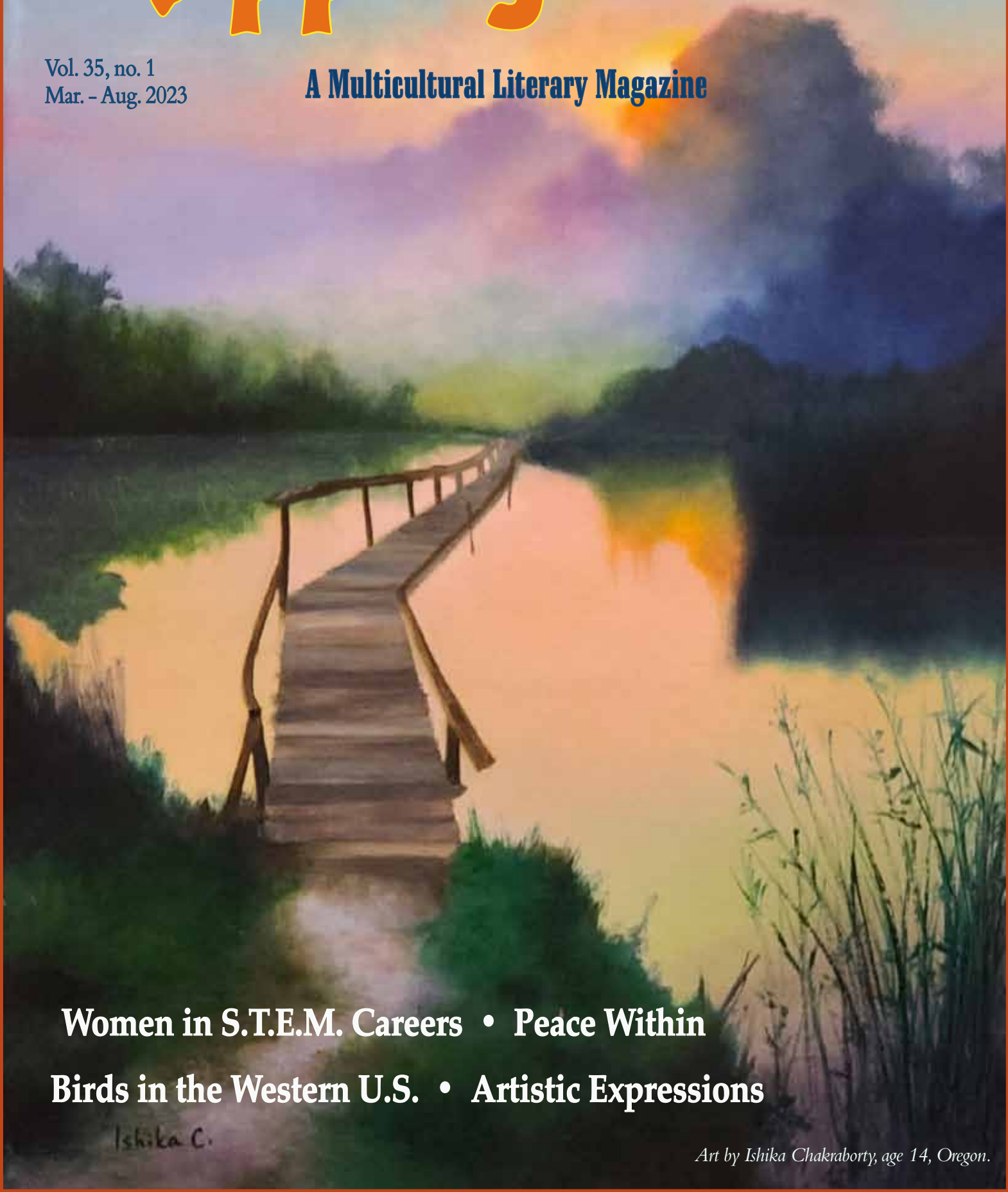


Skipping Stones

Vol. 35, no. 1
Mar. - Aug. 2023

A Multicultural Literary Magazine



Women in S.T.E.M. Careers • Peace Within
Birds in the Western U.S. • Artistic Expressions

Ishika C.

Art by Ishika Chakraborty, age 14, Oregon.



Artist Jeanne Hinojosa Writes:

I started working through a Jon Gnagy Drawing Book in 2015 and then began to practice drawing. I couldn't draw a stick figure before I went through the book. After much practice, I drew my dogs and put a little watercolor on them and that started my watercolor adventure in 2017. This is now my fifth year of painting.

I have learned from mostly trial and error, picking up tips from other painters in different painting groups. I listened to people's comments of my work and tried to incorporate their suggestions. I like to paint from my own photos of birds, plants and animals that I observe in my yard and our four-acre field. We feed a lot of birds so we attract many different kinds of birds on our property. I also paint some from something I see in a magazine or online that attracts me. I paint now every couple days and make my paintings into notecards. I sell them at a couple of stores in Cottage Grove, Oregon.

I would suggest to any young person that they start learning to draw and paint early in their life so that they have this lovely, creative and satisfying passtime all of their life.

Since starting to paint, I see everything around me in Nature so differently! I now see: colors & textures; bark lines on trees; the parts and flowers of plants; and the bugs that like each plant. I look up each of them online to learn about what I am painting before I start.

I used to just take a walk around our field and look at what I passed! Now, I *see* what I walk past, and I appreciate each thing so much more. I'm so thankful that I started painting!

—Jeanne Hinojosa, a self-taught water color artist in Oregon. Her bird paintings on page 2:

1. Mourning Doves • 2. California Quail
3. Mourning Doves • 4. Coopers Hawk
5. Grosbeak • 6. California Quail
7. Killdeer • 8. Varied Thrush

I recall my childhood in India from decades ago. Chickadees and crows, peacocks and parrots, sparrows and starlings, and *koyals* (cuckoos) added music to our daily life. When I came to the U.S.A. as a graduate student, I read **Silent Spring** by Rachel Carson, a marine biologist and nature writer. She brought to light the unintended impact of pesticides on our ecosystems, resulting in public awareness of Nature, the DDT ban, and saved eagles from extinction. Pages 6-9 feature three influential women of science and technology.

Almost every day we acquire new knowledge, skills, and talents. We learn as we travel and experience new things and as we study or practice. Learning is life-long! With my life adventures, I've also been learning a few things that help bring joy and fulfillment in life. Surprisingly, I never pondered them as a teenager. Here they are:

Most good things in life take time. It takes time to develop skills and strength. It takes time and effort to achieve a goal. We can't give up; we have to keep working on the goal. We need persistence and patience, and kindness towards ourselves, as we work and learn.

Memorizing certainly helps us, but it's more important to learn the basic concepts thoroughly—to understand them. It's easier to remember what we've learned if we review the lessons.

Worrying can make life harder than it needs to be. Do you worry too much about every little thing? Do you think along the lines: *What if...?*, and then get all stressed out? Have you noticed most things you worry about never come to pass? Write down your worries in a notebook and then let go of them. We are most successful when we focus and give our best effort, when we work to the best of our abilities, and then let go of our expectations or fears.

Do you spend a lot of time in front of a screen—TV, cell phone, video games, and computers? Do social media, YouTube, and cell phone apps take up too much of your time? Learning *media literacy* might help you make good choices about how you spend your time.

Do you like it when someone gets angry at you? Of course not! Did you know that anger is like a double-edged sword? When we get angry at someone, we also hurt ourselves emotionally.

I am learning that we can choose to be happy; it's our choice to be happy or not. I find that accumulating "things" and being self-centered does not bring us lasting happiness. When I share with others, I feel more satisfied and fulfilled. Life is a two-way street—a *give and take*. Our joy increases when shared with others. And suffering or pain becomes more bearable when shared with people we are close to. Love, family, and friendships bring meaning to our lives.

We can also develop an attitude of gratitude. Let's appreciate the many gifts we've been given. One precious gift is Nature. Each day, I spend time in Nature. It renews me and brings balance to my life.

Welcome to our Spring 2023 issue! Did you hear birds chirping when you opened the window or went outside to refresh in Nature?

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In the spirit of ecological sensitivity, we choose to print with soy ink on recycled and recyclable paper with a 30% post-consumer recycled content.



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Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity, and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore stewardship of the ecological and social webs that nurture us. We offer a forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. *Skipping Stones* expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We invite you to send us your creative art and thought-provoking writing.

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BookShelf

Put Your Shoes On & Get Ready! by Raphael Warnock; illustr. TeMika Grooms. *Philomel*. Ages 4-8.

An inspirational picture book that tells the story of Rev. Raphael Warnock who worked hard to become a pastor and now represents Georgia in the Senate. Young readers will discover that they too have the power to follow their dreams and make a difference when they have role models, guidance, and the will to keep on working at their goals until they achieve them.

Mattie and the Machine by Lynn Ng Quezon, *Santa Monica Press*. Ages 12-18.

A California-state licensed engineer wrote this novel based on the life of the real world female inventor, Margaret E. Knight, who strived for the recognition of her ingenuity during post Civil War America. In this novel, Mattie, a 15-year-old female paper-bag factory mechanic, discovers payment inequalities between the "factory girls" and recently hired male Civil War vets, and she confronts her boss. The boss says he pays men more money because they are better with machines.

Mattie challenges him and says she can design and build a fully automatic paper-making machine to prove that. But he puts a condition that her machine would have to work better than one that a newly-hired mechanic, Frank, would build. Mattie proves her boss wrong by meeting the challenge successfully. Women can excel in any and all fields of study, including the STEM-related fields. Her journey catapults her beyond the factory and into a wider, women-distrusting world.

Raising Feminist Boys by Bobbi Wegner. A parenting resource from *New Harbinger Publications*.

How do you teach your son(s) to be kind and conscientious? How do you shape their moral compass in a world that sends them so many conflicting messages? How can you bring up conversations about sexism and bias, without it feeling forced and/or uncomfortable?

In this hands-on parenting book, psychologist Dr. Bobbi Wegner explores this vital topic and provides practical strategies. She addresses a variety of issues—from gender roles, to sex education, to collectivism, all stemming from the importance of gender equality and empathy. The subject matter is subdivided into age appropriate categories, making the book useful for all parents. Pragmatic discussion of how to talk to children about these concepts are dispersed throughout.

*** Check out the 2023 Honors List of Multicultural and Nature books (& Teaching Resources) in our Autumn Issue.**

First Place Winner: **As the Deer Bleat**

My name is Tu Youyou (too yo-yo). The name is an unusual one, an onomatopoeia dating back almost 3,000 years, to the time when Confucious walked the Earth and poured out his wisdom. It was he who compiled the **Book of Odes**, and in the book was written "The deer bleat 'youyou' as they eat the QingHao," from which my father chose my name.

As a child, I always thought it was a strange line to be named after. It seemed so random. Only years later would I realize how profound my name really was.

Who knew one strange name could save millions of lives?

I certainly didn't. And though I knew little about it at the time, as I grew, so did the conflict that would lead me to my discovery.

While I lay deathly ill, sweat soaking my bed covers, for two high school years as I battled tuberculosis, Vietnam was battling French colonial rule. As I began training at Beijing university, studying Chinese herbal medicine, the U.S. was training South Vietnamese to fight communist rule. By the time I graduated, the Vietnam War was in full swing.

But before we get to my involvement in the conflict, let's go back to 1967, to a hotel in Beijing. No one knows what happened in that hotel except that the most senior Chinese and Vietnamese officials walked into the hotel. And when they walked out, they had struck a deal. By Vietnamese request, the Chinese government instituted a national project; Project 523.

