

The EVERGREEN

2021

The EVERGREEN

2021

Volume XLI

"Seascape" by Ajay Purohit

2021 Evergreen Cover
Competition Winner



During the 2020-2021 school year, students on both the middle and upper school campuses submitted student-created pieces to our inaugural *Evergreen* cover competition. After Spring Break vacation, students on both Greenhills' campuses voted for their favorite piece of art from the images submitted by over a dozen students. As the winner of this year's cover competition, it is our honor to display Ajay Purohit's oil painting titled "Seascape" on the front cover of this volume. Thank you as well to all of the students who submitted their artwork this year-- You will find your amazing pieces betwixt these pages. We hope you enjoy them as much as we have!

- Your *Evergreen* Editors

Copyright 2021 GREENHILLS SCHOOL

DIGITALLY CREATED BY LUCID PRESS

EDITORS' NOTE

Bringing this publication back to life after several dormant years, while enduring a global pandemic and the limitations of virtual school, was a formidable task. From the start of the last school year, we have been working diligently to bring this publication to you, battling fonts, margins, and all the peculiarities that come with digital publishing.

We would like to thank Micaela Thomas and Ana Stewart who introduced us to this vision of *The Evergreen* online, and led us through the first wobbly steps, even when dealing with the stress of senior year.

We would especially like to thank Ms. Conti, who has been the leading force in this project and much more than just an advisor. She has been guiding us every single step of the way. This book would not begin to exist without her.

We would like to thank all the artists and writers for contributing to our book. We could not be happier with the pieces you have decided to share with us.

Lastly, *The Evergreen* isn't going away. Look out for our printed edition being released this spring.

Your Editors- Ridhi, Seyyal, Jenny



Turtle -Isaac Maine

Table of Contents

3	Turtle, <i>Isaac Maine</i>
6	Lost Sparrow, <i>Sara Raoufi</i>
6	Life Finds a Way, <i>Nate Gajar</i>
8	Bella, <i>Sara Raoufi</i>
10	Unwanted Feeling, <i>F</i>
10	Tranquil, <i>Nicole Zhong</i>
12	The Sorrow of Medusa, <i>Emma Zhang</i>
13	The Rooster, <i>Freaky Tuesday</i>
14	50 Word Fiction, <i>Lys Campbell</i>
15	Ultron, From <i>Avengers: Age of Ultron</i> , <i>Elaina Gress</i>
16	Liberté (Part 1), <i>Jamie Tang</i>
17	Liberté (Part 2), <i>Jamie Tang</i>
18	Liberté (Part 3), <i>Jamie Tang</i>
19	Grandpa Miao, <i>Nicole Zhong</i>
20	Enough, <i>Skye Amana</i>
21	Deep in Thought, <i>Nicole Zhong</i>
22	Zebra in the Woods, <i>Asia Shi</i>
24	One Face, <i>Nicole Zhong</i>
25	Pride and Privilege, <i>Anjana Kanakamedala</i>
26	Levitating Man, <i>Jibreel Rehman</i>
28	Triumvirate, <i>Maya Comer</i>
29	Stands a City, Fallen, <i>Henderson Schmidt</i>
30	Grandmother's Craft, <i>Sara Raoufi</i>
32	Universal Rainbow, <i>Ellora Kirbat</i>
32	Be the Light, <i>Jibreel Rehman</i>
34	Peace, <i>Emma Zhang</i>
35	Cottage Cove, <i>Skye Amana</i>
36	A Season's Home, <i>Sara Raoufi</i>
38	A Vase of Crimson, <i>Sara Raoufi</i>
40	My Demons, <i>Jibreel Rehman</i>
41	Ethereal, <i>Jessica Lou</i>
43	I'm Working, <i>Nicole Zhong</i>

- 44 *Away, Nicole Zhong*
46 *No More Plastic, Amanda Chen*
48 *Stare Down, Jade Zhang*
49 *People Like T, Midnight Gates*
52 *Wild Things, Emma Zhang*

2020 McDowell Award Winners

Poetry

- 57 6th Grade Winner: *The Golden Frame, Violet Joe*
58 7/8th Grade Winner: *A Collection of Poems, Mia Abbasi*
61 9-11th Grade Winner: *Words; randomly arranged, Kenya Hall*

Fiction/ Memoir

- 63 7-8th Grade Winner: *The Forest, Nate Gajar*
65 9-11th Grade Winner: *Eiweissburg, Lys Campbell*

Essay

- 71 7/8th Grade Honorable Mention: *Mandatory Voting, Kabir Sankaran Rajendra*
74 9-12th Grade Winner: *Should Rosetta Stone be Returned to Egypt? Arjun Purohit*
77 9-12th Grade Honorable Mention: *Recycling Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric, Yousef Emara*

Journalism

- 83 9-12th Grade Winner: *The Irishmen: A Study in Morality, Lys Campbell*

Playwriting

- 87 9-12th Grade Winner: *Over the Counter, Will Ellsworth*
91 *Standing Tall, Deeksha Sriram*
91 *Faculty Advisor's Note, Ms. Conti*

Lost Sparrow

*The world blessed me with the right person,
But cursed me with the wrong time.
The world gave us so much pain
But you gave me gold,
Yet there you are, under a tile of gray,
And your memory engraved in stone.'*

As she clasped her trembling hands
Around the lifeless body,
Of the boy who healed her heart
It was the beginning of the end,
'Till death do you apart.

With one last coarse breath,
All at once, his chest filled
"My love will always be with you,
Just with a body you can't rebuild."
They captured each other's gaze,
She poured every ounce of emotion
Into the pair of eyes of nothing,
And unlike her own, his pale skin was pristine.
His heavy body laying in the weeds,
And on the two lovers,
The blue moon beamed.
The boy, drowning in her eyes
As she witnessed his life
Wisp away in disguise
And a fire lit within her.



The cascade of anger
A malignant pain,
Streaming through her veins
As her mind was a whirlwind,
And her limbs tied by chains.
The papyrus pages of her journal,
Caught her tears so she wouldn't drown.

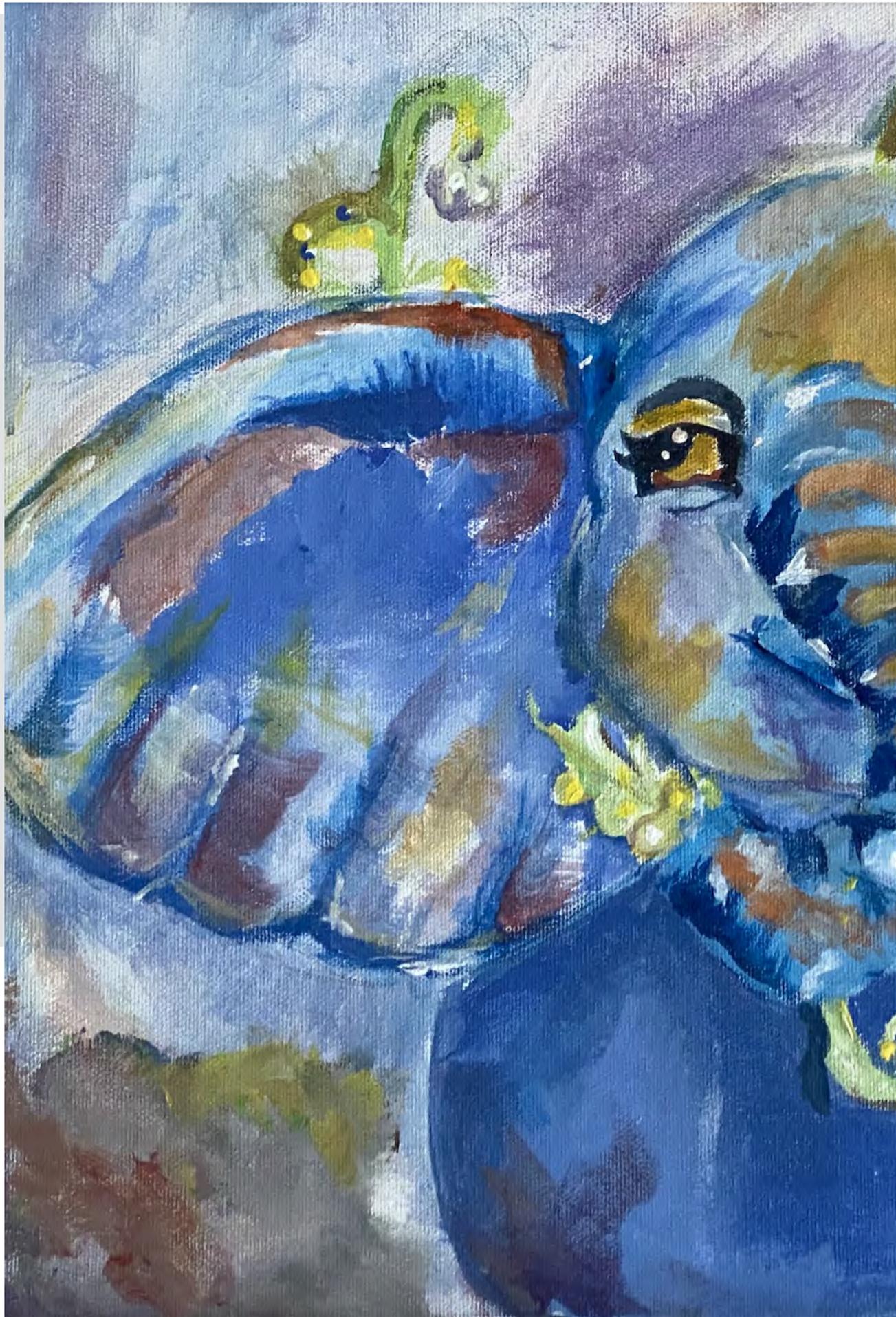
She set fire to her pen,
Flames of lyrical passion,
Her words were ignited
Spread poems of expression.

*'I wished to find you in a time,
When the world was fair to us.
Where our love could escape the shadows of
hardships.
And until we meet again, know that without 'u'it's not
us.*

*Life with you was a painting with reckless blues
Yet on my heart
You left a bruise.*

*We've battled too many wars
And wrote too many stories
To end as if we never were;
I've lost my dear sparrow,
I am a saddened dove left tender,
So with you I keep writing,
To live our chapter forever.'*

-Sara Raoufi

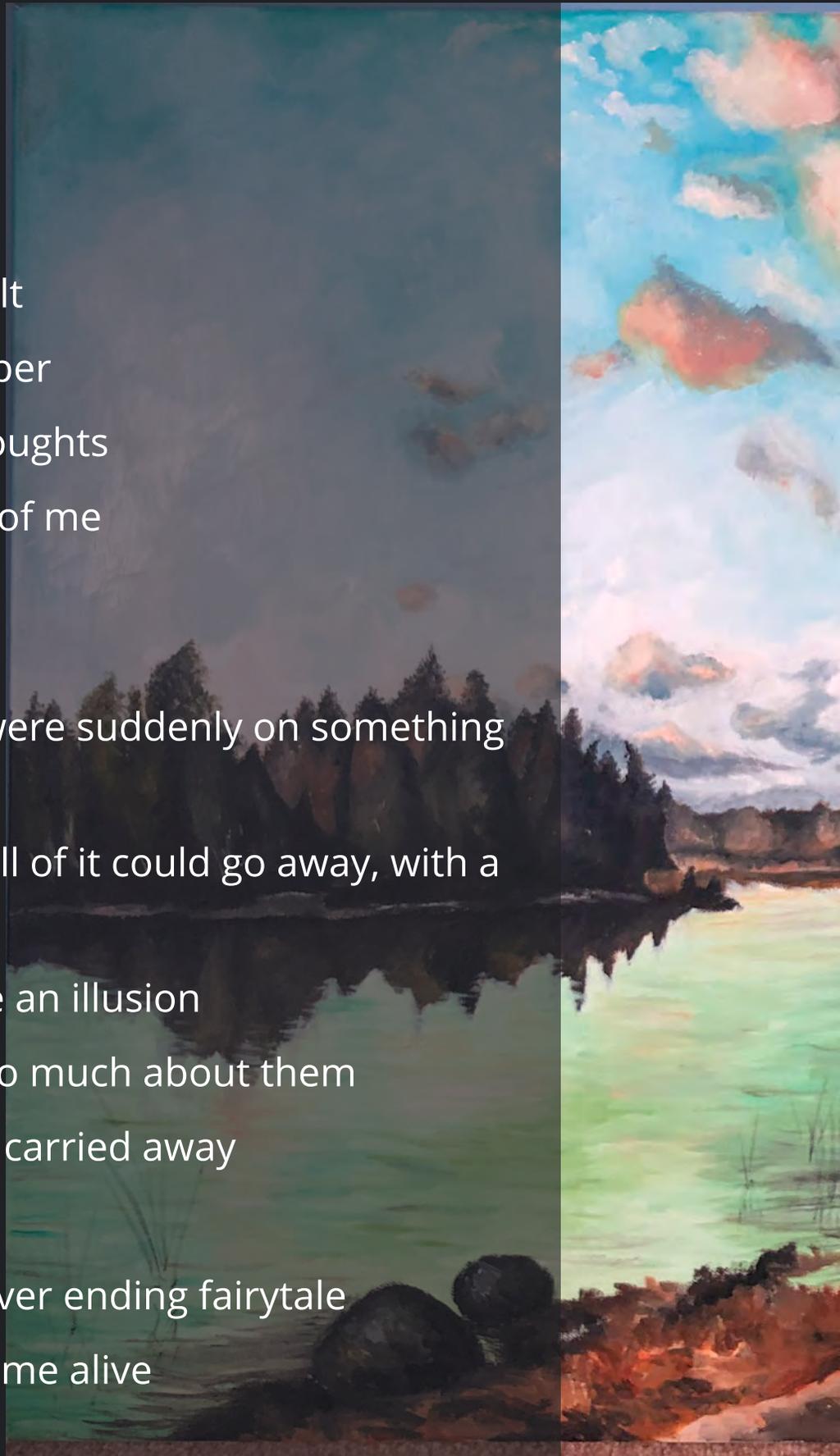




Bella -Sara Raoufi

As a poet
I hate that poetry
Can make me describe
Things I never knew I felt
Until my pen hit the paper
And an ocean of my thoughts
Splattered, out in front of me
Unwanted feelings

My complex thoughts were suddenly on something
ever so delicate
Isn't it so absurd, how all of it could go away, with a
simple rip?
Maybe my thoughts are an illusion
And I shouldn't think too much about them
Because it's easy to get carried away
Lost
In what seems like a never ending fairytale
A fairytale longing to come alive





Tranquil -Nicole Zhong



The Sorrow of Medusa -Emma Zhang

The Rooster

Something sharp and swift sliced through her eye with such pristine accuracy as she held out a little bit of crumble to a curious rooster peering over her shoulder. Without a second thought, it lunged like lightning with a direct hit of its beak into her right eye; a much sweeter treat if I do say so myself.

