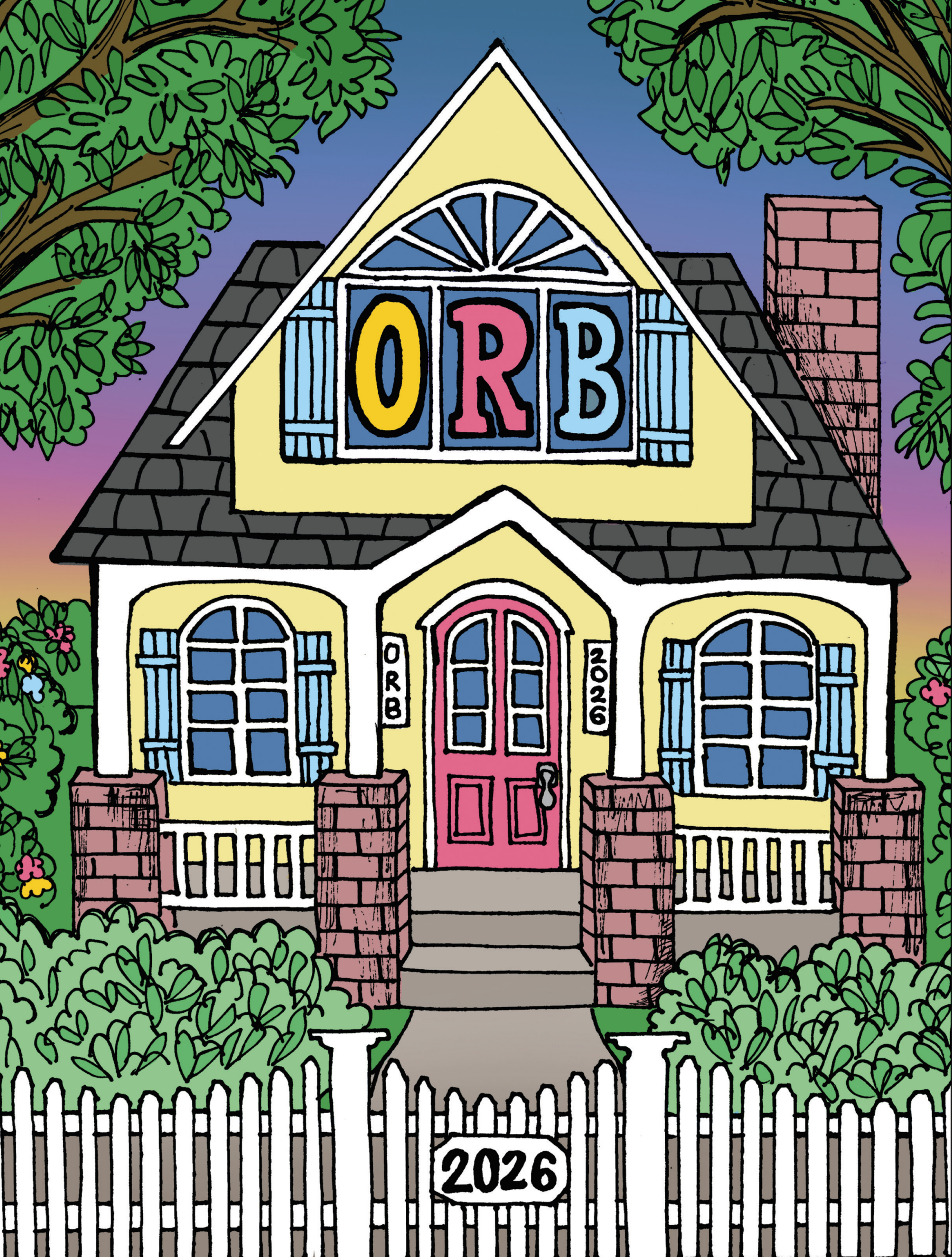




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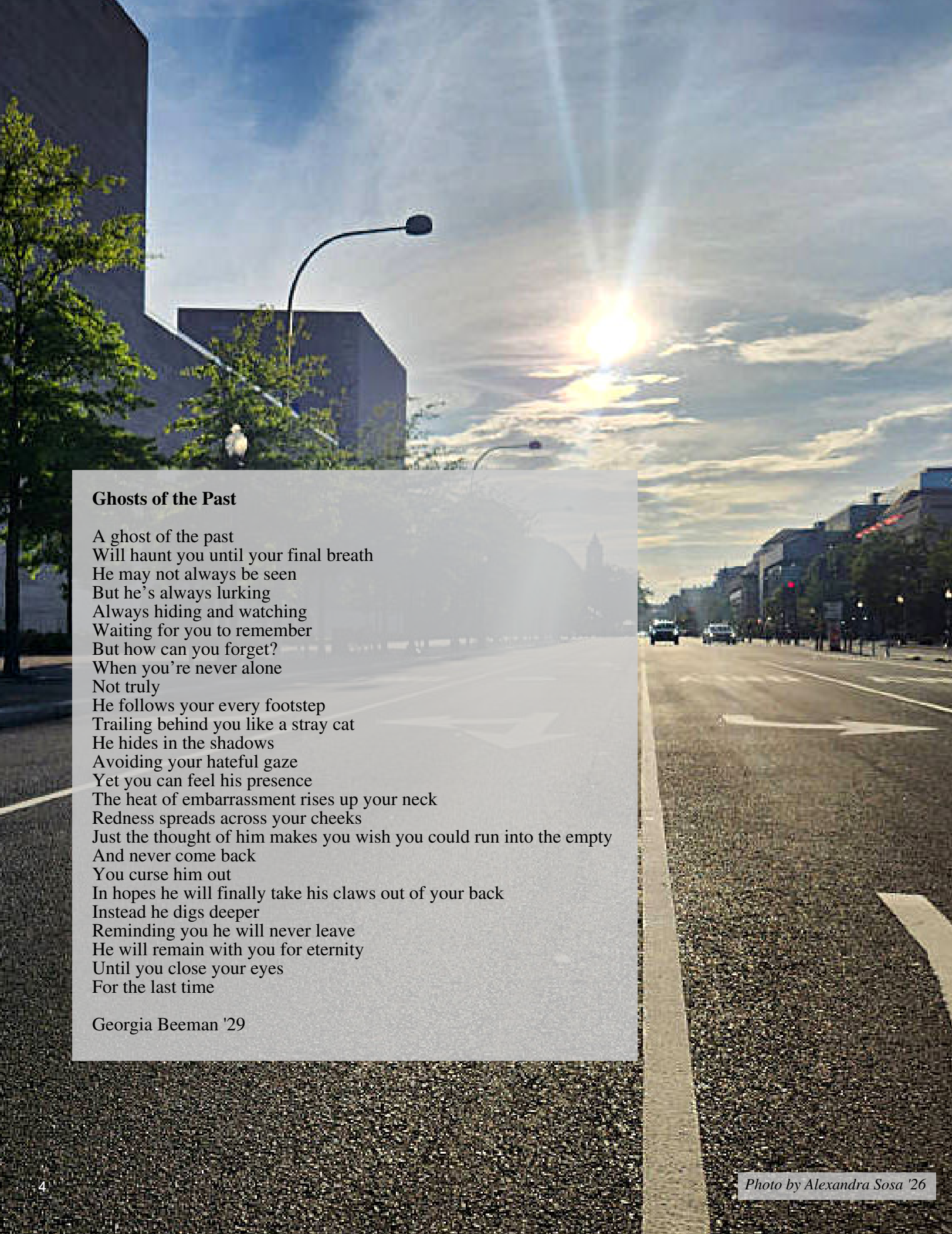
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Ghosts of the Past

A ghost of the past
Will haunt you until your final breath
He may not always be seen
But he's always lurking
Always hiding and watching
Waiting for you to remember
But how can you forget?
When you're never alone
Not truly
He follows your every footstep
Trailing behind you like a stray cat
He hides in the shadows
Avoiding your hateful gaze
Yet you can feel his presence
The heat of embarrassment rises up your neck
Redness spreads across your cheeks
Just the thought of him makes you wish you could run into the empty
And never come back
You curse him out
In hopes he will finally take his claws out of your back
Instead he digs deeper
Reminding you he will never leave
He will remain with you for eternity
Until you close your eyes
For the last time

Georgia Beeman '29

The party

The party is everything.
Bustling and peaceful,
Joyous and morose,
and no two people here are alike.

I do my hair and wear
my favorite party dress.
Open the door and smile
as I join the celebration.

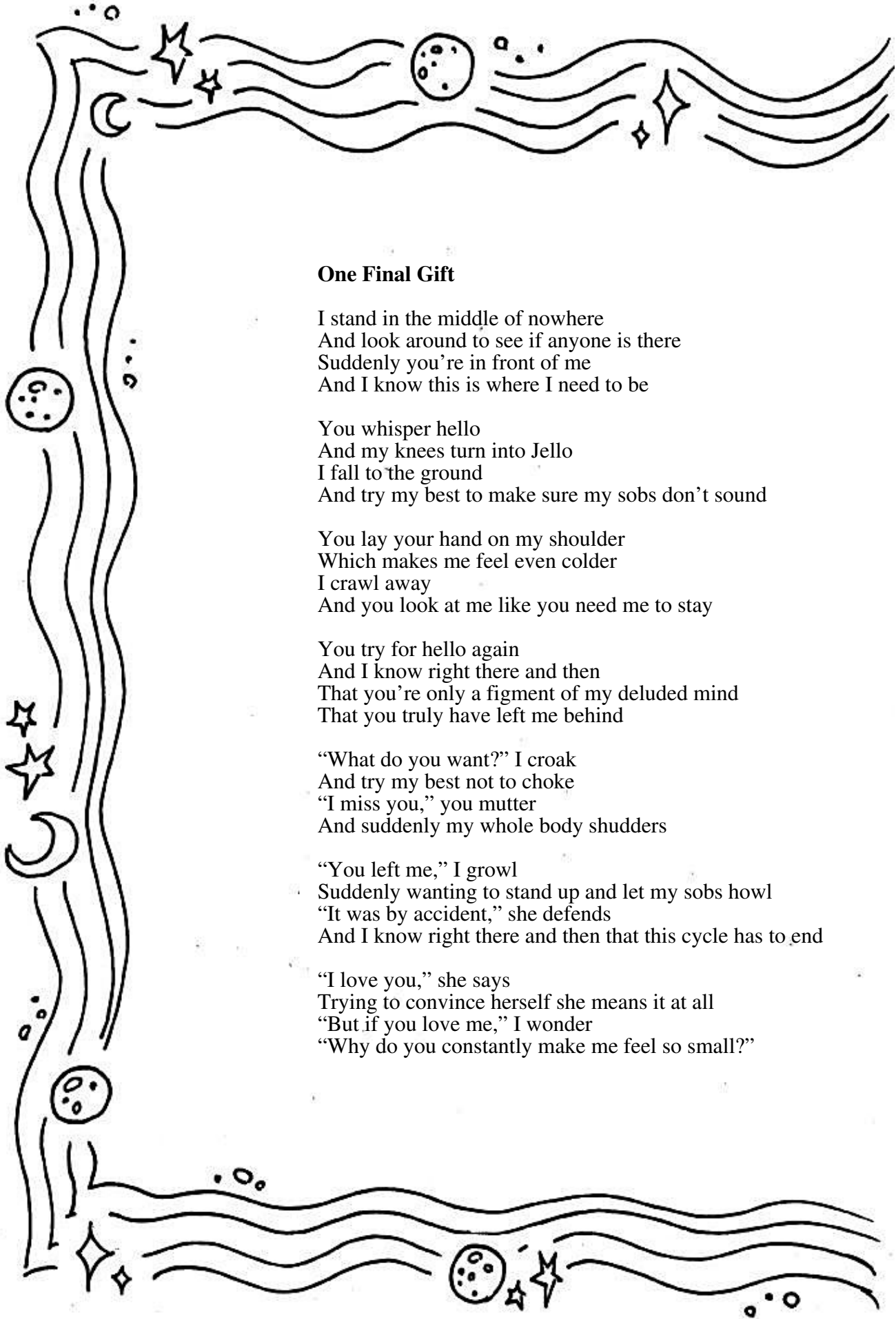
I weave through rooms
to try and find my people,
smile on cue and hit my marks,
but the conversations never
click, the connections never spark.

But of course I cannot help myself,
I break a glass, trip, fall,
spill my guts and hide.
Make it awkward.
Make it worse.

And when I realize my
hopelessness, I make my exit,
searching for a host to thank.
But no matter how hard
I look, they never appear to me,
just outside my reach.

I leave the party,
watch the people dance
and cry and sing
through the windows
in the freezing cold.
And the pain is biting—
that the party does not
want me like I want it back.
But there is comfort in
watching from the outside.
To have nothing to prove.
Nothing to lose.

Julia Valente '27



One Final Gift

I stand in the middle of nowhere
And look around to see if anyone is there
Suddenly you're in front of me
And I know this is where I need to be

You whisper hello
And my knees turn into Jello
I fall to the ground
And try my best to make sure my sobs don't sound

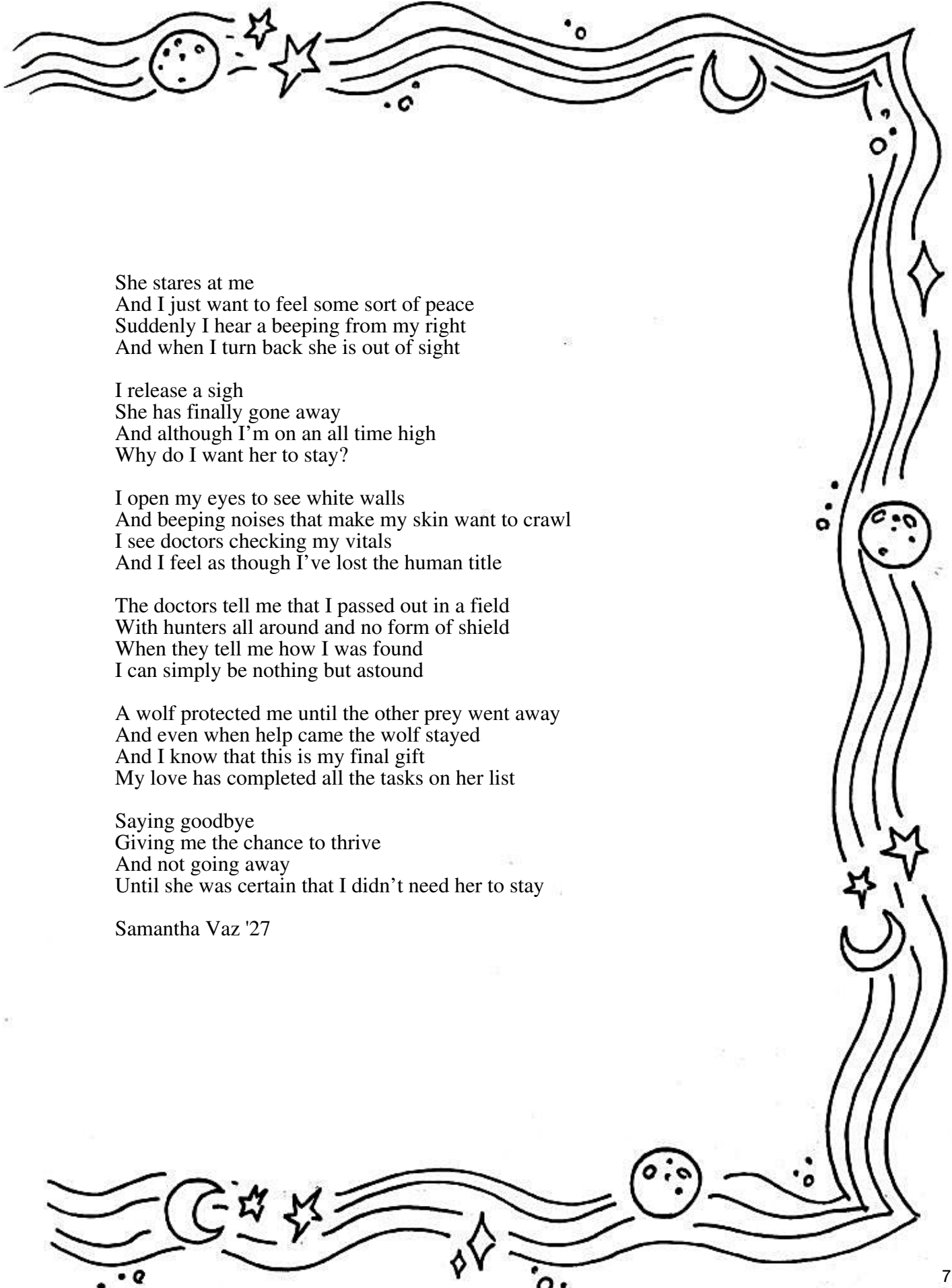
You lay your hand on my shoulder
Which makes me feel even colder
I crawl away
And you look at me like you need me to stay

You try for hello again
And I know right there and then
That you're only a figment of my deluded mind
That you truly have left me behind

"What do you want?" I croak
And try my best not to choke
"I miss you," you mutter
And suddenly my whole body shudders

"You left me," I growl
Suddenly wanting to stand up and let my sobs howl
"It was by accident," she defends
And I know right there and then that this cycle has to end

"I love you," she says
Trying to convince herself she means it at all
"But if you love me," I wonder
"Why do you constantly make me feel so small?"



She stares at me
And I just want to feel some sort of peace
Suddenly I hear a beeping from my right
And when I turn back she is out of sight

I release a sigh
She has finally gone away
And although I'm on an all time high
Why do I want her to stay?

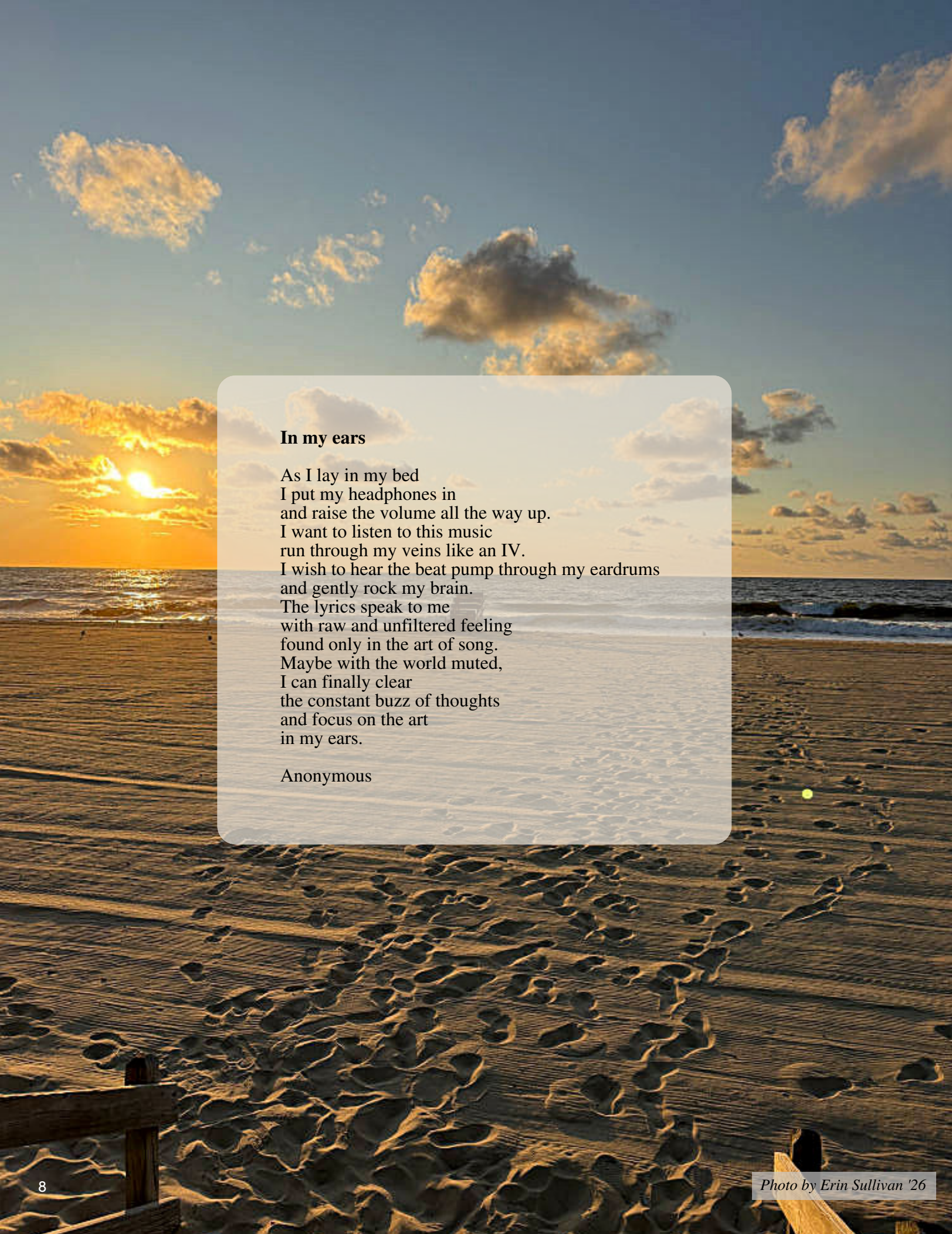
I open my eyes to see white walls
And beeping noises that make my skin want to crawl
I see doctors checking my vitals
And I feel as though I've lost the human title

The doctors tell me that I passed out in a field
With hunters all around and no form of shield
When they tell me how I was found
I can simply be nothing but astound

A wolf protected me until the other prey went away
And even when help came the wolf stayed
And I know that this is my final gift
My love has completed all the tasks on her list

Saying goodbye
Giving me the chance to thrive
And not going away
Until she was certain that I didn't need her to stay

Samantha Vaz '27

A full-page photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with scattered white and grey clouds. The sun is a bright orange orb on the left side of the horizon. The ocean is visible in the middle ground with gentle waves. The foreground is dominated by a vast expanse of sand covered in numerous footprints, leading towards the water. A wooden fence is partially visible in the bottom left corner.

