

\ re-mə-nis

Reflections on Reminiscing

“Reminisce” means “to remember or recall past events.”

As the Advanced Composition class brainstormed themes for this collection of pieces, ideas of time, memory, and recalling past experiences kept coming up. These ideas are reflected throughout the pieces themselves, and this is also a fairly standard place for the minds of seniors to wander as they contemplate their last months of high school. However, we had no idea how truly important this practice would become.

Just two weeks after coming up with this idea, in mid-March, Malaysia imposed a movement control order in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. We had to move classes online, events were cancelled, and we had to stay home, for weeks that soon turned to months.

While it is tempting to dwell on the memories that were not made as usual in the last few months of this school year, I am struck with an even deeper gratefulness for the memories that we formed together during the first three quarters of this year. It is appropriate to grieve the loss of normalcy, of in-person community, of expected celebratory events that many of our seniors have been looking forward to for years. But I challenge you, readers, not to let the grief of this time eclipse the reality of August through March of this year. The future is an uncertain place right now, but I hope that, through the reading of these pieces and enjoyment of the memories that they invoke in you, you can find the past to be a place of comfort and joy. Reminisce and give thanks, to the God who provided for us and will continue to provide for us, even when things seem foggy in our understanding right now.

Seniors, I’m praying that these pieces help you celebrate the achievements, relationships, and lessons you’ve learned in the few years, and that you can embrace His faithful love as you move forward into your next steps.

We love you so much!

-Ms. Bethany Weidemann, Advisor 2019-2020

Eagle's Eye Literary Magazine

Dalat International School
2020

Compiled by:
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With the help of:
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Order of Pieces

Mingling of Mediums:

Lydia Brooks/Grace Wan
Julia Jun/Dael Kim
Gloria Kim/Riley Phillips
Jia Yi Lim/Laviynia Menon
Grace Moon/Joseph Chandra
Corinne Fraley/Daye Jung

Other Works:

Jireh Ang	Zhi Yong Lee
Sheryl Ang	Timothy Lin
Christina Beaman	Daniel Lim
Ryan Bernhardt	Luke Lindsey
Jordan Chang	Duncan Magruder
Emily Chew	Ella Jade Magruder
Jae Cho	Letitia Ong
Wesley DeLaughter	Jerald Ooi
Yuuki Horie	Madeline Rude
Elizabeth Horton	Heemin Park
Mao Inoue	Jong Min Park
Elise Johnson	Yerin Park
JiSoo Kang	Hannah Peek
Inkyul Kim	Gabe Roberts
Seongjin Kim	Eddy Seong
Wansuk Kunawaradisai	Jiyun Shin
Onyu Kwak	Tien Min Tan
Jian Yi Lai	Celestine Teoh
Nicole Lai	Niki Tsumagari
Jun Lee	Georgia White
Mary Lee	Aaron Worten
Nicole Lee	Philip Yeoh
Rebekah Lee	

The History of the Eagle's Eye

By Mr. John "Tommy" Tompkins, Advisor 1964-2015

The first issue published at Dalat was on August 1949, underneath the name Pine Echoes. By 1958, the name of the publication changed to Pine Hill Echoes. In 1962, the issue was titled Bamboo Beacon. The first issue of Eagle's Eye was from 14 October 1964. I, John "Tommy" Tompkins, served as collector/facilitator/formatter from 1978-2015. Copies were produced quarterly for parents and alumni; eventually, these publications went from print to online. My favorite aspect of publishing these updates was to receive letters of appreciation from alumni and parents. The most common article type in Eagle's Eye was feature writing. Occasionally, one of the students would write an editorial giving an opinion on a topic or a poem. There was also a "Dear Abby"-style column called "Dear Gertrude." Lastly, there were point/counterpoint columns where kids wrote on two sides of an issue.

Eagle's Eye—With A Twist

By Miss Emily Grad, Advisor 2015-2019

A Collection For and By Seniors

In the spring of 2015, Eagle's Eye became an annually published literary magazine. Each senior submitted one piece that represented him or her as an artist, being within the discipline of writing or the fine arts; the heartbeat purpose is still to showcase student work. But the vision of the Eagle's Eye is expanded to the following:

- representing a Dalat tradition through a collaborative publication that hosts multiple art forms and spotlights creativity and personal flair
- empowering artistic ownership of senior students by providing a platform to engage in purposeful interaction
- serving the greater community by presenting a piece of academic excellence

This year's pieces highlight the following artistic expressions: poetry, creative fiction, essaying, news article, photography, painting, drawing, dance, and musical score.

Mingling of Mediums

Mingling of Mediums was a project between six writers (poetry and creative fiction) and six students of the fine arts (photography, dance, drawing, and digital painting). Members from each discipline were paired and exchanged an initial artistic piece. Without consulting the other party, each individual responded to his/her partner's work by creating a new one. The mirroring interpretations of partners are published side-by-side. We hope you enjoy these purposeful interactions of creativity!

Say Something

Initial Piece By Grace Wan



<https://youtu.be/WSJ59HoqxPw>



Embracing Simplicity

Response Piece By Lydia Brooks



Home

By Julia Jun

[Verse 1]

hide me in a place afar
with nothing but a small guitar
place me in a quiet town
and hold me when I'm feeling down

[Verse 2]

lay me down and hold me tight
quietly all through the night
softly sing a song with me
and hold me till I fall asleep

[Chorus]

take me far away
to the place i call my home sweet home
take me miles away
to the place where i can call my own

[Verse 3]

hide me in a place afar
with nothing but a little jar
that's full of dreams that I can keep
safe from dangers in the deep

[Chorus]

take me far away
to the place i call my home sweet home
take me miles away
to the place where i can call my own

[Instrumental]

[Verse 4]

shut the door and close the blinds
come with me and help me find
remind me home is where i stand
step by step among the sand

[Chorus]

take me far away
to the place i call my home sweet home
take me miles away
to the place where i can call my own

[Outro]

to a place i know i belong

Jar of Dreams

Response Piece By Dael Kim



Perspective and Point of View

By Dael Kim



Here I Am

Response Piece By Julia Jun

[verse 1]

she takes a step
into the sea
she looks into
the reflection she sees

[pre-chorus]

here i am, she says
am i here? she asks

[instrumental]

[chorus]

where is my north and where is my south
where is the path im blinded right now

im split into two
what do i do

[verse 2]

she takes a step
into the clouds
she paints a storm
and cries aloud

[pre-chorus]

here i am, she says
am i here? she hesitates

[instrumental]

[chorus]

where is my up and where is my down
where is my soul i need it right now

im lost in my home
where do i go

[verse 3]

i took a step
Into the sea
i heard a voice
it said to me

[chorus]

this is your north and this is your south
this is the way come walk on it now
and this is your up and this is your down
this is your heart breath in with me now

[outro]

am i here? she hesitates
here i am, He says

Initial Piece By Gloria Kim



A Tribute to the Sky

Response Piece By Riley Phillips

Words were never enough,

From black to blue, and orange to pink.

You wrote me letters in color instead of ink.

With ribbons of red and gold,

You braided my hair to reflect your own face.

Weaving together each strand as if it were lace.

On some days,

You'd watched me watch you.

And perspective came with every shade of blue.

My thoughts were childlike

As they climbed the cloud castles you built.

And at night I'd curl up beneath your starry quilt.

So thank you, Sky.

For letting me explore the vastness of you.

My heart is forever eager to take in your view.

Love

Initial Piece By Riley Phillips

I If my Grandfather were a bird,
He has forgotten how to sing
His very own tune lost to the sound of his own
disheveled wing.

And if my Grandfather is a bird,
Then my Grandmother is everything else.

When he is hungry,
She is the sustenance that keeps him nourished.
Only her words allow him to flourish.

When he is tired,
She is every woven branch of his nest.
Reminding him that in her is where he finds his
rest.

When he is lost,
She is true north
Guiding his every step forth.

She is the wind in his wispy hair,
And the determination in his wings every flap.
Holding him together, closing every gap.

Because if my Grandfather were a bird
He would not recognize her.
To him, she is only a blur.

She loves a forgetful bird,
Who doesn't remember loving her anymore
Others may view her as poor.

But she still loves my grandfather,
because to her he is no bother.

If I were a bird,
Then I am migrating without direction
Lost in my own reflection.

Because if I am a bird,
Then God is everything else.

When I'm hungry,
He fills me up with his very essence
Quenching my thirst with his presence.

And when I am tired,
He is the only branch I see
Ready for me to seek solace in his tree.

When I am lost,
He is the wind
Lifting me above all my sins.

He is the pigment in my feathers,
And the strength behind my song.
Holding me together, as if I've done no wrong.

Because if I were a bird,
I wouldn't recognize Him
And his healing of me from within.

He loves a restless bird,
Whose heart likes to wander
Taking everything he's given to squander

But still He loves me,
He told me so as I sat in his tree.

Response Piece By Gloria Kim



Initial Piece by Jia Yi Lim



Response Piece by Laviynia Akashi

There is a saying for you and for me.
Life is large, like a willow tree.
Three words to live upon,
Life goes on.

Branches you can't reach,
Your heart aches for each.
Five stages but you haven't even started
On a journey you haven't yet departed.

Why do you weep with such woe?
The daylight breaks, your heart should
glow.

Tears fall, feeding the tree,
Like this, you'll never be set free.

Get up, please,
Life's goal is not to appease.
To think this is the end, all it will be,
That's just misinterpreted reality.
Yet you sob, dirt on your knees,
Not caring about your voice in the breeze.

You sneak out when everybody is asleep,
To think under the tree and weep.
You don't want to care,
So you cut up your long hair

Maybe it's done,
The ache in your chest, there's none.
Yet you sit under the willows,
All damp with tears are your pillows.
So you replace those,
It'll help, you suppose.

It's going to be okay soon,
You think so too, watching the tree under
the moon.
They tell you you'll be fine,

All it takes is a sign.

You think they're right,
Sitting alone in the middle of the night.
But nothing has changed
No matter how many things you've
rearranged.

In the end, there is nothing you can do
It is something only time can tell you
So you sit under the willow tree,
The occasional cry, or three.

The branches touch you now,
Low branches, the tree is endowed.
You remember each one,
Each branch a journey begun.
Five stages, you're almost done,
The tree still sits under the sun.

Except you are no longer there,
But you have watered it with enough care.
It is enough.
You are enough.

Three words to live upon,
Life goes on.

Green, like the leaves on the branches, symbolizes nature, fertility, and life. It also represents balance, learning, growth, and harmony. Our image of the willow tree represents the strength, stability, and structure of the trunk, standing firm and withstanding the greatest of challenges.

Smiley Faces, Yellow Hearts

Initial Piece By Laviynia Akashi

Don't quite know how many pieces it's got,
She can try to fit, but she seems to not.
This puzzle, you, him and her,
Where she fits, it's kind of a blur.

There's not supposed to be an extra piece,
You see, everyone fits! Not a single crease.
So what is she, if not an edge piece,
It's okay, maybe a centrepiece?

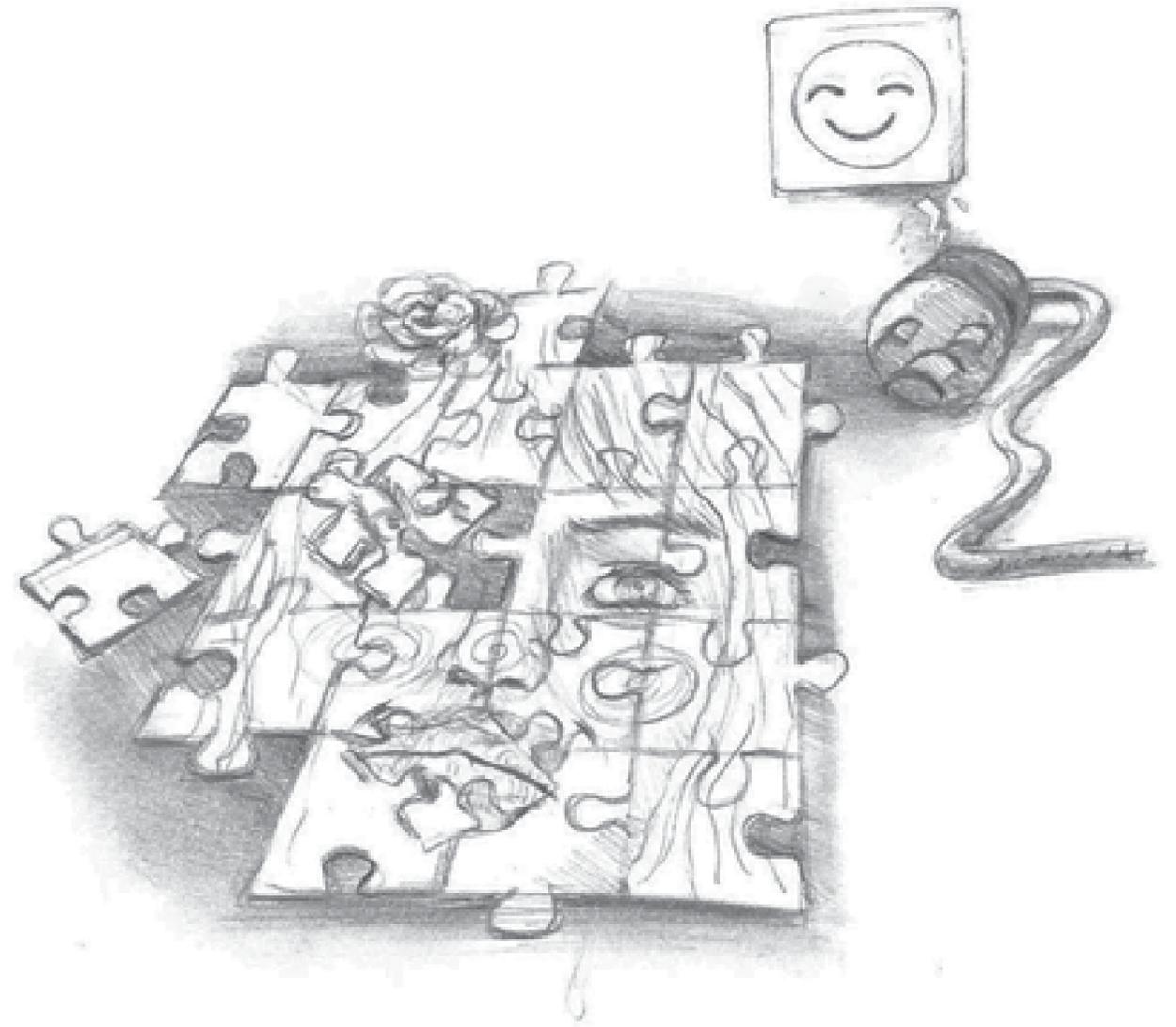
She turns left, right, up, down,
It's no use, all she does is frown.
Lips curved,
Eyes upturned,
Her eyes are so wide,
They can't even tell that she lied.

