

Serendipity



Serendipity Needs YOU!

Attention writers and artists! Those who want work submitted into this magazine can do so by emailing it to mferraiuolo@ridgefieldschools.com

Anyone is still welcome to join!

****Please state if you want your work to be submitted anonymously.**

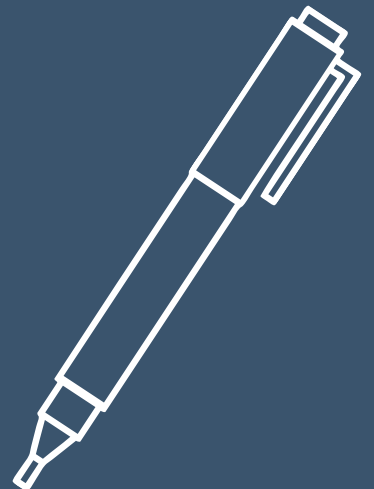
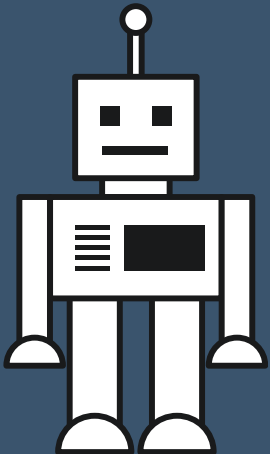
****If submitting poetry, state if you allow the format to be manipulated.**



THANK YOU to all the members of Serendipity who submitted fantastic poems, short stories, and artwork and who attended meetings and critiqued magazine submissions. A special thanks to those who worked tirelessly in creating such a wonderful book for everyone to enjoy.

Miss Ferraiuolo

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Nina
Shehigian

Sebastian
Zhao





Abesera Tessema

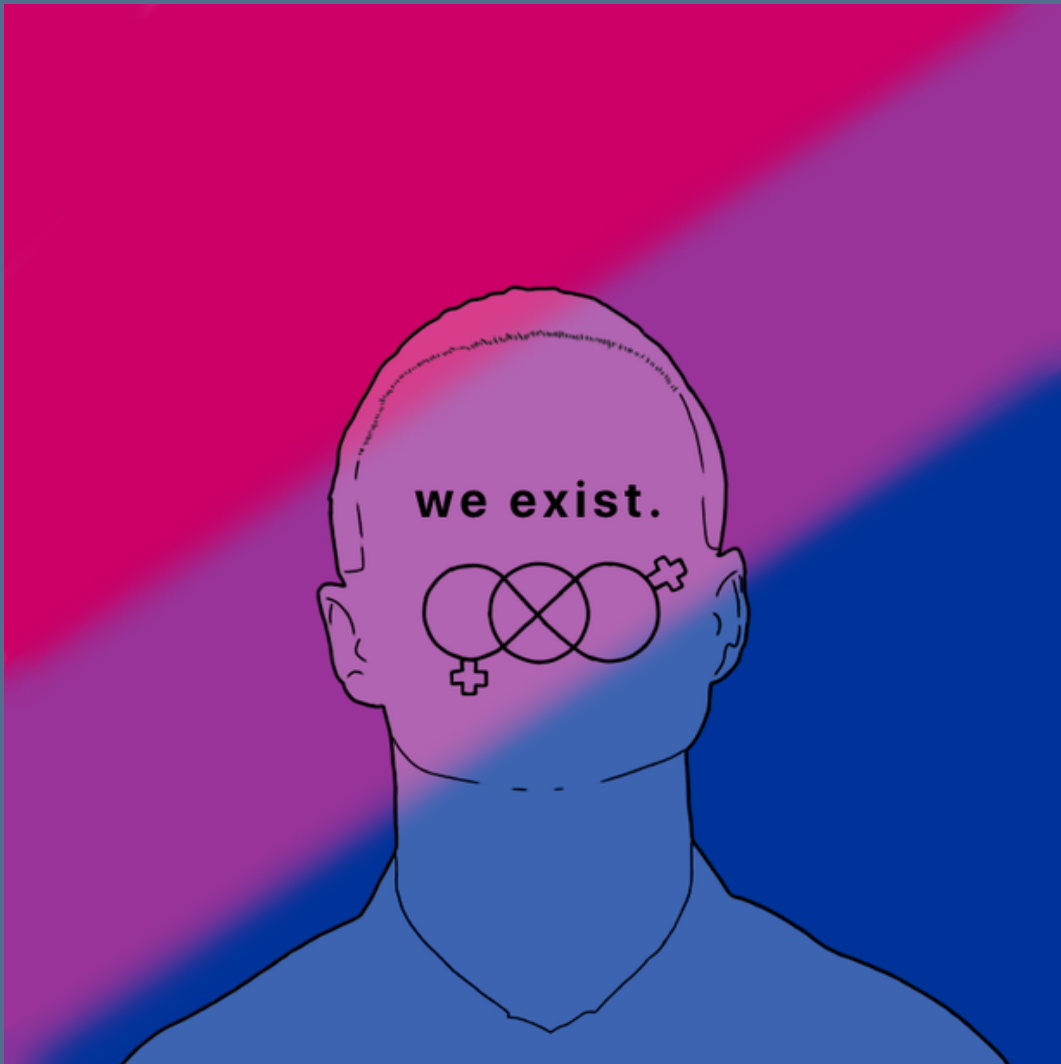


Aqeel Sultani





Victor Suarez

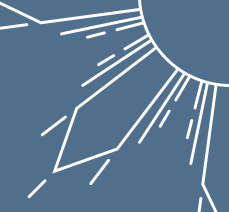



Andy
Shehigian

Nina
Shehigian



Fayeun
Kim



Hourglass


Andy Shehigian

We are constantly running out of time, moments depleting before our own eyes second by second. No matter how much we grasp for more, it will waste away before we know it. Try catching air in your bare hands and maybe you'll have a bit more luck.

We always put things off saying "Oh, don't worry, I have more time," but truthfully we have no clue when our clocks will stop ticking. When the hourglass will run out. Maybe an eternity from now, maybe tomorrow. It's a gamble with death and he holds the answer key between his fingers, just an arms reach away.

No matter how fast we run there is no escape. Wherever you go, whoever you are, it will always catch up. It may be sad but it is inevitable. However it doesn't always have to be a terrible thing.

In some ways it can be a beautiful means to an end. Letting spirits live on after they've passed and leading them along the path of serenity. Putting people who couldn't carry on in an eternal, dreamless sleep, safe from the dangers of the outside world. Waiting for the moment their hourglasses stop flowing and welcoming scared faces with opening arms.



You may see death as a horrifying thing, but I see it as the end of a great story. The last bite of your favorite food as you try and savor the taste on your tongue. A goodbye at the end of the day. After all, who says we'll never see each other again?

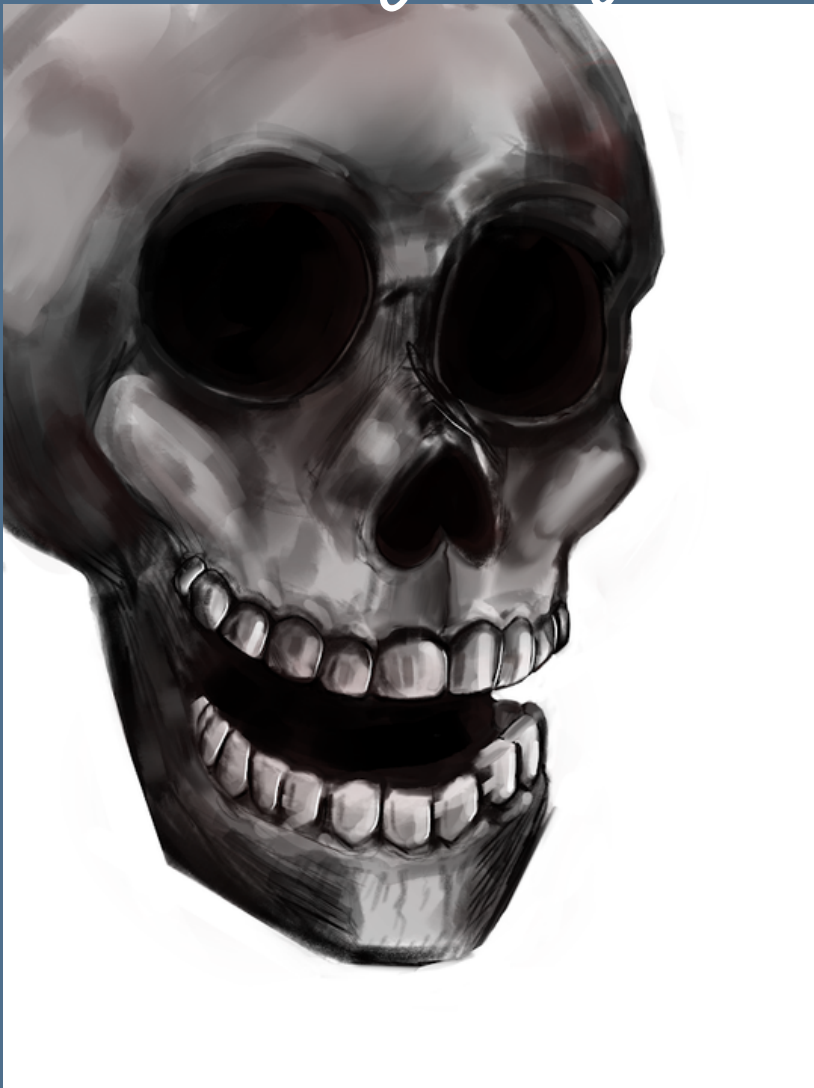


Stephen Park





Kyle Gastangacal



Suleina
Houston

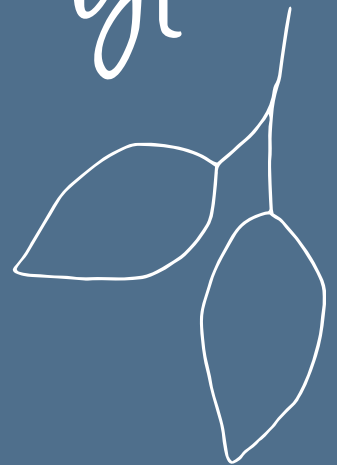


Nina
Shehigian





yu-na
yi





Victor Suarez



Madelyn Suarez





A Letter to My Friend

Sofia Narvaez

Dearest friend,
How are you doing?
It feels like it's been years,
Looking from the outside, you seem to thrive,
We gaze at each other in our peripherals like
strangers,
Secrets I keep now because I'm a decent person.

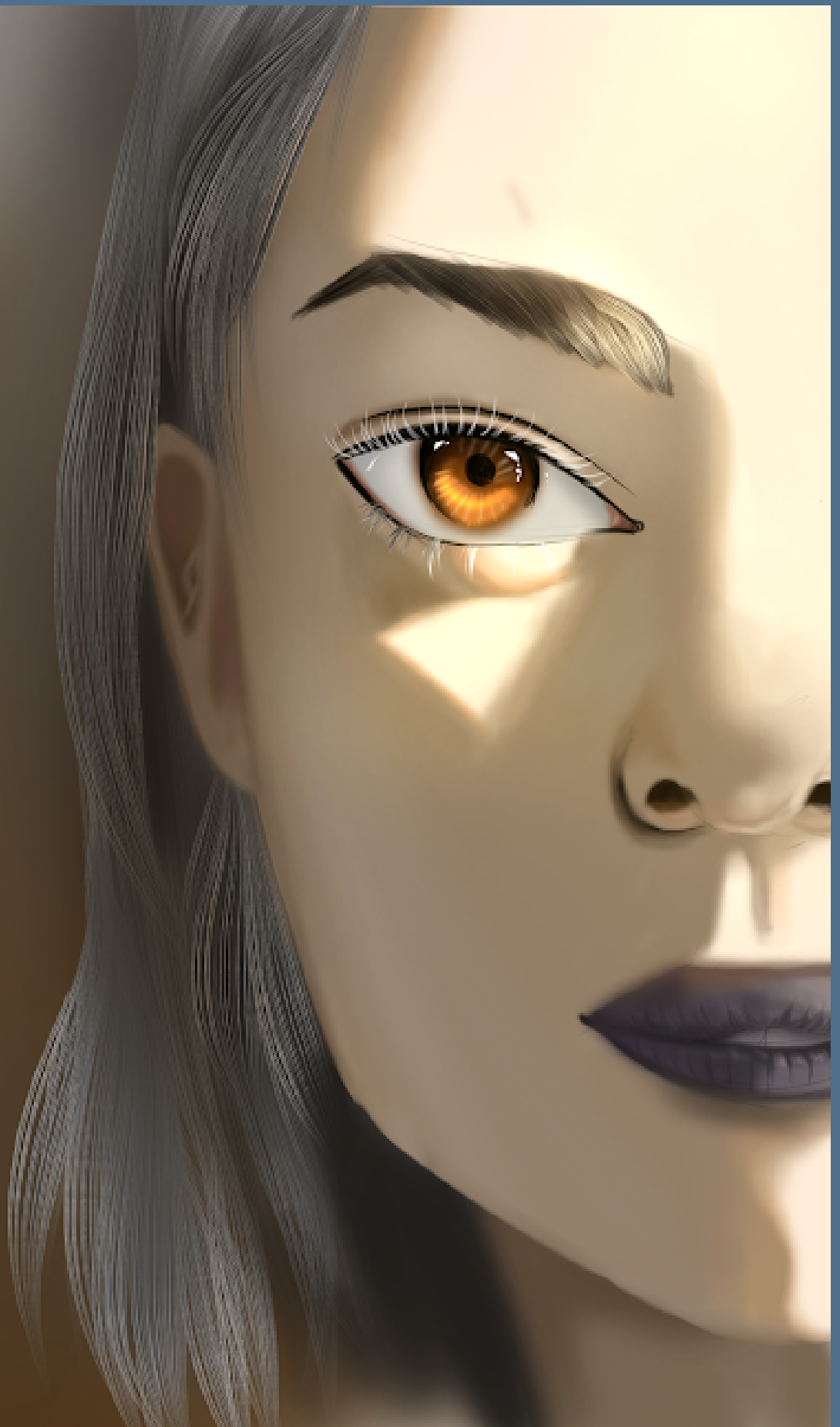
There's so many things I want to tell you,
So many times I wish you were there,
So many moments I want to pick up the phone,
To talk you ear off,
But I can't promise I wouldn't yell at you as well,

