



*Alexis Segura*



Laila Ghaffari

**Back to the Bookshelf**  
**by Alexa Kagiwada**

Armor clad knights upon  
Red fiery dragons flying  
Toward the looming spiral tower,  
Toward the damsel in distress,  
or

The girl with her hair held back,  
Sword hidden beneath her skirt,  
Knives tucked into her boot,  
Ready to lead the rebellion  
or

The sly investigator  
Quietly watching,  
Until everything falls into place  
Like the very last puzzle piece

It is everything but now.

Crisp skies,  
or  
Thunder clouds

It is fiery flames and cutting cold.

Calm seas, sun beating on the backs of  
The hopeful  
but,  
Raging ripples with a furious flood,  
Cause a tragedy,  
As the ship sinks  
Downward.

It is shrinking.

It used to  
Tower until my eyes could not  
Reach the top.  
My arms aimlessly flailing,  
trying to reach the top shelf,  
but  
Now I've grown.  
With ease I can reach the top,

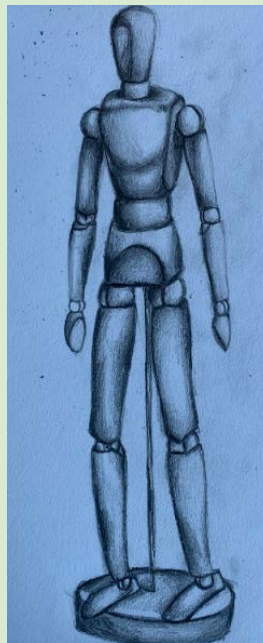
Still the young part in me,  
The part of me,  
That is hidden  
Beneath all the other layers of age,  
Begs not to be forgotten,  
Begs to never let the shrinking  
Shelf of memories  
Become a shirking factor in my life.

So I listen.  
And so I've never let it slip too far.

And it's perfect.  
Blue skies on a wedding,  
Aromas of the best comfort foods,  
Seeing friends after so long.

Forever I will come to it for comfort.  
For it to embrace me with its stories.

Forever, like a faithful dog,  
I will come running  
Back to the bookshelf.



*Georgia Rowe*

# *The Mystery of Evergreen Academy*

(Excerpt)

by Isaac Chiang

June 30th, 2033, Morning

It was a quiet day, and I had just submitted my school application for Evergreen Summer Academy, and my friends Reyna and Michael were going to the same week's sessions, too. Around 3 days after the submission, we all received a formal invitation with an elegant picture of the school logo on it. We were invited to an orientation on July 13th, where groups of 3 to 4 would meet up, and solve escape room puzzles. Supposedly, this was going to test our teamwork skills, so the academy would see what we were capable of. At that moment, Teddy, another person from my friend group burst into the room and looked really confused when he saw my letter. "Why are you trying to read a blank piece of paper!? HAHAHA!" he cheerfully exclaimed.

I replied, "What do you mean you can't read it, it's an invitation to an escape room event for our summer orientation!! Quit joking around, this is serious."

"No, I'm not kidding— it's a blank piece of paper. But screw this! I LOVE escape rooms, can I join?"

He was so excited that he asked me so fast it sounded more like ILOVEESCAPEROOMSCANIJOIN!? The rules didn't say that you couldn't bring an outside person, and we still had one spot, so after some debate with Reyna and Michael, we agreed and let him join.

July 13th, 2033, Morning

"OH MY GOD LET ME SEE YOUR STINKING MAP, MICHAEL!" Reyna screamed as she was freaking out, since the escape room wasn't even on any sort of map, paper, or digital, and we had to leave soon or we would be late.

"Wait, hold up a sec, the letter did have a set of 3 numbers written down on the bottom, could those be coordinates?" I asked.

"Lemme put it in," Reyna replied, slowly calming down. "Hold up - I found it! It's somewhere in that creepy deserted mall up that hill. I honestly thought that place was a ghost town before."

"Well, creepy place we go!" Michael enthusiastically agreed.

After around a 28 - minute walk, we finally arrived at the escape room place. For a business in the back parking lot of an abandoned mall, it looked pretty decent, if not brand new. On the way in, we found an elevator, which we used to descend into its "lobby". A robotic voice boomed through the room stereo system, which was playing some cheesy music about how the color green is evergreen but trees aren't. "GROUP Y48 WILL NOW BEGIN THE TRIAL!" Group Y48 was the code assigned to our group.

Immediately after that message, green lights appeared, all pointing towards a large eerie door, where the first room was already in sight.

