

*The Phoenix*  
2020-2021



"Solace"  
Anjali Gauld

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# A Thank You to the Manhasset Staff

*The Phoenix* would like to thank the teachers and administrators who have supported our efforts and helped to foster the creative spirit of Manhasset Secondary School.

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# Phoenix 2021 Staff

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# Letter From the Editor

## Eunice Choi

Dear Staff, Writers, Artists, and Readers,

There's a saying that you've most likely heard sometime in the past few years, during your English or history class: "The pen is mightier than the sword". While you may roll your eyes at this banality, throughout the past year, we've been given more time than ever- to write, paint, create, and grow. Unequivocally, the strife we have faced has been testing and unprecedented.

But change is never comfortable. Historically, it was catalysts such as the Stonewall Riots and the Civil Rights Movement that underrepresented oppressed minorities were able to gain the representation and rights they had sought for centuries. Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree for forty-nine days before he was able to relinquish material possessions and achieve enlightenment.

*The Phoenix* was founded on the unadulterated artistic expression of students and the mythological Greek bird of the phoenix. Rising from the ashes, against all odds, the phoenix is able to be born again with its brilliant red and gold plumage. This year's theme, "The sound of silence" draws upon the cyclical nature of the phoenix's reemergence: in order to rise up in flames and emerge from the ashes, it must learn from hardship. Appreciating the silence, the in-between episodes in which our limits are tested, are crucial in moving forward. Through isolation and change, *The Phoenix* was still able to present this year's edition, despite being completely virtual. And through these hardships, can we be reborn.

Sincerely,

Eunice Choi

Editor-in-Chief 2021

# The Karie Sit Art and Writing Contest 2021

Karie Sit was a beloved member of Manhasset High School and was part of the class of 2015. *The Phoenix* was one of her favorite clubs, where she enjoyed expressing herself through creative writing. Her compassion and creativity continues to inspire others. Karie's last piece was a touching requiem that was the basis for the 2016 edition of this magazine.

After her passing, the Karie Sit Award was created in order to encourage other writers and artists to see the same beauty in self-expression that she did. *The Phoenix* is incredibly grateful for the Sit Family's continued support for this contest, and will continue to honor her memory through promoting creativity in art and writing at Manhasset.

Every year, the staff of *The Phoenix* chooses a theme for the contest. One writer and one artist in the high school and middle school categories are selected as winners. This year's choice was "The Sound of Silence". We are honored to announce Jordan Aboyoun and Mia Hoang as the winning high school and middle school artists, and Iris Liu and Remy Yin as the winning high school and middle school writers.



Jordan Aboyoun  
Karie Sit High School Art Winner





Mia Hoang  
Karie Sit Middle School Art Winner

# A Ghost Story – Karie Sit HS Writing Winner

## Iris Liu

On the day I met the boy, the ghosts and I were singing Amazing Grace. Some of us sounded like the blowing of a gentle breeze in the autumn night; some of us sounded like a bell, and I sounded like the soft crackles of a fireplace. The harmonious melody of our voices turned into rats being choked to death when we noticed a boy standing at the gate of the graveyard. At first glance, I thought he was a Halloween skeleton decoration. He was thin and scrawny, but he held his head high and his eyes were filled with determination.

“What is he doing here?” Ken, the blacksmith exclaimed. “He’s going to scare away our audience!”

“Could he be lost?” Anne, the baker asked “Where are his parents? He looks like he’s going to fall over.”

Visits from humans were rare and we argued about this strange new visitor. But the boy just stood there, with his mouth agape in wonder and staring so intently at us that I thought that he could... see us?

I voiced my concern to the others, but they brushed it off. That’s impossible to do, they said. The boy is lost and will probably go back to his house soon. But my curiosity was too strong to ignore, so when the boy slowly slipped out of the graveyard, I trailed behind.

I could remember vaguely that I grew up in this place, but I didn’t recognize it at all. New kinds of cars sped past us on the road, houses filled every bit of open land and stood next to each other in rows, and there were even some strange machines on the lawns.

I watched the boy meander down the stone path to the town and make his way to a brick house that looked more like a glorified garden shed. As I slithered into the house, the scent of the living immediately closed in on me. Gross. I tried to ignore the urge to zip back to the cemetery. The living makes us ghosts feel like we’re stuffed in three layers of coats on a hot summer day.

“Hey!” A woman exclaimed from the tattered sofa, she hung up her phone. “How was your day?”

The boy held his hands up and gestured something. His face lit up with a small smile.

“That’s great to hear.” The woman replied. Exhaustion spread over her like molasses, dragging her eyes and her arms down. But she fought with all her strength to smile at the boy and then handed him a pill. I wondered what it was for?

“Dinner will be ready in one hour, take your medicine and take a nap, okay?”

The boy gave her a thumbs up and then hugged her. He hopped away from the kitchen and through a small door.

In the room, the boy began to dig around in a giant cardboard box for something. Meanwhile, I floated around, taking the room in. It wasn't that bad actually. It was clean and organized; a few toys and books were scattered over the desk. The bed had some soft pillows on it, but nothing else.

