



The
Daphne
Review

Spring 2020



Editor's Note

Dear Readers -

Welcome to the Spring 2020 Edition of *The Daphne Review*. This was perhaps the most challenge issue yet to assemble given the incredible array of submissions we received. With numerous talents from around the globe sharing their brilliant work with us, our team was faced with the herculean task of selecting only a handful to feature in these pages.

Uniting the submissions accepted for this edition, though, was the theme of life itself: its triumphs, its challenges, its discoveries, its landmarks in both writing and the visual arts.

We are excited to bring these young talents to you in this issue, but we applaud all of our contributors and encourage everyone to continue to follow their artistic and literary dreams. For those whose works we've selected, we hope this is just the beginning of an illustrious career in the arts.



Alexis
Editor-in-Chief
The Daphne Review

Cover Art: *Discovery* by Madeleine Yoo. A full image of *Discovery* is illustrated on page 17.

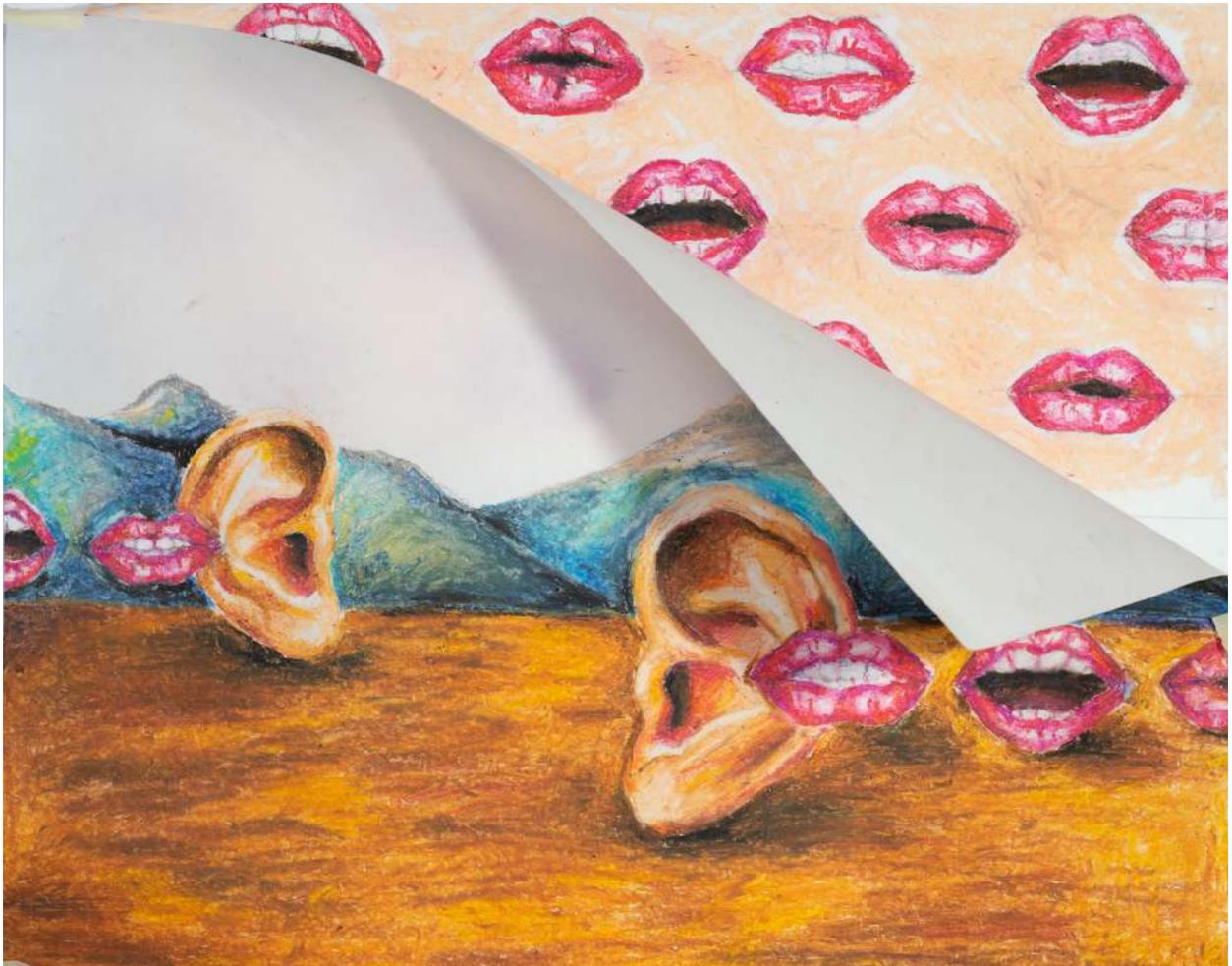
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Possibly

