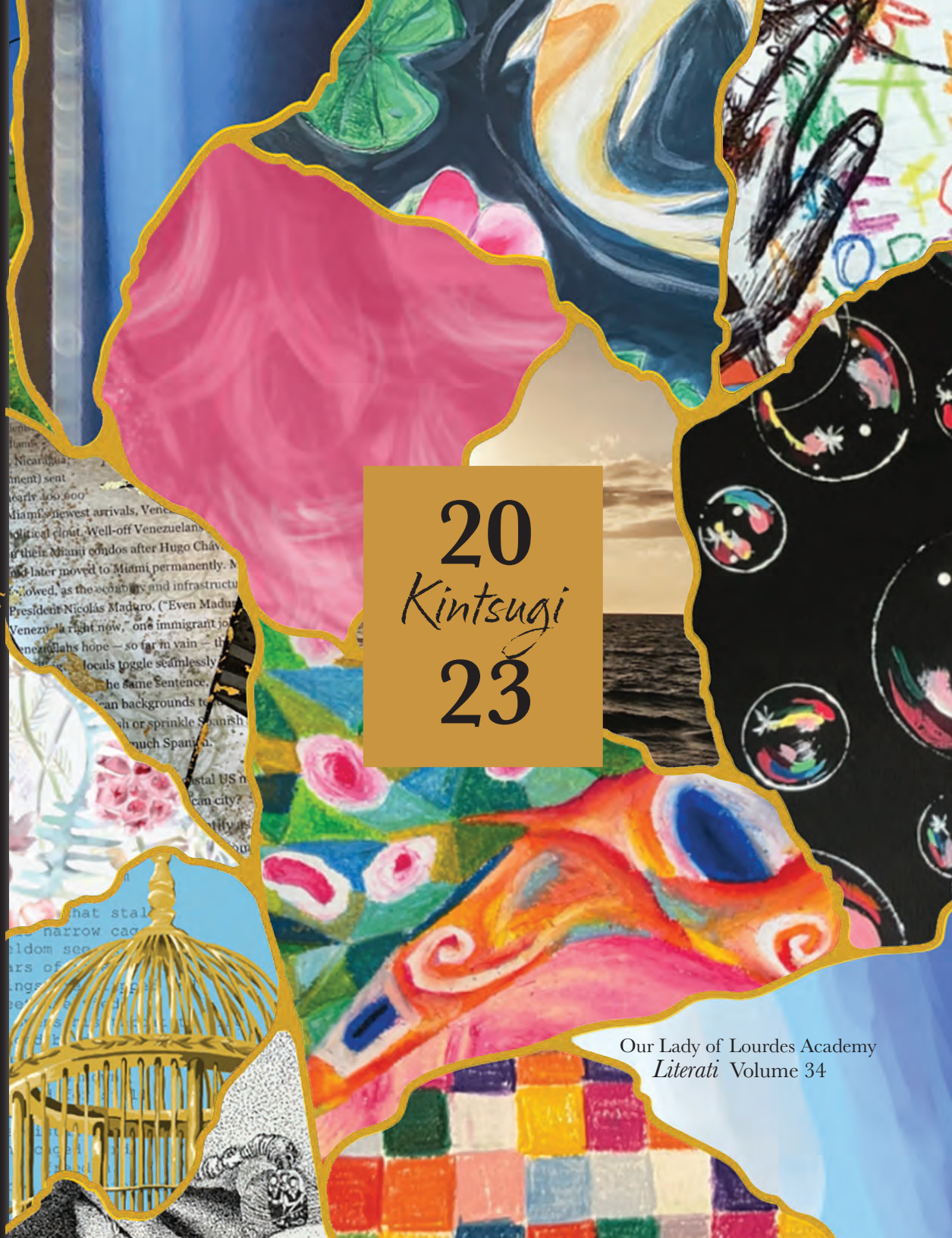




VOL 34 *Literati* 2023

Kintsugi

Our Lady of Lourdes Academy



20
Kintsugi
23

Our Lady of Lourdes Academy
Literati Volume 34



Literati 2023
Kintsugi
Volume 34

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"There is a crack,
a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in."
-Leonard Cohen

Dear Reader,

A beautiful vase, sitting perfectly on the edge of a counter, is destined to fall. When it does, the crashing sound pierces through the air, as if to alert us that something's gone wrong.

Pieces of glass, with newly sharpened edges, sprawl across the floor. Our feet instinctively lift to avoid the consequences of this unavoidable mistake. As the alarming sound ceases, and the last piece of glass stops spinning, it seems like the only option is to sigh, sweep up the broken pieces, and discard them. To forget about this mistake and purchase a replacement vase seems like the easiest solution.

However, there is another option, deeply rooted in Japanese tradition, that invites us to celebrate the broken. *Kintsugi* is the acceptance of imperfection. The art of repairing broken pottery by filling in the cracks with gold. The result is a vase stronger and more beautiful than the original.

This practice reminds us to accept fragility and to take pride in imperfection. Like the vase, we are destined to break, but our imperfections can be the birth of something new. It is in breaking that we find our "gold", what holds us together; faith, community, purpose. It is our cracks that allow light to shine through.

This *Literati* is a collection of creative and genuine experiences that appreciate our innocence, our broken parts, and our healing. This culmination begins with pieces that reflect simple joys, before developing into pieces that focus on hardship. Because growth is a result of challenges, this collection ends with pieces that highlight strength, hope and beauty in imperfection.

Understanding that we can not appreciate the light until we have been in darkness, this collection of art, prose, poetry, & photography mirrors the gradual development of every aspect of life.

Kintsugi

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Prose



mother knows best

Maria de Armas, class of 2023

My safe space,
my happy place,
the one love that never fades.
When all is lost, she remains.
Steady and strong in the face of pain.
A love that loves expecting no gain.
My mother is my idol and my light,
my best qualities she did ignite.
With open arms she welcomes me into her nest,
reminding me that mother truly knows best.

leaving to a new school, Gabriela Garrido Pravia, class of 2023, pencil

girl

Sarah Hernandez, class of 2024

A mind in which dreams collect,
the pink color of her cheeks,
and deep cherry colored hair,
with complimenting golden skin,
the serenity of her care.

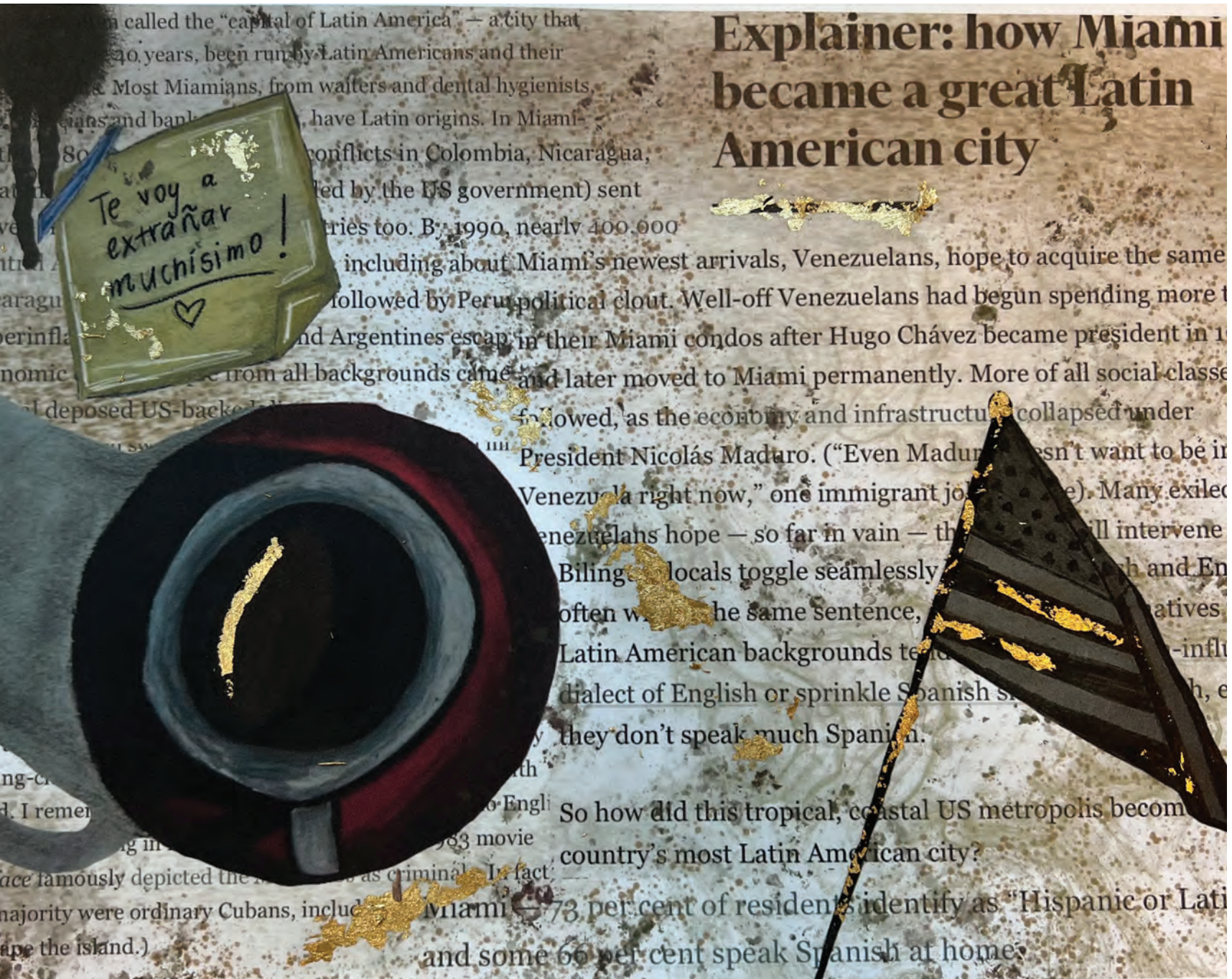
The femininity she carries,
as she nurtures strangers like friend,
a floating walk she takes,
the gloss on her lips that tend,
shimmering like comic dust.

