

# The Dome



a journal of art & literature

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Reflection of Time

*Sahar Sultani '26*

photography

## Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Before you read on, turn back to the front cover, and look in the mirror of Sahar Sultani's photograph. Let it unsettle you. Try to figure out what is being reflected, what is essentially behind you as you look at it; try to find and follow the sight line that this image is offering. Each time I try and do this, when I narrow my vision and lock onto the dark column slicing through the left third of the reflection, I think I know where I am as clearly as if my own face was reflected in the mirror. But then I blink, or my eyes shift, or I'm drawn to that flash of white, and my senses are disoriented again: I'm inside the room with the mirror, or I'm in the mirror's reflection, or I'm somewhere between those black bars, drifting toward the smudges of light on the other side. "Reflection of Time" is the title of this photograph, yes, and it is also the story—the experience—of this edition of *The Dome*.

The vision for these pages cohered slowly this time around. Something is happening with memory and remembering, we said, but it wasn't immediately clear what. We knew it wasn't the same kind of wistful nostalgia anchoring last year's edition; there was something grittier about these stories, something more urgent and radical about all this remembering. We hope you'll notice—across all genres and mediums—the blend of abstraction and concrete lines. Like the swirls and cascading drips of color in Ashley Greer's "Last Melt of Summer" versus the crisp lines and distinctive boundaries of her blue jay in "To Grandpa, Love Ashley." Sometimes memory arrives in blurred, bright colors, and other times it is a bird resting on a branch: clear, undeniable, waiting for flight. Notice this blend also in the lush lyricism in Aeowynn Conway's "Geese form the North" and the sharp deluge of images in Molly Caesar-Kim's "Six Twice"; here, memory is so fluid that form and structure can barely contain it. Now, hold that in concert with the highly structured and jaunty remembering in Lila Barkan's two poems, and you'll have a sense of how all these artists are grappling with the passage of time, with generational identity, with the fact that, maybe, time is insignificant in the face of all that art can capture and freeze. Something comes into focus, then it blurs; we readjust, reflect, return. It is Sahar's mirror all over again.

It is particularly exciting to launch *The Dome* right now in a year where this publication has gained firmer footing in our community's consciousness. Establishing *The Dispatch* did exactly what we hoped it would: create more space and time for writing and art, more opportunities for our young people to see themselves as writers and artists. These sixty-six pieces come to you out of a record high round of submissions, nearly tripling what we've seen in previous years.

The first time I read Molly Caesar-Kim's poem "Six Twice," I slammed my computer closed after reading her final line about the "hungry beast of a mind" and I haven't stopped thinking about it since. This edition has a hungry beast of a mind; this community—all this art, all these people who want to share their stories, their vision—has a hungry beast of a mind. I hope that when you get to the final page, your mind will be hungry too. Let it prowl. Find it something to eat.

Cheers,

Kim Cooper, Faculty Advisor

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## The Long Way Home

*Wren Freund '26*

poetry

At dusk, the horses unwrite the field.  
Hooves erase the days-long silence.  
Dust climbs to meet the coming dark.  
A gap has waited in the stalls.  
The herd runs until the horizon fades,  
calling in the language of thundering earth.  
A shadow slips from the treeline.  
It runs crooked,  
limbs heavy with the shape of elsewhere,  
remembering the shape of belonging.  
It has been out where the wind has no walls,  
where the grass tastes of salt and solitude.  
The dust gathers the stray.  
The herd opens like a lung, breathing.  
One body blurs into many.  
The lost one returns into the thick of them,  
into rumble and steam and heat—  
Distance was only  
the long way home.  
By the time the wind settles,  
the field looks the same,  
except for the space  
that no longer stands alone.



**Buried in Reflection**  
*Sabar Sultani '26*  
photography

## Flounder, Flounder

*Dionis Phelan '26*

nonfiction

Waves lap the beach in front of us; I look out at the dark abyss in front of me while tears sting my eyes. “I just don’t think we should stay together, a relationship is similar to a fire, to make it last you need a strong base, and we just don’t have that yet. I think we can still be friends but I don’t want to lose what we have just because we’re trying to save what we had.” I feel the grains of sand roll through my hands as I play with the beach around me. I stay silent to preserve the masquerade of detachment that I promised to myself when we were sitting on the kitchen floor at our friend’s party, laughing about the type of nonsense that’s only funny at 2 am. However, it’s no longer 2 am, and we don’t really laugh anymore.

I look at him, only when I know evening will cover our faces, because I fear that when I look at him he’ll look relieved. I fear that as my lashes grow dewy, the glazed over look he’s had for that past week will be gone. I fear the truth. I was the anchor that tied him to his adolescence, and now as August air grows brisk, he’ll long for a college girl who understands the concept of no strings attached.

But when I look at him, it’s not his furrowed brow slowly receding back to its normal state drawing my attention, but the shirt he’s wearing. It’s my shirt, or rather the shirt he thrifted for me. He saw it in a consignment shop, saw the flounder and his mind ran to me, to my new catch phrase fantastic flounder. I made a joke that he stole my go-to catch phrase, Awesome Sauce, but he insists I stole it from him. As a compromise we find silly names to give our students for doing well. That’s when I found the most perfect compliment, the name to trump all the others: fantastic flounder. A flounder that’s fantastic.

When he found the shirt we weren’t together yet. In millennial terms we were simply “getting to know each other”. He and I were co-workers, and from the first day I met him my perception of joy permanently shifted. Green eyes that resembled the sea glass we found on the beach the night we told each other we weren’t just friends. Golden hair like the sun, always unruly and in the way.

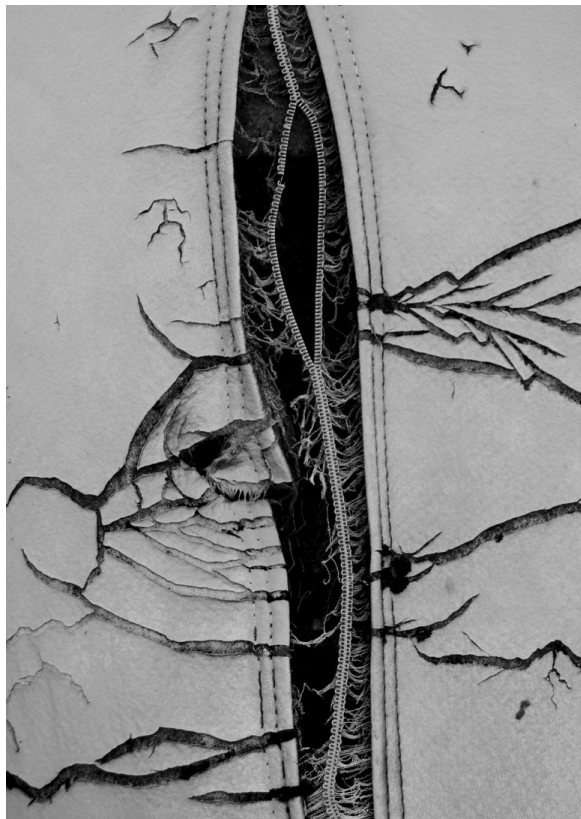
When he found the shirt, I was away, but the shirt is what kept us together. A token for the jokes that only we could understand. But now he's wearing it and I couldn't feel further from him. As time grew the shirt became a motif of our relationship. Not only the joke it contained, but the scent that I tried to preserve. When he first gave me the shirt I kept it separate from my other clothes. I feared that my dirty clothes, no matter how clean they were, would contaminate the pure fabric. I felt that if I was able to keep the smell of the shirt from changing, then maybe I'd never lose him.

The shirt now sits at the bottom of my drawer. It contaminates everything around it. I shove it down, past the free shirts I get from colleges I never visit, and hide it under my third tier pajama tops that only move when I'm decluttering. When I see it, I feel a sudden breeze of salty Maine air. I feel the sun freckling my nose, and bleaching my hair. I feel his eyes on me. I'm taken back to the dirt crusted aquamarine Boston Whaler.

We're sitting in little pools of water that escaped our bailers as we emptied the boats of water from the previous rain storm. I don't mind the dampness that slowly engulfs my shorts, because it gives me an excuse to sit down between the benches of the boat. My knees sandwiched between his. I asked him why the tip of his nose is split into two. It vaguely reminds me of a small valley between two peaks. He's regaling the time he cut his face open while skate boarding, but I'm not focusing on the story as his hands find his way to my knee. He's using me as a demonstration. Deploying my leg to show me how, as he flew off a jump, his skateboard hung in the air while his face hit the ground. I know how that feels. The feeling of complete confidence as you launch yourself into dangerous territory, and land painfully face first.

I can no longer wear the shirt without my skin crawling, screaming at me to take it off. My eyes burn with guilt when I see it shoved to the far corner of my dresser. An article of clothing that altered the course of my summer discarded like a used tissue. I contemplated throwing it out, letting it rot in a landfill as the void between him and me grew, but that would be a disservice

to the landfill. I play with the idea of upcycling it into a quilt for my mom that she could eventually box up and hide in our basement. But the shirt might sully the couch that it would touch for a brief moment. I settled upon using it as a dust rag. I spray Mrs. Meyers spray on it and clear the dust off my window sill. And although I push away the thought of him, I feel the chilly Maine ocean freeze my toes as I stand at the edge of a rock. He's diving out into the dark waves, water foaming around him as his body becomes surrounded by the Atlantic. I watch him swim laps around the drifting lobster buoys while he's watching me under the pine trees. He tries to convince me that the water isn't freezing. But it's not the cold water I'm uneasy about, it's the fear that when I plunge in after him I'm committing myself to him. I'm committing myself to the eventual suffocating silence that will surround us after the sun sets into a new year.



**Fissure**  
*Chloe Howard '26*  
Photography



**Fragility**  
*Nora Liu '27*  
ceramics, glaze, gold leaf

## The Art of My Mother's Nose

*Sophie Benjamin '26*

nonfiction

I'm always told that I have my mother's nose. We begrudgingly oblige to turn to the side so friends and acquaintances can study our heads. I point out that I have my father's eyes—the hazel ones that mimic the hues of the greens and browns of the forest, but I am met with refusals: “Nope. You're all Mom,” they say as she laughs and thanks them for insinuating she hasn't lost her youth quite yet. They comment on our identical blonde hair, even though it's artificial, and I remind them that I have my father's head shape. The bones in my jaw follow the same curves and bends as his, but all they see is my mother's nose.

What I see is my mother, standing in front of the mirror tugging at the loose skin on her neck. She smoothes on an ointment and applies a wand with a red light. It looks futuristic, like it's not from this planet. I'm seven years old, and my head barely reaches the countertop. I am fascinated by this ritual, but I don't yet know that she's tugging and yanking and stretching at her neck, praying for the return of her youth.

I look down at my new, bright yellow romper. The shorts have youthful ruffles and the fabric is littered with blood red poppies; I'm twelve years old and in my growth spurt, and the fabric on the shorts is already beginning to stretch. My gaze shifts to mine and my mother's matching strappy sandals as they click on the cobblestone of the indistinguishable summer coastal town. A tall, beautiful man stops us and asks if we're sisters. My mother's laugh is automatic—almost robotic. He politely asks us to come inside to shop for “beauty products.” My mother agrees, and I reluctantly nod. We cross the old, cobblestone street and head inside the quaint beauty shop.

