

ZEPHYR

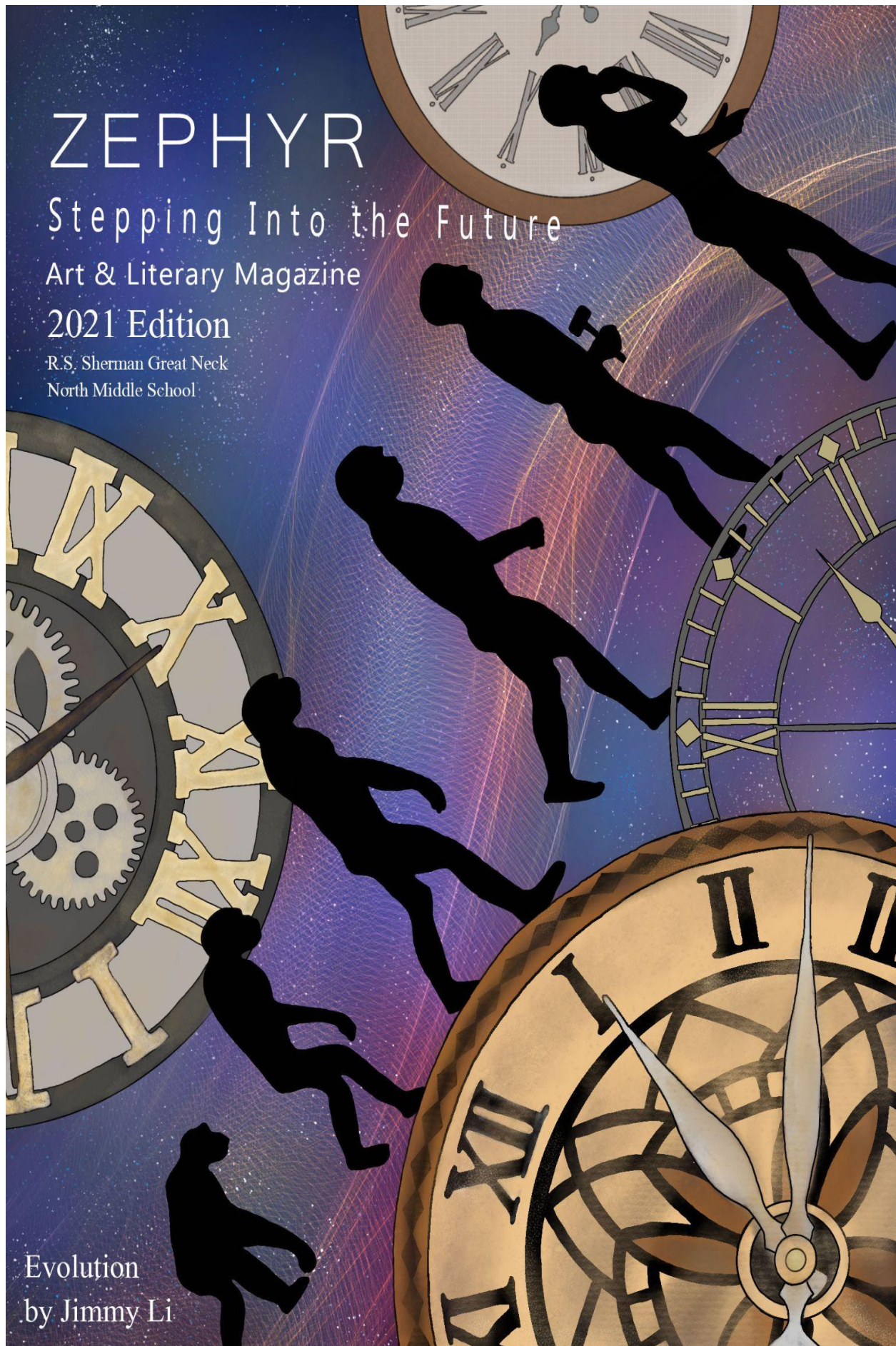
Stepping Into the Future

Art & Literary Magazine

2021 Edition

R.S. Sherman Great Neck
North Middle School

Evolution
by Jimmy Li



ZEPHYR LITERARY MAGAZINE

A Magazine of Art and Literature
2020-2021 Edition

Richard S. Sherman
Great Neck North Middle School
77 Polo Road
Great Neck, New York 11023

Board of Education

Barbara Berkowitz, President
Rebecca Sassouni, Alternate Vice President
Donna Peirez, Trustee
Jeffrey Shi, Trustee
Grant Toch, Trustee

District Administration

Dr. Teresa Prendergast, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Stephen Lando, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Kelly Newman, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
John Powell, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Dr. Joseph Hickey, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education

Justin Lander, District Technology Director

Dr. Gerald Cozine, Principal
Jennifer Andersen, Assistant Principal
Nancy Gunning, Assistant Principal

ZEPHYR LITERARY MAGAZINE

ADVISER

Marissa Dove

CONTRIBUTORS

Eva Amirian
Talya Bagim
Jake Balazadeh
Ellen Barbu
Dylan Brenner
Juliet Burkhoff
Victoria Cho
Madison Choi
Daniella Cohen
Mali Cooper
Eva Corrales
Janeidy Da Silva
Nathaniel Davidson
Juliana Dayani
Sherlyn Dominguez
Ashley Dong
Lea Eshaghoff
Ethan Fefer
Sarah Friedberg
Sofia Giannoglou
Daniel Goldberg
Wynne Gruder

Audrey Han
Lia Huang
Anna Huo
Daniil Isarevich
Vincent Jie
Miriam Kagan
Kayla Kahen
Izzy Kamali
Elliott Kane
Daniel Kardos
Joshua Kiaei
Audrey Kim
Jonathan Kontente
Raquel Landerer
Max Lee
Marisa Levine
Jiawen Li
Jimmy Li
Ashley Liu
Mia Malhotra
Julianna Miano

Melvin Moreno
Jolie Nassi
Katharine Park
Liad Pilip
Maxwell Pour
Rachel Rafaeil
Mia Sakai
Aybriel Schnatz
Eliav Sehati
Sofia Shahid
Rebecca Slobin
Diana Smolens
Lisa Sulaymanov
Stephanie Tsai
Emma Wen
Kaylee Wu
Lucy Xiao
Jamie Yao
Elana Zarabi
Ava Zeng
Elena Zhuang
Eva Zubli

SPECIAL THANKS

Elaine Brendel, Art Chairperson

This year's edition of Zephyr is dedicated to Ms. Elaine Brendel, who has tirelessly inspired her Art 9 students to produce all of the magazine artwork. We thank you for your 31 years of service at North Middle School. Your passion, spirit, and love for art will live on in the work and the hearts of your students for an eternity.

Zephyr's Philosophy

Great Neck North Middle School's literary magazine, *Zephyr*, provides students with the opportunity to share their poems, short stories, and graphic artwork with the school community. *Zephyr* is a unique way for students to express themselves, to demonstrate their talents, and to articulate their feelings through a creative outlet. This school-based publication is a student-run activity where students are encouraged to contribute not only as writers and artists, but as members of the editorial staff.

Explanation of Theme

"Stepping Into the Future" was imagined by the students of the *Zephyr* club. Our members thought it important to have a positive theme this year, which could lend itself to pieces that offer strength, hope, and inspiration. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, we anxiously await a return to normalcy. As we do, it is important to recognize how far we've come, while we focus our sights in the direction of the future.

We hope that you enjoy "stepping into the future" with us!

Table of Contents

Title of Piece:	Author/Artist:	Page Number:
Evolution	Jimmy Li	Front Cover
When I Believe	Talya Bagim	Poem, 7
Dimension Two	Stephanie Tsai	Illustration, 8
2050	Daniel Goldberg	Opinion Editorial, 9
Smile Once Again	Marisa Levine	Poem, 9
Strands in Time	Audrey Han	Illustration, 10
Steps	Joshua Kiaei	Poem, 11
Ready to Perform	Azadeh Elana Zarabi	Poem, 11
Into the Future	Madison Choi	Illustration, 12
A New World	Mia Sakai	Short Story, 13
In the Future	Raquel Landerer	Short Story, 14
The World is Watching	Nathaniel Davidson	Poem, 15
Portal of Success	Kaylee Wu	Illustration, 16
Four Feet, Eight Inches	Jolie Nassi	Memoir, 17
Future Reflection	Janeidy Da Silva	Illustration, 18
The Decision	Aybriel Schnatz	Opinion Editorial, 19
In Her Eyes	Julianna Miano	Poem, 20
What the Future Holds	Daniil Isarevich	Poem, 21
Skyrocket	Anna Huo	Illustration, 22
Capton's Captain	Juliana Dayani	Short Story, 23
Is Space Our Future?	Dylan Brenner	Illustration, 26
Parachutes	Ellen Barbu	Short Story, 27
Worth It	Liad Pilip	Short Story, 28

Table of Contents

Title of Piece:	Author/Artist:	Page Number:
Leaving Home	Jake Balazadeh	Poem, 29
Home	Wynne Gruder	Poem, 29
Happy	Miriam Kagan	Poem, 29
A New Start	Emma Wen	Illustration, 30
Stepping Into the Future	Sofia Giannoglou	Poem, 31
Day and Night	Izzy Kamali	Illustration, 32
Missing Home	Jonathan Kontente	Short Story, 33
On Top	Maxwell Pour	Poem, 33
Towards the Stars	Jamie Yao	Illustration, 34
One Quick Peek	Sherlyn Dominguez	Memoir, 35
The Curtains Lift	Eva Zubli	Poem, 36
Looking Into the Future	Ellen Barbu	Short Story, 37
Confident and Confused	Audrey Kim	Poem, 38
Jackpot	Juliet Burkhoff	Short Story, 39
Far Ahead	Mali Cooper	Illustration, 40
A New Beginning	Sofia Shahid	Poem, 41
A Wonderful Girl	Vincent Jie	Poem, 42
The Journey of Jude	Daniel Kardos	Book Summary, 43
Different	Ethan Fefer	Poem, 43
Broken Time	Ashley Dong	Illustration, 44
One Way to Find Out	Eva Corrales	Short Story, 45
Past vs. Present	Melvin Moreno	Conversation, 46
Life on a New Page	Katharine Park	Illustration, 48

Table of Contents

Title of Piece:	Author/Artist:	Page Number:
The Nanobots	Elliott Kane	Short Story, 49
The Glade	Max Lee	Illustration, 50
Jude's Journey	Daniella Cohen	Book Summary, 51
Always Been	Mia Malhotra	Poem, 52
Portal to the Imaginary	Lucy Xiao	Illustration, 54
Dear Diary	Lisa Sulaymanov	Short Story, 55
The Trail's End	Ava Zeng	Illustration, 58
Changes	Sarah Friedberg	Book Summary, 59
200 Years Off	Juliana Dayani	Short Story, 61
Leap of Faith	Victoria Cho	Illustration, 68
One Wish for the World	Diana Smolens	Interview, 69
Finding Comfort	Lia Huang	Book Summary, 71
Drippy Clocks and Purple Hands	Rebecca Slobin	Illustration, 72
Welcome to Osiris Academy	Elena Zhuang	Short Story, 73
Future Road	Jiawen Li	Illustration, 76
October 3, 1918	Jolie Nassi	Short Story, 77
Covid 23	Rachel Rafaeil	Letter, 78
Which One?	Kayla Kahen	Illustration, 80
The Good Life	Eva Amirian	Poem, 81
Learning From Trauma	Lea Eshaghoff	Short Story, 83
Facing Challenges	Eliav Sehati	Book Summary, 85
Last One Left	Daniella Cohen	Short Story, 86
Galaxy of Possibilities	Ashley Liu	Back Cover

“When I Believe”

by Talya Bagim

When I believe in myself, I can travel
Travel to a different time, somewhere in my prime
The light flashes on, and I wonder what I'll find
Taken to a reality, different from mine
I stare at myself in the future
Defined
She walks footsteps with purpose, not afraid to cross the line
My future self
My new way of life, a life for the shelves
I know I don't have to worry, and I go back to the past
My future happy self
Vast
But that's just the future, not right now
So I smile in the past
Knowing that in the future, I'll be having a blast
Knowing that a few years later, I won't be wearing a mask
The future, a reality, different from mine
Myself in the future
Living
Defined
But only when I believe in myself, can I travel
The future is there, open and unraveled
Waiting for me
For myself
To find
For when I believe
I am
Inclined



Dimension Two
by Stephanie Tsai

“2050”

by Daniel Goldberg

I would imagine the year 2050 to be very different from now. The last 100 years have seen incredible progress in all areas. Somebody living centuries earlier would never have imagined the future to look like it does now.

In our future, cars will look revolutionary and a majority of them will be electric. Maybe some of them will even fly. Buildings in cities will be ever taller. Possibly cities underwater and underground will attract artists and scientists. More people will inhabit the earth. Schools will be using electronics all of the time. I will learn from my bed or from the top of a mountain. Many new discoveries will be made. Incredible electronic devices will be developed. Medicine and healthcare will be even more advanced. Many species of animals will probably have become extinct. Hopefully, new ones will be discovered, and one day we will find a way to bring the old species back through cloning. Global warming will probably still be a rapidly growing problem, and bananas will grow in Canada. I bet that some things that nobody would ever have imagined, will become the “normal” in 2050.

I believe that the future is a surprise waiting for us all.

“Smile Once Again”

by Marisa Levine

The sun shines again after many darkened days
We break the barrier that held us back
We reconnect with the world and we thank those who got us through the troubles
It's wide, open, and blue; not a cloud in the sky
For the very first time in a very long time, we can finally smile once again
Without a mask, we can smell the flowers
For a fragrance like that would truly empower
For the very first time in a very long time, we can finally smile once again



“Steps”

by Joshua Kiaei

Leaving your home behind is ONE step taken by a giant named Bravery
Leaving your family is TWO
Stepping onto the airplane is a huge THREE
It all seems like a leap of faith that could never be made
Walking into a new school would take FOUR
Making friends seemed like it would be FIVE
Being able to communicate and adjust
These obstacles block the path
But I hopped over all of them
One by one
At the end of the journey I saw a spotlight
Shining down on me
And suddenly I realized
I belong

“Ready to Perform”

by Azadeh Elana Zarabi

I was happy, as everyone was
But we had to leave
I left behind almost everything I loved
I knew it was for the better
We started fresh
I felt disassociated
Like an estrangement
As if I stepped out onto a stage, with the spotlight on me
I always wanted to be a movie star
But not in this way
I met some people who helped dim the spotlight
I felt welcomed, like I belonged
I felt like I was adjusting to the spotlight
Ready to perform



Into The Future
by Madison Choi

“A New World”

by Mia Sakai

Anna is a girl who grew up in Germany. She is now moving to America with her family. She is moving because her father just got a job opportunity there. She doesn't want to leave Germany. All of her friends and family live there, and she is only one month into the seventh grade. Anna has an older brother named Alexander, and they aren't very close. Anna tries to make an effort to talk to him, but he shuts her out. They have one more day left in Germany, and Anna is trying to do everything that she can possibly do there. She says goodbye to her friends, she says goodbye to her grandparents, and she takes her last walk through the town and her neighborhood.

The next morning, they wake up at 4:00am for their 7:00am flight. Anna sheds a couple of tears when they arrive at the airport. Her parents and Alexander look down as they stroll through airport security. They know this will be the last time they are in Germany for a while. This is also going to be their first time on an airplane. They board the plane and Anna looks around, fascinated by all of it. It is a very long plane ride, so she decides to rest. When she wakes up, they only have about 30 minutes left until landing! Alexander has his headphones on and he is listening to music.

After walking off of the plane, they have to stamp their passports and go through security again. When they are getting their passports stamped, the man at the counter stops at Anna's. He takes a good look at it.

He then says to Anna, her parents, and Alexander, “Welcome to America!”

They plan to stay at a hotel for a couple of weeks, before they move into their new apartment. Anna glances at all of the people walking on the streets, and at all the shops in the town. This all feels very weird to her, but she is very excited to explore more. Her first day at her new school starts tomorrow, and she is not very happy about that. It is 9:40pm, so Anna decides to go to bed. When she wakes up, her mom is rushing her out of bed, and making sure that she has brushed her hair and teeth.

Anna walks into her new school building. Her teacher welcomes her into the class and introduces her to the other students. Anna sits next to a girl named Ally. Anna thinks Ally is cool, and she wants to be friends with her. They sit together at lunch and Anna tells her all about Germany. Ally finds this very

interesting and she tells her about her own life before coming to America. They find a lot of things they have in common with each other. Alexander has also made plenty of friends already, and he is really enjoying America. Anna's parents are happy to see that Anna and Alexander are making new friends.

When the school year is over and summer vacation begins, Anna's parents tell her that they are going to take a visit back to Germany. She doesn't know exactly how she should feel about this trip. She was planning to spend the summer with her new school friends. However, Anna chooses to be happy, because she knows that they will be back in America before she knows it. The night before they leave, Anna is packing. Although they are going to Germany for the summer, Anna's mind is already set on all of the fun things she is going to do in America when she returns!

"In the Future" **by Raquel Landerer**

I popped a lozenge into my mouth. I looked around the house, blue walls with white butterflies. Addilyne was an eccentric character, always in the modern times.

