JULY–SEPTEMBER 2018

ChildArt

Children's Voices

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2018 VOL. 18, ISSUE 3, NUMBER 55

Editor's Corner

Young people and children comprise 40 percent of the world's population. Yet their voices do not get the audience or appreciation they deserve. Hence this issue of ChildArt on "Children's Voices."

In collaboration with KidSpirit (see the introductory piece) we are presenting here a collection of writings and poems by authors aged 11 to 17 who are growing up in New York, Maine or Tennessee and also in Bangladesh, Canada or New Zealand. In a globalized world, peer to peer learning can provide you fresh perspectives that deepen your understanding and make you feel more connected and assured.

In the last pages of this magazine, we provide a brief description of exhibitions your school could invite ICAF to arrange or perhaps your parents could to awaken the "inner child" in professionals at their organization or corporation.

Some children express themselves adeptly through art rather than prose or verse. Most important is expression itself, because it symbolizes freedom. Whatever your own creative outlet, do express yourself fully and uniquely so freedom grows.

Happy reading,

Ashfaq Ishaq, PhD
Founder/Chair, International Child Art Foundation
Producer, World Children's Festival
Publisher/Editor, ChildArt

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Published since 1997, ChildArt is a commercial-free arts learning, self-discovery, and global education periodical expressly written for 10 to 14 year-olds, but useful as a teaching tool for educators and inspirational for creative individuals of all ages. Subscribe to ChildArt online at www.icaf.org.

When a child's creativity is ignored, it could be lost forever. Tax-deductible donations support children's creative and empathic development. You can donate online at www.icaf.org or make your check to ICAF and mail it to: ICAF, P. O. Box 58133, Washington, DC 20037.

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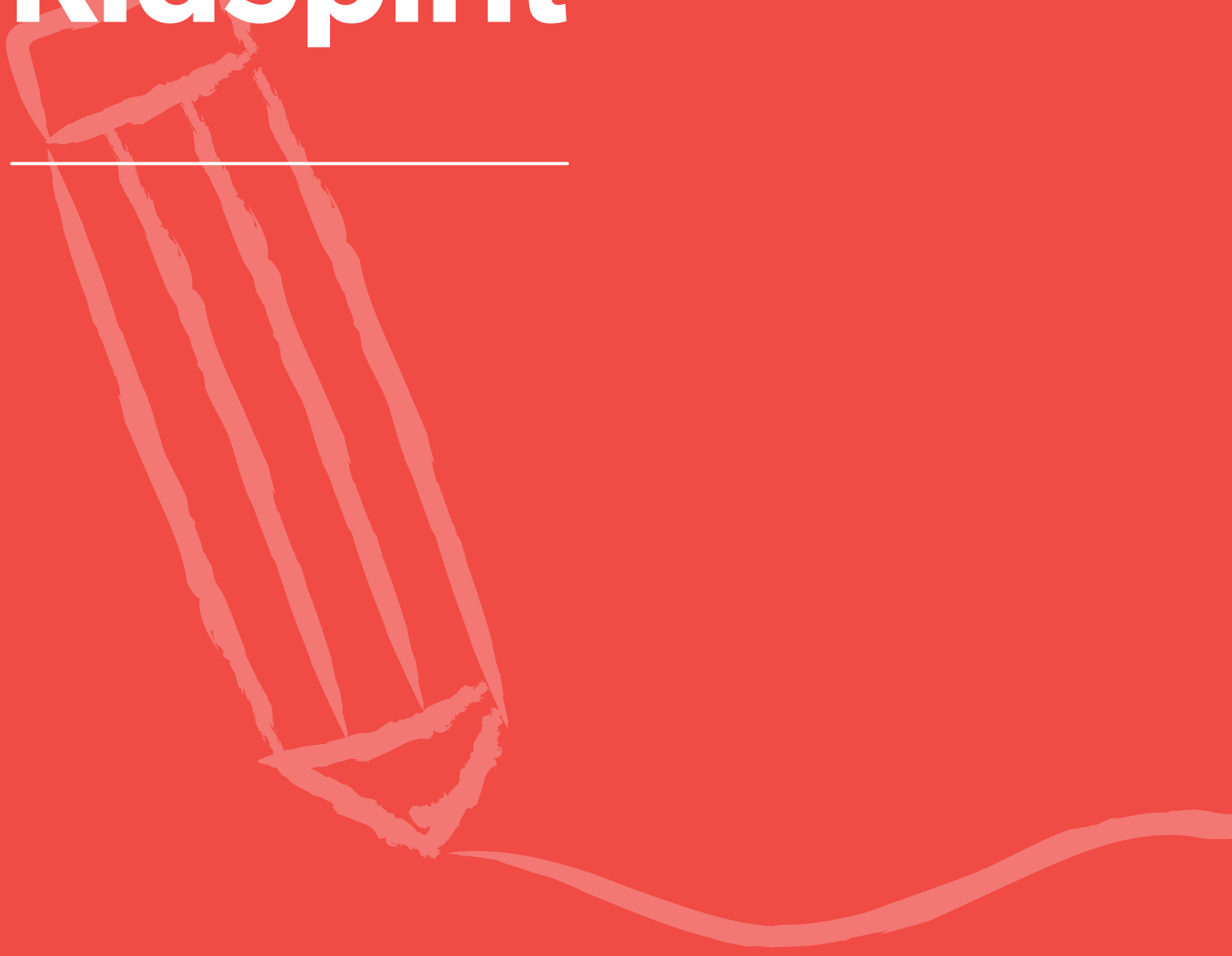


For more than 10 years, KidSpirit (kidspiritonline.com) has offered youth around the world a unique platform to explore life's big questions through creative expression. The ad-free, nonprofit online magazine and community is led by a global network of young editors who edit submissions collaboratively, decide on the magazine's quarterly themes, set the editorial agenda, and discuss topics that go to the heart of life. Together, they create a publication that brings thoughtful and inspiring teen writing, poetry, and artwork to over 50,000 peer and adult readers each year. Young editors have addressed 40 themes on an impressive array of topics, including beauty, imagination, time, education, human dignity, ethics, myth, humor, heritage, gender, and money.

This community's work is a testament to the incredible insight, creativity, and authenticity of youth voices. As kids dig deep to share what is truly important to them, they discover not only their own selves but the life-changing process of self-expression. At KidSpirit, they then hone their work in the company of peers, incorporating feedback and refining their pieces to convey their wisdom as powerfully as possible.

This process is not by any means easy, but it is essential. Young people are rarely asked to weigh in on conversations about 'serious' topics, but we have found they are hungry for opportunities to explore and share their deepest thoughts, hopes, and aspirations. KidSpirit gives adolescents the confidence and skills to express these innermost values with peers in a collaborative, supportive community, emphasizing how writing and art can not only facilitate self-understanding but build bridges of empathy and friendship with others from diverse backgrounds. Though they hail from different places, hold different beliefs, and have different experiences, these brave teenagers are able to form authentic connections by embarking on a creative journey together.

Over the years, several contributors have chosen to write about the act of creativity itself and reflect on why this process of artistic expression is empowering, difficult, vital, transformative, terrifying, revolutionary, fun, or all of the above.

The articles in this issue of ChildArt offer a unique opportunity to hear directly from kids who are passionate about artistic expression and open about their experiences grappling with its ups and downs. Their voices remind us all of just how essential a creative outlet is to our growth, confidence, and relationships.

KidSpirit invites you to savor this issue and share it with the young people you know. Any artist, writer, or poet between the ages of 11 and 17 is welcome to participate in our programs by emailing us at info@kidspiritonline.com. It is our hope that the articles featured here inspire readers to share, reflect, listen, and create in the open, courageous spirit that will bring us all closer to our true selves and to each other.

Happy reading,

Elizabeth Dabney Hochman
Founding Editor and Executive Director, KidSpirit

Color in Art and Life

By **Eleanor Goetz**

As a young child I remember scraping my knee while riding my bike. I made a sharp turn and fell onto the hot, black pavement.

In that moment, I could not breathe. The bright red of blood caught my eye and I began to cry, even though it did not hurt that much.

The color red brings me back to that moment. The black of the pavement and dirt; the bright white of the sun that beat down on my shaking body. White, black, and red are colors that seem to affect us the most. White is the smoothness of milk, porcelain, a blank, untouched sheet of paper. White is pure and clean. I perceive white as emptiness, yet I know that white light in fact contains all colors. I associate black with the depths of the ocean and the vast expanse of space. I think of black as city grime and dirt, while also picturing the sleek, soft texture of velvet. **Red is what you see when you close your eyes and look at light.** Red is inside of us. It is love from roses and pain from our first skinned knee. It is the excitement of an empty subway seat and finding Mars in the night sky.

