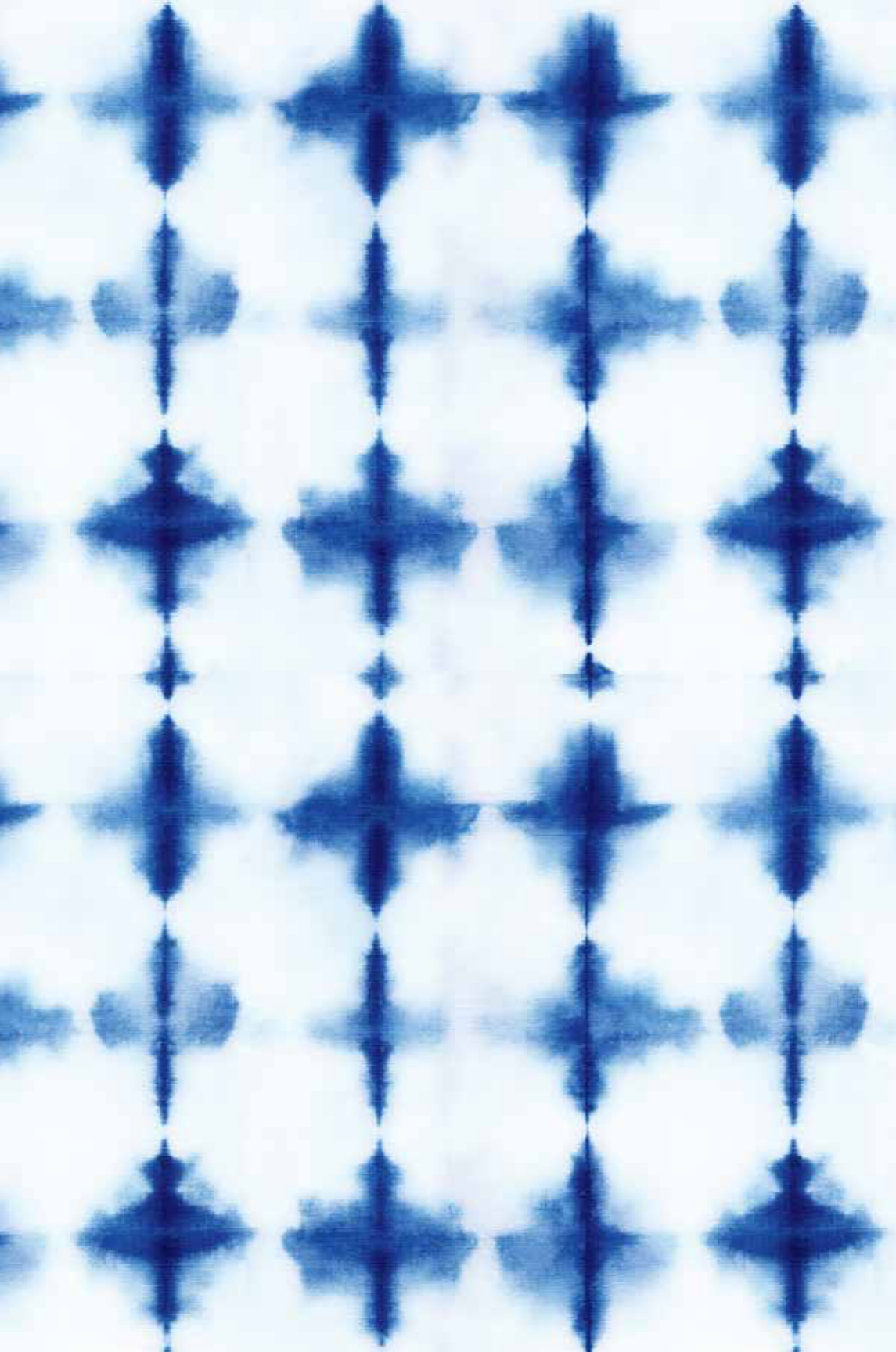




DePaul's
blue
B O O K

BEST
AMERICAN
HIGH SCHOOL
WRITING
2022

Edited By Chris Solís Green





DePaul's
blue
B O O K



DEPAUL
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



DEPAUL
publishing
institute

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Editors' Notes

AS A FORMER HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER, I know teenagers are capable of producing artful, amazing writing. And it's my honor to feature young writers from across the country in the inaugural issue of *DePaul's Blue Book: Best American High School Writing 2022*. It's fitting that such writers are acknowledged by DePaul, a university unique in its commitment to creative writing and journalism. Starting a national anthology from scratch is not easy! I'd first like to thank Rujuta Joshi for her brilliant work creating our website. I'd also like to acknowledge the hard work and talent of *The Blue Book's* editorial staff: Allie Dulabaum, Lillian Groth, Elias Ahumada, Kate Anderson, Richie Requena, and Lara Diaz. They canvassed the U.S., seeking submissions in both English and Spanish from thousands of high schools; they were also the first readers of all submitted work, culling choices from the many literary magazines, student newspapers, and individual submissions. Ultimately, *The Blue Book* is about celebrating the work of diverse young writers and acknowledging the diversity of their concerns. As editor, it's my pleasure to acknowledge these unique young voices and also to bring attention to DePaul University as a pre-eminent destination for serious students of writing.

Prof. Chris Solís Green, *Editor*

IN THE PAST YEAR, I have worked for and been a student of Professor Solís Green. Over that time, I have learned two things from him. First, you do not have to wait for permission to create (collections, anthologies, chapbooks, zines, newspapers, literary magazines, etc.); and second, if you want to be recognized as something, simply claim it. Although these seem obvious, in my experience, both are difficult to actualize. I hope through this anthology our *Blue Book* authors and finalists' will claim the identity of writer, poet, journalist, artist, or creative. The stories, poetry, articles, and art shared by these creatives show the beauty and hardship of youth. Thank you for choosing to create during the challenge of growing up. Best of luck to you all. Thank you, Professor Chris Solís Green, for this opportunity and your support. Being a part of *The Blue Book* has been the highlight of my senior year. Thank you to my fellow undergraduate editor and editorial assistant, Lillian. And lastly, thank you to my high school English teachers, Mrs. Whitmer, Mrs. Banwart, Mrs. Slawski, and Mrs. Zuniga.

Allie Dulabaum, *Undergraduate Associate Editor*

AS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT in college, being a young high school writer is not very distant in my mind. I remember how hungry I was for someone to read and give feedback on my "next best American novel" (at least, that's what I thought my quality of writing was at the time!) I would have loved having an opportunity like *DePaul's Blue Book*, and this is what drew me to work on the project in the first place. I so enjoyed

reading all the submitted pieces and seeing the varying degrees of creativity within young people around the country. Their writing does what all good writing does: expresses, challenges, uplifts, and makes us think. I feel fortunate to have been part of a project that allowed so many young voices to be heard, and to have been surrounded by the fabulous and hardworking *Blue Book* team who all were inspired by these students. I thank every school, counselor, teacher, or head of department who felt inspired to submit something to *DePaul's Blue Book: Best American High School Writing 2022*. And to all those students, writing is a relationship filled with times of both love and hatred, but remember to keep trying, continue to be inspired by the world around you, and never stop writing and reading. Someday you'll be working on an anthology of high school students' writing in college realizing how far you've come!


Lillian Groth, *Undergraduate Associate Editor*

I AM A FIRST-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT at DePaul in the Writing and Publishing program. I have a degree in Multimedia Photojournalism from Columbia College Chicago and a background in teaching in elementary, middle, and high schools in Los Angeles and Chicago. I truly enjoyed working on *DePaul's Blue Book: Best American High School Writing 2022*. I had the honor of reading hundreds of pieces by some of the best high school writers. I would like to thank all the writers that shared their work with us, and I hope that they continue to write. I also want to thank the wonderful staff that I worked with.

Elias C. Ahumada, *Graduate Literary Editor*

AS A GRADUATE STUDENT in DePaul's Masters of Writing and Publishing program, I was thrilled to join the *Blue Book* editorial team as an editor. I read hundreds of submissions this past winter, and narrowing them down to the featured students in this issue certainly wasn't easy. To all of our submitters: you all certainly didn't make my job easy and I thank you for it. Each piece was a testament to the dedication and talent of America's young writers and artists. I am proud to lend my time and skills to celebrating the work of the next generation of great writers and I hope that this platform encourages them to continue to celebrate what makes them unique. Seeing today's young voices embrace their creativity is inspiring, and I hope that this inaugural edition of *DePaul's Blue Book* will continue to inspire young people to pursue art in all its forms. I would like to thank Chris, the *Blue Book* editorial staff, and all of our submitters for this wonderful journey. And to all our accepted students and finalists, thank you for sharing your amazing art with us all and congratulations on your inclusion in *DePaul's Blue Book: Best American High School Writing 2022!*

Kate Anderson, *Graduate Literary Editor*



Journalism is fundamental to truth telling and elevating stories within communities. I spent four years of my undergraduate journalism studies learning about the importance of journalism writing and its impact on society. As the Graduate Journalism Editor for *The Blue Book*, it was a pleasure to read pieces from passionate high school journalism students across the U.S. I appreciated their in-depth research, willingness to interview a variety of sources, and choice of story topics that were not only important to them, but our society as well. It is crucial for high school students to learn about journalism, and I commend each student for submitting and sharing their work with us. At *The Blue Book*, we celebrate and acknowledge your dedication to the journalism field.

Lara Diaz, *Graduate Journalism Editor*

We're Vomiting at the Bowling Alley

and I am nostalgic and sad. My friends ate oysters in a landlocked state and I am passing around a bottle of Tums and thinking about you. Someone scores a strike and says something about a pearl. I'm wearing the necklace we bought together and thumbing the rose quartz pendant. I'm trying to figure out if God is in here somewhere. You always asked me if God was hiding in public places. I wonder if he's behind the pins, or inside the ball return machine, changing our scores. I'm told I won and I don't know what that means. Really, I just want to be in love again. I've never been to Gambier, Ohio, but I think I might go if it means I can forget the sound of your voice for a little bit. Mitski cries over the speaker, a glass of Coke is knocked over. I hold someone's hair back and a glass of water, like you did after we drank too much champagne on New Years'. Do you remember? You wore my perfume that day, you tasted like kiwi coconut Bath & Body Works and the way the bowling alley smells. I looked up at you from the bathroom floor and said *God is my last pair of jeans.*

ok:

an acronym that is so common yet unknown with endless connotations. using it is comical, as my simple response of “ok” has enraged more people than i thought it would. it could be that the phrase has great meaning, summoning helplessness and loss of hope, because ok is careless; humans don’t like to be forgotten. ok is small; its size and worth correlate perfectly, as it takes up little space, containing two little letters, disregarding people, making them feel like they deserve little space in the world. yet, for a reason i can’t explain, ok remains a phrase i enjoy, but solely for my own use.

Life Scars

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THAT IT WAS ME who was going to plummet right into the core of a social dilemma. It was 4th grade. The world had already lost its color by then. The school was mostly full of rich kids with egos as large as their parents' wallets.

I always rifled through my mom's purse to try to find 10 quarters for laundry money. It was actually kind of satisfying to see the laundry machine suck up the only cash my mom ever carried. For every 6 apartment rooms, there was a chalky laundry room. The apartment complex on Parkside Lane didn't look like anything special. A sizable rectangular-shaped building with a huge grassy field in the middle. There was a swingset my brother and I destroyed using mud and whatever else we could find, and a public pool we found a dead rat in one time. Living in an apartment with an income too low to buy groceries for the month began bothering me at such a young age.

I observed how cruel and shameless some 10-year-olds could be, but that didn't stop me from desperately wanting to be liked by them. I was chubby and my clothes were from the clearance rack at Kohls. I started wearing bras in 6th grade, so that was another thing to make fun of.

I guess so many things about me made me different in the worst way possible because I would always fall victim to Lily, the leader, and her posse's inhumane jokes that implied that I wasn't as wealthy or athletic as them. She had long, blond hair that she would always wear in ponytails. She did Cheerleading, Volleyball, Swim, and almost any other sport you could name. The bell rang and everyone turned their attention to the teacher.

"Good morning girls and gals," Mrs. Gebheart would exclaim enthusiastically, as she did every morning. "Today's a brand new day to learn. Now, can everyone form in groups of 3 or 4, please? We are painting t-shirts today for cancer awareness week!"

I would slowly stumble close to some of Lily's friends and awkwardly ask if they wanted to be my partner. They pretended as if they didn't hear.

"H-hello?" I'd try to voice. I internally rolled my eyes when Lily showed up to speak for her friends because almost every time she walked up to me she would blurt out, "Sorry, we already have our group."

"But there are only 3 of you guys, the teacher said we can have 4," I would murmur.

The trio would turn their back on me and start whispering in each other's ears. *Nobody loves me*. I hopelessly backed away and waited around for the teacher to notice that I was the only student who didn't have a group. Sadly, it was too late to prevent the 27 other pairs of eyes I felt crawling all over my skin. What felt like hours later, Mrs. Gebheart had walked up to the group of girls I'd asked to join.

“Girls, would you mind letting Daren join you guys for this activity?”

Lily turns around, hesitates, and says “Uhhh yeah, sure but I don’t think we’ll have a t-shirt size that fits her”

“Go ahead sweetie, pull up a chair.”

I turned around and grabbed a chair from one of the tables next to the bulky window in the classroom that had given me a perfect view of the cars going to work in the morning. I sat down with my palms on my cheeks, elbows on the desk, and eyes bleeding water. I zone out and start reminiscing about my mom.

My mom was sick. She had been diagnosed with breast cancer a few years back. The doctors never told her how bad the tumor was because they didn’t want her to lose hope. I was looking back on how I used to paint her nails and do her makeup when she didn’t feel pretty. A small side smile began to form on my face. She was always pretty to me.

“Mom if you aren’t pretty that means *I’m* not pretty and you made me! Are you calling me ugly?!” I would snicker.

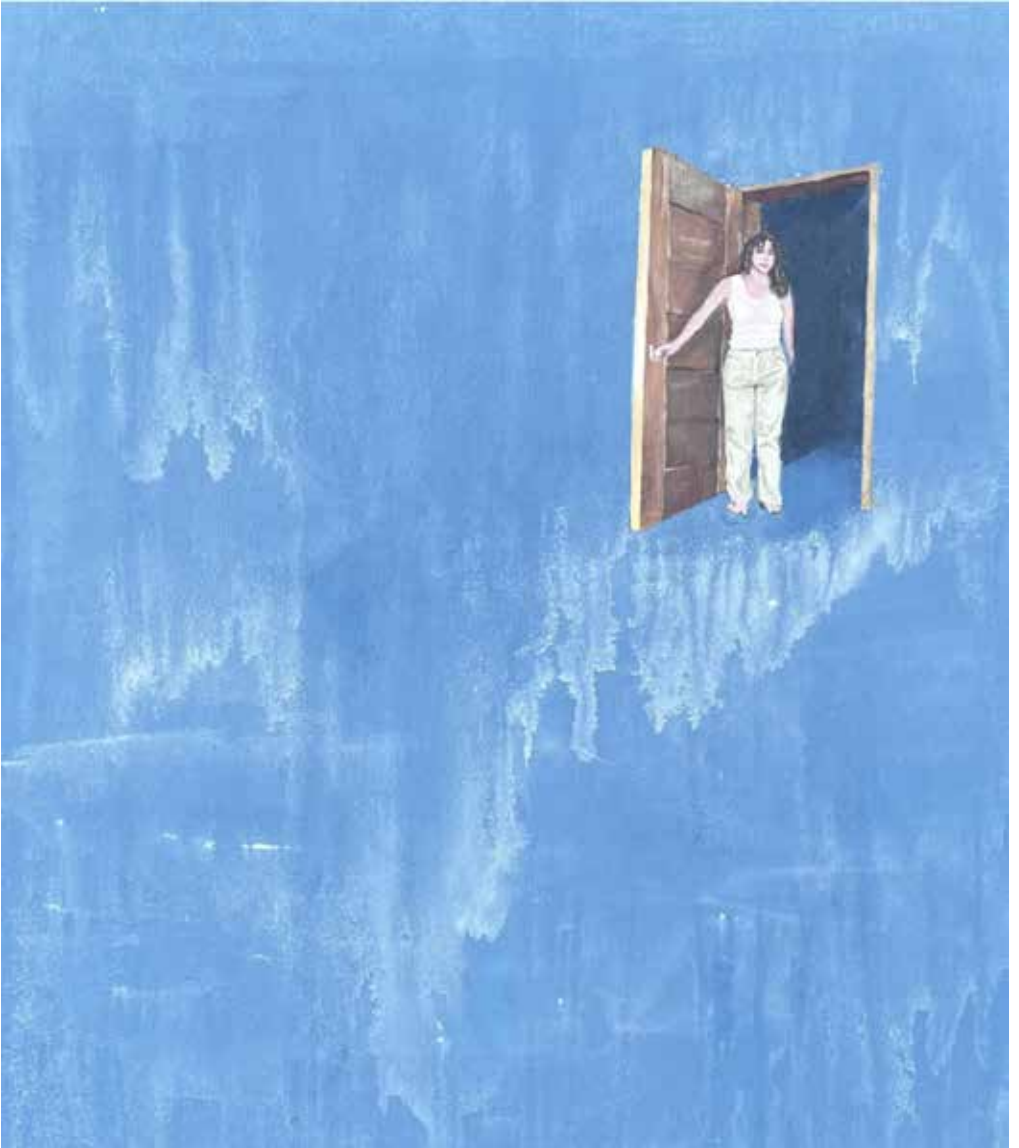
“No *habebte*, (meaning sweetheart) you are beautiful,” She would softly say with her thick Arabic accent. You could tell she was very weak and tired, but she stayed positive for her kids.

I knew it wasn’t her time yet but from what I’d seen in movies, I wondered if my mom would ever get a minute of relief. I sure wasn’t getting it. I had no one to talk to. I was so alone. I was the only person I had. My mom was too sick to deal with all the drama and emotions I carried around from kids at my school like Lily. I only ever saw bad things happening to me and my family and compared it to the families who had two physically and mentally healthy parents. The picket white fence family; while my mom lived on a hospital bed for two years.

Now, almost 6 years later, my mom is standing at my bedroom door telling me that I have to get out of bed and it’s time to get ready for work.

“Okay, got it,” I yawn.“ I’ll be downstairs in a minute.”

I take off the oversized t-shirt I wore for my nap. I notice my half-bare body in the mirror on the top of my dresser. *You’ve changed so much.* My body looks so different. It doesn’t look like the body I spent so much time hating and allowing people to disapprove of. God has granted me a fresh start to spend less time self-sabotaging and spend more time self-improving. My need for acceptance diminishes. I don’t want anyone to suffer the way I did my entire 4th-grade year. I make a promise to myself that if anyone was treated unkind or made to feel left out, it is my duty to lift them up and show them their worth.