In my ears

As I lay in my bed
I put my headphones in
and raise the volume all the way up.
I want to listen to this music
run through my veins like an IV.
I wish to hear the beat pump through my eardrums
and gently rock my brain.
The lyrics speak to me
with raw and unfiltered feeling
found only in the art of song.
Maybe with the world muted,
I can finally clear
the constant buzz of thoughts
and focus on the art
in my ears.

Anonymous

Where, When, Why, How?

Where was it that I left my hope?
A hope for a new day,
a new dawn,
a new world.
When did I lose it,
that fire in me,
that people have so often said
I have?
A fire which burns deep in my soul,
strong and resilient.
Why?
Why have I let this ardent fire
consume me,
burn me,
until I am flat on the floor;
charred,
with nothing to give anymore?
How?
How have I let the spirited girl
in the mirror,
who had so much to tell,
to give,
to change in the world;
How have I lost my faith in her?

Luisa Vogel '27



childhood friend

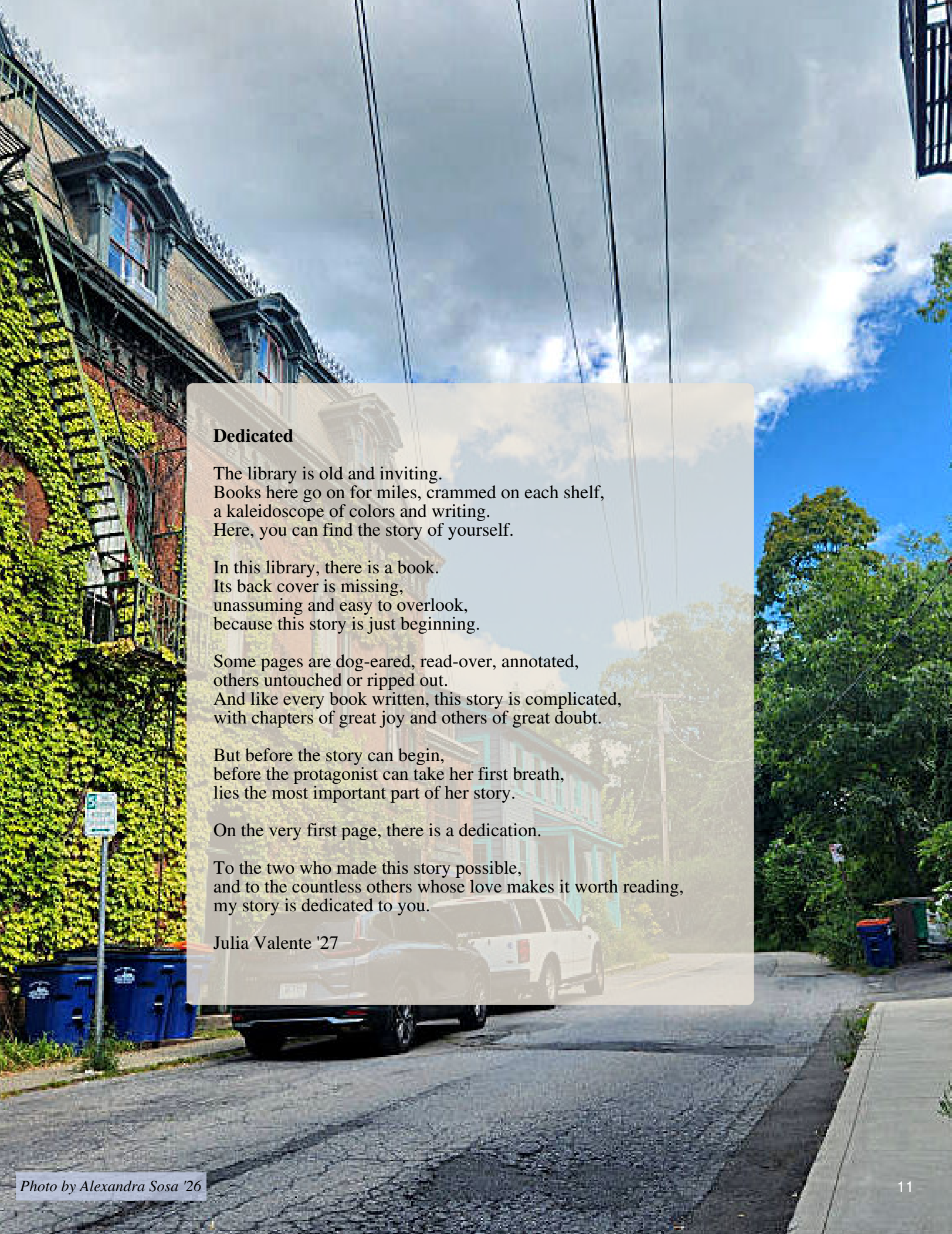
i wouldn't call us friends:
not school friends,
not teammates.
those titles live in the present.

i'm your childhood friend,
the one who lingers in the background,
ready when your mom says
you should reconnect,
though you never will.

so here I am,
watching you grow up.
the girl I used to laugh with,
cry with,
live beside.

but now
i keep the echoes close;
the way we knew each other
without words,
the nights we swore we'd never drift.
i whisper those promises back to myself
when the room is quiet,
because if i remember loudly enough
maybe you'll hear it
wherever you are.

Kathleen Brancato '26



Dedicated

The library is old and inviting.
Books here go on for miles, crammed on each shelf,
a kaleidoscope of colors and writing.
Here, you can find the story of yourself.

In this library, there is a book.
Its back cover is missing,
unassuming and easy to overlook,
because this story is just beginning.

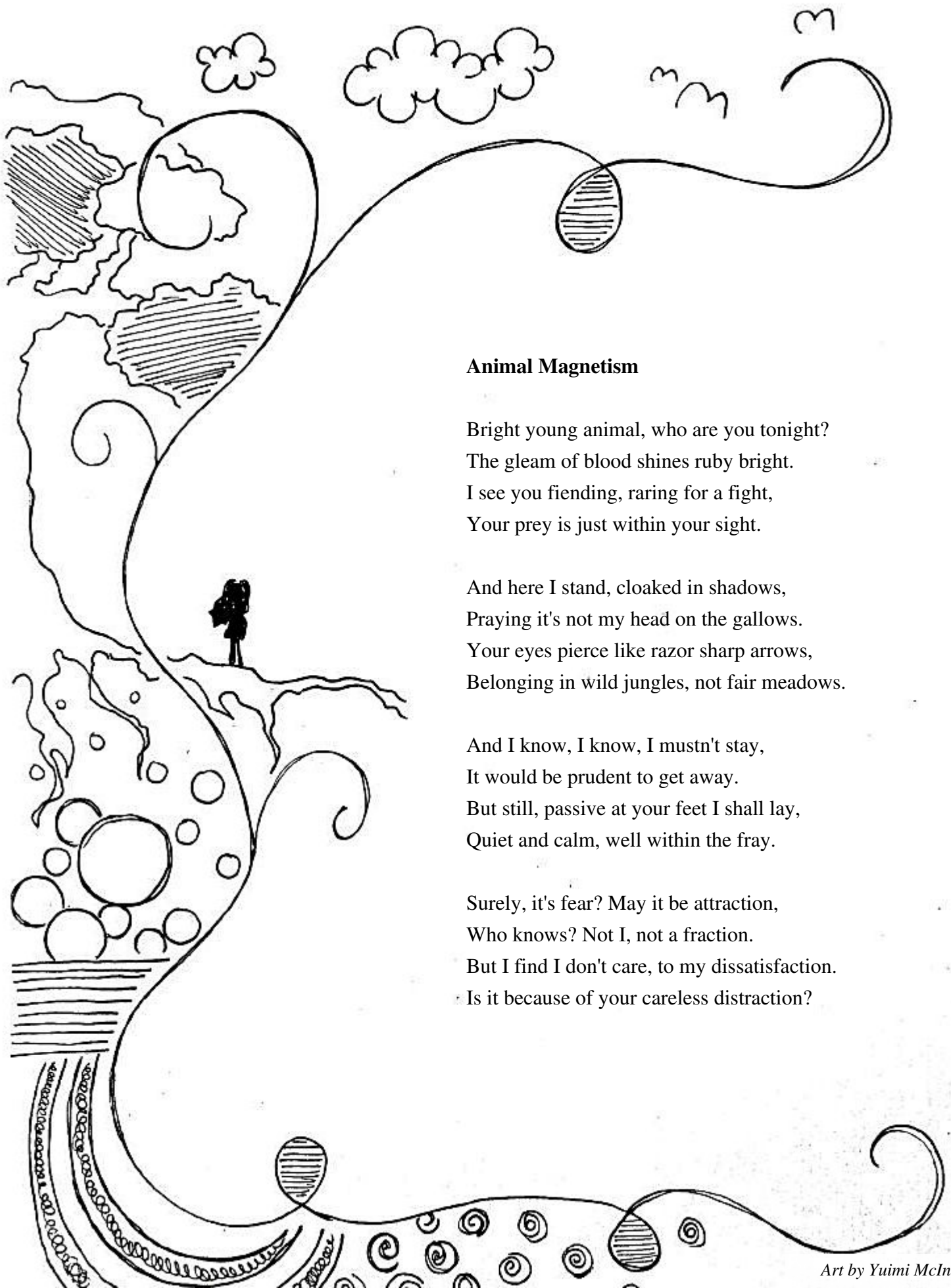
Some pages are dog-eared, read-over, annotated,
others untouched or ripped out.
And like every book written, this story is complicated,
with chapters of great joy and others of great doubt.

But before the story can begin,
before the protagonist can take her first breath,
lies the most important part of her story.

On the very first page, there is a dedication.

To the two who made this story possible,
and to the countless others whose love makes it worth reading,
my story is dedicated to you.

Julia Valente '27



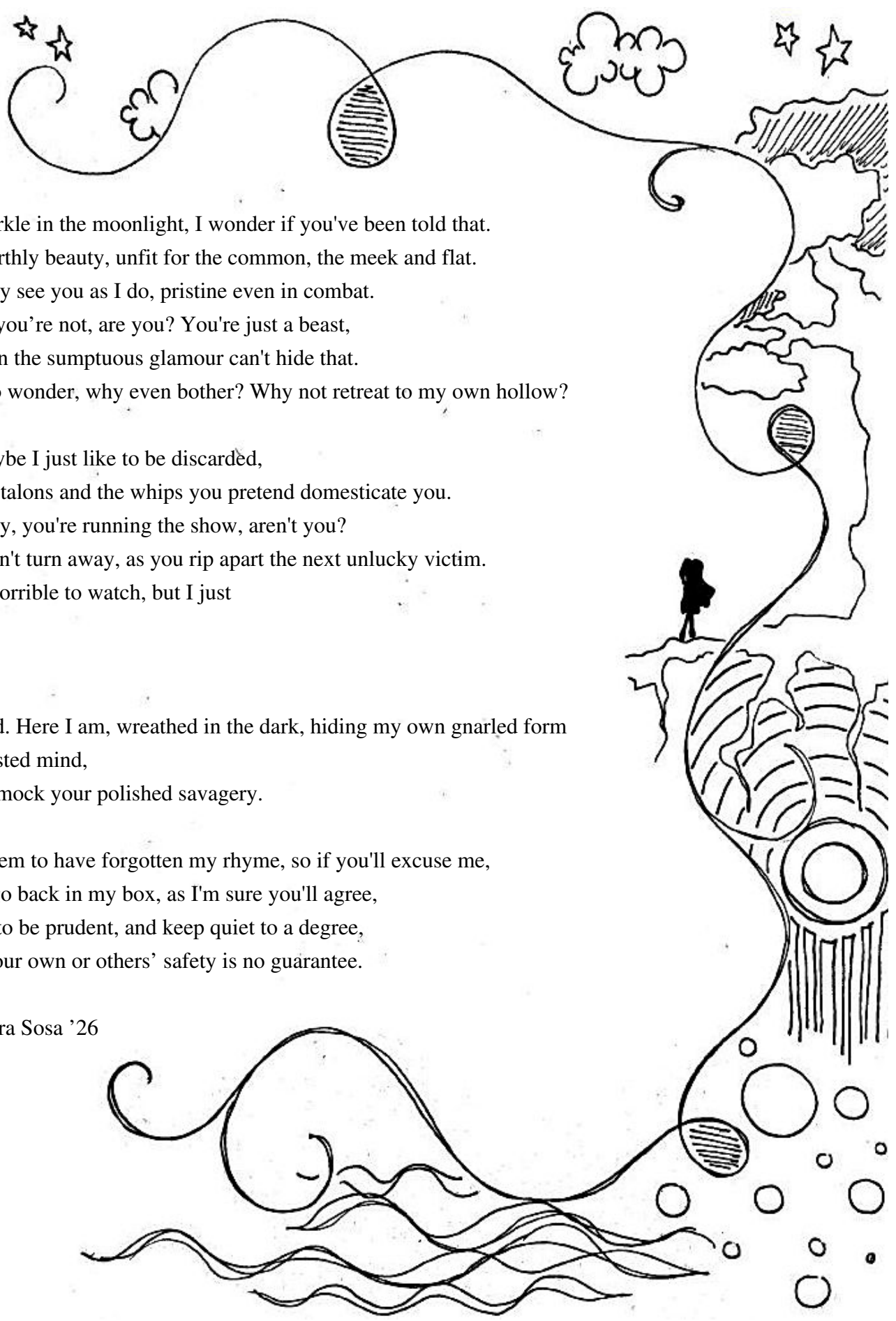
Animal Magnetism

Bright young animal, who are you tonight?
The gleam of blood shines ruby bright.
I see you fiending, raring for a fight,
Your prey is just within your sight.

And here I stand, cloaked in shadows,
Praying it's not my head on the gallows.
Your eyes pierce like razor sharp arrows,
Belonging in wild jungles, not fair meadows.

And I know, I know, I mustn't stay,
It would be prudent to get away.
But still, passive at your feet I shall lay,
Quiet and calm, well within the fray.

Surely, it's fear? May it be attraction,
Who knows? Not I, not a fraction.
But I find I don't care, to my dissatisfaction.
Is it because of your careless distraction?

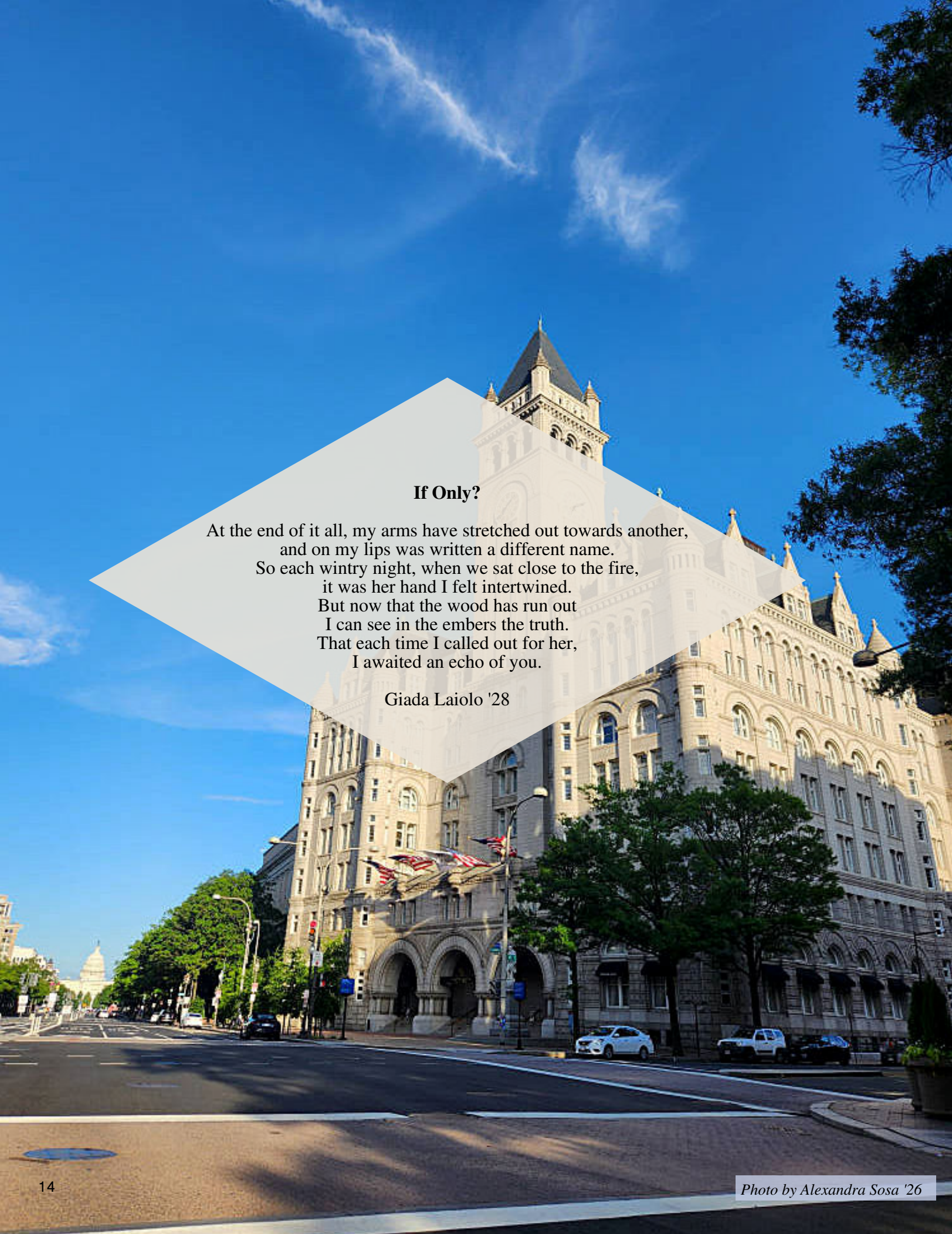


You sparkle in the moonlight, I wonder if you've been told that.
An unearthly beauty, unfit for the common, the meek and flat.
Not many see you as I do, pristine even in combat.
Oh, but you're not, are you? You're just a beast,
And even the sumptuous glamour can't hide that.
And I do wonder, why even bother? Why not retreat to my own hollow?

