

THE PAPER CRANE JOURNAL



# nightmare

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3 | SPRING 2023



# FROM THE EDITORS

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Greetings Reader,

This issue—the *third* edition of the *second* volume, also known as our *seventh* issue of all time—is a creative mammoth, featuring 16 works of prose and poetry and just as much artwork from the talented illustrators on our staff. *Nightmare* represents over three months of hard work and divine intervention. We hope, of course, that is self-evident.

What's so nightmarish about a selection of words? Famed horror writer Stephen King wrote that literature is a kind of telepathy, an almost-magical transfer of life between the author and the reader. Like a nightmare, written art is half-real, half-dreamed. It's a feverish, loopy picture of the unconscious.

These writers have demonstrated for us the terror of the every day, the threats that lie beneath the mundane epidermis of our lives. They have confronted these terrors, wrested from the grasp of the unknown, and laid them bare in their work. This is no small task. We present to you the seventh issue of the *Paper Crane*: a nightmare in which you choose to immerse yourself.

Thanks in abundance,

The Editors

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# A DREAM OF A DEAR FRIEND

Ryan Wong

*For Sol*

In this dream, I held a pink sweater covered in dirt. You said something and we were standing by a sink, the tap-rush of water too loud for either of us to hear. We looked down and watched as the sweater turned white, the dirt, a serpent circling the drain. Then we were back. In some folded corner of the earth, you put on the sweater, sopping wet, and we sat together in silence, our knees touching. I woke to the patter of rain against my window, the world a fog in which I sat, thinking of you for hours.

And I thought that was just it: the secret in the apple's core. How we have changed and how we are changing still, our colors, a prism of things devoured gently into light. How we live in water and how it lives in us. How, at the world's end, oceans will meet and know each other only through the sound of their waves, fitting into one another like pieces of an old puzzle. We are not oceans, and we are not light, but in this quiet world of words unheard, I promise to know you still.

# FOR M

Celina Naheed  
CW: substance abuse

Who traced almond eyes with crumbling liner, after kissing her girlfriend with cherry vape breath, and lips covered in red velvet lip balm. The lovers were tucked away, sucking face, in graffitied-bathroom stalls, so they had a backdrop when caught

intertwined, and tangled together. All M ever really wanted was to be held tight, breast to breast with her favorite druggie, but she only let herself fall after whispering *inshallah*, so her mom would never find out. Just the other day M laughed until she cried,

babbling the words “20 days sober.” Her mascara melted into the hollows of her eyes rotting pretty cinnamon skin. If her mom was there she would’ve licked her thumbs and wiped her pretty face clean of American high school filth.

M was expelled once for pretending vodka was water, that stick-poke hearts made you a real girl, and razors were red crayons to play connect the dots. M could never pull her head down from fluffy, vapor clouds and doodles of crying eyes with fake lashes, but I have to write about her,

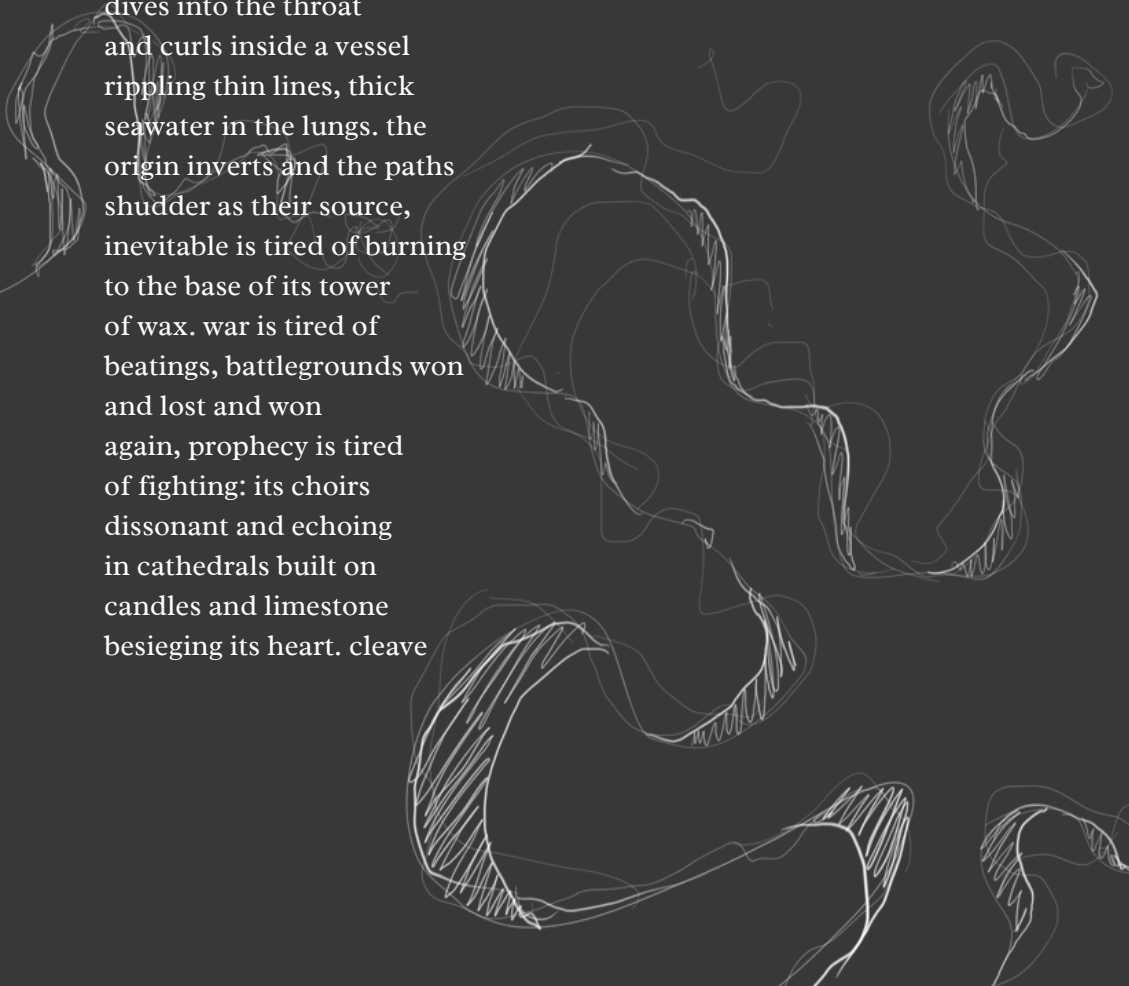
because she’s just 15 and I’m not sure she’s going to make it to 16, and how much can you remember about a girl who couldn’t even last two decades? She’s just another muse we scribble stanzas About pretending she’s the face of our generation, a cherry

with a rotten pit, because no one thinks we’re going to last to be anything sweet.