Everybody links their hands and feet,
Looking from above it's so perfectly neat.
There's no difference, no matter who she meets,
She's just an outsider, somebody to greet.

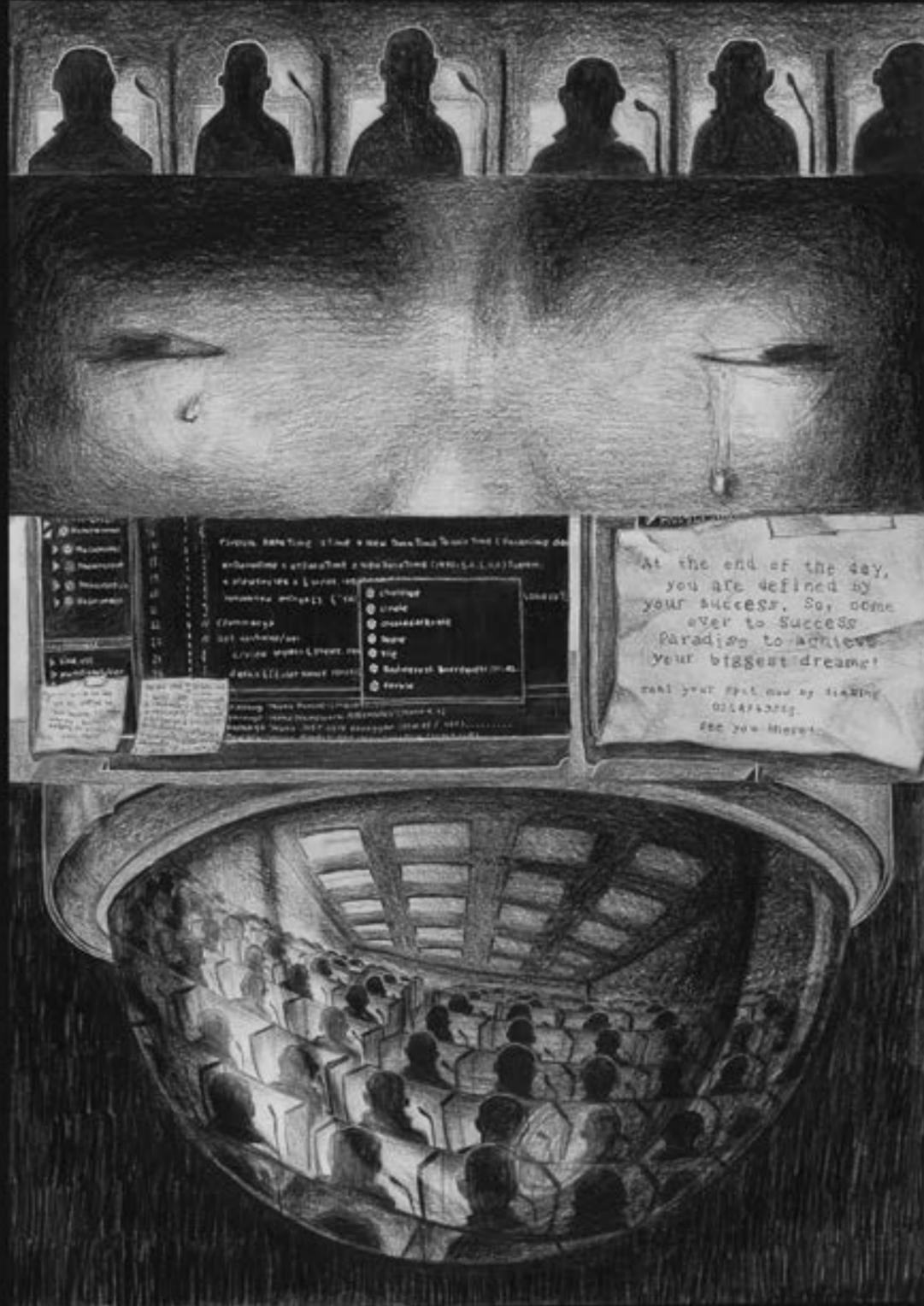
She thinks she's dramatic,
Everyone says she's just erratic.
Like wifi, she tries to connect,
It's worthless, her words disconnect.
They say reach out, and she does too! Yellow hearts for you.
But red hearts are nasty, they just turn her blue.

A square edge in a round piece puzzle,
It's almost like she has on a muzzle.
It's okay though because she can still see,
She doesn't have to talk, don't you agree?
Smiley faces. Yellow hearts.
Let's just pretend she has some spare parts.

Response Piece By Jia Yi Lim



Initial Piece By Grace Moon



Response Piece By Joseph Chandra



They say when you grow older
You ought to have a dream
So when I was young
I told them my dream was
To become a
race car driver
mountain climber
firefighter
policeman
An as unrealistic as it sounds
It was my first time
Imagining what could be
What I could be

In elementary school
I wanted to be a mechanical engineer
And invent crazy machines
And I wanted to be an environmentalist
And save the endangered animals of the world
If dreams like helium
could fill balloons
I would've floated away like
Dandelion fluff
On a breezy, summer day

In middle school
I wanted to be someone else
Because I thought
I wasn't enough for friends
To love me
I wanted to be
Funnier
Livelier
Stupider
Stronger
Attractive-er
I wanted so badly to be
Special
And my dream was
For old me
To disappear

In high school
I wanted to know
What my dream was
Because every conversation I had
With an adult
Was a constant reminder
That I needed to have my life planned out
Every square inch of my future
Filled with expectations
And ambition
Because I'm becoming an adult
And that's what adults do
So I desperately wanted to know
Why I was such a failure

In senior year
I wanted to see my friends
And go ride cars at 1AM
And run to beaches
to watch the sun set
Instead of spending
My last two months of high school
In my bedroom
Pretending I still gave a damn
About school and my life

In senior year
My dream
Was to graduate
And walk across an illuminated stage
In front of the whole school
And for one, shining moment in time
Be the most important thing
In the room
I wanted to look into the crowd
And see the proud look in my parent's eyes
And think to myself
This is what I worked for
This is worth it
Maybe it's selfish
But I don't care

Perhaps
This is a testament that
Dreams don't always come true

That in a single wave
Our sandcastle of hopes and desires
Aspirations and goals
dreams
Can be swept away without remorse
Into the tumultuous, emotionless
Sea of life
And that dreams
Like humans
Are made to be broken

Or perhaps
It's a reminder
That no matter how high we build
Our sandcastles
No matter how sturdy or beautiful they are
If or when they crumble
We ought to never stop dreaming
Because the moment we stop dreaming
Is the moment that we
Start to biologically exist
Without truly living;
It's the moment that the
bitterness of our crushed dreams
Begin to crush those of people
Who still dare
To hope

Because I don't want to grow up
And sit at my desk
During my nine-to-five job
And stare at my pinboard
Of pretty lies and lost dreams
Or catch myself gazing at my reflection
On my dimly lit computer monitor
And remember a time when I
Had the tenacity to dream
Of becoming a
Race car driver
Mountain climber
Firefighter
Policeman

Education (f)or Life

Initial Piece By Joseph Chandra

From the eternal sea of ephemeral elementary
The whining whim of western supplementary

That is

The purposeful pruning of our personal penitentiary
The delicate doors that dictate our port of entry

Education

Education for life

From a young age, we were taught that we were defined by a single letter

That we could never amount to more than a two or a four-digit number

We were fed the lie that everything that we can, could, and ever will be belongs to education's
fettters.

We were told that happiness was chained to our achievements

As if a 1600 would finally complete us

As if somehow an A in that class would mend the torn edges of our broken and empty lives

We were given expectations before we were given love

Books before hugs

Graphs before bugs

Notes before trucks

And to this day they have the audacity to say: grow up

Because maybe we didn't grow up

That even though we learned our SAT's right after our ABC's

Our STD's after our 123's

Our "you owe me" after our "please, mommy's"

We are the product of a system that tells us a square peg should fit into a round hole

The paradox that you must try and try to be creative

But you must never cross this line

What box? The one that has no outside I guess

They say you are not alone

Just a little lonely

That you're at home

Even if it's only

For the 12 years of

Education for Life

But that isn't the end is it

no

Because you are more than the sum of your classes

Because you are more than just a face in the masses

Because you had the strength to believe that maybe you could

We are the burning stars that illuminate the night sky

From the ashes a blazing phoenix flying high

We thought, we could, and so we did

Because together we rose above our past

Because together we decided we would not be bound by their lies and twisted words

Because together we found that "us" begins with you

So don't you ever let them call you stupid

Because you aren't

And if you think you're the sum of your grades

Then add again

And If you can't find anyone who cares for you

Then Look Longer

And if you hate what you see in the mirror

Then Break it

It's not a mirror; it's a lie

And when they hit you down

Pull yourself up

And When they tear you into pieces

Glue yourself together

And when they think they've won

Prove them wrong

They don't know you

You are the best part of someone's day

You give someone a reason to say

Maybe I can do it

Maybe I am worth it

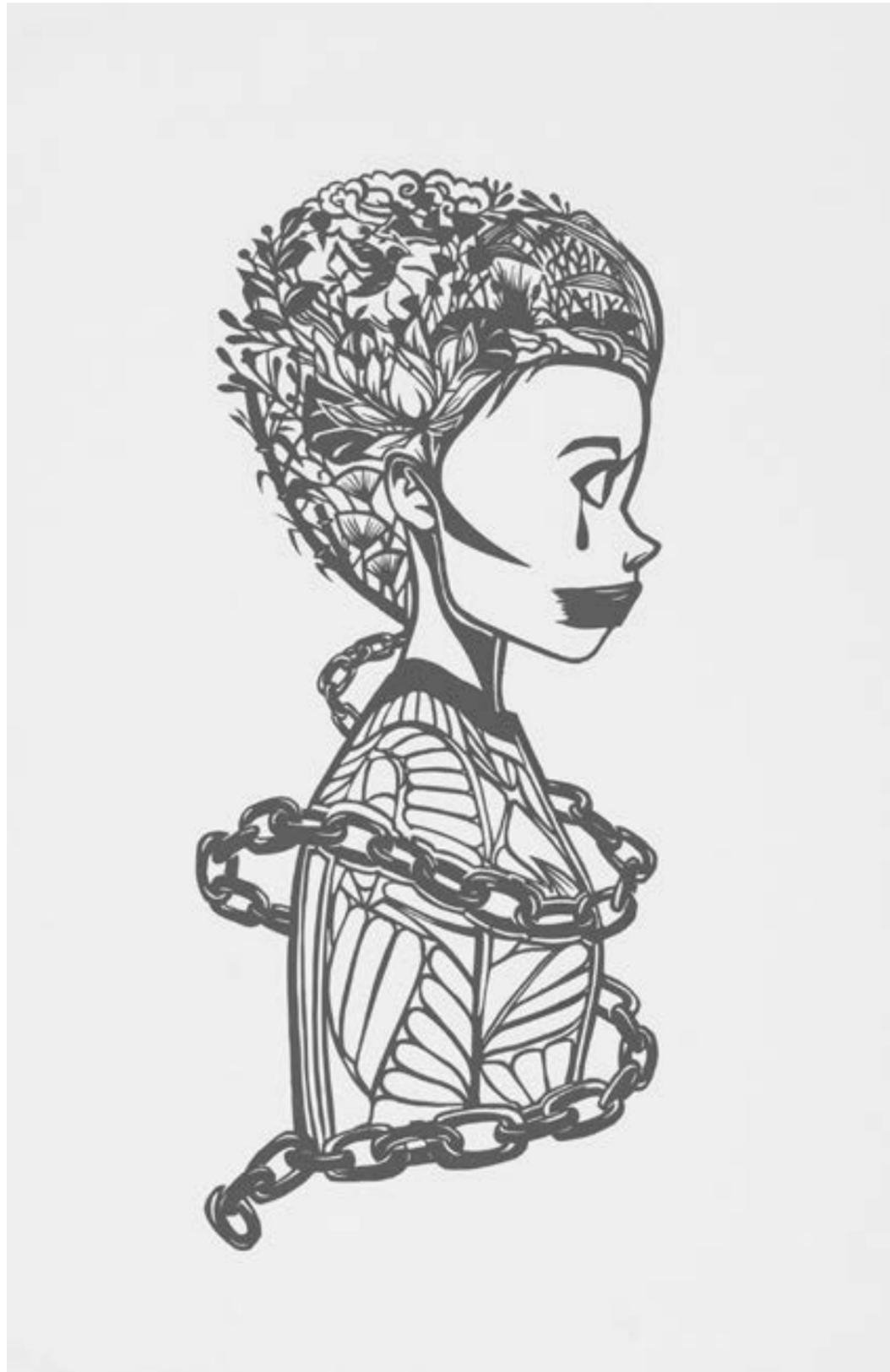
Please remember. You are more than what they label you

You have a chance to become brand new

Because your life to them

Is not your life to you

Response Piece By Grace Moon



A Golden Cage

Initial Piece By Corinne Fraley

She remembered when she was younger, she had once gone to the edge of her beloved home to watch the stars one cloudless night. This was back when her papa had just died, the first night Uncle Paul had come to live with her. They had met each other that midmorning and had spent most of the day in awkward silence with each other- unsure how the other would act. That night she had decided that she needed air from the stiff atmosphere inside the house. She had pulled the black book out and marveled at her father's art. They were the stuff of dreams, space pirates, battles of the fiercest degree, moon lit ladies with their snow-white complexions somewhat like her own. She remembered her father quietly exiting at dusk and creeping through the door early in the morning. More times than she should have, she stayed up to watch his little lantern light, like a gentle firefly, gliding across the dark horizon until it faded from her view. He had constantly told her that the night was the best time to paint. He enchanted her- recounting how he would watch God as he lit a match and a flame to each candle till the whole sky was lit. Often her father studied the stars the night and inspired, created by that rusted lantern light beautiful pieces of art. He had promised to take her one day. A promise that had been left unkept.

