

BONFIRE

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Table of Contents

Stories Churn In My Blood by Logan Navar	1
Skating 2 by Jeanette Pham	4
Skating 1 by Jeanette Pham	5
Coachella: The Modern Prythian Games by Ryder Flowers	6
SCENE A by Alex Helguero	10
The Big One by Annika Petras	11
LIU LOOK by Alex Helguero	13
Kirby Holding a Heart by Mia Gu	14
teenage girls by Ksenia Eve Jenkins	15
Face of Fantasy I by Sophia Cuevas	17
Summer by Ella Lam-Chan	18
Veggie by Macy Wong	19
Parking Garage by Jeanette Pham	20
Celestial Longing by Julie Mejer and Zivie Ye	21
[untitled.] Savannah Trieu	23
Ode to Tangerines by Rachel Sung	24
Oranges by Macy Wong	25
But It Started Out As Child's Play by Sarah Glauch-Lozano	26
My Precious by Aniya Wilkins	27
Things my parents never told me by Ksenia Eve Jenkins	28

Skiptown Playhouse by Alex Helguero	29
Lonely by Caliee Copeland	31
Two Floors Down by Olivia Han	32
Pencil by Macy Wong	33
stick n poke by Olivia Han	35
In No Particular Order by Olivia Han	36
Possessions by Isabel Saenz	39
Stallion by Mordecai Mehau	40
[untitled.] by Savannah Trieu	41
[untitled.] by Isla Finamore	42
1 is the best number by Cailee Copeland	43
On the Clock by Zivie Ye	45
Blue Beetle by Mia Yang	46
Summer Rain by Mordecai Mehau	47
The End by Mia Yang/THE CHRONICLE	49
Facet by Mia Yang	53
Seasons Change by Isabel Saenz	54
Face of Fantasy II by Sophia Cuevas	57
Anne Hathaway by Kevin Zhang	58
Muted Metamorphosis by Ariel Mualim	59
Glass Eyes by Chanel Lewis	61
Binoculars by Logan Navar	62
Frekalin by Nino Raymondo	63

What is happiness? by anonymous	64
Donut by Macy Wong	66
A Diamond's Pearl by Mordecai Mehau	67
The Realm In My Head by Rhea Kolapalli	68

Stories Churn In My Blood Logan Navar

Stories churn in my blood and buzz in my bones.

They penetrate me, they define me
with their simple but defiant “What if?”

The same question our earliest ancestors asked
when they gazed upon the tapestry of stars above.

This question birthed the wanderer’s lust for novelty
the drifting sailor’s yearning for a new horizon

it is a desire that is etched in our hearts

it shines on our tongue when we speak

and cascades out in brilliant spirals when we sing songs
or tell stories.

A storyteller does not create; they discover.

They breathe life into the things that the voice of sensibility would
rather dismiss.

They dare us to break free from the confines of our minds
with the tantalizing, unimaginable beauty of impossibility.

The act of story-making is not to craft something by our own
cleverness,

but to be an explorer, a wanderer,
to follow the quiet but ever-present longing
intrinsic to our humanity.

It is discovering a story hidden in the recesses of the cosmos,
venturing in and pulling it out

when the time is right.

To be a storyteller in its purest form

is to be a humble conduit for the story to flow forth from.

To free it from its ancient rest,

and birth it into this world

like a courageous babe

that climbs from the comfort of its mother's womb

and meets the blazing sunlight outside.

People and Story are one.

Intertwined, weaved together by the elusive might of
consciousness,

shaping and molding each other

until there is no clear separation.

For gathering around a fire and hearing a story

might be the most universal human activity

never abandoned even across countless generations of change.

You... miss it, don't you?

You don't think you do,

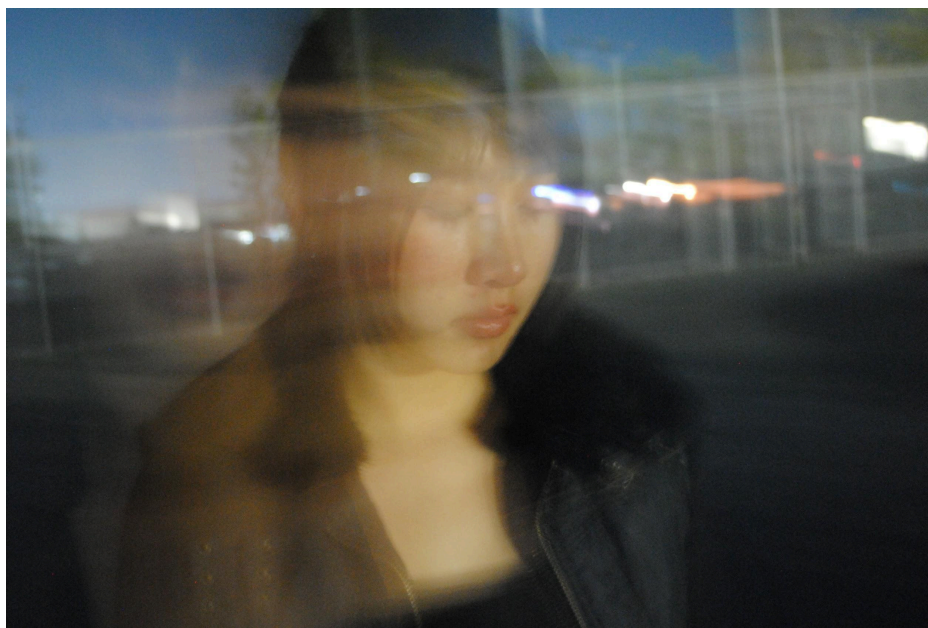
but your bones ache

and your skin tingles,

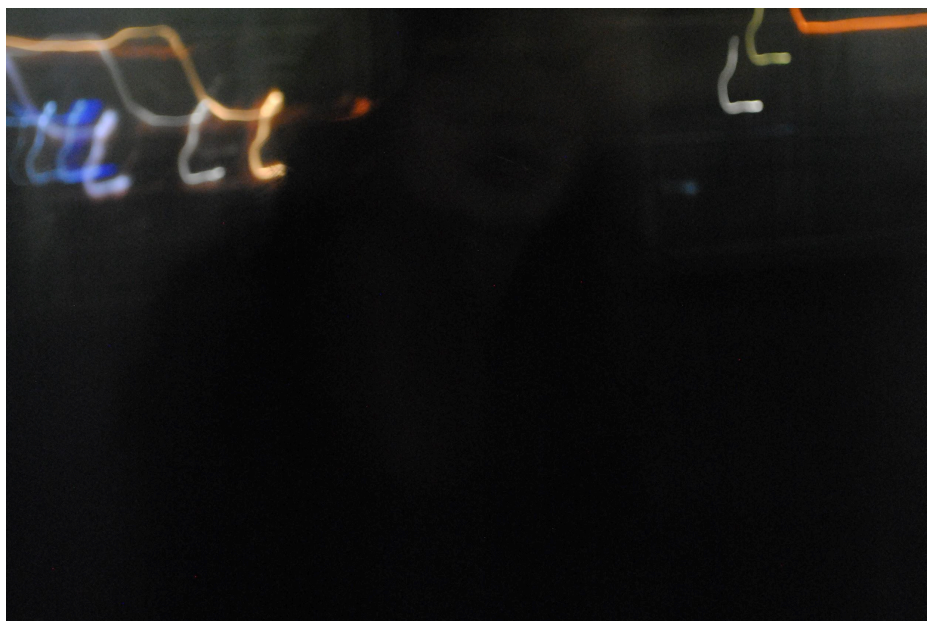
ever, ever longing

to return to that ancestral fire and hear a story.

Because hidden in the poet's words
is the return to that dark place of the cosmos
where stories are conceived,
gifted to us not by some divine entity
but blooming
from the seemingly impossible coming together of
the human mind
and the mystery
which surrounds all that is and isn't.
To tell a story
or to listen to one
or even contribute to its making
is the closest thing we will ever have
to dipping our fingers in that black pool
from which all things crawled at the dawn of time.



Skating 1 Jeanette Pham



Skating 2 Jeanette Pham

Coachella: The Modern Pythian Games Ryder Flowers

While it may not be everyone's forte or instant impulsivity to spin a vinyl for hours, launch Spotify until their phone dies, or even pick up an instrument and start strumming to their heart's desire, I do believe in the ever so tight grip which music has on our society as a whole.

Specifically, I believe in the cultural power live music wields and more importantly, how it connects us. Whether it be a massively successful multi-country tour, or a two hour festival performance, the media headline domination which concerts and live music events have is remarkable. As a kid growing up in Southern California, one music festival, however, always shined through every nationwide news outlet and flooded social media apps like Instagram and Twitter. Oddly, it has amassed such prestigious popularity that people get confused when you mention the city it's named after, mistaking it for the very festival that takes place there annually. This of course is Coachella. What some people see as "land of the influencers" and a weekend composed of overpriced \$15 dollar lemonades melting under the blazing sun, others view as greatness and the product of decades of beautiful community coming to life.