Carolina Caro

*Quando Cierra El Porton:
When the Gate Closed*

my first love isn't just somebody but it is someone

i wish i was the kind to write down numbers
maybe then i would've been the first number
to slide as their first thought on their mind

cure the strings of light from the moonlight

i forget the beauty of a moon
we are too used to seeing the white glow
the full and half evens
and the 1/4 to 3/4

let my veins be the only thing to heal

home is the first person that carried me
the emotions and feelings; *gunnen*

**gunnen: to feel happiness in someone else's happiness because
of how much you love them*

perlite and ink

— to bridget noobler

i'm ripping up my own poetry
chewing the page like tobacco, spitting it out a bleeding red;
my gums are ripped from the glass i keep chewing on
volcanic rock. perlite. naturally, i have no inhibitions. naturally, i keep it a secret.

naturally, my knee is aching and my heart is pounding and i'm wondering what
i'm looking for in the tea grounds at the bottom of cups gone cold.

i wrote a tribute to jane o. wayne
at the height of my ... whatever and i swore up and down
that it was the best thing i'd ever written. incidentally, that isn't true anymore.

the best things i've ever written are about a friend i haven't seen in a while
and they're poems i'll never let see the light of day. shame is a flavour of burnt bread,
sooty char, the acidic twang of oversteeped tea.
grief is a flavour that leaks all over the taste buds, sickly sweet & vaguely stale.
the two of them together are viscous, devious, encompassing.
i'm drunk right now. i have a habit of letting everything go to my head. i miss
you.

i don't know what the hell i'm writing anymore

i just want to get things on the page. i started journaling but every time i pick up
that notebook (i got it for my birthday), my hand feels like it's going to be seared clean
through.

i need to tell someone something. i need to tell someone some thing. i need to tell some

i'm ripping up my own poetry

choking down perlite like i can replant myself. i mourn the mistakes that i've made.
i have no inhibitions.

naturally, all i can stand to keep with me are secrets gone cold
like a cup of earl grey steeped too long.

I Wish You

I wish you a charger that only works in one position, a dry mascara, a broken lip gloss applicator.

I wish you a snapped tank top string in the middle of a date, a broken bra so that every time you move the underwire pierces your skin.

I wish every time you put on mascara it just climbs up and looks like furry spider legs. A white shoe suffocated with dirt.

I wish you a bent bra clasp, a cracked phone screen to the point of no use, an empty almond milk container in your refrigerator when you go to make cereal.

I wish you a lifetime of not knowing, a lifetime of always questioning. I wish you a love that consumes you but your love isn't enough.

I wish you a sharp muscle tear when you try to use the shoulder press, a tank of gas empty, a glass always half empty.

I wish you a car with no air conditioning or heat. A jacket unable to keep you warm.

I wish you colorless days, the inability to smell chocolate chip cookies baking, a broken leg, a pit in your stomach every time you try to speak in front of a crowd. A plan b that doesn't work. A mismatching outfit. A bowl of soggy cereal. A dead battery. An empty bank account. An unfulfilling job. And a world in black and white.

I wish you a lifetime of remembering... remembering me. Every time you look in the mirror, you see me forcing you to drink water and throw up.

I wish you to be as you are, but to never know what it feels like to watch someone you love die in front of you... because that's how it felt to be loved by you.

*inspired by Jeanann Verlee's *Grief, Not Guilt*

Life's Limit

COVER YOURSELF from head to toe; wear long pants; wear a big shirt; don't let them have an excuse when they ask the question: what were you wearing?; don't walk in alleys; don't walk at night; don't walk alone; don't walk without pepper spray; don't walk without a taser; don't walk without a knife; don't let people know that a girl owns this car; check under your car for a potential attacker; park close to the entrance; don't stop to help others; *I know that I shouldn't walk alone*; always walk with a man you know; always walk in a big group; always walk during the day; always walk on main roads; walk against traffic so nobody can pick you up from behind; go to parties in groups; don't wear a skirt; don't wear a dress; always wear shorts under your dress; turn on your location; have emergency contacts; bring guys that you trust; never walk off alone; cover your drink; don't set it down; you shouldn't trust anybody with your drink; don't get too drunk it's not safe; hold yourself back; protect yourself against the men who will take advantage of you; know the signs; trust your gut; don't make the same mistakes I made; these things don't just happen in movies or on the news; it happens; even if you don't think it could be you; if a boy picks on you that doesn't mean he likes you; don't fall for the guy who will treat you like trash; take it slow; don't give him everything he wants on the first date; he will just leave you; know your worth; don't be friendly towards men because they will take it the wrong way; watch how you talk to a man; don't engage when he catcalls you; ignore it; watch how you touch a man they will get the wrong idea; there is no such thing as a boy best friend; at school make sure not to distract the boys; cover yourself so they can focus; cover yourself so they don't have an excuse; limit what you do; limit how you live your life; to protect yourself against men.



Regina Cervantes Ellis

Doña Tolosa y Doña Molinera

La Nota Dentro de la Botella

En ocasiones, conocemos a personas que nos hacen sentir bien.
Por un momento, piensa en quién.
¿Quién es tu persona?
En que confías con todo,
la que te hace sentir mejor,
simplemente más cómodo.
Mi persona era a quien yo le contaba todo
Excepto,
El secreto gusto que le tenía a él,
El pensaba que se lo tenía a aquel
Yo sentía lo que teníamos
Y nuestras familias se quieren tanto,
Pero él qué poco sabía,
Porque el era mi encanto
No era una obsesión
Pero si un buen gusto
Pero decirte que te quería
Me daba un gran susto
Me gustabas porque no te daba pena
En frente de tus amigos, me hablabas
Y cuando necesitaba con alguien que hablar
Allí tú estabas
Cuando ya no me gustabas
Era ya alguna semana
Yo te confesé mi gusto viejo
Pero para ti era solo una hermana
Cuando yo me fui
Te escribí este poema tan bonito como una estrella
Pero ahora este poema es solo una nota dentro de la botella.

How to Write the Great Black Girl Novel

Our faces must mirror the one of a white woman.
Our features should be feminine, light, and dainty with rosy cheeks.

We should love black men, even when they don't love us.
We should stand alongside black men, and the patriarchy, even as it eats at our faith.

We don't know how to articulate words, and if she does she's well-spoken.
We don't know how to love and our aggressive nature stops pursuers.

To spot us you can look for round bosoms, loud voices, and wild hair.
Look for a stoic face, mad at the world.

If she is a princess, she has to turn into an animal.
If not, the fairytale is boring.

We are experts at babysitting.
The Mammy of the town, with headwraps concealing our monstrous hair.

We must love the kitchen.
If not, we're bad mothers.

Our voices aren't loud, we're just speaking.
Our hair isn't wild, it's our crown.

Our faces aren't rosy, it's filled with melanin.
Our culture isn't phony, or one to mock.

Our lives aren't a joke.
Our lives tell the story of the unspoken truth.

My Name: A Vignette

WHEN THE CAR CRASH HAPPENED, my mother did not pray or wish on stars. She did not run away. She had something more than hope. She picked herself up and picked up her life, as if she knew that the trail would lead her somewhere if she only kept walking. That is what my name means in Russian — something more than hope. It means daily hospital visits and listening to the doctors say that my father might not wake up, then that he might wake up unfunctional, then maybe dysfunctional, and finally watching him wake up and being the one to crack him open with the news. It means day-by-day healing, the kind that takes twenty pages in books. It means my sister's photos still hanging on the walls of the silent bedroom, waiting for the mason-jar baby with an 8% chance.

So when that baby emerged, she was named *Bepa* — *Vj'erə*, the velvety texture crumbling in your mouth; *Vj'e* a breeze of smiling softness, *rə* a gentle puff, like someone sitting heart-bared through the evening, letting the beauty of the world in, when startled by the clock striking the late hour of the night, breathes in softly to *puf-ff* — blow the candle out, and tiptoe quietly to bed.

I don't breathe like that. When I sit up scribbling long past dark, I am harsh in word and movement. Perhaps that is why as soon as I learned English, I changed my name.

Vera, a little girl skidding, veering left and right to avoid the sharp desk corners, slippery playground slides, and pride-staining expo-markers of a confusing American world. *Vih-ra*, agile but stubborn, brash but jumbled, as vast as the sky, as particular as a single star, and door flung wide to all the desperation in between.

From the first, Vera was blunt, scared, curious — and I am grateful for her. Without her I would not know there is more than one trail. She dares to try, to explore, to feel, to act. She gets me through the day, through classes and clubs and friends, to bring me home to the *Bepa* that is always there, standing quietly with a candle, waiting for us at the windowsill.



Ana Ramirez

Ojos Azulejos

Brown-Eyed Babe

HER FATHER DID NOT NOTICE her wide hips on her twenty-first birthday or the lilt in her voice as it grew breathy with exhaustion. Even though it had only been 6 weeks, she swore she could feel the baby kicking, trying to rip her apart and break free. Humming, she sang the fragments of a melody and imagined the baby looking at her heart, peering through her memories and secrets and fears. Her broken song calmed the baby, but did little to calm her. Only studying the picture of the universe lying still in the frame of her window slowed her racing heart.

She remembered the time she was six years old and her father picked up a job working nights at a convenience store down the street. He couldn't afford a babysitter, so he taught her how to lock the doors. When she was scared, she tried to pray. But, her words stuck to her lips and lumped together, so when she tried to pluck them from her mouth and send them soaring to heaven, they dropped in a heap on the kitchen floor. When praying failed her, she opened the back door on her tiptoes and lay on the dead grass of her backyard. As she stared at the stars, the pressure knotting her chest floated to the moon. Hypnotized by the cosmos, she didn't mind the sharp grass poking her back or the chilled breeze or that she was alone.

As a babe, she entered the world head-first, slipping from her mother's womb like the sun stumbling out of night at dawn. Cradling her mother's glowing life in her fistfuls, she dug her fingers deeper into her palm, squeezing tight. When the brightness leaked through her fingers and drifted away into the stale hospital air, she did not cry. The gold glossing her eyes faded, leaving them the brownest brown. She spent that night at the hospital awake, waiting and waiting for the amber light she once held to rise from the dark.

The Book's Cover

“Jorge? You don’t look like a Jorge.”

I’ve heard that exact phrase from dozens of people. Growing up I never understood what they meant. I thought to myself that maybe they knew another Jorge and that I simply did not share the same features as their Jorge. Or maybe my personality wasn’t that of what a Jorge should have. People whom I had just met, and who knew only what I looked like and nothing else about me, instantly characterized me as someone who *shouldn’t* be a Jorge.

What *does* a Jorge look like? To me, Jorge seemed extremely fitting. I was raised in a family of Mexican immigrants. They were raised in Mexican culture, so growing up it was all I knew. We spoke like Mexicans. We celebrated like Mexicans. We dressed like Mexicans. We ate like Mexicans. We looked like Mexicans. Or, at least that’s what I *thought*.

My mother has extremely pale skin that burns red after an hour of being in the sun. Naturally, my siblings and I share her pale complexion.

So to me, that is what Mexicans look like. There was nothing special about us.


I remember once when I visited Mexico my aunt told me to go to the local corner store alone. I remember feeling terrified. What if my Spanish was bad? What if they think it’s weird that I’m alone? What if they don’t recognize me? What if... what? Why was I so terrified?

“Tu no eres de aqui, guerito,” I heard from the other side of the store, as she said that I, a white boy, didn’t belong here.


Suddenly, everything that I doubted about myself became reality. In America I was too pale for my name, and now I was too pale for my culture. I felt that I belonged nowhere, and I began to distance myself from my culture and roots.

One day, my father played “El Chofer” by Vicente Fernandez while driving home. Instinctively, I asked him to turn the volume down. I felt ashamed and hated getting looks from people for playing music that wasn’t in English. He turned the volume down a little and then asked me if I remembered how much I loved this song growing up. If I remembered that last time we went to Mexico I begged him to buy me a CD of Vicente Fernandez’s “Para Siempre,” and he did. If I remembered how I would sing this song while cruising through the streets of my parent’s hometown, Capilla de Guadalupe.


And I did recall those moments, down to the finest detail. Going to get tacos late at night with my aunt. Getting boliz de cajeta at Paletas “El Feo”. Getting freshly squeezed orange juice in the morning with my dad. Getting guasanas from a vendor cart in the plaza. Celebrating my birthday at my cousin’s ranch in San Jose de Gracia.



Being dragged to morning mass on a weekday by my late grandmother, something I wish I had cherished more in the moment.



I had internalized the labels that others created about me. I'd let others' stereotypes stop me from embracing my culture, as if they had a say in who I was. But my Mexican roots are a part of who I am, irremovable, no less than my spine.



No, my skin color doesn't define me. Nor the language I speak, nor my level of intellect, nor my sociability. Most importantly, neither does my name. Even if others tell me otherwise, a stereotype will not take away from the many rich and unforgettable experiences I've lived through.

So whenever I'm feeling down, I get my speaker, open Spotify, and play some tunes. And whether it's J. Cole's "January 28th" or Vicente Fernandez's "El Chofer," I enjoy them both equally, knowing that whether in English or Spanish, they don't make me any less Mexican.

Living American

I am a hyphen.

Two adjectives juxtaposed to form a perfect creature
A diamond hewn of sacrifice, blood, and betrayal

I always wondered why they said immigration was a
Gamble,
Not a guarantee.
For how can a card the hue of spring buds splinter into a thousand shattered stories?

I blame myself for living American,
For assuming assimilation would save my soul,

Because now the Motherland is a mystery to me
Her seven thousand islands are all family
And all are unfamiliar

I am the last born of the last born
The luckiest of the lucky
Hunger is a stranger
Hardship, not part of my vocabulary.


Yet why does my heart lament as I fail to sing the praises of my ancestors?
Each word fumbles past my lips
Bitter bile of long-lost liberty spewed forth in an

Accented


Americana

Array

Close to the original intention
But oceans away from its true meaning



How am I, created on the dimensionless plains of a dying dream—
How am I to comprehend the rivers that course through my veins, the mountains that
make up my foundation?
The roots of my soul perish
Without me even knowing where they grow.



I was told my blood is exotic
Because it is not of the land in which I shuddered my first breath, yet it is shackled to it
all the same.

I am coveted.
I am cast out.
But who is coveting and who is casting out depends on whether they are looking
At me
Or at ako

It is never one.
Nor the other.
Always some.
Never whole.

It is an eternal state of struggle
To be a living paradox
To be a living American.

The Nightmare of an American Dream

“CORRAN, CORRAN! O se los carga la fregada!” Those were the screams my father remembers from that hellish night when he crossed the United States illegally for the first time. Just as he remembered his humiliations, he also remembered the hunger, the cold, and not only his suffering but also that of several friends who accompanied him.

In 1998 my father and his friends made the decision to come to the United States in search of a better future. Because they did not have papers, they walked through the desert. They took several trucks to get to the border, and the truck ride lasted over 24 hours. Although the truck trip was difficult, it did not compare with what would come next. They had contacted a person who was going to help them cross, but after desperately waiting for several hours, they looked for someone else.

The journey began on a rainy night when they jumped a fence that at that time was the border. A helicopter approached overhead as they walked through waist-high grass. When the Coyote saw the helicopter, he began brusquely and rudely shouting at them, “Everybody down! Get down!” He ordered them not to look at the helicopter, so the light in their eyes would not give them away. They were dirty as they crawled through the mud; everyone was cold and scared. When the helicopter flew away, the Coyote screamed, “Run, run or they will find you!” This is how it went throughout the night.

At dawn they approached some bridges, stopped, and rested for 3 or 4 hours. Then they walked during the heat of the day, going up and down hills under the sun. They began to feel thirsty and tired. The youngest of the group, only 17 years old, had already finished his water, and they shared a little with him. The night came and with it the cold; they continued walking. Among them, a woman in the group began to say she could not take it anymore; she was crying desperately. The coyote yelled at her that she had to continue or she could die there. That night was even more difficult than the last. Water became scarce; those who had a little left no longer wanted to share. “Out of desperation we began to drink water from the puddles,” said my father.

Mario, the young 17-year-old, began to have a temperature; some helped him to continue. The cold was increasingly unbearable, so much so it was the same Coyote who ordered a fire to be lit. My father got close enough to the fire to be able to warm up. This was a big mistake, because the next day, his knee opened, and he could no longer walk. His friends tried to help him, but he did not want to be a burden. He said, “Leave me here, continue without me,” but they persisted in helping him. Rodolfo, who was a robust man, a little overweight, had to endure even more humiliations, such as “Pig! You are useless!” The moment came when he, too, no longer wanted to continue. By dawn, Mario began to vomit; they asked the coyote to stop

because there were already several who could not make the journey anymore. But the coyote responded with insults and rudeness; they had to continue.

When he saw Mario was very bad, he ordered them to leave him there. Perhaps, someone would find him later and give him help, but they could not spend more time with him. He was delaying them, and it was likely they would find the whole group. While they were resting under the shade of a tree, Mario just fainted and stopped breathing. They wanted to bring him to the side of the road so someone could help him, but the coyote ordered them to leave him there and to go ahead. My father could barely walk and could not help them. There was nothing more they could do for him.

When night came, the Coyote told them they would have to go under a bridge to get to a Ben who would transport them to a house where their relatives would pick them up. When they reached the edge of the bridge, the coyote began to scratch with his arm as if he were swimming because it was very narrow between the bridge and the ground. They had to make room with the earth to be able to pass. Due to his large body, Rodolpho found it difficult to pass. With everyone's help, they began to pull him from the front and push him from behind so he could pass. Under the bridge, drops of cement fell which tore his skin. While everyone tried to help him through, he only complained and repeated how much it hurt. He was just screaming, and there came a point where he asked to be left, but the Coyote rudely ordered everyone to keep pushing him to get him out. When leaving the bridge, everyone noticed his back was bleeding and pieces of his skin had been torn from it. Between complaints and regrets, the tears in his eyes showed a total loss of hope; he realized how in search of a great life he lost the one he already had. He decided not to continue any longer. He thought it was better to stay by the side of the road and wait for help. A woman who no longer had hope and was afraid of losing everything decided to stay with him. Nobody helped them, and eventually, they died, too.

With the help of friends, my father was able to move on with the rest of the group. They reached the Ben who took them to the house where some families were already waiting for a few of them; after one or two days, others came to pick up the rest. My father said, there were more than 30 people in a large room with only one bathroom. It was like a jail because they had them lined up in case someone wanted to leave. They could only get out of there if they or someone else paid their bail.

Sadly, several died on the journey. Was it worth so much sacrifice? There are moments in life when one loses faith, but it is also those moments that teach us to value the greatest gift God has given us: life.

Trabajando en la Viña

Como el polvo, nos levantamos de los colchones.
El sol despierta los peones del dolor.
Magullados los músculos, no permiten quejas.
Nuestras manos secas se preparan para llenarse de ácidos y muecas.

