

ECHO



Prologue

Flowers blossom through a slow, graceful process driven by light, warmth, and time. The blossom begins as a small, tightly closed bud, protected by green sepals. Inside, delicate petals are already formed, waiting for the right moment—when they have saved enough energy, gathered enough strength— to fully bloom, show themselves, and reach their potential.

So too is the act of writing, of storytelling, of making art. Every piece begins as a seed of thought, buried beneath layers of doubts and dreams. Words are cultivated slowly in silence. As creations are made, they eventually reach the moment of blossoming.

This magazine remains a garden for these creations to bloom. Each of the pieces anthologized in this years' issue relates to flowering in their own ways: to the beauty, the struggle, the continual change. Each piece speaks to personal growth, creative and emotional, and we are incredibly grateful for every contribution. Thank you for sharing your voice and your vision.



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Grace Littman '25
Ja'Miyah Claxton '25
Damercy Artau '27
Jaden Jiang '27
Saje Cilento '26
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Inside Back Cover Art

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Prologue

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Saje Cilento '26
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Editor Portraits

Wendy Li '26

Special thanks to

Nicole Cossitt-Levy
Lori Kriegel
Helena Smith

Editorial Policy

The editors spent the year reading and reviewing art and literature submissions. We went through each piece and selected a vast assortment that showcase our schools' strength, talents, and diversity. The echo staff met weekly to design and create this marvelous collection of artistry. If you would like to be a part of this process next year, sign up for Literary Magazine!

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Viv K. '30
Josh T. '31

echo
Wooster School Literary Magazine
2025

I am from the hands of love

I am from worn down shoes, souls cracked at the bottom.

From stale cheerios in the depths of the cupboard and
colorful Crayola markers streaking crisp, white paper.

I am from the chimney flue ash,

Thick, smokey, a hollow abyss of leftover flames in my ear.

I am from a rushing stream,

Crooked, cutting through the raw Earth.

I'm from sticky cinnamon rolls on Christmas morning whose frosting coats each finger,
and loving embraces that carry affection from heart to heart.

From Morgan, her "little bean," and Chris, her "little manager" who was always prepared.

I'm from the cold, familial arguments and quick, cushy apologies.

From brown cows grazing in a field who make chocolate milk, from never giving up.

I'm from my dad's strong sermons echoing from the pulpit and soft bedside prayers, hands to the sky.

From the golden sand of the west and still snowfall of the east.

From warm creamy pasta, filling my tummy on a tuesday night,
and gooey, rich brownies, covering my lips.

I am from my sister begging for a sibling and the stork's effortless wings on our porch,
granting the request.

From the smitten stare of my mom bridging to my dad's heart years ago
and the endless dusty boxes of scrapbooks and memorabilia,
each like a magnet resisting gravity's force by generational love from afar.

I am from fear's grasp on a stormy night, each rumble in the distance
heeding warning to my sleepy head.

From the separation of a family,

then the peace, every step treading new ground from there on.

I am from mom's bravery and dad's encouragement shaping a strong harness around me.

Inside though, I am from the hands of love, calloused
and yet still stroking me tenderly after all these years.



All Gone

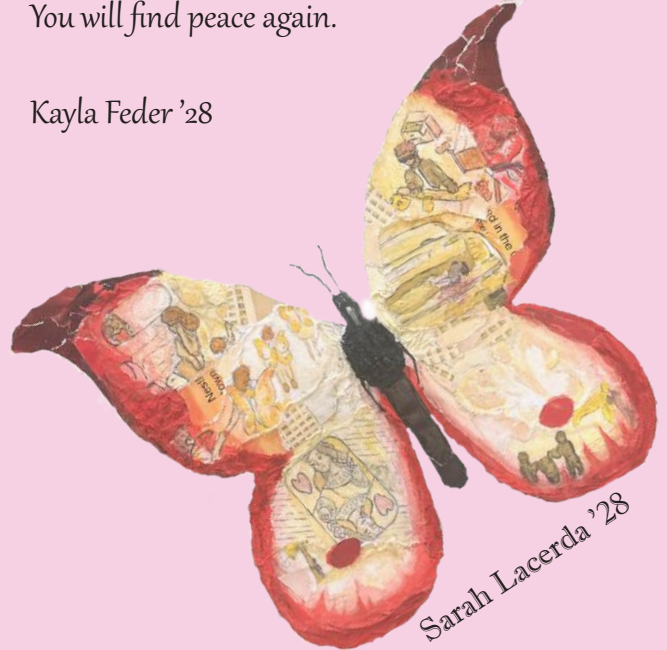
And on the days you miss them,
go outside.
Take a walk,
Let the world wrap around you
like their warm hugs,
hear their laughter echo in the trees.
Remember how much they loved you,
how their eyes sparkled when they saw you.
They never wanted you to feel this pain,
this ache that seems to drown the light.

And on the day you feel sad,
take a bath.
Let the water cradle your body,
paint a little more,
let colors spill like your tears.
When you've written "all gone"
in every poem and every song,
the silence will flow in
like an unwanted guest.
You can hold their ashes,
sit by their grave,
share your secrets as if they
were right there beside you.

They can't rise up or fall down
to hold your hand,
but in the rustle of the autumn leaves,
you just might hear them,
feel them guiding you home,
a place only they will know.

Next time you miss them,
feel sad, go outside, take a walk.
Breathe in the beauty around you,
take a bath, soothe the ache
left from their touch.
Paint a little more,
and something beautiful may just happen.
You will find peace again.

Kayla Feder '28



Sarah Lacerda '28

Spring is in the air

Spring is in the air
Blossoms await, colorful feast
Groundhog get it right, and hear our plea
Spring is in the air
Sprouts are peeking through the snow
Making way for endless summer glow
Spring is in the air
A vision of blooming trees, green grass sprouting
Birds chirping, perfect melodies
Spring is in the air
Frogs croaking, delightful harmonies
Spring emerging as winter says goodbye
Sunlight filters through the sky
"Bye bye, snow!" we say with joy
"Spring is here," we cheer

Josh T. '31





Tree
stands swaying slowly
tall, strong, home for many
growing for centuries
no dreams, no hope, no freedom.

Ja'Miyah Claxton '25

Ja'Miyah Claxton '25

A TREE THAT DARED TO LISTEN

In the heart of a forgotten forest, where the sunlight danced lightly on the leaves and the air was filled with the scent of moss and the forest floor. In the middle of the forest stood an ancient tree that whispered secrets to those who dared to listen. Its great branches stretched out like welcoming arms, holding the dreams and stories of wanderers who had found it. Each mark in its bark told a story, by the hands of time and nature itself. Beneath its branches, the ground was carpeted with delicate wildflowers and soft moss. All the flowers were bursting with colors. In the beginning of the tree's life people came to the tree and told their stories. Tales of their travels, interactions, and their sorrows. The tree kept all their stories safe, in its branches, and in its roots. As time passed, the tree got very wise and started to think, "What can I do with all this knowledge?" One day another person came to the tree, the tree seeing many people over the years, and the tree could quickly tell what their problem was. So instead of listening to the person, the tree spoke. Its voice came up in a soft whisper, the air carried it to the person. Once the person heard it, they had a little more courage, a little more strength, a little more wisdom. Now you know of the ancient tree that whispered secrets to those who dared to listen.

Katarina A. Sorokin '27



Home Away from Home

One Week. 7 days. 168 hours. All can disappear in a blink of an eye when you aren't counting. Each year I take a one-week trip to Easton Pennsylvania to spend time with our family friends, the Trochym's. During this week, they have a planned activity each day whether it's a ropes course or water park, or staying the night at the Jersey shore. Even in the moments of saying nothing, the week is still fulfilling.

