

the sheet

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The Sheet Staff
Get involved!

by piper doyle

my tongue is tickled by a word,
a gently, frivolous letter herd,
whose beginning is daunting and sharp,
whose ending sounds like apollo's harp.

the middle is composed of two syllables, two
parts.

the first is youthful, giddy, and tart.
following close behind are the letters of warmth
and the color of crisp leaves in the north.

it's a flower that's quite far from humdrum
and its curved petals call it chrysanthemum.

- *chrysanthemum*

by rae nawrocki



“Aurora”



“Radiance”



“Golden Hours”

by aeron

forget-me-not

by sofia foradori

i stand in a field of memories
of forget-me-nots and
bittersweet pheasant's eyes
that pull at my legs as i
walk on by

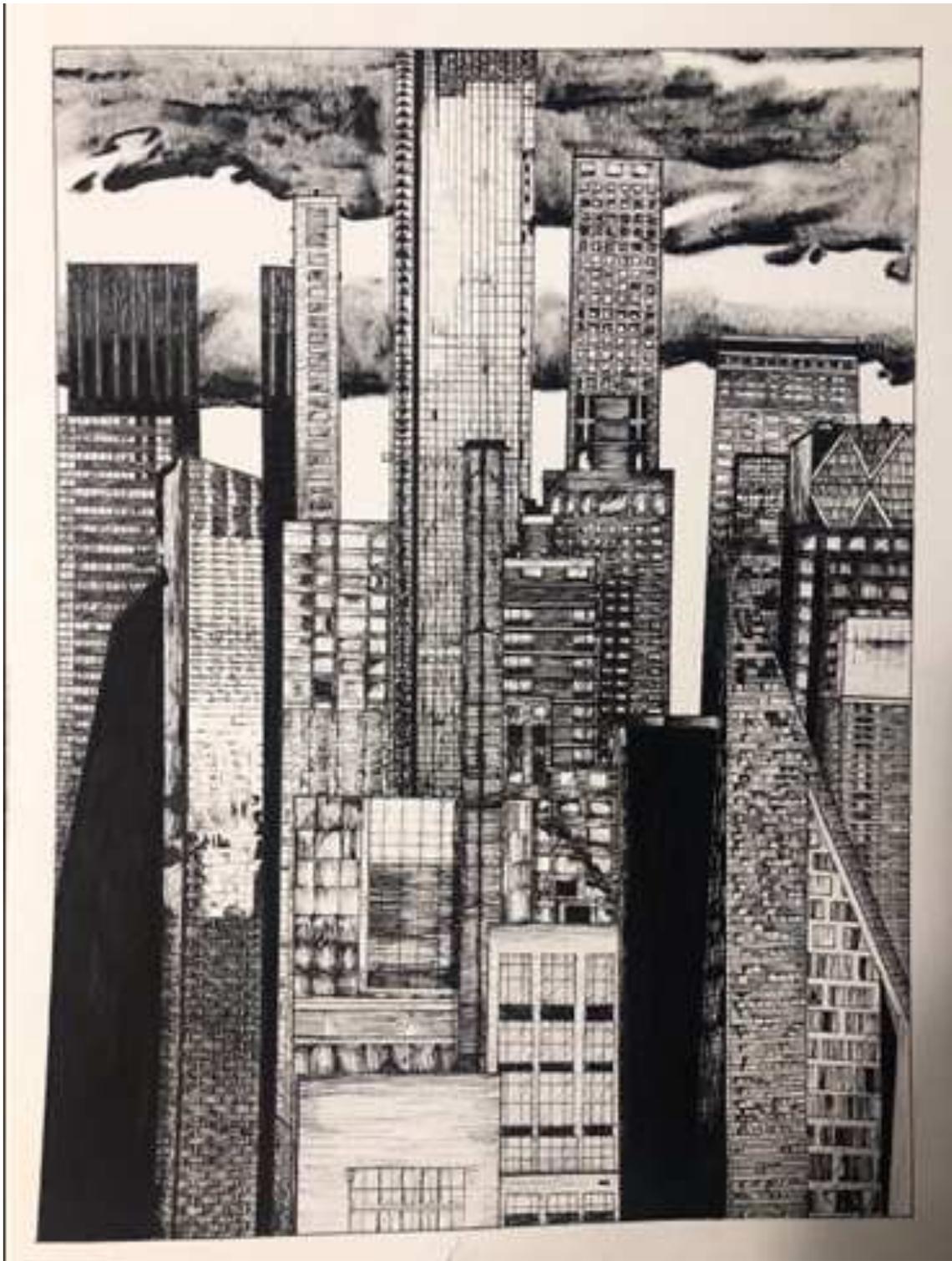
and when lightening cracks
in the gray sky overhead,
i gather them in my calloused palm