Even during a walk down the street, the color red captures my eye. I immediately notice a red tulip growing in the tree pit and feel awakened by the sudden burst of color. The blinking red of the crosswalk sign catches my attention. Red reflectors on a bike caution us, triggering an emotion to become unconsciously more alert.

The colors in art can cause reactions because colors can evoke certain moods or emotions. Take, for example, Seurat's "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." This piece is extraordinarily colorful. When we look closer we see it is composed of thousands of colorful painted dots that enliven the canvas. We feel the warmth of the sun and sense the happy, tranquil mood of the park goers.

Artists can convey powerful ideas in their work by using certain colors. These colors elicit emotions and intrinsic, universal themes.

It is said that colors do not symbolize ideas themselves, but have become associated with **important human events**, such as birth and death, life and love.

For example, white is associated with milk, angels, and snow. It represents purity, birth, and life. Black is associated with death and darkness, mourning clothing, coffins, the grave. Red is associated with blood, symbols of life, love, and war. Red, white, and black are emotionally evocative colors. Artists such as Kara Walker, Pablo Picasso, and Frida Khalo have used these colors in their work to elicit responses from the viewer.

Kara Walker's use of the color white in her piece, "A Subtlety" (a subtlety refers to intricate sugar sculptures placed on tables during feasts in the middle ages), is a powerful reminder that growing, harvesting, and processing sugar comes at a human price. **The color white, in this case not a universal association, evokes the suffering of slaves** who tended and cut, carried and processed, sugarcane. The sculpture is a 75-foot sphinx with exaggerated African features and a mammie's kerchief. The sphinx is constructed of foam, covered in refined white sugar, even though sugar is brown in its natural state. Perhaps Walker's sphinx is white, not brown or black, to make a statement that African-Americans were forced to be something they're not, just as brown sugar is processed into white sugar. Walker may use the starkness of white – sugar removed of all color – so we look at the powerful African sphinx without the bias of color. Or, to use a universal symbol of white, the sculpture may symbolize purity within the African-American woman's soul.

Picasso's painting "Guernica," is a powerful anti-war statement depicting the horrors of the bombing of Guernica, a town in northern Spain, by the Nazis during the Spanish Civil War. This abstract, cubist painting has become an iconic symbol of pain, suffering, and the tragedy of war. The work elicits nightmarish, horrific feelings, and depicts the horrors of the bombing. The bombing happened at night and deathly black dominates the painting, except where there are white, broken, screaming, innocent forms of life. This differs from Kara Walker's use of color in her sculpture, though both are intense subjects, in that while the black on Picasso's canvas feels heavy, the eye almost drowns in it, the white used here feels light.

Red affects us much differently than black and white. **Black and white appear serious, forcing us to look deeper into the image, while red startles us.** In Frida Kahlo's autobiographical painting, "Henry Ford Hospital" or "The Flying Bed," six symbolic red ribbons are depicted emerging from her abdomen after her miscarriage. Her unborn son is painted red and depicted as floating above her, and the other objects symbolizing pain, sadness, loneliness, are painted red or in earth tones.

Eleanor Goetz

The life blood hemorrhaging underneath Kahlo's body is red. Red represents her love for the lost child and her husband, Diego Rivera, her mortality, and her inability to bear children.

Colors have universal associations for all humans. They can produce emotional responses based on our own personal histories, or that of the artist.

Artists are able to communicate ideas by using colors associated with **powerful symbols** and depict connections with color to elicit emotions or reactions.

A person may associate a special aunt with the color lavender or a brother with bright blue. Colors that have such personal meaning – associations with people, things, or events – can bring back memories. Color and art can perhaps stir the soul.

When she wrote this piece, Eleanor Goetz lived in Brooklyn, New York and attended LaGuardia High School in Manhattan. She majored in visual art and worked part-time at the American Museum of Natural History, in the genomics laboratory of the entomology department. She hopes to combine her love of art and science in her future work.

Fulfillment

By **Grace Luckett**

When I was asked by my choral teacher to perform in front of a director and producer for Carnegie Hall's production of The Sound of Music, I didn't fully grasp why I had been selected or what it would happen if I received a part.

My choral instructor asked thirty kids to audition for her, and narrowed it down herself. Twenty of us were called in on a Sunday, crammed into a space the size of a broom closet, asked to sing a prepared piece: the iconic Do-Re-Mi. Most of us had no idea how enormous this opportunity was- that we should have some self-confidence. Most were just uncomfortable and nervous to be performing in front of adults. The youngest of us was six, and the oldest seventeen. At ten, I was right in the middle.

I was a knock-kneed, skinny ten-year-old, tripping over my feet as I shuffled to the front of the room. My hands shook, so I clasped them behind my back. I tried to smile and look the director in the eye. I tried to "have fun with it", a pointless phrase told to you by friends and family to coax you to invest emotion into the song. I was primarily a singer, so I think this part was the most strenuous for me, as I felt I should prove my worth.

When this ordeal was over, six or seven of us were taken for acting auditions. These were quick, as none of the children had many lines anyway. We were informed that the performance was meant to be more of a concert and less of a play. After that came the dancing auditions. As a mentioned before, I had a prepubescent awkward body that struggled to perform everyday tasks, such as walking down stairs and jumping rope.

Looking back, I don't know how I thought I was a graceful dancer, but somehow I convinced myself that all the gangly and uncoordinated movements that occurred every day did not apply to my dancing skills. I shuffled and tripped my way through a ten-minute audition; I was sure I had the makings of a ballerina. At the end of this almost three-hour process, we were told to go home. Two weeks later, I got a phone call and received the role that I never thought I'd get: Brigitta Von Trapp.

As rehearsals began, I started to hum the music as I walked to school, ate my meals, and went to sleep. I began to see the songs and lines in my daily experiences: waking up was the lonely goatherd, going to sleep was edelweiss, and school was Do-Re-Mi. I started to identify with Brigitta in ways I hadn't imagined. We both loved to read, were quite opinionated, and both occasionally meddled in the affairs of our parents (and in her case, governess). There were five other children with me. Leisel, the oldest, was played by Mary Michael Patterson, fresh off a role in Anything Goes.

"I started to **hum the music** as I walked to school, ate my meals, and went to sleep."

I developed a close relationship with the other children, especially in the weeks leading up to the performance. We met with the choreographer once a week, going through increasingly more difficult dance pieces. I wondered why I was always in the back row.

Grace Luckett

We rehearsed our lines, and I realized that I would have to talk to a lot of adult characters, which sent me into an anxiety tailspin, which lasted until I actually met the actors and realized that they were incredibly nice, especially the woman playing Maria, Laura Osnes. She had a warm smile, a gentle, sweet demeanor. She encouraged us during scenes. To top it off she had a beautiful voice, better than anyone I had ever heard. To me, she was a goddess; the other children and I worshiped her.

During the first rehearsal in Carnegie Hall, I closed my eyes and thought I was dreaming. The red and gold fixtures, the velvet seats, the vaulted ceilings made me feel like I was dreaming. We were given seats onstage, to stare out into the cavernous hall and practice. We ran our lines with the director, and he gave us notes. Then came the dance rehearsal, where I was moved further to the back of the group dance. After an almost six-hour day, we began to run the musical numbers. When we sang, the space reverberated. I gazed into the vast space, watching the sea of seats go on and on. They all watched and encouraged me. I wasn't focusing on anything, just floating through an endless reverie.

Performing onstage is finding a balance between performer and audience. As the actor, you must connect with the audience to help them feel the emotion of the story by using yourself as a vehicle for the character. In that single performance in Carnegie Hall, I shored up every memory about performing and conveying emotion.

Every musical I'd watched, every book I'd read, every time I'd cried or laughed or felt remorse, I stitched these emotions into a tapestry of Brigitta Von Trapp. I remember the shine of the light as I marched onstage, the way the first notes rang in the hall, the way my lone voice sounded when I tripped during the dance number, **but most of all, I remember the standing ovation that echoed through the chamber; the joy I felt from the payoff of working so hard.**

In the cab ride from the after-party, I had a sense of melancholy and nostalgia that I had never felt before. In a moment like this I should have been rejoicing, but since the show only ran for one night, I would never experience it again. In that moment, my ten-year-old self concluded that some things in life are not meant to be held onto. Moments should be experienced and remembered, even celebrated, but not wallowed in.

