



# Impulse.







### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Impulse 2020 was organized to share a story and send a message: That life, with all of its ups and downs, is worth living. There are euphoric moments where it flourishes, and there are soul-crushing moments where even weeds refuse to grow. It shows the unspoken reality that not all relationships are made of diamonds and gold, but not all of them end in tear-soaked ashes. The ability to interact with others is a wonderful gift, and we must always claim responsibility for our actions. In every life comes new firsts: a first passion, a first love, a first loss, a first forgiveness. Impulse 2020 is a reminder that our struggles need not be solitary, a reminder that it is okay to feel lost, and that how well one understands themselves and the world around them is not indicative of their worth.

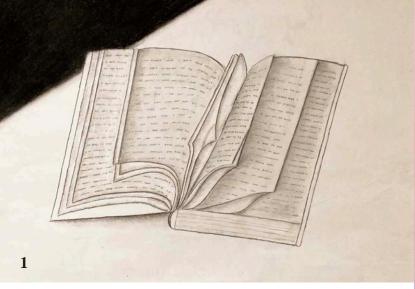
Impulse works toward a better future, not only with the variety of its editions, but also with the quality of its content, to uplift and inspire those who read it. With the belief that showing is more impactful than telling, Impulse 2020 hopes to send a message of perseverance that does not get watered down by the constant wave of social media. In times of difficulty, it is never shameful to ask for help, and one should always remember that only in greater numbers can we achieve greater things.

Sabrina Vuong Editor-in-Chief

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# A Slice of Life

Because to exist is to be surrounded by beauty.

Photo 1 Julia Zislis

Jake Turtil

Sabrina Vuong

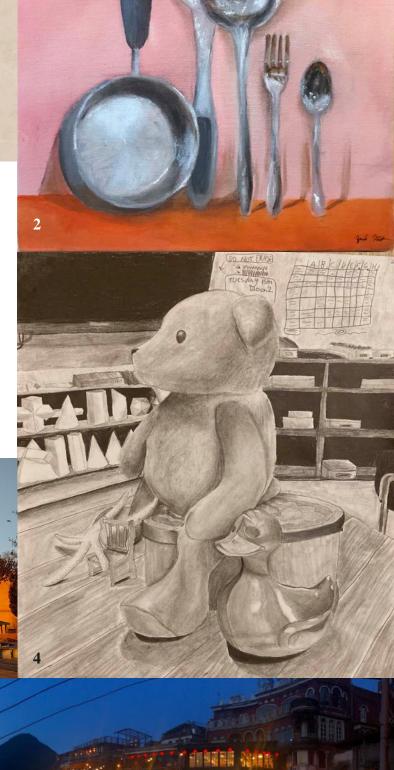
Jazmin Zeitune

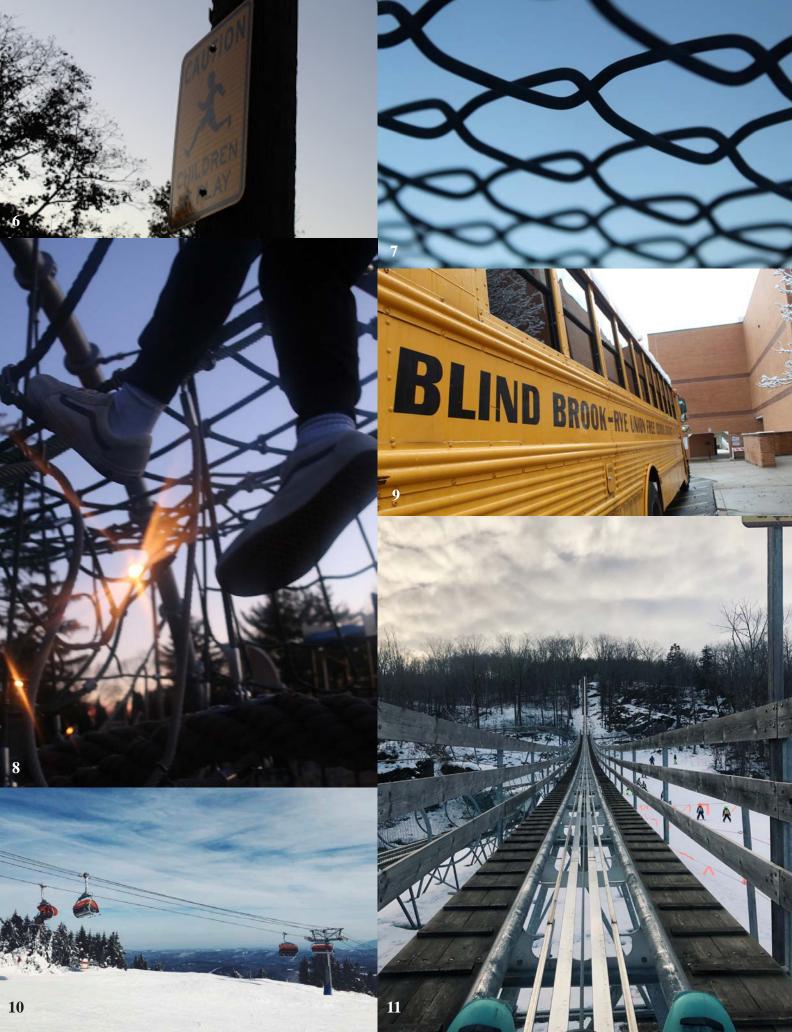
5 Chloe Ng

6, 7, 8, 9 Jahdae Levy

10, 11 Ellie Sternchein









### **No Instructions Included**

By Claire Limb

A black buckled bag and a thick guidebook lay in front of me as I sat on my bed. "Here you go," were the only words my dad said as he left me alone to discover what was inside. With a mixture of confusion and curiosity, I unbuckled the bag's straps. I rolled over the top flap to reveal what was inside, a tool that would launch me into my endless journey of creativity.

