

# Deerfield's Literary Magazine

FEATURING  
CREATIVE ART AND  
LITERATURE FROM  
DEERFIELD'S  
MIDDLE  
SCHOOLERS

Spring  
2022

# Folio

ART

POETRY

FAN FICTION

SHORT STORIES

PERSONAL NARRATIVES



Chloe Choo



# Letter from the Advisor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 2022 issue of Deerfield's Literary Magazine!

Now into our fifth edition, I continue to be grateful for Deerfield Middle Schoolers' amazing creativity, dedication, and willingness to share their unique artistic expression. Thank you to the Deerfield staff, school administrators, Board of Education, and community members for your support of Folio each year.

In this year's addition, readers will find exceptional

sketches and illustrations, paintings, collages, linoleum prints, photography, as well as creative writing pieces in the forms of personal narrative and memoir, poetry, fan fiction, and short stories- all created by Deerfield Middle Schoolers.

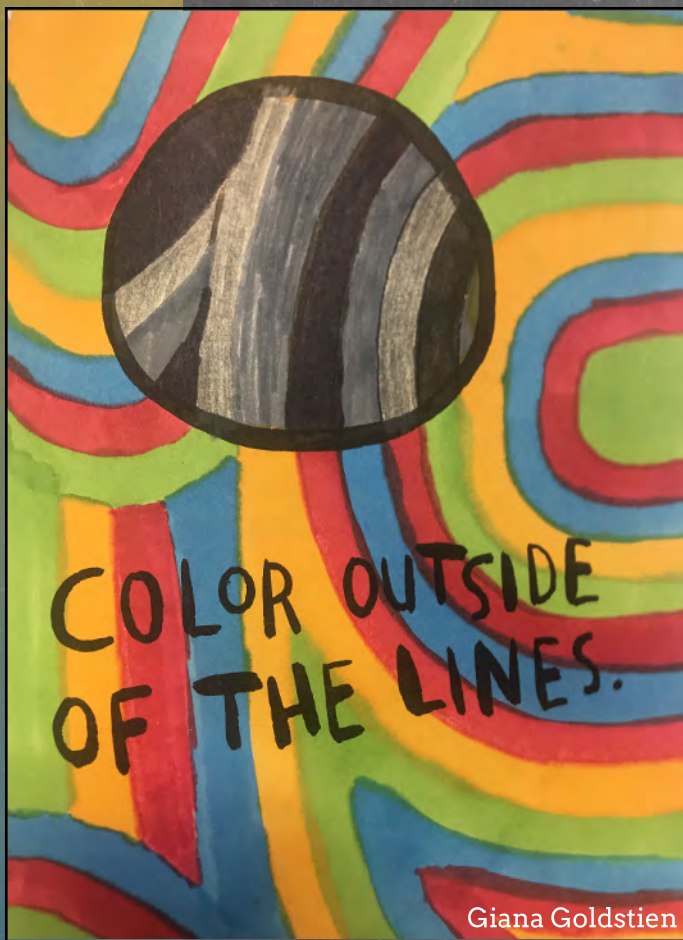
Thank you for taking the time to look through the magazine!

Year after year, we aim to inspire students, faculty, and parents alike to allow their creativity to bloom! Happy reading!

Best,  
Ms. Onore



Molly Francisco



Giana Goldstien





# A Snowy Day

There was snow falling  
The water had white shadows  
It was beautiful

Haiku by Brook Duca & Painting by Julia Kravchenko



# The World Beyond Me

## A Personal Statement Essay by Sophie Wu

As a child, I believed that my parents were capable of anything. I viewed them as superhuman, that they magically knew everything and could miraculously protect me from anything. They provided comfort, care, and solutions to every possible problem. I believed them immune to any weaknesses. The moment I stopped seeing my parents as invincible, but human, was the death of A-Gong, my grandfather. That moment and the period following showed me that everyone around me was a real person with feelings and vulnerabilities, just like me.

For as long as I remember, my maternal grandparents would come early spring and stay with my family all the way through early fall. They would then return to Taiwan just in time, escaping the harsh New Jersey winters. I always loved having my grandparents around. I cherished the time we were able to spend together.

When I was in fourth grade, my mom suddenly had to go to Taiwan in late September. This was unusual because the school year had just begun and my mom never traveled without us. How would we get to school and all of our after-school activities? Despite those obstacles, my dad made arrangements to work from home and my mom left the next day. A few days after she left, my dad called my sister and I over while he was on FaceTime with my mom. When we saw her, she was crying and she tearfully told us that A-Gong had passed away. When I heard the news, it felt like the world stopped. I had never seen my mom in tears before. It made my heart drop. I wanted to comfort her but all I could focus on was the denial and sadness

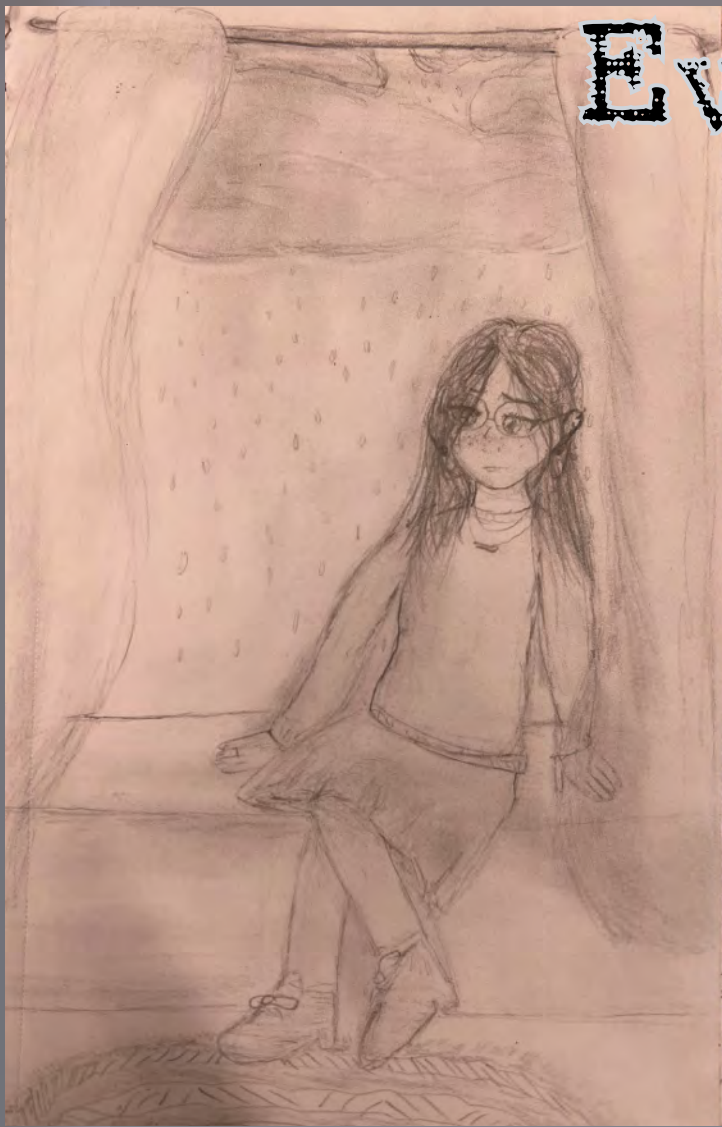
flooding my head.

