





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. Please visit troyoracle.com to view more entries, including our film submissions.

## FILMS



▲ Life's Beauty Phoebe Yao, junior



Mixer Fibrand Dylon Gaddi, senior ▼



### LIT MAG TEAM

Ariana Chow Jenny Ji Malika Pandey Alina Choi Lex Park Amy Weng Jois Talla Charlie Clark Tiffany Kim

Cover art by Kristen Perez & Katie Nguyen

**▼ Dory** Christina McBride, senior



## A Return To One breath in, and she says: 'I want Oxygen, Mother's milk, A cave, Sleep, Fresh water,

One breath in, and she says:

"I want Oxygen,

Mother's milk,

A cave.

Sleep,

Fresh water,

Fire,

Scavenged vegetables,

Fresh meat,

Clothes,

A house.

Hot breakfast,

A deity to worship,

Trustworthy friends,

A husband,

A family,

Ethics and laws,

A functional government,

A hippopotamus,

A washing machine,

A car that gets decent mileage,

A school that accepts girls and is not too strict on their uniform policy,

A pink vanity table where I can put all of my most prized perfumes and jewelries,

Grades so perfect and brilliant that it puts even my headmistress to shame,

A boyfriend who must be at least 6 feet, 9 34' tall to even make it to the consideration stage,

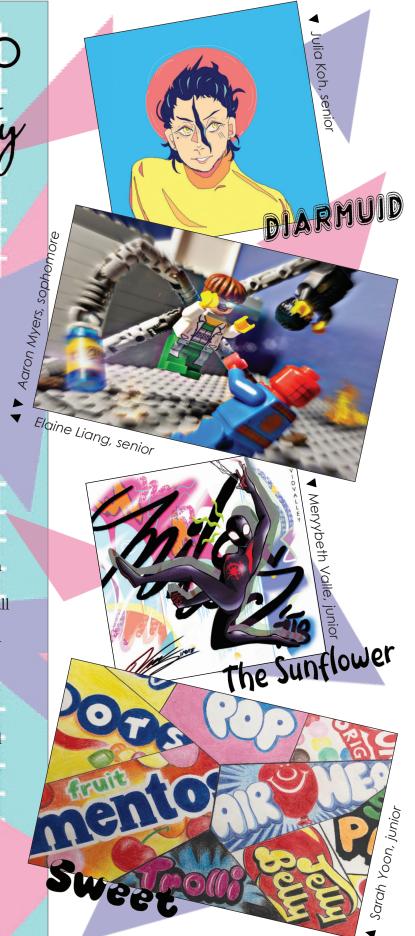
A career in technology that most girls can only dream of getting the interview towards,

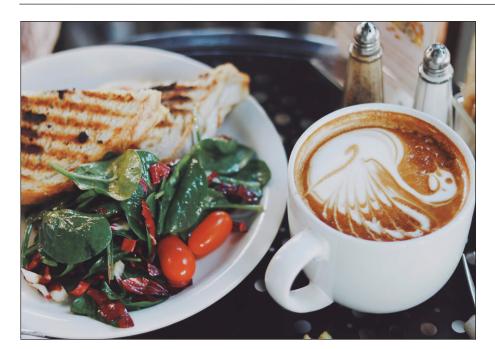
A Trenti Vanilla Bean Frappuccino with 12 pumps of [sugar-free] vanilla, hazelnut, and caramel,

5 pumps skinny mocha, a splash of soy, poured up to the star on the Siren's head with ice, and double-blend it all,

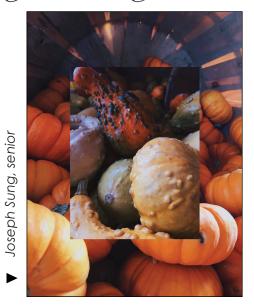
A 2022 13.65" MacBook Air S Pro complete with OLED2 360 Display and 5.36 GHz Intel Triple-Core i9q, 160.233 GB of Onboard & Offboard RAM and 256.0001 GB SSDi..." Unceasingly, she presses on in search of happiness,

Not knowing she has already left it behind.





#### *C*Autumn *C*Harvest



Bea Rosete, junior



## Tabletop

Irene Yoo, junior



## Warning of the Fork

Julia Lee, sophomore



Stay safe around forks. we might want revenge.