The Canon 40D, my first DSLR camera, sat neatly tucked in its compartment. As a mere twelve year old, all I saw was an intricate piece of fragile glass, a screen, a spinny wheel, and numerous buttons covered in foreign, indecipherable symbols. I scanned this foreign device, flipped the "on" switch, and pressed the small button on the front. Its complexity was no match for my eagerness to snap my first picture. A glaring stream of light projected from the top. As I pulled the camera down, a crooked picture of my bookshelf emerged. There it was—my first picture. A smile grew across my face.

I set down my camera and picked up the guidebook.

I flipped through the book, only to see each page, uniform with words top to bottom, fall onto the next—until a Ferris wheel caught my eye. I rifled back a few pages and stopped. The giant Ferris wheel, on the center of the page, painted mesmerizing spirals of light. My eyes lit up, astonished that my camera had the capabilities to take pictures like that.

"How do you do this?" I asked my dad.

"You just have to read the book," he responded nonchalantly.

I started at Chapter 1: Shooting Your First Canon EOS 40D Picture. I searched in hopes for a simple set of directions that I could follow, but all I saw were complicated explanations of concepts I'd never seen. F/stop? Exposure? Shutter speed? I was feeling slightly frustrated and hopeless that I would never figure out how to use my new camera, but my journey had just started. I closed the book, grabbed my camera, and began randomly clicking different buttons.

All my minute actions, like watching video tutorials for leisure, using my stuffed animals as models, and

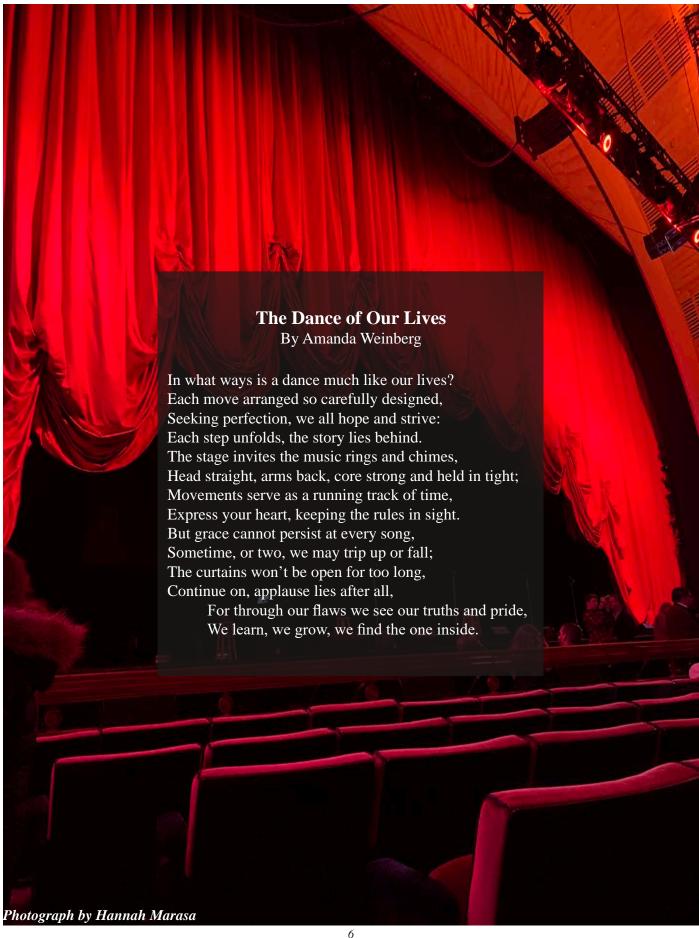


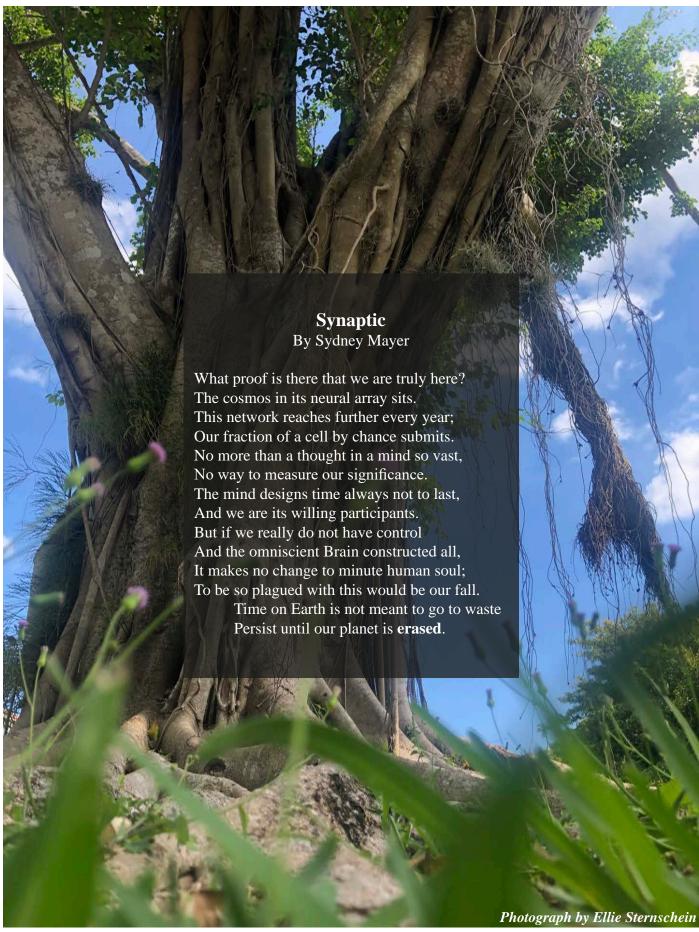
spinning the mode dial, slowly pieced together into something more significant. There was no stopping point for my knowledge and it continued to grow. I began to add new accessories: first a tripod, next an external flash, and then finally, another camera. Every new accessory meant greater capabilities—more to learn and countless more failures, but I continued to crave to create more.

