literary and arts journal

Ink & Feather

August 2020 Issue Five
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Greetings,

As of summer 2020, the world has been going through chaos and imbalance. The human psyche has a tendency towards the negative-- a tendency to embrace it-- to amplify it. Along this thread, there is a recurring melancholy in the submissions that is reflective of the troubled times which we are currently experiencing. Of course, not all of the submissions fall under this trend, and opt for a more positive and ambient message-- a message of hope.

The mission of this magazine is to showcase and give platform to the thoughts and creativity of today’s youth. Literature and art are the staples of creativity which the human mind cannot live without. As this era of technology and science continues to progress, creative arts are often overlooked and undervalued. But this is where the spirit of humanity resides, in the echoes of the conscious. The world may rely on the mathematical precision of machines and numbers, but it cannot change the innate necessity of these arts.

This magazine is a passion project, created and continued off the generosity of so many others. I have read so many beautiful pieces of work and enjoyed the gorgeous art submissions for this magazine. My sincerest wish is that you, dear readers, may also see how lovely each individual piece is and that it also inspires something in you.

Sincerely,
Ava Kim
Editor
Blue Fire

Isabella Ferrero

Swirls. Pastels. Flowers. Chatter. Quiet music. Wedding cake on a pedestal. Groom and bride at the front of the room, smiling eyes, blind to everything around them. Oh, what joy, right? You can see it on their parents’ faces. They couldn’t be happier for their children to unite in the blessed sacrament of holy matrimony. Pretentious.

Near the back, dim lighting. Blotches. Jewels. Ferns. Whispers. That’s where I am. With a clear view into the wedding reception, my hazel eyes have adjusted to the constant burn of brimming tears. Oh, what joy, right? Resting my head against the splintery wall behind me, I have one hand supporting my weight with the table next to me. My other hand is slung around my midriff. Horrid posture.

I hate it here. Breathe in. Breathe out. My cheeks puff out as I try to eliminate the pink splotches on my face that would reveal my emotions. Only brings back memories.

Speaking of memories, here was one personified. Dangerous.

“Rough time, hon?” Damien asked as his eyes met mine from the shadows, “How ‘bout I help you fix it? You know I have a knack for that, Bernadette.” Do not entertain him. I pushed myself back into proper posture. Adjusting the petticoat under my tea length ruby dress, I faced Damien. His blue eyes maliciously lit with fire. Blue fire is the most dangerous.

With a small smile, I exuded politeness, “Good evening, Damien. It’s a gorgeous wedding, isn’t it? I must head to the washroom. It was a pleasure catching up.” Gracefully, I walked away as quickly as my heels would allow. No more memories to make with you.

A hand clasped my wrist. Immediately, his other hand gripped my waist.

Damien whispered into my ear, “You haven’t told them yet, hon? I can tell by the slight bump right around here.” Momentarily, he released my wrist to pass his hand over my abdomen. Not safe. “Scared of their reaction, I know. Don’t you want our baby to know her father?”

No. “I would love it if our baby knew her father,” I steeped my voice with fake infatuation. Loosening the clasp of my bracelet with my free hand, I used it to tear my dress at
mid-thigh. I untucked the poisoned needle I had sown into the dress. Now, the trick is in when to prick.

I forced my body to go limp in Damien’s arms. Fluttering my eyes closed, I gave him control. With a small chuckle, he carried me to a nearby chair. As he set me down, I shot my hands out, grabbed his suit jacket, and used my full strength to swing him into the chair. Glass shattered. Before he could resist, I pushed the needle into him twice. Once into his abdomen, once into his hand. He went unconscious. Safe. I smoothed my dress. Protectively, I laid my hand on my stomach.

Thank you.

Sudhigna Lingareddy

I never knew I could feel this hurt
By the ones I presumed closest
The kind of hurt I felt when
I was being brought down
By Trust, Hope, and Love
Just to lift up the spirit of others

In a million years,
I would’ve never guessed
My walls would be put up this high
Just by empty promises.
Now, I have learned that in life…
I have no one but myself

So, thank you, Sir.
For taking away my voice
Knowing that I would soon speak up for myself.
Thank you, Sir.
For taking away my Hope--
The thing I needed most.

And thank you, Ma’am.
For teaching me the lesson
that it’s every man for himself
Thank you, Ma’am.
For teaching me that
Trust is a weakness

Finally, thank you, Kid.
For stabbing me in the back
Betraying the faith I had in you as a friend.
Thank you, Kid.
For allowing me to take the blame
And allowing me to lose the idea of Love.

Without her, Love.
Without her, Trust.
And especially without him, Hope.
I’ve learned how not to be a
Friend, citizen, or human.

So, thank you.
For knocking me down,
So I could learn to pick myself up.
For leaving me lost,
So I could learn to find my way.

Even though it wasn’t intentional,
It made a difference.
For this, I have to say...
From the bottom of my heart,
Thank you.
Reminiscence

Aishling Kelly

This piece challenged me personally because I left my comfort zone to try out a new art style. Inspired by works from artists like Georges Seurat and Paul Signac, I created this piece using pointillism. The process of creating Reminiscence was so enjoyable and encouraged me to continue experimenting with different art styles.

Medium: Watercolor
The Silence of Winter

Jacqueline Wu

A long time ago, my grandmother told me,
That there was nothing more important than love you can see
She told me
That in the beginning of the world,
As the autumn leaves curled,
the days grew shorter and the nights longer
She told me that the night animals prowled, grabbing many good men who were led astray
It’s not my fault, they would say

Yes, evil ruled now, Chaos on a throne
A throne of deception and lies
A promise to both sides, made too long ago to remember
The good now diminished to a last dying ember
No one could change their destinies
For the world was ending

As the moonbeams shone, and the snow fell thick
My grandmother lay on her bed, sick
She shone through, her rays lighting the way,
illuminating an imaginary path for anyone who listened
Her name was hope
Hope for change
Hope for the better

As we sit, we can still hear the last forgotten memories of the people from seasons ago
For even if they had fallen in the fight for good, their love lives on
You see, the good and the light had won
If you listen carefully, you can still hear the moans of the lost in the creak of ice and the whoosh of the wind
The sigh of the plants settling in their roots and the last cry of the mockingbird

As my shoes crunch in the snow, it falls, slowly covering the ground.
The winter wonderland bathes the world in a blanket of quietness
The chittering of birds stop, and you can no longer hear the squirrels.
The air, the river, the mountains
An empty silence remains, the calm before a storm
I hear the dying cries of my ancestors begging me
A strong blizzard churns inside me, threatening to pull me apart
A battle between good and evil, a battle between jealousy and love
The night sky twinkles with many stars, their light leading the way.
Peace settles inside me, and I suddenly hear the twinkle of bells, the music of the world.
The song of the night jay joins in a strange harmony, the song of old.
The ice crystals sparkle, and the bitter gale moans in agony.
This is the song of goodness.
This is the song of winter, a time of choice and remembrance.
I am one with nature, and I feel my soul being carried away with the wind.
The merry sounds of Christmas fill my ears, my mind, and my heart.
My worries drain away, and I am a new person.
My grandmother was right.
Winter always turns into spring.
In *Serenity*, I wanted to encapsulate the peacefulness one can feel through nature; especially, when among trees and a warm sunset. Inspired by landscape artists like John Constable, I created this work with their paintings in mind. Oil paint is not a medium I use very often, but in landscape paintings like this one, the texture and deep color it provides works to create the serene mood I hoped for.

