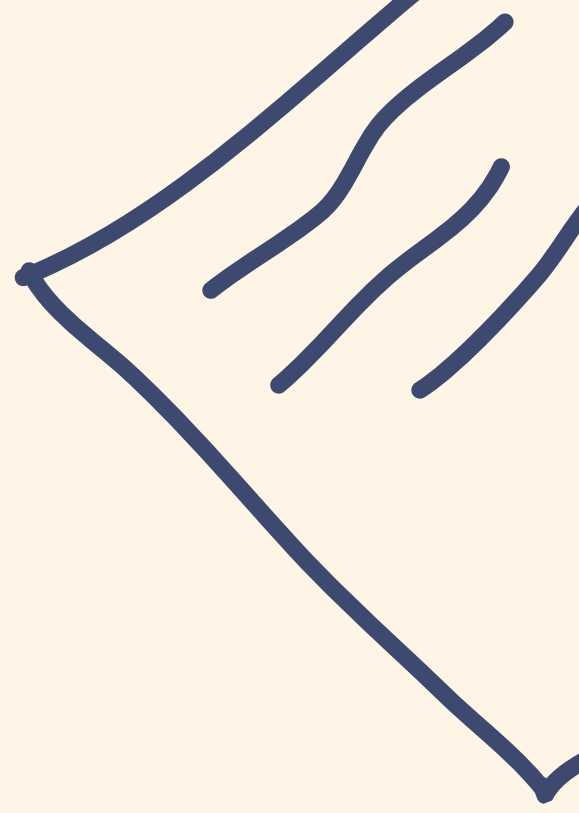


# Scribe







# SCRIBE

2020

## Rutherford High School's Literary Magazine

**Advisor: Ms. Dougard**  
**Editor: Tierra Sherlock**

With special thanks to Mrs. Castellano, Mrs. Grillo, and their students for their art; as always, thank you to the Scribe staff and all contributors.



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## A Gift

Kyra Cioffi

She gave me marigolds when the air turned sweet;  
The apricot petals laced with ribbons of saffron and rust  
Excited, I encased them in glass,  
And later wondered if that was a bad choice.  
If that, by pressing their heads against the frame,  
I had stifled their breath.

Hung above my bed, I hear them whispering.  
So, I walked away from sleep so I could listen.  
They told me I had made a big mistake -  
that it was far too late to put them back in water.

I succumbed to the thought of those marigolds in warm earth  
before they were ever picked.  
How they must have rested so peacefully underneath an endless sky  
Without knowing their twisted fate.

I missed the way I could hold them in my hands,  
So soft in their touch.  
I missed the way they gave a bit of themselves when I cradled  
them,  
Immaculate buds of life.

Now all dried up.



## **A little sharp, a little flat**

Tierra Sherlock

Whenever you came over,  
you bee-lined for the guitar at the foot of my bed.

