Artist’s statement for the cover: As an artist, I work hard to create paintings that speak both to me and others. This piece captures the beauty in daily life through a monochrome spectrum. I created this piece while I was exploring graphite. Unlike my other pieces, I included the tiny details in a city that create a sense of chaos.

-Sahitha Vuddagiri
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# Table of Contents

**Fiction**
Sherry Wang  
   Paper Faces.  ................................................................. 8

Sabah Ashfeen  
   The Cave  ................................................................. 25

Ava Kim  
   The Grief.  ................................................................. 41

Sydney Cohen  
   Cruel Fate for the Greedy.  ........................................ 46

**Non-Fiction**
Pranay Garg  
   Postcard  ................................................................. 35

**Poetry**
Surabhi Sajith  
   Go to her.  ................................................................. 32

**Screen Plays/Dramatic Scripts**
Alina Chisti  
   6:28 AM.  ................................................................. 11
Editor’s Note

The Hopi tribe have a proverb— “Those who tell the stories rule the world.”

In preparation for this introduction to the literary and arts journal, I pulled out every scholarly resource in my library and spent hours pouring over discussions on literary theory, writing technique, and lexicography. I took pages of notes— scribbled over envelopes, napkins, and receipts— notes that I subsequently tossed. This journal isn’t about arguing the finer points of deconstructionism or lexicography. It’s about giving teens a platform to share their stories, their art, and their voice.

Teens create from the soul. They don’t hold back. They pour their heart onto the page and canvas. The stories, poems, and art in this journal speak to the human condition. They touch on the themes that are important not just to teens, but to all of us— themes of loneliness and frustration, but also themes of curiosity, friendship, and hope.

So I invite you, dear reader, to look deeper. Look past the words and the brush strokes to what lies beneath and share in the journey.

Best Regards,
Lysette Cohen
Editor-in-Chief
From day to day, Nick dreams of being someone else.

He dreams of being someone. Someone not plain, not unassuming. Someone vaunted. Showered with the attention afforded to the talented. More than anything, he wants to be noticed.

Other people. Other people are different. There’s always something to notice, something to imitate, something to borrow in other people. They have unique qualities that make people notice them; it doesn’t matter who notices or when, what matters is that they do, and Nick would do anything to live the stories of their lives, instead of being stuck the apathetic observer looking in.

There’s the old man who goes on a walk every morning in the park. He has deep laugh lines that cut into the sides of his face, and he leans heavily on his cane while puffing for breath. Thin wisps of white hair sprout from a bald head.

Nick wonders what goes on with him too. Why is he so tired, so weary of life? Why, if Nick possessed his ramrod straight back and quiet authoritative appearance, he’d wear it all the time, no matter in rain or sleet or fog. There’s a story there, that makes it interesting, and Nick likes to sketch out thoughts of a war fought halfway across the world, of thick swamps and desert sands and gunshots that ring in the nights.

The girl next door has sharp cheekbones that flare out of her thin face. She doesn’t eat enough; she shakes uncontrollably in the crisp winter air as she hurries along. What a pity. He makes a story up for her too, of frightening mothers and crippling expectations and little, little doubts.
The college student who he passes on the way to the bus stop has piercing, questioning eyes, philosopher’s eyes. He doesn’t sleep enough; there are dark bags encircling those eyes and he slouches too much. It’ll permanently damage his posture one day if it hasn’t already. That’s something the storyteller in him can work with.

His friends. He’s stolen or lifted parts of them too, little parts that wouldn’t be missed. A freckle or two from sharp Amelia’s face, thick calluses on the right hand from silent and tall Jonathan. The little scar on his finger is another borrowed set piece, from an accident with the kitchen knife, or a wipeout on a bicycle; he doesn’t know. All that matters is the story, the combination when he puts all of these parts together, not the origin.

Janine knows what it’s like. She doesn’t say it; she never says anything when he does his work, but she understands better than any of the rest of their band of freaks do. (And he, he is the greatest freak of them all).

That girl, with an awkward pained smile and a wild head of curls and legs that shake whenever she speaks in front of large groups of people? Of course she understands. (He’s worn her chewed bottom lip on many occasions now. He hopes she hasn’t noticed that he’s taken it.)

Nick knows them all better than they know themselves. He plays their personas better than them, knows how to manipulate a carefully half-formed smirk and a quirk of the eyebrow far better than any of them ever could.

Nathan with the bright wispy blond hair wanted to be an artist. Left-handed Max with the ripped jeans broke up with his girlfriend three days ago. Quick, clever, chubby-cheeked Ella was the captain of the debate team. People, so many people, all in a never ending row. Nick wonders if they can see themselves now, their respective qualities stitched together to serve a greater good.

Cammy has beautiful thick brown hair and a voice that sounds from all the way across the hall. He’s careful this time; Nick doesn’t want to accidentally ruin anything. The knife in his hands is slow, deliberate, as it carefully removes the
Sherry Wang is a junior in high school. She is an active member of Quiz Bowl and Science Bowl and spends time volunteering for the school as a member of Link Crew as well as other parts of the community. Outside of school, she likes to write, draw, read, and hang out with friends.
Foreword

In the dramatic script, 6:28 AM, I seek to address the growing issue of domestic violence and the patriarchal family dynamics in the South Asian Muslim Community. While this issue
The story follows a low income South Asian couple that immigrated to America in hopes of pursuing the American Dream. After the young couple have their first child, Rahma, the mother, drops out of college to take care of her family. The script is written from the perspective of an older version of Yasmine, their daughter who is essentially the Narrator of the story as she looks back at her family life. The script primarily consists of flashbacks that depict the struggles of the family and the domestic violence that is perpetrated by Ahmad, against his wife Rahma. Being the man who brings the money to the house, Ahmad constantly feels financially pressured and undermines the role that his wife plays in the household. After Rahma commits suicide, the Narrator holds many regrets and blames herself for her mother’s death.

