

A detailed illustration of Alice in Wonderland. Alice, with long flowing blonde hair and a black bow, is shown in profile, wearing a light blue dress with a white apron and a black belt. She is looking towards a bright, glowing orb in the center of a dark, swirling vortex. Playing cards are floating in the air around the orb. In the bottom left corner, a white rabbit with long ears and a red bow is visible. The overall style is painterly and whimsical.

# The Phoenix

## 2023-2024

Cover art by  
Alvina Zheng

# Table of Contents

Cover Art by Alvina Zheng	1
Thank You to Manhasset Staff	4
<i>The Phoenix</i> Staff 2023-2024	5
Editor's Note - Daniella Dell'Aquila	6
The Karie Sit Art & Writing Contest 2024	7
Karie Sit MS Writing Winner - Blair Bi	8
Karie Sit HS Writing Winner - Leo Chan	9
<i>The Recount of a Struggling Sophomore</i> by Catherine Abrams	10
<i>In the Garden</i> by Daniella Dell'Aquila	11
<i>Forget Me Not</i> by Leila Altamura	12
<i>Still Life of Apple and Pears</i> by Siri Craven	13
<i>Second Place</i> by Mia Andel	14
<i>Flowers in Black and White</i> by Alyssa Seng	15
<i>Allergies</i> by Olivia Aversano	16
<i>Traffic Crossing</i> by Hang Mi	18
<i>Rooted to the World</i> by Hannah Chang	19
<i>Skeleton</i> by Eshaal Mirza	22
<i>Haunted Shores</i> by Isabella Chung	23
<i>Crow and Crab</i> by Daniella Dell'Aquila	25
<i>Echoes after "All Things Now Remind Me"</i> by Diane Seuss by Chloe Eng	26
<i>Bananas!</i> by Zoe Eng	27
<i>Heart of Glass</i> by Sophia Jin	28
<i>Reflections</i> by Lily Westfall	29

# Table of Contents (cont.)

<i>Waves of Curiosity</i> by Hang Mi	31
<i>Ineluctability</i> by Jocelyn Liu	32
<i>Time</i> by Natalia Miranda	34
<i>Sounds</i> by Ioannis Nikas	35
<i>Falling Through Time</i> by Jocelyn Liu	36
<i>The Children of Armenia</i> by Sofia Ogulluk	37
<i>Sewed Shut</i> by Julia Weston	39
<i>Seasons</i> by Sonia Sankar	40
<i>In the Distance</i> by Mackenzie Williams	41
<i>Minarets and Regrets</i> by Nate Selbert	42
<i>Setting Moon</i> by Mia Chen	43
<i>To See the Next Part of the Dream</i> by Matteo Sokolof	44
<i>Skull in Black and White</i> by Alyssa Seng	45
<i>Ghosts</i> by Leila Altamura	46
<i>Abracadabra</i> by Isabella Falcone	47
<i>How Was Your Trip Down the Rabbit Hole?</i> by Eileen Zhao	48
<i>Sunflowers</i> by Katherine Russell	49
<i>The Night's Calling</i> by Chelsea Eng	50
<i>Still Life</i> by Kylie Russo	51
<i>Playing and Taking Care of Your Vinyl Record</i> by Jocelyn Liu	52
<i>Forest Scene</i> by Morgan Lapadula	54
<i>Beauty, Unseen</i> by Siri Craven	55
Back Cover Art by Lillian Xie	56

# 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.

## **Administrators**

Mr. Richard Roder, Principal  
Dr. Joseph Owens, Coordinator of Extracurricular Activities and  
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Dr. Rebecca Chowske, Coordinator of English Language Arts

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## **Library Media Specialist**

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## **English Department Teacher Assistant**

Annie Thornton



# The Phoenix Staff

## **Daniella Dell'Aquila**

I'm Daniella, and I'm the Editor-in-Chief, although I wouldn't say I'm the "Chief" of anything; we have worked as one team all year and I'm so proud of the edition we put together once again. While I will be attending Vanderbilt University next year and I'll have to say goodbye to the Phoenix, I am confident that the club will continue to grow and thrive! I look forward to seeing the beautiful work that will be created in years to come.

## **Isabella Falcone**

Hi! I'm Isabella, and I'm the Phoenix Magazine's Art Editor. This is my last year in the Phoenix, as I will be attending Duke University in the fall. While I obviously have a love for the arts, I've had a love for writing as well ever since I was little. I'm so grateful for the Phoenix and the amazing people I've gotten to know during my time here! I will definitely miss this club and its snacks. Wishing the best of luck to the Phoenix this upcoming school year!

## **Siri Craven**

I'm Siri, and I'm the Literary Editor for the Phoenix. I've been invested in creative writing ever since I was a child, and the Phoenix has helped me to share this passion with others. Through poetry I've been able to communicate with others, as well as myself. I've loved getting to know all the younger members and work on their writing with them, and I know they will continue to find liberation through this club in the coming years. I will be attending Amherst College in the fall, where I hope to continue creative writing.

# Editor's Note

George Orwell, the author of *Animal Farm*, which I read, and *1984*, which I partially read and faced outwards at coffee shops to make myself seem mysterious and intellectual, once said that “good writing is like a windowpane.” I take this to mean that writing, and the arts in general, allow the public a glimpse of the reality in which the artist lives. Over the past few years that I have had the privilege of contributing to *The Phoenix*, I and many others have put together a collection of voices that made up that year's student body, and no two editions were the same.

My first interaction with the Phoenix was not when I officially joined the club in high school, but in 6th grade. A family friend was that year's editor-in-chief, and my mother, trying to encourage me to learn about the school I'd be entering, arranged for me to sit in on a meeting. I had no clue what was going on, or what the meeting was for, except that the club was discussing entries for the magazine while my microwave macaroni and cheese was waiting for me at home. I don't remember anyone's name, but I do recall the pieces that were shared.

The students in this year's edition and the students from six years ago are linked by their work; both wrote about difficult classes and shared their dreams, and both drew and painted fan-art of their favorite characters, although perhaps from different shows. At the same time, their contributions are distinctly different. The students in this year's edition watched their elementary graduations over a computer screen, and the students six years ago got to hear Beyoncé and Jay-Z's first joint album.