Hm, maybe I just like to be discarded,
By your talons and the whips you pretend domesticate you.
But really, you're running the show, aren't you?
And I can't turn away, as you rip apart the next unlucky victim.
It's too horrible to watch, but I just
Can't
Turn
Away.
How odd. Here I am, wreathed in the dark, hiding my own gnarled form
And twisted mind,
While I mock your polished savagery.

And I seem to have forgotten my rhyme, so if you'll excuse me,
I'll just go back in my box, as I'm sure you'll agree,
It's best to be prudent, and keep quiet to a degree,
When your own or others' safety is no guarantee.

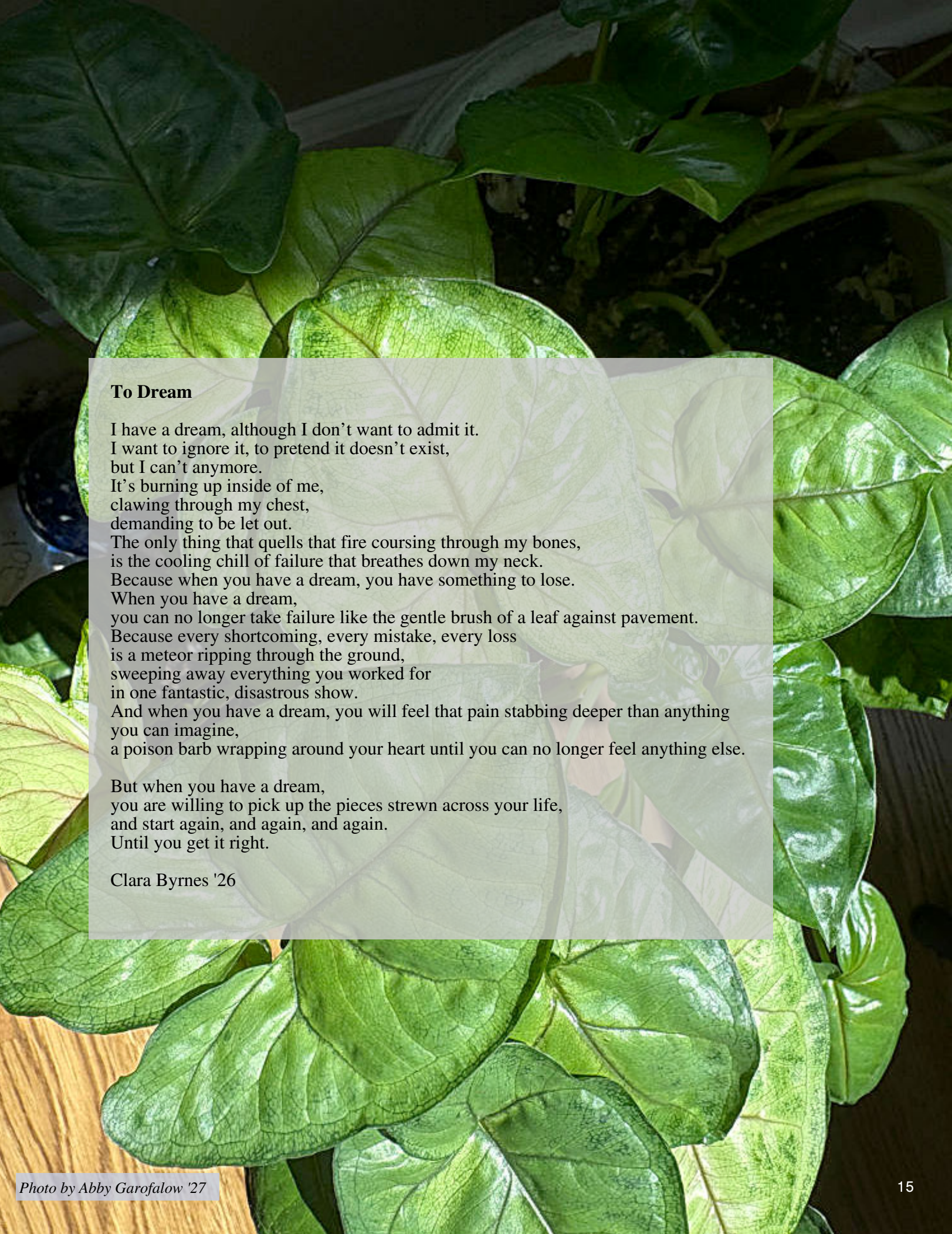
Alexandra Sosa '26



If Only?

At the end of it all, my arms have stretched out towards another,
and on my lips was written a different name.
So each wintry night, when we sat close to the fire,
it was her hand I felt intertwined.
But now that the wood has run out
I can see in the embers the truth.
That each time I called out for her,
I awaited an echo of you.

Giada Laiolo '28

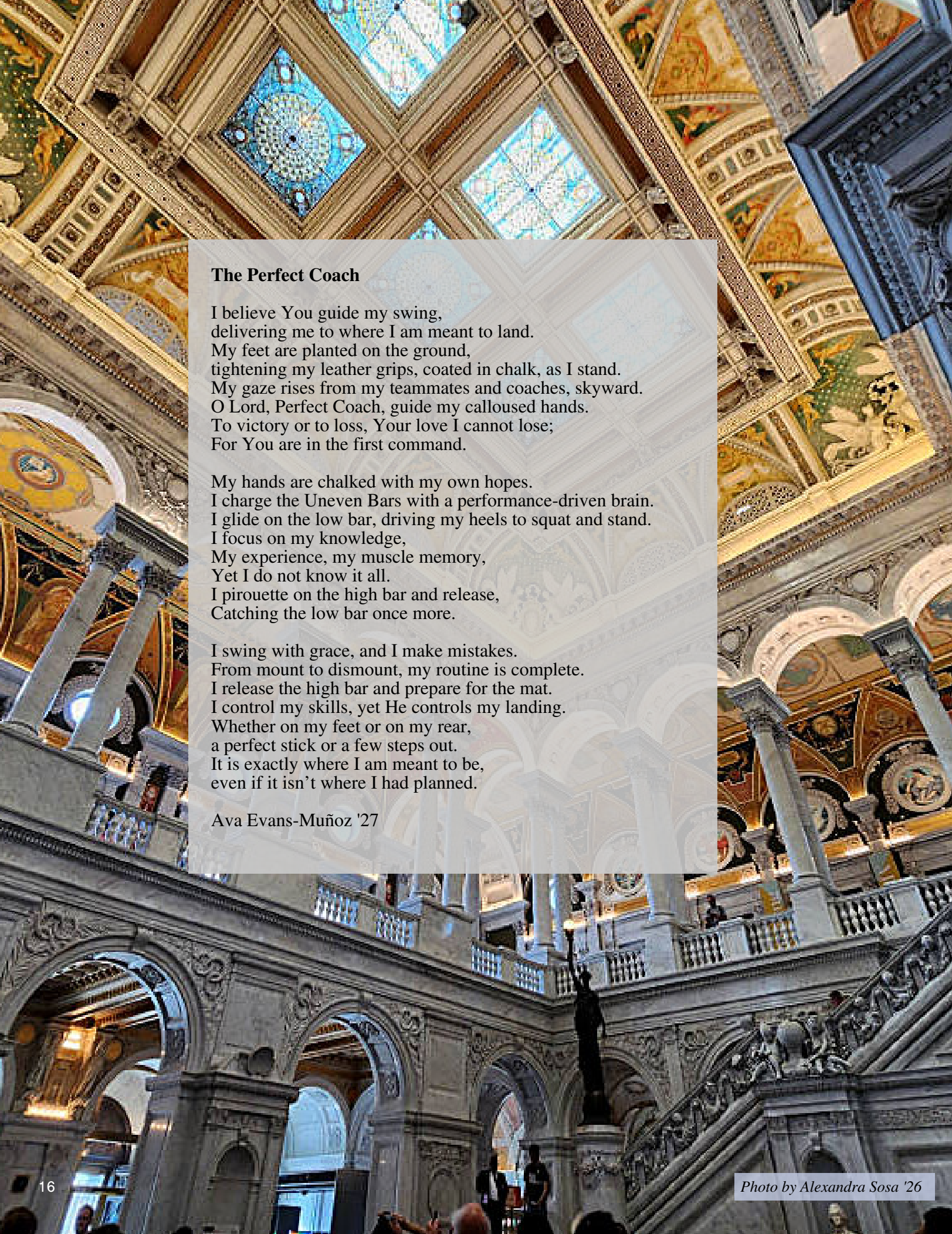


To Dream

I have a dream, although I don't want to admit it.
I want to ignore it, to pretend it doesn't exist,
but I can't anymore.
It's burning up inside of me,
clawing through my chest,
demanding to be let out.
The only thing that quells that fire coursing through my bones,
is the cooling chill of failure that breathes down my neck.
Because when you have a dream, you have something to lose.
When you have a dream,
you can no longer take failure like the gentle brush of a leaf against pavement.
Because every shortcoming, every mistake, every loss
is a meteor ripping through the ground,
sweeping away everything you worked for
in one fantastic, disastrous show.
And when you have a dream, you will feel that pain stabbing deeper than anything
you can imagine,
a poison barb wrapping around your heart until you can no longer feel anything else.

But when you have a dream,
you are willing to pick up the pieces strewn across your life,
and start again, and again, and again.
Until you get it right.

Clara Byrnes '26

The background of the page is a photograph of a grand, ornate interior space, likely a cathedral or a large hall. The ceiling is the most prominent feature, with a complex network of wooden beams and large, colorful stained glass windows. The walls are covered in intricate frescoes and murals, depicting various scenes and figures. The architecture is highly detailed, with many columns, arches, and decorative elements. The lighting is warm and comes from within the space, highlighting the textures and colors of the architecture.

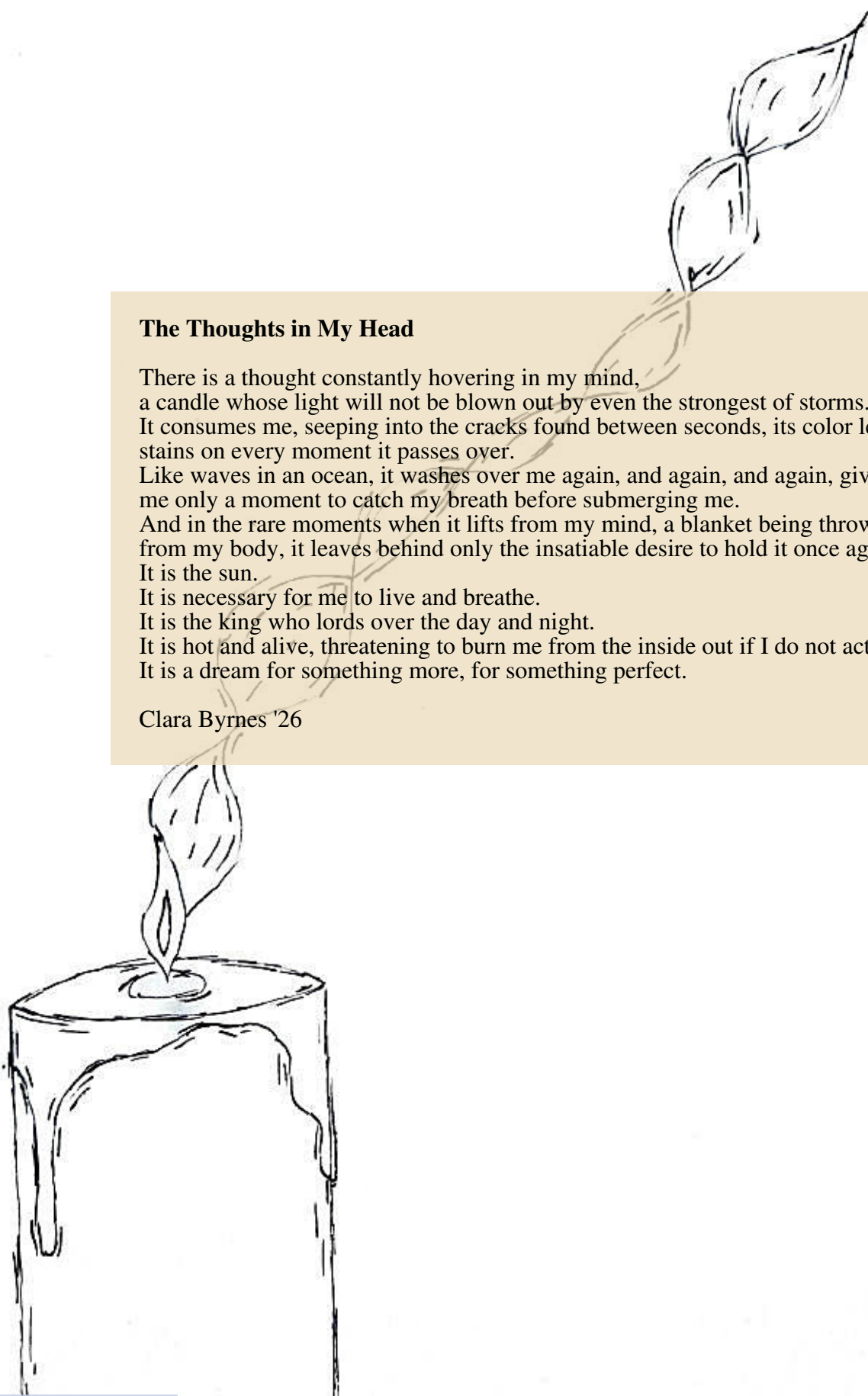
The Perfect Coach

I believe You guide my swing,
delivering me to where I am meant to land.
My feet are planted on the ground,
tightening my leather grips, coated in chalk, as I stand.
My gaze rises from my teammates and coaches, skyward.
O Lord, Perfect Coach, guide my calloused hands.
To victory or to loss, Your love I cannot lose;
For You are in the first command.

My hands are chalked with my own hopes.
I charge the Uneven Bars with a performance-driven brain.
I glide on the low bar, driving my heels to squat and stand.
I focus on my knowledge,
My experience, my muscle memory,
Yet I do not know it all.
I pirouette on the high bar and release,
Catching the low bar once more.

I swing with grace, and I make mistakes.
From mount to dismount, my routine is complete.
I release the high bar and prepare for the mat.
I control my skills, yet He controls my landing.
Whether on my feet or on my rear,
a perfect stick or a few steps out.
It is exactly where I am meant to be,
even if it isn't where I had planned.

Ava Evans-Muñoz '27



The Thoughts in My Head

There is a thought constantly hovering in my mind,
a candle whose light will not be blown out by even the strongest of storms.
It consumes me, seeping into the cracks found between seconds, its color leaving
stains on every moment it passes over.
Like waves in an ocean, it washes over me again, and again, and again, giving
me only a moment to catch my breath before submerging me.
And in the rare moments when it lifts from my mind, a blanket being thrown off
from my body, it leaves behind only the insatiable desire to hold it once again.
It is the sun.
It is necessary for me to live and breathe.
It is the king who lords over the day and night.
It is hot and alive, threatening to burn me from the inside out if I do not act.
It is a dream for something more, for something perfect.

Clara Byrnes '26

Pieces of People I Love

I am a little piece
of everyone I know,
I carry their light,
their spark, and their glow.

I hug everyone
who I am happy to see,
because my best friend
does this for me.
My favorite songs
come from her playlist;
they bring me back
to moments I missed.
"You are always smiling,"
My aunt points out.
Of course I am,
because Maeve is,
without a doubt!

Ally gives me high fives,
whenever I do well.
Now I do this for others,
to make them feel swell.
I try to pass on joy
like she showed me how to,
by celebrating the small wins
that get people through.

Jamie is great,
at making me laugh.
I joke around more,
on her behalf.
She changed my life,
in more ways than one
She makes every day,
A lot more fun.

Clare is the kindest
person I've seen.
She definitely makes me
a lot less mean.
She always works hard,
she's very committed.
Now I study more,
and get everything submitted.

Those and many others
have shaped how I live.
I really hope that someone
carries a piece that I give.

Anne Maciejewski '27

An aerial photograph of a vast mountain range, likely the Alps, with deep valleys and jagged peaks. A semi-transparent rectangular box is centered over the image, containing text. The sky is a deep blue with wispy white clouds. The mountains below are covered in patches of snow and green vegetation.

The Girl Who Was Born of the Clouds

Have you heard of the girl who was born of the clouds?
Her eyes were stained with the sky.
The wind followed her ribbons of hair,
and was synchronous with her sighs.
The sun herself beamed at her smile;
so to her heart was extended some of her light.
She spoke to the thunder with the gentleness
of snow placating the night.

And the girl, she cherished the feeling
of holding the starts in her palm.
But once, as she dreamt, she uncurled her fingers,
and each tiny light fell through.
She regathered the stars,
held them closer this time.
Yet the warmth she once gave them
was no longer new.

She awoke in a cloud,
engulfed in gray.
So she spoke to the thunder,
but he forced her to stay.
To this day no one knows what became of
the girl who was born of the clouds
But her story is told over and over again,
for even the brightest light burns out.

Giada Laiolo '28

A photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with scattered clouds. The ocean is visible in the distance. In the foreground, the sand is covered in many footprints, and a wooden fence is partially visible at the bottom.

Imagist Poems

Summer Morning

The porch is glazed
with rain
but the sun still rises to
greet me
peeking from behind
the trees
and warming the goosebumps on
my arms

Clara Byrnes '26

The Ocean

The water washes clear
over my feet
It's cold at first
for a moment
The salty scent rushes into my nose
as the sun lies down to sleep
behind the sea

Clara Byrnes '26

New York

The clamor of a busy city
fills my ears
and fast walking people push
past my shoulders
A siren cuts through
the city air
while a car
blares its horn
and I
take a breath
Then
let it out

Clara Byrnes '26

Anne with an e

Anne with an e
is my Snapchat story name,
but not many know
how this became.

It means a lot to me,
this short little phrase,
because it originates from
a very special phase.

An obsession with a character,
from a certain storybook,
whose bright red pigtails
gave her a unique look.

Something about her,
just drew me right in.
She always seemed to be
so confident in her skin.

But what caught my attention first,
was obviously her name: Anne.
I felt such a rare connection,
like a thread between us ran.

I read each of her tales,
from the beginning to the end.
I especially loved the way,
she would always pretend.

She used her imagination
whenever she could,
taking each bad situation,
and turning it into good.

Her creativity and inner world reminded me
of me;
she exactly embodied
the person I hoped to be.

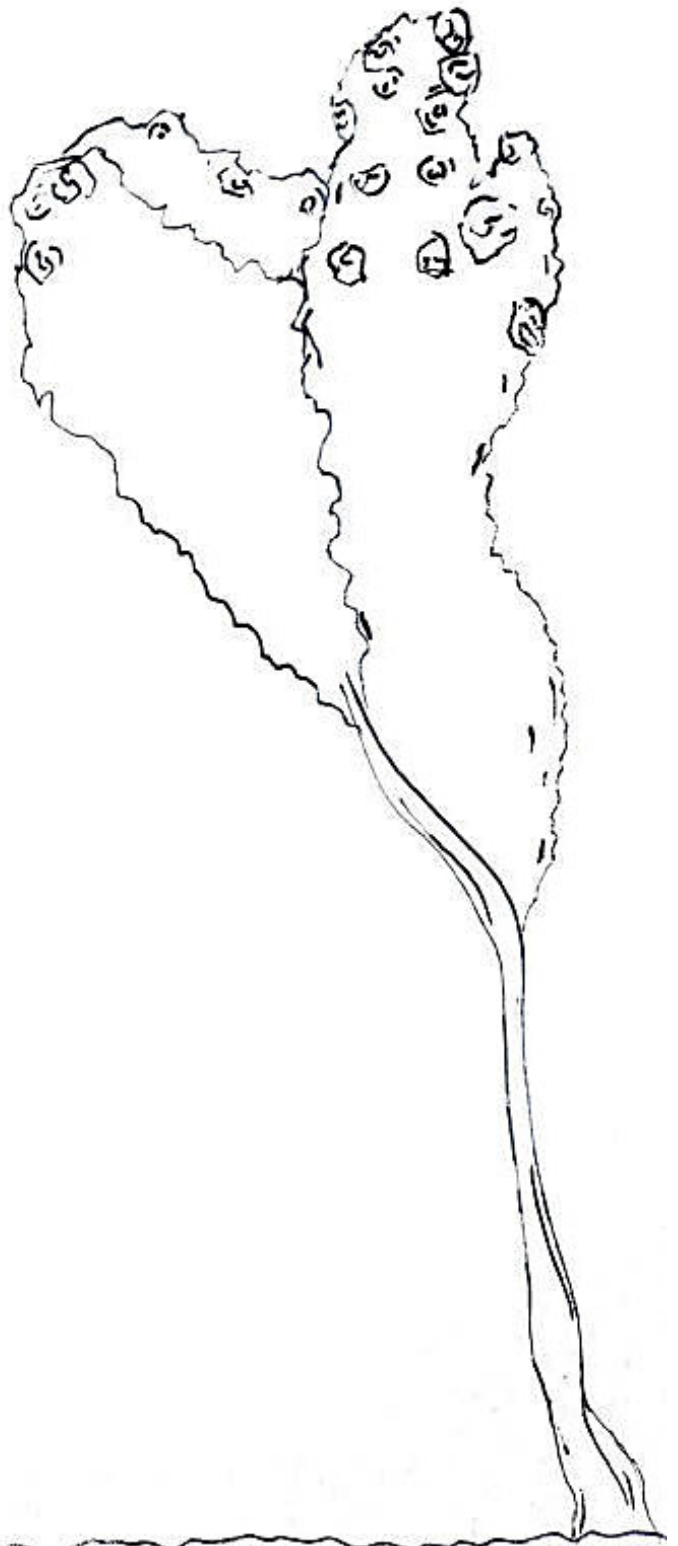
So thoughtful and kind,
I wanted to meet her so bad.
Finishing the book series
made me really sad.
It was quite an admiration,
I must have had.

