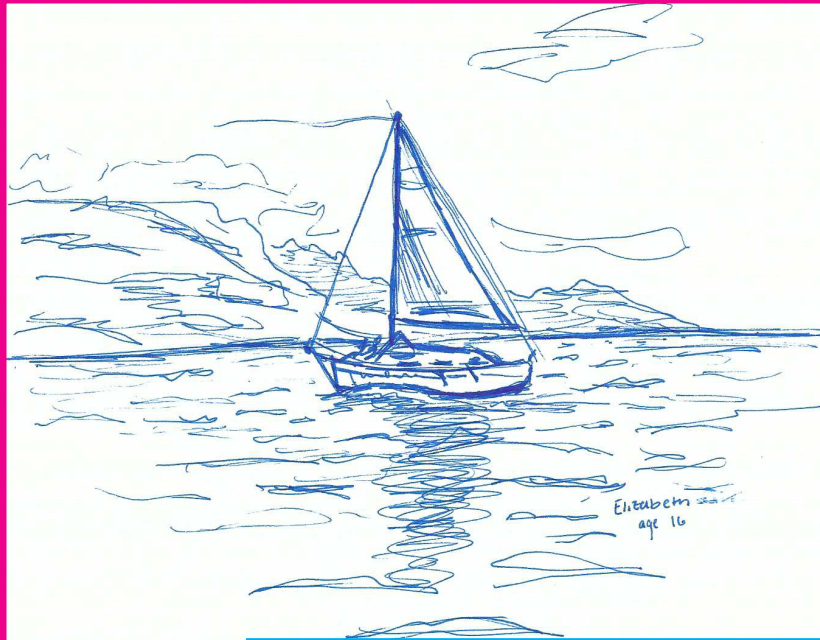
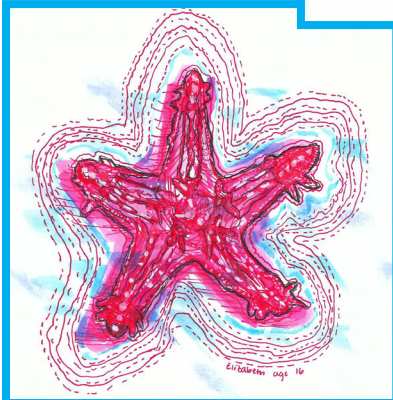


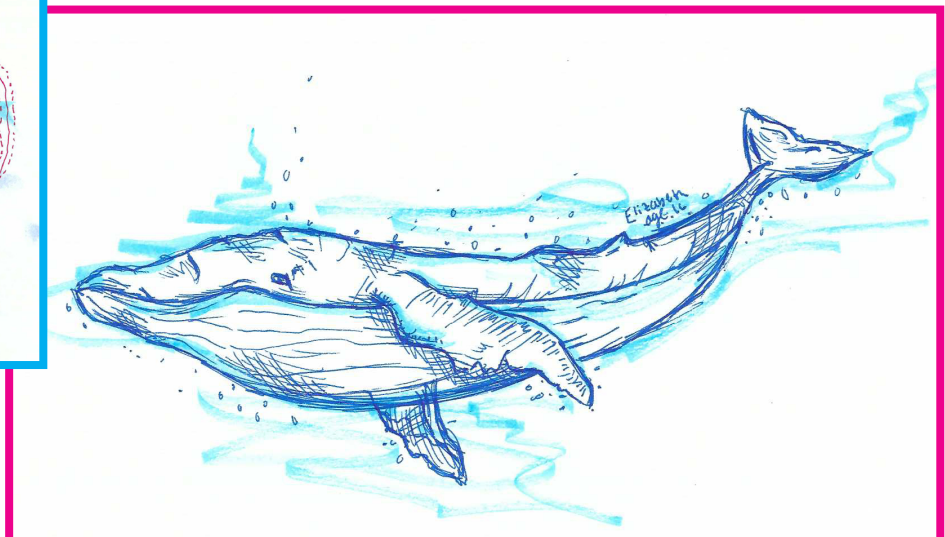
The Edda Literary Magazine 2021



A Collection
of Art and
Writing
by the
Vikings of
La Jolla
High School



Cover Artwork
by Elizabeth Parr



About The Edda Literary Magazine

“Edda” is a word in the title of two collections of ancient Viking poems and stories: *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda*, and inspired the title of the La Jolla High School Vikings’ collection of their own poems, stories, artwork, etc.

Welcome to The Edda Literary Magazine of La Jolla High School.