the crushed flowers
become the dye of mysteries
of metaphors and similes

then fade into the brown
of my murky day-old paint water,
the truth of the matter
lost long ago.

A Recipe for Disappearing by piper doyle

Divide yourself into as many pieces as you can.
Twist them, flatten them, knead them with your hands.
Whip your kindness and empathy until it's thick.
Then dollop them in to dough bricks,
And pull the corners to make them drape
So that your infinite love may not escape.
Lather them with reassurance and purity
And preheat the oven to that of your security.
Bake them for as long as you can force a smile;
Then let them cool down as to preserve for a while.
And lastly, divvy them between family, strangers, friends
Until there is no more of yourself left to give.
Repeat until they realize, after once, the recipe is bluffing,
But you'd do it again, even if you are and regret nothing.



“New York”

by piper doyle

2021 Essay Competition First Place Winner

Alongside Time by piper doyle

COVID-19 has impacted me in several ways- mostly for the better; one thing that truly resonated with me is how time won't wait. For anyone. The way the virus swept the world and took so much more than it gave was horrendous. However, it gave several of us a reality check and me a brilliant opportunity.

When Corona hit, I was 16 and living in Pike Road, just outside Montgomery. I had all these ambitions piled up, but not a place in sight to take them. Not to mention, I had no idea how to act on them. Opportunity was slim for a young, mixed girl from the middle-of-nowhere who just wanted to make a name for herself. With all this inspiration, my head was bubbling full of thoughts and quarantine was the perfect time to devise a plan. Previously, I struggled immensely with mental illnesses that prevented me from any motivation whatsoever. All my dreams and desires were merely just dreams and desires. Nothing more.

So, when COVID-19 took the world by storm, of course, it was devastating, horrid, and terrifying. But, for a struggling artist- homebody too, might I add- weeks of isolation to do nothing more than ponder, write, and create sounded like the most amazing thing. And it was. I would constantly get in trouble for spending so much time alone in my room, but I was innovating! I drew an ink portrait every single day. Every. Single. Day. The month after that, I did the exact same thing writing poetry. And the month after that, I did digital theater. In between all these new, outrageous creations of mine, I still threw in obscure hobbies with little room for me to eat and drink. Spiraling into a hyper-fixation hibernation seemed to be my true talent. And although I was making incredible progress in any art form I could get my hands on, I was hit with the realization one day that I still wasn't going anywhere. Time kept passing me by without a chance to catch up to it. Nothing was changing. No new opportunities were arising. Until my parents sat my sister and I down and said, "Hey, what do you girls think about moving to Auburn?" Time won't wait for any of us and I knew that in my heart. I also knew that this was a chance to start for the desperately yearned for change.

Now, I'm here. In Auburn. Writing this essay. And for the first time in my life, *loving* school. When I look around, I see seniors devastated that their year won't be normal and college freshmen still missing their last one. I hear the danger that arises from each new mutation of Corona. I feel the plague of wretchedness it has set on this world. And I know time didn't wait for anyone. It didn't wait for the victims or freshmen. It's not waiting for the seniors. And it's not waiting for me. Perhaps, all time has done is pass by, leaving a trail of sadness too deep to clean up. But, I do see all it has done for me. Quarantine gave me a chance to pull myself up and out of the gutter and work so hard, write so much that my fingers have bled. It gave my parents the idea to move, which gave me the education and motivation I always wanted. Because of that, I've kick-started being a poet, playwright, actor, artist. I ended up writing two full-length plays and two musicals in 26 days. I got to play Antigone in *Antigone* and now I'll be Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at this school. I've indulged in learning the science of forensics and criminal psychology. And I've joined a marvelous art class. All of these things I have and will continue to pour my heart into. And although it sounds atrocious to say, I owe it to the first domino in the row: COVID-19.