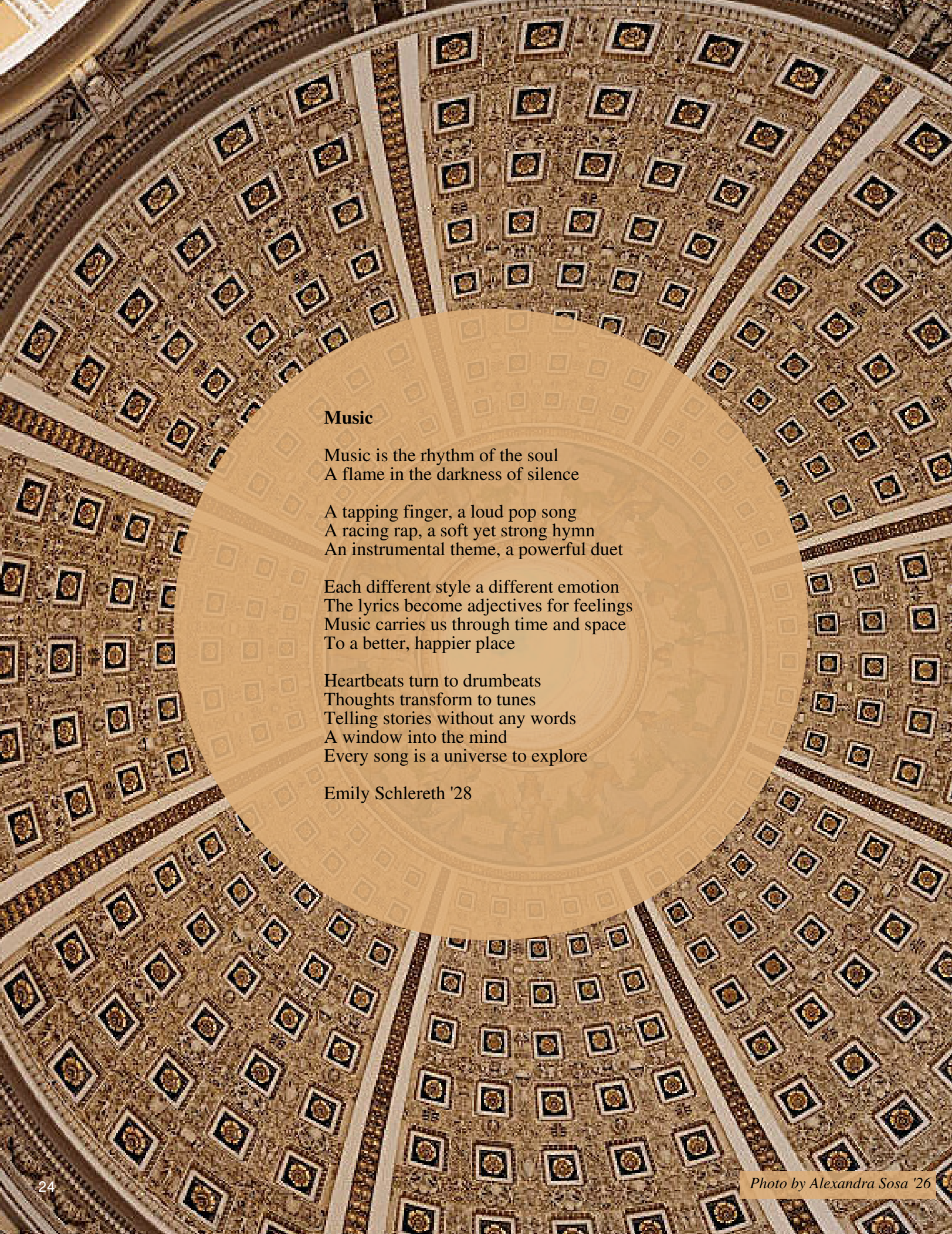
But now I know
admiration is recognition
of one's potential,
waiting to grow.
I kind of see similarities between us,
although this phase was long ago.

Anne of Green Gables held a special job,
a teacher who knew where each was at,
and a countless number of people
have said I'd be good, truly, at that.

She also loved to write, especially poems,
and all of a sudden, I'm doing the same.
Maybe we really do have more in common,
than simply a name.

Anne Maciejewski '27





Music

Music is the rhythm of the soul
A flame in the darkness of silence

A tapping finger, a loud pop song
A racing rap, a soft yet strong hymn
An instrumental theme, a powerful duet

Each different style a different emotion
The lyrics become adjectives for feelings
Music carries us through time and space
To a better, happier place

Heartbeats turn to drumbeats
Thoughts transform to tunes
Telling stories without any words
A window into the mind
Every song is a universe to explore

Emily Schlereth '28

"What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin."

He was sitting in the middle of the road. Surrounding him, the cracks in the pavement filled with blood. It ran freely all around him. He looked like a fallen angel. He was gorgeous, the type of beauty that was so immeasurable it almost seemed unreal. He looked so pitiful sitting there. He was meant to have been so much better.

The cracks were now overflowing with blood. The street was like a river running red. He was unmoving, letting the ruins of his destruction wash against him. It was such a heartbreaking sight.

As the red rushed past him, it flowed toward the fires left in his wake. They seemed to both torment and fascinate him. His eyes were fixed on them like they held all the answers to his prayers and why they had been rejected. The fires seemed to dance with the spirits of the fallen all around him. The spirits questioned him, asking why, begging to know what could have inspired such devastation.

He sat there unmoving for days, unable to take his eyes away from the flames. The fires were swept away by a strong wind, and he was finally able to rise. He stumbled from the wreckage and started walking toward the end of civilization as he knew it. This once beautiful creature was full of misery and despair.

"Why?" he cried. "Why must this be my fate? What gods have I angered? Who have I offended for the Fates to curse me so?"

Fate did curse him. It hated him. This godlike creature was an offense to them, to their tapestry of destiny. They did not create him, did not weave him into existence. Someone else designed him to be greater than they, an insult to destiny. But even the greatest fall, and he fell long and hard, hard enough to crack the stones beneath him. And those stones destroyed everything.

The creature walked from his devastation toward Nothingness. His spirit was defeated. The Fates were indifferent now that their will had been carried out. He felt this indifference in the air. It was a loneliness like no other. He was abandoned by all. Once a god revered for his unique creation and beauty, he no longer had a world to worship him or enemies to hate him.

The Nothingness swallowed him whole. He was empty. The world was empty. The Nothingness reigned supreme, consuming everything it could reach. And he cleared a path for it with all his destruction. And the world became Nothing and he became Nothing and the streets were stained with Nothing, and all the carnage was Nothing.

And that once glorious creature was a shadow.

Carolina Guardascione '27



I see God in you.

I see God in you.

In the way you make me smile:
laugh until a tear slips down my cheek,
until my belly aches
and I have to lie down to catch my breath.

In the way you make me cry:
not from pain, but from realizing how rare it is
to have a friend who shows up so fully and faithfully,
and how empty things would feel without you.

In the way you always know just what to say:
offering advice, steadying me,
knocking a little sense into me
when I need it most.

In the way you say nothing at all:
just sit beside me
and listen
when the rest of the world seems to pass me by.

I see God in you.

Kathleen Brancato '26

Becoming a Work of Art

Every heart is a canvas.
Some are already full,
but others are still blank,
waiting to be painted.
To have an empty canvas makes one feel
like they are not important enough
to be seen or listened to,
like they have nothing
to contribute to the world,
nothing to show off.

Although that person is enough,
just the way they are,
their canvas must be decorated
with marks of love;
a collection of internal proof
that they matter.

Special people must come along,
each with their own distinct color.
Their words and actions make swift strokes;
each smile, wave, hug, and "how are you,"
subtly contributing to an elaborate scene.
Laughter covers the grey areas with yellow,
and good conversations spread pink flowers everywhere.

Some colors are used
only a small amount of times.
But their marks are so wide and bold,
because of the care they hold,
that they paint the entire sky,
without even knowing it.

After a while the canvas is full
of people and moments that left an imprint.
The decorations make the person feel valuable,
so they display the canvas on an easel,
for all to see.

It takes great layering
of internal brushstrokes
to give a person the confidence
to show themselves off.

The artwork on their canvas
may then serve as a template,
prompting them to imitate its design
to decorate the canvases
of those who seem empty.

Anne Maciejewski '27

The Colors We Wear

“Look perfect,” they said, so we made ourselves thin and sickly, concealing every flaw and painted our lips a sensual shade of **red**.

“Be gentle,” they said, as we dimmed our indignation, that blazed in hues of **orange**.

“Stand out,” they told us, making us shine like the sun with radiant rays of **yellow**.

“Give,” they told us, making us sacrifice our lives at their rough hands, glowing with a selfish **green**.

“Be happy,” we heard, as we concealed scars and masked our rightful sadness, painting over the **blue**.

“Be strong,” we heard, although we never got to shine our light of **violet**.

Never allowed to complain when we are beaten down, silenced like a shrinking **violet**,

cut down and withered until we scar a deep **red**,

thrown into an ocean in the middle of the storm, forced to drown in the sea of **blue**.

Pushing down the bitterness we have collected from the years of objectification, sweetening our citrusy **orange**,

shot down a million times, left defenseless in a battlefield of grass with blades of **green**,

ignoring the way grown men have gazed upon us since adolescence, covering our fear with a bright shade of **yellow**.

Crash diets and weight loss pills; wasting away until our skin grows cold and **yellow**.

Hair dye and tanning beds curating a spotless image as we fade into the rays of ultraviolet.

Pitted against each other, looking upon each other with envious eyes beaming **green**.

The anger within us grows, burning a vibrant **red**,

like a shimmering glow of rays of **orange**,

but through that promise of hope we are watered down, shot down 'til we are **blue**.

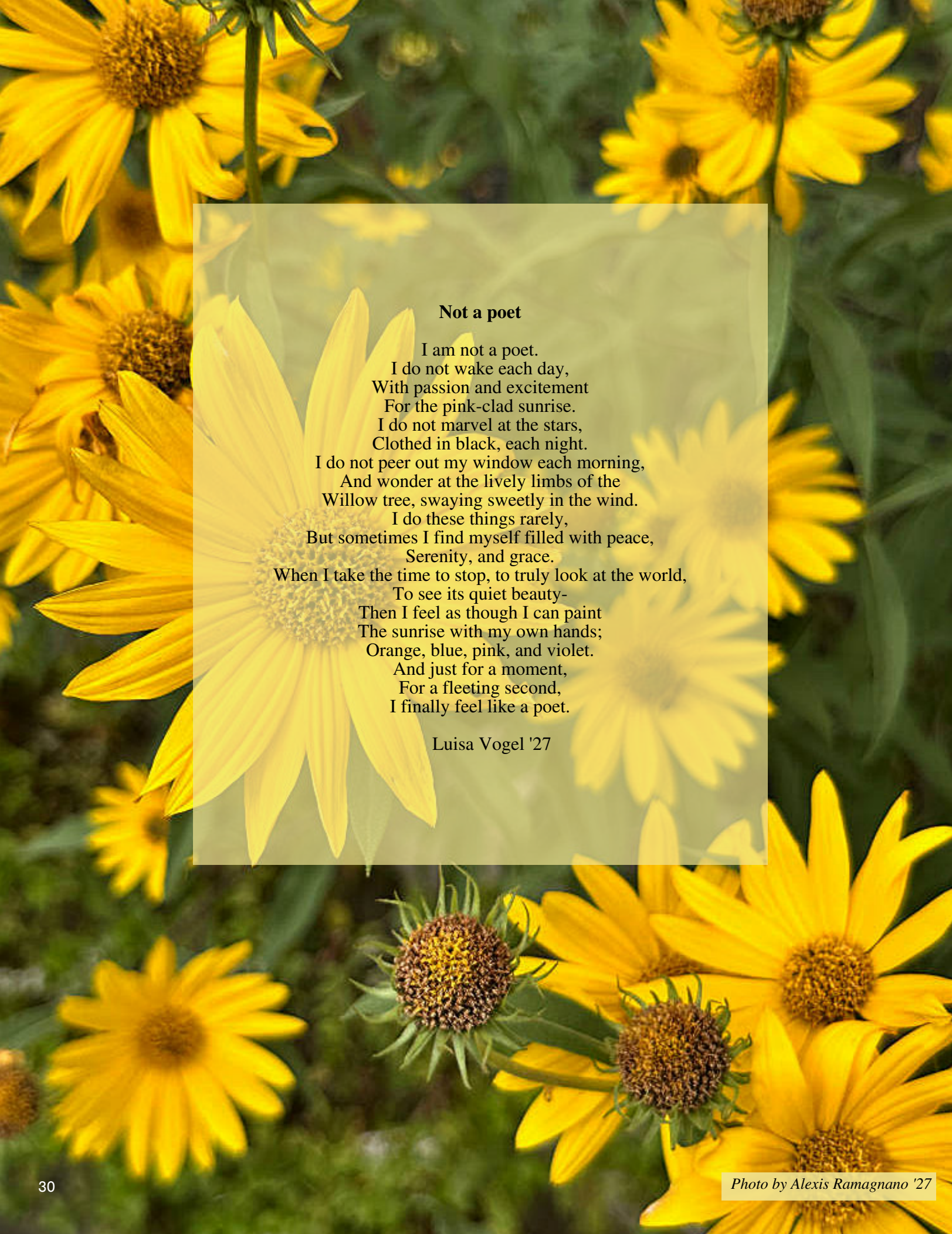
Fighting our battles until our faces turn **blue**,
rising like the phoenix from the ashes with a sparkling **yellow**,
bursting like a star with hues of vibrant **orange**.
To blossom like a gentle flower with petals of sweet **violet**,
showing the world that we are like a book that should not be judged, not before we've been **read**.
Growing like an unshakable oak tree with leaves of emerald **green**.

When we are beaten down, I remember the way I looked up as a little girl with eyes of innocent **green**,
with unclipped wings, my expectations reached the sky above me, oh so **blue**.
Not yet knowing what being a woman in this world could bring, I smiled with plump cheeks of **red**.
Although it feels distant, that glimmering hope that glittered so **yellow**
whispers a quiet strength like a flower in a dull meadow, never forgetting to show its sweet **violet**.
And I feel a warmth subside within me, like the summer sun's **orange**.

It reminds me to never quiet my voice, to roar like the tiger with her stripes of **orange**.
It tells me not to accept the sickening treatment that makes my stomach drop and my face go **green**.
I go back to that childlike glimmer, the sparkling **violet**,
making me stand through the storm with an unwavering fortitude, never knocked by the violent
winds that **blew**,
Girlhood is complexity and it is struggle, but it is also a joyful strength that echoes in a shade of **yellow**.
It's laughter, it's love, it's a passionate fuel that beats in my heart of deep **red**.

So to my future daughter, may you grow up in a world where your **orange** glow is never dimmed
and your heart never grows black and **blue**.
May we pave a world today so you can bloom in **green** tomorrow and your soul may never lose its
glittering **yellow**.
For my dear **Violet**, you have the strength to change the world—so let your voice be heard and your
stories be **read**.

Lily Yezdanian '27



Not a poet

I am not a poet.
I do not wake each day,
With passion and excitement
For the pink-clad sunrise.
I do not marvel at the stars,
Clothed in black, each night.
I do not peer out my window each morning,
And wonder at the lively limbs of the
Willow tree, swaying sweetly in the wind.
I do these things rarely,
But sometimes I find myself filled with peace,
Serenity, and grace.
When I take the time to stop, to truly look at the world,
To see its quiet beauty-
Then I feel as though I can paint
The sunrise with my own hands;
Orange, blue, pink, and violet.
And just for a moment,
For a fleeting second,
I finally feel like a poet.

Luisa Vogel '27

"Electronegativity (from the point of view of Fluorine)"

I will take your electrons,
a little more for me,
share the edges of mine,
and you will stay
you will call it stability.
And you will say it is better
than being alone,
and you would be right
if you were talking about me.
But it is only in my nature,
so please. Stay.

"Electronegativity (from the point of view of Carbon)"

I trusted you with my electrons
and my stability.
I suppose I have little right to ask for more,
I am full now.
But you hold them so very close to your chest,
and I get less of yours, less of mine,
less of ours.
Who are we?
Does it even matter?
I am with you,
and it is only in your nature.
Perhaps it is in mine
to be too weak to hold,
or to be alone.
I will stay.

Gabrielle Rivera '26



The Recipe of Independence

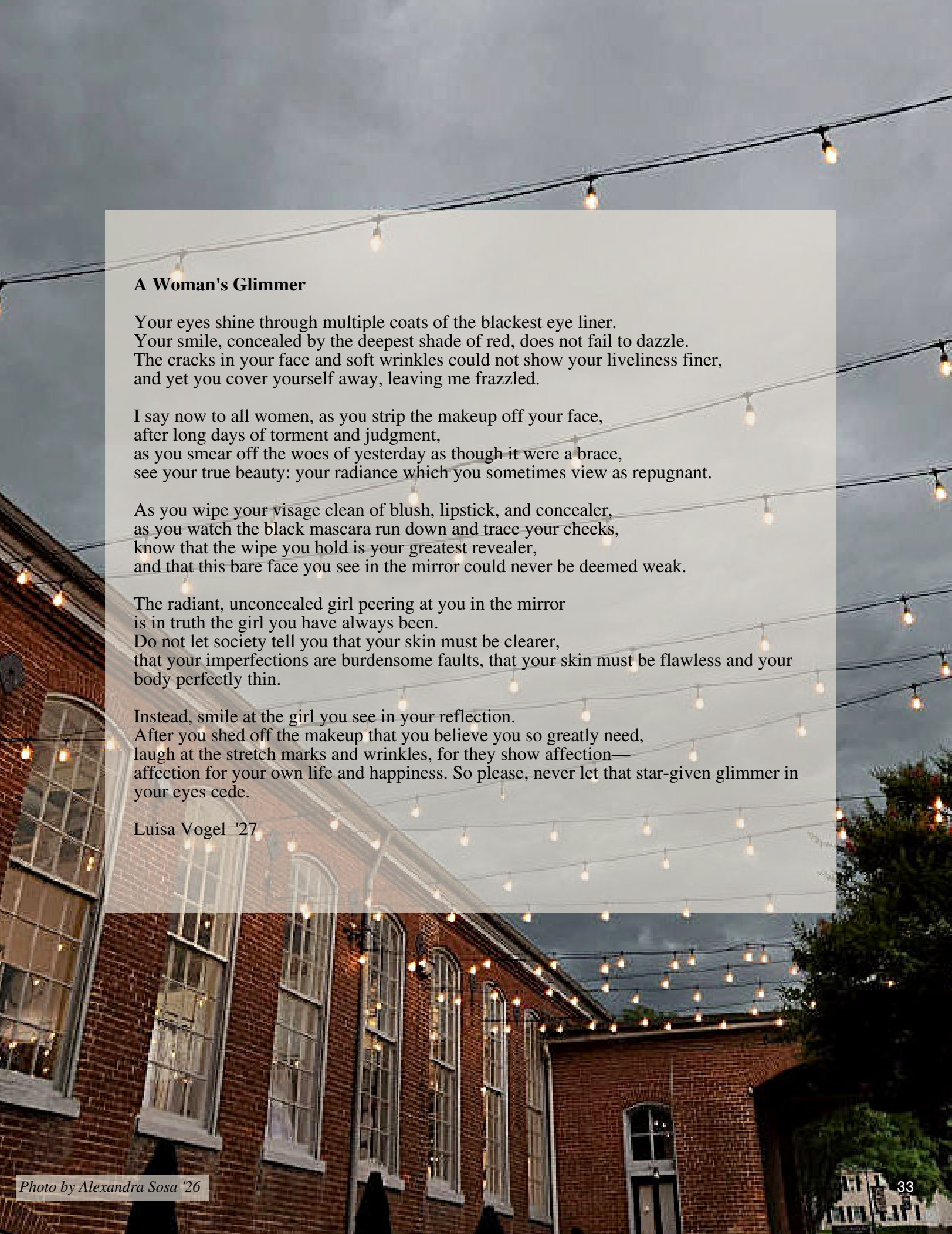
Little cake, hear me now,
I once mixed your ingredients with tender love and care.
But you are not so little now,
and to the other cakes, you do not compare.