# GENERATION / REVOLUTION

Janice Lin  
CW: body horror

trails interlock:  
unfolding, a fractal cries  
out endless in reverse. a shout  
dives into the throat  
and curls inside a vessel  
rippling thin lines, thick  
seawater in the lungs. the  
origin inverts and the paths  
shudder as their source,  
inevitable is tired of burning  
to the base of its tower  
of wax. war is tired of  
beatings, battlegrounds won  
and lost and won  
again, prophecy is tired  
of fighting: its choirs  
dissonant and echoing  
in cathedrals built on  
candles and limestone  
besieging its heart. cleave





quarter notes into waxy  
skin and bury eighths  
between marble lungs. sharp  
and bleeding, a fistful  
of thorns is wrapped in  
gauze and pressed into a  
ribcage fashioned with  
roots. breath is accessory  
because rigidity lacks  
foresight. growth is  
neglected, withering  
at the spine. ragged points  
still stinging. wounded  
columns crack, wounded  
altars quake. wounded  
tears a cry from its chest;  
a tremulous chord  
reverberates,  
enshrining its  
collapse.



# CRIMSON RIVER

Naeem Hossain  
CW: reference to violence

*After Shamsur Rahman*

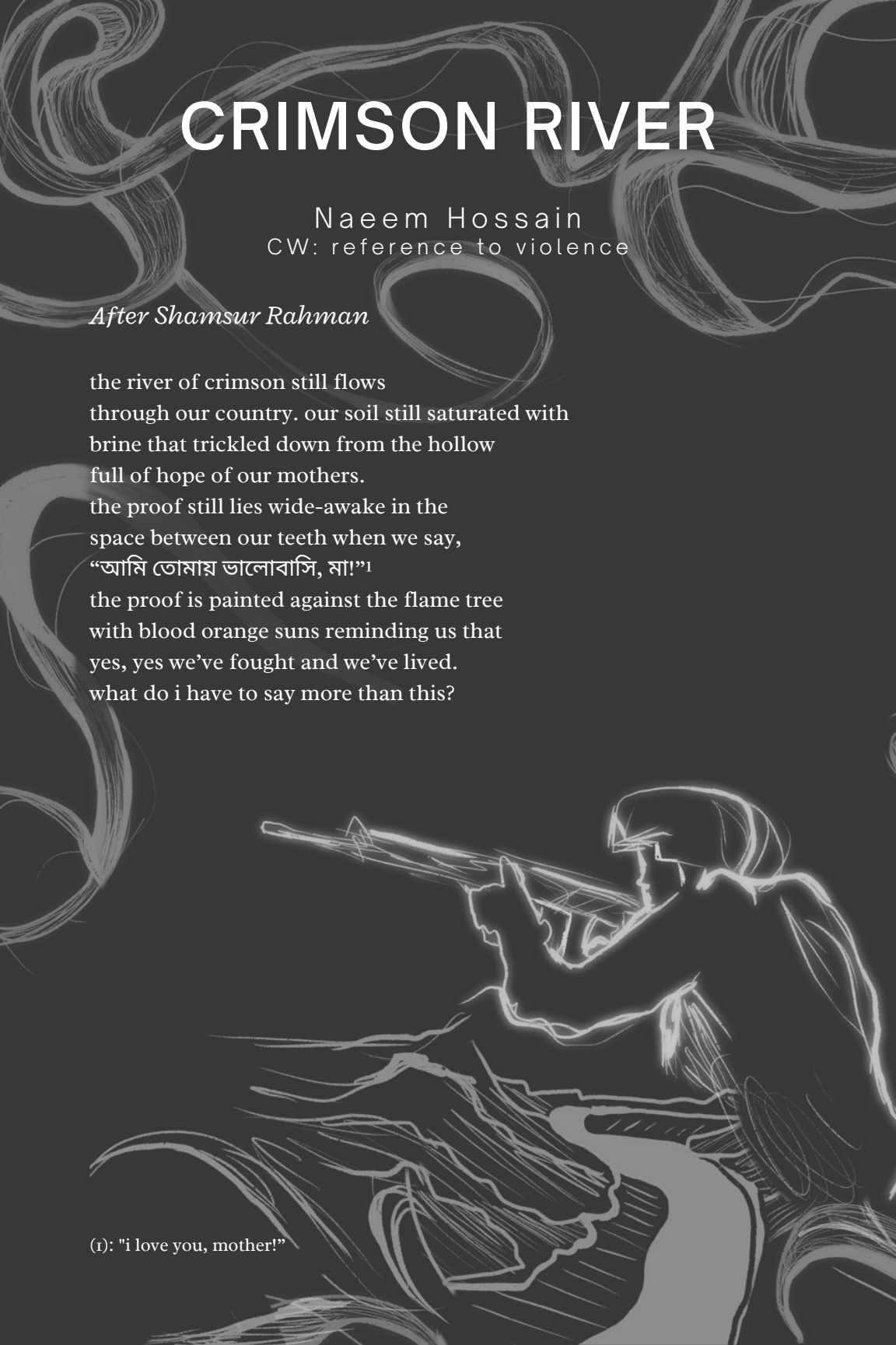
the river of crimson still flows  
through our country. our soil still saturated with  
brine that trickled down from the hollow  
full of hope of our mothers.

the proof still lies wide-awake in the  
space between our teeth when we say,

“আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি, মা!”<sup>(1)</sup>

the proof is painted against the flame tree  
with blood orange suns reminding us that  
yes, yes we've fought and we've lived.  
what do i have to say more than this?

