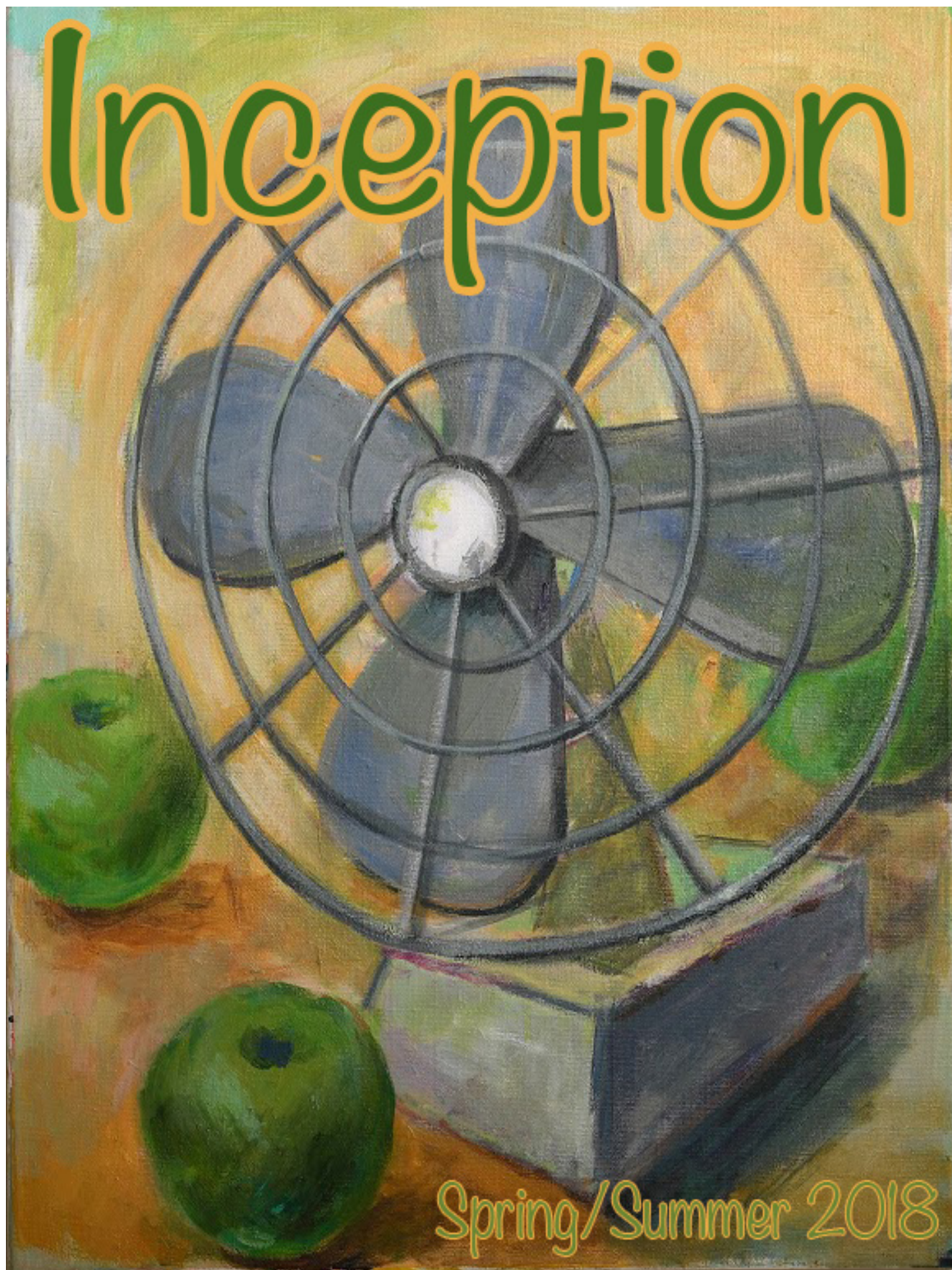


Inception



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INCEPTION

Slocum Skewes Literary Magazine
Volume 3, June 2018

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Inception Literary Magazine is designed to showcase the amazing talents of Slocum Skewes' young writers and artists in grades 6 through 8. It is a place where emerging writers and artists create and collaborate. This issue would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our talented staff and the encouragement of our entire school community.

We would especially like to thank
Mr. Michael Lennox for his support.

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My Moods

On the outside, I'm joyful and carefree,
A burst of yellow sunshine—
Optimistic and cheerful,
Knowing people smile when they look at me.

But on the inside, there's another side.
A gray uncertainty colors me.
Then I feel lonely and unsure.
I feel defeated and useless,
And I fear
People might not like
That side of me.

By Kelly Wang

Illustration by Yenni Myueng



April

April hops in after March,
Quietly, yet joyfully.
She brings rain clouds with her.

She is a gardener
And grows plants of all kinds.
She helps life flourish,
Before prancing off into May.

By Edward An
Photograph by Eftihia Christou

Stan the Toucan

Whoa, is that a toucan?
Is that what I scan?
Oh, man!
I sure am a fan!

I think I am going to name you Dan,
Or maybe Stan.
You seem like a wise man,
I wonder, what's your wingspan?

What is that I see?
Are you trying to catch a bee?
But it continues to flee I see,
Don't worry, I believe in thee!

It flies away,
Still you try to catch it anyway.
I hope you catch it without delay.
So you may feast today!

By Shailene Nuñez
Illustration by Samuel Yun



My Mother

The person who gave you life,
Who loves you unconditionally,
Nags at you for not dressing properly,
And smiles at you fondly while you sleep—
That person is your mother.

When tears escape you,
You look for her.
She will surround you with her warmth,
And you will be overwhelmed by her scent.
The scent calms you
And you feel tranquility,
As your worries melt away.

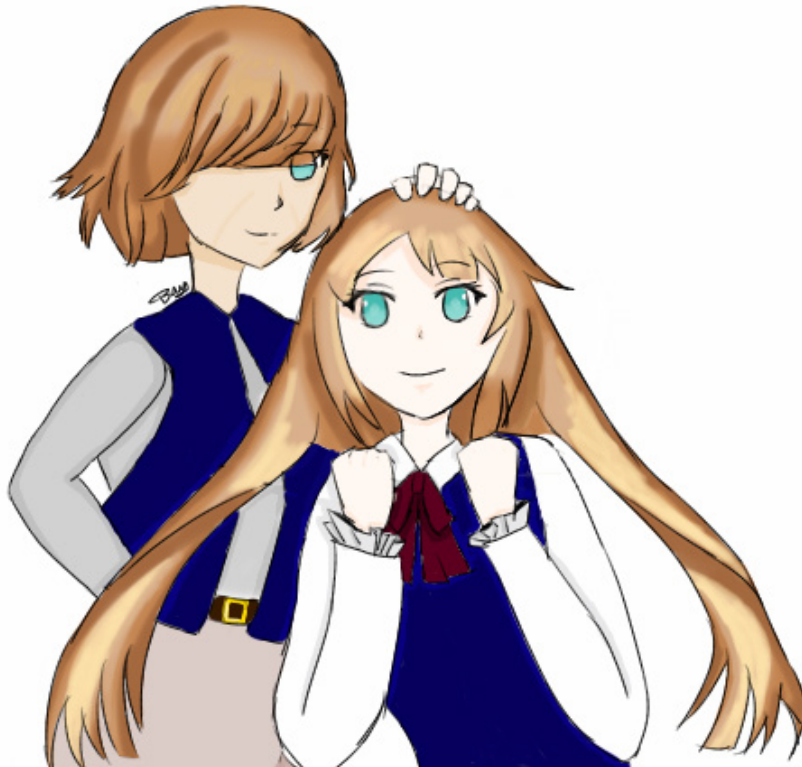
When you doubt yourself,
She will tell you that you are wonderful,
The most precious living thing on Earth.
Worthy of love.
And that you should never question yourself.

She will list reasons,
And reasons,
About the things she loves about you,
Until you are bursting with confidence.
And she won't hesitate to pull you into her
embrace.

This is when you realize
That your mother is the most inspiring,
The most loving person you know.
And you yearn to be like her one day,
So you can love and inspire
Your own children.
For you will never forget,
Your mother.

By Eunice Lee

Illustration by Yu-Na Yi



Don't Let Summer Fade Away

When people think of summer, they usually think of the wonderful memories they had when they were young. Memories such as spending time with family, hanging out with friends, and going on vacation. However, with many districts opting to have students go to school year-round, those memories will be gone along with long summer breaks, family time, and vacation. Instead, students will be left with more tests and more stress. Therefore, schools should not go year-round because enjoying summer is an American tradition, both teachers as well as students need a break from the constant stress of the school year, and students need summers to pursue other interests not always offered in their schools.

To begin with, summer vacation has been an American tradition that has been around for 120 years, so why let it stop now? Summer break is an important part of childhood that creates many lasting memories. It is also a time for families to spend time together and to visit relatives that live far away. For many students, however, summer break is more than that. Many high school students, in particular, need their summers to work. In the article, "The Pros and Cons of Year-Round Schools," the author says that year-round school would hurt these students who depend on their jobs to help pay for college. So making students go to school year-round would not only deprive them of childhood memories, it will also deprive them of a better future since many may not be able to achieve their dream of going to college.

While supporters of year-round school argue that students will still have breaks and time off, the amount of time and the quality in which students will spend their time won't be the same as it is now. Many year-round schools only offer between two and four week breaks. However, these short breaks will not help ease the pressures that students and teachers are under. For example, students don't only need breaks from school work, they also need breaks from the social pressures of school. They are not alone, as teachers also need

time to recharge. You may not be aware of this, but your professors have to deal with the bulk of grading papers, and planning lessons. In the article, "Vacation is Just as Important as the School Year," the author writes that, "Too much schooling can impair a child's and a teacher's health." That seems to support the idea of long, restful breaks because you cannot be productive if you are stressed.

Lastly, an extended summer break offers many children the opportunity to participate in activities that they wouldn't normally take part in when in school, but are still enriching to a child. During summer break, kids can go to camps and experience nature. Many students can also attend programs that specialize in a particular field of interest. These opportunities are not only enriching the lives of children, they are also allowing them to nurture their interests in a variety of fields not included in many school curriculums. The extended summer break offers a balance between the time children are in school and the time they need to experience real world opportunities.

In conclusion, schools shouldn't go year-round because the summer break is a part of American culture and tradition. It is a time when children can create lasting memories they will remember as adults. Summer is also the time teachers and students can relieve the stress brought about by school, and summer break allows kids to attend to other out-of-school activities. The balance that exists today between the school year and summer break has a proven success rate that does not need changing.

By Collin Mussell

Illustration by Yu-Na Yi



Time to Catch Up

Would keeping summer vacation be more beneficial to students? Summer break is a treasured respite from school that many students and teachers have enjoyed for decades, but is it time to go down a different path? I believe that schools should stay in session year-round, and we should say goodbye to summer. Schools should stay in session year-round because students would learn more, thus catching up to peers in other countries, students and teachers would still get the same amount of time off... just spread out in smaller segments throughout the year, and students could take creative classes during their short breaks to add to their learning.

To begin, the United States is a country loved by many, with thousands of cultures, races, and ethnicities. One area that America can improve is its education system. The United States ranks 14th out of 40 countries in education as of 2016 according to *Ranking America*, a trusted site that ranks America on many subjects, including education. Proponents of year-round schools believe that following a year-round schedule would help raise the United State's global rank, making it one of the top. America's children would learn more and process information more easily and this will result in higher test scores, making American students more competitive globally.

Opponents of year-round school argue that summer break is a much needed rest for both students and teachers and that summer vacation is an American tradition. However, saying goodbye to summer break does not necessarily mean that there will not be any vacations for students. Many year-round schools in the United States give students the same number of vacation days but split into shorter vacations which are spread out through the year, not one main vacation in the summer. These multiple vacations can in fact be even more beneficial by allowing students to visit family more often, and can prevent students from struggling to remember the information learned

before the vacation.

Lastly, year-round schools offer creative classes during these short breaks so that students can participate in activities they enjoy during their break. This is better than the alternative—being glued to a television screen or a game console. These classes can range from karate to screenwriting, to baking, or getting extra help on challenging school subjects. These classes would give students something enjoyable to do over their breaks. In addition to giving students something to do, these classes will also give students a chance to socialize with their friends, something they would not be able to do if they were to be stuck inside their house for the summer.

In summation, schools should stay in session year-round because students would learn more and catch up to peers in other countries, students and teachers who worry they would not get a rest from schoolwork would still get the same amount of time off, and students could take creative classes during their short breaks that would enhance their learning experience. Although some people might argue that summer break is a treasured and valued American tradition, year-round schools would benefit America's youth more than keeping summer vacation. If you want your child to perform better in school, schools should stay in session year-round.