This has been to say that, yes, the world has been impacted in gut-wrenching ways; that's indubitable. But, for me, it has worked wonders and flipped my world upside down in the best way possible. Everything still seems to be flying by- time especially. But, the way the normative changed for COVID-19 actually gave me a chance to run alongside it.

2021 Essay Competition Second Place Winner

An Unexpected Turn in Life by sarah rabren

2020	The numbers are growing
	No one is knowing
	When the world will be safe
All is still	
2020	
So many ill	
	Lonely and alone
Coronavirus	We all must stay home
Pandemic	
Is all around	Distance learning
	People yearning
The world	
Searching	Masks are being worn
For a vaccine	Families are being torn
To be found	
	Six feet apart we stand
So many dying	This is not what we planned
So many crying	
Scientists trying	Nothing is the same
	A spring with no game

The current state of affairs has put the world on pause, a pause that has given people time to reflect on troubling matters. For me, it has given me an opportunity to reflect and appreciate my own life. Walking into the year of 2020 everybody was saying “20/20 vision”, thinking the year was going to be a one-of-a-kind year as the first digits match the last two digits. However, the poem listed above explains how this year actually went. The year 2020 has completely transformed the way people live their lives. Since I am an extrovert, I love to engage with my peers and see their facial expressions, or hug them goodbye, but because we wear masks and are mandated to be six feet apart, I can not do these things anymore. Even though I miss a normal, peaceful life, I have learned in this chaotic season that it sometimes takes one’s world falling apart for the most beautiful mosaic to be built up from the broken pieces of wreckage. Maybe the world needed a time-out to remember how to appreciate what it had but forgot to experience.

2021 Essay Competition Second Place Winner

How COVID-19 Impacted Me by emery waggoner

Stores cleared out as homes locked up. Phones beeped furiously and rang with curiosity and speculation, proms were cancelled, and toilet paper became a treasure. Nobody knew the severity of how COVID-19 would change the very fabric of our lives. Even now, ten months later, politicians, health care experts, and scientists debate the long-term impact that the disease will have on our country's economy, community, and youth. We don't know whether children will be one year more ignorant than the previous generation, whether in-person dining has changed forever, or even whether the tradition of shaking hands is as extinct as the curtsy. What we know for certain is that the lives of citizens all over the world have been drastically affected in numerous ways, some for good and some for bad.

An average day in my own private quarantine typically consisted of 15 hours of sleep, baking chocolate-chip cookies from scratch, and increasing my screen time by the hour ... every hour, of every day, of every week, in every month. In time, this routine put me in a bit of a funk- a phase where I would rather spend the whole day alone in my room than with my family, enjoying our free time together. I did ultimately advance to a phase where I became active every day, begrudgingly finding ways to cobble productivity out of uncertainty. Still, my energy was not the same as before the pandemic, and my emotional well-being was poor. COVID-19 left me lonely and unaccustomed to this strange "new normal" that lacked proper socializing and offered hour upon hour of free time at home.

The lesson is patent. As part of the human race, we are wired to be around other humans and when we are not, our mental and emotional health is threatened. Even the most independent and strong have been affected by overextended quarantines and the emotional consequences of a global pandemic. This insidious virus has touched us all deeply, whether economically, physically, or just by the slow torture of time alone at home.

2021 Essay Competition Third Place Winner

A Student's Plea

by aubrey o'bryant

Hello Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Duerk.

