



# The Sheet

2022-2023



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All cover art made by Isabella Trentacosti



**First  
Place**

# Photography Competition

*Last Orange  
of Fall*  
Estela Muñoz







## Second Place

### *Fall in the Smokey Mountains*

Jon Ren

## Information

The fall and winter photography competition was centered around the changing of the seasons. With several fantastic submissions from AHS's own students, it was a tough call. However, Estela's striking image and excellent composition drew our judges in immediately.

## Third Place

### *The Fruits of the New Season*

Sinhyun Kim





# Poetry Competition

## First Place

### “Self-Lit Poem”

Eric Mun

Sun-kissed rooftops, bathed in a morning dew,  
gentle rush of wind, stirring the pot anew.  
Wooden spoon cradled, softly within the hand  
of mothers all around, trekking the unknown land.

Deserted, dry wasteland, bristling with unease,  
scorched, blackened scars, hardened by the heat.  
Burdened board of circuits, of vitality drained  
by plugs pulled premature in a cold winter rain.

Frostbitten digits, nipped in black and blue,  
White toothed yellow crowns, fused within a hue.  
Artists' painted palettes, mixed into a blend,  
colors flowing freely into the smooth river bend.

Crystal-clear waters, mottled specks of brown,  
bubbly froths of nature, gurgled without a sound.  
Trickling stream of wishes, swept swift into a pool  
of unrealistic promises that glistened like a jewel.

From sapphire, opal, topaz, and ruby, spinel, garnet,  
birthed a priceless gem of lies, seemingly unblotted.  
Yet hidden marks buried in fears of reprimand,  
assorted glimpses lost to strive of common man.

Moonlit truths, concealed in clothes of darkness,  
jagged edge of Dusk, thrust sharply from the wrist.  
Swords drawn hastily, may save you in the fight,  
so do not wait for Dawn. Go, be the light.





# Second Place



**“We Are Like Stars”**  
Milan Yancey-Kidd



# Art Competition

## First Place

*Unequipped Love*

Michael Barefield





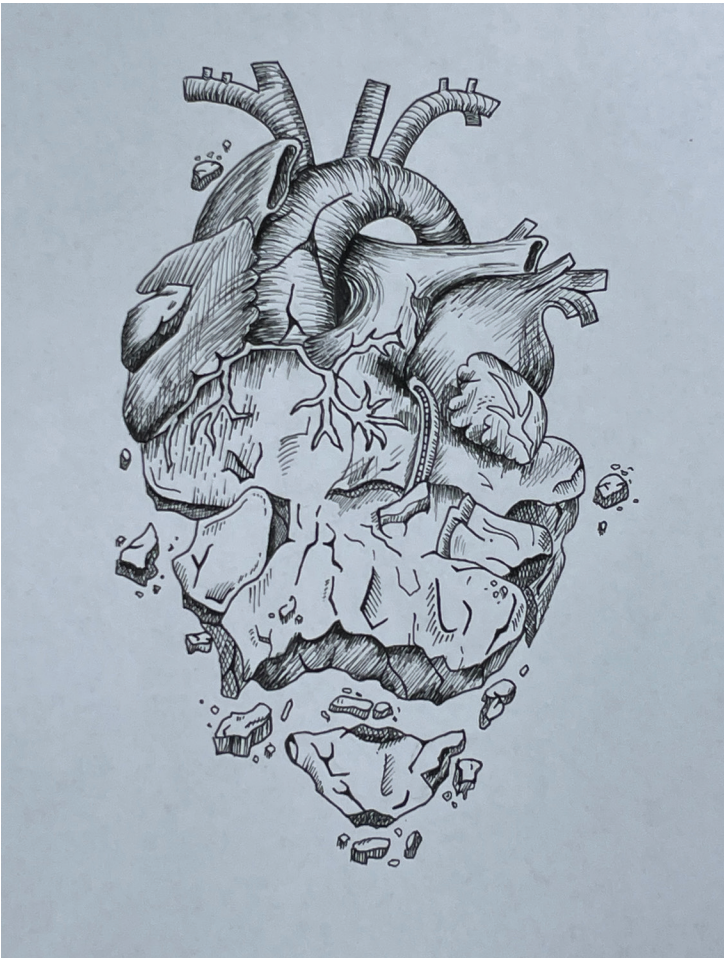
Second Place

Embrace  
Bethy Tameru



Third Place

Pieces  
Leah Lethander



Information

This Valentine's Day inspired competition was themed "lovebugs: what is love to you?" We loved every entry and took hours arguing and reflecting on each piece. Michael's work was selected for first place due to his creativity and wonderful characaterization of love.



# Short Story Competition

## First Place

### “Haunted House of Horrors”

Janae Merrill

Tonight was a great night to be haunted. The moon, though round and full, stayed hidden behind dark clouds, which threatened rain. A cold breeze blew through the streets, kicking up leaves and debris. It could hide the unearthly chills one got if they were being haunted.

But Specs, the grumbling, lanky boy stumbling up the steep hill, was used to being haunted. After all, his best friend Livi had been haunting him for a full six months now.

“I can’t imagine walking,” Livi jibed from the top of the hill. She sat - or, well, floated - there, her spectral arms crossed. “So impossibly hard. You should just float.”

Specs scowled and shoved his glasses up his sweaty nose. “I’ll think of it next time I hike up to the House of Horrors.”

“What’s so scary about this ‘House of Horrors’ anyways?” Livi said, forming air quotes with her fingers. “Did someone die there? Is it just inhabited by a nice old lady that people hate?”

“Well,” Specs started. He paused on the sidewalk to catch his breath. A leaf flew at his face, and he batted it away. “It’s supposed to be haunted but-” Gasp, “-clearly, I would know if it was.”

