



Heliotrope  
2013

# Note from the Editors-in-Chief

*Heliotrope*, IMSA's literary and arts magazine, began with the simple goal to spread appreciation of the literary and artistic talents of IMSA students and staff around the campus and community. Oftentimes, in the midst of our hectic lives and never-ending workload, we forget to appreciate. We forget to take a step back, breathe, and take in the art and beauty around us. It has been a pleasure to try to bring some of that beauty to you all. Something tells us that when one takes some quiet moments to translate one's thoughts, sights, and meanderings onto paper (or the computer, or camera, or canvas, or whatever medium one pleases), beauty blossoms. It'd be a pity to have that beauty go unappreciated. So that's why we're here, and why we have worked all year to bring you a compilation of the literary and artistic beauty that sprouts from the minds of students and staff here at IMSA. We have greatly appreciated putting these exquisitely crafted pieces together for you, and we hope you will take a few moments to appreciate them as well.

*Heliotrope* Staff 2012-2013

Enjoy,

Carrie Sha, Lily Lou, and Monica Kim

*Heliotrope* EICs 2012-2013

Al-Jalil Gault

Ashley Kim

Jonathan D'Souza

Phuong Vo

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Heliotrope

Publication for the Arts & Literature at

IMSA

A Good Day

By: Clayton

I never thought

There was a way

For me to have

A perfect day,

But then, we met,

And I must say

I've never had

One like today.



Hungry Death

By: John Ludwig Jaeger

By the Lake

I saw Death

Waiting, watching me

Build my fire.

“I’m not ready!” I cried.

“I know,” replied Death,

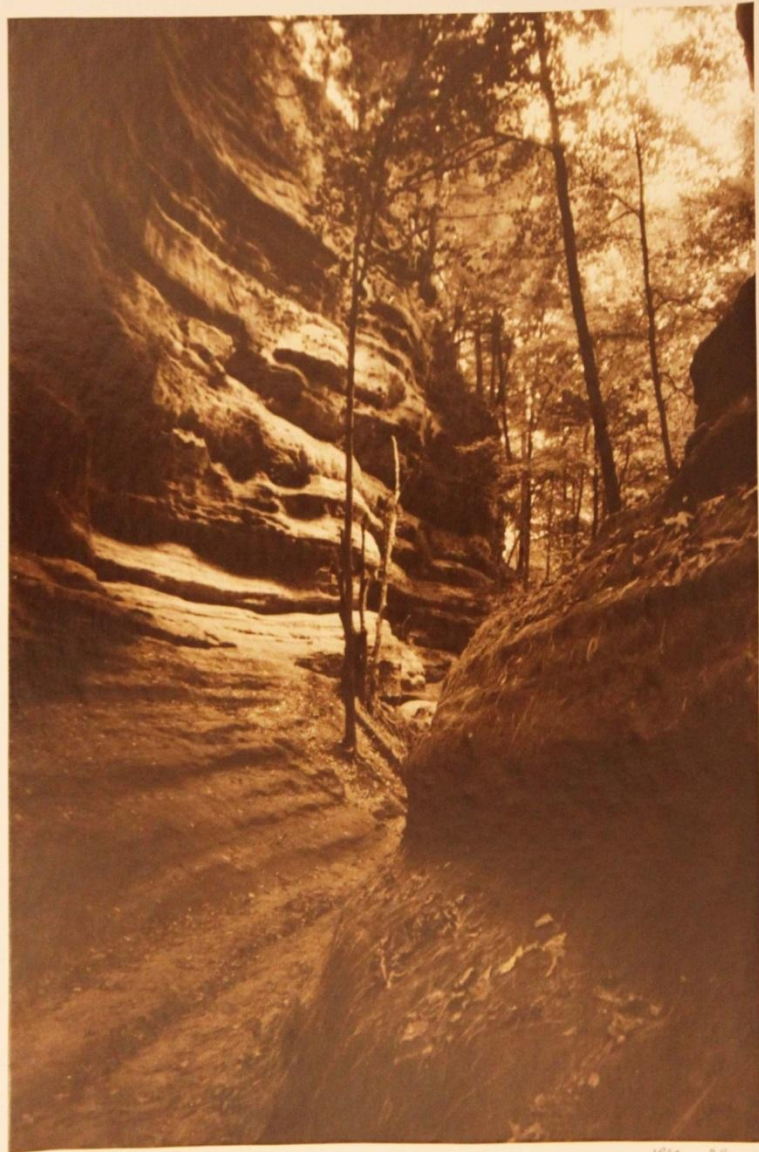
“I’m here for the fish.”



Atene Poskute



Grace Li  
*A Splash of Fall*



*Ellen Zhao*

Ellen Zhao

**Skyward**

By Hannah Trewitt

Here we are  
golden  
falling through night skies  
leaving fluttering tails so  
infinite  
yet so insignificant  
together  
we are singular in a void  
silent  
but astounding to the few  
Who see.

You leave trails everywhere  
to follow, to re-create  
trails that are desperate  
to inspire  
blazing your signature in fire  
across a withering sky  
but try as you might  
but this inspiration doesn't  
ring  
as true as you do  
to those  
Who see.

I follow your path closely  
swallow my own whole  
extinguish the light  
that could once be identified  
as mine  
and come to bask in your  
own



Just as you astound the few  
who witness your flashes of brilliance  
I am honored to follow you  
falling  
unfazed  
to disappear  
all the glory of a moment

but I am broken  
when I fall, I fall apart  
skyward  
waiting for your next move  
for you to determine my life

Existing as the echo of your dreams  
embodying and cherishing every discarded thought  
breathing in the light  
and everything else you leave behind  
addicted to the memory  
sucking it by the mouthful and letting it change me  
it becomes who I am

An echo unmoving in space  
personified stardust  
whimsical  
dramatic

Unseen.

