

AGS Literary Magazine

Atlanta Girls' School

2017-2018

**Individuality
in the Face
of Society**

Cover art by
Tierra Williams

Notes From The Editors

The qualities that make someone unique might not always be obvious to them. We can reflect on ourselves until the end of time and might never truly understand what makes us different from the person next to us. Why is each of us an individual? Is it how we walk or talk? What we like or dislike? To me, our individuality comes from how we think and feel, something no one can take away from us. From a young age, we can formulate our own opinions. And, while they might sometimes be influenced by others, we can always change and grow in our beliefs and thoughts. Our differences are also incredibly hard to articulate, and when they are, they should be celebrated as art, personal pieces of our souls. So, with this year's literary magazine and every issue that follows, we will celebrate those AGS girls who dared to look at their world and inside themselves to create a one-of-a-kind piece of art. We, the editors of this year's magazine, are honored to be able to share these amazing works with you.

-Madison Marsh '20, Co-Editor

In today's society, individual voices are often lost, drowned out by the words of the media, the famous, politicians, and a multitude of those who believe that the one who speaks the loudest is the one who speaks the best. Women's voices in particular are often silenced in America and even more so around the world. Our theme this year is individuality in the face of society, a topic that encompasses all writing and artwork and those who are brave enough to share their visions. Writing and artwork is a way to make yourself heard, a way to make yourself seen. Because of the impact student work can have, this literary magazine is non-anonymous because at Atlanta Girls' School we empower each other by claiming our submissions, taking pride in them, and sharing them with the world. To the women who were courageous enough to put their work in this magazine and share a piece of their individuality, congratulations: you are part of the solution to one day achieving a world where all voices in all mediums have the opportunity to be heard and appreciated.

-Kimberly Kassis '20, Co-Editor

Often, especially in high school, people feel pressured to fit in with others, making it difficult for them to understand their true individuality. As children, we feel comfortable with our individual traits, but as we age, we feel the need to conform to society's standards. We strive to suppress anything that distinguishes us from others, preferring to blend into our surroundings rather than cherishing qualities that make us stand out. Art is a form of self-expression; inevitably, artists share a piece of their identity when they release work. Choosing to be vulnerable and share a piece of ourselves can be terrifying but, nonetheless, worthwhile. We commend each of our AGS photographers, artists, writers, and poets for sharing their personal work with our community.

-Veronica Speyer '20, Art Editor



Artwork by Zahra McIntosh

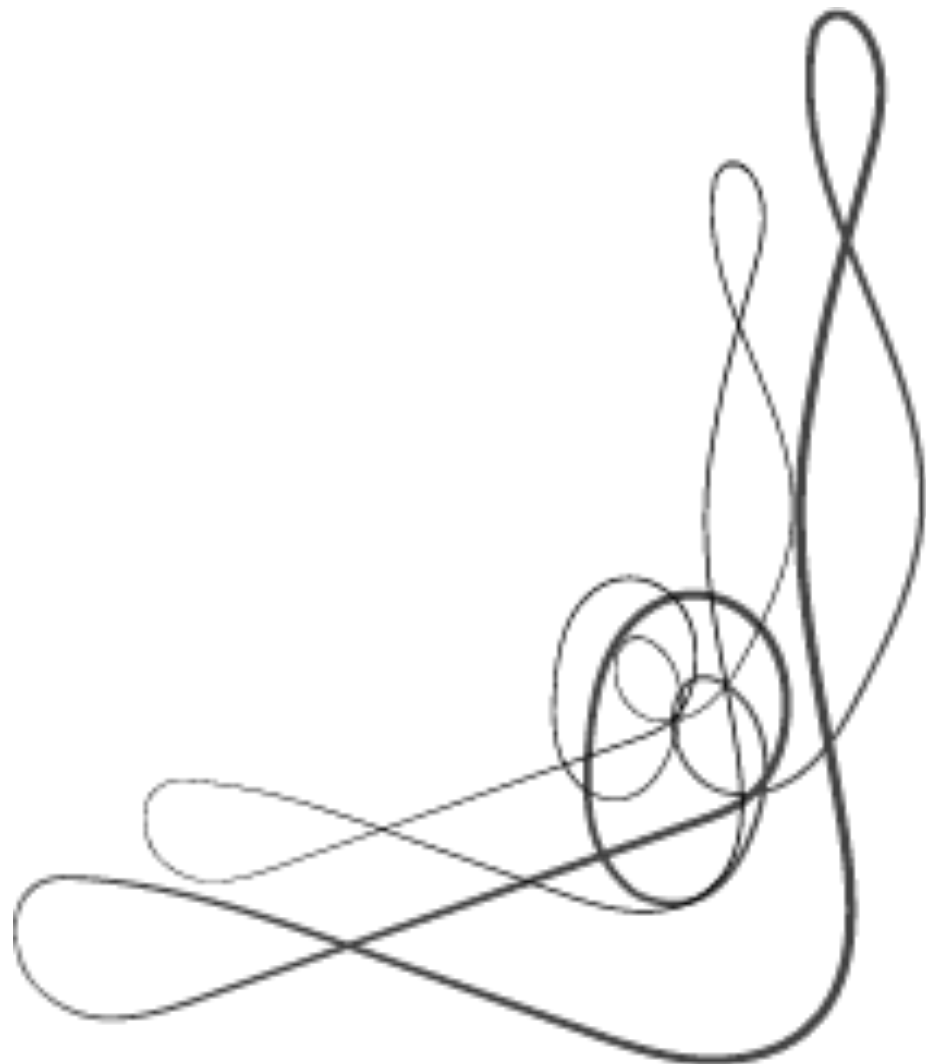


Artwork by Isabella Newberg

THIS ONE GOES OUT TO THE DREAMERS BY LELIA TOLBERT

I stand tall,
Growing from the roots of this tired Earth.
This unstoppable future: aging is one that I welcome openly.
That is why I continue to grow.
They say only children can be gay, innocent, and heartless at once,
But I am all of those plus the guidelines for adults.
But truly what is the difference

Between a child and an adult?
I mean, we all start off small and grow taller each day
And we all can remain happy and gay if we wish to stay that way.
So why do we discriminate between the seed and the blossom.
Why do we shade ourselves from our original state?





Artwork by Isabella Newberg

AMONG THOUSANDS OF STARS BY AMELIA HICKS

How far away can a friend be?
I look up at the night sky and think,
What is out there,
Among thousands of stars?
A single planet,
A dot on the horizon.
Think about it,

What is waiting for me,
Thousands of miles,
Thousands of light years,
Thousands and thousands of stars and planets, Waiting for someone to come.
Just for a moment,
Look into the dark,
Into the night sky,
Into thousands of galaxies,
And you may see something other than a thousand stars,
Looking back at you.
The sun will rise and shine on the earth,
And on you.
Maybe, just maybe,
Someone will be thinking the same thing,
And someday,
You will see each other as the same.
Just for a moment,
Look into the dark,
Into the night sky,
Into thousands of galaxies,
And think,
Why am I here?
What is my purpose?
Why do I exist?
And some day,
You may see other than a thousand stars,
Looking back at you.

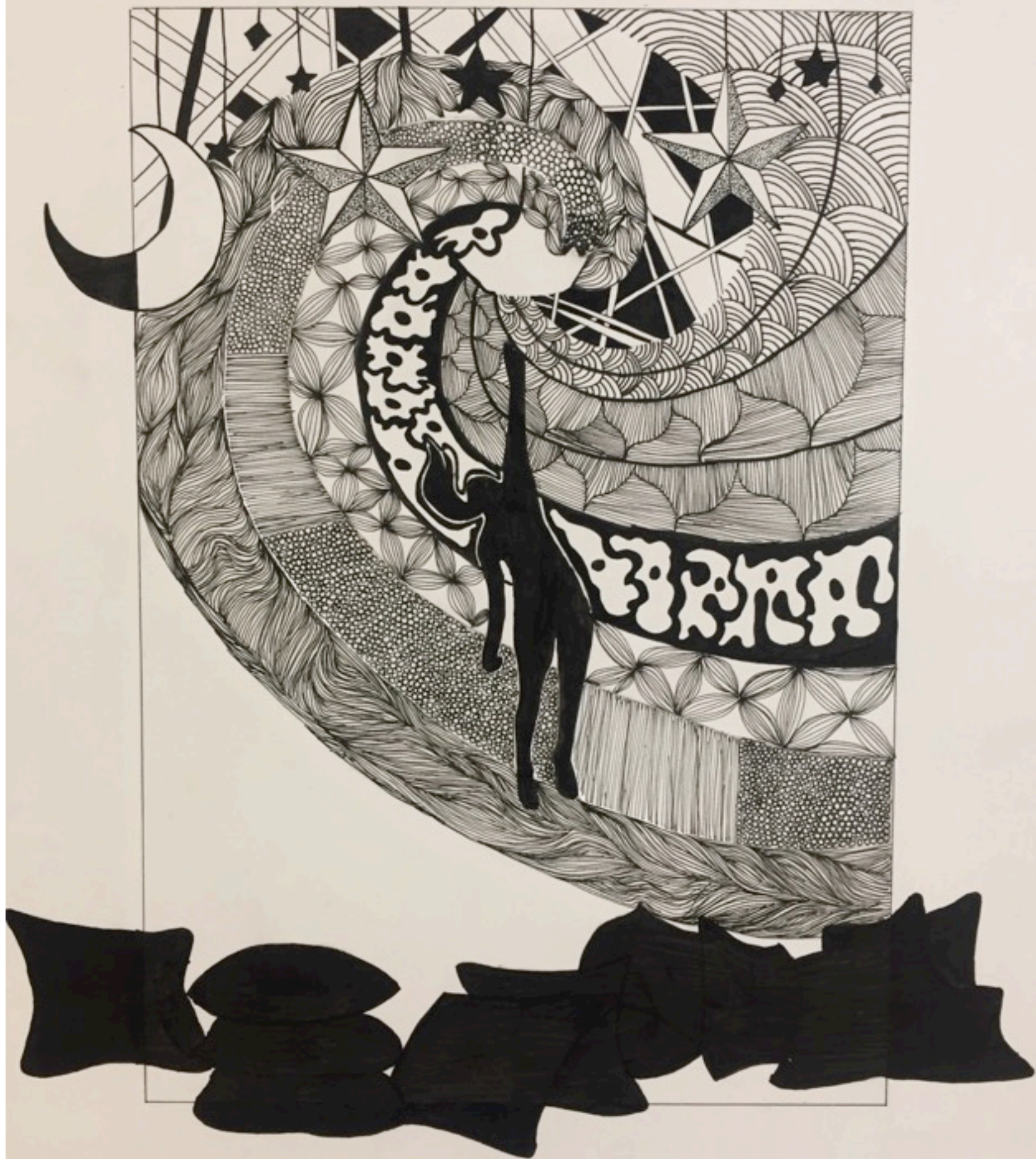


Artwork by Isabella Newberg

MON RAMA, MON HÉROS BY SALLY COBB WELTNER

mon rama, mon héros
qui est ton rama? pour moi, Elle est chaque Femme
chaque Fille, qui sait sa valeur
sa valeur, ses buts, ses montagnes.
pas seule Elle sait ces choses de soi-même,
Elle sait ces choses du monde.
et Elle ne saurait pas exactement comment aider,

mais Elle sait qu'Elle veut aider.
pour moi, des héros tiennent tous les formes,
tous les tailles.
Elles ont toutes l'esprit d'océan
les vagues, en toutes leur férocité.
Elles ont la fortitude de
La Grande Muraille de Chine.
et ouai, Elle casse de temps en temps.
Ça arrive.
mais chaque temps Elle se réveille,
Elle est plus forte, et Elle a plus de la passion. Et donc,
c'est l'Esprit de la Femme.