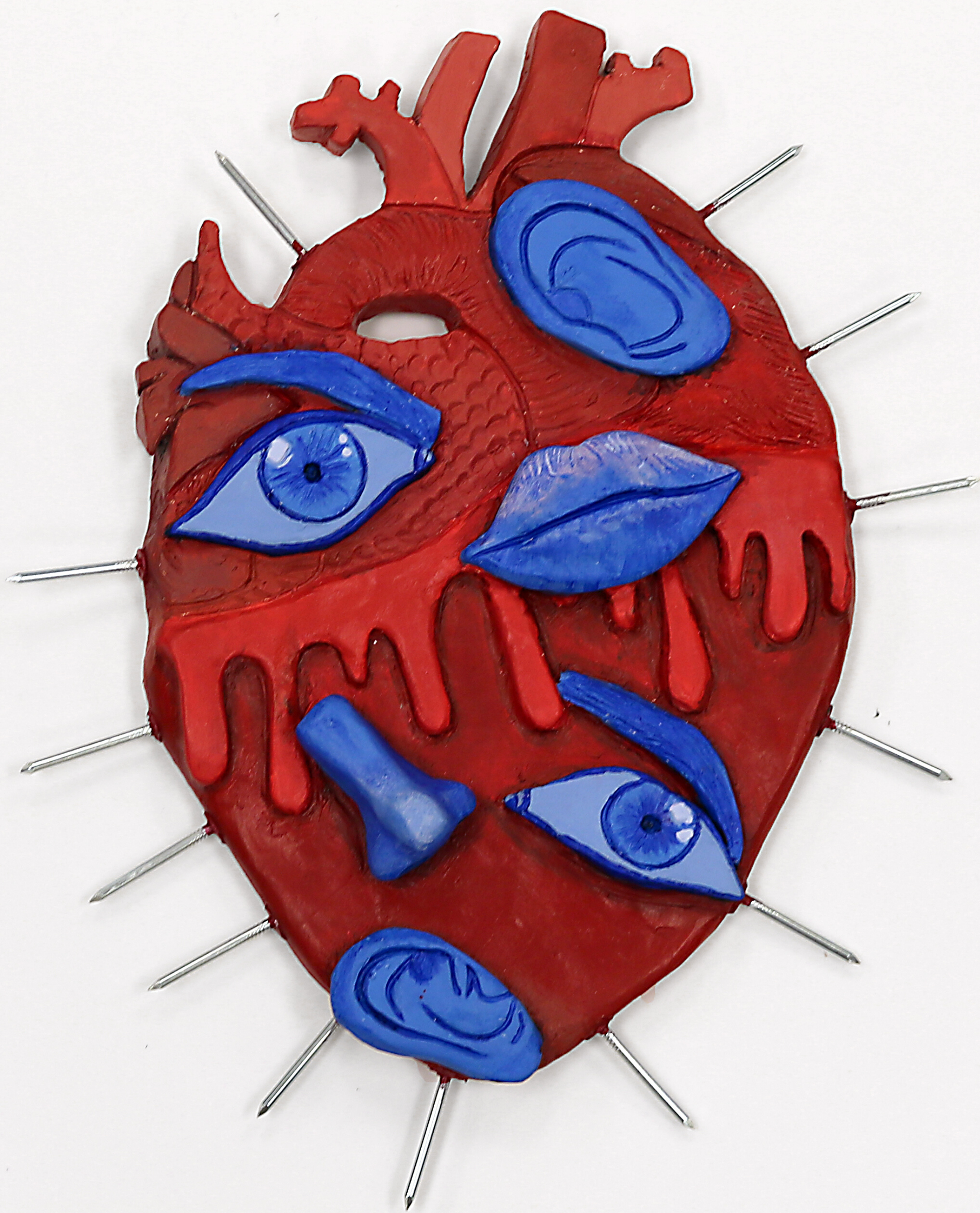
I tried to learn to play when I was younger.  
I spent hours sliding my fingers across the steel strings  
and pressing down so hard that they bled.

We laughed at how small my beginner guitar looked when you cradled it.  
You said the quality sucked,  
but you still reached for the pick you always carried in your wallet.

I watched how easily your fingers found the frets,  
how you could feel for the right notes even with your eyes closed.  
The strings never made a deep impression on your skin,  
your fingers never bled.

The guitar hasn't been tuned  
since you stopped coming over.  
I was never as good as you at letting the calluses form.







# **It's a Vicious Cycle**

Meghan Lichtenberger

Every 7 years, all of the cells in our body are replaced  
Some parts of our bodies grow more rapidly than others  
Others, like the brain, never regrow,  
It's a vicious cycle for our cells  
Grow, Divide, Repeat,  
Grow Divide, Repeat,  
A truly vicious cycle

Every 8 seconds a child is born  
Nurtured with love and care, they are born.  
Every 2 seconds a person dies  
It's a vicious cycle for our bodies  
Grow, Love, Repeat,  
Grow, Love Repeat  
A truly vicious cycle

Every 29 days there is a full moon,  
The moon refuses to stay away for too long  
The sun refuses to stop shining on it,  
It's a vicious cycle for the moon  
Grow, Shine,  
Grow, Shine,  
A truly vicious cycle

Every second, 4800 stars are born  
A collapsed ball of dust and gas  
Can become celestial given enough time-  
Only to die in a ball of fire,  
A supernova  
It's a stunning cycle  
A truly, magnificently, stunning,  
Vicious cycle







## Verse

Katherine Whaley

It is our sole duty  
Amid a disillusioned society  
To sing our verse with everything that is inside of us.  
Let it enthrall your imagination,  
Let it send your forsaken heart and your wandering mind ablaze,  
Let it fuse your misjudged atoms with her misunderstood molecules,  
For then we may set off a chain reaction within us  
That allows us to sing just loud enough  
That we break the sound barrier that limits our hindered scope of view  
And renounce our hushed voice to the point that we let it find its desired echo  
Letting each whispered tone rise into a perfect modulation  
That roars the universal magnanimity that connects the power that fuels us  
And links the particles that makes us all the same,  
Relinquishing the exhaust that makes us different  
And at last,  
Our verse shall be sung.