Medium: Oil Paint
The stages of the Arizona Sunset

Alina Chisti
These photos were taken in Payson, AZ at the pinnacle of a mountain. They captured the different stages of the iconic Arizona sunset as the sky changed colors from various different perspectives.
Endless Revolution

Alina Chisti

Who knew that he could suddenly take you so casually and cruelly?
Who knew that bright future memories could be replaced with a dark endless void?

I wish I could go back

to the moment before he took you
And take you far away and keep you under my wing
Where I wouldn’t ever stop shielding you from him

Who knew that you could promise forever when there isn’t a forever?
I never knew that the world would keep existing without you
Thought everything would stop.

Remain in Silence.
Why does the earth keep revolving around the sun without a purpose
. . . I don’t have a purpose anymore
Never thought flowers would still bloom after you were taken
But they do in the same way the earth maintains its centripetal motion

In the same way that I realized that I have to keep moving forward

The world didn’t stop, so I can’t either
Longing Breath

Sahitha Vuddagiri
Undulation

Jacqueline Wu

I was waiting for dawn’s stately tresses at the intersection,
For I hail from another time, trapped in its steady undulation
And oh was I waiting!
My feet were sore, my blisters festering,
Night was not day, day was not yet dark,
Yet I have to leave my mark.

I had come from another place,
A dream by a child's sweet lips identified a myth
“Tis divinity! A nymph, a fairy, a god!” She exclaimed.
A heinous sprite- two faced, a damnation common to us all
Or perhaps a fiend professing truth? What truth betrays the definition?
“Tis beauty in misty eyes and smiling mouth!”

Insatiable hunger, oh tyrant in peacetime, all for despairing hope
Is evading the truth, this cowardice, tempest worth?
Or is Death himself, devil crying mercy, with the promise of salvation worth?
Dare to hope or hope to dream?

Lady of the night, oh envious, cunning moon
Lend your gloved hand who stole velvet from the king of Chaos
And starlight for the silk caressing skin
The hand that brought broken dreams
And hated remembrance and brassy love
And lifeless eyes-

Give me the gilded key
And let in the glorious sun
For I see her tresses at the intersection
At the intersection between night and day
And old and new.
Butterflies

Sofia Mohammed

One egg,
More eggs here now.
Leaf covered with hundreds.
Eggs hatching and larvae emerge
Crawling!

Larvae
Eat, grow, and sleep
Eating milkweed daily
Getting bigger caterpillar,
So huge!

Shedding,
Crawling out skin,
Climbing to the leaf tops.
Cocoon to metamorphosis,
Sleep now.

Awake!
Wet, wilted wings,
Cramped cocoon, crack open!
Emerging, drying newfound wings,
Fly free!
Haiku Poems

Sofia Mohammed

1

A cool babbling brook,

Relaxing, clear, glistening,

A timeless beauty.

2

Whispering voices.

Wind flutters through woodland trees.

Leaves go still once more.

3

Torrential waters,

Crashing onto rocks below.

Unrelenting strength.
Simile Poem

Sofia Mohammed

Darkness,
Enveloping the daytime.
Where the sun once stood,
Shades of dark blue
Fill the sky.

As quiet as a jaguar hunting its prey,
The constellation Sagittarius
Shoots an arrow at Scorpio’s body,
And meteors fall from the sky.

The star filled sky,
As vast as the deep blue ocean,
Disappears as the sun rises once more.
My first digital art piece, Glance, was created using the procreate app on my iPad. As I created this work, I wanted to capture the intensity one can feel from just a glance from another person. So, I painted the girl looking out as if she is directly watching the viewer, making the piece more personal and intimate.

Medium: Procreate
I may be Ageless, but You are Immortal

Denneen Macariola

“i may be ageless, but you are immortal.”

the 100° heat singes my skin;
crests of carmine red and summer’s imperial colors
paint her cheekbones into a solar flare.
molten eyes and
    high-shine skin
    and sleek-straight hair
overload the hum of the cicadas in my senses.

at the sight of you,
prayers long-forgotten, lost to sea, reappear with
their hooks caught in my lips,
their nets strung in my teeth,
harvesting the stilted speech and castor seeds
i let sit on my tongue as sediment
until they transformed into pearls.

can you not see you’re studded with them?

my thumb smudges the stare of noon against
palmar flexion creases and the
gathered pleats of your body:
    mantle and viscera and
    sides
    stomach
    spine,
a gratuitous act of exorcism sinking
mahjong tiles into false positives,
searching for windfall the absinthe might betray.
but even the Sun can't cast full shadows on the
sandpaper grit of our bodies,
on that infantile chest,
    birdlike
    in the slightness of the bones.

i sometimes forget that,
unlike you,
    who sometimes feels as if
the oxygen in your breath lit the wick of time itself,
unlike you,
    whose waist and sternum cry mercy from
the weight of tens of thousands of distinctions all
lined up like mosaic tiles,
unlike you…
i have scarcely been living.

tell me.

with each passing compliment, with your every florid victory,
how does it feel to be immortal?

Sudhigna Lingareddy

I sit on the bench alone. Every morning.
Listening to the laughter of the kids.
Breathing the scent of freshly watered grass.
Waiting for the guy that’ll never come.
The ghost that lives within me.
The man I long for. The cliché.
I know. How foolish of me.
Desiring a man that doesn’t exist.
I never knew the immense pain the idea would’ve cost me.
The kind of hurt I never knew even existed.
The day I found out he doesn’t exist. He won’t come.
All the time I’ve wasted waiting for Prince Charming.
Then, you call out my name.
Asking me to come with.
You pleasantly smile making me feel safe.
But, I hesitate. Looking around for that guy.
The guy that I want.
But, why should I wait any longer,
When you are the guy I need.
When you are my Today, Tomorrow, Forever.
Empty Promises

Jacqueline Wu

Moonbeams illuminate the cedar wood floors of the tiny antique shop,
The only source of light in the darkest hour of the night,
When dreamers dream, with only the bitter cold seeping into fatigued bones…
Until the horizon turns orange and gold, and the moon hides its face yet again.

A small girl with red cheeks and raven black hair opens the door,
Holding the weathered hand of father, their breaths forming fog in the wintry air,
For in the depths of the tiny shop lay a lone black violin case,
Out of place like a brick among colorful feathers in stark contrast.

Once, it was apprized by many, carefully handcrafted with the utmost love and care,
And not a speck of dust dared touch its polished varnish then.
Its warm, rich melodies had sung in many acclaimed concert halls,
Its timeless, haunting beauty connecting the souls of strangers for that one moment,
Allowing breaths to catch and tears to inevitably fall, fulfilling its selfless promise.

Now, after many long years trapped in the steady undulation of the glorious past,
The violin had forgotten its promise, its concert days only a fading dream of youth.
And the small desperate flicker of hope had simmered to a dying flame in its fragile shell,
Until the girl with the raven black hair, straight like the definition, became its owner.

Yes, I bought the violin that day,
For it was a joyous freedom for the girl and the violin
With its warm, rich melodies still ringing in acclaimed concert halls,
Its timeless, haunting beauty connecting the souls of strangers for that one moment,
Allowing breaths to catch and tears to inevitably fall, fulfilling its selfless promise.
Fantasy

Illia Solano

This is my life now.
Ghosts and memories unfound.
We lie in the state of misery,
Not knowing where our pieces lie.