Despiertan los peones para un día más de dolor.
Al abrir las puertas roídas, como papel maché empiladas en periodico,
nuestras manos secas se preparan para llenarse de ácidos y muecas.
El paisaje invadido de rayos atravesando las hojas de nueces.

Abriendo las puertas roídas, cubiertas en hojas de lata,
el calor oliente pringa los pañuelos coloridos.
El paisaje se llena de rayos atravesando las hojas de sus nacidos,
esparcido por el surco se desvanece en el horizonte.

El calor cesante pringa a nosotros los coloridos.
Las doce horas empiezan pero no terminan,
esparcidos como hormigas nos desvanecemos en el horizonte.
Uva tras uva giran en las canastas, manchan de vino el día.

Las horas siguen lo dicen nuestros ahorros.
En ácido se limpian mis hermanos orando que nos paguen nuestra pena,
cada uva que gira en las canastas manchandonos la ropa.
Hasta que la noche caiga, y el lodo muera.

En ácido se baña mi familia.
La lamparita de petróleo se apaga,
Cuando la noche cae, y el lodo muere,
Nos arropan las tortillas y el amor de mamá.

La lamparita de petróleo no deja rastro,
Como el polvo, descendemos en los colchones.
Nos arropan las tortillas y el amor de mamá.
Magullados los músculos descansan.

translation of *Trabajando en la Viña*

Working in the Vineyard

Like dust, we get up from thin mattresses.
The sun awakens the pawns of pain.
Bruised muscles do not allow complaints.
Our dry hands prepare to be filled with acids and grimaces.

The pawns wake up for one more day of pain.
The doors are worn, sealed by newspaper;
our dry hands prepare to fill with acids and grimaces.
The vineyard is invaded by rays hugging the walnuts.

Opening the gnawed doors, covered in tin sheets,
sour heat smears the colorful handkerchiefs.
The vineyard fills with rays piercing the leaves,
scattered across the furrow and horizon.

The ceaseless heat smears the colors on us.
The twelve hours begin but do not end;
scattered like ants, we vanish on the horizon.
Grape after grape spins in the baskets, staining the day with wine.

The hours continue, our savings claimed.
My brothers clean themselves in acid, praying that is worth it,
each grape that turns in the baskets staining our clothes,
until the night falls, and the mud dies.

My family bathes in acid.
The oil lamp goes out,
when the night falls, and the mud dies;
we are wrapped in tortillas and mom's love.

The oil lamp leaves no trace;
like dust, we lay on unpadded mattresses.
We are wrapped in tortillas and mom's love,
and our bruised muscles finally rest.

homeland by

my mama left her heart in california so every summer we follow it back
the bay area kids, smoke-sharp and seaworthy, ask me where i'm from
i say austin, texas, and that's where it begins


*you don't seem-act-look like you're from texas
you can't get abortions, right
do people call themselves rednecks
are you friends with trump supporters
oh my god how do you even survive there
why don't you just leave*

the pick-up-and-go possibility
to think that's there for everyone, ha!
don't tell me to be ashamed
take your pity,
leave it for your burning forests, fading stars
i certainly don't want it


how to renounce the place you were born?
and raised, same house every day till the walls feel like a second skin
i am made of cicada sounds and bluebonnets and sun-baked granite
100-degree summers
a deer peering out from the deep shade
the glistening line of a water moccasin
the bricks layed by those who came before
a second step, a history
my history, my homeland

and can i stay?


look at this place
the heat can take the life right out of your eyes
we step around the memories of bloodied chains
and the losing side of a war
on the streets i love we learn to tread lightly
the right to a future, the right to our bodies
is no longer a certainty
this is a state that tells my friends and i that we
do not matter, are invisible
that they hate us hate the way we dress walk talk try



to live lives the way we want
texas texas my body my
choice, choice
and what a choice you have left me with



to love my home,
to leave my home



i am just a traveler here
living borrowed time on broken stolen land
as the world heats up to a burning fever pitch

how to renounce this place?

all i ever knew



Charlie Freer

Glow

My Struggle with Racism

SMALL RURAL TOWNS ARE very isolated, and this isolation allows for the quick spread of hateful and bigoted ideas. During my last years of middle school at a public school in Coshocton, Ohio, I was forced to experience hate, bigotry, betrayal, and blatant racism. During elementary school I had no problems besides the occasional crude joke, or having my hair filled with little white hands. These were all things that I could easily deal with. However, everything changed once we got to middle school. People I had considered close friends began to call me racial slurs as they passed me in the halls; adults would also belittle me both outside and inside the school. I had grown adults scream in my face, or shout racial slurs at me. If I ever was caught doing something wrong, I would be punished far harsher than my peers. Through those last two years of middle school, I felt extreme hatred, dread, depression, and betrayal. I now deal with overwhelming levels of paranoia because I am unable to truly believe the things people tell me. I struggle with forming deep relationships with others because I have a constant gnawing fear that people are lying to me, and that they will betray me whenever they deem it necessary. Because of the way I was treated during middle school, my view of people has been skewed and altered.

I originally had no problems with any of the people in Coshocton. They had all been kind to me, and I felt safe around them. There were times when I was reminded of where I was because of off-hand mentions of Klansmen living a town over, but I had assumed as long as I stayed in town there would be nothing to worry about. However, this changed during the 2016 presidential election. Something within the townsfolk changed; they stopped seeing me as just another kid that lived in the town, to some kind of leech or menace that they needed to get rid of. There was a time I was walking home from school and while I was waiting to cross the street a red pick-up truck pulled up beside me. The man rolled down his window, spit his chewing tobacco at my feet, and then said “Trump’s gonna make y’all niggas work, can’t be livin for free around here” and then he drove off. I was at a complete loss at what had just happened. I was unable to comprehend what made this man feel like he had the need to pull up to a seventh grader and spew his vile rhetoric at me. I also had to deal with adults treating me like I was some sort of a threat to them. One man came out of his house and screamed “I don’t wanna see your coon ass on this street again, and if I do, I will deal with you personally.” I was petrified. What had I done to this man that made him believe I was a threat? What had I done to this man that made him want to physically assault a seventh-grade boy? I never walked down that street alone, and when I did go down it, I sped up as fast as I could on my bike.

School was even more of a struggle. Not all of the students were bad; I was actually friends with a good amount of people. But the bad students were the loudest. Walking through the hallways was a hit or miss event, sometimes I had no problems, but other times I was belabored with constant jokes about my race. Some students would just get to the point and call me slurs. When I would try and call them out on it, they would get mad at me, saying “Calm down, dude. I was just joking.” How is saying the n-word a joke? Where is the punchline? Where is the build up? There were times I could have sworn that the teacher must have heard them say the things they said, and yet I never had a teacher step in and at the very least tell them to knock it off. One time, I finally got fed up with the way things were, and decided to report it to the principal. I believed that he was going to actually punish the students severely who had been calling me these names, but he did nothing but give my peers a slap on the wrist.

I still struggle greatly with putting my trust in others due to how people tried me at such a young and vulnerable age. I now struggle with forming deep and trusting relationships with people that are not family members. I was forced to see how cruel people can be to those they deem as different or bad. I was a child that made mistakes, and when mainstream authorities saw those mistakes, they would treat them as colossal crimes. Some people viewed me as a lazy, subhuman menace that needed to be removed or exterminated. Yet past treatment has been skewed and altered my relationships with people. However, I refuse to let this permanently limit me or my future.

Pledge of Allegiance

One huddled mass,
facing exclusion acts,
yearning to breathe free
but choking on hypocrisy.

One education,
under lockdowns,
and traumas passed on
like hand-me-downs.

One nation, in desperation
Inexplicably, with
deliberate injustice
for just us.

I pledge allegiance to thee,
of what we can become,
of age-old stitches in our flag
yet to be undone.

Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the moon-shaped *diyas*,
their fire dancing in the night and lighting up my foyer.
To the mango *lassi* in everyone's colour-coated hands
every spring, the sun's rays bathing in laughter and yells.

To the sizzling of *garam pakora* in my *Nani's* kitchen
and the reruns of Indian TV serials in the living room.

I pledge allegiance to grey skies and soft pitter-pattering,
followed by a double rainbow and more rain. A lot of rain.
To the turquoise seat cushions where I'd lay my head
and gaze at the cotton-like clouds as they glided across the sky.

To the Asian market where they sold strawberry-flavored Magic Straws
and the pottery hut where we bought pale blue potato jars
and the "peach bubble tea with extra pearls, please" from the outdoor mall.

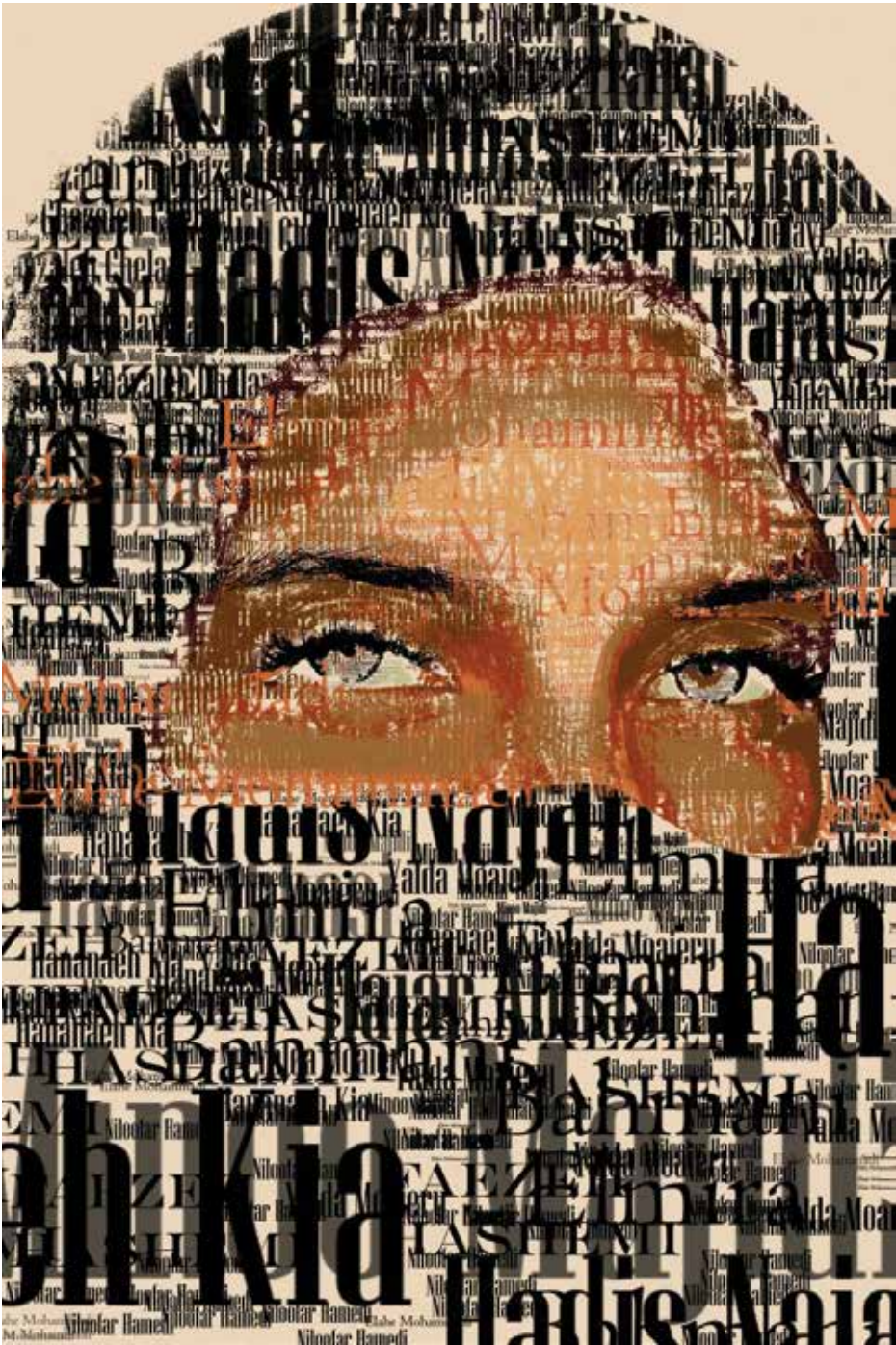
But I also pledge allegiance to *colour* turning into *color*,
to *trolleys* turning into *carts*. I pledge allegiance to
a 5-hour trip home turning into a 20-hour journey.
To Diwali turning into Halloween and Thanksgiving
and Chinese New Year turning into midwinter break.

I pledge allegiance to brown cartons stuffed with knickknacks
and the stretching of clear tape.

To jetlag and time differences and
street signs that made no sense.

To single-colored bills and
dates that are formatted out of order.

I pledge allegiance to packing and unpacking.
To change.



Ava Hanlon

Fighting from Across the Atlantic

a chinese girl's tianlai receipt

1. haw flakes & every 3 flavors of pocky, 3 + 2 cookies (2 packs), Beijing colors toddler fingers chased like daydreams. naitang milk candy's cartoon cows (sinicized), waxy wrapping paper a type of rice that *melted*. father Confucius smiled upon you then. (*before you learned English. total: ¥42*)
2. *xiaomaibu* milk bags (x 7:34 am) you loved to poke, just-heated & ripped open with loose third-grade teeth. plastic pieces you'd spit out like afterthoughts, solid like steel school gates glazed with dawning change. packaged warmth to swaddle the stinging pain of bones lodged too far from home. street *mantous* (2) white & fluffy as airplane clouds. (*39 South Xueyuan Rd. total: ¥13*)
3. fleshy red sausages whose name you no longer recall, train station ramen selling promises of glistening pork bellies, fat egg yolks & *xiangcai* 2016 green (one bucket). *I'm visiting China* & the *yeye* smiles; *no—you're coming home*. every overnight train savor hums a pleasure tinged caustic with msg. (*that summer you went back. total: ¥21.*)
4. soybean sprouts (3 bunches, dry), lunar year calendar 2020 scuffed & still hanging like the cashier's *nahaos*; Chinese-American *Epoch Times* under hi-chew & *guodong* gleaming low-ceiling lights. glutinous rice balls (every *yuanxiao* festival) frozen foods aisle, each bite swallowing cane sugar, stickiness, & hydroxypropyl distarch phosphate preservative for what expired the moment you walked in those doors. (*1266 E Dundee Rd, Tianlai Asian Mart. total: \$31.23.*)

chores

time for chores dad hollers from the kitchen so loud we can't even pretend not to hear ~ we trample begrudgingly from our rooms ~ the dishwasher shiny and metal and loud opens with a clang the dishes rattling together hot watery air billowing into our faces we pile clanking plates on plates shake out the tinkling silverware delicately pick up the knives because dad told us to be careful and we remember when we watch mom slice into vegetables the sharp edge parting the flesh so smoothly ~ whining and groaning we clamber down the stairs with a mountain of clothes thud thud thud shove them into the machine press the right buttons never low speed never high speed normal water pressure medium soap we listen to the whir and watch the clothes spin in the ancient machines because we've come all the way down here already and if you blur your eyes the colors of the fabric mix and blend together like paint on a wheel ~ unload the dryer shove the clothes back into the hamper and lug the mountain of clothes up the steps one at a time thud thud thud slowly until we reach the top and then bliss as we dump the clothes onto the couch and jump into them reveling in their warmth like baked bread right out of the oven like the extra blanket at our feet on colder winter nights mom shouts get your dirty bodies off my clean laundry but we ignore her for just a minute more to savor that warmth ~ ducking under the sink to grab new trash and recycling bags and hauling the filled bags outside to the chilled air making us crave being back in the comfort of the air of the house ~ the air humid with the sounds of voices whirring clanging rustling thuds and smelling like mom's lavender perfume like dad's burning toast because he always burns the toast like my brother's gross feet because he leaves his socks lying around the house and I hate and love this air the air I breathe the air they breathe the air that fills my home to the brim and wraps around me like clothes from the dryer



Rosa Parlakian

House Art

Something as Simple as a Radish

OURS WAS THE BLUE HOUSE on the street; that is the first house I remember. The blue house always smelled of handmade tortillas, black coffee, and my abuelas Jafra perfume. The tight-knit family system that we had made me more than happy. Just me, my sister, and my grandparents. Sofia and I had matching pajamas with my grandpa. The outfit consisted of a baby blue gown with a baby blue hat. Every night I waited for a steaming hot chamomile tea, brewed by my grandma's old kettle. This way of living was lavish.

Growing up I preferred living with my father's side of the family, the food was better, the culture was better, and I had loving grandparents. My sister was closer to my abuela; they both loved to braid, sew, and crochet. I always wanted to learn, but my short, fat fingers were never fit for those tasks. I was close with my abuelo; we spent time cooking and eating together. I was mediocre at the cooking, but I found my passion in the eating. In the appreciation of anything and everything that my grandparents cooked. Lentils, nopales, avena, bistek, fideo, chocoflan, I was never picky, and everything made me happy. My grandpa was the same way. We never wasted food, and we never complained about what was served. As far as we knew, any meal was a good meal.

We ate anything and everything that was put on our plates, and we rejoiced. But the food we enjoyed the most wasn't a dessert, soup, not even a meal. Radishes, we would slice them up, add some lime, and sprinkle some salt. We would eat them until our teeth hurt and the burn in your mouth was too much to ignore. After that we would drink the juice left on the plate. It would be criminal not to. Sometimes it was so sour our faces would scrunch and move in funny ways. Then, as we looked down at the pink-stained bowl we wondered if we should get more. Only to find out there wasn't more.

There are a few pros and cons in this situation. Con, there are no more radishes. Pro, that means we can go to Sam's Club tomorrow. Con, I have to wait until tomorrow. Pro, going to Sam's means I get to eat the samples at Sam's. Pro, we can also get the mamey ice cream that my grandpa and I love, and maybe even some salmon for dinner tomorrow. Another pro, we probably will go to El Torito. Pros take the win.

My grandfather was doing good for a few years after that. During that time we had left the blue house, and my grandpa and grandma got their own place: A dusty brick duplex that smelled of mothballs with neighbors that had told them to speak American or get out. That didn't bother them though; they were still happy.

Things started to feel off. Grandpa's desire to eat was there, but his body would not comply. It started with him not eating anything spicy. He had noticed he

couldn't keep it down. Then it was anything with too much milk, or fat, or sugary. Even if it was healthy amounts. Then it was simple things like fruits and vegetables that he couldn't manage to eat. I thought it would pass, but I knew something was wrong when he couldn't bear to look at a radish.

His appetite was ripped away. He was diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer, and it was estimated he only had five months to live. I remember how sad he looked, how he had gradually been shrinking until he almost weighed less than his 11-year-old granddaughter. How he would hallucinate because of malnutrition and imagine his pillow was a bowl of rice, and when we told him it wasn't, he would just give us a weak laugh and apologize for getting excited.