Hair in layers,
in like with her personality,
as she returns on a gliding stars,
with spells from black holes,
glitter and dust from mars,
forbidden scriptures from saturn.

That is the girl I want to be,
The woman waiting for me,
She's modeled after another,
Who took me in as a girl,
In hopes of turning me into a woman.

pink, Natalia Sofia Pravia, class of 2025, digital mixed-media





Explainer: how Miami became a great Latin American city

life in Miami

Maggie Zulueta, class of 2024

Miami,
 A place where my roots and my future met.
 Where the sun shines bright
 and the beaches are fun.
 From the culture and all the traditions,
 To the food, to the music,
 and the family connections.

Love in our hearts, hard work and pride,
 Our heritage and the sacrifices made in our stride.
 Spanglish flowed through our everyday talk,
 90 degree weather, can't forget the sunblock.

Growing up surrounded with musica y baile
 Croquetas, pastelitos, ropa vieja, and more.
 Our families are big, loud, and full of love,
 Our Latino culture is a blessing from above.

Miami will always remain at my core,
 A part of my being that I'll always adore.

american city, Camelia Lazaro, class of 2023, mixed media with gold foil



yusuf, Bianca Sanchez, class of 2025, pencil/pen



yusuf, Miranda Munoz, class of 2024, pencil/pen

perception of love *Reese Spence, class of 2026*

Love is an enigma to many that humanity has been trying to decipher for centuries, the problem that has stopped many philosophers and teens alike in their tracks. Love is an essential part of any person's life. Whether it is for something tangible or not, love gives purpose. It instills drive and determination. Love is an effort requiring altruism—a true giving of one's self. Since I began to grasp love, I have dreamt of genuinely feeling that for another person. Books and movies have all romanticized the idea of being in love, which has led to my high expectations for how love should be. Today, my generation does not consider what it means to love someone—not to like them, but to love them.

I value romantic love too much to cheapen it. My friends say my idea of love is unrealistic, but I do not wish to experience a hollow love. I want to feel real love. I want an all-consuming love that makes you think that your life has no significance without that person to whom you have passionately expressed your feelings. I want a love that is giving and messy and selfish, one that looks beyond superficial appearances, one of admiration for things you cannot see. I desire a love of wisdom and character, which genuinely form a person. These values make the distinction between your partner and every other person living on this earth. Unfortunately for me, I am not a coquette; instead, I am a pedantic, uptight, stubborn girl who is not often viewed through someone's eyes with the glasses of intellectual beauty.

I pondered the subject of love and came across Plato's "Ladder of Love" from his Symposium. It tells the story of a dinner party that unfolded in Athens at the home of a distinguished playwright, Agathon. Individuals from various cultures gathered to discuss important matters over food and drink. At the start of the dinner party, the host announced that he wanted each of his guests to give a speech on what they perceived love to be. Plato reserved the best and most alluring theory for his hero, Socrates, who advanced an idea that

became the "ladder of love."

Socrates explains that many people learn to love in a very immediate and physical way. This refers to the love of a person's appearance. He claims that this is not what love truly is. Socrates says that this first interpretation of love is the first step of the ladder and that the beauty of someone, although appealing, does not lie in their physical appearance. It is intellectual.

At first, I believed being attracted to someone because of their looks was foolish and shallow. However, the interest in beauty is not superficial but the starting point for a more profound fondness for another person. It becomes shallow when you choose not to analyze that person further because you do not care to. To truly love, you need to have an ambiguous view of beauty. Interest in beauty frees us to believe that it exists beyond one person.

I, along with many others, have fallen prey to liking a person only for their looks, and it feels empty and baseless. I find it far more fascinating to initially only be captivated by a person's outward appearance, only to become more infatuated with them as you gain knowledge of who they are over time until you love every aspect of who they are. Although connected, the beauty of the mind is superior to that of the beauty of the body.

.....

I like to compare romantic relationships to a bustling metropolis. Both are hectic. In a large city, many people are all busy. They are busy working towards something. Often, that something is their purpose in life. However, there are cases where some commute to and from work and continuously replay their daily life on a meaningless loop. They hope that someday something will come along and change their never-ending pattern, but they never muster up the strength to change it for themselves.

A relationship is chaotic. Both people are trying to convey their feelings simultaneously. Those in a relationship are working towards

their partner's happiness. That precious happiness becomes their purpose. Then, there are the not-so-gloriously fruitful relationships. These can also be described as disorderly, but not for positive reasons. Those who experience these kinds of relationships commonly feel dull, empty, and disconsolate. They relate to those who live a continuously meaningless day-to-day life. They stay in a relationship that makes them unhappy. Although the connection they once had to their partner is now frail and disfigured, they continue to hang desperately onto whatever is left, never bothering to try and change the horrible state of the relationship.

Love is a crucial part of someone's life. Love teaches lessons and brings joy. It is one of the most vital forces on this earth. A love for another that is comprised of attraction to their

intellectual beauty and things beyond mere outward appearances is a true love. That is a love worth working towards. That is a love you want to cultivate so that more beautiful feelings bloom in the relationship. It makes you feel seen and wanted.

.....

Love can urge people to commit insane actions and go to great lengths. Without it, some people can lose all hope they ever had for their future. People can become lost and melancholy after a great love has ended. Love can save people from making the wrong decision.

Only one person must love someone to pull them out of the darkness. I hope everyone gets at least one chance to encounter this kind of love.

safety & serenity, Sofia Huerta, class of 2024, watercolor with pen



hermanas *Catalina Frias, class of 2025*

There are only two people in my life I've been undeniably attached to. To both I've always been the baby, the youngest who loves to copy them. They never understood why I copied them but it was because they never saw them from my eyes. 'Cause when I look at them I see the people I wanna be.

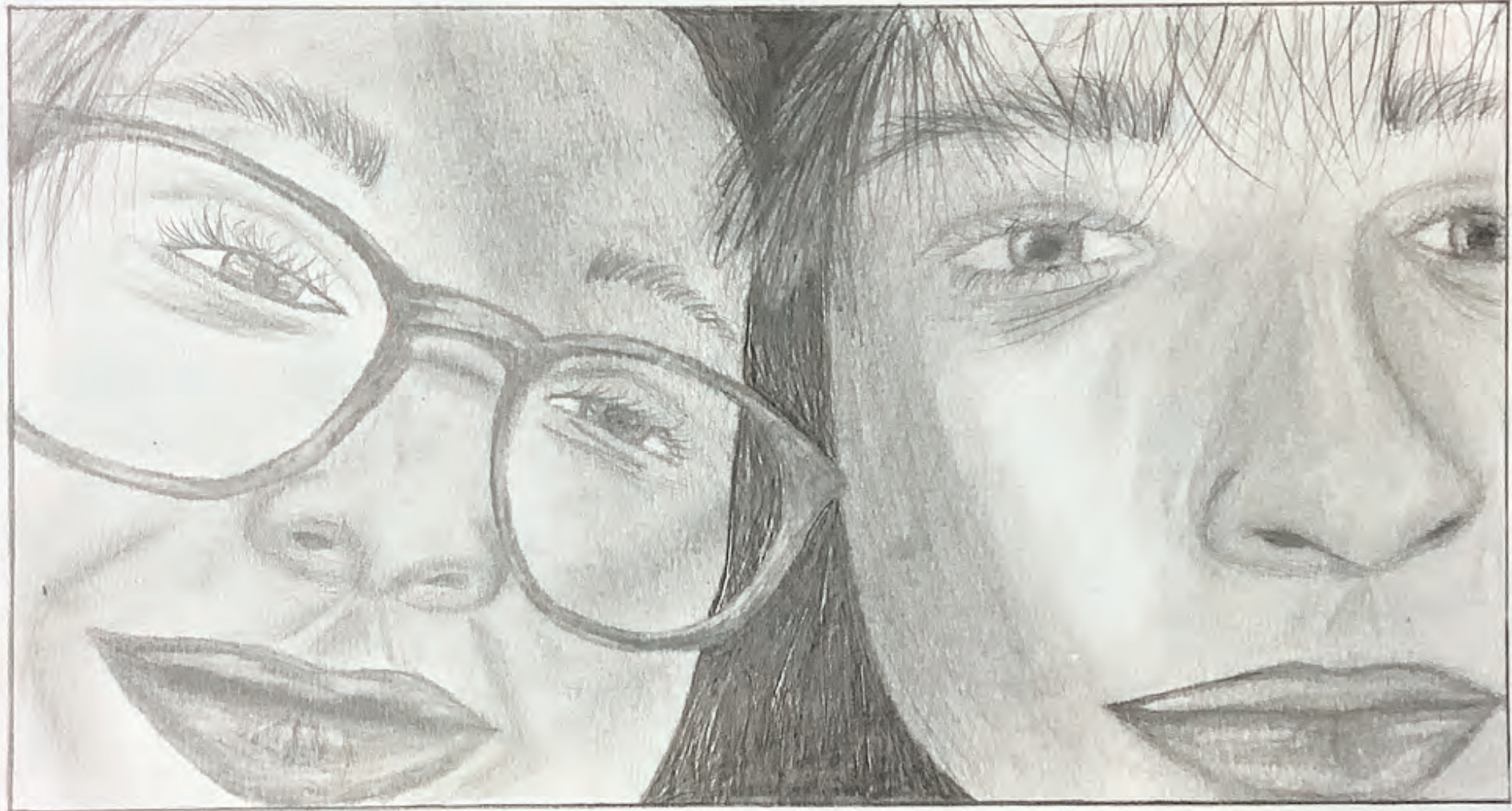
One has majestic blue eyes that turn colors like a kaleidoscope, and the grace that carries her from person to person like no other. The other has curls like angels falling from the graces of heaven and landing on Earth, and the protective nature that would shield me from anything. And all three of us look as though we

are strangers picked off the street. But nonetheless we are intertwined.