Everyone has a path.
A dark, a light- crooked path
But no one knows this time,
This isn't our actual life.

I lived a life of bliss
Of happiness faked,
Of actions remiss,
Never knowing what was truly lost.

Love came, a barrier to my mind.
This joy didn’t replace
That empty void,
I knew wasn’t real.

There was only one thing that was real.
The care in those eyes.
But that was never something
I knew I needed

The truth tried to break
Through this broken plane of reality.
This dimension of lies
Filled with people we would never be.

My forbidden love saved me.
We saw our real life,
The life we lived in.
We were ready to die.
Our past life I was ready to leave.
That guy wasn’t my destiny.
The day of our death
Brought our life to a restart.
Dampness seeped through layers of cotton and wool as Joanne layed on the hard ground. A sharp pain speared through her head causing her to groan in discomfort. Rocks bit into her palms as she reached out. What happened? Where was she? One minute she had been trekking up the side of the mountain to her favorite outlook, and now— Now she was flat on her back. But where?

Joanne squinted her eyes against the bright flash of light from above and immediately regretted the action as pain slashed through her brain. She closed her eyes again and raised an arm over her face to block out the sunlight, blinking and adjusting them.

Tree roots slithered up the sides of the dirt walls like hundreds of writhing snakes. Rocks and big chunks of dirt hung above her head, blocking out most of the sunlight. She was in a cave-trapped in a cave.

Groaning from the pain throughout her body, Joanne struggled to her feet. There was no telling how long she had been lying there before opening her eyes, but her muscles felt stiff and tight—almost like she was waking up from a long nap.

Scared and alone, she trembled against the cold. In an attempt to calm her terrors she wrapped her arms around herself and squeezed tightly, but she couldn’t seem to stop the trembling.

Her body felt wobbly as she stood up and she thought she was going to fall again. Reaching out, she grabbed onto a thick root until the nausea passed and she could stand on her own. Looking up, she saw the hole she had fallen through. It wasn’t that far off from the ground, so she thought she could climb her way back up.

Joanne examined the roots and figured that they would hold her weight. Readjusting her grasp, she hefted herself up to the lowest root. It was damp, but thick enough that she wouldn’t fall. She repeated this again and again until she was halfway up the wall. Until, she missed the next root and her foot slid off the damp sliminess.

With a cry, Joanne fell back onto the floor of the cave, scraping her hands against the wall of the rough stone as she fell. Tears gathered behind her eyes, but she sniffed them back. She struggled onto her feet and leaned back against the dirt and roots. She was stuck—really stuck.

Desperate, she started to look for her phone. Her hands shook as she pulled it from her back pocket. The screen was shattered and small glass pieces fell onto the ground when she turned it over. When she tried to turn her phone on, the screen remained dark. Her phone was
broken and she couldn’t use it to call for help. Her palms started to sweat, ache, and her heart raced. Not now, she thought to herself. Her phone couldn’t be broken— but it was. Trapped and with no way to call for help, tears rolled down her cheeks.

Shadows shifted and the cave darkened around her. Whipping away her tears as she looked up, Joanne saw deep grey clouds where blue sky had previously been.

Desperate and even more worried, Joanne called for help at the top of her lungs, but there was no answer. She was all alone. She was terrified. She then realized that if she was going to escape, she had to find a way out by herself.

Staring down the long, dark corridor, Joanne cocked her head to the side and listened. At first she didn’t hear anything. But, the longer she listened, the louder it became. Wind! She heard whispers of wind through the cave tunnels. If there was wind, there had to be a way out, she thought. Keeping one hand on the cave wall, she stepped into the dark corridor. Within a few steps, all light was gone and she was plunged into an inky vacuum of darkness which seemed to be just getting darker and darker.

As Joanne walked she could hear water droplets falling into little pools of water that had formed over time. The wind wasn’t noisy or strong, it was more like a chill that brushed against her skin. This made her heartbeat the loudest sound she could hear, which gradually seemed to be getting faster. The longer she walked through the cave, the more she heard the whispers in the darkness that sounded so close, it was almost as if they were right next to her. This reminded her of Eurydice in Hades. As she continued on visions of Orpheus flashed through her mind. She could almost hear his lyre.

Her teeth chattered and echoed throughout the cave. She saw shadows reshape into figures of people. She felt a whisper of movement against her skin. Joanne rushed forward as she felt hands emerging from the darkness grabbing at her ankles. Screams echoed throughout the cave. It took several seconds for her to realize that they were coming from her. She pushed at the hands holding onto her and raced through the cave. Her feet caught on something and she fell. She ignored the pain in her knees as she pushed herself up and started running again. She was not going to die in this cave.

Sweat dripped down her neck, freezing on her skin. A sharp pain in her side grew more and more with every step until it felt as though a long needle had pierced her skin and was stuck inside her. Her heart raced as she ran further and further through the cave. The shadows of rocks that seem to transform into silhouettes of people had started to grow closer. The cave was getting brighter. Squinting her eyes, she looked ahead and saw a sliver of light in the distance. Overjoyed she bolted toward it, her legs pumping faster and faster as she ran. The pain in her side faded away and all she could feel now was the cold air blowing around her as she dashed toward her freedom.

The light got closer and closer— brighter and brighter.

She was almost there. She was—
With a final burst of speed, Joanne broke through the bushes at the entrance of the cave, she dropped to her knees. Laboring for breath, she closed her eyes against the brightness of the sun. Falling back she rested both her hands against the ground behind her. Her eyes glanced back to the entrance of the cave where tree roots seemed to slither from the dense blackness.

Tree roots, she thought to herself. Not hands— just tree roots.

It took several long minutes for Joanne to be able to stand up again. When she did, she took a deep breath and winced at the pain in her side as she hiked the trail down the mountain purposefully.
Puppet Master

Sahitha Vuddagiri
We were the three marionettes living behind the door of your china cabinet
You were our creator, our master, and our protector

But we desired to explore past the cramped china cabinet
To experience the vast world outside
To interact with intriguing strangers
To learn how the world functioned beyond the cabinet door

We began strongly developing unique thoughts of our own
Thoughts that you didn’t feed us by hand
We began countering your reasoning for keeping us secluded

You had feared rebellion and contradiction since you brought us into existence
So you stuffed our heads with cotton, stitched our eyes shut, and tightened our control strings
Making us incapable of forming coherent thoughts on our own
Blinding us to possibilities beyond our shell
Leaving us unable to act on our own will
Turning our bodies into a vessel for you to authoritate

It wasn’t long before you noticed our resentment building
You were no longer the object of our adoration
Nor our benevolent protector
However so you liked to remind us of your ever-flowing generosity and the ingrates that we were
We were the fruits of your labor and the object of your devotion;
Any form of disobedience was heresy

I was the first marionette that you locked in the attic
The strings that you willed me with were futile in attempting to govern my life
My joints remained resistant to your external exertion
I no longer lived on your accord

I ought to not influence the others with my troubled mind
And foster radical thoughts of escaping the china cabinet
I no longer belonged amongst the puppets.

