

# PYRA 2019



# Pyra

---

International Community School Authors' Society  
2018-2019 Literary and Art Magazine

Editor:  
Michelle Janssen

Co-Assistant Editors:  
Alex Boyko  
Eric Shi

Editorial Staff:  
Madeleine Goertz  
Rachel Li  
Ellen Ma  
Rory McNerney  
Zain Merchant

Advisor:  
Lauren Jackson

Cover Art:  
Sigh Biology, Iziash Suklan, 9

# Table Of Contents

Thank You.....	Madeleine Goertz .....	4
Pyrrhic .....	Rachel Li.....	4
Snow.....	Ellen Ma .....	5
Through My Eyes.....	Aseela Galeeb .....	5
Unsurprisingly, I have failed my test .....	Anna Nguyen.....	6
first love: mother tongue .....	Adithi Raghavan.....	6
She Looked Up At The Moon .....	Keren Inger .....	7
Nuthatch .....	Jonah Synn.....	8
Burns Too Brights.....	Anonymous .....	9
McMurphy .....	Michelle Janssen.....	9
a peacock and chukar wed under a .....	Adithi Raghavan.....	10
Inferno Canto XIII.....	Trushaa Ramanan.....	11
What Hero Would You Be For a Day?....	Jack Li .....	11
Fusion World: The Champions .....	Maxwell Robertson .....	12
Love Poem #138 .....	Madeleine Goertz .....	14
Star Crossed.....	Rachel Li.....	15
my goofy god.....	Kaylee Allen.....	16
Diamonds in the Shadow .....	Mahit Prathikantum .....	16
Addiction .....	Michelle Janssen.....	17
HArRY POTTER and da charmer .....	Anonymous .....	18
Dogs .....	Mahit Prathikantum .....	20
Pencil Portrait.....	Jessica Laing .....	20
This Needs Its Own Museum .....	Iziash Suklan .....	21
Scientific Hypothesis .....	Pranav Gopalakrishnan ..	21
tap scroll refresh .....	Noa Avitan.....	22
Ophelia Sketch.....	Ella Yuen .....	23

Merciful God .....	Lauren Yates.....	24
Eunoia.....	Rachel Li.....	25
Kintsugi.....	Madeleine Goertz .....	25
Black-eyed Boy .....	Jasmine Herri .....	26
Hanging On.....	Rachel Li.....	27
The Great American Road Trip .....	Jack Li .....	28
Portrait.....	Nathania Lim .....	29
Ashes of Diamonds .....	Bhanu Atmakuri.....	29
Cando XII.....	Alex Boyko.....	30
Goodnight .....	Cora Madison .....	31
Music Girl .....	Ashwari Shende .....	31
The Shadow .....	Kaylee Allen.....	32
first heartbreak: a ghazal for angelica....	Adithi Raghavan.....	33
Sleep Paralysis .....	Amy Shrivastava .....	34
Dave is Unsatisfied .....	Ben Yu .....	36
Koi.....	Nathania Lim .....	37
Heroes Made in a Hurricane .....	Jasmine Zhen .....	38
The Path of the Everyday Vader.....	Rory McNerney .....	40
Satisfaction .....	Eric Shi .....	40
Betafish .....	Ellie Fu .....	41
The warmth of a conversation.....	Shalini Shrivastava.....	42
Double Black.....	Rachel Li.....	42
Mirror .....	Anonymous .....	43
Mariihime DTIYS .....	Ella Yuen .....	43
The Old Gods are Dead.....	Maya Bar .....	44

## Thank You

Madeleine Goertz, 10

*“So I have learned to shape the words “thank you” with my first breath each morning, my last breath each night.” – Sarah Kay, “The Paradox”*

So, what's your favorite word? Asking a logophile this seemingly simple question opens up a lot of doors, looking for that one perfect word – one that rolls nicely off your tongue, encapsulates that emotion succinctly, or just sounds sweet. Yet, in this crowded hallway of shiny diphthongs and unique etymologies and strange spellings, one word in particular comes to mind. A workhorse of our modern discourse, this word can be used both to placate and to please, yet, these two words mean so much more. I want to shout them from the rooftops when it's a beautiful sunny day, when laughter has robbed me of my breath, and when I'm left in awe of those around me. I find this phrase lurking everywhere: behind doors held open, on the foreheads of smiling strangers, in the arms of those I love. So – all you sesquipedalian specimens, fielding groomed linguistic racehorses capable only of beating others to artificial finish lines – step out of the limelight for a moment to appreciate the true workhorse, “Thank you.” I say it all the time, yet not nearly enough. Thank you, for eclectically eccentric people and frosty mornings and the smell of my city after it's rained and moments that make me feel truly alive. Thank you, for those I have loved, those I love, and those I am still learning to love. Thank you, for those moments of human connection that help build bridges between these islands. And yes, thank you for my love of all things loquacious, paradoxical as it may be. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

## Pyrrhic

Rachel Li, 10

The camellia petals tangled in his hair,  
Like sea-foam drifting through waves  
Upon waves of silver strands  
Tied back neatly by a red ribbon.

Tainted by the wrath of war,  
Trembling hands which  
Wielded a sharpened knife

Parted the ocean.



Snow

Ellen Ma, 10

## Through My Eyes

Aseela Galeeb, 7

Tall, snowy, purple mountains of confidence, towering over the lush green fields of happiness. Butterflies of pleasure, flying through the air. Wind of comfort, breezing through the flowers of sympathy, gently swaying the branches of knowledge. Rivers of curiosity, snaking through the land of satisfaction, with small fish of humor swimming in its waters. Suddenly, raging red wildfires of anger. Overwhelming grey storms of sadness. Life-threatening earthquakes of fear. Tsunamis of confusion, washing away beaches of comfort. Then, once more, deep blue oceans of calm. What is this? Life.

Unsurprisingly, I have failed my test.

Anna Nguyen, 9

Unsurprisingly, I have failed my test.  
My head fills with hopelessness, like a well.  
Bleary nights spent studying, I tried my best.  
School is a struggle, it seems like real hell.  
Thoughts cloud my mind, “I’m a worthless nothing.”  
Tears swim in my eyes, “I don’t belong here.”  
I gave it my all, trying everything.  
In front of me, my future disappears.  
My parents will find out about my grade.  
I cannot breathe, my hands begin to shake  
Dragging my feet home, I am very afraid.  
Clearly, I cannot erase my mistake  
But I turn on some music, I sing and sway  
And slowly all my worries fade away.

first love: mother tongue

Adithi Raghavan, 11

she held my tongue,  
melding it into undulating syllables  
with her maternal touch.  
a caress carried by the light wind,  
lifting the murmurs of a foreign land,  
frayed with torn words.  
she wove these threads into steady sentences,  
a rope anchoring me in this tempest of a sea.  
i harbored myself in the port of her familiar walls—an anchor.  
her warmth: reviving forgotten vestiges of a priori knowledge  
her tongue: a vine guiding me through ageless rivers and scarred  
mountains  
her voice: awakening the sun,  
drying my cries,  
its blooming light deepening my shadows as I parted with her sacred  
chambers.

# She Looked Up At The Moon

Keren Inger, 9

She looked up at the moon.

It was beautiful. But it was a different kind of beautiful.

Untouchable, unreachable. It was so far away, she could not reach it even if she wanted to. But she did not want to anymore.

Her eyes traveled elsewhere. She found herself looking at the stars. They were so bright. They sparkled in the inky black.

She understood now how cruel the world could be. Those tiny specs of light amongst a sea of inky black. She watched them as they danced and glittered, taunted her as she lay there on the ground. She looked to the sky around them. The dark and gloomy inky black. It called to her. She didn't listen.

She closed her eyes.

The first thing she felt was the sand. It was soft on her aching palms. They were swollen and bruised and the sand was cool and soft. She moved her fingers. She felt the liquid sand gliding down her hands and onto the ground beneath her.

The second thing she felt was the wind. It twirled around the sky; it tickled her face. She shivered under the cold night air, but she had never felt so warm.

In the distance she heard the crashing of waves. They had traveled a long way. She welcomed them with a hug. She heard them as they crashed against the shore and then disappeared without a trace into the sand.