As much as the pain has eased,
There are slight aches that linger from time to
time,
You let go so I guess that means I had to as well,
What else are friends for?

Sincerely,
Your Dear Friend



11.30.20



Stephen Park



Jayeun
Kim



Madelyn
Suarez





Fessica Dominguez



Leeches
Lewis Miramontes

Leeches in my arm and leeches on my cheek
Everywhere I look, it's my blood the leeches seek
The sensation starts out strange, in fact, foreign, it seems
But the more time that passes, the quieter are my screams
Why must I endure this horrific scene, should it feel alright?
Perhaps in the future, it will be revealed, but soon because I'm turning
white.

Time has passed and people praise me for what I have accomplished
I enjoy their remarks but my interest in succeeding has diminished
They ask for more and reprimand me for doing less
It's getting tiring and I am getting desperate for rest.
The leeches grow and so does their hunger as my legs grow numb and I lose
my excitement of wonder.

Things are growing bleak, all I hear is the sound of squelches
More reprimands, more requirements, more tasks.
Perhaps I shouldn't have gone into that lake where the water shined blue
It looked great at first, now how about you?
Do these leeches feed off you? and if so it is true.
Just give in... I tried ripping them off, they just bite harder.

Child's Play
Hope Koloszuk

We don't love children because they are cute—we love them because they
represent the healing our souls can do. As we grow, we think more. We see
more. As children all we knew was either pure happiness or pure sadness and
we had a choice of which to be. As an adult or teenager we cannot just
decide. There are too many factors that go against the decision, leaving us
to just be. We love children because they represent freedom. They're not
tangled in their thoughts, they just do what makes them happy while somehow
still managing to bring joy to the world. No matter how hurt they get, they
always seem to easily bounce back just as quickly. We love them because they
are what we once used to be but lost and can never get back





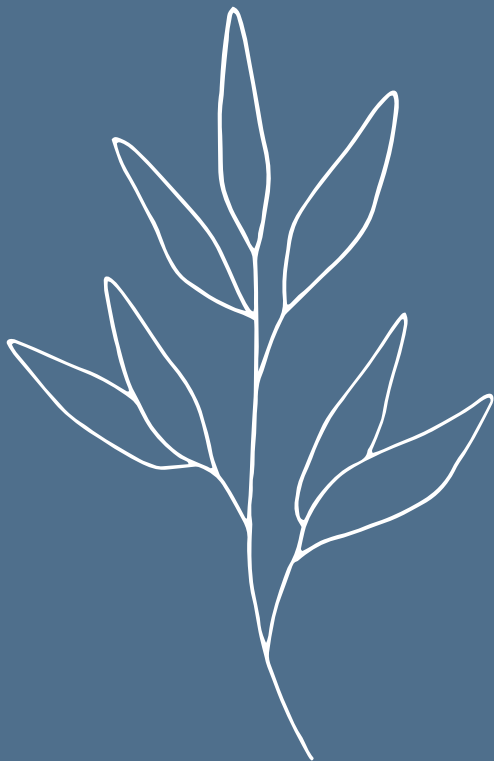
Marianne
Kim

Ash Sorto





Irene
Shim



leo/virgo
Anonymous

i don't think of you when i listen to the songs you
showed me anymore
or how you're the reason behind all the nights i
spent quietly crying on bathroom floors
i think of warm hands and sweet lips
and how her back dips
i think of peaking down at her through her eyelashes
whilst listening to the rain pound on the steel roof
above us and watching as the stoplight flashes
i've collected all the remnants of your residence
and replaced them with hers



Liz Garcia



Andy
Shehigian



Leave the past behind, as you left your
mistakes

Sebastian Zhao

Leaves gently fall into darkness
Slowly the life withers away
Lifeless, darkness, loneliness

You open your eyes and see the sun
The color of the world illuminates
Colorful, bright, vivid

Breaking away from a lover
Isolating themselves into hate
Heartless, hate, confined

Thinking about your future
Going into a world of mystery
Excitement, joy, courage



yu-na
yi





Yosep
Yun

Africa
Avila





Alrica Avila





Dusk of Dust

Kyle Yastangacal



2013, Whillsburg, Illinois was the start of the decay. The only couple hundred people alive started to realise that their bodies were eating themselves due to lack of their own food. Humans had only been exposed to nutritional foods, so when Brayden and Mina searched the dangerous outside, they wouldn't be too excited when they came home with only some egg shells and some dead insects. Charlie didn't seem to care, he was always the first to sit down to take his food, then ran back to his corner of the bunker to plan on what to do when they would get rescued. Mina hoped everyday that eventually the people from the outside world wouldn't try to hurt them, but instead help them in these horrible conditions. Emilia on the other hand, although she didn't do much in school, she knew what was going on.

Emilia always loved to read books and get stories told to her about surviving through the worst conditions. Although some of them were fake just to make her interested, she would always stay up at night trying to figure out what she would have done if she were in that situation. Whenever Emilia went to Mina, the mom of the group, to tell everyone about what she has been thinking about for the past couple of days, she would almost always get ignored, since they knew that she was uneducated and stupid compared to Charlie. Even though Emilia was older than Charlie, with her being 17 and him being 14, Charlie never had trouble getting his ideas out there, even though they never worked the way he wanted them to. Whenever Mina and Brayden went to search for food, Emilia would sometimes go to Charlie and ask, "Why do they hate me so much? Why can't we implement my ideas to our situation, they know that I can help us survive!"

"It's just life, sometimes you don't get appreciated for what you are good at, rather only in what you cannot do," Charlie always replied with.

THUMP! “Wake up everyone! I have some good news for you all!!” Emilia screamed in their bunker at 7:30 am with a log in her hand. Today is a new day, perfect for us, right? Wrong! No more searching for dirty insects or cow eyes, it's time to rebuild humanity! Brayden was the first to wake up,

“Here we go again,” he mumbled. “Your stupid ideas never work Emilia why don't you just quit it, we're going to decay and die in a matter of weeks now, there's no point!”

Emilia immediately replied, “Ha! But there you're wrong, because from now on!, we will be searching for not only leftover scraps and inedible meals, but for the only remaining seeds and living animals out there!”

“We have been searching for seeds or anything to plant for years there's definitely no way of finding them anymore, Emilia, go back to bed” Brayden says as he tries to fall back asleep.

But I can sense it, this time I know I know! Please give me this one last chance, it's our only last chance in a new life anyways?!” Brayden groaned in annoyance and said, “If it will make you be quiet for the rest of the time we live, then sure let's go and “rebuild humanity.”

The whole group gets prepared to please Emilia since no one believed that they would ever find anything, since their hope had slowly been devoured over the past years. Emilia was filled with excitement when she turns around to see everyone with her as “support.”

“Ok so, Mina, remember when you and Brayden were getting some food a couple weeks ago? And you came across some books that you gave to me and Charlie?” Emilia blurted out in excitement.

“Well, yes, of course I remember those books they were in perfect condition. I was surprised and had to tell you!” Mina replied in wonder

“Ok well I was reading them for the past couple days and I came across one of the books called The Intricate Stick and when I finished reading it, I realised how similar the story was to how we are living today! Well, basically there's these three characters stuck in the middle of a gigantic landfill with no sign of water, food, or any wildlife! Sound similar?” Emilia explained.

“Well in the story James, one of the characters gets a sensation of appreciation from his fellow friends and family, and with that confidence and support, he was able to save everyone that was slowly starving to death in the landfills!” sounds scary!

“Seems like what we're doing right now, maybe we'll have a change to get out of here and save us!” Brayden foolishly said to Emilia.

"Yes! You understand now!" Emilia jumped and cheered not knowing that Brayden was making fun of her. Over time the group got a little lucky, finding better and better finds over their long trip. Little did they know that they wouldn't be going home soon, since a bad dust storm started to grow, as they started to get weaker.

The group started seeing huge pieces of metals and plastics flying at really high speeds all around the place, like a tornado, but since it's been so long since the last dust storm, it's been charging up and starting to rain down like crazy!

“Lets hide before it gets too late, guys” Mina quickly shouted since the wind was blowing into their ears with dust and scraps of pollution. The longer they searched, the worse it got outside, as it started to blow away Charlie. They all huddle up and run to the nearest shack they could find, turns out it was a port-a-potty that

had been destroyed and corroded over the years. Although it was very toxic there and smelled atrocious, they had to do what they had to do in order to survive the dust and pollution that was heading their way.

After a bunch of musk, and a lot of hours, they were finally out of the area, in a loss of hope.

“I thought I was able to save us. Im sorry” Emilia said in disappointment

“Don’t bring yourself down, you tried to help us and that is all that matters.” Mina and Charlie were saying to Emilia to bring her confidence back. “Isn’t that right Brayden”

“I apologize for bringing you down, but you did they best you could Emilia, you saved us in our hearts,” Brayden sincerely said.

They started to walk back, slowly draining their energy out, since they hadn't eaten after the storm. It got to the point where they were collapsing every couple minutes, they knew this would be their last days on Earth.

“This is all your fault Emilia, how could you kill us like this!” Charlie said with the last bit of energy he had consumed.

Emilia felt shamed and hurt, slowly lying down on her knees to a full collapse. She thought she would just take a little nap, but her allies knew it was her time. Emilia laid on the ground, with plastic bags and old gas canisters around her, when she smelled a very odd scent. She starts to be awakened by how fresh and clean this smell is, never like before.

“Why does it smell so clean right now?” Emilia confusingly mumbled.

“Oh I cannot listen, she's passing too early! Please save our family, someone please bless us with the luck and health we need!!” Mina

shouted in fear of losing Emilia.

“It smells like mothers old garden. Is anyone else smelling this?” Emilia asked while slowly pulling herself back together.

Charlie bends down to where Emilia lied and realized that it was not just her. “I smell it too! It couldn’t be what we have been searching for, could it?” Charlie yelled in excitement. Mina tackled Charlie to move away while she looked around for any type of life, when she came across the smell next to Emilia's shoes. Mina pushes Emilia's feet away and notices a small little flower, in perfect condition tied in between Emilia's shoe laces.

“No way.” Mina whispers to herself in total shock.

She grabs the flower right away screaming to the group in prayers of life, while the others start to fulfill themselves with hope. Mina immediately grabs her socket of soil that she had kept from before pollution took over the world, and immediately planted it in their empty water cup.

“Water, NOW” Mina screamed as she realized they had run out of water just before the dust storm.

“Let's go back to the Port-a-potty, I bet you there's some type of liquids in that toilet!” Brayden shouted in the distance.

“Yes, yes! I knew we could survive this horrible life, let's go quick!” Emilia jumped up and ran to their previous hiding spot.