Your Creation







Ego

By: John Ludwig Jaeger

I will not be torn aside


I will not be rent asunder

You will know My Name

I am Lightning; I am Thunder

Atene Poskute



A photograph of waves crashing on a sandy beach at sunset. The water is dark blue and black, with white foam from the waves. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey. The word "Surf" is written in a black serif font in the upper right quadrant of the image.

# Surf

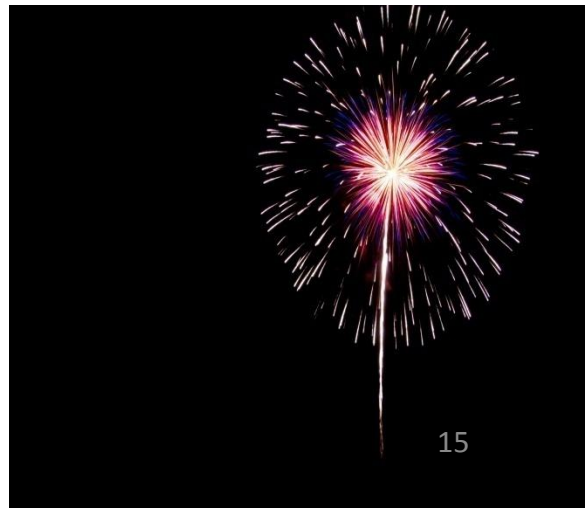
Erma Mladenova



Atene Poskute



Joe Reda





Molly Cuka

K P  
y e  
l t  
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h







-Ellen Zhao

## We Were Ghosts

We were ghosts-  
souls departed from an alive world,  
wandering among the living  
longing to have their flesh  
their color  
their pulse  
their life.

We were ghosts-  
living in a nocturnal eternity  
living in a world  
where we went unseen

We were ghosts-  
we had no foot prints  
we had no voice  
we had a soul

We were ghosts-  
but now we live.

-Anonymous



## Fighting the Dawn

I bought a ticket from  
here to there  
Went from Who  
Knows and got to  
Who Cares  
And fought the  
monster under the  
stairs  
But before I dealt the  
killing stroke  
The light of dawn  
from my window  
broke  
And all my dreams  
turned back to smoke



Joe Reda





-Ellen Zhao

## *A Few Words from Us Spiders*

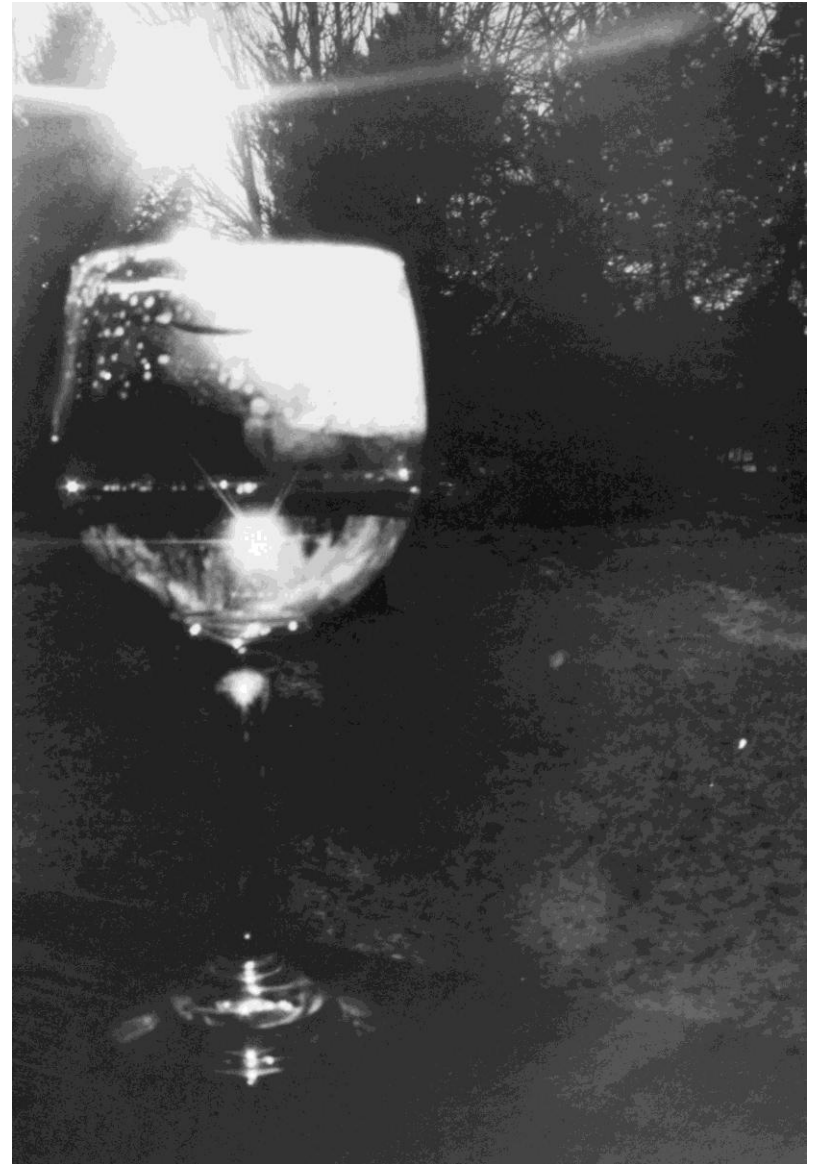
The next time you want to curl up into a ball of frustration and anger, take a lesson or two from us spiders.

Yes, that esoteric entanglement of silk and plotting arachnids is really a counselor in disguise, that abominable gauze cleaving to street corners, bursts of messy green and God forbid—your bedroom door—and those menacing legs inciting a perfectly laughable terror in the hearts of two-legged giants roaming around them.