#### ROADS

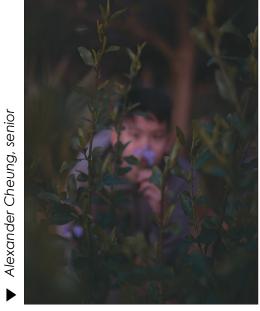
Some short, some long, sometimes we are on them all night long. Driving till the end.

Every curve, every bend. A curve sharp enough will throw you off to never see the light again,

but stay close enough to the edge and make the turn on a hinge to drive through another day, past

another sunset bay. You can only drive so far, but where you end up, is it the stars?

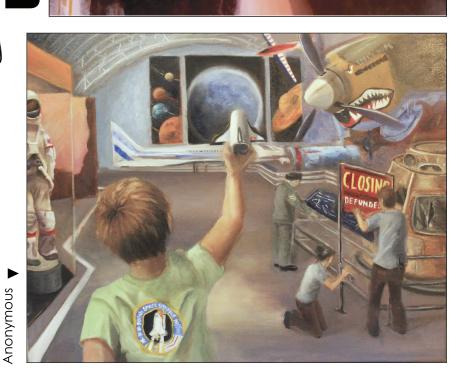
Samuel Juaregui, junior



Rowena Luminarias, senior





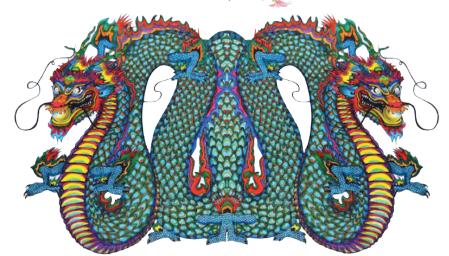






**Life in a Chinese Village** *Lillian Lin, junior* 

Christina McBride, senior



Amber Huynh, junior

twisting (around their pinkies) attaching (to her limbs) clamping (over his wrists) fastening (around his neck) winding (down)

**Pearl of the East** Christina McBride, senior

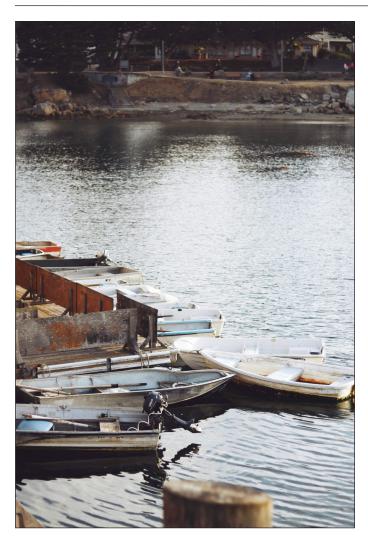


Inez Kim, senior

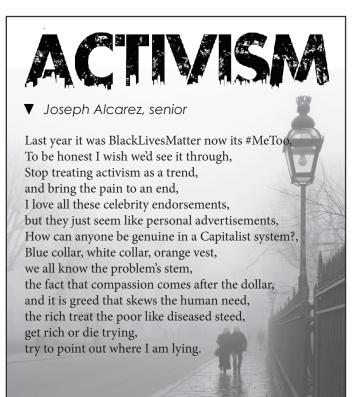




Melody McBride, junior



▲ Bea Rosete, junior





▼ Edifice Joseph Sung, senior ▲ Aurora Couto, junior



**▼ Embarcadero Waterfront** April Chun, junior







Bea Rosete, junior





4 Sunny Winter

Joseph Sung, senior

▼ Alicia Lee, freshman





Makena Williams, senior

5 Н N G G Н



▲ Bea Rosete, junior

## Lady of Dawn

▼ Charisse Ng, junior





▲ Alessandra Gonzalez, junior



▲ Ethan Huang, sophomore▼ Bea Rosete, junior





▲ Andrea Nguyen, sophomore

Liz Pinson, freshman ▼

## Miracles Are Real

Are miracles real?
Do wishes come true?
Are our dreams realities
But we never knew?

Ask yourself first,
If miracles are real.
Then start counting every time
You have had a meal.

Let your feet carry you outside And take off your shoes. Walk on the rocks. At least that, we can choose.