(1): "i love you, mother!"



# MY MOTHER

Saheed Sunday

*After Haneefah Bello*

is a dyed terracotta is slicing up her  
favorite thumb to teach me a million  
ways to die right lies about  
being a cherub, winged in purple [royalty] is a  
duckweed in god's pond has been  
murdered in different poems is undead, still  
knocks her foot against the screen. has taught  
me to hold rain & not puncture 's body is a  
division of twos;  
half human, half memory  
is a punctured receptacle  
recites *kursiyyu* too often is  
afraid of god draws a ring around  
her home [in chalk],  
to breathe away raven moons wears carnelian  
to shield spells morphs into cherubic halos  
threads her voice into an orchestra is  
here is the reason i'm writing  
this poem  
did not teach me how to say sorry  
is a block diagram | a tight-lipped sibilant  
sits at the riverbank loves watching  
diving boys is dizzy after a  
funerary dance  
of her mother's mother understands how  
a jailhouse belches chimeras smells foul  
is hooked in a loop can see if you laughed  
at this poem says: [& i hope you didn't?]

# BIRD-BONED CREATURE

Vicki Lin

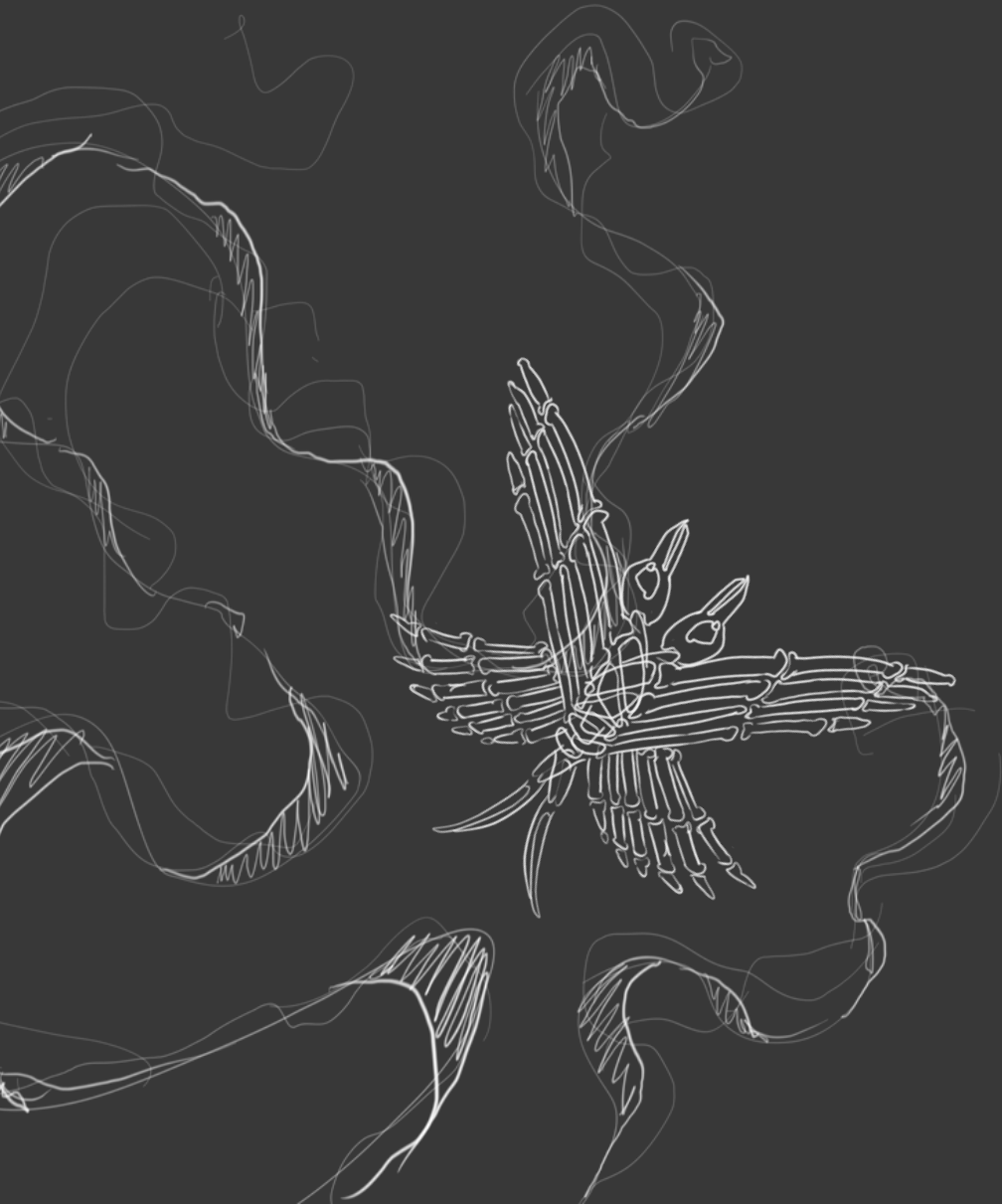
on the way home from the funeral, i  
fist cherry gum wrappers into my pocket and pray for origami cranes  
that wouldn't startle at the first gasp of violence.  
last time i painted with a brush i told you i'm too heavy-handed  
to wield an instrument of such delicacy; my instruments are my hands,  
i say. but what i meant was scarred knuckles fistfighter paper tiger  
that won't buckle to anything but the

weight  
of this

silence.

I couldn't breathe out for the longest time without blue-frosted  
sirens ringing in my ear, tribute to this  
grief collapsing in my lungs. the radio learns to speak static and  
i still can't count pennies on my own  
without the numbers tripping in their almost  
relentless march over my tongue, waxing something foreign  
out of that derelict mass of muscle.  
see, i'm no fingerpainter either. i can't touch paint without parts of me  
seeping out  
like a daydream a wish a plea—  
my fingertips a mess of a crime scene.  
you look at this tainted blue and called it purple  
when really, it's another casualty,  
another gordian's knot of heritage and birthright.

i couldn't speak things into existence any more than i can  
make birds out of my hands. yet  
i have become avian somehow, the thrash of my pulse quill-like,  
which means everything snaps too easily. the truth is,  
i am the escape beat with no place to go. no one  
to keep alive in this barren country. homeland, a used roll of film.  
all i do is mourn a past that does not belong to me.  
is this what growing up is?



