

# THE LITERATE

2020-2021









*–Cover Art by Yifeng (Frank) Hu, '22*







# The Literate

2020-2021

## *Senior Editors*

*Marlowe Dunn Flom*

*Stella Griffin*

*Isabel Forster*

## *Staff*

*Blake Menin '22*

*Emily Parra '24*

*Madison Rhodes '21*

*Alessandra Roberts '24*

*Alexa Shumway '22*

*Grace Vera '22*

*Venus Wang '22*

## *Faculty Advisor*

*Ms. Gettig*

## *Artists*

*Amaia Arizmendi '21*

*Derek Fletcher '21*

*Desmond Maher '21*

*Lucia Miller '21*

*Ashlyn Goila '21*

*Angela McCall '21*

*Eduarda Favero '22*

*Bradley Steinfeld '22*

*Allie Hughes '23*

*Giselle Boueri '23*

*Ella Niren '21*

*Frank Hu '22*

*Tairan Liu '22*

*Jack Rogers '22*



## Six Feet Apart

Six feet apart, they told me, before I set off on my dangerous journey.

Every footstep, soft and slow, my hands slightly weighted by the gloves they hold.

Every huff, every puff, hot breaths trapped within my mask.

Quietly, I raise the mask from my mouth, letting the cool air flow in and flow out.

There she stands—Yes it is she, the one that goes by the name, COVID-19.

Closer and closer to the pandemic on the hill...but not too close!

Remember, six feet apart.

“Why do you meet me?” Coronavirus asks.

“You have made it clear how much you despise me.”

“Did you come to mock my forthcoming defeat?”

“Or perhaps destroy me with a fresh vaccine?”

Her eyes widened in such surprise as I reply,

“No.

“I arrived to say thank you,” and I beam.

“Thank you for that time when I yearned for the sun in the hopes of seeing another someone.

As well as for my frantic search to find something that’ll wipe my bum.

Thank you for building the bars that kept me captive

In my own home where I am not active

Thank you for my reflection on that video call screen

As well as for that moment where I wanted to scream.

*"Thank you for every time I'd reach into the fridge  
Thinking of how my waistline desperately needs a  
trim*

*The salon is closed, whatever shall I do?*

*Maybe a snip with the kitchen scissors to fix my  
hairdo.*

*Thank you for my yells of aggravation*

*As I just destroyed my hair's reputation!*

*Thank you for the TAP TAP TAP of my fingers  
against the glass*

*Dormant on my couch as time wouldn't pass.*

*Six feet apart, is that too much to ask?*

*I think to myself as I put on my mask.*

*I grab my gloves, in such denial.*

*Hopefully my reusable ones would last a while.*

*The DRIP DRIP DRIP of sanitizer*

*SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB of soap*

*And all those times I'd watch the news*

*Losing hope.*

*Thank you for my eternal scrolling*

*On social media, with commenters trolling.*

*What's this? Something different I see.*

*Black lives are breaking free.*

*With every post I am informed*

*Of all the white privilege I hadn't known.*

*Protest, after protest, I start to realize*

*The virus isn't as bad as I surmised.*

*For all those weeks I am hypnotised*

*By the screen which informs me of their cries.*

*Thank you for those hours stuck inside*

*Which gave all of us time to see the other side.*

*And once we look up from our screens*

*We notice that change is actually happening!*

*Thank you for the first moment I walked out the  
door,*

*With my gloves and mask, and all the more.*

*A new person inside and out*

*I learned that I should never pout.*

*The human race has disappeared from the face of  
the Earth*



*But we come back to witness rebirth.*

*Our absence has caused the plants to regrow.  
The litter has gone and still goes.  
Fauna begins to take back the land  
The land we once plundered for our selfish  
hands.*

*Thank you for the vacant roads  
Which drops air pollution down to almost zero.  
And when the thick smog clears, I thank you for  
what it reveals  
The Himalayas, for the first time in thirty years!*

*As coders can reprogram an app,  
Society can reprogram its act.  
We have now seen proof of our potential  
To creep out of our homes, with a better future  
Where children can live without feeling trapped  
in their dark skin  
In contrast to their enslaved kin.  
And nature and humans live in harmony  
Without the delusion of a better economy.”*

*Coronavirus interrupts my scene.  
“But the numbers are spiking, don’t you see  
you’re all dying?  
As my super hosts, you are all helpless.”*

*“We are centuries far from helpless. Don’t you  
remember, your cousin, The Black Death?  
Continents fell from its merciless ravages,  
But we prevailed, even with our limited  
knowledge.*

*Now here we stand, decades of discoveries fresh,  
Medical minds the best of the best.  
A new vaccine is on its way,  
Why should we fear, when everything will be  
okay?*

*Thank you, Coronavirus, for a chance to start  
over.  
With a new plan, in case you come back over.*

*For granting humanity a second chance  
To become stronger, regardless of circumstance.”*

**Six feet apart** the  
Pandemic and I stood,  
yet we had never felt closer.

“You’re welcome”, she grinned.  
“I’d be happy to come back,”

“No, please don’t!”  
And I hurry to my shack.

