

ANTHOLOGY

A collection of works by students of High School District 214



2022



ARTS UNLIMITED



DR. DAVID SCHULER
Superintendent

April 2022

High School District 214 has built a phenomenal legacy of excellence in fine and performing arts – from sculpting, painting, mixed media, poetry and short stories to performing groups like show choirs, orchestras, bands and choirs.

This excellence manifests itself in many ways, including the fact that our student artists often have earned the opportunity to showcase their talents locally, regionally and internationally.

This kind of legacy does not build itself, nor does it occur by chance. These achievements stem directly from the enthusiasm and dedication of our students and educators, backed by Board of Education members who are committed to offering opportunities that ensure our students find their passion and discover their future.

As we celebrate the 46th year of the Arts Unlimited Festival, District 214 will proudly share some of our students' most outstanding art and literary work through the annual Arts Unlimited Anthology. In addition, the annual Arts Unlimited reception - virtual this year - will be broadcast via the D214 Arts Unlimited website and YouTube in April.

It is so gratifying to know that our students are preparing for future success through their own determination with the support of our outstanding educators, Board of Education and an Arts Unlimited team that works continually to elevate and celebrate the fine and performing arts.

I am incredibly proud of the District 214 program and grateful for the value we place on the arts. I invite you to enjoy works produced by students and teachers and join me in applauding their passion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David R. Schuler".

David R. Schuler, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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The mission of Arts Unlimited 214 is to provide all students with exposure to process-oriented perspectives through an ongoing celebration of the fine and performing arts.

Arts Unlimited 214 strives to inspire imagination and creativity amongst the District's diverse student body and to foster an awareness of the arts within our community.

COVER ART Top to bottom / left to right

Ellis Chamorro | Buffalo Grove High School
Angela Hinderliter | Elk Grove High School
Diego Serratos | Buffalo Grove High School
Kacper Mitera | Elk Grove High School
Danielle Ewing | John Hersey High School
Isabel Guerrero | Prospect High School
Emily Dudas | John Hersey High School
Grace He | Propsect High School
Alexandra Lucas | Rolling Meadows High School
Melissa Vega | Wheeling High School
Paige Cosico | Rolling Meadows High School
Jason Pondel | Wheeling High School

ARTS UNLIMITED COMMITTEE

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Mary Larson | Elk Grove High School
Suzanne Renner | John Hersey High School
Li Christoffersen | Prospect High School
Martha Nava | Rolling Meadows High School
Rebeccah Silver | Wheeling High School

FINE ARTS COORDINATOR

Jeremy Morton | Prospect High School

DAILY HERALD CONTEST JUDGES

Jan Bottiglieri | Poetry
Liz Schrenk | Art
William Leece | Prose

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Mark Ciske and Linda Ashida | District 214 Production Services
Susan Klovstad | Daily Herald
Ann Cantieri | District 214 Staff Support

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Mr. Keir Rogers | John Hersey High School
Mr. Greg Minter | Prospect High School
Ms. Eileen M. Hart | Rolling Meadows High School
Mr. Jerry Cook | Wheeling High School

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A POEM SO REAL

Sam Walter

You can't write a poem about anything real.
In a poem, the flowers are as bright as the sun,
Or maybe the gloom as dark as night. In a poem,
things are exaggerated,
Clichéd.

You can't write a poem about anything real
Because you can't read a poem about anything real.
You can't read a poem
About the love that Shakespeare had in his
Two hundred and fifty second sonnet,
And expect to then feel that love
In the dried up ink on a piece of old paper.

You can't write a poem about anything real
Because nothing is real in a poem.
Once the pen goes to paper,
And describes the fluttering joy
Or abysmal pain,
The things become nothing.
Nothing but words on a page.

You can't write a poem about anything real
But it's still worth a shot.
After all, where else can you find flowers so bright?
Or gloom so dark?
Love so pure,
Or pain so sharp?
Where else can all those things
Then be found,
Other than
In dried up ink on a piece of old paper?

RED APRON

Melanie Kehr

I will never taste Swedish pancakes
without tasting the long summer mornings
when you baked a sizzling pan
made with love and never a second thought.

You wore a red apron
and smelled like fresh fall leaves.
You were my safe place
so soft and warm as the wood burning stove.

How did I know those long summer mornings
catching frogs at the lake
would end so soon?

How could I know that your voice
would soon turn into a distant memory
and the coral/yellow roses and lavender lilies
would overgrow in your garden?

You invite everyone into the conversation,
your voice as soft as cotton, your demeanor
as calm as the stars in the sky
just as any Grandma would be.

The stained glass window you always loved—
the array of colors shined into the kitchen
where the smell of Swedish pancakes engulfed us
and the memories of those long summer mornings.
I got lost in the haze of those colors.

As that red apron draped on the wall
fluttered in the wind,
those summer mornings seemed shorter.



SUPERHEROES
Isabel Guerrero



ELECTRIC VIOLET
Ellis Chamorro



VIVID GREENERY
Natalia Grzeda

I WROTE MYSELF A LOVE POEM

Emily Popa

When she sits down to type or write,
she takes off her rings and fiddles with them.
She fiddles with them as she thinks through her words,
how she can turn scribbles letters into imagery
of lavender buds and burned photographs.
And when she rereads something,
she hums to the curves and bends of the letters,
deep in thought she doesn't even realize it,
doesn't realize how she pulls her hair to one side to think,
doesn't realize that she pulls her hair up during a test to concentrate better,
doesn't realize how effortless she makes it all look.

She drives a bright blue Wrangler,
little mushroom hanging in the front,
with a small received blue duck on the dash,
a little circular bear she named "Le Pooh"
because her mother couldn't remember
Winnie The Pooh's name.

She drives around to second hand shops looking for old CDs,
likes flea markets because of the memories with her father,
and crochets little plushies to take to art fairs.

She pours herself into everything she does,
makes a burst of passion for each new project she does,
works herself to the bone for each project until she burns dry,
until she shuts down for a week
and then has to play catch-up.

She likes nature,
feels at peace within it,
likes imagining fairies against moss,
likes clawing at the sky in the woods
as rays of sun slip between the branches,
and dancing on the riverbank.
Kayaking down the Michigan canals relaxes her;
walking her dogs each Saturday morning,
and taking pictures in long dresses does the same.

She has a taste for wanderlust,
to taste the curving canyons of Utah and Arizona,
see the castles of Germany,
see the hillside of Wales,
and gallop with a Frestian down the highlands of Scotland.
She wants to taste the London trains,
visit the forests of Thailand,
and see the history of Jerusalem.
And she likes the taste of caramel twisted Frappuccinos.

She has this beauty around her,
curls that change daily,
eyes that turn green when she cries,
and a fascination that lingers within.



@AVE.ESQ
Giavanna Madura

WHERE THE MAGNOLIAS GROW

Janvi Patel

Magnolias grow on the surface of your heart
With buds like shining pearls;
They protect the soul and withstand the blows
With every gentle touch.
They create a meek opening,
where compassion steadily seeps through
a charitable heart, that's where I'll be,
right where the magnolias grow.

CHILDHOOD

Isaiah Cho

Nothing will ever again be so close
as the fortresses we built and the empires we ruled
living by the lamplight
as it became night
fighting off the monsters.
Bloody noses, scared eyes, warm hugs, forced apologies.
Two beds but we shared the same blanket.
We are children but never again will we be children.



AS TIME PASSES

Naomi Castro

A GHOST KISS

Lexi Blumka

After catching a late train,
she jingles her keys, which echo through our hushed house.
I hear the footsteps of my mom's tread while I lie in bed—
heels clacking up the creaky, wooden stairs.
A streak of light shines through,
and my mom stands in the doorframe,
her hair removed from the ponytail it had been in,
creased from the tight grip it had on her.
She rubs her blistered heels.
A poised blazer lies over her arm,
pants wrinkled from a day's work,
face wrinkled from yet another city trek.
One shift in my bed is a shift in the house.
I yearn to leap from my bed and hug her,
but yearn to forget another day she isn't here.
I drown myself in my covers.
She stands for a few moments.
A sigh parts her lips as she rubs her eyes.
She gently tiptoes toward the edge of my bed,
careful not to "wake" me
and plants a soft kiss on my small head,
a ghost of her kiss lingers.

DANCE

Natalia Soro

Stage lights
Casting shadows
Among tiny dancers.

Figures move curiously
Yet naturally,
Creating sharp lines and
Smooth movements.

Pointed toes prance across the rolled stage.
Muscles meticulously move,
Telling a story through
Emotions.

The audience cheers,
Dancers cry wistful tears,
Knowing this would be
Their
Last
Dance.



2 AM
Grace He

A POEM TO SYLIVA PLATH

Kailie Foley

My soul fears that when a white dress grazes legs once stroked by a stork's wing, they will
solely fade to porcelain.
My insides scream for fingers to stay away from my lips crafted of ribbon, because my skin
can feel a warning;
They will unravel and never take the same shape again.

How can I guarantee that my eyes stay deep enough so that anyone who enters their sea
drowns, yet my eyes stay closed as their hands sink below the surface?

It feels as if my soul is only allowed to burn
At a distance
From what it longs for.

When will dull masks of social skin appear to the naked eye?
When will the burning motion of hearts be as clear as the movement of a forming tornado in
the sky?

The reality of dreams rotates around my fingers, leading them to paste my invisible thoughts
onto paper.
But when will I see the true color of my skin and bones?

I know I have it in me to scream to the whole world what I feel.
I no longer want to wonder if it will only come out as a whisper.
I cannot tell if I hide from the moon or the moon hides from me.

How do I let my fingers burn, dream, and love all at once as I stand in the the fire I have only
admired during its growth?
My beliefs paint my flesh rose-colored, but each time they are questioned they begin to char,
mirroring the black debris of a fire.
I suppose I cannot stay in a cage yet fly free at the same time, but what if the part of my mind
I hate hides the key of my cage from me the moment I jump in the fire just to see if it
truly burns the way my deepest hidden passions do?

At times I convince myself that I feel nothing and that I am nothing.
I do not want to create a mere shadow of myself for others to try on only to find out that they
hate the tight fit of the restrictions my body chains to my heart.
I fear for my dreams to stay isolated inside of me, never breathed in by my own lungs.
I fear that my fingers have the ability to make a birdsong sound like intrusive thoughts,
causing a person wrapped in epiphanies to scream in agony.

