

haywire

A Magazine from the
John-F.-Kennedy School in Berlin



ISSUE NUMBER 8 / FALL 2016

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Publisher's Note

by Zahavah Zinn-Kirchner, 11a

"Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?" (Henry David Thoreau)

In order to live, we must vicariously and selflessly delve into the realms of the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of others. For if we don't, the trajectory of human experience could be finite. How can we sense without empathy? How can we love without compassion? How can art enrich our human experience?

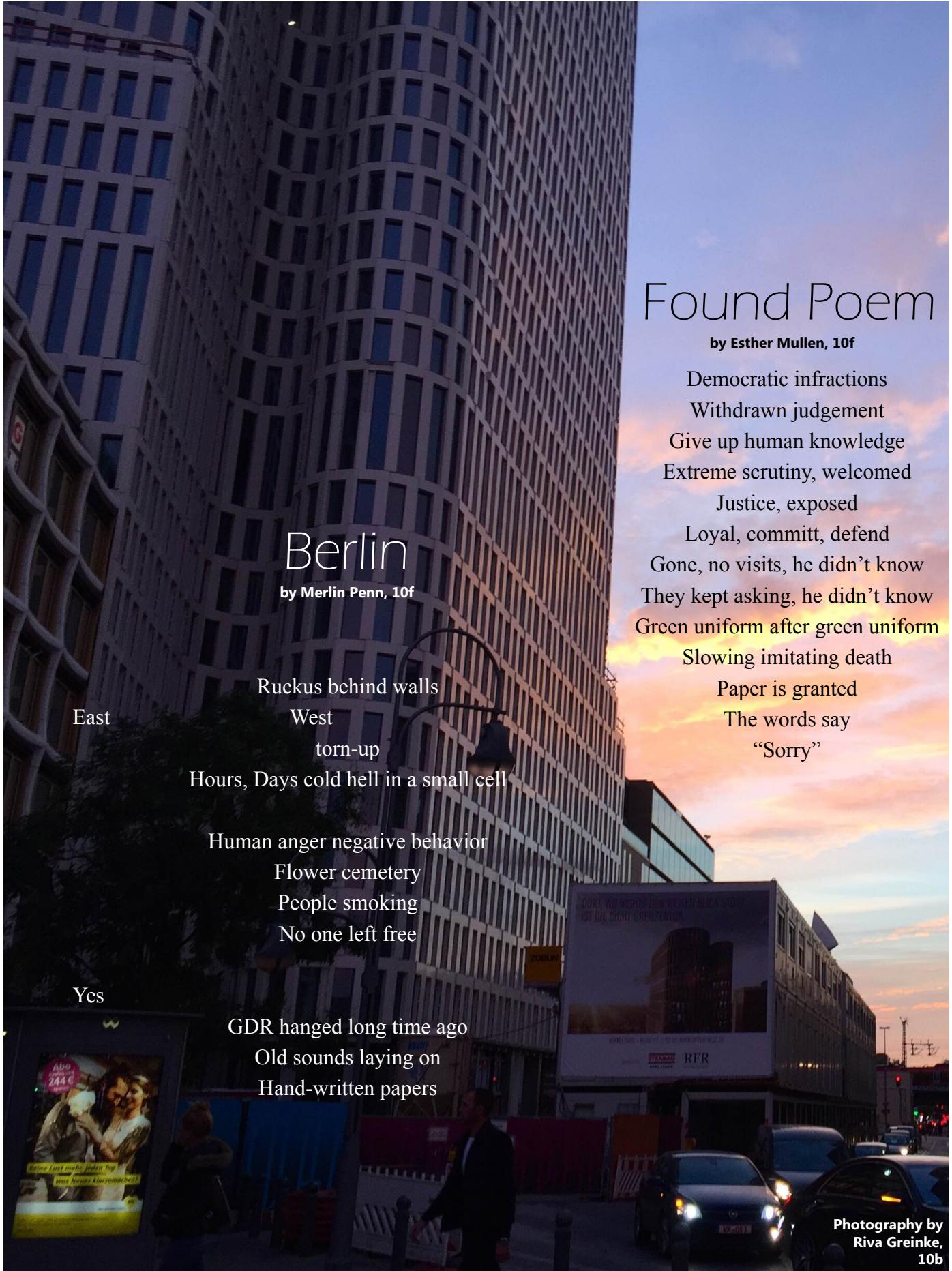
We must be able to look through the eyes of another in order to move forward, especially in a day and age where we are surrounded by so much strife and turmoil, and the political and social climates are reaching peaks and valleys they have seldom seen before. We must be open to sharing our love of creating with others; our ability to discover Truth - with a capital 'T'. The truth that is unending and infinite and stretches far beyond the reaches of the human handprint; the truth that resounds throughout the heavens and will continue to echo in the cave of obscurity for all of eternity if we do not seek it with our lantern.

As artists, we realize that the oil in our lamp will not last forever. We might travel far into the depths of the cave only to have our light go out before we can return to the earth and recount our adventures. By creating art, we venture further and further into the cave, and the more we create, the more we find others to appreciate our art, the more we allow ourselves to be reflected in the creations of others -the less difficult it becomes for us to come to terms with our mortality.

This issue of Haywire invites you to wander along the galaxy through time and space; through infinite and finite realms, until you feel you have found your center. Until you feel you have become grounded in yourself, in the world around you, and in your interactions with others, as peace is only possible through empathy and compassion.

Our focus is to inspire a dialogue using words and images. We invite you to shed your skin and take a mystical trip through the empire of thought until you arrive at your final destination, whatever that may be. Come, friends. Let us wander.

haywire |'hā,wīr|
adjective informal
erratic; out of control :
her imagination went haywire.
ORIGIN early 20th century (originally U.S.): from HAY + WIRE, from the use of hay-baling wire in makeshift repairs.



Berlin

by Merlin Penn, 10f

East

West

torn-up

Hours, Days cold hell in a small cell

Human anger negative behavior

Flower cemetery

People smoking

No one left free

Yes

GDR hanged long time ago

Old sounds laying on

Hand-written papers

Found Poem

by Esther Mullen, 10f

Democratic infractions

Withdrawn judgement

Give up human knowledge

Extreme scrutiny, welcomed

Justice, exposed

Loyal, committ, defend

Gone, no visits, he didn't know

They kept asking, he didn't know

Green uniform after green uniform

Slowing imitating death

Paper is granted

The words say

"Sorry"

UNTITLED

by Anonymous

Dear my beloved,
Did you imagine her to be any different?

Her laugh, as invigorating as the crashing waves,
And her smile, as calm as the night sky,
Almost seem like they don't belong to the same
entity

Did you expect,
Did you even suspect,
That a girl like her
Could be the girl to destroy your world?

“But how dare she
Betray the scripts of time?
And how dare she
Eat from this tree of mine?”

