

BACKROADS

2020



B A C K R O A D S 2 0 2 0

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P R E F A C E

We are all people with voices, thoughts, love, sadness, hopes and fears; but the thing that really strings us all together is our desire to keep moving forward. Even when the world is uncertain or unknown, we are the generation that looks fear in the eye and always manages to push through. Although life has taken an unpredictable turn we will not stop chasing our dreams. As this years backroads editors, we are so grateful to be able to share all the creative minds here at alhambra in hopes that we continue to make our mark on this world.

We are unstoppable.

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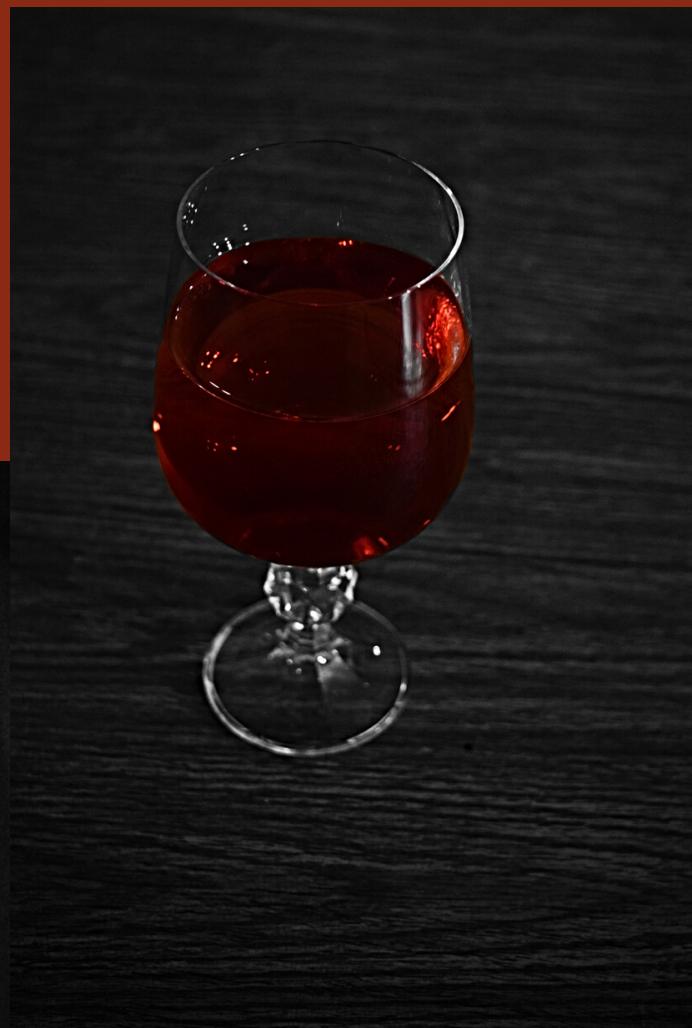
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Solitude

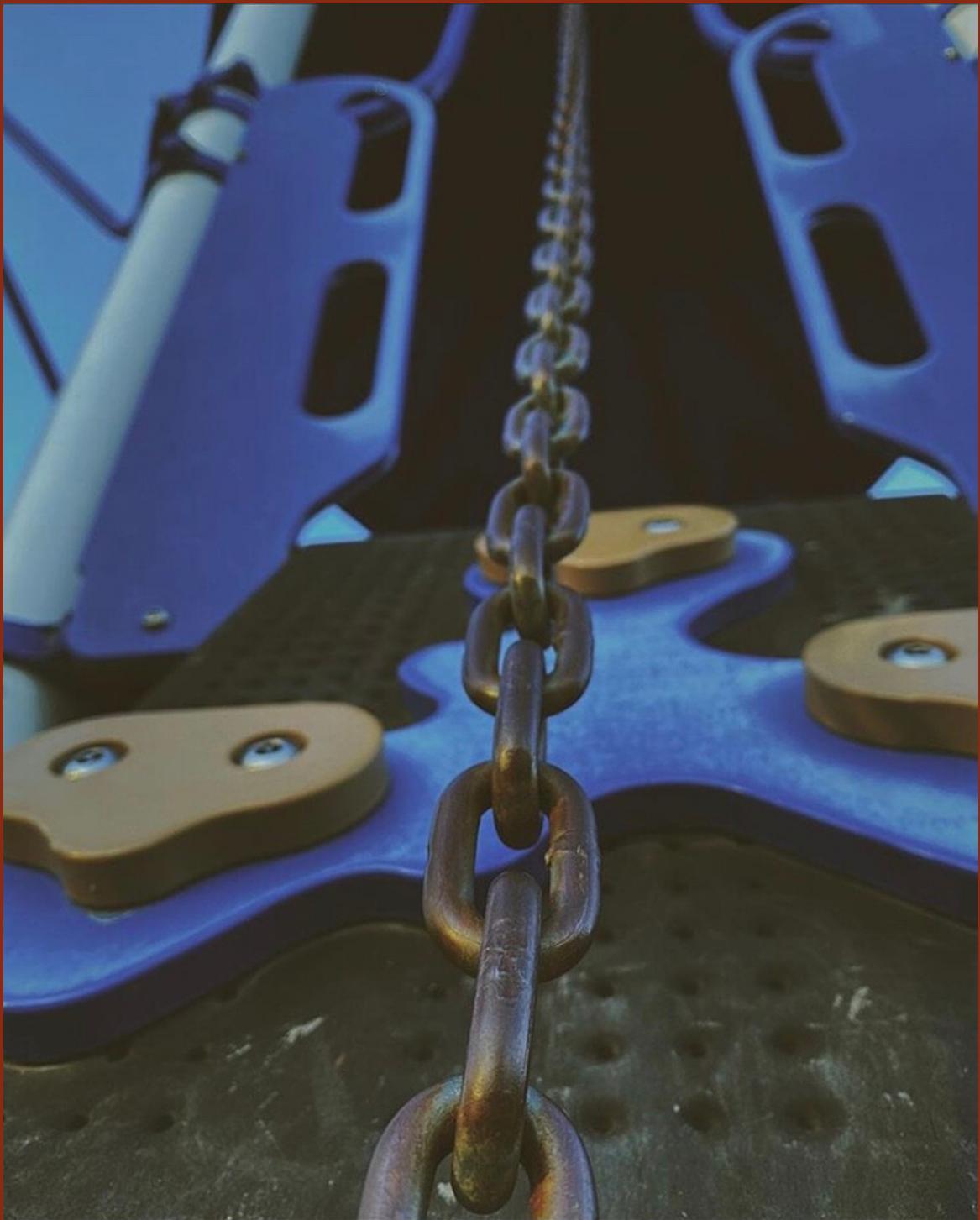
I

I Believe in Love, but Not Yours

Put my heart in your hands
Too heavy for you to hold
Was it my fault for not warning
That it is made of solid gold?