Gianna always used to say, "That Addilyne, she beats to her own old drum."

Everytime I went to Allen Nursing Home, I would smile when I saw Addilyne and Giana. But when Addilyne got sick, I knew that I wouldn't have much time left with her.

The last thing I said to her was, "I love you Addilyne, but you are stubborn and difficult. I'm sorry if you don't want to share your memories because they bring up too many emotions. I just want future generations to hear your stories."

I wish I could see Addi one more time. I wish I could have one more laugh, one more cry, and one more advice session. Just one more moment with her. The opportunity to tell her that everything she told me and everything she taught me, I would use for the rest of my life. I will use it until I see her again. When we are back together. In the future.

“The World is Watching”
by Nathaniel Davidson

The conflict in Syria brings me a new life
I am separated from my family
But that doesn't stop me
My only friend is a house
But that doesn't stop me
I am faced with differences at school
But that doesn't stop me
My own cousin doesn't even notice me
But that doesn't stop me

I hear about the school play
And that's what stops me in my tracks
It catches my attention
It's my chance to be an American actor
Like all the ones I've watched for years
I'm doubted, but I push through
No one believed that an immigrant girl could get a part
When I do, they're surprised
The only person who is proud of me is myself

I started below the bottom
But my life turned around
I came to see the truth about life in America
Through the eyes of a Muslim girl
Being a feather duster isn't as easy as it seems
But everything led to my turn on the stage
Although the spotlight was bright
I stepped out there and adjusted
While the whole world watched
I left my past behind
I stepped out into the future
And I'm ready for what it holds



Portal of Success
by Kaylee Wu

“Four Feet, Eight Inches”

by Jolie Nassi

When I was eleven years old, I had come to the conclusion that Aristotle was wrong. I believed that I, barely four feet eight inches, was wiser than the founder of formal logic. He claimed that friendship was a necessity, and human life could not be lived without it. After reading this off Google, I simply couldn't fathom why a supposedly knowledgeable person would ever say such a thing.

I think that I can speak on behalf of many, when I say that sixth grade is not a time I look back on fondly. We spat curse words faster than we could chug our juice boxes, all while sporting braces and acne. Our biggest problems were trying to find our homerooms and making friends. The latter was something I especially struggled with.

I didn't have many friends. I wasn't always invited to “hang out” with them either. And it's safe to say that I spent way too much time holed up in my room, reading. So many students pranced around wearing hoodies from bar and bat mitzvahs they attended, and I was rarely among them. I was bitter, filled with resentment and jealousy.

Rather than acknowledging my feelings towards my friends and other students when I was upset, I bottled everything up. Every time I got into a fight with one of them, I thought negatively to myself. *I don't really need friends. I can do without them.* I believed these things contrary to Aristotle's philosophy.

Deep down, I knew I was wrong. I couldn't expect to live without any positive social interactions, and still be happy. Reading and listening to music isn't an equivalent substitute for playing or talking with someone my own age. I was lonely, and pretending like I wasn't wouldn't change anything.

Now, I'm five feet and one inch tall. My skin has cleared up, and I could probably walk to my homeroom blindfolded. Most importantly, I've made many good friends who I can turn to and laugh with. My experiences have taught me how to appreciate and value the relationships in my life.

Aristotle insightfully questioned, “How could prosperity be safeguarded and preserved without friends?”

After four years, I take pride in being mature enough to admit that Aristotle was right.



“The Decision”

by Aybriel Schnatz

The sun rises and falls every morning and night. A new day becomes an old one. The future becomes the present. And soon, our photo book of memories captured in time, has filled up. We often ask ourselves if we have been truly accomplished in our lives. We look back on who we used to be, and sometimes, we remember the dreams we used to have. We smile and laugh at our old character, and how much we have changed. However, the first memory of ever deciding who we wanted to be, has become faded with time. We try so hard to remember our first thought, and suddenly, we do. It is up to us, whether or not we choose to accept who we have become...

For years we have all been asked this common question. And as we move through life, the event of the conversation is almost inevitably going to present itself. More so as we enter the last few years of a milestone in our school careers. Through the years, we have changed our answers. Most likely to keep up with our social expectations and our ages. Our answers seem to grow more mature as we gain more knowledge, even if they do not change. We seem to worry so much about this answer that, in fact, as we grow older, the weight of the answer seems to grow heavier upon our shoulders. There just doesn't seem to be enough time before the deadline is up. In our lives, we seem to be influenced easily by family expectations, our friends' whereabouts, and the opinion of random individuals that we idolize. We get so wrapped up in the future, that we seem to forget entirely what a career is, and we forget the guidelines of what it takes to achieve one as we become unfocused with our current lives.

We try to distract ourselves from the pressure and stress that this decision holds. However, in the end, we end up being perfectly fine. We make the decision; the life choice that will allow us to take flight and eventually soar through life. But as we finish more requirements and more schooling, we seem to forget why we started in the first place. Some of us, unfortunately, let the influence of others dictate our decision and leave us regretting ever doing so. Some of us change in the middle, and are too afraid to choose again and restart. Some of us become stuck, in an endless cycle of days on end, repeating the day as we did the day before. We are moving through life, leaving behind the possibility of any

happiness with a different choice. Whether we choose a life of caring and giving, or a life of service and aid, in the end we are all doing what we love.

But, if we are those who have been influenced, our lives don't seem to fill the void of achievement in our own eyes. If we choose, for example, to be a nurse or a doctor and we are miserable. What would give the people we are caring for reason to hope, if that reason is absent in our own lives? You cannot always choose what experiences you go through, or what pain you endure, but when you've experienced happiness, in the end that is all that matters. So I think to be truly successful in life, you need to be happy. And the only way to be happy is to do what you love.

As we watch the sun slowly set, concluding the day, some of us are content with how our lives have turned out. But others want to continue on with their journey. They want to discover new ideas and conquer their own adventures. Again, as long as they are happy, in the end that is what really matters.

**“In Her Eyes”
by Julianna Miano**

She has changed quite a lot
She was brave, she has fought
From the beginning of the novel to the end
Even her body has made amends
Coming to America with little expectation
Then stepping on stage, proud to be with the nation
She has been through a war, seen many things
Happy to know that she is still breathing
Though many problems came her way
She solved, resolved, each one day by day
Learning many things all on her own
It's not a surprise that she has grown
By the end of the book the spotlight shines
Right where she wants it to...
In her eyes.

“What the Future Holds”
by Daniil Isarevich

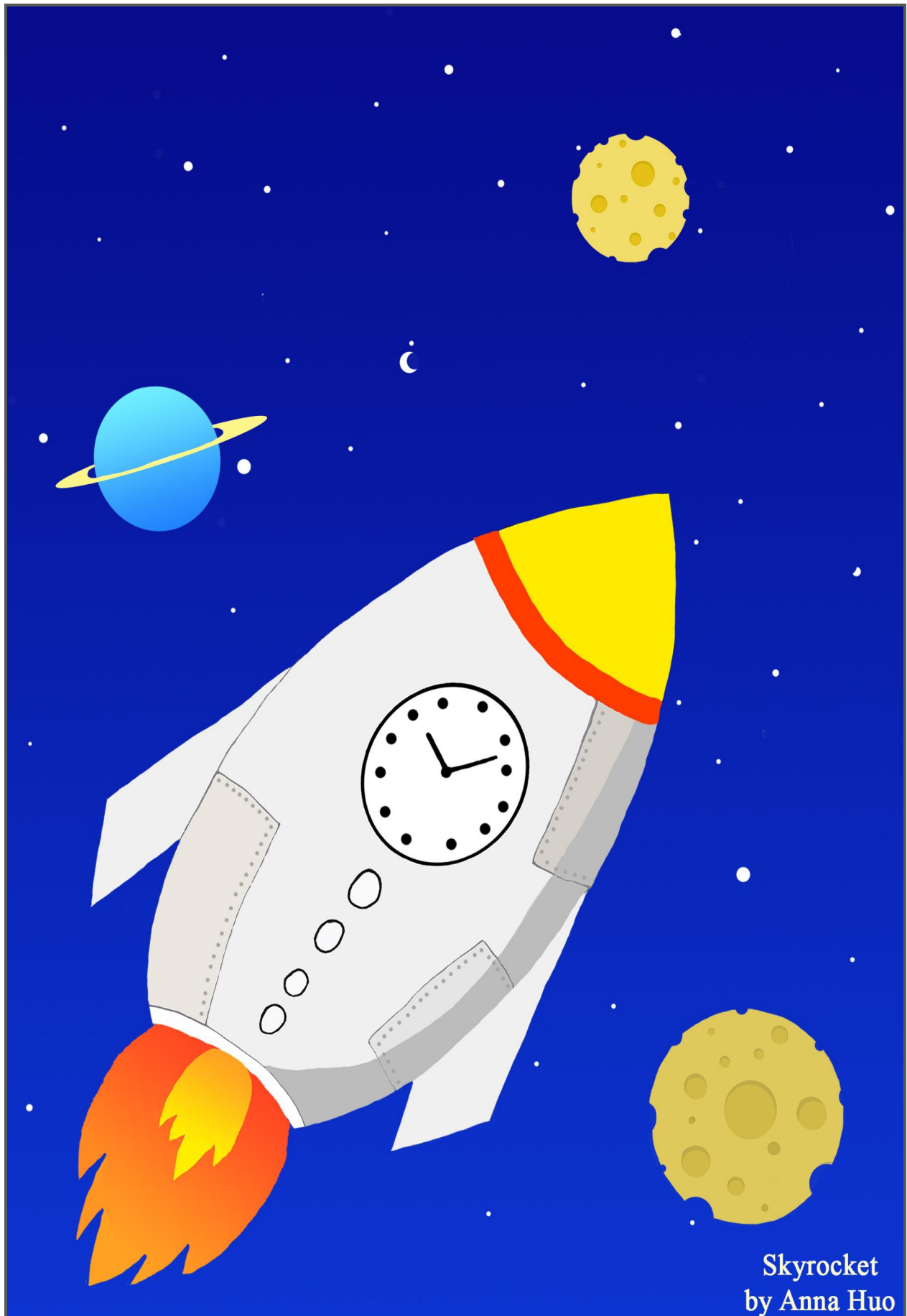
So here we stand
In the beauty of spring
We’ve passed now
Through so much

And now we see, we truly see
That all that work had made us change
That smiles surround all around
That we had made a group of friends
That light is on this ground

But what awaits us later
In the path of our hard times
We may see what we’ve wished for
Or we may wish to be blind

But doesn’t matter what awaits
Since we’ll remain as one
And we will always be the light
For those lost in the dark

So now we know
Through being friends
What future may await
And yet it’s just in our hands
And we can make it change



“Capton’s Captain”

by Juliana Dayani

Earth wasn’t a place that neighboring universes paid much attention to. Or at least that was what I and every other child on Capton was taught. Many planets tend to steer away from the aliens on that planet, with their supposed weak skin and naive minds. I personally always found it curious how they functioned without six fingers on each hand, or with their many shades of skin that weren’t purple or green. How can many of them even be comfortable with hair that is able to grow past their shoulders or eyes that aren’t gold? And don’t even get me started on genders. On Capton, not many people limit themselves to pronouns when it comes to falling in love or making friends.

Anyway, in the past few centuries, one particular species from the confusing planet started making discoveries far more advanced than any other being ever expected them to. So as I’m steering my crew towards Earth, I can’t help but feel a sense of pride that we will be the first ever Captonians to step foot on Earth. And if everything goes as planned, we will secure an alliance with the humans. Needless to say, my palms are sweaty and my jaw has been clenched all day. This is no surprise, considering the fact that I, Ritess Highlax, am currently piloting the very ship that contains Capton’s most important politicians and world leaders. I have this nagging feeling in the back of my mind, saying that the ship is going to blow up and it will be all my fault. It has been there since this morning, no matter how hard I try to bury it in the deepest part of my head, right next to the time that I peed my pants in zero gravity on my first day of piloting school.

“Hey cap! We’re two quantum jumps away from Arth. I’d suggest telling the egomaniacs to stop worrying about their looks and start preparing for landing,” Gilly announced.

“How many times do I have to tell you Gilly, it’s called *Earth* not Arth. And you have *got* to stop calling the world leaders ‘egomaniacs’ or you might accidentally say it to their faces and then *someone*—aka *you*—won’t get that ship they wanted by being the ultimate suck up,” I firmly reminded.

I rolled my eyes at my right-hand man, not daring to admit that I’ve taken to calling the passengers that, too, in private on more than one occasion.

“Yeah, yeah, just tell ‘em to hurry up and get ready for landing,” Gilly responded.

With a resigned sigh, I reached for the comms and announced, “Attention egoman—erm, passengers, we are just two quantum jumps away from Earth, so please start fastening your seatbelts as we prepare for landing.”

“Say it to their faces, you say?” Gilly said, in a cheeky voice.

“Shut up.”

* * *

As I’m landing, my eyes are drawn to the stars closest to Earth. I remember the week-long learning course my whole crew was forced to take called “Everything You Need to Know About Earth; The Guide to Not Making a Total Idiot Out of Capton and Ruining Any Chance We Will Ever Have of a Peace Treaty.” It seemed like a load of cow dung—don’t ask me what a cow is. But now, just the title of the course makes my heart beat in my chest. The course offhandedly mentioned that humans named their stars and I can’t help but wonder what convinced them to do something as pointless as that.

I push these thoughts out of my head, knowing I’ll have to focus on the actual planet that I’m about to land on. I’ve always thought that Capton was the most amazing thing to see from outer space—and I still do. But Earth is its own kind of amazing, as well. Capton is an oval shaped planet, with all of the colors you could possibly imagine somehow flowing together from the viewpoint of the stars. Earth, however, only had three sole colors on the perfectly shaped planet. Blue, green, and white, each contrasting each other perfectly to create a planet, looking of nothing but calm. *Imagine screwing up a first-time visit to a planet this awesome.* My hands started shaking on the joystick, as I thought of all the things that could go wrong. There aren’t any treaties yet. So as far as we know, humans could be waiting for us on their planet ready to probe us. I’m shaken out of my nightmarish thoughts by Gilly wrapping a hand around my wrist.

“Keep it steady,” he says, “those idiots might not give me my own ship if they’re in a bad mood,” he adds, with a light chuckle when he sees the worry etched on my face.

I let myself laugh along, mainly to stop my crewmates from giving me a crazy look. They hadn’t taken a stupid course about earth, just to die before landing there. My hand stopped shaking after that, but my mind was still swarming as I landed in the unfamiliar area. I started mindlessly commanding the

crew, as I've done many times before, and headed towards the world leaders to make sure they got off the ship properly. They greeted me with a slight nod of their heads, as I led them towards the main exit. According to Gilly, the main exit is meant to intimidate others without flat out saying, "*We will conquer your planet.*"

As we made our way down the hall, only the echo of our shoes was heard. I pressed my sweaty hand against the button meant to open the friendly (yet intimidating) door. As I watched the people deemed *important* by the humans, I learned that earth is far from the calm, peaceful place it looked like from afar. Gone are the blue, white, and green. Instead, these colors are replaced by people dressed in a neon orange, guiding my crewmates to where they should park the rovers. Someone must have noticed how stupidly nervous I looked, since a person was making their way towards me. *My first ever up-close sighting of a human.*

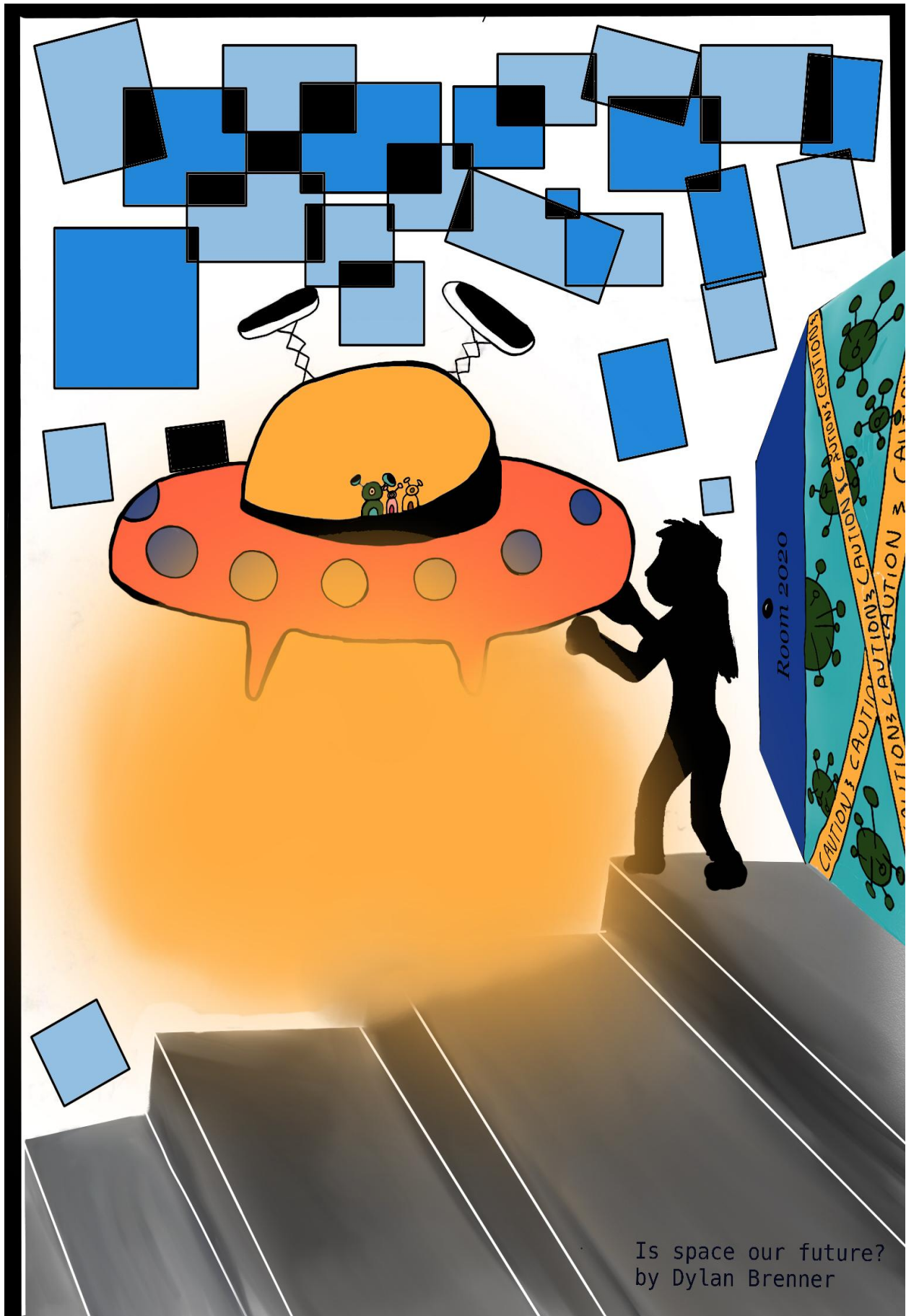
His dark suit (which was meant to be fancy), looked exactly like what a noruvian swamp creature would wear to bed. I tried to bite back a smile at the thought of the humans swimming in the noruvian swamp, but failed miserably. I could tell that he was analyzing me as he walked, but his brown eyes were still somehow kind. I stared back. Not just because of wariness, but because I've never seen a human up close before. This one's skin is unusually pale. If he lived on Capton, he would be diagnosed with B.U.T.T. (Blood Unable To Transport; an incurable sickness) just by his skin tone alone.

