



The Magpie: the literary and art magazine of Seoul Foreign High School Volume 3, 2015

To our dear readers,

Here we are again, in our third year already!

On average, Korean magpies live for eight to fifteen years, but we hope to be around a lot longer than that, bothering you all for submissions and stressing about layouts. We again thank you for your incredible creativity and drive, because it's your art and writing that creates the foundation of our magazine. None of this would have been possible without your work; this edition is an expression of our gratitude.

The quality of the submissions this year was, once again, superb, and the selection process was no easier than the last. However, after this long and productive year, we are delighted to present to you our third issue of *The Magpie*.

We'd like to dedicate this issue in particular to someone we are very grateful for: Ms. Cathi Wiebusch. Thank you for pecking at details until they were perfected, guiding us and pushing us to be better, and investing so much of your time and support into our effort. This magazine would not be what it is without all of your organization and expertise, and we are endlessly grateful. We hope the next chapter of your life is everything you wish for and more.

Although we've named ourselves after the national bird of Korea, the diversity of SFS spreads far beyond this place, and everyone has a different story to share. We have brought you some of those stories today. So sit back, relax, and fall into this collection of art and writing by our own amazing students. We hope you enjoy it.

Hannah Williams and Soojin Oh Co-editors of *The Magpie*

Cover Art:

Prevalence of Nature Acrylic paint on paper Claire Shin Scholastic Award recipient

Editorial Staff:

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Soojin Oh *
Hannah Williams *

Advisors:

Ms. Lauren Jackson Ms. Cathi Wiebusch

Phileo

Sarah Hahm Scholastic Award recipient

Do you think we'll be friends forever?

Or will the day we met be muddled like the fields that drown in the changing months — Will you remember me in ten Novembers?

Or will the way our hands intertwined be confused like the petals of tulips and roses that once bloomed in April – Will you call me in one hundred 20ths?

Or will our secret handshake be forgotten like the remembrance of the cold in the absence of wind – Will you think of me in a thousand changes of seasons?

Or will our roaring laughter be drained like the way water turns to ice in the bitter air — Do you think we'll be friends forever?

Or will you say goodbye to the way we once said hello like the birds bid adieu to their home –

Adieu, Adieu, Autres temps, autres mœurs. Do you think you'll be my friend forever?



Global Warming Mixed media Yoonjie Park Scholastic Award recipient

new Cents, new sCent Edward Kim

Cryin' truth, sniffin' smilin' lies, grinnin' rhymin' Crime, listen. (CliCk ClaCk pow pow pow) boom. street's melody got we singin' rest in peaCe my new pill: the Remedy my old mediCine: Hennessy 1/8 kilo: "don't mess with me" white as God. no snow no more my new high. (sniff) that new sCent's name's Music.

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niffin' nnin' ', listen.

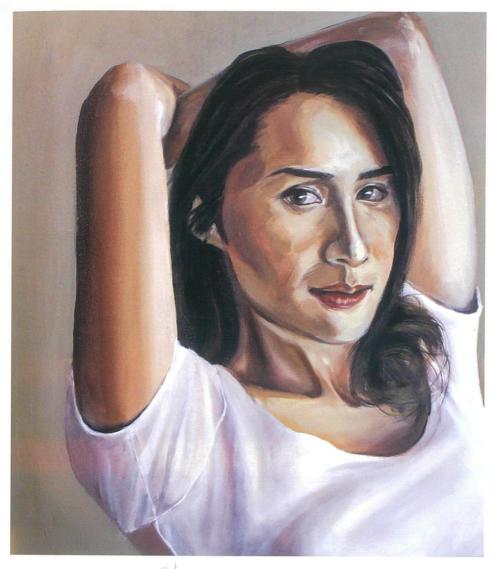
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Catch a Glance Oil paint on canvas

Bianca Austrheim

Mirrored Mathematical Mindsets

Janice Hahn Scholastic Award recipient

"Why even try?" "These problems are too easy." I thought I was doing beyond great. I guess I realized As time carried on Things were really hard for me. They were all plummeting down. The levels of stress – Now skyrocketed upwards. I lacked The confidence. My will to move on took a turn. Gone. Fear and frustration was In every part of my mind.

* This poem can be read from top to bottom or bottom to top



Fleeting Plaster with wire

Claire Shin Scholastic Award recipient

Intra-verted

(From the modern Latin 'vertere' – to turn) Serin Lee

You call me the quiet one.

But you could never imagine
how alive it is here,
bright with the
crystalline fractals that adorn willowy beds of plume
like dewbells born from innocent thoughts.

A hundred children scream silently into these caverns,
but they clamor for balloons – and not from bullets.

Hush. Hear –

Diaphanous whispers of home:
 gossamery in their muted secrets
 which are lacquered with ebony moonshine,
 they are laced like the fingers of a bride
to cradle my skewed cocoon of fragmented dreams and mishaps
and misshapen things.
How dark it must have been! For now,
its sulfurous swathes swell with incandescent rage —
and burst forth into cool flame,
the unborn hearth of which only unspoken words know.

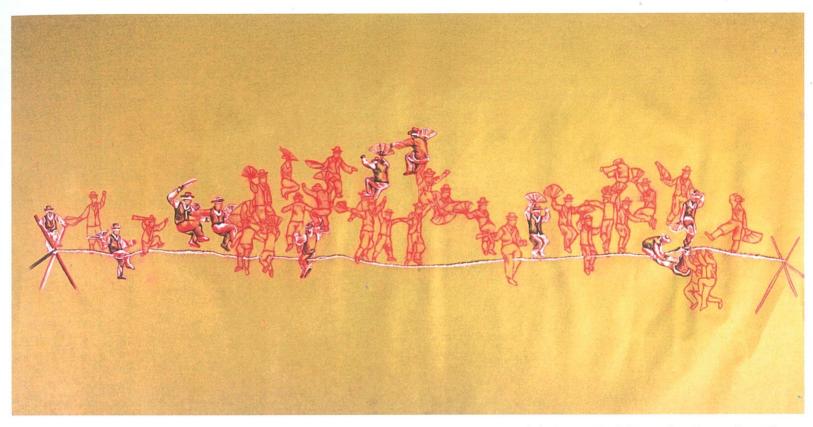
But these matters do not interest you, you – whom the incendiary star burns over, and whom the tide, that ashen scurf exfoliated from hollows in your phosphorous cheeks, rises against. I murmured these stories to you across its somnolent

I murmured these stories to you across its somnolent pulse, but with eyes that have lost sight of wonder, you looked on towards the blackened shore. е

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V.