I tried to cough up the
memories,
tried to cry them all out,
but it didn't work
and so you
remain
in my brain
dancing
all about.



Ryan Salazar

10

Class of 2023

The beggars come out during An Eclipse

I like to say I'm strong, I believe I am.

It's not in a prideful way, the kind that likes to corrupt the mind.

It's the kind of strength that came with so many tears and aching limbs.

The kind that is earned when emptiness was my only certainty.

But I still let myself falter, I said I was strong, not perfect.

I can pick myself back up, never letting my head hang. If I cry, I cry looking up at the sky.

I'll kiss the sun if I'm pained. Cry in silence as tremble and then let go.

The moment will pass because I'm still strong.

I'll never let myself beg,
Never scream or let my words be tainted with pleas.

I keep my head held high and my smile sparkling.
No need to hold my hand, I can walk perfectly fine on my own . . .

But it's in these new circumstances that I find my knees begin to buckle.

And I see my posture start to cripple away, as life becomes drained of its charm.

I fear of being in the dark again because that's where I stand defenseless.

The air is transforming into thick and heavy muck and I am starting to remember the feeling of being voiceless in an empty pit.

The sun is enclosing itself in my troubles that I so selfishly threw up there.

My world is about to see another eclipse and I'm not ready to be in that moment of darkness.

I don't deserve this, none of this emptiness is my fault! I didn't do anything. These problems aren't my own,
so why do they feel like they are.

So this where I am, getting down on my knees. I'll let my head hang low.

I'm not smiling because I can't walk on my own.

I'm begging, I'm screaming,
why am I being thrown back down here?

I'll press my forehead to the ground and yell at myself. Don't let me fall back into this pit of emptiness again. .

I'm begging you.

CREHTE



Cry Baby

XVI
Finding Eden

This World grows you old
Earth sprouts life
Built for paradise
Outside & within
Inside what's within
It is

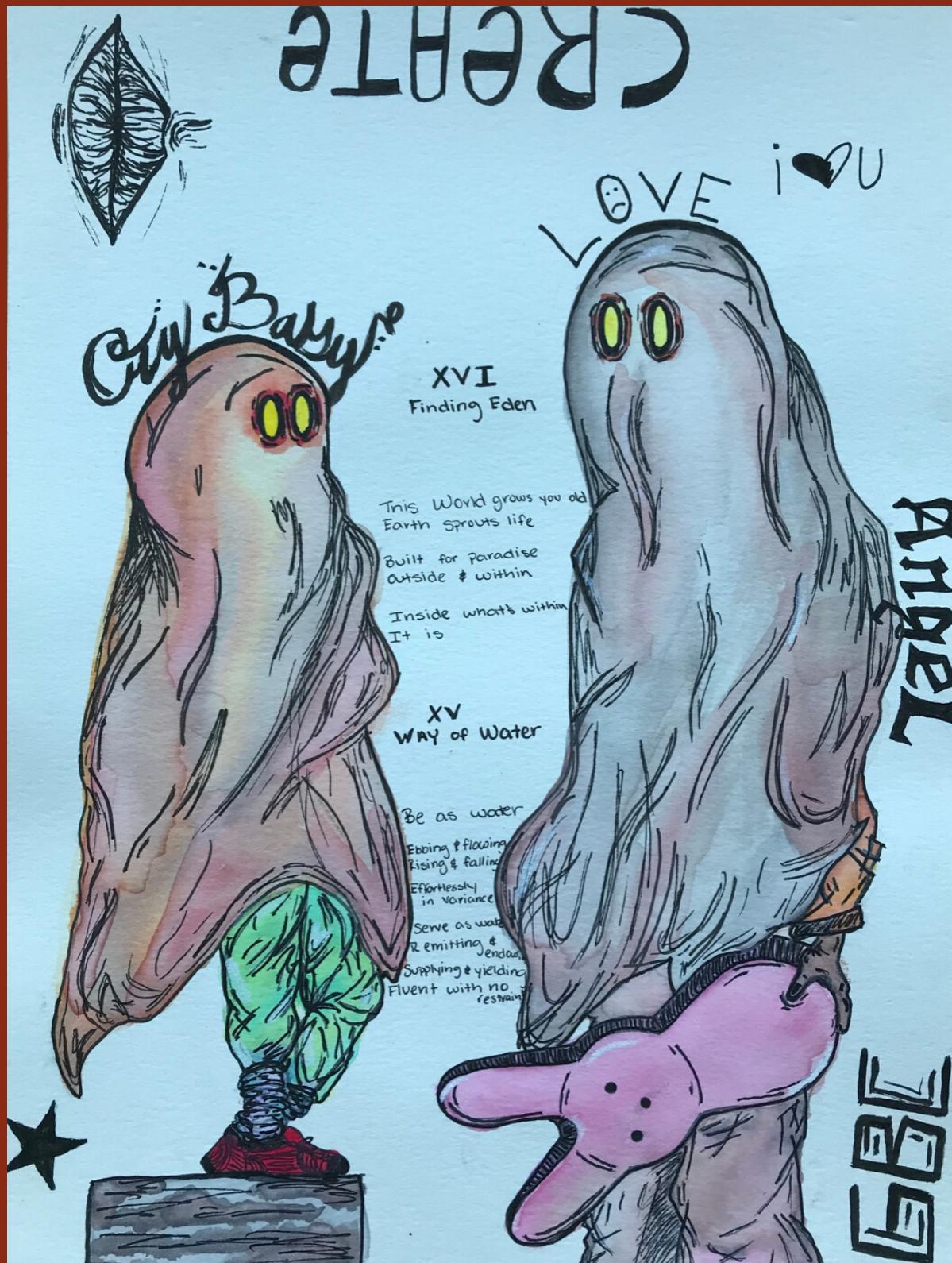
XV
WAY of Water

Be as water
Ebbing & flowing
Rising & falling
Effortlessly
in variance
Serve as water
& emitting
Sounding & yielding
Fluent with no
restraint

