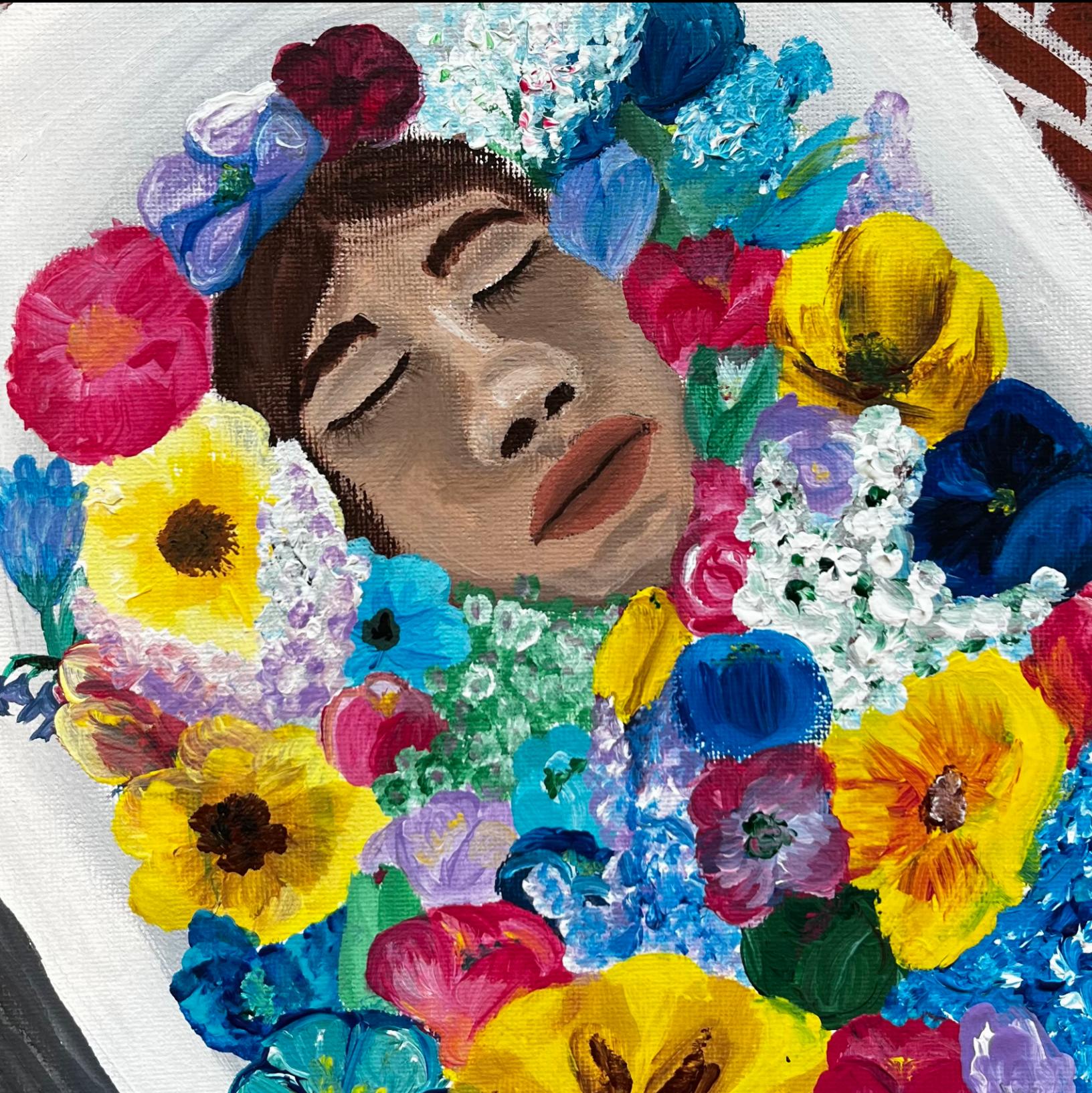


ST JOHN'S LITERARY MAGAZINE 2023



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Daryn Maloni
Stella McKinney
Daisy Overmyer
Anamaria Palacios
Christianna Prout
Chase Ray
Bethlehem Seyoum
Thomas Shea
Olivia Tomelden
Breanna Valcarcel
Lena Walls
Genevieve Willens

Front Cover

Molly Beck

Back Cover

Olivia Del Rosario

**O Captain! My Captain! : a continuation of Walt Whitman's classic poem
and an homage to Lincoln's legacy — Harrington Mirkow**

O Captain, my Captain! Feel our spirits rejoice,
Your work is complete, hear our desperate voice,
Time is upon for honor and glory
Grab my hand and tell your story.

Get up! Arise! Move your glazen eyes!
But with heaving steps,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain, my Captain — open your eyes to see,
The rebirth of a kingdom once infected with debris.
The shackles now lie in mud, torn with rust,
As celebration of freedom for which we had lust.