– Alessandra Roberts, '24



– Amaia Arizmendi, '21

## God Bless America

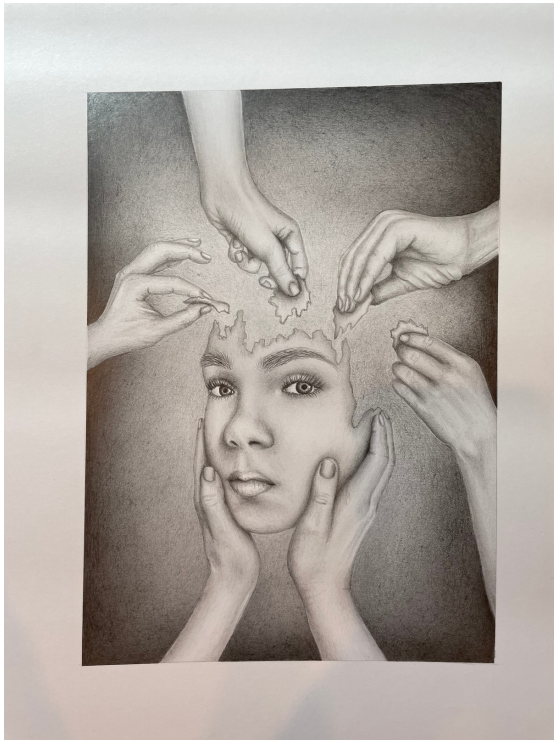
The quivering haze over the dark asphalt,  
After yet another twisted day of work,  
Finally takes its last breath,  
Melting like its sun into the sea

The warmth is consuming,  
Teasing the last bits of day with its final graze  
It mocks and pulls its strings  
The painter never stays to admire his work

Hand over heart, eyelids up to the sun  
Pale corduroy brushes my cheek,  
*“Stand beside her, and guide her”*  
Yet I never see her face

If only the lights didn't flicker,  
And the flame wrought me mercy  
Can I vanish in your gaze?  
Hand over heart, eyelids up to the sun.

*Grace Vera, '22*



– Angela McCall, '21

## Slow Dancing

As I take a step closer,  
Ocean eyes fill my vision  
With a gaze  
As wide as it is blue.

Slow music crawls into the room,  
Seeps into the crevices  
And closes the space between  
Us.

My feet follow the music's path,  
Swaying side to side  
In tandem  
With a second pair of feet.

Two hands wrap my waist.  
I sink into the support,  
Abandon my worries  
And escape reality.

My mind struggles to comprehend  
How I am allowed this moment,  
How someone wants to feel my rhythm  
And interlock my gaze.

As the music dwindles,  
His arms squeeze tighter.  
An embrace I hope I never  
Escape.

– Alexa Shumway, '22



## Clara

Strawberry string cut from the fruit  
 Tangled in paths woven in the scalp.  
 Those red, thick strands dyed with zest,  
 Stained from summer grapefruit soaks,  
 Are stroked with nature's comb by Mother.

Pale pores arched like summer hills  
 Hold wild terrain upon her cheeks,  
 A rosey red softly faded in her face  
 Inside a nature's garden sprinkled with soil.  
 Yet, her sweet blush just kissed by the sun  
 Is forested in self-conscious feelings  
 Hidden behind caked powder.

Wild flowers sprout from her damp lips,  
 Delicate and fragile after a hollow kiss,  
 Release sharp winds to the critical man  
 Who taught her love... not real love.  
 Why bury her skin six under  
 If no one loved her in such a way?

The ginger hair framing her face mothered  
 The tears that erased the smothering paint,  
 Guiding sunlight to her eyes  
 For reflections of a sky that knew her.  
 It saw her golden smile in the sun.  
 Her shadow dance in open fields;  
 The laughter that left her tongue.  
 If only he noticed.

Stardust hidden behind daylight  
 Lays visible in her iris:  
 Such a soft black daring to suck in the light  
 May be hidden from view beside her,  
 But not from above.

- *Stella Griffin*, '21



– Desmond Maher, '21

## Autumn in Bruges

Air as crisp as parchment paper,  
 Fallen leaves flutter to the sidewalk, stamped to the earth under sullen leather boots,  
 Horse hooves echo on the cobblestone,  
 The lone willow weeps over the glassy canal

Spiraling ascent of the belfry  
 Clicking, ticking,  
 Are the resounding carillon chime,  
 Clouded louver windows muffle  
 Their pleas to be cleaned

From the summit, marvelling,  
 Over a brilliant foliage, as bright as box of colored pencils and as wide as the sea,  
 The awning of patched, red tile rooftops,  
 And chimney smoke pouring noiselessly to the steady pluck of harp strings

Debussy and Tchaikovsky  
 Float into every crevice, courtyard, and doorframe,  
 Bumping into trench coats and matted scarfs and puffer jackets on their way home,  
 Permeating the street with the pealing of bells  
 Like the waft of iron-pressed waffles trail to the nose

On the breeze,  
 Sint-Janshuismill creaks,  
 Round and round his blades swoop, ceaselessly, melancholily  
 To the drifts and rustle of nearby poplar trees

A vibrant mirage unfolds over the stepped gable outlines of row houses facing east  
 Before the sun dips under the red maples.  
 Night tucks us in,  
 Layer over layer,  
 So I close my eyes only to remember

All I left behind.