When I went to visit India during family vacations, many of my relatives and family friends instilled traditional gender roles into me and my cousins. They taught us that girls should be soft spoken from a young age so they grow up to be obedient wives. They told us that boys mature slower so they can misbehave for a longer period of time. Many old family friends in India would whisper to my mother about how it was so unfortunate that she had three daughters. Daughters were considered a burden. If you had a daughter, your parents would end up in debt because you would have to pay a dowry of thousands of dollars to give to your daughter’s future
husband. Stories of neighbors ordering their maids to strangle their newborn daughters to death weren’t rarely heard. Sons, on the other hand, were desirable. They would take care of their family members when they grew old and bring money to the family. According to the Hindawi (The International Journal of Population Research), the type of privileged treatment that many South Asian males are given lead to their bloated sense of entitlement and creates the backbone of a patriarchal family structure. Historically, this type of entitlement leads to some husbands dominating their wives and in some cases, perpetrating domestic violence.

Another factor that leads to patriarchal structures in many South Asian countries is fear. According to the the Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless, over 25% of South Asian women in America are victims of domestic violence. Many of these perpetrators use fundamental translations of the Qur’an to justify violence against their wives (Europe Journal of Psychology). Due to fear of women gaining power, literal translations and misinterpretations of scripture are used to justify the enforcement of traditional gender roles for women to keep males in the dominant position. These rules enforce ideas such as the servitude of women toward their husbands and the authority that a husband has over his wife. Since it is culturally expected that the husband earns the money for the family and is economically responsible for his wife, “When a female fails to to perform her duties, violence is reckoned as a valid alternative to educate her” (Europe Journal of Psychology). These ideals are carried with many Muslim South Asian immigrants as they immigrate to the USA.

Unfortunately, many Muslim women are not able to separate from their husbands though because of the stigma of divorce. In many Muslim societies, family units are given utmost importance and a woman would be considered “selfish” if she separated from her husband for her own personal well being. A traditional woman should not “tear her family apart” because she
feels uncomfortable. Some religious leaders even tell women in abusive relationships to be “patient” rather than to “rush” into a divorce (abc news). Many women are afraid to divorce their husbands because they will be socially ostracized from their cultural community and will be left without a support group. As shown in this dramatic script, although Rahma is in an abusive relationship, she never brings up divorce as it is a legal process that is considered to be taboo in South Asian culture.

Domestic violence affects the mental and emotional state of its victims (Joyful Heart Foundation). The effects of domestic violence on the victim include but are not limited to anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Domestic violence also affects more than just the direct victim; it affects the children that witness it as well. According to the Global Giving project (2019), boys who witness their father hitting their mother are five times more likely to grow up to perpetrate abuse against their wives than boys who never witnessed abuse. Domestic violence has long lasting effects that lasts in families for generations.

Through writing 6:28 AM, I wanted to bring awareness to the prominence of domestic violence in our society. After witnessing the sexism in India, writing this dramatic script was an attempt to educate readers about social issues especially in this specific immigrant community often go unheard. I hope to motivate readers to facilitate change and be a part of the change they want to see in society.

For further information:
Domestic Violence Hotline:
1(800)273-8255
Suicide Hotline:
1-800-273-8255
Sources:


**CHARACTERS**

**YASMINE**  
Yasmine is a teenage girl who is very focused on academics. Coming from a low income immigrant family, she is often insecure about her social status.

**NARRATOR**  
The Narrator is the older version of Yasmine who is looking back on past events before her mother committed suicide. She is remorseful and blames herself for her mother’s suicide. Throughout the story, the narrator looks back at her past self with disgust.

**MOTHER**  
The mother is presented in flashbacks. She is an immigrant who has kids at a young age and is in an abusive relationship. She quits her job to become a homemaker; she is a selfless mother and wife who devotes all efforts to her family. The mother often feels unappreciated for her efforts and feels like her life solely revolves around caring for her family.

**FATHER**  
The father is often stressed as he is the sole provider for the family. He often takes out his anger on his wife and abuses her.

**SETTING**

The story takes place through a series of flashbacks that take place in the family house.

**TIME**

The story takes place in the early 1990s when immigrants from South Asia came to America.
6:28 am. 6:28 am was when my mother took her life. And it was my fault.

(Sits Down)

My mother and my father moved to America more than a decade ago. They came to the big city of Phoenix, hoping they’d be able to get a better life for themselves. My mother had many dreams about what their life in America would be like. My father hoped that he could secure a good job in the city and live the American Dream. For the first few years, they managed to find a small apartment in the inner urban slum. (Sarcastically) So much for the American Dream. The apartment barely fit the suitcases they brought, and the singular microwave next to a rusty sink was a sorry excuse for a kitchen. My father was always worried about finances during that time and spent most of his nights at a convenience store to make some extra cash. Before finishing her education, my mother had me. Since my father was barely home, she dropped out of college before getting her degree, so she could take care of me. She came to America to follow her passions, but she ended up spending majority of her time taking care of her husband and me. She always told me that she loved her life and held so much pride in being my mother. I knew she loved my father and I very much, but despite that, it couldn’t have been easy for her to abandon every facet of her life for us. It couldn’t have been easy for her to leave her passions and her education, so she could take care of me. It couldn’t have been easy for her to make several different meals for me because I was such a picky eater. It couldn’t have been easy for her to spend hours every day just dropping me off to lessons and rehearsals and picking me up from them. It couldn’t have been easy to do all that and never receive an ounce of appreciation.

(Flashback)

MOTHER

(Reads off a list)
7:30 am: drop Yasmine off at school. 8:30 am: make Ahmad breakfast. 9 am: Do Ahmad’s laundry. 11 am: Pick up Yasmine from school because Wednesdays are early release days. 1 pm: Take Yasmine to her guitar lesson. 2 pm: Make lunch. Yasmine hates rice with curry so I’ll have to make her some roti, but we’re out of flour... 3 pm-

(FATHER grabs MOTHER’S shoulder)

FATHER
Why didn’t you do my laundry yet? You know I have a meeting with my boss today for the big promotion. Oh my god, my suit isn’t even ironed. Can’t you do one simple thing! The dishes are piling up too; this place is a mess. I told you to wash the dishes because my boss is coming over for dinner today-

MOTHER (Continued)
I’m sorry. I’ll iron your suit right now. I just got so busy because I had to pick up Yasmine and make lunch and take her to lessons and-

FATHER
(Laughs sarcastically) Are you seriously complaining? I can’t believe you. All you have to do is sit at home while I’m out working my ass off to get some extra cash so we can pay thedamn electrical bill. Yasmine’s school fees are due soon too. Do you see me constantly complaining? Your job is nothing compared to mine.
(FATHER exits through stage right)

YASMINE
(YASMINE enters through stage left)
Mother! We have to go. I’m already late AS ALWAYS! Why can’t you ever drop me off on time?