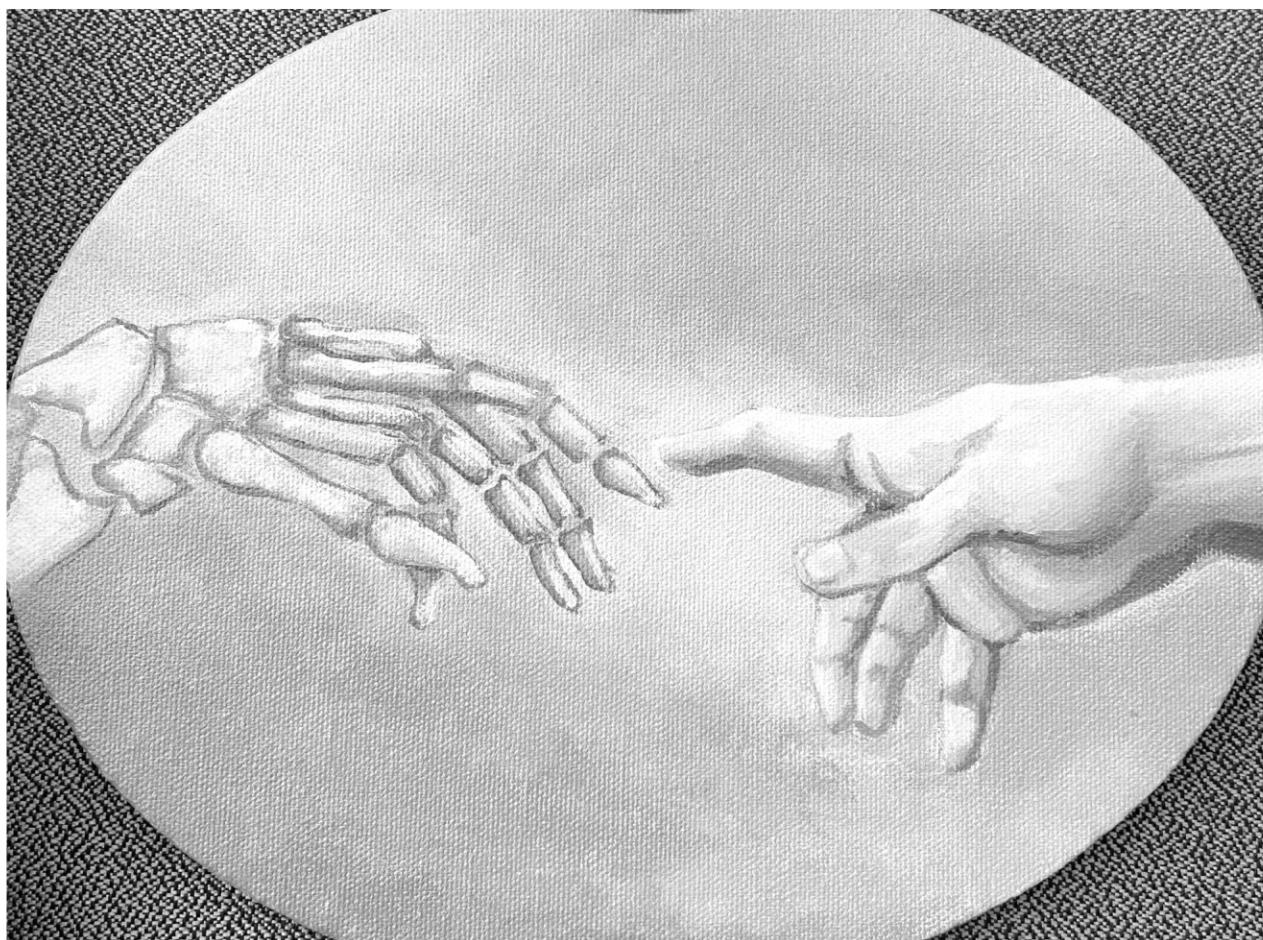
You broke the ties now heed our cries!
But from in the blood my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

My dear, dear Captain — the war is done,
Our sovereign nation has become one.
Through battle and blood you have wrought
the justice for which we have sought.

Yet with blank eyes to the sky,
You continue to lie,
Fallen — cold — and dead.

Original by Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass, 1865.

Keira Gnomes





Life is Good – Malik Mack

Life is good
Even though I'm misunderstood
Everyone sees me smile,
But they don't see me down...
Or frown
Because showing emotion you're looked at as a clown
Unless you're angry or violent
You better keep silent...
So I don't tell people how I really feel...
I just keep silent... until I'm healed.

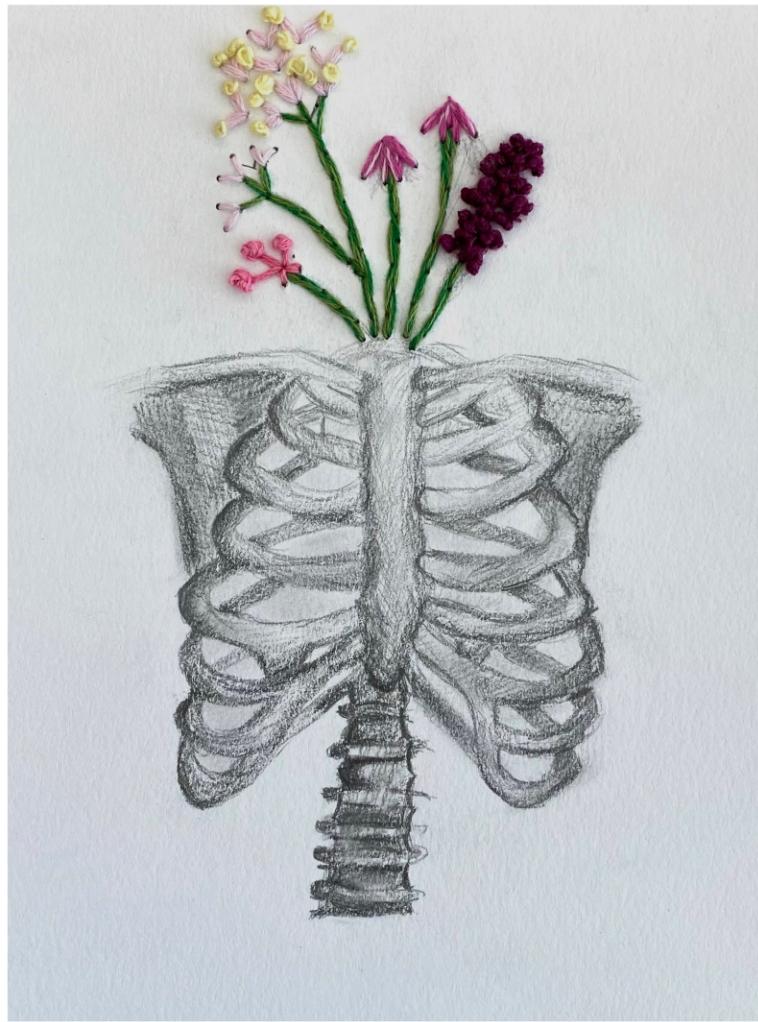
Isabela Amador

(Un)Natural Virtues – Phoebe Sood

Nature forgives but I don't.