- Izzy Forster, '21



## Home

The deep blue water is soft and clear,  
 Blinding sunlight glistening.  
 There's not a rain cloud in sight.  
 I hum to the sound of waves crashing against my bow  
 As I drift in silence.

A thousand beams of light shatter and reflect as if I were floating in a kaleidoscope.  
 Craftily brushed and blended are the most contrasting and astounding colors  
 That work in harmony, molding a masterpiece, only visible to my naked eye.  
 Peering down at my hand, it is soaked from the tranquil water.  
 The current's cool saltiness escapes in between my fingers, tickling me.  
 I hear the rhythmic splashing and can't help but smile.  
 This is where I belong.

Unexpectedly, a dark cloud hovers over me as boisterous winds shriek in fear,  
 Forcing my sail to flap violently. My hull tilts from side to side,  
 Clinging onto port. The sea stubbornly persists.  
 Lightning crackles, startling me. My heart chaotically pulsates.  
 My eyes narrow as I straighten my tiller and tighten my sail.  
 The wind and sea soften, releasing their suffocating grasp.

I gaze at my full sail as the wind gently gusts leading me forward.  
 I refuse to fight the current because I know it will guide me where I ought to be.  
 Now, I am prepared for any journey, indifferent to my destination.  
 So when the summer breeze blows through my hair,  
 Gliding towards the sunset, seagulls cry

Welcome Home!

- *Madison Rhodes, '21*



- *Derek Fletcher, '21*

## small

Little girl in the corner all alone  
bearing the burden that loneliness brings  
wiping her teary eyes

Little girl in the corner all alone  
silently crying out for someone to be there,  
mouth moving but the words refuse to fall out,  
She begs for someone to save her,  
hoping for someone who will never arrive

Little girl in the corner all alone,  
all by herself in a room full of people  
amongst all the people  
amongst all the fear  
amongst the invisible walls  
they have built around her  
she is very  
very  
small

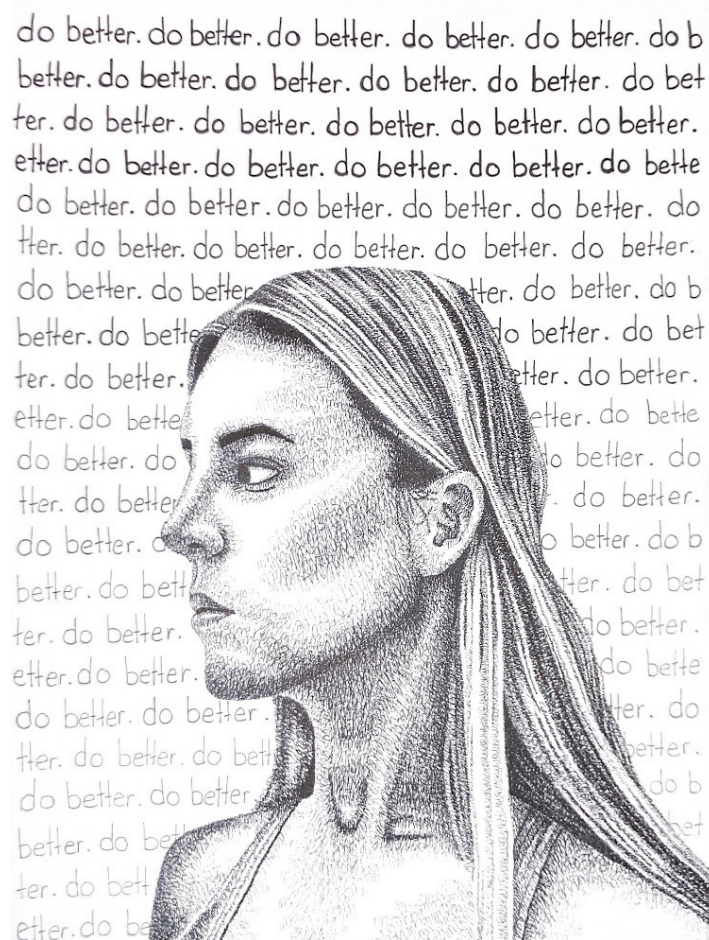
Little girl in the corner all alone  
With every step forwards  
she draws back another two  
Squirming with discomfort  
at every creak the floorboards make  
With every person who passes her by  
she wraps her arms around herself  
hoping it will bring comfort  
With every noise she hears  
she recoils in fear  
Little girl in the corner all alone  
curled up in a little ball  
Watching the droplets fall  
fall  
fall  
fall  
like little shards of glass  
they flee from her eyes  
landing on the soft pink leather  
of her ballet slippers  
with a little splash  
before they dry

Leaving behind only a small trace  
a ghost of a shadow  
that they had been there

Little girl in the corner all alone  
her tiny heart racing  
her brain trying to find a way to escape  
a way to leave  
a way to flee  
and leave the misery behind

Little girl in the corner all alone  
if only there were someone else there  
maybe she wouldn't feel  
so  
small