Their house just has a different warmth than other places. The kitchen overlooks the living room, and their long dining room table is only a few steps away from the kitchen. The openness of their home makes everyone feel together, even connected. The bedrooms upstairs are simple, but roomy and clean. The house is connected to another home, where their grandparents MaeMae and QuaQua live. QuaQua built both homes, as well as their neighbor's. This house holds years of memories from anger and joy, to love and grief. It's always tidy, yet not like one of those homes with no flavor. Outside in the front, there are many acres of land where their vineyard used to be. There's a koi pond at the bottom of their long driveway and places for people to gather. In the back, there's a big pool and garden where MaeMae grows fruits and vegetables for dinner. There's a hot tub and a bonfire. There's a counter outside in the middle of the patio where people can grill and make drinks. Their entire home has been a place for people to convene, learn about one another, see each others' differences, and be just people.

Being from Connecticut, I wouldn't expect many differences between Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Yet, when I enter that house, I feel refreshed with who I could be instead of who I am.

A simple home can feel like so much more when it's filled with the right people at the right time. When people who just click are told to make the most out of a week, not even some crummy weather can stand in the way of their excitement. When I went to Pennsylvania last year, I was not as lucky as I was the year before. The house flooded twice, with water coming up from the basement and down from the ceiling. We lost power and could barely swim. Yet even with that thrown at us, we laughed at how gross it was mopping the basement, poked the ceiling to make the water rush out quicker, and learned new card games, while just enjoying each other's company, talking about the future and the past. We even discovered trash bagging, when you stick your legs through a trash bag, cover that bag in soap, go outside in the pouring rain to find a grassy hill, and throw yourself down it. You slide and twist. It's weird and messy, but no one thinks of the aftermath when you are so deep in the present.

Each year I meet so many new people, whether a friend of the Trochym's or someone who is a stranger to all of us. The memories we all have with one another I wouldn't trade for the world. I might have met a lot of people, but I learned even more. That it is never the places you go, or how far the trip is, it's the people you bring and meet along the way that make a trip truly memorable.

Alé Greco '26



SEARCHING FOR THE GHOSTS

First having listened to a thousand voices,
fading quietly away,
and heard stories of the strangled cries of lost spirits
as their souls departed.

I shoulder the
weight of countless grave accounts,
and visions only dreamt,
shriveling with lost hope.
I do this alone,
tortured by the closure and affirmation
they never received.

There is a path.
Seen faintly glimmering, leading to the stars.
Noticed only by those who care what it means.
I know where the light leads, but maybe
it's just an unusually bright night,
dismissed by the blind, the ignorant.

I journey on.
Step by step, feeling their presence.
Surrounded by the grief which hangs in the air.
Brought on by illusion - one of love,
as all their worth depended on the one
who looked right through them
and squashed their passion.

The place I am going,
this myth disperses into threads of truth
woven to create the reality of many like me.
They could have escaped, but the walls closed tightly around,
until tending the fire for another's comfort,
their dignity dissolved in a shower of flames.





JADEN JIANG '27

I came to find the ghosts.
Their voices are anthems.
Their voices are protests.
I came to listen
And praise the efforts that survived.
I move my pencil along the page
forming the words they were ever allowed,
Highlighting the wisdom,
that scarcely prevailed.
The dreams I came to salvage, not
the pain to intensify.
The rights I came to grant, not
the inequities to hold on to.

This is the place.
I hold my breath,
feeling the power that radiates miles high,
the potential that could never be used.
Purposes shrouded by the facades
of a society that can't see their errors.

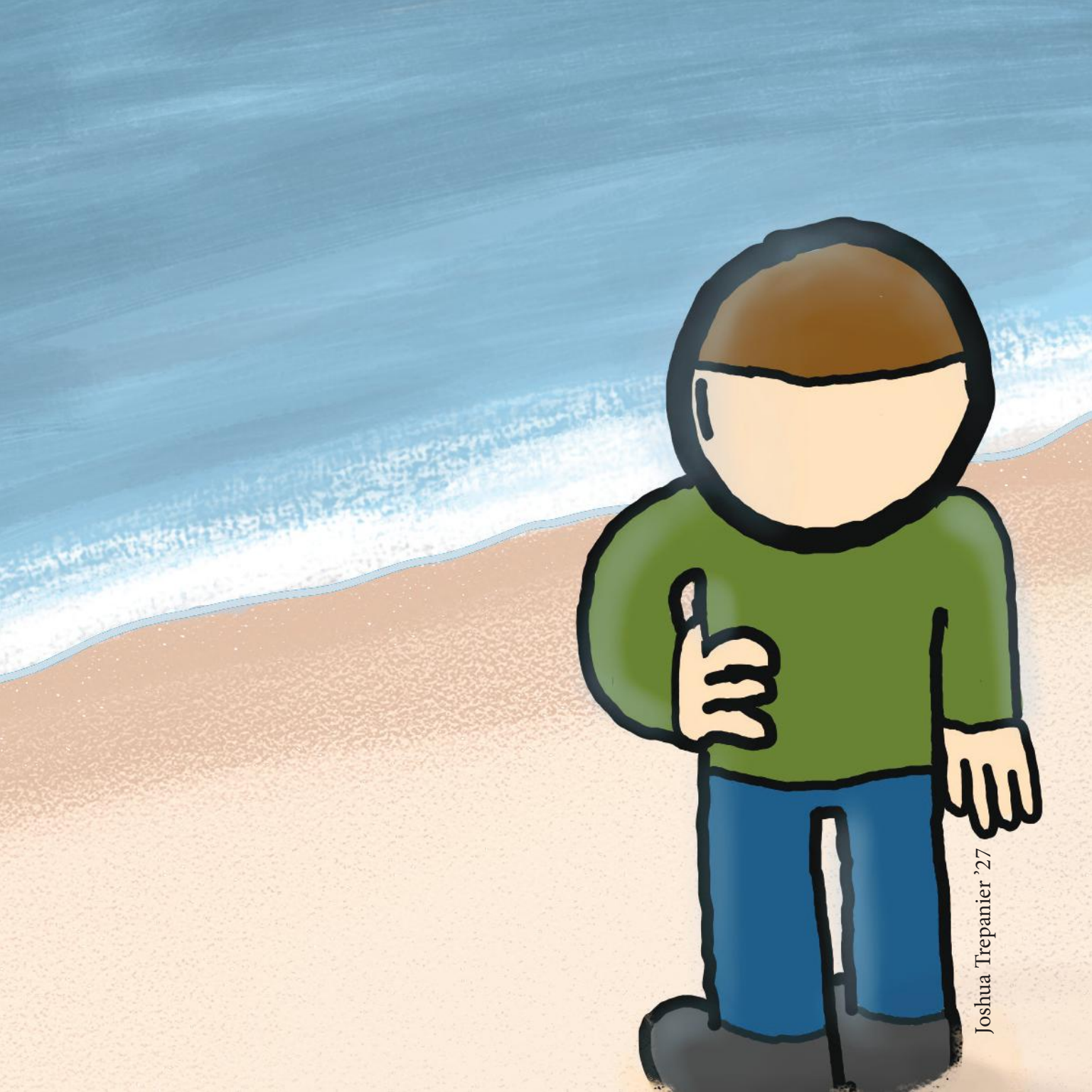
I am them.
They resemble what I will become
if nobody will listen.
If everyone can't unite under the stars,
relaying the past and horrors to come.
For now, I see a
sky full of smoke,
a sun losing its warmth.

We seek the voices
who still have strength to give,
for me alone is not enough
to engrave our message
in a stone, where it will never
be forgotten, or passed as nothing
but a foolish myth.

