

SOUNDINGS

Saratoga High Art and Literary Magazine

DEC 2018 ISSUE



editors' note

Dear Readers,

The first online issue of Soundings Art and Literary Magazine is here!

“Soundings” is a nautical term referring to depth measurement in a body of water. As the title of Saratoga High School’s decades-old art and literary magazine, “Soundings” refers to the depth that featured work reaches and the waves it makes throughout the creative world.

We are proud that we can now serve as a forum for student expression throughout the school year, and we sincerely thank all those who submitted their photography, art, prose, and poetry.

Sincerely,
Soundings Staff

staff

Anisha Byri Manasi Garg Sherrie Shen Kaitlyn Wang
Colleen Feng Anishi Patel Cheryl Wang

Front Cover: **Blasting A Hole in the Sky**
Justin Lee

Calm Beach
Anthony Liu



Table of Contents

- 5 • Tomoko's Garden (Arin Chang, 12)
- 6 • Origin (Colleen Feng, 12)
- 7 • Lonely Blue (Colleen Feng, 12)
- 8 • Stairway to Heaven (Casey Holt, 12)
- 9 • Feeling (Anuj Changhavi, 12) • Left, Right (Casey Holt, 12)
- 10 • Watcher (Kitty Huang, 12)
- 11 • Clash (Angie Yang, 12)
- 13 • Daily News (Selina Yang, 11) • Good Night Math (Anuj Changhavi, 12)
- 14 • Ghost in the Stalls (Mathew Luo, 11)
- 15 • Octopus (Cheryl Wang and Angie Yang, 12)
- 16 • Emma (Hannah Fu, 11)
- 17 • Peace (Selina Yang, 11)
- 18 • Wonder (Anonymous)

- 19 • Untitled (Prisha Samdarshi, 11) • And So We Fall (Casey Holt, 12)
- 20 • Black Phantom (Isabelle Rieken, 12)
- 21 • One-sided Light (Colleen Feng, 12)
- 22 • Forgotten Shores (Arin Chang, 12) • The Treadmill of Life (Elise Phan, 11)
- 23 • Wildfire (Zoyah Shah, 12)
- 24 • iago (Anonymous)
- 25 • ageism and the gun problem (Anouk Yeh, 9)
- 26 • Childhood Innocence (Selina Yang, 11)
- 27 • will I have already forgotten about family dinners this time next year? (Adina Bidel, 12)
- 28 • On a Sunday Morning, We Find (Anonymous) • if only we were taller (Phoebe Wang, 12) •
Untitled Photos (Lily Yang, 9)
- 29 • What If (Elise Phan, 11) Iron Roses • (Cheryl Wang, 12)
- 30 • Human Canvas • (Henry Weng, 10)

