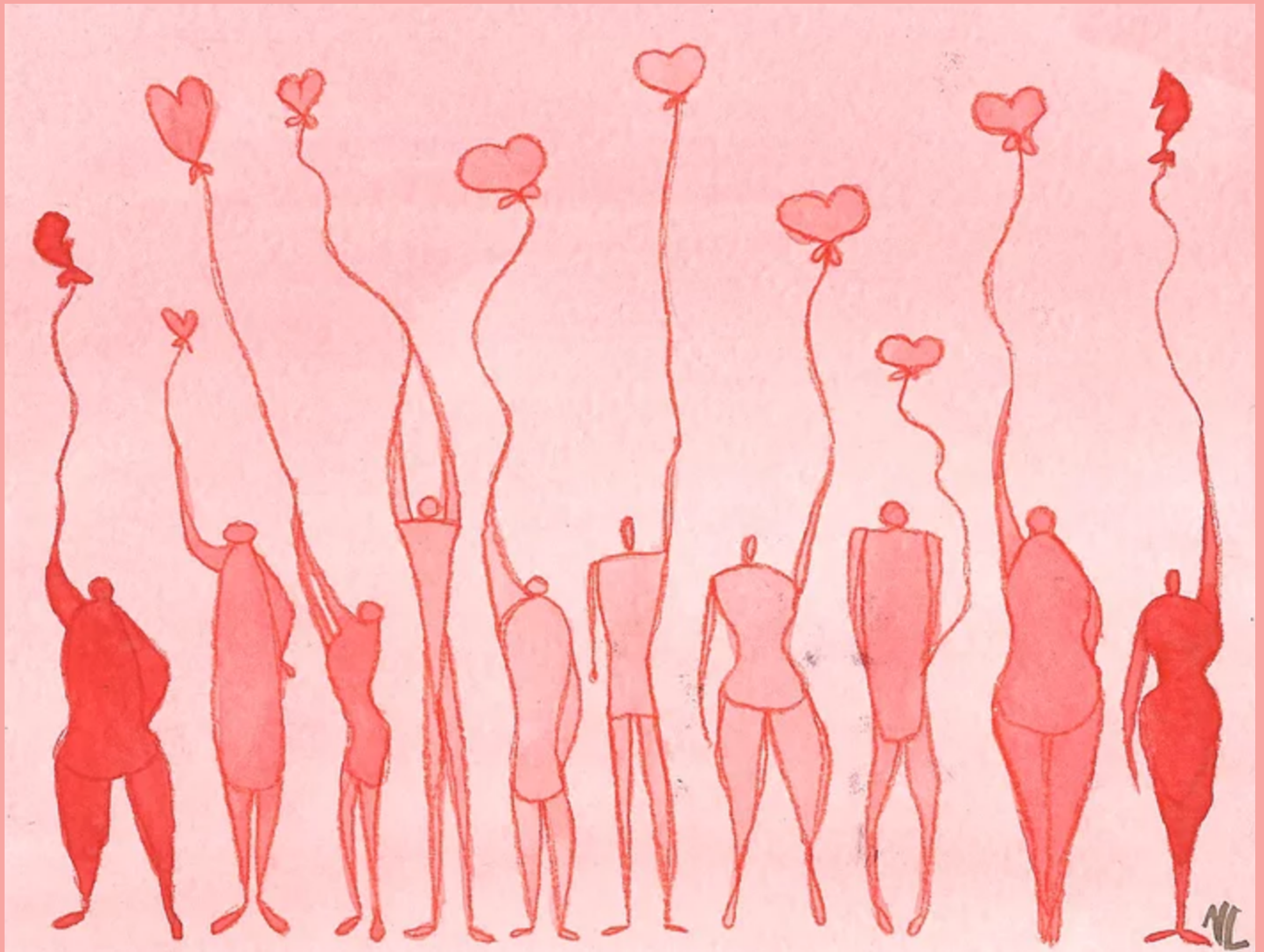


Love Letters

Teen Creative Magazine



Issue #01: Change

Remastered August 2021



Editor's Note:

I

As we approach the one-year anniversary of the creation of our magazine, we thought it would be fitting to take a look back at our previous issues by remastering them into digital versions.

Originally, we published our issues in a blog format, but changed up our style for our fourth issue: *Fresh*.

This first issue, *Change* was originally released in November of 2020 and was remastered in August 2021.

It was a fascinating experience to return to our roots and see how far we've come from the beginning. We hope you enjoy all the works featured here in this new format.

Best,

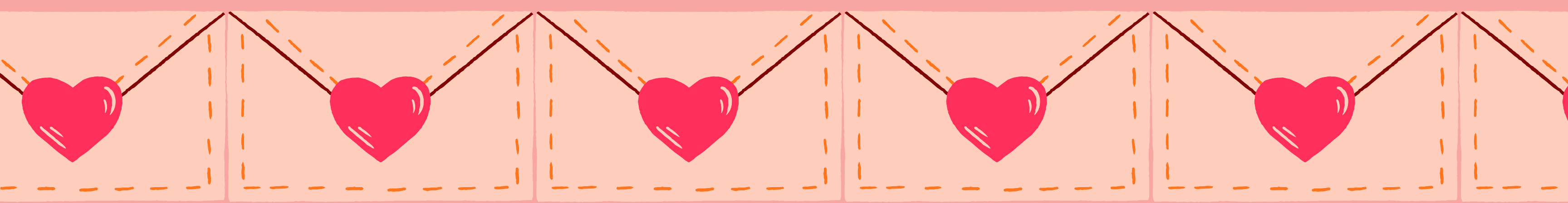
-The Love Letters Team





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- *Elegy* -

1

Kavi Kshiraj

my hair spindles out, dark and long in moss-eaten
water,

my air leaking out of mouth. tell me, if i wake, will you

have hewn out the ruined parts of me? if i wake, will

the rot have spread?

drowning is resurrection is ritual is slaughter.

sit me down in a throne of coral and braid strings of

pale-petaled flowers into my hair and avert your eyes

from the lines against cold, wet skin. weave my legs into

a tail with scales made lucent mirrors.

every metamorphosis has its casualties.





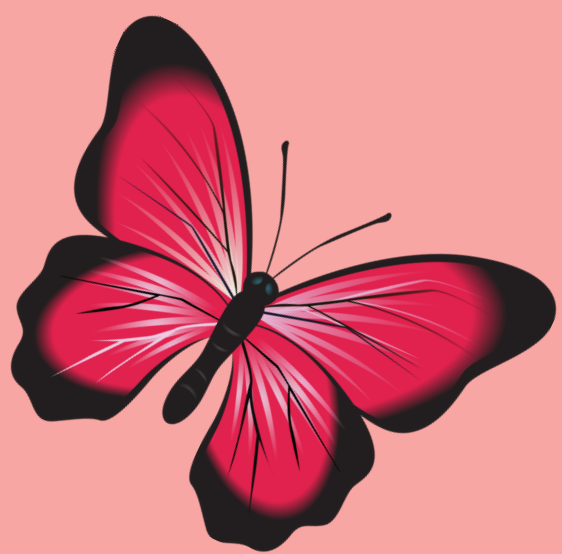
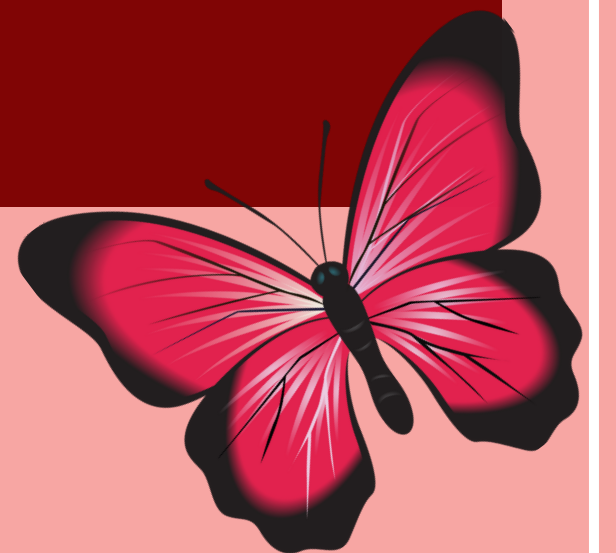
- *Elegy* -

2

Kavi Kshiraj

About the Poet:

Kavi Kshiraj is a queer, Indo-American poet located in New Jersey. They spend time on hobbies such as writing, D&D, and their various identity crises. They have been published in journals such as The Hellebore, Vagabond City Lit, and Nectar Poetry.





- *The Train Station* - 3

Reyna Ace

The Train Station was quite unlike anything I had ever seen before...