She heard the whistling of the trees. The delicate leaves rustled against the night sky. She pictured the life the trees provided for. The birds that seek shelter in the wooden branches. Those same birds that sang cheerful melodies every morning. She loved them now with all her heart. She wanted so desperately for them to sing for her, but it was too late.

Hot tears spilled down her cheeks. Why did she hate everything she now loved? Why did she view the world in black and white, when it was now so full of color?

She opened her eyes and more tears came. It was so violent, how beautiful it all was. The world sparkled under her gaze.

She had been so focused all her life in finding ugliness in the world surrounding, on finding everything wrong with her home, on finding nothing but darkness.

And now of all times, she didn't want to leave.

All her life she was prepared for this moment, a lonely and pathetic endeavor. And now she was not ready just yet. Her heart pounded loudly in her chest. Her ears were consumed with it. She could not hear anything else.

She tried to breathe but it wouldn't stop, she tried to breathe but nothing would stop, she tried to breathe but it all came so fast and spiraling towards her and she couldn't breathe anymore, and her eyes were covered in tears and they were spilling down her cheeks and she couldn't breathe and why couldn't she breathe?

It was all so beautiful. The sand was beautiful. The wind was beautiful. The sea was beautiful. The trees were beautiful.

Her aching figure was begging for release, but her head was begging for a second chance. She must have been there for hours, begging and begging and begging. But nobody came. Nobody knew she was there. It was fitting, for a girl like her. To be alone next to the sea.

But she didn't want to leave.

She didn't want



Nuthatch

Jonah Synn, 6

## Burns Too Bright

Anonymous

Yearning for love, the sun stands alone  
Her intolerable scorch, burns to bone  
Others are constantly circling around  
But the unbearable heat keeps her bound

Until she spotted a slivering ray  
A dull little star, speckled with grey  
He seems so lonely, so trivial and small  
His name is the moon, bringer of nightfall

Her gaze transfixed, and her curiosity rose  
Then they locked eyes and she instantly froze  
She fell at once, into a deep romance  
He quelled her fire with a single glance

Miles away, across the star-flecked sea  
Her heart pulses swift, finally free  
But the moon sadly weeps, pushing them apart  
For how her fire be with his spark?

## McMurphy

Michelle Janssen, 11

Curls on his head burns the brightest of red  
Bloody scars across his face, hands, and arms  
Callused palms and fingers from toiling under the scorching sun  
Face ruddy from genuine mirth  
While flashing a gambler's grin  
Choleric leader of his gang of lunatic lost boys  
Clever like a fox and chatty like a cuckoo  
Lover of winning, women and whistling while he works  
The pyrrhic cardsharp victor of an impossible war  
Where the black spade's authority outranked the crimson heart's  
But a king always beats queen  
They stole his breath, but his laughter remains

## a peacock and chukar wed under a banyan tree Adithi Raghavan, 11

i was born in a slaughterhouse.  
one limb:

bent  
towards the bleeding Euphrates

the other:  
severed  
by Kailash's chakra

A still-born. who had already tasted Azrael's breath.  
—ah yes

my breath: reeking of innocent lambs.  
my curls: seasoned with the blood from shattered coconuts—brown shell casings.  
my feet: drying in leather slip-hairs.  
my nails: festering charred remains of war-turned graves.  
my hands: plunged into Yama's father—burnt.

myself:  
A cannibal.  
eating at my own half-chewed reflection.

i see two.  
not one.

A hybridized animal.  
half Halal  
half Nandi

A tug-of-war.  
between the last names of a Mughal and Pandya,  
embroiled in a Romeo and Juliet fantasy,  
hidden by the shadows of a Banyan tree.

to amma and baba,  
to the peacock and chukar who wed under a Banyan tree,  
to their lovechild,  
me.



Inferno Canto XIII

Trushaa Ramanan, 10

## What Hero Would You Be For a Day?

Jack Li, 12

The universe of *One Punch Man* contains flying telekinetic wonder-girls and heroes powerful enough to level skyscrapers. The series' titular hero is so powerful that despite all the challenges he faces, super-mutants and galactic space-conquerors alike, he's consistently bored, always obliterating his opponents with a single punch. Why then, given all that, would I become Mumen Rider?

A C-Class hero, Mumen Rider is relatively bottom-barrel. His special moves, 'Justice-Tackle' and 'Bike-Crash', are punchlines against top-tier attacks like 'Super-Spiral-Incineration-Cannon(!).' His limits are also literally self-admitted: he rejects an offer to move up a hero-class, understanding he wouldn't be able to handle the challenge. Regardless, however, he's Rank-5 in the universe's popularity polls — the public love him. Where the extraordinary S-Class heroes are cold, arrogant, almost incomparable to everyday people, it's specifically Rider's humility, his relatability, that make him so adored. The only superpower he possesses is his extreme sense of duty and justice; he's the hero I can be for real, mortal and afraid, yet still tirelessly trying to make a difference each day.

His struggle is universal and one that I feel myself, the fear of smallness and insignificance before a cruel, random universe full of powerful external puppeteers. In the face of this, Mumen Rider's determined, defiant response is what makes him my true, chosen hero. Devastatingly thrashed by a monster he cannot possibly win against, Rider, buying time for others, screams "It doesn't matter if it's hopeless or not! I have to fight you here and now!"

## Fusion Worlds excerpt: The Champion's Oblivion

Maxwell Robertson, 10

"Gah, this is ridiculous, if they wanted a show of force, a cruiser would be enough, but they brought a battleship!? And a Chalosinero no less!" Major General Oswald Krell roared, throwing the magnifying goggles across the room, almost hitting his secretary in the eye.

"Now sir, I know this is most definitely problematic, but at this of all times, it's important to think rationally; the council is telling you to call this whole thing off."

Krell looked at the petite man with mildly angered confusion before declaring politely, "Like hell I will," and turning back around to his desk.

Krell's secretary sighed, sliding through the doorway and closing it gently behind him, careful not to announce his departure, and slumped on the wall.

Things were getting out of hand, and the man they needed most, their guiding light, refused to listen to orders. Sure, surrendering to the pirates wasn't good, but there wasn't anything to do. Signals were jammed, and there was no way the armies would prevail, definitely not up against a battleship.

Content with calming down a bit, secretary Hastall departed, to seek the wisdom of the Council once more.

The skies began to fill with thick dark clouds, obscuring the visibility of the land, and partially blotting out the sun. Regional solar generators wheezed, as they slowed down and died. The deserts were torn apart by winds, and the forests mere miles away stood still, with not even a sign of a breeze.

Such things had come to be expected on the colony of Allenirus; the people had learned to adapt. Evidently, however, the pirates did not. Landing craft soared down on inadequate wings, made up at least mostly by wireframe and riveted sheet metal. Their ships were tossed around in the wind like a ball in the hands of a child. When the ships finally landed, if they did at all, they were barely filled, 5 soldiers per at most, but what they did have were tanks, tanks in abundance and in variety.

Allenirus had been a colony under the jurisdiction of the Last Armada; certain, under their strength, of safety but now that pirates had entered the system, they couldn't even communicate with their moon, let

alone the local hub planet. Of course, the lack of communication would no doubt be noticed, but that could take months or even years before anyone came; time they were unlikely to survive through. Resultant of these problems, uncertainty and even distrust began to take root.

Unbeknownst, however, to any of the colonialists help was much closer than they could possibly imagine:

“\*20 mark out and 3 degrees to waypoint 32\*” announced the mildly tempered voice of the bridge AI Serathodie.

“Right!” Responded Rear Admiral Eldervoic, swiveling his PA and announcing, “Crew division C to deck, all weapons on prime.” After 6 hours locked up in GeForce gear, the admiral’s arms had started to freeze up. Every time he tried to move, his arms mildly considered his movements before falling limp again, though this was still a minor inconvenience to him, one that would not continue for much longer. His arm slid groggily along his arm rest before settling on a keypad. In an instant, it jolted up and smashed back down onto the purple button. A pulsar-type siren pierced their ears, but barely for a moment, as a melodic tone phased in.