I would like to start this email with an apology. My work and work ethic this semester has been nothing short of lazy, poor work on my part. I don't deserve any grace in any shape or form and I truly feel guilty about my efforts in this class. Forensics is a major passion in my life and I feel like I have let you both down by what I have done and failed to do in this course. Normally, I am a straight A student. In my freshman year, I was 3rd in my graduating class of 600 students. The problem for me this academic year was the coronavirus and its disastrous effects on my mental health. I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression several years ago—I take medication and regularly talk to professionals about my mental health. While both these things help me, the work style I have been forced to adopt this academic year has set me back years in terms of healing and relearning healthy habits. There have been days where I wake up at 8 o'clock and work until 8 at night—watching lectures for one class while I eat and completing projects in others all while I eat and check my emails. Even after working this hard and counting the minutes on my every bathroom break, I was still drowning in schoolwork. Even now, I will have to work at least 8 hours a day (including on the 25th. Merry Christmas, right?) in order to complete my courses by the 4th. Because Forensics was offered through a different program, it became all too easy for me to forget about it, and when I remembered, the crippling sensation of failure dissuaded me from even attempting to open the coursework. I am asking that you extend the deadline to midnight because the only thing I have going for me in my life right now is my academics, and even then, I am doing worse than ever before in my entire academic career.

Thank you for your time, consideration and patience,

Aubrey O'Bryant



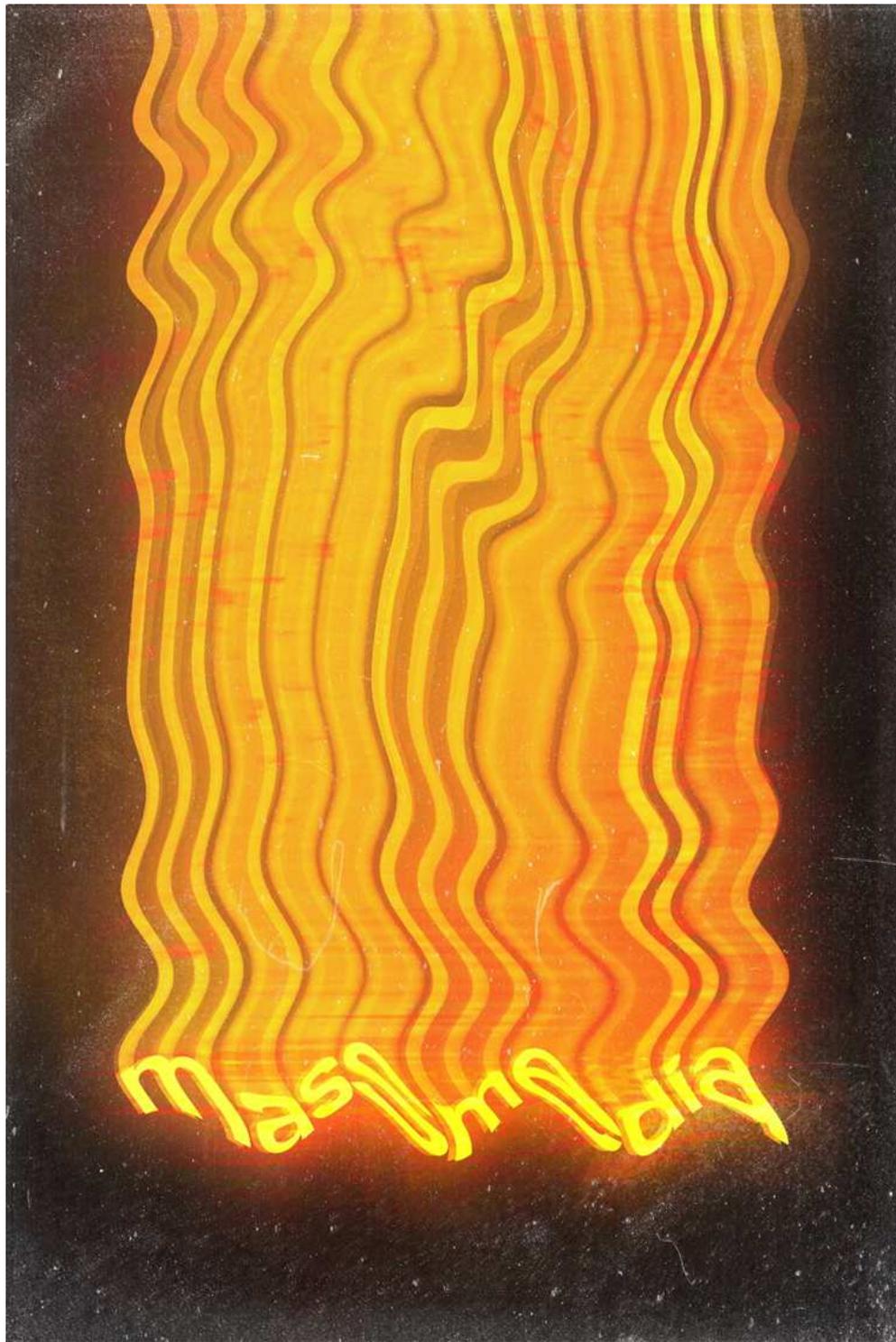
“Irene”