My mother has been fascinated listening to the ingredients of anti-aging moisturizers for nearly two hours—I've taken the beautiful man's seat, and I spend most of the time staring at the floor, studying the rotation of the wheels on the chair as my gliding switches directions. The beautiful man leans over my mother, gently stroking an eye cream onto her face. He turns to me and asks me to examine the difference between her left and right undereyes, and I blindly agree that the retinoid slop has “drastically

tightened” her face. What I don’t admit is that I have never heard of retinol, much less noticed her undereyes. Only then had I begun to notice her aging; even still, I remember wanting to grow older like her.

My mother and I walk into a dimly lit restaurant. It’s filled with couples on first dates, newlyweds, and middle aged women on girls trips. My mother takes the soft, cushiony booth, and I take the chair. I scan the menu and decide on a fruity mocktail while my mother silently scrutinizes the wine list. Finally, the waiter approaches the table, and I watch his lips as he forms the dreaded question:

“Are you two sisters?” I force a smile and a chuckle, because I must be the polite young woman my mother raised me to be. I tune out the rest of their subtle pleasantries, but I pick up my mother’s usual anecdote about our nose.

“It’s the defining feature of our face,” she says. She orders her usual glass of red wine and I quietly order my now-childish raspberry drink. It’s sickeningly sweet, and I stare at the legs dripping down my mother’s wine glass. I can tell the wine is high quality—the color is rich and deep, and the legs linger for longer than they should.

I remember wishing I could grow into the sophisticated woman with the wine glass my mother presented herself to be. I wished I could grow up and escape my sisters’ diapers, bottles, and the late nights babysitting. I wished I could be a grown-up, because grown-ups don’t have to be big sisters.

Our dinner consists only of clanking forks and sighs. I study the room, only to find myself staring at her downturned face. I stare at the perfect ski-slope nose she passed down to me and our matching artificial blonde hair and I know that she did not give me her womanhood.

My mother did not give me her love of shiny gold necklaces with diamonds and sapphires, or her endless supply of retired high heels that made for the perfect dress-up item for me and my sisters. She did not give me her marine-blue eyes or her small frame. She only gave me her nose.

My mother tries to give me her domesticity. She wants me and my future husband to give her two grandchildren who come visit her on the weekends. She wants me to love cooking and cleaning and housework. She wants me to care for my two dogs and to walk them to the country club before I play women's tennis on the weekends.

I want her to see me the same way she sees my sisters. She sees their curly honey colored hair and their big brown doe eyes and she's proud of all that she gave her precious creations. My sisters are soft spoken in their passion, just like my mother. I am loud and abrasive—my passions are radical and creative. They unsettle, and I am proud of it. I want my mother to cherish that creativity—I want her to nurture it and feed it, and make sure it goes to sleep with a full belly.

The one thing my mother knows she'll never lose is her nose. The cartilage, perfectly pinched and sculpted like clay, is fixed. It never changes. Mine will never change either. It is the only thing that tethers me to her as I embrace growing up. I look forward to all of the wonderful smile lines, as they echo my youthful laughter and joy. I see a future for myself full of crows feet from my squinty smile and forehead lines from my signature furrowed brow.

I can't wait for my face to become mine.



**I Carry You**  
*Lena Smith '26*  
mixed media

**Where the Kettle Boils**

*Lila Barkan '27*

ceramics



**A Spiritual Mess**  
*Pearl Dickson '27*  
poetry

I dreamt my future self rotting into a karst,  
kneeling in shame before the holy throne of light,  
facing the fury of the unyielding Might.  
Better to face the storm, the heart, the thirst  
than to wait for the bubble of His grace to burst.

A state not quite as hot as a fire gone out, but the reddish  
orange of the furnace that forgot to shut its doors.

My soul crashes out  
like a bush that is stuck on a mountain high;  
a holy fire that is beneath a cloudy sky.  
I am in a holy mess  
like a saint in a sinner's dress.

I am burning! I am glowing! I am shining! I am a wreck!  
I am like a sad candle that's burning out a night;  
a disaster, a beautiful blight.  
I am nothing but a fiercely burning star!



**Inner Reflection**  
*Ashley Greer* '27  
oil paint

## Where Did My Tears Go?

*Emily Yang '27*

fiction

I have lost my tears.

They were with me in the shower, streaming down my face, my jaw, and eventually kissing the tiles, then swimming into the drain with white bubbles. They were with me when I half-squatted-half-sat by my desk, hanging onto my lower eyelashes, diving into the fluff of my navy-blue carpet. They were with me when I was curled up inside my comforter, temporarily painting the gray-turquoise quilt a darker shade. They were too dependent, demanded too much of my attention like baby birds never growing up. Their presence was too strong; I had to abandon them.

So I went to the mirror and asked my reflection, my companion, to take my tears away.

I carefully placed a small mirror on my desk and sat straight like a kindergartener waiting to be called for lunch, except that I had tears instead of a snack sauce smudging my face, dripping down my jaw. Jaw up, and eyes slowly blinking at my own reflection in the mirror, I clasped my hands together. I was looking at myself, but not really myself. My constant companion in front of me had the same long brown hair as I, with the split ends like sharp claws and the immature face like my underage peers. Yes, she looked like me in every appearance, yet she was different. Her round eyes had the same shape as mine, but they looked sharper, colder, like her irises had been dipped in an icy lake for years. Even though I knew she wouldn't, I always felt like, sooner or later, she would attack me. But no, she was never even plagued by my crying. She always examined me when I was crying with much curiosity. She didn't have the tears masking her face, even though she had the same dark circles beneath her eyes. She had a stiff facial expression and smiled like a robot; she learned to control her face by watching me in the mirror. I felt lucky that she hadn't learned how to cry, despite knowing how to make a sad, almost-crying face. It would be such a misfortune if she had those tears annoy her.

But then she raised an eyebrow. I never taught her this, but she seemed like a self-driven student (better than me, rotting in bed the same day that spiteful project was assigned), gradually mastering her own expressions once I learned she was alive.

I had been more thrilled than appalled to discover that she's living her own life behind a mere glass with some silver paint on the back. She appeared wherever I went: existing the same day I learned I had a research paper due in six weeks, cupping her face in the transparent door of the convenience store downstairs, arms crossed over her chest outside the library window, and in the mirror above the sink where I washed my face at midnight, her pressed against the glass with an intense look. No, she rather gazed at my wasted tears spiraling down the pipe with a hunger so dense, like a vulture preying on a dying deer, that I could not dare to meet her eyes. But I still observed her clenched fingers intently as she swallowed air. Sometimes I thought it was comforting that she felt sad when I was in pain, and sometimes I thought she was excited because she wanted my tears.

I looked into the mirror, seeing her palms up and fingers bent, repeatedly pulling her hands toward her face. She was getting anxious, making shapes with her mouth that I understood perfectly: Give them to me.

I worried about her having those miserable tears, but I hated my tears much more than I worried for her. I closed my eyes, then pressed them against her eyes in the mirror.

Now, my dear friends, don't mistake me—I wasn't tricking her into a trap. I wanted to distance myself from my useless tears, and she wanted to experience them, so we made a deal. I allowed her to mold my tears into an egg-shaped diamond and sew my hair into a brown-basket to hold my tears, all of which she wore as a ring upon her left ring finger.

She offered me attention as a bonus. Full attention. No need to talk loudly or laugh crazily among people controlled by irrational dopamines; her focused brown eyes always turned toward my face. Even standing high upon the stage or walking down the red carpets became unnecessary because the photographers used single-sided lenses instead of putting a full-length dressing mirror by the performers or prize winners. It would be futile to keep up with my honors because I secured her inside my wardrobe. I protected her and those highly saturated, brightly colored dresses I have ceased to love.

My dear friends, I lost my tears, but I didn't lose my love. I loved her. She was perfect—and only I knew it. She had perfect facial expressions, the best skin

condition, and the most attractive eyes, which grew even more affectionate in their movements after I handed my tears to her.

The day after she made the ring, I sat on my bed. The dark purple sky shortly before the sun woke was always inspiring. It reminded me of grapes, then grape juice. Then glucose. Then—abstractly—energy.

And then smiles.

I wondered how I smiled now, so I commanded myself to the mirror hanging on my wardrobe, showcasing my eight-tooth smile to her, my fake, stiff, ugly, inauthentic smile. I waited for a minute. Two minutes. Twenty minutes. My lip muscles twitched. I started to grimace, then opened my mouth wide, imagining my own reflection in the mirror was my dentist, showing her my teeth from all different angles. I did not know what type of expression mine would be classified as—smiling? Scared? Surprised? Or—tired? No, I shouldn't; it was a smile. Just a weird smile.

I saw her frowning. She placed her forefingers on the corners of her mouth and pulled them upwards. Her diamond ring reflected rainbow rays under the cool white light. She wanted to instruct me. How kind, how nice, how patient!

I wanted to be a good student. So I mimicked, but I didn't look good. I put my middle fingers on my mouth too, then ring fingers, then all five fingers, and I started to pinch and squeeze my lips and cheeks, and pulled them forcefully to opposite sides.

No. No! Don't look at me like that!

I shouted at her, with crescent-shaped red marks on my face. I began to swing the wardrobe door back and forth, and the mirror swayed with it. My reflection's figure was blurry, as if she had cloned herself so that she could have more fingers to point at me. She looked dizzy. She kept frowning. I knew she was judging me; she often despised me for losing control, even when she pretended to love me; she had that contempt in her eyes—oh just always haughtily cold-eyeing me!

She seemed angry; she must have thought I was mad.

The moment she opened her mouth, I slammed the wardrobe door shut with a loud bang and hastily escaped her impending reprimand.

I thought her spite well-justified. Yet even her silent accusation felt too heavy

to bear. So I turned away, whispering everything I saw to my ears because I was losing my hearing: unfinished books, open tabs, a waterless bottle, dirty shoes, unwashed pots, unfolded clothes, a mirror...mirror!

Exhausted, I slumped against the door and slid onto the floor in shivers. I clawed the carpet, fell on it sideways. I left half of my face covered in its dust, the other half facing the ceiling. I examined the antennae, their furry, irregular edges. Like grass. I thought: I must be the child of the earth. So the falling me kept falling, deep down, down, down the hard, sturdy, indifferent floor; into these bushes of navy-blue grass, of fake grass, of real fluff. I had lost my heavy tears, so no dew would bend the carpet piles down to the floor; so they were high like corn stalks in the fields, half-hiding my face.

I turned to my back, face up, watching the skylight as if I could see the bright stars through my low ceiling. I borrowed the rigid wooden plank beneath me as my spine.