The goal was to find a cure to the new strand of malaria that was claiming thousands of Vietnamese lives during the war.

Under the government's command, hundreds of the best and brightest Chinese scientists were brought together in the seemingly impossible hope of curing this malaria once and for all. And I just happened to be one of those scientists.

In fact, because of my training in herbal medicine, I was chosen to head my division of the Project; the division of Traditional Medicine, which would test treatments from ancient Chinese dynasties' texts. I still

remember the pride I felt when it was announced that I, Tu Youyou, would head the division. I felt that my heart could burst with joy.

But participating in the project came at great, great personal sacrifice. My work took up so much of my day that I had to send my children away to boarding school. I didn't see them for three years. I was sent to Hainan, an area drenched in malarial mosquitoes, to study the disease at great risk to my own health. My team spent month after month scouring the country for any ancient text that might point us toward a potential treatment. And what results did we get for our effort?

Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Every lead, each of the hundreds of ancient recipes that we tested led to a dead end. I was at my wits end, nothing had worked.

Nothing. We were no closer to a cure than when we had begun.

Until...

I sat down to examine the team's newest find; some 1,700 year old recipes entitled *Emergency Prescriptions Kept Up One's Sleeve* by GeHong, an ancient alchemist.

I scanned the documents. My eyes were tired from squinting at the small characters all day, but I forced my mind to focus. My eyes rested on a recipe that promised to cure intermittent fevers.

"*QingHao*, one bunch, take two sheng of water for soaking it, wring it out, take the juice, ingest it in its entirety."

I dropped the recipe, my eyes widening. Here was the answer we had been looking for. Here was the reason all our experiments had failed.

It was the water.

I ran to my colleague, my eyes ablaze with the only flicker of hope I had felt in months.

"Try the experiment with QingHao again," I ordered. "But this time don't extract it with boiling water; extract it with cold water."

My colleague looked at me skeptically; we had

already tried QingHao, and it hadn't worked. But he didn't protest.

Now, to my reader this may seem like a miniscule, unimportant detail. Why did it even matter if I was trying to extract medicine using hot or cold water?

I didn't know it at the time, but when I tried to boil QingHao, the active, malaria-fighting chemical was damaged by the hot water.

And sure enough, when we used the cold water to extract QingHao essence, it worked. Really, really well.

Well, at least it worked really well on mice.

It was time to begin human trials.

And as the leader of my division, I felt it my duty to be the first human test subject.

As I drank the medicine, it's hard to describe what I felt. I was so hopeful, yet... so afraid. Not for myself; I had already given up my life for this medicine. I was afraid of failure. That after all this medicine it would do nothing. That the people of Vietnam would continue to die, and that my treatment would be incapable of stopping it.

When I swallowed down the last gulp of medicine, I closed my eyes, just for a second, and let the breath enter and exit my nostrils.

After a few days, when it was confirmed that the medicine was safe, our team began experiments on 21 other patients. The QingHao medicine was completely effective in curing their malaria.

Now, QingHao medicine is used to save millions of lives across the globe.

"The deer bleat 'youyou' as they eat the QingHao," read the line of the Book of Odes after which I was named. How on Earth could my father have known that QingHao, the plant mentioned in this obscure line in an obscure poem after which I was named, would link my entire life to my destiny; a destiny that would cure malaria, save millions of lives and create the first Chinese woman to win a Nobel Prize.

—Anna Joy Dillon, age 16, Oregon.

Second Place Winner: **Rosalind Franklin**

"Rosy was bad-tempered, uncooperative, incompetent, and unattractive. Or rather, she chose to be by her unfeminine style of dress. She could not even interpret her own data." —The Double Helix.

In 1968, renowned scientist James Watson published his book "The Double Helix." It followed Watson and his friend Francis Crick, in their discovery of the structure of DNA. Rosalind Franklin, dubbed "Rosy," was one character in the book. In short, her role was to hold the rest of them back.

James Watson was lying.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the race was on to discover the secret of life. Recent scientific advances had made it clear that deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, gave all living things the instructions for life. This made DNA a hot topic.

One key player in this game was Rosalind Franklin, a brilliant young British-Jewish chemist and X-ray crystallographer. She would prove crucial to the discovery of the double helix.

Rosalind Franklin had always been intelligent, focused, and determined. As a young girl, she showed great talent for math and science. In fact, by the age of 15, she decided that she wanted to be a scientist.

Franklin won a scholarship to Newnham College, then one of Cambridge's two female colleges. She studied physics and chemistry. After graduating, she was awarded a graduate research scholarship. However, she did not get along well with her supervisor, R.G.W. Norrish, in part because of her position as a woman. Franklin eventually became an assistant researcher at the British Coal Utilization Research Association, studying the properties of coal and other hydrocarbons. Her contributions aided the war effort—her research would lead to better gas masks, and she also volunteered as an air raid warden—and her work earned her her Ph.D.

In 1946, Franklin moved to Paris, France, where she learned X-ray crystallography. This was a delicate process that involved using X-ray diffraction to determine the atomic structure of a crystalline solid. Though living frugally, she thrived there, enjoying the French people and culture as well as academic freedom. She continued her research on carbons and became a specialist in the field and an expert in X-ray crystallography.

=> =>

March is Women's History Month in the United States!

=> => Four years later, Franklin returned to England, beginning work as a research fellow in the Biophysical Laboratory at King's College, London. This time she would study the enigma of DNA. Tensions immediately rose. She got off on the wrong foot with fellow DNA researcher, Maurice Wilkins, because of miscommunication with the lab director.

While Franklin believed she was to work independently, Wilkins thought she was his assistant, creating conflict between the two scientists. Paired with contrasting personalities, it was the start of a relationship of mutual dislike. Additionally, the deep-seeded 'boys club' culture—of segregation and misogyny—that existed in the academic environment made it all the more difficult for a female scientist to succeed.

Despite the problems Franklin faced, she jumped steadfastly into her work. She worked for hours on end, using X-ray crystallography to capture photographs of crystallized DNA fibers. She discovered two forms of DNA—the dry A form and wet B form. In May of 1952, she captured the now-famous "Photo 51."

Photo 51 was the sharpest photo yet of B-DNA. It was incredibly clear and offered crucial clues towards the structure of DNA. Without Franklin's permission or knowledge, Wilkins showed the photo to James Watson and Francis Crick, two scientists working in the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge, who were also seeking the secret of DNA. This gave them the information they needed to confirm the double helix structure DNA.

Watson and Crick published a paper on the structure of DNA in the 1953 issue of *Nature*, announcing to the world that they had cracked the code. Although Franklin published a paper on her own research, it was placed after theirs, suggesting that her findings only supported Watson and Crick's. Little did she know that she had laid the foundation for their success.

Franklin did not appear to be upset about her lack of recognition and later even became friendly with the two men. She had left King's College a few months before the *Nature* publication, and went on to conduct pioneering research on viruses.

Tragically, Franklin was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 1956. Not two years later, she passed away

from the condition. She donated the majority of her inherited money to charity. After her death, James Watson, Frances Crick, and Maurice Wilkins would receive the Nobel Prize for their discovery of the structure of DNA in 1962.

As mentioned earlier, Watson referred to her in his 1968 book as "Rosy" (*a name she was decidedly against!*) and created an unflattering and inaccurate caricature of her as a hysterical woman rather than the exceptional scientist that she was. Although in its epilogue he acknowledged her achievements and admitted to flawed first impressions, Watson still caused lasting damage to her legacy.

The Nobel Prize awarded to Watson, Crick, and Wilkins raises the question of whether or not Franklin would have been included in this group, had she been alive. However, in spite of her namelessness in this discovery, it is gratifying to note that Aaron Klug, a biophysicist and chemist who worked with Franklin, acknowledged Franklin in his own Nobel Prize speech.

Rosalind Franklin's experiences exemplify the failed recognition, dismissal, and blatant sexism that women in S.T.E.M. have faced for a long time. But still, she persevered.

Her tombstone reads, "*Her research and discoveries on viruses remain of lasting benefit to mankind.*" But we should remember Rosalind Franklin not only for her work on virus structures, but also for her critical role in the discovery of the double helix, her staunch determination in the face of sexism, her pioneering research in coal, and her brilliant mind and generous spirit.

—Lily Yao, age 15, Oregon.

The 2023 Asian Celebration Haiku Contest Invites your Nature Haiku or Tanka Entries by May 5th, 2023

Haiku and Tanka (*short song, in Japanese*) are traditional poetry forms that come from Japan. Use 8.5" x 11" paper to paint/draw your original nature art illustrating your poems. Chosen entries will be displayed at the 2023 Asian Celebration exhibit this summer. Your Haiku or Tanka entries should be ready for display. Select entries will be published in the Autumn 2023 issue and also on our website. *Send by email:* info@SkippingStones.org; or *by snail mail.*

Third Place Winner: **Elizabeth Cooking Greenleaf**

In 1727 C.E. Elizabeth G. Greenleaf opened her very own apothecary in Boston. She is known as the very first female pharmacist in America, and the ‘Mother of Pharmacy.’ She broke the glass ceiling forcefully thrust upon her, meant to stifle her growth and ignore her potential. She found a way to penetrate this gate-kept, male-only profession. Out of the 32 recognized apothecaries in New England, she was the only female owner in the 1700’s. Although Elizabeth died in 1762 C.E., it could be argued that she still lives on today, through the legacy she left behind, and in all of the female pharmacists of yesterday and today. She blazed her own path through life, and in doing so created a new set of footsteps women could follow in. I myself aspire to be a pharmacist, and to be able to walk the very road she forged.

Elizabeth single-handedly started the creation of what is today a thriving career path for women to succeed within, with about 56.8% of pharmacists being female as reported by “Zippia.” This is a staggering number when compared with the average percent of women in S.T.E.M. jobs being 28% according to *Bizwomen*. Additionally, according to “Narrow The Gap,” in 2021 pharmacists who were women made 4 cents more per dollar than male pharmacists. The career of pharmacist is undoubtedly and undeniably one of the most progressive career paths for women in terms of sheer numbers, and the gender wage gap in the S.T.E.M. field and beyond.

Additionally, Elizabeth carried, birthed, and raised 12 children while she simultaneously nurtured the embers of today’s bonfire of a career, known as pharmacy. Her husband lived away from her for a while working as the pastor of the Congregational Church in Yarmouth. After she initially opened her apothecary, her husband resigned from his job and moved out to Boston to help with their children and her apothecary. Actually, Elizabeth started out in her career as a pharmacist by preparing medications for her husband Daniel’s patients (he was also a physician). I’m sure that if her husband was not supportive of her ambitions, I myself, and many other women today would not have the golden opportunity to become a member of this thriving community of women in S.T.E.M. So, for that reason I am also grateful to Daniel Greenleaf (though

not to the same degree as Elizabeth).

Although Elizabeth Greenleaf was formally recognized and honored by the American Pharmacists Association for all of her hard work, for all of the contributions she has made to pharmacy (especially in regards to women) in 2012, her Wikipedia page is less than 200 words long. Her entire life’s story, all of her achievements and accomplishments were overwhelmingly summarized in a measly nine sentences! I can’t help but feel angry and a little betrayed on her behalf. She was instrumental to the wild success of an extremely important profession within not only the scientific community, but the healthcare community as well. And yet, no one would know the depth and the breadth of everything that was—and in some ways still is—*her* without a deep, rabbit-hole, research session. No one can claim that pharmacy is unwelcoming of women, but even important women in pharmacy seem to be unwelcome in the world at large.

—Ashlee L. Dana, age 17, Oregon.