Sometimes I get consumed by a deep anger,
a hatred unwilling to greet forgiveness;
Swept up in a windstorm of irritation
that soon transports me to a place of regret.

Nature forgives,
Nature shares,
Why can't I?



Cailey Gardiner

The dead leaf finally stops hanging onto the tree,

The tide erases imprints in the sands,

Nature lets go.

Maybe I should too.

Rivers and streams flow,
But I am a dam; I disrupt the flow and
I don't let forgiveness wash away my emotions.

I leech on to my anger,
And instead of letting it wash away from me I choose to erode.
Nature finds freedom in forgiving;
Maybe someday I will too.

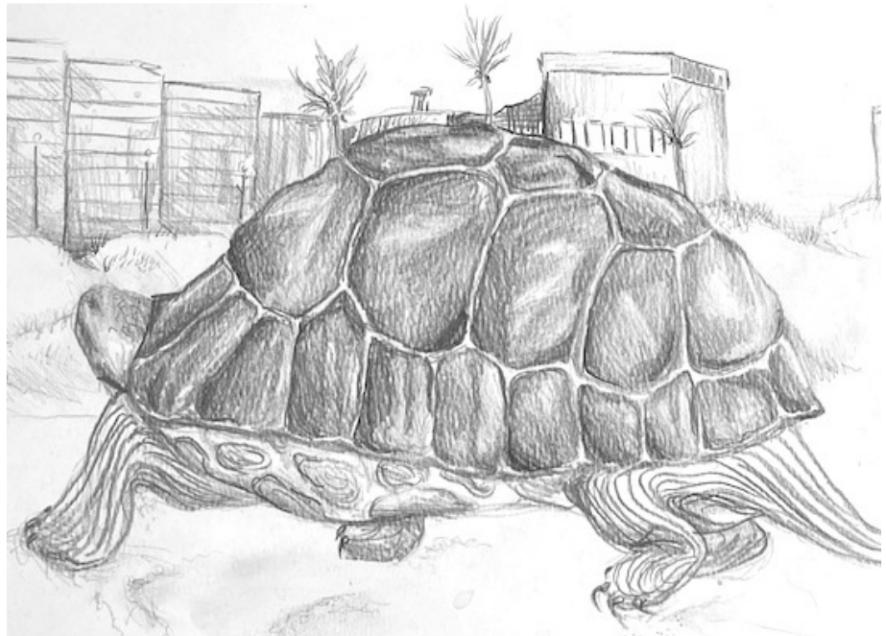
Set in Stone – Sadie Idler

Opinions can be set in stone
But stones can be moved.

Push by push,
Slowly,
Stubbornly,
Bit by bit,
Until our opinions,
Which were set in stone,
Are different.

And yet,
They are still set in stone
Until something decides
To move it.