How do I rip my skin from a canvas when others choose gray as the color to represent the
arguments resting, contained in the form of water and fire spiraling, behind my eyes?

I am afraid to live, but it is all I do.
I feel my figure slip away each time someone tries to brand it as their own.
But why do my beliefs still believe in me, and why do I feel I can answer that question, but
words will never do it justice as they simultaneously exist as all I have to speak in
order to escape temptations swallowing the hands left at the sea's surface?

The day my compass shattered was the day my stone feet broke away from what they were
and ran to take any form other than the horrors of living but not moving.
But I am running toward life only to find death greet me with a chokehold and feel its
cold, lifeless fingers around my neck as I speak my last words.
Will I become as invisible as my thoughts when I put myself on paper with no color existing at
first glance?

I fear this poem will never be a poem, and I will watch my own fingers drown deep in my eyes
until they never come back, only existing in utter despair.
Can you hear them slip away?
My screams are silent, but I think that is solely from my perspective.
Do the writers I read reach through me?

"Please call Dr. Horder."



OCEAN CASCADE
Kade Karp

GOOD EVENING

Lucas Vittore

Occupied seats hold eyes that hold me in their gaze
The spotlight blinds my vision
Clapping parents in front of me
Cheering children to the left and right
The fog machine makes everyone completely disappear
The treats backstage no longer distracting
The mint melted in my mouth
The humid air is like a warm coat
My mic lets out a quick yell
My guitar whispers: We are ready to go
I feel alive

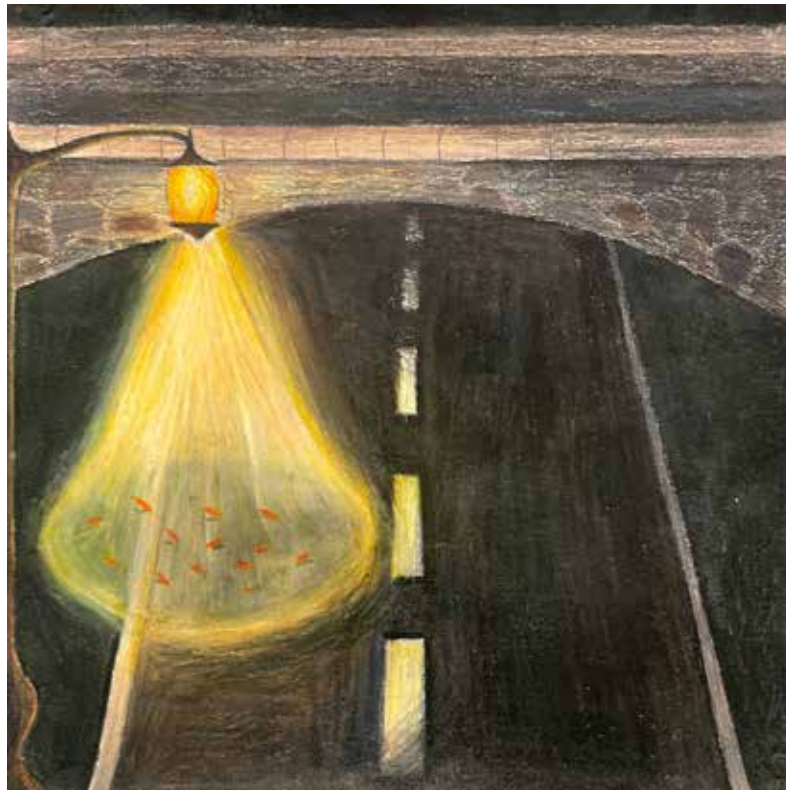


A COLORFUL TRANSITION

Isabella Santiago



A WHOLE NEW WORLD
Kaylie Clark



THE LIGHT IN THE DARK
Ellianna Ivanova

ALUMINUM BODY, BEATING HEART

Patrick Radoll

My name is ... I don't have a name. He couldn't care less what he calls me as long as I do what he says and don't talk back. I tried once, but I don't think he hears me.

My name is ... his workhorse. For two years now he has ridden me flat. Twenty or more miles per day we ride home, to school, home again, work, and again home, and so, so many times around the neighborhood on his off days.

My name is ... his excuse. He can leave twelve minutes early yet still arrive eighteen minutes late (at least that is what he tells the others). I am always the reason he's late. He doesn't tell them how often he leaves knowing he will be late and drags me along without asking if I would like to go.

My name is ... his toy. A few months ago he took a pair of wire cutters to me. He snipped things that crushed my heart like trimming a bird's wings, but these won't grow back. He twisted that screwdriver into me and used it to make me bend in ways my maker never intended. I see the satisfaction in his eyes. He is the Toymaker. He is glad to ruin my divine craftsmanship to fulfill his utilities.

My name is ... his bicycle.

My name is ... his emotional outlet. Even busy people need time to relax, especially busy people. He is a busy person, but he does not simply park himself on the couch and watch programs on the TV. He insists on taking me out time and again through rain, wind, snow, and blazing heat. I can feel the heat deteriorating my oil, the water rusting my axles, the snow-melting salt corroding my paint. Yet, I cherish these times because he chooses to spend them with me.

My name is ... his entertainment. I would be lying to myself if I didn't admit that it isn't all bad. Sometimes he buys me all sorts of fun accessories. He has these flashing lights that he makes me wear, and we go out riding in the night. I love how confident it makes me feel to be so bright and shining in such darkness.

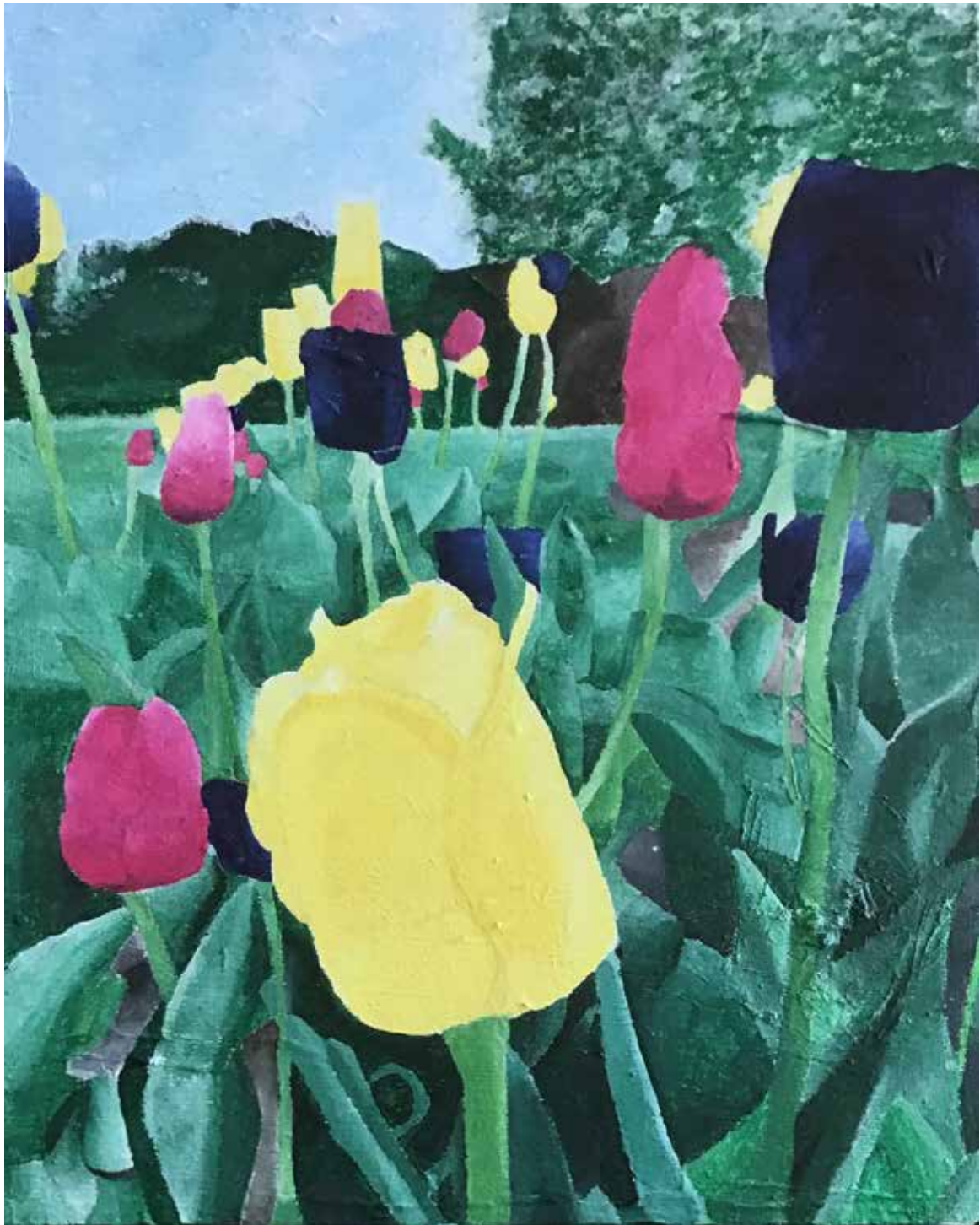
My name is ... his passion. Maybe I am too kind to him, but I know he needs me. I know that he has flourished from all the support I provide him. I know that he too often has little regard for my well being. But, I know that at times he shows me passion beyond belief. He realizes all that he owes me, and he rights the wrongs. He takes me under the hose and washes away the salt, the ice, the mud, the aches. He cleans my sprockets and gears, replaces my oil. He tunes my brakes, tightens my screws, fills my tires. He wipes my memories, I forget all he has done, and for a short while, it again becomes worthwhile to be his.