NARRATOR
How could I have been so insensitive? How did I not see how overwhelmed she was with everything? All I cared about was myself.

MOTHER
Sweetie, I’m sorry but I had to finish up a few things and clean up the house because your father’s boss is coming over tonight-

FATHER
You still didn’t finish doing the dishes yet? How incompetent are you? Can’t you follow simple instructions?!!
MOTHER
I needed to drop off Yasmine to her lesson first. I’ll do it-

FATHER
(Grabs her hair and pushes her to the floor)
STOP MAKING EXCUSES. It seems like you manage to do everything except what I tell you to do. I asked you to finish washing the dishes.
(Grabs plate and shoves it in her face)
Does this look clean to you? Huh?!

NARRATOR
I could’ve washed the dishes. I could’ve helped her out a little bit so my father wouldn’t get so mad at her. I could’ve done the dishes, but I didn’t.

MOTHER
Please stop! Ahmad, let go of my hair! It hurts, please!

FATHER
Listen to me carefully. You are nothing without me. Everything from the ground you walk on to the clothes on your back are from my money and my hard work. If you defy me, I’ll leave you on the streets with no allowance.

MOTHER
(MOTHER pulls away from his grip, angrily) Pshh, I’m not a child Ahmad. I don’t need an “allowance.” In fact, I don’t want any of your dirty money. I’m going to take Yasmine and I’m going to get my own job. The only thing that held me back from pursuing my career this whole time was your sorry ass.

FATHER
(Grabs neck and attempts to choke MOTHER)

YASMINE
Father, what are you doing! Mother, are you ok?

FATHER
(shoves MOTHER’s limp body into his arms) It’s alright baby. Your mother and I are just talking.

YASMINE
But why is she cryin-

FATHER
(Covers MOTHER’S mouth) Oh, don’t worry honey. She’s just being a little over dramatic. She acts out like this a lot. She’s just like a child who’s having a tantrum. (Getting progressively angrier) And the only way to straighten out a child is through punishing them.

MOTHER
(MOTHER groans in pain) NO. Don’t do this, not in front of our daughter.

FATHER
(Looks at YASMINE and chuckles) Oh baby, you know I’m just kidding right? Your mother and I are just having a friendly conversation. Aren’t we?

MOTHER
(Muffled Voice) Yes baby, I’m fine. Go to your room, please; I’m alright.

NARRATOR
I knew it wasn’t alright though. I knew it wasn’t a friendly conversation. I knew he hurt her. I knew everything. And all I did was hide in my room and cry like a coward. I should’ve done something. I should’ve tried to stop him. Why did I sit in my room and hear everything and not do anything?

SCENE 2

NARRATOR
That night after the boss left, my father was in a great mood. He received the promotion.

YASMINE
Congratulations Father! I knew you could do it! Mother, why don’t you come celebrate?

NARRATOR
She didn’t look very happy as she faked a smile and went into her bedroom, her body slightly shaking. I should’ve noticed, but I didn’t.

FATHER
(Twirls YASMINE around and kneels down in front of her)
Baby, now I can buy you whatever you want. Did you say your school uniform was getting old and you needed a new one? Guess what? I’ll go to the store right now and buy you two new ones. Remember that store that all your friends got their homecoming dresses from, but you had to get yours from a department store because I said we didn't have the money. Baby, I can get you ALL of that now. (FATHER’S eyes welling up) Now you never have to feel less than any one of those rich white girls at school. Baby, you never have to take a sac lunch because you can’t afford lunch at the mall with your friends. I’m so sorry I couldn’t provide enough for you when you were younger, but now I can. I’ll give you the life you’ve always wanted.

YASMINE
(YASMINE looks up and smiles at FATHER)

SCENE 3

NARRATOR
It was 3 in the morning when she woke me up.

MOTHER
(Gently pulling the blanket away from me ) Shhh. I need you to be very quiet. I’ve packed your suitcase and took all the extra cash that I had saved in my drawer. Baby, we’re going to get out of here. You know how your father treats us; we have to leave. I’ll get my own job, and we no longer have to depend on that man. Hurry, we need to get into the taxi that's waiting around the corner of the house before he wakes up.

YASMINE
(Pulls MOTHER’s arm away from her) No! I’m not leaving. Are you crazy? Leave me alone!

MOTHER
(Strokes YASMINE’s face) Look I know it’s hard, but that man only feels generous when he has extra cash in his pocket. It’s not safe being around him anymore. We need to leave.

YASMINE
(Scoffs)
Do you really think that you can just get a job just like that? (In a mocking tone) Mother, you may be able to iron dad’s suit and wash the dishes, but that doesn’t
exactly get you a job in America. Father is the only one who can adequately provide for us; you’re just his housewife that sits at home all day.

NARRATOR
(In a disgusted tone) How could I say that to the woman who take care of me my whole life. While my father left on businesses trips when I was a toddler, she was the one who had endured all my tantrums. When I would get sick, she’d be the one who was at my bedside the whole night. (Slightly chuckles) When freshmen year got rough, she’d be the one who’d get me those midnight snacks as I spent all night writing those ten page essays, however, back then, all I could see was the physical paycheck that my father brought home.

MOTHER
Yasmine, how dare you speak to me like that! Just because I don’t have a college education, it doesn’t mean I am any less than your father. You underestimate everything I do for you 24 hours EVERY day-

YASMINE
(Interrupts) Well guess what? I really don’t care. I am not going to let you screw up my life by taking me away from here. You’re just being selfish.
(Get up)

NARRATOR
(Scowls)
The irony of that statement.

YASMINE
(YASMINE shouts and runs to father’s bedroom) FATHER!! Wake up! Mother is trying to make me leave, but I don’t want to. She’s forcing me to. Tell her that I’m not leaving!

NARRATOR
(In a frustrated tone) No! No. How could I have said that? I ruined my mother’s chance to escape her abusive relationship. How could I have chosen my father’s new money over my mother’s well being. All I thought about was myself. All I thought about was my social status if my family had more money. (Disgusted by herself) I chose the new dress and the fancy lunches that my dad was going to give me over my own mother.

FATHER
(Seething with anger) Is that right Rahma? Is what Yasmine told me true? What the hell were you thinking?

MOTHER
(Bitterly) Yasmine deserves better than you. You are a bad man. Go ahead and try to stop me, but we’re leaving!