LOVE i

MARVEL

GE



Constant

how could you say you weren't worth it
broke my heart every time bit by bit
why is it so hard for me to get you out of my mind
it's fine my heads just a bit slow i'm behind
when you look at me now all i see is confusion
i have even come to that same conclusion
i can't recognize myself in the mirror
my head telling me we need to steer her
in the right direction
after this rejection
broken heart like it's an infection
trying to survive every morning like it's a fucking resurrection
it's been hard, losing you
waking up mornings at 2
in a complete panic
going manic
it's ok i understand it
i even know why
you thought we had a good try
breaking things off was better, for you
what about me too
my sadness grew
my trust withdrew
so much to do
but i can't
need a heart transplant
every night i chant
the same thing: "i'm sorry"
planned nights staring at the starry,
sky
i try not to die
everyday when i deny
my impulse to say goodbye
but it's fine
you basically put up a sign
saying that you're ok using your smile
i can see that from a mile
the way you look at her: relief
but i'll be brief
not much longer till i'm done
you will always be the one
but i won't annoy you anymore
i'll try to ignore
how my heart has grown sore
i'll just walk out of the door



Ryan Salazar

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Class of 2023

Prayer for My Mother

Please pray for my mother
Cursed by the blessing of motherhood
Pain of birth doesn't match the pain
Of using your bones as a home's foundation
And using your skin as a sheltering shield
Stripped of her strength
You can hear in every breath
What's the wage of motherhood?
A question with no answer
None except not enough
No pay will ever be enough
For the cursed blessing of motherhood



Demons

Every single day it breaks me to pieces

But the truth always comes out

My demons call and say they want whatever's inside of me

They're all around me, circling like vultures

Lately, things have gotten worse and I can't seem to handle it

My heart cries for help while all the vultures come to dismantle it

It seems these sunny days and this warmth has turned to cold and rain

Seeing everybody that I once loved hurting

Knowing everything that I've said ain't working

And I tried and tried and tried and tried

And I've bled, I've sweat, I've screamed, I've cried

Sometimes I wanna die but I numb it down with stimulants

Sometimes I wanna die and I act on all my impulses

I don't wanna die alone, I don't really wanna die at all

But sometimes I can't control myself

And by then I want to kill myself

I should put this pistol to my brain

Barrel at my temple

Afraid I might pull this trigger

Click bang, feeling rage, feeling the fire in my brain, feeling insane

End of story, .45 to my brain

Praying please help

Tell me what I did to deserve this pain

Tell me what I did to deserve this hurt

When all I ever did was put everybody first

I swear to God nobody can fix this shit, not even the Church

These days I just don't feel shit

I don't feel a thing at all, I don't feel like I exist

I'm sick of it, losing myself, I'm sick of it

I've given it my all and so much more

But everybody still walking out that door

Ask me how I'm doing, I say "okay" but ain't that what we all say

I just crack a smile for a while then I go and hide

Glad to see its working

Glad you seem to think there's nothing wrong

Glad to see you think that what I say is just a joke

I guess that's okay that keeps you out my business asking shit like, How do you cope with it all?

Like shut up bitch just pass the shit

The sleeping pills don't work, the healing pills don't work

I still feel pain with pain pills, now those same pills don't work

I'm not the one you want to fuck with

I don't want your help and I could care less for your sympathy

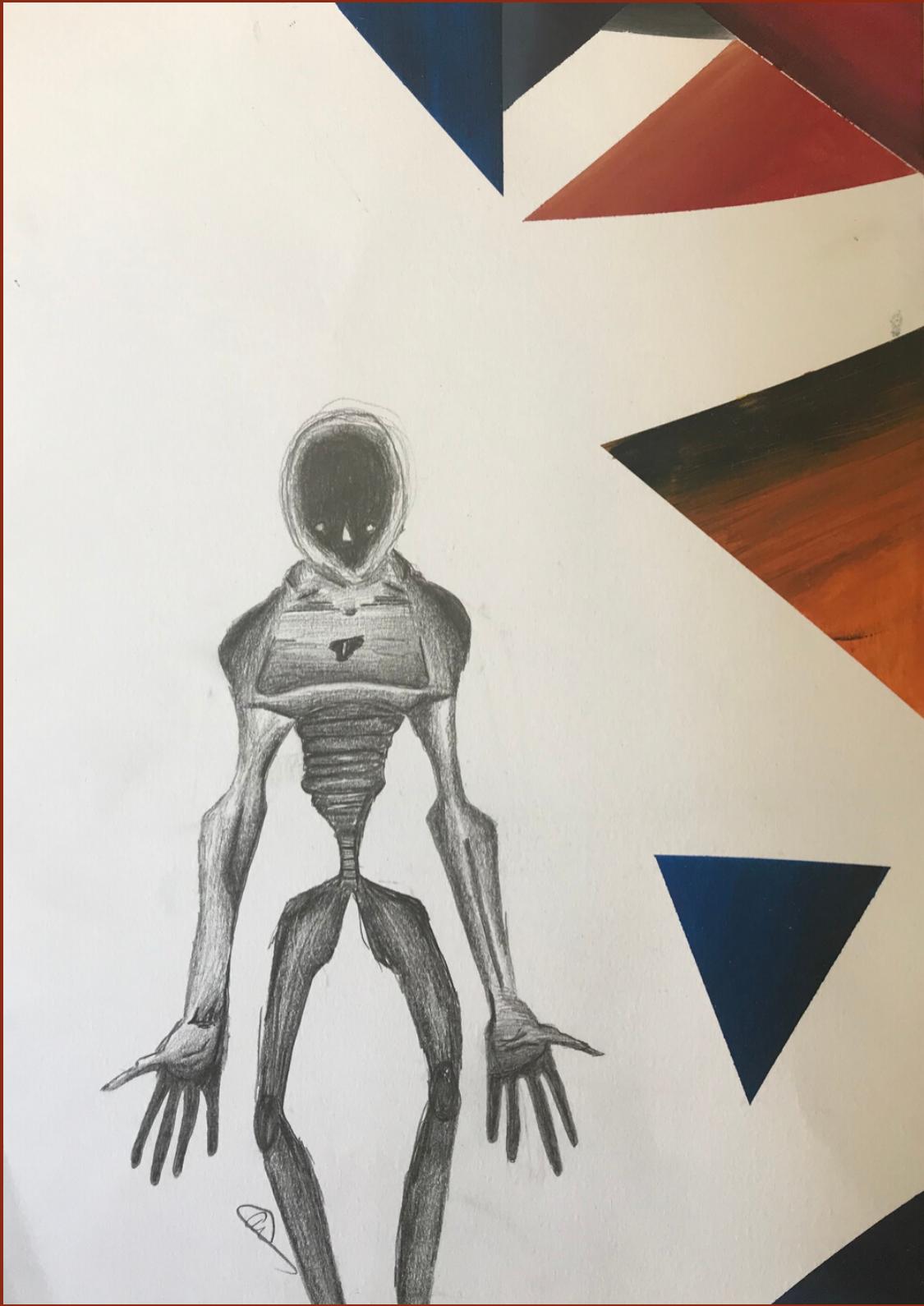
If you saw the inside of my mind I bet I'd make you scream