Tall sandstone pillars held up an elegantly painted ceiling, with beautiful stained-glass mosaics on each side. Colorful light filtered in through the windows, illuminating the whole station. People bustled around me, all knowing what train they were about to get on, and exactly where that train would take them. I sat alone, on a bench with my baggage strewn around me.

I'm a bit worried about what will happen when they all leave. See, I came to the train station with my friends because they all have trains to catch, but I haven't got my ticket yet. Most people are born with their ticket, but not me. I've lived eighteen years without my ticket, and plan on living another eighteen more. A thought crosses my mind of sneaking onto a train and following it wherever it takes me. It's a fun thought, but I'm not spontaneous enough for it.

My friend Lily decides to break the silence. The words she says are supposed to make me feel better, but they don't.

"It's normal not to have a ticket yet," she says kindly. Everyone says that it's perfectly fine that I don't have a ticket, but all those people have their tickets, so I take their advice with a grain of salt. Correction, a pound of salt. Lily fiddles with her ticket in her pale hands and thankfully, does not try to tell me I'm valid for not having a ticket again. "Just don't let it get to you, okay?"

"I won't," I say with a smile, but I'm afraid it already has gotten to me.

The train station fills with steam as a whistle blows. Lily's train has arrived. A beautiful white engine with a gleaming red cross on the front. Lily bows goodbye to me and hops aboard, the train promptly taking off and speeding into this distance.





- *The Train Station* -

4

Reyna Ace

“I’m going to the coast,” says a girl with long black hair who has found a seat next to me. She is dressed in a tropical shirt that is much too big for her and some pants that are much too small for her. “Where are you going?”

“I don’t have my ticket yet,” I say, smiling although I would much rather frown. “It’s okay though. It should come any minute.”

“Would you like to come with me?” says the girl, looking concerned. “I could probably sneak you on board.”

“I would not,” I say, truthfully. “The coast life isn’t for me.” The girl looks offended and storms off, to hop on a bright blue train that will also soon chug off into the sunset.

Just when I think I have a moment alone, a chubby man with pink hair shows up next to me, holding a big golden ticket. His face is stuck in a big dumb smile, and his legs are literally shaking with excitement. He shows me his golden ticket and claps.

“I’m going to LA!” he almost yells. “I am so excited! My parents said I could never go to LA! They were so wrong! Are you going to LA?”

“I actually haven’t received my ticket yet,” I say for what feels like the millionth time that day.

“Oh,” frowns the man with pink hair. “Well. Would you like me to buy you a ticket?”

“I would not. It has to come to me itself. That’s how these things work.”

“I bought mine,” says the man, looking puzzled. “Is that not normal? I never received one in the mail.”

“Of course it’s not normal,” I say sharply. “It is one hundred percent not normal. The tickets are supposed to come to you. That’s how it works. That’s how they set it up.” I worry that I’ve come off a bit harsher than I intended too.





- *The Train Station* - 5

Reyna Ace

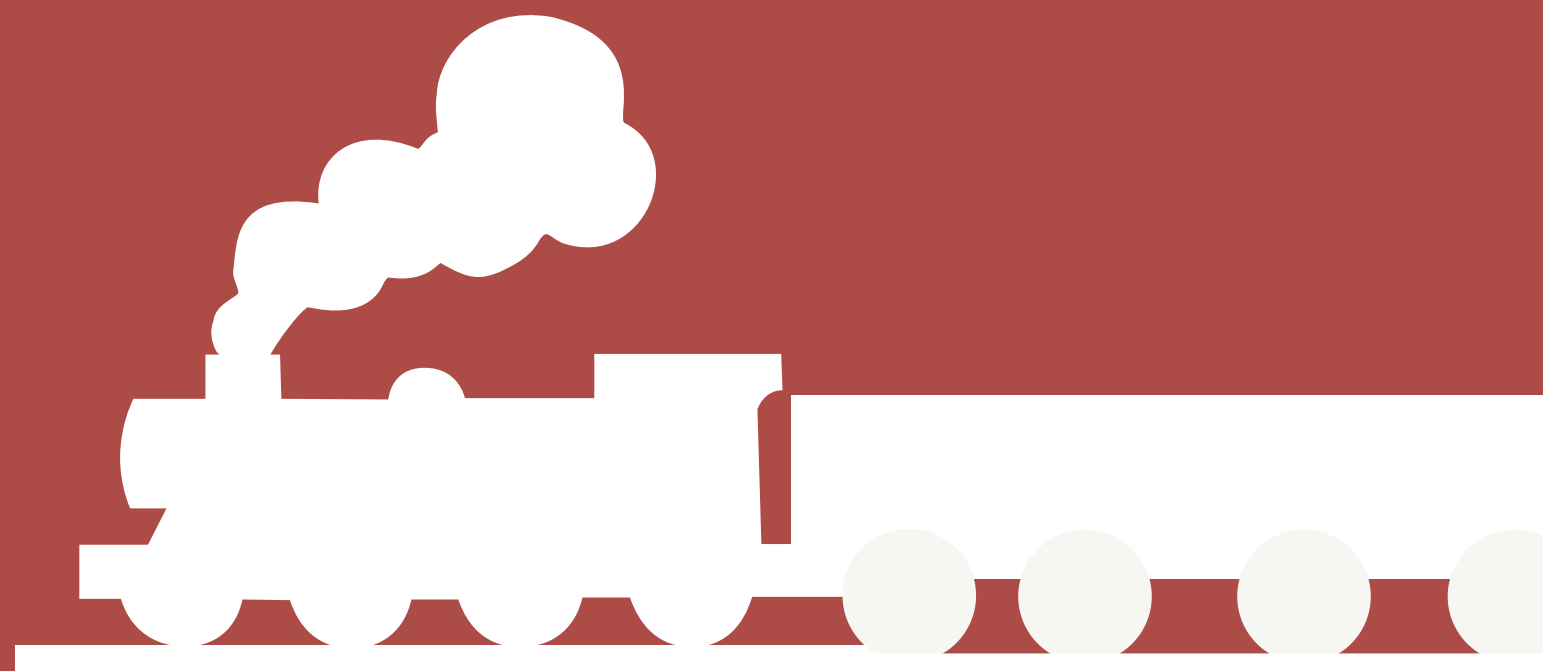
The man with pink hair looks hurt but does not say anything. He sets off and gets on a black train that (you guessed it), promptly speeds off into the distance. Just like that, I'm left alone.

I watch as parents part with their children who hop on trains and head off into their lives. I wish my parents had come with me, although I'm not going anywhere. If my parents had come with me, we would've had the awkward discussion of the fact I don't know what I'm doing with my life. And no one wants to have that discussion. My friends have all left on trains and I am still sitting here on this bench like a dope.

"Your ticket will come one day," I reassure myself, getting comfortable on the bench.

I keep telling myself that. I lean back on my seat and watch the rest of the world go by. A tall woman is taking her cat with her on an emerald green train. A confident looking man in a suit and tie hops on a train made of pure gold. A bald man, accompanied by three children hops on a train that looks like it was colored in with Crayola crayons.

ADMIT ONE
9:30 to LA



Your ticket will come one day.

I watch as a girl my age argues with her parents about her ticket. It appears they want her to get on the one Lily got on, but she wants to get on the one made of pure gold. It is a very passionate argument. Spit flies angrily between their mouths as they shout, hardly regarding that they are in a very public setting.

Your ticket will come one day.

A train rushes by the platform in front of me. As it leaves I see behind it a bench just like mine, except I'm not on it. In my place is a decaying human skeleton, sitting just like I am.

Your ticket will come one day.