Artwork by Folasade Olujuigbe

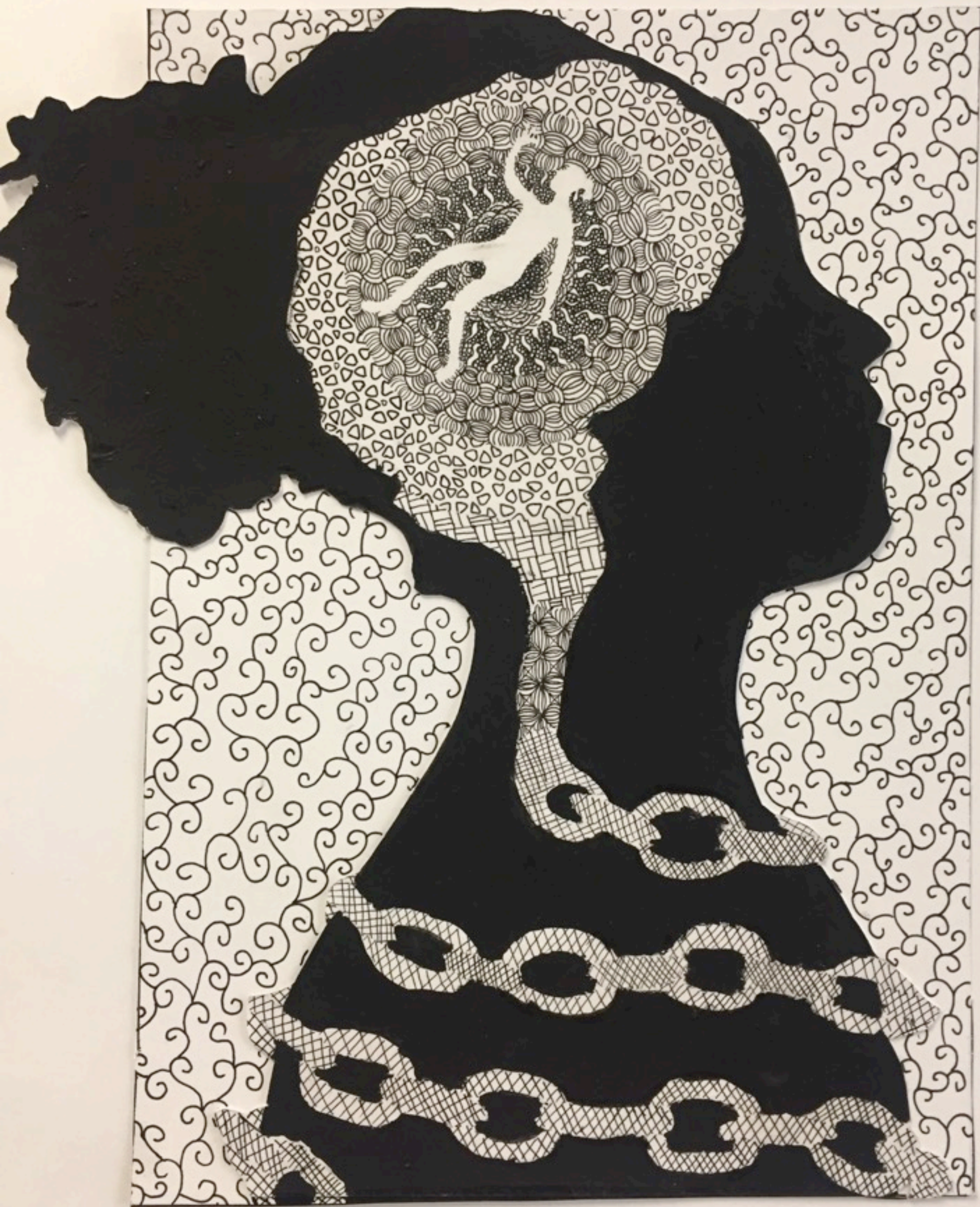


Artwork by Hannah Walls

S'ENFONCE BY CLARE COFFMAN

Une femme qui étais
Tranquille et sensible
Mais inoubliable
Le pouvoir estrope elle et
Elle était blessé
À cause de la guerre, ça c'est sûr,
On a été un supplice dans sa coeure

Elle s'enfonce
Mais personne a lui offert
un réponse
Personne a connu
Ne que moi
J'ai vu.



Artwork by Danielle Toma-Harrold



Artwork by Hannah Walls

AN AMBITIONLESS WORLD BY PRIYA YADAV

What would life be like without ambition?

Without ambition, highways would be empty—
Sidewalks inundated with soiled signs.

Without ambition, offices would house cobwebs—

Alleys brim with white snow.

Without ambition, progress would paralyze—
But blaring blue and red lights would not.

So what's the harm of living a life
Without ambition?





Artwork by Hannah Walls

OUR RAGE BY ABBY PHILLPOTT

I'm connected to the sky with a string
Holding my chest high
To stay dry
Looking down being quiet don't sing
Only pulled up by noticing
A thousand other girls are doing the same thing

My friend, my sister in arms, clenching her fist so hard it rains blood
Her voice shaking with anger
She's humming in purple and red, they say that's weakness not danger
Her words are met with thick mud
We want to smother her, lava to rock, contain her
We avert our eyes from her flood

Then once in a place nobody knew my name
I commanded in braided confidence
Don't speak to me that way, each letter bottomless
And another girl said to me, feel no shame
Boiling rain tied with a lavender and pink bow burst to flame
Emanating power, she claimed

The rope from the sky shriveled I'm just beginning to know
I don't have to sit like a lady to stand up tall
I'll yell, thunder and lightning will liquify then fall
Watch me yell and cry and smile and grow
I'm allowed to overflow
She and I are lava and you wish you didn't see our magenta afterglow



Artwork by Sage Shumate



Artwork by Hadiya Haq

THE TALE OF THE SOUND OF MUSIC TOUR BY KIMBERLY KASSIS

The summer, when warmth peaks through the clouds is the prime time.

People coming from far and wide, or visiting from nearby Mulheim.

Movie viewers and musical fans alike
flock to Salzburg completely psyched.

All gathering in one place,
a bus plastered with Julie Andrews' face.

The group was thirty, but I will only introduce four,

because to do more would be quite a bore.
A modern Canterbury Tales I tell,
of travelers meeting at The Sound of Music bus tour with all their personnel.

The first to take their seat
was the newly married couple from Montreat.
Colin and his husband on their dream trip
dressed in outfits of his own craftsmanship.
Colin wore the grey and green suit of Mr. Von Trapp,
and sat down, adjusting his seat belt strap.
one for safety he was,
but the sight of the white gazebo had him abuzz.
From his bag he took his phone,
the camera roll consisting of photos from home.
His passport, only once used,
opened for a trip he could not refuse.
The ring on his finger was shiny and new,
never once removed as if attached by glue.
The sites made his pale face flush red
a stark contrast against his dark locked head.
Colin, a man so loyal and kind,
that his husband refused to decline,
the trip of his dreams
which is not a typical honeymoon theme.

Beside him sat Gloria from Chile.
In her dark hair, from the weeds, she'd placed a white lily.
the color matching her jeans,
and complimenting her top which was frilly and green.
She hummed the music as she took her seat,
her voicing soothing all from the dry heat.
She came alone
on donations from her friends so she didn't have to take out a loan.
She left singing "So Long Farewell,"
her excitement not leaving her any time to dwell.
Miles away from home,
with a raggedy suitcase containing clothes and a comb,
her heart felt alive,

because this movie gave her a living that allowed her to thrive.
The songs inspired her to sing,
her enchanting voice providing her with males offering rings.
But all the suitors she turned down,
not liking the men who always hung around.
And so her face aged,
and she continued to save each monthly wage.
Until by luck she ended up in Salzburg on that fateful day.
The trip more magical than words could convey

Next is mother and daughter a group quite cliché,
A pairing making the most of their summer holiday.
Together they watched this movie each Christmas Eve,
and all their fighting for over two hours took its leave.
The daughter usually glaring at her mom,
joked and laughed completely calm.
Her black garb gone
replaced by a sundress the color of a fawn.
Seventeen going on eighteen she was,
with her Ivy League acceptance earning her great applause.
She had cash stored away in her clutch,
because when it came to souvenirs no price was too much.
She was most excited to see the wedding church,
so when the bus started moving her stomach lurched,
and to her mom she gave a look,
taking a selfie of them to post on Facebook.
She sang and took part in chit chat,
and for the first time in a while, she wasn't a brat.
For her childhood dreamed mother daughter vacation date,
she decided to let their fighting from home end in a stalemate.