As we entered, the lights dimmed, until all that was visible was a tiny tablet that had one line written on it:

Insert Key in the keyhole below

Hint: The key is not within 15 feet of this tablet...

## Chocolate

By Rhea Hawkins

Chocolate brown were the shoes my father wore as I danced on his **toes**,  
As was the confection I used to mend my **woes**.  
The golden embers of the chocolate that **flows** within us,  
shine through as **the sun sets them free** with its blinding, hot rays,  
that light up all they **see**. The rich chocolate liquid  
burns my throat as it goes down, hot, so I set it down to **cool**,  
**pools** of it poured into **molds** a place  
in my heart does it **hold** I like to drink it **cold**, in milk, forms of chocolate are  
endless, I am not, yet I have not come to an end.  
**Bars like a rapper**, bars in the wrapper, I opened **delicately** in awe,  
now empty and deprived of the **delicacy**, the grooves smooth,  
unlike the gravel beneath my feet, as I walk to get some more.



*Alina Cortes*





*Boadicea Conran*



*Alisa Fox*

## Ode to the Rain

by Victoria Browne

The sky gets filled with dark cold clouds  
The day becomes foggy and mysterious  
A sullen being that weeps in sorrow  
Its tears come crashing like daggers from the sky  
The loud rumbling sound of pain and agony  
What a sad rain  
As it falls on my face  
I feel nothing but joy and happiness  
Its tears of sadness make me cry of joy  
It makes me want to scream but not of pain  
If not of the overwhelming emotion of happiness  
The biting cold gives me a sense of warmth  
Without it, I would be melancholy  
Without it I would be sad  
When I'm home, and I get a surprising visit from the rain  
My sense of boredom disappears  
The rain crashing against my window  
Makes my pain go away  
As I dance in the rain  
I feel relieved and stress free  
I feel refreshed  
I feel like a new person  
When it goes away  
I feel disappointed  
Rain Rain, please don't go away

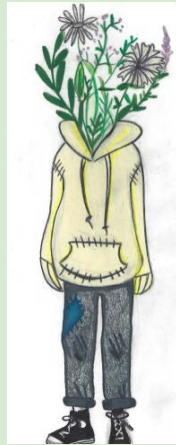


*Conor Phillips*





*Emme Fields-Kremer*



*Ruby Krekelberf*

### Cream of wheat

by Jacob Browning

I love cream of wheat.

The amazing oatmeal type porridge.

The hot steaming breakfast mix of wheat middlings.

The soft, textured, hot cereal, flows through your mouth, pleasing  
every last taste bud living on your tongue.

It is a beautiful food, easy, but complicated, significant, but small.

Getting up from your bed, your nose perks up, gleaming at the smell of the thick soup.

When the breakfast is uneaten, sitting there, waiting, your mouth can't resist.

Without it, you're an untold story with no meaning of life.

It is the open window in a hot room.

It is the hunger quenching thought you crave.

It is the bit of light in a dark room,

The sweet salty vicious taste that soothes your brain.

It keeps you happy while eating it.

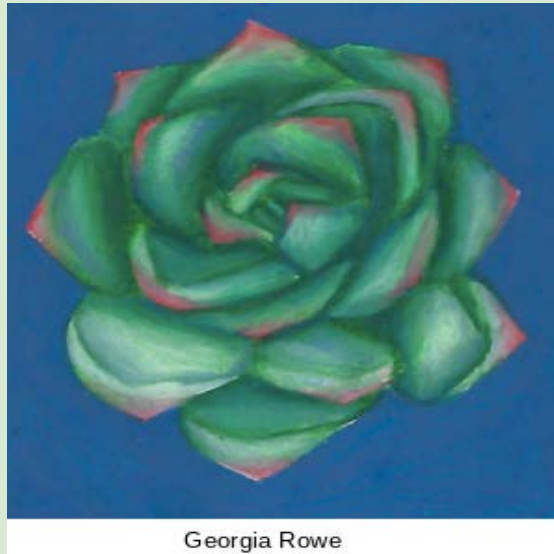
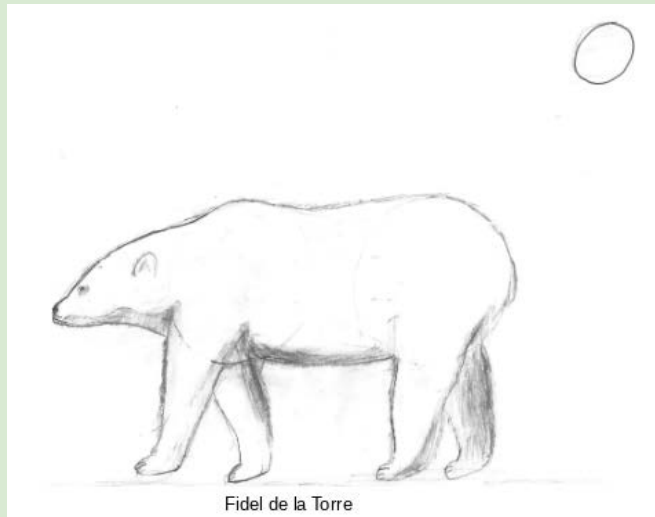
Filling you up with a warm blanket of food.