This magazine was inspired and worked on by The Edda Club, which met virtually on Zoom all year. They inspired each other to write creatively and to make artwork, and solicited contributions from other students via their Instagram account: @theeddamag

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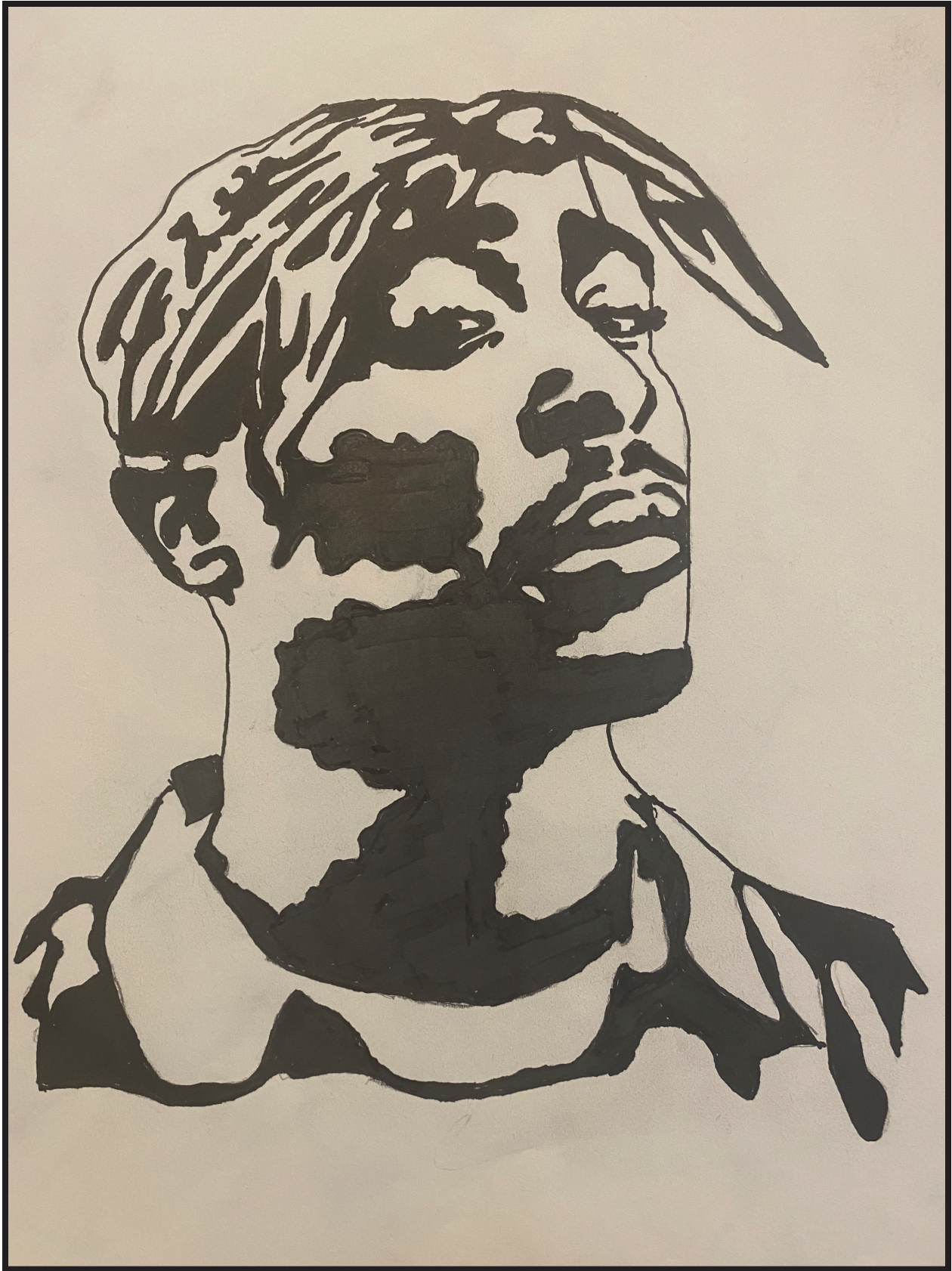
by Anouk Guilhemfouert

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by Elizabeth Parr



by Anissa Nuñez



by Eugenia Kritsuk

The Great Unnamed
by Myka Gary

Unnamed hesitated at signing his name on his book.

He set his quill aside and shut the cover. The book crinkled as it closed, thick with papers and work. It was previously a journal—but now that it was completed, it was a *masterpiece*. What had once been daily entries about his humdrum life had become a novel for the ages, a tale of young love and betrayal and philosophy and a self-inserted protagonist.

Unnamed considered it his magnum opus.

But now that he wanted to publish it, despite being eleven and unimportant, he worried.

Who in the world ever became great with a name like mine?

I need a pen name. Stat.

Unnamed picked up his journal and hurried down the high-ceilinged hall, passing Rembrandt-style portraits of ancestors that decorated the walls—those were always a source of inspiration. He went down a flight of stairs and came to his mother's room.

He opened the door. A rectangle of light from the hall spilled upon his mother, who stood hunched over a table full of thorny vines in pots. The room smelled of vinegar. Unnamed never figured out whether that was mother's natural scent or if she just gained it from all her experimenting.

"Anka," Unnamed said, as in this house the parents went by their first names, "You know my book?"

Anka looked at him. She was wearing black goggles and gloves. "Eh?"

"I...need a pen name."

"What?!" Anka drove her gloved fists on her bony hips. "Child, you *have* a name! What's this penning one for?"

"Because..." Unnamed rubbed his right foot against his left heel, "Unnamed is not a great name."