She screamed wildly, grabbing the bird's wattle in a desperate attempt to pull its beak out of her eye. Fine splatters of blood misted through the air as the bird's beak held itself snugly in the vitreous chamber, blocking any excess gore from splatting onto the farm's dusty ground, still blanketed by the footsteps of her brother that walked by; ignoring the commotion.

In spite of the rooster's beak being painfully lodged inside the thick gelatinous socket of her eye, she grabbed at its angry body and tried

desperately to shake it until a wild heap of disheveled white feathers flew out. The bird's sharp talons clawed into her cheeks and one clung deep into her nose, causing it to bleed. She couldn't see.

With a massive shove the screaming continued with no help coming from the sky. Like a guardian dove coming to knock some sense into the demonic rooster, she yanked, then slammed its head into the ground. The bird's claws tore through her skin, blood welling up through the soft texture.

A quick "pop!" rang out when the beak let loose from the socket, giving the moment an almost satisfying feel despite the pure agony she was enduring.

The rooster lay dead and karma took its toll. Two hours later, she died in the hospital of severe blood loss and a fowl infection.

-Freaky Tuesday

Not too long ago, Margaret Crab accidentally sat on a most unusual-looking bee, which soon wriggled its way to freedom and stung her.

Now, a poster reads:

“WANTED: Crazy woman seen stealing 33 gallons of raw honey. Distinguishing marks: scar from irritated bee sting on left wrist. Sketch appended.”

They pushed me towards Gran. “She can still hear you,” they said, “Tell her a story.” “I had a bird!” she croaked, rubbing her feather necklace. “She’s just sleep-talking,” they said, smiling. “I had a bird named Nugget,” she wheezed, “and he et my feet, and they took him away!”

Leary sat watching the dark house, shabby panama hat over his eyes. A candle dipped on, bobbed across the panes. Hm.

Electricity? On. Mood? She was alone.

Leary twirled his grimy P.I. badge.

The letter. The wax seal.

Leary shoved out of the car. But it was too late.



Ultron, From Avengers: Age of Ultron - Elaina Gress

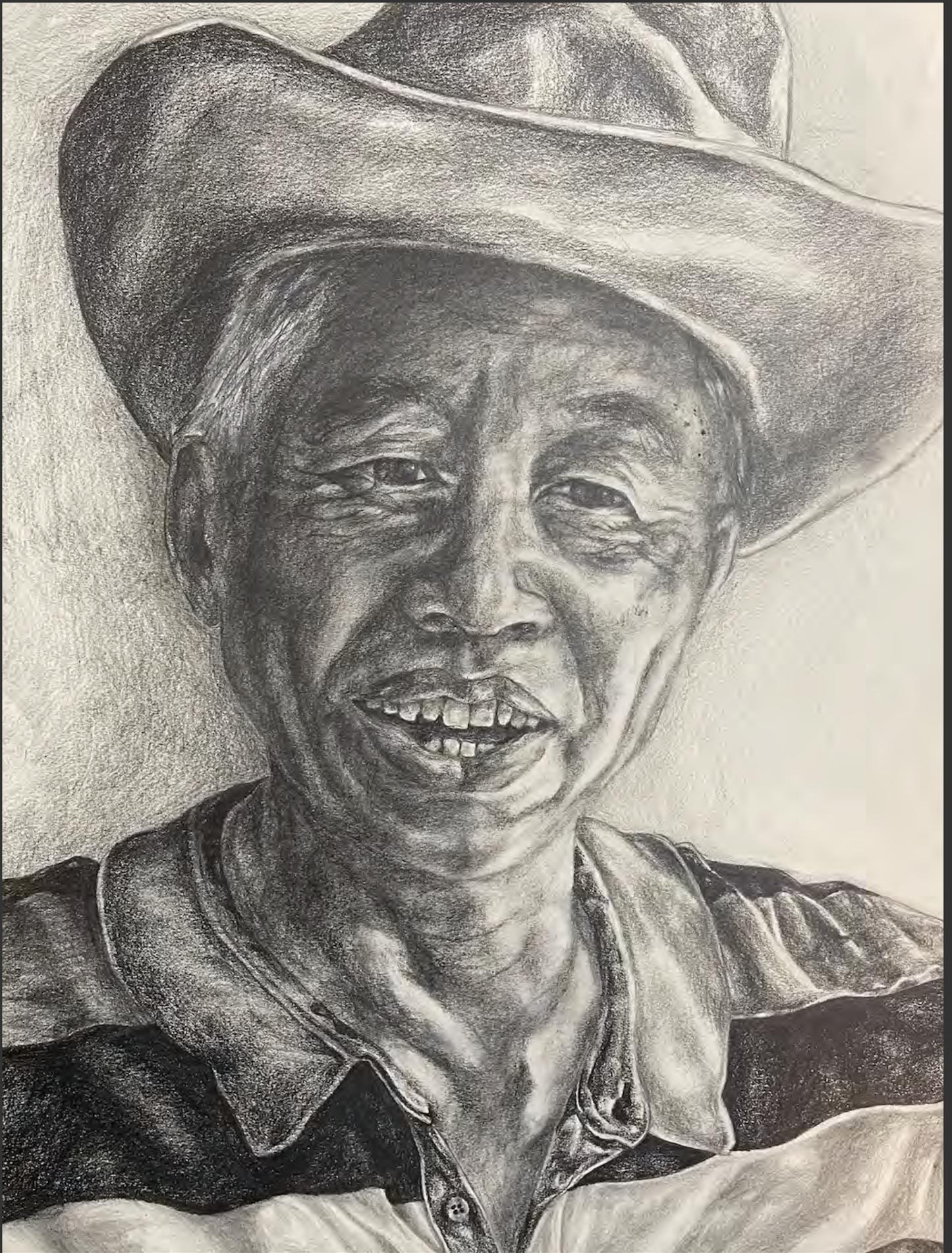


Liberté (Part 1) - Jamie Tang



Liberté (Part 2) - Jamie Tang





Grandpa Miao -Nicole Zhong

"Enough is what we all strive to be.

We think being, "enough," will finally set us
free.

But what we all

fail

to see

is that in society's eyes

we are never

enough.

There is always something about us that will appear

amiss

a quirk or difference that we must fix.

We all think

if I could just be

pretty enough -

perfect enough -

popular enough -

cool enough -

smart enough -

it would be enough.

I

would be enough.

But enough is a moving mirage.

You won't ever become the, 'enough,' you chase,

No matter how much makeup you affix to your face,

or how thin your waist.

No matter how many friends you can claim,

or how you can sink into a crowd; blend in

forget your name,

appear to be the same.

It is enough to be yourself.

Enough isn't something you will ever feel.

Because the, "enough," society makes us wish to achieve
isn't real,

but make-believe.

Society,

brainwashing our minds until we espouse the notion

that to halt all our inner commotion;

feelings of shortcomings

to be

enough

we must leave behind ourselves.

Place all the naturally beautiful parts in boxes,

unique parts on the

dusty upper shelves.

Don't let others measure you up to impossibility that way,

don't let others have any say

in how wonderful you are.

The best things about us can't be counted

can't be compared

to the unreasonable, "enough."

You are more than any, "enough," or amount required.

You can stop being so

tired

As you try,

try,

try,

to be the absolute best.

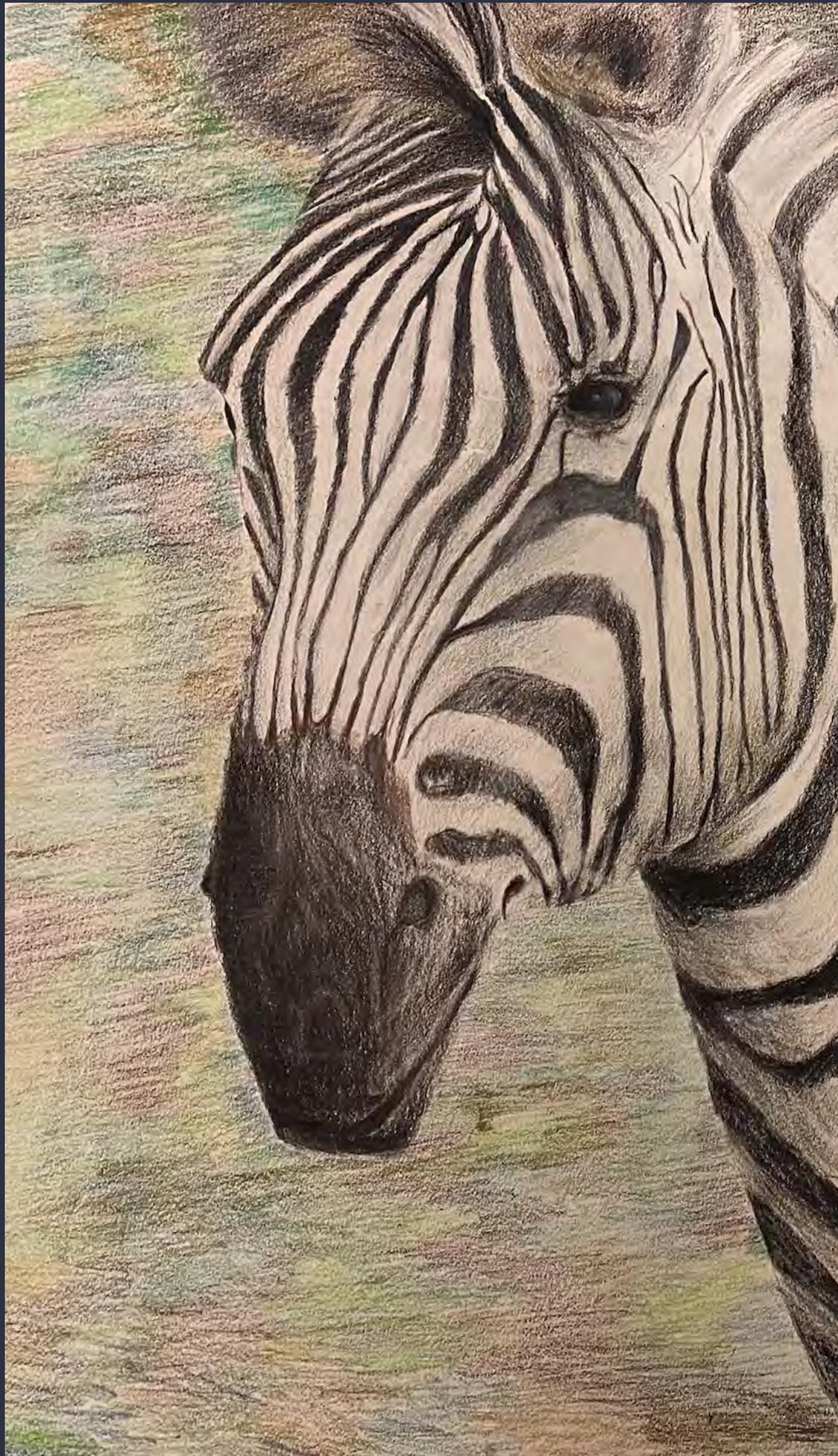
Put all of your worries of self-inadequacy

at a rest.

You are more than enough.

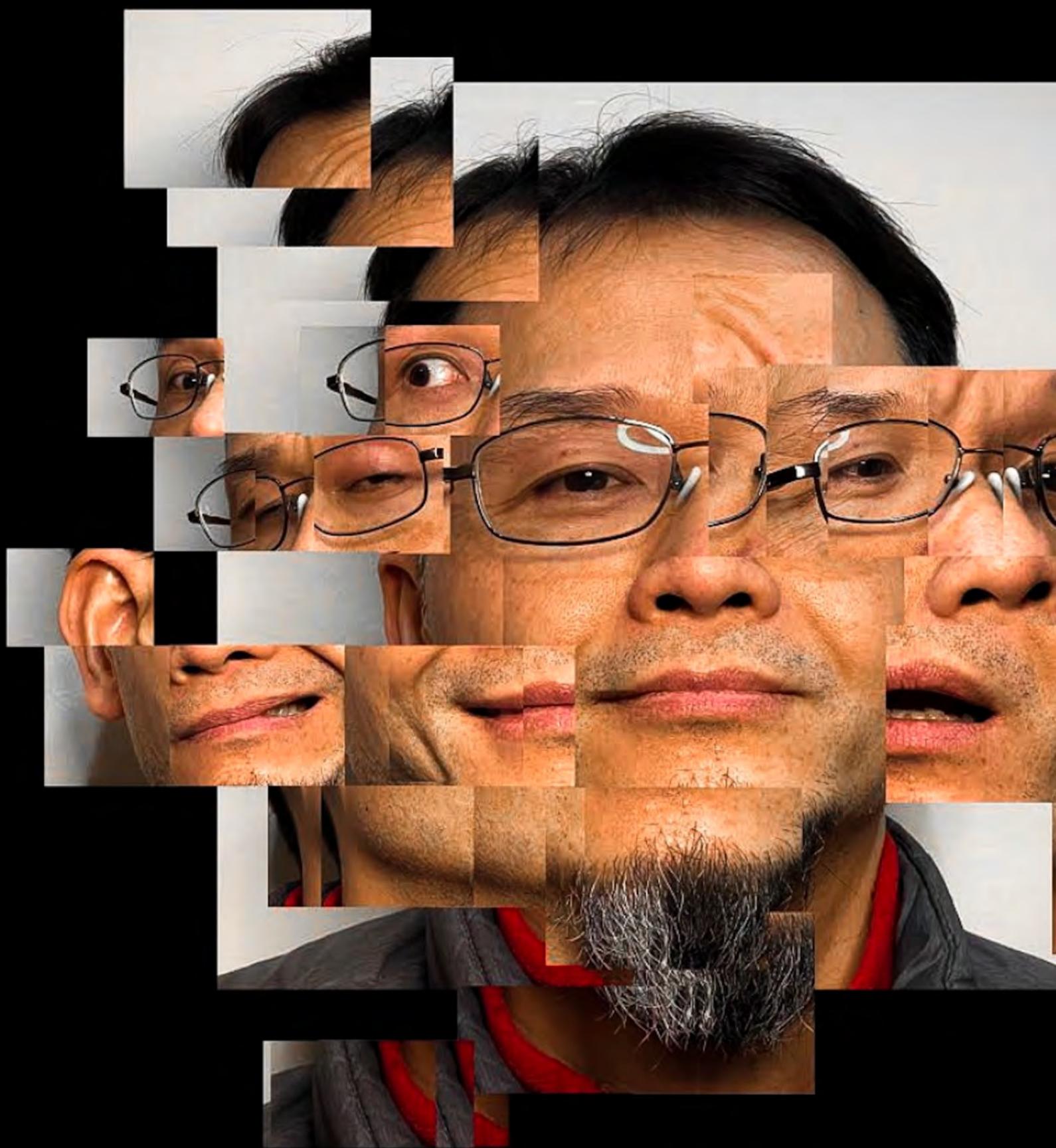


Deep in Thought -Nicole Zhong





Zebra in the Woods -Asia Shi





For the pride no one can define,

For the pride that can't pay bills,

Why in our craze shall we value it?