Livi rolled her eyes, smirking. “Right...”

“Apparently, the people that go in there either don’t come out or they come out screaming their heads off,” Specs said. He started walking again, feeling like his lungs were giving up on him. “And, they always talk about monsters and ghosts afterwards.”

“It’s probably just some over-imaginative children or stupid teens playing tricks on one another,” Livi commented offhandedly. She frowned and looked over the top of the hill. “C’mon, slowpoke, it’s just a few feet from the top. I want to see this ‘House of Horrors’ for myself. See if it’s really haunted!” She giggled, floating out of sight.

“Sheesh,” Specs growled breathily. He struggled up the next few feet, sweating profusely. “Livi, come back! I need your emotional support!”

Livi’s scowling face popped over the top of the hill. “I’m not going that far, dummy. I can’t go that far anyways.” She made a duh face at him.

“Right,” Specs breathed. “Cause then you wouldn’t be haunting me.”







He pulled in a deep breath and crested the rest of the hill. An old, creaky looking house looming in front of them, casting a dim shadow on the dirt road. Overgrown rose bushes cocooned the front of the house, dying this late into fall. The house groaned as the wind blew; a few shingles on the roof broke off and crashed to the ground.

As they got closer, Specs thought the house could've once been a nice house. Once-pretty white paint peeled off the porch pillars. A faded, threadbare porch swing squeaked as Specs and Livi passed it.

"So," Specs asked, staring at the front door. A picked-over Christmas wreath hung from a piece of stringy satin ribbon. "Is it haunted?"

Livi glared at him. "Does it look like it's trying to eat me?"

"Um, I don't know," He said awkwardly. "How would that look-"

"No, the house is not eating me." Livi sighed exasperatedly. "So, no, it's not haunted."

Specs nodded. "Okay?" He grabbed the door handle. "Wait, why would the house eat you?"

"Property ghosts are pretty territorial," Livi said like she was talking about the weather. "They hate other ghosts on their territory. Now, c'mon! The House of Horrors!"

Specs sighed and turned the door handle. The door gave a massive creak, swinging into a small entryway. Dust plumed from the floorboards as Specs walked across the floor.

"Yoo-hoo! Ghosties! House of Horrors!" Livi taunted, floating through one of the walls. "Be all horrifying and such!"

"Please don't," Specs mumbled, studying the entrance. Glass shards glinted on the floor. He stepped over them and whispered to Livi, "Hey, see if you can find the kid."

"What kid?" Livi wondered, feigning ignorance.

Specs scowled and glared at her. She reappeared through the wall she had disappeared into. He made a face, waving a hand for her to go on.

"Okay, okay, sheesh." She rolled her eyes. "You have no sense of fun."

"I do have a job to do," Specs said with his arms crossed. "We're supposed to be looking for a kid. He was kidnapped. The police got his kidnappers, but they couldn't find the kid. They tracked him to here but anytime they tried to enter, the house mysteriously locked. Any attempt to get in failed."

"And they left you to it?" Livi questioned, floating through the walls.

Specs blushed. "Yeah, they did," he reaffirmed, pushing his glasses up his nose.

"Okay..." Livi said, sounding unimpressed. She floated through the next wall. "Come a little closer, I can't get through this one completely."

Specs did as he was told. "Why do you sound so skeptical?"

Livi gave him a look. "You don't sound like the... best man for solving a kidnapping."

"Chief said that I was the best one for this job, thank you!" Specs crossed his arms, glaring at her. "Said it was better that someone like me handle a 'supernatural' job like this."

"Supernatural," Livi mocked saltily. "I don't see the kid anywhere around here." She glanced at the floor. "Hey, do you think there's a basement?"

*Scan this to read the rest of the story!*





## **“A Small Black Dot.”**

**Cal Floyd**

It hadn't been but five minutes since the boat had thrown you over. It was a quick one, so it was already almost out of sight. You tread water as best you could, but it was all but inevitable. Your whole world was reduced to three colors. The blue of the ocean and sky, the white of the sun, clouds, and the thin line of the horizon's reflections, and the small black dot of the boat some impossible distance away. You dared to bob your head under the surface, seeing only an inky blueness stretching as far as to appear black as pitch. You saw your legs kick uselessly against nothing, ever so slightly moving faster and faster as each aspect of your situation began to sink in. You pop your head above once again, the water is up to your collarbone, sometimes splashing to your chin. As the water splashes against your mouth and you spit it out repeatedly, something strange happens. You feel a presence, then not but 5 feet in front of you a large rotund bubble surfaces, its glistening almost radiant quality mesmerizes you. It sustains for a moment before popping, the wake of its ripple not even traveling a foot. The air grows a sour tone beyond the salty wet air which existed before. You feel the salty water seep into your skin, drying you out and wrinkling your hands and feet. Your weakness before the ocean current is becoming obvious as the water rises to your mouth, you lean back, using your nose as a kind of snorkel. With one last wave of water that covers your nose only for a moment, your time breathing the fresh air was over. You begin to sink down, never to float up again. You watch as a last bubble escapes your lungs, all that was left of your life was contained in a single shining orb, drifting away. Your world becomes darker and darker, only a single spot of light directly above you. You had read about this before, Snell's Window, the beautiful spotlight seems to shine for you and you alone. A silver screen laid out as your new sky. Even then the circle shrunk as you sink further and further down. Darkness invades your eyes as the world is reduced to all but a singular point in space above you. Then all goes black as more and more of your senses are stripped from you. Then all around, from nowhere, a deafening click ruptures your surroundings. It vibrates through your body, deafening your ears forevermore, possibly rupturing organs, not that it mattered now. You are reduced to one sense finally, as you drift further beyond the veil, broken and just barely held together. As your last sense, your feeling, begins to leave you, you feel one last thing. You feel your back land against a hard flat bottom, broken and breaking. Motionless, you feel yourself pass beyond the veil, still and gone, forevermore. As for your body, the ocean will always find a use for old bones.