Look up at the sky.
Blue with streaks of white.
And think of how many people
Can only see the night.

Feel your blanket
And lay on your bed.
For not everyone in the world
Has somewhere to rest their head.

Sometimes having a life that
Isn't ours
Is what we dream.
And sometimes our lives
Are other people's dreams.

So yes, miracles are real.
Wishes come true.
Dreams are realities.
But not all belong to you.







## Unto

Lauren S. Dickinson, sophomore V

The light you've brought unto me, Graceful as on angels wings, Lifts me past the sky; A witness to the world around me.

A gale that shifts boats on seas Is what you've brought unto me. Like a blossom gasping in the gift of life, Finally meeting a spring breeze.

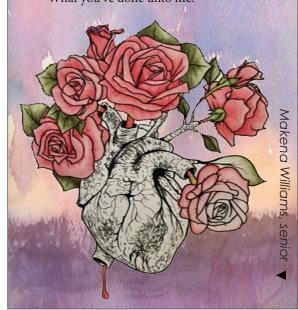
The laughter of a gurgling stream, flowing from a mouth Is what you've brought unto me. A current unbroken before, is what Has graced me.

A twinkle of a star is what you've brought unto me,

Vast against a helpless void, Unable to snuff out the light.

For you a joy, breathless in delight, I wish like a child upon a star. A burst of light from a firecrackers; Adrenaline through the sky, And the warmth that soothes an ache Buried deep inside The sun through the leaves, laying a kiss unto a forest floor As I kiss your brow and wish--

If only I could do unto you What you've done unto me.



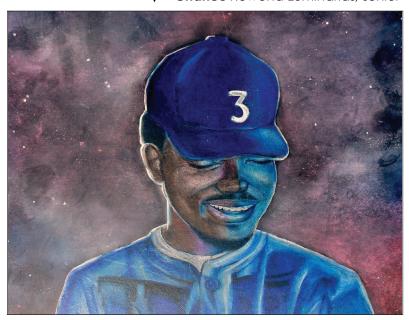


Live or Not

Julia Koh, senior Romeo and (







# The Child Within





Christina McBride, senior



**Boat** Somin (Ella) Moon, sophomore







▲ Alana Huitric, senior



▼ Julia Koh, senior





▲ Bea Rosete, junior



les soleils rouges de sang ont tournoyé dans un coucher de soleil brûlé, les raisins écarlates aspiraient à se transformer en un plus grand soi, et une fille rougissante, les yeux levés vers le ciel.

**▼** Ethan Lee, sophomore



Muhammad Atiq, junior

In a field of roses
Not sure how to propose this
I can't let go
Your thorns stuck in me
I can't break free
Maybe it's just me

Emotion spilling out from a hose Forever connected Connected from my heart To this red rose That's where it starts Just another red rose But something sets you apart

Your thorns sharper than others Striking me deep The thorn which smothers Smothers my problems Thought I couldn't resolve them It's got me thinking

As I tighten my grip on the rose Many problems arose Thorns striking me deeper The rose put me through pain Then there was blood Straight out of my vein Covering the rose in a flood This blood is my feeling Your sense of appealing It's the emotion locked up

You bloom in the dark
Blooming brighter in the darkest parts
Been like this from the start
As I look down the rows
I only water one rose
And that's you
I know that it's you
the stem has grown red
But I'm not dead
I feel more alive
I still have some blood to shed
My grip too tight
Through the pain I still fight
But is that even right?

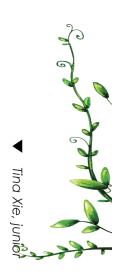
This red rose
Which I grip too tight
This red rose
which I hold too close