I then realized even more how the ability to eat and enjoy food was a gift. How it was a central part of our relationship as a family, and the reason I had so many good memories. I thought about how hard it must have been for him to smell something delicious being cooked upstairs, while he lay in the downstairs room unable to ever taste it again. Unable to taste the soup and check if it needed more salt, unable to cut up some onions and feel the sting of their sharp aroma, unable to even sit down at the dinner table and pass that homemade salsa to his wife.

A Man Tou for Her and Me

MY MOTHER'S HANDS MOVE across the bamboo board, dividing the dough into pieces the size of her palm. Her hands cup around each piece, spinning and sliding it across the surface to produce a single hemispherical *man tou*.

Watching her graceful actions, I spread my palms around each piece, attempting to imitate her working hands. My chubby childhood fingers are no match for the smooth whiteness of the dough. They squeeze too much and rotate too hard, creating droops that look like the bottom of a wet toe rather than her white perfection.

Despite my failure, she places my *man tou* alongside hers in our metal steamer, and we wait for the steam to rise. When the translucent wisps emerge, her hand removes the lid, placing the soft bun in my hands.

Every two weeks since I was an infant, she gathered her board and made me a *man tou*. She made me a *man tou* the size of my head when I sat in my high chair, her hands on my plate as she split the bun into bite-sized pieces. She made me a *man tou* when I understood the curves and lines of the words on the page, her hands on my finger as I traced the sentences. She made me a *man tou* after we went to the library for my book report, her hands in mine as we walked out the door with a finished project.

No matter the occasion, she makes the same *man tou* for me—soft and pure just like her.

My mother was born in China in 1967. She grew up during the Cultural Revolution, when having any food besides rice or napa cabbage was a luxury. As the fourth daughter of parents who wanted a son, she was overlooked but overprotected by her sisters.

By the time she turned eighteen, her sisters already moved out, and it was time for her first taste of independence. She moved across the country for college, sitting on the wooden benches of the train for days to reach her dorm.

After she graduated, my mother worked at a large marketing company with the managerial position within her grasp. She lived in an apartment in Beijing worth millions of *yuan* today.

Despite her potential in China, she came to America in 1993. Whether it was her youthful audacity or her love for her new husband, she gambled on a new life to follow him to a new country. In leaving, she sacrificed the friendships formed in her childhood home and the dinners with her siblings.

In America, my mother worked at Target and attended community college at night, her English slowly improving, and she found work at a small accounting firm.

On days when Excel sheets do not line the dinner table, she talks about her life in China and her early years in the U.S. With a warm smile on her face, she recounts the simplicity: two daughters, a husband, and just enough money for the four of them.

But was this simple life worth her sacrifices? Does she miss the business trips to Australia or Russia with tens of co-workers? Does she miss shopping with her sisters every weekend?

In America, she sees her siblings only through WeChat video call. She spends half her day in a small office with less than ten employees. She visits her older daughter annually at her college halfway across the country, and she sleeps before her husband returns from work. The only person she takes with her to the store is me.

In America, she only has me.

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The memories of my childhood cannot reconcile the differences between our upbringings, our different perceptions of privilege. Years come between us. The flour in her hair stays there, leaving the strands white, while my hair remains black. She tries to pull us closer. While I push us apart.

She tells me to wear socks inside. She tells me not to drink cold water. She tells me about the girls who rode the subway too late at night.

I tell her, "Okay." As I take off my socks. As I add ice to my water. As I leave the house at night. Too late at night.

When I walk towards the door, she turns around the corner. She looks at me with her relaxed face. "Ni gen shei jian mian?"

Who are you meeting? She asks me in Chinese, her tone more soft and curious than accusatory.

"A friend from school," I rest my hand on the knob, my eyes on the wooden door in front of me.

Who? She stands closer to me, and her gaze rises up my back, waiting to meet mine.

"You don't know her."

Try me.

"You've never seen her before."

If you tell me, I'll know her.

"Okay, okay, I'm seeing someone from my bio class," I turn to face her, whipping my hair over my shoulder.

But it is late now. I meet her concerned eyes for the first time.

My eyebrows crease together. "I'm seventeen now. I have my own money, and I can drive whenever I want without you having to be there." My hands fly up. "Why do you care so much?"

I look at her, relieved to cut through her control over me. Relieved to have pushed myself from her.

But the satisfaction is fleeting.

Her eyes soften. The edges of her lips turn towards her chin.

Before she responds, I turn away, into my car. Driving away from home. From her. From my words that hurt her.

When I return at midnight, she sits at the table, a pair of chopsticks in her hand. She waited the night for me to eat dinner with her.

She arranges the plates on the table, setting the proteins near me. *Hong shao rou*. Braised pork. *Jian yu*. Fish. *Ji dan tang*. Egg soup.

“Ni hui lai le.” *You’re back*. Her tone is even, as if my words from earlier did not touch her.

My eyes meet hers, and I see the dark circles underneath her eyes, their shade deepening from years of making me not feel overlooked but overprotected: reading with me, dropping me off at school, and cooking my favorite meals.

I hesitate as she motions for me to sit down. I render myself undeserving of her love because of the hurtful words I hurl at her.

But she reaches across the table to put a *man tou* on my plate.

That *man tou* is her wholehearted love for me: pure, warm, and always there. Transcending my teenage bitterness.

She pulls me closer. And we eat.



Rowyn Nguyen

On the Verge

arroz con leche

the black ladle of childhood stirs in the pot;
the sweet scents of vanilla and canela mist into my face

it's a blanket wrapping my body on a cold day.

the ick of biting into a fresh stick of cinnamon,

&

the pleasant surprise of biting into a raisin.

a piece of home
that laces comfort like a corset on a dress

a bite of s o l a c e
after playing outside in the snow.
a hug from a
loving mother.

warmth
and familiar taste
on a spoon
awaiting its next patient.

IF YOU CAN'T WIN DON'T PLAY: A Day on the Taco Truck

THE SUN BEAMS THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD of the truck, off the metal tray and into my eyes. The cheese softens in the sun. My gloves are coated in cheese. I've got to speed it up. I unwrap another strip from the wheel and begin to peel it into long, thin strands over the bucket. When the wheel first came out of the refrigerator, the strands looked like fine hairs. Now they've become soft and clunky in the heat. It used to take me twenty or more minutes to get through a block of cheese. I got it down to ten. My wrists have gotten stronger since May.

The cheese glistens and glows in the sunlight. It started out bigger than my head and now it's about the size of my head.


A big guy holding a corndog and a kid walks up to the door of the truck. His t-shirt reads IF YOU CAN'T WIN DON'T PLAY. He plops his kid down and enthusiastically spits out, "Is that queso fresco?" "No," I say, "It's Oaxaca." "Oh," he replies, and then struts away as if that was a deal breaker. He's left his kid behind, who looks up at me with a blank stare. I feel sorry for the boy, so I toss him a piece of cheese. He doesn't catch it and it just falls on the ground.

Chazo is chopping meat in the back. He is crying because "Alfonsina y el Mar" is playing full blast over our little speaker and this is the song that Chazo cries to.

Through the hand-cut window I can see the skyline's distorted reflection on the river. There's a barge creeping down. Two-Handed Mikey the caricature artist sits across from our truck, alone. He will draw you riding on a skateboard for five dollars and will do nudes for ten. This is the third festival we've been at where Two-Handed Mikey has worked across from us. Two-Handed Mikey fascinates me. The first time I saw his sign, I went up and asked if he was really two-handed. Now it's become a thing that I do each time I see him: "Are you really two-handed?" "Did you not ask me this already?" "No, I don't think so."


There are six more wheels of cheese I need to go through. It's usually after wheel three that I get into the zone, and the only thing on my mind is cheese. It's very Zen. Sometimes I'll wake up at night and find my wrists going through the motions of peeling Oaxaca cheese. I had a dream one time that I biked to Oaxaca and burned down the cheese farm and then biked back.

Right now, Jesse and the Ripoffs are playing "Livin' on a Prayer." There is a drunk couple trying to slow dance by the stage. This is the seventh rendition of "Livin' on a Prayer" I have heard today since I got here in the morning, but I still haven't heard anyone try to do it in a Billie Holiday voice. My cheese bucket shakes every time




Jesse screams out the refrain. My favorite cover band today has been the Color-Blind Party Band. It's a group of white guys who "don't see color" and only play 90's R&B.

All I have eaten today are some tacos and a funnel cake. The sun drowns in the river. The night is only beginning.



For now, I peel the cheese. Cheese that fills the quesadillas. Quesadillas that feed the people. People who pay the money. Money that fuels my car. Cheese is life. The band plays into the night.



What Do You Call a Rodeo That You Don't Plan On Winning

I don't feel bad about hanging out in the stands. The bull is dangerous even when he's not jumping. My fingers taste like kettle corn and the sky is blue. I reimagine every navy evening we spend together to end with you kissing me. But I am not wanting. I am not in heat. The sky is a big blue window and through the glass Heaven is here. It's 1995 and it's Texas and war is over and you're yet to correct me. I can still watch you ride the bull and not expect a concussion coming. I can still see the horns and your boot spurs and pretend that they, like all things, are harmless.

Your Name is Villain

She calls you a deadbeat, a dropout, a louse, a
Villain.

That's your name.

Villain.

It makes sense. It's who you are.

Just sound it out.

It starts sharp, like ice, like thorns, like misplaced needles.

Like broken dreams, shattered like glass.

And I am torn to bits.

It turns slick, sly, slow,

Double Ls licking the wounds,

Singing siren songs,

Promising that "he'll return,

Just give him time."

And I believe them.

It ends quickly. Terminally. Like pulling the plug.

Villain. It cuts and vows and leaves.

Your name is Villain. I don't know what else to call you.

And if you are named Villain, she must be named

Hero.

Hero. It's a brave word. A proud word.

A falcon's cry, a child's laugh, a trumpet's triumph.

So, I can't call you Dad. I won't.

I refuse.

That isn't who you are.

I hope you know that.

I hope you never forget.

Sea Star Syndrome

Back when my hair was curled by saline
wind, hanging at my hips like seaweed
washed ashore in heaps of heaving foam, I
tore crusts from my sandwich and threw
them to crying mouths, hooked beaks
stretched wide in endless wanting.

Smooth stones cupped the gaps between my
toes like kisses of sunlight, shaded grey. My
shoes were already shed, my denim shorts
stained with brine as I sprawled across the
boulder, orange starfish puckered to its
charcoal ridges.

To see it now, the basalt stripped bare,
washed and weathered by waves and silvered
moonlight; it feels like the slip-strike under
every unsteady step, the dance of gulls
clambering out of reach, the cold sting of
salt spray on the nape of my neck.

The starfish, now scattered, loll
gently in the surf. Shriveled,
alabaster shells; they are limbs,
ripped from a body that died long
ago.

Widow Rousseau

IF YOU FOLLOW THE LIMBS of my family tree, you'll find Widow Rousseau. She is the mother of a mother of a mother. She'd been long forgotten, blended in with the mass of ancestors found by genealogy websites. Try as we may, we don't know much about her, not even her name. We guess; we grasp at straws and marriage documents; we scratch our heads and give up.

There is, however, one thing we know for sure about this woman. One secret, one that might have been lost had we waited another generation to go looking for it: she was Native American: Mi'kmaq, to be exact. Her tribe was the first one to meet the French when they landed in Canada. They traded, and, most important to this story, married.

Widow Rousseau married a Frenchman in 1740. While most websites say the French and Natives got along, we'll never know what happened between these distant relatives hundreds of years ago. I try to put their story together in my mind.

I'd like to think it happened like this:

He enters our wigwam, his skin as pale as the birch bark. My mother guides him to the fire and studies him studying our home; he's met our tribe before, but he's never been welcomed inside. He looks to the corner, where my basket lies half-finished next to a pile of porcupine quills. He turns to my mother for permission, and she nods. He slowly walks to the corner, running his fingers across the woven bark. I shiver as though it were me he caressed so gently. He traces the knots and braids, wonder filling his eyes. They dart to the clay pots of wet paint, which he leans down to smell like a child. He jumps back at the harsh iron smell I know so well, and I laugh as he smiles and wipes the red pigment from his nose.

As if just realizing I'm there, he looks over to where I sit at the table. I stand, feeling my black braids brush my dress. His blond hair has grown long, as has many of the Frenchmen's, wisping around the soft skin of his temples. He wears the deer hide pants of my father and a weight belt wrapped around his muscled stomach, though I can't see it now. Only at the river, when I show him how to snare the salmon; when he shows my sisters how to float on their backs.

I lift my chin, stare into his eyes as blue as the sky, only to find him already gazing into mine.

"Welta'suwalul," he says. I smile.

But, it was probably something more like this:

This morning, twisting coils of fog rolled through my wigwam; silvery wet tendrils caressed my cheek. I dreamt I was in the woods, cold and afraid. I ran through the trees. My feet were cut by sharp rocks and pine needles. An echoing cry rippled

through the freezing forest. I stopped in my tracks long enough for a spotted owl to swoop low, dragging a single talon across my cheek. I woke to a smear of blood on my pillow.

When I rise, I go to see the puoinaq. Shadows creep over my shoulder as I lift the elk-hide flap, entering her home. I sit by the dimly burning fire, hoping the warmth will chase away the chill running down my spine. It doesn't. As I tell the woman of my dream, of the owl's screech, of the blood that stained my bed, she holds my hand, fingers tracing across my palm. She is old, older than I remember: her wrinkled arms shake as she lights the sweetgrass; each step in beat with the drums tires her frail body. But she moves faster and faster with dizzying speed, feet pounding the earth, arms and face raised to the sky and I swear she could move a mountain with only a glance of her milky eyes.

Suddenly, she stops and falls to the ground. She stays there. I rush to help her, but she backs away, putting her trembling arm between us. "Maja'sit," is all she says.

Welta'suwalul: I am happy to see you.

Majasit: leave, move, go.

Only Hens

EVERY NIGHT, Clarice turns off the lights and locks the doors, then goes to bed alone.

She lives in Arizona, in a little house on the outskirts of a tiny town where there is one general store, one post office, one funeral home. Clarice has five rust-colored chickens that she keeps in a wire pen on her kitchen floor, and every day she walks into town to sell their eggs. The woman at the general store pays her, and sometimes lets her pick out a case of cigarettes, or a bottle of lemonade, or a teeny-tiny sheet of Elvis stamps.

The ladies that Clarice passes on the street sometimes say hello to her. They wear bright red lipstick and tight gingham dresses, because there is no one left to stare at their bodies. Sometimes they invite Clarice to barbecues, or to luncheons, or to book club meetings. Clarice never says yes. Sometimes she says maybe, and sometimes she says no. But she never says yes, and she never will.

Clarice goes home as the sky turns from watery lemon yellow to plum purple, and she smokes two cigarettes on the porch while her chickens roam around the yard. Exactly three minutes before all the sunlight drains from the sky, Clarice gathers up her hens and takes them inside with her. Before it gets dark, she makes sure that her lights are all turned off and that her doors are all locked. She should probably start going in earlier, but something about the danger gives her a little thrill. It's the only real feeling she gets all day, and she savors it, like the last sip of iced tea with all the sugar soft at the bottom.

One afternoon, it begins to rain heavily as Clarice is walking back from town. The rain soaks her sheet of Elvis stamps into a wet ball of flaking slush, and it makes the Arizona dust blow up around her, damp and thick and hard to breath. She sees one of the ladies yelling at her from the cactus fields, saying words that Clarice can't hear. When Clarice reaches her house, she steps inside, and doesn't look back at the woman. She should really invite her in, but Clarice doesn't throw barbecues or luncheons or book club meetings. She dries herself with a ratty red towel in her basement, and shuts all the doors and windows against the wet, insistent wind. The sky grows completely black in a number of minutes, and Clarice doesn't turn on any lights.

The next morning, a postwoman finds the wet, mangled body of a lady in the field across from Clarice's house. Her bright red lipstick stains her chin and mixes into the congealed blood that covers her neck and chest. The funeral home prepares a nice oak coffin with a red satin interior, the ladies at the town council ignore what happened, and life goes on slowly and without changing.

Sometimes, when Clarice is feeling reckless, she wonders what it would be like to go out after dark. Sometimes she imagines turning on all the lights in her house, every single one, and running out the front door into the inky expanse of nothingness.

She thinks that her house would look like a smoldering candle, a fire, a paper-mâché lantern. She thinks that if she were to let it burn, she would finally be free.

Technically speaking, all the ladies are supposed to stay in bed After Dark, but Clarice never does. Insomnia has always bothered her, and though she hated it when she was in college or working a new job, she doesn't mind it so much now. She likes to creep around the house, through the rooms in the blackness and the dry summer heat. She peers out the window sometimes, even though she knows that she shouldn't, because she likes to see the stars: little white pinpricks in a black balloon a million miles away.

Clarice likes to eat after dark, too, because it makes her feel rebellious. She pours dry cereal and water into a chipped ceramic bowl, or eats a stick of butter from the icebox. Sometimes she dances in the kitchen, humming Hound Dog and Buddy Holly.

Seventeen nights after the lady was found in the cactus field, Clarice gets up with the sunrise and collects her chicken eggs in a wicker basket. She walks into town in the middle of the dirt road, because the ladies aren't allowed to have cars anymore. There are raspberries that grow in the shade of the boxelder maples by the river, and Clarice picks a few, wrapping them up in a dark red cloth and carefully placing them next to her eggs.

Clarice buys a tiny box of brown sugar and a bag of flour with her egg money, because she has decided to make a cake with raspberries on top. The cake comes out terrible—Clarice forgot to get baking powder, and didn't even try to make a frosting—but she is still proud of her work. She squishes some of the raspberries into an unsweetened puree, then spreads it on top of her rock-hard lump of burned flower and milk. She gives the cake to the lady who owns the general store—for her luncheon or barbecue. The lady pretends to be very impressed with Clarice, and smiles a lipstick-tooth smile so wide Clarice can see all her gums. She tells Clarice that she used to make her husband a raspberry cake every Sunday morning, and this fact makes Clarice want to take her cake back and throw up in her own mouth.

That night, as Clarice is creeping around her house, she sees a light go on out the window. Immediately, her insides go cold, and she freezes beneath the sill, hardly breathing. She knows it will be just a matter of minutes now, but she forces herself to peer outside. The light is in the far distance, among the misty black shapes that make up the town. Clarice moves away from the window, into her bedroom, where she climbs beneath the covers like she was supposed to hours earlier.

Clarice sees it the next morning as she walks into town with her chicken eggs and a heartbeat in her ears. The general store is scattered across the street; dollar mints and cartons of milk and greeting cards are broken and mixed into the gutter dust. The whole facade of the store has been torn off—Clarice can see into the old apartment up there, where a single lamp is still flickering in the dull morning light.