For the bad person it shall make me,

the guilt is unmovable, unstoppable.

I've seen the unknown pain and misery;
universally masked.

While the glorified privilege, representing strength and power;
a universal pride and honor.

So why am I still torn?

Because I am a part of the privilege that poisons this world.

Beautiful, but poisonous.

However learning to accept and move forward from that guilt,
is much more honest and rewarding.

For our privilege is nothing when we hide it and act ashamed of it,
but worth so much more when we spread it to help others,
for those who don't even have an option for pride, and privilege.

Maybe then our world will turn ugly when the nightmares of others invade
our sweet dreams.

At least then, there won't be poisonous pride and privilege anymore.

Unightly it maybe, but pure and honest,

Our world shall be

Pride and Privilege - *Anjana Kanakamedala*





Levitating Man -Jibreel Rehman



Stands a City, Fallen

Henderson Schmidt

Between vast cliffs of stone
battered beneath boreal winds
stands a city, fallen.

The spires hewn by hands long dead
reach up, crumbling, at the skies
under a funeral shroud of snow
dotted with pale bone.

At the heart of the city
at the base of the grandest tower
where the cobblestones are almost bare
of the sky's frozen tide
sits a grave.

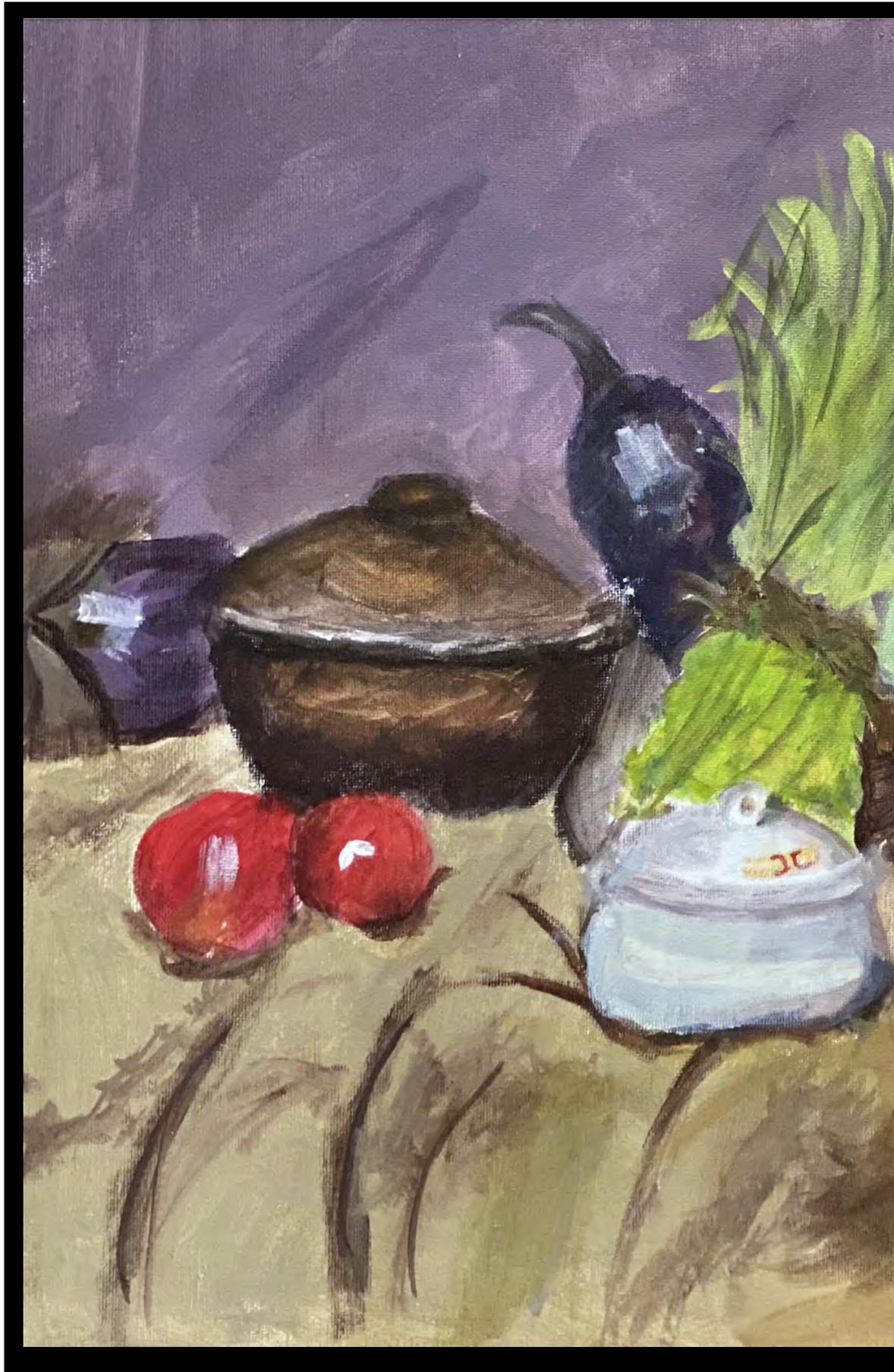
The grave
of the one
who built this grand city
who built these intricate spires
and now lies dead

eaten away
by the silent fate
that came for the builder
as it did for the city
under this shroud of snow.

The silent fate
that is known to all
as time.

And with that time,
as the snow sets in, flake by flake
as the grand spires slowly fall
battered beneath boreal winds
between vast cliffs of stone

the city
and the grave
will return
to dust.





Grandmother's Craft -Sara Raoufi

Universal Rainbow

I've been sitting in this chair all day
Bored out of my mind
Trying' to find something to do
Wonderin' how long this gonna go on
{strum strum}

Oh hey
But After every rainstorm, round every corner
There's a rainbow
A rainbow
There may not be a pot of gold at the end of this
rainbow
But there's hope in every color we see



ou and me
s and we
with all these different we lives lead I have to do school over zoom
And my brother's shouting in the other room
I have cut my hair
But I can't go anywhere



Be the Light -Jibreel Rehman

But there's are rainbow inside you and me
You just gotta believe
This is sounding so cheesy
But hey!
But there's are rainbow inside you and me

You just gotta believe
This is sounding so cheesy
But hey!

After every rainstorm, over every shoulder
There's a rainbow
A rainbow
There may not be a pot of gold at the end of this rainbow
But there's hope in every color we see
You and me
Us and we
With all these crazy we lives lead

{instrumental break}

There are people out there saving lives
working day and night
Somebody's chalkin' walk
Their spreading encouraging talk

Cuz separate we're all amazing
But we're so much better together
We're united by this rainbow
This rainbow

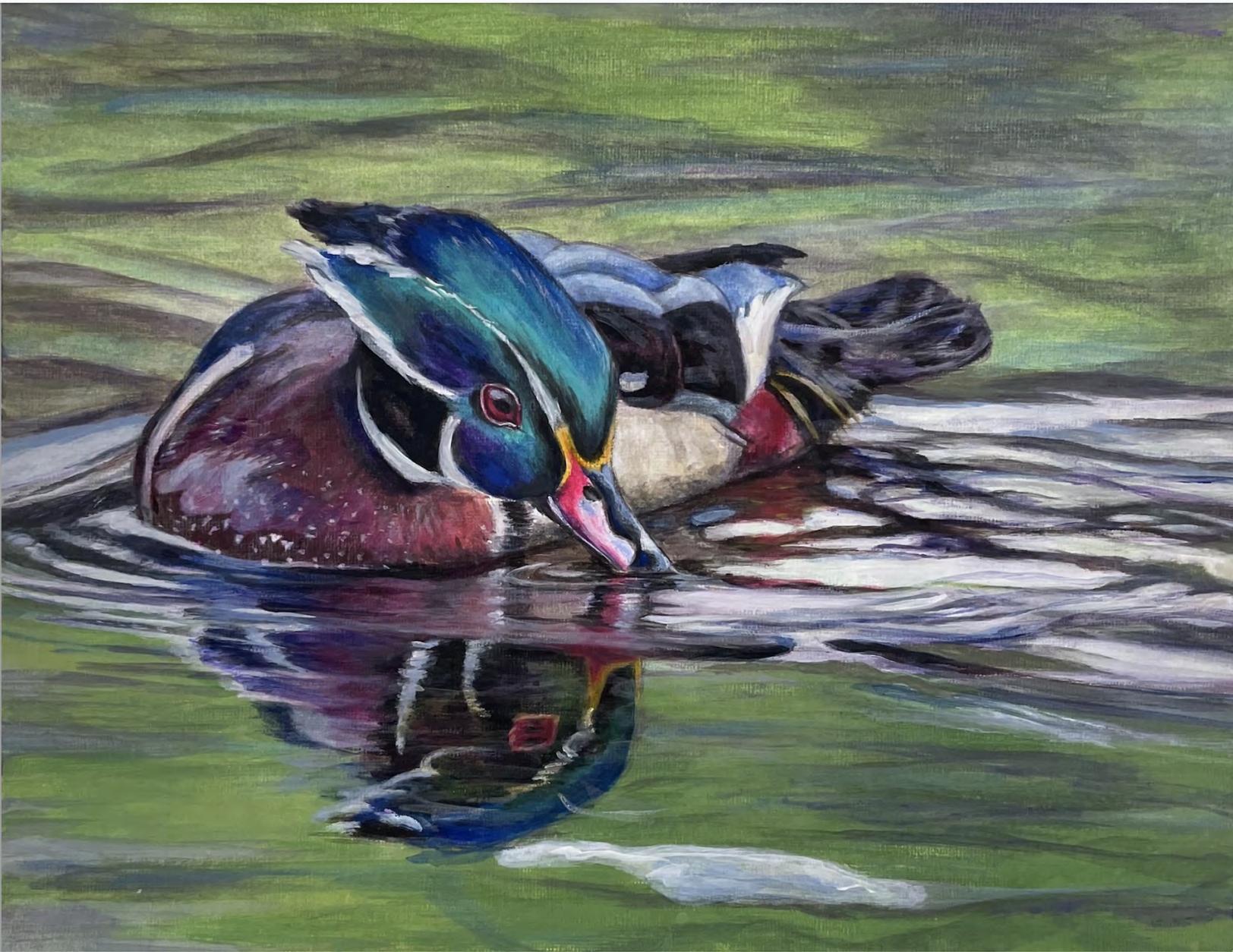
This rainbow

We're united by this rainbow

This rainbow

This rainbow

The universal rainbow



Peace -Emma Zhang

Kick, splash, pant, stroke
grunt, push, flick,
hair soaked
swooshing, swirling
summertime smiles
swimming
peering through picturesque bubbles
sand startled from slumber
in my wake
a beautiful picture your mind
would advise you to take
I race onwards,
and
I am there
Turtle Rock.
yonder it stands
water is caressing me in it's wavy hands
floating on my back
I admire its
sureness
and wisdom.
The inspection
starts
I search for a sturdy section to scale
all the way to the top
yanking myself out of the water
she gives me a hand
helping me find little holes
I climb

capturing the scene,
and reach the top
where everyone gets a chance to be a Queen
even if you only rule how the water will ripple when you jump
and screaming as loud as I can
flying
soaring
dancing
jumping
free
and hitting the fresh, cold blue
adoring the sound of the splash,
scattering shimmering water across the lake
I submerge
to peace
to kindness
I am separate from the pains and pressures of society
meanness and inadequacy can't follow me
I am no longer the perfect imposter pretending
to be the girl they wish I could be
for underwater lies
a secret world
opening its doors to me
for only a moment
then
it's gone
I emerge
gone, but
not forgotten