The controlled environment that you had worked so hard to create wasn’t powerful enough for all three of your little marionettes

Your reign was fading

In a vain attempt to re-exert your control upon the remaining two of us, you pulled our strings taught

And our strings snapped.
A Forced Smile

Sahitha Vuddagiri
Reality

Illia Solano

Fill the air
What I breathe isn't there.
Fill this poisonous abyss,
For I can't go on.

All around me colors disappear,
The air seems denser.
What is happening right now?
I realize you're not here.

The light has been snuffed.
Now everything is black.
No air to breathe,
I may just die.

Before, things were alright
Or so we thought.
At least we pretended
To not know.

But how, oh how
Could it all turn around?
Slap me in the face
And stab me in the back.

My blissful thinking
And happy thoughts
All disappear,
Now that I'm alone.
Life and Death

Sudhigna Lingareddy

Five minutes. Five letters. Five breaths.
Yet only one meaning to the word, Death.

The end of life, only arms length away.
He could reach us anyday.
Carrying fear in his path,
Ending misery at last.

Spirits, Souls, Heaven and Hell.
All connected through death so well.
Angels, Demons, Good and Evil.
To help keep the Doors of Death peaceful.

Five minutes. Four letters and first breaths.
And still multiple meanings to her, Life.

The rebirth of her other half, Death.
Limited time she gives us.
To make us wish for more.
And bittersweet she is when gone.

We will reach the grave once more,
Only to be reborn from the shore.
In the end it’s all the same.
Life and Death will remain
Blindsided

Sahitha Vuddagiri
Shadows of Indifference

Jacqueline Wu

A night, midnight blue, one with no stars
An eye peering through the opening, clouds reflected in gaze
And blank stares, pearly white- drenched in tears

The pendulum’s swinging, completing its endless cycle
Hushed whispers ripple the surface, then back again
An unfathomable abyss and death’s glare upon us with wings of black silk shadowing

A mirror with many faces, broken shards blemishing beauty
A girl, no, two. Nameless, shamelessly looking. Dreaming-
As the sweet, soul sucking vortex redeems her again

Walls encroach upon the silent dreamer as she remembers
Transparent glass walls that cut us with a sharp frame and protect-
Unshackled but made captive, the dragon’s strength wanes from toil- where did dragon from
As two wrongs aren’t made right with Chaos’ king and darkness spilling

It isn’t tempest from which I hide, or fire that chars my flesh
Nor is it chilled autumn morns, or even emotion in flashing thunder and wet torrents
Or love or hate, illusions conceived by the human mind
No, it’s indifference, rather ignorance in all its selfish forms

Colorless with grey hued skies and shapeless mist delusions to cold eyes; tasteless
Silent as despair, undiscerning as the raven veers towards temporary paradise
Poison dripping from the black tongue that blots and burns
For the fair rose with its delicate shades of pink-
Is nothing but deceit.
Last Moment

Sudhigna Lingareddy

The last moments of my life. I guess I was scared and angry. Angry at what my life has become. Angry at those who came to this point in my life. Every moment in my life has led up to this. My downfall. A literal fall. Pause. I wanted to capture that moment. The flashbacks.

It all started when I was a kid. My step-father, well, he wasn’t the best parent to say the least. If I made one move out of place, I would get the life beaten out of me. The bruises and the scars are still there as evidence of my childhood fears. One bad grade, one fight, one wrong move. That’s it. No food for a week. My mom wouldn’t even defend me. As if that wasn’t hard enough, my middle/high school peers found it easy to bully me. Maybe it was because I was weak and I couldn’t fight back.

Maybe it’s because picking on me made them feel better about themselves, stronger. But whatever reason they had didn’t and couldn’t justify the long-lasting pain they inflicted on me. At first, it happened because I was an easy target. My bruises were easy to see. They made me weak since they weren’t covered up by some long sweatshirt or hoodie.

A couple years later, it became less of my scars and more of my sexuality. I discovered I was more attracted to my own gender--girls. I wanted to keep it a secret, until it got out by one of those girls. Gossipers. Girls who can’t stop babbling and would do anything to get a guy’s attention. Literally anything. Pranks would get played on me by the “popular” crowd. That began with little phone calls and notes. It eventually accelerated to fake blood in my locker and knives.

After high school, just when I thought I had escaped it all, society didn’t do me much justice. Mexican, lesbian females don’t get much support. And all through that hate, I had hope. Hope that someone would pull through for me. Hope that life would get better. Of course, yet again, my hope was crushed. A girl. I met her, when I was alone in a bar for my 21st birthday. We talked, exchanged numbers, and before I knew it, we were dating! I thought she was it. She would turn my life around.

A couple years after dating her, I found out she only dated me to find out if she was bi or lesbian. To experiment. Finding out I was just someone’s test tore me to pieces. 24, unemployed and devastated. I thought I gave life enough chances. This was it. The end to my suffering. Play. I was finally at peace.
Out To Get You

Sahitha Vuddagiri
Fifth Debt

Ava Kim

There are so many ways to die—heartbreak, murder, loss of passion.

As an author I wasn’t just gambling for a potential success. I didn’t know it at the time, but I was gambling for ways to die.

Every time I’d have an idea, I would sit down, start writing— it became a process of selling the soul. Losing bits and pieces of myself to scripts that I would never finish, plays that lack coherent stories. I know I’m a gloomy person, a bit contrary as well, but I think it’s true. The more you write the more of that sublime edge is worn away.

Inspiration is a fickle being, and even more so is success and motivation. I was aware of how fleeting it was— the idea of satisfaction and contentment were words that had all but been obliterated from my dictionary. Somedays I could write pages and pages for novels, and the very next day I would rather throw myself out of a window than finish it.

The small income from the novel I published last year wasn’t enough to keep me going. The novel was meant to be something grand, my biggest feat accomplished. I poured countless hours, research, and hope into that small hundred and four page novel. Despite that, despite all of my effort, I cannot get by on it. I practically sold my soul and set it on a bookstand for everybody to read, and not enough people were interested. That wasn’t the first time.

Sometimes I start to think that this world was built in a way that I couldn’t survive as I am. I cannot keep selling my soul in neat packaged writings for nothing in return. The things I want to see, nobody else wants. Writing costs too much for too little, and a gamble as well. I could publish thousands of novels and not even one would bring me to fame. Do I want fame? Not necessarily, but the novels do. And to gain fame requires adaptation, aglamation, degradation.

People enjoy the same things in subtly different shapes and forms. People never change, those that let the bad things into their lives won’t stop letting them in. Change is temporary-regression is a form of change after all. This is the root of my delima, the albatross across my neck. Should I mold myself into fashioning those mundane but perennial love stories, of thoughtless mindless input, or should I stay true. I suppose I should be happy I never bloomed into anything grand, in an ironic way, I’d have buckled under the pressure.

Artists are innately prideful beings. They want recognition for their work, and on some level feel like they deserve it. The lack of recognition, of inadequacy, burns- the wounds fester and rot until the soul is left no longer. I’m no different. I think I’ll be in danger of that soon. I can feel my death approaching, wandering around my front door ever so often. Everytime I write something, everytime I finish a chapter, that door will someday cave in. Thus, another author dies.
“Are you going to quit? You seem like you will.” My editor of five years asks me as we walk down concrete stairs. Snow will fall soon, I can smell it in the air, in the redness of my cheeks. We met soon after my first book was published.