Olivia Tomelden



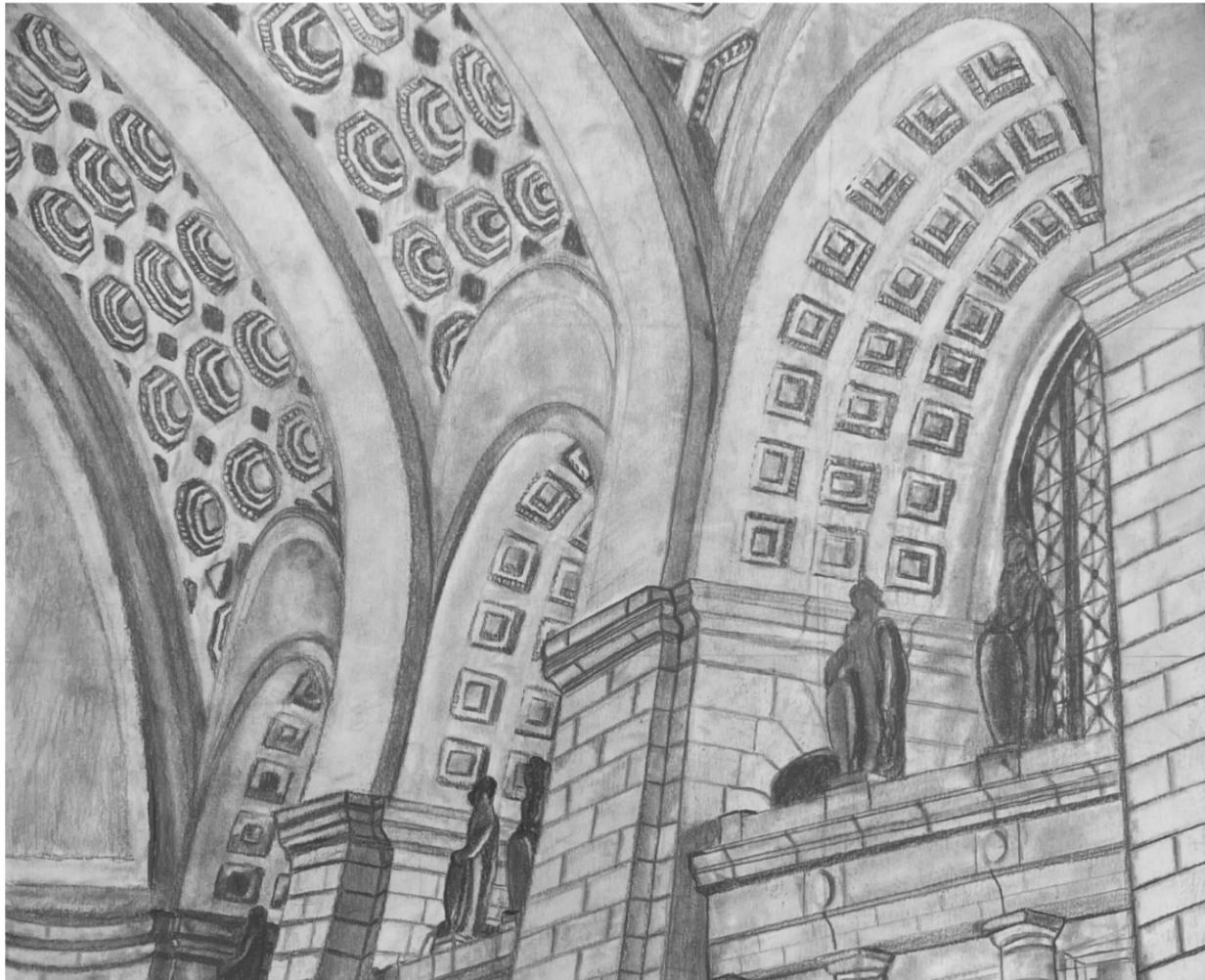
Castle Walls – Sophia Zanger

A king owns a castle and lives a rich life,
plenty of duties to keep him busy.
He sits on his throne and seals the fate of others.
Prim and proper, back straight and tall.

A king seems determined, set in his ways.
Ready to lead and fight if he must.
Kings will have many a personality,
but only one trait will forever remain the same:

A king trapped in his own castle walls,
the marble pillars – too white and too tall.
The echoing halls carry whispered words,
but what had been said will never be heard.

Lights could never brighten this dark cavern,
and days pass in a never ending pattern.
The towers will forever feel empty,
even as decorations are aplenty.
Ceilings are built out of reach,
away from the words that nobles will preach –
away from where ballroom guests dance and choirs sing,
away from the words that will forever bounce and ring.
A head full of noise for our poor king,
a grief and madness it shall start to bring.



Daisy Overmyer

The loneliness begins to creep its way in,
the loud silence could make a head spin.

And when lights are turned down, and people have gone,
the ghosts of a king will initiate their haunt.

He will never know true joy,
he'll always be burdened
by the quiet whispers given,
and the throne crowned in gold.

A king will forever be trapped,
silence will never release its hold
even when he's given everything -
he's alien in his castle walls.

Wings of Justice – Caroline Gotzman

Prejudice,
discrimination,
injustice.

Where does this all end?
We're all human,
flesh, bone, and heart.
Why let our looks, tear us apart?

Get rid of this violence,
this injustice, this hate.
Speak up!
Let your words fly through
space.

Favoritism,
hatred,
bias.

Stand tall and strong,
with your head held high.
Use your voice.
And your words will fly.

Break down this wall.
Knock down this door.
Destroy this division.
This can't go on anymore!

Don't follow the trend.
Fly against the breeze.
Use your wings of justice,
to get rid of unease.



Elizabeth Baechli

Protests,
violence,
unrest.

How can we stand
this torture, this pain?
If you make a difference
this won't be in vain.

Look to your neighbors,
fellow birds in the trees.
We'll stick together.
Fight with us, please.

Hurtful words,
hateful looks,
violent actions.

Use your words.
Your voice, your songs!
Violence can't win.
Has it worked so far?

Patience is needed—
silent strength
united together.
As one, we stand.



The Window — Sadie Idler

My feet make a dull thud
on the hollow ground,
wheels dragged behind me,
straining arms,
lift up up.
Then I sit down in relief.
Breathe in.
Breathe out.
As hectic as it is
with so many rules
and tiny procedures
that need to be perfected
I like plane rides.
I sit by the window
and peer out
at the golden lit world below me.
The sun will rise soon,
and paint the sky in glorious color.

Regular, Everyday, Normal Freshman – Gabriel Taylor

good morning!

tired

good luck on your test!

i bombed it

the test is easy!

maybe for you

smile more!

doing my best

what did you get?

better than you

Grant Hayward

stay positive!

*easy to say from
behind
the big desk*

homework due!

submission uploading

come in before school!

