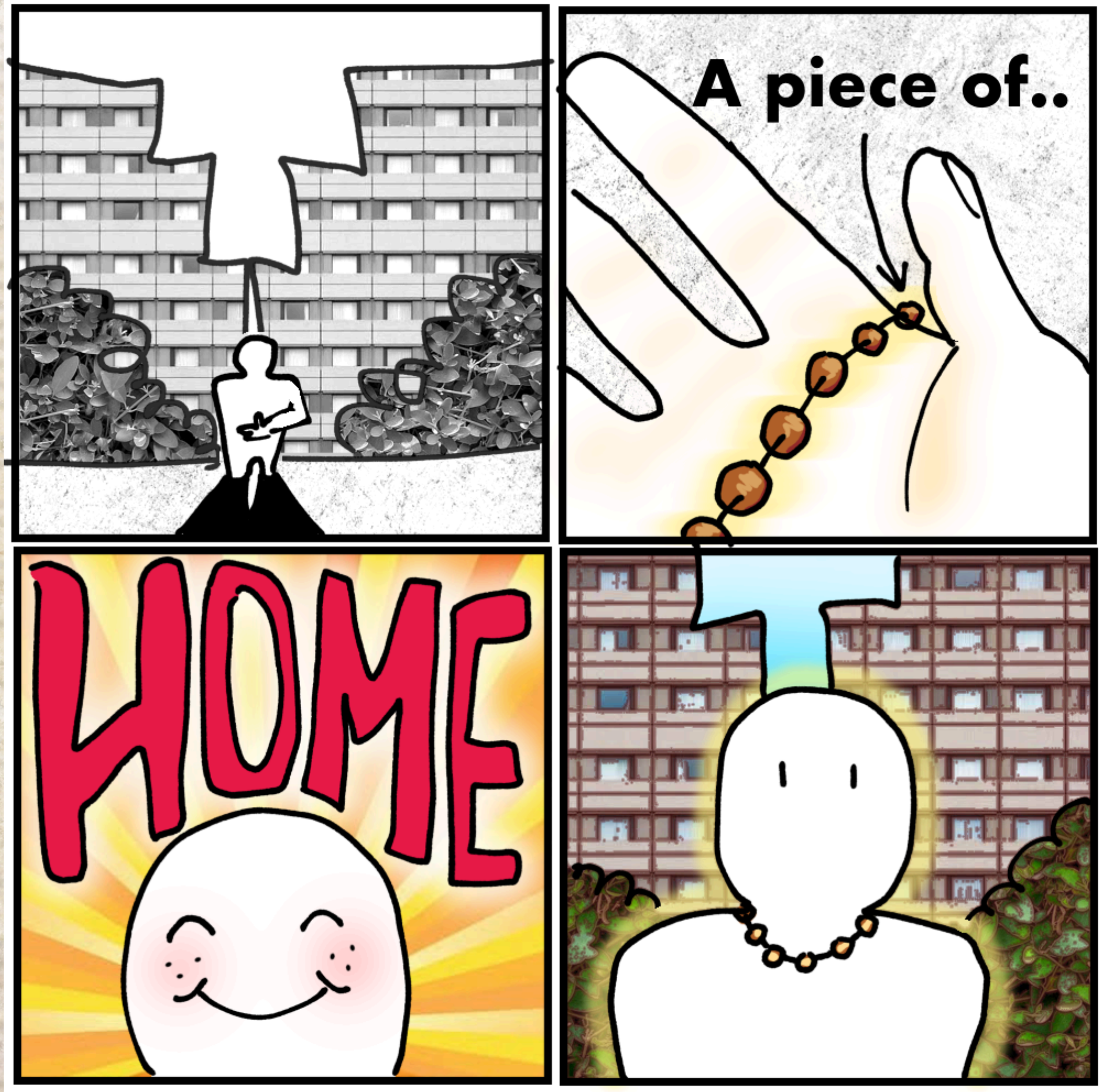
The Common Thread

Issue 4
Challenges

PRESENT TENSE

Our Community's Ever-Present Struggles and Triumphs



Cover Art by: Taha

The Common Thread

Uniting our individual worlds

Issue 1.4 - Present Tense

A Call to Action

Add a song that helps you through hard times to our collaborative playlist!