They bust open the port-a-potty door and find not only some leftover water from the port-a-potty, but also so many other species of life, living right under their feet. Charlie signals Brayden to flip the port-a-potty over to see if anything is under, and when they flip it over, the whole fate of their world changes. Life was then able to be restored, all thanks to the confidence and dreams of Emilia Biseiga and her family that worked through these conditions together.



yu-na
yi





Ash Sorto



Andy
Shehigian



Breaking Boundaries
Sebastian Zhao

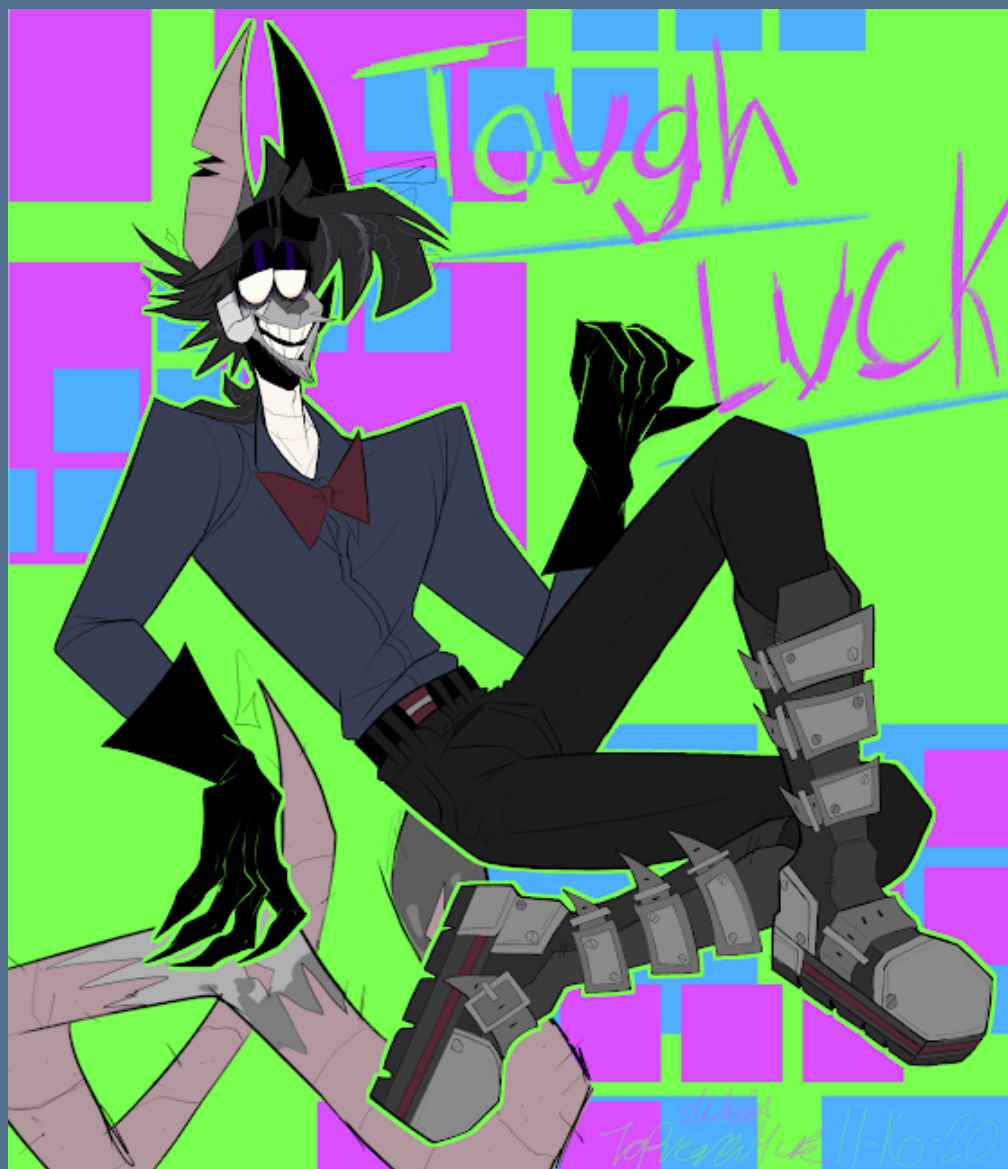
The way you talk to me isn't sincere
Getting close to you, fills me with fear
I don't want to stop it right here
Pleading for you to accept me the way I accepted you
Society rules high, but our love soars
Past the skies and past the stars
No one can break this bond in which is called romance
Never once did you hate me
We used to go on boba dates
Now you can't because of the hate
What can we do to love without bother
I want you to stop focusing on the people's norm
Focus on yourself, focus on me, focus on us



Liz Garcia



Suleina
Houston





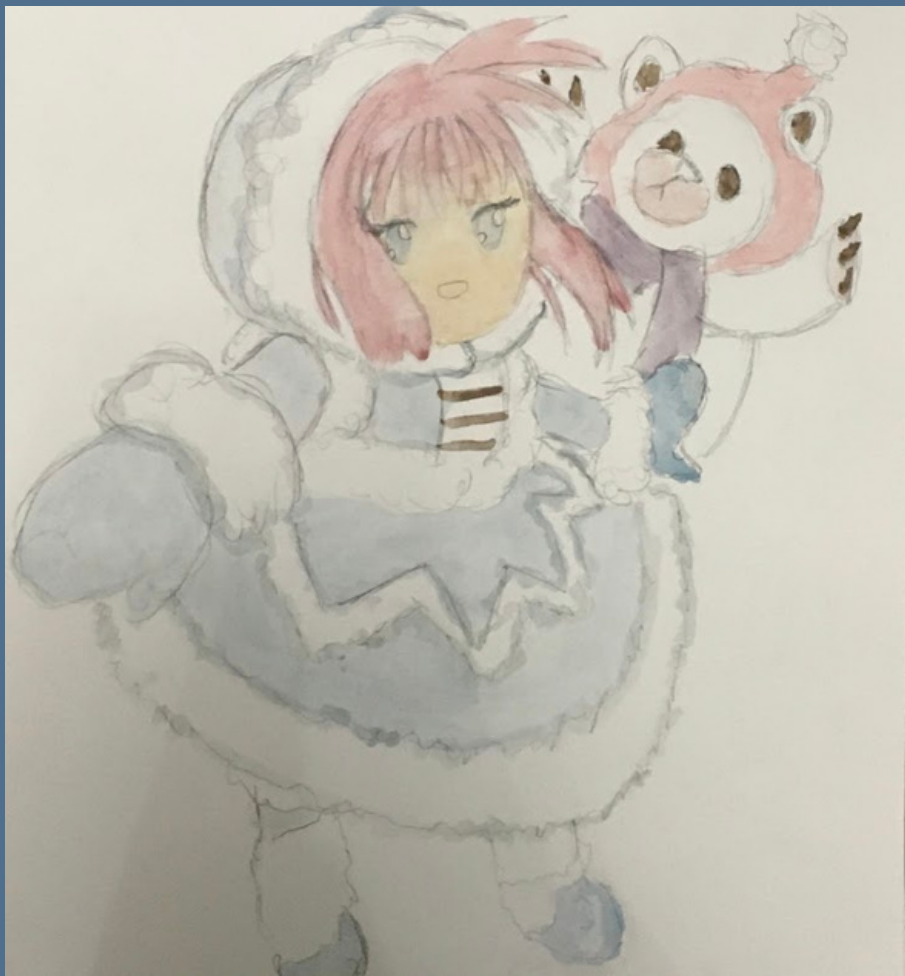
Andy
Shehigian

Liz
Garcia






Suleina
Houston



Africa
Avila


Irene
Shim





Salem

Andy Shehigian



My name is Matthias Fletcher. I am 37 years old and I work as a tailor. I have been brought to the attention of the town by a young girl, Victoria is her name. The shoemaker's daughter. She has a personal vendetta against my family for which I do not know why, and in doing so has ruined my life.

This will probably be the last entry I write. As of today, October 13th, 1692, I have been accused. Of what, you may ask? Witchcraft. The audacity. After all the things I have done for this wretched town, but because I just so happened to be branded with a witching mark they have suddenly all forgotten of my good deeds.

I can't say I was all that shocked however. Just last week I had to watch mine own daughter, my flesh and blood, be crushed to her untimely death by rocks of all things. At this point I would do just about anything to see her once more, even if it means going through all the pain and suffering that is to follow this trial.

It is unfortunate, really. My family has been cursed with these marks, we all liked to see them as signs of God, the touch of an angel leaving these skin deformities. I had never expected that settling down in this beaten up old village would be the end of my bloodline.

My brother met his end only mere months after moving, catching a viral disease that the town's doctor could not treat. My mother, oh the poor thing, she died courageously, saving the life of the mayor's son in a house fire. From then on out we were careful. Careful not to put ourselves in harm's way, careful not to draw too much attention to ourselves, but as it seems we were not careful enough.

My dearest Genevieve. If only I had been a better father, maybe then you would still be here today, laughing and dancing alongside the daisies. They were always your favorite flower, were they not? Instead now your mangled body has been laid to rest six feet under.

I might as well accept my fate. There is no way for me to get out of this alive. They told me I had succumbed to the Devil's Whispers, that I was no longer a man of faith. Curse these damnable people, curse them to hell I say. They've all lost their minds. I am a man of the Lord and I will stick by him through wind and rain, sleet and hail. Not even these trials will get me to lose faith. I will die a man of God and I will praise his name until the moment I take my last breath.

The council has yet to tell me when my trial will be holding place and I grow more anxious with every passing second. I feel as if they have a noose around my neck, slowly tightening it with an infuriating amount of patience. Why must they prod and poke at my dwindling sanity. Any more of it and I may crack.

I have had a good life and I would not be upset for it to end now. I'm positive it could've been under better circumstances but I am waiting for the moment I get to see my darling Gen's smiling face looking up at me.

For those of you who read this in the future, I beg that you make the most of your life as you have no clue when it will just crumble and collapse. With that, I should be finishing up. Farewell cruel world, may you live on in the future with better ideals.





Victor
Suarez



Michael
Kirk



Jessica
Dominguez





Abesera Tessema

Jessica
Dominguez



Bittersweet Hope Koloszuk

Life is so sweet yet so salty. Take love for example. A person can have nothing until they find the love of their lives..Now they have something, someone to lose. Even just the feeling of love in general..You have to feel pain in order to even know what it is. Or how when you're having fun, time seems to go by faster..It's all so bittersweet and yet we're obsessed with it.

The Wide Blue Yonder

Yaeun Jung

My heart is the sky, the sky you will fly
I will greet you with a handful of clouds
Tread on it lightly and come safe and sound



Suleina Houston



The Perfect Sad People Hope Koloszuk

I've been told so many times by so many people that I deserve better than them. That my time is too precious to be wasted on them. That I'm too perfect for them. Perfection is a funny thing, though, isn't it? We all use the term that doesn't exist, yet we strive to be it and to have it. So why is it that when we think we've found it, we run? Guilt. In their eyes, I was perfect and they weren't. Imperfection cannot be with perfection. That's the subconscious thought humanity has shoved into our heads. A queen belongs with a king and a princess must be with a prince. It cannot be any other way!! ..Right?

Sometimes I feel as if the actual thought of perfection is what stops us from being so perfect. We see it as the impossible, that we could never be so high of a rank to another person and yet here they were proving themselves wrong by calling ME perfect? They wanted me to be happy and thought I'd be better off without them and yet I would've been happier if they stayed. They were perfect to me..but they were sad and their sadness is what stopped them from staying..They were the perfect sad people..



Stephen Park



The Lie that Broke Us

Hope Koloszuk



I know you want to believe me when I say I'm telling the truth
So please, please do.

Because even though there are a million things against me
A lot goes for me too

I know you have doubts

I know what you've been through

But I thought our love would be stronger than this hole

I'm starting to think it's not, though

I told you at the beginning, when everything first started

Life would throw obstacles, it would be really hard

You told me it would be okay

You said you loved me on that day

So please believe me when I say

I love you forever and always.

I have a lot of enemies

None of them wish for me to be happy

They didn't even like you

So why would you believe them when in a second they'd hurt us
gladly?

Now look what they've done

When you see the sky, they took away the sun

Just please know that I never lied

I was always by your side

And the most important thing of all


I will never stop loving you until death makes me fall






Stephen
Park





Walking in NYC

Yaeun Jung



The world kept running fast.
Faster, and faster than before.
That's how it was
until it all came to a full stop.
An untimely virus was spreading.

