



ORACLE



# lit mag

troy oracle | 2022-2023



## LIT MAG TEAM

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## CREDITS

The Oracle Staff thanks all contributors for submitting their works of art to this year's Literary Magazine.

Due to the volume of submissions, we were not able to publish all the pieces received.



▲ Staring Contest | Eseuther Lee, senior

## featured films and music

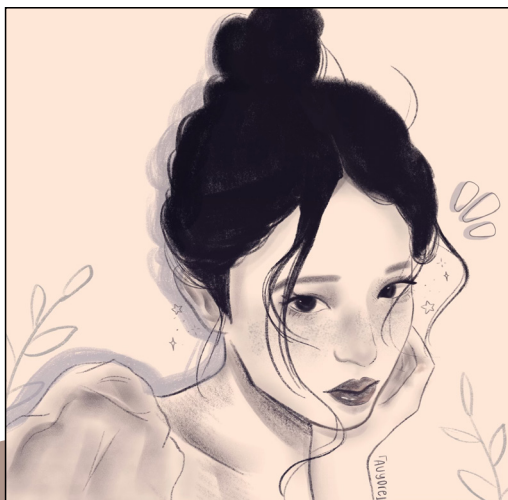


cover by pearl yoon and kaila perlas

[troyoracle.com/litmag2023](https://troyoracle.com/litmag2023)

Visit our website for digital mediums and additional artworks.

▼ Sketch 01 | Audrey Na, senior



## Star Girl

I'm judged on my face value,  
there's no denying  
that I'm not given my voice,  
as if I am lying  
that I am this, and that, and so much  
more,  
What's wrong with that? Can't you see  
that I am more?  
Open your eyes, and see that you  
can't judge me  
I have no destiny, you can't even try  
to control me  
I am who I am, take it or leave it  
My face isn't my identity  
Why won't you see?  
I am more than this

Continued on our website

▼ More Than This | Aaryan Mukherjee, freshman



▲ Ariana Perez, junior

## Interaction

▼ Joy Cheng, junior



▼ Petrichor | Van Duong, junior



▼ Aimee Bohannon, senior



## Smoke

▼ Chloe Ng, senior



▼ Eileen Um, sophomore

## A Troy Student's Worst Fear



▼ Isabela Adorneo, senior

# Band Aids

## A Smile So

A wave in my direction  
I smile  
Only to remind myself  
That he would never know

He smiles so innocently  
I almost fall again  
The days the calls the nights

But he would never know  
His acts of kindness  
Felt like something else

continued on our website

## Good Luck With That

My name is Stan. Stanley Kao.

I'm from Singapore. I'm your typical good-for-nothing rich kid who does practically nothing. At least, that's what my parents think. But what do they know? They're too busy pampering my older brothers to pay attention to me or my sister, Erin. Well, despite this negligence, I get around. I consider myself a pretty social guy, meeting people in places and helping them out in any way I can.

One thing has always been a factor, though. I'm real lucky. And I don't mean in the "I win the lottery and have all my crushes like me" sort of way. I mean, "Random things just happen, and they benefit me." For example, when I was 10, I was at a party organised by one of the wealthy families.

continued on our website



▲ Ethan Lawrence Lomibao, junior

▲ Helen Bai, junior

▼ Kanteen Don't Crash | Ethan Wei, senior

## Huanghe Temple: Lantern Festival



▼ Jiang-nan | Wen Wen, senior

# Little Things

As a society, it's a shame that we don't focus on the little things.

Our minds tend to dwell on the big things, making it impossible for us to comprehend the most beautiful details.

We don't see the individual raindrops setting on window sills... or a beam of light reflecting off puddles of water.

We tend to see the storm before we can understand the darkness... we get startled by the hurricane before we think to follow the wind..

Perhaps if we contemplated the darkness and followed the wind... we would find light where it's seldom found, and a calmness that we would've never achieved.