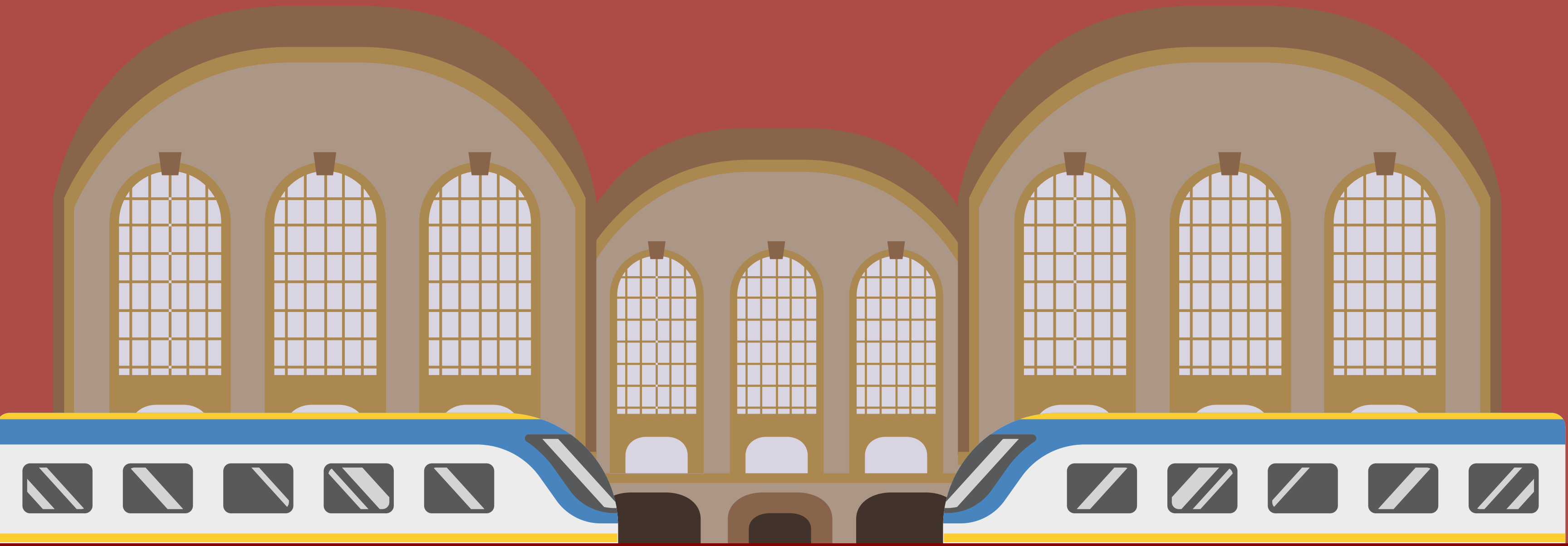


- *The Train Station* - 6

Reyna Ace

And so I sit there on that bench, reassuring myself that things will be okay. Over and over again, I make sure I'm confident in myself. I'll never stop saying it.

If I stop saying it, then the inevitability of me ending up just like the skeleton across the platform would become all too real.



About the Author:

Reyna Ace is a sixteen year old writer who lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. A lot of her ideas come from her fun, but sometimes overwhelming life and she uses art as a way to help her process. When she's not creating, she loves to spend time with friends and practice skateboarding.

You can also find her work in Issue #02: Gratitude!



- Ask the Editors -

7

The Love Letters Team

What inspires you to create?

"Other than movies, songs and books i would say taking a shower at the end of a long day and reflecting on the conversations I had or heard or events that took place. The shower is probably where 99% of my ideas come from"

-Shira Zur (Head Editor)

"I'm inspired by so many things: movies, music, people-watching, and noticing the little things in life, like the light at a certain time of day or the shadow of a tree outside my apartment building"

-Naomi Leites (Poetry Co-Editor)



"When I'm mad or feel a strong emotion and get restless, I put my homework down and pick up the guitar and it just kind of flows"

-Jaya Valji (Poetry Co-Editor)





- Art Piece -

8

Emily Felstead



About the Artist:

Emily Rosemary is a 17 year old artist and aspiring mortician and lover of frogs and bugs, she has been pursuing art for the past 10 years of her life and is only hoping to improve further in the coming years.





© 2020



what to make of your lips

pressed into a line? I've spent hours

hypothesizing, studying how they pulse,

how they are pursed, above me

your skin, unearthed from the mattress &

showered in tastelessness, gifting me a hug

I can't seem to return. I see sparks, or

it used to be once, before the summer

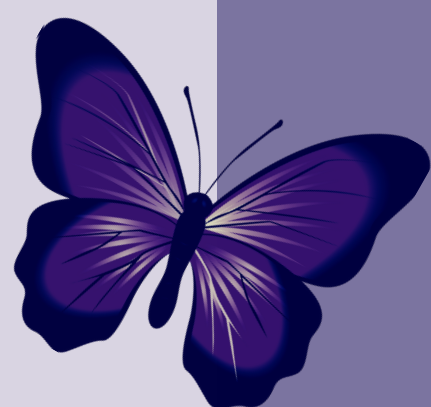
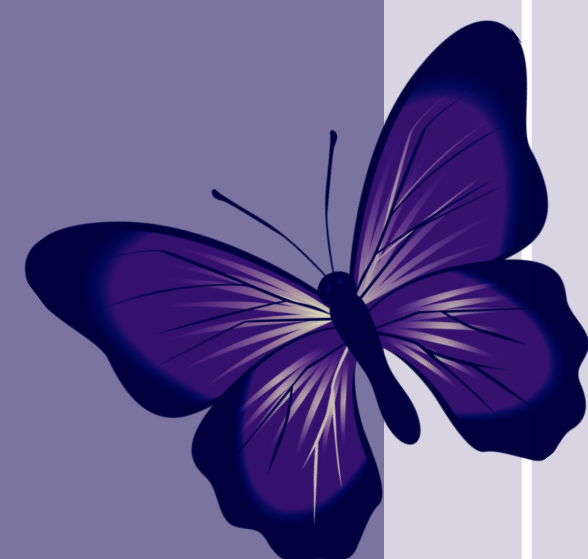
we settled for a sultry simmer instead. between us

my profile, my flat silhouette, it all becomes a line

in your hands, two-dimensional, echoes

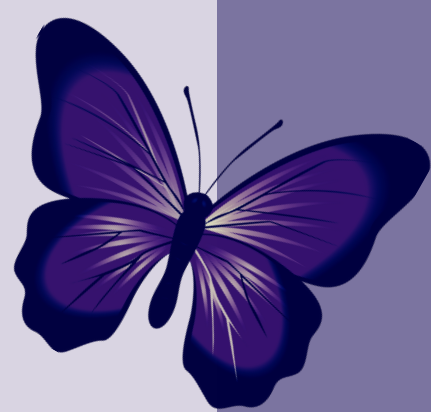
bouncing off the walls as you croon a lullaby

& i try to drown it out. you cry yourself





to sleep sometimes, you said, but it's very rare
that it happens, the tears soaked up by your skin
like a quilt, your skin like a blanket I've sewn
myself, a strawberry shortcake, artificial, painted
and dyed to the shade I like, dressed up
in all my favorite clothes, six words *I still* they
tumble out *love you* like a song *you know?* like a half-
written tune puncturing my ears, hummingbirds
tearing open my skin, exposing the hurt laying
inside. I want to hold you but I can't, I whisper,
I want to be finite as the bed I sleep in, pretend
it'll always be there even though it won't, &

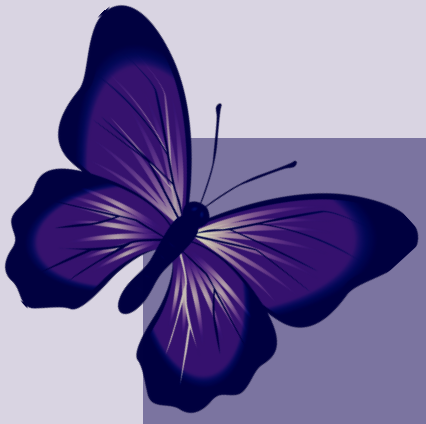


we both know there's something left behind,

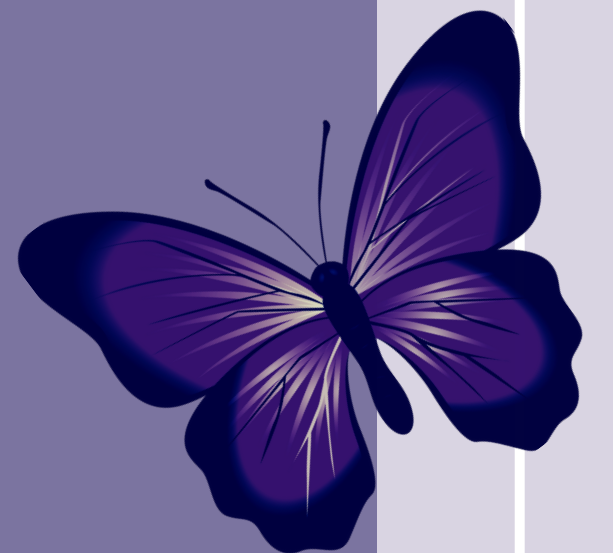




Sal Kang

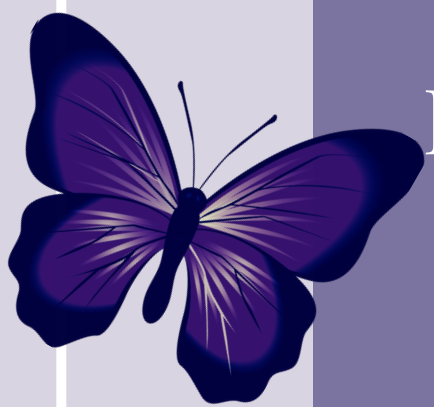


something that tugs at your ankle so close
to oblivion, like a comet might come destroy
everything we've built together so we construct
a peace offering, a slaughter we paint on
the frames of our door hoping the goodbye
will pass over, that I could hold on
to your shadow for a day longer, praying
that the frayed fabric may last.