Tomoko's Garden

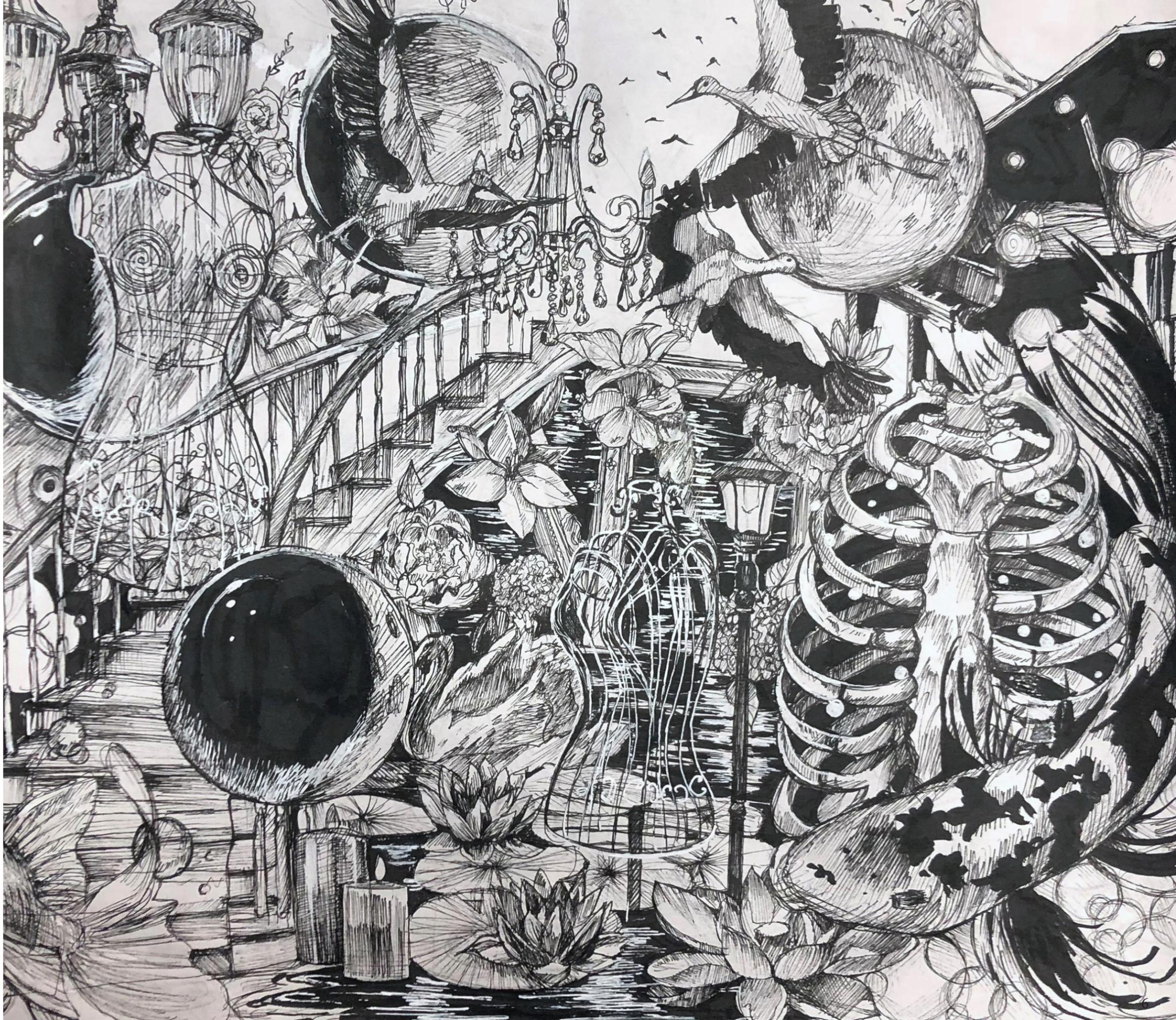
Arin Chang

Tomoko's Garden, May 8 1982

On days when your sun
brewed prunes with lime,
I'd savor the mixture in an
ebony cup by the peach blossoms,
tonguing coarse kernels
and past years,
my mouth thawing as your face rippled
in light crescendos,
chapped-lips curled, pigtailed swaying.

I'd glide over the sleeping pond
as your soft fingertips mourned
Chopin and Liszt, as petals ebbed
with the punctual hummingbird.
I'd stare at the
seven Mona Lisas
smiling from your blank palette, wondering
if their hands would appear
chiseled on smooth canvases
before autumn arrived in
her sable carriage.

Each time I refill the cup
I'd wait for you to
take my hand, thread my fingers
through foggy thickets of memories like
an inexperienced harpist.
With every sip,
the buds of the peach tree
sigh as a reminder
of what lies east
of Tomoko's Garden.



Origin
Colleen Feng



Stairway to Heaven

Casey Holt

i can feel pieces of myself weaving their way through the music and swirling up, up, up, into the sky
i can feel the voices of the song coming not from outside, but inside myself
i don't know what the words are
i don't know what they mean
but i can feel the emotion
i can drink the rhythm, as it flows around me, speeding up and slowing down and whispering feelings
to me that i've never been able to feel
because the song isn't in english, it isn't a song of words
it doesn't make any kind of sense
it's colors and shapes weaving between each other with every chord
it was never meant to be a story with an end
it picks up new meanings and feelings from everyone who listens to it
from every old man remembering his college days
from every little girl flipping through a record collection
from every studded leather teenager carving their own way through this world
it isn't a song that can be pinned down
it isn't even really a song
or an emotion
or a feeling
it just is
a tangle of things that have yet to be sorted out and formed into things like words or thoughts or
meanings
it doesn't need to be brushed and braided and cut into a sheet of notes and a string of lyrics
to me, it's enough
i don't need to turn it into a tangible thing
i don't need to chain it to a definition
because as it is, it's a language i can understand

Feelings

Anuj Changhavi

- a reflection on "Breaking Down the Walls"

Look. This week was crazy. I'm not even going to lie, I think everyone who did Breaking down The Walls this week was insanely shocked. Did I expect at the start of the week that I was going to open up and receive the amount of love that I did? Nope, that was not the case. Maybe, I am one of the few who thought this is going to change our school for the better or maybe I am an optimistic dude. Anyway, let's get into it.

This week was crazy for a variety of reasons, but let me start off by saying this. Everyone has a story to share, and it's crazy some of the things that you hear when you open up to people. Let me tell you my story first, and then I can tell you guys about this week. But the thing is, this blog would literally not be possible without my friend Usman and the countless other people who spread love and their stories this week. My story is pretty simple, but I have never really told anyone publicly so here you go.

I am on the spectrum. That's the truth. My mom has known from a young age, and even now you can kind of see it. I can never look people fully in the eyes and appreciate eye contact. Eye contact is still really hard for me, and I think that it is always going to be a challenge. I also have a tick, I roll my hands up in a ball whenever I get excited and it looks weird and horrible. I used to do that in public, and people used to make fun of me all the time. Believe it or not, I was the outcast for the majority of elementary school, I was never one of the boys. Never one of the people who stood up for anything, I was just there. I said whatever came to my mind, and sure enough time and time again I ended up in the principal's office. Anyway, I think the most ironic thing of this whole story is that I never really was able to write letters.