If you think it's bad when I'm awake come see the shit I dream

Come and see the shit I think about outside of 2 am

You'd be overwhelmed, you're in my domain

All my demons lie awake



Amelia McCutcheon

19

Class of 2020

Perfection

Perfection will inevitably break.
Break the body, break the will, break the mind.
Make, break, quake and shake, ache, rake, take and fake -

-

Left mutilated. Ears deaf, eyes are blind.
Let me propose to you this here what if:
Ignorance is bliss, knowledge is torture.
Teetering on the brink, now flee the cliff.

Fall into the valley, cross the border.
Below, the orange sky is on the run.
It frees the fields, yellow life from the ice --
Crimson blessing sung to a crimson sun.

Black excises the enticed paradise.
Fall, drop, descend, plummet, plunge, ground is near,
Descend again, it's only up from here.



the one for me

as your soft sweet lips skim the surface of my skin
i can't help but to think how i even met him
the boy i once saw as merely a friend
who i now know will be with me until the end

yet there's a part of me who fears
my inability to slow these tears
my inability to last throughout the years
my inability to curve the pain that sears
my inability to accept the inevitable that nears

my heart has been made yours
conjoined with a soul that has opened so many doors
but my flaws outweighs this love we have
which will soon be named on my epigraph

pained that's unnamed
lies flaunted and unwanted
longing yet still not belonging
loneliness as if drowning within the abyss
doubt within this superfluous bout

despite the rips and tears
there is one thing that is still there
my evergrowing love
for the one who is beyond and above
anything i could have imagined

you may believe there is no use
for a love that is seemingly pointless and obtuse
however i believe this love will last
anything that has surmounted in the past

because you are the one that i want
the one that i crave
the one that i flaunt
the one that i will always try to save

so as your lips press against mine
i allow myself to slip through the passage of time
forgetting the if ands and buts
and knowing you will be there to bandage all my future cuts

and within this moment
of passion and intimacy
i am certain
that you are the one for me



Michael Lano

23

Class of 2022

Lying 2 Yourself

I taught you what love is
Like none other before

And yet, you still continue to use the word incorrectly.



Ryan Salazar

25

Class of 2023

swimming in nostalgia

blue glows through the blinds
covering my sheets in the familiar shine of the night sky
trapped in the darkness of myself
only intensified by my past

before you were in the picture it was a different picture
and you were in that one too

my heart stops beating and the morning is calm

watching the sunrise
just like this
it's been forever
it was so different back then
it's so confusing
this rush of emotions that's been the past month
it's all so new, yet oddly familiar

lighter and lighter every minute
yet bleaker than ever before
every morning is another opportunity for disappointment
and maybe if i miss it, it won't be real

it hurt just as bad back then
maybe worse
who can say?

longing the future and now i sit here in the cold moonlight longing for the past

imagining my posters ripping off the walls

my furniture rearranging itself

life changing

reverting

the picture catches flames

last time, i felt terrible
but now i seek solace
those thoughts were so minuscule
so dramatic

but if they can bloom into this longing feeling, then cant today do the same?
and next time i find myself staring at the street lights that i used to write songs about, will i wish for today?

it doesn't feel real

im sure ill laugh at this in 2 years

i think

who can say?

i need comfort in the little things

the little things like the bright blue rays that fill my world.



Day Dream

III

Mosaic

I'm a mosaic.

Broken, not because I'm weak but because there's more to me than just one piece.

My name is Idalia

I'm Mexican, with no shame to tell you off in Spanish if you ever try to make me feel less than human.

I'm a woman, strong and independent. Just like my parents taught me to be. I laugh way too loud and way too easily but I can't help it. I just like being happy.

I've been heart broken more than once, because I love so much and forgive more times than I should.

I'm loved by my family, my friends. I'm loved by myself and that's how it'll always be.

I have stretch marks on my body that makes me smile because they remind me of lightning bolts during a stormy night.

I'm told I have pretty eyes that make it easy for people to talk to me.

I'm confident, in my words, in my clothes, in my decisions, in my future. I'm no longer focused on the big picture but the parts that make the picture come to life

Made up of fragments of lessons, love, and so much more.

I'm broken. Thankfully.

Small fragments contrasting with larger shards, but all coming together to make one thing. Me.

I was meant to be a mosaic, Broken and Beautiful.

I'm supposed to let light shine through me and reflect colors onto everything I touch. I spent so many sleepless nights cutting my hands because I tried to smooth out all the cracks

I burnt my skin countless time from trying to melt myself into a whole.

But that's not my purpose. I'm whole person made up of fragments.

I wrote this while looking into a broken mirror

And the more I stared the more I caught myself slipping, farther and farther into my own soul.



Rianna Herrera

29

Class of 2023

Aesthete

Spring is the bloom of lovers
When hearts bond
And affections flourish

Summer is the beauty from her hazel hair
The rise of burning passion
With her blinding glare

Autumn is falling in love Petals wilt away
Ever-changing colors unveil her flaws

Winter is when starry nights align
Where mind and soul intertwine
And I can only hope
She is forever mine.



