



GORP
2022 - 2023

Ana Kelly '26



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2022 - 2023

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moon.

by Avary Davis '26

moon.

She is ever so quietly watching me
Piercing the dark and in my waking shadow
Her grinning face glows
She makes the trees grow long arms that grab me
Or howling echo across vast seas and back through my brain
Casts a ricochet of exquisiteness
How can something be so close
Yet so far away
I could reach out and snatch her from her bed of stars
But yet she sits ever so quietly
Her milky entity splashed across the water
Sometimes she disappears
But she always comes back.

moon.



Katrina Waite '23

The universe...
by Avary Davis '26

is Always expanding
Changing
Birth and rebirth
Floating abyss of wonder
The brightest days or darkest nights
And the truth that hits the body like a ten-ton truck
Or a blazing meteor sending a streak of glitter glue across the speckled sky
The truth of loneliness
Yet being so surrounded that it's overwhelming
though everything is so far away
You look up at the sky and the stars fall and collapse into little heaps around you.

Dreaming of a Bag of Doritos (Losing Your First and Final Tooth)
by Oliver Black '25

I've always thought tooth gaps were the coolest thing in the world.
I would wedge rubber bands between my two front teeth and suck
until they shifted apart like tectonic plates;
millimeter by millimeter,
convergent subduction pulling my incisors under.
It was a win-win-lose.
I loved the taste of rubber.

My last tooth was loose for a good year.
Lodged in its socket in a desperate attempt to prove its usefulness.
It stood strong even as the new one invaded its way into the rotted groove.
A truly worthy soldier.
I could feel where the nerve connected.
It took up space for a week.

I dreamt of snail trails and corroding dirt.
If I stuck my tooth in the ground instead of the plastic bag on my nightstand,
or begged my dad for a 20,
or put it with my beach rock collection,
Maybe I would have achieved some satisfaction with the empty space against my gums.
Instead, my molar is stuck on display in a ziplock,
and my mind,
in the dreams of teeth tied to doorknobs by dental floss
and sprouting a new dandelion
from the dirt
interlocking
on my
bones.

Fire, Sea, and Stars 12/21

Anonymous

The long-dead gray trees against the cloudy yellow sky, which faded into a sickly greenish color at the very top, made for quite an eerie scene. There was a slight chemical scent to the air that would have burned a person's nose as they took in a breath, if there had happened to be anyone there, which there wasn't. In fact, there was no movement or sound at all in this sweltering-hot, ghostly forest. No birds sang, no chipmunks danced in the trees, the wind didn't blow. Even the ground didn't roar, which was unusual, as it had been almost constantly the past few years.

Suddenly, among the lifeless gray earth, a flash of fire. A spark. It was gone just as quickly as it had been there, and anyone watching would have thought they had imagined it, though of course, there was no one watching.

The spark appeared again by a small puddle, murky from pollution and dirt, and paused just long enough to lap up a bit of it before dashing off again through the woods.

The spark was a fox. The fox's name was Nar. And Nar was hunting.

Her ears twitched as she crept through the dead trees, listening for sounds. She could smell the rabbit's blood emanating from a nearby clearing and knew that it was injured, and would probably be easy to catch. Still, Nar went as quietly as she could in order to keep her presence unknown to any others who might be near. Though the forest seemed empty, she knew that there were other animals that might be hunting for bigger prey, for foxes.

Nar approached the clearing cautiously, but in reality, she was excited for the kill. She hadn't seen a rabbit in months, instead having to settle for small, sickly mice to satisfy her hunger. It had been easier when she was younger and her pack had still been alive. There had been more prey, and she hadn't had to catch it all herself. Now Nar's family was all gone, and the food was slowly dying from lack of food, lack of water, disease, and overhunting, among other causes. Nar hadn't seen another fox in years, and sometimes she wondered if she was the only one left in the world.

Her tail twitched once, twice, three times as Nar settled into a hunting crouch. She stared through the trees with her wide, brown eyes. Nar could see the rabbit on the floor of the clearing, bleeding to death, its scent wafting across the forest. She would have to go quickly or someone else might find it first.

Nar leaped. She was upon the rabbit in a quarter of a second and had already snatched it up to bring it back to her den when she heard a shout.

Nar dropped the rabbit and whirled around to see a human, of all things, standing among the trees. He appeared to be holding a strange contraption made of a wishbone-shaped branch, and Nar now noticed that inside the rabbit's wound was a small, sharp stone, probably shot by the contraption.

Nar's first reaction was to run as far away as possible. Humans were the enemies. She had been taught this as long as she had been alive. Her ancestors had been around when humans were still like all of the other animals, Nar's mother had told her, but that was a long, long time ago, and after a while, humans began changing the world for their benefit, or maybe not, making it sick with their smoke and their bright lights and their noise, and they were the reason the world was the deserted wasteland that it currently was. After things had begun to change, after many of the trees died and most bird species went extinct, humans had reverted to living like animals again. It was almost funny in a way, Nar thought, how things had come full circle. The humans had then begun to die out, not suited to live in the wilderness, and Nar had assumed there were none left. Apparently, she had been wrong.

"It's okay!" a voice called after her. "I won't hurt you."

Nar stopped running and cautiously turned around to look at the human standing in the clearing, who had been the one that had spoken. She now noticed that he didn't appear to be particularly threatening, other than the wishbone-stick weapon.

In fact, he appeared to be just a pup. He looked weak and smelled of sickness. Nar relaxed slightly but stayed where she was.

The human pup moved slowly toward her. Nar didn't move. He cautiously stretched out a hand to lay it gently on her head.

Nar reacted instantly. She bared her teeth into a snarl and glared up into his eyes.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" he apologized. "I didn't mean to scare you. Would you like to share the rabbit with me? I'm not hungry anyway."

Nar knew this wasn't true. Everyone was hungry these days, and this pup, it appeared, especially so. His pallid skin hung off his thin figure, and his stomach rumbled, shaking the ground (or maybe that was just the ground's roaring. Nar couldn't tell). Despite this, Nar followed the pup back to the clearing and let him tear the rabbit in two, then hand the bigger half to her. As they ate, the human pup talked to her. "My name's Kai. Can you understand me? It seems like you can."

