faith is what I am always told,
But I don't have the utmost courage to be bold.

I would not say my heart is cold,
But it burns slowly like coal, even in the snow,
And my body folds when feelings go untold,
But if you must know, my writing is thine soul.

Do I scream and yell
For these stories I cannot tell?
And I hurry home right after the school bell
Over my fear I almost fell.

Ariel Owens
Grade: 12



Candle and Vase
Gabe Windnagel
Grade: 10

Nepo

I honestly don't know . . . how I'm feeling

Scared?

I'm slowly dying inside.

You can't put fear in somebody's life when they

Already want to leave LIFE.

Nervous?

Wipe your own tears on the outside.

I'm slowly dying inside.

Faking a smile on the outside.

People in your face smiling like everything is okay.

You just want it to all go away.

Think of the good memories

and say

GOOD VIBES ONLY!

Caierre Mitchell

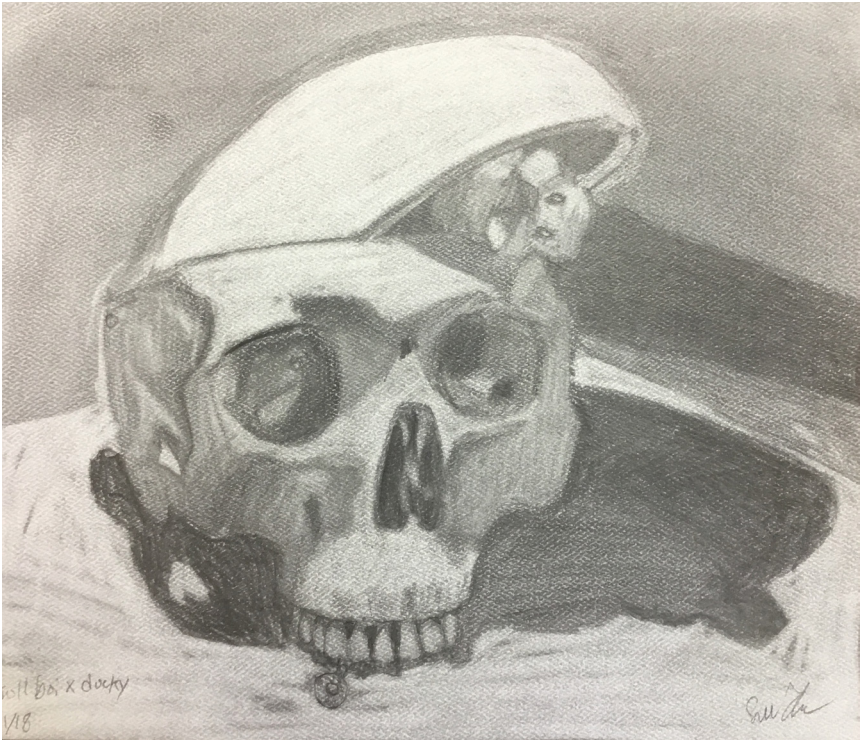
Grade: 10



Head Small- Long Hair

Nue Yang

Grade: 10



Skull with Ducky

See D Chang

Grade: 9

The Fear of the Undertaker

Inspired by: The Backwater Gospel

The fear of the undertaker walks upon the town as he sits by the well. As he sits, crows begin to flock and perch on top of houses. The people pray, in their boarded up homes, for the mercy of their lord. Their prayers echo through the silence of the town. The undertaker's wings casts its shadows as he waits to collect their souls. The people begin to panic and worry when the undertaker sits and waits. Who is he waiting for? Why is he still here? Who is he coming for? The bells of the church ring and the people tear away at the boards that locked up their homes. They sit in their seats and ask for hope from the minister. The minister takes the townspeople's brains and washes them in vengeance. He points to the cripple and to him they go. That's all it takes. One bad apple and the whole barrel is spoiled. They put down their faith and pick up their weapons, for the minister states that the cripple must be a sacrifice to the lord. They pelt the cripple with rocks and on his head did a large one drop. He lays on the ground as if he was crucified, but the undertaker does not budge to collect the soul of the cripple. Instead, he sits and waits. The tears of the sky falls upon the town as they begin to turn against each other. They tear one another apart in order to not be claimed by the undertaker. The minister frowns at the undertaker and goes after him. Pitiful human, you can not kill the undertaker with that man-made weapon of yours. In the end, it is the minister's belief that kills him. Silence, once again, falls upon the town. No prayers echo through the home, only the whispers of death. The undertaker whistles the tune of the cripple as he stands to collect the souls of the townspeople.

Diana Yang

Grade: 11



Random Character

YuePeng Vang

Grade: 10



3 Crosses

Tiffany Vang

Grade: 12

A Closing Argument

Inspired by Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

I made a choice and I do predict,
the masses shall deem me unjust and
their wrath will strangle me, and depict
me as though I am godless, or I evict
the people's voice to the street in gestures grand;

then I looked back, my options laid out,
as if I could reverse how time flies,
my head full of what could only be doubt;
because those who felt betrayed stood stout
at my door with hatred in their eyes,

and they chanted for my name and head
on bloodied grass their feet had stepped through.
Oh, their violent fury leave me dead!
Yet knowing my fate sealed with what I said,
I will not accept their demands due.

Let this story live on forever.
Let them retell it basked in its fame:
I made the choice, which they could never—
never make themselves knowing the lever,
how it would be pulled, how they would hang.

Henry Wieffering
Grade: 11



MR BLUB

Malayah Khang
Grade: 12

CONTRAST

Ia Chang
Grade: 9

Alina Lee
Grade: 10

Anxiety

Anxiety is
drowning without water,
It's
falling off a curb.

Jasmine Flora
Grade: 11

Wonder

So many rooms
Attic calls
Pulling towards
stairs
Dead rodents
Small shrieks
Treasure chests
Locked doors
Empty threats

Anayeli Manzanares
Grade: 9



Imagination

Mohamed Mohamed
Grade: 12

Skull
Lue Her
Grade: 10



Bleach

70's, white suburbia, housewives, uninvolved fathers, and staying together for the sake of family. This was Clara's life; day in and day out. That's it. But, it wasn't always this way, her life was once filled with exuberance, passion, fiery love. That's was until she got "knocked up". Being Catholic, she didn't use any form of protection; thus James was born. And from then on her beloved Richy, the man she assumed to be the love of her life was lost, projecting all his love onto that little bastard. Damn, thought the voice in Clara's head, that little bastard isn't even his.

"That's a lot of bleach", said Mr.Eagleton, snapping Clara out of her thoughts. Mr.Eagleton had known her since she was a child, he had worked with her father at their janitorial business. Now he owns a cleaning supply store.

"God, what what he think of me?" Clara thought, "He' d be so disappointed if he knew what I did". "You bet he would, he'd think you were a monster."

"Yeah, spring cleaning. I'm all out of cleaning supplies". Clara said nervously

"Ah. Say, Clara, would you like to come over for dinner? Susan is making a roast".

"No thank you Mr.E-" Clara was cut off.

"Bob, Clara, you can call me Bob". Mr.Eagleton had always told her to call him that, but she never did, it just never felt right. And now she thought she better distance herself from him incase anyone found out. "They're not going to", said the voice

"Okay", Clara said with her best fake smile," I'm sorry Bob, but if I don't start cleaning now, I won't ever start".

"All right. Well, I hope to see you soon," Bob said with a smile.

"I'm sure you will", Clara said, looking down nervously.

It was a good cover-up. It was, right? Clara wasn't sure. But damn did she sure hope it was. "Richy won't be home until Sunday morning, and James isn't supposed to

be home until Sunday night. Today is Monday; so that gives me roughly 5-6 days to clean. Which should be enough, it will be enough, it will!" Clara thought to herself hastily. Richy wouldn't know, he wouldn't be mad because he wouldn't know. The house would be clean just how he liked it Sunday morning.

Left, left,right, straight right. Same way, same streets. Clara knew her way around this town like the back of her hand. Same life, everyday; it was maddening, maybe that's why Clara had developed the voice in her head, to help her cope with her boring life. Life that once consisted of Richy, Clara, and love. They used to fog up the windows at the drive-in, Richy used to bring her flowers everyday, and they went on dates at least once a week. "those were the days", Clara said signing as she drove into the driveway,"Those were the days..."

Bleach worked wonders on everything, and it could clean anything. A little bleach and a brush diluted the deep red stain on the carpet to pink, until it was pearly white again. Then she scrubbed the counter tops, and James' carpet, and the walls; she washed the sheets and threw away the dress she wore that day; her favorite emerald flowy dress, and hung up a replacement that was almost identical. Everything was back in place, everything had been cleaned, and there was no sign of struggle. Next was the car...

Come Wednesday James' new mattress came in, she planned the order perfectly. The cleaners had offered to bring it in and throw away the old one, for obvious reasons Clara declined.

"Are you sure Ms..." the man looked down at the order," Ms.Broadwhick?"

"Oh yes, and call me Clara. I'm not as helpless as I look, I'll carry the mattress myself" Clara fake smiled again. The young delivery man looked at her confused, not many women would do such a thing, especially not in these parts.

"Well, I'll take your word for it" The young man said, with a hint of awkwardness in his voice.

Clara made sure they were gone. Gone, gone. Around the corner, back to the store, gone. Then she dragged the bed upstairs, made James' bed and put everything back in place. Then she layed on it and cried.

"What kind of mother does that?," the voice said said to her, in a taunting manner.

"You", the voice said

"No!NO! Get out get out get ooout!" Clara said, hitting her head, thrashing around." YOU told me to do it, YOU!"

The voice is what made her do it. IT did, but Clara was too afraid to get help, and Richy would surely leave her if he found out...or if he found out about what she did. He'd kill her. Sure, she had thought about killing James, or making him disappear but she herself would never actually do it. But it was okay, because all the evidence was gone, everything was put back into place and-

"Honey I'm home!" Richy yelled, opening the door.

"Sunday? It's Sunday already?" Clara whispered to herself.

The week had gone by fast, it was all a blur. She wasn't ready, she had just fixed her hair and makeup. Quickly she darted to the closet, putting on Richie's favorite dress. Oh no, oh no. Act calm. Stay calm. It's okay. Everything is OK. Hastily she ran downstairs.

"Sorry, I slept in. I need to start dinner" Clara said trying to stay calm.

"It's alright sweetheart, I understand. Say, isn't James supposed to be home tonight? Maybe we can just go out?" Richy said excitedly. "He's not even his son Clara, why does he care so much? You know you screwed the neighbor, you know it's Jimmy down the streets kid," mumbled the voice.

"Yeah", Clara looked down, "sure"

"I'm going to go shower and out my things away"

James, James, James! He always thinks about James. Ever since you pushed that bastard out at 23, all Richy has ever admired was James! You used to be Richy's pride and joy, YOU! Now you're lucky to get a thank you for slaving

away all day making his favorite dinner! The voice yelled. Clara hit her head, pacing in the kitchen.

Perfect, it was the perfect crime. She sent James to camp, he got on the bus and all signed in, the record shows he was there! All Clara had to do was sneak in at night, knock him out and drag him home. She had planned to do it in the bathroom but her excitement caused her first stab to happen in the living room. For a 12 year old he was strong, and he fought; but she followed him into his room, and finished the job there.

"Honey! Could you bring me some soap!" Richy yelled from the shower.

"No! I killed James for a reason, to get my Richy back, and now I have him!"

"Yes, but there's other men, you know Jimmy down the street would leave his wife in a heartbeat for you"

"No"

"Honeyy, Soap!"

"Do it"

"No!"

"Clara?"

"It'll be easy"

"Stop!"

"Clara! Soap!"

"SHUT UP RICHARD!"

Both Clara and the voice went silent, she looked at the mirror in front of her, as if she and the voice inside of her head had both looked at each other with concern. Richy stomped down the stairs with his pristine white towel around his waist; Clara ran to the kitchen.

"What did you say to me?"

"Hold on... I-I said hold on"

"Oh, you sure?" Richy said walking closer to Clara, "Because I thought you told me, your husband, the man of the house, to shut up!" Richy yelled slamming his hand down on the countertop, "who do you think y-" Then clara did it, she

stabbed him, "Cl-Clara?", Richy slumped to the ground with a thud. The Clara stabbed him again, and again, and again until his face was no longer recognizable, and then she stepped back,"no...no, no, no". Stepping back Clara raised her hands up to her face.

This isn't what I wanted, Clara thought to herself. Crouching down she lifted Richie's head into her lap, Clara's tears washed the blood from his face, she brushed his hair behind his ears and kissed him on the forehead.

"I'm sorry"

Later, Clara returned to the cleaning supplies store, she accepted Mr.Eagleton's offer to eat dinner at his house, leaving with a shovel.

Jasmine Flora
Grade: 11



Sabit Wagad
Grade: 11

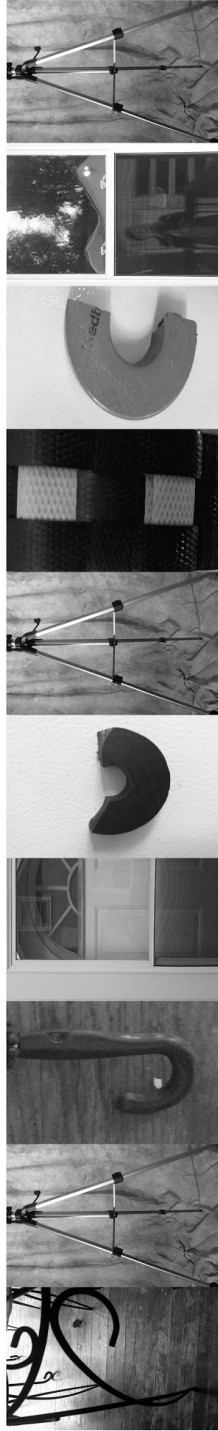
Shoes

Black and empty—silence
Waiting.
Waiting patiently to be filled—a grave sitting
lifeless
Until acted upon by some unknown force,
Natural or unnatural.
(The wind? An invisible hand?)
Their depth is immeasurable; a pit, stretching on
forever.
But who will fill them
When their owner is long gone?
Perhaps they'll be buried too, sole and all.

Henry Wieffering
Grade: 11

Essentially, I
Have found a way to cut up
Words into pieces

Henry Wieffering
Grade: 11



Found Objects Letters

PajFuabcha Vang

Grade: 12

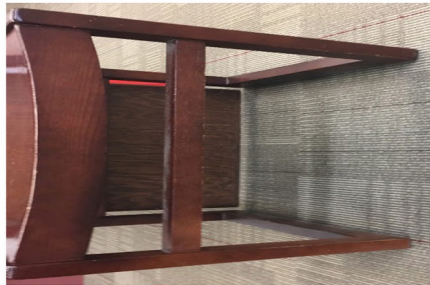
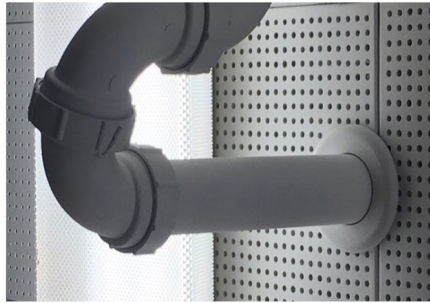
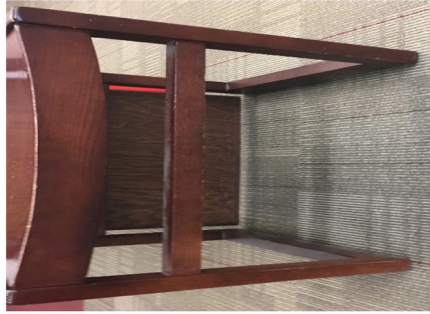
That Sound

I sit here listening to the sound of leaking pipes dripping,
of my chains clinking,
of beetles running,
of girls screaming,
of duct tape ripping,
of boots stomping.
All while the sound of freedom is just out of my reach.

Jazzmine Mwendwa
Grade: 9



Squeeze
Alvin Vang
Grade: 9



Found Letters
Sara Guiterrez
Grade: 12

Trapped!

When you hear the word trapped
Where does your mind go?
Does it go to a illusion
make your mind jump to conclusions
YOU ARE CONFUSED!

Where are you?
What's going on?
You're lost, hurt
YOU ARE GONE!

THERE IS NO LIGHT YOU CAN'T SEE
YOU ARE A HUMAN TRAPPED IN A BOX
CAN YOU ESCAPE!
CAN YOU GET FREEDOM
CAN YOU SEE THE SUN SET ON THE HORIZON!

PAUSE LET ME REPHRASE
YOU AREN'T TRAPPED
YOU AREN'T STUCK
IN THE SHADOWS OF THE PEOPLE WHO STAND OVER YOU

You are looking at me through my window
Only, I can't see you
When I look around I see nothingness

What you didn't know is that I am trapped.
I am stuck behind the doors of my mind.
I can't think.
I can't see.
What's going on with me!

