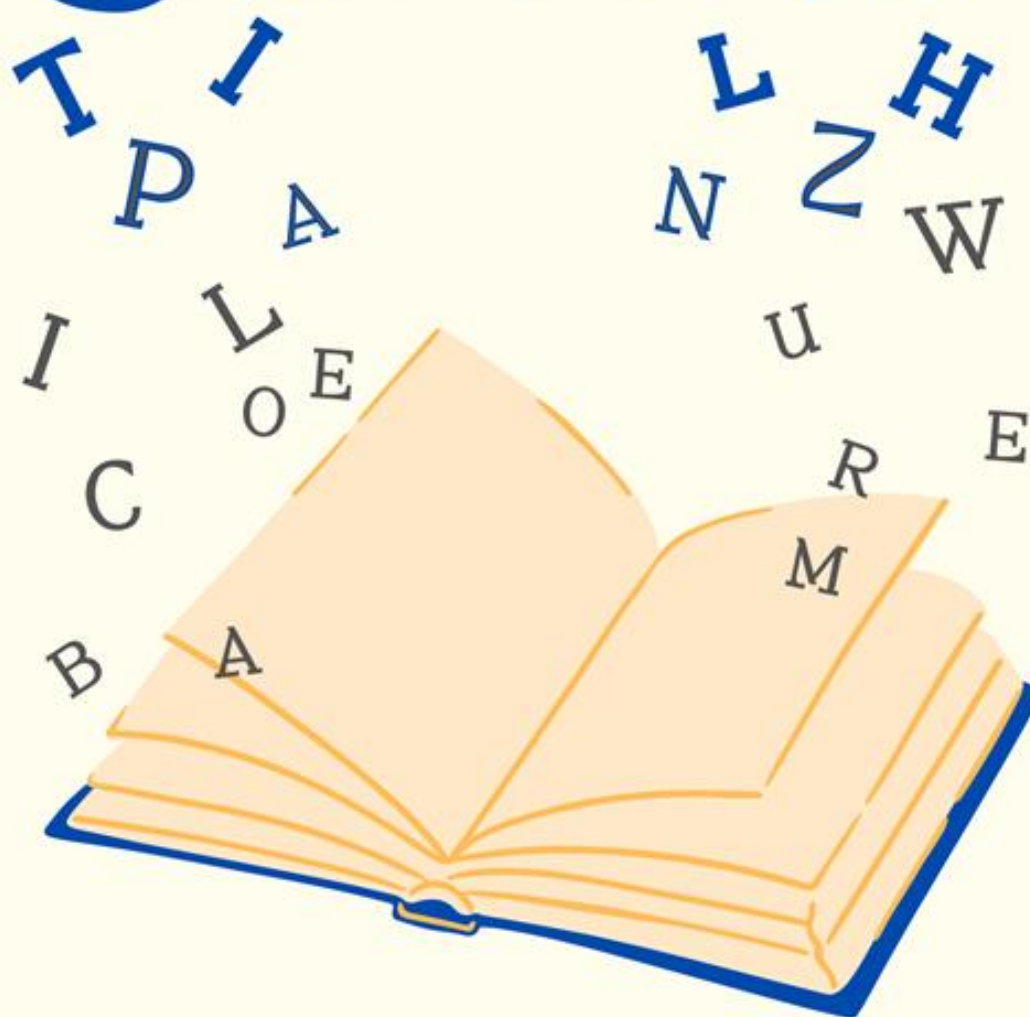


2025 - 2026

The
SCRIVENER



2024-2025

DALAT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

FOREWORD

To whoever reads this,

With the end of the 2025-2026 school year, the Literary Magazine Club is proud to present the 2026 installment of 'The Scrivener!' The Scrivener is an assemblage of pieces written by multiple writers of the Dalat community that exhibit the diverse creativity and vivid artistry within the school.

Over the past year, the Lit Mag Club has received many submitted works that offer a unique and thoughtful insight into the imagination of each writer. The variety of themes explored in these pieces each tell a special story. It is truly wonderful for the authors of the school community to have a platform to share their works with others. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to lead the Lit Mag Club this year and getting to know those who helped with the creation of this magazine.

A personal thank you to everyone who has submitted their writing, participated in editing, and worked hard to publish this year's installment of the magazine! A special thank you to Mr. Hieber and Mrs. Riffey for your support of this club throughout the year.