The first thing disease took away was daily life.
The empty Times Square explains it all.
Times Square was a place where people with cosplay
play the old trick,
taking pictures and asking tourists for money.
But people cover their mouths and noses with masks,
and don't even shake hands anymore.
Shaking hands originated from confirming that each
other had no weapons in their hands.
It's funny to see that now the hand itself is the
deadliest weapon.
"Nice to see you," they say.
But would their face, hidden behind the mask, tell
the same thing?

Fear spread faster than the virus.
But there is no vaccine or antibody for fear.
Perhaps it was inevitable for the world to stop.

This was New York without a doubt,
but there's no honking when I stand in the middle of the
road.
The lonely traffic lights flicker in green and red, though
no one saw it.
Ironically, it is the year 2020.

Ash Sorto

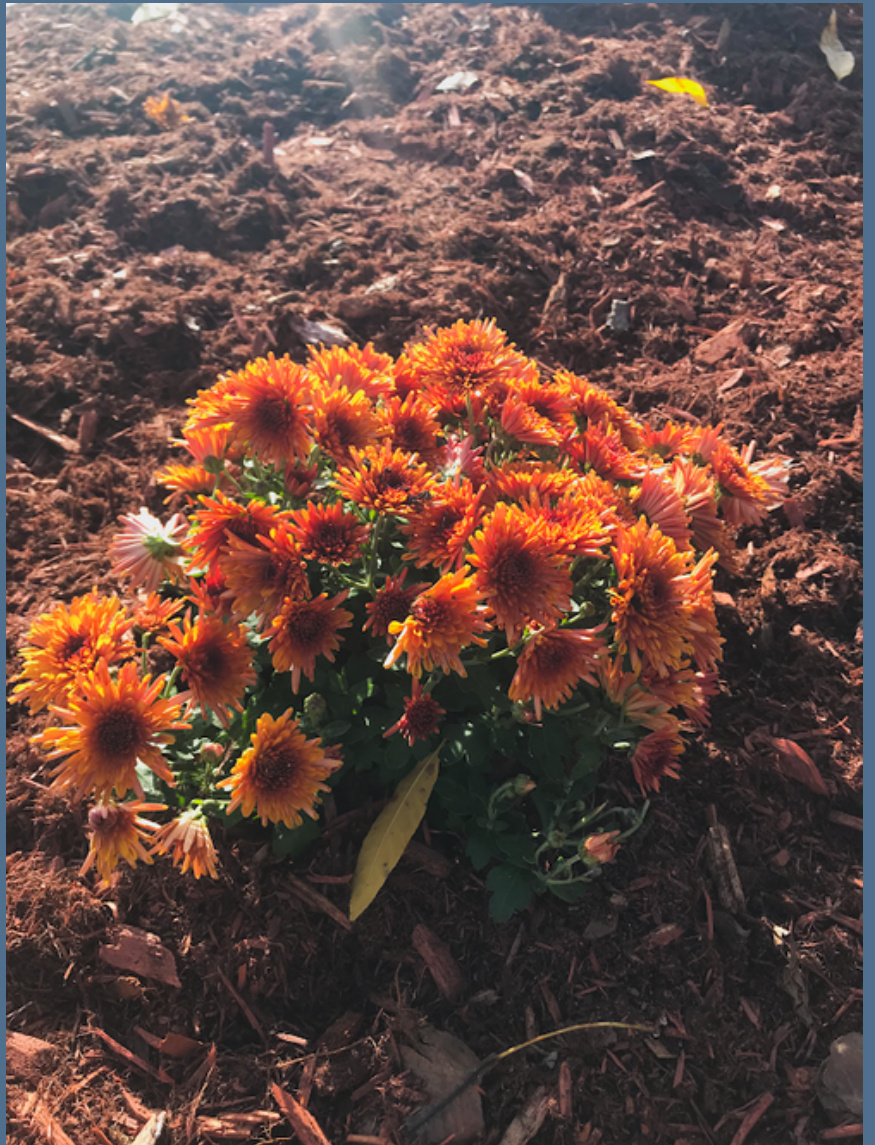




Madelyn
Suarez



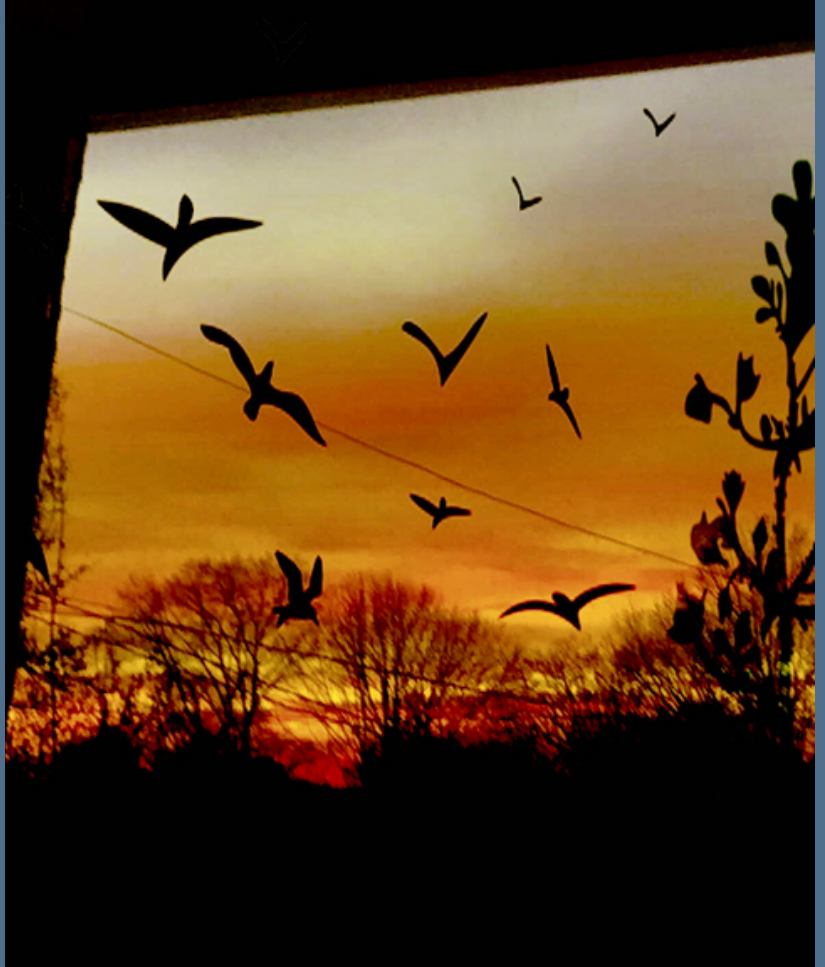
Liz
Garcia





Jessica
Dominguez

Liz Garcia





yosep yun





Andy Shehigian



Angelica Perez
Morales





The Angel
Sofia Narvaez



I used to visit her,
An angel too pure for this world,
Her kind heart contrasting with all the negative,
sending you on your way with a blessing,

Her sweet voice rattles through my head,
A smile so infectious even through her pain,
Gorgeous in sickness and in health,
Knowing we were safer after receiving her kisses

She was a wolf in sheep's clothing but not in a
negative way,
Rather, an angel in women's clothing,
But women must die even if they're angels,
Even if you don't get to say goodbye,
Even if she took away all of the light,

We are left in darkness without her,
I miss the joy on her face, I hope that's an image in
my mind that can never be erased,
I miss me and her playing games,

But I hope she is where she deserves to be,
Alongside her big tree of family,
Doing what she loves to do,
Wishing I could tell her 'I love you.'



coconut scented truths

Anonymous



you used to sit and talk with me while i did the dishes
and i don't really miss you but, angel, the thing is
i can't handle change the way you do
and i'm still caught up on the way i loved you
you used to get upset if i would fall asleep first
you told me it was cause you needed me to lift your
insomnic curse
i wonder how you're doing sleeping alone
cause i know for sure that i'm trying to cope

there's a cat sleeping in my lap as i write this song
(for you, for you, for you)

Anonymous

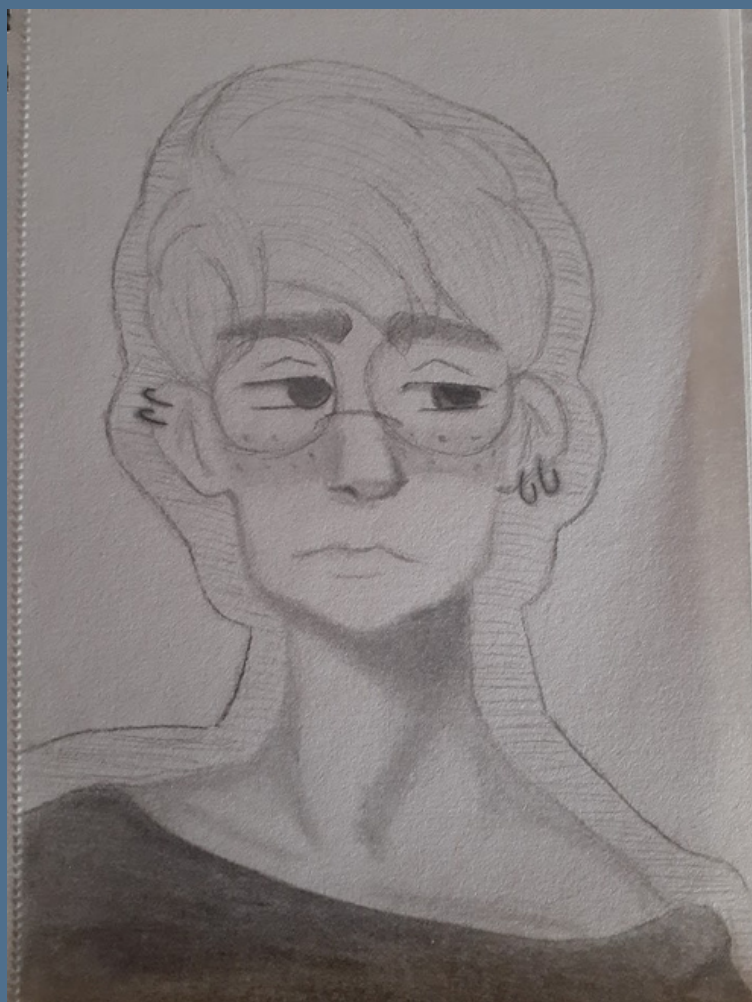
i believe your heart and mine are very old friends
sculpted by aphrodite to fit each other perfectly
i find myself silently praying for this to never end
i would spend the rest of my days with you, willingly
in our tiny, lovely house with a rose red door
with a cat or two, maybe more
my angel came to talk to me the other night
she showed me you and told me everything that was meant for
me is right in front of me
if we were a movie, i'd want us to be twilight
so i could sing to you for the rest of eternity