Before I realized it, he was standing right in front of me, reaching his hand out in my direction. *A handshake*, I think, with pride swelling in my chest at the fact that I actually remembered what to do from the learning course.

"Welcome," his voice is deeper than I expected, but has a calming undertone. "...to Earth."

I can tell he means what he says, and I simply smile back.

Maybe, just maybe, nothing will go wrong.



Is space our future?
by Dylan Brenner

“Parachutes”

by Ellen Barbu

You feel cold air blowing your hair away from your face as you wake up.

“Oh shoot!” you cry, as you realize that you forgot your window open.

Groggily, you get up from your mattress, reaching for something to put on. You grab a faded, dark green sweater. You reach to close the window, but you stop. As you look out the window, you can see the skyline. You see the outer city overgrown with moss, taken by nature. The neon purple creatures called Parachutes (named after their parachute-like wing structure) flying over the city are keeping watch. You can see their lotus-like bodies blowing in the wind, almost like jellyfish in the sky. The moon shines brightly down onto the earth, and buildings cast dim shadows onto the cracked streets and sidewalks.

You quickly glance at the time; 1:29am. Jumping into a pair of warmer sweatpants, you exit your sleeping quarters, quietly tip-toeing towards the rusted fire exit. Climbing through the window, you get a better aerial view. Stray animals are walking the paths of those who lived here before, like remains of the past and memories of the future. All of a sudden, you feel the cold of the night seep into your bones, sending shivers up your spine.

You remember the breath. Your first breath. You remember saying goodbye to your mother, knowing that you would probably never see her again. You remember getting in your tank, tears streaming down your cheeks. You can feel yourself getting drowsy. Looking down, you see that you are getting injected with anesthesia. Your eyelids flutter, trying to stay open as you take your last few glimpses of your mother. You know that she is only doing this because she loves you, but you want to run back to her. Hug her and not leave her behind in a world that is crumbling to the ground.

The next thing you know, a small group of people are standing in front of you. Some are older than others. You feel yourself getting picked up out of the cryogenic sleep tank and being set on the ground. You gasp for air, feeling your lungs fill up and expand for what feels like the first time. As your feet touch the ground, you can feel yourself losing balance. You are not able to stand up. Falling to the ground, you hear a thump and a blunt pain shoots up to your lower spine. Coming to your senses, you realize that you are alive, well, and have at least three of your five senses.

Soon, you are situated in the deserted buildings of the surrounding area. A group of people have led you there. They explained that they were the few people that survived the war with the extraterrestrials. In the meantime, the aliens have backed off, but left a small, very invasive gift: Parachutes.

As you reach up to grab the iron bar for support, you feel a soft, fabric-like material touch your finger and settle on your outstretched hand. A bright purple hue lights up the balcony, and you feel the same soft feeling on your shoulder. The Parachutes, feeling the warmth of your body, perch themselves on any open space. Glowing purple, you look up at the moon. You feel a single warm tear make its way down your face. The wind pushes it to the side and into your hair.

If you close your eyes, maybe the Parachutes will take you away from this disaster. Maybe they will pick you up and you will fly with them, leaving all the struggle and responsibilities behind. Float away...

“Worth It”

by Liad Pilip

The day I stepped onto the airplane, was the day I first stepped into the future. As the plane lifted into the air, I felt as if I was on top of the world. I had left my father, my brother, my best friend, and let's not forget my home. Even if I was not ready for this, this was a challenge that I had to face. My mother had considered us lucky to be accepted in America, but part of me felt another way. My life was changing even if I was not ready.

America is a land of dreams. Could it be that it felt like a nightmare? Sooner or later it would all make sense. I must also remember that I am becoming a woman. I now wear a headscarf. I guess that could be a good thing. My mother is proud as we see our reflection in the mirror. What we have become is far greater than what was expected. There have been obstacles along my journey in America. Some that were easy and some much harder.

I must be strong for my brother, as once he told me that I must be brave. He is my motivation; he is my engine. I worry about him so very much. Knowing that he is risking his life for what he believes in his heart. I am proud of him, but I want him to come home. Sometimes I wish he changed back to who he was before. Singing and dancing in the living room. But Brother has become a different person now. Sometimes I wonder if all of this change is even worth it.

“Leaving Home”
by Jake Balazadeh

Leaving home
Oh so very far
She wanted to go back
And not be in the dark
She missed her country
And wanted to return
She tried to fight through the pain
It was so very hard
She felt she abandoned her own
But she always stayed strong
And never forgot her country
But still even being here
For oh so very long
She couldn't get over the fact
She had abandoned her mother tongue

“Home”
by Wynne Gruder

As I sit in my new home
I remember how I used to be so alone
And realize how much I've grown

I've learned a new language
And learned how to manage
All of these new changes

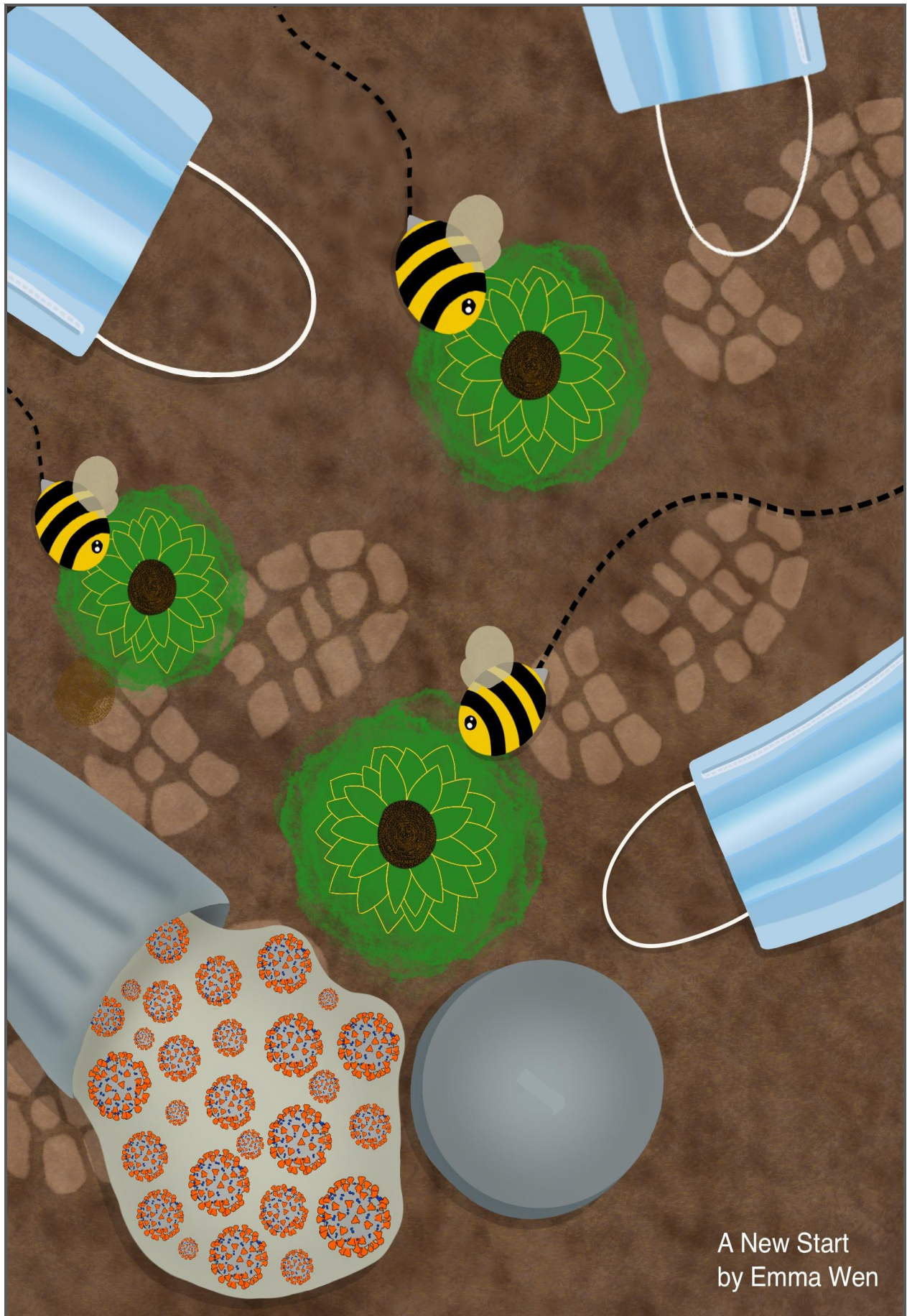
It was such a scare
When my plane hit the air
And everyone started to glare

But finally
This is starting to feel
Like home

“Happy”
by Miriam Kagan

The girl is happy
Then things change
She moves from people she loves
And moves with people she loves
Many things are happening
She meets new friends
And learns a different language
But she still doesn't know
Where her life is headed

But when she steps onto the stage
She stares into the spotlight
She takes a deep breath
Then releases it
She knows that everything will be ok
She knows how to handle challenge
She is making a new life
Things are changing
The girl is happy



A New Start
by Emma Wen

“Stepping Into the Future”

by Sofia Giannoglou

What if stepping into the future was a dream come true
With a deadly disease such as Covid-19 being gone
Being able to walk around freely
Without having a wall stuck between the air and your lungs
Without people staring at those not wearing a mask
Rights for every single person walking our halls
Making sure all kids feel comfortable
Without keeping their secrets to themselves
Knowing your name isn't being whispered around the corner
Having someone to sit next to at lunch each day

In the future, we can make it happen
As long as we run the race
We will know we tried our hardest
Even if we don't win first place
For the training had to be done
The process to fix our future
Changing the environment to be a better place
Free for the tiniest of creatures

We are capable of changing so much
Every single person makes a difference
There is only one earth
To keep it safe, we must promise the words we speak
We must show the future that we broke its system
So that the world can finally be renewed



Day and Night
by Izzy Kamali

“Missing Home”

by Jonathan Kontente

It's March. The war has been getting worse and worse every single day. Two days ago, in a neighboring town, a bomb blew up a house. My mother told me that if this gets worse, we might have to leave our country. I'm hoping that it won't. The next morning it was all over the news. Another bomb took out a whole building on the other side of town. My mother told me that we were leaving.

I boarded the plane with my bag in my hand. I had only taken some clothes, three books, and a hat. After we landed, we left the airport and went to the small apartment that we now call home. The apartment wasn't perfect. We didn't care.

The next week I started school. The school was big and confusing. During lunchtime nobody sat with me, so I ended up going to the library to read a book. I noticed a boy playing a game at a desk full of computers. Back at home, only the rich people did this.

I asked him what he was playing and he invited me to join him. I heard about video games at home, but I never actually played one. I agreed to try. I sat down at the computer next to him and we played. The game was really fun. We talked a bit while we played. We had a good time together. It made me miss home just a little bit less.

“On Top”

by Maxwell Pour

There is a challenge
Inside her it grew
But she will get through it
And she knows it, too

She may get bullied
It is going to kill
She fights her hardest
And gains necessary skill

She can't see family
Which makes her upset
She can't believe it
But she is still so blessed

And with all of the work
She may still fall nonstop
But soon she gains strength
And realizes she is on top



Towards the Stars By Janie Yao

“One Quick Peek”

by Sherlyn Dominguez

I dearly miss the beach and all of the fun things I did while on it. I fondly remember getting ice cream with my family, building sandcastles, burying each other in the sand, and splashing each other with the freezing yet refreshing water. It was pretty hot outside, so the beach water kept us from drying up on the shore like the jellyfish lying out on the hot sand. If I were to describe every little thing on the beach in the best way I can remember, it would take way too long. Instead, I will focus on the three most important things: the sand, the water, and the breeze coming from the ocean.

The sand felt like tiny grains of salt on my two feet. It was hot; very hot. It was as if the sand was begging for us to not step on it. It would burn us only in self defense. Most people don't focus on the sand. They see only its peachy color and a few seashells. But if you look closely, you can see all of the little crystals that make up what we call sand.

The water from afar looked like a pretty blue color, but up close it was almost dark green. If you accidentally open your mouth, you'll get a nice taste of the ocean. It tastes like salt. The ocean holds many things, from shipwrecks to pieces of seaweed. Along the shore, there are many wonders that haven't been discovered yet. Whenever I go swimming, I like to bring my goggles. I try to see if there's anything below my feet, and I say hello to the fish that are passing by. The weather that day at the beach was hot. You might even say that the sun was trying to burn us alive! I did make one big mistake that I don't entirely regret. I'm sure that you've heard lots of people tell you to never look up at the sun, right? Well, I decided to look up for just a quick second or two. I was curious to see what the sun would look like from this spot on the beach. It was a golden yellow color, with its big rays shining down over me. I let out a small yelp when the quick peek stung my eyes.

Lastly comes the ocean breeze. Not many people talk about the ocean breeze. When entering the beach, you begin to feel the salty air touching every exposed part of your body. From your face and hair all the way down to your toes in the sand. When you step closer to the water, the breeze becomes even stronger. It is as if it is embracing you in a warm welcoming hug. The ocean breeze smells like the salt from the water.

I had many fun experiences at the beach. I made sure to observe every single detail. As I look into the future, I hope that I will be able to enjoy the beach like I used to before. I hope to create many more memories with my family. *This will all pass soon, right? I sure hope so.* I'm remaining optimistic as I keep my hopes high. Everything sure does seem like it's getting back to order. Soon, we will be able to go back to our ordinary lives. On my next trip to the beach, I might just glance up at the sun for a second or two more.

“The Curtains Lift”

by Eva Zubli

Jude had to leave her friends and family behind
She was not looking forward to the day she arrived
Jude wasn't familiar with America's common language, English
So it was challenging for her to get the immigration process finished
She met some more family and got to know more friends
It seemed in America, everyone was up-to-date with trends
She adapted to her new school and was interested in the school play
But she was not sure if she was good enough to stay
It was hard because she didn't know how Father and Brother were
That one thing caused a lot of worrying for her
She learned more English which was a big accomplishment
Her friends and family were in total astonishment
Everything was different in America like the food
And she had many thoughts about it as she chewed
Jude looked into the future and decided to take chances
Choosing to not judge things by first glances
She learned that not everyone will accept her being her own person
But she didn't care about those people or let the situation worsen
Jude realized this new country would be safe for her
Not worrying about any political revolution danger
Even though Jude was filled with tons of fright
As the stage curtains lifted she adjusted to the spotlight

“Looking Into the Future”

by Ellen Barbu

I could hear their loud laughter, echoing through the halls as I struggled to put my books away in my locker. Maybe if they didn't see me, they would forget about me. Mikael Woodson started off as my friend when I first transferred to this school. My mother died during labor 14 years ago, and my father didn't do so well with the news. He had loved her, but things only went downhill from there. He turned to drugs to help the ache in his heart, but that only left his son with a bigger one when he overdosed.