By Victor Amaritei
Illustration Ya-Na Yi



Sonnet 1

Should I have compared you to a flower?
You are more lovely and free from flaw.
For you are kind and sweet, not sour,
Every day, you leave me in awe.
Flowers are often the symbol of love and
devotion.
They might smell nice and look beautiful
today,
Yet they are fragile and lack emotion,
And tomorrow they will crumble and
wither away.

You, however, are sweet and beautiful,
For you, my love, are clearly the best.
You are responsible and dutiful,
You make my heart beat out of my chest.
You are much more amazing than a flower in
its vase,
You're far more precious and have more grace.

By Sofia Martinez
Illustration by Chaerin Kim

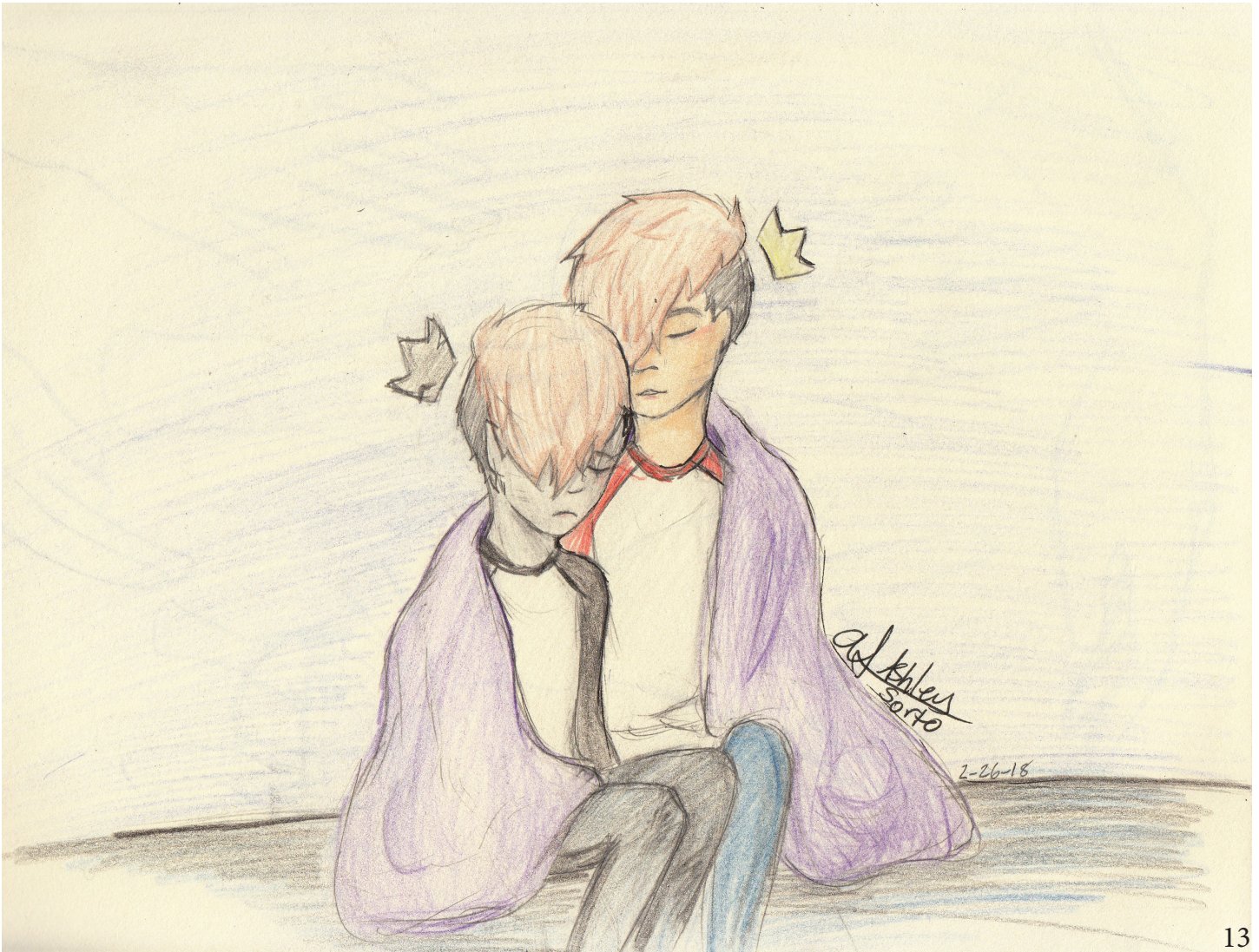


You

You,
You are who you are.
You are human—
Capable of making it through adversity.
You don't always need to be strong.
You can cry— let your feelings fly.

You,
You are who you are.
Capable of making decisions,
Not perfect— but close.
You are beautiful,
You are powerful,
Capable of being happy.
Happy— just the way you are.

By Olivia Hong
Illustration by Ashley Sorto



Solitary Seagull

Your feathers are as white as snow
on a winter's day,
As you flap your wings above the bay.
A thief who steals food from people
on the beach,
With a voice not peaceful, you always screech.
Your legs are long and you have webbed feet,
But you are not a big bird, you are very petite.

I see you snatching prey with your hooked
beak,
You are powerful and strong, not at all weak—
Graceful and sleek, fascinating, not dull,
You are *the* amazing seagull.

By Noor Mohamed
Photograph by Noor Mohamed

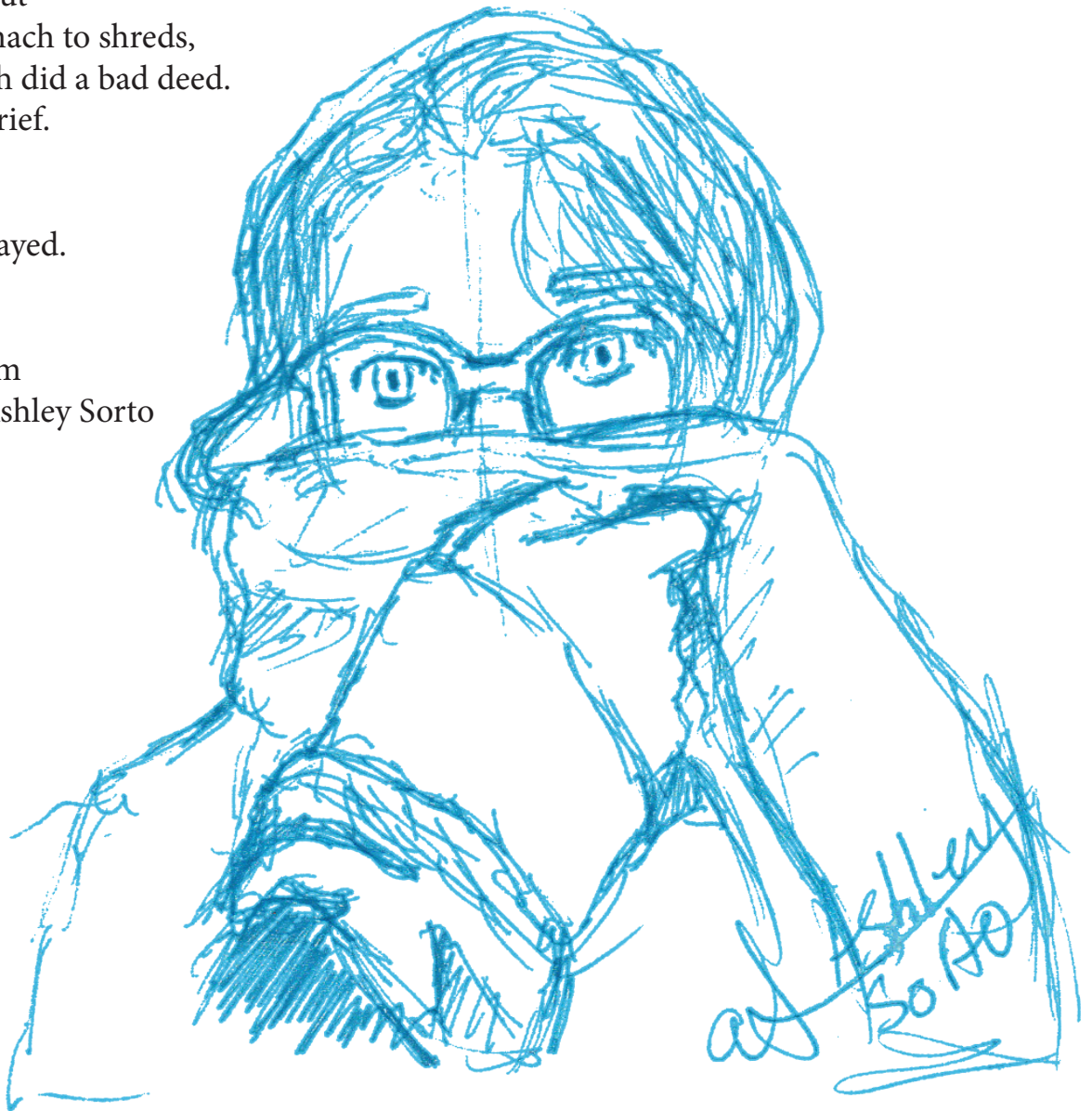


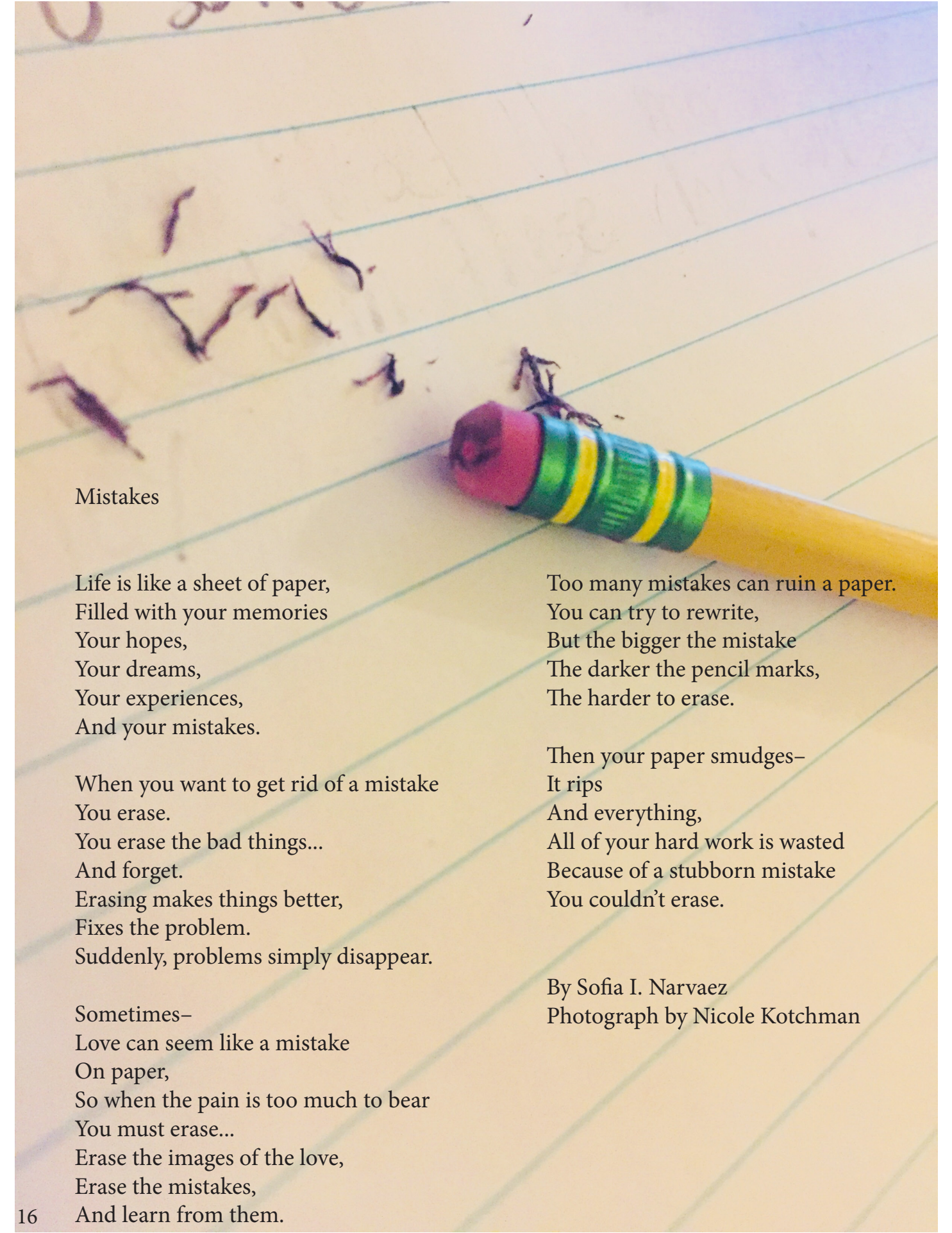
Stomach Ache

My stomach...
It hurts.