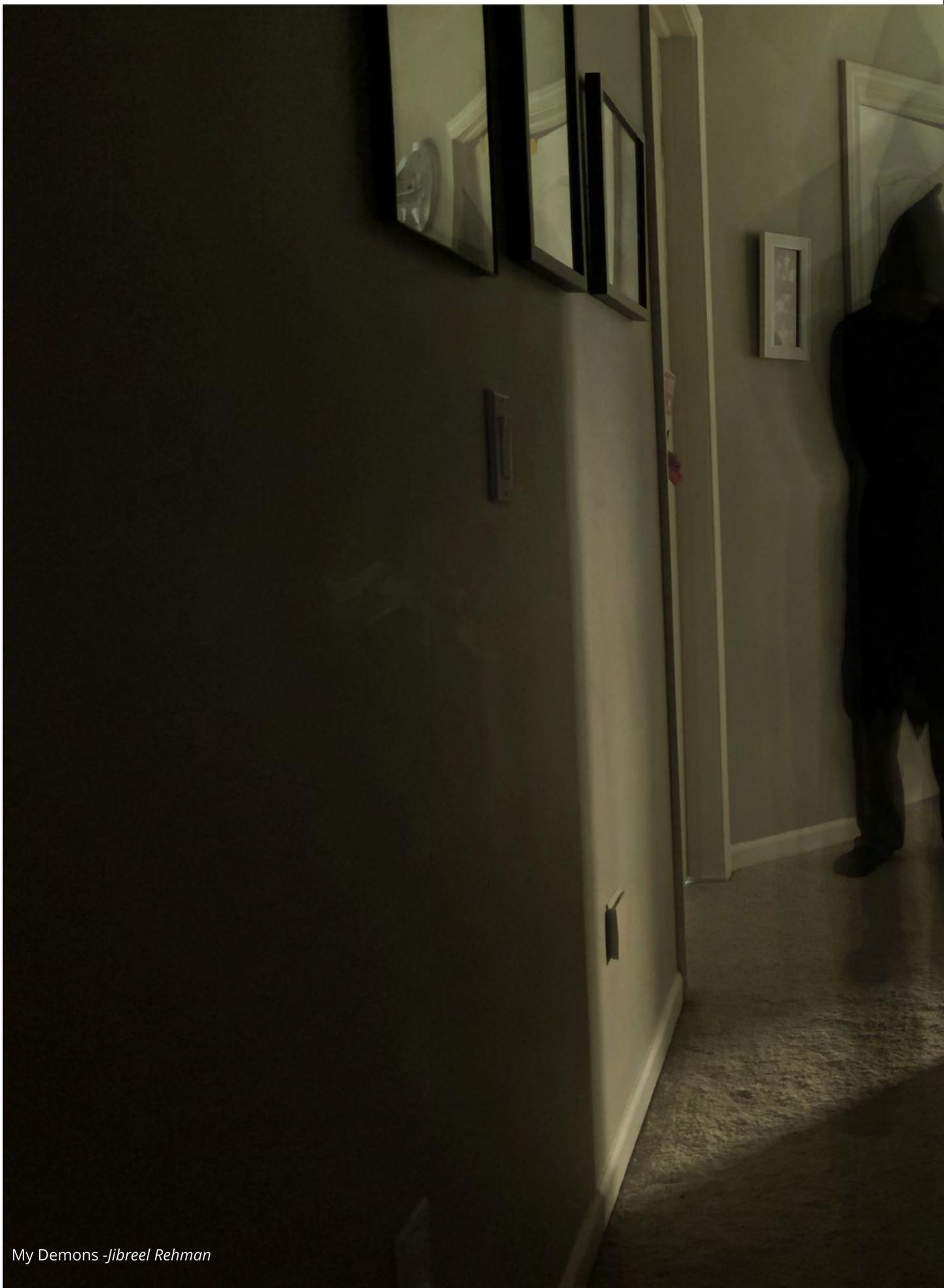


A Season's Home - Sara Raoufi





A Vase of Crimson -Sara Raoufi



My Demons - *Jibreel Rehman*

Ethereal

A young girl with golden blonde hair and sky blue eyes was running from a dark figure. And then she was cornered. She grabbed a pole and hit the figure who was trying to catch her. But the figure seemed to be immune to any type of attack. "I'll let you go this time, Madison," the figure said in a sharp raspy voice. "But I'm coming back for you." Just like that, he left, leaving Madison alone in the middle of an alley...

Beep Beep

Madison gasped, waking up from her dream,

"Oh, it's just my phone."

She picked up the phone.

Jenna: Hey, bestie!

Madison: Why are you texting me this late?

Jenna countered: Why are you awake this late?

Madison: Cuz my phone beeped

Jenna: Haha ok

Madison: So...?

Jenna: Wanna come with me to Cedar Point tomorrow?

Madison: Of course!

Jenna: Ok, I'm going to sleep now. I'll call you tomorrow morning!

The next morning, Madison woke up to the sound of her phone ringing. "Finally! I've been trying to call you forever, Madison!" Jenna shouted into the phone.

"Sorry. I just woke up," Madison said.

"Really?! It's already 10 AM," Jenna said.

"Oh... well, I didn't realize I slept for that long," Madison said.

"Clearly you didn't," Jenna teased. "Anyways, about going to Cedar Point." "Yeah?" Madison pressed.

"I'm coming over to pick you up, so you'd better be ready!" Jenna said. "Ok! See you," Madison said. Jenna came over 30 minutes later to pick up Madison.

"Hi!" Jenna said.

"Hi! I'm so excited!" Madison replied.

They drove to Cedar Point and went to the ticket stand to go buy some tickets. When they were waiting in line for a ride, a dark hooded figure jumped out of the blue and pulled Jenna and Madison down a dark alleyway. Madison vaguely heard anything, but she caught a few words.

"Should... knock out.... So.... everything...."

Then everything went to a muffled sound, like she had earmuffs on. Someone pushed a cold glass cup against her mouth and made her gulp down the cold liquid. As soon as she drank down the first drop, her mind started to feel oozy. She tried to hang on to the last of her consciousness but the darkness dragged her down.

She woke up again sitting in a chair with her hands bound behind her back. In a dark room with tubes connected to her arms and hands. They were injecting some kind of liquid into her body. She looked over to Jenna and saw that she looked about the same as Madison. She looked really pale. Madison tried to scream, but someone clamped a hand over her mouth.

"You're not supposed to be awake," a sharp voice said.

"Maybe we should give her another sedative," another voice mumbled Just then, Jenna woke up.

"Hey, the other one is awake," said the person sitting beside Jenna.

The sharp voice sighed, "I guess I will tell you the story now.

"This world was once a beautiful place. There was no such thing as violence. Then one day a shadow from a nearby world came to this world. Making everyone violent and angry. The doctor made a vaccine to cure everyone. But a tiny piece of the shadows still remains in their bodies."

"How come we don't have shadows?" Madison interrupted.

"Oh. You do," he said, "Just a teeny weeny bit of it passed down from your parents. But not enough to affect you completely. So, here's the plan. See those tubes? It's injecting something called luciform into your body. It's the complete opposite of the shadows. So, it will take away the shadows and also give you powers." "What kind of powers?"

Like, magical powers?!" Jenna exclaimed

"Yep! Now I can't say anything more. Try to go to sleep. In the morning, you'll wake up on your bed thinking nothing has happened," he said and raised a crystal. Madison closed her eyes and fell asleep.

The next morning, she woke up and texted Jenna right away

Madison: Heyyy

Jenna: Hi!

Madison: Yesterday was so fun!

Jenna: Yeah! I know right!

Madison: We should go to Kalahari together next time

Jenna: Ofccc!

Madison: Well we should be getting ready for school now!

Jenna: Yup, see you at the bus station!

Madison: Cya!

-Jessica Lou



I'm Working -Nicole Zhong





Away -Nicole Zhong

NO MORE



PLEASE
NO MORE PLASTIC
NO MORE PLASTIC
NO MORE PLASTIC
NO MORE PLASTIC

THE PLASTIC

-Amanda Chen





People like T

I lay back on the ground, staring up at the swirling green-black sky, the purple ball of flames hanging above me as if suspended on a thread.

"Does the sky look different where you come from?" The voice is both husky and light but the words are whispered like they're sharing a secret with me.

"Yeah, a lot different. Our sky is blue during the day and black at night and you can see so many stars. Our sun is yellow but you can't see it all the time."

"What's a sun?"

"It's a massive, yellow star that my planet revolves around."

"Wow... that sounds beautiful."

"Yeah, but if you look at it too long your eyes hurt."

"That's... strange."

"No stranger than your planet is to me."

"Fair enough."

It's the middle of their night, maybe a little later. The star lights up the area like the pale purple fires that light up their city not far away. Actually, if I sit up and look back towards the way we came, I can still see them glowing in the distance.

Instead, I roll onto my side to look at T, the first person I met on this planet. Their name isn't really T but I can't wrap my brain around the strange vowels in their name so I just call them T. A humanoid figure with pale blue skin stands out against the soft, off-white grass that pokes at my side. Their head is pillowed on one long, slim arm. The other is at their side, palm down. Four long fingers, each with three knuckles, lay still on the grass. They turn their head to look at me. Their eyes are too big for their head, colored dark violet with red pupils. A rugged mohawk of neon green hair slices from between their eyes and disappears behind their back, ending at the edge of their tail with a puff of green. Their tail twitches on the ground beside them, sending small purple sparks dancing between the blades of the Vixalium fire grass, like a tiny firework show. They wear pants made of loose brown fabric and a sleeveless shirt colored dark orange with straps that look like they could be leather criss-crossing their chest.

"I've never seen anyone as strange looking as you. I mean, what are those bumps on the sides of your head. Are all of your people so... translucent?" they ask.

I laugh and tug at my ear. "These are called ears, all humans have them. It's how we hear things. And..." I trail off, looking down at my hands. I wiggle my fingers and for a moment I can see the white grass through the dark skin. "Translucent? No, that's just me."

They blink, their eyelids moving horizontally. They blink again. "You... you look different from your people." It sounded more like a question than a statement. I pause. They told me that all Vixallans are identical copies of one another. I'm not even sure if genders exist in their species and I don't know how to bring it up without making this awkward.

"Yeah, I do look different. Well, I'm not translucent on my planet. Just when I visit others." Their blank expression of confusion doesn't change. I roll onto my back, the sparks bursting up and briefly illuminating my auburn hair before fading away. Softly, I say, "In my world, everyone looks different from everyone else." They tilt their head, their tail pausing and eyes narrowing. I bite my bottom lip, trying to phrase this in a way they'll understand.

“Generally we look the same but our hair and skin are all different colors.”

I look up at the star, watching a solar flare dance across the surface. “It causes a lot of problems in my world. Humans... most of them don't like people who look and act differently than they do. Things would be a lot simpler if we all looked the same.”

The silence stretches out between us for a while before they say, “I never thought about that before.”

“You never had any reason to.”

“What does that mean?”

I sit up. “This place”—I gesture around at nothing in particular—“it doesn't have those kinds of problems.” I sigh. “You wouldn't understand.”

They sit up and look at me with those huge, sharp eyes. “No, I don't understand.” T shakes their head. “I never even knew it was possible to look like anything else but I think it might be nice.” I open my mouth to dismiss the idea, getting tired of the subject, but T talks over me, words spilling out of them as if they couldn't stop. “I mean, of course I've seen other species of—what did you call us?—aliens. Not many since Vixalla is on the edge of our galaxy but I've always thought their species' were like mine, that they all looked the same. But maybe I was wrong. Maybe they are as diverse and interesting as you humans.”

They pause their rant then suddenly pull themselves up into a crouch, the comically long legs bending at their first and second knees. They dig into the grass with their long fingers, sending up the purple sparks in a frenzy until they reach the black dirt. T smears their fingers on their cheeks, leaving black marks like the paint football players wear during a game. They smile, a big goofy grin that lights up the field more than the fire grass could ever hope to.

I laugh and they tilt their head, giving me that same puzzled look. Then they smile. “Carmen, I will never understand the intricacies of your breed.”

“Same to you, T.” They fall back onto the grass and send up a plume of sparks that dance through the air before fizzling out. My good mood fizzles out as fast as the sparks. “I wish I was really here,” I say quietly. “I wish that I could feel the grass.”

He looks puzzled again. “I mean, I can feel the pressure of it against my skin but I can't tell if it's hot or cold or...” I trail off, gazing out at the field of white grass. It ends abruptly some distance away, cut off by large, dark pillars that I think are Vixallian trees but they're too far away to tell their exact shape. T moves to sit next to me.

Softly, T says, “It's cold tonight but the sparks are warm.” They smile at me and I smile back. I lean back on my arms and stare up at the star. I wonder if I can see this star from Earth, maybe it's one of thousands, identical to all the rest like how the Vixallans are identical. Right now, it seems impossible to mistake it for another but everything will look different when I wake up.

“Carmen, will you ever come back?”

I sigh, my moment of serenity broken. “No, I've never gone to the same place twice.”

They lean in close enough that their arm brushes mine. “You're sure that it's not possible?” I look at them then at my hands. When you look at them directly, you can see them just fine, but when I move my hand they fade in and out of view. I sigh and drop it, the sparks adding a dramatic flare.

"I can't control it, T. I just go where I go and that's the end of it. Tomorrow night, I'll be on another planet, talking with them and learning about their world." I decided not to tell them about the planets that hadn't welcomed me like they had.

Some of the planet's inhabitants have been cruel to me and I can't leave until morning. I don't know why I can't leave, I don't know why I go anywhere at all. I don't know why I can understand and speak their languages fluently, and yet I'm failing Spanish. All I know is that I wish it would stop, that I could have just one peaceful night where I can just sink into darkness and wake up as if nothing happened.

On nights like this, nights when I meet people like T, I can almost forget how much of a curse this power can be. I remember nights when I drank can after can of energy drinks in an attempt to stay awake. But I'm only human and I need to sleep at some point. I can't run from it forever.

T lays a blue arm over my shoulders and pulls me against their side. I wonder if they're warm or cold. "Well, if you ever find your way back to Vixalla, come and find me."

I smile at them but it's a sad one. "I'll try, T."

They suddenly turned away from me, looking out past the field and the ring of tree-like things. Their smile wavers. I see it, too. The black-green sky is changing, fading to a lighter shade of green. I can just barely make out the edge of a bright sphere on the horizon. T points in that direction. "That's our second star, Vixcala. Morning is close."

I smile. As much as I would love to stay and talk to T, I want to go home, drink some coffee, and go to school. I want to pretend to be normal for as long as I can before my consciousness is propelled from my body and brought to the next world. The transitions are always rough, but it's nothing I'm not used to. I don't tell T any of that, instead, I say, "Our sky changes color in the morning, too. We call it a sunrise."

They smile at the coloring sky. "We call it The Awakening."

"Yours is cooler."

They tilt their head and don that same puzzled look. "Cooler? I thought you said you couldn't feel things like that?"

I laugh. "No, I mean I like The Awakening more. It sounds like a movie title." I know that T doesn't know what a movie is but they don't ask.

"I don't know about that. I think I would like to see a sunrise."

-Midnight Gates





Wild Things -Emma Zhang

MCDOWELL AV

WARD WINNERS

2020 Writing Competition

This section of the book honors some of the 2020 McDowell Award winners who wished to be included.