When I'm sitting in a room I always know there will be two people I can talk to. When I fall, I always know that there are only two people that would be laughing with me. And even though it has gone from two to one and soon it would become none, I know who's one phone call away.

Next year, when it's just me, sitting at home, alone, I know I'll be waiting for both to walk through the door. Because they are MORE than my same DNA, they were the same breath that ONLY I inhaled, the best friends that ONLY I was given.

For my sisters, Elise and Ami



zoom in, Camelia Lazaro, class of 2023, pencil

acknowledgments

Katie Bilbao, class of 2023

My Oscar winning moment was when I was awarded the “Outstanding Reader” award in first grade for reading an obscene amount of *The Magic Treehouse* books. While most kids found joy in playing soccer, dancing, or serenading others with music, I had the gift of turning words on a page into a cinematic masterpiece in my head. For a long time, I found this extremely annoying. Who cared if I liked reading? I wanted to be athletic like everybody else.

“Mom, what’s my talent?” I used to ask, hopeful that she’d tell me I had a secret ability to sing like Celine Dion.

“I don’t know,” she’d say, “but I know you’re going to be remarkable when you figure it out.”

My a-ha moment, the day I discovered my talent, and resigned myself to the fact that I wasn’t going to be the next Kelly Clarkson, was May 25, 2013. It’s also the day I lost my grandfather to cancer, and the day I needed to escape from most. So, I picked up a sparkly purple pen from my grandma’s desk drawer and wrote a story about three princesses. This was the first time I was a writer, a manipulator of reality, and a professional when it came to the art of disappearing. That pen created an entire new world for me, one where the words I scribbled down drifted up and transformed into palaces in my mind.

Storytelling became my getaway, the secret corner I could retreat to when the world dealt me a bad hand. It was my addiction to the anonymity which writing offered me that drove me to face the mountain of my dreams and finish my first novel junior year. Two years, 223 pages, and 109,077 words later, it was done, and it was mine. My words, my thoughts, me.

As an avid reader, it’s no secret that I crave a certain high that comes with turning the last page of a book. However, my favorite part of any novel is at the very

end, the part most people forget even exists: The Acknowledgments. I’m washed away with hope as my eyes flit down the page of Acknowledgments and I read about all the beautiful people who helped bring someone else’s story to life .

If they can do it, so can I.

So, as I begin the process of publishing my book, and that mountain before me seems to grow in stature and intimidation, my acknowledgments remind me of all the people and things that make me a writer in the first place.

To that sparkly purple pen, thank you for being the bridge toward my fate, and for leading me there safely.

To Victor Hugo, Jane Austen, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, for writing the novels which would become my deliverance, daring me to become my own favorite author.

To Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*, for understanding what it’s like to “want so much more than they’ve got planned.”

To all the professors, friends, classmates, etc. that I have met and have yet to meet, for being my muses, teaching me lessons that inspire stories within me.

To my grandpa, for continuing to change my life, even from way up there, reminding me that it’s okay to not be a star athlete so long as you pursue the thing that sets your soul on fire.

Finally, to my words, thank you for being like a river in my mind, flowing onto blank pages, rippling thoughts which I didn’t even know I had. Thank you for creating characters who become my companions, for telling the stories that drive me to be more courageous, and for accepting that “Outstanding Reader” award in first grade. It is because of you that I was dared to morph from a girl who thought she had no talent, into a young woman equipped with palaces in her mind.





metamorphosis, Catalina Garcia, class of 2026, mixed media

limitless Paola Lista, class of 2023

I am not afraid of fear or failure. Life is a blessing, and we get one chance at making it count. Understanding that not everyone is given a second chance at life, fuels my desire to be a survivor, a fighter. My grand appreciation for life helps me to make the most of everything by transforming fear into positive energy.

Instead of wondering what could go wrong, I focus on what could go right. Everyday, I try something new, take risks and embrace the uncomfortable. I believe that at the end of comfort is the start of growth, and so I exist outside of my comfort zone.

As a frequent public speaker, I turn nerves into excitement. As a leader, I make difficult decisions and propose new ideas confidently. As a human, I fearlessly embrace the changes our world surprises us with. When creating my school's first podcast without much experience, I proudly uploaded the first episode while ignoring negative opinions and accepting constructive criticism. This desire to learn new skills and live beyond requirements positively affects every aspect of my life.

A life lived fearlessly is filled with experience and, almost more importantly,

with failure. I believe failure is necessary as it holds more dignity and teaches more lessons than any victory does. Failure is fuel. It reminds me that I am not finished and that my full potential is far from reached. By working daily to strengthen a mindset of productivity and positivity, I have been able to spend many of my developmental years learning to overcome fear.

This evolving lifestyle creates a foundation of bravery for my future. This foundation prepares me for a limitless future, where I might study on Saturn, earn an Oscar and a Nobel peace prize, or play soccer against Lionel Messi. With the endless opportunities I chase, I am most determined to use my gifts and range of experience to shape a better world for all people.

Because tomorrow is never guaranteed, I hope to go to bed every night with the assurance that I seized every moment, learned all that I could and spread positivity to everyone I encountered. With determination and without fear, I know I can reach success in all that I attempt. Fear will never limit me.

a serendipitous moment

Isabella Nunez, class of 2023

“No, this is not happening,” I repeated about a thousand times staring down at my father’s scratched car. It was a warm winter day in Miami, and I had just been dismissed from school. As I was passing a gate to exit campus, a gust of wind forced the gate door to swing and scrape against the entire right side of the car.

Fear, stress, and chaos circled through my head. This car is my father’s most prized possession, I thought. So, I did what any teenage girl would do: I hid it from my parents. I was aware that concealing the massive gray scratches with only puppy dog eyes would result in inevitable consequences, so I knew I had to fix this.

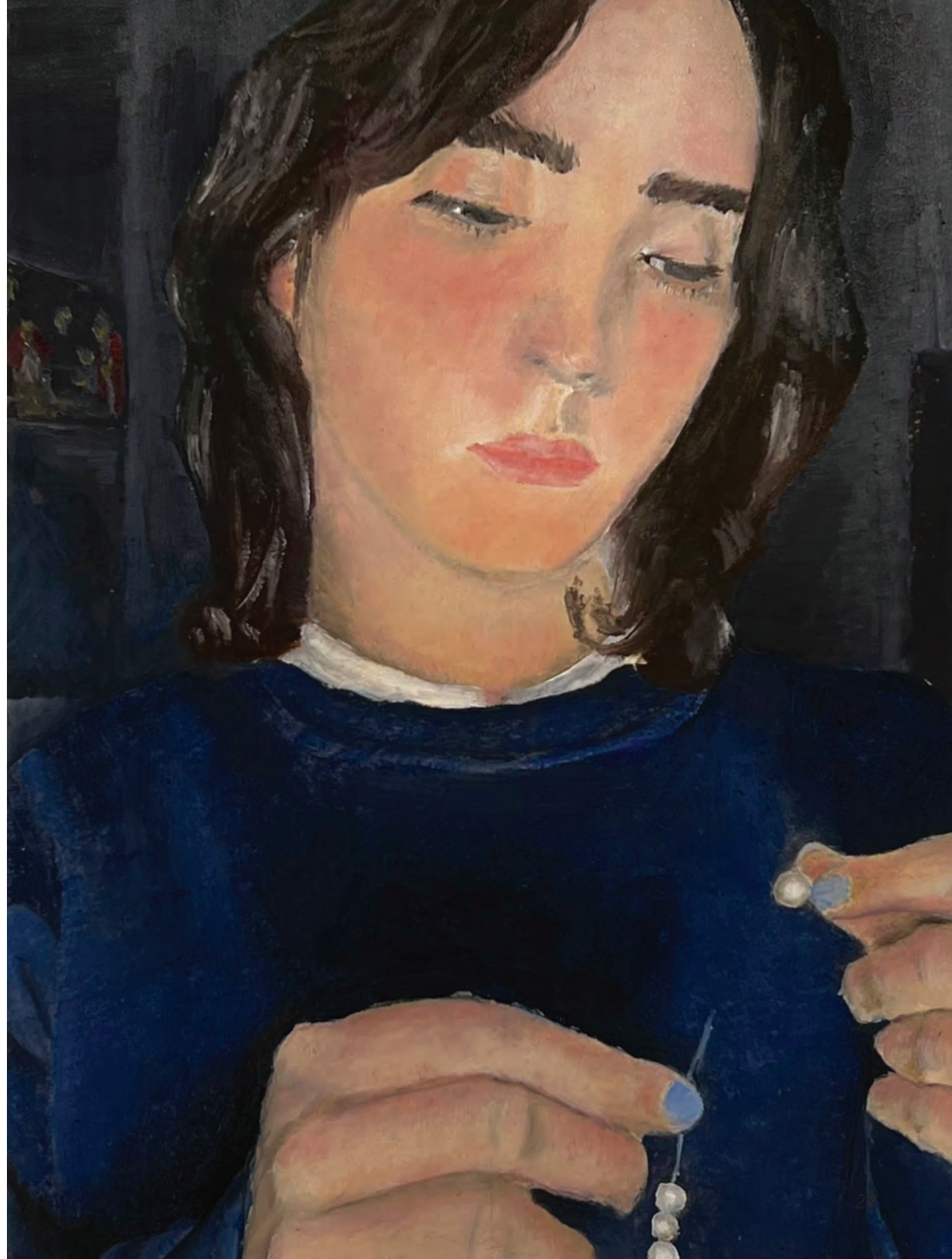
Maintaining composure, I drove to the nearest auto-repair shop to pick up some utilities I had researched. Then, I parked along a cul-de-sac while watching youtube videos such as wikiHow’s “3 Ways to Remove Scratches from a Car.” Yet, to my disappointment, my efforts were ineffective.

My presence appeared to be severely apprehensive since a resident from one of the houses I was parked by came out with toothpaste and a towel. Despite the fact that I was a total stranger to her, she offered me help and kindness without any explanation. The woman told me about a similar experience which armed her with the knowledge of how to fix a scratched car.