The boy finally pulled a ragged notebook out from the other junk; perhaps he wanted to do his homework. I thought back to my living days and wondered if I did homework. But all of my memories were hazy except one: my son crying in the closet of his room. I was always too busy traveling for work when I was alive and never comforted him.

With a flourish, the kid wrote something on his notebook and turned it over. On a piece of loose leaf, he wrote I can see you. "What?" I whispered. I'd never heard of a human that could communicate to a ghost without using some special device. Why was this happening?

The boy's shoulders shook with silent laughter when he saw the shock on my face. He flipped to another page and wrote, You have a nice voice.

"I know!" I grinned with triumph. "Not to brag, I have the best voice in the chorus. But uh...how is this possible? Are you some sort of wizard?"

The boy shook his head and shrugged. He scribbled, And how do ghosts work? I thought you guys only existed in fairy tales.

"Well, you see, child." I tapped him on his head. "Most spirits go off to heaven or hell when they die, but those who have an especially strong desire or wish that remained unfulfilled on earth must remain here and attempt, against all odds, to fulfill it. It's really not all that great, but it is what it is."

I glanced over his head, he started to write his response. "How come you are writing everything down?"

He hovered over his paper for some time, thinking and staring into the covers of his bed, before finally jotting down the words, My lungs are not working because I'm sick. It's hard to speak.

"Ah..." I sat down by him on the bed. "I see, sorry." It must be hard to live without being able to speak, yet the boy is still so optimistic. It's nice.

"But you said you are going to become a ghost." I pondered a moment. "So what is it that you still have to do here on Earth?" The boy pointed at the roof. Ugly rusted pipes dangled stiffly; water dripped down through the cracks. I grew anxious watching the boy stand under it.

I want to fix our roof. The boy frowned. My parents spent all of our money on my treatment. I overheard that it will take a total of \$10,000 in order to fix it.

Being with this boy reminded me of everything that I'd lost. During the 18 years that I spent as a ghost, I'd grown numb to a lot of things. I missed the smell of a rainy day, the scratch of a phonograph record, and the taste of bread pudding. And I realized that I didn't want to be a ghost anymore. But although I was stuck, I could still help this boy. Being forced to spend the rest of eternity haunting the hollow remains of your grave is an awful fate, and he didn't deserve it.

“You know what, I’ll make sure you fulfill your wish and die a satisfied spirit. Pinkie promise.”

The boy’s eyes shone with excitement and he scrambled to write Thank you!! :)

“Alright, let’s brainstorm. Do you have any ideas?”

The boy clicked the pen repeatedly, then wrote, we can start a lemonade shop.

“Oh, well...a lemonade stand is a nice thought, but it would take years before we could even get enough money for half of the roof.” Of course, a kid would think that. I chuckled. “Do you have any ingredients?”

The boy shook his head sadly. What about a car wash?

“I don’t think your body can hand handle that much work.”

We scribbled ideas for hours. We thought of mowing other people’s lawns, tutoring other students, but nothing we thought of seemed likely to work.

The boy gave a frustrated huff and gestured to the outside. He seemed a bit down, so I figured that getting a breath of fresh air would lift his spirit.

As we wandered into a plaza, the sense of the living got more and more suffocating. The boy wheezed from all the movement so I told him to rest on the bench for a while. When I looked around, there were vendors selling hot dogs, fried rice, people chatting and laughing on the benches, and musicians with unusual attires and well-polished instruments...musicians? Musicians!

That word was like a brilliant firework that lit up my brain. How could I have not known! All my worries were lifted from my body. I knew exactly what to do.

I hovered over the boy and linked a part of my soul to him. And suddenly, everything else was real. The wind was blowing against my face and the sunshine touched my skin instead of passing right through me. But it was very hard to appreciate being ‘alive’ again when I felt like my lungs were being compressed in a vise.

Okay, you can do this. I said to myself and placed the boy’s hat in front of him. You’ve performed in front of audiences much much larger than this one. Just breathe.

So I closed my eyes and started to sing. When people turned to look, they saw a boy in torn jeans singing in a voice that sounded like a crackling fire. But the partial link between our souls only allowed a narrow strand of my voice to travel through him. The air grew increasingly heavy and my voice wobbled when the slightest wind blew.

This is as far as the partial possession could get us. Yet a complete link between our souls would endanger the boy’s health, and that is the last thing I wanted. Still determined, I clenched my fist and sang through nausea and the feeling of suffocation.

--

That was amazing! The boy gestured at his notepad wildly. He rolled around in his bed while I sat on the window sill. Pride filled my chest and made my smile stretch from ear to ear. It’s awesome to have an appreciating audience, especially when I get to help the boy in the process.

“Felt pretty good, right? Let’s see how much you’ve got.”

The kid scattered the money and coins in the hat onto the floor.

I helped him organize the spare change and found out we had made almost 20 dollars. It was a small dent in our goal, but it seemed to cheer up the kid; he danced around his room while I laughed. Glancing at the sunlight outside the window, I remembered a moment that my son was joyous like this too. I see him running through the living room, taking his toy train, and screaming at the top of his lungs.