I am a human trapped in the shadows of you
But you don't think of me as a human

You see me as a quiet
You see me as an evil, cold hearted dog

I am Calrita Amita
A woman trapped from her true calling
A female who just wants to be free
But yet you continue to trap me.

Hanniatoris Smith
Grade: 10



Tiger EYES
Nuci Yang
Grade: 10

An Unfortunate Overreaction

Inspired by

Between The World And Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

It does not matter if the destruction is the result of an unfortunate overreaction.

The destroyers will rarely be held accountable.

For the galaxy belongs to them,

You were young, and you still believed

I was afraid, and in this I was unoriginal.

I had seen fear all my young life.

I saw it. I heard it. I felt it.

We do not lay down the direction of the street.

We march. We survive. We persevere.

What I remember is my ignorance.

I remember feeling ill at ease as if I had stole someone's heirloom.

The price of error is higher for us.

This, my son, is how they steal our smile.

Crystale Hicks

Grade: 12



Bug Eye

Jerrell Adams

Grade: 11



Mirror

Meng Lee

Grade: 10



Frog Eyes
Dylan Hendricks
Grade: 10



Big Hair

Dylan Hendricks

Grade: 10



“Catch Criminals & Baseball”

Sara Gutierrez

Grade: 12

Kill Each Other Instead

It's like we're lost in a game
where pain is the only gain.
Your shames spilt out in plain existence,
it's exquisite.
My brain sparking
hoping to change one thing about this world
while you're trapped, contained,
compacted like tupperware --
some people are not aware
My mother keeps her fears aware though,
warns me when danger's near yo.
Late night, hearing tears shed upon her pillow:
this shit is crazy.
Hoping that maybe one day
my mom could be free of slavery.
Can't you see the shackles we're chained to?
Pulling our strings.
They kill us all.
They want us dead.
They fill that shit in our heads,
And we still kill each other
Instead.

Cazh'mir Carter
Grade: 12



High Five
Alvin Vang
Grade: 9

A Love That Should Be Unconditional

A love that should be unconditional
all just thrown away, or perhaps it never would exist if all you
did was run away.

It's not your fault, remember, you had no control
be what he could not, and always stay true, for next time
don't do, what he did to you.

Through our discrimination,
we made due with what we had
and created a culture that wasn't half bad.
We could express how we felt with the little we had.

We still face hate like other races do,
but we can't change how they feel this is true.
We can only stand up for ourselves and our people.

You hear it in the news.
It's all in your feed.
A cop shot a person
with his hands freed.

Dean Davis
Grade: 12

Miss Representation

Stereotyping doesn't make the world a better place.
It makes us insecure.
Our lives were not made to be judged,
But who can stop the ones who feel the need to criticize.

Understand the cloth that you were cut from.
Pay attention to who raised you.
Listen for those who accept you.

Learn to love the skin that covers you.
Accept the changes that progress your being.
Trust that you'll be comfortable with your needs and wants

Looks don't define me as a person.
My beauty doesn't exclude me from the struggles of life.
It's not up to the media to fill my image.
Representation is the key.

Do not pity me because I go unnoticed.
I pray my colored skin doesn't scare away the ones who wonder.
My given features make me feel unwanted.

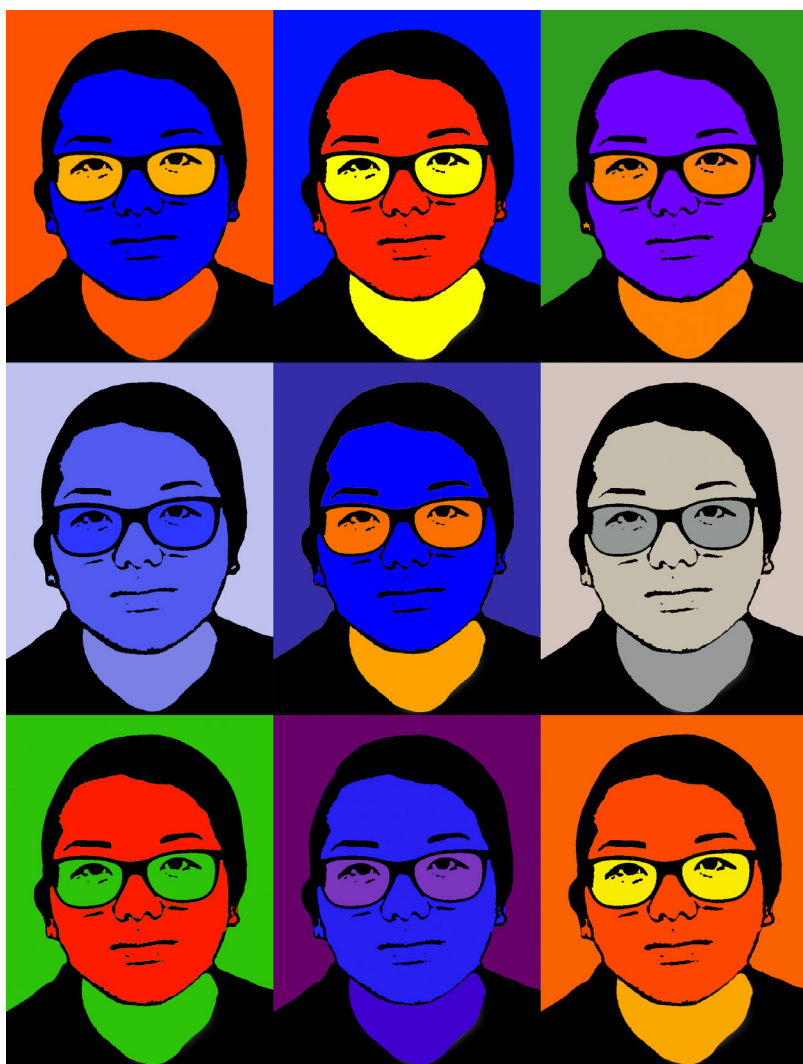
I stick out like a sore thumb even throughout the night.
My culture is over thought by the ones who seek the already born child.
My name is second guessed by the ones who believe perfect is possible.

Give thanks through loving the one who recognized the good in me.
Give back to the community that guided me through the worst.
Give praise to those who support the child with a future.

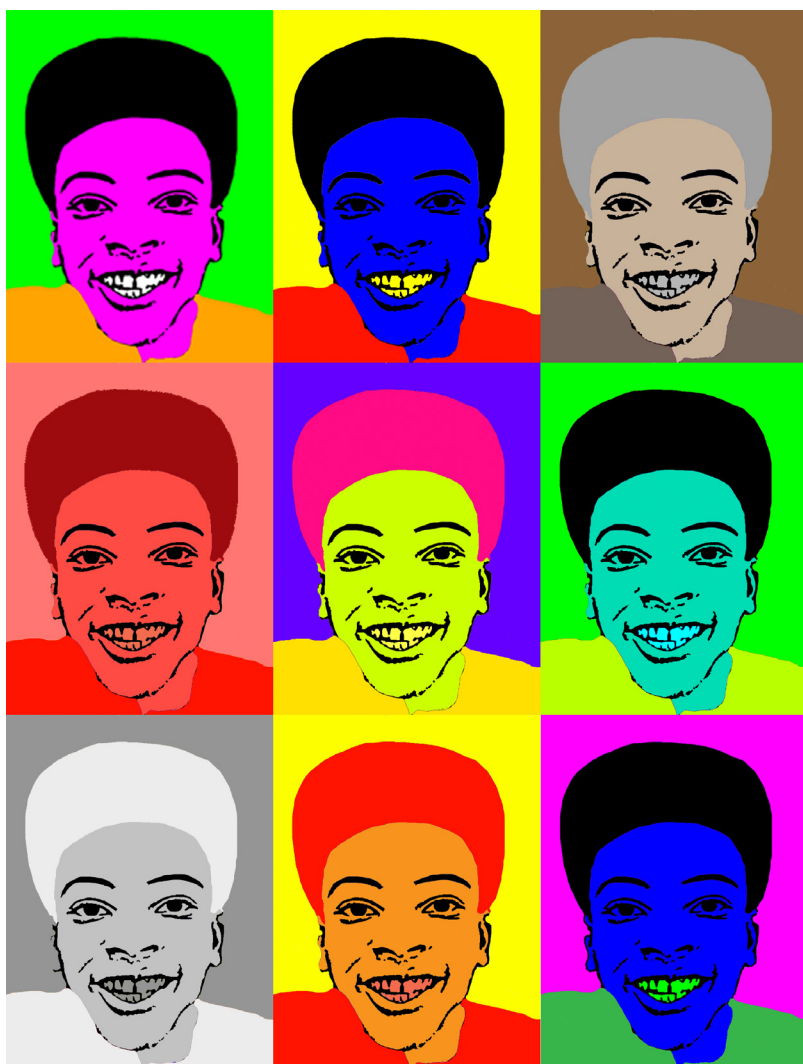
Ariel Owens
Grade: 12



POP ART
Nicholas Walter
Grade: 12



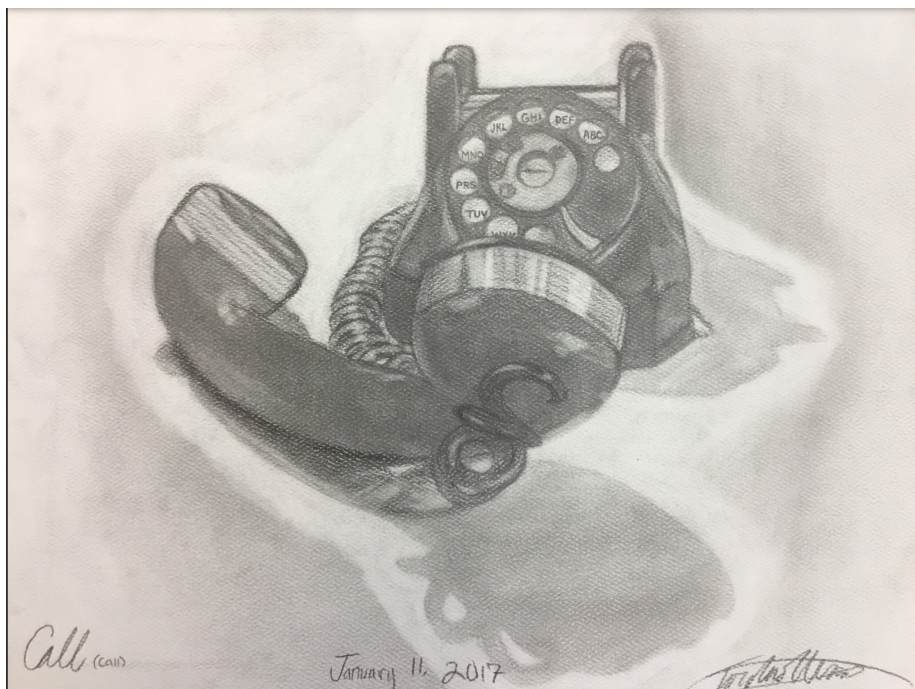
Christina Yang
Grade: 11



POP ART

Jerrell Adams

Grade: 10



Call

Tou Lao Moua

Grade: 9

Black and White

We are called African American
You can't put us down because we are strong loud and proud
We have an urge to be wanted and found
We are told we aren't good enough
Little do they know what they put on us will never be good
for us.

We are called Caucasian
You can't put us down, we're the best in town
We are not kings of all Kings
But we like to pull the strings
So what they put on us will always be good to us

I am called biracial
You put me down simply from how I sound
I'm not black nor white I'm gray
I'm different in many ways, but I'm criticized for being gray

I am strong loud and proud
I have a urge to be wanted and found
I like to pull the strings that brings equality to all things
My diversity can't match them eternally
So what they put on me is uncertainty.

Tatianna Davis
Grade: 12

Growing Up Black

Growing up black, people think it's hard and wack. We are built like trains we don't take smack,
our past doesn't define us we left the rest behind us.

Things about me is I'm good at sports, I strive, I grow, I adjust, one things for certain, I don't rust.

People hate, it's such a waste, it's not going to change shit even if you say it to my face.

How is it true to myself, "haha" don't make me laugh I know myself better than anybody else. These past 4 years haven't been a breeze, same routine every day, it's okay it only paves the way, it challenges me to be true to myself and continue to fight.

The world we live in will always have hate, no matter what day no matter how late. It's only up to you to chose to accept what is around you and use it as fuel, because there is no room or time for those who want wine there's only room for those who want to shine.

Chizaram Azonwu
Grade: 12



Mirror

Tshajlij Fang

Grade: 10



Super Hero

Tshajlij Fang

Grade: 10

My African culture,
in the strugglings of life,
To the shame brought upon
the difficulties of life,
to the poor treatment of my culture

We express how we feel.
We speak our mind.
We give our thoughts, the sky
is the limit
to how far things go

We look from a different perspective.
We see things from a different view.
Everything comes with barriers,
but we always manage to get through.

We find peace in many ways,
and I find mine in sports.
For my culture to come together,
all we need is support.

Malik Stanford
Grade: 12



Black America

D' Asia Burrell- Atkins

Grade: 12

Black Girls

Inspired by Danez Smith's "Alternate Names for Black Boys"

Black GIRLS are the SAME only in DIFFERENT ways.

They are crazy.

They are emotional.

They are jealous.

They are independent.

They are strong.

They want attention.

They want to be left alone.

They want to be loved.

They want to speak.

They want to be heard.

They want money.

They want peace.

They want to become mothers

They want to become successful

They want to become women!

Black girls want to be women that want

Money

Something they own that's theirs.

People ask why?

Well . . . Black women never really owned something or
had anything to say "THAT'S MINE"

They want peace.

They want to be left alone.

They want to focus on being BLACK women

Caierre Mitchell

Grade: 10



Untouchable Soul

Jasmine Davison

Grade: 12

Who Am I?

Who am I ?

Long hair, brown eyes, quiet smile,
they wonder why.

My story is not told,
only because the words won't come out.

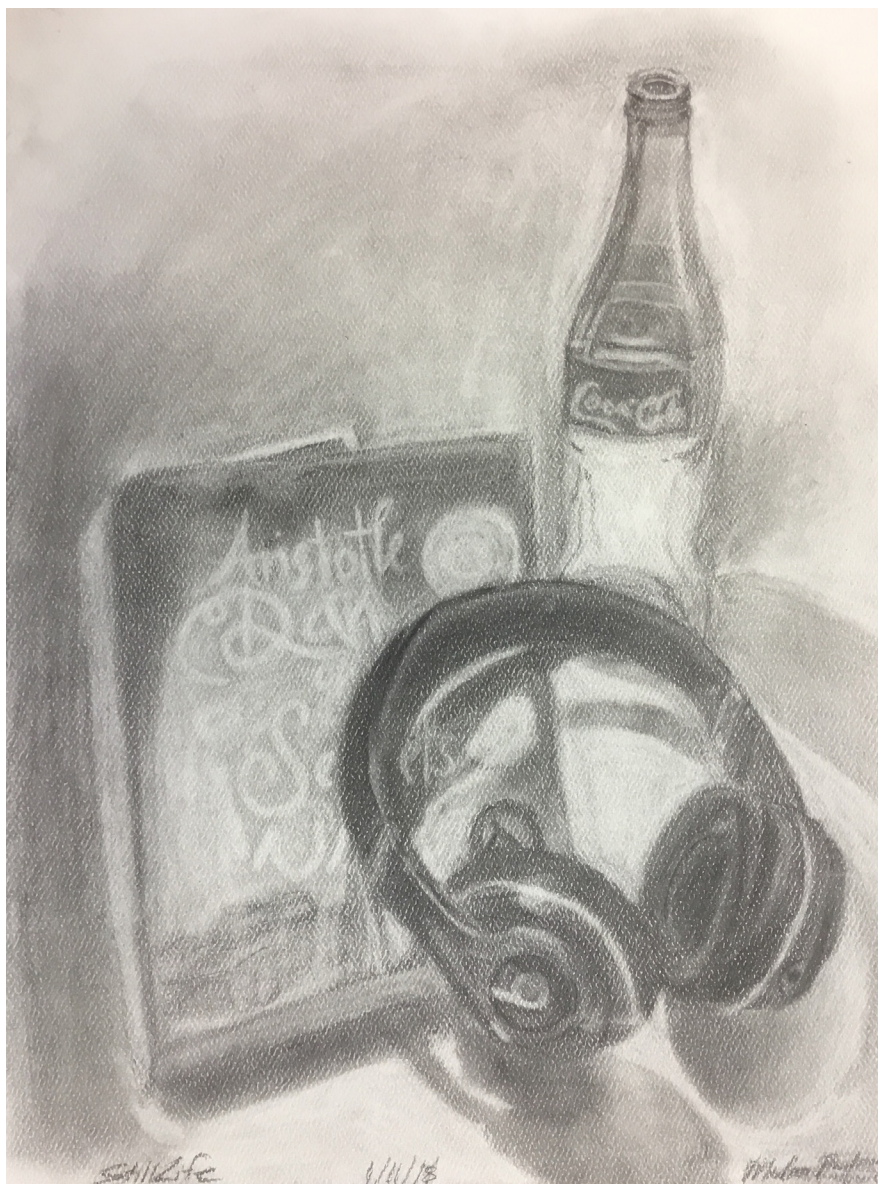
I'm the girl that dances in the rain.
Listen to the beat, do you feel the heat,
That steaming mist that leaves my hair a mess.