She felt as though now she needed to go. She was filled with a strong desire to witness what her father had. To see the beauty that God had made for her father to see. In her simple white nightgown, softly clinging to the lantern illuminating her bedroom, she had slipped on her father's old boots and tied them firmly so that they didn't knock against her delicate legs. She kept her lantern close to the ground watching for any pot holes. The red paint had not quite drained from the sky, but she didn't wish to push her chances. If she were to break her leg or ankle, a common occurrence, then she would be stuck, trapped, alone in a desolate, pitch, lightless expanse during the cold night. As the sky locked away the last of its color till morning she could watch the candles slowly beginning to light. She wobbled cautiously over the last hill; one she knew to be near the edge. She spied a tiny light, dimmer than a star in the distance. A burst of energy struck the young girl and she skipped towards it.

She neared, wandering to the edge of the edge where a single lamp post light flickered warning between the end of the ground and the infant black void. She set her lantern down on the grass and put her hand on the steadfast iron light, holding it like in a warm embrace. Her eyes widen at the billions of stars that had appeared with all shades of white, blue and purple. Their fire blazed in memorizing comforting light. The gentle wind swept around her blowing her skirt, billowing white wings ready to take flight across the star struck sky- softly blowing out her lantern's candle. Her dark hair was surrounded in halo by the sweet gaslight that luminated her in the darkness. Her feet along with the ground faded into the darkness so that it seemed she was stepping on air into the vast universe. The beauty overwhelmed her making the young girl smile and cry and feel that if she kept going she would touch the jewel embroidered sky. Her soul was in euphoria and her body a feather in air.

Emmie stayed there for what must have been several hours before she heard a voice cry out her name in the distance. It sounded strong and sure, papa's voice. She turned from the dazzling display for an instant to look behind her. She saw the faded flicker of an old familiar flame. It was the picture of her father walking out into the night to experience the nocturne of the sky. The air hummed a soothing melody as the man grew closer running towards her, the precious glow growing as it came. The man sailed towards her, leaping with flying bounds, like a fairy from one of her father's paintings. He approached relieved and Emmie could see that he was not her father. She looked back to the waltzing stars dancing in a glowing symphony.

Her young uncle stood with his lantern breathing heavily behind her. He stood watching her, silenced by the night's presence. She felt him nimbly come beside her. He was humming softly, with the lullaby that the stars sung. The moon gently mirrored over his face. He gently placed his dying lantern next to hers on the ground and held fast to the lamp post, watching the grace and spender. The young man and the little girl stood anchored together in the sea of black.

Emmie remember facing him and him facing her. She realized then that he was still just a young boy. Only seventeen, a boy like she was a girl. They smiled at each other in that gas light and waited till each of the candles were blown out at dawn, when the music ended sweetly by the birds, to walk home together.

She's Dreaming

Response Piece By Daye Jung



A Choice

Initial Piece By Daye Jung



A Golden Cage

Response Piece By Corinne Fraley

“Come, come, look at the bird! Isn’t it so beautiful? Don’t frown, Soon-jung.” Mother scolded as a little girl squished up her face as if she were a tiny mouse with her little plush pink nose smelling some unpleasant odor. “Isn’t the peacock pretty?”

Soon-Jung’s lips puckered. The bird was indeed exquisite. The avian prince’s elegant long neck, drenched in deep cerulean, gracefully surveyed its adoring admirers who cooed and awed in wonder of his majesty. The deep velvety blue melted into a lavish green robe, jeweled with the delicate design of his feathers like a thousand sapphires lacing his long train. On the peak of his head lay the envy of all corona. Plumes like a king’s fan adorned the bird’s hallowed crown signaling his position as the envy of all winged things. The crowd around him fawned and gasped in adoration, commenting on his radiance and question how the zoo could have found such a beautiful bird. They were all enchanted. The zookeepers must have also been hypnotized because his cage was unlike the dull grey iron cages with the red flakes of rust creeping in a disease. No, his cage glimmered, coated in a paint that feigned gold- a refined, magnificent home for the zoo’s prince. None of the other animals, not tiger, not camels nor the apes with their grinning mouths, had as fine a cage as the peacock.

“The peacock can’t fly,” Soon-jung voiced quietly then turning to Mother, “Eomma, why is he locked up if he can’t fly?”

“Perhaps he would run away,” Mother consoled her, “Or to keep dogs from attacking him.”

Soon-jung considered. That explanation didn’t quite pacify her.

“But Eomma, he doesn’t walk so fast,” The peacock was far too proud. He only strutted- slowly and gracefully, flaunting his beauty. “And the zoo has no dogs inside the walls. He can’t fly away Eomma, why can’t he walk around with us?”

“Hush Soon-jung,” Mother sighed, tired of her youngest’s questions. Stroking her hair soothingly Mother hummed, “There is a reason, young one, I’m sure. Just enjoy the beauty of the bird and hush dear.”

She listened to her Mother, but the pitying perplexing gaze stayed firmly on the colored bird. It was true that he seemed content in his golden palace, but surely it had some desire to stretch its wings, even if only for a moment. Her siblings, antsy and becoming bored with the fantastic fowl, scampered over towards the cherry blossom trees. The pink petals melted off the cool branches blanketing the ground in a soft pink snow that the children laughed and tossed into the air with glee while parents sat, looking on, smiling. All followed suit, except the youngest; she sat beside Mother thinking. She thought about the bird long after Mother had brought her home from zoo. Lying in bed while her siblings dreamed of fierce tigers, dancing cherry blossoms, and a laughing ape, Soon-jung only remembered a golden cage.

Yong-gi admired himself in the murky ripples of a brown puddle, deeper than average thanks to a blast that had broken the soil during the attack. His new uniform, dull green and only slightly dusty from the conflict, rested handsomely on his torso, so he thought himself very dignified. His fellow men buzzed around him, some escorting enemy prisoners, mostly Korean like themselves. They were bloodied and ragged, some streaming red with many battered blues. The colors flashed

before him reminding him proudly of his country's flag. One of his first true battles in which he had fought bravely, unflinchingly facing the enemy. He again peered at his uniform in the pool. They had triumphed! Another soldier, a young man only slightly older than he, marched up to him signaling to him that they were moving out. The insignia stitched surgically onto his uniform indicated his prestigious rank as well as caught the admiration of the soldiers and their fearful respect.

"Seoul is not yet fully ours! Come!" He called to Yong-gi admonishingly. Yong-gi hastened into motion following after his fellow soldier.

"But sir," Yong-gi countered respectfully, "We have pushed the Communists back and our forces have reconquered most all the city and surrounding country, the last battle—"

"The last battle is finished." The man intoned sternly silencing Yong-gi. With Yong-gi hushed, the man gazed absently at the smoldering rubble surrounding them as it stared back bitterly at the men complicit in its ruined visage. Seoul had been scorched and it demanded retribution, but it would not gain any from the men standing there now. The ranked man surveyed the young soldier amidst the atmosphere of vengeance. The city screamed, talking above its cries and focusing on his task. The young soldier was deaf to the dissent. "You fought bravely for the Republic; I have heard whispers from your fellows about how you killed more Communists than the rest of your squad combined. Is this true?"

"Yes sir." Yong-gi answered promptly. The rank man huffed and nodded. The smoke was stinging his eyes more than he would like.

"The ROK needs more men like yourself," the ranked man huffed sipping from a flask indecorously. Yong-gi watched him anxiously. Yet, a sliver of pride ran down his spine— a superior had noticed him! The ranked man forgot his admirer in the drink for a moment then popped the lid back on hastily on as he remembered why he had begun talking to this soldier.

"There are still leftist sympathizers within the city— crawled out from the north months ago, the Americans worry about them. You'll lead a small band to find such people as to eliminate any threat to this victory." The ranked man commanded, emphasizing sympathizers with disgust. "Inform me of your team before leaving and report once you return."

"Yes sir," Yong-gi bowed. Then he slowed his step as the ranked man nodded and left him, just as stern and uncaring as he had come. Yong-gi mused over his mission and the particular details of his fellow soldiers came to a broken slender piece of glass laying against a sagging hanok. He halted in spite of himself and again investigated his military apparel. It was really a good fitting uniform, it suited him well. He walked towards the makeshift barracks, wondering what it would look like with a metal on it.

Mother's breath hung heavy on Soon-jung's ears. It doused some of the gunfire shots but the little girl could still feel a flicker from the booms that accompanied the harsh, raspy shouts of ROK soldiers. Mother held her youngest whilst she shooed her other children out the door of their hanok as wood shredded behind them. Soon-jung's eyes became blinded by a flurry of rushing air and spice of gunpowder attacking her. She pressed her face into Mother's frayed black jeogori, smudging ash onto her sweet cheeks. All of her Mother's outfit was coated in dirty ash, perfectly ruined by the mucky soot— it couldn't ever be washed out.

Suddenly Mother jolted forward and Soon-jung felt the ground slam unmercifully against her back and head. She screamed out crying in pain as her Mother fell, crushing Soon-jung's tiny body with her embrace. Soon-jung squirmed beneath Mother, suffocating— both because of the sobs from contact with the pavement and because of the lack of air. Pulling her way out from underneath her,

She came up beside Mother, sitting up painfully and sniffing.

"Eomma," she wailed. "That hurt, Eomma."

Mother didn't reply. Soon-jung sobbing stilled to a whimpering pulling at Mother's chima. No one else was there but the woman and the child.

"Eomma," the child whispered. Nothing. Petals of deep red lay growing on Mother's back while the little girl quieted. She sat for a long time by Mother's slowly cooling body.

Yong-gi stepped gingerly past the corpse of the lion; its once golden hairs browning as death took its toll. Though the lion had been dead for a few days at least, Yong-gi still had a suspended sense of uneasy around it— as if it was only sleeping and was lying in wait to pounce on him. Shaking his head, he emptied it of the superstition. His men searched the zoo through the cages, looking for leftist sympathizers that might be seeking refuge there. Yong-gi felt an odd, uncomfortable churning in his stomach since the mission had begun. Not when he had gotten it of course, he had celebrated his stroke of good fortune then... It was meeting the "leftist" primarily men, women and children who all had a certain— he couldn't quite place it. Still, the work was getting done.

It was impressive how far she wandered. Sitting with her mother till the lonely dark of early morning, she then picked herself up on her wobbly legs and walked. A child, no more than six, trudged through the broken streets. She had no reference concerning where to go, yet some force must have drawn her because soon she stepped past charred shadows of cherry blossoms. Turning her nervous eyes toward the charcoal limbs, some image sparked in her tiny mind, and she ran, determined.

The prince sat unruffled, somehow. None had laid their grimy hands on him or his gold aviary— perhaps their prudent splendor had memorized the soldiers as well. Soon-jung cautiously approached, creeping softly as she would on the kitchen floor seeking food at midnight. The bird lay alert and yet dignified, strangely calm— the little girl stopped a moment and puzzled over his state. The pebble-like eye crested round in white observed her, very similar to her mother overseeing her sibling's chores, whilst she climbed up to the cage. Slowly, one step at a time... When her tiny body reached the cages, she paused to study him. Despite the circumstance around him had so changed, yet he lay unaffected; he in turn curiously noticed the same about the creature in front of him. The girl and the bird watched one another.

Firearms rattling away in the near distance, breaking the spell between them if only for a moment— a drop of water in a quiet room signaling the end of frozen eternity. The little girl gently rose and circled the cage, attempting to find a latch or door. The cage remained the same as the day she came with her mother, no speck of war had left its fingerprint on it. She reached around the back where an open-door slot, just big enough for the peacock to exit, greeted her. Her nose wrinkled confused. The cage was just as she remembered it, she was absolutely certain, then how could the door not be there when— Then occurred to her that from the front the bars lined in sync to create a mirage where the door did not exist. The cage had always been open. He had never been hindered in his freedom. Though, he hadn't taken it either, maybe he had never lived beyond his own home. Perhaps he was nervous. She could help him.

"Do you not know how to walk on the ground outside?" Soon-jung asked softly, "I can show you, if you don't know how— I don't have any shoes anymore either." She assured him. She coaxed and pleaded a little more. Then in response— so not to seem unlearned perhaps— the peacock cocked his head at her extending a foot. It wavered over the barriers hesitantly undecided.

“You’re almost out!” Soon-jung whispered. He was dangling from the practice for a moment. The action faltered and the leg receded safely into the cage under his feathers. Soon-jung’s eyes widened and she understood. He had been free once and never intended to be again.

Yong-gi heard a sound like a butterfly’s breath close to him and his fellow soldier. He readied his gun, steadying his finger to the trigger. His friend, wishing to please him, imitated the action but with the slightest shiver in his hand.

“Stand ready,” Yong-gi commanded squinting through the darkness. His voice now held power and it filled him with excitement. Knowing what it meant to hold and control men by his will thrilled his young mind and hunger crept through his soul. His appetite of dominion began shaping and twisting with his men’s obedience- their respect and reverence for him. It intoxicated him just a bit, like his uniform. Then something seemed to penetrate through the darkness and Yong-gi held up a hand of caution. Flaunting itself in uncertain fire light from various unextinguished shrubs or trash cans, rested a large beautiful metallic cage. Peering beyond the bars Yong-gi made out a creature- somewhat large though not enough to be concerned for their safety, with large forms that he recognized to be wings. Even in dusky light, the bird had a noble air to it, untouchable, and yet lonely. As the sprigs of lights spat from the flames he saw gold hints around the frames surrounding the lovely creature.