I love cream of wheat.

## Light Rain

by Sa'Rai McLaurin

The clouds are ready for a light gift  
It is light and sweet but the wind is swift  
I left my umbrella for a good reason  
The clouds let down drizzles for this season  
It appears to be a nice, light, rain  
I believe this is something to appreciate  
The puddles are deep but the splashing is fun  
The plants are growing and the wind is now starting to blow harder  
I sing a song as I splash in the puddles  
My rain boots are wet and feel warm inside  
It is cold but I don't want to go  
I look up to see a couple of birds  
And I finally turn and go inside  
I eat some soup and go to my room  
Where I hear and watch the rain outside  
I start to read and then take a nap  
Because I am comfortable  
I wake up to more rain  
And feel nice and fresh  
Delicate and free



# Ode to a Crow

by Kiki Parker

Your gleaming, sparkling coats

Shimmer in the sun.

Your talons, sharp and precise

Grip the branches of your sapling

Perched on the tallest limbs of the trees,

Surveying the empty roads like a king in his castle.

You soar through the air,

You vault from branch to branch,

Then tree to tree.

At the end of the road you rest in the shade,

concealed by the blanket of leaves.

You hide in the dancing shadows,

Alert.

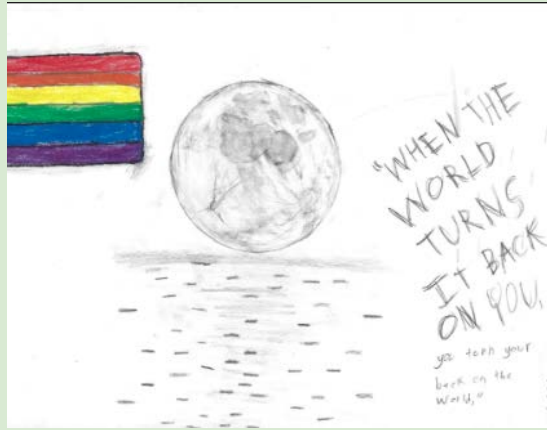
Then, you leap from the boughs and sprint toward the earth.

You spread your wings as you near the ground,

A brave skydiver with his parachute, floating down toward the earth.



*Gabriella J. Serrano*



*Ximena Sandoval Ramirez*

### **Ode to a Pencil by Jasmine Martinez**

The rackety rattle,  
 clatter,  
 rustle,  
 As you are pulled from your home  
 Sunny yellow  
 stormy grey  
 And wisps of pink clouds.  
 Keen,  
 rough,  
 and sharp.  
 Your end gentle,  
 soft,  
 and worn from constant use.  
 The wood that encases you,  
 light brown,  
 and rough.  
 A sigh of content  
 The soft scratch-scratch-scratch of lead  
 dancing across the paper  
 A stray stroke,  
 A gasp of surprise  
 Your world,  
 turned upside down  
 Erasing the mistakes of your past  
 leaving pieces of yourself behind  
 A swift hand  
 brushes them away  
 they fall to the ground,  
 like leaves in autumn,  
 settling gently on the floor.  
 The rustle,  
 clatter,  
 and rackety rattle,  
 as you are carefully placed  
 back in your home.



Vineena Ithesh

### The Day by Maddie Braun

The day drones on past my ears, heat floating in butterfly patterns behind my eyes. Phosphenes form in my hair, I smell coffee with my eyes. My senses are broken with light. My cells scream for the sun to go down. I'm so sleepy. I want to collapse on my desk and go completely numb.

Talking tangles with anger and heat into a gentle cacophony, the sharpness of a raised voice echoing into a scream (I've never really known the difference, as both signal rejection into the repeating depths of my stomach).

Sun melts disgustingly onto my desk. I am drenched with sweat, pouring down onto the broken, fake wood. When I was little Mom used to hold a water bottle against my head when I was too hot, with steady, sweaty hands. So much bigger than mine then, so much more knowledgeable, each line and dry crack a path for me to trace and follow with my own tiny fingers. Her hope for me still seeps between the creases in my brain tissue, tinkling against it uncomfortably and touching parts I don't want it to see. Like cold hands down the back of my shirt.