Into your batter went the wet and dry ingredients:
a pinch of patience, a dash of trust, and a dusting of accountability;
an expectation of honesty, a feeling of freedom, and a life without worries.
Altogether, these blended into a smooth mixture of independence.

This process took time—
from mixing to baking, each step was precise.
Shaping you to always be prepared,
so that when faced with an obstacle, you would not be scared.

Into the real world you now go,
my perfectly complete creation.
There is always more room to grow,
but now, you are ready for any situation!

Lucie Schell '27



A Woman's Glimmer

Your eyes shine through multiple coats of the blackest eye liner.
Your smile, concealed by the deepest shade of red, does not fail to dazzle.
The cracks in your face and soft wrinkles could not show your liveliness finer,
and yet you cover yourself away, leaving me frazzled.

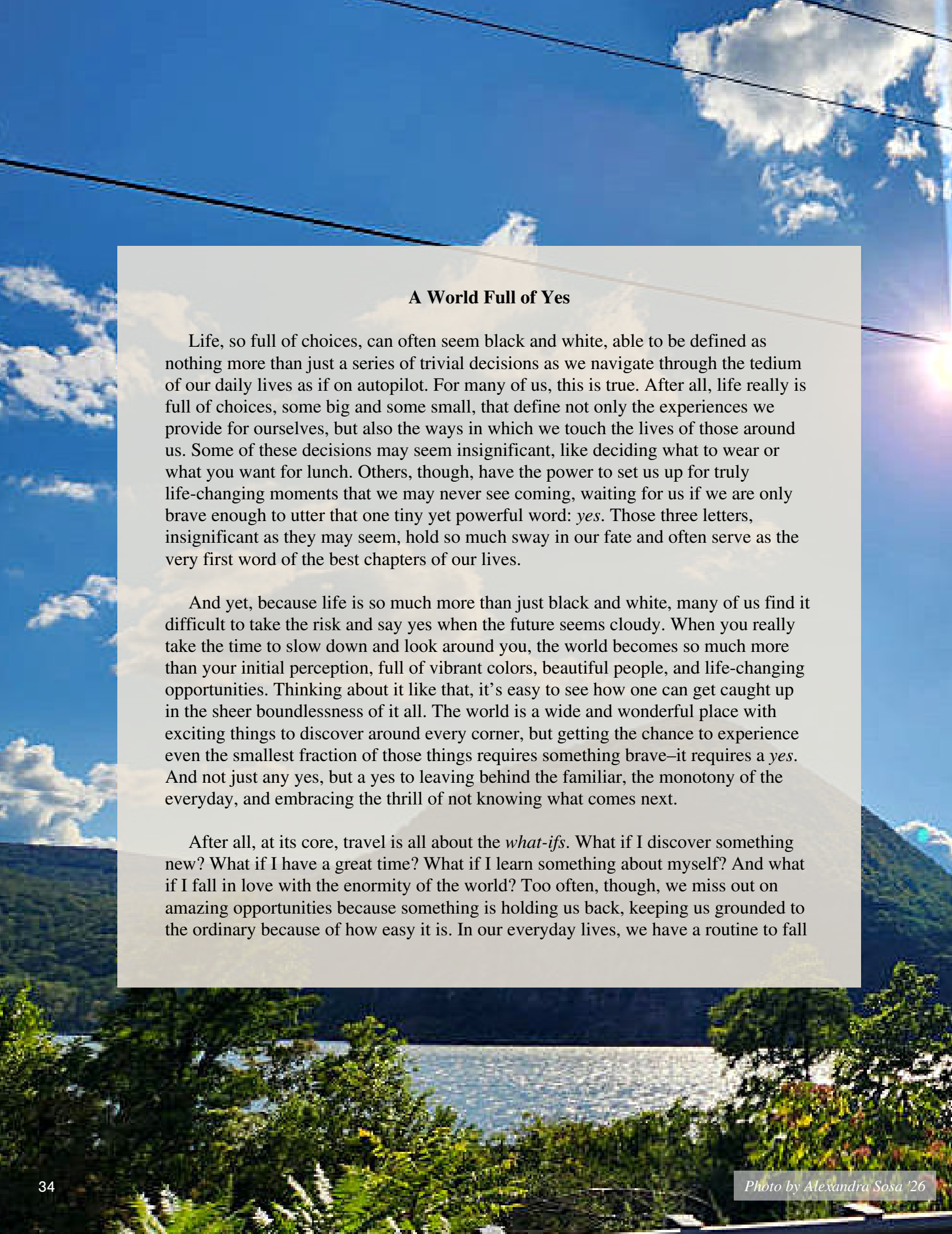
I say now to all women, as you strip the makeup off your face,
after long days of torment and judgment,
as you smear off the woes of yesterday as though it were a brace,
see your true beauty: your radiance which you sometimes view as repugnant.

As you wipe your visage clean of blush, lipstick, and concealer,
as you watch the black mascara run down and trace your cheeks,
know that the wipe you hold is your greatest revealer,
and that this bare face you see in the mirror could never be deemed weak.

The radiant, unconcealed girl peering at you in the mirror
is in truth the girl you have always been.
Do not let society tell you that your skin must be clearer,
that your imperfections are burdensome faults, that your skin must be flawless and your
body perfectly thin.

Instead, smile at the girl you see in your reflection.
After you shed off the makeup that you believe you so greatly need,
laugh at the stretch marks and wrinkles, for they show affection—
affection for your own life and happiness. So please, never let that star-given glimmer in
your eyes cede.

Luisa Vogel '27

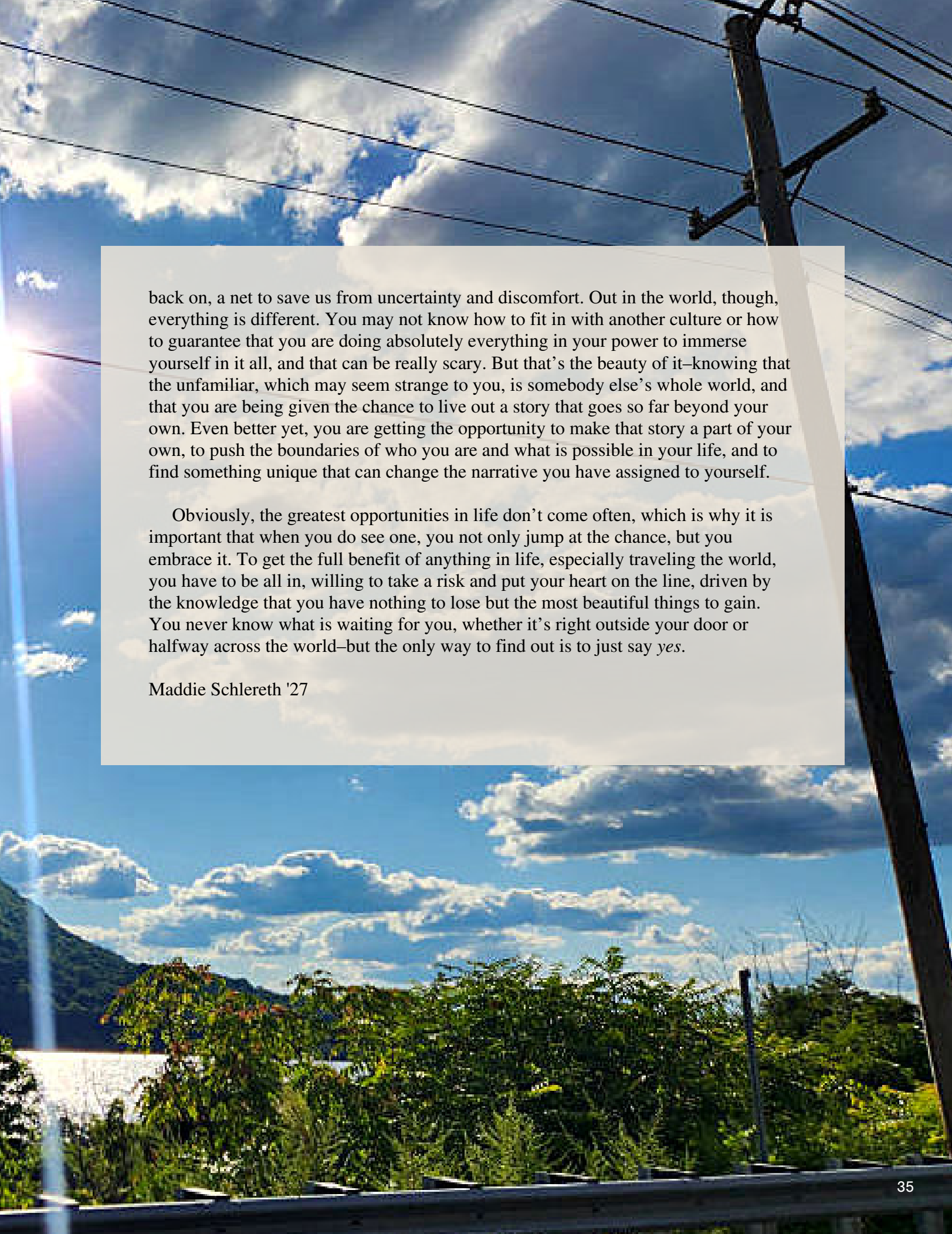


A World Full of Yes

Life, so full of choices, can often seem black and white, able to be defined as nothing more than just a series of trivial decisions as we navigate through the tedium of our daily lives as if on autopilot. For many of us, this is true. After all, life really is full of choices, some big and some small, that define not only the experiences we provide for ourselves, but also the ways in which we touch the lives of those around us. Some of these decisions may seem insignificant, like deciding what to wear or what you want for lunch. Others, though, have the power to set us up for truly life-changing moments that we may never see coming, waiting for us if we are only brave enough to utter that one tiny yet powerful word: *yes*. Those three letters, insignificant as they may seem, hold so much sway in our fate and often serve as the very first word of the best chapters of our lives.

And yet, because life is so much more than just black and white, many of us find it difficult to take the risk and say yes when the future seems cloudy. When you really take the time to slow down and look around you, the world becomes so much more than your initial perception, full of vibrant colors, beautiful people, and life-changing opportunities. Thinking about it like that, it's easy to see how one can get caught up in the sheer boundlessness of it all. The world is a wide and wonderful place with exciting things to discover around every corner, but getting the chance to experience even the smallest fraction of those things requires something brave—it requires a *yes*. And not just any yes, but a yes to leaving behind the familiar, the monotony of the everyday, and embracing the thrill of not knowing what comes next.

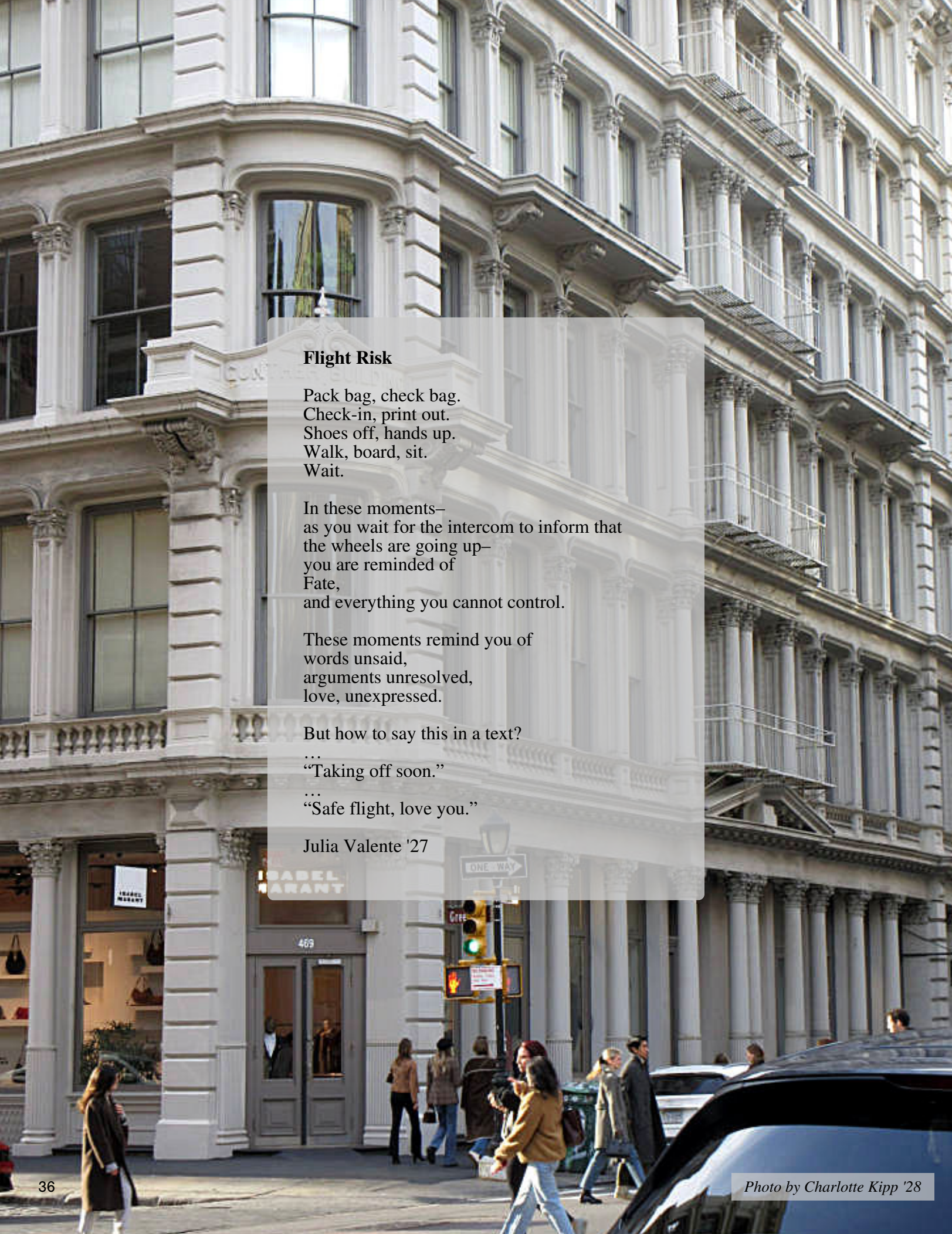
After all, at its core, travel is all about the *what-ifs*. What if I discover something new? What if I have a great time? What if I learn something about myself? And what if I fall in love with the enormity of the world? Too often, though, we miss out on amazing opportunities because something is holding us back, keeping us grounded to the ordinary because of how easy it is. In our everyday lives, we have a routine to fall



back on, a net to save us from uncertainty and discomfort. Out in the world, though, everything is different. You may not know how to fit in with another culture or how to guarantee that you are doing absolutely everything in your power to immerse yourself in it all, and that can be really scary. But that's the beauty of it—knowing that the unfamiliar, which may seem strange to you, is somebody else's whole world, and that you are being given the chance to live out a story that goes so far beyond your own. Even better yet, you are getting the opportunity to make that story a part of your own, to push the boundaries of who you are and what is possible in your life, and to find something unique that can change the narrative you have assigned to yourself.

Obviously, the greatest opportunities in life don't come often, which is why it is important that when you do see one, you not only jump at the chance, but you embrace it. To get the full benefit of anything in life, especially traveling the world, you have to be all in, willing to take a risk and put your heart on the line, driven by the knowledge that you have nothing to lose but the most beautiful things to gain. You never know what is waiting for you, whether it's right outside your door or halfway across the world—but the only way to find out is to just say *yes*.

Maddie Schlereth '27



Flight Risk

Pack bag, check bag.
Check-in, print out.
Shoes off, hands up.
Walk, board, sit.
Wait.

In these moments—
as you wait for the intercom to inform that
the wheels are going up—
you are reminded of
Fate,
and everything you cannot control.

These moments remind you of
words unsaid,
arguments unresolved,
love, unexpressed.

But how to say this in a text?

“Taking off soon.”

“Safe flight, love you.”

Julia Valente '27

To Swimming, With Love

I hate it.
It drains me.
It breaks me.
It pushes me to places
I never wanted to go.

So why is it still
so hard
to say goodbye?

I've seen my lowest moments
in the water:
the anger, the doubt,
the day my coach looked at me
and told me I needed help
beyond the pool.

There were mornings
I stared at the tiles
and felt something inside me
crack.

And still,
there is nothing like the *feeling*
of slipping beneath the surface,
the silence wrapping around me
like a world where everything
finally makes sense.

And there is nothing like the *rhythm*,
the breath,
the brief moments
where my mind stops fighting me
and just lets me be.

And there is nothing like the *people*
this sport has given me
the laughter on deck,
the shared ache,
the ones who understand
without asking.

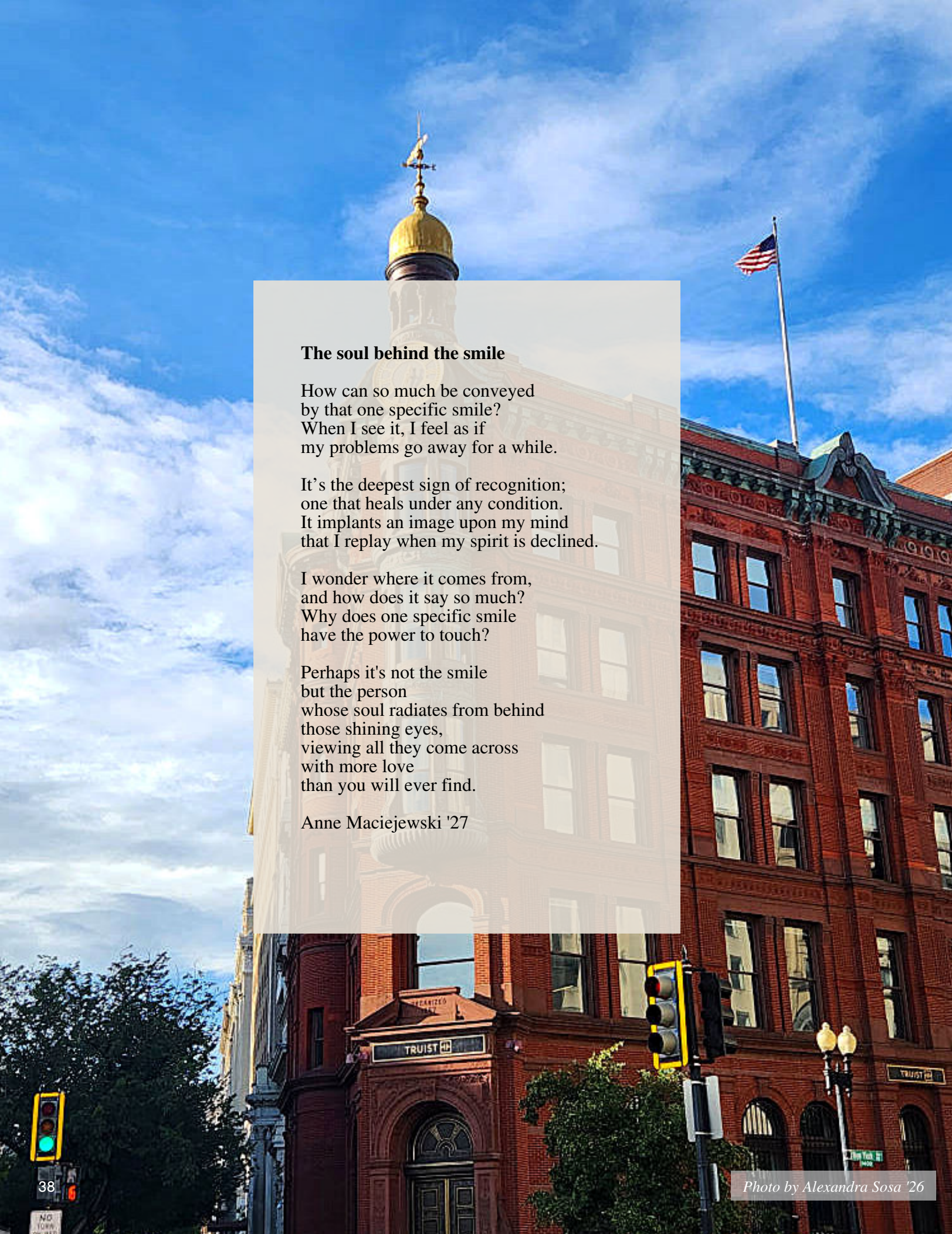
Swimming hurts me
and heals me
in the same breath.