The long, depressing days following the loss of my A-Gong were a redefining moment for me. I saw my mom not just as who she was to my immediate family and I, but as somebody else's daughter, sister, cousin, and friend. There was a world beyond just me. It also made me see my parents as human and not the invincible people I thought they were. Seeing my mom break down into tears frequently at the funeral and over the course of the next few weeks was difficult but I gained empathy for her with the realization that my sister and I were not my mom's only focus. It made me realize that while my mom was always there to take care of me and make me feel safe and secure, she was a person that also needed care. My mom was in Taiwan making funeral arrangements while my dad continued to work from home in addition to taking on all the tasks my mom usually did. This was an overwhelming undertaking for my dad to do because he was so unfamiliar with our day-to-day routine. He managed the best he could but he was not perfect. This also showed me that my parents, who needed help sometimes, were not superheroes who were infallible.

I have come to realize that my feelings are not the only important things in life. The feelings of others around me matter too. Although all of the distractions in my head and the endless tears hid the world around me, it led me to a world of understanding and empathy. It took me time to realize that even the strongest people in my life, like my parents, can be impacted too. I now take the time to recognize the true feelings of others and help them escape moments of sadness.



# Everlasting Sorrow



The rain flutters  
down  
Like a butterfly  
Landing on every  
vulnerable surface  
It showers down on  
my face  
But I am not  
faltered by it  
I embrace the rain  
I trudge forward  
As the wild wind  
blows my hair back  
The rain buries my  
surroundings in

water

My mind clears the way,

I will prevail

Even if no sun shines down,

I will prevail

Even with this wretched rain,

I will make the sun come out,

I will get the sun to shine down on  
me and all

Opportunities

No matter what,

I will prevail

Sketch and Poem  
by Rylee Conover



# How Can I be a Good American?

By Patriot's  
Pen Essay  
Winner

Sophia Huang



Lily Sandholm

We have all spent our time during this pandemic in a number of different ways. Some of us pursued learning how to bake snickerdoodle cookies, and some of us picked up playing the ukulele. However, I utilized the time by reflecting on myself and my community. I thought about my actions and the actions of the people who surround me. It crossed my mind how imperfect our

society is, how we are flawed. Problems such as economic disparity and social injustice plague our communities every day, yet most individuals take no action to resolve them. America has its imperfections, but we should be striving to improve our weaknesses.

During the course of my life, I have never worried where my next meal would come from, or if I had a roof over my head. I did not spend much time worrying if other children had their basic needs either. Most Americans can say the same thing: we have access to free education, clean water to drink, and clothes to wear. We have the privilege to access our necessities.



According to American Progress, one in seven children face poverty in America. 11 million children do not have guaranteed access to what I take for granted. Poverty is only one issue in America; the list of problems in our society continuously grows. Climate change, income inequality, and racism are only a few issues. Despite these flaws, there is a reason why America is a key immigrant destination: America offers us great freedom and economic opportunities. However, this does not indicate that we should avoid the problems in our communities. To start bettering our society, we must all recognize our problems and contribute to improve our quality of life.

It is incontestable how imperfect America is. For us to fix this, we must all contribute our part to our

communities. We all need to come together to work towards a common good, as we are all affected by this and stand to only gain as a result. Every effort counts regardless of how small or big of an impact it creates. I believe that a “good American” accepts how America has flaws, but still contributes to our country in pursuit of a better tomorrow.



Lily Sandholm

## How Can I be a Good American?

continued



# City Life

Short Story  
and Art by  
Rylee Conover

My eyes look up and the sun shines down on me. My vision is blinded by the sun. As I step out of my apartment, I am greeted by beautiful flower beds outside. I smile as I bend down and smell the beautiful roses. It is morning time, and I need to go shopping for my apartment in the city. I love coming out of my tiny little apartment in the morning. It is just so magical with the pretty trees and flowers surrounding the little place that I live.

I do love my little section of the city, because the further I go into the center of our city, the beautiful greens fade away. The beautiful buildings become overshadowed by skyscrapers and an excessive amount of people running around. They rush to their work, to get home, and to go to who knows where.

While I love where I live, in the center of it all it is a different world. My nose no longer is filled with the beautiful smells of my apartment. They are replaced with the smells of smoke and pollution. The stars no longer exist in the sky at night. I can no longer gaze up at the beautiful sky. It is now a dark canvas, one that used to be full of stars.

Everytime I leave my side of the city, it saddens me. People rush past each other; they ignore their neighbors. People are careless and they litter. The community used to be great, but now it is filled with people focused on things other than kindness. They have places to be, like I do.

It is now a weekend, and that is when my little flower shop is closed. I love my little flower shop; it is filled with life and wonderful colors. They dance in front of my eyes and fill the polluted air with hope, the hope that the air will no longer be filled with toxic waste, the hope that people will stop and step into my shop, on the little corner of main street.

It is mainly overlooked, but I make sure that anyone who comes leaves with a smile. They leave with beautiful flowers to decorate the lost side of the city, the side that is constantly redone, and the side with people as toxic as the air. Do not get me wrong, some people are kind. However, many people are not.

My eyes look up at the sky; the sun is now hiding. The sun no longer shines down upon me. As I get closer to the supermarket, the amount of terrible smells and the amount of people increase.



This supermarket is owned by my friend. She owns the smallest supermarket in the city, the one right off of Main Street. People who come here do not have as much as the people who go to the large supermarket. The large supermarket has tons of lines and food.