As we sat on the road while scrubbing the car for hours, our delightful and memorable conversations consisted of me explaining my hopes and dreams and her telling me how she obtained some of the same ones. Not only did she perform magic on my father’s car that looked good as new, but she also inspired me to pursue all that I desire due to her wise words.

A serendipitous moment. I returned home with a sparkly clean car and inspiration from a stranger turned role model. To this day, neither my dad knows of the incident nor the lady of the everlasting impact she instilled in me forever.

mending the prodigal daughter, Amanda Rodriguez, class of 2023, oil paints



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ORIGINAL

every woman is a house

Julianna Burunat, class of 2023

Every woman is a house, a building with which she stands on her own.
Each room is a different aspect of her, a role she gets to act, alone.
Be it a lover, mother, daughter, sister or friend.
She gets the joy, the sadness, and the indifference of having to pretend.

In the kitchen, she is a mother.
She harbors and masters love like no other.
Each meal is made.
Every taxing debt is paid.
Her children may sit at the table,
and every gift she gives, not only because she is able,
but because she has to cultivate what she wants to cradle.

In the living room, she is a daughter.
She puts on her best smile, never to falter.
She wears her best dress,
because there is always a company to address.
And she knows that if she is the best,
then she's finally mastered what put her ancestors to the test.

In the dining room, she is a sister.
She can be your greatest treasure,
Or the cruelest displeasure.
She is happy but mad, she is good but bad.
And though she hands you a plate,
you never question the story she told, or if you could relate.

In the bathroom, she is a friend.
Sometimes she gazes lovingly at herself,
like a favorite toy to keep on a shelf.
She admires her eyes, her lips, her cheeks and her fingertips.
But other times she is a foe.
She observes her shape, and decides whether she is true,
if her body is a prison, or why she is tragically blue.

ruffling clothes, Gabirella Garrido, class of 2023, mixed media

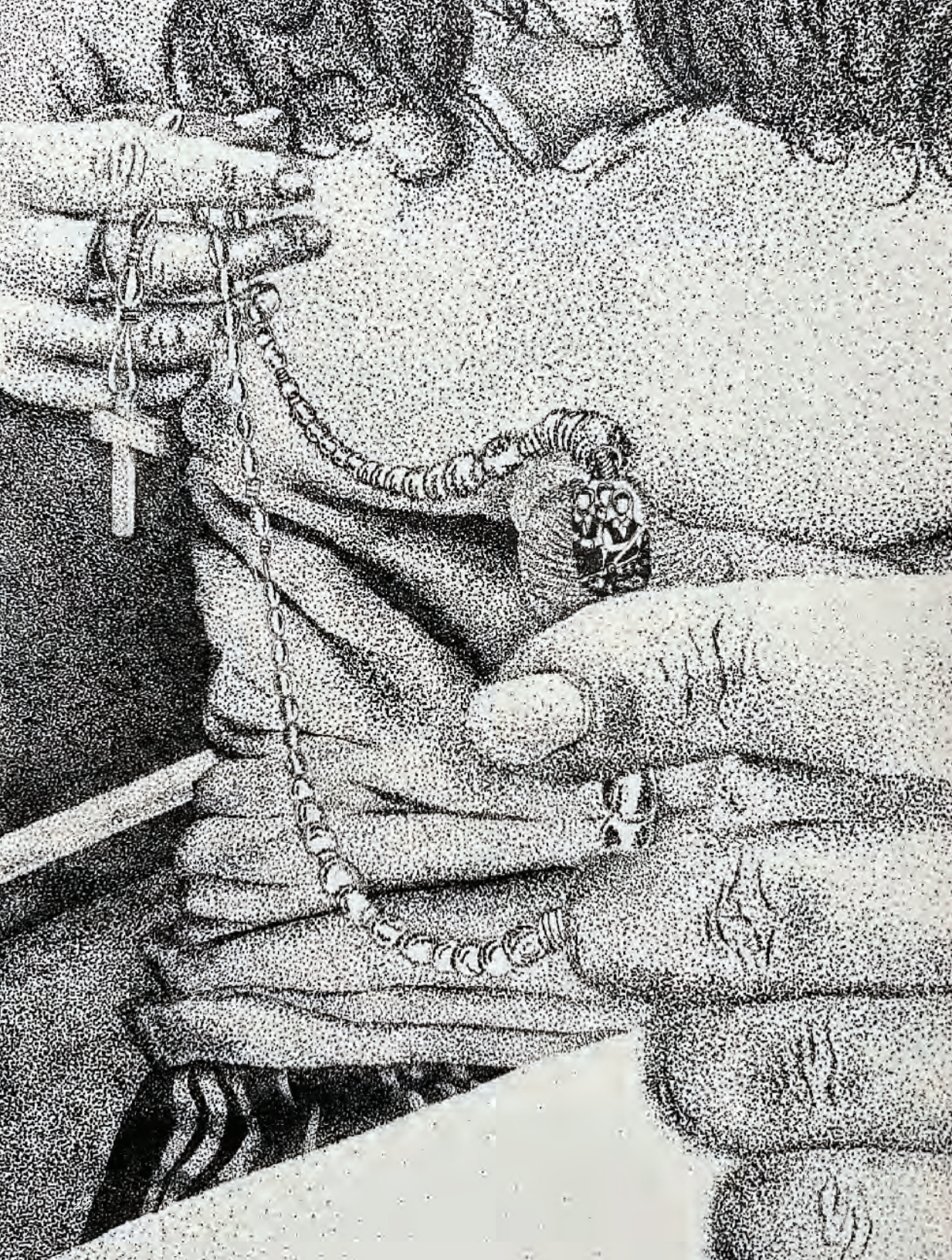
gaping blemishes

Victoria Cristina Trujillo, class of 2024

A single balloon hangs suspended in the bathroom
Reflecting light from the mirror
Upon her entering, the reflected light extinguishes
Her eyes darting to the gaping blemishes in the mirror
They greet her with their usual mockery
The callous red lasting even after it subsides
Every picture
Every video
Every eye fixed upon her
Focusing on the gaping blemishes in the mirror



heated, Annie De Cardenas, class of 2023, mixed media



last hug Carmen Rionda, class of 2023

In Paraná Museum of Contemporary Art, in Brazil, stands a piece titled, “Anatomy of the Hug” by artist Luna Lu. However, traveling thousands of miles across the globe in my short lifetime has not exposed me to this breathtaking piece. Despite spotting ants of people from the tallest building in Manhattan, witnessing streaks of thousand year old rock across the Grand Canyon, and watching the sun paint the sky across the Bahamian horizon; nothing amounted to the picture on my 6 inch phone.

Two identical spinal cord and rib cage skeletons facing each other. Hanging from above the skeletons, two hearts fly suspended in the air resting on each other, finding comfort in the other. I stood stoic, staring at my screen, eyes watering, as memories awoke in my mind.

Flashing back was that last night. The weekly phone call from my grandfather inviting me to dinner was like a broken record; he would say, “Whatever you want,” in a deep Spanish accent, and every time, we chose the same restaurant. The ending to the night was always the same grand hug I overlooked until now.

I can still feel his rough skin and always pressed button down short sleeve shirt closing in for the tightest squeeze. His heavy men’s cologne would take over my nostrils and leave me smelling like a Cuban cigar until I showered. A sting of warmth would remain on my body once he let go. That night I wish he never did.

Heart attacks took that warmth away from me for the last time. There was no more sense of comfort or feeling of love in any hug I received on the only day I wore all black or any day after that. Emptiness

would grow throughout me with every meaningless embrace. I felt as empty as the rib cages in the piece, my soul was disappearing. Having once been filled with purpose and meaning, and now just a bunch of bones representing something that used to be there.

I thought about what life has in store for me, I saw an oasis of peace with no grief. But, I worked in order to fill the void.

I turned down the volume on Birthdays, family celebrations, personal milestones, all of those things to prioritize the only thing that mattered, to stay numb.

However, the first hug from my brother made me feel whole again. But when my toddler brother’s arms barely circumferenced my waist, I felt the light back inside of me.

Down syndrome had created a divide emotionally between my brother and I. Being in the 6th grade I had utter confusion towards the concept of a genetic condition and what it would entail for the future. Development and disability never had any correlation in my mind until I grew older and understood what it truly meant. When he finally had the ability to take his first steps, tears trickled down my face and he moved from my mother to me across the living room and sprang into my arms and brought back the love.

The two hearts resting upon each other for me symbolize the sharing of love in Lu’s piece, it shows the connection between two people emotionally during a physical interaction. Which I believe is beauty in itself. I am so grateful I finally was able to unlock the warmth in my body once again and find true peace.

the light in which i look through

Sofia Huerta, class of 2024

The light in which I look through
the light in which I see
Oh please let the world
be someone other than just me

I look into the faces
 with real thoughts and real lives
And I think to myself they can't be alive
They can't be experiencing the same world design
the same meaningless passage of time

Because when I close my eyes I see
Black light and blue light
Like the bruises on my knees
From apologizing for being right

My skin is burning and I'm blinded
But they say that's just the sun
I think its radiation
 but they don't hear what I've said
They're having to much fun

I need to see what's inside
I want to x-ray your mind
I want to know if that's where I reside
But I'm too scared of what id find

Why does the ugly look fluorescent?
The problems I want to shun
Why isn't the beauty luminescent?
Does that mean there is none?