The world we live in is constantly changing, just as our student body is constantly growing and leaving and starting anew; yet, every year there is an edition of the Phoenix, and every year there is a place in the library—with snacks—for young artists and writers to share their ideas in a community that welcomes them with open arms. This is largely thanks to the tireless efforts of our biggest cheerleaders: our teachers. Mr Novak and Mrs. Pelfrey-Kennedy are endlessly supportive and always willing to lend a hand or an ear; they keep us on track and ensure smooth sailing. Dr. Chowske and Dr. Owens are the backbone of our creative department, and we cannot thank them enough for their diligence in celebrating our students' work.

If I could leave one piece of advice for the artists and writers, or the people who would like to be artists and writers, or even the people who hate art and writing, it would be this: find your Phoenix. Not literally, as there certainly isn't enough room in the library for everyone at once, but a Phoenix as in the place where you feel comfortable enough to create. It could be a room, or an open field, or a group of people, as long as it supports your creativity; Michelangelo had to stand on a ladder to paint the Sistine Chapel. You'd be surprised at the quality of art that comes from a feeling of being free to share it.

Best Wishes,

Daniella Dell'Aquila

Editor-In-Chief  
2023-2024

# The Karie Sit Art and Writing Contest



Karie Sit was a beloved member of Manhasset High School and was part of the class of 2015. *The Phoenix* was her favorite club, 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 "Down the Rabbit Hole". We are honored to announce Alvina Zheng and Lillian Xie as the winning high school and middle school artists, whose works are on the front and back covers, respectively, and Leo Chan and Blair Bi as the winning high school and middle school writers.

Karie Sit Contest Middle School Writing Winner

*Girlworld*

Blair Bi

The girl prays to be thin  
She preys on her own body  
Watching the skin tighten around her bones  
Day by day  
She smiles, satisfied.

She consumes nothing but herself  
The dinner on the table has an irresistible allure  
She devours and  
purges at the holy pond of her bathroom

The voice says to skip another meal  
She obliges, teary eyed and shaky  
Knowing she must break the habit today  
Else the cycle will repeat forever

She falls deep into the madness,  
Chaos and tumult yet to come  
She spirals into the fathomless  
Rabbit hole.



Karie Sit Contest High School Writing Winner  
*Down and Through the Rabbit Hole*  
Leo Chan

Where fantasy lies, the truth of reality unfolds.  
Through beliefs of demise and homes anew  
A mysterious place, known by a few.

Feelings of distress and a glimpse through the past,  
No longer lets me rest.  
A dream so vivid, so unforgettable, so unfortunate--  
adieu.  
Falling through my restless dreams, anew.  
This rabbit hole, Inescapable, true.

Through twisting tunnels, secrets weave.  
laughter rises, as to deceive.  
Awake for sure, or a lucid dream?  
A belief so stubborn, unable to leave.  
Cries of distress and language none can express.  
Treatment inhumane.  
Cost of my envisions, unable to be sustained.

Heaving breaths and an agitated thought.  
Known for sure, the truth of my belief.  
Incoherent and unbelieved.

In the heart of this rabbit hole  
A truth and lie embrace,  
Entwined in this messed up place.  
The threads of this dream, a story never to be known.  
Never do I ever want to wake up from this  
rabbit hole.

# *The Recount of a Struggling Sophomore*

## Catherine Abrams

I hate chemistry.

I hate the way I can't understand it,  
And the way I can't make its puzzle pieces fit,  
I hate the big fat "B" plastered on my paper,  
Because I didn't know the difference between solid and vapor.

Whenever I see that ugly test,  
Sitting all pretty on my desk,  
I can't help but cry,  
As I recount the way my brain fried.

Trying to study is no use,  
Chemistry is mental abuse,  
And I wish I could go back to earth science,  
Where my brain and I were in compliance.  
Yet I'm here stuck in room one hundred and twenty,  
As my mind begins to empty.  
And I think about how much I hate chemistry,

And how much chemistry hates me.