It feels as if a baseball bat is hitting it
Over and over.
No trace of stopping.
The pain,
Doesn't care if it hurts and damages me.
It only cares about
Tearing my stomach to shreds,
As if my stomach did a bad deed.
It leaves me in grief.
It passes.
It fades.
I feel quite dismayed.

By Marianne Kim
Illustration by Ashley Sorto





Mistakes

Life is like a sheet of paper,
Filled with your memories
Your hopes,
Your dreams,
Your experiences,
And your mistakes.

When you want to get rid of a mistake
You erase.
You erase the bad things...
And forget.
Erasing makes things better,
Fixes the problem.
Suddenly, problems simply disappear.

Sometimes—
Love can seem like a mistake
On paper,
So when the pain is too much to bear
You must erase...
Erase the images of the love,
Erase the mistakes,
And learn from them.

Too many mistakes can ruin a paper.
You can try to rewrite,
But the bigger the mistake
The darker the pencil marks,
The harder to erase.

Then your paper smudges—
It rips
And everything,
All of your hard work is wasted
Because of a stubborn mistake
You couldn't erase.

By Sofia I. Narvaez
Photograph by Nicole Kotchman

Butterfly

Sun rises leisurely over the rolling hills
Silvery dew shrouds over the lush meadow of heather
Noble mountains stand regally in the distance
As cool streams pepper down mountainsides

Gliding through the dew-speckled air
The solitary butterfly lands on a singular velvet flower
Contrasting sharply against its bold colors
Complementing the existence of the other

Rushing as a horde
Purple butterflies crash into the meadow
Breaking the tranquility of spring renaissance
Wrapped in their own existence
The solitary butterfly thrives along with the singular
velvet flower

By Victor Amaritei
Illustration by Chaerin Kim



Chipmunk's Feast

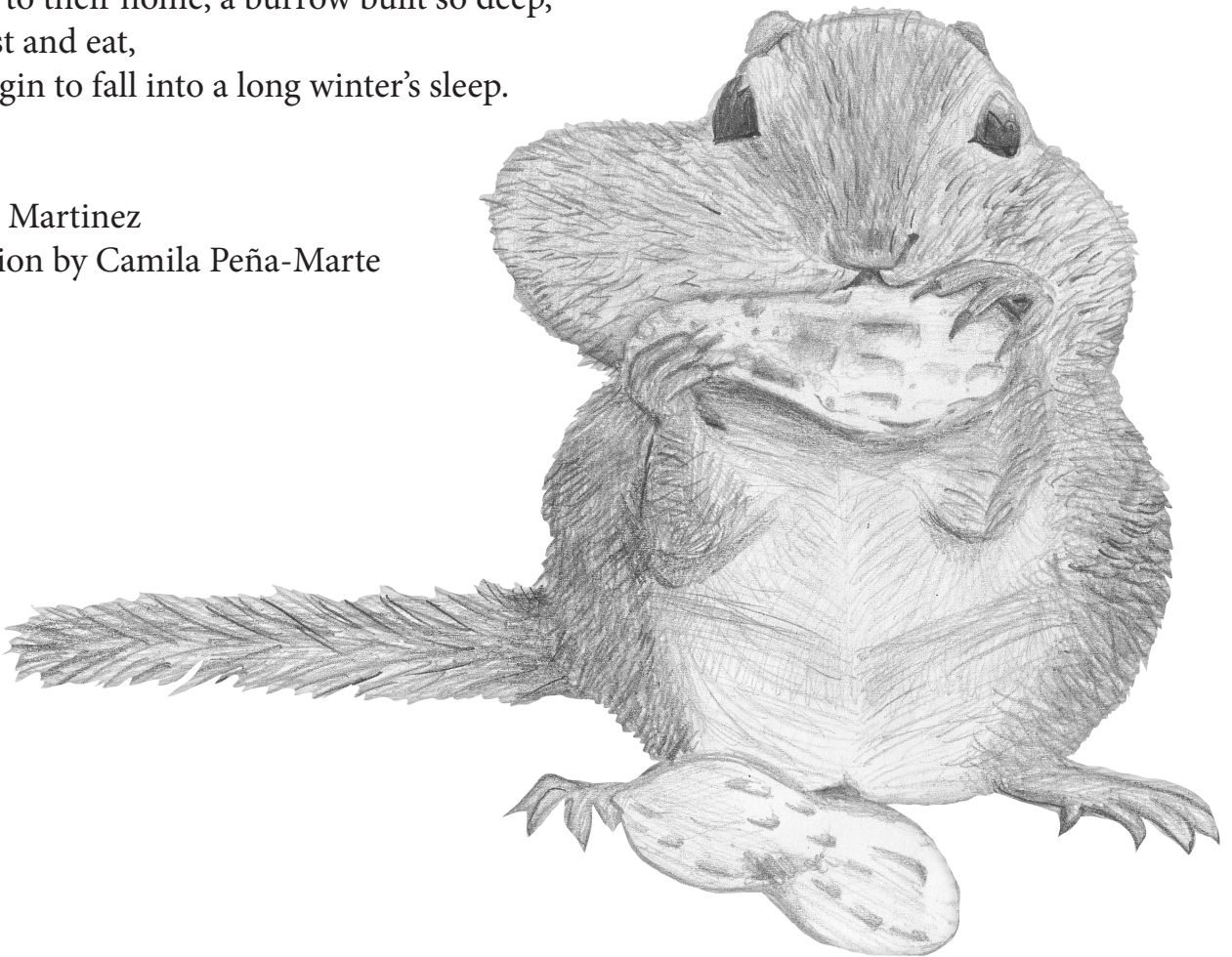
Have you seen that chipmunk climbing up a tree?
Such a small little creature, so gentle yet so keen.
It has a furry tail with a pattern along its back,
Running around on the forest's leafy track.

Scurrying through the woods with a peanut in its mouth,
Going east of the river then turning south.
He meets with his family, and to their surprise,
A peanut to eat while they huddle and hide.

They go to their home, a burrow built so deep,
They rest and eat,
Then begin to fall into a long winter's sleep.

By Sofia Martinez

Illustration by Camila Peña-Marte



Lighthouse

In a lighthouse far far away,
A little girl lives with her grandpa.
She tiptoes up to her grandpa's room,
Cinnamon toast and warm milk in her tiny hands.
The air thick with cigarette smoke,
Still lingering from the late night before.
The drowsy scent welcomes her
As she leaves the food on the nightstand
And peers outside to the salty vast ocean.
It's calling for her.
She walks out to the shore,
The ocean winds wake her.
The crashing waves come toward her
And she runs—
Running, running,
On the soft sand beneath her tiny feet.
All the weight on her shoulders
Magically begins to disappear
Like mist on a horizon.
Until—
She is called back in.
Her grandpa is calling,
“Clara! Clara! Clara!”
The seagull like voice,
Snaps her back into reality.

By Olivia Hong
Photograph by Marianne Kim



Spring

Spring

The time when all blossom
Eggs cracking open
Flowers and animals
Blooming with happiness
The Easter bunny has come
March, April, May
All spring months
Till summer
It awaits us

By Ellen Park

Photograph by Esther Kim

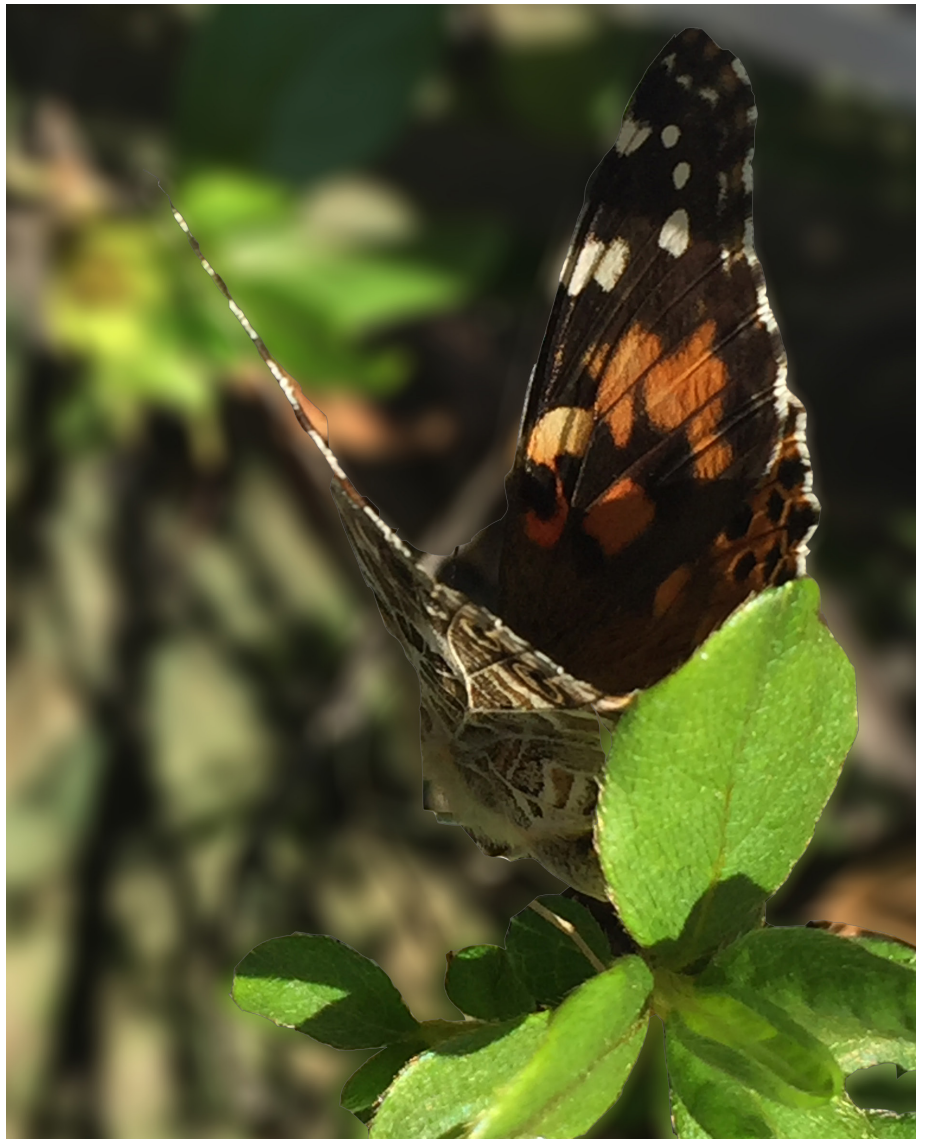


A Butterfly's Delight

A momma butterfly swoops in the air and lays an egg.
Pop! Comes a larvae crawling with many legs.
The baby caterpillar starts off like a twig,
Until it eats and eats and grows quite big.
After the caterpillar has eaten enough,
It climbs up a branch strong and tough.
It morphs into a shell deep inside,
And then days later the shell cracks and parts collide.
Inside the shell there is a change,
One that is very strange.
The caterpillar is out of sight,
Instead, a butterfly comes out
to delight.

By Ashley Gomez

Photograph by Noor Mohamed



A Time-Tecular Reunion

“Finally! I have completed my invention!” Dan said. Dan was a scientist who was working to perfect time travel. Before beginning a career as a scientist, Dan was always doing well—A’s in school and the valedictorian of his college. He kept to himself so he never had anyone to share in his joy.

“Now to test it!” Just as he was about to test it... Beep! Beep! His phone starting buzzing. “Now what?” Dan exclaimed. He set his invention down, walked over to his phone, and checked the notifications. It was just an email. Dan walked back to his invention and prepared to test it once again. Beep! Beep! “Ugh!” Dan groaned. He wanted to ignore it, but he knew he shouldn’t.

Once again, he walked over to see the notifications on his phone. “Oh no, not now,” Dan said as he began to pace around the room. “How could I have forgotten the family reunion?” Dan missed the last few annual family reunions because he was so busy. This time, he knew he would be disappointing his aunt and the rest of his family if he didn’t attend, and he didn’t want to do that. Dan continued to frantically pace around the room. He wanted to test his invention immediately, because if he left it there unsupervised and untested he was convinced that something could possibly go wrong. To solve his problem, Dan decided to bring his time machine invention to test at the reunion.

An hour later, Dan arrived at

the park for the family reunion. He was wearing a white and blue striped t-shirt with cargo pants and black sneakers. His black hair was messy and his glasses were cracked. He looked like a normal person, but that was far from the case.

“I am so happy to see you!” his aunt exclaimed. “How are you?” she asked.

Before Dan had the chance to answer, he was pulled away by his father. “Son, you’re late. Where have you been?” his father said, annoyed. Their relationship had always seemed bumpy ever since his father admitted he was disappointed in the career Dan chose.

“Dad, I had to drive here. I live a little far,” Dan said. His father rolled his eyes in disapproval. His aunt returned to steal him back from his father.