Ryan Salazar

31

Class of 2023

Why God Made Little Girls

God made the world with towering trees majestic mountains and restless seas. Then he paused and said, "it needs one more thing: someone to laugh, and dance, and sing. To walk in the woods and gather flowers to commune with nature in quiet hours."

So god made little girls with laughing eyes and curls. With joyful hearts and infectious smiles, enchanting ways and feminine graces And when he completed the task he began, he was pleased and proud of the job he has done. For the world when you see though a little girl's eyes, greatly resembles a paradise



Thunderlord

Two they were, artist and scientist.
Music flowed in their souls and rained from their
lips.
Not weapons of war they made, but instruments
of peace

The thunder fell, and they were cast apart. Their
love was sundered as the world collapsed. They
sang in pain and sought to reunite, but crimson
eyes glowed in the dark. Their union was not to
be.

He held death in his hands. Stars burned in his
footsteps. He returned from fields afar saying, The
eye has passed, the end nears. Do not fade
quietly. Let thunder reign again. In her, the
conflagration was reborn, the funeral pyre lit.

And so forever after, their love fuels death. Their
last words, a curse and a cry. Their names are
now lost, but their love will not die.



Ryan Salazar

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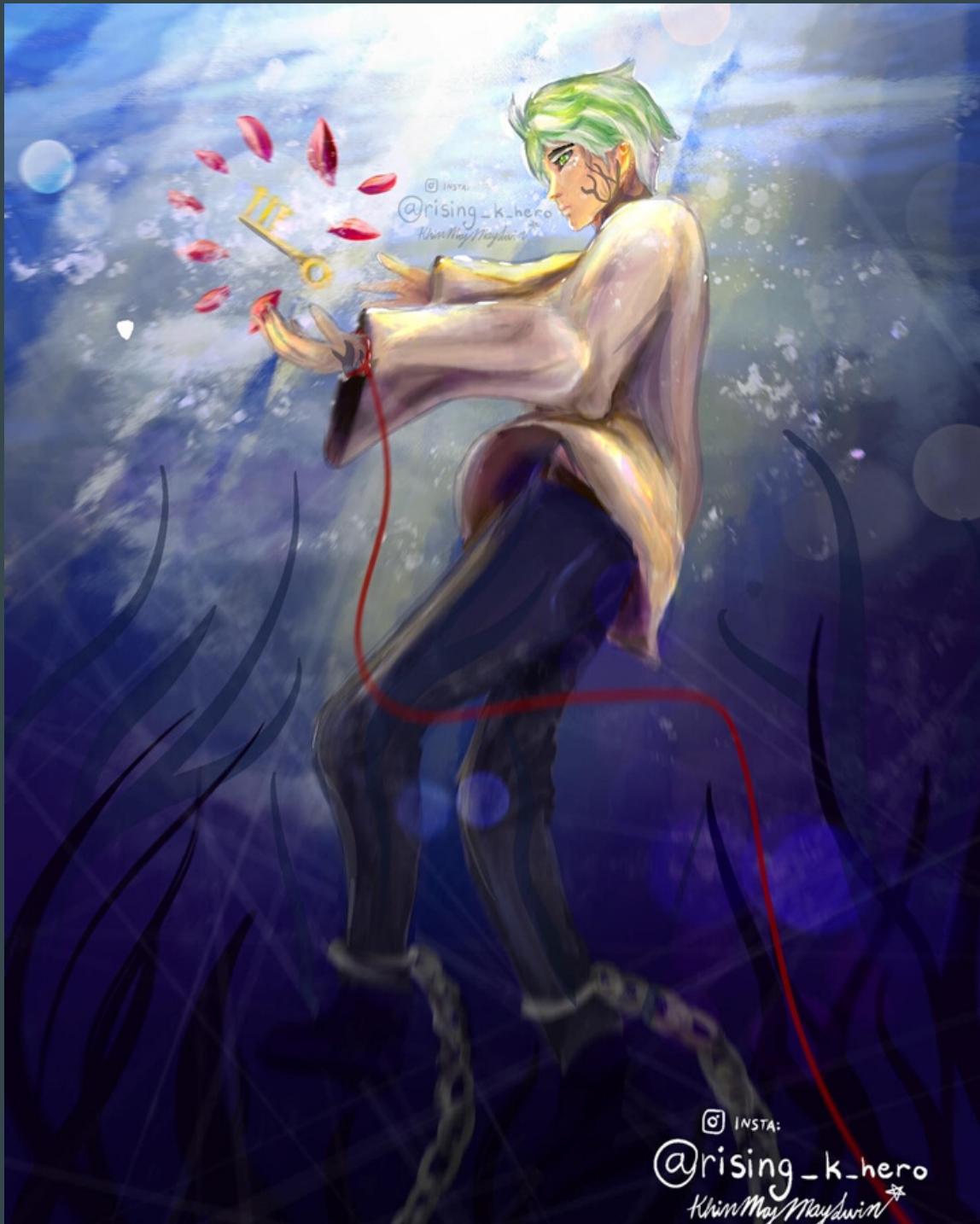
Class of 2023

I picked all the roses for you despite the
thorns
so you wouldn't have to suffer.

I painted the sky purple because
I know it's your favorite color.

I made Zeus stop his storms because
I know you hate the thunder.

I stole you the sun because
I know you're in love with summer.









Michael Lano

40

Class of 2022









Broadening

III

I plucked a pretty purple flower, from your
perfect lips. And pulled off every flower
petal, for I'm full of wicked tricks.

What a shame you didn't see this coming
your sorrowed little way. If I were you I'd
learn some things, maybe start today.



