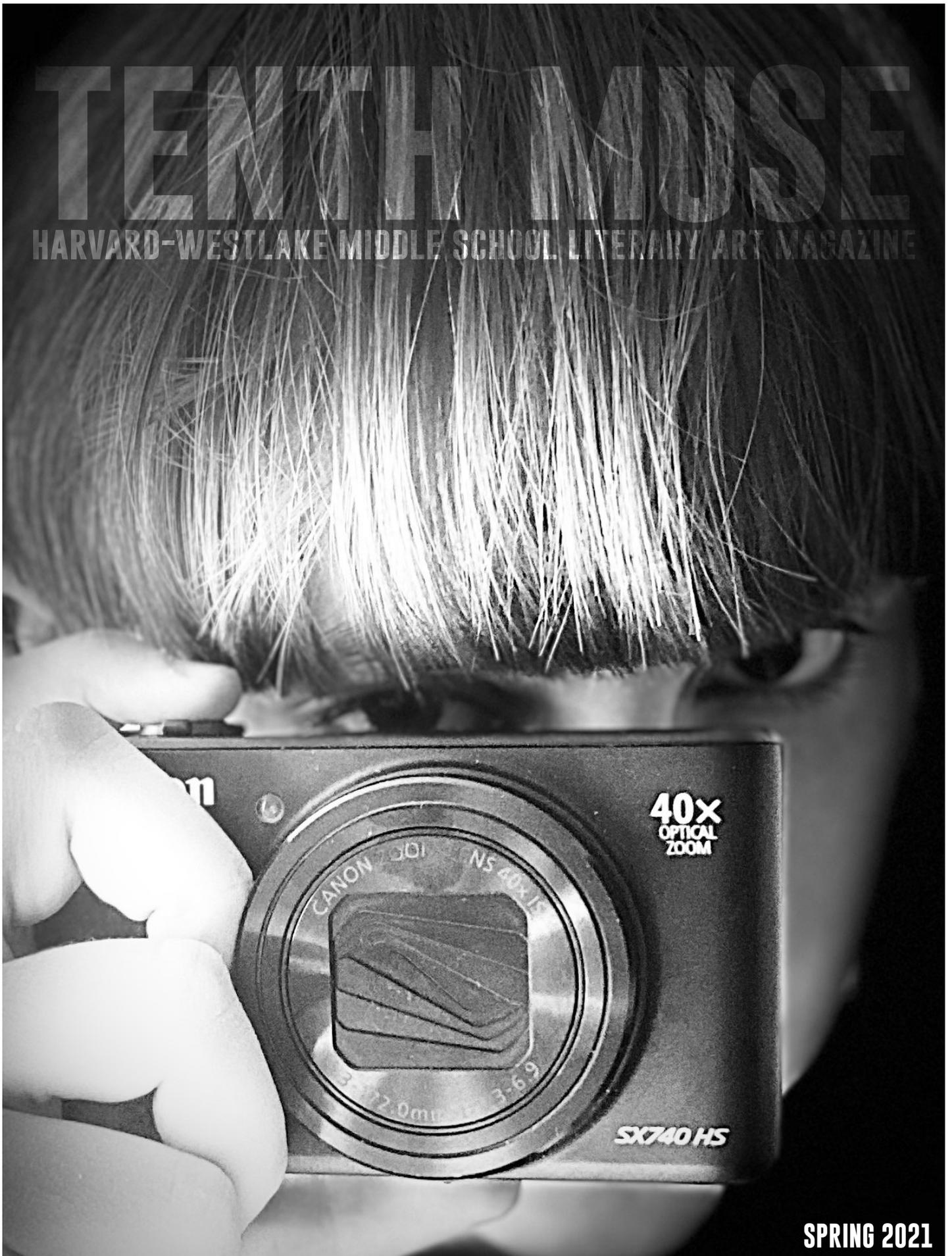


TENTH MOUSE

HARVARD-WESTLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERARY ART MAGAZINE



SPRING 2021

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Nikka Gershman Pepper '26

MOTHER NATURE

Michaela Danielle Kristen '26

Her hair glistens like water rushing down a stream,
Her temper like the wind, in all directions,
Her feet, dark as the dirt on the ground,
Her eyes, as green as the forest that surrounds us,
Her, she, me, you - all apart of her

DEAR HOLDEN

Grant Park '24

The lights blink on the whites and yellows of the carousel
Illuminating the bleak and hazy desolation of the day
I turn suddenly and hear, "Well isn't this just swell"
as I sense the brown, dry leaves nearby sway away

"I remember the good old times
When we were young, carefree and innocent"
He nods and agrees: "Hell, they were indeed sublime;
And if I could go back to those days I would be content."

"If people are running
Without knowing where they're going
I want to know how they have so much cheer
Without a single fear?"

To that, I exclaim, "Boy! How it all changes so fast
I guess time really does fly,"
"Time is an element of the future and past,"
Holden replies, "As I'd just be the catcher in the rye."

But it's how the world is today, so distressing
We are connected yet alone and hollow
As everyone races each other to nowhere, passing
Blurs of amorphous dark figures who follow.

There's no time for the simple joys and happiness
For innocence will crush you like falling boulders
As we march through the maze of miserable madness
Our hearts heavy, worldly burdens on our shoulders.

That's why I want to say something astonishing
We must slow down and walk toward the future
We must give our yearning hearts moments for breathing
And remember to nourish and nurture.

THE KING IN THE MEADOW

Cole Hall '24

The king was never a conventional man
Nor was he a man at all
Trapped within the humid and leathery walls of his solitary
confinement
Solitary like the last tree remaining after a blazing fire
Alone like a graceful golden arc of
Lightning splitting the midnight sky
Surrounded by the rain of cruelty
The reign of his father
Following the brutal agony of war, he found his place
Underneath the earth in an infinite cavernous space
And took his seat atop his throne
Where he held dominion over shadows and bone
Yet even after centuries of being king
The king remained unescorted
His palace was desolate
The monarch scowled and accepted his fate
Thus the beautiful arc of lightning became cold and irate
Until one day he came across a dewy meadow
Filled to the brim with a foreign warmth he hadn't felt before
And subsequently saw a woman
Or a goddess
A being that saw past his faded red markings
Some force of nature that called herself Persephone
Suddenly
For a split second of his eternity
The king didn't feel so alone
Anymore

A CHANGE IN THE WIND

Emma Rose '26

The shrieks grew louder. The sound of my brother's feet banging against the tiled grocery store floors battered against my eardrums.

They were out of Cheetos.

My brother is, well, different. There is nothing wrong with him.

Just, different. Mom used to say I was lucky to have an older brother to look after me. She hasn't said that in a long time.

I remember his bright, smiling face as we drove up the dunes for our family vacation. Mom and Dad in front chatting away, and me and my brother fooling around with tour-guide pamphlets in back. I saw life and happiness behind his big blue eyes.

It's no longer there.

The trip up to the dunes was the last time I would ever see it. I remember the screams. The sirens. The memory of Dad tripping over the pamphlet replays endlessly in my head. The moment he fell back just a little too far. The moment he was gone. The rolling dunes were beautiful at one point.

Not anymore.

Ever since, my brother hasn't been the same. The way he perceives the world and everything in it is far different than how he used to. The loss has sucked his life out of him, leaving behind a weak, battered shell of a person. For me there hasn't been much change. The days seem shorter and colder. Each one leaving me without purpose. No change in me, just a little change in the wind.