Her supermarket has kind workers, roughly the same amount of food, and less lines.

I smile as I open the bright green doors. I love her glowing open sign right next to the doors, like the ones that are on restaurant

doors. A small silver bell chimes as I walk into the shop. My friend runs out to me, with her arms open wide.

"Welcome, welcome! Come in, Daisy!" She smiles at me, revealing a piece of lettuce in her teeth. I laugh as I tell her what's in there. She looks mortified. "I have been smiling all day and no one told me!" She pauses to look at me with her fiery eyes, "Not even my own employees."

"It's fine, no one probably noticed, Amy." I bend down and grab a hand held shopping bag. She frantically moves her tongue around in her mouth. "Is it gone now?" she asks, smiling at my face.





As I nod, I ask for the item that I came for. "Now show me your finest microwavable macaroni, please." Our laughter fills up the empty store. Rarely anyone comes on weekends anymore; most people are with their families or at work.

Some people come, but not that frequently. She grabs my hand and leads me to the pasta section.

"Ooooh, are these new?" I hold up a pasta box that I have not seen before. Since I noticed I can see her bubbling with excitement.

"We just got it-" She is cut off as someone comes through the door.

"Welco-" She stops short. I come around the aisle. A tall man is now standing there holding a piece of paper.

"Amy, do you know this man?" I turn towards her, and her expression is grim. The room is suddenly tense as she walks up to the man.

"What are you doing here?" The man slowly extends his hand, revealing the paper he is holding toward her.

"I- I, no! I can pay the rent, just give me some more time!" She frantically addresses the man, most who I assume to be the landlord of her store.

"I gave you plenty of time." His voice is low and dangerous, and I already feel intimidated.

"What am I going to do?" she cries out, heartbroken, with her lip quivering and her hands noticeably shaking.

I place my hands on her shoulder, and I rub in slow reassuring movements. "It will be alright. How bad is it?" My voice wavers as I ask her. I glance at the paper as she holds it up to my face.

After reading the paper, I carefully watch her expression. She has been in debt for a while. Why did she not tell me? How will she pay this off? If she cannot pay, where will she go and what will happen?

The man stands in front of us, his words looming over all of us. He looks agitated as he holds his hand out to take the paper back.

"So this is it? I can do nothing?" She looks pitifully towards the man. I sure hope she can do something... If she can not, what will happen to her?



Nowadays, people tend to believe that they do not need family, friends, or anyone to talk to in general. It seems as though people disregard the importance of family or a group of friends that can provide support when they are not at their best. As a result, they would have no one to turn to at those times, wishing that they were not alone. Of course, some people do not have a choice to surround themselves with supportive family and friends. However, they do have a choice in how they spend their time, what little they may have, with those they care about most.

When I was five, my family decided to move from Cascais, Portugal to Westfield, New Jersey. This meant we would be a whole ocean away from the rest of our family, but my parents decided that a better future awaited us in the U.S., where my mother had grown up. I felt lost when I arrived in America, like a countryman in a big, bustling city. Although it was an exciting experience being in a new country, I also did feel a sense of loneliness. I felt like I had lost a piece of myself, even a piece of my identity. There were no more fun-filled walks along the nearby beaches, no more exciting visits to my grandparents' farm, no more counting the seconds until the largest mall fountain would spew several gallons of water 25 meters into the air. These moments, which were once everyday experiences, soon became distant memories.

Although being far from these experiences was difficult, I also realized that I was not alone. After some time in America, I learned how important having family members and friends nearby, even if only a few, had helped me feel less lonely. I came to discover that my mom already had many good friends in America, and I became good friends with their kids. Also, school was not as bad as it could have been. I had already attended an English private school in Cascais, so I had no problems communicating with the students. Furthermore, because school was easier and less demanding than my private school back in Portugal, I had time to socialize with other students in Aftercare.

While I had little choice in the move from across the ocean, I have learned about the importance of family and friends, and how they lessen the feeling of loneliness. By making the most of my time when I am with my family as well as with my friends here in America, the loneliness disappears. This, in part, makes up for the empty space that was once filled with all of the time I spent with my family in Portugal. I now make a conscious effort to treasure the time I do have when I return to my second home, when I get to take advantage of experiences overseas.

Each day I choose to value the time I spend with my family and friends, no matter where I am or what I am doing. I now understand that it does not matter if a person is the most successful or the smartest. What matters is choosing to share experiences with the family and friends that one has. Since I was young, my mother has always said, "Life is all about experiences, and those you spend them with." Being an ocean apart from my first chapter of life has only given me the opportunity to write the rest of them.

# A Memoir by David Marques

# An Ocean Apart

Background Art by Eitan Wright



By Lauren Dwyer

Fan Fiction

# GREASE

Alternate Perspective Scene

I can't believe I actually came to the dance with this loser. I hope I can snag a dance with Danny.

"Come on Cha-Cha, we got to win this thing!" Kenickie shouted to me over the music. I playfully nodded and kept dancing. The judge walked towards us. Kenickie sped up, so I slowed down. The judge tapped us on the shoulder.

"What was that?" Kenickie whined as he rolled his eyes. He walked towards his friends.

"Sorry, I messed up," I said sadly. "We can't let Danny win though," I stated.

"Why not? Him and Sandy are doing good, and..." he started to say.

"Danny's doing really well, I agree. But Sandy, not so much. She might lose it for him," Sonny butted in. Kenickie glared at Sonny.

"Because these losers will never let you hear the end of it," I said matter-of-factly. Just as I finished saying that, Sonny rushed onto the dance floor and pulled Sandy off. This was my chance- I can dance with Danny and we can win it! I rushed onto the dance floor and started dancing with Danny.

We did flips and were dancing all around the dance floor. No one compared to us and our moves. I looked into his eyes and knew we were going to win it. Everyone left the dance floor and it was just us dancing. The principal came over and I grabbed the trophy and started dancing like there was no tomorrow. The announcer called us up and asked our names.

"Cha Cha di Gregorio and Danny Zuko!" I exclaimed into the microphone.

The slow song started and it was like everyone else in the world disappeared. All you could hear was our breaths and the music.



# LOST AT CITY

A Dystopian  
Short Story  
by Rylee  
Conover

Mary slouched as she strode down the darkened alleyway. It was late in the city, and fog wrapped the city in its arms. A man stepped out of his store and changed the sign to "closed."