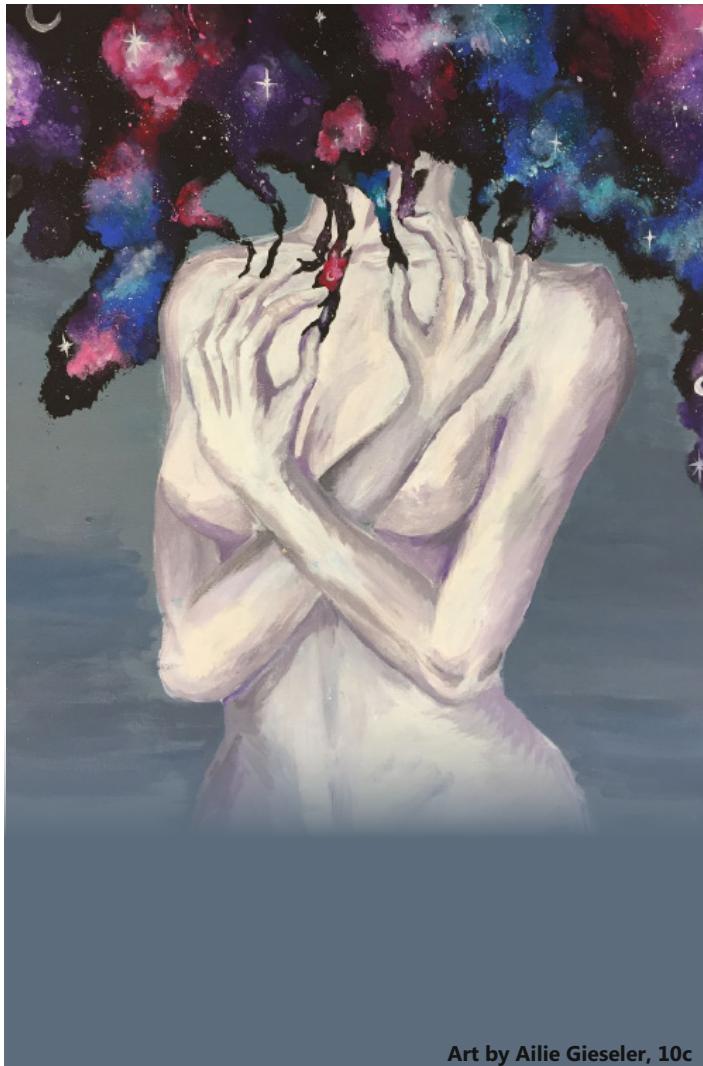
You ask

You think it's not a crime
To glorify yourself and then leave,
You say you gave her Time
And you think that's all she needs

Didn't you know?
Girls like her aren't made to wear
Bright rocks, pretty things,
To be trapped by clocks and antiquated kings

Oh, didn't you know?
Girls like her are made to tear down the burning
sun,
Built to corrupt the entire sky,
Created to flood the entire grounds

Did you really imagine her to be any different?
Because she is,
After all,
Yours



Art by Ailie Gieseler, 10c

Garden Party in the Dark

by Olivia Gallupová, 12d

As bandits twisting through the shade
The leaves meander 'bout the glade
Tornado swirling carousel
And childish laughter echoes still.
The crisp red shapes resemble eyes
Hot hellish beasts feast on their cries
Soft plasma fills the green with heat
As neon-orange dancers eat.
The leaves catch fire in the wind
Like festive New Years' explosions.
The choreography of ash,
Once in the air dissolves the bash,
Lies still and lets the silence ring,
Till phoenix rises up in Spring.

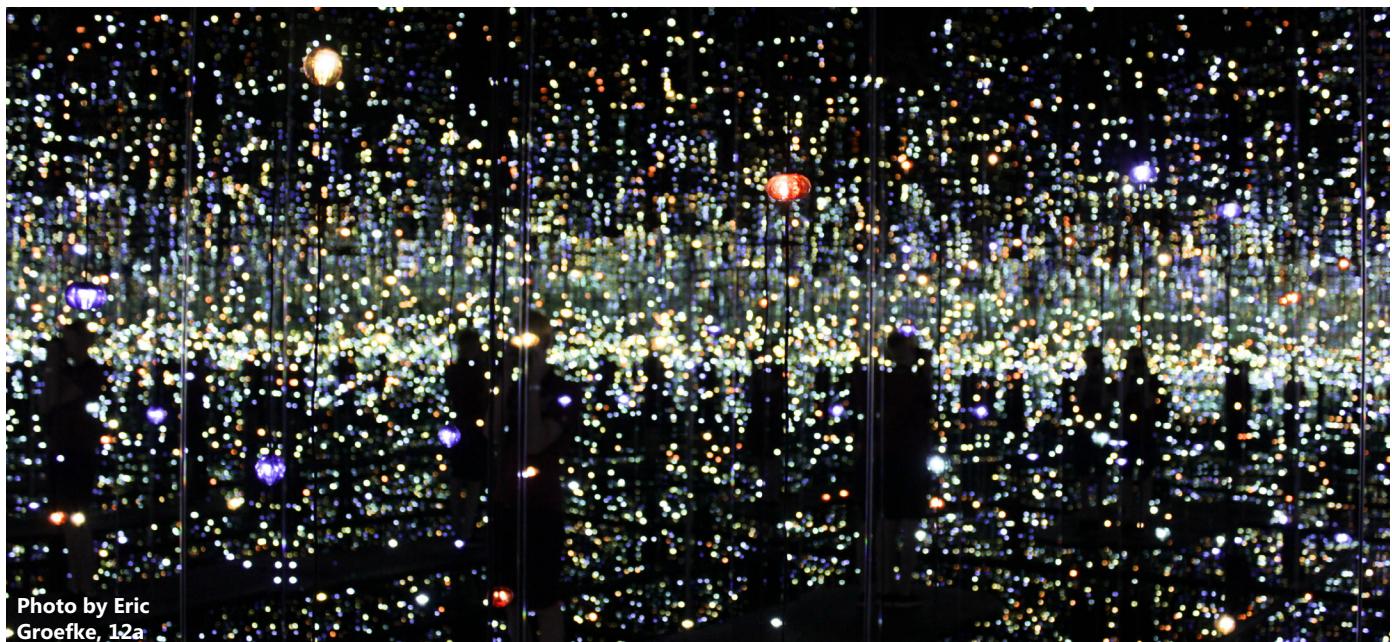


Photo by Eric Groefke, 12a

MJPA
by Anonymous

You left the room and
You are in the sky and
Your guts stayed on earth leaving
A vacuum in your belly
Churning.

You left the building and
You are below and
Your lungs remain attached
By a thread to your body
Heaving.

You enter the world and
You are floating above and
Your eyes stay in place
Tightly between your fingers
Catching Up.



Feuer

by Marie-Louise Bohl, 10d

Ein Feuer fängt an

zu brennen

In der Einsamkeit

Hat es dich gefunden

Ein Funken

zerstört alle Träume

Nichts endet

Und alles fängt an

Ein wilder Tanz

eine interessante Nacht

Beleuchtet von Fackeln

Umkreist von Wenden

Eine spannende Figur

die singt wie ein Vogel

Gekleidet in rot

Sieht sie sich um

Away

by Marie-Luise Bohl, 10d

Drinking hot chocolate
in the dark of night
sip by sip
memories sweep by

the cold of winter
the strangeness of
spring
the feeling that
autumn was made
to sing
the leaves dance

or lie dead on the
ground



Art by Ailie Gieseler, 10c

or fly back to the
top
in a loop of time
starting off with a
new color
for a new rhyme
from inside here
I see all out there
and I wonder
whatever happened
to being alive

so I sip my hot chocolate
and laugh at the rain
it doesn't matter
either way

With this Darkness
It does not Feel
Like I would ever see anything again anyway



Art by Joshua Harnisch-Diamond, 12a

Grunewald

by James Gromis, 8d

Pearling clear waters
Slowed and quickened
 By the gust of
 Cold autumn wind
 Binding the waves
To their earthy grave
 Gated by
 Great Leafy Trees
Dancing in the silver mirrors
 Of unruffled waters
 Throughout which
 Long spiraling barks
 Of mellow oaks
Crowned with yellow
 And green
 Stand uniform
In their earthly halls
Surrounded by the rare silence
 Of the city of Gray
Grown around it all