Maybe we are blind butterflies in the breeze.
Maybe the sun flares sharp blue at its edges.
Maybe the beagle has a beautiful voice.
Maybe the dandelions belong in the garden.
Maybe the world is on fire.
maybe we are kindling.
Maybe the best stories should be hushed until they become legends.
Maybe the glass slipper doesn't fit and the Ash girl keeps sweeping.
Maybe stars don't die.
maybe they open up like oysters and spill pearls upon the earth.
Maybe we never find it,
gilded realization that we see mist.
Maybe we never get to unfurl it,
punch away its festooned clouds.
Maybe it doesn't matter.
maybe our eyes are enough.
maybe this is how it should be:
blind butterflies in the breeze,
fluttering to oblivion.

In One Ear, Out The Other



Litany for Humble Birds

- i. Tendons warped around the
minutes we were emperors of
- ii. palindromic nights. Organs
of the hour lay vivisected for us &
- iii. through grey leather houses we
carried pigeon skulls decorated
- iv. with dust I documented myself
let swallows roost along my tongue
- v. guiding your blackthorn fingers
you plucked sour cherries from
- vi. the base of my neck: lily-stained.
Our mouths ran vile with sour spit.
- vii. Demand of me my body.
To the woods to cotton rows
- viii. where we danced in the shadows
of giants with eyes like oil slicks &
- ix. bristling in pillbug armor
I spoke your red name: Tanager.

nofilter.nofilter.nofilter.



to bear

Lightly, lightly, she came
and so hath fled the life borne within her

The woven flesh shook the layers
Deep held convictions and torments alike
the Wolves around her howled
and raged at the injustice she'd done
All the while hurling slurs sure to be among
The Great Sins
Perhaps Salvation was not the only
prerequisite to heaven

It passed not as a great labor
A Holy pain, a chosen calling
but tenderly in a pool, impure
the body of a Heathen, like her

But Alas! What being
Divine, Spirit, or Human
hath departed her
leaving her barren
her soul cold
for if the Lord keeps his promise
to Abraham and Sarah
then He will too
hold fast to His daughter's plea
but perhaps He has deserted her
a Fallen Angel, undeserving of the Kingdom

Faith Tsang

Lifeless limbs shudder under the weight
of empty cries
echoing in the winds
Leafless, fruitless branches waver
a bountiful forest once teeming with the essence of a pulsed
livelihood
now bleeds its life into a bitter blanket of white

Her prayer can be heard through the night
her wailing insistent, unrelenting
she laments her truth, her heart afflicted with the ache
of knowing who-was-not-to-be