## **“Memory of Līshí”**

**Isabella Stevens**

A sky with no light, just crushing darkness. No one remembers the day; that was the death of Līshí. Maybe it didn't happen, but I swore I saw that day. Was I the one who killed him or did I watch it happen? The day was bland that afternoon, I was drinking oolong... or was it jasmine? I don't remember, all I remember was his face that was in pain and shock. I heard an awful scream; I can still hear it. His death shocked the whole Qing dynasty, but soon it became a forgotten old wise story waiting to be told again. People were frantic but no police officer officially said why, in fact no one did but me. Did he not exist? Should I ask his friends? I keep watching people walking by me and some were his friends with Līshí. I came up to them asking, “Do you all miss Līshí?” They turned to me looking at me with weird looks, responding with, “Who are you talking about Xiao? We never heard of a Līshí, did you fall on your head?”

## **Second Place**

## **Third Place**





Hands  
Kaelyn Coburn

# General Submissions





## “Anything But Just”

Aubrey O’Bryant

Justice is a beautiful word,  
Like magic or joy or peace,  
But is it only good on paper,  
Can justice truly be reached?  
Who are we to determine,  
how much someone is worth?

There is no flawless system,  
No Themis or omniscient man.  
There is no perfection,  
Nothing a court room can.  
There is no change,  
No unbiased or clean slate.

Justice is a mask,  
It hides societies sins.  
It covers the struggle, the hunger,  
Is it okay?  
Will justice will win?  
There is no more accountability,  
Johnathan Mattingly, George Floyd.  
People must be held responsible,  
its not okay,  
justice will still be void.

Justice is a made-up word,  
Which we defile every day.  
It's gorgeous and it's pure,  
But its nothing we can save.  
We cannot be just,  
We are flawed and we are frayed.  
But justice is a beautiful word,  
But it's one we have betrayed.



*Death is Real*  
Bethy Tameru



*Aphrodite*  
Landon Hughes





## **“What is Justice”**

**Maddox Jones**

What is a gun to someone who surrenders?  
Is it too much to ask for someone to defend us?  
If you think America is the land of the free,  
Then what would you say to Ahmaud Arbery

What would you say to a mother and a father  
Who just lost their son, friend, or their daughter  
We are losing our lives because of our skin  
Injustice is not superficial but embedded within

Our families are broken, and so are our hearts  
Oppressed since the beginning; singled out from the start  
I can't take much more, my patience so thin  
Being black is a crime, and it's also a sin

How would you feel- your color a weapon  
You're a first-class citizen, but treated as a second  
We are all falling down like apples from trees  
"I'm innocent he said," as the cops told him "FREEZE"

He feared what would happen as he got on his knees  
His hands in the air; for his life that he pleads  
Two shots rang out loudly, ripping his side  
He fell to the concrete and what was left of him died

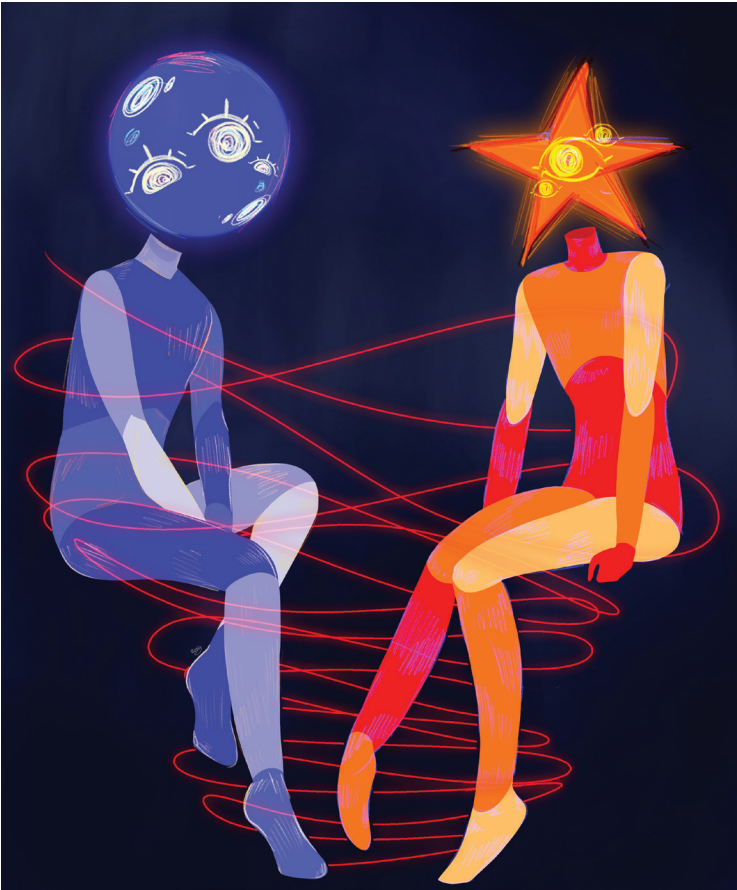
Don't tell me we're equal- don't tell me it's fair  
The system is wicked. In need of repair  
In a position of power, it's not hard to see  
That justice for you is not the same justice for me