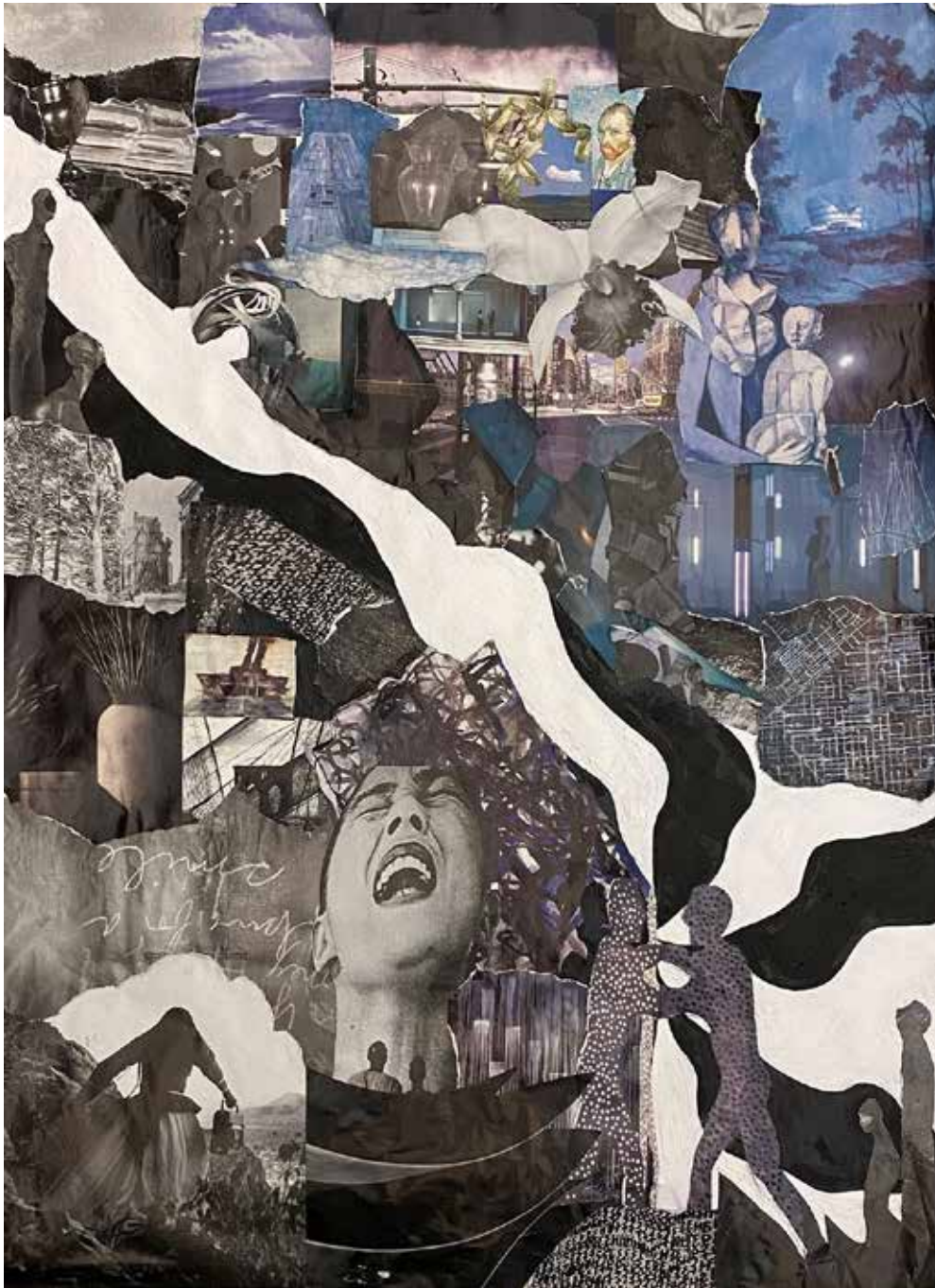
KOI
Angela Hinderliter



HERO IN HEELS
Nicole Hrametz



PRIMAVERA
Brandon Moreno



DISCONNECT
Jessica Bae

ON FILM

Gizelle Salumbides

To be a perfectionist living in this imperfect world
leaves a lighthouse drowned in darkness for eternity
To be a perfectionist living in this digital life
grows a disease of false narratives and high standards
Court cases of fraud are built upon unrealistic pictures
while our vision through a screen blurs our reality

Film clear this vision towards reality
embracing the beauty of this imperfect world
Unexpected outcomes ignite sparks in these pictures
driving the road of perfect away from eternity
The ones who are controlled by these standards
are the same ones who conform to the digital life

Together film and digital pictures coexist in life
but there is a division between its false reality
To live digitally is to be walked upon by standards
To live through film is to walk in an independent world
Both capture the memory that lasts for eternity
but the outcome differs between these pictures

The desire to live vicariously through pictures
may just be a snapshot of the perfect life
Where our eyes become a lens for eternity
Out of focus is forbidden to reality
Overexposure grasps onto an imitated world
and the flood of mistakes construct the standards

With film it demolishes these standards
left with just the moments and the pictures
Delete and undo aren't available in this world
yet it is clutched onto as a necessity in this digital life
Digital is a dream and film is reality
Mistakes wind their way into our lives for eternity

Every mistake that exists for eternity
enables an open canvas to paint over standards
Life does no justice through a screen for reality
A simple point and shoot to receive pictures
speaks volumes to encapsulate life
Unexpected outcomes are the truth of the world

The naked eye intertwines film and digital pictures
Imperfections are what brighten the lighthouse in this digital life
To be a perfectionist is to thrive in this imperfect world

CRY

Grace Coveliers

Running out of space
Running out of time
What is the reason why
I begin to cry

Running out of time
It is hard to catch my breath
I begin to cry
You ask, "Is it over yet?"

It is hard to catch my breath
See me sobbing on the floor
You ask, "Is it over yet?"
I am hardly sure

See me sobbing on the floor
I don't think I can stand
I am hardly sure
If I could take your hand

I don't think I can stand
To live this way much longer
If I could take your hand
I'm sure I would not falter.

SCHOOL'S OUT

Ryan Mayschak

Why not
Do what I want
Living as a robot
MLA format, boring font
They taunt

Can we
Evolve the grade
So some students can see
The margins between A and B
Decayed

I dream
Of perfect school
Of more strong self esteem
A place that all children will deem
Very cool

INCINERATED

Jennalee Cox

what I feel for you consumes me
engulfs my body whole
a fire that lasts evermore

I let myself burn
watching from outside my body
as the flames lick from head to toe

it doesn't hurt
only completes the circle
death
rebirth
time and time again

I will fall to ashes and be reborn
as long as you burn with me.



ERA OF DELIVERANCE
Emily Dudas



LOLA LUCY
Paige Cosico

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Amanda Kim

Do you think aliens have birthdays?

Do they stand around a table and chant "\$#@%*^" as their buddy sits awkwardly,
Holding back tears, for what, he doesn't know.

I wonder if they have strawberry shortcake,

If they light candles on purpose for the sole reason of watching them burn.

I wonder if aliens have arsonists.

Pyromaniacal and Promethean.

I wonder if they have gods.

Do you suppose they have little balloons that sit around their room,

The oxygen shriveling out because they're too lazy to stomp on them?

They just like the idea of holding on to that night just a little longer.

Even if they spent the back half wet-cheeked on the bathroom floor.

I wonder if aliens even need bathrooms.

They say life on other planets

Comes dripping like water

And yet no knock for sugar,

From a Fermi-paradoxical neighbor.

You build your great skyscrapers and you send Laika up

To bark at the moon-men,

And yet she was given no treats.

She wagged her tail in a shriveled balloon.

Do you think aliens have pets?

I wonder if their pets lick the crumbs from their birthday cake

I wonder if their pets get stomach aches and sit with them on the bathroom floor

And lick their tear-stained cheeks

MY HOME ON THE OTHER SIDE - MIMA, TOKUSHIMA

Hanna Tatsuki

i only ever knew the summer
where the healthy river
dances within ripples
in between towering mountains
small city, big green

loud noise
but you can hear the birds sing
harmonizing with the furin – a Japanese glass wind chime
hanging
on the front porch
over the dusty welcome mat
waiting for who?

fenced up for safety,
the 45 degree slope up my house
surrounding it in tall trees
as the light greets us
through the leaves

boney bamboo
scattered
playing hide and seek
with the pebbled floor

where ketako
my old but beloved dog
waits for the same aged smile
that adored her
especially
after three suns left

the shady shed that grows shiitake
an empty garden
that used to hold color

footprints
left from my old baby pink boots
and the laughter and memories
that were planted there
a long time ago

NORTHPORT, MAINE

Megan Shafar

Salt lingers, swirling in the air's sweet breeze
A downhill walk to water past the grass
Invites us to a paradise with ease
We step across the smooth stones sharp as glass

A lone decaying shed stands on a hill
Waves reach with longing as they inch to shore
Retreating tide slips slowly, almost still
We just might stay and rest here evermore

The frigid water beckons me to stay
But we'll return once night loses its heat
To see the stars glow gold above the bay
And candles lined in windows down the street

For now, the ocean beams in empty sky
Soft light kisses the tide as it rolls by



GAME DAY
Alexandra Lucas



STAGE FRIGHT
Isabell Mantilla

A MORNING WITH ANXIETY

Sarah Wilch

A morning with anxiety.
Awoken by the thoughts that fill my head.
Swallowed completely by its entirety.

Plagued by society.
Unwinding as a thread.
A morning with anxiety.

I shall find no satiety.
Among the hours ahead.
Swallowed completely by its entirety.

My aura sits quietly.
For this day that I dread.
A morning with anxiety.

For my thoughts lack variety.
Rationality is misread.
Swallowed completely by its entirety.

A plea to quiet me.
Forced the day I tread.
A Morning with anxiety.
Swallowed completely by its entirety.

A MOMENT OF SELF-PERCEPTION

Victoria Gauza

*Am I really how they see me?
Brilliant smile, wildfire hair
Charisma bleeding from my pores.*

*Does anybody know me?
Everybody thinks they do
Flamboyant young actor.*

*Great things come to those who wait
Hands neatly folded in their lap
I do not care, I charge the first chance I get.*

*(Just be a little more patient.
Keep your wild breath bated
Leave your impulse at the door).*

*My fingertips bleed with artwork
Not the kind you're thinking of.
Orange hues delight my vision
Prefer it when they're green and blue.*

*Quiet suffocates my senses
Ricochets like ten bass drums.
Sound is my religious doctrine
Talk to me, I beg of you.*

*Untamed by the world around me
Vibrant in my eloquent passions.
Wildflowers bloom beneath my feet
Xanthic, free of human burdens.*

*(You look me in the eyes with wonder
Zephyr's breeze kisses our skin).*

FOUR YEARS SLICE TO A MINUTE

Francesca Yoon

The loud cheers of parents and fans drowned out every possible thought that could possibly enter a person's mind. I couldn't tell if the liquid dripping from my forehead was sweat or the chlorine-laced water. I sat in my designated seat amidst the chaos that filled the space while "Now or Never" from *High School Musical 3* blasted through my headphones straight into my eardrums, the only song that could possibly direct me in this moment. The tips of my fingers grazed the edges of my suffocating tech suit where it cut off to reveal my skin, feeling the bumps that had been created due to the immense compression of the suit.