And with that, I hope that you will enjoy the vast stories and literary works that the pages in this magazine offer to tell.

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A Collection of Haikus

By: Yeji Lee

Unrealistic
Expectations this world heeds
Isn't it tiring?

You long to belong
Don't you see a hand outstretched?
In His palm, a hole

So much evidence
Yet they cannot seem to see
The truth that they seek

A home far away
A real paradise awaits
Do you believe me?

Adonai

By: Naomi O'Quin

let me explain
what it is like
to have your Father
best friend
out of sight
but ever present
in and out of mind:

i hear Him in the dead of night
and in the life of morning
i hear Him in the joy and strife
and in the wake of mourning.

i see His face all the time
in each sunset and sunrise.
every smile is His design
the galaxies
and mountains declare His size

i feel His love, it's wide and deep
like the mighty ocean
or a gentle kiss
His peace brings me
softly to sleep
in His arms i know i'm His.

i smell each fragrant offering
offered up to Him on high,
despite a life of suffering,
the sweet smell for Adonai

i've tasted and i've seen
that the Lord, He is good
and when i sin in misery
by His grace He forgave and understood.

A Poem on Post-Modernism

By: Naomi Neiger

there was a time when we had perfect vision,
perfect hearing,
perfect taste;
a time when imagination was alive
but reality lived too.
we were all naive then,
yet we could see the difference between fact and fiction,
could hear the truth calling out to us,
and could taste the sweetness of a truly loving heart.
life was full of color.

but that color is now lurid,
fluorescent,
neon,
a headache for our eyes
as the saturation dial keeps turning right.

imagination is bruised and broken,
reality is warped so much we can no longer recognize her,

fiction is pretending to be fact,
truth's voice is lost within a cacophony of a trillion different songs and
cries,
and the taste left in our mouths is bitter.
the once beautiful color is now harsh and blinding,
And sometimes,
it
hurts
to
open
our
eyes.
how wonderful would it be
if we all dared to live life differently
if we could just stop for a moment,
put this blur that we call life on pause;
and see past the lies and the flashing lights,
hear our own heartbeat and our very own thoughts,
taste and see that the Lord is
still
so
good...
we can only hope and pray that we'd have the strength to make
that day a reality.

Bedrooms

By: John Pham

I moved into your room
The classic tale of hand-me-downs
The sign of sibling doom

I miss my old room
The aged walls changed from green to beige
The embrace of autumn gloom

I don't want to move again
To leave behind another bed
That unknown, homesick pain
To feel as I felt back then
When I moved into your room

Dear Future Me

By: Pooshpiitha
Arun

Dear future me, wherever you stand,
With a steadier heart and wiser hand,
I'm writing from a smaller place,
Still learning how to set my pace.

I hope you kept a gentle mind,
And didn't leave your warmth behind,
I hope success did not require
You dim the parts that feel like fire.

Right now I worry, truth be told,
If I'll be brave, if I'll be bold,
If paths I choose will lead me right,
Or keep me turning late at night.

If dreams have shifted from their start,
I hope it came from growing heart,
Not from the weight of fear or doubt,
Or slowly burning yourself out.

I hope you still find time to stay
With quiet moments in the day.
To watch the sky, to call a friend,
To let small conversations mend.

And if you're tired where you are,
Remember who you've been so far,
Someone who tried, though unsure when,
Still chose to hope again, and again.

I do not ask that you be grand,
Or have each answer neatly planned.
Just live with honesty and grace,
And make your life a steady place.

Echoes From Hell

By: Jayden Juday

Is this it?
Is this where it all grows cold—
Where the world around me slips into nothingness,
Where my body feels nothing?
Except for death's cold embrace,
I cannot feel anything.
I smell not.
My taste is empty.
I hear the deafening silence.
I have passed.
My hourglass has run dry.
I have nothing else to give.
Yet out of the silence, I hear a voice—
Calling me,
Calling me to rise.
Suddenly, feeling has returned.
My body lies before me,
Naked and exposed.
I get up
And follow the faint voice.
I now find myself in an ivory and gold corridor.
The voices are growing more audible.

I quicken my pace,
Passing by statues of gold, bronze, and clay.