Something hidden in the shadows moved briskly next to it producing a frightened squeak. Rapidly Yong-gi slammed his trigger firing two shots into the darkness.

“Who’s there?” he yelled fiercely. His panicked subordinate’s uncertain finger slipped, and a stray bullet spat out of the muzzle kissing hard metal with a sharp shriek. The two armed men stood poised in silence, the sound struck them dumb. Nothing moved.

Yong-gi slowly lowered his gun, assuredly pulling his flashlight from his belt to investigate. The streak of intrusive light flashed along the bars, gliding smoothly along the sleek cape of the bird- peacock, he discovered. The light bumped against the splotch of brown from the bullet had ricocheted off the aureate paint. It then shined across the avian’s face. Unbeknownst to the proud bird, his palace saved his life. The black pitted eyes reflected in Yong-gi’s own and then the bird turned its gaze down to the ground. The blaring light followed the gaze onto a small figure.

A little girl lay curled on the ground. At first glance Yong-gi thought she resembled a drowned rat. Her face stained with wet marks and scrapes of her clothing patchwork all along her body. A red puddle swelled around her, blanketing the pavement she lay on. Then the light traveled down her tiny frame. Her hair frayed and matted in wild directions parting for a glimpse of her serene face. Her delicate eyes rested closed facing the cloudy sky with veiled stars and her face had a thoughtful air, like she was musing through mysteries of the world.

She looked so innocent. They all had- the thought bashed into him like a sledgehammer. A sudden violent desire to cry overwhelmed him. Yong-gi wanted to take the girl into his arms and rock her gently, maybe if he asked her what she was dreaming about she would wake up and give him her wisdom. The soldier beside him licked his lips nervously as Yong-gi stared at the girl.

“Sir, we eliminated the enemy?” The statement came more as a question. It chilled Yong-gi as he now must make an answer. What if he wept before he said something? Certainly, it would make him seem weak even disloyal, crying over a leftist’s enemy. The soldier might report him, stripping him of everything he had worked for. Bringing him to shame. Then a colder possibility pierced him. What if they thought his actions treasonous? The thought of the shame and disgrace placed over his head made him feel an aching burden weighing on his back. His father’s disappointed eyes, the mocking, all his power washed away on a tear drop. But like a siren, the child’s quiet repose

reminded him of his guilt and his pain.

What to do, his time for silence was slowly draining away. His eye flashed around helplessly stumbling into the peacock’s. Fear met fear, locking each other’s eyes, Yong-gi slowly calmed and recomposed himself. He felt an intimate bond with the creature, and he felt the peacock understood. The peacock knew what he himself knew and the animal nodded like a wise sage. The meaning was clear and the actions became simple. He spoke the words of a soldier.

“We should have interrogated her first,” he grunted, and the two men walked away from the quiet little girl under a moonless sky.

When Yong-gi received the medal for his service in the war against the Communists, many of the other soldiers insisted that despite the color it couldn’t be gold. Yong-gi was inclined to agree. Too many were given too generously, but it still sat well on his uniform. He confirmed this once with the privacy of his own mirror. The final touch. Of course, he reasoned, this wouldn’t be the first he concluded. Plenty more space for any others that came along. Yet, still he shivered slightly as he stood looking at it.

He suddenly touched the metal convulsively, plucking it from his breast and rubbing it in his hands. An image appeared in his mind of a child wearing a beautiful hanbok dressed by the feathers of a beautiful colored peacock only for it all to become smeared in red leaving nothing but a thought. He shuddered and considered momentarily whether to shove the metal into his dresser drawer and never touch it again. His feet impulsively made a step towards the dresser then dutifully slid back. There was only a slight moment of hesitation squeezing the metal once angrily. Then he smiled sadly, then coldly, placing the metal back on his uniform and standing at attention towards the mirror. He looked handsome in gold.

Other Creative Works

In the rest of this collection features works from all the other members of the senior class of 2020. Please enjoy!



By Jireh Ang

As cringy as it may sound, this picture to me symbolizes the present and future. In the bottom part of the photo the tree is jagged and covered by moss. I sometimes feel like this is how life is. We get confused with what is going on and are covered by stress and struggle that we deal with. But I believe that although the future is blurry, just like the upper part of the tree. God has a plan for us, He wants us to push through the tough times we go through and trust that He is leading us. As Galatians 6:7 says, "You reap what you sow."



By Sheryl Ang

This collage reminds me of Dalat and home. I wanted to do a visual arts piece that summarized the good times I have had here, and I chose to do a collage of pictures because I felt like it was the best reminder for me. Focusing on significant people and events in my life, I tried to incorporate memorable pictures into the background, which is a picture I took while I was on a road trip with my family. I really enjoy graphic design, so this piece was exciting to put together as I looked back at my pictures and realized how much I have lived through. There will be a time where these memories will not have the weight they have over me now; for example, my middle school memories that already feel so distant, but I believe that no matter how far back they are, they will always be an unforgettable part of my journey to becoming me.

Drawing Flowers

By Christina Beaman

All day long she sat and drew
Pain and suffering, something she knew

Each held a story
Some dreadful and gory

Flowers for hours—hunger devours
She chose to stay there, drawing her flowers

Flowers covering the slits on her wrists
Inner pain flamed, as she tried to cover her shame

Flowers through the troublesome years
Flowers wet from all her tears

She didn't know what to say
So picking up the pen was her way

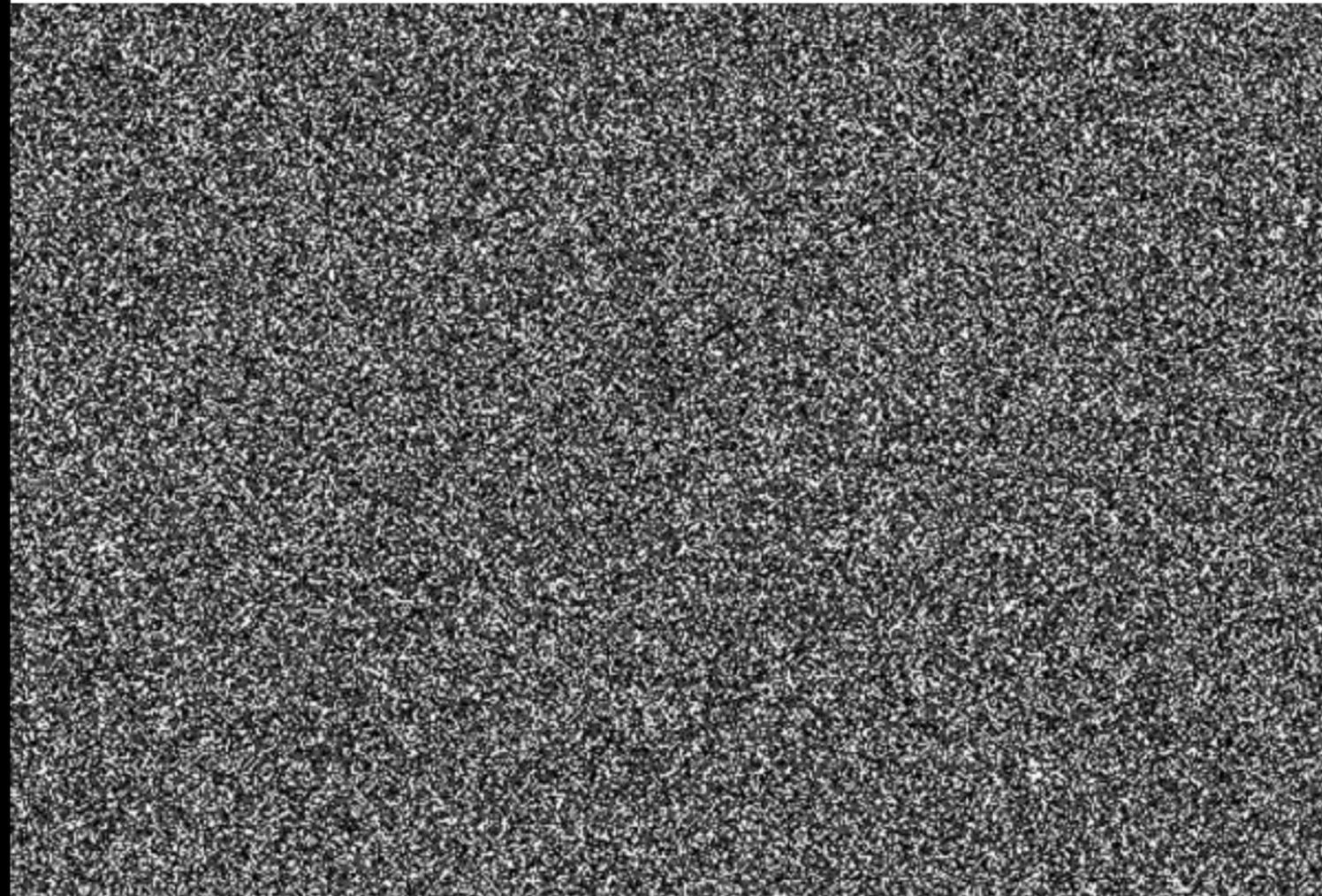
Flowers til she lay in her grave—they never could save the day
If only she knew that words were the way.

Metacognitive: This poem is about a girl struggling with mental health, and personal problems and choosing not to own up to them and get help. Instead, she chooses to bury her problems and cope with them through her own method—doodling Flowers. Thankfully, Dalat is an environment where vulnerability is highly encouraged and viewed as a strength, but this may not be the case in other places. In society, a lot of people can choose to fix their problems on their own without talking to other people who can help them out. The girl in this poem could have sought help with her issues, but she chose to keep them in and live a life of misery. We are all blessed to be a part of a positive community that encourages mentorship and deep relationships so that you don't have to walk through your problems alone. As you leave this community and walk into a new stage of life, don't forget those disciplines. Seek those people who will help you through tough times and be open, honest, and real with them.

The Hidden Meaning

By Ryan Bernhardt

This autostereogram shows that life isn't always as it appears and is a testament to how sometimes we need to go deeper to find truth and reality. It's a perfect example as a medium to convey my life, as most people may never take the time to stop and truly understand you beneath the surface; invisible to all except those who really care and try. We were never meant to only know each other superficially. The 3D image hidden within also sums up my experience at Dalat and reveals what I think defines my personality to so many people.



Life Lessons From the Class of 2020

By Jordan Chang

During our senior year, we were constantly reminded of the impact and influence that we as a class had on our school, but I realized that our greatest influence is on ourselves. Throughout the year, I had the privilege to interact with our “unique” class, and it is with both joy and sadness that I will recall some of what I had learned, good and bad, from you guys, the one and only, class of 2020.

With every mundane school day comes specific situations that produce profound lessons. In A block, I applauded Wesley’s courage in battling the ever-wise Dobson. Every morning, Diligent Dobson brings amusement in the form of boredom, and Wesley has taught me that disagreements may arise in life, even with someone as great as the divine Dobson, and that we must stand strong in our opinions.

In B block, Calculus, I witnessed the breaking of stereotypes that gave me an answer to why Philip needed help in math. Georgia showed us all that proficiency in math had no correlation to ethnicity, and that is something that I believe Philip should use to defend his inadequacies.

In C block, I was blessed to be a part of the “Journ Fam,” a family that had such high expectations they were higher than my mom’s. With deadlines looming every day, Celestine taught me the importance of organizing and scheduling. She taught me these life-changing concepts while being stuck in the Journ room during the last day of school as she struggled to finish her spread on time.

In D block, I had Biology with the juniors, the future seniors of Dalat. It is through these interactions that I realized that 2020 may be the end of an era, an era where the word “useless” could not be applied to an entire class. Their dependencies on Gloria for notes and study guides showed their absolute trust and need for her, even though she has a streak of being dishonest, academically speaking.

Lunch time was a time for bonding, for friendships to form beyond the restrictions of classes. It is also a time where our individualism showed, as with the case of new student Seongjin. With ingenuity that I had never seen before, he confidently handed the guard a temporary ID card slip and walked out for lunch. Times like these taught me how much you can achieve with confidence, despite the stupidity of the action itself.

F block was a study hall again for me, and it was during this time that I learned the unfairness of life. Lizzy confidently boasted her immunity to library rules, often bringing both food and drinks inside while waving at the librarian. I, on the other hand, was subject to harsh scrutiny, often getting called out for having a small pack of candy. On the upside, sometimes Patrick would generously bring me food.

G block provided the time for silent yet opinionated people to shine. I realized the importance of being informed through Jun’s mesmerizing comments that often left me dumbfounded. In order to act smart, we must at least know the basics, just enough to speak slowly and get cut off by Mr. Kilgo before saying anything relevant, a skill that will be key to my future success.

H block reminded me that we should never leave a friend behind. Onyu, with his past knowledge of macroeconomics, still could not understand the basics of microeconomics. Instead of laughing

and teasing everytime he got something wrong, I learned that we should give him the motivation and support needed for him to study more... by laughing and teasing him everytime he got something wrong.

Furthermore, the influence of our class was not limited to school hours or required school classes. Ji Yun and Yerin taught me the art of PC, the highly exclusive concept of pin chasing. For most, senior year meant that it was too late; but for them, senior year was the time for a final push, so that their plaques wouldn’t be empty.

Tien Min taught me how to foster trust between people, all the while being late to every meeting and hangout planned. By being consistently late, we could trust that he would never be on time, strengthening the bond and lowering future expectations; a true win-win situation.

Jerald taught me that friendship extends beyond hanging out and having fun. For almost 10 years of knowing him, he has tolerated my constant sarcasm and jokes, with no apparent reason to. Our friendship has withstood everything... I just hope the flowergram I sent him for Valentine’s day from “Aimee” wouldn’t change anything.