The different banners, shirts, headbands, caps, and goggles all mixed into becoming a sea of color and spirit: teammates who couldn't help themselves but to stand close to the edge of the pool and cheer for their fellow teammates or parents who leaned dangerously far over the balcony railing with posters for their child, wearing sweatshirts that read "Proud Swim Mom" or "Daughter in the Water." My parents, on the other hand, were sitting in the back row where I could barely see them. From my perspective, they were as small as the Party City bells and hand clappers that were being held by the over-enthusiastic parents in the front.

The gross moisture of the water, the uncomfortably slippery floors, the loud noises, all clouded together as I continued to listen to my music. The heat began to feel unbearable as the moisture began to get absorbed by my long parka that our entire team wore. It began from the tips of my toes to the ends of my ears, as the heat began to travel up my body creating an itching, bothersome sensation that I couldn't quite shake off.

I looked up at the scoreboard surrounded by buzzing red lights that displayed the times of the current event being swum in big, daunting red numbers.

Event 14 it read.

Crap, I'm next.

I stood up and began my routine for every swim meet. I carefully took off my parka, feeling as though I had parted with a long-time comfort blanket. My skin was immediately hit with the rising cold air and I felt even more exposed. I dug around in my messy, torn-up swim backpack that I bought in freshman year, decorated with tags and ribbons from various competitions and tournaments, to find my goggles and lucky swim cap made out of extra stretchy silicone and the bright blue that I particularly gravitated to.

I began to spray the mixture of baby oil and Icy Hot, a swim team tradition for as long as I could remember, onto my arms, legs, and back. The smell that was almost spicy flooded my nose and it was able to take me back to when I first started swimming when the upperclassmen would frantically rush to put it on before their events and almost slip when done.

"It makes you feel like you're going faster in the water." They would tell me.

It was funny how now I was the one telling the underclassmen this possibly ridiculous statement that was most likely just an effect created by my imagination.

Finally, I took a deep breath and began my walk to the blocks, my legs feeling stiff and heavy, dragging me back to my seat. The maze of girls was almost impossible to get through and all I could see at some point were the flashes of school mascots or the loud prints of some girls' tech suits. Once I reached the

other side, I stood behind the blocks waiting for my event to be called. It was all a waiting game now.

The water seemed eerily still compared to how it was just moments ago when the girls before me got out of the water. It seemed to be waiting for the next group to jump in. Waiting for me to jump in. I started stretching, jumping up and down, slapping my arms and legs, cracking each and every finger and joint on my hand.

A minute. Just break a minute The announcer's voice snapped back from my thought, "Event number 15: the 100-yard freestyle. Swimmers, please step onto the blocks."

I climbed onto the small platform. My fingers gripped onto the bars, slippery because of the baby oil, and my feet were arched onto the back end of the block, both preparing me for that precise moment where the buzzer would go off and I would shoot into the water. When I was in the perfect position I stood still, a wrong move would call for disqualification at this point.

I peered into the water as if I were the one threatening it now. And before I knew it, I pounced.



THORNS AND A PEARL NECKLACE

Annelise Funovits

THE BELL TOLLS

Anne Nguyen

You forget about life's antonym,
Then it makes itself known.
The moon peeks through thin curtains,
The dim light of your mini iPad
Casts a soft glow but you're used to this.
The weighted blanket rustles as you shift
To find a comfortable position, scrolling through Instagram,

Coyotes yap on the other side of the pond,
Bickering with each other as siblings do,
Shadows shift, strung out across the bedroom wall,
Distorted leaves and branches,
The red numbers on the nightstand clock switch from 22:23
To 23:08 to 00:57 with every blink.
The broken earbud in your ear stutters and crackles
When you tug the cord the wrong way,
But it shuffles through your playlist without another hitch.

Then, the door opens, hallway lights pierce the dark,
Your mother tells you your cousin overdosed, clutching her phone.
She leaves the door ajar like she usually does.

The earbud falls from your ear, thumps against the mattress,
Music still echoes in your head, you shut your iPad off
And drag heavy limbs off the bed,
Light stings your eyes, your parents' voice grate in your ears.
The coyote's family drama is an afterthought as you stumble,
Through the blinding light, trying to make sense of everything,

Every light in the house is awake, everyone is alert, except for you,
And you all sit in the living room, silent, until your phone
Screams and tells you to get ready for school.



PLAY DATE
Sylvia Witkowski

WHY WE CRAVE DISTRACTION...

Bridgett O'Grady

The human race will go extinct sooner than we think. Quite frankly, I don't think there'll be anyone left in a hundred years. Too bleak? Okay, I'll lighten up for a second. We may be doomed as a species, but at least we are alive at the same time as Taylor Swift. It's a privilege to be able to witness her become the first woman to win Album of the Year three times in three different genres. There truly is a song for everyone in her discography. I hate country music, but I'll listen to "Love Story" any day. Pop fan? Try any song from 1989. Wait a second... I got so distracted talking about Taylor that I forgot what this essay was about. Oh, right...distraction!

Back to what I was talking about.

Humans are odd creatures that live differently from any other species on earth. Our ruling over this planet has only lasted for the blink of an eye in the grand scheme of things, so who's to say we'll be here forever? As Carl Sagan said, "Extinction is the rule. Survival is the exception." But we are not the exception. The world we live in becomes more uninhabitable every day. Our atmosphere becomes more polluted every day. The oceans become warmer every day. Do I need to go on? These topics are uncomfortable to talk about, so people shy away from them, just as I did with Taylor Swift. In fact, we shy away from them all the time when we go about our day as normal. But nothing about the way we live is normal. Everything we do from going to school to getting a job is a concept made up by humans to do something—anything—with our lives. In other words, everything we do is a distraction.

So what *is* distraction?

A distraction is anything that captivates our attention so that we don't have to think about something else. Right now, that something else is global warming, political division, a pandemic, the looming thought that we have no real purpose, you name it! Why wouldn't we crave distraction from that? If our lives were trains barreling ahead with no engineer, distractions would be when we jump out the side head first into the dirt. But the train is still running, and it will still encounter more obstacles whether we are paying attention or not. Maybe I'm getting a little too deep. Allow me to reel it in.

Many distractions are dumb and mindless. The most mindless of them all is probably social media. Our eyes become glued to the phone screen, scrolling through Instagram, looking at the latest overedited, filtered photo claiming to be candid. Or maybe we're sending a blurry photo of the top of our forehead back and forth with a friend on Snapchat. There's not a real conversation happening, of course; it's all just to keep that two hundred day streak going. (I might make fun of social media, but I'm guilty of doing ev-

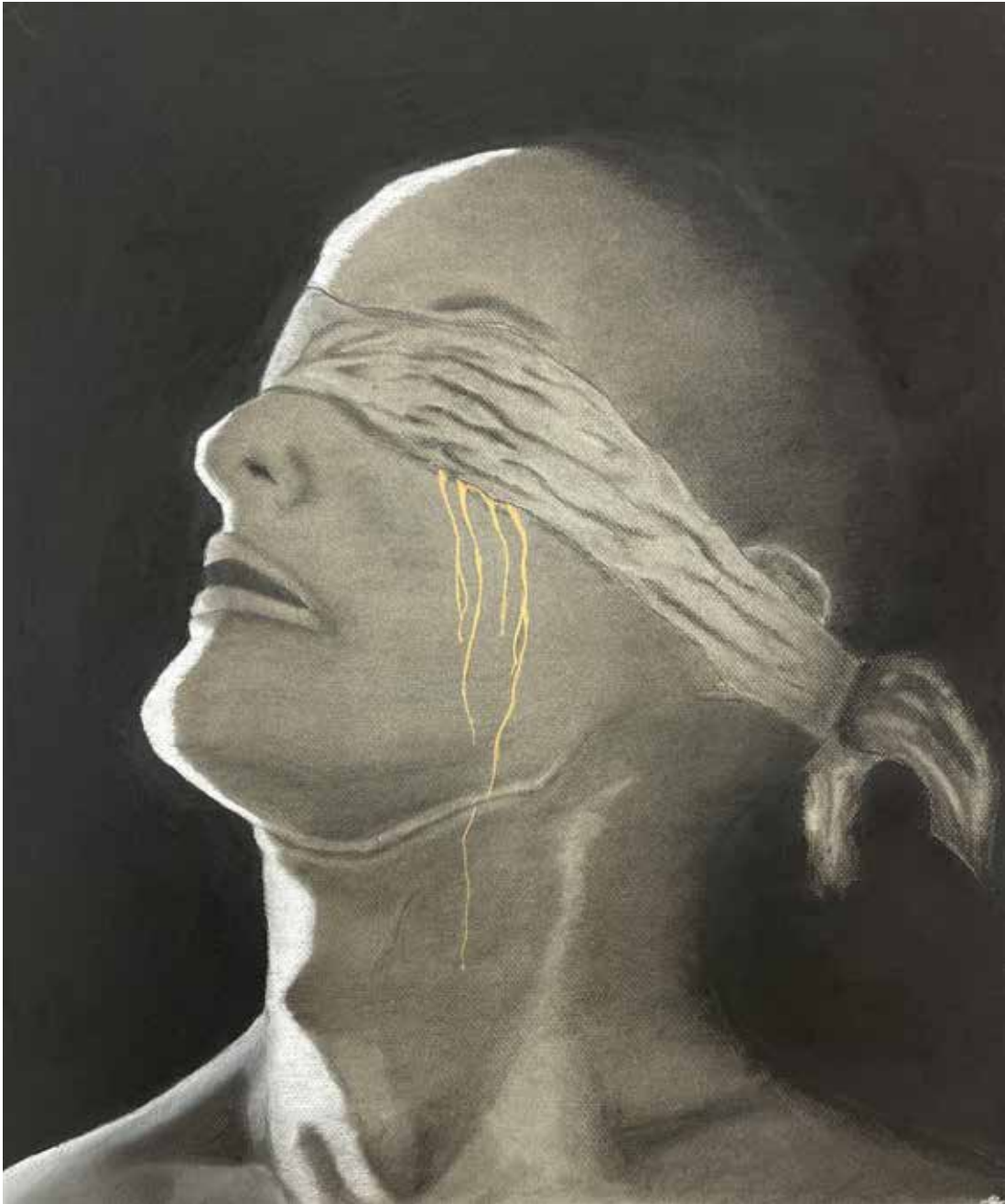
everything here.) Social media is a distraction from doing a task we don't want to do: maybe it's homework, maybe it's cleaning our room, maybe it's getting out of bed. It's as simple as that; social media is more interesting than those tasks.