I remember walking into the house that afternoon, but not seeing him. I didn't think much of it, at first. I rarely saw him, so I just started with my schoolwork. By the time I went to the bathroom to check on my goldfish Spott, whom I had won from a fair, the sky was a dark blue and not a single trace of light remained. I tried to push the door, but something was blocking the entrance. It was heavy. I could feel it shift when I leaned into it, so I pushed until it opened. The cold, limp corpse of my father laid folded over, leaving me frozen with horror.

My only goal at the time was to get good grades and get away from my dad. He definitely wasn't going to spend any money on me, so my only solution was to work towards a scholarship. But now, I want to have someone next to me. At my old school in Portland, I had Josh. He was my best friend and a brother to me. He was always open and let me sleep at his house when my father got aggressive.

But now Mikael, who was so friendly with me when I first moved to Miami, turned into a bully. He knows everything about me, because I told him. I thought that he was my friend, but now he knows all of my weak links and soft spots. All I wanted was a friend, but what I got instead was a black eye and a sprained ankle. My Aunt, whom I now live with, is still young. She has no kids, but she tries as hard as she can. I know she tries, but most of the time it's just better to not worry her. I don't want to cause any problems.

Although times are bad for me now, I like to envision myself in the future. I attempt to see where I would be and what I would be doing. I can imagine myself, standing up to Mikael, even when he threatens me. I can see myself going to college, meeting new people, and making friends. Moving onto becoming a doctor. I want to be an oncologist. I would save the lives of people, or make the rest of them count. I want to help people, because I felt so hopeless not being able

to help my father. I want to grow up and give my kids a better life than I had. I can see myself growing old and having grandchildren. Even if I'm going through some hard things right now, when I look into the future I can see myself moving on and leading a good life. That's the only thing that is keeping me going.

I hear Mikael getting closer and stopping right in front of me. He is blocking the hallway so that I can't get through, but I don't care anymore. I ignore him and step around, leaving him dumbfounded. I know that he will probably beat me up after school, but I'm not worried about that right now. A smile slowly creeps upon my lips. The future has started.

“Confident and Confused”

by Audrey Kim

Issa and Baba hug me as I hesitate to leave.
Issa reminds me to be brave.
When I board that plane I feel like I am leaving my heart,
Behind on the other side of the ocean.
My new house, in the neighborhood Clifton.
An uncle, aunt, and a cousin I did not know existed.
Sarah my cousin, a sassy teen, with many friends beside her.
On the other hand, I am alone, clueless where to go.
Meeting many new faces, it seems the whole world is here with me.
Running in the hall, desperately trying to be on time to my first class.
Then ESL. I am embarrassed to be in this class.
It's known as the “extra help” class.
I was wrong about ESL class.
The atmosphere in the room feels comforting like home.
Hoping to find a friend, I coincidentally meet someone named Layla.
She is somewhat similar to me.
It feels good to have someone who comes from my background.
Throughout my journey of change,
I always reminded myself of what Issa told me.
Be brave.

“Jackpot”

by Juliet Burkhoff

When I was six years old, my mom got diagnosed with cancer. I lived in a small village in Africa, so there was nowhere to get treatment.

My mom always said, “I’m fine; you’re fine. We are all fine; it will be okay.”

Each day I saw her trying to get better, but nothing was working. On my birthday, I woke up and saw my mother smiling above me. She loved me so much and was thankful I was always there for her. At school, I saw my best friend Daliah in the hallway. As I opened my locker, music played and confetti was thrown.

Daliah handed me a lottery ticket and said, “Happy birthday!”

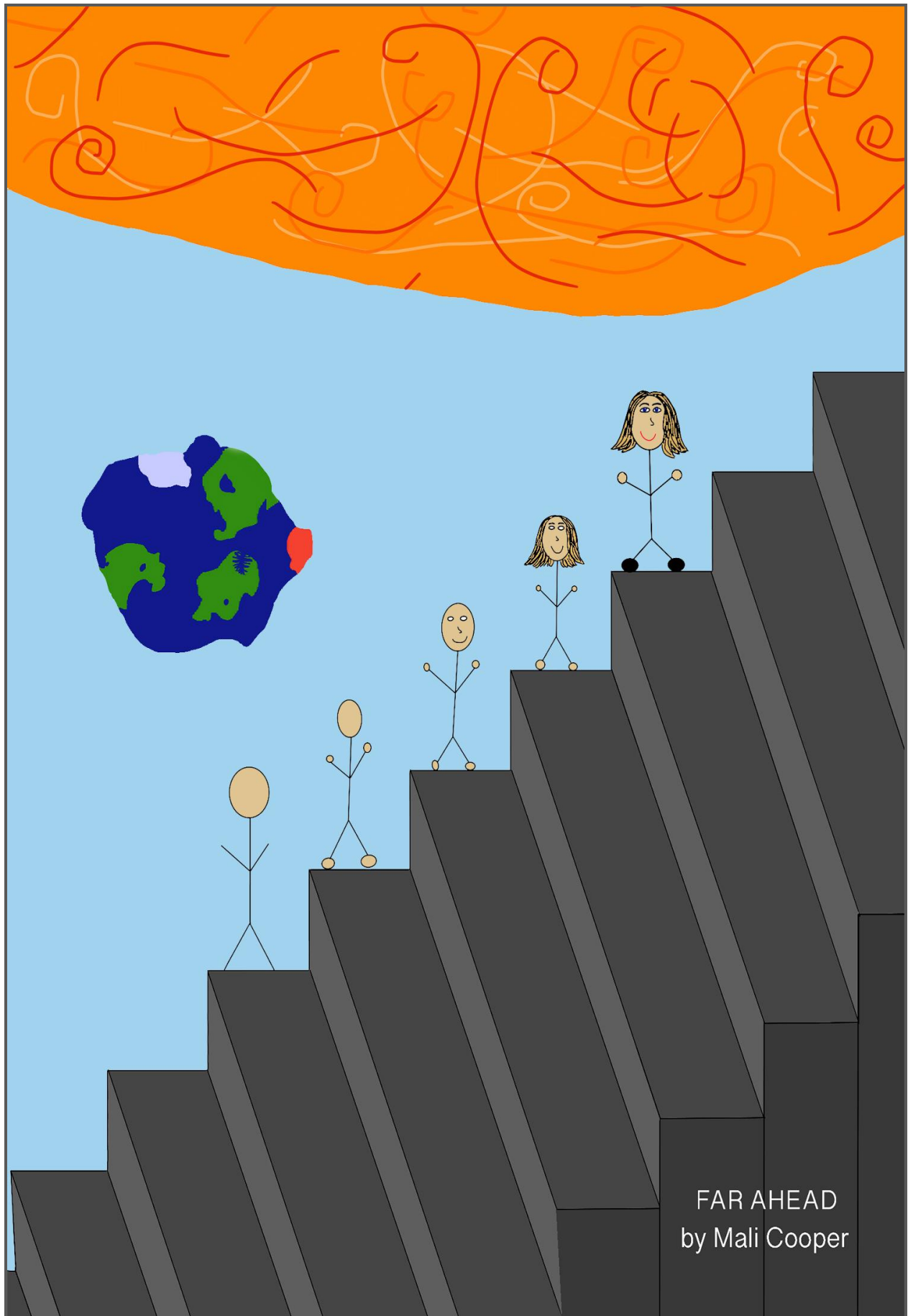
On the way home from school, I scratched it off to see if I won anything.

“Jackpot! Jackpot!” I yelled.

I raced home to show my mother. We now had enough money to afford to go to Canada to get treatment. I didn’t want to leave all of my friends behind, but I had no other choice. I wanted what was best for my mom.

As we boarded the flight to Canada, I knew we were leaving everything behind, but hopefully that would mean that my mother would get better. A few weeks went by, and we finally moved into our new home. It was the day my mom was getting her surgery. I had to live with my uncle for two weeks. I got sent to a public school with all white kids. Half of them called me racist slurs, and the other half just ignored me.

As I walked into math class, there was a girl named Emily. She welcomed me and told me to sit next to her. At lunch, she shared her Goldfish with me. It’s now spring and my mother was fully healed from the cancer. Both her and I are happier than ever. I knew it would take some time, but now we are all okay. The kids at my new school have started to realize that I’m not so different after all. Now, I have many friends and a healthy mother.



“A New Beginning”

by Sofia Shahid

I was met with war, fear, and dread
My family is in a disagreement
Life isn't normal
Home isn't the home I remember
Mama is having another
We must leave here
Things are changing

We arrive in the great beyond
Everything is big and shiny
Everything seem different
Everyone seems to be in a rush
What is going on?
We have arrived to a new home
This house is my only friend

My “new” family is different than what I imagined
It's so hard to get used to the new
I know things won't go back to normal
It's like I'm being held here against my own will
I wanna go back to Issa, to Papa
But I cannot, I'm stuck here
I guess I have to stay for now

My hope will never die
The hope that Issa is safe
The hope that I'll see Papa again
The hope that people will like me
The hope for a new normal
My hope will never burn out
Like the flame in a fire pit
My hope is forever

I am a women now
I'm no longer a little girl
I've met wonderful people
Life is becoming normal
Things are changing
I am growing
My wonderful sister has arrived
The light, the hope I've been looking for
This will be your place
You will be able to call this home
Now a new story will unfold
With you at the center
Amal

“A Wonderful Girl”
by Wanyue (Vincent) Jie

Jude, a wonderful girl
who stayed strong through it all.

Facing abuse, oppression, racism, and more
Running, yelling, crying, and that's only the war
Refugees trying to escape the dread
Unfortunately, many wound up dead
She watches her brother go off to fight
That only fills her heart with fright
She tried to forget about her past
And begin a new life that would last
She faced hard times along the way
But made friends that stayed til this day
Some have said bad things about her religion
But they don't have the right to judge her decision

Jude, a wonderful girl
who stayed strong through it all.

“The Journey of Jude”

(a summary of Jasmine Warga’s novel *Other Words for Home*)

by Daniel Kardos

Throughout the journey of Jude, a thirteen year old immigrant trying to evade the horrors of war in Syria, many challenges have been faced and many have been overcome. In the beginning of the novel, Jude, living in Syria, was happy and contemptuous. Although not wealthy or famous, she had family, friends, and a good life. This was all more or less swept away by the incoming conflict, tearing apart the country and her family. To evade the conflict and protect her pregnant mother, she moved to America to live in her wealthy uncle's house. At this point, she had already faced many hardships. From being separated from half of her family and her friends to getting through customs, which proved especially difficult as she knew but a couple of phrases in the English language. After some time, she was enrolled in an American school, an ESL class, and her cousin's torment. Gradually, she started to learn English better, make friends, and get involved in a school play. However, none of these came without their respective difficulties. Jude is facing them head on each and every day. By the time her baby sister is born, she has two close American friends and has developed a lot as a person. She is now wearing a hijab, but living a well-adjusted American life. By the end of the book, she has an American sister, American friends, and she has learned the English language. She takes part in the school play, proving her cousin wrong, and showing that she can persevere through any challenges thrown her way.

“Different”

by Ethan Fefer

Different is good

It’s what makes a personality

Feeling brave, positive, and happy

Family, friends, and neighbors help support you

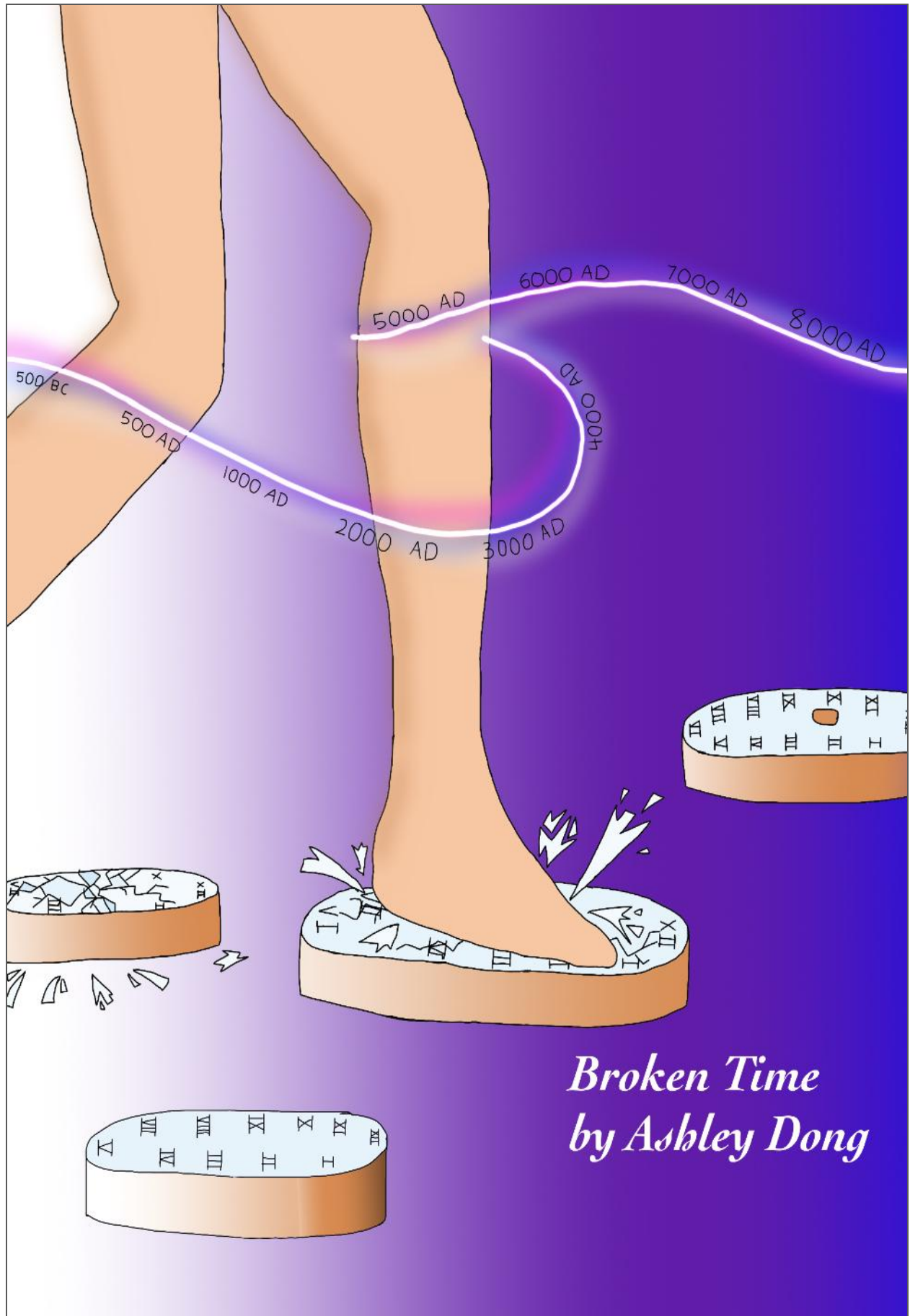
Even though pain will cross your path

Rude people will say you don’t belong

Emotional times will come and go

Never ever give up

The future lies ahead with each fresh start



Broken Time
by Ashley Dong

“One Way to Find Out”

by Eva Corrales

Mary lived in California. It was her home for 12 years. But one day, her parents called her into the kitchen. They had smiles on their faces.

“Mary, your mom and I have been thinking about it, and we're going to be moving,” her father said.

Mary was speechless. She didn't know what to say or how to feel. Mary was very smart. She was at the top of her class, but she did get bullied at school. People would call her names, tease her, and tell her that she was ugly. Mary was an only child. She didn't have any close friends, except for her best friend Sam. Sam was a daredevil. She was always taking the leap. Mary always wanted to be as brave as Sam, but she never was.

After Mary thought about her family moving, she was scared. *What if no one likes me? What if I fall behind in school?* She stopped herself from worrying and took a deep breath.

“When are we moving?” she asked her parents.

“Next week,” her mother responded.

They were moving to Connecticut. Since the next day was a Saturday, Mary called Sam and asked if they could meet up at the park. Sam agreed. As Mary was waiting for Sam to arrive, she wondered how Sam would react to the news. *Is she going to be mad? Is she going to yell? Is she going to cry?*

Two minutes later, Sam showed up on her bicycle. She saw Mary's expression and was immediately concerned. Mary didn't hesitate to share the devastating news.

“I'm moving next week,” she admitted.

“What? You're joking, right?” Sam asked, shocked.

When Mary did not respond, Sam understood that she was serious. She assured Mary that things would be alright and the two girls hugged for a long time.

The next few days were hard for Mary, but she spent most of her time hanging out with Sam. Sam and Mary knew each other since the beginning of kindergarten. Mary had no idea what life was going to be like without Sam.

The day finally came. The day that Mary was moving. Sam walked to Mary's house and waited to say her final goodbye.

“I'm going to miss you so much. I will never forget you,” Mary promised.

“Call everyday,” Sam requested.

“I will,” Mary swore.

As Mary walked to the car, she looked back at Sam. In that moment, she remembered all of the amazing memories she had had with her best friend.

On the car ride to the airport, Mary’s father wanted to have a conversation. He explained why they were moving. He shared that he had gotten a new job in Connecticut. He was going to be starting a new local law firm. That had been his dream for years. Mary was happy for her father. She loved seeing him smile. Mary realized that there was going to be an upside to moving, after all. She just couldn’t help but wonder what her life was going to be like in a new state, without her best friend.