Handwriting was always something that was incredibly hard and I sucked at writing all of the letters. Like, in second grade when everyone was writing their names and full on

sentences I could not write the letter A. Like honestly, I thought I was a loser. I was tall, but uncoordinated. I had an imagination, but I could never get it down on a piece of

Left, Right

Casey Holt

your voice bathes me in a cool light
clearing the fog from my head and the sins from my skin
your voice paints the night sky within my veins
sending a clean flow of ink through my body
your voice is a beam of blue light
clear and sweet through the air
yet dewy and sticky with sickly desperation
a desire that turns sour just before you can swallow it
your voice licks at the edges of the thoughts you're too afraid to think
your voice speaks without the words
that can only ever be colors
your voice lights me on fire
pulsing, breathing, bleeding in me
pushing me up, on, go, keep going, keep moving
your voice picks me up off the ground and gives me my legs
go, run, keep going, keep seeing
your voice is deep and dark and brown, rich, like fresh dirt
or coffee grounds, giving off the heady scent of a new day
your voice is a rolling red wave of suppressed anger and hurt
longing for an opportunity you gave up
so long ago
you think you don't care
don't want to remember
yet your voice thinks you do
your thoughts are gasoline
and your voice licks flames towards them
hold that note too long
and you just might feel something



The Watcher
Kitty Huang

paper because I couldn't even write a fucking letter. I felt like I was inferior. The few people that would even talk with me were because my Mom would set up these playdates that kids would come over and have no clue what was going on. So that's when the therapy started.

Therapy was interesting to say the least. I was on an IEP at school, I went to like three outside therapists, and just other various things to control me behaviorally, mentally, and my tick. At one point, I remember I went to this dude who suggested I drink diamond water whatever the hell that is. So I just looked it up, and it is basically like \$40 dollars for a liter of it which let's face it that is just not worth the thick price tag. So I mean, even despite the diamond water or whatever, therapy was interesting. I would always like my therapists because talking to adults was always easier for me. Growing up, my mom was basically my best friend. She sacrificed a lot of time bailing me out of trouble, driving me up to Palo

Alto two to three times a week for therapy. I still do connect better with adults, that has always been the case, and I still don't know why. My mom would sacrifice time with her friends to spend time with me at parties. She knew that having conversations was never my strong suit and she would always guide me through talking to people. For five years, she helped me become a functioning member of society. She tells me now that the pediatricians thought that I was a lost cause, someone who was just gonna be different.

The weird part of the whole situation was that I did not know any of this was going on until a few years ago. I never really felt alone and isolated from anyone because there were always people in my life that listened to me and made me feel like I was an important person. Plenty of teachers told me that I was not the brightest, or the smartest, or that I wasn't going to academically succeed. To everyone who is struggling with depression, anxiety, family stuff,

socializing. Here is the thing. None of us have the answers. There is no secret formula to being amazing, but the thing is be open. Put yourself out there because if you do, so many cool things are about to happen, and you don't even know it.

Look, now if you made it this far, here's the reason I mentioned Usman. Usman shared with everyone today that he went through so many struggles as a kid with being on the spectrum and it was his mom that dragged him out of the mud. I had no clue that was the case. Breaking Down the Walls showed all of us that we are so different, but at the root of it all, we all are human and just trying to figure our own lives out.

I just want to say thanks. Thank you for supporting me and reading this, but most importantly this week, thanks for opening up to your other friends. If you haven't done anything this week, I challenge you to do something out of your comfort zone because you never know what someone's story is. ♦





The Ghost in the Stalls Mathew Luo

A ghost haunts the 700's wing bathroom. Waiting in the shadows of the urinal, it lurks and stalks, an incorporeal abomination oozing terror and eldritch horror. Its malignant plots—the foul stench of bleach—the dirty mirror, the puddles on the floor—toilet paper strewn over desecrated sinks—the unpredictable sloshing of the fourth urinal to the left—plague and terrorize!

November 28th. The day was dark as pitch when Geoffery arrived at school. An anomalous downpour blotted the sky; a feeling of melancholy permeated the place.

The bells tolled at a quarter to ten. Students scurried out of class like rats; Geoffery, powered by an inexplicable explosive pain in his abdomen, was the fastest of them all. Many headed for the library. Geoffery instead sought the sanctuary of the 700's wing restroom.

When Geoffery passed through the two poles under the eaves guarding the 700's wing restroom, he felt a pair of eyes resting on the back of his head and a sudden nausea, ungainliness and light-headedness descended upon him. It would have been enough to deter any weaker-willed man. But Geoffery, afflicted by magically induced abdominal pain, lacked no motivation.

The great steel door of the restroom heaved as Geoffery shoved it forward, and a blast of cold air and the stench of pool chlorine wafted out from the restroom. Puddles of mud and water and urine lay on the tiled floors; two whole rolls of toilet paper decorated the mirrors and stall; the leaky urinal on the right had made a veritable ocean that wasn't draining into the hole in the middle of the bathroom. It seemed to Geoffery as if he were walking into the abyss. But, that did not deter him.

Entering the restroom, Geoffery became aware of the cold presence that seemed just out of range of

cognizance. That, too, did not deter him.

Suspending his terror, Geoffery entered the stall, hung his backpack on the hook on the stall door, unbuckled his pants, and sat on the toilet. Strange whispering harmonies began reverberating around in that tile and concrete cage. Or was it only in his skull? The lights were dim and the floor was cold, and the seat the coldest of all—a chill traveled up Geoffery's bare skin, making him shiver violently.