## Whispering Aroma

Stacy Shang

The secrecy within its carmine croaks  
Make her eyes burn with icy, waxy smoke.  
Gripping to a yonic, wavering line,  
The four hands upon the tabletop  
Drip crimson chasms through their smiles of wine.

The earthy floral musk  
Is masked in dusk upon the sweat's antiquity  
But as the earth falls out,  
The tide of her breathing flows in  
With powerful places freezing fury to pity.

And the crime lies within the divot  
That carves crescent lines grinning each side.  
While blood is rare and fists are closed  
Each inhale praises the mind as divine.

The crystal rim curls the liquid with a wail.  
As her chin falls downward into the acid splash,  
The wind reminds her to exhale  
And savor this time,  
Each trickling of the cherry wine.







## **A Puppet's Motivation**

Christina Genzano

For where my life full of order and form  
Is moved and halted by emotional mind  
And its strings will tangle within its storm  
Leading my life from productive design

The work that it once deemed most valuable  
Is deemed too stressful to even pursue  
And the reasons do not seem palpable  
But the puppeteer numbs intentions too

I need to wake up from this groundless dream  
Wake up my body and mind to explore  
For the value is not the place I deem  
But in everything else life is known for

When my puppeteer mind from work is numb  
I should explore motivations to come







## **Taking Flight**

Kyra Cioffi

There's a certain bending of the light  
That finds its way to ruin perfectly fine afternoons  
January air is heavy,  
And my lungs ache for their long-awaited release.

I imagine a place where  
My feet, plastered in warm earth,  
will spring up roots  
With the trajectory of many suns.  
I'll go, higher and higher, above this tiny town.  
So high, that the trees become broccoli stems  
And the houses, toy houses  
And the roads, little stretches of tire tracks  
I'll make acquaintances with the sun slits that protect the clouds  
And I'll let the amber freckles of the day touch my skin, breaking the  
long, incessant blue

The whispers of home will bring me back down  
And, closing my eyes, I'll remember who I am again.







## **The Weight**

Christina Rodriguez

I've carried him with me since the day I knew love.  
Endless devotion and fabricated futures  
Prancing to the tune of my swan song.  
He lies at the bottom of the bag,  
Memories inhibiting my ability to move.  
Waves crashing, voices trembling,  
Our euphoric paradise of hopeful lies.  
A cycle of hallway glances and secret obsessions  
Plays in my head,  
The only movie ending I do not know.  
Remnants of the past cling to one another,  
A giant jumble latched to me by two withered straps.  
Ceaseless echos of what could have been  
Ring until my feet are brought to an abrupt halt.  
I have been standing alone in the woods,  
His weight on my shoulders.  
Stuck in the shade of a thousand trees,  
My cries are heard only by the ghosts of us.  
My hand dives into the bag,  
Rummaging throughout our gallery of fantasy.  
I reach and grasp onto Hope,  
Her glow dimmed from the density  
That is our ability to unconditionally care  
For everyone but ourselves.  
I hold onto Hope whose light is my salvation  
And choose to leave the rest behind.