She had these judgemental eyes, clear but lacking understanding. Those kinds of people irritate me, but I made an exception for her. Ever since the first kiss after my first publication, I kept unraveling for her. Little things build into bigger things and so-forth. Contrary to the clarity she carries, our relationship remains ever-obtuse. Trenches deep full of muck.

“I’m going to publish it. You know, that story I’ve been sending you.” I lied.

“It’s not even half-done and lacking.”

I can’t even refute her. You’d think that being aware of the next time you write might be the last might inspire some primal fear in me, but it doesn’t. Drafts go unfinished, poems scrapped, scripts discarded. Time is sandpaper and hope is a hammer to Pandora’s pithos. Then I suppose at the end of the day, death is the only thing that’ll be born from it. One day I’ll drop the pen and never write again. And the worst thing is, I’ll continue living like normal, unaware that a piece of me was killed. Blissfully ignorant.

“Have you got a passion?”

“What is this about? Are you off your antidepressants again? We talked about this.” Her voice was sharp and grating and so insufferably correct. Her anger melted into concern and her eyes stopped holding me prisoner. “You’re on about you ‘dying’ again, aren’t you?”

“I can feel it, I swear. I can, I can.” I urged her, hysteria in my voice. She just grabbed me by the arm and walked me to the park.

I was thoroughly out of it and staring at the grey clouds above. Snow was starting to fall in tiny pricks of cold. Her grip on my arm felt comfortingly stable. It was that sort of thing that gave confirmation to existence and spark needs, the childish need of being looked after. Perhaps my psyche was regressing from the realization of approaching death. She let me sit down on a bench overlooking the field at the park.

“If it hurts you to write, you should stop.” she says. “Don’t make it your passion. It’s stressing you out too much.”

She says it so simply, so neatly, as if I could just cut out a section of my body and ship it off to the void. There isn’t any point in arguing with her because she wouldn’t understand. There’s no fault in her response, no logical fallacies in her mind. She is not the kind of person who'll sacrifice anything to get a grip in this world, to find a place solely shaped for her. She knows who she is.

“I will, soon enough. But until then, one more. I need to write one more.”
“We can’t continue like this. I won’t leave you, but a relationship is a balance.” She looks down at me, snowflakes coating her hair and eyelashes, and she looks incredibly miserable. Full of pity. “You can’t expect others to love you if you don’t try to even love them back.”

“Are you calling me selfish?” I demanded, almost jerking upright the accusation. Or at least, I thought it was an accusation. All I’ve been hearing were accusations these days, it wasn’t a terrible assumption.

“I’m calling you passionate.” And I laughed and she looked down with generous pity. Motivation is all I have. My artist’s soul has been rubbed away, the string that holds hope over the pithos unsteady. If I don’t have passion I have nothing. I’d go back to being empty. Lacking. “Take a break, go back home.”

“I’m not passionate, I’m desperate. Rats swim off of sinking ships, but I can’t do that. I’m not a rat.” I tell her. She just sighs, instead of responding to me, and calls a taxi. As the taxi drives away I see her figure shrinking on the cement sideway, mournfully staring back in black.

She reminds me of that woman who stood with me at the bus stop. That woman only wore black, like a lost mourner from a funeral flock. Despite all the times we’ve waited together, we never got on the bus at the same time. Just like my editor, that woman faded away as I drove away.

“Are you awake?” My friend’s voice buzzed out from my phone. I must’ve answered the phone without thinking. That wasn’t uncommon for me, so I grudgingly accepted that I did.

“I am. Just went out for a date with Marian.” I told him stiffly.

“What? You were?” He shouts like a madman. My ears ache.

“What’s so wrong with that?” I snapped back testily.

“No, it’s just.” He hesitates, as if that ever stopped him before. “I thought you were going to break up with her. These weeks you haven’t really, you haven’t been yourself, especially when regarding Marian.”

“Maybe I will break up.” I growled.

“No! It’s just, you know.” He gropes fruitlessly for the words, and silence fills the call. He gives up and switches the conversation entirely. “How are you feeling?”

The outside world is a pale contour compared to the saturated lines of summer. My breath fogs against the taxi window. “I’m feeling fine. Why do you ask?”

“Can’t I worry about a friend?” There’s a note of nervousness there, a hint of anxiousness.

“I’ve got things to do.”
“Write?” Yes, yes I had to write. That’s all I was good for, waiting for my own death. Tearing chunks of my own heart out, might as well scream at strangers in the street to read my book. All I’ve ever been praised for, writing, writing, what else was I good for—“Well, do you mind if I came over today?”

I sighed. It wouldn’t hurt to put death off one more day. “No. Come over.”

“Good, see you then!” I pretended not to hear the note of relief in his voice.
Artist Statement: This painting is meant to symbolize the state of the world during the year 2020. Medium: Autodesk
Pain has sharpened YOU, brought you despair. Everyone dies, anyone dies, but this breaks the dam. We all SUFFER for who we are, what we are, what we look like. The shell that holds the soul is a vessel, but in ways it becomes a perfectly broken reflection.

Rage until the sun sets, rage before the light of dawn. Burn the streets with a funeral pyre. Let the rats and pigs run amuck, UNDER the heavy violence. There is nothing holy in any action of any life, there is only vaporous breathing.

Do not tell me SKIN does not matter. It is the first thing you see when you look at me: the dredges of stereotypes, caricatures of community, alliances. People die BECAUSE OF this; people chose to kill other humans because of this.

There is only rage and INJUSTICE at the burning lights; people can gather and revolt. But this IS an era of cameras and guns. Talking about peace will not bring it home, when the people are so entrenched in greed and filth

We cannot run away from this TERRIBLE REALITY. What an unchanging thing-skin. All things living will die, but truth be told, to be murdered for a birthright is far too common.
Reflections of the Past

Alina Chisti

We were a functional unit that would occasionally encounter a few hurdles

We were a dysfunctional entity that could only occasionally and temporarily synchronize

We grew up peeking behind door hinges
Accidentally stepping on shards of glass jammed into kitchen tile crevices
Nervously looking out our bedroom windows to red and blue flashing lights
Constantly fearing a broken home

Our current self expression is a distorted reflection of what we’ve witnessed
We act on momentary selfish impulses
We let empathy become our unyielding nemesis
We no longer reign in the perilous burning fire within but instead light up barrels and let the world burn with us
We let rage become our obsession
Permitting it to strip us bare to our most dreaded selves
We kill our logic when it starts to stifle our perception of being on the moral high ground
We don’t mind dismantling everything we’ve established over the years for a second of satisfaction
We don’t mind screaming mindlessly until our temples burst just to project our pain onto one another
We take note of each other’s biggest insecurities, vices, and trauma to throw it at each other conveniently like scraps to feed a flame

You’re a fucking failure.
You’ve lost everyone.
You’re nothing.

If our pain and rage are flames,
It won’t be long before the flames burn our house to the ground

After the flames of indignation lick every corner,
What did we gain other than a satiated ego?
While standing amongst the ashes and the smoke
We’ll justify our unrestrained fury on our past
Forgetting that we’re our own individuals,
Who consciously make our own decisions,
And are capable of self control.
Stargazing

Steven Zeng

Eternal darkness in an empty void all around me is all I see. Forward is the same as backward which is the same as sideways. I am in a box with no boundaries, and my agoraphobia is starting to kick in. Only thing I hear is my heart pounding,

"ba bump ... ba bump ba bump ... ba bump ba bump ba bump."