The final man was the funny tour guide Drew,
who sang songs while managing the bus queue.
When all the seats were filled,
he boarded, making a Julie Andrews impression that showed his acting skill.
Into a microphone he spoke,
never failing to make a Sound of Music joke.
His stomach bulged beneath his clothes,

his outfit complete with lederhosen the color of an old rose.
After starting a sing along to “Do-Re-Mi,”
he sang and danced carefree,
A packet of edelweiss seeds he gives to those who come,
and at the final tour stop, the restaurant strudel is not something he shies away from.
Tucked in his belt is a red flag,
and his groups follow the fabric, clutching their camera bags.
To the movie sites he takes his tours,
for five hours his time is all yours.
And when the tour ends each night,
he locks the bus and thanks the Von Trapp family with all his might.
And on that warm summer day,
in the middle of an Austrian May,
if it weren’t for the Von Trapps,
and their lives The Sound of Music recapped,
then our fans would have never met,
because the movie would not have had it’s great effect.
It would not have drawn four people from around the world,
and their great Sound of Music tour experience would have never unfurled.



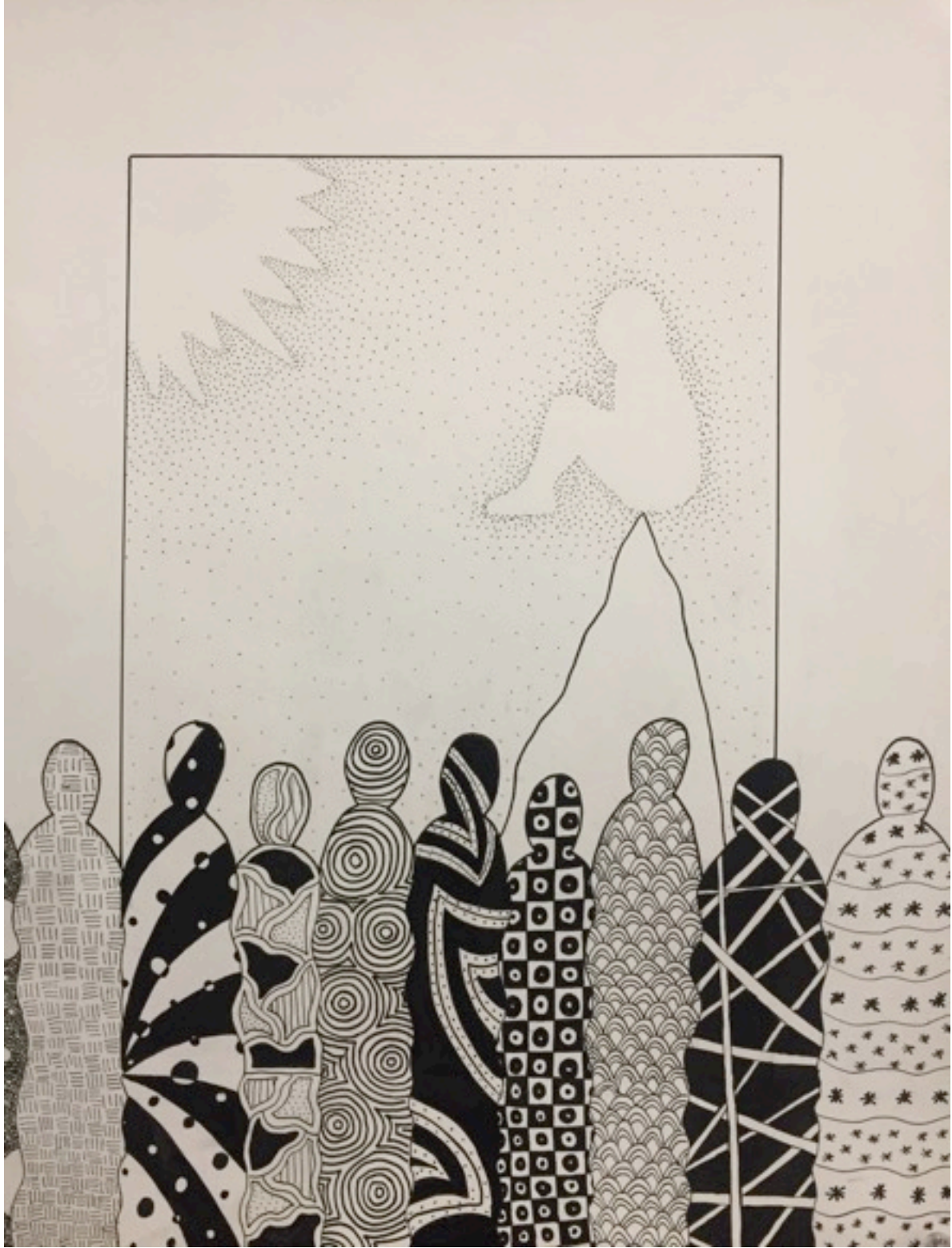


Artwork by Hannah Walls

ODE TO SEXUAL ABUSERS BY SOPHIE PETTIT

This is not a new issue
I am an old magazine printed years ago
Reopened for a political show
I am not a prop to be thrown around
I was used once but I am still standing on solid ground
I have seen my sisters and brothers fall
I have seen these oppressors

I have seen them all
I have seen them grow
But I have seen them fall
Weinstein, Signore, Price, Savino, Scoble, Steele, Besh, Toback, Richardson, Wieseltier, Landesman, Najera, Halperin, Baker, Spacey, Fish, Oreskes, Dick, Webster, Ratner, Hoover, Guillod, Westwick, Tambor, Genocchio, Moore, C.K., Kreisberg, Berganza, Takei, Jurvetson, Franken, Thrush, Rose, Lasseter, Martinez, Masterson
2 months of names
I'm afraid even more may remain
Our leaders divided us
Separated us into two camps
We wait for the other one to surrender, as we become the champs
I do not care what you think you accomplished in your past
This is the present
Make your legacy last
Stand up for something other than yourself
As you sit in your offices concerned with your wealth
We are being attacked on all sides
Nowhere is safe
We have nowhere to hide
Our work, our house, our streets, our town, our world
I do not want to have to explain to a girl
That she cannot wear that shirt because of what a man might do
That even saying no sometimes won't do
I am confused
I am sad
I am tired
I am mad
My heroes fall before me
As I'm trapped in this hell
Surrounded by predators, encasing me in a shell
Our president says to blame the accusers
But our president is one of those abusers
No matter what party you belong to
Or where you are from
Fight back because the battle has only just begun



Artwork By Lucy Shuker

ADRENALINE: PROLOGUE BY CYRENITY AUGUSTIN

Let's talk about fear. Yes, it's an emotion that everyone experiences once in their life. But let's get to the nuts and bolts of it.

It's a parasite. A feeling that creeps into your mind when you least expect it. It snatches at your brain, sinking inside and feeding off of you. It can come at any time, though it can be different for different people.

There are things in our world, many things, that cause us to experience the overwhelming emotion. Each thing, let's call them triggers, affects different types of people.

Let us say that you, dear reader, have a fear of spiders, better known as arachnophobia. If you do, then wonderful, this applies to you! But what you're about to read may be a bit disturbing, though that is what I'm writing this for.

Now, let me ask you a question. What exactly about spiders alarms you? Is it the feeling of their twig-like legs pricking your skin as they slowly walk across your arm? Is it the slow deliberate movements it makes to reach you? Could it maybe be the fangs, ready to pierce your skin at any moment? Or is it the fact that there could be one crawling on you right now. Slowly making it's way up your arm, eight eyes glinting with excitement, as it's mouth starts to salivate. Bristles brushing your skin and giving you the feeling that all is not right. That maybe something is, in fact, crawling up your arm. The uncomfortable shiver that grasps your body before you finally look down, and see it staring right back at you.

And that is when the fear is introduced, though it could have occurred at any time during this process. It takes control and causes you to either run from the source and provide you safety or leaves you open and unmoving to the trigger. It's a very powerful source.

But imagine for a moment if fear was actually Fear. A being, with its own consciousness and willingness to do what it pleases. A being able to manipulate one's movements despite what you wish you would do. Maybe it will curse you, leaving you to suffer the emotional torment of being open to whatever is causing you panic. Or maybe it will pity you and allow you movement of your body to escape from the trigger. It all depends on what it feels.

Or more specifically, what He feels.



Artwork by Hannah Walls

SUMMER IN VENICE BY YOUMNA AL-MADANI

Sun kissed skin and salty hair,
Light breezes through the summer air.
Soaking up the beaming sun,
Out in Venice calls for fun.



Artwork by Veronica Speyer

YELLOW BY SARAH WOOD

A buzz fills my body humming with vibrations
Swift and turning teaming with electric life
The shade doesn't erase sun
This is a feeling of love without strife

Private solo dance creating boundless marks
Lazy afternoons in hours of sunshine
Golden streaks beneath the chest of a lark
He sang this ebullient song in tune with mine

Sweetly open is our talk of the minds
Caring lark we mirror and rhyme
He makes delicate gravitational flights to find
Mysteries of secrets and love but mostly of thine

Too busy to settle in fields of mellow
When we paint stretches of sky with upbeat yellow

Artwork by Clare Coffman





Artwork by Hannah Walls

MA MÈRE BY PAULINE MASHBURN

ma mère, elle
brille comme le soleil,
elle est
mon meilleur amie,
mon héros,
mon fan numéro un,
mon plus grand confident,

mais surtout ma mère.
d'autres sont
inspiré par elle,
aime la
l'envie
respecte la.
mais, elle
travaille sans relâche
parle avec élégance
cuisine avec joie
aime facilement
conseils rapidement
et sacrifices rapidement
elle est la lumière et donneuse de 5 vies
et elle est aimée.

Mon Pionnier

Par Faith Coffman

Mon pionnier est ma mère

Elle n'abandonne jamais

Elle suit ses rêves

Elle travaille dur

Elle a une famille aimante

et un travail qu'elle aime

Mon pionnier est ma mère

Elle a un coeur gentil

Elle se lève pour elle-même

et ceux qui l'entourent

Elle est ma meilleure amie

Elle donne les meilleurs câlins

Mon pionnier est ma mère





Artwork by Hannah Walls

FAME UNDISCLOSED BY KIMBERLY KASSIS

Lights flash, hands reach over security, and bodies push forward as she passes, her long silk gown trailing behind her. Voices scream her name, TV hosts and vloggers all wanting the inside scoop. She turns to face their cameras, plastering a smile on her face that shines like the diamonds around her neck. All eyes strain to see her, and she clutches her golden Oscar to her chest while the paparazzi climb over each other to approach her.