Song lyrics *cut out all the ropes and let me fall* and the heat of black car seats against my head and hair and arms. When I throw up, constellations of sick come out of my mouth, bile and adoration swelling up in my throat as she consumes me, fully. I've never been this worthless for anyone before. I can't focus on the words of the classroom around me because I'm too busy being slowly digested by it.

I want to be five and understand that the throngs of disgustingly loud and cruel people around me can be turned off and ignored. What did I ever do to make people hate me?

The classroom is talking now, its voice opening as a loud, wide mouth *And I told you to be patient* and I can't stop thinking.

Hatred swells in my veins and around my neck like a snake *And you'll be owning all the fines* We're both awful here, why fight? Why not love each other? My mind is echoing with blurriness. Harmonizing thoughts melt together into a shape.

And my name echoes sharply in my ears and I scream, press down shivering against my desk in paralyzed terror.

*"What on earth?"* I finally muster the strength to gather up my shattered guts off the floor. *"Sorry. I'm so sorry I'm so sorry I'm so sorry"* This is the part where they start yelling, if I apologize enough I can drown out their voice and get an opportunity to run. Just talk and talk and talk until the fear disappears *sorry sorry sorry* until you're forgiven. *"Stop, just focus, okay? I need your attention right now."* I nod.

The bell rings.

It takes a second for me to realize (it's all over, now I get to go home and sleep and do it all again but thank goodness I have some sort of distraction from the tides of my mind) that it's time to go now. I sit there staring for a second longer than I should, fatigued.

Leaving is a rush of senses (light blooming into my skull, voices worming their way through my ears, no longer in a controlled space) and instead of running until my throat dries out I stand there, for one second.

Try to ignore the noise and light, unsuccessfully. Walk slowly, unsteadily forward.

A cloud comes over the sun. The screeching dissipates. Oddly, it's gonna be okay.



Ode to Chocolate  
by Sahana Lindsey  
Chocolate, oh chocolate  
The food of gods  
The taste of heaven  
My piece of sunshine on a rainy day  
So much flavor;  
The perfect mix of  
Sweet, salty  
Bitter, luscious  
In one tiny square.  
My mouth waters when I think of the  
Crinkle of beautiful wrapping and tinfoil  
Being unfolded,  
The crack of a square  
Breaking off, apart from the main body,  
The silky smooth taste  
Of fruity and floral  
Earthy and organic  
Melting onto my tongue.  
I cannot help but think of the people  
Tending to the cacao plants  
Day after day  
Harvesting  
Roasting,  
The rich aroma,  
Cacao,  
Chocolate in its raw form  
Filling the humid air.  
The labor  
The love  
The blessings of mother earth  
So much flavor in one intricate, yet simple bite  
I long for your cool crunch  
Your creamness  
Chocolateness  
You nourish my tastebuds  
Like no other food  
Come straight from the earth itself

## **Ode to Franki**

### **By Veronika Brandt**

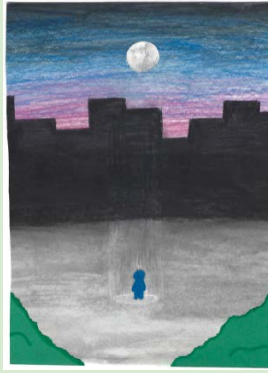
As he prances down the street,  
All four paws one by one  
He waits and waits for his treat,  
Hoping for more than one  
Fluffy, fluffy fur glistens in the sun  
Dreading the haircut  
That is yet to come

Chip chip the squirrel goes  
Taunting the pup  
He chases and chases determined to find  
The little devil that caught his little eye

He gets pets all-day long  
Enjoying his time  
Sleeping on the couch  
That used to be mine  
Though he can be a grouch,  
He is pretty sweet

He loves playing fetch  
But can never catch the ball  
He gets too confused  
So he never gets it at all

Franki is his name  
The little cocker spaniel  
He is small and mighty  
But he's not too much to handle



*Solis Perez-Armendariz*

## Ode to LA Chargers

By Stevie Lenkin

Oh Chargers  
You bolt across my mind  
The constant disappointment  
No championships to our name  
The stars and benchwarmers together alike  
QB is set  
Herbert the God  
Falling like a giant they never were  
Going on 4th  
Mixed feelings between all  
Ekeler a Snub  
Keenan an All Star  
Bosa and Derwin rest of the defense is gone  
Going deep from 60 yards  
The football rides first class into Williams' arms  
Win Win Win all the way to the super bowl  
Where hopefully someday they will be crowned champions  
But until then they will bolt on as Chargers of Los Angeles