"How can you say that, boy?!" Anka took him by the shoulders. "You were given the single most unique name on the entire planet! I've taught you well! You'll be great by talent alone!"

Unnamed gave her a nervous smile. "Well..."

After getting a long Bulgarian lecture, Unnamed was released. He immediately left for his sister's room.

Unnamed found Paranoia sitting on a pale pink blanket, surrounded by eight porcelain dolls in lace dressing. Paranoia scowled at him. She had her hands out, and had drawn charcoal eyes on them.

"I'm *busy*, Unnamed."

"Oh, do pardon me!" Unnamed scowled back. With his sister, he could be sassy. He held out his journal. "Do you have a good pen name I could use?"

Paranoia wrinkled her tiny nose at him. "How about Pubert Snailpants?"

"Paranoia, you are older than me, *somehow*. Be that way and give me a good name."

"Well, I always wished I was named Florence."

Paranoia's southern drawl made the name sound like *Flawreyence*. Unnamed shuddered at it. The accent always reminded him that she was adopted. "Please. I am serious here."

Paranoia smirked. She picked up a doll and twirled its synthetic blonde curls. "How about Lyman, then? You always tell great *lies*."

Unnamed left right then and there, shutting the door as loud as he could. But once he was standing in the dim hall by himself, dangling his *magnum opus* at his side, surrounded by portraits of men who had great names and great lacy collars and great judgmental stares, Unnamed felt more normal, average, and missable than he ever had in his entire life.

He even felt too sheepish to take one of his ancestors' names, though they had amazing names like Conrady and Edward.



by Mika Gary

Unnamed had one last person to turn to.

The very thought made him grimace.

But he went up all the stairs to that final room, feeling sick to his stomach. Unnamed opened the large mahogany doors and stepped into his father's curtain-drenched study.

Forthwith stood at his window, peering through a slit in the curtains. The light silhouetted his prominent nose and sharp cheekbones.

Unnamed approached from behind. "Erm...Forthwith?"

Forthwith looked askance at him.

"I...ehehe..." Unnamed stared at his feet for a moment, feeling like his throat might crawl its way out of his neck, before he forced himself to hold up his journal to Forthwith. "D-do you think I could have a pen name for this?"

Forthwith arched one eyebrow.

"Please," Unnamed whimpered.

"You want something other than what I gave you?"

Unnamed lowered his book, his cheeks hot. *You didn't give me much in the first place!*

Forthwith drew his head back. "Don't look at me that way."

Sniffing, Unnamed turned and left the room. He hugged the journal tight against his chest. As he hurried down the stairs, he thought of his name, Paranoia's name, and his father's name. Forthwith. Almost the same as Posthaste, which would have been even worse.

Whoever started all this stupid naming tradition was cruel! We're all doomed to be weirdos! Doomed!

Doomed!

It is never to be. I am never to be great.

I am forever Unnamed!





by Anouk Guilhemfouert

Ephraim and Zach
by Myka Gary

Dice: one, falling, blank, blank, droppping the ball, revolting, baseball, robbery, sHELTER, arrow

Ephraim McSpeedson had both hands gripping the wheel of his race car and was cruising along smoothly when—oh God no—he saw a familiar face by the upcoming crosswalk.

Even worse, he hit a red light. Ephraim nervously eased his sexy red race car to a stop and slowly lowered behind his window. But he kept his eyes up just enough to glare at the man on the corner.

Zacharias Suaveboots leaned against the traffic pole. He tossed a baseball in one hand and wore a slinky smirk on his dazzling face. He dressed like a 40s gangster, with a purple tie and pinstripe vest.

Revolting, Ephraim fumed to himself, already tapping his foot on the gas pedal, *Why are you turning up in my town again, Zach? What are you after?*

As the red light lasted longer and longer, Ephraim noticed Zach kept looking over his shoulder.

Cripes. That means someone's after him. He's done something. What was it? Robbery? Forgery? Tax fraud? Did he woo somebody's woman again? Did he drop the ball during a heist and now has to keep an eye out for his own gang members? Did he deal drugs? I know he's always got some on him.

Ephraim scowled to himself. As much as Zach was looking around, his expression was its usual smug calm, and Ephraim didn't see anyone else around. Maybe Zach was just being odd. Maybe he *had* done something wrong, but the cops were delayed.

Delayed cops, huh? Ephraim wore a grim smile. *Maybe I gotta take this into my own hands. Yeah.* He sat up and started rolling down his window. *I always gotta keep Zach in check.*

Ephraim leaned his head out the window. "ZACH!"

Zach blinked. When he focused on Ephraim, he put on the most disgusting curl-ended smirk Ephraim had ever witnessed and waved at him with the baseball. "If it isn't Ephraim McSpeedy! Hi."

Ephraim jerked the car over and stopped right in front of Zach. This sharp maneuver left behind black trail marks.

"Oh," Zach slightly raised his silky eyebrows at the black marks, "So you're in a mood today."

Ephraim pointed at Zach. "What have you done?"

Zach frowned. "Nuthin'? I'm just hangin' out."