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Tightrope Walking Conté pencils and rope Yoonjie Park

Caution: Fragile Nikki Nair

Your hands held me Like I was made of china; I found out when you dropped me That we do break just the same.



Han River Acrylic paint on canvas Elizabeth Day

The Sibley Guide to Birds

Soojin Oh

My sister loves birds. She has a \$200 pair of binoculars that she snatched from her boyfriend and a copy of Sibley's guide he bound for her in brown packaging tape. When she sees one, she gets really excited and pulls her book out of nowhere, flipping through the pages, asking me things like: "Did it have a yellow head?" and "Did it have brown undertail coverts?", while I squint through her binoculars and report my findings. She's still a beginner and she can't identify them on sight, but after a while, she'll tell me it's a townsend warbler, or a California thrasher, or at least, all her best guesses. She loves being technical, so while I go through her book and look at the pictures, she'll tell me all the stats she knows about the bird, talking about its typical behaviour and its movements and migration patterns. Then we'll sit at the window with a bowl of Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and just watch them for a while.

The day before she and my mom left for Korea, leaving me alone in Albany to finish the rest of the school year, we went to Lake Merritt in Oakland to see some birds. We walked along the chilly shore, looking at a few ducks, common mallards and coots. She really likes mallards. She says "Mallards!" in a goofy British accent every time she sees one because she once had a professor who said "Mallards!" like that. We spotted a juvenile black-crowned night heron, and we saw a bunch of swans and snowy white egrets standing on one foot.

We had been walking for a while, when she saw a tufted duck in the water. Tufted ducks are black all over with pure white bellies, and have these cute little black fringes on their heads, like slicked-back pompadours. She got super excited and told me that tufted ducks live primarily in Asia, and that it was extremely rare to see one in North America. It had probably gotten lost or confused during migration, and ended up here, in the middle of Oakland, placid and at home with the native scoters and diving ducks. We looked at that little duck for a long time, as it paddled around and dabbled for food.

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fted duck in ite bellies, ke slickednat tufted are to see onfused Oakland, ucks. We round and



Fragile Digital painting

Ana Villarreal

God's Laundry

Katherine Sun

the sky is a wash of color tossed up in a sudden swirl against a cobalt sky, crisp tunics, violet sashes, canary socks, and emerald mittens fly in the lemon scented wind, and fluffed up clouds containing pink soapy detergent wring out their dripping excess in

the

form

of cold

sweet

rain.

this is why when the tireless downpour relentlessly slaps the side-

walks

tiny

bubbles

form

and

pop!

showing off under the dreamlike gazes

of admiring youngsters.

on warm summer nights, if you let your eyes glaze over as the fading sun creates patterns high above, you can almost hear the little sigh of your childhood quietly dissipating in the wind, accompanied by a slow symphony of rose tinted memories.



Metamorphosis Oil paint on canvas

Madeleine McQuade Scholastic Award recipient

Excerpt from "Being Santa" Erica Kim

For those of you older siblings left with the task of keeping up the fantasy of Santa while your parents are out of town, here is your guide to being Santa. You may be thinking, "I don't have the big beard or belly to fill this role". But, my friend, that's why I'm here — to teach you how to be not just any other red-suited, cookie-eating, sleigh-riding Santa, but how to be the best Santa. After all, what better way to get your younger siblings to behave than by threatening them with Santa's "naughty-or-nice" list? Buckle up, and get ready to go on a sleigh ride full of gift-wrapping lessons, Christmas spirit, and Christmas Eve rituals. Down the chimney we go!

First and foremost, you need to cut all ties your younger sibling may have with the outside world. That's right: no Twitter, FaceBook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google, or YouTube. Oh, and no satellite TV; those commercials and parades are dangerous threats to Mission "Santa Exists" with all those Santa "imposters". Why is Santa at the Macy's Holiday Parade? He should be up in the North Pole assembling his "naughty-or-nice" list, or supervising elves at his workshop! Your television should only be used for watching Christmas movies. Social media is even scarier. Imagine all of Jack Frost's evil minions trying to crush dreams of children worldwide. Your sibling could easily look up, "is Santa real?" on Google, and the horrendous truth will be revealed. Twitter and FaceBook are more than likely to include statuses, such as: "Just found out Santa isn't real. #traumatized #childhoodruined". Oh, the horror. However, if you do your job right, your sibling won't even question Santa's existence. Also, it might just be a good idea to keep your sibling locked in the house; at school, he/she is exposed to kids who may already know the truth, and the risk of it being revealed is just too high.

December is when you really need to step up your game; it's time for Christmas spirit galore. This mission isn't effective if you are Mr. Grinch, so it's time to crank out the Christmas decorations, holiday music, and classic movies. First, make a playlist of Christmas carols; that way, you always have something handy for when you need to fill your house with holiday cheer. I promise you'll know all the lyrics

to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" by the end of the first week. Oh, and we can't forget our Christmas movie marathons. Don't forget the Home Alone series, A Christmas Carol, The Polar Express, and Elf. There's nothing like a human raised by elves to make you joyous. Two crucial things to do include cookie-making and letter writing. Go to your nearest grocery store and buy Pillsbury Christmas cookie packets; these refrigerated ones are easy (and quick) to make with your younger siblings, especially if they don't have much patience. You all can create snowmen, Santa and reindeer cookies throughout the whole month; you'll never run out of things to bake! Next up is writing letters to Santa. Have your sibling tell Santa what they want for Christmas in a handwritten letter. You can "help them out", and will be able to see what they want for Christmas. Also, it's a great way to get your siblings excited; let them write out Santa's workshop's address on the envelope, and for those of you U.S. residents, you can send a letter "from Santa" through the "Letters From Santa" USPS program. How thrilled will your brother/sister be to receive a letter from the one and only St. Nicholas himself! Along with these holiday traditions, you can decorate your house, go sledding and skating, go caroling, read a Christmas book every night, and purchase an advent calendar to encourage holiday spirit.

There you have it: a guide to being the best Santa in the world! Although it's exhausting and requires lots of effort, there's nothing like seeing your younger sibling's face light up on Christmas morning when they receive "Santa's" presents.

Mission accomplished.

Isolation

Kanbra Aguayo

Sitting on the waves of despair, staring into the eyes of isolation, his vast, blue chaotic eyes, unable to look away, unable to sail away, unable to do anything but stare.

the silence that soon fell was ear-popping, then came the foul smell of death, and the atmosphere of tragedy, still unable to run away, still unable to sprint away, I stare deeper into his eyes, his vast, blue, chaotic eyes.

Tell myself not to look, tell myself not to stare, but my seldom advice goes unnoticed.