About the Poet:

Sal likes to describe herself as a professional sluggard and occasional writer. She is a student at Princeton University by day and aspiring poet by night. Her work has been published in Canvas Literary Journal, The Rappahannock Review, and Yes Poetry, among others. Some of her previous gigs include tour guiding at an art gallery and making sad lo-fi ballads in her bedroom. She spends most of her free time sleeping and reading Anne Carson.





- *Back to Back at the Dining Table* - 13

Lorna McBain

Your hand lulls lazily across the table now,

In a charitably minded attempt

To reassure me, that it's how it was.

However, I'm not blind

You don't say my name with delight anymore,

You no longer make ridiculous plans for our weekends,
Our weekends started turning into monthly occurrences.

I wish it was something I could see that was in the way,

Yet I claim I'm not blind.

Face to face at the crossroads before I knew you,

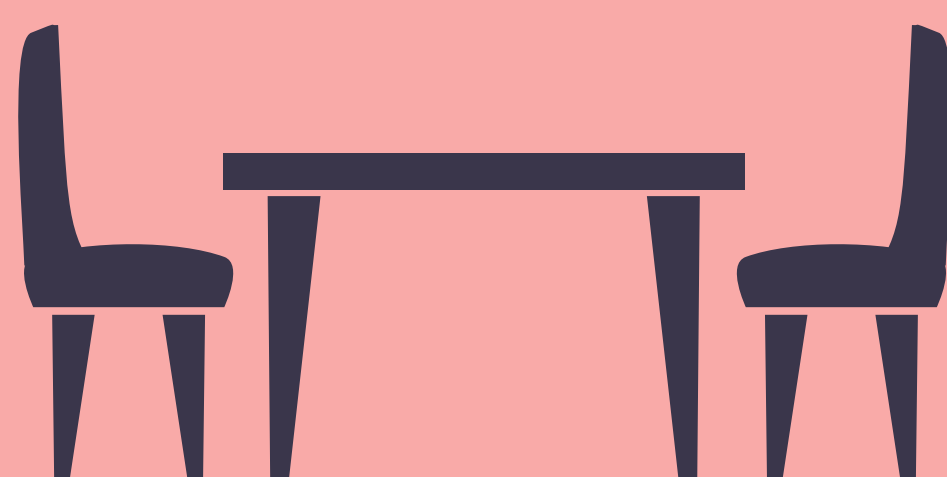
Before we sat at dining tables.

A glimpse of your smile in my mind

Between the passing traffic that separated us.

When our times were sweeter,

Filled with innocence and naivety.





- *Back to Back at the Dining Table* - 14

Lorna McBain

Our chairs are gradually turning back to back at the dining table,

Heads resting against one another

Now separated by our invisible wall.

Our hands have parted

Yet we're still not moving.

It's the thought of contact that brings us together,

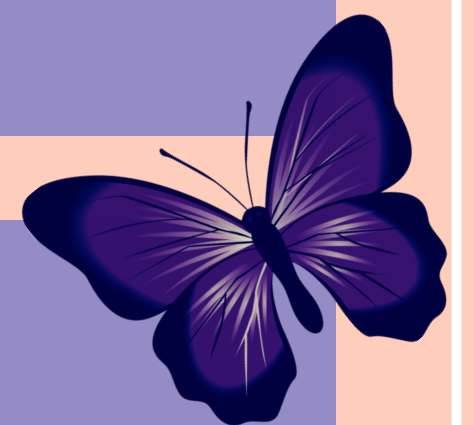
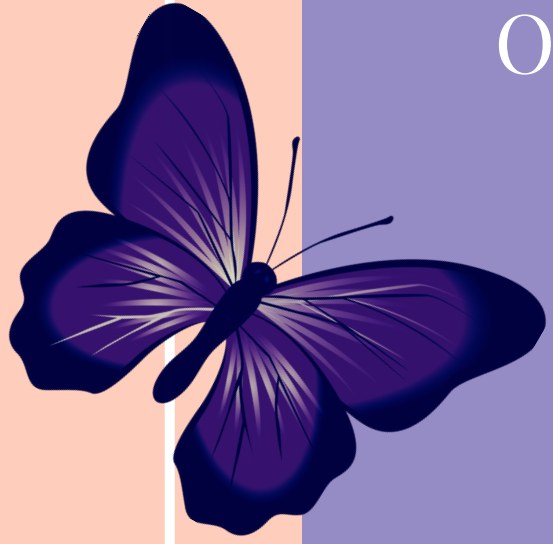
The lack of communication that tears us apart.

It seems that we're back to back at the dining table

And face to face with the end of us.

About the Poet:

Lorna McBain is a brand new, young poet who has previously been published in RISEN magazine. After developing a love for writing during lockdown it slowly became Lorna's passion, despite writing things here and there as a child she never realized how much she adored writing and how natural it felt. It was the perfect outlet. When she's not writing Lorna can often be found reading, watching old movies and, listening to an eclectic range of music.





- *Over Now* (Song) -

15

Alec Lai

Check out the full song here:
<https://soundcloud.com/user-213024295/overnow/s-4ZlR8fyFXvJ>



Over Now

Alec Lai



0:13

1:49





- *Over Now* (Song) -

16

Alec Lai



Lyrics

Screw you and your high
house built on the boulevard
In 1946
You're sitting in your TV
room
Just plucking at drywall,
wearing me thin
Not to say that
I was fake
I just made one
Tiny mistake
Now we're falling back to
strangers
Just like that
Doesn't it make you
A little bit sad
Didn't you love me?
Didn't you think
This would last forever and
ever?
But it's over now

Kiera told me you'd always
act like a movie star
Your head above the rest
And I had always painted her
like the villainelle
Now your foot is on my chest
Not to say
I'm perfect, still
I thought we'd always
Split the bill

Now we're falling back to
strangers
Just like that
Doesn't it make you
A little bit sad
Didn't you love me?
Didn't you think
This would last forever and
ever and ever?



- *Over Now (Song)* -

17

Alec Lai

Lyrics

And I know where this leads
The men who are broken
They roll up their sleeves
And they axe your heart open
They've never been free
From a pain that's unspoken
Ooo, they lie and they lie
Still no one wants to concede
I don't wanna concede

We're falling back to
strangers
Just like that
Doesn't it make you
A little bit mad
Didn't you love me?
Didn't you think
This would last forever and
ever?
But it's over now

About the Artist:

Alec Lai 16 years old and is currently a junior at Roosevelt High School in Seattle, WA. He has been singing and playing the violin for as long as he can remember and just started writing songs a year or two ago! He loves creative writing and music and doesn't think he could live without them.



- *adrift* -
Trini Rogando

18

i never understood why poets were obsessed
with space, until the stars cut me loose.

*It's alright, i tell myself,
because she's still floating;
she's still in love.*

this is as clear as a comet's course:
even now, her voyager eyes dance around
the constellations, glimmering
with flighty dreams.