AUTUMN

Asher Engelberg '24

Days go by, your leaves start to sway
Always shaking in the breeze
Free as the autumn leaves

Delightfully cerulean skies, carry
Clouds along a river bank
Hearing melodies from a humming canary
Your roots solid as a tank

I've never seen one such like you
And I've seen plenty
But suddenly, you start anew
On a day to celebrate plenty

Turkeys fly around the Earth
As we give thanks for what we've got
And you let your children fall to Earth
Green leaves browned at birth.

The wind, a gentle humming breeze
Carries your children across the park
Never letting go,
Always caught by a strong, sturdy push

The autumn leaves fall to the ground
Waiting to be found.



Ian Kim '24

DISCOVER THE LIGHT WITHIN

Chloe Park '24

With every new beginning
another beginning ends.
In life's dips and dives,
and in every moment of our lives
lies gloomy starkness.
Yet in the dark,
glittering with stars,
we no longer fear the night
since dark now twinkles with bright lights.
We must pause therein
to discover the light within.
Embrace the new beginning
to fly our wings.

To fly our wings,
embrace the new beginning.
To discover the light within
we must pause therein.
Since dark now twinkles with bright lights,
we no longer fear the night
glittering with stars.
Yet in the dark...
lies gloomy starkness.
And in every moment of our lives,
in life's dips and dives,
another beginning ends
with every new beginning.

A DRESS

Hank Schoen '24

A magenta dress
Silky on my legs
Swishes around me
Like the water of a river
Around its stones.
Nothing is more simple
Then to melt into its softness
On skin that tingles,
Let it wrap around my shape
Till my body disappears
In its folds.

The citrus scent of perfume,
A deep red lipstick,
Jewels that sparkle, and
Twirling in the rain--
Why are these only
a girl's domain?
The pastel sunset blends colors
that bleed Into one another,
so why should this world be divided
into boy and girl colors?
I thought colors are for everyone.

Sometimes I long for a
Flowing dress instead of the sharp
tailored lines
Of a men's suit
I feel sad for those
Boys who don't have magenta in
Their lives, men who refuse
To smell like flowers.

SCREENS

Olivia Suddleson '24

Can't you tell what it does
To all the people
Who used to be full of
Love?

Can't you see those
Smiles becoming fainter,
And those laughs
Becoming cries?

Those small valleys
Next to the most lively,
Beautiful pools...

Or the delicate carving
That would appear
When we used to smile,
The way we did when we thought
No one was looking?

Gone?

Instead of careless and free thoughts,
We have fear of our own impending
Dooms.

Worried with imperfections
And things we've done wrong.

Having a hard time remembering
The feeling that was raw and not
Artificial.

Not being able to rely on the people
Who make us feel that way,
But only having the way we make ourselves feel
Now that things have changed.

Don't tell me you
Don't see it that way.

That you don't see the way that
It seers right into
The purity and
Changes it for
The worse?

Opening the doors just to remember
There's nothing or no one there.

Don't tell me you
Don't feel that way.

Please tell me one day it will
Stop.

Please tell me that one day I'll
Wake up
And hear the kind of noise
You can feel in your soul.

Please tell me that one day I'll
Open the door
And see the deepest valleys
I'll ever see in my life.

Please tell me I'll feel the way I felt again.

BAD-LUCK GIRL

Sophia Zhang '24

I was the one person in my class who was notoriously known for doing everything wrong, and when I say 'everything', I mean everything. Stayed up all night studying for a math test? Turns out it was supposed to be an English test. Tried canoeing in a lake one time- ended up not only flipping over my canoe, but somehow crashed into another boat in the process, tipping the other unfortunate people inside overboard. This one time I was making toast, toast, and I somehow set the kitchen on fire, which doesn't even make sense, because I wasn't even using a stove!

Although, I'll say that sometimes it isn't so bad, having this odd quirk. When I got sent to the nurse's office for spraining my ankle (from tripping over a basket of fruit), someone pulled the fire alarm as a joke; since I had an alibi, that ruled me out from the list of suspects. And then there was this one time I accidentally spilled paint all over my carefully made bird, and ended up winning an award for the abstract-art-award. Oh yeah, and there was this one time I tried skydiving (bad idea, I know, especially with my tendencies to mess things up), and my parachute broke! So anyways, that sucked, but apparently I could even fall correctly, and ended up floating, in the middle of the sky, with my torn parachute sagging around me.

It took me a good minute or so to register huh, I'm not dying, another minute to process the fact that huh, I'm flying, and then another minute to realize HUH? I'm flying??? I hovered around for a while, slowly drifting down, touching the ground gently. No one seemed to notice my spontaneous floating. So..... that was an experience.

I think the Parachute Incident, as I've dubbed it, was the weird experience that started the whole chain of weird experiences. Or maybe, I've always had weird experiences, I've just never really noticed before. Remember the time I set the dorm kitchen on fire making toast? The ceiling had been charred, the toast had disintegrated pathetically into a pile of ash, and my clothes were smoking and covered with soot, starting to fall apart; I didn't have a single burn on me. That time I sprained my ankle- it took a day and a half for me to walk normally again, when it should've taken at least two weeks. How many more of these experiences had I missed before?

So of course, the theory I came to was oh my god, I'm a Magical Girl, because I watch too much anime. To test my theory, I hiked up a mountain, walked up to the edge, stared a bit, before turning around to walk back to the dorms. Hey, don't blame me- the drop was a lot higher than I anticipated, and just because I started floating once doesn't necessarily mean I could do it again, and I sure wasn't going to end up a pile of blood and guts on the bottom of a cliff.

But of course, since fate hates me, or maybe there was just some deity up there who really wanted to see me fly off a cliff, a gust of wind whooshed right into my face, making me squint my eyes. I stumbled backwards, but luckily caught myself before I fell.

"Whoop, haha, take that! I'm not falling anywhere- oof!"

Spoke too soon again. A tree branch smacked me in the chest and sent me spiraling off, which was impossible because 1) the wind wasn't strong enough to lift a tree branch, 2) tree branches were that strong- this one was only as thin as my arm, and 3) there weren't even any trees around here! But anyways, back to the falling:

I'm proud to say for the first three seconds of my fall, I didn't scream, mostly because I was too stunned to do so. Also, I have really slow reactions. Plus, I was floating again. I think. So that's good, I guess. I mean, like, at least I'm not dead.

The scenery is actually really nice around here, especially from this height, and the new perspective was amazing. Turning around in mid-air, I've found, is a lot harder when you don't have something solid to plant your feet on. It feels sort of like when you're floating in a swimming pool- weightless, but not quite; I could feel the air around me, but not quite.

There was the other problem too- before, in the Parachute Incident, I started drifting downwards to the ground gently. This time though, I just wasn't. Like, dude, what am I supposed to do now?

I tried wiggling around a bit, which feels really weird, by the way, and then I tried to angle my body downwards and make paddling motions, as if I was trying to get to the bottom of the swimming pool. It didn't work. I just flailed there, somehow suspended eighty feet above the ground, thinking to myself, oh great I'm stuck. I could just barely brush the walls of the cliff with my hand if I reached, and I maybe could've pulled myself up if I could actually reach the side. Well, at least I wasn't dead, right?

I'll admit, the first few minutes were terrifying. I screamed and started crying, big ugly sobs and snot, you know, the whole gross package. Thirty minutes later, my eyes were puffy and my throat was hoarse. Most of my fear had ebbed away, and my brain turned less towards I'm going to die here alone! and more towards yikes, I'm going to be late for class! I'm going to miss so much material!