Although Coachella is arguably now one of the most culturally relevant music festivals of the 21st century, it took patience, determination, and hope to bring it to its triumphant status. In 1999, the music fanatic and CEO of Goldenvoice Paul Tollett, had a dream. That dream he had was to build a diverse arrangement of artists performing from sunrise to sunset but most importantly to form a body of unique attendees to exercise their love for music. He brought together a crew to help him establish the festival at the Empire Polo Grounds in Indio, California and set everything up. Eventually when the weekend of the first festival crept up, many flocked to the fields and soon called it home for them, making friends with the people around them and dancing all day long. In an interview with Tollett from IQ Magazine, he admitted to losing over 2 million dollars within the first two years of the festival. However, even with what some would consider a faulty start, he kept pursuing that very dream because it wasn't about the money; rather, he cared about the

community created from it all. He went on to state, “You do it by the music. The music is leading the culture.” And though Mr. Tollett succeeded in constructing a group of thousands over the years, celebrating their passions shamelessly together; this has been seen for centuries with many past festivals. To take us back in time, the origins of music festivals date back thousands of years with the earliest known music festival being the Pythian Games around the 6th century BC. in Delphi, Greece which celebrated arts like music and poetry in honor of the mythological Greek sun god, Apollo. These games allowed people from all across Greece to assemble and come together in festivities with their mutual regard for Apollo.

Eventually, over the numerous years, we have evolved to accommodate artists' creativity, having the capability of hoisting large screens up in the air and projecting lasers from a stage. I feel as though this is what truly sets our time period apart from any other one. The power of technology's modernity and innovation has paved the way for events like the highly anticipated and attended festivals across the globe to blossom. The way festivals like Coachella have taken technology and have used it to shape unforgettable performances to bring the world together is astonishing to me.

Even outside of the scope of music festivals, technology's enhancements stretch to areas like sporting events which pull colossal crowds into stadiums to watch the teams they idolize. For example, the 2022 FIFA World Cup brought over 3.4 million people in attendance at the matches, a staggering number roughly about the same size as the population of Los Angeles. Fans sported the colors of their favorite teams, suited up in jerseys, and chanted during the hours of playtime. The community that has been built on watching sports is the driving factor allowing these spectacular games to continue on in such a large scale. Similarly, continued public interest, the mass purchase of merchandise by fans, and the passionate communities in which Coachella has made gives the festival the platform to provide exceptional performances.

Being in pure awe of Coachella's ability to host memorable staples of pop culture—like Beyonce's 2018 headlining set that amassed over 43.1 million livestream views and Frank Ocean's infamous return to the music scene is a big part of me. I remember being in my Spanish class as a freshman in high school, witnessing the Coachella 2022 lineup drop with big names like Billie Eilish, Harry Styles, Daniel Caesar, and even Kanye West. These weren't just any artists, these artists saved my life. The mere chance of seeing all of these artists in one place felt like therapy to me. That night, I begged my parents to indulge in the six hundred dollar tickets and book a hotel for our family, and if it weren't for my dad's equal passion for music it would have been a hard no. Before we embarked on our journey to discover what Coachella really held in store for us, my dad and I binge watched YouTube videos of young influencers covering their own reviews of the experience. The recurring theme of complaining about the dry heat and long walks back and forth between stages emerged in most of the videos we watched. However, I wouldn't hear a single mention about the actual music. Once the first day of the festival arrived, my expectations were as low as could be, and I was even a little bit anxious that I had wasted my money. Oh how I was so wrong.

The biggest fuel to the bright blaze of Coachella's magic is hidden to the casual eye: the community it has made. The crowds of loving friends, beautiful couples, and even families like mine all passionate about the actual music made the influencer groups look like ants. At one point during Harry Styles' performance on the main stage, I found myself surrounded by kind fans of the artist who danced and sang along with me. For once in my life, I felt like there was nowhere else in the world I belonged more. Screaming my heart out while being next to total strangers and not feeling judgment was so perfect to me. I thought about everyone else in the crowd feeling the exact same way. It was at that exact moment where I really pieced together what Coachella means, more importantly, the overall message it has within our humanity.

Music events like Coachella bring people together to find comfort and expressive freedom. Coachella gathers people from all across the world with their own unique backgrounds and lives to share the festival's

grounds together for the weekend. Attendees dress expressively in garments of all different colors, shapes, and sizes, dancing about freely to the music, expressing themselves openly. Just like how the Pythian games from all those centuries ago stood as a place for art enthusiasts to express their craft united, Coachella serves as a platform for us humans to express our passions for music and arts for the three day festivities. While it may not be perfect, Coachella stands as a reminder of our desire and ability to find comfort and love in communities around us where we feel we belong. Even with the \$15 lemonade and phony influencers, I rate Coachella a 4.5/5 stars.



SCENE A Alex Helguero

The Big One Annika Petras

As the earth crumbled along the San Andreas, I wondered if the universe itself was being destroyed right before my eyes.

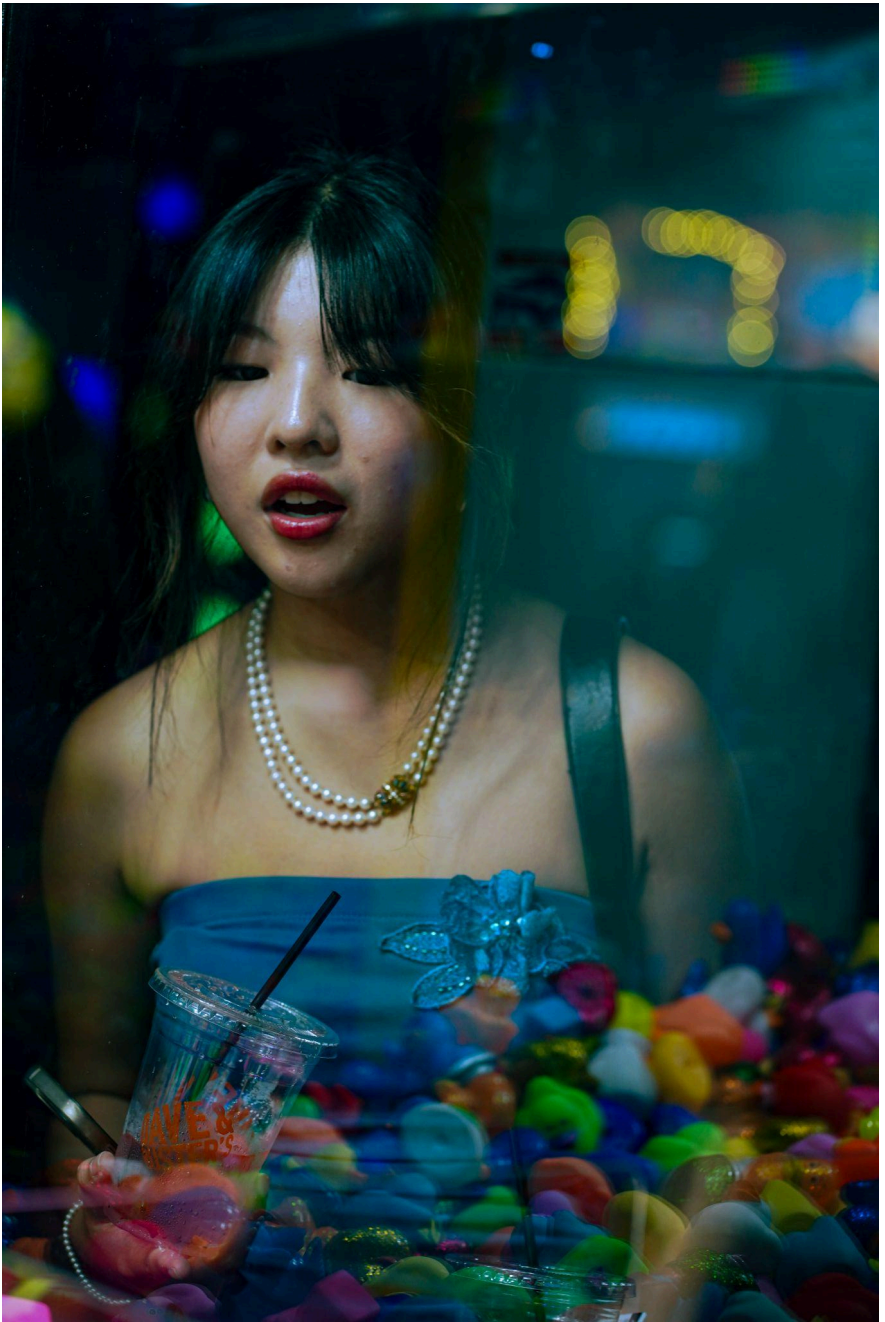
And yet, I supposed, in that moment, that in the depths of our local consciousness — whether one or one thousand generations old — we had seen it in the distance. Don't you remember? At grimy green lunch tables and through hands gripped on chain link fences we would whisper playfully about our inevitable destruction: "When it comes, you know, we're all toast." But, comforted by the even more wary eyes of our elders, we always quickly turned back to the reality in front of us.

And indeed, Los Angeles continued to stand, intimidating and patently permanent, even while time ran quickly on our childhood clock. The sweet alloyed smell of marijuana and toothy laughter and burnt skin, running forever through the thick air, made us absentmindedly believe in its immortality — we could see our governing angels in each minor miracle, protecting the soul of this place.