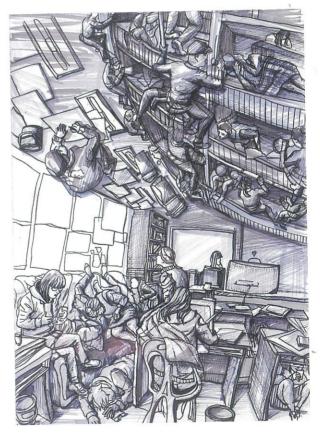
Isolation reaches out his right hand, and asks, "Do you fear me?" as a lone tear of sadness escapes his right eye, his hand grazes my left cheek, his hand is cold yet alive.

> A moment passes in silence again, and his hand falls back to his side, with a simple frown now on his face.

> > I answer, "No, no, I don't fear you."

He stares,.
his frown now gone,
replaced by a look humans like me could never be able to read,
until he finally closes his eyes and turns into dust;
dust that is swept away by the ocean air.
over the waves,

the vast, blue, chaotic waves.



Pressure Conté pastels Elizabeth Day

: be able to read, into dust; n air.





Internal Suspension Oil paint on canvas

Jane Hong Scholastic Award recipient

It Edward Kim

her lips tasted sweet they really did life was beautiful it really was it was loud, but quiet it was tiny, and giant my heart was in chains, then became free then chained again for it was not meant to be my stomach twisted it did she punched she did life was colorful with her then she threw the paint away she just stared, with half a smile oh her pretty young face saying that I was "macho" and strong enough to erase the stain she made it stunk it did her words were pungent, a clap of thunder they were my heart sizzled (for her) it did now it is broken it is

Eva Claire Young

The boys all think she's beautiful because her eyes are like pools of the Mediterranean, glittering turquoise stones. She hides her smile, but her eyes never lie. They crinkle like wrapping paper while her lips stay firm. I want to ask her why she doesn't smile. I want to know. Beautiful girls should be happy. They have nothing to fear from the world.

There is a wrinkled photograph of us taped to the sweating wall. It sits among a myriad of assorted objects: fireballs and pastel flowers, silver glitter and tacky postcards. Despite this sentimental collection, the small room is a white-walled oven, sparsely decorated and baking in the summer heat. The photo might be the only real clue as to its occupants . . . two girls, one fair and one dark, laughing with their heads thrown back, mouths wide open, gobbling up the sky.

I am the one with the yellow nest of hair. It dances and tumbles, becoming a mess of straw. Combing through the dry, fizzling strands she becomes Rumplestiltskin, spinning fine golden thread. Within hours, it's back to its normal confusion. My mind is like my hair. It is a knot of thoughts all rooted in my head, but ending up elsewhere in tangles. I always wondered if everyone's thoughts were like their hair. If that were true, hers would be clean and coiffed, but thick and dark. I wish she did not have dark thoughts. I wish she would stop hiding behind the masses of mousse and let her true feelings show. I wish she could be honest, like the time we stayed up all night clutching frozen towels to our sunburned chests. Nothing could be more honest than cold. Cold steals away the pleasantries, the false kindnesses, the plastic of us. We need it. We crave it.

The room was not air-conditioned. She had a fan, but we wilted, our smiles drooping with every minute past seven am. Seven am was the best time: the in-between time: between the abrupt honesty of the night and the carefully drawn-on mask of the day. In the sunshine, we must conceal our flaws with cheap plastic masks and various syrupy concections. Wet hair dripping on the dirty tiled floor, squinting at a miniature reflection, our insecurities are magnified, seeming to fill the cinder block room until there's barely enough room for air.

Lightning struck one night, and she ran out barefoot into the storm, dragging me by the hand. Pajamas soaked through with rain, we laughed as its little bullets pelted the tin roof. We did cartwheels in the mud at midnight, only returning when the cranky warden called our names.

Her laugh was magic. Floating up from the dingy marble floor, where we made snow angels because it was far too warm to go upstairs, it drifted all the way up to the ceiling and out the open window. It could not be contained. It was bigger than she was. It enveloped her in a cloud of joy. This cloud protected. It kept the world out.

Depression Grace Charnesky

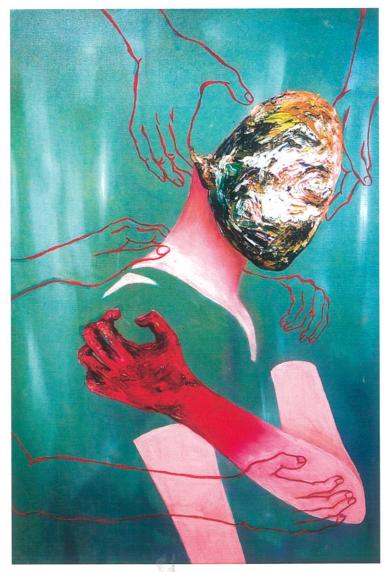
Depression
Is a funny thing,
Sometimes you even like it,
Hiding your secret from the world.
Those mere humans —
How could they ever hope to understand
Someone as complicated
As you?

But then again, Why should they want to? ot into the ugh with rain, id cartwheels sy warden

narble floor, rm to go the open she was. It It kept the



Namsan Eileen Yoon
Photography



Guidance Oil paint on canvas

Claire Shin Scholastic Award recipient

Fire and Alcohol

Michelle Yun

1.

Inside the coziness of his loving home, the little boy knows nothing but the warmth of the fireplace and the sound of his parents' laughter from the kitchen. The wind howls from outside, but it cannot break the spell of cheerfulness as the Christmas tree lights twinkle with wrapped presents lying underneath it. Safe and loved, Aiden carefully stacks up his building blocks and the soft *clink* of two glasses of wine is followed by another bout of chuckles.

2.

"I'm so sorry."

"We grieve your loss."

"... and at such a young age ..."

Fourteen-year-old Aiden watches from a specialized window as the remains of his mother's body are engulfed in flames. Two years she fought hard against the cancer, but in the end nothing she nor the doctors tried could stop it. Next to him, his father fiddles with the cap of a *Jack Daniel's*, the bitter liquid sloshing around in the almost empty bottle.

3.

"This might sting a little." Aiden pours the disinfectant along the line of the little girl's stitches and watches in sympathy as she holds back her tears. After years of education in medical school, Aiden has finally achieved his lifelong goal to become a doctor. Gone are the days crying in the hospital hall, waiting for what verdict the doctors would give. Gone are the days when he would cower in his room, fearing the wrath of his drunk, uncontrolled father.

nd of his parn outside, but tmas tree lights afe and loved, soft *clink* of huckles.

ed window as nes. Two years thing she nor r fiddles with and in the

y as she holds hool, Aiden tor. Gone are rerdict the d cower in his uther. Inside him is a fiery passion to help others who are hurting.