Mary smiled and thought to herself. *There’s only one way to find out!*

“Past vs. Present”

(Past Jude and Present Jude converse in a Skype call.)

by Melvin Moreno

(Past) Hello Jude. It has been a while since we spoke.

(Present) Yes, it has. I have grown and now I am a woman wearing my headscarf.

(Past) Was it scary? Did you feel shocked when it happened?

(Present) I was in shock. I was at a loss for words when I realized it happened to me. At first, I did not recognize myself.

(Past) How do people see you now?

(Present) At first, people most definitely saw me differently. Many people thought that I was obligated to wear it, but I assured them I did this because I wanted to.

(Past) It doesn’t look like you are at home. Why is that?

(Present) I am in my new home. I live in America with Uncle Mazin’s family.

(Past) Wow. I can’t believe that I will be in America. I can’t wait for everyone to come with us!

(Present) By everyone, do you mean Mother and I? Issa has run off to a dangerous city, and Baba is staying to look after the shop.

(Past) Why? Is Issa ok? What city did he go to? Why would you leave in the first place, if you didn't bring Issa and Baba?

(Present) We didn't know much of Issa. I was scared that he wouldn't be ok. But after some time, we were able to catch up on a Skype call. I was so glad that he was alright. We talked a lot with Baba. He always called and we were so happy when he did. The reason why we left was because Mother would soon deliver a baby. We knew that it would be right to deliver the baby on American soil, because it would secure a good future for her. Her name is Amal.

(Past) Oh my goodness, she is so cute! I'm a big sister! I'm also glad that Baba and Issa will be ok. During the time that you didn't know if Issa was ok, what was going on in your head?

(Present) Well, it was scary. I always thought of Issa and the times we used to sing together with Fatima. It was stressful not knowing, but I knew he would be safe.

(Past) Speaking of Fatima, did she come with us? Is she ok?

(Present) Unfortunately, she wasn't able to come with us. But, I promised to send her letters everyday. But, before I could mail them, mother told me that she had moved. Eventually, I sent them when I found her location in Lebanon. She is ok.

(Past) That's too bad that she didn't come. Well, if Fatima didn't come, who are your friends? Did you abandon Fatima?!

(Present) I promised Fatima that I would never abandon and forget her, and I didn't. In America, I started my new school. I met many friends, but I remembered never to forget Fatima.

(Past) Wow. It looks like I am going to have to go through a lot. But, with the support of many people, I hope I will succeed.

(Present) I know you will succeed. I know it because I did. Just remember to never give up.



**LIFE ON A NEW PAGE
BY KATHARINE PARK**

“The Nanobots”

by Elliott Kane

I close my eyes and brace myself for the injection. The feel of twenty thousand tiny nanobots entering my bloodstream isn't pleasant, but it's bearable. The doctor dabs at the hole with an absorbing piece of gauze, because apparently any stray nanobots shouldn't be left on my skin.

“All done,” the doctor calmly states.

She walks outside and beckons to my parents to come in.

“How was it?” my mom asks.

I rub my neck where they injected the nanobots. It's really sore.

“It was fine,” I lie.

It feels weird, but bearable. But these nanobots need to be in my blood. It's because of my disease. I live in New York City. There's a dangerous amount of pollution here. Seven out of every ten kids are born with lung disease. I am part of that seven.

They obviously needed a quick cure. So the nanobots were invented on February 8th, 2047. A historic date. They are able to enter the lungs and repair the condition. So now there's a little bit more hope.

“Let's go get some pizza,” my dad suggests.

“No.”

“Ice cream,” he offers.

“No.”

And that's the last thing I say, before I collapse unconscious on the ground.

“Is he okay?” my mom asks, in panic.

I wake up lying on a cot in the doctor's office.

“He should be fine,” the doctor states. “Probably side effects of the bots.”

I stand up again with more strength than I've ever had in my life. *I'm alive.* And I'll stay that way for a long time, thanks to these nanobots. If everyone could get the injection...then the world would be a much better place.



The Glade

by Max Lee

“Jude’s Journey”

(a summary of Jasmine Warga’s novel *Other Words for Home*)

by Daniella Cohen

Jude, from the book *Other Words for Home*, by Jasmine Warga, went through quite the journey. As a 12 year old girl from Syria, America was completely different from what she was used to. Jude had to face many challenges, including dealing with unreasonable hate, being left out, and feeling different. She felt self-conscious from the moment that she met her cousin, aunt, and uncle in America, and even more so when she merely looked up at her massive new school building. Having a thick accent and dressing differently (at least when she started wearing a hijab), she couldn’t help but feel like she did not belong. Especially when she had a cousin who couldn’t even be bothered to look in her direction, even more so when they were in public. Jude had gone from being a sociable and relatively talkative person, to being really quiet and reserved. She felt even more self-conscious when noticing the stores, the malls, the computers, and the food in America. Everything was so different and huge compared to her old home in Syria. There were many ways Jude managed to overcome this.

One major way was finding comfort in the places and the people who she wasn’t so different from. Jude could almost be herself in Mrs. Ravenswood’s class; the ESL class where her classmates were all immigrants from different countries around the world. She found comfort in knowing that there were other people like her, who didn’t feel like they belonged in America, and who didn’t know how to speak English. She also met someone similar to her named Layla. Layla never stepped foot in the Middle East, because she was born in America. However, she was a Muslim, just like Jude. She was also the only student who wore a hijab, which was helpful for Jude when she started to wear one, too. Additionally, Jude was reminded of Syria every time she entered Layla’s parents’ restaurant, containing the foods and spices that she used to eat back home.

Surprisingly, Jude felt very comfortable when she was around someone known as Miles, who was an American boy. He wasn’t anywhere near in the same boat that she was in, but she loved spending time with him and talking to him. The one thing they had in common was that they were both outsiders, and they felt “weird” in comparison to other students. All of these people: the kids in ESL class, Layla, and Miles, helped Jude through her tough times. For example, when

Jude didn't know if her brother was still alive, and when she saw how people could be so hateful towards her for things that she never did. Her friends smiled and laughed with her when she told them that her brother was safe, and when she received a part in the school play. They supported her when she performed. Jude was so lucky to have found these amazing people during such a hard time.

As anyone can imagine, someone who goes through such a journey is bound to have changed, whether just a little bit or a lot. Jude became so much more mature and independent, whereas before she felt like everyone was growing up and leaving her behind. Jude was determined to reach her goal and really showed others that she was brave, just like she always described her older brother Issa. I don't think that was a change. Jude clearly always had bravery inside of her since she was a little girl. She was able to adjust better than many others, and even try out for a stage performance, of all things! Now that's courage! All in all, I believe that Jude was an amazingly strong character, who was lucky to have met such supportive people along her journey.

“Always Been”
by Mia Malhotra

Dirty, Clumpy, Hungry
Fuzzy, Striped, and Scared
Excited to become that butterfly
The one you always see in the sky
The one people look at and smile
The one that fits in
Fearing to become that moth
The one that people try to kill
The one that eats into stuff that can't be replaced
The one that is an
A-n-n-o-y-i-n-g
D-u-m-b
U-s-e-l-e-s-s
L-i-t-t-l-e
creature that doesn't belong anywhere.

I'm going to be
Changing
Arriving
Staying
Hoping
Growing
Living
I could be red, or purple, or blue
Or I could just be a color
A color no one cares about
A color that isn't beautiful
A color that isn't identified
Not because of who I am
Just because of where I come from and what I eat.

Now I'm hiding
Fearing what's ahead
Not knowing my future
Or my color

Now I'm flying
In the sky
With a pattern
In the color I am
The color that shouldn't matter
Neither the pattern
I'm a butterfly
I'm flying
You're watching
You're smiling

But there's one thing you need to know
I've always been a butterfly
You're just now starting to notice.



Portal To The Imaginary
by Lucy Xiao

“Dear Diary”

by Elizabeth (Lisa) Sulaymanov

Dear Diary,

March 19, 2003, has officially become the worst day of my life. My brother Adam, who just turned 18 a month and a half ago, was called to participate in the war in Iraq, along with my father and my Uncle Albert. My mother and I had to depart last week to move to LA, California, so that we could be safe. We settled in with my Aunt Ramona and her husband, Pedro. They were both so kind and welcoming. The worst part is that my best friend doesn't get to experience this new world with me. Nadia and I have been best friends since she shared her jelly sandwich with me back in the first grade. It has been very hard without her and I am pretty sure my cousin Amelia doesn't like me very much.

Today, I received the worst news that I could possibly get. My brother, my father, and my uncle were fighting in the war, and my uncle was shot. I haven't received any news about my dad or brother, so I am very nervous. All I know is that my uncle didn't make it. I overheard my mother talking to someone on the phone, and she started to look very worried. I could hear some noise from the phone, but everything was so distant and hard to understand. I only heard my mom ask the person on the other end of the phone if he would be ok. I rushed upstairs crying, because I knew someone was hurt. Amelia heard me and came into the room. She asked me what was wrong, with a face that showed no emotion. I just sat there and looked for my new phone. I recently got a cellphone and I don't really know how to use it yet. Back home in Iraq, everything was so different! It's going to take a long time to get used to the foods, the stores, the technology, everything here in America.

A couple of minutes later, my mother walked into my bedroom. She told me not to worry. My dad had been shot in the arm, but they already removed the bullet so he would be perfectly fine. While he is healing, my mother convinced him to come to LA for a bit. Apparently, she has some news to share with him, anyway. I started to get excited, but that all collapsed when my mother explained that my brother wasn't coming with him. I love my brother more than anything. But lately, I feel like I barely know him. All I want to do is spend time with him, without having to talk about war.

Dear Diary,

A couple of weeks have passed and my father is finally here with us in LA! I ran to the door and hugged him when he arrived and I noticed a huge wrap on his arm. My mother brought him into the kitchen and asked me to go get her purse from the other room. I obviously knew that was a distraction. I pretended to do as she asked, but secretly listened from the door frame. My mother is having a baby! I am so happy. I won't be alone anymore. I noticed that my mother was gaining weight, I just hadn't known why.

Dear Diary,

Another week has passed and today I started my first day of the 9th grade with Amelia. She knows practically everyone. I have first period science, which is by far my favorite subject! But I notice how there is nothing interesting about it. The science teacher is teaching us about stuff I learned in the 7th grade. When I left class, I noticed that Amelia was talking to a group of girls. They turned around and started looking at me weirdly. One walked up to me and asked me if I wanted to get lunch. I had no other option, so I went. As I got my food, one of the girls she was talking to tripped me with her shoe and I fell. I ruined my new shirt that I just got at the mall! I was so mad, because I know that Amelia planned this, but I just pretended to think that it was a mistake.

The girl, whose name is Olivia, apologized and asked if I was ok. We quickly sparked up a conversation, and I made my first friend here in America! Back home, Amelia started to complain to our parents about how I punched her at school. I got so angry at her; I just wanted to yell! I asked her what her problem was after dinner, and she told me nothing but gave me an eye roll. I am so confused. I decided that I was just going to ignore her. She apologized to me about a half hour later, and then we ended up giggling in bed before we fell asleep. It turns out that she is just jealous of how much attention I am getting.

Dear Diary,

At school today, Amelia introduced me to some of her friends and suddenly I am enjoying school. Science class is much better, now that I have friends in it! Before dismissal today, they made a special announcement over the loudspeaker. There is a school play coming up. I want to sign up and play the narrator in the show, but Olivia and the rest of the group say that I shouldn't, considering I still

haven't perfected the English language. I love proving people wrong and challenging myself, so I signed up anyway.

Dear Diary,

I got it! I got the part! No one could believe it, not even me! I prepared and studied my vocabulary as much as I could! Just as I was about to start my very first rehearsal, I got the exciting news that my mother was about to have the baby. I was a little shocked, because the baby wasn't supposed to come for another week. My father told me to stay at rehearsal while they went to the ER.

After rehearsal ended, I hopped into a taxi and rushed over to the hospital. My mother wanted to keep the gender a surprise, but I had desperately wanted a little sister. When I entered the hospital room, I saw my mother holding a baby boy. His name is Joe. From the moment that I saw him, I just knew how much I was going to love him. Ramona and Pedro are so kind towards him. They are taking care of him as if he is their own child.

Dear Diary,

Months have gone by, and opening night of the show is finally here! Unfortunately, my father had to return back to our home country. So now, only Mother, Joe, and I are left here in America. I was waiting backstage when I realized that it was almost my turn to speak. There were so many people in the audience! I stepped out onto the stage and into the bright spotlight. I could barely see at first. I started to panic. Then, my eyes adjusted and I could see some members of my family in the audience. My eyes traveled over to Olivia and I could see her nod her head at me. At that moment, I knew that I would be alright. When it was my cue, I recited my lines and every word came out perfectly. Before I knew it, I was taking my final bow and the show was over. I had done it!

Dear Diary,

The war back home finally ended and my father and brother were able to join us here in LA. Nadia and her family have decided to move here, as well. Guess what, they are also expecting a new baby! Nadia is so excited to become a big sister, just like me. My life is finally starting to come together. Everything worked out more perfectly than I could have ever imagined. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for me.



The Trail's End
by Ava Zeng

“Changes”

(a summary of Jasmine Warga’s novel *Other Words for Home*)

by Sarah Friedberg

Jude was born in Syria; she lived there her whole life. So when she heard she had to leave, it definitely wasn’t the best news. The reason why she had to leave was because there was a brutal war going on in Syria. A lot of people were upset with the government, including Jude’s brother Issa. So they started to retaliate against the government. Jude’s parents believed that it wasn’t safe in Syria anymore, so they decided that Jude and her mother needed to immigrate to America. Jude questioned having to leave. She told her parents that they could survive the war. Jude then learned that moving to America wasn’t just for Jude. You see, her mother was pregnant and there was no way that the baby could survive the turmoil in Syria. Because of this, it made Jude realize that moving was the better choice for her mother, her soon-to-be baby sister or brother, and herself.

Jude said her goodbyes to her best friend Fatima, “Auntie” Amal, her brother, and her father, and then got on a plane with her mother. This was probably one of Jude’s biggest challenges, having to leave her home, her friends, and her family behind. When they landed in America, Jude’s mother’s brother and his family were waiting for them at the airport. Jude and her mother were going to stay with them. Everyone was thrilled, except for Jude’s cousin Sarah. Sarah wasn’t really fond of Jude staying with her at her house. In fact, not long after they arrived, Sarah asked her mother when they would be leaving. Jude sadly overheard Sarah ask this. This made Jude feel as though she was unwanted and that she did not belong.

Jude was then enrolled in the same school as Sarah for September. Jude was excited about this; Sarah was not. Sarah told her mother that Jude can’t go to the same school as her, she couldn’t even speak English! Jude once again overheard this conversation and started to feel angry at Sarah. Jude thought about how hard she had been working to speak better English. When Jude got to her new school, all of her classes seemed normal, except for one. This class was for people just like Jude. (A class for students who did not speak English as their first language.) Jude thought she didn’t belong there, and was embarrassed to be seen walking into the classroom. Luckily, her opinion changed when she attended her first class. It quickly became her new favorite.

Some time passed and Jude decided to walk into town. That is where she stumbled upon a middle eastern restaurant. She went inside. There, she met a girl named Layla. She was a year older than Jude, but she was also Muslim like Jude. Layla wasn't born in Syria like Jude was, so when she met Jude she was thrilled. They quickly became good friends.

Once again, some time passed, and Uncle Mazin, Jude's Uncle, wanted to take her out to dinner. He took her to a fancy restaurant. Jude asked all kinds of questions about the names of the English words. Uncle Mazin did this because he wanted her to feel at home, like she belonged in America. When Jude got home, Sarah immediately asked Jude to come to her room. Jude was excited because Sarah never invited Jude into her room. Sarah then asked Jude why her father had taken only her out to dinner. Sarah was clearly jealous of the alone time that Jude had received. Again, this did not make Jude feel good.

Time passed by, and Jude found out that her school was having auditions for their musical. Jude decided that she wanted to audition for a part in the play, and so she did. When the results came out, Layla was the first one there and screamed with joy. She told Jude that she had received a speaking role in the play! On top of that, Jude had gotten a bigger part than her cousin Sarah. Obviously, Sarah was absolutely not happy about this. She then told Jude that the only reason she got the role was because of her accent. Jude wasn't upset about Sarah saying this though, because she knew that Sarah was just jealous again. On opening night of the performance, however, Jude proved herself to Sarah and to the rest of the audience. She stepped on stage, into the spotlight, and gave her best performance possible.

After completing the novel, you can clearly see Jude change. When she lived in Syria, she was still a young girl. Now, Jude is a young adult who wears a hijab. Jude is also brave, smart, friendly, and kind. She was able to conquer all of the challenges that were thrown at her, by simply putting one foot in front of the other. Jude just kept stepping into her future.

“200 Years Off”

by Juliana Dayani

This was the most important day of Ajay Anderson’s life. If the time machine worked, it could be revolutionary. Not to mention going back in time to tell his younger self that a watermelon will *not*, in fact, grow in your stomach if you swallow a black seed. His hopes were pretty high ever since he heard the scientists estimated a 99% success rate. *I hear they said that to the last 13 time pioneers, as well.* As much as Ajay tried to push those kinds of thoughts out of his mind, they just kept coming back. It didn’t help that Ajay was there when the time machine was powered on the last two times. Which meant he felt the searing light emanate from their body, and heard their torturous screams. The first time he was there, Alex—the test subject at the time—was nothing but the skin on his body at the end. The second time, Teresa left nothing but her fingers behind.