Fish and Chips

I am from kitchens
From newsstands and vinegar
I am from the sizzling frier
Flaky, crispy, and delicious
I am from the Atlantic,
Cool as a sunset in September
I am from Boxing Day and pubs
From haddock and whiting
I am from the diehard and hungry
From all you can eat to travel the world
I am from the hungry men, loud and proud
I am from the shores of Naushon
Fish and chips, tartar sauce
From the fresh catches in July
The bread crumbs on cod
Laid next to statues of football crests
That have been passed down for centuries

Gabriel Gordon '28



Joshua Trepanier '27

Wings Of Her Love

In the quiet stillness of a butterfly room, the air hums with delicate energy, as if every wall breathes along with the fragile creatures fluttering within. The scent of damp earth and sweet nectar lingers, mingling with the soft rustle of wings. A few sunbeams pierce the room through the glass, casting long shadows on the floor, where cocoons hang like jewels in clusters, their time yet to come. I step lightly, careful not to disturb the tiny ecosystem around me. The butterflies, wings shimmering like a kaleidoscope of colors, seem unaware of my presence, lost in their brief dance of existence. A monarch with burnished orange wings glides past, its flight slow and deliberate, as though savoring every moment of its short life. A swallowtail, its wings patterned like a stained-glass window, zips by in a burst of motion, vanishing as quickly as it appeared.



One brushes against my cheek, and another flutters by my ear. I instinctively swat it away, my pulse quickening. They seem to multiply, filling my vision and making me feel trapped. A wave of panic washes over me. Are they attacking me? They swoop past my face, landing on my shoulders and arms. I step back, but there's no escape. They block my view and brush against my skin like an overwhelming invasion. My breath catches in my throat as I feel their delicate bodies all over me, and I start to feel suffocated. As suddenly as they appeared, the butterflies began to disperse, floating away to their flowers. I stand there, breathless, realizing it was never an attack; their intent was harmless, still, my heart races as I slowly regain my composure. My fear of these delicate creatures felt irrational, yet it was overpowering. Something about their wings, their unpredictable movements, triggered a spiral of anxiety.





But then, there was my grandmother. She adored butterflies with such a gentle, calming affection that, over time, her love began to loosen the grip of my fear. She would sit with me, speaking of their beauty, their graceful movements, and how they symbolized transformation. The way her face lit up when she talked about them was a silent invitation for me to see them through her eyes. It wasn't an immediate transformation, but her love for those creatures gradually seeped into my heart, replacing my fear with a newfound appreciation. She showed me that love, in its purest form, can transform even the most frightening things into something beautiful. I've learned that love can heal, alter our perceptions, and guide us through fear.

Looking back now, I realize it wasn't just about overcoming my fear of butterflies; it was about understanding the depth of her love and how it helped me grow beyond my limitations. It felt like they followed her, appearing at just the right moments. Her phone had a home screen with images of these butterflies as if she carried their presence. It wasn't just the butterflies but the overall feeling of her home, surrounded by nature. The purple butterfly trees gracing her yard were natural magnets for these beautiful creatures. Their colorful blooms stood like silent sentinels, attracting the butterflies, whose graceful wings shimmered against the rich backdrop of violet flowers. Without fail, she would regularly send me pictures of them, her voice bubbling with excitement in each text as she captured yet another moment when a butterfly fluttered close enough for her to snap a photo. Whenever I saw a monarch in her photos or the world outside, it felt like a piece of her was right there with me, comforting me with her love for these creatures. It was as if the butterflies were her messengers, reminding me of the warmth and peace of her presence, even when we were miles apart.

Saje Cilento '26



The Jar

I put my worries in a jar
that has 9.7 million pebbles.
It's so big yet so small,
full of cries from men and women.

The jar holds the pebbles,
but I hold questions.
How do I help them
when I am outside looking in?
How do I protect and nurture the injured?
How did this happen?

Sometimes, I imagine
the worst-case scenario.
I worry if someone throws a rock
and the glass breaks
the pebbles will be left in disarray.

It has been 396 days since some of the pebbles
were removed from the jar.
I watch as the sealed lid on the jar gets tighter,
keeping the pebbles safe.
I don't know what I would do without this jar,
and I don't want to know.

Abbe Kanfer '25

Abbe Kanfer '25

Never Again

The world watches,
but no one speaks.
The world turns its back
while others weep.

Rockets rain down as hearts break,
lives stolen
and dignity forgotten.
Yet, the world claims peace.

Mothers and fathers cry for their children.
Grandparents stolen from their homes.
Babies held in the dark.
The future uncertain,
but the strength of the nation
fights amidst atrocities.
Israel remains resilient.

How long will the world turn away
while the cries of the innocent echo?
How long will it remain silent
as lives are shattered?

And how do you break the silence that feeds
the flames of hate?
When will the phrase “never again”
regain its meaning?

Peace cannot be built on silence,
where silence allows terror to thrive.
Peace will not come from indifference.
Action must be taken.

Grace Littman '25

The Girl Who's Just a Girl

The girl's just a girl who feels lost.
She doesn't know what to do with herself
She can't help but think about what it would be like if
things were different.
Every time she looks in your eyes, she feels.
She feels so much, she feels more than she will ever admit
She feels the smiles she once wore when you used to talk.
She feels pain, sorrow, happiness, longing, hope, fear,
but most of all, she feels confused.

She's scared to admit it, but she doesn't know
what to think when you speak to her.
Are the questions from a place inside
or from a habit you were born into?
When you look at the pictures from a time
long forgotten, do you regret?
Do you ever feel as much as she feels
when she walks down the halls?
What goes through your mind
when she passes you with a smile?
Do you ever think about her?

In time, you'll see that she is just a girl,
but she's so much more than that.
She hides in the corner, people call her misunderstood,
but really, she's suppressed.
Not with a D but with an S.
Suppressed like the emotions she tries to hide,
covering them up with a smile.

She wants to know if the compliments are real
If you actually care when she talks about her day.
On the nights when nothing goes on,
where silence looms in the air
Do you ever feel like texting her? Do you even care?





The girl's filled with memories,
memories of times long ago.
She still cares, but doesn't know if you do, too.
She's a girl that you once knew.

Whenever your paths meet, the memories fill you both up.
You hear the smiles.
You feel the laughter.
You see the pain that she feels now.
But you're too scared,
too scared to ask her if she's okay,
because you know that she isn't okay.

But you are a good person.
You know it deep down.
The girl knows it too, because she said it long ago,
and she means everything she says,
even when she forgets.

Forgets who she is,
forgets who you are,
forgets the world turns,
and pain is just a scar.
A scar that will hold on,
a scar that will never leave,
the scar is a mark that's better to grieve.

In the end, the girl is just a girl.
You can pass her, you can wave,
you can talk, and you can cry along the way.
But when everything's been said,
it's your choice what to do.
When the girl who's just a girl
has so many questions about you

The Spirit That Was

Clock ticks, voices carry, music flows into my ears.
Wind whispers along the worn gravel,
guiding me into the dark earth,
the weight of this love soaking my tears.
My life links here, flowing in my veins,
blocking all the fears.

Energy electrifies, nature shines,
a breeze wraps around my form.
A spirit powers my life force,
a light on her own in the world,
bejeweled and lit up through the fiercest of storms.
An abstract creation of beauty,
creating her own interpretation of the norm.

Stairs creak, music thumps, mystical fog engulfs me
into a warming embrace.
The racing train of my mind steadied by the sound
of drums beating out a lively rhythm
which summons the fates.
A sacred ceremony of protection and reassurance
never to erase.

Wide smiles, familiar faces, a gently inquisitive soul
focusing on me.
I seek reassurance that others will be safe,
but I get a rallying call for myself to be seen.
Old spirits give guidance, a home,
every little thing in between.

Critical moments, thoughts churning,
not certain to whom I can turn.
Pour my soul to her in times of turmoil,
receive solace never for the price of scorn.
Seems to always be there waiting,
watching for me, asking nothing in return.

Holding her hand, seeing her pride,
knowing that is a fresh start.
I hear her contagious laughter within these walls,
her joy etched in my heart.
A voice whispering wisdom to me
even when we're apart.