As the girl stands up to leave, he gives her a lollipop and tells her how brave she was.

4.

The wedding candles twinkle decoratively around the tables and the altar. The preacher speaks, the wedding vows are said, and Aiden and Charlotte are declared husband and wife.

"A toast," the best man begins as he raises his glass of champagne, "to my dear friend Aiden and his lovely wife, Charlotte. May they see many happy years ahead of them and through their journey learn the meaning of true love! Cheers!"

"Cheers," Aiden whispers with a grin as he watches Charlotte smile back at him. For the first time in many years he looks forward to what the future has in store.

5.

The intense glow of the fire beats down on Aiden as he stands with his head hung in shame. Tears leak out of his tired eyes as he watches the house he finally paid off after six years of hard work burn down to the ground.

His heart aches as he thinks of Charlotte – the best thing that had ever happened to him – gone like his marriage, his career, and his house . . . All because of that wretched bottle of Jack Daniel's that he couldn't make himself put down.

Like father like son, Aiden thinks bitterly.

"A lit cigarette and a bottle of whisky," the neighbors whisper amongst themselves as they eye Aiden critically. "How could he have been so foolish?"

The fire burns on.



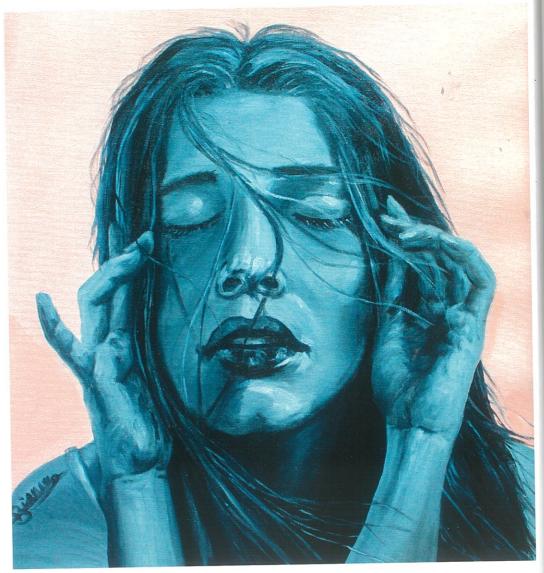
Hormiguero Oil paint on canvas

Ana Villarreal

Glass

Pia Jensen

Just as easy as you can break lines, you can break glass. Remember, when we were playing football? The poor window . . . The glass was shattered and tiny, shiny pieces were lying all over the ground. Unfixable. That's what I thought. Sometimes you don't realize how easy it is to break something, even if it is visible or not. Maybe we should be more careful...



Solemn Oil paint on canvas

Bianca Austrheim Scholastic Award recipient

Princess Reality

Anna Nahm

every little girl has that dream of meeting her prince charming, her true love, in her glittery princess gown and diamond tiara;

and that slim chance that one in a millionth chance that prince charming will notice you and say "your hair looks nice today"

and then comes prince charming when you realize prince charming picks his nose and eats his boogers and showers once a week and thinks you're fat. and hairy.

and every girl feels safe. safer. safest. wearing a sweatshirt on the bathroom floor hands around knees and puddles of tears on the white tiles;

and when you spend your afternoons hunched over the toilet orange bottle shaking in hand dreaming of parties in sequined mini dresses hand holding your prince charming;

when you run until you faint to get your 42 to a 24 to lose your curves that make you "fat;"

and then you realize prince charming is not prince charming and that you can be yourself even without a prince charming; so who really is prince charming? is he really your true love?

Feet Claire Young

And suddenly your left foot is utterly numb You're wondering if it's worth the pain

Flexing Feeling

Tiny little needles pricking your veins Butterflies biting at each blood vessel Waiting

For the pain that must come with that Inevitable first step.

Sometimes I wonder if you are my left foot



Life in Motion Mixed media

Andrew Kim

Margo Serin Lee

In the wee hours of morning, a nattily dressed man and rather fashionably disheveled woman stood in a motel elevator as it went down. The man was lanky and had an awkward birdlike grace – those who knew him deemed him a twee yet tolerable character. The woman had copper skin and slitted eyes that restively scrutinized their surroundings with a measured air of ennui. They were silent until the man began to speak.

"Margo," he started, "Was it clear in anything we talked about

that we were going to Philly?"

"B'lieve it was," Margo replied, picking cardboard flakes of oatmeal from her teeth.

"Did we go into high detail on the gig and our end of the monev?"

"Dunno what else we had to talk about. It don't matter in the end – they wouldn't 'a bothered tapping our room unless they already knew," Margo pointed out.

"Still, who knows? We might just have been sweethearts homebound for the holidays. They bugged us to see whether it was worth

jumping us for our goods - "

The elevator doors blithely interrupted the man mid-speech as they started rattling open. His forefinger jabbed the button that reflected his irritation – two triangles converging at a line running down the middle, two play buttons canceling into silence. He shut them right up again.

" – And you oughta know they're probably here for us by now," he finished, finger still firmly pressed and prolonging this bleak

conviction in its airtight confinement.

Carlisle continued to think aloud. "We're gonna stall them. One of us'll go out front and buy time; one of us'll go through the back lot with the stones. And everything's still gonna be a go, no problem, problem solved."

Margo snapped out of her sleepy trance upon hearing the reedy, effete strain in Carlisle's voice. She unzipped the kitschy red suitcase and removed a small leather pouch, which she put in her partner's

free hand. He jumped as the textured sensation hit his palm. "Carl, go back up and wait. I'll keep them busy. Go find a way out."

Carlisle surprised himself as he felt, dare he say it, a surge of affection for the girl. He didn't remember having been particularly kind to her, nor winning in any special way. It seemed more as though *she* had been on the good-natured receiving end of his vain quirks and the lack of qualms that came with them, narcissism that always lingered behind a cleverly built show of mannered courtesy. The thought embarrassed him, and like an old dog kicked by guilt his chivalry sheepishly resurfaced.

He pushed the pouch back into Margo's hands. Oh, good Margo! Here was to hoping there would someday be another as charm-

ing and giftedly light-fingered as she.

And so it was decided that Carlisle would gallantly brave the forces that awaited them, while Margo stole through the back of the hotel. Unaware of the great inconvenience they were causing from top floor to bottom, the two now looked at each other with a sort of mawkish wistfulness that can only be emulated by strangers who have yet to expose themselves to all the chintzy nastiness of a short fling – and so happily dream about what could have been.

"Good luck, Carl. I'll be waiting for ya."