“Plastic Slide
Static”

by piper doyle

“Mass Media”



by rae nawrocki

by piper doyle

my ribcage is
is doing too good
at being a prison
being it's name;

so I ask you
one last time
before I take
my life back-

not if I'm
pretty enough-
i have a different
question this time:

dear society,
when will
you be
satisfied?

- 105

Anxious Stammering

by piper doyle

my words are an earthquake
shattering the buildings,
i stammer and shake,
that are my limbs.

and singeing the ground
that is my tongue
until the it's burnt down
and the smoke clouds my lungs.

the nervous ricocheting of
self-induced-sorrow-drenched debris
is my teeth up above
echoing the fear in my knees.

to heed my stutter
is to soothe a natural disaster
and to give smooth butter
to a sizzling pan.



“Bathing In Fame”

by aeron

“Liberty and Justice for Who?”



by piper doyle

<Bubbles>

by jennifer min

We were all once floating above rainclouds,
We used to see the sun every day.
Now, we have started drifting beneath the clouds.
One by one everything is turning gray.
We are delicate bubbles that are the verge;
the verge of popping.
Delicate bubbles that hold despair.
Yet we keep these despairs to ourselves.
But let them loose when the rain falls,
let your tears blend in with the rain.
Let the bubble pop and
feel the cool rain on your face.

2021 Poetry Competition First Place Winner

Neapolitan Ice Cream by piper doyle

My life is rice cookers and salt,
Voice singing karaoke and alt.
It is accents with some words
And an assortment of herbs.

My family is freckled and white,
Golden and bathed in light,
Olive, strawberry, sand, and tanned,
Brown and browner on palms of hands.

My skin is a hapless combination—
Call it ombre's inspiration—
For I change with passing seasons
And seem to fade with lack of reason.

From my somewhat vanilla head to bronze toe,
My flesh is a canvas and a show
Of my family's diverse artistry.
Here on me, in order, is ancestry.

It broadcasts to the world that who I am I don't know.
What *do* you call a white, Indigenous, Hawaiian, Hispanic Filipino?
Perhaps it's walking imposter syndrome or a wish to be one thing,
But I'll introduce myself to you as Neapolitan ice cream.

My life is everyone thinking I am a different race
Or squinting their eyes to get a better look at my face.
It is being so confusing I get called slurs of every kind;
All make my heart cry, even though only half are mine.

My family is a color palette, an artist's dream,
And so weirdly disconnected that at age fifteen,
I sat down with spiteful determination and woe,
Teaching myself a language not even my parents know.

My skin was almost chocolatey for a rather long while
Until I whitewashed myself out of being an anomaly of a child—
The internalized racism doing damage I now can't fix
And making me even more of an anomaly out here in the sticks.

It's amplifying other voices and not being silent—
It is being so sick and tired of being compliant.
It's a fine balance acknowledging my privilege and
Fighting racism while besting my past hand to hand.

Perhaps I am what terrified the so-called Great American Dream;
Hi, I'm a finally proud multiethnic, but you can call me Neapolitan ice cream.

2021 Poetry Competition Second Place Winner

icarus

by sofia foradori

i know far too well
what icarus felt like when he fell

how after years in the dark
the bitter feeling left a deep mark
in which the sun was the only antidote
a longing that daedalus had started to provoke

daedalus told him he could if
he flew a little higher
made wings a little stronger
tried a little harder
flew a little faster
and once done he stepped toward the cliff

so with wings sewn with confidence
and a mind that forgot his past experience
when he reached out for the sun's glow
but fell down even so

and during his fall from grace
feeling gravity's saturnine embrace
when the wax rained down like veins
the betrayal marked like bloodstains
he reached out like orpheus for eurydice
for a green light across a distant sea