“Don’t worry about him. You got me!”



his aunt said with joy. Dan continued to greet his other family members, including his nephews, Aiden and Andrew.

“Hi, Uncle Dan!” Andrew said happily. It was no secret that Dan was his favorite uncle.

“Hey, Uncle,” Aiden said softly. Dan greeted his nephews with the usual pat on the head.

“Uncle Dan! Do you want to see our new dog?” Andrew asked with excitement. Dan reluctantly said yes, since he was never very fond of dogs.

“Uncle Dan,” Andrew yelled, “here is our dog, Felix!” The puppy was a light brown pug.

“Woof,” Felix barked softly. Andrew went on to tell his uncle about the shelter from where they adopted Felix. As they were telling him the story, they left the puppy to sleep under a tree in a bed of leaves.

The reunion went on as normal, with family members chatting, people playing games, and kids climbing trees. Everyone was happy, especially Dan, who enjoyed talking to his family about his latest achievements. Suddenly, there was a screech near the old well.

“Felix!” Aiden shouted. He was distraught. Everyone rushed over to see what was wrong. Felix had fallen into the well and was unable to climb out. No one knew what to do. The puppy couldn’t grab onto a rope they threw, because he was a puppy, and the well was too deep to jump in and grab him without injury. Hope seemed to be lost immediately.

Out of the blue, Dan remembered his invention in his bag. He grabbed his invention from his bag, knowing it was untested. It had to be done since disappointing his nephews was not an option. He typed in the passcode and pressed the button. Nothing happened.

“Why isn’t it working?” he asked in confusion. Suddenly, the machine began to light up and Dan closed his eyes.

“Uncle Dan,” Andrew yelled, “here is our dog, Felix!” Dan opened his eyes. His invention had worked and they traveled back in time. Andrew went on to tell his uncle about the shelter they went to adopt Felix, although he had already heard it before. As the kids set the puppy down to rest under the tree, Dan knew he needed to change the past.

“Why don’t you guys show everyone else your dog, and make sure to keep your eye on him at all times. Aiden and Andrew heeded their uncle’s warning and made sure to watch the puppy the whole time.

The rest of the day went on as normal, without the disaster. Dan was ecstatic. He was proud of his work, and he made his nephews happy, even if they would never know it.

By Shailene Nuñez

Illustration by Olivia Hong

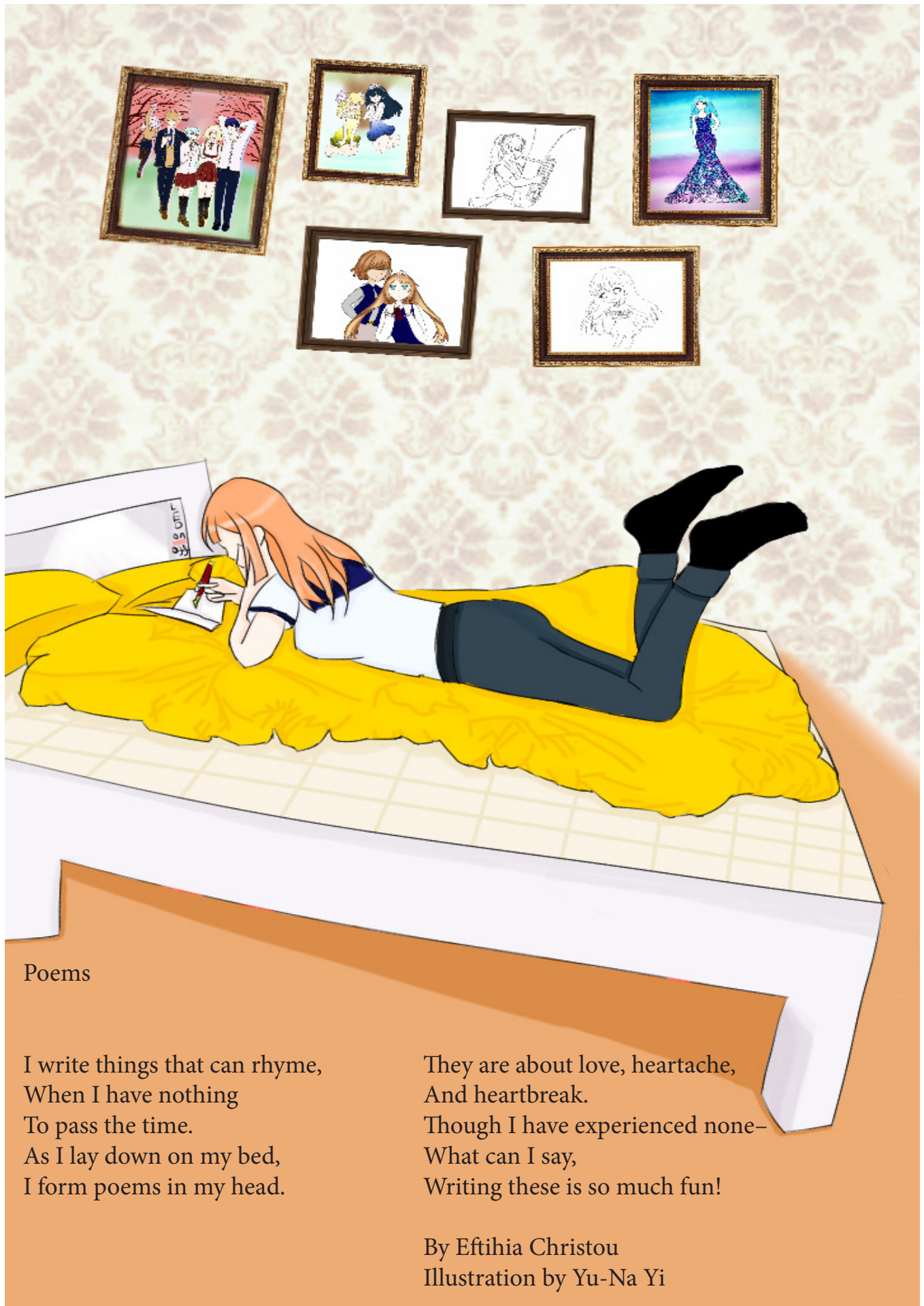


Freedom on Wheels

Have you ever ridden a motorcycle?
The wind in your hair,
The chance of danger,
The feeling of being free?

It's like you can go anywhere
On the open road,
With your problems in the distance,
As you ride into the sunset.

By Shailene Nuñez
Photograph by Isabella Martinez

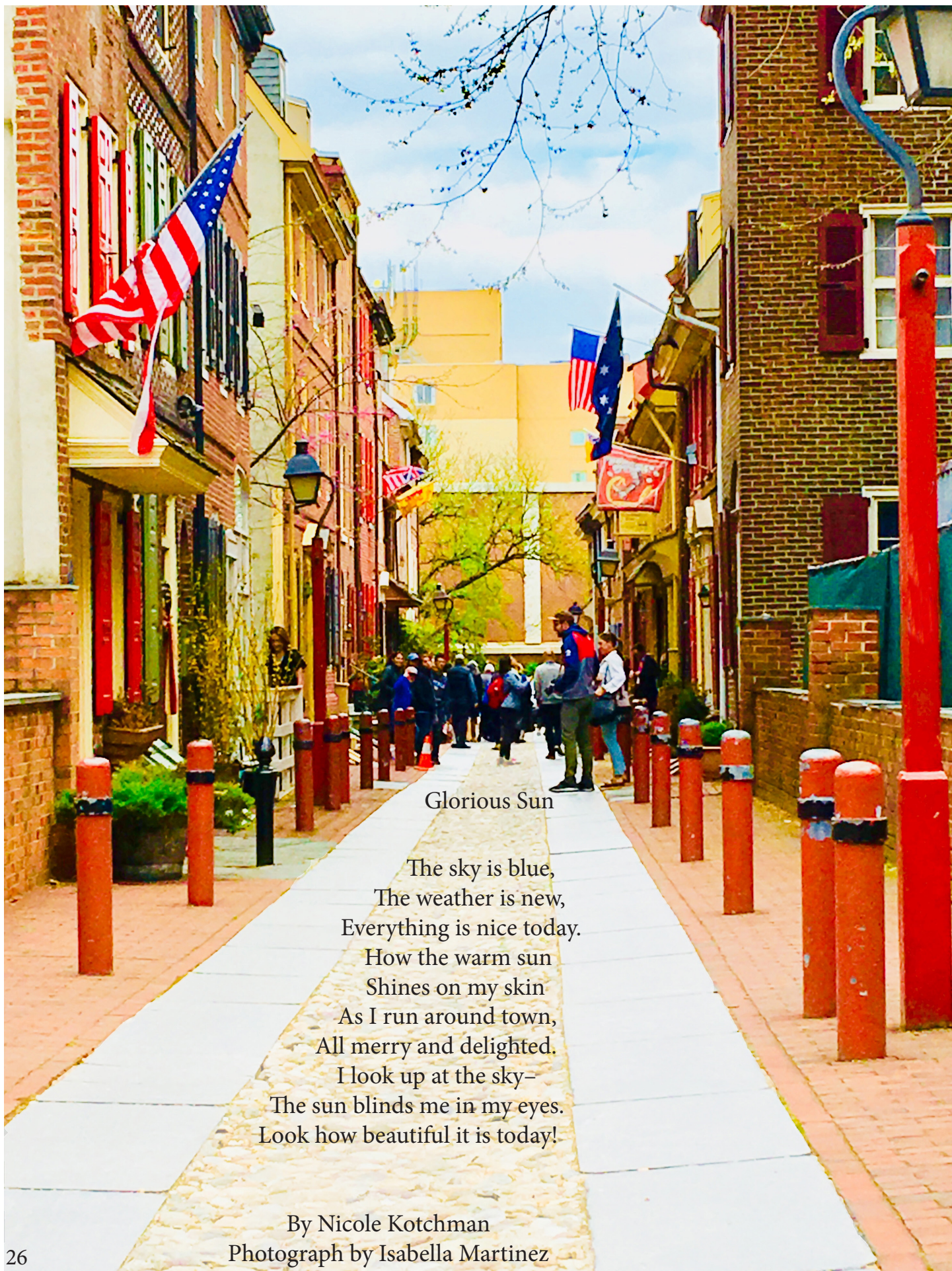


Poems

I write things that can rhyme,
When I have nothing
To pass the time.
As I lay down on my bed,
I form poems in my head.

They are about love, heartache,
And heartbreak.
Though I have experienced none—
What can I say,
Writing these is so much fun!

By Eftihia Christou
Illustration by Yu-Na Yi



Glorious Sun

The sky is blue,
The weather is new,
Everything is nice today.
How the warm sun
Shines on my skin
As I run around town,
All merry and delighted.
I look up at the sky—
The sun blinds me in my eyes.
Look how beautiful it is today!

By Nicole Kotchman
Photograph by Isabella Martinez

Spring Inspiration

Spring, my friend, you inspire me to write
The graceful sway of the lovely flowers
That blossom and glow under nature's light
And are nurtured when drizzled with showers
You bring joy, and awaken nature, Spring
And to our faces you bring joyous smiles
From the top of mountains I want to sing
A song of joy that's heard for many miles
You are the key to my greatest pleasure
Caressing me with gentle breezes
Giving me time to enjoy my leisure
My imagination goes where it pleases
Spring, you are my forever friend
For your inspiration will never end

By Eunice Lee

Photograph by Sofia Martinez



Where's Your Homework?

CHARACTERS:

EDWARD - Intelligent, humorous, impatient

ALEX - Intelligent, friendly, serious

SAM - Intelligent, friendly, humorous

ACT I, SCENE I

(At Rise: Slocum Skewes Middle School. The bathroom door opens. Sam and Edward walk in.)

SAM: So annoying...you guys pick on me all the time! Can't you spare me once?

EDWARD: *(snickers)* Just for fun though, we're all good friends.

SAM: Yeah...sure.

(Alex is sitting on the bathroom floor with all his notebooks on his lap. He picks up his cell phone and drops his notebooks.)

EDWARD: Alex, is that you? You've been in here for a long time.

ALEX: Oh...hey guys! Um, yeah, I'm good. I'm doing really good right now. Yep!

ALEX: *(grabs all his notebooks, then opens the stall door)* So...what are you guys doing here?

SAM: Uh...nothing? What were you doing?

ALEX: *(stumbles over his words)* Uh...nothing. It's...it's all good here.

SAM: What's with the notebooks? And what're you doing with your phone? Alex, what have you been up to?

ALEX: *(stares at floor guiltily)* I didn't do...

EDWARD: Do what? What?

ALEX: Do any of my homework...

EDWARD: *(laughs)* Rest in peace my friend...first period is starting in twenty minutes.

ALEX: Really Eddie...really? Ugh, I don't know what to do. I'm kind of freaking out.

EDWARD: Poor, poor Alex.

SAM: I can help you, how much did you not do?

ALEX: I didn't do any. I'm dead, guys.

SAM: We'll both help, right Ed?