She takes a step backwards as they swarm her, her bare back hitting a cool glass wall while the voices around her blend into an ear splitting symphony of terror. They are like flies hovering over her, and she covers her face with her hands to block their bright camera lights, swatting them away with her coveted award.

The red carpet, once so glamorous, feels like an unending death trap, and she slinks against the wall telling herself that this time she would win, but the crowds press in sucking the oxygen and her chances of escape out of the air. She turns away from their desperate snarls and presses her cheek to the cold glass bracing for impact, her free hand banging against the wall. Flakes of her nail polish flutter to the ground as she attempts to break out of the cage that was locked the moment she signed her life away, her perfect nails splitting, ripping out of her skin.

Passerby watch her tears fall from the other side, another tour group. They are led by her balding boss, who stands before her unfazed as the paparazzi rip at her dress, shredding the silk, snapping the straps. She cries for help as her arms are twisted behind her, the crowd fighting for a glimpse of her face. Cameras slam into her back and head tearing at her skin, spilling her blood for fans to collect. Her award clatters to the ground snapping in two.

She screams, her voice hoarse, throat raw, wiping a red sweaty hand against the once crystal clear glass. Her boss motions to her, an exhibit, saying, "Here lies a celebrity in her natural habitat."

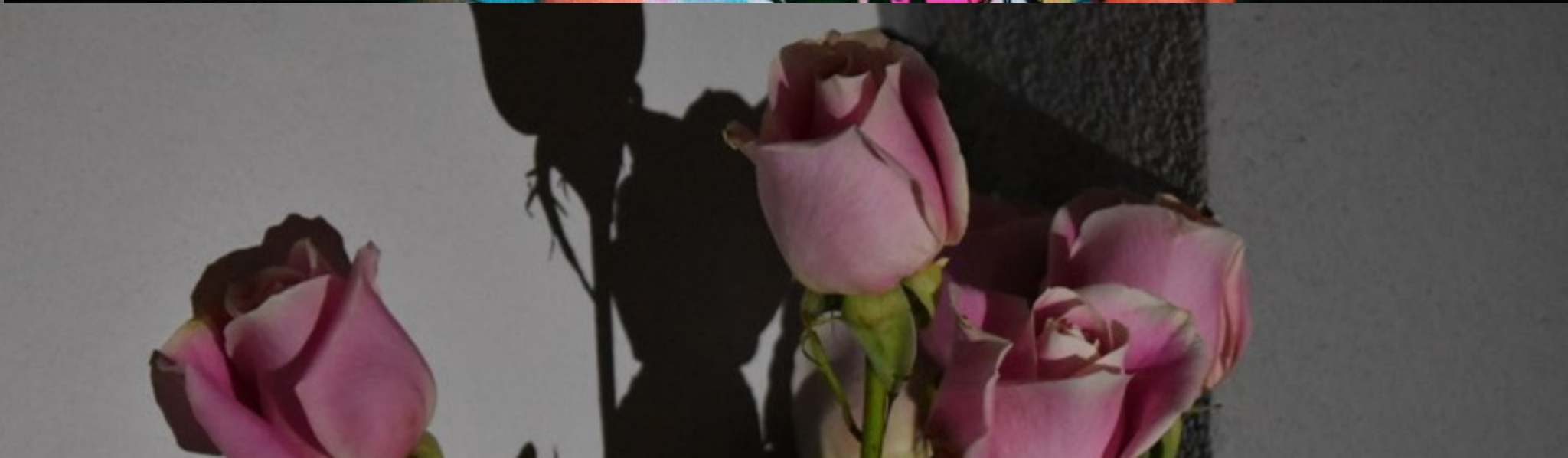
His tour group watches the enclosure unperturbed, and the weight of the paparazzi crawling on her back drags her to her knees as they rip at her hair, fighting for strands to sell. Her mascara drips down her cheeks, and she arches her back in pain, pleading for a rescuer to smuggle her out of the spotlight.

Her vision blurs in and out of focus, and she places the palm of her hand against the glass as the tour group moves closer. Her hand trembles, her appearance torn to shreds, but the group shrugs, one man whispering to his wife, “She chose this life.”

She shakes her head in response, and it is shoved into the glass as she goes under, drowning in the crowd, her body broken and invaded. She thought she was pursuing a dream when she issued her first signature, but it soon turned into a nightmare. This isn't what she wanted.



Artwork by
Hannah Walls and
Clare Coffman





ALAN FLETCHER

Imagination
Is Key

Artwork by Sophia Steingold



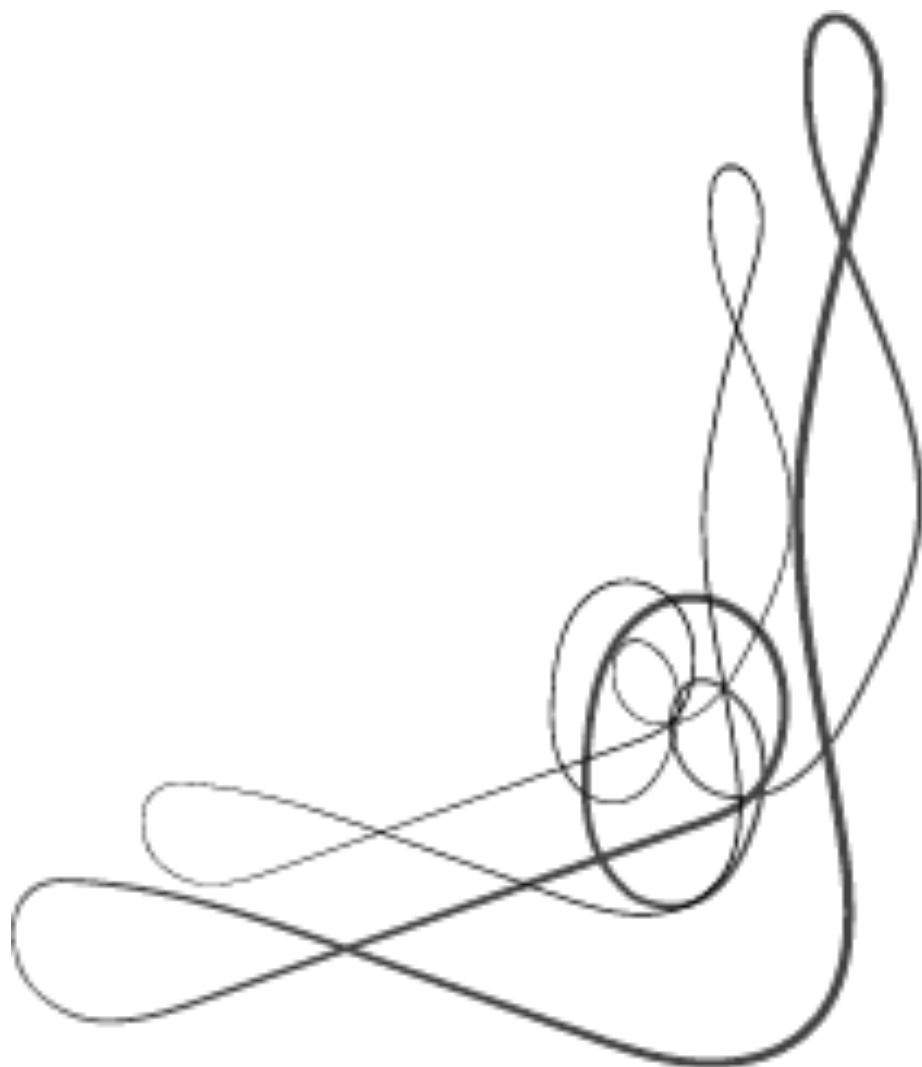
Artwork by Julia Platt

By Ellie Munson

BORN IN THE DAY OF THE MASS SHOOTING

At the age of seventeen, I can't remember a time before 9/11. I was one. I wasn't alive during Columbine. My first memory of Sandy Hook was hearing my teachers cry. I was twelve. Little did I know how normalized these shootings would become. For Orlando, I was fifteen, and for Las Vegas I was seventeen. Now I'm turning eighteen. But I wondered aside from mass shootings about gun violence. To be frank, shooting in America is not only mass, it is small. It can be one single event that changes one person's life. Guns affect everyone. Guns are more likely to be used in a murder, a suicide, or in an accident than in self-defense. My friend just turned eighteen. The day after he turned eighteen, he bought a gun, and the day after that, he got into his dream college. The day after that he called me screaming that he was going to kill himself. He had a gun. He had just gotten out of the hospital. Are these the times I have to grow up in, where in the past two years I have known four people who have successfully committed suicide by guns? And yes, it is a mental health problem, but it is so much more. The problem is not that simple. I wish it was. The access is not hard. This year I signed up for the ACT (college entrance exams). I would submit a picture of myself and it would get rejected, and I would submit more, and those too would be rejected. I had to find a straight on, perfectly sized photo of myself. After that, of course, I had to do pages and pages of paperwork and finally, after signing up for the ACT, I went back to live and wondered why is it so hard to get your drivers license, and sign up for the ACT, but so easy to get a gun. When I wondered this, I thought of my friend; healthy, but so close to committing suicide because of lax gun laws. Only one minute longer and he would be dead. We can blame this problem all on mental health, but we need to take it further. I was left to pick up the pieces of my friend's mental health. So when we say, mental health is the answer to gun control, it is a good answer. What do we do with that? Where are easily available mental health professionals in the United States healthcare system? Why are teenagers left to feel powerless? (NO, I AM NOT SAYING GIVE GUNS TO MY TEACHERS.) Most of all, as Trevor Noah wisely put it, "If kids are old enough to be shot, they are old enough to have an opinion about being shot." So I know I talked about mental health but, when I hear my peers and friends and con-

stituents have been shot, my heart is broken. When people say, I don't have a right to speak my mind until I am eighteen, my heart is broken. If you are not in iGen (my generation), you might not understand what it means to be born in the age of the mass shootings. When people like Tucker Carlson said, "I am not a citizen until I turn eighteen," I will be your next generation of voters. We need to look up to our peers, like Emma González, and stand in solidarity with your fellow man. I am a person, I am a citizen, and I will only ever know a world where mass shootings are the norm. Since the year I was born, in 2000, there have been more than 188 school/university shootings. In my state universities, you are allowed to carry a gun but not light a candle. Remember these numbers: 96 people are killed by gun violence every day, and 7,000 children have been killed in gun violence since Sandy Hook. #NotOneMore is not just a fleeting hashtag; it is something that realizes lives are at stake.