These were only some of the countless lessons that our class had taught me throughout my years in Dalat. Despite the jokes and bad humor, I really value the time that we spent together. In all honesty, the class of 2020 as a whole has affected me beyond what I can describe. Every day, no matter the situation, I have been shaped and influenced by each and every one of you, and I will never forget the impact that you guys, the class of 2020, had on me. Thank you!

Stan Lee

By Emily Chew

Thank you, Mr. Lee
For helping us to see
There's more in your universes
Than we could ever be

Your imagination
Was without limitation

The heroes you gave us
They did save us

You started with a dream
Then it turned into a team
They are called the Avengers
And they'll always be remembered



View of God

By Jae Cho

I took this photo when I was on the plane back to Penang from the Philippines where the boys' basketball ACSC was held this year. I woke up to a beam of sunlight shining onto my face. I was not too happy with myself as I tore my ligament in my ankle right before the playoff game. But as I hurt myself and watched my teammates play on the court, I could support them mentally and emotionally as they went up and down the basketball court. When I took this photo, I realized how great God was and how he could bless all of us with all these different talents that makes us special from one another. God also provided me with this amazing view which helped me calm my mind and I could pray for a good 5-10 minutes.

[Photo on previous page]

Manifest Destiny

By Wesley DeLaughter

The expansion of the American territories, supposedly blessed by God, brought forth the United States of America as we know it. My own family, known at that time as the De Lattre, quite possibly took part in this expansion west. There was an idea that became a rallying point for America. It was known as Manifest Destiny, the ideology held during this massive expansion of territory, and it had three basic ideas within itself: the idea that the American people and their institutions were blessed to succeed, the mission to redeem and retake the West was paramount, and that expansion was essential to take part in to fulfill the destiny that waited for America. These ideas can represent another mission, one with a similar basis yet a very different result. The mission finds itself in Matthew 28:19-20. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The call to missions has been active in my family for a long time; my name provides a symbol for that call to action.

The name Wesley roughly translates into "the one who goes west," which is the direction America set out towards in their expansion. Selfish desires laid the foundation for Manifest Destiny, but the ideas it championed are valuable to use as a comparison to the call to missions. The mission given to us in Matthew calls us to make disciples of all nations; God blesses this mission as he supports us in our pursuit, this mission is meant to redeem and retake the hearts of those who have wandered, and this mission is essential to take part in at some level as a command of God. We are to go out, knowing that God is with us through every step of the way. "The one who goes West," in biblical terms, is one who seeks out God and his promises. following the same command that has called out the rest of my family is the perfect way to live that out. I may be unable to go out to the lost and evangelize at this point, but there is one thing I can do—I can seek out those who struggle, those who need help and guide them back to God. My journey west for college will bring me to the same places taken by America during the expansion and Manifest Destiny. It will also allow me to be the one who goes West, fulfilling my namesake and obeying the command laid out for me.

Legend Killer

By Yuuki Horie

To the mentors around the globe, who have watched me,
to the trainers who have disciplined me.

You may recall, a young, Yuuki Valentino Horie.

Son of Shinya and Maki, a road runner and track pacer.

I have prepared to serve a true victory in Dalat athletics

For I will slay the name of David Sahlberg

A track-eater, no doubt, in his time of 65

Bounding, blinding, blasting, breaking the limits he is one of a kind.

Fear not, his 55 years of reign over the tracks of Dalat is soon to be over.

No more will I watch his behinds — it's my turn to spin and look behind.

Years of strenuous working and countless hours of agony,

A constant repetition of working out, throwing up, and enduring pain

Each toilsome step towards the ultimate goal of taking his name off the wall.

In places beyond, I have slain the beasts of the foreign with my slicing speed

Earning first in most of my races.

I have competed against a league of Spartans and troops of scouts in sprinting

All with the eventual outcome of victory.

Now, I lead a legion of athletes, young and old, to their next track feats

to erase another name off the board;

There is not a second to give up.

With the name of David gone, my name will replace the throne of 400 meters.

Many will not even reach close to the time of my sprints, and I shall

Reign over just as how David used to do.

My name will shine on the board with my time when I defeat David.

The king's assassin would gleam brightly in the sun,

Staring at other students to even dare to challenge the new time set by me.

Yet, after this feat, my world would become smaller with my goal out of the picture.

The hard work accomplished over the years would now be distant replays.

Perhaps a replays that someone in the future will repeat.

If that may happen, so be it.

Let them have a chance to break the record as I did.

I have another record to break at a place far away...

To Escape Myself

By Elizabeth Horton

It may sound scary, to be somewhere or do something completely new. But I'd argue that it's the best thing you could possibly do, to step out of your comfort zone and escape yourself.

Escaping the things that once defined you, sends you falling into freedom to do what you want to. School, sports, family, friends, put them behind you and what's left? Some would say nothing, some might say truth. I'd say when you escape yourself you find the real you.

Like a powerful star in the dark, all alone, pure in essence, and defined on its own. Life gets so crazy it becomes too hard; too hard to know the difference between what we do and who we are. So escape yourself, do something new! Only then will you discover if you've been the real you.

When life carries us away to different locations, it may seem like we are about to lose ourselves and our defining relations. But don't you worry because the good news is in. We are closer to finding ourselves than we've ever been!

As you go, keep in mind the person that you want to be. Those of you who don't know, have chosen a path that's very slippery. It's easy to listen to what the world says about finding love, wealth, and fame. So don't forget your past and the place from which you came.

Where love was found at the white tables and not at a bar.

Where fame was about including others and not being a star.

Where wealth was measured in friends and not fancy cars.

Where we love another because of who they are.

Dalat has taught us well the things that we should value, so as you escape yourself to find you, please take those values with you.

As we escape ourselves and live a new life, leave the fear, enemies, and restrictions behind. The ropes tying you down will be cut free, and you'll get to become whoever you want to be.

As we escape ourselves and start life anew, take the light, memories, and convictions with you. We have so much to lose, but so much more to gain, when we find who we are and step out of our frame.

To Show Love

By Mao Inoue



This is an apple tart I baked for Mother's Day. The most important reason why I chose to bake this was that I knew she liked, but also because I wanted to work hard for her. Unlike the cakes and desserts I usually bake, the tart was more complicated and time consuming: the crisp, for example, took almost a day since I had to repeat rolling and cooling in the refrigerator. It also contains two types of cream, custard cream, and almond cream. The language of rose, which I put in the middle, is love. Baking has been a way to communicate for me; I've tried to convey the message that I love her and that I am very thankful for all she does for me.

Learning to Grow

By Elise Johnson



I painted this piece in 9th and 10th grade. It took me 2 years to finish, partly because it was so detailed but also because I didn't work consistently on it. When I finally finished it, I was in a completely different place in my life than when I had started. I can look back on that time and remember some of the hardest days, where I turned to painting as something I could do mindlessly, and also some of the best days, when I danced to loud music and painted in my pajamas. It reminds me to be thankful for the process, the stages, easy and difficult, because they bring me to where I am and they make me more into the person I want to be. I can truly say that the past year has been amazing but has also brought me more pain than almost any other year. Being content with the place you are at is a huge step to becoming the person you want to be, but it is so important and ultimately changes the perspective that you have on life.

Success

By Ji Soo Kang

It's true.
Life may be tough
but the clock is ticking,
not waiting for you to catch up.
But wait.

Trust me.
The end exists.
Even though the tunnel seems
to be filled with endless darkness,
go on.

Promise,
that you won't leave.
Don't give up just yet 'cause,
even if no one is waiting,
I'll be.

One Bad Joke

By Inkyul Kim

The sun shone its succulent rays gently on his face, as genius struck the young boys mind. And as pen struck paper, that very genius was seeped into the ink to form words unbreakable and sentences unstoppable. Later in life these very words could be found in the Smithsonian to be presented to the gawking eyes of millions, as such beauty may never exist again in the world.

This is what I wanted my writing to sound like back in the day, when I just had my first tooth popped off (quite literally, it got hit by a rather excited piece of champagne cork). However, my writing was not like that in the slightest. The only reason one may have put it in a museum would be the same as when they displayed the movie *Cats* in theatres—to remind everyone of the crimes committed by humanity. But even though my writing was about as good as Michael Bay is at writing female characters, I did have one little trick up my sleeve, passion.

“If you can draw anything with enough guts, your ideas will come through.”

That was a phrase said by a random art person of no popular value that I constantly remind myself of. This same idea applied to my writing back then, and even now to some extent. If I could get my idea and personality across with my less than average grammar and my poorly structured paragraphs, then I had done my job. And let me tell you I had a lot of ideas back then, enough to fill at least three Nicholas Cage films. And if with all those ideas, a complete misuse of commas, and at least eight spelling mistakes a sentence, I was set with all the tools to construct the writing of way back when. And as ugly as it was, much like a terrible B movie that takes itself too seriously (so *Bee Movie*), it had its charm.

Although my writing back then may have been as charming as a middle schooler with a can of axe body spray poured on each of his limbs (so ridiculously charismatic), it still lacked something crucial. I would only find out what this crucial factor was during 6th Grade, where I had my first research paper of sorts. I have no clue what the research paper was about, because my memory is about as good as *Finding Nemo's Dory*, except she's on several recreational drugs. However, I do remember getting an A, and I also remember hating it. Focusing on the latter, I hated this particular paper, not because it was a drag to write but because it was boring. Reading through that paper gave my cranium the same sensation as hearing *Smash Mouth* played by a kazoo on repeat.

Understandably, you might be thinking to yourself, “Wait, since when was reading a research paper ever supposed to be an experience that one could describe as ‘fun?’”. Well, to me, all writing and reading should have some form of entertaining factor, no matter the topic. And so I partook in a marathon, testing what could and couldn't work to attribute to making my pieces entertaining. Research papers, that contained elements of suspense, depressing poetry, and at one point a non-fiction fiction piece (don't ask). And all was swell, and it seemed I had come to a point where I thought I found my groove in comedic undertones (I say undertones, but really it was about as subtle as getting hit with a truck). However, on a cold dreary day, a research paper lay sullen on my desk. There was a grade marked on it, 89/100.

What? I had done everything the rubric asked of me and had it proofread by a teacher for grammar mistakes. Just how could this be? Yet the paper still lay there, the blood red ink unmoving, spelling me demise through fraudulent numbering. I flipped the page to hide my shame, and a note was placed three quarters down that read, “Take out joke”. How could this be! How could they even suggest that I remove such a major component of my masterpiece! And as the world around me

lay still, the truth dawned upon me. Researchers are boring people that have no fun at all. They are losers, who read loser things.

“Fine!” I thought, “If they want boring, I’ll only give them the most sultry, pretentious, overly-long, MLA cited, boring pieces they’ll ever read. Then that’ll make them happy! And happy they were, for after this every research paper I graced my hands upon received fair grades, with points taken out for grammar (as usual). But life then was boring, and oh how I yearned for freedom. And as the days, weeks, months, and years passed, I was an older man, hardened mature. I no longer had voice cracks, but a manly man voice (I was of an attractive breed). And one day, when I was pumping weights in English (as you do), Mr. Hieber told us to fetch a book from the library, some boring writers book. I threw myself to the library, picking up a book that looked about as fun as watching paint dry. Jens, or as the common folk call him, Mr Hieber, read out the prelude with us in class.

“Another boring book for boring people I suppose,” I thought to myself, bracing myself for what was to come.

But then it happened, something that should have been impossible. A boring book about writing and grammar tips, cracking a joke, a very bad joke? How could this be? Was I being lied to? Or was my idea right? And as my head threw itself into circles, a voice in my subconscious whispered, “Do what you want, you self conscious prick”.

And that was it, that was all I needed.

One joke was all it took.

One bad joke, to make my writing fun again.

Melancholic

By Seongjin Kim

♩=90

Steinway Grand Piano

The musical score for "Melancholic" is written for a Steinway Grand Piano. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking of ♩=90. The score is divided into eight staves, with measure numbers 9, 13, 16, 20, 24, 27, 31, 34, and 38 indicated at the start of each staff. The music features a high-pitched, melancholic melody with a nostalgic feel, characterized by a series of ascending and descending lines, often with grace notes and slurs. The piece concludes with a final chord in the eighth staff.

“Melancholy” is a piece written for a piano (or a keyboard/synthesizer) that is capable of producing beautiful high-pitched melodies. Written in C-sharp major, this song is to be played very slowly, at around 90 (45) BPM tempo. The melodies produce melancholic vibes, and a nostalgic mood to the audience. Melodies are written intentionally in high-pitch to intensify the emotional and sentimental feeling.

Floating Along

By Wansuk Kunawaradisai

I want to grow into a life understanding that it is okay to be mixed up in the good and the bad. Sometimes—I might outrun the darkness, and I might end up entering the light. But other times—I may be too slow to realize, and I may end up getting swallowed into those dark clouds. The sky is full of these shades. I hope that I will find nothing else in them, except for the beauty in its process.

Life as a Volunteer

By Onyu Kwak

As other volunteers summoned us to the cafeteria, I despised my existence as a middle school student who was stuck listening to college students discussing the drama of college life. I had nothing in common with the other volunteers, I felt like a nonentity among them. As I struggled with loneliness in the organization, I tried to enter dialogues of sympathy and care with everyone around me. This dialogue helped me to recognize the encouragement that a community can provide.

My volunteering days did not begin easily, especially when I struggled to even hit the off button on the alarm clock. Thoughts of quitting and not showing up to the workplace frequently came to my mind. When I finally managed to somehow summon the energy to wake up and head towards the workplace, I arrived for duty with a smile on my face. Of course, this smile had everything to do with pleasing the manager and nothing to do with any enjoyment that I might have felt at the time. My duties included: organizing shelves, vacuuming, and wiping the floor. Going to work at nine in the morning offered me no joy whatsoever, especially since I felt like I had no one with whom I could share my feelings, dreams, and humor. I assumed that the college students would just look down upon me for having middle school concerns that had nothing to do with the realities of university campus life or anything in the long-term future.