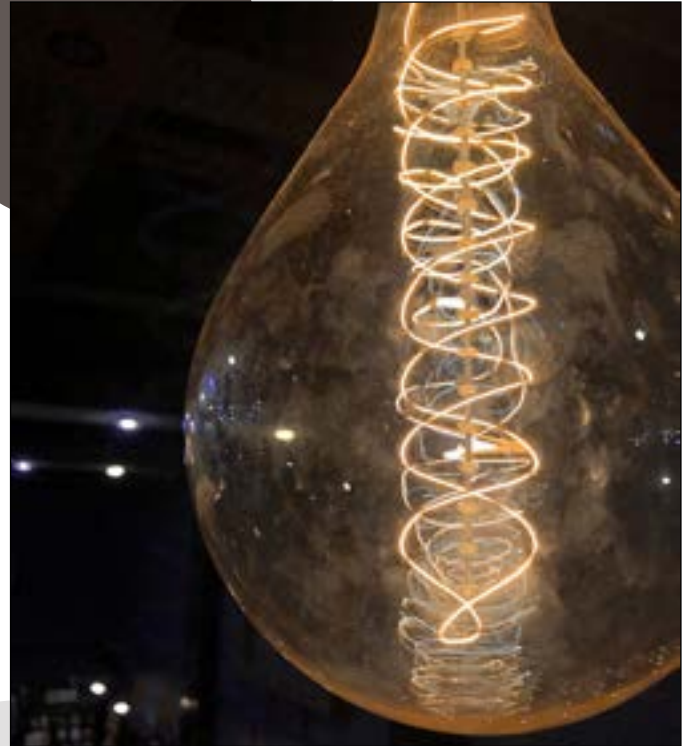
▼ Jinx | Pearl Yoon, senior



▼ Jacqueline Crisostomo, senior

# In Our DNA

▼ Saiya Shah, senior



▲ Eseuther Lee, senior

# Yellow Flower



▲ Strange Voice | Pearl Yoon, senior

▼ Edyn Lim, junior

## since when did i start to hate the color orange?

It was supposed to be an easy day. You were supposed to pick me up from work, exactly like normal. We were supposed to go skating, just like normal.

We would hold each other's hands and swing our arms as we walked the 14 minute walk from the tattered old record store on the corner of the block to Our skate park.

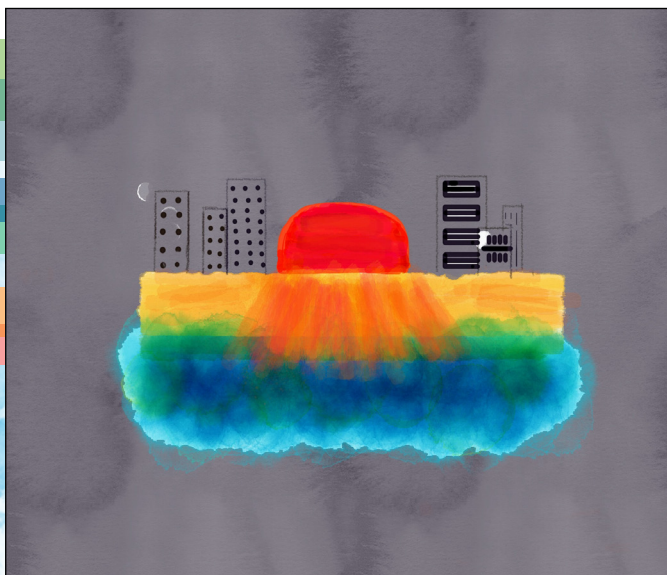
The same one ever since the first day, ever since June 23, 2022. It was December 31, 2024.

The same one that I would sit on the ramps while my feet swing back and forth, my heart beating 20 times faster than it should as I watched you flip off flights of stairs and slide on the rails. Then you would look towards me every time you land a trick, smiling with the tips of your mouths reaching your ears as you exclaim loudly in praise at your actions.