Then,
At long last,
The end of the corridor lies before me.
And at the end,
A door of wood with iron hinges.
The door is open—
By only just a crack.
And the faint sounds I had heard
Rise to my ears
As I lean forward, I begin to make out the sounds.
It was screaming—
Screams of pain,
Of sick, twisted laughter,
Screams of loss,
And of intense suffering.
The door slams shut.
A hand releases its grasp.
“Are you lost, child of God?
Rise, follow me to the kingdom.
For Hades has no claim on you,
For the Lamb of God has paid it for you.”

Isn't it Odd?

By: Savannah Kontsas

Isn't it odd
When you stop to think
That a common day for one
Is when another's heart will sink
Every day
Breath enters
And breath leaves
We grow and we wither
Falling off life's trees
As humans we are always on a climb
Rarely stopping to notice we are out of time
We spend our whole lives chasing things in vain
Yet our final fate is one and the same
Let's take a day
For instance, the eighteenth of the third
A classroom holds a group appearing in the same herd
Yet inaudible matters sidle the surface unheard
One lost their assignment, and so is swelling with stress
Another's parent is finally home, and is wanting to look their best
Three sit and talk of their peer's grotesque vest
All while one has an odd pain in their chest
Derived from losing the will in the midst of being depressed

One is looking out the window
Faltering to contain tears
As they think of mom and dad fighting again after all these years
I take in the scene with much musing on this pain
Us humans are so caught up with ourselves
Why do we miss those around us, and just complain?
Is a loving, truthful society so hard to attain?
Especially in a church, I feel this is awfully difficult to ascertain
Why do we crush the broken and lift up the proud?
Should not the body of Christ be where total unity is found?
This is not how Christ called us to live
He came to this world to heal, save, and forgive
We are all flawed and struggle with sin
Yet, our Savior invites us in
He leads us into truth and life that seeps deep
It flows into our heart—bandaging the hurt that we do not speak
The church of God should be more of a rehabilitation center
Than an elitist group with no flaws shown left, right, or center
It is a people that gather who share in their love for God and His Word
together
Building a community that can shine Jesus' light wherever
Would not that be the way God intended
Would not our society be doing noticeably better?

Just Another Poet

By: Wonhoo Shin

I write so I may be able to walk,
So the stones within my soles do not drag me down.
Though the arrows of such interlopers leave much to mock,
I do not make a single sound.
My words are refuge to those who wish to be unwarred,
Meant to halse the unwanted.
Bring forth the hand of justice, a sword,
And cauterise the haunted.
Yet flames do not seem to exalt me.
They do not transcend their very nature of destruction.
They fall from the sky like the stars you see,
Dragging a line of flame within their fluxion.

I write so I may be able to breathe.,
So that my head will stay above water.
Terminal rain from the eyes of the sky and those with bloody teeth,
Flood my island of mercurial and inexplicable laughter.
But then again, how could I ever drown?

When my lungs are filled with smog and smoky sting,
Just as the air, the sky and soot underneath my freezing fingers.
I wish to cut a slit in the blackened dayspring,
Letting go of every burning feeling that lingers.
My pen is my sword. I stab the sky with all my might,
And let the sunlight flood my quintessence, rather than sorrow,
But fire does not get extinguished by light,
So it is tears we must borrow.

I write so I may be able to remember,
Perhaps the stones in my soles can be stacked into cairns.
But my words stand the test of time and ember,
Encase the world in stone, unashen bodies in pumice urns.
Yet, no frozen trices will change the acts of the other hand,
Nor will any word take shape in the eyes of circumstances.
So as Vesuvius brings burning thunder to the land,
People will cry while others will take their chances.
Barely able to breathe during the silent lulls,
Silent, as deliquesced throats sing,
We all watch as the sky falls,
Unveiling an ether with crimson colouring.
Perhaps a prophet could have warned us,
Or an ocean could have given way,
Or a martyr could have made our deaths just,
But I'm just another poet in Pompeii.

Muse

By: Catherine Komensen

I spent the last few years sorting my things out for retirement. I'm spending my first years of vacation, and last years (hopefully decades) on Earth by myself in a small mountain home. You would think spending so much time around suffering and death would make me want to embrace life and people more than anything else. But it's actually the healing and life that make me want to let it go.

Rainbows became my favorite thing for a while. I went back to medical school and studied to become an OBGYN, and although not particularly for the peculiar and kooky woman I brought life from that day, she partially inspired me to take that journey.

