

THE NINE MUSES



THE NINE MUSES

Come **Muse** migrate from Greece and Ionia,
Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts,
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings,
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus,
Repeat at Jerusalem, place the notice high on Jaffa's gate and on Mount Moriah,
The same on the walls of your German, French and Spanish castles, and Italian collections,
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wide, untried domain awaits, demands you.

"Song of the Exposition"
Walt Whitman

The Nine Muses of Greek Mythology

Calliope - Muse of Epic Song

Clio - Muse of History

Euterpe - Muse of Lyric Song

Melponeme - Muse of Tragedy

Terpsichore - Muse of Dance

Erato - Muse of Erotic Poetry

Polyhymnia - Muse of Sacred Song

Urania - Muse of Astronomy

Thalia - Muse of Comedy

The Nine Muses is the literary arts magazine of West Forsyth High School. This tenth volume for the 2022-2023 school year is a continued commitment to honor and celebrate artistic endeavors of the many talented students at West Forsyth High School.

Special thanks to Principal Kevin Spainhour for supporting our students and to the West Forsyth Fine Arts Department, especially Elizabeth Betson, Anneliese Edwards, and Nathan Newsome.

Front Cover Art by Tenley Douglass

Back Cover Art by Mikaela Bombay

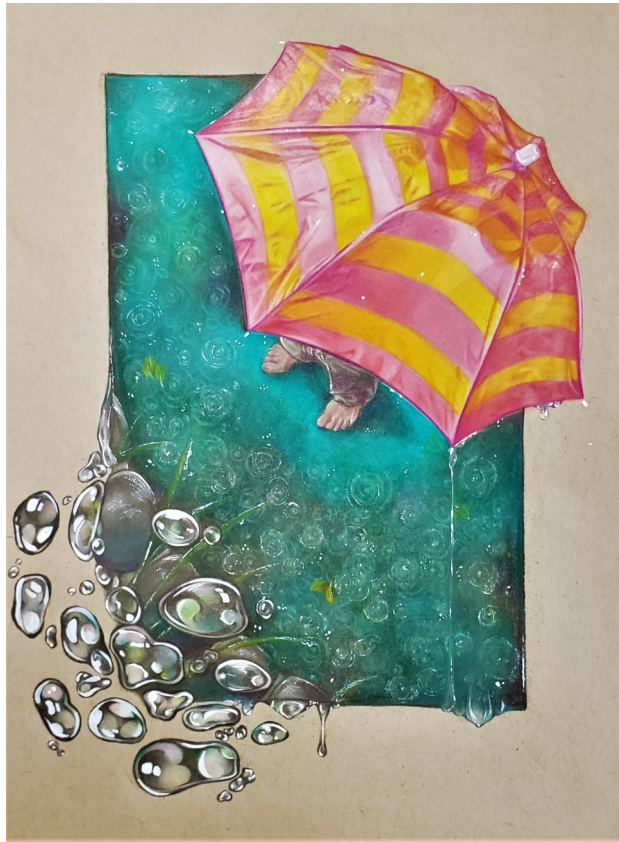
WEST FORSYTH MUSES

Adrian Macatangay
Breana Samonte
Caitlin Leonard
Carolina Lew
Chloe Randell
Dylen Russell
Elly Latimer
Emma Ruiz
Gabriel Vgenopoulos
Gabriela Nolette
Grace Mazzola
Hillary Pachao
Isaac Williams
Isabella Schilling
Jadae Smith
Jadis Vang
Jadyn Magallanes
Jarod Baldwin
Julia Nicholson
Katherine Willmott
Kiera Elliott

Ko Reh
Kyrien Keeton
Leah Cytron-Walker
Lillie Swindle
Lillie Newsome
Madelin Betson
Marina Ghobrial
Meghan Timbinaris
Mica Acilo
Michal Cytron-Walker
Mikaela Bombay
Morgan McDaniel
Peter Romero Hernandez
Phoenix Vang
Ruby Bowser
Sophia Murphy
Tenley Douglass
Ysabelle Abalos
Zaria Little
Zuri Sweatt

WEST FORSYTH ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

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Ella-Brooke Morgan
Emily Henson
Gwen Straker
Jessica Garcia
Leah Cytron-Walker
Maddie Whisenant
Madison Newsome
Mallory Hearn
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Elly Latimer



Dylen Russell

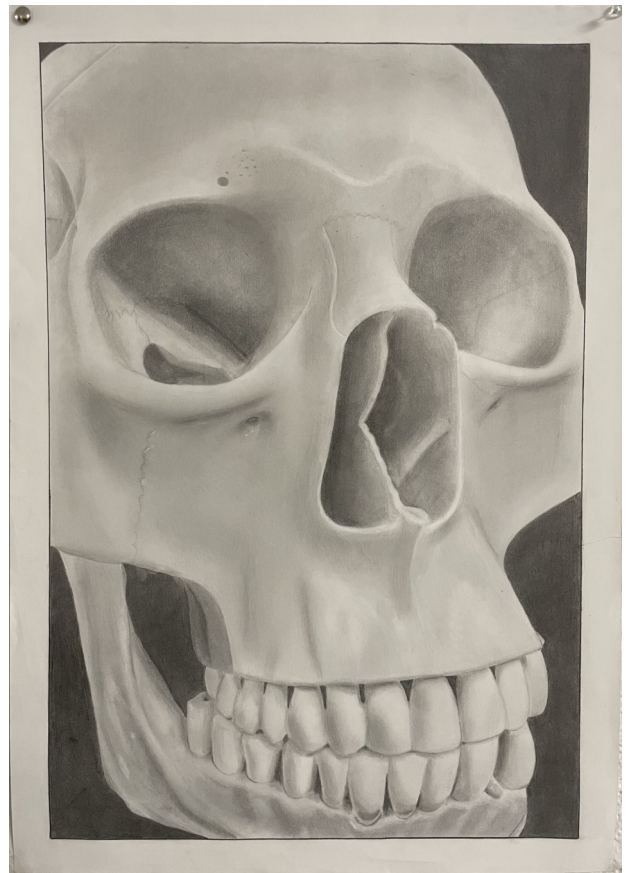
"dear mr. Dracula"

you're everything unexpected and everything wonderful
i feel for a pair of eyes i never would have thought would make me weak
hazel is my favorite color, but only on you
just the sound of your voice across a room and the corners of my lips act on their own
revealing how willing i would be to listen to words
d
r
i
p
from your lips until the sun burned out
you can have my mind
my soul
my heart
you could bleed me dry
and i would still
offer you
my bones