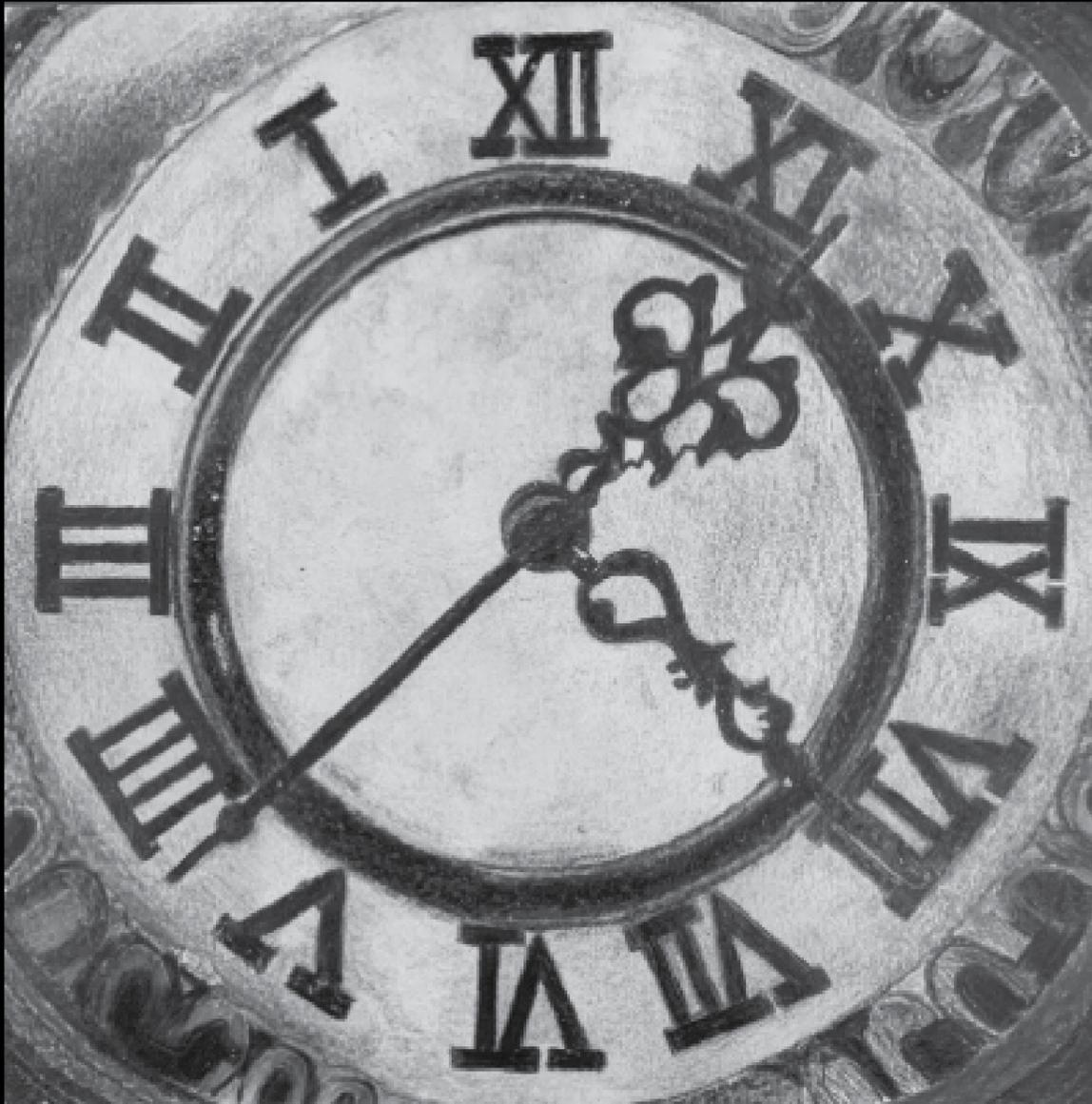
The dreariness of this existence continued uninterrupted for several weeks, but fortunately, fate intervened in the form of a manager who asked me to accompany him outside. In my listlessness, I did not want to abandon the air conditioning of my store, but I had no choice. During the walk outside the building, the manager told me about the nonprofit organization's purpose in encouraging people to donate used belongings that we would eventually sell. In my mind, I doubted that anyone would donate anything, particularly since I saw nothing but greed in the minds of everyone around me. To my astonishment, when we arrived at the metal receptacle for donations, I saw mountains of clothes, toys, and tableware. Like pigeon droppings falling from my eyes, my assumptions had yielded a testimony to the power of human generosity. I dared to wonder if the older volunteers did, in fact, share the same sense of generosity that the organization was founded on.

Of course, my epiphany on the generosity of university student volunteers did not suddenly put a rainbow in the clouds of my social world. Sitting in the cafeteria, I still did not know how to translate my insight into desire to reach out to others. Luckily, fate intervened in the form of a social hour in which the center's leaders put snacks in the middle of a cafeteria table. The directors expected us to gather around the table and think about ways of dividing this pile among ourselves. In the conversations that followed, discussions on who would receive cookie bags yielded words of encouragement. In these words, the co-volunteers and I discovered a sense of solidarity arising from the physical and mental fatigue that we shared. Revelations like this one helped me to recognize the fact that age did not have to isolate me from the other volunteers.

Although I started life as a volunteer with feelings of reluctance, I like to think that this experience taught me to more eagerly anticipate the friendship of others. The college student workers and I probably did not form the types of friendships that can last for a lifetime. On the other hand, I learned about how these undergraduates could empathize with anyone, even a middle school student like me. I know that I will continue to cherish this empathy and share it with my neighbors.

Jian Yi's Piece

By Jian Yi Lai



Lost time is never found again, though how I wish I could tune back the time to the first day of school in 6th grade. Seven years have flown by like a snap of a finger, and it is almost time to call it a day for my high school life at Dalat. Since inception, I have grown up day after day. The school has provided not only a platform but also a conducive environment for each and every one of us to pursue our knowledge and dreams. However, what I valued the most is the school life at Dalat for it has been precious, and the friendship I have developed thus far with schoolmates all over the world has been tremendous, learning their cultures, customs as well as religions. There were millions of memories being made, and words couldn't describe how thankful I am for those who take part in my life. Yet, I understand no one can call back yesterday, so I should make hay while the sun shines and treasure every single minute left in Dalat

Cat Rescue!

By Nicole Lai

Help me, oh help me!
I'm stuck in the trees
Help me, oh help me!
'Fore I catch sight of bees

It's scary, it's high
I'm frozen with fear
Come quick, come fast
I hear bees coming near

What's that loud sound?
No! The wind is blowing
Can't hold on no longer
My tears are now flowing

Help me, oh help me!
The trees are now swaying
Help me, oh help me!
I'd better start praying

Any human, any human,
Take pity on me
I'm just a little kitten
Where's your empathy?

Wait, is that a cat I see?
Is it me she's come to save
So I won't fall down
Straight into my grave?

There is hope! There is hope!
The cats have heard my plea
All of them from afar
Have come now to rescue me!

There is now none to fear,
My heart is now gladder,
My brothers and sisters
Have formed a cat ladder.

Sending love to all cats,
And this I will say,
If you want to be safe,
Do things the cat way.

The end!

The Meaning of Meaninglessness

By Jun Lee

All aspiring mothers pray to Mary
Once upon a time they prayed to Venus.
Now'days patients pray and pray for rem'dy
All in desp'rate wish for help from Jesus.

Think of why the gods would change their nicknames
Though they're ever same in terms of essence.
Fear of void has borne some hide and seek games
Priests would forge unfind'ble heav'nly presence.

All is vain as son of David sayeth
Brahmins shrug and call that basic knowledge.
Stop erecting statues that shall burneth
Else just live in self-inflicted bondage.

Now apologetists' time is over
Earth albeit does move without creator.

Last Degree

By Mary Lee

Ch- Ch- Ch- Chrrrr-
Skaaaa-
The stove has turned on,
But there is no instant reaction.
The big pot needs more time
To start making the bubbles.

Tick tock
Tick tock
Time is flying away,
But there still is not a single bubble
coming my way.

Whirring-
Is the sound of my brain
Considering a change in the fire's gain.

But I know that too much flame
Will burn it up,
And too little flame
Will never boil it up.

So I let the gas burn
For as long as it needs.
And I must get a spare tank,
In case it needs more gas.

Tick tock
Tick tock
Time is still flying,
And my patience is running thin.
But I know I mustn't stop.
I must trust the fire.

Let the last degree of heat
Work its last bit
Until a bubble pops in one corner,
Then the other,
And eventually,
All I see will be bubbles!

Just remember:
It's the last degree that starts the bubbles.

To Be Together

By Nicole Lee

To be together is hard
To meet strangers, to meet different people, at
different times,
Made me think, "Will I fit in? Will I be happy?"

I start to doubt myself
I lose faith, I lose hope
I come to think if I made a mistake, or what was
wrong with that person?
Why is fitting in so hard? What can I do to be
happy?

Slowly, through the process of finding,
I found myself,
I found love,
I found friends.

To be together is indeed hard
But without them, I feel empty
When I'm happy, sad, or want to be comforted,
They came to my mind to my surprise.

Those who were with me,
Are with me now as "us"
Which I feel so grateful for.

We begin to share small things and conversations,
Little moments can make us very happy,
We laughed, cried, and stressed together.
We experienced life together,
We became each other's support.

We had each others backs for 7 years now
And will still continue for the years coming.
Our unknown futures are awaiting us,
Alongside with our unknown fate.

Looking back
There are countless of things I regret.
But never have I ever,
Regret about the friendships
That I made
All these years.

Again this year, 2020,
We are together as graduation sets in.
I think this is what being together is like.

The Past and the Present

By Rebekah Lee

When we were young, we were so carefree
Roaming around in our pajamas, not worrying who would see
When the clock struck eight
It was too late
Our parents told us to go inside
But we would run away and hide

Now we are old
And no longer bold
Counting the years that went by
While looking up at the sky
I wish I could turn back time
I would pay a lot more than a dime

2020 Happened!

By Lee Zhi Yong

It's senior sneak! Crack! Thump! Wait... Are you telling me that the floor collapsed? The fences too?! What happened? The class of 2020 happened?! Have they begun to rebel since they don't want to go back to school? Will they be kicked out of the island? Where's Jun?! Stay tuned in the next episode of Drago-

Senior Sneak is a time when students – during their 4th year in high school – relax and escape from schoolwork, a time when “E” becomes cubed, and a time when new passions begin sparking. Descending onto the Sneak destination, the senior alpha males glimpsed at one another, acknowledged each other's motives, and began the “hunt” that is all so well-known during Sneak. While some failed their missions, others successfully caught their “prey.” Just as “E” became cubed, it sank onto everyone that Sneak is the perfect time to escape, encounter, and encourage – interpreting it however they understood it.

During this precious time as seniors, different groups in the class intertwined ever so slightly and finally unites as one – working together, playing together, laughing together. It is, in these moments, when relationships truly prosper and grow stronger – a period when besties become “feisties.” Furthermore, friendships were created and deepened through splendors and by falling down a cliff with a single heart remaining. While some of these memories will stay for the rest of our lives, others will simply be forgotten and unconsciously thrown into the abyss.

Most memories will soon be forgotten as we grow older and weaker. So which are the ones that we will always remember and look back at again? They are during the instants when a person puts in great efforts to achieve their goal or performs something so stupid that it lingers within everyone's minds. These events include the activities conducted as a class such as playing volleyball when the tide's low, singing “Oceans” for the 100th time, collapsing an entire floor of the lounge room, or dancing over the corpse of a dead rat (Duncan, you're a beautiful man). These exuberant yet ridiculous moments will linger in the seniors' minds as memories forever to be cherished.

Aside from those moments, certain people have also found their new, mysterious passions. Philip, the big baller Yeoh, discovered enlightenment after being introduced to the game of beach soccer. “I've been playing the wrong sport all along. Soccer is my sport!” declared Philip Yeoh with utmost confidence. Those games of beach soccer allowed the class to include even the people who are less athletic or less familiar with the game which created an unusual yet pleasing sense of unity.

Being a senior myself, no words could possibly explain how much I cherish these moments as this would be my final year to be with you – my friends – after an 8-year bumpy, yet joyous ride. As a small way of thanking my precious friends, I dedicate this short article of 500 words to the class of 2020 that happened. I love you guys <3

Friends

By Timothy Lin

A Thai boy with dark brown skin
A Korean boy who's known to sin
A Indian Girl that's full of grace
A Minnesotan Girl that you can't replace
A Indonesian boy who loves to shoot
A Malaysian boy who doesn't give a hoot
A Scottish girl with big round glass
A Texan girl with a lot of sass
A Canadian boy with soccer skills
A American boy that always spills
A Virginian girl with hair like fire
A Korean girl that I always admire
A Singaporean boy who always smiles
A Spanish boy who can run for miles
A American girl with light brown eyes
A Indonesian girl that's not too shy
Different countries that my friends are from
I hope I get to keep them for years to come



Roots

By Daniel Lim

I'll miss you all so much - let's never forget our roots and let's always remember one another. Being here for 12 years of my life, I've only learned to grow closer and closer to you guys, but never how to say goodbye. Whether or not you're dying to leave or wanting to stay, let's keep each other close nonetheless - you never really know what it's worth until you've lost it.

Love you guys!

Mental Strength at Dalat

By Luke Lindsey

Students at Dalat develop a strong mental toughness that is a crucial ingredient for their future.

Mental toughness is the ability to cope with or handle pressure or stress. It is the ability to persist when times are tough; a refusal to quit when all others give in. There's no better gift you can give yourself, then to develop a robust undefeatable mind. A strong mind leads to a strong life, a life that will throw you struggles and then are easily overcome.

The everyday mental struggle students face at Dalat can be overwhelming. However, we don't only develop mental strength in the classroom but the gym as well. Every day there are students in the weight room training. People go to the gym for what? A better physique? To perform better in a sport? Or to simply get stronger? It doesn't matter why you go to the gym, but if you want results, hard work and dedication is required.