So now- how do I get down from here?



Laura McNary '25

UNDERSTANDING HUMPTY

Hank Schoen '24

I can't help but wonder why Humpty was sitting on a wall,
And why they had to call him Dumpty
Just because he might have been lumpy
Or clumsy
Or shapeless,
His body not quite defined.

If he wobbled like an egg,
If he spun like the earth
At an angle, not perfectly aligned--
So what? What could be more cruel
Than the demand that we all conform
To a single shape perfectly outlined?

I see him now on the playground yard
Trying to stay out of the way
So he won't get bullied,
Isolated, sitting alone on the wall
While his classmates are fighting over a ball.

An egg, with its gooshy insides
And only a fragile shell to protect it
Is not meant to balance on a wall,
And no one even noticed him fall.
His body was broken,
But his heart, that fragile thing,
Most of all.

Those kingpins of the class,
The popular kids who believe so foolishly
in their own power can't possibly help.
Overweight, clumsy, wobbly, and broken,
Down in the dumps
Dumpty,
The power lies within him alone,
Brave, persevering Humpty

PANTHER PARTY

Michaela Williams '26

"Free Huey!"
Empower, create, innovate
Words meaning to make someone stronger and more confident
I should know
Mariam told me
Not everything lasts forever
Cecile taught me
I walk around in my purple capris
Wondering when can I get some big girl jeans
I hush Fern and scold Vonnetta
I wish I was called princesa
Heat shining down
Trying to tell me how
To be bright

I look back now
And think
About that time in Oakland
That changed my life
From the arrest to the speech
My name is no longer Dolphin
People no longer make noises when they pass me
No
My name is Delphine
I have two sisters
And I currently have a blister
I live on 488 Surrey Ave.
Spring Valley, NY 10977
And I dream I live in Cali

앞음다음

Grace Kim '26

She was alluring.
Like a warm breeze on a summer day.
Or a child laughing gay.
Like dainty flowers growing in the meadows.
Delicate roses, perhaps.
Like clear skies and blue butterflies.
And soft hugs and handmade mugs.
Her laughter was like a trickling river, tinkling bell.
And bubbles and giggles.
Like stars and au revours.
Heartbreaks and heartaches.
And the melody of life.
Oh, sweet Vita, how beautiful you are.
Oh, sweet Vita, how I wish you were mine.



Olivia Suddleson '24

WE ARE THE FIRE

Chloe Park '24

Smoldering, roaring, flickering flames
So beautifully blinding it must be tamed
Fingers of fire weave golden sparks
Igniting the night, outshining stars

From crackling whispers we all wonder
How it fades and blooms in raging blurs
Recoiling and flinching, devouring and destroying
Yearning for infinite burning

How can something be so

Good and evil
Honest and deceitful
Gracious and merciless
Living in the soul of the weakest and strongest

The dilemma of our desires?
We are the fire.

THE BUND AT NIGHT

Phoebe Hsu '24

The bund at night

What a beautiful sight.
The darkness a switch

That turns on the lights.
Car lights, street lights, traffic lights

And those neon ones on the skyscrapers on
either side of the shimmering river

They dazzle and shine,
Each one brighter than the one beside
Boasting the fact of their existence.
But no one complains

Of their arrogance
For who wants a Christmas tree without any lights?

The hustle of the city
Reach an all time high
At the bund at night.

Two silent friends
Walking side by side.
A woman screaming into phone
While squeezing her child's hand.

A man with a briefcase huffing and puffing
Towards a bus whose engine has already lurched forward.
They seem invisible.
Just a drop of water
In the ocean.

Just another person with a problem
In a world full of people with problems.
Yet somehow
They're the masterminds behind the lights
The arrogantly beautiful lights
That illuminate the streets
And color the skies

And now
The lights are shining on
A spotlight for everyone
At the bund at night.

THE WEIGHT OF INK

Jack Smith '26

Ink
Written down
Preserved for generations
Kingdoms fall, worlds collide
Ink remains behind
Implanted in young minds
Wisdom written
Words of valor
Songs of light
Pages of dark
Weigh more than a thousand bricks



Laura McNary '25

RACISM (11/27/20)

Michaela Danielle Kristen '26

It happens everyday, to you and me in many ways,
When we drive, we go slow, so no one will suspect us and let the
police know,
“BLM” they say, but when it comes down to the wire the don't
wanna stay,
They call us names to make us feel pain.
This is that and the other, why can't we say we love each other?
They listen to our music but when it's time to fight for us they say
“let's move it”,
We are NOT a trend.
We are Black, negro, African American, and that is that.

CURLY HAired GIRL DREAMING

Michaela Williams '26

Newborn. Toddler. Girl. Woman.
3c, straight, curly, braided
Teeth shines like the moon at night
Eyes like a book, waiting to be read
5'7 and a half
Feet like bigfoot
Sun-kissed, melanated, sepia, milk chocolate
Roots so deep you would spend your whole life trying
to find her
Who is she?
Well
I
Am
That girl
The one who lives in Ladera
The one who will become something the world has never seen
before
An aries
Passionate, determined, competitive, energetic, honest
A ram
Runs right through your burdens to bring you to the light
A speck of gold in onyx
I am her.
She is me.

VISIONS THROUGH THE RED HUNTING HAT

Noelle Kim '24

we used to be different,
as children sauntering on the streets
without a care in the world.
we used to have aspirations,
the ones everyone dreamed of,
as actors, doctors, and presidents.
even more lofty ones,
where it would've been easier to land on the moon,
than reach our goals.
when we used to get chills in the dark,
as if Pennywise was out to get us.
when we used to poke holes in erasers
because it was fun and we were simply bored.
when we wished we were adults,
by drinking out of a bottle cap,
and pretending to take shots,
and rearranging our furniture,
to play games of 'The Floor is Lava.'
when we used to climb stairs,
as if we were monkeys,
and hide behind our older siblings,
as they took the bullet for us.
when we were attention seekers,
as we pretended to lay dead in the pool,
and draw the sun in the corner,
believing that it was actually there.
when we dreaded the times,
our parents would leave us,
alone and scared,
in the grocery line.
remembering
the beautiful things
that made up your childhood,
while blissfully unaware,
of the cruel reality
of this world.



Olivia Suddleson '24

LIVING A MIRAGE

Kriste An '24

there are days when
the monkeys stop smiling
and sequester themselves
alone;

and the sloths
move quickly,
overwhelmed by the thoughts
that throng its mind.

there are days when
the pigs stop eating,
worried that others
will judge;

and no one knows
what is wrong,
and everything seems fine
only on the outside.