In order to reach our goal, we traveled back and forth from the town and the house every day. I spent many evenings learning new ghost songs and often worried about the boy’s health. I tried to take care of him as best as I could by reminding him to keep warm or to eat.

We watched the green leaves turn into brilliant shades of yellow and red, trampled around in the snow, and fed the birds that came back to their nests in spring. I learned that his favorite animal was the giraffe because of its long neck. I even managed to learn some sign language!

When the seasons shifted back to summer, quite a lot had changed since we first met. We have raised a total of 6,000 dollars and the boy often sneaks off to buy food for his family. He was still as bright and optimistic as I first met him, even though he poked fun at me because I didn’t know a lawnmower was. But I also saw a change in the boy.

“You look really tired, are you alright?” The boy sat on the bench at the plaza, I tried not to nag him about taking care of himself, but it was especially hard when he loved to work and help around the house.

The boy smiled weakly and nodded before resting his head gently against the back of the bench, falling into sleep. And it was that moment when I realized what I was doing. I felt a twinge of guilt. I’m wearing his body down; I’m killing him. Why hadn’t he said something about this?

The boy woke up, but all I could think about was what these concerts were doing to him.

“Listen—” I began. “Maybe there is another way we can finish raising money for the roof. We only need another 4,000 dollars. You really aren’t looking so well.”

The boy frowned and opened his mouth as if he could speak, but his eyes rolled to the back of his head and he fell onto the ground.

“Somebody help!” I screamed in horror. People swarmed to look at what was going on. A lady picked up the boy. A child screamed. A man called an ambulance. There were noises, motions, and more people. And I could only watch as the boy was hoisted into the ambulance and driven away. Another memory of my past life flashed before my eyes: my son’s funeral.

It was grey and numb. I remember clearly now what it felt like seeing his stoic face lowered into his grave. It felt like I was falling and that every breath was hollow. A careless driver was all it took to take the most precious thing from my life. What pains me more now is that I know he only thought of me as a stranger.

--

The hospital felt cold. The boy had changed into a patient’s gown and he had tubes running into his nose to help him breathe. I paced around the room aimlessly, trying to find something to distract me from the lifeless body that rested on the bed. I attempted to look at the birds outside the window, but all that I could think about was that another son was going to be taken away from me.

After some time, the boy slowly opened his eyes. “ thank god you’re okay.” I exclaimed and the boy signed hello back. “This was my fault, I don’t know what I was thinking, putting you at risk like that.”

It’s okay, I am going to die soon.

The boy’s words chilled me; a child his age shouldn’t have already accepted that he was going to die.

The doctor said... he paused to think before writing, that I have one more week

“You should focus on getting better. You should spend the next week with your parents and doing the things you love. We’ll stop the performances for now.”

The boy shook his head violently. We still don’t have enough money

“I know, but you should enjoy your last moments with your family.”

I can’t die peacefully without knowing my family can be happy, I will never forgive myself! I don’t want to be a ghost. Please.

We stared at each other in silence. The boy had a point and, after all, I was the one who had turned his back on his family all those years ago. At least the boy had the courage to bring joy to his one last time.

“Fine.” I sighed “What do you need me to do?”

A full possession. His eyes were filled with determination. Our last concert in this hospital, one last time.

I walked over to him, taking a deep breath, before connecting our souls once more. This time, the pain was much greater. I let out a few murmurs, surprised to hear that our voice was now perfectly stable, ready for the performance of a lifetime. I placed the boy’s hat onto the floor. His soul was jittering with nerves and excitement.

The clear sound of our voice rang through the entire hospital. It punctured through the walls and we sang for the world to hear. I decided to sing Amazing Grace for our first song, in memory of us meeting for the first time.

One by one, people stopped in our doorway to look. The boy’s parents gasped at the sight as tears filled their eyes. I could feel the boy’s soul laughing and dancing.

I sang all the songs I had learned in the past year, bringing more and more spectators. An old lady cried and another boy stood there in shock. Reporters quietly came by the doorway and recorded us.

These reporters put us on something called the internet where we quickly became a star. People joined our singing in their own homes, talking about their sorrows and their stories. They joined together to raise money for the boy’s treatment and his illness.

Yet the boy’s soul was getting weaker and weaker. When the fourth day came, I was ejected out of the boy’s soul. The soul was no longer glowing with joy nor was it dancing. I looked back on the bed. The boy’s breathing slowed and his eyes dropped. At least he will go to heaven.

“Sleep well buddy” I silently whispered, trying to brush the hair from his eyes. Sorrow gripped me tightly as I slowly drifted out of the room. The hat was filled with money, yet I felt no joy like I had felt at our previous performances.

When I got out of the hospital, there was no boy to follow me. Once again, it was just me and the few other ghosts. Here, forever. Suddenly, everything came to a stop. Darkness surrounded me except for a soft light glowing in front of me, radiating warmth. The boy stood inside the light, waving goodbye, and wrapped his arms around my transparent figure in an attempt to hug me. Tears burned the rim of my eyes.