"HAHA! LIES!" Ephraim prodded Zach's chest. "I can sense your sins. You're up to something."

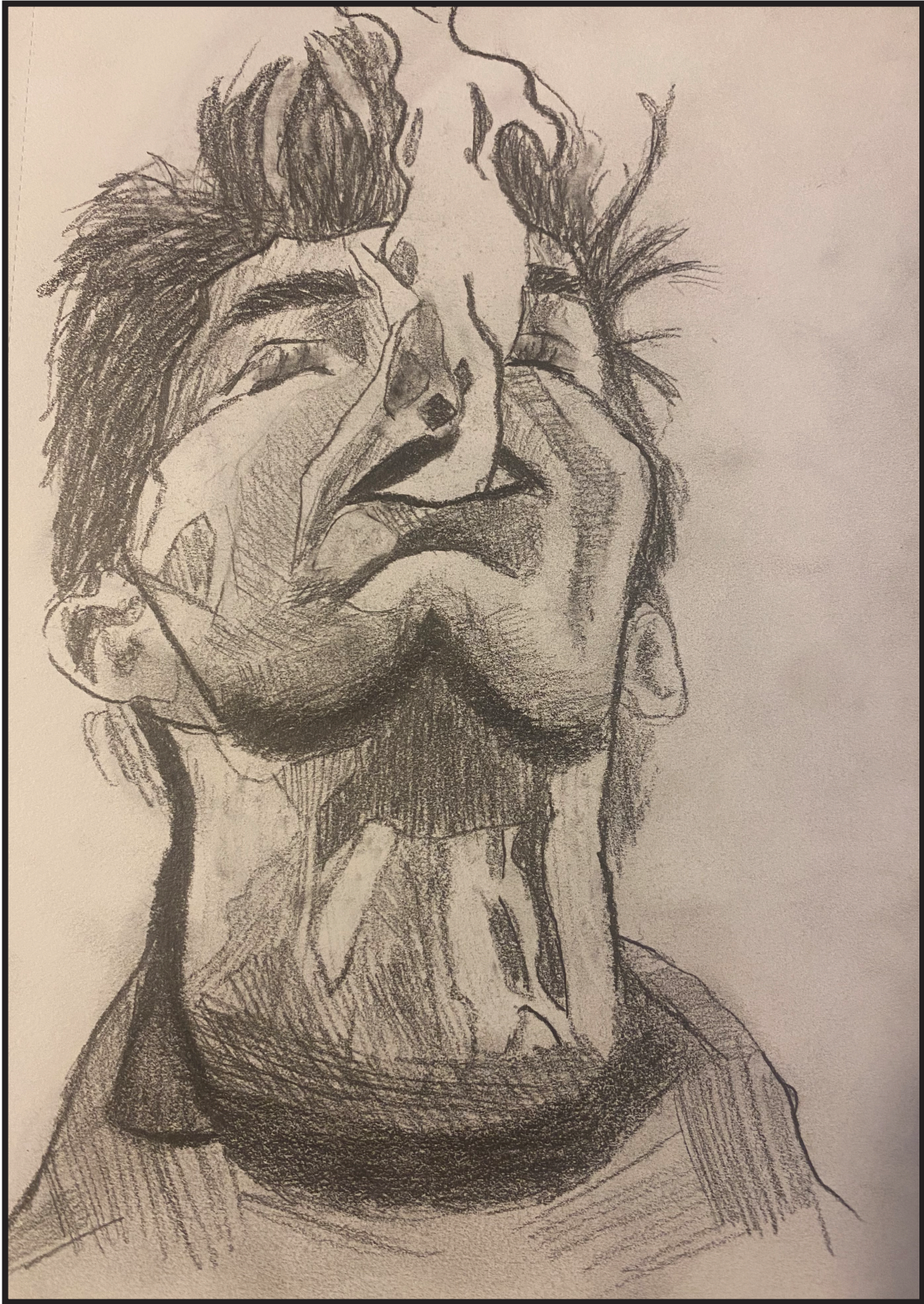
Zach smiled and looked away. "You're not wrong."

"What is it, then?"

"Oh, ya know, the usual."

Ephraim went rigid. His eye twitched. "The—the *usual*? Your usual could be a THOUSAND different things, Zach—"