- Emily Parra, '24



-Ashlyn Goila, '21



–Eduarda Favero, '22

### That Sun Shower

Only dreams resemble those bygone memories...  
 The golden rain falling through mild morning light,  
 Us kids splendidly seated by the sofa, staring off carelessly into the dawn,  
 The windows layered with water drops blooming and swirling like a nebula of light,  
 Giggles resound as the cartoons play to the sight of a sun shower sprinkling the pool,  
 Princess dolls on the pool deck bake in the sun while soaking up the rain,  
 Rubber snakes swirl in puddles next to half pumped beach balls,  
 The morning dew on the greenery are inseparable from the layers of rain drops,  
 No sounds of animals except for the Rugrats on TV and the ones on the couch  
 whose laughter harmonizes with the gentle rain drops dripping about,  
 Sunlight streams onto our little hands eating our little sandwiches,  
 Morning meals still seeming like hours against the ticking of the rain,  
 Mom and Dad strain to admire the sunshower while simultaneously cherishing us,  
 The aroma of coffee and cream clouds the room coming from mommy's coffee cup,  
 Her smile induced by our youth and illuminated by that sunshine,

I wake up from the memory gently,  
 The rain begins to fade with age,  
 The pitter patter lessens as the sky loses gold and goes blue,  
 The light begins to dim while the figures begin to disappear,  
 I strain to taste that juice, caress that couch, listen to the laughs, and see that sun,  
 I try not to wake and stay in the endless memorial of that slumber,  
 I want that morning sun shower to mesmerize me again,  
 Only if I could somehow live it all over again,  
 Only memories help illustrate that rainy dream,  
 Only rain drops can be heard but never seen...

–Marlowe Dunn Flom, '21



## The Wish Upon a Dying Star

As the evening falls we stay together.  
Walking under the tall lamp post light,  
We saw a shooting star fall in the bitter weather.  
And you wished on its fast, dying light.

Then we drove away in song together,  
These old tunes so fresh in our heads.  
Our voices rang so lively together  
Though you slowly fell behind.  
You said "Dance with me. Dance with me.  
Dance with me. "

Singing "May you Stay Forever Young"  
We had all our hometown below us  
Spreading out so far and free.  
Let's grab what we have and just flee.  
Then you said "Dance with me. Dance with me.  
Dance with me."

But how can I dance when my feet are so heavy.  
I thought I was your one and only.  
How can I dance without music  
When the tune lies so deep in my heart.  
How can I believe this life has reason  
When you've gone and torn us apart.

We then drove to your house in silence  
I watched as you waved good-bye.  
And I couldn't help but wonder what you'd wished for  
On that fast falling star in the night sky.

But if you said "Dance with me, dance with me,  
dance with me."  
Just one more time,  
Then I would have danced with you, danced with you,  
danced with you,  
all night long,  
'til the dawn rises.

## Untitled

The vagabond feels no pleasure in anything but his work  
 He moves with precision, like clockwork  
 Meticulously clipping and unclipping at extraordinary speeds  
 None other could tame these wild beasts

But it was one day, when the world shattered this very captaincy  
 One of the animals sprung, and his body fell unilaterally  
 He had lost his grasp on all of them now, and a sea of leashes sailed  
 Reaching for air, embarrassment was what he inhaled  
 For on this day, the dog walker failed

- Blake Menin, '22



-Jack Rogers, '22

## Untitled

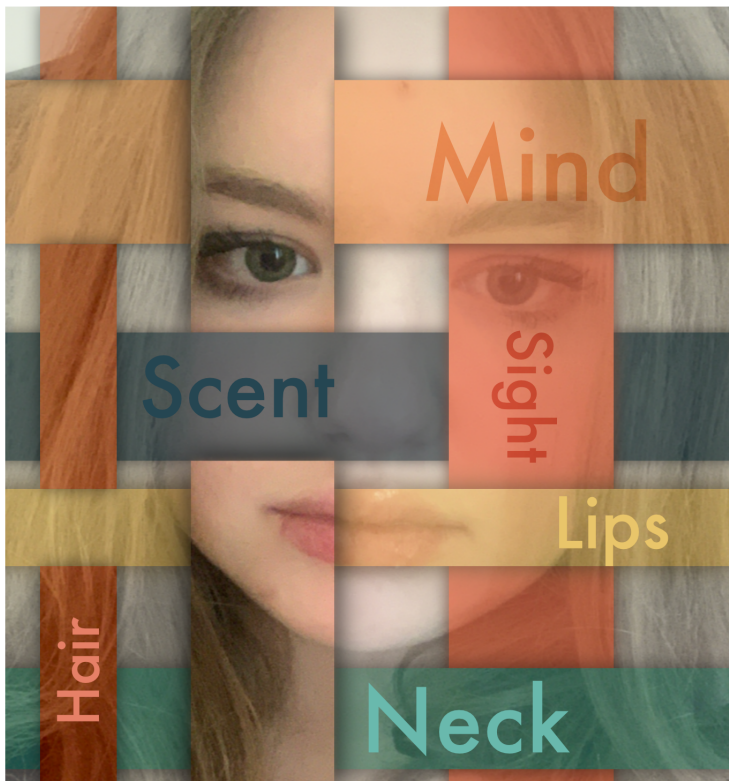
a lock box with a key,  
 a pendant placed on milk skin,  
 a box hidden behind clothes,  
 and the insides of one left broken-  
 hearted

something fragile and pure  
 made from the strongest of hands  
 and crafted from shiny metal that  
 promises to never break

things unseen to foreign eyes,  
 never revealed to those whose eyes  
 aren't my own, hidden locks placed in  
 the furthest corner of my mind

yet they are visible on every inch of  
 my skin,  
 sewn in pretty white lace through my  
 fingertips  
 and worn on honeyed skin—for  
 secrets can never be truly yours.