Le. Hot

Artwork by Hannah Walls

RELEASE OF FIRE BY LELIA TOLBERT

If flames could be worn
Let me tell you,
I'd be the first to wear them.
The scorching heat would burn through the soft soles of my feet
And the steam would seep through the heart of my core
Welcoming my burning ferocity.
Life, they say is like a ball of energy.

No! Life is a ball of energy that will blow.
The blood is boiling.
The nails on the chalkboard are scratching.
The energy is throbbing.
And then it bursts.
Releasing the energy into one sharp zap.
Each crack, sizzle, and pop electrocutes as a laser,
Melting through the first layer of skin
Till it reaches the center.
It will pierce, cut, and slice until its work is complete.
The pain hurts like no other but turns the body to crisp ice.
My eyes will pair with my victims' eyes and that ball will shatter.
I will watch as their puncture wounds emerge.
Their light will release from their core.
My steam will dissipate.
I will rest my hand over their cold cheek and brush it for the last time.

ARTWORK BY ISABELLA NEWBERG

...



BY KATHERINE LANGFORD

THE LONLIEST GOD

Winter stood over a corpse in a world made of white. Ice formed beneath her feet, hard against the snow all around her, undulating like the waves of the sea. Her pale blue dress, made of the tiniest frozen crystals, fluttered in the frigid breeze. She didn't feel the cold. That, after all, came from her. This was her world.

And she had killed another human.

She was only trying to take his hand. She'd tried so many times, taken so many hands, only to have the same result each time.

The human's eyes were wide open, his face slack in shock. His body was turning blue. She'd frozen him completely. She knew that inside his veins, his blood was as frozen as the air, and she was at fault for his death. It was this, more than anything else, that reminded her exactly what she was. While humans were warm, she was cold. While humans were beautiful shades of deep brown, rich black, and ochre, she was pale as the snow, the season of winter in all respects. But she had a humanoid body. What a cosmic joke that she looked like them when she was so different. She let out a long breath and turned away, leaving the body to await a burial of snow.

For the second time, she owned the planet. It had been half a million years since her power had unleashed, encasing over half the Earth in ice. These periods sometimes lasted millions of years, sometimes only thousands. When this one was over, would humans remember it? Would they even survive? She would know if they did or not, for she saw them occasionally, though she walked alone, far from their tribes.

Alone. Winter tensed, closing her eyes against the darkness in her mind. That never worked, though she tried it every time. Try as she might, she was doomed to be alone for the rest of time. A single tear fell from her eye, turning to ice as it slipped from her face to drop into the snow, an indistinguishable piece of glass in the sea of white.

In the distance, a large, fur-covered creature with long tusks walked, joined by others of its kind. She couldn't help but smile at that. At least they had someone, even if she didn't. She was always watching animals go by in packs, never alone. Would she ever have something like that? Others like her?

She looked away. As her white hair fell in front of her face for a moment, she tucked it out of the way. Her hair was pale as the snow. Not like the humans, with their infinite shades of rich brown, tawny beige, and more. She was different. And it would stay that way forever, no matter how much she hated it.

“Hello, gorgeous,” a voice said.

Winter whipped around at the sound and found herself face to face with the most unusual human she’d ever seen.

He was tall, at least a head taller than her, with vivid crimson hair. He had warm, golden skin and eyes of a color she hadn’t seen in many years. Green. And he was shirtless of all things, though he had thick pants and boots. How was he alive? Her brow lowered a little, her mouth forming a line. He took a step closer and spoke again.

“You are Winter, right?” When she nodded, he continued. “Enchanting to meet you, snow angel.” He reached his hand out for hers. She tensed, shaking her head, opening her mouth to speak —

He took her hand and kissed it.

She stared down at him, her body going slack. His fingers slid off of hers, and as soon as they did, she felt like she was missing something. He had touched her, and he was still alive. His skin had felt warm. That was a sensation she hadn’t felt in... she couldn’t remember how long. What was he? Surely he couldn’t be human. Winter drew her arms in close as he introduced himself. “The name’s Summer, beautiful. We’re the same, you and I. Seasons.”

Her breath hitched.

“You are...the warm season?” she said, her voice thin and scratchy. She hadn’t spoken in centuries.

“That would be me,” he said with a grin, bowing low. His eyes never left hers. Winter’s frown deepened. This was odd, to be sure. She’d never met another like herself. Though she didn’t like the look of him. It was reassuring to meet another season, but did he have to be so...garish?

“All right,” she said. “What do you wish of me?”

“Straight to the point, I see. Not a problem.” He laced his fingers and stretched his arms before him. “So I’ve seen your power. Not bad. Want to see mine?” He held up a hand and a flame appeared in the middle of it. It was, to be perfectly honest, the most pitiful excuse for a fire she’d ever seen. “See? Pretty hot, huh?” he said. Winter held back a groan. He called that power? That was nothing compared to what she could do. She’d frozen half the world, all on her own.

“Indeed,” she said in a flat voice. He didn’t seem to notice her intention, and kept on talking.

“You said I’m the warm season, and that’s true. Whenever it gets hot, at least, that’s me. I think it’s pretty great,” he said, tapping the side of his head.

On the outside, Winter was a picture of calm. On the inside, she was close to fuming. Who did this man think he was? Fire wasn’t an amazing power, not compared to her ice. And did he have to be so forward? He was acting like a child. If he was as old as she was, he certainly didn’t show it. And he was still talking. He had launched into a story about himself. She didn’t bother to listen.

Winter had always been careful to keep her emotions below the surface, never showing too much of any feeling. But now, she was close to snapping. She wasn’t even trying to pay attention now, even as he made ridiculous grand gestures as he spoke about his exploits.

Winter had been alone since the beginning. Throughout history, even as humans evolved and began their journeys over the planet, she’d remained by herself. What was the use of interaction with them? All she did was kill them at a touch, especially during these frozen times, when she was at her most powerful. She’d grown used to spending each day by herself, thinking and walking, thinking and walking.

It hurt, of course. She hated every second of it, especially when humans had begun to speak, laughing with one another, holding each other. She could never have that. Her heart never seemed to be content with her solitary life, though her mind had grown accustomed to it. She wanted someone to spend time with.

But did it have to be him?

“So, that’s pretty much my story.” He flashed her a large smile, while she kept her face expressionless. “Would you like more of—”

“You are ridiculous,” she said. Her voice was soft, but her intent was clear.

“I’m sorry?” he said, his eyebrows shooting up.

“Do you need me to repeat myself?”

“You don’t have to be mean. I’m trying to help you,” Summer said, voice defensive.

“I do not want you here. I have my own tasks.”

“What, walking around all day? Why don’t you come with me, and you can actually have some fun?”

“Come with you?” she said. “I would much rather not.”

Summer ran a hand through his hair. When he next spoke, a growl laced his tone.

“This was supposed to be easy,” he said.

“Well I am sorry for not meeting your expectations.” Winter said, enunciating each word. Summer’s eyes narrowed.

“Do you have to be such a b—“

“I hardly think that’s an accurate word,” Winter said coolly. “Have you not looked around you?”

“What?” Summer said.

“The world is mine. Have you not seen it?”

“Oh, sure. Because covering the world in ice and freezing people to death is so incredible.”

Winter’s muscles quivered, and her jaw clenched.

“Fine,” she said. “If you won’t leave, I will.”

With that, Winter turned and began to walk away. She let out a shaking breath, letting her temper cool as she took step after step.

Alone again.

More days of eternal solitude, staring at the world and watching as it grew, never to be a part of it. She would watch as humans grew, watch them build their homes, and whatever came after. But Winter would never be a part of their world. She knew the humans feared her. Here she was again. Here she would stay. She felt her eyes begin to sting with unshed tears. Once again, each day would pass without a word spoken. No contact with anyone. Ever.

“Do you really want to be alone forever?”

Winter stopped at the softness of Summer’s voice. She didn’t turn, but she did not keep walking.

“I wouldn’t wish that on anyone,” he said. “Even you.”

She turned her head as he continued. “The only reason I’m still sane is because I have the other seasons. I can’t imagine how you do it. And yes...” He paused, shaking his head. “You are mean, and I don’t really like you, but I don’t hate you. So will you come with me?”

“Why would I do that?”

“Because the other seasons will want to meet you.”

Winter’s breath halted.

“There are...others?”

“Their names are Fall and Spring. We’ve been looking for you for a while. We used to all be alone, like you, but it would be nice if we didn’t have to live for eternity

by ourselves, right? You can go insane like that. Why do you think I'm here?" He smiled. "We don't want any of us to be alone."

Winter let out a breath she didn't realize she was holding, though her brow furrowed.

"Why are you coming now?" she said.

Summer bit his lip.

"We...uh...couldn't find you," he said. "That, and..." He looked down. "We were trying to figure out how to best approach you. You'd be surprised how hard that was." He chuckled. "You've been alone for so long. We didn't know if you'd be right in the..." He gave a suggestive nod. "And I mean, come on, we've only been around for a few million years."

"Is that it?" she asked.

"I suppose there's more, but I can tell you on the way. Be careful though, Fall's hugs might knock you out."

Winter took a breath in. Her fingers twitched. She'd only ever touched someone once without killing them, and that was the small brush of hands Summer had given her just moments ago. She tried to imagine a world where she could smile. A world where she could hold someone, feel the warmth of another person. She didn't know what it felt like, and she wanted to. Of course she wanted to.

But could she tolerate him?

She could try.

Winter turned her body around to face Summer. He held out a hand. All he said was, "They'll be waiting for us."

Winter took a breath, in and out.

She took his hand.