My brain was like a machine, perpetually on, pumping out ideas. I snapped shots of gooey cinnamon rolls and landscapes with sunsets stretching the sky, but nothing could surmount the pull photographing people had on me. A release of adrenaline would rush out like water breaking a dam, shooting throughout my body. My hands fluttered, my heart pounded and my eyes lit up as I buzzed with excitement. I knew the close snapshots of faces had a special quality, being able to fuse my close attention to detail with my creative drive. Portraits gave photography a purpose, and it was now more than just technical skills. Rather than using objects to practice f/stop and shutter speed, I was using these skills as instruments to convey a feeling. Different settings gave me the power to

manipulate the photo to reveal my perception, an interpretation of emotions and attributes that stood out to me. My newfound inspiration motivated me to overcome the barriers of an unknown skill. So, I continued to move along the path of my journey with an open mind, willing to overcome challenges that came along the way.

Since then, I've been moving along this very same path. Every photo I've taken has added to my toolbox of knowledge and nourished my creativity. Creativity isn't clear or established; there is no instruction manual to follow. It's formed by what matters, what inspires, and what moves me. It's an eternal path of the unknown with curiosity driving me to follow it. Uncertainty and gaps in knowledge are frustrating, but the burst of electricity exploding from my creative vision motivates me to become comfortable with uncertainty. Along with the consistent change in technology, my creativity is evolving. It's essential for me to keep the same open mind and return to where I first was, black bag sitting on my bed, hungry to learn more.









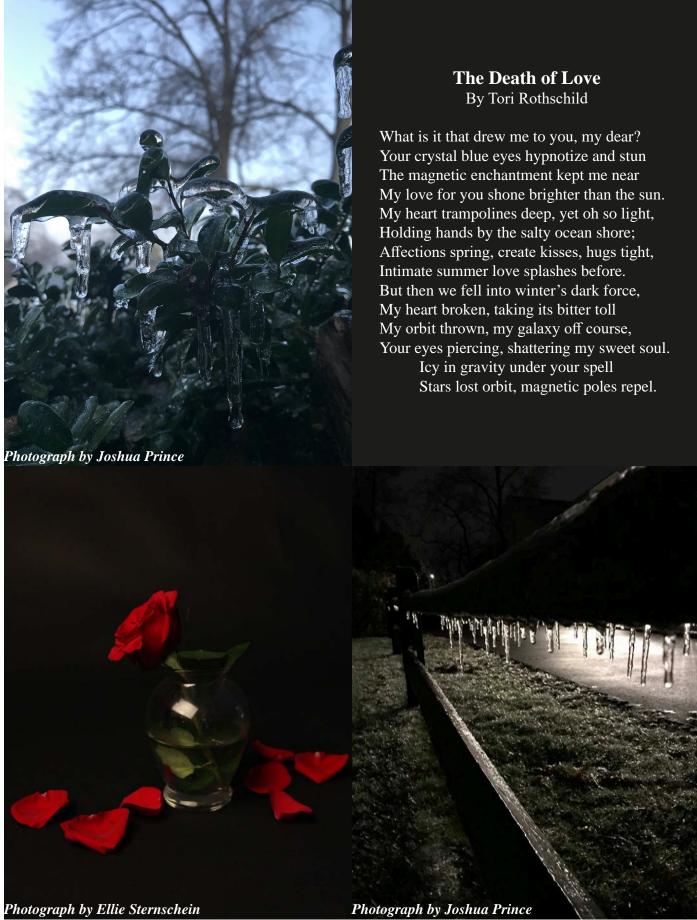


# Animal Kingdom Because we are never truly alone in this world.

Photo 1, 2 Kate Crennan 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 Chloe Ng

5 Hannah Marasa

9 Ellie Sternchein



### **Sonnet** I

By Howard Kuo

A two-faced evil, cold like winter night, Corrupted pearls, now filled with woes and screams; A cannibal, a fiend, a parasite, Misleading—just a puppeteer of dreams. The frozen, ruthless ruler, haunting all; An icon, pretty, gleaming, sparkling, fake. The drifting soot, a choking aerosol, Leads frostbit ghosts and harrowed souls to ache, But night and cold will fear and hide from self. They all recede with sign of jealousy; Perhaps their true disguise of self they shelf, Perhaps repent they will at prelacy. It matters not, for now with fires we'll fight, It matters not, for life goes on despite.



# **Lost**By Lauryn Weintraub

Can I ever repair my broken heart?
Running away from all that lies ahead
I thought that this was me just being smart,
And yet somehow I now feel lost instead.
Hairpin turns and detours on ev'ry road
Dense forest trees shade paths that lie unknown
No sound of lark's song nor a dove's sweet ode
As black velvet skies shroud the bright moonstone.
But through any darkness your light will shine
Warm rays mimic the way it once had felt
With passing time no feelings will resign
Despite the pain, my heart! It still will melt.
The farther I get the harder it seems
To abandon my endless tears of streams.