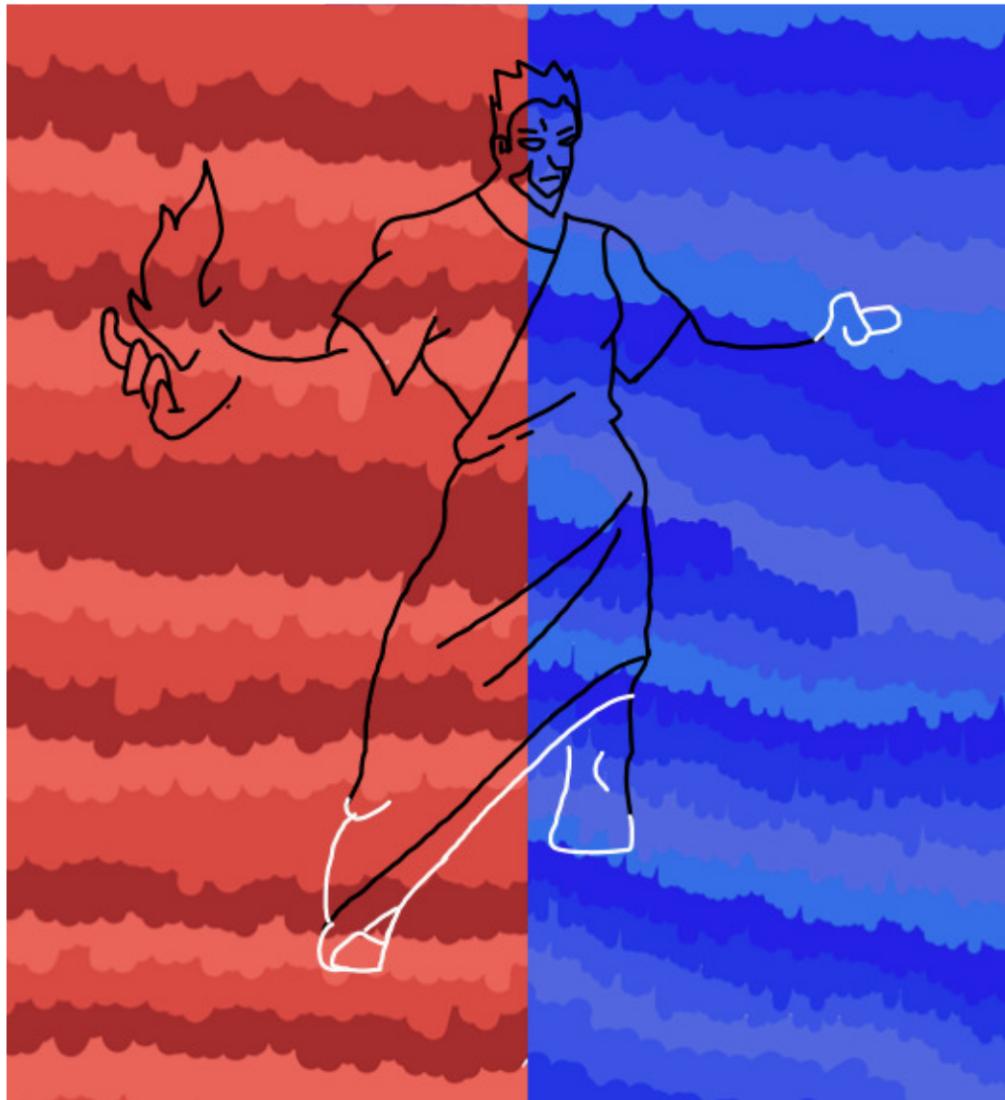
extra help

take notes!

learning the ropes

have a good weekend!

monday is a new day.



Breanna Valcarcel



Stella McKinney



Lena Walls



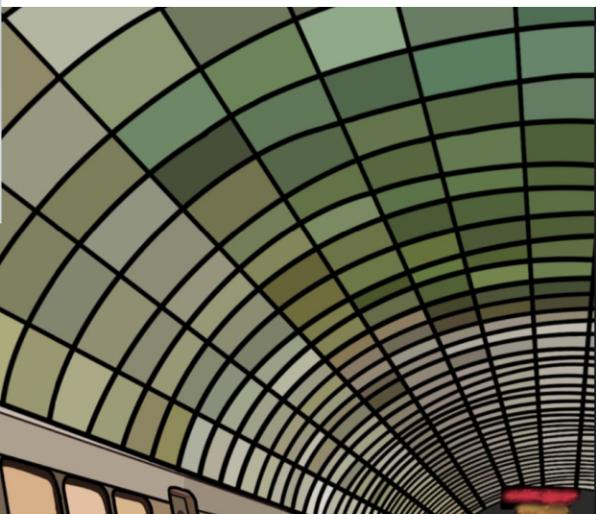


Zoe Beuzelin

Genevieve Willens



Bridget Kelley



Thomas Shea



Daryn Maloni



Christianna Prout



Ellie Browning



Ava Boza

Midnight Rain – Sophia Zanger

The waves crash and lightening strikes,
the thunder booms throughout the night.

The drops splash against the sill.
where he sits, quiet and still.

He trails his finger down water streaks,
His frown will linger, watching the streets.

The clouds are gathered all grey up above,
the children are scattered, some finding new love.

The houses are lit, all warm inside,
But out here the cold will sit – in the rain it will hide.

The umbrellas are open and boots are put on,
the woman and her children, like a deer with her fawn.

The headlights are blazing –
puddles are splashing –
it is amazing –
how fast it is happening.

Many laugh – many wish.
Tonight some might, share a kiss.

But the boy will stay at the sill,
where he may sit quiet and still.

As he watches the world,
with this midnight rain.