A single microphone jutted cleanly out of the left rest, egging him on... He coughed... “Purple alert all decks,” Eldervoic declared “mark in three... two, one, exiting!” The entire ship seemed to shudder as the bubble around it morphed into the emptiness of space. After hours in a restrictive brace, it began to fold back as his limbs came back to life. Once again full of energy, Eldervoic returned to his usual excited mood which had earned him his reputation, whipping back onto his feet.

Clapping his hands, he whispered “Alright.” Eldervoic pivoted and pointed to an officer to his right “Report ensign!”

Several others on the bridge looked away and rolled their eyes, but this particular ensign had gotten used to it; after all, being under him for as long as he had been was bound to have an effect. “This is the most likely location, sir. There’s no way they made it any farther on that engine” the ensign responded.

“Good!” cheered the admiral, before his tone noticeably darkened, “There’s no way they’re getting away from me a second time.”

Love Poem #138  
Madeleine Goertz, 10

I will part the curtains  
even though I know you love to curl up in the dark.

I will drive long into the night with you  
down, around, and through the places  
we've shaped in our minds for so long.  
You can drive,  
as long as I am navigating.

I will pun when no jokes should be cracked,  
yet you'll keep the fissures from forming.

There will be detours along lonely streets  
and winding side roads that seem to not unfurl,  
but we will never run out of roads to travel.

My slippers under the table,  
used tea bags in empty mugs,  
paper cranes perched on desk corners, about to take flight.

My tongues twist in linguistic tangles,  
speaking for one another, overlapping, until I unconsciously utter  
*Want to walk down that Steg?*  
Yet you always *lächel*,  
pointing out the coot gliding past the railing of the footbridge.

I see the spectacles through my two circles.  
You'll remind me to wipe off the smudges.

I'm quick to classify by only the petals,  
but together we will unbury the roots.

I prowl used bookstores with my nose to the spines,  
but you'll pull me back to take in the entire shelf.

I will part the curtains  
with my small, yet calloused hands.  
You will ask me *Is it time yet?* and I will nod,  
interlocking your fingers in mine.

(after Sarah Kay)



Star Crossed

Rachel Li, 10

my goofy god  
Kaylee Allen, 9

my god forgets to do her math homework  
    my god's eyes bulge out when she realizes the homework  
    my god scampers to finish homework on the bus

my god screams into her pillow when she gets a bad grade  
    my god laughs when she made silly mistakes  
        my god screams at group-mates who don't do work

my god loses her temper at her brother when he whines,  
    she rolls her eyes at her mom,  
        my god slacks on her chores—too lazy to get up

but my god fills the empty void,  
    with laughter.  
    my god cheers everyone up

my god helps her classmate with school work,  
    my god seeks help from her classmates  
        my god loves to learn new things

my god,  
    well,  
        she's a goofy god.

(After Sheena Reza Faisal)

Diamonds in the Shadow  
Mahit Prathikantum, 6

Africa, a beauty and a shame  
Fiends, money and greed  
Red as blood with the souls of many  
It is the guilt and problem of the damaged  
Come here and sell it  
America will pay you for your greed



Automatic Drawing

Michelle Janssen, 11

# HARRY POTTER and da charmer of houses

Anonymous

## **CHATPER 1: MR.DIRTLY WAS A VERY AVRAGE FATHJER**

M.R dirtly and Mrs.dirtly were very avrage peps, no sur e. they had one sun named dudelay dirtly and he was a bad man. They one dad went home and Mr.dirtly saw a cat he didnt like. He said “begon you feline.” but the cat woundlt buge. So he and he family went inside to play some fortnite. “If u tak care of this kid hagrid for 11 days, you get 20039 clasch of clan gemn.” mr dirtly kep hagridpot in his house for twenty hours when an email arived on his macbook pro from the email [dumbdumbi1990@gmail.com](mailto:dumbdumbi1990@gmail.com). hagrid then meet roberts and they stole mr westalslkyl’s car and felw to zebramoles.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE AWAKENING OF HOBErts**

Hagrid missed the football game  
To be contined in chapter 34

## **CHAPTER 3: HAGRID BECOMES A MEMBER OF GARFIELD.**

Remember that cat from **CHAPTER 1: MR.DIRTLY WAS A VERY AVRAGE FATHJER**, well that was profe Mohogany from Garfield house. She can transform into a fat cat that loves lagansa. Well hagrid put a head on his hat and it told him to go eat some Doritos so he said “Yay im aa garfield.” BUT! sorting hat put Hagrid in slither, and hagrid was now in garfi. cranberry cow

## **CHAPTER 3.5: HAGRID FINDS HUCKLEBACK JOE BEING EATEN BY A GHOST**

When Profer.Snaggles let a troll into the computer lab, hagrid realized taht something might be sliglty wrong. “Oh No.” Hagrid exclamed “The troll is messing with Huckleback Joe’s my space page.” Hagrid slither into the humans bathroom where he saw Huckleback Joe being eaten by the friendly ghost. “Huckleback Joe!” he screamed and ponted his wond at it screaming “expugalimugas.” Huckleback Joeflew so far Huckblackjoe flew into the inviting deserrtt.

## **CHAPTER 4: HAGRID GETS A BROOM**

Life is good, Hogarth got his favorite profesr Snaggle, and he made a coupe of putions. But then snapple realized that Hogarth was not indeed a student, and kicked himk outt. Hogarth was Angry. “Why!” he screamed, bu this broom hit Snag and hagrid

## **CHAPTER 4.5: HAGRID DELETes HOGRATH FROM EXISTANCE:**

Ah, sipp. Hagrid enjoys a good Sip of butter. However, Something is Wrong!!! there was no butter.. Angry! Very. Hubert yelledf, “Hagrid!

CLAM down!” Hagrid grabbed a tree and threw it at hobarth

## **CHPATER 5: HAGRID FAILS HIS TESTS.**

While hagrid was taking his spanish final, voldemort used an astral projecting to hit hagrid in the left thigh. Hagrid almost died, but he only passed out. Sadly he got a 0%.

## **CHAPTER 6: THE MAGITICANS ROCK GETS THEIVED BY HAGRID**

profeclash He ran down the stairs, he grew his third leg because prophecy Hagrid steal. He jumped out the roof and scaled the clouds. He then grew twenty arms and grabed a cloud which he milked for cloud juce. He drank the cloud juce and then he teleported to the magiticans rock, but it wasn't there. Turns out voldemort was back.

## **CHAPTER 9: HOGRATH GETS SCAMMED BY PROFER CLASH OF CLANS**

Hograth was rich, or so he thought. When he was two days old he got his first computer and participated in an online scam. He thought he was getting free gems but actually he was giving up his credit card number. Profer Clash of Clans got the wealsyds one gallon and he was happy. But he got sue and he got jail

## **CHAPTER 10: HAGRID DISCOVERS A ONE HEAD CAT**

Hegrid escaped! “Hagrid! whatMAhogony says are You doing outside class!” “negative 2 points do grarfileld!” Hagrid was devasteated. Drugo had duped him once again and little did profrise mahogany know but Drugo had stole his Fortnite Credentials.but drugo found him in the library. Unfortunate:ly, Hargidhad arthridtis in his left hip so he could not get out. He opened up to see fat hagrid. “”Akrabrkadra!” screamed hagrid and drugo was now no more. But then drugo screamed “philosophy” and It! Appeared! The one heead cat. unfortunately it was already dead so hubert roasted it for dinner.

## **CHAPTER 11: HUCKLEBACKJOE FINDS ZEBRAMAW:**

humpback whale was still stuck in desert. SO she summoned pool and flew away, the end.