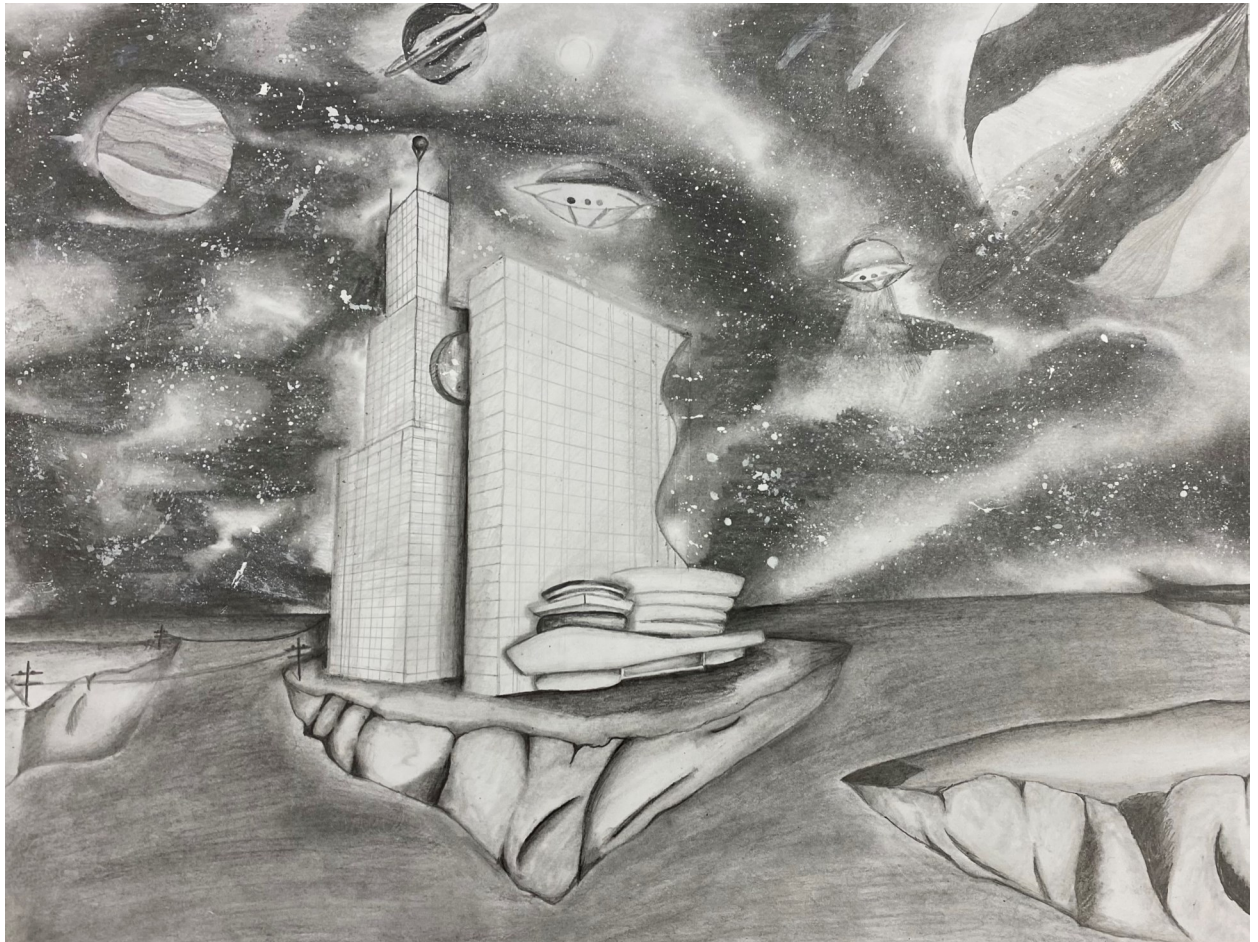
-Julia Nicholson



Dylen Russell



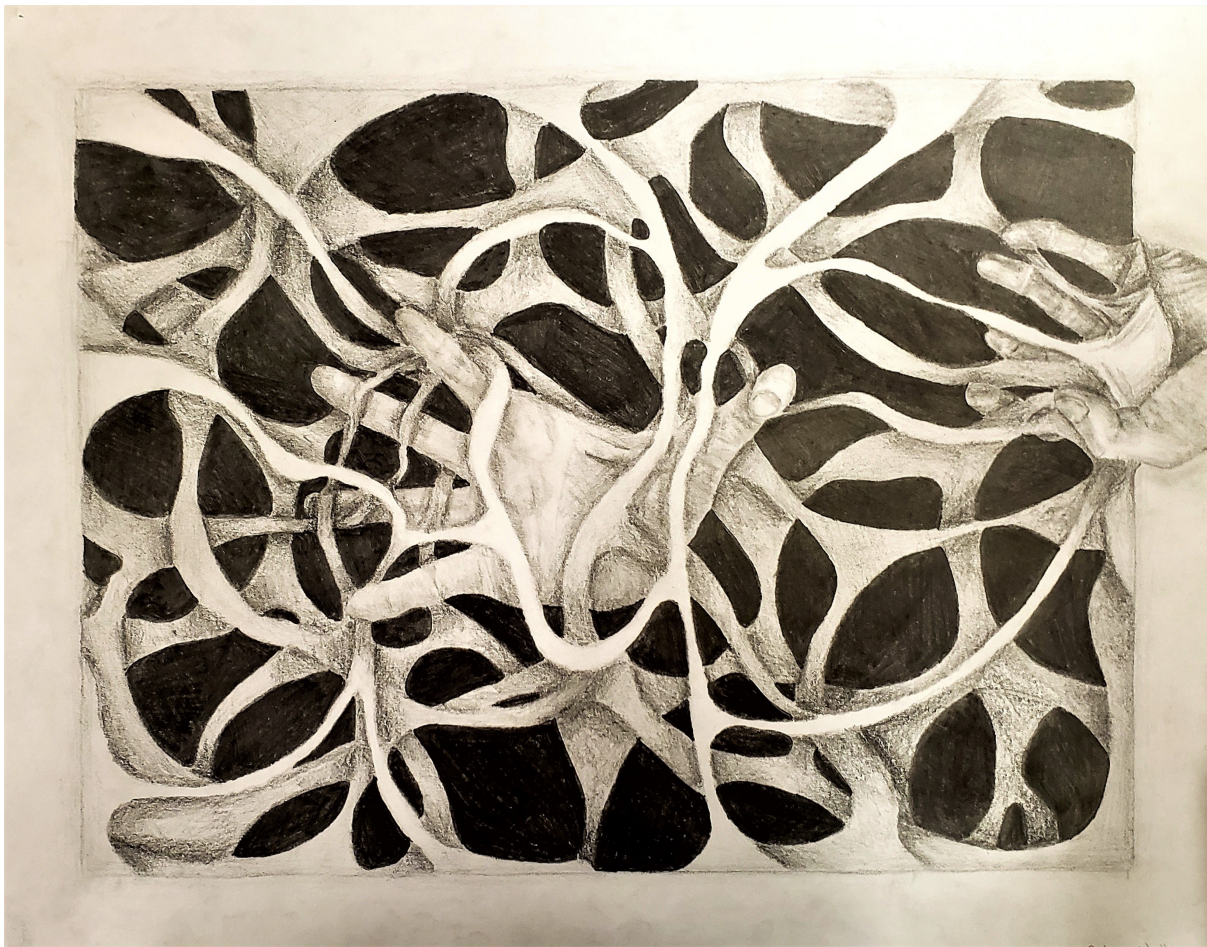
Caroline Lew



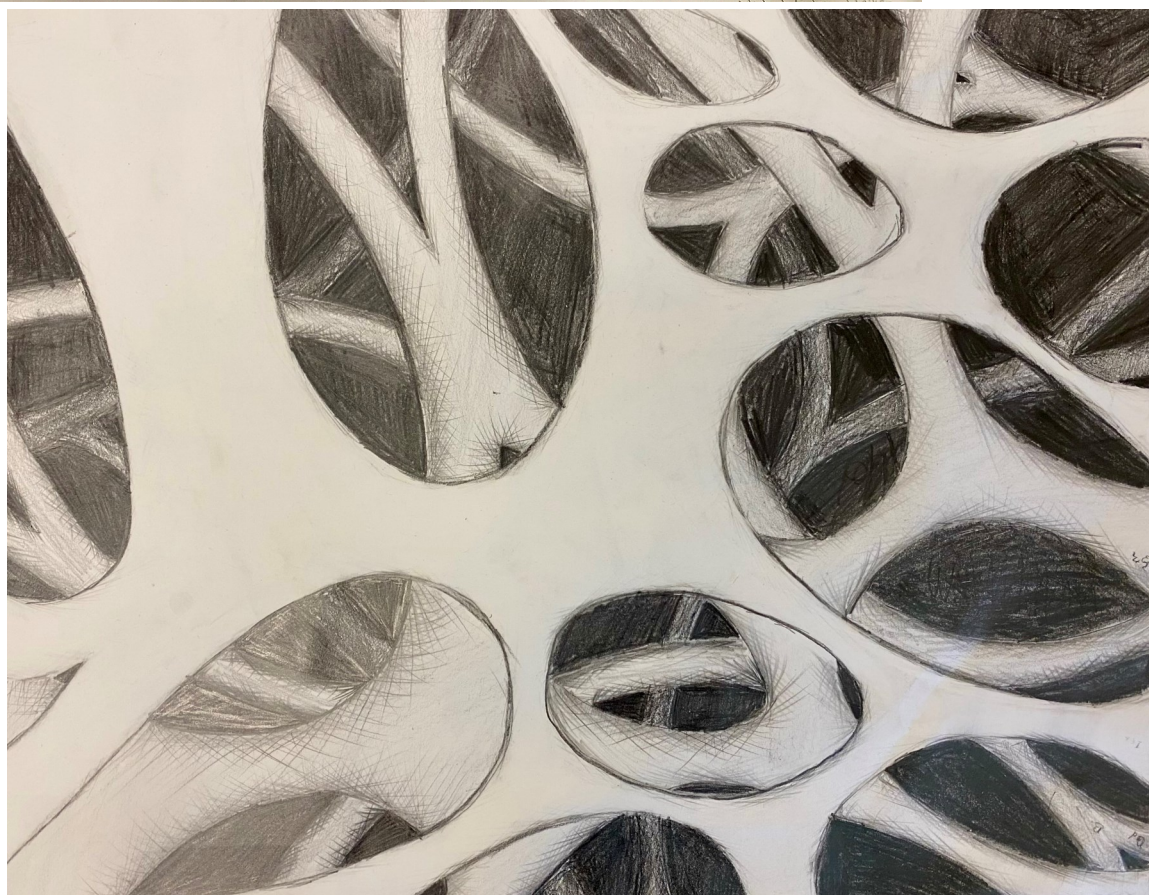
Jadae Smith



Katherine Willmott



Michal Cryton-Walker



Ko Reh



Marina Ghobrial



Morgan McDaniel

"Beautiful"

If my body is beautiful, why must I hide it?
Cover it up like I don't deserve to be seen

You tell me to be proud.