MCDOWELL AWARDS
POETRY

6th Grade Winner:

The Golden Frame

By *Violet Joe*

Music hums in the silver oak trees,
Whistling, bristling, in the vibrant green
leaves,
Hummingbirds singing in the depth of
night,
Sipping sweet nectar and beginning their
flight,

Moon gleaming vivid, like a sparkle in a
storm,
Surrounded by stars, and the fire where
they're born,
Waves washing up, on the tropic sandy
shore,
Again and again, and again one time
more,

Twinkling stars, fall back from up high,
An extraordinary sunset painted on the
sky,
An ocean of blue, babbling from stream
to stream,
A blissful child, waking from their sweet
dreams,

The elegant world is, much like great art,
A painting of people, compassion, and
heart,
A small scratch or dent, in the polished
gold frame,
Is mostly ignored, or sometimes merely
blamed,

When these imperfections, these flaws
come to light,
We shield our eyes from the dents in our
sight,
We know that the blame has done
nothing good,
The picture we know does not look as it
should,

So flashback to this moment, wherever
you are,
And make a decision to not leave a scar,
To polish the frame of the artwork of
earth,
And then to teach others of this painting's
worth.

7/8th Grade Winner:

A Collection of Poems

By *Mia Abbasi*

Shine

Almost time for me to go on stage
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
I hear my cue
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
Taking my first steps on the grand stage
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
The bright lights hitting my face
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
Seeing hundreds of eyes staring at me
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
I hear the first notes ringing in my ears
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
I take a deep breath
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
And suddenly I hear someone singing
I feel my heart beating in my chest.
And I realize that someone is me
I feel the music in my body.
I feel the music in my body.

I feel the music in my body.
I feel the music in my body.
Like a glove that just fits
I feel the music in my body.
Sending notes to all parts of the theater
I feel the music in my body.
Thinking of the words I am saying
I feel the music in my body.
Dancers surrounding me
I feel the music in my body.
Moving precisely with the beat of the song
I feel the music in my body.
I spread my arms out wide
I feel the music in my body.
I finish with the show-stopping note
I feel the music in my body.
Then the audience
jumps to their feet and applauds
And I feel like I am floating...

Flying

Floating snowflakes and wind on my face

In every direction, miles of space.

Looking for the steepest part of the hill

This bubbling feeling inside me is a thrill!

I sit down on my sled

Looking at the snow ahead.

And off I go.

Starting out slow.

Then it hits me!

And I am flying free...

My sled hits the soft pillow snow.

My face is aglow!

Awww, now I have to climb back up the hill again.

But then, I look at the sunset and the glen...

And I have no worries

Hakuna Matata!

Season Haikus

The tree

Under an oak tree
I feel the breeze blowing by,
Leaves fall on my head.

Puddle

Colorful rain boots
Splashing through the fresh puddle
Flowers peeking out.

Snow

Playing in the snow
I feel snowflakes on my nose,
The silence filling my ears.

Beach at night

The sand in my toes,
The moon directing the waves,
Stars shimmer tonight.

9-11th Grade Winner:

Words; randomly arranged

By *Kenya Hall*

It's said
that if you give an infinite amount of monkeys
an infinite amount of typewriters
and gave them an infinite amount of time,
You'd end up with an infinite number of pages filled with
absolute absurdity.
Among the nonsense would be
the greatest works mankind has seen.
But I don't have a typewriter
And owning monkeys is illegal in this state
so you get this:
Words, randomly arranged.

MCDOWELL AWARDS
FICTION/MEMOIR

7/8th Grade Winner:

The Forest

By *Nate Gajar*

As I enter the forest once again, for the first time in what feels like years, I take in a deep breath of the fresh forest air and begin to drink in my surroundings. I see the tall, seemingly never-ending trees that have stood tall and unmovable since long before I was born. The hills where I've spent joyful hours talking to my friends and causing general havoc to the responsible adult figures in our lives. Finally, I rest my eyes on the little stream that runs through the whole wide forest. I've gone down there against my parents' will to splash around countless times. I smile to think of the time that me and my (earlier) childhood best friend Zach decided to follow the thing all the way downstream to find out where it let out. Given the fact that it once had the speed, power, and sheer mass to erode away a good amount of a small hill, creating a three foot drop that, at the time, was like our own personal grand canyon, we expected nothing less than an enormous oasis, with a huge, glittering lake filled to the brim with sea creatures that would obey our every command, with loyalty undying. We expected huge, towering trees from which we could rise above the treeline and find a treetop civilization where we would be crowned the rightful kings of a powerful, magical, unchallenged group of creatures from around the galaxy. (We were both a little nerdy.)

So, you can probably imagine our immense disappointment when it led into our local polluted pond. But, nevertheless, we had fun following our favorite body of water, and that's what it's all about, isn't it? Not the destination, but the journey leading up to it.

* * *

As I walk down the path, I hear birds chirping, creatures roaming about for the first time in a long time for many of them, the cold weather seemingly over for this season. Their noises ring out through the forest, and they are music to my ears after many silent, shivering walks through these woods. I reach the bottom of the hill I've walked down and smile ear to ear as I look up at a tree, remembering an awesome story that occurred in its branches and above its roots. Once upon a time, I nearly befriended a rabbit after I hopped out of this tree's mighty branches. I was sitting in one of the lower hanging branches of this tree, reading a book, almost completely cut off from the rest of the world mentally. The whole world could have frozen over and thawed out, and I wouldn't have cared in the slightest.

But somehow, the snapping of one little twig underneath the paw of a tiny creature broke my trance, and I looked down from my perch towards the noise. What I saw was not some mouse or rat to shoo away, but instead, an ADORABLE little bunny rabbit. It had light brown fur the color of an oak tree in the light of a setting sun, and it was so fluffy that I just wanted to march right up to it, scoop it up, and cuddle it to death. But I knew, even as a nine year old, that that wasn't exactly an option. So, I did the next best thing. I hopped down and approached it while making kissy noises. Even then, I was just filled to the brim with dignity and intellect. The rabbit did what any sensible rabbit would've done what it saw a small child clad in bright red and blue clothes: it turned tail and ran. However, it appeared that this little rabbit was also full of intellect, because it ran headfirst into a tree and fell over. So, I used this to my advantage, and approached the rabbit. I stopped about three feet away and gazed at its fluffy, beautiful fur. It stared back, probably too dazed to do much. Then, once I had had my fill, I stood back up and left the forest to head home.

* * *

To finish off my trip, I approached a large, fallen tree. This hulking log contained so many of my childhood memories it might as well have been my own personal playground. At the time, I had assumed that it was me and my friends' secret playplace. Looking back, this was probably illogical. But hey, a kid can have his dreams. This was the place where I would not only host, but participate in lightsaber battles with all of the boys. We would also lounge around and just talk for hours on end about all of the very pressing issues of elementary school boys. One time, I defeated all of my friends in battle so badly that they teamed up and dropped me into the river. I may have been fuming at the time, but looking back, it was the time of my life.

* * *

As I finished my journey through the forest of my childhood, I thought back to all the good times in the woods. I thought about all the times I had just let my thoughts wander as my body wandered the paths. I thought of the memories I would never forget. And most of all, I thought about how much I loved these towering trees that surrounded me, the trickling sounds of the stream, the breeze rustling through the leaves, and the comforting feeling of being home.

9-11th Grade Winner:

Eiweissburg

By *Lys Campbell*

Medieval castles are notorious for being the sites of violent and mysterious deeds, but perhaps no other castle has hosted so many strange denizens and held so many dark secrets as Eiweissburg. It was to Eiweissburg that Formicus Flanders, the obscure gentleman-scholar, returned from the Crusades, bearing deep, oblong scars (apparently from an unknown illness) and howling like a banshee whenever the word “lump” was spoken aloud. It is rumored that the Medici exiled a cousin who was causing them trouble to Eiweissburg’s network of damp stone cellars to be guarded by a one-armed German butcher woman called Hildegard (who also happened to be Cosimo’s mistress). When the builders of the castle left, or were killed off, it was left to the elements for a period of a hundred-odd years; it was during this time that inhabitants recorded seeing pentagrams inscribed in slowly dripping, pitch-black fluid on the castle’s by-then-somewhat-broken windows and hearing thunderingly loud maniacal laughter on full moons. Contemporary sources claim that a bishop was called upon to purge the castle of evil during the reign of Albert I; he walked in with his servants and came back alone, an hour later, his skin the color of ash. A Benedictine monk, in an account of the castle, describes seeing a woman wearing a robe made of purple objects resembling sausage links run out of Eiweissburg, speaking in tongues and gesticulating wildly.

Eiweissburg has never been investigated by bona fide members of the scientific community; the strange tales surrounding it have either been ignored or cast aside as examples of medieval groupthink, results of recreational drug use (rare in Europe in the pre-Renaissance), or simply a string of explainable coincidences. And so it sat, a beacon of darkness, even as Bacon and Copernicus, and, later, Einstein, Darwin and Miller and Urey parsed away the layers of gloom enshrouding Earth; the castle remained unnoticed by the outside world and apparently empty since the early 1900s. Until a superficially prosaic event occurred during (or, perhaps, immediately after) Eiweissburg’s long modern period of emptiness— until it was listed on Airbnb.

Logic would dictate that an Airbnb listing be traceable. A device of some kind must have made the listing, ergo an IP address must be on file somewhere in the depths of Airbnb’s servers. The professional-looking photographs must have been taken—if not by a human, then by a computer

program, or some other entity capable of operating a camera. The camera specifications— the model, the condition of the lens, the shutter speed— must all be knowable quantities. The unremarkable, friendly diction of the listing must be traceable— the precise usage ratios of words indicating the writer's level of education, nationality, and gender. There must even be other evidence that the calico cat in the purported owner's profile picture existed in some form. But none of these things were true. The investigation uncovered no IP address, no human who would admit to taking the photos or indication that any other entity did so, no camera or flashdrive bearing any traces of the photos, and absolutely no indication as to the specifics of the post writer's life—the experts disagreed bitterly, and the computer analysis simply spat out a series of hot pink pound signs—or the identity of the cat. The rational mind at this point tends to jump to a series of *rational* conclusions: Airbnb was hacked to remove evidence of wrongdoing, the poster naturally remained silent out of fear or for a price and was simply never found out, the camera (more evidence) was naturally hidden, the experts were simply a bunch of pretentious academics who wouldn't know a fact if it bit them in the ass and the computer was just as bad, and the cat died in an alley five minutes after the photo was taken. And perhaps all of these things were true. They do seem the logical conclusions.

But there is another, less rational option: logic has nothing to do with this. It simply blinked out of existence while the events of which I speak, and will speak more of, occurred, or perhaps it never really existed fully at all. But that's preposterous, you say. No event in all of human knowledge has ever violated the principles of logic, and nothing ever will. I know there are no ghosts, or will-o-the-wisps, or any supernatural bunkum, you say. They are all part of a human tradition of over-seeking patterns and social storytelling explained by Darwin's model of evolution by natural selection. Perhaps. But perhaps we know less about the universe than we think we do. Darwin and his followers have shown us that the things we think we know are not always true— sometimes it just serves us to know them. Others have suggested models of the universe not necessarily built upon the foundation of logic— simulations and brains in jars. But I digress. The story of Eiweissburg still lays before us.



On December 13th of 2018 at 8:32 PM Eastern, Miranda Arsch-Schweiss's transaction for the booking of Eiweissburg was approved. While perusing Airbnb for accommodations for the Arsch-Schweiss family trip to Germany, Mrs. Arsch-Schweiss had been intrigued, initially, by the ivy-covered stone walls and romance of a medieval castle and then charmed by the well-lit photographs, five-star reviews

(another mystery), and decidedly reasonable price (50 dollars a night for the whole castle) and had booked six nights. I will not bore you with the unnecessary minutiae of the Arsch-Schweisses' travel before they reached Eiweissburg, for the trip did not take place until June of that year, and there were many cargo shorts to be rolled up and packed, many small gurgling laughs to be heard when particularly cute squirrels passed into view, many unhelpful interactions with United Airlines employees, etc.

On June 23rd of 2019 at 4:12 Central European Summer time, the Arsch-Schweisses' rental car pulled onto Mitesserstraße, the main road which leads to Eiweissburg. It is here that the Arsch-Schweiss family structure should be explained, so I will proceed in order of age.

Michael Arsch-Schweiss at this point in time was forty-two years of age. He had been born in Green Bay, Wisconsin as Michael John Arsch to Elaine Margaret Arsch, née Waller, a secretary, and Kenneth John Arsch, the head of cheese production at Family Fresh. He attended the University of Iowa, where he slowly turned from a moderate Republican into a moderate Democrat. After college, he began to work for Popel, Inc., where he slowly climbed the corporate ladder. He very much enjoyed trout fishing and, more generally, being out of Wisconsin (he had moved to a suburb of Philadelphia). He had met Miranda at a bar in 2001 and they had been together ever since, with a marriage in 2006.

Miranda Arsch-Schweiss (née Schweiss) at this point in time was forty years of age. She had been born in Des Moines, Iowa to David Mitchell Schweiss, a carpenter, and Maria Holborn Schweiss (née Holborn), a high school science teacher. She attended Eiter College of Des Moines, and later became a writer for Plasma Girl, a little-known women's magazine, switching to part time after the birth of her first child. She enjoyed felting, but her wool had recently been invaded by a swarm of small brown bugs, leaving her dismayed.

Quinn Arsch-Schweiss at this point in time was thirteen years of age. She had been born in Poloch Creek, Pennsylvania to the above Michael John Arsch-Schweiss and Miranda Arsch-Schweiss. She had not gone to college, gotten married, or found adult employment, though she very much enjoyed reading YA novels and doodling pictures of Shawn Mendes in the margins of her notebooks.

Justin Arsch-Schweiss at this point in time was five years of age. He had also been born in Poloch Creek, Pennsylvania to the Arsch-Schweiss parents, and he also had not gone to college, gotten married or found adult employment. In place of these things, he enjoyed eating animal crackers and

watching animals in his backyard. In consequence of these two things, his parents deemed him a future zoologist.

So, the Arsch-Schweiss family rental car pulled onto Mitesserstraße on its way to Eiweissburg. The family was coming from Köln, where they had already spent five days seeing the sites and dining at that bastion of culture, the Hard Rock Cafe [sic]. Michael Arsch-Schweiss drove quickly. The children were largely silent; Justin distracted by the antics of Peppa Pig and Quinn by a video entitled, “I Gave My Dog Dulcolax!!! (NOT CLICKBAIT!!)” Miranda, too, was distracted; she was communicating with the person she assumed to be the owner of Eiweissburg in order to find out where the keys to the house were hidden. They were in the bottom of a fake stone next to the doormat.