"Hello Miss. What brings you here so late?" He eyed her suspiciously. No one was allowed to walk these streets this late.

"I was just heading back now, Sir," she replied, trying to sound innocent. He merely nodded and walked toward his own house, not wanting to get in trouble.

She would not be going home. "Bye." She falsely smiled. She knew that she could get caught, but she had nothing to lose. All that she had loved had been taken from her. She glanced up at the dark ominous sky; the most beautiful thing that she had seen in a while.

Someone whispered something behind her. Mary stopped dead in her tracks. Was that a guard patrol? Was someone already after her? Without turning around, she spoke, "Yes?" She tried her best to keep her voice from shaking like the rest of her.

"Don't worry—" She cautiously turned around and let out a sigh of relief. It was just a young man who was standing on the balcony of his apartment. "I just want to warn you—a troop patrol is coming." A sense of urgency rushed through her.

"A p-p-patrol?" She let the words float off her tongue as she started to sway. The man looked down, distressed.

"Are you alright, Miss?" A loud noise erupted behind them. Immediately it sent her back to her horrendous past.

The man woke her from her trance. "Come on! I see them!" He pointed frantically to the metal ladder leading up to the balcony. Trembling, she placed her hand on the cold metal. Should she go inside, or stay out and rebel?

"Come on!" He grasped her hands to pull her up. He slammed the door with so much swiftness and force, the whole apartment shook.

"Will you get in trouble for helping me?" She stood, enthralled by this stranger. No one had ever tried to help her.

"It is—" The stranger was cut off by loud sounds that danced into their ears from the stairs. Suddenly, the man had become as white as a sheet. "They've- they've never come here before." The girl furrowed her brow as she looked around, desperate to escape. "BANG-BANG-BANG!"

"Open up! Now!" a guard bellowed through the door. The man sent her a worried glance. She quickly slid under the bed. He shuffled to the door; each step he took was forced. The man slowly opened the door.

He hesitated as he smiled nervously. "E-evening." Emotionless guards stood on the other side of the door. The man hovered worriedly over the guards as they entered and patrolled the room. Mary purposely tried to be careful to not let a single sound escape from her mouth.



"What are you searching for, sir?" The man addressed no guard in particular. The guards ignored the man and kept roaming the room. The guards carried weapons, as if to make sure the helpless citizens knew that they had total control over them. A guard stuck his hand under the bed. Almost gasping, Mary's hand flew to her mouth. Her mind felt heavy from being in such an enclosed space; and she felt peril awaiting.

With one more glance from the suspicious guards, they left without saying anything. The girl let herself relax as she slowly slid out from under the bed. She had no idea what would happen next. The man looked pained when he smiled weakly towards her. "I am so sorry- they are probably looking for me," her hesitant voice squeaked. "I should get going anyway..." Mary forced her lips to make a twisted smile. "Thanks." The man opened his mouth to speak, but she turned without allowing him to respond. Sighing heavily, she knew that his kindness would not last, and the world was imperfect and controlling. She still had a sliver of hope that some people were different, like she was. In her society nothing changed; no one could do any more than expected. No one could stay out late, especially alone, not that she cared. She wanted to rebel every time she thought about what society did to her now nonexistent family. She gently urged herself to walk down the metallic stairs leading away from the apartment.

The misty air swirled coldly around her as she fearfully trudged forward. Each breath she exhaled seeped out in white puffs in front of her face. Her scarf twirled in front of her; it barely stayed on as she grasped it tightly to her pounding chest. Each building was barely visible from the fog, and each was shut or abandoned. She had no knowledge of where she would go. An open patrol was deadly if anyone were out this late. She despised each and every cruel and strict rule. Any form of resistance ended up in disappearances or certain death. A loud stampede of footsteps approached her. Diving behind a massive building, she shook with fear. "Please, please do not come..." she pleaded uneasily. Sounds of their arrival erupted loudly over the horizon. There were more screams, more terror, less lives, pure torture. Mary crouched in the alleyway, devastated. More loud bangs burst around her. Overwhelmed, she tried her best to hold in her tears. She whimpered as she pulled her legs in closer. She closed her eyes, trying to grasp the fact that her end may come soon enough.



Emma Wargaski



# LEARNING Not to RUN

It is always okay to be scared; it is not okay to let it dictate who I am. That is the repetitive remark everyone decides to make when faced with others' struggles. At the age of six, I moved to California. For the first time in my life I was faced with the scorching heat of the west coast sun. My sister and I would walk to school, traveling up and down the forever twisting mountainsides. I had school in the afternoon, so every weekday around noon, we began our day. Looking back, I envy the kids who would be sharing their afternoon with their families, who would not have to hold the memories I do today.

Once we sat down in the classroom, we began our everyday activities. Everything felt the same, the schedule falling into the familiar pattern it always did. That was until we went to music. The class all gathered around on benches watching a movie. I am not sure what happened with my teacher, but I remember the look on her face, the expression of a very scared person when she looked down to her phone. I smelled something like firewood or maybe campfire. I walked over to the window, in the classroom, looking up at the big trees against the sky.

I saw dark clouds filled with black ash, and I was horrified by what was going on outside. A couple of minutes later, a woman burst through the door saying the kids in aftercare were coming with her. I walked over, almost in shame. What was going on? Was I in trouble? I walked with her outside into the scorching sun and the smoke scaling the sky above us. I saw huge crowds of people gathered in a circle, walking out of the school. I turned around and looked where ash was coming from- huge flames bigger than the school running towards us. I felt I was being hunted down. I wanted to go home. I was so scared. We walked for what felt like miles away, but I was so little I probably would not have been used to walking that far. When we got to the senior home, everyone was either breaking down in tears or sitting in silence on benches.

It is hard to remind myself of this because it makes me feel even more alone than I was at that time. I realized and wished I had somebody to lean on, only to be alone. Maybe a half an hour later my mother came, and we rushed to get my brother who was 15 minutes away from the school.

Later that day, we all safely got to the hotel outside the fire.

A few days later, I was traumatized from the fire and so scared to go back to school without my mother. I thought it would happen again, and I would be alone again and scared. I realized after my mother told me it would not happen again, and we would be safe I had a small bit of confidence in myself without her. Not only that, but I luckily got some guts and learned I have to be brave even in hard and scary situations. I cannot just live my life being scared. I needed to learn, to live, and fight to be happy.