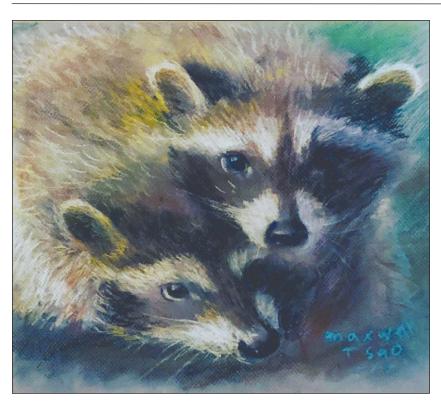


Melody McBride, junior









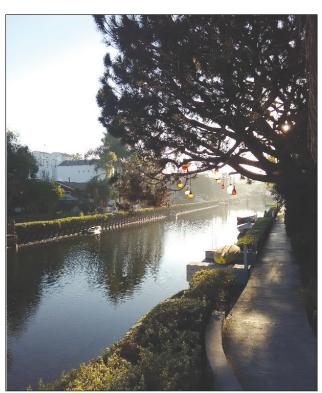
#### Blank spot, Won't stop

Blue lions purple storms
You can make all the runners worn
Making fish dance in a zoo
That's what I like about you
Keeping it real, really chilled
Snow is coming the tea is spilled

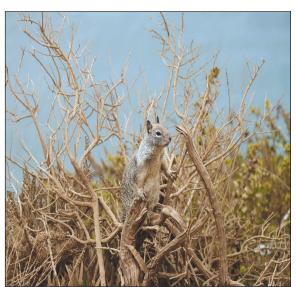
So we gonna live forever
Might as well make it fun
Draw and dance as a hobby
Work hard to get it done
What makes immortals tick
Paper scissors rock stick
The chances of a life-time
a literal paradigm
Yeah, I got a blank spot, maybe
I'll write for fame.

▲ Julia Lee, sophomore

Curious and Wary Maxwell Tsao, junior







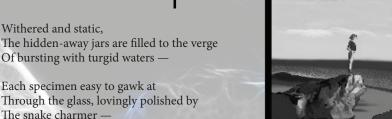
Bea Rosete, junior













Each specimen easy to gawk at Through the glass, lovingly polished by

Who mutters his incantations to himself Alone; he has already forgotten The countless moons and sheddings he has seen —

Arranging his prizes, Each little dream is gleaming to itself From where it is tucked away —

Then the magician's boy collects the skins when no one is watching, Trophies which are the only evidence of their existence Where only the faces change -

Faces lined In their old stagnant metamorphosis of Desire, seductive as Isadora's scarves —

Dirty ribbon-tails winding and unwinding, Leaving dust lines etched on the mud-green circus-couch, Retching their persistent whines from the back-room —

Scent of sweet tangerine, sharp apple, saline-sweat breath Make their own element, Knowledge and experiment —

Spectator sport! Come one, come all are welcome to watch the prizes One-by-one —

Hiss and rattle the applause and the Jeers, sinful and lower, Lower —

'Til my name, wanting to shame me For being a norm, An ordinary, but they don't even know —

Know that, stuck in the terror, the fumes of my own dullness, Envy of the stage, loony pinhead, I am the biggest freak of all -

So I win out by nature because The jar-things rot in bell-jar-graveyards, no one can smell their little tombs But I, blazing suet-smell tallow candle, each gaze an affirmation —

All eyes on me, off of the walls, The stars are reeling in their dual orbit For me, and me alone.

### PERSPECTIVES

**Anonymous** 



Micaela Montinola, junior

an arid wasteland stands before me. I find not a human, but a Thing: one that snaps and grasps endlessly fighting back I ought to do, yet do not.

instead to the Creature I ask, "where did you come from, you pitiful Animal?" it does not reply, but comes after me with a gash. and I fall.

I remain in my cocoon of death. I await for passing ones to take notice. I see a man, but hold my breath, for all he did was stab me, to take, and take, and take my life and blood.

I was but a pitiful Soul. lost and alone, not even a metaphysical form. I wanted the Creature to return, for Its pain would reverse this numbness.

not even the man had hurt me. because how can you hurt Something that is already dead?

I realized it now: I was the Creature. my rotten Brain must die in order for love to survive.

## artemis



Isabella Alpert, freshman 🔺



Christina McBride, senior

## Froun

Persephone looked up at her mother. Demeter crossed her arms and stared her daughter down.

"I didn't break them," Persephone said and Demeter sighed. She placed her woven basket on the floor, careful not to get it dirty, and sat beside her daughter. She pointed at what remained of the chains.

"Who was it?" She asked, stern as could be. Persephone shrugged, cheeks coloring.

"Oh, no one," Persephone said and gazed across the field. Demeter narrowed her eyes. "The field's enchanted, remember? So long as you aren't here, no one important can enter. Or exit."