*In the Garden*  
Daniella Dell'Aquila



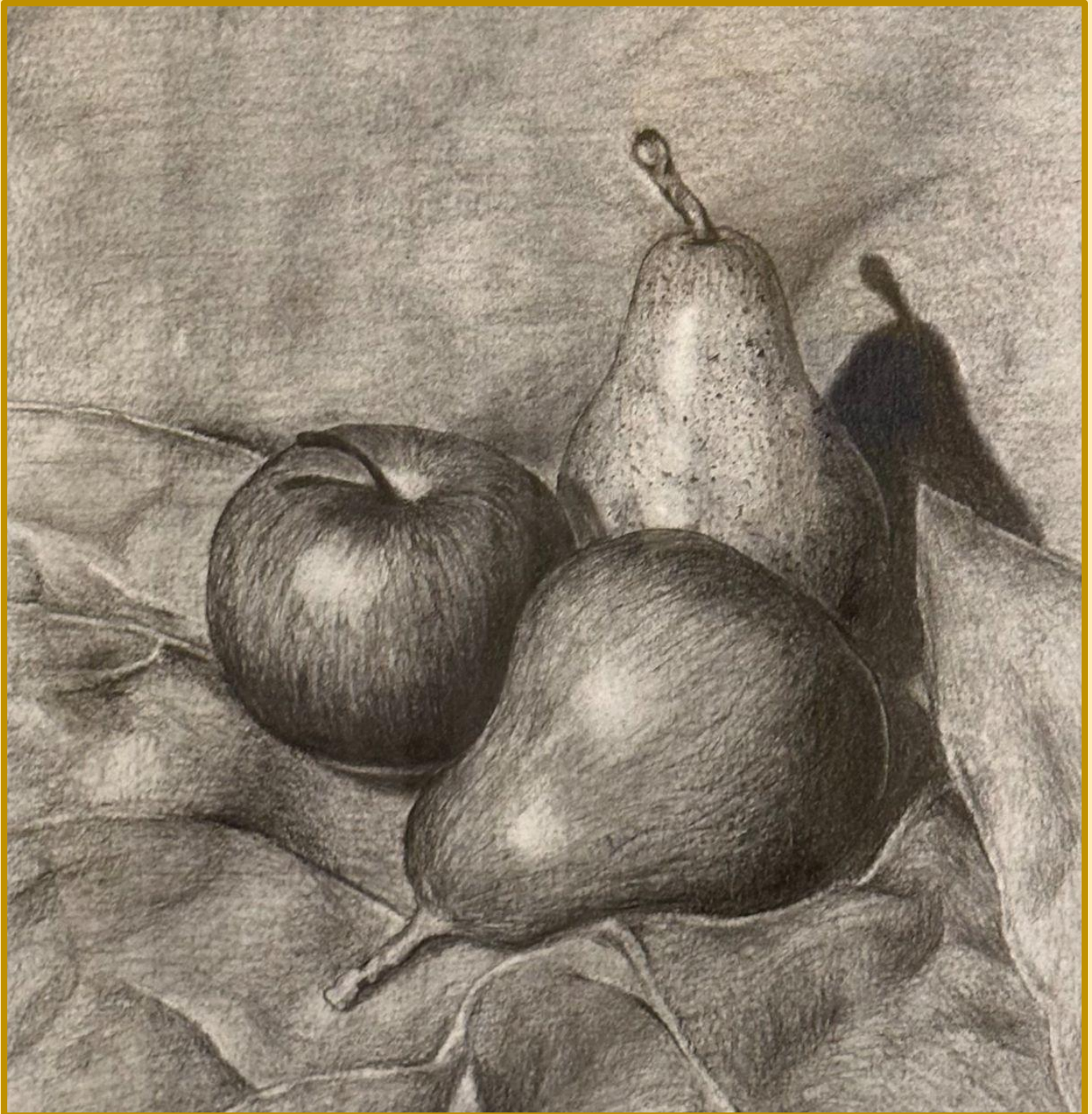
# *Forget Me Not*

## Leila Altamura

Forget me not  
On nights like these  
Where I don't love myself  
Forget me not  
On days I don't feel like myself  
Forget me not  
On nights where I cry  
Forget me not  
When I have this ongoing battle in my head  
Forget me not  
As I am the one who messed up  
Forget me not  
As I look at you from across the room  
Forget me not  
When the anxiety attacks are too much to bare  
Forget me not  
When the thought of being  
**Close**  
To you fears me  
Forget me not  
When I am close to you  
Forget me not  
When I start to stutter  
                    stutter  
                            stutter  
Forget me not.



*Still Life of Apple and Pears*  
Siri Craven



## *Second Place*

Mia Andel

Families in fancy attire take to their seats to honor the girl whose prose and rows of carefully thought out words flow like the songs of birds.

Why don't my words sound like that?

I look down at the cacophony of sloppy sentences which lay in my lap,  
hidden from the shame of not sharing the fame which she gets to claim.

She makes an intelligent quip,

forms a sly smile,

the audience erupts for the first time in a while.

Why didn't I think of that joke?

I ransack the files of my exhausted mind,

consumed with a tumor that rids me of her humor.

The kind that engenders envious eyes and the surprised remarks of "Wow she's bright!"

Why am I so dull in comparison?

She crafts her sentences with the precision of Pygmalion perfecting his Galatea  
while I lay as the puddle of wax which partnered the privations of Icarus.

Only I never got to see the sun.

She's harnessed its immensity while I lay buried in the sea of propensity to be just  
average.

The first to lose, the first they forget, and the last they envy.

Why did I have to come in second?



*Flowers in Black and White*  
Alyssa Seng



# *Allergies*

## Olivia Aversano

I'm a Girl Scout who can't eat Girl Scout cookies. I remember sitting with my troupe at eight years old in front of my town's convenience store. Wearing my green vest decorated in pins, I was barely visible behind a tall stack of cookie boxes. A passing pedestrian asked me to recommend my favorite cookie. I looked up at her, caught. The familiar but threatening label on the package, "manufactured in a shared facility with..." prevented me from ever enjoying the famed cookies. If I dared to eat a Thin Mint or Tagalong, I would descend into a severe allergic reaction.

I was born with a life-threatening peanut allergy. I am forced to confront my fear of death three times a day, whenever I sit down for a meal. If I touch a peanut-based product, I break out into sweltering red hives. Even the faint smell of peanut butter triggers an intense bout of nausea. I feel like a strange superhero with the ability to smell peanuts from a mile away. I never leave the house without the antidote, my trusty EpiPen (I actually carry two in case the first fails or a single dose is not enough).

For a while, I kept my condition a secret. I didn't want to be the geek at the allergy table. I concealed my EpiPens in a crossbody bag, so as not to scare my friends with the idea that I carry two sharp needles at all times. Meanwhile, anxiety ruled my life. I constantly worried about what I ate or touched, certain that the next attack was just around the corner. My secrecy backfired on Halloween of ninth grade. While my friends were trading treats, I began to notice the signs of anaphylaxis. Though I hadn't eaten any candy, I had touched a melted Reese's Peanut Butter Cup at the bottom of my treasure bag. I began to panic.



I didn't want to die, dressed as a yellow Minion, no less. My friends noticed my distress. It then dawned on me that I was in an emergency situation and all of the people around me were clueless as to what was happening or how to help.

Luckily, I managed to administer the proper medications and avoid a fatal attack. However, from this moment on, I decided I would confront my allergies instead of hide from them. So I dedicated my Girl Scout Gold Award to teaching young adults how to recognize the signs of a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. I researched with medical professionals to create a brochure that illuminates everything from common allergens to EpiPen use. I also began giving educational presentations to teach young adults critical skills through engaging activities and my research. Knowledge is power and I am now reassured that future generations are more knowledgeable than mine.