and when he finally reached the bone crush
chagrin of falling made his cheeks flush
his limbs became like broken sticks
the promises weighed down like bricks

and the mud pulled him under
he could think of nothing but his blunder
as he was forced to watch the terrible sight
of all the others in their flight
their sun-kissed skin brewed envy
that made his limbs even more heavy

because i know far too well
what icarus felt like when he fell

2021 Poetry Competition Third Place Winner

Friday nights and Saturday mornings

by andrew ward

Always riding the bus home, couldn't get home quicker.
I'd go to my house ask my mom if I could stay over.
I'd run out saying bye mom "I'll see you tomorrow!"
No need to knock on your door your mom always knew,
We'd raid the pantry then run upstairs arms full
Of goodies we figured would fill us up till dinner.

After a while of games, we heard a call for dinner.
We paused the game and wolfed down our food quickly,
Then we would go upstairs hoping the round wasn't over.
A few more hours of this and we realized it's tomorrow.
We always got too rowdy, your mom scolded us, but we knew
she'd be back. Every time you got us water the glass wasn't full.

Every time I think back on these days, I remember feeling so full
of joy. I got tired of the snacks and went to get left over dinner,
we weren't in any real rush until we heard a noise and ran quickly
back up the stairs to the refuge of the entertainment room over
the garage. Once again, I tried to invite you to church tomorrow,
you always said you didn't wanna wake up that early, but I knew

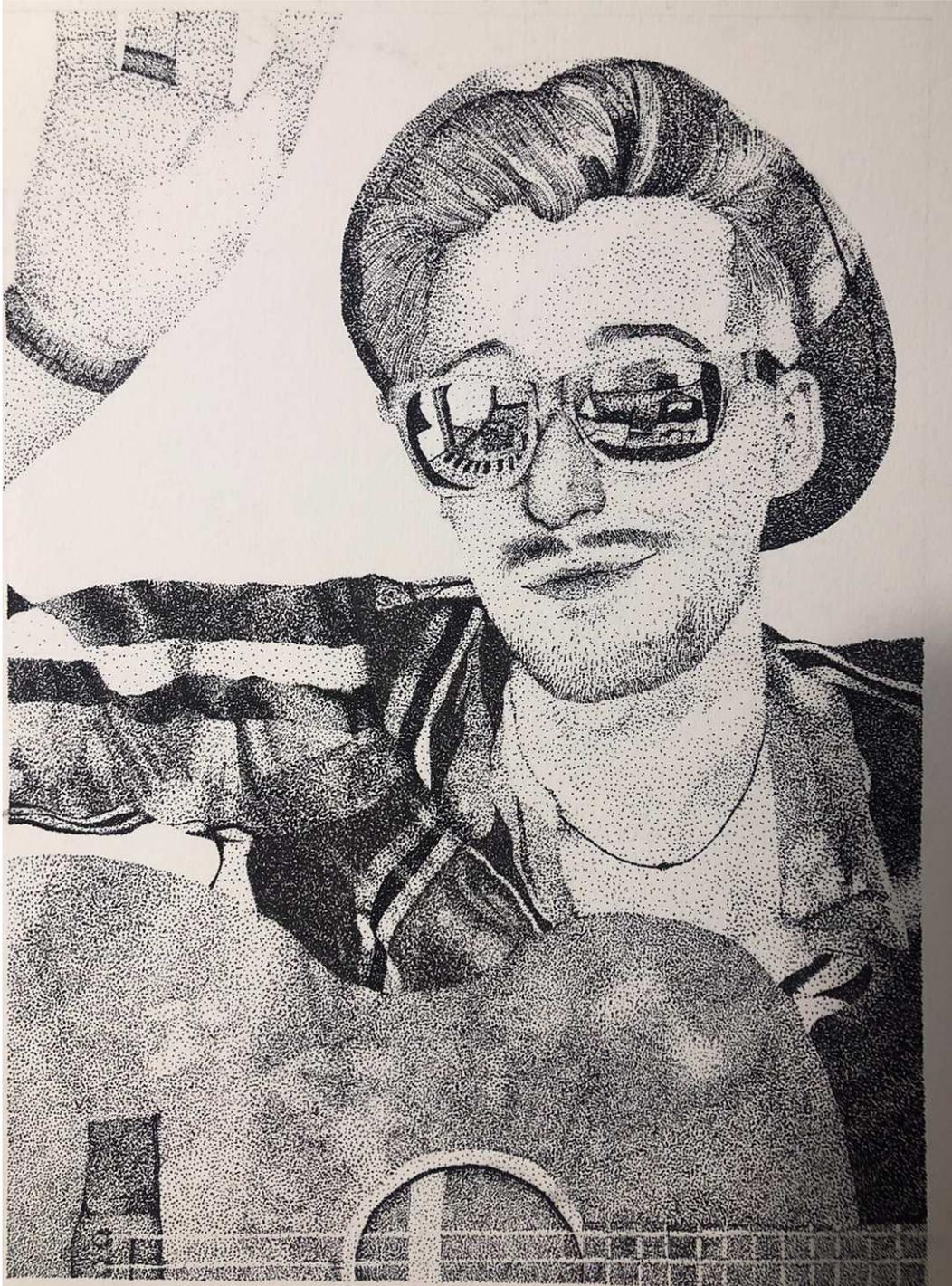
that you just felt like you had too much to confess. I knew
your answer every time but I still asked. Nevertheless, we filled
up on more junk food, because it had been 6 hours since dinner.
we always played the dumbest games like Fortnite which you quickly
came to love, and I despised every time I saw it, we used to fight over
switching games, you usually won. As usual you asked if tomorrow