EDWARD: Sure, but I think that's cheating.

SAM: Wow, thanks for telling us that Edward. Definitely needed to be called cheaters.

EDWARD: *(rolls eyes)* Well it is, but I'll help.

ALEX: Thanks, Sam, but I don't want to burden you guys.

SAM: Nah, we're just being good friends. Right, Edward?

EDWARD: Hmm...

SAM: How about this? We each do one subject. Ed, you do social studies, I do science, and Alex does math.

EDWARD: Well, social studies and science are after lunch. Why not leave them for when we go to lunch, and we all focus on math right now? *(Pauses)* But, I am going to miss recess for this. Awe, man. I was looking forward to a game of cops and robbers.

SAM: *(smirks)* Yeah, alright. But Ed, we're helping a friend in need. Now, let's go, we have only seventeen minutes. Let's do this!

ALEX: Thanks guys, I really appreciate it.
(Curtains close.)

ACT I, SCENE II

(At Rise: Curtain opens. Edward, Alex, and Sam are sitting in math class. They are scrambling to write something on paper.)

EDWARD: Wow, we actually did it. I mean, we rushed...but still, record time! Oh yeah!

SAM: Yep! Next...science and social studies.

EDWARD: I'm not really sure if I can do it all. It's a lot of work.

SAM: *(smirks)* Edward. We all know you're the best at taking notes. You got social studies, right? I'll handle science with Alex here...four hands are better than two. Good luck.

(Ms. Thomas, the math teacher, enters stage right.)

MS. THOMAS: *(smiles)* Hello boys. Show me your homework.

(Edward, Alex, and Sam show their completed homework and she walks away.)

ALEX: Thanks guys. You guys are my saviors.

SAM: Yep.

EDWARD: Mhm, you can say that again.

(Curtains close.)

ACT I, SCENE III

(At Rise: Curtains open. It is the lunch period. Edward, Alex, and Sam are writing frantically.)

SAM: *(munches on food)* Ahh! My hand hurts so much from writing!

ALEX: Sorry, I'll take over for now Sam.

EDWARD: Yeah, I'll even have to admit my hands hurt now. And we all know I'm the best at writing notes here!

SAM: Come on guys, lunch is over in five minutes.

EDWARD: *(leaps up from bench)* Done! I'm finally done.

ALEX: I'm done too. Ahh, now I won't get in trouble by our teachers.

(Curtains close.)

ACT I, SCENE IV

(At Rise: Edward, Alex, and Sam are standing in the hallway. It is the end of school.)

ALEX: I've gotta thank you guys. My grades would have dropped in all of those classes.

EDWARD: It's fine...we're friends. We're supposed to help one another out. Although, it was cheating and I feel bad about that.

SAM: Yeah me too.

ALEX: I'll help you guys anytime if you ever need me. I'll always remember this.

SAM: *(laughs)* I think the lesson here is to do your homework next time Alex...and maybe

you should explain what happened to our teachers.

ALEX: *(sighs)* You're right, first thing tomorrow.
(Curtains close.)

ACT I, SCENE V

(At Rise: It is the next day. The school day just ended.)

EDWARD: Well? What happened?

ALEX: Okay, I explained to all of our teachers. And they all gave me extra homework for tonight.

SAM: Were they angry with you?

ALEX: Just disappointed. They gave me a little speech about being responsible.

EDWARD: And that's it?

ALEX: Yep. And I'm making sure never to skip my homework again. But thanks, guys. You guys are the best.

SAM: Of course, Alex. No problem. But we're never doing this again.

EDWARD: Ok, so can we now please leave? School ended like five minutes ago.

(Edward, Alex, and Sam laugh. They exit stage left. Lights fade. Curtains close.)

By Edward An

Photograph by Sara Prtoric



Radiance

아침 이슬이
파란 꽃잎에 앉아.
봄이 왔구나.

Pretty morning dew
Delicate on blue petals
Spring has come again

다양한 색상
빨강, 노랑, 푸른색
무지개 같네.

Arrays of colors
Red, Yellow, and Blue
Looks like a rainbow

화려한 꽃잎
멀리서도 보이네.
참 예쁘구나.

Radiant petals
Can be seen from far away
It is beautiful

By Eunice Lee and Olivia Hong
Illustration by Chaerin Kim

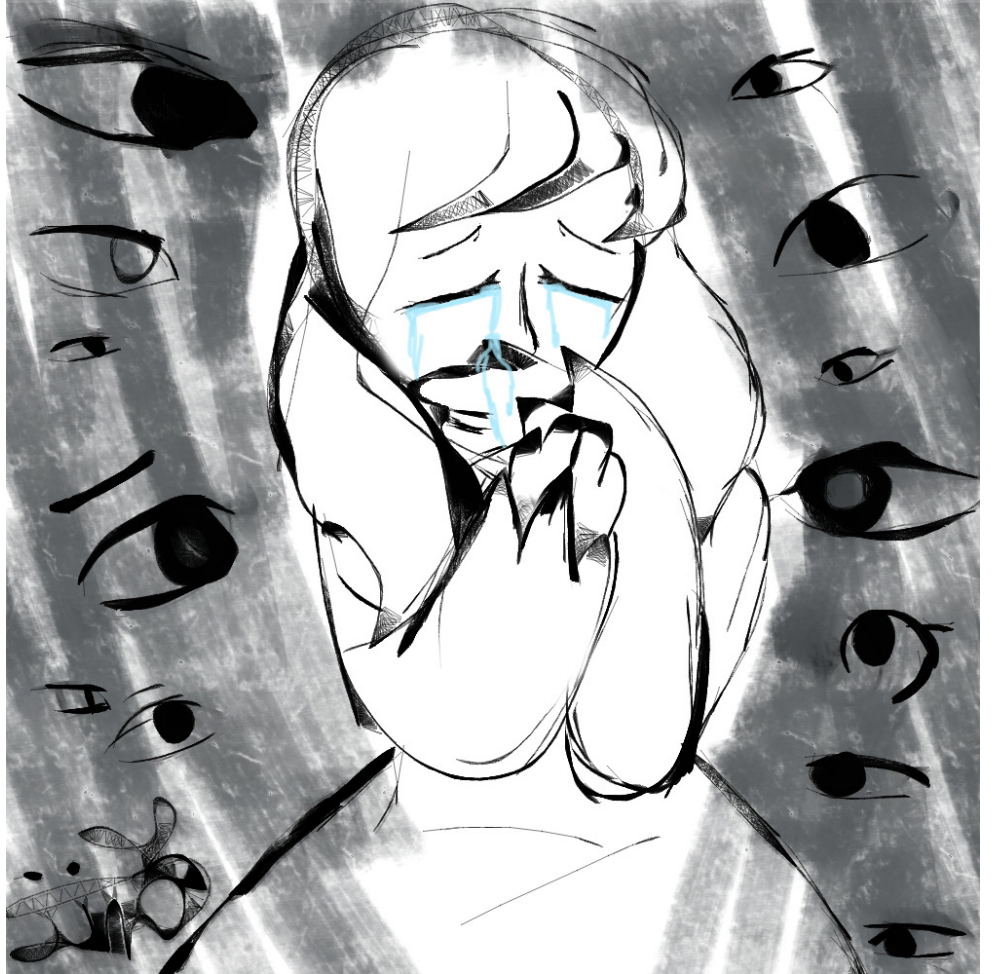


Social Anxiety

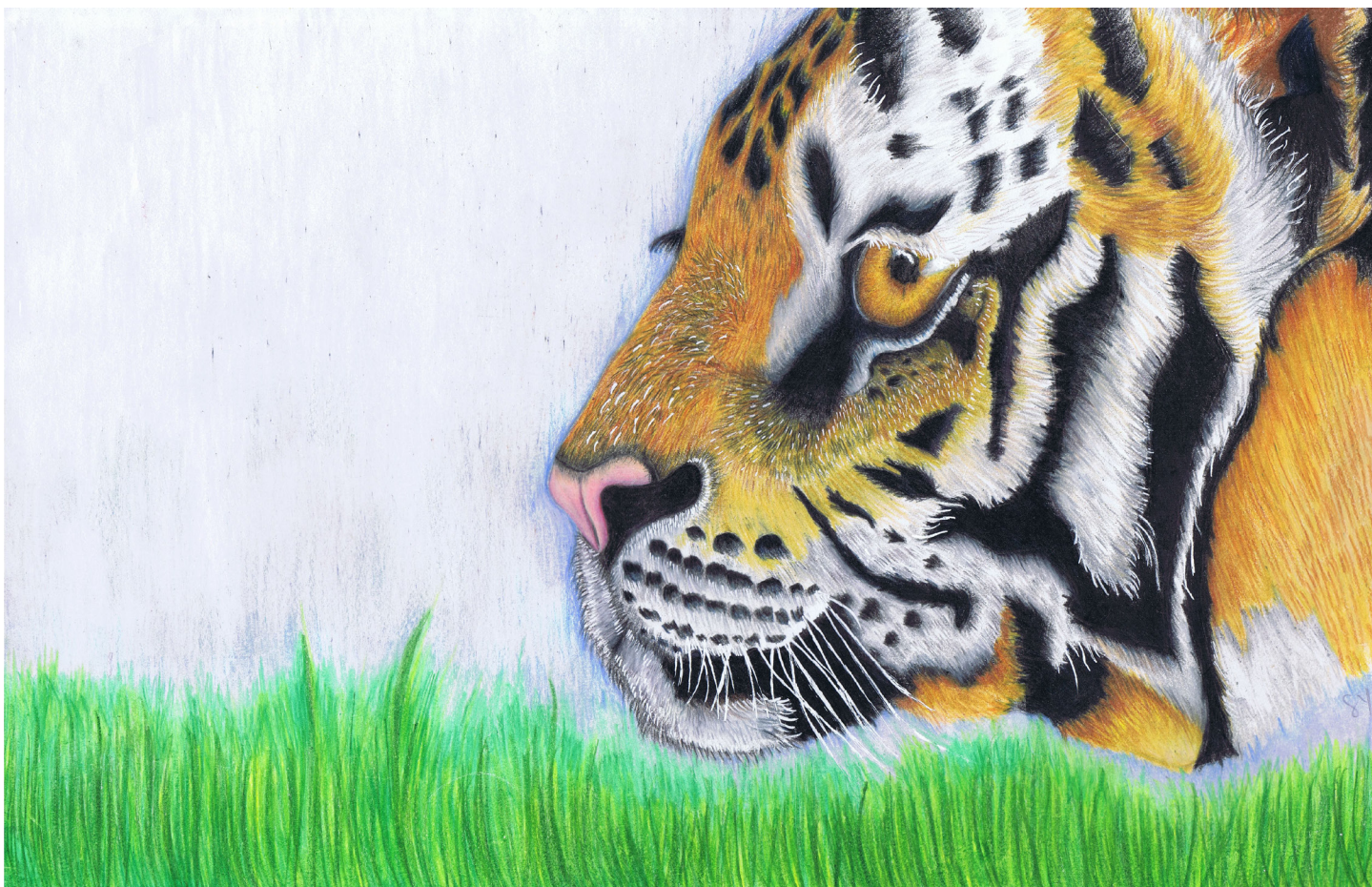
It's my first day of school,
But I don't go alone,
Social anxiety is with me.
My constant companion—
“Hi! What's your name?”
“Where did you come from?”
Kids ask—
I want to answer,
But social anxiety says,
“No! Don't talk to them.”
So I run away crying.
Everyone staring as I run,
Social anxiety is no fun!

In time,
I meet others.
They understand me.
Then, one day,
Social anxiety—
My constant companion,
Disappeared.
I cheered!

Each day now
I break out of my shell
And I'm free!
Free from feeling like everyone is staring at me,
Free to express myself and my ideas,
Free from social anxiety
And its lonely society.



By Kelly Wang
Illustration by Marianne Kim



Mighty Tiger

Through the green, green grass,
I see patches of orange, black, and white.
The black, deeper than any crevasse.
The white, glinting like moonlight.

Orange tufts of fur ruffle in the light breeze,
The sun's warmth captured in the fur.
The creature's solemn gaze never seems
to cease,
Resting in silence, until he stirs.

The animal becomes alert and stiff
When he spots a critter nearby.
He moves in a way so quiet and quick
That the mouse could barely defy.

The beast growls at his escaping prey,
He surges into the sky, chasing his furry desire.
Scampering on four tiny paws, the mouse will
not see another day,
For what creature is greater, than the mighty
tiger?

By Samuel Yun
Illustration by Samuel Yun

I'm A Paranoid Pessimist

Spring, oh spring-
Everyone is absolutely in love with your colors.
The beautiful flowers you bring, even though it
isn't Valentine's Day.
You charm everyone with the beautiful
weather that accompanies your days.
And, let's not forget to mention all the animals
you wake from their long winter slumber.