The wind shifts, earth trembles,
the dreaded cycle fingers her release.
My body quakes in dread,
yet our connection remains
untouched with eternal peace.
Though the spirit has moved on,
she has made an impact never to cease.

Ivy Masotta '28



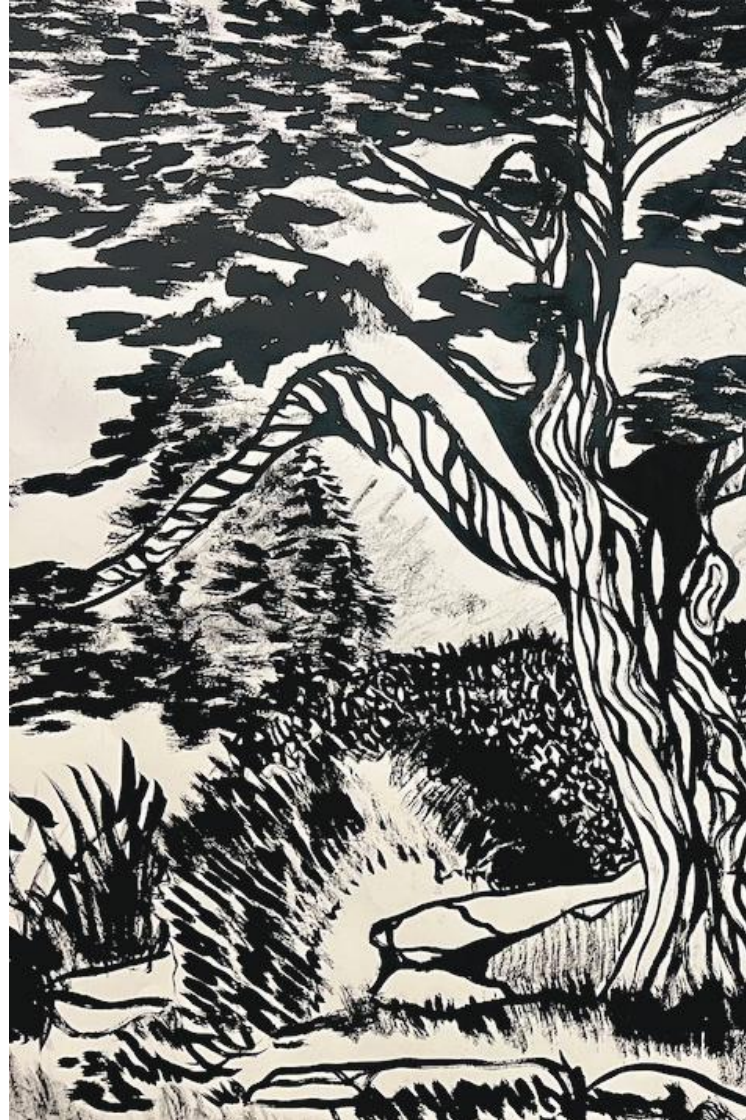
The Life of a Great Poet

The life of a great poet is complicated
Being left behind until so much later
And cared for by a parent that was not her own
Learning from the circumstances that made her,
And her writing of it being well known

The life of a great poet is unique
So easy and so hard,
like rain falling from the Missouri sky
And the way her uncle's fists fly,
the hardship in the horrifying reason why
Keeping quiet before speaking so much,
She held it in before letting it go
Like the anger towards the one who
should have been there,
And didn't arrive until she was old
enough to be strong on her own
A child that became so grown and yet minds so young,
And that's how it is in everyone, she says

The life of a great poet is insight,
So listen to what she has to say
About being present in this wonderful world
That hurts the most when you don't have a home
Or the comfort that a home brings, the belonging

The life of a great poet is difficult
Especially when you don't surrender,
And let pride roam





Toni Erian '25

Like her pen on paper that is full of experience
Uplifting and caring for children that are not her own
And sharing her knowledge so others won't make
the same mistakes that got her stuck in a tough place

It's difficult when their hands hurt you
more than their words
And leave bruises all over your body and soul
When the one you loved is one
you no longer recognize or know
Like who she was before she found
the Creator of everything
Even of her mind, her home, her hair,
her comb, her world, her family, and her spirit

The life of a great poet is beautiful
Phenomenal like she believed herself to be,
“And still I rise”
Is what she says when they wanted to get her down
She got up shining like the sun
Like the clouds above her in Arkansas
For years she suffered until she healed
And now she loves the very one who abandoned her
Like the moon abandons us in the day
And brings light the next night

The life of a great poet is improvement
Learning from the human family
Recovering from the peering memories
Improving how she treats herself,
And the one she is responsible for
The life of a great poet is remembering
great trees that fall,
Or are forgotten and falling
And when she did it hurt us all
But at least her legacy lives on

The Life of a Great Poet (cont.)

The life of a great poet is success

She earned many awards,

And did so much for what she believed

Yet,

Her real success is in what she's given to us,

That will stay forever like air here

Every sentence she wrote will remain

and keep a mind going

Like those three people who pulled her

back when she was on the brink

When she was on the brink of breaking,

Like glass in a mirror,

She prevailed

And now we honor her gift

The gift of wisdom in writing

Or proof of redemption for every girl

The life of a great poet is freeing

like when the old folks laugh,

The life of a great poet is thoughtful

like being touched by an angel,

The life of a great poet is trial and error

Hard-working,

Loving life,

Trusting God on those lonely nights,

The life of a great poet is amazing peace

The life of a great poet is equality

And making sure everyone has it

The life of a great poet is time

The time she danced

And the time she sang

The time she acted

And the time she won her awards

The time she lived

and made her voice heard

The time she captivated

anyone who read her thoughts in print of a book

The life of a great poet is a cool drink 'fore I die

The life of a great poet is beauty and pain

Stained and cleaned,

Redeemed and new

Denying the threats of old

Helping those while they grow

Meaning something

Sharing something

The life of a great poet is trying

Trying when you fail until you don't

It's loving until what once was has faded away,

Its acknowledging differences

Its charity and kindness

Its confidence and humility

The interest in pondering her and what she learned

The tears wiped off of her face and off of mine

The maturity some gain

Her truth being given away

Her life was like a story

Her story was like a motivating song

A song from the heart

and the tune is from the mind

The life of a great poet is her

The life of a great poet is Maya

Maya Angelou

Isabela Espinal '28



Ella Dumorné '27

I was a victim

I was a victim, a victim
of my own story
A victim in a story
I had created for myself
It wasn't a cry for help
It was an attempt
Gouging my eyes out,
searching for proof
Evidence

Let's call in a search team,
and clear her brain,
every ounce should be investigated,
she is a criminal

For this wasn't my story anymore,
somethings twisted, I'm going insane
My pages are being ripped out,
I can't feel anything,
but somehow this is so painful

If losing myself means gaining my soul back,
give me a paper and a pen,
I'll write my own funeral speech

My vision is going hazy,
I would rather die than not be able to see
what's going on in front of my very eyes
My palms are becoming a sea, the waves
crashing along the shore
My heart beating out of my chest
like a bird's wings as it slowly dies
No, no this isn't happening to me,
this only happens in a movie