Six minutes and twenty-one seconds after turning onto Mitesserstraße, the car drove up Eiweissburg’s long black driveway and parked. Everyone jumped out; Miranda found the stone and unlocked the large black door, remarking that Eiweissburg was, “such a nice old castle!”; and the family entered.

It is at this point that the story diverges from the realm of fact. I can tell you what happened, but it will not be fact, because there is no logical, factual, rational explanation as to what occurred after the Arsch-Schweisses crossed the threshold of Eiweissburg, not even a hypothetical one, and yet the fact remains that they did cross its threshold.

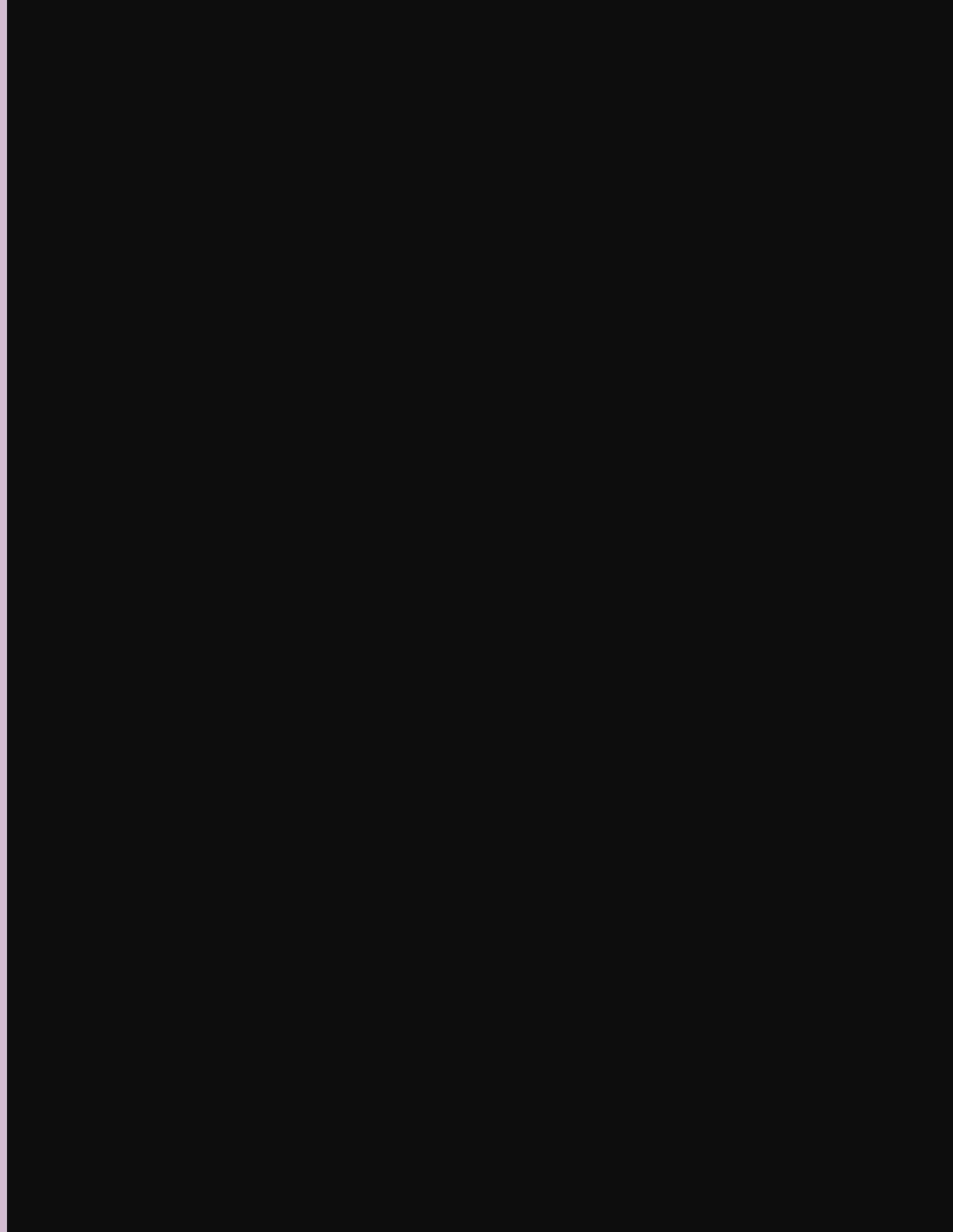
The first thing the Arsch-Schweisses noticed when they walked into the castle was the absolute darkness inside. The only source of light came from outside, and even that did little but lend a sheen to the polished stone walls. As they walked further into the main room, their eyes adjusted to the darkness and they noticed several tables with ancient, dusty, red runners, and half-melted candelabras on them.

They saw, too, that there were seven hallways radiating off of the room into which they had entered, although in the gloom they couldn’t see where they led.

“So,” said Mrs. Arsch-Schweiss, referring to her phone, “it looks like there are two kids’ rooms and one adult room, although it’s unclear”—and here she squinted at the hallways— “where they are, so why don’t we just drop our luggage here and explore?”

(Scan QR-Code for Complete Work)





MCDOWELL AWARDS
ESSAY

7/8th Grade Honorable Mention:

Mandatory Voting: The Way to American Success

By *Kabir Sankaran Rajendra*

According to the article "Should Voting Be Mandatory?," "Alarmed by a decline in voter turnout to less than sixty percent early in the 20th century, Australia developed mandatory voting in 1924. The results have been remarkable." In the 1925 election, turnout soared to ninety-one percent." Mandatory voting solves many problems concurrently while improving our nation greatly. Without high numbers of citizens voting, we can imagine a chaotic country where beneficial laws are not passed and diverse populations of people are not represented. In such a scenario, our so-called democratic nation soon falls to implicit tyranny. When voting is not required, many moderates will stop voting because they know the extremists who are the usual ones to vote will usually be the real winners. Politicians will only make policies helping the voters who tend to be upper class. The last few moderates running will have to spend all of their money getting votes out instead of working on their campaigns. This is what is already happening in the United States and will continue to worsen if our country doesn't make the switch to mandatory voting. As we see through Australia's success, it is clear that mandatory voting is the way to go because more voices will be heard. Furthermore, the United States will see less polarization of politics, more minorities will be represented, and campaigns will be able to devote less money to getting out votes but to showing their strengths.

We should have mandatory voting in America because there will be less polarization of politics and government bodies such as the House of Representatives and the Senate will be more likely to get things done for the people they represent. According to William Galston, a senior fellow for the Brookings Institution, "low voter turnout is one reason for the polarization of American politics." Many people are discussing how all of our political leaders are very conservative Republicans or very liberal Democrats. This is due to the myopic groups of people that show up to vote in American elections. These people are very likely to support the radical left or far right candidate, instead of a moderate candidate. There is an ongoing fight between the Democrats and Republicans. This fight has gotten to the point where the whole goal is just to beat the other party. This is causing America to split up into two sides. A House of Representatives controlled by one party and the Senate controlled by the other party will never be able to pass laws or get work done. Also, if the President disagrees with the opposing party, he can simply veto the laws which were passed. An increase in voter turnout will give moderate candidates, and ideas, more of a chance.

Our House of Representatives and Senates will no longer be full of extremists and we will be able to get more done and progress as a nation.

Secondly, mandatory voting will allow more minorities to be represented as most of them don't vote with our voting policies now. Politicians are clever and will do what they have to do to win the race. So, if that means only appealing to the small proportion of people they expect to come out and vote and making policies that those voters like, then that's what they will do. The people who haven't been showing up to vote tend to be minorities. According to the United States Elections Project, in 2014, only 20% of eligible voters who identified as Hispanic actually voted, while non-Hispanic whites voted at over three times that percentage. Also, according to the United States Census Bureau, in the 2008 presidential election, only 41.3% of eligible voters with an annual income of less than \$10,000 cast their ballots. On the contrary, almost 80% of eligible voters who earned more than \$150,000 per year voted. To truly be a democratic nation, we have to be able to represent the most number of people as possible. Most politicians will not visit the places with low voter turnout, causing people in those areas to not vote and thereby to not be represented. Making voting compulsory will force politicians to switch their tactics in order to earn votes from minorities. This will allow many more people to be represented. In order to be a better functioning democracy we have to have equality for all and provide power to the people. The less number of people that are represented means the less number of people have power and our democracy could eventually fall to tyranny.

Lastly, having mandatory voting will decrease the amount of money campaigns will have to spend on getting out votes and instead allow them to focus on demonstrating why they are formidable candidates. According to "The New York Times," "Bernie Sanders's campaign plans to spend more than \$30 million on TV advertising alone in the first four presidential nominating states and California, according to several people familiar with the strategy, a financial show of force that also suggests he needs to reach outside the traditional sphere of Democratic primary voters and caucus goers for support." Also, according to the "AP News," "Michael Bloomberg is rolling out plans to spend an estimated \$15 million to \$20 million on a voter registration drive and Tom Steyer plans to spend \$45 million over the coming year and register at least 270,000 young voters." Although two of the three candidates have since dropped out of the race, they all had to spend truckloads of money trying to increase voters turnout. In order to make the races more fair and representative of the people, candidates should not spend most of their money on getting votes out but to proving themselves as the best candidate in the field. With mandatory voting, candidates will be able to use their money better by fighting for votes not getting out votes. This way we can truly have the best elected officials.

It is obvious that mandatory voting is the way to go. If our nation were to enact laws to make voting mandatory we would see benefits such as less polarized elections and representation government to get more done for its citizens, more elected officials that care about the broader population including underrepresented groups and minorities, and campaigns focusing more on demonstrating the benefits of their candidates versus trying to increase voter turnout. We the people hold tremendous power to vote for the best elected officials that represent each and every one of us. If we are required to wield our power, each of us, and our democracy as a whole will benefit.

9-12th Grade Winner:

Should the Rosetta Stone be Returned to Egypt?

By Arjun Purohit

Who owns global culture? Apparently, the British do. For example, the Rosetta Stone, a touchstone of ancient Egyptian civilization that has allowed historians to understand Egyptian hieroglyphics, currently resides in the British Museum in London. The museum holds many important cultural artifacts because it believes that it has the obligation to “deliver accessible world class cultural learning experiences for all ages,” (British Museum). However, controversy has mired Britain’s possession of the Rosetta Stone as the Egyptian government has requested that it be returned to its native country, especially since Egypt was colonized by the British in the previous century. This controversy, involving ownership of the relic, encapsulates Britain’s continuous, underlying, deeply pervasive colonial agenda.

According to the British Museum, such a cultural artifact is “integral to the Museum’s purpose as a world museum telling the story of human cultural achievement,” (British Museum). Furthermore, Richard Faulkner, a British antiquities scholar, expresses that the Rosetta Stone should be kept in London because the British Museum is “the top world cultural center,” (Faulkner). These statements subtly epitomize the *white man’s burden*, the notion that Western countries such as Britain had the obligation to civilize the “heathens” through colonization. Certainly, Britain may not be actively colonizing countries currently. However, this imperialist attitude feeds into the museum’s possession of the Rosetta Stone as Britain somehow has the moral responsibility to narrate the story of other cultures and that those cultures cannot actually tell their own stories. These statements are explicit manifestations of British colonialist ideology. For example, British authorities, during their colonization of Egypt, felt that Egyptians were incapable of governing themselves, that their country was uncivilized and deserved modernization. According to Aljazeera, “[British] colonial rule rested on a rigid logic of security that rejected the very notion that Egyptians themselves might be capable of serious political thought,” (Jakes). The British believed they were intellectually superior to their Egyptian subjects and failed to believe that Egyptians could politically and economically manage their own country. This justified colonialism: the plundering and looting of Egyptian land and resources in attempts to seize knowledge and authorship of the Egyptian people and their culture.

By controlling traditional cultural narratives, the British ultimately thought that they could convince the rest of the world to sympathize with their hegemonic agenda by believing the British knew best how to control African and Asian countries.

This relates to colonial historian Edward Said's argument in his book *Orientalism*. Said says that the British thought the Egyptians were "dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them, better than they could possibly know themselves," (Said, 35). Said highlights that British colonialist authorities thought they understood Egyptian culture better than the Egyptians did themselves. This attitude fueled a desire to capture ancient cultural artifacts and use them to share "exclusive" knowledge of Egyptian culture. While the Rosetta Stone was initially stolen by Napoleon and the French, the fact Britain ultimately snatched it from their European counterparts and never returned it to Egypt testified to their imperialist desire to deny Egypt's regional autonomy and currently signifies their attempts to become authors of global history, religion, and culture. Ironically, by admitting that the Rosetta stone is an example of "human cultural achievement," the British museum inadvertently admits that the Egyptian people were ultimately capable of developing a highly sophisticated culture and civilization. Nevertheless, the British, due to their history of colonization and rejection of regional autonomy, continue to believe that the modern Egyptians are culturally inferior in their ability to understand the significance of the Rosetta Stone. Therefore, the museum's supposed duty to tell "the story of human cultural achievement" through artifacts such as the Rosetta Stone is actually Britain's method of reinstating its self-anointed dominant status as the world's preeminent cultural storyteller.

The British Museum has numerous counterarguments to the Rosetta Stone's possible return to Egypt, including its ability to better preserve the artifact. According to the Independent, "Concern remains that priceless artefacts [the Rosetta Stone] are at risk of damage in Egyptian museums," (Milmo). This is blatantly false and representative of the West's distorted perception that "war torn" Middle Eastern countries are unable to effectively preserve ancient remnants of their own cultures. For example, according to the Washington Post, in the wake of cultural artifacts that were looted from the Iraqi National Museum by thieves and radical groups during the Iraq War, "the [British] museum had offered six conservators and three curators to provide help in the crisis," (McCartney). In addition, because of the stolen artifacts by such groups, The Independent reports, "The British Government had an obligation to the Iraqi people ... to protect Iraqi heritage," (Woolf). The British Museum continues to justify their possession of ancient objects from the Middle East such as the Rosetta Stone by employing rather rare instances of artifact theft or destruction that occurred in Iraq, which was a war zone at the time and is a completely different situation than Egypt. The British have tried to convince people that they alone have an "obligation" to conserve ancient cultural artifacts due to the "risk" of leaving these artifacts in their "dangerous" Middle Eastern countries of origin.