My awesome moment may have been singing in front of the director in the audition, it may have been seeing Carnegie Hall for the first time, it may have been when I realized that I had made a lasting bond with the cast members, it may have been singing in the performance.

> But, really, my awesome moment was sitting in that cab when it was all over, registering that **through hard work comes satisfaction and great experiences**.

For the past three years I've drawn upon this work ethic almost every day. It has lead me to every one of my achievements, to every single time I've felt fulfilled. My moment will follow me through my life, and that's what makes it truly awesome.

When she wrote this piece, Grace Luckett was 13 and going into the eighth grade at Packer Collegiate in New York City. An avid reader, she is also a skier, baker, and singer.

Believing is Seeing

By **Jung Woo Bae**

Imagine a world without sight. What do you see? Darkness? Or maybe nothing at all.

The concept of seeing seems so simple, yet it is so complex to explain. I once wondered how one could have no sight and still "see," like the blind. I knew so little about them, even considered them to be foreign. I naively thought that seeing was believing, when in fact, the opposite was the key to unlocking a new perspective.

Through the process of writing my first novel with a blind protagonist, then selling it and donating the money to a foundation for the blind in my community, I gained meaningful insights about what it means to understand alienated people. Most importantly, I was able to recognize how the act of making even a small difference could bring about understanding — the things we cannot see are often the most magnificent. I was able to develop into a more compassionate person by learning to empathize with people we seem to be very distant from, such as the blind.

My journey started in year 10 at my school. In that year, every student was expected to complete a personal project. The possibilities of this project were endless; we could pursue anything that met our interest. However, it had to have a "so what" factor. In other words, the project had to have some sort of an impact on the community, or even the world. Since I am a rather indecisive person, I had trouble coming up with ideas. I lacked faith and felt doubtful about my project.

Fortunately, I had a supervisor who was a writer. I loved writing, and so did he, and he inspired me to write. To do what I love is the purpose of this project, I thought. My supervisor offered suggestions. Yes, I thought again, I'll write a book, a good one. I congratulated myself on my progress, as I had taken my idea a step farther.

It was extremely difficult to come up with ideas for the book. What would it be about? How would I publish it? I had so many unanswered questions, but realized I was being too reliant on myself. My supervisor was there to help. He guided me through the process, explaining how I could publish my book via a self-publishing website, and how I could write about my passions and interests.

A few years ago I happened to read a Greek story of Psyche and Cupid and was deeply moved by it. The story was about trust and faith, and I still remember what Cupid said to Psyche near the end: "Believing is seeing."

I interpreted this sentence as an axiom. Believing is the first step to truly understanding anything in the world. Contrary to the commonplace phrase "seeing is believing," believing can offer a whole new perspective. After all, we must first believe in ourselves to achieve incredible things, just as blind musicians learn to play music without looking at the score.

"**Believing is the first step to truly understanding** anything in the world."

I was so inspired that I decided to use the phrase "believing is seeing" as the title for my book. Then I contemplated how I could use the story of Psyche and Cupid. Faith was an important theme, so I linked it with my passion for music and my interest in the blind. I also decided to incorporate my own faith of Christianity.

Soon a plot emerged: A story about a blind boy who needed faith to fulfill his dream of becoming a musician. How could you play music without seeing the music score? It is because music is born within. How do I know if God is there or not? I do not, but I must believe in order to recognize his presence.

My supervisor was pleased with this concept. Throughout the year, I wrote the book, dedicating a significant amount of time to researching, writing, and editing. And the publication process was just as demanding. However, in the end, I had written and published a 126-page novella I was proud of. In order to fulfill the "so what" factor, I decided to order my published books, sell them for five dollars each to people I knew, and donate the money collected to the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. This was rewarding because I knew that I had made at least a small difference in my community.

However, my journey did not end there. **To my surprise, this year my book was accepted for publishing by one of the leading publishing companies in Korea called Crayon House.** The book is scheduled to come out in the next few months. I discovered that the people of the publishing company really liked the ideas and plot of my book and thought it would be a great inspiration to children in Korea. It was also decided that all the money earned from selling these books be donated to the blind foundation in Korea. I was surprised that I could even make a difference in other nations, and I hope that my book can inspire young children, disabled or not, to dream, have faith, and strive to reach their full potential.

Helen Keller, my central inspiration, once said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched — they must be felt with the heart."

Jung Woo Bae

Writing about the blind, and using my written work to help and support them, was truly invaluable to me. Through this important moment I realized it was also significant to take the perspective of blind people. I came to recognize that things we cannot see are in fact the most wonderful in life. **I was able to "see" from a different, revolutionized, viewpoint and realized how indirect ways of showing compassion can be so rewarding.** Making a difference in even a small community was one epitome of such wonders.

I am so glad I pursued my personal project and chose a "so what" factor that focused on the blind. I was able to change into a more altruistic and empathetic person who came to understand and interact with different people, such as the blind. Through this experience I will be able to approach seemingly distant people in society and learn to understand them better.

My book may be neither the most impressive nor the most inspirational work, but I'm proud of it because it has made a difference. Above all, I hope people are moved by the title — that believing is, in fact, seeing. Because once you believe, you will see a whole new world.

When he wrote this piece, Jung Woo Bae was 15 and living in New Zealand. He plays basketball, the violin and piano, and has a passion for both music and literature but his dream is to become a doctor.

Caroline Hochman

Destruction: The Key to Art?

By **Caroline Hochman**

From the beginning, our conception of destruction is diametrically opposed to our ideal of music. However, the power of music, in fact, lies in its connection to destruction. The most meaningful music stems from destruction, or destroys the status quo that preceded it.

Destruction gives music a purpose. **Music flourishes during times of strife and oppression because it can act as a tool to unite people through emotion and bring them towards a common goal.** In this way music can reveal injustice, demonstrate the artist's opinion, and, most importantly, show us that we are not alone.

The power of destruction to inspire the creation of music is exemplified by the Polish national anthem. The piece was written after the Third Partition of Poland (1795), in which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was once again divided among Prussia, Russia, and Austria, and Poland ceased to exist as a country. The work — entitled "Poland Is Not Yet Lost" — is a powerful example of the Polish spirit that remained despite Poland's nonexistence, and its popularity demonstrates the significant part that oppression played in unifying the Polish people. The opening verse states: "Poland has not yet died,/ So long as we still live./ What the alien power has seized from us,/ We shall recapture with a sabre."

This message of Polish nationalism inspired bravery in the oppressed Poles who had previously been silenced and showed them that their views and feelings were shared. **Born from the destruction of their homeland, the anthem unified the Poles and connected them based on feelings of a shared national identity.**

The protest songs of the Industrial Workers of the World are a further illustration of art stemming from destruction. Throughout the early 1900s, the Industrial Workers of the World, or IWW, fought for workers rights. They battled laws and companies that forced industrial workers to labor in awful conditions under laws that were exploitative. In his famous folk anthem "There Is A Power In A Union," the famous IWW, or "wobblies," union member Joseph Hillstrom called on his fellow workers, saying: "Come, all ye workers, from every land /Come, join in the grand industrial band; … " Like the Poles a hundred years earlier, Hillstrom fought against the power structure, connecting people through a mutual sense of inequality and injustice.

When music breaks outside of traditional bounds, it conveys its message much more powerfully.

This destruction of the status quo shocks the system, but ultimately draws more attention to the music, and **allows the artist to illuminate difficult — and sometimes previously undiscussed — topics and taboos**.

Examples of this are embedded in history, as these pieces of music are the moments that make history. One example is the famous Russian composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, and the opposition he faced throughout his career. Shostakovich's music was so bombastic and glaring that during a time in his life called The Great Terror (1936), Stalin ordered Shostakovich's close friends and family imprisoned or executed in an attempt to force Shostakovich to stop composing.

Despite this, Shostakovich refused to change or stop writing his music and is now lauded as one of the great Russian composers and considered one of the most influential Russian artists ever.

Another famous example is Leonard Bernstein's musical West Side Story. West Side Story took the classic tale of Romeo and Juliet and applied it to New York City in the 1960s. It displayed the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets as a racial dispute between two gangs, a controversial move which highlighted a struggle that many upper class theater goers of the time had previously ignored. Additionally, West Side Story was the first Broadway musical to depict murder and suicide onstage. Despite these risky artistic choices the musical was a huge success, and Tony and Maria's (the tragic fated couple) story resonated with many shocked Americans. Bernstein and Shostakovich's work changed the face of music because it challenged the status quo.