Friend

I miss you
I love you
I hate you
This hurts
Your serrated words slice through my coffee skin, I grin
Afraid to lose you
I smile We talk
You lie We walk
Circles
again and again and again
Sequenced whispers penetrate hallways and homes
Back to square one
Alone and unknown
But with anything worth living for
You must sort out the weeds
Though not with ease
Always worth it in the end
I dream of you in oil paintings sometimes
Your raspberry curls dotted with time
So as we touch souls, after years, after months
I set my heart to rest.
You are my friend.

—Zoha Pattanaik, age 15, California.

Library Dumplings

First, place a teaspoon of the filling inside the dumpling.
Make sure the filling is firm and not crumbling.
Gently fold the dough over this Chinese delicacy,
And create a pattern across the trim
As the Chinese tradition calls for generally.
Allow the soft 餃子 (jiaozi) to boil,
However you might find that the dumplings uncoil.
Remember to apply water to the rim when attaching the two
sides of the dough,
Do this step very smoothly, nice and slow.
You would be surprised to hear
That this recipe wasn't being demonstrated on a cooking channel,
But rather while shelving books at a library,
Specifically near the children's section at the rear.
The most unexpected place to learn how to make authentic
dumplings,
But don't people always say that you can learn new things
everywhere?
Though I suppose learning about recipes
While volunteering at a library can't compare.
He spoke about how his grandmother taught him to make his first
dumpling,
And at such a young age too, back when he was still mumbling.
He said to enjoy the dumpling with a sauce of your choice,
In a whispering voice,
So that the library would not hear a peep of noise.

—Sriya Bandyopadhyay, *United Arab Emirates. Sriya is a high school sophomore in Dubai, where she resides now after Singapore, Mumbai, and Kolkata (India), where she was born. She is trained in Western Classical Opera, plays on volleyball teams, kayaks, and expresses her poetry through calligraphy. Her poems are always inspired by the people around her and seemingly simplistic events that hide a much more profound truth.*

Sriya adds: "The poem is based on my experience as a regular volunteer at the Old Library in Dubai, and how I meet people of different nationalities, stories, and interests."

Adventure

The burning yellow sphere begins to set
Meeting the cool white moon as it takes its place
The hot sticky air continues through the night
Lights begin to fill the dust covered streets
The long awaited adventure is about to begin

When the tired adults have laid down their heads
The phone rings an obnoxious loud ring
My older cousins on the other side
Waiting at the front of the apartment complex
Ready to start the day

Some nights it's bowling
Tossing the ball hoping to hit even one pin
Some nights it's karaoke
Chinese songs I don't even know the words to
Some nights it's a movie
Cuddled up in a cozy blanket at home

The well rested adults begin to wake
As we are beginning our slumber
Letting the adventures of last night
Remain fresh in our dreams

Sprinkled in amongst the restless nights
Are family gatherings with my large family
Tables full with my grandpa, aunts, uncles
Family I have not seen in two years
Each coming up saying how much I've grown

After three weeks in paradise
The adventure must end
A tearful goodbye and quiet car ride
Twenty four hours of traveling
Leaves me back

In the quiet peacefulness of home
—Madison Chng, *Chinese American student, Iowa.*

All human beings—irrespective of our national, religious, cultural or ethnic backgrounds, the languages we speak, our gender and/or sexual preferences, and our abilities or disabilities—have a right to live and flourish, practice our faith and culture, use the language we choose to speak, engage in a pursuit of happiness, practice a profession of our choice, eat healthy foods, breathe fresh air, drink clean water, live in safety, and sleep without fear of harm. Girls and boys, women and men, as well as persons that use different pronouns, all need a 'home' where they can be themselves.

Gods of India

(A poem in Haiku form)

Gods have lived for years
Creators of universe
In Hinduism

Vishnu, protector,
Through avatars brings the peace
Toward enlightenment

Slayer of demons,
A spectacular dancer—
The holy Shiva

Krishna the strong boy
Lifting mountains with pinkies—
Stealing the butter

The strong Prince Rama
Weds to the Princess Sita
A tale of strong love

The great Hanuman
With his mighty, holy mace
Serving his master

Indra the mighty
Claims to be god of the gods
Wields his thunderbolt

He has a sweet tooth
And a big elephant head—
The holy Ganesh

Durga the mighty
Destroyer of the evil
Our good protector

Within white temples
Saraswathi, arts patron
Plays her instruments

Lakshmi, Vishnu's wife
Known for beauty, wealth, and love
Holds her white lotus

In arts and sculptures
Seen in all aspects of life
The almighty gods

—Rishi Chundury, age 13, Nebraska.
"I'm fascinated with Greek mythology."



Sri Krishna and Radhadevi

A Home Shrine Photo by Evaani Kapoor, age 7.5, Virginia. She adds: "I think temples are peaceful because they are quiet. Temples make me feel calm when I pray. People go to the temple sometimes when they're anxious. People go to the temple to ask for blessings. Also sometimes, we go to a temple when we feel guilty and want to ask for forgiveness. I always feel better and have peace after I go to a temple whether I go for quiet, to pray, I feel anxious or need blessings!"

"Castle in the Sky" by Alistair Moore, age 15, Oregon. She writes:

"Art, to me, is a release from the problems of life. It is the thing that is most important to me. It is the only thing that lets me express how I feel. Drawing, painting, music, and writing are very important to me. I'm not the greatest artist, but that is all I need."

How Does it Feel to be New?

I have a river in my mouth that floats,
try to make a different sound,
like bird chirping,
like a wind rustling.

Whenever I try, it makes awful noise
I hear a giggling laugh,
I would just be a tree
even if the wind rustles through me
I would do nothing.

When is the flower blooming
tornados are sweeping the flowers
I dreamed and dreamed
thinking of the flower that will bloom
one day
and of the many bees and butterflies that
will come to me.

—Kyujin Kim, grade 5, age 11, Illinois.
Kyujin adds: "When I first came to America (11 months ago), it was hard to open my mouth. I used to study English in Korea but here everyone spoke so fast so I couldn't understand. I got into an ESL class with Mrs. Markus and my English became better. Playing with kids made my English better, too. My hobby is playing baseball and I'm good at math."



Reminiscence

Ancient tree with
 branches budding like dreams; green, new with life and the
 cacophony of insects, birds in the shade. They
 d
 u
 c
 k their heads and warble out songs which tumble over the winds to
 reach our
 ears. We listen for the notes strung along the scale, whistle like a
 flute or the winds blown along the
 green grass. The beds where the flowers sleep
 harbor fairies and the mice and all
 inquisitive creatures like the singing songbird and Grandfather's dog which trots,
 jaws wide and shaking limbs rolling in the sunlight. The sun
 kisses the edges of the leaves, abundant now that the days are
 long and the nights shorter. The crickets
 mumble along the fences the cats balance on—the cats have
 names that Grandfather is not here to say—lonely, they look upon us; we cannot
 bring him back but
 only if we could—*only if we could*—
 pine scent. Pining thoughts. The sun rises. Grandfather is not here to walk back
 with us. The days are
 quick and the creatures
 run back to their dens, the fairies fold back into the tulips, the
 sun falls down from the sky, the sky
 turns into flame; sunset skies burn and then dusk comes like cold winds, the
 stars hang the moon. We,
 under the cloak of moonlight, listen to the frogs begin a *new*
verse and the crickets, again they chorus. The birds spiral in the air,
 wings wide against the
 xanthic moon, brilliant on a pedestal of stars, it will
 yield to the sun as it rises again to the
 zenith of the sky.

—Ruth Chen, age 15, California. "I am Chinese-American, and I write about
 nostalgia, nature, and memory." She is studying creative writing and poetry.

Inviting Creative Writing & Art for the 2023 Youth Honor Awards!

Writings: 1,000 words or less. Poems: 30 lines or less. Photo and art entries:
 8 pieces or less. Max. # of entries: 5 per student. Ages: 7-17. Entry dead-
 line: May 5th. Entry fee: \$6. Everyone who enters receives the awards issue
 (*International entrants get a digital copy*). Send to: editor@skippingstones.org.

Mountain Serenity

My name is Christopher
 Jozczyk, and I am a dual citizen
 of the U.S. and Poland.

Before the Covid-19 pan-
 demic, I enjoyed spending sum-
 mer vacations in Poland, visiting
 my relatives and working on
 my uncle's farm. This summer I
 am fortunate to be able to have
 the opportunity to visit Poland
 again, when I will participate
 in a global community service
 project where I will help children
 develop their English reading and
 writing skills.

My poem (*on page 13*) reflects
 the calming nature of the out-
 doors that I love and appreciate.
 I wanted to stress the beauty and
 serenity of nature in my writing.
 I love the outdoors and spend
 a great amount of my free time
 hiking or walking outside. The
 location that inspired Mountain
 Serenity was Chauncey Peak in
 Connecticut, which I hiked dur-
 ing the summer. Upon reaching
 the summit and breathing in the
 fresh air, I looked into the dis-
 tance and I was amazed by the
 surrounding area.

I take pictures to memorial-
 ize the peaceful feelings of nature.
 One of the ideas that came to my
 mind was to create a poster that I
 could hang in my room. It would
 put me at peace and bring back
 the good memories I had while
 exploring the nature. I would
 love to share this poster with
 others who might benefit from
 the calming and majestic views of
 nature and my interpretation of
 my moments of serenity.

Mountain Serenity

By Christopher Josczyk, 15, Connecticut.

Let me take you to a place
Where gentle winds caress your face
And one feels the distant yet overwhelming
smell of pine
That warms the mind.
Where the stones lay weathered along the
twisted trails
Where the greening bark is rough against
your nails.
Where green pines would loom
And radiant flowers would bloom
Long emerged from their winter tomb.
Where the cliffs and boulders that rested for
ages
Ancient with calcite and mosses collected
throughout the stages.



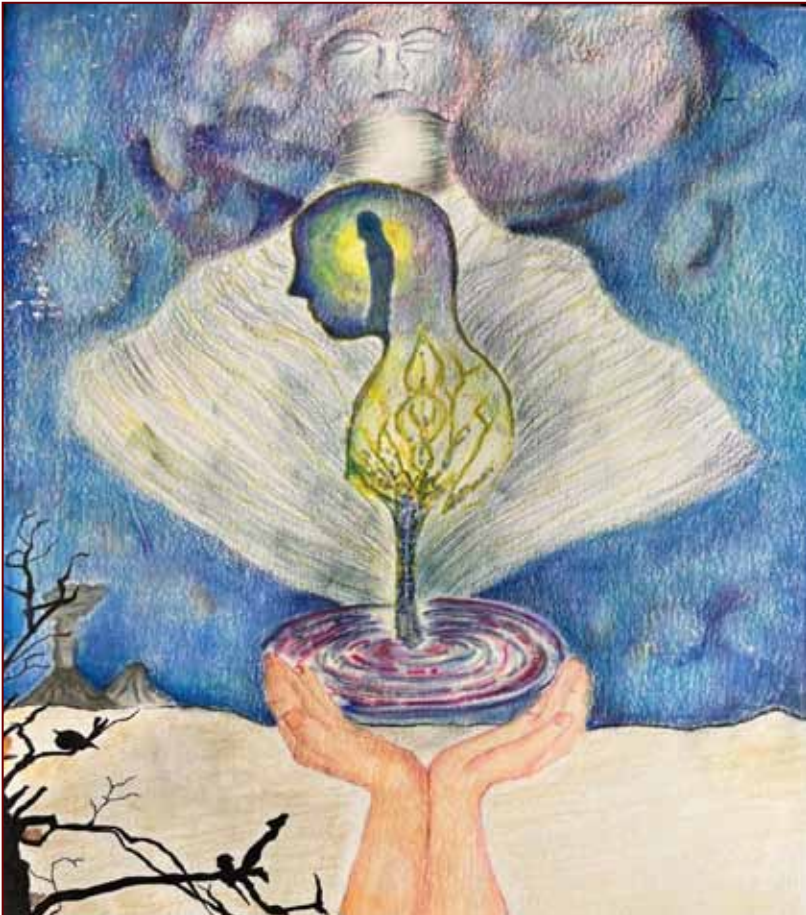
Where the sky is filled with a
constant blue
Where the feeling of quietude
passes over you.
Where you hear the sporadic
cries of a hawk
Or the rustling of the under-
growth as a chipmunk would
walk.
Where your lungs would be filled
with the purest mountain air
As it lifted your heart and rustled
your hair.
Where you could see for miles
The isles that occupy our habitat.