Mateo Liloia





# Al/mo/s't | I/m/po/s'sible

## Part II

The path feels like it is impossible, unreachable

Never ending

Day after day I keep going

Alone

Then one day someone stops

They walk away from their laughing friends

They come

Towards me

They come with a smile on their face

It is contagious,

Because now I cannot stop smiling

Somehow I am no longer alone

I beam,

For I have finally found my joy

A friend

Someone to laugh and have fun with

Someone to accompany me,

In times where I am unclear

The misty path seems so clear

The sun stops hiding behind the clouds

I look up,

New opportunities

New beginnings

New everything

Now, I can focus on my dreams

And being happy

I am no longer facing the world alone

The people around me laugh, but not without me anymore

Nothing is impossible,

Any more,

It is just incredibly hard to reach,

And only possible to achieve if I try

My path suddenly has become easier to follow

The misty air no longer blows on my face,

The sun shines down upon me,

On my smiling face



Bryanna Pasuco



A/m/o/s/t

I/m/p/o/s/s/i/b/l/e

Part I

The misty air blows  
on my face

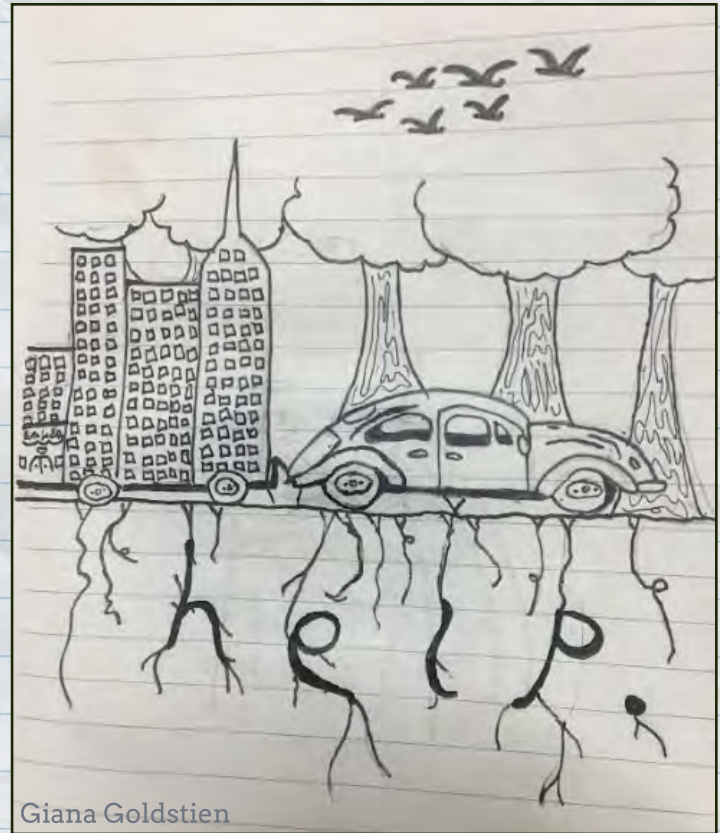
I cannot see  
My thoughts swirl  
Everything is unclear  
I do not know what I want  
My dreams are distant  
Far away  
Out of reach  
I do wish to achieve them  
I just do not know how.  
My thoughts swirl  
I am alone

No one knows what to say  
I try and try and try  
I do not know what to do  
The path I am taking is so  
misty,

It is as if I am walking  
straight forward with my  
eyes closed  
I follow each turn,  
to the right, to the left  
Everything is still unclear  
What can I do?

The path that I am taking is long and  
treacherous  
I feel so alone  
How can I be?

With so many others around me  
They laugh and they smile  
I look for their joy, and any kind of passion  
The path I am taking seems never ending,  
Always filled with new twists and turns



A Poem by  
Rylee  
Conover



# "The Last Leaf"

Original Story by O' Henry

## Deleted Scene Fan Fiction by Joshua Moorman

Silver grey hair of the old man's beard and head, along with the wrinkles on his forehead, highlighted the man's time on earth. These features made the painting even more realistic. Once Sue had finished painting, Mr. Behrman had thought of an idea- his final masterpiece, the one he had been crazing over for years and years. He knew what he would paint. After supper, he walked out of the building holding a brown stool into the cold, frigid night. The street lamps illuminated the leaf that Johnsy had been waiting to fall. Mr. Behrman placed the stool on the ground and took his paint and brush out of his long coat pockets. As he stood as tall as a giraffe, he reached the towering leaf. He let his mind take his hand.

The yellowish, orange leaf looked a bit brighter than the original. Ridiculous for Johnsy to have such an idea, the old man thought. I won't let her allow a leaf to kill her, but if it must change her life, I might as well let it save her. He felt a little cold even with his jacket on, so he waltzed inside the building, high on hope.

Night had passed. Then came the next day. He hadn't had the chance to visit Johnsy and Sue. Then, Mr. Pneumonia had paid him a visit. Once in the hospital, he lay on his deathbed. He had recently awoken, when he heard a young lady scream his name.

"Oh, Mr. Behrman! You've saved her. You've saved Johnshy!"

He smiled to himself as he let go of the string attached to his life. Ah, yes. My masterpiece.





Chloe Choo



*A Personal Narrative by Sophia Huang*

# Metamorphosis

As children, it was embedded in our minds how it was condemned to treat others unfairly. Teachers would provide us with redundant lessons on empathy and bullying. I presumed that every one of us had the capability to understand injustice, but I was mistaken. Tormenting others became normalized, and it would be referred to as a joke to underplay the abiding effects it caused. This reflected our reality. Injustice plagues our society, yet we fail to pursue reformation.

I recall a vivid moment during kindergarten. I was sitting at a table with two other classmates. Unexpectedly, they started to comment on my race.



"Don't Chinese people look like this?" my classmate questioned while pulling his eyes back. I was tentative to answer him. His tone of voice did not appear to be hostile, so I was unsure if he had malicious intent. What was he insinuating with that gesture? I had an instinct telling me that it was not a compliment. My other classmate joined in, adding more racist stereotypes.

"My older sister said that Chinese people eat dogs too," she castigated. This information forced me to grow reticent. I had never eaten a dog before, nor heard of an Asian who ate dogs. My six-year-old rudimentary brain was not capable of comprehending this denunciation. Malaise descended upon me. I stared at the floor, hoping it would reveal the answer, for what felt like a century.