Sports bra, grey sweatpants, and my white glitter shoes
that make my feet feel like everywhere I walk
I'm on the same stage that people told me I'd never make it
to.

Call me crazy but I dance to the sound of my own beat.
No headphones needed but
In my mind it's repeated.
This beat it's undefeated.

People always shut me down.
Told me I couldn't get to the top.
I'm on a roll. My mind is lost and my feet won't stop.
I've made it so there is no stop.
In my world I am on top.
I am the top there is no stop.

Hanniatoris Smith
Grade: 10



Still-life

Malia Peterson

Grade: 9

I Must

I MUST do well in school
but not be better than my brother.
I am not their daughter.
I have embarrassed my father.
My mother hates my hair color,
My stained skin and my ears that will never flutter
because of too much weight.

I will do well in school,
And I will be better than my brother.
I love my hair, it brightens my skin.
I have not sinned.
I love the skin I'm in and my ears bring out my beauty.

My brother will take care of my parents,
And I will take care of mine.
Girls are no longer fine.
They are shunned
for their unappealing appearance,
but the love is not done

I am who I define myself to be.
They worked too hard for me to fail.
I can defy the standards.
I will work hard,
Harder than them,
I must believe in me.

Baonyiag Moua
Grade: 12



Pop Art
Hanniatis Smith
Grade: 10

Her

She became what they called used.
Now only worth half the price she was
bought for.
Her ego then and now still abused.

They felt sorry for me.
Because a girl with no man was strange to
them.
I was told to give up my seats for the men.
Disobeying was prohibited.
I like to say no to unpleasant things.

I tell her when a man isn't treating her right
and for that, men call me rebellious.
She is underestimated
from her past to her present.

She is to be named worthless.
Expectations hurt her.

I guess I am disobedient.
The cuts and bruises can't be seen on me
and her
truth doesn't like to be heard when it's true,
but I can only educate my children,
so their children can teach their children
how to respect a woman.

Delihla Yang
Grade: 12



Still-life

Maixue Xiong

Grade: 9

Gender Doesn't Matter

Boys are attracted to video games,
What are girls attracted to?
Romance, dramas, and caretakers?
Not all of them live up to these expectations.

Introduced to video games,
I became infatuated with them.
I was seeking and craving approval from the rest of the community.

The wrath of our parents,
the names others call us,
the way people view us,
none of it ever discouraged us from gaming.

Girls can be attracted to video games.
Boys can be interested in dolls.
Don't put anyone to shame
Because gender does not matter at all.

Szia Xiong
Grade: 12



SCARED FISH

Maria Arroyo

Grade: 10

FISH

Lucy Yang

Grade: 12

FOOL FISH

Leng Xiong

Grade: 11



Linda (Mai Pha) Vang

Grade: 11

FISH

KaLia Thao

Grade: 9

GOSSIP

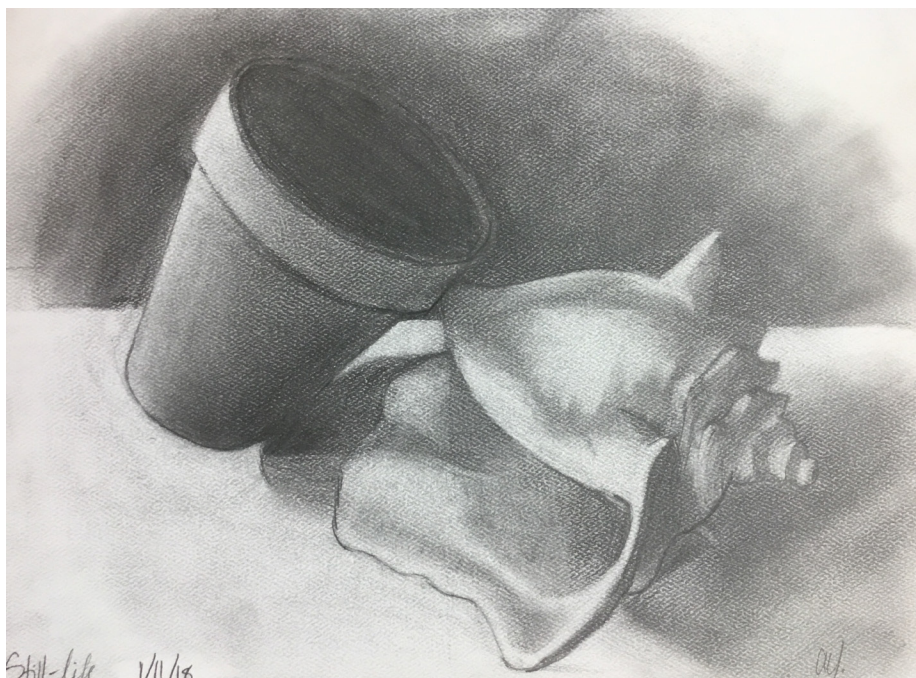
Yang Thao

Grade: 9

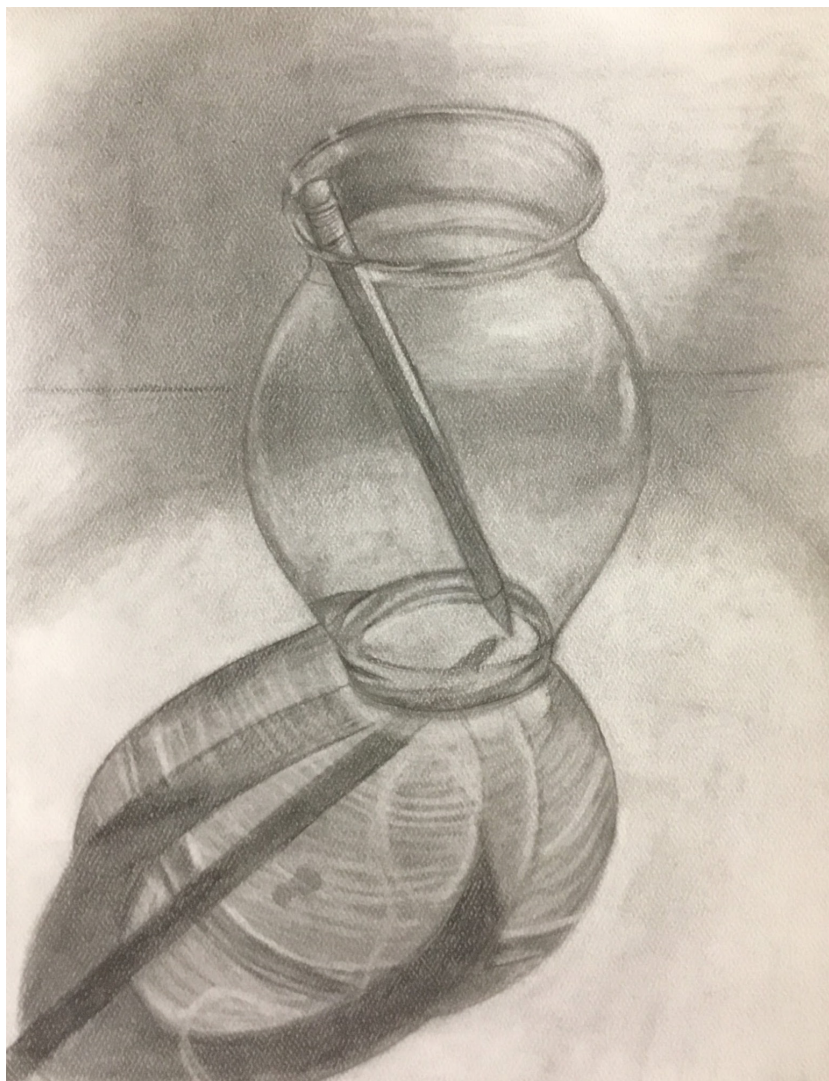
Love Struck Love Stuck

Good grades, good days; your hard work has paid; high school is now starting, into a new phase; don't fall for boys, you need to focus on school; education comes first, not boys who are tools; you're getting distracted, why are you getting B's and not A's?; is it that boy you talk about every single day?; school isn't a fashion show, why are you wearing that?; just throw on a shirt, some pants and a hat; why are you home so late?; did you stay at school because it was really that great?; was it the boy again?, the boy who is now making you try so hard; lately, you've seem really unbarred?; why do you seem melancholic? ; You used to be so jolly; you have chores to do, don't you know what to do?; I raised you to be hardworking, not useless and rude; dishes are waiting in the sink, what is taking so long?; why are you singing that sad song?; why is your phone ringing like crazy?; don't answer unless it's your father being lazy; I am making dinner, can you set the table?; can you find a job? I don't know if we are stable; why are you up so early?; why are your eyes looking puffy; why is your wrist so red?; why is there blood on your bed?; why do you have dried tears on your pillow? Why are you so mad nowadays?; I heard you yelling last night, who was here?; or were you on the phone with that boy I hear? I told you no boys, is he breaking your heart?; Is that why you're crying every night falling apart?; you woke up pretty late, what time did you go to bed?; were you up again with those sad tears you shed?; I told you, your education comes first, did you listen?; why are you letting boys get to you and keeping yourself hidden?; you've lost yourself, are you even my daughter?; you've been crazy, it's like the old you has been slaughtered - it was- I've cried, all for love; I've died, for going above and beyond; yes mother, you told me so; wish I knew it, like it was all on my soul.

Jocelyn Yang
Grade: 9



Still-life
Alexus Yang
Grade: 11



Still

Joua Vue

Grade: 11

Mom

Don't play with that it's dangerous; Why you never have time for me?; Do you not love me anymore?; Ai-ya why you never listen; Why you no study; Always your fault; No more see this Lisa girl; No more go beach after-school; Why you so boy-crazy?; You smoking; Why I have a daughter like you?; Why so late?; No time buy gifts; This is how you impress your in-laws; Don't be lazy; Don't sleepover, that's not a good example; Don't sit like that; Bring water to the guest; Don't stay in your room all day; Don't play sports; Why don't you have good grades; Don't bent down like that; Clean the house; Go to church; They have good sons date them; Why you not like your cousin; If you think I don't love you then find someone else to love you; Why are you so fat?; Bring honor to the family; But what if I don't bring honor?; Will you really be the girl who doesn't bring honor to the family?

Stephanie Yang

Grade: 9



Still-life

Chelsea Her

Grade: 12

I'm Not Asking

Inspired by "Girl"

Ai no sirves para nada, mierda; you're expected to be my daughter so start acting like it; you need to have straight A's and stop worrying so much about others; everywhere you go just know I'm there; you are the man of the house now, get over it; your brothers look up to you so be an innovator; if you want to leave these residents the doors are wide open, I'll help you pack; don't act like you can't hear me you know what I'm talking about; everything has consequences so just remember that; if you get hurt or discoloration it doesn't concern me; I need 200% from you at all times; I don't trust you; "I love you?"; keep it classy now; you never seem to tell me how you really feel about me; you are the heavy weight of this kin; I always wonder if you're gonna become anything in your life; why are you so cold hearted; you're just like your father; when will you stop making the same mistake; you are the rock of this family; I just don't get why you don't have sentiment; I'm not your friend I'm your parent; I brought you into this world, don't forget that; stop comparing me to people; every time I think you're done with this you go back to it; someday you'll realize the damage you have caused,

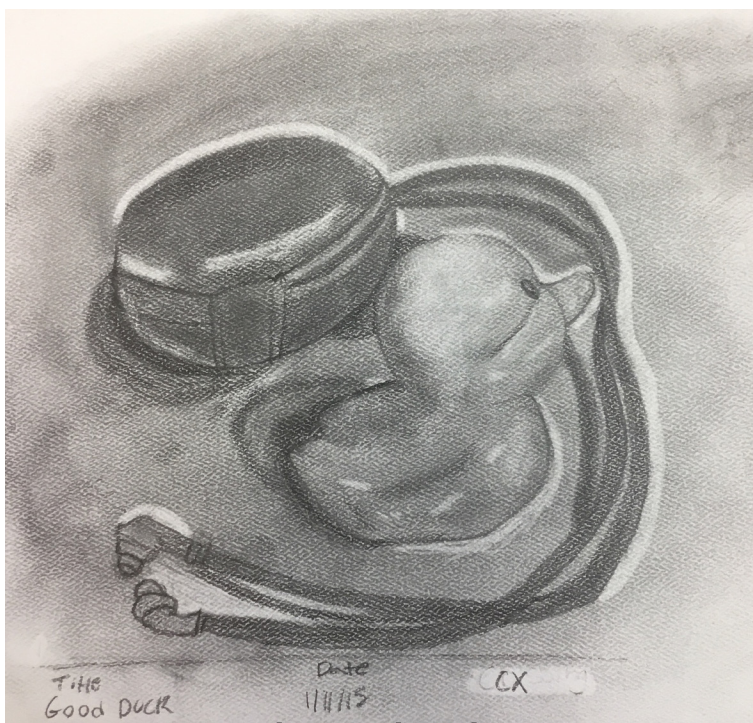
Pendeja;

everything I do for you is for your own good not for anyone else; you are growing up to be a young woman so toughen up; go wrestle with your brothers, and I'm not asking; you need to get a job, and I'm not asking; you need to help the family out, and I'm not asking; when I look at you I don't see a daughter I see an associate; when I was your age I didn't have all of this you have; back in my day there were no "tempers"; but this is the 21 century; you can never make mistakes or you will be looked down on; the most important work you will ever do will be within these walls of your so called home; you have no value; wash the dishes, do laundry, cook for

us, and I'm not asking; you push my limits all the time and I don't ask that of you; your life is not to be taken for granted you have it all; you are more valiant than your brothers but I can't seem to admit it; take care of the family, and I'm sure as hell not asking; you need to be mature; but what is going to happen the day I vanish? But of course, I can't ask that.

Lizbeth Camarena Rosales

Grade: 9



The Good Duck

Crissing Xiong

Grade: 9

Girl Clothes

"You should start to wear girl clothes". That sentence always brought chills to me, it always made me go speechless. I hated having long hair, it always got in my way. I never wanted to be born as a girl. I never wanted to always wear dresses and skirts and stuff; I hated how the dresses were always itchy and always so colorful, how they had princesses on them. I never wanted to wear makeup. To me, there wasn't any point of wearing makeup, that was just carrying extra weight on your face, but all the girls still did it anyways.

When I was younger I thought that wearing dresses and makeup was disgusting. I just never wanted to be a girl, and because of that I thought I was weird for not wanting to be my own gender but I couldn't change that. Back in middle school, they were never really open about about the LGBTQ+ group. In 6th grade I went to the girls bathroom, I got yelled at for going into the girls bathroom. They said as I was walking out of the girls bathroom "Are you serious Pajdib?!". The voice just echoed in my head, not really believing that she was yelling at me.

It felt like I was in a daydream.

It all happened so fast; my day was all bright but after that, it became gloomy and depressing. That was the first time I ever got yelled at for being me. After that I started to hate my body even more. This body isn't made for me; I remember laying in my bed and always wondering if I could change my body but during that time, transgender wasn't even opened up so I thought I had to change myself to accept myself.

I hated myself for that, because that wasn't who I really was.

I remember they forced on a dress on me, they stripped me down naked and put on "my" dress. I never recalled having

a dress. They said to me" Why don't you wear these princess shoes?" And "Why don't you keep your hair long?". They said "You're a girl so dress like one. You're a girl so wear this. You're a girl so don't talk back and listen to us". Being told that over and over repeatedly, you start to think that you're by yourself in a dark room with no one to relate with. You start to have suicidal thoughts.

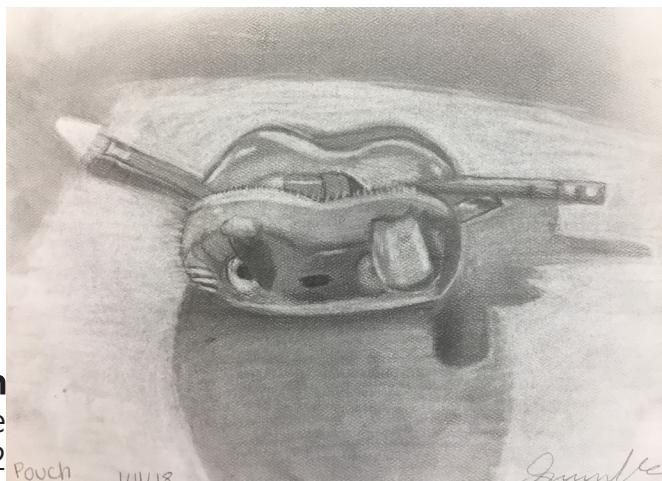
You become someone you aren't.