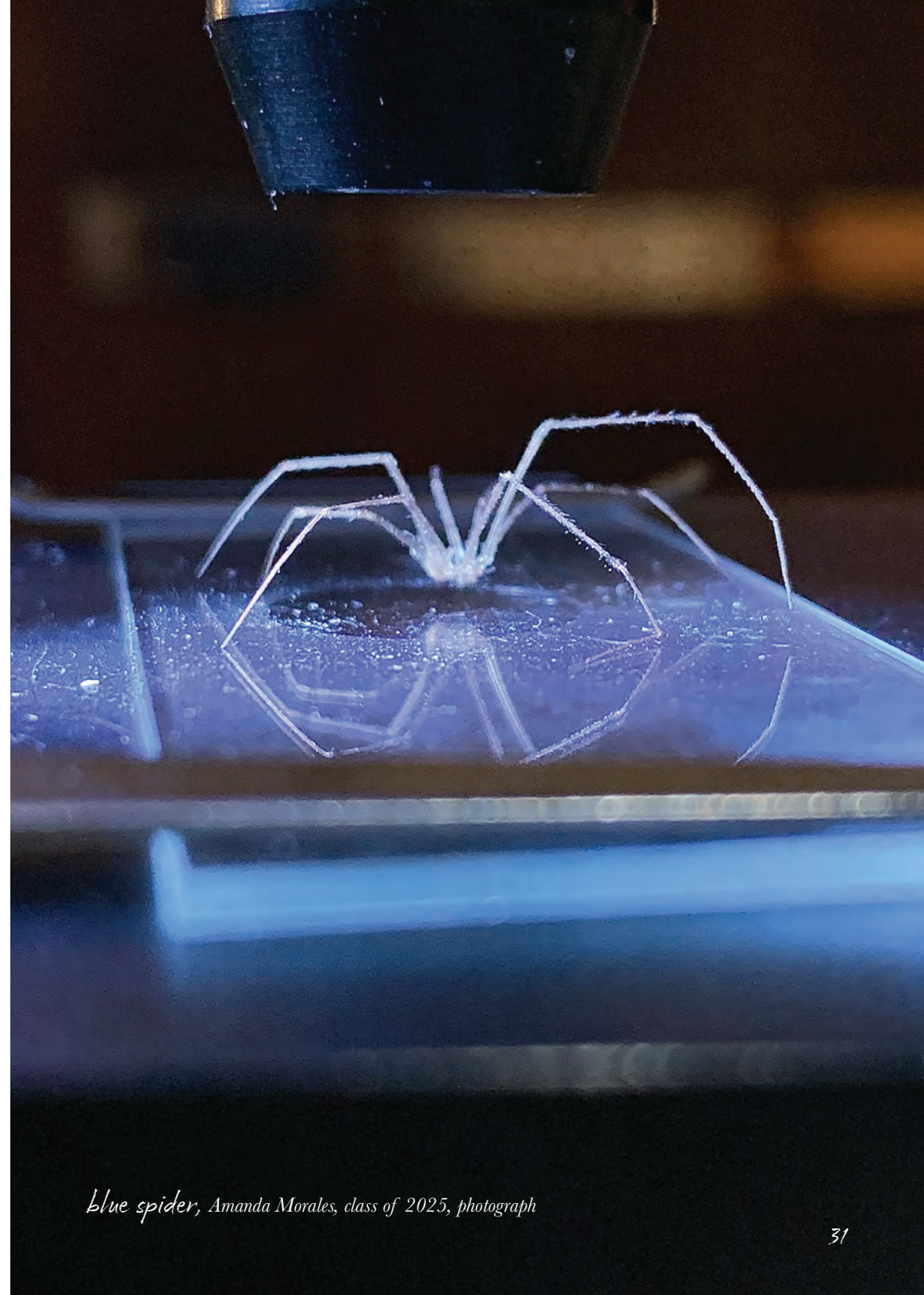
I want to surf on gamma rays
I've heard their waves are the longest
I want to lose track of the days
I don't want to have to be honest

Because blood is not thicker than water,
 remind us
But even the water is still blue
And blue light causes blindness
Have I ever seen the friends I thought I knew?

Once again I find myself alone, only me
In the light in which I look through
The light in which I see

Now all that's left to see is the warmer light
The hope I've clung to every night

I hope they see the light in which I look through
I hope they aren't gone
I hope you think like I do
I hope I'm not the only one
 trying to keep the light on



blue spider, Amanda Morales, class of 2025, photograph



the reflection

Priscilla Paul, class of 2024

Glancing at a girl who seems familiar but is unrecognizable,
I become frustrated.
Who is that girl who looks solemnly at me with eyes that beg,
I don't understand.
Why does she look to me for comfort, who am I to her?
I don't know.
Why does she giggle at nature's orientation and do math for fun?
She's so weird.
Who is she to not try to please people by changing herself?
Such a tease.
What is her motive, why does she seem like she is trying to escape?
She is dramatic.
Why can't she just pretend to be happy as everyone else is?
She seeks attention.
Why is she grabbing me and pulling me in?
I am scared.
Is she the person I am hiding from the world?
I understand now.
She is what's under the mask.
She is me.

the art of overcompensation, Natalia Sofia Pravia, class of 2025, mixed media

until departure

Gabriella Dreize Perez, class of 2024

2 months left until departure:

My cheeks are stiff with dried tears as I sit in a garden of tissues. You console me, but I've been here before and know that your flowers of promises will soon wilt away. You've stopped reassuring me, and I've left the garden; we both silently agree not to talk about it anymore. But I'm fine; there is still time.

1 month left until departure:

The ache in my stomach grows with each day, but I push it down. There is still time, but I see the famous printed shirts and pants. I've always hated green on you. Your facial hair has changed; it is short and blunt, and crude against your loving expressions. You are not the only one to change. Soon I will have to change too. But I'm fine; there is still time.

1 day left until departure:

Why must you go? We are brought back to the garden from months ago and see the wilted flowers on the floor. People in the Middle East need you, but so do I. It's complicated, you say, and deep down, I know that. It seems as though you've picked strangers over your own flesh and blood; them over me. I know mothers and fathers need to be relieved from their position, but what about my father? Why must it be you to take their place? I know I'm being selfish, but I don't want to relive three years ago and have to change again. Because deep down, I know there is no more time. Deep down, I knew there was never any time.

the broadway way, Stella Marie Arthur Gnibus, class of 2025, photograph





eyebrow tweezers

Lucia Moglia, class of 2023

It starts to emerge before me,
Right through the cover of trees, slowly cascading shadows over my face
As I look at empty spaces, as far as my peripheral vision allows
The sun adds color to a day I wish would never come
For now, This parking lot is a ghost town, and I it's only ghost
Sometimes I feel translucent,
as if only a flashlight can highlight the labyrinth under this weak, coarse skin
Hold it to my brain, and like a surgeon
witnessing a career justifying mess
Try to ix it
Why do you try? Knots and knots and knots
Untie them, only you're an amateur and those are eyebrow tweezers
The same ones that released follicles
that once called the midsection between my eyebrows home
You took them out after a boy said they were ugly
And you did it again when the whiskers that decorated my face reminded me of imperfection,
made me shame the dark hair of my heritage
The same darkness that spans my arms and once spanned my legs
before I became acquainted with sharp objects, the cosmetic kind
The hair on my head is even thicker,
But my skin is not
On the epidermis, surface level
Fragile, tactile level
I can feel it scratching and cracking under the weight of life's context
And here in this parking lot all I can think is that soon the sun will expose me
Expose those years of bleaching away into the single digits of the night
All those appointments to make me perfect
All those headlights I rested under
And I became translucent laying there,
Watching them run a finger over my face, feel it's bumps like the humps of my insecurities
I took pills for that once
The bumps went away but the humps remain,
it doesn't matter, you can only see them when you hold a flashlight to my brain,
and pick up the tweezers
They are rusted now, but you interrogate as if to pick the worn thoughts out of my mind
Rearrange and rearrange as if up cycling the past will make it the same
But who she was before the change, remains
She's the ghost that vaporizes from the leftover frays
Residue in the way I still bite my nails and scrutinize my face
Crouch in the light, retreat to the shade
I thought being translucent would make me malleable, compatible to the mold
But in my mind, as you see with the flashlight's glow
The knots reject tweezers and manifest a ghost decades old

college acceptance

Emi Gil, class of 2024

You talk in hopes that I listen.
You read to learn how you can potentially glisten.
In a moment, all is challenged, even your position,
Because the tare of an envelope denies your admission.
A choice that was made, by you, for me.
You cannot avoid what you want to see.
You cannot avoid what you want to believe.
Tell me, why are you against me?
Away from the bubble that engulfs your sorrow.
Away from me, who eats, but does not borrow.
Away, away you go, drifting through the shallow depths of tomorrow,
Hoping that judgment won't be all that you come to follow.
You like to think that you can back up your name,
But in the end, you love to blame.
After all, we all go with some shame,
Our DNA is framed to play a competitive game.

if the shoe fits, Ella Romero, class of 2023, acrylics



i hate the airport

Amelia Frias, class of 2023

i saw the ball drop.
in new york, cheers erupt
in miami, i lower the volume
the tv gives me a headache

the clock hits zero
it means about as much
as the timer on the microwave

i stir the contents
still cold

the clock doesn't stop at 12
it keeps ticking
59 to 00 to 01
a minute is still sixty seconds

i eat my grapes
i forget my wishes

health, i guess
grades, i guess

this is ridiculous

a pony
a million dollars
a boyfriend

waking up without swollen eyes
going to sleep without damp pillows

i drag luggage around the block
i don't know why
i hate the airport

ticking time bomb, Miranda Munoz, class of 2023, pen/pencil





modern disguise

Ella Colina, class of 2024

The suppression of emotions is so normalized in today's society
We are expected to put up a front
 in order to hide our true feelings from reality
It causes people to fall into a cycle of deception
A sequence of internal fraud and dissimulation
We become emotionally unavailable
And our trust ends up unattainable
Depression suppressed by optimism,
 modernism for a physiological disguise
But will it be enough to claim the prize?
The award of popularity
Isn't that what is sought for? The euphoria from familiarity
We all just want to be loved and known
But will the stakes make us turn into clones?
There is lack in originality
Causing creative minds to be missing individuality
Leaving everyone to the question-
Will I become a puppet to society's suggestion
Or possess an objection to the world's repression

dear reader

Fabiana Lara Montoya, class of 2026

Dear Reader,

I struggle everyday to please you:
I have given you everything I have,
Everything I am,
And everything I can do.

For years I have felt lightheaded,
The heat is defeating me.