**Her.**

Julia Narucki

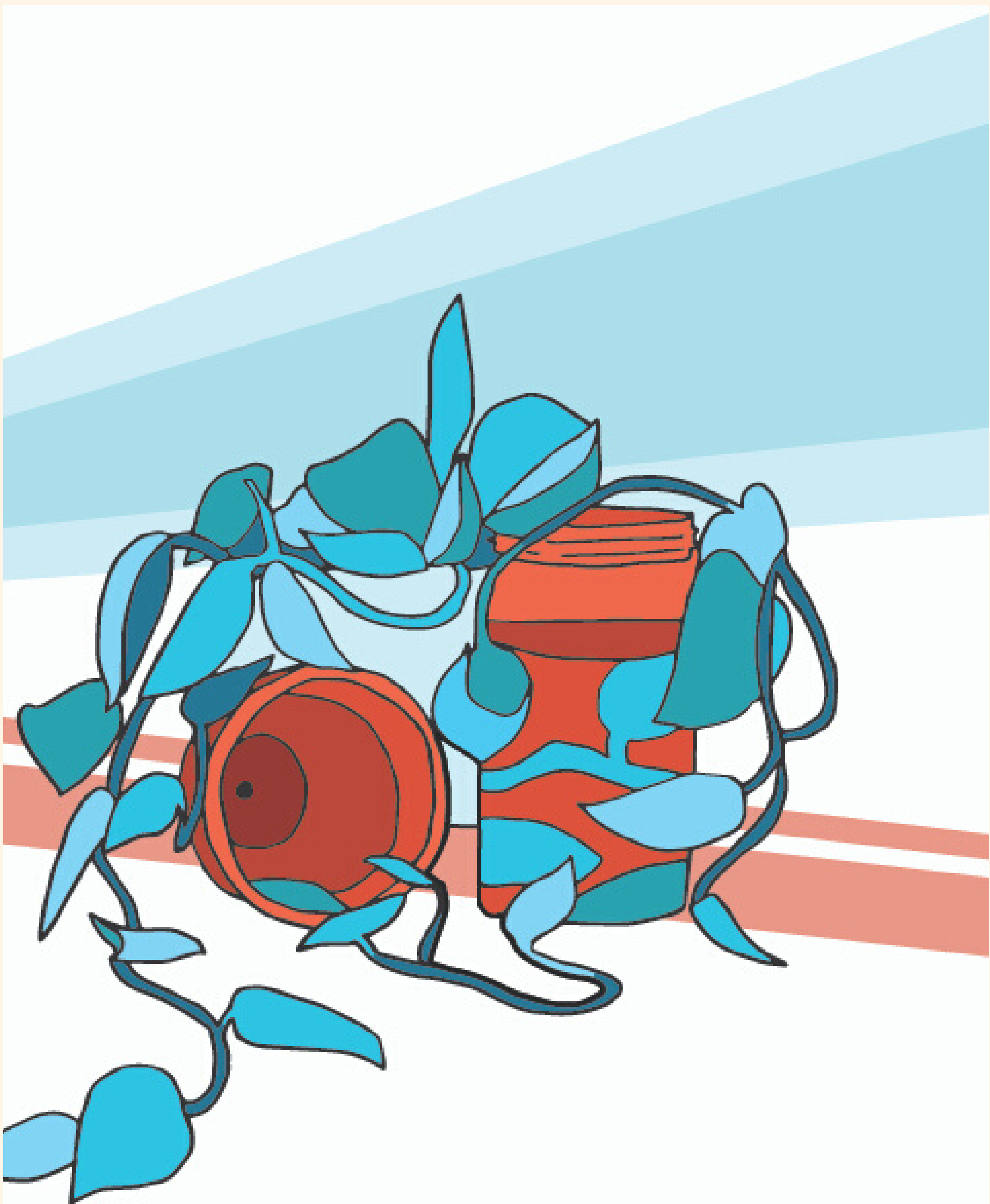
With lavender chiffon, a flowing grace  
Soft waves cascading down her thigh,  
At a slow and growing pace.  
And a purple band 'round her waist so high.

Curls of brown and red,  
Loose, below her chest,  
Hanging freely from her head  
Her frightened eyes watching the rest.

The rest, so beautiful, unlike her  
Dancing, living, effortlessly  
Eyes straight ahead, no glances at her  
Hands reaching out, desperately

She lies alone, in her corner.  
No one to mourn her.







## **Do you know what death smells like?**

Tierra Sherlock

When it's not in a trench, I mean.

When there are no guns and no bombs  
and no rope no blade  
and no wounds and no blood  
and no cold and no hunger  
and no cars and no accidents  
and no words.

When the stench of death  
just hangs in a living room  
and sits in an armchair  
and throws hairbrushes  
and dances a jig  
and screams through the night  
and sips a cup of tea  
and waits.







## **A Midnight Musing**

Paige Holman

She truly feels at home

Bathed in the silence of 2 AM

Dark shadows clash with muted moonlight

As the moon's pale face reflects through her window

There is nothing to fear in darkness

Pain is dulled

All is focused on a single heartbeat

A single dream

A single flicker of something more

A glimpse of freedom

Far away from her gilded cage

She lives for these moments

Frozen in time

Even if they disappear

With the rising of the burning sun



# Malibu

Emilia McCarthy

Breathe in, breathe out  
the wise words of mankind.  
Seeking for complete serenity,  
yet only feeling intertwined.

The sun giving off a honey glare,  
shining brightly in my eyes.  
Making me feel as if I can breathe,  
overlooking all my despise.