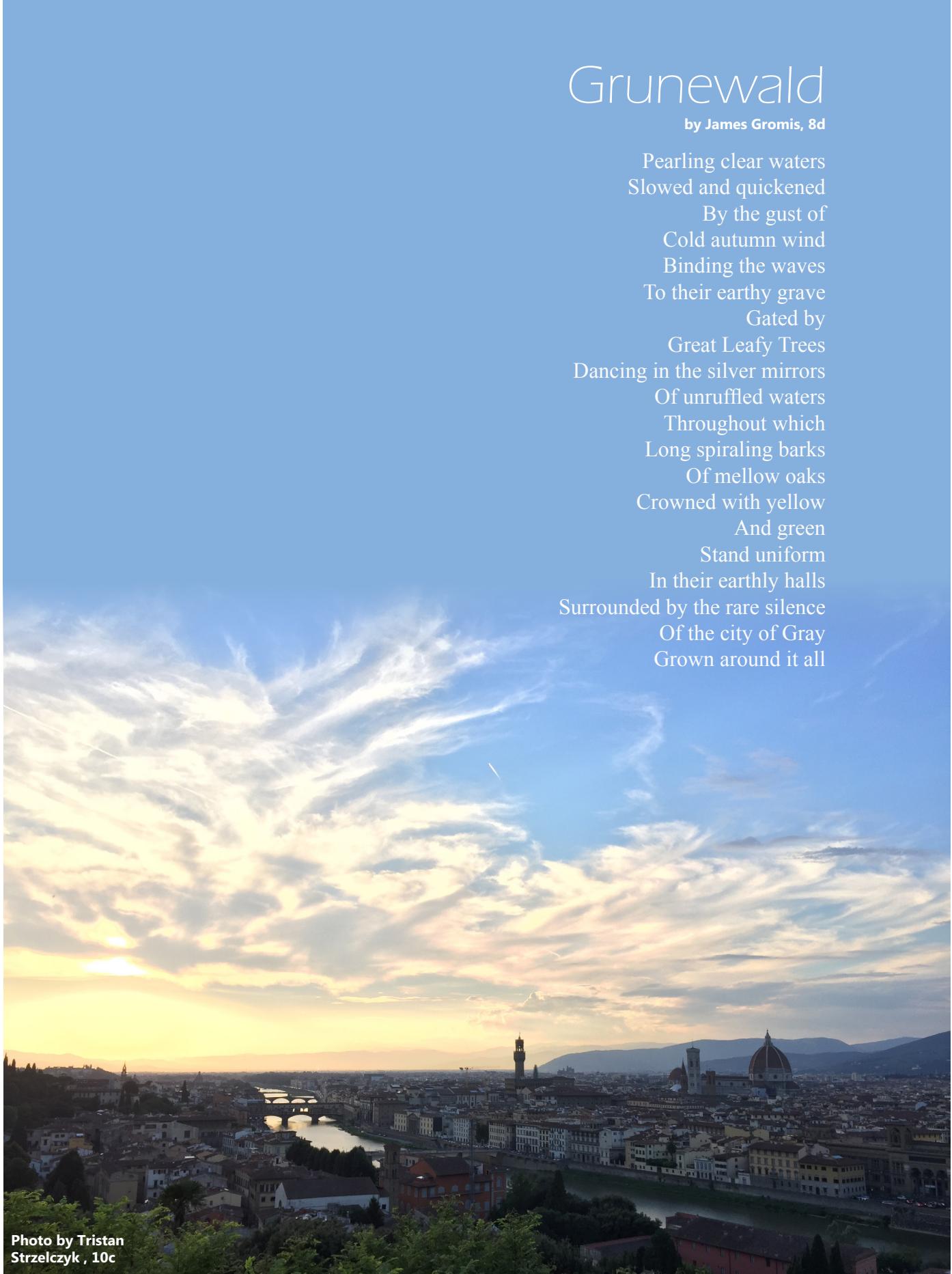
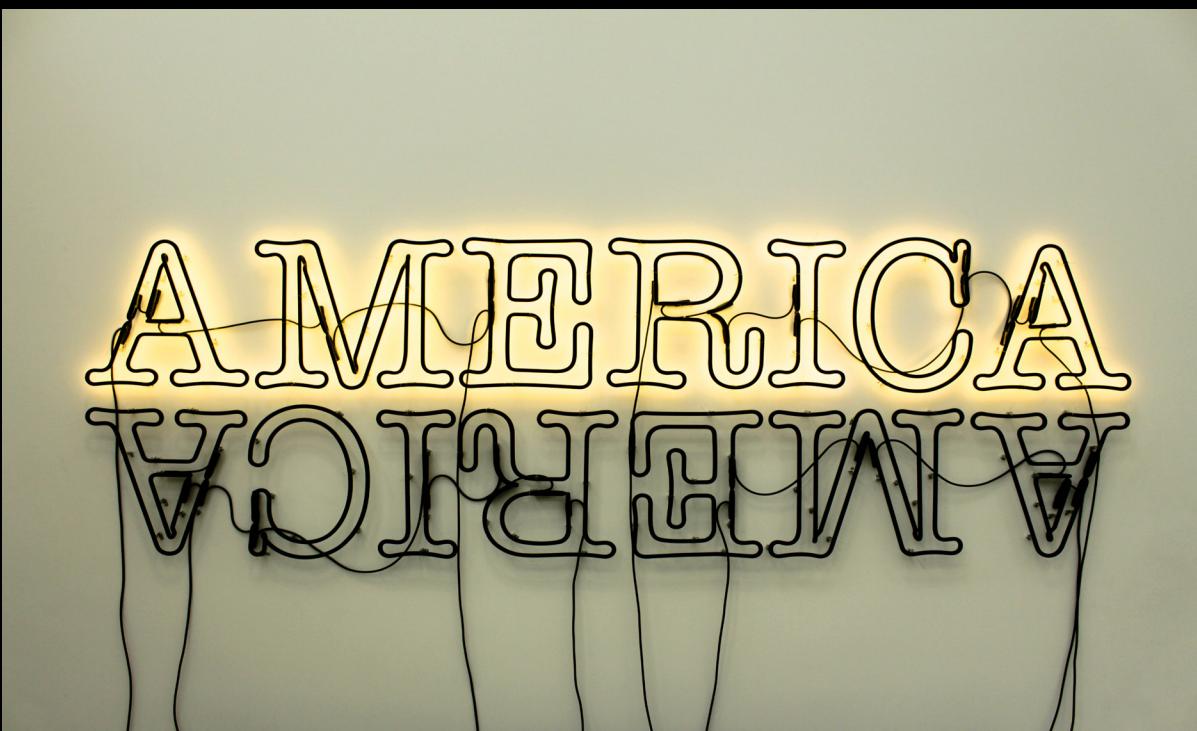


Photo by Tristan
Strzelczyk, 10c



Red State! Brown State?

by Emiliano Larriuz, 12d

First he went after the immigrants, and they cheered for him —
Because they were not immigrants.

Then he went after the Muslim faith, and they cheered for him

—
Because they feared the Muslim faith.

Then he assaulted the women, and they laughed it off —
Because it was just talk.

Then he came after them — and they were too busy vilifying.

Father Camosy, 2018



Photos by Eric Groefke, 12a

Of Winter and Fall

by Eli Goodman, 10e

I've never liked fall; it's not cold yet, but it
really isn't warm either, and for the longest time
I just demoted it to the most boring part of the
year, weather-wise.

For a while, newcomers bored me because of
this need for intensity; they had just joined us,
so it would be hard to see their personality.
They held back like an autumn chill too shy to
be winter quite yet.

But I guess if you see someone calm as fall, and
just decide to give up, then you'll never witness
the snow that's bound to come.