*What Do We Do Now*

Si Qing Ni

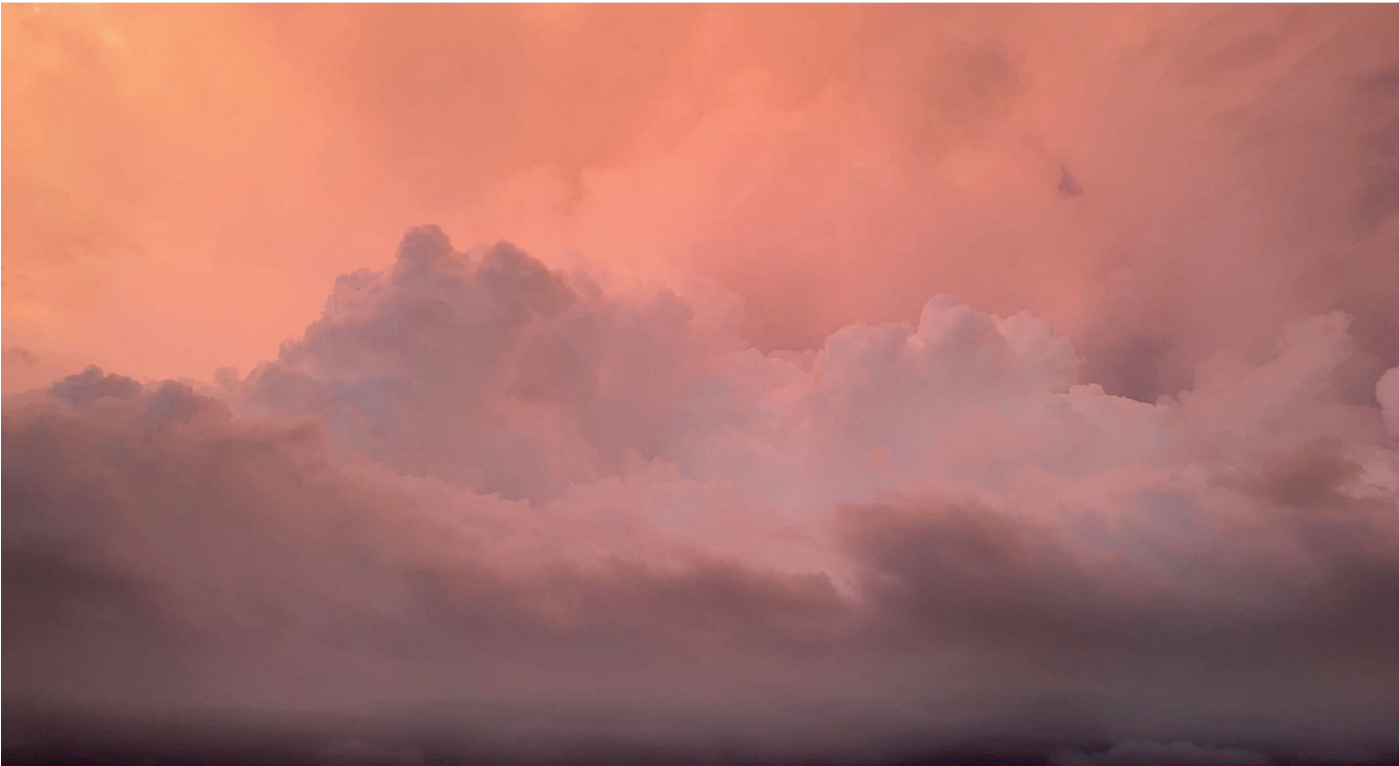


**“Picnic”**

Luci Johnson

Light shining down  
Bursting through the tree leaves  
They illuminate your face in the most  
beautiful way  
The warm soft blanket  
A wicker basket filled with little goodies  
we brought from home  
The ugly green lake  
Filled to the brim with little turtles and  
fish  
We'll make up stories and gives turtles  
names  
I tell you I love you  
And you love me too

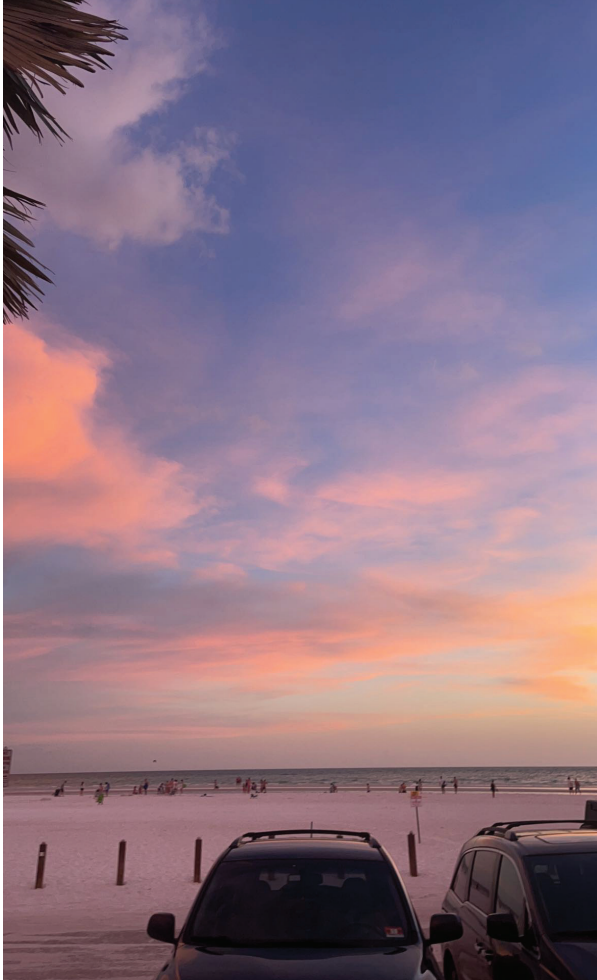
*Heaven in the Sky*  
Sarah Ashley Forthofer





## *Himalayan Salt Type Beach*

Sarah Ashley Forthofer



## *Showchoir Showdown*

Songi Yoon



## *Under the Stage Lights*

Brantley Clegg







***Summer Nights***  
Becca Tarpley

## **“Home Sweet Home”**

**Luci Johnson**

Muddy tiles and grassy landings  
There's a familiar smell the second you walk in,  
This place gives you the feeling  
You get from freshly baked bread.  
It tastes like pasta salad, chicken and rice,  
and improvised Christmas cookies.  
Big Dogs that jump on you  
When you walk in,  
Love that knocks you off your feet,  
And makes you feel ten feet tall.  
It doesn't care if you track in grass,  
Or if you smell like gasoline and oil.  
It asks if you slept well,  
And what you dreamt about.  
It's couch is worn out,  
But cozy and familiar.  
There's a specific spot etched into it's history,  
Made just for you.  
It's home.

