

The Muckraker's Independent John F. Kennedy School Student

# QVARNZINE

Week Four: Family



Ari Friedman

## La Familia

a bond for life

*algo especial*

a source of comfort

*algo precioso*

to face adversity united by blood and heart

*algo que no quieres perder*

two-faced

*a veces solamente lleno de amor*

and full of individual complexity

*a veces puede causar dolor*

not everyone can call family home

*ama las personas a tu lado*

yet I wish everyone would

*mientras todavía puedes*

Johanna Tigges

Dear Reader,

Family – a word that represents one of the most complex relationships in our lives. What once used to be a cookie-cutter term has now evolved to include many diverse structures of people, far beyond biological relation. No matter what form a family takes it is a bond that can largely enrich one's life as a means of support, education, and community. However, families can also prove to be havens of abuse, bigotry, and isolation, with children and adolescents often most at risk. In this issue, your peers share their work regarding family, revealing the emotions and experiences that best represent family for them. We hope you enjoy their work, and are inspired to examine your own experiences in a creative fashion.

June Gromis

Next theme: *Confession*

What does that mean to you?

Let us know.

## Requiem

I don't remember the day my twin sister died  
When I try to recall it all I see are the hushed words  
with which my parents spoke of her years later.  
Her tiny, six-week old corpse was known to me only by the gravestone  
under which it now rested, and the many tears I had shed for her.  
By the time I knew of her, my parents had long made peace,  
but six-year-old me was tasked with overcoming the most tragic event of her young life  
So I cried for:

missed birthdays  
phantom Christmases  
bikes she'd never ride  
trees she'd never climb  
a best friend she'd never have

Then I screamed for:

a best friend I'd never have  
a companionship cruelly disbanded  
the grief I did not know how to translate

She became my guardian angel,  
someone to thank when things went right  
someone to cry to when things went wrong.  
Although she was without face, without voice, without form  
Her angelic rebirth in my mind mended the open wounds  
the grief had left.

With time, as the vibrancy of childhood faded  
I left her gradually, without saying goodbye.  
She no longer seemed important in the endless cycle of victory and defeat  
that I had categorized my life into.

A year ago, she came back into my mind,  
amidst turmoil which had placed everything in my life into question  
and I screamed again for:

an answer  
a flashlight  
a way to make life beautiful again

I knew there could be no answer from a corpse, yet I screamed regardless  
and the answer propelled itself into the open from amidst my screams:  
her death cannot be in vain.  
On every day I could not live for myself, I lived for her  
And in time, I started living for the both of us.

## Ode an die BVG

BVG: weil wir dich lieben.  
So steht's an tausend Orten in Berlin geschrieben.  
Dies Gedicht ist meine Antwort drauf:  
Denn - BVG, ich lieb' euch auch!

In treuem Dienst von vielen Jahren  
Habt ihr mich durch die beste Stadt der Welt gefahren.  
Von hier nach da und hin und her -  
Kein noch so geheimer Ort ist euch zu schwer.

Besonders lieb hab ich natürlich die S1  
Sie nenne ich - mit etwas Chutzpeh - „meins“  
Der rosa Faden auf dem S-Bahn Plan  
Hat's mir besonders angetan.

Doch auch die U-Bahn, die sich unter uns bewegt  
Und so die Kunst der Unsichtbarkeit versteht  
Ist, um in die richt'ge Richtung mich zu lenken  
Aus meinem Leben nicht mehr wegzudenken.

Auch den Bus darf man auf keinen Fall vergessen!  
Wie oft hab ich schon spät am Abend im X10 gesessen  
und, aus dem Fenster schauend, nachgedacht:  
Wie schön ist doch Berlin bei Nacht!

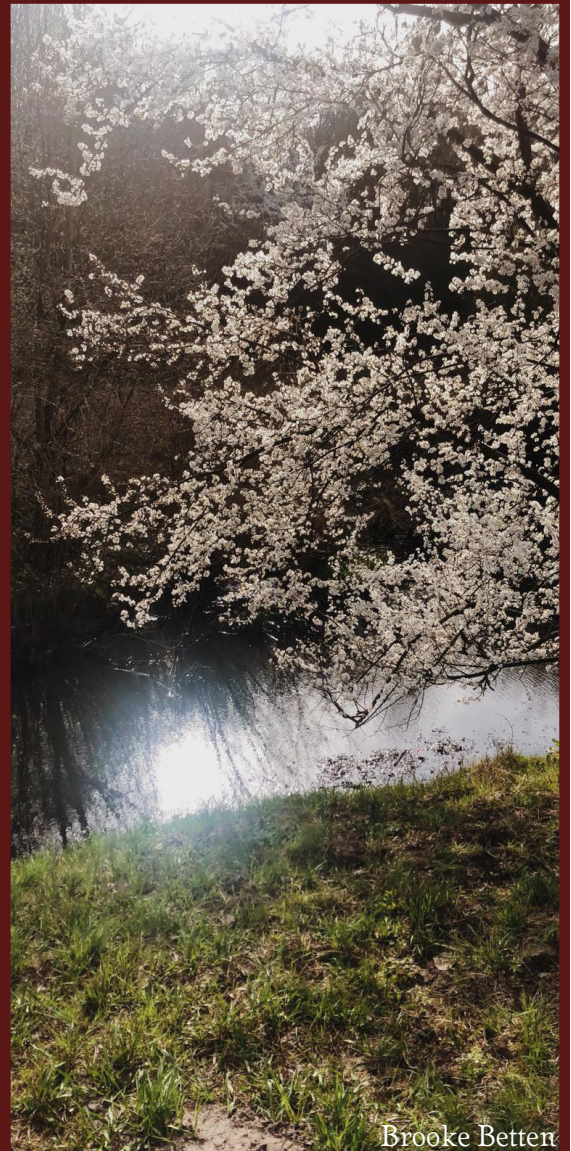
Ich muss einräumen: niemand ist perfekt.  
Auch eure Mobile sind öftermals defekt.  
Und macht dies mein Leben zugegebenermaßen schwer,  
Mir bleibt der Trost: Es gibt Ersatzverkehr.