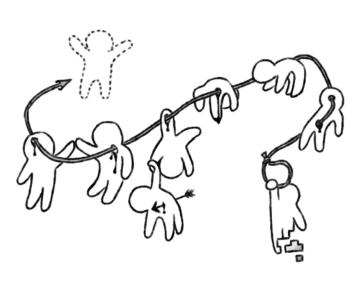






### **Imagine**

By Manami Yamano



Imagine walking in on your best friend with blood dripping down his wrists onto the cold, marble bathroom floor. Imagine going to your friend's funeral with his mom choking back tears, mascara dripping down her face. Imagine watching his coffin slowly lowering under the ground. Imagine if you were the one screaming at him to wake up. No one should undergo this pain of losing a loved one.

A preventable death. The death of my friend. Suicide is a choice and yet, somehow—we end up pushing people into a corner where they feel that suicide is the only choice.

I have watched many of my friends slowly fall into a place where they have completely deprived themselves of their sense of identity, voice, and self control. I have seen them surrender themselves to their demons and devote their lives to the instinct of living in their small world where lies nothing, but a deep despondency for their life.

They continue putting on a mask for the sake of society, for the sake of being "safe," but that's nothing but a delusion. For them? Nothing is safe. Not their loved ones, not their home, not even their own mind. Insanity means war. A constant battle between love, fear, control, and hope.

Control is our sense of sanity. It's power. It's the basis of our identity. Losing it means letting fear dominate over all. Fear is what drives us down a spiral into the unknown, into madness, but love is what makes us stay. Love can heal. When all rationality is lost, love is the only power that can instill hope in the eyes of the dead.

But sometimes, fear can subdue love and blinds people where they forget their light that shines in the darkness. Maybe for them the anguish makes it feel as if death is the only way out of this cycle, that the choice of death or life at their disposal establishes control, maybe even freedom.

They are the outcasts. They are the people with depression, with mental illnesses. They are their own victims and their own worst nightmare. They are discriminated against for their lack of "normality" and have been stigmatized as a joke over generations.

When in fact we are all human.

Major depressive disorder is attributed to one's genetics, biochemistry, and personality, as well as environmental elements of the individual's life and have prolonged feelings of a depressive mood or loss of pleasure for two or more weeks. Depression plagues approximately 16.2 million adults (ages 18 or older) and 3 million teens from the ages 12-17. All of whom have experienced at least one major depressive episode. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in 2016, 60% of the 3 million teens and 37% of the 16.2 million adults do not receive treatment and suffer the consequences of a disturbance in every aspect of their life: an individual's physical and mental wellbeing, daily activities, and their social relationships.

Their pessimistic attitude results in suicidal thoughts continuously tormenting their mind increasing the urge to harm themselves. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide has claimed

44,965 people's lives in 2016 alone and increases by the year. Nearly 123 people take their own lives every day.

Why does this happen?

We believe in things that we grew up knowing, in what we call a bias. Confusing delusions with reality. Our five senses become our enemy, not realizing that we are just living in our own headspace where the lies and the truth can't be held apart. It causes us to become numb to everything beyond our comprehension and prohibits us from seeing beyond the unknown. This mindset created around fear bred the stigma around mental illnesses. This mental wall restrains us from taking a step forward into the minds of those who are desperately reaching out for our hand.

We have to come to terms with the fact that the education that is provided on mental illnesses is insufficient and acknowledge that it is essential to educate the world on the normalcy of mental illness and the weight of bearing that burden.

If we continue treating mental illness as a joke, you wouldn't be laughing if the next victim was your own friend, a sibling, or lover.

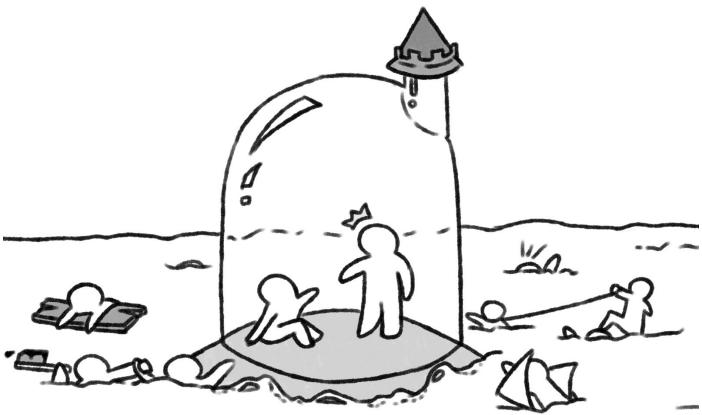
Notice the signs. Be honest. Acknowledge them. Speak. Understand.

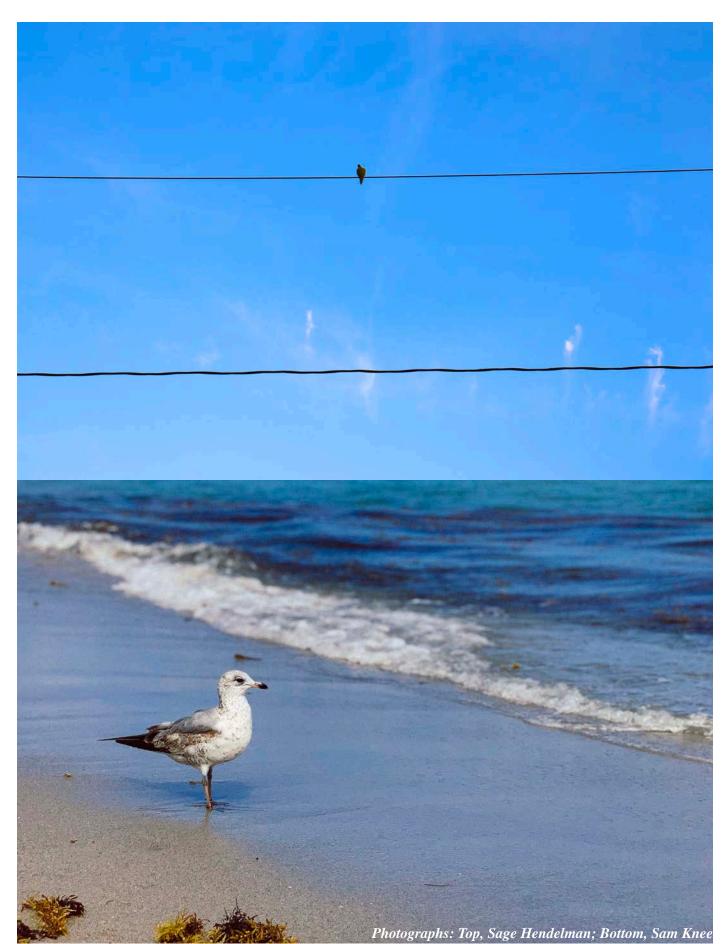
Nothing is worse than being too late. Nothing is worse than hearing news of your friend six feet under ground. Nothing is worse than a preventable death.