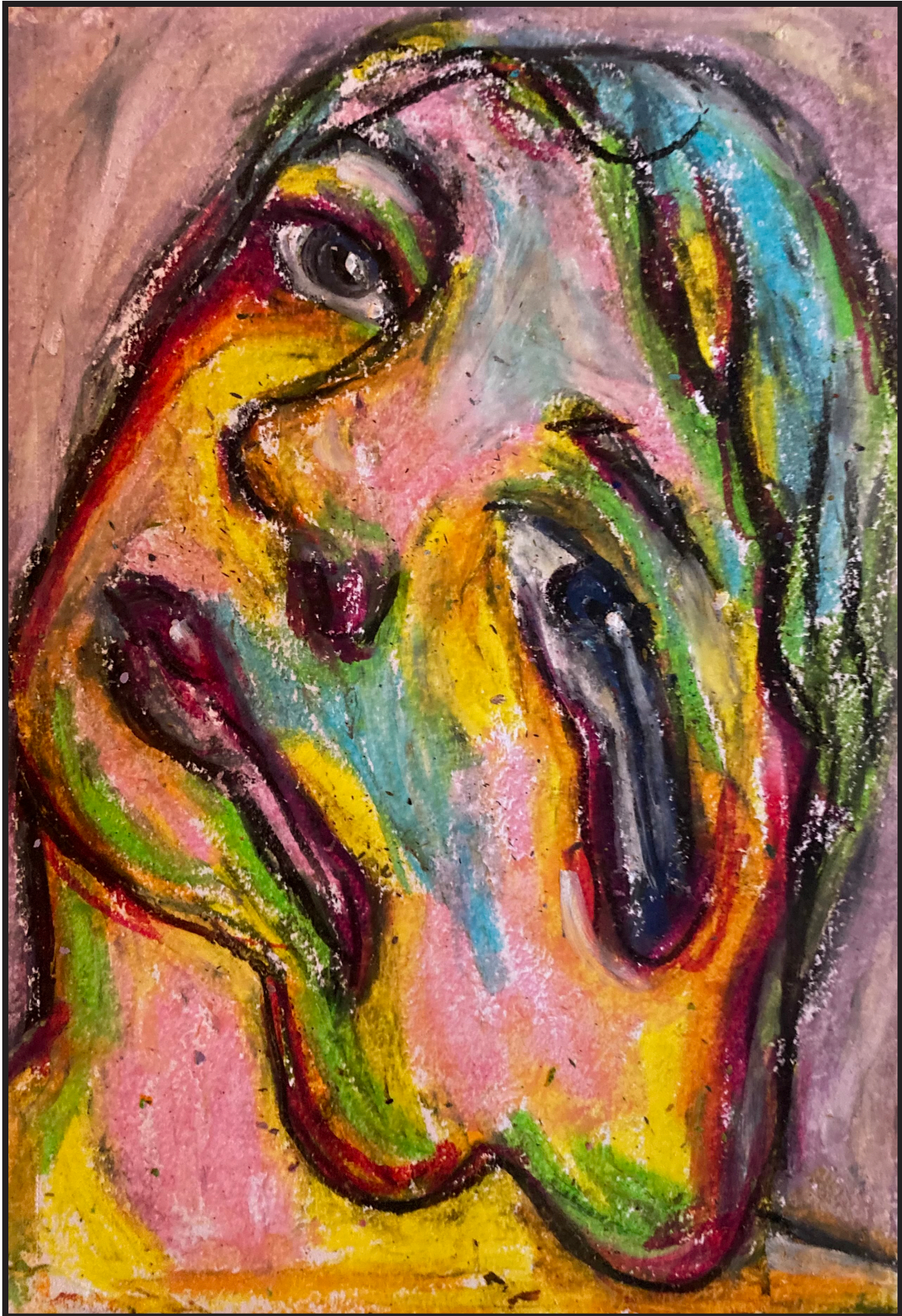
"Whoa whoa whoa, no yelling bro."



by Anissa Nuñez

Breathe
by Camila Alvarez

There are a lot of feelings that don't have names
Sensations and emotions that you can't describe quite right with words
Sometimes they are easy to describe
Oh improbably hungry, a little tired, or maybe just eh
However, there are some I'd rather not feel at all
But when I'm struggling I remember
Breathe 5...4...3...2...1
I feel the crisp cold air soon filling my lungs
Slowly filling up
But the tension soon wants to grow again
Panicking I then think of what is going on in my small world
For my problems cannot be so big
But they are to me in that moment
I then remember again
Breathe 5...4...3...2...1
Hearing the small things I never noticed
Sensing the simple but comforting sense of the silence
Wishing this moment would last forever
I know my troubles and worries are waiting for me
Without the sense of the day and time
Just lurking around the corner mainly coming in the most unconventional times
I remember again
Breathe 5...4...3...2...1
With the tension lifting up upon my shoulders
I stand up taller,
And the world begins to open up
My problems, worries, and sorrows won't matter in a week, a month, or even years from now
They're simply trials of perseverance and strength
And Man it's some wild ride and I'm sure I don't feel alone on this
But wait
I almost forgot
Breathe 5...4...3...2...1



by Alexa Thompson



by Amaya Bishop

Playing With Death
by Audrey Weishaar

"In a game with no consequences, why are you playing it safe?" she asked, leaning over the board. What the goddess of death didn't know was that a mortal life meant more to the one who created life, rather than to the one who takes it.

"Perhaps for you, there isn't," I replied calmly, surveying the cross-patterned board in between us. It resembled a chessboard, but slightly larger. Not to mention each set of pieces was individually crafted. I fought with my people, while Mara fought against, with forces of her own. I fought with friends, family, lovers. Mara fought with enemies and hardships.

I wouldn't consider her an enemy, however. But I would fight to the ends of the Earth to save my creations. And she would fight to the death to take them.