Ihr könnt euch meine übergroße Freude denken,  
Als ihr beschloß, mich mit dem Schülerticket zu beschenken.  
Nun fahr ich täglich - kostenlos! - mit eurer Bahn  
Von Lichterfelde nach Marzahn.

Die Teenager, die in der Ringbahn trinken!  
Die Großeltern, die ihren Enkeln winken!  
Die Musiker, die hier ihr Geld verdienen!  
Mein tägliches Familientreffen von Berlin.

Selbst nun, wo Krankheit unsren Tag gestaltet  
Seid ihr es, die die Stellung haltet.  
Das gelbe Herz schlägt unversehen  
Für die, die noch zur Arbeit gehen.

Ihr vereint mich mit der Stadt,  
die mich zu mir gemacht hat.  
Berlin, ich lebe  
Und Berlin, ich gebe  
An die Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe  
- aus tiefstem Herzen - meine Liebe.



Brooke Betten



## Daughter

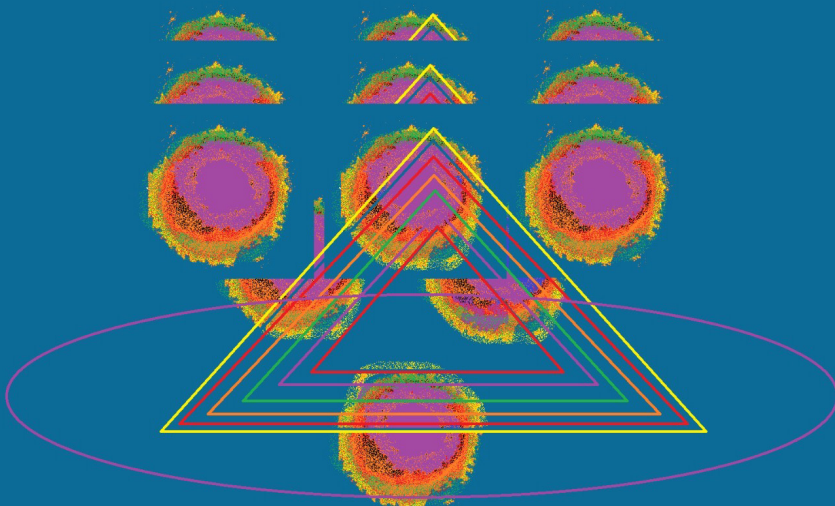
Her indefinite shape crosses my mind  
I am in perpetual ignorance  
It seems I don't know words from people  
Its like telling the fog from the rain and she is the rain  
Acid rain, sweet rain, sour rain  
Burns my heart, warms my heart, tinges my heart  
She confuses the fuck out of me  
It seems I don't know emotions from emotions  
Which ones are the motherly ones?  
I have no idea  
I have been searching for the answer in her eyes for hours  
But they won't stand still  
She won't stand still  
Ever  
Her heart is my pacemaker  
Or is it a scalpel?  
Or is it nothing?  
It's not nothing, I know that now  
The sun also rises, but she has been my sun for hours  
Is that a good thing?  
Its probably worth finding out sometime