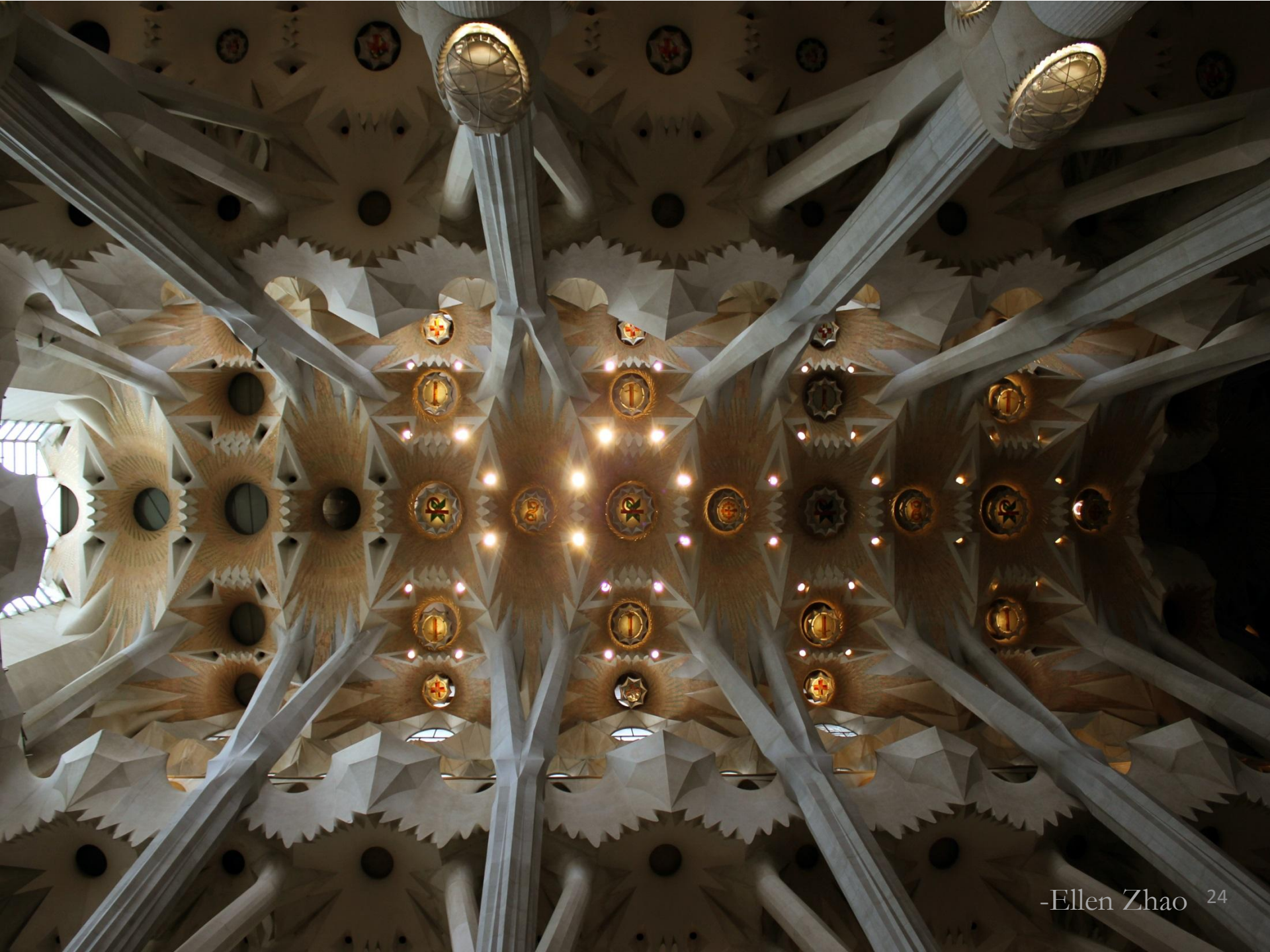
You vacuum up our webs without a whit of penitence  
Those webs—the product of our toils, our home, our lifeblood!  
Just as nature’s calamities do not spare your dwellings,  
do you suppose they spare ours?  
We suffer equally tragic fates, but do we fall into depression  
and while away our hours drunk with despair?  
Why, of course not!  
Perhaps we have shed a few tears on the unfortunate matter (which is only natural),  
but before long another web captures  
the glint of morning dew and trembles gently with the passing breeze.

And so we wait—sometimes minutes, sometimes days—before  
A meal tangles itself in veins of our web.  
But luck is not always on our side  
And the fly misses our net by a breath.  
But anger is a futile consumption of energy  
so we slide back into our hidden alcove  
in patient wait of the next opportunity.