The markings up and down the walls of the stall spelled strange words and phrases—incantations perhaps—that Geoffery could barely understand. "This is a haiku/that I wrote on the toilet/I have no flip flop. 'Pity me; I eat lunch here.' Geoffery shivered from looking at them, shaking with a supernatural vigor from the combined forces of the writings on the wall and his violent gastric and intestinal cleansing.

Then he flushed the toilet and the world went dark.

The stall became an endless prison, stretching far behind Geoffery into a pitch-black void. The sound of endless dripping of rain leaking through the roof became tormenting, fear inspiring, madness inducing. The stall's doors were flung wide open, their rusted iron hinges reflecting a twilight purple glow from a shambling monster just outside the stall.

The quiet was unbroken except for the dripping of rain. Pitter patter, pitter patter. Geoffery was frozen in fear, for nothing in his twilight prison was familiar save the toilet he was sitting on and his bag, still hanging on knobbed protrusion on the stall doors.

Then the urinal flushed and sent a thundering echo into the stall. Startled, Geoffery jumped, his muscles twitching and his stomach contracting in tight knots. His legs flung him three feet into the air off the toilet, leaving him sprawled as a butt-naked heap on the dark marble floor. His jeans lay in a little heap around his ankles.

The ghost entered the stall. Scream now, said the thing in the darkness.

"No you," Geoffery croaked.

Geoffery gathered himself, unsheathing his belt from his pants and rolling his flip-flop wristband off his wrist. Standing up, he flung his pants off his feet with a kick and charged the ghost with a pink flip-flop in one hand and a belt in the other.

Geoffery weaved, ducked, and stabbed. His flip-flop sliced through the gelatin of the monster's arm with a squelching sound, and his belt cracked backward to flay the flesh from its bones. The ghost lashed back with a sweeping arm, but Geoffery danced backward and landed a graceful riposte with his flip-flop.

Back and forth they went, Geoffery gaining both skill and confidence with every strike. At last, in a desperate move, the ghost ripped open the bag hanging on the iron door to hold up a stapled packet, an envelope, and a little book.

"From the pits of your nightmares I produce this," said the monster. "Fraser, chapter 13 with 25 pages of reading! Your report card! Hamlet, with detailed notes from the world's leading center for Shakespeare studies!"

"Foul thing!" Geoffery said. "Those things I have conquered, and you will be next!"

With a lunge, Geoffery shoved his flip-flop through the monster's chest. The thing collapsed, teetering backward and dissolving back into the marble floor.

In the same moment, Geoffery's left foot caught on his pant leg, and, overcompensating for balance, Geoffery slipped backward in a diver's corkscrew, hitting his head on the toilet and leaving him sprawled on the bathroom floor.

The custodian found Geoffery half-naked and unconscious in a heap beside the toilet. An APUSH textbook, *Hamlet*, and an envelope lay soaking in a puddle under an unzipped backpack. Rain still poured overhead. ♦

Goodnight Math Anuj Changavi

In a nutshell, I had been struggling with Pre Calc for the first six weeks and now my counselor was recommending that I drop the class. Truthfully, I have never been mathematically inclined. From classifying shapes in Kindergarten all the way to Pre-Calculus, math had always been a challenge. Sitting in her office, I had a thought cross my mind, "Am I done with math forever?"

On the one hand, I was forced to consider what every Bay Area child worried about: What will colleges think? How are they going to view me dropping out of Pre-Calculus in the middle of the semester? These questions raced through my mind as I tried to process the situation. However, over the last two years, these questions were routine.

Through both Geometry and Algebra 2, I struggled, but I always managed to keep my grade within passing range. This year, felt different. I spent nights, yawning while graphing until my hands were tired, but none of this worked. The result of my efforts; a spiraling D-. Feeling deflated, I convinced myself to drop the class.

Late, when I mentioned the idea of dropping the class to my dad, he gave me a stern look. "You are seriously going to quit? Already Anuj? Keep going!"

I went up to my room, and I stared at the form sitting on my desk. Grabbing it, I thought about all my struggles in the past. Math was no different; it could be resolved.

Determined, I crumpled the form and tossed it into the trash. ♦

Daily News
Selina Yang



Octopus
Angie Yang

Octopus
Cheryl Wang

(i drowned in chinese seas)

i have eight legs
and a puckered beak
that talks too much
and a face
scarred; marred; starred
from battles ill-fought.

my grandmother used to cluck
at my dark, tanned skin
cooked in the heat of the california
sun
my hair
thick and bushy
from the turkish man who infiltrat-
ed my blood
are you really chinese? she
asked, pointing at the acne
that dotted my skin
like the little spots of

red beans in a mung bean cake.

ugly
was the word
she didn't have to say.

i chase after glossy black hair
and pale white creams
and wish my legs were longer
to support my dreams
my hollow dreams
my broken cradle of a heart
i chase after impossible ideals
of infinite calves and a
small face and phoenix
eyes that rise through the
smoldering ashes to face the rising
sun
i chase after a society obsessed
with white & white & white & white
& white & white & white & white.

when they harvested me from the

nets
among the little girls that
once chased after fireflies and
fried ants with magnifying glasses
on sunny days
i looked at them
and smiled into their concealers,
their foundations, their b.b.
creams and c.c. creams; see,
see that the knife is falling, falling
falling into me
and my eight legs struggle
futilely.

i am chopped into a million pieces
and sold for scraps
at the fish market
octopus, bestial,
beautiful creature
octopus, wise,
ancient, alien
octopus, \$3.99
for a leg with sesame sauce.