- Arianna Arizmendi, '21



-Ella Niren, '21

## Untitled

Vibrations resonate under my feet and under my skin,  
crawling around my inside as my outside braces against the howling  
wind.

My fur is not aerodynamic, was not built for this life.

A steel toe boot catapults me across the platform,

I land in a crowd of tennis shoes, stilettos  
and sensible work heels making their way, making a living.

The floor is slimy and sticky and sickly,  
like the homeless man begging, jostling his cup of change.

I, too, am looking for Change.

A Change in scenery.

A Change of pace.

A Change of heart.

But what good is a heart without a companion?

When will it be done?

This endless chase.

- *Defne Akcakayalioglu, '23*

## The Play

Oh what an enigma the theatre is

For every laugh, there are a thousand cries

For every beauty, a beast awaits

From the loud silence in the audience

To the pleasant anxiety that fills each performer

The atmosphere is a perfect chaos

The entertainers perform as if their lives are on the line

The intense gaze that eerily follows the closing scene

The tidal wave of red blossoms that award the entertainers

For what began with a note and ended with a bow

This bittersweet and strange production that was only a few hours

And all those who witnessed will never forget

This tale as old as time

- *Francisco Moore, '23*

## Untitled

It is smooth  
but bleeding underneath;  
it is a bruise.

A girl came running through,  
picking from the yard, vegetables and fruits.  
Her skin was tanned and smooth,  
covering up her bruise.

A woman sat under the sun  
with her baby on her lap.  
She touched the smooth skin of the baby,  
and the baby giggled a clear laugh.  
Such a tranquil afternoon covered up  
the woman's bruise.

An old lady knelt down to the Bible  
with bruises all over her face.  
She couldn't hide them any more,  
she needs to be saved.  
Dropped out of school when she was seven,  
she is totally illiterate.  
She saved money so her brothers can go to school,  
but she was sold to marry when she was sixteen,  
Pregnant when she was seventeen.  
She covered up her bruise,  
But her husband gradually added more bruises to her,  
too much that she couldn't cover them up.  
Yet bruises do not bleed bright colors.

Her fingers run across the pages of the Bible,  
it is smooth.  
"Please cure my bruise."

- Tairan Liu, '22



-Lucia Miller, '21



Saturday mornings with you,  
The smell of kindness filled the air the moment you arrived  
Your positivity had enough power to dissipate any lingering fear  
Your smile could part oceans,  
The music you would create could cure disease,  
When you would play,  
our piano would grow legs and dance around our home  
One two three, one two three...

You always made me feel special.  
Like I could do anything, be anyone  
You made the clouds disappear.  
You transformed me from a caterpillar to a butterfly.  
Light as paper I would float.  
Meeting you was a blessing,  
You would always say, some things are meant to be.

Now I only have Saturday mornings without you.  
Our piano doesn't dance anymore,  
The music we would create together, forever lost.  
How I long for five more melodious minutes with you,  
Just enough time for one more song.  
To feel our hearts connect through every harmony,  
To pretend just for a moment to be in a different land,  
Sleeping on the milky way,  
Dining on pieces of stardust.  
But eventually, I would have to come down  
And you wouldn't be there when I would land.

I still feel you with me,  
Every time I perform I know you're there.  
Sometimes I see your face in the flash of the silver spotlight,  
Sometimes I hear your voice in the bellowing undertones of a full orchestra.

I miss you,  
But I know some things never die.  
The memories of our magic ride,  
The love I feel for you.  
I guess,  
Some things are just meant to be.

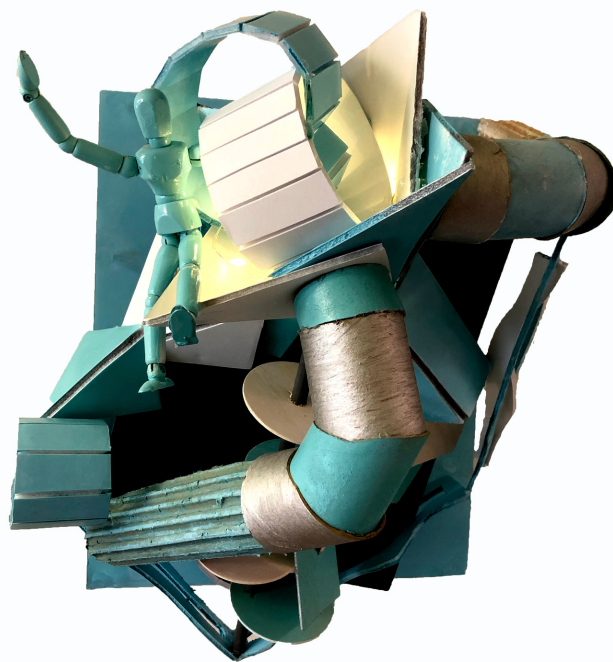
But she melts into the midnight mist  
 And marries the darkness, where  
 A claustrophobic, blazing light opens up the  
     Belly of a beast.  
 Her body tingles  
 The pain is indescribable, it only builds, burns, and buries all  
     thoughts  
 However, she will not wake  
 Until her figure slowly slips away  
     into the waves  
     of the sapphire water  
 that crash upon the flower beds.  
 She will not rise  
 Unless a Roman  
 Drowning in diamonds  
 Kisses her cheeks.