SANDS ON A BEACH NOT YET CONCEPTUALIZED

Cole Hall '24

Sand on a beach not yet conceptualized
A fanatic's fantasy
Is quite a normal one
Aren't all dreamers fanatics?
Teeming with life and thoughts beyond their own comprehension
Fading back into an organism that constantly plays
Hide
And
Seek
Yet has never decided a victor
This is not to say that the universe can't find itself
Her knowledge holds no bounds
Yet for some reason
She doesn't want to

THE WILLING MARIONETTE

Cole Hall '24 & Harper Fogelson '24

How I wish you could seep into my skin
Feel my heart drumming in my chest, synchronous
With the augmenting allegro
Feel my fingers aching with the strain of 1000 ivory whiskers
Feel our air of elegance, growing increasingly refined with every
Breath
Smell the remnants of
Glorious streaks of lighting
Taste the burning imprint it leaves on my mind
Like a memory long forgotten
Hear the fading thunder as it departs
As if reassuring me it would
Return should I only utter its name

How I wish you could feel the
Air as it dances past my lips
Teasing our restraint
The pearlescent cage we confine ourselves to
Tinkering with the freedom of a breath

It begins with the diluted wave of honey
Intangible, yet divine
Solidified tears of a saffron siren
Surrendering its melody to the tremor of our chords
Why, we ask?
Why would the greedily cryptic pixie
Unveil its enigmas
To such simple beings?
Nothing to offer in return
For the kiss upon my dancing fingers
Unleashing the rolling of our tongues
Blessing our song
With foreign benevolence

A precise flick
Of howling emphasis
That cultivates a dire roar
Denoting the end is soon

How I wish you understood the majesty.

A symphony of sketches
Gallop upon the copper-tinted
Sheets that were once caressed by a
A hysterical herald,
A remolded Hermes
Who created a portal in a stroke of their wrist,
Intertwining reality with the hypnotic chimes of music

How I wish you could seep into my skin
Feel every wave
Greet you with a knowledge
Cultivated over a billion years
Feel every drop of the great expanse meet you where you lay
Somehow teaching you more with every interaction

How I wish you could flow into my being
Feel the rate at which my heart stills then quickens
When my feet meet the sand
When my hands embrace the water at alarming rates
Where my humanity ends
And the sea begins
How I wish you could hear it
The sweet silence
The most deafening silence
The articulate timing
As I pierce through Poseidon's lair
The cocoon held by the azure abyss

How I wish you knew
That the calm and the storm can sing harmoniously
How the pressure of the liquid sapphire can relieve the weight of
the hippocampus
How it can set you free
From the oppressive chains of your singular body
How the melted sky can grasp my limbs,
Twirling us around like a marionette
How I wish you could feel it
Feel the gravity
No longer hibernating in the earth's molten heart,
But now stunningly intoxicating my being
Stunningly intoxicating our body.

YOU SAY YOU HAVE A SOLUTION

Jackson Adams '24

You say you have a solution to
my disease, my ailment. It is not
something in need of curing.

Without the constant bombardment of noise,
your mind is free to wander,
unchained from the captivity of noise.

Sounds are a nuisance,
the honk of bus driving by, the
scream of planes flying through the sky.

Filter out those distractions, and
you begin to notice things.
Whenever I visit a park, I see

A couple feeding the birds at a park,
A toddler playing in the grass with its parents.
Old friends crossing paths again.

When I was a child, the non-stop sound of
cars and alarms relentlessly pounded my eardrums.
When I lost that, I gained a new sense of clarity.

After adapting to my new reality, my mind was
free to wander, to notice, to relax. I have
grown the ability to observe the world around me.

I have noticed a dozen or two quirks about you, doctor.
The way you tap your foot when you write
on your clipboard, and that you have a son and
two daughters from the pictures hanging on the wall.

My inner thoughts are who I am and without them,
I am no better than a potted plant gazing out at the
world on a windowsill. A plant does not possess
the ability to notice love, struggle, pain, or happiness.

My thoughts allow me to experience the world in
a new way, different from everybody else.
My unique perspective on the world defines
who I am, and I'm not giving that up.



Olivia Suddleson '24

THE TRUE DEFINITION OF A DOOR

Ashan Abrol '24

They are meant to keep the good things in
While sometimes they keep the bad things out
While some doors are meant to be closed
Others are waiting to be discovered

Some see doors as the opening of their boundaries
Like the bridge into their freedom
A promise into a new life
A place where they can be free

Others see doors as protection,
A wall that separates them and their worst fears.
On their side of the door is their safe place
And on the other side is terror

And some doors just lead to emptiness
Waiting to be filled with whatever desired

Some see doors as a new stage
A sense of growing up
Like a gateway into maturity
When they turn that handle
They become a new person
Which causes them to look at life through another lens

Some may hesitate to open the door
As they cannot anticipate what is on the other side
They know they cannot see beyond what is shut
Some only open it
When they have no other choice
And others go through it fast
But come to realize that the door can only open once
And that there is no going back

THE WHOLE IDEA OF DOORS

Henry Mariscal '24

The whole idea of doors is moving on to something new
Some doors you go through to get away from others
Some you go through to explore new things
Whether it is new places or new beginnings

Some yield everyday items
Others lead to once in a lifetime experiences
Some may lead to uncomfortable things
Whatever it leads to it is about experiencing new things

We go through time remembering the past
We look forward to the future
Sometimes we just need to stay in the present
Where we are passing through different experiences

We look forward to these new ideas
Because without them our life wouldn't be as joyful
These new adventures are exciting
Because we don't know what they will involve

Some doors we open won't be exciting
Which makes the ones that are more enticing
And as we open these new doors
We will always look forward to the next door we find

THE LAMP WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

Coco Scoville '26

Chapter 1

It was a dark and normal night. All the storms currently living in Maine were taking the night off, so they missed a perfect setup. Honestly, it's very hard to tell an intense tale without a few 'dark and stormy nights,' but I'm telling a true story here, so let's get on with it.

In a small suburban neighborhood, known as Little Oak District, a light shone out across a dark road, illuminating the silent night for all to see.

Five houses down the road, Mr. Oliver Gray of the Little Oak Tea Company (and President of the Committee for the Sale of Vintage Items) was reading a book and drinking tea. After drinking 17 cups of strong black tea, he was still awake at exactly 1:27 am, which was when he noticed the light.

He stepped quietly out onto his front porch, book in hand, and could see that the light was coming from the Pinkerton house, the home of a well-known family in that area. This struck Mr. Gray as odd, since he knew that the Pinkertons had left for a vacation in Florida two days earlier.

Telling no one, (for Mr. Gray was not married and had no relatives in the area), he crept quietly up to the big house, with light shining out of its every window. Who could be in the house? He wondered.

He opened the door, and stepped into the threshold.

That's when every light in the house went out. A shadow swept over Mr. Gray, closing the door as it went. There was a crash, a bang, and Mr. Gray disappeared into the darkness.

Chapter 2

Believe me: there is nothing more boring than being a lamp. I sit in the Living Room ALL DAY, and, for the majority of my day, nothing happens. Once in a while, someone will turn me on when they want to have dinner in front of the TV, but aside from that, basically nothing happens.

I have spent a lot of time doing nothing, and I suppose I have gotten pretty good at it. I stare at the table on which I have been sitting all my life, because, for some annoying reason, a person came along and put a hat on my head. An annoyingly large hat. An annoyingly large hat called a "lampshade." I don't need a shade! It blocks my view from everything in the room except the little spot of table directly under me. I have come to hate tables for this sole reason.

However, I can hear. I can hear everything that goes on in my house. If only they knew that I was listening in, I doubt that they would let me sit in the living room, the very center of everything.

But perhaps you feel that all this lamp-talk is a bit off-topic? A random interruption of the fascinating tale you were being told? Hah! You see, I was the one telling the tale. I never sleep! I listen even when everyone else has gone to sleep, when the whole world is draped in a quiet darkness and stars scatter the sky. No one else thinks it worthwhile to listen to the soft stillness of the dead of night. But a lamp never sleeps. A lamp knows that when the whole world sleeps, mysterious things begin to happen.