To hold my head high
Ignore the whispers
That follow me like shadows...

You say God is testing me.
Why?
Is my soul impure?
As far as I can tell
My only sin
Is trying to fit in

I don't feel beautiful.
Not when people nod
And smile
When I skip a meal
Or two

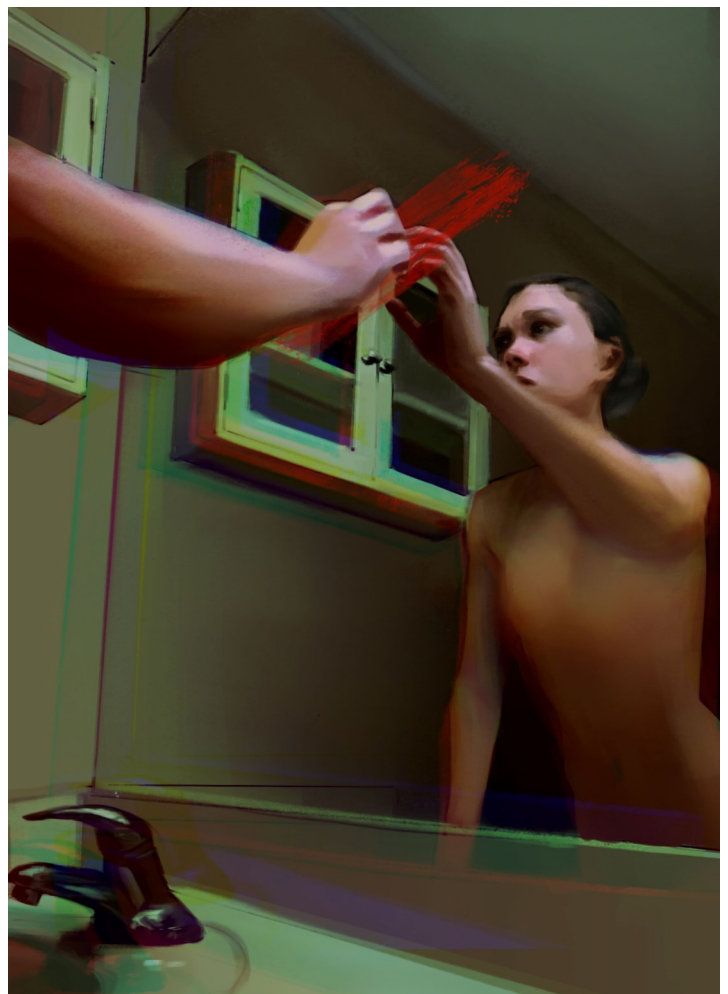
I hate the look
Of disapproval in your eyes
When I go up a size

Just once, can't my clothes
Be too small
for me?