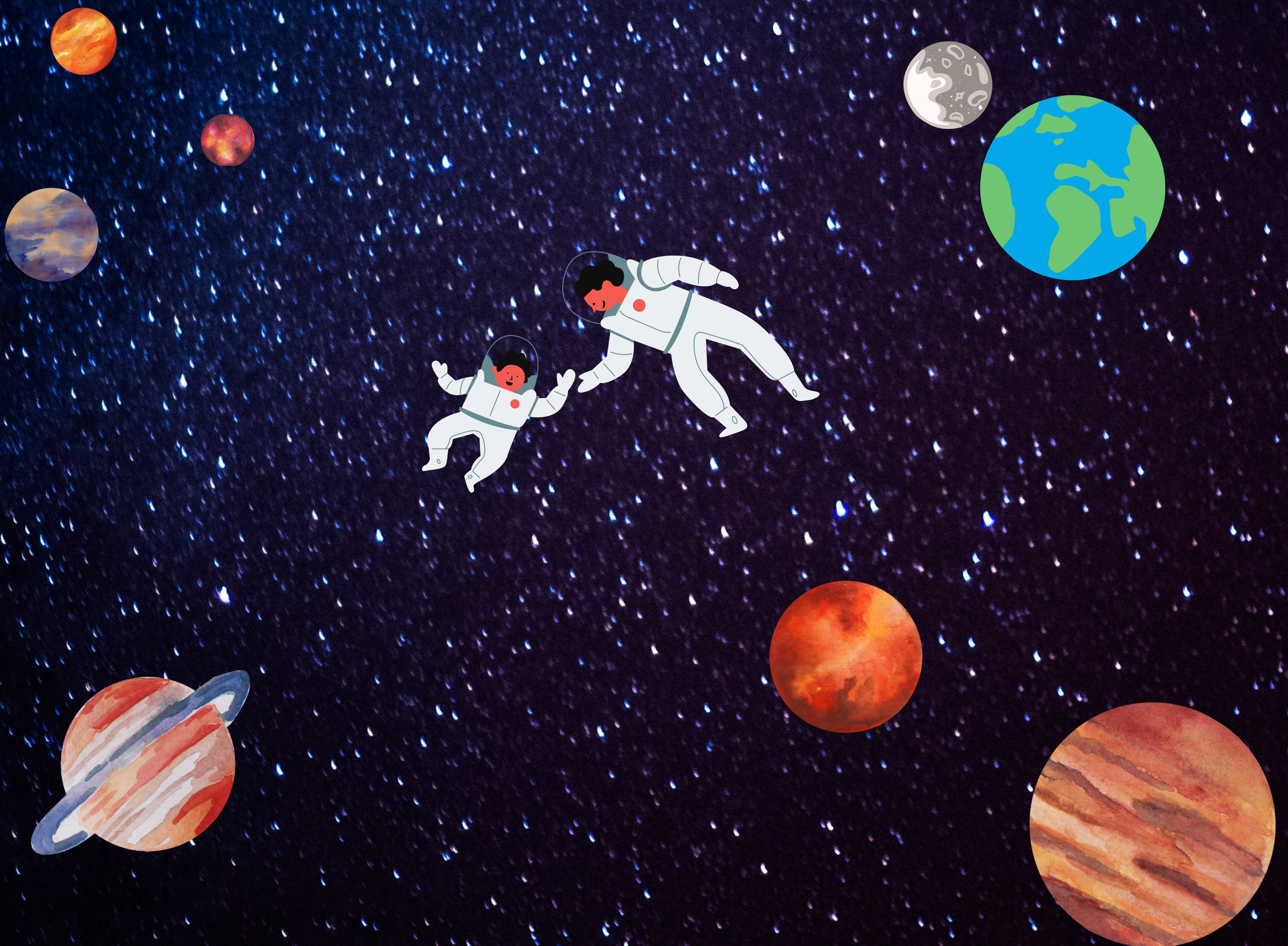
*i exhale. i am sinking into
the depths of the galaxy's abyss,
consigned to the emptiness between lines
of prose, the crinkle in an uncharted frontier.*

yes, she still loves something
with her round moon heart,
and i let myself be content to stargaze.



About the Poet:

Trini Rogando is a junior at TJHSST in Alexandria, Virginia. Her work has been published in Kalopsia Literary Journal and she was recently named a National Winner of the National High School Poetry Contest. If she's not writing, you'll most likely find her procrastinating on physics homework or fiddling with four marimba mallets. She wants to remind everyone to not take life too seriously; no one ever gets out alive.





- *When the Night Falls* -

20

Lynn Acacia

If you listen to the whispers and rumors around town, then you might've heard of this tale...

It goes like this: at the eastern border of the woods, there's a clearing with a rickety lamppost and a rusted red telephone booth. Nothing less, nothing more.

They say that if you dial the number of a late loved one, there's a chance that they'll pick up. They'll tell you the answer to every question you've been longing to ask and hear all the things that you never got the chance to say.

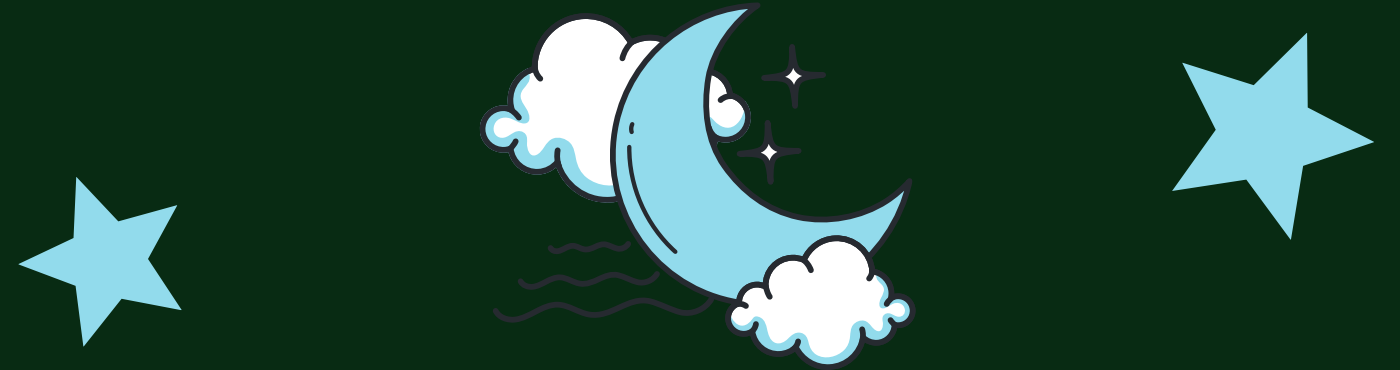
Most who look for it don't find it.

But those who do come back year in, year out, pointlessly looking for a change that will never occur.

This is the story of a boy who does.

Hello? Hello? Is this thing on? I'm pretty sure I put in the right digits.

I can't hear anything from you, though. Well, it's not like I should be hearing anything. You're not supposed to be around anymore. I mean, I saw you die—I mean, pass away, three years ago. God, I hate it when I say that out loud. It's true, I guess, but still. Ugh. Fuck.



It's weird. Sometimes I feel like you're still here when you're clearly not. Whenever I go to Starbucks it doesn't feel right to order one drink instead of two, and it definitely sucks to screenshot memes and realise I don't have anyone to send it to. Maybe except for Rae. Huh, I could probably do that. Don't wanna though. She'll probably send like five variations of lol and blow up my notifications. She's like that.

So...how are you? Is it nice up there? Uh, are you happy, I guess? I really hope you are. I hope you're drinking smoothies with god or shitting actual rainbows like we'd joked about because one of us needs to have a fun life. Or death. Or consciousness, that's the word. Either way, it definitely isn't me! I finally graduated uni and pulled myself through senior year. If you want to know what it's like, graduation is severely overrated. I got back home that night and had an existential mental breakdown. Fun stuff, huh? I'm working as a tutor, which is odd considering I hate children. I'm still horrible at math though. What else? Oh. I didn't apply for a masters degree. Lost motivation and all. I think that's it, really. Nothing super interesting—or interesting at all, honestly, has happened since you were gone.





- *When the Night Falls* -

21

Lynn Acacia

I know, I know. I'm boring as hell. I get it. I haven't done anything on our bucket list either. I tried to get a ticket for a PATD concert but I'm broke. I also shit my pants in my attempt to skydive. It all kind of just faded away when you left. Things really changed over the past few years, and I don't know how to handle that without you.

I'm completely fine, though! Eating healthy. Doing sports. Going out at night and living the life of a broke college graduate. Things dulled a little bit without you here, even when everything and everyone seemed to keep getting louder. I just miss you sometimes.

Okay, a lot.

I miss you and your dumb jokes and eccentric fashion sense and bad taste and surprisingly large brain. You keep me in check when I'm being a giant idiot or an irrational dick. Even your presence, your touch, your laugh comforts me. It's so easy to pretend that you're still living in our apartment when there's so many traces of you. I've convinced myself so many times that you're just taking a really long vacation or...I don't know, visiting a relative's house for the time being. It's not right. I know. But at the same time it's terrifying to think that you're...actually gone. So I pretend, or ignore, or don't think at all for the sake of shoving these feelings to the back of my mind.

What's more terrifying to me is that I've gotten so good at it. You're stuck in this limbo in my head between being alive and being the voice in the corner of my mind. I don't have to feel like this as long as I don't think about it too hard, even if the price of that is slowly feeling nothing at all.

It's gotten to the point where I almost forgot to call you today. I was so wrapped up in simply trying to get through the day that I didn't realise it was your birthday. I didn't notice this morning. Or this afternoon. Or this evening. It was when night fell that I finally remembered and I was so, so scared that someday I'd forget *you* like that too.