Losing Teresa felt as if he was slapped in the face with an avalanche. He would lie awake most nights afraid to fall asleep, knowing that every time he closed his eyes he would relive the day of her death. She was Ajay’s best friend ever since the academy, both of them bonding over their own curiosity. His dream was always to be an astronaut, but when NASA came and offered him and a bunch of his peers a job right out of school to work on a top secret project, he just *couldn’t* say no. That was the best decision of his life, arguably. If this worked, he would go down in history as the first person to ever time travel. 1990, exactly 100 years ago to be exact. If not, well...let’s just say the name ‘Ajay Anderson’ would go up in flames along with his body. But he couldn’t let that happen. He *had* to succeed, he *had* to be remembered so that he could make the whole world remember the pioneers before him. Because they, along with each and every scientist, deserved recognition just as much as he did.

His thoughts were interrupted when a flustered intern (whose name he couldn’t remember) barged into the bunk.

“Er, sorry, Sir, but Dr. Peters wants you in the lab ASAP,” he announced.

He was frantic, as if his life depended on Ajay’s response. Which it probably did, since Dr. Peters (the constantly grumpy head scientist) was someone whose bad side you did *not* want to be on.

“I’ll be there in a second,” Ajay responded.

The intern didn't even have time, as the four cups of hot coffee he was holding didn't seem to be so hot anymore, and Dr. Peters is even crankier having room temperature coffee. Ajay made his way over to the mirror and looked at his dark skin, curly brown hair, and black eyes one last time before putting on his helmet. To Ajay, the whole entire suit was an abomination, with the chunky gold plating sticking out in areas chunky gold plating should *not* be sticking out. He looked like the world's worst Iron Man minus ten. He made his way across the hall to the lab, looking at it for possibly the last time. *Don't think like that.* He chided himself until Dr. Peters caught sight of him and told him to get into position. He took a deep breath and walked over to the time machine.

The time machine, however, was the complete opposite of his suit. With its silver, sleek circular shape, it most definitely looked like a UFO. He sat down on the uncushioned chair and closed the hatch. Then came the longest five minutes of his life. There was no glass in the time machine, so he couldn't see what the scientists were doing. Whether he should deem that a blessing or a curse, he had no idea. He was starting to get claustrophobic, as he sat there looking at the buttonless panel in front of him. He never understood why there was a panel in the first place, since most of the steering is done outside the machine. The only visible tech in this thing was a radio for communication. Everything else was controlled by the large panel the scientists were standing at.

After what felt like hours, Ajay finally heard a voice through the radio, "Commencing transport in 3, 2..." the rest was static to Ajay.

He grabbed the radio, "Do you copy? This is Anderson. Do you copy?"

The panic in his voice soon disappeared, but it was overtaken by pain. Like, *a lot* of pain. In the span of two seconds, his vision blurred and he let out a bloodcurdling scream. He felt like his insides were burning and his outsides crumbling, until there was nothing but silence.

"Is he dead?" A muffled voice asked.

"No," said another slightly clearer, yet familiar voice.

"Yes."

"Possibly."

Teresa? Ajay's eyes flew open and he leapt up. He then abruptly stopped and let out an embarrassingly high pitched scream. Which caused the people...aliens...to scream. Which caused Ajay to scream.

“Okay, can we stop yelling, because we are very low on water. I for one will not be going out into that *hellhole* of a place to get more.”

Ajay turned his head towards the voice, only to lay his eyes upon...someone's stomach? He craned his neck upwards and saw a giant twice the size of him.

“Alex? What *happened*?” He questioned his formerly five foot tall friend.

He looked around the room and saw four other people. Four other time pioneers. *Living pioneers*. He wanted to say something, he really did, about how happy he was that they were alive, or about how he was sorry for always taking the last slice of pizza, but he couldn't. Like, he literally couldn't because once the shock of seeing his friend passed, he was overtaken with another round of immense pain, as if his whole body was burnt. His eyes landed on Teresa. Then on her hands. *They are literally lizard fingers*. Then Malcolm, whose head that used to have vibrant golden locks, was now gone. There was Ally, her brunette hair covered almost all of her eyes, but if Ajay examined her further, he would notice the whites of her eyes were the only part of her eyes. Then Jamie, who...actually didn't have anything weird looking about her. Nope. Nevermind, her arms just stretched all the way to the floor.

“Time travel happened. Duh.”

I looked towards Jamie, the third ever pioneer, who seemed to be struggling to put her arms back on properly, giving her a *stop playing dumb you know what I mean and I'm on the edge of having an existential crisis so just answer the question* look. She let out an exasperated sigh, but before she could respond I was tackled with a hug.

“I missed you, idiot,” Teresa uttered.

“I missed you too, Teresa, but can you explain what is going on *before* I pass out?” I asked.

“Oh, right,” she responded.

She took an abnormally large breath and opened her mouth, “Okay, so basically, we went through the time machine and we were the only ones to survive. Apparently, it sent us 100 years into the future, and not into the past. We also all have these weird mutations and the future *sucks*, but we don't know what to do because we can't figure anything out right now. And I am freaking out, so yeah.”

Her face was red from saying that all in one breath, but she was grinning from ear to ear.

“Basically we are trapped 100 years in the future with no way out, and we are all *technically* mutants. Which is kind of ironic, since Malcolm over here looks like Professor X,” Alex finally explained, with an exasperated look.

“They got the time jump off by *200 years*?” Ajay exclaimed, in a strained voice. He looked up at his friends, still weirded out by their mutations. Then it occurred to him that he didn't actually know all of their mutations.

“Okay, so I'm guessing your mutations are super big, stretchy arms, lizard finger –” Ajay began to list.

“– *Pterodactyl* fingers, actually,” Teresa interjected. “Which means they are *much* stronger than lizard fingers. And Ally can sense anything near her within sixty feet. We don't actually know what Malcolm can do, aside from the fact that he got bald.”

Ajay looked at Malcolm, who seemed to have a permanent somber look on his face. His blue eyes seemed to be giving Ajay a wary look. His whole attitude sent a shiver down Ajay's spine, especially since he used to have such kind eyes. Ajay turned his eyes towards Allison, who somehow was looking directly at him, even with her milky-white eyes.

“What can I do?” Ajay asked.

He was met with a bunch of looks from his fellow pioneers that said, *how do you not know, you Idiot?*

“So, you're telling us that you *didn't* notice when your skin turned into lava?” Ally piped up.

“What?” Ajay questioned.

“Yeah. When you screamed, your skin turned into lava. It was super cool, honestly,” Jamie jumped in.

I wanna go home, Ajay thought. This was all just too much for him to process, especially while he was in a scarily unfamiliar place.

“Are you sure we can't go home?” Ajay tried to hide his uneasiness about what he just learned.

“No, we *chose* to be trapped in a post-apocalyptic world where you can't even find a decent pizza. What is this? San Francisco?” Alex said, while rolling his eyes.

Ajay's whole life was crashing down on him. He had a family and a *life*, and it just disappears like that? Everything he has ever worked for was just *gone*, and they most likely thought he was dead.

“But we still have a chance!” Teresa exclaimed. “I have only been here for three years. That isn’t nearly enough time to do proper research in a world as different as ours. It usually takes years, maybe even decades, to learn about a place like this. And when we finally figure it out, I’m almost positive that I’ll figure out a way to get us back home.”

Her words died away, after she realized that what she said didn’t do much to lift Ajay’s spirits. *Decades*. Nevertheless, Ajay wasn’t one to be negative or give up so easily, so he did the best thing he could think of.

He plastered on a fake smile and said, “Well then, we better not waste any time.”

Alex responded, “We’re screwed.”

* * *

“I’ve got it! I’ve finally got it!” Teresa practically jumped out of her seat.

“Well, figure out whatever you are doing quietly, please, because these animals aren’t going to hunt themselves,” Ally whisper-shouted.

“That doesn’t matter anymore! I’ve figured out a way to get us back home.”

This grabbed the attention of everyone in the room.

“With the combined research of the scientists on our team a hundred years ago, and the research we were doing here, I’ve finally figured out how to send us to the past and not to the future,” Teresa announced.

“How will we know it will work, though?” Ally asked, still miffed about Teresa scaring away a meal.

“It *will* work. I’ve triple checked it and there is a 99.9% chance of success. You guys can check for yourself,” she stated, confidently.

As Teresa passed the notebook around, Ajay’s thoughts raced. After six months, he’d finally be able to see his family again. But would they even accept him with his mutation? He remembered his reaction to the others when he first saw theirs. He had assumed that their whole personalities had changed, just because they looked different. Looking back on it, Ajay was ashamed of his reaction; he should have known better than that. He wondered how he would have felt if one of his very close friends looked at him as if he were a complete stranger. It definitely wouldn’t boost his self esteem, that’s for sure.

By the time the notebook finally reached Ajay, it was filled with everyone else's handwriting, marking where they could improve the design, or where they could find the materials. It was perfect, but Ajay just couldn't ignore the voice in the back of his head. *Something will go wrong. It did last time. Why is it so different now?*

"It looks great Teresa," Ajay grinned. "Before you know it, we'll be back home and I'll be eating the last slice of pizza again."

That comment earned him a crumpled piece of paper to the head, but he couldn't care less in the moment.

As the months went by, the group decided to explore the barren wastelands near the base looking for clues, whilst looking for supplies for the time machine. They found many things, and for a while they were almost sure they would figure out what happened. But then they hit a wall. After finding so many things from the past for two months straight, there was nothing left to search for. The most helpful things they found were a bunch of toys, makeup, and magazines from 2090.

Finally, the three months were up and they were going home with no new information. There was a sandstorm outside, so they had to wait for it to pass so that it wouldn't interfere with the transportation. Everyone was sitting in silence. The suspense was killing them. As Ajay's thoughts wandered, he started thinking about the magazines they found. All of them had been released in the year 2090 or earlier. He found that strange. Wouldn't there be magazines from the more recent years instead? Then it hit him. *Literally*. A paper was hit so hard through the nimble window from the storm, that he was literally slapped right in the face.

"Are you okay?" Teresa asked.

"Yeah," he looked up to see Ally trying to hold in her laughter.

"You sensed that coming didn't you," Ajay questioned.

"A girl with mutant eyes never tells her secrets," Ally chuckled.

Ajay merely rolled his eyes and looked at what hit him. It was a paper. *A newspaper* from 2090. If his theory was correct, the paper might confirm it.

Twenty minutes later, the storm passed, and Ajay had finished reading.

"Is everybody ready?" Jamie asked.

When she heard a chorus of yeses, she went to power on the machine.

"No," Ajay spoke up, most likely looking like he was about to cry.

"What do you mean?" Jamie questioned.

"I mean we can't," Ajay admitted.

Ajay was met by a series of looks that ranged from confusion to anger, so he decided to read an excerpt of the paper to show them. “*‘As the earthquakes increase in Nevada, they steadily grow larger, as well. Scientists say that if they continue at this rate for another day, the results could be apocalyptic.’*” This newspaper was released on August 12, 2090. That's one day after we plan to arrive back home. We have to assume that one day later, the world ends.”

At that moment, Ajay hated himself. He hated that he had to be the one to deliver the bad news to his closest friends. The friends who helped him learn how *not* to accidentally light his face on fire when he was scared. After all these months, the plan came crashing down faster than Jamie's arms the first time Ajay met her.

“I still don't get it,” Jamie spoke, breaking the deafening silence.

Unfortunately for Jamie, she didn't get a response. Everyone was trying to process that information. Teresa was the one to break the silence this time, but not with a response. Instead she went over to her desk and started writing equations. This went on for five minutes until she finally spoke up.

“Ugh, I'm so *stupid*. I was so caught up in getting us back home and solving time travel, I didn't even stop to *think* about the potential after effects. I should have known. The impact of going back in time, rather than traveling to the future like we all did before, will most likely send a shock through the Earth so large it will cause hundreds of deadly earthquakes until...well, until the world around us happens,” Teresa confessed, as she buried her face in her hands, very clearly trying to prevent herself from crying.

“What do we do now?”

It took a while for Ajay to realize that Alex was talking, as his voice was devoid of the usual sarcasm that seemed so comforting.

“We stay.”



Leap of Faith
by Victoria Cho

“One Wish for the World”

(an interview with the characters from *Other Words for Home*)

by Diana Smolens

Layla:

What is one problem that you face being Muslim in America?

The hatred. The fear. There's more than one, but the fear and hatred are really shown. People try to hide it, but they can't. People crossing the street or looking at my family's restaurant with hate. Those are the things they try to hide, but can't.

How did you feel when you met Jude for the first time?

The first time I met her was at my family's restaurant. I could tell how comfortable she was with all of the scents in the air. I could tell she felt good. That made me smile. When I learned that she had just moved, I realized there were so many strange things in America, but this was not strange to her. It was where she felt comfortable.

What is one thing you wish for in the world?

Love. And pizza. But really, love. People have been blinded by hatred. They cannot see the love in the world. I wish for love so that people could come together. It would help so much. I see so much hatred, and a lot towards me and where I come from. I just hope that in the future, people will learn to love more rather than hate.

Jude:

What was your first impression of America?

It is very loud. And everybody's moving like they have something important to do. Same with school. But a little different. Honestly, I like it. It reminds me to keep on moving.

What did you feel and notice when you started wearing your hijab?

I felt older and more like a woman. It made me feel even better when I saw Baba and Issa's face when they first saw it. I was not a little girl anymore. Now, when I go outside, people are staring at me. I know it's because of my hijab, but I like to think of it another way. I like to think that I am walking down a red carpet going to a show, just like Julia Roberts. That always makes me feel better.

What is one thing you wish for in the world?

I wish for a judgment free world. At school, people are judged. Outside in the street, people are judged. And it's usually based upon first looks. What people have heard. What people think. And another thing is that people do it without realizing. They will judge someone as soon as they walk into the room.

Sarah:

How have your feelings changed towards Jude since you first met her?

They have changed a lot. When I first met her, I was nice in a friendly way. I mean I had only learned a couple of days before that other people were going to be living in my house. But now that I look back, I was pretty mean to her. I would say hateful things that I shouldn't have said. Now, she is my cousin. We know each other, and we are family.

What is one thing you wish for in the world?

Only one? Well, I don't know. There are just so many things. It's kind of sad that you can go on and on and on about things you wish you could change in the world. So, I'm gonna say a world filled with friendship. Sometimes, people are not very nice to each other. I hope that in the future, people will learn to be better friends.

“Finding Comfort”

(a summary of Jasmine Warga’s novel *Other Words for Home*)

by Lia Huang

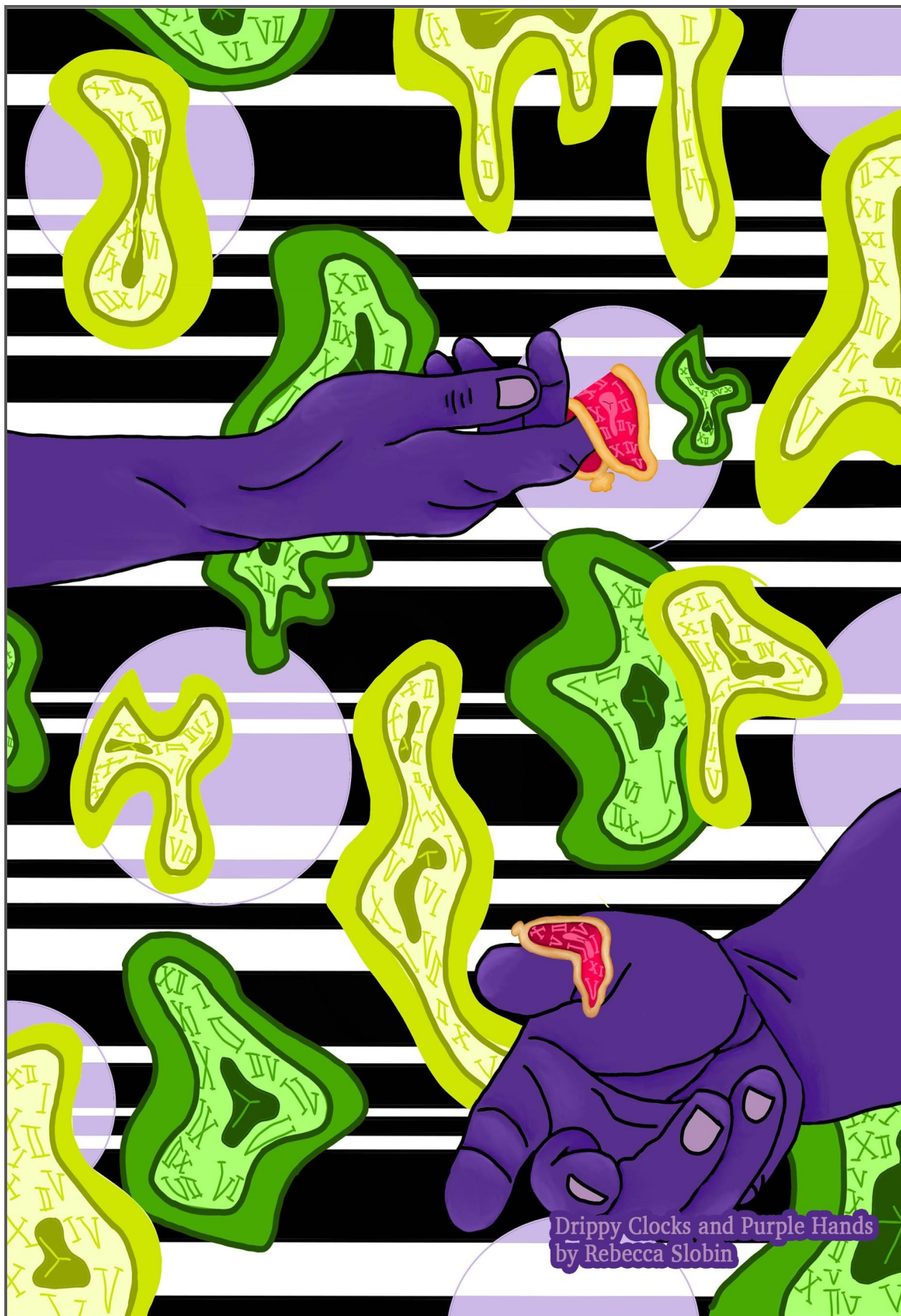
Jude faces countless challenges in the novel *Other Words for Home*. Due to an ongoing revolution in Syria, she immigrates to the United States with her mother for safety purposes. Throughout this book, we learn about the intricate obstacles that Jude and other children like her have faced.