Another mindless distraction is pop culture. Music, TV, movies, celebrities—we love the “hot goss” about fictional people and we love the “hot goss” about real people, and we love watching their lives fall apart. On the surface, these things are enjoyable because they are funny or scary or, in the case of celebrities, hot. They're also jam packed full of drama. Which actress just broke up with her co-star? Is this movie character going to make this unrealistic slow-mo jump across two, far-apart buildings hundreds of feet in the air? All of it is exhilarating. But below the surface, these things are distractions because it's easier to unpack someone else's problems than our own. Better yet, in the case of movies or TV shows, we watch others' problems being solved. It can be a therapeutic distraction from our own unsolvable, looming conflicts.

The thing about mindless distractions like pop culture and social media is that they are actually distractions from bigger distractions. Buckle in and listen closely, this is going to get existential. As I already mentioned, mindless distractions are meant to distract us from boring tasks we have to do for school or work or life in general. But school, work, and life in general are all distractions in themselves! From what, you ask? From the problem that I started this essay with.

Humans are running themselves into the ground. Climate change is the problem that will likely define our generation, and whether or not we are able to solve it will determine whether or not our children can survive on earth. Huge corporations spew pollutants into the atmosphere, stuff toxic waste into every nook and cranny they can find, and mine and deforest our environment dry. We regular citizens can pretend all we want that living a “sustainable lifestyle” will solve our climate problem, but at the end of the day, we are at the mercy of heartless, money-hungry companies. So why do we crave mindless distractions, like our phones, from our everyday distractions, like school and work? So that we can become so far removed from the fact that we have no control over our fate that we forget about it completely. When we forget that, inevitably, natural disasters will continue to get worse and worse, and we can say that our biggest problem in life is whether or not we'll get an A on our math quiz. That's much more manageable.

If we stopped distracting ourselves, we would be able to better focus on issues in our own lives. With no social media or video games or TV shows to binge watch, there would be much more time to address tasks on our agenda and the bigger issues facing us. We can't stop going to school or work, obviously, because it is the way our society is built, but stepping back every once in a while and assessing our place in the world would be very beneficial. At the very least, get off your phone and go outside! After all, we won't be able to enjoy the outdoors forever.



GOLDEN TEARS
Nikita Pavlovich

NIGHTHAWKS

Madeline O'Dell

The streets are blank when I arrive. Empty save for a flimsy silhouette retreating from a window. Dark save for a familiar fluorescent glow spilling from Phillies. The color fills in with each footstep. By the time I can discern each face sitting at the bar, it's not the rough sketch it once was. By the time I am inside, the whole city is flesh and blood, heart beating a gentle pulse and exhaling slowly and closing its bleary eyes.

I am wide awake.

The strong scent of black coffee wafts to me and the lights above me are so bright, I can hear them. It's like Phil knows this, because he reaches for the radio to atone for the incessant buzz. An old wartime tune drifts above our heads, like we are all underwater. Having long since given up swimming to shore, I hum along.

The laminate bar stool deflates beneath me with a sigh that I can't help but reciprocate. Phil knows what I want without words and slides it across the wooden countertop: a cup of espresso and yesterday's news. The headlines sit unchanged from when they were eagerly consumed by the masses the morning before. My eyes follow each word with loving disinterest and comforting boredom. By the time I am done, my coffee is cold and Phil is waiting for me to ask for another. Tonight, speech is a skill far beyond me, so I sip my drink and ignore the misplaced chill. The Man and The Woman sit to my left, far enough away that I don't feel obligated to speak to them. The Man and The Woman are here every night and I have never spoken to them. I watch them, though.

She stares intensely at a sugar packet. She has never struck me as the brightest lady, but surely it should not take her this long to read the ingredients. The Man beside her glares at the rounded corner of the room like it has personally wronged him. He's an odd fellow. He balances an unlit cigarette between his index and middle finger, hands shaking like a leaf in the persistent autumn breeze. Phil offers him a light three times, and three times he accepts, stamps it out immediately, and goes back to glaring at the unseen figure.

The Man and The Woman come together, I think, because they leave together, but not for an instant are they in the same world.

I wonder for a brief moment as I begin the crossword if they ever think of me. Do they come up with elaborate stories about my life? Am I an undercover spy sent by a rival restaurant, the same way he is a retired car salesman who steals away in the night to commit auto theft? The same way she is a Broadway dancer, down on her luck and tap dancing on street corners in Greenwich? The same way Phil is...? Well, Phil is just Phil. He grins at me as the thought crosses my mind and I return to the crossword, determined not to let him see me spooked.

A ten letter word meaning "lack of company". I look up. I am not lacking company. The answer is already penned in, but I scribble it out and write it again.



TIRED OF WINTER

Jessica Reizer

I'm tired of waking up with no beach
At the tip of my toes.

No rigid palm tree leaves
Dangling over the top of my ponytail.
The leaves that stay
Green
No matter what season it is.

I don't want it to feel like I'm in Antarctica,
When I'm actually in Arlington Heights.
I don't want to confuse baby polar bears
With neighboring dogs.

I'm ready to walk right into the ocean.
Ready to glide my fins,
And swim with the dolphins.

HAMMERS

Samantha Cooper

AN ODE TO CEMETERIES

Maria Harmon

I am bored of the living,
The population of people-pleasers,
Backstabbers,
And droning, soulless nine-to-five zombies.

I want to fall asleep in a grave and wake up
Falling through the earth,
Grabbing at roots and gems to slow my descent.
I wish to land among the dead,
Greeting decayed corpses and falling asleep
Wrapped in a blanket of ancient anecdotes.

I could listen to stories all days and nights,
And take a piece of history home with me.
I am bored of the living,
And I would like to dance with a skeleton.



FIGURES IN A CROWD
Jason Pondel



PARANOIA
Akari Czyzewski

FEAR

Mikey Cassidy

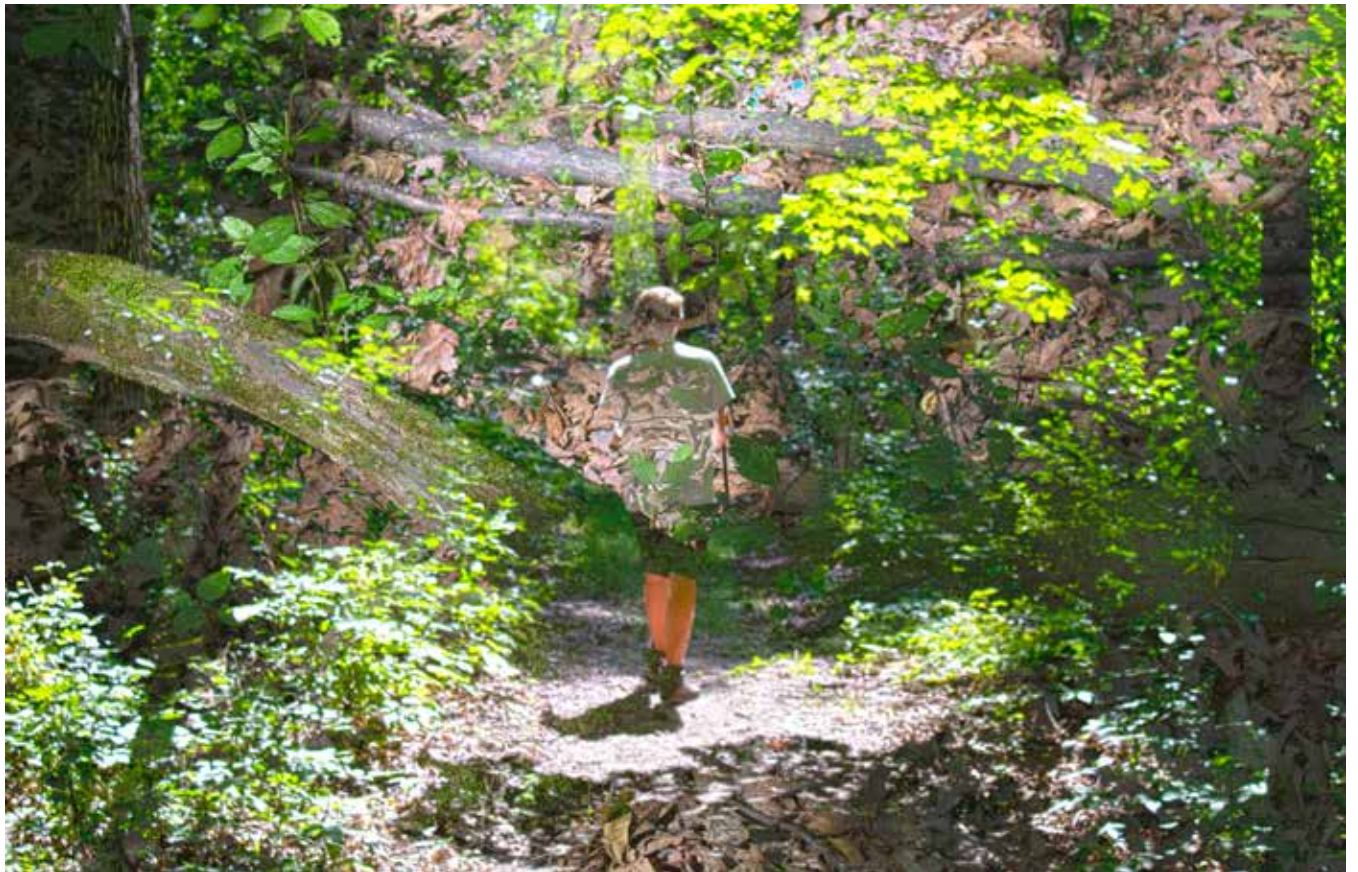
Fear is a presentation
in a class full of strangers.
Standing up there,
fingers bitten down to the nub,
forgetting what you wrote.

Fear is a dog, a bad dog
trained to bite.
Digging into flesh one tooth at a time,
ripping skin like
fine, tissue paper.

Fear is the dark,
where a creature could lurk,
but not enough light to know.
But fear is always there,
patiently waiting to pounce.

Fear is everywhere truly.
Perhaps a knife when young,
or a doctor's office later.
Fear doesn't hide.
It waits.