The sand tickles my toes,  
as I walk along the shore.  
Thinking loudly to myself,  
“What could I want more?”

The smell of salt filling the air,  
I cannot go past it.  
Taking in this new life,  
my soul going through a complete shift.

For I am able to compose oneself,  
as the waves crash on.  
I am able to experience this relaxation,  
while feelings of despair are withdrawn.

Thank you shores,  
for your effortless enlightenment.  
It has brought me to a mental state,  
of complete defiance.



# Wings in Summer Hue

Ariel Ingram

“Look at that glow!”

Leo’s wings perked up at the sight of it, his eyes fixed on the hundreds of tinted shards that were scattered across the wooden floor. He entered further into this room that he had never once entered before, parting with his home of the forest that held intangible levels of beautiful spells and trails of speckled gold.

With tearing wallpaper and a fair quantity of worn, Victorian furnishings haphazardly dispersed among the room, abandonment spoke plainly for the large living quarter. An unclothed and blond-locked ceramic doll lay face down atop a mildewed Aubusson rug.

Despite this unwelcoming ambiance, the sun’s casting of a bright beam through the entryway illuminated fresh flurries of dust and warmed the stale air. Caught below the rays, each scattered shard was turned into a fiery flame of color.

“There are rainbows on the walls!” Nina responded, lighter than a hummingbird as she floated further into and then throughout the room, multi-colored reflections forming patterns as they raced over her skin. After twisting several times in the air and basking in the beauty of the light, she brought herself back to where Leo now stood, his miniature feet having rested on the dusty, wooden floor, not even a hint of a pitter escaping from beneath them.

“What could they be? It’s the most beautiful thing!” Nina, with her eyes wide and enthusiastic, grabbed onto Leo’s hands and pulled him back up into the humid air. A cloud of golden fairy dust encircled their wings as they batted them quicker than could ever be counted, intricate designs lining their clear surfaces, his complemented with an effervescent blue, and hers, a sweet salmon. Nina’s dress of white roses shimmered in the sunlight, illuminating her delicate features. Leo’s cheeks had gone warm and rosy at the sight.



Leo searched his mind for an answer to Nina's question, but he had never seen anything like this before, and had no experience on knowing what could be of the vibrant pieces. Although, a peculiar feeling inched into his mind, spinning his perspective like a top. He had seen this before, but not in person. In stories... in nightmares.

The realization had struck him so suddenly that the newfound pounding in his chest seemed to have blinded him for a split second. Furrowing his brow and piercing Nina with concerned, amber eyes, he recited the first line of a sacred poem he'd never thought he'd be reciting in such a shocked state...

"If a glassy vase hits the floor and shines its light from each colored core..."

Nina forced her hands away from his, evident in her expression that the realization of the trap they had entered had hit her.

"...then fairy's dust will encircle you and their wings will burn in summer hue," Nina recited, the words lingering in the silence.

They stared into the abyss of dilated pupils that each other's eyes had become. They knew what could... what would become of them.

Suddenly, a cutting shriek echoed as far as Nina's itty vocal cords could send it. Taking no more time to spare, Leo dug his pointed nails into her arm, and with adrenaline bouncing in his wings, he hurriedly flew for the opening that they had entered the room through. Nina batted herself behind him at the same hastened pace. Out of this beautiful yet dangerous room and back into the home of their magical forest was where they intended to head...

...until they became the characters in the stories they had read. Booming footsteps encased the room as Leo and Nina peered behind them, daring to lay their eyes on what they could only assume was the beast.

"If a glassy vase hits the floor and shines its light from each colored core..." The creature of great myth recited the lines. It was the one who had learned that setting this colorful trap would attract the small, innocent things. It was the creature that many like Leo and Nina would see, but could not flee from or live to tell of the day that they encountered it... a human.







# SURF CITY, 1998

Kaitlyn McCarthy

*I'm sorry about the blood in your mouth. I wish it were mine.*

- Richard Siken

I watched Annie get washed overboard.

The ocean had turned on us like I'd never seen it do before. When we left the dock, the Sun was beating down on us heavily from its late afternoon position in the relentlessly blue sky. Fishermen and recreational sailors, like you, Annie, and me, flitted like little birds up and down the dock, climbing onto boats with their gear and their hats, commenting on how fine the weather was. The waves rocked so gently against the side of the January, it was as if the entire great body of water was sleeping.