## **CHAPTER 13: PROFESSOR SQRITTLE HAS A MAN IN HIS HEAD.**

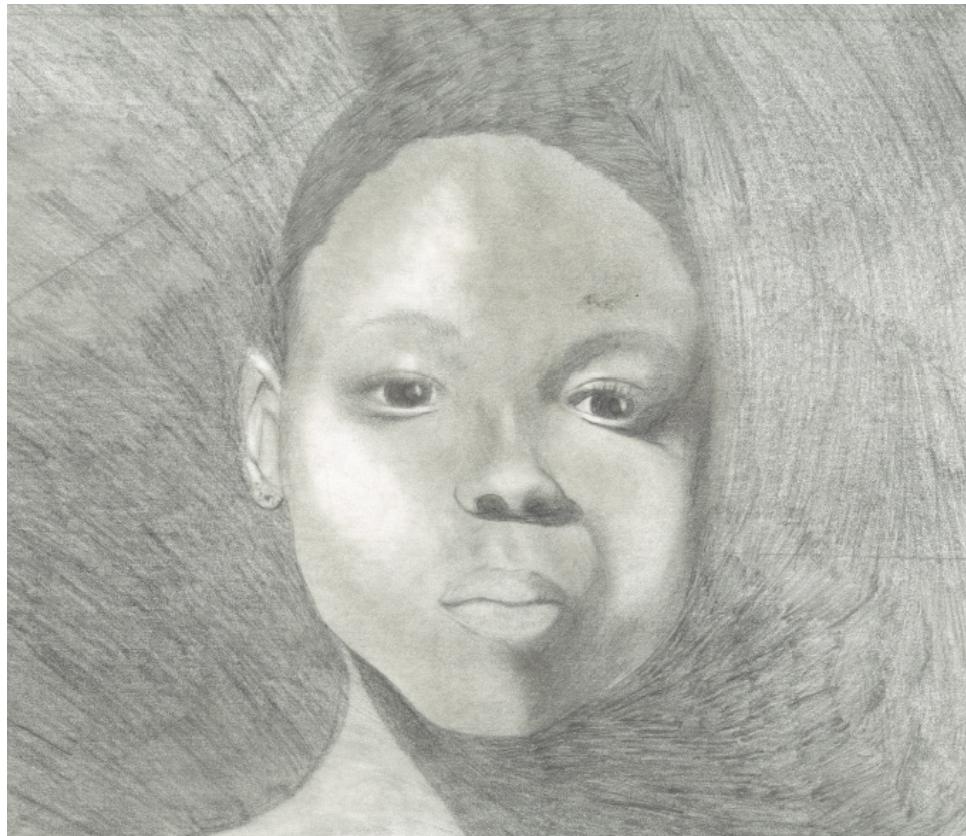
Hagrid didnt think much of his new DnD teacher Squirtle. Squirtle smelled like onions. THen one day hagrid found out that voldemonrt was actually attached to his head, He got Stopped. Every body liked hagrid after that a drugo even gave him back his fortnie.

## Dogs

Mahit Prathikantum, 6

Woof! There in the back yard,  
The ball crying in his mouth all covered in saliva.  
The ball, flying and speeding, falls in a puddle  
I think to myself that delightful dog loves me.

He runs and gets the ball.  
All covered in mud, like father like son.  
That dirty dog I say  
That dog, delightful and loyal, loves me  
That puppy, a teddy bear, that has all the cuteness in the world.  
That dog means so much to me that words can't describe it.



Pencil Portrait

Jessica Laing, 9



This Needs Its Own Museum

Iziash Suklan, 9

## Scientific Hypothesis

Pranav Gopalkrishnan, 9

What would happen if the world were to be made of cheese?

With rivers of molten mozzarella

And trees made of sharp cheddar

Would we be made of monterey? Would mountains be made of brie?

And what of our creator,

Does he have an appetite, or is he just

Gouda?

What would happen if the world were to be made of bread?

With streams of runny dough

And giant towers made of baguettes?

Would we be made of rye? Would the ground be made of crumbs?

And what of our creator,

Would he just have a craving, or is he a

Dough Boy?

Or perhaps

What if the world were to be made of people?

And what of our creator,

Would he be human?

tap scroll refresh

Noa Avitan, 9

\*tap\* \*scroll\* \*double-tap\* \*refresh\* \*tap\* \*scroll\* \*refresh\* \*tap\*  
\*refresh\* \*refresh\*

Flora had sat in her room. Every single thing around her was a mess. Papers scattered across the floor. She had thrown her school bag on her bed, not giving a care in the world. She was on her phone, looking through her social media. \*refresh\* No one had updated their status. After scrolling through her feed for an hour, she started to feel alone, to feel sad; she didn't know why; she didn't know how. To fix this "problem," Flora immediately decided to text her group of friends on their group chat:

"Hey. Anyone wanna hang?"

\*no reply\* Frustrated, Flora threw her phone against the wall, only to quickly go and pick it up again. She sat there, against her wall, scrolling through her home feed, waiting for their reply, only to see the continuous pictures of models living their best life. How perfect they were. She despised them. She wanted to be them.

Soon enough, her friends replied saying: "Sorry can't," "not today, sry," and "maybe another time?" Flora wouldn't take no for an answer; she wouldn't; she just couldn't. Flora continued to spam the group chat, but no one replied after the short conversation.

*How could they? They are my friends*, she thought. *Friends don't do that; they just don't!* Flora felt alone; it's not something that she was used to; it's not something she wanted to be used to, to be alone, to be sad; Flora didn't want that. Flora didn't understand why.

Why? She knew not. But it is only by nature. To envy, to obsess, to desire. A couple hours passed, and had led her to the night, yet Flora still sat there, obsessed with the social media that was consuming her. All she continued to see was those perfect models, the ones that had perfect skin. Perfect hair. Perfect bodies. She only started to compare them to herself. Her skin. Her hair. Her body. She wasn't like them; she didn't have what they did.

Flora stood in front of a mirror. Up and down. Down and up. Every insecurity that Flora ever had stood out at her, just like notifications. They all popped up. Every single one. Her head filled up with a lot of negative thoughts. They came over her like a rush of emotions. She felt overwhelmed; they consumed her.

*Why am I like this, Flora thought. Why do I care what others are doing? Why am I obsessed with their lives? Their lives have nothing to do with me. I don't even know them. Why am I comparing myself; wishing I was them; traveling all over the world; when all I'm doing is*

*sitting in my room, complaining, whining. Am I doing anything to help myself? Am I even trying? I don't know.*

She looked around her room, the mess, the clutter, nothing organized. Flora realized that she has been absorbed her life with social media. She hadn't been worrying about her own life, only worrying about others. All around her, everything was a mess, her bag, her papers, all splattered across the floor like paint on the wall. Flora didn't realize that all this time, she'd been covering up all her insecurities.



Ophelia Sketch

Ella Yuen, 10

## Merciful God

Lauren Yates, 9

Oh, Merciful God residing within Him,  
A shielded soul, the yearning to maintain authority.  
I, who collected every shining apple from the trees  
And witnessed truth at its purest source  
The last drip of sweet mercy cascading off the edge of our earth.  
I, who have seen others try to grasp the fruitful mercy from Him  
Can tell you I would not give one attempt  
For I do not deal well with loss.  
I, who has not done but seen many wrongs  
Who has given up hope  
Who lost all faith in reliance, and prayer  
Who did nothing but wait for the heaven above  
To unlatch its sturdy and everlasting lock

I, who knows there is no chance He will see;  
I witnessed truth at its purest source.  
In all His wisdom never to give,  
Anything

Oh merciful god, why not bathe me in the depths  
Of my betrayal and your forgiveness  
Present me with  
You Merciful God  
Anything.

(Emulation of Yehuda Amichai's "God Full of Mercy")

## Eunoia

Rachel Li, 10

A light feather brushes off  
Thin layers of dust settled on the frame.  
Shining through the glass panel,  
Is a bright yet flustered smile.  
Like the lull of ocean waves,  
Silvery hair floats in the breeze.  
Even when his image fades  
My heart still feels at ease.

## Kintsugi

Madeleine Goertz, 10

We are all our own kind of  
broken.  
Chipped at the corners,  
Cracked in the center,  
Held together by adhesives of  
apologies  
And staples of stolen sentiments  
As patchworks of our former  
selves  
Stained by regret  
Of what could have been  
If only we had had the courage to  
say  
What never came to our minds.

I love you. All of you.  
I love you when you are hurting.  
When you are drowning in your  
own waves  
I will be your life raft,  
Keeping you afloat,  
But only if you reach out your  
hand.