From my view, I see darkness, but the neighbors see this child wandering in an empty field at a random park. Typically, as a child, I should be imagining superheroes and fairy tales, but all that I imagine is the darkness and this feeling of emptiness. Frozen in place with chills scattering down my spine to my legs, then I fall onto the moist grass like falling into a cloudy bed. I finally see something and know my direction. I see the stars in the sky. While looking at these extraterrestrial lights, I come to a realization of how I can’t see all the trees in the dark, but I can somehow see these floating giants from other universes. Stars were meant to be seen, and our eyes become telescopes seeing beyond the ozone, beyond space itself, and beyond universes. Like a hypnotist moving a pendulum clock, the stars lure me into a trance. As hours move past, I still stare at these stars like I’m face to face with them in a perpetual staring contest. The medusa-like effect of the stars pressurizes me into a stone: motionless and cold. Suddenly, sunrise manifests itself like a snap of the finger to kick me out of this trance. I get up and return home, but all I ponder about is going into the box again and repeating it all the next day. These stars have become drugs for my eyes. They strike my body with dopamine, my body with more blood, and my mind with more thoughts.

The next night has arrived, and I surround myself with darkness and peace. What amazes me is the variety and change that encompasses stargazing. I see different stars in different positions each evincing a new feeling and emotion within me. Like the never-ending darkness around me, the stars open up an infinite amount of orientations, shapes, and pleasure. The tiny light in a sea of black attracts my eyes as a magnet attracts metals. It is truly extraordinary how something so far can have such a grand effect on someone. We can’t view the sun with our bare eyes because we would overdose on the power caused by our closest star, but the perfect dosage comes from stars in the night sky. Unlike last night, I am not a stone, but rather a cat chasing after a laser. I become a moth searching for the tiny glitter of Sirius; then, I move on to Arcturus and so on. I begin connecting the dots where my eyes act like a pencil tracing lines from star to star. Going from field to field, adrenaline fills my body, and my inner Indiana Jones takes over me. As I go on throughout the darkness, the darkness takes on a meaning because in reality, the darkness is what connects the stars. I shift from a simple gaze to exploring a maze, and my
imagination takes hold. This journey from star to star or field to field is my treasure hunt where my treasure is the journey. As I move through this adventure, it suddenly stops, and I find myself sitting on the grass bathing in sunlight. Not pleased with an abrupt ending to my adventure, I wait for what the next night has in store for me.

I come running to the park awaiting the arrival of a new wave of stars, but all I see is a blank sky as blank as the space around me. Now, I sit inside my empty box with absolute emptiness, and nothing around me. Disappointment is what I feel. The stars could be anything, they can be tiny holes inside the box that I’m in shedding little spots of light on me, or they could be little fireflies wandering the skies, but no matter what they were or could be, I held onto the stars as a sign of hope and excitement that allows me to be free and in my own world. My eyes allowed me to navigate my world like a GPS going from star to star like how cars go from place to place. The darkness that surrounds me strikes fear into my eyes because it represents loneliness and despair from the world I live in. As I struggle in this world, I look to the stars as a pathway to another universe where I could find peace and adventure instead of being confined inside this little box I call Earth. Even in my imaginary world, I found emptiness and darkness, but these stars taught me how even in a dark and void-filled world, I could find peace, excitement, and light.
How Marvel Superheroes Impacted My Life

Ethan Park

“With great power comes great responsibility.”

— Ben Parker

If you have the ability to do something, make sure that you do it for the good of others. After Uncle Ben was killed by a burglar in *Spider-Man*, Peter Parker became inspired to use his powers to stop crime in New York. Swinging from building to building, he prevents the robbers from getting away by swinging them up from the ground and dropping them back down like a yo-yo with his spider web powers. While I don’t have his nifty yo-yo powers, I strived to learn and harness the traits of a superhero. Watching the Marvel superheroes impacted my life by teaching me how to stand up for my peers and to protect other people, how to do things for and in support of others, as well as how to work effectively in a team.

When I was 11 years old, I was invited to my friend’s 11th birthday party. In the beginning of the party, we watched *Captain America: The First Avenger*—which I had not seen before. In the beginning of the movie, Steve Rogers, the main protagonist, wants to join the America’s armed forces during World War II, but the military constantly rejects him due to his small stature. Later on, a bully harasses someone in an alley and despite his size, Steve comes in and tries to stop him. Unfortunately, instead of the bully stopping, Steven is beaten up. When I saw this for the first time, I was astonished how much he was willing to stand up and to protect other people.

A few years later, I suggested to a close friend to check Twitter out because he was looking for a social media to use. Few weeks later, he messaged me that he had been getting threats from someone on Twitter. At first, I didn’t know what to say or know how to help him. I didn’t want to say something that might have made the situation worse. I felt bad for him and thought I couldn’t do anything to help him.

After a lot of brainstorming what to say or do, I got a flashback and remembered what Captain America went through. I saw a young boy standing up for a stranger and never giving up. This gave me a lot of strength and courage.

I confronted the cyberbully online and told him that I would save and screenshot all their threatening messages as proof and evidence of cyberbullying and report it to the Twitter team. They refused to listen, so I saved all their messages and reached out to the Twitter support team.
In the meantime, I comforted my friend, told him to block the cyberbully’s account, and said it was not his fault.

The next morning, the Twitter team replied back and told me they deleted the account. They appreciated my actions, which gave me more courage to stand up for my peers and to protect other people. Whenever a friend of mine needs a helping hand or just needs me overall, I tell them I will always be there, and I always do. Captain America is not just a hero, but he also teaches people to stand up for peers and to protect other people.

When I was eight years old, my dad wanted to show me *Iron Man* on the television in the living room. I wasn’t a big fan of superhero movies that time, but he knew I enjoyed action and adventure movies. In the beginning of the movie, all I saw was a selfish billionaire playboy. I was confused why my dad was showing me this. Did he want to show me to not become like Tony Stark? I kept asking my dad to change the channel to watch a different movie, but he said to keep watching. Reluctantly, I did.

In the beginning of the movie, we see Tony Stark, the main protagonist, going to Iran to show the American army his new weapons. However, on his way there, the Taliban blew up his car, and he received a metal shard in the heart. He got captured and healed because the Taliban wanted him to make weapons for them. He refused to, so he made armor from scraps of metal he found and escaped. After he got home, he upgraded his armor to make it more secure. He transferred ownership of his company to Pepper Potts, his girlfriend, to focus on his heroism. In doing this, he demonstrated that doing the right thing and helping others is far more important than making, or having money.

Many years later, during my freshman year in college, I was shopping for school supplies and snacks in an in-campus supermarket. I had a $30 budget during that time. When I got to the cashier for my lane, I overheard the cashier on the left say to another student that they were $10 short. They said they didn’t have $10 with them, and the cashier requested them to put the mechanical pencils back where they found them. I felt bad and thought they needed them. When they were about to head back, I told them to stop and gave them a $20 bill in my wallet. They were shocked by what I just did and said they felt bad. I told them to not worry about it. Once the cashier put the $20 bill in the cash register, I told the cashier to give the change to the student. Looking back, I realized I was inspired by Iron Man to help others. He’s the man who has everything, but he uses it for the betterment of society.