So each time I try to leave,
I feel myself drawn back,
even when I swear
it's the last time.

But this time feels real now.
There's no more coming back.

So why, after everything,
is it still
so hard
to say goodbye?

Kathleen Brancato '26



The soul behind the smile

How can so much be conveyed
by that one specific smile?
When I see it, I feel as if
my problems go away for a while.

It's the deepest sign of recognition;
one that heals under any condition.
It implants an image upon my mind
that I replay when my spirit is declined.

I wonder where it comes from,
and how does it say so much?
Why does one specific smile
have the power to touch?

Perhaps it's not the smile
but the person
whose soul radiates from behind
those shining eyes,
viewing all they come across
with more love
than you will ever find.

Anne Maciejewski '27

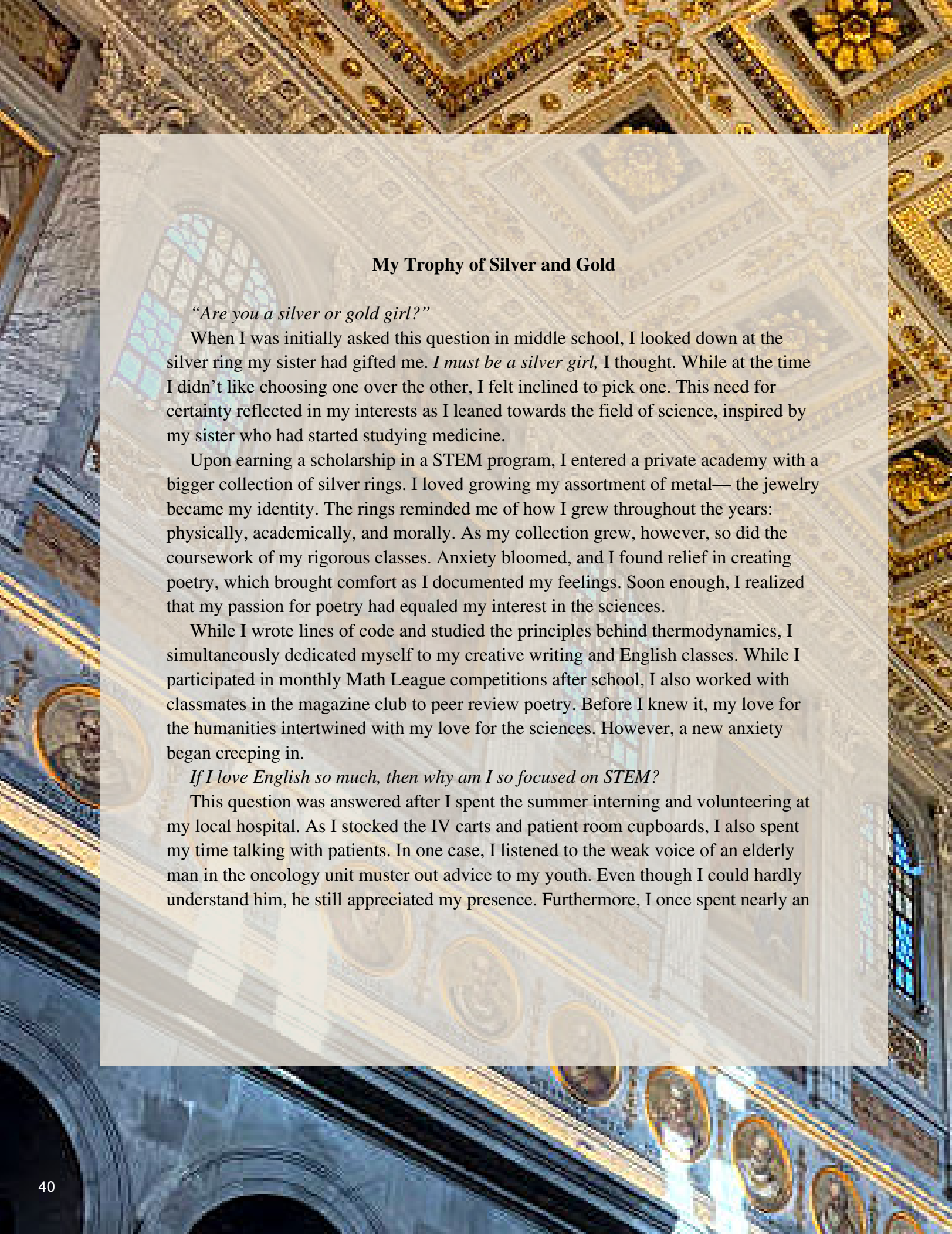
Crossroads

I find myself at a crossroads.
I have nowhere to turn
as the past road I came from slowly disappears.
My eyes dart back and forth between the roads.
Left or right.
Streaked hair or brown curls.
Brown eyes or blue eyes with hints of green.
A birthmark on the cheek or a small dimple with a smile.

I am at a crossroads.
I have nowhere to turn
as I slowly examine my options,
recognizing I could never have both.
My eyes dart back and forth between roads,
but they linger on the left.
The right road stretches forward
but the left road curves
regenerating, connecting
right back to the road I came from.

With deep breath,
I lift up my right foot.
With resolute strides,
I leave the
red streaks,
the brown eyes,
and the birthmark
behind.

Ava Evans-Muñoz '27

The background of the page is a photograph of a highly ornate ceiling, likely from a historical building. It features a complex geometric pattern of gold leaf, with blue and white frescoes interspersed. The perspective is looking up, creating a sense of height and grandeur.

My Trophy of Silver and Gold

“Are you a silver or gold girl?”

When I was initially asked this question in middle school, I looked down at the silver ring my sister had gifted me. *I must be a silver girl*, I thought. While at the time I didn’t like choosing one over the other, I felt inclined to pick one. This need for certainty reflected in my interests as I leaned towards the field of science, inspired by my sister who had started studying medicine.

Upon earning a scholarship in a STEM program, I entered a private academy with a bigger collection of silver rings. I loved growing my assortment of metal—the jewelry became my identity. The rings reminded me of how I grew throughout the years: physically, academically, and morally. As my collection grew, however, so did the coursework of my rigorous classes. Anxiety bloomed, and I found relief in creating poetry, which brought comfort as I documented my feelings. Soon enough, I realized that my passion for poetry had equaled my interest in the sciences.

While I wrote lines of code and studied the principles behind thermodynamics, I simultaneously dedicated myself to my creative writing and English classes. While I participated in monthly Math League competitions after school, I also worked with classmates in the magazine club to peer review poetry. Before I knew it, my love for the humanities intertwined with my love for the sciences. However, a new anxiety began creeping in.

If I love English so much, then why am I so focused on STEM?

This question was answered after I spent the summer interning and volunteering at my local hospital. As I stocked the IV carts and patient room cupboards, I also spent my time talking with patients. In one case, I listened to the weak voice of an elderly man in the oncology unit muster out advice to my youth. Even though I could hardly understand him, he still appreciated my presence. Furthermore, I once spent nearly an

The background of the page is a photograph of a highly ornate ceiling, likely from a historical building. It features intricate gold leaf patterns, including scrolls, floral motifs, and geometric designs. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture and color of the gold.

hour keeping a man company in the emergency room. Similar in age to me and living in the surrounding area, we could easily discuss our shared interests. To these patients, I know that the diagnoses and medical treatments provided by their doctors were important. However, I realized that connecting with the patients and learning who they were as humans was equally important as it provided better care for those suffering.

The significance of my experience was further solidified as I began studying narrative medicine in school, a course that interlaces science and the humanities. It is impossible to work at a hospital and provide adequate care for a patient if all one sees is a list of symptoms instead of a human face. We learn that by studying art and poetry, people learn to read *people*, and not just rely on science. The humanities emphasize observation, understanding, and justice—core values which foster human connection. And now, one of my favorite works of literature, *Frankenstein*, resonates more powerfully. His lack of humanity while solely using science to pursue the secrets of life birthed chaos both in his life and in the world around him. On account of Frankenstein's failures, I plan to value science while equally prioritizing the humanities, embracing a balance with my passions.

I didn't realize it at the time, but over this summer my collection of jewelry began to diversify. Silver embellishments twist around my fingers. Gold adorns my arms and even hangs from my ears. The mixture of cool and warm metals decorates my neck like a trophy. This harmony serves as a reminder that although my future is STEM-based, it will be centered in the humanities for me to connect with others. I hope that as I go out into the world I am able to apply the art of empathy I've learned from the humanities in today's world of science.

Victoria Zalewski '26



Beauty

The road rolls behind me, my hands gripping the wheel.
My mind slips away like a rug being pulled from under my feet,
drifting up into the air.

And I wonder, *am I actually real?*

Or is this all just an illusion?

I am just a speck of dust floating in the universe,
separated from the never-ending undulation of time.

But when I roll the window down,
I feel the wind in my hair and the sun on my face.
The music from the radio streams across my skin.

And I feel alive.

I haven't decided yet if it's real,
or if it's so beautiful that I don't care either way.

Clara Byrnes '26



Uneven

I have one too many
of way too many things.
One too many plates
and soapy dishes in the sink.

One too many pillows
laid neatly on my bed.
An extra cup of coffee
and a toasted slice of bread.

But I didn't always have
so much extra stuff,
and it seems I've grown accustomed to
having just enough.

A candle dancing on a cake
for each shadow twirling on the wall.
Two chairs for one table,
two hearts in one home.

Yes, it seems I've learned
to live my life in pairs.
But can I really blame myself,
when you'd promised to be there?

Giada Laiolo '28

More Than Just a Game

I remember walking with my sister and her friend. “Why would he even transfer from Marist to Nebraska just for basketball?” When I tried to object and defend an unknown ambitious athlete, she merely stated, “It’s not like he’s going to the NBA or anything. He should focus on academics; it matters for his future.”

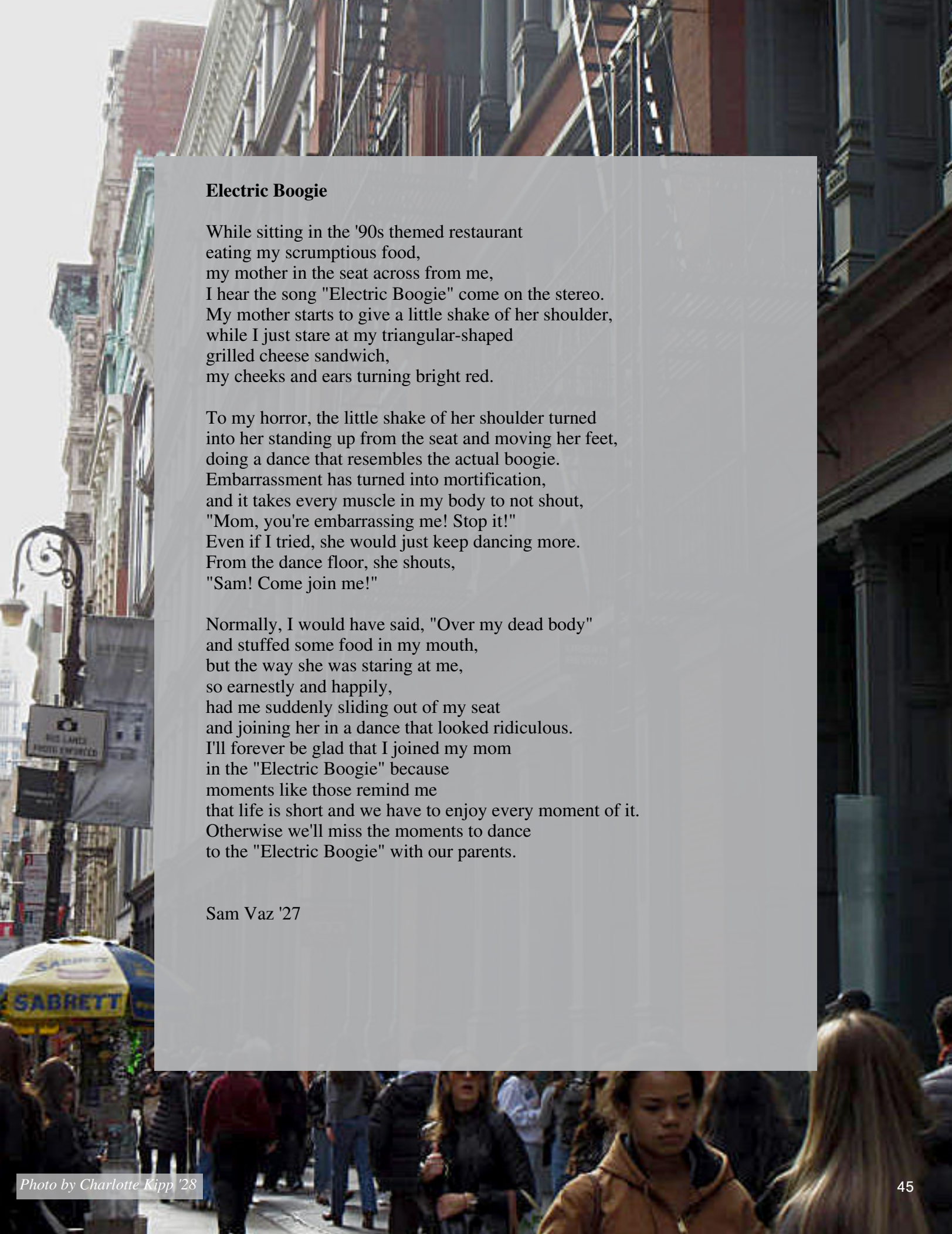
Maybe getting good grades will get him a good job, but what comes after that? She's probably right. He won't make it to the NBA because only 1% of Division I basketball players do. But then again, he made it into the 1% of high school players to make the Division I level, so maybe it is not such an absurd idea after all.

However, society will tell that man to not race after the impossible goal of being a professional. What if all of us athletes were to think this way? There would be no Usain Bolt to fly down the straightaway faster than someone could count to ten. There would be no Cristiano Ronaldo to fly through the air on a bicycle kick. There would be no LeBron James to score 40,000 points at 40 years old. There would be no Serena Williams to win 23 grand slam titles. There would be no Michael Phelps to surpass every Olympic athlete, with 28 medals. But then again, what are the chances we will be the next Michael Jordan of our sports? There is no guarantee of that whatsoever.

In fact, the odds are so against us, so why do we keep trying? Because for us athletes, we are a completely different breed of humans. The sprinters feel the pierce of the gunshot echoing through their minds as they barrel down the track. The soccer players feel the relief of the ball crashing into the back of the goal. The basketball players feel the rush of adrenaline when the ball meets the inside of the net. The tennis players feel the power to strike the ball with all their force to their enemy's territory. The swimmers feel the chase with no one behind them. To the outside what we do is just a hobby, but to us it is a freedom. We get to run away from our problems temporarily and put the physical fitness demands on our bodies that release the mental pain. Through sports we become a team, and we fight so hard for each other that we forget our personal safety. Our "reckless abandon," as they call it.

We are athletes, faced with awful home lives, mental disorders, anxiety, depression, addictions, shame of who we were and who we are now, pressure, inequality, poverty, violence, physical pain, lost friends, loneliness, and broken hearts. But for the precious minutes in that game or race, it all melts away. If I could tell anything to that young collegiate athlete it would be this: *Try*. It is more than just a game. It is a way of life, and no school teaches you that.

Gabby Vaughn '29



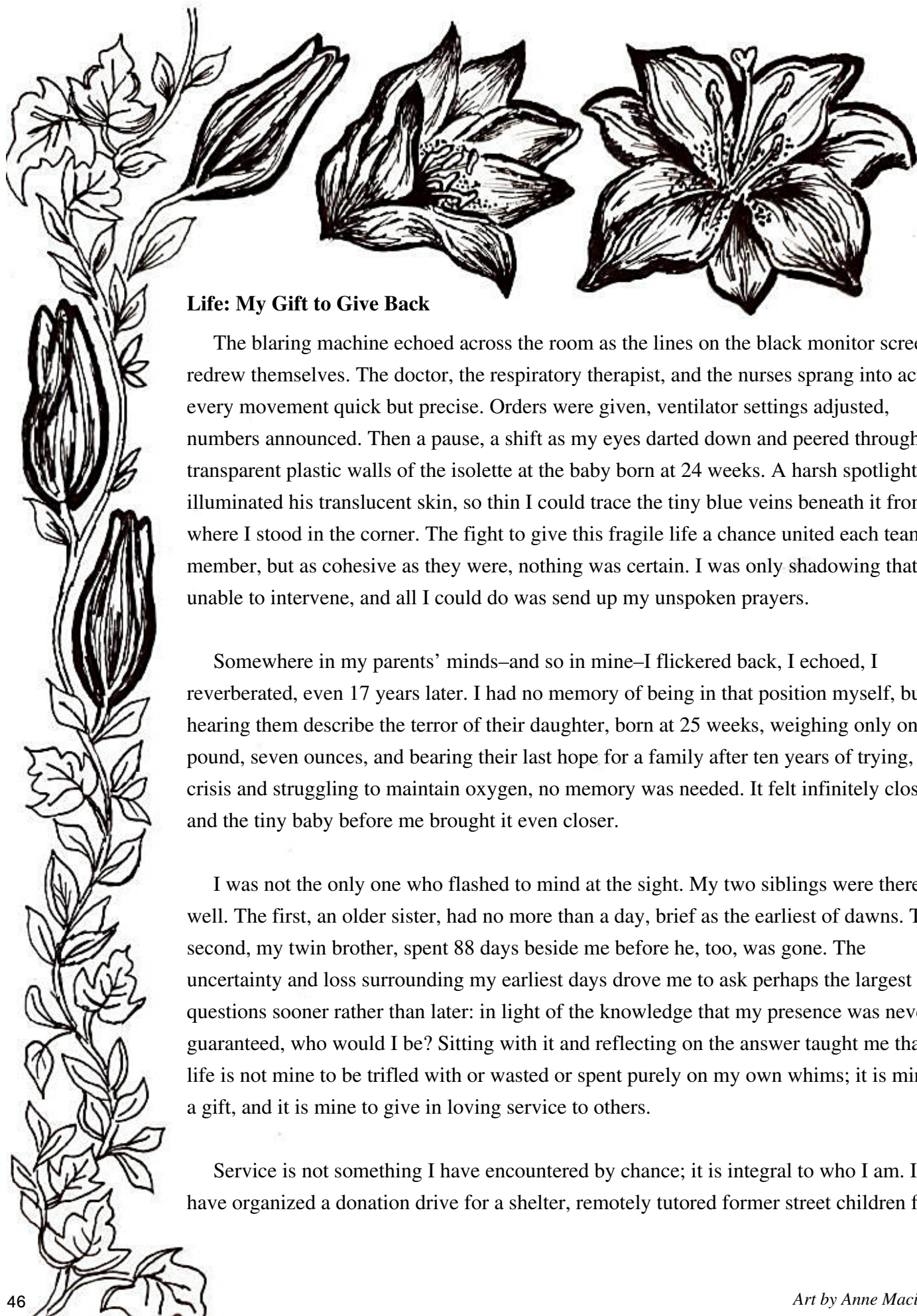
Electric Boogie

While sitting in the '90s themed restaurant
eating my scrumptious food,
my mother in the seat across from me,
I hear the song "Electric Boogie" come on the stereo.
My mother starts to give a little shake of her shoulder,
while I just stare at my triangular-shaped
grilled cheese sandwich,
my cheeks and ears turning bright red.