Ashley
Kim

Angelica Perez
Morales

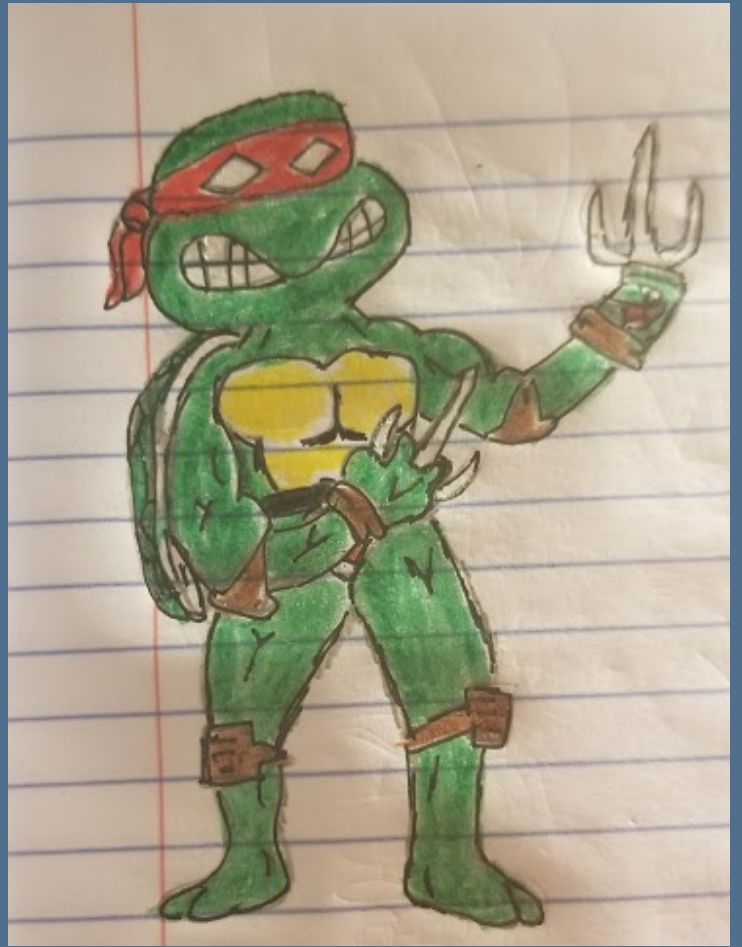




Madelyn Suarez



Victor Suarez



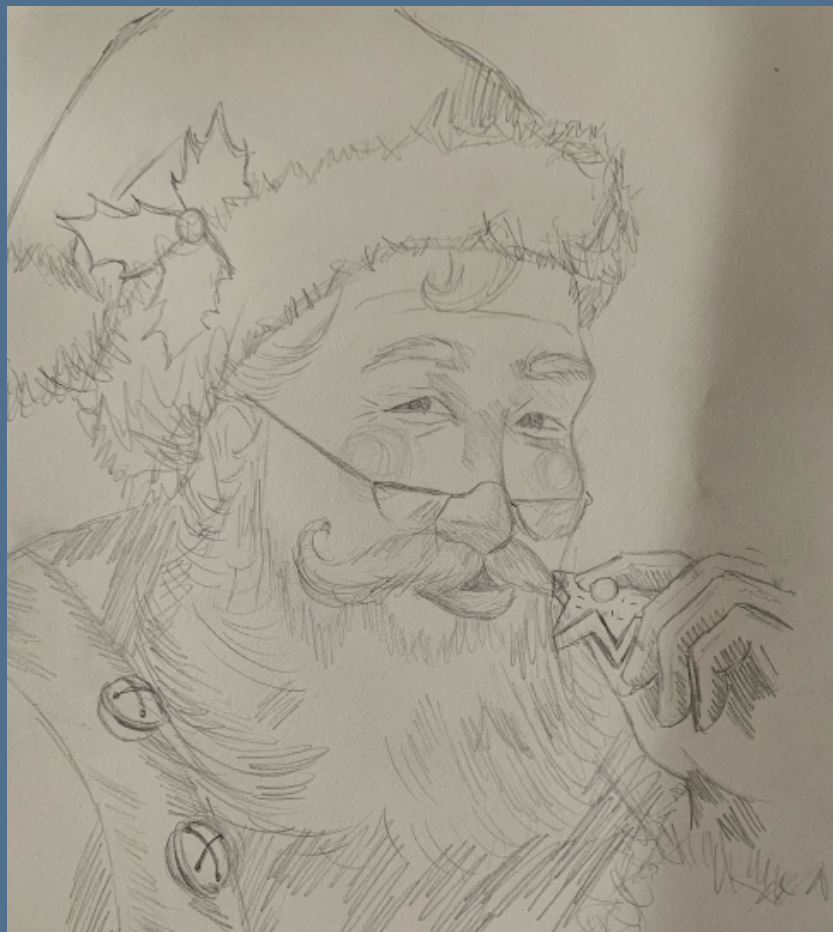
Madelyn Suarez





Nina
Shehigian





Nina
Shehigian

Irene Shim



Sii Sempre Bella: Solis Occasum

Yaeun Jung

The whole castle was in chaos. The walls of the fortress that once stood majestic fell like those of Jericho. Thump, thump. The fast-coming footsteps echoed and shook the castle. The smell of blood gushed in through the window. Something was hanging from the tree in the garden.

".....Maria," the princess barely managed to swallow the scream. The princess backed off from the window, clearly frightened, but eyes fixed out the window. That tree was the tree of the princess; it was one of many things that she owned.

The head that was hanging on the princess's tree was the head of her maid. The dead blue eyes of hers were staring down at the princess as if she was blaming her. The princess broke down under that gaze, now her legs feeling weak. A beautiful voice leaked through the red, plump lips. The princess was crying. The head of the princess' maid hung from the princess' tree. What this meant was obvious. Now realizing the downfall of her kingdom, she despaired for losing all of hers.

After a long time, the princess looked up with a tear-stained face. The princess was such a beauty, a saint, and soft-hearted. She teared up even when she scratched her

hand on the jewels on her dress. I must say it was the most extravagant tear in the world.

Then, there was the sound of the door of the annex breaking. The doom came right by the throat. But the princess wiped her tears and stood up proud. Then, she firmly held my shoulder. Her eyes that used to shine like gold now held a fiery sun. She still looked beautiful even when the tears and mucus dirtied her face.

"Listen to me, Ida," her voice was full of determination. No, it was ignorance. I wanted to laugh at her naivete.

The vibration of those footsteps came up again to my toes, much stronger than before. They were close. The princess glimpsed at the door once. 'Please hide me.' 'Die for me instead.' I expected her to say something along the lines.

"It's me they are after anyway. Hide over there and run when things get better. I cannot lose you," she said. The princess's voice trembled with pleading. She was truly a perfect and selfless princess, a princess that the king, the people, and the world wanted and needed. I felt a thrill electrolyzing me. All she had left of her was me. "Do you understand me? Ida, you've got to get out of here and..."

"Shut up, princess," I cut her off and lowered her hands on my shoulder.

"You can't keep anything if you always act naive and kind," I cooed. She reminded me of a butterfly caught in a trap with its delicate wings torn apart. So helpless and vulnerable. I burst out with the laugh that I was holding the whole time. "There are just too many people who are waiting to take on advantage of you. And so do I," I pushed her forehead with my finger. Her head fell back helplessly. The princess opened her eyes wide, shook herself, and finally looked in vain. The princess then laughed weakly.

"Ida, stop, you're not yourself," she shook her head, her voice barely audible. The princess's face slowly hardened. "It's not funny."

I frowned with fake pity. The princess only wanted to see the beautiful world until the end. To her dismay, the world was everything but beautiful. I smiled gently and pulled out the sharp hairpin stuck in my head.

"You, you were one of them, you are the one who opened the gate," she bit her lips. Her voice trembled with anger. "How dare you betray your kingdom, Ida."

"My kingdom?" I snickered. I wrapped her face with my hand. Her perfect, soft skin felt awkward on my rough hand. "Here never was my home nor my kingdom. You never were my liege."



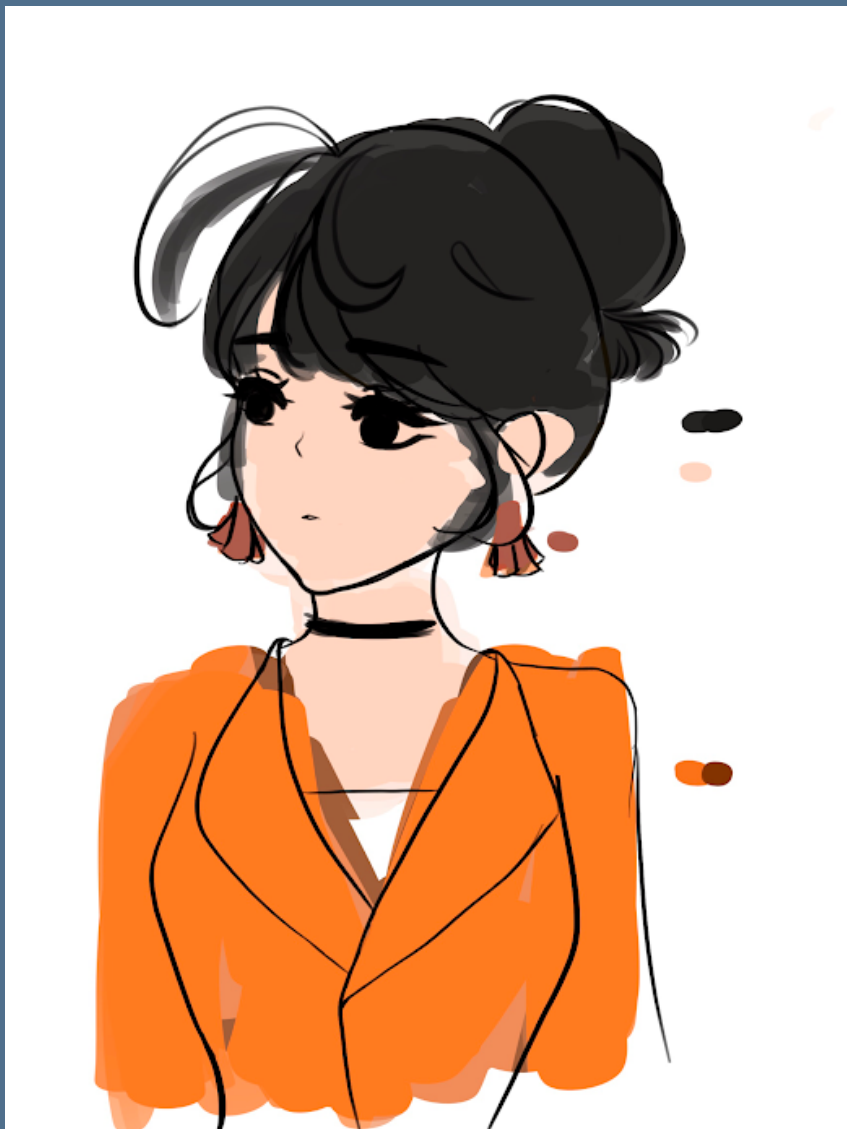
“Don't worry. Your place will be filled in no time,” I watched in delight as her face distort and break down in dismay. Ten years. For ten damn years, I have longed for this moment. A man's instinct was to ruin perfection. Ever since this girl who had done no dirty work took my filthy hand with a silk gloved hand, I've always wanted to bring her downfall with my own hands.

“Now, stay beautiful forever, Her Highness,” I watched the golden sun of hers slowly setting and falling into the abyss. I was enchanted by her breathtaking beauty and fell into ecstasy. Sii sempre bella, the princess shall forever be beautiful.