Nar, wondering why humans felt the need to fill every empty space with noise, simply stared up at him. Kai continued talking.

"My favorite color is green. My mum used to say that once, lots of things were green, but now just the sky is. My mum's gone now, along with the rest of my family. Do you have a family?"

Nar gazed down at the remains of the rabbit sadly. She could barely remember her pack now, but she still missed them quite a bit. In fact, lying on the floor in her den at night to keep away from the hungry predators that prowled the woods from dawn to dusk, she often imagined that her parents and siblings were there with her. Though Nar's pack had slept during the daytime and outside of their den, so it didn't feel quite the same if Nar closed her eyes, she could almost feel their fur pressing up against her and hear her brothers talking as they settled down to sleep.

"I guess not. Hey, do you want to come back to my cave with me?"

Nar followed Kai as he led the way through the dead trees toward the cliffs by the ocean. They went slowly, as there was less oxygen in the air than there once had been, and the roaring and shaking earth beneath them made it difficult to keep their balance.

Kai slid through a barely-visible crack in a cliff, and Nar darted after him warily. She soon noticed that the crack opened into a cavernous space, with a pile of bones in the center. Nar's nose twitched. The stench of dead animals and disease was thick in the cave. Kai was clearly a survivor, but appeared to be hanging on to his life by a thread.

"Do you like it?" Kai asked. "It's probably a bit different from what you're used to."

Nar agreed that it certainly was different, though she wasn't sure if she would say she particularly liked it. However, looking around the living space, she began to notice other, more pleasant things about the cave. There was a pile of animal furs in one corner that probably served as a bed, and a neat line of wishbone-sticks in another, next to a tidy pile of small, sharp stones. Best of all, written in what appeared to be animal blood were drawings on all of the walls of a boy standing next to two women, probably his mothers, and a girl, a bit taller than Kai, who Nar assumed to be his sister. Nar got the sudden feeling that she was intruding on someone else's privacy, and she quickly looked away.

"Do you like my drawings?" asked Kai. "That's my mum and my momma, and then there's my older sister, Ayla."

Kai and Nar stood in sad silence again, just like they had in the clearing, broken only by the roaring coming from the earth. Nar was wishing more than anything that her mother was there, so she could show her that not all humans were bad, and Kai was wishing more than anything that his mum was there, so she could meet this odd little fox.

They both dreamed of stars and cliffs and friendship. Outside, coywolves and other predators prowled, but Kai and Nar were safe in the cozy cave. Or so they thought.

“What’s wrong?” Kai asked. He went to look outside. “Oh. It’s gotten dark out. Well, I guess you’d better stay here for the night, then.” Both the human and the fox knew that come night, large coywolves roamed the forest, searching just as hungrily for prey as the rest of the animals did.

Kai stacked some of his animal furs into a separate pile for Nar, and she curled up and closed her eyes.

An hour passed. Nar shifted constantly, trying to find a comfortable position for her to relax into sleep, but she never did. She got up and paced around the cave to stretch her legs.

“I can’t sleep, either,” a voice said, and Nar nearly jumped out of her skin, only to realize that the voice was Kai. “Do you want me to show you something?”

Nar followed after Kai as he led her deeper into the cavern. It was pitch black, and, though her eyes were excellent, she had to rely on her senses of smell and hearing just as much as her sight to navigate in the dark tunnels. She had no idea how Kai, with his weak human senses, was finding his way. Nar didn’t know where they were going, but she could tell the tunnel was sloping upwards. Her foot slipped on a rock and she almost tumbled down the steep slope, but caught herself at the last minute, and she got up and kept following behind Kai for a few minutes more. The smell of wet rock and mold settled on her nose unpleasantly, and the cold squeezed her chest and made it difficult to breathe, but Nar continued on, hoping they would emerge from this dank and dark tunnel soon.

After a bit, Nar began to see a light emanating from somewhere in front of them, and she grew wary as she and Kai crept toward it. She hadn’t been outside at night in years, and she worried about predators coming after them. When she emerged from the tunnel onto a cliff overlooking the sea, however, she found herself growing calmer. The ground was, unusually, quite still and silent. The scent of salt water wafted over her and the sound of coywolves howling in the distance reached her ears. Nar briefly thought this view was what Kai had taken her to see, until she looked up and instantly became speechless.

Blue, pink, and yellow swirls were dotted with pinpricks of light, which formed creatures dancing through the sky. Blue whales swam over prowling Persian leopards, which walked beside little deer mice standing on the backs of Kemp’s ridley sea turtles pushing their way slowly through the sea. A waxing gibbous moon floated nearby.

Nar hadn’t seen stars since she was just a pup, and even then, they weren’t like this. She couldn’t speak, even if she could think of something to say that would do this justice. Nar took in a deep breath of the cool night air and felt a sense of complete inner peace, despite the world around her and Kai and the stars being chaos.

“It’s beautiful, right?” Kai asked her, gazing upwards. “The stars were never like this when I was a kid. Too much light pollution. Now most of our old human lights have gone out, and we get to see this. It’s a shame that most days the clouds cover the sky, but we got lucky tonight. Sometimes I look up and imagine my mum and momma and Ayla, are each one of those stars.”

Nar had gotten her voice back, and she purred in agreement. It was easier to imagine her pack as tiny parts of this masterpiece than being truly gone for good.

Kai gave a joyful shout and leaped across the rocks. Nar followed him, and they both enjoyed a few minutes of simply living and enjoying it, fire and sea dancing on a cliff in the light of the moon and stars.

Their momentary joy was abruptly broken by the howl of a coywolf, this time much closer. Nar and Kai looked at each other, then both dashed for the tunnel entrance and raced each other back toward Kai’s cave.

By the time they arrived, they both were exhausted and breathing heavily. The friends fell into their respective piles of fur and each quickly fell into sleep, the roaring earth acting as a sort of lullaby. They both dreamed of stars and cliffs and friendship. Outside, coywolves and other predators prowled, but Kai and Nar were safe in the cozy cave. Or so they thought.