No, my dear friends, I didn't miss my tears. Didn't long for their company or relief from my weaknesses. I just needed to rescue my cornea. At first, my abandoned tears saved me an hour every day to spend freely, like extra sleeping, reading, and gaming. Whenever my eyes were dry, I put Hylo eye drops on to moisturize my eyeballs. Yet the frequency with which my cornea needed attention increased exponentially in just three days, almost as distracting as my bygone tears. When I took out the eyedrop again under a dim table lamp, I stared into the fake eye printed in blue and white near the Hylo logo. The indifference in the cold, manufactured eye had reminded me of my ruthless, metal doorknob, always having a lower temperature than my fingers and shocking me awake—almost as annoying as my alarm clocks.

Three minutes of intense eye contact neither scared me nor the Hylo's eye. For a second, the printed eye seemed to obscure, wilding into blue sky and white birds. The birds lifted their wings and flew to a red and yellow hot air balloon above the fresh green grass, with a gray highway cleanly transpassing the middle of the trimmed lawn. The neatly edged balloon, horizon, and highway were always locked in autorefractors' lenses. Thinking of my eye doctor, my delicate corneas began to tug at my optic nerves. Irritated, I pulled my hair temporarily straight. I squeezed my eyelids hard, blindly shoved the

open books aside, and threw the eyedrop into my open-mouth backpack after I dumped more of those artificial tears into my eyes.

I tossed myself on my bed, face down this time. I heard the sound of wind smashing on the window coming from my right; I smelled the pillow with lemon detergent in front of my nose, and I turned my head and bit into my left palm while drinking the thick, sullen, dead air of chips from all around me. The hateful smell had weight, pressing my back and pushing me deeper into the lifeless mattress. But all of my senses were so, so far away. So far from me that I couldn't notice any of the spiteful feelings, except for the piling snow outside shining like crushed silver granules. I imagined myself to be a never-falling shooting star, accelerating down the Earth but finding no ground to stop it, so it continued to drop, through the illusory air, liquid, solid; then solid, liquid, air again, until it penetrated this planet in the end. I would be unseen, ignored, unobserved, because no one would notice a tiny hole needled by a dimly lit star. Still, I could not force any tears out.

I lost my tears. I needed them back.

I stood in front of the mirror and knocked on its surface. I asked my reflection to give my tears back. Her lips drooped; I saw sparkling liquid surge up in her eyes. They were my tears. I put a hand on my chest, the other reaching for her, leaning forward, forward, forward, till my forehead touched the surface. I stared into her eyes and her tears; her whole body pressed against the glass, and the diamond on her ring almost seemed like it could protrude out from the mirror. We gazed at each other with an affection that was twisted by desire into hunger, the same vulture-like hunger that once occupied her calm, crystal-clear eyes. She slowly revealed a bright smile—for sure, it was her trap to captivate me. My heart pumped faster. I put both of my hands on the mirror, and I seemed to be thrown into the swirl inside her eyes because all my senses withered away except my vision, but my muscles were too stiff to move.

I heard a whisper, but couldn't distinguish the content. She raised her hands; the mirror surface trembled.

Then we held hands for the first time, like lovers.

I felt the warmth cover my cold fingertips, gently pulling me in her direction. The silver-plated waves wrapped my body in delight, and a flush of generous, salty water kissed my sore eyes. I fell into her embrace.

**Totally Failing Calculous**  
*Charlee Cate Cardot '27*  
oil paint



**To the Func**  
*Charlee Cate Cardot '27*  
acrylic paint



**Moscow Men**  
*Katherine Nelson '27*  
poetry

Mommy and me  
went to Moscow  
for a meal  
and a man.  
To find a twin flame  
to make her heart whole.  
Mommy and me  
went to Moscow  
to see the moon  
and to find a man.  
We went to the market  
and milked a cow.  
No man was found.  
Only mountains  
and museums and  
Moscow mops.  
Mommy said  
she needs a man  
for a magnet  
and a machine.  
Someone strong  
with muscles,  
preferably lean.  
A man to never mend  
but to get the job done,  
to button my coat  
and never let my nose run.  
To cater to her  
and promise a vow,  
to rip out the weeds

and always allow.  
A man not to control  
or conquer  
but to hold and feed,  
to hug and prosper.  
Moscow has men  
but which will promise  
a life of lush and gold?  
A musician followed  
us in Moscow,  
fed us a meal  
and a mountain.  
Buttoned my coat  
and brushed my hair.  
He carried caramels  
in his messenger  
and played a tune  
in mommy's honor.  
Mommy said  
he was no man.  
For his music  
didn't move  
and his pockets stayed bare,  
a man not worthy,  
not worthy of our time,  
not worth the affair.



**Mother-Daughter Date**  
*Chloe Howard '26*  
photography

**Already Grown**  
*Elysia Shively '26*  
poetry

A child raising  
the child in me  
while you look through my hurt  
like it's nothing to see.

Dinner in silence,  
a flicker of blame;  
each night I pretend  
I'm not sleeping in pain.

Your love is a whisper  
you never quite said,  
so I learned how to tuck  
my own self into bed.

You say you're right here,  
but I don't want you near;  
it's too late after  
I wanted you, dear.

The 2026 Spring Collection



LILLY WEYMOUTH

SHOT ON A SONY CYBER-SHOT DSC-RX100II,  
A SONY ZV-1  
AND AN IPHONE 13 PRO

# THE ART OF BECOMING ING

79 Chandler St,  
Boston, MA 02116

The 2026 Spring Collection will be available in Boston until July 1st, 2026.  
Its new location will be in Hingham MA, opening July 14th 2026.



*Patterns*

May 2013

LILLY WEYMOUTH  
SHOT ON A SONY CYBER-SHOTDSC-RX100II

In 2013, the artist first discovered self-expression through her clothes. Every day after she turned four years old, her mother allowed her to pick out her own outfits. This had a larger impact on the artist and the way she lived her life. Her small dresser transformed into a grand armoire, and her basic, solid clothes were replaced with colorful, floral, striped, plaid, and polka-dotted outfits, each able to mix and match to the artist's liking. She no longer asked to be dressed, for each day after her morning kiss, she would leap out of bed to determine what style she wanted to wear. She became a master in patterns and designs, helping her younger sister determine which clothes were appropriate for that day's adventures. As the artists grew up, the patterns did not. They stuck with her, and by the time she left her armoire behind, she knew which colors were her favorite, which design she adored, and how she wanted to walk out the door each day: with confidence and pride.



Not long after her wardrobe renovation, the artist needed a way to fill her free time. Going for a stroll was not an option, for the streets were too dangerous without her parents beside her. She could not cook, for the table tops were far too high, and climbing them might risk a scraped knee. So she found the only other person in her house who faced the same limitations as she: her sister. Together they played and played, discovering an ensemble of tutus, synthetic jewelry, masks and tiaras, capes and cloaks, enough costumes to keep them occupied for hours on end. The artist grew older along with her fair sister Elsie, and the two of them created a fantasy kingdom, where they were tasked with missions that required so much imagination that their parents were often confused. Despite moving houses and welcoming a third member, the young prince Wyatt, into their world, the artist and her siblings continued to discover costumes everywhere, spending any free moment as princesses and princes, villains and heroes, fairies and warriors. She brought her imagination with her to her neighbors and friends houses, creating a world of fun and play.

*Dress Up*  
January 2014

LILLY WEYMOUTH  
SHOT ON A SONY CYBER-SHOTDSC-RX100II

Shortly after the start of her 6th-grade year, the artist faced struggles she had not before. Much of the particulars of these dark times are lost and undocumented. However, it is known that the artist felt a deep sense of pressure building within her, leading her to believe certain things that were untrue. She thought she was no longer accepted anywhere, no longer felt she had friends. Her schoolwork demanded so much from her, taking hours out of her free time every afternoon, every weekend. Even when she felt she had nothing more to give, her math homework and English essays exhausted her to the point of breaking. Her mother describes this period as overwhelming, filled with tension and fear. She no longer spent her Fridays walking downtown with her friends, but chose to ride home in the car, sinking into her seat when she passed familiar faces. Familiar faces and voices that belonged to the girls she thought she was friends with, but who were unaware of her previous requests to join their afternoon stroll. Her nights were spent crying into her pillow, her parents' kind voices being drowned out by her sobs of stress and anxiety. The artist has not spoken about what led her down this path, but she certainly found her way back into the light over time. This could be because she formed strong bonds with those around her, or simply because she found joy in her day-to-day life.



*Lost and Unseen*  
October 2021

LILLY WEYMOUTH  
SHOT ON A SONY ZV-1



## *New Beginnings*

July 2024

LILLY WEYMOUTH

SHOT ON A IPHONE 15 PRO

The artist began a new chapter of her life in the summer of 2024. She no longer had to worry about what had happened and what had not, and could focus on following her dream, whatever it may be. She began her high school years at a remote boarding school in Massachusetts, and when she first arrived, she wondered if the decision to go was the right one. Everyone she had already encountered at field hockey preseason seemed far more excited and confident than she felt. She remembered she could have gone to another boarding school, one that perhaps would have set her on a different path. However, after some time, she knew in her heart she had made the right choice to try something outside her comfort zone. The artist became friends with her neighbors, her colleagues, and her mentors, each of whom influenced her and who she became. She tested her interests, first falling in love with field hockey after stepping onto the hot turf during the summer preseason. She spent hours in the ceramics studio, not minding the clay on her clothes, her face, and in her hair. She read classics and masterpieces, as well as tried to create some of her own. She was fascinated by biology as the stories of planets, animals, and humans unfolded before her, connecting everything she saw into a seamless web of life. Unbeknownst to her, the artist truly discovered who she was through trial and error, finding that making mistakes helped her grow from a happy little princess to a strong and brave queen. She laughed with those around her as she followed her own path defined by her passions, relationships, and joy.

**First Goal**  
*Benson Lu '28*  
photography



**Swim**

*Kendall Dobratz '27*

poetry

I've admired you  
Like a mesmerized kid tapping on a fish tank  
So close their breath fogs the glass  
But seeing you float past me  
I stepped away  
My ring of vapor on your house  
Slowly disappeared  
Then years later you swam back  
Finally  
I was still secretly waiting  
Close enough to run back to you

Look at me  
I took you home  
And got to call you mine



Two Photographs from Benson Lu '28:  
*The Read (left)*  
*Kitchen Street (right)*

## A Treaty with the Clouds

*Pearl Dickson '27*

poetry

I dress not for you.

Not for the boy in the corner, licking his lips, watching the street,  
waiting for a beautiful flower to pass.

Not for the empty aww, you look cute.

Not because I have too much to wear or because I want to show off  
what I have. Not to impress anyone.

Pause and ask: who cares?

I don't dress because I need to, or even because I love it.

It's okay to care a little, but caring too much about their opinions is a waste  
Of energy. Let them take their bad energy elsewhere.

Let them know, loud and clear, that I care less.

I dress for only one thing, and one thing alone:

I dress for the weather.



**Just Another Fish**

*Ellie Patterson '26*

oil paint



**Fall**

*Benson Lu '28*  
photography



**Cockpit**

## Words from an All-Nighter

*Emily Yang '27*

poetry

Am I a dying cactus, shriveled, dry;  
a wilting flower in two stones being wedged;  
or a cooked mushroom whose stem has been stewed  
into a slimy brew that melts on the bed?