# THE HANGMAN'S TRAGEDY

Izzy Goldberg

you write poetry about the parties you didn't get invited to. child, the answer is enmeshed in the question and the assumption goes like this: you don't like parties. you're not the kind of girl who works in dilatory time, and red solo cups and your blue-tinged fingers seem destined to end up in some boy's hair, some boy who you'll go scarlet for on monday morning, an exchange of sanctity and sanity which leaves you feeling cheated. no matter. not everything that is white is pure, he won't want you if you're not standing before him in an angel dress. yet still, you're so ostentatious it hurts; you coat yourself in gold in the middle of a recession and wonder why their stomachs turn. their tongues on your neck, this is what freedom tastes like. just like the other girls, and you hate it. all in alabaster, you'll turn their pictures into a stained glass window as you try to stem the bleeding. sixteen. you never thought it would rip through you like this. something softened you, but you starved it out and the siege worked like clockwork, tick tick tick. watch as you sharpen yourself again, whet yourself on a rock in the middle of the ocean. does it hurt? you would not know. maybe some witches deserve to be burned. you are the hangman, you decide, and watch the murder fly away into the night as you lie awake and wonder what possessed them not to invite you to the christening.

# RESURRECTION

Annika Gangopadhyay

i remember the scorn melting out of my voice when my mom and i argue at the kitchen counter. her face red, mine sucked in precise contours throughout my cheeks and jawline. the light on the ceiling is dim and graying into the walls—tired, worn out, as if even the paint chipping away knows where this will end (her in silence, me in indignation).

“this isn’t fair. you made a promise, and i taught you better than to go back on it.”

“i didn’t promise; you forced this on me. you didn’t give me any other choice but to say yes. you can’t just yell and expect me to do whatever you want.”

“i’m your mother.”

i cannot deny this. and she cannot deny my resistance.

i picture the word *mother* forming out of the cracks in the cabinet. soft to touch, but hard to ignore. just bold enough to jut out of the drywall.

“i don’t want to go to india”—i know this breaks her, and i wonder if seventeen years of american schooling have taught me that it’s okay to be stubborn about what you want. she hates this, because the twenty inch bag of flesh that stole her cells and bundled in her arms at a hospital has turned selfish. in the kitchen, i inhale and steal the moisture through scouring nostrils, leaving her to catch her breath as my words choke her.



“i’m your mother.”

mother. reminds me of a petite woman, straight-backed, watching a prostrate girl below her. the stories repeat themselves over and over—how she wouldn’t dare talk back to her mother like this, how even now, when her mother is over seventy and shriveled and benign, she cannot fathom refuting her. i wonder if this is why she wants to go back.

“you sound crazy. we can’t move there. it’s too late. i’m applying to college.”

“we talked about this. international schools there are much better than whatever education you’ll get in these american public schools.”

education. the reason why i am like this, why i do not care about her. i *learned* this apathy from somewhere. i could never be born with it. the baby in the stroller, lugged across new york like delicate cargo, could never desert her parents. i assimilated the wrong colors—instead of reverence, i absorbed greed. i’m selfish for *wanting*, because she learned at seventeen that wanting is a sin, and her fiber wasn’t capable of sin on its own. it has to be mixed with something, she reassures herself, and india will pull all of it out. the way america pulled her out, siphoned her to a place where her degree in botany was an exotic piece of paper. a reverse osmosis, to turn paper into futures; to turn pride into humanity.

“you’re disrupting my education.”

“i taught you everything you know.” oh, mother. you taught me how to breathe, *how to be*. but not how to *live*. “you’ll like it there. we’ll live in your grandparents’ flat. you’ll see people every single day—neighbors, aunts, uncles—they’re all just dying to see you. it’ll be a nice change, since you don’t have any friends here at all.”

loneliness, truth. the same color. “i don’t know any of those people either. they won’t know me at all.” i don’t even know me at all. i trace my arms and remember the mosquito repellent some uncle sprayed on



me when i was five. as my grandparents, father, sister and i left for a festival, my mom gleamed in a loud orange and blue sari. i asked her why she chose it. she told me through laughter that opposite colors are hopeful and beautiful; she will only wear bright shades that clash.

i do not realize i am crying until i see wet lines on my beige shirt. she thinks it is ugly for lacking vibrancy, and i cannot help but wonder if she feels the same way about me. *i don't have any friends here at all.*

“it’s not my fault. i just can’t do it.” i try to wipe my face before she looks over her shoulder. “i thought you said you wanted me to have good grades.”

“you can make friends too. when we go back, it’ll be even easier to do that. everyone in that town knows our family. they’ll be happy to see you.”

“i can’t do both.”

“in india you can.”

“i can’t move to india now.”

“you don’t know what’s good for you.”

but i know what’s good for *her*. the creases in her temples indicate another day of fumbling at a macy’s cash register. she couldn’t separate pennies from nickels and dimes after some twenty years of collecting rupees. she couldn’t do both. her three bookshelves bulge open with stories i do not know how to read, and i will never know how to read. she hasn’t spoken to her parents in six years, but they called last october as she shut the door to her bedroom. when they said her uncle died, she was quiet. i have known that uncle from nine years ago; i don’t know his name, but i know he was bald and kind when i last saw him. the rest of the week, she read a yellow-covered book (nameless to me, a world to her)—it was his favorite book, she told me. i will never know how to read it.

but when she took me to work once, i could read her voice clearly—her english was crystallized honey. it kept fracturing every time some customer mocked her or when she couldn't count thirty cents, though she never raised her voice at these americans—she smiled through humiliation. yet she demands and shouts and accuses me of being unfair, as if i refuse to pay the price for detaining her here. perhaps she feels better knowing that she chastises her own flesh, her own body.