"Your move, Taya." I frowned. I considered my choices trying to figure out how long I could outsmart her. Sometimes I fall into a trap. Sometimes I didn't.

I always lost, in the end. So, I looked around, looking at her closest players. Fear. Fairly avoidable, if you were smart about it. I made my move and looked up to face her.

"Have you ever considered the morals of what we do?" I asked. It was a reasonable question. I was surprised when she paused and looked up. She didn't often give too much credit to what I did or said.

"Why?"

"Curiosity, I guess. Is what we do right or wrong? Or just a way of life?"

"I don't think it matters."

"Oh, really?"

"I win, in the end. You know this. So why try?" I met her gaze unflinchingly. Most mortals would call that a feat. But after playing with death for centuries, you learn to realize that she isn't intimidating. Just... frustrating.

"Because. I made them. In a way, they are my responsibility. You don't give up on something because you don't always do well. In fact, that's the opposite. Because while you know you'll never play a game like the last, you know that you have next time," I finished. She gave me a look, more scrutinizing rather than disapproving. With a shrug, she turned back to her play. I noted that she didn't make a remark. Or respond in the slightest. She just let it drop. A very rare occurrence.

I watched as she considered her options. There were numerous moves she could make, but most of them had bigger consequences for her. She reached forward, but changed her mind.

There were a lot of risks to take at the beginning, typically until one was an adult. As your player got a better feel for who they were, it got easier. They made better decisions. Better choices. More often than not, they moved of their own accord. I could only override important decisions once per game.

I watched as she fiddled with the cuff of her jacket, almost nervously, and I felt myself smile at my small victory. I had her trapped. She couldn't take them, and they could move in either direction. They were safe, for now. She sighed, then moved a random pawn without looking. Again, something new.

What was she playing at?

I ignored it for the moment, pondering the board.

After a few minutes, she asked, "Are you going to make a play or no?"

"I'm sorry that I care more about this than you." I didn't look up, but I could feel her eyes on me. Finally, I moved another piece. I looked up, meeting her eyes. We sat there for a few seconds before she sighed.

"Fine. If that's how seriously you think I take this," she muttered at the board. I rolled my eyes, watching her move another piece: greed. Not surprising, she often played it around this time. I had always wondered what would happen if I could actually beat her. What if I actually tried to win? I played, and I played well. But I always knew I couldn't win. Would it be possible to outsmart Death herself? Probably not, to be honest.

But, one can dream.

I smiled faintly as I moved another aspect on the board. Others would take care of the details once we finish. Affection and heartbreak will take over love life, depending on the influence in the mortal's life, for example. We just plotted out the life path. Most tended to think of our jobs as a hierarchy. But I've never thought of it like that. While Mara and I make major decisions, we never get to deal with details. I've always been interested in the minor aspects. But I never get to see them.

So no, I don't think that anyone here is more important than the others. But, no one listens to my opinion anyway. And people are too scared of Mara to talk to her. So the only friends I really have are Kwan and Kibu. They are kind of a package deal. Mara and I aren't exactly friends, but we tolerate each other. It isn't as lonely as one would think, even if the sting of it at first was a bit harsh.

But, after a couple of thousand years, one gets used to it. There was no point in trying to fix an issue that no one else cares about.

I continued to play around a bit, trying some new moves out. I wasn't focusing too much, just moving my pieces out of harm's way. However, something strange had happened that never occurred before. She was outnumbered. By a lot. Mara was good at hiding her panic, but it was definitely there.

I still played as I normally did, but something had happened along the way that didn't normally occur. We had continued back and forth for another quarter of an hour before something I never thought was possible occurred.

"Checkmate," I whispered.



by Anouk Guilhemfouert



The Young Lady
by Margareta Backlund

There once was a girl who strived to be perfect; to be loved; be to admired. But every time she tried she would always fall short. How could she awake in the morning happy and excited but lay down in bed to fall asleep when day turned to night be the opposite. How lost she was in her own world; it was like she was living in someone else's life; a side character. The emotions that wind up her body are never released, keeps adding on, and she is losing herself. How can she label what she feels?

Nothing. Why? How? Be normal. Don't attract attention. You attention whore. God, you are pathetic. God, you are never gonna find a husband with your unsymmetrical face and fat body. Be proper. Be a lady, don't be aggressive. Don't be needy. Don't act all independent; how are you going to find a man that way?

A knock on the door disrupted her stare at the mirror that hung over her perfectly organized desk. In a small and clear voice, she questioned "Yes?"

"Can I come in?" asked her mother, loved by all.

"Since when does she ask?" she uttered to herself "Of course, Mother." She spoke up, plastering a smile across her flawed front.

"I was wondering if you wanted to accompany me on some errands."

"Oh, sorry, I cannot. I have school work to attend to," she lied.

"Oh, very well then, Amplexa," her mother responded, reaching out for a hug. Amplexa swerved to avoid the touch from her own mother. The mother looked sad but did not think much of it. "Well, don't study too hard, sweetie," she smiled while exiting the room. She left the door ajar and turned to her right to walk down the stairs to the ground floor.