Who cares what's right or wrong or why!  
I'm a student counting night stars, being boiled  
into meals, into roiling oats, broiled—  
for the lights are shut, and I lost wifi.

Regrets creep in (my thinning hair weighs light),  
compacting into stones that press my gut.  
The unwept lamps and books and papers jeer,

but my eyes pool only a tear.  
Apologies to my flesh and bones:  
I would love you if I could.



## The Door of No Return

*Nussi Chitou '29*

photography



**Are you Bored?**  
*Ellie Patterson '26*  
collage

## Worldly Possessions and Things

*Lila Barkan '27*

*poetry*

I wrote my will a week ago  
before I turned eighteen.  
'Cause when I die I want everyone to know  
what to do with me.

The money in my bank account,  
give it to my brother dear.  
It's not a lot, just a small amount  
To get him through the years.

Maybe he will buy a new pair of shoes  
the ones I thought looked smart.  
And when he goes to put them on  
he will be less sad to be apart.

To my friends, I leave my favorite song  
the one I always played.  
And when it gets to the end  
They will be less sad, I went away.

And when his darling girl is six feet under  
Dad, I will leave it to you,  
Our garden, full of lemon trees  
under a sky so blue.

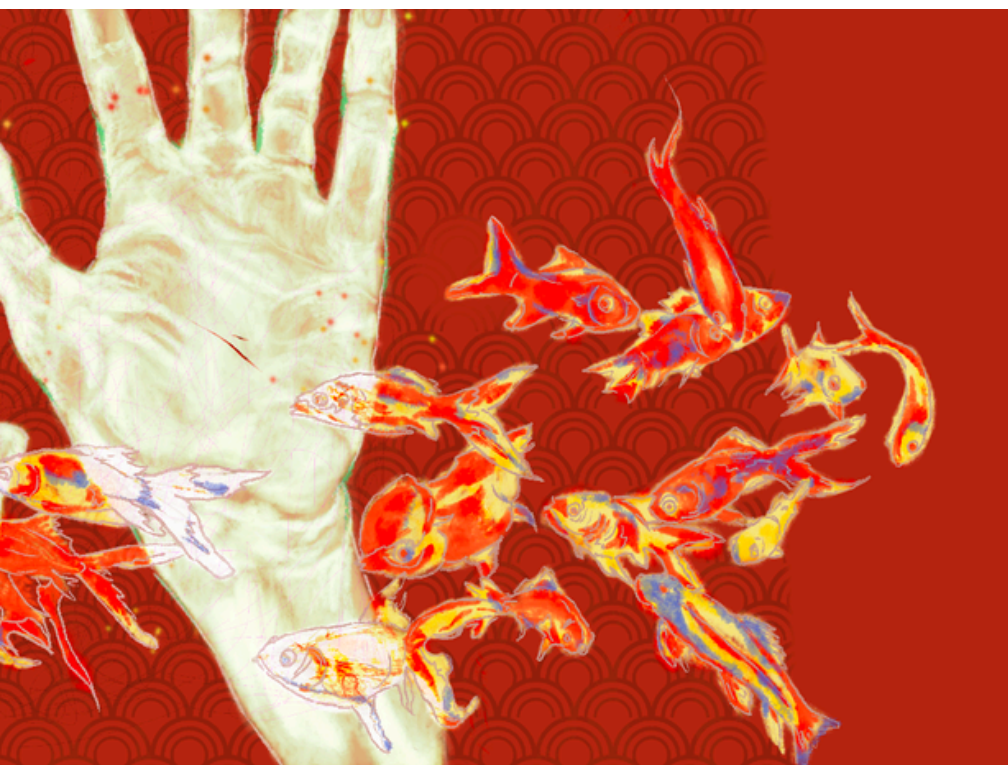
Tell my mother not to fuss,  
standing over my cold body.  
I left to her my full name  
That she would call me when I was naughty.

Ask my english teacher if she would,  
give me an extension, please?  
Leave to her my unfinished work  
And a thanks for all she has taught to me.

It's kind of silly to write a will  
And it's dumb that this poem rhymes.  
But the best thing about it still,  
At least you know I tried?



## What We Carry



*Yuki Hu '26*  
digital art

**Forgotten and Absorbed into the Earth**

*Dionis Phelan '26*

clay



**I'm Nothing if I'm Not Consistent**

*Dionis Phelan '26*

clay

## Learning to Drive

*Lila Barkan '27*

poetry

White knuckles  
and double yellow lines;  
passing lanes  
and exit signs.  
The eerie hum of the engine.  
The whoosh as a car goes by.

My driving instructor, Vlad, tells me  
if a creature runs in the road,  
Do not stop.  
Do not swerve.  
A shoebox, Vlad says,  
if it is bigger than a shoebox,  
then hit the brakes.  
Stop for the fox—  
not a rabbit or a squirrel, a chipmunk or a snake.

Any whisper of compassion becomes nullified  
when the bass of station 102.5  
drowns out the crunch of little bones  
and intestines being liquified.

If you are kind enough  
to hit the gas,  
there is compassion in killing it fast.  
After all  
you are big  
it is small.  
Your life has worth—  
their life means nothing at all.

But did you know that it is against the law  
to drive with flip flops on?

**Id**  
*Yuki Hu '26*  
digital art



**Six Twice**  
*Molly Caesar-Kim '26*  
poetry

I think I tinkered with toys for too long because I don't remember the moms of the girls in my grade granting them dollhouses and littlest pet shops when they were twelve but what is rather befuddling is twelve is only six twice so why was I patronized for puddle jumping or weird for whining for dolls or wishing I had someone to play the dad or the baby when I was simply six twice but I am independent not codependent so I played a puppeteer with my characters' cadences giving the nerd with sticky velcro glasses a nasal lisp and another a slow maternal hush and doe like eyes and a plastic mane so I played with my ponies in my plastic princess heels with pleasure and my mom may have purchased the most perfect pink dollhouse the only one I've ever admired and the wood was soft and free of splinters and the props were intricate and though I had never done the dishes the kitchen was still my favorite room and those moments of peace when I was only six twice enter my mind and I think how often I sat solemnly on the sandy shaggy rug kneeling near the nourishing house where I embarked on quests of fractured fantasies like glimpses into unknown apartment windows reciting tales of barbies not invited to the ball or simulating high school calculus tomfoolery all of which were fractions of things from false reckonings that I never actually experienced in life outside of my whimsical fairyland bubble and those itchy-bitsy molded figurines carved into dogs and toucans and hermit crabs for christ's sake were all slipped under the forgotten rug fibers while my fleetingly juvenile hand gripped my precious toy plane its bodice white and shiny with pink wings and glittered as all was back then bent from constant crashes convinced it was cruising somewhere cleaner than the grit burning my palms and the dried mud flaking from my rain boots a realm named aloud until it stuck and somewhere in that domestic creation of worlds I lost my sense of time of reality of leaving the floor of when play was supposed to end and I stayed there longer than I was forgiven for but who could even care because I was only six twice with a hungry beast of a mind and now I cannot say the same

**Kisses and Plums**  
*Sophie Benjamin '26*  
poetry

Beaches are filled with  
blues and oranges. They meet  
in the sky right as the sun  
begins to rise. But

this beach is purple. Purple  
like the bags under my eyes  
after staying up all night. It's  
purple like the night sky  
when you're in love, like  
the bruises on your knees that  
your older sister ices  
before giving you a bandaid and a kiss.

It's purple like July, like the  
plum that slides down my throat  
and into my belly, its juice  
left behind, dripping.  
Dripping down my cheeks  
as they begin to ache from laughter. The  
laughter is drowned out by the  
cold splashing from the waves.

The water washes away the sand, and  
reveals a purple seashell underneath.



**Gratitude**  
*Isabel Shen '27*  
acrylic paint

## Geese from the North

*Aeowynn Conway '27*

nonfiction

I must love it here in my grandfathers overgrown and obnoxiously green woods; nothing ever moves except for those neighbors whose souls seemed familiar, though they packed up before the first winter even sent a shiver down their little boys' spines; and one did have down syndrome and the cutest smile, and I guess my grandmother moved too, as far away as she could, but look at us: despite her attempts, we all flock back like geese from the north to the magic acre.

That must be why my grandfather lined the paths with the blue bottles—a flight path for his winged grandchildren; and while stirring my coffee this quiet morning in one of the heavy grown up mugs that now rests in my hands, I was surprised that the mug weighed nothing, and I looked out across the dew trampled grass concealing the secret clovers and horrific worms that we used to dig up and fling around, coveting and wielding them as something precious; and that grass must hold something else in its green blades, for we all once wished to melt into its soil and breathe in the hazy july air as we strained for sightings of fireflies in the blackness, the only light the shiny whites of our eyes and the distant firepit glower.

A sprinkler shoots on, and startles the chipmunk and her babies, which have been babies for as long as I can remember, and I really do wonder how some things disappear though never leave these wise forests of my youth.