***On Your Mark... Get Set...***  
Maddison Jones



## **“Fighting For Life”**

**Rosa Hawkins**

Streets littered with shards of glass and tear gas  
Reminiscent of times best forgotten  
Citizens shouting for justice  
Gasping for nine minutes, needing air  
SWAT teams armed to the teeth  
Unnecessary utilities meant to murder  
Dark blue sharks patrolling the lanes  
Keeping innocent citizens under watch  
Surveillance plaguing the abodes  
Of watchful teenagers encountering history  
Thousands of eyes crying from the gas  
Thousands of bones broken by wanton batons  
Faces doused in pepper-spray  
Pleading for water for their fire  
Their hearts burn for a better life  
But others want to fill it with ice  
They fight till their bones weaken  
They fight till their eyes are bleeding  
They fight for the proper way of life.





*Beauty is Fragile*  
Leila Garcia



*Love Birds*  
Estela Muñoz



*Trip*  
Bethy Tameru







*Love is Blind*  
Shelby Foster



AKTS\_OF\_ASHES  
SHELBY FOSTER  
2023





*I Feel it Coming*  
Bethy Tameru







## **“When America is not Americaing”**

**Angy**

“Your visa has been accepted, come pick it up within the next two weeks” The world slowed down as the counselor of the U.S. embassy said those words to me and my family. My whole life was about to press reset button and little did I know what was about to come.

Towards the end of 2020, I heard my mom talking about a scholarship program in some city in the U.S. named Auburn in Alabama, but paid little attention to it since she mentioned something about the application deadline being last month. I forgot about it during 2021 until one day, my mom walked into my room saying that there might be a slight possibility we moved to the U.S. At first, that sounded like the most exciting thing in the world because who does not want to move to the United States? The country of freedom, opportunities, football, and success? Moreover, at that time, I was stuck at home due to covid policies at my city and doing online school which meant I could not wait to get out of there and hoped that my mom got the scholarship.

In Peru, the country where I am from, moving abroad and “Escaping Latin America” as many would say, is the dream a lot of people look forward to. I have never hated my country. Of course I hated how unstable it was, and the fact that we have had over six presidents in the last four years but still, I loved how fast everything moved, how I could be independent and do not rely on a stupid car to move anywhere, how fun partying on the weekends was and how fun life was with all my friends, and even how each morning was greeted with a damp gray sky. However, reality was different, and I was moving to a new country in less than two months and leaving all I knew behind.

The funny part is that I did not even realize I was moving until the very last day when all my friends were greeting me goodbye and we were all crying, thinking about the time we would meet again with our hearts broken. Then just like that, we headed to the airport and we left our beloved country hoping for the better. I remember in the airport how all my clothes and personal belongings fit in two suitcases and one carry-on, and my family and I said “our whole lives in 2 suitcases, how funny”, and it was a moment when realization hit even harder.

Adapting to the American lifestyle was harsh. No walking, new jobs, new friends, new school, new culture, a new life. I was also told a million times that Alabama sucks and to be honest, not at all!! Honestly, I really thought for the first 2 weeks that it was all just a kind of prank and that my life would return to normal, but that was not happening, and I just had to deal with it. I remember sitting alone at lunch for the first weeks here, and it felt like a shark tank.

After 6 months of moving here and living my “American Dream,” I can say that America is not americaing. It is not as easy as the media suggested, and not every aspect of my life is better after moving here. But I really do think it does not depend on the country, but on you and your mindset. Either America or China, things will not change if you as a person, do not do anything different. Things do change geographically, but you know what I mean. If you ever move abroad, just know that it should be your chance to improve who you are, and accept the fact that like every change, it is not going to be easy.



## “Where I’m From” Samantha Trejo

I'm from popcorn, chips and tacos  
On Tuesdays—church meals on Wednesday nights—  
Drives to Burger King for lunch, getting the occasional  
Treat of ice cream or Hershey pie—  
Delicious hibachi dinners with family

I'm from band camp, family vacation, going to the pool  
Playing outdoors with children and waiting for  
School to begin once again  
Ice-skating in the winter months—hot cocoa, throwing  
Oats for the reindeer and congregating with family

I'm from sitting on a porch conversing with  
My dog, her breathing and bad breath oddly  
Comforting to me—longing for the unfinished treehouse  
In our front yard to be complete to play with—  
Riding a four wheeler on the big, descending hill  
Behind our home and through a stream

I'm from the spices of Mexico and the breeze  
Of Florida—a father who grilled tortillas and tamales for us  
As a snack—a mother who struggled with cigarettes  
Held back by an oxygen tank and a wheelchair  
Loving her children

## Avoidance Bethy Tameru







## *Sunset Boat Ride*

Morgan Sides



*“Sunsets are a beautiful thing to end our days with. You start your day with a beautiful sunrise to symbolize the bright new beginning and end it the same way with sunsets. It makes my heart happy to watch a sunrise or a sunset.”*