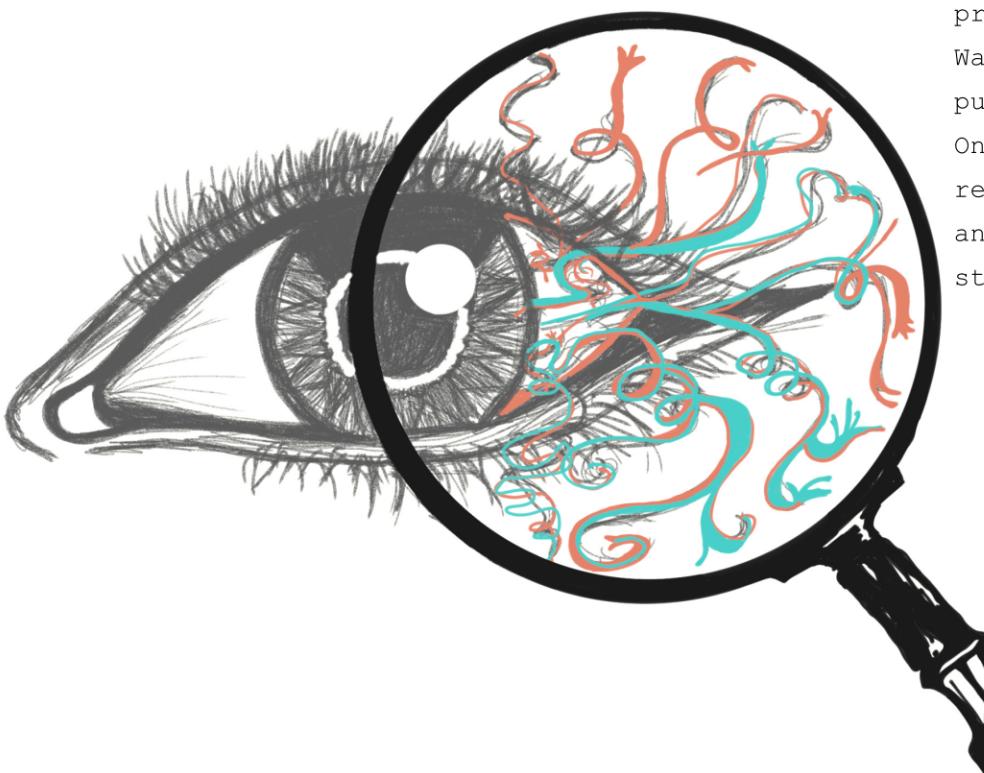
Ocean Waters – Griffin Reilly

The ocean is quiet, the ocean is soft.
The ocean can calm you with its noise,
maybe you should try it.

Sea creatures glide through the water
and eventually are slaughtered like
prey in the waters of the bay.

Waves glide into the shore, paves a
pure new color on the shore.

Once the oceans are no more, we will
remember the shells upon the shore,
and the names of the creatures we are
still unsure.



Bethlehem Seyoum

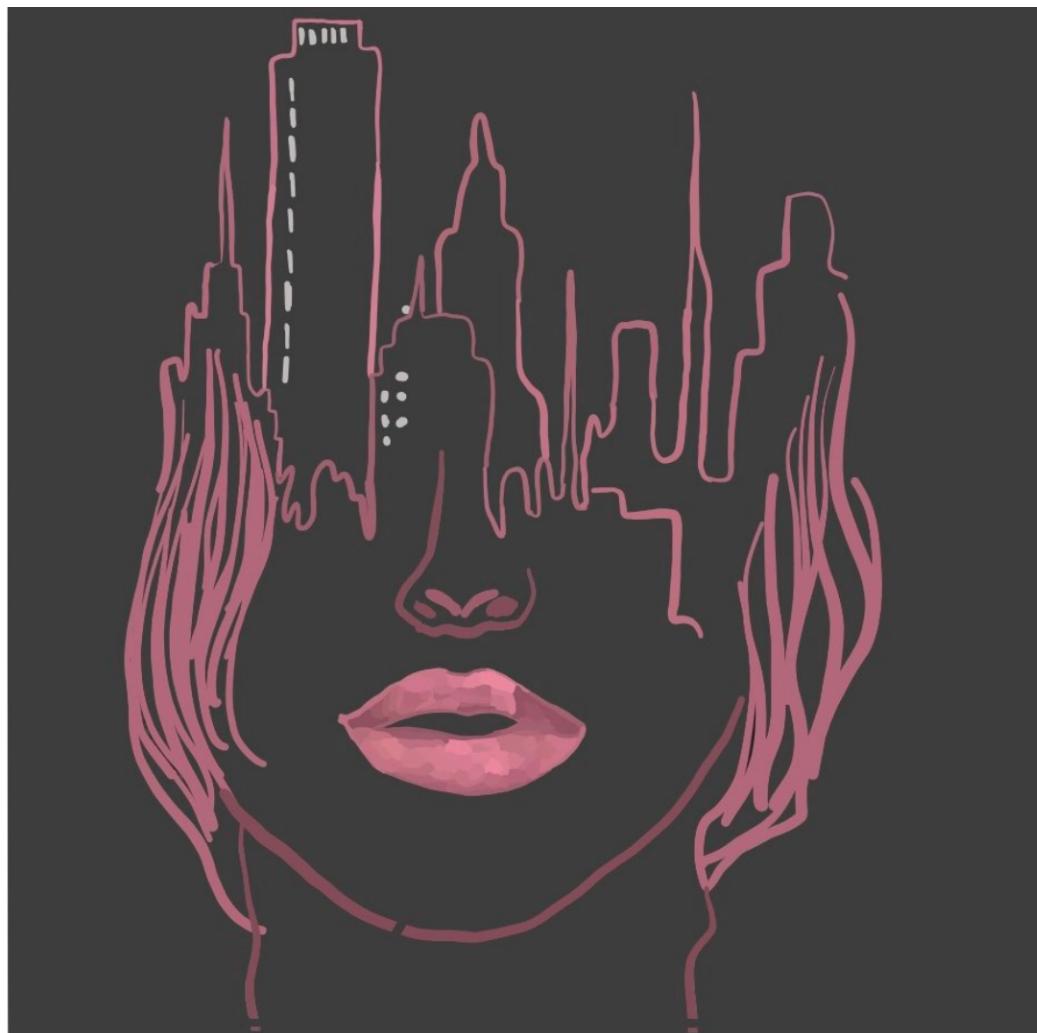
Home — Kellie Gilliam

Home is the place,
Where you look around,
And know you've been
There.

The memories rush in,
The conversations begin —
In no one else's style,
But the collaboration called
Our own.

So once again...
Home, you are
Everything around me
That calls me back —
Back to safe,
Back to wonderful;
And you are loved.

Elizabeth Baechli



Environmental Destruction – Grace Coleman

A great gray owl is perched in a grand oak tree.
The tree that has been overly trimmed for electrical wires
Making their way to a new development on the avenue of Tennessee.
Leaving the owl's life to retire.