She prayed and prayed in hopes
Creation may lay a hand on her once more

Perhaps it was the Lord who heard her
Perhaps it was fate

But O! What wonder gripped her when she found that

Lightly, lightly, she came

Daania Sharifi

Blind Poison



Excerpt from: The Life of Henry

The sizzle of bacon rang a piercing sensory alarm in Henry's brain. The soft, tantalizing smell of savory pork lured him up like a helpless fish despite his adamant will to remain in bed. Henry sat at the edge of his bed, his back slumped and face buried in his fat chest. Slowly, he stood up, clutching the sides of his bed, his knuckles turning white from the pressure of his weight. The bed groaned painfully as Henry attempted to right himself. An immense crater remained on the side of the bed; it was as if a large meteor had hit it. As Henry walked out of the bedroom, the tarnished floorboards greeted him grudgingly with croaky growls. The hallway outside Henry's bedroom was shaped in a large 'L,' his bedroom located at the end of the short tip. In order to go down to the first level, one would have to exit the bedroom, turn right and walk along a long and dark corridor filled with imbuing nothingness.

Henry blankly stood at the doorway of his room. His eyes barely open, fully open actually, but buried deep under coats of pudgy fat, he squinted at the mirror that hung on the wall, about 6 feet away from him. His arms awkwardly stuck out of his torso - almost as if he was a doll with one too many stitches connecting its arms to its body. The most prominent feature was Henry's beer belly. His stomach was a balloon inflated to its limit, ready to burst any moment. Some of the buttons on Henry's blue-striped pajamas near the lowermost parts of his belly were missing or dangling off by a thread. The buttons on the center of Henry's stomach tried its utmost to keep the satin of the pajama from bursting apart. There were small diamonds of skin between the buttons, with flabby, fat flesh protruding outwards. Originally, the XXXL pajamas had straight blue stripes running across the white satin. Now, however, the lines created a hypnotical vision; it had been gradually stretched out by Henry's increasing weight.

Henry stared at his reflection. He stared for so long that he started to look uglier; the big mole on his cheek, ugly mushes of fat lying in creases, his short and fat legs that looked like elephant limbs.

Grace Song

"Henry!" The voice of Henry's wife reached jolted him awake. As much as Henry was in desperate need of a plate of greasy, steaming hot bacon, he was equally not very fond of his wife's nagging. Reluctant and yet ambivalent, Henry's clammy feet guided him through the dimly lit hallway, and down the winding stairs.

Warm fluorescent light illuminated the small kitchen. Henry's wife, Sarah, hastily washed the dishes and looked over the curry pot simultaneously. The sink was of a generous size since it was responsible for holding all of Henry's dishes and brownie platters. Above it, were a set of antique, wooden cabinets filled with various plates, bowls, and cups. Between the cabinet and sink was a large window trimmed with narrow wooden blocks. The white, floral curtains were almost never drawn back unless there were visitors - which there were none. To Sarah's back was a square table, with only one chair.

Henry slid open the glass sliding doors and waddled in, taking a seat in his chair at the table. A large feast awaited him. There was a plate mounted with sausages, eggs, and heaps of pancakes. To the side of the dish was a mug of scalding hot coffee. Within a few seconds, the plate lay empty. Vestiges of dried up ketchup remained scattered here and there, which too disappeared until the dish was vacated. The coffee was almost gone as well. The black liquid left imprints on the sides of the mug, and a sad puddle sat at the bottom. Henry scanned the violent murder scene with a smirk of satisfaction

Kid Problems

Bare concrete surrounds the sculpture garden. Not in a tyrannical, "I feel oppressed and silenced" kind of way, but more so in a protective manner that feels like a mother comforting you after you fell, or a father who was proud of you after you scored a point. The walls stood in front of the sun while it casts a shadow that split the garden into a windy cool half and a warm sunny half; and when the sun hits your skin, it feels like someone had shrunk and took the sun, now rubbing and rolling it like a ball all over you. It wasn't scorching, but just nice; that nice feeling that one feels entering a warm home after exiting the blistering coldness of nature. It was these feelings one felt with someone special, perhaps a girl, in these walls.