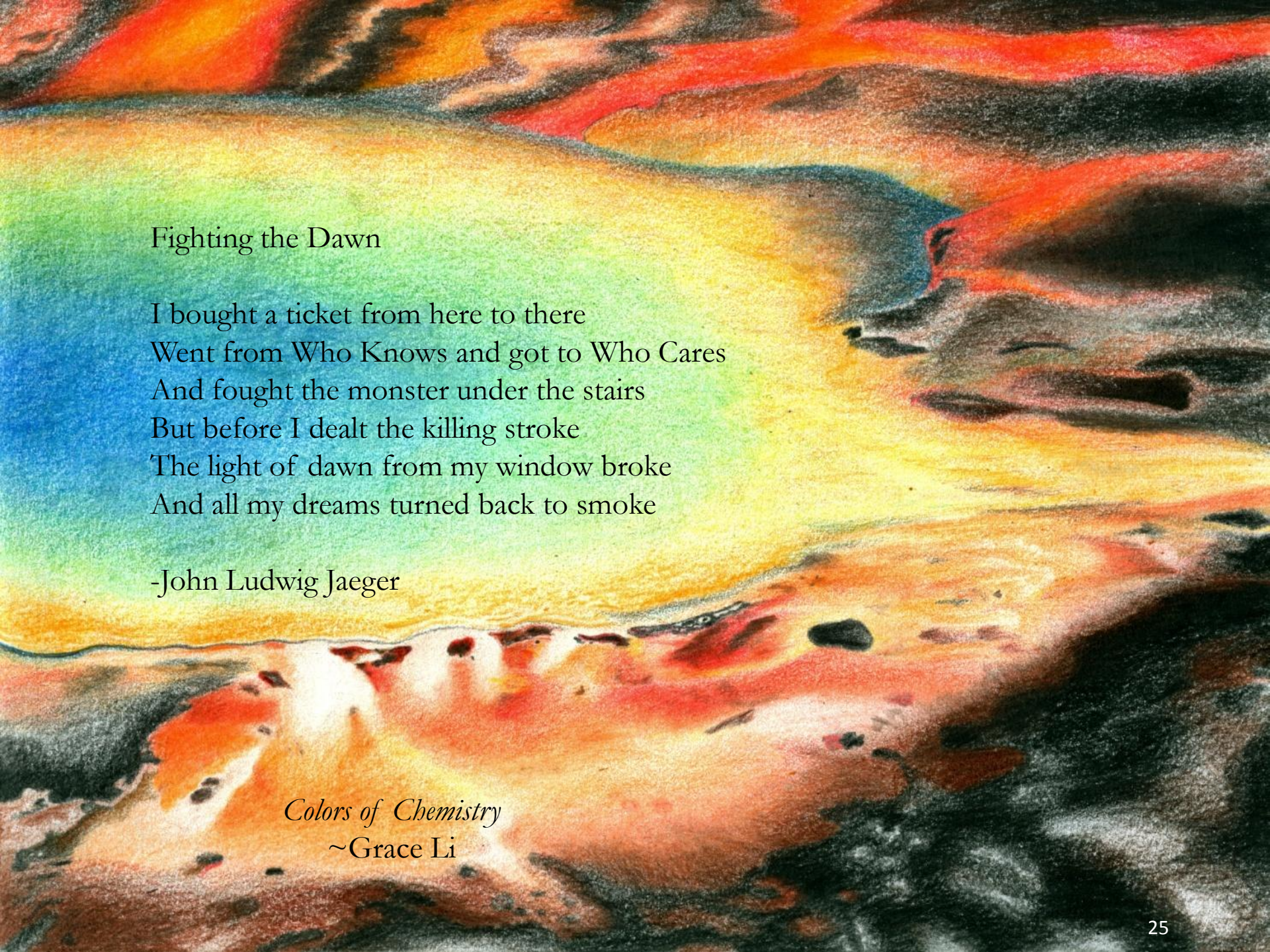
Us spiders know it best: life is a precious little thing  
that can be ended by a human’s finger.  
Nothing comes easily, and disappointments lurk nearby.  
So when we chomp on a hard-earned victory  
we move on from past mishaps and for that moment, be happy.  
Because who knows what the world will bring us  
In the next?