It's easy to look at a gravestone and see a gravestone. It's easy to drive by a cemetery and see a cemetery. I used to be like that, too. My mother raised me to not look at cemeteries when driving by because if you looked at cemeteries, the souls were looking back at you. And, it sounds scary. But, inherently, it's not. Souls aren't necessarily evil, we just fear them because we can't identify them. I had a teenage-like revelation well into my thirties. It really sunk in; those gravestones I passed by on the way home weren't just gravestones, but people who were walking and living on our Earth at some point in time, now six feet under and

skeletonized. So when I go to visit the young mother... the young woman's gravestone, which the hospital staff helped pitch in to purchase, I don't see a stone anymore. I saw a young woman, and many other young and old people because I knew she was here. I know she was. And I'll put pictures of her son on her gravestone, not because it's my responsibility, but I can't help but feel responsible for it. I'm not as jaded as I thought I was.

And although it's not my place to get emotionally invested in the lives of patients, I guess I am human too, and I am curious sometimes. Over the years, I learned a bit more than I should've about her.

Her young son was adopted very shortly after she passed, and I kept in touch with the adoptive family until I decided I didn't need to anymore. Thankfully, they allowed this.

As I looked through records and names and internet searches, I learned some information about this young woman. I saw her at a vulnerable time of birthing life, and I think it was my ignorance that made me view her as just "a mother". But, like everyone, she's not mother to all, she's not daughter to all, and she's not friend to many either. She's just another person living life.

In high school, she won a local writing competition for her submission, "Travel of Silence", a satirical twist on the Italian epic poem "Divine Comedy" by Dante Alighieri.

I didn't find it very appealing at all, the worldbuilding being far too complicated, even for someone who memorized all the functions of the human body, but I could understand the intention behind it.

"Three years of planning, two weeks of writing. Never again". And I couldn't help but laugh, and then remembered she wasn't alive anymore and hit my mouth twice like a reset.

Then, I scanned another article and found she won her school's Young Historians award for her literary paper on Greek mythology. Apparently she learned Greek intensely for six months and was semi-fluent. "Pyramus and Thisbe vs. Romeo and Juliet: The Inspiration Behind Our Tragic Tales" — it takes a specific type of person to recognize a tragedy of both worlds I think.

There were a few more things that I could find about her, and I just kept thinking "eccentric", "curious", and "captivating". She poetry, music, writing, poetry, music, writing, (dance!)... and more. "If I don't become a writer, I will become a stand-up comedian, and if that doesn't happen, I will go to Pluto."

"What an inspiration." I muttered under my breath. Life lived short, sure. But even through photos and articles, I felt a radiation of content and self assurance.

Now, I'm older. It's been decades, and I can think of all the titles to give to a dead person. For one, that. But perhaps by their career?

Their interests? Their familial role? Their personality? And while all are good ways to describe any person, I know what that young woman is. She is an inspiration.

I sent pictures and article clippings to her son through a letter. And usually, I get an e-mail response: "That's where I got my 'me' from." And I think that's where I developed my 'me' from too.

The wind travels silently, as do I when I walk towards my cushioned chair. I peel the curtains all the way back, and I see a rainbow. And then I intently hope to see another. Maybe it will inspire me to write a poem, or a song, or a story, and then maybe when I die, someone will label me an inspiration too.

No Room

By: Ellen Jeon

As the time for the baby to be born comes near,
Mary and Joseph seeks desperately for a guest room,
But all they hear is “no room, no room.”

The echo continues

As they knock and knock on doors,

Ears slam and eyes close,

Too much music plays,

Too many colors flash,

Without any space to squeeze through,

All the sounds fades and all the light blurs,

No ear to hear, no eyes to see,

“no room, no room.”

Hearts harden and thoughts narrow,

Infinite reasons for heart to beat,

Infinite areas to pay attention to,

With I, that surrounds and captures,

All the heart rushes, all the thoughts calculate,

No heart to cry, no thoughts to remember,

“no room, no room.”

Then,

they found a mandle,

The only who heard, saw, empathized, and opened,

Let them in,

To the smallest and dirtiest room of his,

That is valued in gratitude.

Still He knocks and knocks on doors,

Despite numerous I.

I hear and see,

And rush down to the mantle empty-handed,

For Him to stay where I was, for me to lay where he laid.