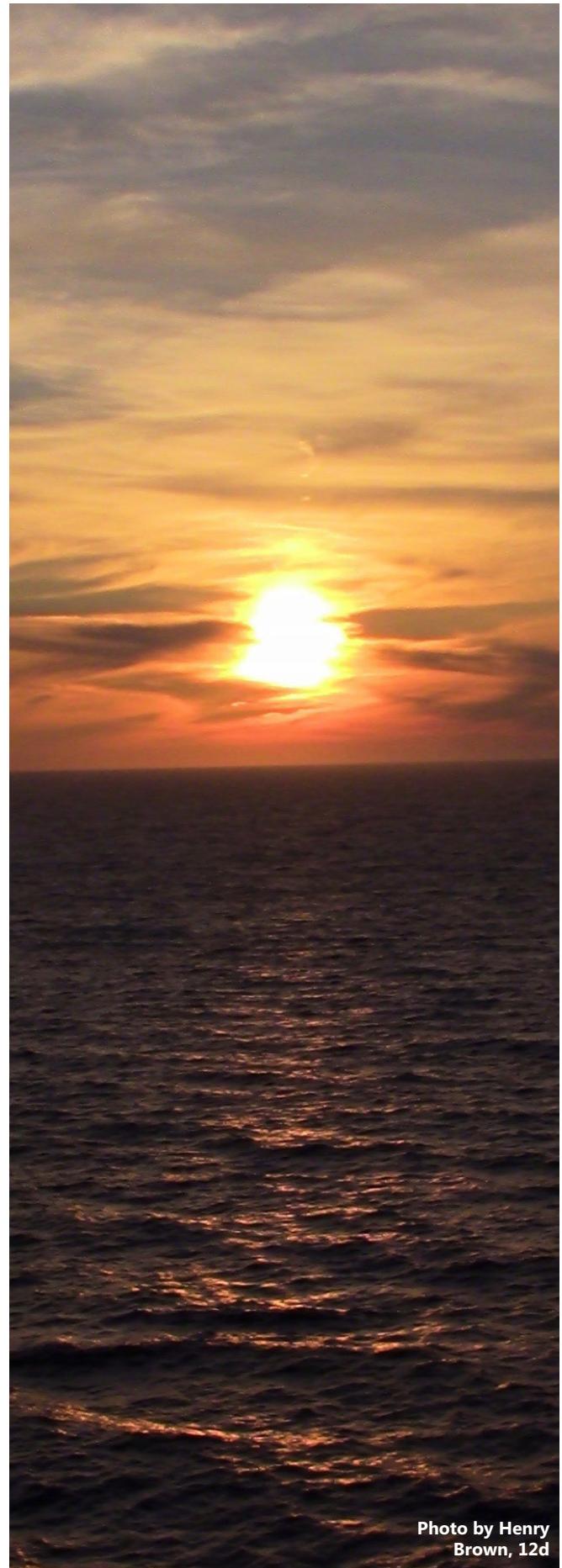


Photo by Henry Brown, 12d



Photo by
Finnegan
Wagner, 10d

Impending Darkness

by Henri Jackson, 10c

I sat watching the sun set, as I do every night. Tonight it took longer than expected. The sun seemed to have given me an additional moment to take action to prevent the impending darkness. I contemplated what I should do before the sun disappeared. What was there to do? One can't stop the sun from setting, I thought. It would be a waste of my time to try. So I sat there, helplessly watching the sun vanish. The only problem was that I was afraid of the dark.



Missing Things You Never Had

by Lydia Krifka-Dobes, 10a

Yesterday, I started missing a group of friends I never had. By a wonderful lake, surrounded by strangers, I began to picture my friends' faces, and wished they were here instead. But that would be awkward—because a lot my friends aren't friends with each other.

Now I'm thinking about all the times that I've missed something I never had in the first place and I wonder if got mixed up with nostalgia in my head. Now, where longing should be, nostalgia holds a place instead. So I'm sitting here — missing the perfect family I only actually had certain parts removed from — and I start

thinking I should go visit them sometime soon. Then my mind wanders off to faraway places and holidays I never went on; it tells me not to waste the beautiful places this earth has to offer.

My favorite place in the world is a home I haven't actually been in yet — but I saw it on Tumblr once. Once again, I miss the home I didn't grow up in. This isn't to say my family isn't wonderful and my friends don't make me laugh, and I do so appreciate the places I have been — sometimes I just feel nostalgic about things I haven't actually yet seen.



Photo by Kailey Sun Marcus, 12a

Ravens

by Eli Goodman, 10e

In a world where crows are as mighty and large as humans and have feathers that they can use as opposable thumbs, you find yourself smoking on your balcony when a rather old and hardened crow lands next to you. You wave your greeting and he answers “Oh hey mate, could you lend a crow a hand?”

He’s a smoker, you give him a cigarette and light it for him and watch as the smoke comes out of his mouth and curls around his beak. You’ve never smoked with a crow before, and honestly the surprise of him suddenly landing next to you has distracted you from making polite conversation, as you should be.

“Do you do this often?” you try, hoping he might have some nice stories.



“What? Oh, this? Yeah, I’ve been doing it for the last couple decades, it’s always nice to find a nice little conversation.”

“Wait, how long do crows live? I thought you guys didn’t live for much longer than 30 years.”

They seemed to never really mention the talking, flying, disproportionately large and intelligent birds in the sky in school; apparently there was some sort of trouble with them at

some time, you were really just confused as to why that made them so off limits as a conversation topic, or as conversation partners.

“Humans, you guys get me every time. Nah, I been alive for about... what was it 250 years? 300? I lose count. I’ve seen a lotta shit, kid.”

“Oh, sorry, I was just told that you lived a third as long as humans do. I mean, an old roommate of mine did Poe studies, so I thought I knew more about you than most people.”

“Now that’s a name I haven’t heard in awhile, Edgar Allan Poe. Nah, we all just screwed with that bastard, never respected him one bit. Thanks for the cig, kid”

And then he was gone. Did you offend him?

The Gallery Secret

by Oscar Brown, 8c

My older brother and I were invited, as part of a group of guests, to visit the Boros Collection, located in the center of Berlin. On December 22, 2016, as we strode up to this perfectly symmetrical building with its classic Italian architecture, we had no idea what was going to be lurking in the shadows behind that thick, heavy metal door.

Once we entered the first low-ceiling, confined room, I realized the interior was no

ordinary structure. A feeling of claustrophobia began to come over me. We were instructed never to stray from the group and, above all, to never enter any of the 180 rooms unsupervised. We drifted to the back of the group as we began to smell and hear peculiar things coming from partially closed doors as if the rooms were speaking to us. Compelled by our uncontrollable curiosity, we chose a room at random and entered. Without warning, all of

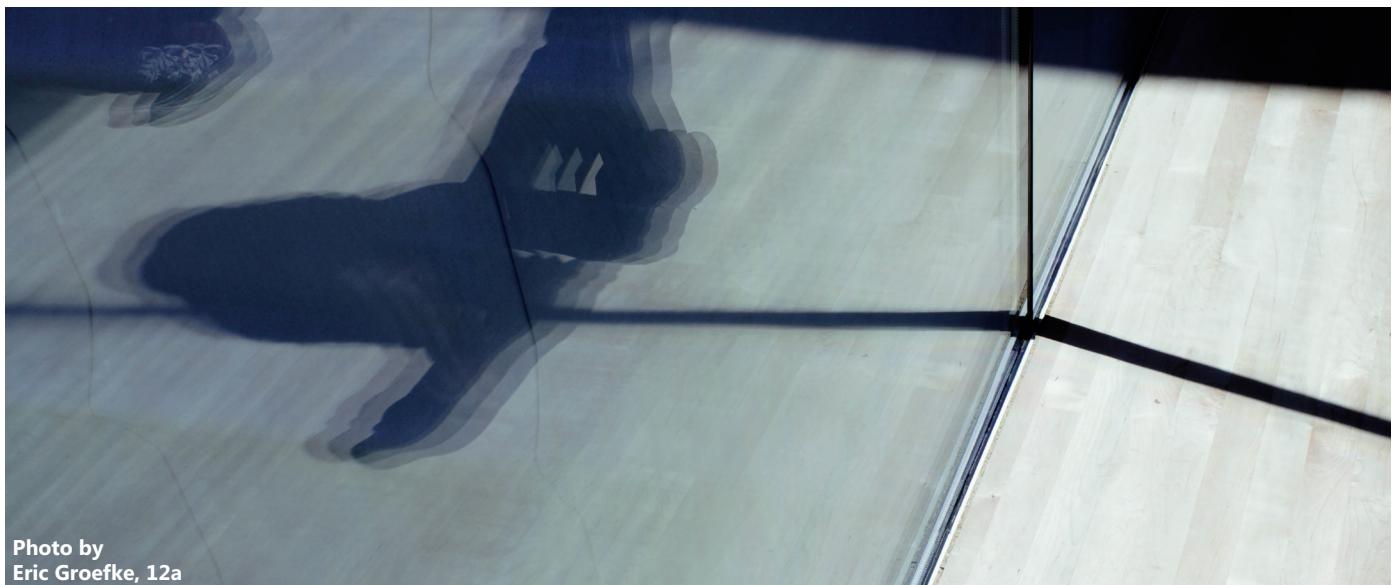


Photo by
Eric Groefke, 12a

the sounds from the group and the rooms behind us vanished. Slowly, we opened our eyes and saw something so unanticipated, we could not believe it. The room was filled with exotic fruits like bananas and kiwis stacked in high, large heaps. Each fruit looked positively edible until we picked one up and it turned to dust. We ran to the nearest of the four doors and stepped through.