Long Time
Traveler by
Category
Five



Artwork by Hannah Walls



Artwork by Hannah Walls

LE FILM COMMENCE... CHUT BY SAWYER THEIS

J'achète les tickets pour un film au cinéma. J'emmène mon amie qui s'appelle Lucille. Nous allons au cinéma mais les directions sont très difficile. Premièrement, nous allons au restaurant. Nous commençons à la maison de moi. Lucille et moi avançons et nous tournons à droite. Nous avançons dans le rue pour 3 miles. Puis, nous tournons à droite encore et continuons tout droit jusqu'au feu de signalisation. Nous tournons à gauche et garons la voiture et en sont sortie. Lucille et moi entrons dans le restaurant. Je veux les pâtes et Lucille veux une salade. Le serveur place le nourriture devant moi

et Lucille. Nous plongeons dans le nourriture et nous mangeons le chose entière. J'ai tellement faim, je ne partage pas avec Lucille. Lucille paye pour le nourriture, c'est très gentille d'elle. Nous sortons le restaurant et allons au cinéma. Pour aller au cinéma, nous sortons le parking et traversons le feu de signalisation et continuons tout droit à la grande route. Mais au deuxième carrefour, nous tournons gauche. Et à la fontaine, nous tournons droite. Et au bout de cette rue, nous arrivons au cinéma. Lucille et moi faisons la queue pour achetons les tickets. J'essaye paye par carte de crédit, mais le machine rejette mon carte. Comme ça, je paye en liquide pour les tickets depuis Lucille paye pour le dîner. Je reçois les pièces de monnaie. Le théâtre où le film est montrer est en bas du couloir et est sur le gauche de nous. Nous avançons le théâtre et nous nous asseyons dans notre sièges. Le film commence... chut...



Artwork by Rachel Bergeron



Artwork by Hannah Walls

HORSES BY KRISTA ROSEN

Horses
Beloved, bright
Trotting, now cantering
Smart, loving, beautiful, careful
Ponies

SHIGEO FUKUDA



50% ABSURDITY



Artwork by Hannah Walls

UNEASE BY SARAH WOOD

Bursting bumps under my skin
They see and study
A match of shame strikes within
I try to smother smoke and keep it hidden
Discomfort from the layers
Even with fire the blisters remain
The bullfrog under my skin
Straining to be free
To sever our unwanted relation

She is trapped inside my lungs
Croaking and crying
I am her cage
She is my deformity
The bullfrog inside needs to erupt
For others keep her imprisoned within me
She is not a guest, I am not a home
Magnificent and serene it would be
To release the bullfrog from inside my body



Artwork by Sophia Steingold



Artwork by Hannah Walls

DES FEMMES BY ESTHER STEINGOLD

Au Sénégal, les femmes ne sont pas traitées le même que les femmes aux États-Unis. Il y a beaucoup de différences entre les deux, mais il y a aussi beaucoup des similarités. Au Sénégal, les femmes ne sont pas égales quand elle est comparé à des hommes. Les femmes sont dessous les hommes et les hommes sont le chef de la maison. Cette idée est commune parce que dans la religion d'Islam, les hommes sont toujours le chef de la maison. Les femmes doivent faire toutes les tâches ménagères de la

maison comme les vaisselles, le linge et elle doit cuire la nourriture. Aux États-Unis, les femmes sont plus ou moins traité la même façon que les hommes. Les femmes aux États-Unis veut être payée le même, elle veut avoir la même opportunité et elle veut être vue comme égal aux hommes. Dans les deux cultures, des femmes peuvent être religieuses. Aussi, au deux pays, les femmes on leur indépendance. Quelque chose qui est vu au Sénégal qui n'est pas traditionnel aux États-Unis c'est la polygamie. Ça veut dire qu'un homme peut avoir jusqu'à quatre femmes. Aux États-Unis ce ne pas le même cas. Pas tous les gens croient que la polygamie est juste. Dans le livre, "Une Si Longue Lettre" écrit par Mariama Bâ, Rama parle beaucoup de sa vue à ce sujet de la polygamie. C'est pour cette raison, Rama avait divorcé son mari. Beaucoup des vues sur les femmes viennent de la religion. Les vus sur les femmes sont changées et il va continuer à changer tandis que les femmes veulent l'indépendance et elle veut être vue comme égal aux hommes.



Artwork by Isabella Paul



Artwork by Hannah Walls

POLYGAMIE BY KATHRYN CHAMBERS

Bon? Mauvais? Ça dépend de la perspective

Bon? Mauvais? Pour l'homme ou les femmes?

Bon? Mauvais? Pour moi

Pour moi, il n'y a pas des mots

Les mots, il n'y a pas des mots pour expliquer

Pour expliquer la douleur et la souffrance

Pour moi, ça m'a fait penser

Pense aux femmes

Les femmes semblables à moi et pas comme moi

Nous devons aider les autres à travers les bon moments et les mauvais moments

Bon et mauvais

LOVE LETTERS BY FLORA SMITH

Time: 10:00

Characters: Anwil
Connley
Sue

(Optional): Annie Talloway
David
June
Alex
Person 1
Person 2
Person 3

Scene One

Light on. We open on a man in a buttoned-up mint green suit (with matching suit pants), white button-up, and pink tie (ANWIL), sitting at a desk, reading something. A voice is heard.

ANNIE VOICE: Dear LOVE...you are pointless.

ANWIL looks up from the letter and sighs; begins to read

ANNIE VOICE: What is the point of loving someone if they are just going to leave anyway? My Grandmother died Saturday, and she meant more to me than most anything. Why would you make someone be more than anything? It's not practical. I feel like you planned for me to spend my nights crying. I'm going to miss her smell (like a dusty fall) and her enthusiasm about Frank Sinatra. You make me feel like I didn't even want to know her at all; that's such a terrible thing to think. How could I think that? Why would you let me? You make me want to reject even the thought of her, just because her memory hurts my heart. You've really just crushed everything and I can't help but hate you.

A pause

ANNIE VOICE: Conscientiously, Annie Talloway.

ANWIL, obviously unhappy, folds up the letter and drums his fingers on letter, thinking. CONNLEY enters and stands in the doorway. CONNLEY wears a "I Heart NY t-shirt" with an unbuttoned light pink suit jacket (with matching suit pants), and a blinky red heart pin.

ANWIL drops letter in a garbage can by his desk.

CONNLEY: (smiles) You know you have to file those, right? You've been working here for five years now. You really should know what you're doing by now.

ANWIL: (turns to CONNLEY) (weak smile, sarcastically) Thanks Connley, that's really helpful. (thinking) You know, if I had known everyone would just complain to me I would have reconsidered my occupation.

CONNLEY: (*walks deeper into the room, grabs a chair from the wall, pulls it to ANWIL'S desk and sits down*) You're acting ridiculous. Working at L.O.V.E. is amazing!

ANWIL: (*correctingly*) Laboratory Of Verified Enamoredness is not amazing.

CONNLEY: Why do you always gotta say it like that? Why can't you just call it L.O.V.E. like a normal person?

ANWIL: (*stressed*) Because all I ever read all day is about how love is a sham. Yesterday I read a letter where someone just went off about Valentine's day cards. I have no control of Valentine's Day cards. I don't even know where those come from.

CONNLEY: (*as if it's obvious*) The inventor of Valentine's Day, obviously--

ANWIL: Cupid?

CONNLEY: What? No. (*resolving*) Hallmark.

ANWIL: Ah.

CONNLEY: Last year, I saw this one of two dogs. (*thoughtful*) Adorable.

ANWIL: You only think that because you work in "Honest Emotions And Romantic Tract," not Customer Service.

CONNLEY: It's called H.E.A.R.T and anyone can tell you, dogs are adorable.

ANWIL: (*slightly exasperated*) That's not the poi- (*gives up*) Fine, fine, you think L.O.V.E. is so great? Listen to this. (*grabs a letter lying on the desk, opens it, begins to read*)

DAVID'S VOICE and ANWIL: Dear L.O.V.E., I lost my dog. And I don't mean in a hippy dippy death sense or spiritual sense or whatever that is. I mean that one of the things I am closest to in my life ran away. He ran away and hasn't come back. It

doesn't make sense; we were happy. You must have broken him. You must have taken back his love or compassion or whatever the hell you make up in that factory of yours. I've got no one to watch TV with and I have a bag half full of uneaten bones. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THAT??? After everything, he's just gone and it's your fault. You stupid jerks! Now I am alone. You didn't have to put him in my life, but you did. You did it to ruin everything and screw me over.

A Pause

DAVID'S VOICE: Hatefully, David Tate.

CONNLEY: (*attempting to be helpful*) Well, that's sad, but it's not your fault.

ANWIL: They're all like that.

CONNLEY: I'm sure they're not all like that.

ANWIL: (*half smile*) I think I'd know.

CONNLEY *jokingly rolls his eyes.*

ANWIL: Pick one up then if you're so cocky about it.

CONNLEY: Maybe I will. (*Picks up a letter*)

CONNLEY AND JUNE'S VOICE: Dear Mindless Corporation....

ANWIL: (*a bit cocky, but stressed*) Well this is off to a good start.

CONNLEY AND JUNE'S VOICE: You have broken my child. I don't know why you would choose to infect my child with this disease, but-

ANWIL: (*panicked realization*) Shoot! Connley, don't read that!

CONNLEY: (*looks up to Anwil*) This person just needs to vent a little. I'm sure it will get good soon. (*clears throat*)

CONNLEY AND JUNE'S VOICE: I, of course, can not tolerate such disgusting behaviors. Your perverted corporation has destroyed my home. I will not allow any type of homosexuality or impurity in my household. I demand you take back this incessant curse, so my family can return to its normality. Angrily, June Walker.

CONNLEY: *(falls further into his seat, disgusted)* Well that's absolutely disgusting.

ANWIL: To be fair, I did tell you to put it down. After a while, you know to get rid of the letter if it starts talking about a disease because it's always some bigot complaining about sexuality.

CONNLEY: *(sighs)* It still has to go in the files, Anwil.

ANWIL: I know, I know.

CONNLEY: Even if they do sound rather obnoxious.

ANWIL *lets out a small, half-hearted laugh*

CONNLEY: *(gets up and walks over to the trash bin, picks up letter, and hands it to Anwil)* Don't be a grumpy goose. It's fine. It's just a few bad letters. *(slowly backing up toward the doorway)* Take a break, read some of the good letters for once.

ANWIL: Yes, but--

CONNLEY: If it helps, I brought homemade empanadas for our lunch today. *(in the doorway, with a pause)* I gotta go work Ans, *(looking back into the halls behind him and then looks back at Anwil, explaining)* due dates.

ANWIL nods and smiles. CONNLEY smiles back and finger guns, then he exits. ANWIL's smile drops into a frown and he looks around room. ANWIL sighs.