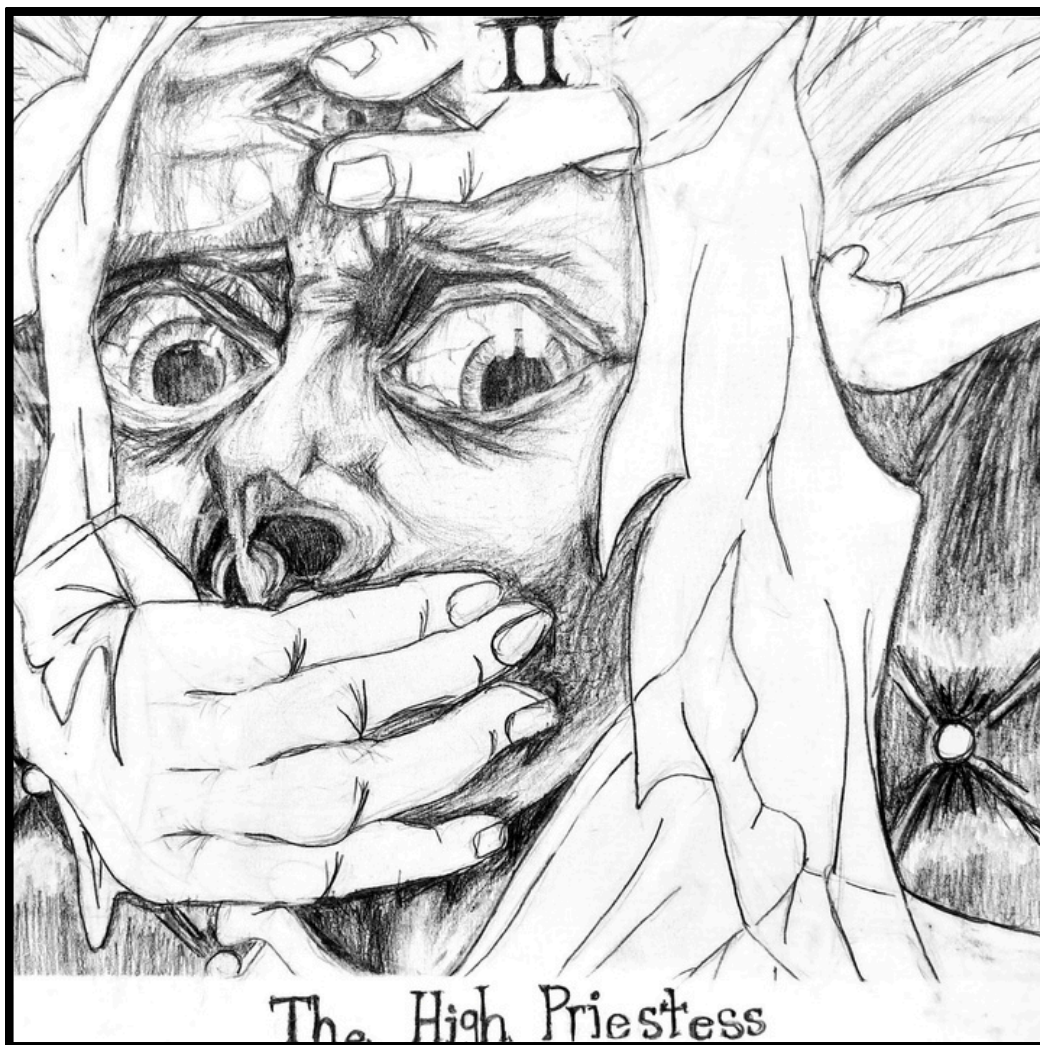
How the once loud echoes of twigs and leaves breaking beneath our five pairs of bug bitten legs, skipping through the fields of golden rod, past my grandfather's indigo bottles guiding us to the stream, seem to have hidden themselves amongst the now silent hills of ivy; and the breathtaking rush of the glimmering emerald creekbed gurgling as we tested the give of fallen limbs and wobbly rocks now seem as dull as the brownish color of rippling waters; and each time I land here, my feathers ruffled from the journey, I wonder if I am the only one that can still taste the cool lemonade and crunchy stems of delicately woven daises and ferns left at the mossy roots of the fairy houses; and if I am the only one that still remembers how quickly the imprints of our damp swimsuits—wet from the pool or that summer rain we loved because it made the pavement smell funny—would fade from the brick patio after we pressed our skin into the sun-warmed brick; how it

held our our heavy feet, tired from the drive, as we crossed that patio into arms opening wide, skin sagging; and I am sure the brick felt sorry for the bloodied knees it caused, tears soaking the backs of chubby hands; and now, me, staring at the same porous brick, my wings beating, searching for the steady rhythm of the rise and fall of our damp little bellies splayed across the front patio.

The mug is now heavier in my hands, and I will forget it on a counter and move beyond the porch, the wind swirling my hair before it reaches the tips of the branches of the big oaks and maples by the entrance to my grandfathers acre; and I watch how it rattles the wind chimes and clinks the blue bottles off in the distance, making music that I almost mistake for our laughter, and I remember that my grandfather waits in his woods everyday, maybe listening and waiting for the same thing I am.



**To Grandpa, Love Ashley**  
*Ashley Greer '27*  
oil paint



**(II) The High Priestess**

*Chidera Okeke '26*

graphite on paper



**(IX) The Hermit**  
*Chidera Okeke '26*  
mixed media

## You Hear Him

*Ptolemy Williams '27*

fiction

No one will ever hear Miles Fontaine's early work and know I had anything to do with it, and I want everyone to know that without me, he'd be nobody special.

I never believed the guy could sing for shit, but when it came to commitment, Miles did things like he was one of the greats. My parents weren't into music much at all, and they probably wouldn't have given a damn even if me and him went Gold and sold out an arena tour across the country. Miles was a dropout whose parents were rich and didn't care about him, and now ten years later he's at those stadiums, going backstage with his acoustic guitar wrapped around him and shit-talking his mom and dad to some late night hosts. My parents didn't care for what I liked, but at least they cared about me.

Since freshman year of high school, I'd bike over to Miles's townhouse in the West Village every afternoon. He strung all the amps and mics he bought with his mom's card around his dad's old office, but I had some of my own gear too. About half the time, I'd ride downtown with my dad's old Fender strapped onto my back. We'd cheat off each other's homework and be done in minutes. I'd be there until 9 sometimes on school nights. When we met freshman year, he was really into the Eagles and late era Clapton. Miles liked how I was loose with the guitar. His vocals were always perfectly on-beat, so I'd let the strings ride a little. But we didn't invent a genre or anything.

Miles couldn't sing from his chest at all, at least I never thought so. Not for me to judge, but he always sounded like he was doing an impression of who he liked that week. He didn't like autotune a lot, which I played around with a ton when I fixed up his vocals. "You know what to do," he'd say, taking his Scarlett headphones off. "You can make that sound good."

I'd barely played the drums, never touched a bass in my life, but I always made our songs sound as acoustic as they could. I was a solid guitarist, which was kinda how Miles found me freshman year when he used to be one of at least three bassists. I didn't know he was into singing or music in general until we talked about it a bit. In that same class, Miles also got close with this girl he liked named Amelia Sykes, one of the school's jazz band singers. They went to a bunch of concerts and festivals together that summer. I'd gotten pretty close with him by that time, so it was weird to me how he seemed to want to keep his worlds separate. Amelia seemed sweet and she'd like what Miles did. I think he was worried about me realizing what a good voice sounds like. I had a lot of alone time around this time, so instead of getting pissed at Miles, I'd crank out

at least five tracks every afternoon, and these were some of the best I'd put together. They kinda leaned in a different direction, a little dirtier and more aggressive. I'd stare out Miles's window checking the time, waiting for him to bike home and hear what I'd done. Of course his parents had no clue where he was.

Sometime in January of the next year, Miles got to his house a little late. Snow was really coming down onto the city and the cabs splattered slush onto the streets. He flung the door open, which creaked and rattled the townhouse walls. I made four beats off of the same sample, all at different tempos and with altered drum patterns, but I cranked the 808 distortion much more than we'd ever done. "How's Sykes?" I asked Miles, a little annoyed at him for missing that whole night. It was a pretty proud moment for me. His eyes were a little red, and he was moving around the room faster than usual. "She's chill. What'd you get done?" I got excited, and I let him listen to the best one I'd done that night. I kept leaning over towards him, trying to hear which part he was hearing. His teeth were bright in his smile, but his eyes couldn't have sat more neutral.

"Fire, man," He said as he yanked my AirPods out when the track ended, already struggling to pull his phone out of his tiny pockets.

"You'd do something on this?"

Miles sat, hesitant. "I don't know, bro. It's a little loud, no? I mean, like, what if you laid down some vocals on it? I'd be cool with it if you, I don't know, made a new artist profile on the app for it?" Then I got pissed.

"You coulda been around to give me some input while I did all this but you were with Amelia the whole time. I made probably a hundred beats without you even being around. This is the shit I got good at."

Miles looked stunned, less defensive. "Sorry, man." He sighed gently. "You're totally right. I'll lock in, man. You've been doing a lot of work."

"Alright, you're good. Just try to be around for this kinda shit." He nodded a little too aggressively, trying to get me to shut up.

Miles came around, and eventually he decided what I was going for was gonna be cool and push boundaries. I distorted his vocals, added booming 808s and some non-acoustic leads, and kinda forced him to like how he sounded with autotune. He seemed somewhat enthusiastic about it here and there. If you shuffle any album he's made without me, it's all acoustic, mostly drumless with raw, often dry vocals.

He stuck with that same head voice mixed with the slightest gravelly growl that added in some needed flavor to the new production style I had leaned towards. We got around forty tracks done in two weeks. Junior spring was a

weird time for me. I'd be in school, cramming beats, telling my parents I still cared about college while Miles spent school days out with Sykes, who he somehow talked into dropping out. I never got a chance to ask her why she did it. I guess I just didn't know how close they'd gotten without me being there. It's like they were married. I don't know where he left her after people found him. It was definitely in his best interest to hide Amelia's singing voice from whoever called him up.

We spent Easter Sunday blasting all our tracks through Miles' speaker while his parents went out drinking, deciding which songs were throwaways and which were keepers. What pissed me off was when Miles would hear five seconds of the beat, like three hits of an 808, and yell "Scrap it!" We then put together a seventeen-song tracklist of what we wanted to put out. When I headed home that night, I couldn't stop myself from mixing and mastering everything until the album sounded cohesive and ready to go.

I called him up and he picked up after a few rings. "What, man?" He sounded exhausted.

"I finished everything. You wanna put it out for this Friday?"

"Sure, bro. If you want."

I talked to him again on the way to school that Thursday morning, after a slow week of promoting it and working on some newer production to pass the time, and a friend of mine actually let me play a quick set at some avant-garde jazz gig he got on the lower East Side. At one point I tried to get Amelia to check out the show, but she was out of town somewhere. I was wobbling over the curbs of the city sidewalks on my bike as I gripped the smudgy rubber around the handlebar with my left hand and my phone with my right. Miles was silent for a bit, like he was looking for the right words.

"Dude, I've been tryin' to reach you, man. I was just thinking, um, what if we, uh, put the album out next week? Next Friday. I'm meeting up with some record guy uptown that Sykes linked me too. I'm just sayin' this 'cause obviously we gotta both, like, promote the album and shit, y'know? Can't just be one of us. It's just probably, uh, better, right?" I was in disbelief. I was furious. He'd picked that moment to tell me about his stupid record thing?

"Bro, no! I'm not changing the date. I swear, bro. This whole time I've been putting in all the work for this album that I had to force you to stop running around Brooklyn with your girlfriend and sing to for half an hour. I don't care. Go uptown with your record guy. The album's coming out. I don't even wanna hear anything from you. Am I supposed to tell the thousands of people who pre-saved our album off of playlisting and distribution that I paid for to just cope? What do you want?" Dog walkers and passerbys glanced over to the

“Dude, whatever. That shit sucks anyway. I’ll say it, bro. It’s my fault too, dude. I can’t sing on any of that. I just can’t have anyone hearing and thinking of that as what I can do as an artist, bro. I can do more, bro. Just please take down the links. I promise you we’ll work on the next one.” I hung up on Miles. He’d been pissing me off too many times those past few months. I wasn’t backing off the plan. I hated the way he talked like he was a moron, like when he mumbled his way out of anything and would never say anything straight.

I spent the day all pissed off about Miles. I started hating the album too. Those 808s that sounded experimental and upbeat on Easter pounded in my head and aggravated me, coupled with Miles’s half-baked vocals and sappy lyrics. I questioned everything about it, like how could anything this half-assed propel us anywhere. Maybe I just can’t hear a hit, but I don’t care to tell anyone to go digging around for it.

I sat, crossed feet resting numb on my bedroom desk, headphones gripping my ears as the album made it everywhere. I didn’t play it, didn’t start spamming everyone about it. By that point, it didn’t feel like art to me, which anything has to for me to actually care about it. I didn’t and still don’t plan on talking anything out with Miles, who probably sat down in front of some exec’s desk that day with some CD he’d never told me about, Sykes’ arm latched around his neck as he signed documents and acted all professional.