Truth is, on the day you died, I felt like a part of myself was ripped away from me. I've felt like a part of me was missing all this time, and I don't know what to do about it. The worst part is as much as I hate to admit it, this is a result of what happened to you.





- *When the Night Falls* -

22

Lynn Acacia



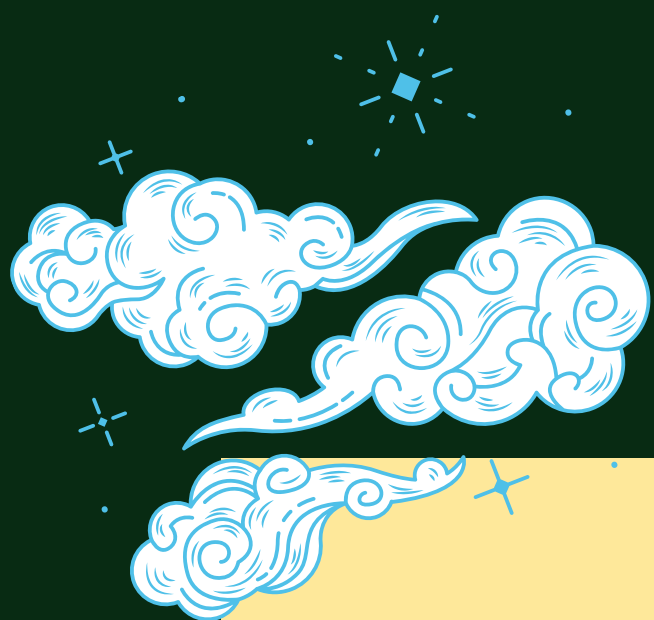
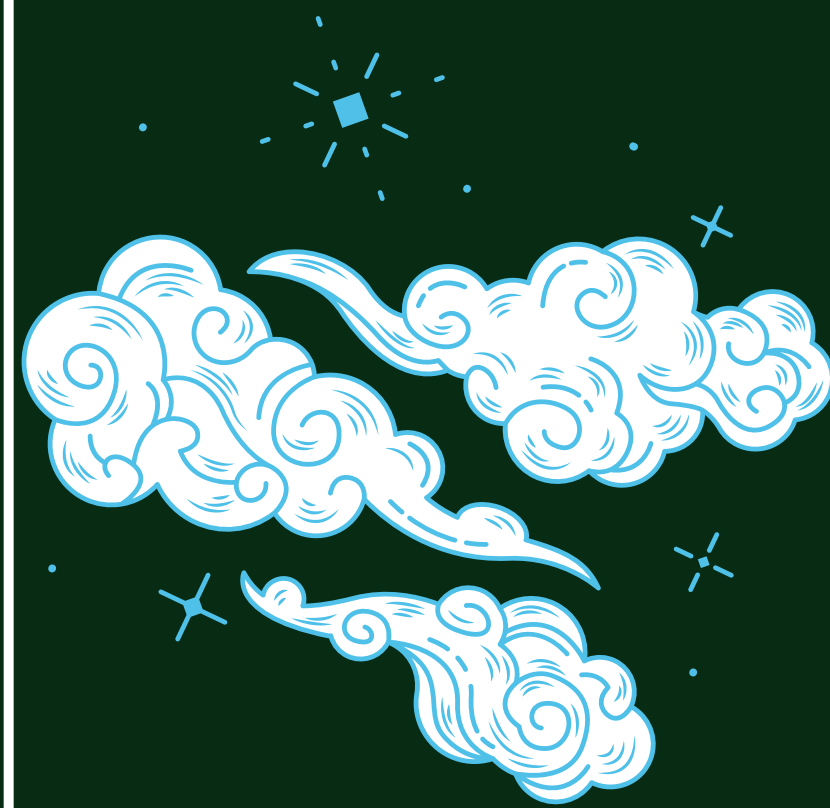
I guess I've simply...forgotten what it's like to be whole.

Argh, I sound pathetic. I'm good. Not sniffing. Definitely not crying. Okay I am. God, I'm fucking stupid talking to myself and sobbing like this. It's dumb to feel like this and sour your memory with my morbid thinking. I shouldn't have said that at all. I shouldn't have let myself confirm it.

Hey, Sylvie? If you're really out there listening. Somehow. I know you'd want me to move on. And I promise I will. It's just been really hard recently. But I'll do it, only for you.

Then I'll see you next year. Hopefully I'll be different then. Hopefully I'll have changed to become someone both of us can be proud of.

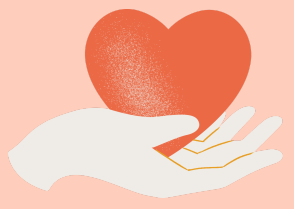
I guess this is goodbye.



About the Author:

Lynn is a 16 year old writer from Jakarta, Indonesia. Student by day and writer by night, she enjoys writing contemporary fiction and fantasy at any chance she gets. She is currently enrolled in the Oxford Summer Courses Creative Writing Course. Lynn enjoys reading books, listening to lo-fi and binging youtube videos in her spare time.