"Thanks. If this is the last of us, I want you to know that I'd do this job ten times over with you on it with me." Carlisle extended his hand while hoping for something more gratifying – a hug, fare thee well, Auf Wiedersehen.

The elevator slid open at long last, gasping for air. It deposited Carlisle in the lobby and went up again to the third floor. Margo strode out quickly, and, careful to stay unseen, wrapped her cardigan around her frame more tightly as she entered the chilly back lot.

An indistinct thud carried up from below, sounding like an empty bottle falling from a short height onto carpet. Margo pretended Carlisle had slipped past the front door unhurt and was by now on his way to Newark Airport in a cab. She crossed her arms around her neck as the wind buffeted her face, vaguely hoping the fraying wool would swallow her up as she walked away from another job, another hard day's night.

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Oh, good Marther as charm-

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. It deposited oor. Margo ed her cardigan lly back lot. In glike an empgo pretended has by now on arms around in the fraying another job,

Two more blows dully echoed up through the concrete, followed by a telling cry of pain. The shout sullied the seemingly innocent sounds and trampled Margo's delusions, cutting the diamonds in her pocket with the decadent glare that marked things of such value.

Shame, she mused. I didn't even get his last name.



Verdad Irremediable Charcoal and acrylic paint

Ana Villarreal



Second Hand Smoking Mixed media Yoonjie Park Scholastic Award recipient

Blindfold Nikki Nair

once you blindfolded me and took me on a long walk across town through traffic

once
i told you to close your eyes
to take you
to my room
5 feet away
and you said no

Counting Coins

Janice Hahn Scholastic Award recipient

Your friend Lucy at school today brags about how she has so much money, that if she stacked up all her quarters one by one, they would reach outer space. She asks you how rich you are. Dumbfounded, you look at your half eaten tomato sandwich and wonder.

"I dunno," you say.

Lucy giggles and wags a finger at you. "Not as rich as me, probably!"

You think so too, but just in case, you plan to ask Mama later. You want to know so you can tell Lucy. Before you hitch the bus, you pick up the tomato you dropped on the floor and throw it in the waste bin. Then you wipe the rest of the seedy goo on your pants.

Mama swings the door open as soon as she hears a knocking sound, grinning in her patchy little kitchen apron. The first thing she notices is your pants. She frowns for a second, and before she can open her mouth to ask about the orangey glob smeared on your trousers, you spit in your question. "Ma, how rich are we?"

Mama cocks her head a little and squints her eyebrows. After a few moments of idly standing at the entrance, she laughs. It's the hearty kind of laugh that fills up the room and rings like humbers mingbird wings in your head. Papa always said that when they were young, it was well known among the men that her laughter could pierce right through your chest and steal your heart away if you weren't careful.

"Look up, child." She sits you down on the steps and perches her bottom next to yours. As she leans closer, her big hips awkwardly push into your side. Mama swings her arm around your shoulder, looks up at the sky, and points high. All you see is blues, whites, and birds.

You're confused, but you don't ask Mama what it means, because you want to figure it out yourself. Eventually your patience sinks lower than the wilting wildflowers at your feet. You ask Mama again, and she strokes your hair. "If you've got the persistence, honey, you'll get more wealth than you've ever needed."

You wait again. You wait until all the birds go away. You wait until the sky turns yellow, then orange, then blue; until the sky is finally dyed black and glowing speckles of white are peppered all over. You look at Mama again, who all but speaks. Her eyes are bound to the heavens, twinkling along with the quivering whites above.

Wiping off pebbles that have begun to embed themselves on the bare backs of your thighs, you wonder how you ended up sitting this long. In the dark, you finally hear her take a breath. Your ears instantly filter out the hum of the crickets and the wind whistling through the tall grasses — waiting for Mama's honeyed words to pour out slow, warm, and sweet. "Baby, can you see those sparkling little darlings up there?"

"Yeah," you nod, "... millions. Millions and billions of 'em, Ma." You can feel Mama smiling at you, her warm breath enveloping your skin from the cold. It puts all the little hairs standing up on your arms to rest.

She kisses your forehead. "All our riches, they spread farther than all the stars in the sky." Her answer is enough to send a thousand more questions raining down like angry bees in your head. "But these riches aren't the kind you can play heads or tails with, or the kind that Mama gets on her paycheck each month. They're a different sort."

... What kind is that then? You rack your brain, hoping to salvage an answer from a fog in your mind.

"... It's the kind that you can never run out of, no matter how much you use it. It's the kind that people can never steal from you. It's the kind that keeps you warm at night when it's cold; makes you feel safe in a thunderstorm. Not even a whole army of guns n' soldiers could make you give it up."

"Mama, I don't get it."

She pulls you in closer and cradles your face in her hands, touching forehead to forehead. Ma's skin is more beautiful than the night and you can see the moon in her eyes.

"Baby, you will some day."

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er hands, utiful than the



Negativity Pen and ink, watercolor Sarah Kim

Cheswick

Adeela Najwa Nasharuddin

Say hello to the man in me A hostage in my own man body.

Does not remember how to dance and sing Only the present, where what's left is calamity. What does he do? He is a lion baited into a cage. Where does he go? He is a car on a road, long and endless.

Then laughter appears, towering and striding so freely So ardent, so dynamic, it Digs up the hope buried deep in him. He grasps it, admires it, and comes to love how raw it Feels in his bare hands.

Does not know how disappointment feels until His efforts to climb higher, squandered With only one push – one poke. I fight. I fall. I lose. Again. No more. I want release . . .

Say goodbye to the man in me No longer a victim of society.



Conform Oil paint on canvas

Madeleine McQuade Scholastic Award recipient



Eros Sarah Hahm Scholastic Award recipient

I fell in love with him the way children fall in love with the idea of Christmas.

He was the embodiment of the fountain of youth, and I, the embodiment of competitive angst.

He shook my heart and my life the way fairytales enchant a child; planting seeds of dreams, hopes, plans and preparations, for a future and life that itched to be desired.

His laugh was every jingle on a sleigh that I longed to hear as a child. His eyes were the expensive ornaments that we could never afford, his smile the only star I could see on top. He, my evergreen.



Culture Photography
Aidan Dobson

I loved him the way a child believes in Santa –

with faith.

And

he fell in love with me the way Christmas carols fill the atmosphere And

I fell in love with being that child.

Here he lies at my feet, back to his roots, my evergreen.

Guilt

Grace Charnesky

I don't remember the impact
That took his life.
Just me
In my tiny silver Hyundai
Racing away down twisting roads
In the forest, digging a hole
Deeper than I am tall
Dumping the body in, covering it well
Then racing the sunrise home.