We appeared to be back in the same hallway, but our group was nowhere to be found. The two of us heard heavy footsteps approaching, marching in time. We ducked behind a rack of coats just as ten armed soldiers wearing

red stars passed by us, pushing blindfolded and handcuffed prisoners along. The lead officer shouted in a harsh, commanding tone that sounded Russian. As more shouts followed, we narrowly managed to escape up a set of stairs.

Entering the first room, we found graffiti on every surface available and packed with people drinking cocktails, smoking, and dancing. There were flashing lights, loud techno music bouncing off of every wall, and smoky air so suffocating I felt as if I was going to pass out. My brother must have noticed my pale face as he grabbed my arm and pulled me into the next room.

To our horror, we were surrounded by partially decomposing bodies sprawled across the floor. A flag hung limply on the wall, covered in blood, and branded with the swastika symbol. The room was shaking from the explosion of bombs outside.

One of the bodies began to move, rising up on its hands and knees, holding a gun and a watch, slowly crawling towards us saying, in a heavy German accent, “Ze next bomb vill go off in 50 seconds und I vill not die alone!” We made the split-second decision to make a run for it when the man shot me in the thigh. He was reloading his gun just as my brother yanked me across the threshold.

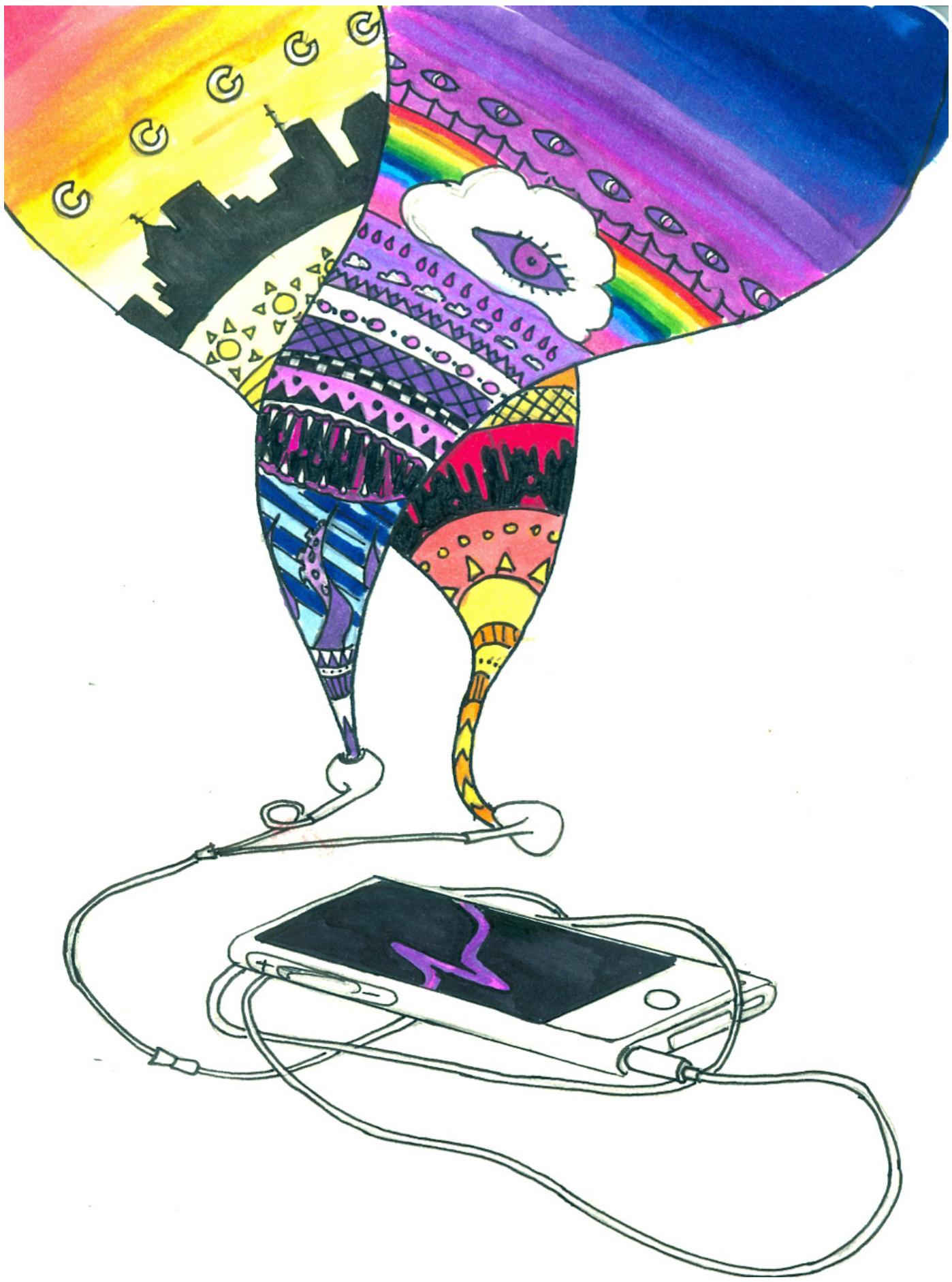
We scrambled up several more flights of stairs until we crashed into glass doors, shattering them. Looking up at us in shock from his large console with many monitors, was Christian Boros himself. “Welcome to the true exhibition,” he said, and all went black.