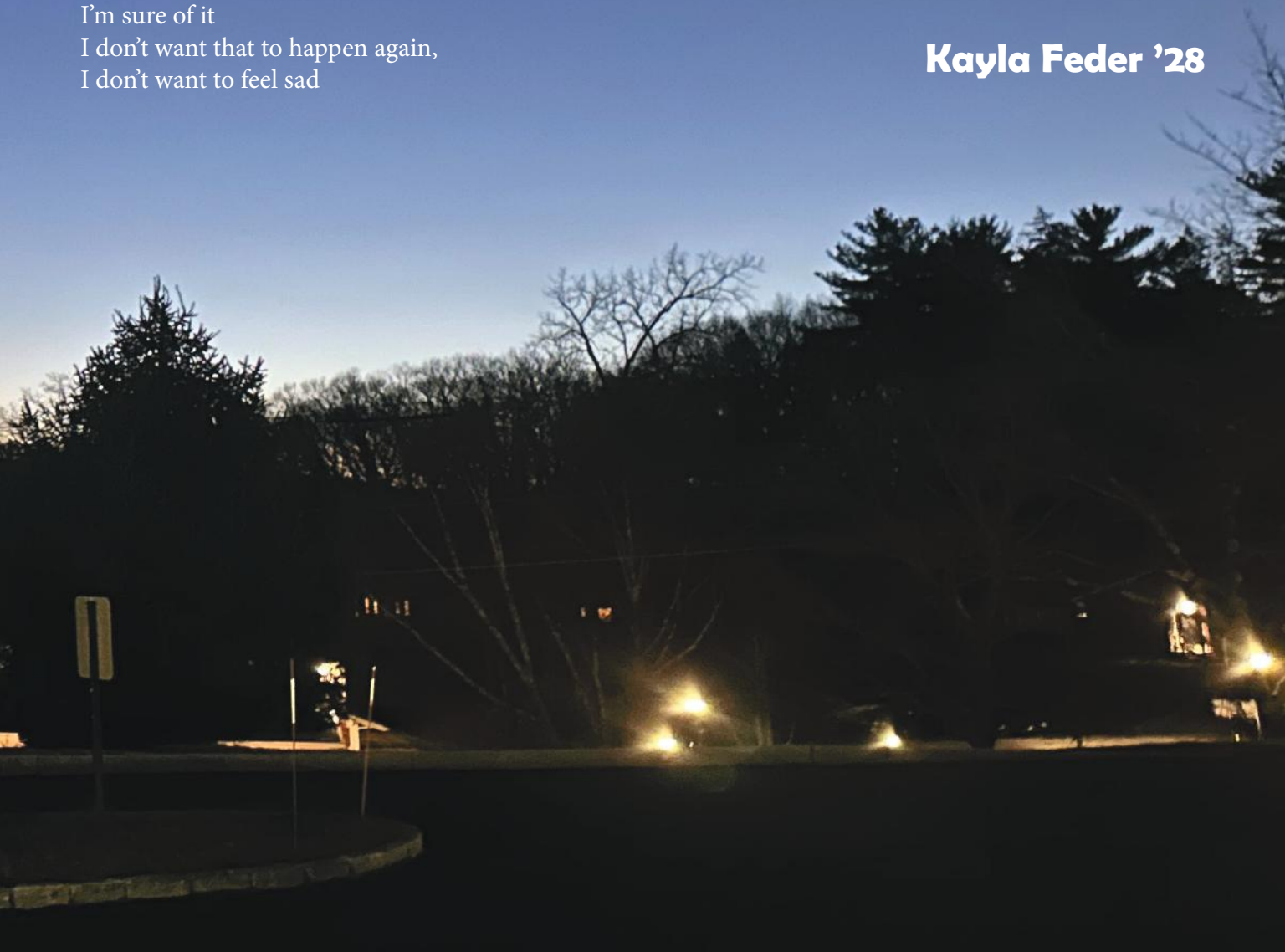


Only, everything was happening to me
I wasn't just living in my own book,
but my own movie

My vision floods back in,
my heart slows down,
and my hands become a little drier
I know that was bad, that wasn't normal,
I'm sure of it
I don't want that to happen again,
I don't want to feel sad

That's it, I'm burning this book,
setting it on fire
I was a victim, yes, of a crime
I put myself through
So in that case, maybe I am the criminal,
showing up guilty to the court case
taking place on the last page
of this horrible book.

Kayla Feder '28



My Friend Black

My friend Black is bright and brilliant
Their hair defies gravity and their smile blossoms across their face.
Their skin is dark brown like volcanic sand
Or light like the trunk of a Eucalyptus tree
Their lips like a seedling emerging from the ground to smile at the world
Their coffee brown eyes color coordinate with their brown skin
Their hair isn't nappy it just can't be assimilated

My friend Black has to tell people to not to put hands in their hair
My friend Black doesn't want to be asked for the n word pass
My friend Black wants more black teachers,
My friend Black wants to be represented
My friend Black doesn't want to be killed by the police
My friend Black wants an education
My friend Black doesn't want to die at 15

My friend Black had a dream,
The dream was Beyonce and her 32 grammys
The dream was Langston Hughes, a great poet of the Harlem Renaissance
The dream was Lebron James, the all time leading scorer in basketball history
The dream was Madam CJ Walker, the creator the first black hair care products
The dream was Lewis Latimer, one of the inventors of the light bulb
The dream was Ida B Wells, who led the anti lynching crusades of the 1890's

The dream was not George Floyd, he died with a knee on his neck
The dream was not Breonna Taylor, she died shot in her own home
The dream was not Amaud Arbery, he died while jogging
These black friends of mine were all unarmed,
their lives mattered, know their names

My friend Black is someone you know
They work at your local grocery store
Black is your boss or your coworker
Black is a artist you like
Black is your neighbor

My friend Black is more than just black
My friend Black is more than a caricature
My friend Black is more than just one person
My friend Black is greatness