But the next morning
There he is again
His lifeless body
Leaning against the wall
Next to my front door.
I live alone
And the cops can't see him.
Sometimes I can't see him
But I feel him
Always breathing heavily
Just around the corner
In the mirror, behind my back.
It's not an illusion.

I work the night shift on Fridays,
It helps pay the bills.
Last night I came home around
4am,
Stepped on a Lego,
A Lego skull.
The door clicked behind me,
Trapping me.
Specks of dirt clouded my vision, filled my throat;



This is What Creates Us Transparent paper, photography
Sarah Kim

I tasted mud and worms and sweat.
The dirt kept coming, drowning me as I tried
To bail myself out.
And from behind the door came shrill laughter,

Cackling and screeching, As he watched me struggle From the safety of his grave. I never meant to become a murderer. Even an accidental one. But I did.
And the secret I buried

Killed me with him.

Cerulean Blue Ju Young Jules Lee

Serene tides, splashing waves The salty breeze and gusts of wind Whether calm or raging, soft or rough All rises from the cerulean ocean

Drizzles of droplets, thick downpours The swirls of wind and full on storms Whether calm or raging, soft or rough All falls from the cerulean sky

Melodic chirps, alert screeches The tiny hands and the aggressive bill Whether calm or raging, passive or alert All comes from the cerulean warbler

Yves Saint Laurent military jackets, thrift shop coats Oscar De La Renta ball gowns and ten-dollar sweaters Whether high or low quality, expensive or cheap All created by the cerulean era

One unique hue; infinite connotations A pigment that represented royals And appeared as a fashion trend The shade of the ocean, sky, and birds The color itself is a Paradox:

Cerulean Blue

is grave.
ome a murderer.

ne.

B+

Yuchen Linda Wang

fresh like spring flowers, brightly colored under the summer sun, the blue and purple decorated every inch of her skin. they'd soon fade yellow and highlight a lesson. this one she would never forget.

Old Bird Pete

Bryan Min

i'm tired, he squawks, as audacious as the tick to a clock. the others pay no mind, knowing that He gives strength to the powerful and increases the power of the strong. they preach that salvation comes from Him, he looks at words like a child looks to strangers. "I was born dead, for 55 years I been dead" the doctor crushed the life out of me, but who am I to blame sitting in that lonely box. It takes blood, sweat, and years for him to recognize that phrase, but good things come to those with two dents on his face. Yes, my soul, finds stress in God; clip my wings then demand flight. They shoot him down with pills and shots, his eyes clouded from the chances he never had; for God did not give a spirit of power, love, or self-discipline. He was born to die, he died at birth. i'm tired, he mumbles.

Dispensable Love

Sarah Pak

I was stitched with fine shining needles and puffed with cotton Stuffed into a paper bag and sealed with red ribbon. You were overjoyed; I was just what you wanted! It was then I first learned how to love and be loved. Days of adventure and excitement passed, A new journey every day and you never let me go.

Where will we go today?
The museum? The park? I've always wanted to see the arcade!
Oh... the closet?... Well, I mean... that's alright!
Take me out whenever you wanna play again...
Whenever you want! You can't love that noisy bright board
More than me, right?
I'll be here waiting, don't worry!
Take your time!
You'll get bored of that mindless tapping one day!

Oh!!!

Right . . . ?

Today we're going somewhere! It's been forever, wow! I can't wait to see what changed! You've grown so much, friend! I missed you!

What?

That's not my name . . . You named me Cotton, remember? Not Ratty, not Dirty, not Trash . . .

Oh.

I see.

It seems today we're exploring the garbage bins.

Clever

Claire Young

Everyone wants to be so clever.

We paint ourselves with wit,
Caking it on in the morning,
Letting it slowly peel off throughout the day,
Handing a tiny piece to each person
Gathered around the water cooler.

What happens when we run out of clever?

What do we have left?

Naked sincerity?

Sometimes I wonder if I apply too liberally . . .



Girl with Hair Ribbon Acrylic paint on canvas

Leslie Kim

Here, Now Becca Freeman

You vanished here, I understand now

I liked it when here, was now

I'm stuck here, it's dark now

I lost you here, when then was now

Here, Now Becca Freeman

You vanished tere, understand tow

liked it when tere, vas tow

'm stuck iere, t's dark iow

lost you iere, when then was iow



Dungeness Boat Photography Jonathan Sheldrick

A Grandmother's Hands

Katherine Sun

A grandmother's hands are something special: tranquil and calm, wrinkled and gentle.

They shaped my parents' futures, with the same skill with which they created kimbap and cookies.

A grandmother's hands are there for you, all-knowing hands that deftly place band-aids on your boo-boo, no questions asked, always on your side.

I wish it could have been your hands that held mine when I walked my first teetering steps.
I wish it could have been your hands, smoothly braiding back my hair while I clumsily braided Barbie's.
I wish it could have been your hands that I nervously clung on the first day of Pre-K.

It could have been your hands.

It could have been your hands, before illness played with your burning flick of flame, snatching at fire, playing a dangerous game, impulsive, rash, like a child stretching out to a unstable toy, steady yet wavering, quick to ignite, fast to blow out until all that is left is a smoky wisp, that could have perhaps held some semblance

to the light inside your eyes.

All I have are frayed memories, flickering flashes of recognition, of faint echoes of laughter and childlike happiness as I stare at your delighted face smiling with an eight-month old me.

Too many years too soon.

Hospital lights cast harsh fluorescent glares, indifferent, they stare at countless tears, and you were a lone rock in a sea of waves, desperate hands clutching your still ones, as if holding them hard enough could somehow bring her back.



Blue Pyromania Photography
Sara Chang
28

The Gore Beneath Glitter In Young Jules Lee

Whimsical words Pretty faces Both hide scheming minds.

Kittens meowing Their innocent purrs; All a façade for the tiger within.

Mermaids singing chime-like melodies Twirling their sparkly tails with vanity, Catch, another glimpse only to see Delusional sirens screeching in pain.

Neon lights, wanderlust souls.

A place where all wishes comes true.

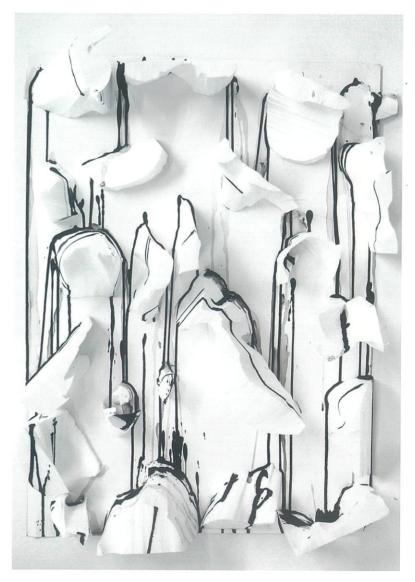
Wake up from the dream, only to see

New York City's reality:
damp streets, busy people, gray construction smoke,
stressful atmosphere.