You would run over to me, and I would watch with a pang of strong pride in my heart as I followed you with my eyes. I would jump up and high five you with both hands and laugh the same laugh as yours, my eyes wrinkling and turning into soft crescent moons as I look up towards you.

You looked so happy...

continued on our website



▲ Sunset | Nicole Wheeler, senior

▼ Sophia Peng, sophomore



Sunset Tulips



▲ anonymous, senior

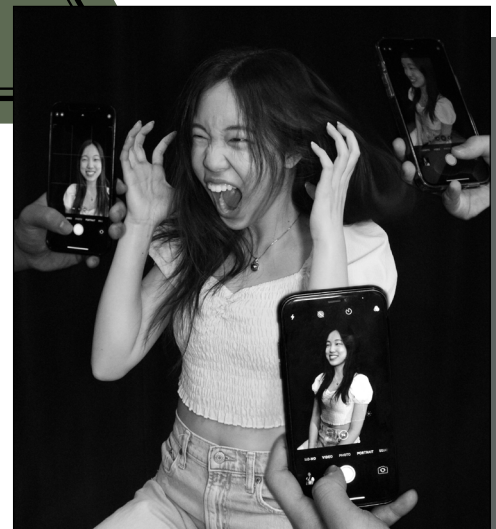
## Self-Portrait



▲ Ness Bustos, junior

## Behind the Scream

▼ Sabrina Yeh, senior



I know I overthink. I know that I shouldn't. I know how I should be acting – how I should be thinking. But I can't help it. It's a defense mechanism, a trapdoor that guards the possibility of risk from ever entering my life.

It means never encountering a surprise - yet when they inevitably occur, having a default response for exactly that – an event that I cannot guess. It's having a tunnel system that leads me back up to the surface, no matter which path collapses on me.

Maybe that's why I love finding that one loophole. Moments in which life is so undoubtedly amazing that my thoughts know they should be shut off in an attempt to achieve what elation should be – pure, untainted.

Moments where I have no need to lunge for the trapdoor – and instead, I embrace risk's knock at the door like it's second nature. Because life deserves to be interesting, and living without worry is the definition of such, is it not?

And in those moments, I'm at my most vulnerable.

I become someone completely new. I live without a single care, as if life isn't dictated by promises and expectations and so so so much pressure.

▲ Overthinking | anonymous, junior



▼ Owl's View | Sophie Chen, senior



## three little birds

▼ Eseuth Lee, senior



## Spotted Sandpiper

▼ Bella Liu, senior



▼ Effete | anonymous, senior

Effete (adj): worn out; barren

Stepping over dusty pebbles and crunching through dried leaves, the little webbed feet padded clumsily after the two figures. They were getting further by the second—a pair of humans pushing their stroller and enjoying the remaining rays of the setting sun.

The baby goose strained its neck, the half-grown feathers on its small wings flapping about in a desperate effort to propel itself forward. Even though it tripped over itself for every step it took, it ran after them. The lonely gosling ran for warmth, for love, for the wishful image of a family that cared for the youngling sleeping in their stroller.

Beneath the layers of soft gray fluff, its heart knew that the two figures were human—they were neither geese nor his real parents. They would never help chew up the worms that were too big for it to eat, never chase off the other ducks that snapped at its neck in their crystal-blue pond.

It couldn't keep up.

Footsteps slowing, its small body shivered at the first signs of nighttime wind.



## Blue-footed Boobies



▲ Adriana Zhou, junior

# when midnight comes

blue is the color of my dress  
and it shimmers as i rest  
my head on the cold stone bench

blue is the color of my shoes  
glass slippers that i threw  
away in the yard out back

blue is the color of my tears  
slow slipping as my fears  
come true before my eyes

blue is the color of my dreams  
tinted deep dark sheens  
cracked and shattered like fragile glass



▲ Julie Liu, sophomore



▼ Crystal Cove | Zoey Bahng, sophomore



# unnamed

▲ Parveneh Jasmine Toquero, senior

▼ Aquarium Painting | Zoey Bahng, sophomore



## ▼ Sharing the Umbrella | Nadia Park, sophomore



Justin Lo, senior

## Seasons

As this year begins, an old ends.