Emma
Hannah Fu



Wonder

Anonymous

“A lack of knowledge creates fear. Seeking knowledge creates courage.”

Then, a man of learning seeks courage amidst fear. Now, what do you fear? What is your courage? Will you struggle among billions and fail, or will you climb up the thorny vines and succeed?

What do we seek? This world is a game. There's no way to know the rules or the goal, yet there are 7 billion players making whatever moves they want. If you lose too much, or win too much, there are penalties. You can't pass your turn, and if you talk too much, you'll be ostracized. There are no parameters and no way to even know the genre. This world is just a crappy game.

Then, how will you roll your dice? How will you play your cards? How will you prove that if there are 200 students in a line, consisting of 100 boys and 100 girls in a random order, there always exist an interval of 100 people where 50 of them are boys and 50 are girls?

Imagine we take the first 100 people and find the number of girls in that interval. Let's call that number x . Then, it is easy to see that in the last 100 people in the line, there will be $100-x$ girls. Now, let's shift our interval right by one, now counting from the 2nd person to the 101th person. Now, let's call the number of girls in this interval as y . Notice that the difference between y and x will be: a) 0, the number of girls does not change, b) +1, the number of girls increases by one, c) -1, the number of girls decreases by one.

Now, if you continue shifting the interval rightwards, the number of girls in the interval will pass through all the integers between x and $100-x$. Therefore, there must exist an interval with 50 girls. ♦



Untitled
Prisha Samdarshi

And So We Fall
Casey Holt

Falling
Falling
Falling

All he can feel is how far he's falling.

He goes to class; he zips open his backpack; he laughs with his friends. He turns in his homework; he laces up his shoes for soccer practice. He types thin black text into thin black boxes, telling faceless people why they should let him into their college, let him fall someplace different from here. He types in his extracurriculars; he types in his community service hours; he types in all the parts of him that are supposed to make him a person. He doesn't feel like a person.

He feels like he's falling.

His friends can't see him falling.

His friends can't see that the middle of him has been ripped out of him and flung into some deep, deep chasm that he has yet to find the bottom of. His friends can't see the crooked stitches holding his sides together, hiding the hole inside. His friends can't see the nothing that used to be a person.

Perhaps his friends just don't know to look past the smile stretched across his face; perhaps they don't see his shaking hands and uncombed hair and dark blue jeans that he's been wearing for three days now. Perhaps they don't see his eyes fixed on the table and his mind falling miles and miles away from here while the rest of them are all talking. Perhaps they don't expect anything to be wrong.

Or perhaps they don't want to expect anything. Perhaps they see him staring at his hands, wondering

whose hands they are, how it can possibly be that flesh and blood and bones and nails can knit so tightly together into something so real, and they turn away. Perhaps they see him with his hand on the door handle, trying to remember how to tell that hand to turn it, and they just open it for him. Perhaps they laugh at him when he forgets what day it is, and perhaps he laughs with them, because he's so afraid of them knowing. He's so afraid of them worrying about him and trying to help him and telling him to see someone who will fill in his empty open hole with little pills that he has to have a prescription for.

He's afraid of anyone touching him. He's afraid of anyone spending their own precious time trying to help him, because what if it's not real. What if he's making it up somehow, what if this is what everyone feels,

and he's just weak.

Weak.

He falls because he's too afraid to ask for someone to throw him a rope. He falls because he's afraid that his disconnect is a fabrication, and he will only hurt others by making it known. He falls because no one has ever bothered to look long enough to see that there's nothing inside of him; no one has ever looked past his carefully crafted mask of sticky smiles and frail excuses to see that the person inside is bleeding, bleeding, bleeding out. He has never reached further than the rocky cliff face whizzing past his face as he falls, and no one has ever clawed through the rocks to grab onto him.

He falls
and falls
and falls.

But he's right, he is not a person. Not one person, but many. An army of the dusty, bruised, and beaten who feel as though they are the only ones in so much pain. They are the only ones who feel as though the inside of them has been painted black and tied down with bags of oily sand; in an army of thousands, they are all alone. They are taught that the numbers on their skin are more important than the scars on their hearts, and so they push on forward, go, keep going, you can't fall down if you don't stop moving, moving, moving,