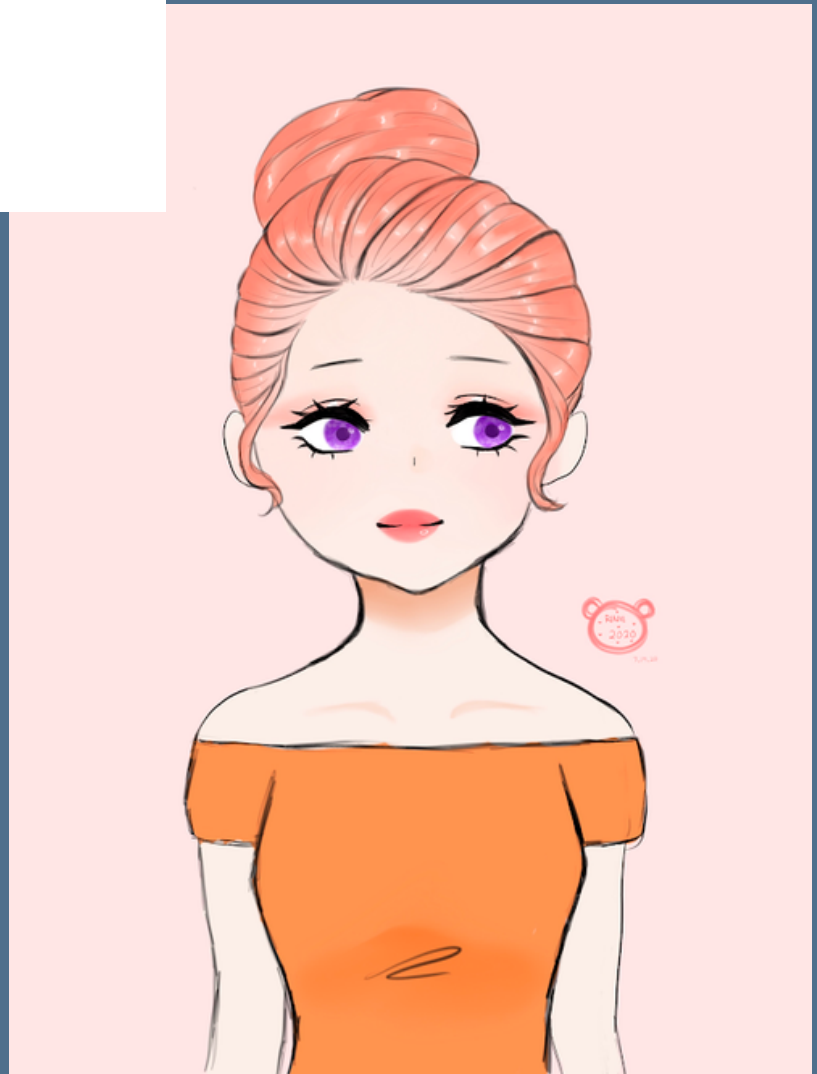


Madelyn
Suarez





Irene
Shim





Jaeyeun Kim



yu-na yi



Andy Shehigian





Alyssa
Kim

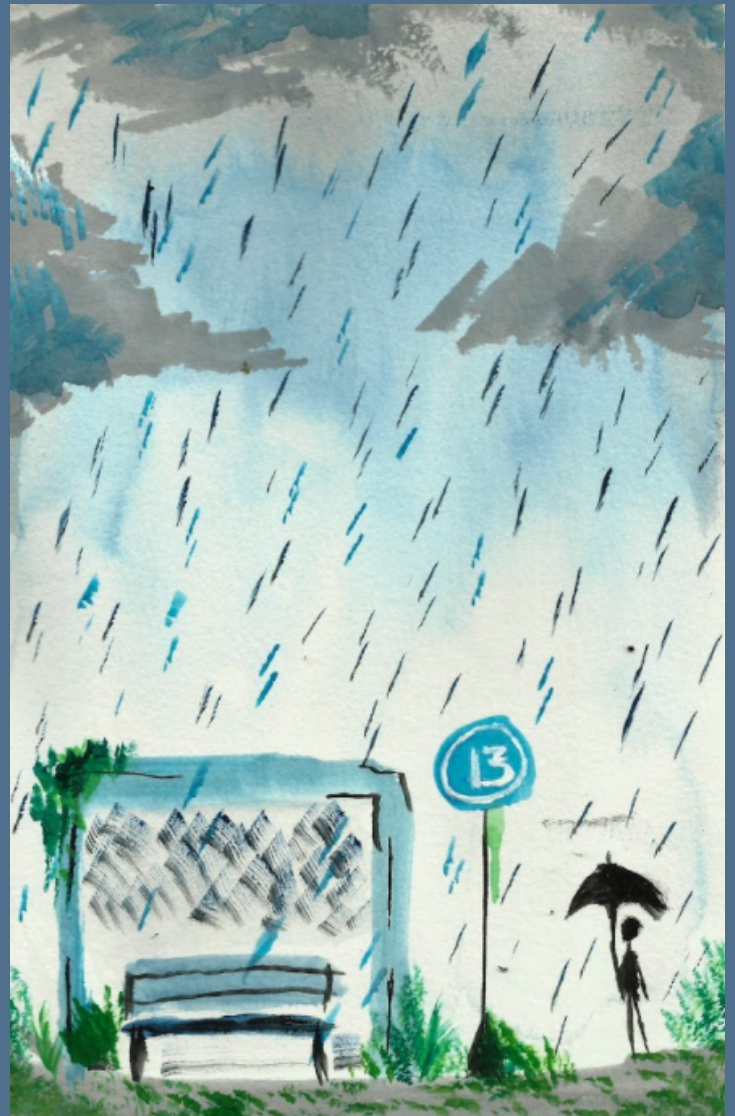


Humza Majid



Abesera
Tessema

Ash sorto





Angelica Perez
Morales

Ash Sorto





Ash Sorto



Madelyn Suarez





Andy Shehigian





Liz Garcia



Fessica
Dominguez



How Does One Explain?

Ash Sorto

How does one explain?

How do I try to explain to someone that my heart is made up
of crushed crystalized glass,

Where it is being held together by laughter and hours upon
hours of tediously gluing parts together—

Piece by piece

Although I am alright, and the past has settled down and
the pain or desires don't linger,

I am cautious of my steps,

Not because I am afraid,

But simply because I know I am not ready—

It never hurts to take time,

I know eventually I will find something—someone—new,

But for now I am alright—

And for me, That is enough.

Abesera
Tessema





yu-na
yi



My Mind No longer Dreams

Sofia Narvaez

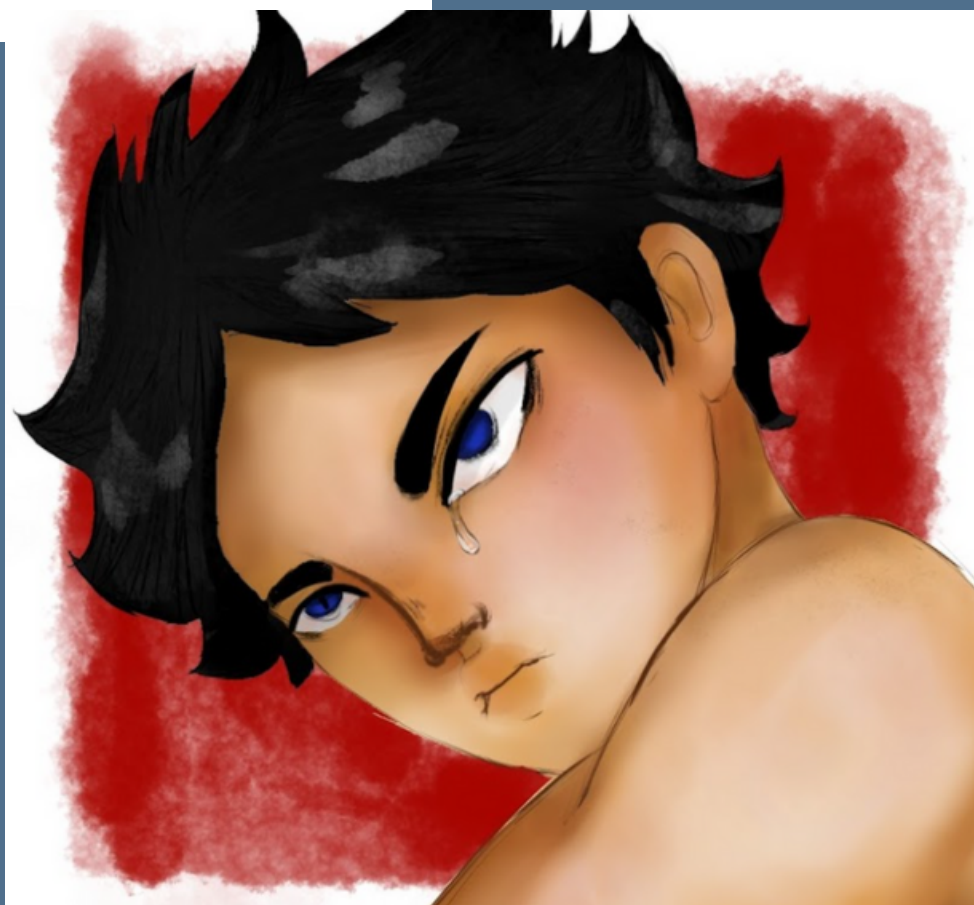
My mind no longer dreams,
It doesn't see pictures like when my eyes
are open,
There is no rosy tint of imagination,
Only the plain black of sleep,
I question if my brain has lost its
sparkle,
Perhaps it's the twisted burden of
adulthood,
But the pleasure of the childhood dream is
something I crave,
It is a silent story with the characters
of your life,
But they are spread out and I wish for a
dreaming mind,
A dream not of the future,
Not the dream of an awake person,
But the dreams of a child's mind,
with a hazy but interesting subconscious