However, beyond working with others, I needed to work with myself. I felt like allergies were controlling my life. No matter how careful I was, I still ended up having allergic reactions. And when I wasn't going into anaphylaxis, I was worrying, spiraling, and dreading. The only way to stop the cycle was to take a leap of faith and try oral immunotherapy (OIT). Immunotherapy is often called "the peanut challenge" because you challenge your body by eating its lifelong enemy. This fall, once a week for 8 months, I will visit the doctor and ingest increasingly larger doses of peanuts. The "challenge" is remaining calm as you hope the dose doesn't land you in the emergency room. Immunotherapy is relatively new in the medical field, so research is limited and success is not guaranteed.

However, I am done avoiding. I know the only way to deal with my problems is by facing them. By the end of this, I hope I'll finally know how Girl Scout cookies taste.

*Traffic Crossing*  
Hang Mi





# *Rooted to the World*

## Hannah Chang

Life is peaceful when the only thing that can be done in life is sit back and watch life happen around you. There's not much that can go wrong when the world doesn't revolve around you. For all the years I have been rooted in this field, I let the procession of life carry me like a big gust of wind. There is something beautiful about existing without the ability to make noise. There is nothing expected of me and I do not expect anything from anyone. Every year I watch as the seasons change and the colors of my leaves change, as the world gets one day older each day. When the earth cools and is covered in thick blankets of snow, my leaves vanish and I am stripped of my colors. But this makes the autumn more memorable. There aren't any family members or friends to depend on in my life. My lifelong interactions with the sun and soil are the only things that I need to rely on. Sometimes, I watch as people approach me, carefully examining the different attitudes towards me and my forever home. Some use me as support for their backs as they watch the clouds shifting shapes. Others come and climb my limbs. Any harm made against me is minor and relatively rare, except for when an occasional couple comes along to dig letters into my skin. Even then, the intentions are not bad, but quite the opposite, for at least I think so. It is hard to know why people do things when I cannot speak. Life went on like this, my joy and happiness expressed in the way I provided for my community without complaint, until one day I was faced with the true evils of humanity. It was the beginning of a cold, bitter winter. My leaves lost their color and soon lost their will to hang on to my limbs. Throughout the entire duration of my fall,

I was accompanied by men in bright orange jackets. Their colors matched mine and I felt a sense of connection. I grew to enjoy a new companionship I found in a man who consistently stopped by to sketch out my land. I sat, watched, and wondered: would this serve as a piece in his room? I felt touched. Weeks passed and at the start of my dreaded, barren winter season, another possible friend came along. This man was dressed in blue with bright orange ear accessories bulging out of his head. His eyes were hidden. He had some sort of object with him. As he came closer, the instrument made a loud buzzing noise, and I was deafened by the volume. The next moment, the world went dark. I felt sharp blades grinding my trunk, accompanied by the rhythmic noise of what seemed to be a loud whirring engine that silenced the melodic chirps of birds that I was once so used to. For a few hours I am unable to understand my surroundings, so it is safe to assume that I must be in some man-made location. With the removal of my limbs, there was also the fading of all those memories where children swung up my limbs like monkeys and when confused cats climbed me until they realized that there was no one under to fall into. Children picking up fallen sticks to use as tools for their mini structures. Who knew that this innocent form of children's play could cause an imprint on the newfound nature of the world? Surrounding the small container I was stuffed into, there were other containers filled with others like me, some that I have already seen before and some that were unknown to me. I watched as workers took a container full of small ugly chips over a burning fire. Soon I realized those chips were my fate. On the other end of the large space, there were drab, pale sheets of paper. Its life seemed to be drained from it along with its colors. What was going on? I simply could not understand why the innocent were being cut up and burned, completely transformed. What happened to nature?



Before I could ask more questions I felt movement and indeed, I was about to be shredded into pieces. It was terrifying. I waited for the terrifying moments to arrive. All my life, I enjoyed life in silence and it never really bothered me. But these moments proceeding to my ultimate transformation made me feel the highest measures of betrayal and eagerness to speak out. Before I could think of anything else, the moments arrived where I was removed of my identity and purpose. Destroyed and stripped of my character. I was then moved to an area where I felt so much pressure that I was completely flat and dry. I was reminded of my cold and dry winter days. Days where my bark seemed to crack off at the cold touch of the frozen air. Days where creatures who normally ran around me stayed buried in warm areas. Days where children stayed home and pranced around, knee-deep in snow. The white of the snow was replaced by the gray tones of my thin, wispy self, with nothing to contribute to the rest of the world. I was pressed and perfected into a perfectly smooth surface. My identity was chipped of its uniqueness and I was without meaning. I hoped that my life would be successfully repurposed into something more valuable than before. After all this, I expected something to benefit me. But I would soon find myself in the same position. Where I was found to be useless and unnecessary and therefore repurposed into something else. Being alive in a world of humans where I was not one of them trapped me in an endless loop where I would never be appreciated for the things that I could do. Maybe one day, I could live in a world where this is so.

*Skeleton*  
Eshaal Mirza



# *Haunted Shores*

## Isabella Chung

A deserted island.  
Peaceful in the gentle glow of the sun,  
But stormy,  
As soon as the warmth sinks beneath the horizon.

The island, afloat like a lone survivor.  
Its shores are sheer cliffs,  
Dropping off into the crashing gray waves.  
Footsteps across the sand reveal a dense forest that beckons ominously.  
Who knows what lurks in the dark space beneath the trees?

A small beach,  
Long since left to nature's forces, reveals an eerie figure in the fog.  
An abandoned lighthouse, the sole occupant,  
Stands with a haunting presence.

Sad, deserted lighthouse,  
Overgrown with weeds and vines.  
A prisoner of nature's beauty itself.  
Weathered red paint on the exterior peeks through,  
After all these years.

The walls within are dark and cold  
A gaping hole in the wooden walls opens after each storm.  
Covered in dusty cobwebs,  
And eerily silent.  
What haunts this desolate place?  
Or is it in the dark surrounding water?

A shadowy seagull  
Perched upon the abandoned lighthouse.  
The only soul to watch the horizon,  
As a lone ship appears.

Too late for the ship!  
The gull watches helplessly.  
The boat like a bathtub toy  
At the hands of the ferocious waves.