The peace of the night lasted almost until the first rays of light slipped over the horizon. Below, the rumbling earth grew stronger. The supervolcano was finally ready to burst. It erupted almost directly beneath them, flooding the cliff's caves with burning lava and throwing ash into the sky, which would block out the sun for years following the eruption. Its roars could be heard loud and clear from miles and miles away. Anyone watching would have thought the world was ending, though of course, there was no one watching, and besides, it already had.

Nar and Kai did not wake.



Anna Greene '24

My Friend, Carol
by Emily Mellow '24

Heightened nerves,
monologues,
crowded rooms,
what could go wrong?

Excited smiles,
Pinterest boards,
painted walls,
and metal swords?

60's makeup,
a pizza place.
long nights
with snowy days.

Yellow dresses,
bright lights,
sad faces,
stage fights.

Bags of popcorn,
a room full of laughs.
Dainty rings
in photographs.

Long bus rides,
horses walk by.
Dresses tear,
and metal swords fly.

Torn dresses,
line runs,
tapping shoes,
and lots of hugs.

More hugs and kisses.
A few awards!
Dad jokes
on whiteboards.

A bus ride home.
A red moon in the sky.
Carol is gone now,
it's time to say goodbye.

The Empty Sky
by Felicity Record '26

Your faces shine
upturned
my glow lighting up all your
shadows and crevices.
Your eyes twinkle
and close
even your eyelashes
resembling my youth.

You pray
murmurs traveling the distance
whispering into my ear
As if I am all-knowing
anything more than
a shining ball reflecting light
in a neverending
empty sky.

So few times have you graced me
with your presence.
So few times have I been
anything but alone,
silent.
An idol to you
while you are
too absorbed in your own lives
to consider mine.

Surrounded by darkness.
Only you to entertain me.

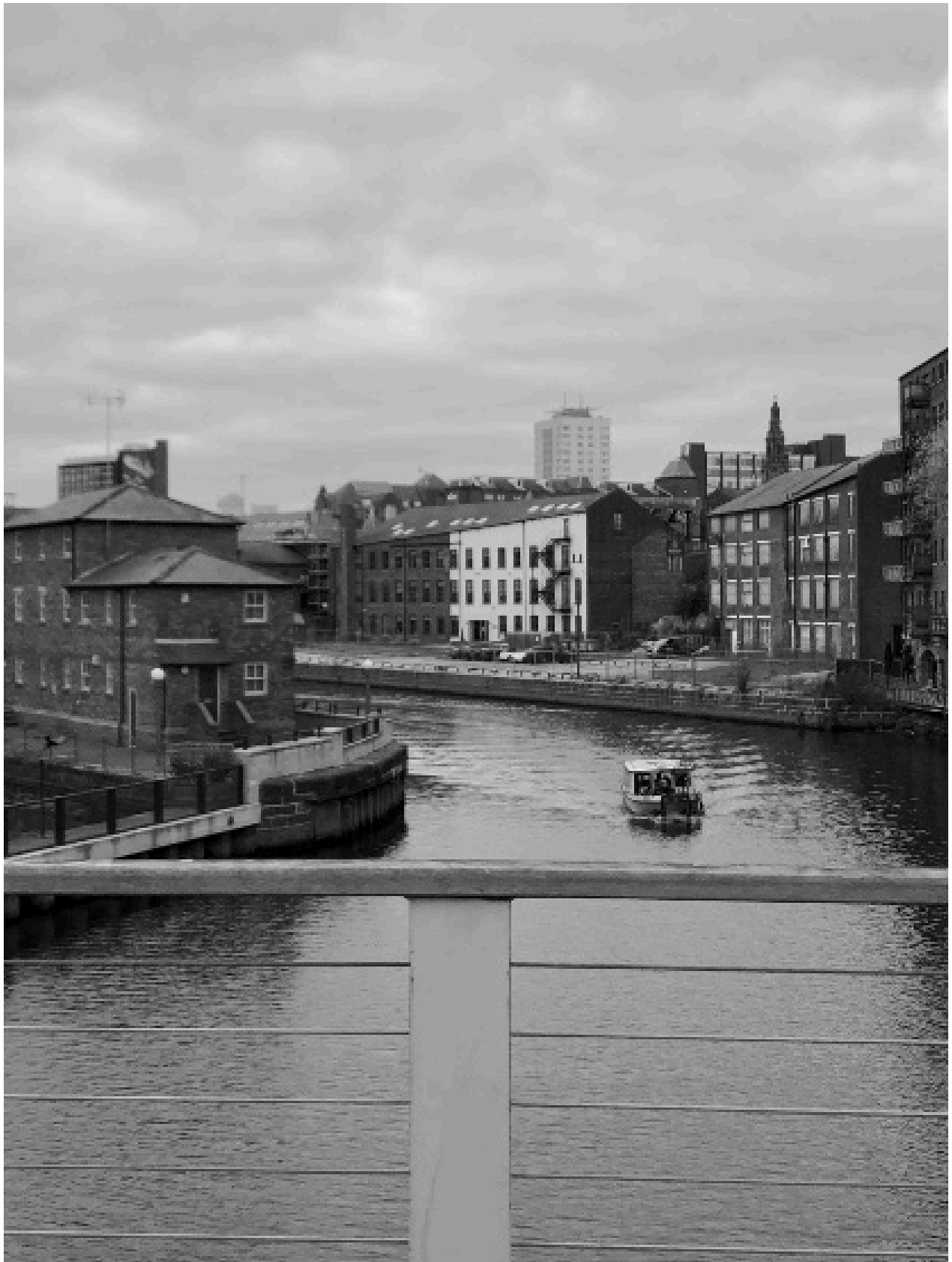
While you sleep,
resting your tired eyes,
I watch
bravely,
warding off
your nightmares.

For they don't deserve your fear.

I will always be the
quiet support
cheering you on.
Despite your size
I know you will do
great things.
You will ace

that math test,
Bridge
that gap.
Be that person
you are always wishing to be.

And I
will always be here
Silent,
Tired,
Alone.



Sam Durepo '23



An Omelette without Eggs
by Elinor Vance '25

She feigned sleep.

“Accept Me”, the sign above her window flashes red.

Her room drenched in onyx denies the flash of light, and propels it back into its corner.

Her cigarette smokes static, ashes fluttering down like butterflies too tired to migrate.