ANWIL: *(picks up a letter that is laying on the desk; thinks to himself, as if CONNLEY was there)* You know Connley, I think I would have read the good letters if there were any. *(shakes head, disapproving, picks up letter and begins to read)*

ALEX: Dear Scientific, emotionless, jagweeds, *(pause)* You have destroyed my very foundation. My boyfriend broke up with me the other day and I am absolutely heartbroken. I have had enough of you and your dumb lackeys. I find it appalling that you would even consider the very idea of letting this organization go on for one more second. I have been crying non-stop and it is completely and entirely of your doing. I feel like garbage, like utter trash. All I can think about it is how absolutely terrible and useless I am. There's a reason your business is called a laboratory. You know nothing of people or feelings! I should have checked my facts before I let you corrupt me, not that I had much choice, you tortured me, persuaded me, made me fantasize about grand romance. How stupid. Most everyone I know has been broken by you and now I've let you break me too. He meant so much to me. He was the one riding shotgun in my life and you let him. You made him my science tutor, you made him compliment my endurance and passion, you made us kiss, and you let him set me up like bowling pins, rolling, rolling, rolling, STRIKE! Screw you, *(a pause)* Alex Brown.

ANWIL: *(Deep sigh) (crumbles up letter into a ball and throws letter across the room,angry)* There are no good letters!

ANWIL *stands up and begins to pace around the room, snapping fingers, trying to think, he turns around and picks up a small stack of letters on the desk and sets them on the floor. He takes a deep breath. He sits down on the floor next to them.*

ANWIL: *(opens seven letters and line them around him)* Okay, I can do this. Connley says I can and I say I can. There has to be a good letter somewhere. *(opens first letter)*

LETTER ONE PERSON: You dimwitted, science wielding, happiness destroyer.

ANWIL: *(closes letters; closes eyes and takes a moment; opens eyes)* So okay, not that one. *(looks to letter two)*

LETTER TWO PERSON: I don't feel love toward people. Does your corporation hate me? Am I broken?

ANWIL: (*confused panic*) I don't--

Quick line after line

LETTER THREE PERSON: Ugh, I wish they weren't famous! We'd be happy!

ANWIL: I can't--

LETTER FOUR PERSON: LOVE is insignificant!

ANWIL: I'm sorry.

LETTER FIVE PERSON: (*hurt*) LIFE RUINER!

LETTER SIX PERSON: (*offended*) ROBOT!

LETTER SEVEN PERSON: (*angry*) I HATE YOU!

ANWIL: (*abrupt*) (*hurt*) Well maybe I do too!

(*a pause*)

ANWIL: (*Shocked*) I-I need to leave. (*Stands ups and exits room*)

Scene Two

We enter on ANWIL frantically walking down a hall, a few co-workers stop to look at him. CONNLEY steps out of a doorway and in front of ANWIL.

CONNLEY: Anwil, what are you doing?

ANWIL: I gotta go. I can't anymore, I--I'm sorry.

CONNLEY: But, what about our special lunch?

ANWIL: (*stressed*) Can't we just order in empanadas later?

CONNLEY: (*A bit sad*) But I made them.

ANWIL: (*determined*) Lee, I can't, I've got to go to head office.

CONNLEY: W-wait? Why do you need to go to head office? What's happened?

ANWIL: Nothing. Nothing's happened. I'm fine. I mean it's fine. I'm just a little stressed out is all.

CONNLEY: You shouldn't go to head office because you're a little stressed out.

ANWIL: Well maybe I'm more than a little!

CONNLEY: The day's half way over Ans, go back to your office before you do something you'll regret.

ANWIL: Trust me, I won't regret this.

CONNLEY: (*puts hand on ANWIL'S shoulder, lowkey desperate*) Please, go back to work Anwil...please.

ANWIL: I can't be here anymore, it's toxic. I feel like LOVE is slowly killing me. It's been killing me since my first day here.

CONNLEY: (*desperate*) Please.

ANWIL: (*trying not to be mad at CONNLEY*) Fine! Fine! I'll go, but all of this (*gestures with his finger around the room*), it's got to end soon. (*exits*)

SUE: (*steps out of the doorway CONNLEY was in*) (*looks to CONNLEY*) Was he going to head office?

CONNLEY: (*worried*) Yeah.

SUE: He must be pretty messed up to wanna do that.

CONNLEY: (*thinking*) Yeah.

Scene Three

We enter in a little lunch room, with a couple tables scattered around, a trash can by the doorway, and a vending machine in the corner. ANWIL sits alone at a table eating his lunch. CONNLEY enters and sits down across from ANWIL. CONNLEY slides his lunch box across to ANWIL and opens it revealing empanadas wrapped in tinfoil and small containers of sauce.

CONNLEY: Take your pick.

ANWIL: (*with a weak smile, he reaches out and grabs a tinfoil wrap and a container, unwraps the empanada and pops the top of the container*) Wow, this looks really good Lee. How long did it--

CONNLEY: (*blatantly*) What was up with you earlier today?

ANWIL: So we're just going straight into that, aren't we?

CONNLEY: Well I don't very well see how we can go around it.

ANWIL: Look, Lee--

CONNLEY: No, your "Lee" privileges have been revoked

ANWIL: (*rolls eyes*) Look, Connley.

CONNLEY: (*smiles*) Proceed.

ANWIL: You know how much I hate my job. I have since day one.

CONNLEY: Yes, yes, you're just stating the obvious. What's your point?

ANWIL: My point is if I hate my job so much and it makes me doubt love's role in society, shouldn't I just quit? I'm so tired of hating myself because people tell me I'm making the world a worse place. I want to believe in love, trust me, I do, but here...here I just don't see love being a real thing. Each day I drive myself to the brink. So, in the long run, wouldn't it just be easier to quit?

CONNLEY: No, not if it means you have to leave.

ANWIL: (*slightly scoldingly*) Come on, Lee.

CONNLEY: (*correcting*) Connley!

ANWIL: (*aggravated*) Fine then! Connley.

CONNLEY: Good then, Mr. Anwil Davet, I'm glad we agree.

ANWIL: What? No. No. We don't agree on anything. You don't get a say.

CONNLEY: Of course I get a say. We're a team.

ANWIL: I don't know how else to explain it to you. I need to quit.

CONNLEY: (*trying to understand*) Please, try again. I want to get it. I do.

ANWIL: It's-- It's like I don't understand relationships anymore, between things I mean. Friendships, romantic, parental, they just don't seem to make sense to me. I don't see the point. It all ends in a disaster, a disaster that we create. It's like I'm endorsing a killer drug. People just keep losing and losing. They get more confused, more desperate, more alone and I'm watching it happen. It takes weight on someone's brain.

CONNLEY: Then why can't you just apply somewhere else in the company?

ANWIL: Because I'll still be working here, knowing what I'm doing to people.

CONNLEY: But I love L.O.V.E.

ANWIL: (*correctingly*) Laboratory Of Verified Enamoredness.

CONNLEY: Will you quit with that?

ANWIL: No.

CONNLEY: I'm just asking you to stop. I love my job.

ANWIL: What does that have to do with me quitting?

CONNLEY: Because I have to work where you work.

ANWIL: No, you don't. We can still see each other after hours.

CONNLEY: You don't know that.

(*a pause*)

CONNLEY: When people leave, they leave. They drift apart. They stop.

ANWIL: (*getting mad*) Well I don't see the purpose in people anymore, so what's the point?

CONNLEY: (*mad*) I don't care if you don't see the purpose in people. I care about if you--

ANWIL: (*mad*) You don't care? You don't care that L.O.V.E. is going to be the death of me? You don't care about how all of this effects me. Wow, fat load of good you are. Some friend. (*stands up, grabs trash and walks to the trash can, and forcefully throws trash away*)

CONNLEY: (*defensive*) You know that's not what I meant.

ANWIL: (*angrily blunt*) I'm quitting tomorrow. That's the bottom line, whether you like it or not. (*exits*)

CONNLEY: (*kicks ANWIL'S unoccupied chair*) (*frustrated*) Ugh! (*rests hands in face*)

Scene Four

We enter back in ANWIL'S office. The lights are off and the floor is clear, all of the letters are stacked in little piles. ANWIL enters this time wearing a mint green suit with a dark blue button-up and a candy striped tie.

ANWIL turns the lights up and soon yawns. He scratches the back of his head and walks to his desk to sit down. He looks at the stack of letters and sighs, discouraged.

ANWIL: (*depressed*) Files, here I come. (*opens desk drawer and pulls a small stack of papers out and puts them on desk, trying to encourage himself*) Come on Anwil. Last day. (*pulls worksheet from stack and begins to fill out worksheet*)

SUE: (*enters, holding a stack of letters. The top letter is mint green*) Hey, just wanted to let you know, we're doing a "LOVE is in the air" test today at-- (*smiles, small laugh*) Not that it matters to you though, huh?

ANWIL: What?

SUE: Sorry, didn't mean to be nosey. Just, rumor has it (*interested pause*) it's your last day.

ANWIL: (*sighs, annoyed*) Connley.

SUE: So it's true then.

ANWIL: Yes, well, Connley didn't have to go around sharing it with everyone.

SUE: (*nods*) Point taken.

ANWIL: (*curiously*) What's with the letters?

SUE: Well, as long as you're here you ought to get some work done. These just arrived today, fresh batch. I figured you could--

ANWIL: (*gesturing to top letter*) Why is it green?

SUE: Does it matter?

ANWIL: No, it's just, does it mean it has special significance or something?

SUE: Isn't that your business to know?

ANWIL: Not anymore.

SUE: Then let your replacement deal with it.

ANWIL: (*thinking*) But what if it's important. What if it's a big client or something?

SUE: Then read it.

ANWIL: The whole point of quitting was so I wouldn't have to do that anymore.

SUE: (*hands ANWIL the letters*) It doesn't matter to me either way. I have to go post the testing schedule on the bulletin. Not all of us have the privilege of not working.

ANWIL: (*nods*) Okay, bye Sue.