But, I know your true motives.
I know you're out to get me!
April 22, 1996- my birthday.
Remember how you would wake animals from
their slumber?
Well, did you really have to wake up that
grizzly bear while we were setting up camp?
March 31, 2001-
I had no idea I was allergic to bees...

It sure was a wakeup call when you sent an
entire hive after me!
Those are only two of the many "pleasant gifts"
you have given me.

Oh sure, you bring nice weather, but you just
happen to bring the warmest, hottest days
when I forget to put on sunscreen.
You may have the rest of the world fooled,
But I know you're out to get me!
And when you finally strike,
aiming at all of humanity,
I'll be ready for you-
Just you wait...

By Camila Peña-Marte
Illustration by Camila Peña-Marte





The Flower

The pink flower is
Beautiful in the sunlight
Let it shine so bright

The graceful flower
It entralls me to this day
Nature's gift to us

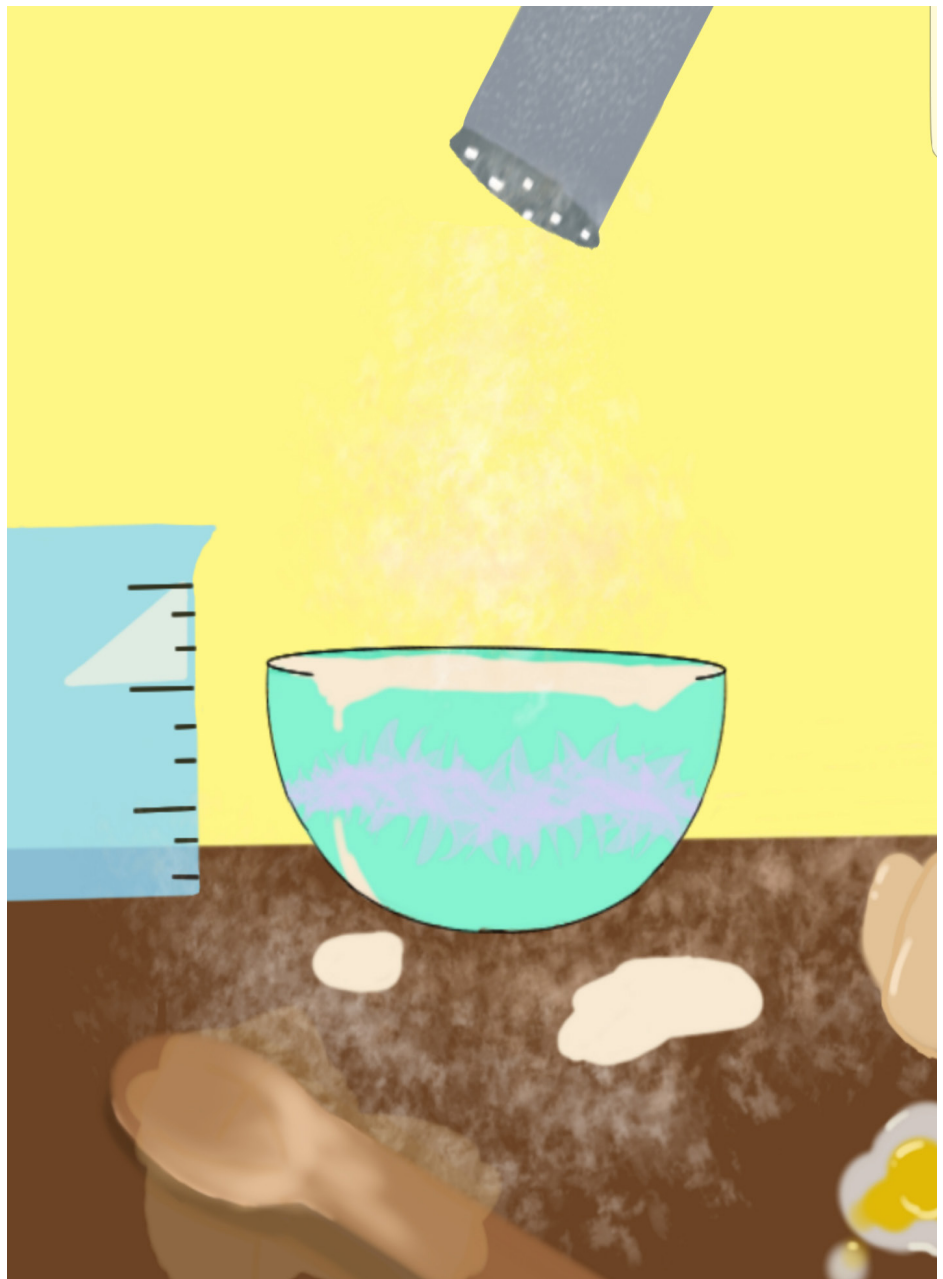
By Mia Cruz
Illustration by Chaerin Kim

Recipe For Friendship

A cup of fun,
A pinch of glee,
A friend who is there to listen to me.
Never add a cup of lies,
Because if you do, that won't be wise.
A generous spoonful of being kind,
This ingredient will be hard to find.
After this you mix and blend,
Then bake to get a perfect friend!

By Noor Mohamed

Illustration by Diane Park
and Yu-Na Yi



A Cowboy Legend

In a dusty plain
That was once deserted
Settlers came in
With their problems averted.
But then new ones came up
Like thieving bandits,
“STOP IT NOW!”
The locals demanded.
Then one day in an old town
A stranger turned up and said,
“I’ll take the bandits down.”
The townsfolk cheered
And the mayor came and said,
“You’re courageous for taking the task
Of putting them bandits to bed.”
The stranger thanked the kind mayor
And went off riding hard
Until he saw a shadow in the distance
With two men at its guard.
The stranger knew it was the bandit’s lair
And when the head honcho saw him
He felt like pulling his hair.
The head honcho yelled,
“Stop him at once!”
But all was quiet,
There was no response.
Scared, he ran outside
But there was the stranger
With all the bandits tied.
The head honcho said,
“You’ll never catch me!”
So the stranger pulled out his lasso
And stopped the head honcho’s crime spree.



The stranger brought all the bandits in...
“I’ll get you one day,” the head honcho said.
“In your dreams, you has-been.”
And that is the story
Of a legendary cowboy
Who once claimed his glory.

By Sebastian Gomez
Illustration by Ashley Sorto



Bloom

The flowers have bloomed,
The warm sun is out today,
All is well
As long as you stay.

As I am picking this flower,
All that is on my mind is...
It's finally spring!
New possibilities, new hopes,
And new dreams.

When a flower blooms,
It declares the winter doom to be over
And the start of a new season begins.
As long as you stay,
Nothing stands in our way.

By Nicole Kotchman
Photograph by Nicole Kotchman

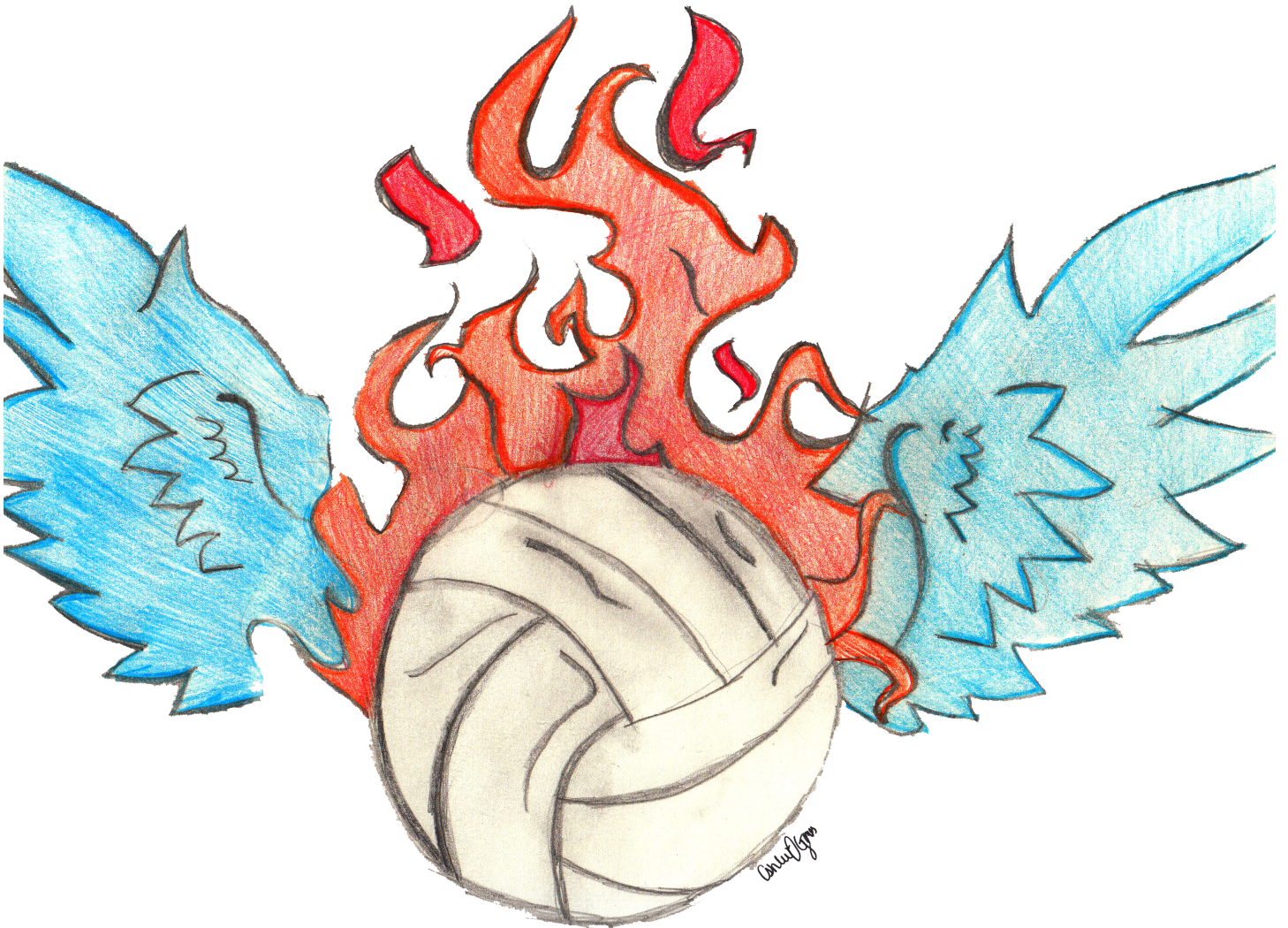
Volleyball

The ball comes over the net,
It gets bumped, then set,
All over your face is sweat.
Your team's a threat.

You spike the ball,
You stand real tall.
Your team has scored,
It's the best feeling of all.

You love this game.
Not for the fame,
Nor the acclaim,
But for the obstacles
You overcame.

By Sara Prtoric
Illustration by Ashley Gomes



Fake

The school day has begun,
Nothing out of the ordinary.
The first bell has rung and
He's on his way to class.

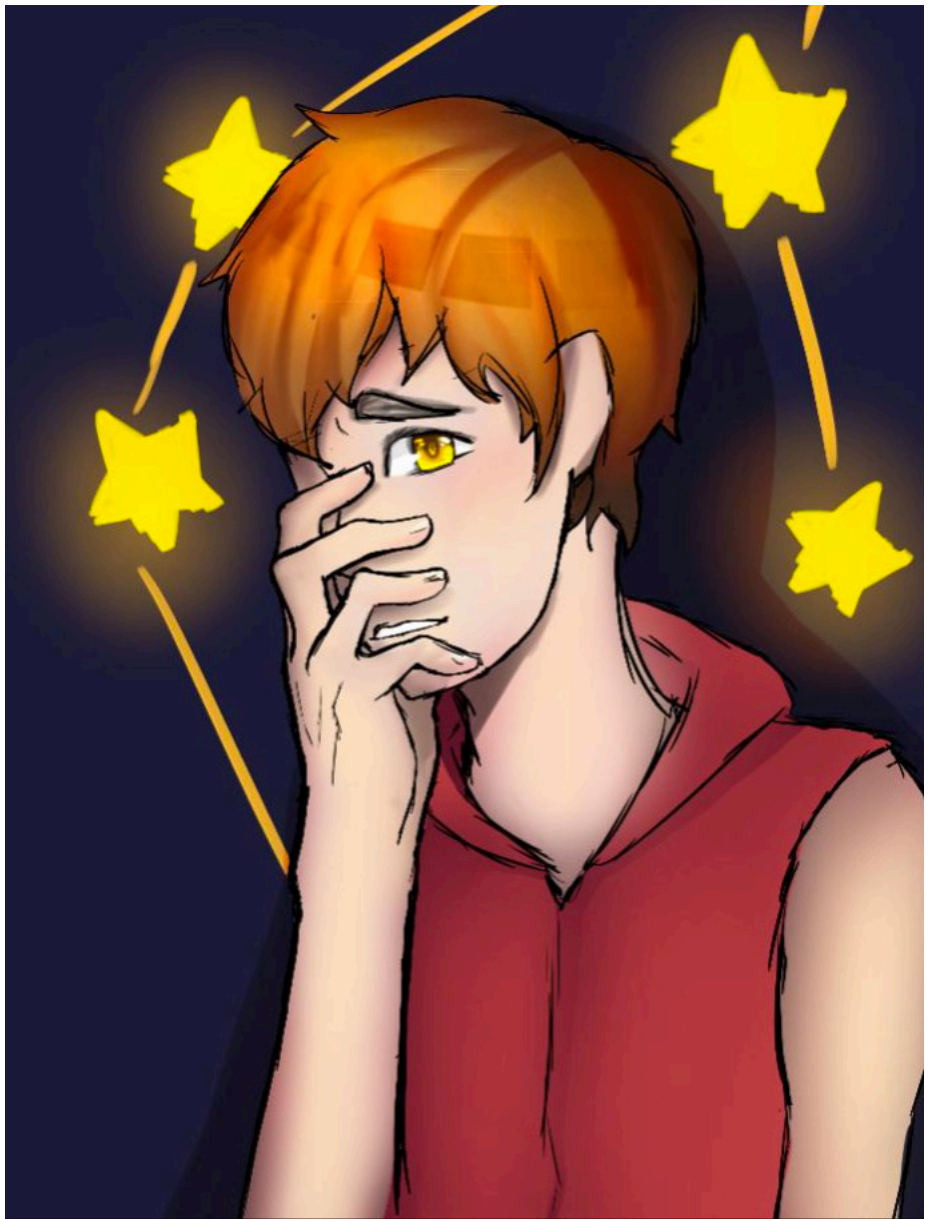
He looks around and see smiles.
He looks around and sees laughter,
He looks around and sees everyone happy,
Except for him.