Eric Chen Writes:

I tend to be philosophical and ponder greatly about esoteric concepts. In addition to being a philosopher, I am a social critic and my work represents those two sides of my personality.

Alan Watts influenced me. He is a renowned philosopher and his words greatly influenced me to examine myself in a different persona: the good and bad, the calm and the storm, and the light and darkness. After a deep soul search I found serenity. Everything appeared to be moving in slow-motion. I could feel the flow of blood and each heartbeat in my body. I did not judge the world, for I let it judge me. All I felt was love, raising me to a higher state of awareness. The figure within a figure is supposed to allude to the philosophical qualities, as I think of the mind as being complicated and sometimes a mind within a mind, pondering the greatness and tragedy of life. Lastly, the hands are a philosophical allusion to the hands of an artist creating artwork but also as a hand of creation (God) imbuing the universe with its greatness and the wisdom of his creations. This is why my background is that of a universe.

—Eric Chen, age 17, New York.



The Bloodsucking Pig



Portraits: (top) **Surrealism Self** by Junghwan Yoon, age 17, South Korea, & (bottom) **Shades of Blue** by Sue An Kim, age 14, South Korea.

Landis Shen: Buddhism and Peace

I was born in Asia. Being influenced by the Eastern culture, I knew a lot about Buddhism since I was a child, and I like it. As the religion I have always believed in, it brings me the peace I never experienced. Religion is a kind of faith that is extremely important to people. When a person loses his faith, he loses his direction and motivation. To me, faith is a state of believing. It does not matter what you believe in even if it is a really small thing, it can be anything, like beautiful views, music, and a touching poem. I enjoy meditating like a real monk when the sun shows up in the morning because it makes me calm down to feel real peace. This state, this way of life that is not being disturbed by my surroundings, is what Buddhism guides me to.

In my drawing, I'm trying to create a monk who is wandering in the garden and enjoying peace during fall. It represents my understanding of what real peace is. I add the science fiction elements because I think it is a very interesting combination and symbolizes the eternity of peace.

—Landis Shen, age 17, California.



Angel Vale Explains: The Bloodsucking Pig

My artwork is filled with emotions and imagery. The subject of my work is my home country, Venezuela, which is going through a humanitarian crisis due to a socialist dictatorship that is violating human rights by starving Venezuelans to death and making it hard for the people to have access to medicines, health services, power, and water supply. The title of my work is **The Bloodsucking Pig** as my intention is to highlight who's directly and indirectly responsible for the crisis in Venezuela and the suffering of its people. The elements and principles that are most obvious in my drawing are color, shape, movement directed along lines, asymmetrical balance of shapes, and a variety of elements to guide the viewer's eye through and around the work. My artwork is made on Bristol paper, and mediums and tools used are graphite to sketch it, and watercolors and colored pencils to finish it by using mostly primary and secondary colors.

The crisis in Venezuela is a personal issue for me as a Venezuelan-born artist who had to abandon his

country for the U.S. at the age of six, when the crisis was in the making and even before it became worse, and also because I still have relatives living there who are suffering. Therefore, my artwork shows the current anger, frustration, and pain of my people, and it is my goal to inspire a sense of solidarity with the people of Venezuela and rejection towards the ones causing it, calling out on the world for help. By creating **The Bloodsucking Pig**, I learned how imagery can be so powerful that it only takes the correct image to express your message (in this case, dictator Nicolás Maduro is presented as a pig to enforce the idea of his responsibility for the humanitarian crisis). The piece is exactly what I had imagined. It shows the reality of Venezuela, even in the language spoken in Venezuela—Spanish, and it will influence my development as an artist by allowing me the freedom of expressing my thoughts in a creative way, even if not politically correct.

—Angel Vale, age 15, grade 9. Angel was born in Venezuela. He now lives in Maryland.

Skipping Stones Stew

A Letter from Earth

The soft whispers that we used to exchange between us,
Your presence that I felt and my bounty that you adored.
All that harmony that existed between you and I,
It was surreal what we had created.

The pain that you brought into my bosom,
I was torn asunder by your rapacious appetite.
All the edifices that proudly stood upon my bare face,
They weighed down heavily on me.

The burnt ashes that form dark clouds,
You suffer from my tears that make you excessively thirsty.
All the moves that changed our relationship forever,
They were devastating beyond my grasp.

I ache and you startle.
Alas,
Behold and listen,
My barren face oozing with pain and suffering.

—Sian Kim, age 15, South Korea.

Remembering Kwanzza

I announced, "Happy Kwanzza!"
Out of a genuine gesture
Of brotherhood
Without doubting whether I should
To a fellow stranger
Who was not in my brown
Skin
He was filled with wonder when
The words spilled out of my mouth
And asked, "Are you talking to me?"
Of course I am, I replied
It IS about unity and building
Relationships
"Oh!" he said with a startled look
Passing along the surprise in his
Eyes to the multi-heritage child
Whose hand he held
"Happy Kwanzza!" she erupted
Breaking the quiet stillness in
The check-out line
Barely old enough to speak or
Understand

—maggie d., African American poet, Washington.



Toucan by Mikayla McHart, age 10, Oregon.

Day in, Day out: Two Perspectives

Mother

The alarm goes off, I jolt upright.
I scurry to the kitchen,
Open the fridge and cook for my family,
Before they leave the house.

Father

The alarm goes off, I slowly sit upright.
I stroll to the dressing room,
Open the drawers to pick my outfit for the day,
Enjoy a breakfast feast with my family.

I wash the dishes,
Sweep the floor,
Fold laundry,
Clean, clean, clean.
Drops of sweat crawl down my face.

I get on the subway,
So squished I can hear
The heart beats of other people.
Open my computer...type, type, type.
Flip through papers, filled with numbers.

This is my morning.

Lay in bed.
My wrists,
Shoulders, and back
Ache from the work I did.

Lay in bed.
Watch TV with a snack,
Laziness has spread over me like a virus,
Exhausted from the work I did.

This is my evening.

—Chloe Suh, age 16, South Korea.

The Mother Tree

There are trees that protect their children
No matter the cost
They are called mother trees
They nourish the saplings and
Keep them safe

Trees warn each other of danger
With chemical signals
They mourn the dead of their species
Especially if the lifeless tree
Was a mother tree

Sometimes two trees are so dependent
On each other
That when one dies
The other dies soon after
Trees make alliances

There are peculiar relations in the Earth's canvas
Fungi connect trees and
Take nutrients in return
Underground currents, invisible,
Give life to trees and fungi

Water leaves its trace for a billion years
Hydrating all living bodies
Tree groves drink from common fountains
Their roots embrace marine creatures
That swam in primitive oceans

Ancient religions worshiped trees
The world tree that holds up the nine worlds
The tree of life that reminds us
How similar we are to other beings
We all need water, are water

And then there is our thirst for the air
That trees so gently gift us
Forgetting our past does not make it less true
We are poisoning our planet
We are choking ourselves

The mother trees pay no mind
They're just trying to survive
To grow pure and true
Guiding water to their children
Breathing life into the sky

—Nova Macknik-Conde, age 10, New York

Fairytale

It's my life, it's a fresh new page
Just waiting to be written,
Don't need the Fairy Godmother
The knight in shining armor,
The king and queen,
A scaly dragon

Nor a magic wand
It's my story
It's my pen and paper
No preordained fate to lord over me
It's my turn to show the world
That my life is mine, goes by my word

Can't you see, the only thing waiting for me
Is me
I've been sleeping for a hundred years
Just to know
What it's like to be alive
What it's like to be me

I will not wait around
For my happily ever after
The past is unchangeable, unbreakable
The future's not yet found
I will choose to live in now

—Nova Macknik-Conde, age 10, New York.

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Sept. 29, 2022

—Arun N. Toké, Editor & Publisher

Poetry Page

An Eternal State

Butterflies flit at daylight this Spring,
Enfolded beneath trees and ferns:
Part of Nature's undersurface.
Hand-in-hand, we stroll down
The time-worn wooden switchbacks
Under the leaves that veil a host
Of tiny, ethereal butterflies.

Summertime holds a unique lushness in spirit:
The air grows humid at its peak, then crisp.
Autumn's red and gold fade to brown like
A watered-down pigment that grows paler and weaker.

When we face a fork in the wild we turn to our companions—
If alone, it's easy to turn away.
At times we'll all part ways, only to reunite again.

In the seasonal cycle, all is anew:
Flowers wither and wilt yet the genus still goes on:
Each day new blossoms are born,
The most remote of roads may still cross paths.

There is so much more "eternal" than "finite" in this world;
So often we interpret new beginnings as endings of the former.
It is only when we take a step back
That we see the full picture:

An eternity of peace may be punctuated by moments of distress
But it is peaceful, nonetheless.

—Ellis Yang, age 12, California. She is passionate about reading, and writing fiction and poetry. She plays music with her friends and enjoys art in her free time. =>



A Rose

I pick up a rose—not
just any rose. A rose that
is the color of darkness
and cold, but then peace
will unfold and the love from
the heart will be set free
and when I die somebody
new will arrive.

—Violet A. Maras, grade 4, and
Andrea P. Tollinche, grade 3, Illinois.
Rose by Xiya Lin, age 16, Oregon.

=> Ellis adds: "My poem embraces the theme of "peace" through nature and rebirth. It seeks to define peace as a deeper harmony and humanity—not an artificial or unchanging stillness. Just like how flowers wilt and bloom, life is volatile and unpredictable; little moments of distress are natural."



Brown Town (Bombay)

Children claustrophobic in an empty room,
Roaming around the city of dead dreams,
Buried in the ashes of money,
The stench of the wealthy pollutes this crowded town.

It follows you in every gully, every corner.
And hidden behind the curtain of glass sculptures
are the tears of the poor,
Their silent screams stifled by the insanity that
Consumes the night and resumes in daylight.

Grey clouds poison the white canvas of the free sky,
Dirt engulfs every inhabitant, murky waters reaching knee high,
The sweat and blood of the poor waters the plants of the rich,
In this brown town.

—Maharshi Roy, age 16, Mumbai, India.

Maharshi was born in Greece, has spent many years in UAE, and is now studying in India. His multicultural upbringing has shaped his artistic lens. A sports enthusiast, he is also passionate about Hip-Hop music production. Maharshi delivered a TEDx talk at the age of 11, making him the youngest to do so in the UAE. He also co-hosts a podcast titled, 'That's Great News.'

He adds: "I was inspired to write my poem while first traversing the narrow crowded gullies of the slums in Mumbai. Growing up in Dubai, I had never witnessed poverty on such a massive scale. The scenes moved me to create this piece to highlight the duality in nature of the mega metropolis, Mumbai."