-Leah Cytron-Walker



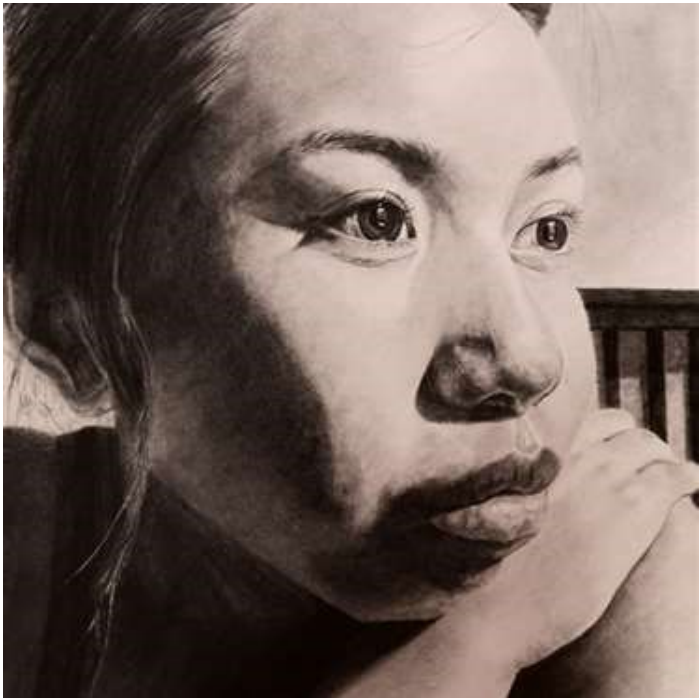
Mikaela Bombay



Chloe Randell



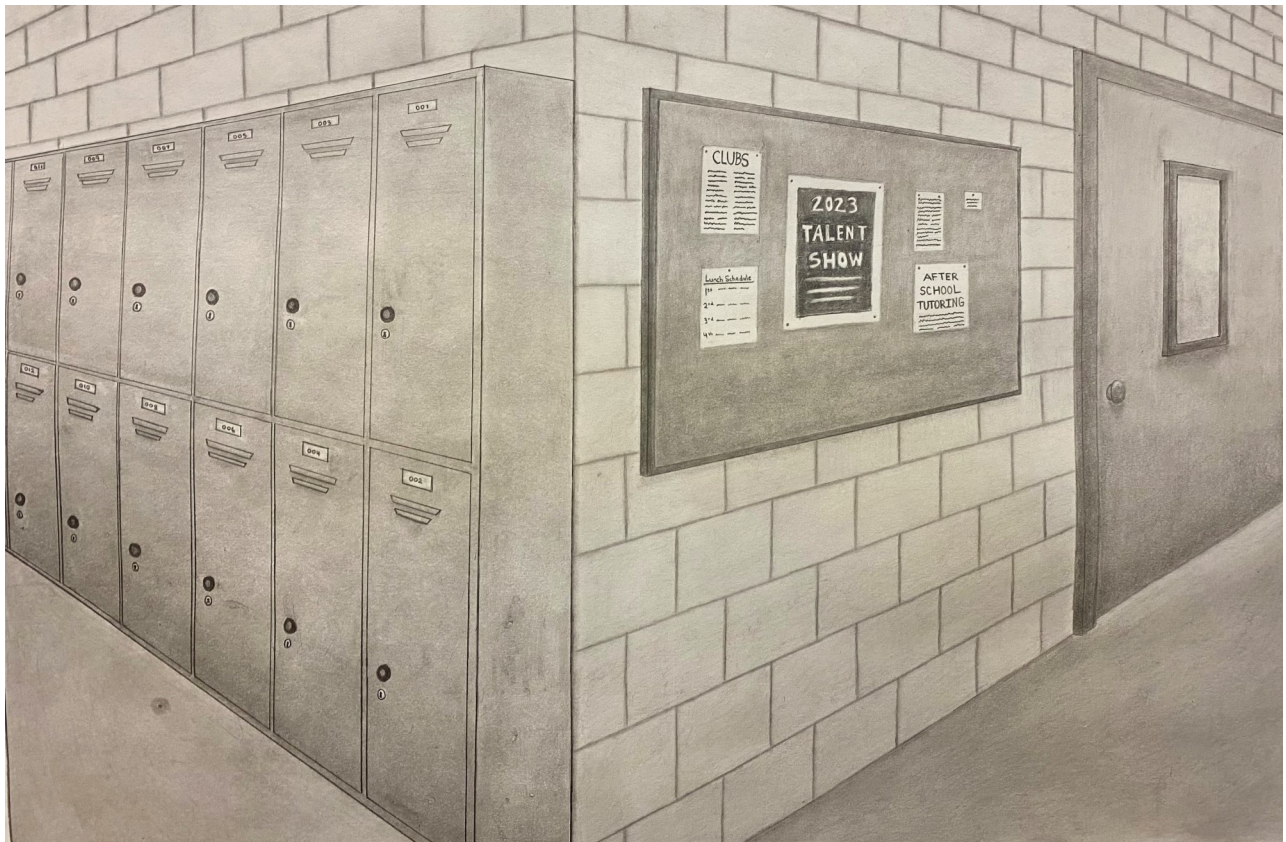
Lillie Newsome



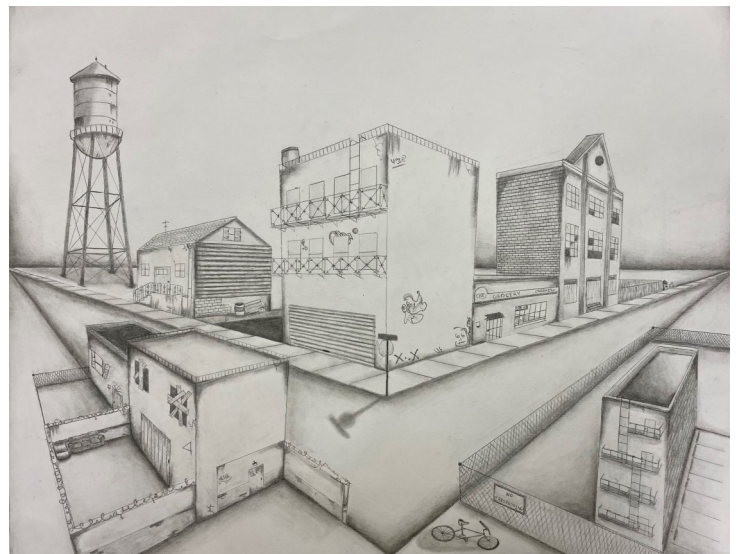
Hillary Pachao



Madelin Betson



Dylen Russell



Isabella Schilling



Katherine Willmott



Mica Acilo



Morgan McDaniel





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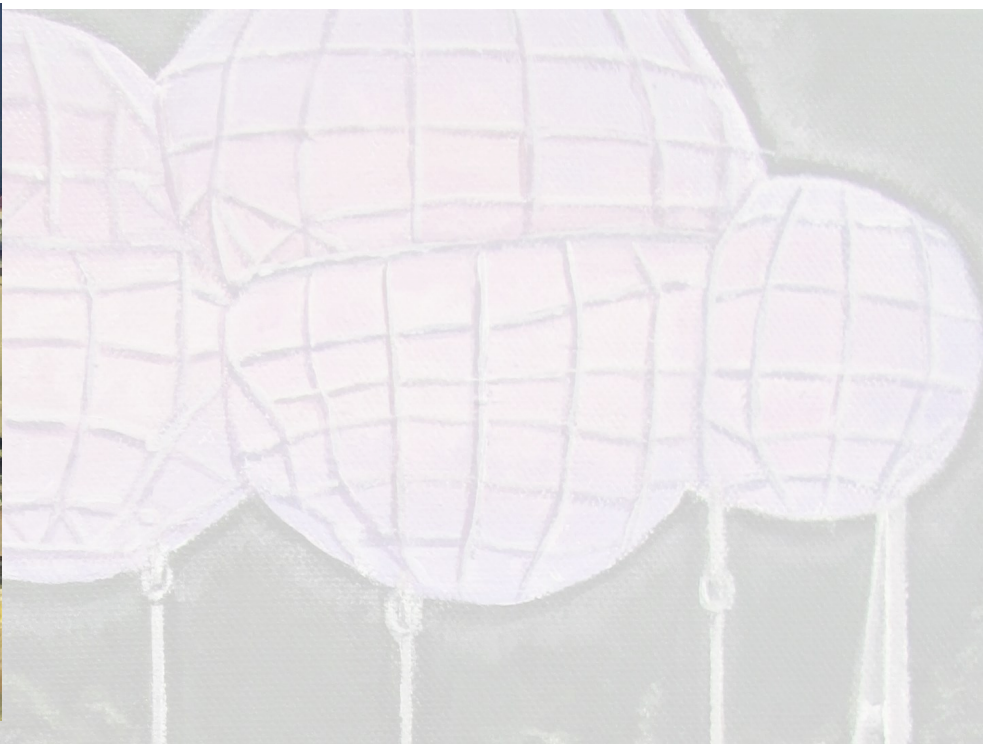