In the meantime, we felt the sun in our veins, the metallic shine of bruised opportunity in our eyes, music stuck in our heads. We saw thousands of days pass by, often blending together into one headache — unmemorable rush. We saw gray midnights, with intersections less crowded with dusk's dented cars and thumping music, the city settling in, the city a little more silent. We wondered if this was it. Life felt bare during those collective nighttimes, nothing but a buzzing streetlight and the distant crack of fireworks or gunshots. No matter how much we fantasized about leaving California, no matter how many times we made juvenile plans to run away, no one ever did. Our existence, clearly, was tied to this place and this place tied to our existence, an honor and an insult simultaneously.

Now, I know that it was too flawed to exist for long, too beautiful not to fall victim to tragedy. And inevitably, as the lower edge of the sky wobbled with heat, the earth cracked. In the suddenly religious eyes of the people and in the darkening sky I saw Pompeii. The rubble on the ground and the sharp screams of men, cars stopped and smoke rising on once jam-packed highways, sirens speeding by, the hands of the homeless woman supporting her invisible head, dyed flowers lying abandoned on the sidewalk, concrete rising, folding upon itself.

I suppose that all the greatest civilizations fall.



LIU LOOK Alex Helguero



Kirby Holding a Heart Mia Gu

teenage girls Ksenia Eve Jenkins

let's buy brightly colored eyeliners we'll never use
and perfumes in smells we hate
let's paint our nails in absurd shades and stay up way too late
let's get lost in cheesy movies
and take far too many buzz feed quizzes
let's obsess over our skin, our hair, our clothes, our bodies,
and stolen late-night kisses
let's sing Taylor Swift karaoke in too high heels
reciting lines to experiences we've never had but,
"I know exactly how she feels,"
let's go to the beach and pretend to like sunbathing
putting our insecurities on display
sucking in our stomachs
side effects of society
dying slowly like a rose in decay
all tan lines, stretch marks, and mascara stained cheeks but,
"no dude, I'm like totally okay,"
let's deflect the compliments we know to be true
heaven forbid we seem conceited
we say, "oh, that's okay, I hope we can still be friends,"
but our eyes betray, we feel defeated
let's climb the trees we love so much
let's scream at the insects we yearn to touch
scoff at the scuff-kneed boys we envy
cry for the childhoods we never had
too young to be a mother

too old to be a girl
still just a child
but forced to endure
the world at our fingertips
but our voices silent
stopped by the men
who force us to be quiet
it doesn't have to be this way
our world's direction can still be steered
we can change the course; the narrative
let's be messy
and weird
and giggly
and creative
let's make too many mistakes
and be tired
and smart
and funny
let's be dreamers
and lovely
and imperfect
and bubbly
let's flat iron our curls
and for the love of god
for as long as we can
let's be teenage girls



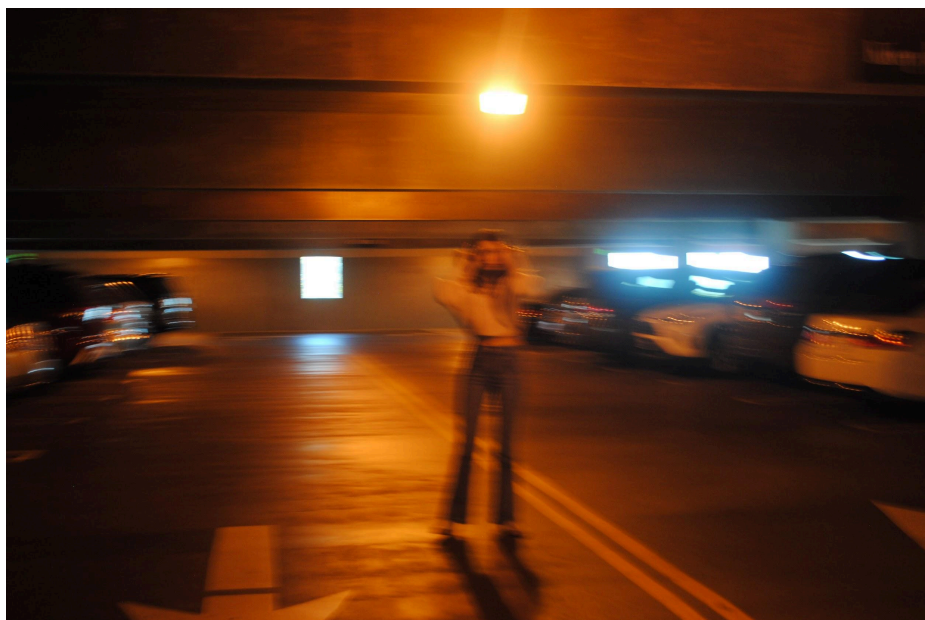
Face Of Fantasy I Sophia Cuevas

Summer Ella Lam-Chan

I come to play with June and May
I tickle waves and sunshine
I pass by Spring's grass, green and gay
I send light through leaves of pine.
I love the flowers, babes of mine,
A gift from spring and from fall
I'm the color of your new tan line
From an ocean tale told tall,
I warm the sea and warm the sky
I'm sunshine on your freckled nose,
I'm the kindest kind of bitter lie
When my time comes to a close.
But, though Time goes by and Time comes fro
I, Summer, will come back even after I go



Veggie Macy Wong



Parking Garage Jeanette Pham

Celestial Longing Julie Mejer and Zivie Ye

Moon

So close yet so far, I remember the days when earth had it hard,
Passing the love notes of light into dark,
Each turn Earth lingers, the more I want to break,
Break into the stars surrounding your face,
What if our jobs were to rid of dark space?
Overwhelm it with stars, nebulas, and leaving no grace?
If that's the case, then I plead, cut me into two and devour the thought of
the stars and butterflies,
The endless nebulas in my stomach and heart,
The crime of loving is wanting to die for it too,
I wish you knew just how much I don't want to be this cold, lifeless
moon.

Sun

In the dawns embrace, I rise anew
A golden promise to the sky so blue
My warmth hugs the earth with a gentle light
While you, dear moon, adorn the night

Through darkness, I chase your glow
In twilights' dance, our love unknown
Though we may never share the sky
My rays will reach you where you lie
A love so deep yet bittersweet
Me and you, forever bound
In a waltz that shall never be complete.



[untitled.] Savannah Trieu

Ode to Tangerines Rachel Sung

People often
Move right over you
And turn to oranges.
But every time
I see your beautiful
Sunset skin,
I feel a rush
Of excitement.

Your porous
And imperfect flesh
That must be peeled
Before eating
Captures and lures me
Towards your citrusy scent.

You lie there
In Grandma's fruit bowl,
Waiting for me,
And with every piece
I bite into,
As your sweet
And tangy juice
Seeps onto my tongue,
Joy floods through me.

Countless days you have been there,
Offering me comfort,
In times of stress.
The countless days you fed me,
And made me feel loved.
Your rich,
Green leaves brushing against
My hands,
As I search,
For you.



Oranges Macy Wong

But It Started Out As Child's Play Sarah Glauch-Lozano

A paper plane once flew,
he'd thrown it, that strange, quiet boy with the downtrodden eyes
who'd watched the other children launching their own paper flying
machines
from his small isolated table in the corner.
Wishing to be part of their group, he had
taken out a crumpled newspaper sheet,
its blaring headlines shouting out tales
of fiscal depressions,
of murders,
of a society perpetually at war with itself
but as he could not yet read,
he'd understood none of it.
He had simply folded a careful crease down the middle of page,
splitting apart the obituaries from the advertisements,
folded a center line down the face of a missing person
turned in the corners of the political cartoons
glowing with victory, when, finally
his little project had been completed.
But it would not fly,
it flopped uselessly on the table,
a failed creation, a tarnished hope,
he had despaired
when
he saw another little boy's paper airplane practically begging to be flown
it had been denied its purpose, he reasoned,
he took it of course, the boy didn't seem to appreciate it.
After all, it had been left lying there.
He deserved it
so he had thrown it, and by god how it had flown
it had soared through the air, when he had thrown it,
defying the laws of gravity,
suspended in a moment of perfection.

Then
suddenly crashing into a house of cards the children had built
it was a tall house, he had thought
more of a tower really
which had then triggered the collapse of the tower beside it
the tower's twin
both went down.
The children cried out.
And the little boy,
unaware of what he had caused
smiled,
intrigued with the destruction.
He had seen the other children carelessly swatting at flies and killing ants
with a mere footstep, so after all
how was this any different?
He had observed this violence, he had been taught it
and, in the end, achieved what he always wanted.
To do what the others had done, to be one was one of them at last.
So he laughed,
Laughed as his stolen paper airplane
brought down
the twin card towers.



My Precious Aniya Wilkins

Things My Parents Never Told Me Ksena Eve Jenkins

My parents warned me about drugs on the street,
The ones in the school hallways,
The ones in the dark alleys,
On street corners

In white vans with no windows,
They warned me about addiction
About vape flavors,
And peer pressure,
And parties with red solo cups
Yes,

My parents warned me the about drugs out there
But never about the ones with big blue eyes and a heartbeat.