What would you do? If it's for one life, one friend, isn't it worth it?

*Imagine* a world where you don't have to live in fear. *Imagine* being able to lend a hand to your loved one desperately choking on their air to live. *Imagine* if I could be able to make jokes with him one last time and laugh at how he used to live. *Imagine* if we were able to show him that "you are not alone."

This is my last goodbye to you, old friend. Forever fourteen– September 17, 2018.





# **Bird with a Broken Wing** by Janell Lim

What's it like, I wonder, Out in the world, Alone, all alone, With your dreams unfurled.

I'll never know, And I'll never find out, I'm just stuck here, With a frown and a pout.

This home of sticks and twigs, My home of many years, Starts to suffocate me in every way, The home of my fears.

Fear I'll never be free, Like those other birds flying high, Fear I'll always stay, Looking up at the sky.

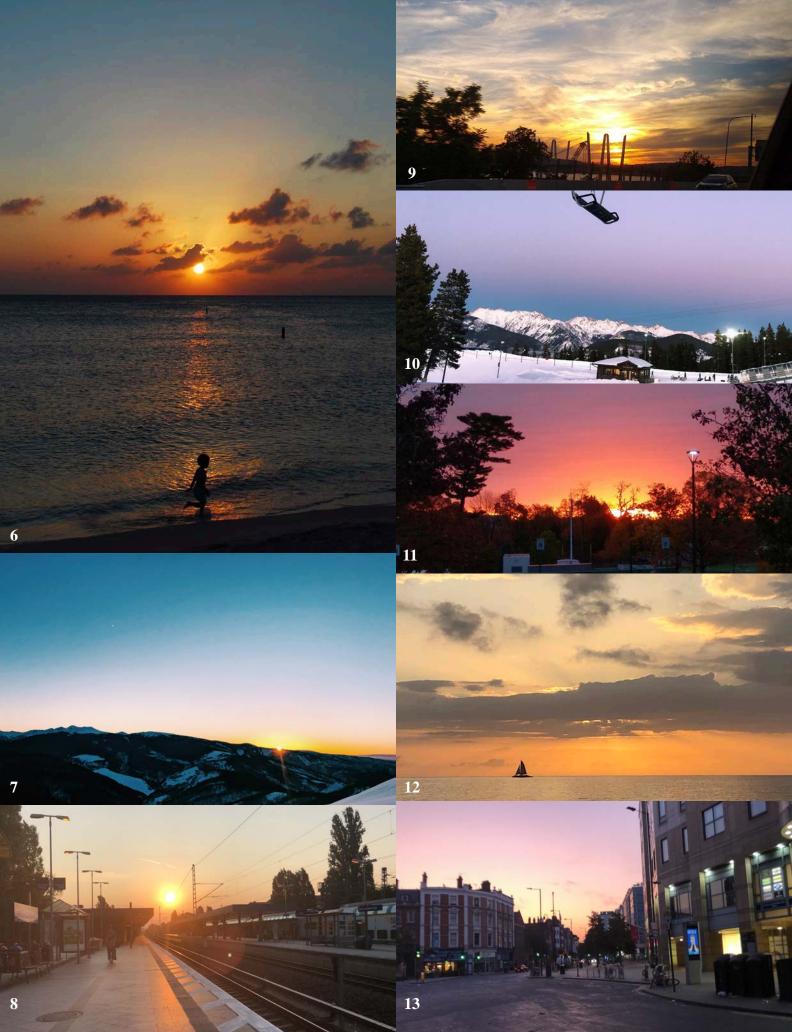
I wasn't always alone, Once, I had friends like me, But that time has since passed, Like a memory to flee.