To my horror, the little shake of her shoulder turned
into her standing up from the seat and moving her feet,
doing a dance that resembles the actual boogie.
Embarrassment has turned into mortification,
and it takes every muscle in my body to not shout,
"Mom, you're embarrassing me! Stop it!"
Even if I tried, she would just keep dancing more.
From the dance floor, she shouts,
"Sam! Come join me!"

Normally, I would have said, "Over my dead body"
and stuffed some food in my mouth,
but the way she was staring at me,
so earnestly and happily,
had me suddenly sliding out of my seat
and joining her in a dance that looked ridiculous.
I'll forever be glad that I joined my mom
in the "Electric Boogie" because
moments like those remind me
that life is short and we have to enjoy every moment of it.
Otherwise we'll miss the moments to dance
to the "Electric Boogie" with our parents.

Sam Vaz '27



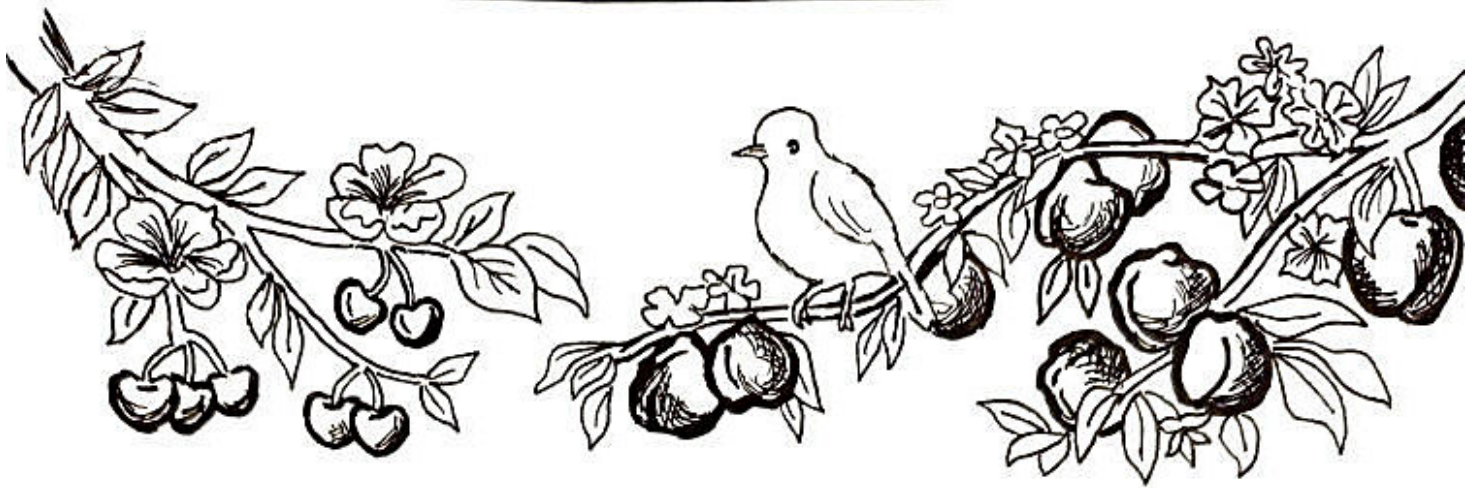
Life: My Gift to Give Back

The blaring machine echoed across the room as the lines on the black monitor screen redrew themselves. The doctor, the respiratory therapist, and the nurses sprang into action, every movement quick but precise. Orders were given, ventilator settings adjusted, numbers announced. Then a pause, a shift as my eyes darted down and peered through the transparent plastic walls of the isolette at the baby born at 24 weeks. A harsh spotlight illuminated his translucent skin, so thin I could trace the tiny blue veins beneath it from where I stood in the corner. The fight to give this fragile life a chance united each team member, but as cohesive as they were, nothing was certain. I was only shadowing that day, unable to intervene, and all I could do was send up my unspoken prayers.

Somewhere in my parents' minds—and so in mine—I flickered back, I echoed, I reverberated, even 17 years later. I had no memory of being in that position myself, but hearing them describe the terror of their daughter, born at 25 weeks, weighing only one pound, seven ounces, and bearing their last hope for a family after ten years of trying, in crisis and struggling to maintain oxygen, no memory was needed. It felt infinitely close, and the tiny baby before me brought it even closer.

I was not the only one who flashed to mind at the sight. My two siblings were there as well. The first, an older sister, had no more than a day, brief as the earliest of dawns. The second, my twin brother, spent 88 days beside me before he, too, was gone. The uncertainty and loss surrounding my earliest days drove me to ask perhaps the largest of questions sooner rather than later: in light of the knowledge that my presence was never guaranteed, who would I be? Sitting with it and reflecting on the answer taught me that my life is not mine to be trifled with or wasted or spent purely on my own whims; it is mine as a gift, and it is mine to give in loving service to others.

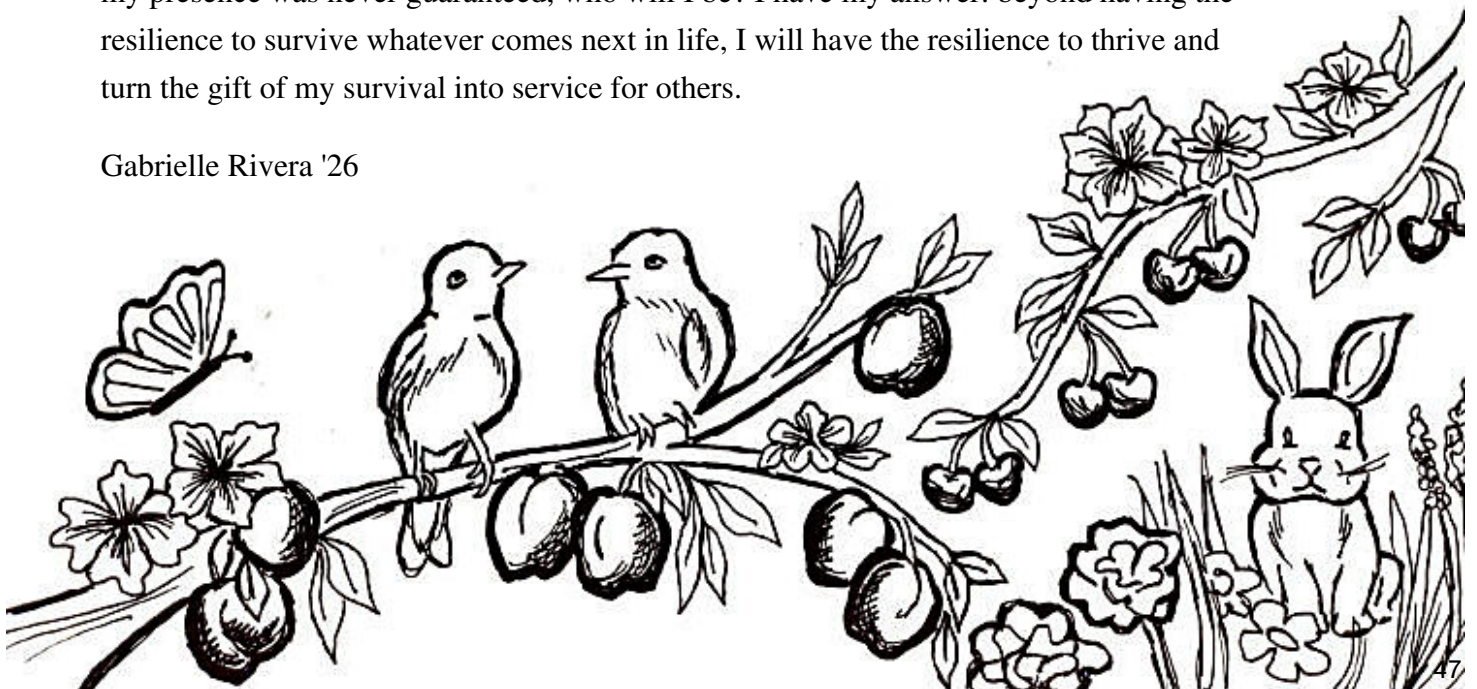
Service is not something I have encountered by chance; it is integral to who I am. I have organized a donation drive for a shelter, remotely tutored former street children from

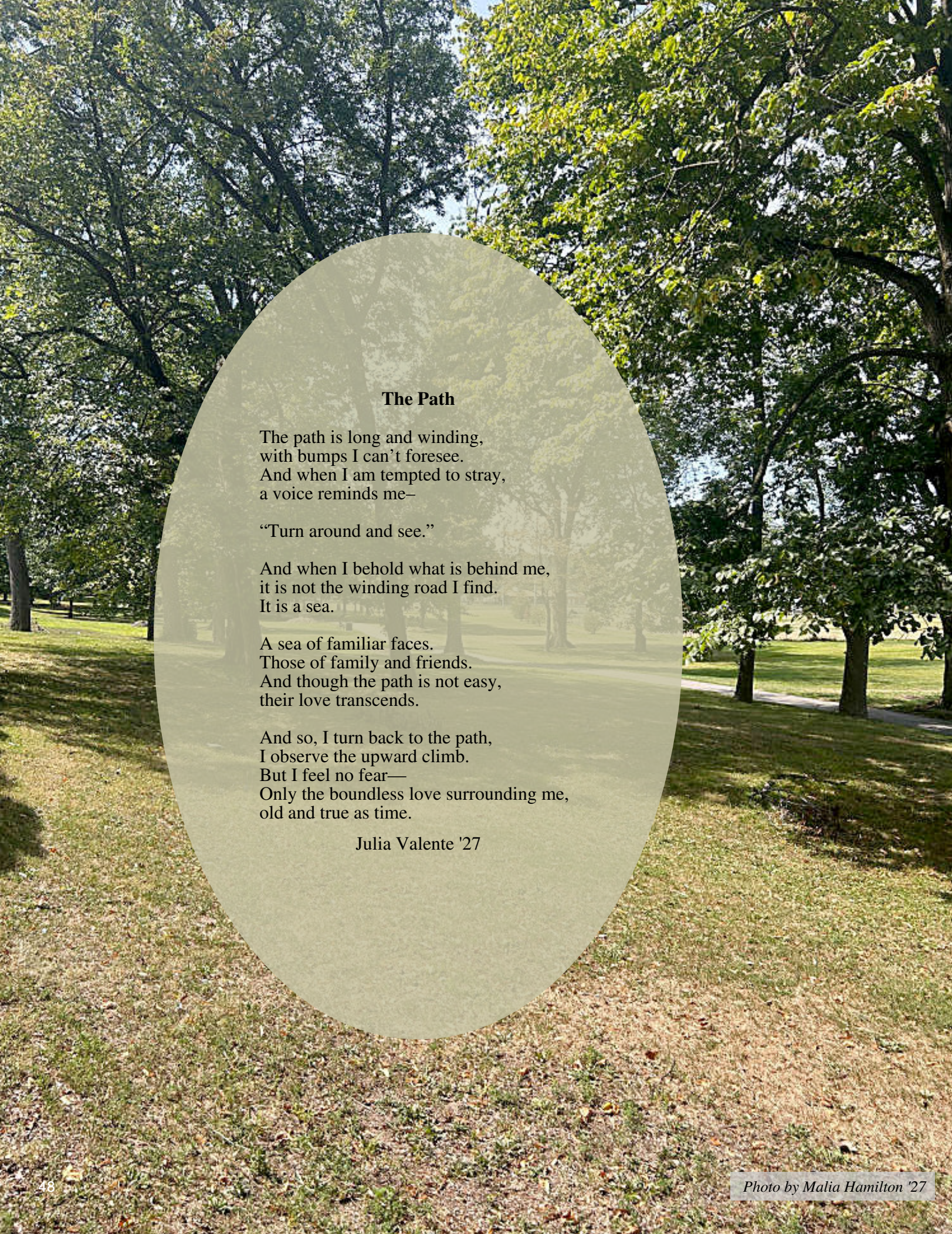


the Philippines in English, and assembled care packages for nursing home residents. Each summer in high school, I have volunteered hundreds of hours as a camp counselor, pushing wheelchairs and sharing smiles, laughter, and conversation with disabled people. Each project and encounter is, in its own way, a continuation of the compassion once extended to me. When I add the final items to a care kit before sealing it; when a camper proclaims “I trust you, Gabby” and hands me a pink gel pen drawing of a birthday cake; when I’m greeted with excited hugs at a Down Syndrome support group by a girl who recognizes me from camp, eyes wide as she presses my face to her chest; or when I hear a poem written for me by my student in Manila, pausing nervously between lines but beaming in the end, I feel a deep joy knowing my life has intersected with others and touched theirs in a meaningful way.

I still think of the brevity of my siblings’ lives. However short their time in my story, their influence on me has been invaluable. They have revealed that my life is part of a bigger story—one of sacrifice, loss, and unyielding love—and inspired me to live out the determination and compassion so critical in my beginning. In light of the knowledge that my presence was never guaranteed, who will I be? I have my answer: beyond having the resilience to survive whatever comes next in life, I will have the resilience to thrive and turn the gift of my survival into service for others.

Gabrielle Rivera '26





The Path

The path is long and winding,
with bumps I can't foresee.
And when I am tempted to stray,
a voice reminds me—

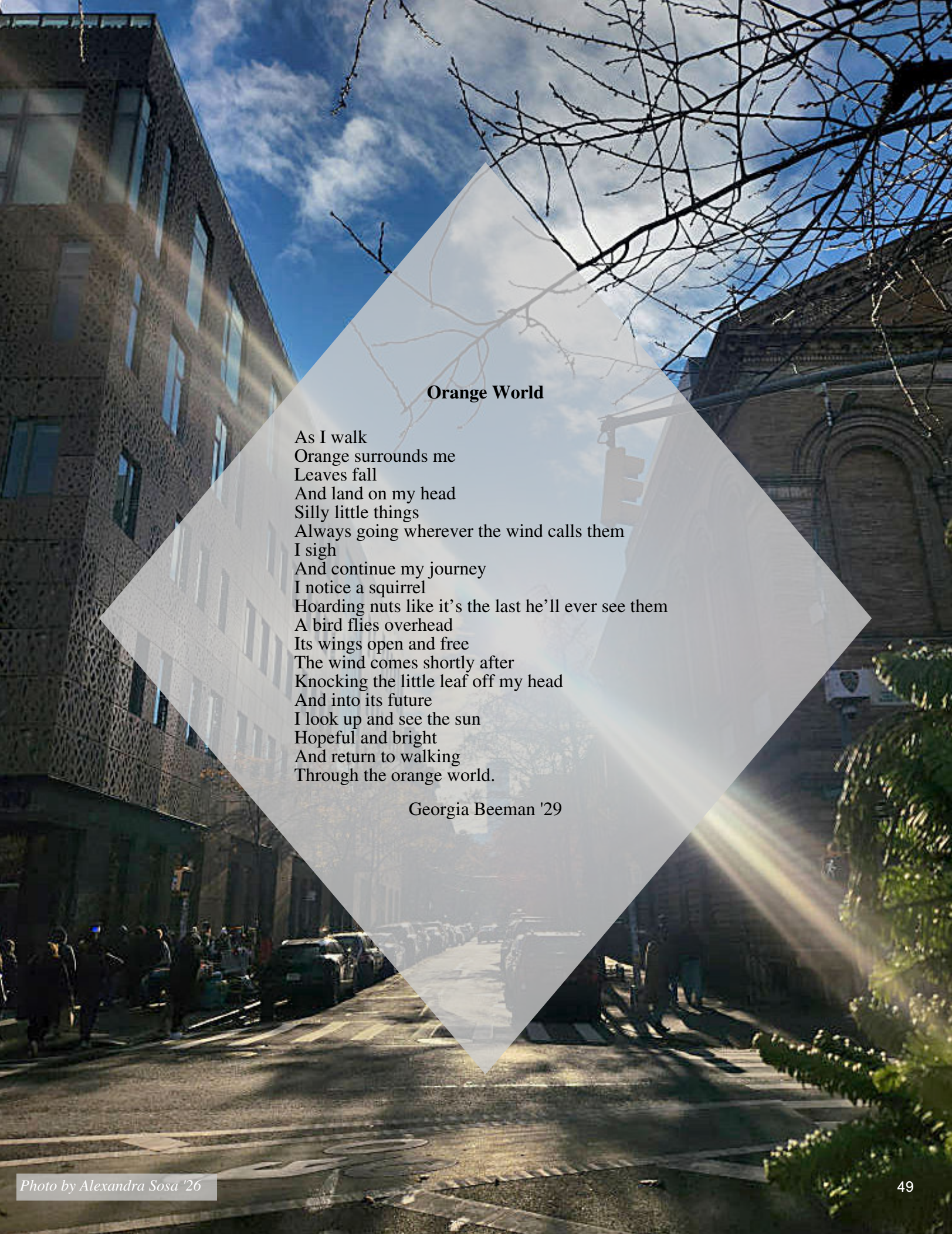
“Turn around and see.”

And when I behold what is behind me,
it is not the winding road I find.
It is a sea.

A sea of familiar faces.
Those of family and friends.
And though the path is not easy,
their love transcends.

And so, I turn back to the path,
I observe the upward climb.
But I feel no fear—
Only the boundless love surrounding me,
old and true as time.

Julia Valente '27



Orange World

As I walk
Orange surrounds me
Leaves fall
And land on my head
Silly little things
Always going wherever the wind calls them
I sigh
And continue my journey
I notice a squirrel
Hoarding nuts like it's the last he'll ever see them
A bird flies overhead
Its wings open and free
The wind comes shortly after
Knocking the little leaf off my head
And into its future
I look up and see the sun
Hopeful and bright
And return to walking
Through the orange world.

Georgia Beeman '29

Tired

I'm so tired all the time.

It's a never-ending shadow that drapes over me, tracing my every move, coating my every breath.

It's a hand resting on my shoulder like a comforting friend,
but its fingers are always too tight.

It's a fight with myself, with my better judgment.

Knowing I need to sleep but refusing to prioritize it.

Because why should I rest when there is so much more to be done?

I'm falling behind—

I'm too slow—

Too lazy—

I'm not good enough to sleep.

It doesn't matter how many mornings I wake up wishing I had gone to bed earlier
because I never will.

Not when I'm so close to greatness.

Not when I can still fall so far.