*Crow and Crab*  
Daniella Dell'Aquila



## *Echoes*

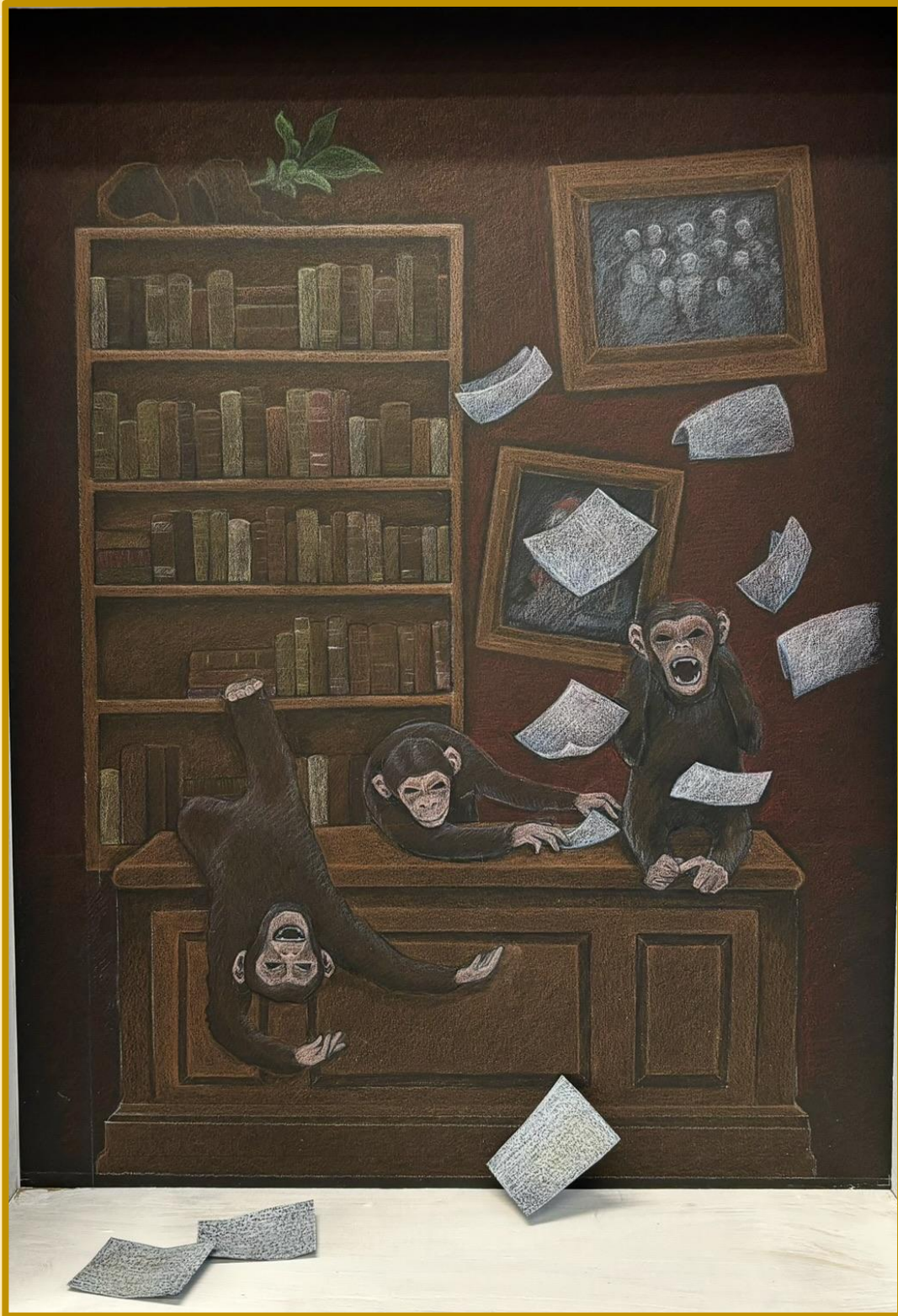
after *[All Things Now Remind Me]* by Diane Seuss

Chloe Eng

All things now remind me of what loneliness used to be. Fresh pages stuck together in the printer. A stop at the end of a sentence. Guitar strums. Notes played one by one. Fingers plucking at the untuned strings. The past is this: to have been admired and wanted and to be those things no more. In the future the pages are torn. I hope that in the future I will be living. What does it mean to be alive and useful? Feet planted on the ground instead of floating away in the sky. Back when I felt the earth underneath the soles of my feet. When I had the motivation to climb. The present tense: to hike back is to turn away from the sun and make the decision to leave, like a melody faltering or an ephemeral bubble popping. Or the inexorable realization that the leaves will fall anyhow. I have seen these things. I have been alone in them. My hands were cold and only bare sticks were left. My heart is the only thing beating. That whispered elegy. Memory: an aesthetic reminder of what might have been. And poetry. This poem right now. This incorrigible wreck.



*Bananas!*  
Zoe Eng



# *Heart of Glass*

## Sophia Jin

Words

Like a knife to the heart

Unbearable pain

Laughter

I laugh along, but

It catches in the back of my throat

Whispers

My name on their lips

All too familiar

Fear

I run

Without looking back

Pathetic

I know

Nothing has changed

Pebbles

Though lacking in size

Are fruitful in numbers

Crack

Glass shards

And severed heartstrings



*Reflections*  
Lily Westfall



# *Jellyfish*

## Sophia Li

I want to be a jellyfish  
I'll have no brain  
I won't even think

I want to be a jellyfish  
I'll have no heart  
I won't even feel  
Let me not ache