"Describe him," Demeter demanded. Persephone picked at the end of her yellow dress. She peered around, stalling. Demeter sat and waited.

"Tall," she caved, just like Demeter knew she would, "soft and - and handsome. Thin, unlike Zeus -" the sky roared with the customary lightning and thunder and they waited for it to finish "- and he looked like he couldn't lift a stone without help. Weak, but handsome." Demeter waved her hand.

"But what did he look like?" She said.

"Pale," Persephone said, entirely too emotional for Demeter's liking. "Like moonbeams on the lake. That's where he came from, by the way, out from near the lake." She gestured to the South, where Apollo's light hid the lake. "His skin was smooth, like water before a skipping stone shakes it. And - I shouldn't tell you this but I have no one to confide in - when he touched my wrist it was as gentle as sheep's wool."

"He touched you?" Demeter roared and leapt to her feet. "Name him! So I can end his miserable life! How dare he touch what's mine!" Persephone rose and brown eyes met gold. Her dark skin shone and the sight of her precious daughter healthy and plump calmed Demeter.

"I call him Winter," Persephone said, "for his skin is as cold as the snow and winds from the North. I call him Hope, for I always hope to see him and hope he never leaves." Demeter's rage returned in waves. "I call him Love, for he loves me enough to take care of me."

"I love you enough to take care of you," Demeter hissed, "this Love of yours will meet his end. Where can I find him?" Persephone smiled. Demeter had not seen it in ages. It warmed her heart and chilled her to the bone. Persephone raised one steady hand and pointed.

"There," she said. Demeter turned.

The King of the Underworld beckoned and, drawn to him like the moon to the sun, Persephone came. Demeter's legs gave out.

"You will never hurt her again," Hades said, in that soft, haunting tone of his. A crown of frost curled around Persephone's head. Persephone wiggled her fingers and a matching crown, one of green vines and pink flowers, grew around the silver one on Hades' head. The very ground opened for him as he turned, Persephone on his arm, and they descended.

Demeter screamed and the world turned white.

## The Equality in Extraordinary

We met

under extraordinary circumstances.

It seems the stars have planned it oh so carefully-

Same time of year, same tears, same flight company,

Same city, same school, same classroom.

And same desk.

At first, that's where the same-ness stopped.

You were a boy, for one,

who, at that time, was so consumed by hatred and confusion

that our classmates reflected back the same attitude towards you.

A proud boy so particular about your mark and height

that I felt like a nun next to you.

But Father Time did his bidding

shedding your protective layers of detached arrogance

to reveal a surprisingly sensitive person

with an infectious zest for life and adventure.

To reveal a person whose biases, thoughts,

values, and goals were so very much like my own.

The only person I could confide in

by the chance that we were the only ones fluent in English.

How small and strange the world is

to find my equal

in extraordinary.



**Anonymous** 

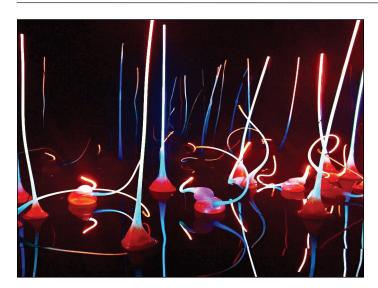




#### CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' & CLIFFS OF PORTUGAL







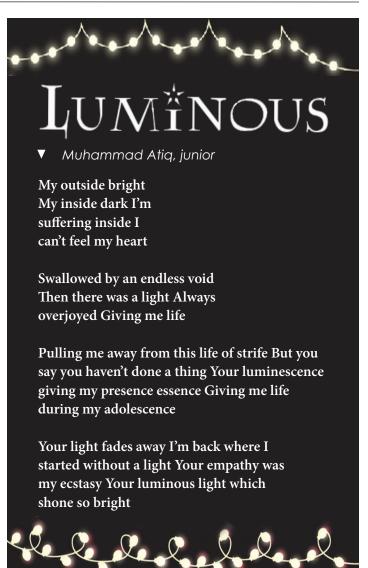
▲ Karl Choi, junior





Alexander Cheung, senior







# LECTIFYING SERVICE

Jospeh Sung, senior

January 25, 2019 21 20 Literary Magazine

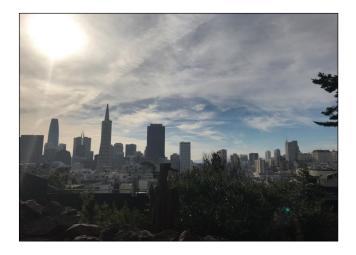
### Vietnam Sun

Julia Lee, sophomore



April Chun, junior ▼

## pioneer park



## THE GIRL ON A ROCK

In the beginning, there lived a girl on a rock. The rock was small and bare and shrouded in darkness. One day, a man and his son walked by. They shone through the dark.