Ask your friends what struggles they are currently facing. Listen deeply to their answers.

OUR WHY:

The TCT editorial team feels that we do not know enough of the inner worlds of people we see every day. We do not know the individual challenges that each person is facing, triumphing over, or will continue to face for their whole lives. We wanted to showcase the challenges that unite us as human beings, but also those that are harder to understand for those who have not experienced them.



A blank page and swelling eyes:

"Ok, put your pens down, the 50 minutes are done." A blank page and swelling eyes, this is all I was left with. 'Too easy', 'too hard', not enough time or too much, unclear or obvious. Comments were flying and I was sitting still. I failed to 'try' and didn't deserve to complain.

The clock started moving but I didn't. Shooing away the fog my brain was desperately trying to figure out what went wrong. "Do you need help ?"

No.

It's one of those issues that even I can't put a name on.

My chest tightened as I got up to leave under the saddened look on my teacher's face. The fog became thicker and I felt my brain weaken trying to piece together a sense of clarity. Suddenly a thought rose above the gloom, like a silver grail it became my new purpose. I had to change this page into a piece. I knew it wouldn't happen just yet, but it didn't need to. The ink would pour steadily just like murk slowly disappears.

- Janna, TCT Writer (Grade 12)

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Rabab's Story

Coming here, I faced the challenge of adjusting to a very different environment, from academics to socializing. It takes time to feel like you fit in. A funny story: in Sudan, we always shake hands after every interaction and greeting–you can imagine how many times I extended my arm here, only for people to just stand there looking at me.

No matter how far I am from Sudan, I will always be affected. I don't hear the sound of guns anymore, but every thunderstorm here is a nightmare. The constant anxiety and checking the internet for updates about home is consuming. I've seen videos of my home raided and destroyed, and the helplessness I felt was immense, even though I knew I couldn't have done anything. The war in Sudan is a constant reminder that I can overcome anything here, because no matter how hard that math homework is, it's not a bullet I need to stop with my bare hands.

I'm forever grateful for the friends I've made here. Whether we share the struggle or not, they make sure I'm okay, check on my family, and stay beside me during thunderstorms. I'm also grateful for my mom. It's ironic, but although the war separated our family, I feel closer to her than ever. I call her at least three times a day, and she reminds me that as Sudanese, we carry our home within us–our values and culture define Sudan, not the bricks that fell from our buildings.

I wish people sought knowledge about these issues because they care, not because they're pressured. My experience is tragic, but not unique; thousands are going through the same or worse. I hope we can acknowledge our privileges and support those whose stories are unheard.

Even in the Dark

Beneath the shadows of human greed,
I hear the stifled voices cry
lost dreams and lost hopes.
Their hearts in their motherland,
and their feet on the battleground,
enduring injuries that promise freedom,
a new scratch, a flaw.

I thought I was alone,
that no one understood or saw.
But they noticed me, they supported me
and hands reached out,
while hearts drummed together;
Together we weave threads of unity.
In community, our wealth is found.
Intertwined stories: a strength that proves
that even in the dark, love knows how to shine.

- Marceline & Syna

Interview with Khun Rid

Nara: What do you enjoy most about your job?

Khun Rid: (smiling warmly) I love being a driver, and I love the responsibility of ensuring that students arrive safely. It's very rewarding.

Nara: Tell us about a major challenge you've faced in this role and how you handled it.

Khun Rid: (pausing seriously) Once, we were on our morning route when the car broke down in the middle of the road with students on board. The police came to help escort the students safely, but I still had to repair the tire. While I was fixing it, another motorcyclist collided nearby. Thankfully, no one was hurt, but it reminded me of the importance of staying calm under pressure. I reported everything to the school, and we got back on track with a new vehicle.

Nara: There's a lot of pressure in ensuring students' safety. How do you handle that responsibility?

Khun Rid: Every time I drive, I treat the students as if they were my own children. I pay close attention to everything inside and outside the bus. It's not just about reaching the destination, but about making sure each student is secure along the way.

Nara: How has this job affected you over time?