I was never told of the dangers of the wrestler girl who pierces
her friends ears
Never was it mentioned to me to watch out for the best friend with
blonde curls

The one with a heart-wrenching smile
Why didn't they tell me about how perilous her gaze is?
Or about the tenor boy

The one with soft waves and a comforting laugh

The one who's always the lead in every show
Who graces the world with his intelligence and melts your heart with his
kindness

No, they never told me about them.
Why was it not mentioned to me?

Did they not think it important to say,
“Oh, hey,

By the way, you're going to meet your best friend one day,
Your soulmate,

The person who makes you laugh and smile, and feel safe, more
than anyone in the world,

And you'll meet a boy who's whole existence gives you
butterflies,

Who makes getting out of bed each morning an exciting prospect
You'll meet them and your life will be complete each time,
But there will be one tiny problem,
One miniscule inconvenience,
Just the smallest hitch in the perfection of a life you will begin to plan for
yourself,
They won't like you back."



Skiptown Playhouse Alex Helguero

Lonely Cailee Copeland

(Verse 1)

Stand in the back of the group now, try not to say a word
No one really cares, that's all she's ever heard
She's never been one to question who she's had around
But when she tries to call, no one makes a sound

(Chorus)

Lonely is her name, she's not so wealthy in fame
Lonely is her name, her face is black and white with a frame
She's gone, she left for so long
And no one saw, she doesn't spark a memory in their brain

(Verse 2)

Doesn't get invited to parties, is mostly by herself
Acts like she's ok, she's a book on a shelf
Has so much to offer, but no one gives her time
I think they would like her, she's seen as poison not as wine

(Chorus)

Lonely is her name, she's lost so much but has so much to gain
She fades from the storyline, but don't worry she's ok she's fine

(Bridge)

But actually it's me not her
And it's much worse here cause I hurt
And you would never know, you're too much in control
And I know that I'm not worthy, there's nothing left of me
I try to be so special, but I guess it doesn't show

(Outro)

Lonely is her name, she's so broken she stays in her lane
Lonely is her name, she thought she was worth more than everything

Two Floors Down Olivia Han

Rubin doesn't like coffee.

She likes to drink tea way past the mornings when her body is abuzz and takes her time diligently putting together a cup. If she could, she could spend hours perfecting her single porcelain mug of jasmine for her sun-laden mornings, hearing faint footsteps and the clatter of heels on the pavement where she stands two floors above. Rubin could disturb her neighbors upstairs, five college students from the art school five blocks away beckoning guests with loud music and a promise to the world's fair in their little shoebox. Rubin has two missed calls from Mom. None from Dad. That rattled faucet of hers eases and creaks the same way she stretches out of bed in the morning, groaning in greeting as it slips water into her old kettle, burn marks smelling of a barley tea she brewed last week—perhaps she'll wash it later.

Rubin doesn't like coffee because of her eyes. Ever since she was a little girl, her mother would sit beside her plush bed and press her thumb against her stout nose, whispering as if she held a secret that could never be revealed to the universe, singing a song about her little Rubin's eyes being like pearls, laden with gold and a white shine that could make a bear buckle its knees at a single glance.

And so she held that gaze on everything in her life.

Rubin liked pretty things. And coffee was not one of them. She found it quite ironic, given that she loved taking her time and coffee took a very, very long time. Grind the coffee, but not too much, or it'll be powdery and messy, boil the water and don't add too much, place the filter, place coffee in the filterpourandwaitmaybewaitsomemore—Rubin hates it. Coffee was gritty and messy, a disguised sweet smell giving way to a bitterness she didn't like as much as her tea. Her pearl eyes were decaying into a yellow, yellow enough to make people think she was a fake, a gilded pair of eyes that would blink and cry and scrunch up. Rubin did not find herself to be vain. She just wished she could feel her mother's deft fingers retrace her nose again as she sang another melody

of a song they listened to on the radio in the mornings. Rubin's mother made the best cups of tea. She knew how much sugar was too much and how bitter was too bitter. Her liquid gold was the same shade as her eyes, speaking to her in poems she could only hear through her touch and her nose as she sipped her earl grey. Rubin was the miner, the one digging for golden nuggets in junk drawers, searching for traces she could place in her melting pot of a kettle. Perhaps, she could replicate her mother that way, she believed.

Rubin isn't afraid to grow old; she's been growing old for a long time after all. She likes to trace the lines on her face against her bathroom mirror like Narcissus and his pond, her wrangly fingers scratching pearl dust off her eyelashes. The wrinkles on the edges of her lips look like dried cornflower petals with the small creases at the edges of her eyes exhausting and tensing up with every grin she makes at a bird passing by her window. She likes to collect and collect like a filter catching those ugly brown droplets. Her house is filled with pearl necklaces and letters sent to her from the wrong people and reading them becoming a more entertaining pastime than watching TV. There is a new one left on the counter tonight, a coffee-stained love letter addressed to a woman named Maggie that she reads with careful delight, thumbs careful not to touch the lining of coffee spilled on the paper. It's quite new, she realizes, and finds herself wondering if it is worth the trip to find this Maggie in her building and relay her lover's poem to her. It doesn't take her long to decide. Sometimes, she sits with her kettle on the stove, simply staring off into the haze of the morning sun like a crow waiting for the worms to seed up. One day, she'll wither and dry like her favorite cornflower tea leaves, rested in a bath of warm water, submerged, lost but lingering in the air like her mother's songs and grated pearls. Rubin will take her time. Like she does with everything else.

Because coffee can be made instant in powders and boxes, but tea will always taste better with time.



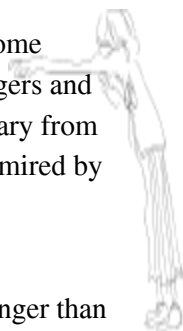
Pencil Macy Wong



stick n poke Olivia Han

In No Particular Order Olivia Han

I would rather live between those ugly margins like an unwelcome parasite, digging and grasping at what dirt lies between my fingers and gnawing at the letters until they crack at my teeth, red eyes bleary from the dark. I would rather be watched with disgust rather than admired by them. A messy creation of anger built up from spoken life and excruciating simplicity.



They called for three-inch thick straps on tops and shorts no longer than the tips of our fingers. I was a silent protester, my nails cut extra short from biting and stubby enough to let me wear my favorite black denim shorts around. Every time they would ask me to check, I would stand on my little stage and preach my case, resting my hands at my side, triumphant as I spoke quietly because we could not be too loud or arrogant.

“They reach longer than my middle finger, see?”



When I was five or so, I left on quests. Small adventures out of our little home and out to concrete tunnels, winding roads that seemed to fly over other winding roads all like a jumble I was so familiar playing with in my hands like the cables in his drawers. I was always carsick. My stomach was weak and I always complained that I had “*meolmi*.”

“Meolmi, appa. Meolmi,” I would complain over and over again because then I didn’t talk to him in English.

I would follow him into forests of buildings. The streets smelled like cigarettes. A sign always read “Toy district” but we never went in there despite all of my constant wishes. He would park his car by the street where I could hear faint conversations passing by like fairies singing songs as I was entrusted with the biggest mission of all: stay and wait. So I did. On days when I was especially sickly, he would bring me a styrofoam cup of water that I would usually finish in under a minute and poke a hole through its flesh with my thumb to show him my floating cup

magic trick when he finally got in the car. He would always come back with these off-brand berry-flavored gummies that his buddy at the store he got inventory from would give him: a proper reward for a weary knight. At that height, from what I could see out the window, Los Angeles felt like the tallest forest in the world. A forest I could one day conquer with my magic tricks and my special chariot: a black Lexus five-seater.