This is not  
 A campfire with chanting couples  
 Nor is there a beach with sand as soft as silk in sight  
 Rather it stretches a trillion light years apart,  
 Trying to be sewed together with a ticking time bomb,  
 Its belly always singing a song  
 But never will it be full.

- Ana Cohen, '21



-Giselle Boueri, '23



-Allie Hughes, '23

### No Good Very Bad Day

It creeps, like age does to the old man.  
 It takes away what once was.  
 The sun, it was shining, I swear it was,  
 Then the voracious grey storm came creeping, sneaking into existence,  
 Shining. Remember when we once conquered the world?  
 Then with the flip of a switch,  
 Back to getting stuck at every traffic light,  
 Spilling coffee on your new white shirt.  
 The stain won't come out.  
 This day, like a snowball on a hill,  
 Rolling down and collecting what was never wanted.  
 But suddenly the cold ice melts revealing the warm green grass,  
 Which hits you with a pang of remembrance,  
 You will be able to open the eye to the sunshine's rays again.

- Alina Morrison, '23



–Eduarda Favero, '22

## Spring's Last Breath

Spring is the silent sound of sunshine, the wonderment of a world through rose colored glass.

Like a sunrise, beautiful and ever fleeting,

fading into summer's oppressive heat, making it harder to breathe.

Summer becomes a buzzing sort of wildness, it is exciting, electrifying, terrifying.

Making me long for spring's carefree footsteps through morning mist and dew covered grass.

Back home to spring's lullabies and warm embrace,

far from summer's ever-changing madness.

I remember my last breaths of spring, which filled my lungs with a sweetness I have long forgotten,  
filled my head with fairytales.

At that moment, in my own little world, my imagination ran wild,

wild like summer's looming gaze.

It's strange... that in the springtime the world around you can be anything you wish it to be.

The ruler of my own little kingdom in that meadow by the mountains,  
pretending for hours, simply letting the time pass by, unaware of how precious it truly was.

The sun began to sink behind the mountains, the sky grew gold...

and springtime said its last goodbye.

I laughed and ran through that meadow, through the daydreams that floated in the air and the imaginary  
world I made in my mind.

Dancing for the first time in the rays of the rising summer sun,

just like that, I grew up.

- Lydia Taylor, '24



## Remembering it —After Yusef Komunyakaa

My childish face fades,  
 hiding inside the small house.  
 I said I wouldn't  
 act like it: No nostalgia.  
 I'm young. I'm grown.  
 My dim memories take over  
 like fog in the morn, pure joy  
 faded into the night. I open  
 this door- the house lets me go.  
 I open that door- I am inside the house  
 which full of the memories  
 again, focusing on the sights  
 to change the reverie.  
 I walk through the empty rooms,  
 hoping to feel many memories with my grandma.  
 I touch the black piano;  
 I see there's an old woman sitting beside me.  
 Stories shimmer on the old woman  
 But when she walks away  
 The stories stay in the house.  
 Doorbell's ring, a doctor's  
 frowns flashing before my eyes.  
 The cancer. A weak old woman with cancer.  
 A yellowish face rises  
 out of the bed, then speaks to me  
 with frail words. I am her vessel.  
 She's losing her energy and hope  
 inside the room. In the blue photo  
 an old woman struggles to rise from her bed:  
 No, she's making a good meal for the little girl.