I could stay over again but I would always tell you, I have church tomorrow,
And my parents won't let me to spend the night. I know
It is a dumb rule, but what was I going to do about it. It filled
Me with a deep annoyance every time I had to stay home for dinner
Because my mom said so, but not tonight, tonight our fingers fly quick
Across the controller as we try and fight each other over,

And over and over again. Morning was coming and the game was over.
We got a little sleep every time we had a sleepover so that tomorrow
We wouldn't fall asleep on the toilet again. This time I knew
However, It was different. The moving truck, once again was full
Sunday night was the last time that I'd invite you for dinner.
We savored our time together, never ready to leave so quick

Looking over everything we did on those nights, they were so full
Of things we knew we shouldn't do. But still the day I left was tomorrow.
I miss skipping dinner, eating junk all day, and going upstairs quick.

“Funky Man”



by piper doyle

A Rotting Raft

Waves crashing
Completely numb
I have been swimming
How long, I can't recall
The horizon is endless

I am drowning

Grabbing out
With aching arms
No logical thought
Only desperation
To survive until sunrise

Is there still hope?

Floating by,
A rotting raft,
Somehow still intact
It is clearly flimsy
It will not hold me for long

I have no choice

I climb on
My saving grace
I am exhausted
This raft will not reach land
But without it, I will drown