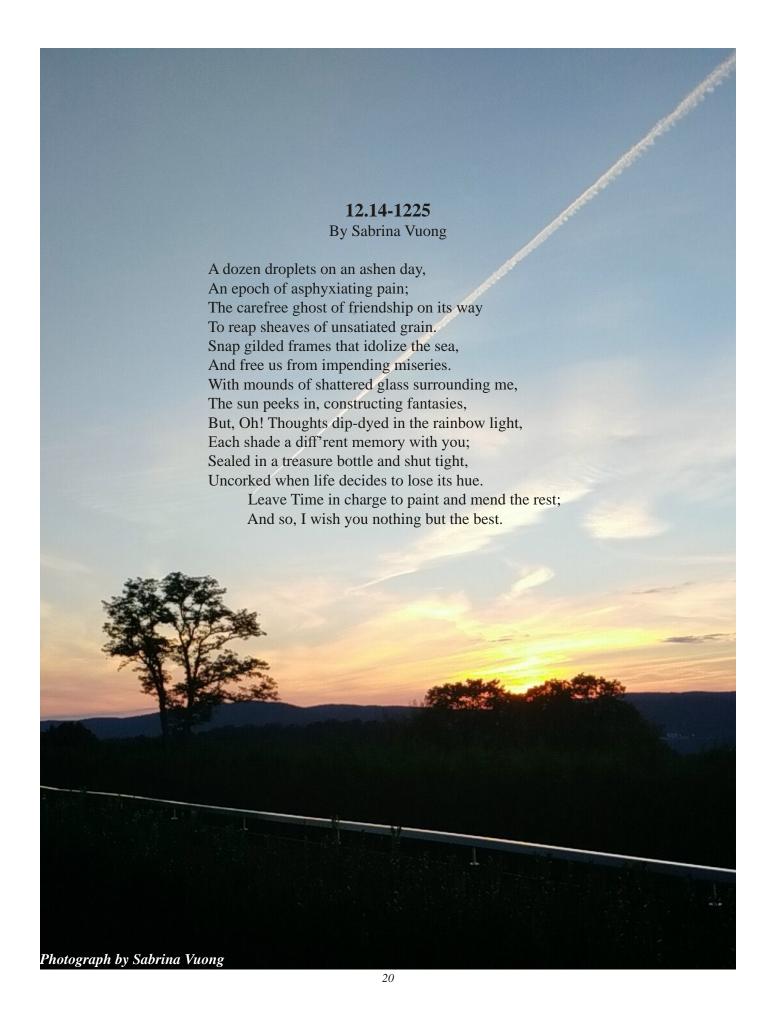
Do they say goodbye? Look behind? See what's left? See me confined?

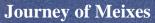
It seems as if they don't, Because they always leave, And don't come back, Leaving me to grieve.







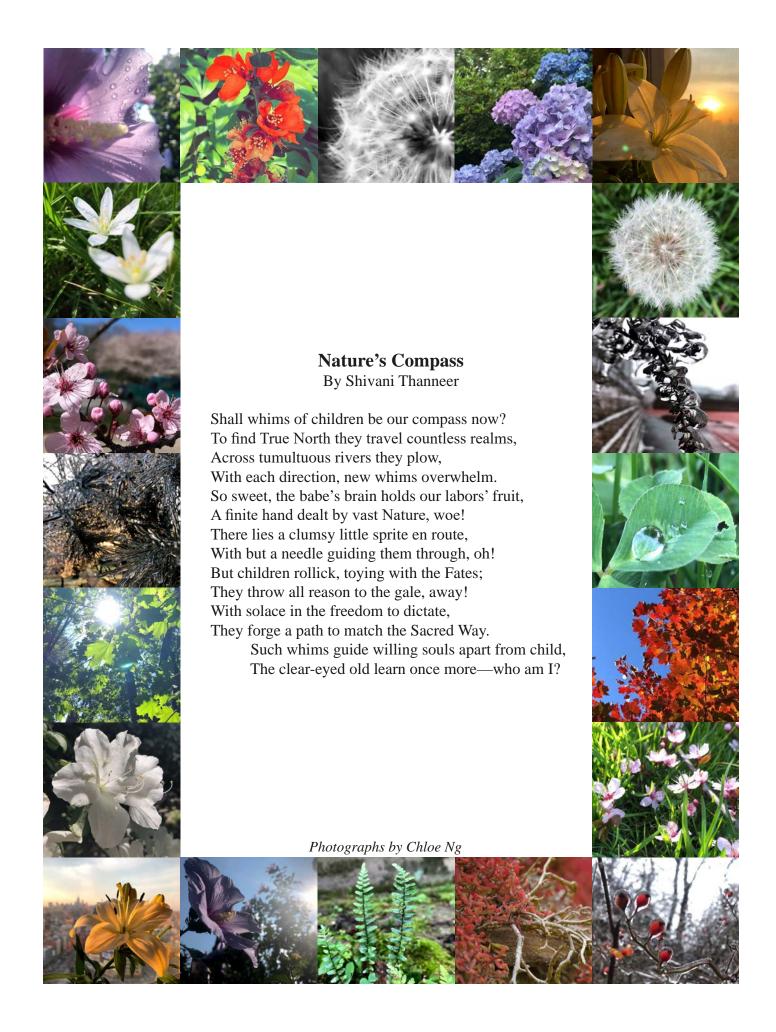




By Spencer Rose

Shall I ponder how you have grown to be?
Your complex and tangled odyssey taken,
Young such a fool, little hath be known to thee,
Can you say I will not be forgotten?
Will I recognize thee, Nobody to me,
Art thou at sea, depths unbeknownst to me,
Neptune's current snatched thee below its unknown murky sea,
Are you a blind cyclops, does telemetry help you see?
Is home still rooted within you, come find yonder,
So long since you returned hath you forgot me?
What bag of wind hath brought you home I ponder,
Did the lotus catch your eye, do we all see?
Never the same matured, yet still knows the tree
Always growing yet Penelope is within thee.





### **Truth or Dare**

By Janell Lim

### **MIA**

"Just tell the truth and you'll be fine, ok?" The agent's voice is a gentle, reassuring one, but it does nothing to calm my nerves. I know he's staring at me, through the one-sided glass that separates us.

"What's your name?"

"Mia Fulton."

"Where are you from?"

"I was born in Tucson, Arizona, but moved at fourteen to New York."

"Where were you at 9 pm last night?"

"I couldn't sleep so I took a walk around the city."

"Did you go to the park?"

"Yes."

"What did you see there?"

"I was walking through the park when I saw Levi. I wasn't sure if it was him, so I headed towards him to say hello."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"You had no intention of interfering with a DEA case?"