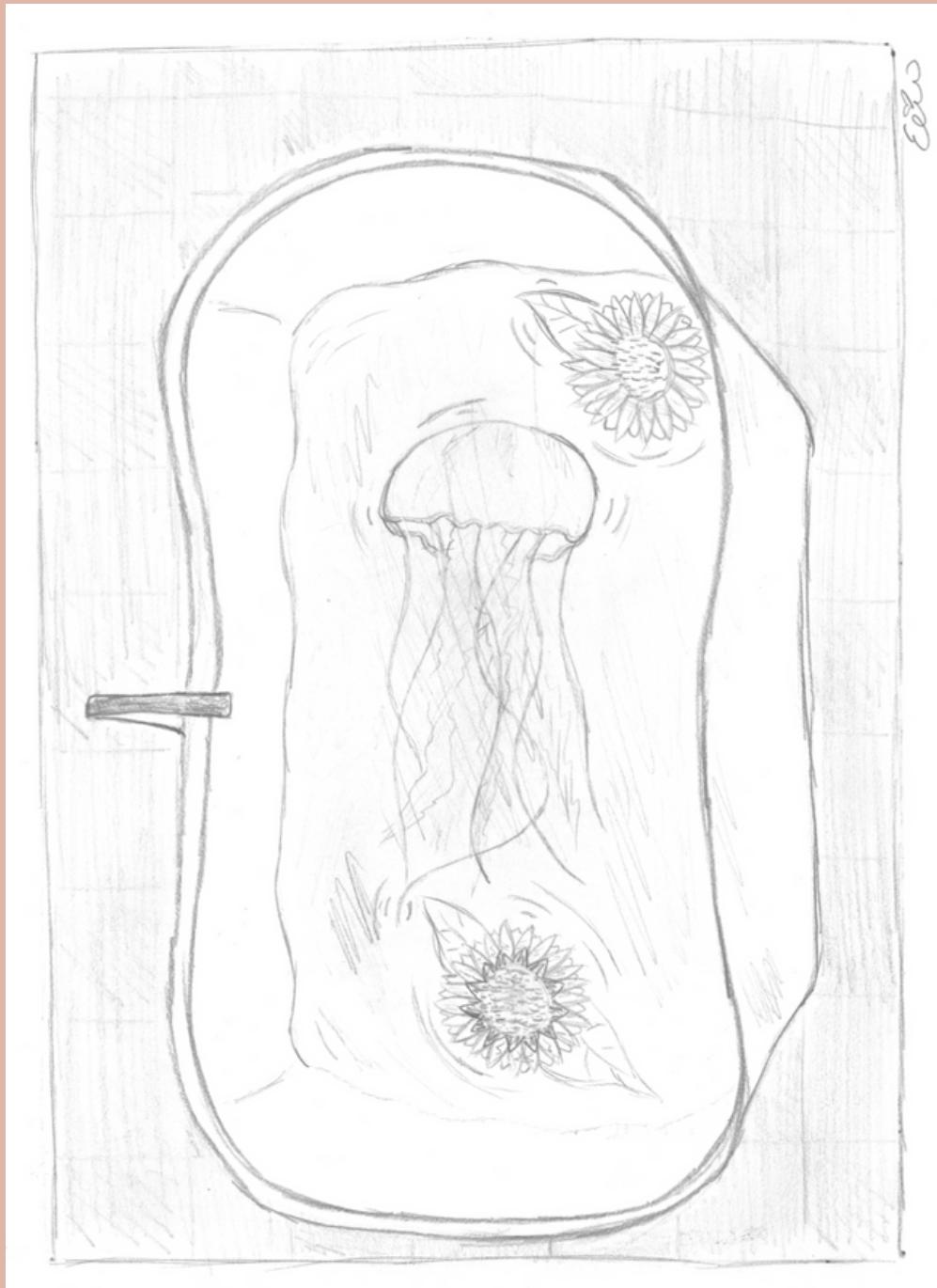
Obituary

Clearly you want nothing to do with me i just wish things were back to how they use to be you know how those words would hurt i can't trust now i'm always alert you keep proving why i shouldn't love you i don't know how to change my thinking from what i been knew about everything that's good things that we would always talk about i'm in doubt it's hard enough for me to live keep losing until there's nothing left to give and then i'll give some more you look at me in some type of abhor all my motivation drained my heart feeling like it's chained not being allowed to feel anything wanting to hang from a tree and just swing you make me feel guilty nights got me feeling chilly wishing you were right beside me i've seen me change i agree but i thought out of all people you'd understand said that your reaching out with your hand to pull me out of the grave i've digged for myself put down my shovel so you can convince yourself that you can finally be free throw away your key to my heart allowed to be apart i said yes not knowing i'd be a mess even tho i said i'd probably slip up you said it's not an option to be a runner-up so i didn't want to disappoint got to a strong point then i broke you saw me as a pathetic joke little did you know i warned you got me feeling blue for disappointing you my biggest fear leaves me with a tear becoming my new reality something i can guarantee when i form new relationships feels like the apocalypse now knowing that imma ruin them repeats the cycle over again and again but it's fine i'm ok happens almost everyday so don't worry about me i'll write a little letter for you in my obituary

Sydney Lieb

48

Class of 2022



Winners write History

If winners write history then what's in store for me?

I've lived and lost but at what cost?

Memories embedded in my brain like a scar of the journey
not the victories.

My pride in every generic stride because being human
shouldn't be pushed to the side.

Holding my balanced with love and hate but I can't help
but hesitate.