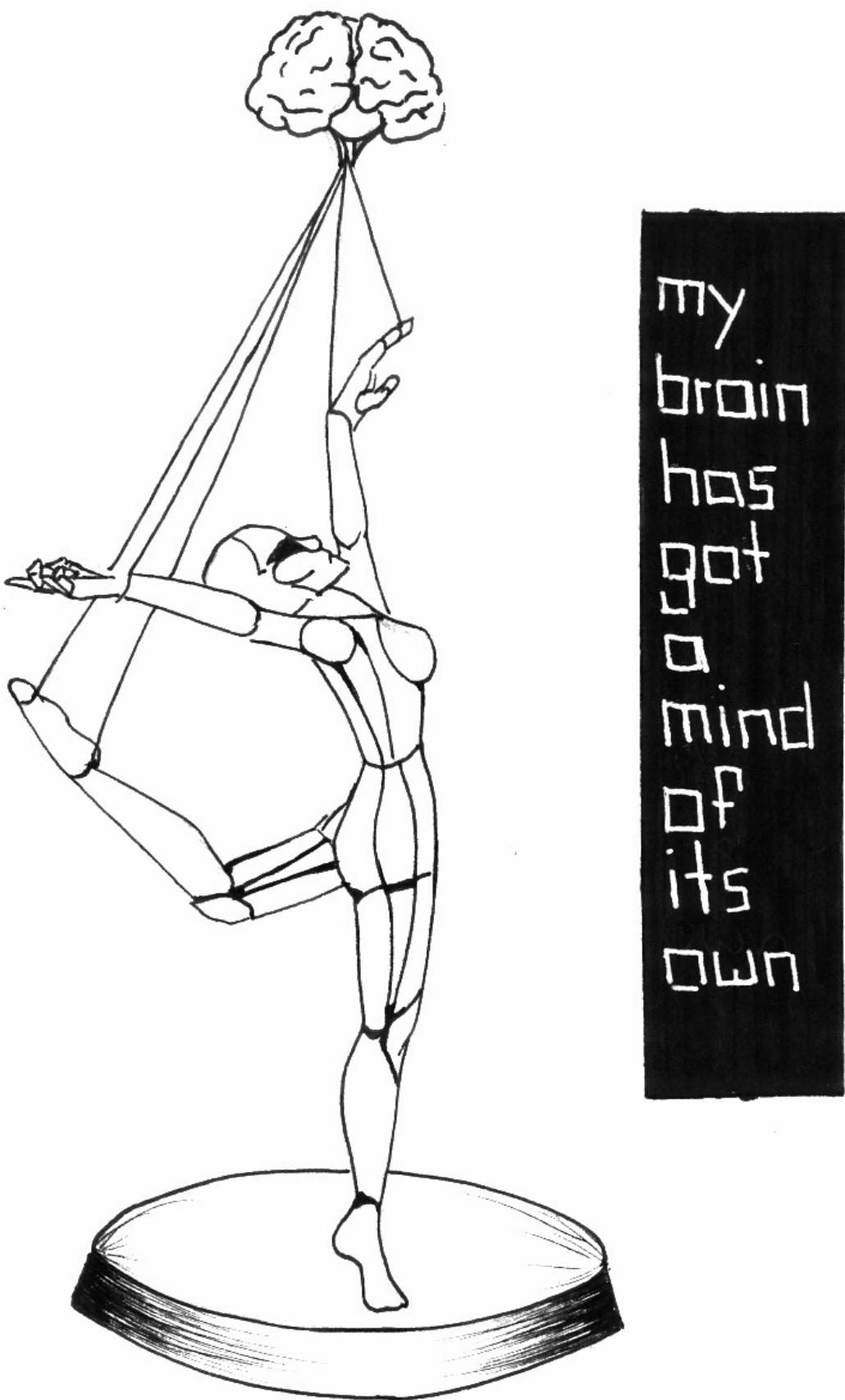
When we awoke we were back at the entrance. We could hear our group approaching from the end of the long hallway. Boros was holding us each by the collar. In a menacing tone, he whispered, “If you tell a single soul what happened here, I will see to it that you are put through this replay of the bunker’s dirty history again and again, while I watch you suffer”.

I have written this in the hopes that, if my brother and I should disappear, you will know where to find us.

Photo by Eric Groefke, 12a







The Sun Also Rises

by Zahavah Zinn-Kirchner, 11a

The cars crept down the street like ants, swerving and honking in traffic as thick and putrid as warm molasses. The supple maple leaves shone translucent in the autumn sunlight and wispy plant fibers waved to and fro, gaining momentum in the breeze until they collected into a silvery ball that tossed and turned.

The thin mist came to a halt at a street sign. The leaves ceased their rustling and the auto horns became mere bleeps in the distance.

It was a warm autumn day, thought Hilde Gruen, as she made her way down the marble steps of her Victorian home and onto the boulevard. Warm gusts raked up the dead leaves and the air smelled of cinnamon and a breath of Hilde's thyme. The aromas mixed together to form an herbal veneer of fall and pumpkins that seemed to douse everything in a golden, almost ethereal light that entered your soul and made you feel wholly well.

Hilde slowly ambled down the street, the Goethe passage she had read earlier running through her mind.

*Möchte dich begrüßen
dieweil sie sich so gern zur Sonne wendet.
Nur steht zur Zeit sie noch zurückgewiesen;
doch du erscheinst und sie ist gleich vollendet.*

*The sunflower, its head inclined toward the sun,
grows of its own accord,
but should you try to disturb it,
it will crumble.*

Like so many other good things that falter and die if you look too closely at them, thought Hilde, sighing mournfully.

She continued walking and slowly made her way towards the Einstein Café on the corner of Unter-den-Linden and Schadowstraße. She glanced over as a young couple passed her,

both of them chuckling, the man reaching out to place a hand on his wife's pregnant stomach. She remembered a time when that had been her and her late husband Johann Haus, a prominent author in the GDR, now dead for almost 15 years.

She passed a businessman with a cracked leather file holder. He looked weary and his suit tattered. A normal passerby might not even have noticed him, but Hilde had an almost uncanny ability to spot a particularly exhausted soul.

When she had arrived on the sidewalk just outside the café she took a moment to look up at its brownstone facade, which had been a comfort to her for so many years; it had helped her through the death of her husband, her sister, and her closest friends, almost like a living, breathing organism with comforting arms and a coffee and cream cheese bagel. She pulled the door open with spindly fingers and stepped into what felt like a warm embrace.

She emerged several minutes later with a peachy blush on her weathered cheeks, afternoon coffee and croissant (for today seemed like a special day) in hand, and made her way to a bench a few houses down. She sat down heavily, her hip especially painful today. Hilde's list of ailments was endless and she liked to carry them in her stride (as long as they didn't get too heavy), casually throwing them into any conversation, her head aches, joint pain, and runny nose all terrible. The insomnia was, however, by far the worst. Each night, she stayed up late reading, hoping to calm her restless mind, which was far more problematic than her physical state.

She placed her coffee down beside her on the worn wood and opened her afternoon newspaper. She took a bite out of the croissant; the flaky dough soon covered her lap like confetti.



Photo by Henri Jackson, 10c

Hilde turned the page to the Feuilleton section. She watched a man of about 25, give or take a year or two, cross the street; boyishly handsome with floppy, chocolate brown hair and rather lanky limbs. He wore a blue hooded sweatshirt with grey faded jeans, the way all the young people did nowadays. His white sneakers appeared almost fluorescent in the light of an approaching car, for it had begun to grow dark without her realizing it and the shoes gave off an eery glow.

The boy fidgeted with the strings of the sweatshirt, knotting and unknotting them again. As he drew nearer, Hilde could tell that he was quite an anxious person. He thrust his hands in his pockets and shivered, whistling a hoarse melody that sounded faintly like a Vivaldi con-

certo she used to love. He skipped a little bit and the motion looked awkward on someone of his stature. His long legs jutted out at strange angles and his bony arms created haunting shadows on the pavement. He came closer and closer still and shuddered just as he was to pass by the bench on which Hilde sat. He carried on whistling but proceeded at a considerably slower tempo, almost as if there was a point just in front of him that moved ever so slowly and into which he was afraid of running.

The bench on which Hilde had seated herself suddenly popped into his field of vision and he slouched his way over to a place next to Hilde, nearly displacing her coffee.

“You could have politely asked me to move my coffee and you know I would have been happy to do so,” Hilde said, looking over at the boy affectionately, though her eyes contained a touch of disdain.

“There’s enough space here. I don’t need to talk to you,” replied the boy, cramming his narrow frame into the corner of the bench farthest from Hilde. His leg jiggled nervously and his fingers tapped out a silent beat onto the rough wood.

“Now that’s no way to speak to an old woman, you know,” said Hilde scoldingly. She scooted over towards him. “And please don’t move your knee like that. It’s making me quite nervous. At my age, you know, I would feel fortunate to have ligaments that move with such freedom. But alas, I suppose the elderly do not deserve luxuries like that. It would really be too hard for the Lord to give us a break once in a while. Now please don’t mistake me for a devoted follower of Jesus or anything of the sort. I simply ask you to be a little more mindful.”

“Look, I know that you’re very old and that every movement pains you, but at my age I would like to think that I can do whatever I want, hopefully without disturbing too many old women who seek out city benches on which to philosophize.”

Hilde chuckled, patting her chalky hair. “How old are you boy? 24? 25? Were you raised in this city? Did you move here after high school looking for adventure? What’s the deal? What makes you think you have the right to speak to me in such a way?” Hilde nodded, encouragingly.