Khun Rid: This job has taught me a lot about patience. When I first started, I drove fast as a taxi driver, always focused on getting as many trips as possible. But here, with the students, I take a calm, measured approach because I think of them as my own children. Even when dealing with traffic or emergencies, like flooding, I feel steady because they're my top priority.

Nara: Do you have any advice for students aspiring to achieve their goals?

Khun Rid: My advice is to be patient, always. and always double-check the vehicle's condition before each trip. Safety is something you don't want to leave to chance; it's our job to ensure a smooth and safe journey for every student.

8TH GRADERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU FACE AS A UWC STUDENT?

"Being Lonely"

"Finishing homework on time"

"The challenges of overcoming the past. My insecurities. The dread of who I used to be."

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU OVERCAME AS A UWC STUDENT?

"I got new friends"

"I finished a big project"

"Being able to adjust to this school, and being able to find more about myself . I also managed to help those who need it most , too. All of it, I have no regrets being here."



“I wanna quit IB.”

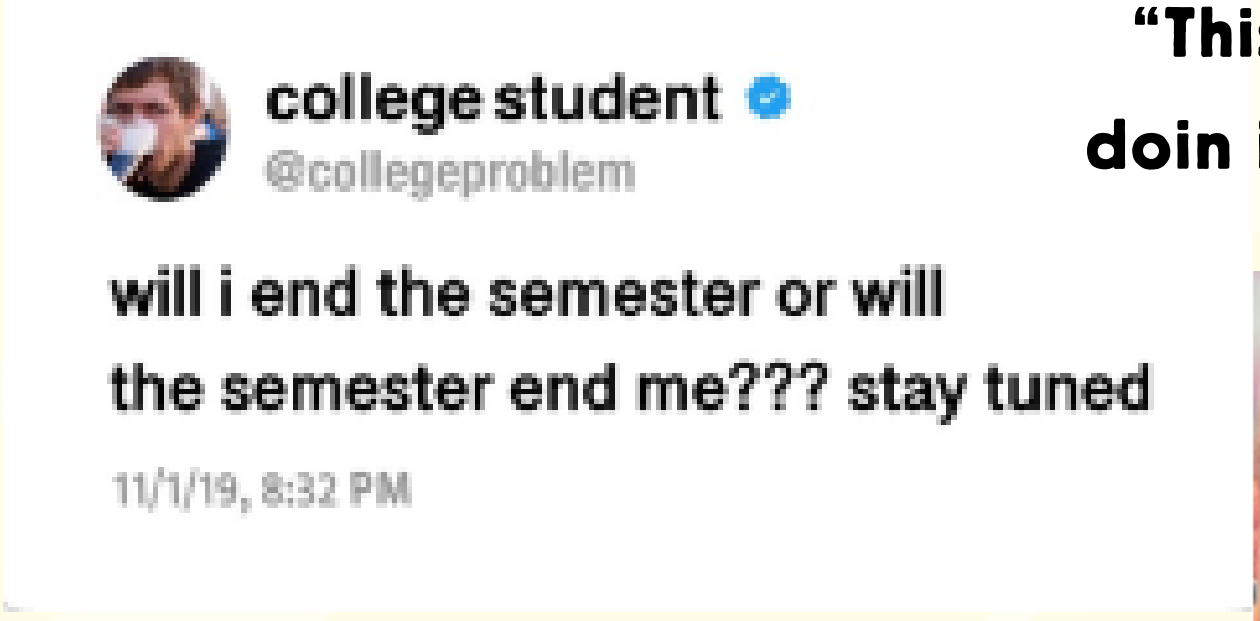
“Pain.”



“So close yet so far.”

Grade 12's can all agree that this year of DP is definitely more stressful than grade 11. They have an endless stream of deadlines to meet and have been slammed with homework, IA's, extended essays, and exams. Not to mention still fulfilling CAS requirements and applying to universities, all well trying to maintain a social life and an acceptable sleep schedule to not solely rely on caffeine for fuel. Grade 12's are working 24/7 to complete their final year of DP and more than ever need support and understanding for the strain of their constant dedication to academics.

GRADE 12'S PRESENT TENSE



“This is crazy but we still doin it and gettin it done.”

“Sometimes you wish you were a tree.”