Gabriela Nolette





Jadis Vang



Grace Mazzola



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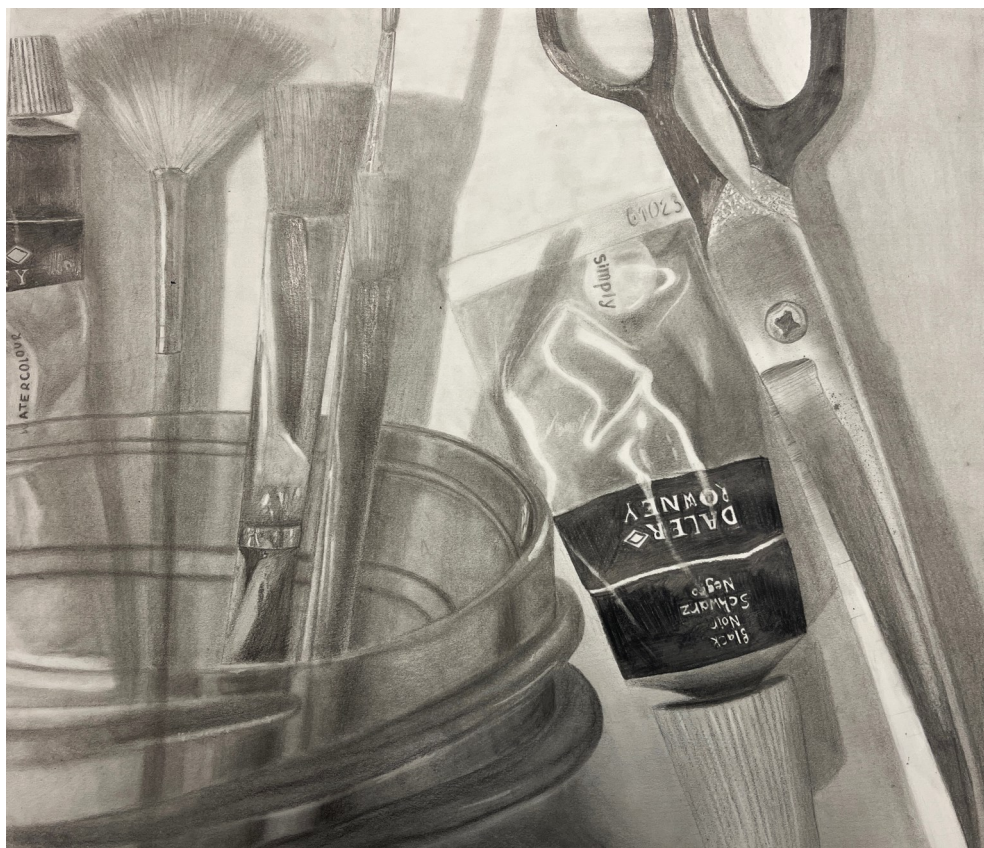
Hillary Pachao



Lillie Swindle



Kiera Elliott



Emma Ruiz



Meghan Timbinaris



Tenley Douglass



Tenley Douglass

“Obsessively Compulsive”

It's clean, no dust let alone a broken frame. Wait... I glance back at my hands. I'm no longer holding my makeshift weapon. It's all gone, all of it. But that must mean, my fingers dig in my back pocket as I grab a hold of a small switchblade that's in the exact place I left it. My breathing starts to speed up to the point I'm gasping for air.

“Okay, it's over. You're fine, get to the office or you're going to be late.” I tell myself so I can think more rationally again.

I walk out of my bedroom and rush to the front door. Once I close it behind me I take my keys off my belt and put it in the lock. Turning it four times, left, right, left, right, and left once more making sure it's locked. The office is within walking distance and the rain has stopped, so if I walk quick enough I can get there with an extra couple minutes to spare. I pull my phone out of my pocket and go to my recent calls. I click on the very first name I see as I put the phone up to my ear.

“Hey! How have you been?” I ask, as I wait for the same answer they give everyday.

“Can't be better, could be worse!” We say in unison, laughing afterwards.

“Haha, that's good to hear. Always nice hearing your voice.”

“Yours too, I miss you so much. How's your day been so far?” They ask, as I debate whether I should tell them the truth or not.

“It's been a little hectic, but I'm heading to the office right now!” I settled for something vague, but it wasn't technically a lie.

“Oh that's great! You always seem to be in a good mood after.”

“Yeah it's always a great way to ease my mind,” as I say that I see I'm coming up on the building, only 100 feet away at this point. “Well I just wanted to check in, I'm glad to hear you're doing good. I'll call again later! I love you.”

“I love you too, goodbye.”

“Goodbye, I love-” I'm not able to finish my sentence before the call cuts out. “No, why did that happen, no not again!”

I'm supposed to say I love you twice. I look behind me and run, and I keep running. It's coming again, I can't let it catch me. I'm so close, the building is just barely 50 feet away. I sprint while clutching my phone, trying to reach into my pocket to grab my knife once again but I fail. I hear his footsteps come closer, but all I can do is keep going. The office is so close but so is he. I can feel his breath on my neck as its long legs start to catch up. My teary eyes clouding my vision, it's just 5 feet away, 4 feet away, 3 feet away! I leap towards the door and shut it before he can get me, panting like a dog on a hot summer day. As I look through the tinted windows I see nothing. Just my sweaty tearstained reflection.

I get on the elevator, and slow my breathing down. Deep breath in for 10 seconds, out for 5 seconds. I reach the third floor and make sure to open the correct door. I find my seat in a personal office that's bigger than my bedroom. I sit in my chair which is positioned 10 feet in front of the door.

“So that's everything that's happened today?” I tell Dr. Grey, my therapist.

“The melatonin I suggested you get isn't helping much with your insomnia?”

“Correct, it isn't.”

“And those shadow creatures? You're still continuing to see them if you don't follow a certain routine?”

“Yes, they're everywhere now. How do I get rid of them?”

“Well, you just can't.” Wait, what? No way I heard that correctly.

“What do you mean I can't?”

“Well frankly, this is all in your head. None of this is real. There are no people after you Alice, let alone these shadow monsters. You're just tired. As a matter of fact, what's one routine you do?”

“Well,” I stammer. “I make sure every blind and window is closed, and I check it again twice.”

“So,” Dr Grey says “If I open this window those shadows will appear?” No, don't do it. Please no, they can't come back. Stop it! Too late, the blinds are now open.

“Why would you do that!” I shout

“It's not real! Can't you see it Alice!”

As Dr Grey says that, I hear the door open behind me. I turn around in my chair and look back. My blood runs cold.

“NO!” I shout, I look back at where Dr. Grey was just standing, but they're not there anymore. But It's still here. It won't leave me. I look back at it again, with tears streaming down my face.