The Anatomy of Gray

By: Ysabelle Wan

I'm familiar with the color of gray. The gray of the old rusted gates and the gray of the beeping machines. It peeks out beneath the cracks, ever present, ever comforting. Like an old friend you met once but have always known. Or a chance encounter that brought memories flooding back. No, there's more to gray than somberness. More to the stillness that is neither black nor white, neither stark nor soft. There's gray in the little and the large, from the smallest pebble to the largest elephant. And all the better for it, I say. For how are we supposed to see the vibrancy of color if we do not first understand the lack of it? And all of a sudden, I don't fear the in between as much, not the unknown, not the hesitant step forward. For every gray step I take, a profusion of vibrancy follows, steady and calm like the rising sun.

The Carousel

By: Stella Park

Welcome to The Carousel,
Where the very hands that turn the tides of fate
Will steer the very wheel of this floating ship.

We're known to be a legend, yes, of course.
We sail the seven skies, yes, we do.
We don't discriminate the unlucky, no, we don't.
Because aboard this home, there's a place for everyone
Including you and me.

We have Baryl, the troubled machinist who found a place to call home here,
There's Macy, the lost lady who found who she was aboard this beauty,
And of course we can't forget about Kole, the blinded professor who saw once more.
Do any of these people sound like you?
Well then what are you waiting for?
Wipe your feet, brandish your dagger, and come aboard this wondrous abode.
After all, when's the next time you're gonna get the chance?

Oh?
You don't want to come along?

I can't decide for you, but if that is indeed what you choose,
Then I'd advise you forget
We ever shadowed your doorstep.
Because your rejection would likely just bring your own regret.

Then farewell for now,
For you may never see us again.
But you'll surely share the tale
Of how The Carousel chose you
But you never took that chance.

The Night

By: Wonhoo Shin

Your lightest taps bring forth the echoes of harmonious
fractures,
Illuminating the great artificial chasms between the candescent
Sun and I.
Perhaps your recurrent promiscuous knockings on my dual
hollow conjectures
Collected into a nightfall so dense and wide, covering the
iridescent golden sky.
Fictitious fairy tales repeated religiously like a sagacious mantra,
Evocative of the warmth on my face from whence the summer
breeze
Flew with floral tundra zephyrs. Desperately wishing to be
eclipsed in the umbra,
Hidden away from the aureate rays but heard of my solitude
cure pleas.
Breathlessly craving the presence of radiance, I graze the
phosphorescent moon

And recall the lost purpose and divine moment when my pulse
was revived
Prodigiously yet regretfully. From an empty bed, it rose and fell
into a warm, beating tomb.
Mangled into beguiling weapons by careless juvenile hands that
survived.
Henceforth, I let your false glow gleam into my regard with all
of its feeble potency,
To forget the one that pulled motion through my fingers into
the weathered string,
Diverting the emotions from the wounds in my back to the
diaphanous mist I can see.

The Ocean

By: Erin Lee

In front of my house lies the ocean.
On days with no streak of white in the sky, the sea and the sky
form one,
Mirrors on infinitely extending mirrors of big, clear blue.
Within that unity I stand on the shore and close my eyes
Premising myself the courtesy of enjoyment
Enter the realm of fantasy
Oh, how I wish to be swept into that great basin and its loving
arms
How wonderful would that be?
If I could partake in that splendour, plunging deeper into its
frigid depths?
In that sea's view, would I not be but a blip of a second,
appearing and fading in its stillness?
Would It even notice me?
I imagine
Each minuscule inch of my teeth and bones and flesh and hair
dissolving into Its

With love, each microplastic cell in my filthy blood is liberated.
All that to be carried away by the rising tide
“I” become skim foam, light airy wisp on the water’s first kiss
to the Outside.
“I” become part of the thin sea breeze,
“I” become free.
Within the depths of this marvelous ocean I
Am buried beneath the coral reef’s rock,
I hear the echoes of whales and the chirping of fish
I feel each rising and falling wave,
I taste each salty gulp of water,
I see everything from the light
Above to the depths below.
I am We. I am One.
But instead I stand there on that lone and listless shore
And open my eyes.
Behind the ocean is my house.

Transfigurations

By: Kai Anderson

My eyes are filled with velvet blobs
They run across a million logs
Imaginary flies go by
On my spine, they jive and writhe

There’s a red horse down the street
With bruised legs and wooden teeth
Most tears vanish easily
Like foam rats on Lethe

I sip cider from a gorge
Those foam rats are on the shore
And no one seems to ever ignore
The stagnant seconds of the day.

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COVER ARTWORK

A design of letters coming off the pages of a book to form the title: The Scrivener.

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THE SCRIVENER

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