Irene
Shim

Marianne
Kim



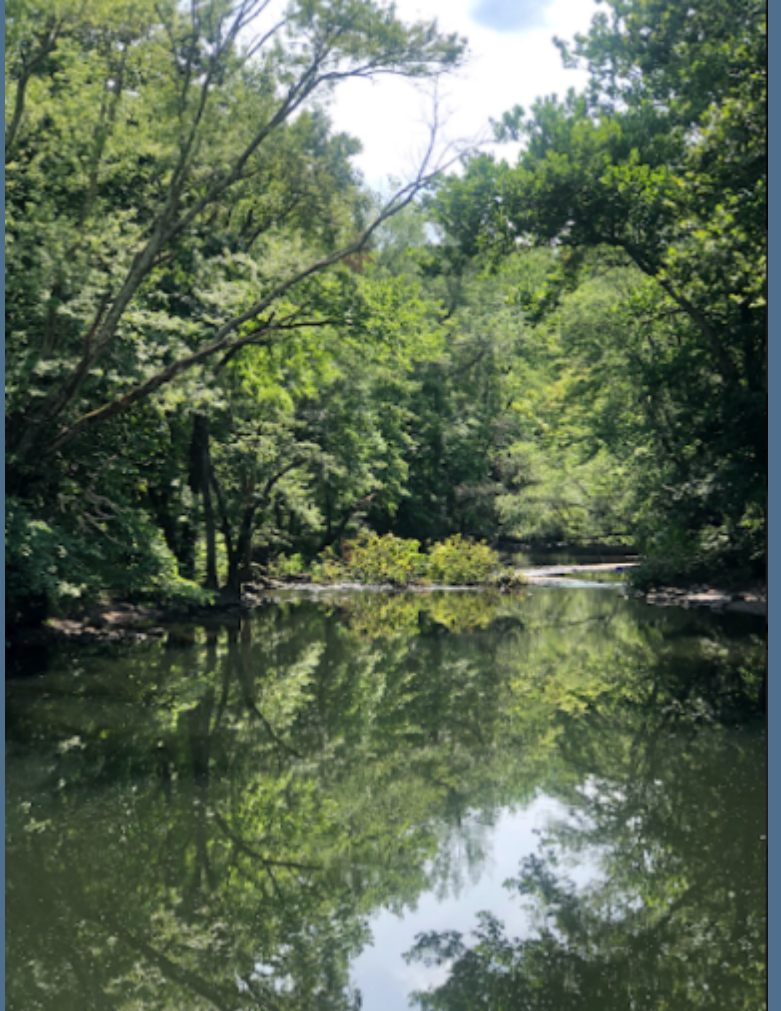


Andy
Shehigian





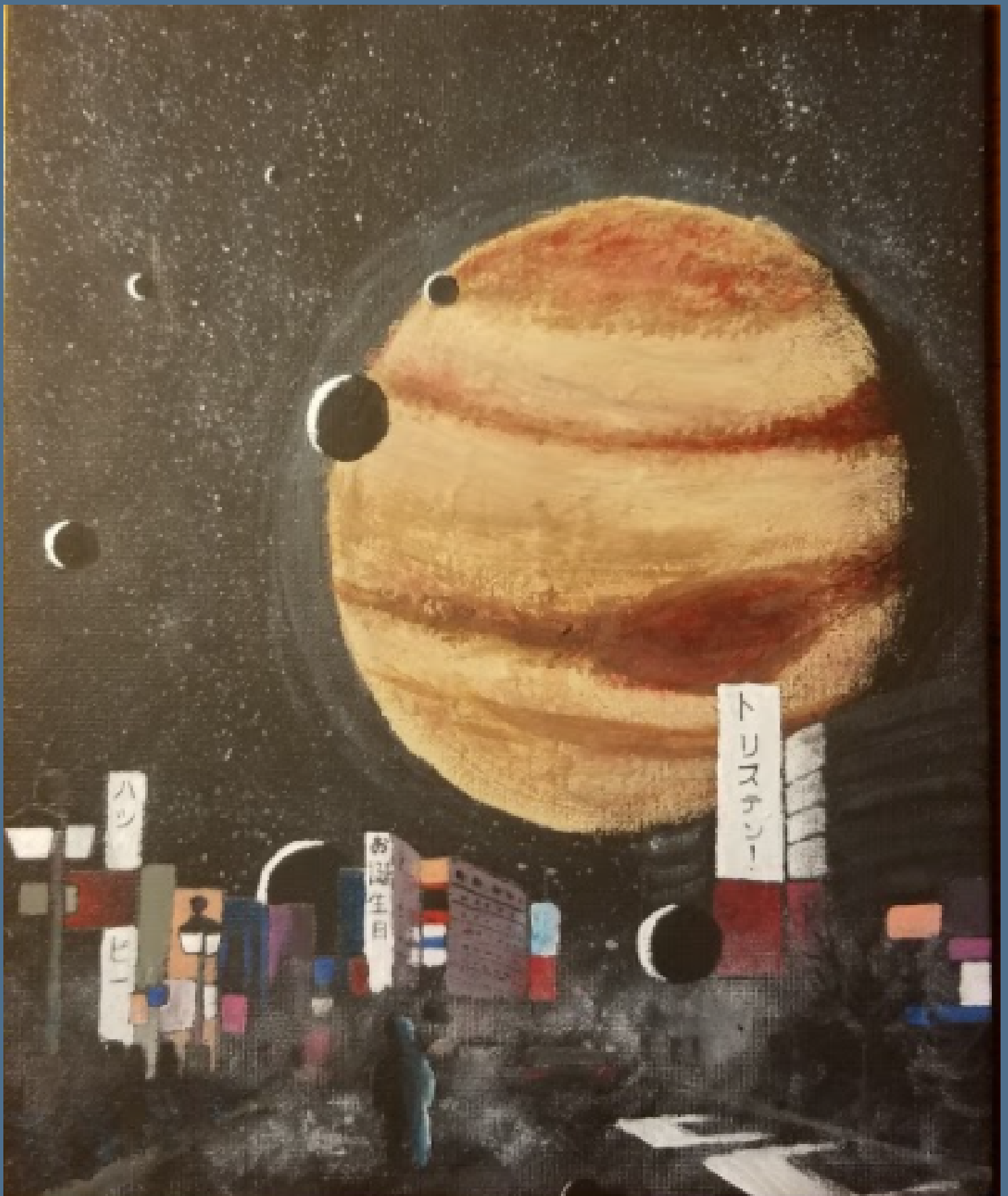
Andrea
Solis



Acceptance

Hope Koloszuk

In today's society with the standards and stigma, acceptance towards anyone is rare. Everyone sits in their rooms dwelling and wondering why they cannot receive it, imagining and wondering through ideas of what they might be able to do to gain it. As for me, I sit in my room strumming my ukulele in search of the proper description of what acceptance might even be. I mean, everyone thinks celebrities are socially accepted due to their talents and stunning appearances and yet the amount of hate they receive is absurd and yet we choose to ignore it. We find that thousands of people find their beauty immaculate and they are still socially accepted despite the hundreds who find their flaws to be revolting. This is false. Every person contributes to "society." No one is socially accepted because there will always be the many or few who choose to take a disliking to you. This could be for any reason or no reason at all. So instead of searching for acceptance I invite you to sit and listen to the distant strumming of my tuned ukulele and wonder with me. Does acceptance within our society truly exist or is it just something we made up to try to force people to attempt to fit within our idea of the perfect person?



Madelyn Suarez

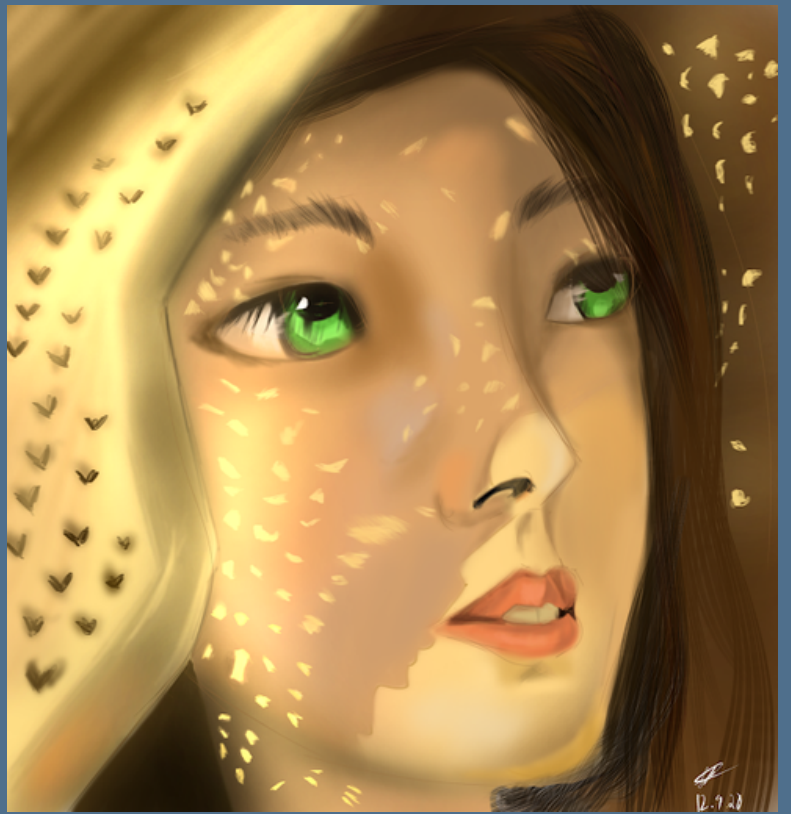


Liz
Garcia

Andrea Solis



Stephen Park



Andy Shehigian



A Hurricane. A Lie.

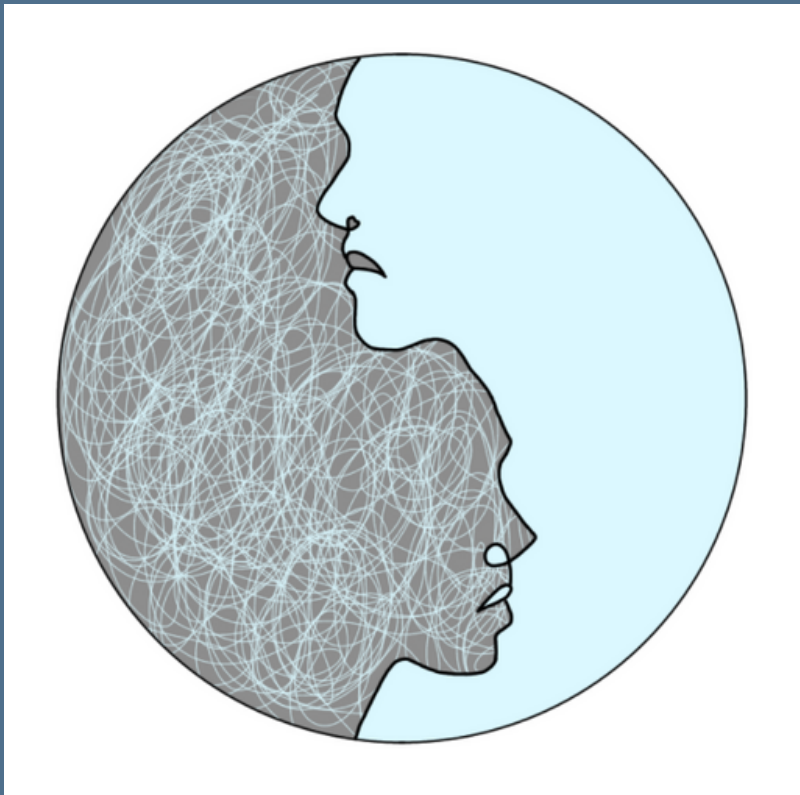
Hope Koloszuk

They say a house without a foundation will easily collapse the second something touches it. No one remembers that even a house with a strong foundation can be destroyed by weather destructive enough. A relationship and a lie. It could be healthy, it could be lovely, it could be perfect. They could be your soulmate or simply not even your partner, maybe just your best friend. No matter who or what, it can be destroyed or dented and hurt. A lie. A simple lie from someone who dislikes you. A simple lie from someone who wishes you the worst. A simple lie from an unexpected enemy or person you thought was decent. A lie. It can hurt more than the truth because when it comes down to a lie you can sculpt and create the worst believable story the world has ever heard. You can add details or remove them, as long as it adds up with some details that are true. That's how a perfect lie can be pulled off, with anyone. The worst part is, sometimes a lie adds up more than the truth simply because it's all planned out. Sometimes the truth does peek through. But a lie is like a hurricane; it can be deadly and destructive and it could hurt, no matter how prepared you thought you were. Just remember who it's coming from. Is it someone you trusted with your heart who trusted you with theirs? Or is it someone you once knew who you, by your own preference, left in the past? Ask questions. Escape the lie before it becomes deadly.