“if i knew you'd turn out like this, so ungrateful, so american...”

i'd never agree to have children. your english may have been broken, mother, but you know you chose not to finish this sentence. blame me for siphoning your blood and turning it red. blame me for choosing the eight thousand miles of ocean over the eighty relatives that would die for a life in america. the aunts and cousins that see *luxury* when she tells them about her new job, the new house. the new kitchen. these people want stories about the silicon valley and the americans and how easy it is to pay for college and how easy school is. i picture the disappointment on their faces when i arrive, a wrinkled t-shirt and bags under my eyes from the sleepless nights i need to maintain my grades. they cannot read reality.

i apologize; i will never know what's good for me. i could never read the stories you are fond of, mother. i could never be american, or unamerican, or grateful, or at ease. i cannot gleam. i apologize.

she stares at me, no tirades left. we have clashed until there is nothing left to hurl at each other. she used to wear opposite colors, but today i notice her gray sweater sighing. i wonder if she no longer finds comfort in dichotomy. she is quiet.

“look, i'm sorry, okay? you know i want the best for you. you've been cooped up in your room for so long. you've been stressed.”

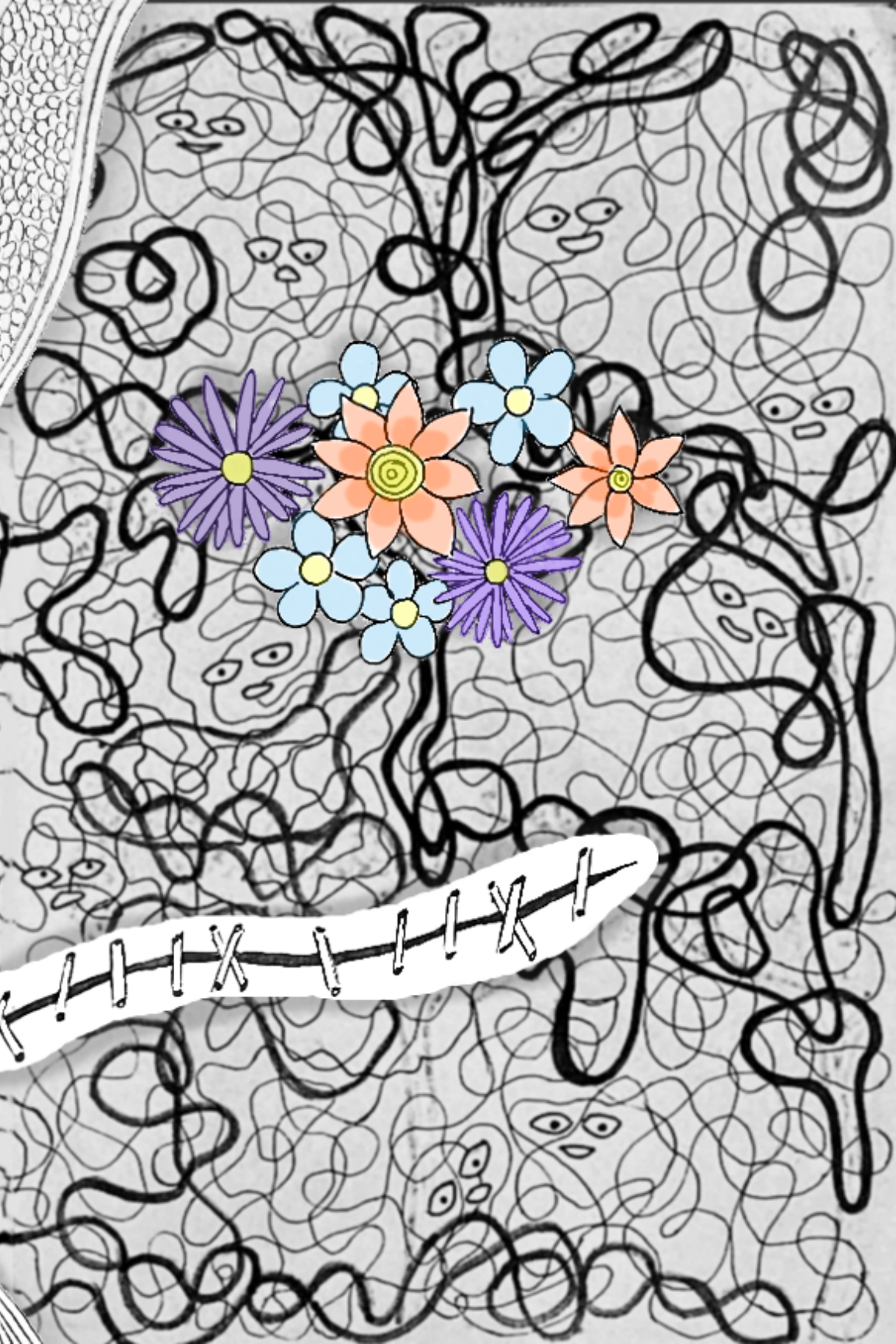
so have you. i do not know why i respond—guilt, agreement, or perhaps tolerance. but i cannot deny her. her cells, her blood. they cannot deny her.

"i know."

we both sag in the kitchen—the exhausted lamplight, the beige, the gray  
—not vibrant, but living.







# WHEATGRASS

Aaliyah Anderson

You unhook the basket, passing it to me,  
& we're blind with the random controlling of an audacious shining.

We continue our gimmick while the badgers peek in  
& out—a trick, I'm afraid, is bestowed only to you.

There is a sharp whistling, quick to be cut with the clashing of  
glass; the dissection of bones to end our hard work.

In short, we lunch in quietness.