-Ellen Zhao







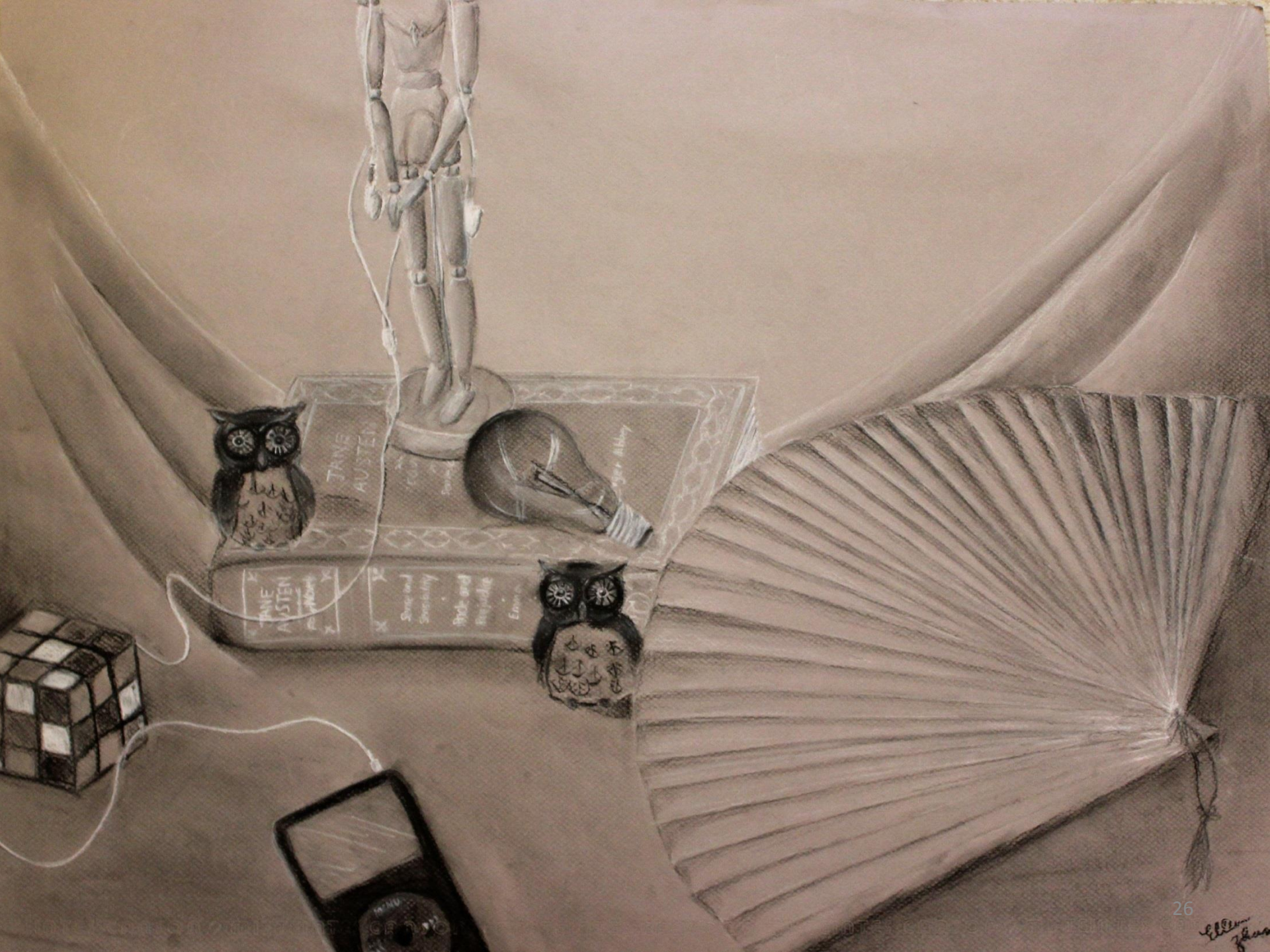
Fighting the Dawn

I bought a ticket from here to there  
Went from Who Knows and got to Who Cares  
And fought the monster under the stairs  
But before I dealt the killing stroke  
The light of dawn from my window broke  
And all my dreams turned back to smoke

-John Ludwig Jaeger

*Colors of Chemistry*

~Grace Li



## Stages Of Foolishness

### 1) Anger

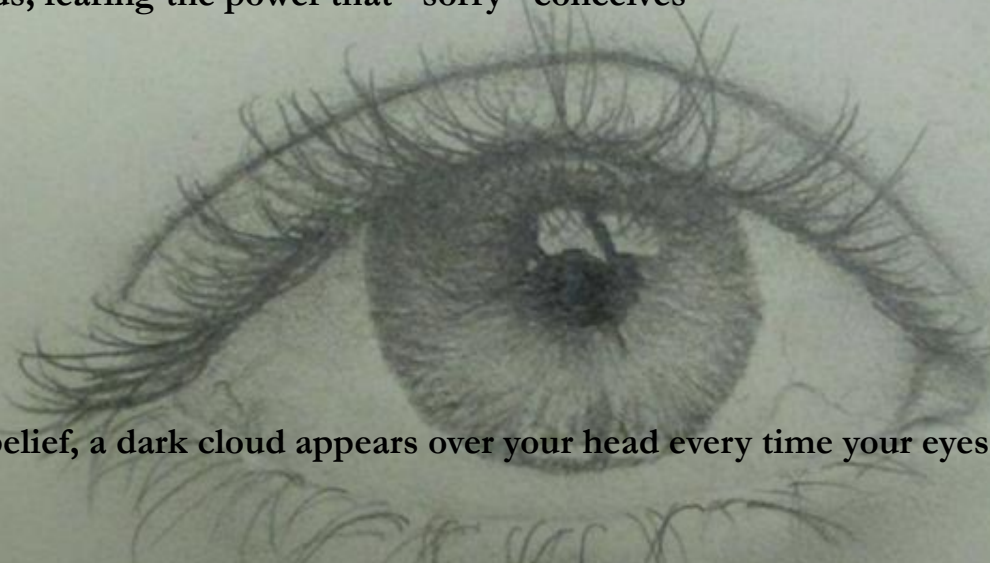
is the charge of evolving mishaps that sit on your heart til it feels the wrong beat

### 2) Words

are the releasing of anger that rings in their ear even after the slate is clean

### 3) Silence

is avoiding with words, fearing the power that "sorry" conceives



Drawing by Jennifer Zhang

### 4) Regret

is the raining of disbelief, a dark cloud appears over your head every time your eyes meet

### 5) Confrontation

is when your chest begin to pound like fast drum beats, and you begin to an end of doing the womanly thing

Of talking THROUGH your anger and getting PAST this sin

And then you wonder why no one attempted to do this to begin.

Too bad it's too late to take back the words that still ring and blend

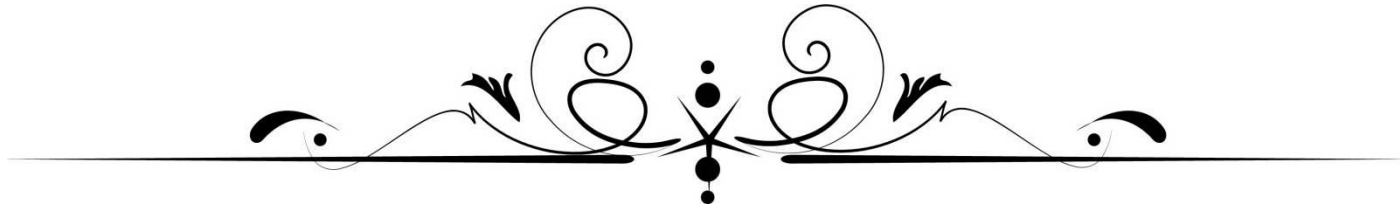
in with mixture of feelings that you cannot rid

because we were supposed to forgive and forget

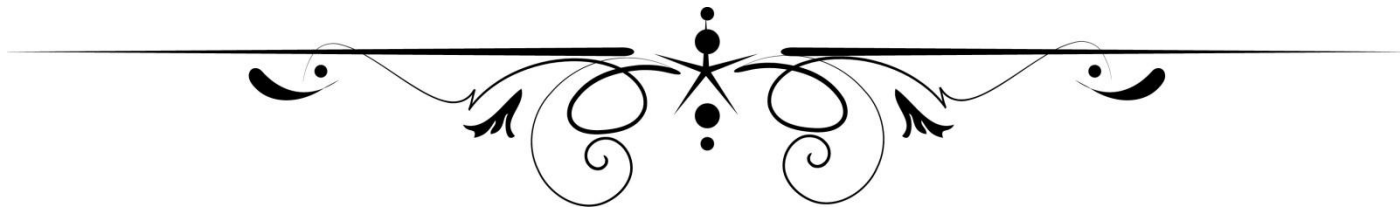
but the insistent ringing in my ear develops to re-offend.