The mortician finds the body near the river, spread eagle on the ground, her hair torn and her neck bloody. It's Clarice that finds the photograph, though, a few dozen meters away, the glass and the frame cracked. Clarice recognizes the general store lady, and her husband, and her little son, and she also sees the red dash of raspberry that is smeared across their faces.

Clarice doesn't really know what to do after that. Sometimes ladies come to her house to buy the chicken eggs, but most of the time she just has an overflowing icebox. She hates throwing them away, but they couldn't turn into chicks even if she saved them.

One night, Clarice finds a bottle of wine in her basement, and she drinks the whole thing sitting at her kitchen table. She gets drunk fast, but doesn't black out. Instead, she boards an invisible train that takes her on a rapid, involuntary trip to the past, and for the first time in years she thinks about what it was like Before.

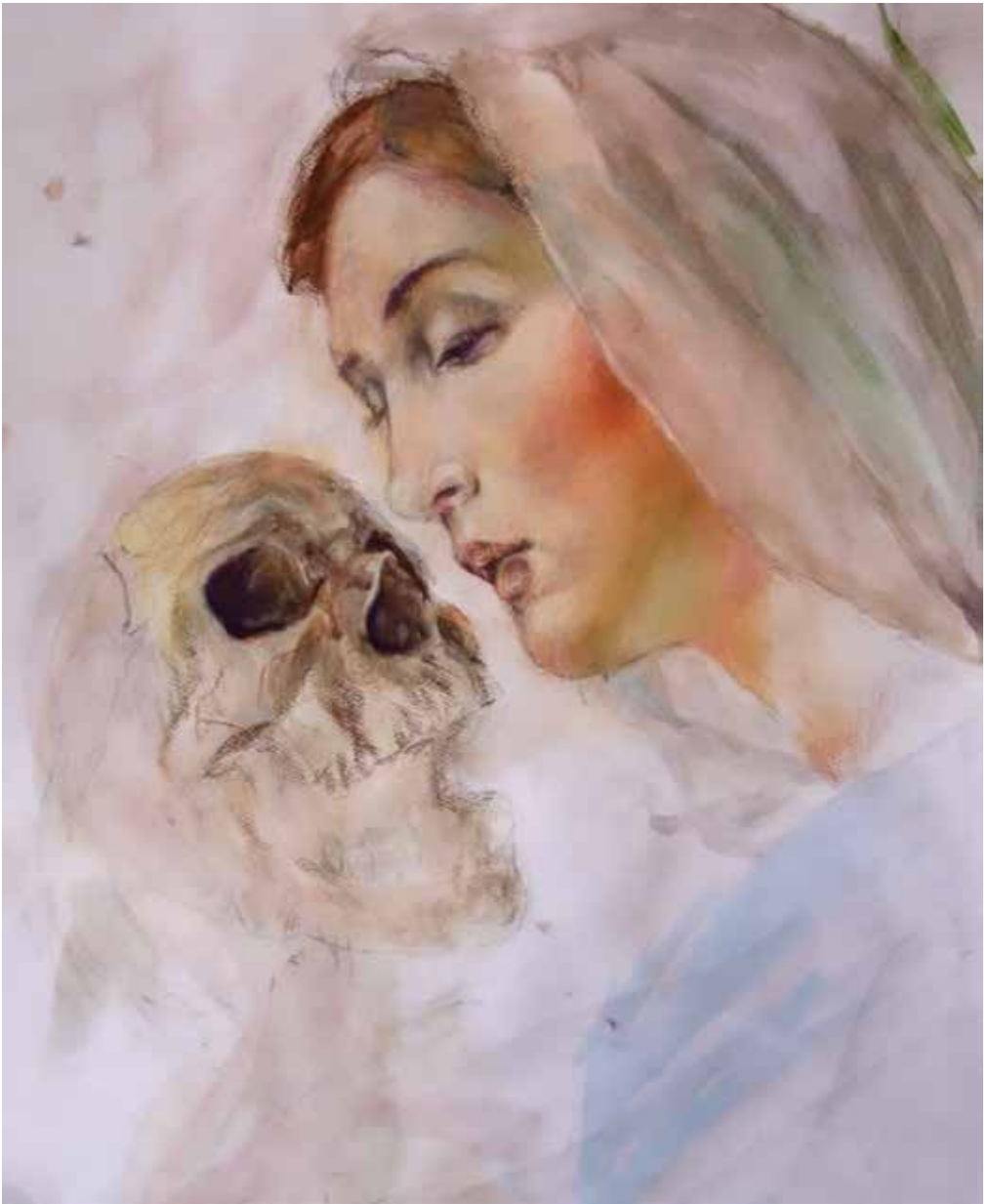
The thing that the red wine makes her miss the most is night. She misses it with an ache that makes her sob into the wine drips on the wooden table. She misses clean dew on the grass and running barefoot through meadows under the moon. She misses doing things just because she could, just because they helped her feel free.

She always used to say that one night she would sleep outside, with not even a tent to keep her from the night sky. Now she can't do that, but what she wouldn't give to be able to.

Clarice gets up, and staggers off towards her bedroom. Her footfalls are louder than they should be, but she's too far gone to care. On her way there, she accidentally bumps the wall. Her shoulder hits the kitchen light switch, and a white-gold sun suddenly floods the room.

Clarice freezes, then falls away from the light. She hits the floor hard, but then thinks *I'm not going to die sitting here in the kitchen*, and gets up. She runs through the house, turning on every light that she sees, then unlocks the door with a fumbling hand, and steps outside. She has forgotten what night air tastes like, and it's wonderful, rich and beautiful and fresh. She stands on the porch for a full minute, or maybe just what a minute feels like, then dashes down the steps into the grass. The dew cleans all the dirt and dust from her feet, every dirty thing from inside her.

Clarice hears them then, shrieking in the distance, and she begins to run. She runs and she runs and she runs, and she doesn't stop running until they catch her.



Yenedith Sanchez

La Madre

The Pit

DO YOU SEE those eyes? It's ok if you don't. They are in pretty deep.

They're watching you, from within the darkness. Don't worry. They can't hurt you. At least not right now. They are in too deep. They can't climb out.

If you listen closely, you might begin to hear the whispers. The hushed voices aren't talking to you. They are talking to each other.

How do I know this? Well, it's easy. If you learn to listen and to see.

You already know how to listen? Hah, you know how to *hear*. Listening is much harder. You may be able to hear the echoing *drip, drip*, of stalactite water through the subterranean, but if you listen, and I mean really listen; you will know the shape the water droplet makes as it plunges into its lonely puddle, even the soft ripples it makes through the strata. The hidden turnings of the earth become a part of your perception. And down, down, down, at the very edges of your awareness, you can hear them. Their cold, hungry, gibbering. Constant at the back of your mind. That's why it's important to learn how to stop listening. I am able to drown out their whispers, but just barely. Besides, it's the knowing that's worse. Knowing they are down there at the bottom of that pit. It's enough to drive a person mad.

You want to see them? No, just stick to listening for now. To see something is to understand it completely. This is not a place for seeing.

Two Sentence Horror Story

I WOKE UP to the warmth of my cat Velvet on my shoulder, the pain of her claws digging into my neck as she kneaded. I looked across the room to the empty spot on my bookcase where her ashes had laid for nearly six months, then stiffly turned to face the creature on my neck.



Lada Volkov

One with All

Black Music: Amplifying America

The impact of Black American musicians and their music on the music industry

March 15, 2022

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN INFLUENCE on American music is profound; it has shaped American music in every genre,” Retired Paly teacher Letitia Burton said. “Even bluegrass and country western music has been shaped by the African influence.”

Burton retired from Paly in 2020 but still considers herself an educator. She uses her background as an educator, personal experience as a musician, and knowledge of American history to help unpack the influence of Black musicians and music.

Many Black musicians throughout history have been underrepresented, despite their tremendous impact on the music industry. The emergence of African American culture in the United States as a result of slavery and mistreatment has heavily shaped the creation of modern music.

The term “Black Music” is used to describe the many genres that have been heavily impacted by African American musicians. From R&B, jazz, soul, blues, jazz-rock fusion, hip-hop and folk music, Black musicians have played a prominent role in the creation and evolution of modern-day music.

“[Black music] has been really influential and it has had a big impact on the music that we hear now,” senior Maia Johnsson said. “I think that without Black music from a while ago, we wouldn’t be anywhere [near] where we are right now.”

Black artists throughout American history have shaped the music industry with revolutionary and unique genres.

“African American [musicians] have made so many impacts on history, and I definitely believe our influence on music will never be forgotten,” junior O’Maria Sephers said.

After slavery came the creation of blues, a genre of music inspired by traditional African American folk music. Early blues artist Lead Belly was famous for his innovation in folk-blues.

“He introduced playing a 12 string guitar into mainstream [music], which was kind of uncommon, at least in Black music up until this point,” junior Reed Schulman said.

Other blues artists such as Elizabeth Cotten and Mississippi John Hurt were famous for their contribution to the genre as well as their talent as solo musicians.

“They’re both really talented because they are able to play a guitar where they both have a melody and an accompaniment going at the same time,” junior Phela Durosinmi said.

This method and technique of playing the guitar guided many musicians. Cotten is known for creating a new style of playing the guitar for left-handed musicians by flipping a right-handed guitar to play it properly with her left hand.

“She played it left-handed, which was just unseen at the time, and now lots of people do that,” Schulman said. “It’s kind of a moment in history where something completely original is now a form of a standard way of playing.”

Jazz, another classic American genre created in the late 19th century, boasts a rich history and influence from Black musicians.

“A lot of [jazz] came from the South and New Orleans,” Durosinmi said. “And it was almost all African American.”

Jazz was created as a blend of blues and ragtime, an example of merging of African and European music which included syncopated rhythms.

“I like that jazz can take many forms,” Durosinmi said. “It’s very fluid and finds its way into many forms of music.”

Some notable Black jazz figures include: Scott Joplin, who brought attention to ragtime, Grant Green, known for blending styles, Louis Armstrong, who moved the focus of music to solo performances and Don Shirley, who mixed jazz with a classical influence. These are just a few of many who shaped the music industry.

“Grant Green plays a lot of covers and has refined a very clean and distinct tone,” Durosinmi said. “He is able to put new spins on other people’s music while leaving his mark on them.”

Another notable jazz figure is Ella Fitzgerald, who is sometimes called “The First Lady of Song”.

“When I listen to Ella Fitzgerald she has such a pure sound and she has an incredible range,” Burton said. “She can [sound] light as a feather but she can also be really deep and soulful.”

The pillars of Black music have spread to many other genres. Rock and roll was created by Black musicians such as Chuck Berry, another example of the clash between European instrumentals and the African American R&B, short for rhythm and blues music tradition which managed to create an innovative new genre which spread wide and was adored by fans black and white.

Rock and Roll Musicians include Little Richard, who was famous for his glorious performances and piano skills, and Jimi Hendrix who was one of the most impactful guitar players of all time.

“[Hendrix] led the way into exploring the endless possibilities of the guitar,” Schulman said. “He formed a new sound that’s replicated today but probably will never be made again successfully.”

Starting in the 1940s, new genres such as R&B emerged. Artists Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles led the rise of this new genre that is still very popular today.

By the end of the 20th century, rap music started to become popular, with well-known hits such as 50 Cent “In Da Club” and Nelly’s “Hot in Herre” coming out in the early 2000s.

“I went to college in the late ‘90s and early 2000’s,” Paly band teacher Gregory Miller said. “The influences of individuals like Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Ice T and Ice Cube from the late ‘80s and ‘90s paved the way for artists like Nelly and Jay Z.”

Rap music has continued to change throughout the years as new musicians bring new ideas.

“I think it’s really fun to see how [rap has] evolved through the words they use, the tone, and the speed at which they are rapping,” Johnsson said.

Living as a Black musician in America post-reconstruction offered its struggles. Lead Belly, an inmate in the deep south, often sang about the issues which plagued his day.

“He talked about racism and prison and also politics,” Schulman said.

Black music is often shaped by the experience of Black Americans, whose lives and experiences are reflected through song.

“I feel like every song, whatever genre, you know, gospel, R&B, Blues, Jazz, all of it is really a story,” Sephers said.

Black musicians have used their voices to bring important issues to light. For those who have managed to gain credit and success for their artistic endeavors, their lyrics reach a large audience and can have meaningful impacts.

“A lot of black music really tries to embrace culture and bring out what they [the artists] are thinking of and who they are,” Johnsson said. “And I think that’s really fun to listen to because I get to feel like I’m seeing a bit into this musician’s life and seeing what they are interested in.”

An example of a song that sheds light on prevalent issues is ‘Alright’ by Kendrick Lamar which references promises given to enslaved people that were never received, as well as talking about police targeting the Black community.

For many black musicians in history, music has been a medium through which they could gain independence and success, despite the racism of their times as well as allowing them the ability to express their culture and struggles.


“I think music is actually one of the mediums where [Black musicians are] the most accurate and most equally represented,” Durosinmi said.

However, there is still work to be done to increase representation for Black musicians in some genres, such as classical music, where credit for Black musicians is severely lacking.

“In the world of classical music, we still have a very long way to go, as is illustrated by the lack of diversity in published lists of recommended music published for band and orchestras out there available to teachers,” Miller said.


The largest distributor of music recommended for orchestras and bands in the United States, JWPepper, carries a very small number of compositions written by Black musicians.

“This list includes only 1.3% of historically underrepresented composers,” Miller said. “This is why I work so hard to find music sourced by composers from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds that are more representative of our community here in Palo Alto.”




Schulman agrees that not all Black musicians are given the amount of recognition and coverage that they deserve.

“There have been Black musicians who have had massive influence over the young population and across racial divides that haven’t received much credit, if any,” Schulman said.



An example of this is Chuck Berry, who was put in as a co-writer for something he wrote by himself, leading him to receive less credit for his own song.

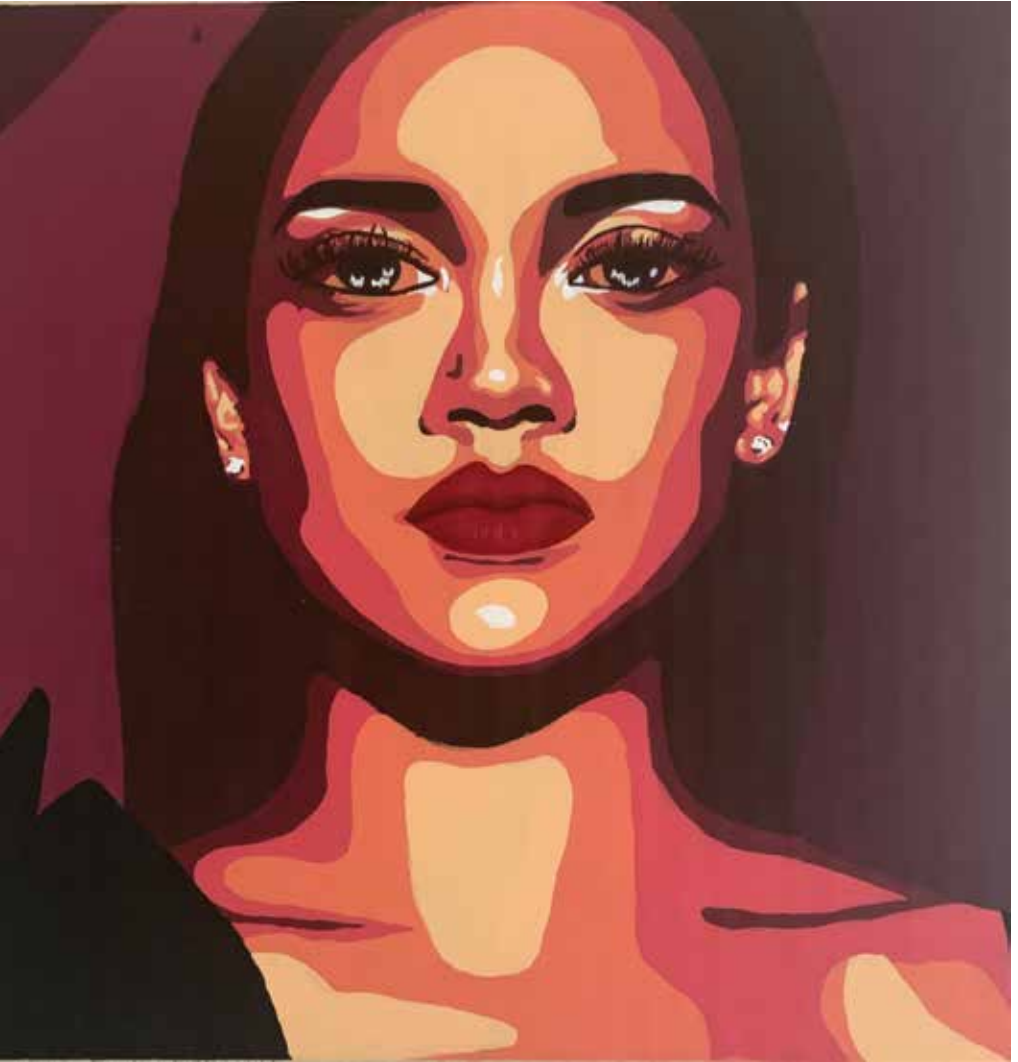


Though not always given the proper credit, Black musicians have been immensely impactful to the music industry in the past and present day.

“I would just think that without the influence of African Americans and American music, [music] wouldn’t be what it is now,” Burton said.

Black music and musicians have impacted the entirety of the music industry. Most, if not all, musical genres owe credit to Black musicians.

“We’ll always see undertones and the influence of historical Black music like blues, soul, funk, gospel, jazz,” Schulman said. “And it’s [historical Black music that] paved the way for the modernization of Black music which has become, thankfully, more and more mainstream.”



Lily Boyer

Rhiannon

At the Center of 'the Drug Triangle'

For McHenry County, opioid deaths and overdoses are not a far-away problem, so who and what does it take to keep the epidemic at bay?

IT TAKES A VILLAGE to combat an epidemic and McHenry County is no stranger to that.

Like much of the United States, McHenry County is grappling with the effects of opioid use. This year alone, the county has lost around 138 lives to opioid overdoses, per McHenry County Department of Health data.

What led to a skyrocket in opioid deaths in 2017 is unclear and a complicated research question. There were around 24 deaths per 100,000 people that year, compared to 13 just two years prior. At the time, the county was in the top five for most opioid overdose deaths.

A possible explanation is McHenry County's unique location at the center of Chicago, Milwaukee and Rockford—what experts call “the drug triangle” because of easy drug access through connected highways.

To this day, McHenry County maintains moderately high numbers of fatal and non-fatal overdoses.