“Just leave me alone, please, please, I just want to be left alone.” I plead with it, gasping between words. But it

The picture frame, it's hanging on the wall not an inch out of place. I crawl trying to find any piece of glass on the floor. It's clean, no dust let alone a broken frame. Wait... I glance back at my hands. I'm no longer holding my makeshift weapon. It's all gone, all of it. But that must mean, my fingers dig in my back pocket as I grab a hold of a small switchblade that's in the exact place I left it. My breathing starts to speed up to the point I'm gasping for air.

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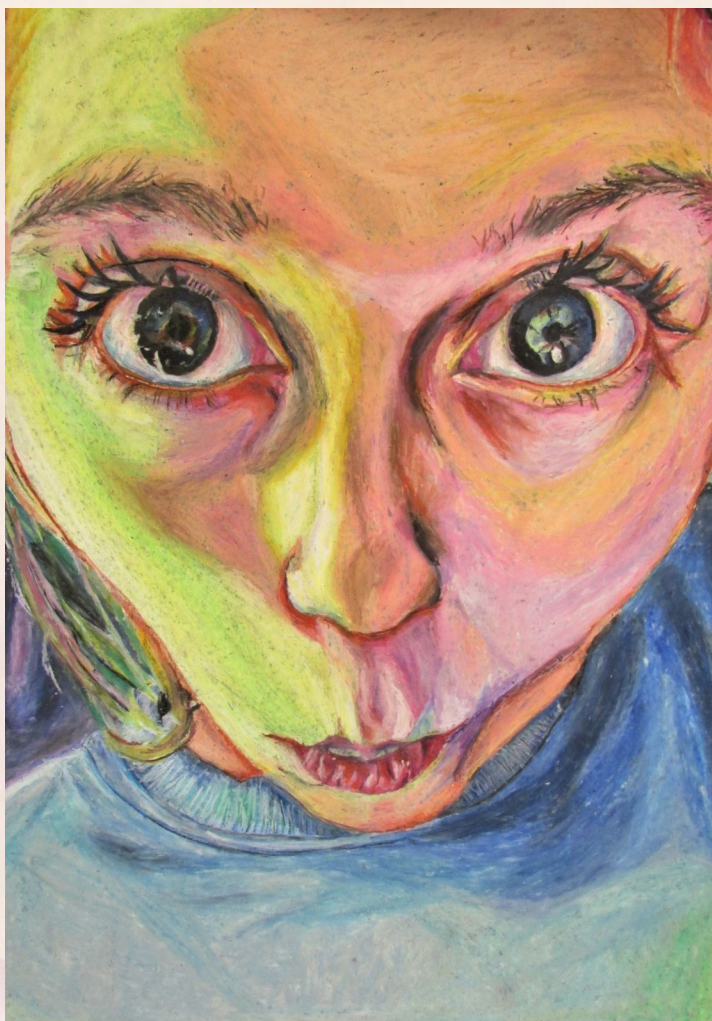
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"Just leave me alone, please, please, I just want to be left alone." I plead with it, gasping between words. But it walks closer and closer, and all I can do is pull out that knife once again.



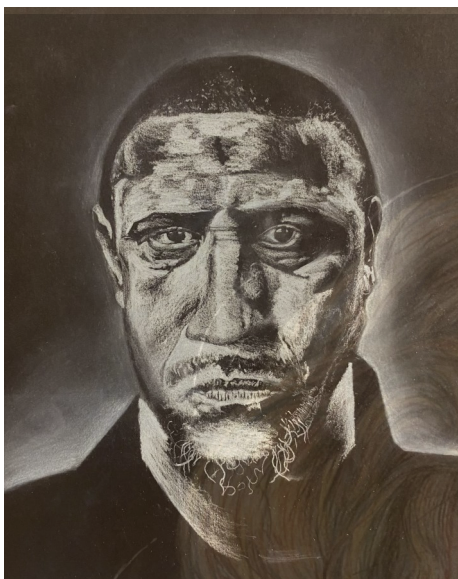
Adrian Macatangay



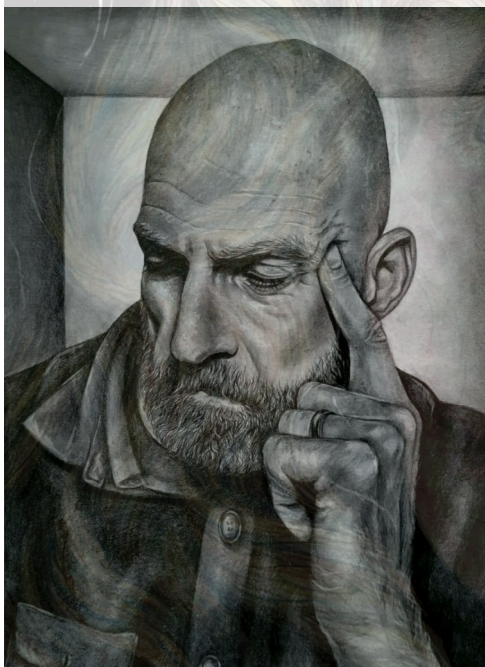
Kiera Elliott



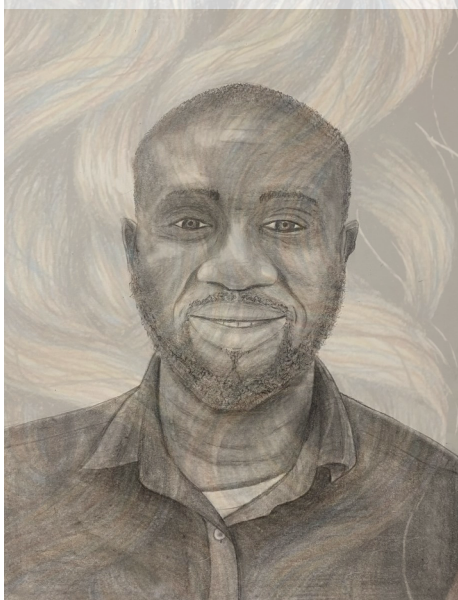
Tenley Douglass



Peter Romero Hernandez



Tenley Douglass



Gabriel Vgenopoulos





Phoenix Vang

"Misuse"

This time it didn't hurt.
 Much.
 Shrug off the skin peeling, stomach churning
 Need to take a shower
 Scrub your body from head to toe,
 Burn these clothes.

You just bought them last week...
 It's not worth losing them over some creep.