The boy eyed her wearily. He shifted his body in her general direction and opened and shut his mouth several times, like a fish out of water, all the while shaking his knee and knocking his knuckles against the bench. “I’m Xavier. Craemer. 23. From Brandenburg. I grew up in a big house with a big yard and rich parents. I studied math and hated it. I studied physics and hated it. I feel restless all the time. I drink a lot of coffee and I’m very jittery and I play the piano. I speak very quickly and I don’t really care about much. I went to the Berlin Zoo one night and I really liked it because I felt like the animals really understood me, you know. They were so wild in nature but then they were trapped in their cages and sometimes I feel that way about life. I don’t really know where I’m going. I mean that literally and figuratively. So yeah. That’s me.” Xavier breathed heavily, his lashes fluttering madly, like agitated butterflies. He looked down at his white sneakers and bit his lip, as if regretting spilling the information. “I’m sorry if that came off as rude but yeah so I should probably go soon.”

Hilde looked at him searchingly, as if it were the most normal thing to chat the night away with a complete stranger. “Didn’t you just say that you had no place to go? Well since you’ve been so kind as to tell me more about yourself than I had originally expected, I suppose it would be improper for me not to share some of my personal information also. Well, my name is Hilde Gruen. Born and raised in Berlin, during war times, if you’re curious. I am 82 and was married once, to Johann Haus. He was an author in—”

“Yes, in the GDR, I know,” interrupted Xavier, rolling his eyes. “Most famous works



Art by Zoë Matt-Williams. 12a

include Solomon’s Letters and Rashida the Undying Pilgrim.”

“You’re well-versed for someone your age,” Hilde replied, eyebrows raised. “I don’t think many people spend their early 20’s reading classics.”

“Oh please,” interjected Xavier, “I read his books when I was 14. I had read all of Shakespeare, Goethe, Dostoevsky and Schiller by 16, Tolstoy by 18, and Kafka by 20. Now I prefer philosophers. I like nihilism.”

Hilde smiled, a gesture that crinkled the wrinkled skin around her eyes. “Nihilism you say? Well you seem awfully concerned for someone who sees no point in anything and runs away from responsibility. I should like to think you’re more of an existentialist - someone who questions and confronts meaninglessness rather

than taking it on as a singular worldview.”

“Well, truth be told, I had never really thought about it that way,” he admitted, rubbing the back of his neck thoughtfully. “You see, I feel like I’ve spent my entire life being taught and “educated” but I’ve come to realize that I don’t really know anything.”

“Ah child, that is the beauty of life. Not knowing. Stumbling forward and trying to find a home. Trying to find comfort in confusion. These are all things that you will learn over time. I like what you said about the animals earlier - about them being wild at heart, yet not truly having the opportunity to be themselves, contained by borders put up by men to keep them in. A model of our own society. Perhaps there are little creatures out in space, watching us as we speak, and laughing about our trivial problems and ridiculous regulations.” Hilde sighed and looked at the cars steadily passing by in the dusky light. “Sometimes I wonder if we aren’t all just figments of someone’s imagination. Dreamed up by a creator - no, not necessarily a god - but a great spirit that lives insides all of us and makes us question.” She sipped on her cold coffee thoughtfully. The bitter grounds at the bottom made her purse her lips, her mouth leaving a burgundy stain on the side of the paper cup. “Take this cup for instance. Think about where it has been. Tell me.”

Xavier looked at her, surprised. He coughed once and shivered as the wind blew a cold gust along the boulevard. “Well, it’s been here, on this bench. In your hand. In the coffee shop, stacked on top of countless others. But I don’t suppose that that’s what you’re referring to?” He cocked his head at Hilde. She smiled affectionately, as a mother would when looking at a son.

“Indeed, it is not. Please continue. I am very interested to see where your train of thought leads us,” she said, readjusting her seating.

“Before it was a cup at a cup at a coffee shop it was in a factory, and before it was

pulp. And before that it was perhaps some kind of other cup or packaging and back and back and back - until we have arrived at a time long before packaging. At a time when there were prehistoric humans. And who knows what it was then. Maybe part of the soil, bacteria, a dinosaur fossil.”

“Aha!” Hilde exclaimed triumphantly. “At last we have arrived at the point at which I wanted us to. You have realized on your own, well perhaps with a bit of prodding on my part, that we are all made up of the same atoms. This coffee cup, this bench, the cobblestones on this street. We are all made up of atoms that continue on and on in an endless cycle. And I suppose that in that regard you are correct. Nothing really does matter. Race, religion, age, gender. We are all the same. But it depends on what we do with our inborn human potential that makes life worth living.”

Xavier was quiet for a beat, eyebrows furrowed, his hand to his chin, stoic. “But you see, the life that I have created, or rather, that has been created for me, is a life that is not full of the adventures and discoveries of self-worth. I live a life that requires a lot of hard work and little relaxation and time to ponder things like these.”

Hilde sighed, nodding, and tucked a loose strand of silvery hair behind her ear. “One has to find a balance. Of course one must work in life. How else can progress be made? How else could the “modern world” have come as far as it has today? The goal, I think, is to set up a life that you don’t feel you need to escape from. And before you get on my case about that being easier said than done - wait, and listen. In my long life, I have discovered something about life and death, and in its course, I have discovered something about myself. Because what are humans really, if not bottled embodiments of death? We live to die. What is the purpose of it all? Life is but a fraction of a second for the universe. One human life is worth nothing when looked at from a broader perspective. But if one takes

this approach to go through life, one becomes aimless; one might even call it nihilistic. It is important to find a balance between what seems real now and what is infinite. What is merely temporary and what is internal.

When I was a young girl, I used to panic whenever confronted by a situation that involved death. My brain would repeat the same phrase over and over. ‘When you die, everything that you ever were, or are now, will be irrelevant. Soon there will be no one who remembers you. What is one human body against so many others? What is one speck of dirt, which we will all be reduced to, in comparison to the infinity of the galaxy? Nothing. Worthless.’ But in truth, to us, while we ARE alive, while our hearts still beat, it is everything. We are our own, individual everything and discovering that should be a beautiful process. It has taken me too long to realize that the world will continue to function when I am dead. When I am forgotten. We are mortal, but we are made up of what is immortal. And that makes us infinite. We will cease to go on, but we will also continue.

Life itself proves the vulnerability of the human race. There is no point in fearing death. We fear it when we are alive, when we are dead we know not of it. The only ones we have to pity in its course are ourselves, and what is the sense in that?

Death is a mystical, magical thing. Feared and worshipped. Unknown and imperfect, yet obsolete. There is no escaping death, yet while we can run from it we do. We seek the path farthest from it, the fastest way out of the ever darker woods, as you may have it. Because what is life but a forest? You are born at dawn, the sun just rising, people just starting to walk on the path. As you grow older, the day progresses, people enter the forest and leave again.

And at dusk, you grow steadily weaker and weaker until at last, at nightfall, you lay down to sleep on the forest floor forever. Life is but a fragment of time, drifting in the wind.

Life is not about living the longest, having the most, or even giving the most. It is to live while we can, and help others do the same, which is what we are doing right here, right now. It is to take what is available and produce beauty from it. To discover one’s gift and give it away. To live with and for others. To allow a little selfishness, but to leave most of it be. We guard the planet from generation to generation and it is our duty to uphold its honor. To love and to cherish till death do us part.”

There was a long moment of silence. It seemed the world around Xavier changed had completely, yet stayed perfectly still. He couldn’t quite tell what was different, but he felt transformed as well.

He broke the silence, suddenly, sounding almost harsh. “And-,” he faltered, “do you think that it’s almost your time to lay down on the forest floor?” He blinked, unsure of what he had said.

Hilde smiled, sadly. “I do, child,” she replied, looking off at a point in the distance that Xavier could not see. “I do. But don’t worry about me. I have lived a good life. I raised a child, I had a loving husband, I read the greatest works of literature and I had the time to think about what really mattered. And I’m glad that I was able to pass some of the knowledge that I have acquired on to you, though I am not sure that it deserves to be labelled wisdom.”

The street on which they sat was now completely dark and the lamppost closest to them flickered slightly. A car would pass by ever so often and for a moment it would bathe Xavier and Hilde in a warm glow, so that they turned to stone angels in the night. They sat in silence and

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watched the night slowly tick by.