I always strive to be flawless,
When you need aid,
I assist with pleasure.

Now:
Now I struggle,
I am drained,
And you do not care.

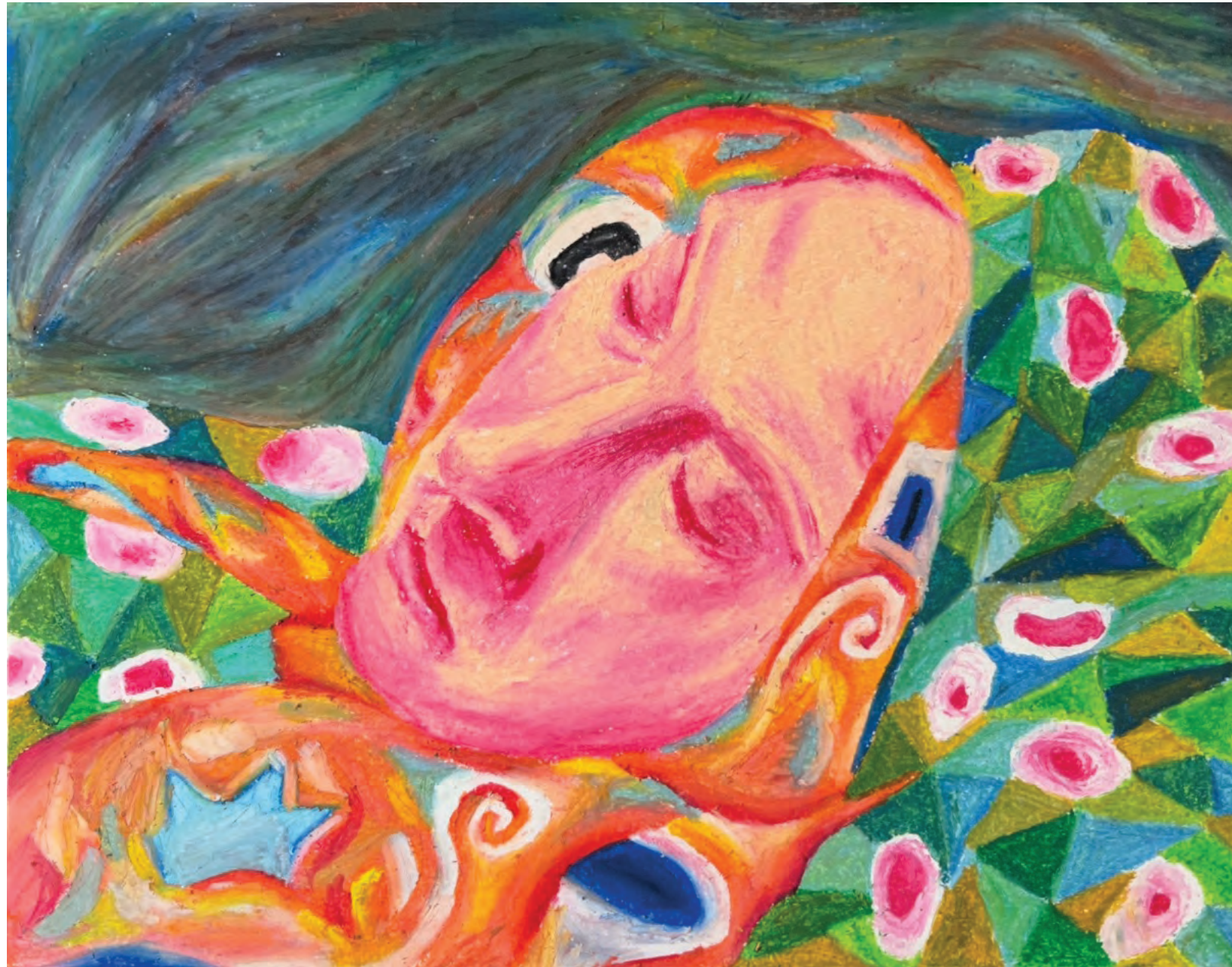
No one cares enough to help me.
I need fixing
Most people deny what is happening to me,
Yet the outcome is inevitable.

I am dying.
When I give out, everything goes with me.
I do everything in my power to protect us,
But I can only accomplish so much alone.

If only you had listened when I first cried for help...

With Love,

Mother Nature



encased in klimt's life, Amanda Rodriguez, class of 2023, oil pastels

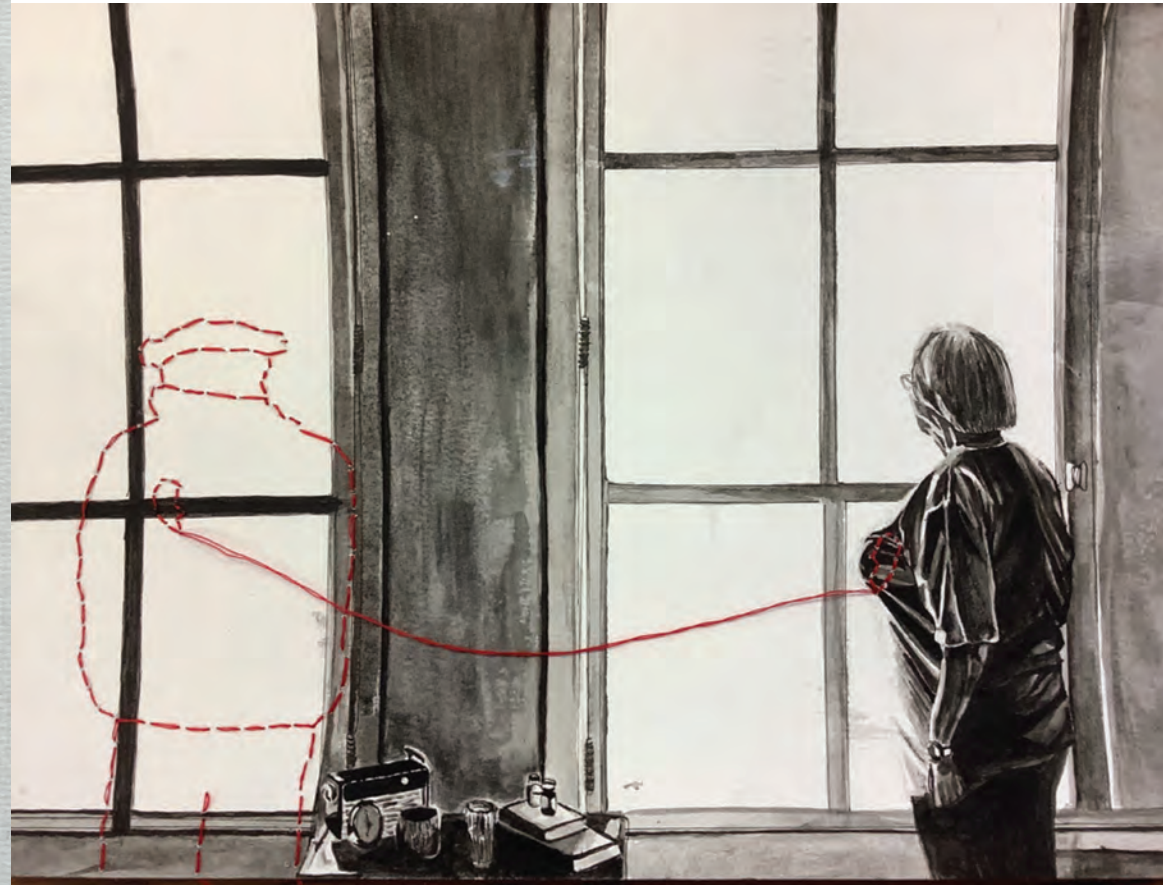
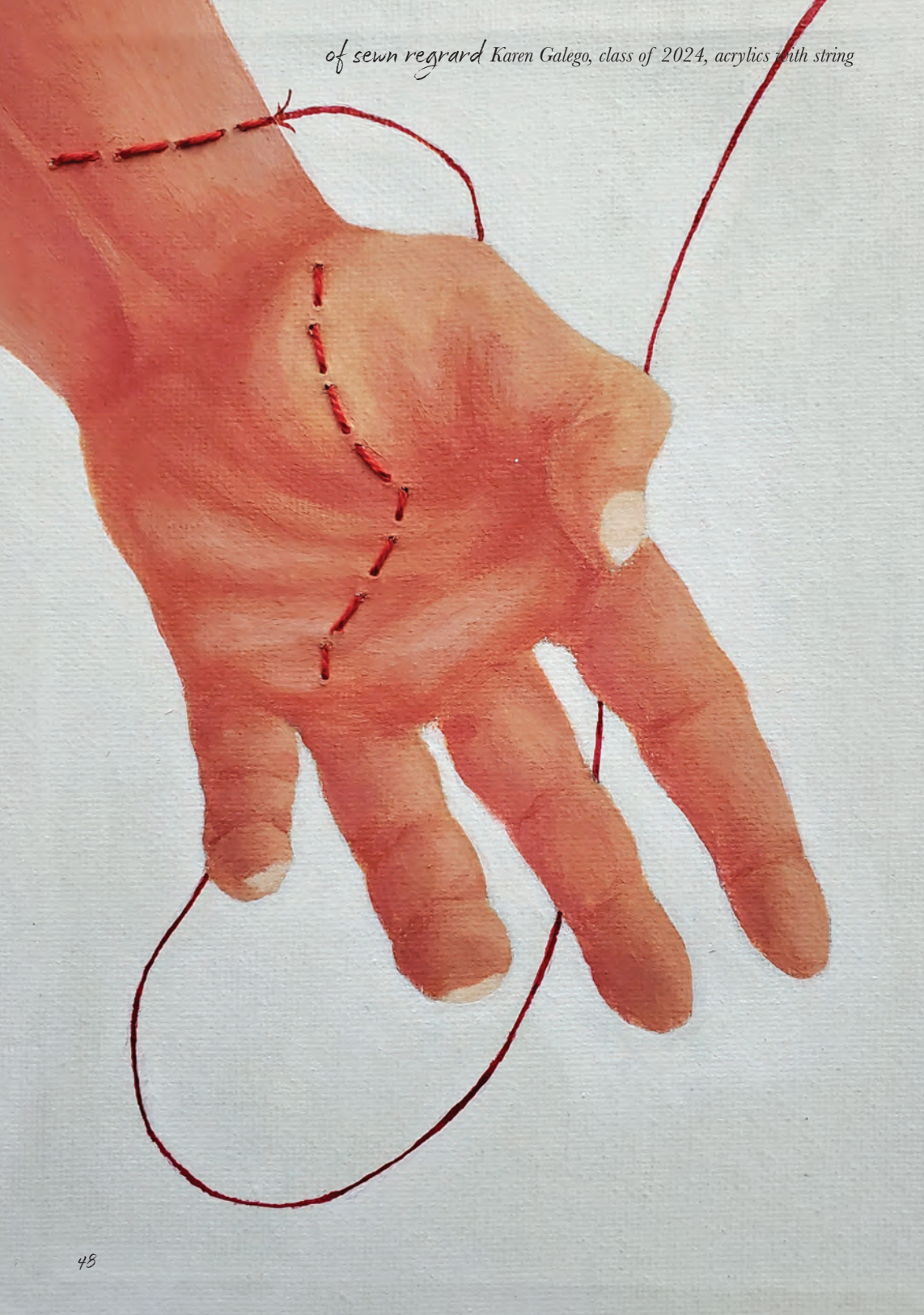