I could always hear someone saying in a whisper, "Is that a boy or a girl?", believing that I didn't hear them. "She's only confused about what she wants to be.". One day my mom took me clothes shopping that was my time to get clothes that I wanted to wear. I just wanted to get rid of every girly thing I had, all the dresses, all of the pink, all of the light blue. ALL OF IT. I got rid of all the girly things I had. I started fresh in my wardrobe. I'm happier now. I finally know that it's okay to hate the body that you're in. It's okay to be different. It's okay to be who you want to be. Nothing is wrong if you're just being yourself.

Be you, be no one else.

Pajdib Lee

Grade: 9



Pouch

Summer Vue

Grade: 12

Being a Hmong Girl

Being a Hmong girl;
I thought it would be very easy;
To say, you sit, eat, sleep, do some chores, and just live your life;
But no, that's not just it, you got a lot more things you don't know about;
You go through a lot of things, being a good daughter, doing dishes, making food, going to gatherings, etc.
"Yog ib tug ntshais yuav tsum ua noj ua haum"
Being a Hmong girl; You will always hear;
"Mus ntshuav tais diav,"
Washing dishes is always a pain
Hmong girls do dishes 24/7,
no matter how many times you washed the dishes,
no matter how much time you wasted
just washing dishes,
they just won't leave you alone because you're a GIRL!
And parents just say,
"Koj yog ib tug ntshais."
That's all that matters to them;
Being a Hmong girl;
You have to help around the house, do dishes, serving food, and drinks have to be replaced;
"Mus ua haujlwm tam sim no";
Why do Hmong girls have to do these kind of things?
Every family wants a good daughter who can show that they're a good role model for the younger ones, family, and guests;
You don't want your parents to lose face, so you just have to go through with it without arguing back because that's bad manners;
Being a Hmong girl;
You can't dye your hair or you're gonna be called a "Poj Laib";
It causes some bad impressions of you, it may even affect your family

Parents say dyed hair makes you look bad but what they don't know is that the hair color has nothing to do with being bad or good, it really depends on that person;
Being a Hmong girl;

You can't even wear ripped jeans in some families;
Like what's the deal with all these rules?
Parents just think that if you wear ripped jeans then you're trying to show your skin and be pretty and all, but no that's wrong;
We just wear it because we like it, not because we want to show our skin or whatever;
Being a Hmong Girl;
You have to be wife material
Make food, wash dishes, clean the house, do everything for your husband while he works and earns the money;
This is what all Hmong girls have to go through;
Why can't we be ourselves and still be
"Ib tug ntxhais zoo rau peb tsev neeg?"

Chia Moua
Grade: 9



Still-life
Pang Thao
Grade: 9

I Stand On My Own Land

Traveling through disaster and beginning a new life today
Many lives made it through the war, but there's many that
could have been saved Mothers will miss sewing outside in
the hot sun

Fathers will miss hunting freely with their sons
Children will miss running in fields with their friends
Thanks to the bloody war
The fun had come to an end

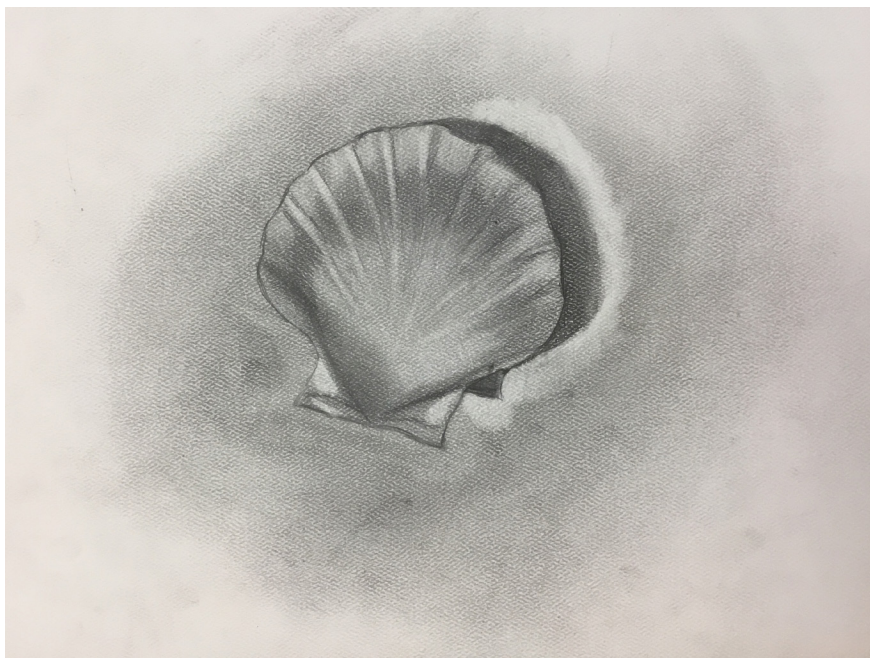
Stories of women waiting for a prince to come and save the
day - For some odd reason, in this culture, the women never
have a say - Repetitive cycles are no good if there are negative
outcomes,
Yet we still sit here in households full of gender roles, how
come?

Stereotypes about the way we look and dress,
Assumptions and expectations nailed hard into our skin,
No wonder young Hmong women and men feel like such a
mess,
It should not matter about the way we dress,
Even if we did not want to get married early, or if we have
tattoos, if we have crazy hair, our families should not love us
less

Getting married young is not something that is wrong
"You will no longer be a Xiong"
"When you get married, don't work, stay home, and have
kids"
But mother and father, that lifestyle for me, is not a perfect fit
"Be with god, hold his hand, and you will eternally be with us
in the promised land."

"Be a Nyab, come see us every weekend to do womanly
chores, have four children or more", But with both sides, I do
not stand
I stand on my ground, my side, I stand on my own land

Britney Xiong
Grade: 12



Still-life

Peyton Larson
Grade: 10

Hmong Expectations

Being Hmong has many expectations and requirements.
We help our relatives.
Many Hmong wives stay home and
clean and cook.

Growing up seeing my mom
clean and cook
for our
family.
There are many new opportunities for
other Hmong women

in America.

As a Hmong wife, one have to respect their husband's
family and stay with
the husband's family.

Hmong people have dreams
to achieve.
They want to be successful
and have kids.

Hmong people have to help each
other with events or weddings.

Growing up my dad
provided food and
clothing for us.
He worked really hard to make sure that we were
wealthy and healthy.
He gave us money for school or to buy other
things.

The expectation of being Hmong
Hmong people have dreams
to achieve.
They want to be successful
and have kids.

Hmong people have to help each
other with events or weddings.

Growing up my dad
provided food and
clothing for us.
He worked really hard to make sure that we were
wealthy and healthy.
He gave us money for school or to buy other
things.

The expectation of being Hmong
Is to have a good successful life.
To work hard to help provide for your family:
food and shelter.
Hmong people are not well educated
and do not have many
opportunities.
That's why they send their
children to be educated.

Keng Cheng Yang
Grade: 12

You Have Love to Compensate

Cream-colored skin, slanted brown eyes, and small flat nose
Not Chinese or Japanese but somewhere that lie in between
Sons taught to be providers and daughters taught to be
wives

Expectations of the children born into the world of Hmong

Grown versions that look like me are everywhere I see
Preschool brought a glaring shine to guide me through the
fog

Yellow haired children, sky colored eyes and sweaty white skin
Kids with dark skin like shadows, running
Fear of change keeps me contained
In my bubble, of Hmong

Society asked me, "Are you Chinese?"
Did you say, "Ching Chong Ling Long?"
Assumptions, assumptions
But I would do the same

I asked the Hmong, "Do you not value your daughters?"

Daughters traded like animals, priced and tagged.
Fight fight fight and you'll get a say I thought.
But wives wives wives is what my grandpa got.
In love with the idea of love I began to hate.

Polygamous relationships and histories of the Hmong
Bride prices and New Years with jingling sounds of money,
Gender expectations and folktales with tigers and ghosts,
To drown out hate,
you have love to compensate.

Molly Vang
Grade: 12



Daimarion Nelson
Grade: 11



VASE

Ia Chang
Grade: 9

LIDDED CONTAINER

Yang Thao
Grade: 9



MASK

Dang Her

Grade: 12



Heart of a Mother

Kallie Chasengnou

Grade: 10

Someone to Surpass Us

It was one of those late nights
Sitting at home alone watching some MMA fights
Mom and dad walk in - they just got back from my uncles
place
Looks like dad had a little too much to drink
He's about to give a speech to make sure that I don't sink

"Son come here I want to talk to you to make sure you don't
do what I have done"

He starts his little speech with the smell of alcohol in the air
around him,

"You must get an education, don't be like me, I never went to
school, instead I was having a little fun,
playing some heavy soccer in the sun
and making sure we had a nice run,

That's why you shouldn't play sports too much, even though I
would like the fame,

But if you play a little too much and it might just blind you

That's why I ask you to become that lawyer

To get that fame and just throw it out there

Or become that doctor so when we get sick you can always
help us

I just want the best for you that's why I'm telling you this

Because in the end all I want is just for you to be better than
me

When I was young I never had nobody to come and teach
me

I never had somebody guide my eyes, to make me see the
right and wrong

So when you grow up I want you to come and hold our an-
cestors spirits

I want you to honor them just like how I always did

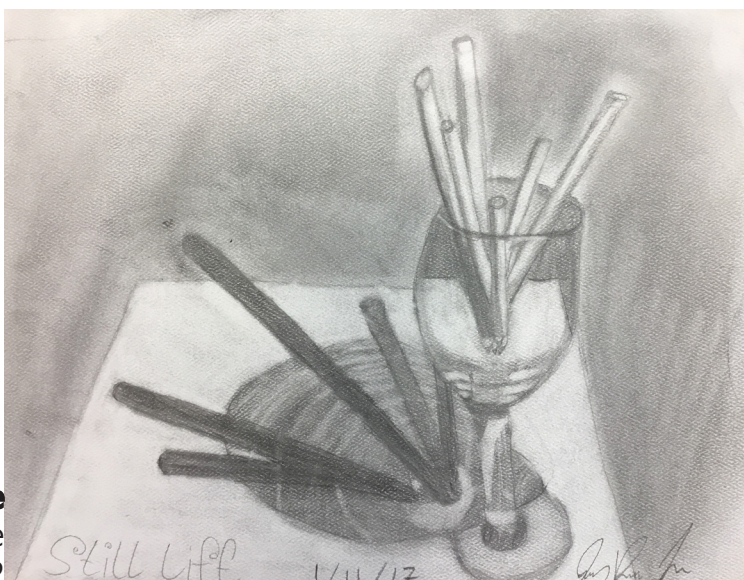
Because as much as they've disciplined and yelled at me, my
feelings always hid themselves

And as much as I hated them for it, I have to honor them

Because in the end I wouldn't be here without them
So I want you to carry our name
And bring it fame
Bring all your game
Because every single minute and every single second will
never be the
same
I just want you to be better than me
To become that man that I couldn't be
And don't you worry about love
That's nothing to worry
Because sometimes these women only want your money
And once they do that and have your heart broken, they
leave and go find a new seed
To then break it open and take what's inside and then leave
and never come back
I don't want that to happen to you because you were blinded
by your lust
Love is like a game, if you lose then you lose
If you can't sweet talk and you can't play with her
Then it's game over and that's fine because you don't have to
go out and try every single time"
He paused and took a few breaths
I'm guessing he's almost done
It's already 12:00
He might just finish
"But son we all gotta die
You can say you live forever but then you would be lying to
yourself
Once you die then you die
In the afterlife you can say 'what if' but it's already over
So if tomorrow morning I end up dying
Then you my son must carry on our name
You have two brothers and you guys are exactly the same
But I'm not dying yet, not right now
So before I die I want you to know how our culture goes"
After the talk, he wanders off into his room

I walk back to mine and think about what to do
I think what should I do with all these words
If someone were to point a gun at me I should fight back
But if I'm that helpless I guess it's game over
Then how about love? I guess I won't need it
At least not now at this very moment
But I guess that's a good thing Then I won't be in a tragedy
like Romeo and Juliet
But after late night thinking
I can see why he doesn't want me sinking
He wants someone better him
To do what he couldn't achieve
And he believes
That me and my bros can be what he dreamed of being
But after thinking deep, I finally realized
it's just human nature
We all want someone to go and surpass us
We all want someone to achieve more than us
We all want someone to do what we couldn't do
And if we don't want someone to surpass us
Why do we call ourselves human?

Chai Yang
Grade: 9



Still- Life
Jenny Lee
Grade: 12

Listening to My Dad

I'd always get into arguments with my parents,
Never able to connect
I'd leave and run away
Or go and hide in my room
Most of the time it's with my mom,
My dad would take me on long rides
Talking to me about life
It would usually just be quick rides,
And sometimes stops to buy groceries
But one specific night, we left for hours
He talked to me in Hmong
"Koj muaj ib tug hluas nkauj, koj yuav tsum pib noj lub neej
ntau dua"
(You have a girlfriend, you need to take life more seriously)
Thinking to myself,
I wanted to tell him that she was just a friend
"Kuv to taub hais tias niam hais tias qee yam ruam ua qee
zaum, tab sis cia li mloog nws"(I understand mom says stupid
stuff sometimes but just listen to her)
Many things I wanted to say
But I just kept silence
Listening to my dad.

Nelson Hang
Grade: 9



**Square
Head**
Nue Yang



Cyclops
Alvin Vang
Grade: 9



NYC Dream Skyline

Dillion Mona

Grade: 10

Me

Many people are immigrants
The United States is a place where there is a dream.
People come here to get a better life.
People running away from worries and starting a
better life.

I was born in a refugee camp.
We came here for a better life.
My parents keep telling me to work hard.
As the youngest, I am the hope.
They tell me to become successful.

What people say about America was right.
Living here, we have to work hard,
get a really good education, and
go forward in life.

Try to find happiness.
Find hopes and dreams
I'm trying to reach my dreams
And trying not to fall.

Talo Heh
Grade: 12

It's Not What it Seems

Most people (mostly Americans)
will assume
that immigrants live off the government,
that we are stealing jobs,
that we are not paying taxes,
that we are getting
special treatment.

I am from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.
It is a beautiful touristic place.
It does have its ugly parts.
2001, My father won the lottery.
The word spread like wildfire.
Coming from the slums,
everyone assumed:
"Narcos" -drug traffickers-
My father gained respect.
In some aspects of the city,
he was seen as a saint,
in others, as a threat.
He gave money to the people in need.
My dad's one mistake
was being young.
He was young and reckless.
He dropped money here and there,
bought cars, and even got himself
in the wrong crowd.
We began receiving threats
from gangs and strangers.
Everyone was money hungry.
My dad on the other side,
saw this coming.
He himself had guns of his own.
He might've been young,
but he was smart.
Over time, things got sensitive.

We had no choice but to flee.
Our lives were in danger.
Little did I know that Mexico
was going to become nothing
but a memory. A small,
dusty memory soon
stored on a dusty shelf
deep in the back of my head.

Everything isn't always
what it may seem to be.

Tania Ayon Ramirez
Grade: 12



Morning Fog Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Ms. Marni
STAFF

Pow Then Slash

Pow then slash.
The air pressure is on blast. What was that?
Many questions blast.

I look out my window.
All I see is glass.

There was nothing we could do.
So we evacuated fast.

I was scared.
The aroma of gas leaked so fast.

My mom didn't have time.
She put out her cigarette.
It went up in a flash.

Daddy couldn't see it.
It was all over for him.

The light at the end of the tunnel was dim.

My daddy's days came to a end.
My light was gone.
My day was over.
My life was no more.

Depression started.
My mom's heart parted,
but she doesn't know I'm still here.

For her eyes are blurry and no longer does she see fear.

Hanniatoris Smith
Grade: 10

A Happy Town, A Happy City, A Happy Life

Inspired by Loung Ung's First They Killed my Father

A happy town, a happy city, a happy life,
my mother was a happy wife.
My father raised us up with the love of his life.
Once a community, we are now torn apart.
This place never saw the terror coming from the start -
Families broken apart
with their broken hearts.

Missing families. Missing children. Missing hope.
Do we know how to cope?
How do we cope with these situations and get through?
Americans crying at home because they had lost their sons.
The Vietnam War tearing individuals away from one another.
We have to be here for each other.

Disappointed in how people do not fight for their country
but comprehending why they would not.
Fighting means they'll get killed;
They still want to live.
But we cannot stand still in times of crisis.
We have to make a move to protect our people
Cambodian people.

Violence and bombings spill on Cambodia's land,
The land where I grew up, and I will rise up to take a stand.
First they killed my father.
As his daughter,
I will be brave, stand up, and rise up to make a clan -
A clan that will make a revolution.
A revolution that will create a new start in history.