*~ Morgan Sides*

## *Cotton Candy Sky*

Ashlyn Hartin





# Staff Creations

## “As the Winter Turns the Meadow Brown”

Beck Hall

From maple to willow  
Gust combs through  
the branches  
Climbs up steep slopes  
Settles soft in the  
breeze  
Rays pillow winter's bite  
As gopher sleeps snug  
Redstart flies from the  
peaks

Ural accepts  
subjugation

Meadow brown  
Meadow brown  
Nestled in your heath  
tussock  
Born from your egg  
To the cold

Stream blocked by  
frozen runnels  
Rushing frazils into  
callow barricades  
Clinking in suspended  
quiet  
Along with the  
drumming of grouse  
Spruce conifers stand  
still  
Like candelabras  
Dipped in hardened  
wax

Ural welcomes renewal  
  
Gopher wakes at the  
shift in space  
Ethereal snow now  
turned slush  
Stream near free  
flowing  
Desman sneaks  
between cracks for a  
swim  
And wolf perks at the  
thrum of tiny beats  
Fragile grasses emerge  
With the resurgence of  
light

Meadow brown  
Meadow brown  
Awake from your  
slumber  
Lea grasses await  
Eat your full

Ural rejoices new life

Warmth all  
encompassing  
Redstart visits and  
sings  
Fox turns from soft  
white to pale brown  
Trees gain luster  
While sable cling to the  
branches

The light-splashed  
ground now safe  
Reindeer hooves  
reverberate

Meadow brown  
Meadow brown  
All stuffed and  
contented  
Now sleep  
Be reborn

Ural goes under mist

Meadow brown  
Meadow brown  
Break free  
See the light  
Fly and see all I've  
said

Clovers dust hilltops  
Cream and cerise  
And cloudberry  
amorphous magenta  
Smelling sweetly of  
spring  
You come to feast  
Amongst friends

Meadow brown  
Meadow brown  
Now eating for more  
You know it will come  
It is soon

From maple to willow  
Gusts tear leaves  
from branches  
Steep slopes  
smothered in snow  
Rays do little to warm  
Gopher hides in numb  
hollow  
Redstart fleas

Ural accepts  
subjugation

Meadow brown  
Meadow brown  
Trust your eggs to  
heath tussocks  
The cold has returned  
It is done



Untitled  
Caterina Chahine



*And a Sun to Maybe Dissipate Shadows of the Mess You Made*  
Catherine Song



# “Mykonos”

Emily Biaz

And you will go to Mykonos with a vision of  
a gentle coast

He said to me when I was five  
Didn't know what Mykonos was then  
Couldn't think of what I'd be seeing there  
All I could think of was how I'd never see  
him again  
How he wasn't my Pops anymore

But you will go to mykonos  
He whispered  
With a vision of a gentle coast

It floated in my mind every day  
Along with memories of picking shells by  
the shore  
Listening to their sounds of the sea  
And smiling at dolphins while sailing

But eventually he and his words washed  
away like footprints in the sand  
High tide crawled over the shells we used  
to hunt for

And with the rolling waves came rolling  
clouds  
That rained for years  
Life was rocky  
Stormy  
Gray  
Not a single boat I could hold on to  
Not a single dolphin to wave to

When the storm was at its worst  
I thought I would sink  
Realized I was somewhere I didn't want to  
be

Sinking through the rough waves  
Looking up where the small rays of sun  
peeked through  
I could follow it  
I could swim up  
And survive  
But I knew that once I was up there  
The sun wouldn't stay  
It was tricking me  
It had always been gray up there

why live  
why come back up  
why not just  
keep  
sinking

I felt the sand bump against my back  
A shell brushed against my hand

Memories flooded my brain  
Sunlight  
Real sunlight

And you will go to mykonos  
With a vision of a gentle coast

I frantically swam up  
Swam with the waves  
Crawled onto the sand

Left the nameless land  
No looking back  
Nothing left for me there

Shell in hand  
Didn't know what was coming except that

I would go to Mykonos with a vision of a  
gentle coast





*Quiet Morning At the Beach*  
Bella Collins

**“I Remember How They Took You Down”**  
Delacey Wilkerson

*I* glanced at her, she returned the gaze  
“*Remember* when they captured me?”  
*How* could I forget?  
*They* stole her from us, a taunt  
*Took* the only thing I loved away from me, a punishment  
“*You* know I will never forget.”  
*Down*, down, down will the secret of my betrayal go with me.



## “Back to Dust”

Em Tran

The world is purple, but I'd rather it be blue.  
Hyacinth petals scattered across the floor, purple.  
Everything is purple. Why does it have to be purple?  
Doves tried to take flight, but they were dragged back down.  
Over and over again, I think, I ask “Why did it have to be me? Why did it have to be you?”  
Orders from your favorite restaurant arrive at my door. Are you still here? Where are you?  
Regret fills my body as my mind blames itself.  
Shouldn't I have stopped you before it had gone too far?  
“Let go” everyone tells me, but I can't. I want to hold on. Don't go.  
As I stare at the hyacinths, purple, I wonder where it had gone wrong.  
My hands holding purple petals covered in blood.  
Maybe this is your fault.  
Everything is red. Petunia's are creeping up my chest, suffocating my lungs. I can't breathe.  
Denial. They said I was in denial. Sure. It wasn't denial.  
Love the way you left me here all alone and by myself.  
Of all flowers, why was it the Spider Lilies that bloomed outside your door?  
Unfair. It's unfair. Why are you gone? Why aren't you here?  
Dead. Stop being dead already. Just wake up.  
Angry? I'm not angry. I just want to know why you're gone. I just...  
Nothing but everything. I'll give up everything. Just come back. Please come back.  
Don't leave me again. Don't.  
Red's fading into black. Black with a hint of blue.  
One day I'll join you, wherever you are.  
So what if you've left me 50 years too early. I'll go with you.  
Eat, sleep. Eat, sleep. Sleep.  
Under my covers, it's hard to move when everything weighs me down.  
Please take me to where you are now.  
Anything is better than this bleak darkness.  
Closing my eyes does nothing since I'll wake again. Can't I just stay in my dreams?  
“Let go” they repeat, but I can't. I can't. I don't want to. Don't leave me.  
Outside, they took me outside for the first time in weeks.  
Underneath the stars, I tried to understand. Understanding is hard.  
Don't leave me.  
Once the sagebrush blooms, I'll be able to let go. Right?  
Forgiveness is creeping up on me, painting the world in blues.  
Doves are trying to take flight. Don't go.  
Understanding is hard and I hate it. I get it. But I don't.  
Slowly the flowers began to bloom, but this time not in your chest, and not in mine.  
They flourished under the blue of the sky and the light I now see the world with.  
Over and over again, the Lotus will bloom. Signaling the start of something new.  
Not only did I stay in this world, but I grew stronger with time.  
Us was no longer, but I could hear you still.  
“Sorry” you whisper, and then the chrysanthemum bloomed.