i forgot
 Maria Jose De Armas, class of 2023

I forgot the color of your eyes.
 I know they're brown and not green,
 but it's hard to differentiate shades through a screen.
 I forgot the sound of your voice.
 I hear it almost everyday,
 and yet it still seems so far away.
 I forgot the feeling of your touch.
 It's been years since we last met,
 so it can be fairly easy to forget.
 I forgot the way you move.
 I forgot your favorite foods.
 I forgot what I stand to lose.
 It's not the distance that leaves me in tears,
 It's the lack of answers I've received through the years.
 I forgot that I had hope.
 The future is yet unwritten,
 but my present pain remains hidden
 in the promise of your return home.

lost & found, Annie de Cardenas, class of 2023, collage

of sewn regard Karen Galego, class of 2024, acrylics with string



my half that's lost, Miranda Guerra, class of 2023, mixed media

Ride of your Life

Camila Alvarez, class of 2023

Here we go
The ride is about to begin The fastest roller coaster

Life

You must choose to truly live your life now
Not tomorrow not Monday but now
Now is when you choose to live in the moment Now is when you choose
to ride the roller coaster

Life comes with many twists and turns
But learn to smile brighter when life twists your plans
And learn to make the best of it when unexpected turns come your way

Like any roller coaster there will be many ups and downs
But on these ups you'll learn to enjoy life for all it has to offer
You'll laugh with your family
You'll dance with your friends
And on these downs you'll become stronger
You'll be able to look on the bright side
You'll lean on those around you

Be thankful to the people who chose to ride this roller coaster with you
Who chose to live life with you
Who stayed by your side through all the twist and turns and all the ups
and downs Because it wouldn't be half as fun without them

So hop on and enjoy the ride Don't blink though
Because if you do
you might miss it

sneakers, Eva Matute, class of 2023





becoming an author Amelia Frias, class of 2023

I remember when my future felt like fiction.
I always treated life like a novel,
Divided my childhood into chapters,
Pictured milestones as plot points.

I spent lunch breaks and car rides racing,
Sprinting to the end of stories,
enthralled in my questions
until I was satisfied with the answers.

I soon branched from fiction;
I tried new genres
and writing lost its structure,
The storyline curved and bent.

Sometimes, the plot melted and reformed
Deformed and misshapen
There was no exposition,
I was thrown headfirst into action

Sometimes it was vicious poetry,
Double-edged delusions
from a delusional poet
unreliable, untrustworthy.

At the very worst, I was swept away
in a stream of consciousness.
Decisions done and redone,
Visions reviewed and revised
over time and time and time.

new city Eva Matute, class of 2023, mixed media

I was overwhelmed;
I left books on the shelf,
on the nightstand,
on the endless list in my notes app.

I always treated my life like a novel
Flipping back to the best parts,
Taking notes furiously,
As if I could rewrite what has been written.

I grew tired of that, even,
Of living in a margin,
Highlighting all the words
I wished I said instead of saying them.

And so I said them; on paper, at least –
immortalizing fears and hopes with ink,
Arguing and refuting my questions
Until I was satisfied with my answers.

I began to write my own novels,
In dim candlelight, in searing sun,
I scratch mindless musings on McDonald's
napkins,
And stain my skin with Sharpies and inspi-
rations.

I have novels and novels
in the back of my mind.
I have novels and novels
to go.



a table long enough

Lucia Moglia, class of 2023

In a hidden corner of my house rests a table large enough to fit three people. When looking close enough, one can find an array of stains, scratches, and dents spanning its wooden length. Although seemingly imperfections, each hint of disorder is a testament to the countless moments spent sitting there with my parents. It's where growing up I did homework as my mother rummaged through weekly mail, where my father sips his morning black coffee as he reads about politics and soccer, where we eat breakfast, where we eat lunch, where we eat dinner and most special, where the magic of our *sobremesa*, the talking period after dinner, happens.

When my mother deems I've tossed vegetables around long enough, she retires the dishes and the table becomes my father's stage. With his Gandalf-like voice he draws me in and introduces another story, another piece in the mosaic of human experience. We talk about anything, and that is what I love about it. Current events, recollections of our family history, or any other token in the history of mankind that happens to come up, all taught to me in a thirty minute period more sacred to me than anything I have ever known.

My father doesn't believe he is a storyteller, at least not in the way I am. He doesn't take pen to paper, or concoct fictitious universes out of plain air. However, little does he know that years of joining him at our special table, watching him spin real life into captivating tales, was a large factor in my own desire to write. Every time he brought me into his confidence, as if we were equals, and I worthy of the new information, the table expanded and became large enough to fit the world.

seafood by the sea, Camilla Luna, class of 2026, photograph

good morning

Natalia Gonzalez, class of 2023

My phone plays the same sound everyday, and I can already tell that today is one of THOSE days. I have millions of assignments to do, billions of conversations to have, and trillions of thoughts that are already overwhelming me, and it's only 6:00. I get dressed and go to the kitchen, where of course I drop my water bottle and need to clean it up. I eat food in a hurry and tell my sister to wake up for the 10th time.

It's only 6:15. Now that she's up, I start to plan out my day, but I'm losing myself in the process. I can't keep track of it all, and it's only 6:25. I grab my car keys and say bye to my parents, but we are going to be late if we don't go outside in the next 3 minutes. Since when have my mornings been this stressful?

I open the door and walk two steps forward before my body stops in its tracks. I am overwhelmed by a new thing: the color of the sky. Suddenly, the world is calm, and the only thought running through my head is "WOW." At only 6:31, the sky has been painted in the most beautiful hues of purple, pink, and yellow. The clouds are nowhere to be seen as the display of light dances across my vision. I must have stumbled into a dream.

I come back to my senses and walk to my car, until I stop again to look down onto the sidewalk to find a chalk drawing with the words "GOOD MORNING!" written in the same purple, pink, and yellow that lights up the sky. That cannot be a coincidence. I take a deep breath, and look at the time; it's only 6:35. Life is truly beautiful once you look for the beauty in every little thing! This truly is a good morning, and it's going to be a good day.

Beautiful day, Ella Romero, class of 2023, digital





*the sun who wished
upon a star* Veronica Salgueiro, class of 2023

The Sun wished she was a little bit more like the moon.
The moon was desired by everyone.
It signaled the night time,
A final end to the chaos,
And a chance to sleep off the day's endeavors.
The Sun wondered why she wasn't wanted in the morning
by the Earth's inhabitants.
She was just doing what she was created to do.

So she wished upon a star in hopes to be more like the moon,
But the star couldn't see why she possibly would want
to be something different.
The star explained to the Sun that she was important,
She mattered,
And although some may say differently,
She was loved.
So when the next morning came,
The Sun put all of her worries and comparisons aside,
And she stayed shining bright.

shine, Ana Perez, class of 2023, mixed media

*i learned how to read
writing this* Anne Varcacel, class of 2024

do you know where your neck ends, and where your shoulders begin?
I used to not know. or maybe I would just ignore it. the gist is,
I probably wouldn't have, if it weren't for the one day
where I happened to feel the end of my neck and
the beginning of my shoulders change.

do you remember being a witness to a series of sounds,
and hearing a collection of noises,
and spontaneously finding yourself resonating with the phenomenon of language?
I don't.
because I never did. and I probably never will

do you remember what it felt like to notice
your brand-new ends-and-beginnings of necks-and-shoulders?
and do you remember what it felt like to realize that those series of sounds,
and collections of noises,
are supposed to assist human beings?

right now I won't remember. but one day I'll look back
on these hard-to-swallow pills that I've attempted to gulp time and time again.
and I'll finally reminisce on the stressed points,
instead of seeing the hurdles ahead of me.
and acknowledge the joys of acceptance.

reinvention, Sofia Huerta, class of 2024, pencil





jump around

Danielle Noriega, class of 2023

I take one step in front of the other on freshly cut grass. My five-year-old self smiles from ear to ear completely oblivious to the world around her. The bright green bushes in the backyard were just planted last week, and finally starting to grow.

Stepping on the ladder to go inside the trampoline feels exciting. I jump but all I see is the wall. I'm jumping as high as I can but all I see is the wall. Is there anything beyond this wall? Can I be anything beyond this wall? The wall is so tall yet I'm so small, but maybe that will change.

I've been jumping on the same trampoline since I was five years old. I love the feeling when the laws of gravity are momentarily suspended. For a moment between the force I expand to jump and the second I come back down, I feel weightless, free, almost like anything is possible. While that feeling never changes, one thing does: the view.