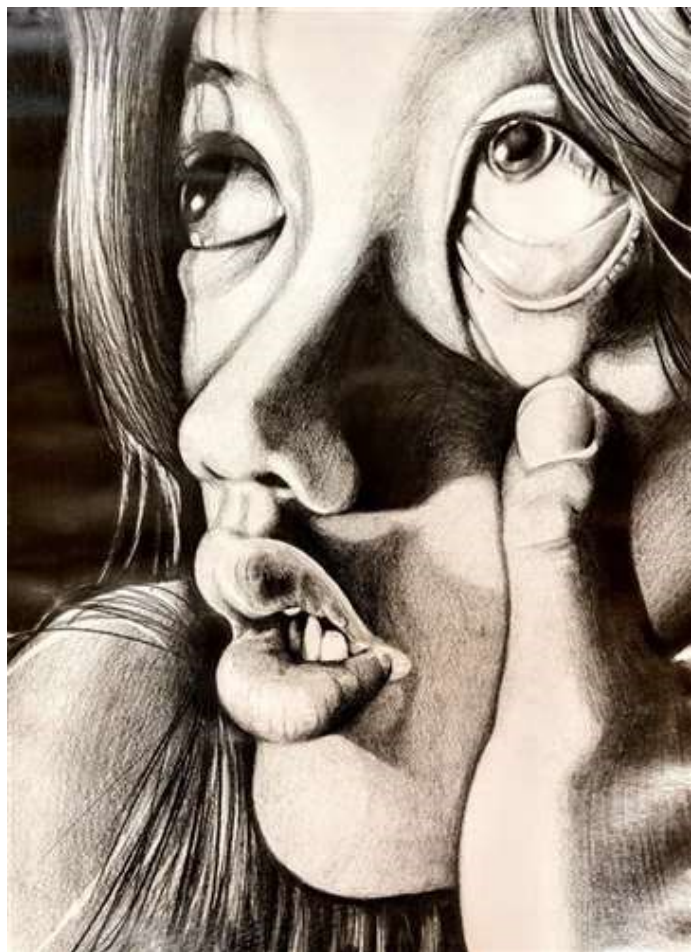
So surf the flood of disgust;
 Keep it bottled up
 Burry the urge to run,
 The urge to fight back