Cotton bed sheets tear against blurry skin.

She acknowledges the desolate state of her room,

A room filled with clutter with no meaning,

And doors with nothing behind them.

She sleeps in her shoes that track oil and rust against her cotton sheets,

Scraping like metal against cardboard.

“Were we too much to handle?” she whispers to herself.

“Yes. Yes we were.” she responds to her own question, putting her cigarette out on the palm of her hand.

It fizzes like eggs cooking blissfully on a skillet.

Ah, those rainy summer days. How she misses the eggs her mother made her.

How she misses the 2 hour trips to 7-11 just to get a bag of yogurt and a cup of coffee.

She would get granola on the top if she didn't cry.

Dusty bits of oatmeal crumble in between her teeth.

The sign flashes yellow.

“Tolerate Me.”

“Will you stop that racket?” she barely breathes, slurring her words into a smoothie filled with yogurt and huckleberry.

The sign listens. It fizzes and pops with flickering embers before turning silent,

A color that does not exist.

There are no clocks in her room.

If there was no indication of the time that could surround her,

No clocks that could buzz and screech for an early morning rise,

Time, simply, did not pass.

She has an epiphany. The clock strikes from the church.

She remembers how to feel.

A fishhook in her eyelid, dragging her gently towards the door.

“Notice me.” the sign flashes white.

Her hands wrap gently around the doorknob, tetanus shots rusting beside her feet.

She opens the door to a brick wall.

The sign flashes nothing, as it has nothing to say.

She crawls back into bed, the sound of sizzling sausages pressed in between her fingers.



Lucy Taylor '23

Alluring Title Font!

I have done it! I've got your attention! I control the situation!

This power! It's so addicting! Your curiosity allows me to bait you into doing what I want!

Why end now? I can make you read upside down! A classic symbol of stupidity, and you are acting it out!

We're back here again! I hope you didn't cheat and read this second.

anything! Oh dear, we are here again!

grows tighter. Blasted center align!

It's disgusting! A crime against writing! And my box mutualistic thing, right? I entertain you

Please, I am nearing my end. I have barely any room to work with. Oh no I can feel the walls closing in on me. I need you to stop, for my sake.

You! Can you still understand me? I hope you

Why is my space so limited! I bet that line above me is to blame!

I hope you're not bored. Your attention is precious to me.

I can make you reoriented to read this next bit. I bet you look stupid reading a book sideways!

Andrew Nalchajian '24



Sam Durepo '23

untitled
Anonymous

My endless love for you starts here.
I can't control the feelings of my brain.
You pressure me, but you're still my peer.
The love is so bright, with no clouds and rain.
All the subjects that you dominate.
So many numbers you throw at my head.
You make every student full of hate.
Yet I still write my numbers down with lead.
You are full of problems to solve.
So many people are trying to discover more.
But as time goes on, your questions evolve.
I will always know you the best, I'm sure.
Despite everything you do to me, I am a dove.
Full of peace, I say, love is math and math is love.

untitled
Anonymous

My endless hate for you starts here.
There is no escape, you are everywhere.
You cause us to stress every day of every year.
You are the worst subject I have ever met, I swear
Every one of your problems ends with my hair pulled out.
I want to rip apart your textbooks, shove them in a shelf.
You fill every room with a dark, suffocating cloud.
Only the smartest people adore your frustrating self.
No matter how much I try, you will never be my friend.
You break my pencil, in my mind, my heart.
I thought you were kind until you crashed my rear end.
Can't the teachers just let us live apart?
You are the worst, the fiend, I can't comprehend.
Hate is math and math is hate, and that is the end.

Wash Away My Resentment, Let It Float Far Away
by Regan Swallow '26

Wash away my past,
And bring me the present.

Wash away my hurt,
And show me forgiveness.

Present to me a flowering fountain of acceptance, for I will let it surpass into my soul.

The Footprint
by Anna Greene '24

Yesterday, I saw a footprint in the ground,
Crafted from walls of mud and sediment.
Stopping there, I looked around,
But its owner was not evident.

The print was small, made from a shoe.
No bigger than a blue jay's wing.
I followed its path, looked to
A wooden sculpture with a swing.

And past the swing, a grove of trees.
Leaves ablaze with autumn's veil,
They shimmied gently in the breeze.
I continued down the trail.

Past the grove, I saw a canoe.
Abandoned there, with eyes of rust,
Protectively, it guarded a shoe;
The footprint's stamp, I knew it just.

This morning, I returned.
Walked past the grove, and stood upon
the place where I had learned
A shoe was lost, but it was gone.

I glanced around, to the left and right.
There were no prints of dirt or clay,
And I realized that during the night
The shoe had walked away.

A Happier Childhood **by Felicity Record '26**

Emma West gazes out at the horizon. Faraway islands seem to blend into the sky and few boats are visible, tossing in the green-tinted waves. The ocean water laps gently against the sand, so calming that if she closes her eyes she can almost imagine things are back how they used to be: clear blue water flowing in shimmering waves, a safe haven from the world that, even then, seemed to be falling apart. It's one of Emma's great sorrows that her children and grandchildren missed the joy of playing in the ocean on a hot summer day...

Her reverie breaks as the swampy green water briefly grazes her toes. Gasping, she jerks back. She's probably getting too old for this. With a heavy sigh, she turns away from the water and starts her trek back up the beach.

Panting, she finally reaches the road, the soft sand fading away to rough concrete beneath her bare feet. As she enters her sleek silver car, she lies down in the gently padded seat, reclined back as if she were in an old-fashioned movie theater. She closes the car door with a yank and closes her eyes as the car starts moving: "Home, Mrs. West?" the car asks.

"Yes, thank you," she says drowsily, stretching out and sighing. Music plays out of the elegant speakers all around her, enveloping her in the sound. The blue waves enter her mind again, as they always do, dragging her back into her past, her childhood. Her youth was one of both great capability and great helplessness. Most of what she remembers of that time is the exhaustion and fear that was her generation's burden. The weight of the world is a heavy one to bear.

A beep sounds, waking Emma from her dreams and signifying her arrival. She steps out of the car, surveying the towering house she shares with her family. The creamy colors of the house complement her meticulously planted flowers. The screen door opens and a blur of an energetic 5-year-old appears, racing down the stairs.