As a child, all I could see was the wall that blocked my backyard from the busy street behind my house. My world was no bigger than my backyard and that wall kept me safe, shielding me from the millions of cars traveling to and from all parts of the world I knew nothing about, each one with a life of their own.

As I grew older and taller, my view changed. When I jumped, I could see past the wall. I saw people on the street, cars passing by, but they all seemed far from me and I didn't need to know about the strangers in the world. I grew up in a tight-knit community. I went to the same school from the time I was 4 years old

to 8th grade. I grew up and was always surrounded by the same people. Those people were all like me; we all had similar thoughts, opinions, and beliefs. The world beyond me was large, but one I didn't feel I needed to venture into. I had everything I needed in this bubble, or at least I thought I did.

But I kept growing and my view kept changing. I learned that the reason why I had similar thoughts and opinions as the people I grew up with was because we never ventured to other ideas and beliefs, what we were taught is what we believed because we didn't know anything else.

As I ventured beyond that bubble, I learned that my view on life was a reflection of myself. The point in my life where all I could see was the wall, was a time I didn't test my limits and try new things. The day I jumped out of the bubble I saw not only the world, but myself, and how I held an unknown curiosity deep inside of me. If I never jumped out of that bubble, I never would have truly found myself.

I learned that in life, it is not about how high you jump, but being open to see beyond the wall. You have to have courage to step out of your bubble to see yourself and the world in a different light. I realize that it may have taken me a while to see that the world is more than the bubble I was raised in, that it is an interesting place with different views, different flavors, and new adventures, but I'm glad all it took was for me to jump around and I can't wait to see what the future holds.

grandma lela

Claudia Portocarrero, class of 2023

“Blah, Blah, Blah.” Disregarding the words of my salad-loving mother and beaming from ear-to-ear, I slyly tip-toed into Grandma Lela’s foyer to snatch a silver-wrapped, chocolate teardrop from her secret stash of Hershey’s kisses.

My Spanglish-speaking mom’s voice echoed through my mind each time I reached for another bite-sized piece of heaven. Though it appeared innocent, a strong duality existed in each tiny piece of chocolate; it was a perpetual cycle of either satisfying my cravings or guiltily disobeying my mom’s rules. It had always been difficult for me to bend rules, but nonetheless, I allowed myself to deafen the overbearing opinion of my mother and indulge in the one devilish ingredient, sugar, that made my tongue tingle with happiness. Over the years I’ve come to realize, C12O22H11 makes me, me.

At the age of five, I stood in the shadow of my six-foot Lela, trying not to let my clumsiness get the best of me as I poured sugar to whip up our beloved “Wiwa’s Cake.” Wearing my batter-splattered, oversized apron and holding a whisk larger than my face, I was jumping for joy; it was finally time to learn the recipe my great-great grandmother, Rosalia “Wiwa” Larriue-Torres, once baked in her Varadero beach house before it was destroyed by the Castro regime. I’ve learned this recipe isn’t just words on paper; it represents the last salvaged bit of Cuba my family could hold onto. As the oldest granddaughter and self-appointed family baker, I vowed to keep my family’s heritage wafting through the kitchen.

I began to grow into my worn, oversized apron. I was no longer just baking for my family as the owner of my business, Confections by Claudia. Week after week, with bags under my eyes, I line up a seemingly never-ending list of orders and ask Alexa to “play Stayin’ Alive.” Each intricate cake carries both the pains of hard work and the sweet taste of resulting opportunities. The carefully-calculated profits

from my business funded sleepaway camp in Georgia and mission trips to the Dominican Republic. They gave me the chance to sing my heart out in Cabin 6 and make friendship bracelets with the campesinos in La Javilla.

After Lela’s unexpected passing in 2021, I almost put my apron away. Instead, I committed myself to another job: sharing her treasured, chicken-scratch recipes with more than just my clients. Just as Lela honored her abuela through Wiwa cake, I memorialize mine by sharing her zest for life and “baking a difference.”

My apron, once too big, finally fits just right. In 2019, I became the Birthday Coordinator for a local non-profit supporting youths transitioning from foster care to independent living. Upon seeing the cake I baked for him, 19-year-old Wilmer burst into tears saying he’d never felt so loved. The milk-soaked, tres leches creation was a conversation baked in cake, a masterpiece bonding us through our shared Hispanic heritage. Moments like this prove the unrecognized power of the sugar molecule: the power to bond people together and make someone smile. For me, it’s done both and more.

Since then, I co-founded my own non-profit providing younger foster children with special birthday parties where, for the first time, they can feel important and loved. If the tears flowing down Wilmer’s face serve as any indication of the impact of these celebrations, then my longtime goal is a river, a rich Willy Wonka chocolate river of tears, like the ones I snuck as a child.

As individual atoms covalently bond to form one molecule, sugar bonds me to people and experiences that make me whole. Every granule serves as a catalyst for relationships with family and friends, connections with my community, and the sweetest moments of my life. My childhood act of defiance may have led to a few extra calories, but more importantly it led to a journey of self-discovery.



holding on, Emma Seguro, class of 2023, mixed media

perfect day, Lucy Fernandez, class of 2023, photograph



A free bird leaps
on the back of the
wind and floats
downstream till
the current ends
and dips his wing in
the orange sun rays
and dares to claim
the sky.
But a bird that stalls
down his narrow cage
can seldom see
his bars of confinement
his wings are clipped
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing
The caged bird
sings that
with a little more
of the
but
and he
on the
for the
sings
The free
another
and
through
and the
bright
and he
But a
of dream

Bittersweet

Camila Alvarez, class of 2023

Your face smiles but your heart aches
For although you're happy in the moment
You know it will come to an end
Because time moves forward
and the present will become a distant memory

Life is full of the good and the bad
and it seems like the bad last a lifetime
yet the good only for a second
and although we hate the pain
the pain shows us that what we lost was worth having
Because with pain comes loss
And if we live life right we'll always have something to lose

As bitter as it was sweet
We must realize without sadness there is no happiness
Without rain how can we learn to dance in it?
Without rain how can we ever see a rainbow?

free bird, Ella Romero, class of 2023, digital

kintsugi theme

Kintsugi is the theme of the 34th volume of the *Literati*. Kintsugi is a Japanese mending technique used to repair broken pottery. It involves putting broken pieces together using gold, silver, or other material that adds to the beauty of the piece.

This practice leads to unique versions of original pottery while serving as a reminder to embrace imperfection and see beauty in the broken. This collection contains literary and artistic works that express the unavoidable lows of life, and the empowering ways to pursue.

The cover combines artwork from the collection, broken apart and mended together with gold. To introduce, the book focuses on innocence. The pieces emphasize the simple joys of life, love that surrounds us, gratitude for the past and excitement for the future. Further in the development of the motif, it focuses on the broken pieces in life, the pieces that bring hardships and challenges. Just as growth comes after hardship, pieces that focus on hope and appreciation follow to end the collection. The final pages reflect acceptance of difficulties that lead to maturity and wisdom.

The practice of kintsugi and the lessons it carries are represented in the photographs, poems, narratives, art, and mixed media that make up this volume.

Advised by Mrs. Rebecca Q. Retana, the *Literati* staff developed the theme of **Kintsugi** with senior Hailey Hernandez. The *Literati* staff sorted through art and writing submissions from students to organize this final collection.

thank you

The members of the staff extend their appreciation to all who supported the *Literati* from invention to publication. The staff would like to thank the school administration for its support of this yearly publication. The staff also extends its gratitude toward both the Fine Arts and English departments who encourage and inspire students to submit all types of artistic content.

Special thanks are in order for Mr. Michael Herold at R & C Management, Inc. for cooperating with the staff in the printing of this magazine.

colophon

The 2023 *Literati* is the 34th volume of the school's art & literary magazine. This year's perfect bound book contains 72-pages of 70-lb silk white text paper with a cover that is 100-lb silk white cover stock with gold foil stamping using 4/4 color throughout. All pages were submitted to a local printer via PDF uploads.

900 copies of the magazine are distributed to every student and faculty member. The magazine is funded by the school which is included in tuition.

The magazine uses 6" x 8.5" dimensions for the layout. The visual layout and design was created with the Adobe InDesign Creative Suite 2023 on 5 iMac Computers and 2 Macbook Pro laptops.

Headlines are set in Cherry Blossoms Regular and body copy is set in Baskerville Regular. All fonts are Adobe Fonts.

Over 400 submissions of writing and art were considered for publication. Each staff member read each submission until all the pieces for the *Literati* were chosen. Fine Arts teacher Mrs. Cristina Zibold supplied the AP Studio Art class' portfolios. The English department also encouraged all classes to submit poems, narratives, and essays.

The cover and theme artwork were created by senior Hailey Hernandez who pieced together artworks to fully represent the theme of beauty through the cracks.

Along with checking for grammatical accuracy and writing fluency, the editorial content at the beginning and end of this book was written by Paola Lista to introduce the concept and explain how the staff has interpreted it in the book.

awards & recognition

Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA)
Gold Crown Award 2005, 2010, 2021

Silver Crown Award 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2017, 2022

National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA)

Pacemaker Finalist 2018, 2020, 2022

All American Award 2013

Florida Scholastic Press Association (FSPA)

All Florida Ranking 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE),

REALM First Class 2013, 2019, 2020, 2021

Excellent Rating, 2022



cover design, Hailey Hernandez, class of 2023

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editorial policy

As the official literary and art magazine of Our Lady of Lourdes Academy, *Literati* provides a means of showcasing the broad, creative scope of the student body. Works are mainly solicited through Art and English classes, but all students are invited to submit entries in March of each production year. To be eligible for publication, all submissions must be accompanied by a certificate of originality. To maintain the high standard of excellence for which the magazine strives, submissions are carefully reviewed by Journalism II and III Honors students and advisers, who choose only the most exemplary pieces to be included in the publication. The magazine production is part of the curriculum of Journalism II and III Honors and is completed during the second semester of each school year. 71