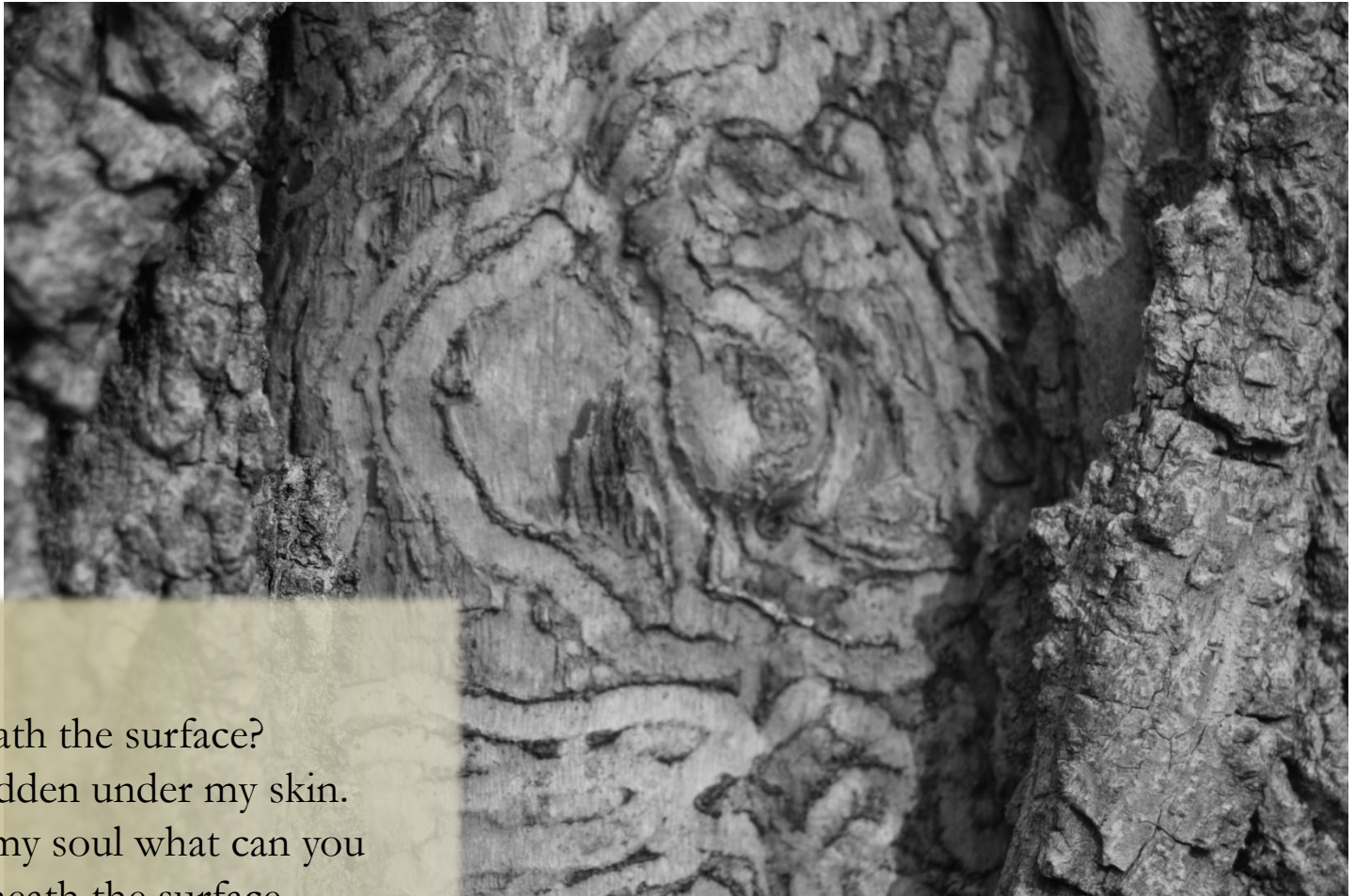
So, the unnecessary anger charges once again.

Will there ever be an end to this consistent trend?



-Ellen Zhao





## Under the Rose

See what lies beneath the surface?  
The truths kept hidden under my skin.  
When you search my soul what can you  
see? What lies beneath the surface  
Must I keep from you?  
Different I's with different eyes  
See what lies beneath the surface,  
The truths kept hidden under my skin.

-John Ludwig Jaeger

~Kyle Petesch

## To Katie

Hear me, o Muse, as I sing to your ears  
And raise up my words to your heavenly spheres  
Take hold of my pencil, take hold of my mind  
Take hold of the memories I am trying to find.  
The story will be told, one word at a time;  
I will stir up deep waters, though frozen in rime.  
I ask your forgiveness, for it's your story too.  
I know you can't give it, but what else can I do?  
We were only small children when you learned to fly.  
We were only small children when I learned all things must die.  
It was mother and father, Michelle, me and you.  
It was that very summer, Sophia joined us too.  
You weren't that old yet, half a year past two,  
While I sat in my PJs and watched Scooby Doo  
And saw Michelle running, then Mom and Dad too,  
To see what was the matter, to see where you flew.  
The window stood open, a portal to new worlds.  
The window stood open for curious girls  
Who jumped on the bed, who jumped just too far,  
Who flapped their wings, who flapped tiny arms.  
We all looked out that window to see you below  
With one scratch on your head and one scratch on your toe.  
But I learned not to judge the covers of books,  
Because that day Death hid beneath your good looks,  
I still remember yelling down from a three-story height;  
I still hear your voice telling me you were alright.  
A queer story I'm told from those who were there  
Because you were already gone. You were no longer here.  
Yet I remember your words after so many years;  
And when I am sleeping they ring in my ears;  
And when I am waking, I find eyes full of tears,  
Because I still hear your voice so calm without fears.