"Oh my goodness. Why can't she just close the goddamn door when she leaves," Amplexa exclaimed quietly in an effort not to be heard by her mother as she strode to the door to close it. All she wanted was to slam the door purely out of frustration but of course, she could never.

She quickly turned around to face her bedroom. How the bed was so flawlessly made the exact way she desired. How everything was put away and everything seemed just perfect. But if one would look, one would start to see the stuffed drawers and the mess that lay just behind the closed closet door. She turned her head slightly to the left to gaze down at her desk, there was nothing to do. Early that day her teachers had unfortunately given her no homework to finish which was the only thing that really kept her sane; that distracted her from herself. She was now stuck with her thoughts for the rest of the day.

She decided to sit down at her desk in an attempt to find something to entertain herself with. She opened a drawer and searched for something, anything. But in the end, she found herself bored with nothing to do.

"Goodbye now. I won't be back until dinner time," her mother cheered from the front door. She unlocked it with a click and opened it, taking a step through the doorway. Amplexa turned to look at her closed door, yelling in response, "See you then, Mother. Kisses." She turned to face her empty desk. Nothing to occupy her mind with. So ultimately her thoughts started to distract her from the ticking clock.

Why did she have to do that? Quite rude of her. Her voice when she complimented my pants. It sounded in a way sarcastic. And that smile. She thought they were ugly. They were, weren't they? Why does everyone compliment my birthmark? I hate it so much. How there is only one. How unsymmetrical my face is. Do they comment on it because it is so big and ugly? God. I am ugly, ugly, ugly.

She began to hit her palm to her forehead. "Ah! Why? God!" she shot up from her desk chair and stared dead in the eye at her reflection. In one swift hard motion, she unhinged the mirror and threw it to the ground to her left. As the mirror collided with the floor, a wave of relief fell over her. Thoughts were swarming through her head at the speed of light.

Why? How? Why does it feel so good? My anger. My frustration. Why? Why? Why? God, I hate this life! I hate me. This release feels so good. It makes me feel. What more can I do to help me? How?

As the mirror was done becoming dozens of mirrors she walked slowly over to the mess and squatted

down. She took one of the larger and sharper shards in her right hand as she looked down only to be faced by her own reflection. She hesitantly raised her head and looked over all of them and saw her reflection in all of them.

Similar to how the wave of relief came it was replaced with regret. She let out a gasp while her hand slapped across her mouth in disbelief. She let go of the piece and fell back. She placed her hands to their respected sides and started to crawl backward; in an attempt to get away from the mess.

In an act to free herself from her trapped self. To escape. To stop. In an attempt to release all the rage and frustration. But the rage and frustration only multiplied. She put her head in her hands and rocked.

"What have I done? Oh my god! The mess that I created. I just want to be gone. I mess everything up. Why can't I just live in invisibility? No one needs to see me. No one needs to see what I am. No one needs to see what I have done. No one. I am alone. Oh my," she muttered to herself in an angry tone on the verge of tears. But of course, no tears came. She had never learned how to properly cry. No, no, no not properly cry like a lady more in the sense that she ever learned how to actually let out her feelings. To talk about them, to label them. She was never in a comforting environment where she felt safe to do so. Crying was a weakness. It was weak and that was it.

"A princess doesn't cry," she told herself. Her tone had changed from an angry one to a tensed and assertive one.

"I made a mess. I must clean up now, can't have anyone see what I have done now, can't have a mess, must be perfect," she simply noted with no stuttering as if it was like a parent instructing her to do so. She began crawling forward to the mess that made her feel so many different emotions. Amplexa started to pick up the larger pieces and stacked them in her hand. She continued until all the pieces formed a pile in her hands. She slowly spilled them out over the empty space within the frame from the mirror everyone thought was picture perfect. Only when Amplexa looked all she could see were the flaws and the imperfections.

The mirror was a gift from her parents. It had always hung in her room, perfectly on her wall. Her mother would often come into the room and admire the mirror with its beautiful balsa wood frame and the floral detailing. As her mind filled with memories of her mother, it quickly turned to;

Why do you always do this? You always have to make a mess. Why can't you just be normal? Just be a lady. Get through this life. It's not that hard. God, you really are pathetic.

"I'm not. No one sees this," she exclaimed and tried to argue with her inner voice as she grabbed her head.

Mmmmmh, sure they don't. You just want them to see. Wow. Can you be more desperate? You are just an ugly, fat desperate little whore. You can't do anything without messing up. You ruin everything.

"Stop. Please stop. I can't take it anymore," she screamed. "I just want to be alone. Stop," she continued.

A pathetic little girl. Yes, that is what you are. Ugly. Fat. No one thinks you're cute. Everyone thinks you are fat, ugly, and disgusting. Everyone thinks that, you know. Whenever you walk into a room, they start to talk about you. They comment on everything. How you walk. Your poor posture. Your outfit. Everything.

"Stop," she shrieked as she stretched out her hand to grab one of the shards. It sat in her right hand ready to make art on her left forearm. She needed to feel the pain. Feel anything but the cocktail of emotions she was feeling.