Living up to fast-paced schedules - all slaves of the 'dings'
From their alarm clocks and notifications.

The city doesn't feel like home; Rather like a prison. No sense of belonging. Thoughts are brainwashed by authority. But be divergent and do not comply. Stray from the crowd, letting the uniqueness shine through.

Candyfloss clouds, periwinkle skies,
Bright green grass, gingerbread houses;
The clichéd setting of a little girl's fairytale.
Push the walls - still wet with artificial paint. And.
Watch the thin cardboards fall.
Only to see a destroyed movie set
Surrounded by gloomy clouds, gray skies,
Littered floors and concrete houses.



Running River of Black Ink and styrofoam Hyunna Yoo



Loneliness Joseph Choi

Photography

Looking Back at Myself Won Lee

I see him.
He looks at me, I look at him looking at me.
Why does he look at me like I've done something wrong.
I don't get him. Why can't he be more like me? Everyone else says he's nice.
But not to me. Be more like me.

Fall Nicole Hong

I locked and weaved my arms
Through the smooth wooden bars
My thoughts were innocent
Unaware of the fall,
Yet faithful of the flight
A stretched jacket was all there was for safety gear
Sleeves as handles and bodice as chute
I disentangled
Trusted the cloth
And jumped
Oh, shoot.



Straight Lines

Candace Shih Scholastic Award recipient

I've never liked straight lines. They're too confining. They k eep me from doing stuff outsi de of the box. No, I have to be in the box. That's what they'v e always told me. Doing other wise would be dangerous, ris kv. Don't go outside of the bo x. They say, "Everyone else di d this, why can't you?" or "Yo 11 should be more normal and do this" as if normal could be back. defined as anything other tha n what you expect of me. I hat e straight lines. Go out of thos e lines, out of that box, and th life ey'll start to whisper when th ey think you can't hear. But y ou do hear. You hear them sa y that maybe you should be c onfined, as if you already wer I'm en't. Prison bars are straight t oo. But I'm done doing what I' done ve been told. I'm breaking tho se fragile straight lines and de stroying that box. From now

on,
I
am
free.
So go
on,
to
try
hold
me
You can't?
Good.
My
is

mine
now.
And
.
with

straight

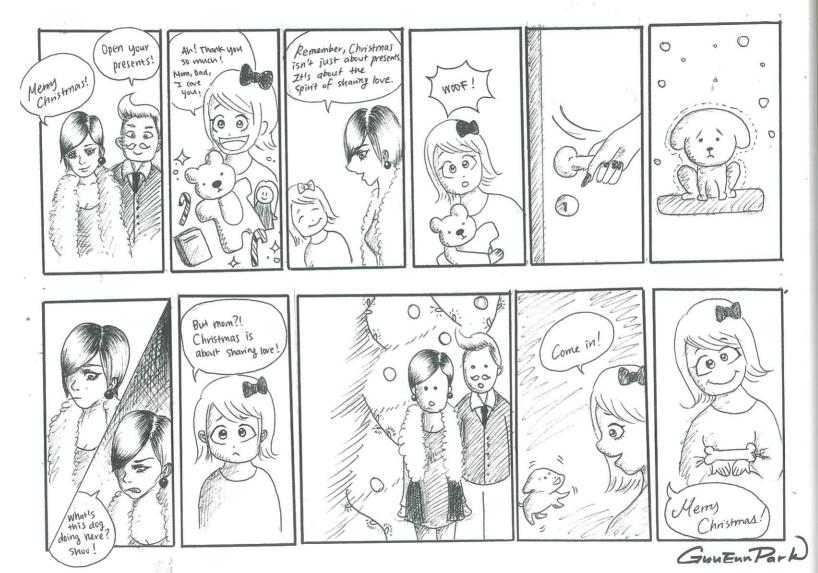
Mongolian Child Photography

Jonathan Sheldrick

ar

31

lines.



Merry Christmas Ink pen Gyu Eun Park



One Day Sophia Han

One day,
I wish I could be,
I wish I could be a bubble,
When someone blows me out.
I won't come back EVER!
I won't come back,
I won't.

Let me go.
Let me go, PLEASE!
Leave me alone in peace.
I'm tired of being trapped here.
Please let me be appy.
Let me be happy,
Please.

I can't wait.
I can't wait until,
Until someone blows me out.
Then I am set free from this world.
Someone pop me please.
Please pop me,
PLEASE!

Why?
Why do you?
Why do you do this?
Why do you do this to me?
What
did
I
do

Hoju from, Seoul to

Seinna Kang

I was *Hoju* in born.

Yudulsal old when Hanguk to moved into.

Now see

Australian *gongjun* school from Foreign *salip* school to changed when *Da* much different.

However, then I was so uhlyuh don't know.

Then I sports called thing don't know.

Now I soccer nonggu and volleyball do.

Australia in friends as I see always imagine and geuriwohheh

And wonder

Me Australia in if, my life now uhddulggah?

I Australia issosseumyun, maybe more better would be.



Tunnel Water color
Ina Kim Scholastic Award recipient

The House on 32nd Street

Anne Lee

The house upon a hill, on the outskirts of the city: where untamed rainforest threatens to engulf concrete and vines drape across feral trees.

There, it is firmly planted into the Earth.

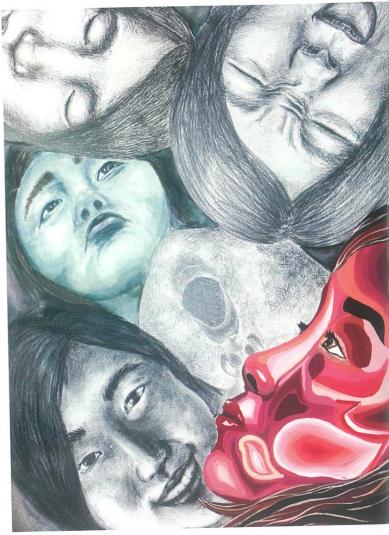
It stands defiantly in the glare of a tropical sun, tested by pummeling rain and lightning lashing the ruddy roofing shingles.

The walls become like tendons.

Unguarded entrance: littered plastic slippers crowding flimsy wood, so flimsy and weak it bends like leaves in a typhoon.