-Ellen Zhao

I still look to the heavens to see if you're there  
And I know Mom still thanks you for parking when you're near  
And I know we all wish that you were still here.  
Even though you live in our hearts, I wish you were here  
To share in the moments that made us all close,  
That made us a family when we needed it most.  
You never met James and Joe, but they sure know you  
From pictures of curls made of gold and eyes full of blue.  
I hope you can hear me, I know you're not far:  
I know you're alright, wherever you are.  
I don't believe in Heaven, I don't believe in God,  
But I know you are watching, even though it sounds odd.  
You watch over our family, but how is that true?  
I know you watch over us, because we're alright too.

-John Ludwig Jaeger



*The Crash*  
~Erma Mladenova

# *The Shadow That Leers*

The Movie house has been closed for years.  
All of the wallpaper has turned yellow  
And around every corner a shadow leers.

My eyes fell upon the structure and I was brought to tears  
Upon seeing that the halls were no longer aglow  
Because the Movie house has been closed for years.

Along all of the walls, moss adheres  
And across the floor, water from a burst pipe flows  
While around every corner, a shadow leers.

No sounds come from anywhere; silence bombards my ears  
Coming from the dreadful darkness that night bestows  
Inside of the Movie house that has been closed for years.

Entering the building gives one feelings quite queer,  
That this place is not what it seems. An eerie wind blows  
While behind me, my shadow leers.

But no longer do I feel emotions, let alone fear.  
And accustomed I have become to the silence and the echoes  
Inside of my home where I have lived for years.  
I shall watch you from around the corner.

I am the shadow that leers.





*Shielding*, Erma Mladenova

## The Glen

Within a moment of faith or by chance  
I came upon a glen in early spring;  
the type of place a dapple fawn might dance  
and in July the cicadas sing.  
Gingerly I made my way down onto  
the soft moss-carpeted land remaining  
silent, afraid of what my presence might do.  
Standing still in the glen, my ears straining,  
I waited in earnest to find a bit  
of the spring magic I knew such a place  
should have raging abundantly in it.  
From the trees came a short musical call.  
Swirling in downy, descended a dove  
illuminated by light from above.

-Brooke Kottkamp

~Atene Poskute





*Turtle on the Keys*  
~Max Zhu

~Kyle Petesch



Think Outside the Cage... When a captured bird learns to use its beak to pick the lock on its cage, it's a free bird. Just like how we should think beyond the confinements and limitations of our minds, freeing ourselves to an entirely new world with every possibility imaginable.



*Think Outside the Cage*  
~Mary Do

*The Deep Green*  
~Erma Mladenova



The picture in the catalogue had lied.  
The young man standing before me was not college age. He was not tall or dark or handsome as the caption beneath his entry had promised, the twinkle of intelligence I fell for was not present in the dirty green eyes. For he was young, foolish, and in love. But they all came in love, according to the description, didn't they?  
I threw the magazine down on the bed and walked a circle around the boy, carefully observing him. He seemed to sense I was displeased, and squeezed his eyes shut, mumbling something under his breath that I couldn't catch. He wasn't ugly, not by a long shot, but he also wasn't pretty, either. He was a few inches taller than me, and the crisp suit-jacket and nice navy pants fit him perfectly. His bleach-blond hair was short, yet still messy. The face...ehh... could be worse, I suppose.  
I stopped in front of him, narrowing my eyes, "What are you mumbling, boy?"  
He opened his eyes. They weren't actually that bad of a green color...just...I had dreamed of creamy mocha brown irises to spend my nights gazing into.  
He spoke softly, not looking at me directly, "Nothing, ma'am. Just a prayer to the Mother."

~Photograph by Atene Poskute

I nodded slowly. At least he had his teachings properly, and wasn't snatched out of one of those barbaric tribes in Canada who still thought a man to have made our Earth. The fools.  
As I paced around him again, fingering the small silver stone on a chain around my neck, my eyes softening a little. He wasn't that bad, not really. The eyes, while not shining with the level of intelligence I had hoped for, shone with knowledge and loyalty. The hair, while messy, most likely disturbed during transport, was wavy in a cute sort of way, and wasn't too long to look savage or unscholarly. The suit made him look handsome. He was around my age, so it wasn't like he was too young, and, I mean, I had only put so old because my mom had said they always run a bit on the young side, hadn't she? The height, while not as tall as I had requested, actually might be better suited to my desires than my original order had been.

The boy wanted me to be pleased by him, he really did. He had been dreaming of this moment for a while, probably, much longer anticipating it than I had. It was in no way his fault he wasn't what I had ordered. My eyes softened on his face when I stopped in front of him again; he was actually kind of cute the more I looked at him. I spoke more tenderly this time, "Do you have a name?"

A tiny bit of happiness drifted into his face to replace a tiny ounce of his fear, "Seph. They called me Seph. Or...Boy #2327B."  
"2327...B?" I questioned softly, moving a bit closer to him. My room wasn't that large, but I slowly, wordlessly, ushered him to the cot he was to sleep on, and we sat.

Seph was gaining a bit of confidence, now that we were on a bit more even ground. “A was my twin. He was born first. They... didn’t expect twins, but wanted to keep track of the fact we were twins, in case a pair of girls called for us...or something like that...” His volume decreased as he continued, now barely audible on his last line, “Except that could never happen. A ruined it.”

He drooped his head forward, and I reached out to brush a lock of stray hair off of his forehead. Turning his face a little toward me, I spoke, “Shh, it’s ok now, Seph.”