The boy smiled knowingly and pointed behind my back. There stood my son, staring at me in disbelief. He wore the brand new red shirt I had bought him the day he died and his hair was sticking in every direction.

I kneeled down and took him into my arms as the warmth slowly dragged me into an eternal sleep.

**The end.**

# Untitled – Karie Sit MS Writing Winner

## Remy Yin

I used to say,  
“Mommy I’m scared,”  
Scared of the monsters and demons  
hiding in the dark of my closet  
I endured the pain,  
bruises,  
and blood.  
Now, only the corrupt, and broken  
fractions of me remain.  
Except,  
I still look in the mirror sometimes,  
and detest my frail arms with only bone and skin;  
loathe my skin that’s always a purple and blue hue.  
I abhor my gray eyes that are always averting eye contact;  
no confidence or determination in myself;  
Mommy, there were no monsters hiding in the dark under the mountain of clothes.  
You were the monster.  
*“I tried loving you.”*





# Metallic Raindrops

## Gwendolyn Seto

she sees copper skies today—

hunched, fatigued, wrapped in jackets. soft

plastic, creased nylon. faded rainbow mural

muffled upon crumbling brick. the air softens

with dewy smiles, cracking his knuckles, blurring

morose city-dweller glares. she sits on the

pavement, clutches an open can for pennies,

plink,

plink

desperate coins, choppy syllables of raindrops

and flower petals on the lowly sunday

afternoon. dazzled and quiet, blue fog escapes

from her chapped lips. she blesses the thunderstorm

as he releases dimes and quarters from the

sky, holy helpings of silver,

plunk,

plunk

# Exemplified

## Nitya Wanchoo

Silenced voices sound

Nothing more than radio static

Or background whistles

Blended into white noise

The minorities quickly trampled

By the people of privilege

Endlessly in power

The same ongoing trope

Countless ignored demands

Now with the stakes as high as ever.

# the flowers and the trees

Nitya Wanchoo

I wonder if the flowers are envious of the trees  
for having cheeky banter with the clouds  
and being able to stand their ground  
to enjoy bear hugs from children  
or if the trees are jealous of the flowers  
and their beautiful petals which put them in high demand  
for the flowers have busy bees and petal crowns  
and do wonders for people in love

I wonder if the flowers ever feel guilty  
for rooting at the feet of the trees  
or if the trees ever feel at fault  
for stealing all the rain from the flowers

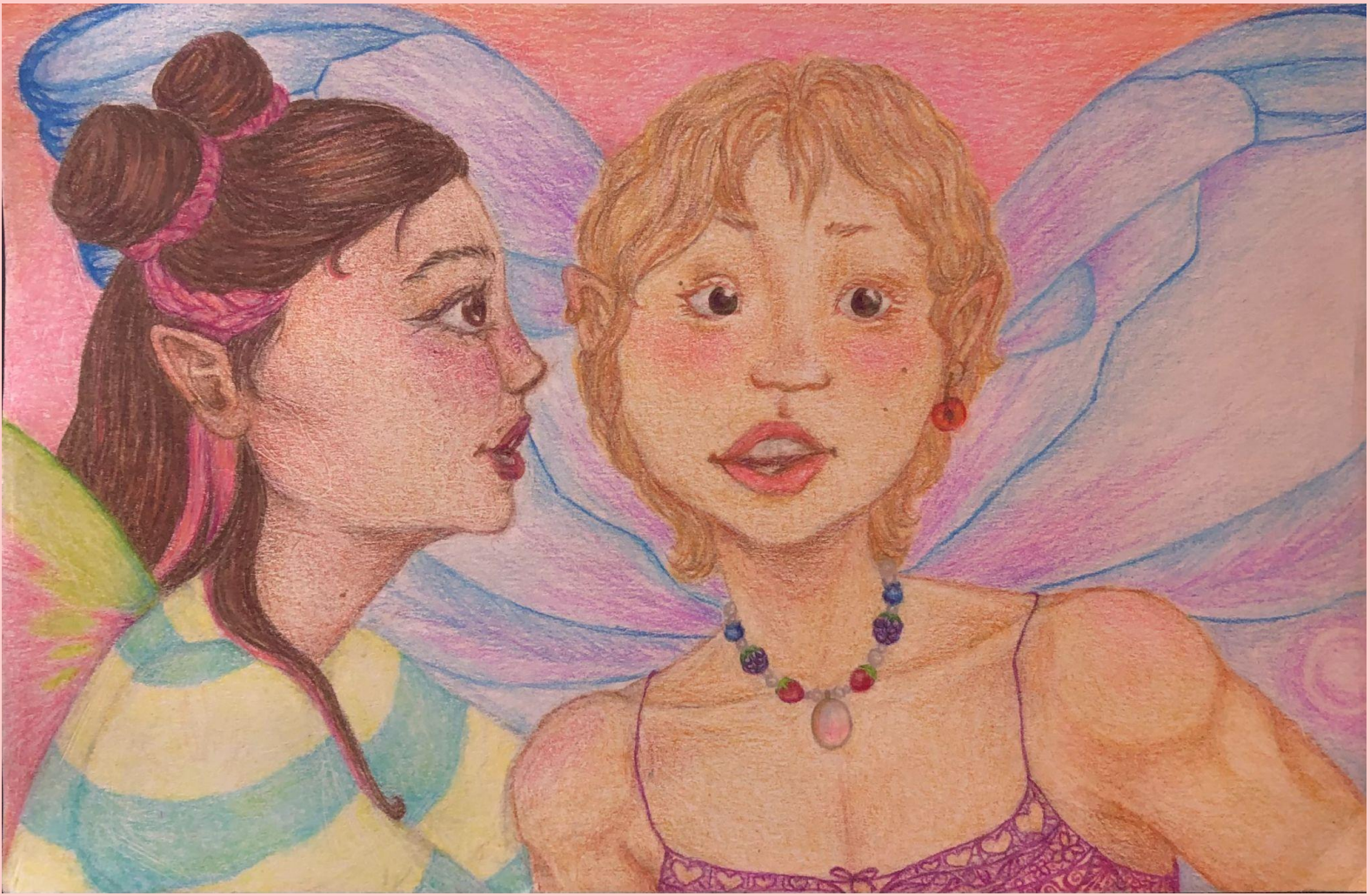
I wonder if the flowers know that the trees admire them  
for being so vivid and bringing a great deal of joy to passerbys  
or if the trees know that the flowers look up to them  
as they stand mighty tall with even the worst of winds