These relationships to destruction demonstrate its important and perhaps even necessary role in the creation of music. A happy ending in a novel or movie bears no weight without the contrast of previous hardship. **Just as the turmoil of a deep, red sunset is often more beautiful than your average sunny day, beauty cannot exist without suffering and pain.**

When she wrote this piece, Caroline Hochman was 16 and lived in New York City. History is her favorite subject and she plays violin and baseball.

Eliza Moore

Closer

By **Eliza Moore**

I am tired of quiet.
Today I heard
poetry like the promises yelled into
empty rooms.
I want to write like that.
I search for this poem the way a body feels for another body
in a darkness too blind
to be beautiful.
I want to write a verse
so powerful that all the streetlamps in all the cities flicker on
and I see you clearly, the poem
in you, the gaps in your teeth and rise of your cheekbones,
the small broken things deep
within your body; a raw heart trembling
like wildflowers.
I want words that goosebump
like surprised hellos as my eyes stumble
across your face.
Words that crumble under our feet
like eggshells, powdery and beautiful.
That provoke question after question
and require no answer,
that bring you and I
closer.
I want to write like that.
Satisfaction does not cling
to words like we do to each other's hands.
It eludes us, masqueraded, brushing
lightly against shoulder blades.
Closer, closer, closer.
Hairs stand on end.
Closer.
I want to write like that.

When she wrote this piece, Eliza Moore was 14 and attending The Center for Creative Arts in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She loves reading, writing, and visiting the ocean.

The Aesthetic of Suzhou

By **Anya Dunaif**

Province just to the west of Shanghai, I knew little about it, except for a Chinese saying that I had been taught in Mandarin class: "上有天堂，下有苏杭," or "Above there is heaven, below there are Suzhou and Hangzhou."

I also had heard that renowned architect I. M. Pei was from a Suzhou family and that the ancient garden city, dubbed "the Venice of the East" by Marco Polo, was a major influence on his modern, geometric style.

Suzhou gardens are meant to imitate the natural world, yet there is something wonderfully supernatural in their beauty. Labyrinthine stone paths and tunnels, rock sculptures, green ponds, lush flora, arched bridges, white stucco walls and gray tiled roofs comprise the gardens. I found the rock sculptures extremely intriguing. Striking and amoebic, they first seemed to be anomalies of nature, reminding me of coral snatched from the depths of the sea.

After returning home to Brooklyn, I discovered that rock sculptures are created by a long, painstaking process. **An individual rock is chosen by a rock farmer for a specific spirit or quality sensed within.** It is then chiseled to form openings that, when the rock is placed in a lake or stream, are shaped and smoothed by currents. This process takes decades or even centuries. Sometimes the son or grandson of a rock farmer will be the one to remove a sculpture from the water. A rock sculpture represents both the life and aesthetics of a rock farmer. It is a concrete example of the beauty and harmony created by the combination of human expression and natural power.

I longed to go back to the gardens and examine the rock sculptures, knowing that there was so much intention placed behind each curve and crevice. I came to realize that the sculptures are carefully chosen and designed to fit a certain location, just as each of I. M. Pei's buildings is created to fit its function and setting. Each one is unique. There are no overarching rules qualifying a rock which is to be formed into a sculpture, just as there is no set way to go about creating a new building, **for the design of each structure relies on the history of its location, the personality and interests of the client, and the purpose it will serve.**

Ieoh Ming Pei, commonly known as I. M. Pei, was born on April 26, 1917, in Guangzhou, China. It was the Warlord Era, full of strife and poverty. Pei's grandfather, Litai, negotiated with militia, begging them not to destroy his beloved city of Suzhou, while Pei's father, a banker named Tsuyee, was forced to flee to Hong Kong. A few years later, he was promoted by the Bank of China and given a manager's position in Shanghai. He moved with his wife, Lien Kwun, and five children to the diverse, westernized city, 65 miles to the east of his hometown, Suzhou. I.M. Pei spent his summers studying Confucian ethics in Suzhou with his grandfather.

Photo Courtesy of Anya Dunaif

Doing so allowed him to explore his family garden, the Lion's Grove, named for a lion-like rock sculpture that resided there. In 1935, Pei left Shanghai, the city with tall, inspirational buildings, and Suzhou, the city whose style and spirit would influence Pei's work throughout the years, to study architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later to obtain his master's degree in architecture at Harvard. In 1955, he founded I. M. Pei & Associates, which 11 years later became I. M. Pei & Partners. Pei went on to become one of the world's most famous architects. Some of his prominent works include: the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, the National Gallery of Art East Building, the Bank of China Tower, the Grand Louvre, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, the Miho Museum, and the Museum of Islamic Art.

After graduating from architecture school, Pei worked for prominent real estate developer, William Zeckendorf. One of Pei's early projects was Denver, Colorado's first skyscraper, nicknamed the Mile High Center. He designed the tower to take up only one quarter of the building site and refused to have the first floor rented out to shopkeepers. Instead, the remaining acreage was left for gardens and fountains. The design of the structure and the open space caused the apartments to rent for a premium and the building to have the lowest vacancy rate in Denver. Pei was able to incorporate aspects of traditional Chinese architecture, such as ample space for gardens and leisure, in his design, making the skyscraper distinctively attractive. **Like a rock farmer, he shaped the building according to his own aesthetic principles, allowing it to become a work of art that others would appreciate.**

Due to World War II and the subsequent Communist takeover of China, Pei and his wife Eileen did not to return to their homeland for many years. The couple became naturalized citizens of the United States in 1954 and their four children grew up in America. In 1972, just six months after President Nixon's historic invitation to China, Pei received an invitation of his own. After years of self-isolation, the nation was beginning to reopen, metaphorically tearing down the so-called "bamboo curtain" that allowed Nixon to become the first American President to visit the communist state. As Pei would soon discover, the China of the 1970's was very different than that of the 30's. For example, the Pei family garden was now open to the public; centuries-old buildings were destroyed by war or cemented over by the government. In 1974, Pei returned to China in the midst of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), during which many bourgeois intellectuals and artists were imprisoned, exiled, or killed. When Pei arrived, he met with government officials who proposed projects near the Forbidden City, the palace of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasty emperors and the largest collection of ancient wooden structures in the world. Pei found himself defending the priceless buildings which, to many, symbolize the power and history of one of the world's oldest cultures. Looming skyscrapers would ruin the aura of the Forbidden City. Pei took this into account, cognizant of how people perceive and internalize a space and its surroundings.

Photo Courtesy of Anya Dunaif

Photo Courtesy of Anya Dunaif

As tourists began to venture to China once again, new hotels were built. In the late 70's, Pei was asked to design a hotel, called Fragrant Hill, just outside Beijing. The feel and function of the building would be very important, for it would make a long lasting impression on foreigners. **Pei was faced with the task of representing China through his design, and displaying the aspirations that the country had with his streamlined, modernist touch.** The hotel wove around the site's ancient trees, in order to avoid cutting them down, and as with the Mile High Center, Pei left room for gardens. Drawing upon his ancestral Suzhou, he chose to incorporate a rock element. He happened upon a two-million-year-old stone forest called Beyond the Clouds. After a year of negotiations with officials in charge of running the national park, Pei was able to transport 230 tons of rock monoliths to Beijing by train. The rocks served to complete the hotel, which was sleek and geometric, while still retaining characteristically Chinese elements, such as the sense of harmony between buildings and nature. Pei successfully combined the traditional and the modern to create a unique style of 20th century architecture.

After an illustrious career, Pei retired from his firm, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, in 1990, with the desire to take on projects only outside the United States for the joy of doing so. In the early 2000's Pei was asked to design another building in his homeland, a museum in beloved Suzhou, the city that had inspired him throughout his career.

This past summer, I studied in China for a month, spending a week in Suzhou with a host family.

One day, after visiting Taihu, the third largest freshwater lake in China and the place where many rock sculptures are formed, my host sister and I broke off from our fellow students to see Pei's Suzhou Museum, which was completed in 2006. In the sweltering heat of late July, we searched for a cab through the congested traffic. The relief I felt once we found one didn't last long, for the car reeked of cigarette smoke and was not well ventilated. When we finally arrived at the museum, **I jumped out of the cab and was immediately overcome by the beauty of the long street paved with stone and lined with traditional buildings on one side and Pei's modern, angular museum on the other**. As I entered through the front gates, I was reminded distinctly of the typical Suzhou gardens through which I had been wandering for the past few days, yet I also felt like I was in an almost futuristic place. This is similar to the dual sensation that I experienced in the gardens themselves, which seemed strangely natural and supernatural at the same time.