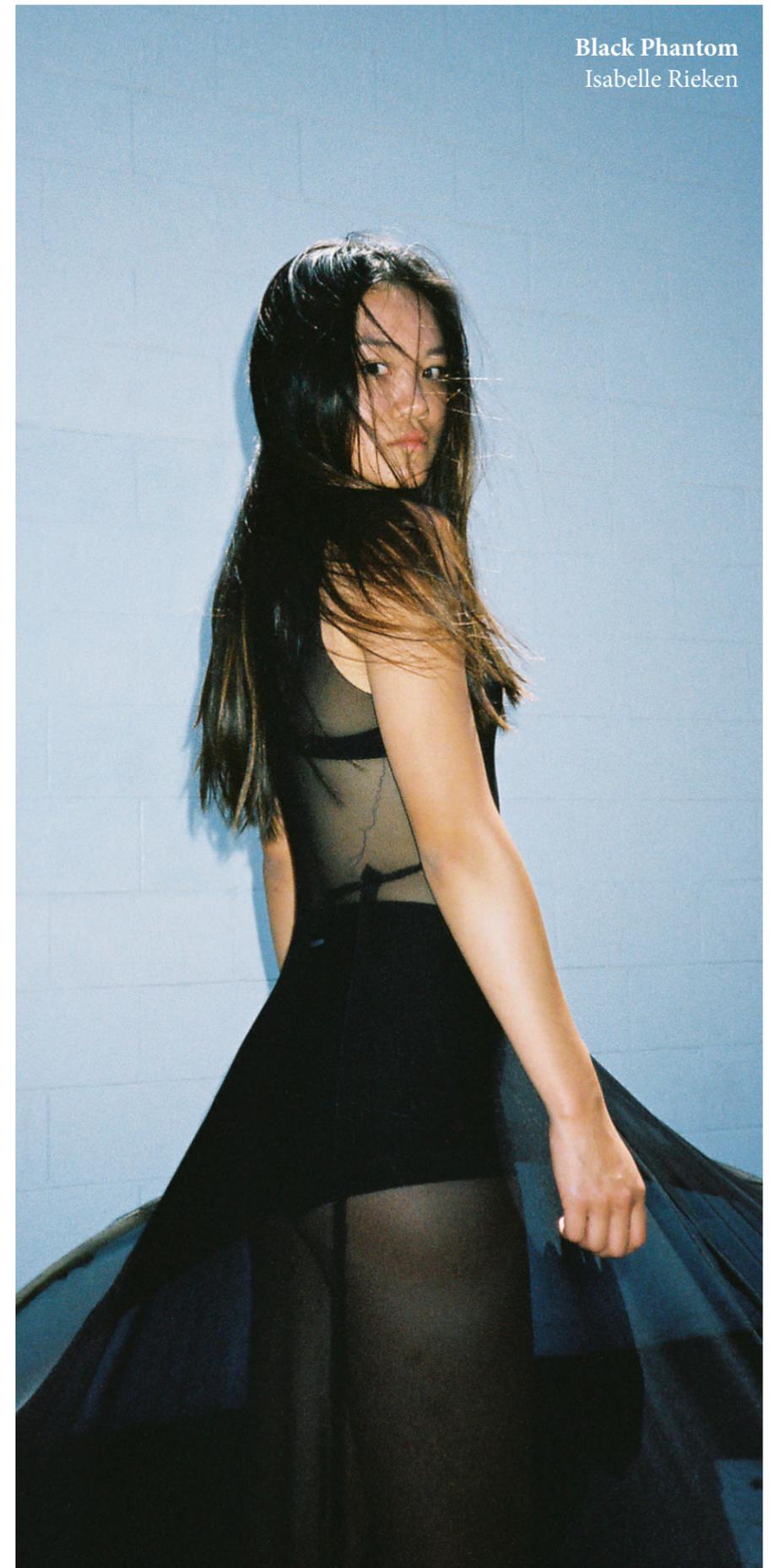
falling.

Because no matter how hard they push themselves, their broken, broken minds can't keep up with a society that doesn't allow them to be people. They are taught to ignore the pain that bears its heavy teeth into their shoulders, because the only thing that matters is that they breathe the same air and wear the same clothes and live the same lives as those with pockets stuffed full of bloody green paper. They are taught that if they aren't happy with this life, clearly they haven't done something right. They just have to push harder, hurt more.

And they believe that.

And so they fall.

And so we fall. ♦



Black Phantom
Isabelle Rieken



Forgotten Shores

Arin Chang

I miss cold wintery nights
bathed in ethereal soundings,
solitude and seashells
echoed through your voice.
My fingers ache from
grasping strings too tightly,
longing for your flaxen hair
to sweep my synthetic core.
Nightly views obscured by
conscious reflection
like the inflection of
a ship's bearing
navigating still forgotten waters.
But why must I be
captured in your hold,
fingers restlessly drumming
wooden tabletops
until the calluses surfaced
disguised
as dented memories.
Still-washed hues of gray,
the masts rise
I step aboard the deck
beating seamlessly
against sweet tides.

The Treadmill of Life

Elise Phan

Sometimes I feel—
As though I'm sprinting
With all my might—
To stay in one place.
If I take a single step
Forward—
A slippery glacier, fate,
glides beneath my feet—
One step forward:
Two steps backward.
Do you think I've never tried
to break this monotony,
shatter the translucent wall
before my future which
keeps me from hoping for
Progress?
Because I have.
All my life.
So maybe.
What if I stop resisting?
Let this perpetual treadmill
pull me backwards.
And backwards and backwards
past all my years of frustration
Until.
There's simply nothing left at all.