I wonder if the flowers and the trees have befriended one another yet,  
and whether they look out for each other

I wonder if the flowers tell their bees to make hives in the trees, so that they too, can  
taste the honey  
or whether they taught the trees to change color in fall, so that they're as lively as the  
flowers

and I wonder if the trees purposely drop acorns by the feet of the flowers as little gifts  
or if the trees have asked the wind to be gentle with the flowers, so that they are not  
uprooted

I hope the flowers and trees take care of one another, as good friends do.



# Thunderstorm at 2 a.m.

## Gwendolyn Seto

a deep rumble flared from  
his throat as he  
erupted, spewing out stones of ill will  
a battle cry of hysteria, never exhausted  
flame of indignation his eyes- live  
coals.  
his lips- chimney ashes. his fists- asphalt.  
me- a thin ribbon,  
flaxen and frail, bending  
from pattering raindrops. me- limp,  
soaking my back turned against the  
storm, but the  
chill slices straight through  
anyways

# To My Dearest Friend, Serena Mancuso

you who pretends not to know me these days  
or is it *me* who pretends not to know *you*?

the word “hello” is the only thing we now share  
in the dreaded hallway that has no end  
an awkwardness  
a silence  
roaming in the empty space between  
strangers  
once lovers

i look for you always,  
in the crowd of hurried people who don't care that we exist  
they're all the same to me now  
but you, and your face, it's familiar  
you remind me so much of myself  
and maybe that's why i cant stop searching for you  
looking and looking in the crowd  
where are you?  
where am i?  
*there*  
yet all i can do is say “hello” and look away

there are some days i just can't find you at all  
and i'm afraid that soon,  
it might become  
*forever*

# My Planner

## Esha Brar

One of my dearest and loved possessions has always been my planner. From the beginning of time, my planner, with each individual one given a unique and important name, were all able to fulfill a simple and single purpose: to clean and organize my constantly roaming, filled, stressed out brain. Writing down the simplest of tasks in my planner, even just making my bed, was able to make each one of my dreaded and hated tasks feel like an event in itself. As stated in the Cambridge English Dictionary, the definition of a planner is a document or software that helps you plan something. For me, my planner was a way of writing down the stressful and annoying tasks that I had to complete, and seeing them on paper was a way that I could physically and mentally prepare myself for what I had to do. Looking back at it now, it is truly crazy to even fathom that I could think to write down everything in my life. Would I have been able to write about a pandemic hitting the entire world, or having my 16th birthday trip ruined, or seeing a whole movement devoted to Black injustice and prejudice. My planner was always my place of sanction, even writing down where I would end up in college was something I always wanted to check off by a simple box. But, I've realized that we as individuals can't truly control every aspect of our lives, and that tasks would come up that can't be written down, or checked off as easily as making my bed could be. My planner can no longer be my reliance and safe protected gate from the real realities of life, and from this I've learned that I'm a growing individual as well, and that I have a lot to learn and discover about myself now. I don't think it's crazy to plan even the way that I do, along with my OCD playing a big role in this, but I strongly feel, after years of reflection, that my journey as a human can't be planned, and isn't a simple task that I will be able to write in my planner anymore. Perhaps I won't chuck out my planner, but rather keep it as a memory of the crazy, obsessive person that I was, to think I could control every aspect of my life.