I’m 22 now, and Miles is 23. He’s toured around, strumming an acoustic guitar and whispering into a microphone in front of an arena of people singing his sappy lyrics with the passion that he never had. I bet he hasn’t seen any kind of commitment since breaking things off with Amelia. When we worked together, we got a few thousand plays on tracks, some little sets and shows here and there. Now he’s easily secured in the millions, and nobody I know personally from venues or other acts around the city are in touch with him or his management now. So if anyone likes him enough to dig around for our old SoundCloud some day, all the tapes are his, but everything else is mine.



**Mirrored**  
*Chloe Howard '26*  
photography



**POV**  
*Yuki Hu '26*  
digital art

## The Weight of a Penny

*Eleanor Rose '27*

nonfiction

I sat beside my friends while our counselor explained how we would approach the rapids. I can't remember exactly what Josephine said about it. I remember being nervous. So nervous in fact, that my fear and anxiety drowned out what she was saying. And I remember nodding, even though her words slipped past me like the fast-moving water right next to us. Grindstone rapids were a set of three, and we were on the last one - the hardest one. The kind our friends who had already done the trip describe with a tight smile. And we were down a stern - Dylan hurt her leg, so I was with Beatrice, who was not a very accomplished stern. As Josephine finished talking, I found myself hoping that Beatrice was listening. Eventually, we started to gather our things and head back to the canoes. Beatrice and I were going last, so we had some time to kill. As we walked around the clearing by the river, a small, shiny object caught my eye. I bent down to investigate, and to my surprise, it was a penny. It almost seemed staged, perfectly placed on the dirt and moss, as if waiting there just for me. How did a penny end up in this remote spot in the woods? It was too out of place to be a coincidence. Already smiling, I picked it up and turned it over a few times before putting it in my pocket, knowing that now I would make it safely through the rapid with Patrick's luck.

Everyone knows that pennies are good luck; it's common knowledge. But in my family, finding a penny is more than that. It's a sign from a cousin of mine that I never met, who tragically died years before I was born. His name was Patrick, and he was hit by a car while crossing a street in New York City. I know him through photographs, stories, and through the careful and caring way my great uncle describes his son. But mostly, I know him through pennies.

I'm not entirely sure how it started, but at some point along the way, a penny on the ground became a Patrick penny. Maybe because it has a nice ring to it, or maybe because grief needs somewhere to land. All I know is that whenever I need it, I seem to find a penny, and I know that my older cousin is watching over me.

You might think it strange or bizarre that a family member who never knew me would be sending me any kind of luck or sign. And I wouldn't entirely disagree with you. So I never really think about it too much. It's just something that I have always believed. Even before I could understand what or who Patrick was, I was always taught that a penny on the ground was a Patrick penny. And it was nice to imagine a kind relative watching over me.

I welcomed the small weight of the penny in my pocket as we pushed our boat into the rapids. I had this touch of luck, so we would be fine. The river, however, had another idea. As the bow, it was my job to yell "left!" or "right!" depending on where I saw rocks or branches. Unfortunately, no one taught me what to yell

when I saw our boat headed straight into a small waterfall. I didn't have a second to think before our boat was filled with water and flipped. Suddenly, nothing made sense. The river slammed us against rocks, spun us around, attempted to pull us and our life jackets down. We watched helplessly as our stuff floated out ahead of us, and the rushing water dragged and pushed us around like pinballs in a machine. The thought of any luck was so far away from me now. Lost down the river with our stuff, perhaps. We clawed our way onto rocks, coughing, catching our breath, stunned. That was only the start of it. Throughout the rest of the day, we would lose the canoe, the map, two friends, and almost all of our personal belongings. But we did not lose each other, and we did not lose ourselves.

That night, I remembered the penny. I pulled it out of my pocket. It looked the same as it had before. Copper, shiny, unfazed by the dramatic events of the day. Until that moment, I had believed that these pennies would protect me. And not in a metaphorical way. It seems stupid, but I truly thought that if I had one with me, I would be safe. Yet the day had been a disaster, and the penny had done nothing. For a while, that unsettled me more than the unfortunate event of the day.

Truthfully, I had never wanted to think about the concept of these pennies in more depth. I love hearing about my family's history, and this story is a big part of it. But in the past, if I got into the facts behind where and when I found these pennies, I felt as though it might take away from their meaning. It seems overdramatic, but in the moment, I was deeply confused and almost angry. All my life, these pennies had really meant something. But what to do now that it had failed me? Was I even allowed to think poorly of them, considering they represented such a praised figure in my life? This incident still sometimes makes me wonder: what do you do when something you've always believed in doesn't work the way you thought it would? Without even knowing, and after years of avoiding speculation, I was forced to think about it. A lot.

The more I think back on the incident, the clearer it becomes. Maybe luck isn't the absence of danger. Maybe it's what remains afterwards. The penny hadn't failed - it just didn't function the way I thought it would. That day forced me to consider something harder. Maybe these pennies have never been promises of ease. Maybe they are reminders of endurance. Patrick didn't survive his accident. We survived ours. Maybe that is the luck. When I find a penny now, I don't imagine that I will be safe from all harm. I think of memory, how it persists, and how we choose what meaning to carry. The penny doesn't stop the rapids, it never did. But it reminds me that even when the boat flips, I will resurface. Not because something bad won't happen—but because something good can.



**Dusk**  
*Dax Mutter '28*  
photography

Cheot-Noon, First Snow

Claire Kim '26

poetry

*Cheot-Noon*

Is eating *goguma*<sup>1</sup> and *Bungeoppang*<sup>2</sup> on crowded  
subways And making a warm fire of laughter  
Family and *miyeokguk*<sup>3</sup> becoming the wood  
In my *balmoni*'s<sup>4</sup> small, smiling apartment.  
The heater always off—*balmoni* says,  
“Why waste money on things  
That love can solve?”

*Cheot-Noon*

Is skipping *bagwons*<sup>5</sup> to skate with cousins around *Lee-Sun-Shin*<sup>6</sup> statue,  
History married by Christmas lights.  
And browsing cardboard and *hoddeok*<sup>1</sup>-scented bookstores  
On silent Sundays, trailing behind my dad.

Let me tell you, though.

It's a little different from 'first snow'.

The one that swathes my suitcases at JFK Airport

And slumps on security guards hollering, “Uber this way!”

Yet, the promising pulse of New York's boasting breeze lifts me up,

Up into Undermountain Road.

First-snow, to me,

Is sledding and gingerbread cookies, Black Friday sales and Christmas carols.

It's rushing to catch flights, basking in feasts, and jamming out

To Spotify playlists.

First-snow, here, means breaking in brand-new boots,

And learning to let go of old ones—

Even if the laces are still in good shape, and the new soles feel off.

Hey, no matter what, you gotta love first snow, right?

*Cheot-Noon* and First Snow.

They mean the same thing in the dictionary. But do they really?

<sup>1</sup>Korean sweet potato

<sup>2</sup>Korean fish-shaped pastry with red-beans and custard

<sup>3</sup>Korean seaweed and beef soup

<sup>4</sup>Grandmother

<sup>5</sup>Korean afterschool study academies

<sup>6</sup>Korean admiral who fought against

Japanese

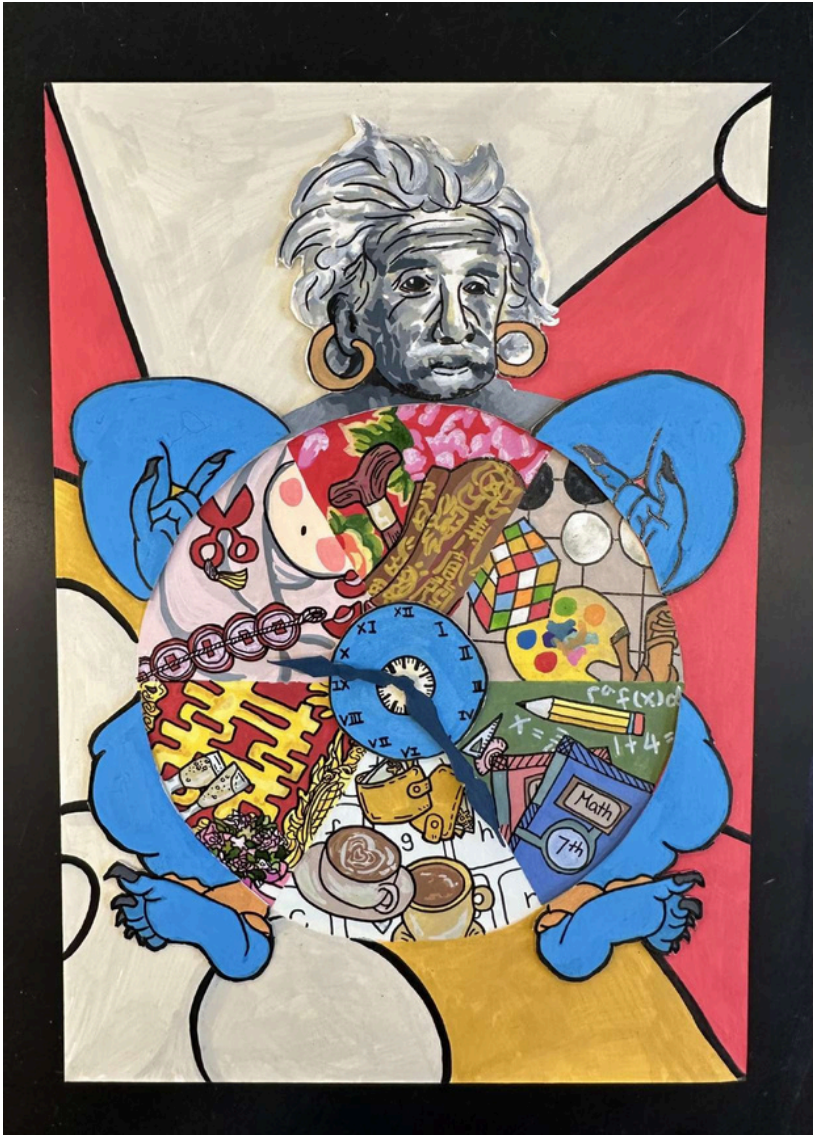
**Yellow**  
*Katherine Nelson '27*  
poetry

I write in the color yellow, one I have recently promoted to my favorite. I write to fight with my little brother, the golden boy. I write so maybe he can realize that a girl isn't just a toy. I write to set me apart and to get more than a moment of praise. I write because I'm mediocre at almost everything I do; I can't play an instrument, especially not the kazoo. I write because I think rhyming is funny; it is quite obvious in my work that I do. I like to laugh and smile and tease, and writing is my way to. I write for my friends who are guys, so I can brag and they can believe my silly little lies. I write for my smarty pants roommate so that maybe I, too, can win a prize.