Sure, he smiles all day,
But it isn't real,
He's not real...
Hiding behind a mask.

When the school day is over
And he heads home,
His true self comes out.
There he can write about his
thoughts,
There he can share his feelings.

Because no one can see
His true self—
He is a fake,
Having two sides.
One is real,
The other is for the world to see.

By Lara Gandour
Illustration by Chaerin Kim
and Ashley Sorto



The Unnatural Tome

“Okay Mom, I’ll be right there,” Blake shouted after his mom as she walked out of their library. As he was returning the book he was currently reading to its proper place, he noticed something out of the corner of his eye. He bent down and with a gentle grip picked up the mysterious brown leather volume. How did I not notice this book? Was it there before? These questions flooded his mind as he called out to his sister.

His sister, Sara, came prancing into the room. “Is it time to go already?” she asked.

Blake responded with an acrimonious, “Yes,” and sent Sara off to their mother.

He headed toward an empty bookshelf to put the book away. Halfway to the shelf, Blake felt the book tug him back. “Whoa! Is it me, or did the book just pull me back?” Blake gasped in surprise. It was as if the book was refusing to go back on the dusty shelf. He turned the book over. The title read *Tales of the Old Wonders*. “Wonder what that means,” Blake murmured.

He ran his fingers over the book’s soft leather cover and peered at the table of contents on the scratchy paper. “Viking Raids in the 800’s, Gilligan Mansion Fire, Renegade Army Terrorizes Europe. This is getting weirder and weirder,” Blake said in confusion, as he was familiar with every book in his family’s library and he had never seen this large, strange-looking book before.

“Blake! What’s taking so long? Leave the book alone! We’re late for your grandma’s birthday party!” His mother yelled from where she stood at the top of the three steps that separated them. Somewhere from above, cheerful voices could be heard singing

“Happy Birthday.”

“One more minute. I’m putting the book away, just like you said!” Blake yelled back.

He turned to the next page, eager to find out what “wonders” the strange book held. To his surprise, Blake found a creepy message on the first page. It read, “*In loving memory of my dear Sally, you shall be avenged. For whomever opens this book will be haunted for the rest of their days.*” Blake heard a snap and quickly looked up but saw nothing. However, a sudden chill overcame the study, contrasting with the warm summer sun shining through the windows. The curtains seemed to cast an eerie shadow on the floor, giving the large room the feel of an abandoned house. Blake shuddered before returning his gaze to the page.

Blake read the remaining words— “Continue if you dare.” He turned to the next page which started the chapter on Viking raids in the 800’s only to be horrified to find the words were written in what appeared to be warm, sticky blood, sliding down the page and onto Blake’s sweaty hands.

“Get it together Blake, you’re dreaming,” he whispered with his eyes shut in disbelief.

He snapped open his eyes. Reluctantly, he took another look at the book, sure that whatever he thought he had seen was just his overactive imagination. Instead of the book, his eyes were focused on his violently trembling hands, dripping with warm sticky blood still trickling from the bloody tome. To his horror, the page was still bleeding.

The merry voices singing “Happy Birthday” just a few rooms away, faded out and were replaced by the echoing screams of agony emanating from the pages of the book. The shadows of the tall bookshelves dissolved into menacing Vikings with scarred faces and fiery eyes.

Blake could no longer read the text as blood began spurting from the book. The screams grew nearer. The shadows lurked closer. Blake, realizing he might be in danger, sprinted towards the door, his only chance of salvation. Then just as quickly, he lost his grasp of the book as the book leaped out of his hands and into the waiting hands of the Viking King. His legs pumped faster and faster, his heart pounding thunderously as he ran for the door. *This could not possibly be real*, Blake thought as he made a futile attempt to escape. He heard contorted sounds rushing closer and closer to him. Blake was at the door. He tried turning the knob but his hands, now covered with the red sticky substance, could not manage to get the door to open.

Then a piercing shriek filled the library. "Aaaaaaaaagh!"

Minutes later, Sara, unaware of the mayhem, blithely danced into the room.

"Oh Blakey! Where are you?" she sang.

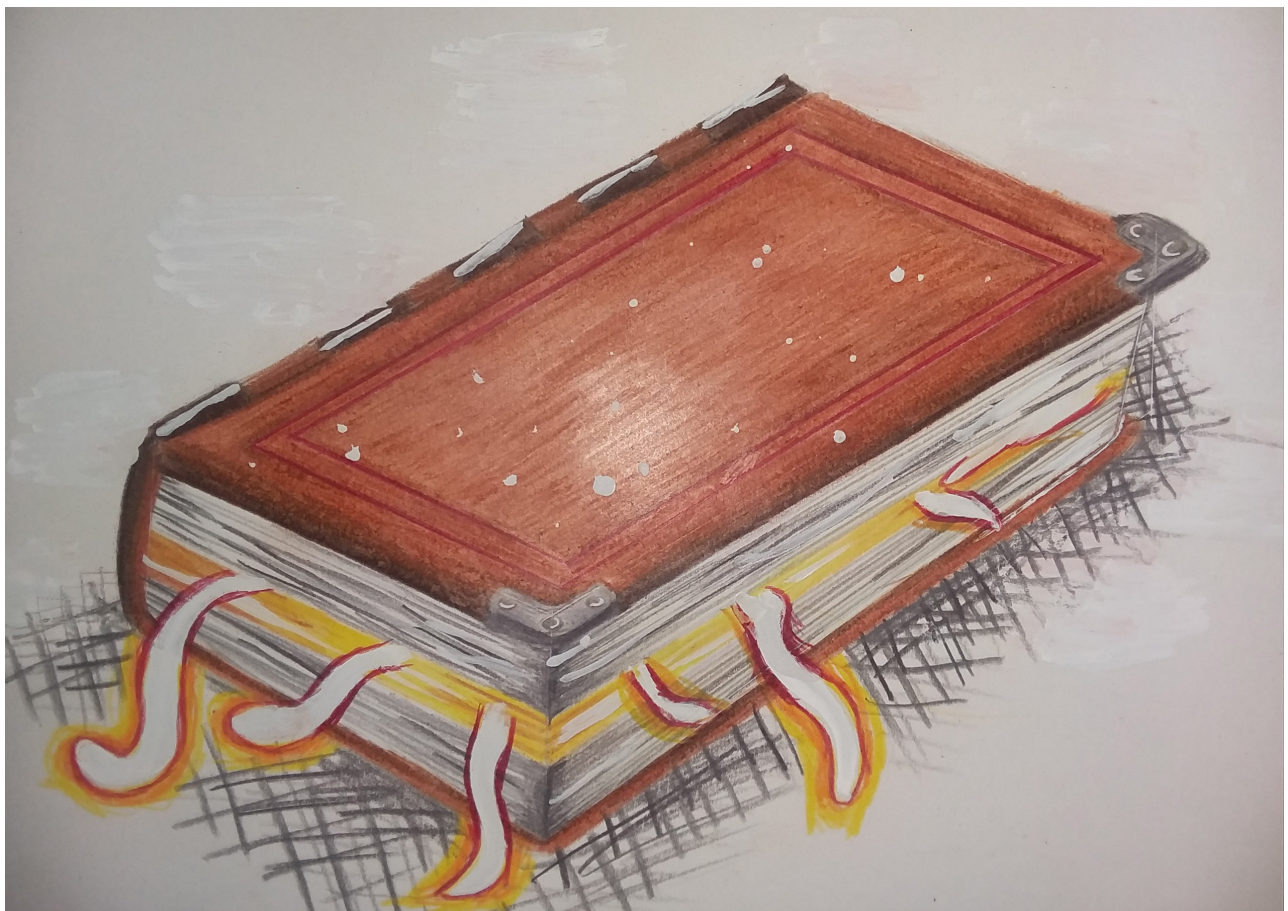
She examined the high ceiling and the brown walls while humming a cheerful tune. "You're about to miss the cake! It's grandma's favorite, double chocolate!" Sara called.

After getting no response, Sara decided to look for Blake. She was sure he had not come downstairs. She looked around the library. Everything seemed to be just how she remembered. The only out-of-place thing that she saw was an ancient-looking book. Sara wandered deeper into the library and closer towards the volume, intrigued by it just like Blake. Cautiously, her hands reached down towards the strange book.

And so the hunt continued...

By Victor Amaritei

Illustration by Samuel Yun



Memories

As I sit here and think
Remembering when everything was black and white
It was either this or that
There was no other

Over time things have changed
Not everything was as straightforward
Nothing was as simple
It was all different

I still remember even the faintest memories
Memories of being happy
Memories of being sad
Memories filled with emotions

They are captured by photos
That each tell a story
As I rediscover the past
Sitting here looking through all these
pictures

Looking at these I realize something
This whole time I have forgotten
But now my memories are forever with me
To remind me of who I am

By Lara Gandour
Illustration by Yu-Na Yi



Heartbreak

You start with a heart
The size of an asteroid,
Day by day
It grows to the size of a planet,
Then a star,
Finally a supernova.
You feel your temperature rising
Until it bursts,
Nothing can make you feel worse,
Depression covers you
Like a moonless night.
Over time your supernova turns
into another star,
It heals your internal scars,
Although it will be an endless line.
You start with a heart
The size of an asteroid,
Day by day
It grows to the size of a planet,
Then a star,
Finally a supernova.

By Sofia I. Narvaez
Illustration by Ashley Sorto



The Beach

The hot burning
 Sand
Only relieved by
 Water
When combined
 Creates sand castles
The crashing waves
 Takes worries away
The unbelievable
 Tides
With the many shades
 Of blues and greens
Reflecting on the water
 So lovely

As your buckets full of
 Seashells
Create sounds of
 Clink Clunk Clink
Watching the waves
 Crash on the shore
Give an ombre effect
 A feeling of awe
Leaving us with
 A painted image in our minds

By Ellen Park and Juliette Cho
Photograph by Nicole Kotchman





My Color

The outside is a pastel orange—
Optimistic and ecstatic,
Funny and care-free.
My friends can confide in me
For I will always have a smile.
I like this side of me!

But on the inside there's a dull gray.
Trapped, confused, and upset.
Everything is hidden away
By rude remarks and sarcasm.
Hoping, praying, that no one will catch on—
That's not the me I want to be.

By Eftihia Christou
Photograph by Deja Fernandez

The Mask's Scream

One night, Thomas Friedman was looking through a Marshalls store, trying to find clothes to wear to his school's graduation party. While he was poking through a shirt rack, something fell out. Thomas stooped down to see what was there. It was a mask. The mask, stared at him through small, but menacing eyes. He was surprised that the ominous looking mask had his school's colors— blue and gold. When he got to the checkout counter he was surprised to find that the clerk said that the mask was not for sale as it did not belong to the store. The clerk suggested it may have been left behind by its original owner and therefore, was not for sale. Since the original owner was nowhere to be found, Thomas got the mask for free, and he decided to wear it on the way home. Little did he know, however, that when the mask touched his face, the mask began to wake up again...