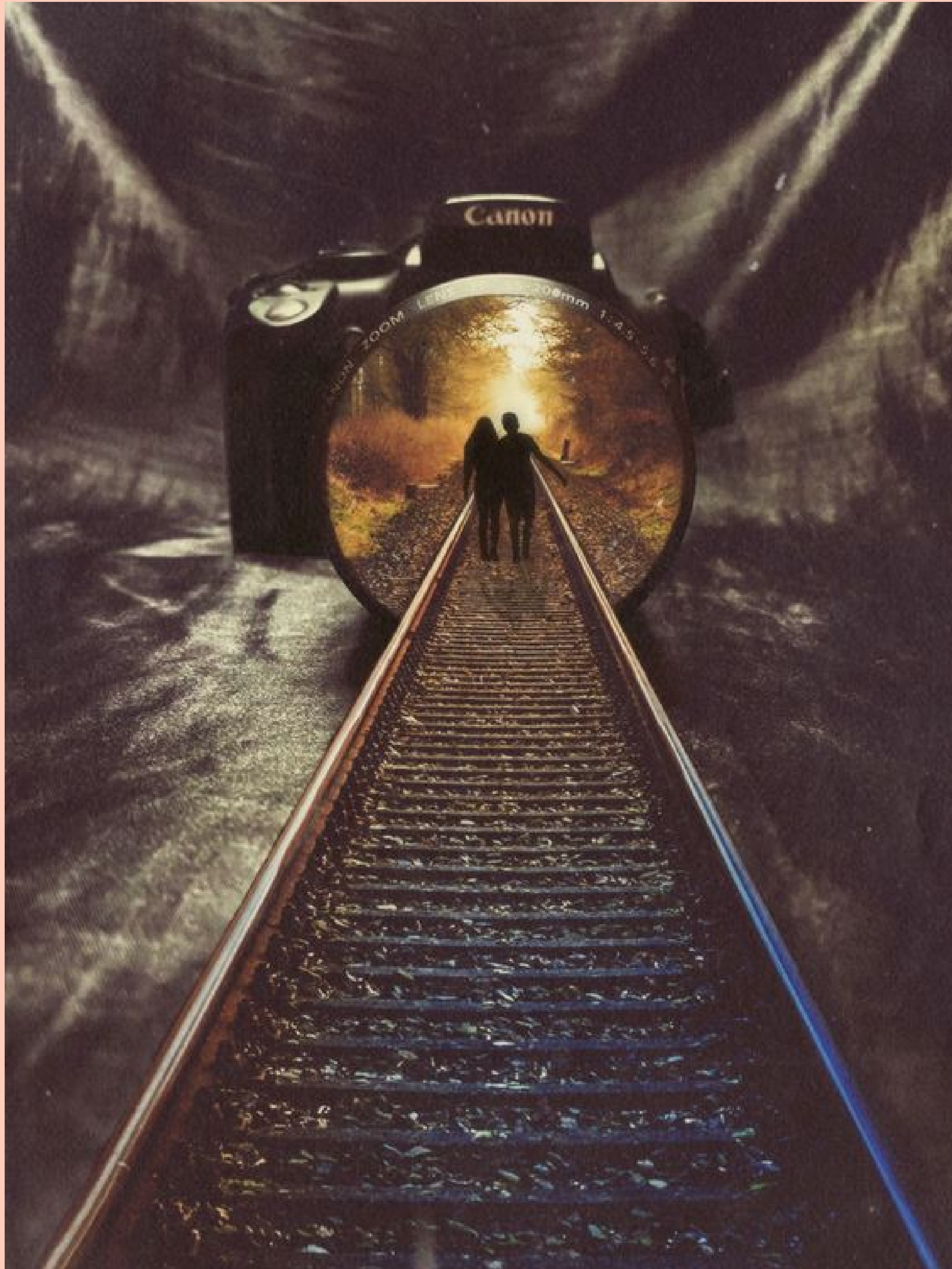




- Art Piece -

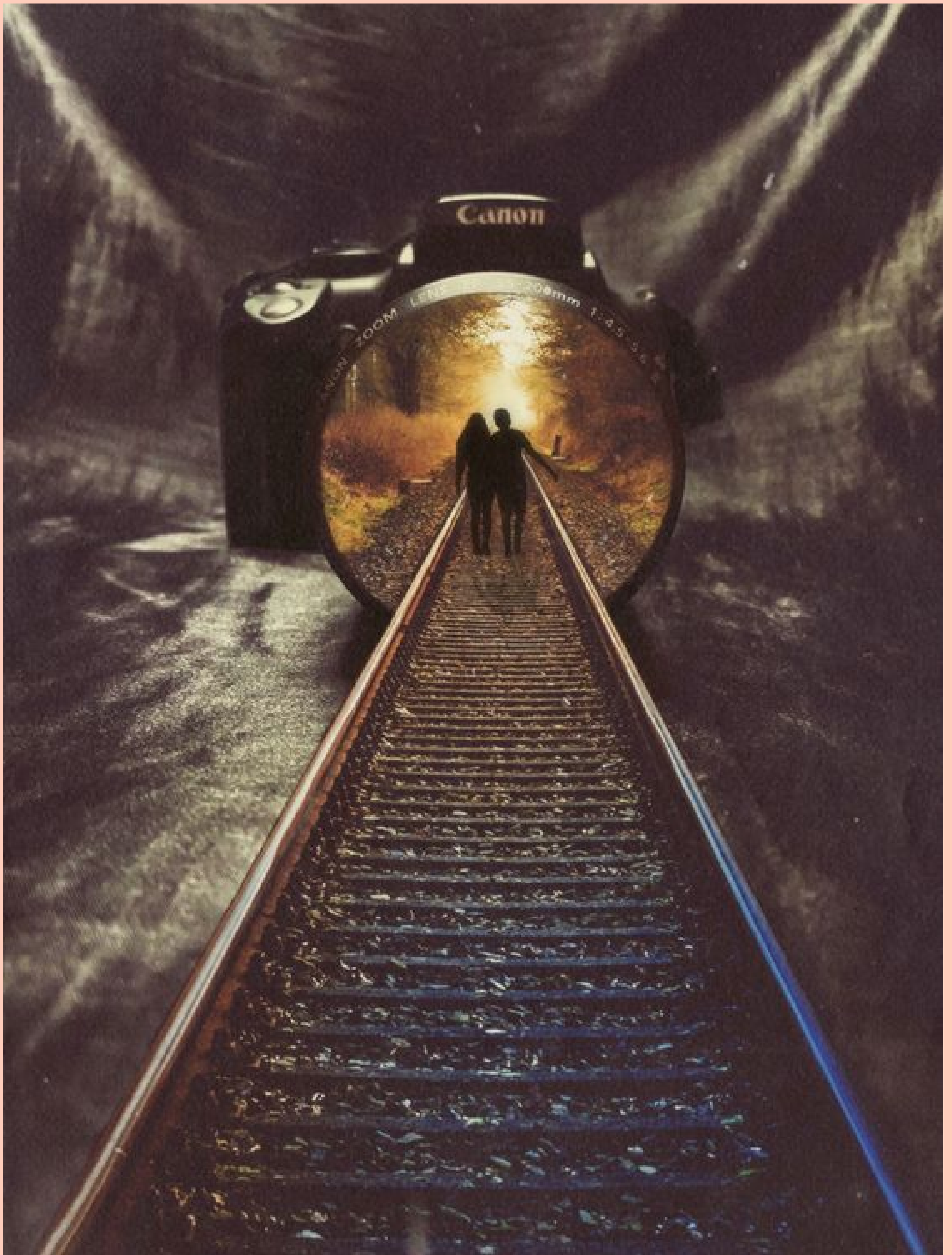
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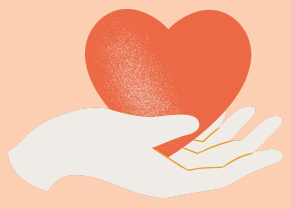
Jaxon Ostrer



About the Artist:

Jaxon Ostrer is a 16 year old high school junior and has been passionate about art and photography for a long time. He lives in Washington state and has 2 dogs! He was pushed to do this challenge because of his amazing girlfriend, who always encourages him to do new things.





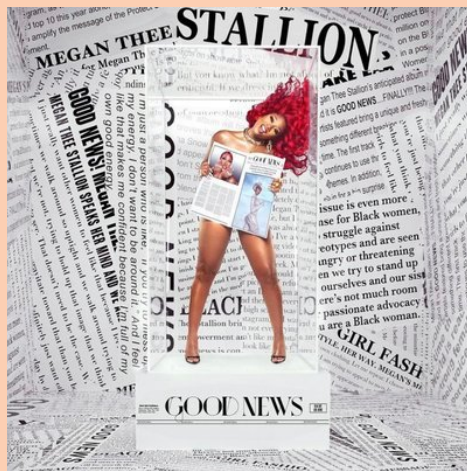
- Time Capsule -

The Love Letters Team

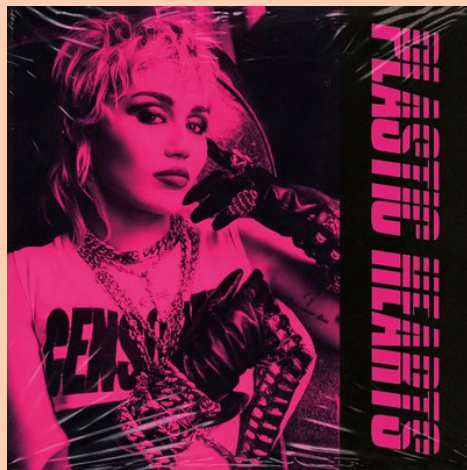
As we look back at the time this issue was originally released, we thought it would be interesting to look back at pop culture and what teens were doing at the time!



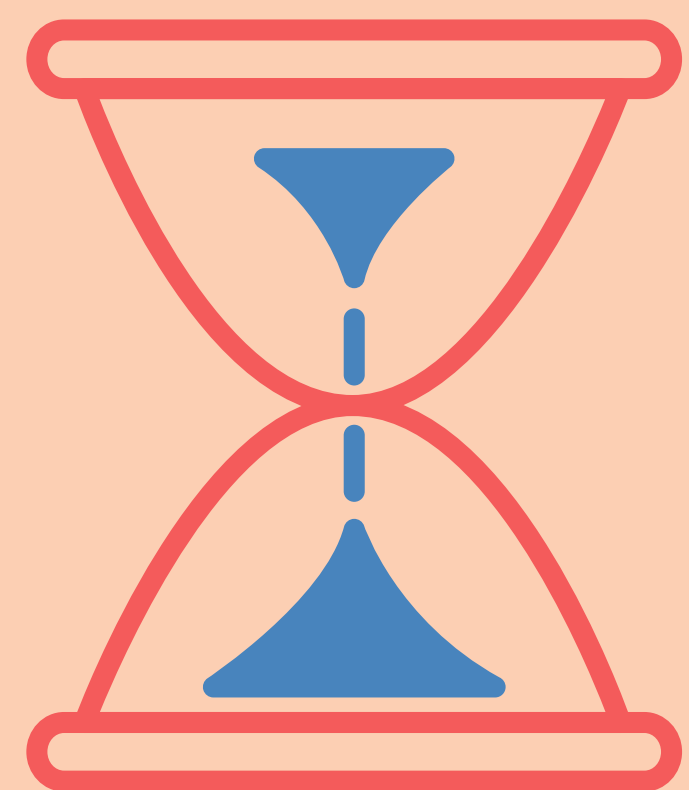
Oct. 1, 2020
Love Letters Magazine began taking submissions for our first issue!

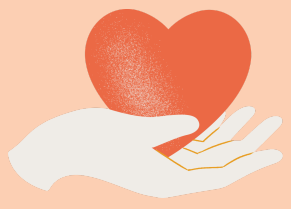


Due to the ongoing pandemic, many celebrated Halloween in the *Animal Crossing New Horizons* game!