I write for my little sister and the very pink room that we share. I write so that I can stay in bed and keep writing from there. I write for my oldest sister, for all of her beauty. I write for the one-half that we are connected. I write to search the web for things that rhyme with duty. I write for my mother and her heart that is split in two. I write for her in the passenger seat, and I pray for her in the driver's seat. I write for her, almost driving into a lake and putting my family's lives at stake. I write for our shopping trips and her size 11 shoes. I write for our laugh that sounds the same. The one I hope I never lose. I write for my dad, so he forever calls me "baby girl", so that he always picks me up on my birthdays and compliments my curls. I write for him and his motorcycle, for the engine he revs. I write for his yellow jeep and the way he rests his head.

I write for my big nose, the same one my grandfather had. I write for my sharp tongue, which my nana always says is from my dad. I write in Times New Roman, for it is the only font that doesn't make me sad. I write for my nana, and her journey to the States. I write because she tells me to never be late. I write about her pantsuits and her favorite color, green. The same as my dad's, a very rare way for them to agree. I write in her voice and her stories. I write because a moment with her is never boring.

I write to dance. The floor will never leave me. I write because I know I am not that good, no matter what people tell me. I write because I can't cartwheel, but at least I can spell because. I write because I like to rhyme, it's stupid, I know, but it is how I make my stories mine. I write to write books for children who look like me. I write to write simple little stories about birds in the trees. I write because things make me sad, because I cried listening to Rihanna, or when I am watching YouTube, and there is an ad. I write because I feel impotent and out of control. I write to be like Cher from Clueless, but not when she slammed her jeep into a pole. I write to be a character in the movie I make from life. To have my life planned out on a script, to end it as a good wife. I write to let people know who I am, to amplify my voice. I write to show people that I can make my own choice.



**The Wheel of Life**  
*Emily Yang '27*  
mixed media

## No Going Outside

*Emma Gally '27*

poetry

We are in a drought, my parents said.  
No watering the lawn.  
No playing with the hose.  
No dancing in the sprinkler.  
No shooting water guns, my parents said.  
There isn't enough water to go around.

Our lawn went brown that summer.  
and the next  
and the next  
until suddenly, the grass was white.  
Ash, my parents said.  
It rained from the sky, leaving everything blanketed  
in a sick, cold grey.

We had school off that day,  
The air too polluted to breathe.  
No going outside, my parents said.  
The wildfires were getting close.  
More land had burned than ever before;  
more land than the state of Connecticut.

I thought the world was fine;  
I thought we were not destroying forests;  
I thought wildfires were not marring the planet;  
I thought humans had enough humanity to not  
destroy our only home, to not cause animals to go  
extinct, to not turn our planet into dust.  
I thought we cared.

That belief died when my grass turned white.



(XXI) The World  
*Chidera Okeke '26*  
digital art

**Knee Deep**  
*Carter Giese '26*  
nonfiction

This past summer I worked on a maintenance team at Camp Waukeela. Most days I took out the trash or fixed screen doors. Nothing glamorous. One time I got to build a cabin with a couple carpenters, but that's a story for another time. Every morning I'd show up at 8 o'clock, eat breakfast with my coworkers, meet with my lovely boss, Abbie, then get to work. One day after my morning check in with Abbie, I heard over the radio: "Abbie to Carter. Come to the office immediately." This only happened when Abbie had a job to assign, or if a team member was in deep shit. In this case, it was both.

As I made my way down the dirt road towards the office, I saw a dark red Ford F250 Super Duty barreling down the road, leaving a trail of dust in the air. I would know this truck anywhere: it was Kevin's truck. Kevin was Abbie's husband and a real salt of the earth kind of guy. Kevin worked in the septic business, installing and fixing septic systems all over New Hampshire. He also liked to help out around camp where he could; he taught me a lot of the handy skills I know today like how to change a tire, how to replace the belt of a lawnmower, and countless words about plumbing that I can not repeat in polite company.

As I stepped into the office, I saw Kevin with his cheeky smile. That's when I knew I was screwed. He shoved a pair of overalls and rubber gloves into my chest. Minutes later, I was standing over a two foot wide hole in the ground, a hole that led to the inside of a septic tank. Abbie explained to me that I would have to go inside and change the septic pump. Kevin couldn't do it because being a six-foot-four and 320 pound man, he didn't even fit through the hole. Abbie couldn't bear the stench, but before leaving, she put a clothespin over my nose, and wished me luck.

One moment I'd been sipping coffee under the pines; the next, I was knee deep in shit, trying to replace a septic pump without a clue in the world where to begin. I looked up through the hole I had just entered, but Kevin's silhouette blocked my only lightsource. He looked down at me chuckling and said "I puked my first time." Then came the instructions. I was able to take the old broken pump out relatively easily. But the trouble began when I tried to put the new one in. Thirty minutes of fumbling while Kevin's voice rained down insults. Each damn time I messed up fitting the pipes together, he somehow came up with a new insult or stupid phrase I'd never heard in my life. Kevin had a lot of skills; he was very good at calling me names, but he was not the best at motivating me. I

knew he meant well, but every botched connection tightened the knot in my stomach. After what must have been hours trapped in that box of stench, I finally got it right and climbed out of the tank. I threw off all Kevin's gear and rushed home to take four separate showers, scrubbing my skin raw, just to feel half clean.

That evening, I sat on the porch with my dog. The quiet and stillness of the lake and the trees was unlike anything I'd felt before. I felt at peace; for the first time all day I could breathe. Then I heard the growl of the dark red Ford F250 Super Duty roaring down the road pulling into my driveway. Kevin made his way up the granite steps with two sodas in his right hand. He dropped one in my lap and took a seat in the rocking chair next to mine. After a long silence he said, "You did good today. I'm proud of you buddy." We drank quietly from the cold bottles and watched the sun set over the tops of the distant mountains.

It's hard to pin down exactly what I've learned from Kevin, except that I see something in him that I want to carry; the pride he takes in doing his work well no matter how tough or thankless it is. He taught me that pride isn't about the work itself. It's about showing up, and doing the job even when it stinks. Maybe that's the lesson: that even if our paths in life are different, the way we show up to work can be the same.



(XIII) Death  
Chidera Okeke '26  
digital art

## My Brother's House

*Lucas Gee '27*

nonfiction

I know everything there is to know about my house, but one home I've never set foot in has always been a curiosity of mine. I call it my brother's house—and no, he never owned it. He was barely three years old when he moved out. Located next to my town's reservoir, the site of my childhood oasis, the house sits on a two-lane road, traffic blaring, honking, beeping, and shouting; the constant cut-offs and curves in the road lead to a loud environment. The house is humble, at least now it is. In a way, it hides behind the other houses next to it, like a little sibling does between brothers. It seems comfortable, but what wouldn't be when sunk into the dirt? It's almost as if it's lying on the couch waiting for a reason to get up. A reason that left when I was born.

My brother's house is only a couple houses down from the town reservoir. Because I visited the reservoir almost every day, that also meant I drove or walked past my brother's house just as often. When I was younger, my friends and I would rush to the water, play with sand and on the playground, all that metal hot and reflecting the heat of the sun; we'd tell stories of sea monsters, and buy Two-Ball Screwball ice cream from the snack shack, its floors covered in sticky sand. Every part of the town's reservoir was perfect, and I loved every second there. It didn't matter the day; I was always going to be there, shaded under the oak tree, slowly awaiting the loss of its leaves.

The reservoir and all the memories associated with it are why I believe my connection to Russel's house is so strong. Whenever we drive by, I think of the warm sunny memories I have at the reservoir, and then we pass my brother's house, and I feel the same way, but a little more eerily. My brother's house is longing for something, but I don't know what or why. It waits as every rain drop breaks the shingles ever so slightly, waiting for the return of its soul. The property is content but incomplete, fragile to the touch, but still rough. The house misses us. This I know for sure.

I've never moved in my life; I've always known the same walls, the same basement, and the same ceiling. I love every part of my house, and I know every creek and sound of it. So well I know to avoid the third and last stair when I'm trying not to wake my parents; so well I know to go through the back door and not the front because it will be quieter; and so well that I

know where every bunny hole is in my yard, which I learned through twisted ankles. The house I love and live in has been what I've known my whole life, but I could never understand why my brother's house fascinated me. Why do I feel so strongly about a house I've never been to?

This feeling never exited my mind: so many whys, theories, and unanswered questions. Maybe it's that going to the reservoir has always been a good memory for me, so when I pass the old house, they both trigger the same feeling in my mind. One way to look at it is that Russel and I both grew up with the house, almost as if it was a nanny. But Russell had direct contact with its walls, and I didn't, so when we drove by, the sun splintering through the windows, I felt the embrace he once felt. The walls I never stepped foot in, the door handle I never turned, all of it felt so reassuring and close, but it couldn't have been farther. Although the house, reservoir, and memories are warm, the house still has an eerie vibe. Not the eerie from a basement, but the eerie from confusion. Not the eerie from a late night walk, but the eerie from a late night drive. Not the eerie from a shaky roller coaster, but the eerie from something you don't know the answer to. I feel as if I am overcome with uncertainty.

My brother loves to brag to me about how he's lived in more houses with our family— some award, I like to think. But maybe there's something to that. When growing up, Russell and I were always fighting. Something about being the younger sibling automatically made me the punching bag of the house. Parallel to that, I was the stupider one too, which I did everything in my power to change. It was hard to beat Russell when he had so many years on me, though. Every night, he would read until birds told him not to, while I would sleep until my dad pulled the sheets off me. I always felt like my parents were praising his reading so much, but I had nothing for them to celebrate. So one night, I told my parents that I could read books like the flash, my favorite hero, which consisted of me bending the spine, looking at no words, and flipping the Jack and Annie Tree House Adventure book pages cover to cover. I claimed I was a genius and that any question regarding the text I could answer, in hopes that I would be worshipped for my wit. Of course, nothing was retained. I like to think that when Russell lived in his house, the walls preached an agenda of intelligence that I didn't receive. They told him to read, maybe even picked out the book for him. The counters, curves, and bathrooms sharpened him, and when I came into the world, I was too late for the house's advice. I missed out on the lessons Russell didn't. Damn it.

I like to think that the house is missing us, billowing and awaiting our return, our love. When my family was there, which I wasn't around for, I like to think that the house was happy, and that the foundation raised itself up a little bit, washed

off some of the old wear it had. Although my brother's house is a home to somebody, it's not for me, and never will be. I feel the echoes, and I hear the creeks, but I will never know them. I listen to the stove turn on, and the closing of the fridge, but I will never be the one to do these things. I see the door frames, the wood more yellow now, faded from the years. I can count the hallways, but I've never been between those walls. The house holds secrets, ones that I will never belong to, but also ones I will never have to know.



**Spotlight**  
*Chloe Howard '26*  
photography

# The Big Red House

*Lena Smith '26*

poetry

Warm, red, shining:  
the house of love.

Where laughter flows from the cracks in the walls,  
and fires warm tired bodies;

Where smiles illuminate the rooms,  
and the clock in the kitchen beats like our hearts.