FATHER
(Grabs MOTHER’S hair in anger) How dare you defy me! How dare you try to leave! I’ve provided you with everything you own. You’d be nothing without me. (Dumps out suitcase) You should be in servitude to me for the rest of your life. God makes sure woman like you, woman who disrespect their husbands, will rot in hell.

MOTHER
(Cries in pain) Ahmad please stop! You’re hurting me!

FATHER
Look at me. Who do you think is gonna protect you from those dangerous city men when you go out in the public all by yourself? They’ll prowl at you like animals. But women like you, women who go against god’s will and flaunt around the cities without their husbands, deserve every bit of it.

YASMINE
(Aggressively tugs on FATHER’S shirt to pry him off of MOTHER) FATHER! PLEASE STOP! You’re hurting her. Please let her go. She’s in so much pain.

NARRATOR
(Points to herself) BECAUSE OF ME! She was in so much pain because of me! She could’ve escape if it wasn’t for ME!

FATHER
(Pulls YASMINE off of him and accidentally pushes her to the ground) Look I don’t wanna hurt you too. LEAVE NOW! Go to your room!

YASMINE
(Feeling betrayed, YASMINE runs to her room, crying)
Alina Chisti is a member of The National Thespian Society. She is involved in many Hamilton Theatre productions and has been taking Theatre classes for more than 5 years. She competes in Dramatic Interpretation competitions and several other theatre competitions, some Â including the Shakespeare competition and the Hamilton Pantomime and Acting competition. She has had experience with directing, script writing, and is represented by the MTM agency. She is mental health activist and was part of a campaign to bring awareness to domestic violence and end the stigma against mental health in the Muslim community. She performed in a dramatic play that addressed depression, suicide, substance abuse, and domestic violence at the 2019 Islamic Social Services Association USA (ISSA) Gala. Due to the play’s success, she and her fellow cast members will be taking the play on the road the summer of 2019.
Outcome of the Human Weapon Experiment

We gathered several criminals as intended and injected them with the fluid. We began the experiment, but it failed with a 0% survival rate. The only change the serum invoked was the longer preservation of the bodies, making it impossible for us to destroy them, so I’ve left them in a remote location. We had nearly given up on the experiment, when one of the younger scientists approached us claiming he had created a successful serum. We refused to believe him, until he presented a seemingly indestructible woman possessing neither compassion nor will. Exactly every quality we had been looking for. She was the perfect weapon, and that was our downfall. I came to the lab late one day to witness every single colleague of mine brutally murdered. She was created so she would kill without remorse, but the enemy was never specified, so everyone became her target. I was able to knocked her unconscious with lethal gas, and took her to the aforementioned remote location. I didn’t know how else to subdue her; she isn’t able to die to any means. I tied her underwater so she would be rendered too weak to escape. Take precautions to make sure she will never escape under any circumstances. Striving for immortality was a grave mistake.

Bob walked cautiously, trying to avoid the sharp rock that jutted out inches from his bald head as water dripped from above him to form murky puddles around his feet. The rough surfaces of the tunnel were outlined a faint yellow from the dim flashlight Rob was holding; besides this no other light was present. He could hear the scurrying of insects as they desperately made their way to the darkness ahead. The pair had no idea what they would encounter. No one had ever documented the structure or location of this highly isolated cave in the outskirts of New Mexico. Rob had thought it would be fun to be the first to explore the cave. Although he hated experiences like this and wasn’t much of an outdoorsman, Bob reluctantly
agreed to make sure his reckless older brother wouldn’t go into such a dangerous place alone.

As they made their way down the eerie tunnel, Bob suddenly heard a clatter and realized his compass had dropped. Rob laughed at him as he pointed his flashlight downward. Bob’s keen, blue eyes searched the floor until they stopped at a large uneven boulder against a corner. There seemed to be several chips and holes underneath it where the compass could’ve gone, so he heaved the heavy rock out of the corner. As the rock had begun to shift, the light suddenly disappeared. Bob panicked and asked Rob what happen, who replied he’d dropped the flashlight by accident. Oddly enough, the light had completely vanished. The overwhelming darkness caused Bob’s heart to thump faster and faster; his imagination jumped to the worst possible scenarios and he had managed to convince himself that they were in immense danger. Rob noticed his rapid breathing and calmed him down, reassuring him that the boulder was probably blocking the light. Yes that must’ve been it, there was no other explanation. He leaned toward the area behind the boulder and reached his hand forward to reach the flashlight on the ground.

But there was no ground.

His arm passed through air, the momentum flinging his entire body forward until something slammed into his left arm and all he could think of was the jabbing pain dispersing throughout his entire body. He could hear Rob calling for him, and weakly responded. Rob explained that there had probably been a hole beneath the boulder, through which the flashlight must’ve fallen. Rob had no choice but to return to their camp site and retrieve a rope; he considered this an easy task, since the cave pathway was a simple straight line. Despite this, Bob still admired Rob’s courage in such a dire situation, wishing he possessed the same confidence.

As worry and fear plagued him, the putrid smell of the cavern caught his attention, like something rotting. His hands navigated the uneven rocky floor and found the flashlights one of the rough crevices. One of the batteries had fallen out, which he found nearby. He turned it on and directed it toward the source of the smell. This part of the cave was a circular space, with a wide but shallow dent to the left filled with...water? It must’ve been his imagination, but the “water” appeared to be red.
He approached it and saw something floating on the surface. Bob gasped and he fell to the floor, utterly horrified. It was only in his head, his mind must’ve been playing tricks. It couldn’t have been real, but…

But it was.

What lay floating in the water were corpses, each with deep slashes through their chest. Their faces was barely visible due to the decomposed, ghastly state of their bodies, but the pain and terror in their eyes remained. Bob lay frozen on the floor. He couldn’t handle staying here any longer.

After a few minutes, he managed to calm himself so he could try to find an exit. He discovered a thin opening near the end of the room, leading to another room just as wide, with the same dent filled with water. This dent; however, was much deeper than before. His heart beat frantically; out of the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of a dark figure laying deep in the water. Bob dismissed it as another corpse and began to walk away. He began to leave through the same gap, when he noticed something out of the corner of his eye. He rotated his head ever so slowly and caught it. His heart stopped, his body shook, the same thoughts whizzed through his mind. It can’t be real. But just as before, he was terribly wrong.

The “corpse” had moved.