# A Conversation With Winter

## Christina Petras

winter whispered and I listened  
his breath floating like snow-flakes  
softly and swiftly raising me up  
and laying me on a white blanket-  
colored white only for him  
and the angels who sing in church.

who am I to whisper back  
only winter can convince himself  
to paint over the sky with  
his own ashes.

winters hearth soaked with the evil,  
burning my nose like a fire  
that is always lit.

why winter do you lay between my ears  
and drown reality

because winter enjoys silence-  
he sits in my room and screams silently,  
he sounds the alarms, but I unfailingly let them ring  
and ring and ring.

# fortune cookie

## Gwendolyn Seto

wrapper

“aren’t asian girls usually short?” he wears a dallas cowboys’ baseball cap backwards, partially covering blond unruly tufts. the corners of his soft meadow eyes crinkle and he laughs like a crow. “i’m not—” he pauses, flashing ivory. “—racist. it’s just that you’re—” and he waves a hand nonchalantly down my form, stripped bare in his chimera, eyes weaving in and out of mirage, then meeting mine. fingertips creep towards my kneecap, trembling with the anticipation of a feast, a steady yearn for the calf with wobbly long legs and twilight silk fur. “—you’re gorgeous.”

cookie

“aren’t asian girls usually smart?” he muses, leaning back against his plastic chair to draw his lips close to my cheek, hot air moisturizing my skin. the professor is musing through shakespeare today, reciting poetic silhouettes, but i am beckoned by my gilded boy, the zealous antihero preparing to lasso, one arm outstretched into the murky air and the other on the holster of a shotgun. “you know, usually ivy-league bound, honors class people—” he fired once, twice, into the drowsy high noon air, neon smoke trails in its wake. bullets that did not dare to ricochet, he knew. lustrous pebbles with only a one-way ticket. “i’ll tell you what. you don’t belong in this class.” and the lasso looped around

the tender calf, thick, blistering rope tearing at the delicate  
flesh of the neck. “not that i’m complaining.”

fortune

“aren’t asian girls usually quiet?” he whispers  
forlornly, doggedly, letting his voice catch the tide and  
mine to sail away in premature adieus.  
i cock my head at him, dauntingly, as he dangles the  
paper sheets in front of my face. “think you can handle  
talking about iago and othello? because  
if you can’t...” he shrugs with lips turning  
upwards into a guffaw, and i see straight through  
the polychrome star on his baseball cap  
to a pale hatchet-carrier, ready to swing the  
metal blade across a forehead, yearning  
for a thick plate of veal chop and mashed  
potatoes and brown gravy. “i can help.” he pleads. i sift  
my glare to his chapped lips, then back to his hat,  
where a lone blue blotch bobbed in agreement to each  
mounting word. sickle-bearer,  
machete-wielder, sword-hauler. i know he’ll

gnaw on the bone and toss it to his dog,  
slew the entrails across the stable floor, toss it  
in the trash. drown his rosy hands in sudsy  
water, laugh. “11 p.m. tonight, my bedroom,” he  
murmurs, voice drawing down hastily. “and don’t  
you dare forget it.”



# milk wings

Gwendolyn Seto

newspaper clippings  
of scattered sepia  
from obese folder  
dropping onto  
hardwood grease  
floor because  
she gathered  
and cut and  
cut and cut  
and cut and  
scissors trembling  
from tortoise  
hands she  
glances at  
crimson pop  
art the glaring  
“WOW!” and  
“LOWEST PRICES  
OF THE SEASON!”  
from boastful  
magazine  
whirlwind of glossy  
scrap paper injecting  
white noise  
directly into  
her brain like  
quill needle prickle  
she guffaws  
and empty voice  
trailblazes in  
empty home  
so she muses  
about him but  
oh he left so  
long ago it  
was useless  
and she is now

hungry with  
crumb  
clippings  
scintilla of  
doubt traces

paper airplane-  
esque across her  
sun-dried raisin  
visage (but  
on top coffee  
ground grains  
and on top  
of that coarse  
brown sugar  
residue from  
the mason jar and  
on top of that  
lachrymose  
folds of sooty  
lace bandanna  
as flapping  
flaccid shield) but  
make sure when  
tying lead knot  
at the back don't  
tangle wispy  
dove plumes  
because the  
birds will cry  
sweet beethoven  
ambassador of  
amity with  
double-ply tissue  
breast feathers  
ripe for  
stroking while  
they slice their petite  
talons into  
granola coupons  
which leaves  
paper cuts  
trailing across her  
pepper laden  
crumpled lizard  
skin but all  
she remembers  
is the tracings

of a reverie with  
him (perhaps he  
was once a dove  
too) as she  
ties up cocoa  
shoelaces with  
a parched  
palm against  
the alabaster  
doorknob  
and slung across  
her wool sweater  
quivers a  
hunting bag  
stuffed  
with waxy  
parchment shreds  
and pearly slices of  
brittle bird wing  
bones