At home, Thomas showed his parents the mask he found and told them how he had gotten it for free. His parents liked it, but his younger brother, who stared into the mask, noticed something wrong. "Uh, Thomas? Where did you get that glowing mask?" asked Frank.

"From Marshalls, why?" Thomas asked.

"Because I have never seen a mask that could glow like that," said a frightened Frank. Thomas quickly pulled off the mask, only to see it as dull as it was when he first bought it.

"I guess it must be the way our lights are reflecting off the colors, or maybe you are just seeing things. I don't see it glowing at all," replied Thomas.

"But I really did see the mask glow,"

insisted his brother.

After dinner, Thomas went upstairs to his room and began a friendly game with his friends on the new video game he got as a graduation present. At first, the game was going well, but soon, Thomas felt that something was wrong. He was losing, even though he was a good gamer. After the game was over and he was humiliated, Thomas tried to examine his controller and see if there was anything wrong, when suddenly, he saw an unnatural orange glow...

Thomas quickly looked on his bed, where he placed his mask, and saw that the mask was glowing! He could not believe his eyes. Thomas realized that his brother had been right! The mask really could glow. But yet, Thomas still managed to say, "Eh, I guess the mask glows in the dark. There isn't anything weird with a mask glowing like that."

The next day, Thomas arrived at school at 6:00 pm for the graduation ceremony. Everyone applauded the students on their final night as eighth graders. When it was time for the final 8th grade performance to begin, Thomas took out his glow-in-the-dark mask and began performing a skit for everyone. The performance was meant to be comical and funny, even though there would not be anything funny for the rest of the story.

After his performance, Thomas took off his mask and waved to the crowd. Everyone applauded. He headed to the concession stand with his brother Frank and got some food. Somehow, he left his mask on the table. Thomas struck a conversation with his friends and family over some pizza. It was then that one of his friends asked Thomas where he had gotten his mask because the student believed he had recently seen it somewhere.

"I got the mask from Marshalls. Why

do you ask?”

At that very moment, unbeknownst to Thomas, the mask, that he had left behind at another table stirred.

Suddenly, everyone went silent as an echoing laugh shot across the room. Thomas stopped talking and looked to where the eerie laugh was coming from. He could not believe his eyes. The mask was emanating a really strong glow, and it was levitating over the buffet table. Thomas ran towards the mask and tried to grab it, but it just rose higher and higher, until it reached the ceiling. Then the mask started flying around the room, bumping into everything! The room was in total chaos, the decorations fell off the walls, the concession stand collapsed, and the lights popped out. Most people ran out of the school. A few brave people, Thomas included, tried to grab the mask as it went by, only to be dragged

skyward with the mask, then slammed against the wall. Suddenly, the mask smashed against a huge stereo, which toppled down and started a fire. Luckily, everyone got out just in time.

Minutes later, the fire department was sent in to extinguish the small flame. Luckily the school was safe thanks in part to the sprinkler system that had sprayed the area and the quick response of the fire department. However, the table where the mask had been on was destroyed, but the mask was not.

That doesn't make any sense, Thomas thought to himself. He couldn't understand how a mask just all of a sudden could glow, fly around a room by itself, knock things down, start a fire, and emerge unscathed. Could this mask be more than just a mask? Thomas decided to get to the bottom of this unruly face covering.

To be continued....

By Dren Sapunxhiu

Illustration by Camila Peña-Marte

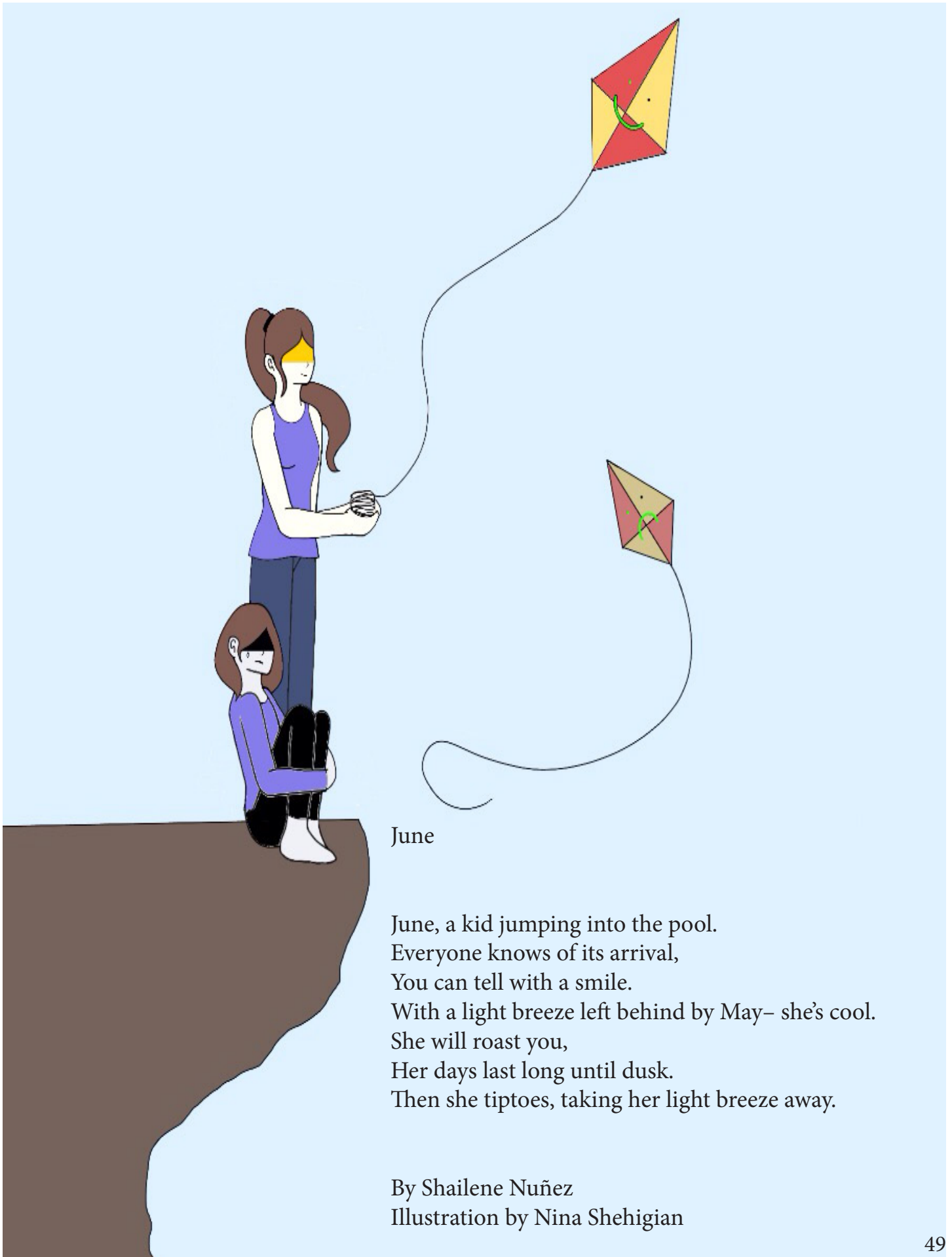




Cherry Blossoms

these blossoms tell us
urge us to
Pay Attention
To the Now
Not the later or the yesterday
little acts of Kindness
will be remembered
Now is the time to
Pay Attention
to the petals
Symbolizing
a small smile
a small compliment
a small seedling
these take a second
A Second of the Now
take this Second
to make a small smile
compliment
seedling
and plant it
wait for April
wait for a small smile back
a small compliment back
beautiful blossoms back
and
Pay Attention
to the cherry blossoms falling
Now

By Olivia Hong
Photograph by Juliette Cho



June

June, a kid jumping into the pool.
Everyone knows of its arrival,
You can tell with a smile.
With a light breeze left behind by May– she's cool.
She will roast you,
Her days last long until dusk.
Then she tiptoes, taking her light breeze away.

By Shailene Nuñez
Illustration by Nina Shehigian

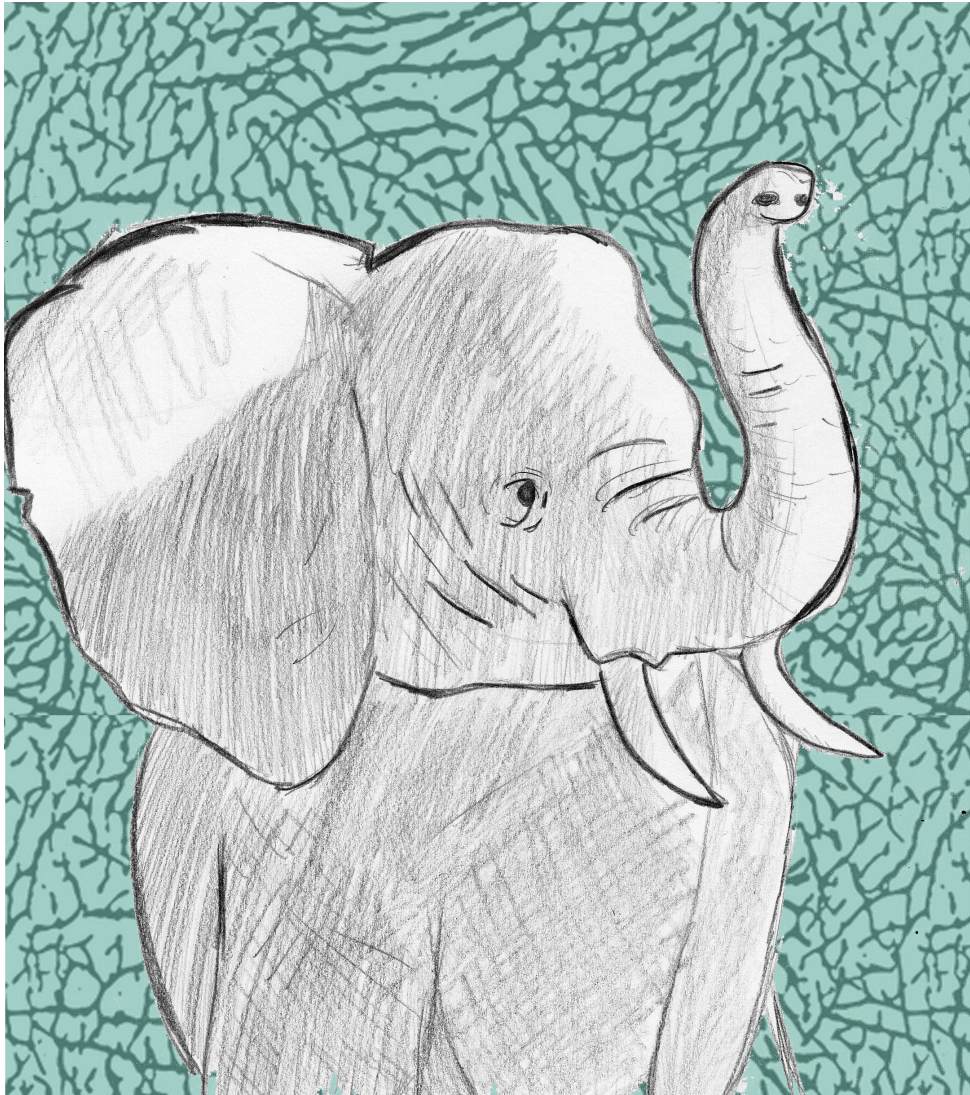
Our Endangered Family

She looks to the left,
Tar and rock flying past.
Her head held low
She runs toward trees,
Behind her,
Her baby is struck,
Hurt, crying, helpless.
She can see the humans, running.
Little did she know,
They caused her woes.

She tries to run away,
And escape the monsters.
She is alone now-
Her cub is gone,
Crossing the rainbow bridge above the sea.
When will she win this battle?
When will she no longer be a trophy?

By Ashley Gomes

Illustration by Collin Mussell



Author's Note: This poem is indeed true. For many years, humans have been endangering elephants. Studies shows that almost 100 elephants are killed per day. Elephants are more than just ivory- they are a symbol of wisdom, strength, and power. Please help keep our kind friends alive and protect them from extinction.

Silence: A Reflection

Right now I'm surrounded by silence and nothing more, but I feel like I'm being suffocated. This silence that so many people find calming and peaceful is absolutely deafening to my ears.

Silence is the eye of the hurricane, the quiet before the battle, the very thing that shakes stable men and drives them into absolute insanity. There is nothing more horrifying than silence and I will do anything to rid myself of it.

No, no it isn't the silence. It's what the silence leaves me with— my thoughts. My mind is the most treacherous minefield I could ever walk through. Some thoughts lead me to enlightenment and others lead me into spiraling existentialism, but I never know what it has lead me to until it ends.

My imagination takes me to places I never thought I'd find myself. It feeds my creativity so that I can build my legacy. What will your legacy be? How long do you have to create that legacy? Are you happy? Who is going to tell your story?

By Camila Peña-Marte

Illustration by Wooreen Choy





2017-2018 Inception Members