Stallion Mordecai Mehau

Possessions Isabel Saenz

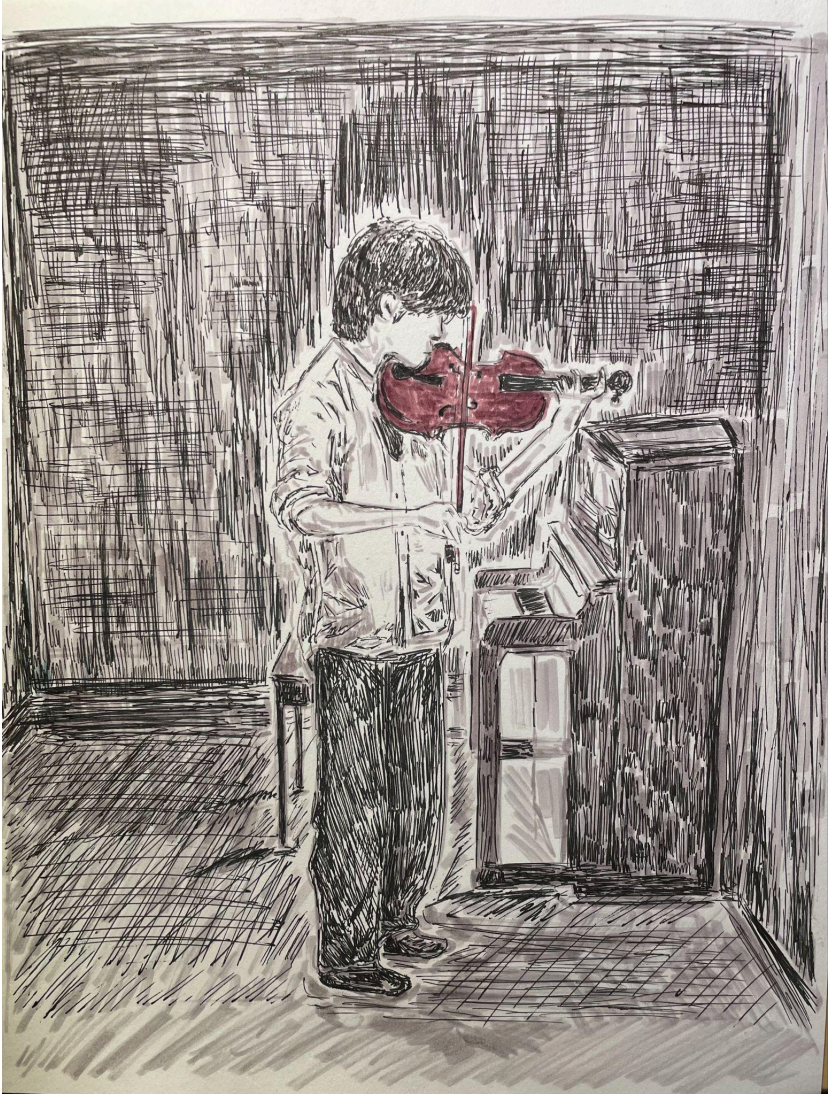
Why do we value possessions?
Some — may say it's an obsession
An obsession we all face at the same time
Time we could be spending with ones we “love”
Love we could be spreading to others by sharing
Sharing stories we were told
Told — as we grow up
Why?

Cars, Makeup, Clothes, and everything else will be here forever

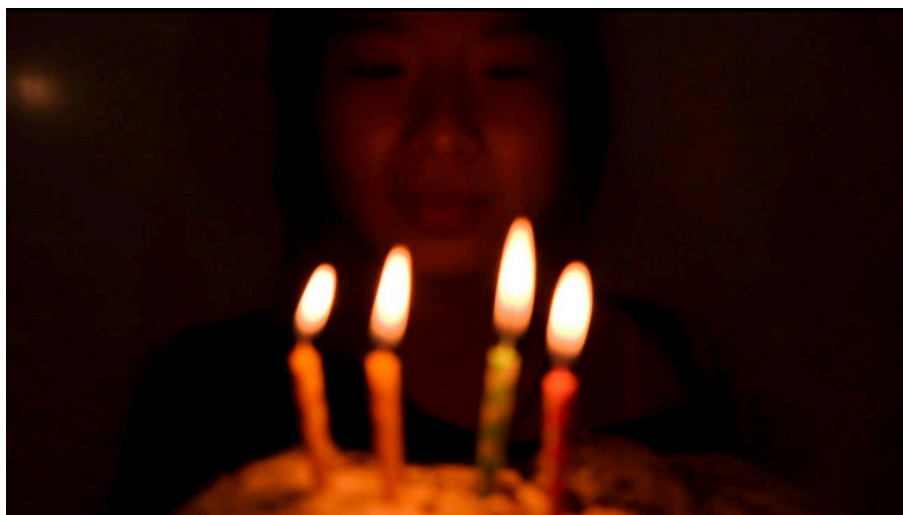
But

They won't

Won't be there forever to see you grow
Grow to be the amazing person you'll be
Becoming the person you've always wanted
Wanting to fix so many things
Things that are just so dumb
Dumb to even regret
Then — regretting the time you could have spent with them
Them being by your side
Giving you their time
Time — that's limited
But...
They chose You; cherish it



[untitled.] Savannah Trieu



[untitled.] Isla Finamore

1 is the best number Cailee Copeland

I think 1 is the best number

It's easy to write

Everybody loves 1st place

And it doesn't have to rely on anyone else but itself to make it complete

1 is solitary

1 is solitary

I was in the eighth grade when I started to experience loneliness

It came in waves

Being ignored

Being pushed to the back of the group

Being left alone for my own enjoyment

My own company

Scrolling aimlessly, all the time

So the question "where are all her friends?" doesn't even come to mind

Because the truth is I don't know, they kind of all just disappeared

But you'd rather have 4 quarters than 100 pennies

Have you ever had to worry about how many friends you have, or have you always had plenty.

You see loneliness, it doesn't go away

Instead it grows rapidly changing sizes day to day

Some days I'm not sad at all

But some days I realize there's no one I can call

And if I fall there's absolutely no one there to catch me

So forgive me if next time you ask me to hangout I say I'm not free

I'd love to have some company, but it's fine I'm used to being alone

I wouldn't want to feel like a burden barging into your group, your

secure home

But I feel so unbelievably lonely, and there's nothing I can do

I've honestly never felt so helpless, and no one seems to be picking up
the clues

That I have no one

Just a complete abyss

Of so much loneliness

So much emptiness

All I see is the tears streaming down my face

The water is held in my eyes full of blank space

They've lost their color as the silent cry for help pours out

But just keep walking by me everyday and I'll just turn off the spout

I won't let you see my vulnerability, it's just not worth it

It's not fair to me to let you see all that's beneath the surface

So yes, I resonate with 1

Because it's as lonely as me, and frankly with that feeling

I wish I was done

On the Clock Zivie Ye

Tick tock on the clock, get things done before it slips away

Before it slips away into a puddle of the past

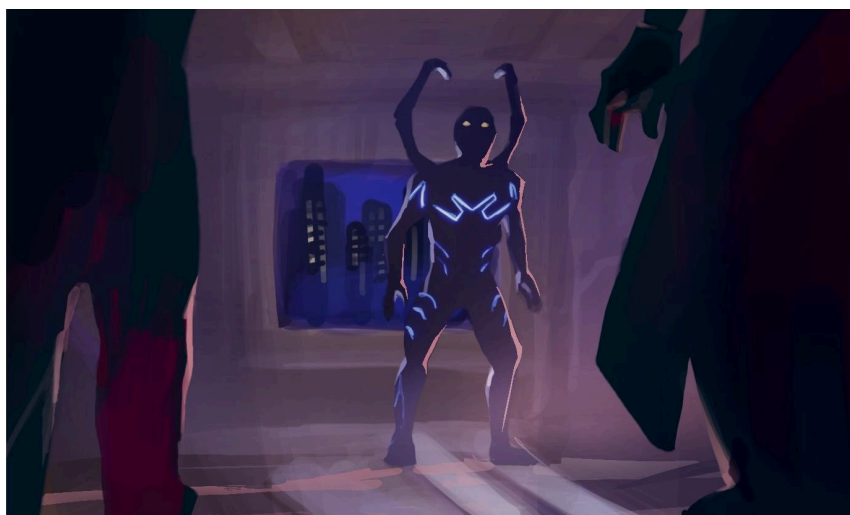
Before you look back and see time go so fast

‘Now’ turns into what things ‘were’

Took a trip and now I’m on the plane back

What a joke that time is, be on time and watch it slip

Slip away into a puddle of the past



Blue Beetle Xinmiao Yang

Summer Rain Mordecai Mehau

You drive me crazy all the time

But I still love you 'cause you're mine

There ain't nothin' you could do

To keep me from lovin' you

And there ain't nothin' I could say

For you to quit your foolish ways

One day you will have a child

And I will hold her in my arms

Cause there ain't nothin' you could make

That I wouldn't wanna take

I'll hold her in my knowin' arms

Knowin' she'll hold your beauty and your charm

Hold your temper and your rage

My baby's made of summer rain

And on the day that I must go

You'll attend my funeral

Gripping poor ol' Jenny's hand

My lovers tears swiftly ran

And as they lowered me to the ground

My heart will hear the gentle sound

Tapping lightly on my grave

My dear will bring me summer rain

Thank the heavens for summer rain.

The Chronicle Annika Petras

Scene 1

Small town of 2,000 residents, Kansas. Early afternoon.

On his front porch, MAN, 63, overweight, sits on a hanging porch swing, smoking a cigarette. He is grasping the local newspaper, The Chronicle. He takes a drag of his cigarette and flips to a new page. REPORTER #1, 39, female, wearing corporate business attire, enters and stands stage left.

REPORTER #1

(deadpan, uninterested)

Rev. Clay Richard Simmons died this past Monday at the age of sixty-seven. Simons was an active member of the community in the late 90s, working to revitalize the His Holiness Protestant Church, located on 2nd street and Grape, which had been inactive since the 1940s.

Unfortunately, it fell back into disrepair after Simons fell ill in 2009. His estate and 40 acres of land in the undesirable northeastern region of the state are to be inherited by his eldest step-daughter, Cassandra Lee. The reverend passed in the comfort of his own home, surrounded by Cassandra and his other three step-daughters.

After speaking, REPORTER #1 pulls a pack of cigarettes out of her back pocket, pulls one out of the box with her mouth, and takes a drag, before exiting stage left. She rubs her temple with her hand as she exits, as if she has a headache. REPORTER #2, 55, male, dressed in a wrinkly suit, enters and stands stage right.