All throughout the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the theme of teamwork is repeated again and again. From the very first *The Avengers* film, up until the very last movie, *Avengers: Endgame*, teamwork has played a central role. These movies and the superheroes in them teach us to value our team. Whether it be a school group project or a sports team, we should always
value our members. Everyone has an important role to play. With that, we have to make sure everyone has a specific role in the team. The Avengers would not be successful if the Hulk stayed on the sidelines. However, sometimes, there can be disagreements, which is okay. This can happen to us with our friends too. We are all different people with different values and moral standards, so we are bound to disagree sometimes. But the real value comes from learning to forgive each other. Although Tony Stark and Steve Rogers disagreed often in *Captain America: Civil War*, they had to make it up to save the universe in *Avengers: Endgame*. It took them a while to reconcile, but they eventually did— and that's what matters.

I use my teamwork skills in both school group projects and cooperative and competitive video games. A lot of people ask me why I am a good team member, and I just tell them that I’ve learned most of my skills from the Avengers. They think I am crazy at first, but I tell them it is true. Currently, I play a cooperative first person shooter competitive video game called *Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six Siege* where you work together in a team to ensure that the other team does not achieve their objective. When my friends and I play, we tend to make simple mistakes and bad decisions, but we all learn to forgive each other and help each other out to make our weaknesses to strengths. So when the next time comes, we will be prepared and become better for the next time.

The Marvel superheroes taught me the importance of standing up for my peers, protecting other people, doing things for others, and working effectively in a team. Captain America taught me how to do the right thing, Iron Man taught me to be selfless, and the Avengers taught me how to work effectively in a team. They all taught me good life skills, to make good moral decisions, and overall how to be the best possible person I can be. Watching heroes doing whatever they can to make their world a better place makes me want to do that myself. Now, they are a large part of my life, and I couldn’t imagine life without them.
Follow The Protocol

Rachel Woosley
Artist Statement: I created this piece to push the boundaries on what I had currently done with my digital mix media work. It has some WW2 Influences as such with the bold red wording and a hidden border that encloses the entire piece. COVID-19 was chosen as subject matter, because of its massive impact on the world and the lack of information on it at the time of creating this piece. Giving me the ability to play with the concept and content of my work.
Things to do after the lockdown is lifted

Nevyn Haque

Some countries around the world are easing lockdown restrictions. The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that we are “still in the middle of the first wave” and the government of each country should not ease lockdown restrictions. We cannot pretend everything is normal after the lockdown is lifted. We should do the least to protect ourselves and our loved ones. Here are the things we can do to minimize the spread of the virus.

1. Before you get out of the house, wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.
2. Wear a mask or cloth to cover your mouth and nose when you go out.
3. Wear gloves before you enter stores, pharmacies and hospitals.
4. Carry your bags for supplies.
5. Carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer or disinfectant diluted with water at all times.
6. Maintain social and physical distancing at all times.
7. Keep distance from crowded areas.
8. Separate easily washable clothes from the ones you wear to work and wear the ones you would wear to work. You may have a small number of work clothes, but it doesn’t matter during these times.
9. Wear shoes that can be easily cleaned. Use a mixture of water and disinfectant to clean on and under the shoes.
10. Carry an extra mask with you at all times. If something happens to the one you are currently wearing, you have a reserve one in hand.
11. Do not carry extra files and boxes unless it is needed.
12. Do not touch your face, eyes, nose and mouth when you are outside.
13. Use bags that are easy to clean like laptop bags instead of jute or leather bags.
14. Use digital bank services like PayPal and Google Pay to pay the charge of your products.
15. Carry a small amount of cash. Sanitize your hands every time you touch paper money.
16. Use gloves at the ATMs for money withdrawal.
17. Avoid wearing jewellery and accessories.
18. Wash your hands before touching any surfaces at home.
19. Leave your shoes and bags at the door when you return home.
20. Take a shower and wash the clothes you have worn outside once you have returned home.
21. If you have touched any surface indoors before washing your hands, disinfect the surface immediately.
22. Clean your laptops, phones, headphones, wireless earphones and your wallets and keys as well. Make it a habit to clean these things at the same time.
23. Gargle warm water with lemon and salt and take in vapour.
25. After coming back home with groceries, wash fruits and vegetables with lukewarm water and sanitize packaged products thoroughly.
26. If you have ordered items from online shopping websites, pay through online bank services. Ask for the packages to be dropped at your front door. If you have to go to the gate to collect your object, make sure to wear masks and gloves. Disinfect the products as soon they are out of the wrapping. Dispose of the wrappings and wash your hands after handling the packages.
27. Keep away from restaurants and gatherings but if you want takeout, wear masks and gloves and maintain distancing.
28. If you see the social distancing rules not being maintained, notify the authorities in that area.
29. Before throwing away one-time use masks and gloves, cut them in half. Throwing away masks, gloves and PPE are causing a new kind of pollution.
30. Isolation is the best thing you can do. Remind yourself that you are doing this to protect your loved ones. When you come back home, perform social distancing with your family and avoid any type of physical interaction with them. It will be hard for all of us, but it is for the best.
31. Do not cause distress for others and do not hurt their feelings. This is a hard time for everyone. Have some patience and be kind to everyone alike.
32. Don’t fall for fake news and rumours. Stay updated with reliable news sources.
33. Post awareness and positive things on your social media platforms.

These are some of the things we can do after the lockdown is lifted. Please be kind towards people as everyone is having a hard time. We can join together to fight off the virus. The everyday life we used to live has changed, and we can return to our previous lifestyles if we follow the necessary precautions correctly. Once this is over, we can all enjoy our lives to the fullest.
Contributor Bios

Alina Chisti is a senior honors student at Hamilton High School. She is currently one of the Editors-in-Chief of the Ink & Feather Literary and Arts Magazine and the community director for the PeerSquared peer tutoring company. Alina is an active volunteer for local and school based volunteer organizations such as Red Cross, FMSC, ISSA, and local STEM camps. Alina is also an avid theatre student, photography geek, writer, and guitar player. You can find her photography on her Instagram @photography_alinazohra.

Sydney Cohen is a recent high school graduate. She was a varsity swimmer and chamber violinist at Red Mountain high school. She will be attending MCC in the fall and is looking forward to studying creative writing. Her short fiction has also been published in Blue Guitar Jr.

Isabella Ferrero is a senior in high school. She is President of the Tri-M Music Honors Society which brings music to the community through volunteering, and is involved in multiple bands outside of school such as the Harmony Project's Latin-Caribbean Orchestra where she plays trumpet. Beyond music and school, Isabella spends her time dreaming up characters and using her life experiences to create stories. In her spare time, she plays ukulele, sings, spends time with family, bakes, plays with her dog, and tries new makeup looks. She loves to create memories with her friends and bring smiles to their faces. Isabella plans on being an author. You can find some of her work on Instagram @isaferwriting.