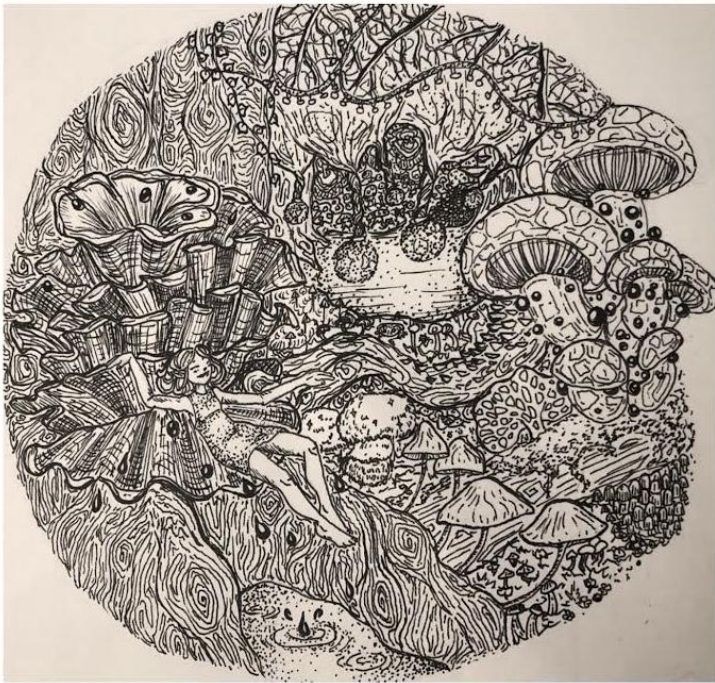
# Mayzie Grobe

## Maxwell Jervis

Quietly they walked down the stairs,  
To gather from near and far; just there.  
I click on them, and look to see,  
If they will sing their song for me.  
Whether it be Harvestfest, Winterfest, or Love Day  
Their cheerful song is there to stay.  
But once in a while, when I click,  
Nothing is heard not even a bit;  
Of their song comes through to be heard,  
Their song is silent, but it is caught by the herd.  
I play this game not for escape  
It forces reality, places no drape.  
All is seen, all is heard,  
But Mayzie Grobe has left me deterred.  
I open a tab to find a fix,  
And a website says it can fix this glitch.  
I trust it and open the game again, to silence and suspense within the environment.  
Although the song was silent before, with this fix it is silent no more.  
I check once more and hear them sing.  
Finally, the curse of silence has been broken.  
Oh Mayzie Grobe, I hear you now, and try to remember the ways how  
You sang those times before.  
With a click I look around.  
I want you to know that I will always be there, to fix, to find, to let it sound.  
Mayzie Grobe your sound is heard, I take a knee and listen quietly.

[Mayzie Grobe I sing to thee,  
Your perfect prayer,  
Fever dream.  
You bring me breath,  
You are my air  
You teach me how to really care.

You see no evil, only sweet  
The honey suckle of your beat  
Don't leave me here  
Don't leave me now  
Oh Mayzie Grobe please take this vow.  
Forever here so I can forever hear  
Your blessed tune  
As flowers bloom.  
You are my beginning  
You end my end  
Mayzie Grobe please stay with me.  
Mayzie Grobe I sing to thee  
Your perfect prayer  
Fever dream].



# Community from a Celestial Perspective

## Caroline Owen

community is not a quantifiable *thing*  
that can be confined into a tiny box  
and defined by sixteen  
twelve-point font words  
in a thickly-bound book or the internet

community is the people who  
witness our supernovas,  
who champion our successes  
and transfer their strength to us  
when we fail to locate it within ourselves

they are with whom the  
    fragments  
        of our  
    multifaceted identities  
converge  
as we rediscover the things  
that light our hearts aflame  
and fill us with golden nectar

sweet and addictive,  
these pieces come together like  
the dots that make up a constellation,  
each forming something much greater than itself  
and far less uncertain

