

Chidera Okeke's introduction of Dax Mutter's photograph

We selected Dax Mutter's photo, 'Dusk,' because it's more than a pretty picture. We admired the technical skill and care demonstrated in this photo, with its incredible composition, beautiful color grading,

and lighting that must have been a paid actor because the way it hits the side of the mountain and reflects off the water feels unreal.

It has a quiet stillness that invites you, which all of us on the Dome editing staff appreciated.

Paired with Lila's poem, which confronts us with the responsibility of being big, Dusk reminds us that we are small. Not to say that we are not significant, but to remind us that we are. It encourages us to coexist with natural beauty, not for personal gain but to enjoy its presence.

Dusk was taken in Yellowstone Park on Beartooth Pass. Dax worked with a Yellowstone native and a photographer from National Geographic to find this spot, which he "was particularly drawn to...because of the strong light and scenic contrasts between harsh rock and lush greenery.

The large rock face appearing next to the forest and the lake, with the last glints of light running through the valley, perfectly encapsulated the beauty of Yellowstone Park and nature in itself."

He spent an hour finding the perfect shot and chose to modify the photo minimally "to 'express the fullness of nature without overexaggeration or extreme alteration.'" With this work, Dax intended for us to "simply appreciate the magnificence of our natural world" and, in that experience, represent "nature in its purest form, without extreme adaptation, to show how the organic world does not need to be manicured to see its beauty."

Molly Caesar-Kim and Georgina Clarke's introduction of Lila Barkan's poem

This month, we're featuring "*Learning to Drive*," a witty and visual poem by Lila Barkan that turns something as mundane as a driver's-ed lesson into a thought-provoking, sensory experience. While our last edition mirrored our school's motto of "learning not just for school, but for life," this poem takes us in a different direction. What drew us to Lila's piece is the way she balances humor and horror, and plays with line breaks and rhyme schemes to create a sharp, rhythmic piece. Lila captures that weird tension between the rules we're taught to follow and the

emotions that lie underneath them. The poem is both darkly funny and unsettling, and it stays with you long after you read it.