Nevyn. P. Haque is a student of Grade VIII in high school (European Standard School, Dhaka, Bangladesh). She participates in the cultural program, science fair, and quizzes regularly in school. She was awarded for British Council Reading Competition in 2014. She campaigned in her school to raise donations for Nepal Earthquake victims in 2015. She came in 9th position of the Wings Learning Centre’s First Annual General Knowledge Quiz Competition in 2018. She used to play soccer. She enjoys reading, listening to music, painting, chatting with friends. She also likes to read ancient and modern mythology. She adores writing essays, book-reviews, and write-ups. She regularly feeds stray cats. Her debut as a writer was in ‘The Key, Young People’s Literary Magazine’ as a book reviewer for “Tyrant’s Tomb” by Rick Riordan. She supports Animal Rights and Anti-Bullying campaigns. Attributions for previously published article: https://thekeylitmag.wixsite.com/thekey/post/review-of-the-tyrant-s-tomb

Aishling Kelly is a senior at BASIS Ahwatukee High School. In school, she is involved in the Climate Action Club, journalism and Spanish Honor Society. Outside of school, she enjoys Taekwondo, dog training, gardening and painting. She has been a recipient of a Gold Key from The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.
Ava Kim is a senior in high school. She writes in her spare time and has published multiple times for this magazine and Blue Guitar Jr. Her future goal is to publish a book. You can find her artwork on Instagram @disnstatq.

Sudhigna Lingareddy is going into 9th Grade, and enjoys reading, writing, and anything that has to do with the arts.

Denneen Macariola is a Filipino American and rising senior at BASIS Ahwatukee who enjoys creative expression, from graphic design to writing to traditional fine arts. In her work she focuses on subtle tensions and conflict within the broader themes of adolescence as well as the dynamics of the Asian family.

Sofia Mohammed is going into grade 8 in the fall of 2020. She loves reading books, specifically fantasy. Her hobbies are crocheting, painting, gardening, and running. She has straight A’s in all of her subjects. She also plays the guitar and will be learning the keyboard soon.

Ethan Park is a junior at ASU studying Statistics. In his spare time, he enjoys watching movies, listening to music, and playing video games with his friends. His favorite writer is F. Scott Fitzgerald. His nonfiction essays have also been published in Blue Guitar Jr.

Illia Solano is currently a senior in high school. She is the head blogger of the Student Blog, and usually writes poems and short stories. In her free time, she enjoys reading fantasy/sci-fi and spending time with her family.

Sahitha Vuddagiri is a 15 year old girl at BASIS Chandler. A couple years ago, she started an organization called Easel Arts Inc. that raises and donates money through art instruction, weekly classes, workshops and selling art. Since 2017, she has donated over $9000. She holds week-long workshops over fall and spring breaks, makes greeting cards and sells them, and teaches regular, private lessons to students of all ages. She’s been passionate about art from a very young age and realized that she could turn her hobby into a means of helping others. Her goal was to start an organization that would raise money through art education, with the proceeds donated to outreach programs assisting others locally and in other countries. She has been painting from an early age and over the years, mastered a variety of techniques and mediums. Her goals this year are to expand her outreach and double the funds earned and donated last year, as well as, teach at community clubs, schools, and retirement homes on a regular basis.
Artist Statement: These paintings relate to the feeling of suffocation and how it feels to be trapped. I used metaphors throughout these pieces to portray this feeling.

Rachel Woosley is a senior in high school. For the past two years she’s been in Visions, an honor's arts program that allows seven students to workshop with various artists around the state. At the end of the program, those seven students submit a piece for an exhibition that goes up in the Scottsdale Center For The Performing Arts. Rachel keeps cooped up inside but stays busy reading and learning about her favorite subject, psychology. Some other hobbies she enjoys are drawing and writing, while throwing a dose of craziness and social awkwardness into the mix. Her short stories and poems have been published in The Blue Guitar Literary and Arts Magazine and Blue Guitar Jr.

Jacqueline Wu is a tenth grade writer from Long Island, New York. She has also won several writing competitions, such as the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. She is forthcoming in Celebrating Art, Remington Review, and other publications, and she hopes to continue to inspire through the arts. Instagram:@jacquelinewu96

Steven Zeng is a rising senior from Gilbert, Arizona. He enjoys playing basketball and reading autobiographies during his free time. “Writing, to me, is a means of relaxation and a way to portray weird ideas.”
Editorial Staff

Alina Chisti, Editor-in-Chief

Alina Chisti is a senior honors student at Hamilton High School. She is currently one of the Editors-in-Chief of the Ink & Feather Literary and Arts Magazine and the community director for the PeerSquared peer tutoring company. Alina is an active volunteer for local and school based volunteer organizations such as Red Cross, FMSC, ISSA, and local STEM camps. Alina is also an avid theatre student, photography geek, writer, and guitar player. You can find her photography on her Instagram @photography_alinazohra.

Surabhi Sajith, Editor-in-Chief

Surabhi Sajith is a senior at BASIS Ahwatukee. She enjoys pursuing the creative arts through different forms including dance, music, and writing. Surabhi has worked to raise money for charity events through her dance performances, and continues to give back to the community through peer tutoring and volunteering with hospitals, low income communities, and Tempe City facilities. She spends time working with youth in organizations such as Chinmaya Mission Phoenix and Arizona’s Interfaith Community. She’s involved in clubs at school, such as NHS, Speech and Debate, and the French Honors Society.

Editorial Staff

Ava Kim is a senior in high school. She writes in her spare time and has published multiple times for this magazine and Blue Guitar Jr. Her future goal is to publish a book. You can find her artwork on Instagram @disnstq.

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Jillian Bartz is a senior in high school. This year she is her school’s DECA president and French Club treasurer. She is also involved in Thunder Buddies, Link Crew Administration, and FBLA. When she is not studying or editing, she enjoys spending time with her two cats and sleeping—she really likes sleeping. In addition to her rest, Jillian also has a passion for working out, doing daily meditation practices, and playing video games. After graduating from high school, she plans to attend the University of Colorado at Boulder to study Finance and Real Estate.

Rachel Woosley is a senior in high school. For the past two years she’s been in Visions, an honor's arts program that allows seven students to workshop with various artists around the state. At the end of the program, those seven students submit a piece for an exhibition that goes up in the Scottsdale Center For The Performing Arts. Rachel keeps cooped up inside but stays busy reading and learning about her favorite subject, psychology. Some other hobbies she enjoys are drawing and writing, while throwing a dose of craziness and social awkwardness into the mix. Her short stories and poems have been published in The Blue Guitar Literary and Arts Magazine and Blue Guitar Jr.

Founder/Advisor

Lysette Cohen holds a M.Ed. in Education from Northern Arizona University and a M.A. in English and Creative Writing from Southern New Hampshire University. She is currently working on a PhD in Curriculum, Assessment, and Evaluation. She has been an educator for 20 years teaching ABE/GED, American History, Creative Writing, English/Composition, and SAT Test Prep. In addition to teaching, she is a professional musician, playing and teaching guitar, mandolin, piano, violin, and viola. Lysette has traveled extensively, but currently makes her home in Phoenix, Arizona. Her nonfiction essays, short stories, and poems can be found in Page & Spine, The Penman Review, The Scarlet Leaf, Unstrung, The Blue Guitar Literary and Arts Magazine, and Blue Guitar Jr.
Open Call to Artists and Writers

Ink and Feather Literary Journal is seeking writing and art submissions by youth writers and artists (ages 13-17). Submissions are open to all genres—fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and art.

Details:
- Deadline for submissions is 9/30/20
- There is no charge to submit.
- Writers and artists may submit in more than one genre.
- Please review Submission Guidelines at http://www.inkandfeatherliteraryjournal.com
- Email your submissions to inkandfeatherliteraryjournal@gmail.com