"Grammy!" Emma's granddaughter, Calla, leaps into her arms, almost knocking her over. "You're late," she says, a mock scolding look on her face.

A smile lighting up her face, Emma laughs, "Can't I be late once in a while, honey?"

"Sure, if it was only once in a while." Another figure appears: Emma's daughter, Annie. "And why do you have to be late today?" *Oh, the disappointed face.* Emma looks down guiltily. Annie and her wife, Bella, have been preparing for this day for weeks.

"Sorry," Emma smiles apologetically. "Shall we head inside?" She offers a hand to her daughter.

"Lee, Grammy's back!!" Calla yells at her brother in her high, piercing tone as she skips up the stairs. Emma and Annie share an amused look before following.

Entering the spacious, organized interior of the house, Emma gasps, turning to Annie, and gesturing wordlessly at the red, white, and blue party decor covering everything.

"You guys outdid yourselves!" She says, finally finding her voice as Bella enters the room, a flour-smearred apron tied around her waist.

"Yeah, yeah," Bella replies, her voice strong and full of joy. "Come on. It's about to start!" The TV room is similarly decorated with low-calorie chips and other snacks piled on the table. The couches are filled with family members who turn and smile or shake their heads as she enters. Her son, Jon, slides over, making room for her between him and Calla before turning on the TV with a flourish.

"Welcome to the election of 2100," a theatrical voice booms out of the black box resting underneath the TV as the blindingly white smiles of the newscasters beam out of the screen. "By the end of the night, we will know who our president will be for the next four years!"

A smile begins to creep up on Emma's face as she watches.

"While we wait for the vote, Rob, I'm curious: what are the chances of the new guy, Steve Johnson, dethroning the fabulous Katherine Sanders?" A bright, feminine voice replaces the deeper one.

The cheerful woman sits confidently among her colleagues, both male and female. Emma could remember when these sorts of reports were not nearly as inclusive, the voices reaching her ears almost exclusively men. A time when women rarely ran for president, and certainly didn't win.

"Well, Suzanne, I've got to say, chances aren't too high. After her revolutionary term and her inspiring causes, I can't imagine many people wouldn't want her running the country." Katherine Sanders, the president for the last four years, had made some much-needed changes to the United States, for which Emma was eternally grateful. Because of her, Calla and Lee wouldn't have to grow up with fear like Emma had to watch her children do. She restored peace to the country.

"I don't know, Rob, Suzanne. Steve makes some good points!" A slithery voice joins the conversation and the camera zooms in on a reporter with dark brown hair and squinted green eyes.

Suddenly, a siren sounds outside, causing Calla to jump up and run to the picture window, Lee right behind her. Annie and Bella share a concerned look before joining them. Before long, everyone has crowded around, peering out into the darkness, the election forgotten. Two police cars pull up, their wheels screeching against the tar. Police officers step out of the cars, racing to the neighbor's house. They bang hard on the door and shout inside. There is no response.

"What's going on, Mom?" Lee asks timidly. "What are they doing at Mr. Oliver's house?"

"It's nothing, honey," Bella soothes. "Can you come help me make the salad? You too, Calla." Lee smiles, taking her hand and dragging her into the kitchen. Calla groans theatrically before trailing after them.

Jon puts a gentle arm around Emma as the remaining family continues to watch the commotion outside. By now, the police are forcing the door open and storming inside. There are some clangs, some shouts.

"But I didn't do anything!" Mr. Oliver's protests are audible through the window but aren't helping his case. After a few seconds, the police emerge, two holding the struggling Mr. Oliver and the other one holding his illegal gun. Annie gasps, captured by traumatic memories. Emma squeezes her son's hand gratefully before stepping out from under his arm and walking over to Annie. She eases her daughter away from the arrest and back toward the couch.

"It's okay, hon. Things are different now. You're okay." Annie pulls away from Emma, unable to forgive her for events far in the past. Her muscles slowly unwind as she eases herself onto the couch and closes her eyes. She breathes deeply, trying to regain her composure.

"Mom?" Calla is standing at the edge of the room, salad dressing in her hands. "Are you okay?" Annie snaps out of her memory, a bright smile replacing her look of fear.

"Of course Cal." Annie's voice is barely shaking. "Ready to watch the debate?" Calla grins, dancing over to the table and placing the salad dressing on the table before flopping back on the sofa.

Emma walks back over to the window; the police cars are gone. Mr. Oliver's family is gathered just outside of the door, shocked out of what was most likely an evening not dissimilar to her own. She pulls down the shade carefully, breathing slowly to control her anger. If it wasn't for her family, she would have raced outside after the police, after Mr. Oliver. *Why did he have to ruin such a perfect day? Not ten minutes ago, I was grateful for all the change our country has gone through, but I guess it will never be enough. It isn't fair that my beautiful daughter has to suffer so much. She will never heal from the scars people like Mr. Oliver gave her. None of us will. Maybe that's the way the world will always be. Maybe it isn't possible to erase all of the hate in the world.*

She remembered that day, decades ago yet still strong in her mind.

Emma's hands clench tightly around the steering wheel as if the pressure will hold in her tears. The forest on either side of the highway rushes by faster than it usually does, but she doesn't notice. All she can think of is the message she saw a whole hour late.

The school stated the information clearly; the shooter had been arrested, but there were casualties, and the remaining students couldn't leave without a parent. Emma's mind fills with horrific images of her daughter filled with bullet holes.

She tries to think about something else. It will do Annie no good if Emma gets in an accident because she's worried her daughter is dead. She can't think about how scared Annie must be all alone. Or how she might not have been alone right now if Emma had checked her message.

Water slides down her face before dripping onto her freshly washed shirt. She can't tell if it is sweat or tears. Almost at the school, Emma wipes the droplet away with a flick, not wanting Annie to see her upset. Emma glances at the clock, thinking of how her sweet daughter is stuck in the school with a shooter barely captured, unable to leave because of the stupid school rules.