The term “opioids” refers to the entire family of opiate drugs, which can be natural or synthetic. Some, like oxycodone and Vicodin, are prescribed following surgeries or health conditions like cancer. Others, like heroin and fentanyl, are obtained illegally through drug dealers.

Both synthetic and natural opioids work similarly—they attach to opiate receptors on nerve cells and block pain messages from reaching the brain. Because of this, opioids can be highly addictive, as people enjoy the euphoria.

With prescription opioids, addiction occurs by taking medication in a way other than prescribed, taking someone else's medication or intentionally taking it to get high.

That is how the nationwide epidemic came to be; pharmaceutical companies assured patients they would not become addicted. At the time, they didn't understand the effects opioids had on people. Today, over 10.1 million people in the United States misuse opioid medication and over 1.6 million have an opioid use disorder.

Illinois, along with several midwest states, was cited as one of the states with the highest drug overdose rates in 2020, with 3,549 deaths.

Together, local government entities and community organizations seek to keep the opioid epidemic at bay. Through policies and resources, they aim to lower opioid-related overdoses and deaths that have taken many lives from McHenry County through the years. This is their side of the story.

The families

Junior Kyle Stojak was only in the 7th grade when his cousin died after struggling with opioid use. Stojak had known him for a long time and recalls hanging out with him at family gatherings.

“I was on my way home when I FaceTimed with him while he was lying in the hospital bed, unable to speak,” he said. “A couple of hours later, he didn’t make it.”

Stojak notes that while his cousins were using opioids, they became more financially unstable and careless with their decisions and actions—an experience shared by many families of people with addictions.

“[My uncle] stole my dad’s car radio to get money to purchase drugs,” a senior, who wished to remain anonymous for privacy reasons, said. “Since his passing, my grandparents still haven’t gotten over the fact that he’s gone.”

Both students mentioned that when their respective family members died, they left behind many loved ones. Now, those individuals are coping with their father, uncle, boyfriend, son or grandson being gone.

“My uncle had an overdose and passed away,” added the anonymous senior. “He left his child and girlfriend. It’s hard seeing my cousin grow up in a fatherless household.”

Often, society considers substance abuse disorders moral failures rather than medical conditions. Because of this, both people with substance abuse disorders and their families tend to avoid discussing their struggles.

“When I was younger, I found it hard to discuss [my family’s struggles],” the anonymous senior said. “I thought people would judge me. I thought people would be like, ‘Oh, so that runs in your family? Maybe you partake in that stuff, too.’”

A person’s decision to seek rehab or help often depends on the treatment they receive from society and loved ones. Thus, the stigma surrounding substance use tends to harm those struggling, noted the students.

“Society should go out of their way to help those with issues,” Stojak said. “Many people will refuse to seek rehab, like one of my uncles for example. Not taking actions is not going to solve the problem by itself.”

Loved ones of people who died or are struggling with opioid use need support, too, notes the anonymous senior. Seeing family struggle can take a toll on them, so help from the community is helpful.

“Honestly, just be there for them,” they said. “Help them out. If you can, be a shoulder to cry on. Be a person that they can talk to about their struggles and hardships.”

The state’s attorney office

The McHenry County State’s Attorney office first noticed opioid-related deaths skyrocket in 2017. Upholding public safety, the office implemented policies to hold drug dealers and those who share drugs accountable that same year.

“We became the most aggressive county in the country with prosecuting drug-induced homicide,” Assistant State’s Attorney Brian Miller, who supervises drug prosecutions, said. “That’s part of the approach we’ve taken locally.”

Almost six years later, McHenry County continues to track several opioid-related deaths and overdoses each month. Attempting to get accountability, State's Attorney Patrick Kenneally filed a lawsuit this August against pharmaceutical companies for their alleged role in the epidemic.

"Particularly, we joined [the lawsuit] because the opioid epidemic...is not just a far-away problem," Miller explained. "It's a problem that's hit close to home here in McHenry."

The original lawsuit aims to hold opioid manufacturers and distributors accountable for profiting off medications in a way that contributed to the United States' growing opioid epidemic. Specifically, it claims there was little oversight and regulation when filling opioid prescriptions.

"That's not the sole cause of the opioid epidemic by any means," Miller said. "It's a multifaceted problem with many causes. We're trying to address [it] as best as we can, so this is just one way we're fighting [for] accountability."

Pharmaceutical companies could not comment on their practices due to pending litigation.

Miller added that several lawsuits against Walgreens, Walmart, CVS and other big-name pharmacies are still ongoing. McHenry County has had previous success in one of these opioid-related suits.

"There's a massive settlement...in which McHenry County got approximately 3.4 million dollars," he said. "Although, that's paid out over the years, so [immediate] compensation is somewhat smaller."

Meanwhile, the State's Attorney Office continues a multifaceted response to the epidemic. McHenry County works closely with the Substance Abuse Coalition and other community-based organizations to brainstorm ways to combat the crisis.

"We've also implemented, to the best of our ability, strict terms to probation for addicts—requiring drug tests weekly, in addition to rehab or other monitoring," Miller added. "We really want to be involved; we need to keep a close leash. Opioid addiction is very, very hard to overcome."

Unprecedented challenges along the way include Illinois' proposed House Bill 3447. It would make possessing specified amounts of opioids and other drugs Class A misdemeanors instead of felonies if passed.

"Our office is opposed to it," Miller said. "I don't want to speak completely on behalf of Mr. Kenneally, but I will say that we don't see that removing penalties for drug possession is going to help addicts in any way."

He added that the potential of a felony functions as a deterrent to keep individuals from using or selling opioids. Felonies come with prison time and hefty fines. In contrast, misdemeanors typically come with a fine not exceeding \$2,500.

"In our experience, people have not willingly gotten the help they need," Miller said. "Some do. But, people get into treatment because there's the penalty of incarceration."

Though there are challenges, the State's Attorney Office constantly brainstorms and discusses appropriate responses to help those with substance use struggles.

“I can say that our office is very sympathetic to the tragedies that occur in our community with regards to drug addiction and overdoses,” Miller said. “We don’t get it right every time, but...we’re trying our best to make a difference, fully acknowledging that the solution is not going to end with our office.”

The department of health

To keep McHenry County informed, the Department of Health releases an “Opioid Surveillance Report” monthly. It details emergency department visits and opioid overdoses, along with data on the race, ethnicity and age of those affected.

In November, around Thanksgiving, McHenry County saw an increase in suspected opioid overdose deaths and ED visits. There were a total of 20 deaths and 135 ED visits.

“IDPH and CDC have presented data that suggests overdoses increase in the holiday season due to stress,” Epidemiology Lead Ryan Sachs and Prevention and Response Lead Chrissy Wasson wrote in an email. “This could potentially explain the recent increase...however, we [can’t] determine if this is the exact reason.”

In McHenry County, overdose deaths predominantly occur among males aged 20–29 who identify as non-Latino or Hispanic white. Many substances contribute to the epidemic locally, but one, in particular, contributes to overdoses the most: fentanyl.

“These groups generally have the highest rates of substance use in McHenry County as well,” Sachs and Wasson added. “The recent spike in fatal overdoses that were seen in 2020 was due to fentanyl. This is the main substance involved in fatal overdoses in 2021–2022 as well.”

A few years back, the MCDH launched its Opioid Surveillance, Prevention and Response Program to respond to the opioid crisis. It uses surveillance data and information from community partners to determine increases in overdoses and deaths, called clusters.

“In response to clusters,” Sachs and Wasson wrote, “we send out communications to the Opioid Surveillance Workgroup, professionals in this domain and the community.”

The workgroup includes community members involved in opioid prevention and response activities, such as the Substance Abuse Coalition, law enforcement, hospitals and emergency medical services. Members work to communicate information and develop responses to clusters.

“MCDH has also created an Overdose Prevention and Response Team that distributes resources, education and Naloxone in the community,” Sachs and Wasson added. “Naloxone can be obtained for free at both Health Department locations. MCDH also provides presentations...in the schools.”

Sachs and Wasson add that several Illinois laws aid the community in addressing the opioid epidemic. For example, the Hospital Licensing Act requiring hospitals to report overdose treatment within 48 hours aids in collecting data for the Opioid Surveillance Report.

The “Good Samaritan” Act also protects individuals using opioids and those helping in case of an overdose. It allows a person to call 911 or go to an emergency

room without being prosecuted for possessing certain drugs.

“The state [also] has a policy that allows any organization or community member to request Narcan [Naloxone brand] from the state for free,” Sachs and Wasson added. “This allows many organizations, including MCDH, to give out Narcan to the public.”

Even when no opioid-related clusters occur, the MCDH regularly meets with the Opioid Surveillance Workgroup to evaluate changes in the opioid epidemic and discuss surveillance, prevention and response initiatives.

“There have not been any major changes in the opioid epidemic this year in comparison to previous years,” Sachs and Wasson conclude. “Based on current data, our fatal and non-fatal overdoses are on track to be lower for 2022 in comparison to previous years.”

The Substance Abuse Coalition

The Substance Abuse Coalition, a local organization, provides services for individuals struggling with substance use. It works with local government entities and nearly 300 members to combat the epidemic. Represented are schools, governments, law enforcement, parents and more.

Together, members look at substance use from different angles to determine policy and gaps in services.

“To anybody in the community, we offer help connecting to treatment providers if people have either no insurance or poor insurance,” Program Coordinator Laurie Crain said. “We can also link to recovery services like Alcoholics Anonymous and other recovery programs for specific groups.”

The Coalition also provides resources for its member organizations and educational programs for schools, especially when there are increases in overdose deaths.

“We try to keep people informed, so they know what’s happening in our community real-time,” Crain said. “That kind of activates the partners to offer support that might be needed to keep [overdose and death] numbers lower and get help outwards.”

Crain adds that SAC, first and foremost, seeks to help those struggling. Because of this, when a person uses its resources, they are not reported to law enforcement for possessing controlled substances.

“We understand that people are human and need help,” she said. “There are people who say, ‘I’m using. I don’t want to stop, but I want to understand something.’ So we have partners who will educate them on how to use smarter, so they don’t run as many risks of overdosing.”

To help, the Coalition encourages individuals to test their drugs for fentanyl, the substance most commonly responsible for overdoses in the county. Community organizations like Live4Lali and Warp Corps offer fentanyl test strips at no cost.

Naloxone, or Narcan, is an opioid overdose reversal medicine. The SAC promotes having it readily available, as it could be life-saving. It is available at no cost through community organizations.

“That’s what we want people to have in their hands,” Crain said. “I personally don’t have someone in my life who uses, but I carry Naloxone because if I’m in a setting where someone might use, I might need it just like CPR.”

Together, community partners and SAC have also developed a waste diversion program. In it, anyone can walk into a participating police department and say, “I need help,” and turn in their substances. There are no penalties and a person will get help with treatment.

“We work with DrugCourt, which is a different system where people agree to be in it and they get treatment, help with employment, housing and other things,” Crain said. “If they stay in the system long enough, they can have their records cleaned so they don’t have [a hard time].”

Amid the opioid epidemic, SAC continues to review its resources and establish new ones to meet the community’s needs.

“The Health Department is part of that,” Crain said. “The State’s Attorney is part of that. Whichever partners are key to developing those programs come together to do so.”

Recognizing the signs of an opioid overdose can be a matter of life or death for someone. These include unresponsiveness, slow heartbeat, pinpoint pupils, irregular or stopped breathing and pale or clammy skin. Administer Naloxone and call 911 in case of an overdose.

McHenry County has combated the epidemic for some time now; and there’s more resources available than ever.

Local organizations like the Substance Abuse Coalition, Live4Lali and Warp Corps can further provide resources, including Naloxone.

Stolen Art, Stolen Stories

The misrepresentation of art obscures the cultures that created it

STEPPING INTO A MUSEUM, surrounded by an array of art from different time periods and cultures, you might wonder about the unique backstory of each piece of art. However, the backstories on the museum plaques may not be wholly accurate. The art may have a convoluted path from creation to exhibition.

Unfortunately, a historical perspective reveals a long list of instances when works of art were taken from their culture of origin without consent and misrepresented, causing the art to lose its original meaning.

Kylie Harrison, a research coordinator at KR&I who majored in history and government at Claremont McKenna, is well aware of the longstanding issue of art being taken from entire groups of people and displayed in museums or galleries elsewhere.

“[Colonizing] countries went into other nations around the world, whether in Asia or in Africa or in Latin America,” Harrison said. “And during [the era of imperialism], the government permitted their countrymen to engage in the looting of those nations for different types of art.”

Sue La Fetra, the Paly AP Art History teacher, notes the immorality of these actions. “It’s essentially stealing,” La Fetra said. “It’s a complete disregard for other people’s cultures.”

Colonizing countries often pilfer art from places they imperialize. “The British Museum is a collection of art that they have taken from around the world,” La Fetra said. “There are examples from all over; they have the Moai from the South Pacific and the Frieze from the Parthenon. Greece asks for [the Frieze] back every year.”

There are certain justifications used to defend such theft. “The [British] said it’s better off here [in the British Museum] because we will preserve it, and Greece has an unstable government, and it might not be as preserved as well,” La Fetra said. “Greece built a museum to hold the Frieze, and they still refuse to give it back. That’s just outrageous.”

Large-scale art theft is also a matter of societal power imbalance. “Minority groups—the people without power—are most vulnerable to having their art stolen,” La Fetra said.

Going deeper into the heart of the issue, La Fetra explains how this disregard for minority groups and their input is justified by museums that refuse to acknowledge the hurt caused by keeping stolen artifacts. “You can find in the British Museum a story behind every artifact,” La Fetra said. “This is how they justify themselves, that people from around the world will come to see it and are educated on its significance.”

For example, during the late 1800s, Britain would invade other countries and take their art. At the British Museum, there is an exhibit showcasing the moai, two stone statues originally belonging to Easter Island. The Easter Island governor has begged the British Museum to return the moai due to the symbolic meaning of the statues and their importance to the culture.

Although the stealing and misrepresentation of art can not be undone, Harrison believes actions can and should be taken to help ease the relationship between the colonizers and the cultures whose art have been stolen.

Museums should now act with the future in mind, not the past. “You can’t undo history,” Harrison said. “You can’t change history, but you can return some of [the art] back.”

Museum curators, including those here in the Bay Area, are taking steps to address the issue of stolen art, but there is still more that can be done. “I think there need to be conversations—and there already are conversations happening,” La Fetra said. “There’s the De Young in San Francisco that just recently gave back Aztec artwork to Mexico. Not all of it, but a lot of it.”

Another example of remedying the misrepresentation of art in modern-day is through decolonizing initiatives, such as in the Museum of Us in San Diego. In the past, the museum had acquired indigenous people’s belongings that were taken during the Apache Wars. To represent the belongings correctly and acknowledge that the museum was built on indigenous people’s grounds, Micah Parzen, the director of the Museum of Us at San Diego, decided to begin decolonizing the museum through holding conversations with indigenous people.

“It’s a long history [but] it’s the right thing to do,” Parzen said. The Museum of Us is working on an initiative to decolonize their museum with a collection of indigenous peoples’ belongings after discovering that thousands of items were misrepresenting indigenous peoples.

Often, it is unclear where art originated from, either because it was stolen more than once from more than one culture or because it has already been in the possession of the colonizing country for a substantial period of time. However, Harrison believes this is no excuse.


“There’s a responsibility to find [the origin of the art] and demonstrate it,” Harrison said.

Knowing the origin of a piece of art provides context and brings a more wholesome understanding of the art. “By obscuring the identity of the artists, you’re also obscuring some of the meaning of the piece,” Harrison said.

Understanding other cultures is often achieved by observing and understanding their art. “[Learning about art from other cultures] does serve a purpose, a very important purpose for making people appreciate and acknowledge differences in beauty that transcends cultural boundaries,” Harrison said.


People behind the scenes get to decide what is shown in museums, affecting how people in a community view certain cultures and ethnicities.

“Making our museums...more inclusive and acknowledging the fact that history has been written by the victors and history has been written by the dominant




culture and [recognizing] that informs what we get to see...it's starting to happen but progress still needs to be made," Harrison said.

Art conveys cultural value; it has the ability to inform people's understandings of society and the people around them. "It's important for people to see cultures outside of their own," Harrison said.



When the art world grows and changes its representation of cultures, the rest of the world follows suit. "I think the world has gotten better at recognizing that no culture is better or worse than others.," La Fetra said. "We still have a long way to go."



Museums are an important resource to represent marginalized cultures if done through an accurate lens. "It's the responsibility of museums to include perspectives that are different and from different artists," Harrison said. "And they should do that while also making sure that they're not perpetuating issues they're hoping to fight."

A Moment Captured

Gordon Parks uses his camera as a weapon against injustice

“A LOADED CAMERA: Gordon Parks” features the work of African-American photojournalist Gordon Parks and showcases his groundbreaking impact on American history. As a self-taught photographer, Parks highlighted the everyday lives of Black people and broke socioeconomic barriers surrounding him.

As a tribute to his work, Elizabeth Mitchell, the co-director at the Cantor Arts Center in Palo Alto, curated a three-part collection of his photographs, with the last part on view until July 3, 2022. Mitchell began the process of curating the exhibition to showcase Parks’s story-telling ability.

“Parks was so incredibly talented at focusing on just a few people and using those human figures in their setting...to tell a story, just in one photograph,” Mitchell said.

Parks focused his work during the 1950s and 60s and documented the stories of the people he encountered. He photographed oppressed people throughout the Civil Rights era and during times of social unrest.

“He took a lot of, at the time, really challenging images and showed Black Americans living as they absolutely live,” Mitchell said.

In the 1950s and 60s, it was unusual to photograph people in disadvantaged situations, especially when these photos were taken by a Black photographer. Parks represented a shift in American society as a Black photographer documenting Black experiences in a world primarily photographed by white photographers. Ultimately, Parks felt it was his mission to show the truth of America.

“He showed economic, very real circumstances around him that showed how institutionalized racism was, and is in America,” Mitchell said.