Corey Phaire '29





JOSHUA TREPANIER '27

STORMY NIGHT

MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD FEARS

AWAKE ON CHILLY NIGHTS

SHADOWS ON THE WALL

TOO STORMY, TOO COLD

YOUR FURRY PAWS KEEP ME WARM

I CAN FEEL YOUR WET NOSE COMFORTING MY HEART

TOO STORMY, TOO COLD

YOUR WARM FUR, AN EMBRACE OF WARMTH

AT LAST, IT'S MORNING, A NICE WALK WITH YOU WILL SUFFICE

JOSH T. '31

WRITING WITHOUT A SOUL

WRITING WITHOUT A SOUL IS NOT
WRITING AT ALL

ITS MEANING MAY BE GRASPED
GENERAL CONCEPT UNDERSTOOD
BUT WITHOUT EMOTION

WITHOUT PASSION

WITHOUT HEART

IT WILL ALWAYS AND FOREVER BE JUST WORDS ON A PAGE

WITH THE POTENTIAL TO HAVE BEEN SO MUCH MORE

SO DARE TO DREAM

DARE TO CRY

DARE TO POUR YOUR HEART OUT ON THE PAGE

DARE TO MAKE YOUR WRITING SOMETHING MORE

DARE TO GIVE IT A SOUL

A NEW LIFE

IDEAS LEFT IN THE WORLD WILL EVENTUALLY FADE AWAY

BUT IDEAS LEFT IN THE HEARTS OF OTHERS

LIVE ON FOREVER

SO I ASK

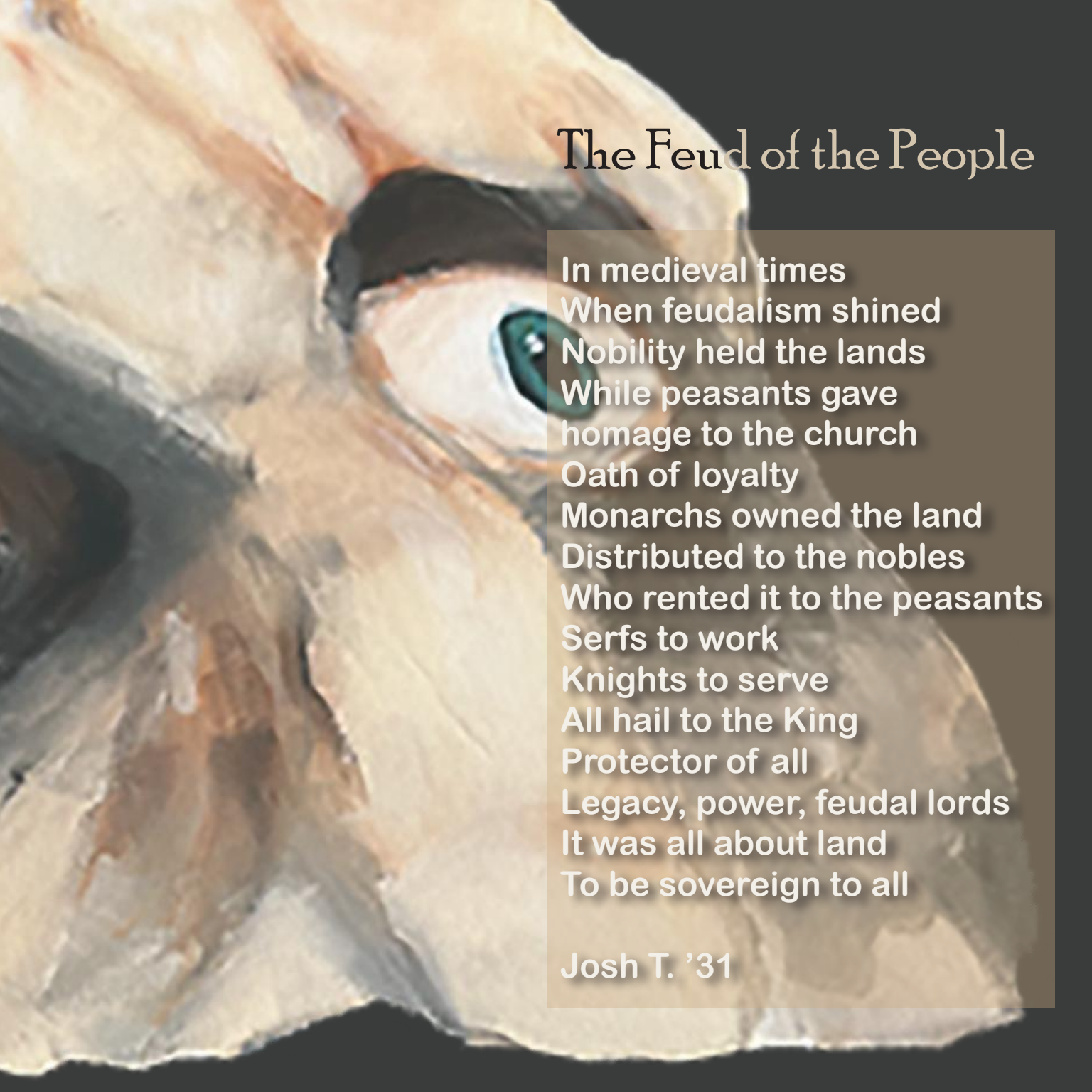
NEXT TIME YOU WRITE

EVEN A FEW WORDS

MAKE THEM FROM THE HEART



Aubrey Benmosche '26



The Feud of the People

In medieval times
When feudalism shined
Nobility held the lands
While peasants gave
homage to the church
Oath of loyalty
Monarchs owned the land
Distributed to the nobles
Who rented it to the peasants
Serfs to work
Knights to serve
All hail to the King
Protector of all
Legacy, power, feudal lords
It was all about land
To be sovereign to all

Josh T. '31

Rani Sandhu '26



From Eye To Eye

When sitting at the park, the essence of time
hit me like an ambulance rushing by
Through one eye I could see the skyline
and the clear blue sky
From the other, I could only see
the big bulky skyscrapers
that now covered my sight;
the sky looked about to cry

Sadness crept over me
knowing we fought for freedom
just to bury it with trash
one snack at a time

I closed my eyes burned by lights
from the food truck that sold too much
From my eye, I saw the statue
of the terrible tyrant glittering
from the guilt he did not feel

I opened my other eye to see what remained
but all I saw was an empty bowl
covered with gray
And the flowers that were supposed to help
wilted away with the leaves that fell
not living another day

On one side I could hear
the sound of horses and wagons,
but on the other, only cars and sirens;
I opened both eyes to see what would happen
But what I saw was tragic

I saw how we went from clean to dirty,
how we went from Native Americans
living off the land
to people who do not care
to walk two feet to throw away a can
The change from eye to eye

Viv K. '30

The Nutcracker

Dancing in the snow
With the greatest gift of all
Love
Sprinkles
As the snow falls
Down
You are my Clara, I am your Prince
We dance the Pas de Deux
Pirouettes, Chassé, Arabesque
Dancing
Our souls connect
Battle to find true love
We strike down the Mouse King
You are my Clara, I am your prince
Dancing
Joyful souls
Fill the snow court with love

Josh T. '31



Abbe Kanfer '25

Our little code

Little tiny pieces of a puzzle work night and day,
our cells, keeping us breathing whether we think or not.
Fixing that cut that you got when you fell off your bike,
memorizing the pattern of how to write.

All because within each little organism,
there is a code embedded.
In each of these little workers,
a code telling them what to do,
what to be.

But what tells them what to change?
When will the next generation come?
What little thing to tweak,
what to pass on and how?
Is it a little thought that tells each organism
what to do, what to feel?

But we never feel those feelings.
Is it because we've polluted the world
with lights, sounds, buzzing,
leaving no time for un-influenced thought?

So the question I leave you with is this:
did we miss our utopia by just an inch?

Aubrey Benmosche '26







Leo Jaccard '28

The Last Mile

The stars dance together as midnight hits the moonlight; I leave the house and the party behind. My heart giggles, and my mind is filled with a warm, fuzzy feeling. My head feels a bit dazed, as if it's above its own cloud. The house waves goodbye, and I smile back at it. I hop into my car and heat it up. As I stare at the frost on my windshield, it melts away. I begin my drive. Music escapes my car into the night; I dance and sing and have my very own concert while every other vehicle scurries by. Yet as I get warped into the light of the cars ahead, I see each one get brighter and brighter. As each headlight ahead winks at me, I feel the warmth of the lights enter my skin. Bones crack, and wheels screech. The snug feeling I once had becomes dizzy and scratchy in my head until all the rumbling and shaking around me suddenly stops. My eyes and heart get heavy. The world moves in slow motion, and every sound becomes muffled. As darkness seeps into my vision, a sudden wave of guilt enters my soul. Why would I drink and drive?

Alé Greco ' 26



Jaden Jiang '27

For Grandma

I watched the rain splatter against the window, each drop a fleeting moment of clarity. I could hear her voice in my head, faint but familiar, asking me if

I was sure. I wasn't. I never was. I looked at the empty chair across from me, remembering when it was always filled with laughter. I tried to focus on the sound of the rain, something to ground me, but

my mind wandered back to her eyes—how they searched mine for answers I couldn't give. I shook my head, trying to clear it, but the weight of the decision still clung to me like a second skin. I reached

for the mug in front of me, letting the warmth soothe the chill in my bones. I felt the silence wrap around me, thick and suffocating and wondered

how we had arrived here, to this place where words failed and time stood still. I didn't want to leave, but I knew I had to. I could feel it, deep in my chest, the pull of something that wasn't there anymore. I stood

up, the chair scraping against the floor, and for a moment, I thought I saw her smile in the corner of the room. I blinked, and she was gone. I walked to the door, hesitated, and then opened it. I didn't look

back. I couldn't. I had already said goodbye.

Rani Sandhu '26

Where I'm From

I am from the messy house full of giggles,
from the fridge full of less-than-worthy pictures.
I am from the TV dinners on the couch.
I am from the heights measured on the walls,
from the table covered in paint.
I am from the two twin beds in the bright blue room.
I am from the hand-me-down clothes
and the handmade dolls.
I am from the tiny house,
full of life.