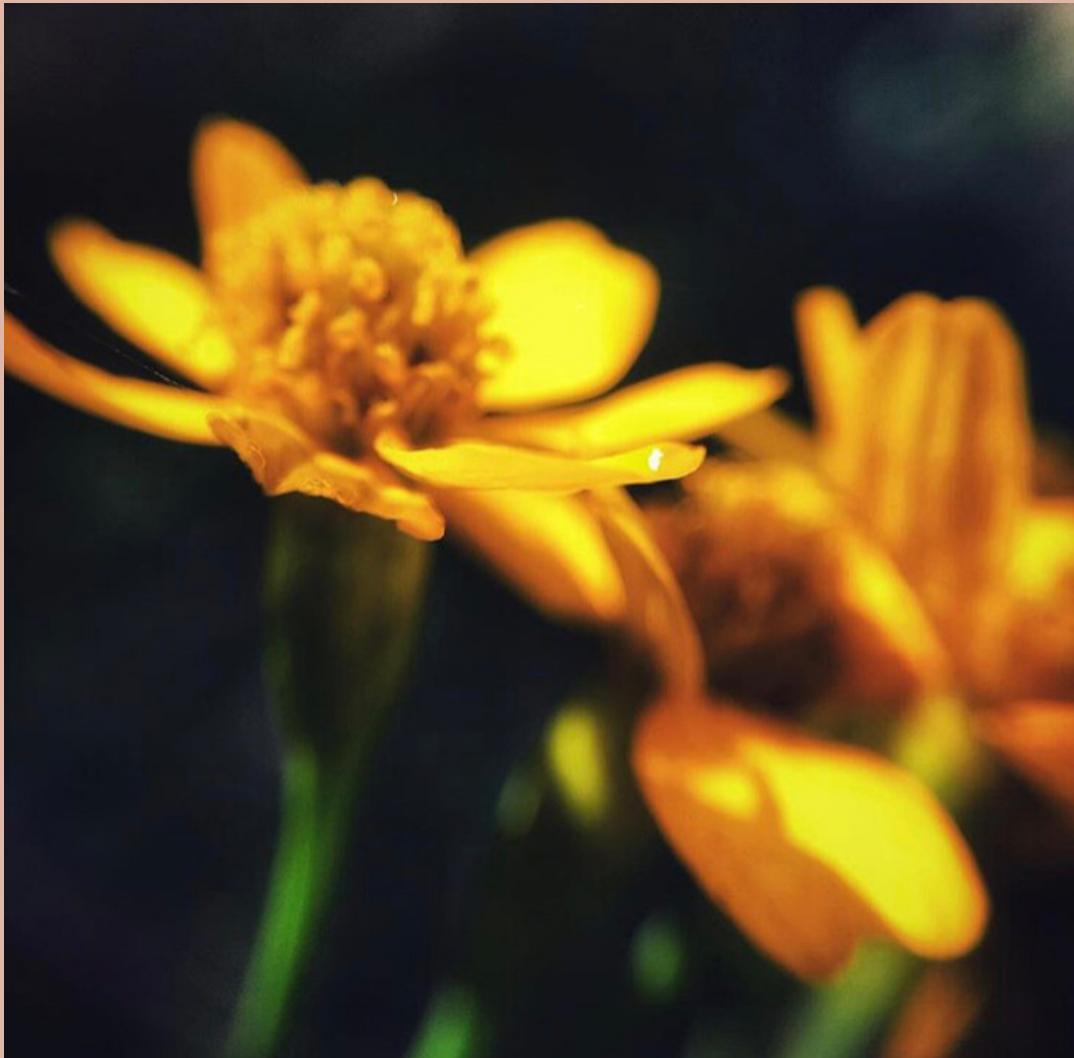
The fact that winners only make the books, It's time for a
different outlook.

Because not everyone succeeds but the words one bleeds
Being able to live life after being knocked down should

make anyone feel proud

in a world with people like you and me,

Winners shouldn't be the only ones who write history.



Rayla Padilla

51

Class of 2021

poison ivy

I went on a walk through a garden in search of healing
for I had been torn up and scarred by the thorns of a rose

each time i came to this place, i picked a flower
and though i had always admired the ivy surrounding them

i was careful not to get too close

knowing that ivy could be dangerous

and while the flowers were beautiful, i held them so tightly
the wilted

leaving me in search of healing once more

but each time I returned

the ivy was there

waiting on me, calling for me

and before i had realized, it was growing onto me

holding me as i held those flowers

and it felt safe

so i let it

and for a while it was beautiful

wrapping itself around my body, through my hair, and into
me

enamoring me with warmth, intensity, and adoration

so that when it slithered away

suddenly and without warning

it revealed itself as poisonous

and i had let it infect me

and what i had thought to be safety, warmth, and adoration

were just the faces of false hope, emptiness, and delusion

these things ran deep into my bloodstream

leaving me in search of healing once more

now i've returned to the garden

to find the flowers in full bloom

and though they are beautiful

i will not pick them this time

this time i am healing



Cheyenne Bradford

53

Class of 2022

I'm written down.
I have a life.

I'm scribbled out.
Where is my sight?

I'm crumpled up.
You're so unkind!

I'm thrown away,
and now I die.