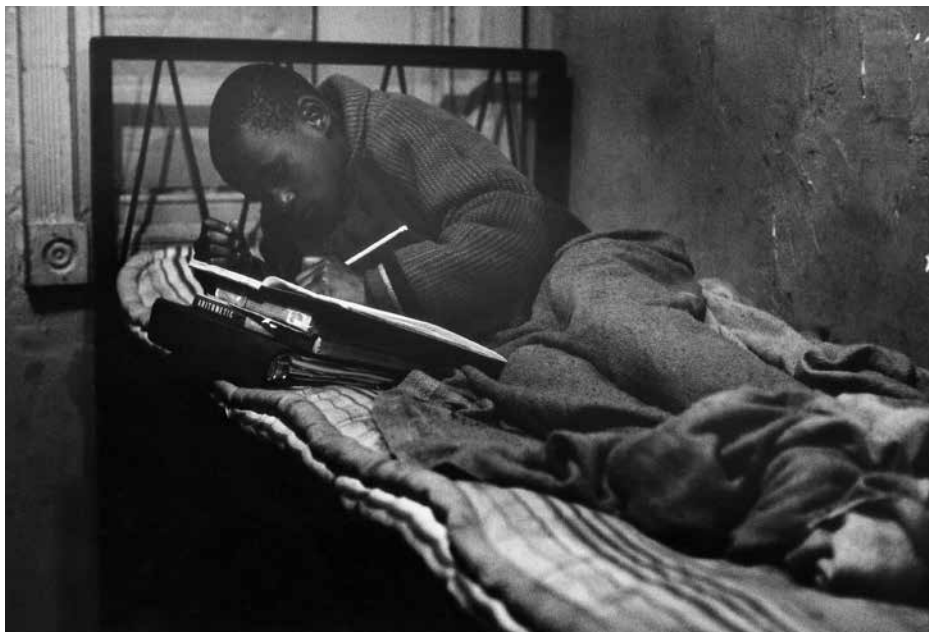
One particular image that captures the ‘realness’ of Parks’s photographs is his portrayal of “A Harlem Family 1967.” Parks lived in a poverty-stricken family’s tenement and took portraits of their daily life.

“To get those stories, you build trust, and you walk in someone else’s shoes,” Mitchell said. “You don’t just read about it and experience it at a distance, you have to really be there.”

When “A Harlem Family 1967” was published, the audience response was immediate—with monetary support.

Even today, Park’s authentic and important work has continued to have a positive, emotional effect on people. Jade Minskoff, a Paly junior and AP Art History student, visited the exhibit with her class on a field trip.

“There’s a lot of consistency. It’s like there’s realness in it. There’s emotion. It’s raw. It’s how life is and he really goes out of his way to portray that,” Minskoff said.



Untitled, *Harlem, New York, 1967* Gordon Parks

After attending the exhibit, Minskoff found a deeper appreciation for photography as a whole. Parks's photos helped her realize the significance of capturing an entire narrative into a single shot.

"Realizing that there's an ability to show so much emotion and so much context from just one photo made me appreciate photos even more," Minskoff said.

The exhibit helped Minskoff acknowledge the importance of imperfections in art to show a genuine story.

"In our society, we've been conditioned to think that a photo is supposed to be perfect," Minskoff said. "I want to see the realness and the beauty and actually how life is."

Parks's photos illuminate a discussion of racism and inequality in America, a topic that is still relevant today.

"It's good to remember that there were people photographing this and the circumstances around this decades ago," Mitchell said. "We've been having these conversations and finding these things out for a very long time."

Parks's work continues to influence modern-day views of prejudice and racism, and change perceptions around the art of photography. The impact Parks leaves behind creates an eye-opening view of our country and society for all who experience his art.

"It's often said that Gordon Parks showed America Black America," Mitchell said. "But I think it's more accurate to say he showed America to America."

Photograph by Gordon Parks. Courtesy of and copyright The Gordon Parks Foundation

Alice Ginsburg and the Legacy of the Holocaust: Lessons for Today's Youth

Alice Ginsburg, now 91, wants today's young people to gain insights into the urgency of fighting hate from her experiences during the Holocaust.

In response to the increase in anti-Semitic attacks across the country, the following is a reminder to us all of the importance of remembrance and of respect.

WHEN ALICE GINSBURG was packed into a train car in May of 1944, she had little idea where she was headed, or for how long. Her family's provisions were meager and the amount of time they would have to sustain them unclear. As such, her fear of using up their supplies triumphed even over her love for the chocolate kokosh cake her mother had prepared. Yet for however long and whatever reason they would be away, Ginsburg assumed that once their purpose had been served—her father predicted they would be doing labor for the Nazi regime—she and her family would return home.

The sight that greeted her when the train's doors opened three or four days later, however, suggested a very different reality. Clearly visible even in the middle of the night were the gleaming boots and vicious dogs of the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, the Nazi Party's elite guard and leaders of the "Final Solution" (a Nazi euphemism for Jewish annihilation). Behind them rose flames and smoke from nearby crematoriums. Ginsburg's family had arrived at Auschwitz.

"When my father saw what was waiting for us, he thought we were all going to be killed," said Ginsburg. "So he started to say a prayer. A prayer that you say before you die."

Students at Payton College Prep come from schools all over the city and have vastly differing levels of knowledge about the events of World War II. Although Illinois was the first state to mandate a Holocaust education in 1990, the time devoted to the subject varies greatly from place to place, and curricula are often incomplete or even factually misleading. Also significant for a school where nearly 4 in 5 students have taken an AP course is the fact that students taking advanced placement classes are shown to receive markedly less Holocaust instruction than those in the non-AP courses.

In this spirit, and in honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, below is the story of Alice Ginsburg, 91, who shared her memories of life before, during, and after World War II.

Blessing Over the Children

Ginsburg grew up in an Orthodox Jewish household, and described her childhood as a simple one. Resentment or fear of the Jewish community in 1930s Czechoslovakia, she said, “wasn’t out in the open.” Owning a radio was forbidden by the government, and what little news of outside events she and her siblings had access to came from her father’s visits to the synagogue. Rather, what preoccupied her thoughts were relatively everyday affairs: looking forward to gathering with family on the Sabbath, jump-roping with her mostly Jewish friends, and even once or twice smuggling hides under her coat to clients of her father’s black market tanning business.

Then, in 1939, trouble arrived in the form of Hungarian troops. All eligible men were sent to work building railroads and digging trenches for their invaders, and World War II claimed its first casualties from her family as many of Ginsburg’s uncles and cousins died amid months of hard labor and mistreatment. “He sent us postcards, saying ‘hope keeps us going,’” remembered Ginsburg of her father.

It was a philosophy she would find herself living by in the months to come. “The Hungarians did the preliminary work for the Nazis; they made these men work for the war effort,” she recalled. When the German army did arrive, in 1944, her father “came home, only to be mobilized into a ghetto.”

The ensuing relocation to a new part of town, the weeks of crowded living and limited food, the days-long train ride that followed—at none of these points, said Ginsburg, did her teenage self know what was happening to her community, or why. The only way she could measure the events around her was by the seismic changes happening in her own life.

Kaddish: The Mourner’s Prayer

On arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau, those who had survived the journey were told to separate by sex, leaving Ginsburg with her mother, 9 year-old sister, aunt, and grandmothers. Together, they walked on until they encountered a group of Polish Jews, who were forced to make the first selection of prisoners to be sent to their deaths. Supervising them was Josef Mengele, an SS physician who would later become notorious for the medical experiments he conducted on the Auschwitz population. But to Alice Ginsburg at that time, he was only the man who was trying to tear her away from her mother.

“I ran back, and I told him I want to stay with my mother,” she said. “He insisted that I go, and I ran away again. I even told him I’m only 13.” It made no difference. In fact, she later learned that it was policy for all those under 14 to be automatically sent to their deaths. “Maybe he didn’t understand me, because I spoke to him in Yiddish versus German. He just didn’t want to deal with me.”

Instead, a nearby prisoner was told to handle her, and took her away from the last family she had with her in the camp. Through tears, Ginsburg recalled: “We said our goodbyes. We hugged and kissed. And I never saw her again, or my sister. It was a painful episode I will never forget.”

After that night, Ginsburg was initiated—head shaved, “disinfected,” and dressed in a striped uniform—and her days at Auschwitz passed in uniform misery. Every day, prisoners were woken early and received their rations: every day, a piece

of bread and a bit of green soup containing an ingredient designed to stop menstrual cycles. In some women, the liquid induced vomiting or diarrhea and they refused it; Ginsburg, determined to survive, ate it all. “The only thing we could think about was food,” she said.

The desperation drove some in the camp to attempt stealing others’ rations, so she slept, on her unpadded and uncovered bunk, with her bread under her head. “Starvation,” she said when recalling this, “can make you do a lot of things.”

Tefilat Haderech—The Prayer of the Way

Through it all, however, Ginsburg persevered. After avoiding selection in months of twice-daily countings that determined which prisoners would be sent to the killing camp that day, she was transferred to Langenbielau. Life at the internment center was similar to Auschwitz but distinguished by the work prisoners did at a munitions factory five miles away and the extra daily piece of bread they received, which would supposedly help them walk the ten miles each day and concentrate on the job.

And even when forced on a three-day Death March, on which many of those around her died from exhaustion or were shot for failing to maintain their speed, Ginsburg forced herself forward. “I never felt like giving up. I just pushed myself,” said Ginsburg of those two years. “I kept on hoping to survive, because if you’re hopeless, then you can’t survive. You need hope to keep on going.”


In the end, it paid off. One day shortly after the Death March, Ginsburg woke up to find her camp completely abandoned, the Nazi officials having left in the face of oncoming Russian Liberators. In the weeks that followed, Ginsburg made her way back to her hometown. With the help of some uncles there and various postwar agencies, she was reunited with her father and brother in Budapest.

At every town and home, great suffering was evident in the aftermath of the war; Ginsburg found it particularly difficult to talk about her aunt, who was separated in a concentration camp from her eight children. Yet she was determined to look forward rather than back. Boarding a ship to America, where her some of her fathers’ relatives had settled, she began building a new life for herself.

Yizkor: Remembrance

In the US, Alice Ginsburg, between working to support her family and attending night school to learn English, earned both high school and college degrees. She now has 3 children, 8 grandchildren, and a dozen great-grandchildren, all of whom she says she keeps in close contact with. Eager to put her past behind her, she initially told her children only what they asked about her life and did not give anyone the full account of what she experienced until approached by a historian in 1983.

After that, however, Ginsburg said she was motivated to speak at her grandchildren’s high schools, to make sure future generations remember the “unbelievable atrocities” that she and so many others lived through. Though telling her story doesn’t get any easier with time, she says she views the recording and sharing of her story as even more significant in the wake of rebounding anti-Semitism across Europe and the US.



The average age of Holocaust survivors today is 83.9, meaning that Payton students belong to one of the last generations able to learn firsthand from the experiences of men and women who lived through the atrocities of Nazi Germany. At a time when anti-Semitism and lack of historical awareness is growing—including among high schools—it’s increasingly vital that we, the voters, thinkers, and storytellers of the future, each embrace and pass on the lessons that survivors want us to hear.

This reality is what led Ginsburg to accept a request to share her experiences and answer questions from the author and other teenagers, as she wants to ensure that this generation doesn’t forget the crucial legacy of the events she lived through.

“Hatred doesn’t discriminate,” she emphasized. “Hatred against Jews is hatred against humanity.” Accordingly, she hopes her story will impress upon every student and future leader that “For evil to flourish takes good men to do nothing,” and that it is the responsibility of every individual to fight against divisiveness.

“Love,” she ended simply, “is better than hate.”

LGBTQ+ Landmark: Biden Signs Respect for Marriage Act

ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, interracial and same-sex couples are sighing with relief as the government is finally officially protecting their marriages and their rights. After the public's long wait for the approval of their fellow Americans' basic human rights, Republicans and Democrats put their differences aside to prioritize the importance of love. Although religious concerns arose throughout the bill's journey, lawmakers followed through on their promise to give legal protection to all marriages, regardless of the people they unite.

On Dec. 13, President Joe Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act, which secures federal protections for same-sex and interracial couples. Surprisingly, the bill passed with bipartisan support in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.


To truly understand the struggle that has been achieving the approval for the Respect for Marriage Act, it is key to note the ups and downs our former presidents and their administrations have had regarding marriage and LGBTQ+ acceptance.

In an interview on National Broadcasting Company News' "Meet the Press" in 2012, former Vice President Biden announced that he believed marriage should be about who people love and are loyal to, no matter if they are heterosexual. He affirmed that he thought all of these couples should be entitled to the same rights and civil liberties.


The recent cases of *United States v. Windsor* (2013) and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) referred to the Defense of Marriage Act, a federal law stating in its third section that the terms "marriage" and "spouse" legally referred to legal unions between one man and one woman as husband and wife. DOMA was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on Sept. 21, 1996 with Section 2 declaring that states were not required to recognize same-sex marriages performed in another state. Although both Supreme Court cases challenged and successfully gutted DOMA, the law still remains intact, though the House plans to erase it completely.

To be clear, the Respect for Marriage Act specifies that states must recognize same-sex and interracial marriages from any other states and must not prohibit or limit any federal benefits to these couples. It does not imply that the bill will have any impact on religious liberty or conscience.


Discussing an issue that ties into religion, family and governmental aid when writing the Respect for Marriage Act, Congress clearly states that "...millions of people, including interracial and same-sex couples, have entered into marriages and have enjoyed the rights and privileges associated with marriage. Couples joining in



marriage deserve to have the dignity, stability, and ongoing protection that marriage affords to families and children.”



Of course, the bill does not restrict any opinions or beliefs of religions that go against homosexuality and interracial marriage and instead puts personal faith aside to give the promised human rights to the citizen couples.



“I think that the approval of the Respect for Marriage Act shows that the government is becoming more independent from the controlling religious beliefs of some of its members, which is only fair to the citizens of the U.S. There is such diversity in this country’s religions; in the end, everyone deserves rights no matter their faith,” freshman Caterina Nuonno said.

In a country full of diversity in religion and opinions, the bill’s purpose and impact on marital laws were challenged by Justice Clarence Thomas. Thomas highlighted the importance of looking back and reconsidering decisions made on the past Supreme court cases that legalized same-sex marriage and protected the accessibility and the rights of marriages to contraception.



Zoe Wallis

Daybreak

Materialism: At What Cost?

Produce. Promote. Consume. Repeat

March 15, 2022

FROM BILLBOARDS TO INSTAGRAM posts to the morning news, the phrase “Sponsored by” is inescapable. Now more than ever, scrolling through social media has gone from entertainment and interpersonal connection to a marketing strategy. People’s impressionable attention can be swayed to promote corporate goods and services, contributing to an increasingly materialistic society.

The attention economy

The ubiquity yet subtlety of modern advertising sways the public’s desires towards corporate benefit according to economics teacher Grant Blackburn.

“When I was [younger], I used to think I was impervious to idle advertising and that it didn’t affect me,” Blackburn said. “Because advertisements have gotten so sophisticated, it was hard for me to realize that I was being persuaded.”

Advertising’s capacity to embed its messages into people’s daily lives is part of its persuasive power, which prompts people to consider a product or service marketed as beneficial.

“Advertising works best when it’s not forced upon people, when it gets you to say ‘yes’ to yourself,” Blackburn said.

The purpose of advertising is to promote and sell commercial goods and services. However, with the influx of advertising opportunities in the digital age, the product that is now being sold is people’s attention, a concept known as the Attention Economy.

“The Attention Economy is simply trying to commodify attention as a way to make money,” Blackburn said. “It understands that our attention is limited and finds ways of dealing with that.”

Social media has played a critical role in the evolution of marketing strategies. By selling users’ data to third-party businesses, social media platforms craft algorithms that target each user with a precise, individualized collection of advertisements.

“It’s a lot easier for [companies] to have all of the control,” Blackburn said. “They have all of our data. They have all of the resources.”

Producing, selling and buying products builds a foundation for America’s economic system, especially in the technology-oriented Silicon Valley environment.

“We now look at products as the salvation for our lives and livelihoods more than ever before,” Blackburn said. “The lifeblood of capitalism is getting us to buy [stuff].”

Slippery slope

Having been inundated with advertisements on social media, junior Evie Barclay has learned to purchase products with intention. Barclay said she has realized that long-term fulfillment and satisfaction do not stem from the excess consumption of material objects.

“It’s always exciting to buy something new and get that refreshing feeling of having something shiny, but it is a slippery slope,” Barclay said. “When that shine fades, I just want another new item.”

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), many people gravitate towards materialistic values in the form of compulsive shopping and over-consumption to appease their anxiety, insecurities and lack of fulfillment.

“The whole human experience reflects our need to fill a gap,” Barclay said. “I think shopping is just one means of doing so.”

Many corporations base their marketing strategies on people’s inclination to materialistic values. As social media has become a crucial marketing platform, brands have shifted their focus towards influencer-based advertisements to promote their products.

“[Influencers’] social media is like a store window,” Barclay said. “What they choose to put out is what they want people to see.”

According to a Forbes article, “The Importance Of Influencer Marketing In The ‘New Normal’ Digital Sphere” (2021), consumers often perceive influencer marketing content as more authentic and relatable because they trust peer recommendations.

“[Influencers] narrow their niche so that people who like that niche will follow them, and they’ll have an audience of like-minded people,” Barclay said.

While influencer marketing is an appealing way for brands to make money, Barclay has learned to be more conscious of advertising’s influence on her spending habits.


“I don’t find that those ads enormously impact me because I’m very aware of their intention, and I try to analyze why I’m buying,” Barclay said.

The psychological conveyer belt


Psychology teacher Chris Farina said that push and pull factors can contribute to people’s appeal to materialistic lifestyles. Push factors are internal impulses such as anxious habits that inform your decisions, and pull factors are external influences such as corporate agendas that sway your behavioral patterns.

“You might have your own desire to purchase things because they’re tangible, they’re really concrete and they can give you a sense of immediate gratification,” Farina said. “[Corporations] are going to push their advertisements to suggest that they would provide you with some degree of benefit, enjoyment or happiness. [People] are on this conveyor belt where they constantly chase after new objects.”


Rosy retrospection is a psychological phenomenon in which people tend to perceive the past more positively than the present. For this reason, Farina explained that experiences can be a source of long-lasting contentment as opposed to the immediate gratification received from material possessions.



“[Researchers] usually find that people who prioritize purchasing stuff versus purchasing experiences have a lower sense of well-being, mental health or self-reported happiness compared to the group that prioritizes spending their time and money on experiences,” Farina said.



Beyond rosy retrospection, Farina said that human connection is often an essential component of positive, memorable experiences and a significant contributor to people’s happiness.



“We know that one of the single greatest things that contributes to an individual’s well-being is their relationships with other people,” Farina said. “Having something that promotes relationships is often going to bring you a greater degree of happiness than something that’s just focused on your own individual consumption,” Farina said.

The happiness that stems from purchasing a new product is fleeting. Farina said he recommends finding a deeper source to one’s fulfillment, a sense of meaning beyond materialistic values.

“You should figure out the things that really matter to you,” Farina said. “Spend your time and effort picking the best version of those things.”

Z is for

Give me capybaras, Megamind,
And other rancid microcosms of the Internet to feed me morsels of serotonin.

Give me fleeting trends,
Whose impish hands drain my pockets and my satisfaction.

Give me a fragment of media,
Whose propagated face becomes impossible to ignore among millions.
(Give it another 6 months to age into irony).

Give me an ineptitude to DVD players
Presupposed by blackboard-and-projector adults,
As if the translucent azure of Blu-Ray boxes had never intoxicated my eyes.