It stands there strong, stable, steadfast.

The rocky foundation covered in moss;

the wide wooden planks lasting through all the children's bare

pattering feet that now carry children of their own;

and blood flows deep within the veins of the walls, a circulating  
vessel of time. Red.

Where roots grow together, entwined.

Two maple trees weave and thread into a fabric.

that creates a frame for our memories.

Where moments live on through smells, sounds and chaos;

where stories are told again and again, so the lost are still living, loving,

breathing and standing in—The Big Red

where everything is alive.

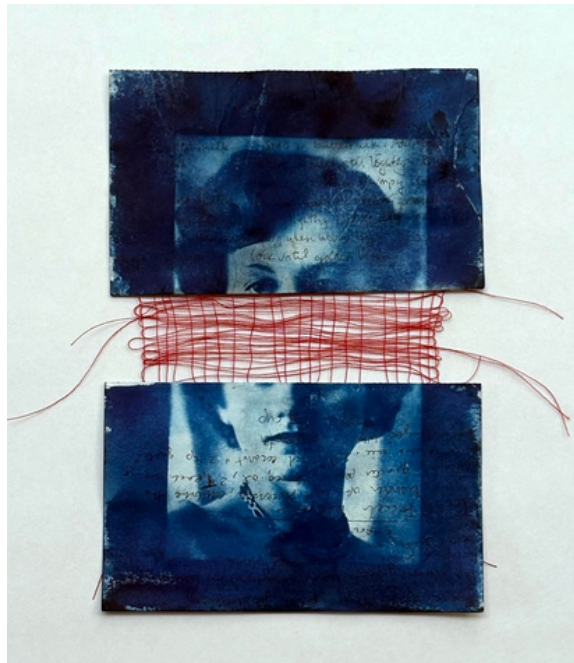
Where a light will never dim from the windows,

and the ticking clock will beat,

On and on,

in the Big Red House.

**A Ripple**  
*Lena Smith '26*  
mixed media





## A Postcard to 02575

*Mimi Biondo '27*

Poetry

Tell me about love, and I shall tell you about the little island.

I've never known what caught my eye:

Was it the flow of laughter or the flow of the sea?

The waves created a rhythm,

a dance I couldn't help but join.

Was it your intention to make me fall in love with you?

Or was it an accident, like when I scraped my knee riding  
a bike for the first time and the blood soaked into your soil.

I did not push your waves away. No, I desired to dance again.

So much need for the dance; departing keeps a permanent  
ache in my chest, one that lingers from September to April.

So in my dreams

I flee to the island,

where summer is permanent,

and love blooms all the way from Aquinnah to OB.

(taxon\_to\_be\_added)

*Yuki Hu '26*

digital art



To my Dearest, Biology

*Emily Yang '27*

poetry

I hate you with love  
like a soft knife slicing a piece of lime  
whose ribosomes scream and are soon silenced  
whose mitochondria's proton gradient was muffled  
because the electrons broke up with their acceptors  
now only the invisible juice remains on the table  
leaving green blood of chlorophyll a, b, and carotenoids  
after I tore open the skins of its thylakoids  
just like the water-stained paper  
stuck on the white wall in seventh grade  
sternly marking me as the last place among all your  
followers  
because seventy-seven percent meant failing  
sliding into the abyss and falling  
I think I might have loved you  
offering chunks of cut erasers and bundled leads  
that I fed you on a day when the sky's dark  
and black clouds chuckling  
for they've caught another fool crying on the stool  
in the woods like a pair of hanging gloves  
being taken off and forgotten in dejection  
you are the raven with rainbow feathers  
whose color hides behind black pigments  
whose photons my visible spectrum can't catch  
and my human eyes can't see even if I crane  
I'm trapped in your carbohydrate snare  
should have listened to the heterotrophic soothsayer  
but the Organic I decided to hug you with carbon  
though the Inorganic You reject  
yet I will engrave your name anyway in my heart  
forever  
with my soft knife

**Last Melt of Summer**

*Ashley Greer '27*

watercolor



**Still Here**  
*Georgina Clarke '26*  
nonfiction

Here we are—surrounded by specs of glittering gold. We gaze up at the sky as sunlight strikes the dust particles floating in the crisp autumn air; they swirl, slide, and sparkle around us, slowly descending in a trail of light like sprinkled fairy dust. The sun feels closer to the Earth here at our new boarding school, nestled among the brilliant gold, crimson, and fiery orange hues that paint the trees in the southwest corner of Massachusetts.

After two weeks here, we've undergone a sort of rebirth, our brains have been set ablaze, our worlds have turned technicolor. We're novices Under the Mountain, four freshman girls suspended in that rare, precious moment where life feels impossibly vivid and promising. Today is Sunday—the universal day of rest—and as we grow older and wiser, and our days become lived in, we'll come to understand that every day of our freshman year was in fact a day of rest like this one.

For now, life is simple in our Berkshire bubble. The four of us lie sprawled on the lush field in the center of the track; we hug the Earth, surrendering with grace to the prickly pieces of grass that imprint our skin. Landslide by Fleetwood Mac hums on a small JBL speaker as we snap a selfie of the four of us with bright grins to send to our mothers—perhaps to let them know that we're alive, and that they really shouldn't feel the need to call us every five minutes. We are finally independent, more so than ever before in our lives, and it's about time they let us be!

Berkshire and I are in the honeymoon phase. I am in love for the first time in my life—not with a person, but with a place. And I know that my new friends share my awestruck appreciation as we stare up at the blue-bird sky in serene silence, our mutual infatuation transcending words. Again and again, we've heard the classic line, "it's the people that make the place at Berkshire," but we know now that it is possible to have both—to be influenced by people and breathtaking scenery—all at once. Look around! We are living proof! We are the exception! We have it all! We're simple humans, ready to love, live, and open our minds to whatever secrets and lessons lie Under the Mountain.

Sure, our hearts ache come nightfall, when the warmth of the sun disappears and we long for our parents, our pets, and the places we call home, but we're stronger in numbers.

The four of us have clung to each other like magnets from the moment our parents drove away from Sheffield, and let the roads twist, narrow, and fade into memory behind them. We're already bound for life because however naive, uncultured, and homesick we may be, there's unity in knowing that we've all traded the same thing—warmth, comfort, and parental support—for an unnervingly unpredictable future.

We're really strangers, though we don't claim that title. We're blissfully unaware of all that we don't know about one other, about ourselves, about the world around us. We've reverted to a kindergarten-esque existence as the babies of the school, and my goodness, we are so lucky to be, though we won't know just how lucky we were until we find ourselves crossing the finish line four years later, experiencing every fated last instead of

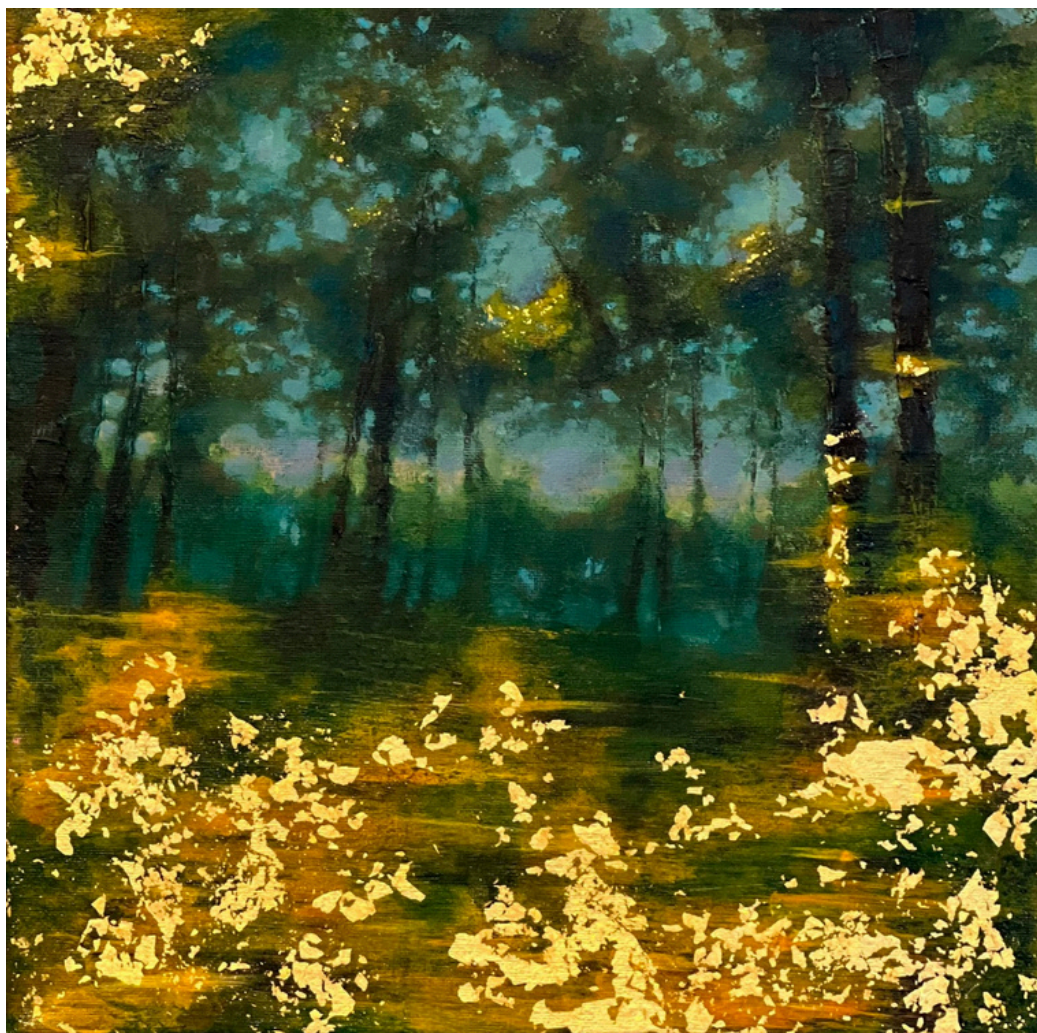
each inquisitive first. But for now, our worries mirror our simple minds and our teachers squeeze our hands tenderly, preaching the importance of imperfection because mistakes catalyze growth and no question asked is a stupid one! Our dorm parents understand just how much support we, fourteen-year-old girls, require.

We have an abundance of time and just as much to learn. Four years feels like a lifetime. We believe that.

We don't know how quickly it will all be over. How could we have known until we're finally the ones walking across the stage, dressed in our caps and gowns, our faces glossy with fresh, bittersweet tears one fateful Friday afternoon? That painful understanding will only settle in when the clock strikes twelve on May 22, 2026; when suddenly, we are engulfed in a green haze of graduation caps, falling like thick droplets of rain.

And somewhere, still, the warm sun illuminates our baby faces, and we are lying on the track, believing with everything we have that this moment is infinite. Time is obsolete. We'll all be here forever.

**Happiness**  
*Isabel Shen '27*  
acrylic paint





**Why Knot?**  
*Georgina Clarke '26*  
acrylic paint