I am from the tangled hair
that took my mom hours to undo.
I am from the cup of tea
that each night my dad would brew.
I am from the family dinners,
from the improvised dances
that were made to earn a cousin's sleepover.
I am from the unlocked doors of my grandmother's home,
and the endless days on the lake.
I am from the sleep-talking sister who kept me awake,
from the secrets shared and the hair braided,
from the tears we cried when she graduated.

The dents in the walls and the stains on the chairs
are just moments and memories,
like proof I was there.

I pass through these places like dust in the wind,
they are from me, and I am from them.

Johanna Vail '26



Ash Craine '27

Just a Little Girl

*I was just a little girl
Now I'm a woman
trapped in my nightmares
but wide awake
Reliving that horrible memory
over and over and over
Just a little girl who grew up too young
When I was robbed
Something stolen from me
I won't ever be able to get it back*

*Sometimes I still feel like that little girl
Consumed by regret and shame
thinking it was somehow my fault
feeling his iron grip on me
But I need to let it go*

*I was just a little girl
I thought what he did was okay
Now I know it is not
This isn't normal
But it still happens
Happens too much
God gives his strongest warriors the toughest
battles, my mom says*

*When I was younger, I thought that meant I'd
already overcome my biggest obstacle in life
I now know it's not something you just get rid of
You carry it with you
I'll never be fully free of its burden
But I can control it
If I let it consume me
If I remain stuck in the storm of the past
Or find a way to tread on
I'm fractured but not broken*

*I wish I could tell that little girl
It will get better
In the same way caterpillars become butterflies
You will change
You will grow
You will overcome*

*I'm a bird who had to re-learn how to fly
But now I'm set free
Soaring high
Filled with purpose
And raging courage
I was just a little girl*

Anonymous



ARMOR

Once, there was a boy who was forged by the fire around him. Disapproval from his father left him with bruises on his back. When he went to school, the sharp taunts of his peers cut into his soul, carving deep holes. He was forced to learn how to defend himself from the world as he grew. He developed a thick, spiky armor around his heart that protected him from bullies, and he learned how to twist his tongue into a blade of anger, lest anyone fail to be repelled by his defenses.

He carried his blade and armor as his life went on. The world had been too unkind to him, and he feared that letting his defenses go would leave him naked and exposed to its dangers once again. So when he married, he said his wedding vows through his iron helmet. And when he had children, he held them with hands calloused from wielding knives and maces. Not once did he consider allowing himself to open up to the world.

But while he stayed safely in place, the universe continued to move around him. His friends, tired of dealing with his sharp voice, started to spend time with people who were softer. His spouse grew sick of trying to tiptoe through the prickles around his heart, and she left him for the peace she found in solitude. And while his children stayed by his side the longest, they too began to drift away when they found that there were better lives than those shaped by shards of steel.

The boy, now an old man, sat quietly on the front porch of his house. He was alone but for the gentle sounds of the wind against his clothes. He no longer had a family; they had all abandoned his roughness long ago. He no longer had friends; nobody found his jagged personality appealing. A pair of blue jays flew across the sky in front of him. They had no armor, no defenses, and no weapons, but they seemed free. They seemed happy. His stomach twisted in heartache, and a tear of regret rolled down his cheek. He thought of his spouse's warm laugh, his children's small hands in his, and the friends who once sat beside him, now all gone.

With all of the energy in his body, he lifted his metallic hand to his coffee. But his iron gloves were too hard. As the man took his last breath, the mug fell off the table and shattered on the ground beneath him.

Anselm Juan '25



Christos Chiotis '25

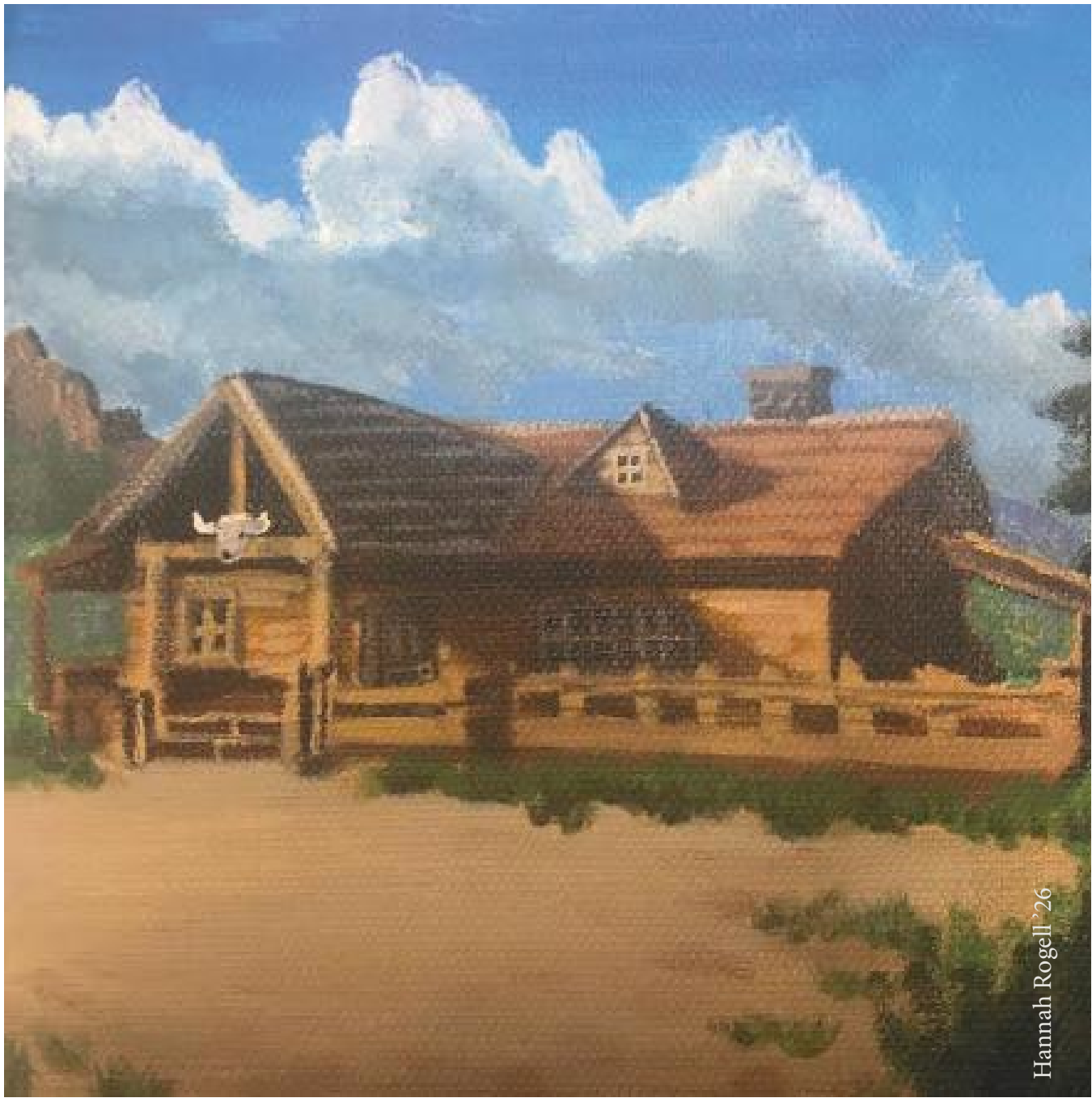
When will they finally be chosen?

What happens to the flowers not chosen? The ones that are not grown yet, or too old with crispy leaves about to fall? What about the ones that are not identified as beautiful flowers? How do you know they aren't beautiful? People think they aren't perfect. But what happens to a can in a store not being chosen because it's chipped, scratched, or dented? Is it not valuable enough or not worth it anymore? What happens to the young girl with the tears rolling down her cheeks at night because of the pain she's in, heartbroken at the thought of being alone because she doesn't know what is valuable and perfect in someone's eyes; because she wasn't chosen from the others.