*Jasmine Martinez*

# Ode to my sneakers

## By Layla Oumanchar

All they do is work day to day,  
rough and rubbed on the ground every which way,  
their color has changed,  
it's just not the same,  
covered in dirt and gravel and dust,  
cleaning them should be a must,  
sadness arrives as their time has come,  
to just about be replaced,  
by another one,  
memories fade one by one,  
my thought to be new sneakers are now done,  
for many jumps and steps in these shoes ,  
thinking about them can give somebody the blues,  
but see! There are new ones shiny and black,  
see them standing on that rack?  
they're jumping, pleading, calling out my name,  
sure, maybe it won't be the same,  
but memories oh, they are made every where,  
every new place, every field and every day that might just be filled  
with the joy of  
my new  
sneakers



*Jordyn Scannell*



*Lanikai (Kiki) Parker*

## **Peter and His Crazy Adventure**

by Wyatt Brown

I was just laying down on my couch after a school day full of intense tests and quizzes. Not to mention I have to walk home 3 miles a day in the hot Arizona heat. When I got home I instantly threw off my backpack, put on my headphones and listened to Lil Yachty music. That's something that makes me happy. So, I relaxed and had a pretty uneventful Wednesday afternoon and then all of a sudden, I heard commotion outside. I had nothing to do and I figured that I should get up so I went to my front porch to see what was happening.

I saw my two neighbors and they looked frantic and distraught. I went over and asked them what was going on and they said that they had lost their dog. At the time, I had never met them so I introduced myself. I said, "Hi, my name is Peter, I'm your neighbor across the street and I was just wondering what was going on. Do you need help with something?" I think that part of the reason I hadn't talked to them before was that the woods are right behind them, and I've heard stories of alligators and strange creatures in there.

But anyways, the neighbors responded and one of them said hurriedly, "Yes Peter, please help, our beloved dog, Ozzie, ran away into the woods. We must've accidentally left the gate open. By the way my name's Martha and that's my sister right there, Mary." Mary nodded at me. Well, I already got myself involved so we went into the woods to look for the dog. We heard barking not too long after we entered the woods.

"That must be him!" said Martha. All three of us rushed over and followed the barking sounds. We eventually got to it and the barking turned out to be the dog, Ozzie. It wouldn't be as easy to save him as we thought though because he was in trouble. He was on the edge of the water of a lake and he was surrounded by alligators.

After about a minute, I devised a plan. I turned to Martha and Mary and asserted, "Martha and Mary, slowly, walk closer to the lake but stay at a safe distance from the gators and start screaming and distracting them. I am going to sneak in behind the gators while they are distracted and get Ozzy back! Now Go!" I gave my neighbors, actually, more like teammates, the go signal and then we executed the plan. They started to get the alligators' attention and then I rapidly swooped in, retrieved the dog, and then bolted out of there.

The alligators started going for us. I started yelling, "Go, go, we'll meet back on our street." Once we got back, we were all panting and exhausted. I handed the dog back to them.

"Oh, wow, thank you so much Peter. You are a great neighbor," said Martha.

Mary then added, "Hopefully he doesn't run away again." When I got home, I told my family about what happened and they were shocked and surprised. The next day, I was in the paper and listed as the daily "Town Hero". After that, I learned that you should be aware and alert, even when things are unexpected because things like that are bound to happen.



## Ode to Puppies 🐶

By Isaac Chiang

Every morning our puppies walk out  
And enjoy life like nobody's watching  
Sleep the rest of the day  
Although not always active  
They touch the hearts of all around them  
Their bark's louder than a horn,  
Echoes all around the streets  
To the tips of the tallest mountains to the depth of the seas  
'Cause they're the lords of all creation  
Pups can be Loving and Caring,  
To Demanding and Powerful  
No matter what they do,  
What we go through,  
Through thick and thin,  
They will always be our greatest companions



## Ode to the Angels

By Jack Waterstone

Through the injures, the travesties, the signing, the trade, and the all the awful transactions,  
We remain holding your colors high.  
You cling us to our TV for 3 hours,  
Screaming and shouting like barbarians.  
You entertain us,  
But put us through a whole lot of pain.  
*Crack*, the sound of the big number 17 going yard  
Trotting around the field with red all around him  
After the game the look of defeat on the other team's face,  
Is what keeps us hungry for more.  
The fireworks go off after the big win,  
Howling and moving in the air.  
Before the game we all gather around,  
To hear the sizzling sound of the barbeque.  
But the best by far  
Is the 7th inning when we all sing from afar.  
It is god's gift  
That we get to watch them play.  
Number 27 glides through the air,  
Or 25 leaping through the air and putting it all on the line.  
And after every win,  
It is super fun to see us keep climbing.  
But nothing beats leaving the stadium,  
The Big A lit up in the background  
All singing on how great it feels to  
Not be a Dodgers fan.