SUE: Bye. (*exits*)

ANWIL sets the letters down on his desk, he stares at the green envelope. (*He shakes head.*)

ANWIL: I'm not getting distracted. I'm too busy for that. (*sits down at desk, looks around room, at clock, and begins tapping his fingers against the desk*)

A pause

ANWIL: *(looks at letter)* But why is it green? *(picks up letter, stands up and begins pacing the room)* I can't not read it....but what if it's devastating...*(stares intensely at letter)* Screw it. *(rips open envelope, pulls out letter and begins to read)*

CONNLEY'S VOICE: Dear L.O.V.E, Every serious complaint I've heard in my life has been about you. That's a real shame because I think you're brilliant. So brilliant that I decided to write a letter, even though I am, in fact, a pretty crap writer. You see, my friend is the talented writer. He has written a whole book before, he said it didn't count because it was all poetry, but I think he just doesn't want to admit his talent. Anyhow, now I know that you get a lot of complaints in this office which I think is silly. I guess it's just cause everyone in love is too busy being happy to write. I understand that, I just wish you did. I mean my friend did. Shoot, I told you I was bad at writing. Look, my writing's not the point. I guess my point is without love, I wouldn't have my best friend. I couldn't imagine a world without him. I love that he can sing the alphabet backwards, I love that his favorite flavor of ice cream is rocky road (even though strawberry is much better), I love that he can still play the first half of "I'm a little tea pot" on piano even though he quit when he was twelve, but most of all I love him. Every memory I have with him is amazing and brightens my life, and it's all your fault. Thank you, for that. The other day I said I didn't care about if you see the point in people, but what I wanted to say was, I care about if you see the point in us. Because I do. You're my best friend. One of these days, I'm going to tell you that because Anwil, you're the best one. *(a pause)* Love, Connley Amator

ANWIL *looks up with a happy/content smile on his face and looks around the room.* CONNLEY *enters wearing a party hat and holding a balloon that reads "Stay?"*

ANWIL: *(stands up and hugs CONNLEY, smiling)* I love you too, Lee.

CONNLEY: *(Hugs back, smiling)*

Lights out, end.



Artwork by Rachel Bergeron

THE RISE OF A REVOLUTION BY MADISON MARSH

When you ask me about my identity, I will tell of being a black girl. It is something meant to demoralize and demean me, but I wear my identity like an honorable badge, permanently attached to my soul. I'm not alone in this pride. Hashtags, such as #BlackGirlMagic and #BlackExcellence, are plastered everywhere. Yet, my identity brings out another feeling for me: fear.

I was sitting in the back room of my grandmother's house, our usual after dinner activity, and watched the story on ABC World News. I was only ten years old when Trayvon Martin was killed. It seemed unfamiliar and distant to me then. What happened to that boy? I couldn't grasp the concept, but I knew it wasn't good. My mom shook her head and my grandmother gave her usual "Lord, have mercy." All I knew is that the boy on the screen looked young and innocent; and his shooter, whose eyes seemed insipid, did not.

It was about two years later when we all gathered in the back room again: Mother, Grandmother, Aunt, Brother, and me. Diane Sawyer was back on the TV screen, just like I had become accustomed to every night. Trayvon was no longer a coincidence. Rather, he was evidence of the introduction of the modern issue. He was the start of an ugly narrative, one that my generation had never seen. That year, the caskets rolled on like a parade. Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice were all killed within three months of each other. Their names felt like shouts amongst the whisper of others, and when they smiled, they reminded me of my brother, who always sat still and silent behind me. A pattern had been starting to become evident, right before our eyes. One by one, I had begun to see them go, life only memorialized by the nation in a three-minute news story. And their killers were no longer unfamiliar and distant, but instead, police officers, dressed in the same uniform as the officer who directed traffic by my school. My brother had already turned sixteen and had been hoping for a car. My grandmother called out to him, "Cameron, son, if you get pulled over by an officer or watchman, just put your hands out the window. Keep them there until instructed to do otherwise. If they tell you to reach for something, do it slowly and tell them exactly what you're doing as you do it. Be polite. Don't seem angry or irritated and don't disobey, no matter who's right or wrong."

Her words didn't affect me until later. Soon, every time I would see an officer, my body would tense up and I would hunch over, willing myself to disappear. I was completely terrified of the people who were supposed to help me. Each of these murders tended to be seen as coincidental moments. The silence from many members of the black community was unexpected to me though. There were small murmurs of outrage instead of roars of discontent.

Seeing my ideas become manifested in the Black Lives Matter Movement, a nationwide coalition of those who understand my anger and disgust towards the unworthy murderers who disguise themselves in a facade of blue uniforms and hide behind the good officers, showed me the steps that need to be taken before equality can be reached. In a nation that is doing more now to segregate the different groups that exist

here, yet one that advocates that we are all created equal, where is the equity? I don't want my children to have to think the way that I do, worrying that one small movement can cause my death. I want them to feel free, fearless. I am willing to fight for my children and all the children who shouldn't have to feel this way, paralyzed by fear of discrimination. I will march and shout for our safety. The oppressors like us best when we are silent and submissive. But we must refuse to be quiet in the face of this deadly discrimination, and those who try to silence the revolutionaries will not slow the revolution. They will only fuel the passion for our cause.







THE PLIGHT OF THE MELANIN ENRICHED BY MADISON MARSH

Number One,
my skin is rich in melanin.
My hair kinks and coils.
I am black girl magic manifested,
ebony power unleashed.

Number Two,
I believe in unity.
I believe in Black Lives Matter.
They matter,
for those who didn't know
and for those who want to bring up "black on black crime,"
nevermind.

Number three,
I am proud of my heritage.
'Cause you cannot sit here and say that
the beauty of blackness isn't both art form and community
The likelihood that I can turn to a black woman on the street and ask her
about blue magic and pink hair lotion
and argan oil and twists
and braids and weaves
and love and dreams.
This is what being black means.
Growing up miles apart,
but always connected by the same things.

But blackness is also the ability to recover after tragedy,
so many people dead
I ain't even know all their names,
more than I can comprehend.

Too many gone,
too many have met their end.
Hold up, I lost count,
I gotta start again.
Wait, there goes another one,
down for the count.

Some ask why fight now?
'Cause this is how it's always been.
But with each whisper,
each word that is left unsaid
another one is buried in silence.
Just like that,
they're dead.

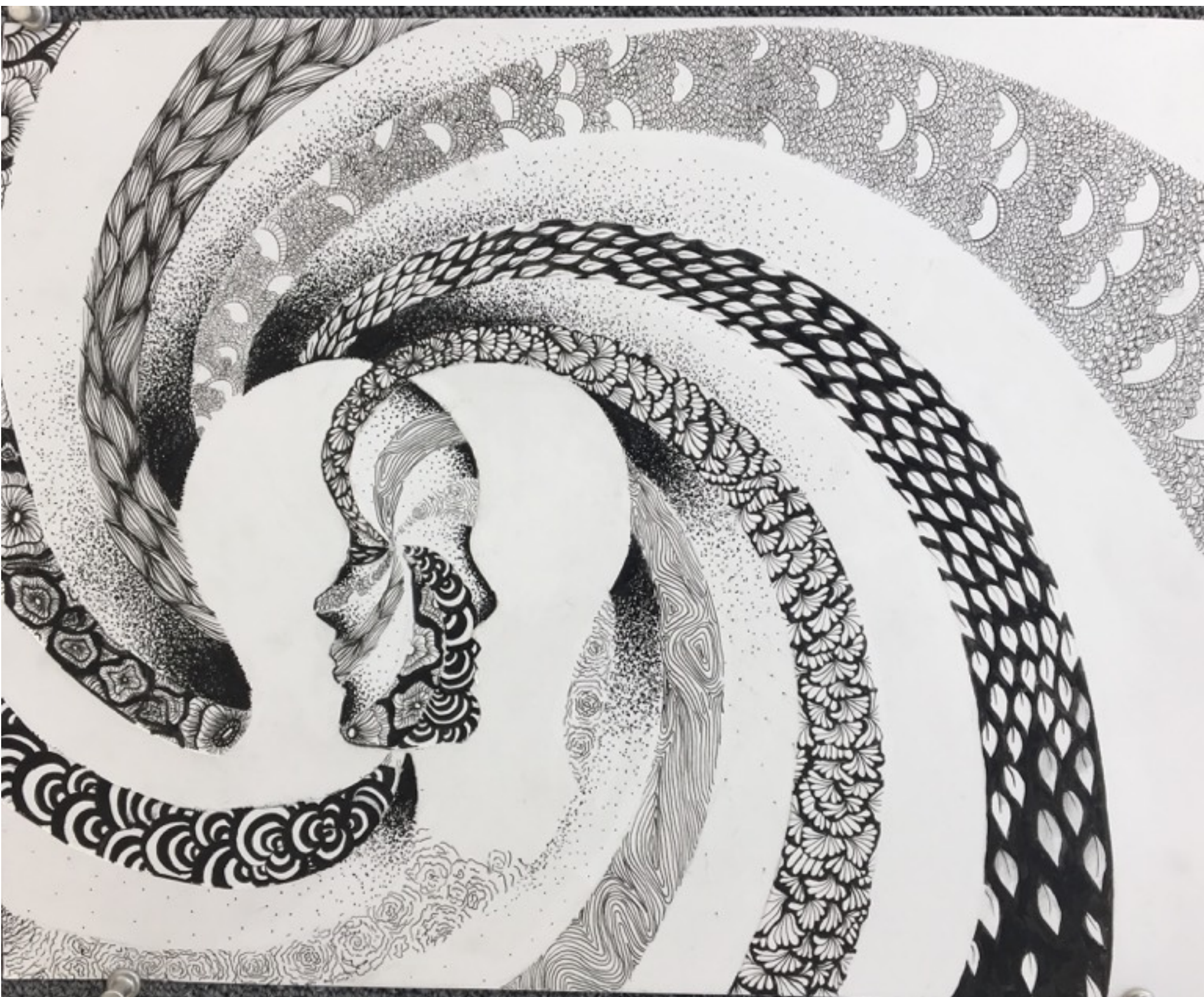
We are dying,
hands up!
Breath stolen from us,
snatched like cookies from the jar of life.
They are killing us,
One by one.
Picked off like the strange fruit of a tree.

One ghost that walks among us
becomes dozens,
only shadows.
No one notices
if you take one,
then another,
until no one is left.

Is that what you want?
To end our community,
when all we want is peace.

Kendrick said we gon' be alright.

Is he right?
Our grandparents said we shall overcome,
Is it true?
Who knew that fifty years ago when we were supposed to have won civil rights,
this is what America would look like.



Artwork by Veronica Speyer



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