Pretend you don't exist.
 Maybe someday,
 You'll get your wish

-Leah Cytron-Walker



Tenley Douglass



Mica Acilo



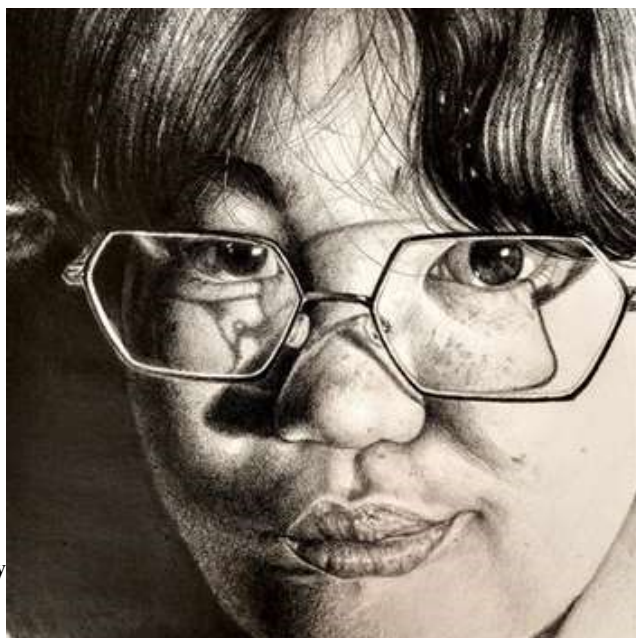
Chloe Randall



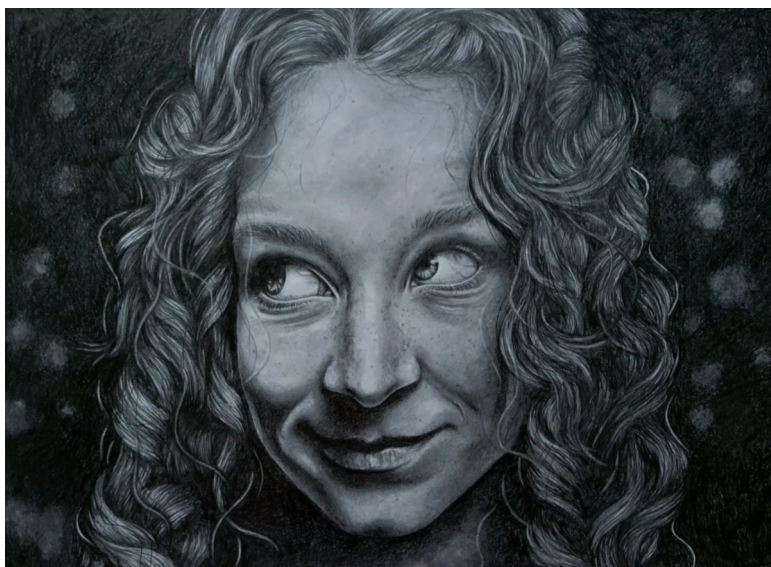
Zuri Sweatt



Hillary Pachao



Mikaela Bombay



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Katherine Willmott



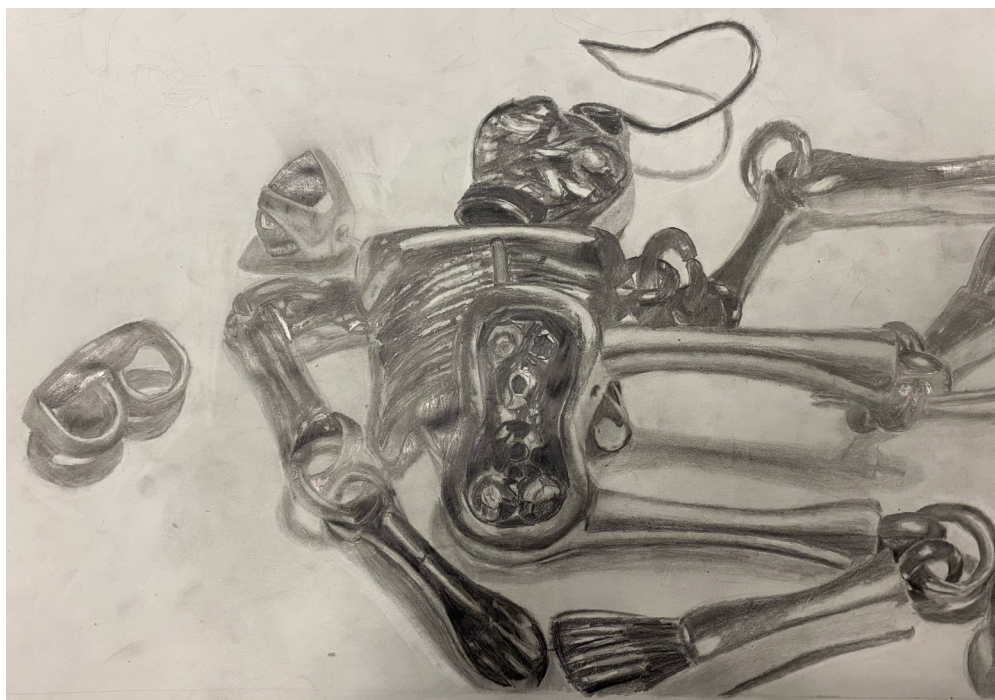
Isabella Schilling



Morgan McDaniel



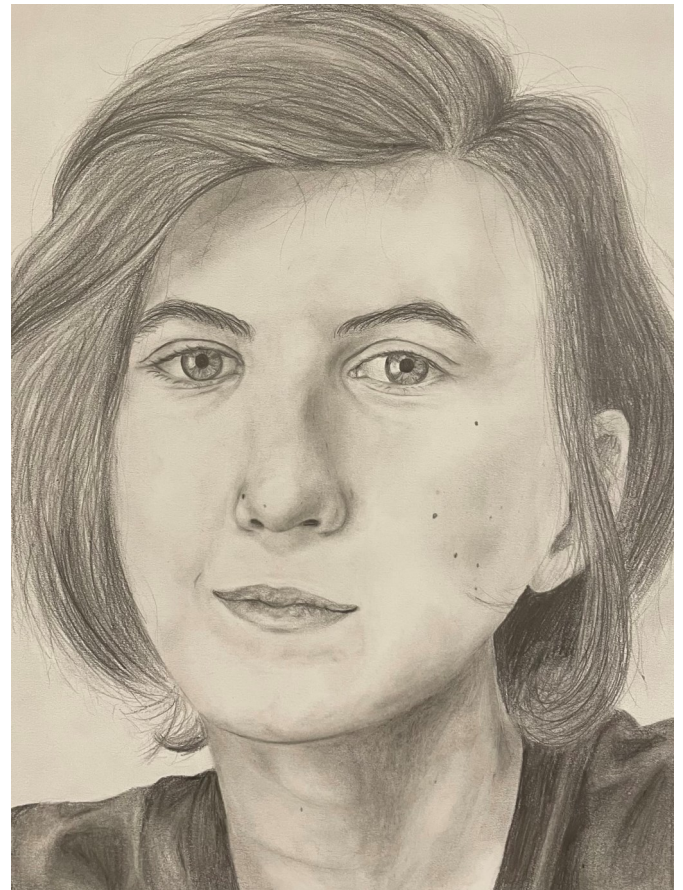
Katherine Willmott



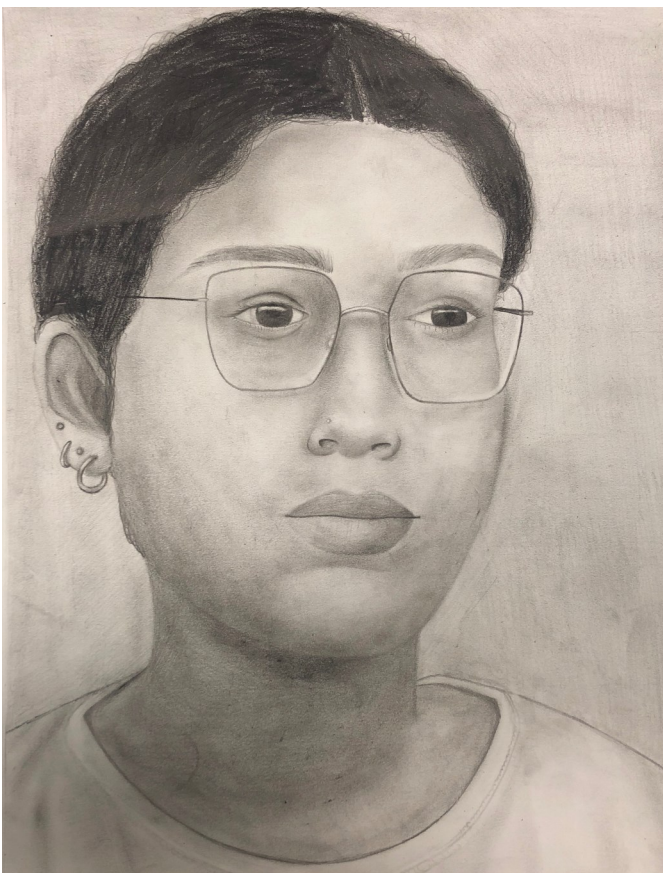
Jarod Baldwin



Breana Samonte



Caitlin Leonard



Emma Ruiz

"Change in Atmosphere"

Prone to pressure, changes and all,
I sense that rain will come.
A scent in the air, shadow's chill,
Suddenly sounds a spring drum.
Ozone— sharp, sweet, synonymous
With sudden strikes and shocks.
Cacophony, I do expect,
As I open this box.

Vulnerability is a gift,
Frightening yet freeing.
Like the feeling of first flights or
Finally believing.
You accept it so readily,
An easy, eager ear.
I tell you my future troubles
That no one else will hear.

Prone to pressure, and yet I've learned,
With rain's sore revival
Come flowers flourished by your love.

-Caroline Lew



Phoenix Vang



Grace Mazzola



Ysabelle Abalos

"Amends"

You once told me we didn't need perfect
We just needed us.
Because "us" was strong enough to rewrite the sun's path
across the sky.

Until it wasn't.
Because I wasn't enough anymore.
You can't love
And be
Simultaneously

I'm sorry
For being
me

I was overbearing.
Prepping your meals, doing the laundry, mowing the
lawn,
I was just trying to be helpful...
Now I realize how suffocating that must have been.

I said yes to everything you suggested.
I can't recall a single movie
That didn't give me nightmares,
Haunting me to this day.
I never knew
You hated them too

You only suggested things you thought I liked;
You wanted me to be happy and I was ungrateful.

I'm sorry
I returned the clothes you bought me
They really weren't as unseemly as I made them out to be
Revealing, yes
But perhaps with an undershirt....

It was a thoughtful gift;
I should have been more appreciative.

I tried to anticipate your plans.
I cleared my schedule every time.

It never occurred to me
You made plans
Hoping I'd be busy,
Wanting me
Out of the house
When your friends came over
I never wondered
If you wanted me to stay
When you told me to
Get out of your sight
I should have
questioned

I'm sorry
I never realized
You were hurting.
I couldn't see past
Your perfection

I did everything you asked-
Blasted past boundaries
I thought I had

You taught me what I could do.
Let me explore the world that is you
And it was exquisite!

Perhaps there were moments I feared;
Perhaps there were moments I felt pain,
But you told me we were beautiful.
Were we not supposed to be?

So tell me,
What went wrong?
How can I fix this?
I refuse to believe
You could give me everything
Only to take it away
There must be some way
To make amends

-Leah Cytron-Walker|



Tenley Douglass



Tenley Douglass



Tenley Douglass



Katherine Willmott



Jadae Smith



Ruby Bowser

"Sun Shower"

Streets shine with golden haze
Children play as the cicadas sing

Gentle breeze tickles cheeks
Of rosy hues from giggling fits
Lazy cats slumber in the shade

Then scattered clouds of warm gray
Bring scents of water from places far
Tiny drops plop onto tiny heads
The children don't run but stay instead

As damp speckles grow on the concrete road
And trees catch heavy drops in their palms of green
Quivering with the rushing air
Children dance under both sun and rain
Their songs and laughter carried by the wind

Crystal beads fall on sun-kissed hair
Pink tongues capture the sky's joyous tears
Small feet splash on puddles
To the beat of the shower's drums
As little streams slide down roof tiles
Then drip to join the symphony as well

Child and water prance
Under sunshine's warm gaze
As growing sprouts and aged trees
Watch this merry display
Of pure freedom and simple happiness

Then the raindrops fall to a lull
The clouds make room for daylight's rays
And an arch of colors adorns the sky
Catching the children's sparkling eyes

The cats continue their peaceful slumber
Chubby cheeks crease with wide smiles
A cozy breeze dries the children's hair

Cicadas chirp their tune once more
Moist streets mirror a sky of deep blue

And the children look forward to another sun shower

-Breana Samonte



Isaac Williams



Kyrien Keeton