Alyssa Chioki

55

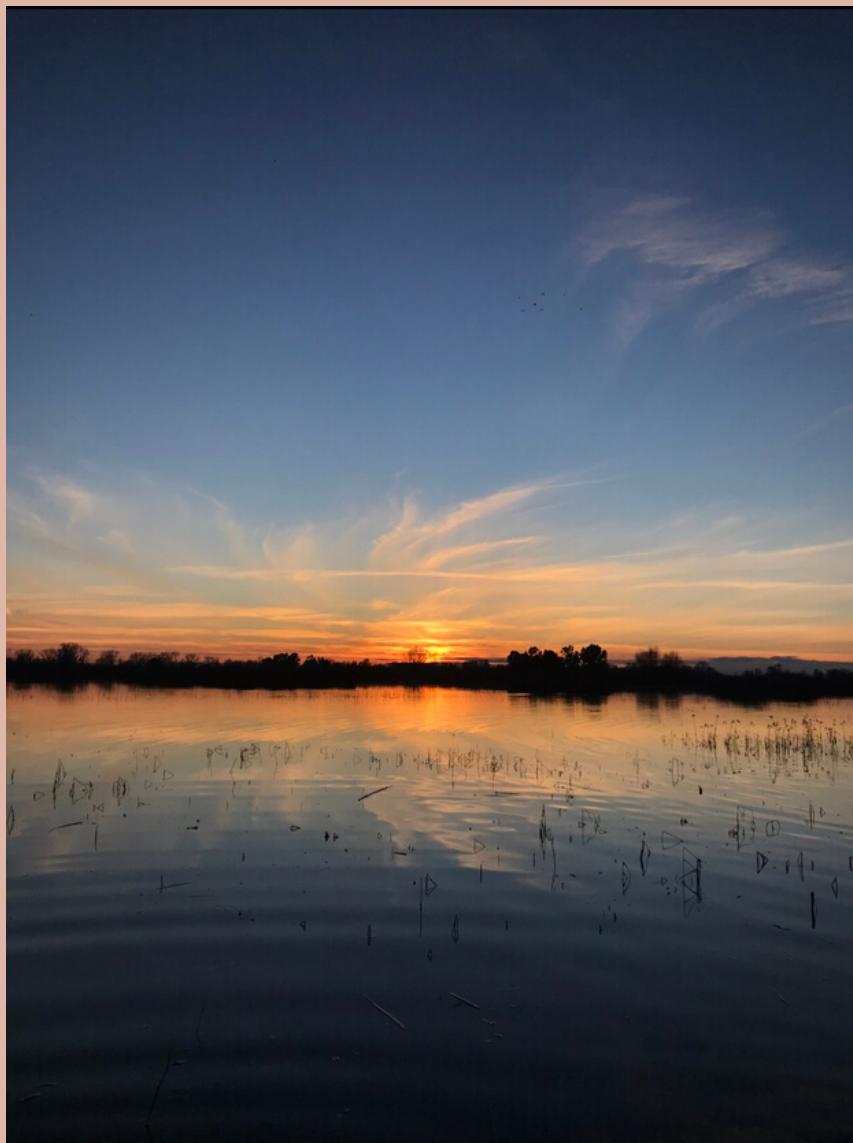
Class of 2020

What if ≠ What is

If I'd never met you,
I wouldn't feel the pain
of losing your sweet embrace,
Or you stuck in my brain.

But if I'd never met you,
I wouldn't know the pleasure
of high school love,
And memories to treasure forever.

Now moving on with our lives,
I force a wistful grin,
Questioning what I did
And anxious, for our new stories to begin.



Cheyanne Bradford

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Class of 2022

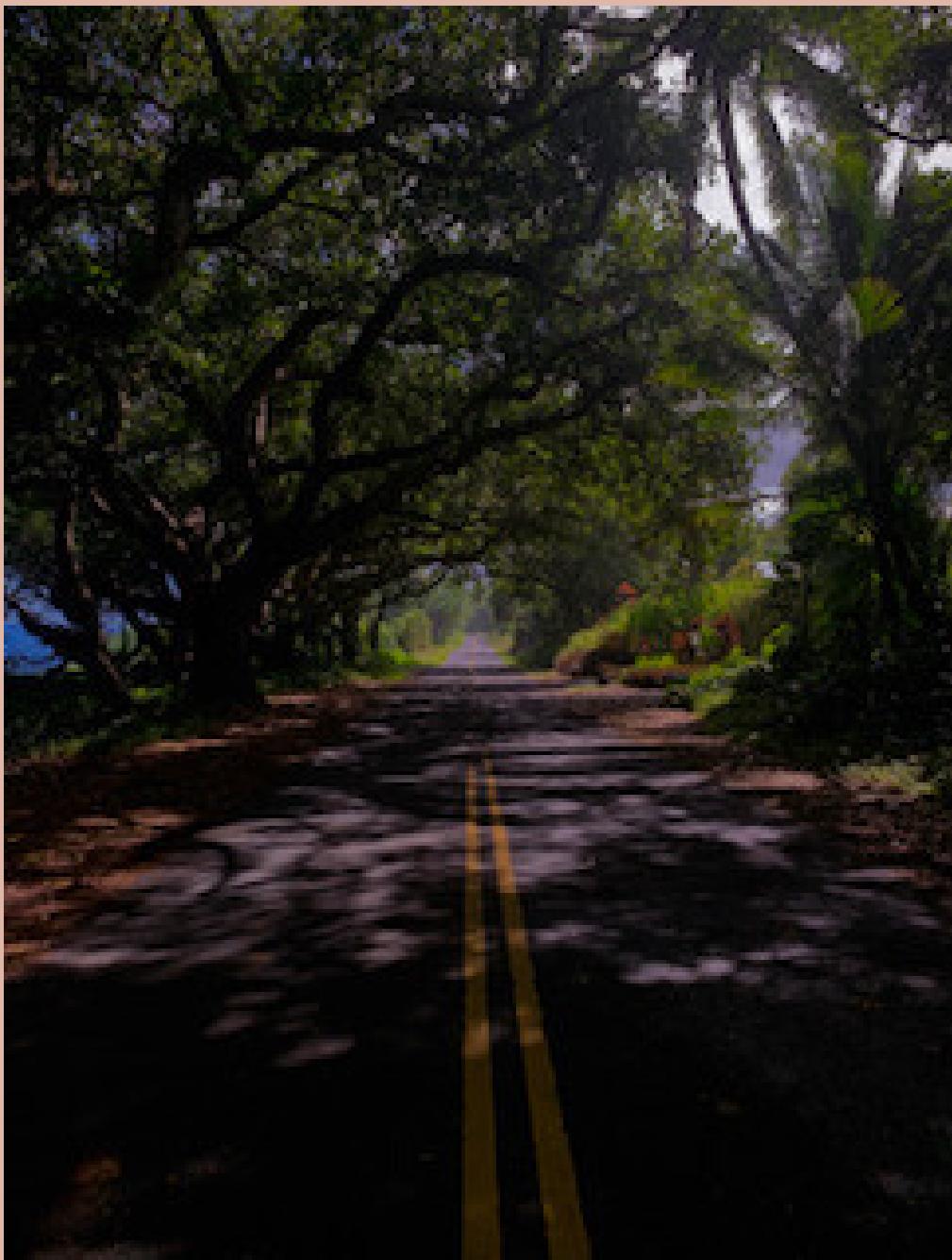
Katerpillar

They always said growing up is hard
But no one ever warned me
Metamorphosis would hurt

And though most days I feel like fighting to get out of this
goddamn chrysalis
I'm teaching myself that good things take time as I work on
these wings

Yes, I'm a late bloomer
But I will bloom
And when I do, you'll find colors you never knew existed.

Yes, I'm a slow learner
But I will learn
And when my wings are finished, I'm never coming back
down.



Yanna Albarracin

59

Class of 2022

2 A.M. on the 18th Birthday

Start where you are
There's beauty in the mess
There's beauty in the chaos
There's beauty in the hope that can only exist where there
is despair and darkness
Start where you are
Buried in madness and love
Build atop of the ruins
They will only lift you higher to the heavens
The sun will rise yet again
Always
And you will do the same
There is warmth all around you and it's not just from the
sun

Keep Going.



Micheal Lano



Jennifer Rualo

62

Class of 2020

Special Thanks To:

Kyle Bonderud

Chris Lebel

Eliot Schain

Students of Alhambra