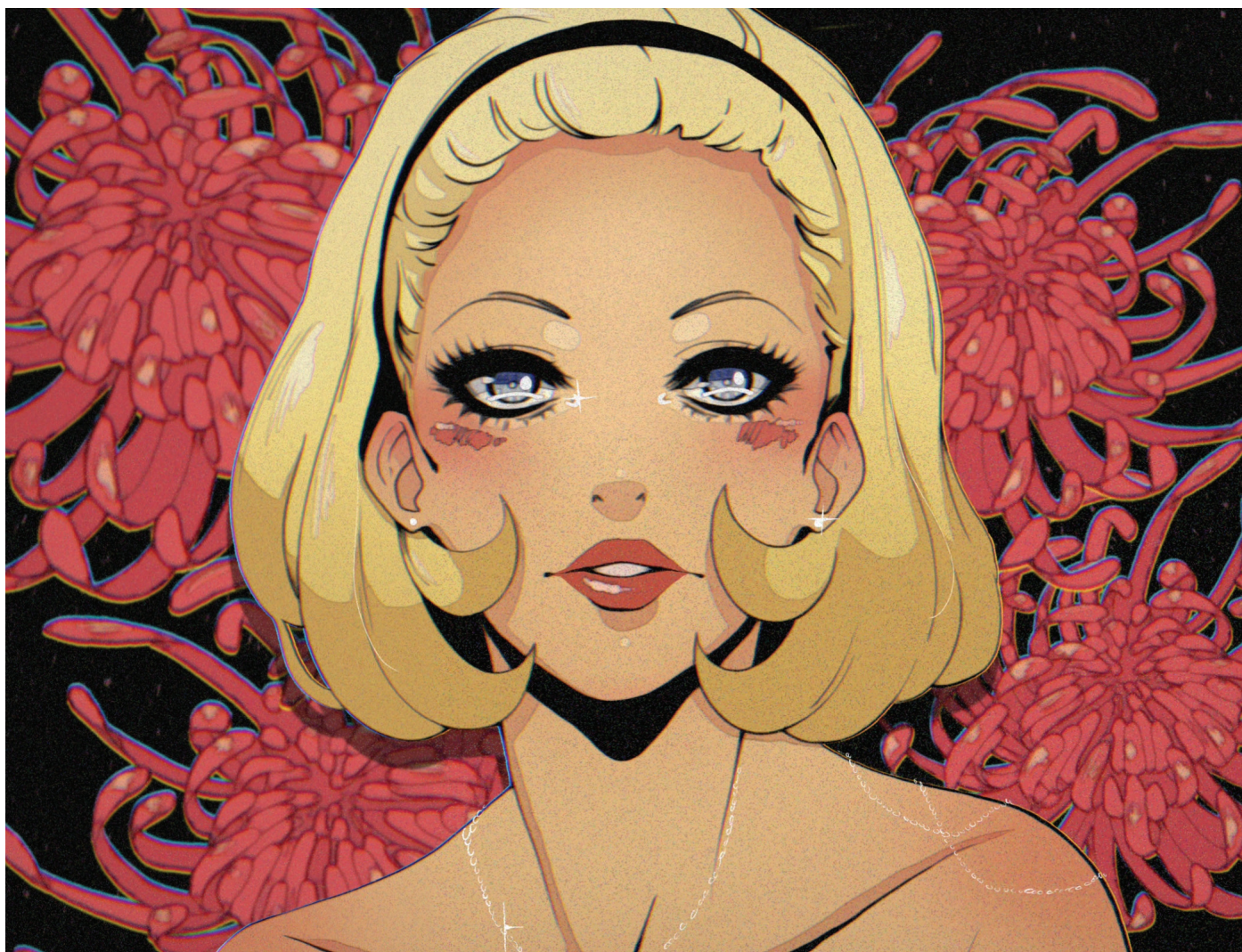
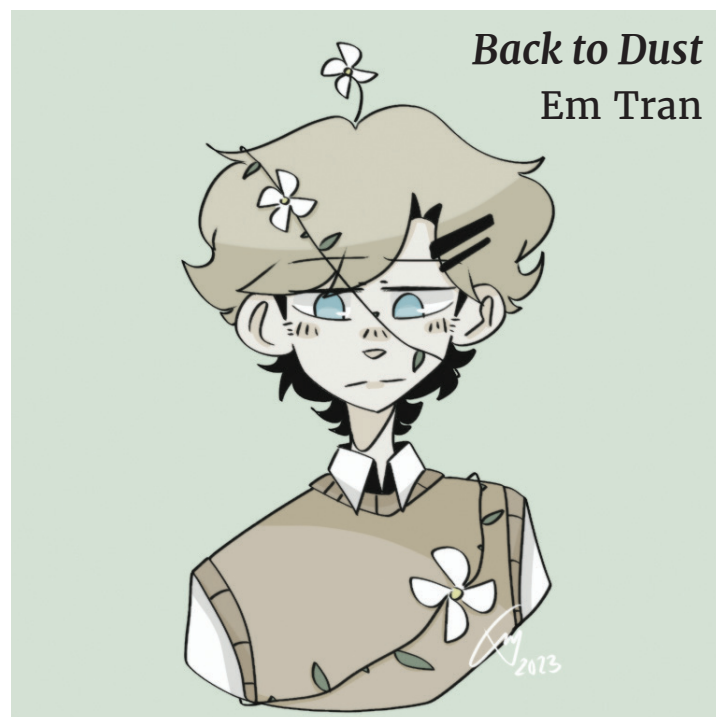