I am the only being in the whole world (aside from that mysterious shadow you met in Chapter 1) who knows what exactly

transpired that night, and what it means. If you listen carefully, you will one day share my knowledge, and, more importantly, understanding, of this peculiar chain of events. Unless, of course, I am unplugged from my outlet. In that case, you will have to bear with me as I take a very long nap.

Now then, let's get on with it.

As you might imagine, the Pinkertons freaked out when they heard the news. A man had gone missing in their house. They knew this much from their security cameras. A light had gone off at 1:27 am. Mr. Oliver Gray had come to investigate. He had entered the house. He had not been seen in two weeks.

The Pinkerton children were so terrified, in fact, that they refused to enter the house. Their father hesitantly agreed with them. Their mother thought that it was all nonsense.

Which gets us to where I am right now. Sitting quietly on a table, while police storm the house, and Mrs. Pinkerton runs around, looking in every corner of the house, and seemingly believing that Mr. Oliver Gray might be hidden in one of her jewelry boxes.

I flicker quietly. I'd been flickering a lot lately. I'm not sure why. Mrs. Pinkerton finally rushes towards the basement door. I flicker again. Quietly.

Mrs. Pinkerton turns and glares at me. She reaches for my cable.

"Darn lamp," she says. "The last thing I need right now is a malfunctioning lamp."

No. No! She - she's not going to -

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////////////////////////////////////

Chapter 3

Hmph. When I'm finally plugged back in, it's three days later, and Mr. Oliver Gray has still not been found. I'm standing grumpily on the table, staring at wood, just like any other day of my life, when I hear voices.

"Still haven't heard anything?"

"No, Officer. We're only staying in this house in case we hear something, but the minute they're found, we're going back to Florida. Permanently. There's something weird going on around here."

It's Mr. Pinkerton.

"They?" I was sure of what I had heard, and yet it couldn't be possible. Somebody else had disappeared?

The officer spoke again.

"I'm sure that they will be found. In the meantime, I have a few questions."

"Of course."

"Did Mrs. Pinkerton seem at ease before she entered the house? Did she give you any sense that she was aware of the fate which waited for her?"

"No, she seemed perfectly at ease, if a little bit annoyed about this whole business."

Mrs. Pinkerton? Mrs. Pinkerton has disappeared?

"I see. May I ask what it is that you do for a living?"

"I'm a dentist."

"Can you think of anyone who would want to harm you or your family for any reason?"

"Not at all!"

Hah! Mr. Pinkerton may look agreeable, but he's really a very horrid man. Just thinking about all those hours alone, staring at the table with no one in the house makes me want to scream.

"And finally, does your family have any connection to Mr. Oliver Gray, the man who has also disappeared in your house?"

"I mean, he is our neighbor. We don't see much of him, as we're always traveling back and forth between here and Florida, but we have spoken a few times."

Along with the circle of table that I stare at all day, Florida is one of the things I have come to truly hate in this world. The Pinkertons have become very wealthy because of Mr. Pinkerton's dentistry business, and are constantly vacationing in up-scale resorts, all located in Florida. Oh, and did I mention that they always forget to turn me off when they leave? Shining is hard work, you know. And what's the point, if no one's there to enjoy it? I can't even turn myself off.

"I see," said the officer again. "Well, we'll let you know if we find anything. Good day."

I heard a door close, and listened as their footsteps slowly faded away.

Chapter 4

I suppose that you're wondering when I will share my secret with you, when I will reveal my most singular understanding of these strange disappearances. You must have patience. To understand my secret, you must first understand the whole tale.

The following article was released in a local newspaper the next day, and was conveniently left directly under me:

Mystery House Claims A Total of Three

Mr. Oliver Gray, who disappeared on Thursday night, has now been joined in his disappearance by Mrs. Pinkerton, wife of Mr. Pinkerton and one of the owners of the proclaimed "Mystery House," and by Officer Merdo of Little Oak Police Force. Mrs. Pinkerton disappeared two days ago, and Officer Merdo, who was investigating the disappearance of both Mr. Gray and Mrs. Pinkerton, disappeared only today. All three people entered the house alone, and, according to the security cameras, never came out again.

The Little Oak Police Force had been heavily investigating the house, but, after the recent disappearance of Officer Merdo, many investigators are hesitant to enter the house. The Oaks District Police Captain has temporarily halted the search, in order to form a safe strategy to prevent further disappearances.

For more, the Daily Bugle interviewed Mr. Pinkerton himself. When asked why he left his door unlocked on the night that Mr. Oliver Gray disappeared, Pinkerton told reporters, "I guess I was just really busy. About a week before the disappearance, our family left for Florida. I was picking up shipments for the office, fixing cables, and all that sort of thing, and I forgot to lock the door before we left for the airport."

The police force is urging all citizens to remain calm, to report any suspicious activity they might see, and above all, not to enter the Mystery House.

Chapter 5

Well, there you have it. The whole story. And now, dear reader, I think that it is time for you to share my secret.

My secret is this - that everything I have told you is true, everything - except for one statement. That statement is that, all day, everyday, I do nothing. In fact, I do everything.

I memorize. I memorize everything, from gossip about the neighbors to Mr. Pinkerton's schedule.

I experiment. If I flicker at inconvenient times, who is it that unplugs me? In fact, it is almost always Mrs. Pinkerton.

And I connect this knowledge. Combine it and connect it until I can use it to manipulate everything around me, until I can concoct the most brilliant scheme of all time!

Yes, dear readers, it was me all along! I was the mastermind concealing those people, it was me, yes, it was me!

I suppose that you want an explanation. I suppose that you are beginning to question my reliability.

Hah!

For my motive, I give but one simple reason, and that is the fact that I am forced to wear this infernal hat! I do not need a lampshade! I wish to see the world! But no, my owners insist on blinding me to life, keeping me trapped inside of this ridiculous lampshade, doing their best to limit the great powers with which I was endowed!

But it was not enough. This, my dear reader, this was an act of revenge!

'But how did you do it' you ask? 'How could an insignificant little lamp like you possibly hide three capable people in one house?'

I suppose that it would be easiest to start at the beginning.

My master plan, I suppose, was to cause as much chaos and trouble to the Pinkertons as possible. However, before I could begin, I needed to make sure that one of the Pinkertons would not grow frustrated with my flickering and flashing, (which actually served many purposes, as I will explain later), and try to get rid of me.

The Little Oak District is a small area, and, after listening in to conversations for more than a month, I confirmed that there was only one man who could really pose a threat to me. That was Mr. Oliver Gray, Vice-President of the Little Oak Tea Company, but, more importantly, President of the Committee for the Sale of Vintage Items. I am considered a "vintage item," as I have been in the family for several generations, and I feared that, if Mrs. Pinkerton got especially frustrated with me, she might sell me to Mr. Gray. There was certainly no one else who would want an old malfunctioning lamp.

This would have been the end of all my plans, so I determined to get rid of him.

As you may have guessed by now, I was the bright light from Chapter One. For that step, I used a curious lamp ability that I possess, which is usually only present in one out of five lamps. It is the ability to save up light, and to then use it when the lamp chooses to. By flickering and burning dimly for months, I conserved an astonishing amount of energy, so that, when I used it all on the night of Mr. Gray's disappearance, it appeared that every light in the house was shining.

Did you wonder why I showed you that news report from the Daily Bugle? Now, you will find out why. Do you remember Mr. Pinkerton's explanation of why he left his door unlocked? He said that he had been busy fixing cables. By that, he meant that he was

fixing me!