REPORTER #2

(enthusiastic, shaking slightly)

After a truly nerve-racking four months waiting for approval in the state parliament, the State Tourism act has still yet to be passed. The act would allow for extremely minimal state investments for rural towns around the now deserted Route 66. Specifically, it would help to develop tourist attractions à la ‘World’s Largest Ball of Paint’ in such towns, most of which have tiny populations and are suffering economically.

(quick pause)

This is a developing story. More later.

REPORTER #2 waits a couple of seconds after he finishes speaking, as if in order to wait for a response from the audience. He then walks off stage left. REPORTER #3, female, 60, wearing an ugly floral dress and sporting a large purse, enters stage right. She reaches into her purse and pulls out a couple of slightly crumpled pieces of paper. She pulls out a pair of reading glasses from her purse, puts them on, and begins to read off of the paper.

REPORTER #3

Happenings around town. By Miss Baker.

(pausing)

I, Miss Baker, find that there is absolutely zero possibility that any given individual in town is not yet informed of the marriage that is to be between the youngest McAlester boy and the only daughter of the Van Bergens. Of course, I also need not remind the general public of the influence the Van Bergens currently hold in the prolific Durum Wheat industry—though, of course, there is some speculation as to the legitimacy of some of the business dealings of Edgar McAlester, which were revealed, if you would remember, in my exposé on the family published in August of this year. Nevertheless, as we know, this marriage seemed extremely advantageous for the only moderately wealthy Van Bergens, who have recently suffered financial loss at the hands of several Topeka casinos. Though, in a sudden turn of events, there is reason to believe that another factor—this factor being already in its second trimester—to have been involved in this speedy decision. Yes everyone, according to new evidence which I collected myself, Kathleen is indeed pregnant. Now, our collective confusion at this match may be solved and put away. It was a marriage not so much made out of convenience, but one that was made simply to protect the precious reputation of the McAlesters, which has, as I previously stated, been faltering in recent years.

REPORTER #3 stuffs the page back into her purse, pushing her glasses back up onto her face. She exits stage right. After a few seconds, crying is heard backstage. Reporter #1 exits from stage left, walks across the stage, and exits again stage right. The crying stops. Reporter #4 enters from stage right, looking back over his shoulder to ensure that everything is alright offstage.

REPORTER #4

(slightly concerned, but professional)

Monday: Sunny. High 68 degrees, Low 53 degrees. Tuesday: Sunny. High 67 degrees. Low 55 degrees. Wednesday: Mostly Sunny. High 70 degrees. Low 53 degrees. Thursday: Sunny. High 69 degrees. Low 54 degrees. Friday: Sunny. High 68 degrees. Low 50 degrees. Saturday: Sunny. High 67 degrees. Low 53 degrees. Sunday: Mostly Sunny. High 65 degrees. Low 52 degrees.

MAN flips the page of the newspaper, seemingly looking for something. He eventually closes it, before standing up from the porch, yawning, and exits stage left.

BLACKOUT



The End Xinmiao Yang



Facet Mia Yang

Seasons Change Isabel Saenz

As we get older people change

We change.

People come in and out of our lives constantly

Opening and closing our doors

Some, a quiet exit

Others, a slam in our face

There's no stopping it

What's the point?

They're gone.

And then, it's fall

Your hair's longer than I last remember

You look the same

But

Different.

You got new clothes

New shoes

New friends

I'm not the only one who's changed it seems

You've changed too

Just like the seasons go, from summer, to fall.

The leaves falling, making room for new ones to come

The old ones were always gonna fall

But, how soon would they fall?

I never thought that *this* would happen

But it did

A leaf, still pretty to the naked eye

Slowly falls on my page

Why?

It never needed to

It was perfect the way it was

Like I was

As I flip the pages, all I see "our" the changes

In the fine lines, all the rearrangements you made

Guess there was no room for me

You rewrote the story

Our story

Why, though?

The distance between each line, is like the distance between us

A life without, **you**

Is the one I outgrew

Starting new, before you

Seeing a new point of view

While I might miss what we had

That's in the past

Because that's all I have left of you

And you of me



Anne Hathaway Kevin Zhang



Face of Fantasy II Sophia Cuevas

Muted Metamorphosis Ariel Mualim

Life starts with a singular seed.

I can fit inside the palm of a hand.

A foundation is all I need,
To build my roots into the land.

As I make my first break through the ground,

I am conscious of my surroundings,

And exposed to the cruelties of life,

As I become sharp-edged all around.

Before I emerge into something of beauty,

I only hurt everything around me.

But you see, it is my duty,

To protect myself at a certain degree.

As only menacing thorns cover me,

Something of color creates a change.

An idea, a revelation, or something inside of me,

Pushes me out of range.

After bleak years, there is a glimmer of hope.

An inner growth that sprouts through my veins.

The ties in me are as strong as a rope,

And I can face any drowning rains.

My life is finally aligning.

This is my prime.

My thorns are ignored as my petals are shining.

I am seen as sublime.

Now I finally understand how life goes.

There's beauty outside and inside of me.

**I am a radiant, ravishing rose,
And now I can taste what it's like to be free.**

But the story always ends the same.
I disappear and wilt away.
My petals hang from my delicate frame,
And life will start another day.

Glass Eyes Chanel Lewis

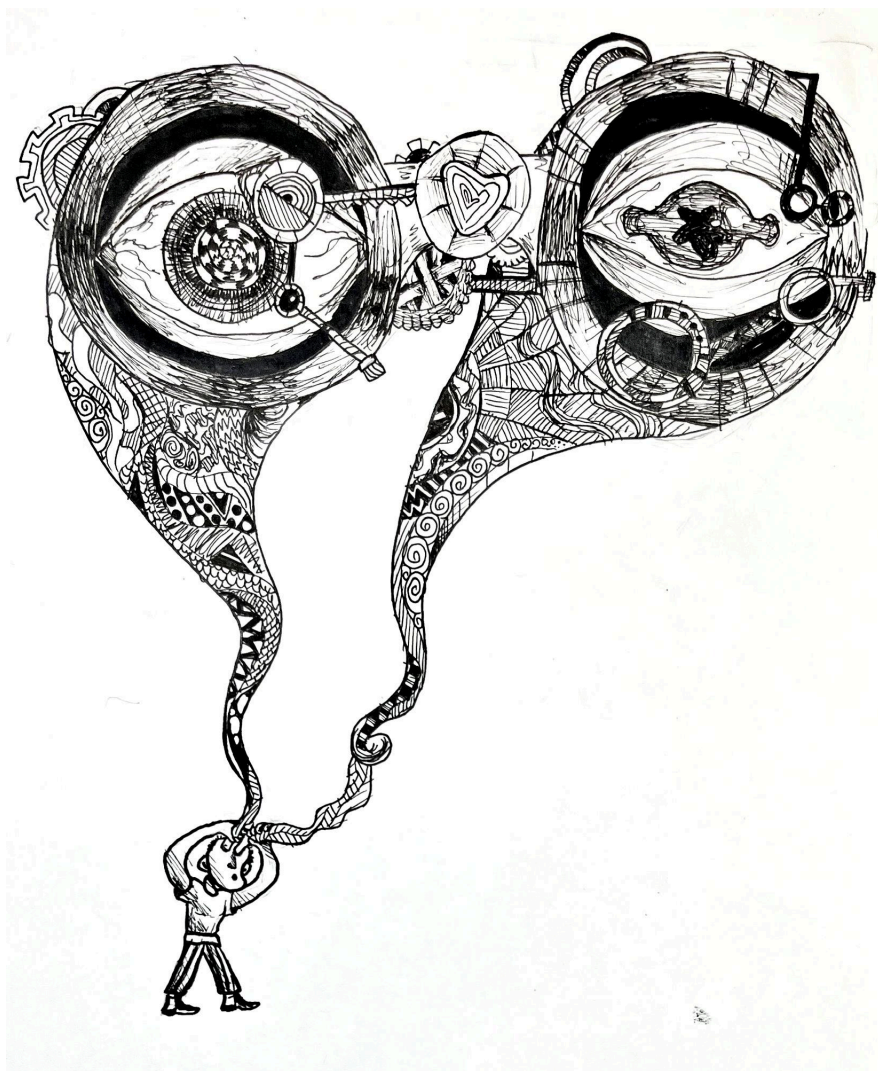
Pick one up. Drop it. Pick one up, drop it. Pieces of eye, glass eye that is, spread out on the floor, scattered, shattered. Eye after eye, I pick it up, and I drop it, and it shatters. So many different colors from sweet honey amber, to sad dull gray, smashed on the floor. I reach for another, a gorgeous blue. Deep navy, delicate, and delighted, a venus eye. Glass glistening although in faint, dim, light. I almost allow my hand to slip from the smooth orb, but then she walks in.

The rainbow glass shines in her vision, she picks up the pieces.

Sweep, sweep, sweep, I am still as I watch her sweep up the broken glass from the floor. Watching the bristles of the broom push shards of glass away. She moves toward the trash can and gently taps the bottom of the broom pan against the wall of the trash. Shards of glass slip down and fall into the flimsy bag that covers the bin.