His eyes widened; the figure was clearly struggling, it’s arm reaching out for the surface. Bob’s first instincts were to hide, or run away as far as possible, or break down crying; but this time, he ignored them.

He rushed toward the body and jumped into the water. Adrenaline poured through his veins as his only though became how to save this person, abandoning any confusion as to how they had gotten there. After the morbid scene he had witnessed earlier, he intended not to let another person meet the same fate. He swam downward until he reached the figure, a young woman, her long black hair cascading around her body, concealing her face. He grabbed her waist and heaved her up, but she wouldn’t budge. He looked below her and saw a weight holding her foot down. He knew it was reckless, but he was determined to bring her back alive.
He swam to the bottom of the trench to untie her feet. Once the ropes were released, she zoomed to the surface and took a longing breath of air. Bob followed, panting from holding his breath for so long. After a few minutes, the woman turned to face him. Her face was bony, her cheeks sunken in and eye sockets bulging. Her pale, white flesh barely stretched over her skeleton of a body. She looked as if she hadn’t eaten for years.

“Thank you”, she said softly, her raspy voice indicating that it had been a while since she last spoke. She closed her eyes, appearing to be deep in her thoughts.

Bob asked what neither of them had yet acknowledged. “How did you get there?” She opened her eyes and looked at the floor for a few seconds, as if she was trying to recall what had happened. She switched her gaze to Bob, her eyes piercing his soul. Her lips curled upward to form a sort of smile, but her eyes remained expressionless. She stared at him intently and tilted her head, her smile widening. Her eyes did not move, they remained as dead as before. The newfound confidence Bob had discovered moments before seemed to vanish at the woman’s chilling glare. She did not respond, nor did she move from this position. Bob knew there was something wrong, but was met with the realization that he could not run. They were enclosed in this small cavern, the only escape being the hole he had fallen through. He prayed Rob would arrive soon, and closed his eyes to ignore the woman’s gaze. Everything was still for minutes as he attempted to calm himself down. The silence was disrupted by a raspy, sinister laugh. Bob’s eyes struck open; the woman was still glaring at him and smiling, but her lips were slightly parted.

She was laughing at him.

Before Bob knew it, she had grabbed his waist and pushed him into the water with great force. He tried desperately to escape her grasp, but her strength was inhuman; he was being dragged down by the very woman he had just saved. His consciousness was starting to fade away, his eyesight blurring, lungs burning, thoughts jumbling in his mind. He was going to drown. He thought about his family and friends, and his thoughts centered on Rob; he would be returning soon. Would he meet the same fate? The very thought crushed him, as his life was sucked out of his limp body. The last feeling he could process was the woman
tying his foot to the same weight. This was really how he would die. She then took out a needle and injected his neck at the single moment before the end of Bob’s life.

And yet, he was alive.

He was conscious, scanning the area around him. He felt the heaviness of the water against his body, and the weight anchoring his foot to the floor. How was he alive? Before he finished the thought, his consciousness began to fade again as he could no longer hold his breath. Water filled his lungs as he passed away.

*And yet, he was alive.*

And within a matter of seconds, he passed away.

He bounced between life and death over and over and over.

The same heaviness, the fear, the burning pain, the confusion; the torturous cycle never stopped. It would seem he was drowning endlessly.

Rob walked down the dark and narrow cave. He imagined how Bob was reacting to his situation. *Probably crying,* he thought and laughed. He decided to be nice and increased his pace, so he would reach Bob faster. The sound of water dripping onto the floor echoed throughout the cave. Rob was surprised; he had never seen any water here. As he approached the source of the sound, he realized he was not only hearing water, but footsteps as well. Had Bob found a way out?

“Bob! If you could escape this whole time why’d you make me walk all the way to the campsite, you moron.” He sighed, “Let’s just go home.”

The footsteps grew louder and louder. Rob hadn’t brought a light so he couldn’t make out any of what was in front of him. He sensed a figure, likely drenched, as water was spreading over the floor between them.
“Did you fall in a lake or something?”

The figure didn’t respond. Rob became a little worried. Maybe Bob was just mad at him for taking him here in the first place.

“Look if you’re still mad, I’m sorry. Tomorrow I’ll buy you lunch—“

The figure grabbed his head, twisting it so as to break his neck.

Possibly the worst threat to humanity had been released.

Sabah Ashfeen is a sophomore honors student in high school. She is a member of several clubs, including A+ Tutoring, Modern Health, and Science Olympiad. Additionally, she has played piano for around 7 years. In her free time, she enjoys art, playing with her rabbit, video games, watching TV, and spending time with friends and family.
Surabhi Sajith
Go to Her

If there’s sometime you don’t know what to do
    Go to her
And she’ll give you a meaningful hug
    Look her straight in the eyes.
And she’ll look back sternly and say
    Here’s what you should do.

If there’s sometime you just want a good cry
    Go to her
And she’ll hold you tenderly
    Her head resting on yours
    Her half witted humor
    Will light you up while she laughs
Just so she can see you laugh one more time
    before she must leave you alone.

If there’s sometime you need a good laugh
    Go to her
And she’ll lick her finger
    And stick in your ear
    As quirky as she is
She’ll never fail to make your day

If there’s sometime when there is something
    random that you want to hear about
Go to her
And she’ll tell you first
    that she hates you
And then she’ll tell you
About how she saw her crush in the hallway
    On the rare occasion
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Surabhi Sajith is a sophomore in high school. She has been pursuing her passion for dance for past ten years and enjoys learning Carnatic music and writing. She participates in diverse events and had won the Phoenix Rotary 100 speech contest, the regional school bee, and several dance competitions. Surabhi has worked to raise money for many charity events, and continues to give back to the community through peer tutoring as Math Sprouts tutor in Tempe, Arizona, volunteering at Chinmaya mission and Maricopa Integrated Health, and teaching dance to younger children. At school, she is a Student Representative and is part of the Leadership Society, which plans school events.
My family’s first destination of our long-awaited trip to Europe was Barcelona. When we arrived at Barcelona by plane by plane, we were all exhausted due to the jetlag from the 8-hour trip from Atlanta. As I stepped out of the airport into the new environment, I was greeted by the rustic smells, the usual bustle of the people, and the fresh warm air. Although we were exhausted after the long journey, my family decided to go sightseeing. After all, it was a once in a lifetime experience! The first thing we did was take an Uber to our hotel, The Petit Palace. Since our hotel reservation wasn’t available yet, we decided to walk around to pass the time.