—Stephanie Shen, '23

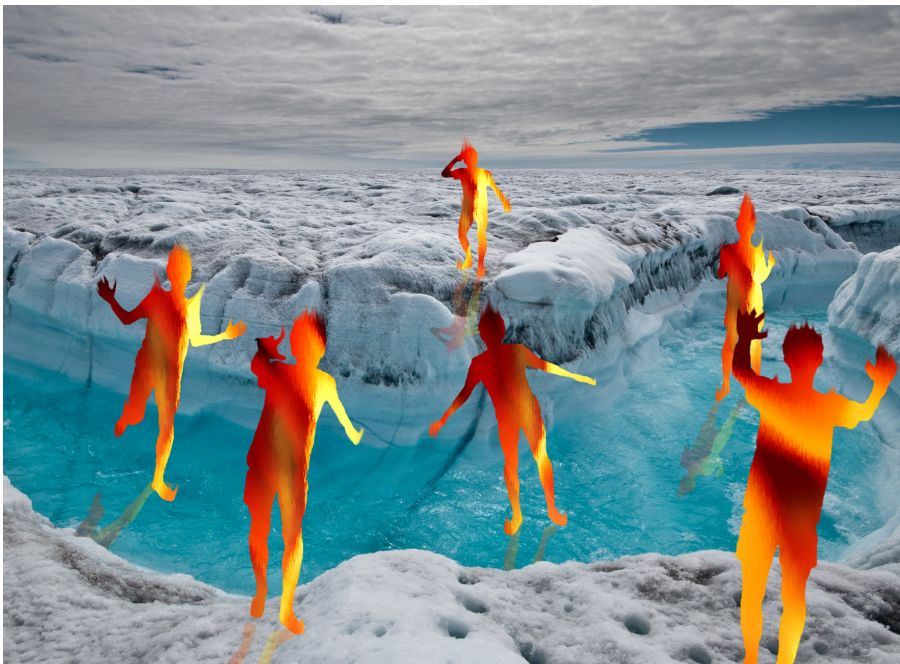
## Holding Stars

I want to see the stars.  
 I step through the door  
 Into the backyard  
 And look up.  
 A world of white.  
 Overcast, with clouds  
 Blocking pinpricks of light.  
 An alternative flies by  
 And lights up  
 To inform me of other options.  
 Back inside to grab a jar.  
 Old, but clean.  
 It can hold stars.  
 Sweat drips as I chase.  
 Mostly close calls to start, but then  
 I begin to catch them,  
 And after an hour, my jar is alive with light.  
 I look close and see my stars.  
 It is not the same.  
 The sky is endless.  
 This jar fits in my hand.  
 I look up and see that  
 The clouds have dispersed  
 While I was otherwise engaged.  
 I smile and release the fireflies.  
 They fly away as I  
 Look up into the night.

—Rosie Schneider, '23

an embrace - welcome or unwelcome - from the unlimited rays  
 of the blazing heart of the solar system  
 the thawing comfort of flames stroking through brick and smoke  
 reviving chill, replacing numbing bitterness with welcoming relaxation  
 and restoration from fingers to toes that knows no bounds  
 the touch of another or of love that never fades from memory  
 suffusing, seeping into every crevice of the body and of the heart  
 the shock of a sizzling stove or flaring pain  
 scientifically, kinetic energy transfer between systems  
 lightning strikes, candles flicker, sweaters insulate  
 summer's sand, baker's oven, child's fever,  
 the glory of grueling exertions, dripping droplets of sweat,  
 the mark of suntans left, emblazoning memories of temporary times  
 the cloud of smell radiating from fresh food, disseminating to all corners and senses  
 even an adjective for physical appearance or attraction,  
 cheeks glowing in blush or burning in shame,  
 face red with embarrassment or electric with anger  
 igniting matches, flashing smolders, unending light  
 a feeling - tangible or intangible - with innumerable forms  
 anywhere, any reason, any time, any way  
 life's warmth may appear inexorable, indescribable, immeasurable  
 As with heat in all its forms.

–Ellie Tymorek, '21



–Bradley Steinfeld, '22

### Untitled

I want to be like the sun  
 warm, vibrant  
 Its perennial shine brightening the lives  
 of all who encounter it  
 I want to be missed, waited for  
 Like sunshine  
 on a cold winter's day  
 or on a long, dark,  
 restless night  
 But I am not the sun  
 I am but a whisper,  
 a grain of sand,  
 haunted by my smallness,  
 drowning beneath the waves  
 washed away with the tide

- Portia Papagni, '23

## Teen Years

At eleven, I just wanted to turn twelve,  
only one more year to thirteen.

They were my older sister's sneaky stories,  
getting home at 2:00 am.  
They were how my parents fell in love,  
in the middle of their calculus class.

*You're going to change so much*, they said.  
Yet, I'm still waiting on it.

Less than two months and I'm eighteen,  
48 days till the clock strikes midnight  
Or I too will feel as if I've lost out on something.

Like a roller coaster,  
Your stomach plummets before the massive drop,  
You clutch your friend's hand beside you,  
bracing yourself

Nearing the tipping point.  
Suddenly, the drop seems significantly smaller  
As you roll into the straight path,  
the anticipation slowly washes away,  
subdues into a rippling pond,  
in comparison to the crashing waves you heard about.

*You'll discover yourself in your teenage years*, they say.  
What a conventional, dreadful statement.  
I'm uncomfortably still stuck on the rollercoaster,  
Not ready to get off but also unwilling to stay.

—Kate Micallef, '21



—Lucia Miller, '21



## Inside a Dancer's Mind

I stand backstage, anxiously waiting  
While the great dark curtains tower over me.  
The sounds of the audience's chatter engulfs the theater  
As the clock's hands slowly tick closer to showtime.

The whispers of nervous dancers drift all around me.  
Out of the corner of my eye, there they are -  
Stretching, jumping, turning, preparing  
While others frantically practice their steps

In these stagnant, final moments, I am still,  
Silent amongst the noise.  
I stand up straight, paralyzed in a sea of black  
Yet the surrounding darkness comforts me.

My body looks completely stiff on the outside,  
but  
On the inside, millions of butterflies flutter in my gut  
While my heart beats like a drum,  
Pounding faster and louder by the second.

As I close my eyes and take a deep breath,  
Small snapshots of movements mesh together in my mind.  
As I envision myself dancing across the stage,  
I can hear each unique beat begin to take shape.