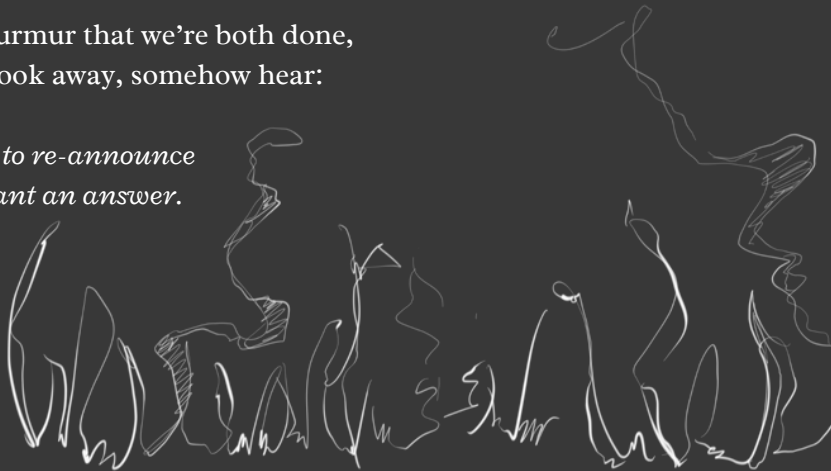
There was no huge fish, so disappointment  
still waits, but I know you're dying

to tell the joke—you won't allow yourself to bite  
your smile over. I almost ask you to say it anyways,

for some reason. Maybe it's that soft rock, not yours, but still:  
you turning into the subject, you singing the words, me listening,

us—until you murmur that we're both done,  
it's awkward, I look away, somehow hear:

*you, continuing to re-announce  
like you don't want an answer.*



How sad it is that you don't make a lot of dedicated-clusters  
with this mellowness, right now

(and, how we presume we can sit & stare,  
together,

until we figure something out).



# THE ANTELOPE TURNS RED

Florianne Che



Of bristles tuning noise when  
scrutiny settles between tendril

and tendril Of dents sunk into  
earth-crust, bronze between

two peaks greening a thousand  
mouths silently chipping away at

walls toward destination and where  
was yours? Mine lay under the skin

Of West Coast sun, nestled itself in  
flesh, opened up the mouth for more

time—Counts ticks with two hands  
weaving through dirt Of hair-stalks

pours shade over peeling Crimson  
gone blue and the buck lifts his

burnt head, knowing before he feels  
the weight Of a sky extinguished



# TWO-STORY MONSTER

Ashley Morrow

daylight was a waste of time  
two coiled commas on a haybale,  
praying we won't flatten into the bed  
of broken weeds  
i pluck strings of hay from my crescent belly  
and hope to be bare  
without the bloody blemishes of truth  
you wear your lukewarm smile  
of liquid solace, free so long as  
the Monster is still a period  
in this flat sentence of dirty green threads  
bald and pale with a wooden mouth  
gold is relieved from the crust of an eyelid  
by the sight of your half-lucid mother  
who awakens the Monster with the flip of a switch  
it splits you down the middle  
spirals into your gaping mouth  
beckons you until you believe it  
you slip from my grasp back to earth  
feet reunited with the painted tongue  
mahogany lips are broken  
begging for our diminishing flesh  
when it is time to inhale,  
only you are swallowed



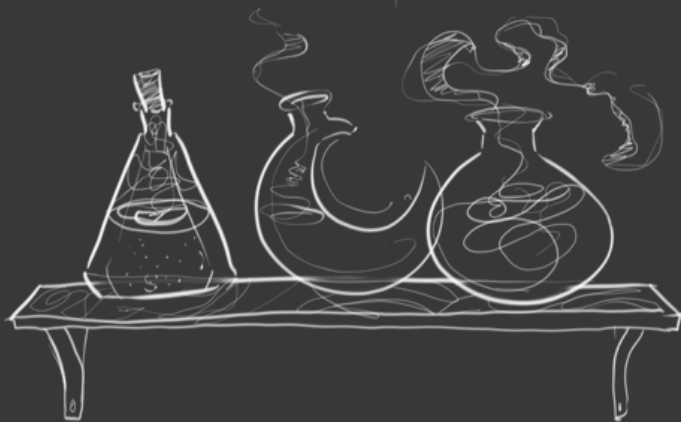
# THE APOTHECARY

Caroline Chou

Rain trickles down the window panes and pools on window sills. It's a faded, foggy morning, a black and white photograph that shimmers and shifts on the skyline of this awakening city. Perhaps this is the kind of day to which you wake with a heaviness in your heart. In the mirror, your lips are frosted violet, cheeks stained indigo. A spiderweb of purple veins is crawling up your neck—a look in your fractured eyes tells you that time of the year has come.

The fog lingers as you walk six blocks of graying streets and concrete crowds to the quiet corner where a little shop lies. In peeling green letters, the wooden sign above the door creaks. You look over your shoulder before you enter.

The bell above the door soundlessly at your arrival. As the door closes behind you, the sounds of the outside world fade away, leaving you with silence. It lays thick like dust on the spotless shelves that line the walls, all of which are perfectly bare, save for the price tags that have been placed every few feet: *Tears. Nostalgia. Limited supply of Laughter available. Special discount on Regret. Please see attendee to purchase.*



There isn't a soul in sight. But the air all around you doesn't ebb and flow—it holds its breath. That heaviness within you weighs you down, slows your steps with something like regret, but you put one foot in front of the other and make your way to the counter at the back of the shop. The back wall is split by three identical doors. All sales are final, a sign above the doors read. No refunds or returns. And there is no turning back now.

There's a call bell next to the register, but before you can muster the courage to ring it, a woman steps into view, as if materializing out of thin air. Her face is completely colorless, pale hair and pale eyes that might've held the slightest hint of blue—until she blinks and it's washed away. If she recognizes you, she doesn't show it. (It's standard procedure, after all.)

“Here to sell or buy?” Her gaze seems to analyze as it falls on your neck, cheeks, eyes. It takes you a moment to respond. “Sell,” you finally manage, the word torn with an exhale from your suddenly dry throat.

But the woman only nods and leads you through the leftmost door.

You step into a room that's an exact replica of the store, only the shelves are no longer empty—hundreds of empty glass jars line the walls. A single lightbulb illuminates the room; the woman gestures to the circle of light that it forms, as if you haven't done this a thousand times before. You walk to that well-treaded spot and brace yourself for what is to come:

The door locks, the light is extinguished, and though you know the woman remains at the door, you can't help but gasp when the sensation of cold, invisible fingers seems to creep across your cheeks, prying apart your lips and reaching into your throat. The tears are falling fast, silver comets down your cheeks, as the hands close around your heart. Your chest, your shoulders, your legs are turning to lead, that heaviness threatening to send you to the floor. Perhaps you cry out, though it is futile to do so: these shadows won't stop until their work is done.