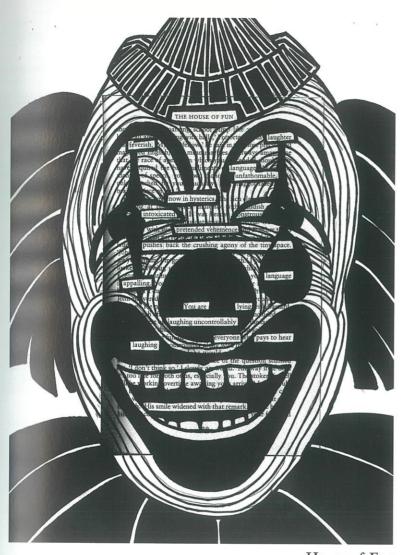
Inside, picture frames are coated in fine, gauzy dust. The once-colorful Persian rug is faded from use, or heat, or moisture. I do not know.

Always the television will drone, casting frail light upon the scene. Unbidden, a gecko scurries through tendon plaster, then returns to hiding, still watching.



Self Portrait Mixed media Eunice Ye-In Lee





House of Fun
Found poem from An Evil Cradling by Brian Keenan
Joanna Kim

Ashes, Ashes

Erica Kim

It started with a window

Shattering

Into a million broken promises.

The heat

Rose and fell,

Angrily spreading towards us.

I snapped out of my enchantment,

And turned towards the little girl and boy.

They too were mesmerized by the fire,

Stuck

As if Medusa had frozen them

With her stone cold eyes.

I sent them running,

Running away

From the vivid colors of

Red, orange, and yellow.

I could feel the heat

Creeping towards me, the heat tickling the back of my neck.

I was stuck in time.

The heat

Rose and fell slowly,

As if it was contemplating whether or not

To take me in.

The angry monster

Then enveloped me, limb by limb.

The flames

Danced along my body,

Enjoying my suffering.

They sang along

To my pleading screams.

Unbearable heat

Took over my body

As the colors of orange, red, and yellow

Turned to black.

Ashes, ashes.

I was too late.

All of a Sudden

Hannah Williams

The pearly white gates have cracked Soggy papers slathered with ink Spew out Conversations that could've happened Conversations that should've happened Filed away in some dark corner Gradually formed the mountain Now tickling the back of my throat An ocean of flames laps at its base Ceaselessly churning in an attempt to digest To incinerate the screams in their cages Yet the heavy steam seeps Tongue burnt by a burst of sparks Lips black with words better left unsaid Soggy papers slathered with ink Spew out

Alone

Amanda Chung

Softly and whispering the wind howled out,
Slowly and gently carrying fragile fragments.
I wondered
Whether I stood or stumbled.
I waited with the weather,
I watched as it flew and soared alone
With my desires taunted.
As the wind declined it began to fall.
My hopes began to fold like the withering crisp leaves.
My eyes vulnerable to the lights covering my face,
I looked afar to see a familiar shadow.
Joy streamed through, channeled within.
Infinitely relieved I ran with it;
I was not alone.



On My Mind Ink pen and pencil Seinna Kang

Velvet Bracken

Joo Young Kim

Of all the things that I could have seen, What had found me was quite peculiar.

For it was a single strand of velvet bracken, A stranger amidst the winter fields.

Its blood satin attire seized my gaze, Yet its surreal nature left me unfazed.

Step by step, Inch by inch.

"Halt."

My legs bent underneath my dismay. Why was such an odd fern out on display?

"Sacrifice."

Unable to separate my eyes from its alluring figure, I blindly offered my dagger of silver.

My knife laid bare by the plant, And began to submerge into the swollen soil, in slant.

"Die."

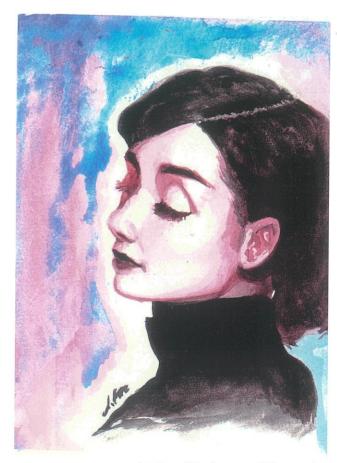
I felt its hold upon my legs intensify; I had lost the will to resist and defy.

But newfound strength awoke with each pant, As I clenched my eyes and grasped the wretched plant.

I uprooted it and consumed it With disregard and in an angry fit.

So here I lie by the apothecary, Pondering on God, Bracken, and Humanity.

Can the greed of one entity Provoke cataclysm for all Under another deity?



Audrey Hepburn Water color

Ina Kim

Nihilne Sanctum?

Serin Lee

"Ghosts of American astronauts glow in the headlight's beam."

- The Mekons, "Ghosts of American Astronauts"

Gravity's stillness creeps in my ears as the universe hurtles by. I wonder if space monkeys are this calm when the bottled compositions of air that gently nurse their ballooning lungs slip away blithely, draining fast against the oppressive black stopper of gargantuan nothingness.

Nihilo sanctum estne?

I watch through crescent eyes as the hands of the Creator of the Universe delicately disassemble my spaceman parts, as he croons to me across space and time that everything will be all right.

I watch each crystallized shard drift away into spectral kaleidoscopes in the darkness – hell glints through their myriad slanted fractals.

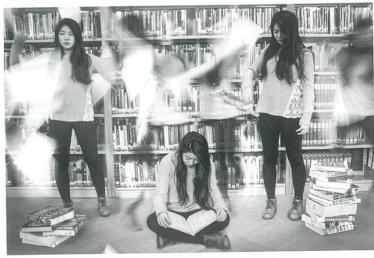
A tear slopes along the curvature of my helmet and aligns with the earth's horizon.

My life doesn't flash before my eyes in these final moments before I descend into that good night — human memories are bad jokes when galaxies lay themselves down at your feet, unfathomable and terrifyingly perfect in their divine observance of silence.

The stars cannot be galvanized into moving by any higher power, and Earth slumbers in its perennial coma as it houses festering red chaos within. Anaesthetics are pumped into its now-iron lung, as its organs deliquesce into wood pulp and then to bills that fold between creases in palms from hand to weathered hand, trying to appease the mad clowns that run rampant on the little planet.

Gravity grips my throat. Something malevolent clouds my eyes. Nihilo sanctum est.

- * Nihilne sanctum? Is nothing sacred?
- * Nihilo sanctum estne? In nothing there is something sacred, isn't there?
- * Nihilo sanctum est. Nothing is sacred.



Imperturbable Photography
Eileen Yoon Scholastic Award recipient



n't there?

Blossoms Poster paint Elizabeth Day

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