"No, I had no idea what was happening."

The agent looks through her polygraph recordings, giving them a quick glance. She signals to the window, indicating a go ahead.

"Ok, well, I'll have to look into your recordings with more detail, but for now, you'll be held here until we get the full results.

I nodded my consent and the agent left the room with her papers and polygraph.

For a moment, there's only silence. I stare at my reflection, stoic and unmoving. Waiting.

The red light in the corner stops blinking. I smile. Predictable.

The sound of the knob turning comes next. As I expected, Levi steps through with barely controlled anger on his face.

"Hi, Levi."

"Really? 'Hi', that's what you say to me after, what? Five years of nothing."

"What do you want me to say, Levi? That I'm guilty? That somehow, someway, I got involved with a drug cartel and am now in the business of drug trafficking?"

Levi doesn't say anything, simply pursing his lips at the sound of his indirect accusations.

I lean back in the metal chair, smirking at his defeat.

My smug expression is probably what propels him to retort quickly. "I know you, Mia Fulton. I know you're guilty."

"With no evidence, no witness, Levi? I'm no lawyer, but that doesn't sound like a very convincing argument."

Levi already knows this. That's why he's out the door before I can finish my sentence.

\*\*\*

"On behalf of the agency, I apologize for the inconvenience." Levi is giving me death stares. "You're free to go now, just live your life as it was before we interfered."

"Of course," I say in a sweet voice. Levi looks like he's going to throw up. "If I can be of any help in your investigation, you can contact me any time." I flash a smile at Levi, who's standing behind the agent with fiery eyes. "Levi has my number."

His mouth unhinges a bit, startled at the sudden amount of stares he gets from his fellow agents. It takes him a while to figure out who his true enemy is, but by then, I'm already closing the door to my car, galloping away into the sunset.

### **NARRATOR**

"You're sure?"

"Austin, relax. The DEA didn't suspect a thing."

"How do you know that?"

"I said, relax. I diverted their suspicions elsewhere."

"What? To where?"

"Someone from my past. They deserved it. And, on the plus side, we get away with 20 mil in cash and no cops tailing us."

"I hope you're right, Levi."

"I told you not to call me that," he says sharply.

"Right. Sorry, Axel."

Levi/Axel Hayes rolls his eyes, seated in the passenger seat of an Aston Martin. He chooses to ignore the offense, only because his thoughts are with Mia Fulton. We're both finally free, he thinks. *Finally*.

### THE END

# Photographs by Hannah Marasa

### **Mount Vernon**

By Holly Greene

My earliest memory was sitting on my parents' bed in our Mount Vernon apartment, watching them shout at each other. After the argument, I was stripped from the bed, forced to pack a bag, and I was off into the night with my mother. Although it was a confusing situation then, those images would forever be burned into my memory. For the next several years, my parents would lie about the status of their relationship. Every October, my father would come to carve pumpkins with me, and every Christmas he would come promptly at 5 in the morning to watch me open my gifts. I had convinced myself that for some unknown reason our family was temporarily divided, but my parents would eventually be back together soon. Not once was I given a proper explanation.

At ten years old, everything stopped. I had to split my holidays, my parents would start bad mouthing each other, and they started seeing other people. Eventually, I had come to the conclusion that my life was a lie. Everything I had known was not as it seemed. For the next decade, I would live my life in a state of confusion and resentment.

After continuous analyzation, I had made up my mind; I was scared to love someone, and I was especially afraid to let anyone love me. I blamed myself for their demise. I was the common denominator, I was the defect. I never saw a reason to give myself to anyone when it was clear they would just walk away. While my middle school friends had their first kisses and talked about being in love, I seemed to be the only one aware of the depressing reality. Did they not know that love led to disappointment? I had completely shut myself out from romance. Subconsciously, I would self destruct the minute I suspected I had feelings for another person. I knew that being in love and depending on someone for happiness could be the end of you, and for many years I knew I'd rather be alone than heartbroken.

The transition from middle school to high school made me realize a few things. One, everyone was the same. Two, people are confined in a societal bubble. And three, it is completely normal for girls to be "obsessed" with a person, regardless of whether or not you've said more than two words to him. There was one boy in particular that made everyone gawk. I didn't think he was worth my time until we spoke. After a few conversations, I gathered that he was irresistibly charming. Within a few weeks of getting to know each other, we were best friends.

As our friendship grew, I knew that I loved him, but I refused to let myself think of him in any romantic way. I would stop myself from thinking about the way he looked at me or the fact that I wanted him to be in my life forever.

After about a year and a half, the moment arrived. When we were alone, looking each other in the eyes, close enough to hear each other's heart pounding, I knew it was time to give in. So after the awkwardness, we kissed. To this day, it is the highlight of our never ending love story. We were quick to realize that the intensity of our feelings for each other

were more than anyone we knew could ever fathom. At that point, he told me that he was in love with me and that he wouldn't be leaving my side anytime soon. I was both excited and nervous, but this time, my feelings were too strong to ignore. I ignored my philosophy and confessed that I felt the same way.