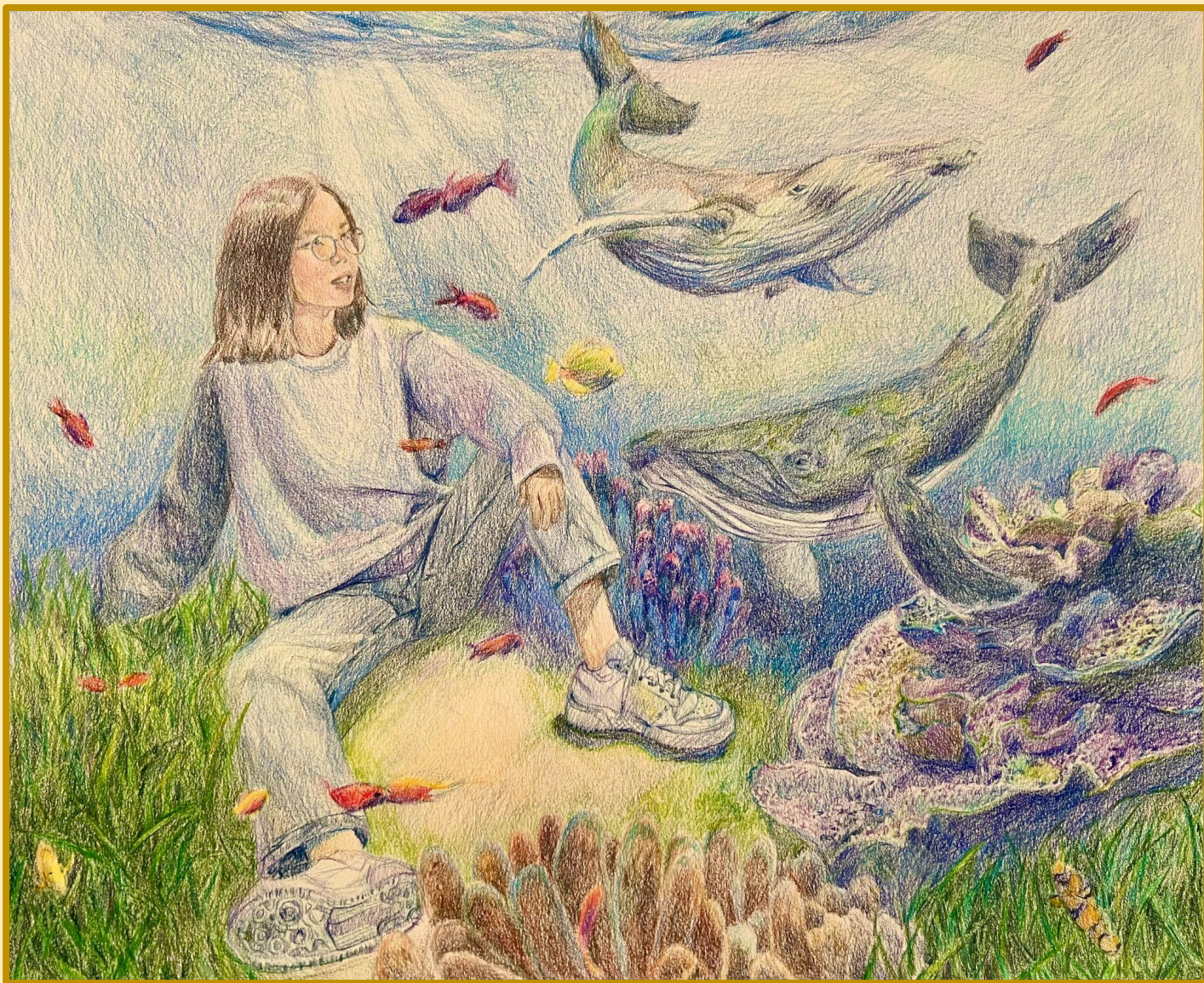
I want to be a jellyfish  
Put me on display  
Admire me, without a trace of noise  
Love me

I want to be a jellyfish  
Swaddle me in a net  
Slice me apart delicately  
Handle me with care

I want to be a jellyfish  
Pluck away my differences  
Strip me back of my everything



*Waves of Curiosity*  
Hang Mi



# *Ineluctability*

## Jocelyn Liu

The light shines within this blanket of white

Yet deep within, I still melt

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

It escapes my grasp.

I can feel

time

slipping

through

My

Fingers

Like

Grains

of

sand.

What time is it?

That I cannot tell.

I am going round and round every second,

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.



As the sun goes down and moon slowly rises  
I overheat in the midst of winter  
time soon begins to feel meaningless

I pass the numbers so swiftly,  
I become fragile as time bends  
My metals and engine soon to be rotting  
Every minute is clear to me  
But what time is it?

I feel an urge of pain, stretching me.  
Would this be the end of my existence?  
The ticking stops, yet simultaneously continues  
It seems to be inevitable.

Tick.

Tick..

Tick.

The hand cannot go on any longer.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

I can finally see the time.

*Time*  
Natalia Miranda



# *Sounds*

## Ioannis Nikas

It is too much  
The sounds, haunting claps and screams  
Everytime I hear one  
It shocks my body, travels through me  
Like a strong wave  
Pushes me over  
And I cannot get back up  
I want to close my ears  
Make myself as small as possible  
But I cannot escape  
It drowns me in the echoes  
Does no one else feel this? Experience this?  
I look at those around me  
They are unfazed  
It is as if they do not hear anything, feel anything  
Yet, I, am stuck  
Head hurting  
Hands wringing  
Heart racing  
Am I to believe no one else is like me?

*Falling Through Time*  
Jocelyn Liu





# *The Children of Armenia*

## Sofia Ogulluk

I look at my *Dede's* large, strong hands  
And see the millions of women and men  
Who have died for our people  
Compared to the millions of people who have lied  
Who say they've helped in many ways  
But in reality  
Reposted on Instagram and called it a day

I look at my *Yaya's* soft and wrinkled hands  
Meticulously making *manti*  
And I see in them  
Children in a home surrounded by fire  
They reach out to us  
Try to hold our hands  
But we simply watch  
Leave them stranded