I was flickering constantly, and not just to conserve energy. I knew that if Mr. Pinkerton realized that something was wrong with his great-great-grandmother's lamp, he would do everything he could to fix it.

So, on Sunday morning, the morning before the Pinkertons left for Florida, instead of securing the house and packing his bags, Mr. Pinkerton was crawling around on his knees, trying to figure out why the cable connecting me to the electrical socket wasn't working. It was genius! When he finally gave up, it was time to go, and he forgot to lock up the house.

As I have already told you several times, I listen to everything. Mr. Pinkerton is a dentist, and, as you may also remember from the Daily Bugle paper, was due to get a shipment of supplies for his dentistry on Sunday. Just as I had planned. Mr. Pinkerton got shipments for his office every Sunday, and, as I happened to have overheard, this one contained a special shipment: dental anesthetic gas.

MWAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sorry. I'll go on.

The next part of my plan took a little bit more work. Lamps can communicate with other lamps, but, unfortunately for me, I was the only lamp in the living room. However, one day, one of the Pinkerton children left a flashlight on the very table on which I stood. To my surprise, I found that I could understand it. I suppose that, since it shone a light too, we were close enough in purpose to be able to communicate. I told it my plan, and it agreed to help.

On Thursday night, days after the Pinkertons had left, I released all of the energy that I had been storing. I flooded the house with light, and lured Mr. Gray through the front door. Just as I had timed it, my light shut off.

Oh, yeah. That shadow that I saw? Well, that was a bit misleading. It was actually the cat. It doesn't mean anything.

Anyway, Mr. Gray panicked, and, while trying to reach the front door again, stumbled further into the pitch-dark house. The door leading down to the basement was on his left, with a hallway leading to the Pinkertons' bedrooms to the right. As I had guessed, he mistook the basement door for the front one, opened it, and immediately tripped over a cable.

You see, flashlights are a bit more mobile than lamps. They can't really move of their own accord, but if they focus all of their energy on one side, they can roll a little bit. I had asked my flashlight

friend to roll off the table and into the basement, where he spoke to another lamp who lived down there. The other lamp agreed that, when she heard Mr. Gray tumble down the stairs, she would concentrate her power, lean as far to the right as she could go, so that the cable which connected her to the socket on the other side of the room would be stretched into a tripwire.

Everything went as planned. Mr. Gray came tumbling down the stairs, then immediately tripped on the cable - and flew headlong into twelve bottles of dental anesthetic gas. Two of the bottles broke, and Mr. Gray, inhaling the gas, immediately passed out. When he awoke, he found that the sound-proofed basement door was locked (the little flashlight and some of his friends had secured the lock from the outside by forming a sort of flashlight pyramid.)

MWAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!

Just, um, clearing my throat. Um...yes. Definitely not maniacal laughter.

Next, I had only to make sure that no one entered the basement. Do you remember the fateful moment when Mrs. Pinkerton opened the basement door? Of course you don't! Because I was asleep! You see, when I heard Mrs. Pinkerton approaching the basement door, I realized that the trap was about to be sprung yet again! If you had heard the crash she must have made, I'm sure that you would have understood everything. So I did the only thing that I could do: I flickered. As I have previously told you, I had found that Mrs. Pinkerton, when angered, was very prone to unplugging me from my outlet. So when she saw me flickering and dimming, she immediately unplugged me, then turned around and fell into my trap! After all, I'm an honest lamp. I couldn't just lie to you about the incident. I had to hide it from you. I'm sure that you never suspected a thing.

After Mrs. Pinkerton met the same fate as Mr. Gray, there only remained the question of making sure that no one discovered them. When the unfortunate Officer Merdo had sprung the trap once again, my work was complete!

Three people missing! Chaos ensuing! Me flickering constantly! And nothing you can do to stop me! MWAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!

...oh. Or, you could, just...include me in your yard sale. I see. Um. Yes. I was, um, kind of in the middle of an evil scheme, so... what? SOLD?

CALENDAR

Elizabeth Johnstone '24

On a rusted nail
next to a sunbleached windowsill,
stand faded pages adorning
a textured wall.
The calendar fits perfectly,
almost as if it was made
for the exact spot
it was placed.

It hangs from a nail
but does anything but hang
its head in despair.
This calendar has purpose,
and it knows it, too.

It stands proud,
etched with dates past,
assignments due
meetings attended.
Birthdays and baptisms,
girls' trips and game nights,
each day, documented.
This calendar knows its duty.

Each entry is in a different color pen.
And never in anything else,
except for pencil markings, of course,
hastily scrawled across squares.

Arrows leap across the page
like highways across a city
from day to day, and week to week.
Reminders span months,
from a gentle "math due",
to a raging
"BIO TEST TOMORROW!"
scribbled in green ink.

Some are in the margins,
black ink from a 0.7mm gel pen,
each letter connected,
a cursive-looking script.
"Practice piano" it reads.
And the next day, "Practice,
seriously."
And the next, "But, like,
actually practice."

Every inch of the paper
is a chest to be opened.
Each square unearths a day,
each page, a month,
each staple-bound stack, a year.
They unravel the moments of
stress and satisfaction,
confusion and confidence,
and, above all,
joy.
Beginning to end,
it dutifully recounts a year
of her life.

Each square unearths a day,
a day of stress or satisfaction,
confusion or confidence, or simply,
a day of joy.
Page by page, it unravels
months. Until, from beginning to end,
it recounts a year
of life.

SINGING IN THE SHOWER

Hank Schoen '24

He turns the squeaky knobs
And waits for the water to warm up,
for the steam to fill the space
And open him up to dreams

The water is his beat,
His accompaniment.
It races through the steel pipes
And flows like music down his body

Anyone can hear him now,
Songs echoing off the tile walls,
His lungs filled with air,
His heart wide open
As he croons
Into the shampoo microphone



Laura McNary '25

VITA

Grace Kim '26

SCENE 1, EXTERIOR, BRIDGE OVER LAKE, 9 P.M.

A woman falls from a bridge, she is wearing a long white dress and the city behind her is glowing.

SCENE 2, INTERIOR, BALLROOM, 10 P.M.

MONROE, a woman in her late 30's with dark brown hair and eyes, stands in the ballroom. She is wearing a dark red velvet ballgown with black gloves.

WOMAN 1

Oh, Monroe, darling, what a wonderful party you have hosted!

MONROE

Thank you, but it really isn't much, the party you hosted last week was far better than this shabby old one.

WOMAN 1

Oh, you're flattering me (laugh)
Right! Before I forget, congratulations, Vita has turned into such a bright and beautiful young woman. I wish my daughter was even half as bright and beautiful as her! And for her to win such a prestigious competition at a young age! My, my.

MONROE

Oh you're flattering me! Charlotte is a wonderful young woman as well, I heard she has a handful of admirers!

WOMAN 1

What is the use of admirers if they do not propose?

Both women laugh and converse for some time.

Suddenly there is a loud knock on the door, interrupting their conversation.

Monroe, puzzled, goes to answer the door and she sees two police officers.

MONROE

Officers, hello, is something wrong?

Ma'am

OFFICERS

(pause)

We're very sorry, we found a body. We think it's your daughter, Vita.

SCENE 3, INTERIOR, MONROE'S MANSION, 6 A.M.

Monroe lies in her bed. She is wearing a dramatic robe, wine red with fur on the sleeves. It seems like she was crying.