"Um, yeah, I guess," I mumbled under my breath. I never chose to inform my parents, a teacher, or a friend. I merely left the moment lingering faintly in the back of my mind. It would arbitrarily crawl upon my mind, leading me to ponder if there was something wrong with being an Asian person.

This lack of sagaciousness resulted in internalized racism. Every Asian feature I possessed I would begin to disdain. I incorporated staring into my reflection and comparing myself to the White girls in my grade into my daily routine. I coveted to have European features. My hair was not blonde. My eyes were not blue. My nose was not pointy. I sat at the periphery of beauty, yearning to belong. I loathed every Asian aspect of myself; I was confined in my amoral mindset. By the third grade, I had learned what racism was. I did not believe it was justified to treat others by the color of their skin, yet I listened to those who judged me by mine.

I slowly started to understand how flawed my perception of myself was. My internalized racism merely fueled my self-hatred and despondency. It helped pave the foundation of my depression. Anguish tinted the glasses

I wore every day, embedded from the trivial comments I received throughout my life. Gradually, my lenses would grow transparent the more I discerned how ignorance fueled inequity.

I have grown stronger now, even if the world does not believe I have. Years of experiencing stereotypes have allowed me to develop a barrier. Though I still hear racist remarks ambling down the sidewalk, I do not perceive them the same way I did eight years ago. Instead of rejecting the blood that flows through my body, I decide to embrace it— the sun-kissed skin gifted to me by my mother, and the dark entrancing hair worn by my parents and their parents before them. My Chinese culture is just as worthy as any other.





Julia Francisco

WHAT HOLDS US  
TOGETHER

IS THE **CHAIN** THAT  
PULLS US TOGETHER  
LIKE A SEWING  
NEEDLE.

IF THE THREAD  
STARTS TO SLIP,  
WILL YOU BE OKAY?

CAN YOU SEW  
YOURSELF BACK  
TOGETHER?

WHAT IF YOU CAN  
NOT?

YOU KEEP TRYING  
BUT **THE THREAD**  
**KEEPS COMING**  
**LOOSE.**

WERE YOU  
DIFFERENT,  
OR IS SOMETHING  
WRONG WITH YOU?  
IT ALMOST FEELS

LIKE BEING HELD UNDERWATER  
BEING BEATEN DOWN AGAINST EACH **ROLLING WAVE.**  
THE **CHAINS** THAT HOLD US DOWN ARE A PART OF US,  
BUT THEY WILL BEGIN TO RUST  
AND RUST  
UNTIL ONE BY ONE  
THEY BREAK  
YOU'RE FREE  
FROM THE PAIN  
**THAT HELD YOU**  
**DOWN**

# CHAINS

POEM BY  
SOLEIL MARGOLIN





# the Vampire Diaries

By  
Andra  
Staricco

## Fan Fiction Deleted Scene

Then I saw the person I have become inside and out. I was hungry- hungry for human blood. Everything changed; the way I acted, the way I looked, the way I treated people, even my best friends.

I changed. I got my humanity back. It felt weird having emotions again. I felt sorrow, hurt, anger, happiness, and so much more. I haven't felt any of those ways in a while. It was somewhat comforting. I know that it's weird to think that feeling sad could be comforting, but I felt alive again. I didn't feel like the blood sucking monster anymore.

My brother was gone and he had been for a while. I missed him. I missed seeing his face, and having those long conversations with him. He comforted me and helped me through a lot. Over time, I was starting to forget what he looked like.

I could still see the sadness in Bonnie's eyes. She loved him; they were each others' everything. Caroline and I were good again over the fact I almost tried to kill her, and even though Bonnie was struggling, she was still there. They saved me from my worst times. They are everything I am grateful for. We had our slumber parties again, with the yummy snacks, and the great movies. Bonnie is trying her best to control her powers, but they are still coming back stronger and stronger. Caroline was helping me control my hunger for blood, but overall the trio was back, and I was glad to be back.



# OUT OF ORDER

## A Personal Statement Essay by an Anonymous Student Author

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder has affected me for as long as I can remember. I could always tell that there was something different about me, something that was off and other kids did not experience. All my life I have heard people regale me with their stories of cleaning their room and sorting their pens in rainbow order, masking their perfectionism with the words "I'm so OCD." Since this was the only way I ever heard about Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, I assumed it was a synonym for perfectionism. I now understand that these stereotypes are far from the truth.

The first time I vividly remember displaying symptoms of OCD was when I was nine years old. 30% of people with OCD will experience tics (a habitual spasmodic contraction of the muscles) in their lifetime. I remember sitting in my mother's car, humid with the still summer air, in my camp parking lot. I had a tic where I would open my mouth and flex my jaw. My mother asked, "Do you ever do things because you feel like you have to?" I focused on a bird flying past the car, too scared to answer.

"I guess so." My memory faded away after I spoke, but I remember her words echoing in my mind on the car ride home. From there, I was taken to a child therapist. An older woman in an armchair asked me questions while I flexed my jaw.