Exhaling clear clouds of frost at dawn  
Awaits us the first rays of light on the horizon

Rain roaring and punching our umbrellas,  
As we Walk down the slippery, soaked streets.

Winter

Flowers bloom, moisture grasps the air.  
Morning dew raises the fresh scent of grass.

A child blows on a pure dandelion  
Up and away the white petals fly  
Spring

School is out, freedom here we come!  
The highway mirage reflects like a mirror  
Incinerating temperatures circulate everywhere  
Salty sweat dripping from our faces  
Summer

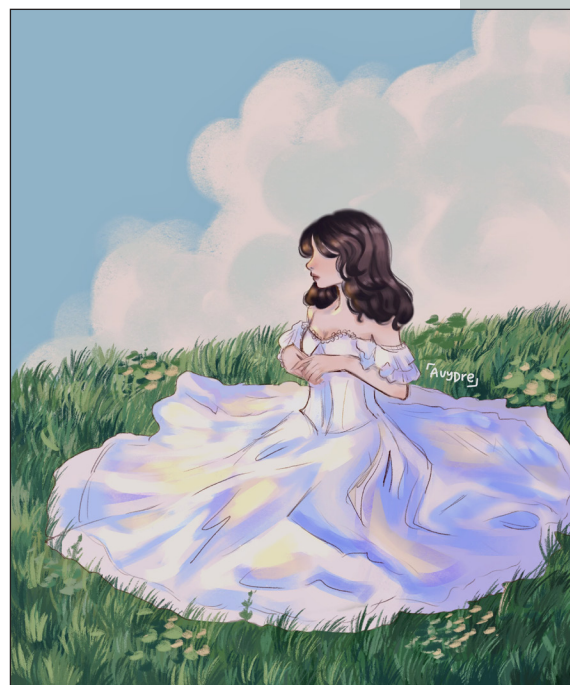
Dim orange light of a setting sun.  
Orange invades the green  
As they make their way to the ground.  
A bare, naked tree stands alone  
Fall

As this year ends, a new one begins

## ▼ Mystical Morning | anonymous, sophomore



## ▼ Rising Water | Hailey Chan, sophomore



## ▲ Untitled | Audrey Na, senior

## When the Sky is Blue.

The sun doesn't rise when you wake up,  
with the stillness of silence and the steam from your cup.  
The coat of night looms above, it shimmers  
from the millions of needle-poked holes that glimmer.

No matter the day, no matter the time.  
You are always doing something sometime.  
The sun doesn't stay when you sleep down,  
The sun never waits when you're around

So, for once when the sky is bright and blue,  
take a breath.

Take the time for the steam to sizzle, maybe try something  
new?  
When the sun is up and its bright and blue,  
when sometimes there's streaks of red and night doesn't  
loom.

You're not the sun that must go up and down,  
someday you'll see the sky bright and blue,  
not from a dark, dank room.

When the sky is blue. Where are you?

▲ Avni Patil, freshman



▲ A Trip Downtown | Joseline Ly, senior



▼ Chicago daytime | Xiaolin Yu, sophomore



▲ Pacific Coast Highway | Sahana Anand, senior

## Cave Town



▲ Xiaolin Yu, sophomore

# Reflections

▼ Laurencia Chmielarski, junior



▼ Iridescent Existence | Jessie Wang, junior

the judge of liquid ruby undyingly sounding the  
omnipotent gavel of mortality

the hypnotizing seduction of a blaze  
promising Eve whispers of truth within the inferno

rays of the brightest star unveiling the earth as floral  
namesake bow to their king

mother nature's proudest monochrome boasting  
the fantastic haven of life

the blank canvas of expansive sky inviting even the  
infinitesimal artist to detail his epoch

midnight swells eternally marrying the shore under  
the starless officiant of twilight

ethereal dusk belying the primal demands of cosmic  
mountains majesty

▼ untitled | Janna Dinh, senior

Oh, dear mirror of mine,  
I see myself through your eyes.  
Oh, how I am a shining star,  
But then you judge my scars

From time and time again you smile,  
While during others you're in denial.  
I thank you for these moments,  
Where I am always your commitment.