She stays staring at the ceiling, with an expression of pure defeat, before she slowly starts to stir.

Monroe then silently gets up and heads to Vita's room. She collapses onto the carpet at the center of the room as soon as she enters. She sees a loose floor board, the word SOMNIUM etched into it.

She pries it open and sees a diary lodged inside. Curious, she starts to read the diary.

SCENE 3, INTERIOR, VITA'S ROOM, 10 P.M.

Young Vita is in her room, on her bed writing in her diary. It is decorated with glittery trinkets and there are numerous stuffed animals and dolls. She is wearing a pink dress with puffy sleeves and has her hair in pigtails.

VITA (V.O.)

June 4th, 1940. Today I made my mommy proud. I won the competition. It was hard to practice everyday and the harp strings hurt my finger a lot. But because I made my mommy proud I am very happy! My mom is calling me to eat dinner, she made me my favorite spaghetti and she even bought me chocolate cake!

Yummy!

Vita skips out of her room, happily.

SCENE 4, INTERIOR, VITA'S ROOM, 3:00 PM.

Vita is on her bed again, she is a teenager now. Her room has changed and she has painted her walls a pale yellow. The trinkets and dolls are gone.

VITA (V.O.)

August 10th, 1945. Today my mom and I went on a picnic at the park. We ate some sandwiches and drank some lemonade. It was a sunny day and the sky was so clear. Like a beautiful dream.

(beat)

My mom seemed happy but she looked tired as well. I'm glad I got to spend some time with my mom. I rarely see her because of she works so much everyday. I really wish I could help her... My mom's telling me to practice... Again.

Vita sighs as she goes out of her room.

VITA

Coming mom!

SCENE 5, INTERIOR, VITA'S BEDROOM, 6 P.M.

Vita slams her door, obviously very angry. It is raining and Vita takes out her diary and starts to angrily write in it. Her room is now grey and bleak and her past enthusiasm gone.

MONROE

VITA, young lady, do NOT slam the door at me!

Monroe screams from outside but Vita pays no heed as she goes underneath her covers. A few moments pass by and we hear a door closing and Vita comes to get her diary.

VITA (V.O.)

October 19th, 1950. I hate her. I hate my mom. Ever since I started to get some prize money my mom started to force me to practice every single day. I hate it, I hate it! She doesn't even care about me, nope, she only cares about money and money and money. I miss when she wasn't so money hungry, I'd rather be poor than live through this hell. I hate her! Ugh she's calling for me again.

MONROE

Vita, VITA, come down here young lady! Your music instructor is here. Do not embarrass me.

Vita storms out of her room, fuming. We can see how hurt she is by Monroe's words.

SCENE 6, INTERIOR, VITA'S ROOM, 7 P.M.

Vita walks into her room lifelessly, she is wearing a white dress, her hair is messy and her head is hung low. She slumps down, her back against the door and she cries silently. Soon after she stands up with sudden vigor and takes out her diary and starts to write on the floor.

VITA (V.O.)

December 17th, 1952. I can't do it anymore. I'm just tired. My mom, someone who is supposed to be on my side is now my enemy. She is always dictating what I do. Forcing me to practice 6 hours a day, while she goes around spending the money I earned. Does she even love me? Or is she just in love with the money I bring? My friends have all left me, saying that I was barley around and that I was becoming boring.

What even is life? Mom, if you're reading this I'm so sorry. But I can't do this anymore. I love you.

Vita slowly gets up, puts her diary back into the floorboard and starts to leave her room. Before she does, however, she looks around the room and smiles with tears streaming down her cheeks. When she goes out we can see the word SOMNIUM etched into her door.

SCENE 7, INTERIOR, MONROE'S MANSION, 9:00 A.M.

Monroe, closes the diary and hugs it close to her heart. She is crying again, clutching the diary.

MONROE

(cries softly)

Vita, vita, my darling I'm so, so sorry.

(sob)

It's all my fault. All my fault. (sob)

Where did things go wrong. My poor, poor Vita.

She screams.

A lot of time passes but eventually we see Monroe fall asleep on the floor.

She stays like that for some time when she suddenly gets up, completely awake. Everything suddenly seems so barren. A pale light shining from the windows.

She heads to the door, as if she is possessed. She opens the door and sees a white envelope with a single WHITE CARD inside. Turning it over she sees the words "YOUR REQUEST HAS BEEN COMPLETED". She gasps and drops the card.

SCENE 8, INTERIOR, CHRISTMAS EVE, 2 A.M.

A pregnant Monroe on the floor begs a man to not go. But the man, MICHAEL, ignores her and picks up his briefcase.

It is snowing and the only source of light are the street lamps. The neighborhood is completely quiet and the only sound heard are the sounds of their argument.

MONROE

Michael, please, you can't leave me like this! How could you leave me for another woman!

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, Monroe..

MONROE

Michael, Michael, get back here! What about the baby? What am I supposed to do? Michael please!

He doesn't turn back and Monroe starts to cry even more, sinks to the ground.

After a few moments she gets up and heads out the door. The vibe of the town is different, the shops have turned on their lights and there is a distant choir of children singing silent night. There are sharp and raspy voices chanting SOMNIUM in her ear.

Monroe quickly walks to a building, the word Somnium appearing everywhere. The voices in Monroe's ear keep getting louder, to the point where it is almost unbearable. The camera is also very blurry, like a dream.

SCENE 9, INTERIOR, ABANDONED OLD BUILDING, 2:30 A.M.

As Monroe walks in the whispering suddenly stops and is replaced by an eerie silence.

Inside it is completely dark except for a few fireflies. The building's walls are thick with ivy, the ground covered with grass, wildflowers and moss.

Monroe walks up the stairs and goes to the 3rd floor. And there is a room, on the door is "THE OFFICE OF MR. SOMNIUM". She goes in and we can see a man, smoking a pipe, dressed head to toe in a dark expensive suit.

MONROE

Mr. Somnium?

He turns around, however, his face is still hidden in the shadows. Monroe pulls her coat tightly around her body, a shiver suddenly overtaking her body.

MONROE (CONT'D)

Are you Mr. Somnium?

MR. SOMNIUM

(beat)

Yes, you must be Ms. Monroe.

MONROE

That does not matter.

Then Monroe takes out a letter and places it on his desk. She turns to leave the room.

MONROE (CONT'D)

Read it after I leave, The money is in the envelope so do not worry.

She leaves. In the envelope is a check. He opens the letter and it says: "Take my life when I am at my happiest."

Somnium rips and sets the envelope with the card and money on fire. Then stalks out of the room, following Monroe, still smoking his pipe. The embers of the fire transfer to city lights in the next scene.

SCENE 9, EXTERIOR, THE BRIDGE, 9:00P.M.

This scene is similar to the first one. It is windy and there is an air of mystery surrounding the night. We see Vita on the bridge, contemplating whether to jump. However, unlike the first scene we see her trying to go back. But as she turns around we see her get pushed, a black gloved hand shoving her. We see the shock on her face. Then we see Vita falling down, like the first scene. During the whole scene there is an ominous music playing in the background. The whispering voice saying Somnium getting louder and louder, almost like a fever dream.