Give me credit for slang and Tik Tok choreography
Picked from the hands of marginalized creators by an ant army,
Brought unto the plates of uninvited cyber-gluttons.

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your overstimulated masses yearning to breathe free
From tremulous fear that Suzanne Collins and Lois Lowry
Projected our futures.

Once, Twice, Sold

We sell our bushes and trees
And the air that we breathe
For another useless building
And a vacant parking lot

We sell nature for cages
And minimum wages
Filling the pages
Of the book of human mistakes

We sell birds for their feathers
Get skyscrapers for weather
Then find new endeavors
And break something else

We sell plants for car washes
And fields for garages
And make metal, colossus
Monsters with small cubicles

We sell next our time
To make pennies and dimes
To continue our crimes
And the book of human mistakes

We sell the sky and the stars
Both desert and marsh
For pavement and cars
And another gas station

We sell animals for trash
We sell forests for ash
And buy pollution and cash
And another chapter
In the book of human mistakes

What It Means to Breathe

If, as a human being, you find yourself treated and appreciated less than your surroundings, if you are made to feel that the state will protect glass with more earnestness than your own flesh, mustn't the glass crumble? Mustn't you assert your place as the more essential treasure of this world?

—Brandon Wilson, 2014

In Ferguson, the people breathed flame & tear gas
harnessed their own aliveness to tear down towers.
When concrete sold for more than skin, a city turned
to scream.


Everywhere, the sidewalks snake-toothed & conniving.
Right down in Clairton, kids suffer record rates of asthma
lungs crimped shut & throats cracked with croup
before they even know they're neighbors
with a coke plant.

In Clairton, they broke 7000 air regulations. Arsenic
carcinogens creeping into baby skin, chemicals
deemed too precious to close down. No one tells the baby
they'll wake up 7000 violations later
marked by tumor & disease in their chest.

If they're crushing coal in your backyard
don't you deserve some of the diamonds?

On the TV, a senator mispronouncing *queer*
as *corruption*. Down the street, a little trans kid
holding in their heartbeat, trying
not to breathe.

& across the way, another kid
starving themself into shadows
because Instagram is selling happiness
by which I mean the right body
by which I mean there's a hundred billion dollar industry
making money off the wrong bodies.




It's no accident that our lucrative bodies
weren't asked how they felt
about the glass designed to cut them down
about the war still trapped in worship
about the skyscrapers hoarding smog-free air & human rights.

Behind the shiny glass, executives stuffed
with college training & fabricated affirmations.
Say female-identifying
& call it activism, say *DEI* & mean
only half-colorblind
but when every textbook drips with genocide
every miracle planted by unpaid hands
in lead-soaked soil on stolen land
how can there ever be good enough?

How can there be anything just
without a crumble?

There is a someday
& it is coming. A someday
of flesh & glass reduced
to the same sand.

Will it be a world ripped & branded & tortured into stillness
by the tidal waves, the dollar bills, the coke plants?
Or will we claim our place as the true treasures?
Before our return to dirt specks & helium atoms
will we choose now for our crumble? Into
each other, into a future
out there, somewhere, with waterfalls instead of tear gas
to make us cry, with love songs & pomegranates
to break us apart.



When the coke plant falls
will there be any kids left
to learn what it means to breathe?



Arman Tahari

A New Normal: Two Young Men

To the Black Man Riding His Bike Past My Block

i love you

your linen white button down unbuttoned

your locs with the fresh retwist and delicate styling

(a braid that starts as two before it weaves into one and
trails down your back, which is slightly bent forward)

your sharp eyes that scan the streets as if you're looking for something,

cycling the block, wheels twisting in a thin layer of wet grime that

coats the streets after a september's shower. you gripping the handlebars of
your thin-framed bike, veins making a vague impression on your hands.

the sun kissing your skin as the cool air holds your chin on its fingertips.

i love you

to the two Black people who stopped in the alley in front

of my house to argue in arabic. white plastic bags emboldened with
a screaming red and black insignia slipping out of her clutching palms. the puddles sparkling in front
of your sandaled feet. the way you shuffled to the side as i murmured excuse me.

the gentle puff (*in... out...*) of your blue medical masks. the pair of you
starting to walk and the taut, braided symphony of your arabic relaxing into capricious

laughter. dominating the air. i turned my head and saw
lines ease into the space next to / his eyelids; a laugh, returning home.

i love you

to the sun that made my skin look like gold the lost treasure of my people

is my entire composition. the way the cicadas' cries melted into its beams & the
dirtied alleyways that looked like paintings. trees so green that i considered

picking the emerald leaves, still dusted in raindrops, and bringing them home to press
for letters to my love. the spotlight on forgotten corners, cracks between sidewalk
squares, crevices between homes. the sputtering air conditioner that spurted out
droplets like a private rainstorm / and the rays that caught the mist long enough to make a
rainbow

out of a moment.

i slip the letter into a blue, tepid mailbox. i turn around and walk another block. the man on the
bicycle rides in circles & i hope that when he steps off, his shoes stay dry & his eyes remain just
as bright.

2022 DePaul's Blue Book Finalists

The Blue Book's editors would like to acknowledge the following students and their works.

- Alakrawi, Ayda**, "They Were Beautiful"
Alquraini, Aisha, "Palestine"
Austin, Eli, "Source-Four"
Babovic, Ollie, "Quantum Physics Fall in Love with a Philosopher"
Bailey, Molly, "First and Last Invitation"
Bass, Kennedy, "I Aspire"
Belmontez, Raven, "Death at the Movies"
Binder, Rain, "Memory," "A Harmony in Queer Major," and "Two-Sided Argument"
Bosworth, Ayla, "Pledge of Allegiance"
Brown, Ryli, "Anna's Secret"
Choomchoonda, Norehamyuh — translated by **Josie Shuman**, "Korean Lullaby"
Coimbatore, Pooja, "Infinite Unfamiliar"
Contreras, Carmen, "Ni de aqui, Ni de aya"
Cutright, Ryan, "The Rainbow Effect"
Del Rio, Marisa, "Melodic String"
Demyan, Grant, "Buzz!"
Deneen, Mimi, "Old Friend"
Dilsy, "Fueron días de alegría"
Dombrowski, Luca, "Burn"
Dorweiler, Owen, "The World Was Once a Peaceful Place"
Duda, "Writing With A Knife"
Florito, Calogero, "Bomolochus"
Garcia, Sofia, "Caught in the Silence"
Garcia, Yuliana, "Spaces Exhibit"
Gattone, Izzie, "The Pianist"
Godtland, Calia, "Life Like Lace" and "Riverbed"
Gore, Sammy, "I Have Too Much Free Time"
Griffioen, Penelope, "Highway"
Guo, Audrey and Caitlyn Oda, "In The Room by Idan Do"
Hall, Andrew, "Abandoned Dreams"
Harpa, Naomi, "Mood Swings, You Son of A Gun"
Hau, Olivia, Julie Huang, and Kylie Tzeng, "Untangled"
Holthaus, Sam, "All She Needed"
Hoque, Subhah, "Growth"
Jamil, Matthew, "Mr. Linden's Library"
Jewell, Rose, "Your Fear, Our Pain"
Jin, Fiona, "The Young Adult's Urge At Midnight"
Johnson, Rylee, "Man Without a Country"
Josi, Anaya, "Monster"
Kahmann, Maria, "Those Two Worlds"
Karpel, Amanda, "I Want A Beard"
Khemka, Megha, "Complementary Colors"
Kim, Andrew Hyunsoo, "Balance of Mind"
King, Gillian, "Identity"
Kirk, Avery, "Timing Self"
Kogel, Elese, "List of Strange Things in No Particular Order"
Krzywicki, Allison, "The American Dream"
Kukreeja, Aarav, "Needles"
LaCroix, Ava, "The Trailer"
Langer, Abby, "Becoming Abigail Esther Rose" and "The Architect's Daughter"
Lavin, Kate, "An Open Letter to You"
Lawrence, Lydia, "Opinion: Choose Safety Over Comfort"
Lee, Rachel, "Hidden Stars"
Lewis, Joey, "How You'll Remember Me (Really)"
Lilly, Kirsten, "Sugar"
Lipson, Camren, "Is It Funny Now"
Madison, Cora, "Four Letters"
Mallavarapu, Riya, "Music When Soft Voices Die, Vibrates in My Memory"
Mardegan, Jeanne, "Nine Candles"
McCormack, Aidan, "Sonnet to Mom"
McKay, Lauren, "Crows"
McKee, Austin, "Home"
McKernan, Josie, "Our Mother"
Mooney, Caitlin, "Dear Empty Book Store"

Moreno, Vanessa, “This is Fine”
Mufti, Faheen, “College Essay”
Nadel-Zeit, Tutum, “The Podcast of Things With Cole Plager”
Nava, Izel, “The Plague of Modern Suffrage”
Nedrud, Brendan, “Pyrite Crown”
Nielson, Hannah, “Untitled”
Nwadukwe, Munachismo, “Untitled”
Otasowie, Faith, “How to Write the Great Nigerian Novel”
Paciullo, Tayla, “Bisexual”
Palmer, Nyah, “Epilogue”
Panis, Sally “Through Luke’s Lens”
Peralta, Leila, “Dearest Mother of Mine”
Pessin, Zoe, “My Favorite Word”
Peyrat, Devendra, “Movies for Guys!”
Rausch, McKenna and Kylie Tzeng, “The Place We Call Home by Kaila Chun”
Reedy, Claire, “Goodbye Again”
Rho Bloom Wang, “Rebirth”
Rojas, Mari Jane, “How to Write the Great Mexican Novel”
Romanelli, Lynne, “Mosaic Lessons”
Rowell, Anna, “Pledge of Allegiance”
Sanchez-De La Torre, Fatima, “Language Barrier”
Sanchez, Alejandra, “Space Exhibit”
Sanchez, Saul, “The Draining Love Story”
Shasty, Nitya, “A Lesson in Anatomy”
Sotto, Anthony and Sayde Feeley, “English Department Removes Tracking for Freshmen”
Spencer, Morgan, “Swans En Pointe”
Sporte, Josephine, “The Café on Orange Street”
Steine, Amanda, “Letter to Society”
Torres, Natasha Vera, “Broken Image”
Ulsh, Rowan, “I’m Fine”
Uriarte, Isabella, “What Lurks in the Darkness?”
Van Breman, Autumn, “Before a Desperate Forest”
Webb-Horvath, Sam, “Of Brothers and Birds”

Weidner, Kristin, “Birdies for Beth: a badminton legacy continues”
Weiss, Jamie, “Rollin’ with Axton”
Winer, Allen, “Clocks”
Yee, Jocelyn, “Three Bowls of Rice”
Ying, Elsa, “Seven”
Young, Samantha, “Lucky”
Zhang, Lucy, “Shredding Potatoes”
Zomaya, Nina, “The Musician Man”

Publications in DePaul's English and Journalism Programs

English

BIG SHOULDERS BOOKS aims to produce books that engage intimately with the Chicago community and, in the process, give students in DePaul University's M.A. in Writing and Publishing and English undergraduate programs hands-on, practical experience in book publishing. The goal of Big Shoulders Books is to disseminate, free of charge, quality works of writing by and about Chicagoans whose voices might not otherwise be shared. Big Shoulders Books celebrates the tremendous resilience and creativity found in all areas of the city.

bigshouldersbooks.com

POETRY EAST is an international magazine of poetry, translations, and art. Edited by the award-winning poet Richard Jones, the journal is committed to an art that is immediate, accessible and universal. *The Bloomsbury Review* calls *Poetry East* "a magical anthology" and the journal is described by *Choice* as "one of the best current journals of poetry" and ranked by *London's Poetry Review* as one of the top 20 literary journals in the United States. In 2020, *Poetry East* celebrated its 40th anniversary and its 100th issue. Forthcoming issues will include a special volume called "The Optimist," which will gather poems that—in spite of the darkness of the pandemic—celebrate life, endurance, optimism and all those many unsung things which sustain us.

www.poetryeast.org

SLAG GLASS CITY is a magazine of urban essay arts, textual burlesque and post-industrial forms. We are a creative nonfiction and multidisciplinary media journal engaged with sustainability, identity and art in urban environments. The living city is broken and blooming. How will our roof gardens grow?

We seek new, original, nonfiction literature, art and media from and about cities. Skylines are made of glass; cities are at once dense, cooperative, tense, tragic and hopeful; urban space is contested territory. Our area of concern is the livable city, but our interpretation of this language—more familiar to urban planners, geographers and city theorists than to artists—is multifaceted.

We are interested in post-industrial greening of urban spaces—from rooftop gardens to elevated bike trails to vertical farms—but we are equally enthralled by interrogative art and performance that values social justice and queerness, reinvents forms and honors the green human need to pursue pleasure, beauty and joy.

www.slagglasscity.org

CROOK & FOLLY is DePaul's annual student-run literary and arts magazine. In the fall and winter terms, the editorial staff develops, collects, selects and edits beautiful pieces out of hundreds of submissions, with publication soon thereafter in the spring. *Crook & Folly* provides invaluable hands-on professional experience for both contributors and editors alike in a nurturing, supportive community of thinkers and lovers of good writing.

www.crookandfolly.com

DePAUL'S BLUE BOOK: BEST AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL WRITING is an annual online and print publication featuring the best pieces of poetry, fiction, nonfiction and journalism from high school students across the country. Edited by undergraduate and graduate students in English, Journalism, and Writing, Rhetoric & Discourse, *The Blue Book* underscores DePaul's commitment to building the careers of young writers.

www.depaulsbluebook.com

Journalism

THE DePAULIA is the award-winning newspaper produced by students at DePaul University. *The DePaulia* is a multiple finalist and winner of national best student news publication for weekly newspapers from the College Media Association and Associated Collegiate Press. The paper publishes in print every Monday during the school year. The paper's website, depauliaonline.com, also publishes Mondays and updates regularly to report on breaking news. Sections in *The DePaulia* include news; nation & world; opinions; arts & life; sports; and *La DePaulia* (Spanish language reporting and focus on Chicago Hispanic community).

depauliaonline.com

14 EAST is DePaul's topical, student-produced online magazine at fourteeneastmag.com. With an emphasis on data and multimedia in their reporting, *14 East* covers everything from politics to literature to culture. At *14 East*, readers can find unique perspectives on issues that impact the lives of young adults in Chicago. *14 East* publishes stories every Friday during the academic year via website and weekly newsletter. *14 East* includes sister publication *Pueblo*, a bilingual section of *14 East*, devoted to Latinx journalists sharing their work with the Latinx community at DePaul and across Chicago. *Pueblo* features poetry, art, news reporting and political commentary.

fourteeneastmag.com

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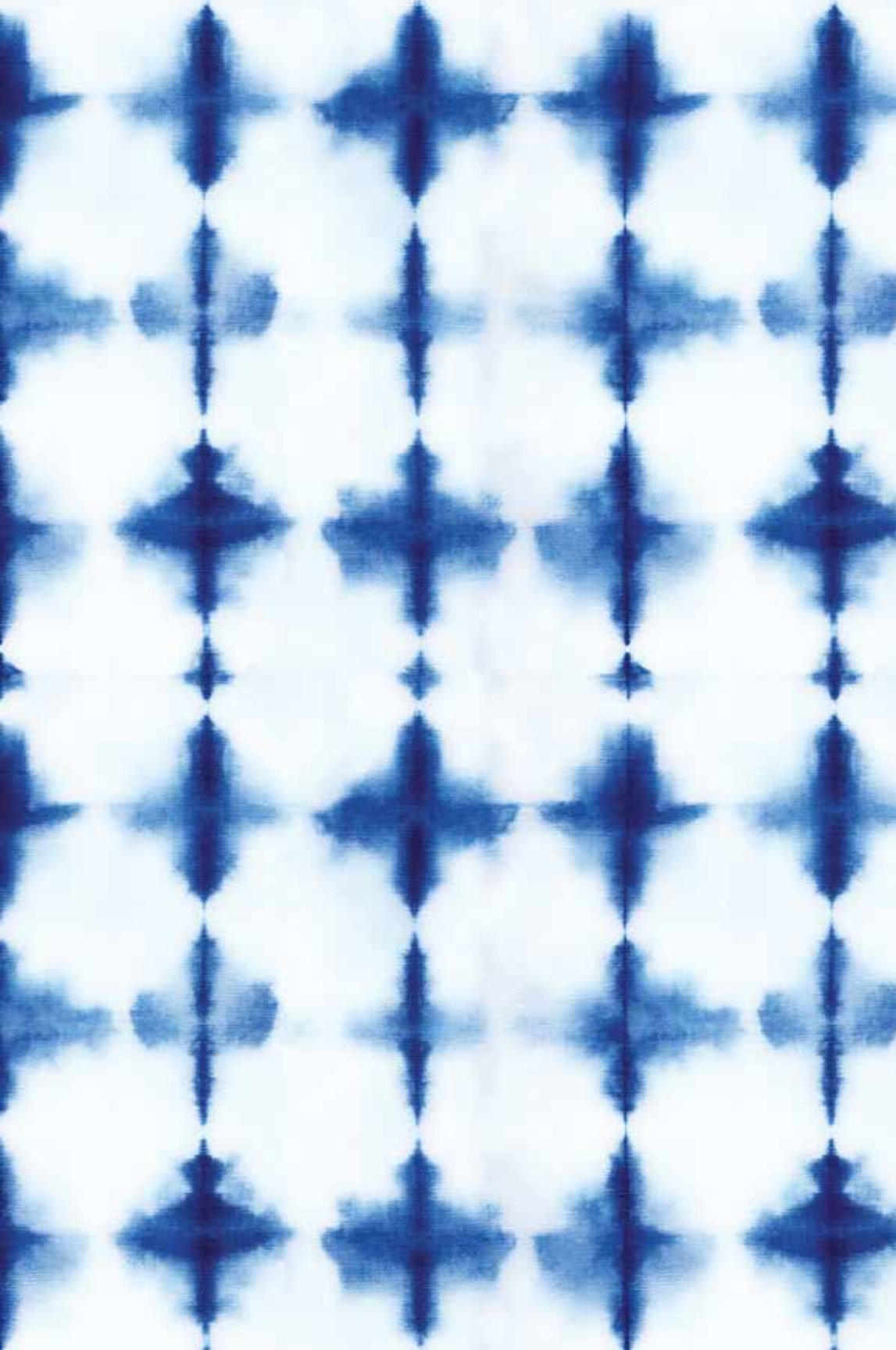
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Selected by student editors at DePaul University's nationally recognized programs in writing, this dazzling collection ushers in the next generation of poets, fiction writers, essayists, and journalists.

For the inaugural issue of *DePaul's Blue Book: Best American High School Writing*, we canvassed the United States, seeking outstanding submissions in both English and Spanish from thousands of high schools. The result is DePaul's celebration of our country's diverse young voices.

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