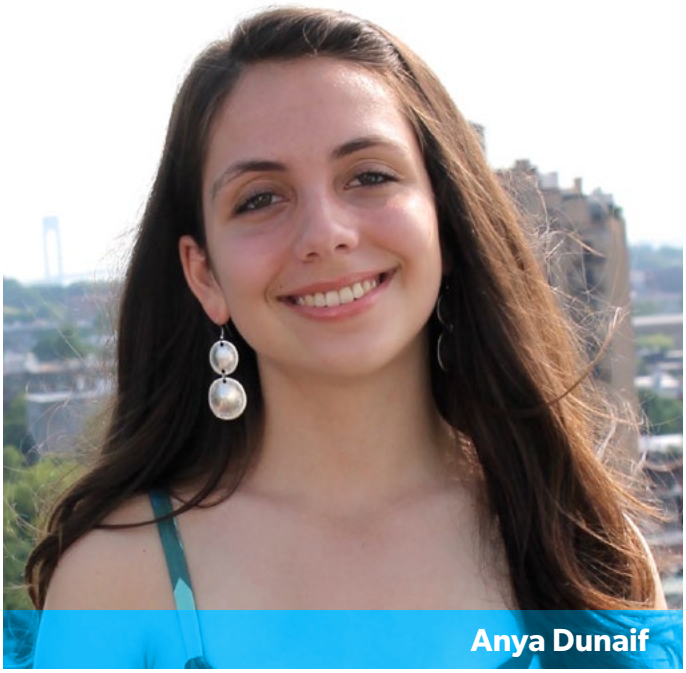
The Suzhou Museum, which is located in the historic Old City, is built from the same white stucco walls as traditional Suzhou buildings, yet lack the curved tile roofs. Pei opted for gray slanted roofs, some parts of which come together at a box-like top that is a continuation of the white stucco. The structure simultaneously fits in with the old-fashioned buildings in the surrounding area and stands out due to its smooth, geometric form, representative of I. M. Pei's style.

The museum incorporates a magnificent garden, which is streamlined like the buildings. A straight, low bridge extends across a large pond, with koi swimming in the waters.

Next to the bridge is a pagoda with a roof made of slanted glass triangles and rectangles. When I was there, adults and teenagers alike sat in the shade reading, while parents rested with children. **It is a place for people to connect with the paradoxically historical and futuristic environment created by the museum, just as pagodas in Suzhou gardens serve as spots for quiet contemplation and achieving harmony with nature.** Next to the pond are thinly cut rocks, which play the role of rock sculptures, yet evoke the mountains of a traditional Chinese landscape painting. The rocks were chosen carefully, some tinted darker to create a sense of perspective and to give an impression of mist floating between mountain peaks.

Hexagonal windows and large glass walls function as portals between the garden and the interior of the museum. Windows of various shapes and ornate designs are prominent in classic Suzhou architecture, forming a frame from which to view a garden or look into a sitting room. Pei takes advantage of light in his design of the museum, as he has with other projects (for example, the primary purpose of the Louvre pyramids is to let light into the underground entrance). The hallways connecting the wings of the museum are lit by bars of sunlight streaming through the spaces between thin wood panels on the ceiling. The exhibits are also lit for the most part by skylights, giving the space a natural feel. The museum's permanent collection contains artifacts from the Ming and Qing dynasties, during which Suzhou was a major cultural hub. There is also a special exhibition on display in the downstairs rooms. Light shines to the bottom floor accompanied by a waterfall, which runs into an indoor pond. This scene itself is something at which to marvel, and, like the garden, is a place to rest and appreciate the beauty of the museum and the works of art that it houses.

Designing the Suzhou Museum was a meaningful return home for Pei late in his distinguished career. Not only was he able to connect with his ancestral city, but also to share his experience with family. Two of his three sons, Chien Chung and Li Chung Pei, known as Didi and Sandi (Chinese for "little brother" and "third brother"), have followed in their father's footsteps. Both practiced at I. M. Pei & Partners before founding their own firm, Pei Partnership Architects, in 1992. They collaborated on the design of the Suzhou Museum with their father. **Like the sons of a rock farmer, who continue to preside over a rock as it is shaped by currents, waiting to remove the finished product from nature and carry on the spirit of the original farmer, the two Pei brothers further their father's vision by continuing to practice as architects.**


Anya Dunaif

I look forward to returning to Suzhou and experiencing the beauty and the element of surprise that both the city and museum encapsulate. Last summer, as I turned a corner or walked beneath the archway of a classic garden, I was constantly presented with new images. These various amazements were in the shape of windows, foliage and rock sculptures. When I go to the gardens again, my mind will process these forms in a different fashion. A rock sculpture that once evoked a certain memory will conjure another. Similarly, when I revisit the Suzhou Museum, I will notice previously unseen allusions to traditional architecture and also observe more characteristics of Pei's individual style. Both Suzhou gardens and Pei's design serve as a window into oneself. The opportunity to reflect on my summer in China has allowed me to examine my own aesthetics and sensibilities, while learning about I. M. Pei and the ancient city of Suzhou.

When she wrote this piece, Anya Dunaif was a junior at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn, New York. Her interests included visual art, film, writing, science, and languages. She spent a month in China studying Mandarin and traveling to Beijing, Nanjing, Suzhou, and Shanghai.

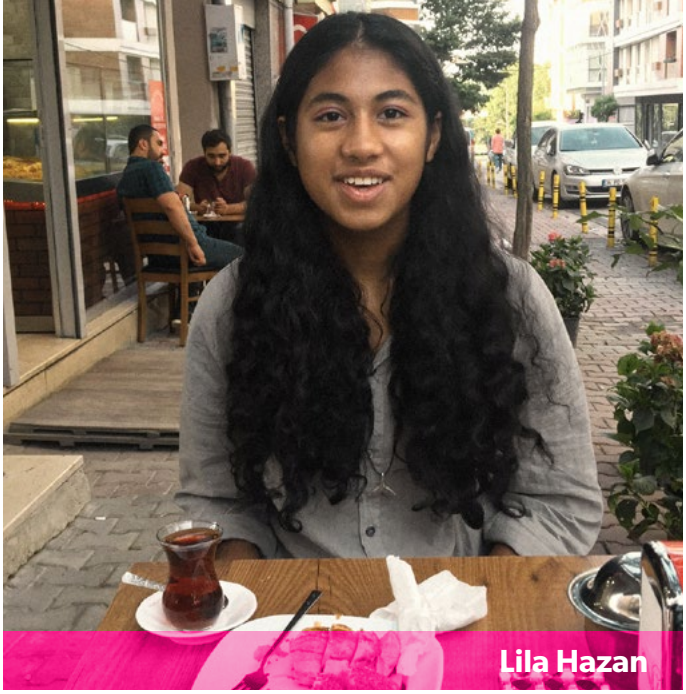
One Desert Night

By **Lila Hazan**

The hotel is a quaint place, all second-hand mattresses and sand pushed into corners. The sun-bleached peeling paint coats the walls and ceilings of the small cottages, and the half-melted tarmac road slithers through the dunes. The sky is a vast, vibrant blue that stretches from horizon to horizon, and the few clouds that bumble their way across it resemble sea foam skimming the surface of a wave.

My neck beads with sweat, and the sun beats down onto my scalp. I've just climbed out of the car, but my clothes already stick to my body and uncomfortable cold flashes buzz up and down my spine. The hotel is nearly deserted, and I don't know whether it has to do with the heat or the fact that I'm in the middle of nowhere.

I'm lying on the mattress now, feet dangling over the edge, springs digging into my back. The curtains are drawn but a sliver of light still falls across my stomach. My earbuds are slick with sweat but I use them regardless, letting the music drown out the almost eerie silence. Soon, the golden light melts into copper and then fades away, leaving me engulfed in darkness. My heart trembles in my rib cage, and I can feel it from the tips of my toes to my ears. My chest rises and falls with each breath, and it feels like I'm part of an audience, sitting in a cinema, or perhaps a sort of ethereal being, peering down from above. I take another shuddering breath, clear away the cobwebs that have settled in my limbs and eyes, and sit up, exposing my feet to the now cool air.


Lila Hazan

The music fades out of my ears and, when I look down at my phone, I realize it's because the screen is black and dead. My guitar sits in the corner, shrouded in shadows. I clutch it in my hands as I walk outside. Everything is still — no breeze, no movement, just me. The sky seems even more vast in the dark, perforated with hundreds of stars. The moon is dilated and glowing with a seemingly supernatural light, and it leaves me breathless. I sit on the ground and take out my guitar, letting the pads of my fingers strum the strings.

My words are italicized and hanging in the air. In that moment, it doesn't matter if my fingers only skim one string or if my voice cracks, because the moon is dangling in the sky and the desert is thrumming with a silent melody.