A Letter to the Creator (Translated from Ukrainian by the author)

Green leaves rustled softly on the branches of broad-shouldered giant oaks. The gleaming Sun gave a crimson kiss to the young trees swaying uncertainly after the long hibernation and then went to its place of rest, behind the endless horizons.

A light breeze blew, but instead of the expected fresh scent of wildflowers, there was a sharp stench of exhaust smoke. Suddenly the sweet memories of childhood disappeared. Somewhere nearby, a car beeped, an old tram rumbled by, a jazz melody was heard from the open window of a nearby house and someone lit a cigarette.

Here it is: the city, the conqueror of the beautiful green world. Civilization has repainted nature in gray-concrete colors. Dense forests, full of wildlife, once flourished here. Just a few summers ago, it was so wonderful to hide under the sprawling branches of the Forest Guardians and just sit in silence, listening to the unique symphony of nature, diving into endless adventures with a book, or praying, thanking the Creator for a sunny day. And now... Now everything has changed...

The cigarette of an unknown person scattered black ashes, which fell silently roadside. Plenty of fellow cigarette butts, dirty and unnecessary, covered the curb and created a gray wave in a small stream nearby. When time scheduled for smoking was over, the stranger left, whistling a cheerful song.

A clear tear in a form of a tiny stream was running down her reddened cheek. Is it possible that people could be so indifferent to nature, to others, to themselves? This is their planet, there is NO other planet! Why does humanity NOT appreciate what it has got?

Suddenly, she noticed one wrong puzzle piece standing out amid this not-so-peaceful and carefree picture. It was a mighty old Oak (so old that it must have seen days of Taras Shevchenko, the Ukrainian poet from the 1800s). There was a wide, once green,

handsome tree leaning over a bus stop with a faded roof, tired of its sleepless years. It held out its thick, bare branches to the people in a silent prayer and only cried sadly when the cold winter wind brushed across its temples.

She recognized it. Quietly, timidly, she approached the Mighty Oak, touched its wet, uneven bark and leaned her cheek on the mossy trunk from her childhood. It used to be her favorite place. There was no highway, and there were no skyscrapers and no bus stops. There was only a sun-drenched lawn, a path winding through the trees straight home and an oak tree. It was under the branches of this tree that she'd dreamt, studied, and read (an ABC book as a child and later, books by Lesya Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, and Lina Kostenko as a teenager). Then there was a sad farewell. The university was awaiting her. How everything had changed over the years! And now this majestic, unconquered Oak was like a wild lion in a concrete cage, standing alone among thousands of tree graves buried under the asphalt.

Will life continue this way?

Putting her briefcase on the snow-covered ground, she took out a notebook and sat down on a thick tree root. And the first words were laid on the yellowish lantern-colored sheets of paper in the dim light:

"Thank you, Lord, for the breathtaking beauty given to us. You made us stewards over your awesome creation: Majestic, emerald forests, transparent blue oceans, rushing and merry rivers, mountains surrounded by clouds, and fields filled with food and flowers..."

But, we did not appreciate it; we neglected this great treasure. We began to exploit, cut down, litter, and insult it, forgetting that besides us human beings, there were other creatures of Yours living on this Earth, too.

Forgive us for the deforested peaks of once beautiful, green mountains, for the dirty, littered shores of once clean and transparent oceans, for the ozone holes that constantly grow, for the



brown deserts that once abounded with life, for the gradually disappearing glaciers and for the millions of innocent animals whose habitats have been taken away by us human beings.

The trees were cut down, the factories that pollute the environment were built, the emissions and waste were not filtered out, the natural resources were taken away, the land was disfigured, the deadly weapons were tested, and innocent people were killed.

Did we, the inhabitants of the Earth, expect that nothing would happen?

Is it appropriate for us to live only for ourselves, just for today, here and now?

Unfortunately, we cannot change the past, but we have the future in our hands!

We must change everything—we need to return what we took from Nature.

Oh God, help us realize our mistakes and change what we can. Clean the sea-shores of our trash, plant new hectares of dense forests, learn how to properly recycle plastics and other waste products, giving them a “second life,” replace aerosol sprays that destroy the atmosphere with environmentally safe means, not burn fallen leaves, but make eco-friendly paper out of them. Can we do these things in near future?

Is it worth waiting for such changes to take place someday in the future? Why not start working on these changes now? After all, it is quite simple—just keep everything in order, recycle, clean up our neighborhoods and be a wise steward of our own lives and our little worlds, taking care of our environment.

There is something which is most crucial. We all should learn to truly love one another, not to be indifferent, but to help. We should not fight but seek for reconciliation. We should seek not to criticize but to

Caged

A burial is taking place,
where she will lie, forever with a moving element,
Captured behind the stories her Grandmother
brought to life—the pungent scent of salt air, the
water’s kiss as she dove under the surface. It was easy
to remember the scents of wilderness that permeated
the air, the dappled sunlight bending colors every which way, all the
large and tiny details of her stories. It was even harder to forget the
way she always began with “once upon a time...”

Yet her wings fly in the space tomorrow brings, the corals, sea turtles,
and organic ocean motion seem within reach, once again.

She flies on the quilted connection of the sea turtles, the regal
angelfish, the manta rays. Her body beats slowly in my palm. Each
pulse sent to the ventricles widens the heart chambers a little bit more
until soon her heart is as strong as any.

Corals woven with shamrock and streaks of fish with vermilion scales
swim through my dreams, a distant memory, accompanied always with
the promise of a fragmented future.

As time hurdles forward, slivers of currants and azures, and bursting
ocean ecosystems slip through my grasp, until only a barren cemetery
remains.

Da-dum, da-dum, da-dum. The rhythms of the ceremony pulse beneath
my fingers. *Da-dum, da-dum, da-dum.*

The swell of the northern current awakens my humanity, immersing
my soul in the island waters, where first life and memory began.

—Tara Prakash, age 16, Maryland. “Caged is a poem characterizing
the movement of time in the context of climate change. The trapped bird in
the cage represents Mother Nature, and I work to bring to life the climate
crisis through visuals and details of the impact and repercussions the oceans
are receiving. I set the poem in a burial scene, beginning with death and end-
ing with birth. Overall through this poem, I am trying to convey the urgency
and impacts of the climate crisis through the eyes of Mother Nature.”

*support, because only unselfish Love can change everything and help us move in
the right direction, toward the Light. Everything will pass, except for it. For Love
is eternal!”*

There was a sheet of paper, folded into a square, laying on the
ancient ground under that pensive old Oak. This letter was left there for
all who are willing to truly love and change our beautiful world.

—Yarynka Yarosh, 15, grade 9, Kyiv, Ukraine. On March 9, 2022,
she and her family had to flee Kyiv due to Russian invasion and bombing.
You can also read her story, **The Most Precious Gift!**, on our website.



What is a Dream?

An image, clear and stark
Emotional, frightening
An idea, a fired spark
Intriguing, inspiring
A wisp of mist-like color
Where something forgotten lay
I dismissed it, shrugged my shoulders
And I went about my day
But now that night has fallen
It strikes me again, more clear
So I'll labor through the darkness
To entice it, bring it here

Peace

I used to think world peace would come—
(Was I a young thing then!)
When people *all* put down their guns
For greater good, and then—
The people would be happier
With no cause to defend.
And then, I grew older. I learned
One does not need a gun
But just a mind or voice to hurt
Unwittingly, or for fun.
And either way it burns like fire
Eternal as the sun.
And then when I grew older still
I learned the sun will die
And just before, consume our Earth
But humans will not die
No, we will put our heads together
We must learn to survive.
I do not think world peace will come,
Not on our current Earth
But maybe in a future time
(Humanity's rebirth)
The people all will drop their hate
Assume a higher worth—

Nature's Plight

I've always loved to draw and paint; whenever I had a chance in the summer I'd always go to the patio and paint. Usually, my sister would come too, but that day she was busy so I went to paint by myself. It was nice and quiet with birds chirping in the trees until my sister came downstairs to practice piano. She was working on a new piece that she had just started. She was playing the part that she had just learned, but she kept messing up and playing the wrong note. Every time she did, she would stop while she looked at the book to find the right note. The birds would chirp every time she stopped to check as if they were playing a duet. They played together in perfect harmony.

We, as humans, should be working together with nature, not working against it like we are. We've been digging fossil fuels, cutting down trees, putting trash in landfills, ruining ecosystems, and causing animals to go extinct. We do all these things knowing that they're harming the environment and causing things like climate change and pollution. People know that the Earth is changing and they say things about it, but they still don't do anything about it. Some people don't even mind because they think it's not going to affect them, or they don't think that it can be fixed even though it can be. But, it is going to affect all of us, whether we believe it or not.

My family and I do everything we can to help: we recycle, we turn off lights we're not using, we car-pool when we can, and we turn off the tap when we brush our teeth. Even my school sometimes puts bins out for plastic and other recyclable things that kids would just throw out. But no one's perfect, and sometimes I throw away things that I could use...

The birds chirping and my sister playing piano shows how humans can help nature just like it helps us. We just have to try. If we all do something, we can help to heal the Earth and live together in peace and harmony again.

—Yuvica Rateshwar, age 10, New Jersey.

—Jessica Weinfeld is a senior at NSHS, Massachusetts. She is the president of the school's Creative Writing Club and loves writing fiction and poetry. She has been published in *Apprentice Writer* and *Cathartic Youth Literary Magazine*. When Jessica is not reading or writing, she enjoys playing the violin and the French horn.

About the Art and Student Artists Featured on Pages 23 and 24

★ **Morning Sky** (front cover) by Ishika Chakraborty, age 14. “To me, art is an expression of emotions, a way to put your feelings into an image of colors and shapes.”

Art featured on page 23:

1. **Moonlight Mountain** by Dantong Chen, age 10. “I love to draw and paint because it makes me happy and it’s calming. I wanted to paint the mountains because I really liked the colors and I like drawing and painting landscapes.”

2. **Misty Peaks** by Tracy Hu, age 16. “I enjoy creating art because it allows me to express myself and relax. I like how I can just focus on my brush and colors and watch as an image slowly starts to come alive from the canvas.”

3. **Vietnam Morning** by Mohini Iyer, age 12. “Personally, I love art because it is an activity of self-expression and creativity. I’ve always enjoyed expressing my thoughts onto a canvas as a way to reflect. I love painting and drawing during my free time. Art has always been a way for me to show my creativity and personality.”

4. **Paris** by Ella Kim, age 12. “I chose this Paris scene because of the monochromatic colors. I thought it would be more interesting to paint compared to the more colorful ones.

5. **Rainbow Cave** by Amelie Wei, age 14. “I chose to paint this cave because I love how colorful and mystical it looks. It is somewhat modern, which I found interesting.”

6. **Self-Reflection** by Bettina Wu, age 17. “I enjoy painting because it gives me freedom to explore new ways to express my creativity.”

7. **Dancing Seals** by Sylvia Wu, age 9. “I like art because I can have a good imagination. Also it is fun!”

★ **The Rose** (on page 18) by Xiya Lin age 16. “Oil painting is fun for me because I get to sit down, relax, and just paint. It is different from school and other extracurricular activities which are full of stress and competition. Painting, however, is different and I enjoy it very much!”

★ **Toucan** (on page 16) by Mikayla McHart, age 10.

Art featured on page 24:

1. **Alpaca Twins** by Annabelle Zhang, age 10. “I enjoy painting because it’s so fun and motivating, while also helping me to get creative. It overjoys me to see my progress over time!”

2. **Best Friends** by Ayush Chakraborty, age 10.

3. **Cityscape** by Timothy Yin, age 17.