The walls enclosed us, and it felt right. It felt like a relief; the kind of relief that only happens after being anxious about something for so long, so unsure about the decisions you make in your day-to-day life, but the paradoxical element of the natural serene greenery enclosed in the walls of man constructed concrete, comfort you; because although it seems unnatural, you feel as if it makes sense, and so it does just that: makes sense. Because in the day-to-day of life, you realize that sometimes "things" don't make sense. So you wander around the garden putting foot in front of foot not caring where each one takes you, holding the hand of a girl, who like you, feels a sense of comfort in these walls.

Surely enough, ten-foot-tall slabs of concrete really aren't all that comforting, it was more so how they secluded her and I from all issues. Issues about kid stuff: like school, drama, and the occasional thoughts of the future, and how these four years of our lives determine the next four, which determines the next ten, so forth and so on. These very childish thoughts had us feel a sense of discontentment that only triggered physical feelings of agony that was like having a permanent stomach ache that at every moment in time felt like you were about to regurgitate your lunch, but it just wouldn't come out, and so you're in this perpetual cycle of anxiety and fear of it splurging all out while just wanting to get it over with and barfing up the damn lunch. Our problems, although much more complex than this, can be simplified to the evocation of those feelings.

Dealing with these problems is probably what we cared about the

most, but what stopped us from figuring that out? The simple answer would probably be that there is no simple answer. No simple answer to deep complex issues about life; especially ones about "future, values, purpose, etcetera." But, at the time, in the moment, we disregarded the future in some ways. Without thought, as we put foot after foot, the sole of my shoe hitting the heated concrete as we drift through the sunny warm region of the walls division, and in my peripheral view I spot her eyeing me and I return her with a deserving slight eyeing back. The sight of her green eyes that glisten because of the yellow tinted rays of the sun that shine through and reflect back. Her gaze so intense, so immediate, that its effect diminishes any and all thoughts related to problems of "future" and for a singular moment within your crappy thirty-six week school year you feel an instant rush of love disguised with awkward teenage small-talk and with a gaze so intimate, it is my own inherit cynical nature to assume the worst, because a moment like this is almost *too* perfect. Perhaps she's just ultimately staring at the atrocious zit above my right eyebrow (that I know is there and prayed to god she wouldn't spot), but you gather yourself. Because you know that she, like you, is probably going through the same kind of immediate cynical thought process that is so unnecessary.

We continue the stumbling of our steps as we cannot synchronize our walking pace together; and as we awkwardly roam within the walls that provide us comfort, we accept an unspoken truce that has us deny any cynical and overly aware thoughts that will only lead to discontentment. We accept it because well, it's all we can do. If we want the immediate joys of being with someone you've grown a connection with, it's all you can do. So, as I spot her eyeing me in my peripheral view, this time without all the pessimistic predisposed thoughts, I eye her back, but in a more proud way. A way that says: "I know, me too."

Discovery



Height Horizontal

You said they read to you when a child. No one read to me. I am
stumbling upon an impressionable moment,
malleable, rehearsing my lies-
In a dream, I walk up the stairs to the library
& end up in the playground & I play
whatever it is with that orange ball. Error is realized
only when I unsleep, undream; if a dream can be wrong
why not a memory shape-
I walk up to that moment stitching hammers,
& breathe into it, mouth to mouth, so it is big enough
to start manufacture. I am making this all up, turning
strangers into yous, digging wells to draw words from,
seeing height-
only one chair is left & now I'm just unfurling the carpet,
I unload them from the truck & pack them in a previous house-

My father shares with me a manly secret, how to fix the flush
but I could not submit my thesis on constructing memories
because I walked away from that moment, seeing its finality of
mirrors-
does that count as inheritance, or is a story something more
genetic?