We walked around the numerous plazas and saw the tightly packed buildings. It was a different feeling from when we occasionally strolled down the sidewalks in Phoenix. At our home in Phoenix, buildings were spread far apart and pedestrians were barely seen. We saw painters display their paintings on the crowded streets and souvenir shops advertising their merchandise; it was an amazing sight in itself to see the locality and the people interacting within it.

After taking note of places to visit and eat for the next day of our trip, we went back to the hotel and slept; as our heads hit the pillows, we were out like lights.

Later that evening of the next day, we met with our family friends who were also in Barcelona at the time. We took the stairs down to a subway to take a train leading to a place called the “Magic Fountain,” a beautiful fountain which changed colors due to the multi colored LED lights and sprayed in various patterns.

Then, we bought tickets and boarded the train. We were pretty tense throughout the bus ride as we had witnessed a live pickpocketing take place on the train. The thief was caught because he dropped the wallet he stole, and it was seen by my friend. When the pickpocketer was accused, he denied the charges, but once the police came and checked his backpack, they found out he had not stolen one wallet but three wallets! This deeply shocked me, as the culprit was a father of two kids and had a wife. From this I learned that people are never who they seem to be; just because one possesses a veneer of innocence, it doesn’t mean that he or she doesn’t
possess malice. After a long day of thrilling experiences, we went to have dinner and then, we went our separate ways. Although we were still pretty shaken by the incident, we overcame our apprehension by the next day. The next day, we went to the National Art Museum of Catalonia. There was a series of staircases that led to the museum, and we conquered them all at a cost. I had a goal of getting at least 10000 steps each day I was there, and it wasn’t really helping that every step we took my family would take another picture. When we finally arrived to the top, we saw the royal designs on the exteriors of the museum that resembled the designs used in ancient Roman architecture.

On our last day, we met with our cousins for a day and saw the breathtaking church called “La Sagrada.” It had hundreds of mosaics; the whole place was clad with colors of blue, red, yellow, and green. It resembled a rainbow on a sunny day. The architecture was absolutely gorgeous. The architect of “La Sagrada,” Antoni Gaudi was an inspiring figure; he created arching frames, slanting pillars, and broken glass sculptures in his lifetime. These inventions created framework for many future architects to plan their buildings as well.

Although our cousins decided to stay in Barcelona for an extra day, we decided to visit Madrid in hope of gaining more exposure to the rich culture and architecture of the populous cities in Spain. As soon as we stepped off the plane into the beautiful city of Madrid, we didn’t waste a second as we were only staying there for a day. We immediately set out to see a once of the biggest castles of all time with over 10000 rooms! Even though we weren’t able to go inside the castle, we were still able to appreciate the sheer size of the majestic sight from the outside. The windows themselves must’ve counted up to at least be 10000! It could be described as something out of a fairytale because of its sheer size! A feat of Roman civilization, not to mention being home to some notable figures, this castle was famous for its paintings and artifacts on the inside.

In order to travel around the city, we took local bus tours, which were pretty relaxing as the tour guides explained all the ancient history in Madrid while we sat back and basked in the refreshing sun shining upon us as a cool wind swept through the beautiful city.

After our day came to an end, we took another plane to Naples, where we met with our cousins once again. From there, we took a car ride to Amalfi; we were being driven by one of the local “Ubers” in the area. On the way there, we crossed a mountain which was populated by luscious green plants and rocky falloffs. It was
a 3 hour drive, and while the scenery was invigorating, it didn’t stop the carsickness we eventually felt. Amalfi was a coastal town, so there was an ocean breeze wafting through the air once we finally reached. We got our luggage and strolled down the cobblestone street until we crashed at our hotel.

The next day, we took a ferry ride to Positano, and the ride there was pretty refreshing. The ocean water sprayed upon us and the wind whipped through our hair due to the high speed of the ferry as it crashed through the ocean waves. Once we arrived, we began to visit many shops and restaurants before finally going to the beach, which was not made of sand but entirely out of little pebbles! It felt a bit satisfying to walk around the beach although my shoes had begun to drown inside the pool of tiny rocks. The waves advanced and receded upon the shore and soaked the pebbles. We also tried finding flat pebbles and skipping them upon the surface of the water.

The ferry ride back was a bit funny. There was a man who was trying to be humorous while selling his wares, which of course my mom had to buy. He was making jokes about what a good deal he was offering. She bought a navy blue tote bag trimmed with gray and a message on it reading “Positano.”

We then took a train to Rome, and Rome was my favorite place because of all the historical sights you could visit. The hotel we stayed in was beautiful as it was adorned with interior designs and many paintings.

We went to see St. Peter’s Basilica, in which we saw a famous painting made by Michelangelo himself! The painting depicted a man trying to hold onto God’s finger. I interpreted it as people trying to get closer to God through prayer.

All in all, it was a great experience despite the long travel time. After that, we saw the one and only Pantheon! It was such an awesome cathedral because it was a center of worship for the goddess of wisdom and had a rich history.

Then, we saw the Colosseum, the home of chariot races and gladiator fights. We took a guided tour for this, in which our group was explained the architecture of the Colosseum which involved the implementation of trapdoors and underground areas. I loved this place because it served as the basis for many historical landmarks like the fights and races that ancient Romans had to partake in to decide their fates.

Once our time in Rome was concluded, we took another train to Florence. At night, Florence was laden with golden lights and wandering musicians singing songs.
Some of the songs incited a nostalgic feeling in me, as they were mainly played on the guitar which was an instrument that I love to play. It was a sort of lullaby, a calming and relaxing experience. We also frequently went to Venchi, a famous gelato shop in Italy. My cousins and I got chocolate crepes there, and it tasted much better than the ones we had back home.

Finally, our last destination was Venice, otherwise known as the “floating city.” It is a man-made island, so we had to take a train over the ocean to get there. Once there, we soon discovered the only way to get around was by “water taxis.” All the intersections of the buildings in Venice were waterways, so we had to take the taxis to go places. At night, we sauntered around the places we could get to on foot, looking for places to eat and take pictures. We also took a gondola ride, which was basically a canoe ride around the waterways of Venice. It took us around the island, and gave us a good view of the whole city of Venice. There were many other rafts and ships that were crossing as well. At last, it was time to go home, so we parted with our relatives and went our separate ways; the timing was convenient too as I was missing home. This trip was one that filled me with many emotions: excitement, sadness, admiration, and nostalgia. The many attractions we visited exemplified these emotions. This trip had taught me a lot about history and the feats of humanity as well. It was even more enjoyable as we got to enjoy it together with our cousins as a family, and it wouldn’t have been the same without them. It was one of the most memorable trips my family and I have ever been on, and I thank Europe for being so hospitable to us.