When Jude arrives in America, she has difficulty adjusting to her surroundings. Her English pronunciation isn’t too accurate, as she is not a native speaker. The students in the United States are much different than the ones in Syria. They have different interests and grew up differently. Jude finds it difficult to converse with others comfortably. Her cousin Sarah has already shown a dislike towards her. Instead of wanting to stand out as she did in Syria, Jude feels as if she wants all eyes off of her.

Her perspective begins to change after she meets Layla. Layla is the first acquaintance Jude makes in the United States. Jude looks up to Layla, as they have similar backgrounds and have struggled with similar situations. Jude also begins to show interest in the school musical. She has always had a love for singing and acting. Although no one shows much support for her trying out, she does so anyway. Jude’s audition reminds herself of her brother, Issa, who is still in Syria fighting for change.

Jude is finally becoming more confident in herself and is growing as a person. Then disaster strikes. There is a terrorist attack in a city faraway from where Jude now lives. People begin to glance at her with fear and disgust. On one occasion, a man walking down the street begins to scold Jude. He says that the attack is her fault, and that she should go back to her own country. This leaves Jude questioning herself and others around her. Her friend, Miles, assures her that no one in their right mind would perceive her in such a disrespectful way. She does not deserve this form of treatment and discrimination.

Jude begins to understand and adjust to the circumstances in her new country. Although it is very different from Syria, she finds similarities and comfort in the places and people that surround her. With her new family and friends, she finally begins to feel at home in the United States.



Drippy Clocks and Purple Hands
by Rebecca Slobin

“Welcome to Osiris Academy”

by Elena Zhuang

Dear Miss Collinear,

We are proud to welcome you to Osiris Academy. In our academy, we push everyone to their limits. We make sure you feel welcome, and most importantly, we give you the opportunity to create your own journey. Everyone has their own story to tell! We can't wait for you to show up at our school. Best of wishes!

Sincerely, Headmistress Amaterasu

Osiris Academy? This has to be wrong; I never signed up for anything. These few days have already been tough. Everyone has been ignoring me. And now, I have to go to some academy that I have never heard of? I sighed, crumbling up the letter and throwing it away. I guess I better pack. School starts in one hour. I stood up and looked out the window. I guess it would be nice getting away from my house for a few days. My parents, on the other hand, might not even notice that I'm gone. They have been taking my stuff from my room without asking, ignoring my words, and crying for no reason at all! Sometimes, I think they have gone mad. As I finished packing the last item, I went to the balcony to enjoy the view of the Eiffel Tower. After saying my last goodbyes to Paris, I walked to the front door and wrote a letter to my parents, just in case they decided to remember me again. As I followed the map to the bus, I suddenly realized that the destination was someplace I had never seen before. I tried talking to one of the controllers there, but he seemed to not notice me. I quickly decided to find more people to ask. As no one replied back to me, I decided to find it on my own.

Searching for the train “The Lotion Rise,” I accidentally tripped and fell.

“Hey, are you ok?” a voice asked from behind me.

“Um, yes, I think so,” I replied back, relieved that someone actually noticed me. “Do you know where the train “The Lotion Rise” is?”

“That's such a coincidence! I'm going there, too!” the guy replied.

As I looked up, I got a good glimpse of him. He seemed like someone who would pull you over while you were driving and then steal your money. I didn't tell him that, of course.

“Oh, by the way, you must be wondering who I am. My name is Min-Jun,” he introduced himself.

“Nice to meet you,” I replied.

As our conversation took only a minute to pass, I couldn't help myself from thinking about how he seemed so kind and clever. More people ignored us while we walked past, but Min-Jun did not seem bothered by them. As we were waiting to board the train, I saw two men that looked like they were from my school. I heard them talking.

“She won't know; she's clueless,” one guy said.

“She's the headmistress, she'll pick up the clues,” the other guy replied.

“I'll be careful. Has the bomb been placed?” the first guy asked, before they both boarded the train.

I thought about what they were saying and decided to continue listening. I heard them talking about the bomb and how they were going to place it under the school. When the train stopped, we all got off at Osiris Academy. They headed straight into the forest, while everyone else went into the school. Headmistress Amaterasu greeted the crowd and began speaking to each student individually.

When it was my turn, she asked, “Hello Miss Collinear, how does swimming in lava work for you?”

“Swimming in lava?” I questioned. “Won't that kill me?”

“Oh yes, and it has,” she replied.

I tried not to think about the words she had just said, and quickly ran inside the building. I went straight to the dorm and saw Min-Jun standing there.

“Where did you go?” he asked.

“Uh, I saw some close friends and decided to tag along with them,” I replied, praying that he wouldn't notice that I was lying.

“Ok then, if you need anything just ask,” he replied.

Before he left, I wanted one thing from him.

“There is something I need,” I said, looking him directly in the eyes. “Could you get me archive videos of each of the teachers and students who attend here?”

“Uh, sure,” he said. Even though he agreed, I could see a look of suspicion growing.

He walked away, and I knew that he thought I was weird. Regardless, that didn't matter much now. I needed to find out who wanted to bomb the school. So, I set out for my first class. The class taught us how to fight, which was awesome! We learned how to handle weapons that I had never even seen before. Many of the students had been previously enrolled at the academy, so they were familiar with what was going on. There was one person in class who stood out to me. She knew what she was doing, and also seemed to have great reflexes. I decided to approach her after class to start up a conversation.

The bell rang three times, signaling lunch, and the whole crowd ran to the cafeteria. I sat down and ate my lunch peacefully. While eating, I thought about my plan to discover the mole in the school. Just as I was in the middle of my train of thought, someone tapped me on my shoulder.

“Guess who got the video tapes?”

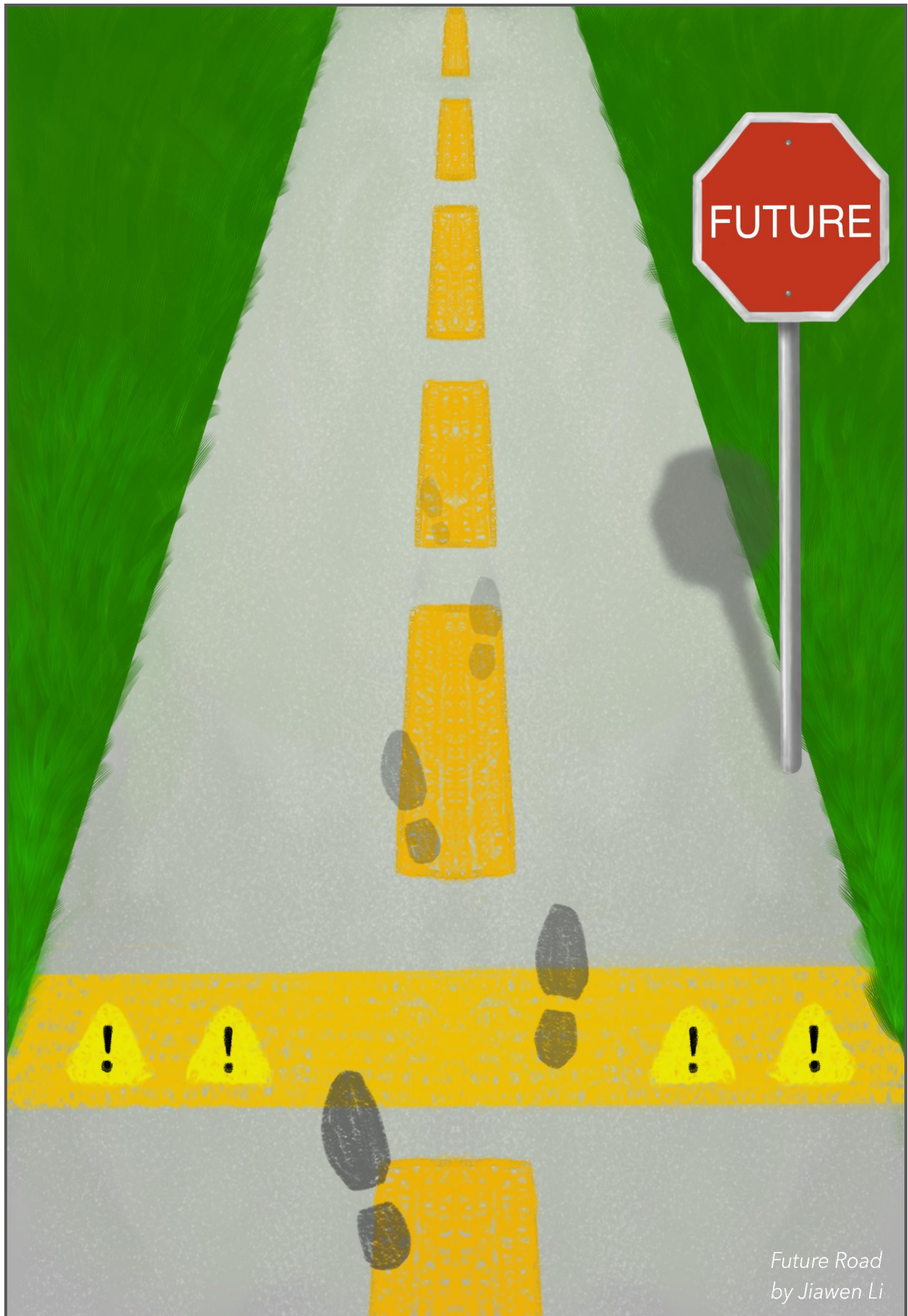
“Let me guess, Min-Jun?” I said, turning around to face him.

I was surprised that he had gotten the videos already. I stood up and grabbed the recordings. I thanked him and then left.

That night, I sat down in my dorm and listened to all of the tapes. After listening, I realized that the teachers did not match any of the people I heard. I listened to the recordings several times, and that was when I knew who the mole was. He was the one who acted like a friend, but really wasn't. The one and only Min-Jun. I ran to the headmistress prepared to tell on him.

After completing my entrance exam perfectly, I became a student at Osiris Ghost Academy. The end already? Ha! This is just the beginning.

Well, ghost you later!



*Future Road
by Jiawen Li*

“October 3, 1918”

by Jolie Nassi

Mud and dirt are caked onto my olive green uniform. The weight of grenades and rifles press down on my back. The other American soldiers and I are poised at the very edge of the trenches, waiting to charge. Every few minutes, we adjust our positions to prevent our boots from sinking into the mud. When I look down the deep tunnel, a sea of green helmets bob up and down; soldiers crouched to the ground, cowering in fear of the pieces of rubble and shrapnel raining from the sky. Although I cannot see him, I know that our officer is glancing at his watch, waiting to blow the whistle that’ll lead so many of us to our deaths.

When the piercing screech of the whistle does cry out, we spill from our trench. I jog with my troop, but attempt to stay low to the ground. My grenades clash together with every step I take. My gun is aimed in front of me, waiting to locate an enemy. Pools of muddy water and patches of barbed wire pepper the long stretch of dying grass known as No Man’s Land. The stench of smoking rubble and rotting flesh fill the air, and I wrinkle my nose in distaste. Corpses litter the ground, all of varying stages of decay. I hazily wonder if I’ll join them.

Without delay, the Germans begin to hurl grenades at us, and our destination is obscured by thick, black smoke that makes our eyes water. The sound of gunfire and bombs seems to shatter my eardrums, and it takes all of my strength to keep my hands from curling around my head. Billows of flame and smoke erupt on the ground, blasting soldiers off their feet and tossing them. Their bodies are left charred and bloody. I begin to run faster, desperately trying to escape the explosions that riddle the field without warning.

Before I have time to think, I fall to the ground. A sharp, excruciating pain is coming from my abdomen. I frantically rip open multiple layers of olive clothes, to reveal a maroon splotch seeping through my shirt. *I’ve been shot.* The words don’t arrive with volume, and I silently mouth the words again, like a mantra. *I’ve been shot.* I am overcome by a wave of nausea, and I rest my hand on the growing pool of liquid. Immediately, it is darkened to a warm, sticky red. My breathing becomes shallow and raggedy, and my chest does not rise and fall as surely as it did before.

The sounds of explosions, gunfire, and dying men fade out, and I hear a bell ringing. Orange and pink spots swim in front of my vision, a striking contrast to the sapphire sky. *They're so beautiful*, I think, and I finally smile. A teardrop races across the bridge of my nose, and trickles down onto the dirt. I try to reach my hand up to touch the blurred circles of color, but I no longer have the strength to move my body. I struggle to stay awake. If not for my country, to continue watching the colors dance for me. For the first time in a year, I want to live.

My wish is not fulfilled.

“Covid 23”

by Rachel Rafael

December 4, 2023

Hey! I'm Sophie! But most people call me Soph. I'm writing this letter to the future generation of America. I want to share my experiences about the current living situation. Right now it's the year 2023, and I'm 16 years old. The Coronavirus has been around for four years, and I've never been more ready to move to Mars! Since December 2019 (which was when Covid started), things have gotten worse, rather than better. Especially since the news just confirmed that Covid has infected a total of 4.5 million people worldwide in the past 4 years.

The situation has *started* to get under control, which has made things start to get mildly better. But many people still don't want to put a stop to the lockdown, because they fear the risk of a quick relapse in case numbers...much like last time. We have been in a complete and constant lockdown for approximately 18 months so far. We aren't permitted to leave our houses at any time, for any reason. In fact, the government has installed a computerized bodyguard outside of each home. It's job is to ensure that everyone stays inside. Every house also has a personalized “sanitation station.” This machine helps everyone stay clean and disinfected.

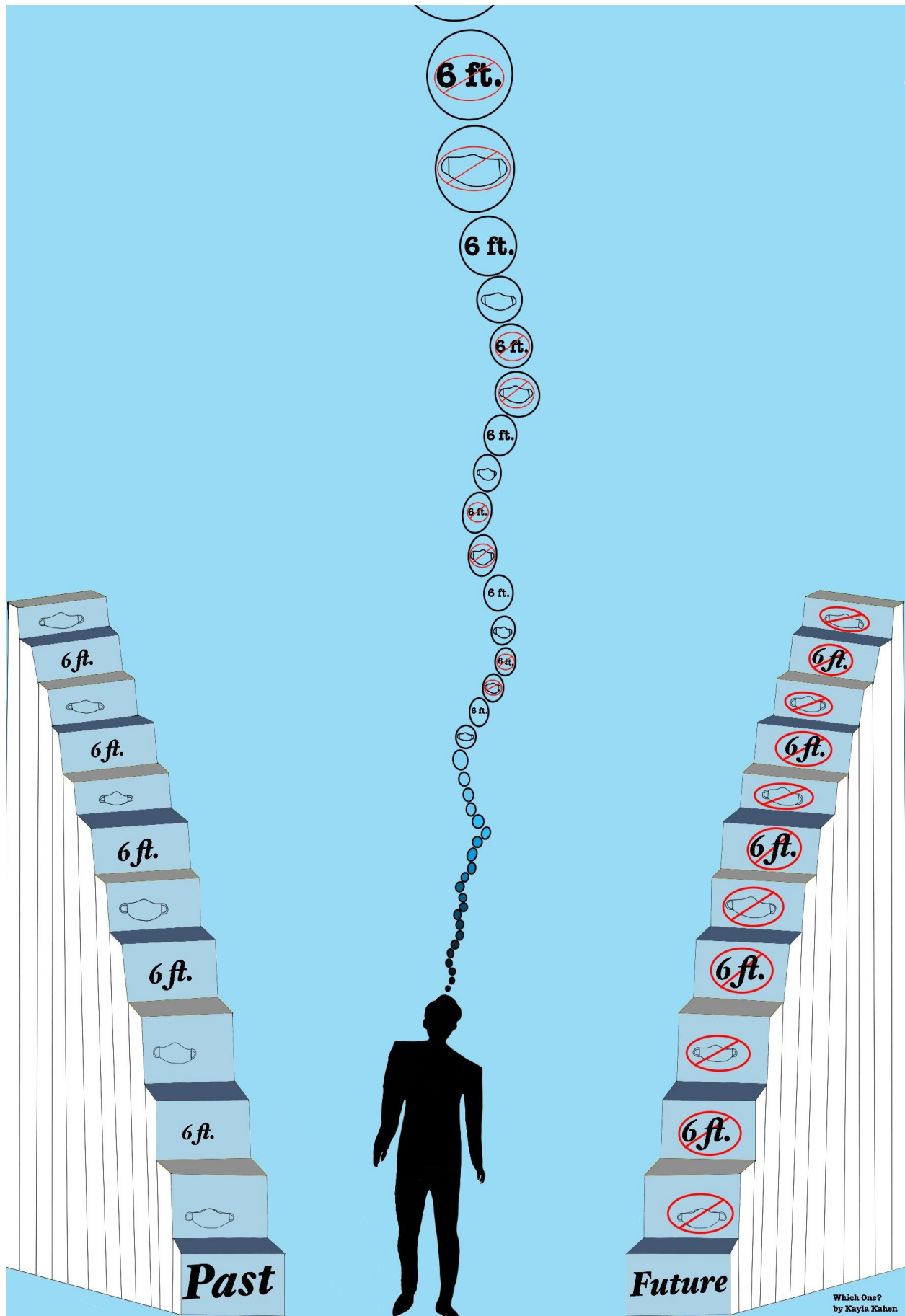
At this point, some citizens are still catching the virus even while in strict quarantine. Some people think this is from dust and germs that are already in our own houses. If that is the case, these germs will be pretty hard to escape. This was the reasoning for the installation of these new sanitation stations. These sophisticated machines are similar to personalized saunas. They disinfect human bodies and prevent the growth or spread of germs for a full 48 hours. Needless to say, they work to prevent the spread of the virus. It is said that these machines have drastically improved Americans' health. There have only been ten positive cases of the virus reported since the installation of these sanitation stations.