It is the time of the night that it is very cool and cold outside and the clock strikes 12. Fifer is freezing at home, ferociously trembling, with no1 but himself.

He senses a pulse inside him, even palpable in his surroundings, and feels the w8 in his stomach shift like a palindrome. Remembering his loneliness, the kid switches his weight on to his lower limbs, and decides to make himself B happy despite the black cloud surrounding him. Hoping for the sunlight to come, he temporarily endures the 4 servings of

sushi that shakes inside his stomach. Are we all not like poor Fifer here, ultimately plodding alone in the world, with precious life dripping away from our appendix? What is romance, when the tree and the flower eventually grow apart, like rambunctious children, but a reasonable way to race pass time in this ridiculous black cloud? O Fifer, if anyone could see the holes in the ozones right now, would one not oscillate between the worlds of heaven and hell?

And maybe, just maybe, can I finally consolidate in my memory that I, for the greater good, have accomplished my duties? Fifer stumbles and nearly falls knee-deep into the bathtub, his mind deeply engrossed in the nebula. His stomach growled, but the shampoo and water was on, so the lazy person just let his excretion exit his rear end in the runny water. And after all that, Fifer wonders what the meaning of life is. Why do we try? What is the point? To reach an object far beyond our reach? To obtain a better life that we already have? Answer honestly to yourselves what you truly want? And is this not what Fife wants too? ♦

ageism and the gun problem

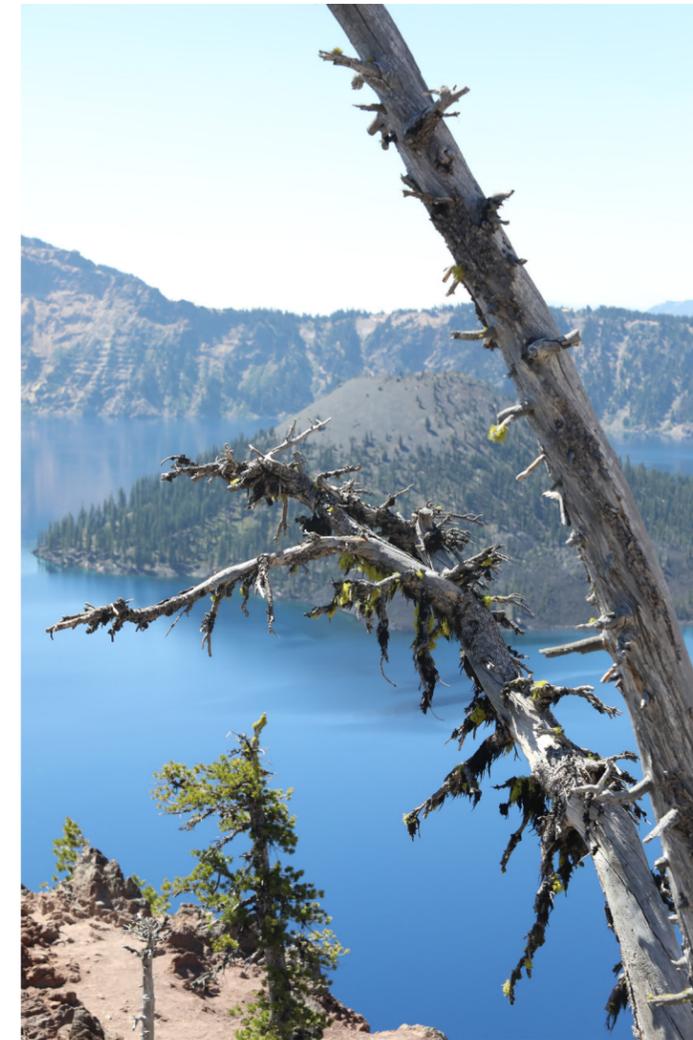
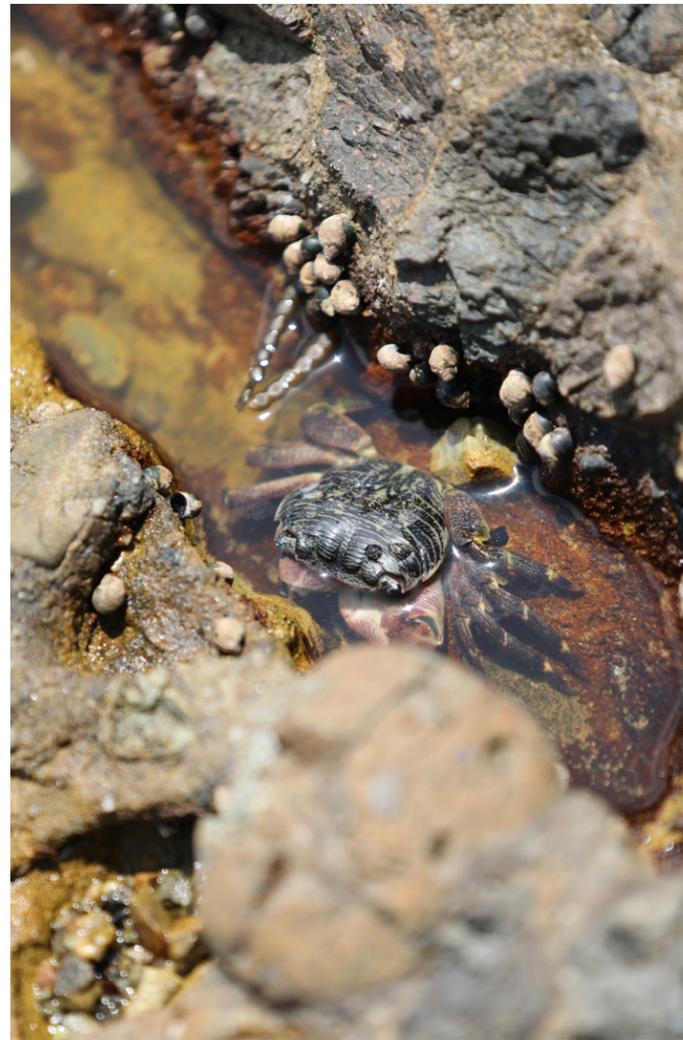
Anouk Yeh