4. **Serene** by Jayshing Goolsby, age 12. “Art surrounds me in my everyday life and comforts my feelings of unrest. I love how methodical, yet free art is and how it projects that sense onto me.”

5. **Tibetan Mother and Daughter** by Jayling Goolsby, age 14. “The interpersonal relationship that connects mother and daughter has always meant a lot to me. I painted this picture because I wanted to explore that subject and gain a better understanding of what it means in a woman’s life.”

6. **Red Panda** by Ava Vivek, age 9. “The reason why I painted the red panda is because they are my favorite animal.”

7. **A Pretty Little Girl** by Fiona Lin, age 14. “I like art because it brings me a lot of comfort after a long week of school. I also like feeling accomplished after finishing my painting.”

8. **Friendly Raccoon** by Sophie Myrick, age 9. “Art is calming and enjoyable, and gives me a sense of accomplishment after completing a painting.”

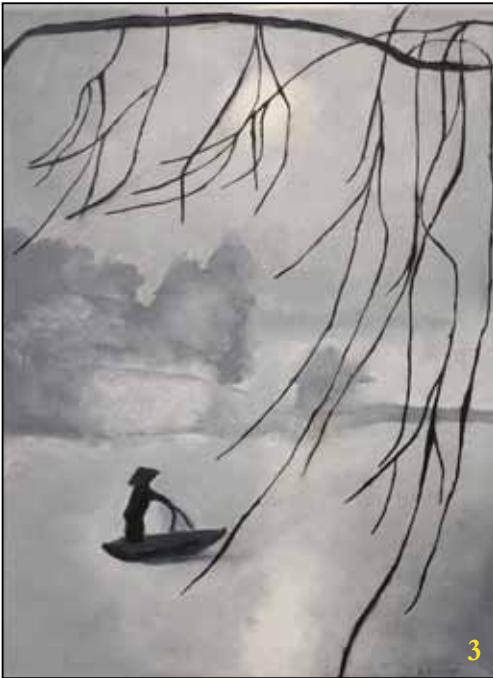
9. **Danger** by Summer Yin, age 14. “I was drawn to this image because I liked its dramatic lighting, colors and poses. I felt that it was one of those scenes that you could stare at and think about for hours.”

See more art by these students on pages 4 and 11.

Our 35th Year Sale

To celebrate our 35th year, we’re offering TEN back issues for \$35 (or 35 back issues for \$100), including postage within the United States. To order, contact us at: info@skippingstones.org, or by snail mail: 166 W. 12th Ave., Eugene OR 97401. Need them sent overseas? Please email us to figure out the extra postage charges.

Artistic Expressions by Students of Stephanie Tsuchida, Eugene, Oregon



More Artwork by Students of Stephanie Tsuchida



The Power of Voices

Sarah walked into class grasping her folder. She had been waiting for this health class, waiting to let it soothe her depressed and resentful heart. Sarah used to be a calm, open-minded and peaceful girl, but now, she is completely losing self-esteem, as her piano audition didn't go very well. It wasn't her fault. She did very well on the audition. But her teacher, who didn't want her to pass the audition successfully, made a glitch in her audition page. That's the reason. She was very angry at herself for not finding out this teacher-problem fast enough, but at the same time, she was depressed, because she worked so hard, for nine years! She was working for this one audition, and she was interrupted by a small glitch made by her teacher. And as if icy water had soaked down to the very bottom of her heart, she didn't speak or ask, nor did she do anything. Just sat beside the window at home, longing for peace.

Ms. Birch announced, "Students of 7A, time to begin. Sit down." Sarah was brought back from her thoughts. She sat down patiently and looked at the teacher. "Today we are going to talk about self-esteem. We have to learn to use our Best Friend Forever (BBF) voice, not our Mean-Girl voice." The students in her class looked intensely with curious, gleaming eyes. Ms. Birch wrote a large title in bold letters on the board: MEAN-GIRL-VOICE and BFF-VOICE. She continued, "Girls, what are some of our Mean-Girl voices that we use often?"

As words increased on the white board, Sarah's emotions were gripped harder and harder as her eyes went over the words again and again on the white-board. The words were very familiar, because she had been using them lately. "I'm stupid," "I'm a failure," "I'm ugly," and "I'm garbage" seemed to knit into Sarah's heart, and she felt hurt. Sarah thought: "That Mean-Girl and bully was me." *She was bullying herself.*

Ms. Birch used a red marker and violently crossed out the Mean-Girl words. In the meanwhile, her voice boomed loudly against the walls, "We will not use these words. Not this year, not when we are adults, not for our whole life. Remember what I said!"

Sarah looked up from her ground, her eyes lightening up a bit. Ms. Birch grabbed a black marker and

started writing all the BFF voices: I'm going to do well, I will work hard, It's okay, I'm smart and capable enough to finish all this.

Sarah was surprised. There was another way to talk to herself when she felt sad? Sarah closed her eyes, brought her mind away, and whispered the encouraging sentences to herself. She felt a wave of peace, sweeping over her. It was so nice to feel peaceful again; the longing feeling for calm soothed Sarah's frantic heart down slightly. She opened her eyes, and saw Ms. Birch handed a sheet down to every student. The student in front of Sarah passed over the paper to her, and Sarah passed it down. It was written on the paper with large and bold golden letters: Your hard work and your results.

Sarah had worked so hard. Her mother and she left their peaceful family in Shenzhen when she was three, just for a better school, and a better music teacher in Shanghai. Staying in Shanghai for nine whole years, she only visited Shenzhen six times at the most, and often it was a visit of three or four days. She worked, following a tight schedule, from early in the day to late at night, only taking breaks a few minutes to see children playing outside under the Sun, out of her window. Then, when she was in sixth grade, she had offers from Manhattan Music School, Mannes Music School, Tianjin Music School, and so many more. She was stressed out. Sarah gained a layer of confidence when she thought of things she had done. Her mind felt dizzy, but at least, she was peaceful all over again. The color of peace, Sarah thought idly, is probably baby pink. Baby pale pink was so pure, like the little angels' skin: soft, tender, and warm.

Later that day, when her mother came to pick her up, she walked out confident, with a large calm smile on her face, running up to hug her mother. This feeling of peace is very comfortable, actually, she thought.

—Ziyu (Sarah) Wang, age 12, New York. *"I'm a young pianist as I have been playing piano for over nine years. I enjoy it very much. I really like reading, math, play-writing and novel-writing, tennis, soccer, swimming, baking, and playing. I hope that more and more people can at least try to overcome their self-consciousness, fear, and sadness." Ziyu hopes to continue enjoying music and becoming a pianist, not just for making money but to get everyone involved in music.*

When an Argument Creates Peace

Emily stared across the classroom at a skinny, blond-haired boy, Jacob. She didn't like him, oh no, she despised him. His nonsensical annoying comments infuriated her. In the middle of math class, for example, he would yell out: "I know calculus!" disrupting the whole class. Wherever he went, there was no peace. Emily tried to avoid him, but in a class with only 30 people, that was hard to do.

When the time came for lunch, the only empty seat was next to Jacob. Emily had no choice but to sit next to him. She was eating peacefully, conversing with her friends when she heard his squeaky voice starting to talk about vaccinations. Emily, an extremely competitive person, couldn't resist jumping into the conversation. Jacob wasn't an anti-vaxxer, although he was anti-vax mandates. The argument very quickly started getting heated. The cafeteria slowly got quieter as everyone stared towards their direction, wondering what the commotion was about.

They stood toe to toe, arguing about the effects on the economy. "People are losing their jobs because they can't or won't get vaccinated!" Jacob argued.

"Lives matter more than jobs!" Emily snapped back at him, "There's a reason governments mandated it!"

"Well, in certain states mandates aren't allowed!"

"In those states women aren't even allowed to control their bodies!"

Jacob paused for a moment, planning his next argument. "You're valuing certain people over others. What about people who can't afford to miss work? They'd be forced to get vaccinated. This goes against democracy, taking away people's choices."

If debate was a video game, Emily's avatar would've flown back. A wave of anger passed through her. "You—" she stuttered "but—" She stuck out her hand reluctantly. "Good job." She sat back down, with a bit of respect. I guess if he can beat me in a debate he isn't that bad.

After that, she started getting closer to him. Where she used to avoid sitting next to him, she now willingly sat. That didn't mean he suddenly stopped being annoying. He did not change, Emily did. She realized that they were more similar than she would've liked. They

both had that fire in their brains, itching to have a good debate with someone, and that's what they did for each other. They unleashed a blast of words upon each other, words not of hate, but of thoughtfulness. Well crafted arguments were traded, and they had fun.

Jacob stood up for her. When she might not have found the courage to speak up, he encouraged her. There was once a classmate who said hurtful things, insulting Chinese people and stereotyping them. Emily was hurt, as being Chinese-American wasn't always easy. Jacob understood her, however, as he had faced anti-Semitism before. He supported her when she decided to speak out about it, ensuring that she wasn't alone.

They each became more and more friendly with each other. They started doing things that friends typically do, not just debating. They would hang out after school, joking around. They would play video games together late at night. They would chatter away in class, sometimes getting in trouble as the teacher glared in their direction.

They learned a lot about each other. And while their political views were drastically different, they respected each other. Where they disagreed, they debated. Of course those debates weren't as loud as their first one, but she learned a lot from each and every one.

She learned that it was a healthy relationship. She learned that friends argued, but unlike with her other friends, those arguments didn't leave her with boiling anger; they left her with... accomplishment. Because when she didn't win, she learned how to be a stronger, better debater. A stronger, better person. Even though Jacob wasn't her best friend, he was a valuable one, because their friendship helped her more than any other. He changed her. He taught her how to find peace between people.

—Emily Shen, 12, New York. Emily writes:

"I like debate and sports, but I had to stop debating for a while which is why I enjoy the discussions I have with my friends. This submission is about how my friend Jacob and I used to have a hateful relationship, but we now have a peaceful relationship. What happened to create that new relationship is what I wrote about."

Dreams inspire people to do extraordinary things. I have dreamed about playing my violin in front of millions and filling their hearts and mine with joy. I have dreamed about becoming an author, writing to share my flooding ideas with the world.

As time passed, I realized that the words I pen could be my greatest strength—a tool to share the joy of creative expression and spread awareness. My first children's book, *True Colors*, is about self-appreciation and belief in oneself. With the hope of helping families cope with mental and food insecurity issues that were compounded due to the recent pandemic, I published *True Colors* and started a fund raiser on the No Kid Hungry platform, which strives to end childhood hunger by providing ten meals for every dollar donated. To support the cause, I pledged to donate 100% of the proceeds from book sales. As of today, with help from family, friends, and our community, we have raised over \$1,200 through direct donations and book sales! This endeavor is a testament to the change that we, as a community, can make when we all stand together!

Over time, my passion for writing guided me into the expanse of the creative world. From indulging in poetry to capturing nature's impeccable beauty, I see no bounds to creative expression.

Unharmony is a poem that I wrote to encompass all of the problems in our modern society. In it, I explain the weakening effects of the

Unharmony

Silence.

It's what we heard for years as we tackled the broken promises and long-forgotten memories.

It was then that I started to think about back *then*.

Back then, there was peace,
or, maybe it was just a mirage holding back the true reality of the future, *but*
there was peace.

Beneath the pride and incessant hunger for power,
there was a time of hope,
a small grain of sand now washed back into the crashing waves.
Back then, war was history.

Something I would look back to, just for the purpose of learning about the unforgettable moments of history, only to now realize that I am the one living an unforgettable memory.