You cannot grow without struggling and challenging yourself. I see these qualities in students every day, in the gym, and in the classroom. Strength and courage are qualities made from our pain and struggles. Many people take many difficult classes at Dalat, but despite the immense challenges they overcome it.

Jong Min Park states, "I find that with the multitude of things going on in my life - such as taking rigorous AP classes, applying to college, and pursuing my own goals in the weight room - maintaining mental toughness is a key component of seeing success in these areas. It's one thing to be able to endure through the struggles of achieving these goals, but it's another thing to continue challenging yourself to achieve more."

Like Jong Min said, developing mental toughness is key to being able to excel in life. Those who lack mental toughness will have difficulty facing the struggles of the future and possibly fall victim to them.

Therefore, push through your pain and fight now, for it will transform you into the person you need to be later.

The Separation of God and Man

By Duncan Magruder

How have you been changed through your interaction with a piece of visual or performing art, a work of literature, or a concept of math or science? (500-750)

In my high school apologetics class, my teacher's classroom was filled with many interesting vintage books, framed old bills, and small statues. But in contrast, the walls of his room seemed to be bland. On the right side of his classroom, he had two picture frames one hanging just a little bit higher than the other. The paintings were of two hands that did not seem significant if one had not seen the original, much larger piece. The two paintings were of the two most influential parts of Michelangelo's, "The Creation of Adam."

When I first saw it, I didn't think anything of it. I recognized it instantly but I just had the thought of, "Oh that's neat," and went on with my day. Every day I walked into class and saw it staring me right in the face. Sometimes I stared back, and other times I wouldn't even give it a glance. It wasn't until sometime later that I realized the significance of this art piece; to someone like Michelangelo, creating it was simple. To someone who gets a little better at drawing Homer Simpson every time he tries; my appreciation for the piece grew into deep respect.

Something that I find very interesting is the gap between the two hands. That gap is small compared to what is happening in the rest of the painting. But in reality, that gap is the biggest gap humans will ever have to face. Before seeing the hands split into two different picture frames, I had not even noticed the gap. There had to be a literal physical gap in order for me to notice. That gap is one I realized could only be filled with Jesus Christ dying for our sins. It is a gap that humans chose to create by our decisions in the Garden of Eden.

I was also struck by the very limp position of Adam's hand. And if one looks at the bigger picture, Adam's whole body is striking a relaxed pose. When I first realized this I got fairly unenthusiastic about the human race. Humans are being portrayed as Adam in this painting and if we are able to look at God straight in the face and hold out our hand saying, "Okay, I guess you can love me," kind of mentality, then I am confused about how God let us even live.

God was and is the part that brought it all home for me. After being in awe that the hand of Adam just hung there so pathetically limp, I decided to glance at the hand of God: full extension. God is reaching out to us as a child reaches for the cookie jar on the top shelf. He knows exactly what He wants and is willing to do anything to get it. After seeing this I realized not only how incredibly lazy humans are but also how intent God is on being with us. God wants nothing more than to be with us and all we can do is sit there. This art piece reminds me that we should strive to be with God just as He strives to be with us. That we should share the opportunity with all the nations.



The Chinese Dragon

By Ella Jade Magruder

The reason why I drew this picture was because of living in Malaysia and seeing some of the dragon creations on the temples, gave me the inspiration, also I just love drawing dragons in general.

Dragons can be strong, powerful, wise, monsters, yet have kind hearts and my black dragon, I wanted to represent myself as a beautiful creature. Like a dragon, I do have a kind heart, and also I love to add fun drama. I made the black on the dragon very dramatic so it would stand out more. Also, it gives that excitement and just that art beauty look, and I want my audience to feel like they have a strong will. Dragons can have strong determinations, and my dragon besides being beautiful and extremely bold, I want it to represent that people can be strong, wise, beautiful, etc. That is the purpose of drawing the Black Chinese Dragon.



Out of Sight, Out of Mind

By Letitia Ong

“You soon forget people or things that are no longer visible or present.”

Vastly obscure,
a tunnel of memory.
Woven into the maze
an endless loop to chase.
Some cling with hope,
denying the deceit
others slip by,
in the blink of an eye.
Knotted in tightly,
I keep them alive.

The Sky

By Jerald Ooi

1. At times my life is like an empty blue sky
2. Like a cloud drifting and wandering, believing I can fly
3. Hours spent pondering with so many thoughts transpiring
4. A beautiful spontaneity, no burden requiring.

5. A beautiful place that lasts only so long
6. Till raindrops form signaling a raucous swansong
7. Thunderclouds drive the pretty things underground
8. The weight of bad thoughts create a harsh, unforgiving sound
9. The pressures of life cave in on a daily basis
10. Negativity and hate break the perfect stasis

11. Then lightning comes in raw, unbridled glory
12. A streak of yellow and white blazing across the canvas
13. Each outburst of electricity tells its own story
14. A tale of anger; a tale of sadness.

Temptations

By Madaline Rude

I'm walking along the path surrounded by trees; I admire the beauty of it as I continue to my destination, it feels as if I had been walking forever when I hear the sound of rushing water and a person, seemingly out of nowhere, walks over.

Procrastination: Hello there. You look exhausted—how long have you been walking?

You: I've been walking for a while, but I don't feel tired.

Procrastination: You look parched. Why don't you follow me over here? I know this pretty little waterfall that has the freshest water.

You: I would, but evangelist told me to stay on the path and not stop along the way.

Procrastination: It's okay; it is only for a second, and you are thirsty, right? You will continue walking later; you have all the time in the world.

You: I guess you're right.

I follow procrastination to the waterfall and take a drink.

You: That was very refreshing, but now I must get back to the path

Procrastination: But would you look at how beautiful this place is? Why don't you sit and admire how peaceful it is? You can always continue on your journey later. Just lay here and rest, take it all in, fall asleep. You've walked so much you're probably exhausted.

You: You're right I can always continue later, but right after I need to get back.

I proceed to fall asleep to the sound of the rushing water, a few hours later, I jump awake, realizing that I have been resting for too long and need to continue walking. I jump up and start to leave when procrastination starts to talk.

Procrastination: Where are you heading? Stay here with me. This is more fun; you can get to that later. I found this bush full of delicious berries, eat with me; you have so much time, don't worry about getting back.

You: I really should get back.

Procrastination: Okay, okay, right after we eat, that won't be long, you haven't eaten—eat, and then you can go.

You: Okay, I am hungry but, as soon as we're done I have to get back.

After we finish eating I start to panic because I took such a long break and lost so much time, which only makes me want to stay and avoid the trip because it feels stressful now, it feels like there's such a long way to go and knowing I can't or shouldn't stop again if I am even able to get back. It causes me to curl up in a ball shaking panicking about how long it will take me to get there now, and I didn't listen to the evangelist, and now I'm caught in a vicious cycle. Then I come to my senses, I start to realize what procrastination is doing, and no matter how good her offers sound, I ignore them and find my way again.



CHENGDU

By Heemin Park

Everyone has a place where they can call their home. Chengdu is that place for me. Chengdu is a city located in the southwest part of China. This place—also known as the home of the pandas—is full of laughter day and night. With the population of over 11 million, the night is lit up with the luminous buildings and the chit chats of people. As it is the origin of Ma-la spices, hot pot, and Sichuan foods, visitors from all over the world come to enjoy the city. Spending the afternoon at a teahouse followed up with watching the Sichuan Opera performances at night entertains the tourists daily. As being one of the most modernized cities in China, the city bus and metro develop every day bringing great convenience. All these add up and make the city Chengdu.

This is my home, so where is yours?



High School's MVP

By Jong Min Park

As I look back at my high school life, thoughts of all the academics and extracurricular activities that filled my schedule pop into mind.
All the ink I spilled studying for AP classes and practicing SAT tests.
All the brainpower I used to try to impress Mrs. Chinn in Honors English 9 and admissions officers with creative essays.
All the Saturday mornings I gave up for JSB workdays.
All the hours I spent grinding service hours.
All the muscle fibers I repeatedly beat down to make gains in the weight room.

None of these achievements, however, come close to what truly shaped my high school life—the people. This collage portrays the people, from 9th to 12th grade, who've shaped me to be the person I am now. This collage is a reminder for me that no matter how messy life gets (like this collage), there is always room for people, and much like the way the pictures in this collage are all over the place, much of these pictures were taken in spontaneous, energetic moments—moments of joy. These people have carried me through the darkest of times, and while I'll never experience the same moments in these pictures again, the memories that last will never fail to bring me joy, for these people were the light of my high school life.



Hope

By Yerin Park

There are many times in our lives when we feel like we are placed in an abandoned desert, left with discouraged and bruised hearts as the only possession. This paper-cutting art piece represents the seed of hope overcoming the crisis and blooming into a beautiful flower that fumes out the sweet scents of hope to its surroundings. I created this artwork to show the incredible power of hope—especially in the moments of pain and despair—and encourage those who are living in the lonely desert this very minute. I hope that the flower in your desert will be watered with drops of hope from this art piece.

“And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

~1 Peter 5:10

Masks and Mardi Gras

By Hannah Peek

The sound of jazz, playing with an assortment of instruments, wafts through the air. Golden rays of sunshine flow through the paned windows. A mumble of a love song brings with it the rattle of the room service cart full of empty dishes as it passes by. I stroll lazily into the lobby and appreciate with a glance the French colonial style. Intricate crown molding frames navy and gold wallpaper full of old maps and pictures. A chipper voice greets me from the desk, "Good morning, Ms. Ava!"

"Good morning, Landon," I hear myself respond as I walk out into the narrow street. My nose and stomach drag me down the road to a bakery. I notice fresh beignets sprinkled with layers of sugar. The regular employees already have a coffee ready for me spiked with a sharp taste of cinnamon. With the warmth of the fresh beignet in my bag, I head off through the French Quarter. I avoid ladders and floats already covered in beads and masks. The city is buzzing unusually, setting up for the biggest night of the year, Mardi Gras.

I have always loved New Orleans, but it is at Mardi Gras that I am overwhelmed with the energy and uniqueness of 'The Big Easy.' I have lived outside of here all my life, and yet every year the number of visitors that Mardi Gras brings astounds me. I reciprocate the harbored thrill in the air. This is my first time in the city for the festival. I am aware that it is inconceivable for someone to grow up so near to the city and not come to celebrate its biggest day, but I was never allowed to, not because of the loud music or alcohol but because of superstition. My grandmother would tell everyone within her reach that the city was full of evil spirits that lurked behind masks, voodoo. While being one of the biggest tourist traps in the city, voodoo was a front, and the only thing that kept people on the edge of belief were the superstitions of people like my grandmother. She grew up in Haiti and was a mambo, a priestess of black magic and sorcery. Once my grandfather died, she decided to bring my mother to the only place she knew would accept her, New Orleans. My mother is a professor. She, being the hard-headed person that she is, demands full respect for my grandmothers' mumblings. According to grandmother, spirits and demons of the past lurked around every corner. Any encouragement of these spirits would be disobedient, Mardi Gras was off-limits. The idea of sheer rebellion from their ways made my fascination grow. Secret projects and trips in my imagination had led me to this day. Being a guest in your own city, although an odd experience, is thrilling.

As morning passes and afternoon quickly shifts into gear, the music gets louder, and the streets begin to swell with life and other guests. Vibrant colors seem to pour out of every nook and cranny. Tourists pose with dancers in extravagant outfits covered entirely in sequins, feathers, and beads that reflect the sun. Parades march down every street with trumpets blaring. I force a gold mask that is too small onto my face and see the joy around me. I am aware of the people around me, and I know that they have faces, but I can't be sure. Everyone is wearing masks; the expressions and vibrancy of the masks portray that everyone is smiling, but all the expression of the real face is diminished to only the eyes. I glance around me and see hundreds of eyes. The laughter spills out of the faces, it did not need to be heard but seen in the scrunching and twinkling of their stare. People pass by the dozen as I take a moment to watch from an alcove. I made it.

My senses are overloaded by the life and beauty that surrounds me. Then out of the corner of my eye, I catch an oddity. My gaze meets the steady study of a young girl. She seems to be in a separate dimension than the world around her; I would have thought she had lost her family if not for the mask she wore. While she in herself is a sight to see, wearing all black, it is the mask that catches

my attention. It looks like an unfinished paper-mâché project. It has coal-black splotches tainting the cream base layer of paper. Her dark eyes envelop me as if connecting to my soul. Before I can ask her any questions, she starts to run, and soon I lose her in the horde of people. I push through, hardly bothered by the crowd. I don't know where the girl has gone, but I need to look at her again, to talk to her. I search the swarm around me but am confused by the masks that I see. Why can't people wear their faces? I walk up and down countless numbers of streets frantically at first. I need to find her. She looked at me as if she yearned for understanding and to tell her that she's alright. She was scared, and I could feel the fear creep over my skin and yet, I thought she smiled. I wander the streets until I look up and notice that I am back at my hotel. The call of sleep wins another battle, and I retire to my room. I wake up the next morning, and my first thought is the little girl.

I have lost her. I misplaced that little girl. She needed me when her grandmother threw her mask into the fire. The mask that I had worked so hard to make. The postcards and plans that I made were all bringing me back. I had forgotten myself, but she had brought me here to Mardi Gras.

The Choice

By Gabe Roberts

I was laying in bed, unimaginable pain coursing through me. Slowly, the feelings left my body, like I was drowning in the air. The heart monitor by my bed began to beep faster. Nurses rushed around my bed, but I was just confused. Why were they in a rush? Where were they going? Who was crying? I turned my head towards the sound and saw a figure, looking at me with deep regret and longing in their eyes. I didn't know who or what it was. I couldn't have told you if it was a boy or girl, or even human, but the last thing I saw was those eyes. My eyes closed, the breath left my lungs, and the sounds around me told me I had died before my brain entirely shut down.

Crying. The shuffling and rushing of feet on a cold linoleum floor. And the Beeeeeeeeep of the heart monitor. All of these sounds combined escorted me to death.