Britney Xiong
Grade: 12

Happiness and Pain

I still think about the times,
when I was all happy and never shy,
You know, the type of happiness where, the littlest things
make the biggest impact.

A simple, "have a good day".

Or

A loving, "I love you"

That use to keep me smiling.

Keep me happy.

It's crazy how things changed
you grow up & everybody start treating you like a lame.
you smile through the day tryna hide the pain.

but you know that once you get home,
You only wanna be alone.

The sadness takes over. The anxiety attacks. Then you're left
alone, with that little demon. The little demon that resides in
the back of your mind. The little demon that speaks only lies.

Naive little EhKhu

a dumb young girl.

living freely without a care in the world

I was young, I was happy, but that's all changed
because we grew up & stuff isn't the same.
Thinking about fairytales, and if true love is true
but it's messed up, you change everything when I met you.

You not a person. You not a physical thing. You're a small
voice, that slowly grow to conquer me. A small voice, that spit
out vicious words. A tiny voice, with the biggest impact.

Young, dumb & careless
living free as can be
I don't know why, but I was the happiest being, and that's the
best thing that's ever happened to me

I thought life was beautiful
The skies were bluer, the sun was brighter, the flowers were
more vibrant. The pops of blue, the amazing color in the
world, it was as if, the world was a color pallet and I was the
artist.

The world was okay
then stuff happened and things went down the drain.

I was hurt at a young age,
not by a boy,
not by a girl,
but by the people I thought would always have my back

"I hate you, like the moon hates the sun. Like the night hates
the day"

They wouldn't say these things, I'd think to myself
but they did, and I knew then
that love really isn't true

I'm tired of crying
I'm tired of being sad
I'm tired of not being happy
I'm tired of it.

Young, dumb & careless
living free as can be
I don't know why, but I was the happiest being, and that's the
best thing that's ever happened to me
I thought life was beautiful,
That the world was okay

then stuff happened and things went down the drain.
I was young, I was happy, and miss those days
life was good, and I was okay.
but stuff changed and tears shed
I'd lay there crying myself to sleep on my bed.

"Why am I like this? Why am I here?" I'd ask myself at the young age of 12. I'd cry and cry as if I wanted to die, and a little part of me inside did want to. I wanted to take my life, my young life, and that wasn't okay, because a child should never feel this way.

I know this is supposed to be happy
I know I'm supposed to be okay
but I'm tired of lying, this pain won't fade

I'm fine though. I really am. Don't stress about me. Don't trip.
I'll be better by tomorrow, I'd tell myself.
Knowing damn well that life was going by like a blur and I didn't have a care anymore.

I wanted happiness. I wanted to be okay. I wanted life to be colorful again. I wanted to see the bluest of blue skies, the warmest yellow sun, I wanted to feel like I belonged in the world. I wanted to feel like, maybe one day, I'd find my true happiness. Maybe not in the form of a person, or maybe not even in the form of a physical thing, but I just want to find inner peace. Inner happiness. The type of happiness where, I could smile without any catches, be happy without any strings attached.

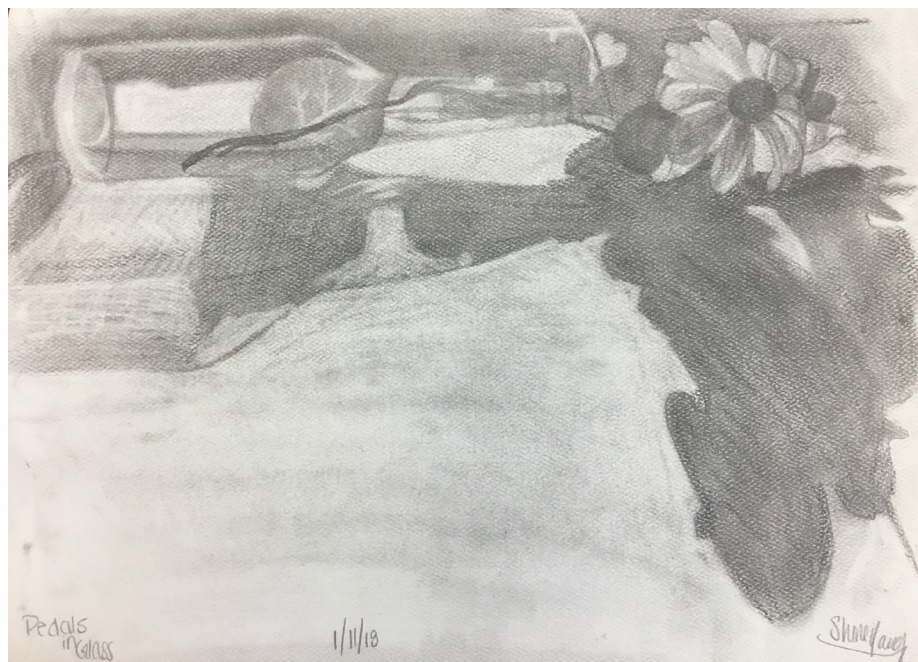
Just true genuine happiness.

But let's stop with all this sadness. Let's stop with all this pain. Because tomorrow is a new day. And maybe one day happiness will come freely again. Maybe one day I can smile with

no strings attached. Maybe one day, I can live happily, and that little voice inside my head, will diminish.

Eh Khu Paw

Grade: 9



Petals In Glass

Shineann
Yang

We to Me

I remember the days when we use to laugh and play
"We" is what we were when you were with me back in the
day
"we" turned to "me"
"hi's" turned to "bye's"
And even "tries" turned to "lies"
It's been almost 11 years,
11 years of you gone
11 years of me trying to stay happy and, strong
I was only 4 years old
4 years of you
4 years of someone old but now new
4 years of untold stories
4 years of blacked out memories
What am I supposed to do?
I remember the times when I asked dad where you were
The same reply was always "I'm not sure"
Well, I'm not sure
I'm not sure why you left
I'm not sure why I felt at fault once you left
I'm not sure why you failed us or if we failed you?
I'm not sure if you loved us enough, maybe that's why you
found someone new
They said "Family forever"
But you're the reason why I believe forever is never
I was clueless, I felt so useless
I felt like I was the reason you left
You were my best friend, you were all I had left
To this day, I still ask you why?
Why did you go?
Why did you go find a new family?
Why did you find a new daughter to hold?
Why does my pain from you come so naturally?
You're why I can't let people in my life
I just know that already, it'll all be at strife

You can't fight for what doesn't want to be fought for
Just like how you think you can buy my love, when I don't
want it to be bought
Time won't wait, and I won't wait for you to change
Now I'm older and I've found ways to make it through the
pain
I learned from you, that I don't need anyone to complete me
I don't need anyone to sit down and come please me
I don't need anybody to accept and appease me
I don't need you to show people the real me
I may look like you, yes, you gave birth to me
But I'm nothing compared to you
More like you're nothing compared to me,
Literally nothing, I'm just too damn flee
Too flee, to be dealing with things that now don't matter to
me
Too free, to be dealing with people who ain't got nothing on
me
Yes you're my mom,
I don't even know if I should call you that
You don't deserve that title
So let me take it back asap,
Sometimes, I think it's a blessing that you left
Even though it still hurts, I coped with the pain
But I'm gonna put it to rest
I just wanna know,
How can you be alive but yet so dead to me?
How can you give birth to a legend and then leave suddenly?

Jocelyn Yang
Grade: 9

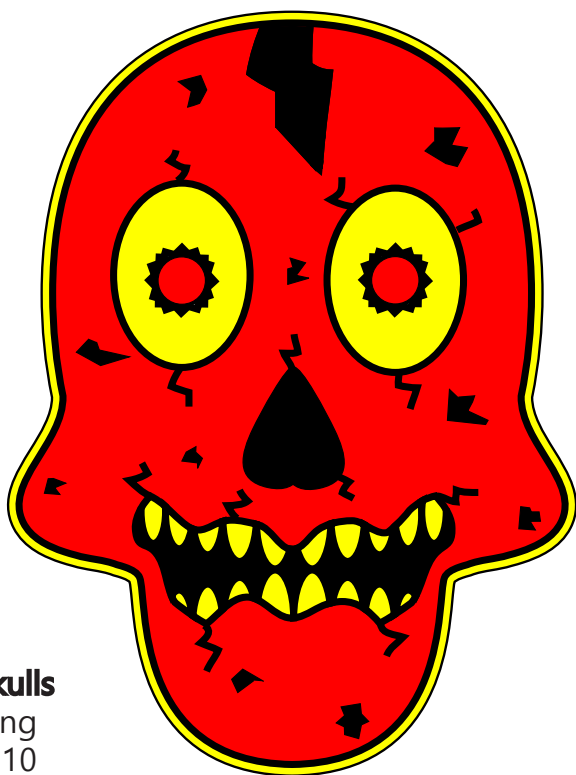
Bruises

In a math class, in Eagles High School, Alex sits towards the front. Second row. The teacher is speaking, but Alex can barely understand anything she's saying. The light shines through the windows and reflects off the desks. He copies the notes down, and faithfully writes them down in his notebook. After the bell rings three times, he gets up and slowly putters to the hallway. That's when he sees everyone surrounding his locker. He wants to see why, so he squeezes himself through the crowd and stops to see his sister punching another girl. He glances at his locker and sees the word "RETARD" painted in red on the dull gray locker. The nail polish fumes are still fresh and burn his nose. Everyone knows about the Asperger's which makes it easier to target him. After the girl is bloodied up and laying on the floor, his sister gets up, grabs Alex and runs for the door. They ran all the way home, panting and clenching their chests. The house is only a few blocks away, and after they get to the front yard of their house, Lola just screams, while clenching her fists. Alex is confused and asks too many questions. "Why did you hit her?" "Who was she?" "What will mom say?" She just shuts him up, Lola throws her backpack on the grass and it makes a loud thud sound. She lays down beside her backpack. Alex stares at her for a few minutes, then decides to lay down with her. They look up at the clouds and the baby blue sky, and the smell of wet grass blows around in the air.

After about an hour of watching the clouds and the falling red leaves, their mom pulls up in the reflective, white van. She gets out, slams the door shut and starts screaming at Lola and all Alex could do was lie there. Lola finally gets a word in and tells her mom that the other girl called Alex retarded. She stared off, with a loss for words. Her eyes started to water and tears streamed down her face. Alex always sees his mom cry when it comes to him and his disabilities. Lola would always hide her tears but he knew when she cried because after she cried, she always looked like a panda. Bright, red nose,

and red eyes. She would always deny it but he knew. They all walked inside to the smell of vanilla. Alex doesn't like the smell but it's his sister's favorite so he tries his best to ignore it. His mom and sister sit on the couch and Lola tries to comfort their mom. He stares off for a minute, then goes upstairs to his room. His room is organized made up of only 3 main colors. White, gray, and blue. They're the most comforting to him. He sets his backpack down next to his desk, and lays down on his bed. He closes his eyes but he doesn't go to sleep because its only 1 in the afternoon. Light shines through the open window which bothers him so he gets up to close the blinds and as he was approaching the window, his sister walked in, looking like a red panda. "Hey. I'm sorry about that." she said quietly. "What for?" he said looking blunt. She fiddled with her blue bracelet and he couldn't help but stare at it.

Cynthia Espinoza
Grade: 10



Sugar Skulls
Nue Yang
Grade: 10

Nostalgia

Growing up pursuing almost all the rules.
Went to about 1, 2, 3, different schools.
I remember my first time watching Aladdin.
I remember asking my friends "Hey you wanna come over
and play Madden?"
We rode our bikes around and made our own jumps.
Playing in the winter till we got goosebumps.

Went to about 1, 2, 3 different schools...
1, 2, 3 different schools.

I was surprised I didn't have a scar.
From the time I got hit by a car.
Growing up from the Vikings to Green Bay.
Went to Raceway Park for an incomparable birthday

Went to about 1, 2, 3 different schools....
1, 2, 3 different schools.
I was surprised I didn't have a scar.
From the time I got hit by a car.
Growing up from the Vikings to Green Bay.
Went to Raceway Park for an incomparable birthday

Went to about 1, 2, 3 different schools....
1, 2, 3 different schools.

I remember when I got that new bike as a gift.
Within 2 minutes, took a spill and gave myself a facelift.

Flashbacks of the sunrise as I climbed on the bus.
With my friends trying to discuss,
Over the fuss,
With the bus driver telling kids to not cuss.

Went to about 1, 2, 3 different schools....

1, 2, 3 different schools.

I used to hate the long drives to town

Now as I've heard, everything around is about to be taken down

From long ago I still have a lot of memories

Probably could publish a Hampton documentary.

It's ludicrous how that part of my life was just the entree

And you never know how important recollection is until it fades away

Keanan Harper

Grade: 9



EXPLOSIVE FISH

Christopher Lor
Grade: 12

COMBAT

Damien Wheeler
Grade: 11

KING FISH

Austin Yang
Grade: 12

Friday

Silence fills the room.
I wish this were every day.
I rest on the desk.

Diana Yang
Grade: 11

New kids on the block.
Neighbors are kind of weird.
Where am I going?

Tony Thompson
Grade: 11

Accusing

There are always those
people who can't drive in the
snow. Classic Saint Paul.

Ender Dillner
Grade: 11

The new falling snow
looking for a dirty home
lost in its season.

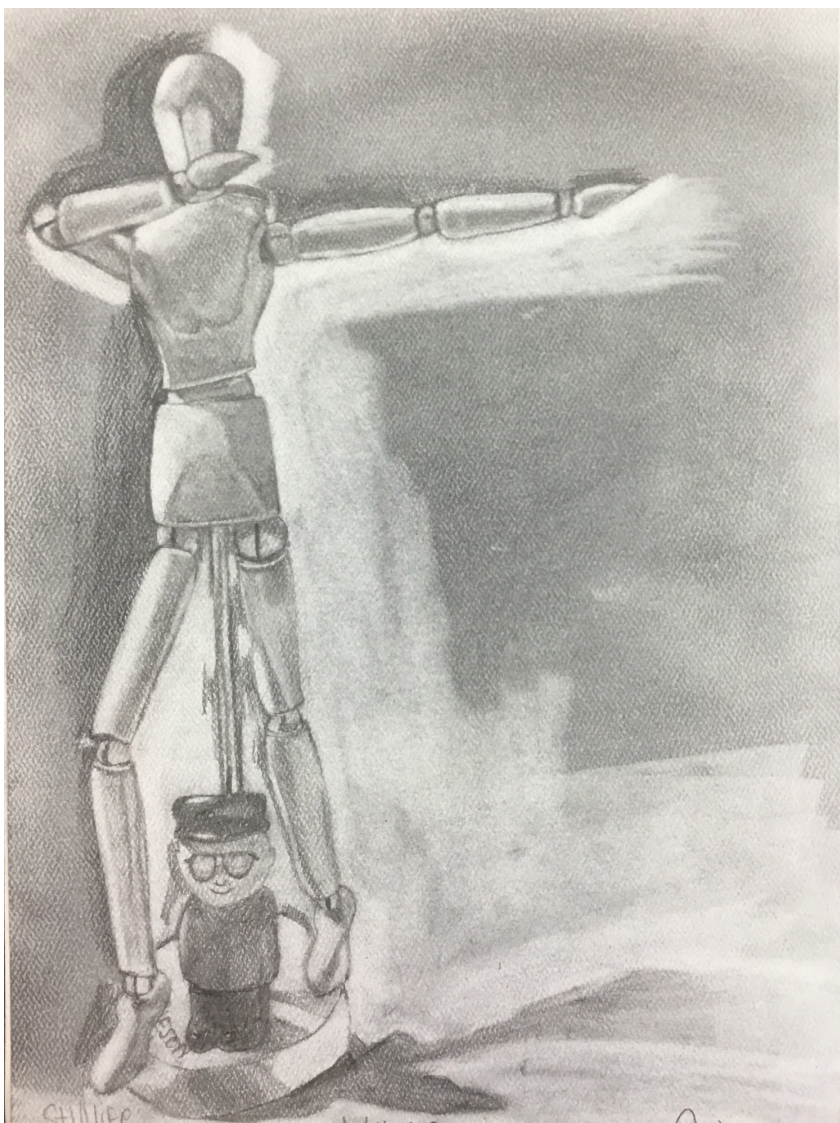
Terrell Turner
Grade: 11

Heads down, silent round,
headphones in, words unspo-
ken.
Who are you? they ask.

Soumina Yang
Grade: 11

I'm all bundled up.
My bun won't fit in my hood.
My ears numbed, nose runny.

Shanell Carter
Grade:11



Still-life

Nou Gee Xiong

Grade: 12

The Key Is To Not Procrastinate

"I will do it later." I would always tell myself when I get home from school. Like I tell my friends at school, "I will finish it at home." When I get home I sometimes don't do it or I will delay it until later. The next day I would usually say to my friend "I forgot to do it." I say "I forgot," but in reality I would delay it so much to the point where I don't do it at all.