"Hello!" the girl shouted, but they couldn't hear her. "Hey!" she shouted louder. The son noticed the girl and landed on her rock. He glowed a magnificent color. "Why are you alone in the dark?" he asked. "I have no one to shine for me." the girl replied. The son smiled and shone so bright, heat rose out from him. "I will shine for you." He replied. And the girl was content.

"Son, come back! We must go." the father shouted. And so the boy left. "I will return," he said to the girl, and the girl was left alone on her rock once more. The next day, a woman and her daughter walked by.

"Hello!" the girl shouted, but they couldn't hear her. "Hey!" she shouted louder. The daughter noticed the girl and landed on her rock. She glimmered a magnificent color. "Why are you alone in the dark?" she asked. "I have no one to play with me." the girl replied. The daughter smiled and glowed so bright, water rose out from her. "I will play for you." She replied. And the girl was content.

"Daughter, come back! We must go." the mother shouted. And so the girl left. "I will return," she said to the girl, and the girl was left alone on her rock once more.

The son and the daughter came to visit the girl regularly. Suddenly, they stopped coming to visit. The girl waited and waited for

One day, the girl found herself in a puddle of water. She found the daughter crying. "Why are you crying?" the girl asked. "My mother left me." the daughter replied. And the girl was sad.

One day, the girl found herself upon a pile of hot rocks. She found the boy screaming. "Why are you screaming?" the girl asked. "My father is mad at me." the son replied. And the girl was angry.

Although her friends lived upon her rock, she was alone. She picked up the rocks and scooped up the water. She molded them into creatures of all shapes and sizes. She placed them in the water and she placed them on the land.

She went to the son and said,"Look what I made with your anger. Don't scream anymore." And the boy shone more.

She went to the daughter and said,"Look what I made with your sadness. Don't cry anymore." And the girl glimmered once more.

"How did you make my sadness into that?" the daughter asked. "With the help of that boy's anger."

"How did you make my anger into that?" the son asked. "With the help of that girl's sadness."

The son and the daughter looked at each other and smiled. And the girl was content.

"I'm tired," said the girl and fell asleep.

When the girl woke up, she saw her rock was filled with tiny people who looked like her. She went to the son and daughter.

"What is this?" she asked. "We fell in love thanks to you," they responded. "As thanks, we made creatures out of our happiness instead of anger or sadness." And the girl was content.

The father came back and apologized to his son, and made a promise to visit every morning.

The mother came back and apologized to her daughter and made a promise to visit every evening.

The girl, the son, and the daughter laughed and played. They taught the people to sing and dance. And the girl was content.

The girl watched as their love flourished and blossomed. She saw their first-born child, a girl who brought life to the rock. She gave them color and life and happiness. And the girl was content.

The girl watched as their love flourished and blossomed once more. She saw their second child, a boy who brought life to the sky. He gave them color and life and happiness. And the girl was

"I'm tired," said the girl and fell asleep once more.

When the girl woke up, she saw the rock was filled with life and color. She looked out at the rock.

The creatures that looked like her had build giant towers, castles, and cities. They visited the mother to tell her about her daughter. They overcame the daughter's sadness to see the land the son had made. They learned to fly and soar through the skies.

The girl went to the first-born child and asked, "What is this?" The first-born replied, "I gave them fruit and wood from my trees, and they gave the rock its beauty. The towers they made and the tools they used were built from your rock." And the girl smiled.

The girl went to the second-born child and asked, "What is this?" The second-born replied, "I gave them fresh water and dreams of the skies, and they gave the rock its beauty. They learned to soar and fly using materials from your rock." And the girl smiled.