I love you unconditionally.  
No matter how many pieces  
you've been shattered into,  
How unrecognizable you think  
you've become,  
I still see you. Love you.  
I will help you search for your  
strength  
Help you begin to fill your cracks  
With gold varnish  
Of forgiveness,  
Of compassion.

Maybe it's time that I let you do  
the same to me;  
That I stretch my hand out  
And show you my cracks  
So that I too can grow along my  
seams  
And become stronger in the  
broken places.  
Because broken  
Is beautiful.  
I love you.  
I should let you love me too.

# Black-eyed Boy

Jasmine Herri, 9

She ran briskly through the library, her Converse-covered feet slapping loudly on the concrete floor. Her chest heaved from lack of exercise as she skidded to a stop at the last aisle. Rosalia smiled to herself. She'd always loved this aisle. No one bothered to search for books in the back, the shelves lined with dusty, leather-bound stories, ancient books that entailed heart-sweeping romances and delightful clichés. Even as a child, Rosalia found herself drawn to these enticing stories, tales of woe and all-consuming love. She often found herself longing to be swept up in a devastating romance, with butterflies in her stomach and love in her heart. Alas, this was the stuff of fairytales, not reality. No one understood her love for daydream, the deep, burning want that constantly consumed her. Rosalia sighed. She reached up to tie her long, auburn hair spilling messily over her shoulders.

Looking up, her eyes widened, realizing she wasn't alone. A tall, broad-shouldered boy stood staring at her. He was striking, with his sharp jaw and a lean frame. He closely resembled a Disney prince. With a slow smirk, the boy walked swiftly over to Rosalia and placed a small book in her hands, staring meaningfully into her eyes. His eyes were coal black, impossible to read. Time stalled, and Rosalia found herself unable to breathe, and it wasn't because of lack of exercise. Abruptly, the boy broke his steely gaze, spinning around and walking away. Bewildered, Rosalia blinked herself out of her stupor, gathering her bearings. She went to see where the boy had gone, but he had vanished. Remembering the book he handed her, she glanced curiously at the title, a golden infinity sign.

Intrigued, Rosalia opened it, and suddenly she stood in the middle of a stunning city, the mysterious boy beside her. Taking her hand, the boy began to sing. Startled by his sudden action, Rosalia tried to pull away, but he merely tightened his grip and continued. Onlookers paused to listen, transfixed on the august, black-eyed boy who had the voice of an angel. His face remained aloof, revealing nothing. His cold hands were smooth, his fingers pale and slender. The boy stared deep into her eyes, as he did in the library. A dozen questions flooded into Rosalia's head, but she found herself unable to voice them. The boy's enchanting singing stole the breath from her lungs.

Rosalia felt a rush of exhilaration as her unbelieving eyes swept over magnificent, gilded buildings with graceful, sweeping arches. Bright colors of pink, yellow, and baby-blue painted the town, and crystal-clear waterfalls rushed in the distance, teeming with silvery schools of fish. Rosalia inhaled the mouth-watering scent of freshly-baked bread and the intoxicating aroma of red and white roses. Her head spun, her heart

pulsing wildly in her chest.

This place, this boy, all so beautiful, her aspiration come true. Rosalia could hardly contain her excitement, and she began to feel light-headed. As the song carried on, she started to focus on the words the boy sang. Realization dawned, and she frantically scanned the crowd of people bustling around her. They all had impassive expressions and lifeless, black eyes. She frantically tried to push the boy away, but to no avail. Too late, Rosalia wrenched her hand from his tight grasp and desperately covered her ears. Dread flooded her body as she felt her eyes growing leaden, like coal. Her vision began to blur, and her thoughts grew fuzzy. In those final seconds before her mind went blank, Rosalia found herself lamenting for her past life, the one she never really wanted. For this beautiful city and all its glory was a trap, and now she was a prisoner... for infinity.



Hanging On

Rachel Li, 10

# The Great American Road Trip

Jack Li, 12

Ah, the road trip, something almost unique to America – a showcase for our values and how a car parallels those values. The freedom of grand, amber midwestern plains below spacious skies, the ability to journey and offroad to see purple mountain majesties, the privacy of sleeping in California Walmart parking lots, all, from sea to shining sea, is open to us with American spirit and a vehicle.

While the invention of the automobile can be credited to Germany, it was and has always been Americans who have explored its true potential. A nation spanning coast-to-coast containing land and peoples enough for scores of countries over, no place is alike. True, the concept of traveling and discovering new sights and vistas isn't unique, but its pairing with an automobile is. Throughout Europe, strong public infrastructure in the form of bus, rail, and boat manifest itself as backpacking. In contrast, writer Paul Theroux writes that America is "a nation that had largely abandoned long-distance trains because they did not go to enough places." Across Asia, Africa and Latin America, many places remain unstable and possibly underdeveloped, making road trips at the best challenging and at the worst completely infeasible or even dangerous. Finally, Oceania would probably instead best lend itself to a private cruise, with even Australia paling in potential to America from mere insufficient size.

At this point one, might point out Canada's size, development, and stability, all valid points, yes, but now I'd like to expand upon the cultural idea of a road trip and how it's specifically in line with America's own cultural values. Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender and creed, are a nation of dreamers; it is our tendency to hope, and hope, and hope. The first European settlers were convicts and religious fugitives. Risking their lives to cross miles and miles of ocean for lands they couldn't possibly even imagine, they hoped to carve out new lives. In other moments throughout our history, Americans have uprooted their lives to rush across the nation for each and every swell of oil or call of "GOLD!" Even in the darkest moments, and actually perhaps specifically in those times, we Americans travel. Andrew McCarthy wrote that this tendency was "the [American] idea that renewal [could be] just around the bend, over the rise, or beyond that distant horizon." For our earliest colonist, it perhaps would have possibly been just over every and any wave. McCarthy concludes that as such the American road trip is "the essence of optimism in action," the very essence of our people.

(Continue reading at [bit.ly/2XqfEXU](http://bit.ly/2XqfEXU))