It was a new feeling, a wave of cool tranquility settling in the depths of my stomach. A feeling that became unattainable when we drove away the next morning. **A feeling that only happens once.**

That feeling, that moment, my guitar, they are all sacred now; a figurative shrine shoved into one of the boxes in the attic of my mind.

That moment was a glimpse into something I don't yet understand, something "magical." It showed me the world is not just about what I've already seen — it's so much larger and more beautiful than anything we can observe while we are sitting in our homes staring at computer screens.

When we consider the topic of magic, we often think of the extraordinary, of witchcraft and wizardry, of the supernatural. But now, when my mind drifts to magic, I don't think about the paranormal. I think about the more mundane yet equally astounding magic that manifests in the barely there whine of electricity at night, or in the beauty and power of the stars.

The word "magic" means "an extraordinary power or influence."

This definition does not solely apply to fantasy and our imaginations but to nature and other complex things that the human race strives to comprehend. I believe that magic is embodied by the things around us that we have yet to understand.

When she wrote this piece, Lila Hazan was 15 and a high school sophomore in New York City. Her favorite things are writing free-form poetry and playing soccer.

Creation in the Face of Adversity

By **Ameena Naqvi**

The universe is comprised of the two fundamental ideas of creation and destruction. They are the essence of all societies, and while many think they are polar opposites and completely detached from each other, I strongly believe that they can be seen as two sides of the same coin.

In truth, **every creation is preceded by a state of destruction**, and every destruction is preceded by some order of creation.

Cultural shifts throughout the world clearly show that during periods of oppression and destruction within societies, ingenuity and creation begin to emerge and eventually provide a richer, more prosperous culture.

My own South Asian community is a prominent example of the correlation between these two ideas and how the eras of ruin and hardship result in more unified and culturally active countries. For instance, when thinking about these different ideas, I am first drawn to the various accounts I have heard from my elders about their perilous journeys during the partition of India and Pakistan.

Tragic stories of migration, separation, and displacement are quite well known to my entire family.

As a Canadian Muslim, I am often given multiple accounts from family members about the sudden departure, loss of homes, and oppression that erupted as a result of the partition of India and Pakistan. **My grandparents would recount grim memories of being separated from their friends and families as entire communities around them began to disintegrate.** Their journeys began on August 14th, 1947, after a nationalist struggle in the Indo-Pak region that lasted nearly three decades, which resulted in the creation of two different states: Pakistan and India. This was a very critical point in history that marked the end of European empires and the start of the postcolonial era. Cultural and religious tensions between the Hindus and Muslims erupted and led to one of the largest mass migrations in history, riots, a harsh division between communities, and the death of many civilians.

It wasn't until I grew older that I slowly began to recognize and understand the gravity of these events and the level of suffering and oppression that the two nations had gone through. When I was 14 years old, I was able to grasp the interconnection between periods of destruction and freedom of expression and creativity when I attended an art exhibit in Pakistan. There I discovered an artist named Sardari Lal Parasher who examined the correlations of power and national identity arising from the historical event of the partition.

At the age of 43, Parasher was forced out of his home and into the newly created territory of Pakistan. During this period, he made several sketches of the refugee camps surrounding him.

When examining Parasher's paintings, **I was extremely shocked and appalled by the gripping quality of the emotions of grief and despair that he had depicted amongst the refugees.**

The painting, "Strokes of Anguish," shows the sadness of a young refugee sitting in a corner with his head facing towards the ground and his arms wrapped tightly around his body as he reflects on the loss and sorrow he has experienced. Through his artwork, Parasher was able to visually document the agony and horror as a result of the partition.

By attending this exhibit I gained more insight into the clear connections between creativity and division within all societies and cultures.

I began to realize that after periods of oppression and suffering, **individuals display resilience through artistic expression**.

I was also exposed to these same ideas in relation to current global issues at the Penticton Art Gallery in British Columbia. There I saw "Behind the Lines," a collection of works portraying the reality of living amongst the destruction and devastation in Syria.

The Syrian artists were able to channel their emotions and feelings towards oppression, and affirm the incredible capacity of the human spirit to not only survive the most unimaginable circumstances but express itself through meaningful forms. This display of various styles of artwork provided insights into global images of suffering. For example, the "Cultural Beheading" series, by Rami Kakhos and Humam Alsalim, featured recreations of different statues from the ruins of the religious site Palmyra in Syria, which had been destroyed by radical groups.These attacks had deprived the country of its identity, knowledge, and history, and the artists used bright crimson paint to symbolize the systematic massacre and subsequent loss of Syrian cultural diversity.

Ameena Naqvi

However, **the exhibit clearly showed that despite any obstacles the nation faced, Syrians were able to band together to show that no one can silence their history or culture.** Artists were able to use the ruins of Palmyra scattered throughout the ancient world to create a project that raised awareness about the country's struggles.

Collectively, these experiences taught me that there is a clear relation between all forms of creation and destruction. During periods of complete devastation and persecution, art provides a powerful medium of expression and rebellion against authorities.

As Charles Bukowski once stated, "The way to create art is to burn and destroy ordinary concepts and to substitute them with new truths that run down from the top of the head and out of the heart." This clearly illustrates the universal link between these two elements and shows the artistic ability to renew society after periods of chaos and havoc. I strongly believe that **creation presupposes destruction and destruction foreshadows creation, and the rift between them forges new artistic expression.**

When she wrote this piece, Ameena Naqvi was in the 10th grade at Arbour Lake School in Calgary, Canada. Her hobbies include drawing, playing the flute, and reading.

Glitter, Perfection and Destruction

By **Lulu Rasor**

There are two things I learned in my ceramics program last summer. One, glitter is terrifying and inescapable. Two, sometimes you have to accept imperfection on the path to finding perfection.

It was early August 2017, and I was just starting the two-week session of the summer camp I've attended for the past three years. A dozen or so lucky campers had gathered inside our camp's art building. The Meeting House — as it is creatively known thanks to its origins as a Quaker meeting house — was sunny and stuffed to the gills with fading collages, curled-edged watercolor paints, fraying friendship bracelets, and yes, glitter.

Glitter gleamed in the cracks between floorboards despite numerous sweepings, flashing in the bright summer sunlight that snuck past the teetering shelves of art supplies and forgotten projects.

Most importantly, the Meeting House was also home to three pottery wheels and one kiln. The kiln, a cylindrical, metal-wrapped furnace used specially for "firing" pottery (baking until it hardens), was strictly off limits to campers. It was generally left to smolder in a back shed like a sleeping dragon behind layers of signs declaring DANGER and HOT and STAY AWAY (we mean it) in bold letters, except for the few times it rumbled to fiery life.

The pottery wheels, however, were open for use to campers during the highly coveted ceramics program. Despite the fact that the wheels were old-fashioned and powered by foot pedals instead of electricity (which required both the ability to multitask and the ability not to confuse the ringing noise of the wheel for the lunch bell), **the ceramics program was one of the hardest to get into due to its popularity.**

And yet, by some luck, my slip of paper had been sorted into the pile designating me as a member of the program for that week's art sessions alongside other would-be potters. Before this class, the most experience with ceramics I'd ever had was a class I took in preschool. It was less skillful art and more "keep the kids from tasting glaze and/or smearing clay in their hair," so you can probably imagine how comprehensive my knowledge about using a potter's wheel was when I stepped through the door of the Meeting House.

The first thing I learned about working with clay? There's a lot that has to happen before you can actually work with it.

High school ceramics classes or professional potters might get processed, air-bubble-free clay that lets them skip straight to forming, but we were attending the last session of a busy summer camp, so we got clay scraps full of air bubbles. Before we could even get kicking at the wheels, we had to spend a laborious half hour wedging (rolling and squashing the clay) to get out any possible pockets of air. **If even one air bubble was left when the piece went into the kiln, it would cause the piece to explode.** Other pieces might even be damaged in the blast.

Yeah, you could say that pottery is more violent than you might think. One bad piece could potentially take down a whole batch.

The trouble with air bubbles is that you can't exactly see them inside a piece of clay.

The best you can do is wedge your clay as firmly as possible — 10, 20, I've even heard up to 80 times — and pray for the best once you're done.

Then, after all that hard work, it surely must get easier? All that's left is to shape the clay into something passably symmetrical, and that can't be supremely hard, can it?

Here's a confession: I suck at multitasking. I can't rub my stomach and pat my head at the same time, and any attempt to do more than one thing at once usually ends with neither thing being done and something dropped on the floor.