*Sean Miller-Morrow*

## Ode to Travel

by Callista Hurwitz

So close, and yet so far  
the smell of new, fresh air  
the clinging warmth of northern mountains  
Wind flying in my hair

The hugs of family distant and new  
Feeling the weight of love  
swimming and playing in crystal clear waters  
A new world to touch, slipping on like a glove

For yes, these regions makes me smile consistently  
A new take on an old ally  
A home away from politics and problems  
These homes, indeed, never boring nor wry

Seeing people as one force, all equal  
sharing each way of life  
Dancing and singing and cooking and eating  
Animals in their prime, enjoying wildlife

Flying through all the fluffy white clouds  
Feeling like the queen of the world  
My crown made up of Africa and France  
New York, Mexico, and Israel

Upon my throne is the color of difference,  
the arm support of society, the seat of change  
Dreaming of the next magical ship over the world  
There is no limit, no stop sign, no range

Whether one hour away, or across the world  
A new planet, or a whole new universe  
I feel as though the home I knew  
Is no longer existent,  
The home, for which, over I flew

Travel, oh travel, a new sense of awareness  
A light shining through the cloud of sadness  
Every trip, whether near or far,  
Fills my heart with pleasure, pushes me up to the stars



*Lara Paghubasan*

Ode to Vaccines  
by Silas Tropea-Lester

The invention of prevention that save many lives  
A trade of soreness for long term health  
The protector of millions  
Always providing in times of crisis  
But some say no to the life saver it is  
They say it's bad for you and instead  
You should drink bleach  
But these people don't understand that  
The vaccine offers life  
And whether they like it or not  
They too are protected by your might  
Oh vaccine, what would I do without you  
Without the infinite antibodies you provide  
If not for you I could get numerous diseases,  
Polio, Tetanus, Hepatitis, Smallpox  
These viruses are gone thanks to you  
The syringe feels good inside the arm  
For the pain is not in vain  
And the arm which is sore  
Is incomparably delightful  
To the soul which is poisoned and sickly  
A prick or a deadly disease  
One would be silly to accept the latter  
But alas, some will always refuse to boost their immunity  
Because they don't understand  
What wonderful protection they would have  
Just for the price of of a little shot in the arm



*Leona Jones*



*Matthew Clark*



## Troubles

by Melany Escobar

"Zack, Dinner ready!" Mom says.

"On my way mom!" I say. I sit there not moving but instead looking down at my messy table full of miscellaneous papers for school. "Why is getting the paper done for school so hard!" I say to myself. I sit and wonder if there can be an easier way to get homework done for school and not be stressed out of my mind about it or in total not be stressed out at all for things.

"ZACK! I said dinner was ready 5 minutes ago and you are still not down. We also have two guests waiting, you know," Mom said urgently. As I run down the stairs, I see people at the table but I don't recognize them. I take my seat and look down at my food. It is pasta and cheese. I know I am a picky eater but still. I would want some variety in my food someday. Not just pasta and rice every day. At least that is what it feels like I eat every day. I see other people's food and it looks amazing. My mom is an amazing cook. Sad that she just cooks pasta and rice for me. I'm too scared to say anything about how I want other food than just this, so I keep my mouth shut and eat the food.

"Zack, this is Max Oliver and his mom, Jenny Oliver. He goes to your school and gets good grades." I nod and say hi to him. I have never seen him in my life, but since my mom said he gets good grades, he is probably in the higher classes than me. Max, Jenny, and my mom kept talking.

"Yeah I love school, it's so much fun. I have many friends, good grades, and love playing sports with my friends," Max says cheerfully. Why can't he be quiet about this? It feels like he is rubbing it in my face on how good he is at everything but still, I can't seem to think how someone so perfect can exist and not seem to have any flaws. How could someone love school? I brushed it off, thinking that he's just making it more of a deal to get the parent to like him more. It seems to be working.

I finish and take my plate to the dishwasher to be cleaned. Max follows. I don't talk to him, I just take his plate and put it in the dishwasher. "Hey, it's nice to meet you, Zack. That's your name right?" Max says happily. I nod. He starts to talk more and more and more and I just stand there listening. "Hey, I asked your mom if one day we can go out and study. I heard you have a math test coming up and I wanted to help," he says. I nod. I do need some help with that test, so I agree.