The wind picked up steadily the longer we were out, and it was like the gods themselves were urging us further, longer, into the open sea. I stood at the helm, small hands wrapped tightly around the railing. It looked like we were sailing directly into the blazing sun. I'll always remember feeling like Rose from the Titanic, flinging my arms wide about me, closing my eyes and turning my face up to the sun and feeling the wind in my hair and thinking I was on the top of the world. You'd only just let me watch the movie for the first time the week before.

When I opened my eyes, the sunlight had all but vanished behind a thick curtain of thunderheads. The sky had been leached gray, the water dark and roiling, angry. I turned to look at you, to find reassurance, but all I can remember is the way my fear was reflected in your eyes. You shouted to Annie and I, but the wind snatched your voice and carried it away before either of us could hear. Annie was standing at the opposite end of the boat, one skinny arm looped around the railing. She was wearing your yellow sweater over her sundress, and it whipped wildly around her, the zipper catching her in the face, tangling in her long, curly hair.

You stood in the doorway of the cabin and motioned for her to come to your outstretched hand. She couldn't move. Wouldn't. I could see it in her face. She blinked saltwater spray from her eyes and shook her head. She yelled something to you, but the storm swallowed it up. It looked like begging.

The waves were coming higher then, crashing over the deck, night-black and rabid with foam. The January was only so big; she bobbed like a child's plaything in the belly of the storm. The waves kept coming, and coming, and it was all I could do to hold onto the railing myself, to close my eyes from the salt and try to gasp in breaths despite the wind.



She was going to try to run to you. I saw her slowly unhook herself from the railing; I saw the fear clouding her eyes dissipate into determination. She called to you, and I saw the delirious panic flood her senses, the fight for survival. The waves were coming fast and tall then and she wasn't going to make it for much longer out in the open. She didn't think it through. She wasn't used to the water, to the boat, she didn't know any better.

She let go, and the water slammed into her. I remember how fast she disappeared under the opaque darkness of the sea. She tumbled like a ragdoll over the side of the boat, backwards. She didn't even have time to reach for the railing once again.

\*\*\*

You took me to work with you on the January every day after school. I'd clamber into the passenger side of your beat-up Impala, Annie trailing along behind me, tucking herself into the backseat. We fought against the beachtown traffic during tourist season, in the last sunny month or two of school, and you'd point an oil-grimed finger out the windshield at the cars you wished we could own. You let me pick the music on the radio.

We'd drop Annie home before heading to the docks. She never wanted to come. Said it was too hot in the open sun out there, and she had homework to do, anyway. We'd sit out on the deck, or in the cabin, and you'd explain your fishing gear to me, patiently answering questions as I analyzed every part of the boat and asked for each purpose. You showed me how to tie a sailor's knot, let me hold onto the steering wheel and pretend I was a pirate captain.

I never thought about what it was like for her, alone in the house until you and me or mom sputtered into the driveway. It amazes me sometimes, how small the world I lived in was. It was only big enough for me. Occasionally for you. But never for her, not really.

\*\*\*

July. During the summer you and mom always picked up extra shifts, and by dusk each night I was confined to the lines of our property, just me and Annie. We shared the attic for a bedroom, the floors and walls and slanted ceiling all wood-paneled, all painted white. It was stiflingly hot up there, even though we kept all the windows open so we could hear the crickets and the ocean and the tourists.



Annie spent each evening perched on her bed with a book, ear pressed to the window screen, listening for your cars coughing back into the driveway. I remember the night I'd rigged my blue and white pinstripe sheets into a tent over my mattress. I sat alone inside, my plastic beach pail in my lap, picking through the ocean water to look at my curated selection of seashells from that day. She was just visible through the open flap. I remember how small she looked in the yellow glow of the lamp, how weary.

"Don't you ever get tired of going to the docks with dad?" she asked, more to the hot summer night outside the open window than to me. She thumbed the pages of her book absentmindedly, pressing her face further into the window screen, until her eyelashes snagged in the little holes and she couldn't quite close her eyes.

I knew that wasn't the question she really wanted to ask. For one miraculous moment, my childish selfishness cleared, and I heard the unspoken words hiding in the lonely afternoons, the split-second hesitation before opening the car door after school everyday, the way she looked at you.

"Come tomorrow. Dad can teach you how to tie a sailor's knot," I said by way of answer. She turned her big eyes on me, blinking owlishly. She didn't say a word. I shrugged, pulling the bed sheet closed.