No home for the owl, or any other animals.
All that is left for them is the polluted forest.
Causing these animals to be highly irrational.
Running across streets and being crushed by cars, even the smallest.

This is because of the people
Prioritizing their new plastic homes.
Rather than making these harmful things illegal
They go about to find a new place for their gnomes.

Save the planet,
Our only home which we inhabit.

Aubrey Klebes





Olivia Tomelden

Time — Sean Donovan

Leaves when least expected, returns when no one calls.

In infinity, a crushing visitor, when scarce, makes us appalled.

Behind, memories locked with sticky notes; ahead, closing walls.

Please read the notes and learn to smell the flowers in this hall.

Fill your life with your desires and create your own call.

When time's become abrasive; ask for help, before it catches us all.

A Timely Matter – Phoebe Sood

Sometimes I feel like I have too much time.
It's a feeling hard to explain, and difficult to define.
I am told to just live in the moment,
But I see too many important components.
It's a wonderful issue to have, I know,
But it's hard simply watching the clock go.
I sit and I wait, too anxiously I hesitate.
From the reflection I watch the seasons go by;
I am here, yet I don't feel connected – Why?
With too much time what to do,
I am always hoping for a break through.
I push my goals away, off for another day,
While the great willow outside continues to sway.
Tick tock, this sound one day will stop,
And I spent it all staring at my watch.

Sometimes It's Best to Let the Mind Wander – Sadie Idler

Sometimes it's best to let the mind wander,
like a curved path
through open land,
wide and endless
taking me places I never dreamed of.
Except dreams are what lead me here.
The endless world of dreams,
of places I'll never go
of people I'll never be
places I can only get to
by wandering
in my open mind.

Dear Writing, — Maria Harb

I do not remember
The first word I wrote,
The first word I learned,
The first word I spoke.

But I do know the characters
That ran as my words flew on my paper,
The words that meant more,
The words that spoke more.

The silly stories,
The terrible stories,
The meaningful stories,
I love them all
They carried me on closer –
Closer, so that I could taste my dream.

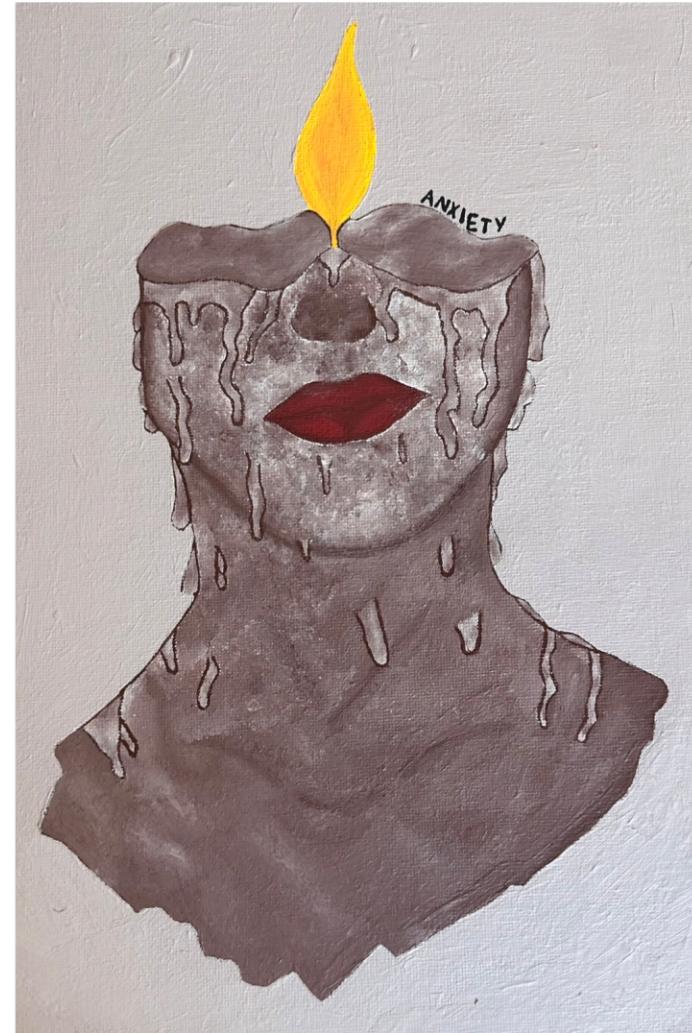
It tastes sweet like honey
Strong like wine
Yet delicate
So I don't get drunk.

It tastes unique and pure
Pure like the water racing down my cheeks
As my smile widens –
Wider and wider until my face hurts.

Yet I still do not remember
The first word I wrote,
The first word I learned,
The first word I spoke,

But I do know
That I love you.
Hold me tight –
Don't you ever let me go.

See you on my paper, Maria Harb.



Sela Farrington

I Wish – Sydney Trent

A solemn wish,
A brief kiss,
Oh come again,
My endless pain,
Everlasting love,
You fit me like a glove,
To hold you once more,
Something I can't yet deplore.
To wish is to want,
Oh how to be nonchalant,
When you deplete me so,
Leaving me with great woe,
I wish and I may,
To see you some day,
With the same old grace,
I rest my case,
That you were always alright.

Victoria Andrade



The Democratic Republic – Anna Rhodes

The conjurer
stared, aghast, at
what she'd wrought
upon the world. The
amalgamation of
kitchen implements
hosting the demonic
soul she had summoned
stared back,
nonplussed.

The conjurer
coughed, remembering
what she was doing. "I
command you, soul of
the damned, bearer of
eternal doom, to do my
bidding and—"

"Yes, yes, carry
out your will and all
that," interrupted the
kitchen creature
(quite rudely, though

he felt it was reasonable, all things considered). "The thing is, I'd
really rather not." He raised a hand to scratch his teakettle head
contemplatively (though it was really more tapping awkwardly, due to said
hand being a ladle with spoon fingers).