Pranay Garg is a freshman in high school. He enjoys hanging out with friends, playing guitar, and playing basketball. He wants to study medicine in college and become a doctor.
Ava Kim
The Grief

On a summer’s day a ghost of a boy approached me from the lake, cloaked with wet white clothes and cries with a smile when our eyes met. So, he came by during the day to play and left alone at night.

He was a quiet soul in nature, always preferring silence. He did not get along with others, favoring only me. The way he disappeared; a shadow swallowed at a falling dusk.
None knew him but he knew all. The town made him cry, and never did he speak of his past. With a small smile he said dearly, “You are there, and here, and no longer there.”

Like a phantom he’d go away, and never spoke to my parents and only haunted me. Everything else passed under the sunlight.

I saw him with a person he once avoided, an old man who had oft visited a lonely store-hand. There was familiarity in their actions. They conversed together, the boy with a crying laugh oft reserved for me, and the old man oft reserved for the store-hand.

Then as the boy left waving goodbye, a cold wind passed by. I thought of a missing store-hand and how the days withered down.

Another day, he was surrounded by my friends. They were wary and fearful of the strange crying boy who had suddenly known me.

My friends began circling him in, like vultures to a feast, I hid and waited for what they seek. Slowly did their shadows corner the single boy.

Then he reached and whispered to each of their ears, something so profound that they fled. I too, fearfully ran away.
The next day I returned, he came, and we left together as always.

Throughout the summer we walked the dusk-dressed streets, but he always slipped away, oft with his face in a small sad smile.

Similar to the first emotion he made for me. Only once he stayed long till the sun slipped away, leading me deep to the woods, to a shrine that never came.

Black shadows and tall blue trees covered the stone path shown mysteriously to me, but the boy showed no worries and never wavered.

I walked with steady steps and almost missed the quiet question of his, “Will you miss me?”

“Probably.” I replied and slow my feet “You cry whenever you see me and miss only for me.”

“So, I do.” He agreed, his crying smile grew. I looked away from it because it hurt my slowly beating heart.

“I am dead, I am dying, I no longer exist.” He said, very close and almost wordlessly.

I gazed into his eyes, two lifeless pits.

Then he laughed loudly and wildly, breathlessly and meaninglessly. He then ran ahead teasing a game of chase, the meaning of his laugh eluded me.

I walk alone to the shrine that night. I could no longer ask anything and never tried again for he had once more only disappeared.

The golden waters flow by the lake at sunset. The flash of yellows, hues of pink upon the pale blue sky in heartful synchrony.

The light was a bruise purple and shades of orange. He stood by me, my friends had left, leaving all but him and I.

A crowd of birds take flight, their shadows reflected upon the lake-light. Shadows ripple through the boy who smiled lake-like.
The cold water nips our toes, deep into the pebbles we go. The glint of sun sparkled across the slick stones, the smell of water permeates.

I never asked him anything, for fear he'd disappear. Something tragic in his gaze would always dissuade the other ever-growing fears.

The last of summer before fall, the cloak of life shifts to rose and daffodil yellows. Soon to fall and be remembered.

The Festival brings a cold chill. At black of night do they light much like fireflies in a jar. Booths smell of sweet memories and long held grief. The grief I always keep as mine.

So, I walk with my friends and join in their laughter. Rows of dangling lights string away from the lake, so close by that I’d forgotten.

The lake was quiet all alone, so big in the dark. I had forgotten about the boy, I had forgotten once again. Yet still awake, lights dying down, do the empty thrive.

He comes to bid goodbye at the cold shore where the waves lap at our feet. A kiss on my cheek, he said, “You are dead to me.”

Then I watch as he runs back into the lake, I hear the last of him splash but I did not give a chase.

By winter he was gone and little thought he lingered. I never knew anything, and certainly not of he. The crowd of people sweep me away further from home than I thought it would, and it takes what I left behind.

Years pass in quiet solitude, all my friends left. I alone go to college where the presence there drags me down. My mind has become more lake-like, deftly reflecting my own faults. I decide to return home and seek what lost at school.

Nothing has changed, I didn’t expect that it would. What is the point of a reunion, of returning when there is nothing left to welcome the return? Or so did my thoughts ponder alone. The bathroom mirror has a face that has crying eyes. Those crying eyes are mine.
A body had showed up from the lake, the missing store-hand from years ago. In my hand a picture of the crying boy. Where it came, I don’t know. It was sitting in my room withering away.

There was no regret to his absence, and only weary acceptance. What was the point of standing by the lakeshore, hearing the laughter of others when I myself haven’t laughed in years? So, I try. Something meaninglessly delightful.

It was a string of numbers which had called a woman without a son. That boy had written a letter to her, saying she was mom.

But that made no sense, and I had never asked before. But he was gone.
Sahitha Vuddagiri, is a student at BASIS Chandler. Recently, she started an organization called Easel Arts Inc. that raises and donates money through art instruction, weekly classes, workshops and selling art. In 2017, she donated over $2000 and continues to do the same for 2018. 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 is 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, she 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, teach at community clubs, schools, and retirement homes on a regular basis. Please find her portfolio, and donation page, at https://www.easelarts.com/read-me/
I can’t remember the last emotion I felt. It has been so long, and yet I know there must be memories of past feeling somewhere within my mind. When I try to remember them my brain goes blank once again. I have lived in this cold darkness that I call home—or prison—for more than a thousand years.

However, these windows appear before me that show many different realms in which I can see but cannot touch.

Why am I here?

What is my purpose?

Is there even any reason at all for my suffering? Or is this just some cruel joke played upon my weak, old soul? I watch and see many different life-forms, go along living their lives day-by-day. I watch as life is given and taken away. I watch, wishing that I could live and die the same. But alas, my dreams I fear will never come true. The pain of watching, but never knowing their joy and happiness or their rage and anger is unknown to me. How I wish to know; how I wish to be free. To have one simple life is all I ask. To be able to feel is all I ask. To die and suffer is all I ask. I wonder is this an emotion?