June Gromis

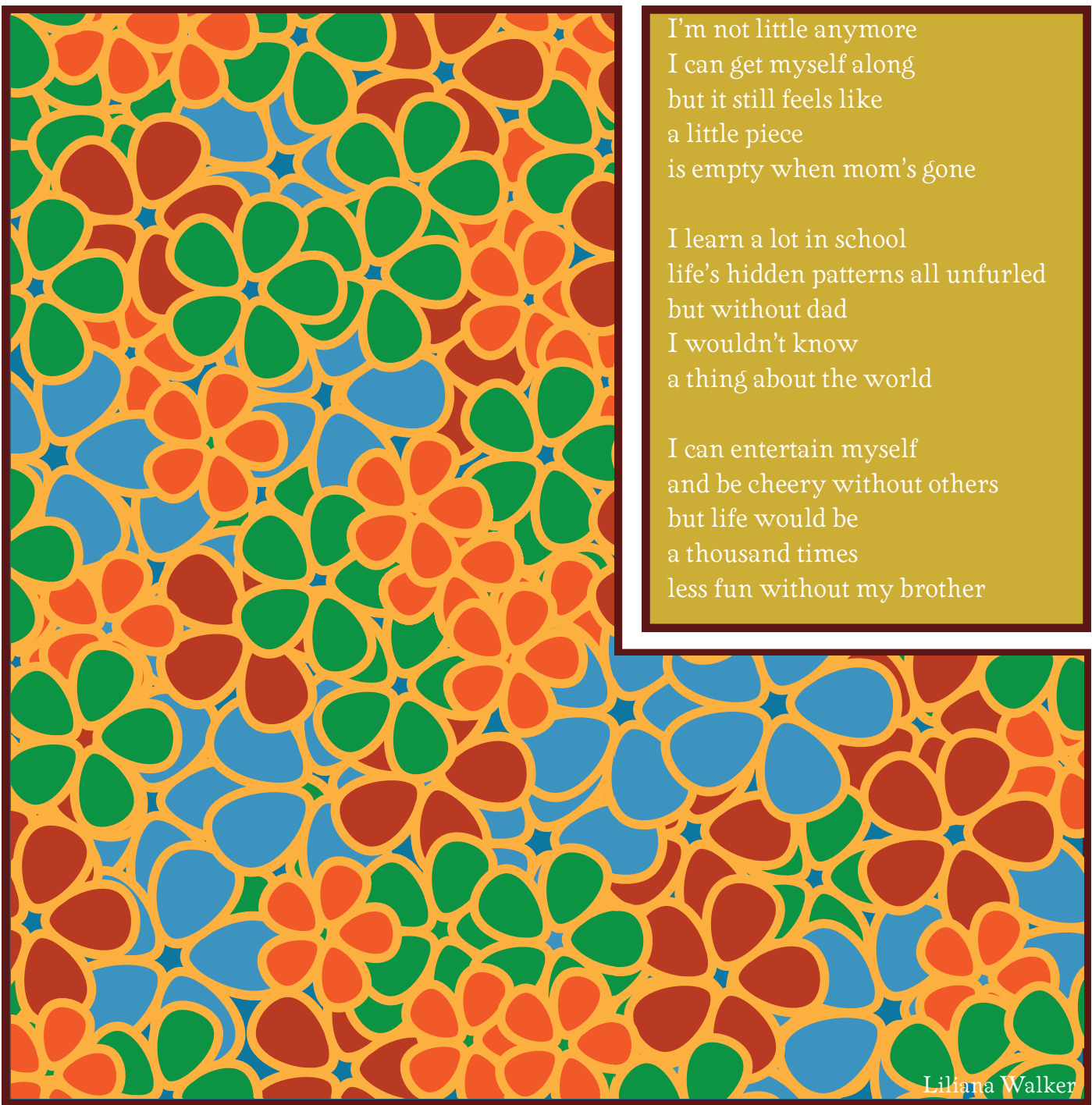
## The Importance of Maintaining a Healthy Relationship With Your Family

During the times of self-isolation and quarantine, we spend a lot more time with our families than many of us are used to. This can create some problems, as a small number of people stuck under one roof indefinitely will inevitably lead to some conflict. While this is almost impossible to prevent, it is possible and necessary to restrict this to an absolute minimum as a means of maintaining sanity and a healthy relationship with your family. The fact that we are in a place of uncertainty as to when school and by extension the world will open up again we must make sure that we are not putting an excessive strain on ourselves and our housemates. The above-mentioned uncertainty is key in this issue as the feeling of ignorance can oftentimes lead to stress and anxiety for the future which can result in a more tense environment at home which can lead to fights and in turn more stress. We must take responsibility and attempt to stop this feedback loop from developing in order to maintain stability in our own lives. There is not much advice to give on this matter as everyone has a different situation at home, but maintaining stability should be on everyone's agenda to ensure sanity and prevent an excruciating home environment.

Jakob Reuter



June Gromis



I'm not little anymore  
I can get myself along  
but it still feels like  
a little piece  
is empty when mom's gone

I learn a lot in school  
life's hidden patterns all unfurled  
but without dad  
I wouldn't know  
a thing about the world

I can entertain myself  
and be cheery without others  
but life would be  
a thousand times  
less fun without my brother

Liliana Walker

## Staff

**Project Leader:** June Gromis

**Muckraker Editors:**

Jakob Reuter, Liliana Walker

**Contributors:** June Gromis, Johanna Tigges,  
Liliana Walker, Brooke Betten, Ari Friedman

**Layout:** Liliana Walker

**Contact Us:** [themuckraker@gmail.com](mailto:themuckraker@gmail.com),  
[muckraker.now.sh](http://muckraker.now.sh)

**Join Us:** The Muckraker is always looking  
for new contributors. Contact us online to  
share your ideas or for more information.

*We are an independent student newspaper (and  
zine!). The opinions expressed here in no way reflect  
those of the John F. Kennedy School.*