When I was a freshmen in highschool, I didn't procrastinate at all. My freshmen year I would do all my homework right when I got home. That time of the year was when I actually knew how to do the homework. The following year when I was a sophomore I procrastinated every day. That year was a really bad year for me, because I had many missing assignments, and I failed classes because of it. I would have to make up the credit in summer school, but I procrastinated then, too, so I didn't go to summer school. Because I procrastinated again, I have to make up the credit in summer school this year. I didn't learn my lesson this year when I'm a Junior. I would procrastinate in the 1st quarter. Then everything started to get serious during 2nd quarter. Then I would start to think to myself "If I keep doing this I won't graduate." The following quarters I didn't procrastinate as much and I had less missing assignments and I started passing my classes. When I started to pass my classes I realized how easy it was to do my homework and turn it in on time. I realized I could do the homework, because before that I was stressing out thinking I didn't know how to do my homework. In some of my classes homework is an important part of my grade, such as Algebra 2, Us History, and etc. I would get low grades for not doing many homework or maybe just turning them late. Even if I pass the test with a 80% or higher it still wouldn't bring my grade up, so that's when I knew that it's mostly about the homework. Therefore, I turned in my homework and got 80% or higher on my test and that that started to bring up my grades.

When I stopped procrastinating, I was getting homework done and turned in on time. When I turned in my work, I started getting really good grades and that made me proud of myself. I felt that I accomplished a goal during the 2nd quarter. Then I started to set a goal for myself about my grades. My goal was to get an A or B, nothing lower than that during the third quarter and fourth quarter. The other part to it was when my half-brother set a deal for me: if I passed my classes with an A or B - nothing lower - he would get me something special. When he said that to me, I was motivated to do my work and pass my classes with A's or B's. I did! I passed the third quarter with A's and B's. Now this quarter, I'm trying my best to pass this quarter, and I kind of slacked off near the end of the year, so my grades dropped pretty hard in some classes. I just hope that I can bring them back up by the end of the year. If I do, I will accomplish that goal and even get something special from my half-brother.

Austin Yang
Grade: 12

**MR.
THOMPOSON
in STYLE of
YUSEF KARSH**
Nahom Asfaw
Grade: 12



From the Start

We arrived at Central High School, a team we haven't beaten in 7 years; this was an important game. My team had been preparing the whole week before. We had the starters all ready to take control of the game early so that the rest of the players could finish it off. But just as we were beginning to do the normal pre-game warm ups, one of the coaches called the first defense over. And as I was walking out I saw another coach walking towards me. Once he got to me he told me that I wouldn't start this game and I wouldn't get as much playing time as I thought. I walked back to the bench with so much anger built up inside of me thinking to myself "why?".

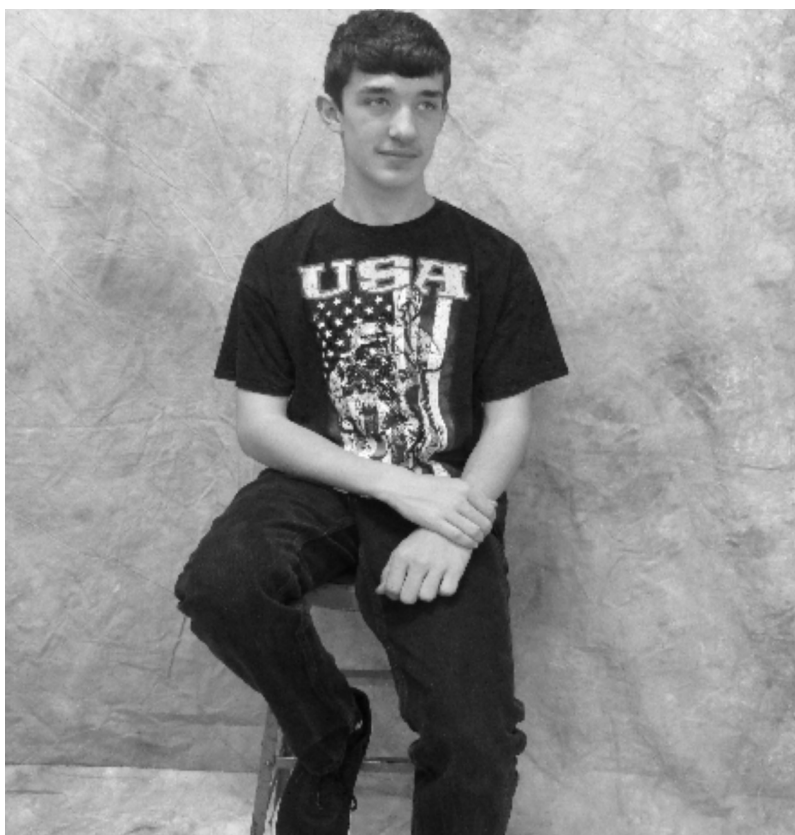
During the summer before that season we had football workouts, and I was as dedicated as anyone could be. But then I got my first real job at McDonalds, so I had to decide if I wanted to play football or work my job and earn some money. I made the choice of going to work one day and football practice the other. Most of the days that I worked were important days for football. I missed 7-vs-7 which is when we scrimmage other schools, or when we learned new plays that we would later use during real games.

After the Central game, we lost 48-8, This made it 8 years in a row that we lost to them. I talked to my coaches and asked why I didn't start. They told me that it was because of my summer job, and they felt I didn't want to be part of the team anymore. I had to debate with myself because I liked earning my own money but also love playing football. I know that my time playing was limited, because I won't be playing in college. So I had to balance my schedule, but now it was between school football and work.

The coaches told me that I had to show them I wanted to play to earn my spot back. So during that week before the next game I treated every day of practice like it was a game. During practice we had little mini games and tackling sessions and my team always won. I encouraged the team that

When I stopped procrastinating, I was getting homework done and turned in on time. When I turned in my work, I started getting really good grades and that made me proud of myself. I felt that I accomplished a goal during the 2nd quarter. Then I started to set a goal for myself about my grades. My goal was to get an A or B, nothing lower than something about myself that I didn't know about. I learned that if I work hard for what I want then I could get it, but it won't be easy. Being hardworking and dedicated to get my starting position back also earned me honorable mention.

Javion Burton
Grade: 12



America
Sara Gutierrez
Grade: 12

Hard Work Pays Off

When I was 15 years old, my father said "Son, I won't be coaching you in basketball anymore because you're not dedicated enough". Hearing this from my father broke me down because I really thought I was putting in work everyday and pushing myself to my limits. Proving him wrong was what I was determined to do and showing him that I can fight alone.

It was the following night when I told myself I was going to push myself to the extreme until my father sees that I really was made for basketball. Therefore, I had to show him that I could do this on my own by waking up early every morning to do my workouts which are push-ups, sit-ups, arm-curls with 30 pound weights, squats, and core. My father, who works the morning shift, would wake up at 6 am. He'd see me working out and most of the time he would give me the "serious" look. It made me think he was angry at me for waking up too early but, I didn't let his death stare intimidate me; I just continued to do my normal workouts.

Some days I would think to myself "Why wasn't I enough for my father?" "Why didn't he see the good in his own child?" "Why wasn't he happy with me?". I tried so hard every basketball season just to see him not satisfied with me. Even after all my effort, when he picked me up from school he would lecture me about basketball and bring up past bad games and sometimes he'd bring up another person being better than me, but I didn't let his words bring me down. Even though he lectured me a lot and always yelled at me, this was his way of showing his love towards me, so I used his words of lecture as a motivation to push myself even harder.

I proved my dedication and confidence on my own. With the little support I got from my family, I was able to become successful in what I loved to do. Even former classmates doubted I couldn't become a starter on Johnson's exceptional team, but I proved them wrong by training hard

every day all by myself. In fact, I became a starter on the varsity basketball team and even an All-Conference player. After all of the times he saw me wake up early in the morning, he began to change his mind and started coaching me again. He saw that I was dedicated to the game, and I had so much passion and desire for the game. In the end, my father was proud of me for accomplishing great things and I was proud of myself for being able to accomplish things on my own without the help from my parents, and that's all I cared about. Thanks to him, I was able to fight individually, achieve great things, and find the person I really am inside.

Kyle Lee
Grade: 12



Still-life

Thomas Heesh
Grade: 11

Remembering Track

The lotion was warm but cold. Smelled sweet but was bitter. Its magnolia scent reminded me of track. Track was a spring and summer sport with the flowers and trees blooming and growing again with the birds chirping, the sun shining, kids going out with friends after school.

Track was fun.

Track was fun and exhausting because of the competitions and the practices: running the whole track, high jumps, skipping, high knees, talking to each other, planning track meets, getting everything ready and going to the front of the school and getting on the school bus home and hearing, "Get ready for Friday" from the coach.

Then came the meets.

We'd meet in the back and go in a fancy bus while getting papers. Looking over the paper, we'd talked about the meet. We'd walk to the field and we'd go to our spots. First was the 100m dash. The only race I'd run for the day. I always came in third or fourth place because I couldn't get over the fear of hearing "start!" or of coming in last place. But I remember that my teammates are there to cheer me on. When the meet was almost over, my teammates would start playing tag and run around like little kids having fun while knowing we might not have even won.

Jaia Vang
Grade: 9

LIGHTNING

Aaron Bender
Grade: 12

Leng Xiong
Grade: 11



JUNGLE

Emily Schwinghammer
Grade: 11

ICE CREAM

PangCha Thao

Grade: 9



CALM

Yang Thao

Grade: 9



BRICK WALL

Austin Yang

Grade: 12

OLD AND NEW

Christopher Lor

Grade: 12



Gaoly Lee

Grade: 9

Hockey Nostalgia

Hockey day in Minnesota,
Me and my friends skate at the rink, He shoots he scores!
Everyone in the crowd goes wild.

"Yyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyaaaaahhhhhhh."

The Rink is where my world starts.
The cold daytime till the dark cold bitter nights,
The snowy days when it would be like a blizzard,
Playing hockey with all my friends,
It takes guts,
Making cuts
in the ice.

One day my dad said with a convincing smirk,
"Hey Tobin want to be a goalie?"

I said, "sure" with joy.
"Do you know I was a goalie when I was younger."
He hoped I would say yes. "No?" I said with a questioning
look.

"I was," he said.
At that moment I felt like he had a flashback to when he was
playing,

"Oh that's cool," I said.

Now I practice every day,
Play your best even when your day is gray,
Now he shouts "what a save!" With a joyful cheer.

Hooray!

I won the game for my team, I won a trophy,
I won state.

Tobin Florhaug
Grade: 9



GRAFFITI

Lucy Vang
Grade: 12

LIFE IS A ROLLER COASTER

Malayah
Khang
Grade: 12



FISH

Nkauzag "Zigzag" Xiong
Grade: 12

Angel

Drake Xiong
Grade: 10

Survivor

Koua Vang
Grade: 11



EAT MY BUTT

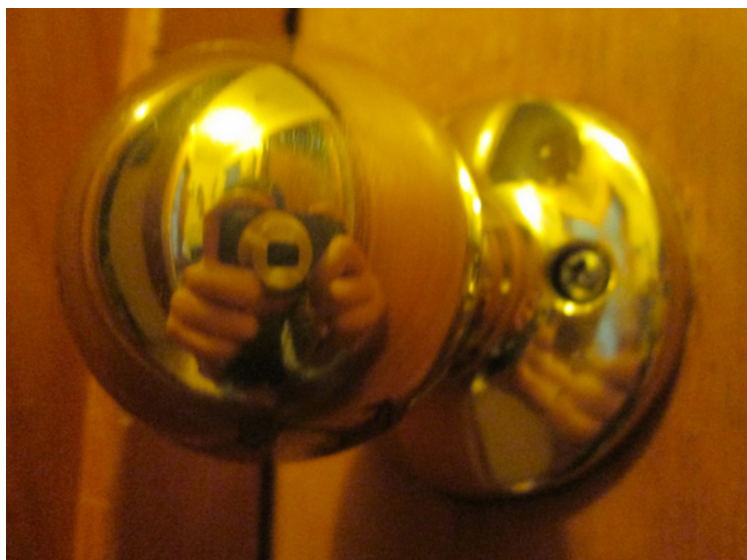
Leng Xiong

Grade: 11

UNDER THE DOOR KNOB

PajFuabcha Vang

Grade: 12



Work

I was on my way to work one day in the middle of winter. It was a cold breezy day. It was snowing in my face, and I couldn't warm my body up. I had to drive a club cart on the dirt road when it was snowing with only my paintball mask covering my face. It was snowing so bad, that once I got to the check-in shed, I was white. I was white enough to the point where I could go in the woods and lay down and you would never find me.

I had to referee in the snow. I came off the paintball field, and I went by the fire to stay warm and tried not to get sick. It was getting to the middle of the day and the group decided they wanted to take their time getting ready to go back on the field. They took so long that they went over their time limit. I got mad at them and so did my boss. We rushed them to get done and they got mad because they wanted to stay and play longer. If they wanted to play longer they would of had to pay more money. They were getting close to their time limit being up and they wanted to buy more paint. But we said no because they only had about 20 minutes left before they were done.

At the end of the day, I had to drive the club cart back up to the inside of the front shed for it no to get snowed on. I had to drive it down a dirt road with fresh snow and ice on it. I had fun driving on the ice because it was slippery, and I could spin the tires on it. I got going fast enough to where the back end wanted to spin and come around to the front. I let go of the gas to get control of it again and continued up front. After having the problems with the group, driving on the ice made my day. Even though it was dangerous, I still had a fun day at work.

Matthew Tobisch
Grade: 12

Breaking for the Best

Plop! There goes my left shoulder. Laying there with a “did that really just happened” face. Dancing is a lifestyle for me, which includes learning new moves, trying them, and then getting injured by them. No pain, no gain am I right? I’m a b-boy (breakdancer), and when my shoulder popped I was trying a new combo. You hop onto your shoulder then push off the ground with your shoulder while landing into an air chair (a freeze). You hold yourself while balancing on either your left or right arm. Sounds pretty simple, but then somewhere along the way I messed up.

I pushed off my shoulder going into the freeze but then when I landed, there was too much force on my left shoulder and PLOP! I was on the ground with my arm in a V shape pointing up to the ceiling. As you can probably tell, I took a 15 minute break because of the pain. My dance teacher Lue popped it back into place and I screamed like a little girl! It was a excruciating experience, but it was also funny to see my arm dangling like a broken branch. My teacher told me to take a break for a while and let my arm heal but I didn’t do that. Then I did exactly what he said, I went back to where I was and started breaking again.

There was a dance battle coming up, it was called “Battle of the Undergrounds” and Lue told me I could sign up. He didn’t want me to push myself too hard because of my shoulder. I did the opposite. When the battle started I did a few warm up top rocks just to get my blood pumping and to loosen up my body. I got into the rhythm, feeling the beat flow through my body then bringing that flow onto the floor with my footwork and power. The battle took a while but I won my first battle! It was only the first round but I was still happy I beat someone. It was like fireworks going off in my body because I won my first battle! As the battle kept going, my shoulder didn’t bother me much because of all the hype dancers and music.

Sadly at the end of the event I took fourth, which

wasn't that bad but it sucked for me since I wasn't first. I blamed it on my shoulder, but really, I just wasn't creative enough with my style. Each day I would try making up new sets or combos, pushing myself to be the best that I could. Every dance battle I went to I've lost. I kept losing. I didn't let it bother me because I didn't really care that I lost. I always had next time to come on top. I'm still dancing now, but not as hard as I used to. I still haven't won anything yet sadly, but I'm getting closer, and soon I will become somebody in the bboy community.

Kongpheng Lao
Grade:12



PEACE OUT

Leng Xoing
Grade: 11



Diana Yang

Grade: 11

Folklore

Bravo!! Bravo!! Bravo!! Everyone was yelling when the music stopped. I was in the line that was in front, a 14 year-old girl. I was in middle school, and it was a month before graduation. My teacher asked us who wanted to dance for graduation day. And without thinking about it, I raised my hand. "That was easy", I thought. The hard part would be if my Grandma would agree with it. As a Mexican girl I knew that my grandma was going to give me some obligations like cleaning my room, doing the dishes and being a good girl for my grandma. My grandma asked my mom. Thank god my mom said, "YES!"