**“Pallid Animals”**  
Aubrey O’Bryant

Pallid faces stare out at me like  
Animals stuck  
In a cold cage with no escape  
The only comfort is the gentle  
Snow smothering it all  
Tipped chins stare out the window  
Pines turning white and sun veiled away  
I too can't help but feel as though I might  
Find answers in the swirling flakes

***Blonde***

Isabella Trentacosti





## “Like Stars, We Shine”

Em Tran

We are like stars,  
A mere speck twinkling in the vast sky above

Yet somehow, we managed to find each  
other,  
Just two out of eight billion people.

You're like the sun and I'm like the moon,  
Coexisting with one another

Without you I'm not seen,  
But for you, even without me, you shine.

Passion fills each step, each breath, you take,  
Though it may be a struggle

I've seen the sleepless nights you've been  
through to grow, To become who you are.

No, you didn't need to complete the 12 labors  
for Eurystheus,  
Nor needed to cut the head off of a gorgon  
who carved people in stone

Ah, but maybe,  
The obstacles you faced were as difficult to  
you as theirs were to them.

It was you who took my hand,  
It was you who led me out of my volcanic walls  
as they crumbled down

The dust that covered my eyes was washed  
away  
By the love and support you showered me with  
consistently.

You showed me new,  
New reasons to smile, new reasons to cry

With you, I opened my eyes and saw the world  
for all it was, The light and the dark.

Through the highs and the lows, you held my  
hand, A steady presence in my life

If soulmates exist, then I believe you are mine,  
And we will meet once again in another life







# The Saintly Queen Catherine Song







## “A Day With Death”

Gwilym B. Lloyd

The day was overcast and grey, the year well into autumn with the painted canopy of reds, yellows, and oranges standing out from the gray and brown trees that supported them. An old man, named Clay Barton, sat atop a hill that overlooked his house, which sat within a clearing next to a small lake. It was a one story affair, a sort of log cabin with a copper roof with a sprawling garden bed in front and a path leading to a dock out back. The lake was fed into by a small river that wound down the mountainside before settling into the lake for a certain amount of time before draining out into a more robust river. This house had been Clay Barton's pride and joy, his goal ever since he was a lad.

He pondered over the nature of autumn and winter, as he found himself usually doing in his later years. It was an annual repetition of death, nothing horrible or inhumane but completely natural and somewhat peaceful. It was a way for the old to wither away and make way for the new things in the spring and summer and to test and temper those who survive it. It was beautiful when you looked at it from a broad perspective and Clay acknowledged that, of course, while on an individual level, death can be a sad and difficult affair it was still a necessary part of living.

As he pondered this, he thought of how he might die and how death had changed him over his life. His wife had long left him behind for the warm embrace of Heaven and his only child, Derrick, was making his way in the world. Derrick was currently in his mid-thirties with a successful writing career and married to an amazing, bright woman. Clay and Derrick were in no way distant, instead they kept up almost constant contact over phone or in visits, especially after Martha's death.

Thinking about his wife, Clay took out his guitar and tuned it in preparation to play a song that he used to play for her. Martha had been an amazing woman, although occasionally clumsy, she was intelligent and polite in almost every situation. They had enjoyed this song that Clay wrote when they first met, a gentle serenade that went along well with his deep voice. He had played it for her every year on their anniversary and he continued the tradition even after she had died. His fingers moved of their own accord over the strings and his voice broke the silence he had settled into ever since sitting on the hill. The notes weaved in and among the trees and hills on the mountainside, as if the wind that carried it were simultaneously dancing with them in a waltz and, as he strummed the last note of the song, he reflected how it had been full of life before but now had turned mournful and longing. It was still filled with as much passion as before but it just wasn't as happy.

As he put away the guitar, he turned his face upward and felt the warmth of the rays of sunlight on his face as the Sun made its appearance, as if the sky reflected the unburdening of his soul. He decided to take a short nap, exhausted by the performance he had played to the wind. He only hoped he'd wake up before nightfall. The nights could get cold enough to kill a man. He smiled as he closed his eyes and assured himself that he only needed to close his eyes a moment.

*Scan this to read the rest of the story!*





## **“On the Moon”**

**Bella Collins**

She's standing on the moon,  
Looking so bold and brave.  
He's watching her on Earth,  
Tears running down his face.  
He knows he didn't help her up there,  
She did this all on her own.  
But he feels a pain,  
Not because his daughter's leaving him,  
But because he knows he should've  
Been with her when she got  
The courage to fly and touch the stars.  
This lovely girl calls down,  
“Dad! I'm standing on the moon!”  
The bitter old man looks up into the sky,  
Stares into the face of the  
Best. Dang. Thing  
That he ever let walk out of his life and  
says,  
In a quiet whisper only the man on the  
moon can hear:  
“But I'd rather be with you.”



***You Go Wherever  
You Go Today***

**Avery Scifres**



**Auburn, Alabama      Auburn High School      Auburn City Schools**