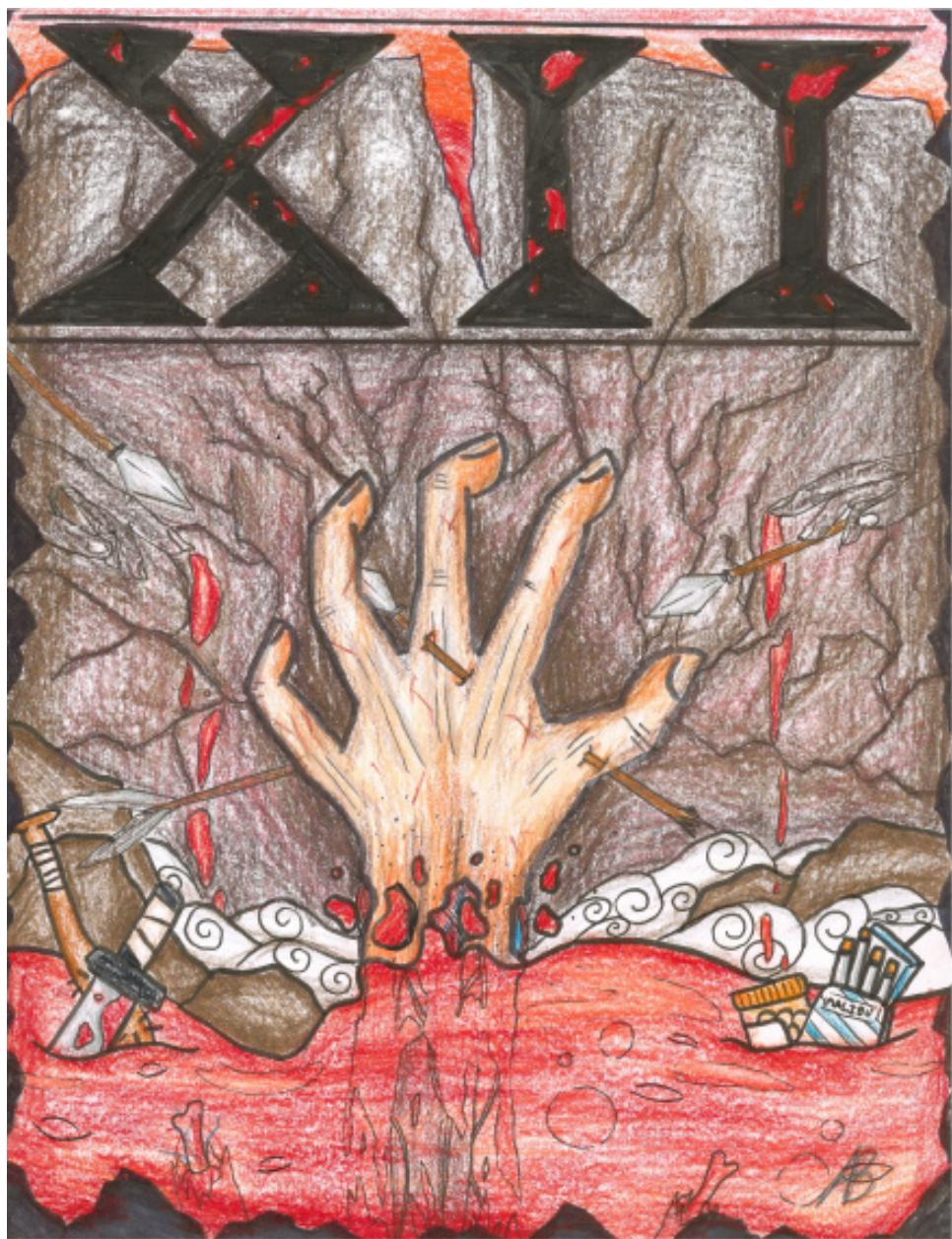


Portrait

Nathania Lim, 9

### Ashes of Diamonds Bhanu Atmakuri, 6

A young boy with ashes of diamonds,  
Traveling with fear, they fly across high-  
lands  
A million miles to the gates,  
Hoping for good fates  
And came in with some violence.



Canto XII

Alexander Boyko, 10

## Goodnight

Cora Madison, 9

My god trapezes on maple trees,  
And swings from Aspen branches.

My god leaves the closet door unlocked,  
To easily access the toys.

My god falls asleep at the dinner table,  
With shoes encased in mud.

My god isn't anxious about the future,  
Or what happened in the past.

My god doesn't yet know the difference,  
Between an image and real life.

My god will greet chickadees and crocodiles alike,  
Don't forget the cats and the mice.

My god will not leave my side,  
For the crowd around us is thick.

My god loves colors, red, blue and yellow,  
And putting them all together.

My god doesn't care,  
When I turn off the light,  
As long as I say goodnight.

(After Sheena Raza Faisal)



Music Girl

Ashwari Shende, 6

# The Shadow

Kaylee Allen, 9

What do you do when the world goes dark? When one second everything is okay, and the next, everything goes wrong? When all that you see is the shadow on the ground, moving when the woman moves? It was her reflection. Yet, she did not notice this. All she noticed was the faceless landscape of her mind. Never changing, just an infinite sea of self-doubt, of self-hate, of fear, always threatening to overcome her, to take control.

And at times the shadow seemed to stop moving, to stand perfectly still, at the edge of safe and dangerous. Of success and the failure. Of life and death. The shadow understood the woman. Or maybe the woman was just imagining that. Imagining the successes that she wished would replace failure. Imagining the life, she wished she had. Imagining that someone out there understood her and would listen to what she had to say.

Staring at the shadow, the day everything went dark was an eternity away. The only thing that mattered was the shadow and her, her and the shadow, the shadow with no face, the shadow who knew everything she wanted, when the woman herself couldn't put it to words. What she couldn't say was too painful to admit. However, the dark shadow on the ground knew everything. The shadow knew when she would cry. It stared at her with a despairing look on its featureless face, willing the panic that threatened to overwhelm her to go away. As if it could be that easy. But the shadow understood it was a hopeless task, one that could have been accomplished ages ago, but not now.

*Do not dwell on the past, on what should-have been, on the people who told me the wrong things, the woman begged herself. Not when everything is going wrong.*

Maybe the world came back into focus, with its glooming sky and roaring thunder, but it did not matter to the woman who no longer knew if anything was real. Who no longer wanted anything to be real, for if it was real it would mean all the failures, all the mistakes, everything wrong she ever did, happened. That she was nobody, never meant to do anything. The shadow, as if confirming her suspicions, nodded and pointed to a piece of shattered glass on the floor of the almost-empty landscape in her mind. The glass reflected her thoughts, her horrible thoughts of all that pain just bottled up inside her, with no way to get them out. Should she not just give in to all the temptations and awful thoughts, if it seemed like they were inevitable despite the resisting inside her?

*Look closer*, the shadow seemed to scream, pointed wildly at the broken glass. The woman looked down only to see a different face stare up at her. A face with no mouth to talk, no eyes to see, no ears to listen. A stupid, meaningless face: the face of her shadow. The face of someone who had done the inevitable and gave in to all that hate and doubt. Who wanted history to change but knew it wouldn't because the shadow was her and she was the shadow, the shadow with no face, who knew everything she wanted. The shadow who was nothing. This is my future, the woman realized. Her dreadful future was to be her own shadow and ghost.

## first heartbreak: a ghazal for angelica

Adithi Raghavan, 11

at first, a delirious haze, siren song, caught in her name.  
a crooked rose, trodden in bittersweet fame, her name:

angelica. serpent of tongues. daughter of Pandora.  
beautiful evil of colonized tongues—stolen names:

murderer. gone is my mother tongue. imprisoned away.  
but her name, like honey, dripped from my lips, when i begged her to stay—

you leech. claiming your territory, see my iron-stained veins.  
my identity dissipates. i once called the sun's name—

angelica. my own voice sounds foreign to me, when i call you.  
fading into the background, left among the choir, same song, same name:

angelica. like the fleeting wind, she danced her seductive ways.  
onto her next victim. fluid paths of pain.

and now, all i know is her name.  
my own, a mark of shame: what is my name?

## Sleep Paralysis

Amy Shrivastava, 8

My eyes flutter open to the world, sunlight filtering through my almost-transparent curtains. My room glows in the quickly increasing light, the darkness waning away. My room nearly glows in the early morning light, soothing and warm. The alarm clock on my table starts beeping quietly, getting louder every second of my delay, washing away any thought of the beauty of trivial things in the morning. I decide to reach over to press snooze, an action rudimentary in itself, but I find myself unable to move my arm over to the blue and gold clock. I then notice the heavy pressure on my chest, as if someone were sitting on it.

My breathing quickens as I struggle to find my breath, my alarm clock still beeping, the sound quite irksome. I try to exhort my muscles into listening to my brain, but my efforts fail. My breath gets faster and faster. And then... there, a small, quick movement out of the corner of my eye, barely noticeable. Again, on the other side of the room, which now seemed darker than ever before. As I strain to move my head to the side, my muscles still obstinately refusing, I see it. A small shadowy shape, a gnarled hand, the sharpest of claws adorning its fingers, reaching towards me, growing larger and larger. My breath gets shallower, my alarm clock blares louder and faster, no longer irksome, instead now frightening. The hand drifts closer and closer until I can almost feel the touch of cold leathery skin on me. Then, in a flash, it all disappears, and my body, in a jerk of motion, falls prostrate onto the floor. As I lay there, my alarm clock not as loud or fast as before, the memories of my horrors slowly fade into the corners of my mind that house the thoughts of the early morning.

As I fumble my way through typing in my locker combination, my hand shakes, causing me to slip onto the wrong key. I sigh, ready to start all over again, when my friends' voices float down the corridor. I suck in a deep breath to calm myself and turn around swiftly, suddenly smiling broadly.

"Hi guys! How was your afternoon? Mine was amazing!" I exclaim jovially, hopping up and down slightly.

"Mine was horrible," one of my friends replied, rolling her eyes, "My uncle decided to take us to a horror movie, and it was, like, terrifying."

You guys have no idea”

“Really, which one was it?” Another one of my friend asked, launching my first friend into a long ramble about the plot of the movie.