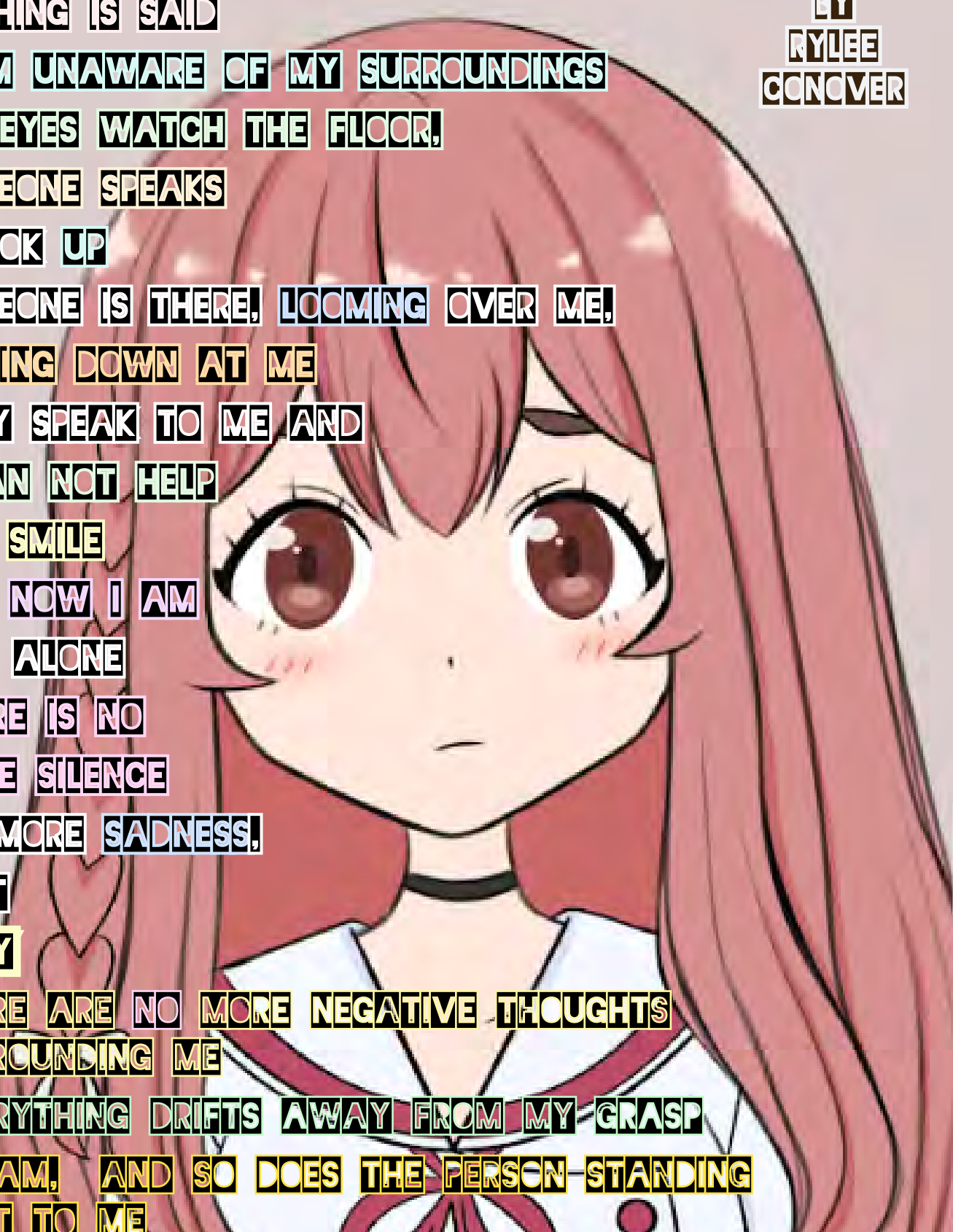
On my way out of her office I remember only placing one foot on each side walk tile. Much like summer camp, my memories of the woman in the chair became dull

thoughts in the back of my mind. Though I had forgotten the term OCD, it continued to affect me. This was something I feared no woman in a chair could fix.

A few years later, I watched the movie *As Good As It Gets*. In this movie, Jack Nicholson plays the character Melvin Udall, a bitter man with little regard for life other than his. Melvin was a character with an intense case of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. He would throw out soap after one use and would eat at the same restaurant every day. As much as I hated him, his actions seemed familiar. Whenever he locked his door repeatedly and went to extremes in order not to step on sidewalk cracks, I felt as though I was looking at a more intense projection of myself. I remember subtly trying to ask my parents if they ever felt that way, but when they shook their heads I was left with more questions. How was this sadistic old man the only person I related to?

Even now as I understand more about OCD, I still can feel alone. Those words in the summer camp parking lot still echo, and scenes from *As Good As It Gets* still replay in my mind. The term OCD has become much more than a synonym for perfection and it has become more than an idiosyncrasy. It has been difficult to come to the realization that Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is not a defect I have. It is easy to feel alone, but labels do not define me. I learned that I do not have to be like the bitter Marvin Udall, or understand everything like the woman in the chair. I do not have to wear the title of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder like an Out of Order sign hung on broken machines. I can use this as a way to learn more about myself, and maybe learn more about others.





SILENCE SLICES THROUGH THE AIR  
 NOTHING IS SAID  
 I AM UNAWARE OF MY SURROUNDINGS  
 MY EYES WATCH THE FLOOR,  
 SOMEONE SPEAKS  
 I LOOK UP  
 SOMEONE IS THERE, LOOMING OVER ME,  
 SMILING DOWN AT ME  
 THEY SPEAK TO ME AND  
 I CAN NOT HELP  
 BUT SMILE  
 FOR NOW I AM  
 NOT ALONE  
 THERE IS NO  
 MORE SILENCE  
 NO MORE SADNESS,  
 JUST  
 JOY  
 THERE ARE NO MORE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS  
 SURROUNDING ME  
 EVERYTHING DRIFTS AWAY FROM MY GRASP  
 I BEAM, AND SO DOES THE PERSON STANDING  
 NEXT TO ME  
 THE WORLD IS NO LONGER SILENT