Sara Labor

The conjurer was taken aback. "I- what?"

"I'd really rather not submit to your will and carry out your undoubtedly nefarious plans this afternoon. I was just about to go on a lovely coffee date, see, and I'd rather like to get back before Bealfregor gets the idea that I've stood her up."

The conjurer (perhaps she was a sorceress? mused the demon) frowned. "You haven't got a choice," she declared. "I summoned you, so I get to make the rules." She shook the old, musty tome in her hands, as if that explained



everything, "The book says so!"

"No no," the demon (whose name was Eadkingardberth, Son of Breek, and Gnawer of Feet, not that it mattered) corrected. "The book doesn't mean anything, anymore. We've recently established a new and glorious democratic republic down in hell, you see," he informed apologetically. "The first vote of the newly empowered people was to abolish the old regime's tradition of answering mortal whims and bowing to the uncaring

Gabi Love

demands of the bourgeoisie — no longer will we give in to their intolerable taxes on our spirits and our income! The workers have United! We have answered the call of the people — to revolution! To a new life! Long live the Democratic Republic! Viva la—"

The demon abruptly cut off his impassioned speech, looking abashed (for all that a soul inhabiting a collection of cooking implements could look abashed).

"My apologies, I do get a bit worked up upon occasion."

The conjurer's mouth moved, but no sound came out.

"Anyway," said Eadkingardberth, gesturing with his other spatula arm to the old book. "You may want to get that updated. The new contracts are much more liberating, and open-ended, and undemanding..." he trailed off. Then he said, cheered, "Well, if that's all, I'll be going!" And clapped his utensil

fingers together. "If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give our team down in Demonic Resources a call. Ta-ta!"

Feeling slightly vindictive, the gentlemanly demon did not offer a 'good day' to the flabbergasted conjurer as he disappeared back from whence he had come, leaving her with nothing but a gaping mouth and an outdated grimoire.

Stories — Sadie Idler

Stories seem to write themselves in the mind of the author. They dance around the page giggling with impish smiles under the yellow lamplight dipping their tiny feet into ink and running across the page, leaving marks left for us to see. But they are not in the mind. Stories are alive, you see. They are not words thought up by anyone. They are creatures that not all can see with their kind, impish smiles.

I see them often. They whizz past my window in the rain, golden glimpses of light smirking at me through the glass, believing they will roam free and I will never catch them. I have a camera, you know. I see them blinking across my screen, their golden eyes and black shoes winking at me from between the words that they weave. They follow me, guide me, turn my feelings into tone and my thoughts into words. As I walk down the hallway with the speckled floor and light wood-paneled sides, head in the clouds but feet firmly on earth, they flit about my head, pointing this way and that. I catch and hold some, some I break without meaning to, and then out of spite they leave me, mad that I ruined one of their brethren. I like it best, though, when they climb on my fingers while I write, swinging their little legs and black inky shoes off of my pinky as I type or write, back and forth, back and forth, looking up at me with golden eyes, smiling an impish smile. They know I can't look away.

The first time I saw one I was twelve. It was flying around the classroom looking for a place to land, a mind that wandered, a hand that drifted. Almost as if pulled by a magnet, it dragged itself through the air to me and found a seat in the words on my computer. It smiled at me, not impish at first, trying to hook my attention

Anamaria Palacios



away from the cold metal of the chair legs against mine and the natural light reflecting through the room, off of the white board and into my weak eyes. And yet... I looked around. No one saw the strange creature sitting half in my computer, half out, like it had decided that the laws of physics just didn't apply to it. It leaned down into the screen, looking at the words I had written and shaking its tiny head. I was fascinated. What was this creature? Then all of a sudden my essay halted. Stopped in its tracks. The little train that had been dutifully chugging on, stopped, unable to withstand the lure of the story. "What are you?" I asked. The boy next to me with floppy blonde hair, round cheeks, a strong nose and blue eyes glanced at me, confused. I barely saw him. I was looking at the little creature with golden dragonfly wings and eyes, a human-like face but not really, everything was sharp and soft at the same time. It had black shoes that dripped with ink. My eyes widened. I could see what it was going to do. "No, I need to finish my essa—" it giggled and ran across my paper, footprints knocking my carefully-placed letters down to the bottom of the screen in a jumble, the word "Shakespeare" broke into six unintelligible pieces, seeming to sneer up at me from under the story's feet. The plastic chair creaked as I leaned back, hands in my hair, and groaned. Trains of thought were so hard to keep chugging along, and now not only was mine stopped, but knocked off its track. The story stopped on the word balcony and sat down, swinging its legs innocently.

"What do you want from me?" It smiled. Looked down at the word "balcony." Looked at me. Smirked. Looked at the word "balcony." And then got up, grabbed the word, and ran. It dropped pieces as it went. Parts of its black dress, golden tears, neither sad nor happy, just drops of an essence that ran from its golden eyes, fell as it ran, creating its own pattern. It became words. But they weren't written. They were what could be written. The story paused. It had run out of space. It turned to me, impatiently tapping

its foot, waiting for me to scroll down, give it more space to run wild, to frolic among the no-longer blank pages, they were full of possibility now. The words it had first dropped were fading out, dripping away, sinking back into the depths of the computer. The story looked up at me. It crossed its arms, tapped its foot, and blinked its large golden eyes. The words continued to fade. Then it uttered its words in a voice containing all voices. Deep, high, raspy, smooth, it felt all feelings in a single moment. It hopped into the last word of what was now my story. The first word had almost dripped away, being slowly erased by time. "Well" it said. "What are you gonna do?" I looked at it. For a moment. Then I copied its smirk. There was no escaping this wonderful, lovely creature. I put my fingers to the keyboard. And I wrote.