From a violent march, leading to corruption,
as we allowed others to prey on our enfeebled country,
to protests addressing an issue that was never truly abolished,
we tried to hide our imperfections, as we buried the truth.
And now, we stand praying for peace and
those who are sacrificing their life to save their country from another.

When will this war end?

*When will we learn that country borders do not separate us,
rather it is the people?*

When will people change?

When will the planet understand harmony?

We're not yet lost, just reaching out to something a little too far from reach.
We are just a little too far from coming together, and just
a little too far from peace.

—Aditi Nair, age 14, Virginia.



January 6th Capitol Riot while adding a bit about the Black Lives Matter protests, and the present war in Ukraine. Through this poem, I try to convey the vital message of peace, harmony, and working together.

Besides writing, I also enjoy capturing the still but dynamic moments in life to inspire others. Through my poems and photography, I hope to convey the messages of finding peace within oneself and embracing nature while restoring peace on land.

—Aditi Nair, 14, Indian American, Virginia, our 2021 Youth Honor Award winner.

you vs. society

lights of the nights brighten
and they're coming home

*double-lock the doors, close the black-out curtains
keep your gun close, closer than your death wish*

out-of-focus tv sounds
they shiver, pretending to not feel the stares

*wonder if society's coming after you tonight
with their pearly-white smiles covering their lies
we'll remember you, stand with you
but society still can't name your names*

behind double-locked doors
old white men sit in big, white buildings

*looking down they tell you you're home
but home doesn't treat you as a trend, as a vote
with cis white male approval have the lost music faded
with the works of forgotten ancestors*

they wear silence out of habit
afraid of the raw gunshots

*you can't ride the subway too early or too late
and even in-between is a chance you won't make it out
you never wear the hood on your hoodies to prove innocence
but aren't you innocent until proven guilty?*

they're shattered every day
dreams broken because they're society's "nightmares"

*you hope to die the "american" way
from cigarette smoke or old age
but you see people like you dying the american way
a third eye in their forehead*

they're coming home
but when will it be home

—Teresa Zhang, age 16, New York.

Home by Zoha Pattanaik, age 15, California.

My mom's masala chai
lures me into her longing,
Lost speckles of our motherland
Now everchanging, growing.
The previous night's sour tension lingers on my tongue,
Eventually put to ease by the hush of the morning sun.
I don't know if I have a sole home,
I don't know why people ask,
Sometimes the one I believed before
occupied by the overwhelming presence of her.
Somber olive melodies mask the midnight blue
Drift out my window
a lonely gift to my pretty neighbor.

—Zoha P.



Short

I hate being short,
I hate being looked down at.

I hate it so much, so much

When people comment on my height.

So I stand on all the books I've read,

Now I just have sky above my head.

I am taller than mountain peaks, flying birds,

Fluffy clouds and skyscrapers,

For the more I read, the more I know,

The more I know, the more I grow!

5 foot 6 might be tallest I'll ever be,

But on books there's so much I can see.

With these books I'm no longer short,

With these books I'm invincible.

—Xiaoyue (Olivia) Hu, age 15, P.R. China.

Olivia is attending school in New Hampshire.

Zoha adds: "I'm a 15-year-old sophomore, and I'm super passionate about music, advocacy, politics, and literature. Poetry has always been a part of who I am, perhaps an alternative outlet that allows me to freely discuss the issues of our world."

Making Peace in Corona

Two years ago, when Corona struck and classes were split into pods and cast outdoors, where were you and what were you studying?

One group of students on a kibbutz in Northern Israel was learning how to make peace. Facilitated by the Jerusalem Peace Builders, fifteen teenagers with varying degrees of piercings, torn jeans and loud colors in their hair, sat in an enormous circle in the old staff parking-lot-turned-makeshift-classroom adapted for the pandemic.

Jerusalem Peace Builders (JPB) is an interfaith organization that brings together youth from different backgrounds, from Jerusalem, Israel, Palestine, and the United States, to create meaningful encounters. The first session is held separately at each school so students can start to build important dialogue skills such as active listening and empathy before meeting each other.

This workshop began by exploring personal identity. They asked questions like, 'Who are you?' 'What makes you unique?' Important questions for teens who are about to get to know kids seemingly so different from themselves.

Just before the lunch break, the group played a game. Sarah, one of the facilitators, a quiet, young woman with silky, dark hair and skin and deep brown eyes, sat inside the circle. The other facilitator, Yardena, taller and chattier, asked the questions and recorded the answers on a portable white board.

Where was Sarah from? What languages did she speak? How much education did she have? What did she study? Was she married? Did she have kids?

What kind of assumptions do we make about people upon meeting them?

At first glance, it was hard to peg Sarah. She was most definitely from the Middle East, but nothing about her appearance, her accent, or even her name, indicated whether she was more likely to be Arab or Jewish.

As Yardena posed the questions, students' answers spanned the spectrum. She was from Egypt, from France, from Jerusalem, or maybe Ashkelon. She spoke English, Hebrew, and maybe Arabic. Perhaps Italian. She was a teacher, a lawyer, a social worker.

Michael had been a student the year before in the



ninth grade English-speakers club. Wild haired with thick glasses and fiercely competitive, English came easily to Michael and he was used to winning. When he attended his first Model U.N. last year, he walked away with second prize. "It's easy," he said after with a wink and a dismissive wave of his hands. "You just need to speak a lot and pretend you know what you're talking about."

Michael was sure he had this game. He pulled his teacher aside. "She's Arab, right?" It made sense since it was a coexistence workshop and Yardena, Sarah's partner, was clearly Jewish.

Still, Michael fell into all the traps: If she was Arab, she must be poorly educated. But she was so articulate, so she must be wealthy and worldly, with some foreign Arab Passport. Jordan? Egypt? Certainly not Palestinian.

When Sarah shared that she was in fact Palestinian, Michael's face twisted. He didn't always take kindly to being corrected, but there was no denying who she was. As it turned out, she was from East Jerusalem, and had no passport at all.

"Well, that's a choice," Michael shot back. "East Jerusalem Palestinians don't WANT Israeli passports because they don't accept the State of Israel."

"There are Palestinians like that," Sarah conceded, "But many people like me want them so we can live a normal life. Unfortunately, they're not easy to get. After you apply, it can take years to receive an answer from the government, and then fewer than half of the requests are even approved. Without a passport, I'm not a citizen of any country. I'm not free to travel anywhere in the world."

Michael's second assumption was also shattered. "Palestinians are the most educated Arab population in the world. Especially the women," Sarah said.

"Really?" Michael raised his thick eyebrows till they reached his fluffy mop of hair.

Making Peace ...continued

Sarah's smile was more conciliatory than cynical. "Well sure. We can't travel and there aren't so many jobs. What else do we have to do with our lives? So, we study."

Michael didn't speak again as Sarah answered the rest of their questions. She wasn't married, no kids. She'd been studying physics, but when she got involved with JPB, she decided to dedicate her life to helping promote coexistence. She loved traveling to schools and meeting students with such different backgrounds than hers and sharing her story.

During the break, several students stayed to chat with Sarah, foregoing their lunch and only free time. She patiently answered their questions and asked some of her own. The rest of the day the students continued to explore identity. They were asked to map out all the things that made them who they were and highlight those that defined them best. As they discovered, how they define themselves—dancer, student, good friend—changed depending on the day or the situation, or their stage of life.

At the end of the session, students were asked to share something they had taken away from the day. When it came to Michael's turn, the other kids stepped in close, eyebrows raised in anticipation of his witty, cynical remarks.

Michael glanced down and then looked at Sarah. He smiled and joined his hands together in a rare gesture of gratitude. "Today I learned that I don't know everything, and that's okay."

The next day, three ninth graders were diagnosed with Corona and the whole school went home for what would be the next eight months. To the great dismay of both teachers and students, their first JPB workshop was their last.

But Covid has taught us at least two important things. First, we're all in this together. Second, we must constantly adapt to an ever-changing world.

Sarah gave up her whole career path to pursue peace. And Michael was able in one day to rethink everything he believed about people. What have you learned in Covid? And how do you plan to use it to change the world?

—Emily Singer, writer and teacher, Northern Israel.



Pointe Shoes

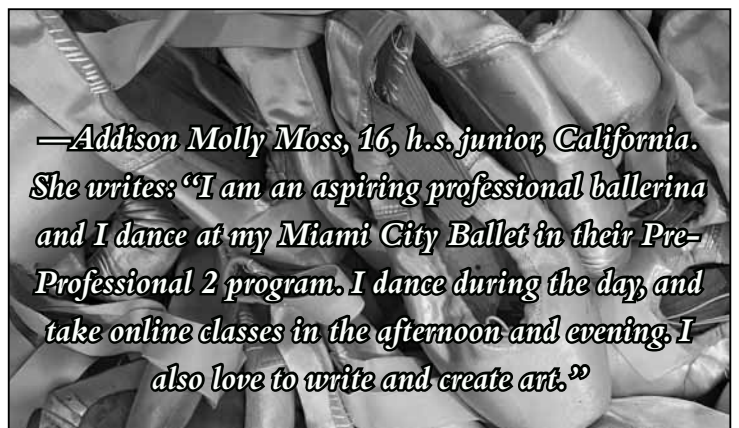
Swaddled in the cradle of my candied, satin veneers
I subsist.

Whose Michelangelon thumbs sculpted me
and set me afloat on the gulf of my youth?
Until the dancer adopts me,
And spits on my architect.

She stifles me with my ribbons and furrows my spine
and then enwraps herself with the skeleton of my fabric.
Squirming in her embrace,
I erode my tenant's toes and I set her aflame.

But in my penultimate life,
we suspend this crusade and beauty comes to bask
in an instant of stillness and repose.

This pursuit which I soldier
is in service of a cup runneth over.



—Addison Molly Moss, 16, h.s. junior, California.
She writes: "I am an aspiring professional ballerina
and I dance at my Miami City Ballet in their Pre-
Professional 2 program. I dance during the day, and
take online classes in the afternoon and evening. I
also love to write and create art."

Do Not Flush

Freshman year, a gray and bulky “Do Not Flush” sign greeted me in my new dorm room. Smack dab in the middle of my wall, it wouldn’t budge whether I used a hammer or screwdriver. But then, I had an idea: I plastered pictures of my parents, brother, grandparents, and cousins around it, creating a tongue-in-cheek “Do Not Flush” wall for the people I love—those I will never flush away.

My daily hour-long calls with my parents are my only clear memories from ninth grade. Ironically, I didn’t realize that these calls, my chosen homesickness remedy, were keeping me from finding a home at my new boarding school. Rare moments with my peers—only when my FOMO* threatened to overpower my social unease—are clouded with a thick fog of anxiety. I spent many hours watching “Gilmore Girls,” my earphones shielding me from the laughter seeping through the walls or filling the uneasy silence around the dorm. Then, COVID struck. Hidden behind my KN-95, I was secretly relieved to go home, to live in the comforting orbit of my family.

Journaling is all I remember of my COVID-corrupted sophomore year. As I wrote, whitewater crashed through my veins, carrying emotions from my heart to my fingertips, spilling onto an exponentially-growing Google Doc, revealing the glossy surface beneath the turbulence and foam. In those clear waters, I saw myself for the first time.

By connecting with myself through journaling, I learned to connect genuinely with those around me when I returned to school my junior year. I let my personality and passions grow, finding life-long friends who shared some aspect of my identity along the way. With these friends, I danced, sang, ranted, cried, and laughed, sometimes so hard we collapsed like giddy amoebas. The relationships I fostered splintered the numbing fog of my freshman year into rainbows of appreciation for my school, my new home.