POEM  
 BY  
 RYLEE  
 CONOVER

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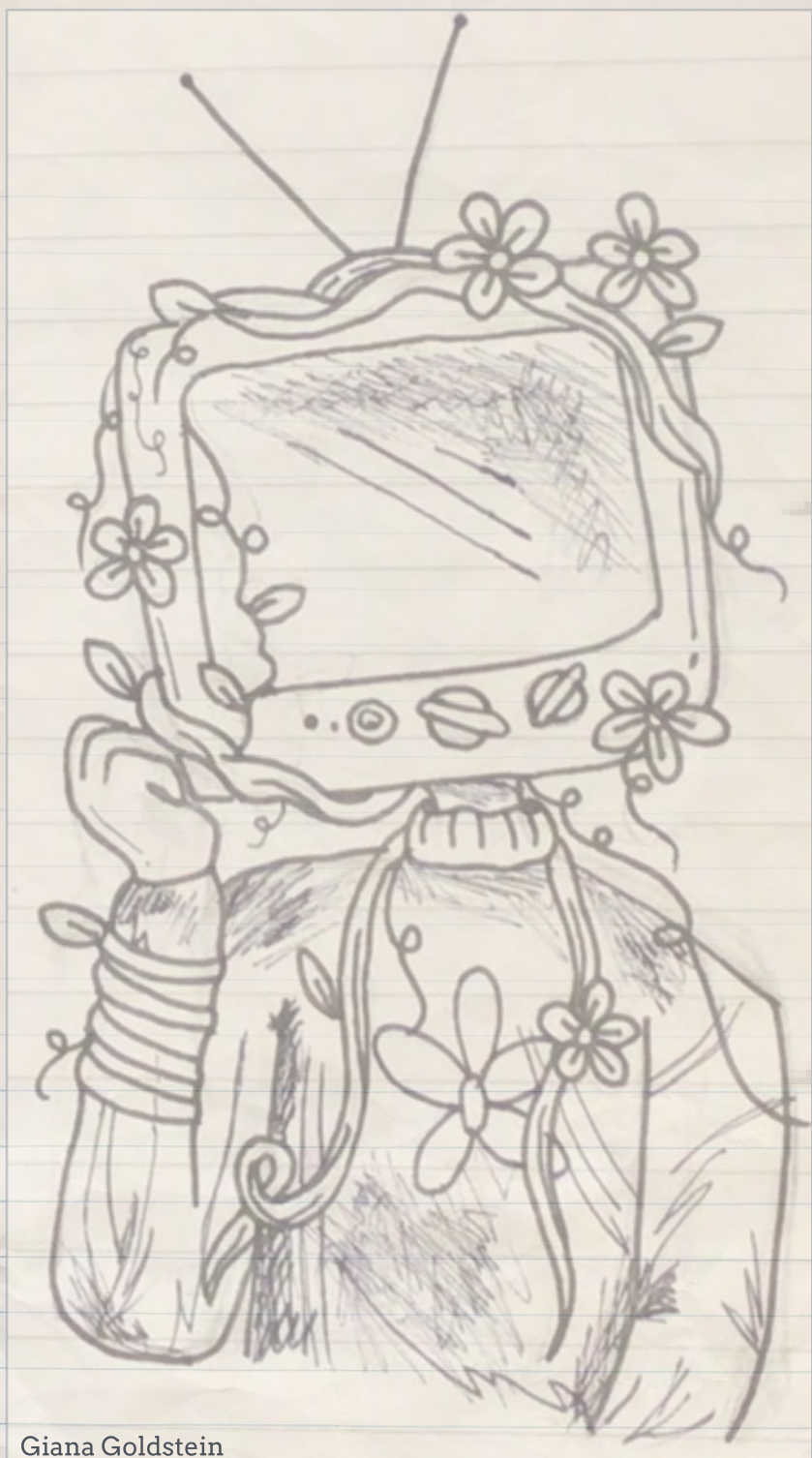


# A POEM BY LIAM NITSCH

STUCK AT HOME  
STUCK IN MY ROOM  
STUCK INSIDE, AWAY  
FROM EVERYBODY ELSE  
BUT THE EARTH KEEPS  
SPINNING.

FAR AWAY  
FAR FROM END  
FAR FROM EVERYBODY  
IN THE WORLD  
BUT THE EARTH KEEPS  
SPINNING  
LOCKED INSIDE

LOCKED IN MY HOUSE  
LOCKED AWAY FROM  
EVERYBODY ELSE  
BUT THE EARTH KEEPS  
SPINNING.



Giana Goldstein

BUT THE  
EARTH KEEPS  
SPINNING



# "GIFT OF THE MAGI"

ORIGINAL STORY BY O'HENRY

## FAN FICTION DELETED SCENE BY SADIE WARD

JIM MARCHED ALONG THE FROZEN ROADS OF NEW YORK. THE COLD BITING AT HIS NOSE. LITTLE DROPLETS OF RAIN FELL BESIDE HIM AS MORE STORM CLOUDS GATHERED AROUND. JIM TIGHTENED HIS GRIP ON HIS UMBRELLA AS HE LOOKED UP AT THE NOW DARKENING SKY.

"PERFECT WEATHER FOR THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS." JIM MUMBLED. HIS VOICE THICK WITH SARCASM. AS HE TRUDGED THROUGH THE SLUSH ON THE SIDEWALK. HE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS WATCH AND SPED UP HIS PACE.

"HELLO?" JIM CALLED LOUDLY AS HE WALKED INTO THE PAWN SHOP. "ANYBODY HERE?"

"IN A MINUTE!" ROARED A GRUFF VOICE RESEMBLING THE START OF AN ENGINE.

A MINUTE WOULD BE TOO LONG FOR JIM. HE HAD ONLY TWO DOLLARS AND THIRTY-THREE CENTS TO BUY A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE. DELLA. TOMORROW WAS CHRISTMAS AND HE DID NOT HAVE ANYTHING.

"UHM. SIR. I'M IN A BIT OF A RUSH!" JIM CALLED TO THE OLD MAN.

"ALRIGHT. ALRIGHT. I'M HERE." HE SAID IN ANNOYANCE. "WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?"

JIM LOOKED DOWN AT HIS BELOVED WATCH. ADMIRING THE SHIMMER OF THE GOLD AND THE SHINE OF THE TICKING HANDS. THIS WATCH HAD BEEN HIS GRANDFATHER'S AND HIS FATHER'S. NOW IT WAS HIS. AND NOW HE WOULD BE GIVING IT AWAY. HE UNHOOKED THE CLASP THAT HAD KEPT THE WATCH SAFELY ON HIS WRIST FOR THE MANY YEARS IT HAD BEEN IN HIS POSSESSION. AND PLACED IT ON THE COUNTER. A TEAR BUILDING IN HIS HEART. HE FELT CONFLICTED—HOW COULD HE GIVE AWAY SOMETHING SO VALUABLE. SO MEANINGFUL? IT'S FOR DELLA. HE REMINDED HIMSELF. DELLA.

"HOW MUCH CAN I GET FOR THIS?"



# Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who supported and contributed to this year's magazine! Also, thank you to Mrs. Tiscia for helping with art selections, and Mrs. Ridley and Mrs. Scanlan for assisting with writing submissions.

A special thank you to Rylee Conover, Soliel Margolin, and Chloe Choo, who created outstanding writing and/or art pieces specifically tailored to be featured in the magazine.

With the ability to finally meet again for in-person extra curricular activities, I want to thank the dedicated staff for their attendance! The amazing student staff of 8th grade editors is pictured below: Rylee Conover, Julie Miranda, Jayleen Nunez, Elle Peter, Andra Starrico, Liv Steinmetz, Ryan Torres, and Sophie Wu.



Lastly, I want to thank Mrs. Jenks and Mrs. Walling for continuing to allow our vision to be possible, and encouraging students to express their creativity! Have a great summer!

Best,  
Ms. Onore



Alexandra Tranquilli



Halle Peris