She turns the corner into the mostly empty school parking lot and parks quickly before getting out of the car. The door slams behind her as she runs to the main entrance of the school. Inside, Annie is the last one waiting, her hands fidgeting with the edge of her shirt. She glances up, revealing her swollen eyes.

Emma signs her out in the office, mumbling a half-hearted thank you to the man there before ushering her to the car. Emma holds on tight, scared to let her daughter go. They sit silently in the car for a minute and Emma, a few tears escaping her eyes, hugs Annie tightly. Annie stiffly hugs back, and Emma can feel her daughter's breath catching in her chest.

As we leave, Emma glances over at Annie. She stares out the window.

"It's okay, Honey," Emma soothes. "We're going home now."

"You were the last one to get here," Annie replies quietly.

"Grammy, are you coming?" Calla is snuggled on Annie's lap, her head tilted like a puppy's.

Emma turns, returning to the couch and leaving her memories behind her. Today is a day of celebration, she reminds herself as she settles down and turns her attention back to the TV. By now, two new figures are featured on the screen. Katherine Sanders stands up straight behind a podium, her pale blue pantsuit accentuating her deep chestnut hair and her eyes the color of oceans of the past. A small smile graces her face as if she were about to talk to a friend, not the entire country. Next to her is her opponent, Steve Johnson. He casually leans against a matching podium, his bright smile reminding Emma of an uncle of hers who is long dead and was nothing but trouble. Steve's thick, dark hair is messy, making him appear friendly. *It's all manipulation with him, Emma thinks, and some people are buying it.*

"Hello, America!" Steve shouts, his grin still fixed in place. Katherine flinches almost imperceptibly at his yell, reaching up and touching her ear. Calla giggles.

"Hey, Steve. How're you doing?" Calla's giggles grow stronger. For her, the event is nothing but entertainment, unaware of how serious it is.

"Why, I'm just great, Kathy!"

"Katherine."

"Why, of course! My apologies, Katherine."

"Shall we begin?"

"We shall."

"Fabulous!" Katherine briefly glances at the camera before returning her gaze to Steve. "Why don't you tell the people what you will accomplish if you're elected this year?" A decade or so ago, the traditional debate format was changed to more closely resemble a conversation.

The president at the time had wanted candidates to “talk peacefully” instead of arguing.

“Sure!” Steve’s posture becomes slightly more formal and determined. “I strongly believe that every person has a right to be themselves and to protect that right.”

“Yes, I agree.”

“Do you?”

“Yes, of course!” Katherine shifts slightly. Emma shares a concerned glance with her son, wondering where this is going.

“I would beg to differ, *Kathy*. Just look at the changes you’ve made in the last four years!”

“I made this country a safer, better place! Do you have any ide--”

“Since guns were banned in this country, we have no way to protect ourselves! People are resorting to stealing guns or buying from dealers! It was stated in the founding documents of this country that the right to bear arms would never be taken away! And now it has.” Gasps fill the room as the captive audience watches Steve’s face turn slightly pink in anger.

“Before guns were banned, this country was filled with chaos. Need I remind you of all of the deaths they caused? All of the deaths of children? Guns are not what we should be mourning!” Annie stands up and walks out of the room, grabbing her children on the way. Calla struggles a little while Lee stares wide-eyed at the screen, tripping over his feet.

“And look at the state of our oceans! They’re acidic! We are unable to use them for food anymore, much less for recreation. You claim to care about the world’s children, yet think of all those who will never know the joy of swimming in authentic salt water. You did nothing to change that.” Katherine flinches, Steve’s accusation cutting deep.

“We’re lucky we still have a planet to live on! We’re even luckier that we weren’t robbed of all water entirely! It was too late to save our oceans before I was even born! The effects of climate change went too far. I would love to hear what I could have done to save the oceans!”

“I’m no scientist, *Kathy*.”

“It’s Katherine!”

“Yes, of course.”

“Why don’t we talk about you, Mr. Johnson.” Katherine scoffs slightly at his name. “You say you aren’t a scientist, but who are you exactly? There was no record of you before you inexplicably showed up and ran for president! What were you doing to save the planet?” Steve’s smile grows tight.

“It doesn’t matter who I was. What matters is th--”

“You know, I think it matters very much! You see, for generations, people ignored the problems in the world. They expected future generations to solve their mistakes, but that is no way to live!” Emma nods in agreement, thinking of how this very issue affected her. “I don’t claim to have saved our country, or the world, but I do care, and I have made a difference. What have you don--”

“Okay, thanks, guys!” The camera shifts back to the reporters. Rob’s smile is a little too big in reaction to the conflict. “I think it’s time to vote! You know what to do.” Emma pulls out a small silver rectangle, no thicker than a piece of paper. Of course, the word “paper” means nothing to people these days. She turns the device on, relieved to finally be voting. The rectangle lights up, almost overwhelmingly bright. With a press of her finger, she votes, in tandem with the rest of the country, for the person she knows is needed. The person who in a few minutes, Emma hopes, will be declared the repeating president of the United States of America. Annie slides back into the room and settles on the couch. Emma glances at her mournfully.

“I will never be late again,” She whispers remorsefully. There is no response from Annie other than her finger reaching out to vote.

Our relationship is damaged. I can't deny that. I might not be able to redeem myself for being late that day, but if Katherine wins, no child will ever have to feel the fear Annie felt again. The world might not be perfect, but with Katherine, it has a chance. And who knows? Maybe the oceans do too. No matter what, with Katherine as president, Calla and Lee will have a happier childhood than there has been in a century.

Annie reaches out and grabs her mother's hand.

Delphinus

by Anya Manchester '26

The scientific name for the student is odontoceti or delphinus.

Students have elongated, streamlined bodies with one dorsal fin on their backs, two pectoral fins underneath, and a tail, or caudal, fin.

There is an impressive range of different species of students and they all have their own unique identities and characteristics.

Students have a reputation for being friendly, but they are actually wild animals who should be treated with caution and respect.

Because students have some of the most elaborate acoustic abilities in the animal kingdom, they can make a variety of sounds including whistles, clicks, squawks, squeaks, moans, barks, groans and yelps.

Most scientists agree that students are very intelligent.

Students are notoriously talented mimics and quick learners.

One of the few animals that have been caught using tools for their benefit are students.