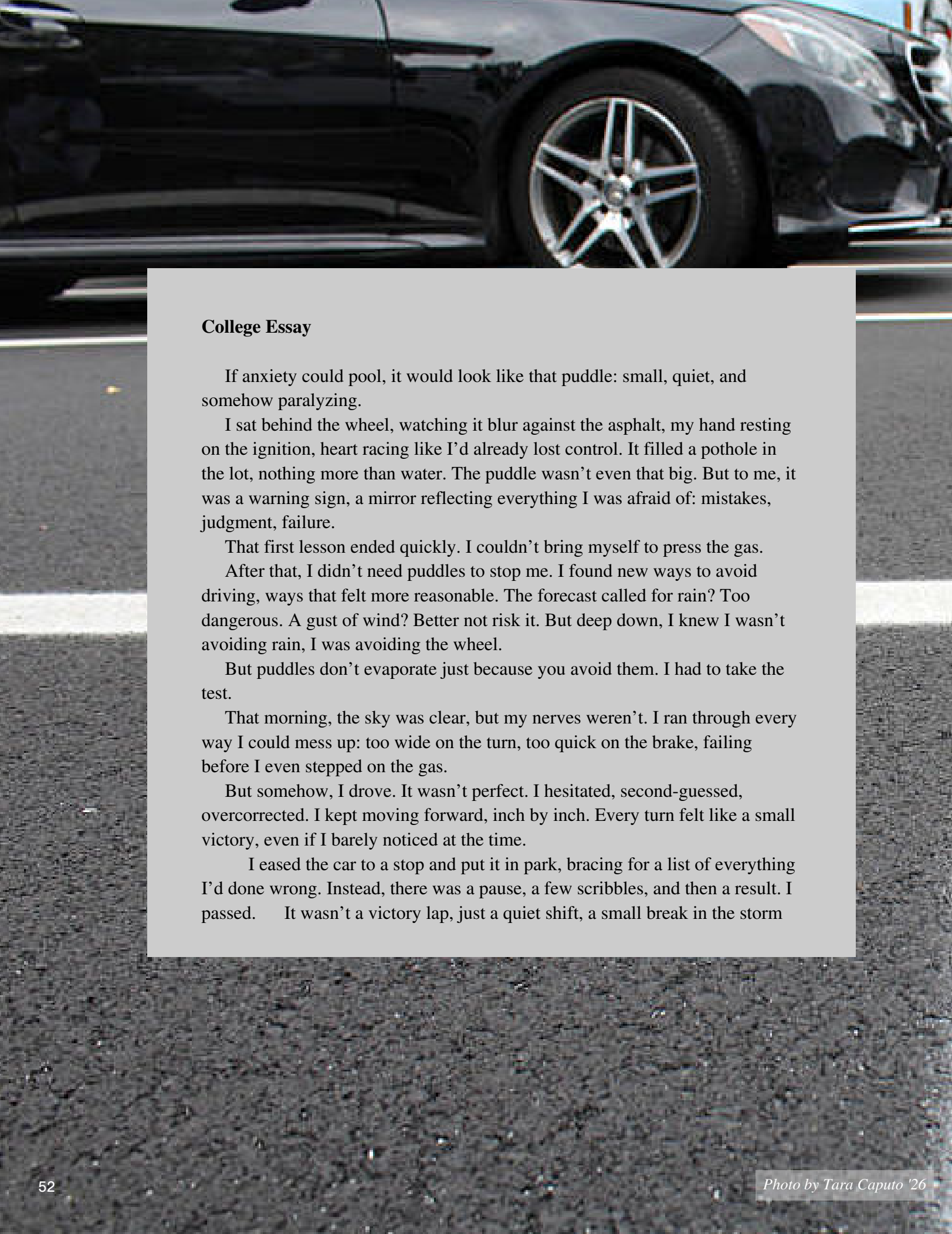
Clara Byrnes '26



Noticing

How can they tell me I don't pay attention
when I see how they twiddle their fingers when they're anxious,
bite their lips when they're concentrated,
and squint their eyes only when they're really happy?
I see how they can hyper-focus on something
and then leave reality the next moment.
I notice their slightly slanted, neat handwriting
and their straight, confident stance when they walk.
I hear them speak with a slight slur
as if they have so much they want to say in one sentence.
I watch their forehead break into tiny lines when they're frustrated,
and their eyebrows scrunch together when they're truly angry,
just like how they're looking at me now.
How can they tell me
I don't pay attention,
when paying attention is all I seem to do?

Anonymous



College Essay

If anxiety could pool, it would look like that puddle: small, quiet, and somehow paralyzing.

I sat behind the wheel, watching it blur against the asphalt, my hand resting on the ignition, heart racing like I'd already lost control. It filled a pothole in the lot, nothing more than water. The puddle wasn't even that big. But to me, it was a warning sign, a mirror reflecting everything I was afraid of: mistakes, judgment, failure.

That first lesson ended quickly. I couldn't bring myself to press the gas.

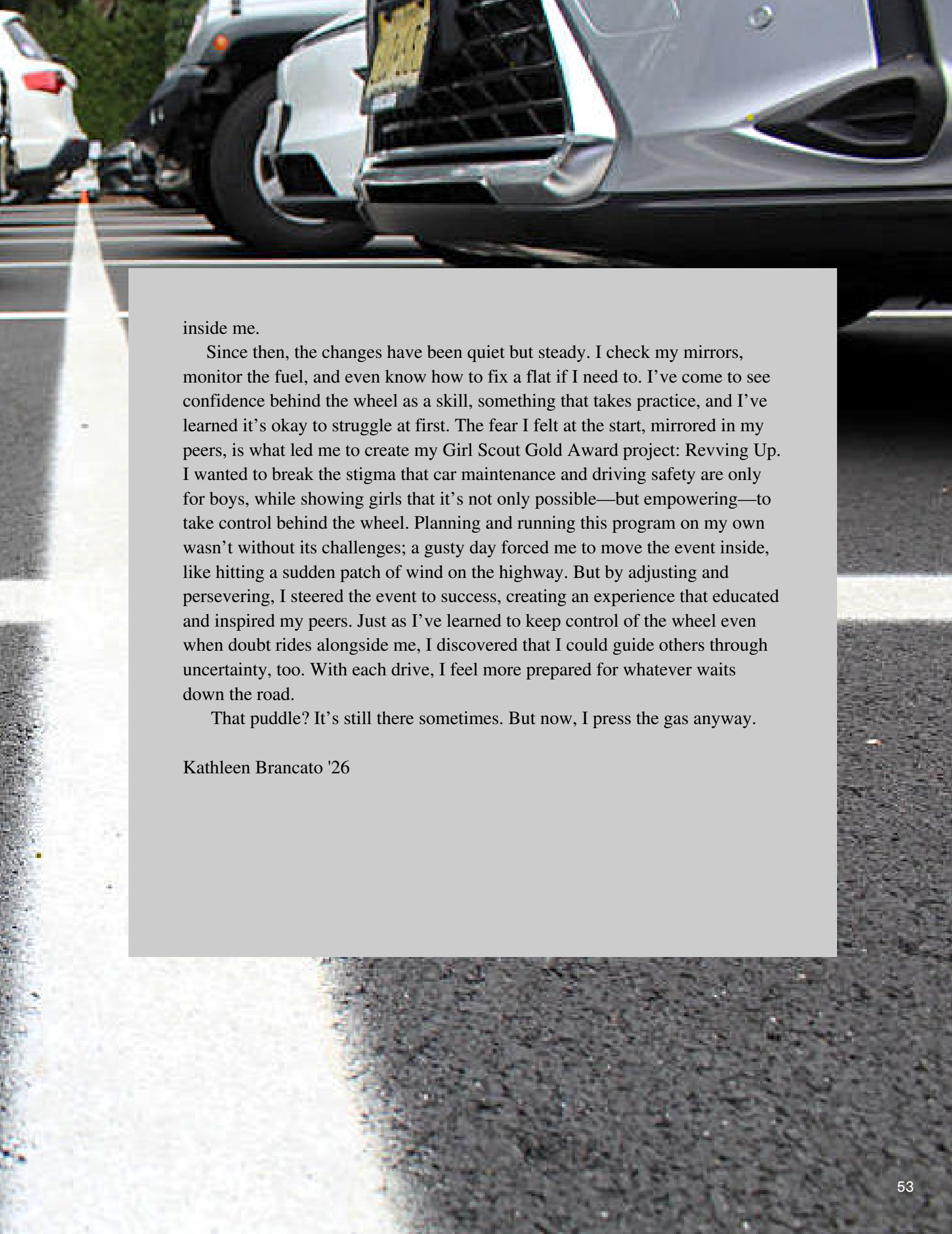
After that, I didn't need puddles to stop me. I found new ways to avoid driving, ways that felt more reasonable. The forecast called for rain? Too dangerous. A gust of wind? Better not risk it. But deep down, I knew I wasn't avoiding rain, I was avoiding the wheel.

But puddles don't evaporate just because you avoid them. I had to take the test.

That morning, the sky was clear, but my nerves weren't. I ran through every way I could mess up: too wide on the turn, too quick on the brake, failing before I even stepped on the gas.

But somehow, I drove. It wasn't perfect. I hesitated, second-guessed, overcorrected. I kept moving forward, inch by inch. Every turn felt like a small victory, even if I barely noticed at the time.

I eased the car to a stop and put it in park, bracing for a list of everything I'd done wrong. Instead, there was a pause, a few scribbles, and then a result. I passed. It wasn't a victory lap, just a quiet shift, a small break in the storm



inside me.

Since then, the changes have been quiet but steady. I check my mirrors, monitor the fuel, and even know how to fix a flat if I need to. I've come to see confidence behind the wheel as a skill, something that takes practice, and I've learned it's okay to struggle at first. The fear I felt at the start, mirrored in my peers, is what led me to create my Girl Scout Gold Award project: Revving Up. I wanted to break the stigma that car maintenance and driving safety are only for boys, while showing girls that it's not only possible—but empowering—to take control behind the wheel. Planning and running this program on my own wasn't without its challenges; a gusty day forced me to move the event inside, like hitting a sudden patch of wind on the highway. But by adjusting and persevering, I steered the event to success, creating an experience that educated and inspired my peers. Just as I've learned to keep control of the wheel even when doubt rides alongside me, I discovered that I could guide others through uncertainty, too. With each drive, I feel more prepared for whatever waits down the road.

That puddle? It's still there sometimes. But now, I press the gas anyway.

Kathleen Brancato '26

Behind the Glass

I sit behind the glass, waiting for her to come
wake me from my paralysis.
I always wait. I have nothing else to do.
I don't mind, I like seeing her. She's so pretty.
She never realizes it, but she's so pretty.
My heart leaps as she sits down in front of me, groggily rubbing
away the sleep from her eyes.
My stiff body animates for the first time in hours, life rushing back
through my bones.
Mornings are always my favorite.
She sighs, the puff of breath glazing the glass in front of me as she drags her hands across
her face.
I watch as always, wishing I could reach through the glass, wishing she could see me.
But she can't.
I don't mind, truly. I like seeing her. She's so pretty. I wish she would realize it.
I watch her as she frowns at the glass. She brushes her hair and ties it back in a tight
ponytail. She picks at her skin before putting on makeup. Dabbing on more and more,
painting over every fine line and spot of red. Glossing over each imperfection.
I wish I could tell that she didn't need it. I wish I could tell her she was beautiful.
But I can't.
I watch and move with her, imagining I am the one sitting behind the glass rather than
within it. Oh, what freedom would feel like.
I watch her push her chair away from where I sit, a dull pain rebounding throughout my
chest. She always leaves too soon.
I wish I could call out to her, I wish she could see me. She
doesn't know I'm here. All I can do is watch.
She sighs again, glancing at the glass once more before striding
away. I watch, straining my eyes until she is gone.
I wish I could see her smile. She has such
a beautiful smile. I wish I could tell her
she has a beautiful smile, is a beautiful
person.
But all I can do is watch from behind the
mirror.

Clara Byrnes '26



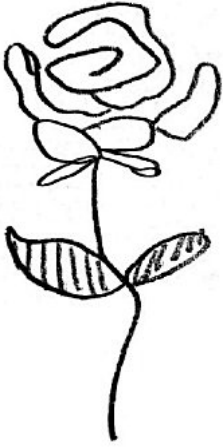
Red Rose

My sweet-smelling rose,
which my arms yearn to hold.
Whose beauty stays indescribable by any prose.

My feelings are incomparable to any of old
when it comes to the rich red hue.
In my eyes, my flower is more valuable than gold.

The sharpness of its thorns is not new,
but my heart strengthens me against its stings.
This rose is worth my labors; the red to my blue.

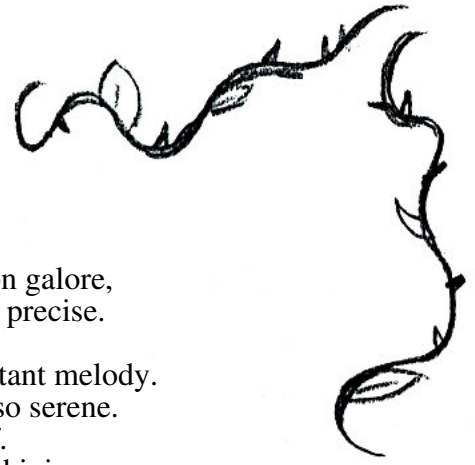
Ava Evans-Muñoz '27



Bouquet of Roses

He bought me roses.

A beautiful bouquet with shades of blush and crimson galore,
A collection of delicate flowers, each so perfect and precise.
Each velvety petal whispers words of love,
With an ever present sweet aroma, that lingers like a distant melody.
The strong green stems grow into something gentle, so serene.
A romantic gesture that many girls dream of.
It's something straight out of a fairytale, with a knight in shining armor,
Or maybe a cheesy rom-com with a witty and charming lead.
They sit there in my room, gently rested in a vase.
Like a trophy, each of the ten flowers celebrating a month I've spent in his arms.
Yet all I can do is sit here and silently affirm to myself -
"You're happy. This is the dream."

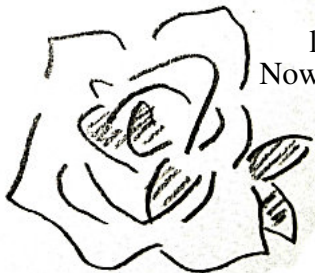


He bought me roses.

Their petals are soft, their scent is fading, each flower so fragile and small.
I run my fingers across them as I feel the way they bruise at the smallest introduction of pressure.
I tell myself it's not the rose's weakness that should be changed,
But the roughness of my own hand.
The water in the vase grows clouded and dark,
The leaves start to shrivel, growing ever so small.
The petals are wilted and withered.
These flowers are slowly dying, I can see it but I ignore all the signs.
From a distance if you squint, you can see all the beauty they still behold within them.

He bought me roses.

After I stayed up at night, questioning everything about myself,
my worth diluted into nothingness.
A shell of a person, devoid of my own humanity.
Defined not by who I am, but by the love I cling to.
My friends watch as I become slouched and concave inward,
like a rose - once so vibrant and full of life, tinted a spirited rouge.
Now my dreary petals have lost their radiant red, sprouting a dull maroon.
I want to speak out, to salvage this glorious garden.
But every word is left unheard, every cry left ignored.



He bought me roses.

Because he made me a rose.
A symbol of innocent beauty,
Sitting there still, like a prize for him to admire.
Seen but never truly heard.
As I sit there solemnly, distracting myself, lying to myself,
Forgetting the hole in my heart shaped like him.
Within me grows a burning strength, to take these wilted roses and throw them away.



He bought me roses.

As I hold them for the last time, cherishing the radiance that once was, and maybe still is,
I can't help but notice the thorns.
Each vile bristle pricking my finger reminds me that to love is not to hurt.
Yet still, despite the spines that graze my delicate palm,
I know that two things could be true at once:
Although these flowers are faded and weak,
there is still beauty within these elegant petals.
A beauty that reminds me that I too have my thorns, that neither of us are to blame.
It reminds me that there are memories I will forever cherish,
Laughter never lost or forgotten,
Truths that cannot be unsaid.
Love that I will hold onto, clasped tightly to my heart.
It gives me the closure of knowing that like these gentle flowers, the sun will rise again and we
will both grow,
Even if that means growing apart.
And maybe even growing back together again.
It's a beauty that takes me back to that fairytale feeling, as I push everything down and pray
that somehow, some day, things will change again,
And that our stories were meant to be intertwined, that our future is meant to blossom together.
That it will all work out, in the long run-forever.
And I can reflect with a wistful smile, telling my future children,

"He bought me roses."

But for now, I realize I am withered and wilted, and for my sake and his, I can no longer stay.
So I gather the strength to take these sweet flowers, and finally throw them away.
Now we can grow apart, both of us finally thriving alone.
No hatred, no revenge, just a sad but needed feeling.
As I stare at the empty vase, I ponder what to do with my own clean slate,
My petals begin to stand straight.
I've gathered a radiant glow.
Despite missing him, I feel the illuminated blush in my color recollect.
Finally myself for the first time in months.
I've always preferred lilies anyway.

Lily Yezdanian '27



well enough

thumbs of lead, i try to write
weighed down by something invisible
head full of cotton, if cotton pounded
my eyelids, like pieces of velcro
i can almost hear them every time they open
blinks are slow, thoughts are slower
i need to stop, i really do
but i just can't
it needs to be done, perfect and finished.

well enough is never enough,
never to be left alone
“well enough” is an unsupervised child
it gets away from you, goes off to do whatever it wants
leaves you behind, to scramble after—
it's never enough, not to me
so i push and i push.

and i open my eyes
even as my vision crosses
and my head snaps forward and back
i push and i pull and i force it to work
though really, efforts became futile hours ago.

well, enough. it is done and i am done
it will be nothing but a blip anyway,
it's over, i'm free!

but the weight is still upon me.

Alexandra Sosa '26

Childhood Is Over

Childhood is over,
and I'm not quite sure how to feel about the fact
that there will be no more long, sunny days
filled with care free laughter, sunshine smiles,
and scrapes along my muddy knees.
It is now all but a far-off memory.

Childhood is over,
and suddenly I'm older.
I am no longer that little rosy-cheeked girl,
stubborn and resilient.
Gone are the long summer evenings
filled with swimming and the lingering scent of sweet oranges.
Gone are the early mornings
with golden sunrays beaming gently through the window
and the sound of banana pancakes simmering on the stove.

Childhood is over,
and I can no longer tiptoe across the cold wooden floors
during the harrowing, chilly night,
over to my sister's room, to reach her warm embrace.
We can no longer giggle together each night,
sharing silly secrets and witty remarks.
The lack of her presence from the other side of the wall
is all too noticeable; it is an ache I've never known before.

Childhood is over,
and I can no longer find joy in the simple things of life:
at least not as easily as before.
Catching fireflies and braiding dandelion crowns;
chasing burning embers dancing high above a roaring fire;
burrowing away into a make-shift tent
shrouded in floral-patterned sheets and blankets.
I long for the days in which these things were enough,
enough to fulfill and enrich me with enthusiastic zeal.

Childhood is over,
and I'm not quite sure how to feel about the fact.
It is as though I blinked once,
and in a flash everything has changed.
Responsibilities and organization tactics, deadlines and tests,
a harrowing feeling of constant exhaustion
and anxiety that I'm not doing enough,
that I, myself, am not enough.
The perpetual *tick, tick, tick* of time passing
sounds in the corners of my mind and fervently consumes me,
leaving me with an aching sensation in my chest,
and I feel as though I'm choking on air.

Childhood is over,
and while I look back at the melodic memories of my past,
I ask myself why I ever wished for it to end.

Luisa Vogel '27

IN THE POOL

Illuminated by the pale moon from above, I study the shimmering ripples of the water. In the dark depths of the pool, I see shadows of fear, doubt, and calamity. This serene, picturesque scene in front of me entices me to test the waters, yet my gut grounds me.

Illuminated by the pale moon from above, I notice I am not the only one enjoying this picture of beauty. You approach the pool, eyes darting from the moon to the pool and back again. Within a heartbeat, you dash from the side and leap into the water.

Illuminated by the pale moon from above, I watch as you submerge under, and the eruption of water soaks my clothes in a damp state of shock. You swim, and the water's foam drips off my skin. When I slip into the pool, I study the ripples of the water and think how the moonlight has never shone this bright before.

Illuminated by the pale moon from above, I study how you glide through the water— how natural it comes to you. It doesn't come naturally for me, but sometimes, I think I catch the same rhythm as you. These waves come subtle and fleeting and surging and messy and thundering and erratic and rippling and billowing and blanketing. Yet, as time goes on, I find we swim through the waves with a similar dance.

Illuminated by the pale moon from above, I let my wet hair cover my eyes. Even like this, I think I could still follow the water's shifting motions. Upon moving my hair and uncovering my sight, I find that you are no longer in the pool. For a moment— I flail. The water catches me, and I recognize the waves. I know this dance.

Illuminated by the pale moon from above, I think I learned how to swim from you.

Victoria Zalewski '26