Though you are like a security camera,  
always watching my every move.  
You keep me on your mind,  
So we are forever intertwined.

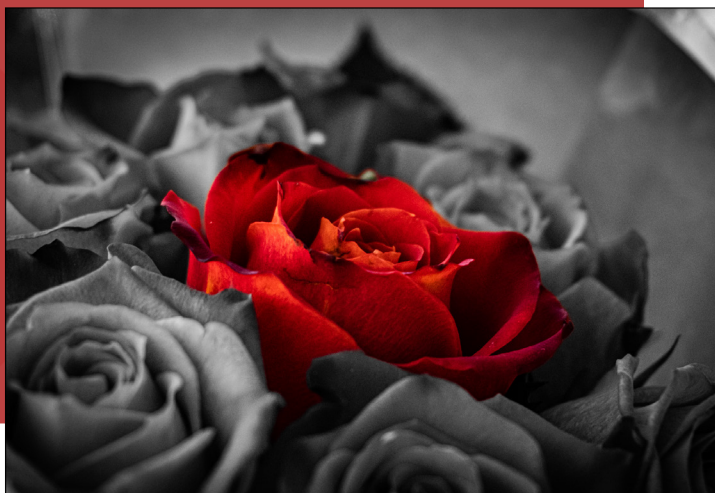
▼ Nichole Wheeler, senior



# My Mirror

# Congratulations.

▼ Zoey Bahng, sophomore



▲ Kyle Pak, junior

## Only You



▼ Grocery Store Roses and Grilled Cheese | Stephen Saucedo, senior



▲ Aimee Bohannan, senior

## Fixation



Quiet Intimacy, I once called it.  
A gentle kind of love.  
A phone call where we can't stop laughing,  
made in pouring rain.  
Whispering and sharing a book on a park bench.  
Grocery store roses for no good reason  
other than "I love you"

A Soul Connection,  
online introductions into forever friendship.  
Love that beats like the bass at a concert.  
Nights spent shuddering  
and smiling about stupid horror films.  
Reading each other's work with  
enthusiasm and awe.  
Grilled cheeses with pickles on the side,  
but I can tolerate it cause "I love you"

Sometimes to get through my days,  
I focus on the little things.  
I focus on what means the most to me.  
Rain, notebook paper, pixelated video games,  
Grocery store roses and grilled cheeses.

Two little men guarding a grove, their  
bellies round and smiles wide  
She squeezes between the Tweedles  
and she hurried to the other side  
She stumbled past a tea party,  
brushed past the guests of the Mad  
Hatter  
Disheveled, sitting side by side, with  
broken teacups on a platter  
A looking—glass a game of chess—  
The Duchess's benign caress—  
She reached out—just a meter  
short!—and roughly brushed aside the  
mess  
At last! A last! she saw the waistcoat,  
gleaming pocket-watch most grand  
He raised the trumpet to his mouth  
and blew the royal fanfare and  
she leaned toward him with outstret-  
ched hand—  
A glimpse of white—a flash of fur—a  
flapping waist-coat curvature—  
For all its worth was just a dream,  
But one can never be quite sure...



▲ Punishment | Chloe Ng, senior

▲ the chase | Yohanna Kim, junior



▼ In My Mind | Anyita Bhawe, senior

Moving on doesn't mean forgetting about what happened. It means that you have to pick up your broken pieces and take steps forward. No one in this world can take these steps forward for you. No matter how much it may hurt or how twisted the path may be. You were born into the world for a reason. That may sound stupid, but I believe it's true. You may feel like giving up or quitting, but each step you take will reach tomorrow. No matter how little step might be. It will reach tomorrow.

▲ Mai Ishikawa, sophomore

# Moving On