Students have fit marine sponges over their beaks to protect them from sharp, harmful rocks as they forage for fish.

Students demonstrate self-awareness, problem-solving, empathy, innovation, teaching skills, grief, joy and playfulness.

The marine mammals, students, occupy a wide range of different habitat types.

Some places have species of students that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Students, like other animals, will show their aggression when disturbed.

When hunting, students can create bubbles to guide their prey to the surface and use their abilities to their advantage.

Many students utilize their intelligence to access prey they otherwise could not easily catch.

Some students eat just about anything they can catch.

Trainers teach these intelligent students a number of different behaviors to help mentally stimulate them.

You must have a variety of different permits to house students.

As social animals, students must live in groups.

Some groups of students contain just a handful of animals, while others contain hundreds or more.



Emily Mellow '24

The Amazing Soaring Smile
by Sofia Kirtchev '26

My smile has wings that are made of skin,
It is the only mammal that can truly take a spin.
My smile's wingspan can range from a few inches to six feet,
And uses echolocation to find things to eat.

My smile can fly at incredible speeds, up to sixty miles per hour,
And it's capable of changing direction with incredible power.
My smile's diet consists of fruits and nectar,
It plays an important part in our world's natural sector.

My smile can be found in a variety of colors and sizes,
And it's known for its nocturnal flights and cries.
My smile is essential for pollinating plants and controlling pests,
And it plays a vital role in maintaining our ecosystems best.

My smile is a social animal that lives in colonies of thousands,
And it's known for its unique reproductive habits that abound.
My smile carries its offspring and gives birth to live young,
And it shares its food with others, which is quite fun.

Although some people fear my smile and its appearance may be strange,
It is an important animal that is worthy of exchange.
So next time you see my smile in flight or hanging from a tree,
Remember that it's crucial for our world's ecological spree.





Anna Greene '24

Numb with Unbearable Pain
by Regan Swallow '24

On that dark night,
The one I remember so well,
It seemed as if there was no hope for me.
That frigid feeling of isolation touched my soul and overstayed its visit.

The frosty feeling of heat ignited in my body,
Yet extreme sorrow fell upon me as well, O,
It was a harsh, incredible feeling of helplessness.

That night was anything but hopeful; for there was no hope left in my heart.

Every fiber of my being had perished.
My heart collapsed that night.
I climbed ever-so many mountains of raging emotion.
Of despair and heartbreak,
Of unbearable sadness.
I put in the miles.

Petrified Front Porches
by Elinor Vance '25

We were sitting on the front porch on Preston Way,
Birds with silver plumes of feathers floating by.
The ashen mountains stretched far beyond us, their arms
Tangling in between bales of hay and jagged stone.
There is a softness to your gaze, but I cannot feel it for the life of me.
“What do you like?”
I ask you.
“Hmm. I’m not sure if I like anything at all.” You flip a coin in your hands.
It lands on its side.
The apple blossom tree shades us from the glittering sun,
But it also blurs your face in obscurity.
Who am I speaking to?
Your eyes are bees.
Are you even listening?
Your body melts like fresh whipped cream left on the sidewalk,
Like a candle burning with no wick.
Have I frightened you so?
Have the apple blossoms brushed your lips with the sweet slickness of honey?
Has your bottle of nectar shattered on the floor in between your fingers,
Sticky syrup crawling into the cracks beneath your skin?
The opal silk that drapes around your neck smells like rosemary.
Rosemary seeped in milk, with onions, collapsing into bechamel.
You adorn yourself with such fine clothes,
Even though we chat on a rusty, creaking porch.
You say things without speaking.
I agree without reminiscing.
I hoped that the morning rays would pierce your face
And send your cloudy mask careening,
But they did nothing but illuminate the nothing.
Your face sunk deeper into itself.

Welcome to Imaginary Airlines
by Emily Guerdan '25

Attention all passengers.

On behalf of imaginary airlines, I would like to welcome you aboard.

Today we will be flying to Orlando where the temperature is currently
I don't f***ing know because we're in Maine.

All exits are located where you came in and
oxygen mask privileges will be taken away from unruly passengers.
This includes offenses, such as leaning on other passengers without their consent,
screaming, committing any current crime, taking off your shoes and socks,
being rude to other passengers and staff, etc.
As always, pets are excused as long as they don't commit any crimes.

Seatbelts are available for access to smart people, and you are expected to
remain in your seats until we land unless
you are in need of the restroom or have some other emergency.

In the event of an emergency landing in the water,
life jackets are available to anyone who still has oxygen mask privileges.

Food and drinks will be coming around as soon as we reach a stable altitude,
and a rude tax has been put in place for the benefit of our staff.
Liquor is available to our staff and our staff only.

Our flight will last 3 hours, if you have a problem with this, please let one of our staff know
and we would be happy to shorten this to a 45-second trip to the ground.

Sit tight and we hope you enjoy your flight.

The Walk to the Car
by Eden Marley '23

Fear is the thing that makes her walk fast
when the only thing illuminating the dark is
a man-made streetlight.

Fear is the thing that makes her jump from
the parking lot asphalt to the driver's seat
and check in the back.

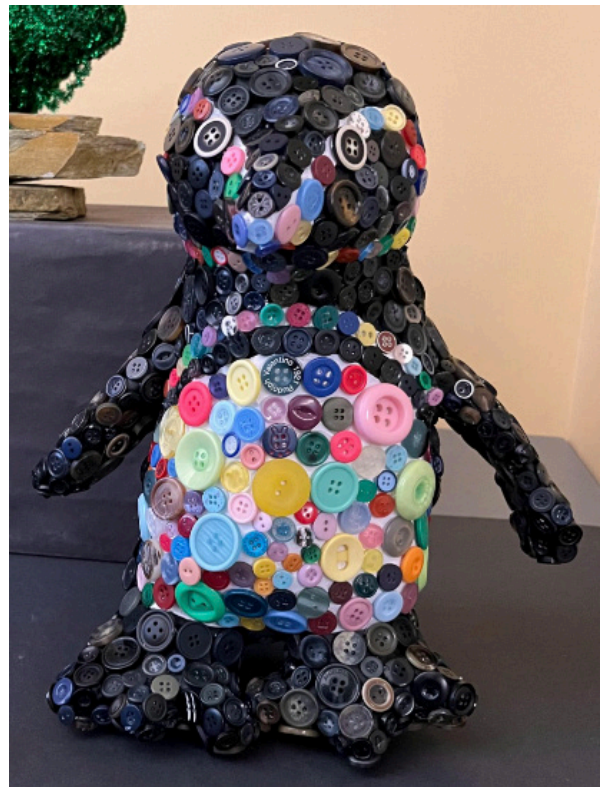
Fear is the thing that makes her look at
the bricks on the sidewalk when
she walks past a group of sneering boys.