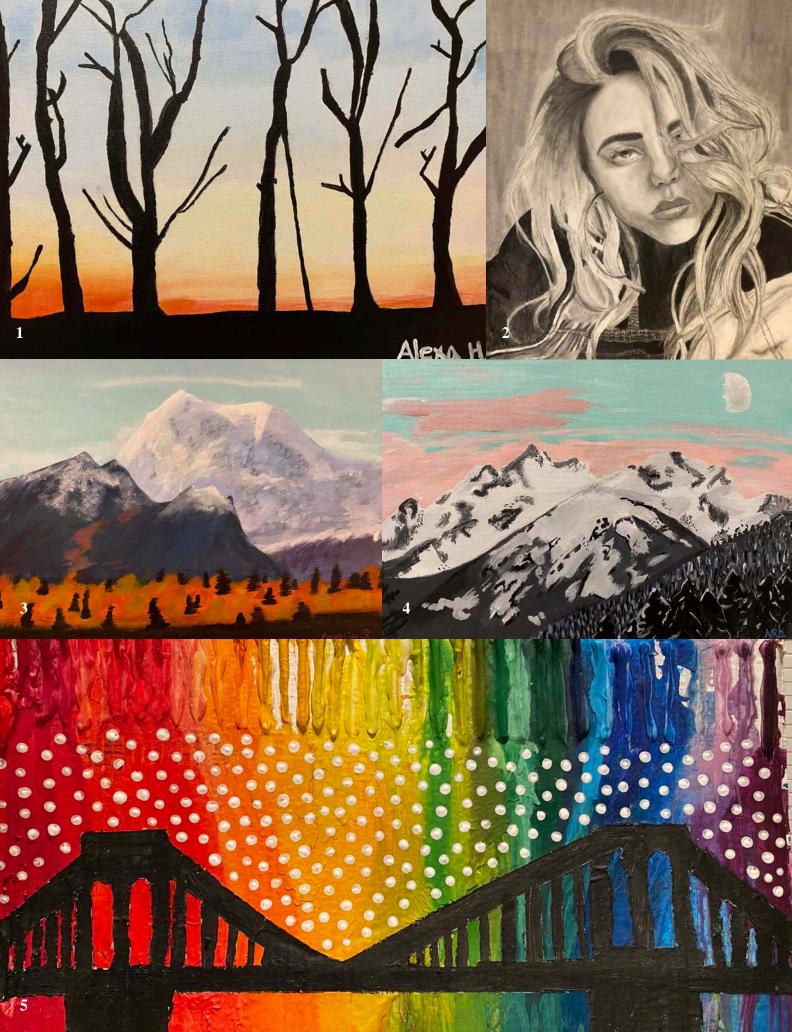
James Baldwin once said, "Love takes off the masks we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within." I believe that love is the fear of all fears. I believe people are scared to let themselves fall into that cold abyss. At least I know that I was before I met my true love. Because of my wretched example, I believed that all love was doomed. By diving head first into my fear, I found that being completely in love is brutish, but contrarily, it can be liberating and beautiful.

I believe that in order to be in love, you have to want to be vulnerable. So in order to avoid a lifetime of loneliness, most people settle. Maybe that's what happened to my parents.

For the right person, allowing yourself to be in love is a high risk with an immeasurable reward. If it weren't for the person I love, I'd be dead or more depressed than I ever was. Because of him, there is purpose and an infinite sea of hope in my life.

I am so lucky to have what my parents failed to achieve.





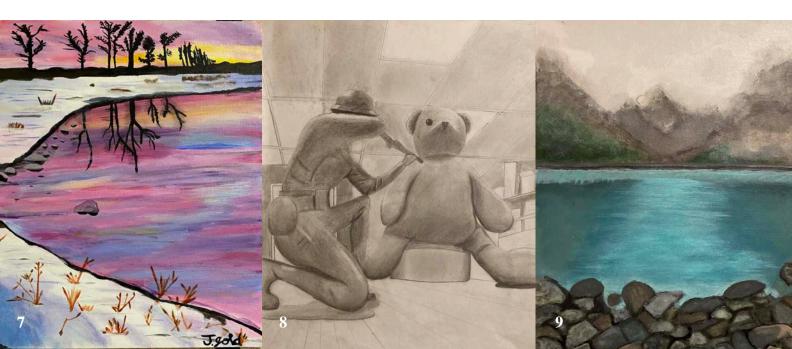


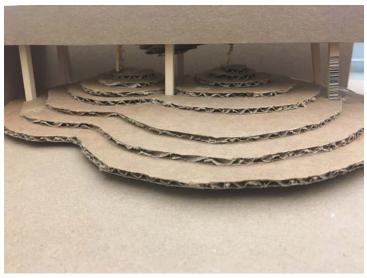
### Artwork 1 Alexa Hoberman

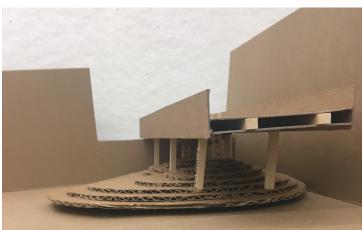
- 2 Jazmin Zeitune
- 3 Amelie Schleuter
- 4 Natalie Steinberg
- 5 Sydney Panzier
- 6 Chloe Ng
- 7 Jordana Gold
- 8 Sebastian Cohen
- 9 Lindsey Rosenberg

# Art

Because self expression is a treasure of its own.

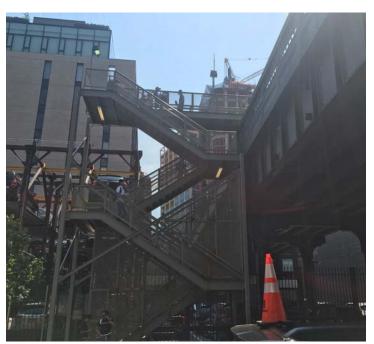






# Architecture

By Kevin O'Neill







As a student in the Introduction to Architectural Design and Theory summer course at Columbia University, I was asked to construct a structural addition to the New York City High Line landmark. After brainstorming and designing, I created a model of an artificial cave where people enter through the street or from ladders. As a social space for relaxation, entertainment, and gatherings, the space is purposed for an individual's experience as part of nature within the city. A sense of discovery, as if one were an explorer when going down the ladder, adds to the full focus of the structure.



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