“As much as I would like to continue this chat, these old bones need a bed and a cup of hot milk. I think it’s my time to go home now and I hope that you find yours. Not an apartment, perhaps not even a house, but a place where your soul can retire,” yawned Hilde, after nearly an hour had passed.

“Here, please, let me take you home,” offered Xavier, warmly.

“Oh, don’t be ridiculous,” scoffed Hilde, buttoning up her suede coat and standing up. “I’ve managed this long without anyone’s help. I think I’ll be able to carry on for a little longer, don’t you?” She winked. “After everything that I have said, Xavier—”

He flew up off the bench, startled by the blunt sound of his own name. “Yes?”

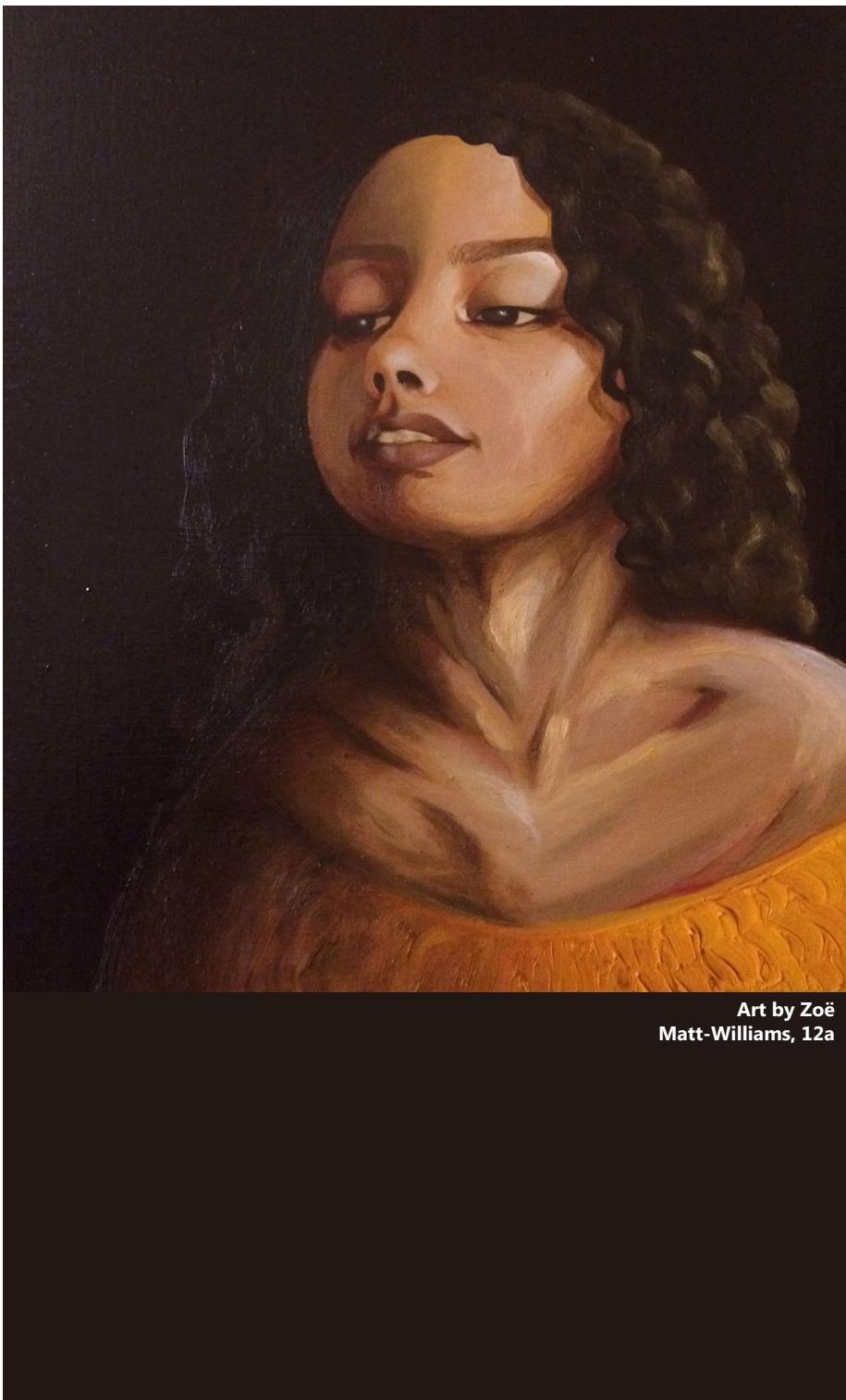
“Please remember that it is both a blessing and a curse to feel everything so very deeply. Don’t abuse the power that you have as an individual. You are a very special young man, and if you can open up to an old lady who is as batty as I, I suspect you can do so to other people in your life as well. I wish you the best of luck in all of your endeavors.”

And with that, Hilde turned and slowly made her way back down the now empty street toward the house that she had called a home for many, many years. Xavier was left

staring after her into the darkness that didn’t seem quite so dark anymore. He crossed the boulevard and walked towards whatever lay waiting.

And as the morning sun climbed up over the buildings,

cars began to creep down the street once again and the traffic soon became as putrid as warm molasses, and the world brightened a little with the rising sun.



Art by Zoë
Matt-Williams, 12a

with her eyebrows



and expectations raised

he killed the lights



and the mood

his vegetables and his
relationships



were strained

She accepted his hand



and her fate

She had a taste for
fashion



and trouble

her curls



and her credit card
bounced

The Corruption of Powerlessness

by Naomi Plitzko Scherer, 12d

While the responsibility of excessive, concentrated power can enable temptation and greed in decision making, our human conscience and the innate appreciation of justice can serve to prevent an abuse of this privilege. Powerlessness, on the other hand, invites desperation. We can annul any consideration for the well-being of others once our overpowering instinct for self-preservation takes hold. Few achieve true selflessness in their lifetimes, yet most hold the capability for occasional acts of altruism, but only so long as their own living situation permits. The corrupting influence of a complete lack of control or self-determination robs us of the ability to overcome our natural egocentrism, generally tempered by natural human benevolence.

World history and the current international political climate demonstrate the terrifying possibilities an excess of power in the wrong hands poses to global security and human dignity. Abuses of influence can carry devastating and unforeseen consequences. As a child in Germany, I was confronted with this reality early and regularly. However, I believe the corrupting nature of power finds expression only in the most susceptible and self-centered of humans, those who suffer from a distinct lack of empathy or regard for the betterment of the world.

Luckily, very few possess the capacity for purely self-serving action, even at the cost of the suffering of others - the ability to take advantage of the weakness and trust of those around them for their own benefit. The arguably innate beneficence of human nature - or at least the ines-

capable guilt and societal pressure that promotes kindness - prevents the generalization of this danger to the majority of the global population. As instinctively social creatures, humans are driven to the preservation and encouragement of others, especially of those within their family or community. To overcome this intrinsic motivation for humanness to further their own species, most must be faced with an immediate and alarming danger to their own existence. Apart from a threat to individual survival, this catalyzing factor for

the corruption of morality often comes in the form of perceived helplessness or desperation. In fact, poverty and helplessness have been shown to be the main roots of drug abuse, crime, gang activity, and even more disturbing phenomena like the string of self-immolation incidents in Tunisia (inspired in part through the neglect of basic human needs).

Human dignity (and, by extension, the desire to preserve the dignity of others) hinges on a basic sense of control over one's own situation. Complete powerlessness, therefore, dismantles the very foundation of our modern understanding of ethical action. The preservation of basic human rights - specifically, the right to self-determination and free self-expression - is paramount to the construction of a functioning society, able to benefit all its members. While we must strive to distribute power within our global community to those responsible enough to wield it with selfless purpose, the true danger of corruption lies in the misery and despair of those deprived of the most fundamental right to lead a self-determined life.

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Photography
by Antonia
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A Literary and Arts Magazine from the
John F. Kennedy High School
Teltower Damm 87-93
14167 Berlin, Germany



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Issue Nr. 8, Fall 2016 (publication date 18.1.2017)