They scream to us  
"Say our name!"  
And I say it back  
A soloist in the choir

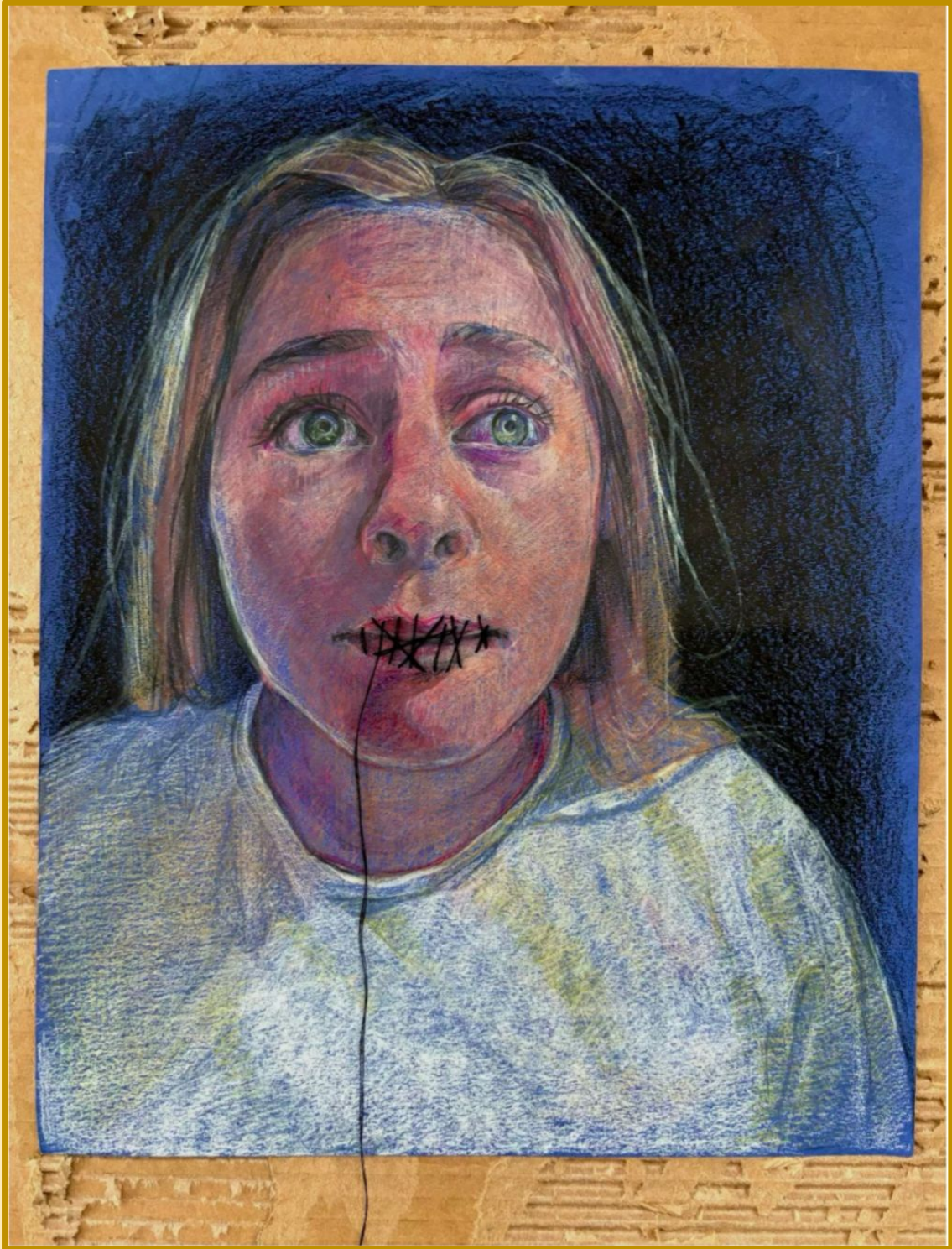
I turn around and a few more stand  
But their silence is deafening  
The voices of the children pleading  
Ring in my head  
And suddenly  
They stand beside me  
And we become one  
And the chorus begins to run

We show and we share  
But they don't understand  
We stomp and we scream  
But they only stare

We wave our flag  
And they say they care  
But if they *really* did  
Then they would be there

So I'll paint myself purple  
And stand in a pot  
If that's what it takes  
To forget-me-not

*Sewed Shut*  
Julia Weston



# *Seasons*

## Sonia Sankar

A vibrant green leaf falls on a puppy's head as he shakes, attempting to rid himself of the leaf. The leaf falls to the ground, followed by the puppy's big brown nose as he sniffs this foreign object. His owner tugs him along, abandoning the leaf. A few days pass, and the leaf shrivels up, brown and brittle. Days, then weeks, and then months pass as spring turns into summer. The sun beats down on everything below it, and the plants show off their green leaves and beautiful flowers, freshly bloomed. People sport tank tops and shorts, sweat dripping down their brows from the summer heat. Another few months, then summer transitions to autumn. The leaves lose their bright green hue, instead taking on a subtle orange and red tone. The flowers hide themselves away, though the occasional confused flower blooms. People begin to wear jackets as the temperature cools and school begins again. Yet another couple months roll by and winter shows itself. The trees lose their leaves, their bare branches blanketed with snow. Snowmen adorn lawns, accompanied by holiday lights hanging from houses. People's faces are obscured by scarves and hats as everyone recognizes the need to bundle up for protection from the cold air. Finally, the cycle completes itself, with spring emerging from the snowy winter. A dog, grey hair beginning to replace his golden fur, walks under a tree as a green leaf falls on his big brown nose. It falls to the ground as the dog attempts to sniff it. His owner tugs him along. It is a different owner, a young boy with eyes bright from being in the big city prior to this small town, bearing a striking resemblance to the woman who walked this dog on this street in her hometown all those years ago. The two disappear down the street, enjoying a peaceful walk through the changing seasons.



*In the Distance*  
Mackenzie Williams



# *Minarets and Regrets*

## Nate Seibert

I watched on, half-heartedly cowering behind battlements  
At my back a city grand, of bright marble and white minarets  
A gift from above, reminiscent of a golden age  
We sang His praise, sought His embrace  
We were His chosen people; no longer was I so naive.

“Hide your women,” I heard  
Beyond the vast desert’s expanse marched a horde, countless strong  
Charging with relentless ferocity, its intensity notorious yet untold  
The city gate stood small, its presence but a formality  
They were heathens, and they would slaughter us.