I cannot move

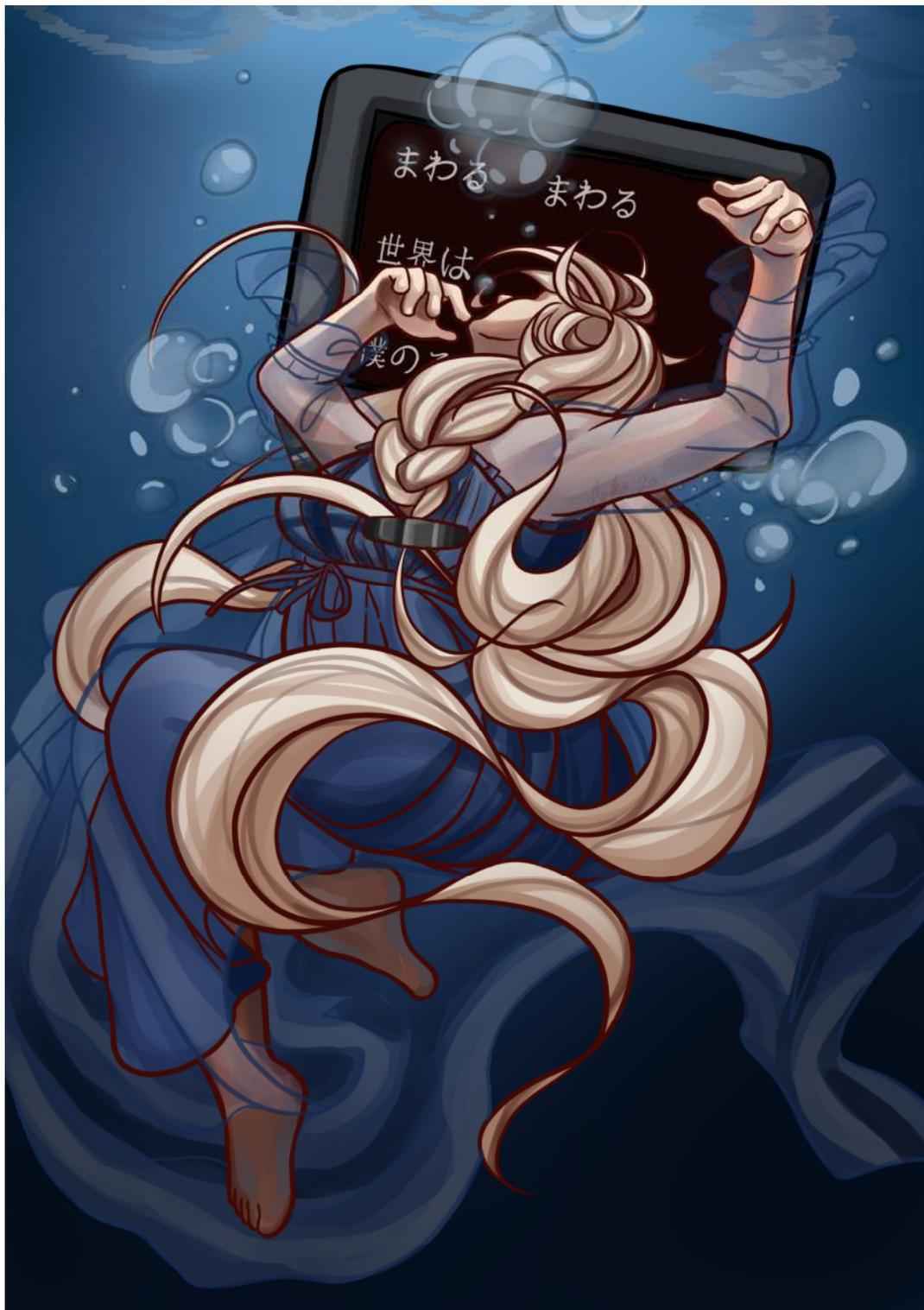
Under me
It is breaking
I cannot feel fear
I will rest here a while
Until I can catch my breath

Or the raft breaks

I know well
It will not last
Yet still, this escape
This broken, rotting raft
Means I still have breath to catch

In this moment,
That is enough.

by
elizabeth
helms



“hinekure neji to ame”
by angela fan

A Lesson Worth More Than a Penny

by danlee simpson

I am going to teach you how to love
Not because I know how
But because I know people who do

I am going to teach you how to love
In such a way
That you will never love the same again

The first thing you need is knowledge
You need to know that love is
Patient
Love is
Kind
It does not
Envy
And it does not
Boast

And if you have enough knowledge
You will see that I quoted a very popular
book
A book that taught many people how to
love
And will teach many more

The second thing you need is warmth
A heart so warm
That it can embrace the coldest souls
A smile so warm
That hatred melts in its presence
A home so warm
That the most distant strangers can find
comfort
The third thing you need is strength
Strength to put out a hand for the lost
Even when they push you away

Strength to hug the broken
And remember where they have been
Strength to realize
That not everyone wants to be loved
But everyone needs to be

The fourth thing you need is
To love yourself
Because it's impossible to always put others
before you
You need to love yourself so that you know
That the people you touch will be in good
hands
You need to love yourself because maybe
No one else will
You need to love yourself because some-
times
When you are so numb from all the pain
You still have that flutter of hope
That everything will be okay
You need to love yourself because you're
Stuck with yourself
And life would be a lot less miserable if
You could look in the mirror
And say
I love you.

The Sheet

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Thank you for reading!