She took the shard and placed it on her forearm. In horizontal lines, she continued, the burning sensation distracting her mind. A small wave of relief comes as drops of blood started to trickle-down. She looked down and a small smile crept its way over her face.

She started to dig a bit deeper. The pain increased, the only thing she felt was this pain. An escape from reality. Temporary or permanent?

"Oh my god," she yelled dropping the shard. "What am I doing?"

I know why you are doing this. I know what you're doing. You are doing this for attention. Just like how

you starve yourself. Have you seen your scars? Everyone sees your scars. Just like how you stand in the shower turn the water to a temperature where it turns your skin red and burns it. Or how to pull your hair. The pain. You are a failure.

"Stop, no one sees. No one knows. I don't talk about it. I am very careful. No one knows. So shut up and leave me alone. I just want to be alone," she screamed. "Ah! Why can't I just be alone? I just want peace and quiet. That's all I ask for"

You don't deserve anything. You're a failure. You unworthy piece of...

"Just shut up," she screamed, throwing her hands up in a motion of defeat. She leaned back onto the foot of her bed. And rested, trying to get her breathing under control. The noise of rustling keys disrupted her silence. She listened closely as the key entered the keyhole and turned. The door unlocked with a click and opened, presenting her mother. She entered the house and called, "Hello, love, mind helping me carry in the bags?"

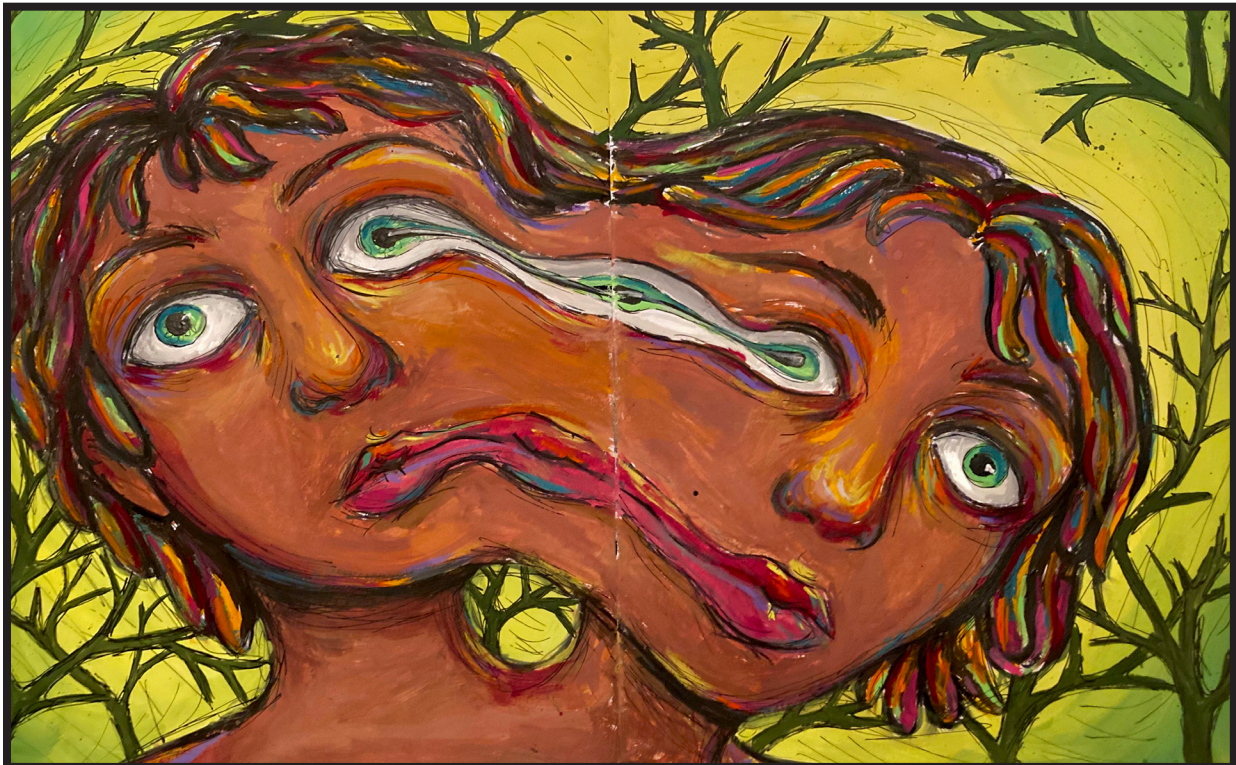
"Of course, Mother," Amplexa responded, smiling a fake smile. She slowly rose and pushed the pile and frame under her dresser. She turned to her closet and reached for a sweatshirt to wear. To cover herself. To conceal the pain.

As she turned and opened the door, she continued with her false smile and proceeded down the stairs. "Hello, Mother, how were the errands? My schoolwork was boring," she said, greeting her mother with a warm and happy tone. Back to her "normal" and perfect self. Since regardless of how she really feels, she must be perfect. Must be a lady day in and day out.



by Leah Hoepfner

by Laine McArthur





by Richard Chao



by Caroline Palmer