When the lights turn back on, the surrounding glass jars are trembling, the single lightbulb swinging to and fro. By the time your vision comes back into focus, the woman is placing another jar on the shelf. For a moment, it shimmers with frosted violet and stained indigo. But then the woman opens the door, and it returns to colorless glass. Back at the register, she hands you a crumpled wad of bills.

“Thank you for your business,” she says, cracking a half smile.

It was to be expected.

The store no longer holds its breath—the floorboards groan as you walk to the door, dust swirling in your wake, the air flat and still the way catacombs are. The moment you step out the door, you have to shield your eyes from the brilliant ray of sunlight breaking through the dissolving clouds. The city has taken on a new palette in your absence, a recoloring of the black and white photo from hours before. It’s only a matter of time before the colors—artificial and saturated as they are—fade away, but you cherish them all the same.

As you walk the six blocks back to your apartment, you catch your reflection in the mirror. Your face is faded, pale hair and pale eyes, a too-light blot in this city of a million shades. And yet, that violet, that indigo, that purple is gone, so it’s worth it in the end. It has to be. Your heart is lighter than it has been for ages, free of that heaviness.

It’s so light that it feels almost hollow.

You look down at the bills—a handful of George Washingtons scrutinize you—and by the time you look up, the woman is gone.

# DAEDALUS

Sophia Hallstein

you are your  
father's son,  
woven like silk  
from ashes swept  
off the face of salt  
and ripe, low-hanging fruit.  
i recall summer being  
upon us and sweet citrus  
as your father's daughter  
danced an island away  
swelling, and waves  
disparaged her honeyed words.  
we are twisted in knots and  
you ask if i like the sky

the stars are midwest-  
summer fireflies. but

there are no fireflies in idaho  
and the sun is melting

your  
wings.

# FRATERNITIES

Eghosa

CW: reference to violence

*The news says—cult clash: 5 Yabatech students  
Killed in a week*

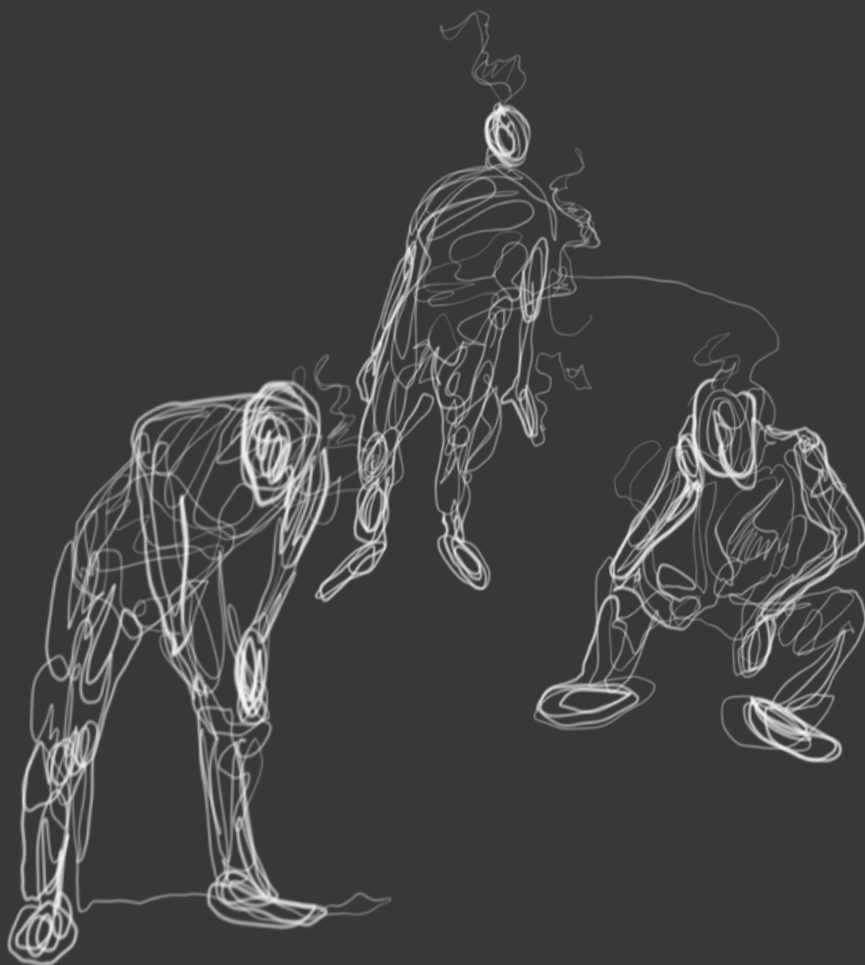
For the third time today  
A man counted on his fingers  
The number of Bodies—still  
Soul—ferried back to God's hands.  
Say,  
What other ways is to walk down  
The aisle of silence?  
Your body, something enough to settle  
The scores of the rage between two groups

Somewhere near the school gate  
A boy is crawling/crimson beating  
The white of his shirt in a color fist,  
Two holes the size of a pistol's mouth  
Shifting into a stream/coloring his body  
Into the beauty of a Rose's color

Somewhere, another boy is shielding the evening sun  
From another boy's eyes.  
In another place, a boy stands over another boy  
Tightening his fist around an axe dripping of life.  
Another feet cut from the sand of this field  
You call life.  
Somewhere, around the next street, in a house

A woman stretches on the floor  
Burning from wailing the loss of her seed.  
Silence—filling her chest.

Down this street  
Four boys dash after another boy  
Like a pack of wolf after a prey  
Axe/pistol/machete for teeth



# FOR NO ONE

Haze Fry

There are words that were invented by soil,  
by queer hands blending with the earth  
like lilac watercolor,  
swirling in pigmentation from lips and hips  
and all the sounds  
that cocoon themselves in our minds.

These are the words that no man could ever think of.  
Syllables crafted underwater before a hurricane  
holding just you and me:  
twirling sand creatures, witches of the sea,  
lovers without letters to spell it out for us.  
But I want to spell it for you.