Fear is a house with no windows,
light, or a door.
A home where floors creak,
and faucets trickle and leak,
Fear.



PERSON WITHIN THE MOSS

Diego Serratos

HOW TO STALK A RANDOM HOT GUY YOU MET THAT LOOKED AT YOU ONCE AT A RESTAURANT ON SUMMER VACATION

Delanee' Hernandez

Summer is the best time of the year. Not only is it sun's-out-buns-out time, but it's also the best time of the year to find some new attractive people (#hotgirlsummer).

First off, everyone is getting a nice natural golden tan and not those fake orange spray tans every other girl gets during winter to pretend like they just went to Hawaii overnight. Also, outfits are at their peak during the summer, and shoe games are very strong. Summer plays out the way making coffee should be. Before summer, everyone works to get their "summer body," acquires a new wardrobe, and makes plans with friends and family. You put all this into your coffee machine on the first day of summer and out comes you. But the summer version because we all know everyone is different in the summer. But by far the best part of summer is the vacation, and almost everyone goes on some sort of vacation, whether 20 or 1,000 miles.

So, I know while you've been out and about, you've seen a hot guy at a restaurant eating his complimentary breadsticks with his family while you walk past them going to the bathroom, and for a split second while he's taking an overview scan of the restaurant, you lock eyes. But then a waiter walks in front of you, blocking your vision, and when you're able to see him again, you notice he's back to eating his complimentary breadstick, looking back at his family. But for that split second of eye contact, you were in hot boy heaven, you felt like you were on the moon, you were the highest you've ever been (legally, of course). In that split second of eye contact, you planned out your future house, job, and family with the cute breadstick boy. The life that you planned was perfect, which only means that he's the perfect one.

It's time to stalk.

This works best if you have Instagram, Twitter, and Google. YouTube could be helpful as well; he might have an account with some gaming videos, or maybe he uploads his football game highlights that his mom recorded on her Samsung 4 with muffled audio and high pixelation. Although the stalking process could be lengthy and requires some detective skills, you'd be surprised how far you can go for an attractive person.

First things first, when you come back from the bathroom, you have to make sure his table is within view, and you must have an easy escape out of your booth, so if you need to switch spots with your dad, do it. If the cute breadstick boy gets up, you get up. He moves, you move. We need any way you can accidentally "knock into him." This may seem so avoidable if you just slip the table a napkin with your Snapchat or number, but first off, only a few people are this bold and would have the guts to do this, and if this is you, I envy you. But secondly, giving him your snapchat or number allows the future into his hands, and men having control of the future is never a good outcome.

Throughout dinner, you keep an eye on his table. The wait feels longer than the time in line trying to get on the Goliath ride while one kid threw up because he didn't expect that a whole funnel cake right

before the ride would end up coming back out of the wrong hole, and while the crewmembers are cleaning it all up, you're contemplating if the wait is even worth it. Someone suggested that a golfing match had the biggest wait of anticipation, but I beg to differ. Waiting for the cute breadstick boy to get out of his seat may be the wait of the century.

Mid-bite into your spicy buffalo wrap, you see what looks like his mom getting out of the booth to let Breadstick Boy out. Quickly swallowing down your buffalo wrap, you realize you can't leave right away. You have to time it so when you come out of the bathroom, you'll be right there to all of a sudden forget how to walk and have the worst vision to exist and bump into his left shoulder, sparking a conversation.

The magic number is two minutes. This gives them time to find the bathroom, pick the perfect stall to drop their bodily fluids, do the dropping of the bodily fluids, wipe (hopefully, but I heard that's unfortunately not the case), and wash their hands (which, once again, I hope because hand hygiene is a must. If hand hygiene is not a part of their daily routine, trust me, you can do better. Even if it's young Leonardo DiCaprio).

Two minutes pass, you stand up and tell your table you'll be going to the bathroom. But your mom remarks, "Didn't you just go, Delanee'? Are you having severe diarrhea or something?"

No, Mom, there's just a cute boy that could be my future husband/your future son-in-law taking a potty break right now, and I need to see if I can get a look at him. But you respond with something a bit less extreme: "No, I just drank too much lemonade."

Walking to the bathroom, you take your time. You don't want to rush because you could completely miss him. Ten feet away from the bathroom door, you see him come out. At this moment, look to your right and pretend like you're watching something, anything; this will for sure lead to a shoulder bump. In three, two, one, BOOM! Mission accomplished.

The next step is to say this key sentence: "I'm so sorry. I should've been paying attention to where I was walking." If his response is not along the lines of, "Oh no, it was my bad" or "I didn't even notice; I wasn't paying attention either," drop him. He's not worth it.

Next, smile a little bit. A smile can carry you through life. You need a job, smile. You need to take an ID picture, smile. After the smile, compliment his shirt. Even if it's a button-up blue navy shirt with pink palm trees on it and you hate it, compliment it. Hopefully, at this point, you're able to spark a conversation with him, wherever it leads to. But no matter what the conversation is, you must get the answer to these two questions: what's your name and are you from around here? Once you have those two answers, you have all you need.

After you have said your goodbyes to Cute Breadstick Boy, in the stall, do your research. Look up his name, where he lives, his high school—anything you can grab, you take.

In conclusion, this plan is not going to work every time. In fact, with the three trials already completed, it has a higher failure rate than success. But don't mistake this for a complete disaster, it's not my fault there are numerous Jakes in Arizona.

I do hope you find your Jake, whether he be in New York or Australia. And to all the Jakes out there, if you're reading this, my snap is dh_123.

ELEVEN (AN AGE POEM)

Kiersten O'Malley

When I was 11 I strolled at the playground.
its frost-crunched wood chips
matching with the crisp air of fresh autumn,
with plastic glossed chunky slides
complementing elementary schoolers' Claire's popsicle "lipstick."
Students swinging down creaky poles screwed into the ground,
rusted at the roots,
giggles resounding the air,
with Sketchers flashing their red, green, & pink lights.
Sticky hands with chipped glitter polish,
tagged the Circo brand t-shirts
who tagged the little league jerseys
who joyfully screeched when "it."
And dandelions,
glovers,
thermos water,
& baseball field dust
sprinkled into grass-dug cauldrons.
And my doe-eyed, last wiggly-toothed,
Justice and Children's Place adorned friends
thought that fifth graders were upperclassmen who no longer
played.



STANDING TALL

Iman Jaber



ROOTS TO LIFE
Kacper Mitera

CLICK

Mikaela Carreon

It's a new age
Evolution has started a new page

Click click click
The world is now at my fingertips

One click
Two click
Three click
Four
How could I ever want anything more?

Attached are my eyes to a burning screen
It hurts but this is the happiest I've ever been

Scrolling away
Scrolling away
I keep on scrolling away

The algorithms know me so well
I bid farewell
To the past
That was never meant to last

For,
Addicted am I
To this burning screen
This is the happiest I've ever been



EXPERIMENTAL ENVIRONMENT

Kiersten O'Malley



INTRICACY
Anna Check

NAIVE

Allison Steger

Love is ours to define
But it seems that others have set the boundaries
We ought to follow them
Even though love is boundless
What is love?

A life can only be lived once
A night may only be savored by the bold
But to throw away a future is unforgivable
What is our future? They seem to know
Might they be right? Or might we be tired

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once believed
“Only children know what they are looking for,”
Does he still? Is it true?
Peter Pan was adamant
“Once you grow old, you can never come back”
Well.

There's no hope

To request to be old
It would be naive
So I'll request instead
to no longer be young

DRAINING

Tyler Sakurayama

Water flows at a perpetual pace
I hate my lace hands
The hands on my clock flow without a trace

The ebb and flow displace
Dragged to the end of spans
Water flows at a perpetual pace

Why can't I get the clock hands to go someplace
The hands continue to chase the set demands
The hands on my clock flow without a trace

Betraying me, bending with the flow, I get dragged closer to empty space
I can only foolishly pray what awaits me are the dreamlands
Water flows at a perpetual pace

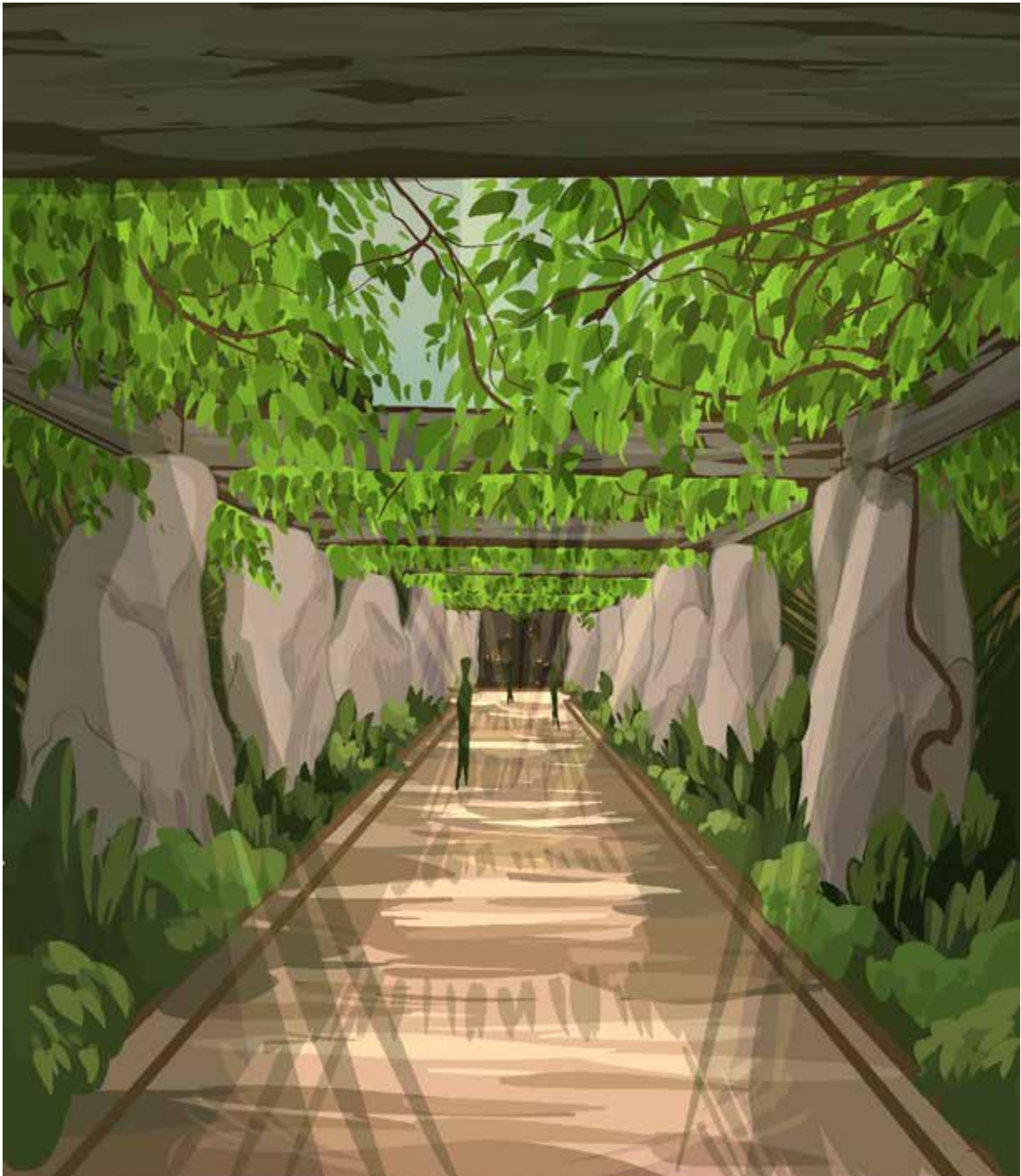
When push comes to shove, why are my hands lace
My hands bend and allows the flow to take my strands
Water flows at a perpetual pace
The hands on my clock flow without a trace