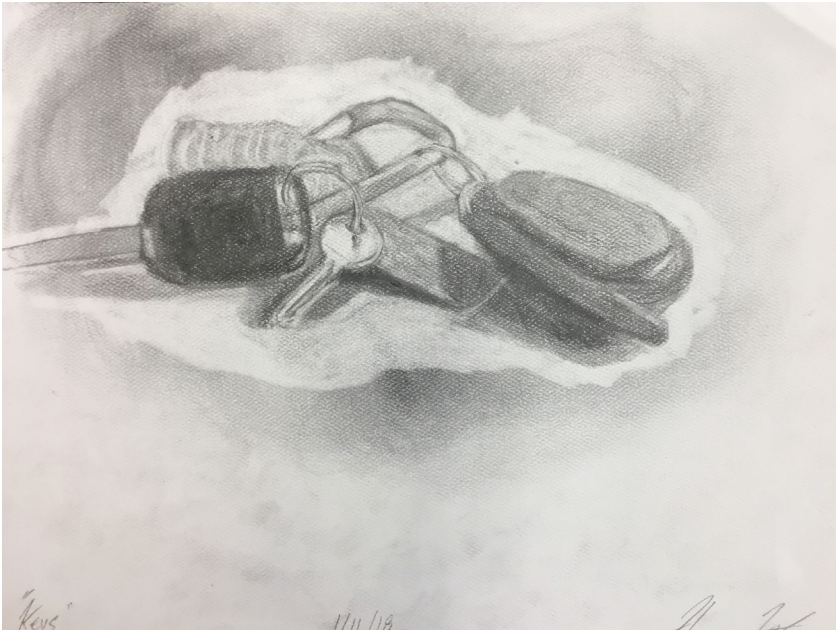
Now we just had to figure out how much the dress was going to cost. The economy in Mexico is so different

from here, and we were poor. On the next day, we had our first meeting. It all went well because the dance teacher was an old friend of my sister. I looked at him, "Azael!", I said.

On the second day we learned the steps: one, two, three, one, two, three, and so on. Thank god I learned the steps faster than my classmates. On the third day, my teacher and Azael had a meeting with the parents of the dancers. The price for boys was more affordable than the girls. The price for a dress was 600 pesos, like \$50 dollars at that time. "That's too much for a simple dress", my grandma said. Azael answered, "It's worth it". A week before the graduation, I went with my mom to see the dress and I was shocked. It was a big and long dress - long enough to make waves- displaying beautifully painted flowers. After that, my grandma and I went to a shoe store to buy the shoes. The prices were a little high "Don't you have a cheaper one?", my grandma asked the gentlemen. He gave us a 25% discount.

Graduation day was getting closer and I was so excited about it, but at the same time, I was also nervous. July 14th, the day was here. I had to wake up early, at 6 o'clock to be exact. My sister had to do my hair and my makeup. I arrived at school early and I found out that we were going to dance with a band next to us. "Now let me announce the dance: El son de los aguacates," the teacher said. The music starts and the first dance was fine, but in the middle of the second song, while I was dancing, my shoe betrayed me!! The heel broke, and I was basically dancing with a sandal. "Thank god nobody saw it," I thought. When the song ended someone told me, "Good job over there, you kept dancing no matter what happened". I said "Thanks", and moved away. So life is going to give us a lot of obstacles, but we have the chance to get over them. No matter how big or small the obstacle is, we have to just figure out how to deal with it.

Leticia Balderrama Estrada
Grade: 12



Keys

Henry Wiefering
Grade: 11

Gaining Knowledge of Cars

"Hey! Did I surprise you?" It was another friend of mine. He was in my garage as I approached the entrance. "Whoa! You scared me, and yes, indeed, I was surprised". The reason I came outside was because I couldn't stop stressing over my car issues and needed his help.

My friend likes to surprise me a lot and we always play jokes on each other. My friend came over to my house to help me fix my car. I wanted to start practicing driving. My father was busy with work and bills that he needed to pay off. So decided that since my friend knows how to repair parts for cars and he has experience with fixing cars, he could probably help me with some of my car issues. My friend came over to my house and we took a look at my car. He looked at the engine and told me to start the car. We both listened to the car

and heard a strange noise coming from the front of the car. We went to look at the engine, which is where it was coming from. We popped the hood and took a look inside the engine bay, where the motor sits. The noise got louder. We looked around and started to take off some parts we thought could be the source. My friend took off the timing belt, alternator, intake, and manifold. Some of those parts were bad. My friend told me to buy a new timing belt, and an alternator to see if that could be the solution to my problem. My friend and I got back from the Auto Shop and we started to work on the car and replace all the old parts with the brand new parts. We got done with the car and started the car. The car sounded normal. The issues were the timing belt and alternator, which were a good thing because those are minor problems.

As I got the time to work on my car alongside my friend, it taught me a whole lot of new things that I didn't know before like new tools and new parts for the car that can be easily replaced. It was a good experience and gave me more knowledge on working with parts that I was not familiar with. An example of this would be the parts that we both took out of the car and also with tools that I didn't know the name of like a socket, or a wrench. I also learned that there are different sizes for different bolts. It was good that I asked my friend to come over and help me, otherwise I would've taken the car to a performance shop. I knew that it was going to cost me a lot of money, which I couldn't afford. It was way cheaper doing it myself rather than taking it to an auto shop to do it for me. After I finished working on my car, I felt relieved. I finally started practicing driving afterwards.

Kylo Lee
Grade: 12

My Car Poem

Cars are cool and fun
A way of transportation from point A to point B
art or a tool,
You don't have to care, but
I care.

Step by step
Not to make a mess,
To the seat that looks so
neat, to the seat that my dad sat
to where I got my love for cars

Bright color for hype
that people don't like
to sedans to trucks and to cars
That look like bathtubs
like cars or not
We still have personality

Hopes to get along
To be as one
To agree on what is right or wrong
As a community not as Enemies
To drive for fun
One day together as all for one.

Kevin Xiong
Grade: 12

A Funny Story

When I was riding my bike, we used to jump off ramps. I went really fast, and thought I was cool, and I took my hands off the bike. The bike went flying, and I was pretty high in the air, and I hit the ground really hard, and my mom was scared and mad at me.

My mom said, "what were you thinking? Are you crazy?"

I said, "I was trying to do what the BMX guys do."

When I got up, I was laughing so hard, and my mom was so mad, it was funny. I won't lie. It hurt at first, but it was so funny to see my mom's face scared.

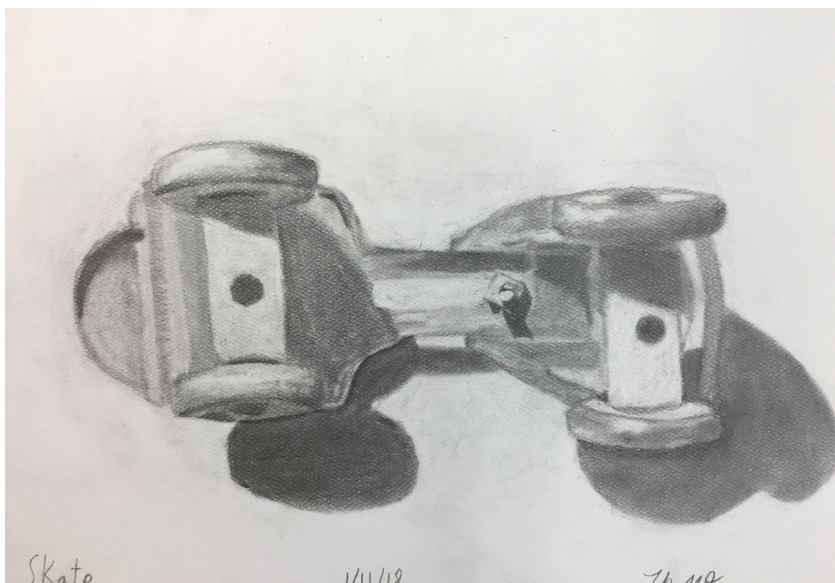
I got up, and I said "what's wrong mom?"

My mom said, "what were you thinking?"

I said, "I was trying to do a trick," and she said, "you need to practice before trying it."

Shane Kogler

Grade: 9



Skate

Luke Moberg

Grade: 11

Cell Narrative

My theme of my cell is a house. I chose a house for my theme because it's something everyone knows. A cell could be anything in a house, from having many things inside that could connect. I also think a house has many parts that connects with the parts of the cells. In this paper I will discuss how the parts of the cell connects with parts of the house.

In my cell the nucleus is the owner. The owner is the nucleus because the owner controls everything in the house like the nucleus controls the cells. The cell membrane is the house door because the door open and closes allowing who has the key or the owner opening it, to who can come in. This is like the cell membrane controls the materials into and out of the cell. The cell wall is all the walls of the house because it's the rigid structure that gives protection, support, and shape to the house just like the cell wall does for the cell.

The mitochondria in my cell are the plugs on the walls because it supplies energy to the object when something is plugged in. The chloroplast is the carpet because the carpet can consume energy from all around it to make another type of energy like the chloroplast convert solar energy into chemical energy. The endoplasmic reticulum is the hall because they can transfer you to one place to another like the cell transports proteins and places. The vacuole is like a cabinet because it stores materials that you put inside.

In my cell, the ribosome is the fridge in the kitchen. The fridge is the ribosome because it gives proteins from the food inside like the ribosome forms protein. The lysosome is like a dog because he can mess things up in the house like the lysosome breaks things apart. The golgi apparatus is the recycling bin because it goes through a process of sorting and delivers like the golgi apparatus goes through a process of sorting and delivering proteins. Lastly, it's cytoplasm which is the floor in my cell because it holds everything together

the cytoplasm is the part where it's inside the cell and contains molecules which hold them together.

From this activity of writing this paper, I liked how I could connect every cell to an item in a house. What I didn't like about this activity is that it was kinda hard to find things that could connect to a cell and match what the cell does. Even though it was kinda hard to find things that could connect with a cell, I was able to do it. I did get some little help with coming up with an item in a house that can connect to a cell and coming up with the reason why it connects to the cell. Overall, this was an ok activity and helped me think on what a cell does and how it is interconnected.

Sandy Perez
Grade: 10



Home

Brandon Onchong'a
Grade: 12

The Earth was More Grotesque

Inspired by Nick Flynn's "Cartoon Physics"

When I was around the age of 10, I didn't know anything. The
earth
was more grotesque
more so than the people on it.

Anyone who believes in heroes probably never learned
That there are heroes who don't wear capes or,

masks.

Cartoons are not realistic,

and neither am I.

Art is

my escape.

I make my own heroes.

My made up heroes would save me.

They showed me a false
reality. I couldn't believe

I had to go back to the normal ways
here, miles and miles of tall green grass,
a hill where the tree provides

all the shade I'd ever need.

I was happy.

These fictional heroes gave me a reason to keep living.
They saved me.

Cartoons are real.

Cynthia Espinoza

Grade: 10



Significant Space

Mi Khan Moul Htaw Chem

Grade: 12



Stitch

Tania Ayon Ramirez

Grade: 12

It Never Came Back

THUMP, was the sound my body made when it hit the floor with my alarm clock ringing time to get up ugggh it's too early. But I guess I have to go to school so I got up, grabbed my towel, got in the shower, brushed my teeth and got dressed. For some reason when I was younger, I thought my socks were the most uncomfortable thing in the world, so I never wore them- I only wore shoes. So I grabbed my backpack, put my shoes on and walked out the door to the treacherous trail the lead to my bus stop. There were mile deep holes, massive mountains and scary monsters that ate anything that went back there. I was really good at maneuvering around all those things. I jumped the holes, climbed the mountains and fought the monsters. But today something was different - there was another obstacle in the way. It looked like a spaceship. It looked like it had been sitting

there for 10,000 years. It had vines all over it and trees growing on it; I've never seen anything like it before. For some reason it was calling to me, making me want to explore it. BANG, The ship's door opened. I hid behind a tree and peeked out just for a moment - nothing was happening but then out of nowhere a big weird green and grey looking thing with a massive head slithered out. I was frightened and I couldn't move! I was slowly stepping back when SNAP, I stepped on something. The grey green blob seemed to look at me but couldn't see me; it didn't have eyes and it just kept slithering. I looked down to see what I stepped on. It was just a stick, and when I looked back up the grey green blob was gone. I was curious so I went to the door and looked inside. I heard a scream. "HELP ME", it said. So I went inside but I didn't know what I was doing so I explored. There were scary laser things all over it and it was kinda awesome but weird at the same time. While I was exploring, I heard a very menacing voice say, " GET OUT", so I took off trying to figure out my way back. I saw a light and it was the door. So thinking I was cool, I walked slow motion, making a beat to my steps like they do at the end of movies. BANG, The door slammed right in my face and the giant grey green blob plopped right in front of me with a giant cheeseburger in his tentacles, but it still didn't seem to see me. I got a closer look at where the eyes are supposed to be but it was just blank. It started to move forward and I jumped out of the way right before it went over me and It went down the hall through a different door. I turned around and ran at the door of the spaceship to try to get out but it was sealed shut. I turned around to see I was stuck in the spaceship. But look on the bright side, at least I didn't have to go to school. I studied the spaceship that I was going to be stuck in for the rest of my life and stared down the hallway that the blob went down. It looked like what you'd expect it to look like - lasers all over and glass containers used for holding specimen. But one thing stuck out at me - there were empty mcdonalds wrappers all over, and what made it even worse was that I was allergic to

cheese. I went down the hallway and through the door and there it was - the giant grey green blob. It was half done with the cheeseburger but this time the place where the eyes were the cheeseburger but this time the place where the eyes were supposed to be was its mouth and then I saw that its eyes were where its mouth was supposed to be. And at that moment it saw me. It looked at me and said "Hi, how are you?". "Hi and I'm confused", I said freaked out. "Why?", It said confused. "Aren't you supposed to eat me", I mumbled. "What? Why would I do that", It said hysterically. "Because you're a monster ", I said with a crack in my voice. "So, that doesn't matter, I only eat burgers not humans", It exclaimed. "Oh ok, thats good. What are you doing here?", I said joyfully. "I like burgers and I heard St.Paul makes a mean burger. What are you doing here?", It asked. "I was curious and I heard a scream. Do you know what it was?", I wondered. "Oh, that's just my alarm system. Aren't you supposed to be at school?", It said as it finished its burger with one last bite. "Yeah but school is just so boring I don't really feel like going", I said quietly. "Yeah school is boring. Do you want me to drop you off at home?", It said. "Yeah I would like that!", I exclaimed. "Ok let me start this baby up!", It said with a hop skip and a jump. When It started the ship it sounded so weird - kind of like a cow, but it was pretty fast and got me home in 30 seconds. When it dropped me off, It said It would come back and we could grab a burger together, but It never came back.

Joseph Moberg
Grade: 9



CYCLOPS

Leng Xiong

Grade: 11

Zombie Story

"Director! One got away!" A worker clad in blue yelled.

"WHAT?!" The director screamed, "How did you let one of those things get away!?"

"I'm sorry, sir," the worker asked, "Do you want me to get it?"

"Hmm... do I want you to go get it?" The director pretended to think, "OF COURSE I WANT YOU TO GO GET IT!! IF YOU DON'T BRING IT BACK IMMEDIATELY THEN YOU WILL BE FIRED!! I WILL PERSONALLY CUT OFF YOUR HEAD WITH MY BARE HANDS!!"

"Of course sir," the worker bowed and ran off in search of the thing.

I walked out of the bathroom refreshed after my hot shower. As I walked to my room I noticed our small apartment looked a bit off. No one had the key except for me and Soonyoung. Was he back?! I rushed to our shared room. And there he stood in all his glory. His fluffy brown hair and his cute eyes. This is the man I fell in love with.

"Soonyoung!" I hugged him, "You're back early!"

Although I was happy I noticed he didn't share the excitement. I looked up at him worried, "Is everything okay, 자기?"

"Seoyeon, we have to leave now," He said in a strangled voice, "Pack your things so we can leave. 빨리!"

After that scene in our room, we drove all the way to the boys' dorm. The car ride was awkwardly silent. I decided to break the silence with some music.

"I'll catch a grenade for ya!" I sang along with the music, "Soonyoung-ie~! Sing along with me!"

He laughed but sang along anyways. I pretended to hold my chest as if it was hurting, "Ah! I've been blessed with your beautiful voice!"

He laughed and pushed me away in a joking manner,

"Let me concentrate on driving, you dummy."

"오빠! 사랑해! 너무 사랑해요~!" I said as we stopped at another stop light.

"야! 너 바보야!" He laughed as he shoved me off so he could drive properly. I laughed and slouched back into my seat.

When we arrived, the boys were already outside with their bags packed. Some of them were with their significant other. Chan waved us over. Once we got over there, the boys automatically started talking to each other in hushed voices. I walked over to the two other girls, hoping that one of them knew what was happening. However as I looked over their faces I got my answer. None of us knew.

As they talked, one of them shushed the others and soon they could hear staggering footsteps closing in on them. Seungcheol immediately went into action as the leader. He rushed all 16 of us into one Van, putting all the back seats down so we could sit on the van floor holding our own bags. Seungcheol took the driver seat and Sowon took the seat next to him and gave him a reassured smile, but Seungcheol could only muster a small smile for his girlfriend.

"What's going on?" Dahyun asked, breaking the ice. The boys all looked at each other as if they were debating on whether to tell us or not. Jeonghan sighed and nodded to Seungcheol.