THE IMMORTALITY OF TODAYS

Averie Perrin '24

A girl lay deathless,
Alone,
Swimming in the depth of her immeasurable bed,
Running unrepentant through her mind,
Escaping regret,
She dreamt of stardust
Of sailing wildly through deep cerulean seas,
Of crimson skies with a dying sun,
Of juniper trees and their indigo-colored berries,
Of fields lined fiercely with lavender,
Of gold and indigo,
Of honey binding her heart back inside her chest,
The same heart that had done flips,
And even ran marathons in another life,
Of melting languorously into a deep, boundless
sleep,
From which time never stopped,
And she rose with the petals of flowered dawn
Spoke to the day that always perdured,
Who told her goodnight,
Too early,
So into the bed again she journeyed,
Mind drawn in by the promise of never,
Tonight she dreamt of tomorrows,
But still awoke wildly trapped within a today

METAMORPHOSIS

Kai Do '24

The lip gloss stain on the back of my hand reminds
Me of the time I spent trying
To fathom a single thought as I stared
At myself in the mirror for way too long.

I'm not a narcissist, I don't
Very much go for appearance but to worry about things,
Everything all the time, the way
I look being one of them,
I knew that time like the back of my hand.

Candle wax drips as I memorise
Too many things slip past,
One in, one out,
One gone, another I stopped caring about.

Rip pages, one per
Day, always and forever,
Teeth and cavities, pulled out and
Butterflies and flowers fill my mouth

A life of a fictional character I had always wished to lead,
Wishing for things will always be so harmful to me,
If constant longing and yearning weren't unhealthy
Then maybe I'd "feel" complete.

Lip gloss smeared because I'm too young for lipstick,
The delicate butterflies that were supposed to live in my stomach have
somehow remained caterpillars and I don't think I've changed
Because I'm still in front of the mirror

Change being complex,
Physiological miscommunication and pronunciation maybe my sequence
wasn't correct,
Maybe it wasn't perfect

Delicate butterflies or what were meant to be,
Like some old story or
Some predetermined destiny

Maybe that was mine, and I'd
Learn to be a butterfly

But for now in front of the mirror,
I'd have to be okay with being a caterpillar.

WHEN YOU LEFT ME

Caroline Stevens '24

Laying flat
Arms out wide
Embracing the warm breeze that falls upon me
Crickets chirping
Quiet wind whistling by
Ocean waves still and mellow
I exhale
Relaxing my whole body, feeling each grain of sand pressing
against my skin
Your laugh is like the summer rain
I so thoroughly enjoy
Pattering on my forehead
I don't mind
I can hear the ocean waves crash softly
Washing in and out
Like the way new conversations arise between us
Sand all over
In my hair, between my toes
I don't mind
I found a seashell
Pink and ridged
It echoed of such harmony and grace
Like you did before
Leaving me all alone, in a place I've never been before
You didn't come back, I do mind
This time

BONNIE

Michaela Williams '26

A gust of wind on a hot day
Reminds me of the month of May
So intelligent
A lot of people underestimate
1,2,3
A,B,C
Cheerful despite of others comments
So very different from her parents
Always has a surprise
She never has an opinion to disguise
Lover of barbies
A hugger
Never lets her positive attitude get in the gutter
Loves Sasha and Brownie
Lives in the near by county
Younger than me
Scared of bees
Reminds me of tea
Sleepovers
Pizza
Ice cream
Under the moonbeam
Her and me
Do-re-mi
Listening to the sounds of night



Michaela Williams '26

FEARFUL OF FLIGHT

Eden Conner '25

I think I must have lived
Once before. Not as a girl, but as an anxious owl.
This would explain my eyes, luminous kaleidoscopes of
truth: locked, like a failed amusement park ride.
I hold the key, but it is sandpaper slashing my
thoughts until they are
crumpled up dreams sitting in invisible waste bins.

A deftly
dangerous whirlpool spiraling in the middle of the pacific,
I am capable of the invisible demise of myself.
Whispered help at first tickles my ear. Soon, I discover it is a
mosquito,
sucking the scarlet blood of my ideas until I am forever
Isolated from the opportunity of
Adventure.

I chose to cower on my perch alone.
My cracked claws grip to the
wobbling oak of purpose, but I am ripped away.
Forced to pave a life with no
Answer key, not even a rule book.

Yes, I must have been that anxious
Owl.
Whose bones, light as my own armor of feathers,
Impede me from trying anything too out of the box.
For I think that my
fragility is not my decision.
My sleek feathers fly silently like
My voice, an outreached hand grasping
at a seashell before it is swept away by the ocean.
Gone.
I choke down my problems like a rodent swallowed whole,
Twitching at the idea of someone
finding out they exist.

THE END OF SUMMER

Averie Perrin '24

The End of Summer

I dream of the time where the days lengthen
And the sun decides to waltz with the moon at a particularly
scandalous time
When the hours seem never-ending,
Tainted with sweetness,
But by the end,
They seem shorter than the smallest of seconds,
Like parcels stored deep in your mind,
Only memories.

When the nights can become your days,
Untethered from the usual confines of the year,
The months of summer feel like a warm blanket on the very
coldest of winter nights.

The fruit is always in season, ripe and saccharine,
And the only time you wince is when drops of cold ice cream
attack your feet,
Softened by the summer sun.

You wake up to light creeping through the windows in intricate
patterns,
And glance at the mirror to see that the sun has left its rosy
mark on your cheeks,
And freckles like constellations scattered on your face.

The moon at night shines like never before,
Vibrant and lucid,
It's silver edges luminously glowing with fervor,
Something you'd only glimpse at in the best kind of dream.

I'd bury my toes into the sand,
And dive, birdlike, into the glittering sea
Submerging myself in the heavy water,
Laughing without a care in the world,
Until the end of summer came,

Then,
I'd wait for the next one to arrive.

THREE PATHS TWO ONE

Derek Esrailian '24

When the newborn child sees the mountain and the river,
that is all they see.
For the child has yet to decide
what deciding is.
Has yet to think about
what thinking is.
For the two bright balls in the sky, the roaring echoes of silver
bullets in the valley,
the tasty wind, and the feeling of their mother's hand on their
face,
are all just happenings.
Defined by what is there and what is not.
The child does not know,
yet is more whole than anyone.
If only they could remain so.

When the child sees the mountain and the river,
now believing themselves to be solid, undrifted –
a man, so they say –
they not only see the mountain and the river, but more.
For now they have been taught what the mountain is –
what the river is, what the sun is, what planes are, what that
hand must be –
and no longer surrender themselves to the universe,
no longer waving a white flag in concession,
no longer friendly with life but attached to it.
If they were life they would know not to do so.

Have they experienced the union of man and woman?
Have they seen how beautiful the sunset and the ocean really
are?
Have they treasured their mother's gentle hand?
They cannot be sure.
They must die to know! As do I.

When the child sees the mountain and the river for the last
time,
back they are to being newly born.
Though I wouldn't be able to tell.
A long beard and fogged glasses wouldn't be too revealing of
this fact.
But they see the mountain as a mountain,
and the river as a river.
Though this time with infinite more certainty
of a thing that cannot go deeper into itself.
The water was nice then.
So was the snow.
They laughed.
How funny it was!

The end the same as the beginning,
with a purposeful yet unintentional middle
to give the two shape
and the one an infinite form.

PLIP PLOP

Kriste An '24

Plip-plop.
I can hear
The droplets fall,
Soothing the aching
And thirsty
ground.

Plip-plop
I can hear
The children laugh
As they run
Outside and
Jump in puddles.

Plip-plop
I can hear
The bus driver swearing
As the droplets
Cover his view
Of the road.

Plip-plop
I can hear
My heart sigh,
As all my worries
Go down
With the rain.

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