My eyes can no longer comprehend my the surrounding environment. Can’t I see anything anymore? What is going on? Wait, is that light? Where am I? Have I finally died? Am I at last free?

“Congratulations!” exclaimed a nearby voice. What? Who was that? “He’s so adorable. Hello, my little Fuscus.” Fuscus? What going on? Wait, my sight is returning. I’m...I’m in the mortal world, but how? How could this have happened?

“Don’t worry ma’am. You’ll be home with your child soon, but we need to keep you overnight to ensure there aren’t any further unexpected complications,” said an assuring voice. What? Did that man just say “child?” What is this sensation? It’s as though I have arms and legs. What is going on? Was I reborn? Is that even possible? A new life... I’m overjoyed! Wait, I...I have EMOTIONS!!

“What’s this? He’s smiling. John, come look. Our child is smiling!”
“Oh Mary, he’s perfect.”

John and Mary, huh. I guess those are the names of my parents.

She’s smiling at me. I guess I have a happy look on my face.

“Fuscus! Hurry with the laundry unless you want to wear dirty clothes all week,” my supposed mother yelled. What’s going on? I was just a baby a minute ago, and now, I have the body of teenager. I have a laundry basket in my hands. I am so confused. “Fuscus, what’s the matter? Are you alright?” What is this water dripping into the basket? Where is it coming from? Am I...am I crying? “Fuscus?”

Oh I guess I should say something. “I’m fine everything’s okay,” I said. She doesn’t look like she believes me. I think I know why I’m crying now. I thought I got my wish of living a normal life, but it seems I thought wrong. I skipped almost fifteen years of this life, but how? I brought her the basket and dried my eyes. “Is it alright if I go outside for a bit?” I think I might’ve scared her because her usual serene expression morphed into an expression of mild concern.

“Of course sweetheart, make sure not to stay out too long,” she replied.

I can feel the sun on my skin. It felt so good that I wanted to lay there for eternity. These sensations are overwhelming, but how long can all this last? I went from a newborn to a fifteen year-old teenager in mere seconds. I fear the worst. Please, whoever is listening grant my wish. I am begging you. The sun is going down, and I should hurry back. I wouldn’t want to make that nice couple.. I mean my parents worry.

“Fuscus, where have you been all this time?” She scowled while glaring at me intently. I think I’m in trouble.

“I was laying in the grass and lost track of time, sorry,” I replied nervously. Even though she scowled at me, it felt nice to have a mother who cared so much.

“Just don’t let it happen again. Here, eat your dinner then go to bed, and make sure to brush your teeth.” I ate so much I think I scared her again, but I couldn’t help it. I’ve never had food that was so overwhelmingly delicious before. Then, after brushing my teeth, I went to bed. The bed was so soft and warm, like the sun.

“What? Wait! No! Please, not like this,” the old man exclaimed.

“Poor old man, his family is in the lobby. What on earth will I tell them,” a voice said.
“This can’t be it. No, take me back!”
“Come on there’s nothing more we can do for him, he’s brain dead it’s hopeless.”
“Wait, I need more time please give me some more time,” the old man begged.
“But isn’t this what you wanted?”
“Who’s there? Show yourself!”
“You asked for this did you not, to die and then to suffer.”
“Yes, I did ask that, but I didn’t have the emotions that I do now. I beg you to please take pity on me and let me go back.”
“You’ve asked for death, you’ve asked for emotions, you’ve asked for life, and yet you are still dissatisfied.”

“Please, I know I’ve been selfish, but I ask for just one thing more, please.”
“I gave you all that you have asked for. After all, you have lived, you have emotions, you have suffered, and you have died. As far as I am concerned your wishes have been fulfilled, and you may now venture off to whatever awaits you, goodbye.”
“Wait, no come back. I don’t want to die. Please, come back. Is this really the end? What’s this bright light I feel myself flowing towards? Is that my human body, an old and shriveled carcass? I guess I’m not going back in there. At least, I’ve had some brief moments of bliss in my lifetime.

Sydney Cohen is a junior in high school where she is a violinist in the chamber orchestra and a varsity swimmer. In her spare time, she loves camping, watching videos, writing, and spending time with her friends. She has been published in Blue Guitar Jr.
Editorial Staff

Jillian Bartz is a junior 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. After graduating from high school, she plans to visit Paris before entering college as a finance major.

Alina Chisti is a sophomore honors student in high school. She has been named student of the year for her class for the past two years. She founded her own non-profit tutoring organization called A+ Tutoring. In addition to tutoring, Alina also volunteers for Hospice of the Valley, Friends for Life Animal Rescue, Helping Hands, ICNA relief, FMSC, and Red Cross. When she is not studying or volunteering, she loves theatre and script writing. She has been actively involved in theatre for seven years. Alina’s other hobbies include archery, cooking, hiking, guitar, ukulele, listening to music, spending time with her family, creating unique looks with makeup, and playing with her two orange tabby cats.

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 has been an educator for over 15 years teaching ABE/GED, English, and American History. Lysa 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, and The Blue Guitar Literary and Arts Magazine.

Sydney Cohen is a junior in high school where she is a first violinist in the chamber orchestra and a varsity swimmer. In her spare time, she loves camping, watching videos, writing, and spending time with her friends. She has been published in Blue Guitar Jr.
Ava Kim is a sophomore in high school. She spends most of her time thinking in endless circles that lead nowhere. She also enjoys procrastinating, writing, and drawing. For her, the future seems very far, so she instead focuses on living today in the best way possible.

Surabhi Sajith is a sophomore in high school. She has been pursuing her passion for dance for past ten years and enjoys learning Carnatic music and writing. She participates in diverse events and had won the Phoenix Rotary 100 speech contest, the regional school bee, and several dance competitions. Surabhi has worked to raise money for many charity events, and continues to give back to the community through peer tutoring as Math Sprouts tutor in Tempe, Arizona, volunteering at Chinmaya mission and Maricopa Integrated Health, and teaching dance to younger children. At school, she is a Student Representative and is part of the Leadership Society, which plans school events.

Rachel Woosley is a sophomore in high school. She enjoys drawing, writing, and spending time with her friends. Her short stories and poems have been published in The Blue Guitar Literary and Arts Magazine, and Blue Guitar Jr.