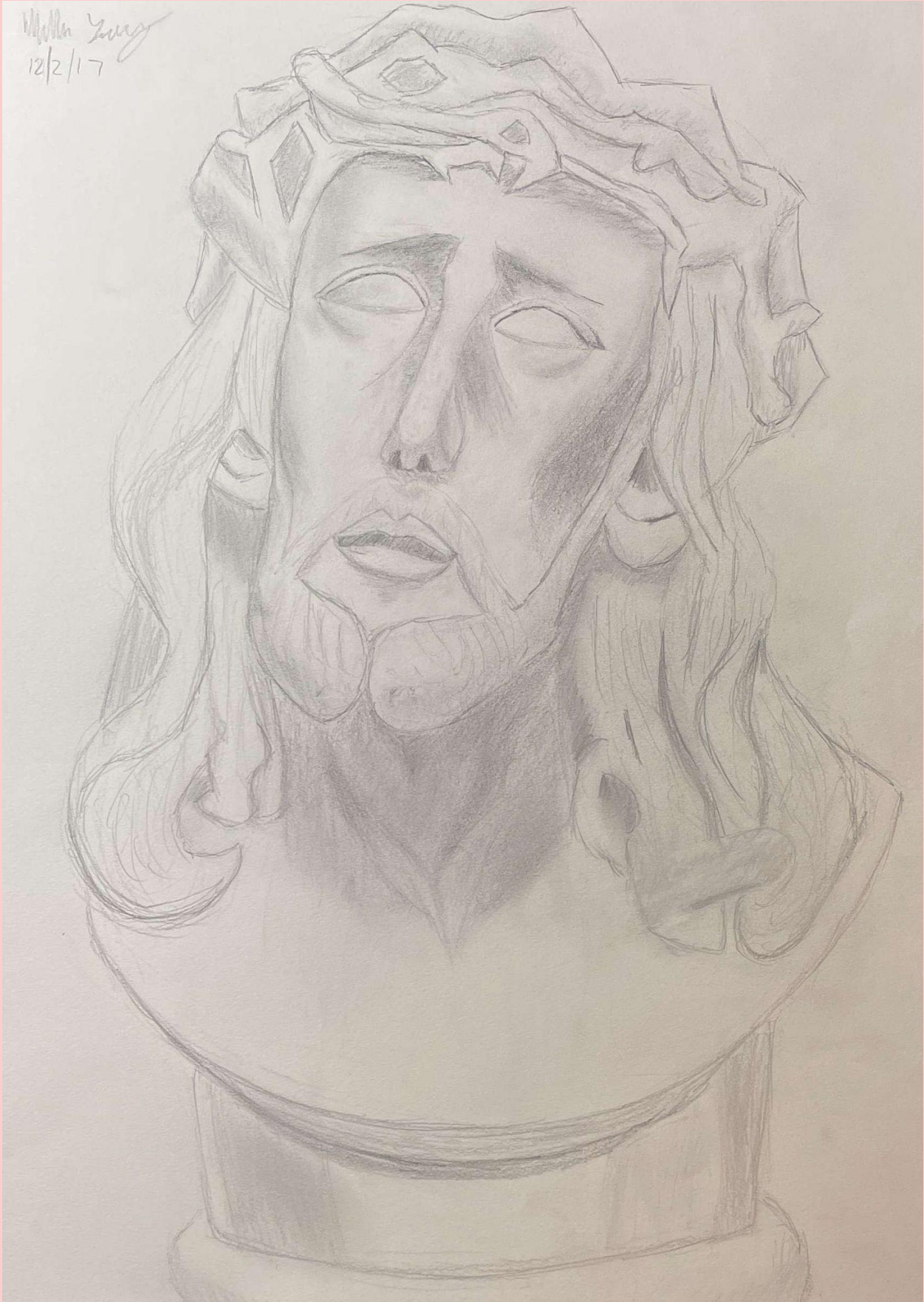
our communities are the people whom  
we welcome to share our sphere of life,  
to breathe the same air,  
sense the same worry and excitement  
course through their veins and minds  
as it does in ours

in this inconstant universe,  
we congregate like sheep,  
herded into the dewy fabric of the  
midnight sky

we seek refuge in the safest spaces,  
the most private corners  
where we are allowed everything  
that *being us* encompasses  
and can live most authentically  
and vibrantly  
without fear of our light being  
extinguished by others

we seek out the feeling of complete  
security and belonging,  
of knowing with every fiber of your being,  
that you are meant to be here,  
a tingle deep within your bones  
reminding you, constantly,  
that there is a chasm  
(even if it's microscopic)  
in our world carved out for your existence

William Tseng  
12/2/17



# The Flowers That You Keep

## Siri Craven

You're watering fake flowers, and hoping they'll grow,  
I'll pour out the excess, so insects don't stay,  
We'll pretend that they're taller, and you'll never know.

The blossoms are stained a too-bright yellow,  
And, because I'm too afraid to say,  
You're watering fake flowers, and hoping they'll grow.

They've already died, made of synthetic soul,  
It's been weeks, and just as vibrant are they,  
We'll pretend that they're taller, and you'll never know.

Their plastic stems stand in a too-perfect row,  
You haven't noticed the leaves that turned grey,  
You're watering fake flowers, and hoping they'll grow.

You have people over and, proudly, you show,  
The plants that haven't aged a day.  
We'll pretend that they're taller, and you'll never know.

Organic plants would have died long ago,  
They don't usually bloom until May,  
Still, you're watering fake flowers, and hoping they'll grow,  
We'll pretend that they're taller, and you'll never know.



# Windless Lonely Forest

## Ava Shu

Spilled ink

The corner of the wall

Wooden fence

Everlasting

Impermanent summers

Love inscribed

the back of your chair

Words written

On top of my desk

No replies

The one flower

Blossomed through the

Cracked cement

Through millions of years

Of waiting

Of solitude

A windless, lonely

Forest

Time didn't wait

I stood

Same place

You forgot to look back

Take me with you

Sun and Moon turned

Mountains and Rivers never changed

The story shouldn't end

Through the years

You stole

The way we were

You held her hand

The love you tried so hard to keep

Was just smoke.

Mountains were the story of the mist and water

Clouds were the story of the wind and sky

You were my story

I was never yours.