Photo Courtesy of Lulu Rasor

As a genius ten-year-old, I once tried to cook my mother an omelet while making a Mother's Day card at the counter, and the results had to be scraped out of the pan with a bristle brush when I forgot about the meal. So, keeping a wheel in motion while also shaping the clay? Not so easy for me.

The clay felt like a living thing — rising and falling under my hand with a whim of its own. Thinning the sides pulled it dangerously high, and attempting to stop its wobbling journey upwards only caused the sides to buckle. My hands were tense the whole time, elbows locked and knees taut as I spun the wheel. I clenched the clay too tight, leaving dents from my fingers. **My attempts to force it back into a normal shape only furthered the collapse, until I was looking at a puddle of muddy water and something that had once been kind of round**. I could see the perfect piece in my head — the upwards-sloping, symmetrical sides, the even thickness of the walls — but all I had to show for that vision was something that would go back into the scraps bin.

At the end of the session, I had one collapsed maybe-bowl, crescents of clay beneath my fingernails, and a sense of failure to show for it all.

It wasn't until two days later that I found myself at the potter's wheel again, after having watched the others successfully slide their pieces off and set them aside to dry. I breathed in deep, slammed my clay onto the metal surface, wet my hands, and started again. This time, I kept my grip firm, but not tense, and let the clay move beneath my hands in a more controlled way. The piece went tall and skinny instead of wide and squat, but I gently let it do its thing rather than forcing a shape that would destroy it. I mostly went off cautious instinct rather than skill or experience, occasionally testing the thickness of an edge with a finger and cautiously pulling it up and out, afraid of pushing too hard. I now knew from experience that it would be hard to change the shape of a piece into something skinnier or shorter, and I didn't want to overwork it to the point where it collapsed again. I had to be firm, but not so hard that I left dents or crushed the shape of it.

It was tricky to form the clay into a desired shape without crushing it or stretching it too thin, so I tried to take my time and control the clay from automatically blooming outwards. **I lost myself in a timeless world where all that existed was the smooth metal of the potter's wheel and the clay whirling between my fingers.** And then I stopped.

One of the most important parts of throwing (shaping clay on a wheel) is knowing when to let go — when working the piece more would just make it structurally unsound or collapse. Sometimes you get what you get. An ugly piece you can fix with glaze or trimming is better than no piece at all. And really, every moment with your hands on the potter's wheel, good or bad, hones your control of the clay for future times. So I let it be, even though it wasn't what I had pictured. Maybe I couldn't make something that would match the image in my head, but I could still make something.

So when I had a shape that seemed structurally sound and had sides of relatively even thickness (uneven sides would cause the piece to dry out at different rates, possibly trapping water inside the clay that could cause it to explode in the kiln), I slowed the wheel and carefully removed my piece. It was short and squat, too narrow to be a bowl, but too small to be a cup. The rim was bumpy, dipping up and down like mountain ridges. The sides were a little too thick, the bottom even more so. It crouched on the drying shelf like a goblin, all warty and lopsided.

But it was mine. However lumpy and amateur it looked, it gave me something to work on later.

Something important about throwing on the potter's wheel is that it isn't anything close to the last step in creating a piece of pottery. While the piece is drying, you can carve away the clay, either to create texture or to reshape the entire piece. And then, of course, there's the glazing.

Lulu Rasor

The day after I threw my crooked little pot, I spent the entire period carving away at the shape of it. The rim became purposefully uneven, rising and falling in smooth dips like ocean waves. I whittled away at the form until the bottom was a more acceptable thickness. When I was done with that, I whittled away even more clay from around the middle so it became less stout and more hourglass shaped, like an old-fashioned goblet.

When my piece had dried enough and I was certain there couldn't be water trapped inside the clay, it was placed inside the kiln and fired alongside the others. When it came out, it was rock-hard. I spent another period carefully layering on dark blue glaze until it was ready for another firing.
When my little goblet-pot emerged from its second firing, the glaze had morphed from a muddy gray into a brilliant dark blue that glowed like a sapphire in the summer sunlight. I held it, tracing one finger over the curving rim, and thought that it was beautiful.

If I had kept trying to form the piece into my desired shape on the potter's wheel, it might have simply collapsed. My insistence at perfection would have ensured I had nothing to work with at all. The first time, I had tried to make the perfect piece and ended up with a blob of mud instead.

But by accepting something less than perfection—even for only one step in the long process—I had given myself the chance to improve later on, rather than permanently trapping myself in the initial stages of throwing.

Sometimes you need to fail, to give up the desire for utterly planned perfection, and see where your hands can take you.

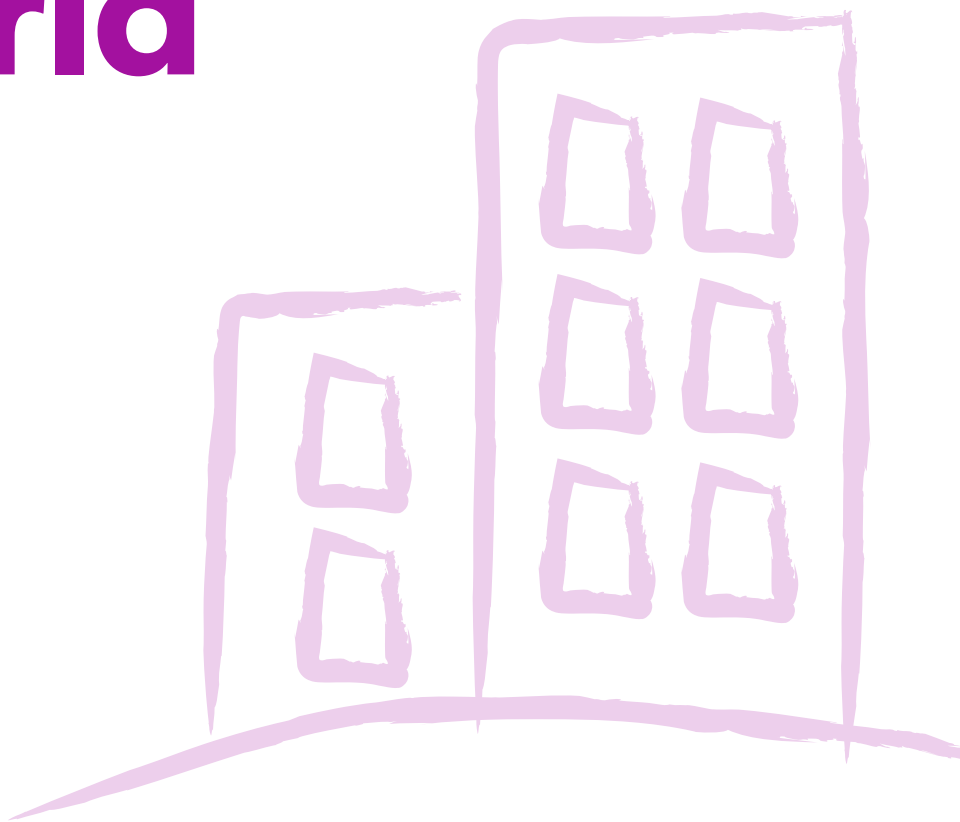
There was no way that I was going to create a modern masterpiece that summer, but I could at least learn and enjoy myself while doing so.

And the glitter? Yeah, some guy got a speck in his clay and his bowl exploded. Ruthless, that glitter.

When she wrote this piece, Lulu Rasor was 16 and a lean, mean, book-reading machine from Yarmouth, Maine. When not reading or learning strange facts about history and science, she enjoys swimming, writing, and talking about herself in the third person.

My World

By **Nusrat Angela**



I have always found "my world" too small.

Living in a crowded city in Bangladesh, I am surrounded by one class of people. I am rooted in a conservative society in which, from a very young age, a path is set for every child. Being different is met with disapproval; it means you have gone astray. People around me believe in one source of success: the financial staircase.

It means one should not waste a moment on anything else. There is no time to dream, no time for poetry or painting. The social barriers that confine me are too close; they always seem to be caving in. I have sought larger boundaries and strive to push the walls further back, but have failed dismally. The small world around me seems to fit into the palm of my hand. So small, so frustrating! Wasting my days within these confines, I feel like a prisoner dying to escape, or escaping to die. The air I am allowed to breathe is not sufficient. I am suffocating.

Doesn't success have a wider meaning? Doesn't it mean more than status? What about exploring the rest of the world? But one voice is never strong enough to change the tide. My imagination never knew any bounds, but my world did. Every step I try to take out of line, I feel a tug at the invisible cord around my neck. The shackles at my wrist and ankle refuse loudly as I try to break down the doors. I feel like Rapunzel — trapped in a castle, guarded by a dragon, waiting for a savior — a savior, oh, if only there were one!