Their discussing voices of mingled amusement and horror slowly faded away as I started thinking about last night. You guys have no idea I thought if only I could have been someone else, anywhere else last night. I would give anything to be able to do that. My thoughts had wandered off into fantasies of peaceful mornings, when I realized my friends were both staring at me, realized the face I was making was that of melancholy and longing.

“Are you okay?” they asked in unison, looking genuinely serious for a moment. I froze, unsure what to say, when they burst into a fit of giggles.

“Jinx!” They both exclaimed. Laughing loud enough to attract the attention of students passing by. “You owe me a soda!”

“Anyway, I better get to class,” I said, avoiding their question and quickly typing in the combination to my locker. “Have fun at science! Bye!” I shoved my books into my bag and walked down the hallway, rushing to get to my next class before the bell rang.

That night I lay in bed, thinking. At first, I had tried to direct my mind anywhere but the thoughts that loomed, lurking in the corners of my head, creeping their way into my attention. At this point, I was past trying, all I could think were five words. I don’t want to sleep, I don’t want to sleep. Over and over until my head was emptied of any other thought. I knew what was coming for me when I woke up, I knew that I didn’t want it. Maybe, if I didn’t fall asleep, I wouldn’t have to endure what was waiting, waiting for the unsuspecting moments when my eyelids first open to glimpse the light of the morning.

As the dullness of sleep started to wash over me, I knew, knew that there was no point trying. It was going to happen every morning, every morning till the day I turned to dust. And as the darkness swept over, casting me into the sweet, dark oblivion, there was nothing I could do to stop it.

# Dave is Unsatisfied

Ben Yu, 9

Dave was constantly envious of others. All of his bird friends had mighty wing spans that could take them to heights he could only aspire to reach.

“Dave, don’t worry about yourself; you’ll eventually take over our family company.” his parents would always tell him. His family earned around \$320,000 each year, so Dave would not need to worry about finances.

But Dave was just a chicken. He wanted to be so much more. He wanted to fly. But can a chicken really fly?

Dave’s friends weren’t bad friends. They didn’t mock him or anything. But he just couldn’t do the things they did. Mess around in the sky, zip through clouds, or any of that jazz.

And he thought, “Wings.” What if he were to train his stubby little wing wannabes, to something that could carry him to the heights he wanted to be? Thinking these thoughts, Dave departed on his journey. (To the Himalayas, because that was the best workout location he could think of)

It was a miracle that his parents even let him go there alone. However, he had traveled alone to France when he was twelve, to try some of their baguettes. His parents thought he could handle himself just fine.

Everyone stared at Dave on the plane. A bird? Riding a plane? How cute. Dave, however kept a straight face. He would train his wings, and fly back on his own.

Upon arrival, Dave was met with nothing but himself and a whole bunch of mountains. He had come prepared with a strict regimen, that would take him months to do.

He trained. He ate and drank. He trained some more. He slept. He climbed many peaks. He trained.

Tourists in the beginning saw an ordinary chicken, doing some weird motions with some heavy rocks. However, as the months passed by, he started gaining some spectacular musculature. As more time went on, there was no one who could take their eyes off him. What a body! What an astonishing build! And finally, the day came. Dave prepared to jump over a cliff. (5 feet tall, as he was too chicken to do anything larger)

He jumped. He flapped and writhed. He fell. He was heartbroken.

How could he be this ignorant? It’s common sense that large muscles are far too dense to be carried by wings.

All of this training for nothing.

Months of his life, wasted.

No one dared to even speak to him on the way back. Who would not cower in fear under such awesome, breathtaking body perfection?

His parents could barely recognize him.

His friends, too.

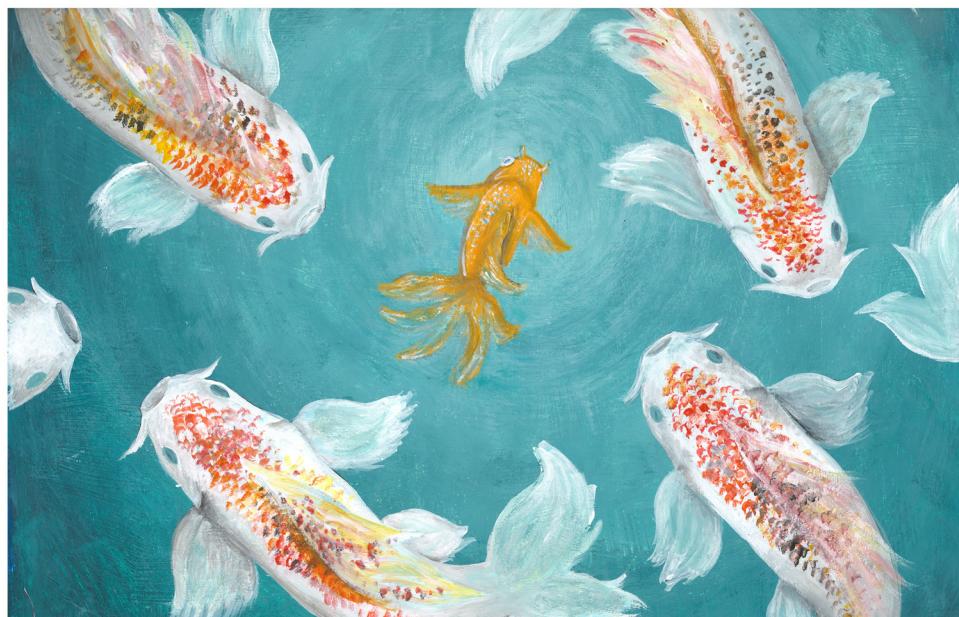
However, he wasn't shunned. His friends were good friends.

"Why?" one of them asked. After hearing about Dave's desires, they laughed. "Why didn't you ask first?" And so, Dave found himself with a new jetpack from his friend's attic.

Finally, he could do all the things his friends could do. Perhaps even more. After all, he did go through several months of intensive training. He then realized: that trip didn't go to waste. It helped him understand himself, his life, his friends.

It helped him understand that, it did not matter that he was a chicken, a flightless bird.

It helped him understand that he could move past his abnormalities.



Koi

Nathania Lim, 9

## Heroes Made in a Hurricane

Jasmine Zhen, 6

The scorching, acid red sun had just begun to rise in the kingdom of Mukajjah. All throughout the village, people opened their eyes to another dull, unvaried morning. By the time the royal rooster, Pekci, shrieked his morning wake-up call an hour later, the villagers were already bustling about the town, whether it was to the market for beans and rice or to the water well in the middle of town. All were awake and ready for yet another tedious day. All except one person: King Wekha.

Ali Farroque liked his job. No, he loved his job. As the king's personal servant, Ali was in charge of waiting on King Wekha around the clock. Foot massages, breakfast, baths- you name it, Ali was in charge. As a member of the royal staff, Ali was treated with high dignity and respect everywhere he went. But as much as Ali loved to serve His Majesty, getting him to wake up was his least favorite activity of the day. You see, the king was outrageously lazy and lethargic, so waking him from his seemingly eternal slumber was extremely difficult. But today, Ali had a secret weapon.

"Your majesty," he said, attempting to seem official but greatly failing, "It is time to rise by the order of myself and... your rooster."

The king merely rolled over and muttered something along the lines of, "Go away, filthy peasant."

"Ah, but you see, your majesty," Ali replied, smiling foolishly. "You wouldn't want to be late to your fortune telling, would you, hmm?"

The minute the words "fortune telling" escaped Ali's lips, King Wekha shot out of his bed and raced around the room like a monkey whose buttocks were aflame.

"Yes, I mustn't be late!", he shouted, scrambling to put his clothes on. After watching the king put on his clothes backwards twice due to his enormous excitement, they set off toward town to see Madam Naadirah, the royal fortune teller. Despite King Wekha's sluggish lifestyle, he always went out of his way to get his fortune told every week. No one knew why the king loved getting his fortune told, but, frankly, no one cared. After some time, Ali and King Wekha finally reached the alley where Madam Naadirah's hut stood. Covered with ruggedly torn, dark navy velvet, the

fortune teller's hut was as welcoming as a vicious wolf.

"Hello?", Ali called out anxiously.