PASSING THROUGH
Danielle Ewing



WINTER WIND
Emily Popa



BOTANICAL WALK
Shelby Paluch

ALL BECAUSE OF HELLO KITTY

Maydelin Alfaro

"Is the house fully evacuated?" the young, blonde, Ken Doll-looking officer urged, his warm breath coming out in visible milky clouds.

"Yes, sir, all four of us. Well, more like four-and-a-half," my dad assured with my little sister asleep and shivering in his arms. Her nose was pink against her fair, freckled skin. The falling snowflakes settled into and decorated the brunette bedhead mane framing her face like pearls. The corners of her mouth turned down, so even though she was unconscious, she sensed the mayhem in the air. Any slips in and out of her slumber probably seemed like wild dreams to her.

Just then my mom departed from the group, walking towards the raging inferno.

"Marisol, where the hell are you going?!"

"The poor girls are barefoot and shivering—I'll be right back. I just need to go get a few things." She waddled quickly inside the house, her bulbous stomach slowing her down. It seemed that with enough movement, it would pop.

"Ma'am, we can't allow you to go back inside. I've been told that the garage has a lot of gasoline and heavy machinery, as well as other chemicals. There's too much potential for explosions to happen when the fire reaches those combustible items, and that is a risk that we can not stick around for!" Mr. Ken Doll insisted.

But she didn't listen. She was already out of sight.

"Mommy! Mommy! Come back, Mom! I don't need shoes! Don't die for the shoes!" My face twisted with a quivering chin and crumpled brow. Tears rolled down my cheeks and stained my shirt while my sobs and wails left my mouth hysterically. My arms flailed around like the inflatable tube men from car dealerships while I tried to claw my way out of my dad's hold to keep me from following my mom. After moments of resisting, I gave up and grasped at any drop of comfort there was available with a hug and a squish of the Hello Kitty stuffy in my arms. After a few moments of hoping for the best, my shoulders slumped, following a sigh and deep pout.

I could not believe it. If my mom died, then it would be all my fault. Everyone would blame me, and the only option I would have is running away. If only I had grabbed my shoes before like I was told to do. When my mom woke me up telling me that the garage was on fire, she instructed me to go get shoes and a jacket so we could leave. Unfortunately, I did not follow orders, and naturally, as a little girl, I dashed to my toy corner in the living room to see what forms of entertainment and enjoyment I could salvage from the scorching flames. Now my mom had to go back inside and literally risk her life to keep hypothermia at bay.

In the few short minutes that my mom was gone to get some shoes and blankets, I experienced the five stages of grief. My head was filled with the thoughts *Mommy's gonna DIE! And what about the baby?! I'm never gonna meet her, and I'm not going to have a mom anymore.*

As I started accepting my mother's somber fate, I glared at the frenzied flames, my mother's killer, with a burning hate that grew at roughly 100 miles per hour. Even with ashes floating through the air and dense smog invading and irritating my eyes, I could still tell how blinding the orange blaze was against the blackness of the starless sky.

Just then my mom scurried back outside, her face turning rosy pink from her hustle inside and her messy top-knot black bun already making its way down the nape of her neck. My baby pink Crocs, looped around my mom's fingers, peeked out from the armful of balled-up light blue Disney princess blankets pressed between her arms and protuberant belly. As my mom approached us, the roof of the garage started to dip lower and lower until it finally gave out on itself and collapsed. The flames roared, and the collapsing of the roof only fed the raging madness. The air reeked of gasoline, and thick smoke permeated the air.

ONCE UPON AN AUTUMN

Sophia Choronzuk

Once upon an autumn,
As the trees began to shed,
The chilled rain was falling
And I was warm in bed.

Soon, Morning showed her face,
And I rose up from my slumber.
The world was moving lazily,
Blanketed with warm shades of umber.

Pumpkin spice filled the kitchen
As I poured that cozy drink.
My mug heated my chilly hands
And I stepped outside to think.

The air was fresh and crisp
Without anyone to be seen.
It was I, and I alone
To take in this peaceful dream.

It comes every year,
Comfy sweaters and crunchy leaves.
But today will soon be a faint memory
In the line that time continually weaves.

So I will cherish this moment,
And hope for more someday.
Because it was once upon and Autumn,
That I began to feel this way.

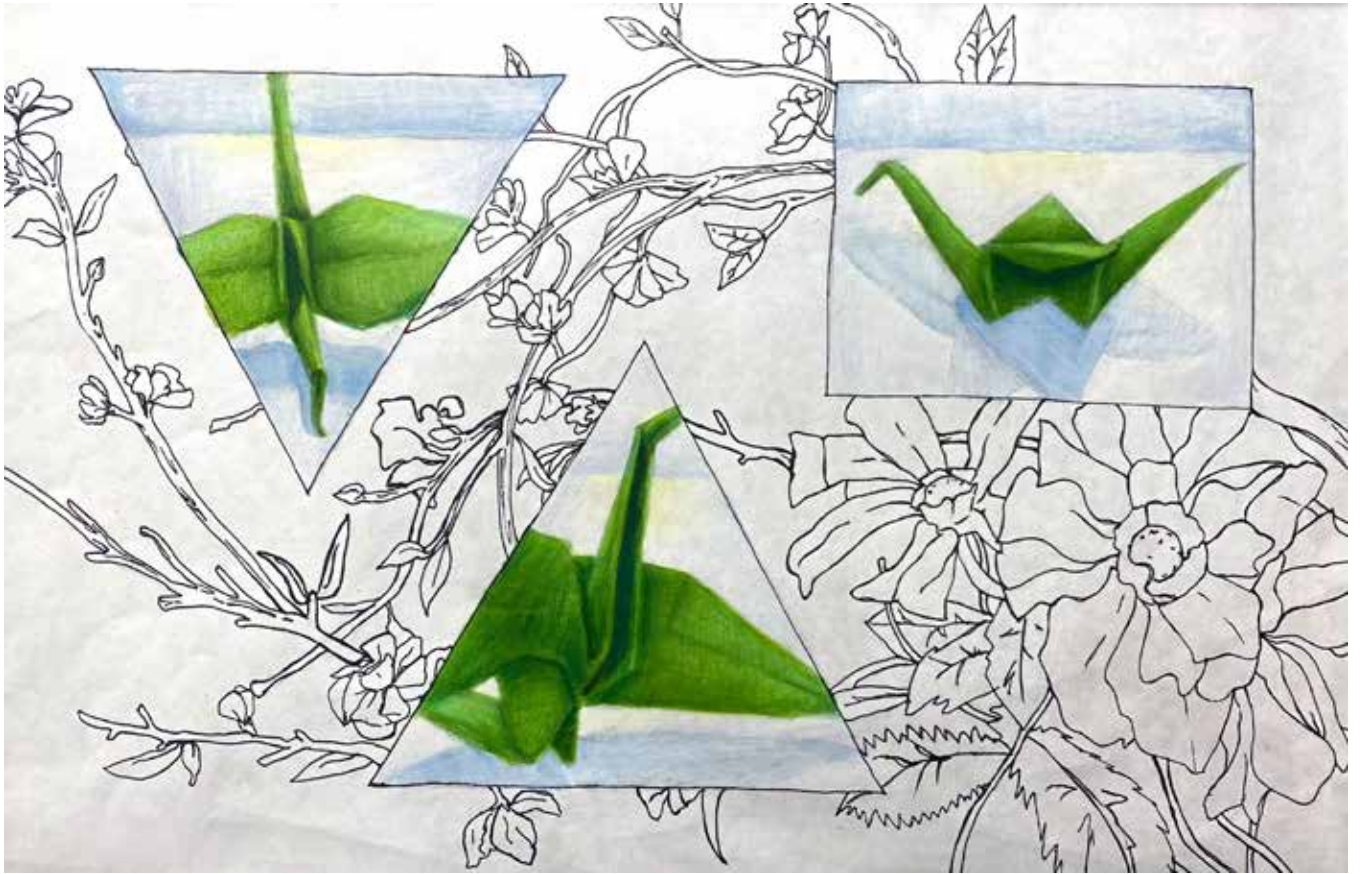
BAKING WITH LOKI

Melanie Giles

Glare from his crown met my gaze in a powerful beam
He took a cup of flour while I poured
the water into the dusty dry ingredients
He seemed sad then he tried
to speak but out came a whimper
A single tear fell from his cheek
"I feel unwanted, unloved, and undesired"
I looked into to his emerald foggy eyes
"You are loved, wanted and needed"

He smiled like a maniac fresh out of a hospital
But I knew he appreciated the love I showed him
We put the oiled pan in the scorching oven
We sat patiently waiting for the timer to ring
It felt like a lifetime waiting for the chicken timer to click cluck
Then finally a pounding ringing echoed off the kitchen walls
We opened the oven and were met with a heat
that covered us like a blanket

The smell of the chocolate cake hit my nose
instantaneously like a sweet punch to the face
Loki the god of mischief smelled the air
he licked his lips as he desired to take a bite
of the warm chocolate cake we made



FLOWER SPHERE
Alexander Ostrovskiy

PUPPET

Lauren Naunheimer

At age 6, I watched the dancers on stage
Longing to have their technique
Their artistry
Their stage presence
Their storytelling

At 16, I realize that a dancer's worth is not measured by her skill, but by the way her body looks
Long legs
Thin arms
Thigh gap
Small chest

Trapped in a box surrounded by mirrors
It's hard not to find every flaw
To obsess

Overachieving the perfect figure
Being the tiny doll spinning around in a jewelry box
Achieving the picture-perfect body

A 10 year old girl told:
"Suck in your stomach"
"I can see your lunch"
Over time she internalizes it

She can't help notice the way the delicate pink fabric clings to her skin
Wondering what she could do to make it dig in less at her hips

And insecurity quickly morphs into jealousy
"What can I do to be smaller than the girl next to me?"
A constant battle of comparison

Because you can never be thin enough until you're nothing but skin and bone
Until you can look in the mirror and see the puppet you were trained to
become



AT THE LAKE
Melissa Vega



ROLLING AROUND
Madison Payne



PERCEPTION OF HOPE

Sydney Kyvik

THE PIECE OF ME

Sarah Whiteside

One.