The next day I go to school and go throughout my day. I wanted to find Max to ask him a question, but I couldn't seem to find him. So I leave it. It's lunchtime and I finish eating so I go to the yard with my friends to have fun. I see a figure outside the yard looking in. I make eye contact, I blink and BOOM, they're gone. I think I am seeing things. This can't be. Maybe just maybe I'm in a dream and am asleep right now? I pinch myself and feel it and I now know I am not sleeping. What do I do? Do I tell someone? What if I am being a bother to them? What if I was just seeing things and it was not true? What if -.

"ZACK YOU GOOD?!" One of my friends yelled at me.

"Yeah, I'm good, just my eye playing tricks on me," I laugh at them. We sit down on the grass and talk. I sit and listen to them. I don't have anything important to add to their conversation so I laugh and nod. My eyes wander off as if it is trying to tell me that what I saw wasn't real but I see it, the figure, it's real. They are looking in. I still can't make out their face, this time we make eye contact, we keep staring at each other.

"Zack, Zack, ZACK!" my friends yell at me. "Hey man, are you sure you're ok, do you have something to say?" my friend says in a worried manner.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. I am good, just a bit tired you know," I say reassuringly. What do I do? I don't want to bother people, I don't want people to be scared, what if, what if, what if? The bell rings and it snaps me out of worry. I say bye to my friends and walk to my last class, math. I have so many questions, I have so many worries, like should I tell someone, should I tell a friend? I don't have time for this. I have a math test next week and I need to focus so that what I do focus, focus, and focus the worries away. Until I think about it again and the stress, worries, more stress, and scared the whole thing repeats, again and again, and again repeating. It feels like am in a loop, an endless loop stuck like a dumb animal in a cage and can't figure out how the lock on the door works. I don't know what to do about it.

Class ends. I stuff my things back into my backpack and walk to the back exit. Luckily, my older brother came to pick me up in the car so I don't have to walk home. I get in the car and he drives off, I look at the spot where I have seen the person. They are not there. I sit back in the car set and rest. I get home and get to my school work to try and distract myself from the problem and stress I am having.

"Hey Zack, Max wants to go out with you and go study at a cafe. Do you want to go?" my mom says. I sit at my table staring in fear. I just want to say home, I'm scared.

"Hey, Zack, are you ok? If you don't want to go out to study with Max, that's ok." I break down crying, scared and worried.

"Mom... I am so scared." I say through the tears of fear. I tell her all that I have seen. About how worried I am about what I have seen. I say sorry to her and it is probably not true. She hugs me and I feel safe again in my mom's arms. A few days later after this incident, my mom calls me down to the living room to look at the television. "Breaking news it has been found there was a stalker outside of a school and terrifying kids. Max Oliver has been arrested and put in jail for many, many years," the news station on TV says. I know who that is. Max, the person that came to our home and I talked to him by ourselves. I was going to go out and study with him. What would have happened if I went, what would have happened to me if I walked with him to the cafe?

My mom hugs me and says, "I am so happy you are safe and you said some things to me. Thank you." I feel happy. I feel safe and now know to not trust people from the beginning, even if I think it is a dumb idea or not a useful addition to a conversation. Sometimes you will need to speak up even if you don't think it is true but, the slightest chance of it being true will help people in the long run.



*Ricky Johnson*

Soccer

By Mateo Castagna

Soccer

My day and night

Everyday

You have to put in a fight

In the game

Someone calling your name

As the ball glides through the blades of grass

The crowd cheering

As you make that perfect pass

You're nervous as you shoot

Everything stops

A rainy night

Hands as cold as ice

Lights shining in your eyes

As you score to tie

You look back to your teammates

And wave goodbye

### *The Red Sweater*

Aubrielle Gomez

You're warm and enjoyable.

Come here, give me warmth. Bring it to me, please.

Wrapping your arms around me gives me comfort.

You make me happy, like a kid on Christmas.

That utter emptiness is gone, thanks to you, I'm happy. I can finally

Be ok with everything because of you.

I want to live with this feeling of care that someone or something

Is there. I can't put it into words and it's on the tip of my tongue.

The words are there when you're not. Why?

I'm tired, come on, I just want to know.

Oh, I think I know. It's because you're not mine. You're my mom's.

It's my mom who's giving me this warmth? She's making me feel welcomed? Makes sense.

You couldn't make me feel like that.

It's fine.