In reality, however, Egypt has shown every indication that it can effectively preserve the artifact. The fact that Egyptians insist on the Rosetta Stone's return to their country suggests that they are willing to take care of the relic because it is culturally and historically important to them. In addition, according to the Guardian, there has already been a "1 billion dollar" investment in the new "Giza Grand Egyptian Museum" that will open in 2020 and would be home to the Rosetta Stone if returned (Michaelson). Therefore, Egypt's supposed inability to preserve artifacts such as the Rosetta Stone is a false narrative utilized to further a post-colonialist British agenda.

Therefore, the Rosetta Stone must be returned to Egypt. While it may seem like the fate of one artifact is negligible in the larger scheme of world events, the status of this particular relic raises a larger question over who actually owns global culture. For example, According to Hannah Bolton, a spokeswoman for the British Museum, "It's [The Rosetta Stone] an object that's important to all of humanity, it's important for all of us to have access to... and I think that's why we feel it's important for it to be based here in the [British] museum," (Bolton). The British argue that because London is a global hub, more people from around the world are able to enjoy viewership of the Rosetta Stone. This poses the question: Do the people of the world own ancient Egyptian culture, or does the country of Egypt own it? The British Museum would like to think these are mutually exclusive options. In reality, returning the artifact to Egypt would satisfy both possibilities.

First of all, the Rosetta Stone would be situated in its native country, where Egyptians would be able to narrate their own cultural story rather than the British displaying their culture in a neo-colonialist fashion. Secondly, given that Egyptian tourism is already on the rise, placing the artifact in its rightful home would only attract more people to come to Egypt and learn about the relic through the more accurate lens of the Egyptian people themselves. Thus, the British Museum has no right to legitimize their systematic looting of the Egyptian Rosetta Stone, as if *only they* can read the pages, decipher the secrets, and chronicle the story of ancient civilization and global culture to the rest of us.

(Scan QR-Code for Works Cited Page)



9-12th Grade Honorable Mention:

Recycling Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric

By *Yousef Emara*

Immigration is perhaps one of the most polarizing and controversial political issues today. America has been idolized as a beacon of hope, freedom, and a refuge for the suffering masses, flowing in from around the world seeking a new and better life. Carved on the base of the Statue of Liberty are Emma Lazarus' words, embodying the idyllic American sentiment towards immigrants, "Give me your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,/The wretched refuse of your teeming shore./Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,/I lift my lamp beside the golden door" (Lazarus). Today, the world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement, with nearly 71 million forced from their homes, fleeing violence and unbearable social and economic conditions (UNHCR). Many yearn to be welcomed into our nation. With the 2016 US presidential election, sentiment towards political refugees and immigrants soured. One particular candidate, Donald Trump, ran on a pledge to end immigration to the United States from Mexico and other Hispanic countries and from Middle Eastern countries, which he labelled "Muslim Countries". To many moderate Americans, his proclamation came as a shock; it was unjust and unfamiliar for the United States to discriminate against and punish suffering populations by shutting them out. Yet, Mr. Trump was able to win by running on this anti-immigration vision. To better understand and empower society to challenge the recent outpouring of anti-immigrant sentiment, it is essential to look back on American history, face the uncomfortable past, and recognize that anti-immigrant sentiment has existed far longer than most may think.

Immigration was a point of contention from the very beginning. The nation had been colonized and built by immigrants, but some of the Founding Fathers believed that if America opened its doors to the world, new and potentially diverse immigrants would not integrate and understand American democratic ideals. According to *America: a Narrative History* by David Emory Shi, Jefferson shared this belief, "Would not the new nation, he asked, be 'more homogeneous, more peaceful, more durable' without large-scale immigration" (241). In the end, the Constitution remained vague on the topic of immigration, only limiting the office of the Presidency to "natural-born" (Shi 241) U.S. citizens, and allocating the task of establishing "a uniform Rule of Naturalization" (Shi 241). Future governments and administrations would interpret these provisions in different ways, leading to a variety of immigration policies, some of which were blatantly racist.

One of the earliest examples of American xenophobia dates back to the year 1798, just 15 years after the end of the Revolutionary War. Congress had just approved Jay's Treaty, which the United States signed with Great Britain and granted trading rights. The failure of negotiations with French officials led to rising tensions with France. In response, the Federal Government, under President John Adams, passed the Alien and Sedition Acts.

According to *America: A Narrative History*, these Acts "gave the president extraordinary powers to violate civil liberties protected by the Bill of Rights, all in a clumsy effort to stamp out criticism of the administration" (Shi 268). Many of the French and Irish immigrants to the United States "had supported the French Revolution and the Irish Rebellion...and had become militant Democratic-Republicans" (Shi 268). The Acts collectively extended the period of residency required for US citizenship from five years to fourteen years, required all immigrants to register with the Federal government, allowed the President to imprison or deport US immigrants, and, during wartime, take similar action against individuals from enemy nations. This strategically prevented new immigrants from voting for the rival Democratic-Republicans.

The Alien and Sedition Acts unfairly targeted all immigrants under what, according to *America: A Narrative History*, was the largely false label that "the newcomers would bring social and political radicalism with them" (Shi 267). On the campaign trail, President Trump made similar generalizations about Mexicans trying to immigrate to America, claiming they are "people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems to us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Donald Trump presidential campaign, 2016/Immigration). Of course, the terms that resonate are "drugs", "crime" and "rapists", which echo the misleading and harmful social radicalism labels associated with immigrants under the Alien and Sedition Acts described by Shi.

A second example of nativist sentiment arose in the mid-eighteenth century, in response to the large-scale immigration to the United States from Ireland and Germany. According to *America: A Narrative History*, "The years from 1850 to 1854 marked the greatest proportional influx of immigrants in U.S. history, 2.4 million, or about 14.5% of the total population in 1845" (Shi 341). According to history.com, "Between 1820 and 1860, the Irish...account for an estimated one-third of all immigrants to the United States. Some 5 million German immigrants also come to the U.S." (U.S. Immigration Timeline). The majority of these immigrants were Catholic, and this sparked resentment among the majority Protestant population who, like the Federalists, saw these immigrants as bringing in dangerous, un-democratic ideals. Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of Morse Code, wrote in his piece, *Imminent Dangers to the Free Institutions*, that-

"Popery [Catholicism], while it is the natural antagonist to Protestantism, is opposed in its whole character to Republican Liberty" (Shi and Mayer 249). Furthermore, he believed that European Catholic societies sent "shiploads of Roman Catholic immigrants for the sole purpose of converting us to the *religion* of Popery" (Shi and Mayer 249). Others simply saw these immigrants as job-stealing threats.

Nativists began to mobilize in secret societies such as The Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, founded in New York City in 1849. This organization was more commonly known as the Know-Nothings, because when members were asked about The Order, they would say "I know nothing." By the 1850's, the Know-Nothings had spread to nearly every major American city, became known as the "American Party", and "appeared to be on the brink of major-party status" (Shi 344). In 1854, the American Party "swept the Massachusetts legislature...and that fall they elected more than 40 Congressmen" (Shi 344). The rising popularity and power of the American Party was only halted as slavery became the predominant political issue.

Following the Civil War and era of Reconstruction, immigration once again became a national issue. The increasing industrialization and prosperity of the United States led to a second wave of immigration in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. This wave was more diverse than the previous wave of mainly Irish and German immigrants, including many from Eastern European countries, Italians, and the Chinese. In response, nativist organizations similar to the Know-Nothings of the mid-Nineteenth Century mobilized in an effort to "'save' the Anglo-Saxon 'race' from being 'contaminated' by 'alien' immigrants, especially Roman Catholics and Jews. For the first time, the U.S. government also began to pass immigration legislation, a task it had previously delegated to the states. The first piece of federal immigration legislation passed was the Page Act, which according to Shi prevented convicts, forced laborers, and Asian prostitutes from entering the country (780). This paved the way for the landmark Chinese Exclusion act, which "was the first federal law to restrict the immigration of free people on the basis of race and class" (Shi 780). The act was originally designed to bar immigration for ten years, but there were restrictions on Chinese immigration until 1943 because Congress repeatedly renewed the legislation (Shi 780). Nativist groups continued to grow in power and numbers, influencing state elections and lobbying Congress to impose further restrictions upon the immigration of other minorities.

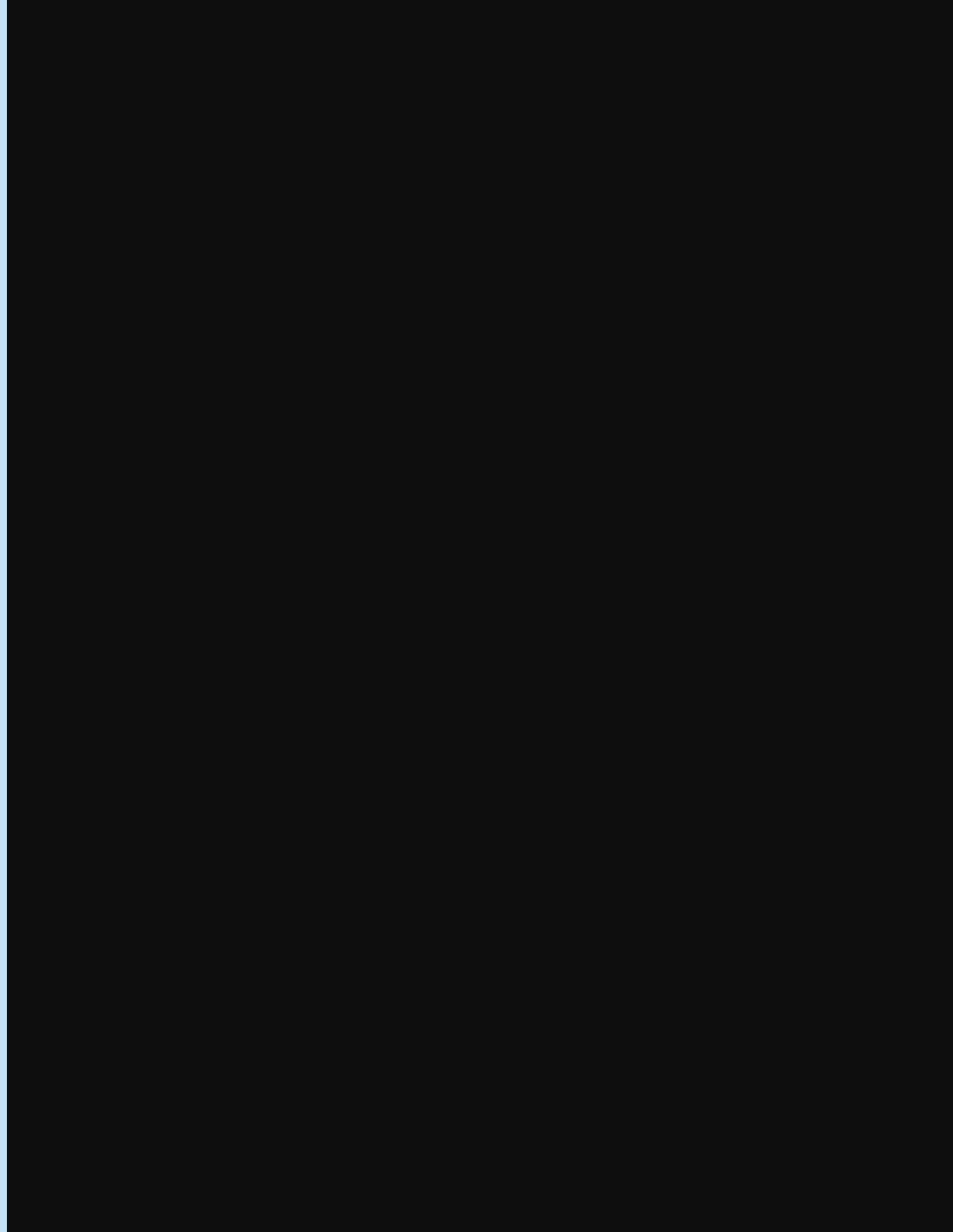
As with the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Page Act and the Know-Nothing movement, the rhetoric of modern day political figures like Donald Trump arose out of xenophobic sentiment and a fear that Americans of Anglo-Saxon descent were losing their power, identity, and jobs to immigrants. Trump called for and imposed a ban on immigration from several majority Muslim countries and stirred up Islamophobic

sentiment among his supporters similar to the calls by members of the Know-Nothing Party to exclude Roman Catholics from office and echoing the Chinese Exclusion Act. Former Secretary of State Rick Perry even referred to current President Trump and his administration as, “the modern-day incarnation of the Know-Nothing movement” (Miller). In other words, anti-immigration policy and sentiment is neither new nor original.

So, why is it imperative to understand the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Know-Nothing movement, and the Chinese Exclusion Act? First, it helps crush the myth that xenophobia is a modern day phenomenon and problem in America. The concept of “us versus them” rears its ugly head as an effective political tool to divide and conquer voters and perhaps even distract from legitimate and pressing matters of public interest. In this respect immigration and foreign policy have served throughout US history as divisive weapons to control who is allowed in and who is not for personal or political gain or to satisfy internal prejudice. Second, understanding the Acts and Know-Nothing movement empowers informed citizens to combat xenophobia. If xenophobia is viewed only as a modern day issue, the ability to anticipate, recognize and counter its cyclical appearance in politics is short-sighted and restricted. Today’s Mexicans and Muslims are yesterday’s Irish, Germans, Catholics, and Chinese. Who will be the next target? By learning from the past, society can effectively understand how to deconstruct the anti-immigrant movement through education and awareness in schools, civics classes, and political education groups. A unified and empowered society of informed citizens is the key to meaningful reform and a better America that will eternally, “lift my lamp beside the golden door” (Lazarus).

(Scan QR-Code for Works Cited Page)





MCDOWELL AWARDS
JOURNALISM

9-12th Grade Winner:

The Irishmen: A Study in Morality

By Lys Campbell

In his latest film, *The Irishman*, Martin Scorsese offers viewers searing moral commentary. As he paints a picture of the life of Frank Sheeran, the titular Irishman, he weaves an intricate tale of organized crime, love, and the struggle to make the right decisions, ultimately using the film to convey the idea that the choices people make irreversibly determine the trajectory of their lives, for good or ill.