Looking up at me, he murmured, “No it’s not. You’re displeased. They sent the wrong boy, didn’t they? Or is it because my hair is a tiny bit longer than in the photo? I can cut it however you’d like. Oh, I’ve prayed to the Mother so longer for this day, I just want to make you happy.” He shut his eyes again, dropping his head into his hands, “You are going to send me back, then I’ll be punished. Just like A.”

I smiled slightly. He was amusing, if nothing else...but he was something else, err... he was a lot of something else-es. And, to tell the truth, he was growing on me. “No, no, Seph, you’re perfectly fine just the way you are.” I placed a hand comfortingly on his back.

He didn’t raise his head, “But I’m not what you requested. You do not like me. Why would you not send back the boy you do not like, when there is a full refund guarantee? I’ve seen it happen before. I’ve seen the boys who come back.”

I glanced around my bedroom, looking for something, anything to give this guy a bit of self-worth. But I was only sixteen; I have nothing of true worth just lying around my room. The most expensive thing was probably Seph’s box, and it’s not like he didn’t technically own that already. As I fingered my necklace, the idea came to me, though I’d be sad to part with it, Seph needed it more than I.

Quietly, I unclasped the necklace and removed it from my neck. Recapping it, I slipped it over Seph’s head. He immediately pulled his head up, fingering the stone and looking at me curiously, a bit confused.

I smiled, wholly this time, and explained. “You’re mine now. See the stone? It’s my token, a gift from my father to me right before he passed away. I have marked you now.”

Joy gleamed in Seph’s garnet-green eyes. “So... you’re not...sending me back?”

I laughed, “Oh, no, Seph! I like you. Unless you deem yourself broken or something, why would I send back my new toy? I like you.”

I leaned forward and hugged him, burying my nose into his shoulder. He hugged me back tightly, but not so tight as to hurt me, no, he was always very careful to never do that. He was warm and soft and human, and absolutely perfect to hug, more perfect than I’d even imagined. I started to cry slightly, silently, and to this day am not exactly sure why. I couldn’t let him see me cry. He would freak out that he’d done something wrong when he hadn’t. So I kept my face tucked against his shoulder, and arms tightly around him. Seph tried to pull back a few times during this, probably worried he would upset me by messing up the hug or something, but I held on to him tightly. Every time he’d pull back and realize I was still hanging onto him, he’d go back to hugging me for a while longer, before testing again. After receiving the same result four or five times, he stopped and just hugged me closer to his chest.

Seph was a good hugger. I wondered if it was part of his training. I also was curious as to just what else was included in his training, and decided to add his manual to my list of reading material.

When I finally stopped crying, I stayed in the hug for a little longer. I never understood why my older sister loved hugging her husband so much, but now I knew. There was something in a hug from a male that hugs from females just didn’t have. My sister seemed to have a rule with her husband that he always had to have an arm around her, since he did in all of my memories of them both since I was very small. I wondered how Seph would feel about a similar rule, and made a mental note to ask later. When I snapped out of my thoughts, I noticed Seph staring at me, a goofy grin on his face. I held a hand in front of his view, blocking my head, “Hey don’t stare at me like that. It isn’t nice to stare at the ugly.” He turned away quickly, “I’m sorry. It’s just, you’re so beautiful, I couldn’t help myself. I promise to never do it again in the future.”

“Beautiful...?” I murmured softly.





~Short Story by Kirstyn Carlson

Seph nodded, fingering the rock on the chain as I so often did when I was nervous. “You’re much prettier than the picture I was given, or than the pictures I saw the other boys of my class received. I like you best.” His fingers brushed the top of my hand on the cot, but he quickly jerked them away. Mentally, I sighed. He was still nervous. I wondered how romantic and sweet he would be when he had gotten over his nerves of the initial meeting. I put my hand over his, and leaned in to kiss his cheek.

Seph turned back towards me, looking happier by the minute since I gave him the token and seeming about to speak again, when there was a shout from the other room of, “Natalie! Dinner! And bring that new boy you ordered! I need to inspect him for shipping damage!”

I sighed and smiled at Seph, “Ready to meet my mother? There might also be some dinner involved...” I sighed a little, “I’m sorry, we don’t know what males generally eat... you’re the first I’ve actually met that wasn’t married...” I trailed off.

Seph laughed a little, a melodious sound I instantly loved and wished to hear again, but was graced with words instead of more laughter, “Oh, I’m sure we eat the same things. We are only different genders, after all, not different species.” Ah, so he was trained in sciences, the basics, at least, and I could always enlighten him more as long as the basics were in place.

I rose to walk to the dining room, but Seph twisted his wrist to hold my hand as I stood, a romantic gesture. Wow, he was either really good or well trained...and I was kind of hoping for both. Maybe I had been sent my perfect match after all, as the catalogue had promised.

There was one strange thing about the movement, though. Seph didn’t stand to follow me. Instead, he mumbled, “Natalie...” as if tasting the word to see if it was sweet enough.”Nat...” He drifted along this longer, and seemed to enjoy it more. “Nat...” He finally looked up to meet my eyes, fingering the necklace, “Nat... thank you for not sending me back.”

I gave a small tug on his arm, and he took the hint and stood. “If the Mother willed you to be sent to me, why should I look a gift horse in the mouth?” And then I kissed him, and it was more wonderful than even the richest fairytales had described.



Wishes

It's cold up here. I'm lonely. I wish my existence would just end.

A pause. A downwards glance. It's a long way down. Should I jump?

"I really wish you would fall," a child calls from down below.

With that, the shooting star plummeted to the ground.

At least two wishes were granted that night.

~Grace Li

~ Photograph by Maria Kuznetsov

*Forward*  
~Erma Mladenova



Thank you for reading this year's  
edition of *Heliotrope*.



Heliotrope

Publication for the Arts & Literature at

IMSA