From a very young age, I grew up hearing this particular story. It seems my predicament matched a locked-up girl, where the wicked witch of insecurity and immorality threatens every step of her life. Sometimes I feel we are the same, living in two different dimensions within different confinements. But at last, I have found my savior.

I imagine open sky and sprawling green fields. The song of freedom sounds in my ear. I close my eyes and am transported to the land beyond the high walls, the land called my savior, my freedom.

And that is writing.

Nusrat Angela

I realized this a few years ago. It was just another day when I had been ridiculed for painting instead of studying for the Olympiad competition. My parents told me to stop wasting my time and do something productive that would appeal to foreign universities. As tears rolled down my eyes, my sister came up to me. She smiled, passing me a paper and pen.

"A gift," she said.

The best gift of my life. **That very moment, when I began to write my first piece, I realized the peace that came along with it.** As emotions flowed on the perched paper, I felt something lift off my chest. For once I was happy, forgetful of the daily barometers, ready to fight against the tide. That one day has proved to be the pillar of my new life. I can fight. With this strength, I shall fight.

I have finally found that answer. Truthfully, I was scared to share it with everyone. But right now I feel light as a feather. I am no longer afraid. I was looking for a nonexistent heaven. Hardships will never end; they are just a part of your life. There is no way above or below. They were wrong. That precious place is around me. I see it every day. I breathe it in with every heartbeat.

Yes.

Every time I write, I am there.

My world, where I get to live with the things I love, is where I belong.

Beyond the harsh reality, **writing gives me a place where I don't have to succeed to gain meaning.**

Stories allow me to sit in front of my piano the whole day without receiving scorching glares from others. They are the place where time stands still as I try to capture the evening with the red wine color at the tip of my pen.

And then I realize that this place is in my heart. I do not have to look far. Every night I dream of it, breathe it in. As long as society isn't giving me what I want, I shall fight like this: with my pen, in my world, hidden from the rest of the universe.

When she wrote this piece, Nusrat Jahin Angela was 16 and in the 11th grade in Bangladesh. Writing is her favorite hobby because she believes it to be the best form of self-expression. Aside from writing, she enjoys learning languages and doing community service work.

Benefits of Exhibiting Children's Art

At the International Child Art Foundation we believe that art produce by children is the most honest and purest form of human creative expression.

ICAF art exhibitions awaken the "inner child" in professionals and foster global citizenship in students.

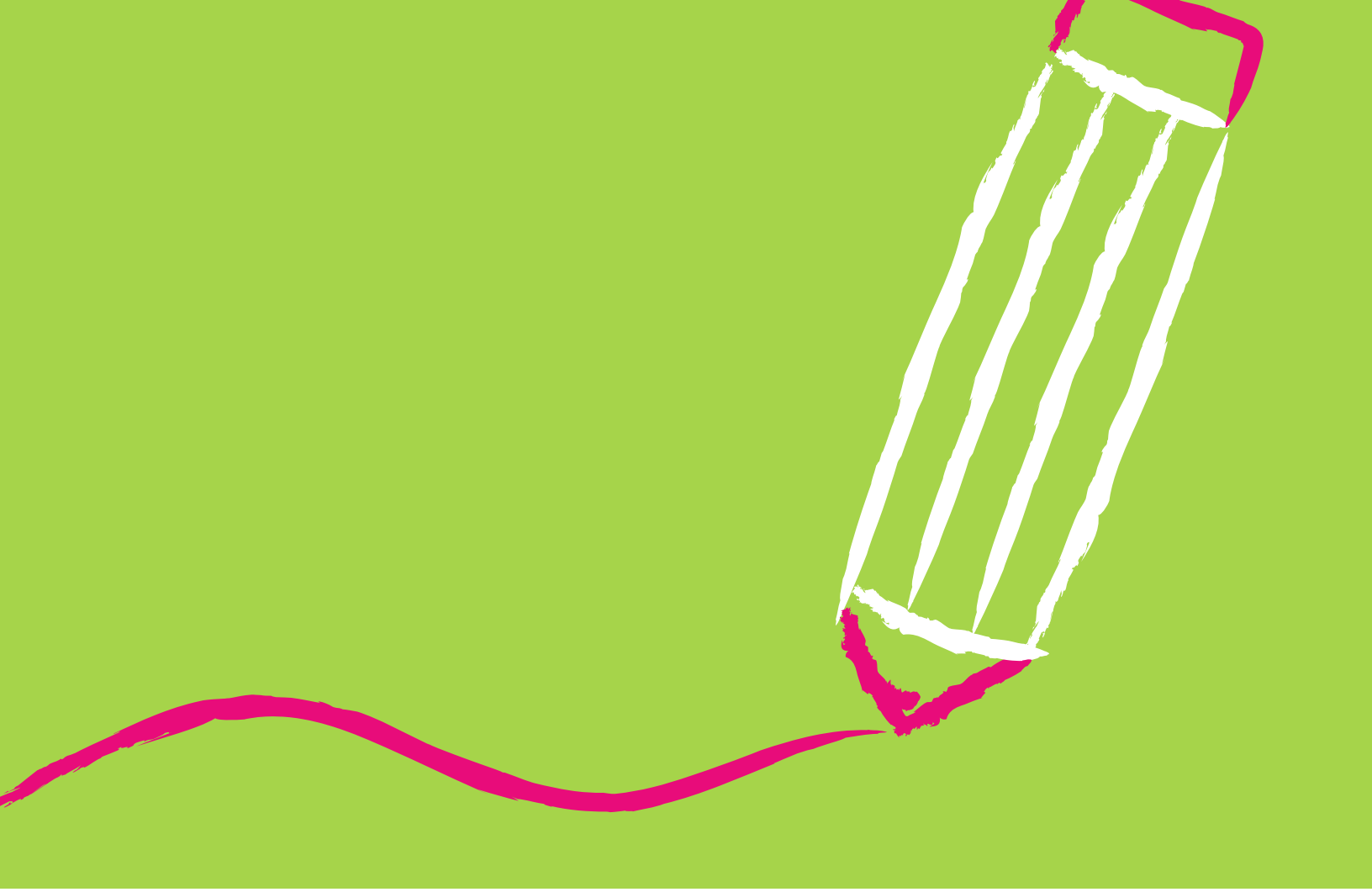
You can bring the imagination of the world's children to your school, college, corporate headquarters or annual conference by hosting an ICAF interactive exhibition. For exhibition fee and expenses involved, please email at childart@ICAF.org.

ICAF exhibitions have taken place at the White House Millennium Celebration, the United Nations in New York City, the World Bank in Washington, D.C., Haus der Kunst in Munich, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, the Torino 2006 Winter Olympics, Education Without Borders in Dubai, Museu da Cidade in Lisbon, XIII World Congress of Psychiatry in Cairo, Yeungjin College in South Korea, Hewar Art Gallery in Riyadh, and at scores of other venues and major events.

Following an ICAF exhibition at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Professor Jessica Hoffman Davis stated "For all of us, the beauty and thoughtfulness of these works offer powerful evidence of the breadth and depth of the global conversation that is cultivated and perpetuated through children's art."

An exceptional ICAF exhibition titled, The Arts of Empathy, took place in May 2017 at the Phillips Academy in Andover—one of the country's preeminent private schools. The exhibition was curated by Zoe Yin, a student at Phillips who is an ICAF supporter.

The exhibition's goal was to expand and deepen the Andover community's understanding of child art as a way of nurturing understanding and respect for all cultures and people starting from a young age. The exhibition presented the Andover community with new lens to examine how all of us can create empathy and positive social change through art starting now.



The International Child Art Foundation invites elementary and middle schools in the U.S. and world over to participate this year in the 6th Arts Olympiad—the world's largest program for students' creative development.

The Arts Olympiad Lesson Plan can be downloaded free at > https://ICAF.org/ArtsOlympiad

Deadline for submission of school art entry is December 15, 2018.

The Arts Olympiad winners from participating school districts, cities or countries will be invited as official delegates to the 6th World Children's Festival to be held on The National Mall in Washington, DC in June/July 2019.

To help bring the Arts Olympiad to underserved schoolchildren who lack creative outlets, please visit www.ICAF.org/support or mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

INTERNATIONAL
CHILD ART
FOUNDATION

Post Office Box 58133
Washington DC 20037

6th ARTS OLYMPIAD

6th WORLD CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL
SUMMER OF 2019
WASHINGTON D.C.