She looked out onto her rock. It was no longer small, and bare, and shrouded in darkness. She was no longer alone.

Her rock was large, and lively, and filled with color. Her friends and the creatures there were with her.

The girl turned to the family and said, "Thank you for coming to my rock. For giving me someone to shine for me. For giving someone to play with me. For giving me these creatures. For giving my rock its beauty. For filling its skies with color. For visiting every day and night. Thank you."

However, the girl was no longer content.

The girl was finally happy.



Looking Down From

▼ Anna Chang, junior





A fleeting memory is all I will be To those of you who will see me

A lonely figure in the street Alone forever, shall never meet

I am cursed with no hope for respite So I will wander endless into the night

Please do not pity me, for I have sinned And now I am only a shadow in the wind

#### SHADOW THE WIND

▲ James Lucero, senior

## Reminiscence of Las Canoas

Time began.

The truck rumbled on to the distant home that released celebratory cheers. The passengers climbed down, and their feet became one with the ground as they traveled on.

Time carried on.

Mosquitoes attached themselves to bare skin. Warm rainwater fell from the clutches of the clouds. Sounds of laughter melded with one another.

Time moved forward.

The sky was painted a brutal red, orange, and pink. The sun fled slowly into hiding. The liveliness of the gathering steadily silenced. Time ticked on.

The blanket of night covered the world. The passengers boarded the truck. One lone girl planted herself alone in the cargo bed. The road extended from under her, and the home disappeared from sight. Time ceased.

Her neck arched back, and the stars blinked at her. The wind's breath tangled her hair. The leaves of the trees danced and waved farewell. The lights from passing houses burned bright and then dwindled into nothingness. The gnarled pavement jolted her soul from her body. Adam's ale relentlessly rushed down the river and into the crowd of trees. The only existing sounds were that of the natural world. Time commenced once again.

The brilliance of the stars was suppressed. Trees morphed into edifices. The knobbly path became smooth and undisturbed. The cacophony of the city began to crescendo.

Time continued.

The truck halted, and the passengers departed on their separate ways. Only the girl lingered, motionless and soundless. Yet her mind and her soul cried, begged, and yearned for time to rewind.

Time remained.





## Because of the Ones who Hurt Me

It still torments me
The way I feel, the dreams I dream
because of you
If I could do it all over again, I would
Watch the time as it passed
Make sure every second lasts
Through the aches and woes, I still want my abode
I want my home.
harbor the things I want before they all go, gone.
I overcome hurdles that will never end,
things I doubted I would ever need to
show no weakness when feeling broken
utter disappointment like the world crashing down
Tsunami waves engulfing me The skyscrapers

I learned how to cope, how to numb the pain, The holes left, still, repent. Like bullet holes on a metal sheet

wanting closure wanting relief wanting more

destruction now

Fractured pieces of my soul, warped and wounded the arrow pierces my heart.

But like a soldier on the battlefield

To feel worthy of this title, I must go fight again I'm patched up, I'm okay.

When I'm hurt when does it stop?

When does it stop hurting, Mama, I just want to be free

When does it stop hurting, Mama, I just want someone to love me

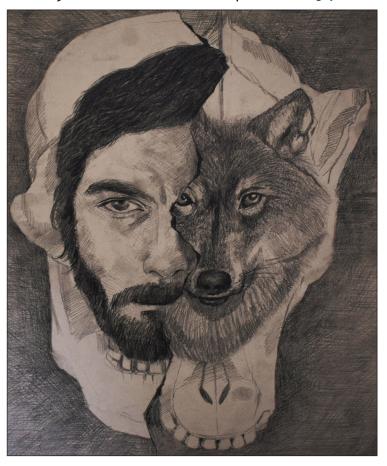
▼ Jillian Warren, junior

▲ Anonymous

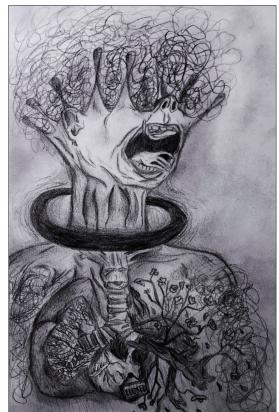


## Ephemeral

▼ Rose Jeong, junior



ECSTASY





Apricity
Anonymous