Sitting in the back of a bustling classroom,
Sketching and scribbling in a black beaming notebook, Trying to
piece together a marveling masterpiece with eraser shreds and
pencil smudges all across the paper. His dark purple sweatshirt and
baggy gray pants don't speak for him
Occasionally, he'll break from the process and look at mine.
He'll say to me
"That looks good!" With a supportive smile a thumbs up.

Two.

The hit of her towering black boots against the floor can be heard all the
way from the hallway
Jingling bracelets of all colors and Knick-knacks of varying sizes can now be
seen hanging off of her bags.
Slipping her phone into a holder, she turns right to me and says,
"Good evening."

Three.

Her beaming smile can be seen even behind a mask, As she walks in the
room confidently, in lovely looking shirt and pants with a stunning jacket to
match, and black hair looking just as good as a celebrity, starts breaking away
from other people whom were nearby, her footsteps start picking up as she
runs right toward me and states, "My best friend."

I am all of these people. We all strive to have creative passion in our interests. We pack together.
Chatting and socializing as we prepare to put on a phenomenal performance of our talents,
Bustling around during busy days, yet making an effort to say hello to friends and family,
Laughing at dumb jokes to cure the awkwardness in the space around us,
Dressing the best we can to be comfortable with ourselves for the day, and just to look good, Trying to
be the best we can, and get high grades, which results in late night work and stress. But we wouldn't
trade our lives for the world.

ROLLING MEADOWS SENIOR RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS CALISCH AWARD FOR THE ARTS

Morgan Paoli, a 2021 Rolling Meadows High School graduate, received the 2020 - 2021 Richard W. Calisch Arts Unlimited Award. She was chosen from a field of six exceptional District 214 nominees from each of our six high schools.



MEGAN PAOLI

This prestigious award was established more than 20 years ago in honor of Richard Calisch, a former English teacher and Arts Unlimited program creator. The annual award is given to one District 214 student who best exemplifies creative excellence in the arts—drama, speech, music, visual art, dance and creative writing.

Throughout her four years at Rolling Meadows High School, Morgan Paoli demonstrated an incredible drive to explore and succeed in multiple areas of the arts, including Speech, Orchestra, Drama, Costuming, Directing, Dance and Writing. Through her hard work and maturity, she emerged as a leader respected by both her peers and her teachers.

Morgan’s diverse resume included three years as a cellist with the Concert Orchestra and with the Chamber Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra during her senior year. She was a member of the school’s Tri-M Music Honor Society, which gives students service-based opportunities.

She also was involved in the school’s theater program, starting as a member of the cast ensemble for “Cats” during her freshman year, then joining the costume crews, first as a member before moving to costume crew student director for several productions and costume designer. She was a narrator for a production during her senior year. Also active in the school Variety Show, Morgan played the cello and served as emcee for two years. She became the overall student director during her senior year, doing an outstanding job developing the show despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Morgan was also an active member of the Speech team for four years, serving as captain in her last two years. She competed in such areas as Prose Reading, Original Oratory, Humorous Duet Acting and Program Oral Presentation. She was a two-time Prose Reading finalist for the MSL Conference and captured second place in the National Speech and Debate Association Northern Illinois Championship, which qualified her for the 2021 National Speech Tournament.

She also took dance and writing classes and participated in the Mock Trial Team for two years.

The other five District 214 candidates also are exceedingly talented in the performing arts and academics and share their time and talents with their communities. They received honorable mention recognition at a Board of Education meeting and at their school: Buffalo Grove’s **Sydney Paunan**, Elk Grove’s **Ariel Williams**, Hersey’s **Sarah Church**, Prospect’s **Mara Nicolaie** and Wheeling’s **Jeremy Cohen**.

2022 FRIEND OF THE ARTS RECIPIENTS



SUZANNE RENNER

Suzanne Renner has been a tremendous asset to D214 schools and deserves recognition as a Friend of the Arts.

Sue may be soft spoken, but she is a powerhouse in the classroom, always coming up with new ideas for students and helping them find their artistic voice. Students always appreciate her openness and her energy. It is impossible not to be excited about art around her. She is such a gracious artist and patient teacher, sharing so many lessons and creative solutions to art and to life. She also has a wonderful laugh that can be heard down the hall.

Sue took on many large projects during her tenure and most recently coordinated with Hersey students to create a mural for the Road Home Program, a group that provides mental health care and wellness to veterans. Sue's passion and enthusiasm for the project influenced other schools to follow suit and create murals for the program that will be auctioned to raise money towards veterans services in the community.

Sue shares her time and knowledge not only with students, but also her colleagues. She has demonstrated different art approaches like sharing techniques using encaustic wax or demonstrating monoprinting techniques during teacher workshops.

Art teachers have experienced the many ways that Sue made time to greet, console, joke, inspire, and share her wisdom with them. She creates lasting friendships and trust among her colleagues as a considerate listener. She has shared her expertise with student teachers and new staff, serving as a great mentor and giving advice with natural ease and warmth. As a member of the Arts Unlimited committee, Sue has provided D214 students with hands-on and career-focused opportunities in the fine and performing arts especially during the annual Visual Arts Day.

Sue Renner will be greatly missed. We wish Sue all the best in her retirement as she continues on into greener pastures— her farm in Wisconsin.



MARK MAXWELL

While Mark Maxwell teaches, his students find themselves surrounded by extraordinary student art on every wall: a large, colorful Buddha; black & white drawings of Salvador Dali, Charlie Chaplin, and Kurt Vonnegut; picture montages; 3-D art; and incredible abstract paintings with a social justice twist, inspired by Mark's teaching. A long-time organizer and presenter of Arts Unlimited Creative Writing Day, Mark brought together Creative Writing teachers from across District 214 and local authors to present writing workshops for students, an annual tradition which continues to this day.

Because he is an author himself, Mark understands how a writer needs to be encouraged to engage in the long rewriting process. Through humor and compassion, Mark is able to guide students to become their best writing selves. He teaches students to think for themselves by modeling for them how to craft their words in both fierce and gentle ways that empowers students to find their voice and hone their writing craft.

Mark came on the scene at District 214 back in 1989 and won the hearts and respect of both students and colleagues ever since. His intelligence and compassion for students is rivaled only by his immense talent and even bigger heart. Outside of the classroom, he supported the arts for many years as the RMHS Arts Unlimited Coordinator, arranging awesome experiences for all of the students such as, "Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind" and brought Poetry Slam founder, Mark Smith, to offer his expertise and ideas to English teachers on how to inspire students' original poetry.

As a colleague, Mark is generous with his ideas and fun. He is always willing to jump in and share his relevant and powerful lessons with the department, raising the bar for all of us, yet he remains humble and brings out the best in everyone through inspired conversation.

The annual Arts Unlimited Anthology collects poetry, prose and visual artwork created by District 214 students. English and art teachers from across the district submit work for consideration. Each school is invited to submit six pieces of writing and six works of art. Submissions are reviewed by the Arts Unlimited Committee which is comprised of seven teachers and one administrator. In reviewing the works, the goal of the committee is to ensure that the pieces selected for publication represent the excellence and diversity that is associated with the district's art and writing programs. Also, every effort is made to provide an authentic public forum for student expression. Finally, since this is a community publication, committee members also consider appropriateness of subject, style and length. Arts Unlimited publication will not distribute material that is obscene, libelous or will cause material and substantial disruption of school activities.

COLOPHON

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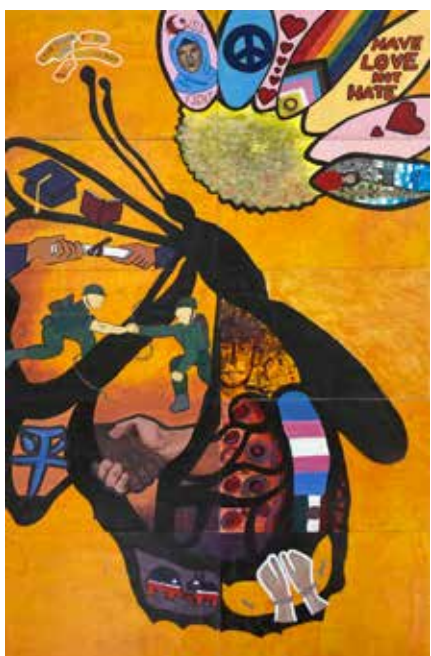
2021 ARTS UNLIMITED “WHAT UNITES US” MURAL PROJECT



During the Spring 2021, 60 students throughout District 214 created a mural working with award-winning Mexican muralist and Pilsen artist Hector Duarte. Duarte spent several months working with D214 artists via Zoom guiding students to develop their own themes of duality, social justice and identity. The results are six unique murals sharing a cohesive theme. Each school had 10 artists that produced a part of the mural.

Top Left to Right: Buffalo Grove | Elk Grove | Hersey

Bottom Left to Right: Prospect | Rolling Meadows | Wheeling



**BUFFALO GROVE HIGH SCHOOL | ELK GROVE HIGH SCHOOL
JOHN HERSEY HIGH SCHOOL | PROSPECT HIGH SCHOOL
ROLLING MEADOWS HIGH SCHOOL | WHEELING HIGH SCHOOL**



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