She told me not to allow the blue eye fall out of my hands like the others before it. I mentally debate her words. In the end I decide to follow her instruction, and I hold onto the sphere tightly and protectively, now determined to keep it in tacked.

She walks to me, I allow my hold to loosen for if I hold it too tight it might pop. She takes it from my palm, and lets it slide off her hand and fall to the floor below. Sapphire glass bounces and cracks. A bounce, a crack, a bounce, a crack, and a burst, the eye bursts into pieces, and the glass scatters. She watches each piece fall into place, then picks up the trash bag, and leaves. Now I stand alone in this lonely darkened room, blue white and black shards surround my shoes, and all I wonder is this: *What was the point of that?*



Binoculars Logan Navar



Frekalin Nino Raimondo

What Is Happiness? Anonymous

Happiness is a word many people use to describe joy
Joy, that for a long time we think stays with us forever
Truth is — it doesn't
It doesn't stay forever
Pulling ourselves apart like a ragdoll
From left to right
The stitches hanging by a thread
The thread — we use to measure our waist as we try to lose weight
Pulling harder and tighter till it snaps
And reality then comes back
When will we be enough?
And not just the runner up

The need to straighten my hair
Since it's too ugly and it's not what people like
It can't be seen by anyone.
Because it's not the blond hair people *want* to see
The need ~~to wear~~ for me to wear color contacts just to feel like enough
Since blue eyes are like the blue sky , and green eyes are paradise
That's why they're the only eyes people ever sing about
The ones they dream about

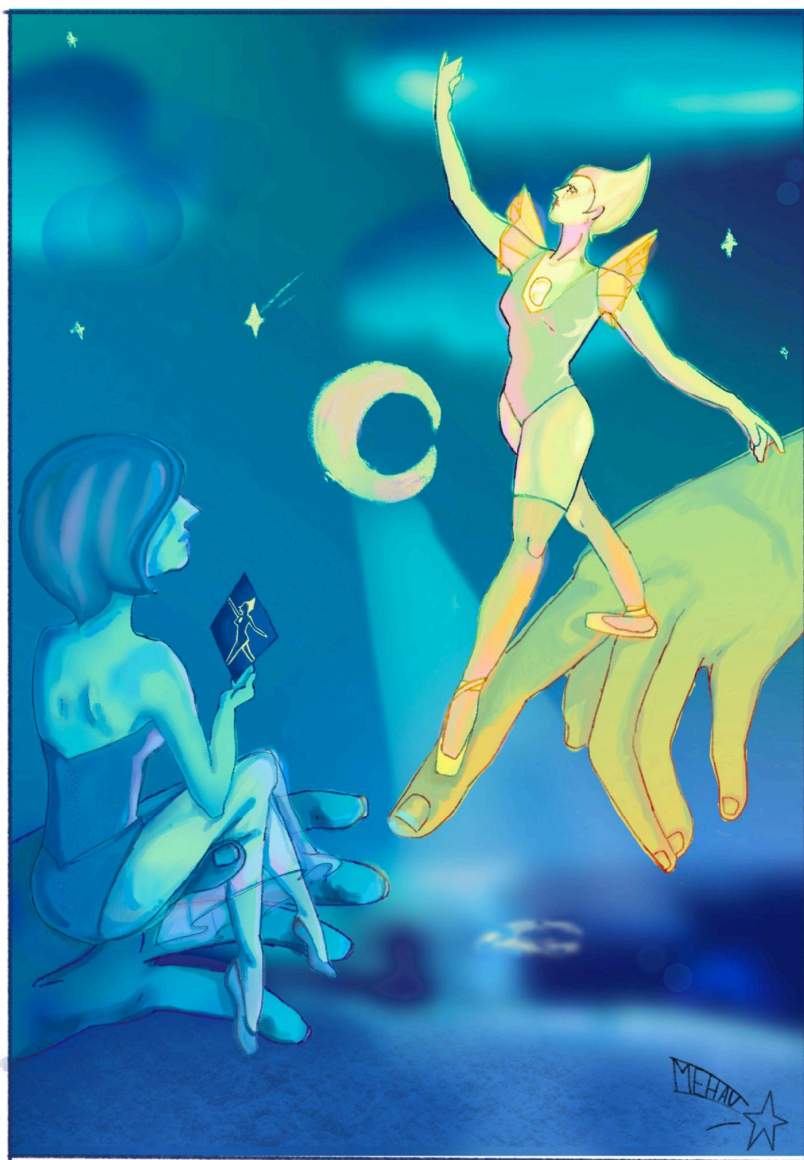
I'm too dark to be white and to be liked
I'm too light to be considered Latina but dark enough to be
mistaken
I don't have the clear skin for people to say I'm beautiful
But with makeup I'm insecure and don't need it

I could never be her

The ones on the covers of magazines
Nothing ever works.
Why can't it just work?
Instead of just leaving me hurt
If only I was skinner I would be prettier
What I would do and what I could do to be like her



Donut Macy Wong



A Diamond's Pearl Mordecai Mehau

The Realm In My Head Rhea Kolapalli

Fields of gold

A sweet tasting breeze

Sand between my toes,

Water lapping at my feet

An enchanting wooden door,

Leading to a hidden paradise,

Flora and fauna I've never seen before,

I linger here, content till sunrise.

Long, winding highways

To a far-off embrace,

My head out the window,

The wind's fingers dancing on my face.

The melodic chime of my bangles,

Stars like scattered fantasies above,

Grass swaying gently around my ankles,

The night whispers its final love.

What fuels my journey,
Through sunshine and through rain,
Is the knowledge
That in sadness or strain—
In loneliness or pain
When life feels like too much,
I can escape to this realm,
The realm in my head
Close my eyes, and touch
The beauty within,
Where my spirit can roam,
Finding solace in dreams,
And always returning home.

Contributors

Cailee Copeland. I am a freshman this year in IA! I hope to publish a poetry book and release my songs before I graduate from OCSA. I aspire to move to NY and be on Broadway, I love Musical Theater! I am so excited for all the future has to offer me!

Sophia Cuevas. Sophia uses makeup to express her creativity. She uses makeup in a way to transform herself into anything or anyone she wants. Sophia started playing with makeup during COVID. It was an outlet for self expression and a way to connect with herself and the outside world, when doing so, was very limited. Sophia has taken a special liking to special effects makeup and intends to continue her practice and improve her craft.

Isla Finamore. Isla Finamore is a sophomore in the integrated arts conservatory. She enjoys film and photography, along with 3D art and performing. She really enjoys drawing portraits and loves to try new forms of art.

Mia Gu. Mia Gu was born on June 20, 2012, and is 12 years old. She enjoys skiing and painting and also loves bunnies and the color orange.

Victoria Johnson. Victoria Johnson is an eighth-grade student at the Orange County School of the Arts. She is a passionate artist, actor and singer. At about the age of nine, she started art lessons at the Atelier: Creative Art Studio in Ladera Ranch. While she certainly enjoys capturing scenery in her art, her true passion is drawing characters. Her favorite mediums are watercolor and alcohol markers.

Ariel Mualim. Ariel Mualim recently transferred from Orchard Hills Middle School, and she is now an eighth grader in Integrated Arts. She was born in Irvine and has lived in Singapore and Shanghai, China throughout her thirteen years. Since second grade, Ariel has enjoyed writing stories and poetry, as well as playing word games like Wordle. Currently, Ariel writes poetry that compares intangible things to nature.

Ariel is elated to be at a school that allows her to grow and showcase her creativity, and she continues to incorporate art into her daily life.

Nino Raimondo. Nino Raimondo is a 10th grader, that's an artist that just makes very odd and random visual art just by what he feels in the moment or by what music he's listening to while he does art.

Savannah Trieu. She loves yogurt, cashews, and music.

Annika Petras. Annika Petras is a senior and has been in the Integrated Arts conservatory since 7th grade. Being a part of IA has allowed her to pursue her interests in both creative and nonfiction writing, and she hopes that she will be able to continue both in higher education.

Rhea Kolapalli. Rhea Kolapalli is an 8th grader in the Integrated Arts Conservatory. She has always loved to read and writing has been a passion of hers since she was very young; However, since coming to IA, she has broadened her interests and loves to engage in new art forms. When she is not writing, you can find her eating too much food, trying to understand math, singing the songs she's written/whatever's stuck in her head, or hanging out with her friends and family.

Mia Yang. Mia Yang is a 10th-grade sophomore at OCSA and has been part of the IA Conservatory for one year. Passionate about art, she dedicates much of her time to creating with various media, including pencil, watercolor, acrylic, color pencil, and digital drawing. [User] enjoys exploring different artistic styles, always seeking to expand her creative expression.

Logan Navar. They say that Logan Navar crawled, wild-eyed and dirt-smudged, from the woods and canyons of Southern Utah. He brought with him a passion for writing and art and a deep-rooted love for nature, which he has carried throughout his career as a student and creative thinker. When he isn't occupied with school, Logan can be found engaging in complex philosophical debate with anyone who will listen, dreaming up some questionable new creative project, or several meters up in a tree with no evident way down.

Ella Lam-Chan. A student in the *Integrated Art* conservatory at the *Orange County School Of The Arts*.