"On our way home, we saw something running away from a company. Our driver couldn't stop on time and hit it head on. When we were about to get out of the car to look at the body, it suddenly started getting up. It seemed to be fine but as soon as it looked up and saw us it started limping towards us and groaning. And as it walked we could hear it's bones cracking," Seungcheol stopped as he was obviously scarred from the incident.

"We think it was a zombie..." Vernon continued for his leader.

"너희들 미쳤니?!" Dahyun said. Dokyeom shook his

head.

"아니요! It's true! We saw it! We could smell it too!" Seungkwan protested. The boys nodded in agreement to Seungkwan. And then the van fell into an awkward silence. "It's obviously never going to happen but if it ever did happen. I think we all know that you would die first knowing you," Seungkwan joked. Everyone else laughed along with him. I pouted.

"야! Boo Seungkwan! Get your butt back here now!" I yelled at his retreating figure.

"자기야~" Soonyoung chuckled and held me back from chasing after Seungkwan, "It's fine. I won't let you die in a zombie apocalypse. I'd rather die than see you get turned. Of course this is just a what if though, since there is a very low chance of there being any zombies."

"나의 바보야," I pinched his cheeks.

"Everyone get up. We're here," Seungcheol announced. Everyone sat up in the van groggily. Outside was a tall building, about three stories high. It was a dull brown color like every other building around it. The only thing that stood out about it was the bright green railing on the stairs leading up to the red door. Sowon seemed to recognize it and glared at Seungcheol.

"형 어디야?" Chan asked rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

"Are we at- you know... that place?" Jeonghan asked. Seungcheol nodded.

"Come on. I'll explain when we're inside," he motioned for us to follow him. Slowly we all climbed out of the van weary of one of them jumping out at us. Oddly enough when we all made it up the stairs Seungcheol just opened the door and let us in.

"Come on, everyone. 빨리 빨리," Seungcheol ordered us. None of us disobeyed him. Through the red door was two more doors. Seungcheol knocked on the left door.

"Hyunwoo, open the door," Seungcheol said through

the door.

"Seungcheol?" A muscular man with narrow eyes opened the door and pulled Seungcheol into a hug, "I haven't seen you in so long since you left the gang."

"Same here man. But I need a favor," Seungcheol hugged Hyunwoo back.

"What do you need? A place to stay? Food? Cause you already know I don't have those," Hyunwoo chuckled. Seungcheol laughed along with him but soon stopped.

"I need weapons, Hyunwoo. Guns, swords, daggers, crossbows you name it. I just need enough for the sixteen of us", Seungcheol said. Hyunwoo thought about it and sighed.

"You're lucky. I just got a new shipment of supplies. But what do you need it for?", Hyunwoo asked. Seungcheol pulled him to the side to break the news.

"WHAT?! You've got to be kidding me Cheol! It's not even possible!" Hyunwoo said, "I need to tell the guys! I need to tell Hoseok, Minhyuk, Kihyun, Hyungwon, Jooheon, and Changkyun."

After showing us to the supply room, Hyunwoo immediately started calling all of his friends - telling them to pack their bags and bring whoever is important to them to his house. Right as Hyunwoo got out of earshot, Sowon turned to hit Seungcheol.

"I told you to stop talking to them. They ruined your life! You almost died for god's sake!", Sowon said to Seungcheol.

"I did stop talking to them, but this is the only way we can survive this thing, Sowon. Just trust me. Everything will okay", Seungcheol reassured her and everyone in the room.

"Now grab at least two things. Everyone must have a dagger and the other will be your weapon of choice", Seungcheol said. Everyone nodded and, grabbed a dagger, and went to look for a weapon of their choice. Soon everyone came back with a weapon of their choice. Most of the boys chose a gun as their weapon.

By the time we got back to the van and on the road, the streets were deserted unlike before. Our immediate guess? Everyone has finally figured out what was going on and ditched town or were turned into one of them. The sun was starting to set now too.

"Seungcheol, let's find a place to stay before it gets dark," Sowon said. Seungcheol nodded.

"So guys. Motels, Hotels, other people's houses, or in the van?" Jeonghan asked. Everyone started mumbling and and soon mumbling turned to small debates. In the end the votes to stay at some random person's house won.

After driving for awhile Seungcheol decided that we don't get to choose what house to stay in anymore because we're too picky. Soon after, we found a house in a seemingly empty neighborhood.

Without looking outside first, Jihoon jumped out of the van and started stretching. As soon as he landed, I heard footsteps rushing towards him. I could see a lopsided figure in the dim street lights starting to run toward Jihoon. Jihoon still hadn't noticed.

"Ji-" I tried to yell but Seungcheol covered my mouth. And before I could even blink, Seungcheol rushed out of the van. I stood in my place spellbound. I could only watch as the zombie rushed onto Seungcheol's back and bit into his neck, the bone cracking. As Jihoon could only stand there dumb-struck as he watched his best friend get bitten right in front of him.

"Ji...hoon-ah... run... take care... of every... one..." Seungcheol breathed out in ragged breaths, "RUN!"

As he said that Jihoon rushed into the van and Jeonghan slipped into the driver's seat. And now we were back on the road. Jihoon sat in a ball in the corner of the van. Sowon was in Dahyun's arms crying her eyes out. The rest of us sat quiet, paralyzed by the loss of our leader.

"Seungcheol, what are you doing?" I asked as I saw him huddled up in a corner of the dance studio. He popped

his head up to look up at me. I was taken aback with the look of hopelessness in his eyes.

"What happened," I asked, this time in a softer voice. But instead of the reaction I was expecting his eyes steeled up again and once again he looked like a strong leader.

"Forget it, Seoyeon. I'm fine," he said. He got up and started walking away. I grabbed a hold of his sleeve.

"You're not fine, Seungcheol. Something is bothering you and you just don't want to tell me," I said. He shook his head.

"You've got this all wrong. Just go check up on Soon-young. He's been waiting for you to show up," he said. Before I could even think I stood up and slapped him.

"That's low of you. I just wanted to help but you bring in Soonyoung into the conversation like you don't need help! Even though you need the most help out of all of us!" I stomped away in anger until Seungcheol spoke in a strange weak voice.

"I... I just don't know what to do... I want to help everyone but I'm not good at anything except fighting and storing away my emotions... I want to be of use but there are just so many expectations thrown on me since I'm the leader and... and I'm just overwhelmed with emotions and thoughts that I don't know what to do!". His eyes were filled with tears that wouldn't fall. I realized that sometimes a leader needs someone to lean on too. And so I pulled him into a hug and rubbed his back.

"It's okay to cry. I won't tell anyone," I said to him as he burst into loud sobs.

"Jihoon what are doing?" Seungcheol asked. I sighed.

"I'm finishing up this song but I don't know what to put for this certain part," I said. Seungcheol hummed as if he was thinking.

"Put on your jacket and shoes 'cause we're going on an adventure!", He stated.

"But- AH nevermind!", I said as he walked out of the

room before I could protest against him.

We met up outside and Seungcheol made me follow him to a random place. We stopped at the bottom of a huge and long stairway.

"Race you to the top!", Seungcheol yelled and took off on the stairs.

"WHAT?! 미쳤냐?!", I yelled but ended up following after him. I finally arrived at the top the top of the stairs out of breath.

"Are... you OUT OF YOUR MIND?!", I managed to pant out. But Seungcheol didn't react to my shouting.

"Lookup. Aren't the stars beautiful?", Seungcheol said.

"Woah... how did you did find this place?" ,I asked as I looked up at the many stars above us.

"I was like you, all stressed out and worried and while I was wandering around I managed to find this spot. When I looked up, all my worries disappeared. And I hoped that if I brought you here, it would help you," he said.

"This helped... this really helped Seungcheol," I said.

"This is all my fault...", Jihoon uttered. Word after word, his voice became louder and louder, "This is all my fault. If I didn't run out of the van, Seungcheol would still be alive. If he were still alive then there still would be sixteen of us. We would still have a leader. I... I don't deserve to be here! Seungcheol deserves to be here right now! Not me! I'm just--"

A loud slap rang out throughout the van. Sowon's hand was still in the air where it had stopped after slapping Jihoon. Jihoon was shellshocked and stared at the van wall.

"This was indeed your fault. I'm not going to sugar coat my words because we don't know when we're going to die or when those things are going to pop out and turn us. You need to learn from your mistake. Go ahead and blame yourself for this but that's not going to take you anywhere. Seungcheol made the decision to let you live so don't waste it. He did that so he was the only one to get turned. So that we can continue and live. Even though one of us gone, this

does not mean you start living like a fool. You start living better because you should know that they gave you another chance, so don't mess it up," Sowon said and sat back down in her spot. Jihoon seemed to soak up her words and nodded. He now seemed like a different person from ten seconds ago and sat down.

"We should choose a new leader," Junhui said. The rest of us nodded and gave out ideas of who should be our new leader and who wanted to be leader. In the end Jeonghan was named our new leader.

Soon after, we were able to find a small gated house and took shelter there. After checking the surrounding area for any wandering zombies that could pounce on us, we checked the house for any of those things, and we found that it was pretty empty. The food was also plentiful in the storage cabinet.

After a few days of staying there, someone knocked on our door. It was a small group of seven people. They all looked very young but the oldest was a 94' liner one year older than Jeonghan and Joshua. They looked like they needed a lot of help so we let them into our house and amazingly we all got along pretty well. Their names were Seungwoo, Seungsik, Heochan, Sejun, Hanse, Byunchan, and Subin. We stayed together for a few weeks and I was able to get along very well with Subin and Chan. I never made an effort to get close to Chan but now that I am, I think I should have tried to from the start. As the days passed, the three of us got closer and closer. Soon we were telling each other our deepest worries and problems.

"Subin-ah. Are Seungsik and Seungwoo still sick?" I asked.

"Sadly, they still are but 누나~ what if one day we won't be able to see each other anymore," Subin asked. I laughed.

"아! Who do you think I am? I'm your awesome friend Seoyeon who doesn't leave anyone behind," I joked and made a weird derp face. They both laughed from my ugly derp face that I had made. I laughed along with them too.

"Seoyeon, you need to stop with those ugly derp faces," Chan said laughing.

"But- but I can't! My derps are what make me BEAUTIFUL!" I fake flipped my short bob-cut hair.

"I second that, 자기야," Soonyoung chuckled from behind me. I jumped to my feet to pull him into a hug.

"You're back from the outing? How was it? Did you guys find anything new?" I asked. All twenty-two of us lived here, and the food started decreasing more and more. So now we had to find a place where there was non-contaminated food that could last us. By now most places were already raided by other people who got there first.

"No luck. It's like all the places around here get raided right before we get there." Soonyoung sighed. I sighed and rubbed his back to comfort him. Right before Soonyoung was able to pull me into a kiss a cough sounded behind us.

"PDA much?" Subin asked.

"야. Just look away," I threw a nearby pillow at his face.

"I see we're playing this game now," Subin said as he threw the pillow at my face.

"You're gunna lose Seoyeon!" Chan yelled and threw another pillow at my face.

"Oh you guys are so going to die!" I yelled as I chased after them with the pillows.

Later that day, Subin and Chan wanted to show me something. It was around nightfall now so the zombies were really active outside, hence the double protection outside of the house. We made the fence much taller so none of those could come in. We also blocked off all the windows so no light could shine in or out of the house. After lots of testing we found that the zombies were attracted to light and they can see in the dark which made them scarier.

"Where are we going, Subin, Chan?" I asked.

"Just to the basement. Don't worry, Seoyeon. You trust us right?" Subin said. I nodded. I shouldn't doubt them. They're my best friends. What could they possibly do that I

wouldn't know of? I basically knew everything about them, from their greatest fear to their biggest dreams.

As we walked further down the stairs to the basement I could smell a rotten odor. I covered my lower face with my sweater sleeve but it did not deter the smell from reaching my nose. It smelt like those but it couldn't possibly be because we checked the house numerous times.

We walked into the basement. The smell made me want to puke. However Subin and Chan didn't seem to smell anything in the basement. It was dark inside. The hairs on my neck stood up. Something was off. Subin's hands wandered on the wall looking for the light switch. CLICK. The light turned on. My eyes widened at the sight before me. Two zombies lurched at us.

"HOLY-" Chan covered my mouth. And put his index finger to his lips.

"It's okay Seoyeon. Nothing will happen. Seungwoo and Seungsik are chained up," Subin whispered in my ear.

"Seungwoo... and Seungsik..." and surely enough the two zombies before us had some barely distinguishable characteristics to Seungwoo and Seungsik, "no... I... I thought they were sick... Subin... you lied?"

"I didn't lie Seoyeon. They are sick. Don't you see how pale and frail they are," Subin said. I looked into his eyes and I saw not my best friend, but someone who was sick.

It was Seungwoo and Seungsik's second time going out with the group to look for supplies but by unfortunate events the group ran into a hoard of zombies. When they had come home, everyone was soiled with blood and dirt. Luckily no one was hurt. But soon after Seungwoo and Seungsik fell sick.

"Subin. You aren't in the right mind right now," I tried to pull him into a hug so I could drag us back to safety after I realized what had happened. But he slapped my hands away from him.

"Subin isn't sick, Seoyeon. Seungsik and Seungwoo are. Can't you see," Chan said.

"No. Chan. Subin. Go upstairs and join the others. Please. You guys aren't in the right mind after losing your closest friends," I said. Chan shoved me away. I landed a few inches away from Seungwoo's grasps. I quickly scrambled away as to not get infected. From a distance I could see that Seungwoo's once warm eyes were now cold and lifeless. I stared into his eyes hoping to find some kind of human life in him but to no avail. Subin pulled me up by my hair. Small whimpers came from my mouth even though I tried not to show any pain.

"Seoyeon. Seoyeon... this was a mistake... I think I should throw you into Seungsik's direction this time..." Subin's eyes showed no remorse as he said his cold words. I looked at Chan but he was in the same condition as Subin.

"S... SOON-" Chan once again covered my mouth but this time I bit his hand, making him wail out in pain.

"SOONYOUNG!!" I shouted, hoping that he would be able to hear me or anyone for that matter. Right after I screamed Subin let go of my hair. I flopped to the floor. Subin stomped his feet on me.

"Look what you did. Seungwoo and Seungsik are mad now," Subin said. And he was right. Seungwoo and Seungsik were struggling more to get out of the chains. They also seemed to be screaming or in this case gurgling. Chan threw some meat out at Seungwoo and Seungsik as Subin stomped on me harder.

He once again pulled me up by my hair but this time I couldn't conceal my pain and screamed again. I was starting to see black specks in my vision. The noises around me became jumbled up and all I could hear was static. Chan was hitting me now but I was numb to the pain. And through my blurred vision I could see two figures running towards us before I blacked out.

"Soonyoung... let's start a family," I covered his mouth

before he could say a word to me.

"I know it's kind of early we're still at the young age of 23 to talk about this, but I'm not talking about now. After you hit it big and achieve your dream let's start a family," I said and took my hand off his mouth. Soonyoung smiled at me.

"Of course. I would love to start a family with you in the future Lee Seoyeon," he said. I smiled back him. We both leaned in and our lips met and intertwined with each other.

KaoSheng Xiong

Grade: 10



Strings
PaZong Thao
Grade: 9

Reflections

Editor's picks from the archives:

With healthy, hearty, joys of winter days
No other joys in any wise compare;
The name of winter to my mind conveys
Sports, whose place no others dare to share.
To skate, to see, enjoy the brisk cold air,
To snowball forts of playmates, - girl or boy;
To slide down hills whose sides so slippery are-
All means to keep your seat you must employ-
Yes! these, all these and more, you may with us enjoy.

Grace Kinstler,
The Gleam, February 1915

Hope

Hope.
The lies we tell ourselves
in the midst of fear
and pain,
that somehow
keeps us from going insane.
Perhaps the strongest of people,
are those who know the truth
but somehow,
find the courage to deny it.
And if this hopeful knowledge
is merely a self induced lie
programmed into my heart
simply for the temporary purpose
of hiding the hurt,
I hope it never goes away.

LeeAnn Lund,
Grade 12, Mirror 2011-2012

Reflection

Looking deep into my reflection,
I've never seen a harder fight.
Struggling with grief of rejection,
looking deep into my reflection,
struggling with the expectation,
of being what society sees as right.
Looking deep into my reflection,
I've never seen a harder fight.

Ethan Yang,
Grade 11, Mirror 2015-2016

A Special Place

There's a place that I know
I know that place very well
A place where I can do whatever I want
A place where I can laugh my hardest
A place where I can cry as loud as I can
A place where I can look like a zombie
A place where I can where the ugliest thing
A place where I can sing even if my voice cracks
A place that's unique
A place that's indescribable
A place that's amazing
A place where I don't care about what others think of me
Just a place that I can be myself
There's nothing like a place
I call home

Maiyakia Thoj,
Grade 10, Mirror 2014-2015



LITTLE BIG HORN AT SUNSET

Ms. Marni
STAFF