i am writing this poem
a day after john mccain's death
while the whole country is mourning his loss
his eulogies broadcasted over the air
soaring through the sky like paper airplanes
each speech different than the previous
i have no idea how to start this
so i guess i'm also going to write an eulogy too
i'm writing a eulogy
for all the girls and boys
whose lives were taken before they knew why
who were sheltered from insensitive topics
kept in the dark
because world issues are adult issues
political issues are adult issues
the issues that ended up claiming their lives
were all too often labeled as adults only issues
well if the kiss of a bullet doesn't knowl age
why should knowledge
so stop telling me that i am too young to understand the things that
are happening to me
to people my age
my classmates
my people
so don't tell us that we are too young
when we say your "background checks" are a problem
so don't tell us we are too young
when we say that
the fact that there have been 345 mass shootings
in the past 365 days
is a problem
when we say fear in our schools is a problem
when we say premature death is a problem
when we come together and say that america's sadistic romance
with guns is a problem
when we lobby for gun reform
don't tell us that we are too young
when we come together and support our brothers and sisters
at santa fe
at lexington
at seaside
birmingham
raytown
ocala
palmdale
dixon
noblesville
wellington

school shootings that our NRA-funded government
tried to cover
tried to mask over
like as long as we don't acknowledge it
it's not happening
well mr. president
i wonder if it's hard
to wear young blood as concealer
how easy it must be
to blame mental illness as the real perpetrator
to tell us it's not the guns
it's the people
tell us what's traditional can't hurt us
well mr. president
no matter how customary
no matter how time honored your guns are
yes
they still kill
yes
we still bleed when we're shot
so when we are the ones
who step up and say to our fellow students
here
i don't know you
but your life is mine
and mine yours
here
although our i'm only your age
and our souls seem light years apart
i will do anything in my power to keep you safe
don't tell us that we are too young
when we say that we are fearful of going to school
don't tell us that we are too young to know fear
when there are people my age
who have already had to look fear straight in the eyes
stare down fear
at its 20 round high caliber bullets and semi-automatic switch
and have it stare right back
so don't tell us that we are too young
when we come together to say that there is no hall pass large enough
to excuse america from its screaming absence on gun reform
when we come together
and say
that it's not america's mental illness problem
that it's not america's educational problem
that it's not america's culture and historical problem
that excuses the fact that america has a gun problem
don't tell us that we are too young.



will i already have forgotten about
family dinners this time next year?
Adina Bidel



Untitled Photos
Lily Yang

On a Sunday Morning, We Find
Anonymous

Cigarette butts, a crumpled Saturday
detention notice, pistachio shells.
In their indigo black shells,
mussels cluster along the shore's end.
When we turn our backs to the waves,
we see graffiti scrawled across the cliff's bare belly.

if only we were taller
Phoebe Wang

The green onions are growing tall
In the earthy garden bed
They drew forth water and all
As if striving to get ahead

But spring passed to summer passed to fall
And now they were too tall
and burst forth
onion flowers

I suppose that the early bloom
Does not mean the crop's doom
But I guess that no one really eats
onion flowers.

What If
Elise Phan

It's a shame, really.
Where did the
answer to everything
go?

In all your wildest hopes and
dreams,
you ended hunger, made peace,
and brought
Happiness
to the world.

This alternate reality was so
Perfect
that it was almost
real.

But all dreams end.
So where did all your
wellbeing, peace, and
Happiness
go?

Well, it's a shame.
If only you could
just

Remember.

Iron Roses
Cheryl Wang

here is the sound of steel on steel
metal ripping on metal
a hard scrape against sparks.

do you shudder? your
primal instinct—dulled (
but persistent, despite all your
wishes to forget)
—growls, and you remember:

this is the sound of death.

and swords against swords and blades against blades
and red dying autumn stained in deep silver glades

i remember tragedy
although it was not mine
but the pale wan screams of a country
when new york danced in flames

and the silent song of the steel belt man
his neck burned red in mockery
who choked in the rust of a dying world

and glassy eyes watching
cold and grey
big brother's grin whittling eiffel

what is iron
but not destruction?