Then, I opened my eyes to the stinging rebuke of the wind, tears instantly springing to my eyes. My head was clear and suddenly, nothing hurt. I looked down and patted over the billowing and whipping hospital clothes. Once I had deduced that I was still myself, I looked around. I was standing on a fragment of a train platform, suspended in the sky. The surface was only a few paces wide in each direction, and realizing just how far I was up in the sky, my head began to spin. Feeling dizzy, I sat down on the platform, fearing I would fall off, and looked around at vast expanse of the sky. It was a tumultuous, grey expanse, with epic cloud formations drifting far, far away like gargantuan flocks of sheep.

Then, I heard it. A noise, far away, like someone calling to you from down the hall. My head instinctively turned, and I saw a train, gliding through the sky like a serpent of the air, approaching me on my tiny platform. Calling it a train was a bit of a stretch, however, as it may have started as a train, but various modifications and additions had transformed it into something vastly different. It had large, canvas sails branching out from every car that were fluttering and flapping in the stiff wind. The engine's boiler had been completely removed and was fitted with a crystal container that held various bottles and flasks of gasses and liquids, connected to each other by flexible metal coils. These coils extended from the engine area and went into the cabin. The train's wheels had long fallen off, and only the rusted metal axles remained to show where they had been.

But before I had entirely scrutinized the train, it ran alongside my little platform, rushing by in a deafening roar. I covered my head and curled up into a ball, trying to drown out the overpowering sound until it slowly, ever so slowly, stopped. I stood up, legs shaky, and looked at the train. The unimaginable length of the train stretched out over the sky, but the last car was in front of me, with a man in a suit and a train conductor's hat looking at me. He was old but strong, and he stepped down onto my little platform and looked at me. He smiled, but I couldn't do anything.

"You seem kind of young to be here," he remarked gently, "Ticket, please."

"I-I don't think I have one." I stammered. The man smiled gently at me.

"Look in your pocket, son." I dug around and pulled out a silver ticket that snapped in the wind. The man took it from me and examined it, punching it with a peculiar little device. "Departed at 4:00 sharp this afternoon," he said. Pulling out a pocket watch, he clicked his tongue. "4:06." He sighed, "Hope we haven't kept you waiting too long." He handed the ticket back to me and pulled me on board, and he told me that after a couple more stops he'd help me around. He pulled a rope, which I could only imagine led to the front of the engine, and we started moving, slowly, but then building up speed, twisting and curling through the sky.

Then, we began to slow down.

"Another passenger," the man informed me, noticing my confused look. Once we finally stopped, I saw a young girl standing alone on another tiny, floating platform, crying. She was clad in loose-fitting hospital clothes, just like me. The man's eyes went tender, and he pulled on his suit to straighten it. He went down and knelt next to the girl. She acted afraid. He told her something. She stopped crying.

"And do you have a ticket, young miss?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Look in your pockets." He told her. She dug around in her pockets but acted confused. "So you don't have a ticket! Well, that is very interesting. You now have a choice, young miss. You can get on the train, or you can go back."

"To my parents?" she whimpered, a glimmer of hope piercing those soft, brown eyes.

"Yes," he said, smiling, "You can go see them again. But you have to do something very brave. You'll need to step off the platform."

"But I'll fall!" she whimpered, tears welling up in her eyes again.

"Hush hush, no, you won't. You'll have to fall but you won't get hurt. Because living is a choice, and you have to be very brave to keep going. Are you going to go back?"

She nodded. He walked with her to the edge of the platform. She hugged him, then turned towards the sky below her and above her, and stepped off, plummeting towards the clouds. She punched a hole through one of them and I lost sight of her. The man turned around and stepped onto the train, pulling the rope and standing next to me. The train started moving and I watched as the tiny platform disappeared into the distance.

The Start of a Winning Journey

By Edward Seong

“Get yourselves together!” shouted Jae Cho, as the varsity boys’ basketball team warmed up for the upcoming game. Finally! It was the time that all the players and crowd had longed for. The varsity boys’ first game against Chung Ling Private!

“We are the king of the island so far, so we should continue this legacy,” Aaron Worten told the boys with pride. The boys stretched themselves in the workout room.

As coach Lee walked into the weight-room, he said, “Alright boys, we will do some stretching and core workout before the game.”

All of the boys were shocked and looked as if they were questioning his authority. But later on, the boys realized that he was joking. The boys, Coach Loustale, and Coach Lee gathered up for a short meeting before the warm-up. The meeting consisted mostly of how the play would work.

“Just have fun and play basketball,” said Coach Loustale.

They started warming up with lay-up lines, shooting lines, and working on their individual moves. One by one, group by group, the bleachers began to fill up with people. When the warm-up time finished, it was impossible to see the bleachers as it was filled with the home crowd. With the intensity and excitement spreading through the gym, the referee blew his whistle and marked the start of the game.

At first, it started as a close game with only a three-point gap. Nevertheless, the Dalat boys got more focused on the game, and they began to dominate. The boys gave everything they had, even leading up a twenty-point lead. The crowd went insane with every shot that was made, and the boys felt spirited and uplifted instantly. If it weren’t for the supportive home crowd, the boys would not have pulled this game off.

The game ended with a 20-point lead for Dalat. There were still so many things that need to be fixed, but the boys knew that this was just the start of their journey, and it would be a thrilling one.

Memories

By Ji Yun Shin

Memories are unforgettable
And some are regrettable
Good ones make a smile
And makes you think a while

It’s hard to erase memories
Especially when they’re full of miseries
Tried removing bitter memories
But will always be there for centuries

We never know how it turns out
And what comes about
But we need to remind
That all memories will live in our minds



:)

By Tien Min Tan

There comes the point where most of us find ourselves within a cycle of self-doubt and low self-esteem. Though I can't speak for everyone, I know the majority of us have struggled with the pain of having to keep most of our thoughts and troubles to ourselves. Sometimes, stuck without the ability to voice out whatever it may be, be it the unfairness of life, the liars and deceivers that cling like parasites, our issues, or just internal struggles, we become the very thing we despised. This piece, along with many other pieces I have made, speaks on behalf of my hardship and anger. Like the artist who once saw a clown in the mirror and his work a reflection of his worthlessness, we have the ability to change how we view ourselves, and in turn, how others view us, by simply looking in the mirror and understanding your self-worth. The opinions of others, your performance, your material value, the standards of this world, none of this will ever define any of you, and I hope that if nothing else, I leave you all with a better self-image of yourselves.

learned how to do nail art wandered in a sunflower garden hard work
 made fun of movies with friends ap psychology discovered good music began journaling road tripped
 watched movies with my family every sunday sense of longing took the sat
 learned how to drive emptiness fell in love with the beach struggled in algebra and physics fun
 fashion snuck into r rated movies lost my voice at karaoke made and sold milkshakes sleep deprivation
 pessimism sang in a mass choir kindness dreamt big body insecurities visited disneyland
 operated the junior class store ap microeconomics reunited with long lost friends made stupid decisions
 went on a mission trip tried out bangs embraced vulnerability ap english hurt
 walked the great wall of china went on a prescribed drug made friendship bracelets volunteered
 procrastinated study sessions at starbucks wrote songs played in the rain crammed before tests
 joined show choir unrequited love danced attended a concert social anxiety lost myself
 visited the maldives learned to appreciate my heritage found myself jealousy
 wanderlust learned how to bake **seven years** struggled with bad acne
 lost friendships emceed an event discovered my passion for music conducted a band
 stepped out of my comfort zone self-love established real friendships suicidal thoughts hope
 gratefulness performed in a musical maturing learned how to compose music experienced god
 ap music theory sadness wrote last minute essays had my first love bitterness loved beyond words
 joined drama traveled to korea with friends visited phi phi islands with the best class
 empathy randomly burst into song with friends individuality loneliness laughed until i cried
 self-control ap mandarin led worship delivered a ted talk cried with friends joy faked laughs
 anger happiness fear of missing out learned to board a plane alone went scuba diving
 success played in a jazz band envy traveled to bangkok with the best choir joined a volleyball team confidence saturday workdays
 went on crutches twice developed a love for food rock music phase learned to appreciate literature
 felt neglected and alone put my worth in the wrong places travelled with childhood friends
 boho bracelet phase had my heart broken visited singapore independence self-taught the ukulele
 shopped as a source of therapy curiosity learned the importance of solitude fell asleep in class
 binge watched movies learned to accept differences hopelessness learned about history
 excelsior learned valuable life lessons witnessed beautiful sunsets savored penang food
 understood the concept of home strengthened my faith the passing of my aunt
 learned to appreciate the beauty of nature cried over academics talked about god and spirituality with friends
 mastered cooking ramen jamming sessions in the car with friends went on an overnight train
 acsc honor choir at hong kong sprained my ankle three times impact trip at southwest thailand
 put on an awards show with my classmates

Seven Years

By Celestine Teoh

Seven years ago, my eleven-year-old self stepped into a new campus, blissfully ignorant but hopeful about what lay ahead. Seven years have passed, and the thought that I once believed that seven years would be a long time still marvels me. I am incapable of describing how big of an impact my time at Dalat has had on me, and I made this word collage in hopes that it would give you a piece of my heart. It encompasses some of my dearest experiences in Dalat, but more importantly, experiences that have ultimately molded me into who I am today.

I still reflect on my past mistakes. I still reminisce. I still revel in the memories now inaccessible. I still cry at how things will never again be the same. But I rejoice in all that has happened in the last seven years, both the good and bad.

Arranged Echo
Orchestra

Niki Tsumagari

Musical score for orchestra instruments including Flute, Oboe, B♭ Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, B♭ Trumpet, Horn in F, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, Xylophone, Cymbal, and Tubular Bells. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B♭). It includes a tempo marking of ♩ = 80. The score is divided into two systems, with measures 1-4 on the first system and measures 5-8 on the second system.

Arranged Echoes

By Niki Tsumagari

This is an arrangement I made of a segment of Bach's chorale, "Christ Lag in Todesbanden" for the final project in AP music theory class. I used the melody line of this chorale as a base and rewrote the other parts to create my own version of this piece. Completing this project and being able to hear the school band play it to my conducting was one of the biggest highlights of my high school career. Looking back at this sheet music, I will definitely be reminded of all the effort I put into school work, fun memories I made with family and friends, and how lucky I am to have what I have.

Musical score for vocal parts including Flute, Oboe, B♭ Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, B♭ Trumpet, Horn in F, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, Xylophone, Cymbal, and Tubular Bells. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B♭). It includes a tempo marking of ♩ = 80. The score is divided into two systems, with measures 1-4 on the first system and measures 5-8 on the second system.

Home

By Georgia White

I close my eyes and breathe in
The overwhelming scent of fish surrounds me
I open my eyes again and look around
There is a grey mist engulfing everything
I pull my sleeves down over my hands as to protect them from the cold
The wind is gentle yet strong, blowing my hair around my face
A smile flutters across my face like a butterfly in spring
I look to the ocean and in the distance I see a boat
It stands out like a light in a dark cave
The waves battering against its wooden sides
A black silhouette sitting near the edge with a pole in hands
Hoping for something to bite or even just nibble
I sit in the soft cool sand
Burying my toes into its depths, searching for warmth
I listen as a wave crashes on shore
I hear it roll back to the depth from which it came
The next wave comes, stronger than the last
I think to myself
This is home

Blood, Sweat, and Shuttle Runs

By Aaron Worten

As I was coming back from ACSC volleyball, sad from a heart breaking 15-13 loss to Faith in the third set, my mind suddenly switched gears, and I realized that basketball season is here.

With season 1 sports coming to an end, new faces and new talent started flooding in for the start of basketball season. There were 23 people on the list, before I even signed up. Students ranged from freshman to seniors who were all eagerly waiting for the chance to prove what they could do on the court.

The day of tryouts finally came, and many students were nervously waiting outside the gym. Then we all were called into the gym and started warming up. Kaden Keefer said, "I was nervous and didn't know what to expect, but as we started getting into the flow of things my mind cleared and I just played ball."

Many students young and old were all fighting for 12 open roster spots. We were then separated into 4 groups, and the first day of tryouts finally begun. The first day we did basic dribbling, footwork, rebounding, shooting, and passing drills. Than to end it off with a cherry on top, Coach Loustale shouted the dreaded word "Baseline!" We then ended it off with a down and back and some shuttle runs. We all went home, and that night the first cuts were made.

The next day as we headed back, the number of people was dwindled down to 20. After warming up, we started the practice with a passing drill. The coaches then wanted to see what we could do in a game situation, so we were separated into 4 teams of 5 and started scrimmaging. Watching them play, I saw all those guys working their butts off to make the team. They were hustling for every loose ball and fighting for every rebound. To end it off the Coach once again shouted "Baseline!" and many people were mentally preparing for sprints, but we just did a full court passing drill. Afterwards, we all headed home excited and nervous for that dreaded email that would come that night.

At home, my phone notifications were going off with people were anxious about whether they made the team or not. Many people refreshed their email page over and over again. The emails started to come out one by one which created even more suspense, and for the seniors, they wouldn't know till the next morning. After all the emails were sent out on who made it or not, a sense of relief came upon some people and excitement came for many people.

Onyu Kwak stated, "I was almost certain I didn't make the team. Waiting for the results to come out I was really nervous, but when I saw my name on the roster, I was flabbergasted, and I couldn't believe that I made it."

Jong Min Park also described tryouts through some wise words, "I couldn't feel my legs."

After everything was done, I learned an important lesson through tryouts. Whether you are going to make it or not, give it your all. That is what I saw on the court, and it made me really proud to see everyone compete.



A Reminiscent Muse

By Philip Yeoh

This piece involves a simple observational drawing of a Malaysian snack called Ice Gems. The artwork shows a man with gloves grabbing the Ice Gems out of a huge jar. Even though this may seem meaningless to some, this treat stirs up nostalgia within me of a time in my Malaysian childhood where I would look forward to enjoying traditional snacks with my family. I decided to use this warm set of colors to represent homeliness and my experience of holding my mum's hand excitedly entering the doors of these wooden-like stores.



Class of 2020