To My Future Father

because silk skins are ripping into grace;
because eyes woven from the night sky
are fading under this light; like a fallen tree
we're perfectly vulnerable. our roots are failing
and our bodies are blurring into an ink stain. once
I held onto you so tightly until your grip softened
into a shadow deepening my own. in kindergarten,
I had too many dreams and bit off the tip of my
tongue speaking. soon you became *dad* not *bàba*,
remember how our skins grew so thin and pale?
how you could see the faint red drowning beneath?
come closer, I've learned to say my new name
without the syllables crashing like falling stars. *come
closer*, there is a war of teeth digging into tongues
when I talk to you. I don't know what to call this in
our language. *come closer*, a butterfly landed on
my tongue I unraveled into a hurricane. your mouth
has been shrinking like my ears, and moonlight
has been scratching at the back of my head like a hand
I can never reach. *Bàba*, sometimes I'm so afraid
of what comes out of this mouth. but I will keep writing,
hoping you can read this one day, hoping my words
will fold into a bridge with yours. only then, I'll wear them
like a spine and give them to you, give them all to you.

Our Contributors

Gia Bharadwaj

Gia is an eighth grader who currently attends The Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing poetry, and baking. Her work has previously been included in the *Blue Marble Review*.

Alex Berman

Alex Berman is a ninth grader from New York City, where the inspiration is endless even though there are no stars in the night sky. He's been writing since kindergarten across all genres, and when he is not writing he can almost always be found drawing, reading, or running. Preferably in the rain.

Spencer Chang

Spencer Chang is a high school junior from Taipei, Taiwan. He enjoys reading, dancing, and making fake languages in his spare time.

Carlos Chavarria

Carlos "CJ" Chavarria is a 16-year-old visual artist from Houston, Texas. He finds expressing himself through writing to be an extension of his visual work and more so just a way to express the same ideas and concerns.

Emily Giang

Emily Giang is a high school senior from Pennsylvania. Enamored by design, she hopes to major in architecture following graduation. When she isn't making art, Emily can be found binge-watching documentaries on YouTube.

Laura Ionescu

An epitome of over-flowing thoughts. A walking, dreamy paradox. A self-professed paper destroyer. Currently studying at the British School of Bucharest, Laura dedicates crucial amounts of time expelling thoughts, feelings and memories onto paper. Briskly attentive of everything around her, through her writing, she manages to encapsulate her own version of the world.

Ivan Josic

Ivan Josic is currently a junior at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts for Creative Writing in Houston. He has been previously published in the *Austin Bat Cave Anthology*. When not writing, you can find him wandering his neighborhood, where he often finds inspiration for his work.

Sheena Lai

Sheena Lai is a junior from Walton High School in Georgia. She is inspired by Monet and Yuko Shimizu. She is inspired by themes, such as self image and Asian identity in America

Ajay Kumar Nair

Ajay Kuma Nair is an 18-year-old student based in Chennai, India. This is Ajay's first submission and publication in *The Daphne Review*.

Daania Sharifi

Daania Sharifi has had over 35 pieces published in various magazines/literary journals and has won many contests for her work. She is the Founder and Chief Editor of the *Cliché Teen Journal* and is a writer for the *Shameless Magazine*. When she isn't taking photos and uploading it to her Instagram (@dsharificaptures), volunteering, or editing her 75k manuscript, she can be found writing song lyrics with her friends.

Our Contributors

Grace Song

Grace Song is a ninth-grader attending Seoul International School in Seoul, South Korea. She is currently working on her writing portfolio for summer writing camp. Her other activities include eating with friends, listening to music, and watching horror movies.

Faith Tsang

Faith is a 16 year old from Texas whose first love was a book. She is an avid reader and writer, with her works focusing on capturing the emotion of the moment. She writes both fiction and poetry and loves exploring ways of capturing social issues in her writing. She has earned 5 Scholastic Keys in the 2020 competition season. In the rare moments she is not found reading or writing, you can find her eating ice cream, playing cello, or pondering the meaning of life.

Madeleine Yoo

Maddie Yoo is a junior at South Pasadena High School. She discovered a strong passion for art when she was a young child and continues to express herself through drawing and painting. She enjoys working with charcoal, markers, ink, acrylics, and colored pencils.

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For more information about *The Daphne Review*, including the submission guidelines and process, please visit:

www.thedaphnereview.org

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