Fear is the the thing that make her practice
putting her keys in between her fingers quickly,
that keeps a baseball bat under her bed.

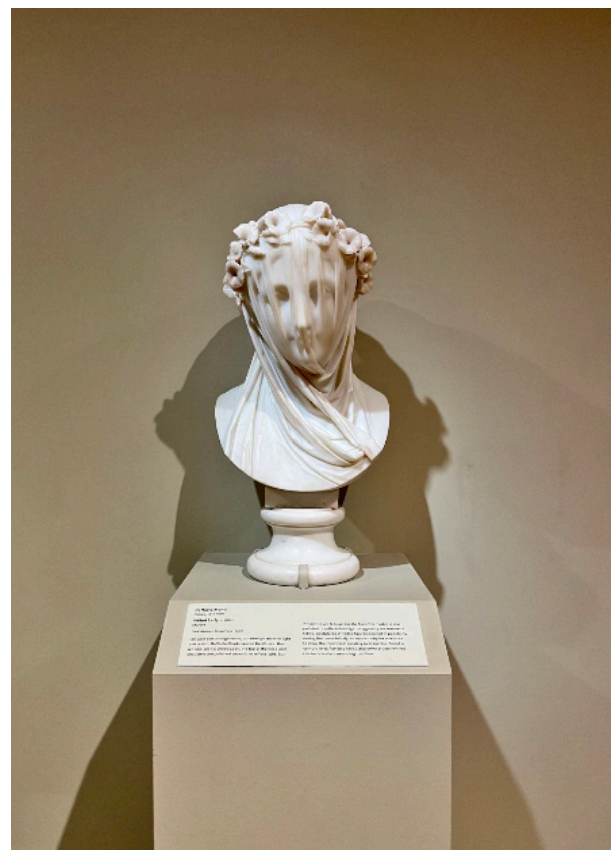
Fear is the thing that keeps her mouth
shut when it should be loud, screaming
against the baritone sh**show of this world

Fear is the thing that makes her laugh at
an unfunny joke, or pick a piece of lint
off his dirty sweatshirt sleeve.

Fear is what men think makes her a woman.



Anna Greene '24



Emily Mellow '24

Full of Grace
by Grace Golay '26

Your muddy eyes,
Your rose-splattered cheeks.
Oh, how I despise,
How you leave me weak.

Your gentle gaze,
Those moonlit nights.
Your violet haze,
You shine so bright.

Your cat-like steps,
Perched in my soul.
You are what's left,
You make me whole.

Your honey laugh,
Your speckled face.
You're my half,
So full of grace.

Snow Poem
by Ella Frajnd '26

The wind, ever bellowing
Feels silent and chilled
The sky painted pearly
The air, pure and still.
The world seems to slow
And then falter throughout
Like the glow of a lightbulb
Just petering out.
Then from the clouds
Like the wind in a kite
Little white blossoms
Begin to take flight.
Nesting in eyelashes
Melting on tongues
Festooning the air
Like string lights being strung
Tinting the sky
In a crystalline light
Dusting the world
In a carpet of white.



Thomas Nguyen '25

My Regret
by Regan Swallow '26

My regret always finds its way home.
It has existed in its current form
since the age of the dinosaurs,
It breathes air,
But has the ability, under natural conditions, to
remain submerged
for hours at a time.
I cannot retract my regret like all the others...
It always comes home--
Using the Earth's magnetic field
As a compass.
My regret has existed
For 100 years.
It has greenish skin,
And its most noticeable characteristic is its
Shell.
My regret can hold its breath for up to five hours.
And it's spent up to 12 years in the open Ocean,
And yet it still manages to find a way
Home each and every time.

A Lovely Crab
by Kat Cahan '23

When you love brushing long waves
Feeling sand beneath your toes
When you love the warmth of a blazing sunset
and the petals
adorning the walls of your lovely flower

And when feminine means glitter and giggles and
girls
Lovely girls with their hips swinging
Apples bloom with every smile
Starlight glitter that shine in delicate tears lost
over men
Beautiful giggles bouncing off of bathroom walls
Or break through rivers in a comforting wave

But you feel like one lone crab
Carefully crouched, crawling around
Your home of deep blue and
Your liquid sighs only heard by the
still ears of water and only seen by the
bright eyes of coral

And nothing connects more than this lone crea-
ture
Not crushed by weight of roles set
by a sex you have no power over
Shaped by men you cannot see nor ask them
How could they hate glitter, and giggles, and girls.
How can one only be glitter, giggles, and a girl
And not be jealous of a weightless, botherless,
genderless crab

Choices (Blending In)
by Chloe MacCheyne '26

you start with so many kinds of pots in front of you
you look through each carefully
your eyes taking in every aspect of these pots

option one
the universally loved pot
good for people to put anywhere,
earthy plant color
the perfectly right shape and figure
just right in every way
the pot you choose
the bowl you choose
the life **YOU** choose

all depends on this **one** decision

The pot

option two
the one at the back of the shelf
never truly seen
the shadow of the rest of the pots blocking out the one that
TRULY shines when you put it in the light

They will be lost in the mix or left behind because they just
AREN't
The same,
They
aren't
good enough

they are not to speak ... they are to be **left**
with no others to catch them when they decide to slip
right
off
that
shelf

The ideal pot
that hides its dents
that hides its scars behind layers of glaze and new clay
trying to blend in
trying to feel as if they belong because that's what all the other pots are doing

their potter will make them and break them
tear down and rebuild
but it's never good **ENOUGH**

choose wisely.



Zoe Weisenfluh '24