No worries. I'm fine.



*Priscila Zaldivar*



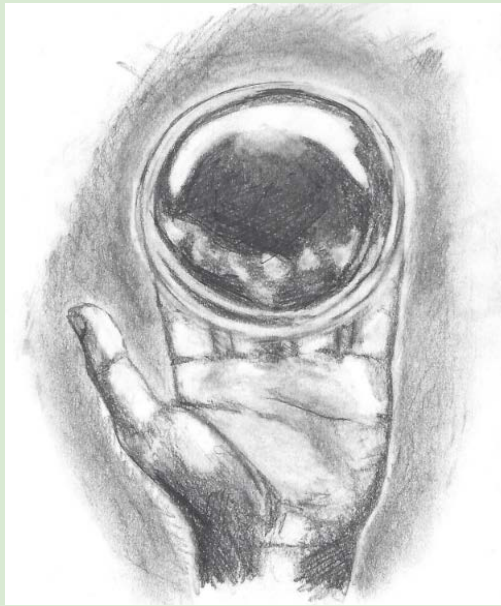
*Rhay Paringit*

# *The Robot*

By Brandon Kirbyson

Shiny metal glinting in the sun,  
Hours of work and never yet done  
Imperfect yet precise and  
broken over twice,  
Like a bird it can finally take flight  
and be seen fully in the light,  
Time has come and seconds count down  
wondering if it shall wear the crown,  
Made up of many parts,  
Will it be at the top of the charts,  
Hard worked by many devoted,  
And many ideas being noted,  
The final result is complete and  
now it could meet a grand defeat,  
Time will tell  
and if all goes well  
Victory shall arise,  
And it will win the prize  
Over a year so many modifications  
No place untouched and the result is much congratulations  
It started small with just its wheels,  
And speed so fast it squeals,  
Now it shall see if it is enough  
and if not it will be tough,  
The time has come, fate will show,  
The clocks counts down,  
Three,  
Two,  
One,  
Go!

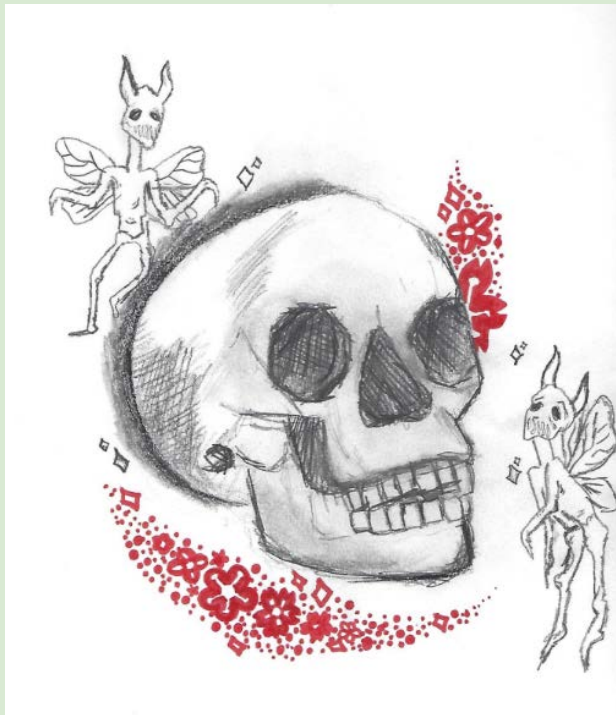




*Sahana Lindsey*

## The Senses by Sarah Gyepes

Reading, writing, typing, telling  
learning, listening, loving, loathing  
senses are beautiful baffling things  
we feel we own them until they are gone  
the things we take until they get up and move on  
like the light that shines through my window in the morning  
or the smell of pies freshly baked from the oven  
senses feel kind, and silly, but what happens when good turns to bad in a jiffy  
the light fades from the wall  
and the pie burns  
when this happens we move on  
maybe skip to the next sense by singing a song  
it's fun and light  
and easy on the ears  
but the girl in stripes goes flat for a moment  
and everyone hears  
people wonder why it's not fun and light on the ears  
they look around to see the girl is in tears  
why you ask, well you see, she pricked her finger on the sharp key



*Sara Valecillos*



Zoe Metcalfe



*Mylo Bieber*



*Sara Valecillos*

# THANK YOU FOR READING!



FACULTY ADVISOR: MR. SALING  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: ISAAC CHIANG  
EDITOR: MADDIE BRAUN

*Front Cover Art: Isaac Chiang*

*Back Cover Art: Neve Nugent*

*Back Cover Photoshop: Isaac Chiang*