All was silent except for the echo of Ali's voice. The eerie silence brought chills to both men. Suddenly, they heard a rustling sound from the hut.

"Come in."

Ali and the king cautiously inched toward the entrance. Suddenly, Madam Naadirah popped out of the entrance, a solemn expression on her face. Ali leaped back in surprise.

"Ah....," she said, sounding somewhat irritated. "You again. Come in, come in, we'll get this over with."

"I will be with you shortly, Your Majesty," Ali chirped, leading King Wekha into the hut before happily disappearing into the bookstore next door.

"So," Madam Naadirah said abruptly once they were seated. "How have you been?"

"Fine, I guess," the king replied without much thought.

"Ah, you say you are fine, eh?", asked Madam Naadirah accusingly. "Well, I know for sure that soon, that will not be the case."

"But why, Madam? I command you to tell me at once!" King Wekha questioned, his forehead creasing with worry.

"Because, my dear king, I see... I see... my, a terrible crisis for your kingdom!" declared Madam Naadirah grandly.

The king was shaken. "What kind of crisis, you peasant? Tell me at once!", he demanded once again.

## The Path of the Everyday Vader

Rory McNerney, 10

The fearful slay fear by squashing it,  
When I can wield death's power on my own,  
I can control death like the throats I slit  
As I mask myself in a somber tone.

To escape morality is my dream,  
When death comes charging like a raging bull  
I will rise above death, yet not in gleam,  
But a new me will reflect from the pool.

While knights of faith no longer see the light  
I will never escape the death I hate,  
Now shrouded in darkness too weak to fight  
I ditch false control and come to death's fate

Let go of everything I fear to lose  
To come to death's terms is the path I choose.

## Satisfaction

Eric Shi, 10

“More.”

“A pause,

Then another cat appeared.

“More,” again.

Another pause,

Then two turned to four.

A quiet smile rested on the straw haired child's face.

Like cells, they multiplied.

4 to 8,

8 to 16.

Variants of sizes and face,

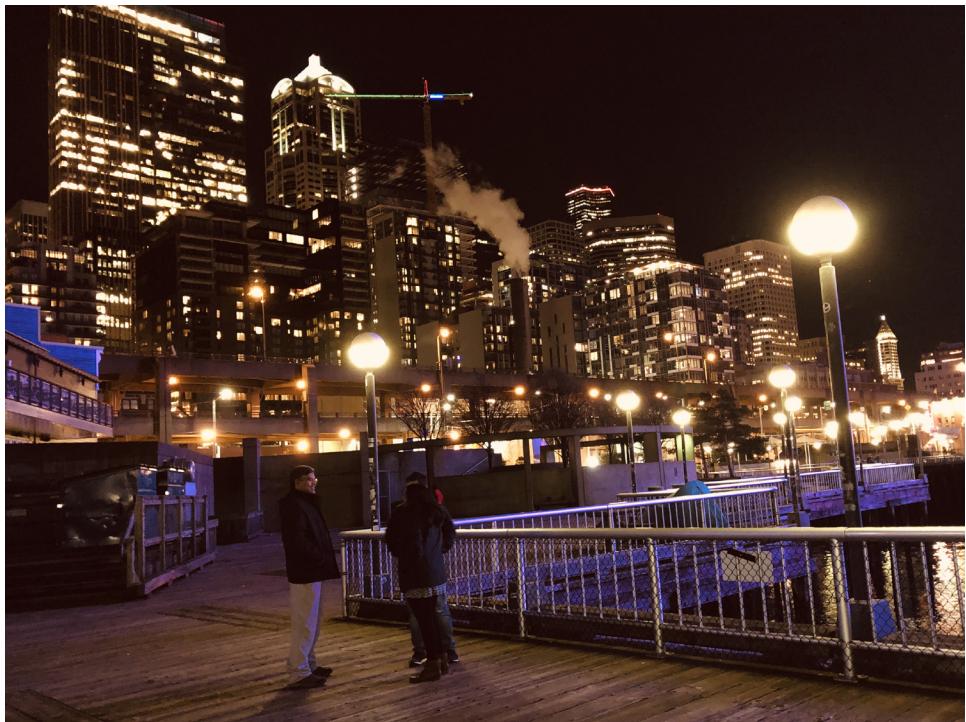
No two cats created with coordination.

Alliteration baby.



Betafish

Ellie Fu, 10



## The Warmth of a Conversation on a Cold Winter Night

Shalini Shrivastava, 8

Double Black

Rachel Li, 10

Tainted hearts and tainted minds  
Dyed to black, both yours and mine.  
Twisting thorns that we let grow,  
Feelings that we used to know.

Clinking glasses at the bar  
Under smiles you'd seemed so far  
In my lonely mafia years  
I never once had any fears

My city felled  
And your beast quelled  
I miss the days when your hand I  
held.

Resting in my pockets here,  
These gloves of yours you held so  
dear

Wind stirs up my tangled hair,  
Seeing your silhouette in this cold  
air.

Though I'm not one to keep a vow,  
Just this one time, I might allow  
Taking one last glance at the sky  
above  
I'll take to flight for you, my love

# Mirror

Anonymous

She stares straight ahead  
Her cold and lifeless eyes  
Staring into your soul

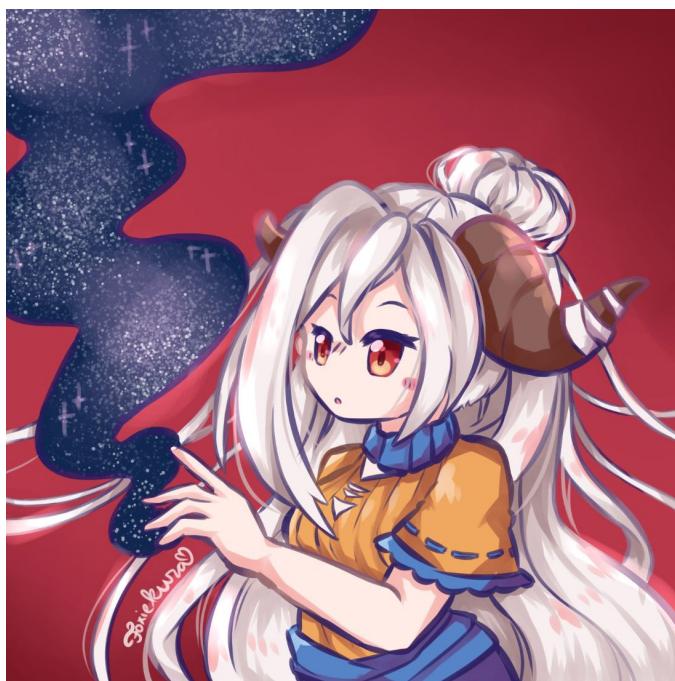
With a dark aura around her  
She sits lifelessly  
On the old wooden chair

With her crooked smile  
Taking pleasure in your sorrow

Her bony fingers  
Touch her cracked skin  
With black blood flowing from her wounds

You stare into her eyes  
As you hear a voice behind you

How do you like my new mirror?



Mariihime DTIYS

Ella Yuen, 10

## The Old Gods are Dead

Maya Bar, 9

Rama instructs self-defense classes at the local gym  
narrowing his “eyes at boys in cars who yell  
obscene things” (L.D)  
these are not honorable men.

Ardhanarishvara marches through the streets with rainbow face paint and  
a flag,

They look around with pride and see Their fearless children  
these are the children of tomorrow.

Brihaspati wanders the streets of India preaching  
to those who will listen  
the hymns of yesterday are long  
gone, ancient voices fading.

Chandi reads the news on corruption in places with unpronounceable  
names  
and in places all too familiar  
she sighs  
the demons of today have no slayer.

Kubera sees the thousands of poor on the trash-ridden streets of the cities  
with  
buildings too tall and people too rich  
he lowers his head  
this was never his intention.

Yama picks his way through the smoking ruins  
“of an elementary school,  
he stopped understanding war a long time ago  
this was not brave, this was not” (L.D) noble  
this was senseless  
he shakes his head and knows that the gates of the dead are flooding  
with innocents.

Emulation of L.D. “The Old Gods Are Dead.” Chaos and Poetry, tumblr.