Ash Sor-to



Andry Shehigian

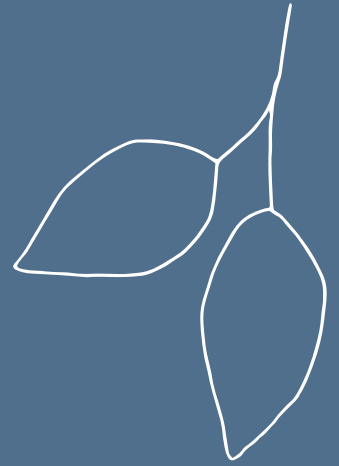
Fayeun Kim



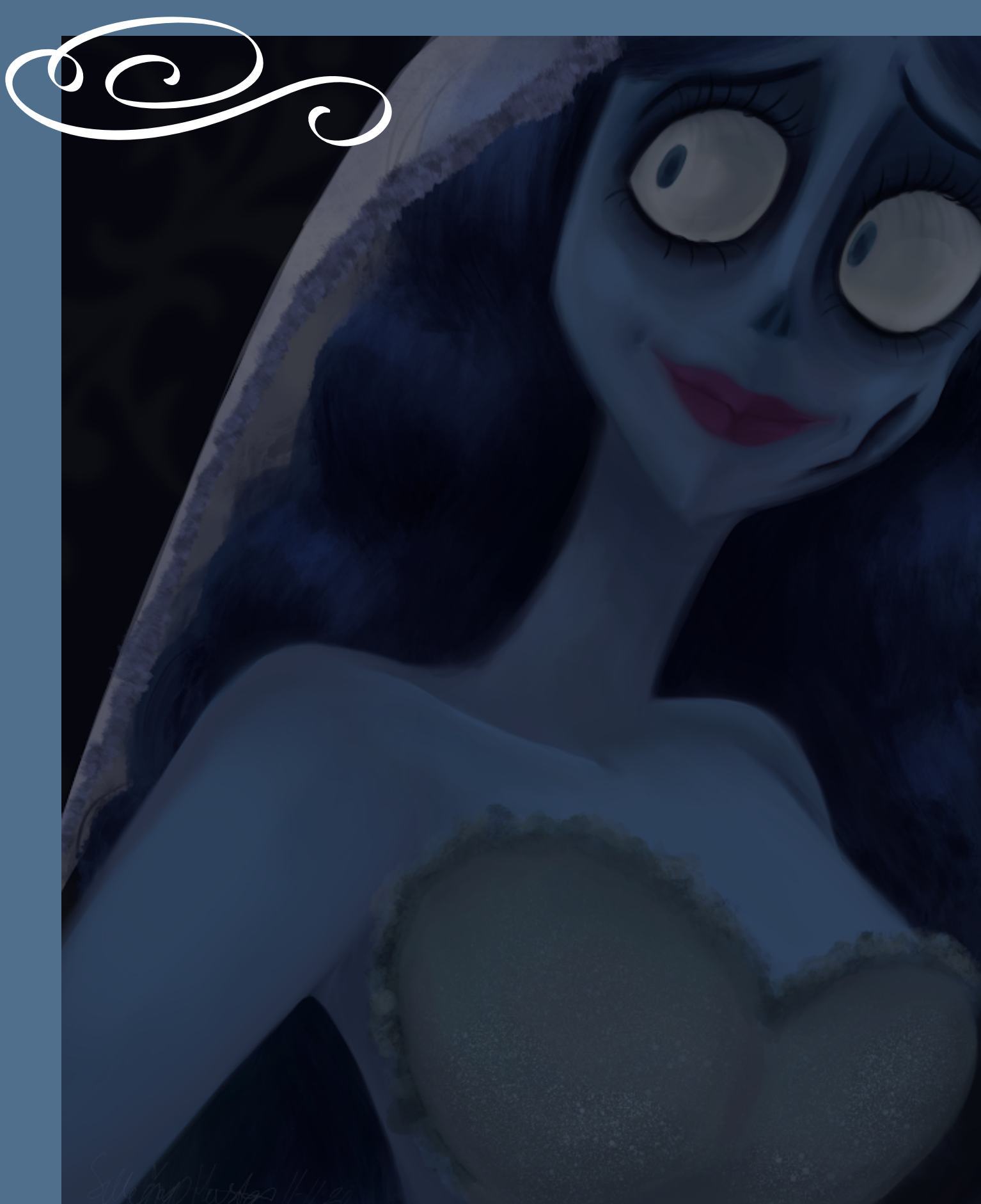
Going Home

Sebastian Zhao

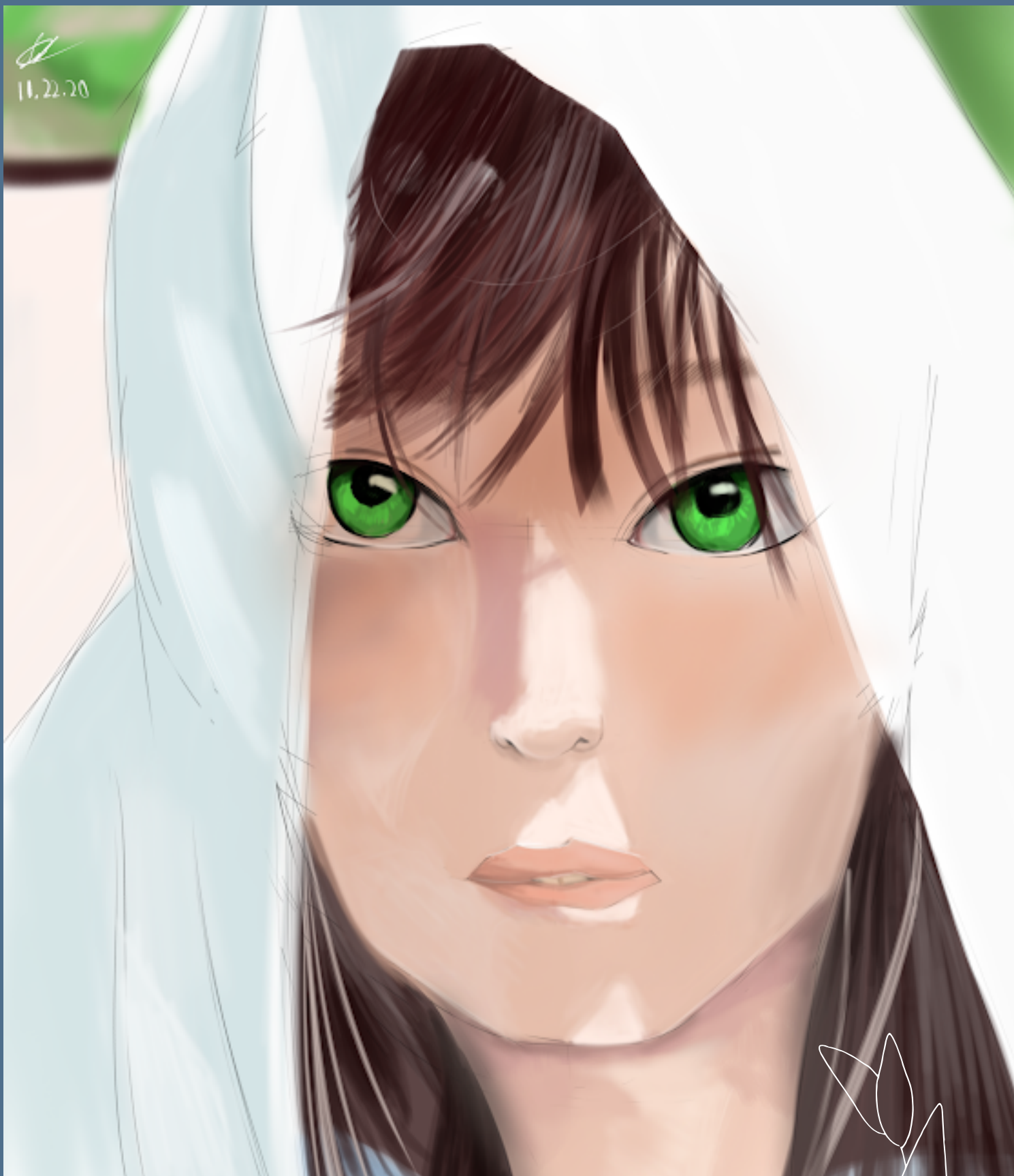
Biting your lips as the winter snow blows
Stressed with all the things happening at home
You slowly track through knee deep in the crunchy flurries
Thinking about what to eat
Chomp chomp chomp
You look up at the sky
The weather has gotten tremendously horrid
You pick up the pace
Speed walking, you slip on some ice
There you go, falling like a fool
You get back up and continue walking
Nom nom nom
You arrived...home, but where are you?
Your lips are gone-



Stephen Park



Suleina Huston



Stephen Park

The Willow Tree and the Girl

Lewis Miramontes

For the longest time, there was only a willow tree in the vast meadows of gray grass and ash soil. There was no wind, thus the sun stayed in the sky without moving and the clouds were painted in place. No sunlight would reach this barren wasteland of a world and so life would not be conjured; however, there was a being all alone who resided here. A young girl roamed here with no direction of where to go, for when she did walk, she wound up next to the willow tree. Since no wind pushed the sun, time did not change and so the girl never aged along with her sense of hope for finding another being.

“Why must there be no change? All I hope is for something new, a change in this world, a friend,” the girl said.

“Lighten up, little one, enjoy the scenery, the vast meadows of grass where you can run, the endless sky you can chase, the ability to experience the entire world at your feet,” replied the willow tree.

The girl was taken aback by the response of the willow tree; she ran for many miles but each time she looked away from where she was headed, the willow tree stood there, planted to the ground with no signs of moving. Running in an endless time loop, the girl thought of her initial reaction as silly; the willow tree did not act as if would apprehend her. She stopped running and came to a halt at the being she ran from.

“Why did you talk?” asked the girl.

“You seemed lonely and sad because of your lack of company,” the willow tree responded.

“Were you always able to talk?” the girl asked again.

“Yes, and I—”

“Well, why have you never spoken before?!” the girl interrupted.



The willow tree creaked, for the girl's interruption was a setback, a feeling he had never felt before erupted inside him, but he paid little attention.

"I have been here observing your sadness you have always expressed for this world. Does it not please you?" asked the willow tree.

The spark of a new relationship ignited; the girl would tell of her sorrows and loneliness in the land and the willow tree would listen to her troubles.

The girl talked about the ever-boring sky, the piercing sound of silence whenever she stood still, the lack of feeling the heat or cold. It was all a never-ending loop of a still wasteland with no clouds that passed by, no sounds of any living creatures whenever she listened for one, and no change in temperature whichever direction she faced. She longed for something new, something that could pass the time even though time never started.

"Little one," the willow tree nudged, "How would you like the gift of a new sound?" he asked.

The girl pleaded in desperation for the opportunity to experience something new. A snap echoed across the landscaped and down came a branch. Startled, yet curious, the girl snatched and inspected the object to get a better look. She asked how she could make the branch make the sound once again for her own entertainment.

"To bring out the sounds of this branch, you must find out yourself." The tree then grew silent.

Many attempts were made by the girl to bring out a sound from the branch. She talked to the branch, asked for it to make the sound once again but there was no response. The girl looked back to the tree and pleaded about how to produce such a sound from the inanimate object. After many words with no response, she whacked the tree with the fallen branch, and the sound of a crack emitted.

Through her phase of frustration, she felt a new sensation she never felt before: heat.



The willow tree creaked once again and its presence was revealed to the girl almost immediately. She jumped in joy for the first time because of the gifts the willow tree had given her.“

I see you have found the gift of sound from the branch,” said the willow tree happily.

“Yes, I am so thankful that you have not only given me one, but two gifts” replied the girl.

The willow tree paused, the gift of sound was the only one he intended and this scared him. A creak that was louder yet barely audible to the girl erupted and concerned the tree.

“What exactly was this other gift, little girl?” asked the tree

“I felt the sensation of heat! It was a new feeling I have never felt before, but it happened only when I was very angry. Can I try it again?” pleaded the girl giddily.

The tree noticed the desperation of the girl in wanting to feel the sensation, but the tree knew it was not be given to the girl. The willow tree told the girl of his concerns and not to search for this sensation. With great speed, the girl’s face changed from joy to detestation and she yelled at the tree for even thinking about keeping her away from something new. More creaks erupted and this time the girl heard them. She heard the many voices in her head clawing outwardly for a grasp of that sound. The temptation was too great, and the girl felt hot with a burning desire to hear the satisfying sound of the tree’s creaks. She lashed out in anger and desperation to experience the new feeling and each creak was a crescendo of pleasure. The tree tried to reach the girl through reason but the voices in her head were screaming, the creaks turned to crackling, and the girl was now laughing with the overall buildup.

SNAP*

voices slithered away with satisfaction and the heat began to dispel. She looked at the result and saw the willow tree filled



with cracks shriveled up in an ugly ashen gray.

The girl ran to the willow tree in anguish and cried out for the tree to respond. No voices were heard in that little yet seemingly forever moment. The girl pleaded over and over. No response was given, no sound could be heard. She cried, and gasped but still pleaded for the willow tree to respond. She cried till her cries filled the landscape and rustled the shriveled leaves of the willow tree and gray grass. She cried as the tears landed on the ground and began to form puddles that grew into lakes and streams. She gasped for air as she cried, but her weeps were drowned out by blood from the tears of her voice. Soon, she bled out and slid down the tree and looked at what she had created. The sight of the clouds and the sun moving had been the first time she saw them which she did not notice for the longest time during the many decades of sorrow for the loss of her one and only friend. She saw the sight of beauty and everything she hoped for. When she looked down at her hands she saw they were as shriveled as the willow tree had been for the many years. The feeling of her own warmth was escaping from while the growing sensation of coldness began to enter her.

“This is my gift to you, everything you ever wanted just like you asked, but just out of reach. You were so close to experiencing all of these things, my dear, but instead, your desperation clouded your judgment and so you deliberately chose to die alongside me,” creaked the willow tree for the last time.


The old woman smiled and her last tears filled with her life essence dropped into the soil. She smiled and tried to talk back to the willow tree, but all she could manage was a pitiful creak as she watched the animals that stood under her newly bloomed leaves and branches.





Sebastian Zhao







Love

Hope Koloszuk


Something I have noticed along my path of life has been the intense emotion and feeling known as love. When we feel it, it travels through us like a lightning bolt that has suddenly hit our skin. It can be felt suddenly, yet oh so slowly at the same time and be calming, but overwhelming at once. Some would say that it's a splendid gift we have been given while others say it's the exact definition of a horror that can ruin your will to exist at all. I, on the other hand, although being a young sprout surrounded by an entire universe of grown shrubs and other vegetation, have a different outlook. Both sides and opinions are indeed correct. Love naturally comes with loss, just as life comes with death. A positive must come with a negative. To love someone with all your heart and to be willing to spend a lifetime with them is to be willing to watch them die and feel your heart break as you realize your time with them is up. In simpler terms, your heart feels full and happy for the majority of time you are with them but once their life comes to an end it feels as if yours has as well, although you are still alive. THAT is what love truly is. To be willing to bear the pain of losing them in order to feel the warmth of being with them.





I hear too many people, too many of my friends complaining that they're heartbroken because they were in love and that's just not how it works. The term love is used so much nowadays that it's beginning to lose its meaning. As much as we wish it would be, real life isn't the same as a teen romance where everyone finds that one special person in high school. Being infatuated with someone and loving someone are two different things. Yes, we can love a friend or family member but to be IN LOVE is completely different. It is not liking someone heavily. It's not just wanting to kiss them or hug them or watch a bunch of movies with them. It's to accept every single point of them for who they are, to love them for what they are and to push them to be what they want to be, while making them realize they are still perfect how they are now. It's to be stupid together, crazy together and to dream together. It's to trust, communicate and respect. It's when you can't imagine a life without them.

To all the people who thought they were in love, I get it. It's okay. We see so many people around us falling in love everyday that we feel like we are obligated to be in love, too and sometimes we rush it. It will come. Be patient.



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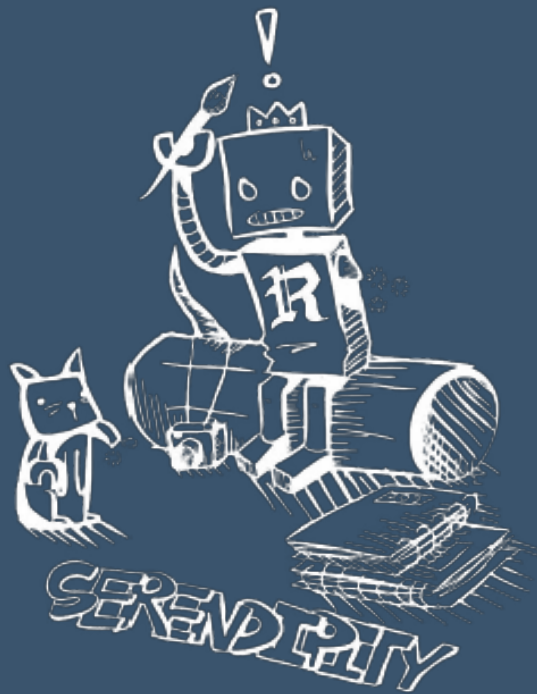
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