Damercy Artau '27







Hannah Rogell '26

I AM FROM

I am from the wooden brown house
from the sweet smell of pumpkin candles and the freshly cleaned tabletops
I am from coziness, from the sense of warmth my house brings
and the freshly baked cookies steaming through the kitchen
I am from the basil that grows on my patio
The great oak that sways in my backyard
whose long gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from the green and soda bread every year on St. Patrick's Day
from my mom, dad and two brothers
I'm from an athletic, caring, but chaotic family
I'm from the beauty I show through my soul
and from the daily affirmations my parents always told
I'm from the Sunday night dinners we have as a family
I'm from Ridgefield, Connecticut, and the rolling green hills of Ireland
Soft mashed potatoes and steaming beef stew escaping the crock pot
From the way my mom was the first to receive a college education in her family
And the way my mom captured my childhood through digital cameras

Katie Pratt '27

Norfolk Botanical Garden

8/7/2024 5:27 pm

On a rainy, sad day of 90 degrees
Two friends sat beneath the willow trees
She cried and she cried because life isn't fair
The loss of her grandmother was so difficult to bear
In a garden where flowers bloom
A quiet place amidst the gloom
The breeze is gentle, tender, kind
Whispering secrets to her mind
A bloom for every tear that falls
A whisper in a garden that calls
Her grandmother's love is like roots that run deep
She wove stories of old where memories meet
The rain continues, a gentle sigh
As droplets kiss the earth and sky
A rhythm soft, like steady tears
An earthy song to cradle her fears
The drops that fall are like her tears
Each one a memory through the years
But that day was a reminder, despite the gloom
Even when words fall short
And darkness may loom
That friendship is forever, and love is too
We will get through this
Me and you
Ella Moskowitz '26



Paused in the Past

Everybody wants their loved ones to be with them forever, despite how bad their pain is and how sore their knuckles might be from knocking on heaven's gate. When my grandfather passed, it was as if the world's speed doubled, and I was the only one paused. Stuck in the middle of nowhere. Somehow, in those moments, everything and everyone becomes too much. Little things start to bother you, and a cycle of losing yourself starts. It doesn't matter how far you shove that anger and how much you distract yourself from that cycle; it will never fully disappear.

Leiana Cuartero '27



Barn Cat

I'm a barn cat, frolicking free.
Happy in the fields, where I love to be.
In this cozy barn, I find my place.
I curl up by the hay, life feels so sweet.

Oh barn. Oh barn.
Barn cat walking in the fields.
Here I've finally found my place, where I belong.
Where I can work hard, play and always run free.
Oh barn. Oh barn.

I'm a barn cat, exploring each nook.
The barn doors are open, the world's my own.
With every corner, I feel more at home.
The sounds of laughter, the feel of working
hard in the fields.
In this joyful space, I could happily stay.

Oh barn. Oh barn.
Barn cat walking in the fields.
Here I've finally found my place, where I belong.
Where I can work hard, play and always run free.
Oh barn. Oh barn.

I'm a barn cat, nestled in the hay,
Dreaming of fields, where I can be free.
The humans adore me, they spoil me every day.
With every soft whisper, I know I belong,
This barn is my safe space, my heart feels warm.

Oh barn. Oh barn.
Barn cat walking in the fields.
Here I've finally found my place, where I belong.
Where I can work hard, play and always run free.
Oh barn. Oh barn.

An everlasting chain

I was six years old when I received the Russian nesting doll my parents brought with them when they immigrated to the United States. When I shook the doll, I heard rattling inside. What could it be? The shell became smaller and smaller as I worked my way towards the core. Unexpectedly, I was left with a tiny doll that no longer opened, and I wondered now that the possibilities were gone, what my next layer to uncover would be. Discovering my future is now left in my own hands.

Anya Ionis '25





Simon Dong '27

Meet the editors

ECHO
2025 EDITION



JA'MIYAH CLAXTON

Each morning I hear the mourning doves sing as I walk to the bus stop. The cold brisk air smells of pine and rain. Morning fog heavy as cars flows by. The only thing heard along the rustles of critters was the laughter of my siblings and I. But as the seasons change and fall becomes winter, and winter becomes spring, the school year comes to a close. Then suddenly everything has changed; we are no longer riding the same bus to the same school. We grow up and go our separate ways. Still, deep down, we will always remember the laughs shared under the songs of the mourning dove.

I'm a logical person. I believe in facts and scientific reasoning. Some things are black and white, while others are gray. The gray concepts are the ones that scare me the most. Like conspiracy theories, arguments that most people on Earth have probably heard in their lifetime. The common ones are: Is water wet? Are aliens real? I think the reason I like things to be black and white is because I don't have to think. The picture is clear. But gray is mysterious, and you have to go deeper to get through the fog. The black and white is what keeps me grounded.

ABBE KANFER



GRACE LITTMAN

The Monday after our annual ski weekend with the Okemo Crew felt brutal. Coming back to reality and realizing my siblings were only home a few more days was weighing on me. I barely made it through school, my mind fixated on one thing, a nap. I pulled into the garage and went inside. I was met with my family gathered, smirking in the kitchen. My dad walked in from around the corner and in his arms he was cradling a puppy. Not just any puppy but my dream dog. The one I'd been asking for as a replacement for my siblings. My little bernedoodle, Joey.



SAJE CILENTO

20 seconds left on the scoreboard. My head spun from being hit relentlessly, my brain replayed every goal I've missed, and my mind was a whirlwind of thoughts. This is my last chance. I heard the sharp whistle and flung my body into motion. Each step brought a new wave of cramps, and my entire body was in a symphony of pain. The goalkeeper's gaze locked on me. I chucked the ball right past her stick and heard the satisfying swoosh of the rubber ball hitting the net and another loud whistle. My team swarmed me, hugging and cheering. Excitement and joy flooded my body as I hugged my teammates with an ear-to-ear grin. I finally did it through the agony and the glee.

Being told I need change? Change clothes, change schools and change friends? I'm basically being told to change my life. Having to shift from A to B within a few weeks. Thinking of the worst, believing all the lies about how people are when they change: stubborn and egotistical. But when I left and changed for the better I saw the truth. The truth of how dramatic people were, the people I had left behind, how cruel they could be, how they wanted to impress everyone with just the littlest things such as the places they go and the things they do. Even though it is difficult being left out from my old life, I seek new things for the better.

DAMERCY ARTAU



JADEN JIANG

Winter in Connecticut is different, but it's slowly becoming familiar. The snow falls softly, and though it's colder than the winters I remember in Hangzhou, I find myself learning to enjoy the stillness it brings. There's a quiet beauty in the way the world looks when it's covered in snow, and even though I miss the warmth of home, I'm beginning to appreciate the calm here. The cold doesn't feel so harsh anymore; instead, it's a reminder that every new place can offer something special, something worth learning to love.



WENDY LI

I unscrewed the cap of the burnt sienna paint and squeezed out a small dollop onto the palette, then dipped in a bit of water to blend it. The moment the brush tip touched the paper, that familiar rough texture traveled up to my fingertips. I gently swirled the pigment, watching it bleed across the surface like morning mist creeping over a mountain ridge. Switching to a finer brush, I sketched the tree trunk, the split bristles giving the lines a lively tremor. Suddenly remembering the glowing tree from my dream, I quickly mixed lemon yellow with white and dotted shimmering highlights between the branches. The slightly raised paint formed subtle textures under my fingers. The translucent nature of watercolors allowed layer upon layer of pigment to breathe on the paper—deep brown shadows revealing hints of underlying blue, just like the dappled moonlight filtering through leaves in my dream. As I swirled the brush in the water cup, the colors dispersed like drifting smoke.



Miles Treat '28



ECHO BLOOM

2025