These words are city lights flickering in my throat,  
illuminating my vocal chords  
until nothing else sounds right.  
These words were spun by sapphics  
in silky spider webs,  
reading poetry to each other and giggling  
as they scribble new cursive letters between each kiss.

Each time we say goodbye I think of the uprooted sunbeams  
that print their hearts into dictionaries,  
and the moonbeams that kiss the sun goodnight.  
Each time we exchange dimples  
I can barely hold myself back from exhaling pretty letters into your throat,  
holding you in the space between poison oak and blackberry thorns  
and telling you everything I feel.





I whisper it all when you leave.

I mutter it to myself.

I have been waiting to raise the volume,  
to incubate my thoughts carefully before I let them hatch,  
before I allow their tender beaks to peek from the eggshell.

But they are ready.

I want to read these words out loud to you.

I want to speak them again and again,  
under and above water.

I love you.

# FEAR THE DAYS GONE BY

Suhaas Nachannagari

Faintly, a pearly white statuette that I hold so dear  
Exists in my past: distant, and oh so unclear  
And I do recollect hours on days on weeks,  
Rigorously admiring the craftsmanship of this unique antique

Through thick and thin, they were with me, seemingly eternal  
However somewhere along the way, they were lost;  
Eventually a fog rolls in to render my memories null

Dear yet so distant, I hoped to eventually rediscover,  
And after relentless foraging which seemed to last forever,  
Yes! I have finally found it!  
Surely past memories and opportunities to forge new ones appear bit by bit?

Glass suddenly shatters, and on his floor lay white bits  
Only now, a black abyss creeps in on the fragments... creeping, creeping  
No! It is merely in his imagination! It's still white, and bright... right?  
Exasperated, he opens his eyes

Breaking his slumber, a beep disrupts the silence  
Yearning to recollect his sleeping delusions, he is once again  
unsuccessful

Suddenly that pearly white statuette that he once held so dear  
Now transformed into the object of his greatest fear

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## *Ryan Wong*

Ryan Wong is a queer poet and writer presently based in their hometown of Penang, Malaysia. They are the Editor-in-Chief of a youth-led online journal called *Getting It Strait*, and have been featured in *Paper Lanterns*, *Aster Lit* and *Impossible Archetype*, among others.

## *Celina Naheed*

Celina Naheed is an Iranian American writer and artist in Atlanta. Her work has been featured in *Words Without Borders*, *Lumiere Review*, the *Aurora Journal*, and more. When she's not writing, she can be found blending watercolors or watching old movies with her super mutt.

## *Naeem Hossain*

Naeem is a writer from Bangladesh who likes to explore the depth and meaning of life through writing. His writings usually explore the transitory of existence, the uncertainty of teen years, chaos, and love. His work has been published in *Aster Lit Magazine*, *Potted Purple*, *Verse of Silence* and elsewhere.

## *Saheed Sunday*

Saheed Sunday, NGP V, is a Nigerian poet, a Star Prize awardee, a Best of the Net nominee, and a HCAF member. He is the author of a poetry collection: *Rewrite The Stars*. He was shortlisted for the Rachel Wetzst-

-eon Chapbook Award, Wingless Dreamer Poetry Prize and The Breakbread Literacy Project. He has his works on *Shrapnel Magazine*, *Rough Cut Press*, *The Temz Review*, *Brittle Paper*, *Poetry Column*, *Off Topic Publishing*, *Eunoia Review*, and elsewhere. In 2018, he was shortlisted for the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange.

### *Vicki Lin*

Vicki Lin (林诺曦) is a young Chinese American poet and writer from Florida. She has been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and the Live Poets Society of NJ. Her works are published in or are forthcoming in *Kissing Dynamite*, *Eunoia Review*, and elsewhere. In her free time, she may be found stalking her writer friends.

### *Izzy Goldberg*

Izzy Goldberg is a writer based in the north of England. A literature fanatic at heart, she writes poetry to help her understand the world around her and also what on earth is going on inside her head. You can find her obsessing over Sylvia Plath, drinking inordinate amounts of iced coffee and/or listening to copious amounts of Taylor Swift.

### *Annika Gangopadhyay*

Annika Gangopadhyay is an emerging writer from the Bay Area. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *Nightingale & Sparrow*, *Hearth & Coffin Literary Journal*, and *Ligeia Magazine*, among many others. In her spare time, she enjoys music and art criticism.

### *Aaliyah Anderson*

Aaliyah Anderson (she/her) is a junior majoring in Literary Arts at her high school in Petersburg, VA. Her work is forthcoming in *Sour Cherry Mag*, *miniMAG*, *coalitionworks*, and elsewhere. She's obsessed with storytelling.

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### *Florianne Che*

Florianne Che is a student residing in Illinois. In her free time, she enjoys collecting cards.

### *Ashley Morrow*

Ashley Morrow (she/her) is an emerging writer from Southern California.

### *Caroline Chou*

Caroline Chou (she/her) is a writer from Maryland with a love for leitmotifs and magical realism. Her work has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Writers and published in *The Aurora Journal*, among others. When she's not writing, you can find her reading fantasy, playing golf, or marveling at the way time passes when she procrastinates.

### *Sophia Hallstein*

Sophia Hallstein is a lover of words and the outdoors. She believes poetry is excellent at articulating stories that might not be told otherwise. Currently, she resides in the Western United States, where she draws inspiration from the landscape and its people.

### *Eghosa*

Aiyi Joel is a 19-year old budding poet from Edo state in Nigeria. He has works published/forthcoming on *The Beatnik Cowboy*, *Synchronized Chaos*, *Carthatic Lit Mag*, *Rough Cut Press*, *Eboquils* and elsewhere. He can be found on IG and Facebook@Aiyi Joel.

### *Haze Fry*

Haze is a junior in creative writing at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts in San Francisco. They have work published in several literary publications, including *Synchronized Chaos*, *Blue Marble*, *The Weight Journal*, and *Parallax Journal*, and have performed their poetry at the Youth Art Summit in San Francisco and 826 Valencia. When Haze is not writing, they can be spotted cuddling their three cats, holding their python, feeding their tarantula, or rescuing insects from being squashed.

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