In May that year, I couldn’t bring myself to pack: how could I be away from my friends for three months? But as the summer countdown approached the single digits, I had to start. And so my friends and I packed together with our doors open, sharing containers of lychee jelly for moral support and blasting Taylor

Swift to drown out the ominous sound of suitcases zipping shut. Though the room I eventually exited was empty of my dance poster, snack hoard, and Bath & Body Works’ “Fresh Cut Lilacs” room spray, I felt an immediate pang of homesickness. More than a physical space, home had become the people and experiences that showered me with joy.

Attending Iowa Young Writers’ Studio that summer was a fresh opportunity to find a new home. My roommate Audrey and I established a nightly tradition of writing by the Iowa River, which sparkled under the lingering sunlight that melted the sky into hues of blue, pink, and orange. We stared at rainbows that stretched low across the sky, and Audrey laughed as I squealed at flashing fireflies. With our neighbors, we wrote regularly in the laundry room, swearing the spinning white noise was a balm for writer’s block. On the last day, I signed out on the pink A4 paper for the last time: “Name: Ella. To: Home. With: Tears,” sprinkling droplets of water for dramatic effect.

Faced with a future full of uncertainty, I take comfort in my newfound power to transform uncertainties into familiarities. By staying in touch with myself, I now know that wherever I land, I can be at home. Even as I fondly think back on the photo collage of my family surrounding the “Do Not Flush” sign, I look forward to blank walls that carry the ripe potential of making homes out of new places. In the future, the constellation of photos that surrounded my “Do Not Flush” sign will burgeon into a galaxy following me to future rooms. And yes, it will boast photos of my family—the first to love me and the first people I loved—but it will also document an ever-growing list of unflushable experiences and people that make up the places I call home.

—Ella Chen, age 17, California. Ella writes:

“I am a 17-year-old rising senior from Beijing and attend the Cate School in California. I speak both Chinese and English, but only write creatively in English. My favorite form of writing is personal essays, as journaling inspired my latent love for the art of words. My family and friends are the most important to me, but I also love to dance and to advocate for youth mental health.”

* FOMO: Fear of Missing Out.

Converge, Coalesce, Consolidate, & Create Community

Unknown lands, foreign sands
Differences accepted. Friends around
every corner. Holding a belonging
To this new world. Every grain,
a pillar to support this journey.
From reticence to expression.
Urge to return the debt of kindness.
Love, that had been lent.
Today, a part of this island.
Tomorrow, a fraction of its proud past.
A heart filled with thoughts, a mind overflowing feelings
Longing to merge, to make
To stay, to sense, to see
Us, a Community

Everyone; with one mind,
With one heart, with one goal.
Egalitarian, one society. For one, for all.
Ambition, one passion. To share, to care.
Embark on a journey, of love, of adventure.
Exploring. The world now within my reach.
The universe within my sights.
Times to support, times of joy,
The sands flowing as seconds pass.
Times to lean, times of sadness,
The sadness halting the time of one.
A solution to problems,
It's you, it's me, it's we
Us, a Community.

Majestic, leaping orange hues
Yet, not one wants to see
It rises, engulfing in flames
The spirit ready to sacrifice all
To douse the flames and even fall,
Proud of the past, Fostering the future
Sublime, the goals of a lifetime
This can't be solved solitarily
Our strength, specks in space
Together, Our power,
Greater than one alone can ever be
Us, a community.

—Avishi Gurnani, age 11, Singapore.

Avishi is passionate about art and writing, and she feels a deep urge to express her emotions through her writing and convey her ideas. She has already published a couple of poetry books. She enjoys playing tennis as well as her piano.

Together We Soar

Jenny, Veni, Kenny, Henny
Separate we are many
Together we are one
Eat, work, play and have fun
Small to some
Magnificent to many,
Protect our land,
For which many fought
Come together as a community,
With one thought
Blooming with diversity at its heart
We may all come from a different part
When we sit and share a meal
The world salutes our mettle, our steel
Together we will soar
In the breeze
For an ever-better core
When there is peace

—Avishi Gurnani, age 11, Singapore.

Art: "Together We Soar" by Avishi.



In My Heart

The words of the slogan
“Hugs Not Drugs”
Hang in the air and
Tickles my nose
Like a delightful fragrance
That makes me aware
Of Daddy’s morning
Embrace
Removing the hate of the
Wooing peddlers
I walk past
Telling me to take a hit—
Have a taste.
“Not this time!”
I proclaim in haste
Knowing in my heart
I am never going to
Start

—maggie d., Washington.

Forgotten Tastes of Hong Kong

In 2021, the author of the book, Sunset Survivors, Lindsay Varty, visited my school. Her presentation on her book intrigued me. With its descriptions of the dying businesses of Hong Kong, such as letter writers, Dai Pai Dong owners, and bamboo-steamer makers, her book made me realize how I had only scratched the surface of Hong Kong's rich culture, knowing only the shallowest parts of it. Only through stepping into the realms of these traditions, rooted in the history of this paradoxical metropolis, could I appreciate the rich mosaic tiles composing Hong Kong. I also came to wonder, how did these businesses play a role in the daily lives of people in the past? How are they holding up against the erosion of the outside world? How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected them?

To determine the answers to these questions I visited a few dying businesses, with a Cantonese speaking friend. Through this exploration I discovered this island city resembles a huge museum filled to the brim with traditional beliefs and practices. Out of these Kung Lee Herbal Tea Shop was a very memorable experience.

Though there are many different worlds that could never overlap, traditionally, I hope social and cultural bridges could be built to connect all of us by prompting cultural communication and exchange, like this short article that I wrote:

Hong Kong isn't only a sparkling metropolis with its cluster of skyscrapers and busy streets, it's also the crowded alleys filled with antique culture and traditions that have faded away from most other parts of China. Tucked away in many nooks and crannies of Hong Kong is a city filled with unique and diverse history.

The Kung Lee Herbal Tea shop sits proudly in the middle of 60 Hollywood Road, Central. A 70-year-old business passed down from generation to generation; from father to son. Their shop is perched in the middle

of a proud street boasting aromatic coffees, trending milk teas, and fancy smoothies. Tsui Man Pan and his son are currently running the generation-old family business of selling herbal tea, sugar cane water, and turtle shell jelly. Some are floral while others are bitter. Each item has its own unique taste, smell, and purpose.

Herbal tea has been a huge part of Hong Kong culture for hundreds of years. It was always the most reliable source of medicine, more trusted than Western medicines, by the vast majority of Hong Kongers. These drinks, called "leung cha," were used to cool the body. Traditionally, Chinese have believed that what you eat can influence your internal temperature. Eating "yit hey" or hearty foods in a humid environment such as Hong Kong causes dampness and heat to accumulate in the body. When this occurs ailments such as nose bleeding, acne, and pharyngitis will occur. Herbal tea was brewed in order to counteract the effects of such foods. Over time such drinks have also become a popular part of daily diet. However, following the development of reliable modern medicine and easy access to flavorful drinks, the demand for herbal tea is declining exponentially.

Currently, for Tsui Man Pan, selling herbal tea is more of a seasonal business, boosted by the extremes of winter and summer weather. In the latter, the climate is hot and humid and the hike up to SOHO* is exhausting. The perfect treat at the top is a cup of chilled herbal tea. Meanwhile during the winters, more people are likely to walk up to central, bringing in a stream of customers. Relying on the changing seasons and the benefits they bring, Tsui Man Pan is able to keep his business afloat. However, even the compass of the seasons fails in the face of the recent pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemics may have struck some big businesses, such as movie theaters hard, but that is nothing compared to what Covid has done for smaller businesses, such as herbal tea sellers. All the tourists and customers they counted upon to come each day disappeared as soon as the pandemic reached



A Wrangled World

the streets of Hong Kong. As a worker in the store informed me, “there are barely any customers anymore...it is very hard to go on.” Nevertheless, they are determined to persevere throughout the pandemic.

When small businesses meet the corrosion of the outside world, they face the choice of whether or not to reinvent their business. Instead of swaying from traditional ways Kung Lee Herbal Tea Store decided to not cater to larger audiences, to not add preservatives to their drinks and ship them off to supermarkets. “It’s not healthy. We don’t want chemicals in our products. All we want is to provide our customers with real, natural drinks that benefit their wellbeing,” Tsui Man Pan said. They have stuck by their traditions, refusing to let the modern tides of the twenty first century change their tastes.

It’s these old businesses that capture and preserve the essence of Hong Kong’s culture. Yet that is also their downfall as all those businesses that do not change and adapt to present needs will inevitably fade away. On the other hand, some famed brands such as Hung Fook Tong have already shifted from a traditional herbal tea shop to a modern factory made, easy access, beverage store. They won access to a larger audience of consumers and a second chance to thrive. Yet to gain that they traded away many cups of tea handcrafted with a belief in nature and its wonders of taste.

In the last decades, the development of the economy in Hong Kong has taken a toll on these old businesses. Globalization and technological advancement have heightened the competitiveness of the market to a new level. Rapid innovation allows more options for the consumer pushing newer products to the limit with easy access, comfort, and prices. This has obscured the path of many traditional businesses with fog.

The end of many of these businesses is near. We outgrow the past, and the old clears way for the new. It’s how we evolve and improve. However, they were a part of our past, and in being so will always be a part of our present. Embodied in the tales of history they become a piece of our cultural heritage, which, as time passes, require our concentration to preserve. Telling their stories may not bring them back to their previous posterity, but it will always keep them alive.

—Meg Xu, a high school student, was born in Beijing, raised in California, lives in Hong Kong. *SOHO is a tourist area South of Hollywood Road in Hong Kong.

Worlds of hatred lie before us
all within reach, yet we pretend our probities prevail
We hear the whispers in our ears and we see the strikes in
our sight

and we feign our ignorance towards others
hopeful that our stories play out to be superior

We stare into the endless night
wondering if we will ever retrieve our omitted bliss
Living in constant war and wrong
we drift off to the sound of invidious murmurings
and long for floods of harmony to fill our world forever

Why does rancor reside in our world for so long?

Why does our mirth inevitably die?

It is because of us, and it always has been
We seed and burgeon the roots of antipathy and adulation
while we lose sight of true tranquility

We lose sight of what peace is like

and we forget how it all goes

We use serenity as a pseudonym for spite
while we conceive a world so far out of reach

When will our bickerings begin to falter?

The truth is that we will never stop our wrangles
Peace is like an ocean tide, rollicking in the day and night
always changing and always receding
but it is still there, even when it wanes and turns and twists
waiting for us to return to it

Peace is not an eternal bliss with seldom brawls

nor is it an excuse to execute enmity

Peace is the respect and understanding for one another
and the willingness to listen and yield

When will we learn to heed to one another?

—Hannah Hufana, age 12, Illinois. She adds: “I am a strong admirer of writing poetry and creating all types of art. I use she/her pronouns, and I am a first-generation American who has parents who were born in the Philippines. Along with writing and art, I also like to spend time outside in sunny weather and to spend my free time with my cat.”

James A. Barney of Utah is a writer and photographer. He makes greeting cards featuring images that he takes in the national parks and wildlife refuge areas of Utah. On pages 35 and 36, we have shared a few of these wildlife images.



Black-billed Magpie



Porcupine



American White Pelican



Burrowing Owl



Bull Frog



Mule Deer



American Bison (Buffalo)

www.SkippingStones.org

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166 W 12th Ave

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Red-winged Blackbird



Eared Grebe



Western Grebe



Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet



Great Blue Heron



Great Blue Heron



Snowy Egret



These Birds were photographed in the Bear River Bird Refuge by James A. Barney of Utah.