Scorsese uses the twists and turns of Frank Sheeran's life to demonstrate the wide-ranging effects choices have on our lives. Sheeran is played by Robert De Niro, from his days as a young father—thanks to the movie magic of “de-aging”—to the end of his life. Viewers first encounter Frank as a petty criminal who is stealing from the meat distributors whose beef he's been hired to transport. Frank is flawed, true, but viewers can empathize with him—he is a blue-collar '50s everyman with a wife and a flock of adorable daughters driving around beautifully-filmed bucolic green fields. Soon, however, the tone of the movie grows darker, as Frank is drawn deeper into a life of crime; the mob and truckers' union combine forces to save him when his meat-replacing scheme is discovered, and he starts working for Russell Bufalino (Joe Pesci), a friendly, soft-spoken mob boss who takes a shine to him.

Religion features prominently throughout Frank's life. Church bells frequently ring in the background, his babies are all duly baptized, and the Virgin Mary looms over the lives of men who have turned their backs on teachings of the church. Scorsese draws our attention to the liminal space between good and evil, symbolizing the choice Frank has just made to live a life of crime and the other life he could have had. Church bells ring just before Frank kills a man at Skinny Razor's behest; it is mob boss Russell Bufalino who, with a grin, baptizes Frank's youngest child surrounded by the beauty and peace of the church interior; and when the Virgin Mary stares blankly out at the weather-beaten faces of mobsters.

Frank must choose: go along with the mob and live out an empty, lonely life; or walk away the minute Bill Bufalino tries to smooth-talk him. Between the two choices lies the church, as it represents the crossroads between heaven and hell and a mashup of peace and madness, innocent babies and corrupt *mafiosos*.

Frank chooses hell, and the church bells clang every so often to remind him of the choice he made. Frank's decision is paralleled by the choices Russell and Hoffa make, as their immorality casts the die and determines their fates.

As Frank's life becomes grimmer, so, too, does the scenery, which shifts to back alleys and dimly-lit Italian restaurants where Frank and Russell euphemistically plot their enemies' demises and chat with friends who need some shady business conducted. Happy, old-fashioned music plays, but the discussions turn to crime. Indeed, many secular spaces in the film represent this heaven/hell dichotomy by combining features of good and evil. Husbands bring blood-stained clothes home to their doting wives, the camera lingers on a bouquet of flowers as someone is shot, and people dance to "Spanish Eyes" over a backdrop of crimson hangings with only table lamps to cut the darkness at a gala held in Frank's honor. Scorsese uses this combination of good and bad to convey the Faustian bargain that joining the mob represents; in exchange for money and prestige, you pay in blood and guilt. Frank is able to support his wife and children, but only in exchange for them seeing him as the abhorrent person he becomes. De Niro, a longtime Scorsese collaborator, portrays the bluff, callous Frank sublimely, drawing us in even in his descent. We watch as Frank's family pulls away from him. Frank cheats on his wife and eventually remarries; he beats a greengrocer (his daughter Peggy's employer) into oblivion after hearing that he shoved Peggy. As the movie progresses, a cohort of grinning, suit-clad mob men join Frank at all of his social engagements in place of his family. Even when he buys nice things— flowers and fine china and new clothes— for his family, the money Frank uses comes from doing someone a favor and the commission of a crime. Frank is respected, but only because he is an effective criminal, not because he is a good man. And when Frank is old and all of those short-term benefits have faded away, he is no longer special or powerful.

The introduction of Jimmy Hoffa (Al Pacino) sets the stage for the final act in Frank's life. Russell soon introduces Frank to Hoffa, and Hoffa hires Frank as his right-hand man. Frank no longer does much work for Russell; he spends most of his time with Hoffa, whom his kids like much more. They all go out for ice cream together, laughing and having fun. Scorsese's choice to have Peggy develop a superficial camaraderie with Hoffa is an intriguing one: both Russell and Hoffa are by no means good men, although both have perfectly pleasant cosmetic personalities, so why does she respond so differently to each of them? Hoffa does some shady business but he is essentially a good, kind, paternal figure where Russell and even Frank are scheming and outright violent. This is another example of goodness begetting goodness. Both Hoffa and Peggy's lives are enriched by their friendly relationship and their decision to be kind people.

As the teamster world further engulfs Frank, Scorsese emphasizes his distance from his family more and more clearly by representing Frank and Hoffa as family members and limiting footage of Frank's real family to quick, tense moments in a house that darken the tone of the film. Frank spends most of his time with

Hoffa, chatting about teamster politics. When they travel, they share a hotel room and sit in their almost-matching pajamas (designed by Scorsese's long-time collaborator, costume designer, Sandy Powell), and Frank listens to Jimmy complain about work. In a sense, Jimmy Hoffa fills the social role of Frank's family, which would be problematic enough if he didn't run around orchestrating people's deaths. His choice to do Hoffa's dirty work, in some sense, strips Frank of his real family.

Russell eventually breaks with Hoffa and draws Frank back into the world of the mafia, convincing Frank to kill someone for him. Peggy, played as an adult by Anna Paquin, learns about the murder watching the news, the TV screen blaring mutely, transmitting public condemnation of Frank, and the expression on her face make it clear that she realizes that her father is responsible for a friend's death.

Throughout the movie, Scorsese plays with the idea of Frank's life catching up with him. He does this by interspersing snippets of earlier moments from Frank's life. Frank's trip with Russell and their wives to Detroit for a wedding, when Frank makes peace with Hoffa, is shown in sequential pieces throughout the film, and the depiction of the trip ends when the timeline of Frank's life catches up to the trip. Scorsese uses the same technique with clips of a geriatric Frank being interviewed: Frank narrates the relevant period of his life before or as it plays out, and then eventually his life as it is being portrayed catches up with him as an old man. Scorsese chooses to remind us periodically, throughout the film, that Frank's choices lead to a bleak ending for him, making the moral of the film evident and salient.

A key turning point in the film involves the end of Frank and Hoffa's relationship. As Frank and Russell approach Detroit, it becomes clear that Russell has engineered aspects of the travel plan so that he could order Frank to kill Hoffa. Frank silently accepts the order and shoots Hoffa in the back, leaving quickly as Hoffa lies dying on the floor; this is the film's explanation of the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa. Frank's choice to remain with the mob, and to work for them in the first place costs him the only semblance of a family he ever had, and, perhaps more importantly, it costs him the ability to feel guilty about killing that family off.

(Scan QR-Code for Complete Work)





MCDOWELL AWARDS
PLAYWRITING

9-12th Grade Winner:

Over the Counter

By Will Ellsworth

NOTE: This is an excerpt of "Over the Counter" prepared by the author.

OVER THE COUNTER

SETTING: It is a cold fall morning in rural Ohio, where this Walgreens pharmacy is seemingly empty. While clean, the pharmacy is worn. It feels tired inside. Dust sprinkles the floor and the

10 year old equipment. While the store and the equipment is cared for, it is still degraded by years of use. A row of shelves face the audience containing kleenex, cold medications, cough drops, cough syrup, and a small area with Narcan, an opiate-overdose reversing drug. An unassuming counter faces the shelves at the end of the stage. On it, there are buy-one-get-one-free candy bars and a cash register.

BILL

Just okay?

(Beat)

Anything I can do about that?

BECKY

Nah, I think I'm just having an off day.

(BECKY begins fumbling with medications on the shelf and BILL puts the cough drops in his pocket. SOFIA slides down the side of the counter, to sit on the ground. She faces BECKY and BILL)

BILL

You ever been in trouble with the police?

BECKY

Uhm. Maybe a few traffic tickets.

BILL

What if I told you that I could help you not have to worry about that anymore?

(pause)

We're in a small town. I've got some say in how things go. *(SOFIA, who's head had been down, perks up)*

BECKY

I'm alright. I'm hoping to never get in trouble.

(BECKY grabs a bottle of cough syrup)

You know, this might help, too.

BILL

Really? Becky, I know you want some help. Or maybe some help for your brother?

(Beat)

I'm just gonna need something in return.

(BILL quietly grabs BECKY's waist and BECKY drops the cough syrup. It breaks open on the floor and splashes BILL's shoes. BECKY pushes away from BILL. SOFIA stands up and turns away)

BILL

Fuck! You got that shit on my fucking shoes!

BECKY

Oh my god, I'm so sorry. Let me get a mop.

(BECKY runs behind the counter to get a mop as BILL watches. BILL's radio then announces, "11-80 on Jefferson and Main, assistance requested")

BILL

Uhhh... I've gotta go. I'll pay for this later.

(BILL exits, as BECKY is mopping up the cough syrup and SOFIA stands at the counter)

SOFIA

(with too much confidence)

I am addicted to heroin.

BECKY

Well... you are certainly sure of yourself.

SOFIA

Yep. I am. I know my flaws.

BECKY

Then why did you start talking about your dad before Sergeant Pervert came in?

SOFIA

Well, what did your brother do that you seemed to need help with?

BECKY

Hm.

(BECKY walks back with mop and places it behind the counter. She then goes back to where she was cleaning and begins rearranging medications again)

My brother is a heroin dealer and I don't think there's gonna be an out for him this time.

(SOFIA walks closer to BECKY, but does not dare getting too close)

SOFIA

What happened to him?

BECKY

He was arrested two weeks ago and is being held on a \$15,000 cash bond. And, if you couldn't tell, Walgreens doesn't pay enough to make that work without a bondsman.

SOFIA

(under her breath)

Good.

BECKY

What?

SOFIA

He's the one causing the problem.

BECKY

You mean your problem?

(Beat)

Don't get me wrong, he's not doing good stuff, but he's not making people buy it from him.

They make that choice.

SOFIA

It's not that easy...

BECKY

Honestly, you're pretty soft for an addict.

SOFIA

Fuck off.

BECKY

You seemed pretty proud of it a minute ago. What happened?

SOFIA

(anxious to leave)

Can I just buy this?

BECKY

(BECKY notices SOFIA's anxiety, but does not move) Sure.

(Beat)

But what the hell. You were gonna let that cop grab my ass like that?

SOFIA

I wasn't watching.

BECKY

Bullshit.

(SOFIA becomes more restless, as BECKY begins to pick up pieces of the medicine bottle on the ground)

Hey, what time is it?

SOFIA

I don't know... I don't have a watch.

BECKY

It's fine. None of the clocks in here even work.

SOFIA

Sorry.

BECKY

It's not your fault. But, we're the only pharmacy for 5 miles and you'd think we would have a working clock.

SOFIA

Yeah.

(pause)

Do you need some help?

BECKY

No, I'm almost done.

(Beat)

You know, I don't wanna scare you, but some of my brother's... uhh... clients don't look very good.

(pause)

And I think you have some more time before you get there. So you really should try to quit it while you can.

SOFIA

(suddenly interested)

What do they look like?

(BECKY walks towards SOFIA)

BECKY

Kind of like a zombie. They have these eyes you don't wanna look at, but can't stop staring into. And tracks all up and down their arms.

(BECKY pauses, realizing the gravity of what she is saying) But half of the time it's not their fault for getting into it. Someone pushed 'em out of the nest before they could fly.

SOFIA

I'm sorry.

(BECKY walks around the counter, SOFIA turns to look at her)

BECKY

And then *my* goddamn brother has to be the one who gives it to them. I have a meeting with a bondsman today at 2 to try to figure something out... but, I don't know if I can make another payment..

(Scan QR-Code for Complete Work)



FACULTY ADVISOR'S NOTE

Welcome to volume 41, Gryphons. We're back! A literary magazine is often a reflection of the times. It represents the creative capacity of a student body— of a community— and provides a necessary reflective moment to pause amidst the normal chaos of life. Ajay Purohit's "Seascape" seems to convey the image we all needed to keep us going in 2021. Thank you to Ajay for sharing his painting with us and thank you to all of the students who voted for Ajay's piece to grace our cover. You knew the assignment, and you delivered.

This collection, the long awaited volume XLI, represents the heart of our community— one who still found the courage to champion artistic abilities during a pandemic that has been more resilient than any of us imagined. Not only am I in awe of the pieces submitted to this publication, but I am so incredibly proud of the teachers, coaches, staff, and family members — our Greenhills Community— who encouraged each of these now published artists to hone their crafts. Art, in all its forms, is life itself. My hope, our hope, is that you return to these pages in your time of need and share in our creative adventures.

Please join me in congratulating my senior editors, these newly published student creators, and Greenhills' amazing communications team who made this edition possible. There have been many versions of this volume. A resounding thank you to Micaela Thomas and Ana Stewart for breathing life back into *The Evergreen* and returning this valuable publication back to campus. Thank you to this year's senior editors for taking ownership of this project and keeping us on deadline. Ridhi Gupta, Seyyal Siddiqui, and Jenny Rong: I couldn't have asked for more responsible and creative editors. Thank you for your time, effort, and creativity.

This book also would not be possible without the amazing work of Monica Lewis and her team of editors who ushered in the ever-important digital age for this publication. We hope to continue that tradition along with an added, and much smaller, print edition coming out this spring. Becky and Mark Randolph, thank you for your guidance and for championing the legacy of *The Evergreen*. Thank you to Peter Fayroian and Quincy McLaughlin who understood my love for student publications and are ever supportive of this project. My heart is so happy! And finally, thank you to Greenhills' writer-in-residence, Patrick Flores-Scott, who coached a handful of the writers that appear in this edition. Your passion for writing continues to inspire us all.

In the latter half of this collection, we have shared a few pieces from the 2020 McDowell Award winners— These writers earned their place in Greenhills history right as the world paused for COVID-19. It is our hope that their presence here is a reminder that nothing can stop the spirit of a Gryphon. Our community continues to meet each challenge with grace and empathy.

Thank you for cherishing these pages.

Thank you for reading,

Mrs. Danielle R. Conti

Evergreen 2021 is ...

Senior Editors: Ridhi Gupta, Seyyal Siddiqui, Jenny Rong

Faculty Advisor: Mrs. Danielle R. Conti

Volume: XLI

Main Fonts: Rondal, Liberation Sans, Open Sans, and Quicksand Book

Software: Lucid Press

Publisher: Greenhills School



Standing Tall -Deeksha Sriram