The noise of the theater has halted, and  
My eyes slowly open as I come back to reality.  
The curtain rises like the morning sun, and  
adrenaline begins to rush through my veins.

The first note pierces the deafening silence as  
A magical rhythm floods the air, traveling  
Underneath my skin, reaching every single muscle in my body.  
It is invisible, yet mighty.

The beat calls out to me with a powerful energy,  
Like a sea siren's hypnotizing song.  
I steady myself and step towards the edge of the wings.  
I am in too deep, no turning back now.

All of a sudden my mind goes completely blank  
As I emerge from behind the darkness.  
I am transported to a whole new world filled with possibilities  
That turns all of my worries into dust.

My head and heart sync with the beat  
As the concept of time is erased from existence.  
I twirl like a wildflower blown away by the wind  
And leap like a gazelle gliding through the vast savannah.

From the very bottoms of my toes to the tips of my fingers,  
I float effortlessly as I let the music take control.  
Happiness exudes from my glowing eyes and my bright smile  
As my inner feelings of joy hold my head up high.

Bright blinding beams call out to me.  
This is where I'm meant to be.

- Ellie Ashley, '22

–Yifeng (Frank) Hu, '22

## Untitled

My hero wore no cape .....

His words were harsh and mean, but his heart filled with lasting love.  
 That love he stored came seldomly, but for his grandsons always.  
 His everlasting love held me up as a boy with its red, warm arms.  
 My hero made me strong, he never let me lay down in the “fight of life.”  
 He made every second of his short time with me seem like his last  
 And Sadly, his last seconds were to come.

My hero had his kryptonite, except unlike in the movies, his was winning.  
 My hero showed no weakness though  
 He had a job to do.....  
 He had to see his grandson's smile.  
 He needed to show his boys the love they always craved.  
 So, the show went on

Balls were thrown, laughs were made, but the clock never stopped ticking.  
 Memories made, dinner eaten, the clock just wouldn't stop.  
 The clock couldn't be stopped, and the sound of the bell was close  
 laughter, giggles, the clock went on.  
 tic... tic.....Ding..... Ding.....

This time the bells weren't from his days in the fire department  
 The bell was struck, the last second had passed  
 My hero had fallen.

My heart sat in my chest shattered, its color black.  
 My tears released through the gates I once called my eyes.  
 All was lost....

Once the whirlwind of emotions was contained in my brain I understood.  
 My hero taught me lessons so I could live without him.  
 So I grabbed my watch and put it on.  
 I looked at it with fear  
 I didn't know how to start without him, but I needed to.  
 So I pressed play on life, and my very own clock was started.  
 My own life.  
 My own path.  
 Thank you, Grandpa.

-Sean Jordan, '22



## Sarah.

I remember once I was asked what I felt when I look at her  
 I Just said it felt like I can breathe again but I wanted to say so much more  
 I wanted to talk about her until my throat grew sore  
 I wanted to talk about the way her eyes are so green that the trees must envy her  
 The way that her smile nearly consumes every room with gleams, with golden ray of light  
 I think of nights of us dancing in the kitchen with  
     Messy hair  
         Full stomachs  
             Huge hoodies  
                 Fluffy socks  
                     And nothing but time  
 Those are the nights that I never wanted to end  
     But they always do  
 No one tells you how hard it is to leave that one person, even just for a second  
 Because only they can turn the constant knot in your stomach into butterflies  
 When ee cummings said that “you are my sun, my moon, and all my stars” he lied  
 Because finding her was like having every planet in the universe coiled  
     Maybe that’s why I see stars when I look into her eyes  
         Galaxies aligning her lips  
             The power of the solar system on her finger tips  
 She is nothing less than the aftermath of a beautiful explosion  
 And the creation of a feeling that will forever be in motion

- *Whizdom Williams*, '22



– Tairan Liu, '22

# Japanese Poetry

## Pauses

Stillness in the air  
Just one moment of silence  
Second to reflect  
- *Emily Parra*, '24

---

## Untitled

The largest puddle  
Ceaseless and nebulous  
Have we met before?  
- *Blake Menin*, '22

---

## Untitled

Rainfall on glass roof  
Plays acoustic rhythm and blues  
My heart dances too  
- *Venus Wang*, '22

---

## Performance

Blanket of darkness  
Anticipation boils  
Inhibitions lost  
-*Alexa Shumway*, '22

---

## Tall Tower

Eventually,  
Hidden in your tall tower,  
Death comes. Slow or quick?

Wrinkled, raisin skin  
Or end decided. Now jump!  
Fall to touch the Earth.  
- *Stella Griffin*, '21

---

## Blue Boy

Blue boy looks inward  
Fearing deep vastness above,  
His ripples turn waves  
-*Grace Vera*, '22

---

## Tanka

Bronze hearts and burqas  
Dancing through arid deserts  
To the sirens' song  
Rising from the Aegean  
This is where our journey ends  
- *Izzy Forster*, '21

---

## Reflection in the Water

A sinful creature  
Stares into your eyes as the  
Water blurs yourself  
-*Alessandra Roberts*, '24

---

## Our evening comes

At the dawn of dusk  
The heavens shine lavender  
As our day dares die  
- *Marlowe Dunn Flom*, '21





-Angela McCall, '21