Lots Of New Music!
Pictured;
Positions - Ariana Grande
Good News - Megan Thee Stallion
BE - BTS
Plastic Hearts- Miley Cyrus



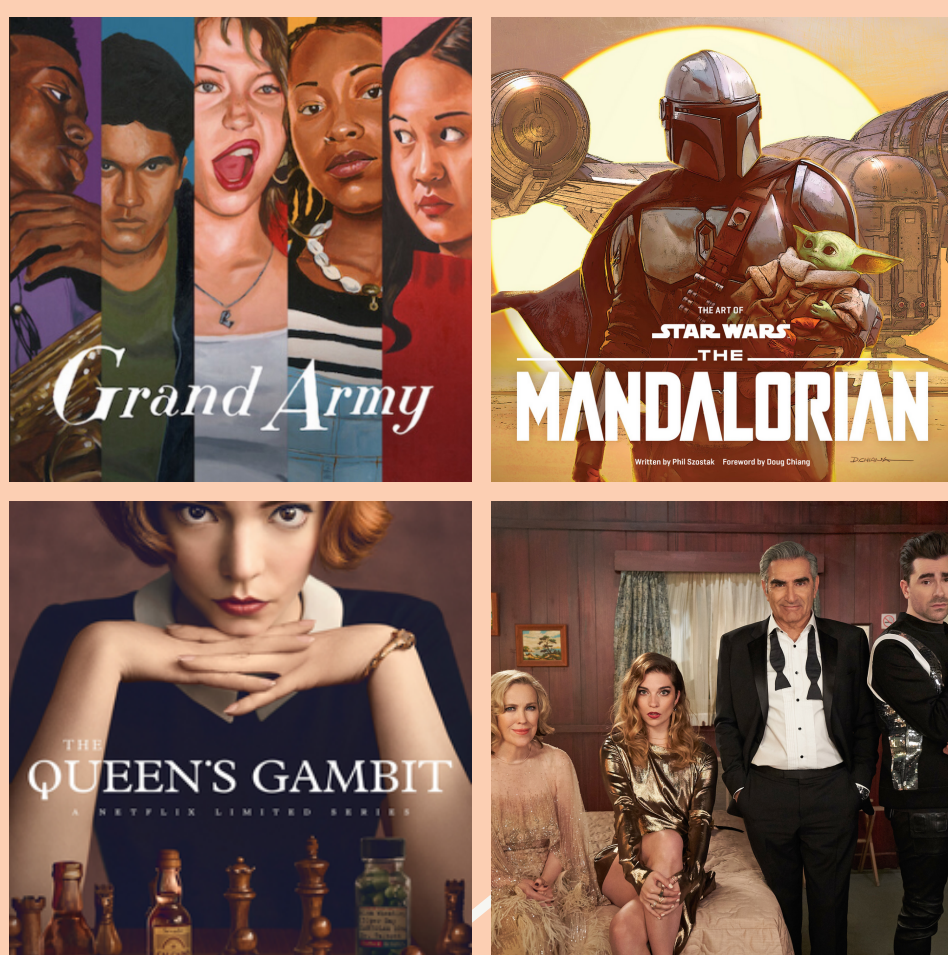


- Time Capsule -

The Love Letters Team



Many teens attended school on Zoom!



The online game *Among Us* was downloaded on everyone's phones!

New TV Shows took the world by storm!

Pictured:

Grand Army

The Mandalorian (season 2)

The Queen's Gambit

Schitt's Creek (season 6)



The Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade took on a new form due to the pandemic!





- *The Banana Leaf Sun* -

27

Anonymous

The sun is colored butter like banana leaves,
Wind is picking up through the shelter of sleeves.

Shells and puddles, grains of sand,
Cold and wet and hurt dig into my hands.

It's getting quite cold, but I'm scared to go,

If I leave will it be alone?

Close me off from the world to save me,

Say that you hate life, you're crazy.

See, the problem isn't that I don't love you.

You make me think this grey sky could be blue,

but I'm not certain you understand.

Let's stop arguing and just hold hands.

Especially when we're never really free,

How can we pretend to agree?





- *The Banana Leaf Sun* -

28

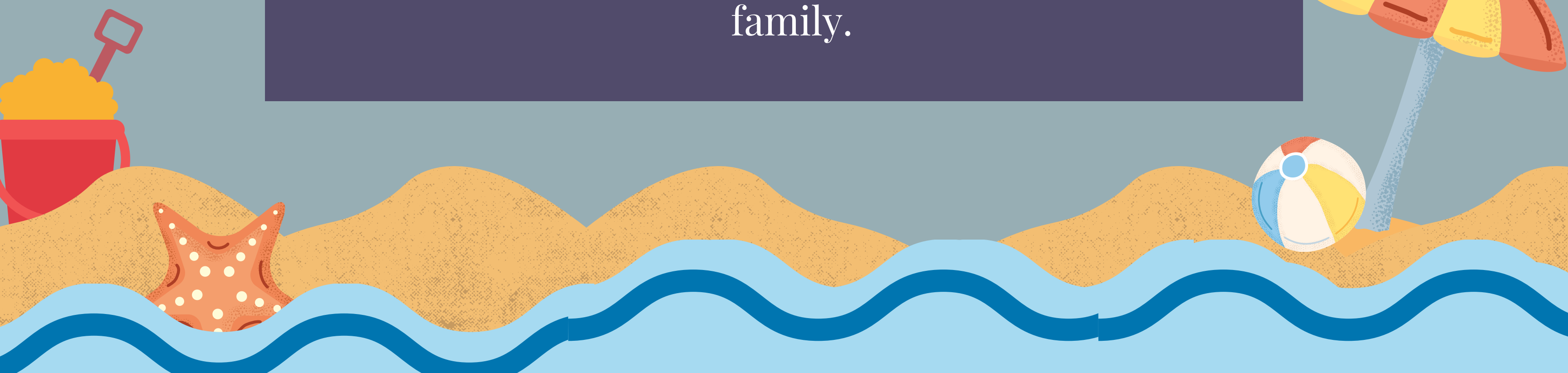
Anonymous

So yes, I'm cold and the sea air bites,
But this is the kind of cold that never fights,
Give me a little warmth, hold on forever,
Let's stay under the banana leaf sun
together.

About the Poet:

(chose to remain anonymous)

This writer is a junior in high school and has been writing since they were very young. At first, they only wrote fictional stories, but after a long night of babysitting without any charge left in their phone, they started writing poetry. Since then, the fantasy story writing slowed down, and they mainly wrote poetry. When not reading books or writing poetry, this writer enjoys swimming and art and spending time with their friends and family.





- *see-sick* -

Kelly Huang

29

weary eyes, we gaze: hidden
blue penetrating across glass shards,
slow to fold our creases.

say, the jelly strands grace
hair into fans of curiosity,
crowning over silver tarnish
which adorns maroon and white
letters, though not of our own ship.

does coast water surge into madness?

when sodium grains wound the
surface

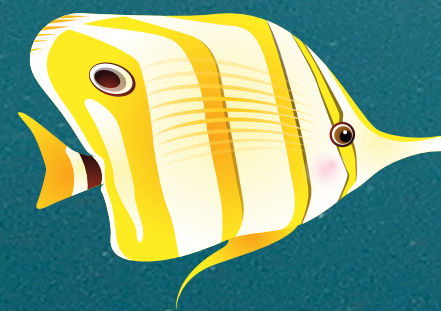
afloat each slant of an eyelash.

for lukewarm coral tucks the ears

softly, surely in a pocketful of loving
breaths.

About the Poet:

Kelly Huang is a 17-year-old senior at Piedmont Hills High School in San Jose, CA. She started writing poetry for two reasons: to forgive and to project into the future. The stories she writes are based on her community, focusing on the people around her. Kelly is also interested in exploring the relationship between society and international communications. In her free time, she likes to lion dance, play the flute and watch Gilmore Girls.



Thanks for Reading!

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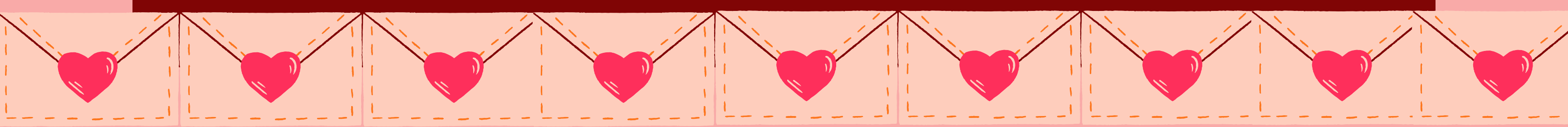
Cover art by our poetry co-editor Naomi Leites!

Love Letters Chronology

#01: Change



#02: Gratitude





Love Letters Magazine