Ryder Flowers. Ryder Flowers is a senior at OCSA, attending school with the ambition of pursuing creative writing work in the future. Ryder works full time in four different paying jobs and through his attendance of over 50 and festivals in the past two years, he has drawn inspiration for much of his work through these exchanges. Ryder plans on attending a four year university and continuing to use his writing to move others, with him currently working on a novel of his own.

Chanel Lewis. On the days all the kids would play she'd sit alone typing away. On the days all her friends would go out, she'd sit through the noise and scribble on page after page. She hopes that on one of these days they'll read what she's written on the days of play.

Julie Mejer. Julie Mejer is an 8th grader in the Integrated Arts Conservatory at OCSA. She enjoys acting, writing, and dancing. She also likes to play instruments, such as the piano, the violin, and the guitar in her spare time. Julie is excited to share her work and passion through Bonfire this year and in the future!

Zivie Ye. Zivie Ye is a writer who is venturing into the world of poetry but also enjoys music, art and reading thrillers.

Macy Wong. Macy Wong is an 8th grader in the Integrated Arts conservatory. She is a developing artist who likes to focus on portraits and nature subjects. Macy has been taking art lessons from Marillyn Brame, a ninety-six year old local artist based in Mission Viejo since she was seven years old. In her free time, Macy enjoys sewing, crocheting, baking, and spending time with her two cats.

Editors

Art Department

Olivia Han. Olivia Han is an artist and amateur writer based in Orange County specializing in mixed media and illustration. Her work mostly focuses on the mess that comes with nostalgia and everyday life, questioning what capturing a memory outside of pictures means. Being a California Arts scholar for her printmaking work, she pulls a lot of inspiration from neo-expressionism, dedicated to simply not caring about mistakes and embracing the unease that comes with adding “a bit too much”. Resonating with punk music and art, she draws and writes for her own zine, *Sisyphus Was Trampled*, covering small poems and illustrations, focusing on women. Nowadays, you can find her cooped up in her room trying to teach herself how to play guitar and scrapbooking. @bonesinthelake

Sofia May. Sofia May, 16, is a junior at Orange County School of the Arts in the Integrated Arts Conservatory. She is passionate about drawing and designing jewelry and owns a small jewelry business, Unica Jewelry. She enjoys public speaking and she is also a member of OCSA’s DECA team and has participated in Mock Trial Competitions. Sofia is an advocate for community service. She gives back to her community through small actions such as reading to children and donating books to underserved communities through her club, Pages for the Sol.

Mordecai Mehau. Mordecai Mehau is a 16-year-old student attending the Orange County School of the Arts. He takes pride in his Kanaka Maoli (native Hawaiian) heritage and looks forward to a culture of art and creativity! He grew up on a cattle ranch and moved to California in 2019 to pursue art and fashion design. Mordecai centres his art around the physical form and the innermost emotions that affect the body. He plans to fulfil self-expression over all else and inspire others to do the same.

Jeanettee Pham. Jeanettee Pham is a junior in IA and is involved with IA leadership. She is an artist and writer who enjoys reading novels in her free time. She loves birds and horses.

Rachel Sung. Rachel Sung is currently a junior at the Orange County School of the Arts and has been in the Integrated Arts Conservatory for the past four years. Rachel's writing has been published in two *Bonfire* editions and she is the coordinator for the Visual Arts portion of IA Showcase. She loves visual arts, creative writing, and singing, and in her free time, she loves trying new foods, reading, traveling, and watching shows and movies.

Audrey Townsend. Audrey Townsend is a junior in the Integrated Arts community who loves music and law. She participates on OCSA's Mock Trial team and is a part of several honors societies on campus.

Sasha Zaree. Sasha Zaree is a visual artist, actress, and writer. She has attended OCSA since 7th grade, and is now currently a senior in Integrated Arts. She enjoys watching popular sitcoms and animation, as well as spending time with her friends.

Kevin Zhang. Kevin Zhang, 16, is currently a junior in Integrated Arts at Orange County School of the Arts. He started drawing at a very young age, eventually finding a passion for fashion/ apparel design. In his free time, he enjoys drawing, finding inspiration on Pinterest, romanticizing life, and spending the weekends at the art studio. Aside from art, he is also the president of LA Royal Leo Lions Club, an organization created for teens to volunteer and help families with low income and children with disabilities.

Fiction Department

Ally Halid. Ally Halid is a junior in the Integrated Arts Conservatory. She enjoys reading comics, walking, and drinking tea in her free time.

Sophia Kim. Sophia Kim is a high schooler at the Orange County School of the Arts in Santa Ana in the Integrated Arts Conservatory. She considers herself an amateur writer who primarily writes to create stories and opinionated pieces. She also enjoys illustration, animation, and movies as forms of art and entertainment.

Penelope Morris. Penelope Morris is a high school senior at Orange County School of the Arts in the Integrated Arts Conservatory. Born in downtown Los Angeles and raised in Portland, Oregon, and Spokane, Washington, her work as an artist, writer, and activist bears heavy influence from the West Coast's multidimensional quilt of natural and man made environments. She currently lives in Aliso Viejo with her family and their dog, Zelda.

Dylan Panetta. Dylan Panetta worked as an editor within the fiction department of *Bonfire*. As a current senior in the Integrated Arts Conservatory at the Orange County School of the Arts, she has a lifelong passion for musical theater and the arts. She is a lover of fiction, reading plays, and inspiring others artistic passions!

Gloria Xiong. Gloria Xiong is an LA native currently in her junior year of high school. Raised in a family of artists, she started her music endeavours from a young age. Throughout the years, they became a multifaceted performer and artist. Their pastimes include rock climbing, being an avid consumer of all sorts of media, playing various instruments, and volunteer work dedicated to bringing the arts to underserved communities. She also hopes to publish some of her works in the near future.

Miscellaneous Art Department

Ethan Baker. Ethan is a junior in IA and he enjoys fishing. Besides fishing, he loves skating and riding bikes.

Alex Helguero. Alex Helguero is a senior at Orange County School of the Arts. She is an avid lover of photography and writing. In her free time, she loves to rewatch her favorite shows like *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Love, Death & Robots*, *The Penguin*, and films like *The Batman*, *21 Jump Street*, and *White Chicks*. Her biggest ambition is to become a cinematographer so she can make movies that show untold stories in a beautiful way. Her biggest belief is that the world is a canvas waiting to be filled.

Aniya Wilkins. Aniya Wilkins is a poetry lover, music geek, and committed actor. She loves exploring different works and loves to be involved with any art types. I like cows :)

Devin Vo. Devin is a junior at IA and loves to dance, which he started in his early years. Besides dancing, he just studies and practices driving.

Poetry Department

Kaelee Felix Cortez. Kaelee Felix Cortez is an Integrated Arts Senior. She has an array of interests from Nintendo games to playing music on her guitar. She also enjoys being a hip-hop dancer outside of going to OCSA.

Ksena-Eve Jenkins. Ksena Eve Jenkins is in her junior year at Orange County School of the Arts. She has been writing for nine years and is an author, poet, reader, and avid sushi enthusiast. She is published in *Bonfire*, *Inkblot*, *Las Estrellas de Nuestra Comunidad*, and *Kisses to the Sky*. In her spare time, you can find her at Starbucks or in Santa Ana, curled up in her bed with her dog and far too many books (and also maybe Starbucks).

Sarah Glauch-Lozano. Sarah Glauch-Lozano is an Integrated Arts junior and avid reader. She loves crafting, baking, is obsessed with Taylor Swift songs, and lives in Brea but finds herself more at home in Narnia, Wonderland, Camelot, and Camp Half-Blood. Even before she could read, she was creating stories about princesses stickers, scrawling out fantasy maps with crayons, and memorizing *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* just from listening to the audiobook. She has had her works published in Bonfire in the past, and is passionate about world affairs, which is mirrored through her poems, short stories, and spoken word poetry.

Elenna Park. Elenna Park is a senior in the Integrated Arts conservatory. Her writing journey began with her love for poems and flash fiction. She is also a member of the Integrated Arts hip hop dance team, ManIA. In her free time, you can usually find her baking or going out for a night drive.

Sammy Park. Sammy Park is a senior in IA who loves crafting, drawing, music and collecting trinkets. Her favorite artists include Role Model, Lana Del Rey, Gracie Abrams, and Omar Apollo. She often rewatches *La La Land* and *The Notebook* (or any movie with Ryan Gosling in it).

Isabel Saenz. Isabel Saenz has been writing for the majority of her life and has even expanded this into songwriting. She has written and sung her own songs and has been attending OCSA for 3 years now in the Integrated Arts Conservatory. She plans to major in fine arts and minor in criminology/criminal justice and plans on helping others through art and law.

Ciara Tadeo. Ciara Tadeo is a spirited artist and writer. She has enjoyed all corners of the arts since a young age, as she spent most of her childhood obsessed with theatre, animation, and creative writing. She loves to write about her amusing life experiences. Her writing leans towards comedy more to replicate a more conversational kind of writing; one that is based on everyday conventions. In addition to writing she enjoys performing, science, and time with her friends and family.