On social media, people who've recently recovered from the virus say that the virus itself isn't so bad. However, the process of recovery from the virus is. Every other day, the sanitation boxes automatically check body temperature and health. All information gathered is then sent wirelessly to the government and your doctors. If doctors discover that you have the virus, they come to your house in white bodysuits, and they take you in a "Corona Car" (which is similar to an ambulance) to the hospital. You are then brought to a completely isolated lab room, where you lose access to all electronics. While you are away in isolation, your house is cleaned from floor to ceiling by a registered professional crew.

With all of these precautions and safety measures in place, people are hoping that infection rates will continue to drop so that they can go outside soon. Personally, I'm starting to forget what the sun looks like altogether!

I hope that I haven't scared you too much, and I hope that things are better for you and society wherever you read this letter!

Best of Luck,
Sophie



“The Good Life”

by Eva Amirian

Part #1

She was living a good life
With her family and friends
Singing to her songs
Watching her movies
Then a thought of moving
Her mother revealed
There was a baby on the way
She doesn't know what to feel
Happy or sad
She must leave Fatima behind
Her father and brother will not come
But she can also see joy
She will be a big sister
She loves her mom
She will love the baby
The next thing she knows
The tickets have been purchased
She is saying goodbye
The plane takes off

Part #2

She lands in the USA
She might feel alone
She may not fit in
But she steps up and takes it all in
She makes new friends
She finds her place
Now she knows nothing is a mistake
She understands
She must stay strong
She must keep it together

For her mother
Sometimes she is not thrilled
But she will get over it
She meets Layla
Miles and others
She feels good
She feels happy
She stays in the light
Always finds the joy
She's level-headed
Nothing will get the best of her

Part #3

No more walks on the beach
No more laughing with Brother
No more hanging with Fatima
No more eating Mama's food
No more speaking Arabic
No more hugging Baba

Now I walk down Ludlow Avenue
Now I laugh with Miles
Now I hang with Layla
Now I eat Aunt Michelle's food
Now I speak mostly English
Now I hug Baby Amal

But in the end
I know
I don't need to choose
Don't need to pick
Which one I like better
Where I would rather be
No one is making me decide
I am content being both

“Learning From Trauma”

by Lea Eshaghoff

“I’m ready to go!” Jessica exclaimed.

“One second, Jess, I’m almost done tagging the luggage,” her mother said.

“Mom, what’s it like in America?” Jessica asked.

“Well, it’s where you can be anything you want to be,” her mother stated.

“Really?”

“Really.”

“Anything?”

“Yup.”

“Wow! Too bad we’re only going for a week,” Jessica replied.

As soon as her father grabbed the keys and opened the door, Jessica was in the taxi with her little purple backpack, just big enough to fit two of her favorite toys. As they drove two hours to the airport from her small town in Australia, she was wondering what it would be like in America. When security asked Jessica how old she was, she was too scared to respond. She had never been to an airport before. After going through security, they boarded the plane. As the plane took off, they all looked out of the small round windows and saw how truly beautiful the landscape of Australia was.

Suddenly, without warning, the land that they had just left from burst into flames! The flight attendant came onto the loudspeaker and explained that there would be no returning to Australia. Jessica was in utter shock. She didn’t even know what to say, so she sat in silence for the entire flight. When they landed in America, she was still in disbelief of what she had seen. When she was finally able to tell her mother how upset she was, her mother tried to comfort her and tell her to think about how lucky they were. Her family had made it out just in time. And now, they were safely in a new country where they could start a new life.

Jessica’s mother reminded her, “Now we are in America, where you can be anything you want to be.”

Her mother explained to her that all of the other people around them in the airport were immigrants. However, they would not be considered immigrants because both she and Jessica's father used to live in America when they were young. They were American citizens, even though they had been living in Australia. Because of this, Jessica's family had no trouble leaving the airport. Jessica's father already had a new job lined up in America with the same company that he had worked for back in Australia. Her parents also had an apartment picked out where they were going to live. Even though the day had been so traumatic, Jessica was thankful that she was safe and that her family was all together.

It took a long time, but Jessica finally got used to life in America. At the end of the school year, her 5th grade teacher gave her class an assignment to write letters about how they felt on their first day of school. When the teacher asked who wanted to share their letters out loud, Jessica quickly raised her hand.

"When I first came to America in the 2nd grade, I was nervous but excited. When I started at this school, I felt very welcomed. It was as if I belonged, and that is all because of you - my new friends and teachers. Thanks to all of you, America finally feels like home to me. I will never forget that, and I will be sure to treat others the same way when I meet them in the future."

A very important lesson had been learned from the traumatic experience.

“Facing Challenges”

(a summary of Jasmine Warga’s novel *Other Words for Home*)

by Eliav Sehati

Throughout the novel, Jude faced many challenges in her move from Syria to America. While immigrating from Syria, Jude needed to explain why she and her mother had come to America. She did not know sufficient English, but her mother knew almost no English. So it was up to Jude to assist. Her hardship was exacerbated by the fact that Jude had to leave Issa and Baba and go to a totally different country. This was a big challenge for Jude, but she overcame it by thinking positively.

Additionally, when Jude first joined school in America, she was scared and nervous to learn with people who were “different” than her. For example, when Jude was in Mr. Anderson’s class, she was able to answer questions. But she did not volunteer, because she was embarrassed and afraid that she did not know how to explain her answers. As Jude went to more classes, she became more confident and brave in front of others.

In America, Jude finally became a true lady and started wearing a hijab. She decided to wear a bright turquoise hijab to show that she was not afraid of what other people thought of her. What really transformed Jude into a brave and confident young woman were the many challenges she faced. In Mrs. Ravenswood’s ESL class, Jude improved her English, but more importantly she realized that she was not alone. In this class, she communicated and learned with people who were just like her. That boosted her self confidence.

Furthermore, when Jude heard that there would be a school musical, she immediately tried out. Even though her closest American friend Layla said that she might embarrass herself, Jude courageously plowed through. Clearly, throughout Jude’s journey, she transformed. She turned into the brave young lady who performed in front of many people, all while adjusting to the spotlight.

“Last One Left”

by Daniella Cohen

“Shut up, Nathan! I’m trying to focus!” Naomi shouted.

“Ha! No matter how hard you focus, you won’t ever beat me! You know I’m undefeated in Shadow Slayer!” Nathan yelled back.

Naomi saw the big blocky letters that spelled DEFEAT through her glasses. She was playing a video game called Shadow Slayer with her older brother Nathan. She was definitely better at virtual reality.

“Yes! I win! You lose!” He jeered.

“Could you be any more immature? Aren’t you going to college next year?” Naomi insulted.

“Oh, come on! Let me live out the rest of my childhood in peace!” Nathan whined.

“Well, I’m going to my room. Gotta finish my schoolwork!” Naomi said.

“Fine. I’ll just sit here, bored because you decided to choose work over me. Like, who chooses work over anything?” Nathan frowned.

“Oh, shut up! You’re talking like you’re not gonna force me to play Shadow Slayer with you again right after!” Naomi laughed.

“Damn, you’re already a boring grown-up! Before me, too! And don’t you dare talk about how I’m turning 18 next year! It’s depressing to think about!” Nathan shot back at her.

Naomi rolled her eyes and went to her room. She stumbled on her books as she walked into her small room. She had the smallest room out the four of them; her mother, her father, and Nathan. They lived on the sixth floor of the 40-story apartment building in New York City. She never liked the city. Naomi hated waking up to all of the loud noises, and going outside to crowded streets lined with stores and restaurants with no room to breathe. She promised herself that she would move out to a comfortable suburban or rural area once she got out of college. Well, she had to finish high school first, and she was only a sophomore.

“I told you to stop leaving your books lying around on the floor like that! I didn’t know it was possible for someone to love reading this much until I met you! How do you even find paper books anymore? They’re so old-fashioned,” Ellie snickered.

“Relax Elle, I’m barely even hurt. And you know that it just doesn’t feel the same when I’m reading digitally. What are you even doing here?” Naomi questioned.

“I was bored and my mom let me come over. But I have to go to the bathroom, so wait here! And we are definitely not doing that schoolwork I heard you talking about!” Ellie shouted.

Yup, that was definitely Ellie. She was Naomi’s best friend. The two girls were complete opposites, from their appearance to their personalities. Ellie’s shoulder length bright red hair perfectly matched her hot temper and fiery attitude, and while she had light brown eyes, Naomi had violet. Her violet eyes were the thing she loved most about her appearance. About ten years before she was born, in around 2190, eye colors like purple never existed. But soon, there were some people who developed this eye color because of some weird chemical explosion. At least, that was all Naomi knew. The only negative thing was all of the attention she got from it! She took a seat at her desk and unpacked her bag. Hopefully, she’d be able to get at least a little bit done before Ellie returned from the bathroom.

“Attention! Exit your building immediately! Use the emergency Sli—”

The words stopped, the connection broken. Naomi shot up out of her seat. What was going on? She rushed out of her room to look for her brother, but he was nowhere to be found. The smell of smoke started growing more powerful. She turned to look out the window. All around her, buildings started to crumble and catch on fire. Her neighborhood was being crushed before her very eyes! But as for what she saw next, she would never forget the feeling coursing through her body. Her eyes grew wide. She felt a sudden dizziness and her body started to tremble. They had arms, legs, heads, and features similar to humans! They were so tall that not even the giants in her fantasy books could compare. And they were destroying everything around them, as if they had minds of their own!

“Mom! Dad! Nathan! Ellie!” Naomi half yelled, half sobbed. “Please!”

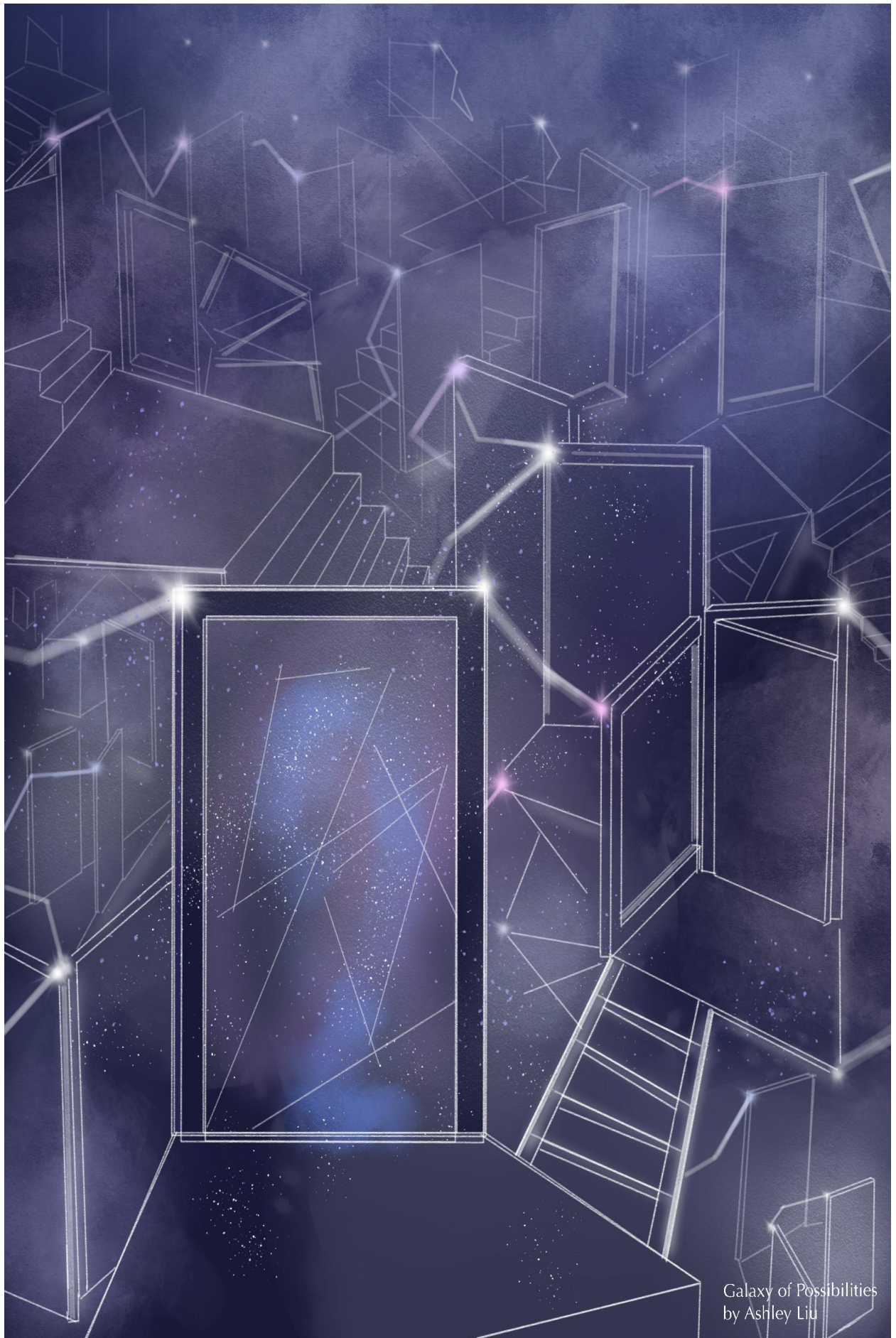
There was no sign of Ellie in the bathroom, and Nathan and her parents were nowhere to be found either. She couldn't just leave them...could she? She heard a loud crashing sound. She looked out the window to see an apartment building only a few buildings away, snapped in half by one of those gigantic, metal arms—made up of our technology—like a toy a child doesn't like. Yes, she had to leave. There was no way her family and Elle were still in the building; they were probably safe and were waiting for her. She wasn't going to die!

She quickly went to her room, and grabbed the bag that she was going to use for her sleepover at Ellie's the next day, hoping it would have everything she needed. She didn't even want to think about it. She was a little ashamed to admit it, but she wasted time grabbing a few books to put into her bag. To be fair, they were quite important to her. She just couldn't lose them! She ran to the balcony as the flames were starting to reach her floor and pressed her thumb against the fingerprint ID. A slide shot out of the side of the wall and Naomi took a deep breath, taking one last look at her apartment building before the fire started consuming what was left.

"Bye," she whispered. Maybe it was to no one, maybe to herself, or maybe to her invisible family.

As one of the machines turned toward her building, she let the slide carry her. In the blink of an eye, Naomi was sitting on the ground, a little dazed from how fast she was going on the slide. There was no time to think, cry, or feel. She bolted, her feet flying over what used to be the sidewalk, over the stones and pieces of broken glass. And while the wind was whipping her face, she had one thought in her mind. She needed to find a place to hide. She wouldn't let herself be crushed by these soulless pieces of technology! And so, even when her thighs throbbed and her lungs burned in need of oxygen, she never halted. Finally, she saw a piece of rubble big enough to be used as a hiding spot, distant enough so that the machines wouldn't notice. Her chest rose and fell rapidly, her breath catching up to what her legs ran. Closing her eyes and curling up into a ball behind the giant piece of rubble, she waited for everything to be over.

"I wonder," she whispered, "what will happen next?"



Galaxy of Possibilities
by Ashley Liu