The barbarians sang in unison, excitement filling their ranks  
They envisioned their mothers’ pride, mighty statues built in their honor  
Blood would taint their garments, and all the better  
They looked ahead, picturing a shining temple atop a hill  
Palm trees sprouting about – they’d never seen palm trees before.

The Tigris stood eerily still, greeting the invaders  
The caliph proclaimed confidence, but I knew better  
He too would bow in due time, begging mercy from mongrels  
Once a coruscate civilization, now reduced to rubble and regret  
So much I had hoped to see, so much I had hoped to do.

# *Setting Moon*

Mia Chen





# *To See the Next Part of the Dream*

## Matteo Sokolof

To see the next part of the dream  
Is to turn the pages in my sleep,  
everyday I awake to find myself trapped in a loop  
of endless repetition.  
Task after task,  
beat after beat,  
it doesn't ever seem to change.

I'll race and dive and drive myself to  
mere insanity in order to complete the job that keeps  
me fed and clothed  
for i've no other other option  
but to settle with this niche that's been imposed.  
Task after task,  
feat after feat  
it doesn't ever seem to change.

Daydreams greet me like a close friend,  
as I'm swept off my feet to places I've never been.  
I'll hope and dream and want and wish  
That I'll soon see these places sometime again.

After day's toils and jests  
I embark to acquire well deserved rest.  
I'll say to myself that the ends justified the mean,  
as I return to sleep to see the next part of the dream.

*Skull in Black and White*  
Alyssa Seng



# *Ghosts*

## Leila Altamura

You call yourself a friend?  
You call yourself a decent human?  
You're not a good person  
I've let you ruin me and tear me apart  
Just because I pitied you  
[redacted] told me to forgive you  
You never appreciated me  
You just liked having a body standing  
There  
Comforting you  
Talking to your ghosts  
They're dead, why talk to them?  
I wish I had the guts to stand up and leave  
I should have  
Why didn't I?  
You laughed at me  
At the time I needed you most  
You told the ghosts  
While I cried  
You laughed  
I hope you're happy with the ghosts...  
Even more happy if you became one



*Abracadabra*  
Isabella Falcone



# *How Was Your Trip Down the Rabbit Hole?*

## Ellen Zhao

I wonder what made you go in the first place  
Was it because you were just so bored with my life that you went?  
Or was it because your fantasies only lie in your dreams?  
I've heard you made yourself too small to reach doors to any opportunities that you  
desired  
But then you made yourself too big that you hurt and scared others away because  
you did  
not fit through where you were  
Simultaneously you guided?  
By some mysterious creatures that I hope you will always remember  
Not for the fact that they terribly confused you  
But because they guided you when you were lost  
Now that you are back to reality I wonder  
Will you warn the others about your travels  
Or is it an experience they will just have to pass along their journeys?  
Because at last when it seemed all to true  
You woke up and realized that you made it through  
Even if it seems like it was all dream  
That we found our way through the underground maze  
which was deemed a labyrinth



*Sunflowers*  
Katherine Russell





# *The Night's Calling*

## Chelsea Eng

A break, a breath, a short respite, turns minutes into hours into days, much to my plight  
In the moonlit universe of my bedroom, here I know that I cannot be harmed  
A refuge for the weary and worn

Only my computers' murmurs remain  
The last survivor,  
Nature's symphony slain

My fatigue insatiable, yet the future unfaceable  
In my moonlit universe, I know I am trapped  
Confined behind my screen I stay,  
The entertainment endless in the realm of the internet  
I dread the inevitable slumber,  
The time where I rest, unencumbered

Tomorrow, I will continue this ritual,  
Succumb to unfulfilled promises of leisure once again  
The urge to sleep, instinctual

However, as dawn breaks, I will realize my folly  
Pledge my oath to never repeat this dance  
Although I remain ensnared by the twilights bewitching trance.

*Still Life*  
Kylie Russo



# *Playing and Taking Care of Your Vinyl Record*

## Jocelyn Liu

### I. Handling with care

For record playing purposes  
be careful not to touch the vinyl itself  
and make sure to care for it well  
or else it will be destroyed  
never to be played again.

### II. Playing the record

Put your favorite vinyl into the record player  
engage the turntable  
and as the record begins to spin  
bring the needle down.  
it makes contact with its grooves,  
playing an ethereal serenade.

### III. The next listening session

but as the record plays  
it never seems to stop playing and repeating and playing  
repeating and playing, repeating and playing, repeating  
with still a sound of great serenity.

#### IV. D.C. al Fine

the lyrics keep singing over and over  
because nothing and nowhere is fine  
there is no notice  
when the words become mumbled  
degrees of dissonance  
like the everlasting laugh track  
heard in a classic 90's sitcom  
until there is no longer music  
but screeches of pain  
and only then  
that's when they realize  
but it was too late.

#### V. Coda

so i am the echoing laughter  
forgotten and ignored  
seemingly perfect  
decaying silently.  
i am one with the broken vinyl  
bruised and voiceless  
in order to cope  
with what is happening to myself.  
it keeps playing  
repeating and playing, repeating and playing,  
repeating over and over and over  
i hate repeating myself.



*Forest Scene*  
Morgan Lapadula



# *Beauty, Unseen*

## Siri Craven

There is so much beauty in the world that you will never know,  
in the sunbeams falling softly on the flowers stretched below  
or the pattern of the petals, in geometric place,  
in the tender kiss of wind on every flower's face.

There is beauty in the people that you wouldn't look at twice,  
in the gaps between their teeth and the bags under their eyes,  
in the choices they make quietly, not looking for any praise,  
in the intimacy of passing and going separate ways.

There's a beauty that comes slowly, a beauty that's unrushed  
that blossoms from within and from there begins to gush  
and you thought you could not feel it, thought you would not know  
the feeling of the sun on your outstretched face below,  
but it comes in little pieces, in patience over time –  
there may be darkness now until the sun learns how to shine  
and the clouds will burn away, the rain will soon be gone  
and the beauty of the world, still unknown, continues on.





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